

The Queen of Abbadon

by Alan Moore

FROM WHITE DISSOLVE:

EXT. - THE BLACK NOTHING

Darkness.

Nothing.

There is only a symphony of faint WHISPERS of SORROW, of SUFFERING. Somewhere in the darkness nearby, a man WHIMPERS. We hear rocks COLLAPSE. His SCREAMS fall away. At random, SNARLING dogs rush past our ears. BARKING, GROWLING. There is a monotonous chorus of angry, hateful VOICES coming from various directions. They SNEER and CHANT. The chant wanes and grows and repeats continuously like a staggered chorus of row, row, row your boat.

REPEATING CHORUS (VOICE OVER)

Suck-nibble-swallow.
Gobble-chew-consume.
Gimme, gimme more.
Ooze-wallop-suckle.
Take it! Get it! Mine.

Above the chaos, MARA's soothing voice seems to come from different directions, as if she is everywhere at once.

MARA

Darkness. The absence of light? Or
an amalgam of every visible color
thrust upon your iris all at once?

Sporadic, disconnected images flash randomly in the darkness like a broken strobe light: a wrecked car, a clock, smeared mascara, kids swinging, coffee, knife slicing through meat, a bandaid, a Christmas tree.

MARA (CONT)

Calm your imagination!

More images flash at irregular speed: an apple, a subway car, a school ruler smacked against a child's open palms, ants under the hot spot of a magnifying glass, a Cobra spitting, striking, a bathtub overflowing, a rotting carcass on the side of the road. Finally, there is a long image of people watching a film in a dark theater. The blue light of a horror flick dances in their eyes.

MARA (CONT)

Nothing's real. Be calm.
The voices chant. The images crescendo and then...dissipate
into quiet darkness again.

MARA (CONT)

Concentrate your belief that you
might see me and know me. Wicked
be gone! Peace be still.

Boisterous THUNDER. Amid a FURY of lightening, we see Mara
in a series of flashes; the alluring smooth skin of her
legs, the bottom of her jaw line and her neck thrust back
in sexual surrender; her thick, kissable lips, her red
painted toes, her perfectly-sculpted naked silhouette.

In another series: she is old, pitiful, sickly, her
grandma-mouth spews vomit, the few teeth she has are yellow
and crooked, her bony arms are wrinkled and age-spotted,
her arthritic fingers are forever bent, she has a
protruding spine and a hunchback, her hair is a wiry mess
of white. Everything is lost to the black again.

MARA (CONT.)

Mind tricks. Be not deceived. See
my face. Know me. Focus your
belief that you might understand.

We see her in the distance. She is young, beautiful, and
sensual. Her face is pure, glamorous. We are slowly zooming
closer to her. She has lots of fiery red hair and eyes so
blue they're almost gray. Closer still, until nothing but
her face fills our view.

MARA (CONT.)

I am Mara. Listen to my tale of
how I come to love and understand
the necessity of evil.

Zooming even closer still, we are looking into just one of
her eyes, creeping forward until her pupil fills the screen
with black again.

MARA (CONT.)

Be not afraid. Your soul is
neither yours to give, nor mine to
take.

The black transforms into brilliant white. As we pull back, we're looking directly into the sun. We are moving backward in a blue sky, watching the shrinking sun.

We go in reverse into a dark tunnel. Emerging from it on the other side, we see it was the enclosed part of a lowercase "e." As we move farther backward, the "e" is part of the word "evil." As things in front get smaller, the entire text is written in the sky:

LEGEND: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."
Isaiah 45:7, The King James Bible

EXT. -- An open field. Day.

We traverse backward across an expanse of tall grass and colorful sprays of wild flowers. It's a beautiful meadow of rolling hills and shades of green. Mara zips past, we see her backside as she sprints in the opposite direction. Then we see an enormous ugly tree, knotted and twisted, but it too is getting smaller in the distance.

We stop abruptly. The ugly tree is the only out-of-place protrusion on the wide-open horizon. Suddenly we accelerate forward to the tree. Beyond it, Mara is far ahead of us but we're moving faster and closing on her. Within a few feet of her, we slow to move at her pace. She stops, breathing heavy. She turns to look back toward the tree. We see it in her eyes that something's wrong in paradise.

Mara collapses. She wails, moans and curses. Despite the speed and distance travelled, she has journeyed no more than 20 feet from the ugly tree.

MARA

What is this? Why have you forsaken me?
I call your name and...nothing. Fine.
Silence speaks volumes.

Atop the ugly tree, NAHOR, a trollish, hateful creature clings to a tree limb watching. Perched on a limb slightly higher is DAMARIS, a bony and unclean child.

DAMARIS

Help me. Please.

Damaris begins to climb down, but Nahor's long fingernails claw bloody marks down his back. Damaris screams.

NAHOR

(to Damaris)

Useless waste. Stupid, stupid. Clearly
your existence is a mistake.

Mara retreats, low-crawling through the grass. Nahor dismounts the tree and approaches cautiously.

NAHOR (CONT)

(to Mara)

For whom do you cry out? ...Why plead
if he does not listen? ...Does he not
hear the agony? I hear you well...

Nahor creeps toward Mara's hiding place. He extends his greenish-black hand to help her up. The grotesque hand is old and sticky.

NAHOR (CONT)

Why do you snivel so?

Are my words so strange? Or...do you
withhold *your* voice from me? Come out.

MARA

Leave me!

NAHOR

Ah. Beauty speaks.

MARA

I thought I was alone.

NAHOR

There is only one like you, so yes you
are. I am Nahor and the repugnant one
is Damaris.

He gestures toward Damaris, who is maybe six or seven years old. The shirtless boy is filthy and bruised, his pants are tattered. He is severely malnourished.

MARA

Is this Hell?

NAHOR

Is it hot or cold?

MARA

Neither.

NAHOR

Well, there you are.

MARA

Then what? What is this?

NAHOR

It is as you wish.

MARA

Foolishness!

NAHOR

It is truth. Show her Damaris.

DAMARIS

No.

NAHOR

Selfish pig. I shall turn you on a spit!

Damaris scurries behind the tree. Nahor chases him.

MARA

There's nowhere to run. I run in all directions for nothing. Stop this.

Nahor stops and approaches Mara with a smug look.

NAHOR

A proposal then? I wish to catch the child. And you?

MARA

I wish to be unbound from that God-awful tree.

As Nahor considers this for a moment, Damaris hides in the tall grass behind the tree. Nahor

looks to the top of the tree, then at the boy,
then to back to Mara.

NAHOR

A solution then. Help me catch the
child. And then we shall destroy the
tree.

MARA

Why do you want him?

NAHOR

I want so to whip him badly. I'd
destroy him if it were possible. You
are fast and able, so you must help me.

Damaris screams and again scurries in horror.

MARA

I will not.

NAHOR

Then I love the tree and so it stands!

Instantly, a baby is CRYING in pain. It is ceaseless
crying. The sound is excruciating to Mara. She covers her
ears. Neither Nahor nor Damaris seem affected by it.
Damaris is making faces and taunting Nahor.

MARA

What is this? A baby? Here?

NAHOR

There is nothing, but what you see.

MARA

You don't hear that?

NAHOR

I choose not to listen.

The cries of the baby are coming from the left, Mara runs
toward it, but then the sound comes from another direction.
She reroutes and runs toward it, but sound shifts again.

MARA

This isn't right. Something's wrong.

NAHOR

Yes. You failed to follow through on
your wish and the balance has shifted.

MARA

Damaris? You hear it? This child cries
horribly? It must be hungry.

DAMARIS

Babies are greedy and selfish.

NAHOR

So true, Boy! There's hope for you yet.

MARA

I must find this baby. He is hungry.

NAHOR

Little gluttons ceaselessly want more,
more, more.

NAHOR & DAMARIS

(In unison chant)

Mine! Mine! Gimme! Gimme! Mine!

They dance around the tree, celebrating the chaos and
mocking Mara.

NAHOR

Why do you trouble over this? A product
of lust and adultery!

MARA

Help me!

NAHOR

No. Never.

NAHOR & DAMARIS

(In unison chant)

Gobble! Gobble! Chew! Consume!

MARA

Damaris? Don't you hear?

Damaris shakes his head "no" and recoils from Mara as she reaches for his hand. Nahor, playing the pseudo-hero steps between Damaris and Mara as if he is defending the boy.

MARA (CONT)

(lashing out)

How can you not hear it? Liars!

NAHOR

I simply do NOT hear it. It does NOT exist.

MARA

This baby needs comfort. Help me.

DAMARIS

(dancing)

Feed the ferocious beast. Gobble, chew, consume!

Pleased by this, Nahor applauds Damaris for the enthusiasm. Mara searches frantically. The cries continue.

MARA

(to Nahor)

Why are you such an adversary?

NAHOR

(taunting)

Such red hot anger. Such ill-temper. I like you this way.

MARA

You can help me.

NAHOR

YOU did this! YOU can fix it, but you must wish it to be so.

Damaris hears this and immediately becomes distraught. His pleas meld with the crying baby.

DAMARIS

No! Don't wish it!

Nahor grabs the boy by his arms. Damaris, struggles, screams, but he can't get away.

NAHOR

Shut up Damaris! This doesn't concern you!

MARA

I did nothing!

NAHOR

Exactly! And THAT shifted the balance. You CAUSED this...

(with an evil grin)

...BUT I can shut its mouth, if you wish it. Shall I silence the baby?

DAMARIS

No! Please, don't! Please!

MARA

If I wish it - then you will whip Damaris?

NAHOR

I will not. I give you my word.

MARA

Then yes! Yes! I wish it so!

Instantly an ax falls from the tree to ground near Nahor's feet. Nahor looks at the ax and then turns to the boy.

He bites hard into Damaris' arm and throws him to the ground. Blood pours out and Damaris wails and crawls to the base of the tree. Nahor wields the ax high above Damaris and swings hard.

MARA

Nooo!!

The ax plants itself into the trunk inches above Damaris' head. The bark of the tree, close to where the ax landed, contorts into a sideways, vertical mouth that wails and cries like a baby. The mouth trembles and contorts.

Nahor kicks Damaris out of the way and steadies the ax for another swing at the screaming mouth of the tree. He makes three quick chops, each hitting it's mark and drawing a spray of green and yellow puss at Nahor's face. Then the horrible mouth falls silent.