

EDGAR ALLEN POE'S

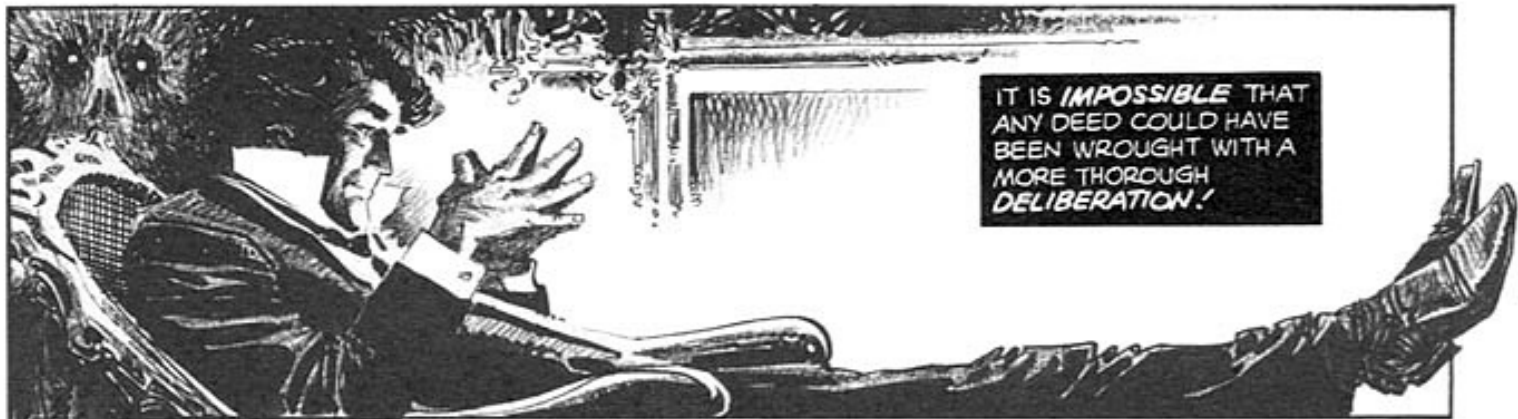
THE IMP OF THE PERVERSE!

IT HAS BEEN SEVERAL **YEARS** SINCE THAT FEARSOME NIGHT WHEN I SAT ALONE IN MY STUDY, AND FELT, TO MY IRREVOCABLE DREAD, A STRANGE **SPIRIT** CREEP UPON ME. IT FILLED MY VERY **SOUL** WITH A HORRIBLE SENSE OF **PERVERSEITY!**

MY **THOUGHTS** TURNED CHILLINGLY **MORBID** THAT NIGHT, AND I REALIZED FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT I HAD WITHIN ME, PRIMITIVE IMPULSES TOWARDS THE **MACABRE**. I FELT MY SOUL ALMOST **DARE** ME TO PERFORM **UNSPEAKABLE ACTS!**

WHO HAS NOT, A **HUNDRED** TIMES, FOUND HIMSELF COMMITTING A **VILE** OR STUPID **ACTION**, FOR NO **OTHER** REASON THAN BECAUSE HE KNOWS HE SHOULD **NOT?**

IT WAS THIS **UNFATHOMABLE** LONGING FOR THE SOUL TO VEX ITSELF... TO OFFER **VIOLENCE** TO ITS OWN NATURE... TO DO **WRONG** FOR THE **WRONG'S** SAKE ONLY... THAT MOVED ME TO **COMMIT** A CRIME AGAINST A CERTAIN **RICH** UNCLE!



IT IS *IMPOSSIBLE* THAT ANY DEED COULD HAVE BEEN WROUGHT WITH A MORE THOROUGH *DELIBERATION!*

FOR *WEEKS*, FOR *MONTHS*, I PONDERED UPON A MEANS OF... *MURDER!*

I *REJECTED* A THOUSAND SCHEMES BECAUSE THEIR *ACCOMPLISHMENT* INVOLVED A CHANCE OF *DETECTION!*

SHORTLY *AFTERWARD* I READ AN ACCOUNT IN A *NEWSPAPER...*

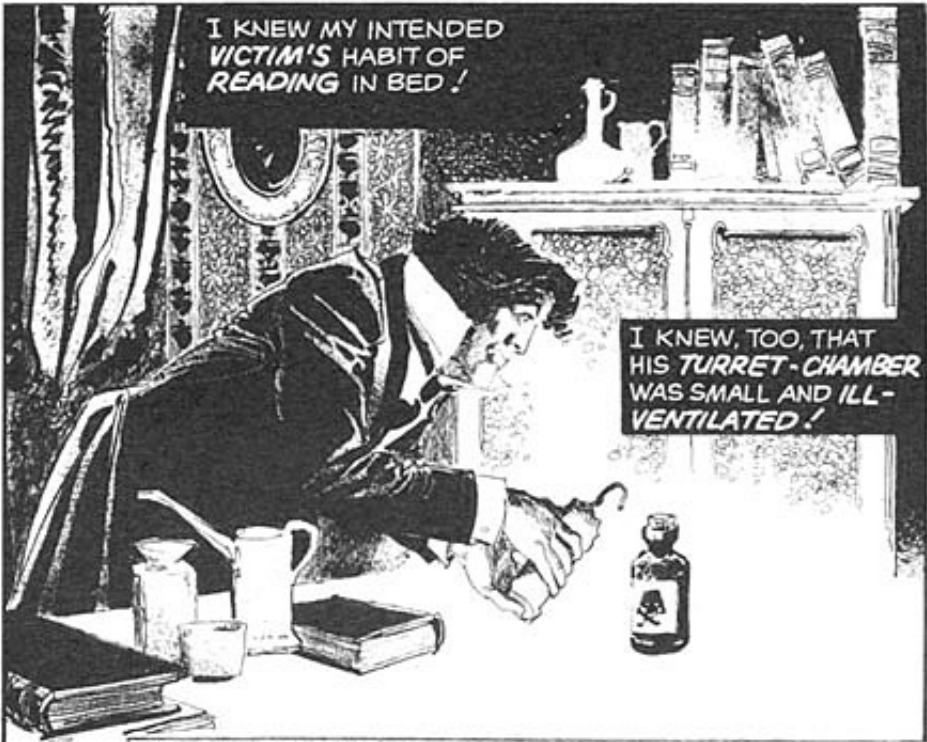


...OF A LOVELY YOUNG LADY WHO *DIED* FROM A CANDLE'S DEADLY *FUMES* WHICH ACCIDENTLY CONTAINED *POISON!*

THE IDEA *STRUCK* MY FANCY AT ONCE!



I KNEW MY INTENDED
VICTIM'S HABIT OF
READING IN BED!



I KNEW, TOO, THAT
HIS TURRET-CHAMBER
WAS SMALL AND ILL-
VENTILATED!

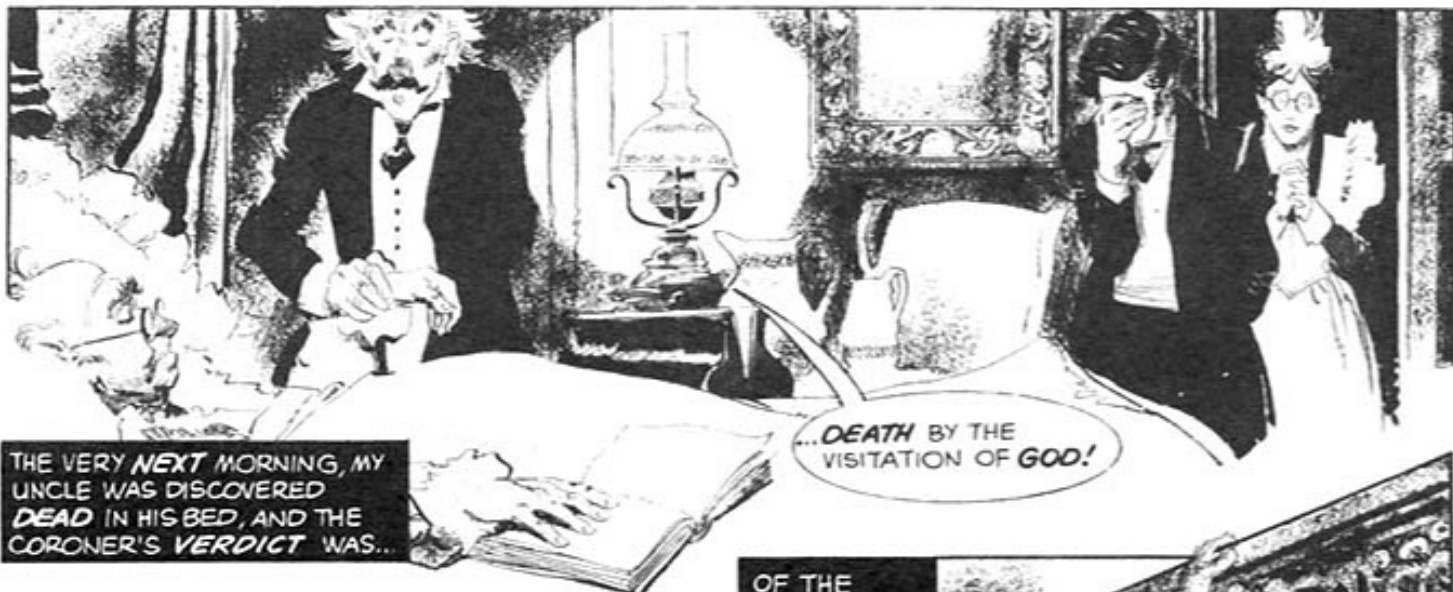


BUT, I NEED
NOT *DISTRACT*
YOU WITH
IMPERTINENT
DETAILS
CONCERNING
MY *CRIME!*



I NEED NOT *DESCRIBE* THE
EASY ARTIFICES BY WHICH I
SUBSTITUTED IN HIS BEDROOM,
A *WAX-LIGHT* OF MY OWN MAKING
FOR THE ONE WHICH I THERE *FOUND!*





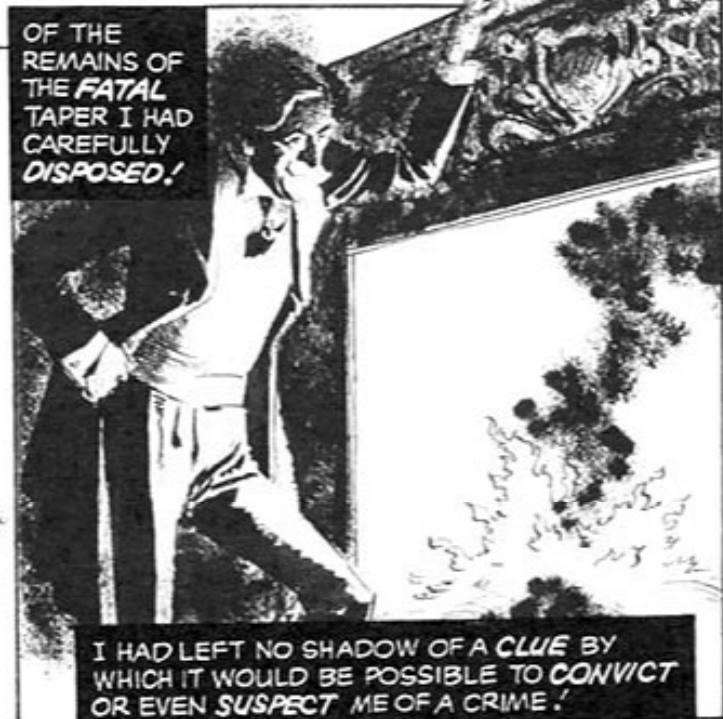
THE VERY *NEXT* MORNING, MY UNCLE WAS DISCOVERED *DEAD* IN HIS BED, AND THE CORONER'S *VERDICT* WAS...

...*DEATH* BY THE VISITATION OF *GOD!*



HAVING *INHERITED* HIS ESTATE, ALL WENT *WELL* WITH ME FOR YEARS!

THE IDEA OF *DETECTION* NEVER ONCE ENTERED MY BRAIN!



OF THE REMAINS OF THE *FATAL* TAPER I HAD CAREFULLY *DISPOSED!*

I HAD LEFT NO SHADOW OF A *CLUE* BY WHICH IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO *CONVICT* OR EVEN *SUSPECT* ME OF A CRIME!



IT IS INCONCEIVABLE HOW RICH A SENTIMENT OF *SATISFACTION* AROSE IN MY BOSOM AS I REFLECTED UPON MY *ABSOLUTE SECURITY!*

FOR AN *EXTREMELY* LONG TIME I WAS ACCUSTOMED TO *REVEL* IN THIS SMUG MOOD!

I AM *SAFE!*

IT AFFORDED ME *MORE* DELIGHT THAN ALL THE MERE *WORLDLY* ADVANTAGES I HAD ACCRUED FROM MY DEARLY BELOVED AND LONG-*DEPARTED* UNCLE!

BUT THERE **ARRIVED** AFTER A WHILE, AN EPOCH FROM WHICH THE PLEASURABLE FEELING GREW, BY **SCARCELY** PERCEPTIBLE GRADATIONS, INTO A **HAUNTING** AND HARASSING THOUGHT!



I AM SAFE!!

I COULD BARELY GET RID OF THOSE **TORMENTING** WORDS FOR EVEN AN **INSTANT!**



I AM SAFE!!

IN THIS MANNER, I WOULD PERPETUALLY CATCH MYSELF **PONDERING** UPON MY SECURITY BY **CEASELESSLY** REPEATING...

I AM SAFE I AM SAFE
I AM SAFE I AM SAFE I AM SAFE I AM SAFE I AM SAFE!



ONE DAY, WHILST SAUNTERING ALONG THE STREET, I **ARRESTED** MYSELF IN THE ACT OF MURMURING, HALF ALOUD, THOSE **CUSTOMARY** SYLLABLES!



I AM SA--!

HAVE TO GET AN **IRON GRIP** ON MYSELF!



I MUST **REMEMBER** THAT I AM SAFE... **ONLY** IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING **FOOLISH**... LIKE MAKING A **CONFESSION** IN **PUBLIC!**



NO SOONER HAD I THOUGHT THOSE WORDS *SILENTLY* TO MYSELF THAN I FELT AN *ICY* CHILL CREEP INTO MY *HEART!*

I HAD HAD SOME *EXPERIENCE* IN THESE FITS OF *PERVERSY*, WHOSE NATURE I HAVE BEEN AT SOME *TROUBLE* TO EXPLAIN ...



...AND I *REMEMBERED* WELL THAT IN NO INSTANCE HAD I SUCCESSFULLY *RESISTED* THEIR ATTACKS!

AND NOW MY OWN CASUAL *SELF-SUGGESTION* THAT I MIGHT POSSIBLY BE *FOOL* ENOUGH TO CONFESS THE *MURDER* OF WHICH I HAD BEEN *GUILTY*...



... *CONFRONTED* ME AS IF IT WERE THE *GHOST* OF MY OWN SLAIN *UNCLE*... BECKONING ME TO *DEATH!*

AT FIRST, I MADE AN *EFFORT* TO SHAKE OFF THIS *NIGHTMARE* OF THE *SOUL!* I WALKED *VIGOROUSLY*...



... THEN *FASTER*...



... STILL *FASTER*...



... UNTIL, FINALLY, I *BOLTED* AND *RAN!*

I FELT A MADDENING DESIRE TO SHRIEK ALOUD!



EVERY SUCCEEDING WAVE OF THOUGHT **OVERWHELMED** ME WITH NEW TERROR, FOR ALAS I TOO-WELL UNDERSTOOD THAT TO EVEN REMOTELY CONTEMPLATE **CONFESSING** IN MY PRESENT STATE OF MIND, WAS TO BE **LOST!**



I **BOUNDED** LIKE A MANIAC THROUGH THE **CROWDED** STREETS.



AT LENGTH, THE POPULACE BECAME **ALARMED** AT MY FRANTIC ACTIONS... AND **PURSUED** ME!

COULD I HAVE SOMEHOW **TORN** OUT MY TONGUE, I WOULD HAVE **DONE** SO!



FOR A MOMENT I EXPERIENCED ALL THE PANGS OF **SUFFOCATION!** I BECAME **BLIND** AND **DEAF** AND **GIDDY!** THEN...

...WITHOUT WARNING, THE LONG-IMPRISONED **SECRET** BURST FORTH FROM **BETWEEN** MY LIPS!

I DID IT!
IT WAS ME!
I KILLED HIM!





THEY SAY THAT I SPOKE WITH A *DISTINCT* ENUNCIATION, AND WITH A PASSIONATELY *HURRIED* PACE...

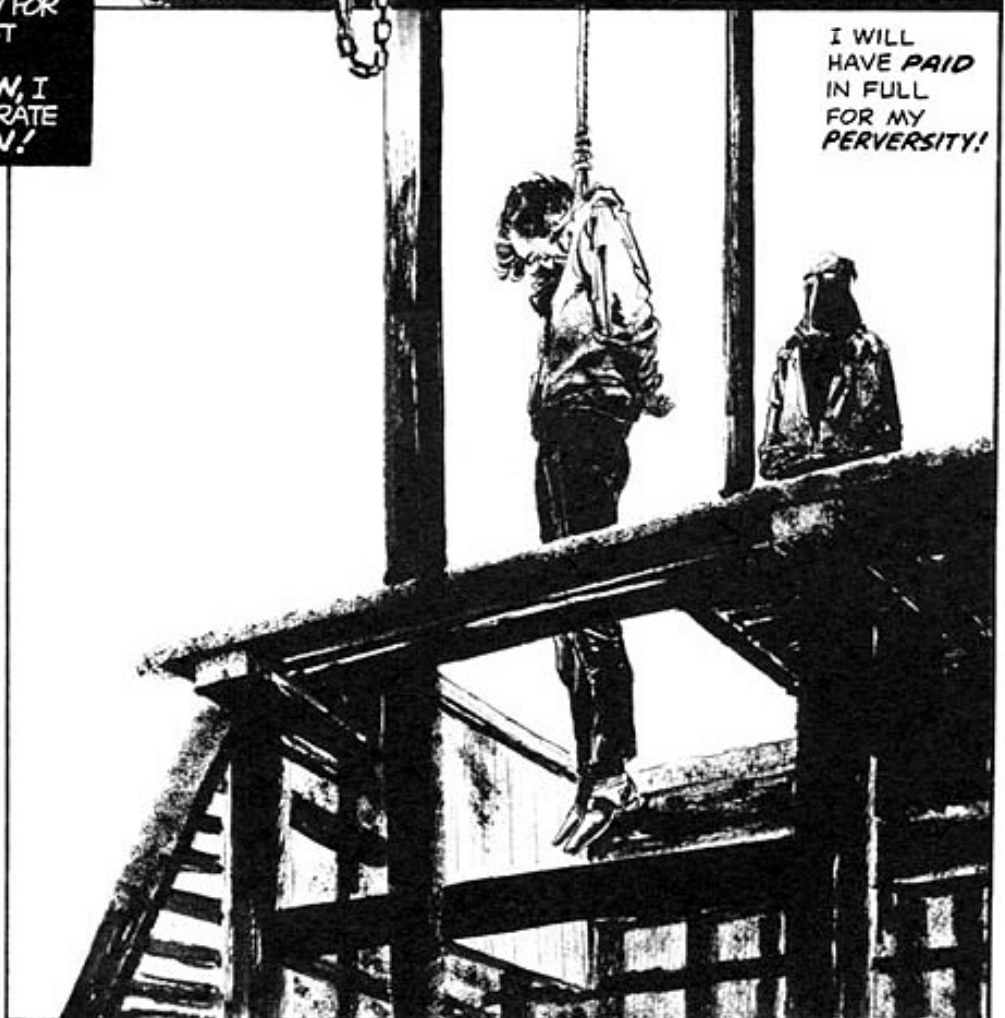
... AS IF IN FEAR OF *INTERRUPTION* BEFORE CONCLUDING THE BRIEF BUT PREGNANT *SENTENCES* THAT CONSIGNED ME TO THE *HANGMAN* AND HELL!



HAVING RELATED ALL THAT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE FULLEST JUDICIAL *CONVICTION*, I FELL PROSTRATE IN A *SWOON*!



BUT, WHY SHALL I SAY MORE? *TODAY* I WEAR THESE *CHAINS*, AND I AM *HERE*! *TOMORROW*, I SHALL *NOT* EXIST!



I WILL HAVE *PAID* IN FULL FOR MY *PERVERSTY*!