



VERTIGO

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HADLEY
RICHARD
FRIEND

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suggested for
mature readers
verligocomics.com

X MADAME XANADU

HOW CAN THIS BE?

Ting-Ting

NOT TWENTY MINUTES AGO, MY ENCHANTED ALARMS WARNED OF THIS MANIAC'S LATEST ATTACK.

TOO LATE TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE LATEST VICTIM TO HIS BLADE.

BUT NOW...

...ANOTHER BELL CHIMES!

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AGAIN?! IN THE SAME NIGHT?!

BLOODY HELL!

WE CAN'T HAVE THIS! THERE'S ENOUGH SOCIAL UNREST OVER THE JEWISH INFLUX OF LATE. THIS COULD LIGHT OFF A POWDER KEG OF RIOTING! I SAY, WIPE IT CLEAN!

BUT, SUPERINTENDENT ARNOLD, WE SHOULD AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL IT CAN BE PHOTOGRAPHED... THIS IS A CRIME SCENE! THAT GIRL BACK THERE... DEAR GOD, IT'S SO SAVAGE!

NO!

MY WORST FEARS ARE EXCEEDED!

EH--?

THE RIPPER HAS STRUCK AGAIN.

YOU SEE? EXACTLY AS I FEARED!

GET RID OF HER! AND FETCH A BUCKET!

MOVE
ALONG
NOW,
MISS...

NO, I...
COULDN'T...
I--

THE POLICE HAVE NO
IDEA OF WHAT THEY DO.

MY SENSES TINGLE. THIS
"DREADFUL" MESSAGE IS
NO ORDINARY GRAFFITI.

THE TAINT OF MAGIC
LINGERS IN THE AIR.

NNGH--
HARD TO
COME OFF!

YOU ARE
RIGHT.

THE
MESSAGE IS
SHEER SUBTERFUGE.
THE TIME IS NOT
YET RIPE FOR THIS
HORROR TO
END.

WHAT?!

AND WHO
ARE *YOU* TO
DECIDE SUCH A
THING? WHO ARE
YOU TO ALLOW THESE
WOMEN TO SUFFER
THE MURDEROUS
BLOODLUST OF
THIS...THIS
ANIMAL?!

I AM HE WHO
WALKS IN THE
FRINGES OF HISTORY.
I AM HE WHO GATHERS
THE REINS OF DESTINY
WHERE NONE
MAY KNOW THE
OUTCOME.

I AM...THE
**PHANTOM
STRANGER.**

WELL,
BULLY
FOR YOU!



ARE YOU SAYING YOU LEFT THAT OBSCURE INSCRIPTION?! *WHY?! IS THIS SOME SORT OF POGROM?!*

I HAVE NO ANIMOSITY TOWARDS ANY RELIGION OR RACE. *THAT* PHRASE IS BUT A REFLECTION OF THE CONFUSION AND PARANOIA THIS KILLER HAS BRED.



A TURMOIL THAT THE POLICE NOW SHARE.

AND YOU...YOU *SUPPORT* THEIR PUZZLEMENT?! YOU *WANT* THIS PREDATOR TO REMAIN FREE?



FREE TO KILL AGAIN?!



NOT... INDEFINITELY.



THIS IS NOT ABOUT THE LIVES OF *THE FEW* OR THE HORRORS OF *THE NOW*. THESE ARE CRUX MOMENTS, A FULCRUM FOR WHAT *MAY* RESULT IF THESE EVENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO UNFOLD.

YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE TWININGS OF TIME.



WAIT! NO--!

ÁSTYNTAN! ÁBÍDAN!

A LUNATIC ON THE LOOSE...

BUT WHO IS THE MORE DANGEROUS? THE ONE WHO WIELDS THE KNIFE?

OR THE ONE WHO CLEARS HIS WAY?

HEXTRA!
HEXTRA!
DOUBLE-SLOYIN'
IN WHI'CHAPEL!
"JACK TH' RIPPAAH"
STROIKES
AG'IN!

YOU BE HOME
BY DARK, DAVEY
COLLINS! 'TIS A
DEVIL STALKS
THESE STREETS.

AMEN
TO **THAT**,
MISSUS.

YES,
MUM.

THERE IS **NO**
TRUTH TO THE
RUMOR THAT
THE KILLER IS
JEWISH!

THE POLICE HAVE
NO EVIDENCE THAT
SUPPORTS SUCH A
CLAIM! THE HEBREW
COMMUNITY IS
PEACEFUL AND
LAW-ABIDING...

BEG
PARDON,
SIR.


I KNOW WE'VE
GOTTEN SCORES
OF **COPYCAT**
CORRESPONDENCE EVER
SINCE "DEAR BOSS," BUT
THIS ONE SEEMS TO
MATCH **THAT** ONE'S
HANDWRITING...

DEAR GOD...
"SAUCY
JACK," HE
SAYS! WHO IS
THIS BLOODY
BASTARD?!



DESPERATION NOW
GUIDES MY HAND.

THE STREETS ARE
RIFE WITH FEAR
AND MISTRUST.



IN THE MONTH
SINCE HIS "DOUBLE-
STRIKE," JACK'S
LONG SHADOW HAS
SPREAD SUSPICION
AND DREAD
INTO THE CITY'S
EVERY CORNER.



I HAVE CONCOCTED
A "CALMING"
DUST AND, IN THE
EVENINGS, I SEED
THE SOOTY AIR WITH
THIS LULLING MIST.

TRUTHFULLY, IT'S
LIKE TRYING TO
DOUSE A FOREST
FIRE WITH AN
EYE-DROPPER.



STILL...IT'S BETTER
THAN NOTHING.

SOME CITIZENS HAVE
TAKEN ANOTHER
APPROACH.



THE WHITECHAPEL
VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.

ALL RIGHT
THEN, LADS!
YOU ALL KNOW
ME--**GEORGE
LUK!**

IF THE POLICE
CAN'T FIND THIS
BARMY **BASTARD...**
THEN **WE** MUST
SEE TO IT
OURSELVES!

YOU
SAID
IT!

RIGHTO,
GEORGIE-
BOY!







THE "VIGILANCE COMMITTEE"
HAS DISBANDED.

THIS, AFTER THEIR LEADER, GEORGE
LUSK, RECEIVED A PACKAGE IN THE
POST CONTAINING A PORTION OF
KITTY EDDOWES' MISSING KIDNEY.

THE ACCOMPANYING
LETTER WAS ADDRESSED
"FROM HELL."

DRASTIC MEASURES.

WHAT I AM ABOUT
TO ATTEMPT DEMANDS
FOCUS AND CLARITY.

I BRUSH MY HAIR
FOR OVER AN HOUR,
FEELING EVERY STRAND.

THE MIRROR ABSORBS
MY MEMORY; I TRACE MY
FEATURES THERE AS WELL.

SO THAT I DO NOT
FORGET THIS WORLD.

AND LOSE MY WAY.

INFÆRELD
GALDORCWIÐE!

GÉATAN!
GÉATAN!

GÉTAN!
NÉAL
CUNG!

GEBANN
NÚ OÁ!



REVELATION
BECKONS ME.

A MISTY WORLD
OF POSSIBILITIES
ENGULFS ME.

I MUST TREAD
CAREFULLY WHILST
VISITING HERE.

LEST I STRAY
FROM MY OWN
AWARENESS.

FOREVER ADRIFT
IN THIS REALM
OF VISIONS.



SACRED
AERON,
GUIDE MY PATH.
UNVEIL MY
ENEMY.

LEAD
ME TO
THE ONE
I SEEK...

...A MAN
OF VIOLENCE
AND CRUELTY.
A MAN WITH A
SOUL STAINED
BLACK AS
PITCH.



I SEEK
A MAN
WHO STALKS
THE STREETS
BY NIGHT,
RAZORED
BLADE IN
HAND.

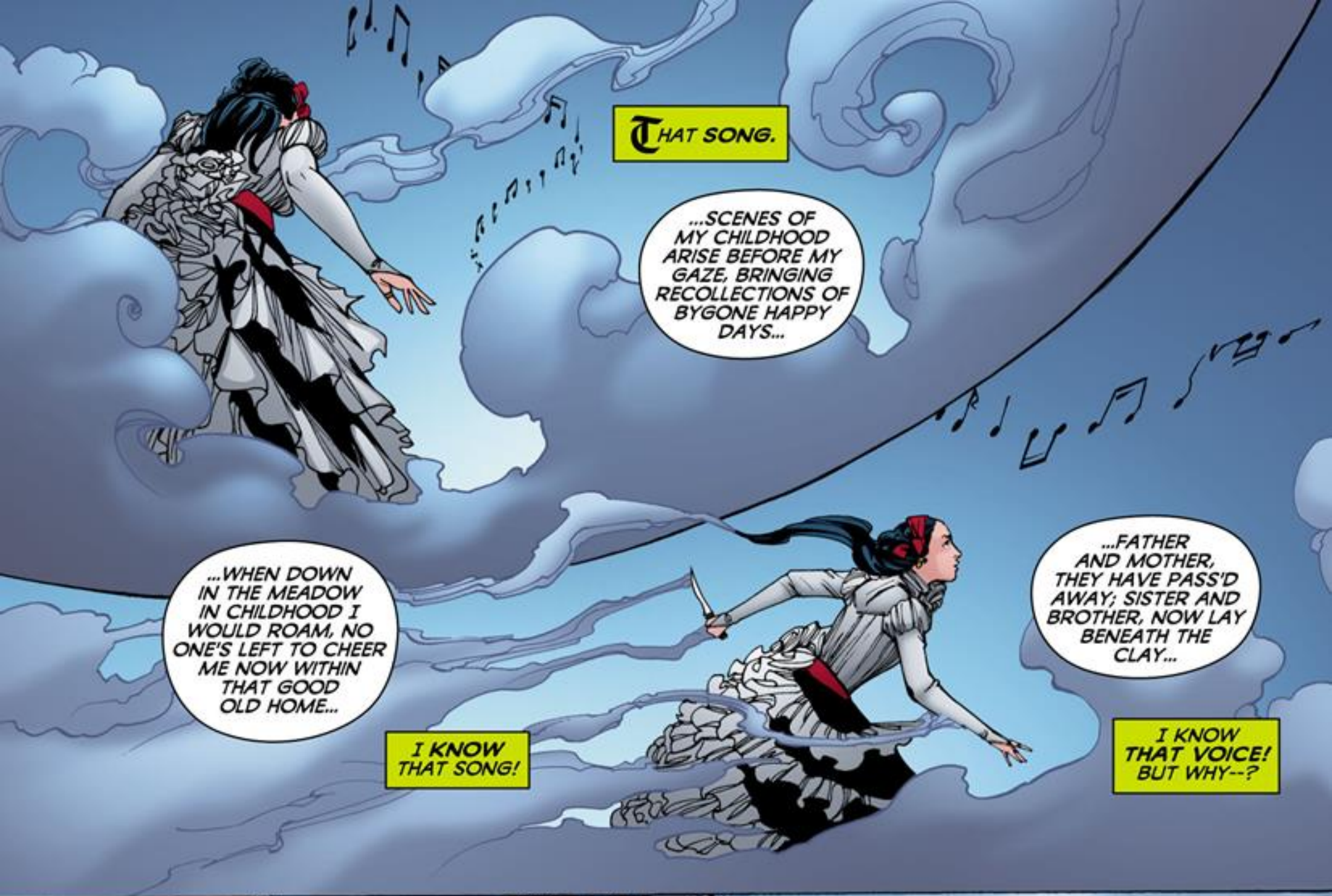
A MAN.
ONE WHO
SLAUGHTERS
WOMEN LIKE
CATTLE. AND
BRAGS OF HIS
BLOODY
DEEDS.



I SEEK THE
ONE WHO
ANSWERS
TO--HUNH?

...THE ONE
WHO DUBS
HIMSELF
"JACK."

I SEEK
"THE
RIPPER!"



THAT SONG.

...SCENES OF MY CHILDHOOD
ARISE BEFORE MY
GAZE, BRINGING
RECOLLECTIONS OF
BYGONE HAPPY
DAYS...

...WHEN DOWN
IN THE MEADOW
IN CHILDHOOD I
WOULD ROAM, NO
ONE'S LEFT TO CHEER
ME NOW WITHIN
THAT GOOD
OLD HOME...

I KNOW
THAT SONG!

...FATHER
AND MOTHER,
THEY HAVE PASS'D
AWAY; SISTER AND
BROTHER, NOW LAY
BENEATH THE
CLAY...

I KNOW
THAT VOICE!
BUT WHY--?



MARY?
MARY
KELLY?



...BUT WHILE
LIFE DOES
REMAIN TO
CHEER ME, I'LL
RETAIN--

THERE
SHE IS!

WITH...A MAN!
IT--IT MUST
BE...HIM!



...THIS
SMALL VIOLET I
PLUCK'D FROM
MOTHER'S
GRAVE...



MARY?!
MARY...
WAIT! YOU
CAN'T--!



DON'T--

WHAT IS THIS
OBSTRUCTION?!



IT BLOCKS
MY SIGHT.

LET ME
THROUGH!
ÆTSCÉOTAN!

IMPEDES MY
PASSAGE.

ITS INKY BLACK
FOLDS THREATEN
TO ENGULF ME.

GEARWIAN
PLÆCE!

WHAT...
IS THIS?!



YOU!



WHY MUST YOU ALWAYS CONFOUND ME, STRANGER?!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR MYSTERIES! ENOUGH OF YOUR INTRUSIONS!

SHHKT

LEAVE ME ALONE!

I MUST NOT LINGER HERE.

STRANDS OF MY HAIR, FACADE OF MY SPIRIT, MEMORY MINE... BECKON MY RETURN, HASTEN MY STEPS, WARRANT MY SAFETY!



MY FEET FEEL LEADEN
AND WEAK.

YET I DARE NOT "FADE"
WHERE I HAVE NEVER BEEN.



MARY?
MARY
KELLY!

MILLER COURT.



TING-TING
TING-TING

NO! THE
BELLS--

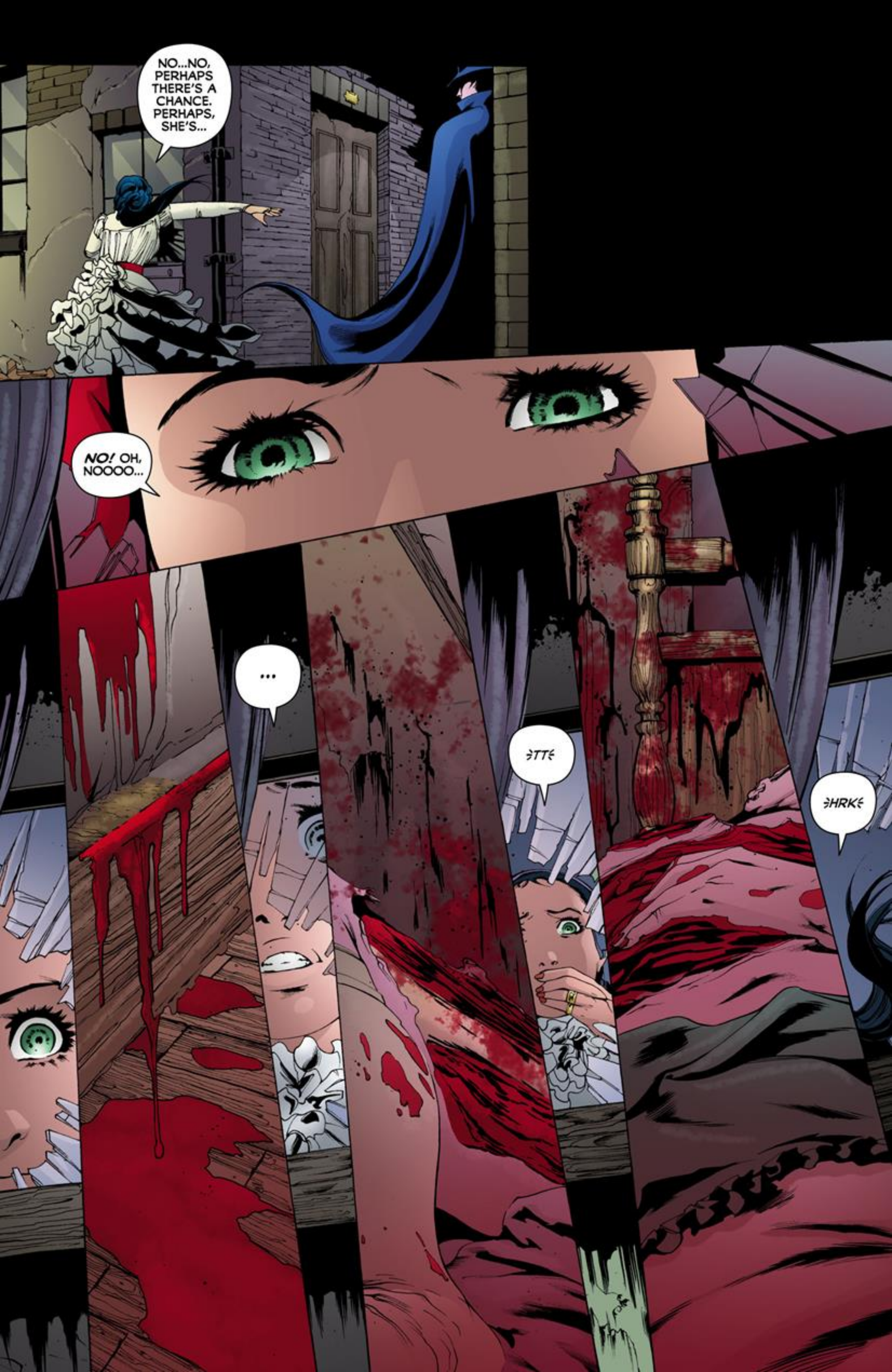


MARY...?



YOU ARE
TOO LATE.
WHAT'S DONE
IS DONE.

DISASTER...
HAS BEEN
AVERTED.



NO...NO,
PERHAPS
THERE'S A
CHANCE.
PERHAPS,
SHE'S...

NO! OH,
NOOOO...

...

→TT←

→HRK←



BLARGH!



A
REPELLENT
SIGHT...

GLG--
GASP

YET STILL BUT
A TRIFLE COMPARED
TO WHAT *MIGHT* HAVE
OCCURRED, HAD HER
LIFE CONTINUED. HAD
HER CHILD EVER
COME TO TERM.

CH-CHILD?!
SHE...SHE WAS
PREGNANT?! MY
GODS! HOW...
HOW--?

HOW
COULD YOU
ALLOW
THIS TO
HAPPEN?!



YOU
BASTARD!

YOU
STOOD HERE...
YOU STOOD
HERE AND LET
THAT...*MANIAC*
BUTCHER HER LIKE
A HELPLESS
SOW!

SPAK

YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN "SAUCY JACK" HIMSELF!

THIS WAS NO EASY TASK, YET A CHARGE THAT *HAD* TO BE UNDERTAKEN.

HOW *DARE* YOU?! I HAVE LABORED TO *SAVE* THESE WOMEN, TO BRING THIS *BEAST* TO JUSTICE...

I REFER TO *ANOTHER* BEAST WHOM YOU, INDEED, ALLOWED TO WANDER FREE.

ALAS, SUCH A SAD OUTCOME IS EQUALLY THE RESULT OF YOUR *OWN* INACTIONS, MADAME.

SOME MONTHS AGO, MARY KELLY BEDDED A MAN WHO HAS ROAMED FOR CENTURIES UNDER THE YOKE OF A POWERFUL ENCHANTMENT. HIS MIND IS MUDDIED BY A PRESENCE THAT INHABITS HIS SOUL...A VILE SPIRIT TO WHICH HE IS INEXORABLY BOUND. HE HAS GONE BY MANY NAMES OVER THE AGES; JAEDON, JAXON, JASON...BUT HIS COMMON NAME IS ALWAYS THE SAME: "*BLOOD*."

HE IS THE HUMAN GUISE OF THAT DEMON WHOM MERLIN SUMMONED TO DEFEND DOOMED CAMELOT: *ETRIGAN*, SCION OF HELL. IF THE CHILD OF *THAT FIEND* HAD EVER REACHED MATURITY, HE WOULD HAVE BECOME A TYRANT SUCH AS THE WORLD HAS NEVER KNOWN. THE DEPTHS OF HIS DEPRAVITY, THE SCOPE OF HIS GENOCIDES WOULD BREACH ANY HISTORIC EXAMPLE.

FAR BEYOND ANY *HUMAN* DESPOT.

I-I...

HAD YOU ACTED ON MY *EARLIEST* WARNINGS, PERHAPS CAMELOT COULD HAVE BEEN SAVED...PERHAPS *THE DEMON* WOULD HAVE NEVER TROD EARTHLY SOIL...

AND PERHAPS MANY OF THE RIPPER'S VICTIMS WOULD YET LIVE AND BREATHE.



N-NO... *THIS CANNOT BE!* YOU CANNOT *BLAME* THIS ALL ON ME--! WHY DID YOU NOT ACT TO STOP THIS TRAGEDY?!

I AM FORBIDDEN TO DIRECTLY INTERFERE IN SUCH EVENTS. I MAY ONLY ADVISE AND OBSERVE.



WHAT NONSENSE! YOU MANIPULATE AS YOU SEE FIT, AND YOU HIDE BEHIND THE MYTH OF YOUR RESTRICTIONS! I COMMAND YOU--



STOP! *ÁBLINNAN! GEFETAN! LICGAN!*

GUILT AND BLAME ARE UBIQUITOUS. "INNOCENCE" IS AN ILLUSION FOR THE SAKE OF SANITY.

I DO WHAT I MUST TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF INFLUENCE. WITHOUT SUCH AN EQUILIBRIUM, EXISTENCE ITSELF WOULD CRUMBLE.



NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...



...*ONE ACT* OF THIS TRAGEDY REMAINS TO BE PLAYED.







WITH
A SHARD
OF YOUR
SHEATH...

...OF
MANDRAKE
ROOT...

...BY THE
PRICKING
OF MY
THUMBS...

THE STRANGER'S TRUE NATURE
CAN NO LONGER BE DENIED.

HE IS EVERYTHING
I ABHOR.

...I
CAPTURE
AND ABJURE
YOU.

WHEN NEXT WE MEET...

...I WILL BE READY.

TO BE CONTINUED...