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Poe:
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The Mask of the Red Death

Prospero had supplied everything they needed for pleasure*. There was music, there was dancing, there was beauty, there was food to eat and wine to drink. All these were within the wall, and within the wall they would be safe. Outside the wall walked the Red Death.

It was near the end of their fifth month there that Prospero asked his friends all to come together for a dancing party, a masquerade. Everyone was asked to come dressed in fine clothes and with his eyes, or perhaps his whole face, covered by a cloth mask*.

It was a scene of great richness, that masquerade. There were seven rooms in which Prospero's friends danced. In many old palaces the doors can be opened in such a way that rooms like these seven can be seen all at the same time. In this palace it was different. Little more than one of them could be seen at one time. There was a turn every twenty or thirty yards. To the right and left, in the middle of each wall, was a tall pointed window. The windows were of colored glass, of the same color that was used in each room. The first room had blue cloth hangings on the walls — and blue were its windows.³ The second room had wall hangings of that blue-red known as purple, and here the windows were purple. The third was green, and so⁴ was the glass of the windows. The fourth had hangings and windows of yellow — the fifth of white — the sixth of violet*. But the seventh room had hangings on the walls made of a rich soft cloth which was black, black as night, and the floor, too, was covered with the same heavy black cloth. In this room the color of the windows was not the same. It was red — a deep⁵ blood color.

All the rooms were lighted through the outside windows. The resulting light was strange indeed, as it colored the shapes of the dancers. But the light that fell on the black hangings through the blood-colored⁶ glass was the most fearful of them all. It produced so wild a look on the faces of those who entered that there were few of the dancers who dared* to step within those dark walls.

THE RED DEATH had long been feeding on the country. No sickness had ever been so deadly* — so great a killer — or so fearful* to see. Blood was its mark — the redness and the horror* of blood. There were sharp* pains, and a sudden feeling that the mind was rushing* in circles inside the head. Then there was bleeding* through the skin, though it was not cut or broken — and then, death! The bright* red spots upon the body and especially upon the face of the sick man made other men turn away from him, afraid to try to help. And the sickness lasted, from the beginning to the end, no more than half an hour.

But Prospero, the ruler of that land, was happy and strong and wise*. When half the people of his land had died, he called to him a thousand healthy, happy friends, and with them went far away to live in one of his palaces*. This was a large and beautiful stone building he had planned himself. A strong, high wall circled it. This wall had gates* of iron. The gentlemen, after they had entered, brought fire to heat the iron of the gates to make them close so firmly that nobody could open them. Here they could forget the sickness, the Red Death. They would leave² the outside world to care for itself.

In this room stood a great⁷ clock of black wood. Gently* it marked the seconds as they passed; and when it was time to mark the hour the clock spoke with a loud, clear voice, a deep tone* as beautiful as music, but so strange that the music and the dancing stopped and the dancers stood still to listen. And then, after another sixty minutes, after another three thousand and six hundred seconds of Time, of flying Time, the clock struck again, and the dancers stopped as before.



Nevertheless*, it was a happy and beautiful masquerade. And you may be sure⁸ that the clothes the dancers chose to wear, their costumes, were strange and wonderful. The dancers looked like the forms we might see in troubled dreams. And these — the dreams — danced softly through the rooms, taking the color of the rooms as they moved. It did not seem that their steps followed the music, but that the music rose from their steps. But into the seventh room the dancers do not go, for the red light coming through the windows, and the blackness of the wall-hangings, make them afraid — and he who enters hears more deeply⁵ the striking of the great black clock.

But the other rooms are crowded, and in them beats hotly the heart of life. And the dance goes on⁹ until at last the clock begins to strike twelve. Again the music stopped. Again the dancers stood without moving while the slow striking sound continued. Before the clock was quiet again, many in the crowd saw that in the first room, the blue room, there was a masquerader who had not been seen before. As they talked softly to each other about him a feeling of surprise spread through all the dancers, then a feeling of fear and of sickening horror.

In such a group as this, only a very strange masquerader could have caused such a feeling. Even among those who laugh at both life and death, some matters cannot be laughed at¹⁰. Everyone seemed now deeply⁵ to feel that the stranger* should not have been allowed to come among them dressed in such clothes. He was tall and very thin*, and covered from head to foot like a dead man prepared for the grave.* The mask which covered his face — or was it really a mask? — the mask which covered his face was so much like the face of a dead man that the nearest eye could not see the difference. And yet all this might have been acceptable — but the masquerader whom nobody knew had made himself look like the Red Death itself! His clothes were spotted with blood. And the mask over his face was covered with the terrible red spots... or perhaps it was indeed his face!

When Prospero looked upon this fearful* form he was first filled with terror* — and then with anger. “Who dares?” he cried. “Take him! Seize* him! Pull off his mask so that we may know who¹¹ we must hang at sunrise!”

Prospero stood in the blue room when he spoke these words. They sounded through the seven rooms, loud and clear. At first, as he spoke, some of the dancers started to rush toward the strange masquerader. But they stopped, afraid, and no one dared to put out a hand to touch him. The stranger started to walk toward the second room. He passed within a few feet of Prospero, who stood still, surprised. And while the dancers moved back from the center of the room, the stranger moved quietly, without being stopped, with a slow and measured step, through the blue room to the purple room — through the purple room to the green room — through the green to the yellow — through this to the white — and then to the violet room.

As the stranger was entering the seventh room, Prospero suddenly and angrily rushed through the six rooms. No one dared to follow him. He held a sharp knife* high over his head, ready to strike the stranger. When he was within three or four feet of the strange masquerader, the stranger turned and stood silent, looking firmly into Prospero’s eyes. There was a cry — and the knife dropped shining upon the black floor, upon which a minute later Prospero himself fell, dead. The dancers then rushed into the black room. The strongest of the men tried to hold the masquerader, whose tall form stood beside the black clock; but when they put their hands on him they found inside the grave-clothes no human form, no body — nothing!

Now they knew that it was the Red Death itself that had come in the night. One by one the dancers fell, and each died as he fell. And the fires died. And the clock stopped. And darkness and decay* and the Red Death ruled forever over all.

The Story of William Wilson

Part One

LET ME CALL MYSELF, for the present, William Wilson. That is not my real name. That name has already been the cause of the horror* — of the anger of my family. Have not the winds carried my name, with my loss of honor, to the ends of the earth? Am I not forever dead to the world? — to its honors, to its flowers, to its golden hopes? And a cloud, heavy and endless — does it not¹ hang forever between my hopes and heaven?

Men usually become bad by degrees. But I let all goodness fall from me in a single moment, as if I had dropped a coat. From small acts of darkness I passed, in one great step, into the blackest evil* ever known. Listen while I tell of the one cause that made this happen. Death is near, and its coming has softened my spirit. I desire, in passing through this dark valley, the understanding of other men. I wish them to believe that I have been, in some ways, in the power of forces beyond human control. I wish them to find for me, in the story I am about to tell, some small fact that proves I could have done only what I did. I would have them agree that what happened to me never happened to other men. Is it not¹ true that no one has ever suffered as I do? Have I not¹ indeed been living in a dream? And am I not¹ now dying from the horror and the unanswered question — the mystery* of the wildest dream ever dreamed on earth?

I am one of a family well known for their busy* minds. As a small child I showed clearly that I too had the family character. As I became older it grew more powerful in me. For

many reasons it became a cause of talk among friends, and the hurt* it did me was great. I wanted people always to do things my way; I acted like a wild fool*; I let my desires control me.

My father and mother, weak* in body and mind, could do little to hold me back. When their efforts failed, of course my will* grew stronger. From then on² my voice in the house was law. At an age when few children are allowed to be free, I was left³ to be guided by my own desires. I became the master of my own actions.

I remember my first school. It was in a large house about three hundred years old, in a small town in England, among a great number of big trees. All of the houses there were very old. In truth, it was a dream-like and spirit-quieting place, that old town. At this moment I seem to feel the pleasant* coolness under the shade of the trees, I remember the sweetness of the flowers, I hear again with delight I cannot explain the deep sound of the church bell* each hour breaking the stillness of the day.

It gives me pleasure* to think about this school — as much pleasure, perhaps, as I am now able to experience. Deep in suffering as I am — suffering only too real — perhaps no one will object* if for a short time I forget my troubles and tell a little about this period.* Moreover,* the period and place are important. It was then and there that I first saw, hanging over me, the terrible promise of things to come. Let me remember.

The house where we boys lived and went to school was, as I have said, old and wide. The grounds about it were large, and there was a high wall around the outside of the whole school. Beyond this wall we went three times in each week, on one day to take short walks⁴ in the neighboring fields, and two times on Sunday to go to church. This was the one church in the village, and the head-teacher of our school was also the head of the church. With a spirit of deep wonder and of doubt I used to watch him there! This man, with slow step and quiet, thoughtful face, in clothes so different and shining clean — could this be the same man who with a hard face and clothes far from clean stood ready to strike us if we did not follow the rules of the school? Oh, great and terrible question, beyond my small power to answer!

I well remember our playground,* which was behind the house. There were no trees, and the ground was as hard as



stone. In front of the house there was a small garden, but we stepped into this garden only at very special times, such as when we first arrived at school, or when we left it for the last time, or perhaps when father or mother or a friend came to take us away for a few days.

But the house! — what a delightful old building it was — to me truly a palace!* There was really no end to it. I was not always able to say certainly which of its two floors I happened⁵ to be on.⁶ From each room to every other there were always three or four steps either up or down. Then the rooms branched into each other, and these branches were too many to count, and often turned and came back upon themselves! Our ideas about the whole great house were not very far different from the thoughts we had about time without end. During the five years I was there, I could never have told anyone how to find the little room where I and some eighteen or twenty other boys slept.* The schoolroom was the largest room in the house — and I couldn't help⁷ thinking it was the largest in the world. It was long and low, with pointed windows and heavy wood overhead. In a far corner was the office of our head-teacher, Mr. Bransby. This office had a thick door, and we would rather have died than open it when he was not there.

Inside the thick walls of this old school I passed my years from ten to fifteen. Yet I always found it interesting. A child's mind does not need the outside world. In the quiet school I found more bright pleasure than I found later, as a young man, in riches, or, as an older man, in wrong-doing.

Yet I must have been different indeed from most boys. Few men remember much of their early life. My early days stand out as clear and plain as if they had been cut in gold. In truth the hotness of my character and my desire to lead and command soon separated me from the others. Slowly I gained control over all who were not greatly older than myself — over all except one. This exception was a boy who, though not of my family, had the same name as my own, William Wilson. This boy was the only one who ever dared* to say he did not believe all I told him, and who would not follow my commands.

This troubled me greatly. I tried to make the others think that I didn't care. The truth was that I felt afraid of him. I had to fight to appear equal with him, but he easily kept himself equal with me. Yet no one else felt, as I did, that this proved him the better of the two.

Indeed, no one else saw the battle going on⁸ between us. All his attempts to stop me in what I wanted to do were made when no one else could see or hear us. He did not desire, as I did, to lead the other boys. He seemed only to want to hold me back. Sometimes with wonder, and always without pleasure, I saw that his manner seemed to show a kind of love for me. I did not feel thankful for this; I thought it meant only that he thought himself to be very fine indeed, better than me.⁹ Perhaps it was this love he showed for me, added to the fact that we had the same name, and also that we had entered the school on the same day, which made people say that we were brothers. Wilson did not belong to my family, even very distantly. But if we had been brothers we would have been near to each other indeed, for I learned that we were both born on the nineteenth of January, eighteen hundred and nine.¹⁰ This seemed a strange and wonderful thing.

IN THE FIRST PART of my story I spoke about my life at my first school, and about the other boys — over whom I gained firm control. But there was one boy who would not follow my commands, who would not do what I told him to,¹ as the other boys did. His name was the same as mine — William Wilson — although he did not belong to my family in any way. He seemed to feel some love for me, and had entered the school the same day as I had. Many of the boys thought we were brothers. I soon discovered that we had been born on the same day: January nineteenth, eighteen hundred and nine.

Wilson continued his attempts to command me, while² I continued my attempts to rule him. The strange thing is that, although I did not like him, I could not hate* him. We had a battle nearly every day, it is true. In public it would seem that I had been proved the stronger; but he seemed somehow able to make me feel that this was not true, and that he himself was stronger. Nevertheless*, we continued to talk to each other in a more or less friendly³ way. On a number of subjects we agreed very well. I sometimes thought that if we had met at another time and place we might have become friends.

It is not easy to explain my real feelings toward him. There was no love, and there was no fear. Yet I saw something to honor in him, and I wanted to learn more about him. Anyone experienced* in human nature will not need to be told that Wilson and I were always together.

This strange appearance of friendship — although we were not friends — caused, no doubt, the strangeness of the battle between us. I tried to make the others laugh at him; I tried to give him pain while seeming to play a lighthearted* game. My attempts were not always successful, even though my plans were well made. There was much about his character that simply could not be laughed at.

I could find, indeed, but⁴ one weakness. Perhaps he had been born with it, or perhaps it had come from some illness. No one but⁴ me would have made any use of it against him. He was able to speak only in a very, very soft, low voice. This weakness I never failed to use in any way that was in my power.

Wilson could fight back, and he did. There was one way he had of troubling me beyond measure. I had never liked my name. Too many other people had the same name; I would rather have had a name that was not so often heard. The words sickened me. When, on the day I arrived at the school, a second William Wilson came also, I felt angry with him for having the name. I knew I would have to hear the name each day a double number of times. The other William Wilson would always be near. The other boys often thought that my actions and my belongings were his, and his were mine.

My anger grew stronger with every happening that showed that William Wilson and I were alike,* in body or in mind. I had not then discovered the surprising fact that we were of the same age; but⁴ I saw that we were of the same height,⁵ and I saw that in form and in face we were also much the same. Nothing could trouble me more deeply (although I carefully tried to keep everyone from seeing it) than to hear anyone say anything about the likeness between us of mind, or of body, or of anything else. But, in truth, I had no reason to believe that this likeness was ever noticed by our school-fellows. He saw it, and as clearly as I; that, I knew well. He

The Story of William Wilson

Part Two

discovered that in this likeness he could always find a way of troubling me. This proved the more than usual sharpness of his mind.

His method, which was to increase the likeness between us, lay both in words and in actions; and he followed his plan very well indeed. It was easy enough to have clothes like mine. He easily learned to walk and move as I did. His voice, of course, could not be as loud as mine, but he made his manner of speaking the same.

How greatly this most careful picture of myself troubled me, I will not now attempt to tell. It seemed that I was the only one who noticed it. I was the only one who saw Wilson's strange and knowing smiles. Pleased with having produced in my heart the desired result, he seemed to laugh within himself and cared nothing that no one laughed with him.

I have already spoken of how he seemed to think he was better and wiser* than I. He would try to guide* me; he would often try to stop me from doing things I had planned. He would tell me what I should and should not do; and he would do this not openly, but in a word or two in which I had to look for the meaning. As I grew older I wanted less and less⁶ to listen to him.

As it was, I could not be happy under his eyes, that always watched me. Every day I showed more and more openly that I did not want to listen to anything he told me. I have said that, in the first years when we were in school together, my feelings might easily have been turned into friendship; but in the later months, although he talked to me less often than, I almost hated him.

Yet, let me be fair to him. I can remember no time when what he told me was not wiser than would be expected from one of his years.⁷ His sense of what was good or bad was sharper than my own. I might, today, be a better and happier man if I had more often done what he said.

It was about the same period, if I remember rightly, that by chance he acted more openly than usual and I discovered in his manner something that deeply interested me. Somehow* he brought to mind pictures of my earliest years — I remembered, it seemed, things I could not have remembered. These pictures were wild, half-lighted, and not clear, but I felt that very long ago I must have known this person standing before me. This idea, however, passed as quickly as it had come.

It was on this same day that I had my last meeting at the school with this other, strange William Wilson. That night, when everyone was sleeping, I got out of bed, and with a light in my hand, I went quietly through the house to Wilson's room. I had long been thinking of another of those plans to hurt him, with which I had until then had little success. It was my purpose now to begin to act according to this new plan.

Having reached his room, I entered without a sound, leaving the light outside. I advanced a step, and listened. He was asleep.* I turned, took the light, and again went to the bed. I looked down upon his face.

The coldness of ice* filled my whole body. My knees trembled*, my whole spirit was filled with honor.* I moved the light nearer to his face. Was this — this the face of William Wilson? I saw indeed that it was, but I trembled as if with sickness as I imagined that it was not. What was there in his face to trouble me so? I looked, and my mind seemed to turn in circles in the rush* of my thoughts. It was not like this — surely not like this — that he appeared in the daytime. The same name, the same body; the same day that we came to school! And then there was his use of my way of walking, my manner of speaking! Was it, in truth, humanly⁸ possible that what I now saw was the result — and the result only — of his continued efforts to be like me? Filled with wonder and fear, cold and trembling, I put out⁹ the light. In the quiet darkness I went from his room and, without waiting one minute, I left¹⁰ that old school and never entered it again.

The Story of William Wilson

Part Three

YOU WILL REMEMBER that in the last part of my story I told of my experiences in my first school; I spoke of my early meetings with a boy who looked and behaved as I did — whose name was even the same as mine: William Wilson. I told of the night when I went to Wilson's room, with a plan to hurt him. What I saw that night so frightened* me that I left the room and the school forever. As I stood looking down at his sleeping form and face I might have been looking at myself in a looking glass*.

It was not like this — surely not like this — that he appeared in the daytime. The same name, the same face, the same body, the same day of coming to school! And then his use of my way of walking, my manner of speaking! Was it, in truth, humanly possible that what I now saw was the result and the result only — of his continued efforts to be like me? Afraid, I left the old school and never entered it again.

After some months at home, doing nothing, I went to study at the famous* school called Eton.¹ I had partly* forgotten my days at the other school, or at least my feelings about those days had changed. The truth — the terrible* truth — of what had happened² there was gone. Now I doubted what I remembered. Now I called the subject into my mind³ only to smile at the strength of the strange ideas and thoughts I had once had.

My life at Eton did not change this view. The fool's* life into which I carelessly threw myself washed away everything that was valuable in my past. I do not wish, however, to tell here the story of my wrongdoing — wrongdoing which went against every law of the school and escaped the watchful eyes of all the teachers. Three years of this had passed and I had grown much larger in body and smaller in soul. Three years of wrongdoing had made me evil*.

One night I asked a group of friends who were as evil as I to come to a secret* meeting in my room. We met at a late hour. There was strong drink, and there were games of cards* and loud talking until the new day began appearing in the east. Warm with the wine and with the games of chance, I was raising my glass to drink in honor of some especially evil idea, when I heard the voice of a servant* outside the room. He said that someone had asked to speak with me in another room.

I was delighted. A few steps brought me into the hall of the building. In this room no light was hanging. But I could see the form of a young man about my own height⁴, wearing clothes like those I myself was wearing. His face I could not see. When I had entered he came quickly up to me⁵, and, taking me by the arm, he said softly in my ear: "William Wilson!"

There was something in the manner of the stranger, and in the trembling* of his uplifted finger, which made my eyes open wide; but it was not this which had so strongly touched my mind and heart. It was the sound of those two, simple, well-known words, William Wilson, which reached into my soul. Before I could think again and speak, he was gone⁶.

For some weeks I thought about this happening². Who and what was this Wilson? — where did he come from? — and what were his purposes? I learned that for family reasons he had suddenly left the other school on the afternoon of the day I myself had left it. But in a short time I stopped thinking about the subject; I gave all my thought to plans for study at Oxford⁷ University.

There I soon went. My father and mother sent me enough money to live like the sons of the richest families in England. Now my nature showed itself with double* force. I threw aside* all honor. Among those who spent too much money, I spent more; and I added new forms of wrongdoing to the older ones already well-known at the university.

And I fell still lower. Although it may not be easily believed, it is a fact that I forgot my position as a gentleman*. I learned and used all the evil ways of those men who live by playing cards. Like such skilled gamblers*, I played to make money.

My friends trusted* me, however. To them I was the laughing but honorable William Wilson, who freely gave gifts* to anyone and everyone, who was young and who had some strange ideas, but who never did anything really bad.

For two years I was successful in this way. Then a young man came to the university, a young man named Glendinning, who, people said, had quickly and easily become very rich. I

soon found him of weak mind⁸. This, of course, made it easy for me to get his money by playing cards, I played with him often.

At first, with the gambler's usual skill*, I let him take money from me. Then my plans were ready. I met him one night in the room of another friend, Mr. Preston. A group of eight or ten persons were there. By my careful planning I made it seem that it was chance that started* us playing cards. In fact, it was Glendinning himself who first spoke of a card game.

We sat and played far into the night, and at last the others stopped playing. Glendinning and I played by ourselves, while the others watched. The game was the one I liked best, a game called "ecarte". Glendinning played with a wild nervousness* that I could not understand, though it was caused partly, I thought, by all the wine he had been drinking. In a very short time he had lost a great amount of money to me.

Now he wanted to double* the amount for which we played. This was as I had planned, but I made it seem that I did not want to agree. At last I said yes. In an hour he had lost four times as much money as before.

For some reason his face had become white. I had thought him⁸ so rich that losing money would not trouble him, and I believed this whiteness, this paleness, was the result of drinking too much wine. Now, fearing what my friends might say about me, I was about to stop the game when his broken cry and the wild look in his eyes made me understand that he had lost everything he owned. Weak of mind and made weaker by wine, he should never have been allowed to play that night. But I had not stopped him; I had used his condition to destroy him.

The room was very quiet. I could feel the icy* coldness in my friends. What I would have done I cannot say, for at that moment the wide heavy doors of the room were suddenly opened. Every light in the room went out⁹, but I had seen that a man had entered; he was about my own height⁴, and he was wearing a very fine, long coat. The darkness, however, was now complete, and we could only feel that he was standing among us. Then we heard his voice. In a soft, low, never-to-be-forgotten voice, which I felt deep in my bones*, he said:

"Gentlemen, I am here only to do my duty. You cannot know the true character of the man who has tonight taken a large amount of money from Mr. Glendinning. Please have him take off⁰ his coat, and then, look in it very carefully."

While he was speaking there was not another sound in the room. And as he ended, he was gone!

AS I ENDED the last part of my story, I was speaking of that terrible* evening when I played cards with a young gentleman* called Glendinning. We were in the room of one of my friends at Oxford University. I had just realized that the young man, weak of mind and weakened by wine, had allowed me to win from him everything he owned. I was still trying to decide what I should do, when, as I said...

The wide, heavy doors of the room were suddenly opened. Every light in the room went out; but I had seen that a stranger had entered; he was about my own height¹, and he was wearing a very fine, long coat. The darkness, however, was now complete; and we could only feel that he was standing among us. Then we heard him speak. In a soft, low, and never-to-be-forgotten voice, which I felt deep in my heart, he said: "Gentlemen, I am here only to do my duty. You cannot know the true character of the man who has tonight taken a large amount of money from Mr. Glendinning. Please have him take off his coat, and then look in it very carefully."

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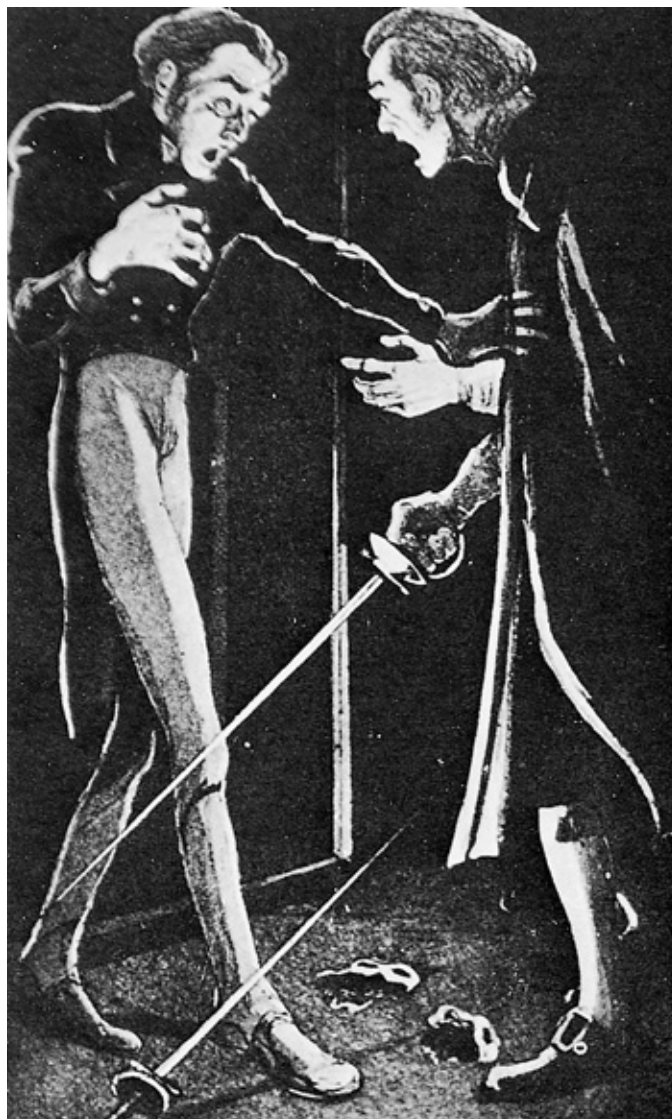
Can I — shall I — tell what I felt? Need I say that I was afraid, that I felt the sick fear of those who are judged forever wrong? Many hands held me. Lights were brought. My friends looked in my coat. In it they found all the high cards, the valuable cards needed to win in the game we had been playing. Secretly* using these cards, I could have taken the money of anyone who played the game with me. Mr. Preston, in whose room we were, then said: "Mr. Wilson, this is yours." He lifted from the floor a fine, warm coat, and said, "We shall² not look in this to prove again what we have proved already. We have seen enough. You will understand, I hope, the need for you to leave³ the University. At the very least, you must leave my room, and leave it now."

Down in the dust* though my spirit was, I might have tried to strike him for those words if at that moment I had not noticed something very surprising. My coat had cost more money than most men could spend, and it had been made especially for me. It was different, I thought, from every other coat in the world. When, therefore, Mr. Preston gave me the coat which he had picked up from the floor, I saw with terror* that my own was already hanging on my arm, and that the two were alike* in every way. I remembered that the strange being who had so mysteriously* entered and left the room had had⁴ a coat. No one else in the group had been wearing one. I placed the coat offered by Preston over my own, and left his room.

The next morning I began a hurried journey away from Oxford University. I ran, but I could not escape. I went from city to city, and in each one Wilson appeared. Paris, Rome, Vienna, Berlin, Moscow — he followed me everywhere*. Years passed. I went to the very ends of the earth. I ran in fear, as if

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Part Four



running from a terrible sickness, and still⁵ he followed. Again and again I asked myself, "Who is he? — where did he come from? — and what is his purpose?" But no answer was found. And then I looked with the greatest care at the methods of his watch over me. I learned little. It was noticeable, indeed, that when he appeared now, it was only to stop me in those actions from which evil* might result. But what right did he have to try to control me?

I also noticed that although he always wore clothes the same as mine, he no longer let me see his face. Did he think I would not know him? He destroyed my honor at Oxford, he stopped me in my plans for getting a high position in Rome, in my love in Naples, in what he called my desire for too much money in Egypt. Did he think I could fail to see that he was the William Wilson of my schoolboy days, the hated* and feared William Wilson? But let me hurry to the last scene* in my story.

Until now I had not tried to strike back. He was honorable and wise*, he could be everywhere*, and he knew everything. I felt such wonder and fear of him that I believed myself to be weak* and helpless*. Though it made me angry, I had done as he desired. But now I wanted more and more to escape his control. As I began to grow stronger, it seemed to me that he began to grow weaker. I felt a burning hope; in my deepest thoughts I decided that I was going to be free.

It was at Rome, during the Carnival of 1835, that I went to a dance in the great house of the Duke Di Broglio. I had been drinking more wine than is usual, and the rooms seemed very crowded* and hot. I became angry as I pushed through the people. I was looking (Let me not say why)... I was looking for the young, the laughing, the beautiful wife of old Di Broglio. Suddenly I saw her; but as I was trying to get⁶ through the crowd* to join her, I felt a hand placed upon my shoulder, and that ever-remembered quiet voice within my ear.

In a wild anger I took him in a strong hold. Wilson was dressed, as I had expected, like myself, in a rich coat of blue.

Around his body was a band* of red cloth from which hung a long sharp* sword*. A mask* of black cloth completely covered his face.

"You again!" I cried, my anger growing hotter with each word. "Always you again! You shall not⁷ — you shall not hunt me like this until I die! Come with me now or I will kill you where you stand." I pulled him after me into a small room nearby. I threw him against the wall and closed the door. I commanded him to take his sword in his hand. After a moment, he took it and stood waiting, ready to fight.

The fight was short indeed. I was wild with hate and anger; in my arm I felt the strength of a thousand men. In a few moments I had forced him back against the wall, and he was in my power. Quickly, wildly, I put my sword's point again and again into his heart.

At that moment I heard that someone was trying to open the door. I hurried to close it firmly, and then turned back to my dying enemy. But what human words can tell the surprise, the horror* which filled me at the scene I then saw?! The moment in which I had turned to close the door had been long enough, it seemed, for a great change to come at the far end⁸ of the room. A large mirror* — a looking glass — or so it seemed to me — now stood where it had not been before. As I walked toward it in terror I saw my own form, all spotted with blood, its face white, advancing to meet me with a weak and uncertain step.

So it appeared, I say, but was not. It was my enemy — it was Wilson, who then stood before me in the pangs of death. His mask and coat lay upon the floor. In his dress⁹ and in his face there was nothing which was not my own!

It was Wilson; but now it was my own voice I heard, as he said: "I have lost. Yet from now on you are also dead — dead to the World, dead to Heaven, dead to Hope! In me you lived-and, in my death — see by this face, which is your own, how wholly*, how completely, you have killed — yourself!"



The Fall of the House of Usher

Part One

IT WAS A DARK AND SOUNDLESS* day near the end of the year, and clouds were hanging low in the heavens. All day I had been riding on horseback through country with little life or beauty; and in the early evening I came within view of the House¹ of Usher.

I do not know how it was — but, with my first sight of the building, a sense of heavy sadness filled my spirit. I looked at the scene before me — at the house itself — at the ground around it — at the cold stone walls of the building — at its empty* eye-like windows — and at a few dead trees — I looked at this scene, I say, with a complete sadness of soul which was no healthy, earthly² feeling. There was a coldness, a sickening of the heart, in which I could discover nothing to lighten* the weight* I felt. What was it, I asked myself, what was it that was so fearful, so frightening* in my view of the House of Usher? This was a question to which I could find no answer.

I stopped my horse beside the building, on the edge of a dark and quiet lake. There, I could see reflected in the water a clear picture of the dead trees, and of the house and its empty eye-like windows. I was now going to spend several weeks in this house of sadness — this house of gloom.* Its owner was named Roderick Usher. We had been friends when we were boys; but many years had passed since our last meeting. A letter from him had reached me, a wild letter which demanded that I reply by coming to see him. He wrote of an illness of the body — of a sickness of the mind — and of a desire to see me — his best and indeed his only friend. It was the manner in which all this was said — it was the heart in it — which did not allow me to say no.

Although as boys we had been together, I really knew little about my friend. I knew, however, that his family, a very old one, had long been famous for its understanding of all the arts* and for many quiet acts of kindness* to the poor. I had learned too that the family had never been a large one, with many branches. The name had passed always from father to son, and when people spoke of the “House of Usher”, they included both the family and the family home.

I again looked up from the picture of the house reflected in the lake to the house itself. A strange idea grew in my mind — an idea so strange that I tell it only to show the force of the feelings which laid their weight on me. I really believed that around the whole house, and the ground around it, the air itself was different. It was not the air of heaven. It rose from the dead, decaying* trees, from the gray walls, and the quiet lake. It was a sickly*, unhealthy air that I could see, slow-moving, heavy, and gray.

Shaking off from my spirit what must have been a dream, I looked more carefully at the building itself. The most noticeable thing about it seemed to be its great age. None of the walls had fallen, yet the stones appeared to be in a condition of advanced decay*. Perhaps the careful eye would have discovered the beginning of a break in the front of the building, a crack making its way from the top down the wall until it became lost in the dark waters of the lake.

I rode over a short bridge to the house. A man who worked in the house — a servant* — took my horse, and I entered. Another servant, of quiet step³, led me without a word through many dark turnings to the room of his master. Much that I met on the way added, I do not know how, to the

strangeness of which I have already spoken. While⁴ the objects around me — the dark wall-coverings, the blackness of the floors, and the things brought home from long forgotten wars — while these things were like the things I had known since I was a baby — while I admitted that all this was only what I had expected — I was still surprised at the strange ideas which grew in my mind from these simple things.

The room I came into was very large and high. The windows were high, and pointed at the top, and so far above the black floor that they were quite out of reach. Only a little light, red in color⁵, made its way through the glass, and served to lighten the nearer and larger objects. My eyes, however, tried and failed to see into the far⁶, high corners of the room. Dark coverings hung upon the walls. The many chairs and tables had been used for a long, long time. Books lay around the room, but could give it no sense of life. I felt sadness hanging over everything. No escape from this deep cold gloom seemed possible.

As I entered the room. Usher stood up from where he had been lying and met me with a warmth* which at first* I could not believe was real. A look, however, at his face told me that every word he spoke was true.

We sat down; and for some moments, while⁷ he said nothing, I looked at him with a feeling of sad* surprise. Surely, no man had ever before changed as Roderick Usher had! Could this be the friend of my early years? It is true that his face had always been unusual. He had gray-white skin; eyes large and full of light; lips not bright in color, but of a beautiful shape; a well-shaped nose; hair of great softness; — a face that was not easy to forget. 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.

In his manner, I saw at once, changes came and went; and I soon found that this resulted from his attempt to quiet a very great nervousness*. I had indeed been prepared for something like this, partly* by his letter and partly by remembering him as a boy. His actions were first too quick and then too quiet. Sometimes his voice, slow and trembling* with fear, quickly changed to a strong, heavy, carefully spaced, too perfectly controlled manner. It was in this manner that he spoke of the purpose of my visit, of his desire to see me, and of the deep delight and strength he expected me to give him. He told me what he believed to be the nature of his illness. It was, he said, a family sickness⁸, and one from which he could not hope to grow⁹ better — but it was, he added at once, only a nervous illness which would without doubt soon pass away*. It showed itself in a number of strange feelings. Some of these, as he told me of them, interested me but were beyond my understanding; perhaps the way in which he told me of them added to their strangeness. He suffered much from a sickly increase in the feeling of all the senses; he could eat only the most tasteless food; all flowers smelled* too strongly for his nose; his eyes were hurt* by even a little light; and there were few sounds which did not fill him with horror*. A certain kind of sick fear was completely his master.

“I shall die,” he said. “I shall die! I must die of this fool’s* sickness. In this way, this way and no other way, I shall be lost. I fear what will happen in the future, not for what happens, but for the result of what happens. I have, indeed, no fear of pain, but only fear of its result — of terror!* I feel that the time will soon arrive* when I must lose my life, and my mind, and my soul, together, in some last battle* with that horrible enemy: FEAR!”

The Fall of the House of Usher

Part Two

RODERICK USHER, WHOM I HAD known as a boy, was now ill and had asked me to come to help him. When I arrived* I felt something strange and fearful about the great old stone house¹, about the lake in front of it, and about Usher himself. He appeared not like a human being, but like a spirit that had come back from beyond the grave*. It was an illness, he said, from which he would surely die. He called his sickness fear. “I have,” he said, “no fear of pain, but only the fear of its result — of terror*. I feel that the time will soon arrive when I must lose my life, and my mind, and my soul, together, in some last battle with that horrible* enemy: FEAR!”

I learned also, but slowly, and through broken words with doubtful meaning, another strange fact about the condition of Usher’s mind. He had certain sick fears about the house in which he lived, and he had not stepped out of it for many years. He felt that the house, with its gray walls and the quiet lake around it, had somehow* through the long years gotten² a strong hold on his spirit.

He said, however, that much of the gloom* which lay so heavily on him was probably caused by something more plainly to be seen — by the long-continued illness — indeed, the coming death — of a dearly loved sister — his only company* for many years. Except for himself, she was the last member of his family on earth. “When she dies,” he said, with a sadness which I can never forget, “when she dies, I will be the last of the old, old family — the House of Usher.”

While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so she was called) passed slowly through a distant part of the room, and without seeing that I was there, went on³. I looked at her with a complete and wondering surprise and with some fear — and yet I found I could not explain to myself such feelings. My eyes followed her. When she came to a door and it closed behind her, my eyes turned to the face of her brother — but he had put his face in his hands, and I could see only that the thin* fingers through which his tears* were flowing* were whiter than ever before.

The illness of the lady Madeline had long been beyond the help of her doctors. She seemed to care about nothing. Slowly her body had grown⁴ thin and weak*, and often for a short period* she would fall⁵ into a sleep like the sleep of the



dead. So far she had not been forced to stay in bed; but by the evening of the day I arrived at the house, the power of her destroyer (as her brother told me that night) was too strong for her. I learned that my one sight of her would probably be the last I would have — that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days following, her name was not spoken by either Usher or myself; and during this period I was busy with efforts to lift my friend out of his sadness and gloom. We painted and read together; or listened, as if in a dream, to the wild music he played. And so, as a warmer and more loving friendship grew between us, I saw more clearly the useless-

ness* of all attempts to bring happiness to a mind from which only darkness came, spreading upon all objects in the world its never-ending gloom.

I shall always remember the hours I spent with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I would fail in any attempt to give an idea of the true character of the things we did together. There was a strange light over everything. The paintings which he made made⁶ me tremble*, though I know not why. To tell of them is beyond the power of written words. If ever a man painted an idea, that man was Roderick Usher. For me at least there came out of his pictures a sense of fear and wonder.

One of these pictures may be told, although weakly, in words. It showed the inside of a room where the dead might be placed, with low walls, white and plain. It seemed to be very deep under the earth. There was no door, no window; and no light or fire burned; yet a river of light flowed* through it, filling it with a horrible, ghastly* brightness.

I have spoken of that sickly* condition of the senses, which made most music painful for Usher to hear. The notes he could listen to with pleasure* were very few. It was this fact, perhaps, that made the music he played so different from most music. But the wild beauty of his playing could not be explained.

The words of one of his songs, called "The Haunted* Palace"*⁷, I have easily remembered. In it I thought I saw, and for the first time, that Usher knew very well that his mind was weakening*. This song told of a great house where a king lived — a palace — in a green valley*, where all was light and color and beauty, and the air was sweet. In the palace were two bright windows through which people in that happy valley could hear music and could see smiling ghosts* — spirits* — moving around the king. The palace door was of the richest materials, in red and white; through it came other spirits whose only duty* was to sing in their beautiful voices about how wise* their king was.

But a dark change came, the song continued, and now those who enter the valley see through the windows, in a red light⁷, shapes that move to broken music; while⁸ through the

door, now colorless, a ghastly river of ghosts, laughing but no longer smiling, rushes out forever.

Our talk of this song led to another strange idea in Usher's mind. He believed that plants could feel and think, and not only plants, but rocks and water as well. He believed that the gray stones of his house, and the small plants growing on the stones, and the decaying* trees, had a power over him that made him what he was.

Our books — the books which, for years, had fed the sick man's mind — were, as might be supposed, of this same wild character. Some of these books Usher sat and studied for hours. His chief delight was found in reading one very old book, written for some forgotten church, telling of the Watch over the Dead.

At last, one evening he told me that the lady Madeline was alive no more. He said he was going to keep her body for a time in one of the many vaults* inside the walls of the building. The worldly⁹ reason he gave for this was one with which I felt I had to agree. He had decided to do this because of the nature of her illness, because of the strange interest and questions of her doctors, and because of the great distance to the graveyard* where members of his family were placed in the earth.

We two carried her body to its resting place. The vault in which we placed it was small and dark, and in ages past it must have seen strange and bloody scenes. It lay deep below that part of the building where I myself slept*. The thick door was of iron, and because of its great weight made a loud, hard sound when it was opened and closed.

As we placed the lady Madeline in this room of horror* I saw for the first time the great likeness between brother and sister, and Usher told me then that they were twins — they had been born on the same day. For that reason the understanding between them had always been great, and the tie that held them together very strong.

We looked down at the dead face one last time, and I was filled with wonder. As she lay there, the lady Madeline looked not dead but asleep* — still soft and warm — though to the touch cold as the stones around us.

The Fall of the House of Usher

Part Three

I WAS VISITING an old friend of mine, Roderick Usher, in his old stone house, his palace*, where a feeling of death hung on the air. I saw how fear was pressing on his heart and mind. Now his only sister, the lady Madeline, had died and we had put her body in its resting place, in a room inside the cold walls of the palace, a damp*, dark vault*, a fearful* place. As we looked down upon her face, I saw that there was a strong likeness between the two. “Indeed,” said Usher, “we were born on the same day, and the tie between us has always been strong.”

We did not long look down at her, for fear and wonder filled our hearts. There was still a little color in her face and there seemed to be a smile on her lips. We closed the heavy iron door and returned to the rooms above, which were hardly* less gloomy* than the vault.

And now a change came in the sickness of my friend’s mind. He went from room to room with a hurried step. His face was, if possible, whiter and more ghastly* than before, and the light in his eyes had gone. The trembling* in his voice seemed to show the greatest fear. At times he sat looking at nothing for hours, as if listening to some sound I could not hear. I felt his condition, slowly but certainly, gaining power over me; I felt that his wild ideas were becoming fixed* in my own mind.

As I was going to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after we placed the lady Madeline within the vault, I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep did not come — while¹ the hours passed. My mind fought against the nervousness. I tried to believe that much, if not all, of what I felt was due to* the gloomy room, to the dark wall-coverings, which in a rising wind² moved on the walls. But my efforts were useless. A trembling I could not stop filled my body, and fear without reason caught my heart. I sat up³, looking into the darkness of my room, listening — I do not know why — to certain low sounds which came when the storm* was quiet. A feeling of horror* lay upon me like a heavy weight. I put on³ my clothes and began walking nervously* around the room.



I had been walking for a very short time when I heard a light step coming toward my door. I knew it was Usher. In a moment I saw him at my door, as usual very white, but there was a wild laugh in his eyes. Even so, I was glad to have his company*. “And have you not seen it?” he said. He hurried to one of the windows and opened it to the storm.

The force of the entering wind nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a stormy* but beautiful night, and wildly strange. The heavy, low-hanging clouds which seemed to press down upon the house, flew from all directions against each other, always returning and never passing away in the distance. With their great⁴ thickness they cut off all light from the moon and the stars. But we could see them because they were lighted from below by the air itself, which we could see, rising from the dark lake and from the stones of the house itself.

“You must not — you shall⁵ not look out at this!” I said to Usher, as I led him from the window to a seat. “This appearance which surprises you so has been seen in other places, too. Perhaps the lake is the cause. Let us close this window; the air is cold. Here is one of the stories you like best. I will read and you shall⁵ listen and thus we will live through this fearful night together.”

The old book which I had picked up³ was one written by a fool* for fools to read, and it was not, in truth, one that Usher liked. It was, however, the only one within easy reach. He seemed to listen quietly. Then I came to a part of the story in which a man, a strong man full of wine, begins to break down a door, and the sound of the dry wood as it breaks can be heard through all the forest* around him.

Here I stopped, for it seemed to me that from some very distant part of the house sounds came to my ears like those of which I had been reading. It must have been this likeness that had made me notice them, for the sounds themselves, with the storm still increasing, were nothing to stop or interest me.

I continued the story, and read how the man, now entering through the broken door, discovers a strange and terrible* animal of the kind so often found in these old stories. He strikes it and it falls, with such a cry that he has to close his ears with his hands. Here again I stopped.

There could be no doubt. This time I did⁶ hear a distant sound, very much like the cry of the animal in the story. I tried to control myself so that my friend would see nothing of what I felt. I was not certain that he had heard the sound, although he had clearly changed in some way. He had slowly moved his chair so that I could not see him well. I did⁶ see that his lips were moving as if he were speaking to himself. His head had dropped forward, but I knew he was not asleep*, for his eyes were open and he was moving his body from side to side.

I began reading again, and quickly came to a part of the story where a heavy piece of iron falls on a stone floor with a ringing* sound. These words had just passed my lips when I heard clearly, but from far away, a loud ringing sound — as if something of iron had indeed fallen heavily upon a stone floor, or as if an iron door had closed.

I lost control of myself completely, and jumped up³ from my chair. Usher still sat, moving a little from side to side. His eyes were turned to the floor. I rushed* to his chair. As I placed my hand on his shoulder, I felt that his whole body was trembling; a sickly smile touched his lips; he spoke in a low, quick, and nervous* voice as if he did not know I was there.

“Yes!” he said. “I heard it! Many minutes, many hours, many days have I heard it — but I did not dare* to speak! We have put her living in the vault! Did I not say that my senses were too strong? I heard her first movements many days ago — yet I did not dare to speak! And now, that story — but the sounds were hers! Oh, where shall I run?! She is coming — coming to ask why I put her there too soon. I hear her footsteps on the stairs*. I hear the heavy beating of her heart.” Here he jumped up and cried as if he were giving up his soul: “I TELL YOU, SHE NOW STANDS AT THE DOOR!!”

The great door to which he was pointing now slowly opened. It was the work of the rushing wind, perhaps — but no — outside that door a shape did⁶ stand, the tall figure, in its grave-clothes, of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white dress, and the signs of her terrible efforts to escape were upon every part of her thin* form. For a moment she remained trembling at the door; then, with a low cry, she fell heavily in upon her brother; in her pain, as she died at last, she carried him down with her, down to the floor. He too was dead, killed by his own fear.

I rushed from the room; I rushed from the house. I ran. The storm was around me in all its strength as I crossed the bridge. Suddenly a wild light moved along the ground at my feet, and I turned to see where it could have come from, for only the great house and its darkness were behind me. The light was that of the full moon, of a blood-red moon, which was now shining through that break in the front wall, that crack which I thought I had seen when I first saw the palace. Then only a little crack, it now widened* as I watched. A strong wind came rushing over me — the whole face of the moon appeared. I saw the great walls falling apart*. There was a long and stormy shouting sound — and the deep black lake closed darkly over all that remained of the HOUSE OF USHER.



The Black Cat

TOMORROW I DIE. Tomorrow I die¹, and today I want to tell the world what happened and thus perhaps free my soul from the horrible* weight which lies upon it.

But listen! Listen, and you shall hear how I have been destroyed.

When I was a child I had a natural goodness of soul which led me to love animals — all kinds of animals, but especially those animals we call pets, animals which have learned to live with men and share their homes with them. There is something in the love of these animals which speaks directly to the heart of the man who has learned from experience how uncertain and changeable is the love of other men.

I was quite young when I married. You will understand the joy I felt to find that my wife shared with me my love for animals. Quickly she got for us several pets of the most likeable kind. We had birds, some goldfish, a fine dog, and a cat.

The cat was a beautiful animal, of unusually large size, and entirely black. I named the cat Pluto², and it was the pet I liked best. I alone fed it, and it followed me all around the house. It was even with difficulty that I stopped it from following me through the streets.

Our friendship lasted, in this manner, for several years, during which, however, my own character became greatly changed. I began to drink too much wine and other strong drinks. As the days passed I became less loving in my manner; I became quick to anger; I forgot how to smile and laugh. My wife — yes, and my pets, too, all except the cat — were made to³ feel the change in my character.

One night I came home quite late from the inn*, where I now spent more and more time drinking. Walking with uncertain step, I made my way with effort into the house. As I entered I saw — or thought I saw — that Pluto, the cat, was trying to stay out of my way, to avoid me. This action, by an animal which I had thought still loved me, made me angry beyond reason. My soul seemed to fly from my body. I took a small knife* out of my coat and opened it. Then I took the poor animal by the neck and with one quick movement I cut out one of its fear-filled eyes!

Slowly the cat got⁴ well. The hole* where its eye had been was not a pretty thing to look at, it is true; but the cat no longer appeared to suffer any pain. As might be expected, however, it ran from me in fear whenever* I came near. Why should it not run? Yet this did not fail to anger me. I felt growing inside myself a new feeling. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself doing wrong, doing some evil* thing for no other reason than because he knows he should not? Are not we humans at all times pushed, ever driven⁵ in some unknown way to break the law just because we understand it to be the law?

One day, in cold blood⁶, I tied a strong rope* around the cat's neck, and taking it down into the cellar* under the house I hung it from one of the wood beams* above my head. I hung it there until it was dead. I hung it there with tears* in my eyes, I hung it because I knew it had loved me, because I felt it had given me no reason to hurt it, because I knew that my doing so was a wrong so great, a sin so deadly* that it would place my soul forever outside the reach of the love of God!



That same night, as I lay sleeping, I heard through my open window the cries of our neighbors. I jumped from my bed and found that the entire house was filled with fire. It was only with great difficulty that my wife and I escaped. And when we were out of the house, all we could do was stand and watch it burn to the ground. I thought of the cat as I watched it burn, the cat whose dead body I had left⁷ hanging in the cellar. It seemed almost that the cat had in some mysterious* way caused the house to burn so that it could make me pay for my evil act, so that it could take revenge* upon me.

Months went by, and I could not drive the thought of the cat out of my mind. One night I sat in the inn, drinking, as usual. In the corner I saw a dark object that I had not seen before. I went over to see what it could be. It was a cat, a cat almost exactly like Pluto. I touched it with my hand and

petted it, passing my hand softly along its back. The cat rose and pushed its back against my hand.

Suddenly I realized that I wanted the cat. I offered to buy it from the innkeeper, but he claimed he had never seen the animal before. As I left the inn, it followed me, and I allowed it to do so. It soon became a pet of both my wife and myself.

The morning after I brought it home, however, I discovered that this cat, like Pluto, had only one eye. How was it possible that I had not noticed this the night before? This fact only made my wife love the cat more. But I, myself, found a feeling of dislike* growing in me. My growing dislike of the animal only seemed to increase its love for me. It followed me, followed me everywhere*, always. When I sat, it lay down under my chair. When I stood up it got between my feet⁸ and nearly made me fall. Wherever I went, it was always there. At night I dreamed of it. And I began to hate* that cat!

One day my wife called to me from the cellar of the old building where we were now forced to live. As I went down the stairs*, the cat, following me as always, ran under my feet and nearly threw me down.

In sudden anger, I took a knife and struck wildly at the cat. Quickly my wife put out her hand and stopped my arm. This only increased my anger and, without thinking, I turned and put the knife's point deep into her heart! She fell to the floor and died without a sound.

I spent⁹ a few moments looking for the cat, but it was gone. And I had other things to do, for I knew I must do something with the body, and quickly. Suddenly I noted a place in the wall of the cellar where stones had been added to the wall to cover an old fireplace* which was no longer wanted. The walls were not very strongly built, and I found I could easily take down those stones. Behind them there was, as I knew there must be, a hole just big enough to hold the body. With much effort I put the body in and carefully put the stones back in their place. I was pleased to see that it was quite impossible for anyone to know that a single stone had been moved.

Days passed. Still there was no cat. A few people came and asked about my wife; but I answered them easily. Then one day several officers of the police came. Certain that they could find nothing, I asked them in¹⁰ and went with them as they searched.

Finally they searched the cellar from end to end. I watched them quietly, and, as I expected, they noticed nothing. But as they started up the stairs again, I felt myself driven by some unknown inner force to let them know, to make them know, that I had won the battle*.

"The walls of this building," I said, "are very strongly built; it is a fine old house." And as I spoke I struck with my stick that very place in the wall behind which was the body of my wife. Immediately I felt a cold feeling up and down my back as we heard coming out of the wall itself a horrible cry.

For one short moment the officers stood looking at each other. Then quickly they began to pick at the stones, and in a short time they saw before them the body of my wife, black with dried blood and smelling of decay*. On the body's head, its one eye filled with fire, its wide open mouth the color of blood, sat the cat, crying out its revenge!*

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part One

PARIS! IN PARIS IT WAS, in the summer of 1840. There I first met that strange and interesting young fellow, August Dupin.

Dupin was the last member of a well-known family, a family which had once been rich and famous; he himself, however, was far from rich. He cared little about money. He had enough to buy the most necessary things of life — and a few books; he did not trouble himself about the rest. Just books. With books he was happy.

We first met when we were both trying to find the same book. As it was a book which few had ever heard of, this chance brought us together in an old bookstore. Later we met again in the same store. Then again in another bookstore. Soon we began to talk.

I was deeply interested in the family history he told me. I was surprised, too, at how much and how widely he had read; more important, the force of his busy* mind was like a bright light in my soul. I felt that the friendship of such a man would be for me riches without price. I therefore told him of my feelings toward him, and he agreed to come and live with me. He would have, I thought, the joy of using my many fine books. And I would have the pleasure of having someone with me, for I was not happy alone.

We passed the days reading, writing and talking. But Dupin was a lover of the night, and at night, often with only the light of the stars to show us the way, we walked the streets of Paris, sometimes talking, sometimes quiet, always thinking.

I soon noticed a special reasoning power he had, an unusual reasoning power. Using it gave him great pleasure. He told me once, with a soft and quiet laugh, that most men have windows over their hearts; through these he could see into their souls. Then, he surprised me by telling what he knew



about my own soul; and I found that he knew things about me that I had thought only I could possibly know. His manner at these moments was cold and distant. His eyes looked empty* and far away, and his voice became high and nervous. At such times it seemed to me that I saw not just Dupin, but two Dupins — one who coldly put things together, and another who just as coldly took them apart*.

One night we were walking down one of Paris's long and dirty* streets. Both of us were busy with our thoughts. Neither had spoken for perhaps fifteen minutes. It seemed as if we had each forgotten that the other was there, at his side. I soon learned that Dupin had not forgotten me, however. Suddenly he said:

“You're right. He is a very little fellow, that's true, and he would be more successful if he acted in lighter, less serious plays.”

“Yes, there can be no doubt of that!” I said.

At first I saw nothing strange in this. Dupin had agreed with me, with my own thoughts. This, of course, seemed to me quite natural. For a few seconds I continued walking, and thinking; but suddenly I realized that Dupin had agreed with something which was only a thought. I had not spoken a single

word. I stopped walking and turned to my friend. “Dupin,” I said, “Dupin, this is beyond my understanding. How could you know that I was thinking of....” Here I stopped, in order to test* him, to learn if¹ he really did know² my unspoken thoughts.

“How did I know you were thinking of Chantilly? Why do you stop? You were thinking that Chantilly is too small for the plays in which he acts.”

“That is indeed what I was thinking. But, tell me, in Heaven’s name, the method — if method there is — by which you have been able to see into my soul in this matter.”

“It was the fruit*-seller.”

“Fruit-seller!? I know no fruit-seller.”

“I mean the man who ran into³ you as we entered this street — it may have been ten or fifteen minutes ago, perhaps less.”

“Yes; yes, that’s true, I remember now. A fruit-seller, carrying a large basket* of apples* on his head, almost threw me down. But I don’t understand why the fruit-seller should make me think of Chantilly — or, if he did⁴, how you can know that.”

“I will explain. Listen closely now:

“Let us follow your thoughts from the fruit-seller to the play-actor, Chantilly. Those thoughts must have gone like this: from the fruit-seller to the cobblestones*, from the cobblestones to stereotomy, and from stereotomy to Epicurus, to Orion, and then to Chantilly.

“As we turned into this street the fruit-seller, walking very quickly past us, ran against³ you and made you step on some cobblestones which had not been put down evenly, and I could see that the stones had hurt your foot. You spoke a few angry words to yourself, and continued walking. But you kept looking down⁵, down at the cobblestones in the street, so I knew you were still thinking of stones.

“Then we came to a small street where they are putting down street stones which they have cut in a new and very special way. Here your face became brighter and I saw your lips move. I could not doubt that you were saying the word stereotomy, the name for this new way of cutting stones. It is a strange word, isn’t it? But you will remember that we read about it in the newspaper only yesterday. I thought that the word stereotomy must make you think of that old Greek

writer named Epicurus, who wrote of something he called atoms⁶; he believed that the world and everything in the heavens above are made of these atoms.

“Not long ago you and I were talking about Epicurus and his ideas, his atoms, ideas which Epicurus wrote about more than 2000 years ago. We were talking about how much those old ideas are like today’s ideas about the earth and the stars and the sky. I felt sure that you would look up to the sky. You did look up⁷. Now I was certain that I had been following your thoughts as they had in fact come into your mind. I too looked up, and saw that the group of stars we call Orion is very bright and clear tonight. I knew you would notice this, and think about the name Orion.

“Now follow my thoughts carefully. Only yesterday, in the newspaper, there was an article* about the actor Chantilly, an article which was not friendly to Chantilly, not friendly at all. We noticed that the writer of the article had used some words taken from a book we both had read. These words were about Orion. So I knew you would put together the two ideas of Orion and Chantilly. I saw you smile, remembering that article and the hard words in it.

“Then I saw you stand straighter, as tall as you could make yourself. I was sure you were thinking of Chantilly’s size, and especially his height. He is small; he is short. And so I spoke, saying that he is indeed a very little fellow, this Chantilly, and he would be more successful if he acted in lighter, less serious plays.”

I will not say that I was surprised. I was more than surprised; I was astonished.* Dupin was right, as right as he could be. Those were in fact my thoughts, my unspoken thoughts, as my mind moved from one thought to the next. But if I was astonished by this, I would soon be more than astonished.

One morning this strangely interesting man showed me once again his unusual reasoning power. We heard that an old woman had been killed by unknown persons. The killer, or the killers, had cut her head off — and escaped into the night. Who was this killer, this murderer*? The police had no answer. They had looked everywhere* and found nothing that helped them. They did not know what to do next. And so — they did nothing.

But not Dupin. He knew what to do.

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Two

IT WAS IN PARIS in the summer of 1840 that I met August Dupin. He was an unusually interesting young man with a busy*, forceful mind. This mind could, it seemed, look right through a man's body into his soul, and uncover his deepest thoughts. Sometimes he seemed to be not one, but two people — one who coldly put things together, and another who just as coldly took them apart*.

One morning, in the heat of the summer, Dupin showed me once again his special reasoning power. We read in the newspaper about a terrible* killing. An old woman and her daughter, living alone in an old house in¹ the Rue Morgue², had been killed in the middle of the night:



Paris, July 7, 1840. In the early morning today the people in the western part of the city were awakened* from their sleep by cries of terror*, which came, it seemed, from a house in the street called the Rue Morgue. The only persons living in the house were an old woman, Mrs. L'Esplanade, and her daughter. Several neighbors and a policeman ran toward the house, but by the time they reached it the cries had stopped. When no one answered their calls, they forced the door open. As they rushed in they heard voices, two voices; they seemed, to come from above. The group hurried from room to room, but they found nothing until they reached the fourth floor. There they found a door that was firmly closed, locked*, with the key* inside. Quickly they forced the door open, and they saw spread before them a bloody sickening scene — a scene of horror!*

The room was in the wildest possible order — broken chairs and tables were lying all around the room. There was only one bed, and from it everything had been taken and thrown into the middle of the floor. There was blood everywhere, on the floor, on the bed, on the walls. A sharp* knife* covered with blood was lying on the floor. In front of the fireplace* there was some long gray hair, also bloody*; it seemed to have been pulled from a human head. On the floor were four pieces of gold, an earring*, several objects made of silver, and two bags containing a large amount of money in gold. Clothes had been thrown around the room. A box was found under the bed covers. It was open, and held only a few old letters and papers.

There was no one there — or so it seemed. Above the fireplace they found the dead body of the daughter; it had been put up into the opening where the smoke escapes to the sky. The body was still warm. There was blood on the face, and on the neck there were dark, deep marks which seemed to have been made by strong fingers. These marks surely show how the daughter was killed.

After hunting in every part of the house without finding anything more, the group went outside. Behind the building they found the body of the old woman. Her neck was almost cut through, and when they tried to lift her up, her head fell off.

The next day the newspaper offered to its readers these new facts:

The Murders* in the Rue Morgue. —Paris, July 8, 1840. The police have talked with many people about the terrible killings in the old house on¹ the Rue Morgue but nothing has been learned to answer the question of who the killers were.

Pauline Dubourg, a washwoman, says she has known both of the dead women for more than three years, and has washed their clothes during that period. The old lady and her daughter seemed to love each other dearly*. They always paid her well. She did not know where their money came from, she said. She never met anyone in the house. Only the two women lived on the fourth floor.

Pierre Moreau, a shopkeeper*, says Mrs. L'Esplanaye had bought food at his shop for nearly four years. She owned the house and had lived in it for more than six years. People said they had money. He never saw anyone enter the door except the old lady and her daughter, and a doctor eight or ten times, perhaps.

Many other persons, neighbors³, said the same thing. Almost no one ever went into the house and Mrs. L'Esplanaye and her daughter were not often seen.

Jules Mignaud, a banker, says that Mrs. L'Esplanaye had put money in his bank, beginning eight years before. Three days before her death she took out of the bank a large amount of money, in gold. A man from the bank carried it for her to her house.

Isidore Muset, a policeman, says that he was with the group that first entered the house. While he was going up the stairs* he heard two voices, one low and soft, and one hard, high, and very strange — the voice of someone who was certainly not French, the voice of a foreigner*. Spanish perhaps. It was not a woman's voice. He could not understand what it said. But the low voice, the softer voice, said, in French, "My God!"

Alfonso Garcia, who is Spanish and lives on the Rue Morgue, says he entered the house but did not go up the stairs; he is nervous and he was afraid he might be ill. He heard the voices. He believes the high voice was not that of a Frenchman. Perhaps it was English; but he doesn't understand English, so he is not sure.

William Bird, another foreigner, an Englishman, says he was one of the persons who entered the house. He has lived in Paris for two years. He heard the voices. The low voice was that of a Frenchman, he was sure,

because he heard it say, in French, "My God!" The high voice was very loud. He is sure it was not the voice of an Englishman, nor the voice of a Frenchman. It seemed to be that of an Italian. It might have been a woman's voice. He does not understand Italian.

Mr. Alberto Montani, an Italian, was passing the house at the time of the cries. He says that they lasted for about two minutes. They were screams*, long and loud, terrible, fearful sounds. Montani, who speaks Spanish but not French, says that he also heard two voices. He thought both voices were French. But he could not understand any of the words spoken.

The persons who first entered the house all agree that the door of the room where the daughter's body was found was locked on the inside. When they reached the door everything was quiet. When they forced the door open they saw no one. The windows were closed and firmly locked on the inside. There are no steps that someone could have gone down while they were going up. They say that the openings over the fireplace are too small for anyone to have escaped through them. It took four or five people to pull the daughter's body out of the opening over the fireplace. A careful search* was made through the whole house. It was four or five minutes from the time they heard the voices to the moment they forced open the door of the room.

Paul Dumas, a doctor, says that he was called to see the bodies soon after they were found. They were in a horrible condition, badly marked and broken. Such results could not have come from a woman's hands, only from those of a very powerful man. The daughter had been killed by strong hands around her neck.

The police have learned nothing more than this. A killing as strange as this has never before happened in Paris. The police do not know where to begin to look for the answer.

When we had finished reading the newspaper's account of the murders neither Dupin nor myself said anything for a while. But I could see in his eyes that cold, empty* look which told me that his mind was working busily. When he asked me what I thought of all this, I could only agree with all Paris. I told him I considered it a very difficult problem — a mystery*, to which it was not possible to find an answer. No, no, said Dupin.

"No, I think you are wrong. A mystery it is, yes. But there must be an answer. Let us go to the house and see what we can see. There must be an answer. There must!"

IT WAS IN PARIS that I met August Dupin. He was an unusually interesting young man with a busy, forceful mind. This mind could, it seemed, look right through a man's body into his deepest soul.

One hot summer morning we read in the newspapers about a terrible* killing. The dead persons were an old woman and her unmarried daughter, who lived alone on the fourth floor of an old house on the street called the Rue Morgue. Someone had taken the daughter's neck in his powerful fingers and pressed with fearful* strength until her life was gone. Her mother's body was found outside, behind the house, with the head nearly cut off. The knife* with which she was killed was found, however, in the room, on the floor.

Several neighbors ran to the house when they heard the women's cries of fear. As they ran up to the fourth floor they heard two other voices. But when they reached the room and broke down the door they found no living person in the room. Like the door, the two windows were firmly closed, locked* on the inside. There was no other way that the killer could roll have got¹ in or out of the room.

The Paris police did not know where to begin to look for the answer. I told Dupin that it seemed to me that it was not possible to learn the answer to the mystery* of these killings. No, no, said Dupin.

"No; I think you are wrong. A mystery it is, yes. But there must be an answer. We must not judge what is possible just by what we have read in the newspapers. The Paris police work hard and often get¹ good results; but there is no real method in what they do. When something more than simple hard work is needed, when a little real method is needed, the police fail. Sometimes they stand too near the problem. Often, if a person looks at something very closely he can see a few things more clearly, but the shape of the whole thing escapes him.

"There must be an answer! There must! Let us go to the house and see what we can see. I know the head of the police, and he will allow us to do so. And this will be interesting and give us some pleasure."

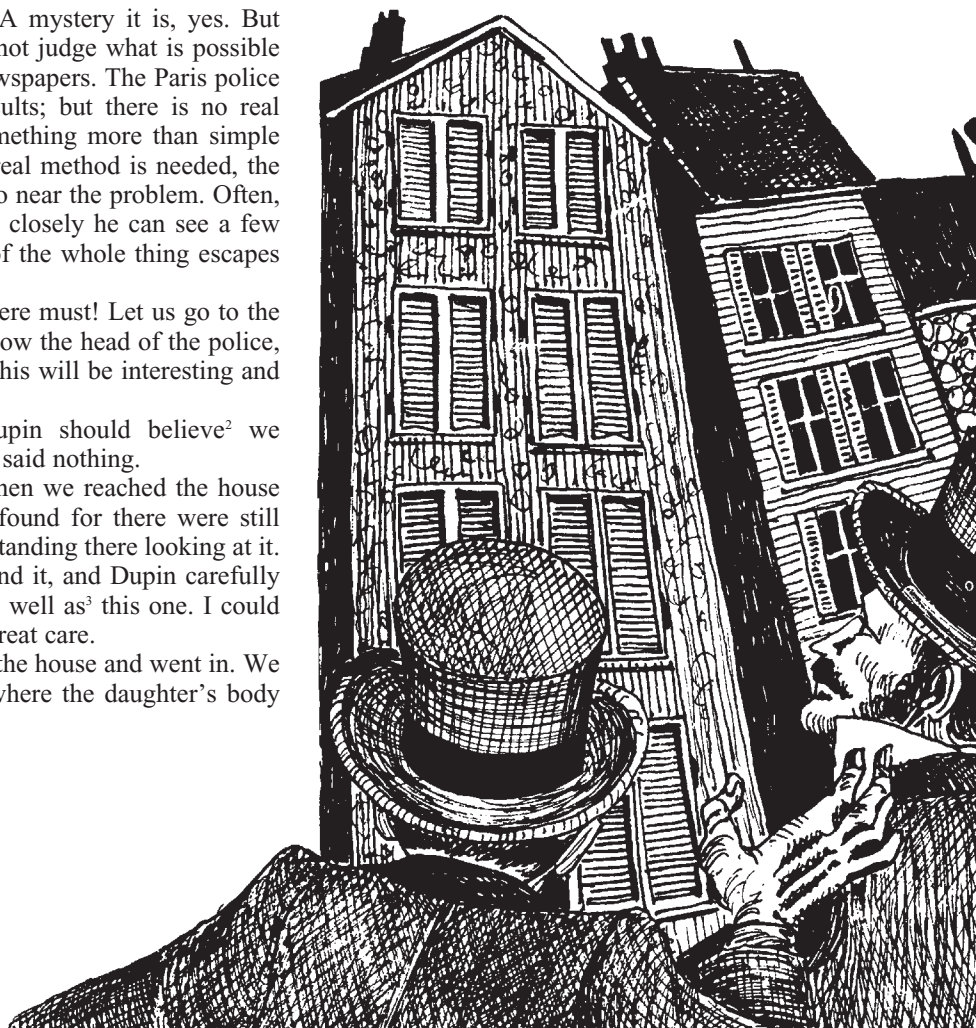
I thought it strange that Dupin should believe² we would get pleasure out of this. But I said nothing.

It was late in the afternoon when we reached the house on the Rue Morgue. It was easily found for there were still many persons — in fact, a crowd*, standing there looking at it. Before going in we walked all around it, and Dupin carefully looked at the neighboring houses as well as³ this one. I could not understand the reason for such great care.

We came again to the front of the house and went in. We went up the stairs* into the room where the daughter's body

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Three



had been found. Both bodies were there. The police had left the room as they had found it. I saw nothing beyond what the newspaper had told us. Dupin looked with great care at everything, at the bodies, the walls, the fireplace, the windows. Then we went home.

Dupin said nothing. I could see the cold look in his eyes which told me that his mind was working, working busily, quickly. I asked no questions.

Dupin said nothing until the next morning, when he came into my room and asked me suddenly if I had not noticed⁵ something especially strange about what we saw at the house on the Rue Morgue. I replied: "Nothing more than we both read in the newspaper."

"Tell me, my friend. How shall we explain the horrible* force, the unusual strength used in these murders*? And whose were the voices that were heard? No one was found except the dead women; yet there was no way for anyone to escape. And the wild condition of the room; the body which was found head down above the fireplace; the terrible broken appearance of the body of the old lady, with its head cut off; these are all so far from what might be expected that the police are standing still; they don't know where to begin.

"These things are unusual, indeed; but they are not deep mysteries*. We should not ask, 'What has happened?' but 'What has happened that has never happened before?' In fact, the very things that the police think cannot possibly be explained are the things which will lead me to the answer. Indeed, I believe they have already led me to the answer."

I was so surprised I could not say a word. Dupin looked quickly at the door. "I am now waiting for a person who will know something about these murders, these wild killings. I do not think he did them himself. But I think he will know the killer. I hope I am right about this. If I am, then I expect to find the whole answer, today. I expect the man here — in this room — at any moment. It is true that he may not come; but he probably will."

"But who is this person? How did you find him?"

"I'll tell you. While we wait for this man we do not know — for I have never met him — while we wait, I will tell you how my thoughts went." Dupin began to talk. But it did not seem that he was trying to explain to me what he had thought. It seemed that he was talking to himself. He looked not at me, but at the wall.

"It has been fully proved that the voices heard by the neighbors were not the voices of the women who were killed. Someone else was in the room. It is therefore certain that the old woman did not first kill her daughter and then kill herself. She would not have been strong enough to put her daughter's body where it was found; and the manner of the old lady's death shows that she could not have caused it herself. A person can kill himself with a knife, yes. But he surely cannot cut his own head almost off, then drop the knife on the floor and jump out the window. It was murder, then, done by some third person — or persons. And the voices heard were the voices of these persons. Let us now think carefully about the things people said about those voices. Did you notice anything especially strange in what was told about them?"

"Well, yes. Everybody agreed that the low voice was the voice of a Frenchman; but they could not agree about the high voice."

"Ah! That was what they said, yes; but that was not what was so strange about what they said. You say you have noticed nothing that makes their stories very different from what might have been expected. Yet there was something. All these persons, as you say, agreed about the low voice; but not about the high hard voice. The strange thing here is that when an Italian, an Englishman, a Spaniard, and a Frenchman tried to tell what the voice was like, each one said it sounded like the voice of a foreigner.* How strangely unusual that voice really must have been! Here are four men from four big countries, and not one of them could understand what the voice said; each one gave it a different name.

"Now, I know that there are other countries in the world. You will say that perhaps it was the voice of someone from one of those other lands — Russia, perhaps. But remember, not one of these people heard anything that sounded like a separate word."

Here Dupin turned and looked into my eyes.

"This is what we have learned from the newspaper. I don't know what I have led you to think. But I believe that in this much of the story there are enough facts to lead us in the one and only direction to the right answer. What this answer is, I will not say...not yet. But I want you to keep in mind⁶ that this much was enough to tell me what I must look for when we were in that house on the Rue Morgue. And I found it!"

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Four

MURDERERS* HAD COME TO the old house on the street called the Rue Morgue! Murderers had come and gone and left behind! the dead bodies of an old woman and her daughter. The daughter's body was in the bedroom on the fourth floor. The old woman was lying outside, behind the house, her head almost cut off; but the knife* which killed her was up in the bedroom, on the floor. The door and the windows were all firmly closed, locked* on the inside; there was no way for anyone to go in or out. Voices had been heard. One voice was speaking in French; the other voice had not spoken even one word that anyone could understand. But there was no one in the room when police arrived.

This much we had learned from the newspapers, my friend Dupin and I. Interested by it, we had gone to look at the house and the bodies. Dupin was now explaining to me what he had learned there.

“That is what we learned from the newspapers. Please remember it; for that much was enough to tell me what I must look for when we were in that house on the Rue Morgue. And I found it!

“Let us now take ourselves again, in our thoughts, to the room where the murders* were done. What shall we first look for? The way the murderers escaped. All right. We agree, I am sure, that we do not have to look for anything outside of nature, for anything not having a real form, a body. The killers were not spirits; they were real. They could not go through the walls. Then how did they escape? There is only one way to reason on that subject, and it must lead us to the answer. Let us look, one at a time, at the possible ways to escape. It is clear that the killers were in the room where the daughter was found. From this room they must have escaped. How?

“At first I saw no way out. It had been necessary for the neighbors to break down the door in order to enter the room. There was no other door. The opening above the fireplace* is not big enough, near the top, for even a small animal. The murderers therefore must have escaped through one of the windows. This may not seem possible. We must prove that it is possible.

“There are two windows in the room. Both of them, you will remember, are made of two parts; to open the window one must lift up the bottom half. One of these windows is easily seen; the lower part of the other is out of sight behind the big bed. I looked carefully at the first of these windows. It was firmly closed, fastened*, like the door, on the inside. To keep the window closed, to fasten it, someone had put a strong iron nail* into the wood at the side of the window in such a way that the window could not be raised. At least it seemed that the nail held the window closed. The nail was easy to see. There it was. And the people who discovered the killings used their greatest strength and could not raise the window. I, too, tried to raise the window and could not.

“I went to the second window and looked behind the bed at the lower half of the window. There was a nail here, too, which held the window closed. Without moving the bed, I tried to open this window also, and again I could not do so.²

“I did not stop looking for an answer, however, because I knew that what did not seem possible must be proved to be possible. The killers — or perhaps I should say, the killer, for I am almost certain there was only one — the killer escaped

through one of these windows. Of this I felt certain. After the murderer had left the bedroom he could have closed the window from the outside; but he could not have fastened it again on the inside. Yet anyone could see the nails which held the windows tightly closed. This was the fact that stopped the police. How could the murderer put the nail back in its place?"

"Perhaps — perhaps if you pulled out the nail...."

"Yes! That is just what I thought. Two things seemed clear: first, there had to be something wrong with³ the idea that the nails were holding the windows closed. I didn't know what was wrong. Something was. Second, if it was⁴ not the nails which were holding the windows closed, then something else was holding them closed, something hard to see, something hidden*.

"I went back to the first window. With great effort I pulled out the nail. Then I again tried to raise the window. It was still firmly closed. This did not surprise me. There had to be a hidden lock, I thought, inside the window. I felt the window carefully with my fingers. Indeed, I found a button* which, when I pressed it, opened an inner* lock. With almost no effort I raised the window.

"Now I knew that the killer could close the window from outside and the window would lock itself. But there was still the nail. Carefully, I put the nail back into the hole from which I had taken it. Then I pressed the button and tried to raise the window. I could not. The nail also was holding the window closed!"

"Then...then the murderer could not possibly have gone out the window."

"He could not have gone out that window. Therefore, he must have escaped through the other window. The other window was also held closed by a nail. But I knew I must be right. Although no one else had looked carefully at the window behind the bed, I went to it and tried to see whether the two windows were in some way different. The nail in the second window looked the same as the one I had just seen. I moved the bed so that I could look closely. Yes. There was a button here, too. I was so sure I was right that without touching the nail I pressed the button and tried to raise the window. Up it went⁵!

"As the window went up it carried with it the top part of the nail, the head. When I closed the window the head of

the nail was again in its place. It looked just as it had looked before. I took the head of the nail in my fingers and it easily came away from the window. I saw that the nail had been broken. But when I put the nail head back in its place, the nail again looked whole.

"What seemed to be not possible we have proved to be possible. The murderer indeed escaped through that window. I could now see, in my mind, what had happened.

"It was a hot summer night. When the murderer first arrived* he found that window open, open to let some of the fresh* night air come in. Through the open window the murderer went in and came out again. As he came out he closed the window, perhaps with a purpose to do so², perhaps by chance. The special lock inside the window held the window firmly closed. The nail only seemed to be holding it closed. And that which was possible looked not possible."

Dupin had been talking not to me, it seemed, but to himself. His cold eyes seemed to see only what was in his own mind. Now he stopped and looked straight at me. His eyes were now hard and bright. And I understood that using his unusual reasoning power to find the answer to those bloody murders was giving Dupin great pleasure!

At first I could think only of this. Then I said: "Dupin — the windows are on the fourth floor, far above the ground. Even an open window...."

"Yes. That is an interesting question: how did the murderer go from the window down to the ground? Once I was quite certain that the murderer had in fact gone through that window the rest⁶ was not so hard to know. And the answer to this question told me still more about who the murderer was!

"When you and I first came to the house on the Rue Morgue we walked around the house. At that time I noted a long, thin metal pole* which went from the top of the building to the ground — a lightning-rod*, put there to carry down to the ground a charge of electricity* that might come out of the clouds during a bad summer storm*. Here, I thought, is a way for someone to go up or down the wall, and then to go in or out the window. He would have to be very strong. Although certain animals could easily go up the pole, not every man could do it — only a man with very special strength and special training. This told me more about what the murderer was like. But I still had the question: who?"



The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Five

took some, why didn't he take the best — or take all? And why would he take a few clothes and leave all the money? Nearly the whole amount brought from the bank was found, in bags, on the floor.

"I want you therefore to forget the idea in the minds of the police, the idea that a desire for money was what they call the motive, the reason for the murders. This idea rose¹ in their minds when they heard how the money was brought to the house three days before the killings. But this is only what we call a coincidence — two things happening² at the same time, but only by chance and not because of some cause, some cause that brought them together. Coincidences happen to all of us every day of our lives. If the gold was³ the reason for the murders, the killer must have been quite a fool* to forget and leave it there.

"No. I don't think the desire for money was the reason for the killings. I think that there was no reason for these killings...except, perhaps, fear.

"Now let us look at the murders themselves. A girl is killed by powerful hands around her neck, then the body is placed in the opening over the fireplace*, head down. No murders we usually hear about are like this. There is something here that does not fit our ideas of human actions, even when we think of men of the most terrible* kind. Think, also, of the great strength which was necessary to put the body where it was found. The strength of several men was needed to pull it down!

"There are other signs of this fearful strength. In front of the fireplace some gray human hair was lying, thick pieces of it, pulled from the head of the old woman. You saw the hair on the floor yourself, and you saw the blood and skin with it. You know, and I know, that great force is necessary to pull out even twenty or thirty hairs at one time. A much

THAT UNUSUAL FRENCHMAN, August Dupin, was still explaining to me how he found the answer to the question of who murdered the two women in the house on the Rue Morgue. We now knew that it was indeed possible for the killer to go in and again out one of the windows and still leave them both firmly closed, locked on the inside. And I agreed with Dupin when he said that only someone with very special strength and training could have gone up the lightning-rod* on the side of the house and thus entered the window. But who the murderer was, we still did not know.

"Let us look again," said Dupin, "at that room on the fourth floor. Let us now go back, in our minds, to the room we saw yesterday. Consider its appearance. Clothes had been thrown around the room; yet it seemed that none had been taken. The old woman and her daughter almost never left the house. They had little use for many clothes. Those that were found in the room were as good as any they had. If the killer

greater force was needed to pull out hundreds of hairs at one time. Also, the head of the old lady was cut almost completely from the body. Why? To kill a woman with a knife* it is not necessary to cut her head off!

"If, now, added to all these things, we add also the condition of the room, we have put together the following ideas: strength more than human; wildness less than human; a murder without reason; horror beyond human understanding; and a voice which made no sound that men could understand. What result, then, have you come to? What have I helped you to see?"

A cold feeling went up and down my back as Dupin asked me the question. "A man...someone who has lost his mind," I said. "A madman!! A madman!! Only a madman could have done these murders!"

"I think not. In some ways your idea is a good one. But madmen are from one country or another. Their cries may be terrible, but they are made of words, and some of the words can be understood.

"Here! Look!⁴ Look at this hair. I took it from the fingers of the old woman. The hair of a madman is not like this. Tell me what you think it is."

"Dupin! This hair is...this hair is not human hair!!"

"I did not say that it is. But, before we decide this matter, look at the picture I had made here on this piece of paper. It is a picture of the marks on the daughter's neck. The doctors said these marks were made by fingers. Let me spread⁵ the paper on the table before us. Try to put your fingers, all at the same time, on the picture, so that your hand and its fingers will fit* the picture of the marks on the daughter's neck."

"I cannot!"

"No. But perhaps we are not doing this in the right way. The paper is spread⁵ out on the table; the human neck is round. Here is a piece of wood about as big as the daughter's neck. Put the paper around it and try again. Go on!⁶ Try!"

I tried to put my fingers around the piece of wood, as if it were⁷ the girl's neck! But still my hand was not large enough to equal the marks left by the killer. "Dupin! These marks were made by no human hand!"

"No. They were not. I am almost certain that they were made by the hand of an orangoutang, one of those man-like animals that live in the wild forests.* The great size, the strength, the wildness of these animals are well known. Look in this book by Cuvier. Read. Look at the picture."

I did so, and at once I knew that Dupin was right in everything he said. The color of the hair...the size of the hand ... the terrible strength...the wildness of the killings...those sounds which were a voice but were not words...everything fit nicely in its place.

No, not everything. "Dupin!" I said. "There were two voices. Whose was the second voice?"

"The second voice! Yes! Remember: we decided that only someone with a very special kind of strength could have gone up the lightning-rod, up the side of the house to the window on the fourth floor — perhaps an animal, perhaps a strong man from a circus*, perhaps a sailor*. We know now that one of the voices was the voice of an animal, an orang-outang. The other was the voice of a man. This voice spoke only two words; they were "My God!" spoken in French.

"Upon those two words I have placed my hopes of finding a full answer to this horrible question. The words were an expression of horror. This means that a Frenchman knew about these murders. It is possible — indeed it is probable — that the Frenchman himself did not help the orangoutang to kill. Perhaps the animal escaped from him, and he followed it to the house on the Rue Morgue. He could not have caught it again. It must still be free somewhere in Paris.

"I will not continue with these guesses* — for I cannot call them more than that. If I am right, and if the Frenchman did not himself help with the killings, I expect him to come here. Read this. I paid to have this put⁸ in the newspaper."

I took the newspaper and read the following:

CAUGHT — Early in the morning of the seventh of this month: a very large orangoutang. The owner, who is known to be a sailor, may have the animal again if he can prove it is his.

"But, Dupin. How can you know that the man is a sailor?"

"I do not know it. I am not sure of it. I think the man is a sailor. A sailor could go up that pole on the side of the house. Sailors travel to strange, faraway* places where such things as orangoutangs can be got. If I am right...."

"Think for a moment! The sailor will say to himself: 'The animal is valuable. Why shouldn't I go and get it? The police do not know the animal killed two women. And clearly somebody* knows I am in Paris. If I do not go to get the animal, they will ask why. I don't want anyone to start asking questions about the animal. So I will go and get the orang-outang and keep it where no one will see it, until this trouble has passed.' This, I believe, is how the sailor will think. But listen! I hear a man's step on the stairs*."

Dupin had left the front door of the house open, and the visitor entered without using the bell*. He came several steps up the stairs⁹, then stopped. We heard him go down again. Dupin was moving toward the door when we again heard the stranger coming up. He did not turn back a second time, but came straight to the door of our room.

In a strong, warm, friendly voice, Dupin said:

"Come in, my friend! Come in!"

Slowly the door opened, and in came — a sailor!¹⁰



The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Six

MY FRIEND DUPIN was now certain that the murders in the Rue Morgue had been done by a wild animal of the jungle*, the manlike animal known as an orangoutang. The animal had escaped from its owner, he thought; and the owner was probably a sailor. He had put a notice in the newspaper that the man who owned the orangoutang could have it again if he came to our house to get it. Now, as the owner came to our door, we were both wondering if that man would, as Dupin guessed, be a sailor.

Yes. The man who entered was indeed a sailor. He was a large man, and strong. He carried a big, heavy piece of wood, but no gun. He said to us, in French: "Good evening."

"Sit down, my friend. I suppose you have come to ask about the orangoutang. A very fine animal. I have no doubt that it is a very valuable* animal. How old do you think it may be?"

"I have no way of guessing how old it is, but it can't be more than four or five years old. Have you got it¹ here?"

"No, no. We have no place for it here. You can get it¹ in the morning. Of course you can prove it is yours?"

"Yes. Yes, I can."

"I wish I could keep it."

"I would like to have it. I...of course I will pay you for finding and keeping the animal. Anything...anything within reason."

"Well...That is very fair, indeed. Let me think. What shall I ask for? I know! Let this be my pay. Tell me everything you know about the murders in the Rue Morgue."

As quietly as he had spoken Dupin walked to the door, locked* it, and put the key* in his coat. At the same time he took a gun out of his coat and placed it on the table.

The sailor's face had become red. He jumped to his feet and reached for his stick of wood, but in the next moment he fell back into his chair, trembling*. His face became quite white, bloodless. He spoke not a word. His eyes were closed.

"My friend, you must not be afraid. We are not going to hurt you. I know very well that you yourself are not the killer. But it is true that you know something about him — or about it. From what I have already said, you must know that I have ways of learning about the matter — ways you could never have dreamed of.

"Now, I know that you yourself have done nothing wrong. You didn't even take any of the money. You have no reason to be afraid to talk and to tell the truth. It is a matter of honor for you to tell all you know. And you know who the killer is."

"So help me God!² I...I'll tell you all I know about this, all I know — but I don't expect you to believe one half of what I say — not one half. Still, I didn't kill anyone, and I'll tell the whole story if I die for it;³ It was that animal! The orangoutang!...

"About a year ago our ship sailed to the Far East⁴, to the island of Borneo*. I had never before seen Borneo. The forest*, the jungle, was thick with trees and other plants, and hot and wet and dark. But we went — a friend and I — we went into that forest — for pleasure. There we saw this orang-

outang, a big animal. But we were two, and we caught it. We took it with us on the ship. Soon, however, my friend died, and the animal was mine. But it was very strong and caused a lot of trouble.

“In the end I brought it back to Paris with me. I kept it in my house, in my own house, carefully locked up, so the neighbors could not know about it. The animal had cut one foot badly while on the ship. I thought...I thought that as soon as it got⁵ well I would sell it. I was certain it was of great value. And it was so much trouble to keep⁶! I wanted to sell it, soon.

“The night of the murders, very late, I came home and found the animal in my bedroom. It had got⁵ free, I don’t know how. It held a knife* in its hands, and was playing with it. I was afraid. I didn’t know what to do. When it saw me it jumped up, ran out of the room and down the stairs*. There it found an open window and jumped into the street. I followed, never far behind, although I had no hope of catching it again. The animal, with the knife still in its hand, stopped often to look back at me. But before I could come near enough to even try to catch it, the animal always started to run again. It seemed to be playing with me.

“It was nearly morning, but the streets were still dark, and quiet. We passed the back of a house in the Rue Morgue. The animal looked up and saw a light in the open window of a room high above. It was the only lighted window in sight. The animal saw the metal pole, went up it easily and quickly, and jumped into the room. All this didn’t take a minute.

“I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t know what I could do. I followed the animal. I too went up the pole. As I am a sailor it was easy for me. But the open window was far from the pole and I was afraid to try to jump. I could see into the room, however, through the other window, which was closed.

“The two women were sitting there, with their backs to the windows. Who can guess why they were not sleeping at that hour of the night? A box was in the middle of the floor. The papers which had been in the box were lying around on the floor. The women seemed to be studying some of these. They did not see the animal, which was just standing there, watching, the knife still in one hand. But the old woman heard

it and turned her head and saw the animal there, knife in hand⁷, and then...then I heard the first of those terrible cries.

“When the animal heard the old woman’s cry it caught her by the hair and slowly moved the knife before her face. The daughter, filled with terror*, fell to the floor and remained there without moving, her eyes closed. The old woman continued to cry for help, screaming with fear. I think the animal now was as afraid as the old woman was. With terrible force it pulled out a handful of hair. And when the woman, covered with blood, tried to run from it, the animal caught her again by the hair and with one move of its arm it nearly cut her head from her body. Throwing down the body, the animal turned and saw that the daughter was moving, watching it with horror*. With fire in its eyes it rushed to the girl, put its powerful fingers around her neck, and pressed them firmly there until she died.

“When the girl stopped moving, the animal dropped her body to the floor and looked up. It saw my face in the window. It began to run around the room, quickly, without purpose. It jumped up and down, breaking the chairs, pulling the bed to pieces. Suddenly it stopped and took the body of the daughter and, as if to hide it, with terrible strength it put the body up above the fireplace*, where it was found. It threw the old woman out the window.

“All this time I was hanging from the pole, filled with horror. It seemed I had lost the power to move. But when I saw the animal coming toward the window with the old woman’s body, my horror became fear. I went quickly down — I almost fell down the pole, and I ran. I didn’t look back. I ran! Oh, my God! My God!”

The Chief of the police was not happy that the answer to the mystery* of the killings had been found by someone who was not a policeman. He said that people should keep to their own business⁸. “Let him talk,” said Dupin.

“Let him talk. He’ll feel better for it³. And he’s a good fellow. But he makes things less simple than they really are. Still, people call him skillful*, and even wise*. I think they say this because of the way he explains, carefully, fully, something which is not here, or there, or anywhere*; and says, “Not possible!” about something which is there before his eyes.”

The Tell-Tale Heart

IT'S TRUE! Yes, I have been ill, very ill. But why do you say that I have lost control of my mind, why do you say that I am mad? Can you not see that I have full control of my mind? Is it not clear that I am not mad? Indeed, the illness only made my mind, my feelings, my senses stronger, more powerful. My sense of hearing especially became more powerful. I could hear sounds I had never heard before. I heard sounds from heaven*; and I heard sounds from hell*!

Listen! Listen, and I will tell you how it happened. You will see, you will hear how healthy my mind is.

It is impossible* to say how the idea first entered my head. There was no reason for what I did. I did not hate* the old man; I even loved him. He had never hurt me. I did not want his money. I think it was his eye. His eye was like the eye of a vulture, the eye of one of those terrible birds that watch and wait while an animal dies, and then fall upon the dead body and pull it to pieces to eat it. When the old man looked at me with his vulture eye a cold feeling went up and down my back; even my blood became cold. And so, I finally decided I had to kill the old man and close that eye forever!

So you think that I am mad? A madman cannot plan. But you should have seen me. During all of that week I was as friendly to the old man as I could be, and warm, and loving.

Every night about twelve o'clock I slowly opened his door. And when the door was opened wide enough I put my hand in, and then my head. In my hand I held a light covered over with a cloth so that no light showed. And I stood there quietly. Then, carefully, I lifted the cloth, just a little, so that a single, thin, small light fell across that eye. For seven nights I did this, seven long nights, every night at midnight. Always the



eye was closed, so it was impossible for me to do the work. For it was not the old man I felt I had to kill; it was the eye, his Evil Eye².

And every morning I went to his room, and with a warm, friendly voice I asked him how he had slept. He could not guess that every night, just at twelve, I looked in at him as he slept.

The eighth night I was more than usually careful as I opened the door. The hands of a clock move more quickly than did my hand³. Never before had I felt so strongly my own power; I was now sure of success.

The old man was lying there not dreaming⁴ that I was at his door. Suddenly he moved in his bed. You may think I became afraid. But no. The darkness in his room was thick* and black. I knew he could not see the opening of the door. I continued to push the door, slowly, softly. I put in my head. I put in my hand, with the covered light. Suddenly the old man sat straight up in bed and cried, "Who's there?!"

I stood quite still⁵. For a whole hour I did not move. Nor did I⁶ hear him again lie down in his bed. He just sat there, listening. Then I heard a sound, a low cry of fear which



escaped* from the old man. Now I knew that he was sitting up in his bed, filled with fear; I knew that he knew that I was there. He did not see me there. He could not hear me there. He felt me there. Now he knew that Death was standing there.

Slowly, little by little, I lifted the cloth, until a small, small light escaped from under it to fall upon — to fall upon that vulture eye! It was open — wide, wide open, and my anger increased as it looked straight at me. I could not see the old man's face. Only that eye, that hard blue eye, and the blood in my body became like ice⁷.

Have I not told you that my hearing had become unusually strong? Now I could hear a quick, low, soft sound, like the sound of a clock heard through a wall. It was the beating of the old man's heart. I tried to stand quietly. But the sound grew louder. The old man's fear must have been great indeed. And as the sound grew louder my anger became greater and more painful. But it was more than anger. In the quiet night, in the dark silence* of the bedroom my anger became fear —

for the heart was beating so loudly that I was sure some one must hear. The time had come! I rushed into the room, crying, "Die! Die!" The old man gave a loud cry of fear as I fell upon him and held the bedcovers tightly over his head. Still⁵ his heart was beating; but I smiled as I felt that success was near. For many minutes that heart continued to beat; but at last the beating stopped. The old man was dead. I took away the bedcovers and held my ear over his heart. There was no sound. Yes. He was dead! Dead as a stone. His eye would trouble me no more!

So I am mad, you say? You should have seen how careful I was to put the body where no one could find it. First I cut off the head, then the arms and the legs. I was careful not to let a single drop* of blood fall on the floor. I pulled up three of the boards that formed the floor, and put the pieces of the body there. Then I put the boards down again, carefully, so carefully that no human eye could see that they had been moved.

As I finished this work I heard that someone was at the door. It was now four o'clock in the morning, but still⁵ dark. I had no fear, however, as I went down to open the door. Three men were at the door, three officers of the police. One of the neighbors had heard the old man's cry and had called the police; these three had come to ask questions and to search* the house.

I asked the policemen to come in. The cry, I said, was my own, in a dream. The old man, I said, was away; he had gone to visit a friend in the country. I took them through the whole house, telling them to search it all, to search well. I led them finally into the old man's bedroom. As if playing a game with them I asked them to sit down and talk for a while.

My easy, quiet manner made the policemen believe my story. So they sat talking with me in a friendly way. But although I answered them in the same way, I soon wished that they would go. My head hurt and there was a strange sound in my ears. I talked more, and faster. The sound became clearer. And still⁵ they sat and talked.

Suddenly I knew that the sound was not in my ears, it was not just inside my head. At that moment I must have become quite white. I talked still⁵ faster and louder. And the sound, too, became louder. It was a quick, low, soft sound, like the sound of a clock heard through a wall, a sound I knew well. Louder it became, and louder. Why did the men not go? Louder, louder. I stood up and walked quickly around the room. I pushed my chair across the floor to make more noise, to cover that terrible* sound. I talked even louder. And still⁵ the men sat and talked, and smiled. Was it possible that they could not hear??

No! They heard! I was certain of it. They knew! Now it was they who were playing a game with me. I was suffering more than I could bear, from their smiles, and from that sound. Louder, louder, louder! Suddenly I could bear it no longer. I pointed at the boards and cried, "Yes! Yes, I killed him. Pull up the boards and you shall⁸ see! I killed him. But why does his heart not stop beating?! Why does it not stop!?"



The Cask of Amontillado

FORTUNATO HAD HURT ME a thousand times and I had suffered quietly. But then I learned that he had laughed at my proud name, Montresor, the name of an old and honored family. I promised myself that I would make him pay for this — that I would have revenge*. You must not suppose, however, that I spoke of this to anyone. I would make him pay, yes; but I would act only with the greatest care. I must not suffer as a result of taking my revenge. A wrong is not made right in that manner. And also the wrong would not be made right unless Fortunato knew that he was paying and knew who was forcing him to pay.

I gave Fortunato no cause to doubt me. I continued to smile in his face, and he did not understand that I was now smiling at the thought of what I planned for him, at the thought of my revenge.

Fortunato was a strong man, a man to be feared. But he had one great weakness: he liked to drink good wine, and indeed he drank much of it. So he knew a lot about fine wines, and proudly believed that he was a trained judge of them. I, too, knew old wines well, and I bought the best I could find. And wine, I thought, wine would give me my revenge!

It was almost dark, one evening in the spring, when I met Fortunato in the street, alone. He spoke to me more warmly than was usual, for already he had drunk more wine than was good for him. I acted pleased to see him, and I shook his hand, as if he had been my closest friend.

“Fortunato! How are you?”

“Montresor! Good evening, my friend.”

“My dear Fortunato! I am indeed glad* that I have met you. I was just thinking of you. For I have been tasting* my new wine. I have bought a full cask* of a fine wine which they tell me is Amontillado. But...”

“Amontillado! Quite impossible.”

“I know. It does not seem possible. As I could not find you I was just going to talk to Luchresi. If anyone understands wines it is Luchresi. He will tell me...”

“Luchresi? He does not know one wine from another!”

“But they say he knows as much about wines as you know.”

“Ho! — Come. Let us go.”

“Go where?”

“To your vaults*. To taste* the wine.”

“No, my friend, no. I can see that you are not well*. And the vaults are cold and wet.”

“I do not care. Let us go. I’m well enough. The cold is nothing. Amontillado! Someone is playing games with you. And Luchresi! Ha! Luchresi knows nothing about wines, nothing at all.”

As he spoke. Fortunato took my arm, and I allowed him to hurry me to my great stone palace*, where my family, the Montresors, had lived for centuries. There was no one at home. I had told the servants* that they must not leave the palace, as I would not return until the following morning and they must care for the place. This, I knew, was enough to make it certain that they would all leave as soon as my back was turned.

I took down from their places on the wall two brightly burning lights. I gave one of these to Fortunato and led him to a wide doorway. There we could see the stone steps going down into the darkness. Asking him to be careful as he fol-

lowed, I went down before him, down under the ground, deep under the old walls of my palace. We came finally to the bottom* of the steps and stood there a moment together. The earth which formed the floor was cold and hard. We were entering the last resting place of the dead of the Montresor family. Here too we kept our finest wines, here in the cool, dark, still air under the ground.

Fortunato's step was not sure, because of the wine he had been drinking. He looked uncertainly around him, trying to see through the thick darkness which pushed in around us. Here our brightly burning lights seemed weak indeed. But our eyes soon became used² to the darkness. We could see the bones* of the dead lying in large piles* along the walls. The stones of the walls were wet and cold.

From the long rows of bottles which were lying on the floor, among the bones, I chose one which contained a very good wine. Since I did not have anything to open the bottle with, I struck the stone wall with it and broke off the small end. I offered the bottle to Fortunato.

"Here, Fortunato. Drink some of this fine Medoc. It will help to keep us warm. Drink!"

"Thank you, my friend. I drink to the dead who lie sleeping around us."

"And I, Fortunato — I drink to your long life."

"Ahh! A very fine wine, indeed! But the Amontillado?"

"It is farther on³. Come."

We walked on³ for some time. We were now under the river's bed⁴, and water fell in drops upon us from above. Deeper into the ground we went, past still more bones.

"Your vaults are many, and large. There seems to be no end to them."

"We are a great⁵ family, and an old one. It is not far now. But I can see you are trembling* with the cold. Come! Let us go back before it is too late."

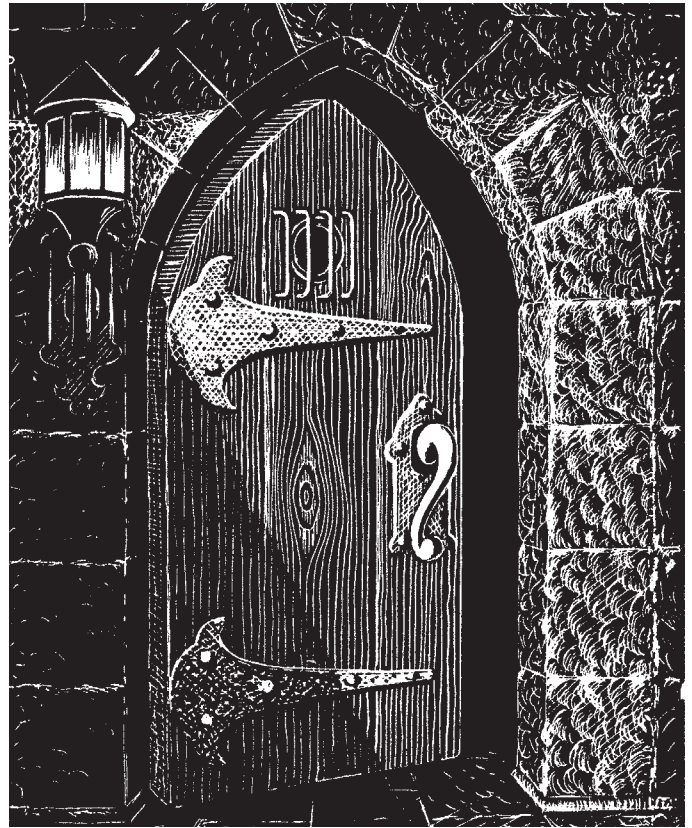
"It is nothing. Let us go on³. But first, another drink of your Medoc!"

I took up from among the bones another bottle. It was another wine of a fine quality, a De Grave. Again I broke off the neck of the bottle. Fortunato took it and drank it all without stopping for a breath*. He laughed, and threw the empty* bottle over his shoulder.

We went on³, deeper and deeper into the earth. Finally we arrived at a vault in which the air was so old and heavy that our lights almost died. Against three of the walls there were piles of bones higher than our heads. From the fourth wall someone had pulled down all the bones, and they were spread all around us on the ground. In the middle of the wall was an opening into another vault, if I can call it that — a little room about three feet wide, six or seven feet high, and perhaps four feet deep⁶. It was hardly more than a hole* in the wall.

"Go on³," I said. "Go in; the Amontillado is in there."

Fortunato continued to go forward, uncertainly. I followed him immediately. Soon, of course, he reached the back wall. He stood there a moment, facing the wall, surprised and wondering. In that wall were two heavy iron rings*. A short chain* was hanging from one of these and a lock* from the other. Before Fortunato could guess* what was happening, I closed the lock and chained him tightly to the wall. I stepped back.



"Fortunato," I said. "Put your hand against the wall. You must feel how the water runs over it. Once more I ask you, please, will you not go back? No? If not, then I must leave you. But first I must do everything I can for you."

"But...But the Amontillado?"

"Ah, yes, yes indeed; the Amontillado."

As I spoke these words I began to search* among the bones. Throwing them to one side I found the stones which earlier I had taken down from the wall. Quickly I began to build the wall again, covering the hole where Fortunato stood trembling.

"Montresor! What are you doing!?"

I continued working. I could hear him pulling at the chain, shaking it wildly. Only a few stones remained to put in their place.

"Montresor! Ha-ha. This is a very good joke*, indeed. Many times will we laugh about it — ha-ha — as we drink our wine together — ha-ha."

"Of course. As we drink the Amontillado."

"But is it not late? Should we not be going back? They will be expecting us. Let us go."

"Yes. Let us go."

As I said this I lifted the last stone from the ground.

"Montresor! For the love of God!!"

"Yes. For the love of God!"

I heard no answer. "Fortunato!" I cried. "Fortunato." I heard only a soft, low sound, a half-cry of fear. My heart grew sick; it must have been the cold. I hurried to force the last stone into its position. And I put the old bones again in a pile against the wall. For half a century now no human hand has touched them. May he rest in peace!

Glossary

ALIKE	– the same, like; almost the same, similar.	ATOM	– the smallest part of a chemical element that can exist and still be that element. If we break an iron atom into its smaller parts, the parts are no longer iron.
ANYWHERE	– any place; in any place.	AWAKEN	– cause to stop sleeping; wake up.
APART	– not together; in pieces; separated.	BABY	– a very young child.
APPLE	– a kind of fruit.	BAND	– a long, thin, narrow piece of cloth or metal.
ARRIVE	– come from another place to this place, come here, get here; come, come close. Sometimes: go there, get there.	BASKET	– a container of light weight, usually made of wood, and used to carry clothes, fruit, potatoes, etc.
ARTICLE	– a short writing which is published in a newspaper or a magazine.	BATTLE	– fight, struggle.
ARTS (THE ARTS)	– things that give pleasure to those who see and hear them, like singing, painting, reading poetry.	BEAM	– a long piece of wood used in building houses to carry the weight of the floor above.
ASIDE	– away, to one side.	BELL	– a hollow piece of metal, often shaped somewhat like a bowl, which makes a musical sound when someone strikes it. “The bell in the school had a loud clear tone.” “He entered the house without ringing the doorbell.” See <u>ring</u> .
ASLEEP	– sleeping.	BLEED	– lose blood. “This finger is bleeding.”
ASTONISHED	– very much surprised, amazed.	BLOODY	– covered with blood.
		BONES	– the hard white things inside the body which hold it together and which make it possible to stand. “One could see that the bones in his arms were large and strong.”
		BORNEO	– a large island in Southeast Asia.
		BOTTOM	– the lowest part of something; “the bottom of a bottle, the bottom of the stairs, the bottom of the river.”
		BREATHE	– take air into the body, into the lungs; take breath into the lungs.
		BRIGHT	– filled with light, giving light.
		BUSY	– active; working hard, at work.
		BUTTON	– a small round piece of wood, glass, bone or metal.

CARD	– a small piece of thick paper, usually shaped like a rectangle: “He gave me a card with his name on it.”	DUST	– very small, fine pieces of dry earth which the wind easily blows around: “The horse ran by us, and behind it rose great clouds of dust, which hurt our eyes.”
PLAY CARDS	– play one of the many games (<u>card games</u>) in which specially-made cards are used.	DUTY	– what one ought to do, what one must do.
CASK	– a large container made of wood, used to hold liquids — water, wine, etc.	EARN	– get or obtain by working.
CELLAR	– an underground room or group of rooms under a building and often used to keep supplies.	EARRING	– a ring or beautiful stone worn by women on their ears,
CHAIN	– a number of metal rings joined together. See <u>ring</u> .	ELECTRICITY	– movement of energy from one place to another. Electricity makes the street lights burn in all modern cities.
CIRCUS	– a traveling show of horses, wild animals, performers, etc.	EMPTY	– having nothing in it; holding nothing; not full.
COBBLESTONE	– a naturally rounded stone, once much used for paving streets. One can still find cobblestone streets in the old part of many cities.	ESCAPE	– get away from, get out of; get free; come suddenly out, come forcefully out.
COMPANY	– usually, a group of people making or selling something. Also, however: the people who live around a person or with him, and who talk with him and are his friends; society. “Usher asked the author to come visit him because he wanted company.”	EVERYWHERE	– in every place, in all places.
CREATE	– to cause something to exist which did not exist at all before; to bring into being.	EVIL	– very bad, wrong; sinful; something which is very bad; the act of doing bad things.
CRITIC	– a person who studies things made or written by others and writes about them, saying whether they are good or bad.	EXIST	– live, remain living; be, be “in fact.
CROWD	– a large group of people.	EXPERIENCE	– learn by doing or seeing; knowledge obtained by doing or seeing, skill.
CROWDED	– filled with people.	EXPERIENCED	– who has had experience; skilled.
DAMP	– not dry; wet but not very wet.	FAMOUS	– well known, known by many people and honored by them.
DARE	– have the courage to do something, be brave enough to do something; “I did not dare to enter the room.”	FAME	– being famous. “He wanted to be famous more than anything else.” “He wanted fame more than anything else.”
DEADLY	– able to cause death, to kill.	FARAWAY	– not near, distant, remote.
DEARLY	– with great love.	FASTEN	– close something tightly, so that it cannot be opened; cause something to stay closed.
DECAY	– change form and become something else as the result of great age or death; the state or condition which results from decaying. “After an animal dies it soon decays and has a bad, unhealthy smell.”	FEARFUL	– causing fear; awful, terrible.
DIRTY	– not clean.	FIREPLACE	– a special place in the wall of a room where wood is burned to warm the room.
DISLIKE	– not like; the feeling of not liking.	FIRST, AT FIRST	– in the beginning; before anything else.
DOUBLE	– two times as much; much more; increase two times.	FIT	– be the right size and shape.
DROP	– a small round mass of liquid: “a drop of blood, a drop of water.”	FIXED	– established, firmly in place; rooted; hard to move, hard to change; sometimes, impossible to move or change.
DUE TO	– caused by, the result of.	FLOW	– move like water. “A river flows past his house.”
		FOOL	– a person who has a weak mind, who cannot think well. – a person who has a good mind but uses it very poorly and thus seems like a fool.

FOREIGNER	– a person from another country.	HORRIBLE	– fearful, causing horror.
FOREST	– a large woods, with many trees very close together.	HORROR	– a feeling that is great fear and at the same time a sick feeling, caused by seeing much blood or many dead bodies.
FORUM	– a place where a person can talk to other people about matters which interest him; a place where many persons come together to talk.	HURT	– cause pain to the body or to the feelings; feel pain; pain, damage. “The stones hurt my feet.” “My feet hurt.” “His words hurt my feelings.”
FRESH	– clean and cool; new, not used before.	ICE	– water that is so cold it is solid, hard.
FRIGHTEN	– cause fear, fright.	ICY	– very cold, like ice; not friendly, unfriendly.
FRUIT	– the part of a plant which holds the seeds and is good to eat: apples, grapes, oranges, etc.	IMPOSSIBLE	– not possible.
GAMBLER	– a person who lives by playing cards, or by winning at any game of chance.	INN	– a house where you can get food to eat and wine to drink, and a bed to sleep in; a small hotel.
GATE	– a large heavy door in a wall.	INNKEEPER	– a person who owns or cares for an inn.
GENTLE	– talking or acting softly, easily, kindly.	INNER	– on the inside; inside something.
GENTLY	– in a gentle manner.	JOKE	– something said or done to cause laughter, something funny.
GENTLEMAN	– a man who has studied in the best schools and who dresses and acts in a very fine way.	JUNGLE	– wild forest, usually far away from cities, roads, and railroads and other marks of civilization.
GHASTLY	– very white, as white as death, pale; like a ghost.	JUST	– exactly. “I don’t know just when he left.” – only. “I heard about it just now.” “He earned his living just by writing.” – only now. “She has just arrived.” – considering all sides of a problem with out favoring one side more than another, one person more than another; honest, fair, reasonable.
GHOST	– the spirit of a dead person, believed by some to continue to walk on the earth.	KEY	– piece of shaped metal used to turn the lock of a door, or any other kind of lock.
GIFT	– something which is given in order to show friendship.	KINDNESS	– gentleness towards others; being careful to think about the needs or feelings of others.
GLAD	– happy, pleased, contented, filled with joy.	KNIFE	– a small piece of iron or steel used for cutting.
GLOOM	– heavy sadness; sadness without hope.	LETTERS	– sometimes: literature. Man of letters = a man who spends his life studying and writing.
GLOOMY	– filled with gloom, covered with gloom.	LIGHTEN	– make lighter and brighter, make less dark; make less heavy; become less dark.
GRAVE	– a hole in the ground where dead bodies are put.	LIGHTHEARTED	– bright and happy; without care.
GRAVEYARD	– a place where dead bodies are placed in the earth, are placed in a grave.	LIGHTNING ROD	– a thin rod of metal reaching above a building and connected to the earth. It serves as a conductor to carry the lightning to the ground so that it will not strike the building.
GUESS	– form an idea or an opinion without actually knowing the facts.		
GUIDE	– lead, show the way.		
HARDLY	– almost not. “There was hardly a day when he was not in debt.”		
HATE	– the opposite of <u>love</u> ; not like, dislike strongly; the feeling of not liking somebody.		
HAUNTED	– filled with ghosts. See <u>ghosts</u> .		
HEAVEN	– in some religions: the place where good people go after they die.		
HELL	– in some religions: the place where, after death, evil persons are made to pay for their wrongdoing.		
HELPLESS	– without strength or power, not able to help.		
HIDDEN	– not seen; in a place where it cannot be seen.		
HOLE	– an opening into something or through something, commonly an opening into the ground.		

LOCK	– close something in such a way that it cannot be opened without turning a key or pressing a button; a metal device which closes something in this way.	PUBLISH	– make public, make known to the public; write, print and sell a book, newspaper, or magazine.
LOOKING GLASS	– a glass in which a person can see his face reflected; a mirror.	REALITY	– what exists in fact, and not just in someone’s mind; the real world we live in.
MASK	– something a person wears over his eyes or over his face in order that others cannot know who he is.	REVENGE	– the act of paying back a wrong or injury. When one man causes suffering or pain to another without good cause, the second man may wish to “take revenge.” This is done by causing some kind of suffering or pain to the first man.
MIRROR	– a glass in which a person can see his face reflected; a looking glass.	RING	– strike a bell to make it sound; make the sound of a bell. “The bell is ringing.” – a piece of metal bent to make a circle. “He had a ring on his finger.”
MOREOVER	– also, in addition, furthermore, besides.	ROMANTICISM	– a movement among writers and artists in Europe in the last half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. Writers were tired of the Age of Reason, when all art was forced to obey certain rules. They wanted each person, each individual to make his own rules, to write or paint in the way that most fully and most exactly expressed his feelings.
MURDER	– kill; killing, act of killing.		
MURDERER	– killer.		
MYSTERY	– something very hard to understand; something which we cannot understand; an unanswered question.		
MYSTERIOUS	– strange, unusual, containing questions which cannot be answered.		
NAIL	– a thin, sharp-pointed metal pin made to fasten together pieces of wood by being driven through them.		
NERVOUS	– worried and unhappy; uncertain about the future and unhappy about it; afraid as a result of doubt.		
NERVOUSNESS	– the condition of a person who is nervous.		
NEVERTHELESS	– however; in spite of that; still.	ROPE	– a large strong cord, or string, made by winding or twisting smaller cords around each other. “We tied the dog to a tree with a strong rope.”
OBJECT (TO)	– speak against; try to stop somebody from doing something; not like it. (Pronounced OBJECT)		
PALACE	– a large and beautiful stone building in which a king or some other ruler lives.	ROUGH	– not even, uneven; not flat, not plain. Sometimes used by city people to describe the manners of a person who lives in the country, that is, on a farm. “He has worked hard all his life and his hands are rough.” “He was a rough kind of person from the mountains.”
PARTLY	– some, but not entirely; in part.		
PERIOD	– a length of time (often of unknown length).		
PILE	– things lying one on top of another; heap, stack, mass.	RUSH	– go very fast, hurry; going very fast, fast movement.
PLAYGROUND	– the place outside a school where the children play games.	SAD	– not happy, unhappy, very unhappy.
PLEASANT	– giving pleasure, pleasing.	SAILOR	– seaman, a man who works on a ship or a boat.
PLEASURE	– the feeling that comes from enjoying something, the feeling of being pleased: “Eating good food gives him great pleasure.”	SCENE	– something which is seen; the time and place where a story or play happens.
POLE	– a long, thin, round piece of wood or metal. “In Venice they push their boats with a pole.”	SCREAM	– a high, sharp piercing cry which hurts one’s ears; to give a loud, shrill piercing cry as a result of pain or fear. Often the word scream is used for a special cry that only women can make.
PROFESSION	– a kind of work that requires special education. A medical doctor works in the profession of medicine. A lawyer is a man who studies and applies the law as his profession.	SEARCH	– look for, try to find; the act of looking for.
PROFESSIONAL	– having a profession.	SECRET	– something which others are not allowed to see or to know. – the condition of being secret; hidden.

SEIZE	– quickly take in the hands and hold firmly; take and hold.	TERROR	– very great fear. See <u>horror</u> .
SERVANT	– a person who works in someone else’s house for pay.	TERRIBLE	– causing terror, causing great fear.
SHARP	– that cuts well. “A knife has a sharp edge.” “Broken glass has sharp edges.” Sharp pains are bad pains that come suddenly, as if the person had been cut.	TEST	– ask special questions in order to learn if a person really knows what he says he knows.
SHOPKEEPER	– person who has a business in a shop.	THICK	– large from one side to the other; heavy and strong; opposite of <u>thin</u> . “A thick piece of bread.” “There was a thick door in the front of the house.”
SICKLY	– not healthy; the way people look when they are sick or ill.	THIN	– not thick, not fat, not strong. “She has been sick a long time and has become very thin.”
SILENCE	– no noise of any kind, stillness, complete quiet.	TONE	– something special about a sound that makes it different from other sounds; a musical sound.
SKILL	– a special ability or a special knowledge that a person learns; experience.	TREMBLE	– make quick little movements which cannot be controlled; shake.
SKILLFUL	– having special ability.	TRUST	– believe that a person is honest, fair, and good: “I trust him because he is a good man and I know he will not hurt me.”
SKILLED	– having skill, experience.	TWICE	– two times.
SLEPT	– past of <u>sleep</u> .	UNJUST	– not just.
SMELL	– one of the five senses (hearing, sight, taste, touch, smell); odor, what the sense of smell senses; give off an odor or a smell; receive or sense an odor with the nose.	USELESSNESS	– being of no use, not useful.
SOMEHOW	– in some (unknown) way, in one way or another. “I don’t know how I’ll do it, but I’ll do it somehow.”	VALLEY	– a low area of land between hills or mountains, often with a river in it.
SOUNDLESS	– without sound, completely quiet; silent.	VALUABLE	– costing much money, worth a great deal.
SPIRIT	– a being which is not physical; the inner, not physical part of a person; courage.	VAULT	– a large high room under ground, where things are kept — often wine, sometimes also the bodies of dead people.
STAIRS	– the steps by which a person goes from one floor in a house to the floor above.	VIOLET	– a color made by putting blue and red together, usually with a little more blue than red. The word <u>violet</u> is the name of a common flower which has this color.
START	– cause to begin; begin.	WARMTH	– warmth; friendliness.
STORM	– troubled weather with very strong winds, much rain or snow, and often with thunder and lightning.	WEAK	– not strong.
STORMY	– of a storm, like a storm.	WEAKEN	– make weak; become weak.
STRANGER	– a person who has not been seen before, whom we do not know.	WEIGHT	– being heavy, heaviness; something which is heavy.
SWORD	– long piece of metal with a sharp point or a sharp edge, used in fighting.	WELL	– in good health.
TASTE	– eat or drink a small amount of something in order to learn whether it is good.	WHENEVER	– every time that, as often as.
TEAR	– the drop of salty water which comes from the eye when one is crying. (Although this word is spelled the same as the word <u>tear</u> which means “to pull to pieces,” it is pronounced quite differently.)	WHOLLY	– completely, entirely.
		WIDEN	– become wider; make wider.
		WILL	– the power a person’s mind has to cause others to do what the person wants; wish, desire.
		WISE	– having knowledge and experience, and therefore being a good judge of what people should or should not do.