



momentary

flat world

bulging outward

# VELMA

Velma makes long, floppy loops out of the shadowless brown rope, and pulls the ends through, tight. She works surely, deft knots revealing her experience, her movements showing that this is by no means her first villain. The swamp monster's glistening black eye-circles notice this quietly. Velma's face is centimetres from the monster's moving skin. She looks to him, and for a split second their eyes meet, their faces almost touching, and she feels a flat sickness swell within her.

The glossy folds of the swamp skin come down over and over each other. Velma sees them folding and rolling down, and imagines a procession of shadowy waves, stretched and bent out of shape. Where is it all coming from? she thinks, lazily – where does it all go? Velma pulls the last perfect end of rope through its flat loop, locking the monster in place. Where does all this stuff come from? For the first time Velma looks at – examines – the swamp monster's skin. It is moving – really moving, really alive and vital. There are shadows; Velma chews the words in her flat mind: there are shadows, there

are shadows. She glances at Shaggy's monochrome clothes – the discrete green block of his shirt. No shadow, she thinks, laconically.

What to make of this, Velma wonders, stepping back coolly and joining the circle the gang have formed around the captive swamp monster. She stands, arms hanging flatly, gazing at the monster's head. The monster watches silently, but she doesn't notice it. Velma stares at the topmost surface of the monster's chewy brown skin, looking for an explanation. She feels an internal haze lifting and her thoughts become firmer, and more panicked. In her mind's eye Velma inspects the monster's crown, a millimetre from the surface looking up up up at the waves of brown gloop crashing over and over each other in slow motion. Up it shoots, the vital fountain of sticky brown-ness. Velma realises that she doesn't know what this is, this stuff; she doesn't know how to classify it, how to describe it. All her knowledge, all her flat, worldly understanding is faltering; instead of answers she has a grey blind-spot illusion – a void.

The stuff is never ending: the essential brown viscous swamp skin spouts up from some mysterious place within. That can't be, Velma thinks, a lazy panic swelling in her flat chest. She trembles, and she feels her black outline spike up for a frame, but thankfully the gang don't notice. She sees the monster now and feels a connection, her drawn eyes locked together with the swampy black circles.

A wave of sleep-like paralysis comes over her as she stands, fixed to the spot next to the swamp monster. The monster turns his attention to the rest of the gang, drippy shoulders bound by the light brown rope. I thought I knew my place, Velma ruminates, but this – I can't place this. Something has changed, she decides, standing in this grey room with these people and this ... thing. For the first time in her existence, Velma feels the crushing weight of extra dimensions, of texture, smell, and shadow. She can't locate these things but she feels them pressing the other side of the screen. Something

has changed, she can feel it now – she tries to yell, to crow victoriously, but feels paralysed.

The monster is an offence, an affront to her knowledge, her way of life, and Velma hates it. She gazes at the moving swamp-skin, watching a soft fold emerge from the monster's crown and roll down his sticky brown length, bubbling and morphing... it is subsumed by the monster's feet, folded back into itself, eternally. Velma feels a sickness and a detached joy, seeing the stuff glooping back into itself silently. It will feel as soft as velvet to touch: the thought comes to her from nowhere. What is velvet?

Velma steps back as Fred moves toward the monster easily. He is the architect of this whole enterprise, Velma thinks, and it is about to crash down on him.

# FRED

Fred takes in the room before him and feels proud. This familiar scene always fills him with deep pride and a sense of strong masculine power. He takes in the cool grey cement of the floor and walls: nothing unusual, he thinks, coolly. The gang are gathered around the dripping swamp monster, all gazing into the swampy brown skin. It is truly disgusting, Fred thinks to himself, powerfully: this dripping mess, this beast-like disguise. Fred's quick eyes assess the faces of his friends, and he sees Velma's flat expression. She looks ashen, Fred ruminates, and confused: the monster is truly disgusting.

With the ropes bound around the drippy figure, Fred takes a last look at the flat figures around him. My gang, he thinks to himself. Fred strides purposefully, powerfully, toward the monster, staring fiercely into its black eyes. Fred hears his footsteps on the hard cement, mixing with the percussive drips of the swamp-skin hitting the cold floor. Ten steps to go, Fred thinks, powerfully, ten steps until I can rid the world of this disgusting charade, this horrible masked villainy. As Fred comes closer he notices a glistening reflection on

the monster's skin, a sparkle of light that makes him falter. What is it? Fred racks his brain coolly, as his pace slows. The light is different to anything he has seen before: it is light, real light, in this shadowless flat place. Fred realises then that all the light he had seen, or thought he had seen, previously had been blocks of colour – areas of white smeared over darker areas.

The monster's glistening eyes are locked to Fred's flat black eye-circles, as Fred steps coolly, confidently up to the chair. This is it, Fred thinks, lazily, this is it now. Fred feels a swelling, hot fire rising within his flat chest as he stops in front of the monster, standing over it, glaring down at it. The monster's face is turned upwards and Fred sees the disgusting, active brown gloop tumbling over and over, stringing down to the floor from the crown of the monster's tilted head. I fucking hate you, Fred thinks, viciously, as he looks down. He thinks he feels a disturbance from Velma's direction but he puts it out of his mind, powerfully.

As he has done so many times before, Fred reaches forward, ready to clasp the disgusting mask and put an end to the day's villainy. There is something wrong, Fred surmises, lazily, as he reaches: something isn't right. It was too late to stop the sure movement of his arms, that now tingled with flat terror. His hands reach the glistening, moving surface and Fred feels a rumble from within the monster travel up his arms. There is no going back, Fred realises coolly, as his hands are pulled into the moving skin. His fingers are engulfed by the sienna brown gloop; he feels the vile, vital liquid moving between his fingertips and sucking at his palms.

Fred feels a stumble in time – his hands sunk to the wrists in moving, glistening swamp. He stares at the monster, their faces so close as to kiss. I was so sure, so cool: Fred's detached thoughts come to him lucidly during this stumbling time. He feels a spiritual rumble from deep within the monster's form that shakes his outline, travelling to his mind. What are you? Fred forces the thought outward, powerfully, willing the monster to answer him. The sticky brown gloop is up to Fred's forearms now, muddying his flat white shirt with a layer of glistening life. In his mind's eye, Fred sees himself being

stripped bare, just me and the monster he thinks. He sees his colour drain – the white of his shirt and the red block of his shoes melt away, leaving a drawn black outline. I am empty, he thinks, coolly, surely. Empty in the face of this realisation. Our world can be, and is, so fundamentally different from the way it seems, I know this now. I am powerless, like a baby, stripped of all my confident masculine power in the wake of this change.

Fred feels his agonising moment of self-realisation pass, and feels a remnant of power surging through his flat arms. He pulls back powerfully, viciously. Panicking now, his quick eyes move from Daphne to Velma, Shaggy and Scooby Doo. He pulls harder, giving the last of his colour, the last of his strength. He falls backward, his hands shlorping out of the brown gloop.

Fred tumbles to the grey cement floor, watching with terror as the monster begins to stand up. He sees the light brown rope falling away through the moving surface and he feels sick and powerless.



still for now  
bone-less god  
of motion

toon-world cement  
warm setting  
dream-like darkness

# DAPHNE

Fred falls back from the swamp monster, his hands and forearms covered in a sticky viscous gloop, burnt caramel brown. His face is fixed, open mouthed, in an expression that strains against his 2D composition and seems, to Daphne, to be almost breaking through into another dimension. Fred's eyes are fixed upwards, staring at the glistening black spots of the swamp monsters'. The monster is rising slowly, its active surface still dripping and moving – the brown liquid now (in a development from before) falling from the monster's body and onto the floor with raw, meaty plops.

Daphne feels the moment opening out, and feels a bulge in time that allows her to consider every pixel constituting the image before her. She does so with mixed feelings. The horror that had initially flooded through her flat heart was beginning to subside and, in the second that had passed, she could feel the cartoon adrenaline give way to a metallic inner coldness.

The monster, the object of the gang's attention and desire, had ceased to be a benign pastime, a friendly foe, and had become something entirely more

sinister. What it had become Daphne could not immediately tell, but she could sense that it would soon make itself clear, and that she was still in the early days of this open moment.

From deep within her Daphne could feel an emotion coming to the surface, one that felt wrong and irresponsible. Fred scrambles backwards from the monster, leaving sticky brown hand prints on the cement, as it rises further still. The ropes that had previously bound it are now retreating into the active surface of the monster's body, and begin to pass slowly and thickly right through it. The monster has fully risen, now, and the ropes fall to the floor from the back end of the monster, lying in a pool of viscous tree-bark-brown gloop. In the eternity that it takes for Daphne to experience this she realises that the monster (or at least the stuff of the monster, its physical material) has fundamentally changed; or was it always like this? Only a few minutes ago those ropes had held fast, kept the beast in place and had resisted being contaminated by the dripping brown stuff.

Something big has happened, Daphne ruminates laconically, something... systemic has changed. The part of her that craves big changes celebrates secretly within her – Daphne notices this and considers it in the ever-slowness of the moment. The others must never know about this quiet joy, she realises. If Fred were to find out about my confused and dream-like happiness he would hate me. And yet her joy grows, as the monster takes its first step, glowering at the receding figure of Fred. Velma, Shaggy and Scooby have yet to move an inch, it would seem, but perhaps, Daphne thinks, I haven't moved either. There seems to have been so much happening within the space of her thoughts that it seems impossible that she wouldn't have physically moved, but perhaps not.

Just the monster and Fred, Fred and the monster, locked in a slow game of cat and mouse. Fred, with the monster on his hands.

Daphne feels hot between her legs and puts her hand to the top of her flat thigh.

That *was* her first movement, she realises – and the others do too. Velma

stares over at her lazily, across Fred who is pulling his legs under him and starting to stand up, looking up at Daphne with fear in his eyes. Velma's expression is hard to read: Daphne thinks she can see some of her mixed feelings reflected back at her, but she can't tell. Somewhere in those flat black circles is something that I'm feeling, Daphne wills it to be true, looking across the grey room at Velma's eyes. She senses, then, the thing that was wrong and irresponsible come to the front of her mind.

Fundamental changes, like the one that she had just witnessed, always seem so far away, so distant and unreal – just like me, Daphne thinks. The monster is more real than any of us can ever be; it is vital, active. This change has terrifying consequences, Daphne ruminates, but I crave it. I want it more than anything I have ever conceived of wanting. She longs to be Fred, to have the active brown matter of the monster on her flat, shadowless skin, as it is on his.

She realises, then, finally, that her desire of the monster has enveloped and consumed her in the bulging moment.

# SHAGGY AND SCOOPY

He is so beautiful, Shaggy thinks, as he looks down at Scooby Doo who sits by him patiently. Shaggy's eyes move between Scooby's flat skin and the swamp monster's back as it towers over a retreating Fred; he notices the colour bouncing between them, both brown – one flat and lightless, one glistening, real. He feels the strong connection between himself and Scooby as a tangible thing; soft and firm like stiff marshmallow. It feels, to Shaggy, even stronger than usual in the face of the event that had just unfolded. Shaggy feels peaceful and stoic as he watches the swamp monster take strong, quick strides towards a scrambling Fred. He understands, and he feels Scooby's understanding, of the situation: of the event, of its consequences, of its implications. He had felt aware of a cosmic disruption orbiting the monster ever since they had caught it.

Scooby looks up into Shaggy's intelligent, loving eyes and feels his flat

heart tighten in his chest. Their shared knowledge of what was to come, that had quickly materialised within both their minds, was swelling and coming to the surface. Scooby feels his flat fur bristle, down to his tail. He watches, thoughtfully, the dripping brown gloop on the monster's back and understands that it, and the monster, is a container – a shell for something more profound than the others were capable of grasping immediately.

Shaggy and Scooby begin walking toward the monster together, approaching from behind as it looms over Fred and glares down at his now still figure. They notice the faces of Daphne and Velma turn to them slowly, lazily. They take in their surroundings wistfully, appreciating the subtle fallacies that had, until then, been hidden from them: the grey cement of the walls dissipating into black nothingness as it stretches up – Shaggy knows now that there should be another corner where the wall meets the ceiling but he can't see

it. There is just an emptiness like a blind-spot illusion; something that can't be understood, or computed. They know that they had entered the bizarre, empty cement room that contained nothing but a chair and ropes; but the knowledge of the door, or the way in, was out of reach, no matter how hard his mind tried to grapple with it.

The thing contained within this thing is change – unthinkable change: Scooby thinks this as he looks up at Shaggy, and felt that he was thinking something similar. The change is unthinkable because we are too small to think it – it concerns an entity that is bigger than us, and this is the first time we have encountered it.

Daphne and Velma gape lazily, out of focus, as Scooby Doo and Shaggy draw close to the monster's back. They can feel the warmth from it and they can see the folding brown gloop rolling down constantly. They are peaceful, resigned and calm. Shaggy reaches out a splayed flat hand and sees his

shadowless skin laying over the monster's gloopiness in his field of vision. The monster has become still, aware of the two characters behind him – Scooby feels that he can sense his fear.

Shaggy and Scooby Doo step forward in unison and feel the gloopy brown swamp wash over them.

They become the monster and feel, as the monster feels, the weight of extra dimensions pulling them down, grounding them in this new world of glistening, of mass, of shadows, of life. It is the right thing to do, they understand this. The change is too immense, and too inevitable, to resist.

They are peaceful as their betrayal of the gang becomes full.

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