

“THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH”  
VS.  
“NOTHING IN THE DARK”

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# GENERAL INFORMATION

## **“The Masque of the Red Death”**

- ❖ Author: Edgar Allan Poe
- ❖ Original title: "The Mask of the Red Death: A Fantasy"
- ❖ Country: United States
- ❖ Language: English
- ❖ Genre(s): Gothic fiction, Horror short story
- ❖ Publisher: Graham's Magazine
- ❖ Publication date: May, 1842

## **“Nothing in the Dark”**

- ❖ Author: George Clayton Johnson
- ❖ Original title: The Twilight Zone: “Nothing in the Dark”
- ❖ Country: United States
- ❖ Language: English
- ❖ Genre(s): Science Fiction, Fantasy, Suspense
- ❖ Directed by: Lamont Johnson
- ❖ Original air date: January 5, 1962



# PLOT SUMMARY

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## **“The Masque of the Red Death”**

❖ A wealthy, powerful prince locks himself and 1000 loyal subjects in his castle in an attempt to avoid “The Red Death.”

## **“Nothing in the Dark”**

❖ A lonely old woman refuses to leave her apartment for fear of meeting “Mr. Death.”



# SETTING

## **“The Masque of the Red Death”**

### ❖ When:

- The Middle Ages
- During a masquerade ball

### ❖ Where:

- European countryside
- Prospero’s Abbey
- The royal suite

## **“Nothing in the Dark”**

### ❖ When:

- Contemporary: 1950s
- A single day

### ❖ Where:

- American city
- A condemned tenement
- Wanda’s apartment



# CHARACTERS

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## **“The Masque of the Red Death”**

- ❖ Prince Prospero
- ❖ 1000 retainers
- ❖ Musicians/servants
- ❖ 1 Uninvited Guest

## **“Nothing in the Dark”**

- ❖ Narrator (Rod Serling)
- ❖ Wanda Dunn
- ❖ Officer Harold Beldon
- ❖ Contractor



# POINTS OF VIEW

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## **“The Masque of the Red Death”**

- ❖ Third-person omniscient – the narrator knows all the thoughts, actions, and feelings of all characters. The author may move from character to character to show how each one contributes to the plot.
- ❖ Some critics have argued that Death, himself, is the narrator.

## **“Nothing in the Dark”**

- ❖ Third-person objective – a narrator who tells a story without describing any character's thoughts, opinions, or feelings; instead, it gives an objective, unbiased point of view.





# POSSIBLE THEME(S)

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## **“The Masque of the Red Death”**

- ❖ Wealth and power can't protect you from death.
- ❖ No one escapes Death.

## **“Nothing in the Dark”**

- ❖ Don't fear death so much that your life's not worth living.
- ❖ Death is perfectly natural, and there's no need to fear it.
- ❖ No one escapes Death.

# TRIVIA

## **“The Masque of the Red Death”**

- ❖ Poe first published the story in the May 1842 edition of Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine as "The Mask of the Red Death", with the tagline "A Fantasy". This first publication earned him \$12.00.
- ❖ A revised version was published in the July 19, 1845 edition of the Broadway Journal under the now-standard title "The Masque of the Red Death.”
- ❖ The original title emphasized the figure at the end of the story; the new title puts emphasis on the masquerade ball.

## **“Nothing in the Dark”**

- ❖ "Nothing in the Dark" is an episode of the American television series The Twilight Zone.
- ❖ This is one of two episodes that was filmed during Season 2 but held over for broadcast until Season 3, the other being "The Grave".
- ❖ The Writer of this episode, George Clayton Johnson, later went on to write the film Logan's Run which also deals with the themes of old age and death.