

# DNA: Desperately Nutty Ancestors

*By*  
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### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Eddie Poe is a direct descendant of Edgar Allan Poe and hoping to follow in his illustrious ancestor's flaky footsteps. He gets his chance when his girlfriend Lucy, a personal assistant to a very wealthy woman, tells him someone has stolen her boss's expensive jewelry. Fearing she'll be the prime suspect, Lucy begs Eddie to help her by attending a conference for people with famous ancestors. The attendees turn out to be a comical cross-section of world history with the descendants of Henry VIII, Molly Brown, Joan of Ark, Michelangelo, Davy Crockett, and others jockeying for center stage. When Eddie and Lucy spot fashion maven Ivana Trembell, descended from Ivan the Terrible, wearing the jewelry, they try to question her but the poor woman drops dead from poisoning. Eddie's frantic efforts to uncover the truth, thwarted at every turn by the dynamic gene pool in which he's been swimming, finally lead to a most surprising ending!

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(4 m, 7 w)*

**EDGAR ALLEN POE:** A descendant of the original.

**LUCY BAIN:** His girlfriend.

**DONNY CROCKETT:** A cowboy.

**MICHELLE ANGELO:** A would-be artist.

**DR. JEAN POOLE:** A professor of genetics.

**BESS TUDOR:** A politician.

**IVANA TREMBELL:** A high-powered fashion designer.

**MAGGIE BROWN:** Descendant of the unsinkable Molly Brown.

**JOHN DARK:** Psychic.

**LOU FRENCH:** From hospitality.

**WENDY EARP:** A police detective.

## **SETTING**

The play is intended to be very fluid with no real change of set. It takes place in various locations, mostly at the Shadow Mountain Resort. A small desk and chair sit DSR holding a notebook or two and several pens or pencils along with a cell phone for Eddie's opening scene. At CS a number of chairs should be placed here and there in positions the actors find comfortable. A coat rack holding a few colorful coats sits USR, as if by the entrance to the resort. Two window frames hang against a dark US wall on either side of a rather grim, stylized portrait of a very melancholic young woman from long ago. Use UPS for the hallway from which actors "break into" Ivana's room. Define the "door" to Ivana's room for all actors so they each go to the same spot when entering her room. Be sure they all open the door the same way! If possible, lights can define various areas. Furnishings can be moved as desired to suit each episode.

### **COSTUME NOTES**

Each character should wear something that conjures the image of the ancestor, or at least relates back to the ancestor, with the exceptions of Jean, Lucy, and Lou—none of whom seem to have any prominent ancestors. Here are a few suggestions:

EDDIE - frock coat, white shirt, dark pants, dark shoes, fancy tie.

LUCY - modern, everyday outfit.

DONNY - jeans, flannel shirt, cowboy hat, boots.

MICHELLE - a very modern, “artsy” outfit that is almost over the top.

JEAN - lab coat over a nice, modern outfit.

BESS - a power suit.

IVANA - a very nice older woman’s dress with lots of jewelry.

Perhaps a shawl to swing about. Later she’ll wear a thick, hotel-style bathrobe.

MAGGIE - jeans skirt, cowgirl shirt, boots, cowboy hat.

JOHN - a sweater vest either argyle or with fleur de lis on it, long-sleeve shirt, dark pants.

LOU - dark pants, dark vest, bow tie, white long-sleeve shirt.

WENDY - pants, shirt, sensible shoes, perhaps a trench coat.

*Please see end of script for Sound Effects and Properties List.*

## ACT I

*(AT RISE: EDDIE, wearing frock coat, sits at the desk DSR. He is trying to write, but struggles.)*

**EDDIE:** *(Scribbling.)* Once upon a midnight nasty...while the wind was cold and blasty.... *(Stops writing.)* Blasty? Is that a word? *(HE punches the letters into his phone.)* Blasty...blasty...

**VOICE FROM PHONE:** Not a word, numbskull!

**EDDIE:** *(Punching phone viciously.)* I hate you! *(Noticing the audience.)* Oh, not you. The phone. It talks back, and it doesn't have a shred of diplomacy. My name's Eddie. Actually Edgar. Edgar Poe. And to be perfectly honest, Edgar Allen Poe. Except my middle name is spelled with an "e" not an "a" like the really famous Edgar Allan Poe. You know, the guy who wrote "The Raven," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and the guy who figured out that an orangutan could make a pretty good villain. How'd I get to be Edgar Allen Poe Junior? Easy...my mom said that I'm a real, direct descendant of Poe. I mean like bloodline and all that. So I was reading about Poe but it never said he had a kid. So? I asked Mom. She said history doesn't record everything. So here I am, Poe for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a hat that I wear with great pride. In fact, since I was really little I exhibited Poe's personality.

*(The following dialogue may be from offstage voices or actors can be spotlighted briefly.)*

**NURSE'S VOICE:** Gee, Mrs. Poe, your little fellow sure cries a lot.

**TEACHER'S VOICE:** I've never seen a kindergartner who loves to...well, brood...the way your little Eddie does.

**BABYSITTER'S VOICE:** Gosh, Mrs. P, Eddie made me read those buried alive stories three times. Gave me the creeps!

**MRS. POE'S VOICE:** Eddie, why are all your poems so sad?

**COACH'S VOICE:** Poe, quit thinking about it and throw the ball to first base!

**TEACHER'S VOICE:** Eddie, I think you've really tapped into the dark side in your essay.

**EDDIE:** *(Rising.)* The dark side. Indeed, my pendulum is stuck in the dark side. And now, with almost a degree in hand, my education almost complete, I...I...sit here in my parents' basement apartment between my jobs at Starbucks and Target...and I brood. What will become of me? How can I grow if I'm already dead on the vine? But you know? There is a ray of hope. Lucy. My Lucy...my best girl. We met in a class on the poetry of death. And Lucy was a real breath of life. Her spontaneous joy brought a smile to my face and a lightness to my heart that I'd never known before.

*(LUCY races on SL, crying.)*

**LUCY:** Oh, Eddie! Eddie!

*(LUCY falls into his arms weeping.)*

**EDDIE:** *(To Audience.)* See what I mean? *(HE notices LUCY'S crying.)* Oh, wait a minute!

**LUCY:** Eddie, you've got to help me!

**EDDIE:** Hey, where are those bright eyes, that cheerful smile, those rosy cheeks?

**LUCY:** They're gone, Eddie! Lost in the squalor of deceit...larceny...and ruin!

**EDDIE:** *(To Audience.)* I should have known right there that Lucy was in big trouble. She's almost never poetic. *(To LUCY.)* I guess this hasn't been a great day.

**LUCY:** *(Crying loudly.)* I guess you could say...say...that.

**EDDIE:** You want to tell me about it?

**LUCY:** You've got to help me, Eddie! You've got to!

**EDDIE:** Okay. How?

**LUCY:** We've got to find it!

**EDDIE:** Find what?

**LUCY:** The...the...the...Polar Star.

## **End of Freeview**

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