

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

Illustrated by
Harley M. Griffiths

By Edgar Allan Poe



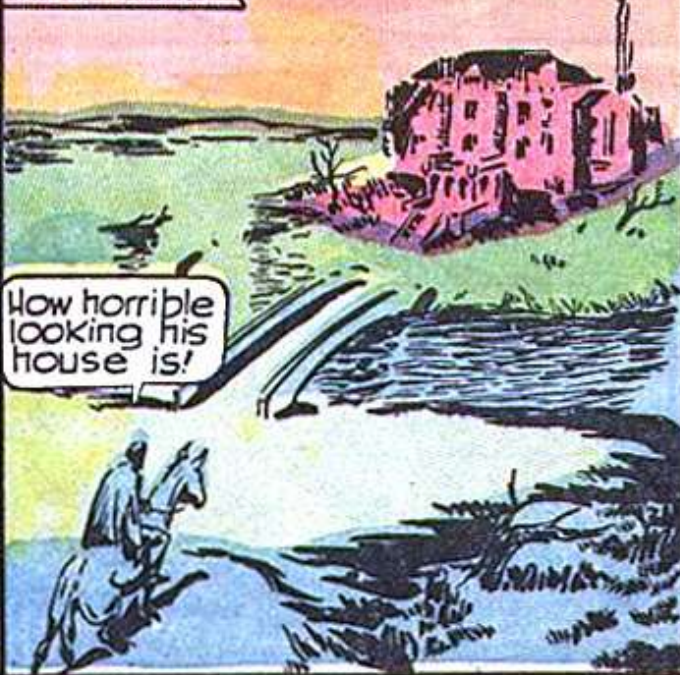
THE SIGHT OF THE OLD, DECAYING HOUSE OF USHER WAS HORRIFYING ITSELF, YET I HAD TO ENTER AND BECOME WITNESS TO THE TERRIBLE TRAGEDIES ENACTED WITHIN ITS WALLS...

IT ALL BEGAN WHEN I RECEIVED A LETTER MARKED URGENT...

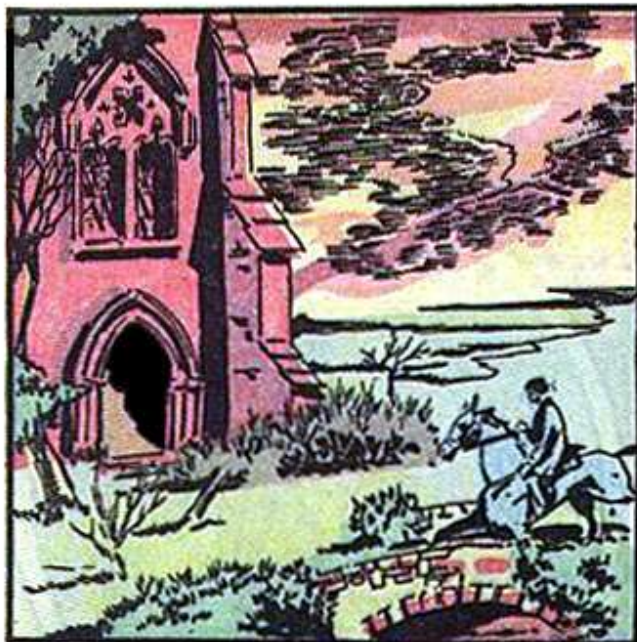
I am sick in mind and body. Only you can save me from going mad. You were my boyhood friend, so please come. R. Usher.



I OBEYED THE SUMMONS AND SEVERAL EVENINGS LATER...



How horrible looking his house is!





JUST THEN, SHE WALKED PAST THE OPEN DOOR...



Lady Madeline, my sister. That's the last time you'll see her alive.



She's dying of an incurable sleeping sickness. For years, she's tried to fight it off, but now it's overcome her and she's taking to her bed. Death is near.

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, I TRIED TO CHEER UP MY FRIEND...

Help me paint, Roderick.



Bah, everything I paint turns black and gloomy.



You still want to hear me play and sing? My songs are as mad as I.

sing, Roderick. It will do you good.



LATE ONE EVENING...

My sister is dead!

USHER TOLD ME HE WANTED TO PRESERVE THE BODY FOR TWO WEEKS SO THAT THE DOCTORS COULD STUDY THE DISEASE...

We'll take it to one of the vaults in the cellar.



The tunnel is copper lined. Gun powder used to be stored in part of the basement. The vault room's copper lined, too.



I'd like to see her face.

I'll unscrew the lid.



She looks very much like you.

We were twins.

THE LID WAS RESCREWED AND WE CLOSED THE MASSIVE DOOR...

She must have suffered terribly. May she rest in peace!



USHER NOW CHANGED FOR THE WORSE. HE EITHER CHARGED THROUGH THE HOUSE LIKE A POISONED CAT, OR STARED FOR HOURS INTO SPACE...

Can I help, Roderick?

No.



THERE WERE TIMES I THOUGHT HE WANTED TO TELL ME SOMETHING BUT WAS AFRAID...

There's something on your mind, old boy. Speak up.

It's nothing.



AN UNNAMED TERROR WAS BEGINNING TO GRIP ME. ABOUT A WEEK AFTER MADELINE'S DEATH...

The furniture seems to be moving!



I hear noises that seem to be coming from the vault where Madeline lies



I DRESSED. JUST THEN, THERE WAS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR, AND...

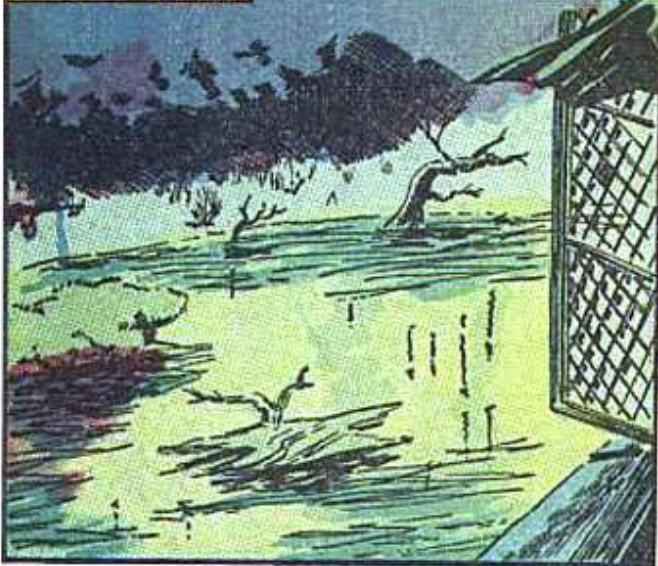
You've not seen it? Come, follow me.



Look on the pond below.



THE WIND WAS HOWLING AND THE SKIES WERE BLACK, BUT THERE WAS NO LIGHTNING AND YET...



I STARTED READING THE STORY OF ETHELRED, THE KNIGHT...

"And Ethelred, seeing that the hermit refused him admittance, used his mace and broke down the door.."



I COULD HAVE SWORN THAT JUST THEN, FROM WITHIN THE HOUSE, CAME THE RIPPING AND CRACKING NOISES OF BOARDS BEING SPLINTERED...

I can't tell if he's heard the noises. I'll continue reading.

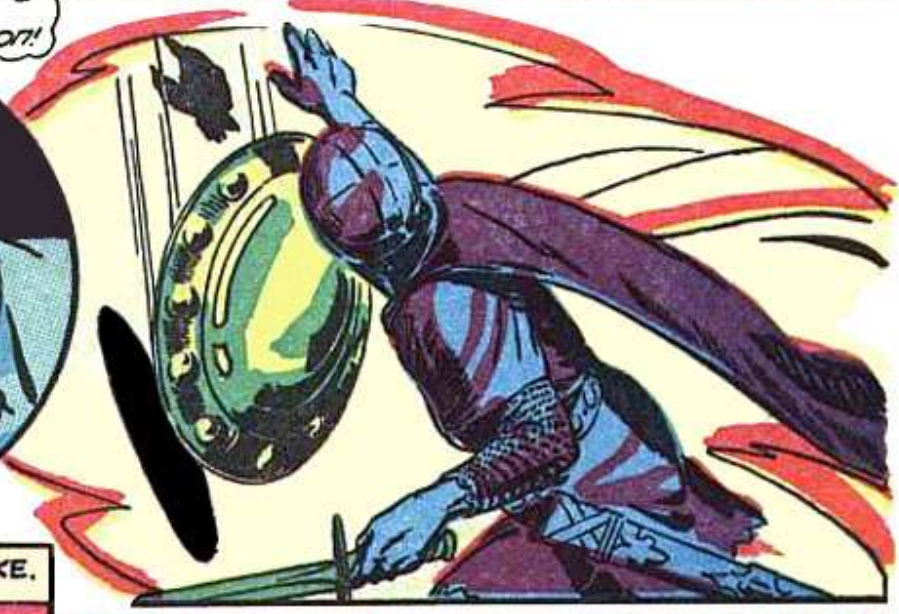


"...ETHELRED ENTERED AND INSTEAD OF A HERMIT, FOUND A DRAGON GUARDING A GOLDEN PALACE. HE STRUCK THE SERPENT WHICH GAVE FORTH A WEIRD AND PIERCING SHRIEK..."



I distinctly heard a horrible scream coming from the cellar. Am I crazy, too? I must read on!

"AS ETHELRED REACHED FOR THE SHINING SHIELD HANGING ON THE WALL, IT FELL WITH A CRASH..."



NOW, THERE WAS NO MISTAKE. I HEARD A METALLIC, CLANGING ECHO...







A GUST OF WIND COMING FROM THE CORRIDOR, PUSHED OPEN THE DOOR...



AND THERE STOOD MADELINE OF USHER...



AND THEN TOPPLED...



FOR A MOMENT, THE LIVING CORPSE ROCKED ON THE THRESHOLD...



AND FELL ON HER
TERRIFIED BROTHER...



I PULLED HER BODY
FROM HIM...



SENSELESS WITH FEAR, RODER-
ICK TRIED TO GET UP...

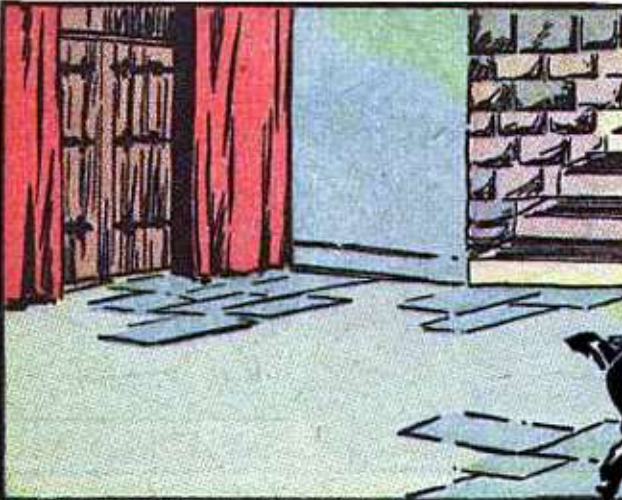


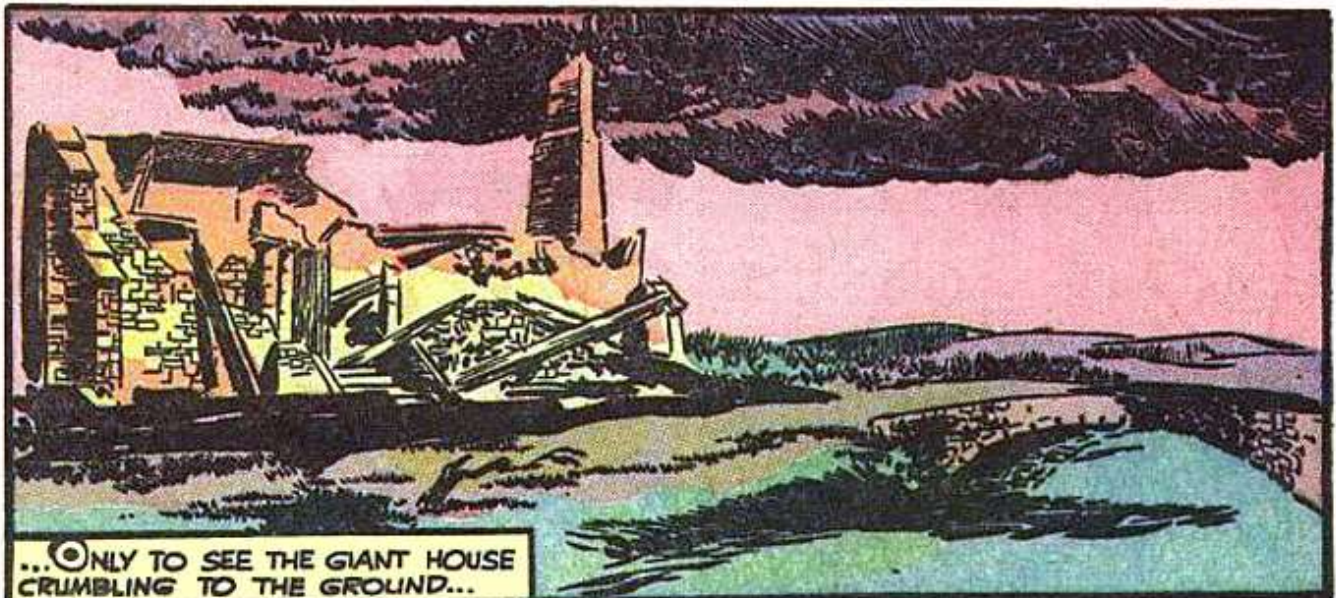
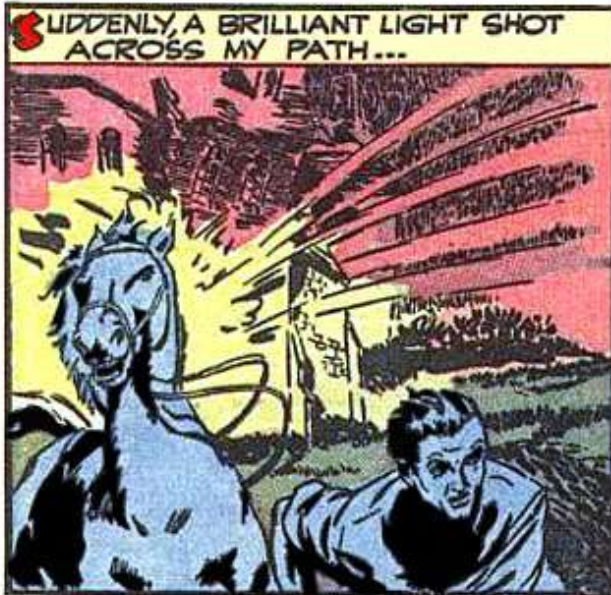
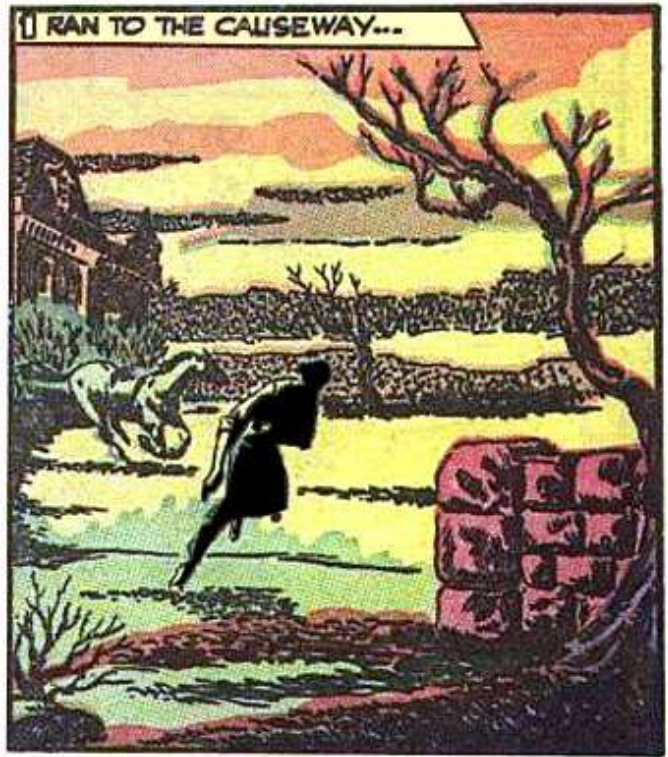
A SUDDEN PANIC
SEIZED ME...

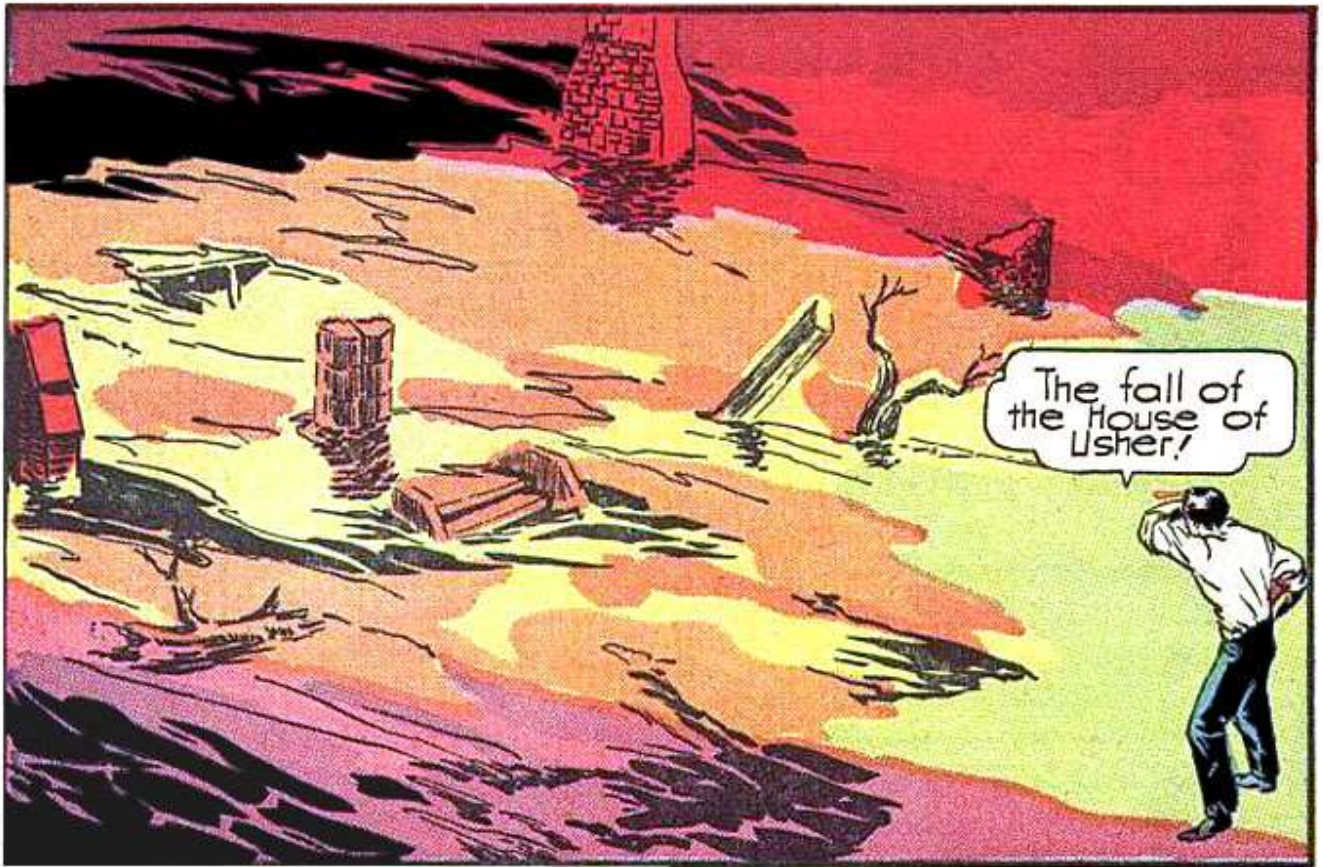
*I MUST
flee!*



*He's dead, killed by the fear
he dreaded! Poor fellow,
his heart gave out.*







The fall of
the House of
Usher!



He loved his sister
and had done no
wrong, willfully, yet
she killed him
through fear.



Goodbye for-
ever, House
of Usher.

The END