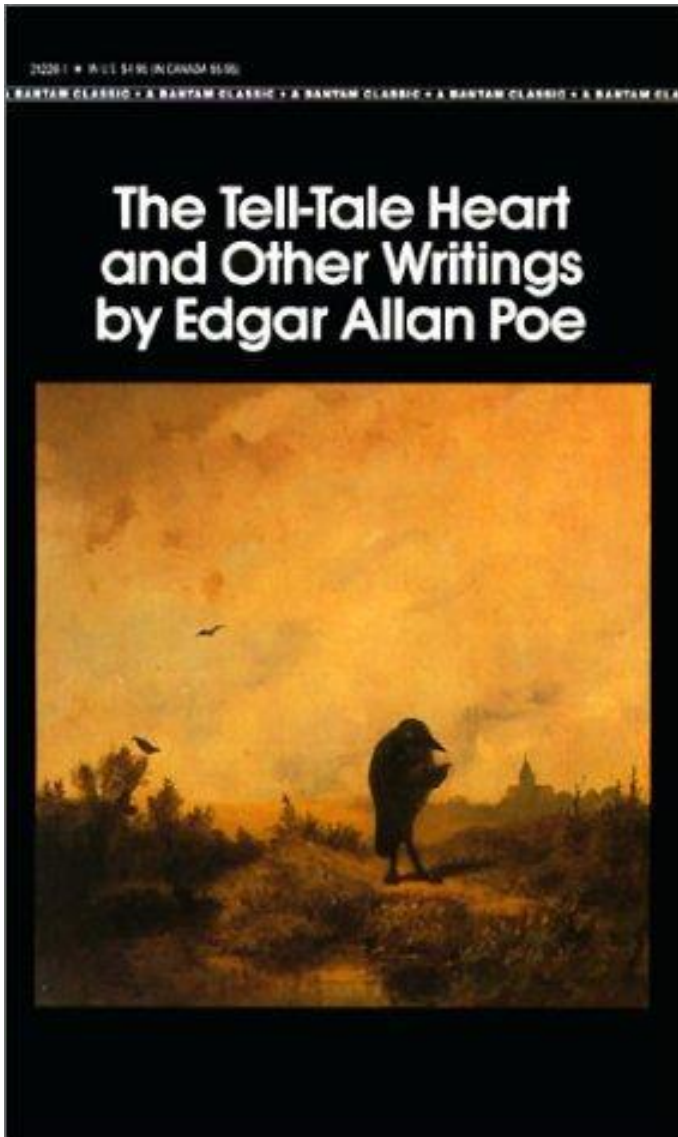

Edgar Allan Poe

The Tell-Tale Heart And Other Writings (Hardcover)



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Description

Suspense, fear and the supernatural provide the center for these tales by the master prose writer.

Insightful reviews

Colleen Houck: I listened to this story on a record in high school as an actor read it in a creepy voice and I screamed when he described the heart beating under the floorboards. I wasn't the only one either. Fantastic story.

K.D. Absolutely: My first time to read and finish a collection by Edgar Allan Poe and I was just blown away. This was one of my two Halloween reads this year and it made my long Halloween weekend truly worth remembering.

Here are my reactions to each of the 32 writings included in the book by Edgar Allan Poe.

STORIES

1) **The Tell-Tale Heart.**3 STARS

Quite scary. The narrator murders his or her (there is no pronoun used) master who has a "vulture-like" eyes. The narrator admits the crime at the beginning of his narration but what he or she is trying to prove is his or her sanity. EAP has the ability to vividly describe his milieu and draws you in immediately right from the first paragraph of the story.

2) **The Black Cat.**4 STARS

I find this better-written and more complex than the first story. A man and his wife are fond of animals and they have a black cat named Pluto (Roman God of the underworld). They love the cat until the man becomes alcoholic. One evening, he plucks out the eye of the cat and hangs the poor animal by the tree. Critics say that this is the darkest among EAP's tales.

3) **The Cask of Amontillado.**4 STARS

Very simple story yet it can send chills to your nerves. Just the mention of catacombs and niche in the kind of prose only EAP can write makes this reading truly apt for this season of Trick or Treats. The fact that there is no clear given reason why Montresor is leaving Fortunato alive inside the catacomb makes the story fresh and very inventive that is different from what I normally expect or demand from the contemporary crime novels.

4) **The Fall of the House of Usher.**5 STARS

I was reading this late last night and I could not sleep because I got scared. The narration comes alive and the images are playing in my mind. Madeline, the sister, entombed alive by Roderick Usher, his brother. The gothic scenes: the castle, the lighting, the eerie song. Unbelievably scary! I have never read a novel (or a short story) that can keep you awake until it

is really really time for you to sleep because it is 1am and you have work or school to attend to in a few hours.

5) The Masque of the Red Death⁴ STARS

A real treat but less scary. It seems to tell us the inevitability of death as symbolized by the many rooms and the different colors of the costume. The Red Death is like the Boogeyman who "gets" Prospero and his guests and as they fall or die one-by-one, it just mimics that happens in real life. EAP's prose is just exceptional. There is nothing like his play of words to impart the eerie but still really beautiful stories.

6) The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar⁴ STARS

Very interesting. The use of hypnosis to a dying man. At first, I did not know what was going on until I realized that the narrator was conducting an experiment by using magnetism to hypnotize Mr. Valdemar who kept on saying "I'm dying" or "Dead, dead, dead." I could not imagine this happening in real life. It is too unkind. But this is a Halloween read but if Madeline was entombed alive by her brother, this is nothing.

7) Ligeia.³ STARS

Seems to me like a wishful thinking kind of story. When the man's first wife dies, he imagines the second one to be the reincarnation of the first. Opium was probably not prohibited during that time and it was even considered as an over-the-counter medicine so the grieving man who is taking care of his first wife drugs her for a painless death. The second half of the story seems like a hallucination.

8) The Murders in the Rue Morgue⁶ STARS

This one feels like a Sherlock Holmes short story rather than Edgar Allan Poe's. I have read the whole Holmes canon and I liked it but I prefer EAP to be himself and his forte is horror. There is a certain EAP touch on this though, the double murder is more gruesome than any of the Holmes'.

9) The Purloined Letter³ STARS

C. Auguste Dupin is back. Hay, it's good that the 3rd story, "The Mystery of Marie Ruget," is not in this collection. Again this story is a detective instead of a horror story. The story revolves around a stolen letter that is being used by the powerful thief to blackmail an influential woman in the society. The letter contains some juicy information about her. It is up to Dupin to bring the bribing thief into open by wearing a green Ray-Ban.

10) A Descent into the Maelstrom⁴ STARS

A story within a story and it is refreshing because it is not a horror story but a science fiction! I did not know that EAP wrote a sci-fi. I could imagine him writing a detective story because the movie "The Raven" starring John Cussack that I saw a couple of weeks back was really a detective story similar to those of Sherlock Holmes. Here in *A Descent into the Maelstrom*, there is a theory that the bigger or heavier body descends faster into the whirlpool. Also, this made me remember the instant graying of the hair when subjected to too much stress. I heard that story from my high school history teacher who was a fan of Edgar Allan Poe.

11) **The Pit and the Pendulum** 4 STARS

Very much like the movie series "Saw." Or it even pales in comparison because in Saw, the prisoners have to saw off their limbs to have the chance to escape. However, this story should be credited for two things: Poe's narrative is just wonderful. The first half of the book focuses on the prisoner's fears in reaction to what he sees, feels and hears. The swinging of the pendulum producing swish-swish sound, the darkness, and the sight of the rats.

12) **MS. Found in a Bottle** 3 STARS

This is said to be the story that launched Edgar Allan Poe's career. It won in a contest for short stories. It is about a man who survives a shipwreck and found a new one manned by an elderly crew. The survivor finds writing journal and begins writing a manuscript that he plans to toss into the sea afterwards.

13) **The Premature Burial** 3 STARS

Like #2 "Amontillado" and #3 "Usher" above, this story is about a man getting buried alive. During Poe's time, public was fascinated about vampirism so dead people are buried right away as they might turn into vampires. This is a bit passe now considering that particularly here in the Philippines, wakes last from 3 or more days prior to interment.

14) **William Wilson** 4 STARS

OMG. I heard this word "doppelgänger" from a teenager girl while nightswimming with her last Thursday, Nov 1st. When I heard that word, I asked what does it mean. She explained that it is having some kind of spirit mimicking you by looking and acting like you. I said, "wow, I learned something from a very young person like you."

15) **Eleonora**. 4 STARS

Said to be the story that EAP wrote to alleviate the guilt that he felt falling in love with another woman after his first wife died. What makes this short story different from the rest of his stories is that this is basically autobiographical and has an relatively happy ending.

16) **Silence - A Fable**. 4 STARS

A short piece, only a couple of pages long, it is more like a dream than a story with real characters. It is full of symbolism and rich imagery. Very deep, very intense. I'd like to know what Poe was thinking when he wrote this. Was he trippin'?

NOVEL

17) **The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket** 4 STARS

The only novel in this collection. It involves shipwreck, mutiny and cannibalism. The narrator, Arthur Gordon Pym, is saved by Dirk Peters and the narrative continues when they land but get into conflict with black native men. They go back to the sea and the narrative ends while they are heading to the South Pole. This novel is partly adventure, partly sci-fi, party travelogue, partly gruesome and macabre. I liked the first-person narrative. That distinct voice that only EAP has is very evident and enjoyable when he is using first-person narrator. It feels creepy and

classy. I enjoyed his better than Nathaniel Hawthorne's. Also, this is said to have inspired the works of Herman Melville and Jules Verne.

POEMS

18) Stanzas.4 STARS

The power of the moonlight. The mystic energy that comes from the sun. I remember a Tagalog song from my childhood that is a song about the moon: "*O maliwanag na buwan / Nakikiusap ako / Ang aking minamahal / Sana ay hanapin mo. // Tadhana ma'y magbiro / Araw man ay magdaan / Ang pagibig ko sa kanya / Ay hindi magbabago / Magpakaylan pa man.*"

19) Romance.4 STARS

A poem about looking back (first stanza) and regret (second stanza). The narrator used to love romance that he compares to a bird: "to lisp my very earliest word" and I also remembered that when I was a young man, I just lie down on the grass covered earth and think about the future. Now, I don't have time for that anymore akin to the feeling of the narrator: "I have no time for idle cares" and so he regrets the lost of his younger years.

20) To Helen.4 STARS

An obvious reference to Helen of Troy because of the use of classical beauty: "Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face." This poem is EAP's tribute to female beauty similar to Pablo Neruda's "Ode to a Beautiful Nude" where Neruda describes the nude female body. I enjoy this kind of poem because poetry itself is like a female body, it is smooth, soft and invigorating to the senses.

21) Israfil.4 STARS

Quite different from the other poems and works of EAP. This is cheery, positive and inspiring. The title comes from the Islam angel *Israfil* who will show up during the Second Coming playing the trumpet. She plays very well so everyone will be looking and hearing her every note. Nice to read something not only different from most of the works in this collection but also appreciate EAP when he talks about angels rather than demons or supernatural beings.

22) The City in the Sea3 STARS

This is what I am saying in #21. This poem is the classic usual EAP. I mean this is gothic through and through. It talks about a city that is ruled by demons. The city is by the sea and it is in the west of it and when that is the scenario, the city is said to be doomed. It is good that Manila is in the east although it is surrounded by China Sea and Pacific Ocean. Hmmm.

23) The Sleeper.4 STARS

EAP proudly claimed that this his is best poem. Better than "The Raven." It is about the death of a lovely woman and goes with the woman is his love. A melancholy and painful poem to read but nevertheless very beautiful.

24) The Valley of Unrest3 STARS

The speaker in the poem asks if all lovely things are far away. It mentions (again) a woman called "Helen" that according to critics was Jane Stannard, EAP's first love and the mother of a friend. It also talks about the valley that is partly Satan, angel and also a large part broken heart. This is another sad poem in this collection.

25) Lenore.4 STARS

Unlike #23, #24 and his other works with dying or dead beautiful woman, in this poem, EAP talks about the possibility of meeting the woman in paradise (after life). Here the Lenore's (the dead woman) fiance, Guy de Vere, says that they should not be sad because she will soon be very happy with the angels in heaven.

26) The Raven.5 STARS

The best (so far) poem in this collection. It is many things to me: it is painful and sad (the speaker is lamenting the lost of his love Lenore - see #25) yet it is musical and not really gloomy, overall. The verses are playful and you can imagine the raven flying in the air, through the window, and settling on the statue. The raven also talks - it keeps on saying "Nevermore" - and it adds to the childlike playful prose. It is sad yet it is happy (in a way). However, the playful scene ends when the speaker begins to talk to the raven while sitting on the statue of Pallas. He asks if he is to be reunited with Lenore and when the raven says "Nevermore," he gets angry and the feeling of doom dawns on the poem.

27) A Valentine.5 STARS

EAP is a women's guy. His writings are mostly about death, life, love and...women! In this poem, you can find the name of his girl, Frances Sargent Osgood. To find the name, take the first letter of the first line, then the second letter of the second line, then the third letter of the third line, and so on. (Source: Wiki). I did see it! Very clever.

28) Ulalume - A Ballad5 STARS

Almost put tears to my eyes while reading. This is similar to the other works of EAP that talk about a death of a woman he loves. Just how many deaths did EAP experience in his life? I know his wife died and he remarried. But I guess even the loss of his many girlfriends (he was a playboy, wasn't he?) became like death to himself. The setting of this poem is by the lake on a moonlit night and with tears in his eyes, he stumbles the grave of his loved one, Ulalume. Very sad.

29) For Annie.5 STARS

A dying man gives thanks that his "lingering illness," life, is finally over. He is now beyond pain and suffering. But no one, he says, should think pityingly of him. After all, everyone will lie in the same bed he does. Moreover, his death is not final. As his lover, Annie, looks on him and cries because she thinks he is dead, he declares that his heart and his thoughts are more alive than ever, for they are filled with the sight of Annie's love. Though dead, he lives on because of her love. Is there any other poem sadder than this?

30) Annabel Lee.5 STARS

This is the only poem of EAP that I still remember reading during my school days (not sure whether in elementary or high school). This poem is very romantic compared to the dark gloomy

ones that he wrote particularly #28 and #29 above. This talks about him missing his beautiful woman named of course, Annabel Lee while he is in his room (unlike #28 that has a setting by the lake). Short and sweet yet of course sad. If I will be asked to choose one poem by him, now I do not know which one to choose: this or "The Raven."

31) **The Bells.**4 STARS

What amazed me here is the use of the word "bells" to mimic the actual sound when a bell rings. The repeated use of that word: *bells, bells, bells, bells,...* in the lines just did not remind me of the ringing of bells but also what those ringings signify to us in different points in our lives. When I was baptized, for example, the church bells rang. When I got married, they also rang. When I will die, they will also ring for the last time. These different stages in man's life is also captured in the use of the bells from the start to the end of the poem. The mood becomes gloomier and gloomier.

32) **Alone.**4 STARS

Simply beautiful. It tells us that no matter what we went through in life, we will always end up by ourselves. Alone. We were born to this earth alone (unless you a twin) and we will all die alone (unless you die with a mass of people like in a battle or a catastrophe). What a nice poem to cap this beautiful beautiful collection.

I think I prefer Edgar Allan Poe as a poet rather than a short story writer or a novelist. However, I rarely read poems so maybe that's the reason why I particularly enjoyed very much the poems in this collection. I had no expectations about his poems prior to this.

This book made my Halloween this year truly memorable. Priceless read.

Prashant: *"No, no, don't fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. You should have seen me."*

I read this one story after hearing a lot of appreciation for it. Lately I have been reading Edgar Allan Poe's one work at a time and my gosh!, the genius keeps on getting better.

Here he tells a story of a young person(gender is not mentioned) who kills an old man in a cold and calculated manner. The way in which the story is told is simply magical. I could not peel my eyes away even for a moment. There is a new emotion and aspect unfolding in every line.

The killer took utmost precautions while performing the murder and getting rid of the body but the heart (ah! you heartless bitch!) still tells the tale.

Amanda L: by no means have I encountered such uncanny description of acute madness from the interior out. [Case in point, the hole lines: "TRUE! nervous, very, very dreadfully anxious I were and am; yet why WILL you assert that i'm mad? The sickness had sharpened my senses, no longer destroyed, now not dulled them. certainly used to be the feel of listening to acute. I heard all issues within the heaven and within the earth. I heard many stuff in hell. How then am I mad? Hearken! and discover how healthily, how calmly, i will be able to let you know the full

story."]The stress mounts yet alongside the best way you will absolutely establish with psychosis, occasionally unwittingly. a gorgeous embodiment of the facility of brief story. artwork really mimics life.

Sara: i've got learn this for the third time and complete 10/08/12. Very good! i love Poe. This assortment wasn't the best, though. For example, I want Hop Frog was once in it. i admire that brief story. i admire Marie Roget, too, yet i will be able to see the modifying of that from this publication considering the fact that now we have detective tales already. The final tale i ended during this e-book used to be The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym. other than the racism within the tale (and Poe is now lifeless and he wrote within the 1800's, so not anything can now be performed approximately that) it really is an attractive narrative a couple of guy on a ship heading to the Antarctic. there is probably an excessive amount of seafaring aspect in there for my tastes. The finishing to that tale is easily unsatisfying. I additionally received a great feel of nineteenth values towards "conquering the world" studying this narrative. It looked like nearly all of the tales point out the phrases "opium" and "ague" at the least once. I acquired to the purpose the place i began trying to find the 1st point out of opium and ague whenever i began a brand new story. I additionally get the sensation that being buried alive used to be one among Poe's worst nightmares. i feel that was once a normal feeling of the inhabitants in the course of that point in history. *****I have simply figured out Jules Verne wrote a sequel to Arthur Gordon Pym referred to as An Antarctic Mystery. i'm glad. Very glad. i've got asked it from the library and desire to learn it someday soon.

Leola: "Fear of being buried alive is the phobia of being positioned in a grave whereas nonetheless alive because of being incorrectly said dead. The abnormal, psychopathological model of this worry is often called taphophobia (from Greek ????? - taphos, "grave, tomb" and ????? - phobos, "fear"), that's translated as "fear of graves". Before the arrival of contemporary medicine, the terror was once no longer solely irrational. all through history, there were a variety of instances of individuals being buried alive by means of accident. In 1905, the English reformer William Tebb accumulated money owed of untimely burial. He discovered 219 circumstances of close to dwell burial, 149 genuine dwell burials, 10 situations of stay dissection and a pair of circumstances of awakening whereas being embalmed." Thank you, Wikipedia! That pretty well sums up my E.A.P. studying experience.

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