

Plot Summary

"The Masque of the Red Death" begins with a description of a plague, the "Red Death." The Red Death takes half an hour to kill a person, and everyone in the kingdom is dying.

Prince Prospero invites all of the rich people and his friends into his castle. They lock themselves up so no one can get in or out to shield themselves from the Red Death.

Toward the end of the sixth month, the Prince holds a masquerade ball. The party takes place in seven different rooms.

- There was a blue, green, purple, orange, white, violet, and black room
- You had to walk through each room to get to the next
- The rooms were all color coordinated with matching decorations
- Each room had a gothic window, and the panes matched the color of the room EXCEPT for the black room. The panes in that window were blood red
- To serve as light, there were burning coals in each room
- In the black room, there was a big ebony clock

The colors and lighting in the rooms create fantasy and dreamlike effect/mood

The black room scares all the guests, so no one goes near it.

The ebony clock chimes every hour for a full minute, and its so eerie and discerning, that all of the guests, as well as the orchestra and the dancers, freeze every time it chimes. But as soon as the chiming is over, they go back to partying and pretending like nothing wrong outside (everyone is dying). The chimes of the clock have such a dramatic effect on the people at the party because

- They have no concept of time and reality, and it makes them realize what's going on outside
- They're trying to ignore what's going on outside but the clock snaps them back into reality

At the stroke of midnight the guests, freezing at the sound of the clock, notice a mysterious "masked figure" at the party. This guy is

- Tall and gaunt
- He looks like he just rose from the dead
- His face is covered in blood
- He looks like he had the Red Death

The guests are scared of him because

- They've been locked up together for 6 months already and they've never seen this guy
- He just walks around not talking
- He's creepy

When Prince Prospero sees this mysterious figure, he orders his guests to seize and unmask it, but no one wants to touch him. Prospero gets mad, and follows the masked man from room to room with a knife, trying to catch him so he can kill him. The masked guy enters the black room. The prince tried to kill him, but ends up dying himself, and suddenly everyone realizes that the Red Death is in the palace (the masked man) and within half an hour, everyone is dead.

From what prince Prospero does (locks himself and his friends up and doesn't try to help his kingdom) you learn about his character that:

- He is selfish and doesn't care about anyone but himself and his friends
- He is a horrible ruler who leaves his people to die
- He is unrealistic and stupid

<u>Inside</u>	<u>Outside</u>
life	death
happiness	sorrow
He tries to block out everything bad	bad things

Allegory: a type of story in which characters, settings, and events are an interconnected series of symbols

-What is the allegorical lesson of this story?
You cannot escape your fate