

“The Masque of the Red Death”

Chance Spradley

Please answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. What did you expect from the masked figure?

The masked figure appeared to be insidious or scary and that it was going to bring harm when it was mentioned in the story.

2. Would you have attended the ball? Explain.

I would not have attended the ball with my modern knowledge of how disease spreads. If a deadly disease is being spread, it would not make sense to go to a large party of people in a poorly ventilated closed room.

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

Prince Prospero and his followers retreat to his palace for their safety because of the disease.

4. Describe the series of rooms in which the entertainment takes place.

In the palace there's seven rooms, from east to west they are the blue, purple, green, orange, white, violet and black room. The black room is notable because it is viewed as disturbing in comparison and it holds an ebony clock which ticks ominously.

5. Explain how the party is disrupted.

The party is disrupted when another individual shows up. A masked person who is corpse-like and tall and dressed in a funeral shroud that moves slowly through all of the rooms. It's noted that his mask looks like someone who has died to the Red Death.

6. Compare life outside the palace with the life of the people Prospero brought inside.

There's a juxtaposition between the outside and inside perspective of the palace. Inside, people are enjoying themselves and the party as they ignore the outside which is being literally plagued by a rampant disease.

7. What do you learn about Prospero from his desire to keep his palace free of the plague?

Prospero and his desire to keep his palace free of the plague is one that is lavished in selfishness, prejudice and fear. It can be concluded that he fears death greatly. It's should also be noted he makes no attempt to help anyone being affected. Instead, he chooses to hold a ball with rich nobles (who he presumes are free of plague) closed off from the rest of the world which he views as lesser.

8. What mood or effect is created by the colors and the lighting in the rooms of the ball?

It's interesting how the rooms are described because it feels otherworldly, or like something you'd see in a fictional story making it dreamish. The fact that there's 7 rooms which are all a single color seems like something that would be in a dream. It's also interesting to see that in comparison to the last room which is dark and intimidating.

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

I the clock having such a dramatic effect on the dancers is kind of a reaction to how many people view them. Clocks like that have very prominent ticking sounds and are loud on the hour. For the dancers specifically, a reminder of the time that continues to pass despite their attempted escape can be distressing. The ticking is inescapable.

10. Why does the visitor frighten the guests?

The visitor frightens the guests because it's identity is unknown, probably in combination with its bloody appearance.

11. Explain how Poe builds terror in the story.

Poe builds terror in the story by using a lot of "eldritch" feeling words along with repetitive references to the clock. His descriptions build fear or dread without anything inherently scary happening.

Understanding Allegory

In an allegory the characters, settings, and events are an interconnected series of symbols. The deeper or symbolic meaning of the story may contain a lesson about life.

12. What is the allegorical lesson in the story?

The main allegorical lesson in the story I believe is the inevitability of death. There's other themes about nobility and wealth being frivolous concepts that were constructed but are ultimately meaningless.