

STRATEGY-BUILDING AND MEANING-FOCUSED LISTENING WITH “THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER” – AUDIO CLIP TRANSCRIPT

“It was a dark and soundless day near the end of the year, and clouds were hanging low in the heavens. All day I had been riding on horseback through country with little life or beauty; and in the early evening I came within view of the House of Usher.

I do not know how it was but, with my first sight of the building, a sense of heavy sadness filled my spirit. I looked at the scene before me — at the house itself — at the ground around it — at the cold stone walls of the building — at its empty eye-like windows — and at a few dead trees — I looked at this scene, I say, with a complete sadness of soul which was no healthy, earthly feeling. There was a coldness, a sickening of the heart, in which I could discover nothing to lighten the weight I felt. What was it, I asked myself, what was it that was so fearful, so frightening in my view of the House of Usher? This was a question to which I could find no answer.

I stopped my horse beside the building, on the edge of a dark and quiet lake. There, I could see reflected in the water a clear picture of the dead trees, and of the house and its empty eye-like windows. I was now going to spend several weeks in this house of sadness — this house of gloom.”

Excerpt from “The Fall of the House of Usher” in *Edgar Allan Poe: Storyteller* published by the U.S. Department of State’s Office of English Language Programs.