

**THE MUSE**

written by

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**BLACK**

A low, distant boom of THUNDER.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
16 October, 1899. Nearly a  
fortnight since I've seen my  
muse...

**EXT. VICTORIAN MANOR - NIGHT**

Lightning silhouettes a large, Victorian era house sitting atop a hill. Moss-covered walls. Missing tiles from the roof. Terrifying gargoyles looming down.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
My writing has dwindled-- the  
words no longer slipping from my  
mind. The blank paper mocks me.  
It's emptiness mirrors my mind...

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - FOYER - NIGHT**

Spiral staircase. Marble floors. Immaculate wood carvings. A thick layer of dust coats everything.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
Perhaps she was a dream-- a  
figment of my imagination taken  
sentient form. I think of her, I  
call to her, I yearn for her.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - NIGHT**

Sparse. A desk sits by the window, a candle casting a jaundice glow on the walls.

At the desk sits VINCENT, 40s, disheveled, unshaven, exhausted.

Vincent writes feverishly in a tattered leather journal.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
Her specter terrified me the first  
time I set eyes upon her.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - NIGHT**

Vincent lies in bed, reading over some handwritten scribbles. With every sentence, his disgust grows. Sickened by what he's written.

THEN--

A THUD from upstairs.

Vincent looks up at the ceiling.

Beat.

The NOISE again.

Vincent grabs the candlestick from his bedside table and scrambles out of bed.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Vincent slings the door open--

--and STOPS SUDDENLY. Mouth agape. Eyes frozen ahead of him.

REVEAL:

A WOMAN IN A WHITE DRESS. SKIN PALE, EYES SUNKEN. ALL THE LIFE GONE FROM HER.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
For whatever the reason, her  
presence soothed my troubled mind.  
Before I could utter a word, she  
was gone.

Vincent snaps out of it and manages to take one step forward.  
Cautious.

The woman turns away from Vincent, DISAPPEARING into thin air.

Vincent charges into the room. Searching the room for the woman. Confused.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Vincent lays in bed, staring up at the ceiling.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
I lay awake, my eyes gazing at the  
empty darkness above me. Truly, I  
was a lunatic. Would I be locked  
away? Doomed to rot in an asylum?  
Just another poet dying penniless?  
Perhaps after my death my work  
will be appreciated.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - HALLWAYS - NIGHT**

Vincent wanders aimlessly down the narrow halls. The eyes of the paintings on either side seem to be watching him-- staring into his soul.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
I paced the halls last night. I  
had to see her. I want to know I'm  
not losing my mind. But I saw  
nothing...

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - DAWN**

Vincent sits at his desk. A stack of paper beside him. All blank.

Vincent stares at it. Tormented.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
This place was not built for  
creativity. The walls stifle it.  
Not let it grow. Not let it  
breath.  
(beat)  
I must see her again... I must...

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - LATER**

Vincent stands by the window, looking out onto the grounds below. A dense fog hangs over everything.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
'Tis twisted, the mind of a poet.  
Loud one moment, deafeningly  
silent the next. What will I do if  
I don't see my Muse again? What  
will I do if the words never pour  
from my pen again? Am I nothing  
without her?

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - DAY**

Vincent sits at his desk. Writing in his journal. A small amount of joy has returned to his face. A trace of life. Of joy.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
20 October, 1899. My Muse has  
returned!  
(MORE)

VINCENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Not a full apparition-- but a  
faint echo, a remnant of herself.  
Visible to my eye for the briefest  
of moments, but enough for me to  
know she is there.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - DAY**

Vincent SPRINTS into the room, catching his breath. He stops,  
looking across to the window--

--where the FAINT OUTLINE of the woman is visible.

Vincent extends his hand. Silently pleading.

Before he can find the strength to muster a word, the woman  
DISAPPEARS.

Vincent's face drops. Overcome with remorse.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
She is trying to return to me.  
Perhaps the veil between this  
tainted mortal world and the realm  
of Muses is a thick barrier? A  
struggle for her, I'm sure, but  
one she is willing to make for me.  
To bring me her words, as well her  
love.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - NIGHT**

It's late. The faint glow from the candle almost expired.

Vincent writes. Hands moving faster than his mind can keep up.

In the corner of his mouth, the smallest trace of a smile  
forming.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
I am inspired. The words are  
flowing out like an endless  
deluge. I've written more in the  
last few hours than I have in  
days. I had almost forgotten how  
it felt. This is a high the  
strongest opium cannot grant.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - DAWN**

A sliver of sunlight trickles into the room.

Vincent continues to write. Exhausted to near collapse, yet he can't stop.

VINCENT (V.O.)

I find my mind recollecting on my youth-- when the Muse first spoke to me, encouraging me to put pen to paper. Things were simple then. I wrote because I was inspired by her, not because I needed coin from it.

(beat)

The search for wealth has corrupted many of my fellow poets. Their connection to the Muse, they have allowed to expire.

(beat)

They will see. All of them. My connection to the Muse is strong-- my devotion has never wavered.

Vincent finishes his work. Reclines in his seat, he rubs his tired eyes.

He grabs his writing and pours over it, loving every single word.

VINCENT (V.O.)

She will appreciate my commitment. She will see. She will reward me. My Muse has returned! A more gleeful man there has never been. As long as she is with me, I will thrive.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Vincent lies awake, unable to sleep. His mind racing.

VINCENT (V.O.)

23 October, 1899. The words continue to flow with no sign of slowing. The Muse is stronger than ever. Her form is vivid to me-- I feel as if I could reach out and touch her.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Vincent stands in the doorway, hidden mostly by the shadowy darkness from the hallway.

He peers inside at the woman as she drifts aimlessly around the room. Perhaps a ghost after all.

From within the darkness, Vincent smiles.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - NIGHT**

Vincent sits at his desk. Writing, writing, writing.

His eyes bloodshot. He can't be bothered to blink.

VINCENT (V.O.)

Sleep continues to elude me. My mind races in a blur of words. The cacophony of the artistic mind. I know she will stay with me. We have many more words to write-- more stories to tell.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - DAWN**

Vincent paces in front of his desk, arms folded. His hair a mess, eyes more bloodshot than every. His clothing filthy.

He looks at his desk--

A pen laying atop a stack of blank paper.

VINCENT (V.O.)

29 October, 1899. The words have stopped. As has my mind. Nearly a week since I saw her only to end last night.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Vincent tosses and turns. Restless. Manic.

VINCENT (V.O.)

I lay awake, the emptiness swallowing my mind. How could she forsake me when I've given her everything? Then, I heard it...

FROM ABOVE--

FOOTSTEPS.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
A faint sound in the attic once  
more. I ran to meet her.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Vincent hurries toward the room.

He reaches the door. Throws it open. Enters--

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT**

--to find the woman HANGING BY THE NECK FROM AN OLD ROPE. Her  
feet dangle a few feet above the floor.

Vincent tears up.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
I threw open the door and was met  
with a terrible sight... my  
Muse... my love...

Vincent walks toward the woman's body. Extending his hand to  
touch hers.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
Before I could touch her, she was  
gone...

The woman VANISHES.

Vincent retracts his hand. Tears stream down his face. He falls  
to his knees. Weeping like a child.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
I offered God anything he wanted  
to return her to me. But she never  
returned. The image of her swaying  
like a pendulum was burned into my  
brain...

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - DAWN**

Vincent lies on the floor in the fetal position. His brow  
scrunches. His sleep troubled.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
In the rare moment sleep comes to  
me, she is all I see.  
(MORE)



VINCENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
This couldn't be her end. Was she  
simply a ghost? No-- she can't be.  
She must be real. The Muse has  
come to me. I have been faithful.  
Perhaps she is testing me?

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - STUDY - NIGHT**

An intense lightning storm rages outside the window.

Vincent sits at his desk, staring blankly into space. His will  
to live gone.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
31 October, 1899. The Muse has  
abandoned me. God has forsaken me.  
The spark is gone. I can feel it.  
The pen that was once a way to  
express my thoughts lies  
untouched.  
(beat)  
Going on seems impossible...

Vincent snaps out of it. He sits forward, an idea percolating  
in his mind.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
I must be with her. If she will  
not come to me, I shall go to her.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The door slowly eases open with a loud CREAK.

Vincent stands in the doorway. A ROPE clutched tightly in his  
fist.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
If the rope is what took her, then  
so too shall it take me.

**INT. VICTORIAN MANOR - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

The rope is tied around a ceiling beam. Vincent stands on a  
chair, fitting the noose around his neck. A look of intense  
determination on his face.

VINCENT (V.O.)  
This is better. This is what must  
be. I will see my Muse again. May  
God forgive me...

Vincent takes a deep breath.

Then--

KICKS THE CHAIR AWAY FROM HIM.

The chair topples over, hitting the floor with a THUD.

A SHARP SNAP OF THE ROPE.

Silence.

Vincent's legs hang in mid-air, swaying slightly.

**FADE TO BLACK.**