The thick sludge on the muddy floor was impeccable. (not 100% sure ‘impeccable’ is the right word here, but I like that you’re using challenging vocabulary!) I could not blame the weather or the conditions for my slow advance but a part of me knew that this was not a joke. (this is really ominous!) When they say that there was a looming castle that was almost floating, they weren’t lying. This isn’t a hoax. (really great use of varying sentence lengths!) You could say this is an idiotic move, to try and figure out something that eleven others attempted but failed to proceed and come back. Alive that is. I should constantly remind myself that I am only doing this to find the eleven missing people or I might retreat. (ah! I love this backstory you’ve created, and it foreshadows beautifully that something awful might happen. I love this!)

As I approached the bridge leading to the towering oak door, the full moon glowered (wonderful personification!) behind the ominous clouds like a villain who is planning something devilish. (such beautiful imagery) The stumbling bricks were cliffs. The entire bridge was a sphere held together by thread while the onyx sky above ~~shaked~~ (shook) unsteadily as it glanced down at the palace of fear and mystery. My body stopped moving. (again, lovely sentence length variation, however I would be wary of using these punchy, powerful lines too much, as they begin to lose their effect slightly) I would be seeing daylight again and was engulfed (fab word choice) by the chance that I would end up like the other eleven. I wasn’t thrilled. As I rested my hand onto the deserted surface of the great gate, I heard a wolf howl in the distance. But it was more man-like than wolf. (spooky!) Even though I knew that turning back was still an option, I waited patiently for someone to open the gate that should lead me inside. To my surprise, it did creak open slowly, (could you use a simile here?) but no-one was opening it.

When people say, don’t make the same mistake again, I suppose that’s very useful advice. But in my case, I might do it repeatedly, until I have no more choices. (this feels like very ominous foreshadowing!) As my trembling foot stepped into the shadow, the gate slammed shut. An eruption of smoke and dust rose into the silent, still (great sibilance) air. The thick smell of mist (does mist have a smell? Maybe ‘dust’ would work better!) stretched to the shadowing ceilings. Glancing around, I noticed that all the windows were stained or cracked. Except for a window on the right; (nice varied punctuation) it seemed as if it had been heaved up with ease. No mirrors in the hall either. The worn-out carpet beneath was stretched out and was left to be forgotten among the crinkled roses. Despite every corner of neglect, I kept on advancing into the dark hall alone with every item alive stalking and spying (beautiful sibilance again, and personification! Very eerie) on me. Suddenly, a flock of ravens emerged out of a tower, visible enough in the gloomy sky because of their beady ruby eyes. (I love this image, and think you could go even further into it! Maybe they’re like glittering rubies sinking into a black hole? Always be challenging yourself!) The rain outside picked up dramatically. Puddles of muddy water collected by my feet as the slaughtering storm dripped through the damaged roof.(the alliteration and sibilance here are so gorgeous) If anyone was to make out of this black and white scenario, it would be a ghost. Where is the lord of the manor? Or, who is the lord of this run-down coffin that sits on this unstable cliff? (great rhetorical questions) That will be something that I do not want to know.

The drooping paintings frowned down at me as the extinguished flames of the dangling torches that glared threateningly above.(beautiful description here, so vivid) Animal heads sliced in half like an orange ~~was~~ (were) stuck in an everlasting picture unable to escape. As I raced through the intimidating hall, I found myself in a greenhouse with cracked windows and flourishing flowers. There was nothing beneath my feet. Nothing but clear glass. The unstable seas below swayed like a broken roller coaster. (really incredible imagery here, Sisley) The more someone stares at it, the more fear collects from them. Suddenly, the greenery withered and crumpled onto the floor in shreds. The glass started disappearing, not shattering. Melting is probably a better word to describe it. The word falling wasn’t enough to describe the situation right now. (lovely cliffhanger, it could be slightly more dynamic and panicked though!)
-Sisley

**What Went Well:**

-Your imagery throughout this piece is so fantastic, Sisley! You use simile, metaphor and personification, and do so with flair. I really like your personification on, ‘the full moon glowered’, as it really captures the sense of threat, even from the nature around your narrator! This, and your other figurative language, is so sophisticated.

-I really like how you use horror techniques, such as varying sentence lengths, and foreshadowing! You use some amazing short, snappy sentences such as, ‘Alive that is.’ These varying sentence lengths help to build and release tension over and over again, creating an extremely dynamic piece!

-Your overall storyline, and storytelling, is spectacular. I absolutely love that you set up this backstory of the missing people, letting this create a sense of unease, suggesting that the narrator may go missing as well. Throughout this, your descriptions are so vivid, spurring the story on. Very well done!

**Even Better If…:**

-While your use of shorter sentences is really great for building tension, I feel that you overuse them slightly, causing them to lose their effect slightly. For a story of this length, I think I would only use two of these short, informational sentences such as, ‘My body stopped moving.’ The more you conserve these for when they’ll really pack a punch, the more your story will shock the reader!

-I think there are some places where you can delve even further into your descriptions, as you set up a gorgeous image, such as the ‘beady ruby eyes’ of the ravens, and then just move on. I think you could sit on this a bit more, making more of a spectacle of it and possibly even using some more imagery here. I suggested above what I would do with this particular raven line, but there are other opportunities for this throughout.

-Your cliff-hanger has the potential to pack a real punch, but seems to fall sightly flat here. Maybe you could end on an exclamation, to just a description of the fall without the analysis-type tone of the ending you have, where your narrator tries to describe the feeling. I’m being super picky, because your work is so good, but I just feel that the narrator would be more shocked here.

Overall, spectacular work! Very well done :D