

IT'S SIX IN THE MORNING, AND I'M LUCKY TO FIND A SPOT FREE.

IT'S INTENSE... AND A BIT FRIVOLOUS I MEAN, WHAT ARE THEY TRAINING FOR?

TO INTIMIDATE IN BOARDROOMS? TO DRAW ATTENTION AT NIGHTCLUBS? JUST TO HAVE A TOPIC OF CONVERSATION?



ME, ON THE OTHER HAND...

HITTING SOMETHING IS JUST ABOUT THE ONLY WAY I CAN COPE.



FOR TWO WEEKS, I'VE BEEN LEADING A DOUBLE LIFE.

BY ALL OUTWARD APPEARANCES, I'M STILL DR. HERBERT WEST'S DUTIFUL ASSISTANT, BRIGHT-EYED AND BUSHY-TAILED.



BUT INSIDE, I'M WRESTLING WITH FEAR, RAGE, AND--PERHAPS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE--PARANOIA.

UNTIL I CAN FIGURE OUT THE REANIMATOR'S SECRETS, I'VE GOT TO PLAY PRETEND.



IT TAKES ALL OF MY WILLPOWER JUST TO STAY COMPOSED BY HIS SIDE.

SO IT'S ONLY IN EARLY MORNING MOMENTS LIKE THIS THAT I CAN WORK THROUGH MY VERY CONFLICTED FEELINGS ABOUT THE MAN.

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED ABOUT DR. WEST?

HE APPEARED IN A CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPH AT MY FIANCEE'S MURDER, DISGUISED AS A POLICE OFFICER...

I'VE SINCE DISCOVERED THAT HE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH A MASSACRE IN MASSACHUSETTS A FEW YEARS BACK, ALTHOUGH AUTHORITIES NEVER SEEMED TO BE QUITE CLEAR WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED.

...AND HE'D BEEN SECRETLY KEEPING TABS ON ME SINCE THAT DAY.

OUR FIRST MEETING WASN'T AN ACCIDENT, AS HE'D LED ME TO BELIEVE.

HE WAS HELD AT MISKATONIC ASYLUM FOR A TIME, BUT ESCAPED. NO ONE KNOWS HOW.

HE'S A WANTED MAN. I'VE CERTAINLY SEEN HIM DO ENOUGH ILLEGAL THINGS IN THE PAST MONTH...NOT THAT I'M REALLY ONE TO JUDGE.

BUT WHAT I CAN'T SEEM TO DO IS LINK THE VILLAIN HE'S BEEN--THE MONSTER I IMAGINE HIM TO BE--WITH THE MAN AS HE CURRENTLY APPEARS.

IN ALL MY TIME WITH HIM, HE'S TREATED ME WITH RESPECT. HE HASN'T DONE A SINGLE THING TO ME THAT I'D FIND THREATENING.

SURE, HE'S NOT EXACTLY CUDDLY. HE'S INTENSE AND METHODICAL, DISTANT AND PECULIAR...

...BUT I DON'T SENSE ANY MALICE FROM HIM.

IF I DID, THAT'D MAKE THINGS SO MUCH EASIER.

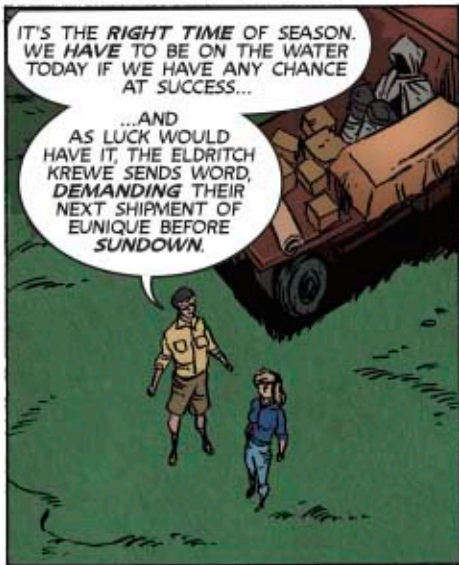
SO I BIDE MY TIME, DOING THE JOB WHILE SEARCHING FOR CLUES...

...AND KEEPING VIGILANT IN CASE THE MONSTER COMES OUT.

TIME TO GET TO WORK.



BUSY DAY AHEAD, SUSAN.



IT'S THE *RIGHT TIME* OF SEASON. WE *HAVE* TO BE ON THE WATER TODAY IF WE HAVE ANY CHANCE AT SUCCESS...

...AND AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, THE ELDRITCH KREWE SENDS WORD, DEMANDING THEIR NEXT SHIPMENT OF EUNIQUE BEFORE *SUNDOWN*.



WE CAN'T EXACTLY DENY A REQUEST FROM A POWERFUL DRUG SYNDICATE.

I KNOW.

STILL, SUPPLY AND DEMAND. IT MUST BE A GOOD SIGN IF THEY'RE SO INSISTENT.

AND YET, IT'S A BURDEN WHEN MY REAL INTERESTS LAY *ELSEWHERE*.



'LO.

HEH. ACTUALLY, IT'S GOODBYE.

YOU BE GOOD NOW.



IS IT SMART TO LEAVE THE VALUSIAN WITH THE TRUCK?

WE HAD TO BRING THE GOODS, AND I CAN'T RISK LEAVING IT UNATTENDED.

HE'LL BE FINE. I INSTRUCTED HIM TO *TEAR THE LIMBS OFF* OF ANYONE WHO APPROACHES.



MEET HOMER, OUR GUIDE TO THE WATERWAYS.

I'VE NEVER RIDDEN IN ONE OF THESE. IT'S GOT KICK?

LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE.



EVER SINCE NATHAN DIED, I'VE SURRENDERED TO ESCAPISM.

WHENEVER ONE THRILL FADES, I SEEK OUT ANOTHER.

MY TIME WITH DR. WEST, WELL...

...IT'S BEEN HIJACKED BY FEAR AND DOUBT.

BUT THEN, THIS SINGLE MOMENT COMES ALONG.

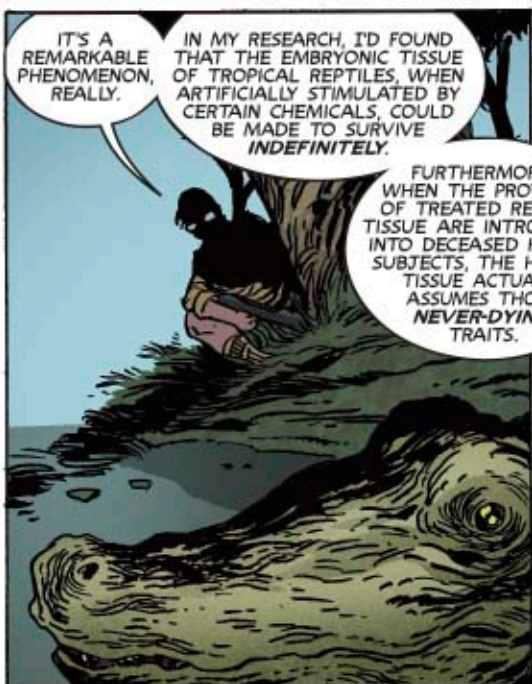
SUDDENLY, THE SUSPICION AND TERROR JUST FALL AWAY...



...AND THE THRILLS BACK-- IF ONLY FOR THE DURATION OF OUR RIDE.



ALLIGATOR
MISSISSIPPIENSIS,
THE AMERICAN
ALLIGATOR.



IT'S A
REMARKABLE
PHENOMENON,
REALLY.

IN MY RESEARCH, I'D FOUND
THAT THE EMBRYONIC TISSUE
OF TROPICAL REPTILES, WHEN
ARTIFICIALLY STIMULATED BY
CERTAIN CHEMICALS, COULD
BE MADE TO SURVIVE
INDEFINITELY.

FURTHERMORE,
WHEN THE PROTEINS
OF TREATED REPTILE
TISSUE ARE INTRODUCED
INTO DECEASED HUMAN
SUBJECTS, THE HUMAN
TISSUE ACTUALLY
ASSUMES THOSE
NEVER-DYING
TRAITS.



IMAGINE HUMAN
TISSUE RETAINING
FRESHNESS UPON
RECEIVING AN
INJECTION.

WITH A PRICK OF A
NEEDLE, THAT BODY WILL
REMAIN FROZEN IN A
PERFECT STATE.

I COULD
TAILOR-DESIGN A
REANIMATION
FORMULA FOR A
SPECIFIC HUMAN
SUBJECT WITHOUT
FEAR OF
DECAY.

THE PROCESS
JUST NEEDS TO BE
PERFECTED. FOR THAT,
I NEED ALLIGATOR EGGS,
RIGHT FROM THE NEST. I
ALSO NEED THE MOTHERS.
BLOOD, REPRODUCTIVE
SYSTEMS, ALL THE
HORMONES AND FLUIDS
INVOLVED.



LIVE
SPECIMENS
AREN'T
NECESSARY.



SO...IT DOESN'T FAZE YOU
THAT WERE POACHING THESE
ANIMALS? NO RESERVATIONS,
NO THOUGHTS ABOUT
THE RIGHT OR WRONG
OF IT?

I THOUGHT
WE'D ALREADY
DISCUSSED
ETHICS, YOU
AND I.

A FEW DOZEN
ALLIGATORS DIE, A
FEW HUNDRED EGGS
NEVER HATCH...BUT IF
I SUCCEED, HUMANITY
OVERCOMES DEATH.



SLAUGHTER
CAN BE A NOBLE
UNDERTAKING.

BLAM