

# Justine Frank

## Two Excerpts from the novel *Sweet Sweat* (1931)

From: *Roe Rosen, Justine Frank, Sweet Sweat* (Berlin, Sternberg Press, 2009)

### Chapter 12. The Animist

*Upon their arrival in Paris the protagonists meet a woman of an extraordinary, irresistible sexual magnetism. Her name is not given, and she is dubbed the Animist. She is broad-shouldered, muscular, and stands taller than Urdukas. Her odor contrasts with the seductive allure of Rachel's sweet sweat:*

[ . . . ] In public places the dense malodor ducked into the folds of the Animist's flesh, like an assassin on the run, hiding in the outskirts of town a few kilometers beyond the reach of the hapless policemen who hunt him ineffectively for years, a few kilometers away from his victims' eviscerated corpses—so the smell recoiled into its concealed sanctuary, deep, deep underneath a cattle shed crammed with emaciated cows, malicious leeches, and a steamy carpet of manure and damp fodder—this is where the smell hid, for the smell is a cunning criminal: it knows that the fumes of the shed, dominating the tunnel, conceal it, the body odor of the odor-murderer, which is, according to pure reason—*ipso facto*, as it were—the smell's smell, the aroma's body, that is to say, the odor's odor, patiently waiting underground in the tunnel dug below the cattle shed, and the cattle shed, pure reason reasons, is the folds of the Animist's clad body, and if the body, in part, is a cattle shed, it stands to reason that the clothes are a dismal farm of herders—toiling, irritable, thick-hipped, disillusioned herders—cursed sons-of-bitches who munch much and wash little; precisely so lurks the

killer smell between the folds of its colossal body-host, while she, the Animist, calmly strolls from the neighborhood's old pastry shop to the desolate stores of the arcades, and from there on to the wide avenues that Haussmann built. And the killer smell, that master of disguises, awaits its chance to strike once more!

At the Animist's house, as soon as the door is shut, the smell breaks loose, its reign ubiquitous—from the cellars through the corridors to the attics.

This smell was a reeking cocktail of church incense, jasmine and sandalwood essence, sulfur, life-swarming dung heap, overripe Roquefort smeared on a stale slice of rye, pine resin, rosemary, sage, and the filthy fluids of wild beasts.

In vain did the guests try to smartly sip their digestifs from crystal goblets and cordially chitchat. The smell invaded their throats and stifled their vowels. Smell spoke.

The Animist's complexion had a dark brassy hue. Her chilling gaze pierced the air from under her bushy, black eyebrows. Because of her slanted eyes Rachel guessed that Mongol blood ran through her veins. A magnanimous hooked nose leapt from her face, like Arthur Cravan about to score a punch. Her flaring nostrils and tremendous lips gave the impression that the face was simply too small to accommodate its features. The forty-eight years of her life were etched on the Amazon's countenance and further intensified her awe-inspiring, hypnotic power.

When the Animist removed her sweat-soaked robe, Urdukas and Rachel were staggered to discover an abundance of anatomical marvels. Like daredevil navigators they surveyed her nipples, a pair of gargantuan growths in eggplant-purple, two tropical turfs of crimson capillaries, creeping and climbing on the peaks of her grand chest mountains.

Thick fur covered the amazing woman's legs and upper chest, and pubic hair curled between her thighs in black, moist coils. Thighs! These were solid, glistening oak trunks, interlaced with veins as thick as fingers. From within the pubic thicket a colossal clitoris proudly rose, about nine inches long, gregarious and combative. Both guests would soon experience its mighty thrust and expressive ingenuity on their own flesh.

The Animist's brawny butt was a spectacle of advanced geometry: smack in the middle of each succulent buttock, the monstrous enormity of which exceeded even the rumps of Hottentot females, was a brown mole—sitting high on this pair of overgrown, perfectly circular meat-mushrooms, rendering an equilateral triangle with the asshole!

The ass was an imposing face, with the asshole for a mouth and brown moles for eyes! This posterior face aimed its blind gaze at Urdukas, who always felt woozy when confronted by concise sciences. The gaping anus underneath the eye-moles was neither hidden nor shy. This was a charismatic, flamboyant rectal ring, a lower mouth with an eternal song on its lips, a cavernous, fuming nether pharynx, turbulent in its operatic burps and gurgles, melodiously performing in a pitch ranging from alto to baritone.

Urdukas pleaded for a tête-à-tête with that impressive ass-face. He diffidently crawled towards it, slowly disappearing in the shadow of the Animist's superb architecture of flesh. But he had overestimated his stamina: he fainted.

"Fetch me a German gas mask from the armory! I am responsible for my guests' well being. We shall draw from the lessons of the Great War," commanded the Animist impatiently. While still unconscious, Urdukas was harnessed with the rubber and iron mask, still dripping with machine oil. The Animist, meanwhile,

leaned towards Rachel, hoisted her in her arms as if she were a kitten, and carried her to the bedroom. There, without further delay [ . . . ] [a missing description of an orgy] (pp. 59–61)

## Chapter 14. The Death of Marat

*The Animist's most thrilling magical ability was breathing life into a variety of inanimate objects and then using them for obscene purposes. The spectacle's arena, her vast bedroom, was jam-packed with torture devices, Rococo furniture, Neoclassical nude sculptures whose proper proportions were corrupted by gargantuan sexual organs, sophisticated automatons, and Faberge eggs; the decor combined Russian imperial decadence with Piranesi's phantasmagoric prisons. The stable and the dungeons, the dwelling place of dozens of slaves, were located in the basements of the urban palace.*

*After a prolonged evening feast, the guests were guided to the bedroom. The orgy's main attraction was the animation of still objects, complemented by many of the Animist's slaves posing in a tableaux vivant during its long hours: frozen reenactments in the nude of historical, religious, or mythological scenes—the conquest of Troy, Danton's execution, the descent from the cross. The spectacle staged that night was the murder of George Marat, hero of the French Revolution, by Charlotte Corday.*

Just as in the famous painting by Jacques-Louis David, a big porcelain bathtub was at the center of the scene and in it the dead Marat, his arm dangling over the tub's edge to the floor, his head drooping, turned to the spectators. Yet the scene as realized by the Animist was much more impressive and comprehensive than that of the old painting, as the gloom and shadows of the dusty canvas had been replaced by the room's brightness, bringing to light many, many more details!

While the painting had shown only Marat, here the murderess, knife clenched in

hand, was poised in lethal immobility over the tub, bent like a mother shielding her child. And what inspiration resonated from the perfect realism of the blood trail dribbling from the wound!

The secret of that perfect realism was unhidden: the knife, the wound, the blood—they were real!

The tip of the blade had pricked Marat's chest lightly, just below the left nipple, but because of the thespian assassin's inadvertent trembling, the cut had somewhat broadened. She—the slave posing as Charlotte Corday—was a dark-skinned, heavy-breasted Amazon. Her pubic hair was shaved, the accentuated contours of her naked sex contrasting with the dense, brown brushes of her armpits. The murderess's feet treaded in a puddle of sweat and piss—which was hardly surprising, considering that the historic murder was being endlessly perpetuated! And if all those lovely details were not enough, there were also two armed guards, frozen in the act of rushing to capture Charlotte, and three mourning, wailing women, crouching beside the victim's headrest. Such is true artistic boldness: old David had dared to render merely the revolutionary's pathetic corpse, while here were offered, simultaneously, in three heaving dimensions, both the murderous act and its aftermath!

Only when the visitors drew near the spectacle could they discern its true labor and ingenuity. What refined casting, deciding on a fifty-seven-year-old woman for the role of Marat! The wrinkles bracketing her lips and the sagging, purple rings under her eyes added a dimension of tactile, tangible death throes to her natural beauty. Her open mouth emitted a mute death scream, and though her lips were chapped, a thin thread of spittle projected from within like a frozen stalactite. What a heartrending contrast the Animist attained between Marat's pretty face and the flesh of his body, gnawed by a gruesome skin disease! From the rotting skin's deep furrows rose powdery knolls of mushroom-shaped tumors.

Here and there an inflamed abscess tinted the masses in dark vermillion.

Bodily scents fused with the aroma of food; it turned out that the magisterial magnum opus of this disease was also a culinary feat!

“To begin with, we coated Marat with a generous layer of butter,” explained the Animist, “from whence comes the lovely, oily yellow glaze. Then we peppered her with white flour, rich in yeast, which provided a fluffy frosting, and funneled it here and there into little mounds the shape of a nipple or a wart. Finally, we sprinkled brandy and heaped blackberry pulp to create the abscesses. The skin malady, my darlings, is a delicacy.”

“You will be surprised to learn,” continued the astonishing woman, “that 'Marat' is none other than 'Charlotte Corday's' mother! The finest vaudeville and circus acts are family businesses; there is no substitute for the sensual thrill of kinship.”

While talking the Animist peeled off her soaked panties and deposited them in the hands of a quivering servant. He fell to his knees in ecstatic gratitude and began to vociferously suck on the steaming fabric.

While Marat and his murderess were both women, a mother and a daughter, the three mourning women were revealed to be three adolescent boys. Hair buds sprouted in transparent triangles above their tender members, but their cheeks were yet devoid of down. A rough rope, pulled tight by a heavy iron weight, callously noosed the scrotums of all three. This simple apparatus not only caused the mourning women great pain but also threatened to castrate them if they abandoned the posture.

From whence the perfect realism of the tears: they looked real because they were

real!

“I do not understand how the women’s pricks remain erect despite their taxing exertion and pain,” said Rachel, turning her bare buttocks towards Charles’s free hand (the other was already diligently rubbing his cock, which, judging by its fidgety leaps forward, was an art-loving organ).

The Animist smiled with satisfaction: “Every artist has little secrets she will not disclose, yet I can promise this much: even were the women to faint from exhaustion or lose their sanity from pain, their members would remain useable. My only hint is that the secret is in the prostate.”

To demonstrate this the Animist positioned her foot near the diabolic device constricting the testicles of the grieving women. Three pairs of horrified eyes were raised to her in a mute, futile plea. The terrifying woman intently stalled, frowning in fake compassion. Then she lifted her foot and kicked the iron weight with all her might [ . . . ] (pp. 65–57)