

# Seven Stories of Mystery and Horror

## Edgar Allan Poe

### The Pit and the Pendulum

- 1 He wakes up and feels the stone floor. He also feels the cold, wet walls. He feels around the walls..
- 2 With a long, sharp scythe.
- 3 Eight seconds.
- 4 After he puts some of the meat on the rope, the rats bite through the rope.

### The Gold Bug

- 1 He is a poor man. He has no family, but he has a servant called Jupiter. He is interesting and he has a good education. He is strange and he does not like meeting people. He is quiet but sometimes he talks a lot.
- 2 Because the heat of the fire shows the secret writing.
- 3 A 'glass' is something you drink from and a telescope.
- 4 (a) a skull (b) a ledge in the rock of a cliff (c) a tool to dig (d) a tool to measure.
- 5 Because 8 is the most frequent number in the secret message and E is the most frequent letter in the spelling of English words.
- 6 Pirates' golden treasure.

### The Facts in the Case of Mr Valdemar

- 1 Because he did not want a painful death.
- 2 Because he wants to see if Mr Valdemar is alive or dead.
- 3 Because he does not think Mr Valdemar is dead.

- 4 He ends the hypnotism after seven months because Mr Valdemar did not die.
- 5 Yellow liquid comes from Mr Valdemar's body. Then Mr Valdemar's body disappears and only a pool of yellow liquid and bones remains.

## The Fall of the House of Usher

- 1 He is pale and ill. He looks older. His hair is silvery gray.
- 2 She is pale with strange eyes.
- 3 They carry her body to a coffin in a room under the house.
- 4 (a) Madeline leaves the coffin (b) Roderick dies with Madeline (C) the walls of the house start to break and the House of Usher falls into the lake.
- 5 Students' own answers. Possible answers include: The house made the Ushers mad. The Ushers have a terrible illness.

## Down into the Maelström

- 1 The tide is turning. The water rises and turns and foam appears in the water.
- 2 Foam is many tiny bubbles of air in the water.
- 3 It appears in the sea between the islands.
- 4 When the sea moves very quickly and the whirlpool appears. They are in the sea at the wrong time of day. The fisherman's watch had stopped.
- 5 Because he is tied to the barrel, which did not sink.
- 6 Various answers possible, but here are some suggestions:

*The sea is rough and the waves are high.*

*The wind and the waves crash against the boat.*

*The sea is smooth and still.*

*The calm wind moves the boat slowly and steadily along.*

## Down into the Maelström

- 1 A masque is a party with music, dancing and lots of food and wine. A mask is something that hides the face.
- 2 The bell of the clock rings twelve times and the guests see the stranger.
- 3 Possible answers include: the name of the disease, the window in the seventh room, the light from the window in the seventh room, the blood on the stranger's mask, the blood on the stranger's clothes, the floor after everyone dies.
- 4 Students' own answers. Possible answers include: Because the stranger wants everyone to die from the Red Death. The stranger is the Red Death.

## The Oblong Box

- 1 The ship is sailing to New York.
- 2 Because he thinks Cornelius Wyatt married a beautiful, young woman from New York.
- 3 Cornelius faints.
- 4 The storyteller thinks that valuable old paintings are in the box.
- 5 He behaves strangely. He pushes the box into the sea and he falls in after it. The ship sinks.