

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

A Dramatic Monolog

by
Edgar Allan Poe



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

**Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106**

**www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com**

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From the horror tale, "The Fall of the House of Usher."

I know not how it was--but, with the first glimpse of the House of Usher, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. What it was that so unnerved me was a mystery all insoluble.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in which the writer spoke of acute bodily illness, of a mental disorder which oppressed him and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best and indeed his only personal friend. His request--allowed me no room for hesitation; and I obeyed the summons.

A servant admitted me and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, conducted me through many dark passages to the studio of his master. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now ushered me into the presence of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. Feeble gleams of light made their way through the long narrow windows, and dark draperies hung upon the walls. The furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered.

Upon my entrance, Usher greeted me with a vivacious warmth. Surely man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the man with the companion of my boyhood. The ghastly pallor of the skin, and the lustre of the eye, above all things startled me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and floated about the face.

His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. He spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. His malady, he said, was a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy.

"I shall perish," he said, "in this deplorable folly. I dread the events of the future. In this pitiable condition, I feel that sooner or later I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR."

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