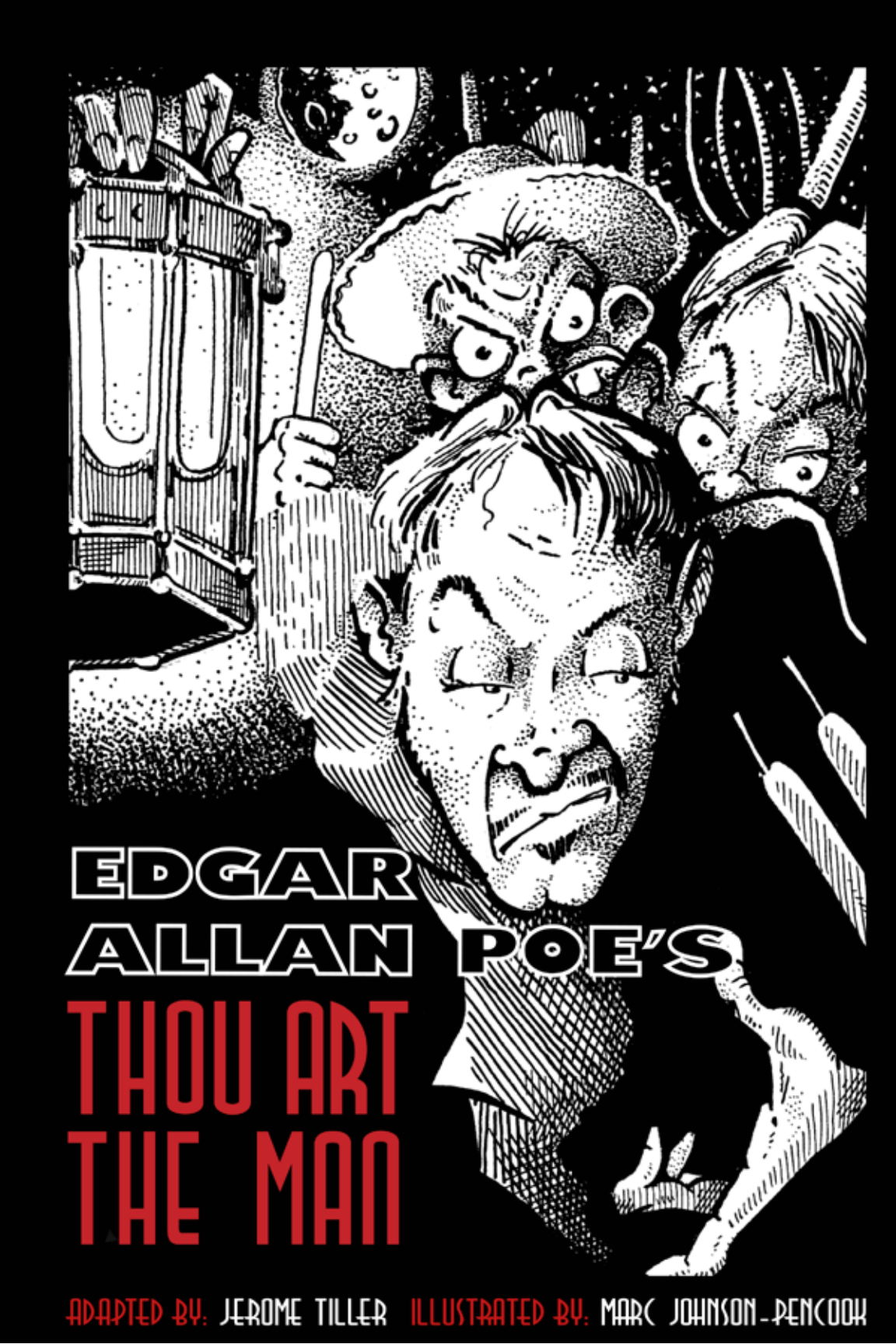


EDGAR ALLAN POE'S THOU ART THE MAN

ADAPTED BY: JEROME TILLER ILLUSTRATED BY: MARC JOHNSON-PENCOOK

PREFACE

This is an adapted version of a story written by Edgar Allan Poe, one of the world's all-time greatest authors. Some changes (paragraph breaks, rearrangements, minor additions and omissions, etc.) were made to accommodate the illustration of characters and critical scenes in the story. Some changes (additions, omissions, word choice, word order, etc.) were made to expand its accessibility and appeal, keeping modern youth in mind. No change was made with the notion it would improve the text or the story.

The original version is a classic—please make a point to read it sooner or later. You are bound to enjoy it when you do!

Among other places, the original version of Thou Art the Man can be found at:

http://www. gutenberg.org/

Mr. Barnabas Shuttleworthy—one of the wealthiest and most respectable citizens in Rattleborough—had set out from town very early one Saturday morning on horseback with the avowed intention of proceeding to the city of Ruxbridge, about fifteen miles distant, and of returning home on the night of the same day.

Two hours after Mr. Shuttleworthy's departure, however, his horse returned without him, and also without the saddlebags that had been strapped on its back. The animal was wounded, too, and covered with mud. These circumstances naturally gave rise to much alarm among the friends of the missing man. When he had not yet made his appearance on Sunday morning, the citizens of the town arose en masse to go and look for his body.

The foremost and most energetic in beginning this search was the bosom friend of Mr. Shuttleworthy—a Mr. Charles Goodfellow, or, as he was universally called, "Charley Goodfellow," or "Old Charley Goodfellow".

Now, I have never been able to figure out why, but the fact is unquestionable that never yet was there any person named Charles who was not an open, manly, honest, good-natured, and frank-hearted fellow, with a rich, clear voice that did you good to hear it, and an eye that looked you always straight in the face inasmuch as to say: "I have a clear conscience myself, am afraid of no man, and am altogether above doing a mean action."

"Old Charley Goodfellow," had been in Rattleborough not longer than six months, and although nobody knew anything about him before he came to settle in the neighborhood, he experienced no difficulty in making the acquaintance of all the respectable people in the town. Every man among them would have taken his bare word for a thousand at any moment. As for the women, there is no telling what they would not have done to oblige him. And all this came about because he had been christened Charles, and because he possessed, in consequence, that sincere face which is proverbially the very "best letter of recommendation".

I have already said that Mr. Shuttleworthy was most respectable and, undoubtedly, the wealthiest man in Rattleborough, while "Old Charley Goodfellow" got along with him as intimately as if he had been his own brother. The two old gentlemen were next-door neighbors, and, although Mr. Shuttleworthy seldom, if ever, visited "Old Charley", and never was known to take a meal in his house, this did not prevent the two friends from being exceedingly close. "Old Charley" never let a day pass without stepping in three or four times to see how his neighbor was. Very often he would stay to breakfast or tea, and almost always to dinner, and at these sittings the amount of wine the two old cronies put down would really be hard to ascertain.

"Old Charley's" favorite beverage was Chateau-Margaux, and it appeared to do Mr. Shuttleworthy's heart good to see the old fellow swallow it, as he did, quart after quart. One day, with the wine in them and their wits naturally somewhat out, Mr. Shuttleworthy slapped his crony upon the back.

"I tell you what it is, 'Old Charley'", he said. "You are, by all odds, the heartiest old fellow I ever came across in all my born days. And since you love to guzzle the wine like you do, I'll be darned if I don't have to make you a present of a big box of the Chateau-Margaux."

"By gosh", continued Mr. Shuttleworthy, "I'm gonna send an order to town this very afternoon for a double box of the best that can be got, and I'll make you a present of it, I will! Ya needn't say a word now. I will, I tell ya. So look out for it. It will come to pass one of these fine days, precisely when you are looking for it the least!"

This little bit of generosity on the part of Mr. Shuttleworthy shows how very intimate an understanding existed between the two friends.

On the Sunday morning in question, when it came to be fairly understood that Mr. Shuttleworthy had met with foul play, I never saw anyone so profoundly affected as "Old Charley Goodfellow".

When he first heard that the horse had come home without his master, and without his master's saddlebags, and all bloody from a pistol shot that had gone clean through and through the poor animal's chest without quite killing it, Charley turned as pale as if the missing man had been his own dear brother or father, and shivered and shook all over as if he had had a fit of chills and fever.

At first he was much too overpowered with grief to be able to do any thing at all, or to agree upon any plan of action. For a long time he endeavored to dissuade Mr. Shuttleworthy's other friends from making a stir about the matter. He thought it best to wait awhile, say for a week or two, or a month, or two months, to see if something wouldn't turn up, or if Mr. Shuttleworthy wouldn't come in the natural way and explain his reasons for sending his horse home before him.

People who are laboring under very poignant sorrow have often been observed to stall or procrastinate like this. Their powers of mind seem to be rendered slow and dull, so that they have a horror of anything like action. People in this state like nothing in the world so much as to lie quietly in bed and "nurse their grief", as some old folks express it—that is to say, repeatedly turn the trouble over in their mind.

The people of Rattleborough had indeed so high an opinion of the wisdom and discretion of "Old Charley", that the greater part of them felt disposed to agree with him, and not make a stir in the business "until something should turn up", as the honest old gentleman worded it.

It is likely this would have been the general determination except for the very suspicious interference of Mr. Shuttleworthy's nephew, Pennifeather. He was a young man of very wasteful habits and otherwise a rather bad character. This nephew would listen to nothing like reason in the matter of "lying quiet", but insisted upon making immediate search for the "corpse of the murdered man". This was the expression he employed, and Mr. Goodfellow acutely remarked at the time that it was "a singular expression, to say no more".

This remark of "Old Charley's" also had great effect upon the crowd, and one of the party was heard to ask, very impressively, "how it happened that young Mr. Pennifeather was so intimately aware of all the circumstances connected with his wealthy uncle's disappearance as to feel authorized to assert, distinctly and decisively, that his uncle was 'a murdered man'". Hereupon some bickering occurred among various members of the crowd, and especially between "Old Charley" and Mr. Pennifeather.

This confrontation between"Old Charley" and Mr. Pennifeather was, indeed, by no means a novelty, for no good will had existed between them for the last three or four months. Matters had even gone so far

that Mr. Pennifeather had actually knocked down his uncle's friend for some alleged excess of liberty that "Old Charley" had taken in his uncle's house where the nephew was residing.

Upon this occasion "Old Charley" is said to have behaved with commendable moderation and Christian charity. He arose from the blow, adjusted his clothes, and made no attempt to retaliate at all—merely muttering a few words about "taking summary vengeance at the first convenient opportunity",—a natural and very justifiable outburst of anger which meant nothing, however, and beyond doubt, was no sooner vented than forgotten.

However these matters may be (which have no reference to the point now at issue), it is quite certain that the people of Rattleborough, principally through the persuasion of Mr. Pennifeather, at length decided to disperse over the adjacent country in search of the missing Mr. Shuttleworthy.

I say this is what they decided to do at first. After it had been fully resolved that a search should be made, it was considered almost a matter of course that the seekers should disperse—that is to say, distribute themselves in parties—for the more thorough examination of the region round about. I forget, however, by what ingenious train of reasoning it was that "Old Charley" finally convinced the assembly that this was the most unsound plan that could be pursued. Convince them, however, he did—all except Mr. Pennifeather, and, in the end, it was arranged that a search should begin, carefully and very thoroughly, by the townsfolk en masse with "Old Charley" himself leading the way.

As for the matter of that, there could have been no better pioneer than "Old Charley", whom everybody knew to have the eye of a lynx, but although he led them into all manner of out-of-the-way holes and corners, by routes that nobody had ever suspected of existing in the neighborhood, and although the search was incessantly kept up day and night for nearly a week, still no trace of Mr. Shuttleworthy could be discovered.

When I say no trace, however, I must not be understood to speak literally, for to some extent there certainly was a trace. The poor gentleman had been tracked by his horse's shoes

(which were peculiar) to a spot about three miles to the east of the town on the main road leading to the city. Here the track made off into a by-path through a piece of woodland—the path coming out again into the main road and cutting off about half a mile of the regular distance.

Following the shoe-marks down this lane, the party came at length to a pool of stagnant water, half hidden by the brambles. To the right of the lane and opposite this pool all trace of the track was lost sight of. It appeared, however, that a struggle of some nature had here taken place, and it seemed as if some large and heavy body, much larger and heavier than a man, had been drawn from the by-path to the pool.

This pool was carefully dragged twice, but nothing was found, and the party was about to go away in despair when Providence suggested to Mr. Goodfellow the appropriateness of draining the water off altogether. This project was received with cheers and with many high compliments to "Old Charley" for his wisdom and consideration.

As many of the townspeople had brought spades with them, supposing that they might possibly be called upon to dig up a corpse, the drain was easily and speedily accomplished, and no sooner was the bottom visible, than right in the middle of the mud that remained was discovered a black silk velvet waistcoat, which nearly every one present immediately recognized as the property of Mr. Pennifeather.

This waistcoat was much torn and stained with blood, and there were several persons among the party who had a distinct remembrance of its having been worn by its owner on the very morning of Mr. Shuttleworthy's departure for the city. There were others, again, ready to testify upon oath, if required, that Mr. P. did not wear the garment in question at any period during the remainder of that memorable day, nor could any one be found to say that he had seen Mr. P. wear the garment at any time after Mr. Shuttleworthy's disappearance.

Matters now wore a very serious aspect for Mr. Pennifeather. He grew exceedingly pale, and when asked what he had to say for himself, he was utterly incapable of saying a word. Mr. P's riotous mode of living had left him but a few friends, and they to a man, upon observing his reaction to this discovery of the vest, deserted him at once and, even more than his ancient and avowed enemies, clamored for his instantaneous arrest.

But, on the other hand, in contrast with the clamoring crowd, the high-mindedness of Mr. Goodfellow shone forth with all the more brilliant luster. He made a warm and intensely eloquent defense of Mr. Pennifeather, in which he alluded more than once to his own sincere forgiveness of that wild young gentleman, "the heir of the worthy Mr. Shuttleworthy", for the insult which Mr. Pennifeather had, no doubt in the heat of passion, thought proper to put upon him.

"I forgave him for it", Mr. Goodfellow said, "from the very bottom of my heart. And rather than push the present suspicious circumstances to extremes, circumstances which I am sorry to say really have arisen against Mr. Pennifeather, I will instead do everything in my power, will employ all the little eloquence in my possession to–to–to soften down, as much as I can conscientiously do, the worst features of this really exceedingly perplexing piece of business."

Mr. Goodfellow went on for some half hour longer in this strain, very much to the credit both of his head and his heart. But such warm-hearted people as he, in the hot-headedness of their zeal to serve a friend, are seldom appropriate in their observations—they run into all sorts of blunders, awkward mishaps and ludicrous misuse of words. Thus, often with the kindest intentions in the world, they do infinitely more to prejudice a friend's cause than to advance it.

In the present instance, so it did turn out with all the eloquence of "Old Charley". For, although he labored earnestly on behalf of the suspected, somehow or other every syllable he uttered had the effect to deepen the suspicion already attached to the individual whose cause he pleaded and to arouse against him the fury of the mob.

One of the most unaccountable errors committed by the orator was his allusion to the suspected as "the heir of the worthy old gentleman Mr. Shuttleworthy". The people had never thought of this before. They had only remembered certain threats of disinheritance uttered a year or two previously by the uncle (who had no living relative except the nephew), and they had, therefore, always looked upon this disinheritance as a matter that was settled.

But the remark by "Old Charley" brought them at once to a consideration of this point, and it helped them to see the possibility that Mr. Shuttleworthy's threats had in fact been nothing more than threats. And straightway there arose the natural question of "who stands to gain from this?"—a question that tended even more than the bloody vest to fasten the terrible crime upon the young man.

Now in the present instance, the question "who stands to gain" very pointedly implicated Mr. Pennifeather. His uncle had threatened him, after making a will in his favor, with disinheritance. But the threat had not been actually kept; the original will, it appeared, had not been altered. Had it been altered, the only supposable motive for murder on the part of the suspected would have been the ordinary one of revenge, and even this would have been counteracted by the hope of

restoration into the good graces of the uncle. But the will being unaltered, while the threat to alter it remained suspended over the nephew's head, suggested at once the very strongest possible motive for the atrocity, and so concluded, very wisely, the worthy citizens of Rattleborough.

Mr. Pennifeather was, accordingly, arrested on the spot, and the crowd, after some further search, proceeded homeward having him in custody. On the route, however, another circumstance occurred tending to confirm the suspicion they entertained.

Mr. Goodfellow, whose zeal led him to be always a little in advance of the party, was seen suddenly to run forward a few paces, stoop, and then to pick up some small object from the grass. After quickly examining it, he was observed to make an attempt, or sort of half-attempt, at concealing in his coat pocket what he had found, but this action was noticed, as I say, and consequently prevented, when the object picked up was found to be a Spanish knife which a dozen persons at once recognized as belonging to Mr. Pennifeather. Moreover, his initials were engraved upon the handle. The blade of this knife was open and bloody.

Now no doubt remained of the guilt of the nephew, and immediately upon reaching Rattleborough, he was taken

before a judge for examination. Here matters again took a most unfavorable turn. The prisoner, being questioned as to his whereabouts on the morning of Mr. Shuttleworthy's disappearance, had the absolute audacity to acknowledge that on that very morning he had been out with his rifle deer-stalking in the immediate neighborhood of the pool where the blood-stained waistcoat had been discovered through the wisdom of Mr. Goodfellow.

Mr. Goodfellow now came forward and, with tears in his eyes, asked permission to be examined by the judge. He said the stern sense of the duty that he owed his Maker, not less than his fellow-men, would no longer permit him to remain silent. He said that, before now, his sincerest affection for the young man (notwithstanding the ill-treatment he had received from him) had induced him to imagine every possible thing that might account for all the suspicious circumstances that appeared to point to Mr. Pennifeather. But, he said, these circumstances were now altogether too convincing—too damning. He would hesitate no longer—he would tell all he knew, although his heart should absolutely burst asunder in the effort.

Mr. Goodfellow then went on to swear that on the afternoon of the day before Mr. Shuttleworthy departed for the city, he had heard that worthy old gentleman mention to his nephew

that he was going to town the next day to make a deposit of an unusually large sum of money in the "Farmers and Mechanics' Bank", and that during the same conversation Mr. Shuttleworthy had also distinctly informed his nephew that he had irrevocably decided to cancel the original will and cut him off without a shilling. Mr. Goodfellow now solemnly called upon the accused to state whether this was or was not the truth in every substantial particular. Much to the astonishment of every one present, Mr. Pennifeather frankly admitted that it was.

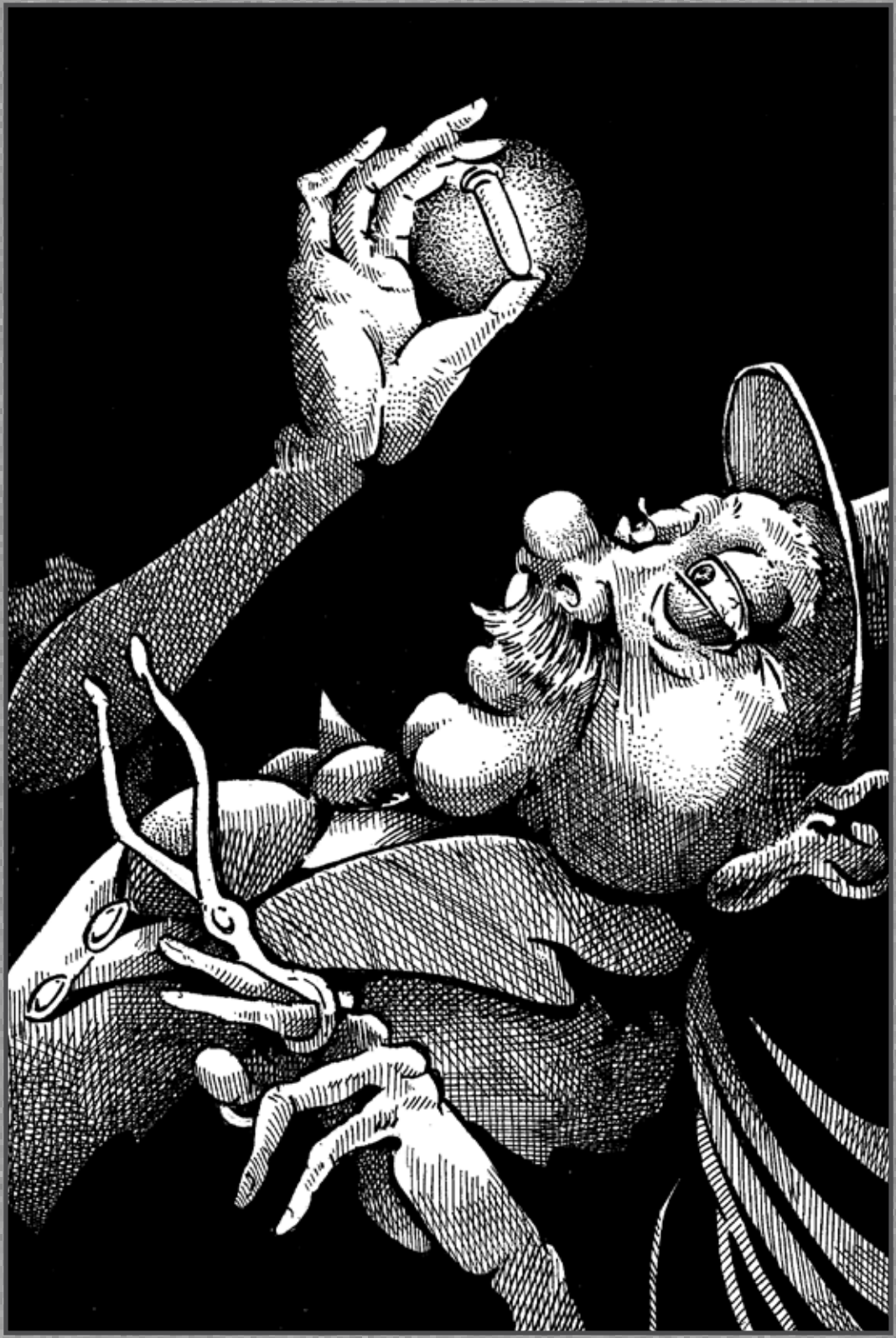
The judge now considered it his duty to send a couple of constables to search the chamber of the accused in the house of his uncle, and they almost immediately returned with the well-known steel-bound, russet leather pocket-book that the old gentleman had been in the habit of carrying for years. Its valuable contents, however, had been removed.

The judge tried to make the prisoner state what use he had made of the contents or in which place they had been concealed, but Mr. Pennifeather obstinately denied all knowledge of the matter. The constables also produced a shirt and handkerchief that they had found between the bed and mattress of the victim. Both articles were marked with B.S., the initials of his name, and both hideously besmeared with his blood.

At this juncture, it was announced that the horse of the murdered man had just died in the stable from the effects of the wound it had received. Upon hearing this, Mr. Goodfellow proposed that a post mortem examination of the beast should be immediately made, with the view, if possible, of discovering the bullet.

This was accordingly done and, as if to demonstrate beyond a question the guilt of the accused, Mr. Goodfellow, after considerable searching in the cavity of the horse's chest, was able to detect and pull forth a bullet of very extraordinary size. Upon testing, this bullet was found to be exactly adapted to the bore of Mr. Pennifeather's rifle, while it was far too large to fit the rifle of any other person in the town or its vicinity.

To render the matter even surer yet, however, this bullet was discovered to have a flaw or seam at right angles to the usual seam. Upon examination, this seam corresponded precisely with an accidental ridge in a pair of bullet molds that the accused admitted owning and regularly using to manufacture bullets for his unusual rifle.



Upon discovery of this evidence, the examining judge refused to listen to any further testimony. He immediately committed the prisoner for trial and firmly declined to take any bail in the case, although Mr. Goodfellow very warmly complained against this severe restriction and solemnly offered to post bond in whatever amount might be required.

This generosity on the part of "Old Charley" was only in keeping with his friendly and gracious conduct during the entire period of his temporary stay in Rattleborough. In this particular display of his virtuous conduct, the worthy Mr. Goodfellow was so entirely carried away by the warmth of his sympathy that, when he offered to put up bail for his young friend, he seemed to have quite forgotten that he did not possess a single dollar's worth of property upon the face of the earth.

The result of the judge's committal of Mr. Pennifeather may be easily foreseen. Amid the loud cursings of all Rattleborough, he was brought to trial at the next criminal sessions. The chain of circumstantial evidence (strengthened as it was by some additional damning facts from Mr. Goodfellow, whose sensitive conscientiousness forbade him to withhold evidence from the court) was considered so unbroken and so thoroughly conclusive that the jury returned an immediate verdict of "Guilty of murder in the first degree."

Soon afterward the unhappy wretch received the sentence of death, and he was remanded to the county jail to await the unchangeable vengeance of the law.

In the meantime, the noble behavior of "Old Charley" Goodfellow had doubly endeared him to the honest citizens of Rattleborough. He became ten times a greater favorite than ever, and, as a natural result of the hospitality with which he was treated, he relaxed the extremely stingy habits which his poverty had, until now, impelled him to observe. Very frequently he had little reunions at his own house when wit and gaiety reigned supreme—dampened a little, of course, by the occasional remembrance of the unfortunate and melancholy fate which hovered over the nephew of the late lamented bosom friend of the generous host.

One fine day, this noble old gentleman was agreeably surprised at the receipt of the following letter:

To: Charles Goodfellow, Esq., Rattleborough
From: H.F.B. & Co. Chateau-Margaux

A — No. 1.— 6 doz. bottles (1/2 Gross)

Charles Goodfellow, Esquire

Dear Sir:

In conformity with an order transmitted to our firm about two months since by our esteemed correspondent, Mr. Barnabus Shuttleworthy, we have the honor this morning of forwarding to your address a double box of Chateau-Margaux of the antelope brand, violet seal. Box numbered and marked as per margin.

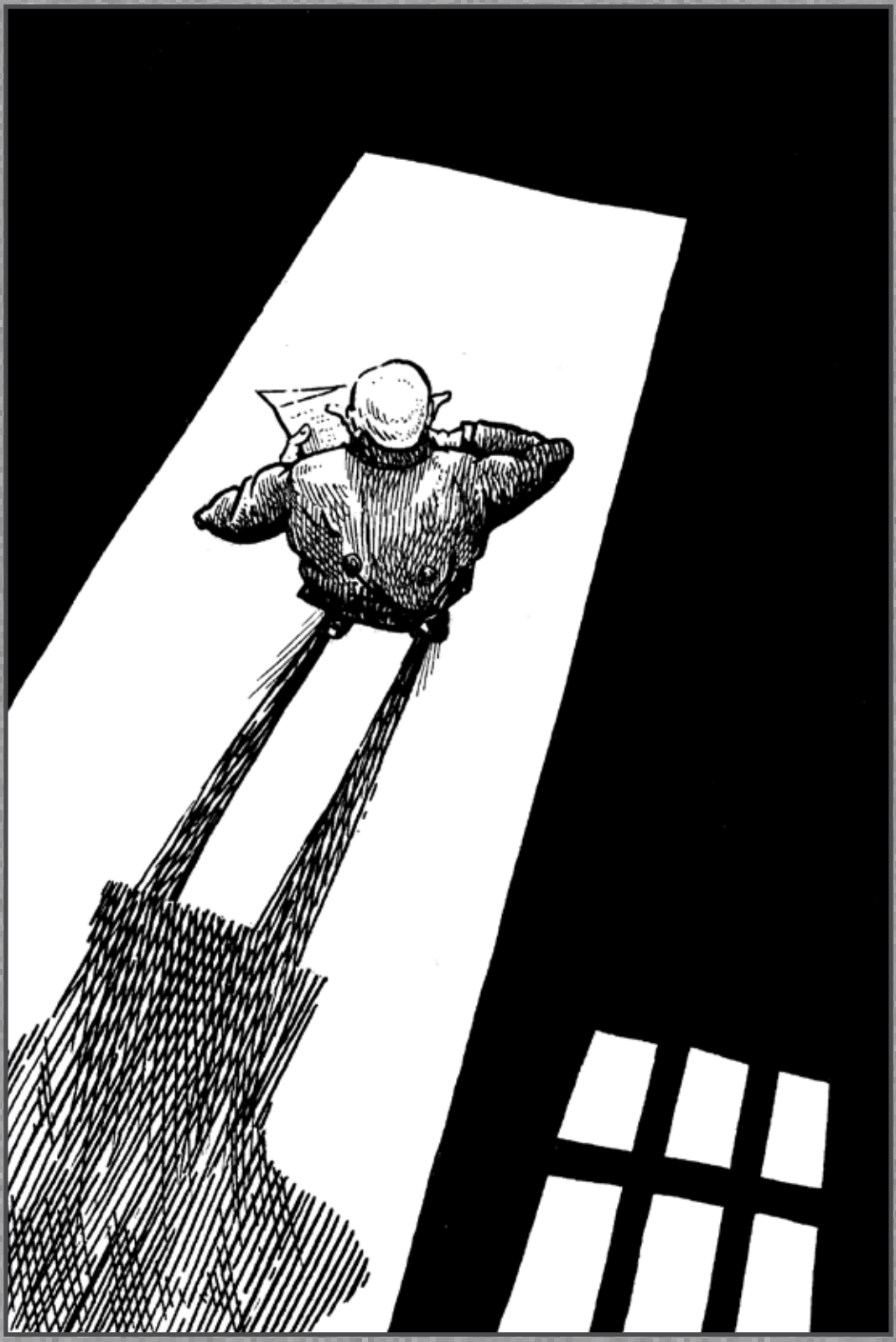
We remain, sir,

Your most obedient servants,

HOGGS, FROGS, BOGS, & CO

P.S. The box will reach you by wagon on the day after your receipt of this letter. Our respects to Mr. Shuttleworthy.

"H., F., B., & CO."



Since the death of Mr. Shuttleworthy, Mr. Goodfellow had given up all expectation of ever receiving the promised Chateau-Margaux. Therefore, he now looked upon it as a sort of exceptional distribution of Providence on his behalf. He was highly delighted, of course, and in the exuberance of his joy, he invited a large party of friends to a small supper on the very next day for the purpose of cracking open the good old Mr. Shuttleworthy's present.

Not that he said anything about "the good old Mr. Shuttleworthy" when he issued the invitations. The fact is, he thought much about it and concluded to say nothing at all. He did not mention to any one—if I remember right—that he had received a present of Chateau-Margaux. He merely asked his friends to come and help him drink some wine of a remarkable fine quality and rich flavor that he had ordered up from the city a couple of months ago and that he would receive the day of the supper.

I have often puzzled myself over why "Old Charley" had decided to say nothing about having received the wine from his old friend, but I could never precisely understand his reason for the silence, although he had some excellent and very high-minded reason, no doubt.

A very large and highly respectable company showed up at Mr. Goodfellow's house when the next day arrived. Indeed, half the town of Rattlesborough was there—I myself among the number—but, much to the irritation of the host, the Chateau-Margaux arrived late, and not until the guests had finished the sumptuous supper "Old Charley" had prepared for them. It came at length, however, and a monstrously big box of it there was, too. Since everyone was in excessively good humor, it was decided, unanimously, that the box should be lifted upon the table and its contents removed without delay.

No sooner said than done. I lent a helping hand and, in a flash, we had the box upon the table and amongst all the bottles and glasses, not a few of which were demolished in the scuffle. "Old Charley," who was pretty much intoxicated and excessively red in the face, took a seat. With an air of mock dignity he sat at the head of the table and thumped furiously upon it with a decanter, calling upon the company to keep order "during the ceremony of disinterring the treasure."

After some clamor, quiet was at length fully restored and, as often happens in similar cases, a profound and remarkable silence ensued. Being then requested to force open the lid, I complied "with an infinite deal of pleasure". I inserted a chisel, and giving it a few slight taps with a hammer, the top of the box flew suddenly

off. At the same instant, there sprang up into a sitting position, directly facing the host, the bruised, bloody, and nearly putrid corpse of the murdered Mr. Shuttleworthy himself. The corpse gazed for a few seconds, fixedly and sorrowfully, and with its decaying and lackluster eyes full into the face of Mr. Goodfellow, it uttered slowly, but clearly and impressively, the words "Thou art the man!" Then, falling over the side of the chest as if thoroughly satisfied, it stretched out its limbs quiveringly upon the table.

The scene that came afterward is altogether beyond description. The rush for the doors and windows was terrific, and many of the most robust men in the room fainted outright through sheer horror. But after the first wild, shrieking burst of fright, all eyes were directed to Mr. Goodfellow.

If I live a thousand years, I can never forget the more than mortal agony which was depicted in that ghastly face of his so lately flushed red with triumph and wine. For several minutes he sat rigidly as a statue of marble, his eyes seeming, in the intense vacancy of their gaze, to be turned inward and absorbed in the contemplation of his own miserable, murderous soul. At length the expression in his eyes appeared to flash suddenly out into the external world, when, with a quick leap he sprang from his chair, and falling heavily with his head and shoulders upon the table, and in contact with the corpse, poured out rapidly and vehemently a detailed confession of the hideous crime for which Mr. Pennifeather had been imprisoned and doomed to die.

In substance what he recounted was this: He followed his victim to the vicinity of the pool; there shot his horse with a pistol, dispatched its rider with the butt end, possessed himself of the pocket-book, and, supposing the horse dead, dragged it with great labor to the brambles by the pond. Upon his own beast he slung the corpse of Mr. Shuttleworthy and thus bore it to a secure place of concealment a long distance off through the woods. The waistcoat, the knife, the pocket-book, and bullet had been placed by himself where found with the view of avenging himself upon Mr. Pennifeather. He had also plotted the discovery of the stained handkerchief and shirt.

Towards the end of this blood-churning recital, the words of the guilty wretch faltered and grew hollow. When the record was finally exhausted, he arose, staggered backward from the table, and fell dead.

Although efficient, the means by which I extorted this happily-timed confession were simple indeed. Mr. Goodfellow's excess frankness had disgusted me and excited my suspicions from the first. I was also present when Mr. Pennifeather struck him and knocked him down, and the fiendish expression which arose then upon the face of "Old Charley", although momentary, assured me that his threat of vengeance would, if possible, be rigidly fulfilled. I was thus prepared to view the maneuvering of "Old Charley" in a very different light from that in which the good citizens of Rattleborough regarded it.

I saw at once that all the incriminating discoveries arose, either directly or indirectly, from himself. But the fact which clearly opened my eyes to the true state of the case was the affair of the bullet found by Mr. G. in the carcass of the horse. I had not forgotten, although the citizens had, that there was a hole where the ball had entered the horse and another where it went out. If it were found in the animal then, after having made its exit, I saw clearly that it must have been deposited by the person who found it.

The bloody shirt and handkerchief confirmed the idea suggested by the bullet, for the blood on examination proved to be claret red wine and no more. When I came to think of these things, and also of the late increase of liberality and expenditure on the part of Mr. Goodfellow, I entertained a suspicion which was none the less strong because I kept it altogether to myself.

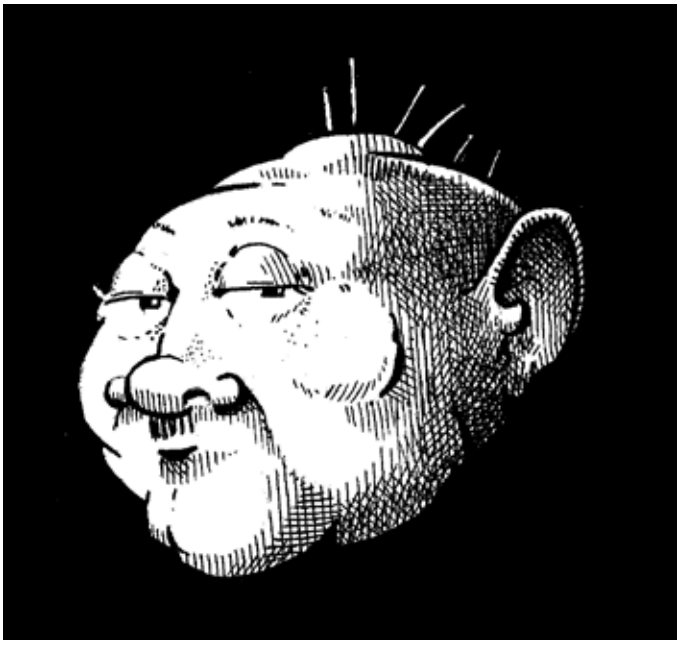
In the meantime, I instituted a rigorous private search for the corpse of Mr. Shuttleworthy and, for good reasons, searched in quarters as divergent as possible from those to which Mr. Goodfellow conducted his party. The result was that, after some days, I came across an old dry well, the mouth of which was nearly hidden by brambles; here, at the bottom, I discovered what I sought.

Now it so happened that I had overheard the conversation between the two cronies, when Mr. Shuttleworthy promised Mr. Goodfellow a box of Chateaux-Margaux.

Upon this hint I acted. I procured a length of supple whalebone and thrust it down the throat of the corpse. I then deposited the corpse in an old wine box—taking care to double up the body so as to also double up the whalebone, which loaded tension into it. Having done this, I had to press forcibly upon the lid to keep it down while I secured the lid with nails. I anticipated, of course, that as soon as the nails were removed, the top would fly off and the body up.

Having thus arranged the box, I marked, numbered, and addressed it as already told. And then, writing a letter in the name of the wine merchants with whom Mr. Shuttleworthy dealt, I gave instructions to my servant to wheel the box to Mr. Goodfellow's door in a barrow at a given signal from myself. For the words which I intended the corpse to speak, I confidently depended upon my polished abilities as an amateur ventriloquist. For the effect of those words, I counted upon the conscience of the murderous wretch.

I believe there is nothing more to be explained. Mr. Pennifeather was released upon the spot, inherited the fortune of his uncle, profited by the lessons of experience, turned over a new leaf, and led happily ever afterward a new life.



the end

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

Edgar Allan Poe was a fascinating, superbly talented writer who lived a troubled, unfortunate life. He was born in Boston on January 19 1809. His father, an actor, abandoned his family when Poe was one year old, and his mother, an actress, died of tuberculosis when he was two. Brought up by foster parents who never adopted him, Poe did not fit in well at home. A gloomy person, Poe also did not fit in well at school, in the military, or within society at large. But he sure could write well. At the age of eighteen he was a published author and by twenty-two he had decided he would make his living as a writer. Unfortunately, Poe needed to write constantly to avoid extreme poverty, and he did not achieve fame until after his ill-fated death at the age of forty. He died soon after being discovered unconscious on a street in Baltimore; he was traveling to Philadelphia to get married.

Edgar Allan Poe began his literary career as a poet. He believed beauty of sound was the essential element in good poetry. He relied upon beauty of sound while composing his poetry and his prose and, as a highly skilled literary critic, used sound as a criteria to judge the work of others. Poe also believed all literary works should be short. Applying this standard to himself, he became a master of the short poem and the short story. He is universally credited with inventing the detective story and perfecting tales of horror. Although Poe's talents were vast, he is rarely credited with possessing a sense of humor. But he actually did possess a devilish wit, and along with many other works, the detective story "Thou Art the Man" displays it very well.

More than a century and a half after his death, Edgar Allan Poe is still popular with readers the world over. He is the only American writer who could rightfully claim to be a master of three separate literary forms—the short story, the short poem, and literary criticism. Poe is best known for "The Raven", a poem widely considered to be the most famous in all of American literature. Poe was honored in Baltimore, the city where he died, when they named their NFL franchise the "Ravens".

Marc Johnson-Pencook is an illustrator, animator, and muralist. He lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His illustrations appear in books, periodicals, gallery shows and private collections, and his murals adorn many walls and ceilings in public places and private spaces in the Twin Cities and beyond. He also teaches illustration at the Atelier Studio Program of Fine Art in Minneapolis and the Art Academy in St. Paul. In addition, Marc composes and performs rock music —he currently plays percussion for “Ozmo Stone”— a rock band based in Minneapolis. Marc can be contacted at: http://illustratormarc.com/

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