

# THE TRAGIC TALE OF NICKOLAUS ALBERT POE



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*By Peaches Pacione & Lewis Unknown*

There is a website lost deep within the bowels of the internet. No blog or journal links to this site and of those few still living who know the url none will share it, but still every year a handful of hardy souls will stumble across it hidden within the results of a Google search composed of tragically misspelled words and hate filled epithets. Awaiting those curious individuals is an amateurish, almost labyrinthine layout composed of broken images, dead links, garishly coloured text in illegible fonts, and missing pages. Only one thing is truly noticeable or memorable: the title which reads, "I am the writer Nickolaus Albert Poe, behold my words ye mighty and despair!" They may stare for a few minutes, shocked by such a blatant display of ego but soon they will leave in search of more exciting sites. However now and again there will be one whose curiosity is greater than their desire for titillation and they will piece together the few remaining facts of his life and work; a path which eventually leads to me. I am perhaps the only man alive who knows the full story, and today I will tell it to you, exactly as my father told it to me and his father told it to him.

Despite his proud declaration Nickolaus Albert Poe was as much a writer as Pol Pot was a humanitarian; over 30 years old, he squatted in his grandparent's basement like a troll beneath a bridge. His only real connection to the outside world was a flickering computer screen, where he would spend hours slowly building his stories, word by torturous word, unburdened by such concerns as plot or grammar. When they were done he would publish them in his own magazines and anthologies that he would then desperately try to sell in nightclubs or at concerts on the few occasions he left his basement lair.

Now such an individual would normally elicit feelings of pity in the hearts of his fellow men but Nickolaus had an unfortunate character trait, an inability to accept any criticism of his work or even to see it as others might. In fact if anyone dared to provide a less

than flattering opinion of his writing he would respond with hate filled rants, insults and death threats. No one was safe from his vitriolic attacks, neither man, woman, nor child; even his critics' friends and families were fair game to this stunted dwarf of a man. One of his favourite tactics was to write obscenity laced revenge fantasies and it was this that would ultimately lead to his great crime, and tragic fate. Of course like many such men he was a coward and would never have dared to act on his threats and fantasies, it was a cruel twist of fate then that delivered him the tool that would seal his doom and that of so many others. As with most tragedies it began with an act of kindness done with the best intentions; a relative bought him an antique typewriter for Christmas, and though the provenance was unproven it was said to have belonged to H.P. Lovecraft himself and to have been the very typewriter he had used to write *The Call of Cthulhu*. That kind hearted relative would have done less damage to the world had he given him a rifle and directions to the nearest bell tower.

Nickolaus immediately became enamoured with the typewriter, he claimed the hammering of the keys provided inspiration for his writing, and he began to type out all his stories on it before transferring them to a digital medium. One night he discovered another poor review; consumed by a fit of rage he sat himself down to the retypewriter to compose one of his revenge fantasies and pulled out the Barbie doll he had stolen from his half-sister so many years ago. His only friend and companion in the dank and gloomy basement lair he called home he had named her Patricia and began to mutter to her.

"What should we do to this one my darling?" he paused for a few moments listening to a voice only he could hear. "Ooh that is nasty, what an evil woman you are Patricia. But yes a car crash, a fatal one. Should her head be decapitated? Of course it should, what kind of a fatal car crash would it be without decapitation." And so he continued, his muttering hidden by the click-clacking of the typewriter's keys. As he typed though he noticed something unusual, with each key he hit he began to feel drained, sweat formed upon his brow, and his eyes felt heavy. The farther he went into the story, the more difficult it became to continue until by the end he was barely able to hit the keys, with his

tale finally concluded he collapsed by the typewriter and slept until morning. When he awoke he read over his piece and was excited, it was the best work he had ever done and he couldn't wait to show it to his critic. Quickly copying it to a word file he visited their blog only to find a post from their brother informing people that they had died in a car crash last night. Surely it was a coincidence, Nickolaus thought, his story couldn't have been responsible. Feeling equal parts excitement and dread he tracked down the details of the crash... It had happened exactly as in his story: the foggy night; the tired lorry driver; even the decapitation. For a moment he was consumed by guilt and fear that he would be caught and punished but that passed all too soon. What was his critic but a glorified fanfiction writer who had tried to poison his career! Who had lied about him to publisher after publisher until no one would touch his stories. No he had deserved the death Nickolaus had written and he was not alone, as for getting caught... Well who would believe that one man could control the fate of another with an old typewriter?

But how to be sure that it wasn't a coincidence... There was only one answer. He would write another tale, one featuring even more detail, and if it happened exactly as he had written then he would know for sure. Picking out another of his critics he crafted a story in which that individual was raped and murdered in a robbery gone bad. Once again he felt drained as he typed and upon waking he noticed some grey hairs in the mirror where the day before there had been none. He spent the next week anxiously checking the news and blogs, hoping to hear that his target had died as he had written, he had almost given up hope and began to believe the car crash had been a mere coincidence when his critic surprised a burglar as he was robbing the critic's home and was raped and murdered exactly as Nickolaus had written.

Now knowing of the power he had stumbled upon Nickolaus had to decide how best to employ it, for while it had been satisfying to exact revenge upon those he felt had wronged him surely there was more he could do. Had he been a better man he might have chosen to exact justice on terrorists and murderers who eluded justice, on those who destroyed the lives of others on a whim, but Nickolaus Albert Poe was not a man but a child in a man's body, and as such all he cared about was his own dream to

become a famous writer. And so he came to the conclusion that if all the other horror writers were dead then the publishers would have no choice but to publish him and finally expose the world at large to his genius.

Over the next year he wrote the deaths of hundreds of horror writers from beloved bestsellers to amateurs who posted their fiction on websites, anyone who was a better writer than Nickolaus Albert Poe was a target and so no one was safe. They died by drowning, by electrocution, by fire, poison, noose, blade and gun, and in one particularly bizarre case being crushed under a gnu accidentally fired by catapult, since Nickolaus's spelling was as good as his personal hygiene. Eventually the papers caught wind of the mysterious number of deaths and soon the entire world was wondering about the horror writer's curse. All this while Nickolaus still remained unpublished, as for each writer he struck down another seemed to take his place in spite of the danger to their health.

Of course Nickolaus himself paid a toll for his crimes, each life he took drained more and more of his own life force until at the age of thirty-three he looked to be a man of eighty, his remaining hair grey, his skin dotted with liver spots and wrinkles. And still he sacrificed more and more to the cursed typewriter always believing that just one more death was all he needed while the rejection letters piled up. In the end he died at that typewriter a bitter old man damned by the blood on his hands.

My grandfather, who was a neighbour of the Poes at the time, helped his grandparents clear out the basement which was how he acquired Nickolaus's journal and the typewriter itself. It sits in my study and every now and again it will start to type on its own, the soul of Nickolaus Albert Poe still bound to it, writing tales that no one wants to read while the world at large has forgotten he ever existed. In fact the only evidence that he ever lived at all is that solitary website in the wilderness of the internet with it's proud declaration, "I am the writer Nickolaus Albert Poe, look upon my words ye mighty and despair!"