



Mrs. Poe

Lynn Cullen

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Inspired by literature's most haunting love triangle, award-winning author Lynn Cullen delivers a pitch-perfect rendering of Edgar Allan Poe, his mistress's tantalizing confession, and his wife's frightening obsession in this new masterpiece of historical fiction to which Sara Gruen says, "*Mrs. Poe* had my heart racing...Don't miss it!"

And make sure to check out the captivating new novel from Lynn Cullen—*Twain's End*—where the acclaimed author tells a fictionalized imagining of the relationship between iconic author Mark Twain and his personal secretary, Isabel Lyon.

1845: New York City is a sprawling warren of gaslit streets and crowded avenues, bustling with new immigrants and old money, optimism and opportunity, poverty and crime. Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" is all the rage—the success of which a struggling poet like Frances Osgood can only dream. As a mother trying to support two young children after her husband's cruel betrayal, Frances jumps at the chance to meet the illustrious Mr. Poe at a small literary gathering, if only to help her fledgling career. Although not a great fan of Poe's writing, she is nonetheless overwhelmed by his magnetic presence—and the surprising revelation that he admires *her* work.

What follows is a flirtation, then a seduction, then an illicit affair...and with each clandestine encounter, Frances finds herself falling slowly and inexorably under the spell of her mysterious, complicated lover. But when Edgar's frail wife, Virginia, insists on befriending Frances as well, the relationship becomes as dark and twisted as one of Poe's tales. And like those gothic heroines whose fates are forever sealed, Frances begins to fear that deceiving Mrs. Poe may be as impossible as cheating death itself...

Mrs. Poe Details

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From Reader Review Mrs. Poe for online ebook

Stephanie says

MRS POE is such compelling novel, bringing history to vivid life. Danger, sensuality, mystery and passion fill the pages of this bewitching story set in the crowded cobbled streets, alleyways, cheap boardinghouses and literary gatherings of mid-nineteenth century New York City. Everyone warns the lovely, near penniless poet Mrs. Osgood, a deserted wife with two young children, to stay away from the dark-eyed writer Edgar Allen Poe who has fallen in love with her. She writes tender verses; he creates blood-curdling tales but he is darker than his writing, carrying secrets of his frail much younger wife and his heinous past. Even when Mrs. Osgood understands that someone is trying to kill her because of him, she cannot put aside her passion until it is almost too late.

A real page turner from one of our most skillful novelists!

Jane says

Where I got the book: e-ARC from NetGalley.

What was fact and what was fiction? That was the question in my mind after I finished *Mrs. Poe*. It tells the tale of Frances (Fanny) Osgood, who is pretty much unknown today but was a hugely popular writer in the mid-1800s, writing poetry and children's books mostly, I think. I had to stop and look her up in Wikipedia about halfway through, because I needed to know more or less where the line between reality and fiction fell, which is the trouble with novelized lives. Anyway, Frances may or may not have had an affair with Edgar Allan Poe during the final years of his wife's short life. They certainly did publish an exchange of flirtatious poems in the review of which Poe was an editor, and lots of people saw fire where there was smoke, and her husband wasn't around much...

But who, seriously, can ever know the truth of such a matter? The biographical novelist inserts herself into the gap between knowledge and possibility, and the reader needs to understand this and take everything that's written with a fairly large pinch of salt. I enjoyed the possibilities: the childlike/childish wife, the female writer skimming along the edge of destitution who discovers that being linked in scandal with a famous author is the way to sudden success, the tortured Poe-t whose work is dark for a reason - all quite reasonable projections of what might have been.

I enjoyed Cullen's writing (except that she mentioned Poe's dark-lashed eyes 1,000,000 times), and loved the more realistic parts of the novel, particularly the gatherings of New York literati and the depiction of a city still emerging from the agricultural age, building itself around the characters as they interact. I did NOT like it nearly as much when strange things started happening to Frances--I felt as if the writer (or her editor), realizing that not a whole lot was actually happening in the novel 'cept a whole lot of yearning, decided to stick in some action. But I LIKED the yearning. I'm kind of a sucker for the slow build of passion under the tight-laced veneer of Victorian propriety, and would have been quite happy to have had just THAT story. That's the beauty of literary fiction--you don't have to have a whole lot of action for it to be good.

So a bit of a mixed bag, but I suspect this might be a novel worth a re-visit, and that's pretty rare these days. It also made me more interested in Poe - I hadn't realized he was considered a SEXY BEAST by the

aforementioned tight-laced ladies, and find the idea intriguing.

Well, tastes have changed.

Sara says

This is a well-written, fun historical novel that casts a completely different light on the life and personality of Edgar Allan Poe. My entire scope of knowledge going in was that Poe did, in fact, have an on-going friendship with Frances Osgood and that there were rumors of something much more. Lynn Cullen takes that information and develops it into the love affair that might have been.

Along the way, she introduces us to other well-known celebrities of the time and has them rub elbows in New York, in much the way that they must actually have done. Of course, in the end, we are left with the enigmatic, mysterious Poe whose life and death defy historians' definitions. No one can ever really get us beyond that. His works alone make his mind seem more a labyrinth than an open book.

The book is fiction, the relationship is conjecture, the writing is skillful and the history is factually correct ...and that is all I need to make a fun historical fiction read. On a personal note, this was a gift from my granddaughter, who proved that she knows a little about what Grandma will enjoy. Thanks, Nicole.

Arah-Lynda says

Breathless

I walk these streets of New York City with Mrs. Frances Osgood (1811- 1850), an American poet and one of the most popular woman writers of her time, also famous for her exchange of romantic poems with Edgar Allan Poe. It is 1845 and Mrs. Osgood is en route to Miss Anne Charlotte Lynch's conversazione, where none other than Mr. Poe, whose poem, 'The Raven', has reached fever pitch adulation here, is expected to attend.

Earlier when Mrs. Osgood was reading this poem out loud to her daughters, she shared her own thoughts:

"That's it!" I dropped the magazine.

"What Mamma?" asked Vinnie

"This silly alliteration – it's clinkering, clattering claptrap."

Ellen's face was as straight as a judge's on court day. "You mean it's terrible, trifling trash?"

I nodded. "Jumblin', jarring junk."

Vinnie jumped up, trailing shawls like a mummy trails bandages. "No it's piggly, wiggly poop!"

"Don't be rude, Vinnie," I said.

The girls glanced at each other.

I frowned. "It's exasperating, excruciating excrement."

She was completely unprepared then for her feelings, when having once met this author, whose work she

ridiculed, she learns that he admires her own work.

I was still quite young when I first read and loved Edgar Allan Poe's work. In fact I credit him, even today, with my love of poetry. Truly, he made me want to read more and so I did. Just as I now follow Frances Osgood and Edgar Poe through the streets of this incredible city, captured so breathlessly; it's political climate and historic events, changing, evolving, shaping life and further defining this time and place. Cullen does not shine the light on Edgar here, after all this is titled 'Mrs. Poe', but allows him some shade in which to command this stage, as Frances tells us her story, and the air about me sizzles and snaps every time Mr. Edgar Poe steps onto and owns the page.

Eliza, in Mr. Bryant's circle with her husband, saw Mr. Poe enter with Miss Lynch. She sought my gaze.

"I see nothing wrong with the Irish, Reverend Griswold," I said. "They are good people, doing the best that they can in spite of their poverty. In fact, my girls spend much of their time with the Bartlett's Irish maid and they do not speak 'Hibernian trash.' "

I could feel Mr. Poe looking my way. I turned as does a flower to the sun. When our eyes met, I felt the heat of his intensity. Exhilaration poured through my veins like hot nectar.

I can feel my cheek flush as his gaze lands softly upon her from across the parlour, or later as I recall the touch of his hand upon her arm. Shaken to my core with heady anticipation, I read on; these pages simply saturated in gothic romance stain my fingers, leaving their tips thirsting for more.

Virginia, Mr. Poe's wife and first cousin, whom he married when she was but thirteen and who clearly idolizes him, invites Frances Osgood to her home, and proceeds to pursue her friendship. Mrs. Poe is frail, childlike and unwell. She believes that Frances has a restraining effect on her husband's vices; he has after all given up alcohol since having made her acquaintance. What possible good can come of this?

With it's darkly, gothic poetic prose, twisted clandestine affairs and flirtatious literary delights, this sirens song is a warm blanket tossed softly over my savaged soul.

I have sat down several times now to write a review and each time I get caught up once again in this story. I swoon, and then I stall, unable to form a coherent thought. Fear perhaps, that my words could somehow diminish this work.

Still, I love the word quiver.

Can you see those five stars twinkling?

Hands down my favourite book of the year!

Orsolya says

Much like his work, Edgar Allen Poe has a mysterious and dark aura. This can also be said of his personal life which includes his women and marriages. Lynne Cullen pursues this romantic angle in "Mrs. Poe".

To clear any misunderstandings, “Mrs. Poe” is not directly a novel of Poe’s wife (although Virginia Poe is indeed a character). Rather, it follows Frances “Fanny” Osgood, a fellow poet who becomes involved with Poe and also befriends Virginia. Cullen’s topic focus intrigues but sadly, her writing does not.

“Mrs. Poe” is bland and thin, immediately introducing far too many characters with each lacking in any development. The reader never truly “feels” Fanny, which can also be said about the story itself as it is one-dimensional and is missing any depth. Cullen’s writing is descriptive and illustrative; but she merely expresses the settings versus the plot, leaving an empty story. The novel also has too much dialogue, adding to the absence of truly understanding Fanny’s innermost thoughts/feelings. When a glimpse is finally revealed, they feel juvenile. In fact, the novel as a whole is more suited for a YA audience than for adults.

As aforementioned, Cullen includes too many characters such as Poe’s literary circle but unfortunately, this doesn’t feel natural and is more in the essence of name-dropping. On the other hand, the actual character of Poe is compelling carrying the mystery of his personality which the reader yearns to solve. The novel does pick up the pace approximately halfway through with some dramatic moments, but the name-dropping continues which really has no impact whatsoever on the story and is simply annoying. Also frustrating is Fanny’s constant complaints of her husband’s affairs, yet, it is okay for her to pursue Poe...

“Mrs. Poe” is quite repetitive without gripping events or an arching plot. Even as the novel progresses, the story continues to be shallow although there is *one* surprising twist. Other than that, even the climactic portions are silly and juvenile at best. To make it worse, these events are overly foreshadowed and much too predictable.

The conclusion of “Mrs. Poe” is unbelievable and tries “too hard” to be twisted and dark... but fails. Like the rest of the novel, it is thin, abrupt, and certainly not memorable. Cullen claims in her ‘Author’s Note’ to have focused on the historical merit of events but the fluffiness of “Mrs. Poe” did not reflect this.

The only success of the novel was to show Poe in an alternate personified view than the usual dark and edgy character. In “Mrs. Poe”, Poe is mysterious but likable and even gentle. Sadly though, even fluffy HF novels tend to arouse my investigation of at least one character but “Mrs. Poe” failed to do even that.

Overall, “Mrs. Poe” is an interesting topic but the execution fails. It is fluffy, too smooth in texture, and reads like a YA novel. Perhaps I don’t click with the author (this was my third novel of Cullen’s I have read); as I prefer heavier HF (more history than fiction). On the bright side, “Mrs. Poe” is a quick, 1-2 day read. The novel is only suggested for a silly, quick filler read. I think actual Poe fans would find it elementary and insulting. “Mrs. Poe” can be skipped.

Diane S ? says

I have always been intrigued by Poe, his tortured genius, his dark character, the fact that while he was the toast of the town he was always broke and died destitute. Just never seemed fair.

So this book recounts a big time in his life, The raven has been published and he is terribly in fashion, all hostesses want him for their soiree's and though many hate him for his cutting remarks, he is still someone everyone wants to know. This book is easy to read, but so many of the ideas presented I had trouble believing. For some reason I never felt these characters in depth, but the events and conversations featuring

Poe were definitely this author's strength. I did get a more than a surface feel of Poe but he was the only one. I had a hard time buying many of this author's assertions.

My favorite parts where when poetry was discussed, the poems related and it is here that I found the dialogue most stimulating. This was a quick and easy read, just expected a bit more.

Undine says

Oh, dear God, the very last thing the world needs is another novel about Poe that completely trashes all the known facts about him and transforms the man into a slimy ladies' man, to boot.

Where do I begin? There was NO AFFAIR between Poe and Frances Osgood. There is not one genuine Poe scholar who takes the idea at all seriously. Their relationship was, at most, a platonic acquaintance that lasted only one year. Osgood and her husband were never estranged, and there is no evidence whatsoever that Samuel was ever unfaithful. The Osgoods, by all the known evidence, were completely devoted to each other, and it is as certain as can possibly be that he was the father of ALL her children.

Many women found Poe attractive and fascinating, but in a "fangirl" sort of way. To paint him as a man-about-town womanizer is just absurd. In fact, although Poe loved and revered "womanhood" in an idealistic sense, what we know about him strongly suggests he was asexual.

And what Cullen did to Virginia Poe! To paint this poor young woman as an antebellum version of Glenn Close in "Fatal Attraction" is beyond absurd--it is disgusting.

As an amateur Poe scholar and long-time admirer of his work, I knew I'd dislike this novel when I first heard about it, but I had to read it to appreciate its true horror. And, believe me, I deeply regret that I did. The bland, cliched writing and uneasy lurches between simplistic Harlequin romance-type fiction and ludicrous Gothic horror would be laughable if it wasn't so insulting to our intelligence. I had thought "Poe & Fanny" and "The Raven's Bride" were about as low as Poe fiction could sink. I should have known that eventually, another author would come along to prove me wrong.

In short: Well, no, I didn't think much of this book.

Judy says

This is one of the latest contributions to what is becoming one of my favorite fiction sub-genres, the telling of tales from the viewpoint of a spouse or person closely connected to a famous person. The choice of Frances Osgood to be the narrator proved to be excellent. Fanny offers a unique look at Edgar Allan Poe as she was a fan of his, a poetess and therefore, a contemporary of his, his married lover and a member of the preferred society of the time. She also shared his pain in many regards including an unhappy marriage and financial woes. I enjoyed this book immensely, but hesitate to give it more than 3.5 stars for a couple of reasons.

First of all, while I appreciate that this is a work of fiction, I found the frequent use of other historical characters of the time as participants in literary social functions or just as strollers down the street as

unlikely. For example, Herman Melville is supposed to have attended one such literary gathering. I find this highly improbable as Melville achieved little fame during his lifetime other than for his *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* which was short-lived. *Moby-Dick*; or, *The Whale* never became the classic that it is today until well after his death. Melville was a dour character, not much liked by those who knew him. The only literary personage who befriended him was Nathaniel Hawthorne. It is unlikely that any member of good literary society in New York would invite Melville to such a gathering. The book continues with mentions of passing on the street, Roosevelts, Astors and other famous persons, as well as rubbing shoulders with other historical figures at the evening conversaciones. I understand the author's desire to include these figures to show the time period and give a sense of what was going at that time, but it was like putting a couple of tablespoons of sugar in one's ice tea when a couple of teaspoons would have done fine.

Secondly, a little closer proofreading was needed. For example, during one scene a mention was made of a certain maid having gone on a trip, then a couple of paragraphs later she is mentioned as being present although no time has passed since the first mention of her not being there. This doesn't impact the story in any way, but is annoying in regards to the continuity.

Thirdly, my next observation is more a question than a complaint. Is the Mrs. Poe of the title referring to Fanny or Virginia Poe, Edgar's wife? It makes more sense that it refers to the former except she never was "Mrs. Poe." The only connection I can make there is that her editor while encouraging her to pursue writing dark stories like *E.A.P.* alluded that she could become the "Mrs. Poe" of that genre. Even though Virginia Poe played a large role in this story, it wasn't "about" her but about Fanny and Edgar, primarily Fanny. So, if you read this book and think you have the answer to why it is titled Mrs. Poe, I would love to hear your thoughts.

What I really like about the book is Cullen's commitment to keeping as many facts about both Fanny and Poe's accurate. She says in the Afterword that she attempted to keep the framework of their lives intact and only fill in the blanks with her fictional account. I think she succeeded. I do recommend this book to my fiction-loving friends. It is entertaining, easy to read and historically educational.

3.5 stars

Crystal Craig says

"Pay attention to fate, Mrs. Osgood. It will always have the last word."

I didn't know what to expect from this book. My knowledge of Edgar Allan Poe is limited. I've always been curious about his work—I think that's what likely drew me to this book.

Overall, I enjoyed the novel. There was enough going on to hold my interest. The writing was decent, and the book appeared well researched—on top of that, I learned all about Poe.

My rating of 3 stars is based purely on my level of enjoyment. I've added *Mrs. Poe* to my list of recommendations as I believe it to be a worthwhile read.

Ann Sloan says

Mrs. Poe by Lynn Cullen

I chose and was granted permission to read it by NetGalley. I was interested in it because of its title. I am and always have been a major Poe fan (I memorized Annabel Lee for my 9th grade English class – this was back when students had to memorize poetry – a practice that should be reinstated but won't be since it's not a skill on The Test).

What a mishmash of fact and fiction! Coincidentally, I just taught a class on American Lit from the Beginning until 1865, so these names were fresh in mind. And names there were in this book. It is the paradigm of "name-dropping." Anyone who was anyone in the first half of the 19th century has his or her name mentioned, in passing or as a major character. Historical context is one thing, but this goes over that "red line."

The whole premise of the novel – that Poe and Frances Sargent Locke Osgood had a physical love affair and that she bore him a child while both were married to other people – is difficult to credit. It is true that some writers have speculated that during this period Osgood had a love affair with Poe, but reliable evidence does not, at this time, exist to prove such a claim. Osgood met Poe in 1845, and they quickly became friends. She socialized with Poe at literary salons, visited him and his wife, Virginia, at their home, and published a number of poems in the *Broadway Journal*, of which he was editor. In the pages of the *Journal* they conducted an open literary flirtation, but, as critic Mary DeJong has said, "For Osgood, writing itself was a kind of performance, and she reveled in drama as much as Poe did." Their flirtatious poems, DeJong speculates, "define their roles as patron and protégé, artist and admirer—not the quality or depth of their emotions" (*The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, 5th Ed., Paul Lauter, General Editor). Creativity and imagination are to be admired, but there has to be some historical basis for it in an historical fiction novel. The majority of this book is "will they or won't they?" I won't spoil the book for anyone who actually reads it, but the answer is right out of a Harlequin romance (or so I suppose, being too snobbish to ever have read one).

Contemporary accounts relate the devotion Poe and Virginia had to each other, although it has been suggested that Virginia and Poe had a relationship more like that between brother and sister than between husband and wife. Poe biographer Joseph Wood Krutch has suggested that Poe did not need women "in the way that normal men need them", but only as a source of inspiration and care, and that Poe was never interested in women sexually.

Poe had several relationships with women; they were an important part of his life and his writing. The first woman, his mother, set a pattern for the other relationships – abandoned by her husband, she died at the age of 24 of tuberculosis, when Poe was two years old. Poe wrote, Poe replied, "In speaking of my mother you have touched a string to which my heart fully responds. To have known her is to be the object of great interest in my eyes. I myself never knew her — and never knew the affection of a father. Both died . . . within a few weeks of each other. I have many occasional dealings with adversity — but the want of parental affection has been the heaviest of my trials". (Ostrom, John Ward. *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2 vols, New York: Gordian Press Inc., 1966, pages 78-79). Poe clearly expresses his need of female attention and love. It is a theme we see recurring not only in his life but also in many of his literary works. His many

poems and short stories were a direct response to, and result of, the many women, and their complementary sorrows, that dominated his life.

It this picture and the impression I have from his writings that makes it difficult for me to see Poe as the sex magnet Cullen portrays him in this book.

As to Frances Osgood – during most of the book she is crushing on Eddie, fretting about what other people think of her, and dashing off the occasional sentimental verse that Poe publishes in his journal. In fact, Osgood was a much-admired popular poet. She thought of herself as a professional writer rather than as a literary artist and took full advantage of the many opportunities presented by a flourishing print culture. Her work and circumstances embody both the opportunities and the constraints of the contemporary literary marketplace. Osgood published in every venue available to her—books, magazines, pamphlets, anthologies, newspapers. Her poems, including beautiful and poignant expressions of maternal love and impassioned articulations of heterosexual love and enthrallment, were widely sought after by magazines such as Godey's Lady's Book and Sartain's Union Magazine. A contemporary reviewer claimed Osgood was Elizabeth Barrett Browning's equal as a poet but far superior in "grace and tenderness." This is not the character depicted in this book.

I have other nits to pick with this book. Several of the persons – who actually lived and had a part in Edgar Allan Poe's life – have their personalities and actions distorted. Others are represented fairly closely to what we know from history.

For example, Margaret Fuller plays a major role in the plot. She is shown to be a petty, scandal-mongering gossip who affects Native American jewelry. She is more interested in other people's personal lives than social works or the arts. This is the Margaret Fuller who was an American journalist, critic, and women's rights advocate associated with the American transcendentalism movement. She was the first full-time American female book reviewer in journalism. Her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* is considered the first major feminist work in the United States. Somehow, there is, as they say, a disconnect.

One character Cullen does get right is Rufus Griswold. His contemporaries considered him to be erratic, dogmatic, pretentious, and vindictive. He and Poe competed for the attention of poet Frances Sargent Osgood. They never reconciled their differences and, after Poe's death, Griswold wrote an unsympathetic obituary. Claiming to be Poe's chosen literary executor, he began a campaign to harm Poe's reputation that lasted until his own death eight years later.

These were complex, creative people. You wouldn't know it from this book. If you are interested in this period, historically and literarily, read biographies, literary criticism or, even better, their actual works. Just don't waste your time on this book.

Erin says

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot...>

Ah distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
that at the library I spied, a fictional tale of Poe's young bride.

Over the pages I did pour, but the book fast became a chore,
the text echoing verbatim lore, a novel that had come before.
After that I swore - no more!

It is a poor effort, I admit, but my comments on Lynn Cullen's *Mrs. Poe* are closely tied to the incident described in the paltry parody above this passage so please, bear with me while I invite you on a stroll down memory lane.

In December 2011, while browsing the new release shelves at my local library, I noticed Lenore Hart's *The Raven's Bride*. Intrigued, I brought the book home with me and while doing some background reading, realized the novel was at the center of a massive controversy citing allegations that Hart had plagiarized her work from Cothburn O'Neal's *The Very Young Mrs. Poe*. Not being one to place absolute trust in the news, I tracked down the older novel to see with my own eyes just how closely the books resembled one another. I was floored with shock by the correlation between each of the texts, but also dismayed at my lack of enthusiasm for the plot regardless of who was telling the story. Try as I might I couldn't make myself accept Edgar and Virginia's marriage as a union of passion. When all was said and done, the media squabble paired with my lukewarm assessment of both efforts left me with a horrendous headache and absolutely no desire to read anything remotely related to the macabre poet ever again.

Now my opinion being what it was you can probably understand why I had to fight the impulse to run far and fast when first hearing of Cullen's *Mrs. Poe*, but as more and more of my fellow readers took interest in the novel, I found myself faced with my own growing curiosity. Having never been fully satisfied by Hart or O'Neal, I wondered if there was even a remote possibility that Cullen would succeed where her predecessors had failed. So there you have it. I began this title a self-proclaimed skeptic with naught but a prayer that this go-round would prove better than my last. I never expected to fall in love with this book, but that my friends, is exactly what happened.

First and foremost, Cullen made Edgar a really believable romantic lead. Though Poe was quite a ladies' man, popular culture paints a very different picture and at the end of the day, this false perception is what Cullen was going up against when writing this book. For it to have any hope of success she needed to strip away the persona of fame and show readers the man beneath it. It is a challenge she rose to and executed with flawless grace.

Of course, Cullen has no difficulty tackling human emotion be it the suffering of a bereft mother, the longing of a fatherless child or the dangerous machinations of twisted mind and darkened heart. Deliciously provocative, no subject is off limits. Jealousy, obsession, revenge, desire, disloyalty - it is all here.

Cullen further embraced her subject matter by embedding hidden meaning within her narrative. Taking a cue from Poe and Osgood's passionate public exchange of poetry, a reader can deduce much by looking between the lines of Cullen's work.

One more note of praise and then I swear I'll rest my pen, but I would be committing a grave disservice if I did not mention the authentic atmospheric quality of this book. Seamlessly woven within the fabric of Poe's complicated love life is the history of New York City. Its changing landscape and growing population making it is as much a character of the novel as Griswold, Samuel or Eliza.

Spellbinding and seductive, *Mrs. Poe* is an impossibly addictive tale of tragic romance that refuses to let you go even after the final page.

Donna says

"Pay attention to fate, Mrs. Osgood. It will always have the last word"

Fact or not...I absolutely loved this novel about the affair between Frances Osgood and Edgar Allen Poe. It was beautifully written with a historical detail that enthralled me. Mystery, passion, compelling characters and heartbreak make this dark tale addictive.

"If I had known that our night together would be our only one, I would have not let you go that morning. I would have shanghied you on Astor's boat to China, or whisked you off to a castle in Scotland -taken you to a place where you could be mine forever more." "Now I must content myself with the memory of the only night I had truly lived"

You will fall in love with Poe in this novel only to have your heart ache for him in the end.

Laura says

I really, really liked this book. It was very well written and keeps you interested from beginning to end. Once you get to chapter four it moves quickly and you become fully vested in the novel. This is how a historical fiction about factual characters should read. It was an emotional read not just fact after fact. After reading this novel it makes me want to revisit some of the actual tales written by Edgar Allan Poe. Very well done Lynn Cullen. Very good character development!!!

Connie says

Lynn Cullen introduces us to the literati of New York City in 1845 in her novel "Mrs Poe". The poet Frances Osgood is a young mother raising two children while her philandering husband is off in another city. She meets Edgar Allan Poe in a literary salon. It's the start of a love triangle involving Frances, Poe, and his wife Virginia who is ill with consumption. When Frances and Poe write flirtatious love poems to each other in a literary journal under assumed names, rumors start about their relationship.

Poe had a miserable childhood where he felt abandoned and unloved. The struggles in his life influenced the darkness of his writing. When he was 26, he married his 13 year old cousin who retained her childlike qualities into adulthood. The book includes several of his poems, as well as a few written by Frances Osgood.

The author said in an interview, "It wasn't my intention to write a biography about Poe or Frances Osgood, fictionalized or otherwise. My aim was to take these two personalities as I came to understand them, put them together, and see what sparks flew." Well, there were plenty of sparks flying between Frances and Poe in this engaging story--some factual and some probably speculation.

Erika Robuck says

Having lived just outside of Baltimore my entire life and being a fan of Poe's macabre and romantic tales, I was thrilled to receive an early copy of MRS. POE for possible endorsement. From the first page, I was

spellbound by the dark and captivating story of the famous writer, his sickly wife, and his troubled mistress.

Frances Osgood is the best kind of heroine: sympathetic, flawed, industrious, and conflicted. Her husband dallies with other women, leaving her to support their young children while desperately trying to preserve her reputation in society. Frances does not plan or wish to fall in love with E. A. Poe, but the spark of their shared creative processes as writers and the frightening attention of Poe's child-bride are magnetic forces they can not control.

Like a story from the master himself, MRS. POE has suspicious characters, dark settings, and startling twists. By honoring Poe's memory through style and theme, MRS. POE represents the best in historical fiction, and would no doubt be a novel in which Poe himself would approve.

If you enjoy gothic tales of fascination, creativity, and suspense, you will love MRS. POE.
