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## CAST

VINCENT PRICE as Roderick Usher

MARK DAMON as Philip Winthrop

MYRNA FAHEY as Madeline Usher

HARRY ELLERBE as Bristol

## CREW

Directed by ROGER CORMAN

Written by RICHARD MATHESON

Based on the Story by EDGAR ALLAN POE

Director of Photography FLOYD CROSBY

Original Music by LES BAXTER

Edited by ANTHONY CARRAS

Production Design by DANIEL HALLER

Produced by ROGER CORMAN

Executive Producer JAMES H. NICHOLSON

## THE HOUSE IS THE MONSTER

by Tim Lucas

***“Son coeur est un luth suspendu; sitôt qu’on le touche il resonance.”***  
***(“His heart is a hanging lute; whenever one touches it, it resounds.”)***

These lines of the French poet Pierre-Jean de Béranger preface Edgar Allan Poe's 1839 story, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and so has Poe's story had resounding effect on all the avenues of art to follow in its wake. Its influence can be heard in music from Claude Debussy to Philip Glass, seen in graphic art from Aubrey Beardsley to Gahan Wilson, and read in works ranging from Charles Baudelaire to Lemony Snicket. Even Herman Melville's Captain Ahab and Charles Dickens's Miss Havisham have a streak of the Usher madness about them, and would Jonathan Harker have ventured to Castle Dracula had Poe's nameless narrator not made the dreadful trek to the House of Usher first?

Nowhere is the story's resounding effect as strongly felt as in the art of cinema, where all the arts sing as one. Since its first adaptation in 1928, Poe's story has been retold in short and long form, in live action and animation, in silence and 5.1 surround sound, its eternally crumbling pillars salting the filmographies of such diverse disciples as Jean Epstein, Curtis Harrington, Jesús Franco and Ken Russell. When Epstein made the barely-feature-length *La Chute de la maison Usher* (1928), he used the story as reason to work within the stylistic realm of Expressionism, which was dying out as sound was forcing cinema in the direction of realism. Franco's *El Hundimiento de la casa Usher* (1982) unreels like a confession of the story's influence on his entire mythos, its French version going so far as to incorporate flashbacks from his first horror film, *The Awful Dr. Orlof* (1962), about a mad doctor's attempts to restore the beauty of his sister, Melissa; plainly a Roderick-Madeline relationship. Russell's satirical *The Fall of the House of Usher* (2002) was literally shot on a camcorder in his home garage at a time when he was considered unemployable by major studios. In a most impressive example of the career through-line, Harrington used the story to literally bookend a 60-year career in films, beginning with an 8mm short (1942), made when he was only 16, and concluding with a 16mm short (2002), made a few years before his death, in which the reticent director ventured his only public statement about his sexuality by essaying the role of Madeline himself.

Yet none of these filmmakers is so well associated with Poe in general or *The House of Usher* in particular as Roger Corman. In 1960, poised to direct his 25th film, the 33-year-old Corman proposed to James H. Nicholson and Samuel Z. Arkoff of American International Pictures that they take the money they had been spending to produce black-and-white double bills and step up to the major leagues with a single, prestigious, colour picture. When he proposed *Usher*, his producers balked, insisting that a horror picture needed a monster. “The house is the monster!” Corman famously improvised — and subsequently took the most fortuitous step of his long career, graduating to a lavish \$300,000 budget and indulgent (for him) 15-day schedule.

Corman chose *Usher* because Poe had been his first literary passion as a young man — also, he knew that Arkoff & Nicholson wouldn't likely object to a property in the public domain. However, there is also something to be said about the impact of UPA's Oscar-winning animated short *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1953), narrated by James Mason, whose influence Corman has never specifically acknowledged. Yet Paul Julian, the visionary designer of that short, was subsequently hired by Corman to design the title sequences of his *Not of This Earth* and *Attack of the Crab Monsters* in 1957, not to mention two more he produced in 1963: *The Terror* and Francis Coppola's *Dementia 13*. The look and atmosphere of *The Tell-Tale Heart*, which predates *Usher* by seven years, now feel unmistakably... Cormanesque.

Nevertheless, Poe's *Usher* — with its sense of contaminated earth, corrupted lives and imminent doom — taps into something vital and personal in Corman's own output. Westerns aside, Corman's earlier films were frequently set in the wake of some apocalypse; in stark contrast to other 1950s science fiction cinema that forewarned us about the perils of the Bomb, in Corman's films it has already fallen. (His first fantasy film, 1955's *Day the World Ended*, concludes with the apt title card “The Beginning”.) What arose from this landscape of cataclysm was a new breed of Poe-seeded hyper-sensitives, rebels and mutations: Paul Birch's light-sensitive vampire in *Not of This Earth*, the scientist who invites alien peril as an alternative to the status quo in *It Conquered the World* (1956), the telepathic crabs of *Attack of the Crab Monsters*. The influence of *Usher* can even be found in Corman's crime pictures of the period, with the criminal figures of *Teenage Doll* (1957), *Machine-Gun Kelly* and *I, Mobster* (both 1958) all sporting morbid temperaments and death wishes branded into them by neurotic family associations. Such evidence suggests that *The Fall of the House of Usher* was less an inspired left turn in Corman's career than a galvanising homecoming that caused all the pieces fall into place.

Those pieces would continue to fall into place throughout the 1960s. The official run of Corman-Poe pictures — *Pit and the Pendulum* (1961), *Premature Burial* (1961), *Tales of Terror* (1962), *The Raven* (1963), *The Haunted Palace* (1964), *The Masque of the Red*



*Death* (1964) and *The Tomb of Ligeia* (1965) — were just the cobwebs on the crypt, so to speak. The real living essence of Poe was expressed through Corman's other, most personal work: *Last Woman on Earth* (1960), another post-apocalyptic tale, in which two men vie for the privilege of mating with a woman who represents life and death; *X - The Man with the X-Ray Eyes* (1963), in which a doctor's self-experimentation raises his sensitivity of sight from humorous to epiphanic and finally unbearable; and perhaps most intriguingly, *The Trip* (1967), in which a Hollywood director of television commercials uses LSD in the hope of gaining personal and professional 'insight' — a film for which Corman prepared by taking LSD himself. In the context of *The Trip*, the protagonist experiences visions of himself with eyes bleeding, walking through derelict houses and along Pacific shorelines, burned to death, buried alive, and (as in *The Tomb of Ligeia*) poised at emotional equidistance between two women, one light-haired and representing life in the now, and one dark-haired and representing the past and death.

Attentive to the vanguard of writing being done in the fields of horror, science fiction and fantasy, Corman hired *I Am Legend* novelist Richard Matheson (who had penned an episode of the Steve McQueen Western series *Wanted: Dead or Alive* shot by his own technical crew) to script the feature. Its ear for baroque language is one of its juiciest pleasures, especially when spoken by top-billed Vincent Price, whose experience as a radio actor seldom came into more expressive play onscreen. The St. Louis-born Price was Corman's first and only choice to play Roderick Usher, but his casting was as inevitable as Corman's selection of material. Since his defining success in 1953's 3D shocker *House of Wax*, Price had become the only criterion of quality native to 1950s horror, most recently having starred in William Castle's 1959 hits *House on Haunted Hill* and *The Tingler*. Just as important for Corman's purposes, Price was an American rarity, a 'king actor' schooled on the boards of the London stage (in 203 performances of *Victoria Regina* opposite Helen Hayes), who not only brought a cultured air to his performances, but also a hint of decadence. His portrayal of Nicholas Van Ryn in the 1946 film *Dragonwyck* now seems a foreshadowing of the brooding, death-obsessed bluebloods he later played in the bulk of Corman's Poe pictures.

Essential to *Usher's* galvanising effect on the horror genre was its distinction as the first American horror picture to be shot in colour (Eastmancolor, to be precise) and CinemaScope. It is necessary to qualify that achievement with nationality because it was preceded in this regard by one other picture: the Herman Cohen production *Horrors of the Black Museum* (1959), which Desmond Dickinson shot — it must be said — with a clashing carelessness that suggests literal colour-blindness. Corman, however, had been working since his first picture as a producer with veteran Academy Award-winning cinematographer Floyd Crosby, then in his late 50s. The two men had been developing a rapport with anamorphic storytelling since the 1955 Western *Apache Girl* (also in colour), finessing it into a genuine style by the time of *I, Mobster* in 1958.

Between them, on this 15-day shoot, Corman and Crosby determined the correct way to photograph horror in colour.

*Usher* shows its cards immediately with its title sequence, a thrilling, deep-focused barrage of neon-bright colours playing over undulating fields of smoke, subliminally encouraging the viewer to look deeper while responding to its bizarre colour chart of limpid blues, voluptuous purples, lime greens and hellfire reds. What Corman and Crosby understood that Dickinson did not was the psychological value of colour, how to suppress and selectively release certain hues, how to exclude certain colours from the story's reality and give them free reign in its dreams. It didn't matter whether the audience consciously understood this; it was information built to bypass consciousness and go directly to work on the subconscious.

The Usher house itself, so deathly obsidian on the outside, is a surprising plethora of human colours inside, its reds and beiges suggesting a dwelling of flesh and blood, a projection of Roderick's acutely pitched nervous system, the rats he hears not creeping through its walls but so much a part of him as to infest his very veins. Wardrobe designer Marjorie Corso worked closely in tandem with the production's visual planning, contrasting the cool blues worn by Philip Winthrop (Mark Damon) upon his arrival with Roderick's (Price's) enflamed red and Madeline's (Myrna Fahey's) depleted pink. By dinner, Madeline is garbed in red, as if in quickened response to Philip's now-deeper blue — chromatic opposites attracting — while Roderick seems to already be mourning her in funereal black. Note the almost complete absence of red in the scene of Philip taking a breakfast tray to Madeline's room, which underscores their unity and intimacy in ways not found in the previous scenes. As she later escorts him to the family vaults below the house, red is expressed not in set dressing but in lighting, suffusing the sequence with a sense of impending spiritual danger. When Roderick decides it is time to take Philip into his confidence, their colours are more in accord than anywhere else in the picture: dark blue and charcoal grey. In this scene, Corman brilliantly allows the voice of Price to take full sway, speaking melodically over images that lull the viewer into receding from the images onscreen as if into a hypnotic dream state. As Roderick shows Philip the family portraits — delirious works by Beatnik-era painter Bud Schonberg — he seems to be initiating him to the colours and textures of the house's subconscious, which in turn infect Philip in the movie's *tour de force* dream sequence, the one point in the picture where Corman innovates something completely new and unmistakably his own — essentially by staging in live action what Julian had done with his downbeat Daliesque designs in *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

Just as important to the film as its colour and width is its sense of depth, which Crosby secured through the use of a 24mm lens — famously used by Gregg Toland to produce similar uncanny visual effects in Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* (1941). In

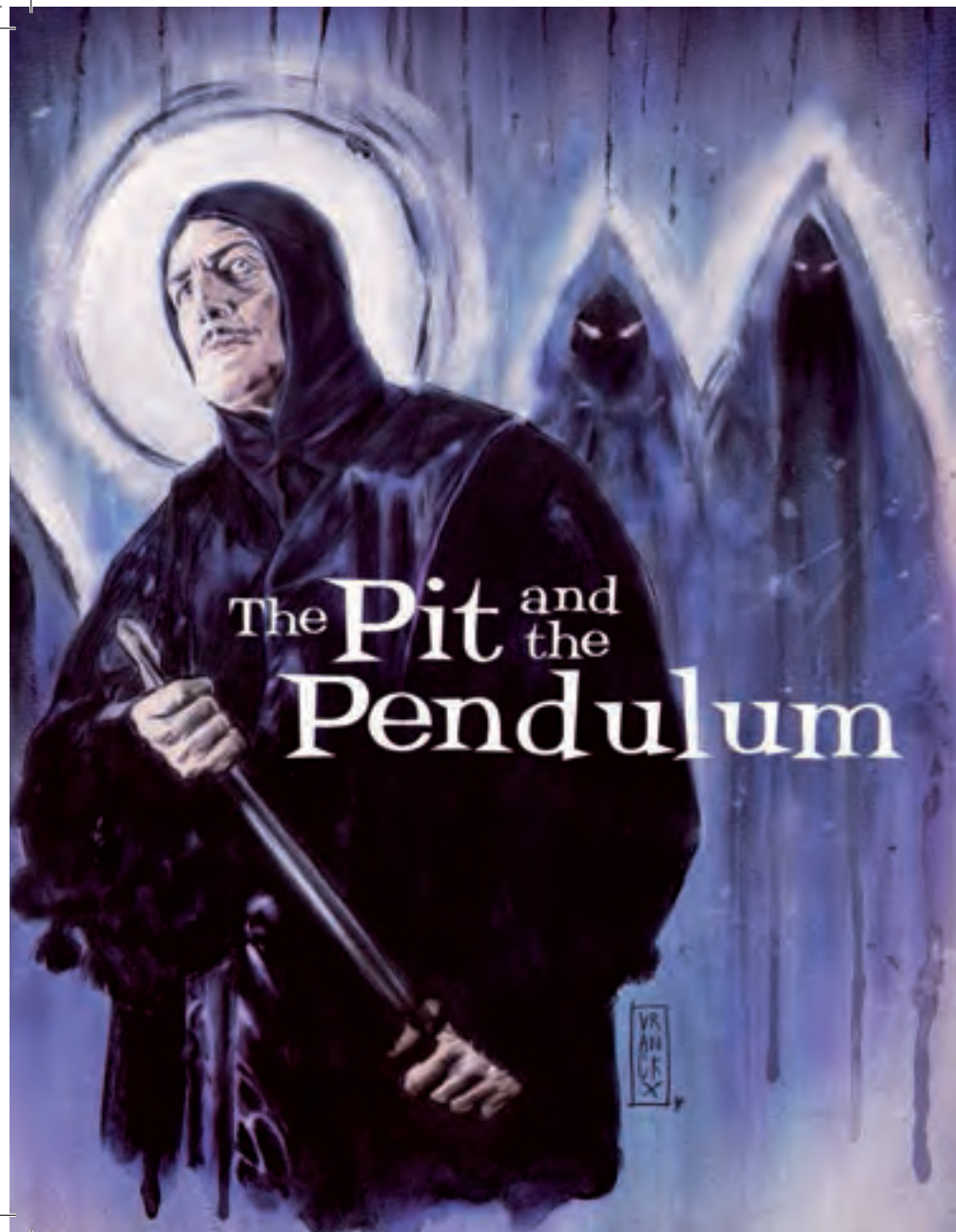
the opening shot, for example, we see Philip riding on horseback through a singed forest of damnation (the location of an extinguished fire Corman had read about in that morning's newspaper), Crosby's tracking lens keeping him in perfect focus in the distance as the closer, bare, smoking branches seem to reach out to us three-dimensionally. These opening shots very much impressed the Italian cinematographer and director Mario Bava, who recreated their effect while introducing Mark Damon in the 'Wurdalak' segment of his AIP omnibus thriller *Black Sabbath* (1963).

The film reportedly grossed nearly \$1,500,000 in its initial North American release alone, and it continued to earn for the remainder of the 1960s – on drive-in triple-bills and 'Dusk-to-Dawn' shows, in television syndication and in 16mm rentals – making it the hearthstone of American International Pictures. It did no less well throughout Europe; the international success of Hammer's *Dracula* had inspired Bava's directorial debut, *Black Sunday* (1960, another big money-maker for AIP), but it was *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and its follow-up *Pit and the Pendulum*, that led to the rise of the Italian Gothics, an entire run of pictures (often starring Barbara Steele) about necrophiles and prematurely buried young women that masqueraded as US or British productions and lasted through 1966. Its influence continues to resound to this day in contemporary pictures like Hammer's *The Woman in Black* and Tim Burton's *Dark Shadows* (say what you will about the movie itself, Johnny Depp gives a classic horror performance in the Vincent Price mode), but there is no substitute for the shock of the new that can still be felt here, as Corman and company advance the horror genre into its most brilliant decade.

*Tim Lucas is the award-winning author of Mario Bava – All the Colors of the Dark and editor/co-publisher of the long-running Video Watchdog, the Perfectionist's Guide to Fantastic Video. His 1994 novel Throat Sprockets has a chapter set inside a movie theatre called 'The House of Usherettes'.*

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## CAST

VINCENT PRICE as Nicholas Medina  
JOHN KERR as Francis Barnard  
BARBARA STEELE as Elizabeth Barnard Medina  
LUANA ANDERS as Catherine Medina  
ANTONY CARBONE as Doctor Charles Leon  
PATRICK WESTWOOD as Maximillian  
LYNNE BERNAY as Maria  
LARRY TURNER NICHOLAS as a Child  
MARY MENZIES as Isabella  
CHARLES VICTOR as Bartolome

## CREW

Directed by ROGER CORMAN  
Written by RICHARD MATHESON  
Based on the Story by EDGAR ALLAN POE  
Director of Photography FLOYD CROSBY  
Original Music by LES BAXTER  
Edited by ANTHONY CARRAS  
Art Direction and Production Design by DANIEL HALLER  
Produced by ROGER CORMAN  
Executive Producers SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF and JAMES H. NICHOLSON



## THE WAITING PIT OF HELL

by Jonathan Rigby

It was January 1961 and Hollywood's studios were humming with activity. Among the pictures in production were *Summer and Smoke*, *West Side Story*, *Wild in the Country* and *Return to Peyton Place*, with *The Devil at 4 O'Clock*, *Hatari!* and *Mutiny on the Bounty* enjoying exotic location shooting in Hawaii, Tanganyika and Tahiti, respectively.

To add to this impressive roster, three new films went into production in the second week of January. For Universal, the durable romantic team of Doris Day and Rock Hudson started work on *Lover Come Back*, while the winsome Sandra Dee was reunited with John Gavin in *Tammy Tell Me True*. Over at American International, a very different kind of romantic team was getting ready to inhabit a world a million miles removed from the high-gloss milieu of its Hollywood brethren – the crepuscular world of Edgar Allan Poe.

For Vincent Price and Barbara Steele, the setting was 16th century Spain, their main trysting place a “blasphemous chamber” in which “the blood of a thousand men and women was spilled,” and the romance was of a decidedly Gothic, even necrophile, variety.

The film was Roger Corman's *Pit and the Pendulum*.

It was 12 months almost to the day since the film's precursor, *House of Usher*, had begun shooting. *Usher* had made a mint on a modest outlay of \$270,000 and convinced AIP that they could turn a profit on films far more ambitious than the black-and-white teen-appeal programmers they were used to. In Price they had a bona-fide horror star of the old school, and in Corman a fast-working stylist who was to become patron saint to a new breed of American filmmakers. And in Poe they had a uniquely skin-crawling supply of source material.

Taken together, this triumvirate provided Hollywood with its first worthwhile riposte to the astounding efflorescence of Gothic horror that had recently been coming out of British studios. As Alexander Walker put it in his *Evening Standard* review of Corman's first Poe picture, “The doomed House of Usher literally falls to pieces in this American version of Poe's story, which should shake even the foundations of the House of Hammer.”

*Pit and the Pendulum* was duly offered up to trade reviewers a week or two in advance of its New York opening on 23 August 1961. Commented James D Ives in *Motion Picture Herald*, “The mood throughout combines reality with the dreamlike ornateness and dark imagery of the original, resulting in a resoundingly good screen story and a remarkably accurate transliteration of Poe's mood and purpose. On every count it stands to equal or exceed the previous effort by the same team in box-office value.”

Ives's estimate of the film's commercial potential proved well-founded; having cost only about \$30,000 more than its predecessor, it out-performed *Usher* on release, accruing over \$2 million in rentals. But Ives's judgement on the film's Poe-like ambience was just as astute. Screenwriter Richard Matheson had been faced, in his own words, with “a little short story about a guy lying on a table with that razor-sharp blade swinging over him,” and from it he'd conjured up a story of his own that nevertheless distills the essence of Poe.

This was more than just a matter of the echoes of *Ligeia*, *The Cask of Amontillado* and other Poe stories that resonate through the screenplay. For Matheson's great achievement lay in his construction of an archetypal family saga of madness, death and decay (closely modelled, it's true, on his earlier *Usher* screenplay), enclosing the viewer in the same “infernal air” and “miasma of barbarity” that infects the whey-faced neurotics on screen.

If there was still a suspicion that Matheson's scenario was over-stretched, Corman – plus his regular collaborators Floyd Crosby (cinematography) and Daniel Haller (production design) – stepped in to cloak the film in enough widescreen pyrotechnics to disguise this shortcoming. This, together with the leprous atmosphere characteristic of Poe, made the film a hit with critics as well as audiences. The plaudits ranged from “a physically stylish, imaginatively photographed horror film” (*Variety*) to “a thoroughly creepy sequence of horrors” (*New Yorker*) and – perhaps most tellingly – “a class suspense-horror film of the calibre of the excellent ones done by Hammer” (*Hollywood Reporter*).

Certainly Corman succeeded in crafting one of the most arresting openings in any Gothic horror film, balancing it at the end with a wildly extravagant finale and bolstering the body of the picture with eerily tinted flashbacks and a creepily effective tomb-rising for Steele.

Introducing the action, rivulets of luridly coloured paints bleed into each other to the accompaniment of composer Les Baxter's sombre atonalities, suggesting nothing so much as the interbreeding blood vessels of the mind. Then Corman treats us to one of the very few location shots ever featured in his early Poe pictures; only with the last



film in the series, when he ventured into the English countryside for *The Tomb of Ligeia*, would he completely abandon his theory that the unreality of a sound stage mirrored the inner workings of Poe's tortured mind. Here, he only sanctioned the use of the Palos Verdes Peninsula on the assumption that "the ocean background was representative of the unconscious".

The effect is spellbinding; with Francis Barnard's journey to the Medina castillo suggesting a dreary daytime version of what Poe called "night's Plutonian shore". In addition, Barnard and his coach driver indulge in a dumb-show version of the hackneyed "I don't go to *that* house" routine (the lack of dialogue taking the sting out of a potentially comical exchange), after which we see a stunning matte shot of the castle, rearing high on a promontory above Poe's "lines of horridly black and beetling cliff".

Right from this coldly mesmerising prologue, *Pit and the Pendulum* would exercise a decisive influence over a second wave of Italian-made Gothic horror pictures. The first wave had taken the huge success of Hammer's *The Curse of Frankenstein* and *Dracula* as its cue. Now, in the words of screenwriter Ernesto Gastaldi, "*Pit and the Pendulum* had a big influence on Italian horror films. Everybody borrowed from it." To take just three examples, two of them scripted by Gastaldi – the conspicuously diseased family dynamic of Riccardo Freda's *L'orribile segreto del Dr. Hichcock* (1962), Christopher Lee thundering on horseback through sunset-dappled surf at the beginning of Mario Bava's *The Whip and the Body* (*La frusta e il corpo*, 1963) and the protracted, candlelit corridor wanderings featured in Antonio Margheriti's *Danza macabra* (1964).

Inside the castle, Matheson lays out the bare bones of his manufactured plot with uncluttered ease, pitting the priggish Barnard against his shifty Spanish brother-in-law, Nicholas Medina. "You are an unyielding man, Mr Barnard," sighs Nicholas, accurately describing John Kerr's flint-faced performance. For his part, Barnard tells Nicholas's sister Catherine that he "would like to believe him, Doña Medina, but I find it very difficult to do so." In this he, too, echoes the audience, for Price was not the man to put across romantic love with anything approaching conviction. Nicholas's protestations smack of pose and posture; lines like "God is my witness, I worshipped your sister – I worship her still" do not ring true. But this only adds to the intrigue regarding the deceased Elizabeth Medina. Could the fey and frequently fainting Nicholas actually be the guilty party? Certainly Barnard seems to think so.

"Such a film," noted the British trade journal *Daily Cinema*, "calls for a certain kind of acting: i.e., Vincent Price acting." But other critics drew sometimes jeering attention to the epicene nature of Price's performance in the film's early stages. In the *Los Angeles Times*, Charles Stinson acidly applauded "just how well Vincent Price manages a

swoon. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr Price faints away more gracefully than a reviewer can describe". And the anonymous critic of Britain's *Monthly Film Bulletin* noted the actor's "scenery-caressing style, a blend of oily solicitude and cissy sadism".

These judgements may not be cissy but they're certainly catty. Worse, they fail to take into account the film's basic plot motor. For Nicholas has clearly been emasculated by a classic case of childhood trauma, a 'primal scene' given to us in an optically fogged, blue-tinted flashback.

This extremely powerful sequence, and the lilac-hued flashback immediately preceding it, seems to play out in a kind of silent-movie suspended animation; in showing us the depredations of Nicholas's insane inquisitor father, one is reminded of Conrad Veidt stalking through the subterranean torture chambers of Paul Leni's *Waxworks* (*Das Wachsfigurenkabinett*, 1924). Nicholas's boyhood glimpse of his mother's fate at the hands of the demented Sebastian has clearly left him unable to satisfy his young wife Elizabeth, as the lilac flashback has already indicated. By Nicholas's own account, their marriage involved little more than breakfast in bed, portrait painting, convivial dinners and occasional spinet recitals.

Hence the special vindictiveness with which the 'risen' Elizabeth faces her detumescent husband at the climax. Hence, too, the scything pendulum, centrepiece of a death chamber which Nicholas describes as "my birthright and my curse"; it's a torture device with obvious significance for anyone suffering from castration anxiety.

Whatever one feels about Price's wilting interpretation of the bereaved Nicholas, there can be little doubt that, in charting Nicholas's subsequent descent into exquisitely baroque madness, Price was in his element. First there's an expertly contrived sequence in which, to establish whether or not Elizabeth was dead when she was interred, her tomb is broken into and the sarcophagus opened. The bludgeoning force of the pickaxes, the harsh grating sound as the stone lid is pushed aside, the horrid desiccation of the corpse within (a real shocker in its day) – these are followed by Nicholas with a despairing, reiterated cry of "True!" It's a moment that deserves to stand alongside Lear's five-times repeated wail of "Never!"

Later, when Nicholas is lured down to the crypt again in response to Elizabeth's post-mortem siren song, he walks face-first into a glutinous cobweb, an icky moment recalling Carrie Daumery's predicament in another Paul Leni silent, *The Last Warning* (1929). (This detail was included on Price's own recommendation: "There's one thing that men are really afraid of, something they absolutely hate, and that's cobwebs...") Then Matheson delivers his plot twist – which audiences familiar with Clouzot's *Les Diaboliques* (1954)

may be forgiven for finding less than revolutionary – and the duplicitous Elizabeth realises that her plan to drive Nicholas insane has worked all too well.

Just turned 23, Barbara Steele was the British-born star of the Mario Bava classic *La maschera del demonio* (1960), which AIP had recently picked up for US distribution as *Black Sunday*, and she came to *Pit and the Pendulum* directly after losing out on a role in *Return to Peyton Place*. Her loss wasn't just Luciana Paluzzi's gain; it also benefited Gothic cinema, because after finishing *Pit* she returned to Italy and continued the long run of Gothic heroines and anti-heroines that were to make her a darling of continental cineastes and discerning horror fans alike. Though Corman decided to re-dub her dialogue in post-production, she remains perfectly cast as Elizabeth; her rising from the tomb is a tour de force, as is her adamant hatred when she corners Nicholas and her dawning horror when she sees just how ill-advised her scheming has been.

And here Price reaches his apotheosis. His mind collapsing under the strain, the limp Nicholas transforms into the twisted yet monstrously virile form of his sadistic father. "Harlot!" he seethes. "You will die in agony! Die!" Anyone in 1961 yawning over the *Diaboliques* twist will have been entirely wrong-footed by this unexpected, and hair-raisingly effective, development.

It's Matheson's apotheosis too, for by means of this ingenious contrivance he was finally able to include Poe's slender original. (Corman: "You could think of it as our creating a two-act prologue that leads up to the third act – which would be the actual Poe story.") Rising to Matheson's challenge, and intimidatingly garbed in an inquisitor's cassock and hood, Price acts up a storm. The last time he had someone at his mercy on a slab was at the climax of *House of Wax* in 1953, and his lunatic fugue in *Pit* borrows a few twitching mannerisms from that performance. But otherwise Price's resurrected Sebastian is its own beast entirely. When interviewer David Del Valle pointed out in 1987 that the performance "was three times *beyond*," Price's response was merely to say, "It's pretty *hokey*." He was being too modest; his vengeful, bile-spouting inquisitor is a barnstorming wonder to behold.

Also wondrous to behold is the cavernous chamber, much enhanced by gorgeous matte paintings above and below, in which the long-awaited climax takes place. Price himself called it "one of the most exciting sets I've ever seen." The star attraction, of course, is the titular pendulum, which, according to Corman, "was actually operated from above, a very large mechanical system that didn't work as quickly as I liked. So I skip-framed it with an optical printer later, taking every other frame out optically to make the blade appear to move twice as fast . . . We did that sequence in a day. The end was fun. I used a crane and just started to make up shots as we got to the last hour or so, knowing I'd

cut it all together in editing . . . These cutaway montage shots would give the sequence colour, vitality and tension. They worked."

Indeed they did. The climax of *Pit and the Pendulum* still rates as one of the most bravura set-pieces in horror cinema, and certainly had a massive impact on those who saw it at the time.

British audiences, however, had to wait a few months before seeing it; the film opened in London on 1 December 1961 and only went on general release (coupled with Luis Buñuel's *Island of Shame*, aka *The Young One*) on 15 January the following year. Critical estimates ranged from "Badly acted, but worth seeing for its lurid finale and the sight of Vincent Price running amok in an inquisitor's cowl" (*Sight & Sound*) to "Floyd Crosby's camera lingers lovingly on mauve cobwebs, secret passages, flickering candles and crashing waves, but cannot prevent a strong impression of *déjà vu*" (*Monthly Film Bulletin*).

In *Films and Filming*, John Cutts enthused over the film's "moments of sheer tour-de-force of which both performer [Price] and his director can be justifiably proud". "Patently, much of this is nonsense," added John Coleman in the *New Statesman*, "and some of it is just too elegant for horror, but it is the *cinema's* nonsense and elegance: the sort of rhetoric that is inconceivable in any other medium." David Robinson, meanwhile, wrote a *Financial Times* review that was typical of the back-handed compliments reserved by the quality press for even 'good' horror pictures. Noting that "the quality of the film is its full-blooded feeling for Gothick horror," he concluded that "It is a lusty grand guignol sideshow, a Tod Slaughter spectacle for those who are willing temporarily to set aside their finer judgments." In this Robinson was echoing Nina Hibbin's estimate of *House of Usher* the previous December: "it has more in common with Tod Slaughter than Edgar Allan Poe."

I quote these British reviews at some length because they're likely to have been scanned with a certain amount of alarm by the men at Hammer Film Productions. Here was Corman moving in on their Gothic preserves with wraparound Scope photography, a modicum of psychological acuity and a proto-psychedelic visual sense. Corman's Poe cycle would coincide with some wobbly, censor-bedevelled years for Hammer, whose supremacy would only be reasserted with the January 1966 release of *Dracula Prince of Darkness* and *The Plague of the Zombies*. By that time, of course, Corman's final Poe, *The Tomb of Ligeia*, had come and gone.

In the meantime, Corman had made his mark with a series of films that retain their lustre as horror classics. For, amid all the highly coloured melodramatics, the occasional spot of tombstone philosophy would be smuggled in, as in Sebastian's gloating account of

the human condition when he looms over his helpless victim and admires his favourite torture device:

*The razor edge of Destiny. Thus the condition of man: bound on an island from which he can never hope to escape: surrounded by the waiting pit of Hell: subject to the inexorable pendulum of Fate, which must destroy him finally...*

A cheerful thought – and a fittingly poetic epitaph for the enduring Gothic masterwork that is *Pit and the Pendulum*.

*Jonathan Rigby is the author of several books, including English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema (2000), Christopher Lee: The Authorised Screen History (2001), American Gothic: Sixty Years of Horror Cinema (2007) and Studies in Terror: Landmarks of Horror Cinema (2011).*

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## CAST

### MORELLA

VINCENT PRICE as Locke  
MAGGIE PIERCE as Lenora  
LEONA GAGE as Morella  
ED COBB as Driver

### THE BLACK CAT

VINCENT PRICE as Fortunato Luchresi  
PETER LORRE as Montresor  
JOYCE JAMESON as Annabel  
LENNIE WEINRIB as Policeman  
WALLY CAMPO as Barman Wilkins  
ALAN DEWIT as Chairman of Wine Society  
JOHN HACKETT as Policeman

### THE FACTS IN THE CASE OF M. VALDEMAR

VINCENT PRICE as Ernest Valdemar  
BASIL RATHBONE as Carmichael  
DEBRA PAGET as Helene  
DAVID FRANKHAM as Dr. James  
SCOTT BROWN as Servant

## CREW

Directed by ROGER CORMAN  
Written by RICHARD MATHESON  
Based on the Stories of EDGAR ALLAN POE  
Director of Photography FLOYD CROSBY  
Original Music by LES BAXTER  
Edited by ANTHONY CARRAS  
Art Direction and Production Design by DANIEL HALLER  
Produced by ROGER CORMAN  
Executive Producers SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF and JAMES H. NICHOLSON

## THREE DOWN, FIVE TO GO

by Roger Clarke

With three Edgar Allan Poe films down and five to go, in 1961-62 Roger Corman was suffering a certain amount of low-level resentment towards his subject matter. Was everything now to be wall-to-wall charnel housing, his professional life in sepulchral suspension like Mr Valdemar?

"I was getting a bit tired of the Poe films by this time," Corman recollected to Ed Naha in *The Films of Roger Corman: Brilliance on a Budget*. "[American International Pictures] felt that I should continue. I was exhausted. With *Tales of Terror*, we tried to do something a little different. The screenplay was actually a series of very frightening, dramatic sequences inspired by several of the Poe stories. To break things up, we tried introducing humour into one of them..."

There are three tales in this portmanteau film and all feature Vincent Price in some of his most lip-smacking turns. By then in his early fifties, Price plays versions of himself that are superficially younger or older. *Morella* has him rather ill-cast as a cold, resentful father, reclusive in a cobwebby house, receiving a visit from his estranged daughter (a sugary turn by Maggie Pierce which horrified scriptwriter Richard Matheson, who dubbed her "Shirley Temple in the Haunted House"). Ghostly mayhem ensues. Then there's *The Black Cat*, which concerns a jealous husband who walls up his wife and her lover in the basement – finally betrayed by a detested moggy. The macabre trilogy concludes with *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*, where Price plays a man suspended in a mesmeric trance at the point of death.

In literary terms, *Morella* is an earlier story than the others, first published in the April 1835 issue of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. It is, in essence, a vampire story without the usual trappings, with Price fielding the whisper of a Byronic persona switching necrophilia for incest, all suggested and never explored. Corman's showman instincts were to exaggerate the Gothic and theatrical elements of the story, turning it into a wildly melodramatic opener, the colours of this story tweaked in post-production to exaggerate cadaverous black, white and green. The decaying family house on the brink of dissolution, the vengeful guardian, family secrets and parentage issues: these are all Newstead-Gothic tropes. In the original Poe story, the daughter lives with her father and slowly becomes her dead mother in a process of arcane transmutation; in the movie version things are more dramatic and sudden. Here, the daughter arrives,

deposited quickly by a coachman like a guest to Dracula's castle. The father is cold and hateful. Her birth brought about the death of his beloved Morella who, during the last weeks of her life, we learn, cursed the existence of her daughter before a postpartum demise. In one room sleeps Morella, naturally mummified in a state of imminence. There's a bat-squeak of necrophilia in the air.

The daughter's arrival is, unfortunately for her, an act of invocation. Elaborating on an old cinematic tradition, Corman introduces the spectre of Morella (played by Beauty Queen Leona Gage, during her brief film career) as an intrusion of appalled translucency – a double-exposure of spite and rage. She has returned – her boring daughter is no longer safe. Like Countess Bathory, she is determined to refresh herself with the life-force of a young woman. Rather implausibly (after a lifetime spent hating his daughter for taking his wife away from him) Price's suddenly guilt-ridden character is not all that keen on his daughter's murder and Morella's stealing of her young body, and the whole House of Usher goes up in flames.

Death as mortifying stasis is a recurring motif in Poe. Death as a trap, too. It's well-known that Poe was haunted by the death of his mother, an actress who died of consumption aged only 24, when he was just a little boy; it was especially strange for him since "he had seen his mother die beautifully onstage," according to Wolf Mankowitz's 1978 biography, *The Extraordinary Mr Poe*. Her death seemed artificial, more of a prolapse than extinction.

*The Black Cat* story actually includes another Poe story in its makeup – *The Cask of Amontillado*, which was first published in the November 1846 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*, three years after *The Black Cat* was printed in 1843 in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

The original *Black Cat* is very bleak and deranged and it was in the drunken revenger antics of *The Cask* that Corman found his comedic leaven. *The Black Cat*, like *The Cask of Amontillado*, has a first person unreliable narrator, and in the film Peter Lorre takes on the name Montresor Herringbone. It was Corman's favourite section and Price also enjoyed making it. "Before we did it they brought in this very famous wine taster to show us how it was done," recalled Price in *Vincent Price: A Daughter's Biography* by Victoria Price. "We enjoyed that enormously; we got very drunk in the afternoons. Roger really allowed us to comedy it up on that scene. I did it exactly the way the wine taster showed us, but added a little bit more, and Peter was doing it the way they didn't do it, which made for a very funny scene." Price added, "Peter loved to make jokes and ad-lib during the filming. He didn't always know all the lines, but he had a basic idea what they were. He loved to invent; improvisation was part of his training in Germany."

*The Cask of Amontillado* is rumoured both to have been based on a story Poe heard when he was in the army and also an attempt to imagine his revenge on a rival author with which he was feuding, Thomas Dunn English. In truth, the immurement of a miscreant is another common Gothic trope; nuns and monks were walled up for wickedness. There are many examples of this – Walter Scott's *Marmion* (1808) is just one. There are dozens of folkloric phantom nuns in British tradition, the best known is the nun of Borley Rectory, and they all seem to come from Scott.

*The Black Cat* is considered one of Poe's most autobiographical stories, conceived as he watched his wife Virginia in her final illness, sick in bed with the family feline, Catarina, curled up beside her, perhaps beside her head. Poe fled from this scene into one of his characteristic drinking binges because, according to the psychoanalyst and royal eccentric Marie Bonaparte (who considered the writer an incipient 'sado-necrophile'): "Poe had good reason to fly from his dying wife and her haemorrhages, for she then realised his sexual ideal."

Lorre's inebriated bricklaying has some background. There's also a story that Poe briefly worked in a brickyard in the fall of 1837, when funds were running especially low. In the Poe story, the murderer is never caught and enjoys gloating; in the film, as in the story, the murderer is rumbled by the cat meowing horribly from behind the walls. The cruelty of *The Black Cat* is largely excised – in one of the story's scenes, for example, the narrator gouges out the cat's eye. Lennie Weinrib, the actor who plays one of the policemen who tear the wall down, went on to voice Scrappy-Doo for the *Scooby-Doo and Scrappy-Doo* cartoon series in 1979.

*The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* follows the opposite trajectory to *Morella*. A man wants to be released from suspension into death, rather than a woman who wants to be released into life. Here, Price is the man hypnotised by evil mesmerist Basil Rathbone; *Tales of Terror* reuniting the two actors onscreen for the first time since *Tower of London* (1939).

In the Poe original, the narrator is the mesmerist at the heart of the story. Corman makes him a villain called Carmichael and he's played by Rathbone with sleek malevolence. He has designs on Mr Valdemar's wife (Debra Paget) and has resolved to keep Valdemar in purgatorial suspension until she agrees to marry him. Eventually, when Carmichael does lay his hands on the wife, Valdemar is raised from his toxic slumber; but upon killing Carmichael, the spell is broken and Valdemar dissolves into revolting putrescence.

Price recalled the role and its infamously cheap final special effect in later years.

"The question was, 'What would a man look like in this state?' We settled for an old-fashioned mud pack – it dries and draws the skin up and then cracks open. It worked beautifully. But the hardest job was the part where the dead man actually comes back to life. They decided on a mixture of glue, glycerine, corn-starch, and makeup paint, which was boiled and poured all over my head. Hot, mind you. I could stand it for only one shot, then I'd have to run. It came out beautifully. It gave the impression of the old man's face melting away." (As recounted in James Robert Parish and Steven Whitney's 1974 biography, *Vincent Price Unmasked*.)

Corman has particular fun with Price's dead-alive voice, described in the story as "if from some deep cavern within the earth" and "gelatinous". This kind of shuddering moan from the grave was a staple of 18<sup>th</sup> century ghost stories – you come across it in 'real' ghost stories such as the Epworth Rectory and Hinton Ampner hauntings of 1717 and 1767-71, respectively. It's been all but forgotten about now as a haunting motif.

When it was published in 1845, *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* was cutting-edge stuff. In the late 1830s London doctors, such as Dr John Elliotson at the University College Hospital, were experimenting with mesmerism, an early form of hypnotism pioneered by the pug-faced German physician Franz Mesmer (1734-1815). In 1840 a Reverend Chauncey Townsend published *Facts in Mesmerism*, which was considered the first definitive guide. Some used it to teach themselves. This led to all sorts of problems; one amateur in the early 1840s put a 14-year-old Deptford boy into a trance which lasted three days, leading both *The Times* and *Examiner* to postulate that "some persons never awake from the mesmeric state". In the summer of 1841, the itinerant French mesmerist Charles Lafontaine conducted a massive stage mesmerism tour of England and Scotland and audiences were intrigued and appalled by the clearly quite real death-like states of the subjects.

In early 1842, during a tour of America, Charles Dickens told the *East Coast Press* that he was a believer, and indeed, while in Pittsburgh that year, before a group of 'steamboat companions', managed to cast his own wife Catherine into a trance. She became hysterical after six minutes and after two more fell sound asleep. By making transverse passes with his thumbs and blowing on her face he was able to recover her from the state.

It seems certain Poe knew of this Pittsburgh incident. By 1848, a few years after Poe's story, the creepy side of mesmerism crops up again in the US; spirit-produced raps in the presence of the notorious Fox sisters (two mediums from Rochester who, in essence, who created Victorian spiritualism) would ask for some of the attendees to be 'magnetised' (as mesmerism was sometimes called).



*Tales of Terror* had a kind of comedy second life a year later. *The Comedy of Terrors* (1963), directed by Jacques Tourneur, remarkably, reunited the cast for an extended skit on *The Black Cat*, with a ginger cat replacing the black one and Price and Lorre exchanging roles as the husband/lover of Joyce Jameson. Rathbone also returned. For fans of Vincent Price it remains one of his most cherishable films.

*In his teenaged years, Roger Clarke wrote short stories for the Pan and Fontana horror stories anthologies. A published poet and performed librettist, for ten years Roger wrote three film columns and countless features for The Independent newspaper. Most recently his book, A Natural History of Ghosts, has been published in the USA and UK to great acclaim.*





# THE RAVEN

## CAST

VINCENT PRICE as Dr. Erasmus Craven

PETER LORRE as Dr. Adolphus Bedlo

BORIS KARLOFF as Dr. Scarabus

HAZEL COURT as Lenore Craven

OLIVE STURGESS as Estelle Craven

JACK NICHOLSON As Rexford Bedlo

CONNIE WALLACE as Maid

WILLIAM BASKIN as Grimes

AARON SAXON as Gort

## CREW

Directed by ROGER CORMAN

Written by RICHARD MATHESON

Based on the Poem by EDGAR ALLAN POE

Director of Photography FLOYD CROSBY

Original Music by LES BAXTER

Edited by RONALD SINCLAIR

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## COMEDY AND KARLOFF

by Vic Pratt

Four films into the Poe cycle, and poised to begin work on the next, Roger Corman feared that recent additions to the series – though still doing well at the box office – were beginning to look slightly similar. He was ready to do something just a little bit different, and the refreshing result was *The Raven*. It successfully rejuvenated the series once more with two key ingredients: comedy and Boris Karloff.

Karloff's career needed a shot in the arm just as much as the series. Boris was still busy, increasingly on television these days, but some of his recent small-screen parts lacked distinction. It was certainly time for another meaty film role. Corman's film provided Karloff with exactly the kind of restorative showcase for his talents that he needed.

Karloff had done a screen version of *The Raven* before, of course, back in the golden age of Hollywood horror – starring alongside his old rival for the title King of Horror, Bela Lugosi. Their gruesome 1935 Universal classic had seen Boris – playing a fugitive murderer on the run – horribly disfigured by Bela's crazed Poe-obsessed surgeon, the latter the proud possessor of a basement filled with custom-built torture devices. So perturbed was the British censor by the sadistic thrills contained within this grisly entertainment, that five minutes of footage were snipped out before the impressionable public were allowed to see it. But more irksome for Karloff than the scissoring might have been the niggling suspicion that, on this particular occasion at least, Lugosi had upstaged him.

The second time around, it all ended up very differently, and doubtless to Boris's quiet satisfaction. Despite a top drawer cast of splendid horror stars, all excellent, the 1963 version is unquestionably Karloff's film. And despite the claims made on a scream-filled giveaway record promoting the feature, on which an excitable chap – perhaps from the American International Pictures press department – seemed to suggest *The Raven* was abundant with “the shrieking of mutilated victims”, there was nothing at all to frighten the censor in Corman's latest. In fact, there is nothing more horrible in this thoroughly jovial entertainment than the mental pictures conjured up by Jack Nicholson's reminiscences of the titular bird: “The raven we used shit endlessly over everybody and everything. It just shit endlessly. My whole right shoulder was constantly covered with raven shit.” That, indeed, sounds like the stuff of nightmares.

Here the Poe series took a new offbeat humorous direction, after Corman and writer Richard Matheson – enlisted to pen the script – shared an inspired brainwave. Matheson was of the opinion that it was pretty ludicrous to attempt a full-length feature based on Poe's slight poem – almost laughable, in fact. Meanwhile, at the back of Corman's mind was his recollection of the terrific comic chemistry shared by Vincent Price and Peter Lorre. Their exploits in an episode in a previous series entry, the portmanteau *Tales of Terror* (1962), had provoked at least as many laughs as thrills. Why not, Corman and Matheson decided, make *The Raven* an all-out horror comedy? Inspired, and using the poem as a springboard, Matheson went on an outrageous flight of fancy, pouring out the pages of his fanciful, farcical terror tale on a portable typewriter in a holiday motel.

Price and Lorre were enlisted once again; and, with the addition of Boris Karloff, Corman had assembled, in the grand words of that aforementioned promo record, “the great triumvirate of terror... greater than Dracula, Werewolf and Frankenstein together.” This may perhaps have been overstating it slightly, but one thing was for certain: all three of these gifted actors had a genuine flair for comedy. Karloff was an old hand at humour. Playing the pantomime villain, he had appeared onscreen with Danny Kaye, for example, and on various occasions with those slick vaudevillians Bud Abbott and Lou Costello; not to mention his hugely successful, critically acclaimed stage run starring in the black comedy *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Peter Lorre – who'd featured in Capra's film of that same hit play, though Karloff hadn't – had long ago appeared with Boris in such movie mirth-fests as *You'll Find Out* (1940, which also featured Bela, incidentally) and *The Boogie Man Will Get You* (1942). Price, the slightly sprightlier young buck of the group by comparison with his co-stars, was perceived by now primarily as man-of-the-moment when it came to screen horror, but certainly couldn't be accused of taking his work too seriously. Indeed, he'd confessed to having trouble keeping a straight face when shooting highly serious films like *The Fly* (1958). Having enjoyed his skit in *Tales of Terror*, he eagerly embraced this extended opportunity to play the clown.

*The Raven*, though, was not exactly your standard-issue Hollywood horror comedy. Unusually, there was no wisecracking scaredy-cat comedian on hand to be frightened by Karloff, Price and Lorre – instead, they put the frighteners on each other. Subtlety is the keynote, and as the colourfully spooky title sequence ushers us into the opening scenes, casual viewers could be forgiven for not noticing at first that it's a comedy at all. But even if you don't catch on when you hear the just-so-slightly overwrought organ flourishes on the soundtrack, or twig that all is not as serious as it seems when Price's Craven bumps into his telescope in almost slapstick fashion, never fear. The clincher comes when Craven, having admitted the raven at his window, ornately wonders out loud whether he shall ever hold again that radiant maiden whom the angels call Lenore. “How the hell should I know?” the bird pipes up unexpectedly by way of answer. “What



am I – a fortune teller?” It’s a great comic moment – a marvellous magic trick that signals the modern, offbeat direction *The Raven* is to take.

The time was right. With his hep horror comedy, Corman rode the zeitgeist again, skilfully capitalising on the fact that Karloff, Price and Lorre were now being discovered by a new generation of film fans. They, and the other horror stars, were regularly celebrated in Forrest Ackerman’s flourishing fan mag *Famous Monsters of Filmland*; significant to the success of the magazine was the fact that their bounteous back catalogues were finally being dug out of the vaults, and returned to circulation, thanks to the wonders of television syndication. *The Raven* must surely have had a special appeal not only for the drive-in crowd, but also for all those new aficionados who stayed up to catch creepy old Universal classics – presented by their favourite ‘Horror Host’ – on late night television. Spoofing horror was all the rage, too. Just the previous year, Bobby ‘Boris’ Pickett had recorded *The Monster Mash*, a hit novelty beat number which showcased his Karloff impression; ’63 saw *Mad Magazine*’s 1950s comic strip version of *The Raven* poem, by Will Elder, reprinted in paperback; and in 1964, Charles Addams’ enduringly popular *New Yorker* cartoon series *The Addams Family* would transfer to television. In 1965, Karloff would even end up singing *The Monster Mash* himself on television pop show *Shindig!* Groovy old Boris. Horror – with a self-referential, post-modern twist – was happening.

Slickly styled, *The Raven* was filled with deadpan quips and imbued with a cheerful awareness of the limitations of the film’s modest budget. It could almost have been Corman’s version of a *Mad Magazine* parody of a Corman horror picture. This was a comedy for literate, intelligent audiences already aware of the conventions of horror cinema, not just for the kiddies. But thanks to the understanding touch of Corman and Matheson, this was more than merely a quick cash-in on those monster men of yesteryear. This was also a warm and affectionate celebration of the life and work of some still much underrated genre actors. And what’s more, best of all, it looks like everybody involved had a ball making it.

Price seems to be enjoying himself immensely in the opening scenes, concocting the cure to Bedlo’s feathery condition, and the viewer can’t help but share his joy. Off-camera, of course, Vincent was something of a gourmet, and, later on, he enlightened bored British housewives as to the mysterious intricacies of ‘Continental’ cooking, with his remarkable 1971 television series *Cooking Price-Wise*. How, then, could you not be enraptured at the sight of him rustling up a revolting recipe for bird-like Bedlo, especially when he delicately flicks his whisk at the simmering cauldron of jellied spiders as if he were preparing a soufflé? His disgust at the “entrails of troubled horse” discovered in the potion-pantry seems quite genuine.

The Price-Lorre double act really gets going when Lorre’s Bedlo, returned to human form at last, seeks outdoor attire. He tries on Craven’s splendidly impractical cloaks, direct from the horror B-Picture costume-cupboard, while velvet-voiced Price presides like a salesman at a gentlemen’s outfitters. “The sleeves are a little long,” Price’s Craven purrs politely, affecting concern, as diminutive Bedlo is engulfed by a garment. “Yes, but I can hold them,” mutters Lorre. “It’ll keep you warm,” Price suggests hopefully. Further funny business ensues as Lorre chooses a hat. There’s also much to enjoy in Lorre’s anguished relationship with his well-meaning, overly tactile son, Rexford (Nicholson). Hats, cloaks, family relationships: it’s all splendid stuff, and all wonderfully irrelevant to the story. But something more substantial *is* on the way.

It comes after a frantic coach ride across the cliffs, as we enter the ominously shadowy castle that is Scarabus’s lair. What Karloff crucially brings to the proceedings is gravity, weight, and darkness. His evil sorcerer is the perfect counterbalance to the levity of Lorre and Price. Corman has spoken of the “incredible clash” of acting styles practised by Karloff and Lorre, with the older star flummoxed by Lorre’s improvisational method. But Karloff’s solid, old-school performance style certainly paid dividends. As soon as he appears on screen, the film takes on greater substance, greater depth; and we are aware that we are in the presence of the true King of Horror. *The Raven* is of course an ensemble piece. But Karloff brings something extra to the table – that strange duality, that mixture of light and darkness, genius and madness, at which he excelled. His Scarabus is simultaneously wonderfully funny and genuinely menacing.

Karloff is not simply playing a comic turn – it’s a fully-fleshed out characterisation. The evil power of his sorcerer, initially hidden beneath a veneer of geniality and polite false modesty, is immediately apparent; concisely communicated to the viewer, simply by small gestures of his hands, or a momentary glittering of the eyes beneath those bushy brows. And as the narrative progresses, his air of geniality is gradually discarded, and he becomes increasingly sinister. A delightfully dark relationship with Lenore – his “precious viper” – is fascinatingly hinted at. He knows his fickle mistress is no good, but he wants to hang on to her anyway, simply so Craven can’t have her; and he looks forward with quiet delight to the thought of torturing Craven’s daughter with a red-hot poker. Scarabus, it is clear, is a thoroughly evil man. But he’s charming too, and you can’t help liking him.

If Karloff dominates the proceedings in the middle part of the film, Price reasserts himself somewhat in the climactic final sequence, which must be one of the strangest encounters between rival sorcerers ever committed to celluloid. As they play their tricks, with coloured lights and confetti, in high-backed chairs before a roaring fire, the young ’uns watching respectfully from the balcony, Price and Karloff seem less like wizards, and more like two beloved uncles performing their party pieces at a family get-together. The charm lies in

the fact that we, as viewers, are part of the family: as Price flies through the air (his chair hoisted on a camera crane) and waves, like Rexford we almost want to wave back. No matter that some of the spectacles seem a little less spectacular than they might; just being in the presence of these legends as they play out their pantomime is more than enough. We share their sense of fun, and revel in this celebration of the screen presence of Karloff and Price. We are being entertained by two generations of screen-horror royalty, both of whom warmly and indelibly impress their personalities upon the proceedings without the need to say a word. What could be more magical than that?

*The Raven* was another box office success for Corman; and Karloff's connection with the director continued. His talent for humour would be further utilised in *The Comedy of Terrors* (1963); while for *The Terror* (1963), in a series of speedily shot scenes grabbed in a couple of days to make the most of *The Raven*'s lush sets before they were packed away, Karloff sensibly played it straight, the calm at the eye of the hurricane. There are those that might describe *The Terror* as a bit of a dog's dinner, but it is testament to Karloff's skill to lift whatever he appeared in, that he *still* got good notices for it, with the reviewer at the *Kine Weekly* pausing from the obligatory grumbling to note that "Boris Karloff as the Baron is of course always worth seeing." Even if, by the time the film was finally cobbled together, nobody knew any longer what the hell was going on.

The important thing was that Karloff's work with Corman allowed him to reassert himself both as noble old-school troupier of an earlier age of horror, and, at the same time, a charismatic contemporary presence in hip American movies for the college crowd. *The Raven* especially had given Karloff the chance to remind everybody of his skill and versatility as an actor; and there were further excellent performances still to come: in Michael Reeves' *The Sorcerers* (1967), shot back in England, and Corman protégé Peter Bogdanovich's *Targets* (1967).

When *The Raven* inevitably ends with the castle burning down in a huge fire (and, no, you're not imagining it – you did see some of those shots of flaming timbers in previous Corman movies), Karloff delivers one of the funniest lines in the picture, and one that also wonderfully reflects his awareness of his own mortality. Sitting shamefaced in the rubble with vain Lenore, his defeated Scarabus intones sadly: "I'm afraid I just don't have it anymore." Physically, perhaps, as Boris became increasingly frail, this was true; but in acting terms, quite the opposite was the case. Surrounded by a splendid cast, armed with a juicy script, and championed by a director who understood what made the horror veteran great, Karloff remained impressively able to deliver the goods. Despite Scarabus's lament, *The Raven* proved he still had it, all right.

*Vic Pratt is a writer, a film historian, and a curator of fiction film at the BFI National Archive.*





## CAST

VINCENT PRICE as Charles Dexter Ward / Joseph Curwen  
DEBRA PAGET as Ann Ward  
LON CHANEY JR. as Simon Orne  
FRANK MAXWELL as Dr. Marinus Willet / Priam Willet  
LEO GORDON as Edgar Weeden / Ezra Weeden  
ELISHA COOK JR. as Peter Smith / Micah Smith  
JOHN DIERKIES as Benjamin West / Jacob West  
MILTON PARSONS as Jabez Hutchinson  
CATHIE MERCHANT as Hester Tillinghast  
GUY WILKERSON as Gideon Leach / Mr. Leach  
STANFORD JOLLEY as Carmody, Coachman  
HARRY ELLERBE as Minister  
BARBOURA MORRIS as Mrs. Weeden  
DARLENE LUCHT as Miss Fitch  
BRUNO VE SOTA as Bruno, the Bartender

## CREW

Directed by ROGER CORMAN  
Written by CHARLES BEAUMONT  
Based on the Poem by EDGAR ALLAN POE and  
THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD by H.P. LOVECRAFT  
Director of Photography FLOYD CROSBY  
Original Music by RONALD STEIN  
Edited by RONALD SINCLAIR  
Art Direction by DANIEL HALLER  
Produced by ROGER CORMAN  
Associate Producer RONALD SINCLAIR



## STRANGE ECHOES AND FEVERED REPETITIONS

by Roger Luckhurst

*The Haunted Palace* (1963) is the sixth of Roger Corman's cycle of Poe adaptations, but the one most often passed over in silence. It shares many of the same core creative team Corman had established: a Charles Beaumont script; Dan Haller's inventive rearrangement of familiar Gothic set pieces; Floyd Crosby's signature deep focus as DP; and another schizoid performance from Vincent Price. It even has a cameo from that famous monster of filmland, Lon Chaney Jr. But Corman skips over the film in his 1990 autobiography, *How I Made a Hundred Movies in Hollywood and Never Lost a Dime*, and other surveys tend to follow suit. "Nothing about it calls for comment," the *New York Times* said curtly on its release.

This is undoubtedly because *The Haunted Palace* is a cuckoo in the nest. It was sold on the poster as *Edgar Allan Poe's The Haunted Palace* at the insistence of Corman's pay-masters at American International Pictures, but the film is merely topped and tailed by the beginning and end of the author's 1839 poem. The rest of the script is developed from H. P. Lovecraft's novella, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, written in 1927, but only published after Lovecraft's death in 1941. AIP's classic exploitation tactic, evoking Poe to keep the identity of the series, seemed on this occasion to annoy Corman. He was only persuaded to continue the series, already mocked by the knockabout comedy of *The Raven* (1963), with the prospect of a luxurious five-week shooting schedule in England for *The Masque of the Red Death* (1964). This was an extension of the fifteen-day shoots of the first six Poe films, and would be repeated again for the last in the series, *The Tomb of Ligeia* (1965).

If Corman rarely discusses *The Haunted Palace*, it may be because its impure fusion offended his deep personal investment in the psychosexual dynamics he wanted to explore in Poe. At the time, Corman was reading Sigmund Freud and other psychoanalysts, undergoing psychotherapy, and developing his own theory of horror as traumatic repetition of childhood fears, all to feed into the Poe cycle. He was a pulp modernist, looking to find the right balance of camp and catharsis. *The Haunted Palace* might have shared the same look and the same crew, but was far from pure Poe.

Yet *The Haunted Palace* has its own fascinations, not just as the very first cinematic attempt at a Lovecraft tale, but also precisely because of its weird mix of sources. The Gothic is a hybrid, bastard form: the film's heady brew of source materials, strange

echoes and fevered repetitions makes it an unusually perfect example of a genre that was always a mongrel of uncertain parentage.

Poe's short poem, *The Haunted Palace*, is inserted inside the narrative of *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Corman's first inspiration for the series. It is a deranged ditty sung by Roderick Usher about a once "radiant palace" that conveyed "the wit and wisdom of their king", but which has now been overthrown by "evil things, in robes of sorrow". The last stanza reads:

*And travellers now within that valley,  
Through the red-litten windows, see  
Vast forms that move fantastically  
To a discordant melody;  
While, like a rapid ghastly river,  
Through the pale door,  
A hideous throng rush out forever,  
And laugh – but smile no more.*

The lyric confirms to the stricken narrator of the tale that Roderick has lost his mind, possessed by the idea that the house itself has taken on horrific sentience as a living extension of the Usher line itself. It is the idea on which Corman sold his first Poe adaptation to a sceptical Samuel Z. Arkoff and James H. Nicholson at AIP. "Where's the monster?" they asked. "The house itself is the monster," he replied. The elaborate soundstages in the Poe series would always be the co-star, in this case the vast dungeon of *Pit and the Pendulum* (1961) repurposed for the female tribute to the demons below in *The Haunted Palace*. These last lines of the poem also hint, in their "red-litten windows" to the sumptuous saturated colours of *The Masque of the Red Death*, and that dying fall of the last words, "no more" recalls the ominous repeated chant of *The Raven*, "nevermore". These little echoes intensify the sense that Poe and Corman's series obsessively visit the same psychic springs to work away at something hidden there.

But the poem is only 48 lines long and merely illustrative of a mental mood; not enough for a film. It was rather inspired to marry it up with *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, Lovecraft's story of a man who becomes psychically possessed, and eventually entirely taken over, by an evil ancestor, one of the masterminds of the outbreak of Satanism in the Salem panics of the 1690s, when many members of the community were denounced and burnt as witches. Lovecraft's story was laboriously told, the longest he

ever wrote. "I don't think much of it," he complained in a letter in January 1927, and put it aside unpublished. It builds its sense of dread rather clumsily, revealing in the end that poor old antiquarian Charles Dexter Ward has become literally occupied by the undead object of his researches, the warlock Joseph Curwen, a man given to calling up ancient deities in his basement and spawning a monstrous race of inhuman hybrids down there. There are some rather impressive passages of Dr Willett's terrified search of the vast subterranean slaughterhouse that Curwen constructs under his house. The deformed, eyeless creatures that populate the village of Arkham in the film might be calmer renditions of this horror but they make their own memorable impression. These monstrous offspring recall another key Lovecraft story about a village of nightmare cross-breeds, *The Shadow over Innsmouth* (1931).

*Charles Dexter Ward* is important to Lovecraftians because it contains the first mention of Yog-Soggoth, one of the panoply of the Old Ones, the terrifying pre-Christian beings worshipped as gods by mountebanks, savages and debased half-breeds. A mere glimpse of the return of the Old Ones regularly drives Lovecraft's protagonists insane, *The Call of Cthulhu* (1926) being the most memorable of these moments. *Charles Dexter Ward* also has the first use of Lovecraft's mythical grimoire, the *Necronomicon*, the book of spells to conjure these creatures up. Corman's film is the first in a long cinema history of depictions of the book, up to and beyond Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* (1981), where it opens up the portal to another dimension. "Why the hell would we want to do that?" Bruce Campbell asks, with some reason.

It is worth recalling that Lovecraft was barely known except to a small coterie of fans at the beginning of the 1960s. Lovecraft was a failed thirties pulp writer once dismissed by the critic Edmund Wilson with the damning judgement that "the only real horror of most of these fictions is the horror of bad taste and bad art". Corman was in the first wave of the revival; by the end of the decade, paperback collections of Lovecraft's tales sold in their millions, there was a psychedelic rock group called H. P. Lovecraft, Anton LaVey of the Church of Satan was incorporating the panoply of Lovecraft's gods into his demonic rituals, and film adaptations had taken off (including *The Dunwich Horror*, produced by Corman and directed by the Poe production designer Daniel Haller in 1970). Lovecraft's influence has only increased ever since – much of the *Alien* series or the tentacle obsession of contemporary horror is unthinkable without it. Lovecraft's merciless materialism continues to speak to the times. As in so many things, Corman got in there first.

Corman's scriptwriter for *The Haunted Palace*, Charles Beaumont, was an accomplished writer for *The Twilight Zone* (1959-64) and a friend of Richard Matheson (who had adapted four Poe films for Corman already). Beaumont was shortly to die at the very young age of 38, suffering a shockingly rapid decline from very early onset Alzheimer's disease. In a Poe-like horrific detail, his stricken friends swore he looked like a wizened old man by the time he died in 1967. Beaumont did not exactly share the sensibility of the conservative Poe and the ultra-conservative Lovecraft, both political pessimists who harped on the doom of personal and racial heredity. Beaumont came into Corman's orbit through his liberal novel about segregation in the South, *The Intruder* (1959). Filmed by Corman in 1962, and adapted for the screen by Beaumont, it was made, guerrilla-style, in the teeth of hostility in the South after every studio turned Corman down. He later declared it as the only movie he made that lost money, despite gaining every possible critical plaudit.

Beaumont struggles heroically with the task of fusing the Poe and Lovecraft material, but he also borrows liberally from elsewhere, particularly for the portrait of Joseph Curwen that so fatally mesmerises Charles Dexter Ward. There are dashes here of Poe's *The Oval Portrait* (1842) and the idea of an intangible corrupting influence on a rather bland and innocent young man owes much to Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). *The Haunted Palace* has lots of narrative holes and unresolved sub-plots – why reanimate the corpse of your dead lover when she has singularly little to add to the proceedings after all that effort? What exactly is Lon Chaney Jr doing in this film and why does he disappear from the climactic scenes? This exasperates some reviewers, but I find all this contributes to the dream-like artifice of the film, the sense that it has been woozily re-built, stone by stone, from two centuries of the rubble of Gothic tropes. Pump the dry ice across the sound-stage moors one more time: step inside this vicious, Eastmancolor circle.

*The Haunted Palace* replays Corman's central theme of the compulsion to repeat, the obsessive return to and replay of the same traumatic origin, which is the mark of the death drive in horror. Just as Nicholas Medina is doomed to repeat his father's Inquisitorial cruelties in *Pit and the Pendulum* or Guy Carrell to follow his father's fate to be buried alive in *Premature Burial* (1962), so we know at once that Charles Dexter Ward will inevitably relive his ancestor's evil deeds and suffer the same fate at the hands of the village mob over a century later. That much the same ensemble cast restages this plot on recognisable but reshuffled sets, only contributes to the realisation of this uncanny theme. Corman's revival of the late careers of the masters of horror – Boris Karloff and Peter Lorre for *The Raven*, and Lon Chaney Jr here – evokes a line of flickering screens back into the silent era. Chaney, playing the walking corpse of Curwen's deathless accomplice Simon Orne, seems himself at this late stage still

trapped in doomed repetition of his own Universal career and his father's silent career before that. Vincent Price's performance, full of his typical "dilettante menace" (as David Thomson puts it), foppish one minute as Ward, steely the next as Curwen, uses the same small palette of gestures and tones for every Poe outing, bleeding the films together into a single sustained psychological study. Corman's economy of production was the perfect vehicle to explore the agonies of being trapped in this feeling of demonic repetition – it's how the director himself began to feel less than halfway through the cycle.

Perhaps in the women's roles it is possible to see the chance of openness and optimism fighting against the pessimism of male fate and heredity. Mrs Ward is entirely absent from Lovecraft's exclusively masculine terrors, but Debra Paget, in her last screen role before she retired from the business at thirty, makes the young wife a determined fighter against the compulsion to repeat. We can also read this historically: it is no coincidence that these forces fight it out in a film cycle that broadly coincides with Kennedy's presidency, an era embraced by many in America as the mark of a generational shift away from the dead hand of the fearful conformity of the Fifties, but which was cruelly cut short by the assassination in 1963. This was the year *The Haunted Palace* was released; Corman was in England, on the set of *The Masque of the Red Death*, when Kennedy's death was announced. The Gothic is always about the horrors of what we inherit, the terrible struggle with the dead weight of history that wants to stifle the future and bury us alive. Every film in the Poe cycle stages this struggle. But the Old Ones that shimmer so ineffectually beneath the grate in the dungeon of *The Haunted Palace* do not have long to live. Within a year, Corman had finished with the Poe films and was making *The Wild Angels* instead with Peter Fonda and Bruce Dern. The Sixties were about to get swinging.

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## CAST

VINCENT PRICE as Verden Fell  
ELIZABETH SHEPHERD as The Lady Rowena Trevanion / The Lady Ligeia  
JOHN WESTBROOK as Christopher Gough  
DEREK FRANCIS as Lord Trevanion  
OLIVER JOHNSTON as Kenrick  
RICHARD VERNON as Dr. Vivian  
FRANK THORNTON as Peperel

## CREW

Directed by ROGER CORMAN  
Written by ROBERT TOWNE  
Based on the Story by EDGAR ALLAN POE  
Director of Photography ARTHUR GRANT  
Original Music by KENNETH V. JONES  
Edited by ALFRED COX  
Art Direction by COLIN SOUTHCOTT and DANIEL HALLER (uncredited)  
Produced by PAT GREEN

## THE LAST OF THE CORMAN-POES: EXCAVATING 'THE TOMB OF LIGEIA'

by Julian Upton

In 1963, American-International Pictures' chief Samuel Z. Arkoff decided he could transport Roger Corman's Edgar Allan Poe films to the other side of the Atlantic "and not leave any of the terror behind".<sup>1</sup> AIP had been making movies in the UK for some years. Never ones to miss a fiscal opportunity, Arkoff and partner James H. Nicholson had eyed with great interest the establishment of the UK's Eady Levy, an exhibition tax that channelled a portion of the British box office returns from Hollywood movies to producers of British-made films. Like a lot of savvy US distributors, Arkoff and Nicholson realised they could get a piece of the Levy by setting up in Britain the same kind of movies they were making in America. Thus, AIP forged an alliance with Anglo-Amalgamated to make, among others, *Cat Girl* (1957), *Horrors of the Black Museum* (1959), *Circus of Horrors* (1960) and *Night of the Eagle* (1962). As well as qualifying for Levy money, Arkoff found to his liking that it was "easier to cut corners and pinch pennies in England".<sup>2</sup>

It wasn't difficult to convince Corman of this benefit. Also serving as the Poe films' producer, Corman was even tighter with a buck than Arkoff. So the director duly travelled to London in late 1963 to make *The Masque of the Red Death*. *Masque* proved a great success as a film and a shooting experience; Corman was impressed with the high-quality actors and crews he found in England. He decided not just to stay in the country for his next film, but this time to explore its countryside, where an abundance of history and atmosphere lay just waiting to be Poe-ified.

Corman had the luxury of 25-day shoots in Britain, as opposed to the 15-day schedules he'd been used to in the US. Even with the slower pace of the British crews (and their fanatical adherence to tea breaks), the extra time opened up a wealth of possibilities for a director who worked as quickly as Corman. It would allow him a whole week's location shooting, as well as an extra week in the studio. So, after a breakneck recce of almost the entire British Isles in a hired Mini, Corman settled on Castle Acre Priory in Swaffham, Norfolk, as the setting for his new Poe film: *The Tomb of Ligeia*.

<sup>1</sup> Sam Arkoff (with Richard Trubo), *Flying through Hollywood by the Seat of My Pants* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1992), p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

*Ligeia* is an early Poe story, published before the author's more famous works. An exquisite Gothic riff, it is narrated by an unnamed, opium-addled nobleman who retreats to the darkness of a ruined abbey in "one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England" after the death of his wife, the mysterious, raven-haired and preternaturally gifted Ligeia. A "moment of mental alienation" leads him to take a new bride, the blonde and blue-eyed Lady Rowena, a woman who could be Ligeia's antithesis. But, still morbidly obsessed with his lost love, the narrator pays little attention to Rowena. That is until she falls sick and, on her deathbed, appears to undergo a chilling metamorphosis before his very eyes.

Corman knew as he began shooting that *The Tomb of Ligeia* would be his last Poe film. It was his eighth, and he wanted to move onto newer, hipper projects. So he set out to bring a fresh style to the film, to mark it out from the others, to go out on a high. Where the previous Poe films were studio-bound, *The Tomb of Ligeia* takes to the open air, embracing the English countryside in widescreen tracking shots that follow the characters through the decorative ruins or tail them as they ride on horseback through rich, green fields. And where other, outdoor-shot horror movies might favour shadowy night shooting or portentous, gloomy weather, much of *The Tomb of Ligeia* is bathed in sunlight. Handsomely captured in Eastmancolor by cinematographer Arthur Grant, this amounts to a lush visual style. But it one that is essential in contrasting the brighter world of the feisty, vivacious Rowena (Elizabeth Shepherd) with the dark, tortured solipsism of Vincent Price's Verden Fell (as Poe's narrator is here named).

Rowena first encounters Verden after breaking away from her foxhunting party, which includes her father (Derek Francis) and suitor (John Westbrook). She finds herself instead more interested in exploring Verden's crumbling abbey, stopping to look upon the gravestone marked 'Ligeia', on top of which sits a snarling black cat. The cat leaps and knocks Rowena from her horse; she is then further startled when the imposing Verden steps into view.

Corman's outdoor shooting, while evoking a 'realistic' aesthetic, does not preclude a tightly controlled colour scheme in these scenes. The strawberry-blonde Rowena wears a riding habit of striking red velvet; Verden is clad in black and, bizarrely, sports futuristic, blinkered sunglasses to combat his "morbid reaction to light". She has an open appetite for life; he occupies a gloomy world of his own.

Verden shows kindness to Rowena, however, taking her into his home to bandage the ankle that she injures in the fall. She is intrigued by this enigmatic man; her face betrays a quizzical, flirtatious look. Where her young suitor, Christopher, is safe and dull, Verden is brooding and artistic. Before long, Rowena, who's both drawn to and unnerved by Verden, has fallen in love with him.

In its first few minutes, then, *The Tomb of Ligeia* presents major creative diversions from Poe's original story and a level of complexity not generally associated with Corman's previous films. A fair portion of the credit must go to the screenplay by Robert Towne. Towne would later make his name as the hotshot writer of *Chinatown* (1974) and become a leading light of the 1970s New Hollywood wave, but it's clear from *The Tomb of Ligeia* that he was already taking pains over his scripts even when he was working for peanuts.

Towne's characterisation of Rowena, for example, alters the dynamic of the story. Poe's Rowena is an empty shell, easily overtaken by the spirit of Ligeia. But here Rowena will fight back (while she is surprised by the black cat at the start of the film, she is not frightened by it). She comes to see it as her role to save the weaker Verden from the heavy burden of his involuntary obsession with his dead wife. She is independent and headstrong, the Corman Poe films' first feminist.

As Rowena, Elizabeth Shepherd is not unlike a Hitchcock blonde, exuding a sophisticated allure that would have had Alfred bouncing in his director's chair. And she portrays *both* Rowena and Ligeia, just as Kim Novak played *femme fatale* Madeleine and the dowdy 'Judy Barton' in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958). Critics have long acknowledged *The Tomb of Ligeia*'s link to *Vertigo* — the scene where the black cat/Ligeia lures Rowena into danger at the top of the abbey's bell tower, for example, boils over with *hommage*. But the idea of a morbid but romantic obsession driving a man to project the ghost of an idolised love onto his current surroundings is so strongly expressed in Poe's original story that it might be fairer to say that *Vertigo* owes a debt to *Ligeia*. Also, Rowena's hair is tinged with red, and this is significant in terms of the film's colour scheme. Her recklessness and wilfulness exasperate the men around her, but these qualities fortify her against the taunting of Ligeia's spirit.

Shepherd gives the best performance in the film. When she is hypnotised by Verden during a parlour game and suddenly begins to channel Ligeia, it is the film's most chilling scene. (Mesmerism is a clever, reality-altering replacement for the opium of the original story.) Vincent Price is also effective; he's less hammy than usual, more restrained, guarded and beguiling. But, at 53, he is rather old to be playing the tragic-romantic protagonist; Towne, certainly, was against his casting. But AIP would only put up the money if Price was on board. And Corman had faith in his star, even if he tries to make him look younger by furnishing him with a black, wavy wig. The makeup fails, really, to knock many years off him — throughout his 30-year horror career Price always seemed to nudging 60 — but we can accept that a beautiful, unconventional woman like Rowena could fall for him; his cultivated presence, as always, has an elevating effect.

Price, of course, was one of the 'safe', tried-and-tested ingredients that Corman was prepared to retain from the previous Poe films. Another is the obsession with fire. But one suspects a major reason for staging *The Tomb of Ligeia*'s climactic inferno was so that Corman could once again re-use the footage of a burning barn he shot for *House of Usher* five years earlier. As Corman-school graduate Joe Dante observes in his overview of the film on the website Trailers from Hell, "Those stone castles really can burn!"

Burning stone notwithstanding, *The Tomb of Ligeia* was released to great acclaim at the end of 1964. Corman was heartened to see it draw the best reviews not just of all his Poe films, but of his entire career. The *Los Angeles Times* (22 January, 1965) praised the film's "fluid camerawork, first-rate color, sumptuous period sets and impassioned performance from Vincent Price", while the UK's *Times* (3 December, 1964) got very excited, calling it "a film which could without absurdity be spoken of in the same breath as [Jean] Cocteau's *Orphée* [1950]". Even the esteemed David Thomson later wrote that, of all Corman's work, "*The Tomb of Ligeia*, at least, is worthy of a place in the history of screen horror".<sup>3</sup>

AIP's Sam Arkoff, on first seeing the finished movie, had concluded that it was just another "good picture, with enough sadomasochism, necrophilia, and black magic to appeal to the tastes of even the most aberrant moviegoers". He was "stunned" by the gushing notices.<sup>4</sup>

Such acclaim surely helped convince Arkoff and Nicholson to continue milking the Poe theme, even without Corman's involvement. So AIP foisted the title of a Poe poem (*The Conqueror Worm*, which also turns up in the *Ligeia* story) onto Michael Reeves' *Witchfinder General* (1968) for its US release, and had star Vincent Price read the poem over the opening credits. Next, the studio served up a more legitimate, if less inspired, adaptation of Poe's work, Gordon Hessler's *The Oblong Box* (1969). But Hessler's follow-up, *Cry of the Banshee* (1970), only references an unrelated Poe poem, *The Bells*, in its title sequence. This didn't stop AIP's poster from screaming in huge letters, 'EDGAR ALLAN POE probes new depths of TERROR!'

This was all just typical AIP ballyhoo; these later efforts don't detract from the achievements of the earlier movies. The Corman-Poe film cycle remains the finest interpretation of Poe's literary *oeuvre* on the big screen, and it arguably reached its apogee with *The Tomb of Ligeia*.

<sup>3</sup> David Thomson, *A Biographical Dictionary of Film* (London: André Deutsch, 1995), p. 149.

<sup>4</sup> Arkoff, p. 142.



## VINCENT PRICE: HIS MOVIES, HIS PLAYS, HIS LIFE (AN EXCERPT)

by Vincent Price

In 1960 I made my first film for Roger Corman, the producer-director. And thank goodness, *House of Usher* was the beginning of a whole series of films on which we collaborated, most of them being based on tales of terror that were written by Edgar Allan Poe.

Roger is a marvellous person, and I owe him a lot. His energy, talent, and drive amaze me. Besides, he let me pick the artist to do the portraits of the members of the Usher family that were used in the film.

The film was made in a mere fifteen days, but I have loved every minute of it. Where else would I have been given the opportunity to bury a beautiful young girl alive – and then die a sickening death by having a burning building collapse on me?

Roger and I went on to make *Pit and the Pendulum* (1961), *Tales of Terror* (1962), *Tower of London* (1962), a remake of the film in which I played Richard and Richard McCauly had my old role as Clarence, *The Raven* (1963), *The Haunted Palace* (1964), *The Masque of the Red Death* (1964), and *The Tomb of Ligeia* (1964).

One of the most unusual chiller movies I was ever in was called *The Comedy of Terrors*. What a cast we had – Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff, Basil Rathbone, and Joe E. Brown. I was a lazy man who married Boris Karloff's daughter in an attempt to get control of his undertaking business. Things don't go too well for me in the funeral game, so I force my bumbling assistant, Peter Lorre, to help me drum up trade by committing a few murders. But we all played it for laughs.

Peter, Boris and I had a great time in another film, *The Raven*, in 1963. This was a comedy too. Peter had been turned into a bird by Boris, and I was bound and determined to help him out. Actually, Karloff and I both were magicians, and our battle scene at the end where we kept using magic was the high point of the movie. What a duel that was.

Making that scene frightened even me. You see, I don't like snakes. Boris was supposed to throw a scarf at me which turns into a snake and wraps itself around my neck.

When we were planning the scene, I said to Roger, "That's nice. How are you going to do that?"

He said, "We have this man who is a snake trainer," and introduced me to him.

"Okay," I said. "I've met you, now I want to meet your snake."

He brought out this boa constrictor and told me not to worry. "It's a very tame snake," he informed me.

"I'm tame too," I pointed out, "but strange things can happen."

He wrapped the thing around my neck and said, "You know a boa constrictor doesn't bite."

"Get it off of me until the camera starts to shoot," I screamed.

The scene began, with that snake around my neck. Roger wanted the boa's head facing the camera, but the snake didn't want to turn that was, so we fussed for about an hour and a half with that darned thing around me.

The snake must then have thought that I was his dinner or something. He started squeezing me. It's true that boas don't but, but it took a little prying to get him to release me. I still don't like snakes.

We had a great time with that film. Everybody was adlibbing like mad. And a lot of lines that were not in the original script stayed in the picture. For example, when Peter Lorre walked into a filthy cellar set, he looked around at all the dirt, grime and cobwebs, and said, "Gee, hard place to clean, huh?" That broke us up.

One final note. The small part of Rexford Bedlo was played by a young aspiring actor you might want to watch out for. His name is Jack Nicholson.

*The Haunted Palace* (1964), in which I played the great-grandson of a man burned for witchcraft, was seen by practically nobody in the United States. But in Australia it was the highest grossing film ever to appear at the time. Figure that out.

My one hundredth film came out in 1971. It was called *The Abominable Dr. Phibes*, and I had the title role. I played the part of an ex-actor who has been disfigured in an accident. Actually, this was a mock-horror movie, and some say it was ridiculous when I had to speak out of an electric socket in my neck. But the public loved the film.

I don't mind making these funny horror films at all. I find almost anything funny, and myself funniest of all. I don't mean that I am a comedian, but I find that the minute I take

myself seriously, I've got to laugh because it's so ridiculous. It's what gets me through an awful lot of films, this sense of the ridiculous.

*Phibes* was something that I had to take very seriously when I was doing it so that it would come out funny. All the same, it was agony for me because my face was covered with plastic, and I giggled and laughed the whole time, day and night. The makeup man and I became very good friends, because the makeup kept dissolving and he had to patch me up every five minutes.

The film role that had the most impact on me was probably *Theatre of Blood*. I played the part of a hammy Shakespearean actor who vows revenge on the critics who have blasted him. And he murders them one by one. It had a great cast – Diana Rigg (from *The Avengers* TV Series), Robert Morley, Robert Coote, Jack Hawkins, and my wife, Coral Browne.

It was a marvellous role because I got to play eight Shakespearean parts in it. And I got to knock off eight critics. It was a story dear to the heart of any old actor.

People have always asked me about how I feel concerning all the makeup that I have to wear. While they are putting it on, you can't just read a book. The makeup men are poking about your eyes. It can be boring merely sitting there.

Makeup is something I don't really enjoy. Probably no actor does. It's often a very painful thing. Some things are stuck onto your face with spirit gum, which is a strong, sticky glop. It burns. And when you try to pull off your fake moustache, I think twice about the part.

On the other hand, I am so used to simple makeup that sometimes I forget that I have it on. Once I even left the studio wearing makeup. I had forgotten about it. I went to the supermarket all painted up, and nobody there even noticed. That tells you something about Los Angeles.

So here I am, with many more than one hundred films under my belt. And I am proud that I seem to have inherited some of the stature of the grand old men of horror films – Karloff, Lugosi, and Lorre. One of the highlights of my life was when I was voted the best actor at the International Festival of Science Fiction and Fantasy Films in 1974.

*From the chapter 'Ghoul Days' in Vincent Price, His Movies, His Plays, His Life.*

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## ROGER CORMAN: BETTER TO BE ON THE SET THAN IN THE OFFICE (1984)

by David De Valle

*From Films and Filming November 1984. Reprinted by permission of David Del Valle, Del Valle Archives*

**David Del Valle:** What was the concept of the Poe series? Did you initially just plan to make one film with *The Fall of the House of Usher*, or did you see it as a series at the time?

**Roger Corman:** My original thought was simply to make *The Fall of the House of Usher*. I had been a great admirer of Poe since I'd been in school, and I'd always wanted to make a particular film and, at that time, I was making a series of low-budget pictures, generally black and white, on ten-day schedules, for about \$100,000 or less for AIP (American International Pictures). Their policy at the time was to release two of these pictures together as a double-bill, two science fiction pictures, two horror pictures, whatever, sometimes two gangster films. They wanted me to do it again, and I felt we had been repeating ourselves too much, so I said, "Instead of doing two black and white horror films for \$100,000 each, let me do one fifteen-day colour film for \$200,000" – it eventually became \$250,000 – and they agreed to do that, and that's how *The Fall of the House of Usher* was made.

**DDV:** Did you decide on Vincent Price from the outset?

**RC:** No. My initial thought simply was to *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Once we had a script, I had several meetings with Jim [James H.] Nicholson. We discussed a number of actors and we felt that Vincent would be the best; he was our first choice, the first man to whom we sent a script, and he accepted.

**DDV:** Was Daniel Haller the art director on that?

**RC:** Yes.

**DDV:** He did an incredible job, because the film has the look of a more expensive film. What was it like when that film first opened, and you started getting what for AIP must have been unusual critical attention?

**RC:** It was exciting. It was truly a wonderful moment. It was one of those rare films where we had both the critical acclaim and the box office success, so we could kind of sit back and see it coming from all directions.

**DDV:** Sam [Samuel Z.] Arkoff tells me that he was a bit reluctant at first to do a film that didn't have a monster in it, but legend has it you told him that the house would suffice.

**RC:** Right. The house would be the monster.

**DDV:** Did he go for that?

**RC:** He did. He knew – but Sam was very bright; I mean, you don't really put anything over on Sam. He knew I was slightly conning him when I said that, but he also knew that it was kind of correct. Psychologically, or subtextually, the house is the monster, so it could be considered a correct statement.

**DDV:** How soon after *The Fall of the House of Usher* did you decide to make another Poe film?

**RC:** Very quickly. The film came out, it did well, I had a continuing relationship with AIP – I'd done a number of films with them – and Sam and Jim and I were having lunch and we simply decided over this lunch to do the next one and I suggested *Pit and the Pendulum*. I had two choices. It was really interesting, because they asked me what I thought for the second one and I said, "Either *Pit and the Pendulum* or *The Masque of the Red Death*," and I think it was Jim chose *Pit and the Pendulum* or a joint choice at any rate. Each picture afterward, they would say, "What do you think?" and each time I would them two choices, and one of them would be *The Masque of the Red Death* and we kept staying away from it and staying away from it until late in the cycle, when we finally did do it.

**DDV:** Did you have a hand in the script at the point that you did *Pit and the Pendulum*?

**RC:** Yes, always.

**DDV:** So a script would be submitted to you, and then you would –

**RC:** No, it would come earlier than that. I would meet Dick Matheson before doing the script, and we would discuss it. But when he did the script, I would leave him alone. In



other words, he and I would have a discussion as to what we were looking for, and then he would do the script, totally on his own. I would get a first draft, we would discuss it, then second draft and so forth.

**DDV: How did you meet Dick Matheson?**

**RC:** Through Jim Nicholson. Dick was originally assigned by Jim to do *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Jim had read several of his other works. I had seen several pictures he had written, and knew some of his works in the fantasy field as a short story writer and novelist.

**DDV: Did you make a conscious decision to introduce humour into the Poe films?**

**RC:** It was a gradually developing thing and I've forgotten whose idea – it would have been Dick's – it was to work on it. Vincent was able to bring a very civilised and genteel air of horror with just a touch of humour that we began to play on a little bit more in each picture. There was little suggestion of it creeping in and I think it started with *Tales of Terror*, where one of them, and I think this was Dick's idea, to do *The Black Cat* as a full-out comedy. And then, from that, we did *The Raven*, where the entire picture was a comedy-horror film. The idea was that it would be sold – all of these films were sold as horror films, but increasingly comedy crept into them, maybe because we enjoyed it and it added interest, and also it was a way to vary to series, because, towards the end, I was beginning to feel that we were repeating ourselves, and going to comedy on *The Masque of the Red Death*, then going to a full love story on *Tomb of Ligeia* were ways to vary the cycle so that you were not always doing the same thing.

**DDV: When *Pit and the Pendulum* was finished, did you then decide that it was going to be a series?**

**RC:** It was never decided to do a series, because each time we said, "All right, we will do one more," until it became, unwittingly, a series. Finally, I said that I didn't want to do any more. I had done – I've forgotten – six or seven of them, or something like that, and I said, "I've really done about all I can do; the shots are beginning to look very similar."

**DDV: You couldn't face burning that house down again?**

**RC:** Right! As a matter of fact, I did another horror film, *The Terror*, with Boris Karloff, in which we flooded the house. We flooded the house with a dam burst or something, and the water came through and drowned everybody, and I did it only because I was so tired of burning the house down. I said, "What is the opposite of destroying a house by fire?"

It must be destroying a house by water. We're going to flood the place!"

**DDV: Did it amuse you that you were developing this cult following at the time?**

**RC:** At the beginning, it did amuse me, but then you get used to it and you say, "Well, this is the way it should be."

**DDV: After *Pit and the Pendulum*, you did *Tales of Terror*, and that was the first one to use three different stories within a framework like an anthology. Now that was kind of a trendsetter too, because they started making them that way in England in colour, those horror packages, Amicus and so forth. *Tales of Terror* didn't do so well at the box office. At that point did you think about not doing another one?**

**RC:** Well, they were all successful, so when you say it didn't do so well in terms that the profit was less; in other words, the profit had dropped. I think, and this was a number of years ago and anything I say I might remember incorrectly – I've had interviews where I've forgotten the pictures. They'll say, "Do you remember so-and-so in this scene of this picture?" and I'm thinking, "Did I make that picture? I don't remember." But I'll remember as closely as I can. I think this is correct. *Tales of Terror* did well, but not as well as the others and we felt it was because we had gone to the trilogy format. We did a little research and we found, in general, the multi-part films had not been a successful genre. Audiences did not want to see multi-part films, and particularly in the age of television, when in those days, most television series were half-hour rather than an hour, they felt what they were seeing maybe, I don't know, were three half-hour television shows.

**DDV: Were you shooting these films in fifteen days?**

**RC:** Yes

**DDV: Including *Tales of Terror*?**

**RC:** Yes, they were fifteen, except in England. The two English pictures were twenty-five days, we went from three weeks to five weeks, but I wouldn't say in American terms, they were really twenty-five days, because the English crews did work a little slower.

**DDV: Yes, they're notorious, aren't they?**

**RC:** And I would say that twenty-five days were probably the equivalent to maybe

eighteen or nineteen or twenty of an American crew, so they were effectively a longer picture than the fifteen-day pictures in the United States, but not that much longer.

**DDV: What was your first meeting with Peter Lorre like?**

**RC:** It was great. I must say Peter Lorre is – was – one of the funniest people you will ever meet to talk with, and highly intelligent and well-educated, so you're talking with a man who'd come up with great ideas for a full-out farce, and at the same time justify it intellectually and thematically in terms of Poe. It was just great. It was immensely stimulating working with him.

**DDV: Which horror films influenced your work?**

**RC:** I don't know. My favourite directors at the time had some features that might have lent themselves to horror films, particularly Ingmar Bergman. There was a mood that he created that could have been, had he wanted, moved in one direction towards horror. He didn't; he moved in a different direction. But Bergman, Sergei Eisenstein and, of course, Alfred Hitchcock, who did a kind of suspense-horror film, so in that field, those probably were the ones I liked the best.

**DDV: I would think *Rebecca* would lend itself to the feel of the Poe films.**

**RC:** Yes, very much so.

**DDV: What was it like working with Vincent Price, Boris Karloff and Peter Lorre?**

**RC:** It was very interesting working with the three of them. First, they were all very good actors, and they were all simply good people to be around. That was one of the good things about the Poe pictures. There was a great spirit on the set that extended from the actors to the crew. Everybody was interested, because we were creating. The crew had opportunities to do things they would not normally do. The prop men would come up with ideas on the set, the special effects men would come up with ideas, and so there was a good spirit all around and the fact that these three men were really such devils, I mean such good actors and such dedicated, hard-working actors, lent itself to a kind of a group enterprise.

As to how the three of them worked – which I think was the original question – it was very interesting to me. Vincent Price was more the type of actor I had traditionally worked with, which was a man who came in, fully prepared, who understood some of the method acting, which was the way I had been trained, yet at the same time was

able to improvise, was able to work on sub-textual level, and was fully prepared to be flexible and make those inevitable changes that occur on set; sometimes because you have a better idea and you can do it better, sometimes simply because what's in the script, for one reason or another does not work, and you must do it differently. So Vincent was that way.

Peter Lorre came in, really generally without knowing the lines. He would have a vague idea of what the lines were, but he was so fast and so inventive that we would integrate them into the script. I'd say, "That's great, Peter. Now let me see, we'll do this and work it around." It became very stimulating to me to work from the script and work with Peter, and Vincent entered that too, because Vincent was working from the text and trying to integrate all of this and come up with ideas of his own. Boris Karloff, a very fine actor, was trained more in an English tradition and really came in prepared to do the script, line for line. It was a little bit more difficult for Boris to adjust to the way Peter worked.

**DDV: Well, he had been in retirement, hadn't he?**

**RC:** Semi-retirement. He had been ill and he worked, but did not work much.

**DDV: I always felt that *Premature Burial* never really got the attention it deserved. Why wasn't Vincent Price in that one?**

**RC:** Ah, it started off being done for a different company. I have forgotten exactly how these things happen and there were some contractual points of difference.

**DDV: Was it something to do with your contract?**

**RC:** It was my contract, yes; in conjunction with Pathé. Now they were always my company in conjunction or in partnership with AIP, and there was some, as will happen, discussion as to exactly how profits were to have been allocated on some previous films, at which point I moved slightly away from AIP and started *Premature Burial* with Ray Milland for Pathé. Vincent, I believe, at that time had an exclusive contract with AIP, so I made the contract with Ray and I remember, while this was going on, Sam Arkoff – as I said earlier it was very difficult to move around Sam – had been talking with Pathé, which was primarily a laboratory that wanted to get into a distribution company. And on the first day of shooting, Sam and Jim Nicholson showed up on the set. Well, I thought, "This is very nice, since we've had a little bit of an argument, they're here to wish me well," which I really had not anticipated in any way. And they came over and shook my hand and let me know that we were all partners again, that they had bought

out Pathé and instead of my being in partnership with Pathé, I was in partnership with AIP once again. It was all right with me, because we settled all our previous difficulties and kept on going again.

**DDV:** How did you come to cast Jack Nicholson in *The Raven*?

**RC:** He was a friend whom I'd known for a number of years and who had done a number of films for me. And I always thought that Jack was a good actor and did have great potential. Actually, about that time, I began to wonder a little bit that I was the only guy around who was hiring him, and I thought, you know, either everybody else is right or I am but it cannot be both.

**DDV:** He always lent himself to costume, I think.

**RC:** Well, he's somewhat of a contemporary actor. However, he was very good, knowing that he has contemporary quality. I always liked what he did in *The Raven* and he was very good with Peter. And Peter played it well, because Peter immediately decided that he was going to be ashamed of his son. He was going to be terribly ashamed of Jack, at which point Jack and I discussed this and that together and decided that Jack's motivation would be that, if Peter was going to try to disown his son and didn't want to have anything to do with him because he was such an obvious fumbler, that Jack's motivation would be to win the approval of his father and the scenes took on – and this is not in the script, there may have been one or two lines but not really this – a great added dimension as we played them, as Jack was essentially saying, "Father, I will do anything for you," and Peter was saying, "You idiot, you get away from me here," and it played really well.

**DDV:** Hazel Court told me you ordered her from the set one day because she was breaking up so much. She said it wasn't like going to work at all. She said, "We all had very early hours; we were there quite early in the morning and sometimes quite late at night and everyone was trying to keep Boris's health in mind." But she said there would be times when Vincent would be about to give her a line and then he'd pull a parrot out of his cloak or something. She said it was impossible. She said, "Roger, just one day, said, 'Get out, go away, you're of no use to me' because –" And there's actually a scene in *The Raven* where she is just visibly cracking up.

**RC:** On the edge.

**DDV:** On the edge, teetering on the brink.

**RC:** But Hazel was very good.

**DDV:** Was there ever a chance that Peter Cushing or Christopher Lee would have gotten into the Poe series?

**RC:** I had talked to Christopher Lee at one time, but we really had become identified with Vincent Price so specifically at that point, except for the one which we did with Ray Milland.

**DDV:** He would have been quite interesting in a couple of them. I don't think you could have done comedies with him at that point in his career.

**RC:** Christopher is a good actor and he has moved away from horror things. He wants to broaden his image and apparently he's done it successfully.

**DDV:** Along with *The Raven* and *Premature Burial*, you also did a very bizarre movie called *The Haunted Palace*, which is far more H.P. Lovecraft than Poe. How did that come about?

**RC:** That actually started because we wanted to do another one, and this was late in the series, when I was saying that I'm beginning to repeat myself and so forth. I just said that I didn't want to do a Poe film and Jim Nicholson and I both liked the work of Lovecraft, who I think is very, very good. For me, Poe is fractionally more interesting, and a more complex writer, but I think Lovecraft is very good in that field and so we decided to do a Lovecraft film, and then I don't remember exactly how this happened – it's all very weird. Somewhere, late in the game, Jim felt that somehow we should combine the Lovecraft story with Poe, but the script had already been written. I made some gestures towards bringing some Poe into it so it could be sold, I think, as Poe and Lovecraft, but it was really primarily Lovecraft and it was slightly misleading advertising.

**DDV:** It's an interesting film, though.

**RC:** I think it was the first film in which I used zoom lenses. They had recently been developed and they were much slower than the normal fixed lens, and as a result you simply need more light; you had to pour in the light on the set in order to reach an intensity that a zoom lens could photograph. It's possible with all the lights crowded in closer really to heat up the set for the zoom lenses.

**DDV:** When you were shooting these films, did you kind of edit as you went along?



**RC:** I always did as much as possible. I don't know exactly how you'd use the phrase "edit as you go along", but I always planned my work very carefully. I was always about to have every shot worked out before I started. I was never quite able to get to that level, but I would generally have at least two-thirds to three-quarters of the shots sketched in my script before I started the film. So I felt secure that I had the basic scenes planned, leaving some room for improvisation within that. And that brought me to a semi-editing position, because if you're going to do that much planning, you really are editing in front.

**DDV:** I have got some stills from *Tales of Terror*, showing Valdemar in Hades. That isn't in the film.

**RC:** Right, we had that sequence taken out. It didn't work. I don't remember why. I shot it, I put it together and, for whatever reason, I made the decision to take it out. It was a short sequence. I was just dissatisfied with it and I don't even remember why.

**DDV:** Did you have any other instances where sequences were done that were not included in any of the films?

**RC:** Well, there would be always be brief moments of scenes or sometimes occasionally there would be one whole dialogue scene that ran two or three pages. That was the only time I remember actually a whole sequence. But even then, the sequence was no more than four or five minutes and it may have been for this reason. These pictures really were rather low-budget films. We tried to make them look more expensive than they were, but they really were quite low-budget. And I think when I really looked at the Hades sequence, for five minutes I felt that it didn't really look right. I felt it didn't fit the mould.

**DDV:** When did you decide to shoot *The Masque of the Red Death* in England?

**RC:** That decision was made by Jim and Sam. The films had been quite successful in England. They had a co-production with Anglo-Amalgamated, who were the distributors in England, and Anglo suggested that we go there, and as I said, *The Masque of the Red Death* had been one I had wanted to do for a long time. But it was really a little bit bigger than what we had been doing and required simply more money and more time and therefore *The Masque of the Red Death* became a logical film to do as the first one in England, where we were going to be given five weeks. I did not realise that five weeks was not really that great an amount of time.

**DDV:** Was Nicolas Roeg brought in as part of the English package?

**RC:** Yes. I had approval on all of that, so they suggested him as the cameraman and I talked with him and saw some of his work and I said, "Fine." He's a good guy and I liked the quality of his work, so there was no problem.

**DDV:** The sequence with Hazel Court when she said, "I just gave myself up," and apparently she was completely nude in that sequence, or at least she appeared to be, and the British censors were kind of strict about that. Did all of the Poe films get X ratings?

**RC:** In England? I'm not certain.

**DDV:** I think that all horror films were given an X over there.

**RC:** Very possibly. There was no actual nudity in any of them. It was a different age. With Hazel, I think she was nude under a diaphanous gown and probably felt there was too much showing through. Today that would play six o'clock television and nobody would worry in any way.

**DDV:** *The Tomb of Ligeia* is my personal favourite, except for *The Pit*, which is a lot of fun to watch. What is it about?

**RC:** All right. Now, it became extremely complex at the end. As a matter of fact, I remember I had written into the back of my script a little chart of the changes, and I hate to say I don't remember exactly, but there was a concept where – was her name Rowena? – would lose possession of her body and the Lady Ligeia would return to take possession, then Rowena would regain possession of her body. So it was a tale of Ligeia coming from the grave, to reclaim her previous life and her husband through the current wife. And what became complex was the rapidity and method in which Ligeia would return to take over the body of Rowena. I remember I actually had to have a chart that I wrote down one night as I was in the middle of one scene. I said, "Exactly where are we?" And I had to stop for a minute and look back at the script and re-chart what was going on.

**DDV:** Was it ever going to be called *The House at the End of the World*?

**RC:** It was always *Ligeia* because that was the title of the Poe story.

**DDV:** Now Daniel Haller did do the art direction on that, or at least he told me he was there.

**RC:** He was there, although we had to have an English art director on both pictures. As matter of fact he and his wife had a flat and I stayed with them, in Knightsbridge, when we did *The Masque of the Red Death* and it was a great camaraderie on the set which came home to our flat. On *The Tomb of Ligeia*, Dan did not stay for the whole film. He came over for a few weeks and did the sketches and the preparatory work and, by that time, I had already worked in England once and we were able to trust the work, then the carrying out of work, to the English art director.

**DDV:** Were you aware, when you were shooting *Ligeia*, that this was going to be the last Poe film, or was there ever talk of another one?

**RC:** Yes, they wanted me to do another one, and I felt, when I was doing *Ligeia*, that this would be the last one, although I wasn't certain, because I'd felt, on a couple of previous ones, that I was just wearing out the series. I just decided, after it was over, that I did not want to do any more, and they had all been profitable, so they wanted to do more. So they stopped them for a year, figuring I would change my mind, and because I had other things to do. We talked again a year later and I still did not want to do any more. I felt I had done all I wanted to do – or could do – with that genre at that time. So they did a couple more Poe films with other directors.

**DDV:** When you did *Ligeia*, I have always been impressed with the way you got a particular kind of performance out of Vincent, which is not, as I well know, easy to do sometimes. Did you have talks with him about the fact that you really wanted a straightforward kind of performance?

**RC:** Of course. Obviously, as an actor and a director do when working, we discussed the roles in some detail. In that one, just as in *The Raven*, where I was moving to make it part-horror, part-comedy, in this one I was moving to make it part-horror, part-love story, really. We discussed and we were in agreement that it would come out that he was playing a leading man, when you could not say he had actually been a classical leading man in the other films.

**DDV:** In these films, he told me – I've known Vincent about ten years, but I've never discussed the Poe films with him, except in bits and pieces – and he told me one day that the thing he liked about *Ligeia* was that he got to take off the facial hair. He said, "I looked in the mirror and Vincent Price doesn't look back." It was such a feeling of achievement. He said, "With Roger, he was always pleased that I brought little bits of makeup and ideas to the character," Roderick Usher being his favourite.

**RC:** That was great, because what we did with the hair was wonderful.

**DDV:** Finally, how did you come to make *The Terror*?

**RC:** I shot the basic picture in two days, on sets that were left over from *The Raven*. *The Terror* would never have been made had it not rained on a Sunday. I had planned to play tennis on this Sunday and it rained and I was sitting around the house and I thought, "You know, all those great sets are going to be torn down in a week. What I should do is go out and get a script or develop a script." And I called Leo Gordon, who was a friend of mine and a writer and also an actor, and I said, "I've got an idea for a horror film. And I have to shoot it in a week." I called the head of the studio and asked, "Could I have the set for two days of the next week?" And he said, "Sure," and I made a deal. All of the lights were up, it was lit, the set decorations, everything was there and I just walked in and shot it!

## ABOUT THE TRANSFERS

*The six feature films in this collection are presented in their original aspect ratios with original mono audio. The HD masters were created by MGM and delivered by Hollywood Classics. Additional picture restoration work was carried out at Deluxe Restoration, London under the supervision of Arrow Video.*

*Restoration Supervisor: James White, Arrow Video*

*Restoration Technicians: Tom Barrett, Clayton Baker*

*Restoration Department: Mark Bonnici, Graham Jones*





# THE BLACK CAT

by Rob Green

## CAST

**CLIVE PERROTT** as The Prisoner

**DAVID KINCAID** as The Inquisitor

**ALISON MORROW** as The Wife

## CREW

Directed by **ROB GREEN**

Written by **ROB GREEN** and **CLIVE PERROTT**

Based on the Story by **EDGAR ALLAN POE**

Director of Photography **SIMON MARGETTS**

Original Music by **RUSSELL CURRIE**

Edited by **TINA HETHERINGTON**

Production Design by **TRICIA STEPHENSON**

Produced by **SARAH CARR**

If you discount Super 8 horror films made during the school holidays, *The Black Cat* was the first film I ever directed. At the age of 27 I'd already been working in the film industry for seven years, first as an art department trainee, and then as an assistant film editor. I was very fortunate and found myself assisting several tremendously talented and respected film editors, such as John Shirley (*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* [1968], *Live and Let Die* [1973]), Eric Boyd-Perkins (*The Wicker Man* [1973]) and John Grover (several Bond films, *Lifeforce* [1985]). Each was a gentleman, sensing my thirst for learning the crafts of filmmaking and imparting their own considerable knowledge and wisdom upon me. As a result, when I eventually had the opportunity to direct, I had a firm understanding of how to construct, stage, shoot and edit scenes, and to build it all into a narrative whole - what I did not have, however, was any experience of working with actors.

Enter actor Clive Perrott. I had met Clive while editing a docudrama he was starring in. We hit it off immediately and quickly discovered we had shared ambitions: I wanted to direct and Clive wanted a more personal project (than just being cast in a role) with which to showcase his talents. We also shared a love of the macabre and this naturally led us to the works of Edgar Allan Poe. I was already a fan - I'd read many of his tales and loved the Roger Corman/Vincent Price film adaptations. Clive, however, was an avid and deeply passionate reader of Poe's work and, thanks to Poe's common use of first-person narration, felt this would lend itself perfectly to a single actor taking centre stage throughout a film. I immediately saw the cinematic potential, not only because it allow us to use Poe's very words (and who could ever write better than that?), but also because it meant we could make a very subjective film that would express the emotional and mental anguish of Poe's doomed narrator.

We quickly chose *The Black Cat* because we both felt that, despite the many screen adaptations of the story, no film or TV version had yet got to the core of the tale because each one presented the titular black cat as a physical onscreen creature which menaced the cat-fearing protagonist. Many Poe readers and scholars believe that when the tale's narrator is describing his "beloved" wife's black cat as a creature of malice, even a manifestation of evil which thrives on tormenting him, he is in fact describing his growing disgust and hatred for his wife and his increasing obsession to be rid of her. The cat and the wife are one, equally suffocating him, and then, after the wife's savage murder, equally haunting him. Taking this as our angle, we decided the cat, and all reference to it, should be ambiguous and the actual animal should never be seen, except for a brief and very subjective flash-cut of a phantom-like screaming feline (courtesy of Clive Dawson's abstract animation) during the climactic scenes.

We were determined to remain as faithful to Poe's writing as possible and to retain as much of his rich and compelling prose as we could. But we also knew that we

would have to make careful edits and alterations for pacing, and to allow for moments where the visuals and the sound design could dramatically express or even replace spoken words. Because the narrator – who, we decided, should physically resemble Poe himself (as Clive naturally does) – would be the intense focus of the film, we constructed a scenario with the narrator imprisoned within a dungeon and facing a priest-like figure (played by the wonderful and now departed David Kincaid), who sits in silent judgement like the God of the Old Testament. An unbreakable web of iron chains surrounds the prisoner. His ankles are shackled. No daylight; only flickering torch light. Deep black shadows (to capture the style of Harry Clarke's Poe illustrations). Solid brick walls. Low arches. No escape. A dark and enclosed world. This would be an almost expressionistic environment in which the narrator's tale and his memories of the events which led up to his violent crimes – slaying the cat and then burying an axe in his wife's brain – would be vividly re-played, not as straightforward flashbacks but as nightmarish sequences as he would re-live them then react to the consequences of his dreadful actions. One of the touchstones for me, as I designed this highly subjective and stylised cinematic approach, was *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), which is also a tale of murder and the descent into madness narrated by a man who does not know he is insane and is already condemned to his fate.

Once we had scripted, and I'd meticulously storyboarded the entire film, we approached the usual UK-based funding organisations to raise the budget. We had calculated that we'd need £20,000 for a six-day shoot, on Kodak 35mm (a must for me), with a small professional film crew. Unfortunately, we were turned down by everyone we approached. In each case we were politely advised that Poe had already been "done" and therefore it was difficult for them to justify giving support. Fortunately for us, not everyone felt Poe unworthy of re-exploration. A wealthy American businessman, Leslie Jones, was visiting London and browsing the antiquarian bookshops off Charing Cross Road; in particular, he was looking for rare publications of Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* and, by chance, he stumbled into the very shop where Clive worked part-time between acting jobs. Engaging the gentleman in conversation, Clive enthusiastically pitched our film project. Mr Jones, who considered Poe to be one of the great American writers, was intrigued and requested to meet me as well. We presented him with our material and budget and, two days later, we had the £20,000 we needed with the polite request that we repay the money, if and when the film made a profit.

We charged ahead, finding a suitably grim location – the old Victorian tunnels under Camden Lock – and assembling an excellent team, including producers Sarah Carr and Kate Dain, lighting cameraman Simon Margetts, camera operator Peter Field, art director Richard Campling, and first assistant director Steve Moore. Alongside them, we also had a tight crew of experienced and highly professional film technicians, many

of whom I knew from my editing days. Everyone was working very hard for low wages and top-notch food (a well-fed crew is a happy crew), although after filming in dark, rat-infested tunnels for six days, they all scrambled for daylight and fresh air the very second I finally announced, "Cut! That's a wrap!"

In post-production the film slotted together very smoothly, almost exactly as storyboarded. Myself, film editor Tina Hetherington, and sound editor Colin Miller (*Octopussy* [1983], *The Living Daylights* [1987]), then concentrated on creating an intense and atmospheric sound track in which the rattle of chains was ominously intensified as the narrator gradually lost his (already loose) grasp of reality. Added to this was Russell Currie's stunning and doom-laden music score. Russell, a fine New York-based composer, had written several accomplished and highly regarded operas based on Poe's works, and when he also heard about our film, like our American investor, while visiting Charing Cross bookstores. We met and he was very excited about our approach to *The Black Cat* and offered his talent and his services, which, to my amazement, included a 50-piece chamber orchestra. The score was written and conducted by Russell, and performed and recorded in New York. To this day I do not know of any other independent short films which have a fully orchestrated score. (Russell would later write an equally eerie and moody score for my feature film, *The Bunker* [2001].)

The completed short defied concerns that another Poe adaptation would only draw limited interest or attention. At preview screenings the audiences responded very well; word spread and the Odeon cinema chain requested a viewing and then supported, at their own cost, an impressive 20-print theatrical release as a support film to George A. Romero's *The Dark Half* (1993). We received some excellent reviews, which quickly caught the eye of Channel 4, who then bought the UK TV rights. (The cheque went straight to Leslie Jones, of course.) While the film screened several times on British television, again picking up several very positive reviews, even 'Pick of the Day' in some listings, it also played at international film festivals around the world, where it earned a reputation as the most faithful version of *The Black Cat* ever put on film. No less than three years ago, it was still being invited to film festivals with a Poe theme. And now, twenty years later, it is getting this wonderful re-release with Roger Corman's classic, *Tales of Terror*. How many short films have that kind of life? Not many. But then Poe was our author. And Poe's work is timeless. Forevermore.

## THE TRICK

by Rob Green

### CAST

**CLIVE PERROTT** as Master Judge  
**STEVEN O'DONNELL** as 2nd Judge  
**TANYA MYERS** as 3rd Judge  
**DON WARRINGTON** as The Magic Man  
**MARK WEBB** as The Fake Chinaman

### CREW

Written and Directed by **ROB GREEN**  
Director of Photography **PETER FIELD**  
Edited by **TINA HETHERINGTON**  
Production Design by **RICHARD CAMPLING**  
Produced by **SARAH CARR**  
Co-Producer **KATE DAIN**  
Executive Producer **LESLIE A. JONES**

*The Trick* came to me in a remarkably vivid and succinct dream. The whole thing played out in my head while I snored next to my girlfriend. It had obviously been brewing for some time and slowly taking form in my subconscious. I sprang up out of bed and, before the idea evaporated, frantically wrote the script: twelve pages in about 25 minutes. I then made coffee, ate my cornflakes, rang lighting cameraman Peter Field (with whom I'd worked on *The Black Cat* [1993], as well as a TV pilot I'd recently completed), and asked him if he'd be interested in shooting another short film. "As long as it's not down in a bloody dungeon again," he said, fondly recalling *The Black Cat's* shoot. "No," I assured him, "this one is light and breezy." So I half-lied.

The central theme of *The Trick* was judgement, which had been playing on my mind ever since we publicly screened my first film, *The Black Cat*. (Hence the dream.) It had been well-received but, like any piece of work, it also had its detractors. Everyone is rightly entitled to their opinion, but what surprised me, as an over-enthusiastic but slightly thin-skinned first-time director, was how some people plainly relished putting the boot in. "There's too much dialogue in it." "It's too dark." "It's too serious." And so on. But this is the way of the world. From our first day on this earth we are all subjected to others' opinions – some are kind, some are wise, some help us stand taller, and some tear us down. We all bask in the applause and we are all bruised by the knocks. We are all judged and we all judge others, whether qualified or not. As one reviewer of *The Trick* commented, it's a film about critics getting their just desserts.

Because I wanted to make the film so that it could play anywhere in the world, without the barrier of language, I decided it would have no dialogue (after all, I'd been told *The Black Cat* had "too much dialogue"), it'd be brightly lit and colourful (after all, *The Black Cat* was "too dark"), and it'd be comic, with a nod to the silent era and the physical performances of Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton. The general set-up, that of three 'master magicians' sitting in silent judgement of auditioning acts, also allowed the film to centre on magic, an idea that would appeal to all ages and all cultures.

I made each of the 'master magicians' a grotesque archetype, again so that they would be broadly recognisable for any audience anywhere in the world. I also wrote the script specifically for actors whom I already knew; each one with very different physicality, so as to instantly distinguish their grotesque characters. I'd worked with the marvellous Steven O'Donnell on a TV show and knew he had the innate comic timing I was looking for. Steve loved the script and, in discussing an approach to his character, the second judge, we hit upon the idea of basing him on the wonderful actor Zero Mostel (best-known for Mel Brooks's *The Producers* [1967]), a robust but childlike man who is as light as a ballet dancer on his feet and takes wicked glee in trashing other performer's magic acts. The 'master judge' was Clive Perrott, who had been condemned in *The*



*Black Cat*, so I felt it only fair to put him in the judge's seat this time – although he still could not escape terrible punishment by the close of the film. And the third judge was Tanya Myers, a very fine and instinctive actress who had a fantastic take on her character. She told me, "She sits with her cunt clenched so tightly that she's rigid as a board." When you see her sharpening a pencil in a scene, she is imagining it's a man's dick. Brings tears to the eyes! Finally, the mysterious Magic Man was played by the immaculate Don Warrington, again an actor I'd had the pleasure of working with before. Don is a highly intelligent gentleman who exudes grace and charm and, perfect for our film, a deep stillness. He can also effortlessly project an ice-cool menace – in that way Don has always reminded me of Burt Lancaster.

Unlike *The Black Cat*, which took a bit of time to fund, we were quickly offered a £15,000 budget from the London Production Fund, who respected the script, its themes, and the bold approach of having no spoken dialogue (save for one word – "Abracadabra!" – that is announced off-camera at the start). Producers Sarah Carr and Kate Dain, the production designer, Richard Campling, and I found a perfect interior location near Kings Cross. Richard, a skilled artist and craftsman, constructed the various stages of the trick 'green door', while our talented costume designer, Fiona Chilcott, hand-made Steve O'Donnell's purple suit and gathered all the wonderful outfits for the other judges and the victims trapped beyond the Magic Man's door. Don was fitted in a bespoke Paul Smith suit, which was a sober contrast to the other, more theatrical characters.

We shot for three days and completely MOS – "Mit-Out-Sound!" – as German directors would demand in the old Hollywood studio days when wanting to record without live sound. I'd decided during the story's conception that the sound would need to be heightened and very precise, and the most controlled way to achieve this stylised approach was to record EVERYTHING – every footstep, chair creak, etc. - in a foley theatre after we had edited and fine-cut the film. The very talented sound designer, Ian Wilson, and sound mixer, Adrian Rhodes, were responsible for creating the darkly comic but unnerving, and finally nightmarish, soundtrack. Music was kept to a minimum; just one suitable instrument to represent each specific quality or characteristic of the individual judges.

*The Trick* was embraced by audiences around the world. It played in more than a hundred international film festivals and I travelled all over the place with it for almost three years, on and off. The film also enjoyed a UK theatrical release supporting David Lynch's *Lost Highway* (1997) – a very apt pairing. As I hoped, *The Trick* demonstrated its universal appeal, playing in places such as France, Germany, South Korea, Scotland, the United States, etc. to audiences who could easily relate to its central theme. Some audiences belly-laughed as each judge was tricked into stepping through the green

door, and then fell dead silent during the trick's freaky climax; other audiences watched in silent anticipation as each judge stepped through the green door, and then roared with delight as they got their just desserts.

To my relief the completed film was judged very favourably – many film critics admired it, despite the broad swipe at their own profession. I did, however, have one perturbed lady challenge me after one screening. "It would have been much better if it had dialogue," she fumed. Who was I to argue?

## PRODUCTION CREDITS

**Discs and Book Produced** by Anthony Nield

**Co-Producer:** Michael Brooke

**Executive Producer:** Francesco Simeoni

**The Fall of the Usher and The Pit and the Pendulum Discs**

**Produced by** Francesco Simeoni

**Production Assistants:** Louise Buckler, Liane Cunje

**Technical Supervisor:** James White

**QC and Proofing:** Michael Brooke, Anthony Nield

**Authoring and Subtitling:** IBF Digital and David Mackenzie

**Design:** Jack Pemberton, Emily Fordham

## SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Barbara Alpert, Anne Billson, Roger Clarke, Roger Corman, David Del Valle, Larris Dubois-Flavien, Antje Ehmann, Robert J. Emery, Kenn Goodall, Rob Green, Matthew Griffin, Scott Grossman, Naomi Holwill, Pascale Houngebe, Graham Humphreys, Luke Insect, Kenneth V. Jones, Stephen Jones, Bob Jordan, Alistair Leach, Roger Luckhurst, Tim Lucas, Paul Mayersberg, James McCabe, Dan Mumford, Kim Newman, Victoria Price, Jonathan Rigby, Jennifer Rome, Barbara Steele, Melanie Tebb, David Tringham, Julian Upton, Gilles Vranckx, Calum Waddell, Brian Yuzna, Vladimir Zimakov





## THE COMIC BOOKS

Film and television tie-ins were big business in the comic book trade, especially for Dell Comics, who spent much of the fifties and sixties issuing all manner of titles under their 'Movie Classic' line. Everyone from John Wayne (*The Conqueror* [1956], *El Dorado* [1966]) to Robert Altman (*Countdown* [1967]) got a look in, although the emphasis, understandably, was on horror and fantasy. Among the films to receive the Dell treatment were *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954), *The 3 Worlds of Gulliver* (1960), *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* (1964), and a number of American International Pictures properties, including three of the films included in this boxed set. The remainder of this book is taken up by complete reprints of the following comic books: *Tales of Terror* (first published in February 1963), *The Raven* (September 1963) and *The Tomb of Ligeia* (April 1965).



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Classic

EDGAR ALLAN POE'S

# TALES OF TERROR



THRILLING—  
CHILLING  
EXCITING

Three stories  
of the  
world beyond!



© 1964 DELL PUBLICATIONS

From the creative mind of one of the world's most imaginative story tellers come four suspenseful tales which will strain the senses to the point of breaking as they rush headlong through the netherland between the real and the unreal. Follow along, if you will, as shock and stark terror reach out at you from the pages of...



EDGAR ALLAN POE'S **TALES OF TERROR**

1577-1578

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and special great offer

DERBA PAGE?

Monks and Monks' Wives

**Keywords:** child sexual abuse; disclosure; self-blame

Summary given by

www.elsevier.com/locate/ymbs

AN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURE

by M. J. McVITTIE and others

adapted from the motion picture



EDGAR ALLAN POE'S  
**TALES OF TERROR**



VALDENAR WAS A CHARMING, WELL-EDUCATED OLD MAN WHO KNEW HE HAD BUT A SHORT TIME TO LIVE. HE ACCEPTED THE SERVICES OF A HESMERIST\* TO RELIEVE HIS EXTREME PAIN.

**APPENDIX**



THERE IS NO PAIN YOU  
ARE AT PEACE YOUR  
BODY AND YOUR  
MIND AT PEACE  
ENTIRELY.

4852



THEN LISTEN TO MY VOICE. THAT WHICH IS TRUE AS OF THIS MOMENT WILL BE TRUE AS WELL WHEN COGNIZANCE RETURNS - PAIN VANISHED MIND AND BODY IN A STATE OF PEACE. YOU UNDERSTAND?

4. CONTINUING

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I SHOULD NOT HAVE EVEN MENTIONED IT. IT IS SO SLIGHT.

NO PLEASE! YOU TELL THEM MR. CARMICHAEL.

WELL, IT'S SIMPLY THAT MR. VALDEMAR HAS CONSENTED TO BE MEMORIZED IN ARTICULO MORTIS - WHICH IS TO SAY -

AT THE POINT OF DEATH?

WHAT?



I FEAR IT SOUNDS SO MUCH MORE DREADFUL THAN IT REALLY IS, IS THAT NOT SO MR. CARMICHAEL?

QUITE SO, MR. VALDEMAR.

BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHY?



TO ASCERTAIN JUST HOW LONG THE ACTUAL MOMENT OF DEATH CAN BE POSTALLED, A MOMENTOUS EXPERIMENT FOR...

MOMENTOUS! MONSTROUS! WOULD BE MORE THE WORD, MR. VALDEMAR. I APPEAL TO YOU TO WITHDRAW THIS OFFER. THE DEATH-BED IS NO PLACE FOR LUNATIC EXPERIMENTS!



MY DEAR FRIEND, WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF I DIE TEN OR TWENTY MINUTES BEYOND THAT POINT WHEN I SHALL DIE? AT ANY RATE I OWE THIS GENTLEMAN A GREAT DEAL. I COULD NOT DREAM OF REFUSING HIM SUCH AN INSIGNIFICANT REQUEST.



AS YOU SAY, SIR. I MUST LEAVE NOW.

SO SOON? WELL, GOOD NIGHT, SIR. THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING ME. HELENE, MY DEAR, SHOW OUR GOOD FRIEND TO THE DOOR, PLEASE.



SOMETIME LATER, WHEN VALDEMAR AND HELENE WERE ALONE...

WILL YOU NOT RECONSIDER?

REGARDING THE EXPERIMENT?



YES.

I WISH YOU COULD SEE IT ALL AS I DO. I AM NOT AFRAID OF DEATH ITSELF, NOW THEN CAN I READ SOME BREEZY, HARMLESS EXPERIMENTING AT THE POINT OF IT?



THEN, REAR, CARMICHAEL!

FEAR NOT MY DEAR, THINK OF THE PAIN HE HAS SPARED ME.



I KNOW, AND I WOULD NOT, TO SAVE MY LIFE, HAVE EVER WISHED FOR YOU TO SUFFER A MOMENT OF PAIN. AND YET, I FEAR HIM. IF YOU COULD ONLY SEE THE CHANGE IN HIM WHEN YOU ARE UNDER HIS CONTROL, NO LONGER IS IT MISTER VALDEMAR AND ALL THE FEARNING CEASES. HE CALLS YOU VALDEMAR. HE TELLS YOU WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO...

NO MORE! LET US FORGET IT. IT IS ESTABLISHED AND OF NO IMPORTANCE TO ME. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS YOU!



I WISH - WITH ALL MY HEART - THAT, FOLLOWING MY DEATH, YOU MARRY OUR GOOD DR. JAMES. IT WOULD MAKE ME VERY HAPPY TO KNOW THAT YOU WOULD NOT BE LEFT ALONE. THAT YOU WOULD MARRY AGAIN - TO A MAN FOR WHOM I HAVE ALL THE RESPECT IN THE WORLD.



HOW VERY MUCH I LOVE YOU - YOUR HAPPINESS MEANS MORE TO ME THAN ANYTHING INDEED. I SHALL NOT DIE UNTIL THAT HAPPINESS HAS BEEN ASSURED.







AS DR. JAMES BENT OVER VALDEMAR, HE STIFFENED IN SHOCK AS A hideous DEATH RATTLE STARTED IN VALDEMAR'S THROAT.



WHAT IS HAPPENING?  
WHAT IS HAPPENING?



VALDEMAR, RETURN TO YOUR SLEEP. RETURN TO YOUR SLEEP, VALDEMAR!



SLEEP! I COMMAND YOU TO RETURN TO YOUR SLEEP! SLEEP!

STOP IT!

RRR-RRR-RR-TT!

SUDDENLY THE RATTLE STOPPED AND THERE WAS UTTER SILENCE.



VALDEMAR... CAN YOU HEAR ME?

THERE WAS A STRANGE SOUND IN VALDEMAR'S THROAT LIKE THE CRY OF A DEMENTED PRISONER IN SOME DUNGEON. THEN A VOICE SPOKE - A VOICE HARSH, BROKEN, HOLLOW. AND VALDEMAR'S LIPS DID NOT MOVE.



I HEAR.



ARE YOU ASLEEP NOW, VALDEMAR?

YES.

NO! I HAVE BEEN ASLEEP - BUT NOW... I AM DEAD.

YOU ARE ASLEEP, VALDEMAR!

NO-O-O.



YES YOU ONLY SLEEP YOU SLEEP... RAISE YOUR RIGHT ARM... RAISE IT! I COMMAND YOU!



DR. MICHAEL'S EXPRESSION BECAME ONE OF MANIACAL ELATION AS.....

HE DOES NOT. HE DOES NOT!



HE IS DEAD.

YES, DEAD BUT STILL AWARE.

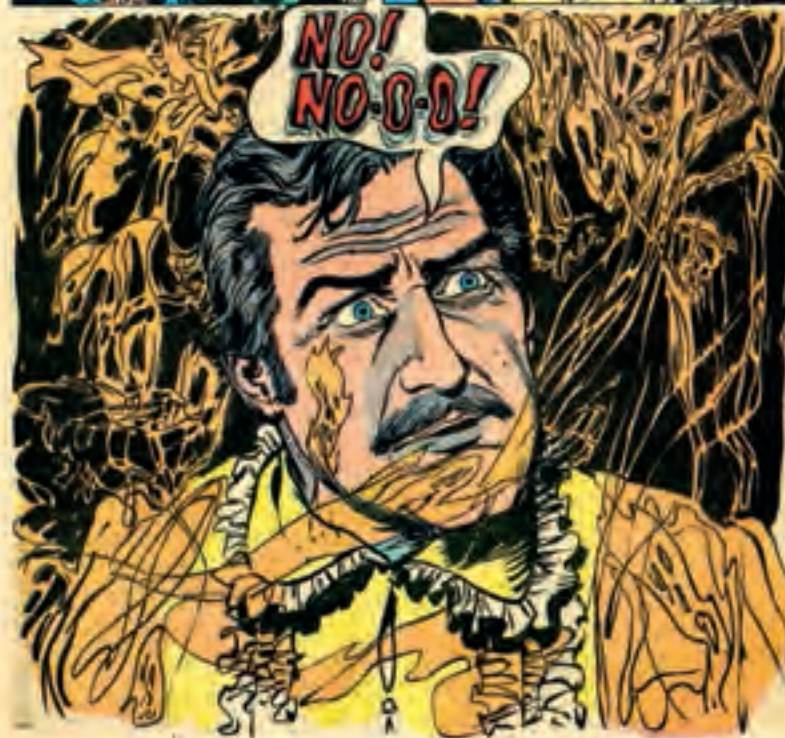


VALDEMAR, WHERE ARE YOU?

DARKNESS. HOVERING IN DARKNESS.

STOP IT! THAT WILL DO, DR. CAR-MICHAEL. END THE CONTROL!













DR. JAMES WAS JUST GOING OUT THE DOOR WHEN HE HEARD CARMICHAEL'S HOWL OF TERROR RING OUT.



AS THE DOCTOR REACHED THE LOCKED BEDROOM DOOR THE SCREAM CEASED AND THERE WAS A HORRIBLE RUMBLING NOISE INSIDE THE ROOM. HE THREW HIS WEIGHT AGAINST THE DOOR.



ACROSS CARMICHAEL'S BODY THERE WAS AN OZZING LIQUID PUTRESCENCE. ALL THAT REMAINED OF MR. VALDEMAR.



LATE ONE NIGHT ANABEL, MONTRESSOR'S CAT, PLUTO WAS AWAKENED BY THE LOUD NOISES OF TRASH CANS FALLING AND FENCES BREAKING.



IT WAS ONLY MONTRESSOR HIMSELF COMING HOME IN HIS USUAL CONDITION.



... DEAD DRUNK.







HAS IT BEEN THAT LONG?  
—NEVER MIND YOUR  
DIVERSIONARY TACTICS!  
YOU HAVE MONEY  
FROM YOUR CLEANING  
WORK!

BUT WE  
NEED IT  
FOR FOOD!



AS MONTRESSOR DREW BACK HIS FIST TO  
STRIKE HER ANNABEL REACHED INTO ONE OF  
HER SECRET HIDING PLACES AND...

THANK YOU FOR  
LOOKING INTO  
YOUR HEART.

THAT'S ALL WE HAVE.  
WE'LL STARVE NOW.



SEVERAL HOURS LATER MONTRESSOR WAS  
OUT OF MONEY BUT STILL THIRSTY AS  
HE WALKED THE STREET EARLY BEG-  
ING FOR MONEY HE SUDDENLY SAW...



ONE  
MOMENT,  
PLEASE!



AS WE PROMISED, YOU WILL NOW  
WITNESS A DEMONSTRATION OF  
WINE TASTING BY NONE  
OTHER THAN MASTER  
FORTUNATO LUCHRES!  
PERHAPS THE WORLD'S  
FORMOST WINE  
TASTER!

I CAN TELL THE  
TASTE OF ANY WINE  
AS WELL AS  
HE!

UNLESS YOU ARE  
INTENT ON MORE  
RAUCOUS ROUSING  
SIR, YOU HAVE  
MADE A MOST  
SERIOUS  
ACCUSATION!

AN  
ACCUSATION  
WHICH I AM  
FULLY PRE-  
PARED TO  
FOLLOW UP  
WITH  
ACTION - IF  
YOU CARE TO  
TAKE THAT  
RISK!

WE WILL TAKE THE RISK,  
FORTUNATO LUCHRES!  
SIR, AT YOUR SERVICE

MONTRESSOR  
LUSHINGTON  
BRING ON  
THE WINE!

NONSENSE!

CANARD!  
THE FELLOWS  
MAD!  
EJECT  
HIM!

HOLD/AFRID  
TO TRY ANY  
COWARDS!

ONE  
WORTHY













Suddenly from behind the wall came a scream that was loud and utterly inhuman.





# MORELLA



LEHORA'S MOTHER, MORELLA, HAD DIED JUST A FEW MONTHS AFTER GIVING BIRTH. SHE HAD BLAMED LEHORA FOR HER UNTIMELY DEATH AND SO HAD LOCKED LEHORA'S FATHER. LEHORA WAS SENT ELSEWHERE TO LIVE. LOCKE PAID FOR HER BOARD AND EDUCATION UNTIL SHE WAS TWENTY-ONE, THEN HE PUT HER COMPLETELY OUT OF HIS LIFE.

NOW, AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-SIX, SICK AND UNHAPPY LEHORA RETURNED TO HER HOME. DISMAYED AND REPELLED BY THE SIGHTS THAT CREEPED HER, SHE CALLED FOR HER FATHER.



RECEIVING NO ANSWER, SHE WENT THROUGH THE HOUSE AND FINALLY FOUND HERSELF IN HER FATHER'S ROOM, LOOKING UP AT A PICTURE OF HER DEAD MOTHER.



SHE SUDDENLY GREW CHILLINGLY AWARE OF SOMEONE WATCHING HER. SHE TWISTED QUICKLY ABOUT, GASPED AND SHRANK BACK.



WHAT? IT'S LEHORA, FATHER?



SHE MOVED TO KISS HIM, BUT HE BRUSHED PAST HER AND...



ALL THOSE PARTY DECORATIONS BELOW--















ROCKY RAN INTO LEMMA'S ROOM. BUT...



SLEEP, YOU ARE RELEASED NOW. I HOPE TO A HAPPIER PLACE THAN THIS.



ALL THESE YEARS I HAVE WAITED TO RETURN AND REUNITE MYSELF.

WOODE STOOD LISTENING FOR A FEW MOMENTS. THEN IT OCCURRED THAT THE BODY BENEATH THE SHEET TWITCHED AND HE HEARD IT SQUEAL. HE PULLED BACK THE SHEETS AND RECOILED IN HORROR.



I AM BACK!



DIE! DIE! AS I DIED!

ROCKY RAN AT INSANE SPEED TO THE OTHER ROOM AND GASPED WITH SHOCK AT HE LOOKED DOWN AT THE BED.



SUDDENLY THE WALL DOOR, LOCKED FOR TWENTY-SIX YEARS WAS FLUNG OPEN. HE WHIRLED AND...

# EDGAR ALLAN POE



EDGAR ALLAN POE was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1809. He was a story writer, literary critic and poet, ranking among the truest poets America has produced.

While in literary circles his greatest fame rests on his talents as a poet, he is undoubtedly equally well known as one of the world's greatest writers of short stories, especially stories of terror and death. Among these are The Fall of the House of Usher, The Tell-Tale Heart, The Murders in the Rue Morgue and The Hound of the Bad Death. Considered his masterpiece is The Gold Bug. Among his poems are such American classics as "Annabel Lee", "Bachelors", and the most famous of all, "The Raven".

Poe died in 1849 and his grave in Baltimore, Maryland is one of America's literary shrines. He was elected to New York University's Hall of Fame in 1916. Poe Cottage, the frame house in which he wrote "The Raven" while living in New York City, stands in Poe Park, The Bronx, New York, as a memorial to one of the world's most famous writers...

BOYS, GIRLS, MEN, WOMEN

IF YOU KNOW JUST 20 PEOPLE...



YOU CAN MAKE AT LEAST \$50<sup>00</sup>  
-MORE LIKELY \$100<sup>00</sup> to \$200<sup>00</sup>  
IN YOUR SPARE TIME!

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and Everyone Loves Wallace Brown Cards

Do you know 20 people? Of course you do! Add up a half-dozen relatives, perhaps 3 neighbors, the butcher, the baker, the milkman, the grocer, your dentist, social friends and other miscellaneous—and you've probably got a list more than 20. So when are you waiting for? These folks alone expecting you is at least \$100.00, probably \$100.00 to \$200.00 extra money in just a few hours spare time. And this is just a start! Almost everyone you know needs Christmas Cards, and when you show them the spectacular nationally famous 1963 Wallace Brown Line of Cards and Gift Items—it's love at first sight. They'll snap up 2, 3, 4 or more Christmas Card Boxes right on the spot. Keep up to 50¢ of every dollar you take in! That's the fun way of making money because it's so easy. We send you samples that do the selling for you. And, besides making money you'll save money on your own personal Christmas Cards, Gifts, Wrappings, etc. Are you yourself washed (taking a penny). Mail coupon, you'll be glad you did!

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# EDGAR ALLAN POE'S **THE RAVEN**

A STRANGE  
AND EXCITING  
STORY OF  
UNBELIEVABLE  
MAGIC



A MOST FASCINATING TALE FILLED WITH THE STRANGEST OF THINGS IS THIS OFFERING. ADAPTED FROM...

# EDGAR ALLAN POE'S THE RAVEN

starring  
VINCENT PRICE •  
PETER LORRE • BORIS KARLOFF

screenplay by RICHARD MATHESON  
AN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURE

In Color and Panavision®  
Copyright—An Alta Vista Production  
ADAPTED FROM THE MOTION PICTURE



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OF COURSE I'M COLD! BUT YOU CAN WARM ME WITH A CUP OF WINE!

AM I DREAMING OR DOES IT SPEAK?



YOU MUST BE UNDER AN ENCHANTMENT, AND I WOULD NOT KNOW HOW TO--

NEVER MIND, I'LL TELL YOU NOW! TO YOUR LABORATORY, QUICK!



DIED BAT'S BLOOD, GALLONS! BONE, SPOON--JELLY--

WHAT IS IT HE NEED TO RESTORE YOU AS A MAN?



DR. ORATEY IS STUNNED BUT COMPLIES WITH THE BIRD'S REQUEST.

GOOD! NOW YOU CAN START TURNING ME BACK INTO A MAN!



IT IS MY FATHER'S LABORATORY, I HAVEN'T VISITED IT SINCE HE DIED 20 YEARS AGO!

THIS IS DOUBTFUL MATERIAL, IT WILL NEVER WORK!



BE OF GOOD HEART, PREPARE JUST ONE MORE INGREDIENT-- DEAD MAN'S HAIR!



DEAD--DEAD MAN'S HAIR? WOULD YOU HAVE ME ROB A GRAVE?

WOULD YOU HAVE ME REMAIN LIKE THIS FOREVER? LET US BE ON OUR WAY!



--AND THE REUL OF THE WHEELER, DR. SCARBUS WHO DO THIS FOUL THING TO ME!

BUT HOW?



WHAT IS MORE, SCARBUS USED ONLY HAND GESTURES!



WE WILL NOT NEED A CEMETERY, MY FATHER IS IN THE FAMILY CRYPT BELCH!

AS YOUR FATHER THE FORMER GRAND MASTER OF THE SORCERERS BROTHERHOOD--



I WAS AT HIS CASTLE TONIGHT, I WAS DRUNK AND CHALLENGED HIM TO A DUEL OF MAGIC.

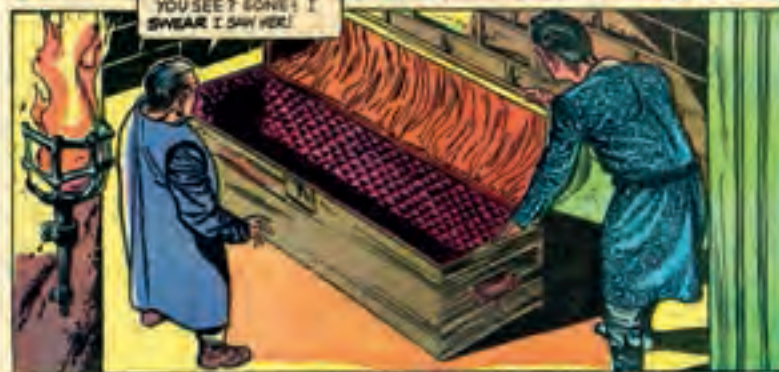


INCREDIBLE! SCARBUS' SKILL IS MORE DUNCY THAN I REALIZED!

























THE DOOR--IT  
OPENS BY  
ITSELF!



AND NOW THE DOOR CLOSSES, NOISILY THIS TIME, AS  
THOUGH TO WOCK THEM...

THAT DEVIL, SCARBURGH--  
HE PLAYS WITH US!

CRASH!



THE ALARM ON YOUR FACE  
SADDENS ONE WHO HERSELF  
WANTS THE PLEASURES OF  
YOUR COMPANY AT DINNER...  
PLEASE JOIN ME!



DR. DRIVEN--THE SON OF MY OLD COSSACK IN  
MAGIC--IN MY HOME AT LAST! I AM HONORED!

WATCH HIM  
CLOSELY!  
ESPECIALLY  
HIS HANDS!



YOU ARE HONORED? BUT YOU WERE MY FATHER'S  
BITTER ENEMY--AND YOU TRIED  
TO KILL US THIS NIGHT!

YOU MUST BE MIS-  
TAKEN, GOOD SIR! I  
WOULD NOT HAVE  
PREPARED THIS!



AA! YOU SUSPECT THAT SOME  
DAY DR. DRIVEN OR I WILL  
DISPLACE YOU AS GRAND  
MASTER...

TONIGHT YOU  
TURNED ME INTO  
A RAVEN, BUT  
NOT FOR  
LONG, AS  
YOU SEE!



AND I, SIR, WANT  
TO KNOW WHAT YOU  
HAVE DONE WITH  
THE SPIRIT OF  
MY DEAD WIFE,  
LENDREI! WOULD  
SAY HER HERE!



HE SAID ONLY A  
SERVANT HAD  
PERHAPS LOOKS  
LIKE HER!





BUT DR. BIGDLE'S BAG CONTAINS ONLY THE WEAKEST OF WITIC AIDS. HE BARELY BRINGS ONE INTO PLAY HERE--



TOO RETURNED TO PROTECT THE CHAIRMAN AND REWARD AGREE...













MOMENTS LATER...











BUT DR. ORANBY RAISES TWO FINGERS AND THE DEADLY SERPENT BECOMES A BLACK SILK SCARF!



THE BAT BECOMES A FAN, BUT SOON THE DEADLY DUEL REACHES NEW HEIGHTS OF INTENSITY!



BUT NOW SCARBUS MAKES A TREMENDOUS EFFORT!!



BUT DR. ORANBY, WITH HIS QUICK PUTTING MACHINES, IS EQUAL TO IT!



THE CANNON BALL "EXPLODES" OVER SCARBUS' HEAD AND...







NOW, MY FRIENDS, SCARABUS SENDS A RAIN OF HORRIBLE FIREBALLS AT DR. CRAMEN, HOPE ONE OF THEM WILL GET THROUGH!



BUT DR. CRAMEN JUST MANAGES TO PUT UP A FORCE-DEFLECTION SCREEN AND THE FIREBALLS VEER OFF—WITH AN EFFECT SCARABUS HAD NOT COUNTED UPON!



THIS IS THE END, CRAMEN. NOW IT SHALL BE YOU OR ALL MY TOTAL FORCE AGAINST YOURS!



AND EACH MAGICIAN SENDS OUT A FORCE CLOUD BEFORE HE'D DO BATTLE. AND NOW, DRUCK, THEY ARE LOCKED IN A DEATH GRIP!



NOW THE CASTLE IS ABLAZE AS THE FORCE FIELDS STRIVE FOR MASTERY!

THIS THING BETTER END QUICK...OR MIGHT ANOTHER NOTICE!



MEANWHILE, THE SCHEMING LONKOR, WHO HAS BEEN HUNTING FOR SAFETY, ONLY TO FIND—



DR. CRAMEN—YOU HAVE WON!

KILL HIM, DRUCK! HE IS HELPLESS!



OH, BRASSUS, DARLING! YOU HAVE CONQUERED THAT MISERABLE SCARABUS AND FIRED MY BODY AND SOUL!









BECAUSE OF THE FASCINATION THAT MAGIC HAS ALWAYS HELD FOR PEOPLE, IT HAS BEEN USED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. EVEN IN CONTEMPORARY MODERN TIMES, ROBERT HOUDIN, A 19TH CENTURY FRENCHMAN AND THE FATHER OF MODERN CONJURING, PROVED TO BE OF GREAT SERVICE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE. NAMED PRIESTS AND SORCERERS IN ALGERIA, WERE WIELDING GREAT POWER OVER THE PEOPLE, AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO REBEL AGAINST THE FRENCH COUNTRY.



HOUDIN ACCOMPLISHED HIS MISSION BY SHOWING THE PEOPLE PRODS OF MAGIC WHICH WERE BETTER THAN NONE OF THEIR LOCAL SORCERERS. AMONG HOUDIN'S BEST, WAS THE FOLLOWING:

UPON A STAGE HOUDIN WOULD PLACE A WOODEN BOX THAT HAD AN IRON BOTTOM. THE BOX COULD BE STUCK TO THE STAGE BY TURNING ON A STRONG ELECTRO-MAGNET. HOUDIN WOULD CLAIM HE COULD MAKE ANYONE HEAR AS A PUPPY.

HE WOULD SURROUND ANY POSSIBLE ARAB TO THE STAGE. THE ARAB WOULD EXERCISE HOIST THE BOX, THEN HOUDIN SAID HE WOULD TAKE AWAY THE PAPER STRENGTH BY UTTERING A SINGLE WORD.



SAYED HOUDIN SPoke THE WORD: IT WAS THE SIGNAL TO AN ASSISTANT OFF-STAGE TO TURN ON THE ELECTRO-MAGNET.



THE ARAB WOULD STRUGGLE, BUT WITHOUT SLIDING THE BOX, THE ALGERIANS CONVINCED THAT THE FRENCH COULD OUT-REMATCH THEIR NATIVE SORCERERS, SOON LOST INTEREST IN THE REBELLION.



# 147 FAMOUS AUTOMOBILES



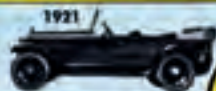
1914



1919



1920



1921

Only  
**\$2.49**



1934



1935



1936



1937



1938



1939



1940



1941



1942



1943



1944



1945



1946



Come packed in this special garage box which to store your models!

**KIDS!** Here's the greatest assortment of famous cars from Grandpa's days to today! Yes, a model car each year from 1913 thru 1963! And there's 3 sets of each model so that you can trade them and race them! EACH MODEL HAS THE NAME OF ONE AUTO-MOBILE AND HAS ON IT — each on its own base, 48 different models, 147 pieces in the set. Made of pure plastic, stress, fun for you and the whole family. Comes in a garage box for storage when not in use! Send \$2.49 money order or check with coupon.

Satisfaction guaranteed or your money refunded, We C.O.D.'s plan!



1949



1950

## HERE'S A COMPLETE LIST OF CARS YOU GET

1913 Buick	1937 Town	1949 Hudson
1916 Apperson	1938 Dodge	1950 Chrysler
1917 Packard	1939 LaPette	1951 Nash
1918 Baker Electric	1939 Cadillac	1952 Plymouth
1919 Franklin	1939 Terraplane	1953 Mercury
1920 Chevrolet	1937 Buick	1954 Chrysler
1921 Case	1938 Ford	1955 Lincoln
1922 Mercer	1939 Packard	1956 Dodge
1923 Stinson	1940 Mercury	1957 DeSoto
1924 Chandler	1941 Plymouth	1958 Ford
1925 Locomobile	1942 Lincoln	Thunderbolt
1926 Cleveland	1943 Nash	1959 Rambler
1927 Jordan	1944 Willys Jeep	1960 Valiant
1928 Knott	1945 DeSoto	1961 Willys
1929 Auburn	1946 Dodge	1962 Chrysler
1930 Ford	1947 Kaiser	1963 Studebaker
1931 Buick	1948 Ford	

## MAIL COUPON TODAY!

Auto Models, Dept. 6  
Carle Place, L.I., N.Y.

We C.O.D.'s

Guarantee:

Please send immediately full set of 147 auto models.  
I enclose \$2.49. If not satisfied I may return for full refund.

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Check or add \$2.49 to order. \$2.49 (non-refundable) Money Order is the easiest.

DELL  
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APR-JUNE  
MOVIE  
CLASSIC

# TOMB OF LIGEIA

VINCENT  
PRICE

BLACK MAGIC CASTS  
ITS GHOSTLY SPELL...  
WHAT STRANGE AND  
SINISTER SECRET HAUNTS  
THIS MAN?





AN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURE  
**VINCENT PRICE**  
 AND  
**ELIZABETH SHEPHERD**  
 STARRING

**TOMB**  
 OF  
**LIGEIA**

IN COLORSCOPE

PRODUCED BY ROGER CORMAN  
 DIRECTED BY ROGER CORMAN  
 SCREENPLAY BY ROBERT TOWNE  
 FROM THE STORY BY EDGAR ALLAN POE  
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AT LAST I CAN SEE YOUR EYES.

INSIDE, THE SUNLIGHT CAN NOT REACH ME.



I DON'T THINK IT IS BROKEN. BUT THIS BINDING WILL HELP.

YOU DO THAT QUITE EXPERTLY.



HOW IS MY DAUGHTER? IS SHE MUST BADLY?

YES, FINE FATHER.



WELL, IT WAS WORTH THE DAY'S HUNT AFTER ALL. CAUGHT THE MOST WONDERFUL LITTLE FOX, HAVE A LOOK.



WHY--IT'S GONE! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH IT?

DON'T BLAME YOUR LIVERYMAN, SIR. MY CAT MUST HAVE TAKEN IT. SHE IS OF A MIND TO DO SUCH THINGS.



I TRUST YOUR ANGLE WILL TROUBLE YOU NO FURTHER.

THANK YOU--GOODBYE THEN...



HAS LISBET'S DEATH CHANGED HIM GREATLY?

HE HAS CHANGED---THOUGH I NEVER KNEW HER...BUT HE ALWAYS WAS A BIT MYSTERIOUS. DO YOU LIKE HIM?



USING A PERSON HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH BEING DRAWN TO HIM. IT IS THE ATTRACTION THAT BRINGS ABOUT MARRIAGE.

MARRIAGE? YOU AND VERGEN? YOU ARE QUITE WILFUL, AREN'T YOU? HOWEVEN? BUT WHEN THEY SAY LISBET WAS WILFUL, TOO?



THE NEXT DAY...

A NOTE FROM MR. VERGEN. WELL, ANNOY!

FROM VERGEN? THAT'S A SURPRISE!



WHAT DOES HE WANT, CHRISTOPHER?

NEVER MIND, ROYALTY. REPEL--THIS REPLY IS TO BE DELIVERED TO MR. FELL IMMEDIATELY.



WELL, I MUST BE OFF TO THE VILLAGE. I HAVE SOME LEGAL BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF.

HOW A GENTLEMAN CAN CONTINUE TO PRACTICE LAW IS BEYOND ME, BUT THAT'S YOUR CONCERN, CHRISTOPHER.

I SHALL DELIVER HIS NOTE, REPEL, TO SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE.

YES, MAJESTY...





NO ONE ANSWERED MY KNOCK...



YES... IT IS YOU! YOU HAVE COME BACK TO ME... JUST AS YOU SAID YOU WOULD...



PLEASE! LET ME GO!

ROWENA! IT'S YOU! I THOUGHT...



NEVER, NEVER, COME HERE UNANNOUNCED! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

I ONLY CAME TO DELIVER THIS NOTE FROM CHRISTOPHER!



I CAN'T SEND YOU OFF SHIVERING LIKE A FRIGHTENED KITTEN. COME ALONG TO THE KITCHEN...

ALL... ALL RIGHT...



DOES SHE LOOK LIKE ME--THE WOMAN YOU SEEM SO AFRAID WILL ARRIVE WITHOUT WARNING?

YOU COULD HAVE SENT A SERVANT WITH CHRISTOPHER'S NOTE. BUT YOU WANTED TO COME YOURSELF, TO PITY ME...



PITY WAS NOTHING TO DO WITH BEING ATTRACTED TO YOU. BUT IF YOU ARE TOO BUND TO SEE THAT, THEN I'LL LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.

ROWENA!



WHEN I SAW YOU FROM BEHIND, I WAS SO SURE SHE HAD COME BACK. SEEING HER AND SEEING YOU WERE AS ONE...

YOU SAY YOU LOVED YOUR WIFE, YET YOU TRIED TO ATTACK ME WHEN YOU THOUGHT I WAS LIGIA. COME BACK!



I--I DON'T REMEMBER APPROACHING YOU LIKE THAT...

YOU DON'T DO YOU? I BELIEVE YOU, VERDEN.



PLEASE ANNOUNCE ME TO MR. FELL. I'M EXPECTED. MY CARD.

YES, SIR.



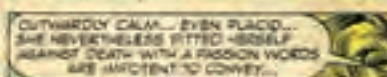
OH, VERDEN...

MY LOVELY ROWENA...



















NO ONE, NO ONE WILL DO NEAR LORNA'S GRAVE!

AS YOU WISH, VERDEN, BUT THEN THE SALE OF THE ABBEY CANNOT BE COMPLETED.



THERE NEVER WAS A CERTIFICATE OF DEATH BECAUSE EACH OF THE TWO COUNTIES ASSIGNED THAT THE OTHER HAD SEEN IT. I'M SURE YOU CAN FIND SOME WAY TO HANDLE IT, CHRISTOPHER.



WELL, I'LL DO THE BEST I CAN.

WE'VE, LORD TREMUNION AND I WERE JUST DISCUSSING A COLLEGE OF MINE, A CHARLATAN NAMED FRANK MESMER, CLAIMS HE CAN WORK WONDERFUL HEALING POWERS OF THE MIND.



MESMER MAY BE A CHARLATAN, DR. VERDEN, BUT THE POWER HE CALLS ANIMAL MAGNETISM IS QUITE REAL. I HAVE SOME SMALL PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH IT MYSELF.



MIGHT WE SEE A DEMONSTRATION, SIR?



I DON'T SEE WHY NOT.



I SHALL NEED YOU FOR MY SUBJECT, DEAR, ALTHOUGH YOU DO LOOK SOMEWHAT LITHELESS THIS EVENING. ARE YOU FEELING WELL?



WE CAN DISCUSS IT LATER, VERDEN.



CHRISTOPHER, I MUST TALK TO YOU, SINCE LAST NIGHT--UNTIL THIS EVENING--I HAVE NOT SEEN VERDEN, AND SOMETHING ELSE-- SOMETHING HORRIBLE--



IS I HAVE A SONNET TREMUNION WITH ME--DO YOU HEAR IT? YES I DO.



AMAZING! SHE WAS ONLY A FEW MONTHS OLD WHEN HER MOTHER COULD NO LONGER SING THAT SONG TO HER!

ROWENA, WE SHOULDN'T KEEP OUR GUESTS WAITING--



YES, VERDEN.

MY WIFE IS NOW IN A DEEP TRANCE, LORD TREMUNION HAS TOLD ME THAT ROWENA HAS ALMOST NO RECOLLECTION OF HER MOTHER, YET WE SHALL SEE IF SHE CAN RECALL A SONG HER MOTHER USED TO SING TO HER.



HAD KNOWN THE MYSTERIES OF THE WILL, THE WILL THERE IN LIE, WHICH DIED NOT--MAN NEED NOT KNOW BEFORE ANGELS AND LIE IN DEATH FOREVER BUT FOR THE READINESS OF HIS FLESH WILL--I SHALL ALWAYS BE YOUR WIFE.



ROWENA, WAKE UP! STOP IT!



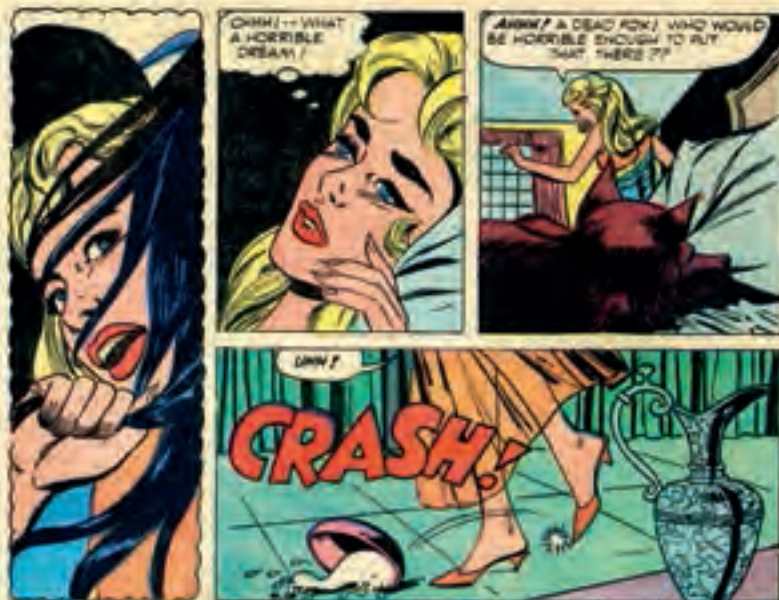
IS IT--IS IT OVER? I'M SO SLEEPY. OH--































# THE HUNT

THE FOX HUNT HAS LONG BEEN A FAVORITE PASTIME OF THE WEALTHY AND ARISTOCRATIC. THERE ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE IT TO BE A CIVIL SPORT, BUT ITS PARTICIPANTS AND GREAT ENJOYMENT IN IT.

TRAINED HUNTING HOUNDS ARE TURNED LOOSE, AND THEY PURSUE THE PREY WITH A VENGEANCE...



FIVE HOUNDS CHASE THE WIFELSS SON AND ATTEMPT TO CORNER IT IN A DEAD END. BUT WHEN ALL A SUDDEN THE HUNTERS FIND IT EXHAUSTED TO BALANCE THROUGH THE EASY MORNING AIR. BUT THE FOX FOR DENIES THAT THIS WILL BE TO LAST FOR FOR FREEDOM... FOR THE HOUNDS GENERALLY SET WHAT THEY SCARED!





Portable Radio



Typewriter



Watch



Travel Case



Baseball Glove



Sleeping Bag



Camera



Rocket



Chemistry Set



Bicycle



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ALSO AVAILABLE FROM ARROW VIDEO



the abominable  
**dr. phibes**

**OUT NOW**

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM ARROW VIDEO



**DR. PHIBES  
RISES AGAIN!**

**OUT NOW**

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM ARROW VIDEO

VINCENT PRICE ♦ DIANA RIGG



T H E A T R E  
♦ o f ♦  
B L O O D

**OUT NOW**

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**COMING SOON**



