

NARRATOR'S NOTES: EDGAR ALLAN POE

Scene 1:

Among his multitude of achievements, THOMAS JEFFERSON, 3rd President of the U.S., was proudest for his establishment of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. It was his belief that Northern colleges such as Harvard were inappropriate for free-spirited young Southern-gentlemen unsuited for stiff conformity.

From the Age of 3-years, EDGAR ALLAN POE was raised as a foster-child by the family of a Richmond-based Merchant named JOHN ALLAN. Though he was never formally adopted by these people Poe was given a fine Classical Education which when combined with his natural aptitude for learning equipped him well for matriculation at JEFFERSON'S University at the age of seventeen when most of his fellow students were the scions of priveleged families and were in excess of nineteen years of age when becoming Freshmen.

MONTICELLO was JEFFERSON'S palatial home overlooking the University.

POE had been introduced to Poetry at an early Age by the Tutors his foster-father employed for him. He was inordinately adept at translating Latin and Greek Poets.

JOHN ALLAN had removed his family to England to reestablish his Business during Poe's formative years. They had remained in that country for almost three years.

GEORGE GORDON BYRON is regarded as one of the greatest European Poets of all time. He was renowned for his extravagant lifestyle which included extraordinary exploits in all aspects of

human existence. As a Revolutionary he became involved in Italy's struggle to break free from Austrian Rule then died in Greece where he fought against the Ottoman Empire as a defender of Greek-culture.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was a major English Poet who was instrumental in launching what is known as the Romantic Age in English Literature.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was another British Poet who as a contemporary of WORDSWORTH helped launch the English Romantic Period. Of the two, COLERIDGE is probably best remembered for his "RHYME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER" which may have influenced Herman Melville when he conceived the idea for "MOBY DICK".

HELLESPONT is an ancient name for what is now known as "the Dardenelle-straits which separate Europe from Asia. The Poet BYRON reportedly swam across this body of water to prove his athletic prowess. In duplication of this legendary feat Poe crossed the JAMES RIVER at Richmond, Virginia, as a swimmer.

PATROCLUS was a figure in Greek Mythology as recorded in Homer's ILIAD. He played a prominent role in the Trojan Wars.

HUBRIS, in Ancient Greece, referred to actions without remorse on the part of a perpetrator to establish the superiority of himself at the expense of another individual. In modern English usage the term is used to describe any outrageous exhibition of pride or disregard for basic moral laws.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON was an Writer from Concord, Massachusetts, who publicly advocated rebellion against the Literary-styles of Europe through establishment of a unique American Literary Tradition.

"FROGS" is a Comedy written by the Ancient Greek Playwright

ARISTOPHANES. Essentially the story deals with people who plan and plot rebellion but fail to act - "they croak but seldom swim". POE thought little of New England authors in general and of EMERSON's followers in particular - FROG-PONDIANS, in his terminology - because of their exclusivity and unwillingness to participate in Real Causes.

Due perhaps to POE's immaturity vis-a-vis his fellow students who were older and wealthier than he, his career at U. of V. was doomed to end prematurely. This precipitated a crisis between himself and the Foster-father who refused to underwrite his gambling debts.

Scene 2:

After departing U. of Virginia, Poe ventured to Boston, Massachusetts, where he eventually published anonymously a booklet of forty pages entitled TAMERLANE AND OTHER POEMS.

While there, out of economic necessity he enlisted in the Army using the name "Edgar Perry". Within a relatively short time he achieved the highest rank available to a mere Recruit and soon began contemplating becoming a Commissioned Officer. For this however he needed to enroll at West Point Military Academy in New York State. Prior to this happening it was necessary for him to hire someone to take his place as an enlisted Soldier.

Needing money to extract himself from his contract with the Army, Poe attempted a reconciliation with JOHN ALLAN.

Scene 3:

After being "drummed out" of West Point for numerous infractions