



Elegant Enigmas: The Art of Edward Gorey

Karen Wilkin , James H. Duff , Edward Gorey (Illustrator)

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The delightful tales and theatrical drawings of Edward Gorey (American, 1925-2000) reflect a special kind of genius for what is left unwritten and unseen. In *Elegant Enigmas: The Art of Edward Gorey*, more than 175 reproductions include samples from Gorey's books, illustrations produced for other writers, theatrical sets and costume designs, and a wealth of individual pieces, many never before published. Sketches, typewritten manuscripts, doodles, and musings join the generous selection of finished works.

Elegant Enigmas: The Art of Edward Gorey Details

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Author : Karen Wilkin , James H. Duff , Edward Gorey (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Elegant Enigmas: The Art of Edward Gorey for online ebook

Lila says

Edward Gorey is a name that most people are at least familiar with. I've heard a lot about him, but haven't really had the opportunity to explore his work (aside from the Twelve Terrors of Christmas, which I didn't really like.) This is a GREAT book for those who adore Edward Gorey and for those who don't know him at all. This book contains artwork that spans his career. It is also equipped with an interesting mini-bio that brings to light his unique, sometimes bizarre personality (which made him that much more interesting.) I am now a fan of Mr. Gorey and will be checking more of his books out from the library soon.

Orsodimondo says

IL TAO DEL NONSENSE

Ho incontrato (da lettore) Gorey quaranta anni fa e fu subito amore.

Amore a prima vista. Mai deluso, e mai interrotto.

Avvenne attraverso 'The Gashlycrumb Tinies', un abecedario in cui a ogni lettera è associato un bambino, da Amy. *Cadde dalle scale a Zillah, trincò troppo alla svelta*, attraverso *M per Maud, il mare le fu boia* e *N per Nevil, morì dalla noia*.

"Big Little Lies" la tv series che è appena finita di andare in onda su HBO: Alexander Skarsgård, che interpreta il giovane marito di Nicole Kidman, legge ai suoi due bambini 'The Gashlycrumb Tinies'.

In *Il ricordo di una visita*, Drusilla tiene infine fede alla promessa di inviare qualcosa a un anziano conoscente solo per scoprire che è morto da poco: proprio come è successo a me, che ho comprato questo libro per regalarlo al compleanno di un'amica, e poi scoprire che anche lei era morta da poco. Un macabro dettaglio che sarebbe piaciuto a Gorey.

'I piccoli di Gashlycrumb' del 1963.

La scoperta di Gorey era nello stesso periodo in cui m'innamorai di *Delitti esemplari* di Max Aub.

I libri di Gorey raccontano omicidi, disgrazie, abusi e uccisioni di bambini, gente che si ammazza a vicenda (*The Deranged Cousins*), serial killer (*The Loathsome Couple*, uno dei pochi libri in cui Gorey punisce i suoi malfattori).

Questi tragici eventi vengono presentati con un tale distacco, sia nei testi che nelle immagini, che è quasi impossibile esserne disturbati: il tono di Gorey è freddo e neutro, i suoi protagonisti restano inespressivi, nelle sue immagini non si vede mai nulla di indecente, tutto è lasciato all'immaginazione del lettore. Infatti, gli eventi più orribili accadono fuori scena (proprio come in una tragedia greca), il lettore assiste solo a ciò che precede e segue la violenza.

Ne *L'ala ovest*, una delle sue opere più belle e poetiche, il testo è assente e il significato è affidato alle sole immagini, dense ed evocative, come quella rampa di scala che sembra condurre da nessuna parte, la

moquette a disegni che sembra doversi aprire per far apparire chissà quale figura.
Sublimazione e rarefazione, mistero e paura. Humor nero, macabro, inquietante.

Immagine da 'L'ala ovest' del 1963.

Nonostante la visione del mondo potenzialmente traumatica, nonostante sembra rivolgersi a un pubblico di adulti, il suo lavoro generalmente piace ai bambini: forse perché le sue storie sono brevi, o perché i testi sono ridotti al minimo, una o due righe per pagina, e spesso sono in rima, forse perché i protagonisti sono spesso proprio bambini che rimangono vittime di tragici eventi.

Lettore onnivoro, avido di letture di ogni genere, ma anche teatro, balletto (in primis le coreografie di George Balanchine), opera, musica, cinema (soprattutto il muto) enciclopedico, di gran cultura, spaziava in tutti i campi.

Amante dei giochi di parole, degli indovinelli, dei puzzle.

'L'ospite equivoco' del 1957. "Li raggiunse a colazione e si mise a divorare / parte delle stoviglie, insieme al desinare".

L'ospite equivoco (*The Doubtful Guest*) dopo diciassette anni *nulla fa supporre che se ne andrà mai via*.

Gorey fotografato nella sua casa. Non ha mai abbandonato la barba hipster. Amava indossare pastrani e pellicce lunghe fino alla caviglia, che lasciavano bene in vista le sue immancabili snickers.

Sherry says

We usually check out some roadside attractions when we go on vacation. We happened upon the Edward Gorey House while we were in Cape Cod, it was recommended, so we decided to stop. Now, I had never heard of Edward Gorey before, so I was delightfully surprised. Think of the cartoons of Charles Adams and put a Victorian spin on them. This book states, "The more you know about Gorey, the more difficult it is to define his work." Words can't adequately describe this eccentric artist, so I'm glad this book contains numerous samples of his drawings. Being a fellow cat lover, I remember his philosophy of felines from the house tour: he always had 6 cats, because 5 just isn't enough, but 7 is WAY too many.

Eling says

LOVE this companion book to first major traveling exhibit of Edward Gorey's work. Excellent (if brief, it's a catalog, not a biography) background & insight on/into the artist/writer/theatre person :) in the introduction, and thorough, quality presentation of exhibit. It's not quite the same as seeing the detail & fine line work in person, but a great reference to have. Exactly what I wanted when I purchased. The only thing missing is a few photographs of the quirkiest plushes/other more personal items in the exhibit. HIGHLY recommended.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

Nearly everything I was going to say is already in the official synopsis at the top of this book's good reads page.

I loved seeing the elaborately decorated envelopes from the letters Gorey sent home to his mother while he was at Harvard in 1948. The signs of future promise... Of course, this was long before automated mail sorting. If you did that to an envelope these days, it might never get delivered.

John of Canada says

I quite liked the photograph of Gorey and his cat. I have seen a lot of information in the book from other sources, but that doesn't diminish Karen's work. What I especially appreciated was the attention she paid to his use of words and sheer inventiveness. The things he came up with. This was a wonderful reference and should be on the bookshelves of all Gorey fans.

Sarah says

Elegant Enigmas is a great compilation of Edward Gorey's work. It not only highlights the work used for his own writings, but includes work he did for others. His drawings are almost always enigmatic, sometimes surreal, sometimes surprising, but always original. I've always admired such detailed artwork and Gorey takes it to a story-telling level. His books are picture books for adults. I was reminded that he did the art for the children's books by John Bellairs, which were some of my favorites as a child, and his work enhanced these books, some of which I was fortunate enough to own. I absolutely loved the envelopes he decorated for letters to his mother, supposedly never before published until this book. I am now inspired to order another of Gorey's books.

Will says

This is a book for avowed Edward Gorey fans. If you're not one of those, or worse yet, if you've never heard of the guy, don't read THIS book, go read some of Edward Gorey's own books.

This book is essentially the exhibition catalog for an exhibition of original drawings by Gorey. For the Gorey aficionado, it provides a rare glimpse of some of his preliminary sketches, and other previously unreleased materials, such as some wonderful illustrated envelopes Gorey created and mailed to his mother while attending Harvard.

There are also bits and pieces from many of his books, but not enough to give more than the flavor. These are rewarding for those already familiar with most of the books, but the newbie won't get but a taste.

Highly recommended for all Gorey fans.

Susan Tan says

I like this easy to read illustrated book of my favorite scenes from Gorey's not-for-childrens' books!

Bob says

I've always loved Edward Gorey's macabre drawings and stories, which today might be diminished by categorization in the graphic novels section of most bookstores. Not sure why this art exhibition featured *these* drawings among the hundreds of possibilities, but they are representative. The compilation's introductory essay is terrific, if you like that sort of thing. If you don't, just buy a Gorey book and pass it along to friends who don't yet know how eccentric you really are.

Brian Umholtz says

This book was published as a companion to an art show featuring Mr. Gorey and it is filled with examples of his art from many of his books and other collaborations. It details his influences and the personality that informed his macabre style; and when you find yourself asking new questions after you learn more about him, Karen Wilken does a very good job of anticipating those questions as well as answering them.

There are wonderful tidbits and tales within that help you create an understanding of the man-this book is more of a light biography rather than a chockfull series of his artwork. When I borrowed this book from my library, I had hoped it was the latter, but I was quite pleased overall with it. It is very well printed and allows you to really take in the incredible hatching work Mr. Gorey was able to create that defined his art style.

I had long forgotten the name of Edward Gorey; only being quasi-familiar with him through his illustrations for many John Bellairs books I read as a young teenager. I found myself trying to remember Mr. Bellairs' name one afternoon and pieced together the title of one of his books due to memory of the mildly disturbing images Edward Gorey created to accompany them (something blue.. a blue figurine!). Once I remembered again and researched both creators, I made sure I would never forget again.

Edward Gorey was a fascinating man and an incredible artist. This book does an admirable job of creating a more complete picture of him than just an art book or non-illustrated biography could. I learned a lot about him and I've made sure to add most of his works to my to-read list. I've come to realize that my enjoyment of those John Bellairs books is intrinsically tied to those amazing illustrations. I highly recommend reading Elegant Enigmas-it will certainly open up a rabbit hole of content for you.

Calista says

This is a companion to the art exhibit of Edward Gorey that Brandywine River Museum did. There is some biography on Gorey and then some history of his works, his style. I didn't know this, but he loved the ballet and he was a regular at the NYC ballet and would talk to many different people.

I love the eclectic works of Gorey. His stories are somewhat difficult to find nowadays and I am trying to

read all these stories. I love this quote that opens the book "the helpful thought for which you look is written somewhere in a book".

There are works of his from several books here, but never the whole book. It covers: 'The Unstrung Harp', 'The Listing Attic', 'The Doubtful Guest', 'The Object-Lesson', 'The Fatal Lozenge', 'The Hapless Child', 'The willowdale Handcar', 'The Gashlycrumb Tinies', 'The West Wing', 'The Nursery Frieze', 'The remembered Visit', 'The Guilded Bat', 'The Blue Aspic', 'The Secrets', 'The Epileptic Bicycle', 'The Iron Tonic', 'The Chinese Obelisks', 'The Osbick Bird', 'The Deranged Cousins', 'The Lavender Leotard', 'A limerick', 'The Lost Lions', 'The Glorious Nosebleed', 'The Broken Spoke', 'The Loathsome Couple', 'Les Urnes Utiles', 'The Raging Tide', 'Dogear Wryde Postcards', 'The Tuning Fork', 'Verse Advice', and 'The Haunted Tea-Cosy'. There are also pictures from works he did art for and did not write. The John Bellairs books are not included.

This is a collection for Gorey fans. It's a beautiful book!

Kirsten says

This is an excellent overview of Gorey's art, with some real treats for Goreyphiles. The early sketches and the reproductions of his decorated envelopes are particularly awesome. Those who aren't well-versed in Gorey's books might want to hunt down copies of his *Amphigories* as companions to this text; otherwise, the inclusion of only a few pages from several of his books might be a little frustrating.

TR says

This was the best of the secondary literature on Gorey I found. A nice selection of his art, but I still prefer the collections.

Margaret Bessai says

If you love Gorey's work, or are just curious and want to know a little more, this is a good sampling. This book is the exhibition catalogue for an art exhibition of Gorey's work from 2012.

Art review:

"Elegant Enigmas: The Art of Edward Gorey" is one of the most interesting and entertaining exhibitions of the year.

It's an impressively large show with about 180 drawings, objects and books featuring the work of one of America's best loved artists, illustrators and writers — Edward Gorey (1925-2000) of Cape Cod.

Relying primarily on the Edward Gorey Charitable Trust's collection, "Elegant Enigmas" features Gorey's original pen-and-ink drawings from many of his best-known publications, such as "The Gashlycrumb Tinies," "The Doubtful Guest," "The Unstrung Harp" and many others."

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