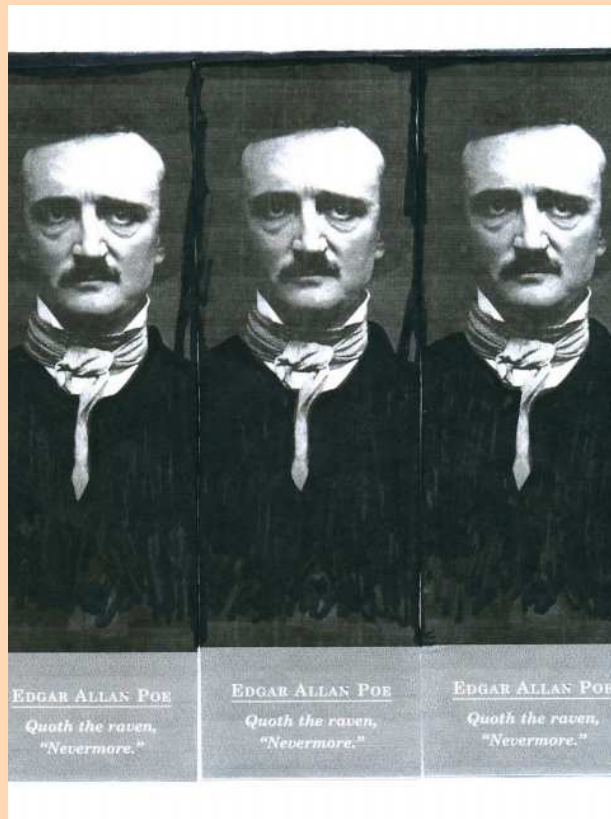


## THE RAVEN MAN

‘In Mournful and Everlasting Remembrance’

A novel based on the facts of the life of the amazing **EDGAR ALLAN POE**



By **Dedwydd Jones**

Published AuthorHouse. Available on [Amazon](#) website

The Pit and the Pendulum, The Fall of the House of Usher – horror stories known all over the world. But who wrote them? Yes, a familiar name – Edgar Allan Poe. But who was he? Was he really an opium addict and alcoholic? Did he actually marry his thirteen year old cousin? Was he a monster or a misunderstood genius? In *The Raven Man*, Dedwydd Jones, a fellow Celt, presents an historically accurate picture of Edgar’s astonishing life and times. The extraordinary Mr Poe is seen at last, as someone who was all too human after all.

## EXCERPT I

A flock of cawing rooks rose from the crowded elms of the parkland. The elegant porticoed Southern mansion stood bright in the white moonshine as the sinister winged shadows wheeled over the pile into the immense silvery skies beyond. Light filtered into the bedroom behind the cream-painted balcony of the second floor. The French windows stood open. Through them protruded the long brass neck of a telescope encased in polished black leather.

Hardly an inch of the walls inside were bare. Pinned up haphazardly were dozens of lithographs, drawings, prints, wood-cuts, copies of paintings which Edgar had picked up from ancient volumes and esoteric journals he had come across in his travels - Gothic cathedrals with hideous gargoyles, the Parthenon, the Roman Coliseum, ruins of amphitheatres, caryatids, the Athenian Agora; busts of the Emperor Augustus, next to sketches of Pallas Athene, their curving, clustered stylized curls brushed over the forehead, a fashion Edgar favoured. Shadowy Venetian palaces loomed over the dreaded Bridge of Sighs. An ivory gondola with a phantom gondolier at the helm, slid beneath its watery arches. There were charcoal sketches of storms, maelstroms, hurricanes, tornadoes, heeling ghost shops, sunken wrecks. All seemed to merge into a single gigantic unearthly turbulence, with Edgar at the centre.

Side by side with this vast tumult were Edgar's own drawings of the birth of the universe - an immense explosion from a central core, scattering flaming, multitudinous fragments into outer space, matrixes of the intergalactic swarms which later formed. Edgar's Pythagorean diagrams and theorems demonstrated the harmony of the spheres, just one of the streams of ineluctable beauties present at the cosmic birth.





## EXCERPT II:

### **The Transformation.**

Edgar paused by the window, his back to the door. He *felt* the shadow approaching behind him. He turned. Mr Jones, Mr Allan's black retainer and general factotum, now white-haired, stood like a statue before him. Mr Jones's smooth round face was taking on a weird sheen . His eye-lids drooped. He moved his arms in slow motion. Strange Creole whisperings fell from lips twisted into a bemused, eerie smile.

From the beginning of their friendship, Mr Jones had delighted in telling Edgar stories of the spirit world of Haiti; of the Legba, the youngest son of the Creator, a trickster who opened the way to the Gods; of the devil, 'a light-complected man in a white suit,' sitting on a horse, dragging chained souls to their doom at cross roads at midnight, of the 'houngans' and 'bocors,' the priests and sorcerers, and of the Loas, the ferocious, cruel spirits of the dead. He has recounted how Count Samedi and the Snake Gods could inhabit corpses, enslave them and have them stalk the land as zombies, agents of the powers of darkness. These were in the thrall of the ubiquitous 'loupgarous,' the vampires of the messengers of the dead. Edgar had absorbed these tales as naturally as the mythology and folklore of Ireland, with its banshees, its blood-drinking Dhroguhlas of Mourne, and on his mother's side, the Welsh 'lledrith', with its hearth-shriek, presaging death. In the Irish tales Edgar had read as a child, he had come to identify himself as the greatest of all Irish heroes, Cuchulain, the giant Chieftain who rode across the heavens in his chariot, rescuing his people from the terrifying specters of pestilence, war and death.

Mr Jones and Edgar lived on the same plane, the eternal Lands of pure imagination , the world of the fay, the realm of the unusual. But Mr Jones had inherited from his voodoo elders, the frightening powers of transformation. He could physically change his features so they seemed to belong to a different person, someone malefic from the cursed regions. Mr Jones, long

removed from the direct influence of his religion, now used this unholy ability as a harmless trick, but only with spirits like Edgar who believed, as he did, in the universe of the Other Side.

‘No more of your loupgarous,’ said Edgar, ‘you’ll have to invent some fresh ghouls.’

‘I’ll leave that to you,’ said Mr Jones with an amused, affectionate smile.



Virginia Clemm Poe – Edgar’s wife

### EXCERPT III:

#### **The Visit to Paradise**

On the Awena River not far from the port of Baltimore, Edgar had discovered a row of ancient weeping willows. Their drooping foliage spread low over the lapping water, forming shady green passageways dappled with sunlight. Edgar and Sissy walked down hand in hand to the water’s edge. Edgar meant this day to be special for Sissy. He had the ring in his pocket.

‘Look at that.’ Edgar pointed.

‘Why, it’s a canoe,’ gasped Sissy.

Edgar pushed it out into full view.

‘Why, look, rugs and cushions. And a hamper!’ She embraced Edgar.

He held the canoe steady as Sissy stepped in. She gazed around at the green canopy and the drooping boughs lit with shafts of golden light.

‘We grow in age and love together...’ Edgar quoted from a poem Sissy had often copied out for him.

‘...roaming the forest and the wild,’ Sissy joined in.

Edgar took Sissy’s hand, drew out the ring, slipped it onto her finger. He gently kissed her. They gazed wordlessly into each others’ eyes. The canoe floated away on the current.

Sissy suddenly sat up. ‘What’s that...music?’ she asked, bewilderment mingling with the pleasure in her voice, ‘it’s lovely.’ The faint melody stole over them. They looked around for the source of the sweet music. Edgar paddled to the curtain of foliage which cut off their view and the canoe slid out into the main stream, the leaves brushing against their faces.

At once they sat up, amazed. The canoe had been now transformed into a high-prowed ivory gondola and seemed to glide along of its own volition. The water was spread with sacred lotus, yellow and white Lilies, fringed along the banks with Purple Loosestrife and Rosebay Willowherbs. Along both sides as far as the eye could see, stretched meadows of Hyacinths, Blue Gentians, Daisies, Buttercups, Stars of Bethlehem, Archangels, Celandines, All Heal, Honeysuckle, Sunflowers, fragrant green-winged Musk and Lady Orchids, of all lands, climates and all seasons, all at once. Their odour filled the air as the low, humming music grew louder, mingling with the breezes and the lapping water. They heard nightingales and sky larks and high above, they saw the diving purple and gold Paradise King Fisher flash by for an instant before it disappeared into the floral canopies close by. Now they saw the banks were dotted with Pomegranate, Hibiscus and Tamarind trees, bursting with fruit. Nectarous ruby-throated humming birds hovered at every blossom while sun-birds with silver eyes hovered over the pale flowered gourd branches. The breeze carried the scything sounds of cicadas and the buzz of bees to their ears. At the heights of the banks, directly ahead of them, were groves of the Arbor Vitae, the Tree of Life. Edgar then knew they were entering the Garden of Aeden of the Ages, the Land of Eternal Apples, that ancient peaceable Kingdom so longed for in this life. The river ahead of them grew narrower and narrower and seemed to converge into one point ahead. They moved on through misty effulgence of drifting fogs and mists. All at once the clouds parted and the outline of huge

golden portals shone into view. A towering, graceful, female figure stood under the arch of the entrance, her arms outstretched towards them. Edgar and Sissy stood in awe, their arms now reaching out as well, for they knew this was Nesace herself, the planet Al Araf's Queen of Love and Beauty. The music of the spheres it seemed rose for a last time, the fragrance of roses enveloped them and the waters shone with an ethereal loveliness. Yes, they were inside the everlasting arms now. They had, however briefly, come home.

#### EXCERPT IV:

Edgar was enclosed in a blackness so thick it seemed immovable. He tried to push it aside but found he could hardly move his arms. He forced himself to open his eyes. A sudden flash in the darkness made him wince and blink. The flash again. It revealed the surface of a high-walled, polished metallic cell. The flash came from a deep narrow pit a few feet from where he lay. He tried to raise his arms and suddenly realized he was bound down on his back to a wide, wooden table. That flash again. He strained to see what lay around him. Edgar saw the upper walls were studded with drooping eye-slits, which gleamed with an intense malevolent yellow glow, like the eyes of a snarling tiger. Higher up in rows, he saw the faces of a myriad ebony clocks, their face shining dully. With a shudder Edgar saw that none of the time pieces had any hands and he could hear no ticking from them. He yelled out as he saw what was suspended immediately above him, a giant pendulum, the edges of its heavy disc sharp as a razor. It was drawn up to one side as if to swing down across him. Dominating the space above the pendulum, was a black marble figure of the Lord Death with his hour-glass, standing on a broad ledge, legs astride, a voluminous black cloak covering his skeletal frame. His skull grinned out from beneath his cowl. Time's scythe, the pendulum, and Time's ferocious eye-slits all seemed poised to converge on him. Edgar frantically struggled to get free. All at once, with a rushing, hissing noise the pendulum swung down. Edgar pressed himself against the table. The pendulum whooshed past, not an inch above his stomach and disappeared up into the shadows above. It paused there, as if waiting deliberately for its next terrifying passage. Suddenly, above all the horror, he heard a multitudinous squeaking, and the scrabbling of a thousand tiny rodent claws. He turned his head and saw from the pit that his cell was being invaded by a thousand ravenous giant rats, their tiny sharp teeth gleaming, their pink tongues

extended, and all moving towards him. The eye slits of the Lord Death gleamed. Time remained suspended. What would it be? – the pit, the pendulum or the rats? He yelled and struggled frantically again, but to no avail.

## Comments and Reactions

“ The Poe novel I really enjoyed reading. It painted a sympathetic picture without being uncritical, and brought his whole world to life wonderfully well. Blessings. ”

*Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Place*

“ This is an ‘autobiographical’ novel, à la Irving Stone, a fictionalized life of Edgar Allan Poe. The writing is as superb, ornate and Gothic as the writings of its main character. Lots of historical detail, sidelights, insights and foreshadowings. I like the way the past is presented here, as if it is the present. Poe was a fascinating person, and this is a fascinating book, I like the way Mr Jones plunges the reader into Poe’s life and the 19th century milieu. ”

*Reader’s Report, Writers Digest, USA*