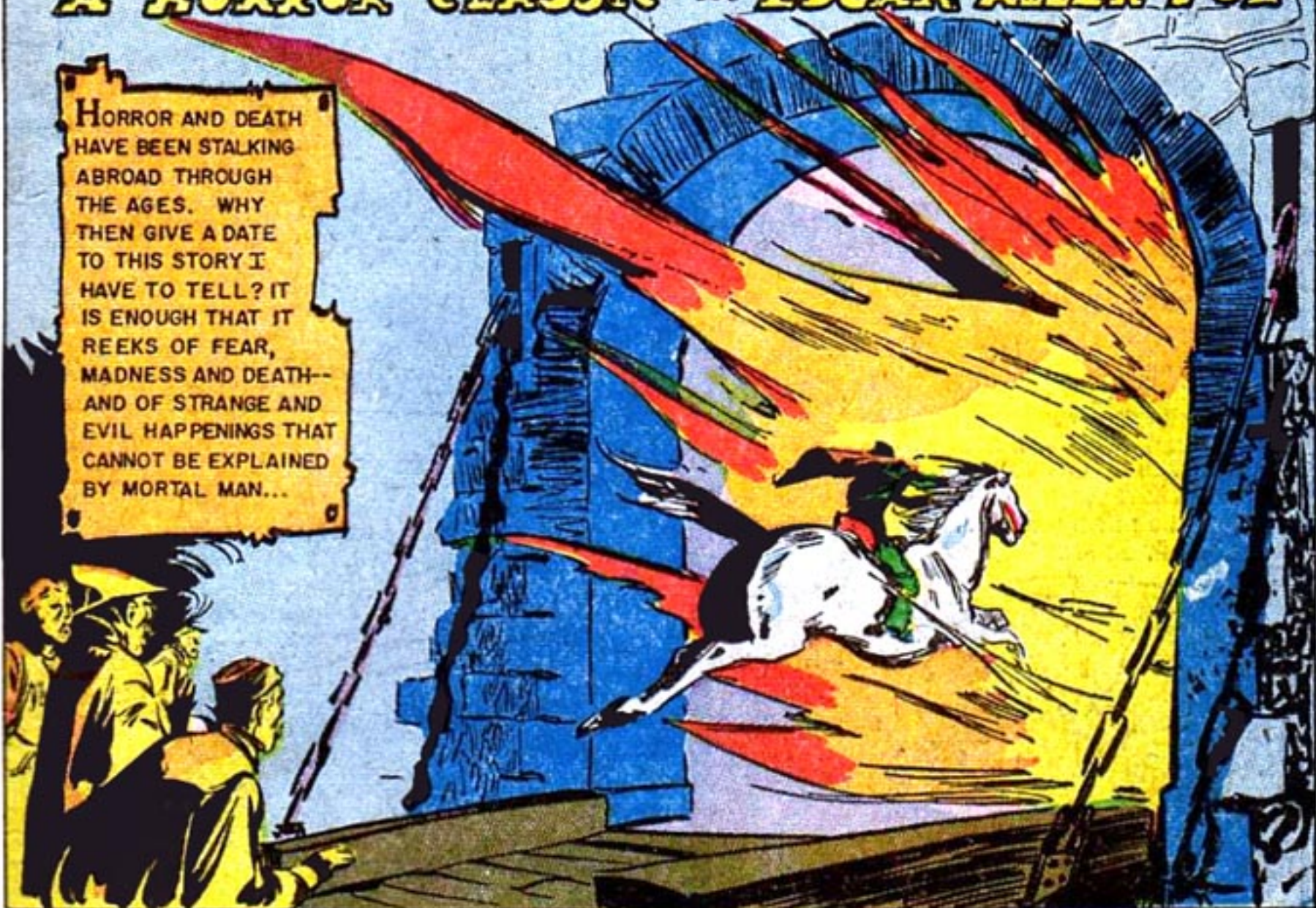


THE **CURSE** OF METZENGERSTEIN

A HORROR CLASSIC BY **EDGAR ALLEN POE**

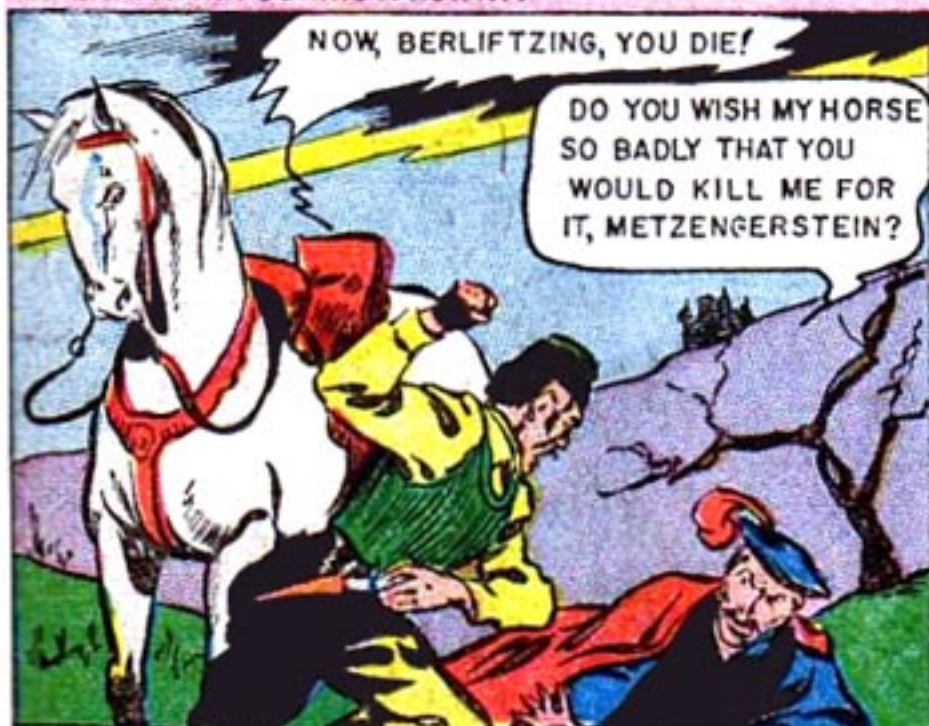
HORROR AND DEATH HAVE BEEN STALKING ABROAD THROUGH THE AGES. WHY THEN GIVE A DATE TO THIS STORY I HAVE TO TELL? IT IS ENOUGH THAT IT REEKS OF FEAR, MADNESS AND DEATH--AND OF STRANGE AND EVIL HAPPENINGS THAT CANNOT BE EXPLAINED BY MORTAL MAN...



MANY HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO IN THE WILD MOUNTAINS OF CARPATHIA DURING A HUNT...

NOW, BERLIFTZING, YOU DIE!

DO YOU WISH MY HORSE SO BADLY THAT YOU WOULD KILL ME FOR IT, METZENGERSTEIN?



PERHAPS! AND PERHAPS I HATE YOU TOO MUCH TO LET YOU LIVE.

THEN, REMEMBER THIS! YOU SHALL HAVE THE HORSE... BUT WITH IT GOES MY EVERLASTING CURSE... *IT SHALL BE A STALLION THAT WILL BRING DOOM TO THE HOUSE OF METZENGERSTEIN!*





YOUR CURSES DO NOT FRIGHTEN ME! *DIE!*

UHHH!

SOME HUNDREDS OF YEARS LATER AS THE NEW BARON FREDERIK OF METZINGERSTEIN SHOWS SOME FRIENDS HIS CASTLE...



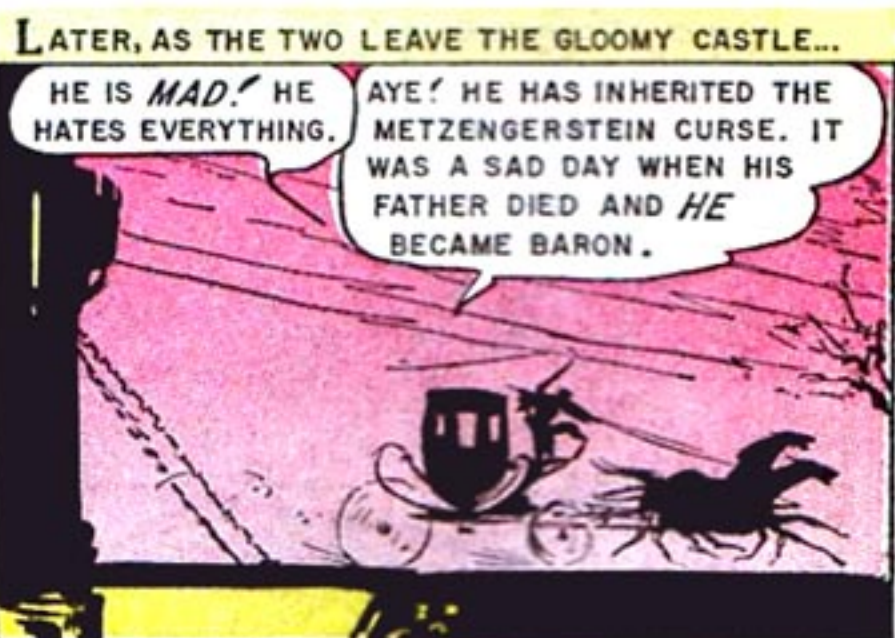
AND THIS TAPESTRY SHOWS AN ANCESTOR OF MINE KILLING A BERLIFTZING...OUR HATED ENEMIES.

BUT THEY ARE YOUR NEIGHBORS!



THAT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. ALL METZINGERSTEINS HATE BERLIFTZINGS. WE DO NOT KNOW WHY, BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER! *HA, HA, HA!*

ER, YES... I UNDERSTAND WE MUST GO NOW...



LATER, AS THE TWO LEAVE THE GLOOMY CASTLE...

HE IS *MAD!* HE HATES EVERYTHING.

AYE! HE HAS INHERITED THE METZINGERSTEIN CURSE. IT WAS A SAD DAY WHEN HIS FATHER DIED AND *HE* BECAME BARON.



AS TIME WENT ON, FREDERIK'S MADNESS AND HATE GREW! ONE NIGHT...

SOON, COUNT BERLIFTZING, YOU WILL HAVE *NO* HORSES. YOUR STABLES WILL BE GONE!



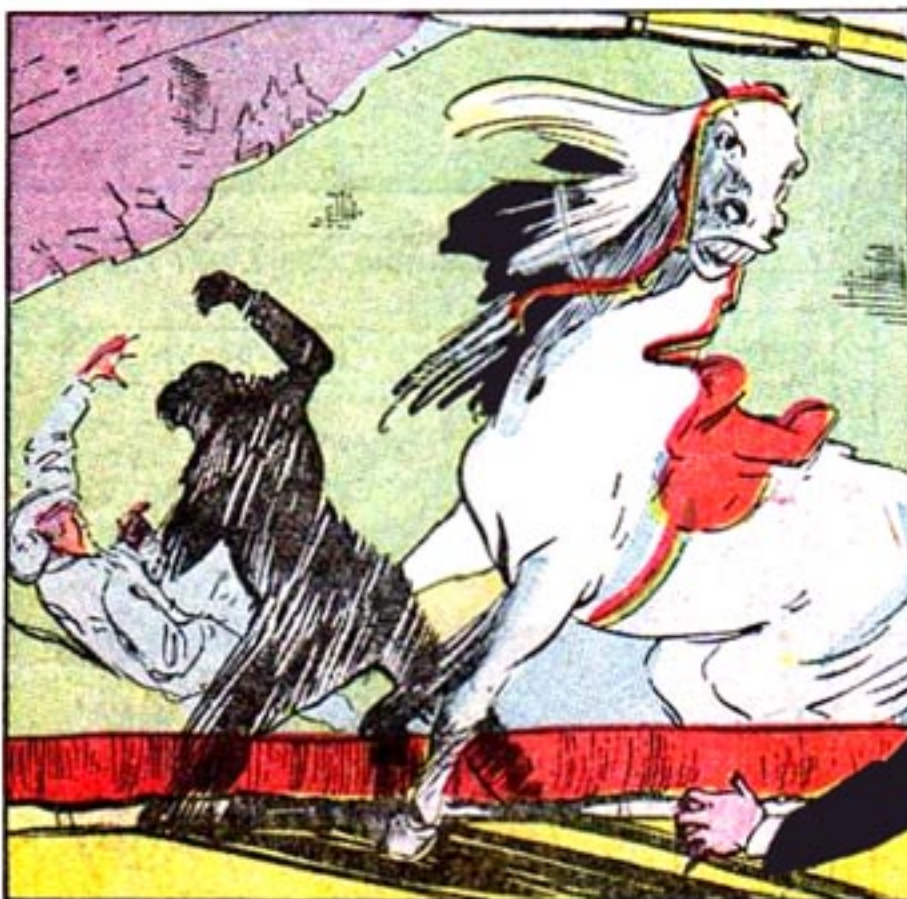
HA, HA, HA! NO BERLIFTZING LIVES WHO CAN CONQUER A METZINGERSTEIN!

HURRYING BACK TO HIS CASTLE, FREDERIK WATCHES THE FLAMES...

IF THEY BUT KNEW WHOSE HAND HAD PUT THE TORCH TO THEIR STABLES. IF THEY BUT KNEW...

SUDDENLY, *SOMETHING* COMPELS FREDERIK TO TURN AND LOOK AT THE TAPESTRY...

THE HEAD! IT MOVED! IT TURNED TOWARD ME! AHH, THOSE TEETH! THE EYES! *EEAAAH!*



MY-MY SHADOW! IT LOOKS AS IF I WERE KILLING THE MAN IN THE TAPESTRY! AND THE HORSE... IT'S TRYING TO GET AT ME!

SICK WITH TERROR FREDERIK RUNS FROM THE SCENE OF HORROR. AS HE REACHES THE CASTLE ENTRANCE...

IT IS AN OMEN! AN OMEN! YET I HAVE KILLED NO ONE...

WHAT IS IT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

COUNT BERLITZING... IS DEAD!

DEAD, YOU SAY? INDEED! SHOCKING-- SHOCKING.

HA HA HA HA HA!

AT THAT MOMENT...

IT-- IT'S THE SAME---
WHOSE HORSE IS THIS?

HE IS YOURS, SIR! AT
LEAST HE IS CLAIMED BY
NO OTHER OWNER...



MINE?

WE CAUGHT
HIM FLEEING, ALL
SMOKING AND FLAM-
ING, FROM THE BURN-
ING STABLES. WE LED
HIM BACK, BUT THE
GROOM DISCLAIMS
ANY TITLE TO HIM.



THEN FREDERIK RECEIVES EVEN MORE
STARTLING NEWS...

THE LETTERS 'W.V.B.' ARE
BRANDED ON HIM. IT COULD
STAND FOR WILLIAM VON
BERLITZING, BUT THEY
SAY NO.

THEN LET HIM BE MINE.
PERHAPS I MAY TAME
EVEN THAT DEVIL FROM
THE STABLES OF BER-
LITZING.



SIR, SOMEONE HAS CUT OUT PART OF THE
TAPESTRY IN THE TOWER CHAMBER... THE ONE
WITH THE HUGE HORSE!

TH--THE ONE
WITH THE
HORSE?



IT IS TRUE,
SIR!

LOCK THE CHAMBER IMMEDIATELY,
AND BRING THE KEY TO ME...!
HURRY!



FROM THAT DAY FORTH, FREDERIK WAS A CHANGED MAN.
MADNESS SEEMED TO HOLD HIM IN ITS GRIP...

WHAT IS THIS? I DIDN'T
ORDER WINE!

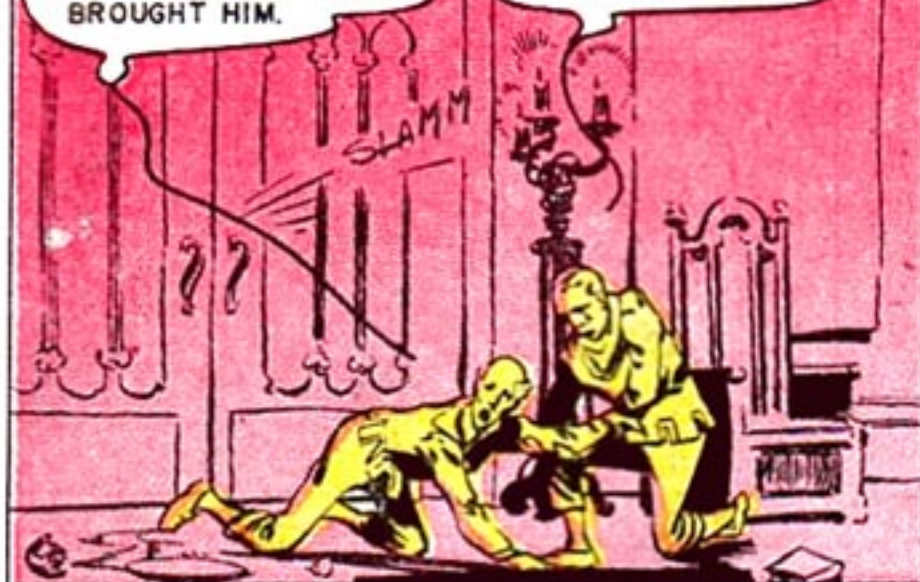
BUT YOU DID, SIR. I...
Y!!!



OUTSIDE THE BARON'S ROOM...

HE--HE BEAT ME AGAIN. HE EITHER SITS IN THAT LOCKED ROOM OR RIDES THAT WILD HORSE THEY BROUGHT HIM.

AYE, HIS ATTACHMENT FOR THAT BEAST IS UNNATURAL. I FEAR HE HAS GONE MAD.



AND IT WAS TRUE. IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, OR THE HEAT OF SUN, HE COULD BE SEEN ASTRIDE THE MONSTROUS ANIMAL...



IT IS THE BARON! HE HAS INHERITED THE STREAK OF MADNESS THAT INFESTS ALL METZENGERSTEINS. MAY GOD HELP HIM!



AND SO MATTERS WENT, UNTIL ONE STORMY NIGHT, WHEN FREDERIK WAS SEIZED WITH THE INSANE DESIRE TO RIDE HIS WILD STEED...



HURRY! HURRY!

HE IS VERY RESTLESS TONIGHT, SIR. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU DIDN'T TAKE HIM OUT!



NONSENSE! THERE IS NO HORSE IN THIS WORLD THAT I CAN'T CONTROL!



OUT OF MY WAY!

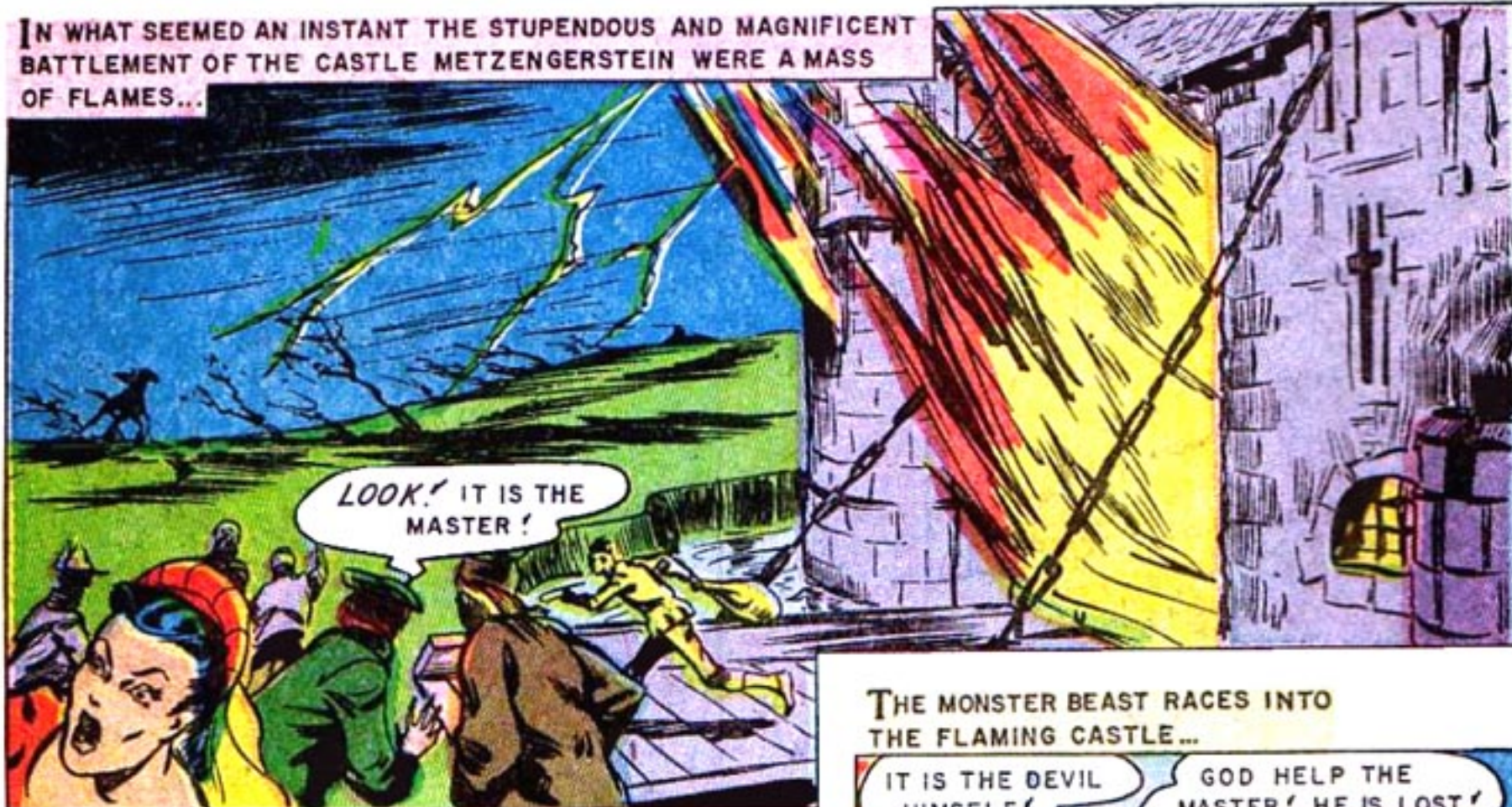
THE LOOK IN THAT BEAST'S EYE GIVES ME THE SHUDDERS.

AYE, I WOULDN'T RIDE HIM FOR ALL THE GOLD IN CARPATHIA!





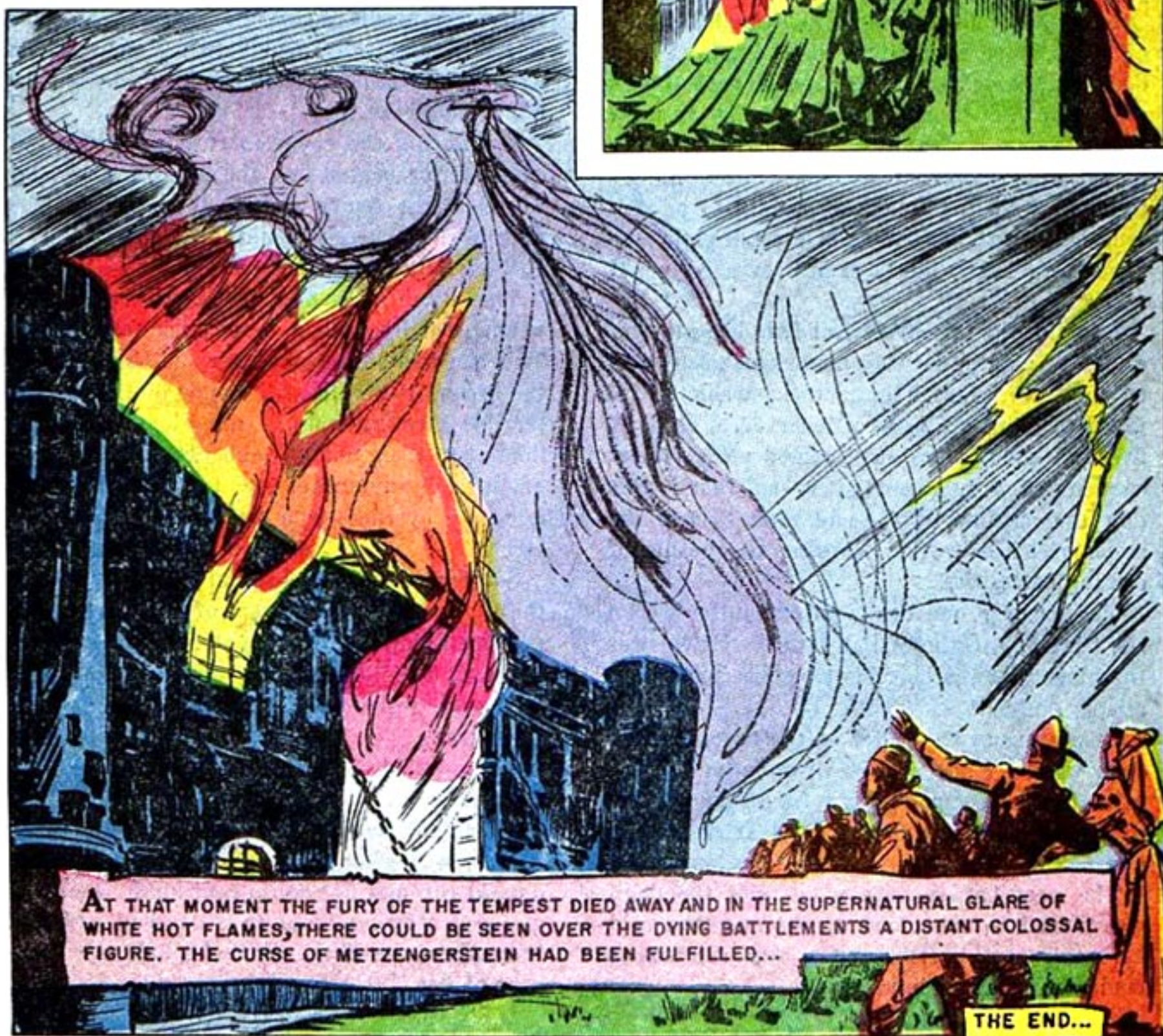
IN WHAT SEEMED AN INSTANT THE STUPENDOUS AND MAGNIFICENT BATTLEMENT OF THE CASTLE METZINGERSTEIN WERE A MASS OF FLAMES...



THE TERRIFIED FREDERIK TRYs TO STOP THE HEAD-
LONG FLIGHT OF THE ACCURSED STALLION, BUT TO
NO AVAIL ...



THEN WITH A LAST GIGANTIC BURST OF ENERGY,
THE MONSTROUS HORSE CLATTERS UP THE TOTTER-
ING STAIRCASE OF THE CASTLE TO DISAPPEAR IN
THE AWFUL FLAMES...



AT THAT MOMENT THE FURY OF THE TEMPEST DIED AWAY AND IN THE SUPERNATURAL GLARE OF
WHITE HOT FLAMES, THERE COULD BE SEEN OVER THE DYING BATTLEMENTS A DISTANT COLOSSAL
FIGURE. THE CURSE OF METZINGERSTEIN HAD BEEN FULFILLED...

THE END...