



## **Eddie: The Lost Youth of Edgar Allan Poe**

*Scott Gustafson*

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When young Eddie is falsely accused of destroying the Judge's chicken coop, his adopted parents give him two days to find the true culprit. Guided by logic, but entranced by the poetry of the paranormal, Eddie seeks to solve the mystery, along the way meeting Captain Mephisto, a darkly unusual magician. With help from his Raven and the prodding of a mischievous imp, McCobber, it is no wonder that Eddie grows up to become a master of the macabre.

Scott Gustafson crafts a finely wrought portrait that is both humorous and touching. Coupled with his stunning gothic illustrations, *Eddie* is sure to win fans young and old.

## **Eddie: The Lost Youth of Edgar Allan Poe Details**

Date : Published August 23rd 2011 by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

ISBN : 9781416997641

Author : Scott Gustafson

Format : Hardcover 208 pages

Genre : Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction, Fantasy, Childrens, Young Adult, Middle Grade, Kids, Juvenile

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## **From Reader Review Eddie: The Lost Youth of Edgar Allan Poe for online ebook**

### **Alison says**

It was okay. I think it was a great way to introduce Edgar Allan Poe's youth without kids having to read biographies. The style of writing was certainly true to the time period the story was written in which, sadly, may be a bit sophisticated for today's youth. For my reluctant reader there were several points that I had to stop and explain what something meant. On the up side, however, she is now very interested in reading some of Poe's stories. I didn't think the storyline was overly exciting and I think that if Poe himself didn't intrigue my daughter she would not have wanted to finish. Bravo on the surplus of pictures, they were very nicely drawn!

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### **Laura says**

I read over 100 pages of this book, but then gave up because I wasn't liking how flippantly they portrayed Edgar Allan Poe and their imagination of his childhood. I know it's a fiction version with liberties taken to make people interested in his life, but I wasn't a fan. I didn't care for the characters and I found myself disinterested several times while reading. The illustrations didn't really hold my attention either. I wouldn't recommend.

\*Taken from my book reviews blog: <http://reviewsatmse.blogspot.com/2011...>

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### **C.J. Milbrandt says**

Before he became the Master of the Macabre, Edgar Allan Poe was a boy called Eddie. While the prologue gives us the factual framework of Poe's life, the story is a whimsical mystery in which Eddie is accused of playing a terrible prank. With the help of an imp named McCobber and a talking raven named ... well, Raven, Eddie sets out to find the true culprit.

First off, Gustafson's art is gorgeous. Nearly every page is lavishly illustrated. He depicts a young Poe, often affecting eerily familiar poses, with a lovely balance of melancholy and innocence. I appreciated the frequent allusions to the poems and stories for which Poe is remembered. Knowing the whole of Poe's story, Eddie's wistful smiles kind of broke my heart. I was pretty much in love from the story's introduction, when the boy first meets Raven. But Gustafson truly did me in near the book's conclusion, when young Eddie asks the bird if he'll be there for him at the end. Raven promises, "Then and forevermore."

Guh. Wonderful!

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### **Maryann says**

Review forthcoming in School Library Journal

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### **colleen the convivial curmudgeon says**

I stumbled across this book recently, and I don't even really remember how it happened. But I have a bit of a thing for all things Poe, and I thought it might be cute/interesting, so I grabbed it from the library.

Of course, I also thought it could be absolutely terrible, and was, honestly, a bit trepidatious when I started reading it, and I was still a bit leery as the first chapter introduces us to the man Poe and why we should care about him, and even a bit into the first chapter...

But, after that, things went swimmingly and I ended up really enjoying it.

I think this is one of those books that had a good story for children and it can serve as a cool introduction to Poe, but it works on additional layers when you're already familiar with his works because you see a lot of elements on his stories as you read through - like his history lesson in school on the Spanish Inquisition, his befriending of a talking raven, his meeting of a magician with a secret (view spoiler) and, of course, the little imp who rides on his shoulder and takes his thoughts and pondering into dark and scary territory, named McCobber. (Get it?)

But while we see elements of his horror stories, at its heart it's a mystery story - and this aspect I just loved since Poe is the father of detective stories, though not a lot of people know that, so it seemed really fitting that this story about Eddie Poe is one where he plays detective to root out the truth.

It's a short, quick read, and a really enjoyable one. I don't know if there are any plans to turn it into a series, and it definitely stands alone well - but I would certainly not be opposed to reading any more down the line.

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Accompanying the story are lots of illustrations - and I mean lots. Practically on every page. And the artwork is really good. Gustafson, who does both the writing and illustrating, captures the essence of Poe's distinct profile wrapped in a young face of innocent wonder.

My only quibble is that raven's should have black beaks - and not just because the yellow beak looks silly. They really do have black beaks.

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

Young Edgar Poe is sent to live with a foster family after the desertion of his alcoholic father and the death of his actress mother. They are kind enough, but Edgar spends most of his time in an attic filled with antique relics, talking to McCobber, the imp that his father left him. When a neighbor's cat and rooster are put in a bad and tied to the top of a building, Edgar is blamed. He asks for a day to clear himself, and begins his investigation. This brings him in contact with The Amazing Mephisto, who has a failing magic act. He witnesses the show and Mephisto shares some of the secrets with him. The two figure out who the real culprit is, but in doing so, manage to improve the magic act and give Edgar someone in his life who is sympathetic to his artistic side.

Strengths: The pictures in this are gorgeous-- this is very nearly like Selznick's work. The story is not advanced through the pictures as much, but certainly this has far more illustrations than other books. Students are perennially intrigued by Poe, so this slim volume will be popular.

Weaknesses: Bit of a slow start-- there was so much historical information that I thought it was a preface rather than the first chapter.

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### **Stephanie Phares says**

i have 3 boys and someone else with 3 boys made the comment that she wished the golden sower noms had more books to suit a boys interest, i somewhat found this to be true so ive set out to read what boys might like and also not turn away the girls. this book could easily do the trick...a 'magical' mystery with the potential of having a slightly dark side that turns out to have an all-in-fun explanation in the end. i liked that the character is based on a real american poet that kids can easily aquire the works of and be pleasantly surprised that poetry isnt all sappy nature and love stuff but can be more harry potter-esk.

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### **Madison Henson says**

This incredible story ever I read. I feel bad for Eddie's mother died from TB, when his parent are dicr.... because his father an alcoholic, not good. Eddie would not see his siblings, because somebody who adopted parents to catch each of his siblings.

He had nightmare really so awful about demon. I think they attempt to encourage affect to Eddie be bad boy, but he isn't.

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### **Brindi Michele says**

These illustrations were a fantastic accompaniment to this young Poe mystery. Great reader's advisory for shool-age boys and fans of the macabre.

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### **Book of Secrets says**

My son got this book for Christmas, but I had to read it first - because Poe! EDDIE is a mystery geared toward middle grade readers, and it gives a glimpse into what Edgar Allan Poe's childhood might have been like, and how experiences in his youth influenced the stories and poems he wrote as an adult.

How did a neighbor's prize rooster and a cat end up inside Eddie's pillow case, and stuck on the roof? Eddie's harsh stepfather Mr. Allan only gives him a day to prove his innocence. With the help of his pet raven and a mischievous imp, Eddie sets out to solve the mystery.

This book is a good introduction to Poe for young readers. The author Scott Gustafson also illustrated the book, and the detailed drawings are amazing. IMO, nothing too scary. A fun, quick read, worthy of the keeper shelf.

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## Shellie (Layers of Thought) says

3.5 stars actually

Original review with links and more posted at Layers of Thought.

*An adorable mystery for middle grade readers – especially boys! It has incredible black and white line drawn illustrations. It can be seen as a book for literary minded and reluctant readers and as an introduction to this fine American author.*

**About:** Eddie is the nick name for Edgar Allen Poe and the story is based upon the author's humble beginnings, as we find out more about how he was born, raised, and lived.

Young Eddie attempts to get himself out of trouble when a powerful next door neighbor's prized rooster and the local tom cat are hung on a weather vein in a bag during the middle of the night. Eddie is blamed for creating the ruckus by the entire neighborhood and especially by his father.

**Thoughts:** I just loved this cute short story, the drawings are lovely black lined and delicately done and will break up the reading for younger or reluctant readers. The story is cute and has a deeper appropriate age level message – which states “if you know who you are and are honest and truthful that is what matters most – even if others do not believe you”.

The story has a touch of the speculative. Our young hero has his own personal imp - which is based upon one of Poe's stories “The Imp of the Perverse” (actual story is linked on the blog). Eddie experiences the human conundrum where one often chooses to follow an internal voice (called by Poe the “imp”) rather than a better and more reasonable form of logic, therefore creating many human problems. Poe believed that it is human nature to follow this “imp” which persuades us to wait until the last minute to accomplish important responsibilities.

This book can be seen as a roll model for children, as well as for youngsters whose interest are literary rather than athletic or social. An important story about one of my favorite classic authors. 3.5 stars for this perfect Halloween “treat” rather than a bag full of candy – or in addition too!

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## Sharon Lawler says

This is a mashup between biography, historical fiction and mystery Edgar Allan Poe and his two siblings were orphaned as very young children with all three being separated and raised by different families. Edgar spent the rest of his youth with the Allans of Richmond and during the brief timeframe of this story the rift between Edgar and Mr. Allan is depicted. There are elements in the story that foreshadow Poe's future writing, the raven being one, and the little monster being another. Well illustrated in black and white. Edgar's biological parents were actors and I had to do some research about one of the characters in the story--did he actually exist? As I said, this is a good mashup.

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## **Pat says**

This book has two great things going for it... the subject of Poe and Gustafson's wonderful artwork! Both of which I give highest ratings! Gustafson is an outstanding artist and I have every book that I can find that is illustrated by him. Five star keepers every one!

This is the only book I've read by Gustafson and it is a well done chapter book. The author obviously researched and provides the reader with the sad facts of Poe's humble beginnings and upbringing before branching off into fantasy and fiction.

As the only child to a kindly, loving foster mother and a stern, impossible-to-please foster father, it is easy to see how a lonesome child would create an imaginary companion that only he could see or speak with - the mischievous imp. Young Poe is also an animal lover and his other companion is an actual crow (who also speaks only to him).

I could not help seeing his imp companion as a metaphor for his father's legacy to young Poe... whether it be his fearful wild imaginings or simply a good imagination. Adults will not find it a stretch to attribute Poe's adult problems of melancholy and 'self-medication' also as a sad bequest of the family "demons." The imp appeared a substitute of a reckless and irresponsible father, while his raven companion might be the logical, level-headed father aspect.

In the middle of the night, young Poe awakens having found that he has sleepwalked into the neighbor's yard. A great noise and clamor is coming from a sack hanging from the barn's weather vane which wakes all the neighbors. Eddie's own embroidered pillow case has been stuffed with his pet cat and the Judge's prize rooster and hung on high! And poor Eddie is blamed. Punishment is called for! But logic dictates that Eddie could not have done the deed. His foster father grudgingly gives Edgar 24 hours to clear his name or be caned.

Luckily, Ed has the moral support and love of his foster mother and a family servant. He takes on the job of detective and works his way through to the truth -despite his fears- with both logic and heart. An admirable young man who acts in a praiseworthy fashion.

No doubt young readers will root for young Eddie as I did :-)

ps. While done in a different artistic style, Gustafson's illustrated full-color Peter Pan, Classic Fairy Tales, and Mother Goose are without parallel. Simply outstanding in every aspect and I recommend them to all - be it individual or public libraries - without reservation!

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## **Barbara says**

Filled with detailed and sometimes quite eerie graphite pencil and liquid pencil illustrations, this chapter book imagines a brief episode in the life of Edgar Allan Poe. When he sleepwalks and finds himself in the yard of a neighbor who happens to be a judge, he has no idea how he got there or why the man's prize rooster and Eddie's cat are in a pillow case hanging from a weather vane. Eddie is certain that he is innocent, and he begs for time to prove that innocence. With his trusty companions, an imp named McCobber, and a large bird called Raven, he sets out to do just that. In its own way, the story is just as strange as the stories the

adult Edgar Allan Poe would end up writing, and the author gives all sorts of hints for the inspiration in the master of the macabre's works. Given the state of his home life, it is no wonder that he grew up somewhat troubled, to say the least.

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### **Nancy says**

an enjoyable story  
it makes me wonder how much was cut  
from whole cloth and how much was  
semi factual

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