

2. The Oval Portrait

'The Oval Portrait' was first published as a longer version titled 'Life in Death' in Graham's Magazine in 1842. The shorter version, renamed 'The Oval Portrait' was published in the April 26, 1845 edition of the Broadway Journal. This is the story of an artist who wants to make a painting of his young wife but becomes so obsessed with it that he doesn't realize his wife is dying meanwhile. This is a short horror story about the relationship between art and life, through the narrator's encounter with the oval portrait of a young woman in a chateau in the Appenines.

About the Author

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) was an American writer, poet, literary critic, and editor. Poe is best known for his poetry and short stories. He is widely regarded as a central figure of Romanticism in the United States and of American literature as a whole. He is generally considered the inventor of detective fiction and is further credited with contributing to the emerging genre of science fiction. He is famous for his dark, mysterious poems and stories, including The Raven, The Black Cat, The Fall of the House of Usher, and Heart. His tale The Murders in the Rue Morgue (1841) initiated the modern detective story, and the atmosphere in his tales of horror is unrivaled in American fiction. His "The Raven (1845) is among the best-known poems in national literature.

The Oval Portrait (Summary)

This is a story written by American writer Edgar Allan Poe. It is a horror type of story about the relationship between art and life. It is the shorter version of the story 'Life in Death'. In this story, we can find double stories or it is a story within a story that is known as a frame narrative.

The story begins with the narrator and his servant Pedro who arrived at a deserted Chateau of the Apennines of central Italy in the

evening. The narrator was seriously wounded for unknown reasons. The servant took the narrator inside the Chateau forcibly because there was cold outside. They established themselves in one of the rooms which was the smallest and the least furnished apartment of the chateau. Its decorations were rich but they were in a decaying state. There were unmanaged old paintings, tapestries and trophies.

The narrator showed a deep interest in the paintings of the wall. He lit a candlestick which was on the head of his bed. The narrator also found a small book upon the pillow. He started reading a book related to paintings. It was almost midnight. His servant Pedro was sleeping. When the narrator changed the place of the candlestick, he saw an oval portrait. It was the portrait of a beautiful lady. It revealed the head and shoulders of a young woman.

He was charmed by the portrait which was quite attractive. He went to the lines of the book. He got information as the woman depicted in the portrait was the young bride of the artist. She was perfect wife in every respect

According to the information, the woman in the oval portrait was the wife of a passionate painter who loved his artwork more than anything else. One day, he desired to paint a picture of his beautiful wife. He made his wife sit beside him on the chair. The artist started to paint. He became quite obsessed and devoted to his artwork. He continued painting the portrait for many weeks. His wife remained there for weeks without care. She became weaker and weaker. She didn't tell her pains to her husband and her husband didn't ask about her condition. He kept on painting the portrait of his wife. At last, he finished his painting. He became very happy to show the nice painting of his beloved to her. When he turned to her, he found that his wife was dead.