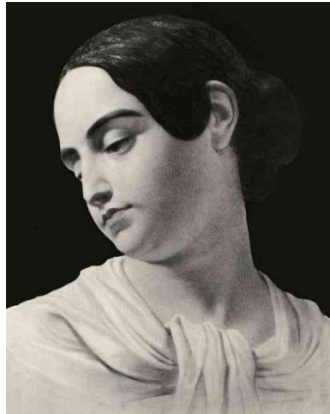




Virginia Clemm—a first-cousin to Edgar Allan Poe—became his wife in the spring of 1836.

Historians believe this image of Virginia—apparently the only one which exists today—was created immediately after her death (at the age of 24) on the 30th of January, 1847.

The Edgar Allen Poe Society of Baltimore provides a [series of eyewitness quotes](#) regarding Virginia Clemm Poe. Let's start with one about her appearance:

Mrs. Poe looked very young; she had large black eyes, and a pearly whiteness of complexion, which was a perfect pallor. Her pale face, her brilliant eyes, and her raven hair gave her an unearthly look. One felt that she was almost a disrobed spirit, and when she coughed it was made certain that she was rapidly passing away. (Mrs. Mary Gove Nichols, "Reminiscences of Edgar Allan Poe," reprint, p. 8).

How did Poe treat his wife? Was it obvious that they loved each other?

One of his [Poe's] severe chroniclers says: "It is believed by some that he really loved his wife; if he did, he had a strange way of showing his affection." Now it appears to me that he showed his affection in the right way, by endeavoring to make his companion happy. According to the opportunities he possessed, he supplied her with the comforts and luxuries of life. He kept a piano to gratify her taste for music, at a time when his income could scarcely afford such an indulgence. I never knew him to give her an unkind word, and doubt if they ever had any disagreement. That Virginia loved him, I am quite certain, for she was by far too artless to assume the appearance of an affection which she did not feel. (Lambert A. Wilmer, 1866).

Were there any special expressions of love which Virginia demonstrated about her husband? An eyewitness says that she slept with a picture of Poe under her pillow:

The day before Mrs. Poe died I left to make some arrangements for her comfort. She called me to her bedside, took a picture of her husband from under her pillow kissed it and gave it to me. She opened her work box and gave me the little jewel case I mentioned to you. (Mrs. Shew to Ingram, March 28, 1875.)

How did Poe react to his wife's death?

When his wife died Mr. Poe took it mighty hard. She was buried up in the old Dutch cemetery but they afterward moved her to Baltimore . . . He used to cry over her grave every day and kept it green with flowers. (Mrs. Rebecca Cromwell, a former Fordham neighbor, quoted in "Edgar Poe's Cottage," Scranton Republican, June 21, 1883, p. 2, col. 3, reprinted from the New York Herald, and reprinted in K. W. Cameron, The New England Writers and the Press, 1980, p. 64.) (Curiously, Mrs. Cromwell was under the impression that Virginia's remains had been moved to Baltimore about 1878, although this did not occur until 1885.)

Click on the image for a better view.

Credits:

Image online, courtesy Poe Museum.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Virginia-Clemm-Poe>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Virginia-Clemm-Poe>