

# The Conqueror Worm

by Edgar Allen Poe

Lo! 'tis a gala night  
Within the lonesome latter years!  
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight in veils, and drowned in tears,  
Sit in a theatre, to see  
A play of hopes and fears,  
While the orchestra breathes fitfully  
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,  
Mutter and mumble low,  
And hither and thither fly-  
Mere puppets they, who come and go  
At bidding of vast formless things  
That shift the scenery to and fro,  
Flapping from out their Condor wings Invisible Woe!

That motley drama- oh, be sure  
It shall not be forgot!  
With its Phantom chased for evermore,  
By a crowd that seize it not,  
Through a circle that ever returneth in  
To the self-same spot,  
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,  
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout  
A crawling shape intrude!  
A blood-red thing that writhes from out  
The scenic solitude!  
It writhes!- it writhes!- with mortal pangs  
The mimes become its food,  
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs  
In human gore imbued.

Out- out are the lights- out all!  
And, over each quivering form,  
The curtain, a funeral pall,  
Comes down with the rush of a storm,  
While the angels, all pallid and wan,  
Uprising, unveiling, affirm  
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"  
And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

# **The Cask of Amontillado**

by Edgar Allen Poe

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc.

We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

# **Frankenstein**

By Mary Shelly

## **Chapter 5**

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavored to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!--Great God!

His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriance's only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same color as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and straight black lips.

# Dracula

by Bram Stoker

## Chapter Two

From Johnathan Harkers journal

It all seemed like a horrible nightmare to me, and I expected that I should suddenly awake, and find myself at home, with the dawn struggling in through the windows, as I had now and again felt in the morning after a day of overwork. But my flesh answered the pinching test, and my eyes were not to be deceived. I was indeed awake and among the Carpathians.

All I could do now was to be patient, and to wait the coming of the morning.

Just as I had come to this conclusion I heard a heavy step approaching behind the great door, and saw through the chinks the gleam of a coming light. Then there was the sound of rattling chains and the clanking of massive bolts drawn back. A key was turned with the loud grating noise of long disuse, and the great door swung back.

Within, stood a tall old man, clean shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of color about him anywhere. He held in his hand an antique silver lamp, in which the flame burned without chimney or globe of any kind, throwing long quivering shadows as it flickered in the draught of the open door. The old man motioned me in with his right hand with a courtly gesture, saying in excellent English, but with a strange intonation:-

"Welcome to my house! Enter freely and of your own will!" He made no motion of stepping to meet me, but stood like a statue, as though his gesture of welcome had fixed him into stone. The instant, however, that I had stepped over the threshold, he moved impulsively forward, and holding out his hand grasped mine with a strength which made me wince, an effect which was not lessened by the fact that it seemed as cold as ice- more like the hand of a dead than a living man. Again he said:-

"Welcome to my house. Come freely. Go safely; and leave something of the happiness you bring!" The strength of the handshake was so much akin to that which I had noticed in the driver, whose face I had not seen, that for a moment I doubted if it were not the same person to whom I was speaking; so to make sure, I said interrogatively:-

"Count Dracula?" He bowed in a courtly way as he replied:-

"I am Dracula; and I bid you welcome, Mr. Harker, to my house. Come in; the night air is chill, and you must need to eat and rest."

## Pickman's Model

by Howard Philips Lovecraft

There was something very disturbing about the nauseous sketches and half-finished monstrosities that leered round from every side of the room, and when Pickman suddenly unveiled a huge canvas on the side away from the light, I could not for my life keep back a loud scream—the second I had emitted that night. It echoed and echoed through the dim vaulting's of that ancient and nitrous cellar, and I had to choke back a flood of reaction that threatened to burst out as hysterical laughter. MERCIFUL CREATOR! I don't know how much was real and how much was feverish fancy. It doesn't seem to me that earth can hold a dream like that!

## The Call of Cthulhu

by Howard Philips Lovecraft

### I. The Horror In Clay

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

## The Other

by Howard Philips Lovecraft

Unhappy is he to whom the memories of childhood bring only fear and sadness. Wretched is he who looks back upon lone hours in vast and dismal chambers with brown hangings and maddening rows of antique books, or upon awed watches in twilight groves of grotesque, gigantic, and vine-encumbered trees that silently wave twisted branches far aloft. Such a lot the gods gave to me—to me, the dazed, the disappointed; the barren, the broken. And yet I am strangely content, and cling desperately to those sere memories, when my mind momentarily threatens to reach beyond to *the other*.

# **The Haunting of Hill House**

By Shirley Jackson

## *Chapter 1*

No live organism can continue for long to exist sanely under conditions of absolute reality; even larks and katydids are supposed, by some, to dream. Hill House, not sane, stood by itself against its hills, holding darkness within; it had stood so for eighty years and might stand for eighty more. Within, walls continued upright, bricks met neatly, floors were firm, and doors were sensibly shut; silence lay steadily against the wood and stone of Hill House, and whatever walked there, walked alone.

# **THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO**

By Ann Radcliffe

The carriages were at the gates at an early hour; the bustle of the domestics, passing to and fro in the galleries, awakened Emily from harassing slumbers: her unquiet mind had, during the night, presented her with terrific images and obscure circumstances, concerning her affection and her future life. She now endeavored to chase away the impressions they had left on her fancy; but from imaginary evils she awoke to the consciousness of real ones.