

LENORE

A short play in one scene

By Herb Isaacs

Characters

Mel, 19, freshman at college, English major

Jerry, 19, freshman at college, English major

Steve, 22, junior at college, basketball player

Lenore, 19, freshman at college, Sociology major

The Place: A university in New York City.

Time: Early 1950s

SCENE 1. ON THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

(At Rise, we see a bench on campus. Mel and Jerry are seated there. Steve approaches.)

STEVE

Hi, guys. Lenore said she was gonna be with you today. Is that right?

JERRY

Yeah, we're expecting her any time now.

STEVE

Good. Can you give her a message for me? I tried to call her, but nobody answered.

JERRY

Probably in the library.

STEVE

Yeah, I guess. Could you please tell her I got her a reserved seat for the game tonight. It will be at the box office window. Are you guys coming?

MEL

Sorry, but we have a big test tomorrow. Gotta study.

JERRY

Yeah, sorry we won't get to see you play.

STEVE

Have you ever come to a game?

MEL

Not yet, but we will.

STEVE

Well, you frosh need to get the spirit! We've got a great team. You should support your school.

JERRY

Oh, we will. I promise.

STEVE

Good. Well, I gotta get to practice. See you around, I guess.

JERRY AND MEL

(Adlib different words together) Sure. See ya. So long.

(Steve exits)

JERRY

He is so full of himself.

MEL

Yeah, the Star, the Big Man on Campus.

JERRY

What do you want to bet he thinks Edgar Allan Poe is a backup center with the Knicks.

MEL

Funny you should mention Poe. I was just re-reading The Raven last night.

JERRY

Thinking about Lenore again?

MEL

It is weird isn't it? That poem says it all.

JERRY

(Reciting) For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

MEL

God, that gives me the chills.

JERRY

You got it bad for her, don't you?

MEL

Yeah, and what about you. I've seen your eyes when she smiles at you.

JERRY

I take the fifth.

MEL

What are we going to do about this?

JERRY

What do you mean?

MEL

C'mon, Jerry. You know what I mean. We are both nuts about this girl.

JERRY

So?

MEL

So, sooner or later we're gonna be in competition for her, you know, each of us trying to outdo the other to win her for himself.

JERRY

That's perfectly natural, isn't it?

MEL

Jerry, use your head. Each of us will wind up doing anything to get her, including bad-mouthing the other guy.

JERRY

You wouldn't bad-mouth me, would you? (thinks about it) Yeah, I guess you would.

MEL

And, if I may say, vya versa!

JERRY

Yeah, I hate to admit it, but you're right.

MEL

If we carry on like that, our friendship will go down the drain for sure. We can't let that happen.

JERRY

Yeah. We're the Damon and Pythias of Brooklyn.

MEL

I'm really torn, though. I love Lenore... but I would hate to break up our friendship over a woman.

JERRY

I feel exactly the same.

MEL

So what do we do?

JERRY

(Thinks) I've got it! We'll just let her choose.

MEL

What?

JERRY

Instead of us competing, we leave it up to her. We tell her how we both feel, and ask her to choose the one of us she loves the most. You and I agree to abide by her decision and we all remain friends.

MEL

Wow, that's a great idea! When should we tell her?

JERRY

Let's not waste any time. Let's do it today.

MEL

Okay, I'm game.

JERRY

Here she comes now. You ready?

MEL

I guess.

(LENORE enters and goes over to the bench. She alternately hugs JERRY AND MEL.)

LENORE

Got room for me?

JERRY

We always have room for you, Lenore.

(They move apart and she sits down between them.)

MEL

We're glad you were able to be with us this afternoon.

LENORE

You know I always love being with you guys.

JERRY

Yeah. Us too. By the way, Steve came by and said to tell you he left a ticket for you for the basketball game tonight. It's at the Box Office.

LENORE

That was nice of him. I do enjoy going to the games.

MEL

(To Lenore) So, besides that, what else is going on?

LENORE

I just came from another boring Soc 101 class. The textbook is so inane, and my prof just drones on.

JERRY

Glad I'm an English major.

MEL

Yeah, me too.

LENORE

That's one of the reasons I love being around you two. I'm so impressed you can recite so many poems from memory. And you know my favorite, right?

JERRY

Sure. It has to be The Raven.

LENORE

Yep. It's my personal place in history.

MEL

We love that one too, but for a different reason.

LENORE

What is that?

JERRY

It makes us think of you.

LENORE

As in nevermore?

MEL
No, silly. Forevermore.

LENORE
Wow, that almost sounds romantic.

JERRY
Maybe it is.

LENORE
Really?

MEL
Yes.

LENORE
Both of you?

JERRY
Yes.

LENORE
Wow, that's a little startling.

JERRY
C'mon, Lenore. Surely you've noticed how much we enjoy our daily walks together.

LENORE
I like being with you two a lot. Naturally I assumed you enjoyed my company as well.

MEL
Can I ask you a personal question?

LENORE
Anything.

MEL
Do you just like our company, or do you like us as individuals?

LENORE
Of course I like you as individuals. You are both interesting and fun guys.

JERRY
Anything more than that?

LENORE
What do you mean?

JERRY

Could you ever see us in a romantic way?

LENORE

I've never thought about it. (Thinks it over.) Sure, that could be possible. But it could turn out to be a problem.

MEL

Why?

LENORE

I think of you as Jerry and Mel, my closest friends. If there ever were romance involved, I might have to take the two of you as a package deal.

MEL

No, we're still individuals.

JERRY

Yeah, we would have to court you separately.

LENORE

Well, in the meantime, I can just continue as I am, loving you both as my best friends.

MEL

We're happy you mentioned that, because we have a proposition for you.

LENORE

Oh?

JERRY

Lenore, it has become clear to Mel and me that we have fallen in love with you.

LENORE

Both of you?

MEL

Yes. But we realize that only one of us can ultimately prevail.

JERRY

So we have figured out a way to solve the problem.

LENORE

You're going to fight a duel.

MEL

No. It will never come to that.

LENORE

So what will you do, then?

JERRY

We thought we could just let you choose the one you love the most, and the other guy will accept the decision so we all can stay best friends forever.

LENORE

I see. And how long do I have to make up my mind?

MEL

Take as long as you need, but the sooner we can get a decision, the easier our mutual lives together will be.

LENORE

What if I told you I can make the choice now?

JERRY

I would be amazed, but that would be great!

MEL

Yeah, unbelievable.

LENORE

(Takes a moment to gather herself). Well, guys, here are my thoughts about this situation. Both of you are very gentle souls, but you each have different external characteristics. Mel, let's face it. Jerry is more handsome, not your fault, but a fact. Jerry, from what I can tell, Mel is more fundamentally idealistic than you. You can tell by the poetry he loves. I love idealism and gentle, and I love handsome and gentle. But, truthfully, the one factor I need to consider is what else I love. So Mel, Jerry, here is my choice: I choose **STEVE**.

(LENORE gets up from the bench. Kisses each one on the cheek, and exits jauntily. MEL and JERRY look up the path after her.)

MEL

Quoth the Raven.

JERRY

Nevermore.

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY