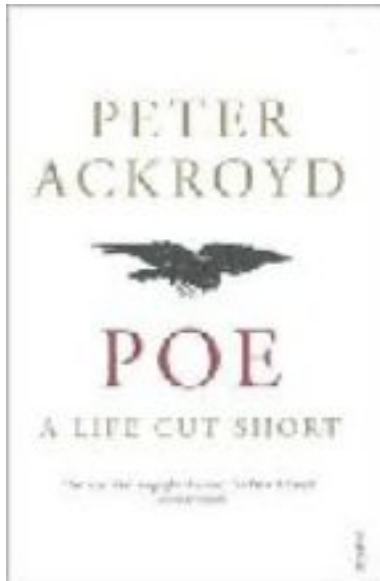


POE A LIFE CUT SHORT



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Gothic, mysterious, theatrical, fatally flawed, and dazzling, the life of Edgar Allan Poe, one of America's greatest and most versatile writers, is the ideal subject for Peter Ackroyd. Poe wrote lyrical poetry and macabre psychological melodramas; invented the first fictional detective; and produced pioneering works of science fiction and fantasy. His innovative style, images, and themes had a tremendous impact on European romanticism, symbolism, and surrealism, and continue to influence writers today. In this essential addition to his canon of acclaimed biographies, Peter Ackroyd explores Poe's literary accomplishments and legacy against the background of his erratic, dramatic, and sometimes sordid life. Ackroyd chronicles Poe's difficult childhood, his bumpy academic and military careers, and his complex relationships with women, including his marriage to his thirteen-year-old cousin. He describes Poe's much-written-about problems with gambling and alcohol with sympathy and insight, showing their connections to Poe's childhood and the trials, as well as the triumphs, of his adult life. Ackroyd's thoughtful, perceptive examinations of some of Poe's most famous works shed new light on these classics and on the troubled and brilliant genius who created them.