

'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'

An unnamed narrator begins this tale of murder and criminal detection by telling us about an analytical man named C. Auguste Dupin. They both shared the expenses of a residence together. The narrator then tells us about the first criminal case he had to solve: the murders in the Rue Morgue.



One night at three a.m., eight or ten neighbours of Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter, Mademoiselle Camille, wake to the sound of 1. _____ from their fourth-floor apartment. The neighbours hear two voices, then silence. The neighbours and two policemen finally break 2. _____ the locked apartment to find utter disorder and multiple pieces of evidence of a crime, including a blood-smeared razor, locks of gray human hair, bags of money, and an opened safe. They find no traces of the older woman. However, the noticeable traces of soot in the room lead them to the 3. _____, where they find the corpse of Mademoiselle Camille who must have been choked. Later, they discover the body of Madame L'Espanaye in a courtyard in the rear of the building. They find her badly beaten, with her 4. _____ cut. The 4,000 francs that Madame L'Espanaye had just withdrawn from the bank are still in the apartment, ruling out robbery as a 5. _____ for the crime.

The newspaper then recounts the depositions of witnesses concerning the 6. _____ they heard. They all agree that they heard two voices: one, a deep Frenchman's voice; and the other, a higher voice of uncertain ethnic origin, though speculated to be Spanish. The gender of the second speaker is uncertain.

Dupin becomes interested in pursuing the investigation and obtains permission to search the crime 7. _____. Dupin is eager to survey the setting because the newspaper reports portray the apartment as impossible to escape from the 8. _____, which makes the case so mysterious.

Dupin also names those elements of the crime scene that he believes the police have mishandled. For example, the shrill voice remains unidentifiable in its gender and its nationality, but it also cannot be identified as emitting words at all, just sounds. He also explains that the police have overlooked the 9. _____ in the apartment, which operate by springs and can be opened from the inside. Though the police believe the windows to be nailed shut, Dupin discovers a broken nail in one window, which only seemed to be intact. Dupin surmises that someone could have opened the window, exited the apartment, and closed the window from the outside without raising suspicion.

Dupin also addresses the mode of entry through the windows. Dupin hypothesizes that a person or thing of great agility 10. _____ leap from the lightning rod outside the window to the shutters of the window. Dupin surmises that no ordinary human could inflict the beating that Madame L'Espanaye suffered. After drawing a picture of the size and shape of the hand that killed the two women, Dupin reveals his solution. The hand matches the paw of an 11. _____.

Dupin has advertised the safe capture of the animal, news that he believes will draw out its owner. Dupin adds that the owner must be a 12. _____, since, at the base of the lightning rod, he found a ribbon knotted in a way unique to naval training.

When the sailor arrives, Dupin demands all the information he knows about the murders. He assures the sailor that he believes him to be innocent. The sailor describes how the animal, grasping a razor, escaped from its closet one night and disappeared from his apartment. The sailor followed the orangutan and watched him climb the lightning rod and leap into the window. He could only watch the animal as it slashed Madame L'Espanaye and choked Camille. Before escaping the apartment, the animal threw Madame L'Espanaye's body to the courtyard below. The sailor thus confirms the identity of the mysterious voices—the deep voice was his own, and the shrill shrieks were that of the animal.

The Prefect of Police is happy to have the crime solved, but he is sarcastic, rather than grateful, about Dupin's assistance. Dupin comments, in conclusion, that the prefect is a man of ingenuity, not analysis.