••FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY••

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

BY EDGAR ALLAN POE
RETOLD BY MATTHEW K. MANNING
ILLUSTRATED BY JIM JIMENZ

STONE ARCH BOOKS | A CAPSTONE IMPRINT

His heart is like a poised lute;
As soon as it is touched, it resounds.

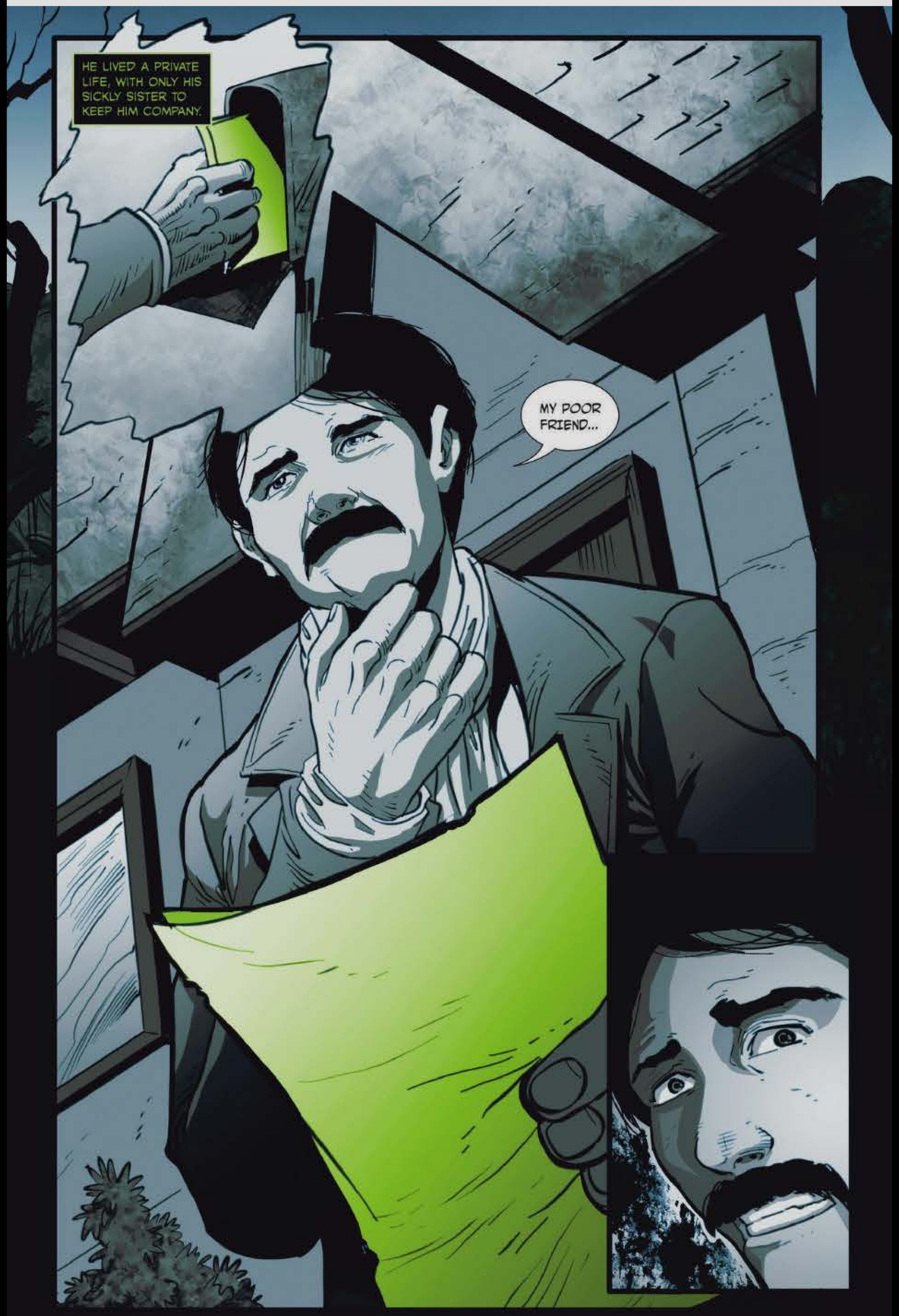
– *De Béranger*

THERE WAS NO BACKING OUT OF IT.

NOT THAT I DIDN'T LOOK FOR A WAY. I DID MY VERY BEST, MIND YOU.

BUT RODERICK USHER WAS ONE OF THE FEW PEOPLE WHO HAD THE RATHER DUBIOUS HONOR OF CALLING HIMSELF MY FRIEND.

AFTER ALL, RODERICK WASN'T ONE FOR MAKING NEW FRIENDS.


HE LIVED A PRIVATE LIFE, WITH ONLY HIS SICKLY SISTER TO KEEP HIM COMPANY.
MY POOR FRIEND...

...ALL ALONE IN THAT HOUSE.

IT LOOKED DIFFERENT THAN I REMEMBERED.
THE HOUSE HAD NEVER BEEN A WELCOMING PLACE. BUT NOW IT WAS ALMOST IN RUINS.
AND IF RODERICK'S DESPERATE LETTER WAS ANY INDICATION...

...THE HOUSE WASN'T THE ONLY ONE FALLING APART.
WELCOME, SIR.
AH!
OH... HELLO.
YES. MY APOLOGIES. I'M HERE TO SEE--

PLEASE FOLLOW ME.
OH. ALRIGHT.

AS I ASCENDED THE STAIRS, I CROSSED PATHS WITH RODERICK'S DOCTOR...
HE'S A LOST CAUSE.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, RODERICK.
IS THAT YOU?
OH, THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE.

HELLO...?
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D COME.
YOU KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT.
I HARDLY KNOW YOU AT ALL THESE DAYS
WELL, I... I GUESS IT HAS BEEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT?

YOUR LETTER SAID YOU'D BEEN ILL.

A LITTLE, YES. BUT THERE IS MORE.

MY SISTER IS VERY ILL.

MADELINE.

YES. SHE'S WASTED AWAY TO HARDLY ANYTHING. IT'S TERRIBLE.

SHE'S MY VERY LAST LIVING RELATIVE, AND NOT LONG FOR THIS EARTH, I'M AFRAID.

I'M SO SORRY, RODERICK.

I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE SORRY. IT'S LIKE I'M A SCARED, LITTLE BOY AGAIN. I MADE YOU COME ALL THIS WAY.

IT'S STUPID, REALLY. IT'S JUST THAT...

I HAVE THIS FEAR. THIS... DREAD, I GUESS YOU COULD SAY.
THERE'S NO OTHER WORD FOR IT.
IT'S TERRIBLE. I CAN'T HANDLE IT. YOU UNDERSTAND. IT'S... THERE'S SOMETHING VERY WRONG WITH ME.
AND I NEED A FRIEND.
AS IT TURNS OUT, YOU'RE MY ONLY ONE.

IT'S OKAY, RODERICK. I--

WOOOOSH

WAS THAT--?

MADELINE, YES.
THAT'S PROBABLY THE LAST TIME YOU'LL SEE HER DURING YOUR STAY...
OH. OH, DEAR.
I'M SO SORRY.

I TOLD RODERICK I WOULD STAY AWHILE.

I DID MY BEST TO RAISE HIS SPIRITS.

SOME DAYS IT EVEN SEEMED TO WORK.

WE SPENT MOST OF THE TIME IN HIS SITTING ROOM, READING FROM HIS VAST COLLECTION OF BOOKS.

ALL THE WHILE, RODERICK WAS LIKE A JITTERY LITTLE PUPPY, CONSTANTLY NERVOUS AND ON EDGE.

WHILE MY COMPANIONSHIP DID SEEM TO HELP HIM A LITTLE...
...RODERICK'S SICKNESS WAS PROVING TO BE...
...INFECTIOUS.

ONE EVENING, I HEARD RODERICK SINGING...
... AND TRAVELERS 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...

...NO MORE.

THERE YOU ARE.

...AND LAUGH--BUT SMILE...

THAT WAS VERY GOOD.

IT HELPS, YOU KNOW.

MY, UM, CONDITION HAS MADE ME OVERLY SENSITIVE.
SENSITIVE TO LIGHT, SCENT, AND MOST DRAMATICALLY... NOISE.
IT'S LIKE MY HEARING IS EXCEPTIONALLY MAGNIFIED.
I HEAR EVERY LITTLE CREAK AND SQUEAK IN THIS PLACE.
EVERYTHING.
BUT THE MUSIC... WELL, IT SOOTHES ME.
IT BLOCKS EVERYTHING ELSE OUT.

LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF PLANT LIFE?
PLANT LIFE? I, WELL...

SOMETIMES I THINK THAT IT HAS SENTIENCE.
THAT IT ALL HAS FREE WILL, OR MAYBE A PLAN, EVEN.

PLANTS HAVE PLANS...?
LIKE THE IVY ON THE OUTSIDE WALLS. WHAT IS IT TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH, CLIMBING SLOWLY UP THE HOUSE?
IT MUST HAVE SOME IDEA OF WHAT IT'S DOING.
HAVEN'T YOU EVER WONDERED THINGS LIKE THAT? ASKED YOURSELF THOSE TYPES OF QUESTIONS?

NO... I CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE.
THAT MUST BE NICE.
Vigils for the Dead
HM.

LATER THAT NIGHT, AS I SLEPT...
I THINK WE SHOULD PRESERVE THE CORPSE FOR A FEW WEEKS.
OTHERWISE THE BODY IS JUST GOING TO ROT.
WHAT--?!

OH, I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE STILL ASLEEP.
MADELINE HAS DIED.
OH, NO.
RODERICK, I'M SO SORRY.
I THINK WE SHOULD ENTOMB HER, DON'T YOU?
WAIT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

RODERICK WAS DISTRAUGHT. HIS MIND SEEMED UNTETHERED, FLOATING ABOUT RESTLESSLY.

RODERICK DECIDED TO PLACE MADELINE IN THE ABANDONED DUNGEONS BELOW THE ESTATE.

IT SEEMED TO ME THAT RODERICK COULDN'T HANDLE HIS SISTER'S DEATH. ENTOMBING HER WAS LIKE POSTPONING THE INEVITABLE.

PERHAPS HAVING MADELINE'S CORPSE HERE WOULD HELP HIM THROUGH THE GRIEVING PROCESS...
...SO HE COULD COME TO TERMS WITH HER DEATH.

CLUNK!
AH!!!
CLANK
CRASH!

OH, GOD, I DIDN'T MEAN TO...

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

IT'S JUST THE GROUND IS SO SLICK...

IT'S COPPER. A REMNANT FROM AN OLDER TIME, I'M AFRAID. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

TSSSS

HERE.

I GUESS I OUGHT TO SAY MY GOODBYES, THEN.

OH, MY...!

THE RESEMBLANCE? YES.

YOU FORGOT THAT WE WERE TWINS?

I GUESS I DID...

WELL.
ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO DO.
THUD

THE FOLLOWING WEEK, RODERICK GOT WORSE.
WHAT WAS THAT?!

I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING.

I'D NEVER SEEN HIM THAT NERVOUS BEFORE.
I KNOW I HEARD SOMETHING.

AT LEAST I THINK I DID...

AND FOR A MAN LIKE RODERICK USHER...

...THAT WAS SAYING A LOT.

THERE WAS NO REST FOR RODERICK THAT WEEK.
WOOSH!

AND LITTLE FOR ME, EITHER.

I KEPT HEARING NOISES.
THUMP!
THUMP!

hOOOOOO

SCRATCH!!
SCRATCH!!
SCRATCH!!
THAT'S IT.
I CAN'T HANDLE THIS ANY LONGER.
39

GASP!
RODERICK! YOU STARTLED ME.
I TAKE IT YOU CAN'T SLEEP EITHER?

HAVE YOU SEEN IT? THE WIND, THE PLANTS?

THEY'RE COMING TO LIFE OUT THERE!

IT'S A STORM, RODERICK. NOTHING MORE.

WE NEED TO CALM DOWN. THIS HAS GOTTEN COMPLETELY OUT OF HAND.

LET'S READ SOMETHING TO DISTRACT OURSELVES, HM?

LET'S CONTINUE MAD TRIST.

IT'S A FAVORITE OF YOURS, RIGHT?

LET'S CHECK IN ON... WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

ETHELRED.

THAT'S RIGHT. I BELIEVE WE LAST SAW HIM AT THE DWELLING OF THE HERMIT...

Mad Trist

"FEARING THE RISING OF THE TEMPEST, ETHELRED UPLIFTED HIS MACE OUTRIGHT..."

"....THEN BROUGHT IT DOWN WITH ALL HIS MIGHT."

CRACK!!

DID YOU JUST HEAR SOMETHING?

AHEM. ANYWAY, WHERE WERE WE...

"THE GOOD CHAMPION ETHELRED WAS DISAPPOINTED TO SEE NO SIGN OF THE EVIL HERMIT..."
"...BUT, INSTEAD OF THE HERMIT, A FIERCE DRAGON ROSE TO MEET ETHELRED."
"THAT WAS WHEN HE SAW THE MAGIC SHIELD ON THE WALL."
"THERE WAS AN INSCRIPTION ON THE SHIELD. IT READ: 'WHO ENTERETH HEREIN, A CONQUEROR HATH BIN; WHO SLAYETH THE DRAGON, THE SHIELD HE SHALL WIN.'"

"ETHELRED CHARGED BRAVELY AT THE MENACING BEAST..."
"...EAGER TO CLAIM THE MAGIC SHIELD AS HIS PRIZE."

EEEEE!!!

EEEEEEEEEEE!
WHAT WAS THAT?!

"AND NOW, THE CHAMPION, HAVING DEFEATED THE TERRIBLE DRAGON..."

MUST'VE BEEN THE WIND. ANYWAY...

"...WENT FORTH TO CLAIM HIS PRIZE."

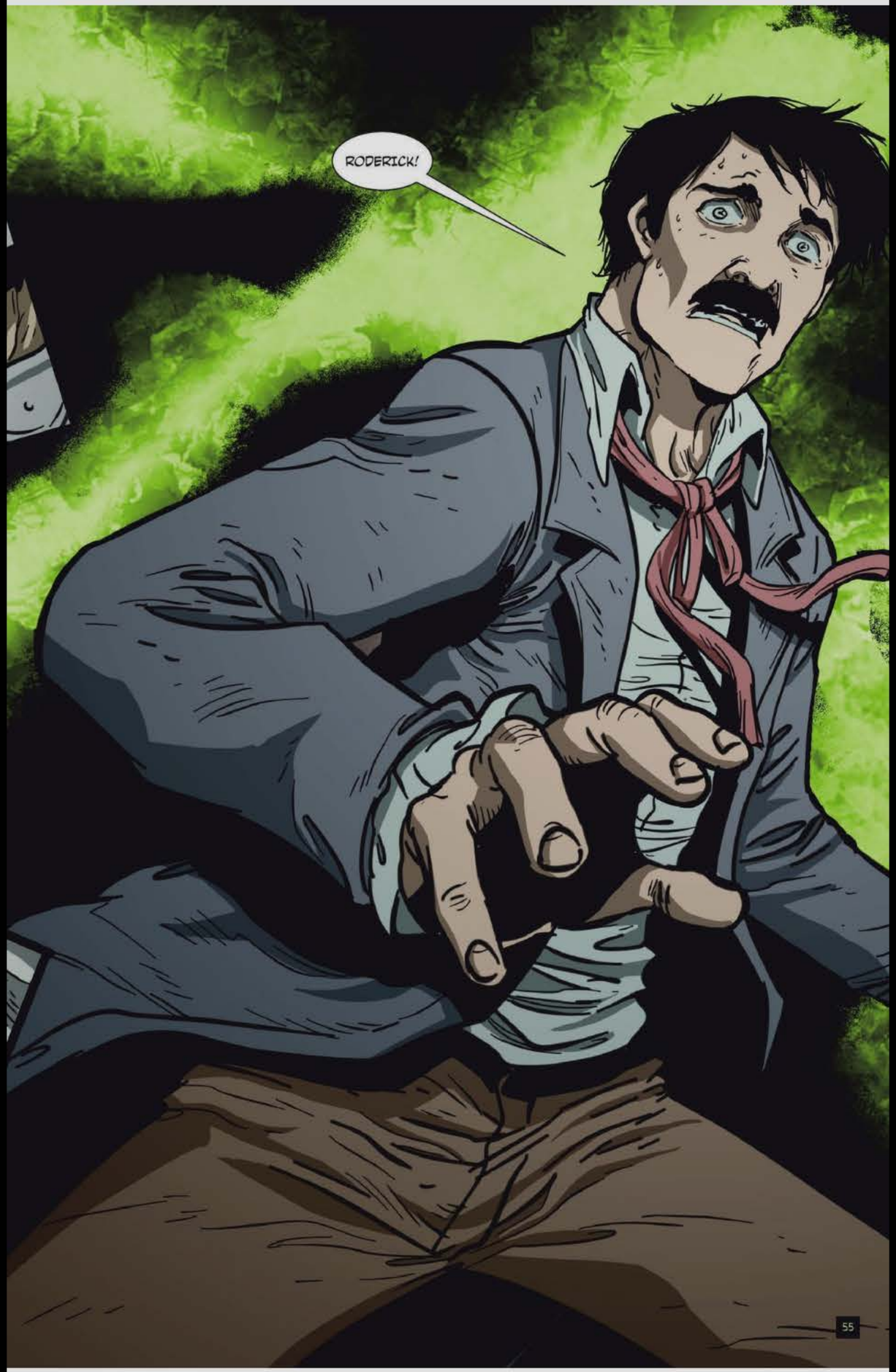
CLANG!!
CLANG!!
DID YOU HEAR THAT, RODERICK?!

DO I HEAR IT?
OF COURSE I HEAR IT.
I'VE BEEN HEARING IT FOR DAYS.
THIS IS OUR FAULT, YOU KNOW. THIS IS BECAUSE OF US.

WE PUT HER IN THAT TOMB...
...ALIVE!

MADELINE!

¡¡¡ON
¡¡¡ACK!
¡¡¡AH!


RODERICK!

OH MY GOD! IS HE... ARE THEY...
...DEAD?
CRRREEK

CRASH!!!
CRACK
THUD

THUMP!!
AH!!!

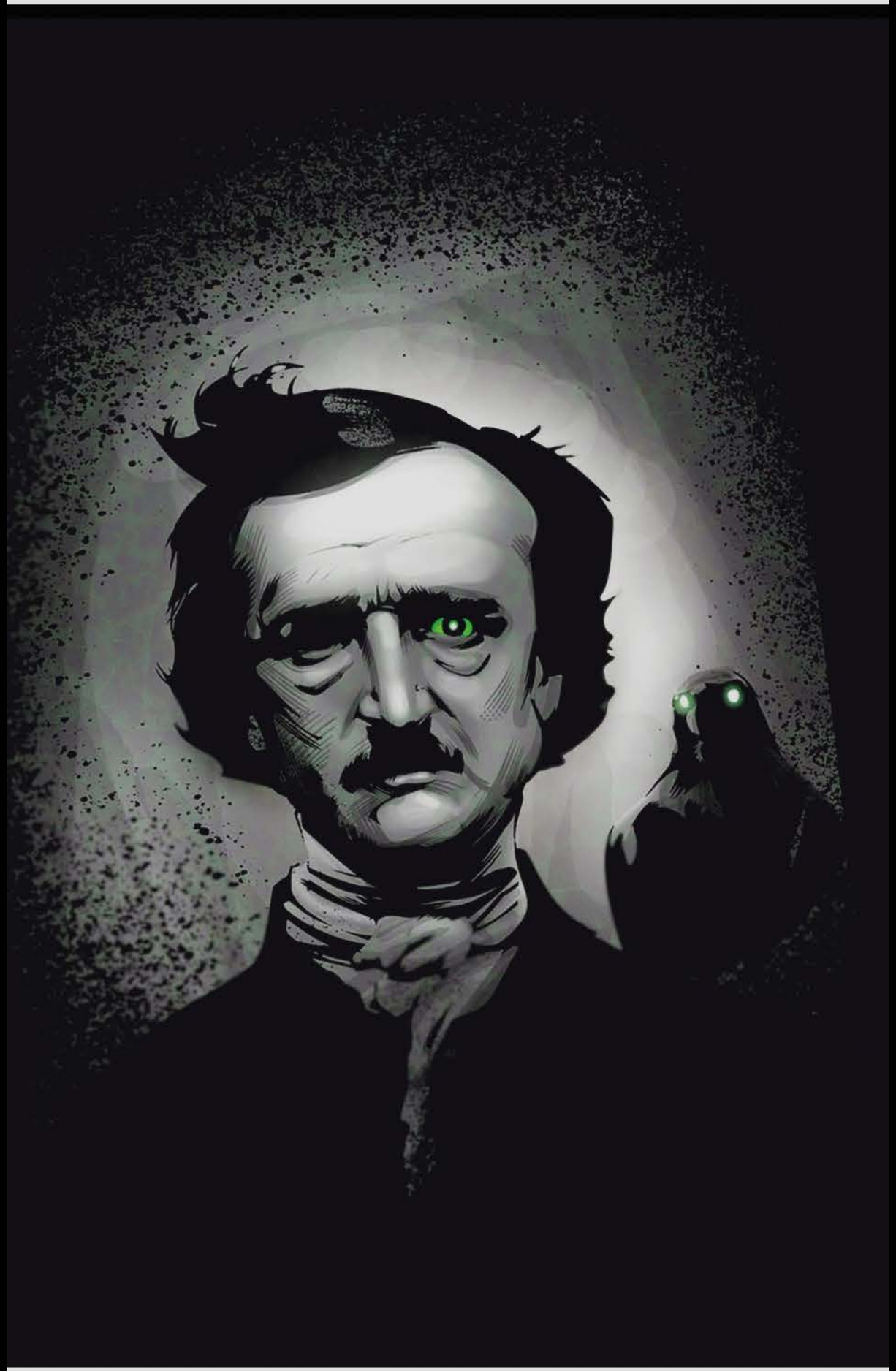
IT'S...
IT'S GONE!

FIRRRSH

GURGLE

GURGLE

GOODBYE, RODERICK...

GURGLE!

MAY THE HOUSE OF USHER REST IN PEACE.