

EDGAR ALLEN POE'S

THE IMP OF THE PERVERSE!

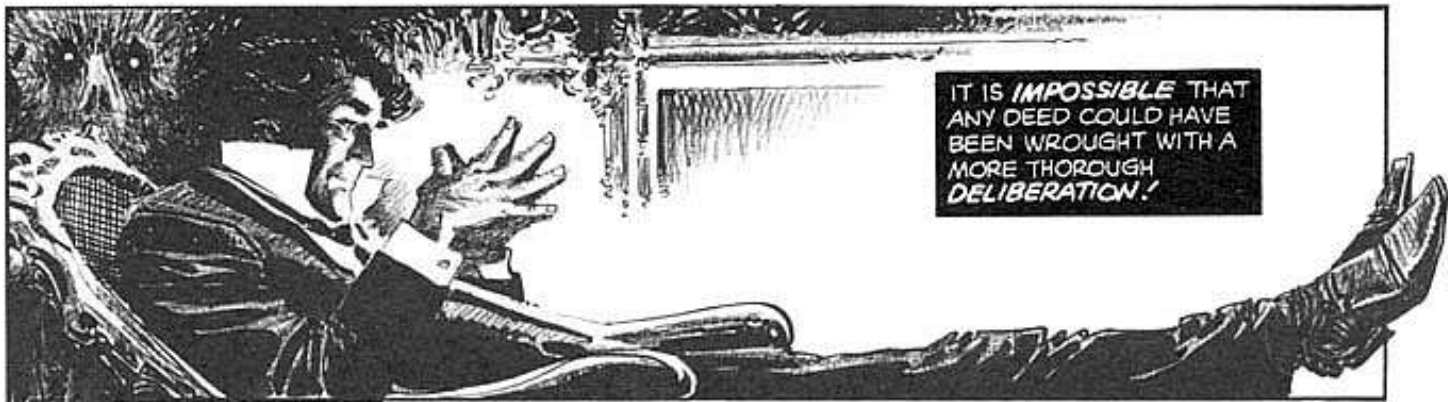
IT HAS BEEN SEVERAL **YEARS** SINCE THAT FEARSOME NIGHT WHEN I SAT ALONE IN MY STUDY, AND FELT, TO MY IRREVOCABLE DREAD, A STRANGE **SPIRIT** CREEP UPON ME. IT FILLED MY VERY **SOUL** WITH A HORRIBLE SENSE OF **PERVERSITY!**

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!*

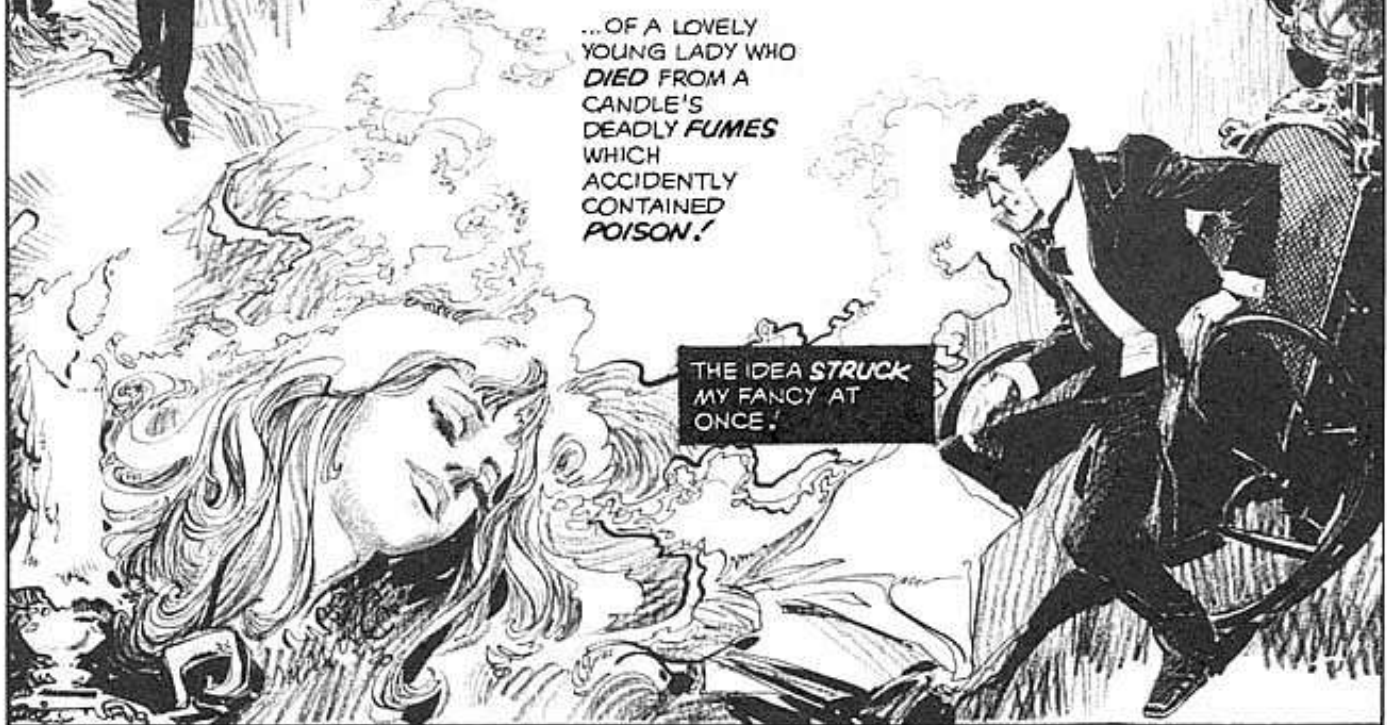
FOR *WEEKS*, FOR *MONTHS*, I PONDERED UPON A MEANS OF... *MURDER!*

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 ACCIDENTALLY 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!



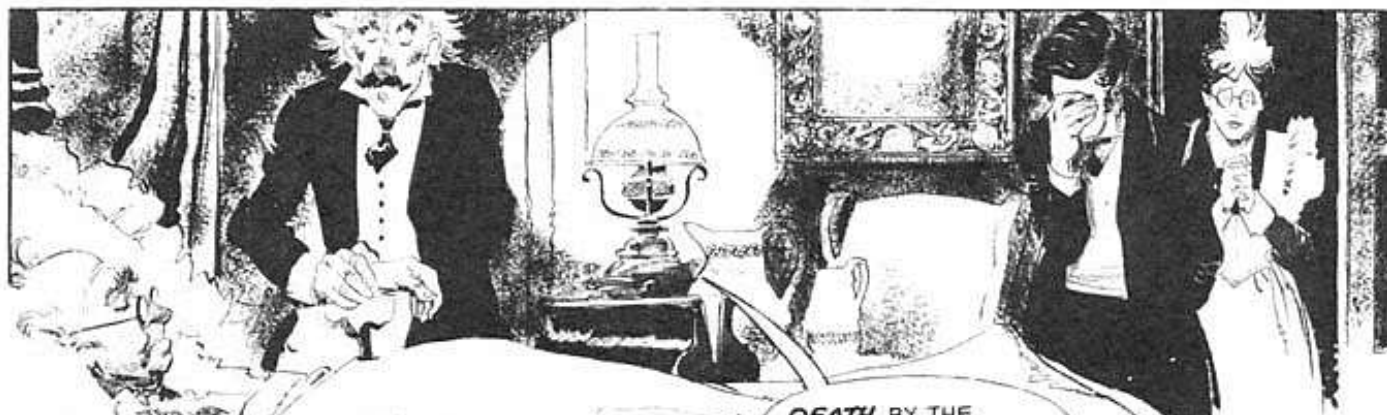
BUT, I NEED NOT DISTRACT YOU WITH IMPERTINENT DETAILS CONCERNING MY CRIME!



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!



GACK-KK



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!



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



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!





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!



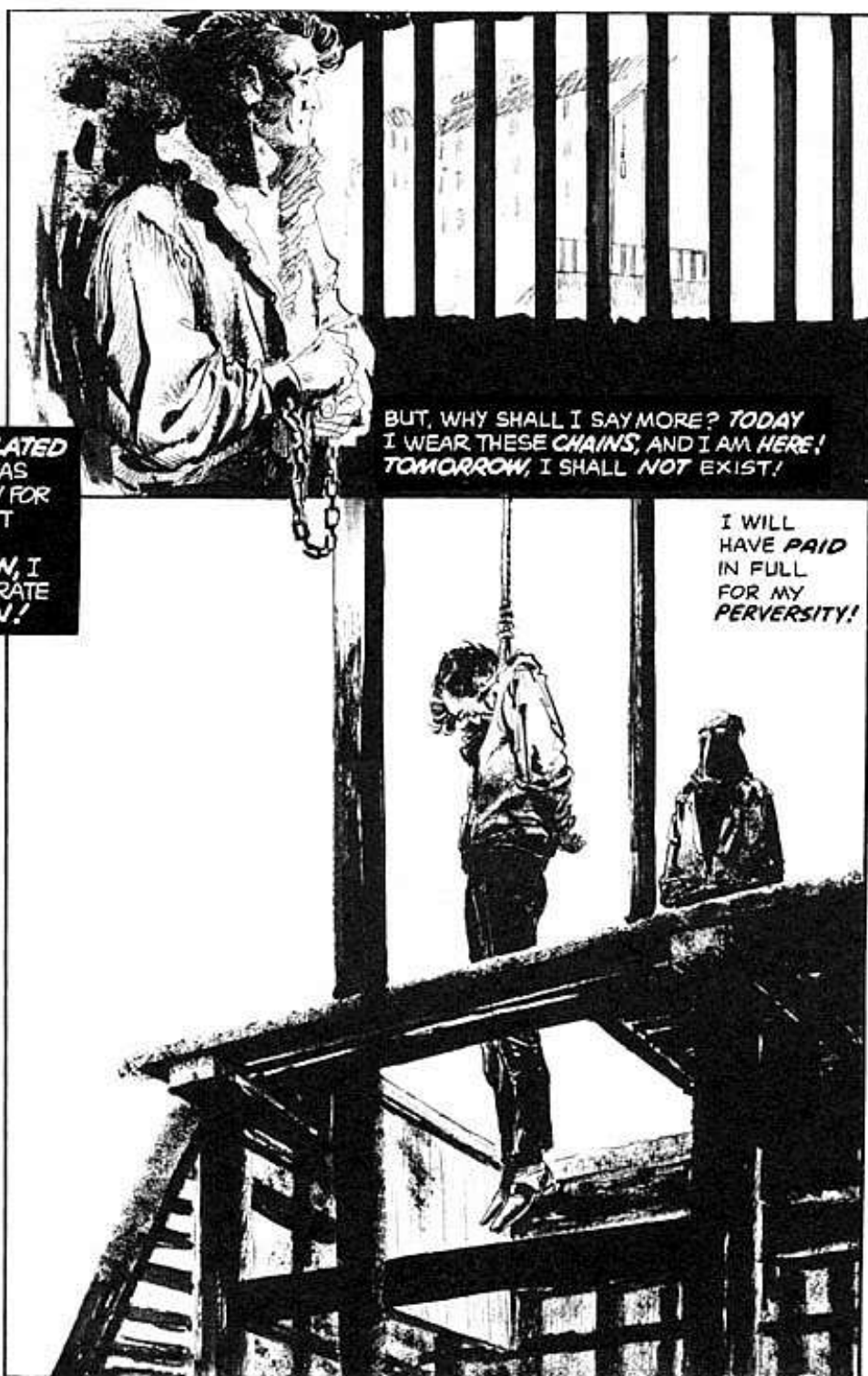


THEY SAY THAT I SPOKE WITH A *DISTINCT* ENUNCIATION, AND WITH A PASSIONATELY *HURRIED* PACE...

...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*!