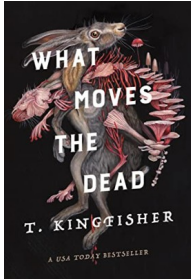




# Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



What Moves the Dead  
 By T. Kingfisher  
 The Fall of the House of Usher  
 By Edgar Allen Poe  
 Discussed January 2023

## Dramatis Personae

<p><i>What Moves the Dead</i>          by T. Kingfisher          (Nightfire/TOR, 2022)</p>	<p>“The Fall of the House of Usher”          by Edgar Allan Poe (1839)</p>
<p><b>Dramatis Personae</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Roderick Usher</b></li> <li>• <b>Madeline Usher</b>, his cataleptic sister</li> <li>• <b>Alex Easton</b>, retired soldier, non-binary</li> <li>• <b>Angus</b>, Easton’s servant</li> <li>• <b>James Denton</b>, Roderick’s American friend, a retired Civil War physician</li> <li>• <b>Eugenia Potter</b>, British mycologist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Roderick Usher</b></li> <li>• <b>Madeline Usher</b>, his cataleptic sister</li> <li>• <b>Narrator</b> (unnamed, male)</li> <li>• -----</li> <li>• <b>“physician of the family”</b> (NPC)</li> <li>• -----</li> </ul>

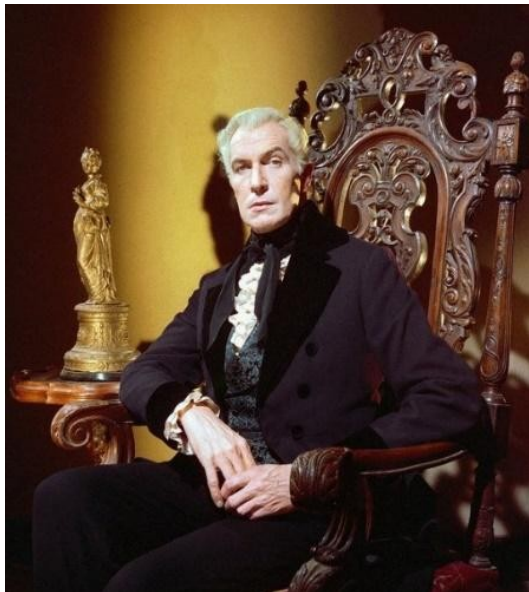
## Discussion Questions

1. Did you enjoy one or both works? Why (or why not)?
2. If you read them both, which did you prefer?
3. What do you think about Kingfisher’s adaptation of Poe’s short story?
4. Is What Moves the Dead a “Poe” story or a “Lovecraft” story?

5. Any ideas about Roderick Usher's unnamed illness in the Poe story?
6. Any ideas about the relationship between Roderick and Madeline Usher?
7. What did you think about the section where Easton discusses Gallacian gender neutral terms?
8. Did you find either or both of these works "creepy" or "unsettling"?
9. Kingfisher apparently enjoys making subtle literary references in her works. Did you catch any of them in *What Moves the Dead*?
10. Have you seen the 1960 American International film version of Poe's story? If so, how would you compare its interpretation of the Poe story with Kingfisher's re-telling?

## T. Kingfisher Bibliography

- 19 YA novels under her real name: Ursula Vernon
- 20 works as T. Kingfisher, including *The Twisted Ones* (2019) and *Nettle & Bone* (2022)
- *Digger* (webcomic, graphic novel – Hugo winner)
- "Jackalope Wives" (short story – Nebula winner)



### *House of Usher*

(American International Pictures, 1960)

- Directed by Roger Corman
- Starring Vincent Price (as Roderick Usher)
- Screenplay by Richard Matheson

Philip Winthrop travels to the House of Usher, a desolate mansion surrounded by a murky swamp, to see his fiancé, Madeline Usher. Madeline's brother Roderick opposes Philip's intentions, telling him that the Usher family is afflicted by a cursed [bloodline](#) that has driven all their ancestors to madness and even affected the mansion itself, causing the surrounding countryside to become desolate. Roderick foresees the family evils being propagated into future generations with a marriage to Madeline and vehemently discourages the union. Philip becomes increasingly desperate to take Madeline away from her brother. At the end, Madeline kills Roderick and Winthrop is the only one to escape the burning house.