

## OCTOBER 13, 2015-AGENDA

1. Write down homework- Black Cat short response questions. study for vocabulary quiz on Thursday.

2. Do Now- On piece of loose leaf choose 4 vocabulary words to use in sentences.

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| haunts   | peevish |
| gallows  | rouse   |
| wretched | feeble  |

3. Finish reading "The Black Cat."

4. Begin short response questions.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To increase our knowledge of vocabulary.
2. To practice using annotations to increase comprehension skills.
3. To improve our ability to use text based evidence to support a thesis.

# The Black Cat

I do not expect you to believe what I am about to write. Only a madman would expect it. Yet mad I am not, and very surely I do not dream. But tomorrow I die, and I would give the world my story, as plainly and frankly as if I were writing a story of everyday events. I will not try to explain my deeds. Later, perhaps, some person wiser, more calm than I, may see in this story that I tell, only the usual chain of events—cause leading to outcome.

Flash  
back

In  
jail

early  
life  
happy

From my childhood I was noted for gentleness and kindness. My playmates would laugh at me for being so tenderhearted. I loved animals, and my parents let me keep many pets. I spent most of my time with these pets, feeding and looking after them.

I married early, and was happy to find in my wife the same liking for pets. We had birds, goldfish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat.

had  
money

bad  
luck

The cat was beautiful, large, black, and so very knowing that my wife said he caused her to believe the old story that black cats are witches in disguise. Pluto—this was the cat's name—was my own pet and playmate. I alone fed him, and he followed me wherever I went about the house. It was hard to keep him from following me through the streets.

→ go &  
death

Narrator  
drinks  
to much

Our friendship lasted several years. But during this time my general nature was changing for the worse. The change in me was due to the use of (I blush to say it) strong drink. I grew more moody day by day, more selfish and careless of others. I spoke harshly to my wife, and at last I would even strike her. My pets, of course, suffered because of this change in me. I failed to feed and care for them, and ill-used

them in other ways. At first, I still felt kindly toward Pluto, though I never failed to vent my ill-temper on the rabbits, the monkey, and even the dog, whenever they were led by love or chance to come in my way.

My ill-nature grew upon me—for what can so change one from his better self as drunkenness! At last even Pluto, who was now getting old and somewhat peevish—even Pluto began to feel my ill-temper. One night, after coming home drunk, from one of my haunts about town, I thought that the cat tried to keep away from me. This made me angry. I grabbed him, and he, in fright, bit me on the hand. At once the fury of a demon filled me. My better self seemed to take flight from my body. A fiend-like, gin-fed evil thrilled my whole frame. I took from my pocket a pen-knife, opened it, grasped the poor beast by the throat, and cut one of its eyes from the socket! I blush, I burn, I shudder as I think of it.

When reason came back with morning—when I had slept off the night's drunkenness—I felt regret, half of horror, half of pity, for what I had done. But it was, at best, only a feeble regret. My soul was not touched. I again plunged into drink and soon drowned in wine all memory of the deed.

In the meantime the cat slowly got over the attack. The socket of the eye, it is true, was fearful to look on, but he no longer seemed to suffer any pain. He went about the house as usual, but, as might be expected, fled in terror at sight of me. I had enough of my old heart left to be pained, at first, to see this fear in a pet which had once so loved me. But this feeling soon gave place to anger. One morning, in cool blood, I slipped a noose about the cat's neck and hung it to the limb of a tree in the garden.

That night I was roused from sleep by the cry of fire. The curtains of my bed were in flames; the whole house was blazing. It was by a narrow chance that my wife, a servant, and I got out of the burning building. Everything was burned. All my worldly wealth was gone.

evil  
eye  
TTH

he  
killed  
cat

bad  
luck  
black cat

only  
feels  
slightly  
bad

On the day after the fire I went to see the ruins. All the walls had fallen in, except one that had stood about the middle of the house and against which had sat the head of my bed. This wall had not burned as others because the plaster had been lately put on. A crowd of people were standing there looking at the wall with eager interest. I heard the words "strange!" "queer!" I went nearer and saw a figure, as if it had been drawn on the wall, of a gigantic cat with a rope about its neck.

super natural  
might be unreliable  
blc of guilt or drink

When I first saw this strange figure, I was terrified. Then I remembered that the cat had been hung in the garden next to the house. Upon the cry of fire, this garden had filled with people. Some of them must have cut the animal from the tree where it was hanging and thrown it through an open window into my room. This had been done, perhaps, to rouse me from sleep. The falling of other walls had pressed the cat into the freshly spread plaster and thus the picture had been made.

guilt trying to make seem normal

Although I was thus able to explain the strange fact to myself, it cast a shadow upon my mind. For months I could not rid myself of the sight, and during this time, there came back a feeling that seemed like, but was not, sorrow for my crimes. I went so far as to look about the yule haunts where I now spent my time for another pet like the one I had killed.

One night, as I sat half drunk in a den of more than evil, I noticed some dark object lying upon the top of one of the great hogsheads of gin, or rum, which was the chief furniture of the place. I had been looking steadily at the top of this hogshead for some minutes, and I was surprised that I had not noted the object sooner. I went up to it and touched it with my hand. It was a black cat—a very large one—fully as large as Pluto, and very much like him in every way but one. Pluto had not a white hair upon any part of his body, but this cat had a large spot of white covering nearly the whole of the breast.

When I touched him, he got up at once, purred loudly,

The Black Cat



Like  
Pluto  
narrator  
loves cats  
at first

rubbed against my hand, and seemed pleased with my notice. This, I thought, was the very cat I had been looking for. I at once offered to buy it of the landlord. But he made no claim to it—knew nothing of it—had never seen it before.

I went on stroking the cat, and when I left to go home, it showed a willingness to follow me. I allowed it to do so, now and then stooping and patting it as I walked along. When it reached the house, it made itself at home, and at once became a great favorite with my wife.

For my own part, I soon began to dislike it. I do not know how or why it was—but its very fondness for myself rather disgusted and annoyed me. By slow degrees these feelings grew into bitter hate. I kept away from the creature, not wishing to harm it, for memory of my former cruelty roused in me a certain shame. For some weeks I did not strike it. But gradually—very gradually, I came to look upon it with such loathing that I would turn away quickly from sight of it.

What I did not learn until the morning after I brought the cat home, was that it had, like Pluto, lost one of its eyes.

Black Cat

This fact, no doubt, added to my hatred of the beast. But it caused my wife to feel pity and to show the animal even greater kindness. Her nature, as I have already said, was marked by gentleness and kindness, qualities which had been a part of my nature once, and the source of many of my simple and purest pleasures.

The more I disliked this cat, however, the more it seemed to attach itself to me. The way it kept always close on my heels, I can never make the reader feel. Whenever I sat, it would crouch beneath my chair, or spring upon my knees and press on me its loving attention so hateful to bear. If I rose to walk, it would get between my feet and thus nearly throw me down, or fasten its long sharp claws in my clothes and climb up my body. At such times I longed to kill it with a blow, but was kept from doing so partly by memory of my former crime, but chiefly—let me confess it at once— by dread of the beast.

FORE SHADOWING  
Narrator's death  
Unreliable  
drink  
guilt

It is hard to tell what this dread was. I am almost ashamed to own yes, in this prison cell, I am almost ashamed to own what it was that raised this dread within me. My wife had spoken more than once of the white spot on the animal's breast, which was the only mark of difference between this beast and Pluto! The outline of this spot began to change, by slow degrees—so slow that for a long time I would not believe that a change was taking place, except in my fancy. At last the spot took the outline of an object that I shudder to name—a hideous—a ghastly thing—the GALLOWS! It was, above all, because of this that I loathed and dreaded the creature. I would have rid myself of the monster *had I dared*.

— And now was I indeed wretched. Alas! neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of rest any more! During the day, the creature left me no moment alone. During the night I awoke from fearful dreams to find the hot breath of *the thing* upon my face, and its vast weight—a nightmare that I had no power to shake off—always upon my heart!

Under torments such as these, the feeble good within me

Black Cat

died. Evil thoughts became my sole companions—the darkest and most evil of thoughts. I grew to hate all things and all mankind. I would give way blindly to sudden outbursts of fury, and my gentle wife, alas, was the most usual sufferer.

abuse  
his  
wife

One day she went with me upon some household errand into the cellar of the old house, which our poverty drove us to live in. The cat followed me down the steep stairs and, getting under my feet, nearly threw me headlong. This roused me to madness. In my wrath I forgot the dread that had hitherto kept me from killing the beast. Raising an ax, I aimed a blow at the animal that would have been fatal had not my wife caught my arm to stop me. Her act threw me into the rage of a demon. I tore my arm from her grasp and buried the ax in her brain. She fell dead upon the spot, without a groan.

This awful murder being done, I set myself with thoughtful care to the task of hiding the body. I knew I could not take it from the house, either by day or by night, without the risk of being seen by the neighbors. Many plans came into my mind. I thought of cutting the corpse into small bits and burning them. Then of digging a grave for it in the floor of the cellar. Then of throwing it into the well in the yard. Or packing it in a box and getting a porter to take it from the house. At last I hit upon what seemed the best plan of all. I would wall it up in the cellar.

TTH

Like  
TTH  
heart  
thinks  
he  
won't get caught

The walls of the cellar had been lately covered with a rough plaster, which the dampness of the place had kept from drying hard. In one of the walls was a fireplace, which had been filled up with brick and plastered over. I could easily take out the bricks at this place, put the corpse within, and wall up the place as before, so that no eye would notice any change.

And in thinking so, I was right. By means of a crowbar, I pulled out the bricks, propped the body against the inner wall, and with little trouble relaid the bricks as before. Then with great caution I got mortar, sand, and hair, and made



a plaster which could not be told from the old. With this, I very carefully went over the new brick work. When I had finished, I felt that all was right. The wall showed no sign of having been broken into. The rubbish on the floor was picked up with the greatest care. I looked around, and said to myself, "Here, at least, then, my labor has not been in vain!"

Next I looked about for the beast, which had been the cause of this wretched crime. I had made up my mind to put it to death. Had I been able to find it at the moment, I would have killed it. But it seemed that the crafty animal had been alarmed by my anger, and was keeping out of my way for a while. It is not possible to describe the deep sense of rest that I felt, now that the hated creature was out of my sight. It did not come during the night—and thus for one night at least I slept soundly. Yes, slept, even with the burden of murder upon my soul!

The second and the third day passed, and still my tormentor came not. Once again I breathed as a free man. The monster had fled forever! I should never again see the hated thing! I was happy! The guilt of my dark deed troubled me but little. Some few questions had been asked, but these had



Black Cat

been easily answered. Even a search had been made—but of course nothing was to be found. I was safe.

The fourth day after the murder, a party of the police came and again made a search of the place. I felt quite safe, however, sure that my careful work had not been in vain. The officers had me go with them in their search. They overlooked no nook or corner. At length, for the third or fourth time, they went down into the cellar. I quivered not a muscle. My heart beat calmly. I folded my arms upon my chest and walked easily to and fro until the police were satisfied and ready to leave. Then joy in my heart was too strong. I longed to speak, if but one word, of my success, and to make doubly sure that they should believe me innocent.

“By the by, gentlemen,” I said, as they turned to go up the steps, “this is a very well-built house.” In the wish to say something easily, I scarcely knew what I spoke at all.

“These walls—are you going?—these walls are solidly put together.” And here, in a sort of wild boasting, I rapped with my cane upon the very brick work that hid the corpse of my wife.

But may God keep me from the fangs of the Arch-Fiend! No sooner had the sound of my blows sunk into silence, than I was answered by a voice from within the tomb! It was a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the crying of a child, and then quickly rising into one long, loud scream—unlike anything human—a howl—a wail—a shriek.

Almost fainting, I staggered back across the cellar. For one moment the men at the stairs stood still, as in terror or awe. Then a dozen stout arms were tearing at the wall, and in a few moments the corpse was before our eyes. Upon its head, with red, wide-open mouth, and single eye of fire, sat the hideous beast that had caused me to do the murder, and whose voice had now given me to the hangman. I had walled the monster up within the tomb!

