

DREAM

A Play in One Act

Written by  
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ACT I

SCENE 1

The play is set in a hole-in-the-wall café. There is a counter with a computer monitor and a number of display dishes with pastries. There are a couple of tables, a small wooden stage with a stool, and a lounge area including a couch, chair, and a small table with magazines. There is a bulletin board with news and current events, as well as a menu board on the wall behind the counter. Low-key coffee shop music softly plays in the background. A teenage girl dressed in all black, ALLISON, sits reading The Poe Shadow in a chair at the lounge area. A young 20 something couple, SARA and ANDREW, enter and go to "their" table. CHEYENNE, a beautiful blonde mid-20s waitress, enters from the kitchen and crosses to the cute couple.

CHEYENNE

Hi, welcome to The Raven. My name's Cheyenne, I'll be your server tonight.

ANDREW

Hey Cheyenne.

CHEYENNE

What's this? Andrew and Sara? Together? What an unexpected surprise.

SARA

Haha, very funny.

CHEYENNE

So do you guys want your usual?

ANDREW

What do you think, babe?

SARA

Of course.

ANDREW

(To Cheyenne.)

Yeah, the usual sounds great.

CHEYENNE

Super! Two Kona Mocha's with whipped cream and rainbow sprinkles. I'll get those right out to ya!

ANDREW

Thanks.

Cheyenne exits to kitchen.  
A new song starts over the  
coffee shop speakers.

SARA

Oh, I just love this song. Andrew, do you remember this song?

ANDREW

Of course I do. This is the song that was playing on the radio  
the night I asked you to be my girl.

SARA

Oh! You remember. That's what I love about you. You remember all  
the little things.

ANDREW

Only when they have to do with you.

SARA

Oh! You're so sweet.

ANDREW

No, you're sweet.

SARA

No you are!

ANDREW

No, you-

Cheyenne enters carrying  
two drinks.

CHEYENNE

Here ya go! Two Kona Mocha's with whipped cream and rainbow-

Everyone freezes. Light  
change. A mysterious being  
known as THE MUSE appears  
from nowhere and recites  
Edgar Allan Poe's "Dream  
within a Dream."

MUSE

Take this kiss upon the brow! And, in parting from you now, thus  
much let me avow- You are not wrong, who deem That my days have  
been a dream; Yet if hope has flown away in a night, or in a day,  
In a vision, or in none, Is it therefore the less gone? All that  
we see or seem Is but a dream within a dream.

Lights shift to a more pedestrian ambiance. The lights are dim and everyone unfreezes. They all move silently as Muse speaks. A spotlight hits the small stage. Allison rises from her chair and heads to the stage to prepare for her performance. Allison takes a moment before reciting Poe's "Alone." Her delivery is very dark. Poe would be proud.

ALLISON

From childhood's hour I have not been As others were; I have not seen As others saw; I could not bring My passions from a common spring. From the same source I have not taken My sorrow; I could not awaken My heart to joy at the same tone; And all I loved, I loved alone. Then- in my childhood, in the dawn Of a most stormy life- was drawn From every depth of good and ill The mystery which binds me still: From the torrent, or the fountain, From the red cliff of the mountain, From the sun that round me rolled In its autumn tint of gold, From the lightning in the sky As it passed me flying by, From the thunder and the storm, And the cloud that took the form when the rest of Heaven was blue of a demon in my view.

CHEYENNE

(Disingenuous.)

Thank you Allison for that always wonderful, lovely, dark and creepy poetry stuff you do. Super.

(Genuine.)

We here at The Raven thank you all for coming to tonight's poetry hour.

MARK

Yeah, all two of you.

CHEYENNE

Please be sure to purchase a delicious Danish on your way out! Have a great night!

Cheyenne makes her way to the computer behind the counter to clock out. She then exits to the back. Sara and Andrew walk towards Allison.

SARA

Allison, we just wanted to tell you that we think you're just terrific!

No response from Allison.  
ASHLEY, 20s, a likable  
brunette waitress, enters  
from the kitchen.

ANDREW

Yeah, we've been coming here a long time and this place has never  
had anyone with your style of poetry before.

No response.

SARA

You really touched us tonight. It was so moving.

Still nothing.

ASHLEY

She's not exactly a conversationalist, especially when it comes  
to people she doesn't know.

SARA

Oh... Well we were only trying to pay her a compliment.

ASHLEY

Yeah, she doesn't take compliments very well either.

SARA

Oh! I bet it's an "artist" thing. You know the whole seclusion  
and solitary way of life. They shun themselves from interacting  
with the community as a form of suffering for their craft.

Beat.

ANDREW

You're so cute.

Sara playfully slaps  
Andrew's arm.

ANDREW

So how are the efforts to save The Raven?

ASHLEY

Actually-

MARK

False hope, Ashley...

ASHLEY

Actually, it's going great! I've got an idea in the works. I'm  
thinking about putting on a show kind of like the poetry hour,  
but with more variety. Like songs and stuff!

SARA

Oh! That sounds wonderful!

ASHLEY

The only problem is we don't really have anyone to perform.

SARA

Problem solved!

Sara excitedly rushes to  
the stage. She begins  
singing the Star-Spangled  
Banner. Very, very badly.

SARA

(Screeching.)

Oh say can you see, by the dawn's early light, what so proudly we  
hailed at the twilight's last gleaming. And the rockets red glare-

ANDREW

That's beautiful, baby, like angels singing; but I think they're  
looking for something a little more... lyrical and poetic than  
the Star-Spangled Banner.

SARA

Oh, well in that case I'm afraid I can't help. I don't really  
know any poems.

ASHLEY

What about you, Andrew?

ANDREW

Me? No no no, not me. I couldn't handle being up there in front  
of all those people.

MARK

What people?

ASHLEY

Don't mind Mark. He's just got a lot going on right now.

SARA

We understand. We just hope things work out. I know I'd hate to  
see this place get closed down. I mean, this is where Andrew and  
I had our very first date.

ANDREW

And our second, and our third...

ASHLEY

How long have you two been together?

SARA

Just over a year now.

ASHLEY

Wow. I don't mean to pry but, are there any talks of marriage?

SARA

One can only dream.

ANDREW

One can only dream.

They look at each other  
and laugh at the  
coincidence.

ASHLEY

Aw, well I hope things work out for you two.

SARA

Thanks. Well we'll go ahead and get out of your hair so you guys  
can close and go home. We'll see you all later!

ASHLEY

Take care! Come back and see us.

ANDREW

Goodnight guys.

Andrew and Sara cross to  
the front door.

SARA

Baby, you think I sing well, right?

ANDREW

Of course baby. Like the choir of heaven.

They exit.

MARK

Ashley, what did we talk about?

ASHLEY

Are you referring to your schpeel on giving up and hopelessness?

MARK

I'm talking about filling our customers' heads with ideas that  
we're going to be around for a while when we both know that is  
not the case.

ASHLEY

Hey, I'm choosing to look at the glass as half full. You seem to  
have drunk your half.

MARK

Well that depends, was it a glass of water or scotch? Never mind  
I've had both today.

Cheyenne enters from the  
back wearing a jaw-dropping  
outfit.

ASHLEY

Wow Cheyenne, you look great!

CHEYENNE

I know.

ASHLEY

Where are you going looking so hot?

CHEYENNE

No where.

MARK

That's right. You can't leave yet. It's your turn to do the final  
sweep tonight.

CHEYENNE

I'm off the clock, Mark. Besides, I have plans. Goodnight!

She exits.

ASHLEY

Goodnight.

MARK

I swear, if we weren't going under...

ASHLEY

Relax Mark. I'll sweep tonight.

MARK

Thanks.

Ashley begins tidying up  
while Mark continues with  
his paperwork.

ASHLEY

We're about to close, Allison.

ALLISON

That's because you're a slave to the clock, man. I'm free from  
the grasp of the hands that belong to the minute and the hour.

ASHLEY

(Confused.)

That's great Allison. But we're still about to lock up everything.

ALLISON

...five more minutes?



ASHLEY

Sure.

(Begins to walk away, but  
suddenly has a great idea.)

Hey, would you be willing to perform in a talent show to save The Raven? All the regulars really-

ALLISON

"Thy soul shall find itself alone Mid dark thoughts of the grey tomb-stone; Not one, of all the crowd, to pry Into thine hour of secrecy."

ASHLEY

...sooooo is that a yes?

ALLISON

My inspiration is like the butterfly: lovely when it's here, but soon departs to grace its beauty for another. I refuse to net and cage such a free-spirited creature.

MARK

(Aside.)

Strike one for the Dream Team.

ASHLEY

But Allison, you love this place. You're here everyday. Don't you want to do everything you can to save it?

ALLISON

(A button was pressed.)

Love is a drug that takes you high before the inevitable painful fall from the sky! It's a weak emotion that I will not fall prey to again!

(Beat. She pauses to compose herself.)

I won't take part in a vain attempt to "save" something that we as humans are powerless to affect.

MARK

(Aside.)

Swing and a miss.

ASHLEY

Please?

ALLISON

No see, you're not diggin' me. Check in, princess. I said no.

MARK

(Aside.)

Yoooooooouuu're out.

ASHLEY

Oh can it, Mark! Just wait! I'm gonna put on this show and it is gonna bring people in and we are gonna save The Raven!

MARK

Tell me something, do they get good internet service up there in Never Neverland?

ASHLEY

Fine, make all the jokes you want. But a girl can dream.

MARK

Do you know who dreamers really are? People who don't have any follow-through. They're so busy talking about their dreams that they never actually get up off their butts and make it happen! And even the people who are hard-working and have honest aspirations and reach for the stars soon find out that they're not tall enough. Dreamer is just another sugar-coated word for fool.

ASHLEY

Oh come on, didn't you have dreams?

MARK

Oh yeah, sure. My dream was to be a manager at a hole-in-the-wall café serving Danishes to lovey-dovey couples and homeless beatniks.

ASHLEY

You just don't stop with the sarcasm, do you?

MARK

Ashley, I'm only trying to be true to myself, which apparently means being fake to everybody else.

ASHLEY

I just don't understand how you can sit by and do nothing.

MARK

What do you think I'm doing right now? Doodling cartoons? Believe it or not, I am actually trying to save this business, but I'm doing it the only way it can be done, by sitting here in reality and crunching numbers. You want to enter a fantasy land where Santa Claus plays golf with the Easter bunny and dreams come true and put on a talent show with no talent? Well be my guest, but you're doing it on your own.

Beat.

ASHLEY

You know something Mark? You're right.

MARK

I'm what?

ASHLEY

You're right. I can't possibly put on a show to save The Raven with no talent. That was a silly idea. Thank you for bringing me back down to earth.

MARK

No problem. It's what I do.

ASHLEY

Well, looks like I'm done sweeping. Anything else you need before I go?

MARK

No, thank you Ashley. Everything looks great.

ASHLEY

Alright then.

(She goes to computer to  
clock out.)

Have a good night. Try not to stay too late.

MARK

Me stay late? Don't be ridiculous.

ASHLEY

Get some sleep Mark. See you in the morning, bright and early.

Ashley exits.

MARK

Goodnight.

Mark looks over and notices  
Allison is still there.  
He goes to the light switch  
and turns off the lights.

MARK

Goodnight Allison.

Mark walks back to the  
counter and resumes working.  
Allison scoffs and gathers  
her things. Muse speaks  
as she gets up to leave.

MUSE

A night of seclusion, a night of despair, thoughts of confusion looms in the air. One's troubles and torments seem greater than most, and their worries plague and haunt like a ghost. Restlessness never ceases, never relents its pursuit of your sanity. It seeps straight down to the root of all that you are and all that you will be. Will you succumb to your own misery?