

**The Raven by** [**Edgar Allan Poe**](http://www.heise.de/ix/raven/Literature/Authors/poe/life.html)

 [First published in 1845]

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| horizontal space | 1 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.5 ‘'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 borrow10 From my books surcease of sorrow - sorrow for the lost Lenore - For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named 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;15 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,20 `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.25 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 darkness 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!'30 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 -35 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;40 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,45 `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,50 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 above the sculptured bust above his chamber door, With such name as `Nevermore.'55 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 further 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.'60 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 -65 Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore Of "Never-nevermore."' But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul 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 linking70 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;75 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 censer80 Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor. `Wretch,' I cried, `thy God hath lent thee - by these angels he has 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.'85 `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!'90 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 named Lenore -95 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels named 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!100 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;105 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! | horizontal space |
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