The Black Cat and Other Stories

**While reading**

*The Black Cat*, pages 1–11

1. Which of the words below describe the people or animals in the story?
   - bad
   - brave
   - clever
   - evil
   - friendly
   - good
   - happy
   - horrible
   - kind
   - loving
   - selfish
   - sick

   a. The story-teller: ____________________________
   b. The story-teller’s wife: ______________________
   c. Pluto: ________________________________
   d. The second cat: ____________________________

2. Put these sentences in the correct order, 1–10.

   The first half of the story: (1–5)
   - a. I searched for another black cat, of the same size and type as Pluto.
   - b. For years, he and I lived happily together, the best of friends.
   - c. I saw a black shape in the new white plaster.
   - d. I caught the cat and hung him by his neck from a tree until he was dead.
   - e. I took my knife from my pocket, held the poor animal by his neck and cut out one of his eyes.

   The second half of the story: (6–10)
   - f. And there was the cat, standing on her head, his red mouth wide open in a scream, and his one gold eye shining like fire.
   - g. But the more I hate the cat, the more he seemed to love me.
   - h. I knocked hard on the part of the wall where my wife was.
   - i. Pluto didn’t have a white hair anywhere on his body; this cat had a large white shape on his front.
   - j. I took the axe and tried to cut the animal into two. But as I brought the axe down, my wife stopped my arm with her hand.

*The Oval Portrait*, pages 13–17

3. Something is wrong in these sentences. Cross out the wrong part of the sentences and correct them.
   - a. It was a sad and strangely ugly house, many hundreds of years old.
   - b. He helped me to lie down on the sofa.
   - c. I asked Pedro to light the candle beside the bed.
   - d. I began to look at the maps on the walls, and as I did so I read a small book.
   - e. The picture was a portrait. It was square in shape, and showed the head and shoulders of a young woman.

4. Choose the right answers.

   1. What is strange about the portrait? …
   - a. The woman in the portrait looks beautiful.
   - b. The woman in the portrait looks alive.
   - c. The woman in the portrait moves around.

   2. Why does the story-teller again pick up the book by his bed? …
   - a. Because he fell in love with the portrait.
   - b. Because he didn’t want to look at the portrait again.
   - c. To read the story of the portrait.

   3. Why did the beautiful woman hate her husband’s paintings? …
   - a. Because her husband’s paintings were more important to him than she was.
   - b. Because her husband’s paintings were more beautiful than she was.
   - c. Because her husband’s paintings made her unhealthy.

   4. What happened to the woman when her husband was painting her? …
   - a. She couldn’t smile any more.
   - b. She became more and more pale and ill.
   - c. All of the above.

   5. What happened to the woman when her husband finished the portrait? …
   - a. She had no face.
   - b. She didn’t love her husband anymore.
   - c. She was dead.

*Berenice*, pages 19–27

5. Are these sentences true (T) or not true (NT)?
   - a. Egaeus is from an old family.
   - b. Egaeus lives in the house of his fathers.
   - c. Egaeus’ father died in the library.
   - d. Egaeus doesn’t like the library.
   - e. Egaeus has a friend called Berenice.
   - f. Berenice’s bright young days ended because she became old.
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- Activity worksheets

6 Answer these questions.

a Why does Berenice change so much? □

b What is wrong with Egaeus? □

c Why does Egaeus ask Berenice to marry him? □

d Why does Egaeus want Berenice's teeth? □

e When does the servant girl tell Egaeus that Berenice is dead? □

The Mask of the Red Death, pages 29–36

7 Are these sentences right (✓) or wrong (✗)?

1 If you have the Red Death:
   a you have burning pains in your eyes. ✓
   b everything begins to turn round and round inside your stomach. ✗
   c you begin to bleed all over your body – but most of all through your face. ✓
   d you have about half a year to live. ✗

2 The Prince's house in the middle of a forest has:
   a servants. ✓
   b a high wall around it. ✓
   c only seven rooms. ✓
   d a lot of keys. ✓

3 Each of the seven rooms has:
   a different furniture. ✓
   b lamps. ✗
   c a clock. ✗
   d windows the same colour as everything inside it. ✓

4 The seven rooms are different colours:
   a The first room is blue. ✓
   b The second room is pink. ✓
   c The third room is yellow. ✓
   d The fourth room is orange. ✓
   e The fifth room is white. ✓
   f The sixth room is green. ✓
   g The seventh room is black with grey windows. ✓

8 Choose the correct answer.

1 Why was everybody dressed so strangely at the party? …
   a Because the Prince chose the way everyone was dressed.
   b Because the Prince was strange.
   c All of the above.

2 Why did people look at the tall masked man with anger and horror? …
   a Because he was wearing black, which made them think of death.
   b Because he was wearing a red mask which looked like a dead man.
   c All of the above.

3 Who killed the Prince? …
   a One of his friends.
   b One of the servants.
   c The tall masked man.

4 Why did everybody die? …
   a Because they were very scared.
   b Because the Prince was killed.
   c Because the tall masked man was the Red Death.

After reading

9 Write a sentence using these words.
   a anger …………………………………………………
   b evil …………………………………………………
   c horror …………………………………………………
   d mad …………………………………………………

10 Write one more sentence to continue the story.
   a The Black Cat: The policemen looked at me. …………………………………………………
   b The Oval Portrait: When I finished reading the book, the portrait started to talk. …………………………………………………
   c Berenice: The servant called the police. …………………………………………………
   d The Mask of the Red Death: A hundred years later, someone came to this house. …………………………………………………
1 The Black Cat: Complete each sentence with a word from the box. You can use the same word more than once.

angry axe cellar evil horror
mad object plaster several

a Some people believe that all black cats are ............

b I was often suddenly ............. about unimportant things.

c Someone else was in my body: someone evil, and ............. with drink!

d The next morning, my mind was full of pain and ............. when I woke up.

e I realised why this wall didn't burn: because there was new ............. on it.

f I looked at the shape in complete .............

g I noticed a black ............. on top of a cupboard.

h The cat pressed the side of his head against my hand ............. times.

i I took the ............. and tried to cut the animal into two.

j I decided to hide the body in one of the walls of the .............

2 The Oval Portrait: Match the two parts of the sentences.

1 I was so badly hurt …
2 After dark, I could not sleep …
3 I looked and read for a long time, and …
4 My eyes became more and more tired, and soon …
5 I saw more pictures, and …
6 It was almost impossible to believe …
7 Quickly, I looked through the book until …

a I found it hard to read the words on the page.

b because of the pain.

c I found the story of the oval portrait.

d that she was just paint – that she wasn't alive!

e that I would die if we stayed out all night.

f among them there was a portrait of a young woman.

g the hours passed quickly.

3 Berenice: Circle the correct words in italics.

a Egaeus' favourite room is the library / sitting room.

b Egaeus was born in the library / richly decorated room.

c Berenice and Egaeus were lovers / cousins.

d Berenice was always shining like a bright / evil new sun when she was young.

e Berenice ran over the hills under the great blue sky while Egaeus studied at school / in the library.

f Berenice became ill. The first illness caused two / several other illnesses to follow.

g Egaeus became ill. He could lose himself in the useless study of even the simplest or most ordinary subject / object.

h Egaeus asked Berenice to marry him because he loved her / felt so sorry for her.

i Egaeus thought, 'Berenice was like an angel / a stranger to me, only a weak shadow of the woman I remembered.'

j Berenice made a strange smile, and it was then that Egaeus saw her eyes / teeth.

k 'We are ready to bury / burn her now,' said the servant girl.

l Berenice wasn't dead / alive.

4 The Mask of the Red Death: Choose the right answers.

1 What is the Red Death? …

a An old ship.

b A terrible illness.

c A small pub.

2 Why did the prince take 1,000 friends to his house in the forest? …

a so that they could have a fight.

b so that they could enjoy the walking in the forest and listening to the birds singing.

c so that they could get away from the Red Death.

3 Why did he throw the key into the lake? …

a so that nobody could get in or out of the house.

b so that he would die in the house.

c because he didn't like the key.

4 What did the Prince want to do five months later? …

a He wanted to have an unusual party.

b He wanted to marry a beautiful girl.

c He wanted to have great furniture.

5 Which room has a very large clock? …

a The blue room.

b The black room.

c The red room.

6 What happened when the clock made a deep, strange, musical sound? …

a The musician was killed.

b The dancers fell down onto the floor.

c The whole party stopped.