

(Printed with an unregistered version of Fade In)

MORAN

That's why I'm here. To extend an opportunity.

POE

An opportunity.

MORAN

Yes, to repent.

POE

I have something to repent?

MORAN

Oh, yes, most certainly. The Sin of Pride. Of all the deadly sins, it's easily the most insidious. You see, Mr. Poe, people hate to blame themselves for their misfortunes. Rather put the blame on something else. God, fate, luck... Obsessed with self, ironically they fail to see that they are in control.

POE

Repentance...

(then)

I'm not interested, but how would we proceed? You tell me how I strayed, and guide my feet back on the path?

MORAN

That's not exactly how repentance works. It kind of has to come from you. Epiphany, not revelation. I merely put the truth before you, let you reach your own conclusions.

(then)

Not to be glib, Mr. Poe, but what exactly do you have to lose? Most certainly you can't go on like this. Lord help your poor soul if you do.

POE

How do I know you're not the devil?

(Poe is startled by a
voice from behind
him)

GRISWOLD

You think the devil, who is occupied with the collapse of mankind, makes time to visit poets?

POE

Griswold! What the hell are you doing here?

GRISWOLD

In Baltimore? Scraping the gutters for scoundrels. It would appear I've struck it rich.

POE

Villain! You think I didn't hear you read aloud my eulogy?

GRISWOLD

Just practicing. Something to look forward to. Actually, I've come to help you.

POE

I need no help from you!

GRISWOLD

Ah, yes--the Sin of Pride! What use is the grace of God to the mighty Poe?

POE

This fellow here is offering salvation!

GRISWOLD

He's offering distraction, I offer truth!

MORAN

The Great Deceiver!

GRISWOLD

The Blind Believer!

POE

You two have met?

GRISWOLD

As darkness meets the dawn.

MORAN

(to Poe)

Do not be led astray. Watch what I shall show you and discern the path to your redemption!

GRISWOLD

What an offer! Cut and dried and tied with a ribbon. If only fate were that simple.

POE

This is beginning to feel Faustian.

GRISWOLD

What good is repentance? It's all doubt and self-delusion. Wouldn't you rather a practical answer? No constant oscillation between hope and hopelessness! No pointless begging to unlistening gods!

MORAN

You make it sound so bitter.