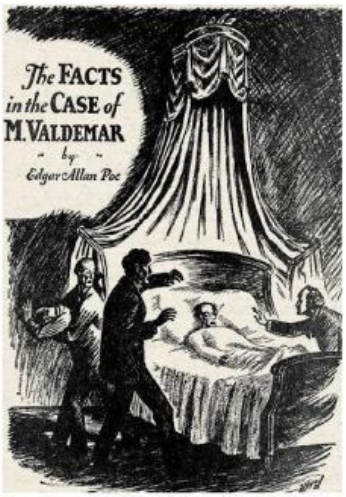
AMERICAN HORROR - Five Terrifying Tales

The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar



PART 1:

A. Answer the following questions:

1.Why did the narrator decide to write about his experiments with M. Valdemar?

2. What 3 things did the narrator want to discover in his experiment?

3. Why was M. Valdemar such a good subject for the experiment?

4. Why was he present during the experiment?

5. How was M. Valdemar physically and mentally when the narrator came to perform the experiment?

6. How did M. Valdemar react to the narrator's attempt to mesmerize him?

7. How long before he wrote the article did the narrator perform his experiment?

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B. MESMERISM: For questions 1–10 read the text about Franz Anton Mesmer, and decide which answer — A, B, C or D — best fits each gap.

The type of hypnosis described (0) _C____ Poe in his story "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" was (1) _____ by a German scientist named Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815). Mesmer believed that diseases and illness (2) _____ be caused by blocking the electromagnetic forces of the body, (3) _____ he called "animal magnetism". Mesmer performed his first experiments with magnets, (4) _____ later he developed a method of hypnotizing people. Mesmer first worked in Vienna (5) _____ he was forced to leave. He then went to Paris. At first Mesmer was (6) _____ successful. Once again, though, the local doctors began to protest. In 1785 a royal commission was set (7) _____ to investigate Mesmer's methods. It included some of the most (8) _____ scientists of the day — Antoine Lavoisier, the founder of modern chemistry, the American Benjamin Franklin and Dr. Joseph Guillotin. Their report began, "Animal magnetism may exist without being useful, but it cannot be useful if it does not exist." The report then described their scientific experiments that (9) _____ that "animal magnetism" did not exist. However, the commission did say that some diseases and illnesses were only in the patients' imagination, and that perhaps Mesmer did cure these patients with his trance. Today, doctors recognize the effectiveness of hypnosis in treating (10) _____ psychological problems.

	A	B	C	D
0	from	with	by	through
1	created	prepared	produced	developed
2	could	need	would	had
3	what	how	who	which
4	and	but	however	though
5	then	until	when	next
6	much	very	real	lot
7	up	down	on	to
8	know	considered	thought	famous
9	revealed	told	showed	exposed
10	much	very	lots	many

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PART 2:

C. For questions 1–5, choose the answer – A, B, C or D – which you think, fits best according to the text.

1. When M. Valdemar was mesmerized, the narrator could tell he was alive from his

A ☐ legs.
B ☐ pulse.
C ☐ arms.
D ☐ breathing.

2. In earlier experiments, M. Valdemar had

A ☐ talked more.
B ☐ appeared to be dead.
C ☐ been less difficult to manipulate.
D ☐ more difficult to manipulate.

3. The narrator thinks that his readers will have a hard time believing that

A ☐ a person who shows every sign of being dead can speak.
B ☐ doctors would accept to perform such a strange experiment.
C ☐ a dying man would really want to be mesmerized.
D ☐ a dying man who is mesmerized can speak.

4. The narrator kept M. Valdemar in a mesmerized state for seven months because

A ☐ he did not know how to awaken him.
B ☐ he thought he would suffer when he awakened him.
C ☐ it was the mesmerism that kept him alive.
D ☐ he thought that mesmerism could cure him.

5. Which one of the following WAS NOT proved by the narrator's experiment?

A ☐ A dying person can be mesmerized.
B ☐ Death can be blocked by Mesmerism.
C ☐ A mesmerized person knows he is dying.
D ☐ Decomposition is blocked by Mesmerism.

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D. The epoch of the hoax

For questions 1–10, read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap.
Use only one word in each gap.

The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" first appeared in a magazine in 1845, but not as a short story – it was published as a true account of a scientific experiment. And it was widely believed. (0) **When** a newspaper man from Scotland wrote to its author – a not very famous writer named Edgar Allan Poe – and asked him whether it was true or not, Poe responded that the (**1**) _____ word to describe this piece of writing was hoax, or trick. Poe later wrote (2) _____ he lived in the "epoch of the hoax". (3) _____ are several reasons why hoaxes became so plentiful in the 1830s and 40s. First printing presses became powered by steam and (4) _____ print millions of newspapers in a day, for the first time in history. Then, the owners of newspapers soon discovered that nothing sold newspapers better (5)_____ extravagant and believable – at least for enough time to sell papers – hoaxes.

Before the article on M. Valdemar, in 1835 Poe (6) _____ already written another hoax article for a New York City newspaper. It was about a man (7) _____ went to the moon in a hot-air balloon. This hoax was not very successful, partly because another newspaper, The Sun, started publishing articles by (or so it said!) the famous astronomer Sir John Herschel. Herschel described a fabulous new telescope with (8)_____ he made many interesting discoveries, including life on the moon. He said that there were forests, seas, quartz pyramids, unicorns and even a Vespertilio-homo (Latin for "batman"!). The Sun never admitted that these stories were a hoax.

Poe had better luck with (9)_____ hoax, the Great Balloon Hoax of 1844. He wrote a newspaper article saying that Monk Mason (a real hot-air balloon pilot) had crossed the Atlantic Ocean in just three days – truly incredible when a ship took more than a month. Poe wrote in this article that, "The air, as well as the earth and the ocean, has been conquered (10) _____science, and will become a common and convenient highway for mankind." This was not just exciting fiction (or, in other words, an entertaining lie). It was also great science fiction.

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