**“Porphyria’s Lover” by Robert Browning**

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| The rain set early in to-night,The sullen wind was soon awake,It tore the elm-tops down for spite,And did its worst to vex the lake:I listened with heart fit to break.When glided in Porphyria; straightShe shut the cold out and the storm,And kneeled and made the cheerless grateBlaze up, and all the cottage warm;Which done, she rose, and from her formWithdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,And laid her soiled gloves by, untiedHer hat and let the damp hair fall,And, last, she sat down by my sideAnd called me. When no voice replied,She put my arm about her waist,And made her smooth white shoulder bare,And all her yellow hair displaced,And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,Murmuring how she loved me — sheToo weak, for all her heart's endeavour,To set its struggling passion freeFrom pride, and vainer ties dissever,And give herself to me for ever.But passion sometimes would prevail,Nor could to-night's gay feast restrainA sudden thought of one so paleFor love of her, and all in vain:So, she was come through wind and rain. | Be sure I looked up at her eyesHappy and proud; at last I knewPorphyria worshipped me; surpriseMade my heart swell, and still it grewWhile I debated what to do.That moment she was mine, mine, fair,Perfectly pure and good: I foundA thing to do, and all her hairIn one long yellow string I woundThree times her little throat around,And strangled her. No pain felt she;I am quite sure she felt no pain.As a shut bud that holds a bee,I warily oped her lids: againLaughed the blue eyes without a stain.And I untightened next the tressAbout her neck; her cheek once moreBlushed bright beneath my burning kiss:I propped her head up as before,Only, this time my shoulder boreHer head, which droops upon it still:The smiling rosy little head,So glad it has its utmost will,That all it scorned at once is fled,And I, its love, am gained instead!Porphyria's love: she guessed not howHer darling one wish would be heard.And thus we sit together now,And all night long we have not stirred,And yet God has not said a word! |

**Answer the following questions:**

1. **Narration:**

How is the text narrated to position the audience? (Consider how point of view (e.g. first person vs. third person), focalization and voice position the reader in relation to perspectives, ideas and **reliability** of the characters or narrator in the text. Is this a fallible narrator? Does the ideology underpinning the gender discourse operating in the poem align with the narrator’s world view? Ie does the poet side with the narrator?)

1. **Analyzing Binary Oppositions:**
* What pairs of opposing forces can you identify in the poem?
* What key conflicts are suggested by the binary oppositions?
* Does one half of a pair seem more powerful than the other?
* How is the reader intended to respond to the opposing forces?
* Do the binary oppositions suggest any ideological messages?
1. Write your own **theme statement** for the poem. i.e. What is the main idea that is promoted?
2. Expand the theme statement into an **opening paragraph** for an analytical essay on the poem.

**Note: binaries are activated in the text but both halves of the binary may not be present in the text.**