

VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

THE  
**SANDMAN**  
 DISTANT MIRRORS



**T**HERMIDOR

by  
 NEIL GAIMAN  
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 SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

JUNE 28th, 1794.  
WYCH CROSS, ENGLAND.



You are Lady Johanna Constantine, are you not?

SIR! I WILL CALL FOR THE SERVANTS--

Your servants sleep, Milady. But we are old friends, you and I.

We met in a tavern, Johanna, five years gone.



WHO'S WHO'S THERE?

At the time you a believed me a demon. Have you learned differently since?

YES I HAVE. IF-- IF YOU ARE WHO I THINK YOU ARE.



I am.

THEN WHAT WOULD YOU WITH ME... SIR?

There is a task I need accomplished. I... I cannot involve myself directly in the matter. It is a family affair...

SO YOU NEED A MORTAL AGENT?



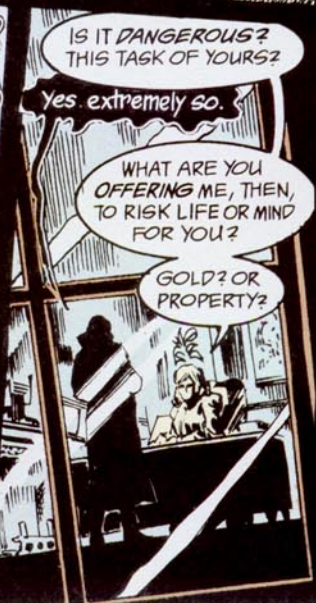
Yes.

IS IT DANGEROUS? THIS TASK OF YOURS?

Yes extremely so.

WHAT ARE YOU OFFERING ME, THEN, TO RISK LIFE OR MIND FOR YOU?

GOLD? OR PROPERTY?



No, milady. Birth has blessed you with a surplus of both; and I have neither.

THEN WHAT?

I will give you what it is in my power to give you, Lady Johanna Constantine.



THEN...

THEN I AGREE.

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DC COMICS  
A DIVISION OF WARNER BROS.—A TIME WARNER ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY

PARIS, FRANCE.

JULY 24th, 1794.

OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR:  
6th THERMIDOR, YEAR II.



STOP RIGHT  
THERE, CITIZENNESS.  
YOU ARE OUT VERY  
LATE, ARE YOU  
NOT?



WHERE ARE YOU  
GOING, HE IN?



AND WHAT  
DO YOU HAVE  
IN THAT SACK, EH,  
CITIZENNESS?

I HAVE A ROOM IN AN INN,  
HERE IN MONTMARAT,  
CITIZENS. AND I HAVE  
NOTHING IN THIS SACK  
THAT WOULD INTEREST  
YOU.

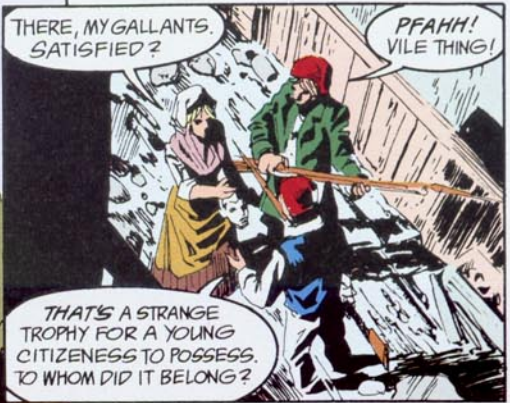


IT'S A HUNGRY BUSINESS, THIS. WE HAVE  
BEEN HOPING THAT SOME FOOD WOULD  
PASS BY THAT WE COULD LIBERATE--  
A HAM, PERHAPS, OR A CABBAGE.



OPEN THE  
SACK.





THE POOR LITTLE THING TOOK LEAVE OF HER SENSES FOLLOWING HER ORDEAL. LAST WINTER SHE HANGED HERSELF.

WHEN I HEARD THAT THIS MONSTER HAD BEEN BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, I WALKED TO PARIS, AND I... PERSUADED MONSIEUR SANSON TO GIVE ME HIS HEAD.



I WILL TAKE IT BACK TO MY VILLAGE, WHERE MY POOR OLD MOTHER WAITS FOR ME.

AND I WILL SHOW IT TO HER, AND SHE WILL SPIT IN ITS ROTTEN ARISTO FACE-- LIKE THIS!



TTUU!



AND THEN I WILL PLACE IT ON LITTLE ANNE-CLAIRE'S GRAVE.

AND I WILL LEAVE IT TO ROT.

HAHAHAHH  
HAHAHAH!



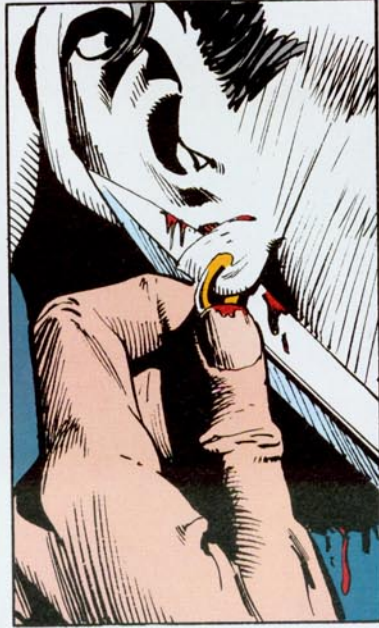
GUILLAUME, LET HER BE. SHE'S A MADWOMAN, A GHOUL.

LET HER BE? HMPH--YOUR EYES ARE AS DULL AS YOUR WITS, MICHEL.



COME HERE, MY PRETTY. COME MORE CLOSE TO GUILLAUME.

I WISH TO INSPECT YOUR HEAD MORE CLOSELY.



THIS WILL BUY MANY HAM-HOCKS, MANY CABBAGES, AND MANY BOTTLES OF WINE.

THANK YOU A THOUSAND TIMES, MY PRETTY. THE NEXT TIME YOU HAVE TREASURE TO DONATE TO THE PEOPLE, PLEASE, COME DOWN THIS ROAD ALSO.



EH, GUILLAUME. WHY DO I EVER DOUBT YOU?

BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOTHING BETWEEN YOUR EARS BUT FEATHERS AND CHICKEN-DROPPINGS, MY FRIEND.

E OHH, ÇA IRA, ÇA IRA, ÇA IRA, ÇA IRA, LES ARISTOCRATES À LA LANTERNE...





IT CANNOT BE HELPED. THE EARRING WILL BRING HIM NOTHING BUT MISERY, AND EVENTUALLY IT WILL COME BACK TO ME. IT HAS BEEN STOLEN BEFORE NOW...



FRANKLY, MADAME, I AM MORE CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT THEY WILL SAY TO THEIR SUPERIORS.

THE WORD WILL BE OUT SOON TO LOOK FOR A YOUNG WOMAN WITH A HEAD.



WITH TWO HEADS, SIR.



YES. WITH TWO HEADS.

WE CAN'T GET OUT OF PARIS UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING, WHEN THE CITY GATES ARE OPENED...

DAMN ME FOR A FOOL, SIR. I WISH THEY HAD NOT SEEN YOU.



BUT THEY HAVE, MILADY.

AND WE MUST THINK FAST, ELSE WE ARE BOTH AS GOOD AS LOST.



AYE, MASTER ORPHEUS. WELL, THEY DO SAY THAT TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE.

IT'S NO GOOD, CAPTAIN. IT IS NOT HERE.

I SEE.



WHERE HAVE YOU HIDDEN IT? HEIN?

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT.

CITIZENESS BONCHANCE. WE KNOW THAT YOU HAD IN YOUR POSSESSION A... A SOMETHING. WHERE HAVE YOU HIDDEN IT?

TALK TO US, MY LITTLE CABBAGE, OR MADAME GUILLOTINE WILL STILL YOUR TONGUE FOR-EVER.

THE CROWD WILL SING THE CARMAGNOLE AS YOUR FACE TUMBLES INTO THE BASKET.

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT.

TALK! OR I'LL EAT YOUR BRAINS AND SHIT IN YOUR SKULL...

WHERE IS SHE? WHERE ARE THEY?



AH. CAPTAIN. GOOD DAY.

CITIZEN ST. JUST. I...I... GOOD DAY...

WELL? HAVE YOU FOUND IT YET?

NOT YET. BUT LEAVE ME AND A MAN ALONE WITH HER FOR HALF AN HOUR AND SHE WILL SING LIKE A NIGHTINGALE, I PROMISE YOU.



YES. YOU WOULD ENJOY THAT, WOULDN'T YOU?

BUT NO, I AM AFRAID NOT, MY FRIEND. YOU AND YOUR MEN STAY HERE. SEARCH THE NEIGHBORHOOD. KEEP SEARCHING.



THE LADY, ON THE OTHER HAND, COMES WITH ME.

BUT-- M. ST. JUST, MY ORDERS ARE--



DO YOU WISH TO DEBATE THIS WITH THE COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, CAPTAIN?

BECAUSE IF YOU DO, I DO NOT DOUBT THE REVOLUTION WILL CONTINUE WITHOUT YOU.



I DID NOT MEAN... YOUR PARDON, CITIZEN, I...

PLEASE-- TAKE HER. WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEARCH.

PLEASE YOUR PARDON.





WHERE ARE WE GOING, THEN?

YOU ARE GOING TO THE LUXEMBOURG, LADY.

I THOUGHT YOU KEPT THE LUXEMBOURG FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS.

NOT FOR POOR COUNTRY GIRLS, UNJUSTLY ACCUSED OF STEALING SOMETHING-- I KNOW NOT WHAT.



BUT M. ROBESPIERRE TELLS ME YOU ARE NO COUNTRY GIRL. AND M. ROBESPIERRE KNOWS MANY THINGS.

STILL, REST ASSURED, CITIZENESS, YOU WILL NOT STAY IN THE LUXEMBOURG LONG...



AFTER ALL, THE LAW OF PRAIRIAL GIVES BUT TWO VERDICTS FOR THOSE WHO TROUBLE THE STATE: THERE IS ACQUITTAL, OR THERE IS DEATH.

YES. THE SAME LAW THAT EXCUSES THE COMMITTEE FROM HEARING ANY DEFENSE EVIDENCE, M. ST. JUST.



LIBERTY IS A BITCH WHO MUST BE BEDDED ON A MATTRESS OF CORPSES.

IS THAT ORIGINAL, LOUIS-ANTOINE?

PERHAPS, JEANNE. ROBESPIERRE THINKS YOU ARE A SPY AND A THIEF.

MM. WHAT DO YOU THINK?



I THINK I WAS VERY FOOLISH TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU. FORTUNATELY ST. JUST IS ABOVE LOSING HIS HEAD OVER A WOMAN.

LOUIS. YOU COULD LET ME GO.

JUST TELL THE DRIVER TO TURN HIS HEAD, AND YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE TO SEE ME AGAIN.



JEANNE, I WILL HATE TO SEE YOUR PRETTY RED BLOOD SPATTER THE SHRIVELLED OLD TRICOTEUSES, AS THEY KNIT--KNIT--KNIT BENEATH THE GUILLOTINE...

BUT YOU SEE, MY PRETTY, I AM A REALIST. I BELIEVE NOTHING.



BUT M. ROBESPIERRE IS A VISIONARY: HE BELIEVES. HE TRULY BELIEVES.

AND IF I BETRAYED HIM... MM. THEN ST. JUST WOULD LOSE HIS HEAD OVER A WOMAN.





WHAT I WROTE THEN IS STILL TRUE.

BUT YOU HAVE *PERVERTED* THE SPIRIT OF REVOLUTION -- TWISTED IT, MIRRORED IT INTO SOMETHING FOUL AND PROFANE.



THIS IS FRANCE'S REVOLUTION, PAINE. WE DO NOT NEED FOREIGNERS MEDDLING IN OUR AFFAIRS.

FRANCE FLIES THE FLAG OF LIBERTY, AND CITIZEN ROBESPIERRE IS OUR STANDARD-BEARER.



AYE, AND YOU'RE HIS LAP DOG.

WELL, WHEN HE IS TOPPLED, AS ALL TYRANTS MUST TOPPLE YOU WILL FALL WITH HIM, ST. JUST. AND THAT IS A COMFORT TO ME.



HMM. WOMAN-- YOUR FACE SEEMS FAMILIAR TO ME. HAVE WE MET BEFORE? IN AMERICA, PERHAPS? OR IN ENGLAND?

I GET AROUND, M'SIEU. YOU KNOW HOW IT IS.



WE MUST GO. WE HAVE WASTED ENOUGH TIME, AND I HAVE MUCH WORK TO DO.

COME.



HE WAS MEANT TO HAVE BEEN GUILLOTINED LAST QUINTIDI. SOME FOOL ERASED THE MARK ON HIS DOOR THAT SHOULD HAVE TOLD THE GUARD TO TAKE HIM.

BUT PAINE WILL NOT LIVE TO SEE THE END OF THERMIDOR.



THE AMERICANS WILL BE AS PLEASED TO SEE HIM DEAD AS OURSELVES. PAINE IS USEFUL AS A RABBLE-ROUSER; BUT RABBLE-ROUSERS ARE NEEDED BEFORE REVOLUTIONS, NOT AFTER.

IN HERE, MY LITTLE ONE.



WILL YOU KILL ALL THE POETS, THEN, ST. JUST? WILL YOU KILL ALL THE DREAMERS?

WHEN THEY HAVE SERVED THEIR PURPOSE, YES.

FABRE D'EGLANTINE DEVISED OUR CALENDAR, AND HE DIED WITH DANTON LAST GERMINAL.



GOODBYE, JEANNE. WHOEVER YOU ARE.

I FEAR THAT I WILL NOT SEE YOU AGAIN; BUT THEN, THIS IS SOMETHING I HAVE BY NOW ACCUSTOMED MYSELF TO, AND I DO NOT ALLOW IT TO TROUBLE ME.

# THERMIDOR

FROM THE JOURNALS OF LADY JOHANNA  
CONSTANTINE, VOL. II [MAY 1793 - JAN 1794].  
(BRITISH LIBRARY SEALED SHELVES: C. n110.d58).

Thus it was I found myself immured in the Palace of Luxembourg. My Plight was not cheerful, and in my Younger Days I might perhaps have dropt a few Tears in the Tumult of my Senses; but I had been hardened by the Years, and was content to wait.

It is forever a matter of Amusement to me what trifling Consolations the Mind will seize upon, in Times of Misery. Myself, I sought Refuge at this Extremity in tabulating what I had so far accomplished.



I had cross the Channel without Incident; and I had, with Ease, made the acquaintance of Louis St. I — As I have remarked earlier in these Journals, those who consider themselves the Stronger Sex are, in many matters, more tractable than Children, when their Passions are to be Gratified.



In short, Men have a Fond of Bullibility, and (as my readers must by now have gathered) one I have never shrank from Exploiting when it met my Purpose.

St. I — impudently told me the whereabouts of my quarry, little realising to whom he spoke; thus it was not long before I had betaken myself to the Crypt, and gained myself of what I sought.

Where there is Life, there also is Hope, they say.



MADMOISELLE, YOU WATCH OUR LITTLE PUPPET SHOW. IT IS AMUSING, IS IT NOT?

But my Death waited for me then, in the Place de la Revolution, at the edge of a Weighted Blade; and at that Time, and in that Place, I could foresee no way to avoid It.

NOW, LET ME SEE. YOUR NAME IS *NOT* JEANNE BONCHANCE. IT IS JOHANNA CONSTANTINE. YOU ARE THE ONLY CHILD OF LORD GEORGE AND LADY HARRIET CONSTANTINE; YOUR TWIN SISTER DIED SOON AFTER YOUR BIRTH.

POPULAR RUMOR HAS IT THAT YOUR TRUE FATHER WAS SIR FRANCES DASHWOOD, OF THE SO-CALLED MEDMENHAM MONKS. YOU ARE 32.

YOU SPEAK PERFECT FRENCH. BUT THEN, YOU ARE THE PROTEGÉ OF THE SO-CALLED CHEVALIER D'EON, EXILE, SPY AND ENEMY OF FRANCE. AND HE--OR SHE--HAS TAUGHT YOU WELL.

D'EON TAUGHT YOU FRENCH. TAUGHT YOU SOMETHING OF ESPIONAGE. AND, IF THESE REPORTS ARE TO BE BELIEVED, TAUGHT YOU THE ART OF SUCCESSFULLY CROSS-DRESSING.

YOU HAVE BEEN POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS THE YOUNG ENGLISH CAPTAIN INVOLVED IN THE THEFT OF CERTAIN PAPERS FROM THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL COURT IN 1786.

YOU WERE CERTAINLY INVOLVED IN THE SLAVE SCANDAL IN LOUISIANA THREE YEARS AGO. YOU WERE ALSO IN EGYPT, WHERE YOU NARROWLY ESCAPED BEING STRANGLERD AS A WITCH.

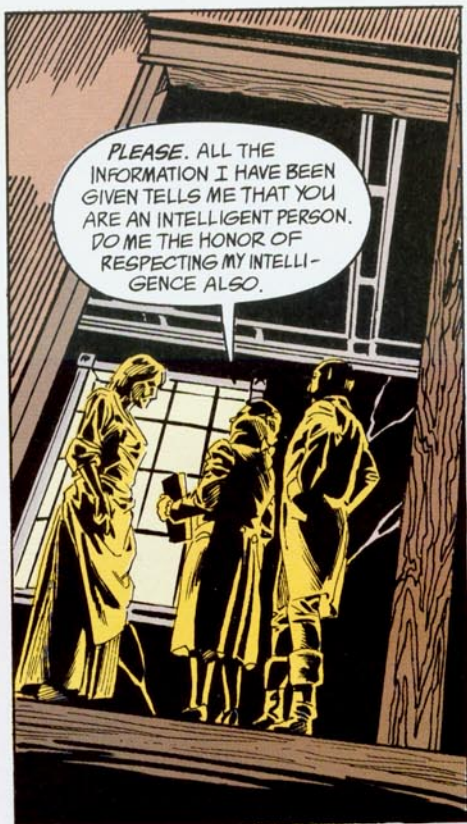
YOU ARE NOW IN POSSESSION OF SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE. AN OBJECT OF SUPERSTITION AND DECADENCE. I WANT IT BACK; MADemoiselle CONSTANTINE.

YOU HAVE NEVER MARRIED.

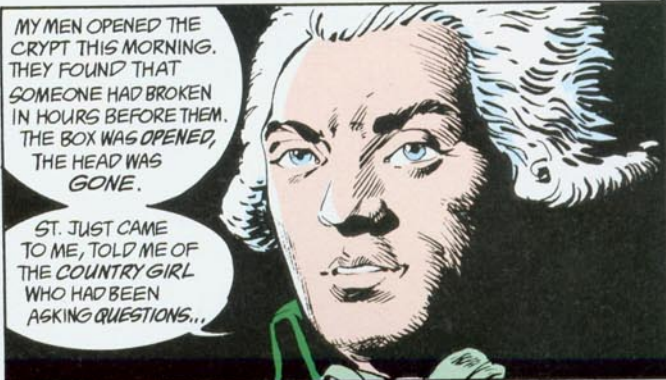


GOOD DAY, CITIZEN ROBESPIERRE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

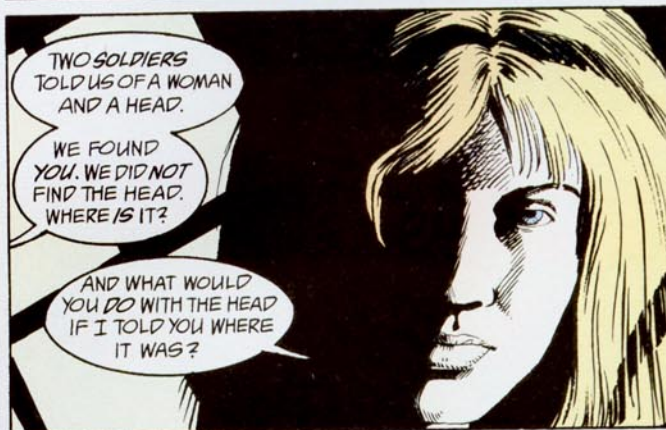


PLEASE. ALL THE INFORMATION I HAVE BEEN GIVEN TELLS ME THAT YOU ARE AN INTELLIGENT PERSON. DO ME THE HONOR OF RESPECTING MY INTELLIGENCE ALSO.



MY MEN OPENED THE CRYPT THIS MORNING. THEY FOUND THAT SOMEONE HAD BROKEN IN HOURS BEFORE THEM. THE BOX WAS OPENED, THE HEAD WAS GONE.

ST. JUST CAME TO ME, TOLD ME OF THE COUNTRY GIRL WHO HAD BEEN ASKING QUESTIONS...



TWO SOLDIERS TOLD US OF A WOMAN AND A HEAD.

WE FOUND YOU. WE DID NOT FIND THE HEAD. WHERE IS IT?

AND WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH THE HEAD IF I TOLD YOU WHERE IT WAS?



I WOULD DESTROY IT UTTERLY. AND I WILL.



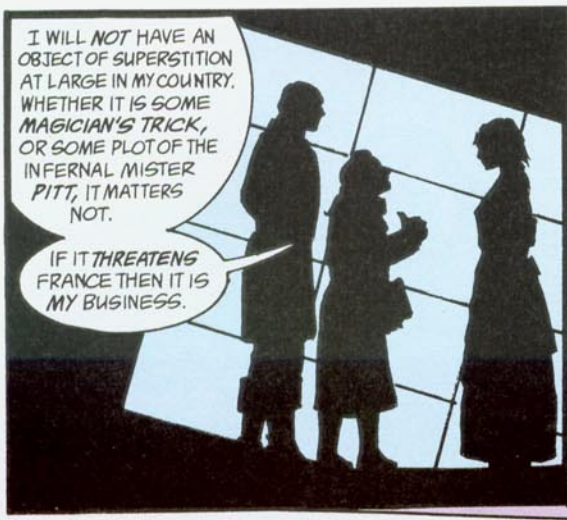
WE ARE REMAKING THE WORLD, WOMAN; WE ARE CREATING AN AGE OF PURE REASON. WE HAVE TAKEN THE NAMES OF DEAD GODS AND KINGS FROM THE DAYS OF THE WEEK AND THE MONTHS OF THE YEAR.

WE HAVE LOST THE SAINTS AND BURNT THE CHURCHES.



I MYSELF HAVE INAUGURATED A NEW RELIGION, BASED ON REASON, CELEBRATING AN EGALITARIAN SUPREME BEING, DISTANT AND UNINVOLVED.

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?



I WILL NOT HAVE AN OBJECT OF SUPERSTITION AT LARGE IN MY COUNTRY. WHETHER IT IS SOME MAGICIAN'S TRICK, OR SOME PLOT OF THE INFERNAL MISTER PITT, IT MATTERS NOT.

IF IT THREATENS FRANCE THEN IT IS MY BUSINESS.



SO I HAVE SEEN. YOU WILL SAVE FRANCE, IF YOU HAVE TO KILL EVERY CHILD, WOMAN AND MAN IN THE COUNTRY TO DO IT.

TELL ME, LITTLE CITIZEN, HAVE YOU EVER SLEPT WITH A WOMAN? OR WITH A MAN?



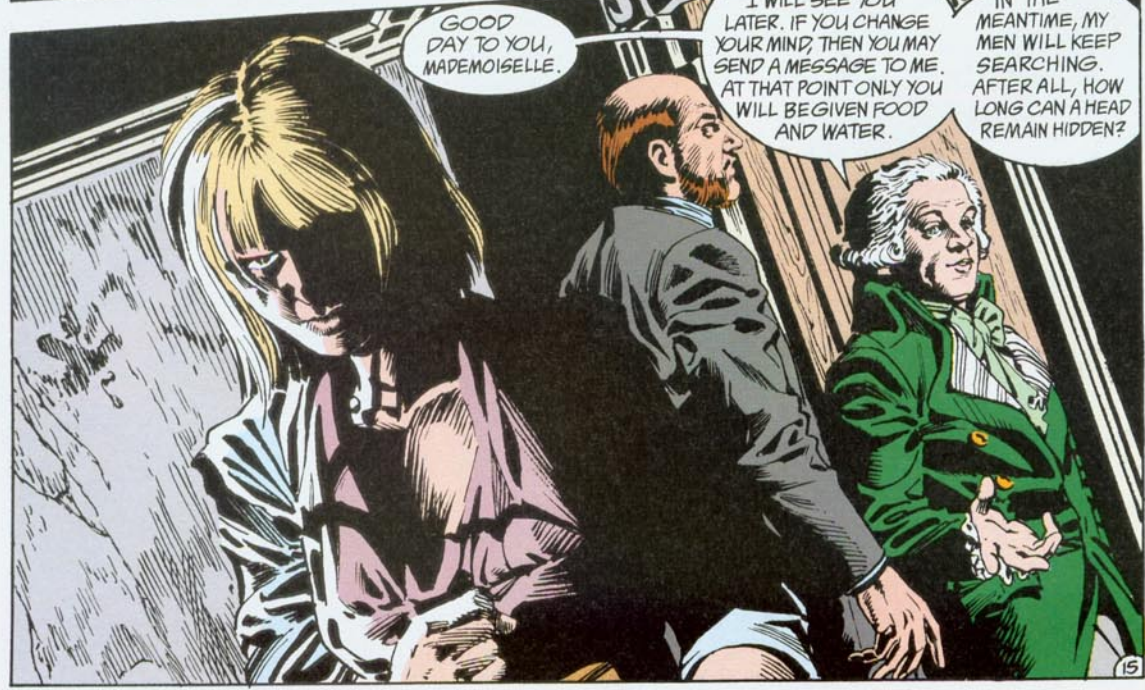
WE WILL FIND THE HEAD, WOMAN. AND YOU WILL HELP US FIND IT. YOU HAVE TONIGHT, TO THINK FURTHER ON THIS.

AND THEN...



WELL, MADMOISELLE, BEING A FEATURED PLAYER IN A PUPPET SHOW IS NOT THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU.

THERE ARE WORSE THINGS. MANY OF WHICH DO NOT INVOLVE DYING FIRST.



GOOD DAY TO YOU, MADMOISELLE.

I WILL SEE YOU LATER. IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, THEN YOU MAY SEND A MESSAGE TO ME. AT THAT POINT ONLY YOU WILL BE GIVEN FOOD AND WATER.

IN THE MEANTIME, MY MEN WILL KEEP SEARCHING. AFTER ALL, HOW LONG CAN A HEAD REMAIN HIDDEN?





You are  
having problems,  
I see,  
Johanna.

I... YES. I  
AM. TO PUT IT MILDLY.  
CAN YOU... WILL YOU  
HELP ME?

Not  
directly,  
no.

I wish that I  
could. But I may not  
be seen to intervene  
in this matter.

WELL, SIR, MIGHT I  
SUGGEST YOU GIVE THE  
MATTER SOME THOUGHT?  
YOUR SON'S HEAD IS  
VALUABLE TO YOU, AND I  
AM ATTACHED TO MINE.  
INDEED, HITHERTO WE HAVE  
BEEN INSEPARABLE.

NOW IT APPEARS  
BOTH HEADS MAY BE  
LOST.



SIRE?

Yes, Jessamy.

IF I MIGHT MAKE A SUGGESTION, SIRE, YOUR SON KNEW MANY SONGS. IF HE WERE TO SING...

Hmm. You might have something there, Jessamy. He still has power. But for that to be effective he would need a chorus.

Hmm.

Drink this, Johanna. It will keep the waking world from stealing this meeting from you.

Remember my words, lady.

Very Well, Johanna. Now: Listen...



IT CAME TO ME  
IN A DREAM! IT WAS  
SO OBVIOUS. SO  
BLINDLY  
OBVIOUS...



WHERE DO YOU HIDE A  
BOOK? IN A LIBRARY.

WHERE DO YOU HIDE A  
FLOWER? IN A GARDEN.

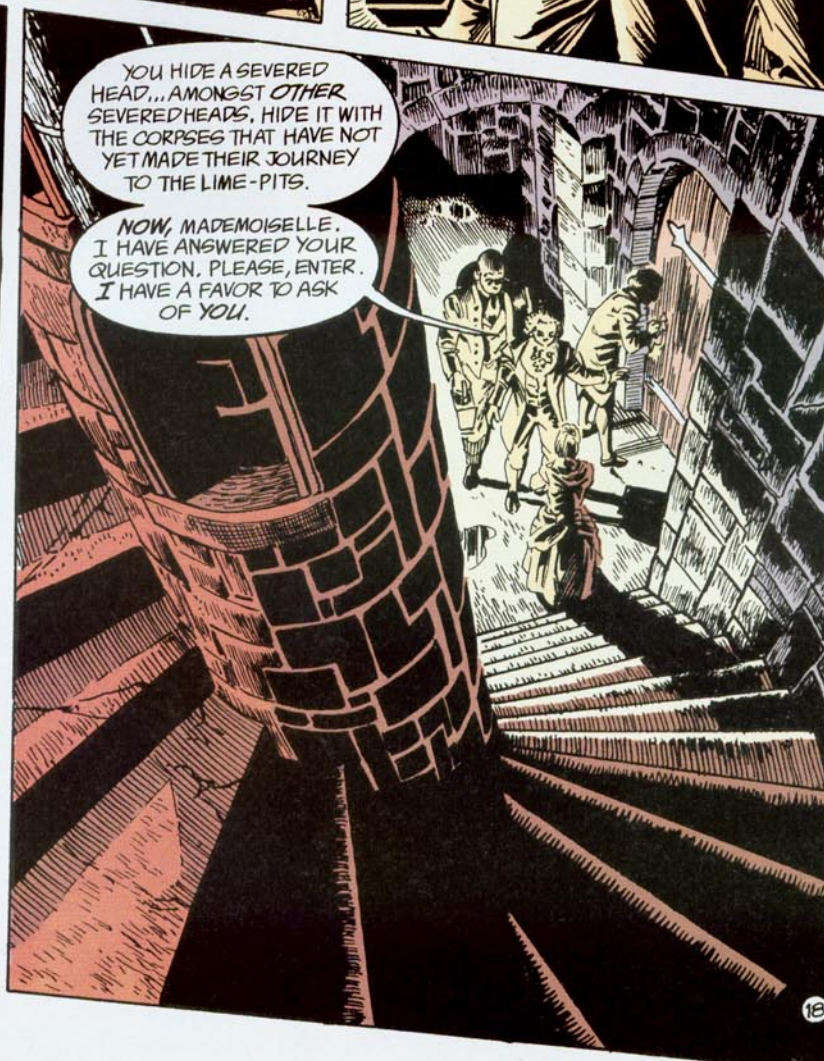
WHERE DO YOU HIDE  
A SEVERED HEAD?



WHERE... DO  
YOU HIDE... A  
SEVERED HEAD?




YOU TELL ME,  
CITIZEN ROBESPIERRE.  
YOU TELL ME.



YOU HIDE A SEVERED  
HEAD... AMONGST OTHER  
SEVEREDHEADS. HIDE IT WITH  
THE CORPSES THAT HAVE NOT  
YET MADE THEIR JOURNEY  
TO THE LIME-PITS.

NOW, MADEMOISELLE.  
I HAVE ANSWERED YOUR  
QUESTION. PLEASE, ENTER.  
I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK  
OF YOU.



WILL YOU DO ME THE COURTESY OF INTRODUCING ME TO YOUR FRIEND?

FEUH! WHAT A STINK!  
MEAT DOES NOT KEEP  
WELL IN THIS JULY HEAT.

...THERMIDOR.  
I MEANT THERMIDOR.

MONSIEUR ROBESPIERRE...

EVEN NOW IT IS  
NOT TOO LATE.

YOU CAN LET ME  
GO. I WILL TAKE WHAT  
I CAME FOR AND LEAVE  
FRANCE, AND NEVER  
BOTHER YOU AGAIN.

REMEMBER THIS: THAT I  
OFFERED YOU ONE FINAL  
CHANCE TO LET THE MATTER  
LIE.

MADemoiselle,  
YOUR ATTEMPTS TO  
THREATEN ME ARE  
LAUGHABLE, AND  
BATHETIC. GIVE ME  
THE HEAD.

VERY WELL, CITIZEN. THIS  
IS THE HEAD OF ORPHEUS.  
RIPPED FROM HIS LIVING  
BODY BY THE BACCHANTE.  
THEY USED THEIR BARE  
HANDS.

THE WOMEN  
OF THE  
FRENZY...

THEY THREW HIS HEAD INTO THE HEBRUS, AND IT IS SAID THAT IT STILL CALLED THE NAME OF HIS LOST LOVE AS IT FLOATED DOWN TO THE SEA.

THIS IS THE HEAD OF ORPHEUS, WHO BESTED DEATH, AND WHO NOW CANNOT DIE.



DO YOU TAKE US FOR PEASANTS, JOHANNA?

THE MYTHS ARE DEAD. THE GODS ARE DEAD. THE GHOSTS AND GHOULS AND PHANTOMS ARE DEAD.

THERE IS ONLY THE STATE, AND THE PEOPLE.



NO, MONSIEUR ROBESPIERRE. THERE IS MUCH MORE THAN THAT.



ENOUGH OF THIS NONSENSE.

HENRI-- BRING ME THAT HEAD.



NOW. MESSIRE ORPHEUS.

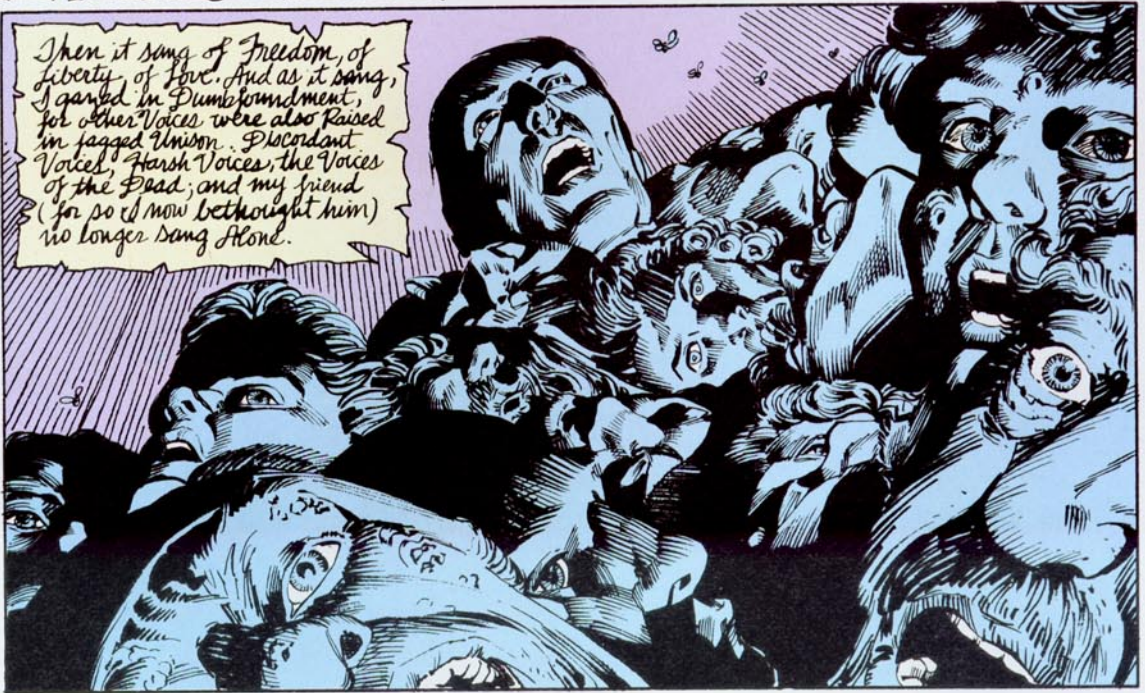
SING TO THEM.



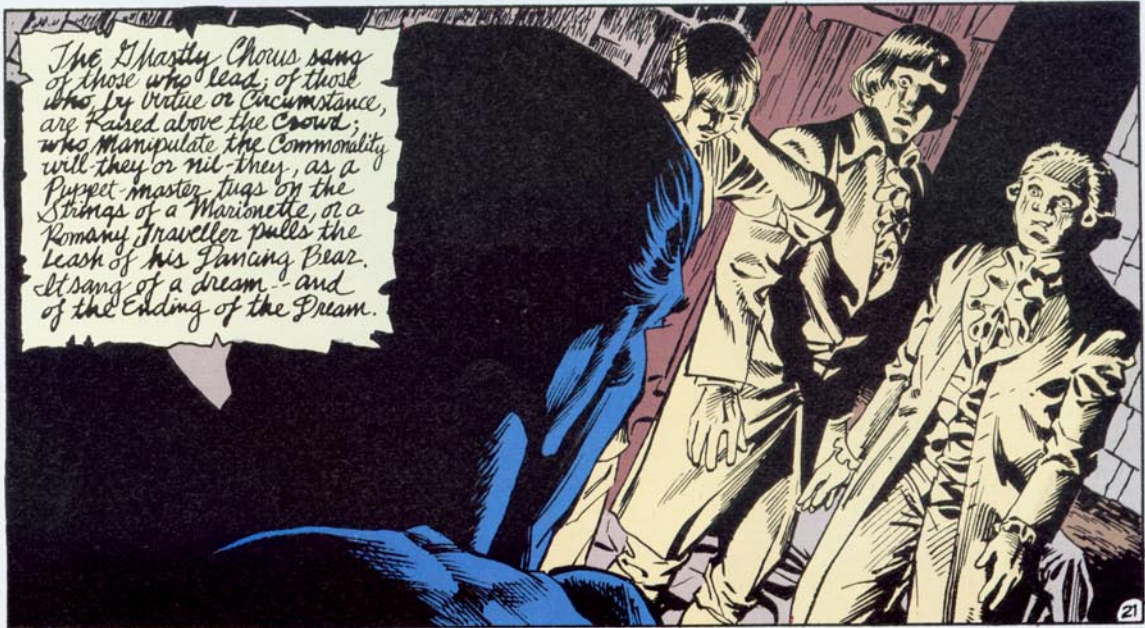
My Ears were covered, but I could not entirely obliterate the Sounds the Head made, as it began its Song. Although I possess a Modicum of Greek, the most part of the Words it used were unfamiliar to me. Still, by what Means or Mechanism I cannot say, I found myself deriving some Measure of Sense from its chanting. The Head sang first of Blood, of the Baying, Senseless Cries of the Mob; of the Anger of Women and Men; of the Worm that devours its own Flesh.



Then it sang of Freedom, of Liberty, of Love. And as it sang, I gazed in Dumbfoundment, for other Voices were also raised in jagged Union. Discordant Voices, Harsh Voices, the Voices of the Dead; and my friend (for so I now bethought him) no longer sang Alone.



The Unhastily Chorus sang of those who lead; of those who, by Virtue or Circumstance, are Raised above the Crowd; who Manipulate the Commonality will they or nil-they, as a Puppet-master tugs on the Strings of a Marionette, or a Romany Traveller pulls the Leash of his Jangling Bear. It sang of a dream - and of the Ending of the Dream.





ON THE 9th THERMIDOR, LOUIS-ANTOINE ST. JUST, THE GREAT ORATOR, FALTERED DURING HIS SPEECH BEFORE THE NATIONAL CONVENTION, AND FELL SILENT.



MAXMILIEN ROBESPIERRE, THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN FRANCE, THEN ATTEMPTED TO SPEAK. UNTIL THAT POINT HE HAD BEEN LISTENED TO WITH AWE, OR FEAR, OR SILENCE.

NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE FOUND HIMSELF LAUGHED AT, AND, ALSO FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE WAS LOST FOR WORDS.



THAT NIGHT HE AND HIS FACTION WERE DEPOSED AND ARRESTED, AND DURING THE ARREST ROBESPIERRE WAS SHOT IN THE JAW. OR PERHAPS HE FUMBLERD A SUICIDE ATTEMPT. THE TRUTH HERE IS A MATTER OF CONJECTURE.



AND IT IS ALSO A MATTER OF RECORD THAT, IN THE END, MONSIEUR SANSON, THE EXECUTIONER, RIPPED OFF THE PAPER BANDAGE THAT HELD HIS JAW TOGETHER.

AND THAT ROBESPIERRE'S FINAL WORDLESS SCREAM OF PAIN WAS CUT OFF, WITH HIS HEAD, BY THE FALL OF THE WEIGHTED BLADE.



IT IS, HOWEVER, A MATTER OF RECORD THAT THE NEXT DAY, HIS SHATTERED JAW BOUND BY A PAPER BANDAGE, HE WATCHED ST. JUST STEP UP, SILENTLY, TO THE GUILLOTINE.

THE TERROR DIED WITH HIM.



SEPTEMBER 9th, 1794. NAXOS.

...THE PRIESTS WILL TAKE CARE OF ME. I STAYED ON THIS ISLAND FOR MANY YEARS BEFORE I WAS STOLEN.

IT WILL BE GOOD TO REST ONCE MORE, AND MY MOTHER STILL COMES BY, FROM TIME TO TIME ...

JOHANNA?

YES.

WILL YOU SEE MY FATHER AGAIN?

I WOULD HOPE SO. AFTER ALL, THERE IS STILL THE MATTER OF MY FEE TO BE DISCUSSED.

JOHANNA, HE **MUST** CARE FOR ME. DO YOU NOT THINK SO? IF MY FATHER DID NOT CARE FOR ME, HE WOULD NOT HAVE HAD YOU RESCUE ME.

I DO NOT KNOW.

...I TRUST THAT HE WILL REPAY YOU ADEQUATELY FOR YOUR TIME AND TROUBLE IN ASSISTING ME.

"WHAT WE OBTAIN TOO CHEAP, WE ESTEEM TOO LIGHTLY," ORPHEUS.

TRUE. BUT WHEN YOU SEE HIM... TELL HIM I MISS HIM. I HAVE NOT SEEN HIM FOR SO LONG.

NOT EVEN IN YOUR DREAMS?

NOT EVEN IN MY DREAMS.

ORPHEUS, I... TRAVEL WIDELY. PERHAPS, IN A YEAR OR SO, I COULD RETURN TO NAXOS. SEE YOU AGAIN. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I DO NOT THINK THAT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA, JOHANNA. GOODBYE.

*I never saw him more. But, as the years have passed, I have, on occasion, seen him in my dreams. And, from that time on, the Song of Orpheus has always hovered at the edge of my perception; a melody I can never truly recapture, try howsoever I will.*

*And do not doubt that there are many in authority to whom I would sing it, if I were within my power.*