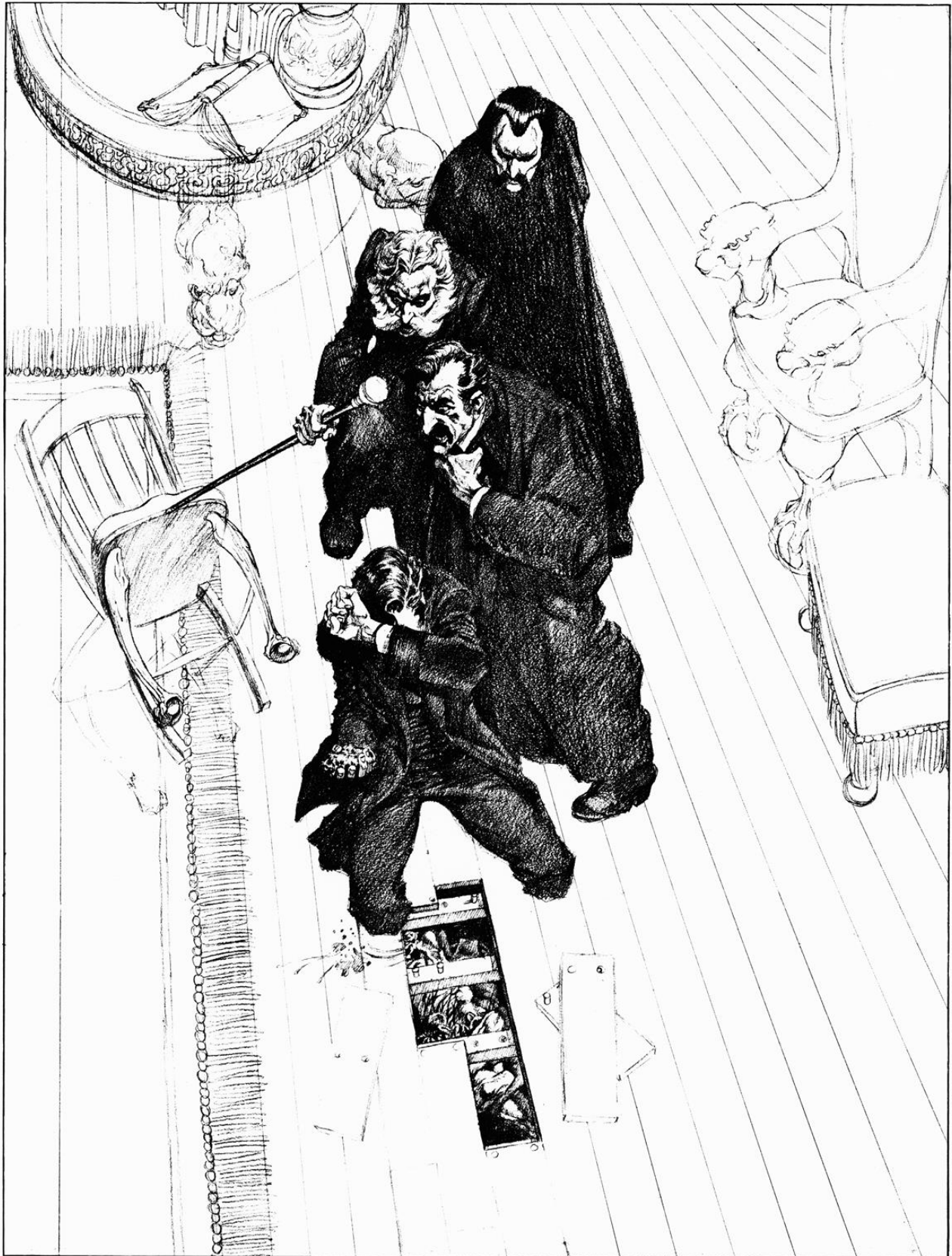


Tales of MYSTERY & IMAGINATION

- by -

EDGAR ALLAN POE





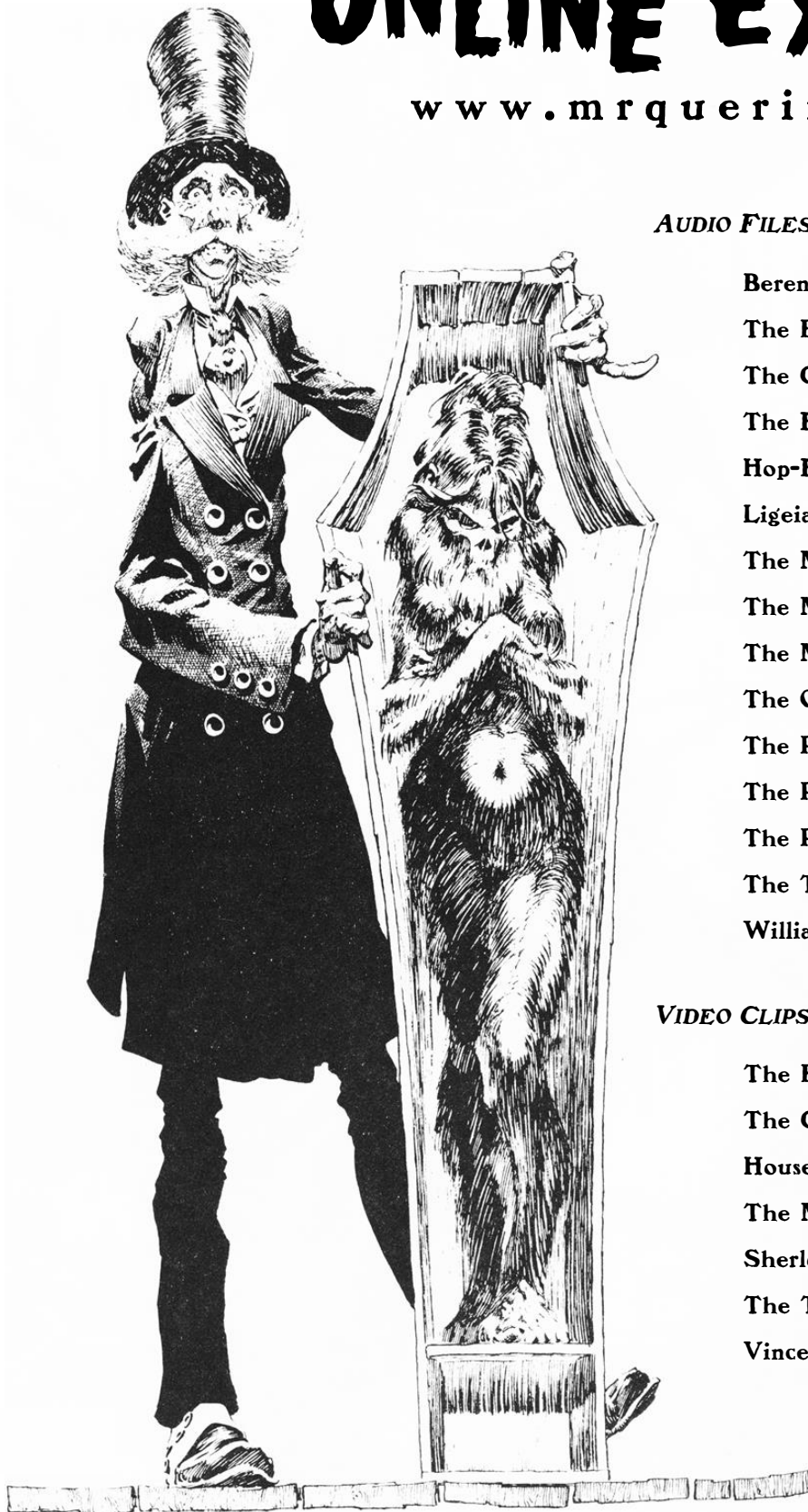
Original pencil sketch of THE TELL-TALE HEART by Bernie Wrightson for THE EDGAR ALLAN POE PORTFOLIO (1976). The varnish used on the oil painting made the final piece difficult to reproduce.

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ONLINE EXTRAS

www.mrquerino.com



AUDIO FILES:

Berenice
The Black Cat
The Cask of Amontillado
The Fall of the House of Usher
Hop-Frog
Ligeia
The Man of the Crowd
The Masque of the Red Death
The Murders in the Rue Morgue
The Oval Portrait
The Pit and the Pendulum
The Premature Burial
The Purloined Letter
The Tell-Tale Heart
William Wilson

VIDEO CLIPS:

The Black Cat
The Cask of Amontillado
House of Usher
The Murders in the Rue Morgue
Sherlock: A Scandal in Belgravia
The Tell-Tale Heart
Vincent

Name _____

Date _____

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Who was Edgar Allan Poe, and how did he help shape American literature?

Hawthorne and Poe are both considered American Romantic writers. Explain how Poe fits that classification and describe other similarities between Hawthorne's and Poe's works.

What is Gothic literature?

First published in 1841, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" is a literary landmark: the first modern detective story. What are the basic conventions of detective stories?

In your opinion, does the use of multimedia—film clips, audio files, videogame segments, comic books, etc.—add to or detract from Poe's original texts?

Name _____

Date _____

Read Edgar Allan Poe's obituary, which was first published in *The New York Daily Tribune* on October 9, 1849, and then answer the questions which follow.

Death of Edgar Allan Poe.

"Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore!'"

EDGAR ALLAN POE is dead. He died in Baltimore the day before yesterday. This announcement will startle many, but few will be grieved by it. The poet was well known personally or by reputation, in all this country. He had readers in England and in several states of Continental Europe. But he had few or no friends. The regrets for his death will be suggested principally by the consideration that in him literary art lost one of its most brilliant, but erratic stars.

The character of Mr. Poe we cannot attempt to describe in this very hastily written article. We can but allude to some of the more striking phases.

His conversation was at times almost supra-mortal in its eloquence. His voice was modulated with astonishing skill, and his large and variably expressive eyes looked repose or shot fiery tumult into theirs who listened, while his own face glowed or was changeless in pallor, as his imagination quickened his blood, or drew it back frozen to his heart. His imagery was from the worlds, which no mortal can see, but with the vision of genius.

He was at times a dreamer, dwelling in ideal realms, in heaven or hell, peopled with creations and the accidents of his brain. He walked the streets, in madness or melancholy, with lips moving in indistinct curses, or with eyes upturned in passionate prayers for the happiness of those who at that moment were objects of his idolatry, but never for himself, for he felt, or professed to feel, that he was already damned. He seemed, except when some fitful pursuit subjected his will and engrossed his faculties, always to bear the memory of some controlling sorrow.

He had made up his mind upon the numberless complexities of the social world and the whole system was with him an imposture. This conviction gave a direction to his shrewd and naturally unamiable character. Still though, he regarded society as composed of villains, the sharpness of his intellect was not of that kind which enabled him to cope with villainy, while it continually caused him overshots, to fail of the success of honesty.

Passion, in him, comprehended many of the worst emotions, which militate against human happiness. You could not contradict him, but you raised quick choler. You could not speak of wealth, but his cheek paled with gnawing envy. The astonishing natural advantage of this poor boy, his beauty, his readiness, the daring spirit that breathed around him like a fiery atmosphere, had raised his constitutional self-confidence into an arrogance that turned his very claims to admiration into prejudice against him. Irascible, envious, bad enough, but not the worst, for these salient angles were all varnished over with a cold repellant cynicism while his passions vented themselves in sneers. There seemed to him no moral susceptibility. And what was more remarkable in a proud nature, little or nothing of the true point of honor. He had, to a morbid excess, that desire to rise which is vulgarly called ambition, but no wish for the esteem or the love of his species, only the hard wish to succeed, not shine, not serve, but succeed, that he might have the right to despise a world which galled his self-conceit.

We must omit any particular criticism of Mr. Poe's works. As a writer of tales it will be admitted generally, that he was scarcely surpassed in ingenuity of construction or effective painting.

As a critic, he was more remarkable as a dissector of sentences than as a commenter upon ideas. He was little better than a carping grammarian.

As a poet, he will retain a most honorable rank. Of his "Raven," Mr. Willis observes that in his opinion, "it is the most effective single example of fugitive poetry ever published in this country, and is unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conceptions, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift."

In poetry, as in prose, he was most successful in the metaphysical treatment of the passions. His poems are constructed with wonderful ingenuity, and finished with consummate art. They illustrate a morbid sensitiveness of feeling, a shadowy and gloomy imagination, and a taste almost faultless in the apprehension of that sort of beauty most agreeable to his temper.

We have not learned of the circumstance of his death. It was sudden, and from the fact that it occurred in Baltimore, it is presumed that he was on his return to New York.

"After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well."

— LUDWIG

What is so unusual about this obituary?

Shortly before his death, Poe named editor/writer Rufus Griswold his executor, and Griswold, whose relationship with Poe was always tenuous, set about to destroy Poe's reputation once and for all. Griswold was responsible for the mysterious obituary signed "Ludwig." The next year, he wrote a "memoir" of Poe's life that was published in a magazine and a collected edition of Poe's works. Griswold generally praised Poe's work but attacked his character, making up several stories and forging letters from Poe to do so. Griswold's "memoir" remained the only major biography of Poe for almost 25 years. The lies he created were taken up and perpetuated by other biographers. Even today, much of the popular knowledge of Poe and his life is actually misinformation, spread by his "friend" Rufus Griswold. Why would Poe leave one of his adversaries in charge of his legacy?

CREEPY VOCABULARY



These words which appear in the works of Edgar Allan Poe have been identified as words or derivatives of words that have appeared on past SAT tests.

1. **Acuity** – sharpness of perception.
2. **Affinity** – a likeness, a natural relationship, a kinship.
3. **Anomalous** – out of place, abnormal.
4. **Antiquity** – the quality of being ancient.
5. **Apathy** – a lack of concern or feeling, indifference.
6. **Desolate** – deserted, without inhabitants, barren.
7. **Dirge** – funeral hymn, lament.
8. **Discern** – to differentiate between two or more things.

9. **Discord** – lack of agreement, tension, strife.
10. **Dissolution** – disintegration, decomposition and dispersion.
11. **Emaciated** – very thin (usually as a result of starvation), wasting away.
12. **Equivocal** – ambiguous and intended to mislead.
13. **Fervid** – ardent, burning, impassioned.
14. **Goad** – to urge on in a negative sense.
15. **Hideous** – very ugly, offensive, shocking.
16. **Impetuous** – violent, hasty, rash, impulsive.
17. **Inspid** – boring and stupid.
18. **Interred** – buried.
19. **Malady** – a disease or unwholesome condition.
20. **Melancholy** – depression of spirits.
21. **Morbidity** – unwholesomeness and gloominess, gruesomeness.
22. **Munificent** – very generous.
23. **Orthodox** – conforming to established standards, conventional.
24. **Pallor** – extreme paleness usually referring to the face.
25. **Palpable** – tangible, perceptible, easily noticeable.
26. **Paradoxical** – something that appears false or contradictory but is actually correct.
27. **Pertinacity** – stubborn persistence or act of refusing to yield on an opinion or belief.
28. **Ponderous** – very heavy, unwieldy from weight.
29. **Potent** – powerful, having a strong effect.
30. **Precipitous** – marked by great rapidity, haste, or lack of caution.
31. **Prodigious** – extraordinary in bulk, quantity, or degree, great in size, enormous.
32. **Profuse** – extravagantly abundant, flowing freely.
33. **Protract** – to prolong.
34. **Quaint** – unusual in character or appearance.
35. **Rend** – to tear violently, to split.
36. **Reverie** – daydreaming.
37. **Stealthy** – acting in a secret and sneaky way.
38. **Sublime** – exalted, noble, uplifting.
39. **Tarry** – to delay in coming or going, to linger.
40. **Tempestuous** – turbulent, stormy.
41. **Tenuous** – flimsy, barely attached.
42. **Trepidation** – fear, trembling, agitation.
43. **Trifling** – not significant, frivolous.
44. **Trivia** – insignificant matters.
45. **Unobtrusive** – not readily noticeable, inconspicuous.
46. **Upbraid** – to scold harshly, to reproach.
47. **Utter** – to express by speaking.
48. **Vivacious** – full of life, very animated.
49. **Vivid** – bright, distinct, and clear.
50. **Wan** – very pale and sickly.

Date _____

Before reading “The Black Cat,” apply Poe’s theory of “PERVERSENESS” to your own life. The, rather questionable, narrator of “The Black Cat” explains perverseness in this way: “Of this spirit philosophy takes no account. Yet I am not more sure that my soul lives, than I am that perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart—one of the indivisible primary faculties, or sentiments, which give direction to the character of Man. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a silly action, for no other reason than because he knows he should *not*? Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is *Law*, merely because we understand it to be such? This spirit of perverseness, I say, came to my final overthrow. It was this unfathomable longing of the soul to *vex itself*—to offer violence to its own nature—to do wrong for the wrong’s sake only—that urged me to continue and finally to consummate the injury I had inflicted upon the unoffending brute” (194). Have you ever broken the law just for the sake of violating it or done something you know to be wrong just because it was against your morals? If so, what was the offence and what were the consequences of succumbing to perverseness?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

Date _____

The image of the pit has, for centuries, been connected with Hell and destruction, as in Psalms 73:18-19: “surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment!”. These lines are also part of “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” that remarkable tract by Jonathan Edwards. While Poe may have been distanced from the New England Puritan tradition, there is still a strong parallel between “The Pit and the Pendulum” and “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Describe some of the connections between these two works. If you’re having difficulty, try substituting Poe’s repeated use of the word “fate” for Edwards’s use of the word “God.”

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.



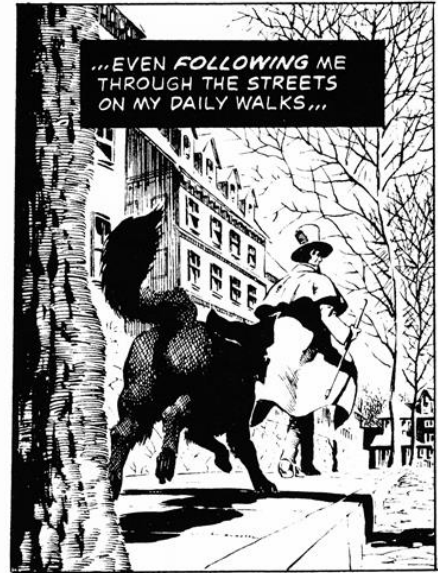
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HAT IS IT THAT PROMPTS A MAN TO SURROUND HIMSELF WITH **BEAST-FOLK**? PERHAPS IT IS A NEED TO REAFFIRM HIS **SUPERIORITY**... PERHAPS AS A REMINDER OF HIS BESTIAL ORIGINS...

...WE LIVED, MY WIFE AND I, FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, IN A QUIET TOWN IN THE MOUNTAINS... HERE, WE LOVED AND CARED FOR OUR MENAGERIE...

WRIGHTSON





...AT FIRST, I **WELCOMED** HIS CONSTANT PRESENCE, AND WE BECAME A FAMILIAR SIGHT AT THE **TAVERNS** I WAS WONT TO FREQUENT. THEN, LITTLE BY LITTLE, MY BLACK COMPANION BEGAN TO **GRATE** ON MY NERVES... I FOUND MYSELF **TURNING AWAY** WHEN I REALIZED HIS **EYES** WERE UPON ME... I IGNORED HIS PURRS AND TREMBLED WITH **DISGUST** AT HIS LOATHSOME CARESSES...







... AT FIRST, MY INSANE ACTION
REVOLTED ME, AND I SANK INTO THE
DEEPEST OF *DESPAIR* AND *REMORSE*...



... BUT, AT LENGTH, AS THE CAT
RECOVERED, AN ICY *RAGE*
BEGAN TO BURN IN MY HEART...

... FOR, THE *BEAST*, AS MIGHT WELL BE EXPECTED, NOW CAREFULLY *AVOIDED* ME... THIS THING THAT ONCE HAD
LOVED ME, ITS *MASTER* AND *PROTECTOR*, NOW SHRANK AWAY AS FROM A *LEPER*! MY REMORSE AND MY
HATRED BEGAN TO *BOIL*... TO *BLEED* INTO ONE ANOTHER... GIVING BIRTH TO A FINELY DEVELOPED SPIRIT
OF *PERVERSENESS*... I MISSED NO OPPORTUNITY TO TEASE AND TAUNT THE DREAD CREATURE... HIS VERY
PRESENCE GOADED ME INTO EVERY CONCEIVABLE *ATROCITY*...



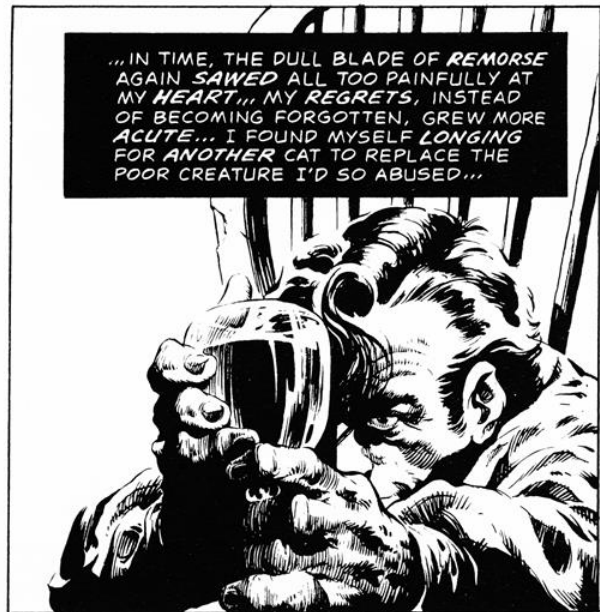
... THEN, ONE MORNING, I
SLIPPED A *NOOSE* ABOUT
ITS NECK, AND WITH *TEARS*
STREAMING FROM MY EYES,
HUNG IT FROM THE LIMB
OF A TREE...



... ON THE ONE REMAINING WALL, AS IF CARVED IN **BAS-RELIEF**, WAS THE IMAGE OF A GIGANTIC **CAT**, PERFECT TO THE TINIEST DETAIL ...

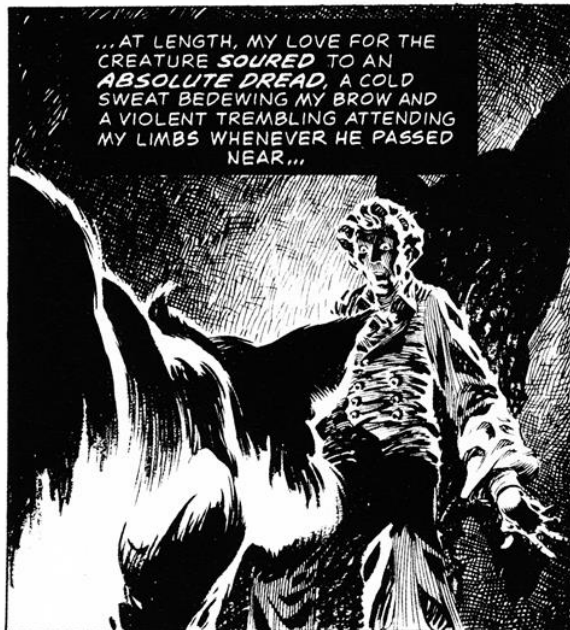
... THERE WAS A **ROPE** AROUND THE CREATURE'S NECK ...







...THEN, TO MY **SHAME** AND **HORROR**, THE BEAST BEGAN TO AFFECT ME **ADVERSELY**... HE TOOK TO PURRING INCESSANTLY, RUBBING AT MY LEGS, EVEN FASTENING HIS **CLAWS** IN MY CLOTHING AND CLAMBERING UP TO COVER MY FACE WITH HIS LOATHSOME MEWS AND LAPPINGS...







...THERE WAS A SHALLOW **PROJECTION** ON ONE WALL, A FALSE CHIMNEY, PERHAPS, THAT HAD BEEN **FILLED IN** AND MADE TO RESEMBLE THE REST OF THE CELLAR...



...WITH A CROW BAR, I BROKE AWAY THE **PLASTER** AND REMOVED THE LOOSELY-FITTED **BRICKS**...



...UNTIL I HAD EXCAVATED A LARGE **HOLE**...



...WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY, I **DROGGED** THE BODY TO THE WALL AND **SECURED** IT WITHIN THE TOMB. THEN, MIXING A TUBFUL OF MORTAR, PROCEEDED TO LAY THE BRICKS BACK IN PLACE...



...IN SEVERAL HOURS, THE WORK WAS **DONE**, FRESH PLASTER SPREAD, AND EVERYTHING AGAIN AS IT WAS...





THE PURLOINED DETECTIVE STORY

First published in the *Gift*, December 1844, although a shorter version appeared in Chambers' *Edinburgh Journal*, perhaps without Poe's permission, in November 1844. This is the third and most unified of Poe's tales of ratiocination. Unlike the other two Dupin mysteries, no murder has been committed here. The crime is known and so is the criminal. The problem that Dupin faces is that of locating a piece of incriminating evidence in order to protect the good name of a well-known lady. It is a game of wits that leaves the police, the narrator, and the reader perplexed, and underscores once again the superiority of Dupin's mind. It is also (arguably) the most enjoyable of the mystery tales because of its bantering tone and the complete absence of ghoulish details. The lighter quality adds to the game of cat and mouse between Dupin and Minister D—.

Arthur Conan Doyle, while never directly copying any of Poe's tales, comes close to the mood and subject of "The Purloined Letter" in "The Adventure of the Second Stain." In both tales a letter is missing, a letter that can have serious consequences on matters of state. In each, too, blackmail is indicated. And in both, the missing letter turns up right under everybody's nose.

In this shorter, analytical essay, you are going to compare "A Scandal in Belgravia," the first episode of season two of *Sherlock*, to Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter." This is not meant to be a review of the show or of the story. You are being asked to take a critical approach to two works that we have studied. Your completed essay will count as a homework assignment grade. Because the length is only 1-2 pages, you will want to focus in detail on one or two parallels between the works. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Compare the plot structure of the short story to the television show. What is the so-called "purloined letter" in the updated telling of this tale?
- How is Sherlock Holmes similar to C. Auguste Dupin?
- Compare what Sherlock calls "THE SCIENCE OF DEDUCTION" to Dupin's "RATIOCINATION." Are the two philosophies really the same?
- Professor (and the editor of our book) J. Gerald Kennedy writes, "The basic conventions of the detective story are an eccentric sleuth, an admiring but less perceptive companion, an inept police chief, and a seemingly insoluble crime" (227). You could show, specifically, how "A Scandal in Belgravia" and "The Purloined Letter" both meet each one of Kennedy's benchmarks.

Requirements: The essay must be at least one page long but no longer than two (1 and 1/2 pages). You must properly introduce and explain at least one direct quotation from "The Purloined Letter" and one quotation from the *Sherlock* episode, "A Scandal in Belgravia." So, a total of two quotations are required. The paper must have your own original thesis in the first paragraph (usually the last sentence or sentences before the transition into the next paragraph). Remember, a thesis is not a question; it is an answer to the question. A thesis is not a fact; it is an opinion or theory—one worth arguing. As always, the paper should follow MLA format. Use white 8 1/2 X 11-inch paper. Font size should be 12 and Times New Roman. Margins should be one inch around (top and bottom, left and right) on each page. Every line of text should be double spaced throughout the entire paper (even the heading). Your last name and the page number should appear in the top right corner of each page. The Purdue OWL website has sample papers written in MLA format: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

TO THE LIGHT-HOUSE CREATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Found among Edgar Allan Poe's papers after he died was an untitled story fragment with an intriguing preamble. Consisting of three short diary entries by a newly indentured lighthouse keeper, the fragment affords few clues about Poe's plot intentions. Your assignment is to finish the tale by using Poe's language, themes, and predilection for curdling the blood. Be creative and have fun with this writing assignment. Your completed story will count as a class participation grade. There is no length requirement, but you are being graded on the quality of your ideas and your effort to bring this lost Poe tale to life.

THE LIGHT-HOUSE¹

Jan 1 – 1796. This day — my first on the light-house — I make this entry in my Diary, as agreed on with De Grät. As regularly as I can keep the journal, I will — but there is no telling what may happen to a man all alone as I am — I may get sick, or worse So far well! The cutter had a narrow escape — but why dwell on that, since I am here, all safe? My spirits are beginning to revive already, at the mere thought of being — for once in my life at least — thoroughly alone; for, of course, Neptune, large as he is, is not to be taken into consideration as “society.” Would to Heaven I had ever found in “society” one half as much faith as in this poor dog: — in such case I and “society” might never have parted — even for the year . . . What most surprises me, is the difficulty De Grät had in getting me the appointment — and I a noble of the realm! It could not be that the Consistory had any doubt of my ability to manage the light. One man had attended it before now — and got on quite as well as the three that are usually put in. The duty is a mere nothing; and the printed instructions are as plain as possible. It never would have done to let Orndoff accompany me. I never should have made any way with my book as long as he was within reach of me, with his intolerable gossip — not to mention that everlasting *mäerschaum*². Besides, I wish to be alone It is strange that I never observed, until this moment, how dreary a sound that word has — “alone”! I could half fancy there was some peculiarity in the echo of these cylindrical walls — but oh, no! — this is all nonsense. I do believe I am going to get nervous about my insulation. That will never do. I have not forgotten De Grät's prophecy. Now for a scramble to the lantern and a good look around to “see what I can see” To see what I can see indeed! — not very much. The swell is subsiding a little, I think — but the cutter will have a rough passage home, nevertheless. She will hardly get within sight of the Norland before noon to-morrow — and yet it can hardly be more than 190 or 200 miles.

Jan. 2. I have passed this day in a species of ecstasy that I find impossible to describe. My passion for solitude could scarcely have been more thoroughly gratified. I do not say satisfied; for I believe I should never be satiated with such delight as I have experienced to-day The wind lulled about day-break, and by the afternoon the sea had gone down materially . . . Nothing to be seen, with the telescope even, but ocean and sky, with an occasional gull.

Jan. 3. A dead calm all day. Towards evening, the sea looked very much like glass. A few seaweeds came in sight; but besides them absolutely nothing all day — not even the slightest speck

¹ Text: Edgar Allan Poe, “[The Lighthouse]” [Text-01], fragmentary “Griswold” manuscript, 1849. The title “The Light-House” was assigned by George E. Woodberry, who first published the text of pages 2-4 in *The Life of Edgar Allan Poe* (1909), volume II, pp. 397-399. Although the title is not Poe's own, it is sufficiently descriptive and has been accepted by subsequent editors and scholars.

² German for foam of the sea, also known as sepiolite; it is a soft white mineral, often used to make smoking pipes. It is sometimes found floating on the Black Sea and rather suggestive of sea-foam, hence the German origin of the name as well as the French name for the same substance, *écume de mer*.

Jan 4.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features approximately 30 evenly spaced horizontal black lines across the entire page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The background is plain white, and there are no margins, text, or other markings present.

