

Abducted

Sunday, August 13, 1972 - He waited east of the intersection of Harris and Riverside roads. Albert Doer would take a right turn there, heading to Abbotsford. He would glance left, just long enough to make sure there was no oncoming traffic, then pull out. He wouldn't notice a white panel van parked on the shoulder about two hundred yards away. Why should he? Albert had no reason to suspect anything. Besides, by the time they got around to reporting what was about to happen the Doers wouldn't remember a detail so inconsequential. And if they did? There were thousands of white panel vans in the Lower Mainland. This one would be scrap.

Frank inhaled and exhaled slowly. On the brink of the unthinkable he felt more alive than ever, fed off the monstrous energy of his plan.

"Oh! What a feeling; what a rush!" The lyrics came to him out of the blue. He winced, hated Rock n' Roll and everything the song stood for. But you couldn't control what the brain connected to, and he had to admit the music expressed his state of mind pretty well. It was the type of song Crystal Doer would be listening to, he guessed. That's why it had come to him. Maybe it was being broadcast that very moment by one of the Vancouver radio stations polluting the airwaves with their smut. Maybe Crystal was tuned in, lying on her stomach, on her bed, letting its rhythms infect her.

Frank grunted, rested his head against the steering wheel, concentrating. Her last few times at church she had pouted like an underpaid harlot. Then stopped attending altogether. And the Doer's *let her get away with it*. They were sinners. Worse sinners than Crystal. Hadn't they allowed her to inhale the contaminating dust of Sodom and Gomorra, still circling the globe?

"Good fruit can spring from crooked limbs." he muttered.

Suddenly there they were! The Doers followed his script exactly. Albert stopped, glanced left, then turned right. Crystal, as expected, was not in the car. She would not be going to church that day.

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She didn't mean to make her parents angry; but couldn't help it either. The shudder of the front door slamming still echoed through the empty house. Crystal wanted to care, wanted to stop the hurt in her father's eyes. But the devil had got into her. That's how her parents saw it. She winced. *Christian crap*, she called their lectures. They went on and on and on about how much they loved her, God loved her, Jesus loved her...

"Stop it!" she shouted.

The house absorbed her tantrum. God, how she hated the place. Its walls, plush carpets and chintzy furniture absorbed her outrage as effectively as a padded cell, where she was forced to breathe in a middle-class miasma of freshened air, lingering tendrils of her mother's perfume, shoe polish – the atmosphere was cloying, but Crystal couldn't leave. Not yet. And that made her even angrier.

Beau padded up to the sofa and prodded her with his moist, rubbery nose. He placed his head on her stomach and she stroked his chocolate brown fur mindlessly. At least there was one being in the Doer household everyone loved unconditionally. It was so easy to love Beau. "Nobody expects you to be perfect," she said, patting him. "You already are, I guess." His irrepressible tale banged against the coffee table, a drumbeat of affection. He'd sensed her sadness, knew instinctively what to do.

The sound of an approaching vehicle disturbed them. Beau woofed uncertainly, trotting over to the living room window.

"Shit!" Crystal complained. Her parents must have had second thoughts. They'd come back. They were going to argue with her some more. Make her go to church. "No way," she muttered fiercely, closing her eyes against them.

Beau woofed again, louder. Then he let loose a long string of loud barks that merged into a sort of howl. Alarmed, Crystal bolted off the sofa and hurried over to the living-room window. "What's wrong?" she said, peeking out through the chink in the curtains. A white van had backed into their drive. She didn't recognize the vehicle, but when the driver's door sprang open, she did recognize Mr. Umbach from church. *What does he want?* Crystal grimaced.

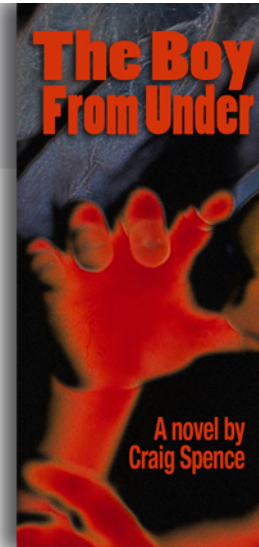
She didn't like Umbach. *Creep!* You could tell he was thinking you naked whenever he looked at you, and judging you at the same time. He was nothing but an old lecher, disguised as a scrubbed Christian. There were others like him at church, but he was the

worst of the old goats. For a second she thought of hiding, pretending she wasn't in. He'd think she'd gone with her parents. But he caught a glimpse of her at the window, and waved stiffly. She'd have to open the door, explain that her parents had already left. No doubt he'd be wondering why she wasn't with them. Why had he come to their house? It didn't make any sense. His rap at the door cut short Crystal's uneasy thoughts.

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