

WITCHBLADE

#179



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YEAR, THIS IS WHY I GOT INTO POLICE WORK...



...SO I COULD BE CALLED OUT TO A FARM AT THREE IN THE MORNING AND STEP IN COW SHIT.



AT LEAST WE'RE GETTING SOME FRESH AIR, RIGHT, SHERIFF?



SO, UH... WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT FRESH AIR, ROONEY?

MY GOD...

...I THINK
I JUST ATE
MY LAST
HAMBURGER
EVER.





I'M NOT EVEN SURE HOW MANY OF THEM THERE ARE. THREE...



...FOUR?
THREE AND TWO EXTRA LEGS?

FOUR, I THINK.



I'M A CITY GIRL, SO MY EXPERIENCE WITH SLAUGHTERED LIVESTOCK IS EXACTLY ZIP. WHAT ARE WE THINKING HERE?

WOLF?

COYOTE?



ALIEN ABDUCTION?

FIRST THE CATTLE MUTILATIONS, THEN THE ANAL PROBES? NO THANKS.

MY UNCLE HAS A DAIRY FARM. ONCE IN A WHILE COYOTES WOULD TRY TO TAKE DOWN A CALF, BUT NOT ADULTS LIKE THIS. SO I THINK WE RULE OUT COYOTE.

AND THERE HASN'T BEEN A WOLF SEEN IN SARATOGA COUNTRY IN DECADES.





WHEN MY UNCLE LOST CATTLE, IT WAS ALMOST ALWAYS A MOUNTAIN LION. ONCE IN A WHILE, A BIG CAT COMES THROUGH AND PULLS DOWN A REIFER FOR A MEAL...

BUT THIS DOESN'T SEEM HUNGRY...

...THIS SEEMS PISSED OFF.

COME CHECK THIS OUT, ROONEY.



I CAN TELL YOU WHAT RAT TRACKS LOOK LIKE, BUT I'M A LITTLE OUT OF MY DEPTH ON THIS. IS THIS YOUR MOUNTAIN LION, ROONEY?

DON'T LOOK AT ME, I CAN'T TELL A CAT FROM DOG. BUT IF THAT'S A MOUNTAIN LION...



...IT'S A DAMN BIG ONE.



WE CAN GET WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OUT HERE IN THE MORNING. THEY'LL BE ABLE TO TELL US EXACTLY WHAT THAT IS...



...MAYBE TAKE SOME CASTS IF THERE ARE ANY OTHER IMPRESSIONS LEFT.

MORE THAN LIKELY IT'S A TRANSIENT CAT, MOVING THROUGH THE AREA, HEADED UP TO THE ADIRONDACKS.



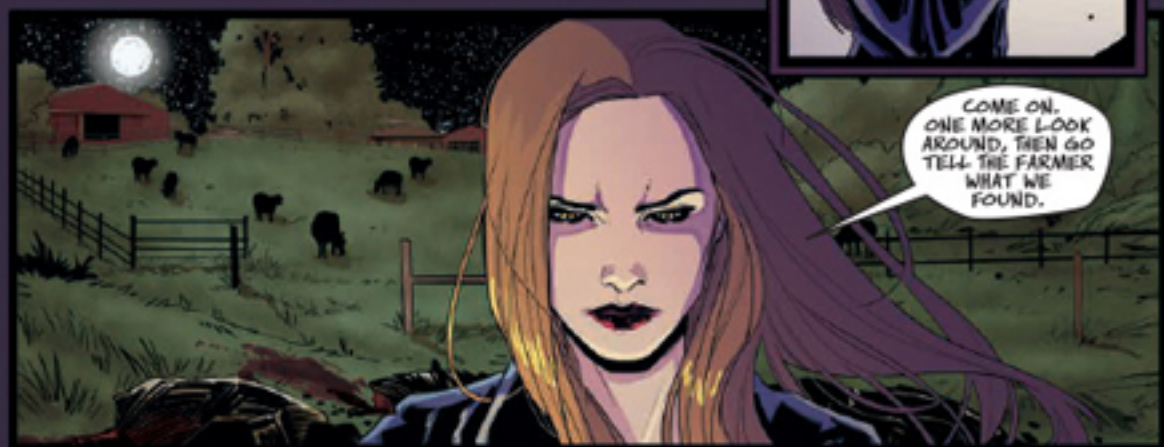
AND I GUESS THERE'S THE OTHER POSSIBILITY.

WHICH IS...?

YOU SAID YOUR FRIEND THERE IS A MAGNET FOR WEIRD SHIT. THIS KINDA QUALIFIES.



SOME DEAD COWS? I DON'T THINK I'M READY TO MAKE THAT LEAP YET.



COME ON. ONE MORE LOOK AROUND, THEN GO TELL THE FARMER WHAT WE FOUND.



AT LEAST HE'LL BE ABLE TO GET SOME SLEEP.





IT'S A WOLF, ALL RIGHT...



...BIGGER THAN MOST I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.

WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT, RANGER REYNOLDS? GO WANDERING AROUND IN THE WOODS AND HOPE WE SEE IT?



PLEASE, JUST RICK IS FINE.

"RANGER RICK." SERIOUSLY?

BELIEVE ME, I'VE HEARD 'EM ALL.



SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS APT TO BE DENIED UP DURING THE DAY, ONLY MOVING AROUND AT NIGHT. YOU'RE BETTER OFF IN A TREE STAND.

SO SIT IN A TREE ALL-NIGHT?

WELL, I'D BE HAPPY TO COME OUT AND SIT UP IN THE STAND WITH YOU.



I'LL LET YOU KNOW, RICK.

DO THAT, SHERIFF.

THAT WAS A NICE OFFER...



PEZZINI!