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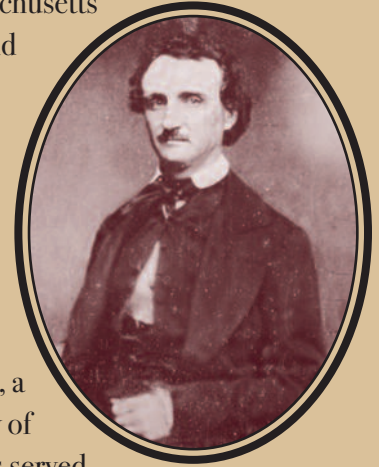
THE FINEST IN RECORDED LITERATURE

The COMPLETE POETRY
by Edgar Allan Poe ★



Table of Contents & Start Times

EDGAR ALAN POE, (1809–1843), was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1809, the second child of two actors, David Poe, Jr. and Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins. He had an elder brother, William Henry Leonard Poe, and a younger sister, Rosalie Poe. Their grandfather, David Poe, Sr., had emigrated from Cavan, Ireland, to America around the year 1750 and had served with distinction as a patriot in the Revolutionary War. Edgar may have been named after a character in William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, a play his parents were performing in 1809. His father abandoned their family in 1810, and his mother died a year later from consumption (pulmonary tuberculosis). Poe was then taken into the home of John Allan, a successful Scottish merchant in Richmond, Virginia, who dealt in a variety of goods including tobacco, cloth, wheat, tombstones, and slaves. The Allans served as a foster family and gave him the name "Edgar Allan Poe", though they never formally adopted him.



Poe attended schools in England, Scotland, and Virginia. He was expelled from West Point at the age of 21. Poe's early work as a writer went unrecognized and he was forced to earn his living on newspapers, working as an editor in Richmond, Philadelphia, and New York. Although he was respected as a literary critic, his poetry and short stories were neglected until the publication of *The Raven and Other Poems* in 1845, which propelled him to instant fame. Poe's life and personality have attracted almost as much attention as his writings. The circumstances of his life were further complicated by the ill health of his young bride, his cousin Virginia Clemm, who died of tuberculosis in January, 1847. Poe attempted to court the poet Sarah Helen Whitman, who lived in Providence, Rhode Island. Their engagement failed. Biographers and critics often suggest that Poe's frequent theme of the "death of a beautiful woman" stems from the repeated loss of women throughout his life, including his wife. He died a few years after Virginia on October 7, 1849. Edgar Allan Poe left behind a large body of work including many poems and short stories, two novels (one incomplete), and a variety of critical essays.



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Starting Time

These times may vary slightly depending on how the material is streamed.

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Total running time: 2 hours 14 minutes



THE RAVEN

BY
EDGAR ALLAN POE

ILLUSTRATED
BY GUSTAVE DORÉ

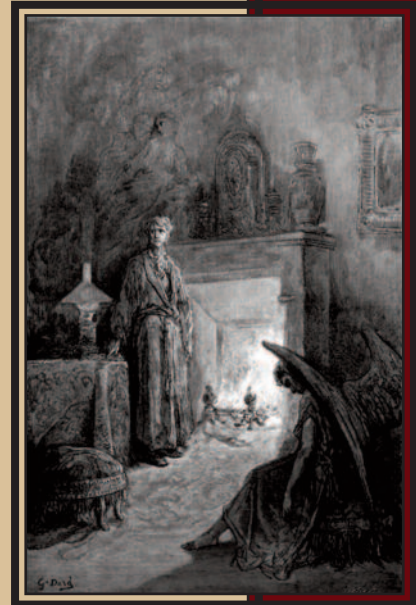


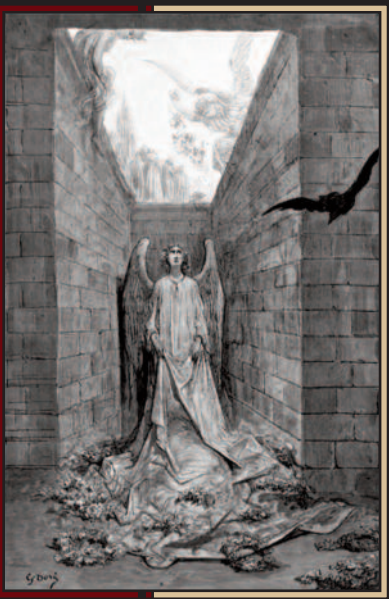
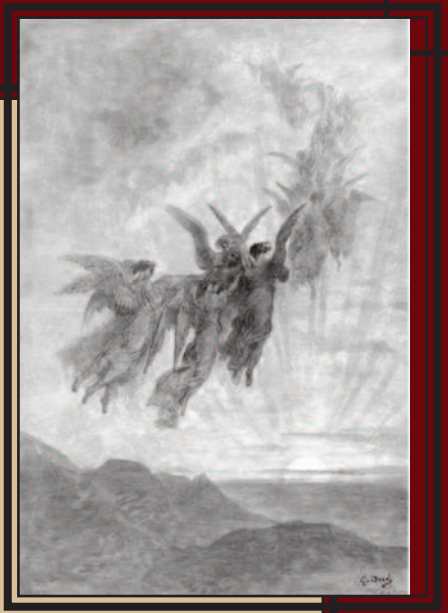


Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door;
Only this, and nothing more."

.

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.





Eagerly I wished the morrow; vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here forevermore.



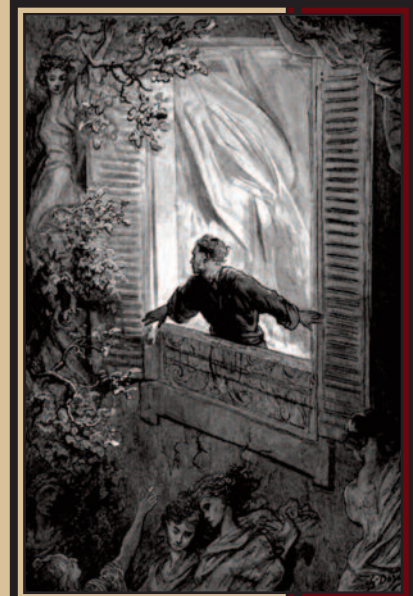
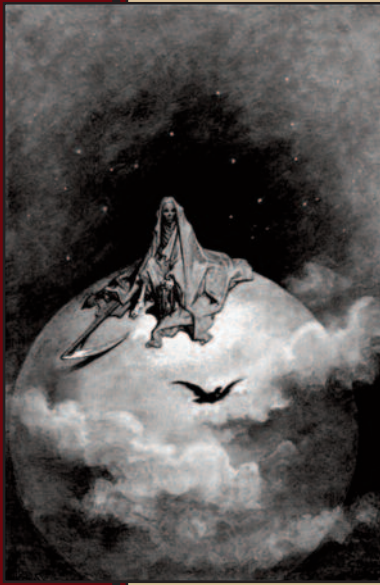
And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;
This it is, and nothing more.”



Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
“Sir,” said I, “or madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is, I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you.” Here I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there, and nothing more.



Deep into the darkness peering, long I stood there, wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"—
Merely this, and nothing more.



Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping, something louder than before,
"Surely," said I, "surely, that is something at my window lattice.
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore.
Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery explore.
'Tis the wind, and nothing more."

.

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,





In there stepped a stately raven, of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door;

Perched upon a bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door;
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
“Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no craven,
Ghastly, grim, and ancient raven, wandering from the nightly shore.
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore.”
Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”





Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning, little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door,
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as “Nevermore.”

.

But the raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered; not a feather then he fluttered;
Till I scarcely more than muttered, “Other friends have flown before;
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before.”
Then the bird said, “Nevermore.”

.

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master, whom unmerciful disaster
Followed fast and followed faster, till his songs one burden bore,—
Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore
Of “Never—nevermore.”

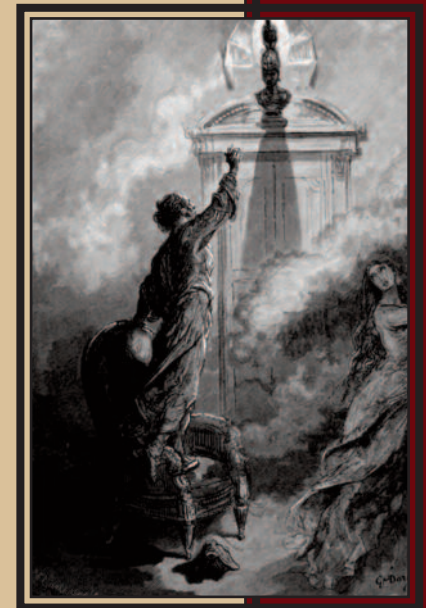
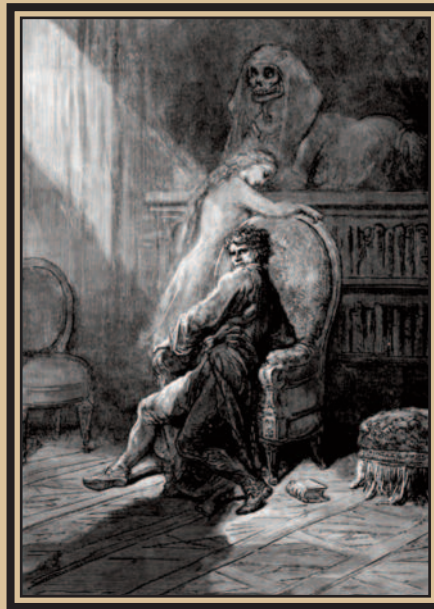
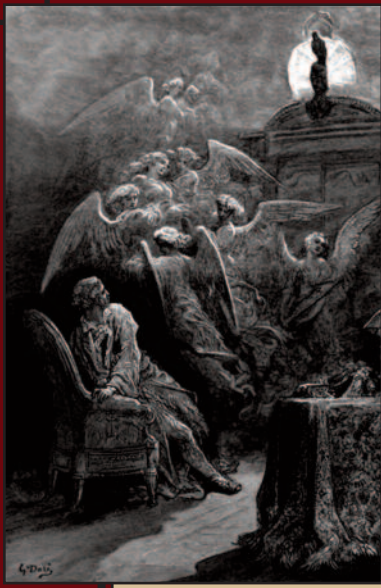


But the raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore,
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore
 Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

.

Thus I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
 To the fowl, whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,
 But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er
 She shall press, ah, nevermore!





Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor.
“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, O quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!”
Quoth the raven, “Nevermore!”

.

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
Whether tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—

.

On this home by horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore:
Is there—is there balm in Gilad?—tell me—tell me I implore!”
Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”





“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden, whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels name Lenore.”
Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”

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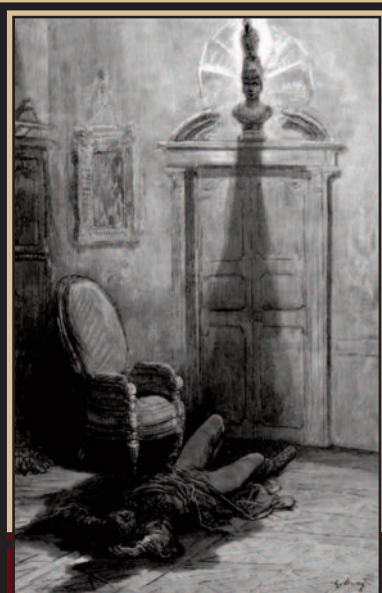
“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting—





“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
 Leave my loneliness unbroken! — quit the bust above my door!
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”
 Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”

.
 And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming;
 And the lamplight o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
 And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
 Shall be lifted—nevermore!





Edgar A Poe



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