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COMICS™

6  
of 6

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**JSA LIBERTY FILES**




# THE WHISTLING SKULL

THE BIG  
DIRT NAP  
CHAPTER SIX








YOU'LL FIND  
THE SPECIFIC DETAILS IN  
THERE, MISTER MASSEY. BUT  
THOSE PAPERS MAY NOT  
LEAVE THIS OFFICE.

FORGIVE  
ME, BUT THIS  
IS ALL A  
LITTLE...



BEWILDERING?

OVERWHELMING.



THE WHISTLING  
SKULL. I MEAN--  
YOU ALWAYS FIGURED  
HE WAS LIKE THE  
SCARLET PIMPERNEL OR  
THE BLOODY SHADOW.  
INVENTED BY CLEVER  
STORYTELLERS  
TO ENTERTAIN  
FOLKS.

NOT AN  
ASSUMPTION THAT  
BOTHERS US. THE SKULL  
HAS ALWAYS WORKED  
UNDER A CLOAK OF  
SECRECY. THE ENTIRE  
NETWORK HAS, FOR  
DECADES NOW.

THERE'S A  
BRIEF ACCOUNTING  
OF THE LINEAGE,  
WILLIAM. YOU WOULD  
BE THE SEVENTH. AND  
UPON YOUR DEATH,  
THERE WOULD BE  
AN EIGHTH. IDEALLY  
CHOSEN BY  
YOU.

BY...  
ME?





SO THAT  
MEANS--THE LAST  
MAN CHOSE ME?  
HOW WOULD HE  
EVEN--I MEAN--  
WHY ME?

WILLIAM, JOHN  
SINGLETON WAS THE SIXTH  
WHISTLING SKULL. AS WE SAID,  
OVER TIME, JOHN OBSERVED YOUR  
ATTENTION TO NIGEL, AND TOOK  
YOU TO BE A RATHER  
KEEN LAD.



WHEN HE WAS  
IN LONDON, HE SPENT  
SOME TIME OBSERVING YOU,  
AND, IN TRUTH, ASKED SOME  
OF OUR PEOPLE TO ASSESS  
YOUR QUALIFICATIONS.  
WHICH THEY DID.



JOHN  
SINGLETON.  
OF COURSE.

AND  
WHAT OF JOHN  
SINGLETON? THE  
LAST WHISTLING  
SKULL?

LOST  
IN JAPAN.  
SOMETHING  
NIGEL ISN'T  
AWARE  
OF.



OH.

WE HATE  
TO PRESS YOU,  
MR. MASSEY, BUT  
THIS IS EITHER THE  
JOB FOR YOU,  
OR IT'S NOT.

IF IT IS,  
WE'LL WELCOME YOU  
ABOARD. IF IT ISN'T,  
THIS CONVERSATION  
MUST NOT LEAVE  
THIS ROOM.

UPON  
PENALTY OF  
DEATH.

SO, DO  
WE HAVE AN  
ANSWER?





VIKTOR?  
CAN YOU TELL  
US ANYTHING  
ABOUT YOUR TIME  
WITH HELLMAN?  
HOW DID HE  
FIND YOU?

IF IT'S  
TOO PAINFUL  
TO SPEAK, MY  
BROTHER--

N--NO.  
I WILL  
TELL.

I...WAS...  
CLEARING THE...  
ROAD...AT NIGHT.  
TREES FALLEN.  
WORRIED...WAGONS  
MIGHT...BE  
DAMAGED.

# THE BIG DIRT MAP

## CHAPTER SIX

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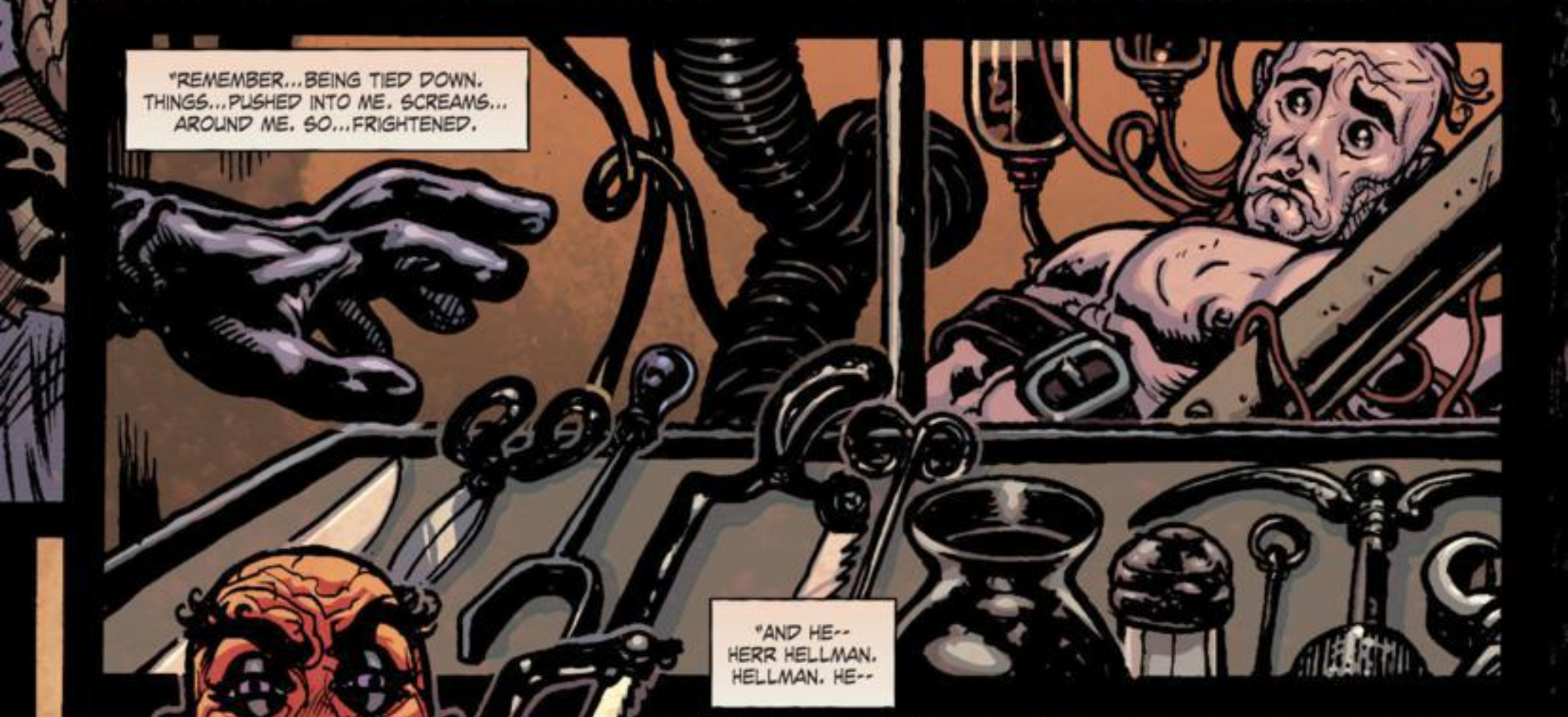
"COULD...FEEL SOMETHING.  
EYES? WAS BEING...WATCHED.  
TRIED TO...HURRY MY TASK.

"AND THEY...  
JUST...  
APPEARED.





"FRIGHTENING. TRIED...TO...  
FIGHT THEM. BUT WAS...  
FRIGHTENED. SLOW. HORRIBLE...  
FREAKS. EVERYWHERE.



"REMEMBER...BEING TIED DOWN.  
THINGS...PUSHED INTO ME. SCREAMS...  
AROUND ME. SO...FRIGHTENED.

"AND HE--  
HERR HELLMAN.  
HELLMAN. HE--



"THE THINGS...  
HE DID. WHAT  
HE--DID TO ME."

"SHUSH,  
VIKTOR.  
THAT'S  
ENOUGH."





THERE'S NOT MUCH TO BE DONE FOR HIS CONDITION. AS HEINOUS AS THIS IS COSMETICALLY, IT MUST BE SAID THAT HELLMAN LEFT HIM RELATIVELY HEALTHY. HIS STRENGTH IS INCREDIBLE, YES. BUT HIS HEART SEEMS FINE.

WHAT ABOUT THE FOG IN HIS BRAIN?

AH. WELL, HE'S CLEARLY BEEN DRUGGED, BUT HIS METABOLISM MAY HAVE WEAKENED THE EFFECTS OF THE DRUG. PROBABLY SOMETHING HELLMAN USED TO KEEP HIM UNDER HIS CONTROL. BUT THE PSYCHIC TRAUMA INVOLVED--



WHAT--WHAT DID THEY DO TO HIM, DOCTOR? WHY DOES HE LOOK SO--?

I SHOULD THINK IT OBVIOUS. HELLMAN USED THE WORKING BODY PARTS OF OTHERS TO ACCENTUATE VIKTOR'S STRENGTH. MUSCLE, TISSUE, SKIN. EVERYTHING GOES AGAINST THE LAWS OF HUMAN NATURE, BUT THE RESULTS ARE HERE BEFORE YOU.

CHRIST ALMIGHTY.



GOD ONLY KNOWS WHAT WOULD DRIVE HIM TO DESTROY ANOTHER MAN IN SUCH A WAY, BUT HELLMAN HAS CREATED HIS OWN FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER.





EXPLAIN THIS TO ME, KEENE. SLOWLY, IF YOU WILL.

WE'VE BEEN TOLD NASH AND HIS MEN CLEARED OUT A FULL DAY AGO. AND YET WE'VE HAD NO COMMUNICATION WITH NASH SINCE HIS MEN UNCOVERED THE COFFIN.

TROUBLING.

MORE THAN TROUBLING. AND WHILE I'M NOT INCLINED TO DOUBT THE WORD OF THESE MONKS...IT GIVES ONE PAUSE.

TRUE. BUT WE'RE UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE LARGER JUSTICE SOCIETY TO ANSWER FOR THE CAT'S DEATH, AND TO WHAT EXACTLY ATTACKED JOHN SINGLETON AND THE UNHOLY THREE.

THE CLOCK AND THE OWL AT LEAST MANAGED TO RETURN HOME WITH THE CAT'S BODY.

I'D LIKE TO THINK THEIR INTERESTS ARE THE SAME AS OURS, BUT ALL OF THE FIFTY-TWO OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, I SUPPOSE.







BUT  
WHAT ABOUT  
JAPAN? DO WE  
SEND ANOTHER  
TEAM IN?

I THINK  
YOU KNOW WHAT  
WE SHOULD DO,  
KEENE.



DO WE TRUST  
THE NEW LAD ENOUGH  
TO SEND HIM IN? WITH  
SINGLETON'S SON AT  
HIS SIDE?



WE HAVE TO  
TRUST HIM, DON'T WE?  
ISN'T THAT WHY HE  
WAS CHOSEN?

THIS IS A BLOODY  
COMPLICATED GAME WE PLAY,  
KEENE. BUT WE HAVE TO FOLLOW  
THE RULES WE'VE SET IF WE'VE  
ANY CHANCE OF EMERGING  
THE VICTOR.



RUN A FULL  
ASSESSMENT OF THE  
SITUATION. MAKE ANOTHER  
EFFORT AT RAISING NASH'S  
TEAM. ASSUMING THE BOYS  
RETURN FROM THEIR SWISS  
ADVENTURE UNDAUNED, WE'LL  
SEE WHERE WE STAND AND  
MAKE THE CALL THEN.  
FAIR ENOUGH?

LONDON'S TEMPLES  
BONE A COLLECTIONS  
All the  
Bills of Morality  
27th of December 1883. And  
211 2nd Street 1st Floor



FAIR ENOUGH.













HE DESTROYED  
MY WORK HERE. THIS  
IS TRUE. BUT IT WOULD  
BE FOOLISH TO WORRY  
ABOUT REVENGE IN THAT  
CASE. IT WAS ONLY A MATTER  
OF TIME BEFORE WE HAD  
TO MOVE ON. EVEN A  
REMOTE VILLAGE SUCH AS  
THIS COULD ONLY KEEP  
US HIDDEN FOR  
SO LONG.

BUT I  
HAVE NO INTEREST  
IN LOOKING OVER MY  
SHOULDER WHEREVER WE  
GO, WONDERING IF THIS  
BIZARRE FELLOW AND HIS  
LUMBERING COMPANION ARE  
WAITING IN THE SHADOWS.  
AND SO WE'LL DEAL  
WITH HIM BEFORE  
WE GO.

REST ASSURED I'LL  
WORK MY WAY BACK INTO THE  
PARTY'S GRACES. WHEN GOEBBELS  
HEARS WHAT I'VE ACCOMPLISHED--  
NO ONE WILL LAUGH AT ME. WHILE  
MENGELE AND HIS BUFFOONS TORTURE  
PRISONERS WITH THEIR BARBARIC  
GUESSWORK, I'VE ACHIEVED  
WONDERS.

IT  
SHOULDN'T  
BE LONG  
NOW.



# LONDON

1940

CLICK



CLANG  
CLANG







HMMPH.  
YOU'RE THE  
NEW ONE,  
THEN?

I...  
YES, I  
AM.



THE WATCH THEN.  
HAND ME THE WATCH.  
YOU DO KNOW YOU  
MAY ONLY USE  
IT ONCE, YES?  
THEY TOLD YOU  
THIS?



THEY DID.  
AND THEN IT  
NEEDS TO BE  
RESET BY--  
WELL, BY  
YOU.

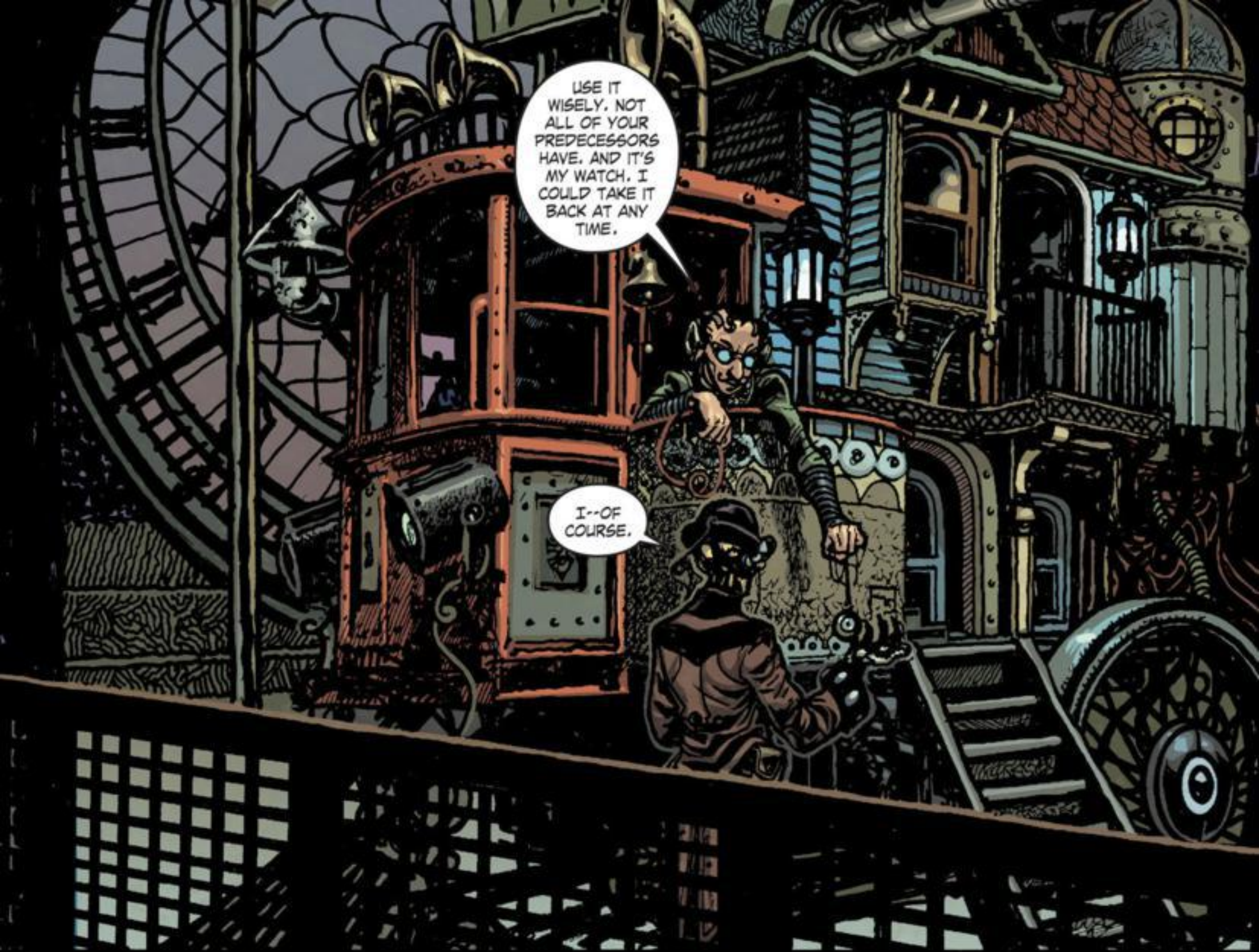
YES, YES.  
THE WATCH  
IS MINE. DON'T  
FORGET THAT.  
YOU'RE ONLY  
BORROWING IT.  
BUT IT'S MY  
WATCH.

RIGHT, I  
UNDERSTAND.



SEE  
THAT YOU DO.  
NOW BEGONE  
WITH YOU. I'VE  
OTHER PLANES  
TO VISIT, AND  
YOUR MINUTE  
IS UP.





USE IT  
WISELY. NOT  
ALL OF YOUR  
PREDECESSORS  
HAVE. AND IT'S  
MY WATCH. I  
COULD TAKE IT  
BACK AT ANY  
TIME.

I--OF  
COURSE.



MADNESS.



THE WATCH?  
I STILL DON'T  
UNDERSTAND  
THE WATCH.



JUST  
FOLLOW THE  
PLAN, NIGEL. I'M  
TRUSTING YOU TO  
PULL THIS OFF,  
OKAY?

OKAY,  
SKULL. I'LL  
MAKE IT  
WORK.

GOOD  
LAD.





HELLMAN!

AH! HE ARRIVES.

YOUR TIME HERE IS DONE, HELLMAN. YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH DAMAGE TO THESE PEOPLE.

SUCH DRAMA. FLAY HIM, MEIN KARNEVAL. DESTROY HIM.

THAT'S IT. COME AND GET ME. I'M RIGHT HERE.









TAKE THEM DOWN!  
GET 'EM!

EASY, KNUCKLES.  
WITHOUT HELLMAN'S CONTROL, THERE SHOULDN'T BE MUCH OF A--


--FIGHT.

AAAARGH!

NO, VIKTOR!  
STOP! HE'S OUT!  
KNUCKLES!

AAAAAH!





I GOT HIM, SKULL.



IT'S OKAY, VIKTOR. IT'S OVER.




IT'S OVER.



HERE'S TO OUR FRIENDS FROM ENGLAND!



HEAR, HEAR!



THIS IS TOO MUCH, REALLY. THIS IS WHY WE'RE HERE. AND YOU HAVE YOURSELVES TO THANK FOR MOST OF IT.





AYE!  
HERE'S TO  
OURSELVES!



KNICKLES?  
ARE YOU  
OKAY?

I'M GOOD.  
EVERYTHING  
IS GOOD.



YOU DID WELL,  
NIGEL. WITHOUT YOU,  
WE NEVER WOULD HAVE  
SUCCEEDED.

THANKS,  
WILL--SKULL.  
I'M GLAD  
WE STOPPED  
THAT BAD  
DOCTOR.



BUT--?





BUT HE  
DAMAGED THOSE  
PEOPLE. SOME OF  
THEM DIED, AND  
SOME OF THEM ARE  
ALWAYS GOING TO  
BE--WRONG. HURT  
FOREVER.



TRUE,  
TRUE.

AND WE'LL SEE A LOT WORSE THAN THIS, I'LL  
WAGER. BUT YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER--IF NOT FOR  
US THIS WOULD HAVE JUST KEPT HAPPENING.  
AND NOT JUST HERE.



HELLMAN'S  
ON A TRAIN BACK  
TO ENGLAND WITH  
A SKULL OPERATIVE,  
AND IT'S UP TO TEAGLE  
AND HIS BOYS TO DEAL  
WITH HIM NOW. BUT  
THE PEOPLE HERE  
ARE SAFE.



WE  
DID GOOD,  
NIGEL.

THANKS,  
WILLIAM. I KNOW  
WE DID.



SO CAN  
I HAVE SOME  
BEER?

HA!  
STICK TO  
HOT TEA.  
TRUST ME  
ON THAT.





"HEY, WILLIAM--  
CAN I ASK YOU  
SOMETHING ABOUT  
JOHANNES?"

"HOW DOES  
AN INVISIBLE  
MAN HAVE  
LIPS AND  
TEETH?"



OH--HOW TO EXPLAIN THAT.  
JOHANNES WAS HIT BY AN  
EXPERIMENTAL GAS DURING  
THE LAST WAR, BUT WASN'T  
FULLY EXPOSED.

HE'S NOT--  
COMPLETELY  
INVISIBLE.

SO  
EVERYTHING BUT  
HIS LIPS IS  
INVISIBLE?

WELL,  
NO. IT'S SORT  
OF RANDOM.  
IMAGINE IF YOU  
THREW PAINT ON  
AN INVISIBLE  
MAN--

HOW  
WOULD  
YOU SEE  
HIM?



I--WELL, THAT'S  
NOT THE POINT--  
I'M JUST TRYING TO  
EXPLAIN THE--

WELL, HOW  
WOULD THE PAINT  
GET ON HIS TEETH  
IF YOU THREW PAINT  
ON HIM? WAS HE  
SMILING?

JUST  
DRINK  
YOUR TEA,  
NIGEL.







WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS? DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

WE DO KNOW WHO YOU ARE, DR. HELLMAN. AND WE KNOW OF YOUR EXILE FROM THE PARTY.



BUT WE ARE THE GESTAPO, AND WE HAVE USES FOR A MAN WITH YOUR ABILITIES. YOU'LL BE COMING WITH US.



KILL EVERYONE ON THE TRAIN.





WELL, IT'S BLOODY WONDERFUL, ISN'T IT? I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

YEAH! IT'S REALLY SUPER!



AFTER HEARING FROM TEAGLE THAT YOU WERE BACK IN ACTION, AND LEARNING THAT YOUR OLD WAGON WAS A LOSS, WE POOLED SOCIETY RESOURCES, AND CAME UP WITH A REPLACEMENT.

THE SOCIETY OPERATES AS A LOOSE COLLECTIVE, BUT IT'S STILL A COLLECTIVE. WHEN WE HAVE THE RESOURCES TO HELP, WE HELP.



AND, TRUTHFULLY, THERE'S ANOTHER MATTER WE'D LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU, ASSUMING YOU'RE OPEN TO IT.



ANOTHER MATTER?

WE UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE PLANNING A RETURN TO JAPAN...

END BOOK ONE





ROXRITE