

# **QUOTE THE RAVEN, NEVERMORE**

Written by

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FADE IN:

**EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT**

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

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.

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

**EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT**

A sweeping view of a GRAVEYARD, overgrown with weeds;

A plethora of headstones, crypts and mausoleums.

A STATELY RAVEN perched on the edge of the landfill.

**EXT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - NIGHT**

On a cliff, a creepy old Hollywood estate fronts the sea. A Christmas Tree glows from within. A SIGN: "Welcome to *Bytheseashore Manor.*

**INT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - STUDY - NIGHT**

*It's small, dark and creepy in that way old historian libraries are.* Books spill from bookshelves and form piles on the floor.

VINCENT, a doddering old man, with a noticeable limp, looks for something in an absent-minded way. Cataract in one eye. It's milk white.

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.

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

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 as LENORE.

VINCENT

Yes -- isn't it a beauty?!

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  
three shows a night. That's  
discipline.

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.

ELEANOR

Unhook me, will you.

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CONTINUED: (2)

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.

ELEANOR

Well, In-Sanity Claus, thank you.

**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 as they are swallowed up by the shrieking darkness... a desperate feeling of anger, frustration, and pity grips him.

Eleanor just laughs. A crazy laugh of sadistic delight.

**INT. BYTHESEASHOREE 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.

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CONTINUED:

ELEANOR

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

VINCENT

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

ELEANOR

Don't get sore at me.

An icy silence, lulled by a raging winter storm outside.

ELEANOR

*"Now is the winter of our discontent." "I cannot tell what the dickens his name is." Mighta been.*

*(a dark beat)*

*"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! Damnit Vincent! Frankly, I'm not sure why you thought this was a good idea.

Then, quietly -- she stubs out her cigarette and stands.

ELEANOR

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

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CONTINUED: (2)

She uncorks a bottle of scotch, pours herself a drink.

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.  
Vincent grudgingly complies.

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 his sleep, groggy, clutching the book.

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

Vincent goes to answer with great trepidation. He  
mutters, words indecipherable until...

VINCENT

*"Here I opened wide the door;  
darkness there, and nothing more."*

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ELEANOR

I... I have to go.

Again, a rapping. On the window. Louder than before.  
Vincent runs for the window and throws open the shutters.

VINCENT

Must be the wind and nothing more.

He shrieks back in horror. This is beyond any nightmare.

Eleanor, eyes dead, naked corpse shows signs of decay,  
wounds sewn shut with morticians thread. 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. 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."*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

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**

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 cobwebs, furniture covered by aged sheets.

Then hears blood-curling screams of human suffering.

She moves fast towards the sound, picking up her pace.

**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.

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CONTINUED:

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

ELEANOR

Never more, Vincent. Never more.

Genevieve stands there. Shocked at what she finds.

Vincent looks up at Genevieve. There is an unsettling detachment in her eyes that sends a chill down his spine.

VINCENT

She was just right there.

GENEVIEVE

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

**EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT**

He stumbles over a snowbank, collapses on a grave site. Its tombstone reads: ***"ELEANOR BYTHESEASHORE, BELOVED MOTHER AND WIFE. 1921 -1959."***

In the background, Genevieve mists up.

**INT. BYTHESEASHORE MANOR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Before the dying embers of the fire, Vincent rocks back and forth in his chair. He shivers. Poe's book on his lap. Genevieve wraps him in a shawl.

GENEVIEVE

You skipped your meds when I specifically 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.

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CONTINUED:

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

GENEVIEVE

I loved it too. When you'd read it to me. Oh. Did I mention the other day. 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 was finished. Despite all the other people who stopped by his cage.

He looks up for the first time, his eyes widen in horror. She meets his gaze, a halfhearted grin. Genevieve reads.

GENEVIEVE

*"And the Raven, never flitting,  
still is sitting, still is sitting  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just  
above my chamber door..."*

As her words register, his body stiffens and convulses, then lies still. Genevieve kisses the top of his head, and continues reading.

GENEVIEVE

*"And my soul from out that shadow  
that lies floating on the floor  
shall be lifted, nevermore!"*

**EXT. SHORELINE - NIGHT**

The break of dawn overtaking the darkened landscape.

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

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.

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

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CONTINUED:

GENEVIEVE (V.O.)

My father was a loving man, and one fine actor. He loved the theatre. Seldom got the parts he deserved, and I think this bugged him a lot. I wasn't as nice to him, as considerate, as I should have been. But he was a flawed figure.

(a sad beat)

As a child when he was done reading 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.

Then hears 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.