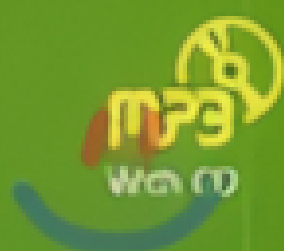


Reading the World *Now*

Rob Jordens • Jeff Zeter
Series Editor Casey Malarcher



2



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Reading the World Now 2

Rob Jordens • Jeff Zeter

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Scan and find the tracks.

The Dark Poems and Stories of Poe



Pre-Reading Questions

1. What poems and short stories did Edgar Allan Poe write?
2. What do you know about Poe's famous poem "The Raven"?

Vocabulary Preview

These are the key words from the passage. Check the words you are not familiar with.

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> agitate | <input type="checkbox"/> lyric | <input type="checkbox"/> anguish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> bereaved | <input type="checkbox"/> overt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> contrary | <input type="checkbox"/> paranoia | <input type="checkbox"/> demise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> psychological | <input type="checkbox"/> hallucinate | <input type="checkbox"/> reconcile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inevitable | <input type="checkbox"/> spearhead | <input type="checkbox"/> inexplicably |
| <input type="checkbox"/> subsequently | <input type="checkbox"/> influential | <input type="checkbox"/> theme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> theme | <input type="checkbox"/> theory | |



The Dark Poems and Stories of Poe



Edgar Allan Poe was a writer and poet born in the United States. His writing helped spearhead the American Romantic movement and is also famous for its frightening subject matter. Poe's attraction to dark subjects was deeply personal. His parents died during his youth. As a result, Poe spent much of his early life grieving over their deaths.

Although he was adopted by John Allan, a tobacco merchant, conflicts over Poe's gambling habits caused Poe to break from the Allan family and join the military. After being discharged from the armed services, Poe worked as a writer and editor but lost many jobs due to his drinking. He eventually went to live with his aunt and married his much younger cousin.

Poe spent much of his life editing and writing articles on the subject of literary theory. His work led him to develop his own ideas about poetry and art. He believed that all works of art should have a single effect on the intended audience. A single emotion should be expressed through any piece of art, no matter whether it was written, performed, or painted. Poe subsequently championed stories published in magazines and short lyric poems. He was unsupportive of longer works, especially epic poems, as they usually were written to have multiple effects on a reader. Poe believed that art should be produced for its own sake. This was contrary to the positions of several other thinkers of his time who argued instead that art should serve a higher purpose, such as instilling values or portraying moral lessons.

Poe was famous for his highly structured lyric poetry that used rhythm and repetition

to create dreadful moods. “The Raven” is perhaps the most famous poem written by Poe and follows a narrator who laments the death of his one true love, Lenore. A raven visits the bereaved man, who believes the bird was sent from the underworld. The man then asks the raven a number of questions regarding his lost love. Despite the man’s anguish, the raven repeatedly answers with only the word “Nevermore.” This repetition only increases the narrator’s anguish, yet the poem does not seek to reconcile the situation in order to provide a moral lesson. In accordance with Poe’s literary theory, the poem conveys a feeling of hopelessness, coupled with an eerie mood, which became Poe’s defining literary style.

Similarly, Poe’s short stories combine spooky, dark elements with a sense of despair. These themes are frequently connected to a feeling of loss and a fear of one’s inevitable demise. For instance, Poe’s short story “The Fall of the House of Usher” follows a narrator as he visits an old friend. He learns that his friend’s sister has died and is currently entombed in a vault in the house. The narrator and his friend bury her, only to find that they are inexplicably agitated for the next week. His host begins to hallucinate. Eventually, the deceased sister reappears in the house and falls on her brother, violently killing him. The narrator then flees the estate and turns to see the house sink into the bog surrounding it.

The work includes many elements typical of the gothic genre in general. Such elements are descriptions of the decaying mansion accompanied by other eerie elements throughout the story. For Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher” explored the depths of human fear, as the two men become more frightened after burying the woman. The story focuses on psychological paranoia, much more so than other horror tales of the time. Several other stories by Poe explore similar themes but never become overtly violent or bloody.

Poe’s writing was poorly received in America due to his public image as a drunkard and gambler. However, Poe’s writing was translated into other languages and became influential in a number of countries, including France and Russia. He has received more critical attention in recent years and is now considered one of the great American writers of his time.



• The Museum of Edgar Allan Poe in Richmond, Virginia

- 14 champion — to support
- 15 epic poem — a long poem that narrates a hero’s life or deeds
- 37 vault — an underground room, usually with an arched ceiling

Reading Comprehension

A Mark each statement as true (T), false (F), or inferred (I) according to the passage.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Edgar Allan Poe grew up in a large and happy family. | T | F | I |
| 2. Poe believed that each poem he wrote should produce one emotion. | T | F | I |
| 3. Poe's writing was not as popular in the US as it was in Europe. | T | F | I |
| 4. The narrator of "The Raven" lost his love to another man. | T | F | I |
| 5. Stories written in the gothic genre focus on spooky elements. | T | F | I |

B Choose the best answer.

- According to paragraph 2, why did Poe break from his adapted family?
(A) They didn't want him to join the military.
(B) They opposed his taste for gambling.
(C) They thought he should marry someone other than his cousin.
(D) He didn't want to enter the tobacco business.
- What was Poe's opinion about the production of art?
(A) He believed that art should be made for its own sake.
(B) He thought that art should teach a moral lesson.
(C) He felt that art should have multiple effects on readers or viewers.
(D) He argued that art should instill values.
- What is the main idea of this reading?
(A) Edgar Allan Poe's parents died when he was young.
(B) Poe spent much of his life writing and editing.
(C) Poe wrote stories and poems that combined horror and sorrow.
(D) Poe's writing was translated into other languages.

C Read the passage again, and then write the main idea of the passage in one or two sentences. Use your own words.

Vocabulary Review

A Choose the correct definition of the word in bold.

1. A raven visits the **bereaved** man, who believes the bird was sent from the underworld.
(A) bitter
(B) grieving
(C) furious
2. His host begins to **hallucinate**.
(A) feel sick
(B) stumble
(C) see visions
3. These themes are frequently connected to a feeling of loss and a fear of one's inevitable **demise**.
(A) death
(B) job
(C) marriage

B Choose the best word to fill in the blanks.

1. Edgar Allan Poe wrote about literary _____.
(A) agitation (B) theory (C) paranoia (D) lyrics
2. There was no real reason for fear, but he was _____ upset.
(A) subsequently (B) hardly (C) inexplicably (D) overtly
3. In France and other countries, Poe's writing was _____.
(A) influential (B) anguished (C) bereaved (D) reconciled
4. _____ to what others said, Poe believed in art for its own sake.
(A) Psychological (B) Reconciled (C) Inevitably (D) Contrary
5. Feeling some _____, the man kept turning around to find no one there.
(A) paranoia (B) themes (C) military (D) lament

Language Form and Meaning

A Choose the correct form of the word to fill in the blanks.

1. The people who lost their jobs were very _____.
(A) agitation (B) agitators (C) agitated (D) agitating
2. The water looked real to him, but he was _____.
(A) hallucinated (B) hallucinating (C) hallucination (D) hallucinatory
3. When his beloved dog died, all he could do was _____.
(A) lament (B) lamentation (C) lamented (D) lamentable
4. She keeps all of the books in her room _____ organized.
(A) thematic (B) themed (C) theme (D) thematically
5. My friend's father is very _____ in the way he disciplines his children.
(A) military (B) militaristic (C) militant (D) militarily

B Underline the correct word or phrase in parentheses.

1. Poe's miserable early life (resulted from / resulted in) his having lost his parents.
2. Drinking is just one way people (escape to / escape from) their daily problems.
3. Because of his gambling, Poe (threw away / threw up) his adopted family.
4. The narrator of "The Raven" (hoped to / hoped from) share his woes with the bird.
5. The two men became (frightened with / frightened by) the dead woman.

Discussion Topics

Discuss these questions with your class.

1. Why do you think people enjoy reading stories and poems that are terrifying?
2. Who is a famous writer today known for writing scary stories?



Scan and find the tracks.

Miller's America Through a Salesman and a Witch

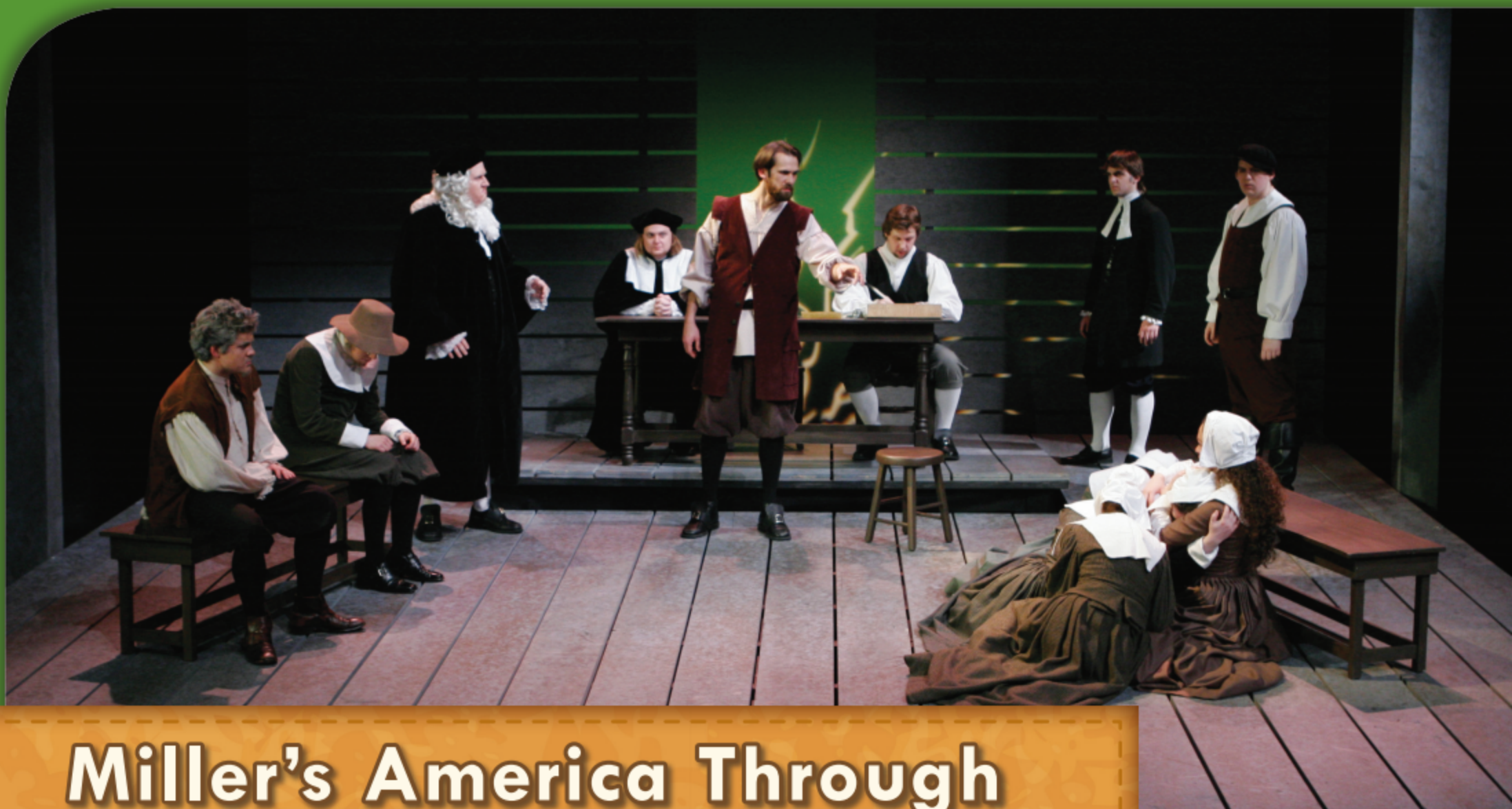
Pre-Reading Questions

1. Other than Shakespeare, who are some famous playwrights?
2. What kinds of characters make a play interesting?

Vocabulary Preview

Match the words with their definitions.

- | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| 1. acclaimed | • | • | a. being well-known for something bad |
| 2. charming | • | • | b. to go across; to last |
| 3. contrast | • | • | c. not guilty; without blame |
| 4. infamous | • | • | d. famous; well-known |
| 5. innocent | • | • | e. to show or have clear differences |
| 6. investigate | • | • | f. ideas others have about a person, true or untrue |
| 7. nomination | • | • | g. respected and praised |
| 8. renowned | • | • | h. to look closely at, usually because of a suspected crime |
| 9. reputation | • | • | i. having a personality that is attractive to others |
| 10. span | • | • | j. a process of suggesting someone for a prize or position |



Miller's America Through a Salesman and a Witch



Well-known American author and playwright Arthur Miller was born on October 17, 1915 in Harlem, New York. Miller first studied journalism and then English at the University of Michigan. Before he obtained his degree, Miller had written several award-winning works. Some of Miller's most renowned plays include *A View from the Bridge*, *The Crucible*, and *All My Sons*. His career in the performing arts spanned over 60 years.

The play *Death of a Salesman* was Miller's most famous work. The 1949 play is a classic of American theater. It has also been called an attack on American capitalism. Soon after opening, it was positively reviewed and went on to receive numerous awards. These awards included the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Tony Award for Best Play, and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. The play is still widely performed today.

The main character in the play is Willy Loman. He is a traveling salesman of retirement age. His hopes in life seem to be fading away as he loses his low-paying job. Willy Loman is forced to rely on his only real friend for money. As he slowly realizes that he has not accomplished the material success he had always tried to achieve, he begins to lose his sanity.

Loman's personal tragedy grows as he realizes that his children have also not succeeded in achieving great wealth or social status. Loman had always believed in the dream of easy success and wealth. This belief had also been instilled in his sons. The American Dream is the primary focus of Loman's life, and it is the main theme of the play.

Loman believes in a version of the American Dream that suggests that a well-liked and charming businessman will eventually be rewarded. This contrasts with the less romantic version of hard work and persistence being the key to achieving one's dreams.

25 Aside from *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible* is Miller's other most notable achievement. The acclaimed play focuses on the witch hunts that occurred in the late 1600s and resulted in the horrifying deaths of innocent people. However, the work goes beyond a simplistic retelling of historical fact. Miller's play explored the similarities between
30 the paranoia-fueled witch trials and the fear of communism running rampant throughout the highest levels of government in the United States during the 1950s. At that time, the House Un-American Activities Committee questioned many individuals suspected of being or supporting communists. Miller was among those investigated. In order
35 to prevent the assumption of guilt of his friends, Miller refused to testify or provide any names to the committee. His refusal caused Miller's own name to be put onto Hollywood's infamous blacklist. This distinction damaged the careers and reputations of many actors and writers of that time.

40 Although the first reviews for *The Crucible* were negative, the work is now considered to be a classic of American theater. It is often studied and performed in universities. It has also been adapted to film twice, once by Miller himself. The playwright's movie version of his own work earned him an Academy Award nomination. Miller's tale has also been turned into
45 a Pulitzer-Prize winning opera. *The Crucible* still moves audiences today with its powerful story and study of the darker sides of human nature.

Miller was not only recognized for his important works in the world of theater. His personal life also brought him attention. In 1956, he married the iconic movie star Marilyn Monroe. One of America's
50 most famous sex symbols, Monroe enjoyed success in acting, singing, and modeling. Their marriage ended in divorce in 1961, and Miller soon after remarried. His second wife was the Austrian photographer Inge Morath. Despite this fact, many still link Miller with the beautiful
55 Monroe.

Arthur Miller's powerful writing questioned society's values and human nature. His plays were not only popular but also enduring. His critique of American
60 society and government brought him personal hardship. However, it also made him one of the most influential writers of the modern era.

30 running rampant — having widespread influence without any control

37 blacklist — a list of people who should be avoided or denied privileges

49 iconic — having qualities of a symbol that represents a belief, a movement, or a population



Reading Comprehension

A Mark each statement as true (T), false (F), or inferred (I) according to the passage.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Miller studied theater at a university in New York. | T | F | I |
| 2. Miller's most famous work is <i>The Crucible</i> . | T | F | I |
| 3. Willy Loman was not a very successful salesman. | T | F | I |
| 4. Miller won an Academy Award. | T | F | I |
| 5. Miller went through some difficult times in his career. | T | F | I |

B Choose the best answer.

- According to paragraph 3, all of the following are true of the character of Willy Loman EXCEPT
 - He had children.
 - He believed in the American Dream of hard work and persistence.
 - He was not a young man in the play.
 - He lost his job.
- What is the writer's opinion of the 1600s witch hunts?
 - They were horrifying.
 - They were a notable achievement.
 - They were simplistic.
 - They didn't really happen.
- What is the main idea of the passage?
 - Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is better than *The Crucible*.
 - Some people did not like Miller's work.
 - Miller used his plays to say things about society.
 - Miller met many famous people through his long and productive career.

C Complete the table below to summarize the information about the two plays discussed in the passage.

Play	Story	Miller's intention	Critic's reviews at opening
<i>Death of a Salesman</i>			
<i>The Crucible</i>			