

Module 6: The Power of the Mind in the Romantic Era

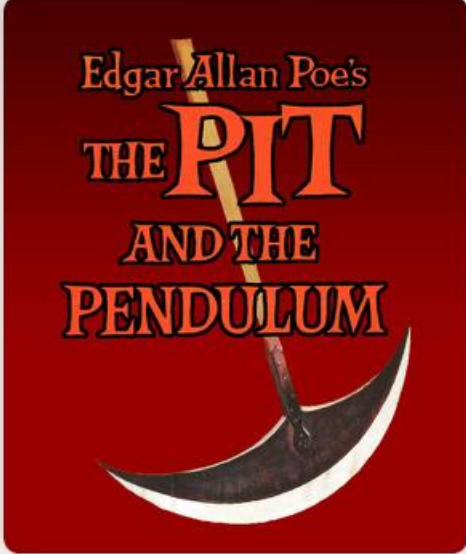
Topic 6 Content: Plot Analysis of "The Pit and the Pendulum"

Introduction

Plot Analysis of "The Pit and the Pendulum"

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You can begin to understand the psychological effects of torture and torment on the human mind and psyche in Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum" by analyzing the plot events in the story. Use the *NEXT* button or the numbered tabs at the bottom to explore the story's plot and see how all the events fit together in the "big picture."



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Topic 6 Content: Plot Analysis of "The Pit and the Pendulum"

Beginning of Imprisonment

Plot Analysis of "The Pit and the Pendulum"

Beginning of Imprisonment

The narrator is imprisoned for an indeterminate length of time in a dark cell before being sentenced to death. At the opening of the story, it is obvious the imprisonment has taken a toll on the narrator by his fanciful daydreaming about the candles and the black-robed figures who have sentenced him to death.



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Discovery of the Pit

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Discovery of the Pit

Upon awakening in the dark and narrowly discovering the imminent death at the bottom of the pit, you see the tenuous hold on sanity the narrator is grappling to retain.



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The Pendulum and the Rats

Plot Analysis of "The Pit and the Pendulum"

The Pendulum and the Rats

By the time the narrator is enduring the gnawing and nibbling of the rats to avoid the bisection of the pendulum, it is obvious the narrator, even if saved from this current predicament, will not come out emotionally and psychologically whole.



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Enduring Psychological Torment

Plot Analysis of "The Pit and the Pendulum"

Enduring Psychological Torment

By the end of the story, you are almost left wondering what would be most merciful for the narrator: to be saved and yet haunted repeatedly by nightmares and memories of these experiences in the prison or to end the psychological torment at the bottom of the pit or the fatal swing of the pendulum.



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