

A CASK OF AMONTILLADO... A SEALED WALL... A SHRIEK--
"FOR THE LOVE OF GOD,
MONTRESOR!"

SO ENDED POE'S CLASSIC
FICTION OF MADNESS
AND REVENGE...

FICTION, DID WE SAY?
READ NOW THE BIZARRE
NARRATIVE OF YOUNG
FRENCH JOURNALIST
PAUL MONTRE, WHO
BECAME-- AGAINST HIS
OWN WILL--

THE OPENER OF THE CRYPT!

THE GUTTERING
TORCH LIT MY
WAY DOWNWARD
THROUGH THE
CATACOMBS OF
THE RUINED
HOUSE, THEN
SUDDENLY...

WHAT'S
THAT??

SCRIPT BY:
JOHN JAKES
BASED ON HIS
SHORT STORY
ART BY:
FRANK
BRUNNER

HOLLOW BLACK SOCKETS IN
MOULDERING SKULLS MOCKED ME--
AS DID THE FERAL EYES OF THE
CHITTERING THINGS CROUCHED ON
THE BONE-FILES.

AGAIN I HEARD THE
VOICE THAT HAD DRAWN
ME INTO THE CRYPTS--

THE VOICE THAT SOMEHOW COMMANDED ME--



EXHAUSTED, I PAUSED FOR BREATH-- AND THE VOICE SEEMED TO REPEDE.



WHY HAD I FOLLOWED IT ON THIS MAD QUEST WHOSE PURPOSE I DID NOT KNOW...?



FROM THE FIRST, I HAD THE EERIE FEELING I WAS READING NOT A STORY-- BUT TRUTH.



MY PUPIL SENT THIS MAP, SAYS THE FORMER OWNERS WERE NAMED **MONTRES--**

SEE HERE! WHAT'S THE RUSH?

URGENT APPOINTMENT, JUST REMEMBERED--!

THAT NIGHT, SLEEPLESS, I RE-READ THE TALE--AND REALIZED THAT THE FIRST **PROOF** OF ITS **REALITY** HAD COME TO ME UNBIDDEN.



I HAD TO SEEK MORE--

NEXT DAY, AS IF UNDER A **COMPULSION**, I RESIGNED MY POST AT THE GAZETTE. BY NIGHTFALL, I WAS DRIVING SOUTH. **NON-STOP--!**



I SEEMED TO BE DRAWN TO ITALY-- TO THE TINY COASTAL VILLAGE--BY SOME ALL-POWERFUL FORCE WITH ITS SOURCE BOTH **INSIDE** MY OWN BEING--



AND **OUTSIDE** AS WELL--

WEARY-- BED-RAGGED-- I REACHED THE VILLAGE AT SUNSET.



BUT I WAS IN NO MOOD FOR THE EMPTY JOYS OF CARNIVAL TIME--

HOW COULD I LOCATE THE HOUSE?



PERHAPS WITH THE HELP OF A KNOWLEDGEABLE **INNKEEPER--**



EVEN MONEY DIDN'T COMPLETELY OVERCOME THE INNKEEPER'S SUSPICION OF AN UNWEAPT FOREIGNER--

BUT SIGNOR, THE MONTRESOR HOUSE IS A WRECK!--SOON TO BE TORN DOWN!

THE FAMILY IS LONG GONE, BUT I SUPPOSE --FOR THAT FEE-- I COULD PROVIDE DIRECTIONS--



I WAITED NO LONGER THAN NECESSARY--

WILD-EYED FRENCHMEN! WE ALL HAVE OUR DEMONS--

SLAM!

BUT THE ONE DRIVING HIM MUST BE FEARSOME INDEED--



ROCKETS BLAZED IN THE NIGHT SKY, CHEAP MUSIC PINNED,

ONE SIDE!

I THRUST THROUGH THE CROWDS, HELPLESS OF STARES AND CURSES...



AT LAST! THE STREET TO WHICH I'D BEEN DIRECTED!

HEARTSICK, I SAW SCABROUS WALLS IN CLOTTED PURPLE SHADOW-- AND--

A DEAD END? IT CAN'T BE!



TO MY RELIEF, I DISCOVERED AN ANCIENT GATE NEARLY HIDDEN IN THE DARKNESS.

MY WEARINESS AND FRUSTRATION SET ME TO SHAKING IT-- SAVAGELY--

HINGES ARE LOOSE-- OASH, CURSE YOU!!



IN MY RAGE, I HEARD THE BARS GIVE -- AND I HEARD ALSO THAT **SPECTRAL VOICE**--

COME! MAKE NASTE...



ANSWERING ITS SUMMONS, I PULLED AND BATTERED AT THE GATE, LIKE SOME ANIMAL, UNTIL--

THE RUSTED HINGES TORE FREE OF THE OLD CRUMBLING MASONRY!



THEN--ACROSS A COURTYARD PAST GREEN-SLIMED WATER IN A RUINED FOUNTAIN, I KNEW COLD FEAR AS THE UNKNOWN VOICE DREW ME ON--



TO A GREAT **CREST** BLAZONED ON THE STONE--!

THE SERPENT BITING THE HEEL THAT CRUSHES IT!

EXACTLY AS IN POE'S STORY --THE CREST OF THE MONTRESORS!



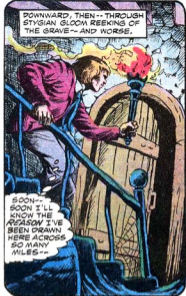
TREMBLING, I GROPED FOR-- AND FOUND-- THE TORCH I SOMEHOW **KNEW** WOULD BE WAITING--



IN A MOMENT, IT WAS ALIGHT-- TO GUIDE ME THROUGH WRECKED ROOMS-- DECAYED GRANDEUR-- A MAZE OF RUBBLE--

LET'S SEE-- NO, STRAIGHT AHEAD--

I SEEMED TO KNOW EXACTLY THE ROUTE TO FOLLOW!



DOWNWARD, THEN-- THROUGH STYGIAN GLOOM REEKING OF THE GRAVE-- AND WORSE.

SOON-- SOON I'LL KNOW THE REASON I'VE BEEN DRAWN HERE ACROSS SO MANY MILES--



AT EVERY STEP, THE HORRID CERTAINTY GREW-- BECAUSE EVERY STEP WAS IMPOSSIBLY DIABOLICALLY FAMILIAR!

THE WINE CASKS! I KNEW THEY'D BE HERE, TOO. NOW?



THE GUTTERING LIGHT SUDDENLY REVEALED OTHER INHABITANTS, FAT-FANGED-- HUNGRY--!

NO! MUSTN'T THINK OF THAT!

ONLY THE TORCH KEPT THEM AT BAY--



I RUSHED ON-- THE VOICE LOUDER NOW--

MAKE HASTE TO PERFORM THE TASK!

I WAS ALREADY FAR BELOW GROUND, BUT ANOTHER STAIR REMAINED. MORTALLY AFRAID-- YET POWERLESS TO STOP-- I DESCENDED INTO THE CHILL, DARK AIR OF--



THE VOICE BADE ME REST NO LONGER--

MAKE HASTE!!

AND SO I PLUNGED DEEPER INTO THE CRYPTS...



THE GREAT ANTEROOM OF THE CRYPTS! THE PLACE WHERE I PAUSED NOW-- PANTING FOR BREATH-- REMEMBERING--

TO THE INNERMOST VAULT... A LIFELESS MIASMIC PLACE WHOSE FETID AIR TURNED THE GLOW OF MY TORCH A FEEBLE, GHASTLY BLUE...

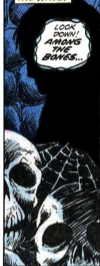
THIS CAN'T BE THE END!

WHY WOULD I BE SUMMONED TO CONFRONT A WALL OF STONE AND MORTAR...?



IN THE DREAD STILLNESS, THE VOICE SEEMED TO ECHO FROM BEHIND THE WALL!

LOOK DOWN!
AMONG THE BONES...



I SHRIEKED AT THE SIGHT OF AN ANCIENT MASON'S TOOL... AND SHUDDERED AT THE NEXT SEPULCHRAL COMMAND...

PICK IT UP!



NOW... BREAK THE MASONRY!



DRIVEN BY THE MONSTROUS INSTRUCTIONS OF THE HIDDEN SPEAKER, I SET ASIDE THE TORCH AND ATTACKED THE WALL WITH A FRENZY--

CRACK!

AT LAST--MY HANDS BLOODED--MY TORCH DIM--I BROKE THROUGH-- AND SAW--

I WORKED AN HOUR-- ANOTHER-- THEN HOURS PAST COUNTING--

ALTERNATELY CURSING-- OR WHIMPERING--

I WAS THE AGENT OF SOME TERRIBLE FORCE FROM THE UNQUESTIONABLE GUTS BEYOND THE KEN OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE--





THERE-- PRISONED-- THE **THING** WHICH HAD SOUGHT ME-- CALLED ME--

--- FINALLY **ENTRAPPED** ME IN THIS DREADFUL PLACE!

A CORPSE! NO-- A SKELETON-- ANCIENT-- ROTTED--!

THEN WHY DO I HEAR THE SOUND OF JESTER'S BELLS? WHO ARE YOU--?

AS IF TO ANSWER MY HALF-MAD CRY-- IT **STIRRED!** FROM THE RUINED SKULL, PART OF ITS AWFUL **ESSENCE** SEEMED TO **POUR FORTH** AS IT ANSWERED--

I AM-- **FORTUNATO!**

YOU HAVE PAID YOUR DEBT-- RELEASED MY TORMENTED SPIRIT FROM THIS DEATH-CELL WHERE I WAS SO **IGNOBLY IMPRISONED** YEARS AGO--



--- AND LEFT TO DIE!

YOU SUMMONED ME? WHY ME-- OF ALL THE MILLIONS ON EARTH--?



AND THEN I KNEW THE LAST, HELL-BORN TRUTH--!

YOUR NAME IS-- **MONTRESOR!**

MY FAMILY NAME IS **MONTRE!**

ONCE IT WAS MONTRESOR, YOU ARE THE LAST OF THE LINE.

I HAVE STRUGGLED TO SUMMON OTHER MONTRESORS BEFORE YOU. NONE HAS FOUND ME UNTIL NOW--!

THEN I REALIZED THAT THE NAME MUST BE A SHORTER FORM OF THAT OLDER, MORE INFAMOUS ONE--

I MUST FLEE-- ELSE I'LL DIE IN THIS PLACE--!

THE NAME OF HIM WHO HAD FIRST WALLED UP THE INSUFFERABLE FORTUNATO-- LURED HIM TO HIS SUB-TERRANEAN GRAVE WITH THE PROMISE OF A **PASTE** OF FINE AMONTILLADO!





BUT MY EYES WERE ALREADY FILMED WITH THE MIST OF MADNESS-- AND I GREW FAINT, WATCHING THE ESSENCE BEGIN TO RISE FASTER FROM THAT DREADFUL CRYPT--

--SPIRALLING UPWARD IN SUPREME TRIUMPH! ABOVE THE SOUND OF WIND AND TINKLING BELLS, I SCREAMED--

WAIT!

YOU SAID I PAID MY DEBT! MY TORCH IS FAILING-- SHOW ME THE WAY OUT OF HERE--!

FIND IT YOURSELF-- IF YOU CAN!!

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, FORTUNATE!!--

BUT THERE WAS NO REPLY-- NOTHING SAVE THE WIND-- THE BELLS-- AND FAINT, MOCKING LAUGHTER--

I FELL, SWOONING--

--TO AWAKEN ONLY JUST NOW-- MY TORCH ALL BUT BURNED OUT-- MY OWN STRENGTH GONE AS WELL-- EXHAUSTED BY MY DRIVEN LABORS--

I LIE NOW UPON THE CHILL EARTH OF THE CRYPT-- WITH NEITHER DESIRE NOR POWER TO MOVE, I REALIZE DEATH IS AT HAND.

FOR IN THE DARKNESS... I CAN HEAR THE LITTLE SOUNDS--

--THE RATS--

--CLOSING IN--

--AND I KNOW THAT THIS IS... THE END!