

“What can be said about Jen Holzer that the world doesn’t already know? World-renowned lepidopterist and subject of this month’s Vanity Fair cover story—‘Kate’s Confidante: How a Swarthmore undergrad’s love advice forever altered the British Monarchy and the EU’s future’—her current paper “Really little butterflies: flutterings of color amid fourth and fifth dimension subatomic particles” debuts next week at the Museum of Natural History’s Semiotics and Semites conference. But what most don’t know is that she wasn’t always ‘Jen Holzer.’

No, it wasn’t too many years ago that Jen was known simply as Bunny, daytime waitress at Earl’s Bar-be-cue out on Iowa’s Highway 40, which at night transformed into Earls’ Brawl-be-cue, which is where her story really takes place. You see, Bunny, as her name suggests, was a lover of animals. But Earl was hard up for cash. The tweekers and corn haulers who frequented Earl’s for the \$1.99 patty melts were always looking for a little more excitement to make them forget about the desperately lonely night that lay out ahead of them on the open road, but others had already tried and failed with cat houses and poker joints, “But what about wrestling,” Earl said to Bunny when she was counting up her meager tips as the fry cook swept the floor one night. Bunny was already suspicious of Earl’s motives, and he knew this, so he cut to the chase—“with animals.” “Earl—you ain’t touchin the hair of a tiger while I got anything to say.” “That’s why I’m leaving you in charge.” “Huh?” And it was with that simple “Huh?” that Earl heard as “Uh-huh” as in “Yes” that Bunny soon found herself lined up to wrestle a bear—an ex-circus bear named Carl. Carl knew the routine, but he had his pride too. In the opening of the match, they both fumbled around and Bunny, not wanting to hurt the bear pretended to go down. Carl however wouldn’t take the simple win and gave a slightly rough nudge to Bunny’s backside that unbeknownst to ‘Carl the Snarl’ triggered an old memory of being taken advantage in high school. Bunny, vastly unaware of her own strength and her Scorpio transformative power, pounced upon the bear, so much so that she pinned him down; the loss broke his spirit. These days you can find him occasionally doing voice-overs for the national forestry service (“Only you can prevent forest fires.”) But the defeat ultimately took its hardest toll on Bunny who vowed never to harm another animal again. Her doctor sent her to a Costa Rican butterfly preserve where she fell in love with a native who encouraged her doctoral pursuits. And the rest, well, is history.”

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Michael