

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

The Pit and the Pendulum –Edgar Allan Poe



Part I

Directions: Choose the word that best completes the meaning of the sentence. Utilize context clues!

Acrid
Avidity
Cadence

Frivolity
Gossamer
Inanition

Spasmodically
Unbidden

1. An _____ intruder, suspiciously made his way across the lawn of Kim Kardashian.
2. The thunder clap had spooked the horse, causing it to run _____ around the stable.
3. He could not be sure if his _____ stemmed from the long hike or because he hadn't had breakfast.
4. The _____ odor of burnt gun powder filled the air after the pistol had been fired.
5. The rhythmic _____ of the drums signaled that the football team was fast approaching the stadium.
6. The cast enjoyed a night of fun and _____ after a spectacular performance of *Seussical*.
7. His _____ about making as much money as possible destroyed his relationship with family and friends.
8. The spider's silk, _____ web glistened in the morning sunlight.

Part II

Directions: Answer the following questions, in complete sentences, using support from the text.

1. The story opens with a Latin quotation that translates, "Here the wicked mob, unappeased, long cherished a hatred of innocent blood. Now that the fatherland is saved, and the cave of death demolished, where grim death has been, life and health appear" (pg 69). Explain the passage and what it suggests about the story.

2. In the beginning of the story, does the narrator seem to be a reliable or unreliable source? Explain why or why not.

3. Describe what the prisoner can discern about his imprisonment.

4. After the narrator escapes the pit, the intended method of execution, he begins to fear something. What is it and how is that fear intensified?

5. Upon awakening, how does the narrator find himself positioned? What is on the floor? What is positioned directly above the prisoner and what is it doing? How does he escape it?

6. How does Poe create suspense as the pendulum lowers?

7. The narrator is forced toward the center of the room to escape the torturous heat. The narrator looks into the pit and writes:
Yet, for a wild moment, did my spirit refuse to comprehend the meaning of what I saw. At length it forced- it wrestled its way into my soul- it burned itself upon my shuddering reason. Oh! For a voice to speak! Oh! Horror! Oh! Any horror but this! With a shriek, I rushed from the margin and buried my face in my hands- weeping bitterly (pg 79-80).
Why is the interior of the pit not clearly described? Based on evidence from the story, what is likely in the well?