

The Onset



They were big. They were numerous. They were relentless. They were **worms**. Over the course of eight days, hundreds – nay, *thousands* of them invaded the erstwhile quiet village of Quaylude. Farmer Dinklaker tried to frighten them away with a giant papier-mâché predator robin, but the annelids paid it no heed. The Widow McGillicutty swore a gang of worms broke down her front door, strapped her to a card table, and removed her gall bladder, replacing it with a gizzard and metanephridium, a claim that could not be immediately confirmed. Alonzo thought he detected a new strain of worms in his computer, but that, too, wasn't verifiable. But when Mayor Heebers learned from his counterparts in Lamington, Flederer, and Bung Hollow that hordes of the giant wrigglers had also overrun their towns, he realized that his worst fear had finally come to pass: it was the onset of global worming.