The Fall of the House of Usher

**Main Characters**

**Madeline Usher**
Ill woman suffering from seizures; collapses on and kills her brother

**Narrator**
Willing but fearful friend; witnesses the death of Roderick and Madeline and collapse of the house

**Roderick Usher**
Sickly, paranoid man; last of the Usher line

**Author**
Edgar Allan Poe

**Copycat**
Poe's skill with the horror genre is evident in many of his short stories, particularly in "The Fall of the House of Usher." In this tale, he twists the psychological and physical together until the reader—along with the narrator—is unsure of what is real and what is imaginary.

"The Fall of the House of Usher" traces the parallel demises of a literal house and the incestuous line of the Usher family. When the narrator's friend Roderick Usher mysteriously invites him to visit, he agrees—but he is unprepared for the deathly appearance of Roderick and the terror that awaits him in the claustrophobic home.

**Similes**

Symbol: the heart is a suspended lute

Poe uses similes throughout "The Fall of the House of Usher." For example, "The heart is a suspended lute" suggests the narrator's lover's feelings for him. This simile is visually appealing and helps the reader visualize the narrator's love for his friend.

"Fall creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet imperious superstitions."