

Edgar Allan Poe: Buried Alive (Biography and Falsehoods)

(Describer) Against a white background, clouds of black ink disperse through water. In the blackness, a scene emerges: a dimly-lit narrow street. Title: Baltimore Harbor, 1849. A man with a coat and suitcase walks slowly down the street. With black hair and a moustache, he looks down.

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[church bells ringing]

(male #1) When Edgar Allan Poe came to Baltimore, he was famous. He was making money off of his lecture tours. He had found financial backing to establish his magazine, which was his great dream.

(Describer) Coughing, he stops and turns.

He was about to marry his childhood sweetheart. What is it?

(Describer) A figure casts a shadow behind him.

Oh, no thank you. I will be on a train to New York. I have no need of a room.

(Describer) The shadow is cast over him. Poe walks away.

And he died.

(Describer) Someone carries a candle in a holder.

♪

(male #2) And who is it that gets the opportunity to announce to America that Poe has died? His sometime friend, but also literary rival, the Reverend Rufus W. Griswold, who wrote the very first obituary of Poe.

(Describer) Cobwebs shake as Poe carries the candle down a narrow corridor.

(male #3) Griswold succeeded in establishing the modern perception of Poe, really as the same person as one of the characters in his stories, as someone who is mentally deranged, as someone who is homicidal, a drinking, drug-using, womanizing scoundrel.

(Describer) A photo of Poe blinks.

That's an invention of Griswold. It's a complete fabrication. Who was the real Edgar Allan Poe? I feel like he slips further away from me the more I know about him.



(Describer) An ink signature reads "Edgar A Poe". Underneath, title: Buried Alive. The ink from the signature drips and spreads, revealing Poe's face. Accessibility provided by the US Department of Education.

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