

“The Oval Portrait”

Questionnaire 1:

1) What is the object of the author's description ? Give some elements of this description.

2) Find the odd man out. The castle is sumptuously decorated with :

- a- multiform armorial trophies
- b- tapestry
- c- an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque
- d- antique vases with dull colors
- e- velvet curtains

3) Where has the main character found the book ?

4) What is the role of the candlesticks in history ?

5) What can be distinguished in the background of the table described ?

- a- a forest
- b- a sunset
- c- a wave
- d- a starlit night
- e- the mountains

6) Does the spirit the painting seem rather gloomy or light ?

7) "As a thing of art nothing could be more admirable than the painting itself". Explain this sentence in context by giving your point of view.

8) What does the painting mean to this man ?

- a- beauty
- b- a waste of time
- c- entertainment
- d- the resurrection
- e- a source of income

9) Why did the painter decide to paint this woman ?

10) Do you think art is the place of expression ? Justify your answer.

11) Ultimately, this story is a reflection on :

- a- eternal life
- b- a fascinating reading
- c- the power of painting
- d- art as consolation
- e- memories of a haunted castle

Camille A.

Questionnaire 2:

True or false ?

- a. The narrator and his valet are invited to a chateau.
- b. The narrator and his valet take sumptuously furnished apartments.
- c. At the beginning, the narrator sees the young girl's portrait.
- d. The girl on the portrait was the artist's wife.
- e. The artist doesn't succeed in the achievement of his portrayal.

Questions

- a. What was the first reaction of the narrator when he saw the portrait ?
- b. Did the lady of the portrait hate arts ?
- c. What is the reason for the artist's cry when his painting is completed ?
- d. How did the artist's wife react when she learnt that he wanted to paint her ?
- e. What happens to the artist at the end of his work ?
- f. How is the artist's wife depicted ?
- g. What do you think about the end of the short story ? In your opinion, what did the artist's wife kill ?

Doriane

Questionnaire 3:

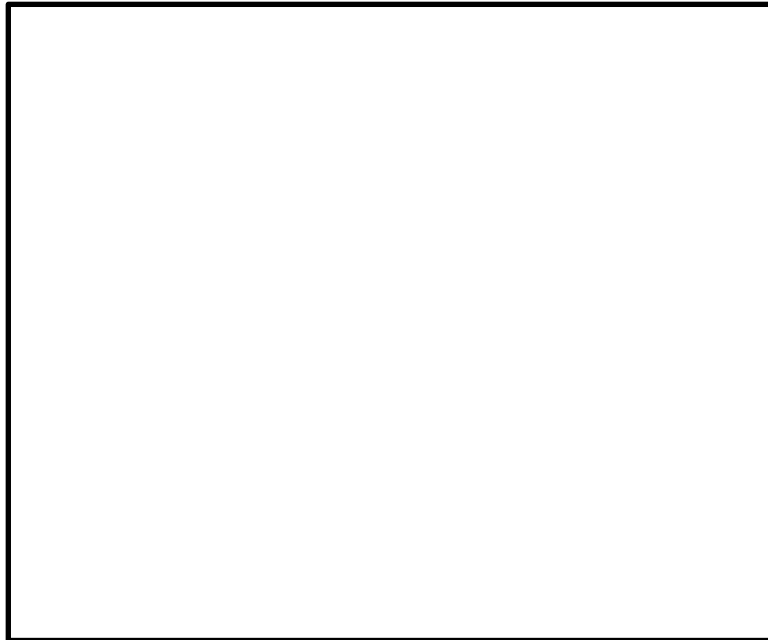
- Where does the story take place ?
- Who are the two main characters ?
- What is the condition of one of them at the beginning of the story ?
- How can you describe the place where the narrator spends the night ?
- What is the narrator doing during that night ?
- What hour is mentioned in the story ?
- How does the narrator discover the portrait ?
- Who is represented on it ?
- What is the narrator's first reaction in seeing it ?
- Why did he react like this ?
- To what does the last part of the short-story correspond to ?
- Who is the painter of this portrait ?
- Who is the rival of the portrait's character and why ?
- Would you describe with two adjectives the man and the woman ?
- What happened to the painter ?
- What does " This is indeed Life itself" mean ?

- What are the main themes of this short-story ?

Gabrielle

Questionnaire 4:

Try to portrait how you think this « chateau » could be, the castle itself or a room :



Who is that mysterious girl on the portrait ?

The master's daughter ☐ The painter's wife ☐ The gardener's sister ☐

What is so scary in this short story ?

Why could we say that this atmosphere is oppressive ?

This short story is about love, but can you say that love is really positive ?

How do you understand what happened at the end of the story ?

Imagine the scene that could have happened for the painter just after the death of his model !

Marine

Questionnaire 5 :

BEFORE YOU READ



1. Look at the picture. Describe what you see and try to imagine what is happening.
2. According to you, why do some people decorate their house with portraits of the people in their family ?
3. Would you like to sit for a portrait ? Why (not) ?



observe the comic and imagine a summary of this story.

5. What does the title of this short story inspire you ?

WHILE YOU READ

6. Circle the correct word in italics.

- a) The servant lights the *fire/lamp* next to his employer's bed.
- b) The eyes of the woman in the portrait fill the story-teller with surprise at first, but later with *happiness/horror*.
- c) The painter loves his *wife/work* more than anything in the world.
- d) The painter's wife is becoming *famous/unealthy* , but he never notices.
- e) The painter's wife hates his paintings because they take all of his *time/money* .
- f) Nearly completed, the portrait makes the painter almost *mad/romantic* .
- g) Looking at his finished portrait of his wife, he thinks she looks *dead/alive* .
- h) The painter's wife *sleeps/dies* while her husband paints her portrait.

7. At the following times, how has the painter's wife changed (circle the correct answer) ?

- a) soon after their marriage
- b) when visitors speak about the portrait
- c) when the portrait is finished

8. What feelings do these people have (one word for each proposition) ?

- a) The story-teller for the oval portrait : _____
- b) The young wife for her husband : _____
- c) The painter for his wife : _____
- d) The painter for his portrait of his wife : _____

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

9. Imagine you are the story-teller in The Oval Portrait. You have sat up all night looking at the portrait and

reading about the beautiful young woman. Write about your feelings for the young woman and your opinion of her portrait.

10. Explain how Poe uses madness and fear to produce a feeling of horror (you can compare with another story by Poe).

Déborah