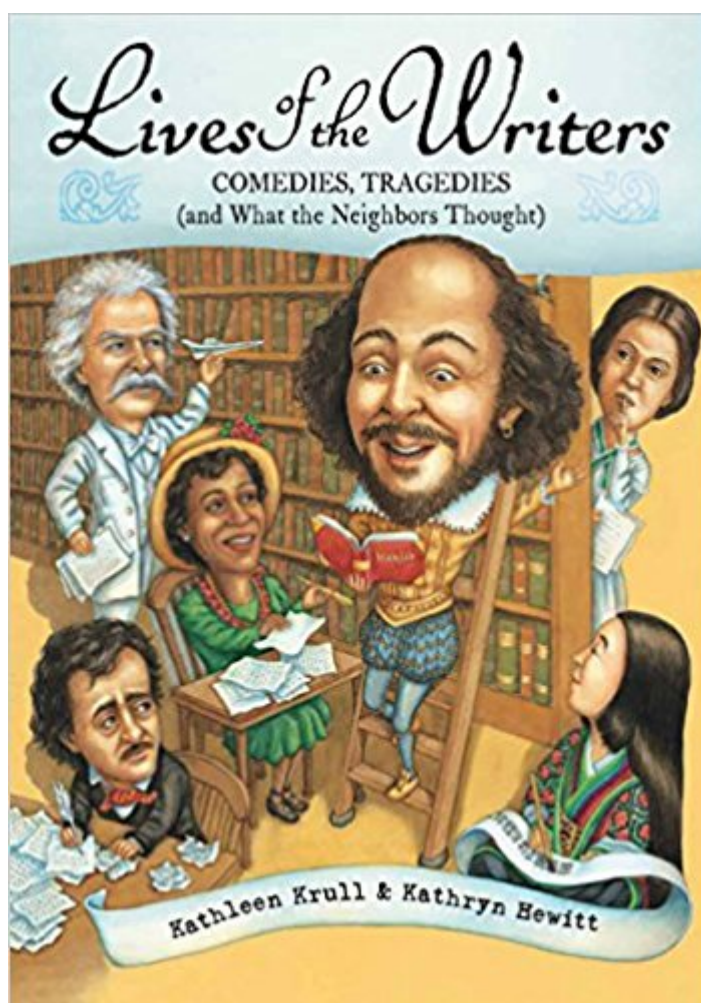


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# Lives Of The Writers: Comedies, Tragedies (and What The Neighbors Thought)



## Synopsis

Shakespeare wrote with a feather quill and ink; Emily Dickinson wrote with a fountain pen; Isaac Bashevis Singer wrote on a Yiddish typewriter. But what did such writers do when they weren't writing? What did Jane Austen eat for breakfast? What could make Mark Twain throw his shirts out the window? Why would Zora Neale Hurston punch a fellow elevator passenger? *Lives of the Writers* tells all that and more.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## Customer Reviews

As seductive as Krull and Hewitt's *Lives of the Musicians*, this compendium of brief biographies of literary luminaries is as much fun as a tete-a-tete with a gossipy friend. Krull knows exactly how to captivate her audience; she goes right for the juicy stuff, adding to historical fact the kind of chatty incidentals and amusing anecdotes that put flesh and blood on dry literary bones. Hans Christian Andersen, for example, "was known to hug trees," and Edgar Allan Poe, at 27, married his 13-year-old cousin. Emily Dickinson and Mark Twain shared an eccentricity—they both dressed solely in white. Jane Austen ate chocolate for breakfast, and Jack London liked to pose outrageous challenges to his houseguests—swallowing live goldfish, perhaps, or pushing peanuts up their noses.

These exuberant thumbnail sketches are ably matched by Hewitt's sophisticated caricatures, which will delight sharp-eyed readers with their many visual references to particulars and oddities about each of the subjects. A must-have for the reference shelf. Ages 8-12. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

Grade 4 Up-Employing the lively format that worked so well in *Lives of the Musicians* (Harcourt, 1993), Krull and Hewitt present the brief histories of 20 classic writers-warts and all. Most are novelists and poets whose names, and possibly whose works, will be familiar to the intended audience. A wide variety of cultures and a generous proportion of women are represented. Krull organizes her biographical sketches chronologically, moving from Japan (Murasaki Shikibu, author of *Tale of the Genji*) through the centuries with Shakespeare, Cervantes, the Brontes, Twain, Poe, Zora Neale Hurston, and ending with Isaac Bashevis Singer. The glimpses she provides are respectful of their times and influences without being dull. The dry essentials are dealt with in the headings of each chapter. The rest is the juicy stuff-what the writers ate, the pets they kept, what they wore (with a healthy interest in underwear), their writing habits, eccentricities and scandals, and what people thought of them. Brief sections entitled "Bookmarks" highlight a few of their works. A one-page glossary of literary terms, a short index, and a child-focused bibliography complete the book. Hewitt maintains a light touch in her full-page caricatures by balancing fully realized facial portraits on small bodies surrounded by representative objects. The handsomely mounted text is larded with small pictorial reminders of the content. There's enough substance here for a quick report or to enliven a longer one. Let's hope this team continues through all the arts. An irresistible package. Sally Margolis, Deerfield Public Library, IL Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

"How can you print a piece of your own soul," Dickinson, p. 51 This is the 2nd in the Krull and Hewitt's "Lives of ..." series. The book contains 19 chapters on 20 writers in birth order: Murasaki Shikibu (973?-1025?), Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Jane Austen (1775-1817), Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875), Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), Charles Dickens (1812-1870), Charlotte & Emily Bronte (1816-1855 & 1818-1848), Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888), Mark Twain (1835-1910), Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-1924), Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), Jack London (1876-1916), Carl Sandburg (1878-1967), E. B. White (1899-1985), Zora Neale Hurston (1901?-1960), Langston Hughes (1902-1967), Isaac Bashevis Singer (1904-1991) This is a perfect book for young adolescents and

pre-teens who as they grow and mature frequently feel awkward. Krull introduces us to the idiosyncrasies of the literary. Some of the authors were loners, eccentric, a wee bit peculiar. Michael Jackson's behaviors might seem normal when held in comparison. Some retreated into themselves. Some sought out adventures. Some as adults were unsuccessful at the ordinary. Some worked at a young age to support the family. Some took daily walks, very long daily walks. Some were not healthy and therefore wrote in bed. There were some similarities and some differences, but they all shared a singular conviction to write and write they each did well. Hewitt's delightful portraits of the writers are precious. My favorite portrait is of Frances Hodgson Burnett of "The Secret Garden" fame. Her hat is the secret garden. Given the high price of the book, I was surprised that Krull did not include a list of the authors' books and/or poems and the publication years. END

My daughter loves this series. I purchased on for Prime Shipping convenience.

I bought this for my 10 year old granddaughter. I think that it is a nice introduction to literature for children. It will encourage them to read and research more about these and other writers.

Our family feels this series is very entertaining and informative. We ALL thoroughly enjoy them! They offer info. other books on the same topics don't.

Articles are usually 2-3 pages in length, sometimes including a little know fact. Use this for a brief introduction to a well-known composer. Suitable for all grades as a starting point, depending on level of students' previous knowledge

This book is a fun and informative book. The pictures are filled with humorous meanings and hidden information. The book keeps the reader's attention by keeping the included information short and simple, but also makes sure that the reader gets as much possible about the author. This book is great for kids and students to use as a report source as it is filled with great information. Kids would rather use this book as an information source rather than an encyclopedia since the information is easy to understand. Authors in there are some you may not know, ( Murasaki Shikibu) and some well know ones ( Charles Dickens). I am glad I purchsed this book. I really liked the pictures which are so vibrant with color. This would make a great buy.

The second book in Krull's "Lives of..." series covers an assortment of famous writers including de

Cervantes, Shakespeare, Austen, Poe, Dickens, Dickinson, Sandburg and others. Rather than focusing on the dry details of their lives, Krull goes for what really interests us about other people: their foibles and quirks and oh-so-human idiosyncrasies. Although she covers the basic facts and dates about the authors in a brief opening summary, Krull primarily focuses on the juicier details of these authors' lives, including their unusual (and sometimes scandalous) marriages, preferences in food and dress and their more eccentric activities. Brief mention is made of each of their more important works at the end of each chapter in a short "bookmarks" section. Though I wish a few of my other favorite authors had been included, I found the lives of those that are covered (including a few with whose work I was not familiar including Shikibu, Langston Hughes and I.B. Singer) extremely interesting and, in some cases, was persuaded to order a few of their books. Though each is made as fascinating as the characters they themselves created, I found a few more amusing than others, including Mark Twain (who was almost as much of a rascal as his beloved Tom Sawyer), E.B. White (whose biggest compliment to his wife was "you smell of pencil shavings") and Miguel de Cervantes (whose life sounds very much like that of Don Quixote!) Krull ably brings each author alive and made me wish that I had been numbered among their neighbors and been able to witness these amazing (and sometimes quite farcical) characters myself!

LIVES OF THE WRITERS: COMEDIES, TRAGEDIES (WHAT THE NEIGHBORS THOUGHT) is a long title for such a little book! However, the book is long enough for what it is: a voyeuristic peek into secret details about writers that are not included in many biographies. This little book of little-known facts is witty and interesting. There is one prerequisite to enjoying this book, though: the reader should already know the writers fairly well in order to enjoy these snippets. This is not a detailed biography, but it sure is fun for those readers who already know the writers! Enjoy!

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