Name: Date:

**"The Black Cat"**

1. **Stop after paragraph 1.** What does the narrator mean by "But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburthen my soul"? (2)
2. **Stop at the middle of page 4.** What would the name ‘Pluto’ be alluding to? Why would this be important? (2)
3. **Stop at the top of page 6.** Do you agree with the narrator's assessment of "Who has not . . . found himself in committing a vile or silly action for no other reason than because he knows he should *not*?"? Explain why or why not. Use an example or two from your life. (5)
4. **Stop at the bottom of page 6.** What do you think the fire symbolizes? (2)
5. **Stop after the middle of page 10.** What is the repeating pattern of foreshadowing that Poe seems to be driving at? And what does it represent? List the examples of this foreshadowing. (3)
6. **Stop at the middle of page 13.** The narrator's state of mind since the beginning of the story appears to have gone from calm to mad and then back to calm. What do you think caused this? List the two different reasons. Why do you think these affected him so? (4)
7. What superstitions do you have in your life? List at least **four**. Explain why you have these superstitions. (8)

Total: 26 marks

Name: Date:

**"The Black Cat"**

*"Gentlemen," I said at last, as the party ascended the steps, "I delight to have allayed your suspicions. I wish you all health, and a little more courtesy. By-the-by, gentlemen, this -- this is a very well-constructed house." (In the rabid desire to say something easily, I scarcely knew what I uttered at all.) "I may say an excellently well-constructed house. These walls -- are you going, gentlemen? -- these walls are solidly put together"; and here, through the mere frenzy of bravado, I rapped heavily, with a cane which I held in my hand, upon that very portion of the brickwork behind which stood the corpse of the wife of my bosom.

...But may God shield and deliver me from the fangs on the Arch-Fiend! No sooner had the reverberation of my blows sunk into silence, than I was answered by a voice from within the tomb! -- by a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one long, loud, and continuous scream, half of horror and half of triumph, such as might have arisen only out of hell, conjointly from the throats of the damned in their agony and of the demons that exult in the damnation.*

In your opinion, do these paragraphs suggest that the narrator--perhaps suffering from a guilty conscience--wanted to be arrested and charged with murder? Explain your answer.

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**Examples of Bad Luck Symbols/Superstitions**

* A black cat crossing one's path
* The numbers 4 and 9 in Japanese culture
* Also in Japanese culture, maternity wards numbered 43, as it can literally mean "still birth".
* The number 13, known as triskaidekaphobia
* Friday the 13th
* Failing to respond to a chain letter
* Viewing one's doppelgänger may be considered a harbinger of bad luck
* Walking under a ladder
* According to Eastern cultures, spitting in public, as the spit may land on invisible spirits, who in response to the disrespect, may place a curse on the spitter.
* Hanging a horseshoe with the ends pointing down, as it is believed that the luck will fall out[1]
* Breaking a mirror
* Placing chopsticks in a bowl of food sticking upward
* United States two-dollar bill
* Shoes on a table
* On the Isle of Man, the mention of the word "longtail" (referring to a rat)
* Three on a match (superstition)
* Giving a clock as a gift in Chinese culture
* Saying the word "Macbeth" while inside a theatre
* Opening an umbrella indoors
* A hanging picture falling from the wall
* Stepping on a grave
* Ravens
* Spilling salt
* Ouija board
* Stepping on a crack in the pavement
* Giving someone an empty wallet