

Chapter I, page I.



In which the machinery of our story is sparked into motion. This page is shown in two states. Alan was still thinking cinematically, with large blocked title lettering superimposed on the opening scene (or “shot”). I thought it would be more in keeping with the ambience of the work to do it in the style of the title page of a book, and had my pal Des Roden calligraph a series of chapter-headings for the original appearances. When I collected the work together in 1999, Michael Evans, graphic designer, replaced those with a typeset version. These are in a more funereal white-on-black, with a suggestion of the title cards of old silent movies.

Here I’m earnestly trying to get all the information in. I “zoomed” in for the first panel’s label details. Those pasted on xeroxes of period sweets/candy designs helped to establish place and time, giving me enough credit in the bank, I hoped, so that I could concentrate on the people for the rest of the page. Still, in ’99 when I looked over the pages before publishing the collected edition, I was unhappy with Eddy’s faces, and they are all altered in the second version, with the whole figure in the final panel being replaced. This is a standard problem with the first appearances of characters. Like real people, the artist can’t know them fully until they’ve been around for a while. Later he or she gets comfortable with them and knows exactly how they look and move.

PAGE 1. (1758 words) PANEL 1.

THERE ARE SEVEN PANELS ON THIS FIRST PAGE, PROBABLY WITH A BIG WIDE ONE AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE HERE, SPANNING ITS FULL WIDTH. THE DATE, AS WE SHALL SEE, IS JULY 1884, AND THE PLACE IS CLEVELAND STREET, LONDON, ONE OF THE MORE FASHIONABLE AND UP-MARKET AREAS OF THAT PERIOD, AS FAR AS THE METROPOLIS WENT. WE ARE INSIDE A CONFECTIONERS-CUM-TOBACCONIST SITUATED AT NO. 22 CLEVELAND STREET, AND IN THIS FIRST PANEL WE ARE LOOKING AT A LONG SHELF THAT NEATLY FILLS THE SPACE ALLOWED BY THIS FIRST WIDE, HORIZONTAL PANEL, STRETCHING FROM ONE SIDE OF THE PAGE TO THE

OTHER. UPON THE SHELF THERE ARE OLD-FASHIONED SWEET JARS CONTAINING OLD-FASHIONED SWEETS: ANISEED BALLS, WINTER MIXTURE, MINT IMPERIALS, SUGARED ALMONDS, ACID DROPS, BON BONS AND SO FORTH, ALONG WITH SOME EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT THE SHOP IS ALSO A TOBACCONIST'S. PERHAPS A BOX OF CIGARS, OR PARTITIONED TRAY OF DIFFERENT TOBACCOS. MAYBE WE CAN SEE A HINT OF THE TOPS OF THE JARS ON THE SHELF BELOW THIS ONE HERE, BUT ONLY IF THERE'S ROOM. OVER ON THE RIGHT OF THE WIDE PANEL, WE CAN SEE THE ARMS OF A TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD SHOP-GIRL NAMED ANNIE CROOK, A STURDILY BUILT AND TIDILY DRESSED YOUNG WOMAN, AS SHE REACHES UP FROM OFF PANEL BELOW TO TAKE A FEW MORE PIECES OF BARLEY SUGAR FROM A JAR ON THE TOP SHELF. ONE OF HER HANDS MANAGES TO HOLD THE JAR'S LID AND ALSO TO TILT THE OPEN JAR OVER TOWARDS HER. HER OTHER HAND DIPS IN TO RETRIEVE A COUPLE OF SINGLE PIECES OF DEEP ORANGE BARLEY SUGAR. WE CANNOT SEE ANY MORE OF HER THAN HER ARMS, ENTERING THE PICTURE FROM BELOW. THE REST OF THE PANEL IS JUST TOBACCO AND DIFFERENT SORTS OF SWEETS: I WANT THIS TO BE A PANEL THAT YOU CAN ALMOST SMELL, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. THE TITLE LETTERING IS SUPERIMPOSED OVER THE LEFT OF THE PANEL SOMEWHERE, DOWN TOWARDS THE BOTTOM.

TITLE: Chapter one. The Affections of Young Mr. S.

PANEL 2.

NOW WE ARE BEHIND THE COUNTER OF THE SHOP, WITH THE SHOP-GIRL, LOOKING OUT OVER IT. ON THE SHOP'S COUNTER THERE IS AN OLD-FASHIONED WEIGHING SCALE OR BALANCE, INTO ONE OF THE PANS OF WHICH WE SEE ANNIE CROOK DROPPING THE COUPLE OF PIECES OF BARLEY SUGAR THAT SHE'S JUST TAKEN FROM THE JAR, AS IF TO MAKE UP THE WEIGHT. WE CAN STILL SEE NO MORE OF HER THAN HER HANDS AND CUFFS, ENTERING FROM THE LEFT OF THE FOREGROUND HERE. LOOKING OUT ACROSS THE COUNTER AND INTO THE SHADY REMAINDER OF THE SHOP WE SEE TWO YOUNG MEN STANDING, WAITING FOR THE WOMAN TO FINISH DELIVERING THE SWEETS THAT THEY ARE PURCHASING. ONE OF THESE, DRESSED IN A MUSTARD COLOUR CHECK SUIT OF SOMEWHAT QUESTIONABLE TASTE AND LOUDNESS, IS YOUNG WALTER SICKERT, AGED 24 YEARS OLD. THE OTHER YOUNG MAN IS MUCH MORE SOMBERLY AND ELEGANTLY DRESSED IN A GENTLEMAN'S BLACK COAT, AND ALTHOUGH HE WILL BE INTRODUCED TO US AS SICKERT'S YOUNG BROTHER ALBERT, HE IS IN FACT THE YOUNG DUKE OF CLARENCE, PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR CHRISTIAN EDWARD... OR PRINCE EDDY FOR SHORT. AT THE TIME OF THIS FIRST SCENE, IN 1884, HE IS ONLY TWENTY YEARS OLD. HE'S QUITE GOOD-LOOKING, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING RATHER BOVINE ABOUT HIS EXPRESSION. HE ISN'T TERRIBLY BRIGHT, KNOWS IT, AND FEELS WRETCHEDLY SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT IT. HE'S NAÏVE TO THE POINT OF BEING INFANTILE, AND HAVING LED A RELATIVELY LOVELESS EXISTENCE IS INCLINED TO FALL PASSIONATELY IN LOVE WITH ANYONE HE MEETS. COUPLED WITH THIS, HIS INFANTILE NEEDS FOR GRATIFICATION MANIFEST THEMSELVES IN HIS SEX LIFE TO MAKE HIM FAIRLY PROMISCUOUS... ALTHOUGH THAT'S SOMEWHAT TOO KNOWING A TERM TO CONVEY THE CHILDISHNESS, ALMOST INNOCENCE, OF HIS EMOTIONAL AND SEXUAL EXPERIENCE. HE HAS HAD SYPHILIS SINCE THE AGE OF SIXTEEN, ALTHOUGH THIS WILL NOT MANIFEST ITS WORSE EFFECTS UNTIL LATE IN EDDY'S LIFE. AS HE STANDS WITH SICKERT HERE HE HOLDS A TOP HAT NERVOUSLY AND AWKWARDLY BENEATH HIS ARM, AND IS STARING ALMOST SLACK-JAWED AT THE OFF-PANEL WOMAN BEHIND THE COUNTER, FAR TOO GAUCHE TO CONCEAL HIS WIDE-EYED INTEREST, OR EVEN TO BE AWARE THAT HE IS SHOWING IT. SICKERT, ON THE OTHER HAND,

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IS COMPARATIVELY EASY AND RELAXED, A CONFIDENT YOUNG BOHEMIAN ABOUT TOWN. HE HAS A SMART DERBY HAT TUCKED JAUNTILY UNDER HIS ARM, OR IS HOLDING IT IN ONE HAND. HIS GAZE IS DIRECTED AT THE LAST PIECES OF BARLEY SUGAR BEING DROPPED INTO THE SCALE, RATHER THAN AT THE YOUNG WOMAN DOING THE DROPPING, AS IS THE CASE WITH HIS COMPANION. HE SMILES FAINTLY, RELAXEDLY, UTTERLY AT EASE. THE SHOP HAS A LARGE FRONT WINDOW, AND THE BRIGHT SUNSHINE FALLS IN FROM OUTSIDE IN SHAFTS, A SOLID-EDGED RHOMBOID OF WHITE-GOLD LIGHT AGAINST THE MUSTY UMBER DARKNESS OF THE SWEETSHOP, WITH ITS JARS AND TRAYS AND SELECTIONS OF BRIAR PIPES. FALLEN FROM THE OFF-PANEL WOMAN'S FINGERS, THE LAST PIECE OF BARLEY SUGAR HANGS SUSPENDED AND MAGICALLY IN MIDAIR, CAUGHT FROZEN BETWEEN HAND AND WEIGHING SCALE. THE CAPTION CAN BE AT THE TOP OR BOTTOM. UP TO YOU.

CAP: LONDON, JULY 1884.

PANEL 3.

NOW A SIDE-ON SHOT, LOOKING DOWN THE LENGTH OF THE COUNTER TOWARDS THE SHOP'S FRONT WINDOW, SO THAT WE CAN SEE ALL THE THREE PARTICIPANTS CLEARLY. ANNIE STANDS, FULLY VISIBLE FOR THE FIRST TIME, BEHIND THE COUNTER, OVER TO THE LEFT OF PANEL HERE. SHE'S POURING THE BARLEY SUGAR FROM THE PAN OF THE SCALES INTO A LITTLE TRIANGULAR BAG MADE OF WHITE PAPER. THE BARLEY SUGAR LUMPS ARE SOMEWHAT MELTED AND STUCK TOGETHER, ON ACCOUNT OF THE FEROCIOUS AND SWELTERING JULY HEAT. ANNIE IS A LARGE AND STURDILY BUILT WOMAN WITH BROAD FEATURES. SHE ISN'T FAT, YOU UNDERSTAND, JUST BIG; ONLY A LITTLE SHORTER THAN PRINCE EDDY. SHE ISN'T IMMEDIATELY PRETTY OR BEAUTIFUL, BUT HER CHARACTER AND WARMTH ARE EVIDENT, AND DO MUCH TO COMPENSATE FOR THIS BY LENDING HER A UNIQUE AIR OF ANIMATION AND CHARM. SHE SMILES QUIETLY AS SHE POURS THE BARLEY SUGAR INTO THE WHITE PAPER BAG, EYES TWINKLY WITH FRIENDLY AMUSEMENT AS SHE SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO SICKERT. PRINCE EDDY, IN THE BACKGROUND, HOLDS HIS TOP HAT WRETCHEDLY IN BOTH HANDS AND STARES AT THE WOMAN BEHIND THE COUNTER WITH A MOONSTRUCK EXPRESSION THAT BORDERS UPON THE IMBECILIC. SICKERT GRINS AT ANNIE AS HE SPEAKS TO HER. SHE'S MODELED FOR HIM IN THE PAST, AND THE TWO ARE QUITE FRIENDLY AND RELAXED AROUND EACH OTHER. ANNIE COMES FROM SCOTLAND ORIGINALLY, BY THE WAY.

ANNIE: There. Two pennorth on the nail. I'd not want to jew you now, would I?

ANNIE: I'm sorry they're all of a lump. It's this weather.

SICKERT: Nonsense, Annie. They look mouth-watering.



PANEL 4.

SAME SHOT EXACTLY. ALL OF THE SWEETS ARE NOW IN THE BAG, AND ANNIE IS PLACING THE BAG (WITH A TWIST AT THE TOP CORNERS) ONTO THE COUNTER. SICKERT IS IN THE ACT OF TAKING A COUPLE OF COPPER PENNIES FROM HIS COAT POCKET. BOTH ANNIE AND SICKERT SORT OF PAUSE IN MID-MOVEMENT AND TURN THEIR HEADS TO LOOK SLIGHTLY AWAY FROM US TOWARDS EDDY, WHO STANDS FACING US IN THE IMMEDIATE BACKGROUND HERE, IN MORE OR LESS THE SAME POSITION AS LAST PANEL. HE LOOKS DREADFULLY EMBARRASSED, AND, AS IS USUAL AT SUCH TIMES, STARTS TO EVIDENCE A FAINT STAMMER, A MERE ECHO OF HIS FATHER'S FAR MORE SERIOUS SPEECH DIFFICULTY. HE GAZES AT ANNIE WITH CHILDISH, AWESTRUCK ADORATION. YOU CAN SEE HOW PEOPLE MIGHT BE TOUCHED BY THE NAKED SINCERITY OF A YOUNG MAN OF EDDY'S YEARS AND

STATION. SICKERT AND ANNIE LOOK SURPRISED.

EDDY: A-as do you...i-if I may say so.

EDDY: That is, ah...

PANEL 5.

REVERSE ANGLE NOW, SO THAT EDDY FACES SLIGHTLY AWAY FROM US, HEAD AND SHOULDERS IN THE FOREGROUND AS HE GAZES TOWARDS SICKERT AND ANNIE IN THE CENTRE OF THE IMMEDIATE BACKGROUND, STANDING TO EITHER SIDE OF THE SHOP'S COUNTER. EDDY LOOKS WRETCHEDLY AGITATED AND ANXIOUS AND WORRIED IN THE WAKE OF HIS OUTBURST, FEARFUL THAT ANNIE HAS TAKEN OFFENCE. ANNIE, STANDING BEHIND THE COUNTER, TURNS AND GAZES AT EDDY WHILE SHE SPEAKS TO SICKERT. HER EYES ARE WIDE WITH SURPRISE, AND SHE HAS A FAINT SMILE THAT IS SLIGHTLY MOCKING, BUT KINDLY. SICKERT, LAYING HIS TWO PENNIES DOWN ON THE COUNTERTOP, TURNS ALSO TO LOOK AT EDDY, GRINNING BROADLY WITH AMUSEMENT AT THE YOUNG CHAP'S OBVIOUS DISCOMFORT. WITH HIS OTHER HAND HE IS PICKING UP THE SMALL WHITE BAG OF BARLEY SUGAR.

ANNIE: Why, Mr.S. You do entertain the most IMPERTINENT companions.

EDDY: I...please, I apologize. I only meant...

PANEL 6.

NOW BACK TO AN ANGLE SIMILAR TO THAT EMPLOYED IN THE PANELS THREE AND FOUR, WITH THE COUNTER RUNNING AWAY FROM US, ANNIE ON ONE SIDE AND THE TWO GENTLEMEN ON THE OTHER. TOWARDS THE FOREGROUND, ANNIE IS PLACING THE MONEY IN THE DRAWER OF AN OLD-FASHIONED VICTORIAN TILL. IN THE NEAR BACKGROUND, AGAINST THE LIGHT OF THE SHOP WINDOW, SICKERT HAS TAKEN A STEP ACROSS SO THAT HE'S BEHIND EDDY WITH HIS HANDS CLASPED FATHERLY UPON EACH OF EDDY'S SHOULDERS FROM BEHIND AS HE STEERS THE RELUCTANT AND LOVE-STRUCK YOUNG MAN TOWARDS THE COUNTER, IN ORDER TO PROPERLY INTRODUCE HIM TO ANNIE. ANNIE LOOKS AT THE FRIGHTENED AND UNCOMFORTABLE-LOOKING EDDY WITH AMUSEMENT IN HER EYES. SHE THINKS HE'S CUTE. EDDY SHUFFLES FORWARD UNDER SICKERT'S GENTLE PRESSURE FROM BEHIND, HIS TOP HAT IN HIS HANDS.

SICKERT: Oh, come on, old chap. She's just having you on.

SICKERT: Annie, this... this is my younger brother, ALBERT.

SICKERT: Uh, Albert, this is Miss Annie Crook.

PANEL 7.

SIMILAR SHOT NOW. IN THE FOREGROUND, ANNIE SMILES AND REACHES ONE HAND ACROSS THE COUNTERTOP TOWARDS EDDY, AS IF TO SHAKE HANDS. EDDY STARES DOWN STUPIDLY AT THE HAND AS IF NOT SURE WHAT TO DO WITH IT, HIS OWN HAND RISING HESITANTLY TO MEET IT. IN THE NEAR BACKGROUND, SICKERT IS IN THE ACT OF SETTING HIS DERBY ATOP HIS HEAD IN PREPARATION FOR GOING OUTSIDE. PERHAPS HE'S CHECKING HIS REFLECTION IN A GLASS-FRONTED CABINET OR SOMETHING WHILE HE DOES SO. IN ANY EVENT, HE IS NO LONGER LOOKING TOWARDS US, OR TOWARDS EDDY AND ANNIE. ANNIE ALMOST LOOKS AS IF SHE'S GOING TO LAUGH AT THE AWKWARDNESS OF THE HANDSOME YOUNG EDDY AS HE GAWPS AT HER OFFERED HAND.

ANNIE: Oh, a YOUNG Mr. S, eh? I didn't KNOW there was a young Mr. S.

ANNIE: Well...

ANNIE: Pleased to make your acquaintance, I'm sure.

AND AT ANNIE. THERE IS A SADNESS AND VULNERABILITY IN HIS WIDELY SPACED EYES THAT IS TOUCHING. IN THE BACKGROUND, SICKERT FINISHES ADJUSTING HIS DERBY AND GLANCES OVER AT THE PAIR WITH A NON-COMMITTAL EXPRESSION, UNLESS YOU WANT TO LEAVE HIM OUT ALTOGETHER AND JUST CONCENTRATE ON EDDY KISSING ANNIE'S HAND.

EDDY: The...
EDDY: The honour is all mine, dear Lady. I ...
EDDY: I hope we may become better acquainted.



PANEL 2.

BACK TO A SHOT LOOKING DOWN THE COUNTER FROM THE END WITH ANNIE ON ONE SIDE AND EDDY ON THE OTHER. HE IS STILL HOLDING HER HAND, ALTHOUGH THE HANDS ARE LOWERED NOW AND HIS IS ABOUT TO RELEASE IT, HAVING STRAIGHTENED UP AFTER STOOPING TO KISS IT. HE STARES DIRECTLY INTO ANNIE'S EYES. SHE STARES BACK INTO HIS EYES AND SHE IS NO LONGER MOCKING OR AMUSED. HER EYES HAVE A WONDERING AND ALMOST STARTLED LOOK AS SHE STARES INTO EDDY'S EYES. SEEMINGLY OBLIVIOUS TO WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE EMPTY SPACE BETWEEN THEIR EYES, SICKERT CALLS OUT CHEERILY FROM THE NEAR BACKGROUND, GESTURING WITH HIS THUMB TOWARDS THE FRONT DOOR OF THE SHOP THAT WE CAN SEE IN THE RIGHT OF THE BACKGROUND BEHIND HIM. IT HAS A GLASS PANEL SET INTO ITS TOP HALF, THOUGH NOT A TERRIBLY BIG ONE.

SICKERT: Albert, I hate to be a bore, but Netley's waiting outside.
SICKERT: We really must dash, Annie. No doubt we'll call again shortly.
SICKERT: Come along, youngster!

PANEL 3.

SAME SHOT. ANNIE STANDS MOTIONLESS BEHIND THE COUNTER, LOOKING TOWARDS THE DOOR OF THE SHOP. THE TWO MEN HAVE JUST GONE OUTSIDE. EDDY, CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, LOOKS BACK INTO THE SHOP THROUGH THE GLASS PANE SET INTO THE TOP HALF OF THE DOOR, HIS LOVESTRUCK GAZE SERIOUS AND MEANINGFUL. ANNIE, UNCONSCIOUSLY, TOUCHES ONE HAND TO HER BREAST AS SHE GAZES AFTER HIM. THE LITTLE BELL THAT'S RIGGED TO THE SHOP DOOR TINKLES IN THE OTHERWISE DEAD SILENCE FOLLOWING THE GENTLEMEN'S DEPARTURE.

F.X. Ti-ting

PANEL 4.

WE ARE NOW OUTSIDE THE SHOP. (FOR THE BASIC LOOK OF THE PLACE, SEE THE ENCLOSED REFERENCE PHOTOGRAPH. I FIGURE THAT THE SIGN ABOVE THE WINDOW READS "MORGAN'S TOBACCONIST & QUALITY CONFECTIONER." THE SHOP HAS NEVER BEEN NAMED, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, BUT THE PROPRIETRESS WAS A MRS. MORGAN, SO THE SIGN OUTSIDE SEEMS FEASIBLE.) THE SHOP WAS AT NUMBER 22 CLEVELAND STREET, ONLY A LITTLE WAY DOWN FROM ONE OF THE STREET'S ENDS. CLOSER TO THE END WAS NUMBER 6 CLEVELAND STREET, WHERE ANNIE THE SHOP-GIRL LIVED IN A BASEMENT FLAT. WALTER SICKERT'S STUDIO WAS DIRECTLY OVER THE ROAD FROM THE FLAT, AND THE SHOP AND THE FLAT WERE CLOSE ENOUGH TOGETHER FOR ONE TO SEE BOTH OF THEM FROM THE WINDOW OF SICKERT'S STUDIO. I FIGURE THE HOUSES WERE SMALLER AND THE STREETS WERE SHORTER THEN... EVERYTHING WAS MORE CRAMPED AND ECCENTRIC LOOKING. I FIGURE THAT THE COACH THAT IS WAITING FOR SICKERT AND EDDY OUTSIDE IS NOT ACTUALLY OUTSIDE THE SHOP SO MUCH AS A LITTLE WAY DOWN THE STREET,

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TOWARDS THE CORNER, FACING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM THE CORNER TOWARDS THE OTHER END OF THE STREET. IN THIS PANEL HERE, WE HAVE THE BLINKERED HEAD OF ONE OF THE COACH HORSES AS IT STANDS STEAMING IN THE SUNSHINE AT THE MERCY OF THE NUMEROUS FLIES EVIDENT DURING THAT PARTICULARLY HOT SUMMER. WE ARE AT A SLIGHT ANGLE, SO THAT WE'RE LOOKING UP THE STREET SOMEWHAT TOWARDS THE FRONT OF THE SWEETSHOP. WE SEE SICKERT STROLLING ALONG THE PAVEMENT TOWARDS US, SMILING INDULGENTLY AS EDDY HURRIES TO CATCH UP WITH HIM, SETTING HIS TOP HAT ON HIS HEAD AS HE DOES SO. HE IS GRINNING FOOLISHLY AND EXCITEDLY, BABBLING LIKE A SCHOOLBOY AS HE HURRIES TO CATCH UP WITH SICKERT, WHO IS WALKING TOWARDS THE COACH THAT IS WAITING OFF PANEL TO THE LEFT OF THE F/G, BEHIND THE HORSE WHOSE HEAD WE CAN SEE. AS A GENERAL NOTE ABOUT THE STREETS, EVEN THOUGH CLEVELAND STREET WAS IN ONE OF THE MOST FASHIONABLE AREAS OF TOWN, RUNNING PARALLEL TO THE TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, IT WOULD STILL HAVE LOOKED FAIRLY CRUMBLY AND DIRTY. NOTHING NEAR AS BAD AS WHAT WE'LL LATER SEE IN WHITECHAPEL, OF COURSE, BUT AS A GENERAL RULE OF THUMB, EVERYTHING WAS DIRTIER THEN; THE STREETS, THE BUILDINGS, THE PEOPLE AND IN PARTICULAR THE SKIES. THERE WERE TONS OF FACTORIES IN LONDON BELCHING OUT BLACK SMOKE DAY AND NIGHT, ACCOUNTING FOR THE "LONDON PARTICULAR" FOGS AND AT LEAST PART OF THE ILL HEALTH SUFFERED BY THE AVERAGE INHABITANT. I'M NOT SURE WHAT WE WANT EXACTLY HERE, REGARDING THE VISUAL TREATMENT OF LONDON. IT DOESN'T WANT TO BE QUITE SO STYLISHLY SINISTER AS THE LONDON DAVID LYNCH PORTRAYED IN THE ELEPHANT MAN, NOR YET SO HEART-TUGGINGLY SORDID AND MELODRAMATIC AS DORÉ'S ENGRAVINGS OF THE PERIOD, BUT WE DEFINITELY WANT TO GIVE THE WORLD A FEEL THAT IS SUBTLY DIFFERENT TO THE WORLD OF TODAY. MAYBE THIS IS SOMETHING MORE TO DO WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL AMBIENCE THAN VISUAL TREATMENT, BUT IF YOU TRY TO CONSCIOUSLY THINK YOUR WAY INTO THE LONDON OF 1888 WHILE YOU'RE DRAWING THIS STUFF I THINK IT'LL HELP. EVERYTHING WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE PERMANENT THEN, WOULDN'T IT, AND LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGE. THE EIGHTIES WERE AROUND THE TURNING POINT OF THE EMPIRE, AND I FIGURE THINGS WERE ALREADY STARTING TO LOOK OLD, THEIR TEXTURES ABRADED BY THE RIGORS OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT AT ITS MOST SQUALID. I FIGURE EVERYTHING WAS STARTING TO LOOK A BIT MELANCHOLY AND SAD, LIKE BEER CANS AND DECORATIONS DO WHEN THE PARTY'S WINDING DOWN, WHEREAS THEY'D LOOKED SOMEHOW FESTIVE A MOMENT BEFORE. ALBERT'S DEAD AND VICTORIA HAS TAKEN THE WHOLE EMPIRE INTO HER OBSESSIVE MOURNING WITH HER. SOMEHOW IT SHOWS IN THE DEFEATED LANES, IN THE LITTER, IN THE DIRTY LIGHT.

ANYWAY... HERE THE HORSE CHOMPS ITS BIT AND TOSSES ITS HEAD TO CLEAR THE FLIES IN THE FOREGROUND WHILE SICKERT STRIDES TOWARDS US ALONG THE STREET FROM THE BACKGROUND WITH THE MOONSTRUCK YOUNG PRINCE AT HIS HEELS LIKE A GREAT STUPID OVER-EAGER DOG.

EDDY: I Say, Sickert! Isn't she the most enchanting creature? Have you known her long?

SICKERT: Eddy, you've been too long in captivity and you're mooning after the first shop-girl you meet.

SICKERT: What would your mother say?

PANEL 5.

CHANGE ANGLE. WE ARE NOW BEHIND SICKERT AND EDDY AS THEY PREPARE TO BOARD THE COACH. THE COACH DOORS AND WINDOWS FILL MUCH OF THE BACKGROUND HERE AS IT STANDS BESIDE THE

CURB, WITH THE HORSES OFF PANEL SOMEWHERE ON THE LEFT. IN THE TOP LEFT CORNER WE CAN SEE THE LOWER HALF OF THE COACHMAN AS HE SITS ATOP THE COACH, HOLDING THE REINS IN HIS HAND. HE WEARS A LONG AND DIRTY COAT THAT HANGS DOWN OVER THE BOX SEAT HERE. EDDY IS OPENING THE COACH DOOR AND PREPARING TO CLIMB INTO ITS INTERIOR. (THE OUTSIDE OF THE COACH IS BLACK, BY THE WAY, BUT THERE IS NO ROYAL CREST ON THE SIDE.) AS HE DOES SO HE PAUSES AND LOOKS WITH ALMOST COMICAL EARNESTNESS AT SICKERT, WHO LAUGHS AND TURNS HIS HEAD TO SPEAK TO THE OFF-PANEL COACH DRIVER, WHOSE NAME IS JOHN NETLEY.

EDDY: She rather RESEMBLES mother, doesn't she?
SICKERT: Oh, Eddy! What are we to do with you?
SICKERT: Netley? Take us to Claridges. I intend to render this young pup incapably drunk before he gets us ALL into trouble.

PANEL 6.

CHANGE ANGLE SO THAT WE'RE UP IN FRONT OF THE COACHMAN, AND HE SITS FACING US HEAD AND SHOULDERS TO THE LEFT OF THE PANEL HERE. LOOKING DOWN BEYOND HIM WE CAN SEE SICKERT LOOKING UP AT NETLEY AND LAUGHING GOOD-NATUREDLY AS HE HIMSELF PREPARES TO CLIMB INTO THE COACH AFTER PRINCE EDDY. NETLEY DOESN'T LOOK ROUND AT SICKERT AS HE SPEAKS TO HIM, BUT CONTINUES TO SURVEY THE OFF-PANEL ROAD AHEAD OF HIM WITH WARY AND WATCHFUL EYES THAT ALWAYS SEEM TO BE LOOKING FOR THE MAIN CHANCE IN A CRAFTY AND CALCULATED WAY. NETLEY IS TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OLD, AND 5'5" TALL. HE HAS A FAIR COMPLEXION, DARK HAIR, A SMALL DARK MOUSTACHE... HARDLY MORE THAN A DIRTY GROWTH ON HIS UPPER LIP REALLY, OF NO GREAT IMPORTANCE. IT MAKES HIM LOOK A BIT UNWASHED AND SMELLY, WHICH OF COURSE HE IS. HE HAS A FULL, WIDE FACE WITH A WIDE MOUTH AND QUITE THICK LIPS. HE'S A WOMANIZER AND A BIT OF A JACK-THE-LAD, AND THERE IS SOMETHING CRUEL AND STUPID ABOUT THE GRIN THAT HE CUSTOMARILY WEARS SPREAD ACROSS HIS WIDE MOUTH. HIS SHOULDERS ARE BROAD, AND HE HAS A BUILD LIKE A PIT-BULL. ATOP HIS DIRTY, DARK HAIR HE WEARS A BLACK LEATHER PEAKED CAP. WE DON'T SEE NETLEY AGAIN FOR A COUPLE MORE EPISODES, BUT I WANT TO FIX HIS FACE IN READERS' MINDS SINCE HE PLAYS QUITE A LARGE PART LATER. BEAR IN MIND WHEN GIVING HIM A FACE THAT THIS IS THE MAN WHO WROTE THE 'FROM HELL' LETTER: HE'S A COCKY AND EGOTISTICAL LITTLE SOD WHO'S RUTHLESSLY AMBITIOUS AND WANTS TO GET TO THE TOP BY THE SHORTEST ROUTE POSSIBLE.

NETLEY: Ah, insobriety's no proof against trouble, Mr.Sickert. I got a cousin o' mine in FEARFUL trouble, an' she were as tiddly as I were!
SICKERT: Ha ha ha.
SICKERT: Carry on, Netley.

PANEL 7.

WE ARE NOW STANDING IN THE ROAD ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COACH FROM THE PAVEMENT SIDE THAT SICKERT JUST ENTERED BY. NETLEY IS NOW VISIBLE SITTING TO THE TOP RIGHT CORNER ATOP HIS BOX... OR RATHER, HIS LOWER HALF IS VISIBLE. PERHAPS WE CAN SEE THE WHIP IN HIS HAND AS HE GATHERS UP THE REINS. LOOKING THROUGH THE CARRIAGE WINDOW WE CAN SEE PRINCE EDDY LEANING FORWARDS EARNESTLY TO TALK TO SICKERT, WHO SITS OPPOSITE HIM. SICKERT LAUGHS AND SHAKES HIS HEAD IN DISBELIEF AT HIS YOUNG CHARGE'S INFATUATION. BEHIND THE COACH WE SEE THE FAÇADE OF THE HOUSES DOWN TOWARDS THE CORNER OF CLEVELAND

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STREET. (THE CORNER ITSELF IS JUST OFF PANEL LEFT IN THE BACKGROUND HERE, IF THAT HELPS YOU GET YOUR BEARINGS.) THE HORSES ARE OFF PANEL RIGHT. NETLEY'S FACE IS NOT VISIBLE HERE BUT HIS BALLOONS ISSUE INTO THE PANEL FROM ABOVE.

NETLEY(off): GYAP! GYAP, ya bugger! YAA!

EDDY: No, but seriously, Sickert... she DOES look like my mother, doesn't she?

PANEL 8.

SAME SHOT. THE COACH IS NOW PULLING AWAY OUT OF THE RIGHT OF THE PANEL, SO THAT ONLY HALF OF IT IS VISIBLE NOW. PERHAPS WE JUST CATCH A BLURRED GLIMPSE OF EDDY THROUGH THE REAR SIDE WINDOW AS THE COACH PULLS AWAY OVER THE COBBLES, STILL TALKING EARNESTLY TO HIS CHUM. AS THE COACH MOVES AWAY WE CAN OF COURSE SEE MORE OF THE HOUSES BEHIND IT, WHICH WERE PREVIOUSLY OBSCURED BY IT. NETLEY'S BALLOONS TRAIL BACK INTO THE PANEL FROM OFF-PIC RIGHT, WHILE EDDY'S ISSUE FROM THE COACH.

NETLEY (off): YAA! YAAA!

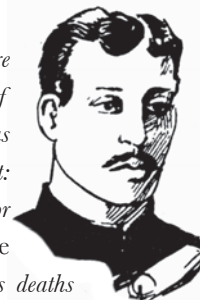
EDDY (in coach): She has mother's eyes.

PANEL 9.

SAME SHOT. THE COACH HAS GONE AND WE CAN NOW SEE THE HOUSES THAT WERE BEHIND IT, DOWN ON THE CORNER OF CLEVELAND STREET, STANDING FULLY REVEALED. IF YOU CAN MANAGE IT, GIVEN THE LOGISTICS OF THE SHOT, WE CAN SEE THE CORNER OF CLEVELAND STREET, AT LEAST TO THE POINT WHERE THE STREET SIGN IS VISIBLE BOLTED UP ON THE WALL, EVEN IF WE CAN'T SEE THE ACTUAL CORNER ITSELF. THE SIGN HAS THE WORDS "CLEVELAND STREET" IN STARK BLACK LETTERING. IF IT'S POSSIBLE, WE CAN ALSO SEE THE FRONT DOOR OF NUMBER 6, THREE DOORS DOWN FROM THE CORNER, WITH STEPS LEADING DOWN FROM THE STREET LEVEL TO ITS BASEMENT. IF YOU CAN'T GET BOTH THESE THINGS IN THEN JUST MAKE SURE THAT WE CAN SEE THE "CLEVELAND STREET" SIGN AS THE COACH PULLS AWAY AND FORGET ABOUT THE SHOT OF NUMBER 6 AND ITS BASEMENT. THE STREET SIGN IS THE MAIN THING, STRIKING AND SOMEHOW OMINOUS AS IT HANGS THERE ON THE WALL, GIVING THE NAME OF THE PLACE WHERE ALL THAT FOLLOWED WAS TO HAVE ITS ORIGINS.

No dialogue

Prince Eddy: *I used to feel a twinge of guilt about some of our depictions of people who are not around to defend their reputations. But lately I have come to the conclusion that the sheer daftness of the accumulation of baloney cancels itself out. Quite apart from his connection to the Ripper murders, as posited in 1970 by Thomas Stowell, who half-disguised him as 'Mr. S', Eddy has this in his account: a pair of alternative history novels, written by Peter Dickinson, set in a world where Albert Victor survives and reigns as Victor I. In Gary Lovisi's parallel universe Sherlock Holmes short story, "The Adventure of the Missing Detective", he is a tyrannical king, who rules after the suspicious deaths of both his grandmother and father. The Prince also appears as the murder victim in the first of the Lord Francis Powerscourt crime novels Goodnight Sweet Prince, as a vampire in the novel I, Vampire by Michael Romkey, and as a murder suspect in the novel Death at Glamis Castle by Robin Paige. (I'm lifting this from his Wikipedia entry.) In 1964 Philip Magnus called his death a "merciful act of providence", supporting the theory that his death removed an unsuitable heir to the throne, but the real relief in being 120 years dead is that he doesn't have to know about any of this crap. Next up, we picture him with his pants off..*



Part I: Stages

ONE HAND ENTERS THE PICTURE FROM THE LEFT TO HOLD THE LEFT BREAST SO THAT EDDY CAN GET IT INTO HIS MOUTH. EDDY SUCKS AT THE NIPPLE, WHICH IS WET WITH SALIVA. HIS EYES ARE CLOSED. ONE OF HIS OWN HANDS ENTERS THE PICTURE AND RESTS GENTLY OVER ANNIE'S AS SHE CUPS HER BREAST FOR HIM TO SUCK AT. ANNIE IS NAKED, WHILE EDDIE WEARS ONLY A GENTLEMAN'S WHITE SINGLET WITH NOTHING ON HIS LOWER HALF.

No dialogue

PANEL 2.

NOW WE ARE LOOKING DOWN ON THE BED FROM ROUGHLY ABOVE IT, SO THAT WE CAN SEE BOTH EDDIE AND ANNIE MORE OR LESS FULL FIGURE AS THEY SPRAWL BENEATH US. LEANING UP STILL, ANNIE PULLS BACK SLIGHTLY, WITHDRAWING HER BREAST FROM EDDY'S MOUTH, ALTHOUGH BOTH HIS AND HER HANDS ARE STILL TOUCHING IT. SHE SMILES AS SHE LOOKS DOWN AT HIM. HE GAZES UP AT HER ACROSS HER BREAST AS HE SPEAKS. HIS PENIS IS LOLLING AND HALF-ERECT. HE LOOKS LOVE-STRUCK.

ANNIE: Do you like my bubbies, Albert? See...they're standing up for you.

EDDY: They're very beautiful.

EDDY: YOU'RE very beautiful.

PANEL 3.

NOW WE ARE DOWN TOWARDS THE FOOT OF THE BED, LOOKING ALONG THE LENGTH OF EDDY'S BODY AS ANNIE SITS UP IN BED BESIDE HIM. SHE GAZES SOFTLY DOWN AT HIS HARDENING COCK. EDDY DIRECTS HIS SOFT DOE-EYED GAZE AT HER AS HE REACHES OUT TO LIGHTLY TOUCH HER ELBOW, TAKING HOLD OF IT LIGHTLY IN HIS HAND. BOTH OF THEM HAVE QUIET EXPRESSIONS HERE, AND THERE IS SOMETHING A LITTLE SAD IN EDDY'S DESPITE HIS BURGEONING TUMESCENCE.

ANNIE: Ah, go on. It's you's the beauty, if you weren't always mopin'. Lookin' after's what you need.

EDDY: No, that's the TROUBLE. My FAMILY look after EVERYTHING, plan my whole LIFE for me...

EDDY: Put your hand on my pego.

PANEL 4.

A DIFFERENT ANGLE NOW, AS IF WE WERE ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE BED LOOKING ACROSS ITS LOWER HALF AT ANNIE AS SHE KNEELS UP ON THE BED. ALL WE CAN SEE OF EDDY IS HIS LOWER HALF. HIS SPEECH BALLOON ENTERS THE PANEL FROM OFF-PIC TO THE RIGHT HERE. LEANING UP ON ONE OF HER HANDS, ANNIE TAKES HOLD OF EDDY'S COCK IN THE OTHER AND BEGINS TO MASTURBATE HIM. SHE STARES DOWN AT THE HAND WORKING ON EDDY'S PENIS WITH A KIND OF DISTANT AND DETACHED LOOK... APPARENTLY ABSORBED IN WHAT SHE IS DOING AND YET WITH HER MIND SOMEWHERE ELSE. THE BASEMENT'S FRONT WINDOW IS BEHIND HER SOMEWHERE TO THE RIGHT OF PANEL HERE, WITH THE BED RUNNING PARALLEL TO THE WALL AND WINDOW. IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE VISIBLE HERE, BUT THAT'S WHERE WHAT LITTLE DAPPLING OF SUNLIGHT THERE IS, IS ISSUING FROM.

ANNIE: Like this, now?

EDDY (OFF): Oh yes. Yes. Frig me, will you?

ANNIE: Mm. Your BROTHER doesn't seem much bothered by your family.

PANEL 5.

NOW WE PAN UP THE BED SO THAT WE CAN ONLY SEE EDDY'S TOP HALF AND PERHAPS A LITTLE

OF ANNIE'S BACK AS SHE KNEELS UP HALFWAY DOWN THE BED, HER FACE OFF PANEL HERE AS SHE CONTINUES TO JERK EDDY OFF, ALSO OFF PANEL IN THIS INSTANCE. EDDY TURNS HIS FACE TOWARDS US, EYES CLOSED AND MOUTH OPEN IN A GASP OF PLEASURE. EDDY IS LYING SO THAT LOOKING BEYOND HIM WE CAN SEE THE BASEMENT WINDOW HERE. IT LOOKS OUT ONTO BRICKWORK WITH A LITTLE RIBBON OF RAILINGS AND SKY VISIBLE AT THE TOP.

EDDY: You...you don't understand. It isn't the same for him. He isn't...

EDDY: Oh. Oh, Annie...

PANEL 6.

NOW WE'RE AT THE FOOT OF THE BED AGAIN. TURNING HER BACK TOWARDS US AND THUS FACING EDDY AS HE LIES THERE ON HIS BACK, ANNIE SWINGS ONE LEG OVER EDDY TO KNEEL STRADDLING HIS HIPS. LOWERING HERSELF, SHE REACHES DOWN BETWEEN HER LEGS TO TAKE HOLD OF THE HEAD OF HIS PENIS, GUIDING IT UP BETWEEN THE LIPS OF HER VAGINA. SHE LOOKS DOWN AWAY FROM US IN A BUSINESSLIKE WAY AT WHAT SHE IS DOING, WHILE EDDY GAZES IN SOFT AWE AT HER FACE.

ANNIE: Oh dear. I think your Mr. Perkins has got himself all restless. I think he wants to go somewhere.

ANNIE: Hold still...and never you mind about your rotten family.

PANEL 7.

WE LOOK AT THE BED SIDE-ON NOW. ANNIE LOWERS HERSELF DOWN ONTO EDDY'S COCK, STILL REACHING BEHIND HER WITH ONE HAND TO GUIDE IT INTO HER. EDDY STARTS TO GASP STRAIGHT AWAY, COMING ALMOST AS SOON AS HE'S INSIDE HER. AS HE CLOSES HIS EYES AND GASPS BREATHLESSLY THROUGH GRITTED TEETH, ANNIE'S EXPRESSION REMAINS CALM.

ANNIE: We'll do as we please, and they'll not prevent it.

EDDY: Oh Annie. Annie, my love, I'm going to spend...

PANEL 8.

WE CLOSE IN, PAST THE COUPLE, UPON THE BASEMENT WINDOW. IT LOOKS OUT ONTO SOLID RED BRICK, MOSS GROWING IN THE CHINKS BETWEEN THE BRICKS AND A SLIGHT DEPOSIT OF SOOT AND GRIME ADHERING TO THE BRICKWORK EVERYWHERE. THERE IS SOMETHING CRUEL AND SAD AND SURREAL AND OMINOUS ABOUT A WINDOW THAT LOOKS OUT ONTO SOLID BRICKS. IT LOOKS AS IF THE ONLY WAY OUT IS BLOCKED, BUT MORE CRUELLY THAN IF IT WERE BLOCKED BY A WALL. WINDOWS ARE A SYMBOL OF FREEDOM AND ESCAPE, AND TO HAVE ONE BLOCKED BY DIRTY BRICKWORK HAS A CERTAIN POIGNANCY ABOUT IT. AS WE STUDY THE DULL AND UNINTERESTING BRICKWORK BEYOND THE GLASS, THE CRIES OF THE LOVERS ISSUE INTO THE PANEL FROM OFF PICTURE.

EDDY (OFF): Uh...uh...oouh...uh.

ANNIE (OFF): Oh Albert. Oh, my lovely boy.

PANEL 9.

IN THIS FINAL PANEL WE SIMPLY REPRODUCE PART OF A CONTEMPORARY STREET PLAN OF LONDON DURING THAT TIME, SHOWING CLEVELAND STREET AND ITS TRIBUTARIES FROM ABOVE, ALL CLEARLY LABELLED. THE WORDS "CLEVELAND STREET", AS WITH THE LAST PANEL ON PAGE TWO, ARE THE MOST PROMINENT HERE.

No dialogue

Chapter I, page 4.



The theory that a Masonic cover-up lies behind the Whitechapel murders comes from Stephen Knight's book, *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution* (1976). The theory sounds convincing at first precisely because so many details fit into its pattern. It's only when you get to pinning down these details, as Alan undertook in writing *FROM HELL*, a process I had to extend in illustrating it, that the theory starts to unravel. One of its foundation stones is the connection between Marie Kelly and Walter Sickert, and the painting by the artist titled *Blackmail or Mrs Barrett*. The painting is usually dated to at least twenty years later than the Ripper murders. While later eruptions from the artist's morbid fascination with the case are documented, it is stretching things to see Kelly in the picture.



One of the details influencing the dating of it, I presumed, is the fashion in women's hats, which became quite large in the later Edwardian period. I tried to diminish the hat's presence here and even more so in subsequent scenes. However, I've just come across this:

I knew Marie quite well by sight... She was usually in the company of two or three of her kind, fairly neatly dressed and invariably wearing a clean white apron, but no hat.

(memoir of Detective Walter Dew (1863-1947) (casebook.org))

In line with my earlier comments on the subject of the commonplace wearing of hats (under prologue, page 1) not wearing one would have attracted attention, so such an observation is likely to carry some weight. This gives us one of the earliest complications in depicting Marie Kelly. While the theory does not fall apart on this specific point, her resemblance to the subject of the painting was something that I felt we shouldn't commit to wholeheartedly.

PAGE 4. (1491 words) PANEL 1.

WE NOW JUMP TO THE JANUARY OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR, 1885, AND ALSO TO THE UPSTAIRS STUDIO OF MR WALTER SICKERT, ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE STREET FROM ANNIE'S

BASEMENT FLAT AND THE SWEETSHOP EIGHT DOORS DOWN THE STREET FROM IT. BOTH OF THESE ARE AT LEAST PARTIALLY VISIBLE FROM SICKERT'S WINDOW, AND INDEED, IT IS SICKERT'S STUDIO WINDOW THAT WE ARE LOOKING OUT THROUGH HERE. UP IN THE FOREGROUND WE CAN SEE SICKERT'S HANDS ENTERING THE PANEL. HE IS BUSILY SHARPENING A PENCIL OR CRAYON WITH A SHARP-LOOKING KNIFE IN PREPARATION FOR DOING SOME SKETCHING. PENCIL SHAVINGS UNPEEL LAZILY AND DROP TO THE FLOOR LIKE THE TURDS OF WOODEN BIRDS. DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE IS INDOORS, SICKERT IS DRESSED UP VERY WARM. THERE WAS NO CENTRAL HEATING, AND I IMAGINE IN THE COLDEST WEATHER HE'S PROBABLY HAD TO WORK IN A COAT AND SCARF IN HIS STUDIO. OUT THROUGH THE WINDOW HERE SNOW IS FALLING UPON CLEVELAND STREET. LOOKING THROUGH IT WE CAN SEE THE TOBACCONIST-CONFECTIONERS DOWN THE STREET BELOW GROWING GRADUALLY MORE DICKENSIAN AND PICTURESQUE AS THE SNOW GETS DEEPER.

No dialogue

PANEL 2.

WE NOW PULL BACK SO THAT WE CAN SEE SICKERT MAYBE THREE-QUARTER FIGURE AS HE STANDS BY HIS EASEL, WHICH HAS ITS BACK TO US, WITH THE WINDOW BEHIND HIM. FRAMED THUS AGAINST THE FALLING SNOW HE STANDS LOOKING TOWARDS US WITH HIS SHARPENED PENCIL OR CRAYON IN ONE HAND AND THE KNIFE IN HIS OTHER. HE IS JUST ABSENTMINDEDLY PLACING THE KNIFE DOWN ON THE WINDOW SILL HERE, HAVING FINISHED WITH IT. SINCE WE HAVE PULLED BACK SOME WAY ACROSS THE STUDIO, WE CAN NOW SEE IN THE FOREGROUND THE KNEE OF THE YOUNG WOMAN SITTING POSING FOR SICKERT, HER HANDS RESTING DEMURELY UPON HER KNEE OR LAP, FOLDED TOGETHER QUITE PASSIVELY. THE WOMAN'S NAME IS MARIE KELLY, AND ALTHOUGH WE CAN'T SEE HER FACE OR MUCH ELSE OF HER HERE, SHE IS A YOUNG WOMAN OF IRISH PARENTAGE, AGED ABOUT TWENTY HERE, AND SHE IS PROBABLY THE MOST CONVENTIONALLY PRETTY OF ALL OUR FEMALE CHARACTERS. AS FAR AS REFERENCE FOR HER FACE GOES, I'M TRYING TO DIG UP PHOTOGRAPHS, BUT FOR THE MOMENT YOU'LL HAVE TO RELY UPON THE FACE IN THE SICKERT PAINTING "BLACKMAIL OR MRS BARRETT" ALLEGEDLY BASED UPON KELLY AND REPUTEDLY BEARING A RESEMBLANCE TO HER. HER VOICE ISSUES FROM OFF PANEL HERE. AS FAR AS SICKERT'S STUDIO GOES, I'M NOT SURE WHAT THE DÉCOR WOULD BE LIKE. AT FIRST I THOUGHT OF SOMETHING PICTURESQUELY CLUTTERED WITH THE ODD PEACOCK FEATHER HERE AND THERE, BUT THAT SEEMS MORE THE STYLE OF A PRE-RAPHAELITE LIKE HOLMAN HUNT (WHO LIVED JUST UP THE ROAD FROM SICKERT, ALSO IN CLEVELAND STREET). AS I UNDERSTAND SICKERT, HE WAS RELENTLESSLY AND PASSIONATELY MODERN, AND DESPISED THE USE OF CLASSICAL THEMES AND TECHNIQUE IN MODERN ART. MAYBE HIS STUDIO WOULD BE PRETTY AUSTERE AND FUNCTIONAL, WITH SKETCHES AND PAINTINGS ALL OVER THE PLACE, PINNED TO THE WALLS OR SCATTERED AND PILED ON THE FLOOR IN DRIFTS. ASSUMING YOU CAN'T FIND ANY REFERENCE TO THE CONTRARY, THEN JUST DO WHAT FEELS RIGHT TO YOU. HE SMILES FAINTLY HERE AS HE GLANCES AT THE OFF-PANEL MARIE, MUFFLED AGAINST THE COLD IN HIS STUDIO. HIS BREATH ACTUALLY FOGS SLIGHTLY UPON THE AIR, ESCAPING HIS SMILING LIPS IN A LITTLE SILK WISP OF VAPOUR.

MARIE: And there I was thinkin' you'd be wantin' me with not a stitch on.

MARIE: You'll have me doubtin' me attractions, Mr. Sickert.

SICKERT: Never, Mary. Perhaps when it's warmer...

Part 1: Stages

PANEL 3.

PULL BACK FURTHER STILL SO THAT MARIE IS NOW HEAD AND SHOULDERS IN THE F/G, IN PROFILE AS SHE SITS THERE POSING FOR SICKERT. SHE WEARS A BROAD HAT ATOP HER DARK HAIR (SEE "BLACKMAIL, OR MRS BARRETT") AND AROUND HER PRETTY THROAT SHE WEARS A NOTICEABLE AND IDENTIFIABLE RED SCARF TIED IN A GAY AND CASUAL KNOT. I DUNNO HOW YOU'LL MANAGE TO MAKE THE RED SCARF IDENTIFIABLE IN A BLACK AND WHITE COMIC... MAYBE A PATTERN OF BLACK SPOTS ON IT OR SOMETHING. AS SHE POSES THUS, SEATED IN PROFILE, SHE HAS A PLEASED SMILE ON HER SMALL LIPS, SATISFIED BY THE COMPLIMENT THAT SICKERT IS PAYING HER. SHE KNOWS THAT SHE'S PRETTY AND SHE LIKES IT, BUT WHILE SHE'S A BIT IMMATURE AND PRONE TO PUT ON AIRS, SHE'S NOT AN UNLIKEABLE GIRL. SHE'S HAD A PRETTY ROUGH AND POVERTY-STRICKEN TIME DURING HER LIFE THUS FAR, AND WAS A WIDOW AT NINETEEN. AS SHE SMILES CONTENTEDLY AT SICKERT'S WORDS WE LOOK BEYOND HER TO SEE THE ARTIST HIMSELF, STANDING BY HIS EASEL AND STARTING TO SKETCH. HE LOOKS DOWN AT THE PICTURE RATHER THAN UP AT MARIE AS HE SPEAKS, AND SHE DOESN'T LOOK AT HIM AS SHE CAREFULLY HOLDS HER POSE.

SICKERT: Besides, I want you how I first SAW you, on the convent steps.
SICKERT: The way the light caught you, in that red scarf... you looked saintly, Mary. Religious.

PANEL 4.

CHANGE ANGLES SO THAT WE ARE NOW LOOKING AT THE SCENE THROUGH SICKERT'S EYES, WITH HIS EASEL NOW TURNED TOWARDS US IN THE F/G, A PIECE OF DRAWING PAPER TACKED TO IT. WE SEE SICKERT'S HAND ENTERING FROM OFF PANEL IN THE F/G, LOOSELY SKETCHING THE SHAPE OF MARIE KELLY'S HEAD. WHAT SICKERT IS DOING HERE IS A PRELIMINARY SKETCH THAT WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME THE PAINTING, "BLACKMAIL OR MRS. BARRETT", SO MAKE THE ROUGH SKETCH HERE LOOK LIKE A CONCEIVABLE ROUGH SKETCH FOR THE PAINTING. HIS SPEECH BALLOON ISSUES FROM OFF PANEL HERE. LOOKING BEYOND WHAT HE IS DRAWING WE SEE MARIE AS SHE SITS THERE, POSING FOR HIM. SHE LAUGHS, FACE CRINKLING DELIGHTFULLY AND PECULIARLY IRISH WRINKLES FORMING ON THE BRIDGE OF THE SLIGHTLY UPTURNED NOSE. SOMEWHERE ON THE WALL BEHIND HER, PINNED UP, IS A CALENDAR, ALTHOUGH WE NEEDN'T BE ABLE TO SEE IT CLEARLY HERE, SO LONG AS WE ESTABLISH ITS PRESENCE.

MARIE: SAINTLY! Will you listen to HIM, now! He takes me into his house, feeds me, finds me a job...

SICKERT (OFF): Oh, yes, the confectioners. How's it going?

PANEL 5.

THIS SHOT IS ALMOST THE SAME AS THAT IN PANEL 2 ON THIS PAGE, WITH ONLY MARIE'S KNEE AND RESTING HANDS VISIBLE IN THE F/G HERE, WITH HER BALLOON ISSUING FROM OFF PANEL LEFT. LOOKING BEYOND HER WE SEE SICKERT, NOW SKETCHING FURIOUSLY, WITH A FROWN OF CONCENTRATION AS HE STARES FIXEDLY AT HIS DRAWING WHILE HE REPLIES TO MARIE.

MARIE (OFF): Oh, it's very nice... and so's Annie. Lovely couple, her and your brother.

MARIE (OFF): Doesn't look much like you, for saying, does he?

SICKERT: No. He, uh, favours his mother more. Do you see much of him?



PANEL 6.

NOW, FROM THE FRONT, WE HAVE A HEAD-AND-SHOULDERS CLOSE-UP OF MARIE, AS SHE TURNS TO STARE AT SICKERT, SMILING KNOWINGLY AND A LITTLE SAUCILY. SICKERT'S BALLOON ENTERS INTO THE PANEL FROM OFF. ON THE WALL BEHIND MARIE WE CAN NOW CLEARLY SEE THE CALENDAR, OPEN AT JANUARY 1885.

EDDY: Not your brother, no... but there's been more to see of Annie lately, if you take my meanin'.

SICKERT: I'm not sure I do. I've not seen her recently. I'm courting myself, you know.

PANEL 7.

PULL BACK FROM MARIE SO THAT IN THE F/G WE SEE THE DRAWING THAT SICKERT IS DOING AND HIS HAND AS HE WORKS UPON IT. LOOKING BEYOND THIS WE SEE MARIE SITTING THERE POSING. SHE LAUGHS AT SICKERT'S WORDS, A LITTLE SCORNFULLY. IN THE FOREGROUND, THE POINT OF SICKERT'S PENCIL SUDDENLY BREAKS AGAINST THE SURFACE OF THE FIGURE HE IS DRAWING. THE FACE ON THE PAPER NOW IS ALMOST EXACTLY A PENCIL SKETCH FOR "BLACKMAIL, OR MRS BARRETT." THE PICTURE IS SET UP SO THAT WE SEE THE PENCIL POINT SNAPPING AFTER WE'VE HEARD MARIE'S WORDS.

MARIE: Ooh, and is it "courtin'" your brother's been doing then?

MARIE: The girl's six months pregnant if she's a day.

PANEL 8.

WE ARE NOW LOOKING AT SICKERT HALF-FIGURE AS HE STANDS THERE FACING US BY HIS EASEL WITH THE WINDOW BEHIND HIM, GREY SNOW FALLING DREAMILY BY. HE STANDS JUST STARING AT US AND THE OFF-PANEL MARIE IN STUNNED DISBELIEF, THE BROKEN PENCIL STILL CLUTCHED USELESSLY IN HIS TRAILING, DANGLING HAND. THE NEWS OF ANNIE'S PREGNANCY HAS OBVIOUSLY COME AS SOMETHING OF A SHOCK TO HIM. ON THE WINDOW SILL BEHIND SICKERT, THE KNIFE IS STILL RESTING WHERE HE PUT IT. MARIE'S BALLOON ENTERS THE PANEL FROM OFF PIC IN THE F/G.

MARIE: Whatever was that? Is that your pencil broken now?
You shouldn't be after pressin' so hard, Mr. Sickert.

MARIE: Now you'll have to sharpen it again.

PANEL 9.

FOR THIS FINAL PANEL WE CLOSE IN UPON THE WINDOW, SO THAT WE CAN NO LONGER SEE EITHER SICKERT OR MARIE. WE JUST SEE THE WINDOW, THE SNOW FALLING OUTSIDE AND THE LITTLE SWEETSHOP ACROSS THE STREET. LYING ON THE WINDOW SILL IS A VERY SHARP KNIFE.

No dialogue

Mary Kelly, or "**Marie**," as she Frenchified it, perhaps around the time of the holiday trip to France shown in Chapter 1, page 7 of *FROM HELL*, has something of a romantic attraction for men who delve into the story of the Whitechapel murders. They end up wanting to do something for her. In the movie adaptation of the book they unburdened her of the disagreeableness of a sex scene with a paying customer up against a fence (from Chapter 3) by giving it to another woman. One Ripperologist (Morrison) whimsically imagined traveling back in time to try to save her. And I've probably drawn her too pretty in this sketch.

