

Annabel Lee

by Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe wrote Annabel Lee in 1849. Many scholars believe this sad poem refers to the death of his wife, Virginia, in 1847 at the age of 24.

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea:
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—

And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the side of the sea.

Questions

1. As well as rhyming words at the end of a line, Poe uses internal rhymes such as “beams” and dreams” in the last stanza. Find another example of internal rhyme.
2. What is a sepulchre?
3. What is an example of alliteration in the poem?
4. In the line, “But we loved with a love that was more than love,” why does Poe repeat love/loved three times?

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. seraphs
2. coveted
3. sepulchre
4. dissever
5. night-tide

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1) "With a love that the winged **seraphs** of heaven / Coveted her and me"

a. birds, especially lovebirds b. cirrus clouds c. angels or cherubs d. fairies or pixies

2) "With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven / **Coveted** her and me"

a. covered; enclosed b. comforted or soothed c. granted; gave d. envied; wanted

3) "To shut her up in a **sepulchre** / In this kingdom by the sea"

a. grass roof cottage b. tower or turret c. grave or tomb d. prison; dungeon

4) Nor the demons down under the sea, / Can ever **dissever** my soul from the soul / Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

a. separate; divide b. save or restore c. unite; join d. be worthy of; deserve

5) all the **night-tide**, I lie down by the side

a. fortnight; two weeks b. time after the early tide c. eternity d. dusk to dawn; night