

Answer these questions.

a. Where did the narrator and his servant make a forcible entrance?

→ The storyteller and his servant, Pedro, went into a lonely castle located in the Apennines of central Italy. The storyteller was badly hurt, but Pedro didn't want him to stay outside in the open air. So, without asking anyone, Pedro forcefully took the storyteller inside the castle.

b. Which special picture did the narrator notice in the room?

The narrator saw an oval picture of a beautiful young girl when the light from the candelabrum fell on it. He had not noticed the picture before. The girl in the picture seemed to be growing into a woman. The picture was so attractive that it caught the narrator's attention. He became very curious about it and read the history behind the portrait from a book he found on the bed. Even though he was seriously injured, he was completely absorbed in learning about the picture's background.

c. Describe the portrait that the narrator saw in the room.

The narrator saw a very beautiful portrait of a young girl in the room when the light from the candelabrum shone on it. The portrait was oval-shaped with an elaborately decorated frame. The young girl in the picture looked like she was growing into a woman. The narrator was surprised to see how realistic the lady's shoulders and head with her shiny hair looked in the portrait. The colors in the painting looked so real as well.

The narrator suddenly felt a strong desire to look at the portrait more closely. He closed his eyes for a moment and then opened them again. He couldn't believe how incredibly artistic the portrait was.

d. What is the relationship between the portrait painter and its subject?

→The relationship between the portrait painter and its subject is husband and wife. The painter who made the portrait was actually the husband of the woman in the picture. He was a very devoted painter who spent many weeks creating the portrait of his wife. So, the painter and the lady in the portrait were husband and wife.

Reference to the context

a. What is the central theme of the story? Who is the woman depicted in the oval portrait?

→The main idea of the short story 'The Oval Portrait' is the connection between life and art. The story shows that art and love can lead us to perfection, but they can also bring destruction. The painter in the story became successful through his art, but his passion for it caused harm to his wife. The wife loved her husband deeply and suffered in silence because of his obsession with art. The story reveals the negative consequences of being excessively passionate about something. The woman in the oval portrait is the painter's wife, and he painted it with great passion.

b. “The Oval Portrait” is a short horror story by Edgar Allan Poe involving the disturbing circumstances surrounding a portrait in a chateau. Elaborate.

→ The short story takes place in a scary and dark Chateau located in the Appennines, a mountain range in central Italy. The Chateau is very old and abandoned, both inside and outside. The rooms inside the Chateau are unclean and disorganized. The room where the narrator and his servant stay is decorated, but everything in it is decaying. The life-like portrait is also placed in a dark corner and surrounded by the mess. The arrival of the visitors only adds to the eerie atmosphere. The portrait seems worthless in the gloomy environment of the Chateau.

c. “The Oval Portrait” suggests that the woman’s beauty condemns her to death. Discuss.

→ In "The Oval Portrait," the woman's beauty is shown as the cause of her death. The painter, who is the woman's husband, is very passionate about his art and loves it more than anything. He wants to paint a portrait of his wife, who is very beautiful and has just become a woman. He puts her in a chair to pose for him and becomes obsessed with his artistic work. He spends weeks painting the portrait without noticing his wife's health deteriorating. When he finally finishes the portrait, he discovers that his wife has died while sitting in the chair.

d. Discuss the story as a frame narrative (a story within a story).

→ In "The Oval Portrait," the frame narrative technique is used to tell a story within a story. At the beginning of the story, we are introduced to the narrator and his valet in a different setting. The readers are taken along with the story, but soon, another story begins within it. The next story focuses on the oval portrait, providing a detailed description of it and its background information. The readers are drawn deeper into the story as they learn more about the painting and the people involved. The frame narrative technique is used to show how one story can contain another story within it.

e. The story is told in a descriptive style, with plenty of imagery and symbolism. Which images and symbols do you find in the story?

→ In this story, we see many pictures and symbols that the author uses to make the story more interesting. The writer uses images of darkness and light to create a sense of horror. The abandoned Chateau in the Apennines and the arrival of the two visitors in a dark, isolated setting adds to the suspense. The author also uses images like dark rooms, wall tapestries, trophies, the oval painting, candelabrum, books, and rays of light to create the atmosphere of the story. The historical background of the oval portrait also creates an image of the painter and his wife in a high torrent of the

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Chateau. These images help the story to have gothic elements that add to the plot.

Symbols in this story also play an important role. The oval portrait represents the mortality of love and the immortality of art. The painter's wife, who was the subject of the portrait, dies because of her husband's obsession with art. This symbolizes how love can lead to death, and art can lead to immortality. Another symbol used in this story is the time during artwork. This symbolizes the painter's obsession where he forgets everything around him and leads his wife to death.

f. What does the expression “She was dead!” mean?

→ "The expression was dead" means the moment when the painter's wife died while posing for her portrait. The painter was so focused on his work that he didn't notice his wife's health deteriorating. He spent weeks painting her portrait, completely absorbed in his task. When he finally finished and showed the painting to his wife, he discovered that she had died while posing. The story shows how the painter's obsession with his art led to the death of his wife, the main subject of his painting.

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Reference beyond the text

a. Do you think there is life in art?

→ I don't think there is life in art. Art is just a creation to display which has meanings related to different things. But, in a literal sense, artists create life in art. They try to find out life within the art.

b. As a thing of art nothing could be more admirable than the painting itself. Explain.

→ Painting is a wonderful art form that can convey deep meaning through its visual language. The hard work and effort that painters put into creating

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quality paintings are truly admirable. Paintings can reveal truths about life through their imagery. In the story, the oval portrait is an excellent example of this. The narrator is amazed and confused by the painting, and wants to learn more about its history and the artist who created it.

c. A more intense look at the painting reveals the illusion. Have you noticed any such painting?

→ Yes, I have seen such paintings. People who are passionate about paintings can understand their meaning better. But, those who don't know much about paintings may not understand them and find them confusing. I once looked at a painting for a long time, but I couldn't understand its meaning. I tried really hard to figure it out, but I couldn't. Eventually, my friend explained it to me.