



The Pit and the Pendulum and Other Stories: The Whole Story

By Edgar Allan Poe

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The Pit and the Pendulum and Other Stories: The Whole Story By Edgar Allan Poe

The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. The intense darkness oppressed and stifled me so that I struggled for breath. Having been condemned to death by the Spanish Inquisition, the narrator descends into a kind of hell. Dizzy with weakness and fainting with fear, he experiences such torments that death itself would be welcome. What troubles him most is the eternal question: how will he die? Toledo Prison is notorious for the torture of the condemned. What minds have dreamed up the terror of the pit in the center of the cell? What is the significance of the painted figure of Time with his menacing pendulum? Why do the walls glow with heat? Experience with the narrator the intensity of his suffering when death seems inevitable but its form uncertain. Can anything, or anybody, help him?

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Grade 8 Up-This series entry presents Poe's unabridged text accompanied by annotated color and black-and-white illustrations and reproductions of various aspects of life during the stories' time periods. The selections include "The Gold-Bug," "The Oval Portrait," "The Cask of Amontillado," "Some Words with a Mummy," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." In some instances, as when there is a historical connection, the annotations are particularly enlightening, e.g., the information about the Inquisition and its relationship to "The Pit and the Pendulum." To maintain continuity, readers may prefer to read through the stories first and then return to the sidebars or vice versa. Libraries that own anthologies of Poe tales will not be denying readers the most important material-the stories themselves-if they pass on this one.

Joanne K. Cecere, Highland High School, NY

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About the Author

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) reigned unrivaled in his mastery of mystery. Born in Boston, he was orphaned at age three, expelled from West Point for gambling and became an alcoholic. In 1836 he secretly wed his thirteen-year-old cousin. *The Raven*, published in 1845, made Poe famous. He died in 1849 under what remain suspicious circumstances.

Basil Rathbone appeared in over eighty films including *Captain Blood*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, and *The Comedy of Terrors*, and made thirteen appearances in the tremendously popular *Sherlock Holmes* series.

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