What happens?

A possessive speaker kills the woman he claims to love.

The main idea

The lover’s claim to preserve a perfect relationship reveals possession, violence and distorted moral reasoning.

1. “The sullen wind was soon awake,”

Method: Pathetic fallacy

Hostile weather establishes emotional disturbance before the relationship is explained.

2. “That moment she was mine, mine, fair,”

Method: Repetition

Affection is replaced by a claim of ownership.

3. “No pain felt she;”

Method: Self-justification

The assertion tries to control how the reader judges the killing.

4. “And yet God has not said a word!”

Method: Distorted reasoning

Silence supplies no reliable moral approval, despite the speaker’s implication.

Form and structure

A 60-line dramatic monologue; a recurring ABABB rhyme pattern gives disturbing order to the account.

Development, voice and tone

Arrival — Dependent and withdrawn. Porphyria brings warmth and initiates physical closeness while the speaker remains passive.

Decision and killing — Possessive and chilling. Her affection is interpreted as complete ownership and used to justify violence.

Aftermath — Disturbingly complacent. The speaker arranges the body and reads divine silence as if it confirmed his conduct.

Context

Victorian dramatic monologues often expose speakers indirectly. The woman’s wishes reach us only through the killer’s unreliable account.

Comparison links

The Farmer’s Bride: possessiveness and silencing. Love’s Philosophy: persuasion and desire.

Recall question

Why must we question the speaker’s account of the woman’s wishes?