

## The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,  
weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of  
forgotten lore—  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly  
there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my  
chamber door.  
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my  
chamber door—  
Only this and nothing more."

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

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of  
each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors  
never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart,  
I stood repeating  
"Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my  
chamber door—  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my  
chamber door;—  
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating  
then no longer,  
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness  
I implore;

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently  
you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at  
my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I  
opened wide the door;—  
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I  
stood there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever  
dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the  
stillness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the  
whispered word, "Lenore?"  
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back  
the word, "Lenore!"—  
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul  
within me burning,  
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder  
than before.  
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at  
my window lattice;  
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this  
mystery explore—  
Let my heart be still a moment and this  
mystery explore;—  
'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with  
many a flirt and flutter,  
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly  
days of yore;  
Not the least obeisance made he; not a  
minute stopped or stayed he;  
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched  
above my chamber door—

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Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my  
chamber door—  
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy  
into smiling,  
By the grave and stern decorum of the  
countenance it wore,  
“Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,”  
I said, “art sure no craven,  
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering  
from the Nightly shore—  
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s  
Plutonian shore!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear  
discourse so plainly,  
Though its answer little meaning—little  
relevancy bore;  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living  
human being  
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above  
his chamber door—  
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above  
his chamber door,  
With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid  
bust, spoke only  
That one word, as if his soul in that one word  
he did outpour.  
Nothing farther then he uttered—not a  
feather then he fluttered—  
Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other  
friends have flown before—  
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes  
have flown before.”  
Then the bird said “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so  
aptly spoken,  
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only  
stock and store

Caught from some unhappy master whom  
unmerciful Disaster  
Followed fast and followed faster till his  
songs one burden bore—  
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy  
burden bore  
Of ‘Never—nevermore’.”

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy  
into smiling,  
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of  
bird, and bust and door;  
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook  
myself to linking  
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this  
ominous bird of yore—  
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and  
ominous bird of yore  
Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no  
syllable expressing  
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into  
my bosom’s core;  
This and more I sat divining, with my head at  
ease reclining  
On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamp-  
light gloated o’er,  
But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-  
light gloating o’er,  
*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser,  
perfumed from an unseen censer  
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled  
on the tufted floor.  
“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—  
by these angels he hath sent thee  
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy  
memories of Lenore;  
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget  
this lost Lenore!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet  
still, if bird or devil!—  
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest  
tossed thee here ashore,  
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert  
land enchanted—  
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me  
truly, I implore—  
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—  
tell me, I implore!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet  
still, if bird or devil!  
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that  
God we both adore—  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the  
distant Aidenn,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the  
angels name Lenore—  
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the  
angels name Lenore.”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or  
fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting—  
“Get thee back into the tempest and the  
Night’s Plutonian shore!  
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie  
thy soul hath spoken!  
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the  
bust above my door!  
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy  
form from off my door!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting,  
*still* is sitting  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my  
chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a  
demon’s that is dreaming,  
And the lamp-light o’er him streaming  
throws his shadow on the floor;  
And my soul from out that shadow that lies  
floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

Source: Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven,” *The Evening Mirror*, 1845.