

The Purloined Letter – Worksheet

Questions and Answers - The Purloined Letter – Set 1

1. Who are the main characters in The Purloined Letter?
 1. The main characters in the story are the unnamed narrator, Auguste Dupin, the Prefect and the Minister.
2. Who is the protagonist of the story The Purloined Letter?
 1. The protagonist of the story is the detective Auguste Dupin.
3. Who is the antagonist of the story The Purloined Letter?
 1. The antagonist of the story is the minister Mr. D—
4. Is The Purloined Letter a true story?
 1. The purloined letter is not a true story and is a work of fiction. The settings are written to draw inspiration from the political scenario of France back in the early 19th century.
5. What happens in the end of The Purloined Letter?
 1. The story ends with Auguste Dupin tricking minister Mr. D— and stealing the letter. He explains in detail as to how he successfully steals the letter without rousing any suspicion.

Questions and Answers - The Purloined Letter – Set 2

6. What is the main idea or theme behind the Purloined Letter?
 1. The theme is that the truth is often hidden in plain sight and that one must learn to expect the unexpected. The stolen letter is so hard to find not because it is hidden but rather because it's right out in the open.
7. What happened in the start of story The Purloined Letter?
 1. The prefect discusses with Dupin about a case of a stolen letter of high importance and sensitivity. He is unable to find the letter despite his best efforts and wants the detective to help solve the case.
8. What is the moral of The Purloined Letter?
 1. The moral of the story The Purloined Letter is that sometimes things can be hidden in plain sight, and that logic and rationality are useful in solving problems. One must emphasize on applying rationality and logical thinking in order to solve problems.

Another way of writing the moral is that things are not always what they seem, so expect the unexpected.

9. Who stole The Purloined Letter and why?

1. The purloined letter is stolen by the antagonist, the unscrupulous Minister D, to blackmail the letter's owner who is a royal lady.

10. What is the climax of The Purloined Letter?

1. In the Climax or the second part of the story, the detective Dupin explains how he was able to think like the thief and recover the letter.

Questions and Answers - The Purloined Letter – Set 3

11. Did the prefect manage to locate the letter?

1. No. One month later after the crime had been committed, the prefect is still not able to find the letter. He even promises a large reward, for the letter, a sum of 50,000 francs to the person who finds the letter.

12. What happens when the prefect states the reward?

1. Dupin asks him to write the check and that he will give him the letter. The prefect is astonished. He writes the check, and Dupin gives him the letter to his utter shock. The prefect thanks them and leaves to give the letter to the queen.

13. Why is the prefect not able to find the letter?

1. He says that the thief was very clever and knew that the police detectives would search every concealed place. So he would not leave the letter in an elaborate hiding place, and thus must have hidden it in plain sight.

14. Why did Dupin wear green spectacles when he visited the minister?

1. Dupin wore a pair of green spectacles since he wanted to hide his eyes as he spent time searched for the letter. He found it in the form of a half-torn letter with a large black seal, crumpled and ignored.

15. Why did Dupin not steal the letter when he found it?

1. Dupin knew he could not steal the letter the same day since the minister would immediately find out and even have him killed. So as an excuse to return back, he left a snuff box behind.

Questions and Answers - The Purloined Letter – Set 4

16. How did Dupin swap the letter without being found out?

1. He started a conversation which they had the previous day and Minister D— was very interested. Suddenly, there was a loud gunshot in the street. Minister D— went to investigate and the clever Auguste Dupin quickly swapped D—'s letter with a duplicate letter which he had made earlier.

17. What was the gunshot?

1. Auguste Dupin then goes on to explain that the gunshot was a distraction he had arranged for earlier.

18. Why is Dupin not the narrator?

1. The author Edgar Allan Poe chooses not to use Dupin as a narrator in order to detach the workings of the detectives mind.

19. Why does Dupin take the case?

1. Dupin takes the case because he knows the accused to be a criminal and has bad blood with him.

20. Where was The Purloined Letter hidden?

1. The Minister purloined, or stole the letter and kept it out in the open on his card rack with his other letters disguised as a useless torn letter.