

NEVERMORE

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

A wintery mix of sleet, and snow pummels the countryside.

A RAVEN shrieks into the air, flapping in a black blur.

A nightingale nurse hurries along - a dark cloak over a crisp white uniform; heels, stockings, the dress itself. Whom will come to know as GENEVIEVE.

GENEVIEVE (V.O.)

That place between sleep and wake,
where you can still remember
dreaming. It's a worst place to
be when you no longer can sleep
nor dream. The moments we cherish
turns into memories, the things we
desire become wishes, the people
we love turn into strangers.

She stops to fix her crooked hat, holds flowers. As she pushes through a DILAPIDATED IRON-WROUGHT GATE, into...

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

The cemetery so VAST you can't possibly see where it begins or ends. Headstones, crypts and mausoleums, an altogether otherworldly place.

EXT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - NIGHT

On a cliff, a creepy old Gothic manor fronts the sea. A Christmas Tree glows from within.

INT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - STUDY - NIGHT

It's small, dark and creepy in that way old historian libraries are. Towering bookshelves.

VINCENT, a doddering old man, a noticeable limp, looks for something absent-mindedly. One eye *is* clouded with CATARACT.

Finds it, wipes away the dust from a POE BOOK.

He heads out. By mere chance, knocks prescription meds off a desk.

INT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A grand place, filled with old money elegance.

He places a record on the phonograph and sets the needle down: Bobby Helms' 1957 "*Jingle Bell Rock*," plays.

He gazes adoringly at ELEANOR, a Hitchcock blonde in her early thirties - and a dead-ringer for Marilyn Monroe.

An ancient grandfather clock reads 12:00 AM.

ELEANOR

Ho Ho Ho.

VINCENT

Jeezus, look at you.

ELEANOR

You don't look too bad yourself.
Just with a helluva lot more gray
hair now.

He grins right back at Eleanor, elated. Eleanor gets a cigarette, Vincent lights it for her.

A beat -- she admires an oil painting above the fireplace of HERSELF. Eleanor smiles to herself, endeared to him.

Vincent mixes two martinis. Eleanor studies a huge movie poster for "Dante Flex" framed on the wall. With Eleanor and a leading man - a Clark Gable-type.

ELEANOR

You know, the studio woulda made
you the lead if they could've.

VINCENT

I never wanted the studio. Live
theater is different. 'Mind with
the dirty man' was the longest
running play in New York. I did
seven shows a week.

ELEANOR

You loved that, though, because
you're a masochist.

Victor drifts off into a tortured reminiscence.

Out of her heels, Eleanor fights with the zipper of her elegantly-cut dress.

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ELEANOR
Unhook me, will you.

Eleanor presents her back to him. Lifts her hair up off her nape. He stares at a ligature mark on her hairline.

VINCENT
Depends. Tell Santa whether you've been naughty or nice.

INT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. Vincent and Eleanor make mad, passionate love.

ELEANOR
Oh... Ernest... God...

A lot of animosity here, but neither eager to pursue it. Eleanor touches his face, smiles at him... almost sadly.

ELEANOR
I've actually really missed you, Vincent. Can I say that? But I need you to be better.

Eleanor's not-so-subtle dig only pisses him off, which gets a cold smile of *'oh come on now'* from Eleanor.

In a blind rage Vincent suddenly wraps a belt around her neck, tight, fucks her, hard. Then, a gasp for air -

ELEANOR
There are worse ways to die.

The irony isn't lost on him, a pathetic look on his face.

Eleanor just laughs. A crazy laugh of sadistic delight.

INT. BYTHESEASHOREEE MANOR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Vincent is dozing, smiling postcoital peace while he sits in his rocker. He jerks awake, looks around -- feeling a strange but familiar presence nearby.

Eleanor sinks into a sofa -- back into the darkness. Takes a drag off a cigarette. Ember glowing.

ELEANOR
What's the matter? You look like you've seen a ghost.

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VINCENT

Rubbish. I thought you were.
Ernest, was that it?

ELEANOR

I cannot tell what the dickens his
name is. Love me or hate me, both
are in my favour. If you love me,
I'll always be in your heart.
If you hate me, I'll always be in
your mind.

VINCENT

If there really is such a thing as
turning in one's grave,
Shakespeare must get a lot of
exercise.

ELEANOR

Your best years were in the
rearview mirror... before I came
along. The man you see in the
mirror? I made him.

VINCENT

Eleanor, you know I'm grateful.

ELEANOR

Then let me rest in peace!
Frankly, I'm not sure why you
thought this was a good idea.

Then, quietly -- she stubs out her cigarette and stands.
She uncorks a bottle of scotch, pours herself a drink.

ELEANOR

Being a nostalgic old fool, I
suppose. Suddenly I feel very
sober, and I don't like it.

VINCENT

You're anxious for me to start
pondering the midnight dreary --

ELEANOR

Poe's character doesn't ponder the
midnight dreary. He ponders during
the midnight dreary.

Chastened, Vincent nods. Eleanor tosses the book at him.

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VINCENT

Once upon a midnight dreary, while
I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious
volume of forgotten lore...

The lights go out, leaves them in the embers of the fire.

He's ripped from is sleep, groggy, clutching the book.

Eleanor is nowhere to be seen. A few peaceful seconds,
then... a rapping on the door.

Vincent goes to answer with great trepidation.

He stares into the darkness. Breath clouding in the
frigid air. An afterthought. Turns back:

VINCENT

Eleanor? Eleanor?

His voice is swallowed by the dark. After his echo dies-
He bows his head and looks utterly isolated, forlorn.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

(a whispering;echoey)
Hey there, fella. It's Lenore?

He goes in for another kiss, but she pulls away - looks
at him, disturbed. The moment is ruined. Silence, then:

VINCENT

I miss you, sweetheart. I miss you
like you wouldn't believe.

ELEANOR

I... I have to go.

Eleanor smiles at Vincent for one moment... TRANSFORMS; a
NAKED CORPSE, signs of decay, eyes DEAD, wounds sewn shut
with morticians thread.

He shrieks back in horror. This is beyond any nightmare.
Her strangled voice, demonic and beyond awful:

ELEANOR

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
OPEN, LOCKS, Whoever KNOCKS.

THE WINDOW SUDDENLY EXPLODES behind them in a deadly
hailstorm of glass. Snow and rain continue to blow in
through shattered window.

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A RAVEN flies into his face. He flails about, before he's able to pull it away.

The Raven circles the room, lands on a bust of pallas.

Vincent takes a lingering look at the ominous bird.

VINCENT

Who... are you... ?

THE RAVEN

Nevermore.

The painting falls to the floor, as if by its own accord.

VINCENT

Where is Eleanor? Have you seen her? Will she ever return?

THE RAVEN

Nevermore.

VINCENT

Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!
Prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us
by that God we both adore. Tell
this soul with sorrow laden if,
within the distant Aidenn, It
shall clasp a sainted maiden whom
the angels name Eleanor. Clasp a
rare and radiant maiden whom the
angels name Eleanor.

THE RAVEN

Nevermore.

The desperate look in his eyes changes to anger. He goes into a fit of rage, looks feverish, deranged.

VINCENT

All lies. Oh, just go away. Go
back to the Plutonian shore!

THE RAVEN

Nevermore!

He turns to find Eleanor in the darkened hall. FLAMES EVERYWHERE, her UNEARTHLY HOWLS fills the scorched air.

Vincent shouts, "Eleanor!!!" Her flesh melts away, then collapses, and seeps into the floor.

INT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

It's mostly dark, a very spooky environment.

Shovel in hand, Vincent pries the lock off the trapped door that leads into the cellar like a man possessed.

INT. BLYTHESEASHORE MANOR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. Dust lingers in shafts of moonlight streaming through the hundred-year-old windows. It's cold in here.

Genevieve shivers, breath visible. She sneezes.

Now a dank, drab room. The place looks as if it hasn't been inhabited in decades; decaying flowers, spiderwebs, and a maze of ghostly, sheet-covered furniture.

Suddenly - a blood-curling screams of human suffering.

Genevieve is already scrambling towards the sound.

INT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - CELLAR - NIGHT

A dimly-lit cavernous labyrinth covered with cobwebs.

Vincent moves to a furnace and lifts up the brick hearth. Lo and behold, soiled clothes, and skeletal remains of a man. Dried blood visible on a shovel.

A shadow falls over Vincent. He looks up, sheer horror.

A ghostly version of Eleanor perched impossibly off the ceiling, lurks over Vincent like the Raven.

ELEANOR

Never more, Vincent. Never more.

He's jolted back to his senses.

Genevieve just stares at the scene helplessly, in shock, unable to move.

VINCENT

She was just right there.

GENEVIEVE

Father, Mom's dead. We buried her together two years ago.

INT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Before the dying embers of the fire, Vincent rocks back and forth in his chair. Shivers. Poe's book on his lap.

Genevieve struggles to control her emotions, but watching him grieve is just too much. Wraps him in a shawl.

GENEVIEVE

You skipped your meds when I asked you not to. I know you miss her, but she's in hell.

VINCENT

Yeah, yeah. Looking up at me right now. You told me.

Clearly an old argument. One neither wants to dwell on.

GENEVIEVE

How about Hamlet? I'd like to get your interpretation of his --

VINCENT

-- Eleanor loved this book.

Genevieve takes the book, speaks softly, but clearly a little bitterness behind her words.

GENEVIEVE

I loved it too. Oh. Did I mention I went to the zoo and recited it to the adorable raven there. He seemed to know I was talking about him because he flew right to me and stayed there until I finished. Despite the other people who stopped by his cage.

Only now does Vincent look up. She meets his gaze, a halfhearted smile. His body stiffens, then lies still.

She kisses the top of his head, closes the book.

EXT. SHORELINE - NIGHT

The break of dawn overtaking the darkened landscape.

The sea rages, dark, churning waters crashes the shore. Genevieve, eyes swollen from crying, moves surefootedly along slippery rock.

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Genevieve's footing is bad, she almost trips up.

GENEVIEVE (V.O.)

As a child when he read it to me.
He would say, just like the other
times before -- the raven was a
symbol of death, which holds
dominion over the narrator, and
moreover becomes a constant
reminder about the inability of
man to escape his ultimate fate.
I say this, and nothing more.

An ominous SQUAWKING. She turns back, as OUR VIEW RISES
towards the cliff...

GENEVIEVE (V.O.)

Not his beloved Eleanor... or the
rapping on his door. Nor our home
by horror haunted sea. Silent is
the ominous bird of yore. Gone,
the shadows on the floor. Quoth
the Raven --

Something flutters across her field of vision with a
WHOOSH. The Raven lands on her shoulder.

THE RAVEN

-- Nevermore.

Now visible, the house -- completely engulfed in flames.

FADE OUT.