POWER RECORDS PRESENTS:

MAN-THING!

The Swamp...

A bubbling bed of life... of which you are a part.

Once, you were a man...

A chemist named Ted Sallis.

But the serum that was to have made you a super soldier combined with strange forces in the swamp...

Night of the Laughing Dead
LESS THAN A DREAM, IN FACT...

YOU NOW FUNCTION...

ON EMOTION....

THOSE FEW....

WHICH YOU STILL....

OCTHERS FEEL....

YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THOSE FEELINGS....

FEEL. YOU CAN FEEL WHAT....
BUT EMOTIONS ARE OFTEN AS AMBIGUOUS AS WORDS. AND SOMETIMES, THEY ARE EVEN MORE SO.

CONSIDER THIS WEEPING CLOWN, FOR EXAMPLE.

WHAT DOES HE FEEL—NOW—AS HE RAISES A GUN TO HIS TEMPLE—AS THE TEARS ROLL DOWN HIS GREASE-PAINTED CHEEKS?

YOU MAY NEVER KNOW, FOR ACROSS THE MARSHLAND COMES...

...A SINGLE DEVASTATINGLY FINAL SHOT!!
..THAT PRODS...

...YOU...

...INTO ACTION!

BUT NO MATTER. YOU ARE TOO LATE.

...YOU ATTEMPT TO HURRY TO THE SOURCE OF THE EVIL SOUND.
IT WAS TOO LATE BEFORE YOU BEGAN.
... fought to protect his scientific discovery. You remember more... the...

Blinding moments of escape—the knowledge that he had to destroy the vial—and perhaps...

And so... Ted Sallis did what had to be done.

At the same time destroy himself.

KRAASH!

Memory: you recall the transformation...
The mingling of the chemical with the swamp waters around him... the stark shock to his metabolism...

... and the bitter ending of his sanity!

Slowly, mercifully... the memories end.

And the man who was once Ted Sallis, whose body has become that of a swamp-roaming creature... forgets again what once he knew.

It's better, that way. It's better.
As those thoughts fade...

Your gaze falls upon something at the dead man's...

"Foot..."


Could these little scrawls on this thin white leaf explain...

Why the man took his own life?

But, wait! Another flash of recollection from your former life: fou--few--?

Funeral!

Humans bury their dead, so this one...

...must be laid...

...to rest.
AND SO, YOU TAKE THE BODY DEEP INTO THE MARSH... WHILE EVENTS TAKE SHAPE MILES AWAY THAT WILL TRANSFORM THIS ALREADY SOMBER EVENING...

...INTO SOMETHING MORE TERRIFYING BY FAR.

THE ONLY ROOMS LEFT ARE MY DELUXE.

COME ON, RICHARD, WE'LL FIND ANOTHER...

UH-UH, LADY. NOT TONIGHT. I'M EXHAUSTED.

I'LL JUST BET!

THAT'LL BE $22.90, INCLUDING TAX.

THese two young people are RICHARD RORY AND RUTH HART. Two old friends of yours, man-thing. WELl... THAT WAS A HASSLE, WASN'T IT... I'LL SAY!

BUT, y'know, I HAVEN'T GOT THE ENERGY...

...TO ARGUE WITH HIM, NOT NOW.

Maybe we can go to the CARNIVAL tomorrow.

CARNIVAL?

SURE! SEE THE TRUCKS OVER THERE? THEY MUST BE PLAYING A TOWN AROUND HERE.

BOSS! MR. GARVEY! DARREL'S GONE! RUN AWAY!

WE'VE GOTTEN TO GO AFTER HIM!

WE CAN'T LOSE THE SHOWS ONLY CLOWN!! AND BESIDES HE WAS TERRIBLY UPSET TONIGHT! I'M AFRAID OF WHAT HE MIGHT DO!

PLEASE, MR. GARVEY...!
If he does something rash, you'll be a--

I'll be boss o' this three-ring looney farm, just like before, you hear?

An' if you don't like it, you can scram!

Holy cow! Ruth--did you see that?

Richard--wait! You don't know--!

Them's your options, Avla. Either y-- huh?!

Hold it right there, Buster!

Run along, Sonny...

Ya heard the man, twerp! Scram!

See--he's th' boss! He's my boss! An' I don't like nobody messin' with my boss!

No, sir... I don't like it at all!

Oboy

Wham!
NOW, I'LL ADVISE YUH TO BLOW--WHILE YUH STILL GOT LEGS TO WALK ON! IT AIN'T WISE TA GIT TRAGG MAD AT YA TWICE!

TRAGG? THE WORLD'S STRONGEST MAN?
GOSH! THAT'S WHO HIT ME!
SHE'S RIGHT, RICHARD.

WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

PLEASE--TAKE ME WITH YOU.

IN FACT, I THINK HE AND "DA BOSS" PLAN TO FOLLOW US!

I DON'T CARE ABOUT THEM, I JUST WANT TO FIND DARREL!

MY... POOR CLOWN...!

FIRST WE FIND ANOTHER HOTEL! I'VE GOTTA GET TO SLEEP!
WE CAN GO CLARABELLE-HUNTING TOMORROW, MISS--

UHM, YOU HAVEN'T TOLD US YOUR NAME, MISS.

OR WHY YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A CLOWN.

I'M SORRY--IT'S AYLA PRENTISS. I'M A HIGH-WIRE ARTIST WITH THE CARNIVAL.
AND I'M TRYING TO KEEP MY CLOWN FROM DESTROYING HIMSELF.

YOU SEE I LOVED DARREL...

BUT I BETRAYED HIM... AND...

HE STOPPED LAUGHING... STOPPED LIVING... JUST WANTED TO DIE...

STOP! PULL OVER!

S-SURE, OKAY...!
There he is! And thank the Lord—he's alive!

Darrel, what's wrong? Can't you see me? It's Ayla!

Darrel, I'm here!

Wh-why doesn't he answer? He acts as if he doesn't know who I am!

Maybe his mind has just totally snapped.

Whoa! Where do you think you're going? It's dangerous out there!

Let go of me! I have to go after him! It's my fault he's like this.

If that's so, it's my fault!

Richard... look at this. I think it's a suicide note.

So Ayla's not exaggerating. The little guy is in a bad way.

Okay, then... we go, but slowly... carefully!

Remember: the next log you step on could have teeth!
But as the three young people forge cautiously into the tepid waters of your home...

Sure, I'm sure they took this road—I think.

Two some-what more sinister figures race along the swamp-side highway in pursuit...

You think?

Ah, Boss, I try.

"It's the clown! Dancin' in some kinda spotlight! Only..."

Hey Boss! Look! Up the road, there!

Where's the light comin' from? He don't even look real!

Slow down, you fool! You'll hit him! We don't want to kill him outright.

Swerve, you idiot. Swerve!

Boss... I'm scared!

I'm swervin'! But we're gonna hit that..."
THE TRUCK'S GAS TANK EXPLODES ON IMPACT, AND THE VEHICLE BECOMES A NOVA-BRIGHT INFERNO.

AND THE LITTLE CLOWN STANDS WATCHING... GLEEFULLY.

GOOD EVENING TRAGG HOW ARE YOU I AM FINE WHERE IS GARVEY HAHA

HAHA HAHA HAHA LAUGHIN'!! WHY, YOU LITTLE PUNK--!

WHEN I GIT OUT FROM UNDER THIS...

YOU'LL KILL ME HAHA MAKE ME DIE HAHA WHERE'S GARVEY HAHA HAHA

YER BLASTED RIGHT I'LL KILL YA! AN...

I'M MAD NOW!!

OH MY HAHA HE'S MAD HAHA BUT HE'LL STILL HAVE TO CATCH ME HAHA.

AND HE CAN'T HAHA CAUSE HE'S TOO BIG AND SLOW AND HAHA--

--STUPID!

MEBBE! BUT AT LEAST I AIN'T NO WALKIN' JOKE.
And Not Too Far Away...

Listen! Voices... It sounded like Tragg!

I didn't hear anything, are you sure?

N-no, it's hard to be sure of anything--in here.

I didn't realize it would be this... dark.

There are so many little sounds, so many shadows. It's-- ooh!

Th-that's no shadow! It's some kind of thing!

Oh, Lord... Look! It's carrying something--or someone! It's got Darrel!

Holy cow! It's the man-thing!

Take it easy, Ayla, I know this is hard to believe--but that creature won't harm us--or Darrel.

If that is the clown he's holding--he may be protecting him.

Even so... we better not startle him.

Right, we'll move closer--slowly.

And so, not suspecting that the man they seek to save is already dead--

...they inch their way through the dense swamp growth toward the spot where you stand...

...the hunk of earth you have chosen for the man's final resting place.
AND WHEN THEY PUSH ASIDE THE LAST CLUMP OF GREEN...

WHEN THEY SEE THE CLOWN'S LIMP BODY AND THE HEAVY BRANCH IN YOUR MOTTLED HAND...

AYLA DRAWS THE LOGICAL--BUT WONG--CONCLUSION, AND PANICS!

DARREL--WAKE UP! IT'S AYLA! DARREL....

OH... NO... HE'S DEAD!

DEAD!

YOU CAN FEEL THIS WOMAN'S DEEP SORROW: YOUR OWN HEAD BOWS... BUT THEN--ANOTHER POWERFUL EMOTIONAL FORCE MAKES YOU WHIRL, STARTLED!

H--HOW COULD YOU--? I HAD ALMOST COME TO THINK OF YOU AS HUMAN! BUT NOW--!

GET OUT! GET OUT OF HERE OR I'LL--!

ANGER--AIMED DIRECTLY AT YOU--EMANATING FROM A MAN YOU ASSUMED TO BE YOUR FRIEND.

YOU CANNOT REASON... AND EVEN IF YOU COULD, YOU LACK THE VOCAL MECHANISM WITH WHICH YOU MIGHT EXPLAIN TO THEM THEIR ERROR, SO YOU MERELY SKULK AWAY....
Once you have gone
Tears flow copiously...

I didn't believe the man-thing was capable of this,
In fact...

It still strikes me as odd that I could face him
down so easily, unless...

I never told him how I felt. I'm so ashamed...

Oh, wow! How could I have been so blind?

Ayla... Look! He's been shot!
The monster didn't kill him!

But... that's impossible! We didn't hear any
gun go off!

And we just saw Darrel alive a few
minutes ago, didn't we?

You know...
I'm beginning to wonder
about that.

So am I. We all saw
something...

... back there.
But what!!

A ghost...
Maybe?

Ghost?!

Come on, Ruth! Under
the circumstances
isn't that a...

Little bit morbid?

Nice try, twerp... I
play-actin' that clown's
dead, to protect him
from me.

Tragg!
C'MON, CLOWNSY--STAND UP N' GET--BEAT TO DEATH LIKE A MAN YA' HEAR?

STOP IT, TRAGG! YOU CAN'T KILL A CORPSE!

TRAGG, I SAID STOP IT!

YOU SAID? WHY SHOULD THE WORLD'S STRONGEST MAN CARE WHAT YOU SAID?

ARRGH

PERHAPS YOU ARE THE REASON TRAGG SHOULD CARE. FOR DESPITE YOUR PUZZLEMENT AT HIS EARLIER OUTBURST--

YOU STILL KNOW DORY AS A GOOD MAN.

AND TRAGG'S ASSAULT UPON HIM... ENRAGES YOU!

WHOEVER HE IS--HE AIN'T ON MY SIDE, SO HE MUST BE ON YOURS!

HE'S A BLASTED LIVIN' SLIME POOL!

SO-- UH--
BUT IF HE FIGURES THAT'S GONNA STOP ME...

THIS IS A CHALLENGE FOR ME! I KNOW I CAN TAKE ANY MAN--!

BUT A MONSTER -- THAT'S SUMPIN' NEW!

HUh? I SLICED RIGHT THROUGH 'IM!

I TORE INTA YA--RIPPED YA APART!

AN' YA DIDN'T EVEN FEEL IT!

...TO ALL APPEARANCES, UNHARMED!

HE HAS TORN FROM YOU SOME SMALL BITS OF YOUR BEING, YET STILL YOU STAND...
YOU ARE WAITING FOR ONE REACTION: FEAR! FOR
IF THIS MAN, OR ANY MAN, FEARS YOU, YOUR VERY
TOUCH CAN BURN HIS FLESH TO ASHES. BUT
TRAGG IS NOT AFRAID, ONLY AMAZED. HE ATTACKS
AGAIN!

...IT IS YOUR STRENGTH WHICH PREVAILS.
AND IN THE ABSENCE OF FEAR...

YOU RESORT TO OTHER EVEN MORE
BRUTAL...

...MEANS TO DESTROY YOUR FOE...

BUT THE MEMORIES RETURN ONCE MORE...
THE VISIONS OF NEEDLESS, WANTON
SLAUGHTER...

AND THOUGH YOUR INSTINCTS ADVISE YOU OTHERWISE...
YOU ALLOW HIM TO LIVE.

HOLY LEAPING--!
WH--WHAT IS IT?
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM?
OR--

IS IT HAPPENING TO US?
ARE WE ALL LOSING OUR MINDS?

AND AS YOU MAKE THAT CHOICE...

...THE MOST BIZARRE EVENT
OF THIS NIGHT OCCURS!
THE WARM NIGHT AIR HAS SUDDENLY TURNED CHILL...

--AS YOU STARE ALONG WITH THE HUMANS--

--AT THE SKELETAL SPECTER THAT HAS RISEN FROM DARREL'S LIFELESS SHELL!

WHAT ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WHY, I WANT TO MAKE YOU LAUGH!
I WANT SMILES AND GUFFAWS AND GRINS AND GOOD CHEER...
AND, MOST OF ALL, PEACE.

WHAT DOES ANY CLOWN WANT BUT TO MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY? BUT I COULD NOT GO ON MAKING OTHERS...

...LAUGH, WHEN ALL I FELT INSIDE WAS PAIN... WHEN THE LOVE I GAVE WAS NOT RETURNED!

...BUT NOW, MY SOUL IS FREE.
I SHALL FEEL MORTAL PAIN NO MORE...
...AND SO I CAN LAUGH... LAUGH FOREVER!

HAAHAHA!
POWErful

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