

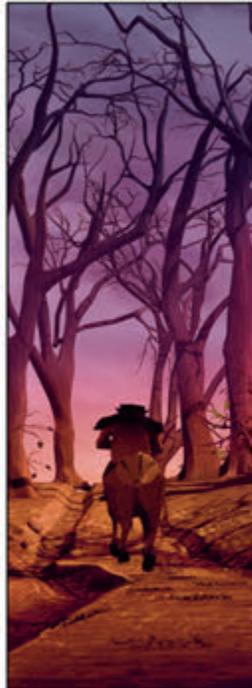




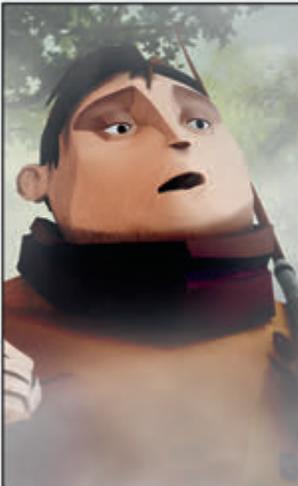
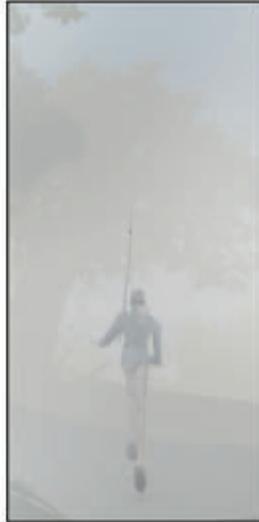
IT WAS PASSING THROUGH A SINGULARLY DREARY TRACT OF COUNTRY...

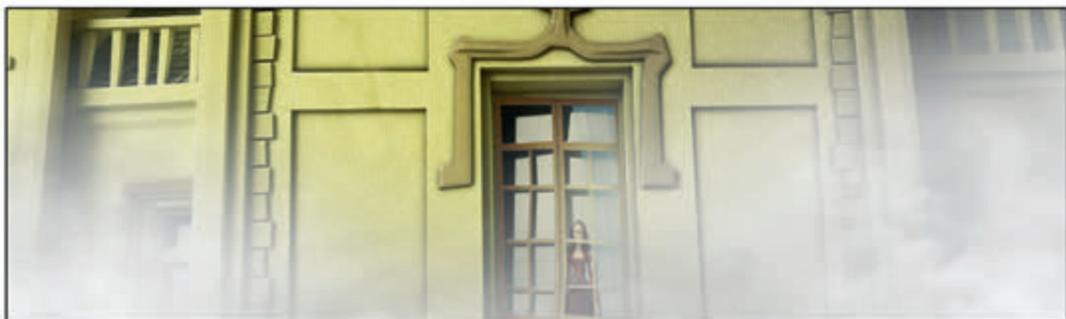


...THAT I FOUND MYSELF WITHIN VIEW OF THE MELANCHOLY HOUSE OF USHER.



IT WAS A MAGICAL PLACE...







I REINED MY HORSE TO THE PRECIPITOUS BRINK OF A BLACK AND LURID TARN THAT LAY IN UNRUFFLED LUSTRE BY THE DWELLING, AND GAZED DOWN...





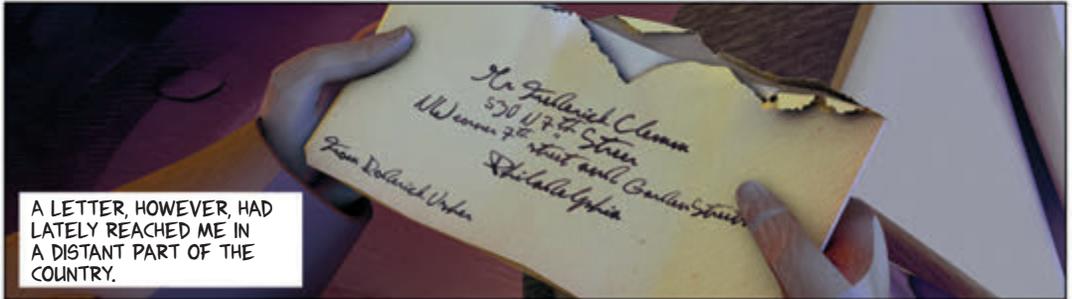
...UPON THE REMODELLED AND INVERTED IMAGES OF GRAY SEDGE, AND THE GHASTLY TREE-STEMS, AND THE VACANT AND EYE-LIKE WINDOWS.



ITS PROPRIETOR, RODERICK USHER, HAD BEEN ONE OF MY BOON COMPANIONS IN BOYHOOD.



BUT MANY YEARS HAD ELAPSED SINCE OUR LAST MEETING.



A LETTER, HOWEVER, HAD LATELY REACHED ME IN A DISTANT PART OF THE COUNTRY.

I KNOW NOT HOW IT WAS...



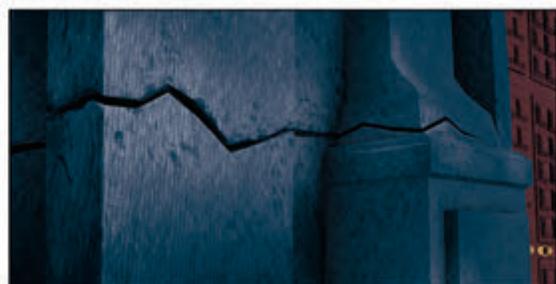
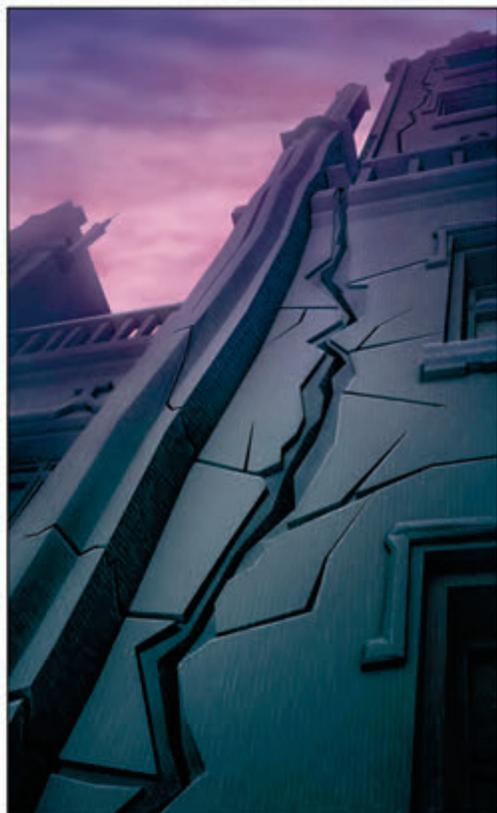
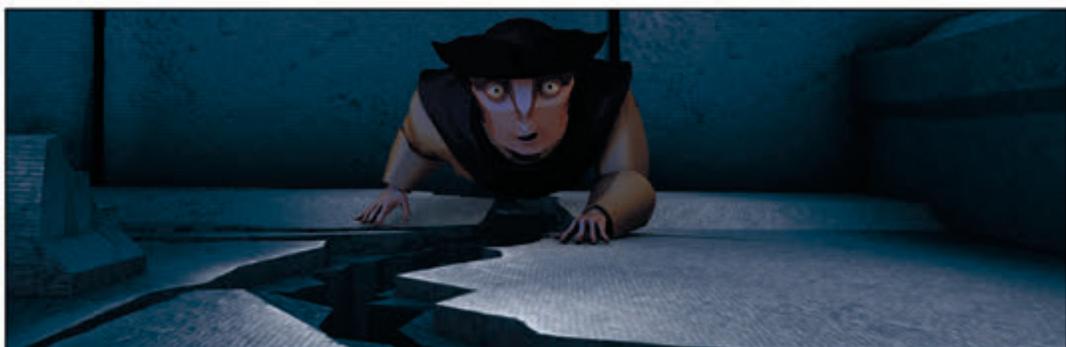
...BUT, WITH THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE BUILDING...

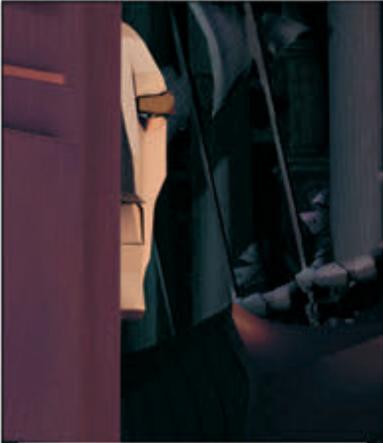


...A SENSE OF INSUFFERABLE GLOOM PERVADED MY SPIRIT.

WHAT WAS IT THAT SO UNNERVED ME IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE HOUSE OF USHER?







THE WRITER SPOKE OF ACUTE
BODILY ILLNESS--OF A MENTAL
DISORDER WHICH OPPRESSED
HIM--AND OF AN EARNEST DESIRE
TO SEE ME...

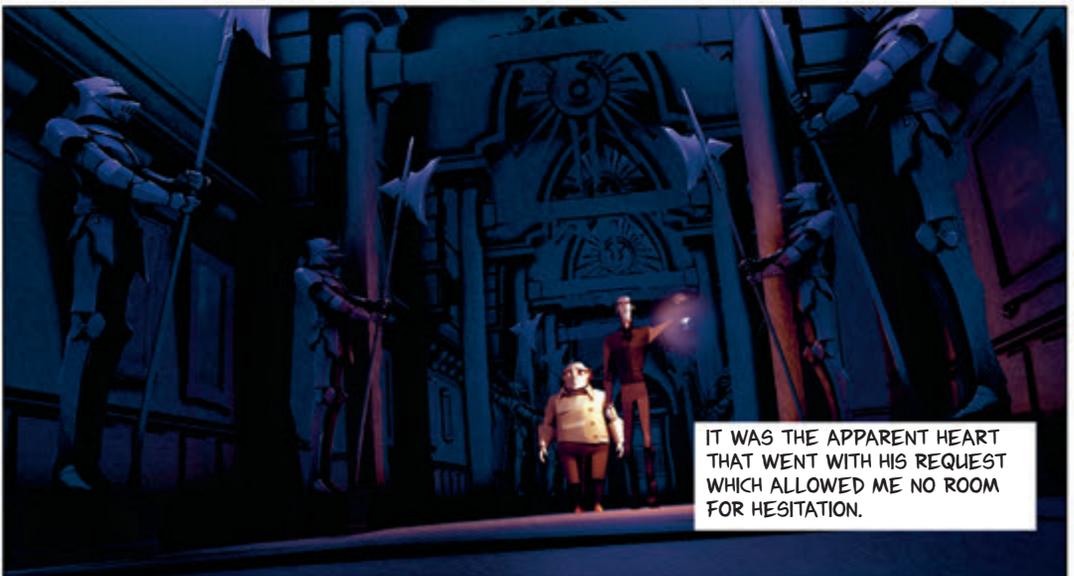
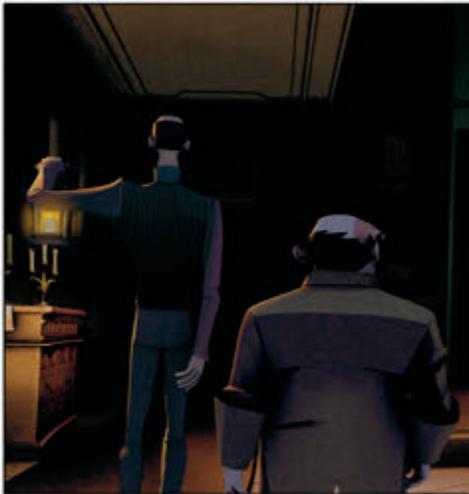


...AS HIS BEST, AND INDEED HIS ONLY,
PERSONAL FRIEND...





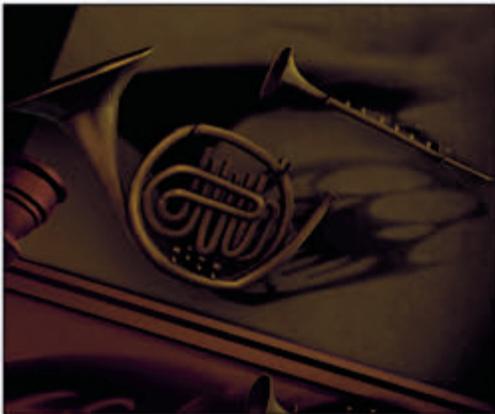
...WITH A VIEW OF ATTEMPTING, BY THE CHEERFULNESS OF MY SOCIETY, SOME ALLEVIATION OF HIS MALADY.



IT WAS THE APPARENT HEART THAT WENT WITH HIS REQUEST WHICH ALLOWED ME NO ROOM FOR HESITATION.



IT WAS THUS THAT HE SPOKE OF THE OBJECT OF MY VISIT, OF HIS EARNEST DESIRE TO SEE ME, AND OF THE SOLACE HE EXPECTED ME TO AFFORD HIM.



HE ENTERED INTO WHAT HE CONCEIVED
TO BE THE NATURE OF HIS MALADY. IT
WAS, HE SAID, A CONSTITUTIONAL AND A
FAMILY EVIL...



AND ONE FOR
WHICH HE
DESPAIRED...

...TO FIND A REMEDY.



IT WAS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT I COULD BRING MYSELF TO ADMIT THE IDENTITY OF THE WAN BEING BEFORE ME WITH THE COMPANION OF MY EARLY BOYHOOD.



