

## **Who, When, Wow! Mystery Edition**

### **The Poe Toaster**

**Carly.** Hello people. I'm back! Still the host of this top secret podcast. Now you may be wondering, "Hey Carly, when will the folks at BUTTHED find out about your podcast?" The answer is "Nevermore..." See I'm back today with a poe-etic adventure. I'm going to Investigate a famous writer, hang out in a graveyard, and -- yes -- there will be PIE! Let's get to work. I'm Carly Q, and this is Who, When, Wow, Mystery Edition!

(THEME SONG)

(Soundbite of Carly walking into the office.)

**Carly in background.** I am so sad about this.

**Carly.** I was not happy going to work today. It was Tuesday, the day I don't pack lunch. And Tuesday is also the day I stop to pick up a pie from my favorite bakery, The Hilltop Pie Shop.

**Carly in background.** This is a tragedy. Where am I supposed to get my pie now? I am sad.

**Carly.** Yes, it's a tiny bakery at the top of a small hill, and yes, the pie is my lunch for the day. But today, there was a big sign that said, "Closing This Week!" I asked the baker why and she said they're retiring and moving to Paris. A dream come true, but my dreams are ending!

**Lewis.** Carly Q, why does your face look so droopy?

**Carly.** No it doesn't.

**Lewis.** Yes it does. I'm probably going to regret asking this but what's wrong?

**Carly.** Nothing.

**Lewis.** Whatever, I tried. (whispers) Hey, have you noticed funny stuff around here lately?

**Carly.** YES! You mean how one day some papers were put in a different order on my desk, and another day, my computer said I needed to reset the password. What is that about?

**Lewis.** No, I mean, the cafeteria stopped serving ham sandwiches. And they don't serve Jello anymore on Fridays. (dramatic sigh) I hate it when things change!

**Carly.** (To herself) You don't know the half of it Lewis! Try having your favorite pie shop shut down, out of the blue. Yeah fine I'll just go to my desk. As if nothing's happened. As if it's a regular day, regular Tuesday.

(Soundbite of door opening as she heads down to her desk.)

**Carly.** When I got down to the basement, something was off again. My alien bobblehead was always on the left side of my desk, and now it was more in the middle. What is happening here?

**Carly.** Nibs, did you see anything out of the ordinary?

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

**Carly.** Maybe I'm just imagining it. I think I'm still upset about the Hilltop Pie Shop closing!

(Soundbite of clicking on her computer.)

**Carly.** I decided to bury myself in work. But it wasn't easy to concentrate. How can you? When you're so sad over something you lost?

(Soundbite of a thumb drive drops down the vacuum tube.)

**Carly.** Luckily, I had a new mysterious, time-sealed file delivered to my desk.

**Audio File.** EVENT: (BEEP) Gravesite of Edgar Allan Poe (BEEP) unusual activity at night.

**Carly.** I do like unusual activity. I powered up my hand-held computer assistant to see if he could help. What does this file mean, H-dad?

**H-dad.** H-dad, pooowwering on. Legendary writer Edgar Allen Poe. 1908-1949, known for his scary stories.

**Carly.** OOh, so you know anything about his gravesite?

**H-dad.** Affirmative. Every year, in the dark hours of January 19th, Poe's birthday, witnesses have spotted a strange figure, dressed all in black, visiting his grave in the city of Baltimore. The visits are believed to have started in the 1930s, and they stopped in 2010.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

**Carly.** I know, Nibbles. Sounds like a ghost to me. What does this figure look like?

**H-dad.** This figure wears a wide-brimmed hat, and brings a bottle of cognac with them.

**Carly.** For what?

**H-dad.** One popular theory? To raise a toast to Pope? Champagne glass emoji!

**Carly.** Toast? What kind of a ghost would be eating toast?

(Soundbite of Lewis walking in.)

**Lewis.** Who's drinking cognac? And eating toast? I love cognac and toast!

**Carly.** Wait a second, a ghost eats TOAST (giggles) A ghost who eats TOAST...and all the potroast. What a terrible host!

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

**Lewis.** Carly, don't quit your day job here.

**Carly.** Ok so, I'm not a poet like Edgar Allen Poe but that was not terrible.

**H-dad.** But there's more. H-dad would like to continue.

**Carly.** Yes, Of course! Sorry.

**H-dad.** This mysterious visitor has become known as the Poe Toaster, and they always vanish into the night before anyone can figure out who they are. They leave behind a bottle of cognac and three roses on Poe's grave.

**Lewis.** Fascinating! How intriguing.

**Carly.** Because it's a ghost.

**Lewis.** There is no such thing as ghosts.

**Carly.** But there IS such a thing as ... aliens!

**Lewis.** It's not a ghost and it's not an alien.

**Carly.** Suddenly, I had a mission. I was going to go to Baltimore on January 19th, Edgar Allan Poe's birthday, and find out exactly who this Poe Toaster was!

**Carly.** Come on, Lewis. Come with me! We've got a ghost story to investigate!

**Lewis.** Uh Carly Q. You know we can't go anywhere during working hours! We have to wait until --

**P.A. Voice.** Attention, BUTHEAD employees! It is now lunchtime! You have one hour. Remember that the cafeteria no longer serves ham sandwiches, and you can kiss the Jello goodbye.

**Lewis.** That really stinks. No more Jello. (sigh)

**Carly.** I know, Lewis. That's how I feel about the Hilltop Pie Shop.

**Lewis.** Fine, I'll come along with you since (theatrically dramatic voice) there's nothing left for me here.

**Carly.** Gosh. Come on, let's go see Odie.

**Lewis.** Besides, I can be there when you realize it's not a ghost or an alien.

**Carly.** And you can be there when the alien beams me up to another dimension. Think about it, you get to witness me making first contact with another life form! Lucky you!

**Lewis.** No thank you. I've seen the way you feed Nibbles.

**Carly.** Uh that's not what I mean by contact!

**Lewis.** I hope you wash your hands after...ewww.

(Soundbite of walking.)

**Carly.** Odie, how's it going pal?

**Odie.** Ah, where are we heading today, Carly Q? Lewis, again.

**Carly.** To the city of Baltimore, the night of January 19th, 2005! We're looking at the legend of the Poe Toaster.

**Odie.** Ah, Edgar Allan Poe. His poem, "The Raven," is one of my favorites. "Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore'". Classic.

**Carly.** Oo I've heard that poem before.

**Odie.** Hm, Baltimore looves Edgar Allan Poe. In fact, it's football team is named the Ravens. Can you imagine that?

**Lewis.** A football team, named after a poem! Fierce!

**Carly.** We're going to find out who's been visiting the grave all these years, and we'll see what they're up to.

**Odie.** Maybe they're just a fan, someone who wants to honor him.

**Lewis.** For 75 years? That's dedication.

**Carly.** Possible, but it's more likely they're an alien. Or a ghost. Or the ghost of an alien.

**Odie.** Uh huh. Quick review of the time travel rules: no changing anything in the past, but you can, of course, ask all the questions you like. And your time is limited, you MUST be back before the end of the lunch break. And, remember,

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

**Odie.** Keeping our memories alive helps us move through sadness. And speaking of move. (Laughs)

(Soundbite of elevator switch and ding. Travel noises.)

**Carly.** Hmmm. is sadness something you can moovveeeee?

(Soundbite of thud as elevator lands in.)

**Carly.** (singing) Good Morning Baltimore!

**Lewis.** It's night time Carly.

**Carly.** I know, it's a song Lewis. Ugh nevermind. We arrived at the Westminster Burial Grounds where Edgar Allan Poe was buried.

**Lewis in background.** Graveyards just give me the creeps.

**Carly.** We walked through, looking at all the headstones, some of them super old!

**Lewis.** Carly stand in front of me, to block anything if anything jumps out.

**Carly.** A mysterious voice was reading the poem "The Raven" aloud!

**H-dad.** Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,

Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,

As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.

**Carly.** Wait a minute. I know that voice! H-dad disable poetry mode!

**H-dad.** Disabling poetry mode now. Sad face emoji. Raven emoji. Quill emoji.

**Lewis.** I think it's a crow emoji.

**Carly.** Come on Lewis. We gotta be stealth, like ninjas. We have to find Poe's grave.

**Lewis.** It's so dark. There's like no light.

**Carly.** Wait, there it is! Edgar Allen Poe!

**Lewis.** What are these people doing here?

(Soundbite of people chatting and laughing.)

**Carly.** Yeah, what is this, a party? Don't they know we're here to catch a toaster?

**Lewis.** Uh, I wish I had a ham sandwich, on white toast.

**Carly.** Come on Lewis. Let's see what they know.

**Lewis.** Fine, but I might ask if they have food.

**Carly.** Hi, Hey. So what's happening here right now? Is it someone's birthday or?

**Maureen.** Yep, Poe's birthday. Don't you know? Maybe you're not from Baltimore.

**Carly.** No, we're from, another place (to self) and another time. But you can't handle that truth.

**Maureen.** That makes sense. Because otherwise you'd know people gather here every year to see the Poe Toaster. They say he shows up between midnight and 6am wearing black clothing, white scarf and a big hat.

**Lewis.** Hm, sounds like a good look.

**Carly.** Although with all these people around, he should be called the Poe Parazzi, am I right? (laughs)

**Maureen.** Anyway stick around, maybe he'll show up soon. I've been coming every January 19th for ten years.

**Lewis.** Ten years? Lady you need a hobby. Have you seen him?

**Maureen.** Nope. The way it usually happens is we're all hanging and waiting and the next thing we know BOOM! There's a bottle of cognac and three roses. Sometimes we see a figure running away, all dressed in black, but we never see his face.

**Carly.** Lewis and I split up to see what we could find out! I met people who were die-hard Poe fans, and some who were just out to have a good time. Nobody had ever seen the Toaster themselves, and nobody knew what the deal was with the three roses and the cognac.

**Lewis.** Hey Carly Q! The guy in the turtleneck over there just told me that the Toaster sometimes leaves notes that say things like, "Edgar, I haven't forgotten you."

**Carly.** Hmmm, would a ghost or an alien be able to hold a pen and write a note? Although, Nibbles has very good cursive so if a rat can write a note I guess anything's possible.

**Lewis.** Oh, Carly Q, clearly, we are dealing with a human. Duh!

(Sound bite of noise and exclamations)

**Carly.** Lewis look! And there he was, a tall man standing silently by Poe's grave. His back was to us, but he wore a large hat and poured himself a glass of cognac. Then he

put the bottle down, laid down three roses side by side, and raised his glass high in the air. I am going to talk to him Lewis.

**Lewis.** What?! No! Carly!

**Carly.** Don't worry! I took two weeks of hapkido at summer camp when I was twelve! I can take care of myself!

**Lewis.** No, don't you see? (quietly) This is a special moment. Everyone was partying, and now they're all quiet. See?

**Maureen.** Yeah, let's give him some space.

**Carly.** You're right. You're right. Pssst! Mr. Toaster! Hey! Can I ask you some questions?

**Lewis.** Maybe just a smidge more space? Hmm?

**Carly.** Don't you want to know who he is? Why he's doing this? Whether he's real or a ghost or hopefully an alien?

**Maureen.** Not really. I think we should just enjoy the moment, like your friend says.

**Carly.** They were right. I stayed put, and we all watched as the man drank his glass of cognac and then turned and vanished into the night.

**Lewis.** Definitely a human.

**Carly.** Are we sure about that? Let's get closer. Hmm. Three roses, laid side by side. What is up with the three roses?

**Lewis.** That guy over there in the Ravens jersey told me that two other people had originally been buried in the same site as Poe, his wife Virginia and his mother-in-law Maria Clemm, so maybe there's a rose for each of them?

**Carly.** Hm. That makes sense to me. What a thoughtful Toaster!

**Lewis.** So, I guess we should go?

**Carly.** That's it? He made a toast, he was NOT a ghost, he did not boast but left us engrossed?

**Lewis.** Let's get in the elevator before we're toast.

**Carly.** Oh Lewis. You're the most.

**Lewis.** You might have a career in sleuthing, Carly Q. Just not poetry.

**Carly.** I disagree. Whoa is me. To fight with thee, is all I see.

(Soundbite of elevator travel noise and thud. Ding.)

**Odie.** Ah you're back. How was your adventure?

**Carly.** Well, the Poe Toaster is kind of like an actual toaster.

**Odie.** What?

**Carly.** The person. Not the kitchen appliance.

**Odie.** Of course.

**Carly.** We waited and waited and waited, and then he just popped up out of nowhere. And he's a human for sure. He's been coming to the gravesite for 75 years, just standing there for a few minutes, not doing much of anything really.

**Odie.** Maybe he's just keeping a memory alive.

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

**Carly.** Keeping out memories alive helps us move through sadness.

**Odie.** Wise words Carly Q.

**Lewis.** You said them.

**Odie.** That's why they're wise.

**Carly.** The Poe Toaster invented this tradition because he wanted to honor and remember Edgar Allan Poe. And I thought that it was like a gift he was giving other people too, a really cool experience. Thanks Odie.

Odie. Have a good day basement companion. Lewis.

(Soundbite of Odie walking away.)

**Carly.** I guess lunch break is over.

**Lewis.** I didn't miss a thing, considering they decided a ham sandwich on white toast wasn't good enough anymore.

(Soundbite of food unwrapping.)

**Carly.** Well this might be the last pie I eat from the Hilltop Pie Shop. Want to share it with me, Lewis?

**Lewis.** Oh no, I couldn't.

(Soundbite of his stomach rumbles.)

**Carly.** Uh I think you better join me. I know lunch is over technically but maybe we can just sneak in a few more minutes.



**Lewis.** All right. Thank you, Carly Q. I know this pie means a lot to you.

**Carly.** MMMMMmmM. This pie is SO GOOD!

**Lewis.** Hmmm. Pie. A classic.

**Carly.** I feel sad, but maybe I can learn how to make this myself! Maybe that can be my own little tradition to honor the Hilltop Pie Shop!

(Soundbite of more chewing and eating sounds.)

**Lewis.** Well, Carly Q. That was delicious, I hate to admit it. I think tomorrow I will make my own ham sandwiches on white toast and bring it in. Let me guess, you want one too?

**Carly.** Yes, thank you! You know what? Maybe we can make pies for everyone! Think about it! Every Monday night, in honor of the Hilltop Pie Shop, we bake pies for the entire bureau! And we deliver them fresh and hot on Tuesday mornings.

**Lewis.** Or, how about we do something less impossible.

**Carly.** We all lose things. Life is about change. And that can be sad sometimes. But our memories will always be there, like the poetry of Edgar Allen Poe. So goodbye for now, listeners, all of whom I shall miss. Until the next episode of my super secret podcast, you never heard this.