

## “The Fall of The House of Usher” by Edgar Allan Poe

### Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe was infamous for his darker take on storytelling and poet writing. “The Fall of Usher” is no different. The group immediately picked up the haunting and evil vibes and as we continued to read, our suspicions were confirmed. We wrote about all the characters in the story, finding them each individually and collectively important to the story. This ultimate dark and mysterious atmosphere was a general feature in the songs that we decided to utilize in our playlist. As the narrator goes about in the story, more weird things keep happening. His friend who had written to him to come over, Roderick, has seemingly gotten lost in paranoia.



This is one of the main themes/characters that we focused on when trying to find songs for our playlist. We also focused on how odd and thrilling it was to read about Madeline, Roderick’s sister. Doctors could not tell what was wrong with her and her limbs which appeared to have a mind of their own, and when she “died”, Roderick wanted to bury her by the house so she couldn’t be experimented on. But that was a clear mistake, as his sister wasn’t truly dead, and escaped her grave to seek revenge on her twin brother in the end. The narrator was simply going

to check on, and care for his dear friend, but was seemingly caught up in a larger issue. He flees the house but looks back to see it completely crumbled to the ground.

#### “Handsome Youth” by Rope Sect

One does not stay youthful forever. Time evades people and they get lost in themselves and forget about the world around them. Paranoia seeps in in times of extreme isolation which Roderick Usher begins to experience. He writes to his friend who is the narrator and asks him to stay with him for a while to help cheer him up and pass this “illness” he is feeling. The two were friends for years before the story took place and lost touch. But the narrator agrees to spend time with him but upon seeing his haunting and gloomy home, he begins to have second thoughts. He sees his friend and is taken aback by how much he has aged and recalls how handsome his friend used to be in his youth. Usher becomes deeply disturbed in his paranoia. He’s deep in thought and sunken in place. It seems he cannot escape his illness, nor the decrepit house. The song makes more sense when it is read from the narrator’s perspective and his internal dialogue towards Roderick Usher. The narrator tries his best to soothe Roderick and to help him avoid things that might cause him anxiety or further physical illness. Roderick’s mind is lost just like how his sister Madeline’s was and having to bury her, seemingly alive, only made matters worse. Roderick seems to be waiting for answers to his paranoid questions and his mysterious illness.

#### “Thriller” by Michael Jackson

This song by Michael Jackson has an overall eerie, creepy vibe, which relates to the story by Allan Poe as a whole. The second line to this song mentions “Something evil’s lurkin’ in the dark” and I immediately connected this to how Madeline Usher had escaped her grave and was wandering the palace to find Roderick, towards the end of the story. The second verse begins with “You hear the door slam” and during this same sequence of when Madeline escapes her grave, the iron door which sealed her tomb was broken open and slammed on the ground. The narrator of the story notes this exact sound and jumps from his chair when he hears it. Roderick Usher agrees that he’s been hearing these sounds as well, but tried to pass them off or ignore them, like how Jackson says, “You close your eyes / And hope that this is just imagination”. The lines right after this fit very well with this section of the story, saying “But all the while / You hear a creature creepin’ up behind / You’re out of time”. As stated before, Roderick had tried to brush off the noises he was hearing, but in the end, the sounds were real, and Lady Madeline of Usher was lurking to seek revenge on her brother for burying her alive. Before this sequence, however, the narrator finds Roderick sleepless in his room and says, “I will read and you shall listen and thus we will live through this fearful night together.” (Allan Poe, 10). Jackson says something similar in his song, saying “All through the night I’ll save you from the terror on the screen” conveying how he’ll guide his companion through a frightening moment, like the narrator and Roderick. Overall, the song compares greatly to the experiences in the story by Allan Poe. With the mentioning of monsters, feeling paralyzed, terror, etc. Jackson’s song encompasses the overall vibe of the story written by Edgar Allan Poe.

“Prisoner” by The Weeknd ft. Lana Del Rey

In this song, it mentions “I’m addicted to a life that’s so empty and so cold.” This relates to the story because Roderick Usher is suffering from a mental illness. He was going crazy. The way he was living was literally empty and cold. The narrator of the story wants to help his old friend, so he goes to visit him. Thinking his presence will help Roderick. The narrator felt this dark and gloomy vibe when he reached Usher's house. Since the narrator would spend a lot of time with Usher, he started to realize that it wasn’t possible that his presence could help Usher. Usher’s behavior switched instantly from happiness to melancholy. He would sort of have mood swings. Roderick Usher’s illness caused him to do things that he shouldn’t have done. Two more verses from the song that relate to the text are “I’m a prisoner to my decisions” and “Maybe I’ve always been destined to end up in this place”. Not only did Usher have a sister but his sister was also mentally ill. Roderick Usher buried his sister Madeline alive. The song “Prisoner” by The Weeknd ft. Lana Del Rey is giving the dark, gloomy, and melancholy vibe that “The Fall of the House of Usher” also gives.

“Little Dark Age” by MGMT

The song “Little Dark Age” by MGMT has a gloomy, gothic vibe that goes well with the story, “The Fall of The House of Usher” by Edgar Allan Poe. The song contains elements such as isolation, denial, and a sense of hopelessness, all elements that the characters in the story experience. For example, the line in the song “The feelings start to rot, one wink at a time” represents the connection between Roderick and his twin sister, Madeline. They are all that is left of the Usher family, and this line from the song represents Roderick’s decline in his mental health, which coincides with Madeline’s decline in her physical health. As Roderick spirals

towards complete insanity, he knowingly buries Madeline alive, for fear that doctors will come and experiment on her. Towards the very end of the story, he admits to the narrator that he knew she was not dead, and that he tried and tried to ignore her movements and sounds, but to no avail. This can be connected to the lines in the song: "The image of the dead, dead ends in my mind" and "Just know that if you hide, it doesn't go away." Roderick's denial was useless, and now he had no escape from what was to come. The story ends with Madeline and Roderick both dying in each other's arms, Madeline from her physical illness and Roderick dying to his own fear. The final line of the song complements the ending of the story: "All alone, open-eyed, burn the page, my little dark age." After witnessing Roderick and Madeline die, the Narrator is alone in this large, dark manor and seeks to run away as fast as possible. While he is fleeing, he turns and sees as the walls of the palace begin to fall apart, representing the end of the house of Usher, its final "Little Dark Age."