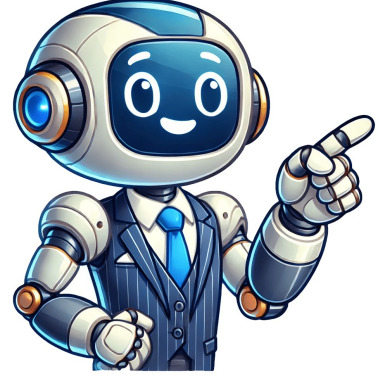


I'm not a robot































[illegible]



and sedate parts their hands over their brows as if in confused reverie or meditation."This sentence is the perfect example of how Poe puts the details in his writings. Poe loves to use lots of descriptive words, even if the sentence is short. For example, he describes the swing of the pendulum, he uses more than one adjective as "a dull, heavy, monotonous clang."Ultimately, one can say that the writing style of Edgar Allan Poe is extremely elegant. The short story "The Masque of the Red Death" is narrated by the third person for omniscient narrator. The narrator is not a part of the story or occupies any particular character. He does not have anything to do with the characters at all. The narrator appears to be interested in describing the setting of the Masquerade party. He takes a "birds-eye" view of the guests of the party rather than lodging in the head of any of these characters. The seven differently decorated rooms in the story represent something symbolic. The black-and-red room obviously symbolizes dead. However, the other rooms also symbolize different stages of life, which is suggested by its color. The suit of the masquerade party can be taken as allegory. The first evidence for being allegorical is it is arranged from east to west direction. East is usually associated with the beginning and birth as the sun rises in the east, whereas the west is associated with death and endings.Considering this reading, the blue room in which the easternmost symbolizes birth. The color proposes the "unknown" from which a human arrives into the world. The next room is decorated in the color purple, which is the combination of blue and red. The purple color suggests the start of the growth. The next room is decorated in green color. It suggests youth, the spring period of life. The orange color symbolizes the summer and the autumn of life. The next color is white, which suggests old age i.e., white hair and weak bones. Violet is the combination of purple and blue and results in shadowy color representing darkness. And the color black is for death.One surprising thing is there is no room in red color. Red is the better color to show the autumn and spring of life. However, maybe, Poe wants to save the color so as to associate it with blood, fear, and death. It always goes with black and black is the color of death such as Red Death, and the darkness is associated till the end of the story, the color red and black both are present in the last room.Through the allegorical reading of the story, one can also observe that the partygoers do not go to the black room as they appear to be afraid of death. Moreover, the Red Death walks from one room to another in a sequence as if it is walking the course of life that leads from birth to death.While chasing the Red Death, Prospero also goes from the blue room to the black room and eventually dies there. In order to attack and unmask the Red Death, the partygoers also go to the black room and die. So the characters in the story walk both metaphorically and literally from the course of life to death. There is a big creepy black ebony clock hanging in the black room. The clock reminds the partygoers of the passing time and approaching death. Certainly, it shows the time that flies and the inevitability of death. It rings at the hour regularly and consistently reminding that life is drifting away. The sound or noise of the clock stops all the dancing and music, so the clock has a more enhanced effect.The "Castellated abbey" is a confined place and cut off from the rest of the world. It is hidden where no one can easily find it. Moreover, the doors of the castle are also locked from inside so that no one can enter or leave the palace. This means that everyone inside the house is trapped. To create a threatening atmosphere of the story, the sense of confinement is necessary.The abbey is a symbol of worldly power that stands above the poor peasants who are ravaged by the Red Death. The castle and abbey can symbolize both church and the state. It is also suggested that the castle is made fall to the Read Death symbolizes some sort of apocalypse.Poe also portrays the hierarchical relationship between the peasantry and Prospero. He shows how unfair the feudal system is. He also points out the lavish lifestyle of the aristocracy and the suffering of the poor. The way Poe uses the feudal imagery in the story is historically accurate. When the actual Bubonic plague overwhelmed Europe in the fourteenth century, the feudal system was at its peak. The disease the Red Death shows radical egalitarianism as it attacks both poor and rich.Along with the color red, blood serves to have a dual symbolism. It represents both life and death. This symbol is emphasized by the masked figure. The masked figure does not explicitly state that he is the Red Death; however, he is the only partygoer in the costume of Red Death. The Mask figure makes his initial appearance in the easternmost room, which is then painted in blue color - the blue color is often associated with birth. The Red Death is a fictitious disease. The disease has been described as "sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores" that leads to death within half an hour.At the time the story "The Masquerade of the Death Red" was written, Poe's wife Virginia was suffering from the disease of tuberculosis. This disease could have been a source for the Red Death in the story. Just like Prince Prosper, Poe ignored the true nature of the disease. Poe's brother William, his mother Eliza, and his foster mother Frances, died because of tuberculosis.Moreover, the red Death may also represent Cholera. The epidemic of cholera breaks in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1831. Poe witnessed this epidemic. However, some readers and critics also suggest that the disease refers to the bubonic plague that breaks in Europe in the fourteenth century. This thought of bubonic plague is emphasized when at the climax of the story features Red Death in the black room.A scholar also gives an explanation by describing the Red Death, not as a disease but the weak man that is shared by humankind.The short story "The Masque of the Red Death" appears to be a scary dream. The dreamlike feeling gets stronger when the suite for the Masquerade ball is arranged by Prince Prospero. Everything appears to be strange, wild, grotesque, frenzied, and intense. There are the masqueraders and their glaring and glittering costumes. All of these images make a mad collage of images. Even Poe uses dram language while describing these images.For example, in the seventh paragraph, he writes:"There were arabesque figures with unsuited limbs and appointments. There were delirious fancies such as the madman fashions. There was much of the beautiful, much of the wanton, much of the bizarre, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust. To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams." All of these images are too real to be true. It appears to be the creation of a mad imagination or a strange and weird dream. Poe suggests a dizzying and frenzied scene by describing the "writhing" dancers, "swelling" music, and the "giddiness." All the things are uncontrolled, chaotic, and mixed-up. The whole world appears to be spinning around and seems to be a bad dream.Everything in the suite appears to be representing something, whether it is colors of the room, the clock, or the party itself. The descriptive language employed in the story is overly meaningful or "oppressively meaningful." This kind of excessive symbolization is found in dreams or artwork or in the mind of a mad artist.One can also say that to cut the whole setting of the story from reality, Poe also does something. For example, the setting of the short story "The Masque of the Red Death" is a palace or the castle which is remote and cut off from the rest of the world. It is situated in a kingdom that is struck by the plague and death.The short story is set in the luxurious "castellated abbey" Prince Prospero which is hidden somewhere in the kingdom. The doors of the castle are shut so that no one can enter the house. Everyone in the house is having a party while poor people outside the castle are dying. The things in the short suggesting that the masquerade ball is a dream are because it gives a sense of unreality and hyper-meaningfulness. There is exaggerated imagery and colors, which also suggests that masquerade is the production of pure imagination - the imagination of an artist. The name of the main character of the story "The Masque of the Red Death" resembles that of the protagonist of The Tempest by William Shakespeare. In fact, the beginning of Poe's story and Shakespeare's play are linked. There is one well-designed connection that appears to be really important for some of the scholars. There is the mention of "red plague" in the play The Tempest. The Cabilan characters early in play utter a curse, which shows up as "red plague." More than the similarity between "red plague" and Red Death," there are other connections too. These connections between the two are explored by observing the "Prosperos" of the two works. There are great similarities between the two characters. However, the two characters are unique in their own way; Shakespeare's Prospero is soccer, while Poe's Prospero is a great artist.The line about the Red Death approaching "like a thief in the night" seems familiar because it is the most famous line in the Bible. It is written in Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians. In this letter, Paul refers to the last judgment. According to the letter, Jesus Christ will come back into the world when the world is not at all, expecting his arrival. He will arrive "like a thief in the night" to judge the sinner for all of perpetuity. One should be prepared for that day as if you are caught unprepared; you are going to be in real trouble. It is between expecting a day of the judge and preparing oneself for it rather than focusing on the pleasures of the world.Poe applies the phrase of Paul about Jesus to Red Death. While doing so, he makes the Red Death as an "apocalyptic figure." Apocalyptic figure symbolizes the end of the world. Prince Prospero and his friends, like sinners, foolishly ignore the inevitable end of life and engage themselves in the pleasures of life. Like sinners, Prince Prospero and his friend, pay the price for their ignorance.In "The Masque of the Red Death," the characters do not cost too much for the pleasure of the world. However, unlike Jesus Christ, instead of choosing the sinners among the partygoers, the Red Death kills everyone. The end that Poe envisions at the end of the story is not among the judgment and salvation or suffering. This inevitable is summed up in the last line as "And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion overall."The lines can be explained in a deeper way by exploring the means through which the masquerade can be taken as the symbol for the world. The term "the world" has a negative connotation in the apocalyptic literature. It usually refers to the evil, base, and profane life that we live on earth, as compared to the spiritual and high life with God. Before the judgment, the world will become chaotic, frenzied, topsy-turvy, violent, grotesque, and absorbed in sin, just like the masquerade ball. Synopsis: The Masque of the Red Death, written by Edgar Allan Poe and published in 1842, is a story that combines horror and fantasy to explore the inevitability of death. In a kingdom devastated by a lethal plague, Prince Prospero takes refuge with a group of nobles in his fortified abbey. He organizes a luxurious masked ball to escape the horror outside. Amid the opulent festivities, a mysterious figure appears among the guests, sowing fear and uncertainty. The story is set in a kingdom ravaged by a deadly plague known as the "Red Death." The disease, which leaves scarlet spots on the bodies of its victims, spreads rapidly and causes death in a matter of minutes. Although the situation is critical, Prospero, the kingdom's prince, ignores the calamity. After gathering a thousand of his healthiest and most cheerful courtiers, he retires to a fortified abbey, a building of his design, surrounded by a high wall with iron gates that, once closed and sealed, would prevent any entry or exit. He intends to keep the disease out while inside, in a world cut off from the misery outside; life becomes a non-stop celebration. With abundant provisions and endless entertainment, the inmates defy the plague with parties, music, and shows, convinced they have cheated fate. After several months of confinement, Prospero organizes a lavish masked ball in a series of seven rooms arranged peculiarly. Each room is decorated in a dominant color with lighting that reinforces its atmosphere: blue, purple, green, orange, white, and violet. The last, the seventh, is different from all the others. Its walls and tapestries are black, but the windows have blood-red glass, which cast an ominous glow on the room when illuminated by braziers in the corridors. In this room, there is also an enormous ebony clock whose deep and mournful toll interrupts the music and the joy of the dance every hour. Each time it chimes, the guests stop uneasy and resume the festivities with nervous laughter. As the night progresses and the celebration climaxes, the guests begin to notice the presence of someone unexpected at the party. Among the extravagant costumes, there is one that provokes horror and general dislike. It is a tall figure wrapped in funeral rags, with a mask imitating the face of a corpse and bloodstained clothes, resembling a victim of the Red Death. The audacity of the disguise infuriates Prospero, who, outraged by what he considers a blasphemous mockery, orders the intruder to be captured and his mask removed. However, no one dares to approach him. The figure advances slowly through the rooms, moving solemnly, while the terrified guests leave his way. With growing fury, Prospero takes a dagger and chases the masked man to the last room, a dark and menacing room. Just as he is about to catch up with him, the figure turns towards him, and, at that moment, the prince lets out a scream and falls dead to the ground. The guests, filled with panic and despair, rush towards the figure to seize it, but when they touch its clothes, they discover with horror that nothing is underneath. The costume is empty. At that moment, they understand that the Red Death has been with them, and they fall one by one to the ground, victims of the plague they thought they had left behind. The ebony clock stops ticking, the flames of the braziers die out, and darkness takes over the castle. The Red Death, which is implacable and inevitable, reigns over all who tried to escape their destiny. The story's protagonist is Prince Prospero, a nobleman who represents arrogance and the denial of reality in the face of inevitable death. He is an eccentric man, a lover of luxury and pleasure, who, instead of facing the devastating plague of the Red Death with responsibility or compassion, decides to isolate himself in his fortified abbey with a select group of courtiers. His initial lack of concern and belief that he can avoid his fate through entertainment and extravagance make him a symbol of human blindness to the fragility of life. However, his apparent control crumbles when the figure of the Red Death appears at his masked ball. His reaction moves from anger to panic when he realizes his wealth and power are useless against the inevitable. His abrupt death in the seventh room, the most ominous of all, demonstrates the irony of his attempt to escape the plague: in the end, he runs straight towards his fatal destiny. The courtiers accompanying Prospero in his confinement have no names or individual features but are a collective who share the same frivolous and evasive attitude. Instead of worrying about the tragedy plaguing the outside world, they are nobles who choose to immerse themselves in fun, believing they can defy death with their privileges. They represent a society that clings to the illusion of security and permanence but which, like Prospero, is completely vulnerable when death bursts into their refuge. Their terror and subsequent downfall at the end of the story reinforce the idea that no one, regardless of status or wealth, can escape their destiny. The story's most enigmatic and terrifying character is the masked figure, the very personification of the Red Death. His appearance at the masked ball marks a turning point in the narrative, as he shatters the illusion of security that Prospero and his guests had constructed. His attire, which mimics the appearance of a plague victim, is more than a provocative disguise: it is the physical manifestation of disease and death that advances inexorably through the seven rooms of the castle following the course of life itself. Its true nature is revealed when, after Prospero's downfall, the courtiers try to catch him and discover with horror that nothing is under his clothing, confirming his supernatural identity. His presence in the story underlines the inevitability of death and the powerlessness of human beings in the face of it. Finally, although it is not a character in the traditional sense, the ebony clock plays a crucial symbolic role in the narrative. Its sound interrupts the party's music and merriment every hour, reminding those present of the passage of time and their mortality. Each time it sounds, the guests become restless, although they then try to laugh to dispel their fear. Its final silence, when the Red Death has claimed them all, marks the definitive end of life in the abbey. This object acts as a portent of imminent death and reinforces the story's central idea: time takes its course, and no one can escape their destiny. The Masque of the Red Death combines horror and fantasy to address a universal theme: the inevitability of death. Edgar Allan Poe constructs a story in which luxury, arrogance, and pleasure collide with an inescapable reality. Although, at first glance, the story seems to revolve around a prince and his courtiers trying to escape a plague, it is a metaphor for life's fragility and the impossibility of fleeing from destiny. One of the most striking elements of the story is the setting in Prospero's castle. The walled abbey symbolizes the illusion of control and security that the powerful believe they have over their lives. The prince and his guests are locked in an artificial world where only entertainment and pleasure exist as if they could ignore the tragedy that plagues the outside world. However, from the story's beginning, there are signs that this isolation is a fantasy doomed to failure. Although fortified, the castle is not a barrier against death but a space where the characters lock themselves away without realizing they have sealed their fate. The symbolism of the seven rooms through which the characters move is one of the keys to interpreting the story. Each room has a dominant color, and the castle arrangement suggests an inevitable route as if they were stages of life. From the blue room, which could represent birth, to the last one, black and red, which suggests death, Poe constructs a visual and narrative path that the characters travel without being aware of its meaning. The last room, where the ebony clock is located, is the story's climax: dark, gloomy, and almost empty, a place everyone avoids until death manifests itself and forces them to face it. The ebony clock is another important symbol. Its sound interrupts the party every hour, causing uneasiness among the attendees. Each chime reminds us that time continues to pass despite the distractions and the false sense of security. It is a constant omen of death, and when it finally stops ringing at the end of the party, it is because there is no one left alive. Through this object, Poe shows us how death is a silent but inescapable presence that marks every moment of existence and does not allow us to stop its advance. The story's climax comes with the appearance of the masked figure, who represents the Red Death itself. His presence unleashes panic at the party, but what is most disturbing is that he has been there all along, moving among the guests without anyone noticing him until the last moment. Prospero's attempt to challenge her with a dagger is the culmination of his arrogance: he believes he can defeat her with his will, but as soon as he faces her, he falls dead. The story reaches its inevitable denouement when the others try to catch the figure and discover nothing under the disguise. Death has been present from the beginning, and, in the end, it takes away all those who believed they had escaped it. The story's message is clear: death is inescapable, regardless of wealth, power, or attempts to avoid it. Prospero and his courtiers represent those who believe they can defy reality with luxury and distractions, but the story clarifies that this is just an illusion. Walls or parties cannot stop death, which arrives without warning at the least expected moment, "like a thief in the night." This story is an excellent example of how Poe uses terror to convey profound ideas about the human condition, not just to scare. Through symbols and an oppressive atmosphere, he reminds us that life is fragile and that, ultimately, no one can escape their destiny. It is a story that invites reflection on the passage of time and how we face the reality of our mortality.