PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

Robert Browning



WHAT HAPPENS? A possessive speaker kills the woman he claims to love.

BIG IDEA **The lover's claim to preserve a perfect relationship reveals possession, violence and distorted moral reasoning.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"The sullen wind was soon awake,"

Pathetic fallacy

Hostile weather establishes emotional disturbance before the relationship is explained.

"That moment she was mine, mine, fair,"

Repetition

Affection is replaced by a claim of ownership.

"No pain felt she;"

Self-justification

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

"And yet God has not said a word!"

Distorted reasoning

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

FORM

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

CONTEXT

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

COMPARE IT WITH…

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

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

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DEPENDENT AND WITHDRAWN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.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.