

Valerie On The Stairs

A Treatment

Part Four

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In the house, Nancy is at the front door. There are three police officers entering.

The first officer, a man called Moorhead, asks where the shot came from. Nancy, shaking like a leaf, replies that it's somewhere behind the walls, in the crawlspace.

“Where's the door to the crawlspace?”

“I don't know.”

“Well that's useful,” Moorhead snarls, “Spencer, check all the exits. Nobody leaves this place. Lady, I need a list of all your tenants – ”

Back on the stairs. The headless Fiend Child slides out of the mother's corpse and into its brethren below. We hear them go into a feeding frenzy. Then, from the smoky, flickering darkness at the bottom of the stairs, the Fiend speaks.

“Hungry. Hungry. Hungry.”

He emerges from the shadows. At his waist, hanging provocatively from a rope belt in front of his genitals, is a human arm. Given its length he clearly has much to hide.

“Always my children are hungry. And here are you, coming to give yourself to them.”

“I'm not here to be fed to anything.” Rob says. “I'm here – ”

“For Valerie.” the Fiend replies. “Of course you are. And here am I, blocking the way. How's it all going to end? Is it still in your hands, Neely? What's left of them? Or are we...finally free to write our own lives?”

“Or deaths.” Rob says. He steps past the headless corpse, pointing the gun at the Fiend.

“Be careful.” Neely says, staunching his bleeding hand by pressing it under his armpit. “There's more than one – ”

Rob doesn't look round. He keeps the gun leveled at the Fiend.

"More than one *what?*"

"Child per body."

It takes Rob a moment to figure out what he's being told. Then, as he starts to turn –

-- the second Fiend Child slides out of the corpse and wraps around his neck. It has legs, like a millipede, and it digs in deep. Now it's Rob who does the screaming. The pain blinds him for a moment. He fires anyway –

On the stairs the officers are locating the noise. One of them has a fire-axe, the other an extinguisher.

"Here!" says Moorhead.

The two men start to hack and slam at the wood paneling.

Inside, the noise of the police officers comes through the walls, adding to the confusion. Neely is still losing blood. And the other Fiend Child is strangling the life out of Rob.

The Fiend turns his back on Rob.

"Valerie?" the Fiend says. "It's time to go!"

The Fiend Child's head hovers in front of Rob, its jaws open wide. It's going to eat off his face in one bite.

Then, Neely puts his mutilated hand over Rob's head. Blood splashes on the Fiend Child's snout. It is suddenly distracted from Rob's face. It wants to drink from the open wounds.

"Thirsty, you sonofabitch?"

Neely lures the creature away with his blood as bait. It loosens its hold on Rob and starts after Neely. It strikes suddenly, opening its mouth so wide that all of Neely's arm, to the shoulder, disappears inside the beast. Then it closes its jaws. Neely's second scream makes the first one seem inconsequential.

Outside, as the paneling is torn away, Moorhead says:

"What in God's name is going on in there?"

Now Neely is lying on the stairs, his arm gone completely. The blood that spurts from the wound makes the Fiend Children below crazy with hunger. They raise their heads out of the churning morass of bodies, trying to reach him.

Rob glances back at him. The Fiend-Child is on top of him, preparing to eat off Neely's face.

Rob grabs hold of the Fiend Child, but it writhes crazily.

"Leave it. Leave me." Neely says.

The Fiend Child digs deep into the upper half of Neely's face, stripping off the skin. Rob tries to get a bead on the beast as it throws back its head to swallow down the flesh it's just removed. He fires. Hits the creature just behind its head. It lets out an unearthly din.

On the other side of the wall the officers, now sweating and dusty, pause.

"Oh. My. Christ." Moorhead murmurs.

As the sound dies away, Moorhead says:

"Let's get this done!"

Rob fires a second time, and his second shot hits the creature's heart. It bursts open, and drops out of sight. A new feeding frenzy begins below.

“That’s it.” Rob says.

Neely shakes his head. Out of the darkness overhead three more dead women descend, their heads thrashing around the way the first Jane Doe’s head thrashed when she was about to “give birth.”

“Hey! If you can hear me out there – ”

They can. They’re listening. They hear Rob say:

“There’s bodies hanging up everywhere. Stay away from them. They’re cocoons.”

“Crazy!” Moorhead says, “Fucking writers.” Then, to his subordinates: “Well don’t just stand there, open the god-damned wall!”

Rob is doing his best to avoid contact with the bodies, which are already tearing open at their necks. The birth fluid drips onto his face and shoulders. He knows the Fiend Children can’t be far behind. He glances back at Neely, who is still lying on the stairs, pop-eyed, and bleeding to death.

“Remember what you said to me?” Neely murmurs.

He’s barely audible over the chaotic din of the axe and the fire-extinguisher beating through from the other side, and the foul, frenzied noise from the Fiend Children. They are becoming more ambitious by the moment, throwing themselves up out of the darkness to try and snatch hold of Neely, who is slowly slipping into unconsciousness from blood-loss.

Even so, he hangs on long enough to say:

“Remember what you asked me, in my room? Rob? Listen to me.”

Rob is listening, but only just. He's more having to back down the steps as the corpses thrash around more violently than ever. He can hear the snapping of their spines being separated from their skulls. The heads start to be pushed off; the birth fluids pour out, spattering the stairs.

"Can you hear me?" Neely says.

"Only just."

"You asked me why he didn't kill Valerie – "

"What?"

"Valerie. You said why didn't he kill Valerie?"

Rob's getting every fifth word, at most. The heads start to drop. The Fiend Children nose their way out, almost blocking Rob's view of Neely. And now they add their own hissings and teeth snappings to the cacophony. He can see Neely's mouth however. He *sees* him say something, but doesn't *hear* it.

"What?" he yells to Neely.

Again we share Rob's P.O.V. of Neely's lips. *What is he saying?*

He commits the movement of Neely's lips to memory. Then one of the Fiend Children catches hold of him. And another. And another.

We go close to hear him say:

"God forgive me."

Then the Fiend Children pull him off the stairs and he's gone.

"Just you and me now," says the Fiend.

Rob turns. The creature is sitting on a massive throne made of the garbage from the house: a beautiful work of art created from beaten out tin cans and arrays of

thousands of dead pens. Overhead are more dead girls, hanging upside down. And at his feet, with his reptilian tail wrapped possessively around her, is Valerie.

“In the end,” the Fiend continues, “you knew this is how it would end up: you and me, fighting to the death over my beautiful Valerie. You *do* want her, don’t you?” He lightly puts his claws on Valerie’s shoulder. The same dark fluid that ran down the stairs – and back up them again – when Rob first met Valerie, issues forth from his claws now, running with incredible sensuality over her breasts and down over her stomach, heading for her pussy. Her eyes roll up under her fluttering lids as the fluid reaches its destination. The Fiend takes his fingers off her shoulder. Valerie is shuddering, as his fluid induces orgasm after orgasm.

“You like that?”

“...y...y...yes...Oh Christ Almighty...”

The Fiend snarls: “What did you say?”

Valerie’s orgasm is forgotten. She suddenly looks afraid.

“Don’t use that name in my presence!”

“I’m sorry. It just slipped out. It was feeling so good – ”

“*So you called on Christ?*”

The Fiend stands up. The light in his Hell-Hole moves as though it’s responding to the Fiend’s will, constantly transforming the way the Fiend looks. Right now it moves beneath his face, throwing a vast shadow up onto the wall, and making him look like an Expressionist nightmare. This is the only source of light down there, and it’s never still through the full length of the following scene.

“I will not hear that wretched name in this place!” the Fiend yells. He pulls Valerie to her feet. “Why would you hurt my heart that way?”

“You have no heart.” she says.

The Fiend throws her against the wall.

“Leave her alone!” Rob yells.

“Or what? You don’t have what it takes to kill me and you know it. I can do whatever I like to her and that little gun of yours isn’t going to stop me.” As he speaks his tail, that long slimy reptilian tail of his, appears between his legs and its tip traces its way up Valerie’s body, leaving a trail of sticky residue on her stomach, her breasts, her neck...

And, of course, it pushes its way into her mouth, despite her desperate attempts to deny it entry. Down into her throat it goes, while she sobs helplessly.

It’s too much for Rob. He comes on down the rest of the stairs firing. He hits the Fiend’s arm, torso and finally, head.

The Fiend shrieks. It is a sound such as we have never heard before: Pain, rage, anguish, fear: all of it is in that long, long scream. The Fiend pulls the tip of his tail out of Valerie’s mouth. Then he turns on Rob. Its face is pure hatred now, its lips curled back, its teeth snapping together. Blood runs from the bullet-wounds, but only the one in his head seems to trouble him. He shakes his head now and again like a dog with a flea in its ear.