Questions “Diary of a Madman” Guy de Maupassant

1. How does the man’s ideology about killing morph in the month of June? Give at least one example, using textual evidence and explanation.
2. Find foreshadowing somewhere in the introduction – provide a quote and explain how we can see it is foreshadowing.
3. On the 15th of August, the man wrote, “The temptation has come to me. It pervades my whole being; my hands tremble with the desire to kill” (15th August). It’s interesting how temptation works. Temptation means a desire to do something, especially something wrong or unwise. The man doesn’t want to kill at first, but then it takes over all of his emotions. What are some similarities and differences between his temptations and our temptations?
4. What would you do if you were the notary who found the papers in the magistrate’s desk? Would you turn them into the authorities? Would you make them public or keep them secret, and why? What are the consequences that you need to think through in order to make that decision?
5. We know that the magistrate himself had died-- do you think he had any remorse as his life came to a close? Why/why not? Use textual evidence to support your ideas.
6. What connections can be made between the story and modern-day or historical figures? Explain fully/ discuss textual evidence
7. The God Complex is a psychological state of mind when a person thinks he or she has supernatural powers and are above the rules of society. Do you feel like the magistrate suffers from the God Complex? Why or why not?
8. On the 30th of June, the man wrote, “To kill is the law, because nature loves eternal youth” (30th June). How does this statement highlight literary Naturalism? (use the biography notes to help or online resources)
9. What would you argue is the main theme of this story? Why?
10. Find two literary devices in the story (not imagery and not one you’ve already discussed in another question), give a quote, and explain how that literary device enhances our reading experience. (For example, does it highlight a character’s personality? Does it create a sense of suspense? Etc.)
11. Based on the 5th of August, which outlines the writer’s internal struggle, would you predict that the man is heading toward a dark or light path? Explain your answer.
12. What do you think that Guy de Maupassant is trying to argue about humanity or society through this story? Why? Provide evidence/full explanation.
13. What are Realist or Naturalist elements that we can see in the story? Choose one, give at least one example, providing evidence and explanation. (use the biography notes to help or online resources)