

# QUICKWRITE

- Imagine that a serious contagious illness is spreading across the country. Hospitals desperately need volunteers to help care for the sick. But you have an isolated cabin deep in the woods where you could go with a few friends or family members. What would you do? Explain.

(1/2 page)

# "THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH"



*Edgar Allan Poe*

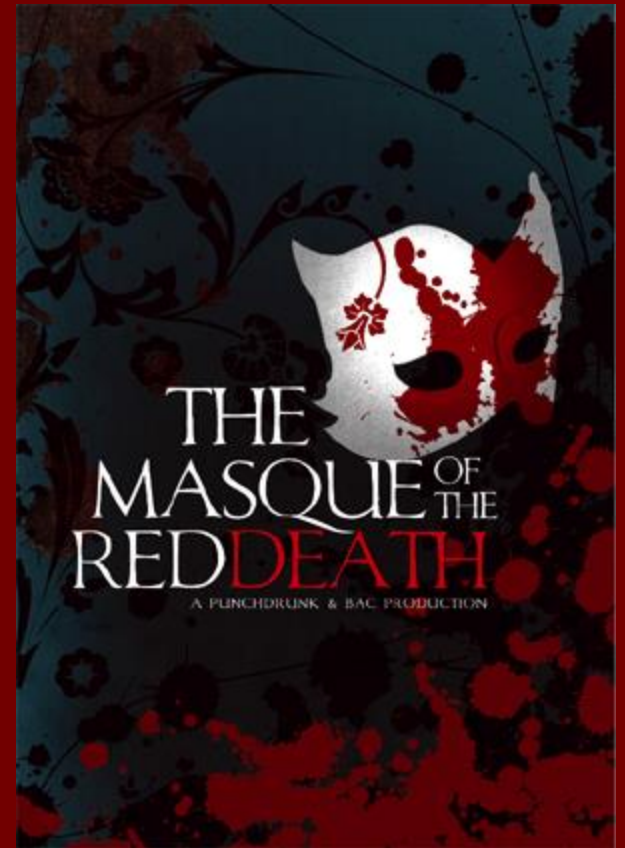
# ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



*"stories and poems dwell on the supernatural and on crime, torture, premature burial, and death"*



*"reflects the dark, nightmare side of the imagination"*



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



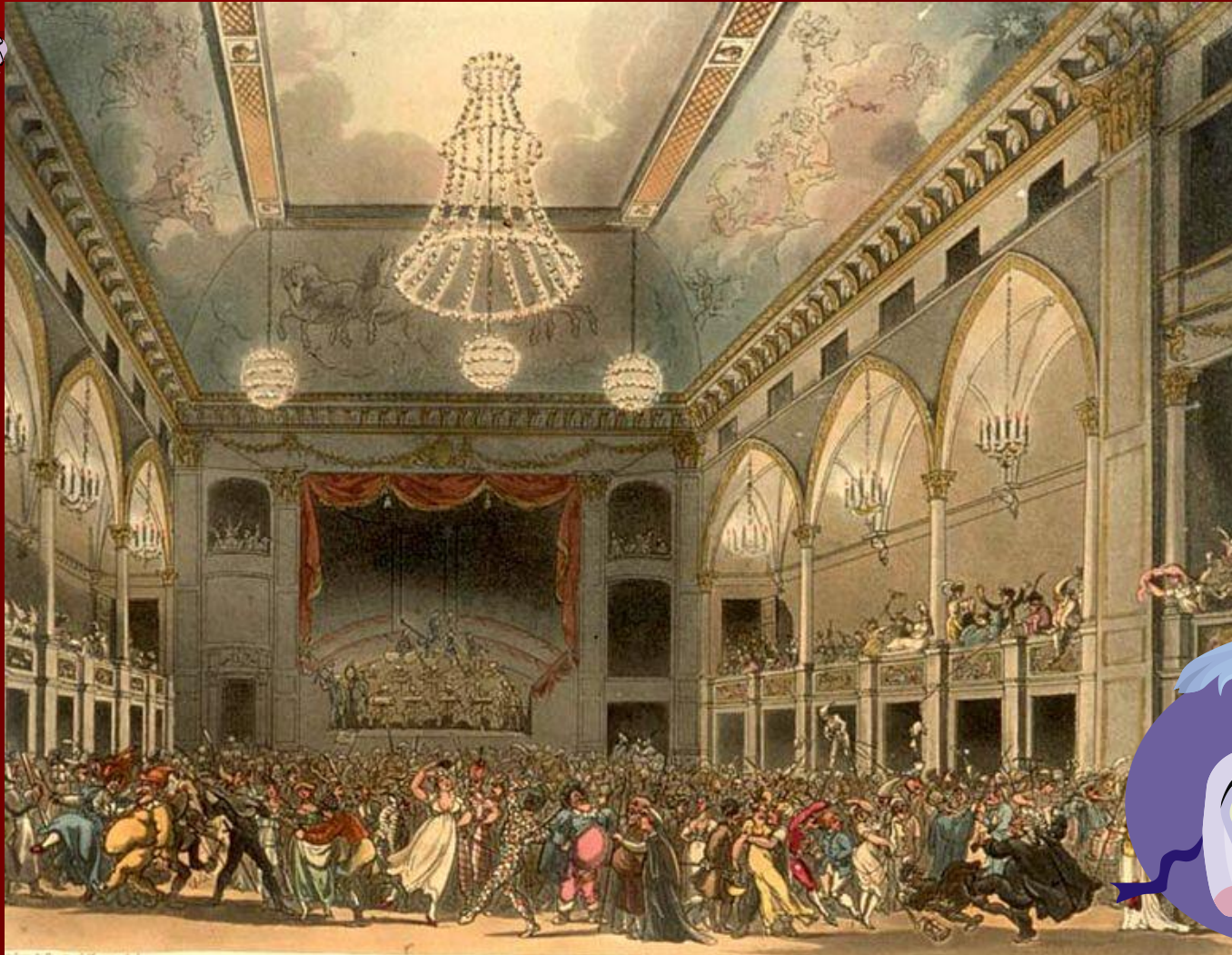
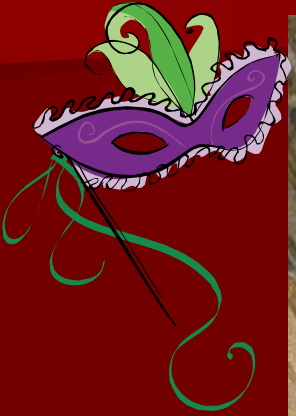
Edgar Allan Poe

(1809-1849)

- American author and poet
- Known for Horror, Suspense, Mystery, and Gothic Fiction.
- Family and friends abandoned him or DIED!
- Married his 13 year old cousin
- Suffered from loneliness and had a drinking and gambling problem.
- The cause of his death remains unknown!!!

**"THE MASQUE OF  
THE RED DEATH"**

■ **MASQUE** (masquerade)-a party at which masks and costumes are worn.



# BLACK PLAGUE

- **PLAGUE** is a contagious bacterial disease that spreads rapidly and is usually fatal.
- The most infamous plague is the **BLACK DEATH** that spread throughout Europe in the 1300s and caused 25 million deaths.

# RED DEATH

- The **RED DEATH** is Poe's fictional disease where the victim is overcome by convulsive agony and sweats blood instead of water.
- The plague is said to kill within half an hour.





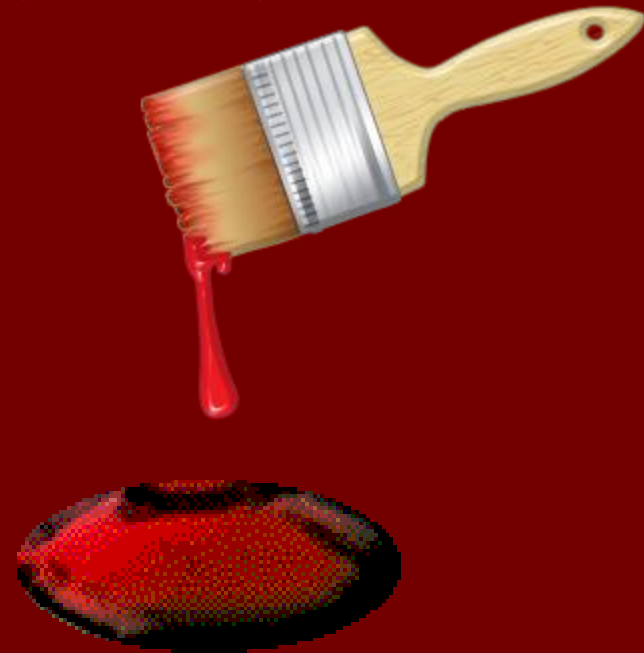
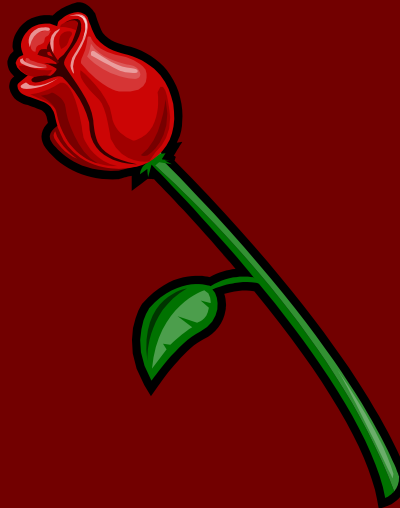
“The ‘Red Death’ had long devastated the country. No pestilence [disease] had ever been so fatal [deadly], or so hideous. Blood was its Avatar [embodiment] and its seal—the redness and the horror of blood” (Poe 421).

# LITERARY ELEMENTS

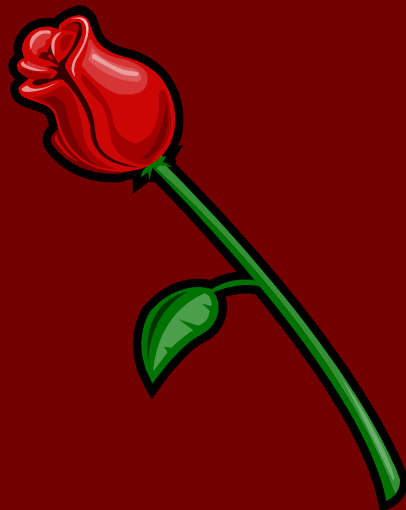
- SYMBOLISM
- ALLEGORY
- IMAGERY

# SYMBOLISM

- Symbols are ordinary objects, events, people, or animals to which we have attached extraordinary meaning and significance.
- A symbol is concrete and it stands for something abstract.

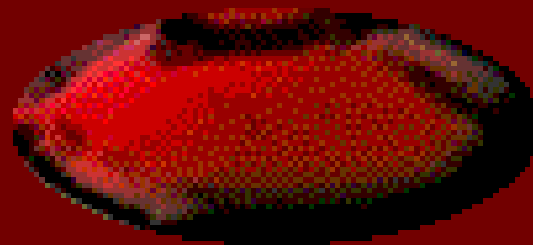


■ **DEATH**



■ **LOVE, FRIENDSHIP**

■ **DEATH, LOVE**



# ALLEGORY

- An allegory is a narrative work with two levels of meaning: the literal (obvious), and the symbolic.
- All (or most) of the characters, settings, and events in an allegory are symbols that stand for ideas beyond themselves.
- The overall purpose of an allegory is to teach a moral lesson.

**Scarecrow, Tin Man, Lion**

**BASIC PLOT**

**= ALLEGORY**

**SYMBOL + SYMBOL + SYMBOL**

**Wisdom, Heart, Courage**



# IMAGERY

- Language that appeals to one or more of the five senses.

“There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse [severe] bleeding at the pores... [there were] scarlet stains upon the body and especially upon the face of the victim” (Poe 421).



# VOCABULARY



# PROFUSE

- (adj.) great in amount, plentiful.
  - Synonym -- Lavish



# COUNTENANCE

- (n.) the face
- Synonym – Demeanor



# WANTON

- (adj.) shamelessly unrestrained, immoral.
- Synonym – lewd, shameless



# SPECTRAL

- (adj.) ghostlike
- Synonym – Eerie, shadowy



# BLASPHEMOUS

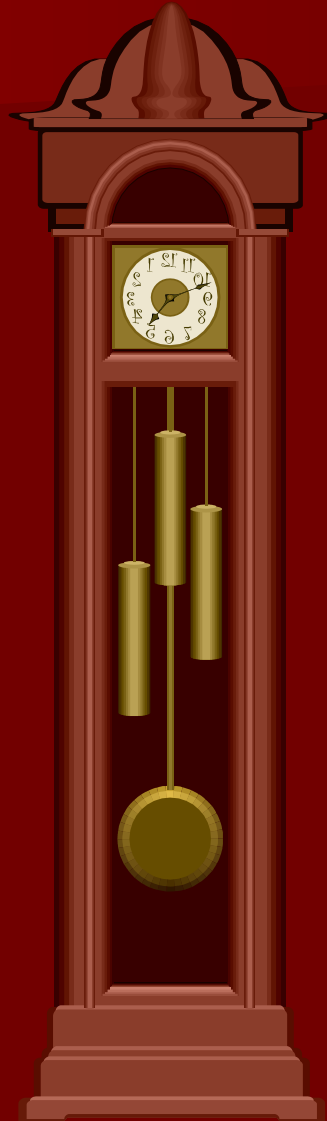
- (adj.) showing disrespect or scorn for God or anything sacred.
- Synonym – Disrespectful



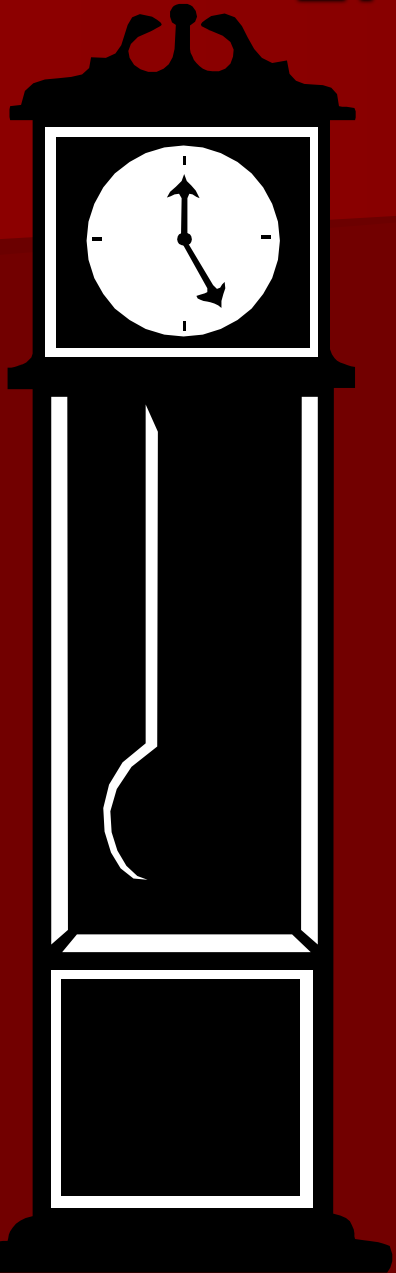
1. Why do Prince Prospero and his followers retreat to his palace?

To escape the Red Death Plague

# GRANDFATHER CLOCK



2. Explain how the party is constantly disrupted.



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



3. 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

4. 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 prejudiced against the poor.
- He thinks he can cheat death.  
(He thinks he can buy his way out.)

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

It symbolizes reality; their lives slowly ticking away.

## 6. 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.

## 7. Why does the visitor frighten the guests? Describe his appearance.

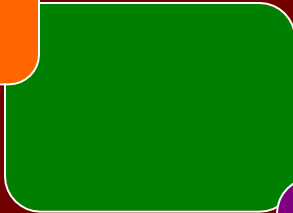
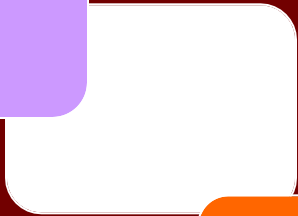
- Because he suddenly and mysteriously appears out of nowhere
- Because he looks like someone with the Red Death Plague
- Because he just walks to and fro and doesn't talk

## 8. How does 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

9. Describe the rooms in which the Masquerade Ball takes place.

- A series of 7 rooms in a zig-zag pattern





# Going from East to West:

■ Blue

■ Purple

■ Green

■ Orange

■ White

■ Violet

■ Black

# 1) BLUE

- Birth/Infancy
- A baby is completely dependent on others...
- (Sky turns blue in the morning)

## 2) PURPLE

Blue + Red

Toddler/Childhood

(Bumps & Bruises as you begin school & leave the protection of home?)

### 3) GREEN

Adolescence/Puberty—the child becomes a teenager  
(Plants bloom in the spring)

## 4) ORANGE

Middle age/Adulthood

(Summer turns into autumn)

## 5) WHITE

Old age/White hair

Purity/peace

(The winter of life)

## 6) VIOLET

Elderly stage

The twilight of one's years

(It appears more bluish-white than purple... As if it's fading and approaching the end of life.)

7) BLACK

Death



11. What mood or effect is created by the colors and the lighting in the rooms?

- It causes a dream-like effect.
- Fantasy

- 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.

## 12. 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 contains a **LESSON ABOUT LIFE**.

13. What is the allegorical lesson in the story?

- One cannot escape his or her fate or death.

# **SYMBOLS**

**What might each  
Symbol from the  
story represent?**

# Prince Prospero –

Wealth; prosperity

He represents mankind's futile (pointless) attempt to live forever.

- But his name is ironic...
- He represents mankind's futile attempt to live forever.

# Welded Locks—

A false sense of security  
Prince Prospero thinks  
he can keep death out...



# Hallways—

They form a maze with “a sharp turn at every 20 or 30 yards.”

Life is unpredictable; we can't know what will happen, but it all leads to death.

# Light/Fire—

Flames usually symbolize life...

But these flames are an unnatural source of light; they represent the false life Prince Prospero tried to create.

# The masquerade

Fantasy; escaping from reality

The partygoers hide from death.

# The Ebony Clock

- A reminder of reality
- That time is passing and life is coming to an end.
- Life is slowly ticking away; death is approaching.

The masked figure –

Death in general;

More specifically, the Red Death  
Plague

# The Number 7

## The Seven Deadly Sins

1. pride,
2. envy,
3. gluttony [greediness],
4. sloth [laziness],
5. lust [desire],
6. avarice [materialism],
7. wrath [anger]

## The Seven Stages of Life

(infancy, childhood, teen years, young adulthood, middle age, old age, death)

## The Life Cycle