



POE & CO. DETECTIVE AGENCY

Pilot

"The Murders in the Rue Morgue"

Written by

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Based on / Inspired by
The life and work of Edgar Allan Poe

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Edgar Allan Poe invented the Detective Fiction genre.

Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" inspired
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to write "Sherlock Holmes."

*"Where was the detective story before Poe breathed the breath
of life into it?" ~ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

EXT. CAROLINE STREET - NIGHT**SUPER:** BALTIMORE September 29, 1849

Thunder RUMBLES. Rain POURS over the THREE-STORY ROW HOUSES at the corner of the block.

A black iron SIGN, attached to the front of one house, reads:
POE & CO. DETECTIVE AGENCY. 100% OF CASES SOLVED!

INT. DRAWING ROOM - POE'S ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

EDGAR ALLAN POE (40, neurotic, melancholy genius) sits at his desk and fiddles with a small **WOODEN BOX** with RUNIC SYMBOLS.

A huge RAVEN (ageless, female, not of this world) perched on the rolled arm of an empire sofa facing Poe's desk, watches.

Poe turns and studies the BOX. He takes notes.

POE

You know, it was an ominous and stormy night just like this one, when I found this mysterious package upon my doorstep.

RAVEN

No it wasn't. It was perfect beach weather. It was sunny and there were like zero clouds.

POE

Well... it mysteriously appeared upon my doorstep.

RAVEN

No it didn't. Sir Reginald hired you to solve it. Oliver delivered it, and even made you sign for it.

POE

Well... the box is still mysterious...

Poe side-eyes Raven to see if he got away with that.

RAVEN

Enough with making up stories. You gotta focus on your side hustle.

POE

I am not enamored with your speech or your tone.

(MORE)

POE (CONT'D)

Just because you do not conform to
societal standards does not mean--

RAVEN

--I'm an eternal talking bird, and
you're more concerned with me
speaking in "proper" dialect? You
think I'm gonna follow any rules?

Poe notices two logs remain by the fireplace. Half a loaf of
bread by his desk. He holds his forehead with both hands.

POE

I have but **one nickel** to last for
three weeks, unless I solve the
mystery of this box.

RAVEN

You got this. You're a much better
detective than writer. *And maybe
lay off the wagers...*

Poe scoffs. He crosses his arms, holds his chin, and thinks.

He jams a letter opener into a thin crevice of the BOX. He
uses his foot on the BOX as leverage, to crack it open.

The letter opener slips out of the crevice, flings backward
toward Poe, stabs him in the forehead, and BOINGS back and
forth like a spring doorstop.

Raven laughs so hard, she falls off of the sofa. Poe yanks
the letter opener out. Shoulders and head droop, defeated.

Raven hops to the overflowing bookcase, pulls out a BOOK
titled "Ancient Runic Ciphers," and tosses it to Poe.

POE

I was just about to locate that.

RAVEN

Uh huh.

Poe flips through the book's pages until he finds symbols
that match the BOX. Poe writes in his JOURNAL, translating
the symbols.

INSERT: JOURNAL

< = Revelation, Knowledge R = Journey H = Change

⌈ = Mystery, Magic † = Power of God

BACK TO SCENE

POE

Revelation. Journey. Change.
Mystery, Magic... Power Of God...

RAVEN

Magic and the power of the God?!
Yes, please!

POE

The temptation to see what's inside
this box is stronger than my
dependency on the drink...

Poe picks up his dead wife's photo from the desk and glooms.

POES

When I lost my poor Sissy...

Raven cuts off Poe--

RAVENS

Ok, one. Stop dwelling. Two.
Pleeease don't call your dead wife
"Sissy." She was *not your sister*.
Gross! Now, let's bust open this
Pandora's Box!

Poe has a panicked look. He pulls at his hair.

POE

Could this box be cursed?

RAVEN

Why are you being such a weenie?
Cloaca-up!

Raven excitedly pecks all over the BOX.

POE

Get your foul beak off my box!

RAVEN

That's what your mom said last
night.

POE

That's disgusting. You know she's
been dead since I was a young lad.

RAVEN

I know. Dead people can't talk. She
was *silent the whole time*.

Poe gives Raven a sour look. Raven CACKLES.

Poe presses runes on the BOX. He turns sections of it in opposite directions. The BOX pops open!

A blinding NEON GREEN LIGHT bursts out, obscuring everything in sight except Poe and Raven's silhouettes!

EXT. POE'S ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

Neon GREEN AND BLUE ENERGY TENTACLES shoot out the windows and wrap around the ROW HOUSE pulsing, BUZZING and CRACKLING.

Poe's three story ROW HOUSE distortedly implodes inward, as if sucked into a black hole.

EXT. CAROLINE STREET EMPTY LOT - NIGHT

SUPER: BALTIMORE September 29, 2023

On a clear night, ten feet directly above an **EMPTY LOT**, a BALL OF BLUE AND GREEN ELECTRICITY, emerges from nothingness.

It BUZZES, CRACKLES, and expands. As it grows, Poe's ROW HOUSE grows and warps into full-size existence with a light POP-- in the exact place where that same building stood in 1849 (minus the other attached ROW HOUSES).

TWO TEN-YEAR-OLDS spray-paint GRAFFITI and don't even notice that an entire building just appeared behind them.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - POE'S ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

Poe and Raven are a hot mess. Crazy hair and feathers. Splayed across the floor, in shock.

They slowly sit up and shake off their brain fog. They spot the WOODEN BOX back in its original configuration.

RED and BLUE LIGHTS flicker from the window. Raven hops over.

RAVEN

What the?!

POE

What is it?

RAVEN

I. Don't. Know. Weird metal boxes with wheels?

Poe examines the scene from the window. Cars line the street.

POE
Metal carriages? Madness! Much too
heavy for a horse. How curious.

A police car races away, LIGHTS on, siren SCREAMS.

POE
We must investigate!

EXT. CAROLINE STREET - NIGHT

Poe and Raven turn 360, taking everything in, confused. They peer into a car window. Car alarm BLARES and startles them!

Raven jumps on Poe and wraps her wings around his big fat head while he stumbles around and attempts to pry her off.

Poe loses his balance. They fall into the street.

They start to get up when a motorcycle ROARS by. Three BLASTS of a car horn. Poe and Raven clutch each other and fall.

POE & RAVEN
AAAAAAAHHHH!!!!!!

Poe and Raven are in a tight embrace when MARLOWE (10, female, biracial, precocious, hyper) skateboards up to them.

MARLOWE
Are you ok? Did you get hit?

Cars zoom past. PEOPLE tap on their phones as they walk by.

Raven's gaze is magnetized to those glowing devices.

RAVEN
Ooooooh! What are those magic
glowing rectangles?

Poe gets up, still taking it all in, overwhelmed. Raven has a one-track mind. Shiny. Magic.

RAVEN
TellmeTellmeTellme!

Marlowe's eyes widen.

POE
What has the devil wrought with
that infernal box? Urchin, is there
actual sorcery here?!

(MORE)

POE (CONT'D)

And shouldn't you be at some orphan
asylum at this late hour?

MARLOWE

My name's Marlowe. You're not
making sense. Wow! Your bird talks!
Is that a black parrot?!

RAVEN

I'm an eternal being, a harbinger
of never-ending sorrow and loss,
trapped in this plane of existence.
Not a frickin' black parrot.

MARLOWE

Ooooh, wow, you really talk a lot!

RAVEN

You talk a lot--

POE

Enough you two! Marlowe - the
machinery whizzing by... Those
magic glowing rectangles... *Every
wild thing around us!* What is going
on? Are we amongst witchcraft?

MARLOWE

Uh, no magic. Just regular old
Baltimore. Did you hit your head?

Poe looks shocked and confused. Poe points an index finger--

POE

What's that?

MARLOWE

It's my skateboard. So I can get
places faster than walking. Plus,
it's fun! Check this out--

Marlowe ollies and gets a 1/2 inch of air. Poe and Raven are
not impressed.

POE

(points)

What's--

MARLOWE

A car. You go places in those. You
definitely hit your head.

A Boeing 777 flies overhead. He points--

MARLOWE

(rapid fire)

Airplane. You fly to places in those. Like far away places. My family took a trip to Disney World. Wow, this is like teaching my baby brother stuff. Are you from another planet or do you need to go to the hospital? I like your costume. Are you practicing for a play or do you work at the museum?

Poe points to the GLOWING PHONE in Marlowe's hand.

MARLOWE

A phone. Everyone has one.

Marlowe shoves her phone in Poe's face. She swipes and clicks a barrage of apps. Raven's eyes spiral, beak agape, jonesin' for this crack.

MARLOWE

(espresso fast)

You play games, message friends, post pics, get likes, look up stuff, get directions, share memes, watch videos, stay up way too late, and make yourself miserable by doomscrolling the latest news. They are so great for everything!!! You really gotta get one!

POE

I don't even know what language you're speaking now.

Raven pushes past Poe, gets her face right on the phone. Her eyeballs stretch and press against the screen.

RAVEN

(drools)

Ooooooooooh. Do want.

Poe and Raven turn toward their house. They steady themselves and gape at the SINGLE ROW HOUSE in the middle of an EMPTY LOT. A vagrant man pees on the side of the building.

POE

Where's the--?

RAVEN

--rest of the row houses?

MARLOWE

Oh, some are just like that because
the buildings got old.

The vagrant man poops. Poe grimaces and turns his head away.

POE

(gags a little)
Why isn't that man using an
outhouse?
(beat)
Old? What do you mean?

MARLOWE

You know. They were built a long
time ago and kinda fell apart.
What's an outhouse?

POE

Long time-- Wait. What year is it?

MARLOWE

2023.

Poe and Raven exchange looks. Poe thrusts his head back. He
clutches at the air.

POE

God almighty! That hideous box!

RAVEN

Holy sh--

MARLOWE

Is that your house?

Marlowe eyes the **POE & CO. DETECTIVE SIGN** out front, and
excitedly points to the house.

MARLOWE

You guys are *detectives?! I had no
idea parrots were so cool!*

If looks could kill-- Raven and Poe dead-eye Marlowe.

RAVEN

I'm a RAY-VEN! Call me RAVEN!

MARLOWE

Poe? Is that your name? There's a
famous guy from here named Poe too.

Poe dismisses Marlowe.

POE

Yes, yes. I'm Poe. Raven, we need to get back to 1849. Muddy's going to be worried sick! Perhaps if we--

RAVEN

Come on, Eddy. Aren't you a *little* curious? I want to find out what a meme is and doomscroll--

MARLOWE

(stomps)

Stop ignoring me! I need to talk to you about detective stuff!

Marlowe follows them to the house.

POE

Little girl, I have much more important matters to worry about.

(to Raven)

Of course, I am ever curious, but how will we survive in this future? We have no reputation, no client list, no ties to the literary community, no benefactors.

Poe crosses his arms and holds his chin in his hand.

POE

How can I earn money from my writing, as a critic or editor, or even giving lectures? No one here knows who I am. I don't have seven cents for a loaf of bread.

Poe throws his hands out, pleading.

POE

I don't even have a reputation here for analysis and deduction.

RAVEN

You *really* need those side gigs.

MARLOWE

Hey! Listen!

Poe and Raven finally turn their attention toward Marlowe.

MARLOWE

I'm trying to be a detective, too!
(looks down, embarrassed)
But, I need help and *I can pay you!*

Poe and Raven exchange looks and HOWL with laughter. Marlowe furrows her brows, squeezes her hands into tight fists.

POE

I don't work for orphans. And I'm sure your wages from the factory or mill are insignificant at best.

MARLOWE

Factory? I'm not an orphan and I have money. Someone stole my GameBoss. I can pay you five dollars now and five dollars when you get it back for me.

Poe and Raven again share a look and CRY-LAUGH.

POE

I don't have time for childish games. Five dollars is more than a week's rent! There is no possible way you have the means to cover--

Marlowe whips out A FIVE DOLLAR BILL.

POE

This is either a fever dream or Dickens *was right* about inflation.

Poe snatches the FIVE DOLLAR BILL as he brushes past Marlowe.

POE

I'll think about it in the morning.

INT. POE'S BEDROOM - DAY

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. Poe sits up in bed, eyes half-closed. Raven nests on a pillow. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

POE

Was that you, Raven, tapping at my chamber doo--

Raven gives Poe an irritated look.

RAVEN

--I'm right here, dumbass, and I'm trying to sleep.

(mutters)

Humans...

PLINK. PLINK. PLINK. ROCKS pelt the front window.

RAVEN
Now I'm angry.

Poe jumps out of bed, opens the window--

POE
One moment!

A pebble flies through the window. It hits Poe in the face.

INT./EXT. FOYER - POE'S ROW HOUSE - DAY

In his OLD-TIMEY NIGHTSHIRT and CAP, Poe opens the front door and doesn't see anyone. He starts to shut the door--

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
HEY!!!

Poe looks down. Marlowe's foot prevents the door from being closed. She scowls at Poe.

POE
I'm sorry. I'm not accustomed to
children rapping, rapping at my
chamber door. Especially
unaccompanied by their guardian.

RAVEN
Wow. Okay. That line, AGAIN?

Raven shakes her head.

POE
Get back to your orphan asylum.

MARLOWE
You took my five dollars. When are
you gonna find my GameBoss?! Why
are you wearing a dress?

As Poe shuts the door on Marlowe--

MARLOWE
(trails off)
My five dollars--

INT. DRAWING ROOM - POE'S ROW HOUSE - DAY

Raven and Poe loom over the mysterious BOX on the floor.

POE

We must try the box again. Perhaps
it will send us back? I wagered a
bonus for solving its mystery--

Poe picks up the wooden BOX and presses the runes.

RAVEN

Wait! I want to MEME!

A brief flicker of light. It quickly FIZZLES out. Poe presses
the runes again. Poe slumps and sighs. Nothing. It's dead.

POE

It appears to be only a paperweight
now. We'll have to figure out--

RAVEN

*I know your intellectual curiosity
is thirsty to check out this
future. We can try to figure out a
way to get home later. I want my
own magic glowy thingie!*

POE

I need to get back to my work. I am
this close to finally starting my
literary journal, *The Stylus*--

Poe gestures with his index finger and thumb an inch apart.

RAVEN

--Yeah, yeah, yeah... You've been
talking about that forevermore.

POE

Can you imagine how much harder it
will be to make a name for myself?
And a living, starting over?

RAVEN

(under her breath)
*It's not like your writing and
lectures always paid the bills...*

POE

What?

RAVEN

Wha?

Raven gives Poe the shoulders. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

INT./EXT. FOYER - POE'S ROW HOUSE - DAY

Annoyed, Poe opens the door.

POE
Off with you--

HANNAH (30s, black, Instagram bad boss babe) stands bling-ed out with jewelry, designer everything, and LONG POINTY ACRYLIC NAILS. Makeup and hair-- high glam. Her dress shows her BARE SHOULDERS.

Poe, baffled, shields his eyes with his hand.

POE
Uh... I do apologize... Can I help you with something, ma'am? Do you need something to cover up with? You're showing--
(whispers)
Your *naked* shoulders.

HANNAH
Hi, I'm Hannah. I'm in need of a detective. You only have one Yip review, but it's 5 stars. The other P.I.s looked pretty sketch.

Hannah shows the YIP REVIEW on her PHONE that was posted by Marlowe. Poe tries not to stare at her bare arms.

INSERT: Yip Review - 5 Stars

"Best Baltimore Detective! 100% of cases solved! (ignore his weird costumes & big head) Black parrot is a saucy betch!! [skull emoji]"

INT. DRAWING ROOM - POE'S ROW HOUSE - DAY

Hannah sits on the sofa facing Poe with a QUILT around her shoulders, TAPPING her ACRYLICS.

Poe sits at his desk. He peers at Hannah's ACRYLIC NAILS, distracted and uncomfortable.

POE
Are those talons?

Hannah ignores his question.

HANNAH
My cousin Camille is missing and my aunt has been murdered.
(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

The police are on the scene, but they are not proving very competent. I saw your sign. 100% cases solved? Really?

POE

Yes. I am a genius. I am most gifted at analysis and deduction.

HANNAH

I'm not sure how I feel about your costume. Or gimmick--

Hannah looks around the room. Raven is perched nearby.

HANNAH

It doesn't inspire confidence. But is oddly authentic... Would you work on a contingency basis? And do your solved cases include murder and missing persons?

POE

Yes they do. I would require a small deposit.

HANNAH

What are your rates?

POE

Two for the deposit. And eight when the mystery is solved.

HANNAH

That sounds reasonable. Do you take Venmo or Zelle?

POE

Are you suffering from apoplexy?

RAVEN

He means, are you having a stroke?

Hannah shakes her head. Boomers.

HANNAH

Forget it. But that's a weird thing to train a bird to say...

She came prepared. She quickly counts out CASH, then hands it to Poe in an ENVELOPE.

Hannah
 Here's TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS and *all*
the info you need. If you need any
 help with the police, call the
Mayor. He's **my brother.**

Poe attempts to contain his excitement and disbelief as he
 takes the envelope with a nervous smile. His eye twitches.

POE
 Two. TH-THOUSAND.

Raven gapes, coughs, eyes bugged.

POE
 Thank you, Hannah.

Hannah leaves. Poe and Raven exchange wild-eyed looks.

POE
 Holy excrement, Raven! You got your
 wish! We can afford to explore this
 future for a little while!

RAVEN
 I'd say that's a fat stack of
 reasons to stay!

EXT. BALTIMORE - DAY

Poe roams the sidewalk. He doesn't know how to get around
 quickly in this carriage-less future. Raven hovers near.

POE
 We must obtain transportation.

Raven spots Marlowe skateboarding.

RAVEN
 Marlowe!
 (to Poe)
 She can help.

Marlowe covers her ears with her hands.

MARLOWE
 (sing-song)
 I'm not listening...

POE
 Please Marlowe, can you help
 procure us a carriage?

MARLOWE

You shut the door on me! Even after
I gave you a five star Yip review!
And you haven't even *talked about*
finding my GameBoss!

POE

I do apologize. We're pursuing an
investigation. But do not fret, I
promise to find your boss-thing.

Marlowe perks up with joy.

MARLOWE

Ok. I'll get you a Lyft. Can I come
along with you on your case?

POE

No.

Yes!

RAVEN

POE

Raven, **NO**.
(whispers)
Murr-derrr.

RAVEN

But the magic--

MARLOWE

Phone.

RAVEN

Magic phone.

Marlowe sighs with her whole body. Then, wide-eyed with an
ear-to-ear grin--

MARLOWE

Wait. What? *Murder?!*

POE

NO.

Marlowe frowns and kicks her foot at invisible rocks.

A TEENAGER bikes past and chucks an XL soda at Poe.

13-YEAR-OLD

Go back to the Poe Museum, freak!

Drenched, dejected, Poe hangs his head.

INT. BEDROOM - CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - DAY

POLICE, FORENSIC TEAM, Poe, and Raven examine the scene.

Camille and Victoria Jones' apartment is in horrible disarray. Furniture is broken and strewn about the room. Open drawers have been rifled through. Contents spill out.

A snake, hedgehog, and sugar glider make their way through the crime scene at various points as we scan the scene.

On a chair is a RAZOR smeared with blood and small tufts of **ORANGE HAIR**. In front of the fireplace are long thick chunks of gray hair, with bloody pieces of scalp still attached.

A small SAFE is open and empty. Jewelry, gold coins, gold bricks, and ten thousand dollars in cash lay on the floor.

A **RACCOON** saunters in, gathers some **GOLD COINS**. A POLICE OFFICER jabs at the raccoon with his baton and the raccoon gives him a dirty look. Police officer kicks the raccoon. It turns its head, hisses, and shakes its fist at the Police Officer. It scurries away.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Captain Daley, can we get that zoo next door to keep track of its animals? Can we fine them for that smell? And why is an actor from the Poe Museum here?

DETECTIVE CAPTAIN DALEY (50s, black, female, doesn't suffer fools) turns her head to the Police Officer.

CAPTAIN DALEY

That's your job. As for Poe, that's the mayor being a pain in my ass.

Daley approaches Poe. DETECTIVE KENT (30s, black, female, reserved, confident) follows.

CAPTAIN DALEY

I understand that the victims' relatives, including the mayor, want you here. But I don't.

Captain Daley eyeballs Poe's 1840's attire up and down.

CAPTAIN DALEY

What the hell is this get-up? I should detain you on a 5150.

Poe opens his mouth to answer but is cut off.

CAPTAIN DALEY

--Don't answer that. Because of the Mayor, I can't kick you out. Just keep your mouth shut, stay out of my way, and let us do our job.

(to the other officers)

First order of business -- find the missing woman!

Captain Daley turns to talk to a FORENSIC CRIMINALIST.

Poe examines the room. He notices a large amount of soot in the fireplace. He points to it.

POE

Captain Daley, have you noticed that unusually large pile of soot? I'd wager that something is stuck in the chimney.

Captain Daley turns toward Poe.

CAPTAIN DALEY

What did I just tell you? Zip it.
You know nothing.

Captain Daley turns back to the Forensic Criminalist.

Poe checks to make sure Captain Daley isn't watching.

He crouches to the fireplace, takes the blunt end of the fireplace poker, and pokes at something in the chimney.

A body slips, head first, half-way out of the chimney! It's Camille Jones! Everyone in the room looks up from what they're doing. GASPS fill the room.

Captain Daley, astonished, looks at the body then turns her head in the direction of the door.

CAPTAIN DALEY

Get the medical examiner in here!
We found Camille Jones!

Captain Daley glowers at Poe with contempt. She turns her head to Detective Kent and nods in the direction of Poe.

CAPTAIN DALEY

Babysit this joker. This lunatic thinks he's Edgar Allan Poe.

EXT. BACKYARD - CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - DAY

Poe, Raven, and Detective Kent stand in a small yard. An ALLIGATOR waddles across the yard and through a hole in the fence. A GIRAFFE peers over the fence from next door.

Detective Kent side-eyes Poe's outfit. She puts out her hand--

DETECTIVE KENT
I'm... Detective Kent.

Raven edges her way in to shake Kent's hand (with her wing).

RAVEN
I'm Raven. The most fun harbinger
of death you'll ever meet--

Poe brushes Raven aside and shakes Detective Kent's hand. Raven is offended. Kent looks at the bird, in shock.

POE
--Edgar Allan Poe. Poet, purveyor
of short stories, literary critic--

DETECTIVE KENT
--Yeah, I know who *Poe is*.

Poe doesn't pick up on the tone in Kent's voice.

POE
(to himself)
Yes! That shows you, John Allan!

Poe pumps his fist. Kent shakes her head. Raven shrugs.

RAVEN
Daddy issues.

DETECTIVE KENT
How... does your raven talk?

POE
Pardon me. Ignore my raven. It's
trained... Much like a parrot.

Poe smirks at Raven. Raven glares at Poe.

RAVEN
Not trained. I do what I want.

POE
I'm also a detective. I was hired
by family members of the deceased,
to assist with the investigation.
(MORE)

POE (CONT'D)

Nice to make your acquaintance. I have many questions.

DETECTIVE KENT

As do I... I guess great literature isn't as dead as I thought...

Kent looks confused. Poe mistakes the comment as recognition.

DETECTIVE KENT

Sooo... this is where the mother's body was found. An elderly woman, who did not meet a delicate end.

FLASHBACK - EXT. BACKYARD - CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - DAY

TWO MEN IN COVERALLS lift the dead woman to a gurney. Her head falls off and rolls across the yard. The men look around to check if anyone saw that. One of them runs over to the head, grabs it, and places it back on the body. He holds the head in place as he pushes the gurney out the back gate.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. BACKYARD - CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - DAY

WOLF WILDER (male, 60 trying to look a white trash 40, with an orange mustache and mullet) **pops his head** over the fence.

WOLF WILDER

Them ladies was asking fer it. Pretty sure they was prostitutes.

DETECTIVE KENT

Mrs. Jones was an elderly woman.

WOLF WILDER

Hey, I'm just tryna help. I dunno wut people are into.

DETECTIVE KENT

Can you come around and answer some questions?

WOLF WILDER

Sure thang.

Wolf Wilder's head ducks out of sight.

TIGER GROWL. An unseen force takes down the giraffe in Wilder's yard. Blood sprays up from behind the fence. Detective Kent and Poe are facing away from the carnage.

Wolf Wilder walks through the back gate and **extends a hand** to the Detective and Poe. They **DO NOT** shake his hand. He turns his outstretched hand into a finger gun--

WOLF WILDER

(winks)

Pew-pew. Name's Wolf Wilder. Owner of the renowned Wilder Exotic Animal Park.

RAVEN

Exotic Animal Park? It's your backyard.

In the background, a raccoon runs through the yard toting SILVERWARE and SHINY OBJECTS. Raven immediately spots the reflection on the silver, flies over, and fights the Raccoon for the shiny stuff.

Poe has his notebook and pencil ready.

POE

I'm Edgar Allan Poe. What sorrow or terror have you witnessed of this grave tragedy?

Kent inhales deep and shakes her head, summoning patience.

DETECTIVE KENT

I'll take this, Mr. Poe.

(to Wilder)

Did you hear or see anything that could help us?

WOLF WILDER

I... uh... mostly heard screams.

Wilder scratches his neck. His eyes dart nervous glances.

WOLF WILDER

Dig the costume. I like to dress up too, *if you know what I mean*.

Wilder pretends his hands are claws and sexy-growls at them.

DETECTIVE KENT

Anything else?

WOLF WILDER

Hey Eddy, how much fer that raven?

POE

Let me ponder that for a bit...

RAVEN
What the Hell?!

DETECTIVE KENT
 We're done here. Let's interview residents and check out the zoo.

QUICK SERIES OF SCENES

INT. CRIME SCENE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Quick cuts -- Poe and Detective Kent interview individual RESIDENTS. All residents shake their heads and put up their hands in a shrug. Last resident is in a Furry skunk costume.

INT./EXT. WILDER APARTMENT/EXOTIC ANIMAL PARK - DAY

Detective Kent, Poe, and Raven search for clues among the exotic animal park. Poe hold his chin, gears turning.

Raven questions the animals as an interpreter. ANIMAL NOISES Raven nods. She feels important. Parrots look at her smugly.

RAVEN
 None of them saw anything.

Parrots poop on Raven. Poe bites his lip, holds back a laugh.

RAVEN
 Not one word.

Poe paces, studying the animals. He writes in his notebook. GEESE chase and bite at Poe. An ELEPHANT sneezes on him. Just as a KANGAROO is about to kick Poe with all force, Poe runs away and SCREAMS like a little girl.

Poe runs through a giant pile of wet elephant poop. Raven is on the floor, holding her belly, laughing as Poe stands covered in elephant diarrhea.

DETECTIVE KENT
 I'll get the hose.

END QUICK SERIES OF SCENES

INT. CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - DAY

DETECTIVE KENT
 Well, that didn't solve anything.

POE

But we did learn that a man spoke
in an unrecognizable language.

Kent, Poe, and Raven examine the crime scene again to see if they missed anything.

DETECTIVE KENT

One peculiar aspect of this crime
is that--

FLASHBACK - INT. CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - DAY

Windows nailed shut with rusted nails. Front door is locked.

DETECTIVE KENT (V.O.)

--the doors and windows were all
locked from the inside. We had to
knock down the door to get in.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - DAY

Police bust open the front door with a battering ram.

END FLASHBACKS

DETECTIVE KENT

The windows are nailed shut. Even
the skylight window.

SKYLIGHT WINDOW covered in cobwebs, secured with LARGE NAILS.

Detective Kent and Poe inspect the WINDOWS in the bedroom.
All have visible NAILS driven through them into the SILL.

POE

Only someone **incredibly strong**
would have been able to thrust
Camille's body up the chimney. And
how did the culprit get Mrs. Jones
in the yard if everything was
locked from the inside?

Poe checks the WINDOWS in the room. He tries to forcibly open them with no luck. Poe comes to the TWO WINDOWS facing the back yard, which are partially blocked by the bed frame.

Poe tries the first WINDOW. It does not budge. The second WINDOW has the same large rusted nail head as the first, but he notices something odd. He gives it a try. It swings open!

POE

Detective! This window only appeared to be nailed shut like the others. The nail is actually severed, but appears fully intact when the window is closed. See this hairline fracture.

DETECTIVE KENT

Now we know how the perp got the old lady outside. Good work.

POE

We all know it wasn't a robbery. Knowing human nature, murder is often personal. Do you have any suspects yet?

DETECTIVE KENT

No. Not yet.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - POE'S ROW HOUSE - DAY

Poe writes at his desk. Raven, on the sofa, plays with phone.

RAVEN

Oh my gaaawwd, Ed, You gotta check out what these things can do! I can't ever live without one!

POE

Where did you get that?

RAVEN

Marlowe, of course. And she already taught me how to do so many things on it! Lemme show you! Definitely gotta try some 21st century food!

Raven clicks around on the phone.

RAVEN

Hang on, I'll order us some.

(mumbles)

Frap, Pad Thai, KBBQ, nachos.

(excited)

They deliver it to your door like mail and blocks of ice!

Poe looks up from his writing.

POE

How did you pay for that?

RAVEN

It's free! Marlowe got this special plastic card from her stepdad's wallet! That's all I need! That's how we bought this phone too!

Raven triumphantly punches into the air, phone in hand.

POE

What is *plastic*?

RAVEN

Show you when the food gets here.

Sindr dating ads keep coming up on Raven's screen.

RAVEN

Check out this Sindr app! You can order a lover like you order food!

Raven turns the screen toward Poe, swiping through ladies.

RAVEN

Yes. Yes. Nope. Yes. Nope. Yes.

POE

That's vile, Raven.

RAVEN

Poe, you really need to stop mourning your dead wife and start dating again! Let's get you on this app! I'll start your profile...

POE

No.

Poe returns to his writing. Raven snaps a few candid pics of Poe and makes his dating profile.

RAVEN

Headline: Melancholy Romantic Seeks Likewise?

(beat)

Bio: Fan of pedantic literary criticism, spiked eggnog, and pranking the Boston literati. Hopeless romantic.

POE

Raven stop playing with that phone. We have real work to do.

Raven clicks around on the phone with her index feather.

RAVEN

I *am* doing real work. Now. Marlowe showed me these communities where people post all kindsa stuff. This is Camille Jones' InstaFace.

Raven points to a VIDEO on her phone.

RAVEN

Look, they're protesting that Wildouche neighbor. They've got hundreds of likes and comments! I guess when the cops don't take action, you take it to the people.

POE

What are you talking about? What is an *insta* face? It sounds like a horror story *I would write*. And how do you know everyone likes it? Did they critique it in the paper?

Raven hops over to Poe and shows him Camille's InstaFace.

RAVEN

Check it. People post photographs--

Raven snaps a candid of Poe, capturing an absurd expression.

RAVEN

and *moving* photographs -- *videos* --

POE

Moving photographs? That *is* intriguing.

Raven clicks on a video of a guy getting hit in the nuts by another guy wearing HULK SMASH GLOVES. SFX: HULK SMASH! The guy getting hit groans. The other guy laughs.

RAVEN

You can double-tap to like it.

Raven double-taps the video with her index feather.

POE

What if you don't like it?

RAVEN

You leave a nasty comment! That's half the fun! Now check this out--

INSERT: VIDEO

VICTIMS CAMILLE JONES (30s, black) and VICTORIA JONES (72, black) hold signs that read: ANIMAL ABUSER, MURDERER. They pump their fists in protest. We can see into the neighbor's yard behind them.

CAMILLE

Wolf Wilder is a cancerous sore on our community. He should go to prison for his unethical treatment of animals!

ANIMALS in the neighbor's yard scamper among all kinds of filth. A RACCOON eats cheese puffs. A TIGER eats the rear half of a downed ZEBRA. An anorexic-looking MEERKAT gnaws on a rock hard turd. An ALLIGATOR is on fire.

An ORANGUTAN swings from a tree, lands directly behind Camille and Victoria, and mimics their actions.

Wolf Wilder has his ASSISTANT by the throat and screams into his face. Wilder sees the neighbors recording him, drops the assistant, and books it inside. The assistant drops to his knees, coughing, trying to catch his breath.

BACK TO SCENE

POE

Is there a way we can send this video to Detective Kent?

RAVEN

Yep. Marlowe showed me how.

POE

I must study this device.

Poe reaches for Raven's phone. Raven pulls it away.

RAVEN

Get your own!

EXT. CRIME SCENE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Police cars arrive outside the apartment building.

INT. CRIME SCENE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Detectives and uniformed officers stand outside Wolf Wilder's apartment door. Captain Daley knocks.

Wilder opens the door.

WOLF WILDER

Oh hey... is this about the tiger?

CAPTAIN DALEY

No, Mr. Wilder. You're under arrest
for murder.

Captain Daley puts Wilder up against the wall and cuffs him.

EXT. CRIME SCENE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Police perp-walk Wilder out the front of the apartment building while neighbors watch with PHONES, recording.

WOLF WILDER

I'm an innocent man! *A single.*
Attractive. Innocent. Young man!

Wilder winks and kisses at the camera.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - POE'S ROW HOUSE - DAY

Marlowe sits with Raven on the sofa, showing her how to do **even more** with her new phone while Poe works at his desk.

MARLOWE

Then you go here. Choose. Click--

Phone screen view of Marlowe and Raven posing and laughing using photo filters. Heart Eyes/Cat Faces/Puking Rainbows.

POE

You two are making fools of
yourselves. Have some dignity.

Marlowe googles GameBoss on her phone and shows them a pic.

MARLOWE

When are you gonna find my
GameBoss? The dead ladies can't get
much deader.

POE

When this case is closed. Catching
a murderer is more important.

Marlowe sighs.

MARLOWE

Wanna play a game, Raven? Watch
fail videos? Pick someone to kiss?

Marlowe makes smooch noises to Raven and giggles.

POE
Oh Virginia...

RAVEN
Fail videos sound AMAZING, *but--*

Raven notices that Poe is slipping into a deeper depression.

RAVEN
You know what they say Poe. The best way to get over your ex-lady is to kiss the ungloved hand of a new one.

Marlowe giggles in the background.

POE
Virginia is not my ex-lady. She is my dead wife! Pardon me for still being melancholy!

RAVEN
Meeting someone new might cheer you up. *And there are beauties in here.*
(beat)
That you're not even related to.

POE
No. Choosing a woman in that way is undignified and disrespectful.

Raven grimace-frowns. Then Raven crams the phone in Poe's face, while swiping through photos, anyway.

POE
Does no one read in the future?!

MARLOWE
I do! I love Agatha Christie!

Poe looks confused. Raven's next swipe reveals an **ORANGUTAN** in a dress and a bad wig. Raven and Marlowe GUFFAW and fall off the sofa. Poe yanks the phone from Raven.

POE
Get up. You two are ridiculous.

Poe's eyes lock onto the Orangutan's **ORANGE HAIR.**

FLASHBACK - INT. BEDROOM - CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - DAY

A RAZOR with small tufts of **ORANGE HAIR** rests on a chair.

END FLASHBACK

POE

Raven, show me that video again.

Raven hops over to Poe and plays the video.

The orangutan mimics the Jones women's behavior -- tosses his arms up, shakes his fist, moves his lips, makes funny faces.

Poe replays Wilder strangling and screaming at his assistant, then rewinds and replays the mimicry.

POE

Believe nothing you hear, and only
one half--

RAVEN

--I know. Only one half that you
see. Blah, blah, blah. There's no
audience here. Just me and Marlowe.
You melodramatic attention whore.

POE

(ignores Raven)
Marlowe, please show me how to
reach Detective Kent with immediate
urgency. I have solved the case!

EXT. WOLF WILDER'S BACKYARD - DAY

Detective Kent, Captain Daley, UNIFORMED OFFICERS, and Wolf Wilder in cuffs, join Poe and Raven in Wilder's backyard.

CAPTAIN DALEY

Alright, Mr. Wilder. You're here so
that you can confirm Mr. Poe's
assessment. *Regardless of how crazy
he is...* Poe--

Poe points to the ORANGUTAN standing before them.

The orangutan appears to have recently shaved-- badly.
Toilet paper remnants stick to razor cuts on his face.

POE

Please take a look at these moving
photo-- uh videos, first.

Poe plays the video of the orangutan in Wolf Wilder's backyard mimicking the murder victims.

POE

The orangutan's hair is almost identical in color to Mr. Wilder's.

Detective Kent's phone RINGS. She answers.

DETECTIVE KENT

Uh huh. Ok. Thank you.

Detective Kent hangs up.

DETECTIVE KENT

I just got the lab results back that you requested. The orange hair in evidence is **not** human. Poe, go ahead with your theory.

POE

As you know, my intellect and analyses are far superior than--
(looks at cops, coughs)
Never mind.

POE

My logical deductive reasoning led me to this conclusion--

WE SEE THE CRIME AS A SEQUENCE OF FLASHBACKS...

INT. BATHROOM - WOLF WILDER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The orangutan watches Wilder shave. Wilder leaves the room.

POE (V.O.)

The orangutan--

WOLF WILDER (V.O.)

Kyle.

POE (V.O.)

Kyle-- had witnessed Mr. Wilder shaving and wanted to do the same. As we saw in the video, the orangutan-- pardon me, Kyle-- mimics human behavior.

Kyle waddles over to the sink and picks up the razor. He stands on a stool in front of the mirror and tries to shave the same Hulk Hogan-style mustache that Wolf Wilder has. He does a terrible job.

POE (V.O.)
 Kyle attempted shaving and was
 caught in the act.

Wolf Wilder comes back and sees Kyle shaving with his razor. Wilder loses it! He SCREAMS at Kyle and grabs a leather whip.

POE (V.O.)
 As we've seen Mr. Wilder's behavior
 and the state of the animals'
 living conditions, we know Mr.
 Wilder was **NOT** a *humane caretaker*.

Kyle freaks out, uses his arms to propel himself, and races out of the room while still holding the razor. Wilder chases.

Kyle swings out the bedroom window to a tree. Wilder YELLS and shakes his fists in vain.

POE (V.O.)
 I believe that Kyle mimics Mr.
 Wilder, not only in shaving, but in
 violence, as well. I further deduce
 that, upon catching Kyle shaving
 with his razor, Mr. Wilder was
 about to get violent. Kyle was then
 overwhelmed with fear and jumped
 into his neighbors' window to make
 his escape, razor still in hand.

Kyle swings into the neighbors' unlocked bedroom window. Wilder climbs out his window and onto the neighbors' tiny balcony. He crawls through the window, following Kyle.

INT. BEDROOM - JONES' APARTMENT - DAY

Kyle surprises Victoria Jones who was counting money next to the open safe. They face each other and SCREAM. Kyle lunges forward and seizes Mrs. Jones.

POE (V.O.)
 Kyle was already in such a high
 state of agitation. When he came
 upon the women, who shrieked in
 fear, it only overwhelmed him
 further. His behavior was then
 reactionary.
 (MORE)

POE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He acted violently toward the women, behaving in ways that he had learned from Mr. Wilder. The more they screamed, the more Kyle felt the need to defend himself.

Kyle pulls out chunks of Victoria Jones' hair, almost decapitates her with the razor, then launches her out the window, as her head flops back and forth.

POE (V.O.)

Razor still in hand, Kyle attacked Victoria Jones and cut her throat. He then heaved her out the window.

Wolf Wilder almost shits his pants in fear and books it out the open window back to his apartment, while holding his ass cheeks together with one hand.

POE (V.O.)

Camille Jones, witnessing her mother's murder, screams even louder in bloody terror. Kyle throttles her to death to silence her and quell the perceived threat.

Camille SCREAMS. Kyle freaks out, wildly waving his arms in the air. He grips Camille by the throat.

POE (V.O.)

Being an orangutan, Kyle had the strength to force Camille up the chimney. This is a difficult feat for even a strong man to achieve. And we all know that Mr. Wilder looks rather weak. No muscle tone at all.

WOLF WILDER (V.O.)

Hey!

Kyle shoves Camille's body up the chimney and flees.

END SEQUENCE OF FLASHBACKS

RAVEN

Haha! He nailed you, you trailer trash version of P.T. Barnum!

POE

The witnesses we interviewed reported screaming, foul language, and a language that was unrecognizable.

(MORE)

POE (CONT'D)

I believe the incoherent language
to be guttural sounds from Kyle,
and the cursing to be Mr. Wilder.

WOLF WILDER

Dammit.

POE

Is my deduction accurate Mr.
Wilder?

WOLF WILDER

(crying, blubbering)

It's true! I didn't kill those
women! And poor Kyle, he just
wanted to learn how to shave. Maybe
my getting the whip made him lose
his monkey marbles? I couldn't stop
him. I didn't know what to do. So I
just ran like a bat outta hell. I
didn't want Kyle to get locked up,
so I kept my mouth shut. He's too
pretty for monkey jail!

POE

I'd also like to add that I
believe, had Mr. Wilder not been
such a poor model of behavior,
these women might still be alive.

Captain Daley yanks on Wolf Wilder by the cuffs.

DETECTIVE KENT

Kyle will be placed in a research
facility where his behavior will be
studied. I need you to write a
signed statement, Mr. Wilder.

WOLF WILDER

Of course! So are you gonna take
off the cuffs? Now that you know
I'm innocent?

CAPTAIN DALEY

You kidding? You're under arrest
for animal cruelty, endangerment,
obstruction of justice, and
negligent homicide. You were
responsible for that orangutan. You
have the right to remain silent--

WOLF WILDER

What?! Noooo! If I'm responsible
for Kyle's killin', aint the whole
police department responsible for
any bad cop's actions?

Officers awkwardly COUGH. An alligator on fire hobbles across
zebra body parts and entrails in the background.

Wilder fights to take off his cuffs. Daley knees Wilder
behind the knees so his legs fold. He loses his balance.

Daley nods to ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER as she walks Wilder out.

The Animal Control Officer puts restraints on Kyle and
perp-walks Kyle to the truck.

DETECTIVE KENT

(to Poe)

Well, you did it. You actually
solved the case.

POE

Of course I did. With superior
powers of deduction, intellect, and
observation, it is unavoidable.

DETECTIVE KENT

Okay. I see you.

RAVEN

Hey! Most of the credit goes to me!
If I didn't show you everything on
that phone, you'd all still think
it was Douche-xotic over there. I
should get an award or something,
right? Immortalized in marble? Key
to the city? Plastic money card?

Poe and Detective Kent ignore Raven.

DETECTIVE KENT

You did a great job here. I respect
you as a detective, despite your
whole... *thing*.

Detective Kent circles her hand around Poe's appearance.

DETECTIVE KENT

You know, people would take you
more seriously if you didn't wear
that costume or tell everyone you
are Edgar Allan Poe. Poe is a
legend here in Baltimore.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE KENT (CONT'D)

In America. I'd change my name, if I were you. People see you as either mentally ill, or mocking our hero to make a buck.

Detective Kent walks over to talk to Captain Daley.

Poe is in shock. A *legend*?! Poe's eyes well with tears.

POE

Did you hear what she said, Raven?
A hero? A legend?

RAVEN

Don't let that big deformed head of yours swell any larger or we won't be able to get it through the door.

Poe and Raven leave the yard and pass Captain Daley.

CAPTAIN DALEY

I don't care if you did solve the case. You're still a nutbar and a kook. *I've got my eyes on you.*

Captain Daley points two fingers in a "V" shape toward her eyes, then at Poe, then back at herself.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - POE'S ROW HOUSE - DAY

Hannah (new hair, new outfit) stands near Poe's desk and hands him the remainder of his fee -- \$8,000.

HANNAH

Thank you for solving the case. I'm glad their evil neighbor is still going to prison. I'd love to take you to lunch sometime. Sushi?

Hannah runs her long manicured nails down Poe's arm.

POE

(shivers)
What's sushi?

HANNAH

You know -- raw fish wrapped in rice and seaweed.

POE

(grimaces)
Raw fish? *Why?* No thank you.

HANNAH

Alright. Thank you again.

Hannah shrugs and leaves.

RAVEN

Wow, for a genius you can really be an idiot. You know nothing about women. She just asked you on a date! What's up with that look on your face?

POE

This case seems rather familiar. I feel a strange sense of déjà vu...
(beat)
Never mind that--

Poe fans out the money in his hands then looks at Raven.

POE

I'll wager staying a bit longer won't be dreadful. Muddy will be fine with cousin Neilson until we can figure out a way to get back.

RAVEN

Hells yeah! Your Aunt-Slash-Mother-in-Law will be fine. *Suck it Muddy!*

Poe frowns.

INT. WILDER'S APARTMENT/ZOO - DAY

The **raccoon** sits among other animals and his cherished collectibles -- coins, hot wheels, forks, toys, foil, etc.

The raccoon smashes buttons on Marlowe's GameBoss. The animals watch excitedly. A baby opossum reaches for the GameBoss. The raccoon swats its paw away.

FLASHBACK - EXT. MARLOWE'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Marlowe stands by a planter, talks to a FRIEND. BACKPACK's on the ground, unzipped, with her sparkly GameBoss peeking out.

A **raccoon** stealthily emerges from the bushes, looks around, snatches the GameBoss, and disappears back into the bushes.

END FLASHBACK

INT. WILDER'S APARTMENT/ZOO - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Raven flies into Wilder's apartment through one of the windows. She runs and flies around opening cages and doors, and nudges the animals out of the apartment.

RAVEN
BE FREE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS!!!
BE FREEEEEEEE!!!

Raven spies the GameBoss. She wrestles it out of the raccoon's hands. Dust-cloud fight of limbs and stars.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - POE'S ROW HOUSE - DAY

Raven, swollen purple eye and wounds from the fight, gives Marlowe her GameBoss back. Marlowe side-hugs Raven while playing her GameBoss. Poe writes at his desk. Raven turns--

RAVEN
So when are you going to add **my name** to that **detective sign**? Why does it say **Poe and Co.**? There's no Co. There's just me.

POE
Do not hold your breath.

RAVEN
Come on... When are you going to add my name?

POE
(quarter smile)
Nevermore.

RAVEN
You really gotta go there?! One time! I said that ONE TIME!

END OF PILOT