

Audition Cut #2 - Helen, the Poet

~~CORTNI. (*Fading*) Bundle up warm, dear, bundle up warm. Storm coming.~~

~~SARAH MAY Oh, it was a lovely ceremony.~~

~~THE POET. Yes. It was.~~

~~SARAH MAY. She would have...she would have...(*weeps*) Goodnight ...~~

~~THE POET. Goodnight. Thank you.~~

SFX: *Door closes. Cut wind.*

HELEN. Goodnight, then.

THE POET. Goodnight, Helen, thank you.

HELEN. You have enough to keep yourself busy?

THE POET. Yes...yes. I have some research. I'll spend some time in the library...going over my books...making notes.

HELEN. Yes, of course. Lose yourself in scholarship.

THE POET. That's right.

HELEN. No sense blaming yourself, you know.

THE POET. No, I...I wasn't... (*There is an unspoken secret between these two*)

HELEN. Her heart wasn't strong.

THE POET. No.

HELEN. And the burden your relationship put upon her...

THE POET. Burden?

HELEN. Oh, you know...the turmoil ...

THE POET. Turmoil.

HELEN. And the worry, of course. (*Breaks mood*) Well, we all worry about those we love, don't we?

THE POET. Y...yes...we do.

HELEN. Some are simply...too fragile for it. Well! Don't stay up too late then.

THE POET. No. I'll be in bed by midnight.

HELEN. And don't feel guilty. Don't feel the least guilt.

THE POET. No, I...I...

HELEN. Well...goodnight then...and, once again, my heartfelt sympathies.

SFX: *Door open. Wind. Light rumble of thunder.*

THE POET. Thank you. Thank you. Goodnight. (Raise voice slightly) Goodnight, everyone. Goodnight.

ALL VOICES. (*Adlib: "Goodnight!" "Take care!" "We'll be by next week," etc, fading*)

SFX: *Door closes forcefully. Wind sound cut off.*

MUSIC: *Bridge, then in and under all, echoing the moods.*

SFX: *Clock ticking fade in and under. Pages of a book rustling. Fire crackling. Clock chimes. Reaches eight before THE POET speaks. Finishes at twelve.*

(*Slight echo over all*)

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

SFX: *Light tapping, and under.*

THE POET. While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door.
Only this, and nothing more."

SFX: *Crackling of fire fades. Dies during next speech. Riffing of pages.*

THE POET. Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books...

SFX: *A book closing quickly.*

THE POET. ...surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore—
Nameless *here* for evermore.