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Power Structures in V for Vendetta

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Introduction

Set in 1997 and 1998, V for Vendetta depicts a dystopian alternate reality in which England is under the control of the authoritarian and brutally repressive Norsefire, a fascist party that came to power in the country in the aftermath of a devastating nuclear war that destroyed most of the rest of the world. The story focuses on V, an anarchist and a terrorist who is only ever seen wearing a mask-- most typically that of well-known English revolutionary Guy Fawkes-- and his fight against the oppressive regime, with the ultimate goal of bringing anarchy to the United Kingdom. Eschewing a typical good-versus-evil plot, the graphic novel instead delves into topics of identity, integrity, and the imbalance of power in society. Throughout, it seeks to confront the reader with difficult questions about what it means to exist within a hierarchical power structure, and if it is possible to do without one, rather than to feed them answers.

V for Vendetta is a graphic novel written by Alan Moore, an English writer known for his subversive and politically charged works, and illustrated by David Lloyd, and English artist best known for his work on V for Vendetta. While the comic is set in the late 1990s, the first issues were published in the British anthology comic Warrior beginning in 1982 and concluding in 1985, when it was cancelled along with the comic. This cancellation came before the story could be completed. In 1988, DC Comics purchased the rights to the title, publishing the original run from Warrior, and finally running the entire story to completion, ultimately publishing the tenth and final use in 1989. The events of the comic-- beginning to be published, as they were, several

years before the time in which they were set-- were not intended as an alternative history, but rather as a forewarning of what the future might look like, and a forewarning that Moore and Lloyd believed to be quite plausible, given the rising unrest and tension in what was contemporarily an increasingly destabilized and fragmented Britain.

At the time of the comic's initial production, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party had been in power in the United Kingdom for several years, having been elected in 1979 amidst a climate of economic crisis and social unrest. A party of, predictably, hardline conservative social and economic policies, Thatcher's government sought to address the prevalent issues of unemployment and a deepening recession through tactics of privatisation, the loosening of legal constraints around business in Britain, and the gutting of socialized support programmes, particularly in the impoverished North. However, their uncompromising and often brutal approach led to worsening economic and social crises throughout the United Kingdom, particularly in the North. Governmental efforts to raise taxes, undermine unions, and privatise and deregulate business in the United Kingdom contributed to an unstable economy and widespread worker dissatisfaction. The government met the resulting strikes and social unrest with absolutely no tolerance, and increasingly violent repression. This in turn spurred the militarisation of the police forces across the country, all of whom were given free rein on how they chose to deal with the growing and occasionally violent unrest.

At the same time, the country, grown embittered and isolated by the economic crisis and still reeling from the aftermath of the collapse of its formerly widespread and powerful empire, was swept by a wave of xenophobia. This was perfectly

exemplified by Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech, in which he claimed that he was told during a conversation with a constituent that, '"In this country in 15 or 20 years' time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man[,]"' and later stated,

> We must be mad, literally mad, as a nation to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants, who are for the most part the material of the future growth of the immigrant-descended population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre. (Powell)

This speech parroted and exacerbated growing racist sentiments about the inevitability of the white population of Britain being overwhelmed and ultimately destroyed by non-white foreigners. It particularly emphasized the idea that a British-born child of immigrants could never truly be a Briton, due to their racial or ethnic background, and that the immigrant, particularly the coloured immigrant, would never seek to, let alone be able to, integrate with British society.

This fear of the "other" was not focused only on foreigners, however, as the ongoing AIDS crisis—then believed to be a disease that targeted only homosexuals and drug users, and thus seen by some to represent a divine punishment for their "sins"-- emboldened the intolerant and homophobic climate that prevailed in much of Britain. Though homosexual acts had been decriminalised in 1967 (Sexual Offences Act 1967 c.60), reporting on the topic in the newspapers grew increasingly hysterical, with AIDS treated as the "wages of sin," and those who obtained AIDS through means such as gay intercourse or drug use were treated as guilty or morally corrupt, as opposed to those who were "innocent victims," having contracted AIDS due to, for example, contaminated blood transfusion (Thompson 71). By 1988, with the AIDS

crisis reaching its zenith, the Tory government was back to reintroducing legislation that was directly homophobic, marked by the passage of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, banning any local authority from,

> intentionally promot[ing] homosexuality or publish[ing] material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promot[ing] the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship (Local Government Act 1988)

In this way, the homosexual underclass was further alienated from mainstream society, and it seemed that even the government itself approved of treating this minority group of its own citizens as a potentially dangerous threat to the "normal" citizens of Britain. This fact no doubt emboldened homophobes and contributed to attacks on gay people throughout Britain.

As a result of these tumultuous social crises, race riots and hate crimes were on the rise. As if this galvanization of public opinion against visible and sexual minority groups were not enough, all of these upheavals and social panics were occurring against the increasingly bloody backdrop of The Troubles, the Irish guerrilla war for independence from Britain which had long since moved beyond Ireland's borders and onto English soil (Aughey 7). This period was marked by a steady campaign of bombings, attacks, and murders in England and abroad carried out by the revolutionaries (Taylor 265). These violent and unyielding tactics of played a large role in further exacerbating the violent and oppressive response of both the police and the government to instances of unrest.

It was within this political and social context that V for Vendetta was created, and which it sought to highlight and to warn its readers about. The bleak, cruel reality and heightened social and economic instability of Thatcher's Britain worried Moore and Lloyd, who looked on with alarm at the government's increasingly authoritarian responses to crises, as shown in the introduction to V for Vendetta, written in 1988 by Moore.

> It's 1988 now. Margareth Thatcher is entering her third term of office and talking confidently of an unbroken Conservative leadership well into the next century. My youngest daughter is seven and the tabloid press are circulating the idea of concentration camps for persons with AIDS. The new riot police wear black visors, as do their horses, and their vans have rotating video cameras mounted on top. The government has expressed a desire to eradicate homosexuality, even as an abstract concept, and one can only speculate as to which minority will be the next legislated against. (Moore)

The fear and dismay that resonate through Moore's words at the time make it clear that both he and Lloyd did not create V for Vendetta as a simple story or thought experiment, but rather as a warning of what was to come if the situation, and the country, continued along the path it was currently following.

When they started writing in 1981, they took for granted that the Conservative party would lose the 1983 General Election to the Labour Party. The Conservative Party managed to retain power in this election for several reasons, primary among them being their success in the Falkland War, as well as the timid economic recovery that the country was undergoing around the time of the election, and which seemed to

indicate that Thatcher's reforms had been successful at safely navigating Britain through the worst of the recession. For the purpose of this dissertation, however, it is interesting to briefly mention specifically why the Labour Party did not win, rather than why the Conservative Party did. One of the primary places where blame for Labour's loss has been places is on its (at the time) new leader, Michael Foot. While he did fare well in the opinion polls in the lead-up to the election, when the time to vote came the general public considered him to be too far to the left, a perception that fed too directly into the Cold War-era fear of Communism that was prevalent at the time. The Labour Party's manifesto, dubbed "the longest suicide note in history", did not assuage fears, with its promise of nuclear disarmament in particular being seen as especially reckless at a time when nuclear tension was high.

While that point of policy was one of the main reasons that the population did not vote Labour in the real world, it was extremely important in the world of V for Vendetta, where it is mentioned as one of the few promises that Labour kept when they came into power following the election. (Moore 27) When, in the comic's universe, some vaguely hinted-at event involving Russian occupation of Poland finally sparked the cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States turning hot in 1988, (Moore 27) it is implied that the United Kingdom was not targeted because it was no longer a threat to either faction, as the Labour party had already eliminated their stock of American missiles. Although Britain was not the actual target of nuclear weapons, however, it still suffered the aftereffects of nuclear fallout, as Evey recalls while talking to V,

> But Britain didn't get bombed. Not that it made much difference. All the bombs and things had done something to the weather. Something

> bad.[…] We could see right across London from the bedroom window. It was nearly all under water. The Thames barrier had burst. The sky was all yellow and black.[…] It turned out that the countryside was worse than the towns. The weather had destroyed all the crops, see? And there was no food coming from Europe, because Europe had gone. Like Africa. (27 Moore)

It is unclear what exactly happened during this time in the comic, as Evey is the only character who ever describes these events clearly, and she was very young at the time they were occurring. She describes this period between the end of the war and the beginning of the regime as a time of chaos and the collapse of governmental order or protection, saying that there was "no food[,]" and that "the sewers were flooded and everybody got sick". (Moore 28) She says that the original government had fallen-- though it is not specified if it collapsed as a result of the war or due to the ensuing chaos-- and that there was a subsequent battle for control of the country that came to a head in 1992, when the Norsefire party finally emerged victorious, thanks in part to the assistance of the remaining economic and corporate institutions. (Moore 28) Its leader, Adam Susan, took control of the country, and proceeded to bring order through highly repressive measures, sending political, racial, and sexual minorities to resettlement (i.e. concentration) camps, and greatly reducing the personal liberty and privacy of the remaining general populace, all in the name of returning order and safety to Britain.

Power is the heart of the matter when analysing V for Vendetta. The country presented in the graphic novel is a fascist, authoritarian one, in which the strictly hierarchical government holds all of the power, and political questioning and dissent

are policed and brutally stamped out. In this version of Britain, the population has willingly given up most of their rights in exchange for the promise of order and an escape from the chaos of the interregnum. The graphic novel takes great care to detail the level of complacency in the population only five years on from Norsefire's seizure of power. Edward Finch, the chief of the police force colloquially referred to as the Nose, does not hide his disdain for the new order, but considers it to be better than no society at all, and makes no efforts to challenge or subvert even those systems that he actively disapproves of. (Moore 30, 210) The members of the public at large are shown to simply be living their lives as best they can, unquestioningly accepting the repression that has been forced upon them. Even when they are given the assurance that they will no longer be spied upon by the government, it takes a great deal of prompting and manipulation of events for them to start actively attempting to overthrow the government. When a character does say that they "shouldn't live like this" and that he wishes "we were all dead! It'd be better!" he is promptly attacked and beaten by the rest of the crowd, who unthinkingly reinforce the regime rather than question or speak out against the system. (Moore129) Later on, when Evey, one of the main characters, repeats that they should not be living like this, the man she is with responds with a meek "[n]o, kid, we shouldn't. What are you going to do about it?" (Moore 130). In this way, Moore emphasizes and critiques the way in which the people of Britain accept even the most oppressive control over their lives, rather than attempting to step outside of the comfortable control that society has trained them to believe that they cannot live without.

This focus on power continues from the level of government to society and pervades even the daily relationships of the individual characters. Almost every

relationship shown in the story has a distinct power imbalance, with one person in control and the other subordinate to the first. In contrast to this, V's plan is to give power back to the people, to make everyone equal and to emphasize his belief that order does not require subjugation, willing or otherwise. As he explains to Evey when she asks if the chaos of the ongoing riot they are witnessing is anarchy, "Anarchy means "without leaders"; not "without order."' (Moore 195) He believes that it is possible for human society to flourish without leaders or hierarchical structures, and that this society would be orderly not because of the top-down structures that keep them in place, but because of the people who create it from the bottom up. The aim of this dissertation, therefore, is to analyse the ways in which the comic portrays power structures and relationships between key characters, and the extent to which it displays the relative benefits of the power structures (or lack thereof) inherent to fascism and anarchy.

To fully explore the role of power and relationships throughout V for Vendetta, this dissertation will be structured around the recommended method analysing power relationships put forward by Michel Foucault in his work The Subject and Power, first published in 1982. In it, Foucault describes five points that must be established in order to correctly analyse the way that relationships generate power. The first is the concept of the system of differentiations, that is those differences between actors, be they legislative or legal, traditional, economic, or so forth, which, "permits one to act upon the actions of others[.]" That is to say, the differences between people, such as unequal wealth or unequal enforcement of laws, that are necessary for power imbalance, and which are used to reinforce imbalance. As Foucault describes it, "every relationship of power puts into operation differences that are, at the same time,

its conditions and its results" (Foucault 344). To Foucault, then, differentiation in power is the means by which one exercises one's will over another, and also the ends to which the power is exercised; by exercising power over another, one reinforces the existing power structure, and deepens the power imbalance between the two actors. The second point is the types of objectives that are being pursued by the actor when they bring their will to bear upon another person. To what end do they direct their power, why do they seek to command another person or people? In typical power relationships, objectives are often profits for oneself, developing or maintaining privileges, or gaining and keeping control over people or objects of value. The third point is the instrumental modes in use by the actor, that is, what are the means that are in use in order to create and reinforce the power relationship. There are many means that may be used to exercise power; among them are violence or the threat of violence, the creation and enforcement of rules or legislation, or the creation and maintenance of economic disparity. The fourth point is the forms of institutionalization used by the actor. What institutions do they use or rely upon as part of their exercise of power, and which justify their power. This can range from the very formal, such as the state and its legislation, to economic institutions, to the relatively informal structure of cultural or subcultural traditions, the hierarchy of the family, or even fashion. The fifth and final point is the degree of rationalization, addressing the actual outcomes of the attempt to wield power. Are the instruments in use proving effective, and do they suit the ends they are being directed towards? Does their value in terms of producing the desired effect outweigh the cost to the actor?

Using these five points of analysis, it will be possible to fully explore each individual character, their place in the hierarchical power structure, and the ways in

which they enact power, or have power enacted on them, either as an individual or on the societal level. This dissertation will explore seven major characters in V for Vendetta, each of whom hold a different place in relationship to the system and to power creation.

To begin with, this dissertation will focus on the character of V. The embodiment of anarchism, V is not a "person," in the sense that he is nothing beyond the idea that he personifies; he has no identifiable personal traits, and is never seen without a mask. He is the impetus for the societal and political shift that the society undergoes throughout the comic. It is through his campaign of terrorism that the rest of the country is, and several of the other major characters are, pushed to rebel against the government. Unlike other characters, he begins the story having cast off the chains of hierarchical power, he exists on his own and by his own ideal, and refuses to allow himself to be subject to the whims of those who society has placed above him. His relationship to society as a whole, that of political revolutionary, is exemplified by his relationship to the character of Evey. By his interactions with Evey, which begin with cajoling and instructing her in the ways of anarchy, dragging her into his plots, and ultimately imprisoning and torturing her, V plays our in miniature the way in which anarchy subverts and ultimately overthrows the control of the hierarchical, authoritarian power structure.

The next chapter focuses on the character of Adam Susan, the Leader of the Norsefire government. Like V, he is the personification of his ideology, in this case fascism. However, unlike V this ideology has not consumed who he is on a fundamental level; he is portrayed as a fully realized character, with very human traits and flaws, as well as having a face and an individual identity. In this way he represents

a fundamental aspect of authoritarianism that is contrasted sharply with anarchism. While anarchy seeks to have no ruler, no one person who is in charge, authoritarianism must. By being a person with a face and an identity, Susan is diametrically opposed to the faceless, nameless V. Though he begins the story freer in many ways than most of the characters, in others he is as trapped by hierarchy and its expectations of him as any of his subjects. Though he exercises great power in Britain, it also exercises him.

The following chapter will focus on the character Evey Hammond. Beginning the story as a helpless and frightened sixteen-year-old girl who has fully accepted the place that has been dictated for her by the system in which she lives, Evey grows and matures through her interactions with others to become the next V. Initially, Evey craves the smothering support of the state, and is willing to accept the role of powerless victim that has been designated for her, as represented by her constant seeking of authority figures to whom to cede control and responsibility of her life. However, through her interactions with V she grows to see that societal strictures that she has found comforting are actually chains. Put through the pain of torture at V's hands, which is also the temporary pain of revolution and chaos, Evey finally escapes the hierarchical power system in which she has lived all of her life, and embraces anarchy and self-determination.

This brings her into sharp contrast with the subject of the next chapter, Rosemary Almond. The abused housewife of a member of the inner party, Rosemary is the quintessential victim of the hierarchical power structure of authoritarian society, as she is routinely terrorized and completely dominated by her cruel and controlling husband, who might be said to be representative of the system. When V kills her

husband, she is unprepared for her newfound freedom from his rule, and her life is subsequently cast into chaos as she struggles to make sense of her new ability to choose for herself. She finds herself trapped in a downward spiral as she continues to seek a way to exist on her own while still, knowingly or not, capitulating to the existing power structures. Like Evey she attempts to rebel against and ultimately overthrow the system, in her case by assassinating Adam Susan. However, she is not properly prepared for this struggle, and she is consumed by the chaos of revolution and unable to weather these changes or to fully embrace her new independence; her attempted subversion is less successful and less complete, and she is captured and most likely executed.

On the other end of the spectrum, the next chapter will focus on the character of Helen Heyer, the wife of another member of the inner party. An abusive and dominating tyrant who controls her weak-willed husband with an iron fist, Heyer uses her connection to power as a way to further her own ambitions and to amass more power and influence for herself. She is the classic image of the corrupt kleptocrat, manipulating and abusing the hierarchical system in which she lives in order to benefit herself and only herself, with her actions contributing to the detriment and suffering of those around her. Her ultimate loss of power and subsequent downfall parallels the downfall of her rigidly structured society: when there is no longer a hierarchy to manipulate, she is powerless; when the system collapses she is left to the mercy of the rioting populace.

The next chapter focuses on Eric Finch, the previously referenced head of Norsefire's investigative wing, referred to as the Nose. Though he shares none of the convictions or politics of his party, he nonetheless passively perpetuates and enables

the governmental powers and controls imposed on his fellow citizens. When he ultimately goes against the will of the government by continuing to pursue V, he nonetheless does so within the strictures imposed by the government, and to further the government's ends. Neither completely free nor completely bound by the hierarchy in which he lives, the government's collapse finally releases him from the bonds that he was unable to fully escape while it still existed. He is therefore in many ways the average person, not fully dedicated to the government, but too passive and comfortable to subvert it by himself, and requiring violent revolution to be begun and largely carried out on his behalf in order for him to finally lay claim to the liberty that awaits him.

Finally, this dissertation will consider the character of Valerie Page, a lesbian and actress who was imprisoned in one of the government's concentration camp due her sexuality, and who ultimately died there as a result of the experimentation that was carried out upon her. Before dying she was able to pass a note to V, which was part of the impetus that set him on his course of anarchy. Ostensibly a victim of society, Valerie subverts this role and escapes the hierarchical system not by acting upon it outwardly, as most subversive characters do, but instead by looking within herself and rejecting the hold that society has over her. Embracing her difference and her choices, she declares herself to be, and dies, free.

Each of these seven characters experience and interact with power in very different ways. Throughout the graphic novel, several of them are seen growing and changing as a result of the influence others have over them, and as the system and their own spheres and abilities of influence are altered. Through a consideration of each of these characters, this dissertation will seek to understand the ways in which

power is created and used in a hierarchical sociesty, how it can affect the trajectory of a character's life and the ways it impacts upon their relationships to others and to the society in which they live. By bringing to bear Michel Foucault's theories about power relationships, this dissertation will reflect upon the power dynamics at play throughout V for Vendetta.

Graphic Novel as a Form

While the "graphic novel" itself is a relatively recent innovation in the field of literature– the term was first proposed in 1964 by fan historian Richard Kyle in his essay *The Future of "Comics"* (Kukkonen 19) – graphic storytelling had been the principal means through which it was possible to communicate with a largely illiterate population for centuries before the term's creation. This goes back even to ancient times, when cave paintings and later works of art such as friezes, triumphal columns, and tapestries were used to communicate historical events and ideas (Dillon 244-270). Illuminated manuscripts and illustrated bibles have also been in use for centuries, marking one of the earliest combinations of text and images that did not have to remain in one location and could be transported to readers. (Dyrness 37) Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, works that could be classed as comics, typically single panels with text under the art, were often created to comment on religion, politics or current events, as instructionals, and also as part of a growing tradition of satirical works using images with text (Smith and Duncan, 2009). It wasn't until the Industrial Age was well underway that pictorial storytelling began to be used purely for entertainment by the average reader. This was due to a combination of the ready availability of the technology necessary to mass produce these works, as well as general advancements in technology granting the working class more leisure time that could be used by consuming works of literature, including comics. Periodicals, and especially humour periodicals, were created in this period of time, many of them with the aim to satirize the then contemporary society; Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's* Almanack, which was printed between 1732 and 1758, and which featured many

political cartoons, is probably one of the best known early examples of this burgeoning field. (Tychinski)

It was not until 1842, however, that the first of what might be called a traditional comic was published, when Rodolphe Toffler produced The Adventures of Obadiah Oldbuck, a serial relating the story of a young man and his girlfriend. From there the medium underwent a period of continuous evolution until the publication of The Yellow Kid by Richard Outcault. This newspaper strip, which recounted the adventures of the eponymous Yellow Kid, was the first to achieve widespread fame, so much so that its very presence in a publication was known to increase sales, which resulted in two rival newspapers, the Truth and the New York World, competing in order to host its stories. (Tychinski) While comic strips continued to be famous and popular with readers, especially among soldiers, it took until 1933 for the first independent comic book to be created. M.C. Gaines is acknowledged as having published the first comic book, New Funnies, an anthology collection of daily newspaper strips. This was followed shortly thereafter by the first independently published comic book story that was composed entirely of new, non-reprinted material, Humor Publication's Detective Dan.

Action Comics #1, published in 1938 by the company then known as National Allied Publications, Inc., saw the introduction of Superman, the first superhero, and this is generally regarded as the beginning of the Golden Age of Comic Books, a period which continued until 1950, and which is so-called because of the surge in importance for this relatively novel literary form in the publishing world, and for the high number of famous characters that were invented during this period of time. The end of this age is widely acknowledged to be due in large part to the publication of

the essay Seduction of the Innocent by psychiatrist Frederic Wertham. This essay stirred up concern and moral panic over the potential effect that violence in comic books could have on the psyche of the public, particularly on the young children who often consumed them most. The ensuing public outrage and backlash led to the advent of the Comics Code Authority, a regulatory body that was created by the publishers in order to avoid government censorship, allowing the companies to self-police their own comics with a series of extremely restrictive rules that heavily censored the content of the stories, the so-called Comics Code. Without Comics Code adherence, it was impossible for creators to publish under the auspices of any of the major companies. As a result of the implementation of the Code and its constraints on what could be published, authors were forced to write more outlandish or buffoonish plots to compensate for the sudden lack of violence; this goofiness and unseriousness came to typify this era of comics, which came to be known as the Silver Age. Because of this rapid change in subject matter and shift in tone to a general silliness, comics became known as being a medium "for children", a label that they still carry to this day. (Tychinski)

To escape the censorious reach of the Comics Code, many creators refused to produce work for traditional publishing houses, and turned instead to self-publishing as a new venue through which to present their true artistic visions. (Rothschild XIII) The comics that were published in this way were referred to as "underground comics," and represented a significant phase in the overall development of the graphic novel, helping to establish many of the traditions and styles, both in terms of the art and writing, that are in use to this day. In The Graphic Novel: an Introduction, Jan Beatens and Hugo Frey explain that "underground comics invented formats and contents for

future graphic novels" (Beatens 59), while Sean Carleton argues in Drawn to Change: Comics and Critical Consciousness that the "mainstream resurgence in the late 1970s" was built on the "relative success of the underground movement[.]" (Carleton 155) Without this period in comic book history, it is unlikely that the modern comic book landscape would look as it does now.

As noted, the Seventies saw a massive resurgence in mainstream comics of "longer and […] more serious engagements with historical and contemporary political issues." (Carleton 156) This marked the beginning of the Bronze Age of Comics, and, starting from this point, comics underwent a marked darkening in terms of both tone and acceptable plot lines and character arcs, with many authors choosing to confront serious political and social issues, such as drug addiction, racism, poverty, and corruption. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that, in this climate of growing seriousness, the term "graphic novel" began to gain traction with a small group of artists during this period, as it did not carry with it the previously mentioned stigmatic connotation that was attached to the word "comics". These advocate artists included creators such as Richard Corben, Jim Steranko, and George Metzger, who, in 1976, put the term "graphic novel" in the introduction, on the cover, or as a subtitle on their respective works; (Beatens 61) in 1974, Jack Katz described his series The First Kingdom as "the first graphic novel"; (Katz) and in 1978, Will Eisner used the term as a subtitle to his A Contract with God, erroneously believing himself to be the first creator to use it. By the early 1980s it was an accepted term in the comic book community, but was not known outside of this circle. It was not until Art Spiegelman's Maus (published as a collected work for the first time in 1986) that the term "graphic novel" made its way from the niche comic community into the popular lexicon, as his

combined biographical/autobiographical retelling of his father's historical account of civil life as a Jew in Poland before and during the Second World War, and of the horrors of Auschwitz, caught the attention of comic fans and the general public alike. (Carleton 157)

The term "graphic novel" is not without its detractors, however, one of the most prominent among them being Alan Moore himself. In an interview with Barry Kavanagh to the website Blather, he explained that in his opinion "[i]t's a marketing term" that "just came to mean "expensive comic book"" and that it has its "roots in the need to dissemble and justify [reading and enjoying comic books]," and thus "exude[s] a sense of desperation, a gnawing hunger to be accepted." (Kavanagh) In the Sandman Companion, Neil Gaiman, another well-respected comic book author, responded to the claim that he writes graphic novels rather than comic books by saying that he "felt like someone who'd been informed that she wasn't actually a hooker; that in fact she was a lady of the evening."(Bender 6) Finally, Giles Coren, a writer for The Times, said the use of the term is a way to give comic books an air of pretension, as "to call them graphic novels is to presume that the novel in in some way 'higher' than the karmicbwurk (comic book), and that only by being thought as a sort of novel can it be understood as an art form." (Coren) While these objections are valid and convincing, and it does seem that the line between "graphic novel" and "comic book" is, for all intents and purposes, a distinction without a difference, still for the sake of clarity this dissertation will refer to V for Vendetta as a "graphic novel." This nomenclature will be used with the understanding, however, that the term can be, and indeed is to be, read interchangeably with the term "comic book," and that the only real difference between the two is their size and style of presentation, with the former

having the length of a novel and being presented as one unified whole, while the latter is more akin to a short story, and is typically presented as many separate elements, as a chain of ongoing, serialized stories.

Much like a traditional novel, the graphic novel has a distinct form and language of storytelling that borrows and builds upon the structures of several other sources, but is unique to itself. In Comic Books and Graphic Novels in their Generic Context, Andrés Romero Jódar posits that this literary form is inspired by both traditional and modern forms of visual art, explaining that the "codecs that govern narrative enunciation in graphic novels borrow from older models of visual storytelling that date into classical antiquity" and from conventions like "certain techniques from cinema." (Jódar 117) Moreover, in Teaching Historical Agency, Clark J. Spencer builds upon this idea of the graphic novel as a literary text, writing that;

> The graphic novel is an extended comic book that treats nonfictional as well as fictional plots and themes with the depth and subtlety that we have come to expect of traditional novels and extended nonfictional texts. (Spencer)

In other words, the flexibility of this literary form allows the authors to face and explore a wide array of themes and genres. This is a concept and a benefit to the nature of the graphic novel that is reiterated by Eleonora Brandigi in *L'archeologia del* graphic novel wherein she highlights the medium's "duttilità" and its "plasticità metamorfica[.]" (Brandigi 21) By combining the best aspects of literature and visual art, poetry and cinema, the graphic novel is able to explore concepts and to lay out new ways of interpreting and interacting with ideas that would otherwise be impossible. It is by bringing the visual and the literary together that either's true

flexibility and depth can be explored, and the graphic novel allows for the inspection and exploration of an entirely unique method of storytelling, and one that is able to create exciting new stories.

In the end, however, the most useful way to define the graphic novel is not to focus on its flexibility, or on the way it can be used as a vehicle for genres that range from speculative fiction to autobiography with seemingly no constrictions, but on the way in which it tells its story. The means through which it does so are what Will Eisner, the creator of the graphic novel A Contract with God, defines as "sequential art[,]" (Rothschild, XIII) namely a cohesive sequence of images with a textual element, unlike the novel, that uses almost exclusively text.

V

Very little is known about the man who calls himself V. All that is known for certain is that he was probably raised in England, and was certainly present when the bombs fell and the war began. After the war he was identified by Norsefire as a social undesirable-- his "crime," whether it was his race, his religion, his sexuality, his politics, or any other element of himself, is as unknown as his name-- and was incarcerated at the Larkhill Resettlement Camp, one of the concentration camps run by the government as part of their campaign against minority groups and dissidents. There, he was the subject of medical experimentation, which enhanced his body and intellect while also rendering him insane. Driven by a new purpose, he managed to orchestrate the destruction of the camp and escape it, travelling to London where he began his terroristic plot to bring down the government and to return the people of England to a state of anarchy. Cunning and manipulative, he manages to undermine the political and social structure of Britain over the course of a year, successfully overthrowing the government. He dies in the midst of the death throes the old world order, passing his mantle on to his protégé Evey.

Before proceeding to discuss V's position in the power structure, it is worth considering his visual representation in the graphic novel. He is almost never shown without his mask, and, when he is, his face is covered by shadows (Moore 9, 83). It follows that he is incapable of displaying any facial expression other than the one pictured on the mask he is wearing in that moment. As a way to circumvent this problem, David Lloyd uses shadows and different perspectives to convey what

emotion V is feeling in any given panel. For example, on page 19, the panel focuses in closely on his face, making the smile of his mask almost disappear while he talks of how culture has been eradicated, and of how instead of music now there is only "his master's voice. Every hour on the hour[,]" emphasizing his anger and disgust at the situation. On page 29, on the other hand, his smile is clearly visible as he comforts Evey, displaying a softer side to the immovable mask.

His usual costume-- the mask that he wears and the style of clothing he is almost always depicted in-- is a homage to Guy Fawkes, an English Catholic who was one of the members of the plot to bomb the British Parliament as part of an attempt to assassinate the king. This is confirmed in a message from David Lloyd to Alan Moore;

> I was thinking, why don't we portray him as a resurrected Guy Fawkes, complete with one of those papier mâche masks, in a cape and conical hat? He'd look really bizarre and it would give Guy Fawkes the image he's deserved all these years. We shouldn't burn the chap every Nov. 5th but celebrate his attempt to blow up the Parliament! (Moore 272)

A similar sentiment is shown in V's speech to the country in the Prologue to Book 3, The Land of Do-as-You-Please, in which he describes Guy Fawkes as "a great citizen" who "made a most significant contribution to our common culture[;]" (Moore 187) that is, he attempted to subvert a government he did not agree with by using his own means, which is an example of liberty in action, even if it was an attempt to instate absolute monarchy in the United Kingdom. This chosen way of presenting himself highlights V's revolutionary spirit, and his desire to destroy what is in order to make way for a new way of governing. While he typically wears Guy Fawkes' face, he

switches masks depending on the occasion. This is seen, for example, when he dresses as Mr. Punch, an extremely popular and well-known character from traditional British theatre culture, to meet with Lewis Prothero. This may be seen as V simply interpreting another role and playing a different sort of character, in this case taking on not the role of revolutionary but that of the comical and violent storyteller, as part of his interactions with Prothero, which largely involve reminding Prothero of the story of their shared history. This considered use of his appearance for storytelling is evidenced by his explanation to Evey, while partially quoting William Shakespeare, that, "all the world's a stage. And everything else is vaudeville." (Moore 31) For V, then, his appearance is an element of the performative nature of the way that he interacts with and enforces his will over others.

Moving on to consider the rigid power dynamics of Norsefire's Britain, V might be said to be a powerless character, in the traditional sense of the hierarchical structure, as he holds no formal position of power, and has none of the traditional benefits of such a position to support him or his goals. Certainly just a few years before the beginning of the graphic novel he was amongst the most disenfranchised of its citizens, being an interned prisoner at a concentration camp, subject to dehumanising and dangerous medical experimentation, as well as a total loss of liberty and bodily autonomy. However, throughout the story he is one of the most powerful characters, in that he is the one who appears most able to bring his will to bear on others. Unlike the other characters in the story, V stands outside of the hierarchical system throughout his time in the graphic novel, refusing to submit to it or to allow it to control him. He is able to do this by slipping the bonds of personhood and taking on an identity not as a person, but as an idea. Throughout the graphic novel he emphasizes

this concept, that he is not a person, that there is in truth no man behind the mask. Indeed, he goes to great lengths to erase his self, systematically eliminating every person who knew or might know who he was before he was V, expurgating the last remaining record, that of Delia Surridge's journal, to ensure that he could never be identified. As he explains to Finch during their confrontation, "[t]here's no flesh or blood within this cloak to kill. There's only an idea[,]" (Moore 236) that is, he is beyond personhood, and in this way he has transcended the power system in which he once lived. He uses this facelessness to differentiate himself from others, to set himself apart from them, and also to create in effect a sort of vacuum of identity. By being this mask, this idea, he makes himself an entity of almost infinite possibilities. Because he has no identifiable characteristics, he can be assigned whatever characteristics a person should choose to attribute to him. He could be anybody or anything, can be all things to all people. As Evey says in the aftermath of his death,

> [...]you were so big, V, and what if you're just nobody? ...Or even if you're someone, you'll be smaller 'cause of all the people that you could have been but *weren't*... (Moore 250)

This identity-free identity is one of his most potent means of establishing his place as unique, distinct, "other," and, most importantly of all, as being outside of the system and not beholden to it or its requirements. By remaining the mask, V maintains this enigmatic power, this mystique that causes others to see him as something greater than they are, something that is able to act upon their actions and their wills with an almost overwhelming force, because it is not only a person.

Indeed, while he does not allow the system to control him in any way, he is more than content to use the system to manipulate others. Standing outside of the

system, perhaps as a result of his altered sanity, seems to have granted him an ability to see the strings on which the others dance, as it were, and to pull them as he pleases. He manipulates the traditional status quo to force others to act, aware of how their natures and the power imbalances between them will force them to act upon and against one another if he only removes a pillar or two of their rigid hierarchical structure. This is seen in the way his machinations start Helen Heyer and Peter Creedy on their course of attempting to grab as much power for themselves as possible, which further destabilized the government and was one of the key contributors in what ultimately resulted in its ruination. His facelessness further grants him a great deal of power in society. Perhaps the clearest example is his chosen symbol of Guy Fawkes, a deeply resonant cultural signifier of revolution, of the desire to overthrow the system. He uses traditional iconography such as this, as well as specifically targeting symbolic buildings and structures in his campaign of destruction, because he understands the power that these symbols and these ideas have within the psyches of the people and the cultural landscape in which they live, and the power they would therefore have to spread his message. He relies upon his skills and his knowledge-- partially inherent and partially expertly honed, and in either case on a level above any of his opponents or any of the common people of England-- to develop and maintain this level of power over others, this ability to grab and hold their attention, to force them to listen to him and to reexamine their lives and their choices.

V's relationship with others, however, is not designed or intended to control them, and he does not use what power he does have in order to entrench or reinforce his own power. He does not want to maintain his privileges or to accumulate more benefits for himself, nor does he even truly want to put himself in authority, as he

seeks a society which needs no leader, indeed, one in which he himself cannot even live. Instead, he uses what power he has, power that has been largely adopted and stolen from the system or from traditional sources of power, to reinforce the idea that there is no need for a hierarchical system, that there is no need for the power imbalance, that all of those who think themselves beneath him should instead see themselves as equal, both to himself and to everyone else in society, and so be free. This destruction of the hierarchical power structure does subserve another goal, that of seeking revenge on his tormentors, an end to which he works tirelessly in the early segments of the graphic novel, however his primary efforts are directed at freedom for the people. This objective, the goal of letting the people make their own choices and do as they wish, is best exemplified in the way that he does not lead the riots that ultimately destroy the government, nor does he personally execute Adam Susan. Instead, he sets the people free to make the choice to riot, as he sets Rosemary Almond free to make the choice to assassinate Susan. V's incitement of the people encapsulated the idea that,

> Liberty, by its very nature, cannot be given. An individual cannot be freed by another, but must break his or her own chains through their own effort. Self-activity is the means by which the creativity, initiative, imagination and critical thought of those subjected to authority can be developed. It is the means by which society can be changed. (Anarchist FAQ)

V is all too aware that simply destroying the system on his own, without preparing or involving the people in this decision or action, and then becoming its next leader will only create the same problems. It will result in the same dependencies that the people

have always had on leaders to make their choices for them, and nothing will change and nothing will improve. He wields his power then to only one objective, and only one purpose: liberty, the freedom of every person to choose for themselves. By letting the people decide what they wish to do with the system in which they live, V makes it clear that his only aim with his power is to destroy the system as it exists, and to give his power away.

V carries out and enforces his objective in three major ways throughout the graphic novel, these being violence, speech, and systems of surveillance. Perhaps the most obvious of his intruments is his use of arms and the threat of arms. V wields terroristic violence, and the threat of such violence, throughout the graphic novel; indeed, his first appearance is a violent attack on several members of the police force, and he follows this almost immediately by destroying the Houses of Parliament. (Moore 11-14) Violence is a well-known method of catalyzing revolution and galvanizing others to rebel that is typical of anarchism, as it is an aspect of their doctrine of the "propaganda of the deed," a way of expressing anarchistic ideals and encouraging others to adopt them (Merriman, 63). Like the anarchists of the past, V wields violence both as a means of destroying symbols of the system, and as a way of drawing the attention of the people. V knows that, "the anarchist revolution is about destroying structures, not people" (Anarchist FAQ), and so he actually kills relatively few people, typically murdering only those who he must, or those who he views as too corrupted to be able to change. He relies upon, and destroys, traditional ideas and images because he knows that by destroying them he can show people that the old ways, the old symbols, do not have to hold forever, and that the people can endure without the structures, and symbolically the systems, they have been raised to believe

must exist. His use of violence is entirely instrumental, carried out in order to establish the power relationship between himself and society that he needs in order to set the people free.

Though violence plays a large role in his campaign, it if far from the only method that he uses. V is noted by many other characters to be a magnetic and charismatic speaker, and he takes several opportunities to express his ideals with individuals and with the population as a whole. In A Vocational Viewpoint he speaks directly to the people, laying out his critiques of the system and of their complacencym and urging them to draw upon their individual power and rise up against their oppressors, saying,

> We've had a string of embezzlers, frauds, liars and lunatics making a string of catastrophic decisions. This is plain fact. But who elected them? It was you! You who appointed them! You who gave them the power to make your decisions for you! [...] You could have stopped them. All you had to say was "no." [...] You will be granted two years to show me some improvement in your work. If at that time you are unwilling to make a go of it... you're fired. (Moore 116-118)

By connecting with the people in this instance through literal speech, he begins to draw their attention to the fragility and the imbalance of the society that surrounds them. He performs similarly in future instances, using his attacks on people and institutions as a form of "speech" through which he lays out his ideas. In this way, V is able to spread his message, to entrench his image in the minds of the people, and to affect their actions.

Similarly, he is able to facilitate, through his conversations with Evey, her change from frightened child to a liberated woman, one who is able to freely discover and accept anarchist ideals. Throughout their interactions he essentially plays out, s though a representation in miniature of his efforts with the greater public, the method by which anarchy subverts the system. He begins by drawing her into his influence and introducing her to his ideas and his methods, which she rejects because they are new and go against everything she had been previously taught by society. Though she resists him, he slowly breaks her of her limiting beliefs through his various displays of propaganda of the deed, breaking her of the victimization that has been inculcated in her by the system, and in so doing begins to bring to her attention the strictures that surround her, and the unfairness of life in a hierarchical system. Finally he subjects her to torture and imprisonment, to the absolute pain of chaos in order to finally force her to see the prison that she is living in and to choose for herself, either to die or to cast off her chains. In this instance, he most clearly uses his speech to carry out his goal of setting others free. Throughout the graphic novel, his speech and his conduct with others are very effective methods by which he incites direct action, developing and controlling the power relationship between himself and society, as well as himself and individuals, which is necessary for his plans to succeed.

As noted previously, V is also adept at wielding the system itself as an instrument by which to generate the power that he needs to overthrow it. He coopts and uses the systems of audio and visual surveillance that the government has in place throughout the country, and uses it to manipulate others-- as when he informs Conrad Heyer of his wife's affair-- and to release the people from the threat of being surveilled-- as when he shuts the system down for several days. He also hacks into

Fate, the supercomputer that lies at the heart of government operations, and uses it to monitor the government's response to his efforts, to cause unrest by manipulating food deliveries and other governmental aid, and to disseminate his ideas to the people by mailing out subversive documents. In this way, he is able to place himself in power over the system by manipulating it, directing it against itself, and effectively forcing it to be complicit in its own destruction.

For V, the ultimate goal of all his maneouvring, the goal towards which he his actions are directed, is anarchy. Throughout the graphic novel he coopts and controls many different institutions and gets them to work for him, regardless of their initially intended use, regardless of whether they actually legitimize his actions. Beginning with the highest level of government and spiraling through its every level, from the police to the propaganda machine, and entering even into the less formal sphere by using traditional culture and inserting himself into the current popular culture, his access to and use of the institutions of society allowing him almost unprecedented power. He manages even to insert himself into individual personal relationships, creating rifts between characters and destaibilising alliances and associations as an aspect of his campaign. However, as a direct corollary of his anarchistic ideals, he believes in no institutions and seeks none to justify or condone his actions, as he abhors all hierarchical structures and all elements of such systems. Though he is opposed to a fascist state in the graphic novel, he would be equally unhappy with a democracy, for he rejects any form of leader, any cession of the individual's rights or powers to another. In this sense, considering Foucault's theory about power relationships, there is neither form nor institution that V seeks to establish in his relationship with others or with the state, and though he gladly wields and manipulates

them to further his goals, it is in full awareness that he will use them to destroy themselves. His goal is formlessness, the death of the institution, and the freedom from structure, from hierarchy, from the repressive rules that a social structure inevitably produces.

V is perhaps one of the most successful characters when it comes to the effectiveness of the instruments he uses and institutions he wields in order to drive those around him, and indeed all of society, towards his ultimate goal. His use of multiple instruments and institutions falls directly in line with his objective of generating chaos in order to push society over the brink, and he was able to topple the government and to effectively prevent a similar government from taking hold in the near future, thus fulfilling his one objective. His actions do have a great personal cost to him—he dies in order that his plans may be fulfilled. However, this is a cost that he pays willingly, even gladly, and so this seems to be, to V, a rational choice in the furtherance of his goals.

Adam Susan

Adam Susan is the dictator of the United Kingdom, and the primary antagonist of the graphic novel. The leader of the fascist Norsefire party, he is a man of exceedingly strict morals and unbending views about society and how it should be run. A socially inept and deeply disturbed man, he is obsessed by his need to protect his country, not only from the horrors of war and chaos, but also from the creeping societal rot that he sees as caused by people who do not conform to his vision of the perfect Britain, one that is white, heterosexual, and Christian. Domineering and ruthless, he exercises his will over the people with the help of his supercomputer, Fate, and through the assistance of his sprawling governmental institutions. Throughout the graphic novel he is seen attempting to grapple with the increasingly chaotic situation and rising tensions brought about by V's anarchistic campaign, ultimately resulting in his assassination at the hands of one of his former party members, Rosemary Almond.

In Adam Susan's case, the system of differentiations by which he gains the ability to act upon the wills and actions of others are not quite clear. By the time he appears in the comic he is well entrenched in power, and very little is shown to the reader to tell them how he got there. In his own words he describes himself as, "a man, like any other man[,]" who "sit[s] here within [his] cage and [he is] but a servant." (Moore 37-38) To Susan, then, there is no inherent difference of power between him and his subjects that would allow him to have any amount of control over them. What does differentiate him from the others is the fact that he has access to the

supercomputer Fate, through which he is able to observe and control the daily happenings in the country. His access to Fate is not something that is unique to him in and of itself, and others could use Fate if they were allowed, however it is an access that is jealously guarded by Susan.

How it was that he gained sole control over Fate, however, remains unclear, and Fate itself is something of a mystery throughout the graphic novel. The closest to an explanation that is given as to why he has possession of Fate can be gathered from a few small pieces of information that are scattered through the text. The first fragment comes from Evey in her retelling of the events that led to Norsefire taking control of the country; she recalls that they, "got together with some of the big corporations that had survived[,]" (Moore 28), potentially leading to the conclusion that the supercomputer was created by those corporations, and then given by them to the party as a means of support to aid in their conquest. The second piece of information comes from Helen Heyer in the chapter Vectors, when, talking about Susan, she mentions that he used to be "chief constable[;]" (Moore 225) in other words, he was never part of a corporation, but most likely instead always a member of Norsefire, which means he does not control Fate because he created it, but because he was given it. This still does not explain why he was chosen to access it above the others in the group. The one assumption that can be made is that he was granted such a privilege because he was the leader of the political group. This, however leads to a circular argument, namely that Susan has access to Fate because he is the leader, and he is the leader of Norsefire because he has access to Fate.

To understand Susan's position and the power that he holds, we must then look beyond Fate. Before Fate was in the equation, it is necessary that he had to be a leader

of some kind, and the only reason that it is possible for him to have been one is because the rest of the group allowed him to be. This falls in line with the concept of authority given by V in the chapter A Vocational Viewpoint, where, when he addresses the nation, he tells them that it is they "who gave them the power to make your decisions for you!" (Moore 117) that is to say, the leaders are in power because they were put in power, because others chose to put them there. In Foucault's words, "[t]he term "power" designates relationships between "partners"' (Foucault 337) for he considers it impossible to speak of power relationships when the subject has no other choice but to follow an order. Power over another comes when power is willingly ceded by the ruled, and only when a choice to go against the authority is possible and yet the will of the authority is followed anyway, not when there is no choice: or, in other words;

> Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are "free." By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available. Where the determining factors are exhaustive, there is no relationship of power: slavery is not a power relationship when a man is in chains, only when he has some possible mobility, even a chance of escape. (Foucault 342)

The system of differentiations that applies to Susan, therefore, is this: Adam Susan is the leader. He has been designated and accepted as such by the people, and by their relationships with him and by their willingness to submit to this designation, he becomes powerful. That is all that differentiates him from his subjects, and that is what grants him his power.

The second point that must be established to analyse his power relations over the country is the type of objectives that he pursues, that is, the ends to which he

directs his power. These can be found outlined most clearly in the chapter Versions, wherein he speaks at length about how he intends to "lead the country that [he] love[s] out of the wilderness of the twentieth century[,]" and how he believes in "the destiny of the Nordic race." (Moore 37) He describes the state of the country after the war using the words "desolation" and "ashes," and emphasizes the dire straits in which they find themselves; his primary aim is, in his words, one of the most basic and simple goals, that of the survival of his people. To Susan, the only way through which this survival may be brought about is through the imposition of order, unbending and unyielding.

This leads then to the form of institutionalization, namely, what system he is using to exercise and justify his power over the country and its citizens. In his case, he is clear in describing they system that he follows as fascism. From his monologue in Version;

> I believe in fascism. […] The Romans invented fascism. A bundle of bound twigs was its symbol. One twig could be broken. A bundle would prevail. Fascism… strength in unity. I believe in strength. I believe in unity. And if that strength, that unity of purpose, demands a uniformity of thought, word and deed then so be it. (Moore 37)

In this specific case, the fascist regime is founded on the cult of the supercomputer Fate, with the various branches of government being parts of its 'body'. The main parts are the Nose, Eyes, Ears, Mouth, and Finger, with all of them answering directly to Adam Susan, who controls Fate itself. The Nose deals with investigations, and is the police force of the state. The Eyes and the Ears control, respectively, the extensive network of surveillance cameras and hidden (or not so hidden) microphones that are

used to monitor and spy on the population, even inside their own homes. The Mouth oversees the state propaganda machine, with the Voice of Fate – an hourly news bulletin – playing a large role in their propaganda efforts. Finally, the Finger is more akin to secret paramilitary police, who enforce the rules and laws of the state with violence.

The leader, therefore, exercises his control through surveillance, propaganda, and threats of arms, with those who disobey his rules being sent to concentration camps. This amount of repressive power over the population is rationalized in his monologue, where he says;

> I will not hear talk of freedom. I will not hear talk of individual liberty. They are luxuries. I do not believe in luxuries. The war put paid to luxury. The war put paid to freedom. The only freedom left to my people is the freedom to starve. The freedom to die, the freedom to live in a world of chaos. Should I allow them that freedom? I think not. I think not. (Moore 38)

In other words, the necessity to overcome the desperate situation into which the country was plunged following the nuclear fallout superseded the right of the people to freedom and liberty. This is the first of the means by which Susan enforces his will, an aspect of the fascism that is his form of institutionalization.

However, Susan's power is not only a wholly negative, repressive thing. While many aspects of his power are harmful for his people, and certainly his rule as a whole is negative overall, there are aspects to it that the people clearly find comforting or positive, as they still allow themselves to be ruled. Indeed, while their society is intensely controlling and the people must live in fear of their government, it still offers

them some benefits. For example, and perhaps most obvious, it offers them some sense of stability and structure, something which numerous characters, particularly Finch, reflect on as being particularly valuable after the constant turmoil and upset of the previous years. Susan, like many repressive leaders, seems to ascribe quite heavily to the doctrine of bread and circuses to appease the masses. He is in control of the food supply for the entire country, and it is through him that they are fed. Further, through the Mouth, Susan disseminates all manner of frivolous entertainment, such as Storm Saxon, to keep the people entertained and docile. He also allows, or at least does not stomp out, the sexually charged nightclubs like the Kit Kat Keller, further means of entertaining the masses. In these ways he keeps the public comfortable, docile, and ultimately complacent. After all, what does the average citizen, who has no particular traits that the government might seek to target and eliminate, care about the threat of the Fingermen, so long as they will be fed, so long as the trains will run on time? What reason do they have to rebel, to retract the authority to rule them that they granted to Susan, and to Norsefire, so long ago? This falls in line with further theorizing by Foucault, who said;

> "[…] it seems to me now that the notion of repression is quite inadequate for capturing what is precisely the productive aspect of power. […] If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no; it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network that runs through the

> whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression." (Foucault 120)

While Susan's government is ultimately repressive, and undoubtedly violent, it also creates; it creates stability, jobs, food, entertainment. This is the second of the means by which Susan's will is enforced on the people, the second expression of his particular form of institutionalization.

Considering this theory of relationship dynamics as power, in many ways Susan is one of the most trapped of all the characters in the graphic novel, because he is completely subject to the will of the people. After all, it is only by the collective will of the governed that he is in the position that he is, for the people have agreed to cede their power to him. He is in an exceptionally tenuous position, for if the governed should refuse to accept his authority, then his authority no longer exists. Indeed, as V systematically subverts his people and they grow to question and reject his control over them, his control over the country, Fate, of even himself, wanes dramatically. It is only by being accepted as leader that Adam Susan is able to exercise any amount of control, or to pursue any goals. Without the acceptance of the governed, even his most powerful weapon, Fate, is meaningless.

The supercomputer Fate is central to the structure and perpetuation of the Norsefire government, it is necessary to describe Adam Susan's relationship with it. As a machine, it would be impossible to declare it a "free subject" as Foucault intended it, for it cannot choose how to act, and thus cannot choose to accept or reject Susan's authority; in this sense, Fate is a slave to Susan, and cannot truly be considered as existing within the power structure of Norsefire's society. Logically speaking, the supercomputer is nothing other than a means by which Susan controls

the country, the way in which his will is carried out and reinforced. However, Susan does not consider Fate to be merely an object or an extension of his power over society; instead he refers to it his "bride", describing it as if it were a person, and further characterizing it as an omnipotent, omniscient being, describing it thusly;

> She has no eyes to flirt or promise, but she sees all. Sees and understands with a wisdom that is godlike in its scale. I stand at the gates of her intellect and I am blinded by the light within. How stupid I must seem to her. How childlike and uncomprehending. Her soul is clean, untainted by the snares and ambiguities of emotion. She does not hate. She does not yearn. She is untouched by joy or sorrow. I worship her though I am not worthy. I cherish the purity of her disdain. She does not respect me. She does not fear me. She does not love me. They think she is hard and cold, those who do not know her. They think she is lifeless and without passion. They do not know her. She has not touched them. She touches me, and I am touched by God, by destiny. The whole of existence courses through her. I worship her. I am her slave. (Moore 38)

Fate is, for Susan, a superior being with godlike abilities towards whom he feels a slavish devotion, and whom he works tirelessly to please, though he realizes it will never love him back. He describes himself as its servant, and it as his love. This humanization of Fate is perpetuated by V, who describes the way he has hacked into the supercomputer as if it were an act of romance, telling Evey, "you see, [Susan] possessed at home a wife that he adored. He'll rue his promiscuity, the rogue who stole my only love, when he's informed how many years it is since first I bedded his."

(Moore 201) Furthermore, after Adam Susan has discovered V's hacking, he assigns the computer some of the blame, as if it were a cheating spouse, thinking, "she betrayed me." (Moore 232) Taking into account the fact that he strongly believes Fate to be a sentient being that is capable of making choices, this section will proceed to treat it as such in order to examine the implication of the power relationship between it and the leader.

Before it is possible to proceed with an analysis of such relationship, however, it is necessary to examine what Fate stands for in Susan's mind. When he thinks back to his past in Vindication, he says that he "talked to God, while colleagues laughed, but I was vindicated: God was real, embodied in a form that I could love." (Moore 232) This would lead to the assumption that he believes the computer to be God; however, in Versions, he says that it "touches [him], and I am touched by God," (Moore 38) implying that they are two different beings, and that God acts through Fate. The next most likely assumption, therefore, is that it is named Fate because, in his mind, it in fact symbolizes fate- that is to say, divine providence, that driving, unknowable force that permeates and controls all lives, driving them to their inevitable final destination. As power and control over the entire nation is what he desires, it would make sense for him to wish for complete control over the course of every life and event to be something that he can easily gain access to with the press of a button. This theory seems to be further confirmed when V tells Evey that "soon, everyone shall drink" from the metaphorical well of knowledge that is Fate. While he means that everyone will soon be free to access its knowledge, it is worth noting that, as an anarchist, his ultimate aim is for people to overthrow their government and to take back control over their own lives; it is, therefore, quite fitting for him to take fate, the

control of their lives and their futures, away from the grasp of the leader and put it instead into the hands of the people.

Now that it has been established that Fate exemplifies providence itself, it is necessary to determine which one between it and Adam Susan is the authority in this power relation. A cursory glance at the chapter Versions would seem to imply a simple answer to this question: Susan continuously refers to himself as "her slave," and states over and over that he worships it. (Moore 38) This would suggest that Fate, while not sentient or able to choose for itself in any meaningful way, is in control of their relationship, a status quo that seems categorically impossible. However, in that same chapter, when he says that "she" has touched him, it is in fact he who presses the button to turn Fate on. (Moore 38) It is also he who authorizes Finch to access the computer, (Moore 63) and, in general, he is the one who uses it as a way to control the country. In every instance, the only actor in the situation is Susan; Fate is always passively manipulated. No matter how much he insists to the contrary or how loudly he proclaims his devotion to her vicissitudes, it is Susan who is the figure of authority. It is to make it easier for him to control fate, the fate of the nation and of its people, that it has been given the form of the computer as it is depicted in the graphic novel; and it is in order to pursue his objectives, namely that of the survival of the country and of its people, that it is used.

Susan controls Fate, and he wants to control fate, but he couches his desires in terms of worship because, as his constant references to God and the divine proves, he needs to have something greater than himself, something that he is able to point back to as the ultimate moral arbiter, something upon which he can depend to justify his every action and thought. He needs this plausible deniability with himself, this sense

that his power is only an extension of the power granted to him by something greater, something that knows and will act toward the best ends (or, at least, what he views as the best ends). He is enamoured of the idea that Fate has blessed his actions, and that he is able to do what he does because Fate allows it. However, he is still ultimately the one in power over this greater being. After all, it isn't Fate that places these ideas in his head, or Fate that tells him what to do with its power. It is only him.

Susan's efforts to control both Fate and fate are ultimately subverted, however, and his empire is smashed to ruins around him. For as much as he talks about Fate being in control, it is clear that Susan wants Fate to submit to him, to love him, as he puts it, and to be in his control. He wields Fate as his tool throughout the graphic novel, but is never able to gain what he truly desires, the too-human ability to submit, to submit ones will or ones self to another. This is what Susan's desire for Fate's love speaks of, his need to possess it utterly, and so control it. However he never controls Fate fully, and ultimately it is taken from him by V, who hacks into it and manipulates it for his own ends, destroying Susan's government and ultimately his mind. If we return to the theories of Foucault we may say that while Fate is in effect a slave, in the end it was able in some way (through V's machinations) to escape, to resist and refuse Susan's commands. In this way Fate becomes a sort of free subject, and rejects the rule of fascism, thus reinforcing the idea of the hierarchical power structure as a relationship, and one that is composed and reinforced by the choices made by the governed. Without Fate's passive consent to be governed, Susan had nothing.

Susan's ultimately futile desire to possess and dominate Fate is emblematic of a greater symbolic point: the human incapacity to control the course of fate. For as hard as he works to capture it and to hold it, Fate easily slips through his grasp, eluding

him. For all the power that he has and all the methods that he uses to enforce and wield it, his efforts are ultimately ineffective, as they are unable to truly capture the randomness of life. It is not possible for any person, whoever they are or however powerful they are, to control the whole course of all human lives, a few human lives, or even, indeed, their own life. All people are, to some extent, acted upon by outside forces, and however much they act upon others, those others also act upon them. This is very clear for Adam Susan, who works hard to dominate those around him, but who is ultimately wholly reliant on those same others to prop him up and to serve him. This reliance on his belief that he can truly completely govern those who he relies upon, including his reliance on Fate, is what dooms him. The concept of fate, like the computer Fate, is not a being, and not able to choose to submit itself to the will of any person, and so it cannot exist within a hierarchical power structure. It cannot be governed and it cannot be directed; any attempt to do so will only lead to ruin.

Evey Hammond

Born and raised in London, Evey Hammond was a young girl at the time of the war. Losing both of her parents during the war and its aftermath-- her mother to food shortages and illness, her father to the secret police when his politics became too outspoken-- Evey was raised by the state from the age of 12 to the age of 16, when she turned to prostitution to support herself. During her first attempted solicitation she accidentally propositioned a Fingerman, a member of the secret police, and was nearly raped and murdered by him and several other Fingermen before she was rescued by the passing V, who took her under his wing. Later, she is abandoned by V and spends some time living with an older man, Gordon Dietrich, who cares for her until he is murdered, setting in motion the chain of events that send her back to V, who tortures her in much the same way that he was tortured at Larkhill, in an effort to free her from the chains that society has forced her to wear. Initially naïve and foolish, she is massively influenced by V, and her own growing awareness of the wrongness of the society in which they live, and ultimately she accepts V's views, and steps into his place when he dies just as his plan is complete.

When the graphic novel begins, Evey is an incredibly weak and disempowered character, a victim of the system and of those in more power than herself, but throughout her journey she grows to become a powerful character who exercises her own will. As the narration at the opening of the story explains, "her transactions, her decisions are insignificant. They affect no one... except her." (Moore 10) Little more than a child, she has no position of authority from which to act upon others; indeed,

her situation is quite the reverse, her will is acted upon by others. To begin with, she is controlled utterly by the state, unquestioningly accepting that its authority is omnipresent and cannot be overthrown. Incredibly naïve and weak-willed, when the graphic novel begins she has no concept of the idea that one might rebel against the system. When V destroys the Houses of Parliament her first reaction is to return to the juridical system in which she has been raised, saying in horror, "but that... that's against the law!" (Moore 14). Evey is further controlled by the economic system, which forces her to work and yet does not provide her enough to live on. She holds a poorly paid job that was assigned for her by the government and which barely supports her. She is forced to turn to prostitution in order to even scrape a meagre subsistence. This in itself reflects the societal and traditional systems of misogyny and disenfranchisement of women present in Norsefire, yet another system to which Evey is forced to submit, which place women in the position of "lesser than," and enforces a narrow field of work in which a woman might be successful, or which she may use to support herself.

However, it is not merely these systems that control her, for in her relationships with others Evey is constantly submissive, unwilling to choose for herself or accept responsibility, and instead insisting on others taking control of her life. She has accepted the role designated for her by the state, that of powerless victim who in some ways welcomes the weight of repression, as it gives structure and meaning to their life. When V removes her from the government's immediate influence she latches onto him, attempting to use him as a figure of authority to give her life direction, as he possesses power over her in the sense that he possesses differences in his knowledge and competence, as well as being physically more capable, and mentally

more aware, than she. Early in their association she makes a play at making decisions for herself, saying to V,

> I mean, part of me just wants to stay in here forever and never have to go outside and face what's going on... but that's not right, is it? That's not taking responsibility for myself, like what you said. (Moore 43)

Despite this espousal of her belief in the importance of personal responsibility, in truth Evey seems to be seeking merely to have V tell her what to do, emphasized by the way that she explicitly states at the end of the quote that she is merely parroting his views. This emphasizes the instability of her position and her relative powerlessness in her relationship with V at this point, for,

> [a] person is strong only when he stands upon his own truth, when he speaks and acts from his deepest convictions. Then, whatever the situation he may be in, he always knows what he must say and do. (Meltzer, 2)

At this point in her life, Evey has no truth upon which to stand, no internal strength to draw upon with which she might support her decisions or her actions. Indeed, she does not freely choose what role she takes in V's plan or to what end she is used, once again finding herself used as a pawn by someone more powerful than her, directed to do something that she does not want to and regrets doing afterwards. Despite this, even as angry and upset as she is in the immediate aftermath of Bishop Lilliman's murder, she still seeks to submit herself to V, as emphasized by part of her tirade, where she says, "V, I didn't know you were going to kill him! Killing's wrong. Isn't it?" Even at this moment of outrage, she simply asks to be told that it is not, and

would presumably accept and internalize his answer if he told her it was not. Shortly thereafter V abandons her, and she immediately seeks and receives the comforting mastery of Gordon Dietrich, a member of the criminal underworld, and a man many years her senior, who holds power over her in terms of social and traditional systems, and also as a result of the fact that he is in an economically more stable and powerful place than she is. She accepts his control over her, and the power differential in their relationship, because it provides her with the stability and the freedom from choice and responsibility that she seeks.

After she is tortured by V, which is not only pain in the literal sense but also the symbolic pain of revolution, Evey undergoes a shift in her relationships to others and to the world that is not unlike the one experienced by V during his time in Larkhill. Like V, Evey becomes aware of the prison that she has been living in all her life, the prison of the hierarchical power system, with its extreme differentials of power. Also like V she chooses to reject that system, to move beyond it and to take full and genuine control over her life and living in the land of do-as-you-please. I is important to note that, though V helped to push her along her journey, Evey ultimately freely shoes to take this final step to liberate herself, choosing to embrace death and die free rather than to submit to the will of what she believes to be the government any further, stating, when she is offered one final chance to capitulate, "[t]hank you... but I'd rather die behind the chemical sheds." (Moore 162) This yet again reinforces and reiterates a central anarchist theory, which holds that, "[l]iberty by its very nature, cannot be given. An individual cannot be freed by another, but must break his or her own chains through their own effort." (Anarchist FAQ) By rejecting her chains in this way, Evey refuses to cede control of herself to any systems, and in her relationships with others begins to see herself as an equal whose choices are just as valid as any other's. This

is best displayed in the way that she handles V's offer to get revenge on her behalf against Alistair Harper, the man who murdered Dietrich. Where once she might have simply acquiesced to V and allowed him to carry out his planned murder, she instead refuses him, declining to pluck the rose meant for Harper and instead urging V to, "let it grow." (Moore 177).

At the beginning of the graphic novel, Evey pursues only one type of objective: survival. At this point, she is interested only in remaining alive, in remaining safe and fed and preferably taken care of and protected by somebody else, with no concern for others or for society as a whole. As such, her objectives may be said to be somewhat selfish: when she acts upon the wills of others, it is to seek her personal betterment, or at least to prevent detriment. As she grows and changes throughout the course of the graphic novel, however, so too do her objectives change. During her associations with V, and afterwards while living with Dietrich, Evey slowly grows towards an awareness that she should perhaps be interacting with society and others in a meaningful way, reflecting to Dietrich, "We shouldn't have to live like this. Should we?" (Moore 130) This displays her trend towards a broader objective, social reform. However, her progress is halted by Dietrich's murder, and Evey returns to a basic and selfish objective, seeking revenge against the murderer, Alistair Harper. She is prevented from killing Harper only by the intervention of V. After she has the bars of her cage revealed to her, Evey finds herself, like V, to be standing outside of the hierarchical system, and to no longer have traditional objectives. Rather, she seeks to carry on V's plan to overthrow the system and show the citizens of the UK that they do not have to go on living as they are, that they are equal and they do not need a system to define or command them. In this sense, then, her objective is to free the people and destroy the need for a system of power to exist at all.

When the graphic novel begins, the instruments that Evey wields in an effort to gain or maintain power over others are unsophisticated and largely unsuccessful. When she first appears, she is attempting to use her sexuality in order to gain support for herself, in this first case in the form of money. This is a pattern that she repeats, or attempts to repeat, several times, beginning with her interactions with V. Though it is never explicitly stated, shortly before he puts her out of his home, she asks why he never seemed to be attracted to her and never sought to begin a sexual relationship with her. This suggests that she expects on at least some level to have to use her sexuality as a means of "paying her way" to the safety and security offered by V. Later, her relationship with Dietrich is similarly sexual, and while she seems to genuinely love him, it cannot be denied that this is also a method, whether conscious or not, of ingratiating herself with him and ensuring that he will continue to protect her.

Another method that she uses to convince others to care for her from the beginning is a consistent attitude of submissive passivity. By going along with the will of others, agreeing with them, and at least on the surface espousing their views, she protects herself and furthers her goals by convincing them that she is on their side and thus they should support her. This is most clearly seen with V, whose views she parrots during their early association, and whom she seeks to help because she believes that being seen as useful will convince him to keep her with him. As she says to him when offering to help his plans, "I should try to help you, the way you're helping me. I mean, that's the deal, isn't it?" (Moore 43) For Evey, at this point in her life, the only instrument she has available is herself, and her willingness to do what others tell her, and to subsume her beliefs and personal feelings in order to maintain her support system.

By the end of the graphic novel, Evey has come to accept and embrace the instruments in use by V, as she takes up his mantle. Though she was initially resistant to his use of violence, she comes to accept the necessity of this propaganda of the deed. To this end, she finishes his plan to demolish Downing Street with a train loaded with explosives, showing that she understands that in order for anarchy to prevail they must first destroy the system, as it is only from out of the rubble that they can begin to rebuild. She also begins to develop speech patterns similar to V's, showing her understanding of the importance of persuasive speech in drawing others to her side and convincing them to see the world as she does. In her first public action as V she makes a public and bombastic speech inciting the people to rise up, finally pushing the simmering social unrest into full-scale rioting. In her final scene, she is seen speaking to the police officer Dominic Stone, who she saved from the rioting, in much the same way that V once spoke to her, implying that she intends to replicate the way in which V took her under his wing and helped set her free with Dominic as the new protégé.

As her first attempts to exert power are clumsy and largely unsophisticated, it is perhaps no surprise that the actual outcomes of her early attempts to exert power were minimally effective, and their cost was exponentially greater than the potential benefit to herself. This is seen, for example, in her first attempt at prostitution, an attempt to better her financial position that nearly resulted in her murder. Throughout her growth and the maturation of her methods, Evey becomes gradually more skilled at wielding different instruments to more effective purposes, and directing them to more complex goals. As she grows and changes she does not necessarily exert power to less potential harm to herself, given that she was still near to death in V's fake prison, but she does so secure in her convictions, towards an end beyond her own

immediate gratification, and closer to a symbolic ideal. To this end she comes to exemplify the idea that, in adhering to her beliefs and wielding the instruments at her disposal to aid those beliefs, "whatever the situation [s]he may be in, [s]he always knows what [s]he must say and do. [Sh]e may fall, but [s]he cannot bring shame upon [her]self or [her] causes." (Meltzer 2)

Her physical representation greatly changes throughout the graphic novel, developing with her as she grows. When, at the beginning, Evey is oppressed and dominated by the economic and political systems that surround her, she is depicted as a teenager with a very youthful appearance. Her eyes are particularly overdrawn, looking slightly bigger than the rest of her face, as if to underline her fear and sadness when she is looking at herself in the mirror before prostituting herself for the first time, (Moore 10) or her surprise when V saves her from the Fingermen (Moore 12). In this first section, she has long hair and childlike expressions, being even able to pass as a much younger teen with Lilliman; (Moore 47) she looks, in other words, like the powerless child she is and feels. Her relationships to even the most informal forms of institutions are extremely weak and broken: she has no family remaining, and no subculture to attach herself to. Her very identity and her relationship to herself is incredibly tenuous, as she has allowed the government to inculcate in her the identity of a victim, taking on the submissive stance of accepting others' views as her own with minimal persuading. As V says, "[t]hey made you into a victim, Evey. They made you a statistic. But that's not the real you. That's not who you are inside." (Moore 29)

As her relationship with V first, and Gordon afterwards, grows -- alongside and at pace with her awareness of the unfairness of the power imbalances inherent in the

fascist state—Evey's appearances loses some of its youthful looks and becomes more adult. That is especially seen in the way her eyes are drawn, as they are much smaller than in the first volume. The most obvious example of this can be found on page 123; like page 10, the reader gets to see her reflection in the mirror, but this time her eyes are not overdrawn, she is not wearing poorly applied make-up, and she looks much more composed as she lies about not thinking of V anymore. This transformation is momentarily reverted on page 137, in which she is sitting on the stairs of Gordon's house, staring at his corpse and thinking back to some moments of her past life where she felt especially powerless, like when her mother died, her father was arrested, and when V abandoned her outside of the Shadow Gallery. In this page, her hair is dishevelled, her eyes are wide open, and her face is drawn as rounder than usual- an expedient, the last one, usually used to make drawn characters look younger. Afterwards, during her nightmare, she is drawn as she was when she was offered to Lilliman: her hair is worn in braids, and her pink dress with ribbons is another way to make her look especially childlike. (Moore 143-147)

She undergoes a radical change in the prison built by V. There her hair is shaven, and she becomes increasingly more emaciated as time goes on. The shadows on her body exaggerate her wrinkles, making her look much older; her clothes cover her form, making her look androgynous. (Moore 162) This is done to show the physical and mental suffering she is going through, as the shadows exasperate her facial expressions, making her rage look almost beast-like and transforming her face into a mask of suffering (Moore 170). However, this also shows how her identity, until now connected to the role of victim, has been slowly stripped away from her, culminating in the scene on the rooftop where she stands, naked, under the rain, awakening a new self. (Moore 173)

From then on, she grows physically stronger. Her hair is still short, the expression on her face more decisive. She is completely in control of herself, and when she looks at herself in the mirror one last time, she has the same unnatural smile of the Guy Fawkes's mask, symbolizing her becoming the new V. (Moore 250)

Rosemary Almond

A docile and timid woman, Rosemary was the wife of Derek Almond, an inner party member and leader of the Finger. Constantly abused both physically and emotionally by her husband, she finds herself on her own when he is unexpectedly killed by V. Adrift, she attaches herself to another party member, Roger Dascombe, whom she dislikes, and who only maintains a relationship with her out of hatred for her late husband. When he too is killed she is forced to find a job as a showgirl in a nightclub. Finding herself to be growing increasingly disillusioned with Norsefire and its vision of England, she purchases a gun from the black market and assassinates Adam Susan.

In her very first appearance there is a marked visual contrast between her and Helen Heyer. Rosemary is depicted as being dark haired and wearing modest, dark clothes that almost blend with the background (the last panel on page 45 is an excellent example of this), while the latter stands out in her completely white outfit. This little detail is a first hint at the contrasting role they each inhabit; Rosemary is the timid victim of her husband, while Helen is the cruel abuser of her spouse.

This positioning is confirmed at the end of this scene, as Rosemary's comment that Helen is "a bit hard" on her husband makes Derek snap into a condescending rant throughout which he belittles her before finally ordering her to "[j]ust shut up. That's all[,]" (Moore 46) establishing him as the torturer in their power dynamic. The system of differentiation, what allows him to be the authority, is hinted at to be principally economic in nature, as evidenced when Rosemary says that, "I can't get a job. No

experience, you see[,]" and continues on to say that she "was stuck at home" and Derek "connected [her] to the world[.]" (Moore 104) By marrying him, she has implicitly accepted the role of the subservient wife who is supposed to look after the house (she outright states that a primary reason why she has no experience is that she "had a home to look after..." (Moore 104)), while the husband goes out and earns money.

The objective of this relationship is not completely clear on Derek's side, yet his objectives and his state of mind when it came to their marriage is central to Rosemary's experiences and the path that her life takes. Derek seems to terrorize his wife for the sake of it, which is often the case in abusive relationships, as fear is an excellent method by which to keep control over the other. Feeling in control is also another likely reason for his treatment of her; Derek is often disrespected at work, as shown for example in the chapter The Voice, where Roger Dascombe, leader of the Mouth, mocks him for his failure to prevent the bombing of the parliament (Moore 17). In the same chapter, Adam Susan shouts at him because of that same failure, blaming his "incompetence" for the "jarring propaganda defeat" caused by the terrorist attack, and, as an interesting parallel with Derek's "[j]ust shut up. That's all[,]" (Moore 46) to his wife, the leader tells him first "you will be *silent"* and then, after giving him his orders, "[T]hat will be all, Mr. Almond." (Moore 16) His lack of control in his job is likely why he is so cruel to Rosemary.

As for Rosemary, her primary objective is survival, both during her relationship with Derek and after his death. She expresses this clearly in her monologue following Derek's death and funeral, saying, "[w]e've all got to just carry on. That's how we survive. That's our purpose. Our purpose is to survive. Whatever

that takes." (Moore 105-106) During their relationship, she clung to him despite his violence and cruelty, because it offered her a sense of stability and support in the world. Reflecting upon their relationship and how she felt about him and how she feels without him, she says,

> You're gone, Derek... and I'm alone. ... And Derek, where I am, it's cold and dark and it's frightening. And this world is so dangerous. You're naked in the rain. Everything's been taken away...all the security and the warmth and the shelter. [...] I thought about you, Derek. About having sex and the fighting and the drink and I really did love you. You were my lifeline. I was stuck at home. You connected me to the world, and I'm still clutching at you. Even though you're broken and I'm adrift... (Moore 102-104)

For Rosemary, this relationship was painful, but it was what she knew, and she saw it as a shelter, as protection from the world. Because of their relationship, she has no job and no support network outside of Derek.

The form their power relationship takes is the institution of the traditional family, with Derek, the husband, as head of the family, and Rosemary as the submissive wife. There are several ways in which Rosemary has power exercised over her by her husband, the first, and most subtle, being the previously mentioned economic abuse. Rosemary reveals, in the chapter Various Valentines, that before they had gotten marries she had worked at a bank (Moore 205). While it is likely that the reason that she stopped working was the beginning of the nuclear war, it is very plausible that she never went back to work because her husband prevented her from doing so, a common method of control that would have forced her to depend on him financially. The most obvious way in which she is controlled, however, is the verbal, emotional and physical

abuse that Derek directs at her regularly. When, in the chapter Violence, she begs Derek to communicate with her, he slaps her, bruising her cheek and throwing her to the ground (Moore 66). Later on in Venom, he points his gun at her while she is in bed and pulls the trigger, saying, when it does not go off, "Don't worry, Rose. I didn't load it. Not tonight." (Moore 71) He also withholds sex from her as a means of punishing her, and then he blames it on her, saying "it's nothing to do with me. Maybe if you took the time to make yourself more attractive… oh, get out of my sight." (Moore 66)

As just shown, the instrumental modes by which Rosemary is controlled are self-explanatory. It is not totally clear, however, how effective those measures are. At the beginning of the graphic novel, the Almonds seem to have reached a sort of equilibrium; Derek has an almost complete control over his wife, while Rosemary is able to survive. While the relationship is definitely abusive, they both seem to have achieved the objectives they are pursuing through their power dynamic. With that said, it is very likely that Derek's threat is not just psychological torture, but actual escalation that would have eventually led him to actually kill Rosemary, destroying the power structure created between them. Nonetheless, that is conjecture, as soon after his threat Derek is killed.

In Venom, Derek dies by V's hands, leaving Rosemary without her torturer. This should logically lead to her freedom, but it instead starts her on a self-destructive spiral that slowly breaks her spirit, a change in her personality that is reflected in the art, as her facial expressions become more and more flat and empty as time goes on. Her objective remains the same, namely survival, but as a subordinate she cannot think of herself without a figure of authority that can grant her what she seeks. When she talks

of her husband's death, Rosemary tends to refer to him as a protective cover, and of herself as being now naked. This is shown for example in Various Valentines when she says, "you [Derek] died and left me bare in front of strangers[,]" or in Veil when she describes mourning as akin to being "naked in the rain." (Moore 102) This choice of words is especially interesting when considering how Evey feels following V's torture and consequent awakening. She tells him that she feels scared and, most importantly, cold, to which he responds by saying "[t]he door of the cage is open, Evey. All that you feel is the wind from outside." (Moore 171) Soon after she stands naked in the rain, a final act that is symbolic of sealing her transformation. Similarly, Eric Finch refers to V's actions as him taking the metaphorical lid off of people's feelings about the war, (Moore 252) and when he accepts his new self he does so by standing naked in the nature, embracing the world outside the cage of society.

At this point in her life, Rosemary has been given the chance to step out of the prison that surrounds her and become free. By killing Derek, V has opened the door to her cage, intentionally or not. However, while Evey and Finch embrace this hypothetical outside world, Rosemary finds it bleak and frightening. As she says in her monologue in Veil,

> […] when you're a widow, the world looks different. You step through a curtain and you're in a place where people treat you differently. A bleak place. [...] And Derek, where I am, it's cold and it's dark and it's frightening. And this world is so dangerous. You're naked in the rain. Everything's been taken away… all the security and the warmth and the shelter… and you'll try any refuge. […] All the world you understood has gone and everywhere looks sinister and different. You're fumbling in the dark… and then you make contact. […] ...and it might not be pleasant, and you might be repulsed and draw back from it, no,

> not that, anything but *that*... but, really, where else can you go? What other choices do you have? Except carrying on, down into the dark. Alone. Completely and utterly alone. (Moore 101-103)

Rosemary has been cast by V into a world where she is the only authority on herself, one in which she is not chained to anyone else. However, this existence frightens her, for she has not chosen to escape these chains. She is used to her position in the hierarchy, and the learned helplessness that is typical of some survivors of abuse keeps her in her role of victim even without an abuser. This freedom intimidates her enough that, soon after her husband's funeral, she submits herself to someone else in exchange for that structure she is used to, even though, as shown in Veil, she hates it and "[h]e revolts [her]. He makes [her] feel dirty." Nonetheless, this new authority is there, and that is good enough for her, as she "can't face going into the dark. Not on my own." (Moore 106)

Voltairine de Cleyre argued that "I never expect men to give us liberty. No, Women, we are not worth it, until we take it." (249) With this she meant that freedom cannot be given, but rather must be earned, and until it is earned it is not deserved. In Rosemary's case, she refuses freedom and self-dependence in exchange for protection, and when her life crumbles around her she asks herself "who has done this to me?" (Moore 205), using her position as a victim to shift the blame onto someone else. It is this refusal to accept her own role in her self-destruction that leads her to assassinate Adam Susan, who she identifies as the only authority with enough power to be her scapegoat. Her rejection of autonomy and personal responsibility is clearly articulated in her final thoughts leading up to the assassination;

> Yes, despite my fear, because it's insignificant, like everything about me. […] Yes, because our [hers and Derek's] lives were wasted on your visions, and they were all we had. Yes, because

> I can't bear what you've done to us. Yes, because history's moving my legs and nothing, nothing can stop me. Yes, because your kind led us to hell, and now you say our only hope is sterner leaders. […] Yes, because I had a life, a world, a marriage, and I valued them but you didn't. (Moore 234)

In this monologue she is giving every reason why she is going to assassinate the leader. Throughout this, she still describes herself as something of a puppet, as someone who is not in control of herself. She is not going to shoot Adam Susan of her own accord; instead, it is history that is moving her legs, and in fact she is afraid of what she is going to do. However, she is insignificant, which means that her feelings on the matter are to be brushed aside. Most importantly, she believes that Adam Susan is to blame for everything that has happened to her, which is yet another way to make herself a victim. In Video, V outright states that the blame cannot be given only to the authority, because it can only exist as long as someone gives them the power to make their decisions for them. (Moore 117) Rosemary's act of rebellion, in other words, is nothing other than the final demonstration of her desperate acceptance of her role as a victim.

Helen Heyer

A manipulative and domineering member of the inner party by virtue of her marriage to the leader of the Eye, Helen Heyer is excluded from any position of real power by her gender, due to the party's prevailing attitude of misogyny. Exceptionally ambitious, cunning, and ruthless, she exploits and controls those around her, particularly her husband Conrad, in order to gain and maintain power for herself. Her manoeuvring is partially responsible for the collapse of the government, as she actively works to displace certain party members with those who are loyal to her, and wages a campaign to destabilize Susan's rule when she sees that he is losing his grip. Despite her extensive and carefully plotted plans, she is ultimately displaced from power by the fall of the government, and left destitute in the streets of a burning, ruined London.

In one of his dialogues with Evey expounding on the nature of the societal structures in which they live, V describes the only interpersonal relationships that it is possible for any person to have in an authoritarian (and thus a hierarchical) society thusly;

> Authority allows two roles: the torturer and the tortured; twists people into joyless mannequins that fear and hate, while culture plunges into the abyss. Authority deforms the rearing of their children, makes a cockfight of their love… (Moore 199)

In other words, a hierarchical society requires that there is a leader and a follower, a controller and the one whom they control, and by living in such a society

human beings, and thereby their relationships, inevitably also conform to this pattern of interrelation. It may be said, then, that all relationships are inherently abusive, as such relationships are defined by the need of one partner to completely control the other,1 in contrast to a healthy relationship which finds both partners on an equal footing.2

It is certainly not a coincidence that this conversation in the graphic novel immediately follows after a private scene between Helen Heyer and her husband Conrad, a member of the Norsefire government. A seemingly intimate scene in the bathroom, it features Helen ordering her husband to towel her off after she takes a bath, a casual assertion of her dominance over him, and her ability to command him to act in a demeaning way. Throughout their interaction she is extremely condescending towards him, constantly belittling him and his achievements, saying, for example, "I suppose I shall have to do everything, as usual" and describing him as a "quite a successful young man" whose personal and professional successes are "entirely due to [her] efforts". (Moore 199)

This scene provides just one example of the constant barrage of emotional abuse that Helen puts her husband through in every one of their interactions throughout the graphic novel. In her first appearance she interrupts her husband mid-sentence by exhorting him to not "be such a bloody bore[,]" then humiliates him in front of his friends and colleagues by reducing his job as head of surveillance for the government—a department colloquially referred to as the Eye-- to "professional peeping tom," calling him "England's highest-paid voyeur." She adds further insult to injury by saying that he wants to go home to "watch what the neighbours do after Sunday lunch, rather than do anything ourselves, of course[,]" further humiliating him

as punishment for his extremely timid attempts to interject and stop the conversation before she can insult him any further. (Moore 45-46) Though she implies that Conrad is disinterested in anything other than voyeurism, and that this lack of interest is fuelling their nonexistent sex life, it soon becomes clear that it is actually Helen who withholds sex as a means of controlling and punishing her husband where she sees fit. This is shown in the chapter Vectors, during which Conrad attempts to initiate intercourse. Helen rejects him quickly and cruelly, pushing him away and telling him that she might be willing to have sex with him in the future, when he becomes leader of the country. In this way Helen displays her willingness to manipulate everything she has at her disposal in order to completely dominate her husband and control him to her own ends, a typical expression of abuse in intimate partner relationships.

Indeed, Helen displays a clear pattern of using sex as a tool of manipulation and control throughout the graphic novel. She withholds it from Conrad, offering it to him as a promised reward should he do what she wants, as above, and also uses it as another weapon in here arsenal of weapons to belittle and demean him, and thus further reinforce the complete emotional control she has over him; it is hinted that she is purposefully coquettish and flirtatious with other men in front of him specifically to humiliate him. This is seen in The Vision, when she flirts with Derek Almond in front of Conrad and Almond's wife, Rosemary, treating him as a dashing man of danger whose life and work are "dreadfully exciting" and asking Rosemary if she is "glad [she's] got such a ruthless, implacable brute for a husband," before turning around and insulting her own husband in the same breath. (Moore 46) She displays this same mercenary attitude in her approach to sexuality in her interactions with Alistair Harper, a Scottish gangster who works for the secret police. She initiates a

sexual relationship with Harper, largely as a way to add a further layer of control over him in what had previously been a purely financial relationship.

Her use of sex is distinct from the only other sexual relationship depicted on panel in the graphic novel, that of the relationship between Evey and Gordon. While their relationship presents obvious and problematic power imbalances in its own way--particularly their age difference, which appears to be substantial, and the fact that she literally relies on him in order to survive-- their sexual relationship is a mutual choice and an expression of affection and love, with neither attempting to use it to establish control over the other. Helen's use of sex as means of control is instead very similar to the sexual relationship between Derek and Rosemary Almond, the other abusive intimate relationship in the graphic novel. Rosemary notes during one of their interactions that Derek has been withholding sex from her lately, an aspect of his controlling and abusive nature. This eliminates the possibility that Moore may be castigating Helen's sexual relationships merely because she does not conform to traditional sexual mores, as Derek's similar behaviour is seen as almost identical to (and just as reprehensible as) Helen's own. For Moore, then, it is not sexuality itself, nor a dominant female sexuality, that is problematic; instead, it is the use of sex as a tool, and in particular its use in order to reinforce the power imbalance inherent in hierarchical society.

Throughout the graphic novel, Helen is almost completely focused on dominating others using emotional or sexual abuse. Whenever she appears on-panel she is making great effort to subtly undermine or exploit others to her own end. This is seen, for example, in The Vision, in which she compliments and emphasizes Derek's manliness in order to further highlight her husband's perceived weakness.

She also deftly uses the opportunity to casually insult Rosemary, asking her a question without actually caring to let her respond, quickly and effortlessly establishing herself as the dominant party in their social interaction. (Moore 46) Another example of this can be seen in her first meeting with Alistair Harper, where she greets him by saying, "[i]n future, you'll be punctual. I don't like waiting[,]" (Moore 204) firmly establishing herself as the one in command, and effectively placing him in the position of subordinate.

Indeed, the relationship that Helen has with every other person with whom she interacts in the graphic novel is exclusively and ruthlessly utilitarian. Every single person she talks to is a pawn, every single interaction a means to some sort of an end, which range from simply insulting her husband, to taking control of the entire country. Her utilitarianism is a theme that runs strongly through her two major relationships in the comic, the relationship she has with Conrad, and the one she has with Harper. In the former, it is obvious from almost their first scene that she has married him, and remains with him, because he is extremely easy for her to control, and because he is well placed to take command of the country should something happen to Adam Susan, which would in turn allow her to govern the country from the shadows. She outright states that her ambitions are the reason that Conrad has the place he currently holds at the head of the Eye, implying that the machinations seen in the graphic novel are just a small part of a grander scheme that has spanned years. This is seen in a conversation she has with Alistair in which she says

> You've no idea how hard it's been, manoeuvering [sic] him into a position where he can take charge. Of course, I'll be making all

> the real decisions… backed up by your muscle, obviously.
>
> (Moore 228)

This quote not only perfectly encapsulates how she regards her husband, but also the way she sees Harper fitting into her plotting, namely as her "muscle." At this point in the graphic novel Harper had been hired by Creedy in order to help replenish the forces of the Finger, the secret police force who had been working overtime in order to combat the chaos and disorder into which the country had been plunged in the wake of V's efforts at destabilization. Harper accepted a bribe from Helen to betray Creedy, along with her promise to make him the head of the Finger when she takes control of the government through her husband. Her use of Harper in this way is yet another advancement of her grand plot to rule the country, as it is shown that in the event of the Leader's death the leader of the paramilitary force of the country will take control until such time as a permanent replacement is found. Harper's place in her plotting, and her unsentimental use of him as a tool to further her own ends rather than as a person, is firmly revealed after his death at the hands of her husband. As Conrad lies dying she shouts at him, saying, "Christ, I had it planned. I had it all planned!" (Moore 256), revealing that even at the moment of her discovery of his death she harbours no sadness or regret for the loss of her co-conspirator and lover, but only anger at finding that his place in the plan has been left suddenly and unexpectedly vacant.

In a similar way to Adam Susan, Helen Heyer's downfall comes as a result of the actions of someone she had considered subordinate and almost beneath her notice or attention, spurred by the destabilizing influence of V. Once again V takes on the symbolic position of the entropy of life, in this case revealing to Conrad that his wife

is cheating on him with another man. Unlike Susan, however, she is not betrayed by her victim; instead, she is undone by his faithfulness and loyalty to her. Conrad's subsequent actions are, in his own words, an attempt to show her that he is the "best man[,]" and another desperate effort to please her. Though her control over him is total, and though her position as leader in their dyad is not threatened, she is still unable to achieve her objectives, and she ends the graphic novel broken and powerless.

Through her character and her relationships, Moore addresses and demonstrates two key themes. The first is the natural inability of people to control every aspect of life, and particularly to control other people, and that any such attempt at total control will eventually cause even the most powerful and domineering authority to ultimately crumble. The second, displayed when Helen refuses to help the mortally wounded Conrad, leaving him to bleed to death on the floor as punishment for his failure, is that being a faithful follower is no guarantee of survival, as in a hierarchical society the one who is at the bottom of the ladder is at the complete mercy of those above them at the top.

There is a final lesson to learn from Helen, and one that is unconnected to her relationship with her husband, but rather explores her place in the grander system. At the very end of the graphic novel, when the country has fallen into complete and violent chaos, its government unseated and control dispersed to the people, Helen is encountered by Eric Finch in a group of men, where she is implied to be offering sex in exchange for food.4 When she notices Finch she immediately attempts to latch onto him, telling him that, "[t]ogether, we can salvage something. This mob aren't much, but given time we could build a small army. We could restore order." (Moore 265)

However, he refuses to join with her, and abandons her bereft and powerless and at the hands of the rioting populace, effectively stripping her of the only means of control she has ever known. In this way Moore demonstrates the ultimate truth that authority is nothing without followers.

Eric Finch

A policeman working for the Nose, the investigative wing of the party, Eric Finch is a principled man who has allowed his principles to be subsumed by his need for stability and safety after the war. Sharing none of Norsefire's politics or convictions, he nonetheless carries out its will as part of his job. Assigned to hunt down V, Finch grows increasingly obsessed, and commensurately unhinged, by his target. Returning to London after a drug-fuelled vision quest at the site of the Larkhill Resettlement Camp, he is the only member of the party to locate V. He shoots and kills V, all according to V's plan. In the aftermath of the government collapse, he departs London in a daze.

Similarly to Evey, Finch goes through a profound development of his character that fundamentally changes his role in society and his personal beliefs about power and government. He begins the story as head of the Nose, placing him within the system as one of the most powerful characters in the graphic novel. He is granted such power by Adam Susan, in spite of Susan's knowledge of Finch's negative opinion of the regime, as seen in page 30 when Finch explicitly tells Susan that he does not "go much for this 'new order' business. It's just my job, to help Britain out of this mess[,]" and the leader responds by saying "that you are still alive is a mark of my respect for you and your craft[:]" that is to say, that his investigative skills are strong enough that Susan is willing to overlook his nonexistant support for the new order and for the government, which typically demands total and complete obedience from its subjects. Finch himself accepts his role in the government not because of fear, mor because he

is forced too, but because he believes that the repressive system in which they live is preferable to the alternative, as outlined by his considerations in the chapter Vestiges.

> These must be the ovens. Ovens for people. People ovens… […] If I'd known this was happening, would I still have joined the party? Probably. No better alternatives. We couldn't let the chaos after the war continue. Any society's better than that. We needed order… or at least, I did. Losing [his wife and son] like that. Everything was disintegrating and I just wanted... to… (Moore 211)

As shown in this paragraph, he believes that the unmitigated chaos in the aftermath of the nuclear fallout had to be stopped at any cost, and that enforcing a rigid and oppressive system over both the country and his own life was the only way to do so. In other words, even a highly repressive and hierarchical power structure such as Fascism is better than a systemless state, because it is guaranteed to bring order and control, regardless of the costs.

The form of institutionalization he uses to achieve his objective of order and peace is the Nose, which is, as previously noted, the investigative wing of the state police force. As England in V for Vendetta is basically a police state, it follows that he has at his disposal an immense amount of instrumental modes through which he can exercise his power. The first and most obvious tool at his disposal is the police force itself, which is comprised of countless detectives (usually in the background, as seen for example in page 23), forensic scientists (mostly hinted at, though on page 63 the reader is introduced to a medical examiner), and Dominic Stone, an intelligent younger agent who is his second in command. Other than officers and resources

available to the police force, his role also allows him to use the services of both the Eyes and Ears, which affords him almost total surveillance of the population. An example of this can be seen in the chapter Virtue Victorious, in which he is able to reconstruct Bishop Lilliman's last moments thanks to a recording given to him by Brian Etheridge, leader of the Ears (Moore 59-62). The final tool at his disposal during the story is Fate itself, which grants access to all possible records and information available to the whole of the government and its agencies in Norsefire's England. However, this particular instrumental mode is not usually at his disposal; as he explains to the medical examiner, "the leader's authorized an extension link for me" because of the exceptional circumstances of V's actions (Moore 63). Nonetheless, the fact he can be granted this privilege puts him ahead of most of the population, adding to his power over others.

The question is, then, is the enormous amount of power he possesses sufficient to achieve what he wants? At a first glance, the answer would appear to be yes. The fact that the leader respects his investigative abilities so much naturally leads to the conclusion that Finch is, in fact, very capable in what he does, and since his job is to maintain order and investigate crime, it should follow that he manages that brilliantly. However, the graphic novel shows a different story. His main objective is to understand and capture V; he fails. He is supposed to interrogate Prothero after he has been released following a session of mental torture conducted by V; Finch only manages to get the clue about "room number five" out of him, and only by accident. (Moore 42) He is not the one who comes up with the idea that V might come from the Roman number V, which is the piece of evidence that, in his own words, "cracked" the case. (Moore 69) He sets off to save Delia Surridge, the last of V's victims, and

fails to prevent her death. His position as a high level authority in the government, and all the power that comes with it is, by and large, absolutely useless when he attempts to apply it.

The turning point of his entire character comes in the chapter Vestiges, in which he decides to visit what is left of Larkhill Resettlement Camp and take the hallucinogen LSD while there in an effort to try and understand V's origins, because, as he says of V, "he was drugged too, locked away to die, and he reached some understanding." (Moore 215) Before this chapter, Finch has always been drawn as a composed, clean-shaven man, always wearing a clean shirt and tie under his trench coat and often seen smoking a pipe. (Moore 58) By the beginning of Vestiges, which follows all of his above listed failures and the gradual worsening of the social and political situation in England, he is growing stubble and appears more dishevelled, showing in this way his slow loss of control. (Moore 211) This gradual change abruptly accelerates once he takes LSD and his journey of self-discovery begins, as one of the first things that happen is that his clothes turn into a stereotypical black-and-white prisoner's uniform. (Moore 212) This happens as he tries to leave the camp and the exit moves far away from him, effectively trapping him in the camp. While this occurs he thinks, "I'm trapped in a job that **disturbs** me, but I can't **tell** anyone. I'm so alone..." (Moore 212) As previously stated, his job is his position as head of the Nose, implying that he feels trapped in his role as an authority, i.e. a torturer. Further evidence of this is shown when he starts hallucinating about all of the minorities that have been killed by the regime he has aided, and whose deaths he was therefore complicit in.

> Oh Jesus, I've missed you. I've missed your voices and your walk, your food, your clothes, your dyed pink hair. […] Say you saw beyond my uniform. Please say you knew I cared. I... [the hallucinations start to leave] Wait... wait! Where are you going? Please... please don't leave me. We treated you so badly, all the hateful things we printed, did and said... but please. Please don't despise us. We were stupid. We were kids. We didn't know. Come back. Oh please come back. I love you. (Moore 213)

He pleads with them to assure him that, even though he was one of their oppressors, they knew he cared, begs them to stay with him and to forgive him for what he has done as a party member; in other words, he desperately asks them to absolve him from the overwhelming guilt he feels as a result of the position he holds. The scene moves on, and he next finds himself thrown in jail. His internal monologue continues; "how did I get here, to this stinking place: my job, my life; my conscience; my prison..." (Moore 215) Again, he refers to his job as something that holds him captive, an imposition on his choices and his conscience, something stifling that forces him to act against his own better judgement. Even though he is one of the torturers, he resents his role. However, in his desperation, he finally understands how he can free himself from it.

> I look at this mad pattern, but where are the answers? Who imprisoned me here? Who keeps me here? Who can release me? Who's controlling and constraining my life, except... me? (Moore 215)

Once Finch understands that the only one who is keeping him in his role is himself, the prison explodes around him, setting him free. In the following panels he sheds his prisoner's uniform, standing naked as if to symbolize his rebirth as a new man, unchained and outside of society's structure. (Moore 216)

In the chapter Vindication, he finally manages to find and kill V, finally completing one of his objectives now that he has finally escaped the prison in which he had been living as a result of his work. He does not do this because it is his duty, however, but rather because he had promised himself he would, which is why he then refuses to reveal where the Shadow Gallery is to Dominic. (Moore 240) He recognizes that the regime is crumbling and refuses to stay there as it happens. As he says in his last conversation with his second-in-command, "I'm following my own orders now[.]" (Moore 252) Having finally seen the bars of his prison and moved beyond them, Finch is able to stand upon his own convictions.

While the graphic novel ends with him free of the shackles of the system he felt imprisoned by, his future remains uncertain. On page 252, he says that the state "kept the lid on [people's] bitterness for years, but we haven't helped them deal with it. Maybe he didn't either, but he certainly took the lid off[,]" and continues by saying that the same thing happened to him in Larkhill. His bitterness, the emotional wounds caused by the loss of his family, have not been healed by his awakening; they have just been unshackled from the repressive bounds of society. Whether that is good or not is not clear, just as it is not clear how he is going to fare as he walks away from London on an empty street towards The North.

Valerie

An actress from Nottingham, Valerie Page was an out lesbian before the war began, and in its aftermath she was among the social "undesirables" who were arrested and sent to the Larkhill Resettlement Camp. There, she was housed next to the man who would become V, and was subject to the same medical experimentation as he was. Slowly dying as a result of her treatment, she passed her biography, written on toilet paper, to V. In it she explained her unwillingness to bend or to lose herself to the government. She died soon thereafter.

While her face appears in a couple of panels, such as, for example, in some posters in a room V has dedicated to her (Moore 175) and in scenes taken from one of her movies that he is watching in The Vortex, (Moore 85) in her own chapter, Valerie, she is only shown from behind. In the one section that goes in depth into her story and her mind, all the reader is allowed to see of her is her blond hair and, in one panel on page 156, her hand as she talks about her first girlfriend, who she fell in love with because "[h]er wrists were beautiful." The choice not to show her face in the chapter that delves into her character may be partly because Evey, who is the one reading her letter, has no idea what she looks like, and for at least some of the time does not even believes Valerie is real. However, another explanation comes from the ending paragraph of the letter itself, in which Valerie writes, "I don't know who you are, or whether you're a man or a woman. I may never see you […] but I love you." (Moore 160) Her love for the reader is not tied to the specific person, to their

appearance or to their character, but rather to the simple fact that they are fellow human beings. By making the reader fall in love with Valerie despite not knowing her face, Moore and Lloyd intend to inspire that feeling of brotherhood that should be part of an ideal society.

As an openly homosexual woman in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the United Kingdom, Valerie was in an incredibly precarious position in terms of the traditional hierarchical structure in which she lived, and from the outside looking in she appears to be perhaps one of the least powerful characters portrayed in the series. Within Foucault's system of differentiations she is substantially disadvantaged due to the strong traditional societal disapproval for her sexuality, and is doubly disadvantaged by her sex, whose subordinate position in society is heavily reinforced by Norsefire's misogynistic doctrines. In her relationship with others, and with society broadly, Valerie is almost always the objectively weaker of the two parties, and her subordinate position is reinforced constantly throughout her life. When she comes out to her parents as a young woman in 1976 she is disowned and thrown out of her home; when Norsefire comes to power in 1992 her partner is kidnapped and tortured, and Valerie herself is interned in a concentration camp and subjected to horrific treatment. Here the power of the state to control her is absolute, her bodily autonomy is taken from her, and she is eventually killed, all aspects of the state's superordinate position over her, a reinforcement and manifestation of the extremity of their power differential.

Despite all of this, however, despite her apparent powerlessness, and despite finding herself in unimaginably bleak conditions, Valerie remains unbowed. Her entire life is a tapestry of quiet resistance to the status quo, of refusal to allow others

to have power over her fundamental sense of self, over her own mind. Before the rise of Norsefire, it is the heteronormativity of society that attempts to control her. When her parents tried to punish her for who she was, and so change her into a socially acceptable puppet, she refused to accept this imposition onto her fundamental self, and she left home rather than bend to their wishes. Pursuing her dreams, she finds work as an actress, and becomes romantically involved with another woman, living the life that she wants to live. After Norsefire's rise to power the fascist state seeks to create strength through unity, and unity only through the destruction of anything perceived as "other." Per Lewis Prothero in Vaudeville, who explains, "we had to do what we did. All the darkies, the nancy boys and the beatniks… it was us or them" (Moore 33), it is clear that Valerie's very otherness was perceived as threatening, as a societal ill that needed to be stamped out. Rather than repudiate that part of herself she embraces it, and goes to her death remaining true to herself, maintaining that sliver of self, that awareness that, so long as she believes herself to be free, she will never be powerless. As she herself explains in her autobiography,

> I shall die here. Every inch of me shall perish... except one. An inch. It's small and it's fragile and it's the only thing in the world that's worth having. We must never lose it, or sell it, or give it away. We must never let them take it from us. [...] I know every inch of this cell. This cell knows every inch of me. Except one. (Moore 160)

Though she is powerless to any observer, though her life is taken from her by those who stand above her in society, Valerie refuses to be a subject of the hierarchical system of power. Throughout her life she acts only upon herself, and makes no attempts to enforce her will on anyone else, pursues no objective but to live her best life at peace in and with herself.

Valerie repeatedly steps outside of the system, constantly rejecting its goals and its pressures, and cultivating freedom within herself. She does not exercise power in the traditional way, for she has precious little to wield throughout her life. Instead, her exercise of power is a conscious refusal to cede her sense of self, her ideals, to others. Her control of herself remains absolute, that maintenance of her final inch of self the instrument by which she overthrows the hierarchical system. Anarchist theory holds that,

> To be dominated by another is to be denied the chance to think and act for oneself, which is the only way to grow and develop one's individuality. Domination also stifles innovation and personal responsibility, leading to conformity and mediocrity. (Anarchist FAQ)

With this in mind, one might theorize that, for all her powerlessness, for all that she suffers and all that she loses, Valerie is never truly dominated by the hierarchical power structure of her society. Her rejection of conformity is absolute even to the end, and her hold on her individuality and personal responsibility is equally powerful. In this way Valerie acts against the state, and against all those who would oppose her, threatening no force, seeking not to dominate or enforce her will onto others, but merely to coexist, to be allowed to govern herself, to choose what she does and who she loves.

Valerie's ability to live as she wishes, to choose for herself, is impinged upon not only because of the greater repressiveness of society, whose weight falls equally upon all its subjects, but also because of who she is, as a person. Though she has no power to utilize institutions herself, they are brought against her heavily throughout her life. Before she leaves home she is the subject of heteronormative repression, based upon

tradition and the traditional family structure. When she is living on her own and making her way as an actress in London she finds that people who share her identity as a gay woman are infatuated with this identity, and attempt to force it upon her, to cause her to conform to their subcultural norms (Moore 156). After the war she is subject to the strictures of the concentration camp, the power of the state and its legislation finally used to control its citizen's personal lives. These assertions of institutional power over her are attempted not only as a side effect of an oppressive society, but levelled at her specifically because she is a lesbian, because homosexual attraction is viewed as not normative, as a trait that must be either stamped out or, for a brief period in her life, to subsume her identity. However, Valerie resists all attempts to reduce her to her sexuality, and all attempts to break her spirit and her mind. She resists because of the strength of her sense of self, and her awareness of the central importance of maintaining her integrity. As she describes in her autobiography while reflecting on her coming out,

> My mother said I broke her heart... but it was my integrity that was important. Is that so selfish? It sells for so little, but it's all we have left in this place. It is the very last inch of us... but within that inch we are free. (Moore 156)

For Valerie, the maintenance of her own integrity is her way of bringing to bear her small amount of power within and against the social pressures that surround her. In this way, by holding fast to her beliefs and her integrity, she enacts her role in the power relationships she shares with societal norms, with subcultural values, and with the broader social structure. She creates, in effect, an institution that exists within herself, the institution of her self and her identity.

One might argue that Valerie's use of power was the most ineffectual of any character, as she dies at the hands of the government, in pain and alone. However, Valerie's use of power is self-contained, and exercised only over herself. Considering this, while her use of power does not allow her to enforce her will or to act on any other person, it enables her to act on and be effective over herself, which is the only amount of power that she seeks throughout the graphic novel. For Valerie, her use of power is extremely effective, as it allowed her to live her life free and as she wanted to live it. She was able to create a place for herself within herself, and within it, to cultivate liberty.

Conclusion

When asked about V for Vendetta, Alan Moore explains that his aim was to take "two extremes of the human political spectrum [Fascism and Anarchism] and set them against each other […] just to see what works[,]" that is, to compare and contrast the means and ends of each political system and see which, if either, can win the approval of the masses (The Beat). Though a self-admitted anarchist himself, who believes that "anarchy is the most natural form of politics for a human being to actually practice[,]" (Killjoy 42) within the story itself Moore resists the urge to take a side (The Beat). While the fascistic society that was enforced by Norsefire was bleak and unrelentingly cruel, it is undoubtedly preferable to the unmitigated chaos that reigned following the nuclear war between Russia and the United States; as noble as V's stated ideals about the pursuit of freedom and equality for all are, it is left unclear at the conclusion of the graphic novel if Britain is better off in the wake of the total collapse of its government. In Moore's words, "the central question is, is [V] right? Or is he mad? What do you, the reader, think about this?" (The Beat)

It is not, however, the aim or the purpose of this dissertation to answer such questions. Declaring V or his actions to be "right" implies a tacit declaration of anarchy as the most correct political theory, an argument somewhat beyond the scope of this piece. Instead, this dissertation has sought only to address the role that power plays in the graphic novel, and to illuminate the power structures and interplay that

exists in the actions and interactions of several of the major characters. In so doing, the political theories of Fascism and Anarchism have been reduced to their most basic components, namely to a system in which there is a rigid and unchanging power structure, and one in which there is no hierarchical power structure at all; a system in which every relationship has an unbalanced power dynamic, and one where all people are equal.

These power dynamics, while complicated even in the reasonably simplified universe of V for Vendetta, can also be reduced to their most basic elements by considering that in a hierarchical structure there are two roles possible: that of the leader, and that of the subordinate; that is, there is one who is in power, and one upon whom this power is exercised. As V describes it, "Authority allows two roles: the torturer and the tortured" (Moore 1999). This power dynamic is readily apparent throughout the graphic novel, and every character described and analysed within this dissertation have, for the most part, an assigned role to play within this dyadic power structure that they fill with varying degrees of willingness and alacrity.

Through the characters of Valerie, Evey, and Rosemary, the role of the subordinate, or the tortured, is explored. Each of them is oppressed in a different way and by different others with whom they have unique relationships. In Valerie's case, the control is held by society, which attempts to force her to become something that she is not. Evey, on the other hand, is subject to several masters: first controlled by an uncaring society that has made her into a victim, she next falls under the sway of V, and after him she seeks again to play the subordinate's role with Gordon; though these relationships may not appear outwardly to be that of torturer and tortured, they are still a hierarchical structure in which she is the subordinate—though the person who

holds power over her is her protector, she has still given away her autonomy in exchange for protection, in exchange for someone to take the necessity of making choices for herself away from her. Finally, Rosemary's place in the power structure is typical of the victimized partner in an abusive relationship, and most importantly reflective of the learned helplessness that comes from living in such a reality, and the tendency to continue to seek out such maladaptive relationships no matter how often one is hurt. Like Evey she also finds herself subordinate to several others, submitting herself to their control out of fear and uncertainty. Valerie dies free with her will and her sense of self unbroken, unbent by the forces that sought to shape her; Evey escapes the role that society has thrust upon her, seeking and creating her own power outside of the system altogether; Rosemary remains the perfectly conditioned victim, and when her first abuser is killed and she is set free, she struggles with self-determination and ultimately submits to other figures of power.

On the other side of the coin, the characters of Adam Susan, Helen Heyer, and Eric Finch explore the role of the leader, or the torturer. Each of them wields and maintains power in vastly different contexts and over very different targets. In the case of Adam Susan, he tells himself that what he does is for the good of the country, which he believes that he loves. To him, absolute control over all things is an unavoidable outcropping of the necessity to maintain order, a belief that is best exemplified by his borderline worship of Fate, the computer that symbolizes providence in a tangible, logical form. His downfall ultimately comes as a result of the supercomputer's enforced "betrayal," symbolic of the simple reality of real life: it is not possible to control fate. In other words, absolute power and control exercised over others is unmaintainable in the long term, and the only possible outcome is, and

will always be, failure. Helen Heyer's relationship with power has a similar outcome. An abusive and manipulative spouse who wields her power over both her husband and the gangster Alastair Harper in an attempt to take over the government, Heyer is ultimately undone by her husband's desperate attempts to please her. All her skill at manipulation and political manoeuvring, and all of her control over others, counts for nothing when her husband, and the country, lie bleeding out at her feet. Finally, Eric Finch provides a different take on the role of leader; while, like the previous characters, ostensibly a torturer, Finch despises that role, and makes very few attempts to perpetuate his role or to exercise his authority over others. As such, his story does not result in a catastrophic downfall in which he is pushed out of power, but a slow descent into the realization that while order is preferable to chaos, order does not necessitate absolute and unbending control over all aspects of life, nor does it require a cession of freedom or liberty. Susan is violently removed from power, his rigid and unyielding control over others finally causing them to snap; Heyer's power is similarly lost when those over whom she has control take matters into their own hands; Finch voluntarily abandons power when he realizes that he no longer has to accept the role that society has given him.

Realization of their role and their place in society comes to some, but not all, of the characters in their journeys throughout the graphic novel. Valerie lives and dies free, existing and judging her existence only by her own standards, ultimately refusing to surrender her integrity even in the face of the role that she knows society seeks to force on her. Finch slowly becomes aware of the prison that being an authority is, and that the only one who has placed him there, and thus the only one who can free him, is Finch himself, even if that means abandoning the comfort of order and walking

towards an uncertain future. Evey's story catalogues the tumultuous journey from scared young girl, made the victim of society, to the future V, subject to only her own will and under the power of no person or thing. The remaining characters, however remain set in their ways, unable to escape the system and power structure into which they have been born and by which they have been moulded, and this, ultimately is their downfall.

While V for Vendetta clearly and thoroughly articulates the ways in which the hierarchical power structures typical of all human societies negatively impact the people that live within them, it never goes so far as to make the argument that it is feasible to ever truly do without them. Indeed, while it ostensible ends with the victory of the main characters and the overthrow of the tyrannical government, the graphic novel concludes on a grim and ultimately uncertain note. As the people riot and the city burns and crumbles around them, Finch walks alone through the desolate, devastated London streets, travelling along an empty road towards an unknown destination. There is nothing in this ending that suggests whether the people are able to manage themselves or their affairs, nothing to suggest that they have managed to truly shed the roles of torturer and tortured, or whether they will be able to successfully cast of their chains as V and Evey had before them. In her final monologue, Evey reflects on the state of the country and on the futures of the people of England, and says,

> The people stand within the ruins of society, a jail intended to outlive them all. The door is open. They can leave, or fall instead to squabbling and thence new slaveries. The choice is theirs, as ever it must be. I will not lead them, but I'll help them build. Help them create where I'll not help them kill. (Moore 260)

She does not intend to guide the country towards a stateless society, but just aid the population as they do so. That is certainly in line with Anarchist thought, but it requires the people to have shed not only the roles they have learnt to follow for generations, but also the idea that such roles are essential for society's wellbeing. Following that, even if everybody has managed to free themselves from the belief that society can only thrive under an authority, there is still no evidence that the natural order that should naturally succeed a brief period of chaos will ever come. Even just looking at the characters who did manage to escape the cage of their imposed role gives no reassurance. V, the one who has destroyed the social system, dies, as did Valerie in the past. Finch survives, but looks to have no aim other than leave London, and no real mean to survive other than his own cunning. Only Evey's story ends in a somewhat positive note, though that comes at the expenses of her identity as anything other than the new V.

V for Vendetta does not provide answers. As previously stated, it does not because the question it asks is too complex for them, and also because neither Alan Moore nor David Lloyd want to preach their views onto the reader. In the latter's introduction to the graphic novel, he outright states that the story is meant for "people who don't switch off the News[,]" (Moore, 5) meaning readers who do not ignore the harsh reality of the world but instead face them with an analytical mind. With that said, however, perhaps another reason why it does not provide a definitive answer is because the authors did not have it. When they wrote V for Vendetta, they were worried about the future of their country, they were afraid for its present, and they were powerless to stop what was happening. In his introduction, Moore says;

> It’s 1988 now. Margaret Thatcher is entering her third term of office and talking confidently of an unbroken Conservative leadership well into the next century. My youngest daughter is seven and the tabloid press are circulating the idea of concentration camps for persons with AIDS. The new riot police wear black visors, as do their horses, and their vans have rotating video cameras mounted on top. The government has expressed a desire to eradicate homosexuality, even as an abstract concept, and one can only speculate as to which minority will be the next legislated against. I’m thinking of taking my family and getting out of this country soon, sometime over the next couple of years. It’s cold and it’s mean spirited and I don’t like it here anymore. (Moore 6)

Perhaps, then, this is why the question V for Vendetta asks does not have an answer; because its England is "cold" and "mean spirited" just like Thatcher’s Britain, and just like Thatcher's Britain, it always threatens to return.

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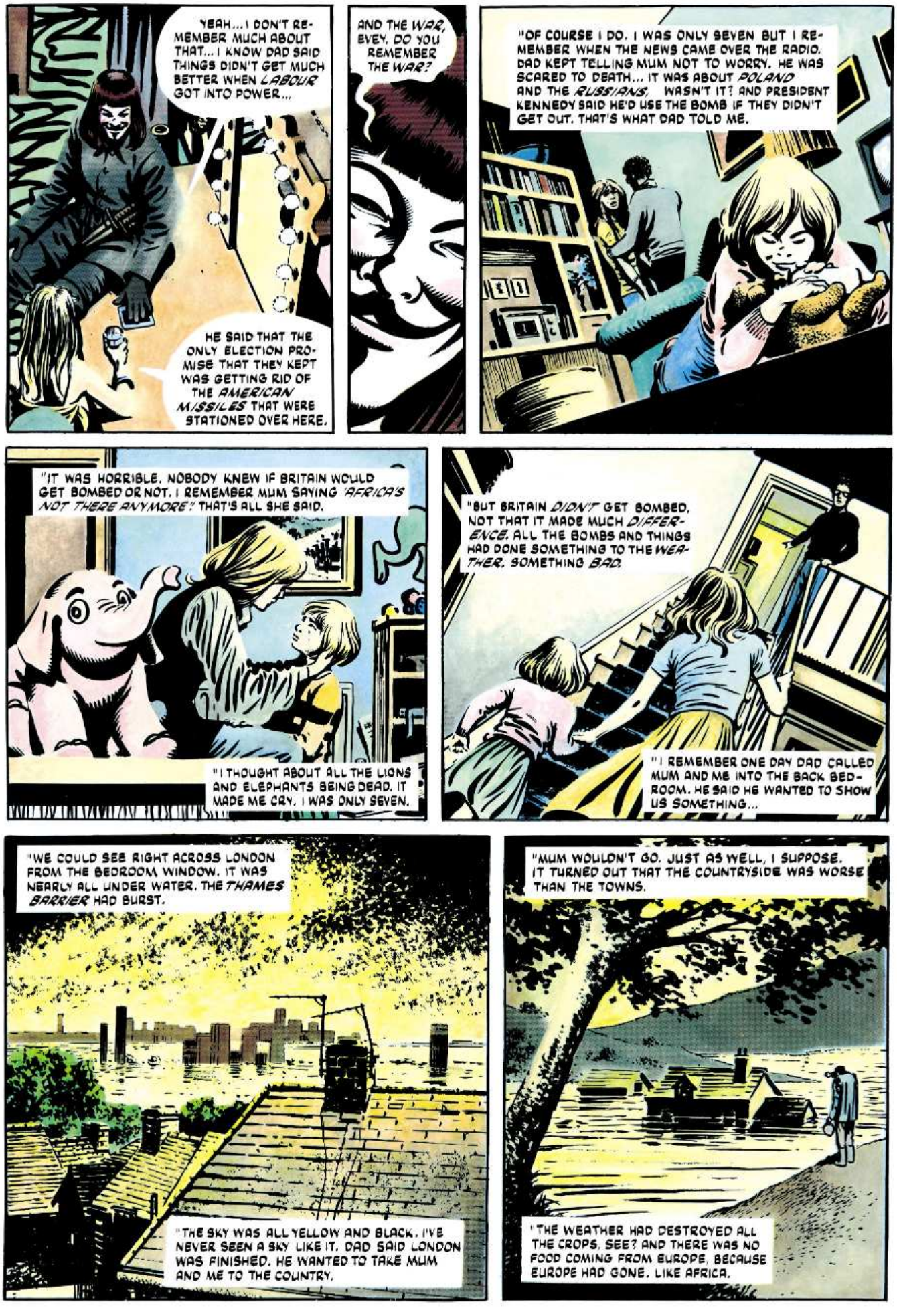
- *Appendices*

    - Excerpt from *"Victim"* in *V for Vendetta* – Backstory


LAST NIGHT... THOSE MEN. THEY WERE GOING TO... THEY SAID THEY'D KILL ME. AND YOU RESCUED ME.
YOU RESCUED ME AND BROUGHT ME TO THIS FANTASTIC PLACE, AND IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL AND IT MAKES ME FEEL SO SAFE AND...AND...
I DON'T HAVE A NAME. YOU CAN CALL ME "V."
WHAT SHALL I CALL YOU?
...AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOUR NAME IS.
MY NAME IS EVEY... EVEY HAMMOND.
I'M NOBODY. NOBODY SPECIAL. NOT LIKE YOU.
EVERYBODY IS SPECIAL. EVERYBODY. EVERYBODY IS A HERO, A LOVER, A FOOL, A VILLAIN. EVERYBODY.
EVERYBODY HAS THEIR STORY TO TELL. EVEN EVEY HAMMOND. I SHOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HEAR EVEY HAMMOND'S STORY.
B-BUT THERE'S NOTHING TO TELL. I'M ONLY SIXTEEN. I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING.
SIXTEEN. THEN YOU WERE BORN IN 1981?
Y-YES. IN SEPTEMBER. WE USED TO LIVE ON SHOOTERS HILL IN SOUTH LONDON. IT WAS NICE THERE. I-I'VE GOT A PHOTOGRAPH IF YOU WANT TO SEE...
JUST ME AND MUM AND DAD. I DIDN'T HAVE ANY BROTHERS OR SISTERS... DAD SAID HE COULDN'T AFFORD ANY MORE KIDS...
THIS WAS DURING THE RECESSION OF THE EIGHTIES?


YEAH... I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT THAT... I KNOW DAD SAID THINGS DIDN'T GET MUCH BETTER WHEN *LABOUR* GOT INTO POWER...
HE SAID THAT THE ONLY ELECTION PROMISE THAT THEY KEPT WAS GETTING RID OF THE *AMERICAN MISSILES* THAT WERE STATIONED OVER HERE.
AND THE *WAR*, EVEY. DO YOU REMEMBER THE *WAR?*
"OF COURSE I DO. I WAS ONLY SEVEN BUT I REMEMBER WHEN THE NEWS CAME OVER THE RADIO. DAD KEPT TELLING MUM NOT TO WORRY. HE WAS SCARED TO DEATH... IT WAS ABOUT *POLAND* AND THE *RUSSIANS*. WASN'T IT? AND PRESIDENT KENNEDY SAID HE'D USE THE BOMB IF THEY DIDN'T GET OUT. THAT'S WHAT DAD TOLD ME.
"IT WAS HORRIBLE. NOBODY KNEW IF BRITAIN WOULD GET BOMBED OR NOT. I REMEMBER MUM SAYING *'AFRICA'S NOT THERE ANYMORE'.* THAT'S ALL SHE SAID.
"I THOUGHT ABOUT ALL THE LIONS AND ELEPHANTS BEING DEAD. IT MADE ME CRY. I WAS ONLY SEVEN.
"BUT BRITAIN *DIDN'T* GET BOMBED, NOT THAT IT MADE MUCH *DIFFERENCE*. ALL THE BOMBS AND THINGS HAD DONE SOMETHING TO THE *WEATHER*. SOMETHING *BAD*.
"I REMEMBER ONE DAY DAD CALLED MUM AND ME INTO THE BACK BEDROOM. HE SAID HE WANTED TO SHOW US SOMETHING...
"WE COULD SEE RIGHT ACROSS LONDON FROM THE BEDROOM WINDOW. IT WAS NEARLY ALL UNDER WATER. THE *THAMES BARRIER* HAD BURST.
"THE SKY WAS ALL YELLOW AND BLACK. I'VE NEVER SEEN A SKY LIKE IT. DAD SAID LONDON WAS FINISHED. HE WANTED TO TAKE MUM AND ME TO THE COUNTRY.
"MUM WOULDN'T GO. JUST AS WELL, I SUPPOSE. IT TURNED OUT THAT THE COUNTRYSIDE WAS WORSE THAN THE TOWNS.
"THE WEATHER HAD DESTROYED ALL THE CROPS, SEE? AND THERE WAS NO FOOD COMING FROM EUROPE, BECAUSE EUROPE HAD GONE. LIKE AFRICA.


"I-I DIDN'T LIKE TO THINK ABOUT THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. WE'D GOT TOGETHER WITH SOME NEIGHBOURS IN A PROTECTION COMMITTEE. IT DIDN'T HELP MUCH...
"THERE WAS NO FOOD. AND THE SEWERS WERE FLOODED AND EVERYBODY GOT SICK. MUM DIED IN 1991. DAD WOULDN'T LET ME SEE HER.
"THERE WERE RIOTS, AND PEOPLE WITH GUNS. NOBODY KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON. EVERYONE WAS WAITING FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO DO SOMETHING...
"BUT THERE WASN'T ANY GOVERNMENT ANYMORE. JUST LOTS OF LITTLE GANGS, ALL TRYING TO TAKE OVER. AND THEN IN 1992, SOMEBODY FINALLY DID...
"IT WAS ALL THE FASCIST GROUPS, THE RIGHT-WINGERS. THEY'D ALL GOT TOGETHER WITH SOME OF THE BIG CORPORATIONS THAT HAD SURVIVED. 'NORSEFIRE' THEY CALLED THEMSELVES.
"I REMEMBER WHEN THEY MARCHED INTO LONDON. THEY HAD A FLAG WITH THEIR SYMBOL ON. EVERYONE WAS CHEERING. I THOUGHT THEY WERE SCARY.
"THEY SOON GOT THINGS UNDER CONTROL. BUT THEN THEY STARTED TAKING PEOPLE AWAY... ALL THE BLACK PEOPLE AND THE PAKISTANIS...
"WHITE PEOPLE, TOO. ALL THE RADICALS AND THE MEN WHO, YOU KNOW, LIKED OTHER MEN. THE HOMOSEXUALS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY DID WITH THEM ALL.
"DAD HAD BEEN IN A SOCIALIST GROUP WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER. THEY CAME FOR HIM ONE SEPTEMBER MORNING IN 1993...
"IT WAS MY BIRTHDAY. I WAS TWELVE. I NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN.
"THEY MADE ME GO AND WORK IN A FACTORY WITH A LOT OF OTHER KIDS. WE WERE PUTTING MATCHES INTO BOXES.
Lucifer
"I LIVED IN A HOSTEL. IT WAS COLD AND DIRTY AND I JUST USED TO CRY ALL THE TIME. I WANTED MY DAD."
...THAT'S HOW IT WAS FOR FOUR YEARS... NOT ENOUGH FOOD, NOT ENOUGH MONEY. SOME OF THE OLDER GIRLS MADE MONEY GOING WITH MEN.
THAT'S WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO, LAST NIGHT. BUT THEY WERE FINGERMEN. THEY WERE GOING... THEY WERE G-GOING TO...
THEY WERE GOING TO RUH... RUH... RUH...

- Excerpt from “*Versions”* in *V for Vendetta* – Adam Susan and V


Chapter Five
VERSIONS


DECEMBER 12TH, 1997. FIRST VERSION:

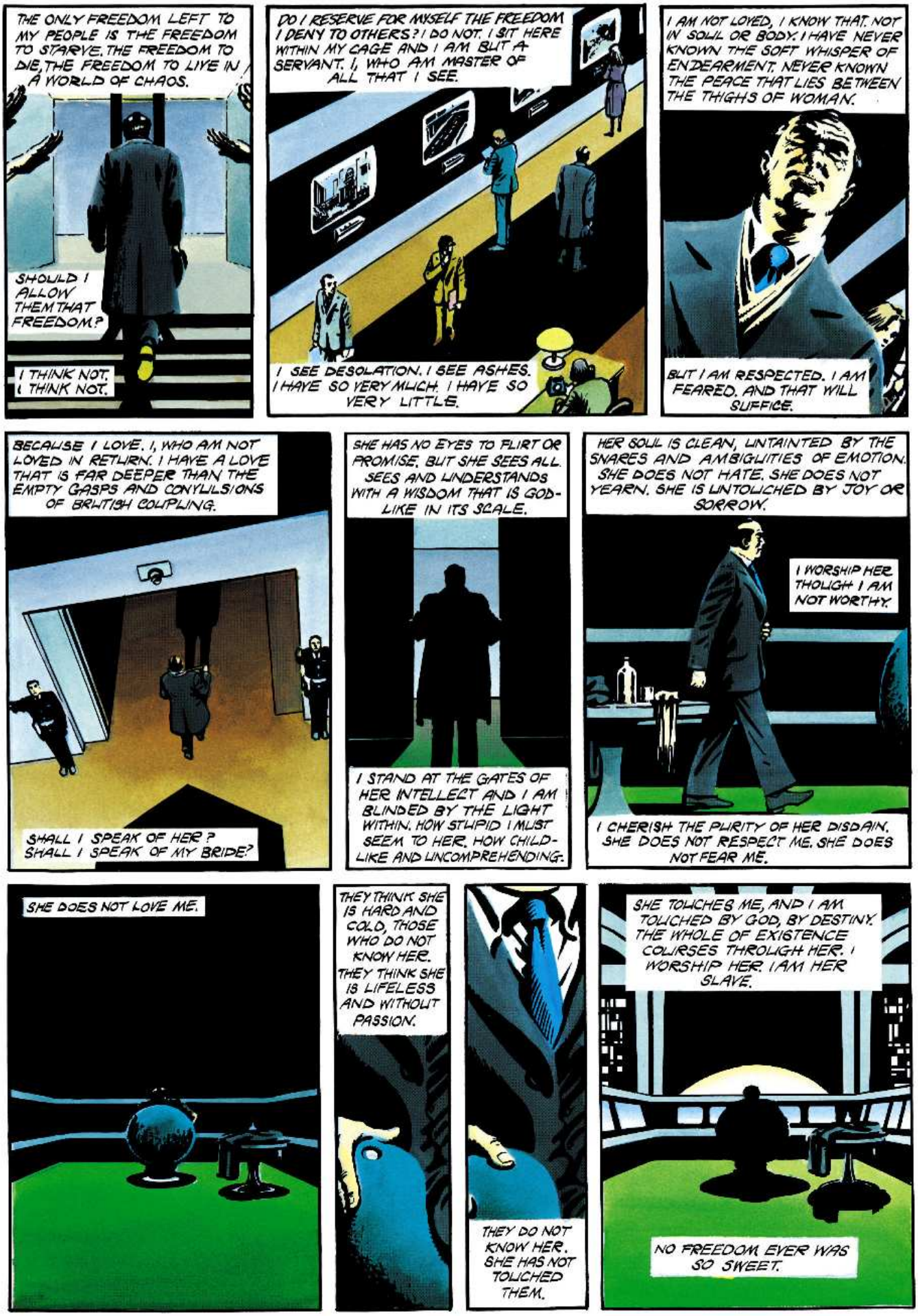

MY NAME IS ADAM SUSAN. I AM THE LEADER.
LEADER OF THE LOST, RULER OF THE RUINS.
I AM A MAN, LIKE ANY OTHER MAN.


I LEAD THE COUNTRY THAT I LOVE OUT OF THE WILDERNESS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. I BELIEVE IN SURVIVAL, IN THE DESTINY OF THE NORDIC RACE. I BELIEVE IN FASCISM.
OH YES, I AM A FASCIST. WHAT OF IT? FASCISM... A WORD. A WORD WHOSE MEANING HAS BEEN LOST IN THE BLEATINGS OF THE WEAK AND THE TREACHEROUS.


THE ROMANS INVENTED FASCISM. A BUNDLE OF BOUND TWIGS WAS ITS SYMBOL.
ONE TWIG COULD BE BROKEN. A BUNDLE WOULD PREVAIL. FASCISM... STRENGTH IN UNITY


I BELIEVE IN STRENGTH. I BELIEVE IN UNITY.
AND IF THAT STRENGTH, THAT UNITY OF PURPOSE, DEMANDS A UNIFORMITY OF THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED THEN SO BE IT.


I WILL NOT HEAR TALK OF FREEDOM. I WILL NOT HEAR TALK OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY. THEY ARE LUXURIES. I DO NOT BELIEVE IN LUXURIES.
THE WAR PUT PAID TO LUXURY.
THE WAR PUT PAID TO FREEDOM.


THE ONLY FREEDOM LEFT TO MY PEOPLE IS THE FREEDOM TO STARVE. THE FREEDOM TO DIE, THE FREEDOM TO LIVE IN A WORLD OF CHAOS.
SHOULD I ALLOW THEM THAT FREEDOM?
I THINK NOT. I THINK NOT.
DO I RESERVE FOR MYSELF THE FREEDOM I DENY TO OTHERS? I DO NOT. I SIT HERE WITHIN MY CAGE AND I AM BUT A SERVANT. I, WHO AM MASTER OF ALL THAT I SEE.
I SEE DESOLATION. I SEE ASHES. I HAVE SO VERY MUCH. I HAVE SO VERY LITTLE.
I AM NOT LOVED. I KNOW THAT. NOT IN SOUL OR BODY. I HAVE NEVER KNOWN THE SOFT WHISPER OF ENDEARMENT. NEVER KNOWN THE PEACE THAT LIES BETWEEN THE THIGHS OF WOMAN.
BUT I AM RESPECTED. I AM FEARED. AND THAT WILL SUFFICE.
BECAUSE I LOVE. I, WHO AM NOT LOVED IN RETURN. I HAVE A LOVE THAT IS FAR DEEPER THAN THE EMPTY GASPS AND CONVULSIONS OF BRITISH COUPLING.
SHALL I SPEAK OF HER? SHALL I SPEAK OF MY BRIDE?
SHE HAS NO EYES TO FLIRT OR PROMISE. BUT SHE SEES ALL. SEES AND UNDERSTANDS WITH A WISDOM THAT IS GOD-LIKE IN ITS SCALE.
I STAND AT THE GATES OF HER INTELLECT AND I AM BLINDED BY THE LIGHT WITHIN. HOW STUPID I MUST SEEM TO HER. HOW CHILD-LIKE AND UNCOMPREHENDING.
HER SOUL IS CLEAN, UNTAINTED BY THE SNARES AND AMBIGUITIES OF EMOTION. SHE DOES NOT HATE. SHE DOES NOT YEARN. SHE IS UNTOUCHED BY JOY OR SORROW.
I WORSHIP HER THOUGH I AM NOT WORTHY.
I CHERISH THE PURITY OF HER DISDAIN. SHE DOES NOT RESPECT ME. SHE DOES NOT FEAR ME.
SHE DOES NOT LOVE ME.
THEY THINK SHE IS HARD AND COLD, THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW HER. THEY THINK SHE IS LIFELESS AND WITHOUT PASSION.
THEY DO NOT KNOW HER. SHE HAS NOT TOUCHED THEM.
SHE TOUCHES ME, AND I AM TOUCHED BY GOD, BY DESTINY. THE WHOLE OF EXISTENCE COURSES THROUGH HER. I WORSHIP HER. I AM HER SLAVE.
NO FREEDOM EVER WAS SO SWEET.


MY LOVE, I WOULD STAY WITH YOU FOREVER, WOULD SPEND MY LIFE WITHIN YOU.
I WOULD WAIT UPON YOUR EVERY UTTERANCE AND NEVER ASK THE MEREST SPLINTER OF AFFECTION.
FATE...
FATE...
I LOVE YOU.
THE OLD BAILEY. SECOND VERSION:
HELLO, DEAR LADY.
A LOVELY EVENING, IS IT NOT?
FORGIVE ME FOR INTRUDING. PERHAPS YOU WERE INTENDING TO TAKE A STROLL. PERHAPS YOU WERE MERELY ENJOYING THE VIEW.
NO MATTER. I THOUGHT THAT IT WAS TIME WE HAD A LITTLE CHAT, YOU AND I.
AHH... I WAS FORGETTING THAT WE ARE NOT PROPERLY INTRODUCED.
I DO NOT HAVE A NAME. YOU CAN CALL ME Y.
MADAM JUSTICE... THIS IS Y.
Y.. THIS IS MADAM JUSTICE.
HELLO, MADAM JUSTICE.
"GOOD EVENING, Y."


THERE. NOW WE KNOW EACH OTHER. ACTUALLY, I'VE BEEN A FAN OF YOURS FOR QUITE SOME TIME. OH, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING...
"THE POOR BOY HAS A CRUSH ON ME... AN ADOLESCENT INFATUATION."
I BEG YOUR PARDON, MADAM. IT ISN'T LIKE THAT AT ALL.
I'VE LONG ADMIRED YOU... ALBEIT ONLY FROM A DISTANCE. I USED TO STARE AT YOU FROM THE STREETS BELOW WHEN I WAS A CHILD.
I'D SAY, TO MY FATHER, "WHO IS THAT LADY?" AND HE'D SAY, "THAT'S MADAM JUSTICE." AND I'D SAY, "ISN'T SHE PRETTY."
PLEASE DON'T THINK IT WAS MERELY PHYSICAL. I KNOW YOU'RE NOT THAT SORT OF GIRL. NO, I LOVED YOU AS A PERSON. AS AN IDEAL.
THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. I'M AFRAID THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE NOW...
"WHAT? V.! FOR SHAME! YOU HAVE BETRAYED ME FOR SOME HARLOT, SOME VAIN AND POUTING HUSSY WITH PAINTED LIPS AND A KNOWING SMILE!"
I, MADAM? I BEG TO DIFFER! IT WAS YOUR INFIDELITY THAT DROVE ME TO HER ARMS!
AH-HA! THAT SURPRISED YOU, DIDN'T IT? YOU THOUGHT I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT YOUR LITTLE FLING. BUT I DO. I KNOW EVERYTHING!
FRANKLY, I WASN'T SURPRISED WHEN I FOUND OUT. YOU ALWAYS DID HAVE AN EYE FOR A MAN IN UNIFORM.
"UNIFORM? WHY, I'M SURE I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. IT WAS ALWAYS YOU, V. YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE..."
LIAR! SLUT! WHORE! DENY THAT YOU LET HIM HAVE HIS WAY WITH YOU, HIM WITH HIS ARMBANDS AND JACKBOOTS!
WELL? CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?
I THOUGHT AS MUCH.

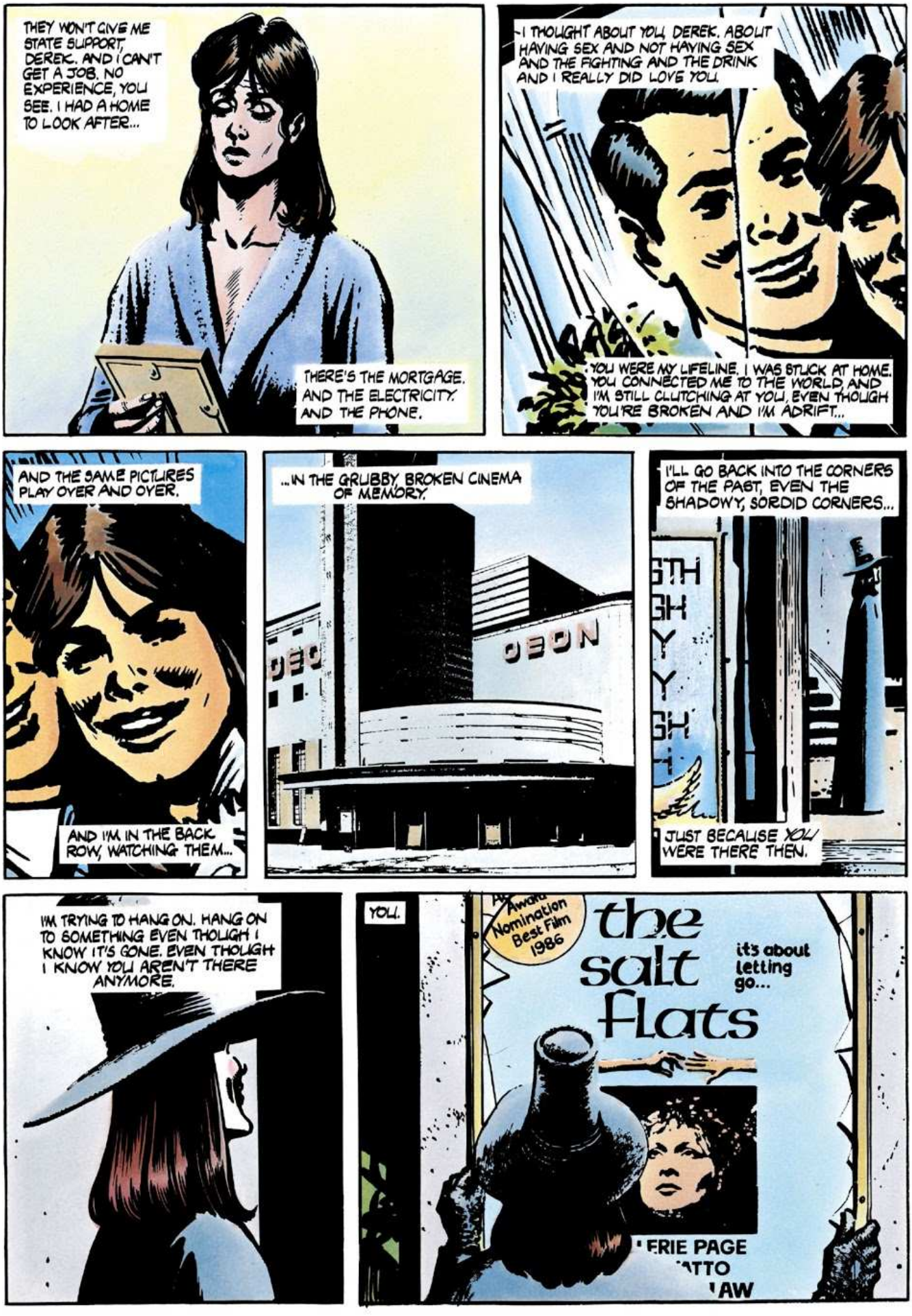

VERY WELL. SO YOU STAND REVEALED AT LAST. YOU ARE NO LONGER MY JUSTICE. YOU ARE HIS JUSTICE NOW. YOU HAVE BEDDED ANOTHER.
WELL, TWO CAN PLAY AT THAT GAME!
"SOB! CHOKE! WH-WHO IS SHE, V? WHAT IS HER NAME?"
HER NAME IS ANARCHY. AND SHE HAS TAUGHT ME MORE AS A MISTRESS THAN YOU EVER DID!
SHE HAS TAUGHT ME THAT JUSTICE IS MEANINGLESS WITHOUT FREEDOM. SHE IS HONEST. SHE MAKES NO PROMISES AND BREAKS NONE. UNLIKE YOU, JEZEBEL.
I USED TO WONDER WHY YOU COULD NEVER LOOK ME IN THE EYE. NOW I KNOW.
SO GOODBYE, DEAR LADY. I WOULD BE SADDENED BY OUR PARTING EVEN NOW, SAVE THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER THE WOMAN THAT I ONCE LOVED.
HERE IS A FINAL GIFT. I LEAVE IT AT YOUR FEET.
THE FLAMES OF FREEDOM. HOW LOVELY. HOW JUST. AHH, MY PRECIOUS ANARCHY...
"O BEAUTY, 'TIL NOW I NEVER KNEW THEE."

- Excerpts from “*The Veil,” “Various Valentines”* and “*Vindication”* in *V for Vendetta* – Rosemary Almond


YOU'VE GONE, DEREK. I NEVER LIKED YOU. I WAS AFRAID OF YOU. I LOVED YOU.
YOU'VE GONE BEYOND THE VEIL...
ME TOO.
CHAPTER 2
THE VEIL
THEY WERE ALL THERE, AT THE FUNERAL. THEY DIDN'T LIKE YOU EITHER, DID THEY? I NEVER REALISED THAT BEFORE.
HELEN HEYER BARELY SPOKE TO ME. SHE LOOKED AFRAID, AS IF BEREAVEMENT WAS CATCHING.
ROGER DASCOMBE WAS THERE. HE ASKED HOW I WAS COPING WITH THE BILLS.
HE WAS VERY FRIENDLY TOWARDS ME.
WHEN I LEFT HE SHOOK MY HAND AND TOLD ME TO RING HIM IF I NEEDED ANYTHING.
SMILED, JUST BRIEFLY, AS HE SAID IT.
HELD MY HAND TOO LONG.
IT WAS AN OFFER, DEREK, AND YES, HE MAKES ME SICK, AND YES, I HATE HIM...
...BUT WHEN YOU'RE A WIDOW, THE WORLD LOOKS DIFFERENT. YOU STEP THROUGH A CURTAIN AND YOU'RE IN A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE TREAT YOU DIFFERENTLY. A BLEAK PLACE. YOU'RE GONE, DEREK...
AND I'M ALONE.


...AND DEREK, WHERE I AM, IT'S COLD AND IT'S DARK AND IT'S FRIGHTENING.
AND THIS WORLD IS SO DANGEROUS.
YOU'RE NAKED IN THE RAIN. EVERYTHING'S BEEN TAKEN AWAY... ALL THE SECURITY AND THE WARMTH AND THE SHELTER...
...AND YOU'LL TRY ANY REFUGE.
ANY REFUGE AT ALL.
YOU SEE, YOU'RE LOST. ALL THE WORLD YOU UNDERSTOOD HAS GONE AND EVERYWHERE LOOKS SINISTER AND DIFFERENT.
YOU'RE FUMBLING IN THE DARK...
...AND THEN YOU MAKE CONTACT. CONTACT OF A SORT.


...AND IT MIGHT NOT BE PLEASANT, AND YOU MIGHT BE REPULSED AND DRAW BACK FROM IT, NO, NOT THAT, ANYTHING BUT THAT...
... BUT REALLY, WHERE ELSE CAN YOU GO? WHAT OTHER CHOICES DO YOU HAVE?
EXCEPT CARRYING ON. DOWN INTO THE DARK.
ALONE
COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY ALONE.
DASCOMBE RANG EARLIER. HE SUGGESTED A MEAL AND A DRINK. TO CHEER ME UP.
I SAID NO. HE SAID TO RING HIM IF I CHANGED MY MIND.


THEY WON'T GIVE ME STATE SUPPORT, DEREK. AND I CAN'T GET A JOB. NO EXPERIENCE, YOU SEE. I HAD A HOME TO LOOK AFTER...
THERE'S THE MORTGAGE. AND THE ELECTRICITY. AND THE PHONE.
I THOUGHT ABOUT YOU, DEREK. ABOUT HAVING SEX AND NOT HAVING SEX AND THE FIGHTING AND THE DRINK AND I REALLY DID LOVE YOU.
YOU WERE MY LIFELINE. I WAS STUCK AT HOME. YOU CONNECTED ME TO THE WORLD, AND I'M STILL CLUTCHING AT YOU, EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE BROKEN AND I'M ADRIFT...
AND THE SAME PICTURES PLAY OVER AND OVER.
AND I'M IN THE BACK ROW, WATCHING THEM...
...IN THE GRUBBY, BROKEN CINEMA OF MEMORY.
ODEON
I'LL GO BACK INTO THE CORNERS OF THE PAST, EVEN THE SHADOWY, SORDID CORNERS...
JUST BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE THEN.
I'M TRYING TO HANG ON. HANG ON TO SOMETHING EVEN THOUGH I KNOW IT'S GONE. EVEN THOUGH I KNOW YOU AREN'T THERE ANYMORE.
YOU.
Award Nomination Best Film 1986
the salt flats
it's about letting go...
ERIE PAGE
ATTO
AW


THE LOVED ONE.
YOU'RE GONE.
NOTHING WILL CHANGE THAT.
ALL I CAN DO IS PACK AWAY ALL THE THINGS I REMEMBER, PUT THEM IN A DRAWER WITH ALL OTHER USELESS SOUVENIRS...
AND JUST CARRY ON.
YOU'VE GOT TO CARRY ON.
WE'VE ALL GOT TO JUST CARRY ON. THAT'S HOW WE SURVIVE.
TRENGTH
HROUGH
URITY
URITY
HROUGH
FAITH
THAT'S OUR PURPOSE.
THROUGH
FAITH


OUR PURPOSE IS TO SURVIVE.
ROSEMARY?
WHATEVER THAT TAKES.
ARE YOU READY FOR A TAXI? I THOUGHT COFFEE AT MY PLACE..
HE REVOLTS ME. HE MAKES ME FEEL DIRTY. AND I KNOW HE'S ONLY DOING THIS TO GET AT YOU, EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE DEAD NOW.
BUT HE'S THERE, DEREK.
I CAN'T FACE GOING INTO THE DARK.
NOT ON MY OWN.
I MADE MY DECISION, DEREK. I RANG HIM AFTER TEA...
..AND THE VEIL SWUNG SHUT BEHIND ME.
OH GOD.
OH GOD.


DEREK...
DEREK, YOU WERE USELESS, THEN YOU DIED, THAT'S ALL.
YOU DIED AND I CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHTS.
YOU DIED AND LEFT ME BARE IN FRONT OF STRANGERS.
DEREK, WHEN WE MARRIED, YOU REMEMBER, I WAS WORKING AT THE BANK AND YOU WERE IN INSURANCE. WE WERE GOING TO BUY A HOUSE IN SURREY, PERHAPS HAVE CHILDREN THAT WAS IN '87...
JUST BEFORE THE WAR.
AND THEN, IN '92, YOU JOINED THE PARTY.
MRS. *RANA* NEXT DOOR LOANED US FOOD ALL THROUGH THE WAR YEARS, WHEN THEY DRAGGED HER AND HER CHILDREN OFF IN SEPARATE VANS WE DIDN'T INTERVENE.
...AND NOW YOU'RE DEAD AND I WALK HOME ALONE EACH NIGHT THROUGH RIOT ZONES, PAST LOOTINGS, SHOOTINGS, BURNING BUILDINGS...
NOW YOU'RE DEAD AND I CROUCH LIKE AN ANIMAL AND OFFER MY HIND-QUARTERS IN SUBMISSION TO THE WORLD.
NOW YOU'RE DEAD AND I CAN'T SLEEP FOR BEING SCARED; FOR CRYING; HATING; THINKING "*WHO HAS DONE THIS TO ME?*"
I CAN'T SLEEP FOR WANTING JUSTICE; WANTING ALL THE WORLD TO KNOW OF ITS UNFAIRNESS...
CAN'T SLEEP FOR THE GUN BENEATH MY PILLOW.


WAVE HARDER!
COME ON! WHERE'S THE KIDS? HASN'T ANYONE GOT A FLOWER TO GIVE HIM?
YES.
YES, DESPITE MY FEAR, BECAUSE IT'S INSIGNIFICANT. LIKE EVERYTHING ABOUT ME...
YES, THOUGH THEY'LL KILL ME, BECAUSE IF I DON'T, LIFE MEANS NOTHING...
YES, BECAUSE OUR LIVES WERE WASTED ON YOUR VISIONS, AND THEY WERE ALL WE HAD.
YES, BECAUSE I CAN'T BEAR WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO US...
YES, BECAUSE HISTORY'S MOVING MY LEGS AND NOTHING, NOTHING CAN STOP ME...
OY!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, I KNOW HER. HIGH PARTY. LETTING HER THROUGH'LL LOOK GOOD.
YES, BECAUSE YOUR KIND LED US TO HELL AND NOW YOU SAY OUR ONLY HOPE IS STERNER LEADERS...
THIS WAY. SURE HE'LL APPRECIATE IT...
YES, BECAUSE I'M NEARLY THERE AND EVERYONE'S THINKING "SHE MUST BE IMPORTANT" AND I'M NOT, BUT I WILL BE...
STOP. LET ME TALK TO MY PEOPLE...
YES, BECAUSE I HAD A LIFE, A WORLD, A MARRIAGE AND I VALUED THEM BUT YOU DIDN'T...
SO NICE...
SO NICE MEETING SOMEONE, DO SHAKE HANDS...
YES, BECAUSE WE'VE MET A DOZEN TIMES BEFORE AND MY DEREK DIED FOR YOU AND GOD, YOU DON'T EVEN, DON'T EVEN REMEMBER MY FACE!
PLEASE... DON'T BE SHY...
YES, YES...
YES.

- Excerpts from “*Verwirrung,*” “*Various Valentines*” and “*Vectors*” in *V for Vendetta* – Helen Heyer


AUTHORITY ALLOWS TWO ROLES: THE TORTURER AND THE TORTURED: TWISTS PEOPLE INTO JOYLESS MANNEQUINS THAT FEAR AND HATE, WHILE CULTURE PLUNGES INTO THE ABYSS.
AUTHORITY DEFORMS THE REARING OF THEIR CHILDREN, MAKES A COCKFIGHT OF THEIR LOVE...
ALL RIGHT, CONRAD. THAT'S ENOUGH. GET ME A TOWEL.
WHEN DID THE LEADER AUTHORIZE CREEDY TO RECRUIT A GOON SQUAD?
LATE THIS AFTERNOON, DO YOU WANT YOUR ROBE, HELEN?
NO.
DOESN'T SUSAN REALIZE THAT CREEDY'S ONLY WAITING FOR HIM TO CRACK COMPLETELY BEFORE MOVING IN WITH HIS PRIVATE ARMY AND STAGING A COUP?
THE LEADER MAY JUST BE UNDER STRAIN...
BALLS, CONRAD. HIS MIND'S DISINTEGRATING... AND WHEN IT GOES, I WANT YOU IN THE NUMBER ONE SEAT AND NOT THAT SECONDARY-SCHOOL OIK, CREEDY.
I SUPPOSE I SHALL HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING, AS USUAL.
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE QUITE A SUCCESSFUL YOUNG MAN, CONRAD. IF YOUR SUCCESS WASN'T ENTIRELY DUE TO MY EFFORTS, I MIGHT EVEN FANCY YOU.
NOW, I'VE GOT THINGS TO ORGANISE IN THE MORNING, SO I'M GOING TO BED. I EXPECT I SHALL BE ASLEEP WHEN YOU COME UP.
YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THE LIGHT ON IN HERE, WILL YOU?
AUTHORITY'S COLLAPSE SENDS CRACKS THROUGH BEDROOM, BOARDROOM, CHURCH AND SCHOOL ALIKE. ALL IS MISRULE.
EQUALITY AND FREEDOM ARE NOT LUXURIES TO LIGHTLY CAST ASIDE. WITHOUT THEM, ORDER CANNOT LONG ENDURE BEFORE APPROACHING DEPTHS BEYOND IMAGINING.


HULLO, MESSES. A GOAT YER MUSSAGE. SORRY AM LATE AN A' THAT...
IN FUTURE, YOU'LL BE PUNCTUAL. I DON'T LIKE WAITING.
DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?


AYE, YUR THE MESSES D'THAT BLOKE RUNNEN THE EYE.
AND YOU'RE RUNNING CREEDY'S CIVILIAN AUXILIARY FORCE.
YOU KNOW HE'S PLANNING A COUP? HE WANTS TO BE LEADER.

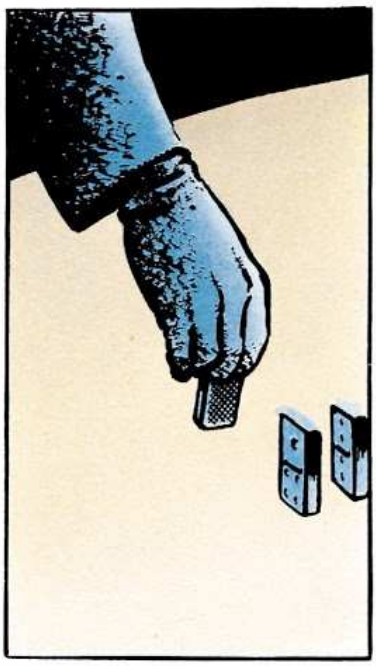

A, WULL, A KNOW NOTHIN' ABOOT ANY O' THAAT...
DON'T PLAY DUMB. THIS IS A STRAIGHTFORWARD BUSINESS DECISION: CREEDY WANTS TO BE LEADER; I WANT CONRAD TO BE LEADER.
HOW MUCH IS HE PAYING YOU?


WULL, UH, AM GETTIN' FIVE HUNNERD AT PRESENT...
REALLY? I'D HAVE THOUGHT FOUR HUNDRED MAXIMUM.
I'M PREPARED TO OFFER SIX, PLUS AN INCREASE UPON YOUR THUGS' CURRENT WAGES.


YE DON'T PESS ABOOT, DO YE? WHAT'S MA JOAB?
YOU CARRY ON WORKING FOR CREEDY, DRAWING HIS WAGES, BUT REPORTING TO ME...
...AND WHEN THE TIME COMES, YOU REMEMBER WHO YOU'RE REALLY WORKING FOR.


LUKE, AM NO AGGRAVATIN' THE POLIS. CREEDY'S RUNNEN THE FENGER...
HARPER, DO AS I SAY AND YOU'LL SOON BE RUNNING THE FINGER.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT CREEDY. HE'S IN A HAZARDOUS OCCUPATION...


LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS PREDECESSOR.




"9.11.'98: 2.30 PM, SCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCE BY LEADER TO RESTORE PUBLIC CALM..."
THEY CAN'T BE SERIOUS ABOUT THIS, CAN THEY?
FROM ALL REPORTS, POOR OLD SUSAN'S ABSOLUTELY BARKING! HOW WILL SEEING THAT RESTORE PUBLIC CALM?
ONLY SOFT CENTRES LEFT. SHIT.
OF COURSE, EVERYBODY'S SEEN IT COMING FOR YEARS, ALL THOSE THINGS HE SAID, BACK WHEN HE WAS STILL CHIEF CONSTABLE...
HUM. PERHAPS STRAWBERRY...
OMF
I BET... UH... I BET THIS WAS CREEDY'S IDEA. PROBABLY HOPING FOR RIOTS SO HE CAN DEMAND SUSAN ALLOW HIM MORE THUGS FOR HIS PRIVATE ARMY.
SWEATY LITTLE CROOK.
HONESTLY, HOW WOULD SOMEONE LIKE CREEDY HOPE TO RUN A COUNTRY?
RE-OPEN THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE? PUT TITS ON PAGE THREE OF THE PARTY CHRONICLE? OBVIOUSLY HE...
NO.
NOT NOW, CONRAD.
FOR NOW YOU CAN HAVE A NICE CHOCOLATE INSTEAD. OPEN. OPEN UP...
THERE. AS FOR THE REST OF THE BOX...
...PERHAPS WHEN YOU'RE LEADER.

- Excerpt from “*Vestiges”* in *V for Vendetta* – Eric Finch

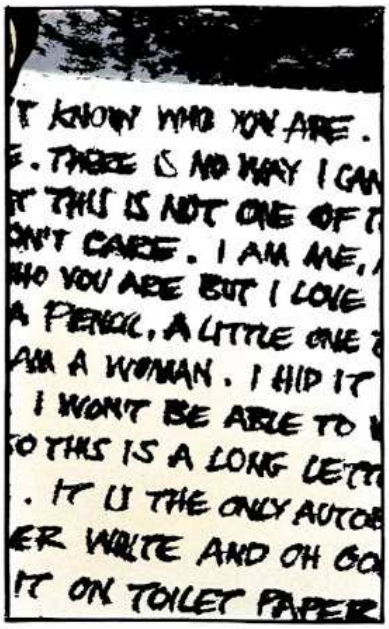

I'VE NEVER SEEN THE CAMPS BEFORE, ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS. SO THIS IS THE TOILET WE FLUSHED ALL THOSE PEOPLE DOWN...
FOUR TABLETS. I WONDER IF THAT'S ENOUGH? I WONDER IF THAT'S TOO MANY?
OH WELL.
AGAINST MY TONGUE LIKE LITTLE PIECES OF SOAP... MY SALIVA TASTING OF TINFOIL... A BUBBLE OF APPREHENSION FORMING LOW IN MY STOMACH...
I SWALLOW, FEELING AS IF I'M LETTING GO OF SOMETHING.
THERE.
NOW I'M STRAPPED IN, COUNTDOWN TICKING FROM BOWEL TO BLOODSTREAM TO BRAIN, TOWARDS TAKE-OFF, BUT I'VE NEVER FLOWN BEFORE. WHAT'S SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN?
NOTHING. NOTHING YET. BETTER TAKE A LOOK ROUND, WHILE IT'S LIGHT.
THESE MUST BE THE OVENS. OVENS FOR PEOPLE. PEOPLE OVENS...
NO. NO USE: STILL CAN'T MAKE IT SEEM REAL. IF I'D KNOWN THIS WAS HAPPENING, WOULD I STILL HAVE JOINED THE PARTY?
PROBABLY. NO BETTER ALTERNATIVES.
WE COULDN'T LET THE CHAOS AFTER THE WAR CONTINUE. ANY SOCIETY'S BETTER THAN THAT. WE NEEDED ORDER...
...OR AT LEAST, I DID. LOSING CYNTH AND LITTLE PAUL LIKE THAT, EVERYTHING WAS DISINTEGRATING AND I JUST WANTED...
...TO...
EUGGH...
I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN THE L.S.D.
NOT HERE.


BUT I WANTED TO KNOW... TO KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE BEING HIM...
IT'S THIS PLACE. IF I CAN JUST GET OUTSIDE ITS WALLS UNTIL I FEEL BETTER...
NO PROBLEM. THE MAIN GATE'S BACK THIS WAY...
I CAN'T. I CAN'T WALK THAT FAR. MY LEGS FEEL LIKE JELLY AND EVERYTHING'S THRUMMING...
THRRUMMMMMMMMING...
IT'S THE DRUG. I JUST HAVE TO REMEMBER IT'S THE DRUG DOING THIS, BUT...
...BUT THEY SAY L.S.D. ONLY MAGNIFIES WHAT'S ALREADY THERE. CHRIST, WHY DID I TAKE THIS NOW, WHEN I'M SO CONFUSED ANYWAY?
I'M TRAPPED IN A JOB THAT DISTURBS ME, BUT I CAN'T TELL ANYONE, I'M SO ALONE...
SO ALONE.
OH.
OH LOOK...
LOOK, THEY'RE ALL SMILING. THEY'RE ALL HAPPY. GOD, IT'S BEEN SO LONG...
I'D FORGOTTEN HOW RICH THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN WAS, A THOUSAND SPECIAL BLENDS OF COFFEE...
THE GIRLS I SAW HUGGING EACH OTHER ON THE DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THE MEN, SO GENTLE, SO SOFTLY SPOKEN...


OH JESUS, I'VE MISSED YOU.
I'VE MISSED YOUR VOICES AND YOUR WALK, YOUR FOOD, YOUR CLOTHES, YOUR DYED PINK HAIR.
MY FRIENDS... THERE AT THE CARNIVAL, THE GAY PRIDE MARCHES.
SAY YOU SAW BEYOND MY UNIFORM. PLEASE SAY YOU KNEW I CARED. I...
WAIT...
WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
PLEASE...
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME.
WE TREATED YOU SO BADLY, ALL THE HATEFUL THINGS WE PRINTED, DID AND SAID... BUT PLEASE. PLEASE DON'T DESPISE US. WE WERE STUPID. WE WERE KIDS. WE DIDN'T KNOW.
COME BACK. OH PLEASE COME BACK.
I LOVE YOU.
AHUH.
AHUHUHUH...
I LOVE YOU. I...


HHUGH...
HOW?
HOW DID I GET HERE, TO THIS STINKING PLACE; MY JOB, MY LIFE; MY CONSCIENCE; MY PRISON...
THE ANSWER'S THERE, WRITTEN ON THE FLOOR FOR ME TO READ, BUT I DON'T UNDER-STAND IT.
AND YES, IT'S JUST THE DRUGS, BUT...
BUT HE WAS DRUGGED TOO, LOCKED AWAY TO DIE, AND HE REACHED SOME UNDERSTANDING.
WHY CAN'T I? I LOOK AT THIS MAD PATTERN, BUT WHERE ARE THE ANSWERS?
WHO IMPRISONED ME HERE? WHO KEEPS ME HERE?
WHO CAN RELEASE ME? WHO'S CONTROLLING AND CONSTRAINING MY LIFE, EXCEPT...
...ME?
I...
I'M FREE.
FREEEEEE!

- Excerpt from “*Valerie”* in *V for Vendetta* – Valerie

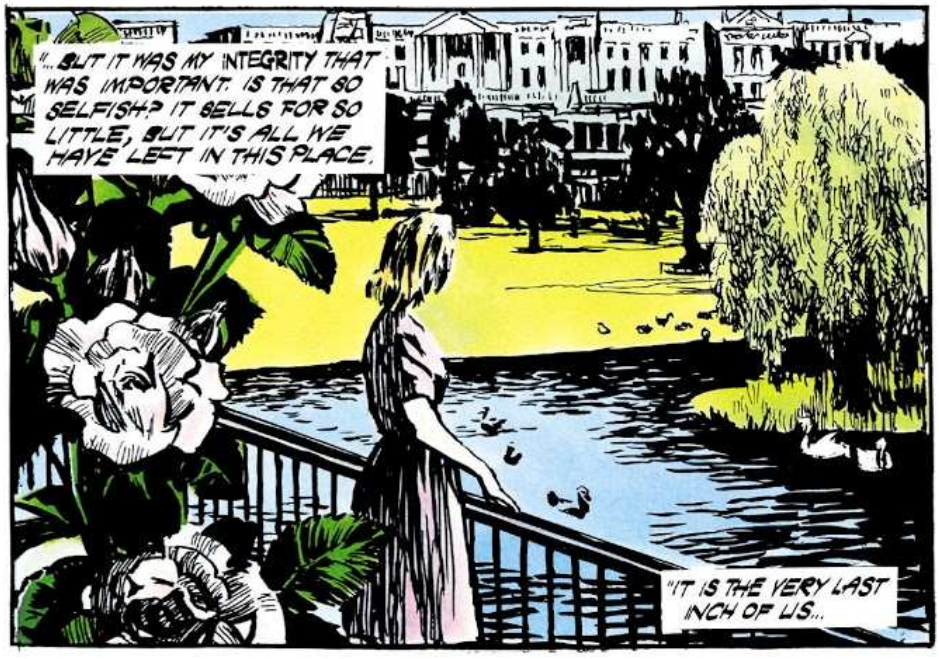

T KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
E. THERE IS NO WAY I CA
T THIS IS NOT ONE OF
ON'T CARE. I AM ME,
HO YOU ARE BUT I LOVE
A PENCIL, A LITTLE ONE
AM A WOMAN. I HID IT
I WON'T BE ABLE TO
O THIS IS A LONG LETT
. IT IS THE ONLY AUTO
ER WRITE AND OH GO
IT ON TOILET PAPER


"I WAS BORN IN NOTTINGHAM IN 1957, AND IT RAINED A LOT. I PASSED MY ELEVEN PLUS AND WENT TO GIRL'S GRAMMAR. I WANTED TO BE AN ACTRESS.
"I MET MY FIRST GIRLFRIEND AT SCHOOL.

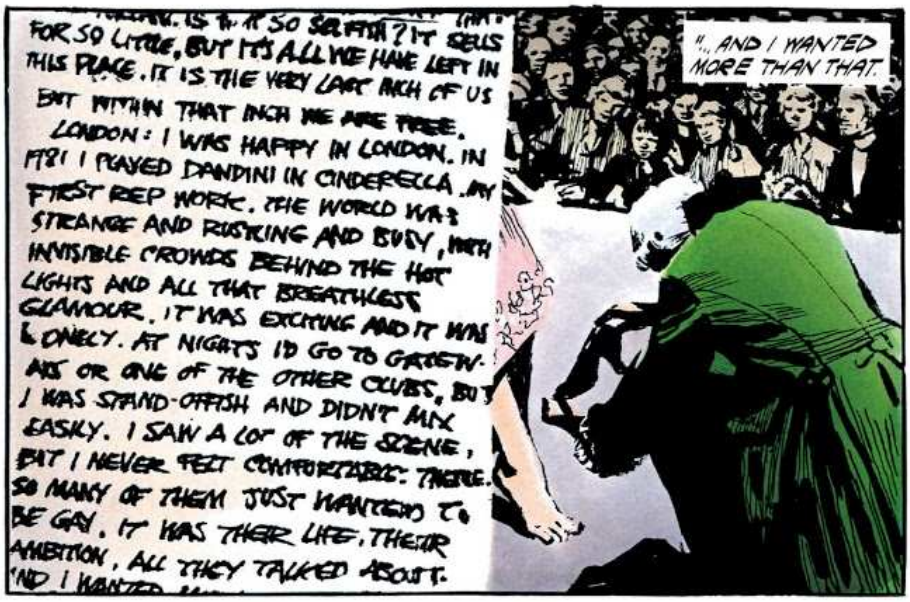

"HER NAME WAS SARA. SHE WAS FOURTEEN AND I WAS FIFTEEN BUT WE WERE BOTH IN MISS WATSON'S CLASS.
"HER WRISTS. HER WRISTS WERE BEAUTIFUL.


"I SAT IN BIOLOGY CLASS, STARING AT THE PICKLED RABBIT FOETUS IN ITS JAR, LISTENING WHILE MR. HIRD SAID IT WAS AN ADOLESCENT PHASE THAT PEOPLE OUTGREW...
"SARA DID. I DIDN'T.


"IN 1976 I STOPPED PRETENDING AND TOOK A GIRL CALLED CHRISTINE HOME TO MEET MY PARENTS.
"A WEEK LATER I MOVED TO LONDON, ENROLLING AT DRAMA COLLEGE. MY MOTHER SAID I BROKE HER HEART...


"... BUT IT WAS MY INTEGRITY THAT WAS IMPORTANT. IS THAT SO SELFISH? IT SELLS FOR SO LITTLE, BUT IT'S ALL WE HAVE LEFT IN THIS PLACE.
"IT IS THE VERY LAST INCH OF US...


"... BUT WITHIN THAT INCH WE ARE FREE."


FOR SO LITTLE, BUT IT'S ALL WE HAVE LEFT IN THIS PLACE. IT IS THE VERY LAST INCH OF US
BUT WITHIN THAT INCH WE ARE FREE.
LONDON: I WAS HAPPY IN LONDON. IN FT81 I PLAYED DANDINI IN CINDERELLA. MY FIRST REP WORK. THE WORLD WAS STRANGE AND RUSHING AND BUSY, WITH INVISIBLE CROWDS BEHIND THE HOT LIGHTS AND ALL THAT BREATHLESS GLAMOUR. IT WAS EXCITING AND IT WAS LONELY. AT NIGHTS I'D GO TO GARLAND'S OR ONE OF THE OTHER CLUBS, BUT I WAS STAND-OFFISH AND DIDN'T MIX EASILY. I SAW A LOT OF THE SCENE, BUT I NEVER FELT COMFORTABLE THERE. SO MANY OF THEM JUST WANTED TO BE GAY. IT WAS THEIR LIFE, THEIR AMBITION, ALL THEY TALKED ABOUT.
"... AND I WANTED MORE THAN THAT.


"WORK IMPROVED. I GOT SMALL FILM ROLES, THEN BIGGER ONES.
"IN 1986 I STARRED IN 'THE SALT FLATS.' IT PULLED IN THE AWARDS BUT NOT THE CROWDS.


"I MET RUTH WHILE WORKING ON THAT.
"WE LOVED EACH OTHER.
"WE LIVED TOGETHER, AND ON VALENTINE'S DAY SHE SENT ME ROSES. AND OH GOD, WE HAD SO MUCH.
"THOSE WERE THE BEST THREE YEARS OF MY LIFE.


"IN 1988 THERE WAS THE WAR...


"...AND AFTER THAT THERE WERE NO MORE ROSES.

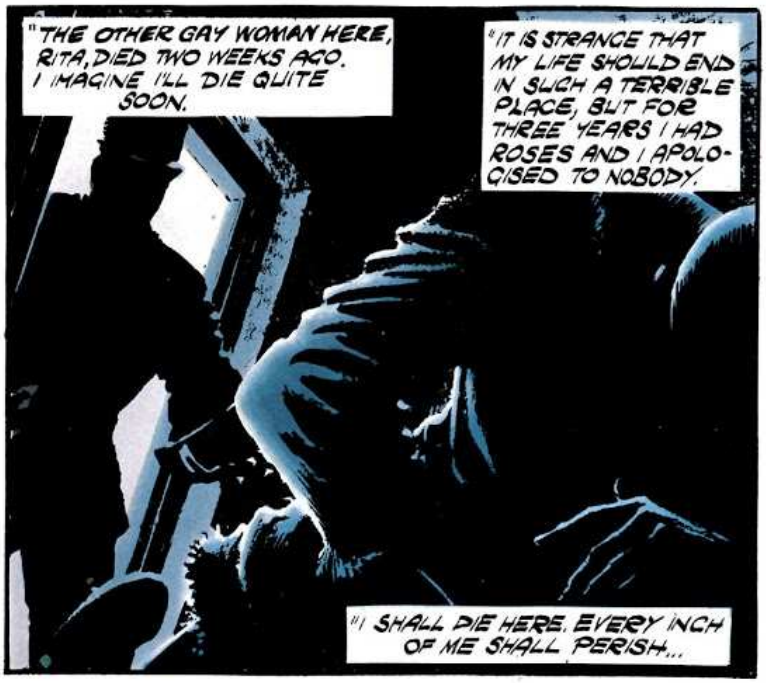

"NOT FOR ANYBODY.


"IN 1992, AFTER THE TAKE-OVER, THEY STARTED ROUNDING UP THE GAYS. THEY TOOK RUTH WHILE SHE WAS OUT LOOKING FOR FOOD.
"WHY ARE THEY SO FRIGHTENED OF US?
"THEY BURNED HER WITH CIGARETTE ENDS AND MADE HER GIVE THEM MY NAME. SHE SIGNED A STATEMENT SAYING I'D SEDUCED HER.
"I DIDN'T BLAME HER.
"GOD, I LOVED HER. I DIDN'T BLAME HER.

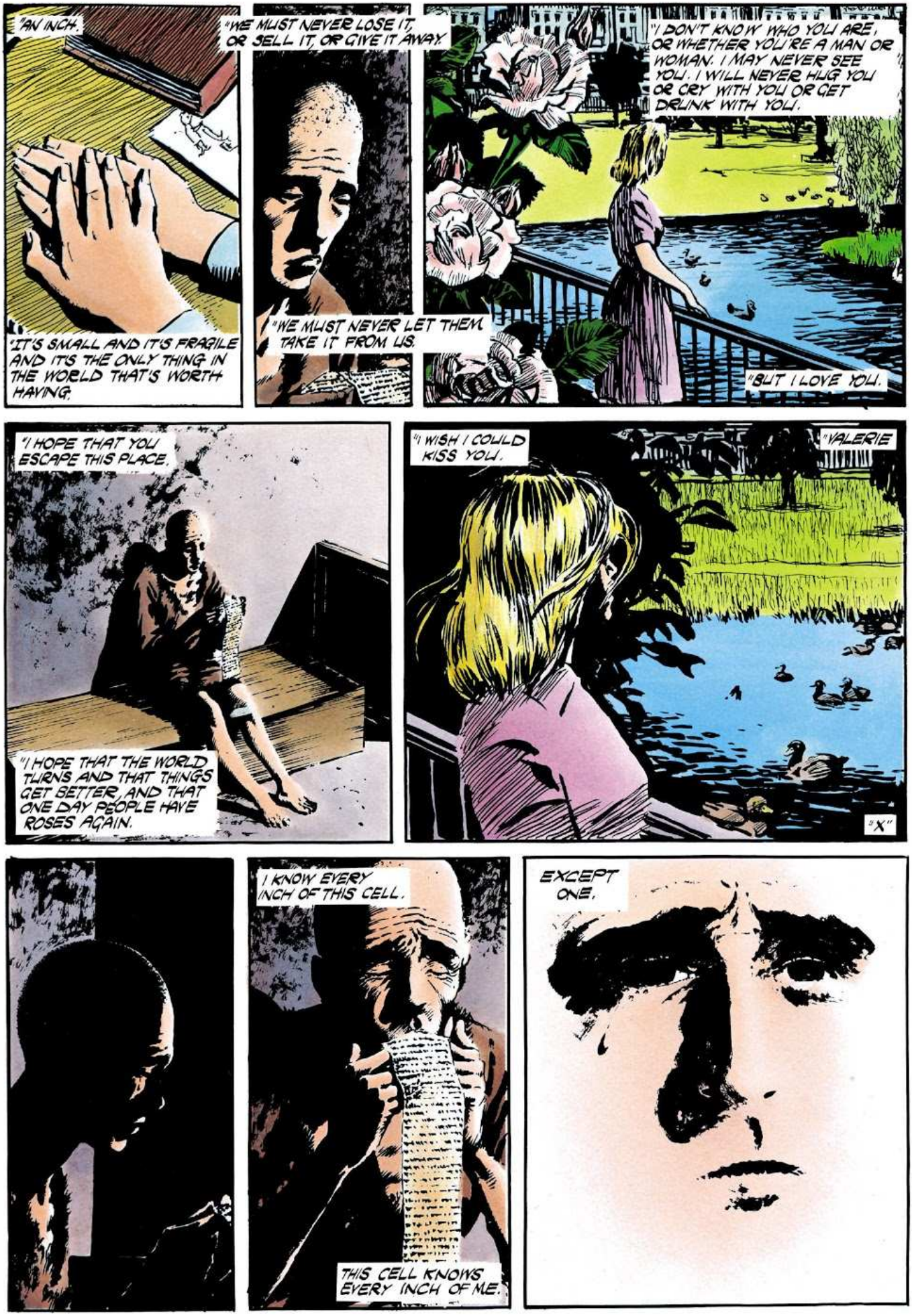

"BUT SHE DID.
"SHE KILLED HERSELF IN HER CELL. SHE COULDN'T LIVE WITH BETRAYING ME, WITH GIVING UP THAT LAST INCH.
"OH RUTH.


"THEY CAME FOR ME. THEY TOLD ME THAT ALL MY FILMS WOULD BE BURNED.
"THEY SHAVED OFF MY HAIR. THEY HELD MY HEAD DOWN A TOILET BOWL AND TOLD JOKES ABOUT LESBIANS.


"THEY BROUGHT ME HERE AND GAVE ME DRUGS. I CAN'T FEEL MY TONGUE ANYMORE, I CAN'T SPEAK.


"THE OTHER GAY WOMAN HERE, RITA, DIED TWO WEEKS AGO. I IMAGINE I'LL DIE QUITE SOON.
"IT IS STRANGE THAT MY LIFE SHOULD END IN SUCH A TERRIBLE PLACE, BUT FOR THREE YEARS I HAD ROSES AND I APOLOGISED TO NOBODY.
"I SHALL DIE HERE. EVERY INCH OF ME SHALL PERISH...


"EXCEPT ONE.


"AN INCH.
"IT'S SMALL AND IT'S FRAGILE AND IT'S THE ONLY THING IN THE WORLD THAT'S WORTH HAVING.
"WE MUST NEVER LOSE IT, OR SELL IT, OR GIVE IT AWAY.
"WE MUST NEVER LET THEM TAKE IT FROM US.
"I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, OR WHETHER YOU'RE A MAN OR WOMAN. I MAY NEVER SEE YOU. I WILL NEVER HUG YOU OR CRY WITH YOU OR GET DRUNK WITH YOU.
"BUT I LOVE YOU.
"I HOPE THAT YOU ESCAPE THIS PLACE.
"I HOPE THAT THE WORLD TURNS AND THAT THINGS GET BETTER, AND THAT ONE DAY PEOPLE HAVE ROSES AGAIN.
"I WISH I COULD KISS YOU.
"VALERIE
"X"
I KNOW EVERY INCH OF THIS CELL.
THIS CELL KNOWS EVERY INCH OF ME.
EXCEPT ONE.