“THE BLACK CAT”

Lesson Concept: Mood in Fictional Short Stories
Let’s Review From Our Previous Lesson

Characters face mysterious forces both within and outside themselves.

Writers explore the conflict in the human soul.

Writers fully understand the frightening power of the unknown and the supernatural.
In your notes, write the words “Superstitions.” Write down anything that comes to mind about this topic.
How many of these words have you actually heard or used?

Aversion
Gallows
Haunt
Intemperate
Loathing
Sentiment
Definitions

Aversion—a strong feeling of dislike or opposition
Gallows—a structure used for execution by hanging
Haunt—a location visited frequently/often
Intemperate—unrestrained or indulgent use
Loathing—strong dislike or disgust
Sentiment—attitude, opinion, or tender emotion
Similar to “The Tell-Tale Heart,” Poe presents the story of a narrator who appears to confuse reality with his imagination—a narrator whose paranoia causes him to take some drastic actions. However, will his confusion force him to commit the unthinkable crime?
As discussed in former lessons, words change meaning over time. In Poe’s lifetime, the word “perverse” meant to do something horrible simply because a person could or because a person wanted to attempt to “get away” with their behavior.

Write this idea in your notes, and as you read, make a list of actions performed by the narrator that you know are either wrong or extremely inappropriate. In other words, what does our narrator intentionally do that he knows is a sin or crime?
For this selection, you will listen to a shortened version of the original tale and view illustrations designed by a modern artist.

Think: How do these illustrations impact your understanding of the story?
Characteristics of Horror Tales

Does the characteristic “Writers explore the conflict within the human soul” apply to “The Black Cat”?

In your notes, state your opinion on this idea and provide at least two examples from the text to support your thoughts.