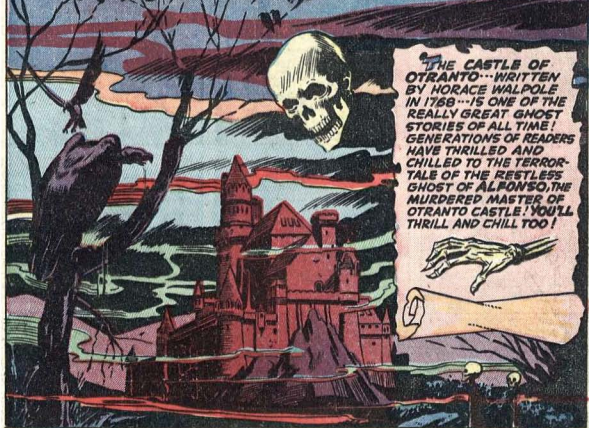


TELL ME A GHOST STORY

# The CASTLE of OTRANTO



THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO...WRITTEN BY HORACE WALPOLE IN 1768...IS ONE OF THE REALLY GREAT GHOST STORIES OF ALL TIME! GENERATIONS OF READERS HAVE THRILLED AND CHILLED TO THE TERRORTALE OF THE RESTLESS GHOST OF ALFONSO, THE MURDERED MASTER OF OTRANTO CASTLE! YOU'LL THRILL AND CHILL TOO!



THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO WAS BUILT IN THE DAYS OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR! IN THE DISMAL COURTYARD...AS HIGH, BLEAK TURRETS CATCH THE SUNLIGHT...

YES, I'M HEIR TO THIS CURSED CASTLE...BUT A SLAVE TO ITS OWNER, MY UNCLE MANFRED! AND AT HIS WISH I MUST MARRY A GIRL I'VE NEVER SEEN...BECAUSE HER NOBLE FAMILY PLEASES HIM! I'D RATHER BE DEAD THAN...



Suddenly...

WHAT? A GREAT SHADOW...SWEEPING DOWN UPON ME! AHHH!





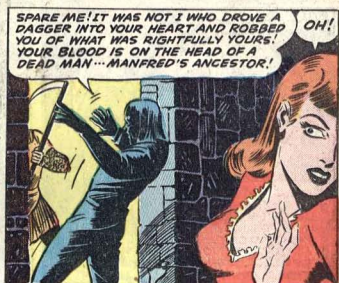
JUSTIN! IT'S...THE YOUNG MASTER! HE'S BEEN CRUSHED!



AS THE SERVANTS REACH THE COURTYARD...THE GHOSTLY HELMET VANISHES!

THERE'S A CURSE ON THIS CASTLE! THERE'S A CURSE ON MANFRED, TOO...HE'LL DIE JUST AS HIS NEPHEW DID!















I CAME TO THIS CASTLE KNOWING IT WAS RIGHTFULLY MINE! SEE... I BEAR THE SEAL OF OUR HOUSE UPON MY FLESH! AN ARROW... SPEEDING TRUE TO ITS MARK!

THEN YOU ARE MY HEIR! YOUR HERITAGE... COURAGE... AND THE RIGHT TO WALK IN THE SUNLIGHT AND FEAR NO MAN!



AS FOR YOU--MY VENGEANCE WILL BE QUICKLY SATISFIED! ...DIE, MANFRED!



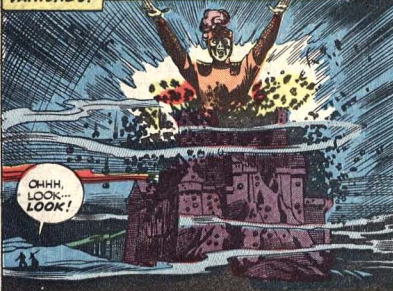
THE CASTLE WOULD DO YOU NO GOOD, LAD! IT IS STAINED WITH BLOOD AND TEARS! I WILL GROW SWIFTLY LARGER! YOU MUST GO-- BEFORE MY SPIRIT LEAVES THE EARTH FOREVER!



AS THEODORE AND ISABELLA FLEE, AGHAST, A TREMOR SHAKES THE EARTH AND THE CASTLE BEGINS TO CRUMBLE! ITS MIGHTY WALLS RUSH ASUNDER-- AND THE DARK BATTLE MENT'S CRASH TO THE PLAIN!



FOR AN INSTANT--BRIEF AS A DROPPED HEARTBEAT--A GHOSTLY SHAPE LOOMS AGAINST THE CLOUDS, GROWN TO TOWERING HEIGHT! THEN IT DIMS AND VANISHES!



Later... BY A QUIET STREAM...

SOMEHOW--I'M GLAD THE CASTLE'S GONE! A MAN WITH WISDOM IN HIS HEAD AND STRENGTH IN HIS ARMS CAN MAKE HIS OWN WAY IN THE WORLD! IT'S GOOD... JUST TO BE ALIVE!

