

Tales of Terror

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This article is about the 1962 horror film. For the American punk band, see [Tales of Terror \(band\)](#). For the Stormwitch album, see [Tales of Terror \(album\)](#).

Tales of Terror



1962 US Theatrical Poster

Directed by	Roger Corman
Produced by	Samuel Z. Arkoff Roger Corman James H. Nicholson
Written by	Richard Matheson
Starring	Vincent Price Peter Lorre Basil Rathbone
Music by	Les Baxter
Cinematography	Floyd Crosby
Editing by	Anthony Carras
Distributed by	American International Pictures
Release date(s)	4 July 1962
Running time	89 min.
Country	United States
Language	English

Box office \$1.5 million^[1]



Alternate theatrical poster

Tales of Terror (1962) is an [American International Pictures horror film](#) starring [Vincent Price](#), [Peter Lorre](#), and [Basil Rathbone](#); it is the fourth in a series of eight adaptations of [Edgar Allan Poe](#) stories directed by [Roger Corman](#) and released by AIP. (The Corman movie [The Haunted Palace](#), ostensibly also based on Poe, is a ring-in, since it was actually based on H. P. Lovecraft's [The Case of Charles Dexter Ward](#)).

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[[edit](#)] Plot

The three short sequences are based on the following Poe tales: "[Morella](#)", "[The Black Cat](#)" which is combined with another Poe tale, "[The Cask of Amontillado](#)"^[1], and "[The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar](#)". Each sequence is introduced by [Vincent Price](#) who also appears in all three narratives.

[[edit](#)] "Morella"

When Lenora Locke ([Maggie Pierce](#)) travels from Boston to be reunited with her father ([Vincent Price](#)) in his decrepit and cobwebbed mansion, she finds him drunk, disordered, and depressed. He refuses her company, insisting that she killed her mother Morella ([Leona Gage](#)) in childbirth. Lenora then discovers her mother's body decomposing on a bed in the

house. Lenora cannot return to Boston and remains in the house to care for her father. His feelings soften towards her when he learns she has a terminal illness. One night Morella's spirit rises, and kills Lenora in revenge for her childhood death. Morella's body is then resurrected, becoming as whole and as beautiful as she was in life. This is in exchange for Lenora's, which is now decomposing where Morella lay. Morella strangles her horrified husband as a fire breaks out in the house. Then Morella and Lenora return to their original bodies, Lenora smiling as she lies on her dead father, rotten Morella cackling as the flames consume the house. The cast includes [Edmund Cobb](#) as a coach driver.

[\[edit\]](#) "The Black Cat"



[Casting call](#) for black cats for "The Black Cat" segment in *Tales of Terror*, 1961

Montresor Herringbone ([Peter Lorre](#)) hates his wife Annabelle ([Joyce Jameson](#)) and her [black cat](#). One night on a ramble about town, he happens upon a wine-tasting event and challenges the world's foremost wine taster, Fortunato Luchresi ([Vincent Price](#)), to a contest. Herringbone becomes drunk. Luchresi escorts him home and meets his wife. Time passes, and Annabelle and Luchresi become intimate. The cuckolded Herringbone then inters them alive in an alcove in the basement. The authorities become suspicious and two policemen ([John Hackett](#) and [Lennie Weinrib](#)) visit the house to investigate. Hearing screeching behind a basement wall, they knock the wall down to discover the dead lovers — and Annabelle's black cat, which Herringbone had accidentally walled up with the lovers. Cast includes [Wally Campo](#) as bartender Wilkins and [Alan DeWitt](#) as the Wine-Tasting Chairman.

[\[edit\]](#) "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar"

Dying from a painful disease, M. Valdemar (Vincent Price) employs a hypnotist, Mr. Carmichael ([Basil Rathbone](#)), to alleviate his suffering by putting him under various trances. He then remains between the world of the living and the dead. In a trance, Valdemar begs Carmichael to release his soul so he can die but Carmichael cruelly refuses. Months pass and Valdemar's putrifying body remains in his bed under the complete control of Carmichael. The hypnotist tries to force Valdemar's wife Helene ([Debra Paget](#)) to marry him. When she refuses, he attacks her. Valdemar's putrid body rises from the bed and kills Carmichael. Helene is rescued by Valdemar's physician ([David Frankham](#)) and carried from the scene of horror.

[\[edit\]](#) Cast

- [Vincent Price](#) as Fortunato/Valdemar/Locke
- [Maggie Pierce](#) as Lenora Locke
- [Leona Gage](#) as Morella Locke
- [Edmund Cobb](#) as Driver
- [Peter Lorre](#) as Montresor Herringbone
- [Joyce Jameson](#) as Annabel Herringbone
- [Basil Rathbone](#) as Mr. Carmichael

[\[edit\]](#) Production

Corman commented on how *Tales of Terror* differed from his earlier film adaptations released by AIP:^[1]

With *Tales of Terror*, we tried to do something a little different. The screenplay was actually a series of very frightening, dramatic sequences inspired by several of the Poe stories. To break things up, we tried introducing humor into one of them..."

The three stories in the film took a total of three weeks to film.^[1] For the conclusion of "Morella", Corman reused some sets and event footage from the fiery climax of *House of Usher*.^[1]

To give the impression of Vincent Price's face melting away, a mixture of glue, glycerin, corn starch and make-up paint was heated and then poured over his head. The substance was so hot, that Price could only stand it for a few seconds.^[1]

[\[edit\]](#) Reception

The New York Times called the film a "dull, absurd and trashy adaptation."^[2]

[\[edit\]](#) Merchandise

The film was released on DVD; [Dell Comics](#) published a comic book adaptation of the film.

A novelization of the film was written in 1962 by Eunice Sudak adapted from [Richard Matheson](#)'s screenplay and published by Lancer Books in paperback.

[\[edit\]](#) References

- ↑ *[a b c d e f](#) Spotlight: *Tales of Terror** from [Turner Classic Movies](#)
- ↑ *[July 5, 1962 review of *Tales of Terror*](#)* and *[Burn, Witch, Burn](#)* from [The New York Times](#)

[\[edit\]](#) External links

- *[Tales of Terror](#)* at the [Internet Movie Database](#)

- [Tales of Terror](#) at [AllRovi](#)
- [Tales of Terror](#) at [Rotten Tomatoes](#)
- [Waiting in line for Tales of Terror audition](#) from the [Life](#) magazine photo archives

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Richard Matheson

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