

Imp: Being the Lost Notebooks of Rufus Wilmot Griswold in the Matter of the Death of Edgar Allan Poe

Douglas Vincent Wesselmann

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The secrets of the last, missing week of Edgar Allan Poe are revealed by the lost journals of his rival, his friend, his literary executor, his failed assassin, Rufus Wilmot Griswold. Imp is a Gothic-Noir laudanum and absinthe soaked quest through the perversions, violence, and horror of pre-Civil War Baltimore that inverts a literary legend and celebrates the human compulsion to do wrong.

Edgar Allan Poe left Richmond, Virginia, on September 27th of 1849, bound via steamship for Baltimore, where he was to catch a train north to Philadelphia and then on to New York City. He never arrived at his final destination. Found shabbily dressed and incoherent in a Baltimore gutter on October 3rd, he was taken to the city's Washington College Hospital, where he died, still delirious, on October 7th. Nothing whatsoever was known of his activities in the period from his boarding of the boat in Richmond until his discovery nearly a week later. Those six missing days have remained one of the most intriguing of all the unsolved mysteries in literary history. In September of 2005, a musty, leather folio was located at the bottom of a misplaced carton stacked in the archives of the University of Iowa's Poe collection. This folio, misplaced among the papers of noted Poe scholar Thomas Mabbot, contained several handwritten journals, signed and dated by Mr. Rufus Wilmot Griswold (1815-1857), Poe's literary executor. These are the contents of those journals: A complete telling of the facts related to the last, lost week in the life and death of Edgar Allan Poe.



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