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The Raven

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 visiter,” 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 visiter entreating entrance at my chamber
door—
Some late visiter 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—
 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 my sad 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!