

The Masque of the "Red Death"



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)

Known for what type of literature?

Other works by Poe include:

- CASK OF AMONTILLADO
- FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER
- MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE
- THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM
- ANNABEL LEE
- ELDORADO
- THE RAVEN
- THE TELL-TALE HEART

1. Why do Prince Prospero and his followers retreat to his palace?

2. Describe in specific detail the series of rooms in which the Masquerade Ball takes place.

Going from East to West:

- Blue

- Purple

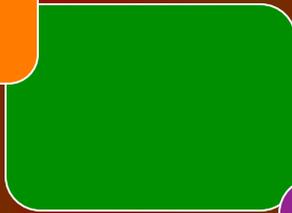
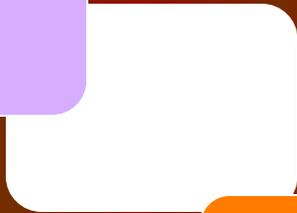
- Green

- Orange

- White

- Violet

- Black

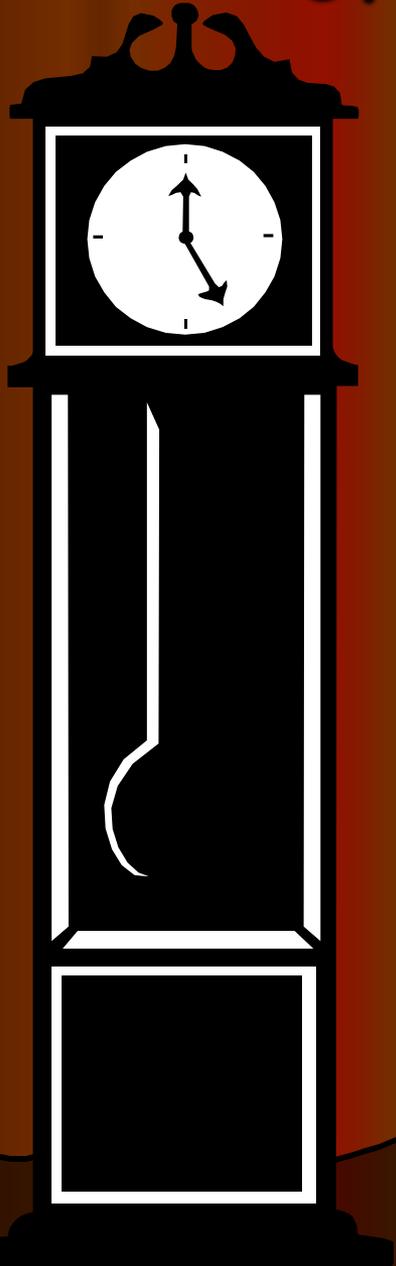


- To serve as lighting, there are large bowls of burning coals between the rooms.
- In the black room there stands a huge ebony grandfather clock.

- The decorations match the color of each room.
- There is a Gothic window in each room which panes match the color of the room.
- The black room's window panes are the only exception: its panes are "blood" red.

3. Explain how the party is constantly disrupted.

Every time the clock strikes off another hour, the orchestra stops playing and the people stop dancing.



4. Compare life outside the palace with the life of the people Prospero brought inside.

Inside

Outside

Wealth

Poverty

Fantasy

Reality

Life

Death; Destruction

Happiness

Sorrow

Health

Disease/Sickness

Hope

Despair

5. What do you learn about Prospero's character from his desire to keep his palace free of the plague?

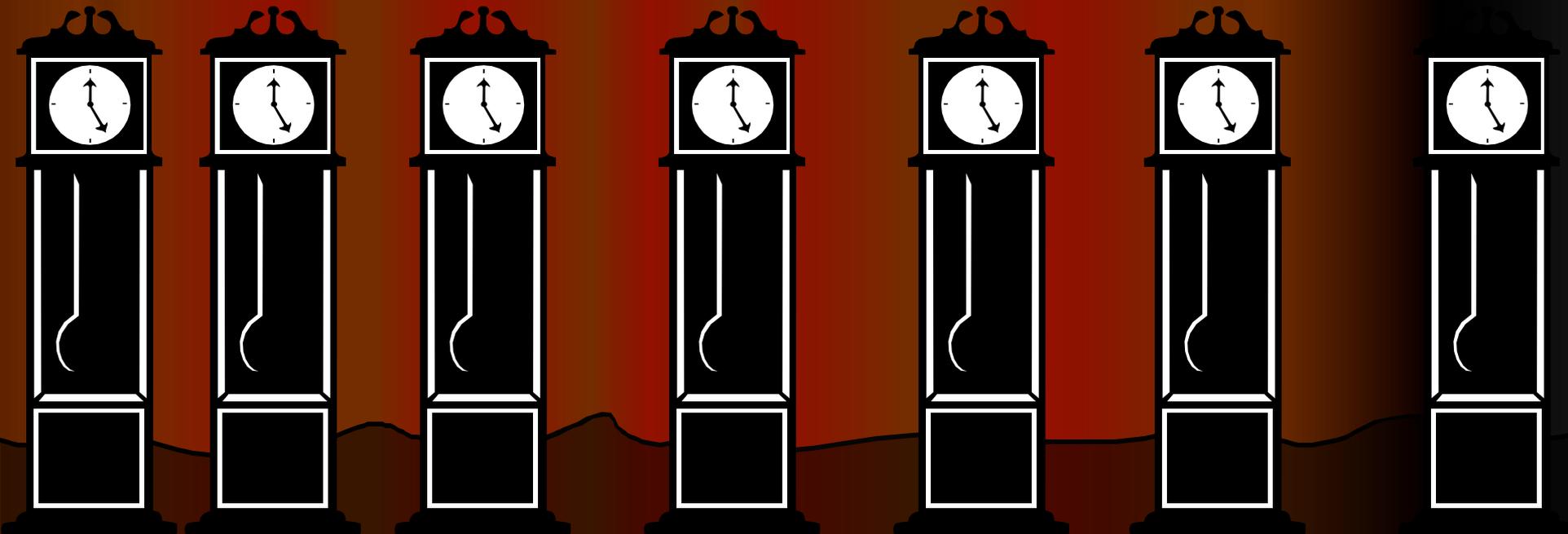
- He is afraid to die.
- He is prejudice against the poor.
- He thinks he can cheat death. (He thinks he can buy his way out.)

6. What mood or effect is created by the colors and the lighting in the rooms of the ball?

- It causes a dream-like effect.
- Fantasy

7. Why does the clock have such a dramatic effect on the dancers?

It symbolizes reality; their lives slowly ticking away.



8. Why does the visitor frighten the guests?

- Because he suddenly and mysteriously appears out of nowhere
- Because he looks like someone with the Red Death Plague
- Because he just stalks to and fro and doesn't talk

Describe the intruder's appearance and behavior.

- It has a tall, gaunt appearance
- It is “shrouded” with the “habiliments” of the dead
- It resembles someone with the red death disease.
- Its face is dabbed in blood.

9. List 6 aspects of how Poe builds terror in the story:

- Description of the plague's symptoms
- Doors welded shut; one couldn't leave even if one wanted to
- Dim, pulsing lights from the burning coals
- Black room with the red panes
- Appearance and behavior of the intruder
- Clock constantly stopping the party

LITERARY FOCUS

10. A. Define Allegory:

- A type of story in which the characters, settings, and events are an interconnected series of SYMBOLS.
- The deeper or symbolic meaning of the story may contain a LESSON ABOUT LIFE.

B. What is the allegorical lesson in the story?
(write in the 3rd Person)

One cannot escape his or her fate or death.

SYMBOLS

What might each
Symbol from the story
represent?

11. Prince Prospero -

Wealth; prosperity

He represents mankind's futile attempt to live forever.

12. The masquerade -

Fantasy; escaping from reality

13. The masked figure -

Death in general;

More specifically, the Red
Death Plague

14. The number 7 -

The Seven Deadly Sins

LIST AND DEFINE THE
7 DEADLY SINS.
EXPLAIN THE
POTENTIAL
CONSEQUENCES OF
EACH.

"GELCAPS"

“GELCAPS” is a mnemonic device.

Mnemonic devices are tools for those who want help in remembering important facts.

[Click here for top 10 mnemonic devices!](#)

G-

- NAME - Gluttony
- DEFINITION - The overindulgence of anything.
- CONSEQUENCES - Death

E-

- NAME - Envy

- DEFINITION - Jealousy of others.

- CONSEQUENCES - Death

L-

- NAME - Lust
- DEFINITION - Impure thoughts and desires.
- CONSEQUENCES - Death

C-

- NAME - Covetousness
- DEFINITION - The desire for others' things
- CONSEQUENCES - Death

A-

- NAME Anger
- DEFINITION - An out-of-control emotion of rage
- CONSEQUENCES - Death

P-

- NAME Pride
- DEFINITION - An overconfidence in one's self or one's abilities
- CONSEQUENCES - Death

S-

- NAME - Sloth (Procrastination)
- DEFINITION - Laziness
- CONSEQUENCES - Death

* Give (2) reasons why these sins are considered to be so dangerous.

- Society accepts and promotes them.
- When taken to the extreme they all lead to death.

WHAT MIGHT EACH
COLOR REPRESENT?
(LIST A FEW FOR EACH.)

16. GREEN

Envy; luck

17. WHITE

Purity; peace

18. BLACK

Death; mourning

19. PINK

Femininity

20. ORANGE

Caution

21. RED

Love; Hatred;
Passion; Help

22. BLUE

Masculinity; Sadness;
Melancholy; Calm

23 PURPLE

Royalty

24. YELLOW

Cowardice

The Masque of the Red Death:

Death:

Background

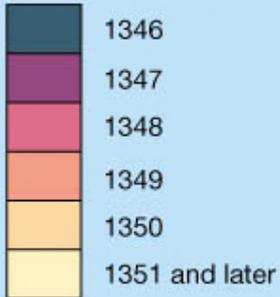
- Poe's fictional Red Death is probably based on the Black Death, which swept fourteenth-century Europe and Asia, killing as many as two thirds of the population in some regions in less than twenty years. Poe calls the plague "the Red Death" because victims oozed blood from painful sores. In this story a fourteenth-century prince gives a costume party, or masque, to try to forget about the epidemic raging all around him.



The Plague

Its spread: 1347-1351

Spread of the
Black Death



← General route of
the Black Death

★ Revolts



The Setting: An abbey



The Setting: An abbey

