

Black cat

Psychology



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The Black Cat by Edgar Allan Poe is a story about the narrator who goes from being a sane human being; but slowly starts to decline into a world of madness and paranoia, all because of his obsession with two (or possibly one) black cats. These cats finally drive him into a full state of madness to the point he take the life his wife, whose death he tries to conceal, with the thought that it's not his fault. Through literary elements of symbolism and character development you can see the decline of the narrator's sense of stability. Its only natural for a human being to slowly drift away from there once rational behavior and start to develop a new irrational behavior. Which is what happens to the narrator in the story, the narrator even states he realize his declinement of stability. " Our friendship lasted, in this manner, for several years, during which my general temperament and character...(I blush to confess it) experienced a radical alteration for the worse I grew, day by day, more moody, more irritable, more regardless of the feeling of others"(Poe 2). The development of the narrator's character is shown when he was once friends with the cat, but ever so slowly the friendship took a turn for the worst. Also when the night of the fire happen that destroyed his home. It sendd him into despair. Something dramatic as losing your home, can either make a person strive to move on from the experience and grow from it, or make the person bitter, hateful, and void of any emotion occurring within them. In this case it caused the narrator to create a behavior that is void of emotion. When a person is void of emotion they don't think of how something affects another person or animal, they act before they think. Feeling no remorse from the action they just committed or going to do. Symbolic references are noticed throughout the story. One for insist is the cat's name, Pluto. Which is the name of greek god of death. Foreshadowing a <https://assignbuster.com/black-cat/>

death that going to happen in the story. Another symbolic note is the cat's eye, when one night the narrator came home intoxicated and he frightened the cat. The cat bit the narrator's hand because it was frighten. In response the narrator removed one of the cats' eyes. " The fury of a demon instantly possessed me. I knew myself no longer. My original soul seemed, at once, to take flight from my body and more than fiendish malevolence, gin-nurtured, thrilled every fibre of my frame. I took from my waistcoat-pocket a pen-knife, opened it grasped the poor beast by the throat, and deliberately cut one of its eyes from the socket! I blush, I burn, I shudder... "(Poe 3). In the narrator mind he thought the cat would no longer be able to see into his soul, no longer will cat be able to see the once caring, loving man subcome to the evil and brutality that starting to overwhelm his heart. With that thought in the mind of narrator he believes once he removes the eye, the cat will no longer have the power to look deep within him. The reason for the narrator thinking like that is because black cats are known for being bad luck, associated with evil witches and such. So with the already known knowledge of black cats, it already foreshadows more misfortunes are going to occur to the narrator. In addition once again the cat's name increases the assumption that the narrator will have bad luck. Also when the narrator hangs the cat from the tree it symbolize the narrator no longer being able to accept love and understanding." Beneath the pressure of torments such as these, the feeble remnant of the good within me succumbed. Evil thoughts become my sole intimates- the darkest and most evil of thoughts. The moodiness of my usual temper increased to hatred of all things of all mankind; while, from the sudden, frequent, and ungovernable outburst of a fury to which I now blindly abandoned myself, my uncomplaining wife, alas!

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was the most usual and the most patient of sufferers. " Which happens to any human being once they have been taken into madness. All rational human emotions are no longer felt. Showing the character's development into a deeper state of insanity. When a person is in a state of insanity or irrational thought. They begin to hallucinate things that are not there due to the repressed feelings. In this case the repressed feeling of guilt. The narrator starts to hallucinate imagining another black cat is there. The second black cat is just the narrator's guilt, which why the second black is always following the narrator around. Just like guilt it doesn't go away it stays with you and haunts you. When he see a white spot on the cat's fur in the form of noose. The symbol of the narrator's guilt for hanging pluto. Including that the spot is white and not any other color shows how the narrator killed something that was completely innocent. When the narrators hallucinations cause him to take the life of his wife. He has reach the point of what people call rock bottom because he let his guilt consume him and drive him to a complete state of insanity showing the narrator full development into a world of madness. When a person no longer fully stable and able to act properly they assume their actions are not their fault showing the deeper depths of their insanity. Just how narrator proves to us. " Sat the hideous beast whose craft had seduced me to murder, and whose informing voice had consigned me to the hangman. I had walled the monster up within the tomb! ". In reality the narrator was truly a psychopath because if a human was driven to an irrational act because of guilt. Instead of rationalizing their behavior, they come to terms with blaming someone else. In this case the narrator and the black cat showed the symbolism and character development of a unstable human being. All in all the Black cat was a symbol for his wife, his wife was <https://assignbuster.com/black-cat/>

the one receiving all this negative outlashes of his behavior which he blamed on the cat. When in fact he was mentally ill but the narrator leaned on the black cat of his imagination. Which is why he didn't have that much remorse for his actions. Proving his state of insanity.