

FROM HIS BRILLIANT BUT TORMENTED MIND CAME THE FIRST AND GREATEST MYSTERY, SUSPENSE AND HORROR STORIES EVER WRITTEN. HIS GENIUS MAY NEVER BE EQUALED! BUT EDGAR ALLEN POE PAID THE PRICE FOR FAME WITH A STRANGE, FRIGHTFUL LIFE AND THE GRIM PROMISE OF A...

THIS WAS THE WORK OF A FIEND!

A FIEND WITH WINGS! THE TOP OF THE CHIMNEY IS TOO NARROW FOR A MAN TO COME THROUGH. THERE'S NO WAY TO REACH THE WINDOW FROM THE OUTSIDE, NO PLACE TO STAND A LADDER!

THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE

A BLACK CAT BRICKED INTO THE WALL!

THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE... YOU HAVE SOME EXPLAINING TO DO, SIR!

THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

NO... NO! FOR GOD'S SAKE-- STOP IT! ...

THE BLACK CAT

THE TELL-TALE HEART

DON'T PRETEND, BLAST YOU... YOU HEAR IT! DON'T MOCK ME!

HEAR WHAT, MISTER? IS THERE SOMETHING UNDER THE FLOOR?

ART BY

STORY: CARL WESSLER
COLORING: GENE D'ANGELO

SOME YEARS AGO, CERTAIN YELLOWED, CRUMBLING PAPERS, BEARING AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES IN THE UNMISTAKABLE HAND OF EDGAR ALLEN POE, WERE DISCOVERED IN A BOSTON ATTIC. THE NOTES MAY BE DUST BY NOW, BUT A COPY OF ONE STARTLING EPISODE EXISTS... SO LET POE'S OWN WORDS (EDITED FOR BREVITY) TELL THE EERIE STORY...



I WAS LIVING IN PHILADELPHIA THAT YEAR--1841, I WAS 32 YEARS OF AGE...MY GAUNT, WELL-DRESSED VISITOR THAT NIGHT, REGARDED ME WITH EYES THAT GLOWED LIKE BLACK COALS. HIS CONSTANT GRIN TROUBLED ME, BUT HIS VOICE WAS SOMEHOW SOOTHING...

...I'VE NOT MANY MORE CHANCES, MR. THANATOS. I'VE LOST TOO MANY JOBS, AND I MEAN TO HOLD ON TO THE ONE I HAVE NOW, SIR!



WITH "GRAHAM'S MAGAZINE"?

WHAT FUTURE IS THERE IN IT? YOU'RE A WRITER, A GENIUS! I CAN SHOW YOU THE WAY TO FAME-- THAT'S WHAT EVERY MAN THIRSTS FOR!



YOU'RE NOT AN EDITOR OR A PUBLISHER! HOW CAN YOU BRING ME FAME?



BY INTRODUCING YOU TO A NEW EXPERIENCE, POE-- A NEW LITERARY FORM!

WHAT IS YOUR PRICE?



WE CAN DISCUSS THAT LATER. FIRST, LET ME PROVE I CAN MAKE YOU FAMOUS...

YOU'LL BE UNDER NO OBLIGATION SHOULD YOU CHOOSE NOT TO GO ON!

VERY WELL! I CAN SEE NO HARM IN A SINGLE EXPERIENCE OF THIS SORT!



THEN LET ME TRANSPORT YOU TO THE FIRST SCENE OF YOUR DESTINY, EDGAR ALLEN POE.

YOU ARE LIVING IN ANOTHER HOME, IN ANOTHER TOWN... THERE'S A STARTLING POUNDING AT YOUR DOOR...

I EXPERIENCED NO FEELING OF MOTION OR PASSAGE OF TIME, YET THERE I WAS, IN A PARIS HOME, WHERE A DOUBLE MURDER HAD BEEN COMMITTED...

THE PEAK OF THE ROOF IS OVER THIS WINDOW... NO WAY TO LOWER A ROPE! NOR IS THERE A PLACE FOR A LADDER DOWN BELOW.

THE DOOR WAS LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE.

SO IT WAS HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO HAVE GOTTEN INTO THIS ROOM, EH?

YOU IMPLY SOME EVIL CREATURE FLEW IN THROUGH THE WINDOW?

OH, COME, POE... THE ANSWER IS SIMPLER THAN THAT! THINK...

SUDDENLY, THE SAVAGE SCENE VANISHED AND I WAS BACK IN MY STUDY. MY VISITOR HAD DEPARTED...

IT COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN HYPNOSIS! THANATOS MADE ME IMAGINE I WAS IN THAT FRIGHTFUL ROOM!

BUT NO! IT WAS TOO REAL, BEYOND THE IMAGINATION TO CONCOCT!

PERHAPS IN AN ALCOHOLIC DELIRIUM, I'D EVEN IMAGINED MR. THANATOS! AGAIN NO! MY MIND WAS CLEAR, AND I SAT DOWN AT ONCE TO RECORD THE WHOLE INCIDENT, AND THEN TO WRITE A STORY BASED ON WHAT I'D SEEN...

I WROTE FEVERISHLY THROUGH THE NIGHT AND THE NEXT DAY, UNTIL THE STORY I CALLED "THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE" WAS FINISHED. I TOOK IT TO 'GRAHAM'S MAGAZINE'...

FASCINATING, POE... NEW AND EXCITING!

I WROTE OTHER STORIES DURING THAT YEAR AND THE NEXT, BUT NOTHING THAT CONTINUED THE BRIEF GLOW OF FAME THAT MY FIRST MYSTERY STORY HAD BROUGHT ME. MY HEALTH WAS POOR... I WAS FOREVER ON THE VERGE OF POVERTY...

IF YOU WERE REAL, MR. THANATOS... I NEED YOUR HELP...



ABRUPTLY, THERE CAME A POUNDING AT MY STUDY DOOR THAT STARTLED ME... AND I LET IN--MR. THANATOS!



DID MY MERE SILENT WISH CAUSE YOU TO APPEAR, SIR? OR DO I IMAGINE YOU EXIST?

OH, I'M REAL ENOUGH! BUT IF YOU PREFER TO BELIEVE YOU CAN SUMMON ME BY WISHING, WELL, WHY NOT?

YOU SAID YOU COULD CHANGE MY DESTINY. IN SOME BIZARRE MANNER, I SAW, OR THOUGHT I SAW, A PLACE WHERE THERE'D BEEN A MURDER...

I WROTE A STORY BASED ON THAT SCENE...



AND PROVED YOUR GENIUS! I READ IT, POE. BRILLIANT!

MY FAME FOR THAT STORY SOON EVAPORATED!



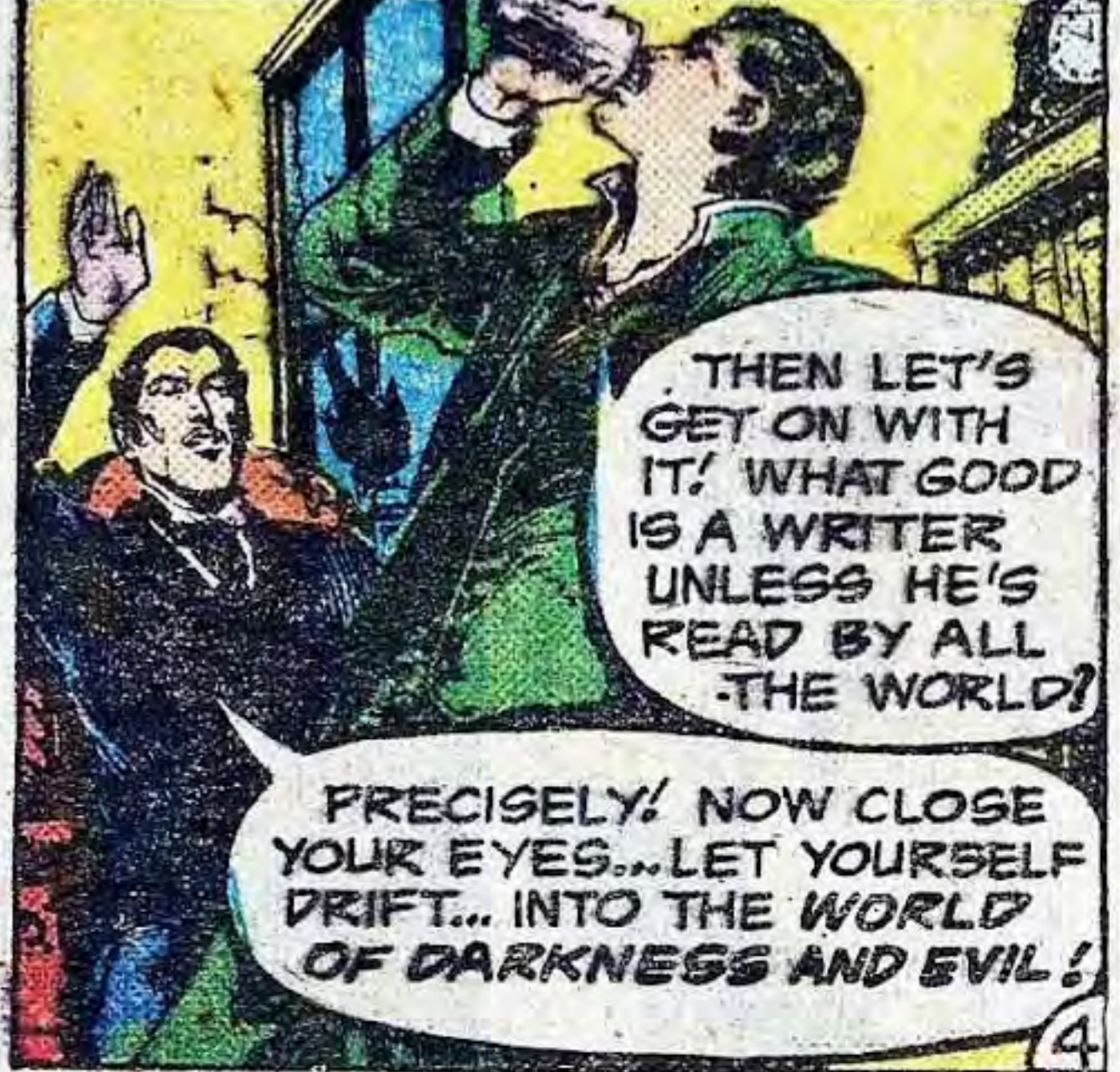
FAME DOESN'T COME THAT EASILY! IT TAKES TIME AND WORK!

YOU HAD JUST A TASTE OF IT. I SHOWED YOU THE WAY. NOW, ARE YOU READY TO GO ALL OUT, POE?



BUT THE PRICE, MR. THANATOS--?

WHAT CAN I SAY-- EXCEPT THAT IT WILL NOT BE OUT OF YOUR REACH, MY FRIEND!



THEN LET'S GET ON WITH IT! WHAT GOOD IS A WRITER UNLESS HE'S READ BY ALL THE WORLD?

PRECISELY! NOW CLOSE YOUR EYES... LET YOURSELF DRIFT... INTO THE WORLD OF DARKNESS AND EVIL!



I CLOSED MY EYES AND FELT A STRANGE LIGHTNESS, THEN CAME THE SCENTS OF AN UNFAMILIAR PLACE, AND MY EYES FLEW OPEN...



HELLO IN THERE! WE'RE THE POLICE... OPEN UP!

THEY'VE NO REASON TO SUSPECT ANYTHING... THEY'LL WANT TO QUESTION ME ABOUT MY WIFE'S DISAPPEARANCE!

I HOPE YOU'VE COME WITH GOOD NEWS OF MY WIFE!

WE'VE COME TO SEARCH THESE PREMISES FROM TOP TO BOTTOM...



AM I UNDER SUSPICION? IS THERE REASON TO SUSPECT SOMETHING BAD HAS HAPPENED TO MY WIFE?



THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO TRACE OF HER. SO WE MUST CONSIDER FOUL PLAY!

THEY STARTED POUNDING MY BEDROOM WALLS AT ONCE...

WOULD YOU CARE TO USE MY CANE, GENTLEMEN? SAVE WEAR ON YOUR FISTS!



AS WE WENT FROM ONE ROOM TO ANOTHER, I FELT INCREASINGLY CONFIDENT THEY WOULDN'T DISCOVER MY GHASTLY SECRET...

I HAD A GLIB ANSWER TO THAT. I WAS SO OVERWHELMED WITH CONFIDENCE, I THUMPED THE NEWLY BRICKED WALL WITH THE HEAVY HEAD OF MY CANE...



...CELLAR? RIGHT THIS WAY, PLEASE?

YOU DON'T SEEM TOO CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR MISSING WIFE!

PLEASE BE THOROUGH SO THAT WE WON'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH ALL THIS AGAIN!



THIS WALL SMELLS OF FRESH BRICK AND MORTAR!



VERY OBSERVANT, OFFICER. BUT THE SERGEANT KNOWS MUCH OF THIS HOUSE BURNT DOWN TWO MONTHS AGO. MOST OF IT WAS REBUILT!

ALL AT ONCE, THE WHOLE THING BLEW UP IN MY FACE. THAT AWFUL HOWLING CONTINUED TO COME FROM THE WALL. THERE WAS A HEAVY SLEDGE IN A CORNER OF THE CELLAR, AND THE SERGEANT SEIZED IT...



I BELIEVE WE FOUND YOUR WIFE, SIR!

YOU SEEM TO HAVE ACCIDENTALLY BRICKED YOUR CAT INTO THE WALL, TOO!

THEN ONCE AGAIN, WITH NO TIME LAPSE I COULD RECKON, I WAS IN MY STUDY, SHAKEN BY THAT WEIRDLY TERRIFYING ADVENTURE. AND I WAS ALONE.

SO MY STORY, 'THE BLACK CAT,' WAS WRITTEN, PUBLISHED IN THE U. S. SATURDAY POST, IN AUGUST, 1843. IT WAS ACCLAIMED— AND LATE ONE NIGHT, MR. THANATOS CAME TO SEE ME...



MY STORY BROUGHT ME SOME MONEY! I'D LIKE TO SETTLE MY ACCOUNT WITH YOU!

I MUST RECORD THIS EXPERIENCE BEFORE I TRY TO BUILD A STORY AROUND IT!



HIS PRESENCE CHILLED ME TO THE MARROW... BUT IN A MOMENT I WAS IN THE MIDST OF STILL ANOTHER ADVENTURE— SO REAL I WAS SURE I WAS LIVING IT.

WELL, YOU SEARCHED THE PLACE, AND DIDN'T FIND THE OLD MAN. HE JUST PICKED UP AND LEFT WITHOUT A WORD!

AS FOR THE SCREAM THE NEIGHBORS REPORTED, I WAS HAVING A NIGHTMARE!



NOSY NEIGHBORS SURE KEEP US HOPPING!

ALL AT ONCE, I HEARD A TICKING SOUND... IT GREW LOUDER... THE NERVE-SHATTERING SOUND OF A BEATING HEART...

I ADMIT IT... I KILLED THE OLD MAN... TEAR UP THE FLOOR PLANKS... TAKE HIM OUT TO STOP THAT THUNDERING BEATING OF HIS HEART!



UNDER THE FLOOR? WE DON'T HEAR ANYTHING. BUT WE'LL TAKE A LOOK!

IN A TWINKLING IT WAS OVER. I WAS BACK IN MY STUDY, ALONE AGAIN. IT WAS TO BECOME ROUTINE--THE FRIGHTFUL SUPERNATURAL EXPERIENCE SERVING AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR YET ANOTHER TALE OF MYSTERY AND TERROR...

IT WAS ALSO WELL RECEIVED. MY FAME IS GROWING... BUT MY HEALTH IS FAILING...

I CHOOSE TO MEET YOU HERE, MR. THANATOS, BECAUSE I MUST CUT DOWN ON MY WORK... I'M ILL...

IF YOU LET DOWN NOW, PEOPLE WILL FORGET YOU!

A TITLE... AH, YES--I'LL CALL IT "THE TELL-TALE HEART."

I JUST CAN'T GO ON AT THE SAME PACE!

YOU MUST! YOU OWE ME, REMEMBER?

WHAT? MONEY? I'LL PAY... IF IT'S NOT TOO MUCH!

I WANT YOU TO BE FAMOUS! THAT'S PART OF MY PRICE. I'LL TELL YOU NO MORE!

THE YEARS ARE PASSING, YET SOMEHOW I'VE SURVIVED AND WRITTEN MANY STORIES OF THE MYSTERIOUS, THE WEIRD AND SUPERNATURAL-- ALL WITH THE HELP OF THANATOS, WHO HAS BECOME MY MASTER. I HAVE FAME, BUT NOW THE END IS NEAR...

THESE ARE MY LAST WORDS. ON THIS OCTOBER 7TH, 1849, I'M GROWING TOO WEAK TO HOLD A PEN. I MUST LEAVE SOON TO JOIN MY BELOVED VIRGINIA.

WELL, EDGAR ALLEN POE, YOUR FAME HAS SPREAD THROUGH EUROPE!

FORGIVE ME FOR COMING TO COLLECT MY DUE AT THIS TIME!

MY SON-IN-LAW IS VERY, VERY SICK! YOU CAN'T COME IN!

HE'S DEEPLY INDEBTED TO ME, MADAM!

L-LET HIM... COME IN... MRS. CLEMM!

YOU GREEDY, COLD-BLOODED...



N-NO... HIS CLAIM IS VALID... I MADE A BARGAIN WITH... M-MR. THANATOS...

I...I... MUST P-PAY... BUT THE PRICE...?

MY PRICE IS THE SAME TO ALL MEN... SOONER OR LATER!



COME ALONG, EDGAR...

LORD HELP MY POOR SOUL!

NGAAAGHH!

AT THAT MOMENT, POE LEARNED THE TRUE AND TERRIBLE IDENTITY OF MR. THANATOS...



MY PRICE IS ALWAYS THE SAME... MY FEE IS ALWAYS PAID!

IN SPITE OF THANATOS-- DEATH--EDGAR ALLEN POE CAN NEVER REALLY DIE. HE LIVES ON IN THE GREAT WORKS HE LEFT US.

AND NOW--CAN YOU HONESTLY DENY THE SUPERNATURAL?

the END. (8)