

An enigma; the sleeper; a raven: edgar "allan" poe

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Dark, depressing, morbid, or simply unusual... a single name can bind all these words together. That name belongs to Edgar Allan Poe. For English students, scholars around the world, and the common dark, poetic romanticist, that name means a lot more. "Poe" is an icon, a person that the aforementioned people aspire to, or just a mysterious person whom will never be understood past his death. The name "Poe" to these people refers to a disturbing poet, a previously run-down short story writer, a hated critic, and an unappreciated author of several volumes of novels.

If someone mentions "Poe", they would immediately think of Edgar Allan Poe. As mentioned before, Poe was a very mysterious person whom many researchers still try to figure out to this day. The reason to his eerie works is thought to be due to the numerous failures and losses he's faced in his lifetime. Whether it was because of innumerable losses, inopportune death, or if he was just simply ill in the head, Edgar Allan Poe did a great deal for scholars around the world, and English literature today. On January 19, 1809, in Boston, Massachusetts, actress Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins gave birth to a healthy boy; his father, David Poe Jr. gave him his name Edgar Poe after himself. However, the young Edgar was only together with his biological parents for a short time, as they broke up in 1810 due to David Poe leaving the family (Edgar Allan Poe Biography). A year after, his mother died from pulmonary tuberculosis, a bacterial infection within the lungs. A few days after his mother's death, Edgar was informed of his father's sudden death from an unknown cause. After going through these inopportune deaths, toddler Edgar was adopted unofficially by Frances and John Allan, a couple of wealthy merchants in Richmond, Virginia.

In 1815, the awkward family moved to England, and Edgar was schooled at Chelsea (Edgar Allan Poe Biography). There in England, Edgar was first introduced to gothic fiction. At the time, gothic fiction was slowly declining in popularity as a favorable literature genre, being replaced throughout the years by historical romance with works from authors such as, Sir Walter Scott. However, the casual reader and many literature critics now think that they had severely overlooked many should-be famous works and that gothic fiction had just begun to mature into its most creative period (Gothic fiction).

From 1816 to 1820, Poe often moved between schools across England and lived with his adoptive family, even shortly after his registration documents have been collected. In 1826, Poe was given a sizeable sum of money from his foster father and was schooled at the University of Virginia. Though he was academically superior, Poe was removed of his registration after merely three semesters due to unpaid debts from his drinking binges and gambling (Polito). In 1827, Poe enlisted in the U. S. Army under the name " Edgar A. Perry" and published his first book, Tamerlane and Other Poems, from the pay he received there.

However, it received little attention and received no critiques (Quinn 129). While serving in the military, Poe's foster mother, Frances Allan, died. After only serving two years in his enlisted five in the U. S. Army, Poe was discharged after serving only two of five of his enlisted years and visited Richmond the day after her burial. Soon after, he moved to his aunt's home in Baltimore and stayed there with her children (Polito). In December 1829, Poe wrote yet another book, Al Araaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems. This book was also unrecognized (Quinn 165).

Poe enlisted into West Point Academy in March 1830, but stood for merely half a year. He dismissed himself through an intentional court martial in February 1831, but released a third collection of poems, simply titled Poems. The volume was dedicated as thank you to many cadets at West Point for helping fund 75 cents each for the publication of his book (Quinn 174-176). Soon after leaving the military, Poe started in his publishing career. In 1835, he became an editor and critic for the Richmond newspaper, Southern Literary Messenger.

He brought 12-year old cousin Virginia Clemm, whom he married in 1836, and his aunt along with him (Edgar Allan Poe). His popularity as a writer began to grow over the ten years spent as an assistant editor for the Messenger. Poe is known for editing literary journals such as Philadelphia-based Gentleman's Magazine, Graham's Magazine, and New York-based Broadway Journal (Polito). Though receiving a tremendous work load, Poe was financially unstable, yet he was able to continue writing and his works garnered praise and built his reputation even further (Edgar Allan Poe).

During this time, Poe had published some of his most well-known works such as "The Raven", "The Tale Tell Heart", and "The Fall of the House of Usher" (Polito). In 1842, Poe's wife, Virginia Clemm showed symptoms of tuberculosis. Under stress from his wife's ailment, Poe was induced with heavy drinking and extreme depression. When Broadway Journal disbanded in 1846, Poe and his wife relocated to The Bronx, New York, where Virginia soon died on January 30, 1847 (Edgar Allan Poe Biography). Poe's demise is still mysterious and under conjecture even to this day.

The only thing known about his death is that he was found on the streets of Baltimore in early October of 1949, delirious, and in a drunken rage. He received treatment at Washington College Hospital on the third, but died merely four days later. Edgar's last words were, " God help my poor soul! " (Quinn 639-640) Edgar Allan Poe's literary prowess and works left a memorable impact on English literature, specifically in the detective fiction and horror genres (Polito). Poe is credited for " crafting" the modern short story. " Art for art's sake" came from the editor Poe, stemming from his vigilance in critiquing the style and structure of literary works placed in front of him (Polito). His works were recognized internationally, where even Charles Baudelaire had begun to translate Poe's works into French, which is why the French culture holds a place for Edgar Allan Poe. He was certainly one of the first American authors to have become more honored and known in Europe, than in the United States where he settled (Edgar Allan Poe Biography). The beloved book character, C.

Auguste Dupin from Poe's early detective fiction works such as " The Murders in the Rue Morgue" became the character model of future fictitious detectives. As quoted by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, " Each [of Poe's detective stories] is a root from which a whole literature has developed... Where was the detective story until Poe breathed the breath of life into it? " (Long) To this day, Poe's works are still introduced in modern classrooms. Not because his writing is famous, but because his writing points something new out to every reader. Though famous for writing foreboding, depressing, or plain confusing, he's always published numerous works depicting hope, passion, and happiness (Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore) Edgar Allan Poe's

mastery of technique and poetic diction appeals to every one of his readers. Every time someone reads Poe's works, the reader is able to immerse themselves in his stories, and they leave, learning something new about them, something they had never known before.

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