

MARVEL
PG 17

EXILES™



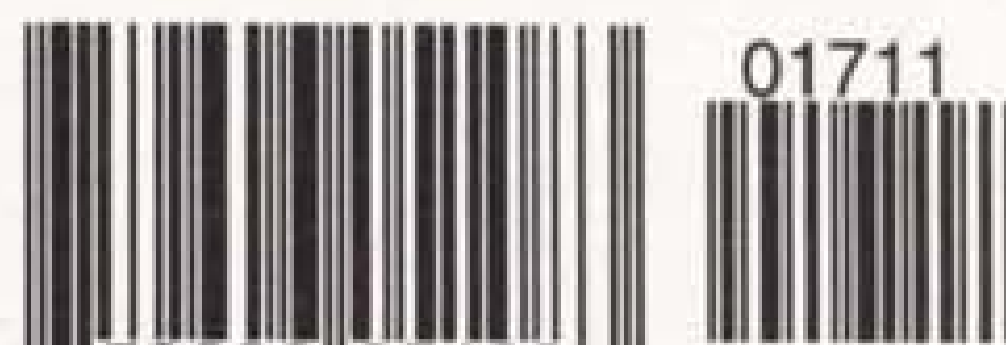
WILD LIFE RESERVE

WINICK

CALAFIORE

CANNON

DIRECT EDITION



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His name is Dr. Curtis Connors. A brilliant surgeon who lost his arm to a war wound.

His career at an end, he turned his sizable intellect towards research.

Connors' area of interest...



He had hopes of tapping into that process and making himself whole again.

He succeeded.

Reptiles.

With a specific focus on understanding the regenerative properties reptiles possess.




It was a personal and professional triumph. Millions would benefit from his discovery.

Millions would know the joy Curtis Connors now felt.




His celebration was short-lived.






The mutagenic qualities of the serum did not end with merely regenerating his missing limb.

It transformed him into a human-like lizard.




Connors had become a hybrid of humanity and the long dead reptilian DNA that lay dormant in all of us.



Oddly, the creature was not without intelligence...

...or desire.

Perhaps it was just instinct.





Much would be hypothesized as to what the motives were of the original Lizard.

Did he transform his wife into a creature like himself out of malicousness? Lonellness?

And why did he infect the Innocent family who lived next door?



Or the entire neighborhood?



Did he know that these new hybrids would have the ability to breed?

Was he aware that females could lay up to thirty eggs every month?



It matters very little now.



That was ten years ago.

Ten years before the entire west coast of the continental United States had become the sole property of the Lizards.

To state the obvious, the Lizards were a problem from the very beginning, but no one would have guessed how rapidly their numbers would swell.

It seemed that with each new generation, they became less human. Compromise was never an option.

By the time a full-scale military strike was deployed, it was too late. The Lizards were overrunning the coastline.

Dozens of major cities were toppled, the death toll rose to nearly three quarters of a million people...

...and two presidencies crumbled.

In the end, the only solution was containment...

...and that's why they built The Wall.

WORLDWIDE RESERVE

JUDD WINICK SCRIBE • J. CALAFIORE PENCILS • ERIC CANNON INKS
TRANSPARENCY DIGITAL COLORS • PAUL TUTRONE LETTERS
MIKE MCKONE COVER • NOVA REN SUMA ASSISTANT
MIKE RAICHT EDITOR • MIKE MARTS TIMEBROKER
JOE QUESADA CHIEF • BILL JEMAS PRESIDENT

SOMEWHERE IN CALIFORNIA...

Not that any of this really matters to the Exiles at the moment.

They were thrown together from different realities to attempt to set right the broken timelines of alternate worlds.

Their continued success will secure each of them a safe return to their true homes.

Does that e#s% Tallus say why it dropped us smack dab in the middle of the iguana equivalent of Mardi Gras?!

Would there have been any harm in teleporting us to a lizzie-free zone?

Today they find themselves attempting to preserve this skewed planet's reality.

Shut up, Morph!

Yeah, yeah-- shut up, Morph! Shut up, Morph!

I didn't send us to the gator country jamboree, Blink.





Mimic--
a little
help!



CEEOCK!



Sasquatch--
Airborne
Delivery!

Gotcha,
boss!



Up ya go!

Much thanks!
Okay, scale faces-- time for us to take our leave of you.





A bomb?
There's a bomb
in here?

That's
what the *Tallus*
says, Sunfire. Big
enough to wipe out
a *huge* chunk of
California. And with
that-- destroying
most of the Lizard
population.

Is that
such a *bad*
thing,
Blink?



I'm not
trying to be all
militaristic, but
look at this
place...

...it's
Jurassic Park
on *Crystal Meth*.
Maybe someone
wants to put the
non-scale-covered
bipeds back at the
top of the food
chain.

I don't
know, Nocturne.
I'm guessing that
they've developed
into a rather peaceful
ecosystem. I think
they're *mostly*
herbivores.

This region
didn't have
enough animal
life to sustain a
carnivorous
diet.



Besides, I don't smell
any *carrion* in the air.
And the Lizard dung
doesn't have a scent
of *meat*.

Wow. You
can tell what folks
ate by smelling their
poop from fifty feet
away? That's *quite*
a talent.



If we *ever* get out of
this, we should make your
excrement respiring
into a show and hit
Vegas.


I don't think
this act is *dinner*
theater but we
could give Sigfried
and Roy some
competition.

Any
idea where
this "bomb"
is supposed
to be?




The *Tallus*
says that we're in
San Diego.

The
bomb is in
the *Bay*.



I didn't say that at *all*, Heather. I was *merely* inquiring if you and your husband had any kind of understanding about dating *outside* of your marriage.


I don't know many *Canadians*, but the ones I do know are a *wild bunch*. Part-*tee* with a capital *Tee*. You ever see *Northstar* after a few *Manhattans*? Forget about it.




Or maybe there was a *moment* in time when you discussed how you'd *satisfy* your basic human *needs* if you were ever separated for a long period of time.

We never *discussed* it, but I'm sure I would have told Jim he would just have to get by with bad hotel cable porn.

And I'm *reasonably* sure, *Uncle Fester*, that he wouldn't have told me I could shack up with an obnoxious, shape-shifting sack of overactive hormones.



Well, *no*, I'm sure he'd never have been *SO* specific, so you'll have to think *creatively*.



You wanna die?

Obviously *not*. If I wanted someone to kill me, I'd be coming on to *Mimic*.

Look. For over a year we've been getting our butts zipped around the merry-go-round of the fractured realities more than J-Lo's magnificent bum whips around the internet--



--and the ol' Morph man has had about as much action as a legless place kicker--

--if you catch my meaning.



No, it was mired in subtlety.

This team is now full of chicks!

Except for me and Chuckles, the power chameleon, we've got nothing but super-powered double X chromosomes. And I was hoping for, well--

--some decent snuggle time.



Snuggle time?



I was trying to be a gentleman.



Blink is with Mimic. Sunfire bats for the other team. And that leaves you. So... So... I was just asking.

A guy's not made of stone. I can be made of stone, or concrete, or most known minerals, but I was referring to my emotional state.

What about me, Morph?



You don't think I'd make a respectable prom date?



No. I thought you were covering the rear and wouldn't hear this, Nocturne. But, once again, I'm an insensitive ass.



It's okay, Morph. You wanted to respect my "mourning". It's cool.

But that aside, I'd have to turn you down.



I don't date white guys. And you are a very white guy.



HAHAHA!

Okay, fine. How about *you*, Mariko? Again, I'm a shape shifter. We can make it work. You like Jennifer Aniston, Sunfire? I can be Jennifer Aniston.



I'm a shape shifter! I can fix that!

Moron.



Don't even start this.

Halle Berry! Lucy Liu! Princess Stephanie! The Vulcan woman from Enterprise!



You've got options, woman, work with me!



Well, that settles it. You and me are creating a code word. Any time you're thinking of kissing me, you have to say it first. That way I know it's *you* and not *Morph*. How about Fettucine? You lean in to plant one on me and speak of pasta.

Sure.



What's with you?



Nothing. I'm just not in the mood for this *idioty*. You should tell Morph to keep his mouth *shut* and get his head in the game.



Really?

Well, we have a long walk left since going airborne brings on those flying Pterodactyl types. Morph lightens the mood.



Wasn't it *you* who taught me when to let everyone blow off steam? "Morale is as important to a successful team as any attack strategy."

Yeah, I suppose.



Cal.



What is it? What's with you? You've been in a funk for weeks.

It's nothing.



Nothing.
Fine. It's
nothing.

We will
talk about
this later.



But I'll
tell you this
much--
--you
are the one
whose head
isn't in the
game. Suck it
up, Mimic. We
need you.



Fine.



Yeah.
Fine.

SAN DIEGO BAY.



We could
better locate
the bomb if we had
a clue. It could be
anywhere in the
Bay. I'm betting
on that ship.

Maybe,
Mimic. I'd like for
us to move in with
something better
than a *hunch*.
We--

Wait, Blink!
I think I've got
something.



There. Around three o'clock. There's a half-sunk submarine.

Why is that significant?



Well, it wasn't the sub that caught my eye.

It's the rowboat tied to it. Is it me or does it seem odd that a giant lizard would paddle out there in that little tub? I think there's someone else on it.



You're probably right. I'll teleport us down to the sub and we can--

SREEECK!

HISSSSSSZZ!



ROAAAARRG!





Hang on! I can still port us out! We'll get down and out before they can follow us.

NO!



We can't give away our location. The team can handle these Lizards. That way they won't get away to alert more. You and I should hit the sub.



He's right, Blink! Go--- we can hold them off.



All right! Be careful!

BLINK!



CAUTION
RADIATION AREA
NO ENTRY
NO ENTRY

I can't smell anything but oil and rust, but someone is here.

Most of the hatches have been pried open. And I'm betting that some of these electrical systems didn't turn themselves on.

Where would the high explosives be on a vessel like this?



I'm guessing way below. Torpedoes and the like.

Then I suppose we--



BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!



Listen... take a look at me... that gun isn't going to hurt me in this state. So, just put it down. Please. I don't want to hurt you...



...Dr. Connors.

Who the hell are you?



We're--
um-- from the
Avengers. We want
to help get you
out of here.

Avengers,
huh? A few new
members would float
in after ten years
I guess...



You're
probably right...
I don't suppose
this could
hurt you.



But if I
blow up this sub-
marine and every-
thing in a *ten mile*
radius, I'm pretty
sure that would
take the paint off
your fenders.

I don't *want*
to do that. I
don't want to hurt
any more people.
I'm just four days
away from putting
an end to all this.



Putting
an end to
what?



This *abomination* I've created.
I became human again about a
year ago. The *Lizards* let me
live. They can still sense the
reptile in me.

The reptile
that gave *birth*
to them all.

It's the *human*
in me that will end
this. This submarine has
nuclear strike capabilities.
I'm going to accomplish
what the government is
too frightened to
attempt.

Several
well-placed nuclear
missiles just off the
coast will destroy
every damned one
of them.



Look...
Curtis... don't
do this...

...the
radiation won't
be contained. It'll
spread to the human
population over
the border. You
could kill *millions*.
That isn't who
you are.



You're
a *Doctor*...
remember...
...you're still a
doctor....



I
am... I
am...

...but
look at
what I've
done...

I used
to... befcre...
I saved people,
y'know. I did...



...what's happened to me... what has become of my life? It wasn't supposed to be like this.

Why? Why did this happen...



...when all I ever wanted to do was help?



I don't know.

But I do know that this won't make it *any* better.





Thank you.

Doctor, we'll escort you across to the barrier wall. The folks on the other side will get you the medical attention that you need.



There's only one thing I need.



BLAM!

Don't!!!





I...
the Tallus...
it says...
...it says
that the timeline
is repaired. We're...
we're going to
leave.



Good.



Cal... you
did everything
you could.



I know.



That's the
problem.

BLOOOONKI!

END.