

Edward Joseph Collins
Ballet Suite—The Masque of the Red Death

The Masque of the Red Death
by
Edgar Allen Poe

The “Red Death” had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal or so hideous - - - - -

But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys- - - - -

The prince had provided all the appliances for pleasure. There were buff[on]s, there were *improvisatori*, there were ballet dancers, there were musicians, there was beauty, there was wine- - - - -

It was toward the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence. It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade! - - - - - In the black chamber there stood a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and, when the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound of so peculiar a note that, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily; and thus the waltzers ceased perforce their [r]evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company.

But when the echoes had fully ceased, a light laughter at once pervaded the assembly- - - - - -after the lapse of sixty minute there came yet another chiming of the clock and then were the same disconcert as before.- - - - - -but now there were twelve stokes to be sounded and there were many individuals who had found leisure to be come aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before.

When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell on this spectral image his brow reddened with rage. He bore aloft a drawn dagger - - - - - there was a sharp cry and the dagger dropped gleaming upon the sable carpet, upon which, instantly afterward, fell prostrate in death the Prince Prospero. - - - - - -and now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revel[er]s- - - - -

And the life of the ebony clock went out. And the flames of the tripods expired. And the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.
