

"the fall of the house of usher" essay sample

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“ The Fall of the House of Usher” Essay Sample

In Edgar Allen Poe’s “ The Fall of the House of Usher” there is evidence that characterizes the story as gothic literature. Gothic literature is a genre or mode of literature that combines elements of both horror and romance. A gothic literature tale deals with horror, despair and grotesque such as mutation in animals, plants, and humans. The purpose of gothic literature is to create horror, to open fiction to the realm of the irrational and to demonstrate the presence of the uncanny existing in the world that we know nationally through experience. Some characteristics of gothic literature are: the atmosphere is of gloom, terror and mystery, the story is set in bleak or remote places, the characters are in a state of psychological or physical torment, visions, a supernatural or other worldly elements are present, women in distress and an unreliable narrator. “ The Fall of the House of Usher” has all of these characteristics.

The setting of “ The Fall of the House of Usher” is a “ dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens.” (Poe 297) The century and the location were never directly given to the reader however it does state that the setting is a “ mansion of gloom.” (Poe 297) The narrator observes that the house seems to have absorbed an evil and diseased atmosphere from the decaying trees and murky ponds around it. The characters in the story are Roderick Usher, Lady Madeline (only two left of the Usher family) and the narrator. Roderick Usher wrote the narrator telling him that he was feeling physically and emotionally ill. Soon after Madeline dies, Roderick decides to bury her temporarily in the tombs below the house. The narrator helps Roderick to bury her. After “ the <https://assignbuster.com/the-fall-of-the-house-of-usher-essay-sample/>

seventh or eighth day of placing lady Madeline within the donjon" (Poe 304) Roderick becomes even more uneasy. The narrator also experiences something very similar. He cannot sleep and passes back and forth. At this point the narrator is unreliable. Like Roderick, he has become crazy.

The last and most important gothic element in "The Fall of the House of Usher" is a supernatural or other worldly element. The narrator decides to read to Roderick to pass the night. He reads "Mad Trist" by Sir Launcelot Canning. As he reads he hears noises that are similar to those in the story. At first he ignores them because he believes they are his imagination. They have become so loud that he can no longer ignore them. Roderick has been hearing the sounds for days and believes that it is Madeline in the grave, alive. Madeline is standing the doorway in a white robe covered with blood. Madeline "in her violent and now final death agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he anticipated" (Poe 308)

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Work Cited

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Fall of the House of Usher" The American Experience. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2000. 297-308. Print.