

APPENDIX I

The *Edgar Allan novel's* Summary by John Neufeld

Characterizations

Reverend Robert Fickett: Is a minister in a small town. He has the idea to adopt the little cute black boy Edgar Allen. He is a very good father because he tries to talk with his children about their problems.

Mrs. Fickett: She is very happy with their adopted child Edgar Allen but she is the member of the family Fickett who has the greatest problems to cope with the fact that Edgar Allen has been brought back.

Mary Nell Fickett: She is 14 years old and is the only one who can't accept the poor Edgar Allen, she never talks a word to him, she never looks at him and finally she gives her parents the choice: Edgar Allen or she. If the family keeps Edgar Allen, she will go away and never come back.

Michael Fickett: He is 12 years old and really likes Edgar Allen when he arrives one afternoon. Michael loves his little black brother very much; he only doesn't understand why his parents didn't tell him that the adopted boy will be black. Michael is the person who tells the story.

Sally Ann Fickett: She is nearly 6 years old and starts going to the kindergarten. Sally is a clever girl and she always tries to teach her brother Stephen Paul and also Edgar Allen, who has nearly the same age, many things, for example, the use of a fork and a spoon and she always plays with the two boys.

Stephen Paul Fickett: He is 3 years old when Edgar Allen arrives. He and Edgar Allen like each other very much and they two play the whole day together and also visit the Nursery School together after the summer holidays.

Edgar Allen: His parents died when he was a baby and since this day he is an orphan. He has a lucky time while he lives at the house of the Fickett's but only till he comes to Nursery School after the summer holidays. From this day on his family begins to feel the town's racism.

The Summary

On Stephen's 3rd birthday Mr. and Mrs. Fickett tell their children that they will adopt a child. Their children are afraid of getting less attention from their parents but the Reverend and his wife calm them down. One early afternoon Edgar Allen arrives. He is a cute black boy, only a little bit slow, for example in learning how to talk and they never know if he listens to them or not. Stephen, Sally and Michael love their new „brother“ from the beginning on, only Mary is shocked because the boy is black. She tells her parents that she doesn't want to have „this“ in the house and they will become many problems with their neighborhood. Her parents don't take this too serious; they think she is only jealous. But Mary never looks at Edgar Allen and she also never talks to him. She tells her friends that the black boy is only at their house because the black families can't afford another child. The Reverend likes telling stories to Edgar Allen, Stephen, Michael and Sally but Mary doesn't want to stay together with them because Edgar Allen is with her family.

One day two ladies from the church come to family Fickett and see the black boy playing in the garden with Stephen. The two ladies first think that

Edgar Allen must belong to one of the servants, but Mr. Fickett tells them, that they have adopted the boy. The ladies think that it is very noble from them to take the orphan. The Reverend expects all of the people to treat Edgar Allen the same way they treat each other. But the problems start, when Edgar Allen and Stephen come to Nursery School. The teachers at school are very friendly to Edgar Allen but the parents of the other children are very shocked. They can't understand why a black boy is in the same class with their children. Because of this big problem for the parents, two mothers of them decide to send their children to another school, where no black child is. Also

Michael gets in trouble at school because many children shout at him "nigger lover". One day a man comes to the house of the Fickett's and wanted to know if they want to keep Edgar Allen or not. If they decide to keep him, the Reverend will have to leave the church. The father can't understand why all people are against Edgar Allen and preaches at a sermon, that when some people are afraid of a single child, this is measure of how some people are afraid of everything the world offered.

The next day is a horrible day for family Fickett. When they wake up, a burning wooden cross lies in their garden and also in the bushes there are some kinds of paper. No one knows who has done this, except Mary but she doesn't want to tell her parents the truth because she can't cope with the situation that Edgar Allen is in their family. But the problems don't stop, also Michael and Mrs. Fickett get in trouble. One day after school some boys wait for Michael, beat him and shout at him. And Mrs. Fickett is waiting to pay and when it is her turn, they close the line. This happens not only once. The problems grow every day and

Mary wants to run away because she thinks that her life is going to be ruined if Edgar Allen stays. She lets her parents the choice to decide.

The next day Edgar Allen is gone. Mr. and Mrs. Fickett tell their children that Edgar Allen's real family has been found and that his family has wanted him back. But Mary and Michael know that this isn't the truth. Mary also feels guilty that all are said because Edgar Allen is no longer at home and she doesn't want to feel guilty.

Another day a reporter comes to interview the children about their lost brother. The two older children don't want to talk with him but Sally and Stephen do it and so he tells them, that their parents have given Edgar Allen away because they had so many problems with the other people in town. The two small children are afraid that their father will also give them away but he convinces them that he loves them and will never leave them. Mrs. Fickett is the member of the family who has the most problems to cope with the loss of Edgar Allen. The family also cannot live in silence because now the people blame them for giving the black boy away but before this no one wanted him. It will take a lot of time for people not to see the black outside before they see the person inside.

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APPENDIX II

The Short Biography of John Neufeld

He is born in Chicago. He grows up in the Midwest. At the age of about 10, he wants to become a writer. He writes a lot of short stories at the age of ten or eleven. He sends them to magazines across the country, but they all come back and he moves to New York and works in a publishing house. He keeps writing and is fired from his first job because he spends more time on his own projects than on the publishing house's. Twenty years later he comes across a story that he can tell well a *Edgar Allan* and the minute it is accepted for publication, he sits down and writes *Lisa, Bright And Dark The Handle And The Key*. And the latest novel for young readers. He gets ideas from everywhere, from the newspapers, from radio, from lunches and talks he has with friends. *Edgar Allan* and *Lisa, Bright and Dark* are selected as among the Best Books of the Year and *Lisa, Bright and Dark* is filmed for television. In 2000 his books are cited as among the best of last year's Young Adult titles by the New York, Public Library and YASLA today he lives in Lakeville, Connecticut.

This American novelist for young adults and adults, editor, playwright, short story writer, and television scriptwriter. Behind each of Neufeld's works for young people is his strong confidence in the perceptiveness and capabilities of young people, in contrast to the general ineffectuality of adults. "Adults are in many ways simply chicken," says Betsy, the narrator of *Lisa, Bright and Dark*: Neufeld's treatment of adult society's reaction, and lack of reaction, to issues such as the acceptance of minorities and the handicapped, mental illness, and the

understanding of love and sex underscores this philosophy. Neufeld's works center on how the lives of his young characters are changed by their confrontations with such thorny issues.

Neufeld's first novel, *Edgar Allan*, deals with the unsuccessful adoption of a black child by a white suburban minister and his family. It describes the inner turmoil and lack of unity within the family which lead to the failure of the adoption, and explores the themes of racism, intolerance, and the effect of community pressure.

With *Sleep Two, Three, Four!* Neufeld moved into the area of fantasy, weaving his own thinly veiled political commentary into this futuristic story of a freedom less society where young people are surrounded by excessive governmental restraint. Neufeld's most recent novels have explored the search for the meaning of love in the lives of their characters. As in earlier works, adults are again ineffectual in providing information or comfort. Despite criticism that Neufeld is overly sympathetic to his teenage protagonists at the expense of his adult characters, his works are popular with both adult and young adult readers for their success in showing the need for sensitivity and tolerance in society. (See also *Contemporary Authors*, Vols. 25-28, rev. ed., and *Something about the Author*, Vol. 6.)

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