



# The Raven (Classics You Should Know) (Volume 17)

*Edgar Allan Poe*

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## ...Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"The Raven" is a classic narrative poem by American writer Edgar Allan Poe. First published in January 1845, the poem is often noted for its musicality, stylized language, and supernatural atmosphere. It tells of a talking raven's mysterious visit to a distraught lover, tracing the man's slow fall into madness. The lover, often identified as being a student, is lamenting the loss of his love, Lenore. Sitting on a bust of Pallas, the raven seems to further instigate his distress with its constant repetition of the word "Nevermore". The poem makes use of a number of folk, mythological, religious, and classical references.

Poe claimed to have written the poem very logically and methodically, intending to create a poem that would appeal to both critical and popular tastes, as he explained in his 1846 follow-up essay, "The Philosophy of Composition". The poem was inspired in part by a talking raven in the novel *Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty* by Charles Dickens. Poe borrows the complex rhythm and meter of Elizabeth Barrett's poem "Lady Geraldine's Courtship", and makes use of internal rhyme as well as alliteration throughout.

"The Raven" was first attributed to Poe in print in the New York Evening Mirror on January 29, 1845. Its publication made Poe widely popular in his lifetime, although it did not bring him much financial success. The poem was soon reprinted, parodied, and illustrated. Critical opinion is divided as to the poem's literary status, but it nevertheless remains one of the most famous poems ever written.

**About the Author:** Edgar Allan Poe (born Edgar Poe; January 19, 1809 – October 7, 1849) was an American writer, editor, and literary critic. Poe is best known for his poetry and short stories, particularly his tales of mystery and the macabre. He is widely regarded as a central figure of Romanticism in the United States and American literature as a whole, and he was one of the country's earliest practitioners of the short story. Poe is generally considered the inventor of the detective fiction genre and is further credited with contributing to the emerging genre of science fiction. He was the first well-known American writer to try to earn a living through writing alone, resulting in a financially difficult life and career.



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