

I. LITERARY WEIRD TALE. FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER BY EDGAR

ALLAN POE pdf

1: SparkNotes: Poe's Short Stories: "The Fall of the House of Usher" ()

"The Fall of the House of Usher" is a narrative short story by American writer Edgar Allan Poe, first published in in Burton's Gentleman's Magazine before being included in the collection Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque in

I know not how it was - but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable ; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me - upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain - upon the bleak walls - upon the vacant eye-like windows - upon a few rank sedges - and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees - with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium - the bitter lapse into everyday life - the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart - an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it - I paused to think - what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble ; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there are combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression ; and, acting upon this idea, 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 - but with a shudder even more thrilling than before - upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows. Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. 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 - a letter from him - which, in its wildly importunate nature, had admitted of no other than a personal reply. 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 manner in which all this, and much more, was said - it was the apparent heart that went with his request - which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons. Although, as boys, we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested, of late, in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognisable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honored as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch ; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other - it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission, from sire to son, of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the "House of Usher" - an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion. I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat

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childish experiment - that of looking down within the tarn - had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition - for why should I not so term it? Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy - a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity - an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn - a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued. Shaking off from my spirit what must have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen ; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn. Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the studio of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me - while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy - while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this - I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master. The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around ; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all. A glance, however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down ; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! 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. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion ; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison ; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve ; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations ; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity ; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be

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forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity. In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence - an inconsistency ; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy - an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter, than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance to that species of energetic concision - that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow-sounding enunciation - that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance, which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement. 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, at some length, 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 - a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me ; although, perhaps, the terms, and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses ; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture ; the odors of all flowers were oppressive ; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light ; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror. To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul. I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect - in terror. In this unnerved - in this pitiable condition - I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR. He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth - in regard to an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be re-stated - an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit - an effect which the physique of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought about upon the morale of his existence. He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin - to the severe and long-continued illness - indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution - of a tenderly beloved sister - his sole companion for long years - his last and only relative on earth. I regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread - and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother - but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more than ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears. The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed ; but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation to the prostrating power of the destroyer ; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus

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probably be the last I should obtain - that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more. For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by either Usher or myself: We painted and read together ; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom. I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn hours I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly distempered ideality threw a sulphureous lustre over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vaguenesses at which I shuddered the more thrillingly, because I shuddered knowing not why ; - from these paintings vivid as their images now are before me I would in vain endeavor to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least - in the circumstances then surrounding me - there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvass, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli. One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch, or other artificial source of light was discernible ; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor. I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments.

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2: Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" Analysis by April Albrecht on Prezi

The Fall of the House of Usher. DURING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country ; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher.

After his mother died in Richmond , Virginia, in , he was taken into the home of John Allan, a Richmond merchant presumably his godfather , and of his childless wife. He was later taken to Scotland and England 1820 , where he was given a classical education that was continued in Richmond. For 11 months in he attended the University of Virginia , but his gambling losses at the university so incensed his guardian that he refused to let him continue, and Poe returned to Richmond to find his sweetheart, Sarah Elmira Royster, engaged. He went to Boston, where in he published a pamphlet of youthful Byronic poems, Tamerlane, and Other Poems. Poverty forced him to join the army under the name of Edgar A. Military Academy at West Point. He successfully sought expulsion from the academy, where he was absent from all drills and classes for a week. He then returned to Baltimore, where he began to write stories. There he made a name as a critical reviewer and married his young cousin Virginia Clemm, who was only Poe seems to have been an affectionate husband and son-in-law. Poe was dismissed from his job in Richmond, apparently for drinking, and went to New York City. Drinking was in fact to be the bane of his life. To talk well in a large company he needed a slight stimulant, but a glass of sherry might start him on a spree; and, although he rarely succumbed to intoxication, he was often seen in public when he did. This gave rise to the conjecture that Poe was a drug addict, but according to medical testimony he had a brain lesion. While in New York City in he published a long prose narrative, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym , combining as so often in his tales much factual material with the wildest fancies. The latter contains a study of a neurotic now known to have been an acquaintance of Poe, not Poe himself. Willis, thereafter a lifelong friend. Poe then became editor of the Broadway Journal, a short-lived weekly, in which he republished most of his short stories, in There was a brief engagement. Poe had close but platonic entanglements with Annie Richmond and with Sarah Anna Lewis, who helped him financially. He composed poetic tributes to all of them. In he went south, had a wild spree in Philadelphia, but got safely to Richmond, where he finally became engaged to Elmira Royster, by then the widowed Mrs. Shelton, and spent a happy summer with only one or two relapses. He enjoyed the companionship of childhood friends and an unromantic friendship with a young poet, Susan Archer Talley. Poe had some forebodings of death when he left Richmond for Baltimore late in September. There he died, although whether from drinking, heart failure , or other causes was still uncertain in the 21st century. He was buried in Westminster Presbyterian churchyard in Baltimore. It owes much also to his own feverish dreams, to which he applied a rare faculty of shaping plausible fabrics out of impalpable materials. With an air of objectivity and spontaneity, his productions are closely dependent on his own powers of imagination and an elaborate technique. His keen and sound judgment as an appraiser of contemporary literature, his idealism and musical gift as a poet, his dramatic art as a storyteller, considerably appreciated in his lifetime, secured him a prominent place among universally known men of letters. The wide divergence of contemporary judgments on the man seems almost to point to the coexistence of two persons in him. With those he loved he was gentle and devoted. Others, who were the butt of his sharp criticism , found him irritable and self-centred and went so far as to accuse him of lack of principle. He talked brilliantly, chiefly of literature, and read his own poetry and that of others in a voice of surpassing beauty. He admired Shakespeare and Alexander Pope. He had a sense of humour, apologizing to a visitor for not keeping a pet raven. If the mind of Poe is considered, the duality is still more striking. On one side, he was an idealist and a visionary. His yearning for the ideal was both of the heart and of the imagination. This Pythian mood was especially characteristic of the later years of his life. Closely connected with this is his power of ratiocination. He prided himself on his logic and carefully handled

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this real accomplishment so as to impress the public with his possessing still more of it than he had; hence the would-be feats of thought reading, problem unraveling, and cryptography that he attributed to his characters William Legrand and C. This suggested to him the analytical tales, which created the detective story, and his science fiction tales. The same duality is evinced in his art. He was capable of writing angelic or weird poetry, with a supreme sense of rhythm and word appeal, or prose of sumptuous beauty and suggestiveness, with the apparent abandon of compelling inspiration; yet he would write down a problem of morbid psychology or the outlines of an unrelenting plot in a hard and dry style. As a critic, Poe laid great stress upon correctness of language, metre, and structure. He formulated rules for the short story, in which he sought the ancient unities: To these unities he added that of mood or effect. He was not extreme in these views, however. He praised longer works and sometimes thought allegories and morals admirable if not crudely presented. Poe admired originality, often in work very different from his own, and was sometimes an unexpectedly generous critic of decidedly minor writers. Indeed his role in French literature was that of a poetic master model and guide to criticism.

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3: About Poe's Short Stories

A summary of "The Fall of the House of Usher" () in Edgar Allan Poe's Poe's Short Stories. Learn exactly what happened in this chapter, scene, or section of Poe's Short Stories and what it means.

Rated 5 out of 5 by upsysydaisy from Poe Stories Always Provide Great Psychological Fun I have read the book and saw the original movie many years ago. It was so creepy back then, given I was much younger. I have since enjoyed all the Poe books and movie adaptations. However my favorites have always been the dark, sad poems. I was delighted to find these games on Big Fish, although they are very lightly based on the novels. Really had fun with this one, it was challenging and included many wonderful HOGs and puzzles. The graphics were stellar and rich with appropriate items and design for that time period along with perfect coloring. It added so much to the experience. Detective Dupin certainly was a nice addition, which is always the case. The story had a suitable ending. This was a quality purchase and I am looking forward to playing all the other Dark Tales games. Yep, I went overboard and purchased all of them!! Hopefully you have fun with The Fall of the House of Usher, too! Check out "The House on Usher" for some different fun on this subject. I am usually hopeless when it comes to hidden object games. This game has everything you could want in a game. If you are like me and find hidden object games to hard at times , this might be the game for you as it also has a type of match 3 game you can play instead. Great story line and visual effects. The game was a lot longer than other hidden object games I have tried to play. Anyone thinking of buying this game wont be disappointed. I buy games that have great graphics and color and detail and all of the Edgar Allen Poe games do. A little bit of weird, intriguing and eerie. I was really in the mood for this, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Still enjoy them, and The Fall of the House of Usher is a great game. I especially like the interaction in the HO scenes, and I found the puzzles fascinating, both in their appearance in the game, and the difficulty I had in solving several of them. I really think BFG might consider having all reviewers state their approximate ages, ie. A review is, after all, only a personal opinion, not a blanket hatred of any game! Detective Dupin and I have enjoyed the Fall of Usher because it requires some thought as to what to do next, and the puzzles were well thought out. In MHO, this is a great game! Really had fun with this one. Puzzles were fairly good, but some were a little too easy. I always like the music in ERS games, and this is no exception. The game was quite long. ERS is still right up there with Eipix for my favorite developers. I love all the Dark Tales series and this one does not disappoint. Compelling music and cutscenes. HOS are only mildly crowded - I like the clue-driven object finds. There are alternative games to play in lieu of the HOS. Puzzles are many and vary widely in difficulty. Visual and sound effects are easily award winners. Madeleine Usher is nowhere to be found and because of this, Roderick is becoming ill. Morris has filled us in a bit, it would seem that the Usher twins, Madelein and Roderick, share a physical bond, when one of the twins is injured the other will feel this same pain, to the point of physical impossibility, if one is given a vaccination they both bleed! As we investigate further we learn that both twins have a rare illness, even stranger is the fact that whenever they leave the estate they become deathly ill, and must return immediately. There is a new addition of a rat on a perch to the left of the screen. I must admit I found it entertaining when he fell off the perch or drug a huge sunflower seed up to nibble on, but, the purpose of this rat is an unsolved mystery to both Detective Dupin and myself Detective pennmom36! The journal and map are located just behind the rat so perhaps he is standing guard. Roderick has given us a code handed down from his Grandfather and naturally we know how to solve this ancient riddle and find "the Reborn One" who is able to turn anything made of stone into reality. The hidden object games were fantastic and genuinely fun. The first HOS was actually in riddle form. Every item to be found was put in the form of a riddle one at a time such as what has several arms and only one leg with the answer being a fork. There were also regular list items, slightly interactive such as putting a sugar cube into a cup of tea to make sweet tea, and there were HOS that required you to find 12 feathers for example. The mini games are very easy such as matching up alike doves on a gate but the one I liked the best was training

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the mouse in a series of mazes. The first maze was simple just guiding the mouse from the starting point to the end and the second maze added keys of different colors so you had to guide the mouse to the green key and through the green door then get the blue key and exit out of the blue door and the third and final maze added some swinging doors that would trap you into a gridlock with the key behind a shut door. You have to tinker with it a bit by opening certain paths that would allow you to keep the door to the key open. There is also a series of photos that you discover with a partial message on the back and you need to place these photos into their natural place to reveal something not seen before. Might treat myself to this one over the weekend x Date published:

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4: Edgar Allan Poe - Poet | Academy of American Poets

The Fall of the House of Usher Edgar Allan Poe. The following entry presents criticism of Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" (). See also, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon*.

The ancient, decaying House of Usher, filled with tattered furniture and tapestries and set in a gloomy, desolate locale is a rich symbolic representation of its sickly twin inhabitants, Roderick and Madeline Usher. Besides its use of classical Gothic imagery and gruesome events—including escape from live burial—the story has a psychological element and ambiguous symbolism that have given rise to many critical readings. This overwhelming sense of gloom continues as the narrator is brought through the dark house, past its ancient and shabby furnishings, to his host. As a result, Roderick claims to have a heightened sensory acuteness, with the blandest food, the slightest touch, and the faintest sounds causing him great pain. The ancient but inbred family had resided in the House of Usher for so long that for many of their neighbors, the house and the family had become one in the same. During the course of this discussion, the narrator learns that Roderick has a twin sister. She makes a fleeting appearance, but says nothing to the narrator or her brother, and passes ghost-like on to another part of the house. Roderick explains that his sister is far too ill for the narrator to see her, and will likely never leave her bed alive again. Disturbed by this finding, the narrator sets out to cheer his old friend. The two spend a great deal of time together in these creative pursuits, but after her first, brief appearance, Madeline is not seen again. Roderick wanted to preserve her corpse for a fortnight before its final interment. This senseless fear was contagious and the narrator was also overcome by a dreadful terror. The narrator read aloud from an old romance to ease their spirits. In several uncanny coincidences, just as a particular action was read, a similar noise was heard from the depths of the ancient house. He feared that she would come after him to exact revenge for her premature burial. Just as he proclaims that she is at that moment standing outside their door, the storm blows the door open. There stands Madeline, covered in her own blood, and battered from her struggle out of the vault. Roderick dies immediately from the horror and shock of the sight. The narrator flees from the horrific scene, and runs from the house. Behind him the crumbling house cracks down the center, collapses, and is swallowed up by the tarn that spread before it. As is typical of the gothic genre, the story is set in a dark, medieval castle, and uses a first-person narrator to instill a sense of dread and terror in the reader. The descriptions of the Usher family home and of Roderick and Madeline create an atmosphere of evil and dread that permeates the narrative from the very beginning. Many interpretations of the story have explained the evil behind the curse Roderick speaks of as the result of a long history of incest and inbreeding in the Usher family. According to this interpretation, the brother and sister are suffering the physical and emotional consequences of the guilt associated with such universally condemned behavior. Roderick speaks several times about the mysterious maladies from which he and his sister suffer. Several of his stories depicted psychologically unstable characters and were very different from the typical writing of the time. Poe was often dismissed by contemporary literary critics both because of the unusual content of his stories, and because the short story genre he employed was not yet regarded as serious literature. Eventually, however, through the scholarship of such critics as A. Quinn and others, his reputation has been slowly re-established based on his work rather than on the sketchy details of his personal life. For example, in an essay discussing the Burkean theory of the sublime, Jack G. Voller notes that Poe uses this story to reject the optimistic aesthetic offered by Burke and instead presents a powerful vision of the terrors and emotions that cannot be easily explained in the context of a sublimely unified existence. In contrast, Craig Howes has interpreted the tale as an original retelling of the elegiac romance. Because of this, the story has lent itself to numerous interpretations, eliciting a large amount of scholarship that continues to explore the text in new and interesting ways.

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5: Edgar Allan Poe | Biography & Facts | www.enganchecubano.com

Continuing his tradition of the creepy, weird, and Gothic style, Edgar Allan Poe does not disappoint in this short story about a strange family who finds its end in the most macabre of ways. Likely, the "fall" the title is referring to is both the actual structure of the Usher family's house, and.

Summary Analysis The narrator of "House of Usher" is passing on horseback through a dull part of the country on a grim day, when he comes across the House of Usher. The sight of the house fills him with dread for some reason. Looking upon the bleak walls and windows is like waking up to horrible reality from an opium dream. This is typical of Gothic literature. The bleak horror of this scene is bound to correspond to greater horrors within. Active Themes Related Quotes with Explanations The narrator of "House of Usher" tries to explain to himself how the house has this effect on him, but it is beyond him. This leads the reader into thinking that something unexplained, even paranormal, is afoot. Active Themes Despite all this, the narrator of "House of Usher" is planning to stay at this very residence. The narrator remembers them being close friends in their childhood but that Usher always had a reserved temperament. Active Themes Another illuminating fact about the family is the purity of its lineage – it is one direct descent, with no branches into other families – so the name the House of Usher, has come to refer to both the building and the family itself. The isolation of the Ushers and their fateful connection to the physical property of the family are ominous details. The narrator of "House of Usher" describes looking down into the water and feeling his superstition about the house increase within him. He explains that feelings of terror often increase the more one becomes conscious of them. He thinks it might be this phenomenon that causes the scene to appear even ghastlier and stranger when he lifts his eyes to it again. He tries to shake off the feeling and examine the house properly. The narrator tries to reason out his sensations. Active Themes The narrator of "House of Usher" notices the extreme age of the property, but that some parts are crumbling and others are fine. Poe uses architecture to portray mystery. Active Themes On the way, the narrator of "House of Usher" passes many striking objects and images on tapestries and carvings, and he feels again that haunting sensation. He is led into a huge room, whose windows were so high that they could not be reached. The narrator struggles to see everything inside the room because of the light, but sees that it is generally filled with tattered furniture and books and musical instruments. The room fills him with gloom. Each vision that the narrator passes on the way to see Usher creates a recurring sensation of dread. The images on the walls, the warped height of the room, the objects from the past make a list in the narrative and create the feeling that the narrator has stepped into another world. The familiar is distorted in this house – and the menace of the doctor, a traditionally kind figure, makes the narrator vulnerable. Active Themes Usher rises and greets his old friend eagerly, which the narrator of "House of Usher" can tell is very sincere, but he can see that the man is completely changed, has become very pale and thin and his eyes have a strange luster. In this mania, he tells the narrator of "House of Usher" about his illness. He says it is a family complaint. He describes his symptoms as unnatural sensations, like aversions to light and food and a general feeling of terror. He thinks that this terror will kill him. It is not that he fears danger, but the condition of fear itself. The House of Usher and the Usher family are attached by name. Active Themes Usher also suffers from a superstitious nature, especially related to the House of Usher – he feels that he cannot leave the building, and that the dilapidation and ugliness of its features has somehow affected his own condition, the physical rotting of the structure corresponding to his own rotting spirit. As the building appears to rot and age, so do the characters. Active Themes But Usher also explains that his symptoms can be attributed to a more comprehensible cause, the long term illness of his beloved sister, his only remaining relative and companion. He talks about her with unbearable dread, and just at that moment, the lady Madeleine passes through the room, and the narrator is filled with a similar sensation of horror. As soon as the lady has gone, the narrator looks to her brother and sees him weeping. Though Usher explains his condition as largely caused by a kind of extreme sympathy and sadness for his sister, there is something more disturbing at work in

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the connectedness of these two conditions. As Madeleine enters the room, her presence has a physical effect on him. She seems to be gradually wasting away. She had been able to walk around but on this day, she finally takes to her bed and the narrator of "House of Usher" knows he will probably never see her again. Over the ensuing days the narrator tries to cheer Usher up. But as they get closer and the narrator knows him more intimately, he realizes how useless these attempts are. There is a sense of reason and hope associated with a diagnosis of a physical problem because then maybe it can be cured. It is an illness beyond reason. An air of distemper and supernatural energy controls his artistic spirit. His songs are played wildly, and his paintings are devoid of realistic subject but their abstractions fascinate and terrify the narrator for some reason. Only one painting can be described in words. It presents a long underground room, with no ventilation at all but strange rays of light passing through it. The narrator thinks it must be his increased concentration because of his illness that allows him to play such fantasias. The talented side of Usher is a theme that lies out of the spotlight while the narrator concentrates on the sickness of the family and the plot spirals towards its fated end.

Active Themes The narrator of "House of Usher" distinctly remembers one example of these songs, and perhaps it is the truth of its words that have put it so forcibly in his memory. The melodious quality of this story also makes it linger and float around the house.

Active Themes This recitation reminds the narrator of "House of Usher" of a strange belief that Usher held about his house: Usher thinks the stones of the house and the water of the tarn contain a remainder of his ancestors and senses a destructive atmosphere in the house. He believes that this is what has doomed his family to have such awful illnesses and what dooms him now. This revelation is made more terrible by the fact that we saw evidence of this phenomenon earlier in the story. Even the narrator, who is not part of the Usher family, felt a change in him as he approached the house and felt its gruesome atmosphere affect his mood. He has also already witnessed the similarity in the conditions of the house and its residents, the wasting away, the aging.

Active Themes The books that Usher adores are in keeping with this superstition. The narrator, remembering the feeling of doom that her presence had caused him, understands that this might be a wise move. Her illness was so strange that the physicians would want to investigate her body before taking her out to the open air to the family burial ground. It serves the mystery and horror of the story in several ways. The narrator deliberately provides these particular details that give an impression of the vault as an impenetrable fortress, so that it can only be a paranormal, spiritual being that would be able to escape it.

Active Themes When they have placed the coffin, they remove the lid and the narrator of "House of Usher" is surprised to find a striking resemblance between the sister and brother. Death has put an unnatural blush on her cheeks that is awful to behold. They shut up the vault and return to the upper floors. He spends all his time wandering, purposeless. His paleness is even worse and his voice takes on a permanently terrified tone. It often seems to the narrator of "House of Usher" that Usher is burdened with a terrible secret that he wishes to tell. He also hears imaginary sounds and the narrator often finds him staring vacantly ahead. Now separated from his sister, Usher is diminished, he is unable to concentrate and unable to free himself from his lingering fears and superstitions.

Active Themes The mood is so overpowering that the narrator of "House of Usher" finds himself changing a little too. He feels this way especially one night about a week after they have entombed Madeleine, when he goes to bed and cannot sleep. Fear comes over him and he gets out of bed and paces around. One of the ways that Poe exaggerates the horror of the House of Usher is by making its effect unclear.

Active Themes As the narrator of "House of Usher" does this, he hears a footfall outside the room and knows that it is Usher. The next moment, Usher enters, pale as usual but with in a higher state of mania, but the narrator welcomes any company on this gloomy night. Outside, a beautiful, terrible storm is raging, with rapid winds that change direction suddenly and thick clouds. There is no moonlight, but instead an aura of some kind of gas surrounds the building.

Active Themes The narrator of "House of Usher" wants to shield Usher from this sight, which he explains is nothing more than an electrical phenomenon. In fact, it is a bit of a joke to call this book one of their favorites, but the narrator hopes it will be different enough from his spiritual fantasies to distract him because he thinks right. So at first, the image of the narrator reading to Usher is a sweet image, the narrator taking a kind of mother-like role and comforting him.

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6: Edgar Allan Poe - comparison of Gothic elements | Dario Vukas - www.enganchecubano.com

"The Fall of the House of Usher" is about (undated) Mickey's Tales of Edgar Allan Poe, Milan: Disney (part I, Literary Classics, no. 23) (A comic-strip adaptation of Poe's tale, with Mickey Mouse in what is described as a parody. The other story in this volume is "The Crimes of Morgue Street," an adaptation of "The

Plot[edit] The story begins with the unnamed narrator arriving at the house of his friend, Roderick Usher, having received a letter from him in a distant part of the country complaining of an illness and asking for his help. As he arrives, the narrator notes a thin crack extending from the roof, down the front of the building and into the adjacent lake. It includes a form of sensory overload known as hyperesthesia hypersensitivity to textures, light, sounds, smells and tastes , hypochondria an excessive preoccupation or worry about having a serious illness and acute anxiety. Roderick and Madeline are the only remaining members of the Usher family. Roderick sings " The Haunted Palace ", then tells the narrator that he believes the house he lives in to be alive, and that this sentience arises from the arrangement of the masonry and vegetation surrounding it. Further, Roderick believes that his fate is connected to the family mansion. Roderick later informs the narrator that his sister has died and insists that she be entombed for two weeks in the family tomb located in the house before being permanently buried. The narrator helps Roderick put the body in the tomb, and he notes that Madeline has rosy cheeks, as some do after death. They inter her, but over the next week both Roderick and the narrator find themselves becoming increasingly agitated for no apparent reason. He also finds, hanging on the wall, a shield of shining brass on which is written a legend: Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin; Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win; [1] With a stroke of his mace , Ethelred kills the dragon, who dies with a piercing shriek, and proceeds to take the shield, which falls to the floor with an unnerving clatter. When the dragon is described as shrieking as it dies, a shriek is heard, again within the house. As he relates the shield falling from off the wall, a reverberation , metallic and hollow, can be heard. Roderick becomes increasingly hysterical, and eventually exclaims that these sounds are being made by his sister, who was in fact alive when she was entombed. Additionally, Roderick somehow knew that she was alive. The bedroom door is then blown open to reveal Madeline standing there. She falls on her brother, and both land on the floor as corpses. The narrator then flees the house, and, as he does so, notices a flash of moonlight behind him which causes him to turn back, in time to see the moon shining through the suddenly widened crack. As he watches, the House of Usher splits in two and the fragments sink into the tarn. This article needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. As his "best and only friend" [2] , Roderick tells of his illness and asks that he visits. Though sympathetic and helpful, the Narrator is continually made to be the outsider. From his perspective, the cautionary tale unfolds. During one sleepless night, the Narrator reads aloud to Usher as sounds are heard throughout the mansion. The narrator is the only character to escape the House of Usher, which he views as it cracks and sinks into the tarn, or mountain lake. Usher writes to the narrator, his boyhood friend, about his illness [2]. He is described by the narrator: And now the increase in this strangeness of his face had caused so great a change that I almost did not know him. The horrible white of his skin, and the strange light in his eyes, surprised me and even made me afraid. His hair had been allowed to grow, and in its softness it did not fall around his face but seemed to lie upon the air. I could not, even with an effort, see in my friend the appearance of a simple human being. He is unwell both physically and mentally. He is tormented by the sorrow of watching his sibling die. According to Terry W. As his twin, the two share an incommunicable connection that critics conclude may be either incestuous or metaphysical [6] , as two individuals in an extra-sensory relationship embodying a single entity. Like with his sister, Roderick Usher is tied to the mansion. He believes the mansion is sentient and responsible, in part, for his deteriorating mental health and melancholy. Despite this admission, Usher remains in the mansion and composes art containing the Usher mansion or similar haunted mansions. She is deathly ill and cataleptic. She appears before the narrator, but

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never acknowledges his presence. She returns to her bedroom where Roderick claims she has died. She is entombed despite her flushed appearance. It was slightly revised in for the collection *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. The house was constructed in and either torn down or relocated in . When the Usher House was torn down in , two bodies were found embraced in a cavity in the cellar. Luke Usher, the friends and fellow actors of his mother Eliza Poe. Hoffmann , who was a role model and inspiration for Poe, published the story *Das Majorat* in . There are many similarities between the two stories, like the breaking in two of a house, eerie sounds in the night, the story within a story and the house owner being called "Roderich". Like the narrator in " *The Tell-Tale Heart* ", his disease inflames his hyperactive senses. It is the first "character" that the narrator introduces to the reader, presented with a humanized description: The fissure that develops in its side is symbolic of the decay of the Usher family and the house "dies" along with the two Usher siblings. Sprague de Camp , in his *Lovecraft: A Biography*, wrote that "[a]ccording to the late [Poe expert] Thomas O. Mental disorder is also evoked through the themes of melancholy , possible incest , and vampirism. An incestuous relationship between Roderick and Madeline is never explicitly stated, but seems implied by the strange attachment between the two. The gloomy sensation occasioned by the dreary landscape around the Usher mansion is compared by the narrator to the sickness caused by the withdrawal symptoms of an opiate-addict. Indeed, as in many of his tales, Poe borrows much from the already developed Gothic tradition. Thomson writes in his *Introduction to Great Short Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, "the tale has long been hailed as a masterpiece of Gothic horror; it is also a masterpiece of dramatic irony and structural symbolism. Poe was criticized for following his own patterns established in works like " *Morella* " and " *Ligeia* ," using stock characters in stock scenes and stock situations. Repetitive themes like an unidentifiable disease, madness, and resurrection are also criticized. It is erring on the best side--the side of luxuriance. Actress Gwendoline Watford made her film debut playing Lady Usher in *The Fall of the House of Usher* , a British black and white film version made in but not released until . As Roderick reveals, the Usher family has a history of evil and cruelty so great that he and Madeline pledged in their youth never to have children and to allow their family to die with them. When she wakes up, Madeline goes insane from being buried alive and breaks free. She confronts her brother and begins throttling him to death. Another monochrome version appeared on British television in as part of the first series of *Mystery and Imagination* "68 starring Denholm Elliott as Roderick Usher. It was filmed on studio sets, recorded on videotape and broadcast on ITV on 12 February . Casting himself in dual roles as Roderick and Madeline Usher in both versions, Harrington shot his original minute silent short on 8mm in , [28] and he shot a new 36 minute version simply titled *Usher* on 35mm [28] in which he intended to utilize in a longer Poe anthology film that never came to fruition. *The Short Film Collection*. The second half of the album was a five-part set dedicated to the *Fall of the House of Usher*, with an introductory narration by Orson Welles as the narrator. In recent years completions have been attempted by three different musicologists. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Poe, Edgar Allan *Office of English Language Programs*. *Madeline Usher and the Resurrection Men*". *Supernatural Horror in Literature*. Susan and Michael Southworth, p. *The Arno Schmidt Connection*". *Literary Palimpsests of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. University of Mississippi Press, , p. *His Life and Legacy*. *The Best from "American Literature*. Duke University Press,

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7: Review: 'Edgar Allan Poe's The Fall of the House of Usher' #1 - Bloody Disgusting

The Gothic Story: Introduction to "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Ligeia" These stories represent the highest achievements in the literary genre of the gothic horror story. By gothic, one means that the author emphasizes the grotesque, the mysterious, the desolate, the horrible, the ghostly.

Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne who test our imagination with images of the sublime, eerie, ghostly, melancholic, gloomy and deathly variety. After reading few of their short stories it becomes impossible not to catch sight of the similarity of characters, setting and narration. The horrifying events described at the very end of the story, with Madeline coming back from the dead and back to the mansion, are not the result of a single circumstance but from a collision of events. Both of which are central themes in the story at hand. Certainly all the elements are there; the aged house with its decaying, half-mad and ill residents, by-the-house family crypt, and even the reading of a poem that mirrors his current state of body and mind in a medieval gothic style. In this story the supernatural element is also evident at the point where we come to see the spiritual tie between Roderick and Madeleine, one of which being undead, and the other brain-dead. Generally, it is not an illness in itself but a symptom of an illness, such as schizophrenia, epilepsy, hysteria, alcoholism or a brain tumor. Certain drugs, too, can trigger a cataleptic episode. The victim does not respond to external stimuli, even painful stimuli such as a pinch on the skin. In the past, a victim of catalepsy was sometimes pronounced dead by a doctor unfamiliar with the condition. Apparently, Madeline is not dead when her brother and the narrator entomb her; instead, she is in a state of catalepsy. She and her brother then die together. Both Hawthorne and Poe, although being from different backgrounds, do not differ as much when it comes down to transferring melancholy and heartbreak to paper. An astonishing 19 pages of getting to know the unknown, falling in love with it, and eventually going mad because of it. This somewhat sums up the story of Giovanni Guasconti and Beatrice Rappaccini but let us analyze it a bit further. Hawthorne begins his third-person narration with the element of isolation. The prevalent gothic element in the story is definitely poison. If comparing Beatrice with Roderick, we can easily establish a pattern with regard that both characters are in their own way poisoned mentally. Although her father tried to corrupt her body with poisonous fumes from birth, her heart and soul remained gentle. The perfect example is the scene when she falls in love with Giovanni and proves that her love is unconditional – that of an unexperienced innocent child. Each in their own way, Poe and Hawthorne managed to present the theme of death to the reader with intentional climax points at the end of each short story.

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8: Edgar Allan Poe Literary Criticism

The narrator of "House of Usher" is passing on horseback through a dull part of the country on a grim day, when he comes across the House of Usher. The sight of the house fills him with dread for some reason.

Introduction to "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Ligeia" These stories represent the highest achievements in the literary genre of the gothic horror story. By gothic, one means that the author emphasizes the grotesque, the mysterious, the desolate, the horrible, the ghostly, and, ultimately, the abject fear that can be aroused in either the reader or in the viewer. Almost everyone is familiar with such characters as Dr. We all know that a gothic story or a ghost story will often have a setting that will be in an old, decaying mansion far out in a desolate countryside; the castle will be filled with cobwebs, strange noises, bats, and an abundance of secret panels and corridors, down which persecuted virgins might be running and screaming in terror. This is standard fare; we have either read about such places or seen them in the movies or on TV. The haunted castle is a classic setting of the gothic story. The author uses every literary trick possible to give us eerie sensations or to make us jump if we hear an unexpected noise. The shadows seem menacing in these stories, there are trap doors to swallow us up, and the underground passages are smelly, slimy, and foul – all these effects are created for one reason: Not surprisingly, both stories have many qualities in common: The story could, in fact, take place anywhere as long as the area is remote to the reader, removed from his everyday environment. Likewise, "Ligeia" is set in an old castle on the Rhine or else in an abbey in the "most remote part of England. Clearly, it is not in an old castle in the present era. In both stories, we see this kind of communication between, first, Roderick Usher and his twin sister and, again, between the narrator and his beloved, Ligeia. Poe uses this effect to its very best effect in these two stories; both of them climax with just such an incident: To this purpose Poe created the return of the entombed and living corpse of the Lady Madeleine, as well as the slow re-emergence into life by the enshrouded Lady Ligeia. This is also true of the stories associated with the Dracula legends, where the focus is upon the continuation of the life of the mind after the body has become a living corpse. Both in the Lady Madeline and in the Lady Ligeia, there is a superhuman strength to live – even after death. Both women overcome the most impossible barriers of the mortal world in order to live.

Tales of Ratiocination, or Detective Fiction: In addition to his reputation as a poet, his originality in his literary criticisms, and the perfection he achieved in creating gothic tales of terror and science fiction, he is also acknowledged as the originator of detective fiction. Poe invented the term "Tale of Ratiocination. In fact, the story becomes one in which the reader must also accompany the detective toward the solution and apply his own powers of logic and deduction alongside those of the detective. This idea becomes very important in all subsequent works of detective fiction. That is, in all such fiction, all of the clues are available for the reader, as well as the detective, to solve the crime usually murder, and at the end of the story, the reader should be able to look back on the clues and realize that he could have solved the mystery. A detective story in which the solution is suddenly revealed to the reader is considered bad form. Poe, then, introduces one of the basic elements of the detective story – the presentation of clues for his readers, and in addition to the above, Poe is also credited with introducing and developing many other of the standard features of modern detective fiction. Auguste Dupin is the forerunner of a long line of fictional detectives who are eccentric and brilliant. This technique has since been employed by numerous writers of detective fiction, the most famous being the Sherlock Holmes and Dr. In all the cases that these detectives attempt to solve, the eccentric detective has a certain disdain, or contempt, for the police and their methods, and this has also become a standard feature of many detective stories, along with the fact that the head of the police force feels, as he does in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," that this amateur detective, while solving the murder, is a meddler. Poe is clearly responsible for and should be given credit for giving literature these basics of the detective story as a foundation for an entirely new genre of fiction: Stories of the Psychotic Personality: In both stories treated here, the criminal is so completely occupied with his own mental state and in justifying his horrifying actions

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that the reader is not nearly as aghast at the horrors that the criminal perpetrates, as he is at the bizarre mental state of the criminal. The cruel acts performed by the criminal in both stories are de-emphasized in order to examine the mind of the criminal. Instead, we note the mental state of the psychotic killer. Poe made one assumption throughout his writings that is very important in understanding both of these stories. Poe assumed that any man, at any given moment, is capable of performing the most irrational and horrible act imaginable; every mind, he believed, is capable of falling into madness at any given moment. Thus, these stories deal with those subconscious mental activities which cause a person who leads a so-called normal existence to suddenly change and perform drastic, horrible deeds. Unlike some commentators who thought that Poe was trying to determine exactly what constitutes madness, Poe was more accurately concerned with the conditions and the various stages which lead a person to commit acts of madness, particularly when that madness manifests itself in an otherwise normal person. Both narrators in these stories are "just prior to their atrocities" considered to be normal, average, commonplace men. Yet without warning, each of them loses his sanity momentarily. Yet even with this self-knowledge, he can do nothing about his terrifying, changing mental state. Aside from the general patterns and concerns that are present in both stories, there are even more basic similarities: There are other similarities in the two stories, but these basic correlatives suffice to show how Poe uses similar techniques to achieve the desired effects in each story. In conclusion, in both of these stories, the narrator attempts a rational examination and explanation for his impulsive and irrational actions. He attempts to bring reason into the picture to explain a completely irrational act. Both stories attempt to present an exterior view of the interior disintegration of the narrator. Both narrators begin their stories at a moment when they are sane and rational, and throughout the story, we observe their changing mental states. Tales of the Evil Or Double Personality: But in the latter story, which in fact deals with a double, the name is not the important issue; consequently, an assumed name is as good as any. In each case, the reader must wonder why the narrator chose to reveal such a horrible deed about himself. In the stories of the psychotic criminal, each narrator of those stories is trying to convince his readers through his logical method of narration that he is not mad, and yet each succeeds only in convincing the reader that he is indeed mad. In contrast, Montresor and William Wilson seem to have other reasons for telling about their heinous deeds. For example, in "The Cask of Amontillado," the entombed body of Fortunato has gone for fifty years without being detected; thus we know that the entombment occurred at least fifty years ago. Also in both cases, the narrator comes from a highly respected family, in contrast to the highly disreputable deed he commits. In both stories, also, there is an emphasis upon the labyrinthine cellars of the school and the long underground vaults of the Montresor mansion. That is, the success of the story depends not only on the fact that the narrator undergoes suspense, horror, and mental torture, but that we, the readers, are also forced to undergo the same feelings. Poe designated such effects and responses as the "ideal," or as being in the "realm of ideality. In "The Pit and the Pendulum," we are exposed to a series of suspenses, terrors, and horrors and, ultimately, we feel in the actual presence of those horrors. Likewise, in "The Masque of the Red Death," Poe carefully chooses every word and every description to make us feel the utter fear and horror of the presence of the dreaded "Red Death.

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9: Edgar Allan Poe and Romanticism

In The Fall of the House of Usher, Edgar Allan Poe writes of a sickly brother and sister that live in an old estate, and a narrator's account of the Ushers' final days. The story is scary on two different levels.

The narrator observes that the house seems to have absorbed an evil and diseased atmosphere from the decaying trees and murky ponds around it. He notes that although the house is decaying in places—individual stones are disintegrating, for example—the structure itself is fairly solid. There is only a small crack from the roof to the ground in the front of the building. He has come to the house because his friend Roderick sent him a letter earnestly requesting his company. Roderick wrote that he was feeling physically and emotionally ill, so the narrator is rushing to his assistance. The narrator mentions that the Usher family, though an ancient clan, has never flourished. Only one member of the Usher family has survived from generation to generation, thereby forming a direct line of descent without any outside branches. The Usher family has become so identified with its estate that the peasantry confuses the inhabitants with their home. The narrator finds the inside of the house just as spooky as the outside. He makes his way through the long passages to the room where Roderick is waiting. He notes that Roderick is paler and less energetic than he once was. Roderick tells the narrator that he suffers from nerves and fear and that his senses are heightened. The narrator also notes that Roderick seems afraid of his own house. The narrator spends several days trying to cheer up Roderick. Soon, Roderick posits his theory that the house itself is unhealthy, just as the narrator supposes at the beginning of the story. Madeline soon dies, and Roderick decides to bury her temporarily in the tombs below the house. He wants to keep her in the house because he fears that the doctors might dig up her body for scientific examination, since her disease was so strange to them. The narrator helps Roderick put the body in the tomb, and he notes that Madeline has rosy cheeks, as some do after death. The narrator also realizes suddenly that Roderick and Madeline were twins. Over the next few days, Roderick becomes even more uneasy. One night, the narrator cannot sleep either. Roderick knocks on his door, apparently hysterical. He leads the narrator to the window, from which they see a bright-looking gas surrounding the house. The narrator tells Roderick that the gas is a natural phenomenon, not altogether uncommon. The narrator decides to read to Roderick in order to pass the night away. As he reads, he hears noises that correspond to the descriptions in the story. At first, he ignores these sounds as the vagaries of his imagination. Soon, however, they become more distinct and he can no longer ignore them. He also notices that Roderick has slumped over in his chair and is muttering to himself. The narrator approaches Roderick and listens to what he is saying. Roderick reveals that he has been hearing these sounds for days, and believes that they have buried Madeline alive and that she is trying to escape. He yells that she is standing behind the door. Madeline stands in white robes bloodied from her struggle. She attacks Roderick as the life drains from her, and he dies of fear. The narrator flees the house. As he escapes, the entire house cracks along the break in the frame and crumbles to the ground. For all its easily identifiable Gothic elements, however, part of the terror of this story is its vagueness. We cannot say for sure where in the world or exactly when the story takes place. Instead of standard narrative markers of place and time, Poe uses traditional Gothic elements such as inclement weather and a barren landscape. We are alone with the narrator in this haunted space, and neither we nor the -narrator know why. While Poe provides the recognizable building blocks of the Gothic tale, he contrasts this standard form with a plot that is inexplicable, sudden, and full of unexpected disruptions. Poe creates a sensation of claustrophobia in this story. Characters cannot move and act freely in the house because of its structure, so it assumes a monstrous character of its own—the Gothic mastermind that controls the fate of its inhabitants. Poe, creates confusion between the living things and inanimate objects by doubling the physical house of Usher with the genetic family line of the Usher family, which he refers to as the house of Usher. Not only does the narrator get trapped inside the mansion, but we learn also that this confinement describes the biological fate of the Usher family. The family has no enduring branches, so all genetic transmission has occurred incestuously within the domain of the house. The

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peasantry confuses the mansion with the family because the physical structure has effectively dictated the genetic patterns of the family.

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