

THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH

A Dramatic Monolog

by
Edgar Allan Poe



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Arranged from the story.

The “Red Death” had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its avatar and its seal--the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution.

The scarlet stains upon the body, and upon the face, of the victim were the ban which shut him out from the aid of his fellowman. And the whole termination of the disease were the incidents of half an hour.

But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and lighthearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys. This was an extensive and magnificent structure, with a strong and lofty wall and gates of iron.

The external world could take care of itself. It was folly to grieve, or to think. The Prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure. There were buffoons, there were ballet-dancers, there were musicians, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security were within. With out was the “Red Death.”

It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. The tastes of the Prince were peculiar. He had a fine eye for colors and effects. His plans were bold and fiery, and his conceptions glowed with barbaric lustre. There are some who would have thought him mad. His followers felt that he was not. It was necessary to hear and see and touch him to be sure that he was not.

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