

NOW THAT I UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED... THAT THERE WAS A DEFINITE *PURPOSE* TO IT ALL... IT ONLY MAKES HER EXISTENCE THAT MUCH MORE *HORRIFYING*.



I NEVER IMAGINED IN MY WILDEST DREAMS THERE WAS ANY *METHOD* TO THE CHAIN OF EVENTS LEADING TO MY FINAL PARTING WITH HER. IT WAS ALL SO *SUBTLE*.



EVEN THAT DAY IN THE WOODS, MONTHS AGO, WHEN MY HUNTING TRIP WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE SOFT, PLAINTIVE *SOBBING* SOUNDS... EVEN THAT SEEMED *INNOCENT* OF DESIGN.



THAT WAS THE DAY I FIRST SAW HER *FACE*, FIRST LOOKED INTO HER *EYES*, FIRST HEARD HER *NAME*...

JENIFER

DEAR GOD!



WRIGHTSON



HEY! STOP IT! DROP THE AXE OR I'LL SHOOT!



I'M WARNING YOU! DROP IT!



BLAM



DEAR LORD, I'VE KILLED A MAN! WHY DIDN'T HE LISTEN?!



H--HIS LIPS ARE MOVING... HE'S TRYING TO SPEAK!



J-JENIFER...



HE'S GONE. IT LOOKS AS THOUGH HE WAS THE ONE I HEARD CRYING...



THE GIRL!
I'D BETTER SEE
IF SHE'S ALL RI--
**GOD IN
HEAVEN!**



I'VE NEVER
SEEN ANYTHING
SO **HIDEOUS!**



DEFORMED
OR NOT, NO
CREATURE
DESERVES THIS.

ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT?
DID HE HURT
YOU?



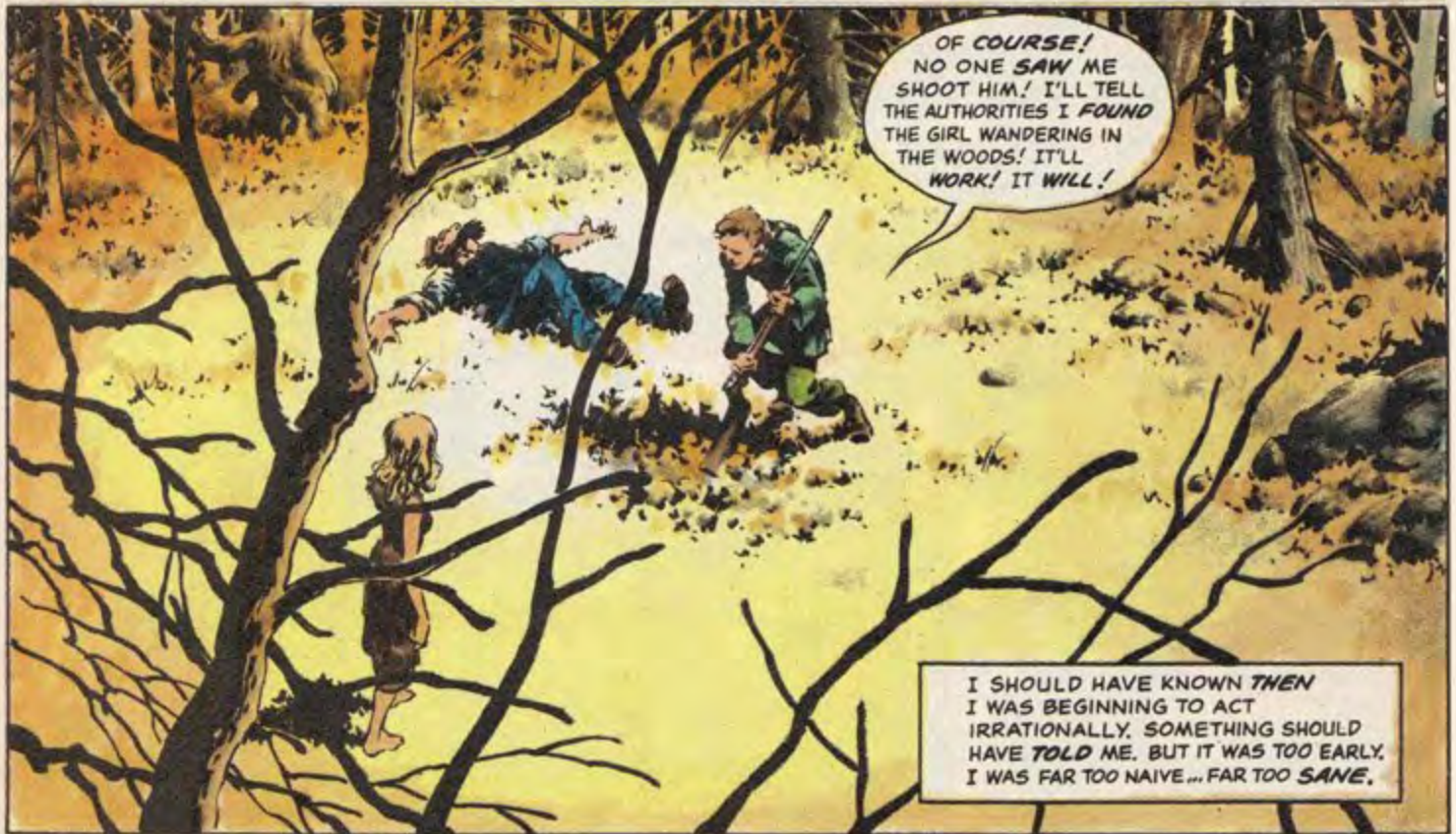
DOESN'T UNDERSTAND A
WORD I SAY... OBVIOUSLY
RETARDED. I'D BETTER
GET HER TO THE
AUTHORITIES.

BUT WHAT
ABOUT
HIM?



I'VE TAKEN A LIFE! EVEN IF I'M CLEARED
IN COURT... WHEN THE **NEWSPAPERS**
GET HOLD OF THIS, IT'LL BE A **SCANDAL!**
MY BUSINESS WILL BE **RUINED!**

OR IS THERE
ANOTHER
WAY?



OF COURSE!
NO ONE **SAW** ME
SHOOT HIM! I'LL TELL
THE **AUTHORITIES** I **FOUND**
THE GIRL WANDERING IN
THE WOODS! IT'LL
WORK! IT WILL!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN **THEN**
I WAS BEGINNING TO ACT
IRRATIONALLY. SOMETHING SHOULD
HAVE **TOLD** ME. BUT IT WAS TOO EARLY.
I WAS FAR TOO NAIVE... FAR TOO **SANE.**

THE AUTHORITIES *DID* BELIEVE ME, AND NO TRACE OF THE GIRL'S PARENTS OR NEXT OF KIN COULD BE FOUND. IT WAS RIGHT AFTER THE JUDGE HAD ANNOUNCED HIS PLANS TO PLACE JENIFER IN AN INSTITUTION THAT I FIRST FELT HER EYES UPON ME... THOSE BLACK, HIDEOUSLY COMPELLING EYES...

WAIT YOUR HONOR! PLEASE... I... I'D LIKE TO APPLY FOR PAPERS TO ADOPT THE GIRL.

YOU WANT TO (CHOKE) ADOPT HER?



I KIDDED MYSELF INTO BELIEVING MADGE AND THE CHILDREN WOULD UNDERSTAND. THERE WAS NO WAY OF SOFTENING THE SHOCK.

MADGE... KIDS... THIS IS JENIFER. SHE'S GOING TO LIVE WITH US!

JIM... GOOD LORD...!

MOMMY, I'M SCARED!



THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WERE A LIVING HELL FOR ALL OF US, EVEN JENIFER-- DESPITE THE HIDEOUS DISTORTIONS--WORE THE AGONY ON HER FACE.

TIMMY, EAT YOUR SUPPER.

I CAN'T! NOT WHILE SHE'S SITTING ACROSS FROM ME!



JIM, YOU'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HER! I DON'T WANT TO SEEM HEARTLESS, BUT SHE'S TEARING APART THE FAMILY!

WHAT CAN I DO, FOR GOD'S SAKE? SHE TRUSTS ME! IT WOULD KILL HER!



BUT IT WAS KILLING ALL OF US, SLOWLY, PAINFULLY. OUR LIVES BECAME AN ENDLESS NIGHTMARE WITH THE STRAIN OF JENIFER'S PRESENCE.

EEEEEEEE

WHAT TH--



SHE BIT ME! THE LITTLE WITCH BIT ME!

YOU LITTLE MONSTER! YOU DISGUSTING LITTLE WRETCH!



MY NIGHTS BECAME RIDDLED WITH *INSOMNIA*. I LOST WEIGHT, GREW HAGGARD.



I MEAN IT THIS TIME, JIM! EITHER YOU GET RID OF HER OR I'M TAKING THE CHILDREN OUT OF HERE.

MADGE... PLEASE!

I TRIED TO FIND ANOTHER HOME FOR JENIFER. I REALLY TRIED! BUT HALFWAY TO THE INSTITUTION, SHE'D BEGIN THAT AWFUL SILENT *PLEADING*... THOSE BULBOUS PROTRUSIONS THAT WERE HER *EYES* WOULD FILL, AND TEARS WOULD START DOWN HER DISTORTED CHEEKS...



JENIFER... DEAR GOD...!



WELL?

I... THEY WERE OVER-CROWDED. I'LL TRY AGAIN TOMORROW...



BUT THE TOMORROW STRETCHED INTO WEEKS, THE WEEKS INTO MONTHS. MADGE AND I WERE BARELY SPEAKING. THE *PRESSURE* WAS UNBEARABLE, THE DAM WAS ABOUT TO BURST...

IF I JUST HAD THE *STRENGTH*... IF I COULD GET RID OF HER WITHOUT LOOKING AT HER...



OH, LORD!



JIM! WHAT IS IT?!

MADGE, STAY BACK... DON'T LOOK!



NO... NO! OH, GOD NO! (CHOKE)

THERE WAS NO POINT IN ASKING MADGE TO RECONSIDER... NO POINT IN EVEN PLEADING. SO I DIDN'T TRY...



YOU LITTLE HORROR. YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, I SWEAR! I'LL GET RID OF YOU SOMEHOW!



BUT I DIDN'T GET RID OF HER. I COULDN'T. EVERYTIME I TRIED, EVERYTIME I THREATENED, SHE'D LOOK UP AT ME WITH THOSE EYES. THEN ONE NIGHT THE SITUATION APPROACHED INSANITY... THE NIGHT SHE CAME TO MY BED...

WHA-- WHAT IS IT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?



WHERE DID YOU GET THAT NIGHT GOWN? OH MY GOD!

THAT'S ONE OF MADGE'S GOWNS! YOU STOLE IT! NO! GET AWAY FROM ME! GET AWAY!

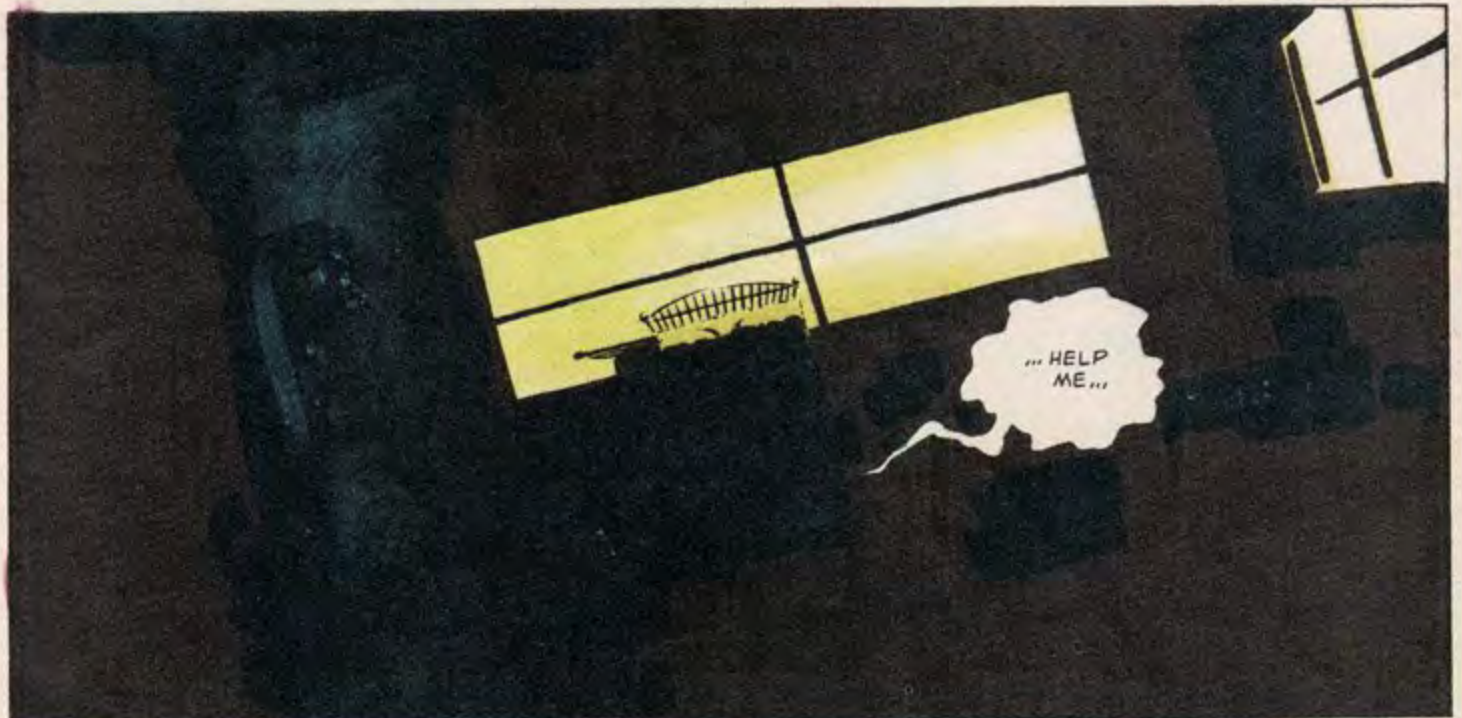


JENIFER, NO! PLEASE!



LORD...! HELP ME... HELP ME...

... HELP ME...



WHAT SPARK OF SANITY WAS LEFT TO ME SCREAMED FOR RELEASE, GRABBED AT ANY AVENUE OF ESCAPE...

WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF FREAKS AND ODDITIES

IS IT A DEAL? WILL YOU TAKE HER?

I DUNNO... THAT'S BREAKING AND ENTERING... I COULD GET IN TROUBLE.

LOOK, IT'S MY HOUSE... I'M NOT GOING TO REPORT YOU! I'LL GIVE YOU THE KEYS! I CAN'T BRING HER HERE MYSELF... SHE... SHE DOESN'T TRUST ME! PLEASE! IT WILL WORK!

WELL...

I STAYED AWAY FROM THE HOUSE FOR THREE DAYS, PRAYING IT WOULD BE DESERTED WHEN I RETURNED. WHEN I FINALLY WENT BACK, THE KEYS WERE IN THE MAILBOX, THE HOUSE...

EMPTY! IT WORKED! I'M FREE OF HER! I'M FREE!

I'LL CALL MADGE! SHE'LL COME BACK... EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY AGAIN! EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE! THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION!

AAAAGGHHH
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

I BURIED THE CARNY MANAGER IN A DESERTED FIELD AND SOLD MY BUSINESS AND THE HOUSE THE NEXT WEEK. JENIFER AND I HIT THE ROAD, NOT BOTHERING TO CHART A ROUTE, RUNNING MINDLESSLY FROM CONSTANTLY PURSUING MEMORIES. LIFE BECAME A SUCCESSION OF SHODDY MOTEL ROOMS...



JENIFER, PLEASE! NOT TONIGHT...

WE FOUND AN ABANDONED FARM HOUSE. I HIT THE BOTTLE, FORGOT ABOUT WORK. EXISTENCE WAS A MUDDIED MONTAGE OF CHEAP WINE, JENIFER'S SLOBBERING LIPS AND CLINGING TALONS, AND LONG, LONELY WALKS AT NIGHT WHEN SHE'D MERCIFULLY SLEEP AND LEAVE ME ALONE.



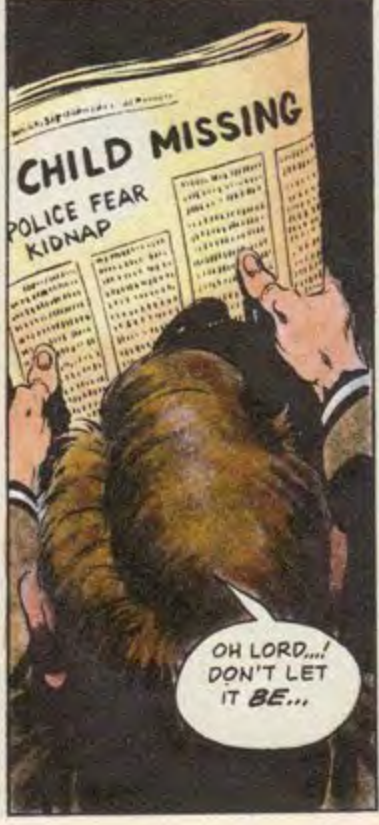
I'LL KILL MYSELF. YES, IT'S THE ONLY ANSWER...



BUT EVEN IN HER SLEEP, JENIFER KEPT HER STRANGE, IRREPRESSIBLE HOLD ON ME. AND EACH NIGHT AFTER MY WALK, I'D FIND A NEW SUPPLY OF ROT GUT MYSTERIOUSLY WAITING FOR MY RETURN. SHE KEPT ME DANGLING ON A SLENDER THREAD OF ALCOHOL...



A PAPER. MAYBE I CAN FIND WORK... PULL MYSELF TOGETHER...



OH LORD...! DON'T LET IT BE...



DON'T LET IT BE!



THEN SOMEHOW WE WERE IN THE WOODS, FAR, FAR FROM OUR HOUSE, FROM ANY HOUSE, AND I WAS TYING JENIFER'S HANDS...



AND I JUST SAT THERE QUIETLY, NOTHING STIRRED. I STARED AT JENIFER AND SHE STARED BACK, FOR HOURS, UNTIL I HEARD THE FOOTSTEPS...



IT WAS THEN I REALIZED HER FULL POWER, HER FULL DEVESTATING POTENTIAL...



I TRIED TO SCREAM MY THROAT WOULDN'T WORK. I CHOKED ON MY TEARS...



JENIFER, PLEASE! PLEASE!

DON'T MAKE ME...

PLEASE!!!



HEY! WAIT!



THERE WAS NO WAY TO EXPLAIN... NO TIME TO EXPLAIN... BARELY THE STRENGTH TO UTTER A FEEBLE WARNING AS HER POWER FADED AND NIGHT CLOSED IN FOREVER...



JENIFER...

The End