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| <p>The Raven – Edgar Allan Poe</p> <p><i>Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,<br/>Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore —<br/>While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,<br/>As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber<sup>1</sup> door.<br/>“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door — 5<br/>Only this and nothing more.”</i></p> <p><i>Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;<br/>And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.<br/>Eagerly I wished the morrow; — vainly I had sought to borrow<br/>From my books surcease of sorrow — sorrow for the lost Lenore — 10<br/>For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore —<br/>Nameless here for evermore.</i></p> <p><i>And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain<br/>Thrilled me — filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;<br/>So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating 15<br/>“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door —<br/>Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door; —<br/>This it is and nothing more.”</i></p> <p>1 Chamber means room.</p> | <p><b>Stanzas 1-3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the setting?</li> <li>2. What is the narrator’s physical state? (How is he feeling?)</li> <li>3. Why is the narrator anxious for the next day (morrow) to arrive?</li> <li>4. Surcease means “to cause to discontinue or stop”. Explain the phrase “surcease of sorrow”? For what/whom is the speaker sorrowful?</li> <li>5. Why might the narrator describe Lenore as “nameless here for evermore”?</li> <li>6. What about the setting and events so far seem to be bothering the speaker of the poem? (Stanzas 1-3)</li> <li>7. Read line 13 aloud (quietly). What literary (sound) device is line 13 an example of? (<i>Hint: It’s not alliteration.</i>)</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,<br/>“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore; 20<br/>But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,<br/>And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,<br/>That I scarce was sure I heard you” — here I opened wide the door; —<br/>Darkness there and nothing more.</i></p> <p><i>Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, 25<br/>Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;<br/>But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,<br/>And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Lenore?”<br/>This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, “Lenore!” —<br/>Merely this and nothing more. 30</i></p> <p><i>Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,<br/>Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.<br/>“Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice;<br/>Let me see, then, what thence is, and this mystery explore —<br/>Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; — 35<br/>’Tis the wind and nothing more!”</i></p>  | <p><b>Stanzas 4-6</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. What is the speaker’s excuse for not answering the door sooner?</li> <li>9. Describe what happened when the narrator opened the chamber door. (Stanzas 4-6)</li> </ol>  |
| <p><i>Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,<br/>In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore<sup>2</sup>;<br/>Not the least obeisance<sup>3</sup> made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;<br/>But, with mien<sup>4</sup> of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door — 40<br/>Perched upon a bust<sup>5</sup> of Pallas just above my chamber door —<br/>Perched, and sat, and nothing more.<br/>Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,</i></p>   | <p><b>Stanzas 7-9</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Who or what is the new visitor? Describe the actions of the visitor.</li> </ol>  |

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| <p><i>By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance<sup>6</sup> it wore,<br/>"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no<br/>craven,<br/>Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore —<br/>Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian<sup>7</sup> shore!"<br/>Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."</i></p> <p><i>Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,<br/>Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy bore;<br/>For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being<br/>Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door —<br/>Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,<br/>With such name as "Nevermore."</i></p> <p>2 Days of yore means "days of long ago". Here Poe is referring to a Bible story in which ravens feed the Hebrew prophet Elijah during a journey in the wilderness (1 Kings 17:1-7)<br/>3 Obeisance means "a movement of gesture that expresses respect".<br/>4 Mein means demeanor.<br/>5 A bust is a statue of someone's head and shoulders. Pallas is the Greek goddess of wisdom.<br/>6 Countenance means "facial expression".<br/>7 Plutonian refers to Pluto, the Roman god of the dead and ruler of the underworld.</p> | <p>45</p> <p>50</p> <p>11. How does the speaker react to this visitor? (Stanzas 7-9)</p> <p>12. What literary device is used by referring to Pallas and Pluto?</p> <p>13. What does the speaker ask the visitor? How does the visitor respond?</p>                          |
| <p><i>But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only<br/>That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.<br/>Nothing farther then he uttered — not a feather then he fluttered —<br/>Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before —<br/>On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."<br/>Then the bird said "Nevermore."</i></p> <p><i>Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,<br/>"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store<br/>Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster<br/>Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore —<br/>Till the dirges<sup>8</sup> of his Hope that melancholy burden bore<br/>Of 'Never — nevermore'."</i></p> <p><i>But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,<br/>Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;<br/>Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking<br/>Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore —<br/>What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore<br/>Meant in croaking "Nevermore."</i></p> <p>8 Dirges are slow, mournful pieces of music, such as funeral hymns.</p>              | <p>55</p> <p>60</p> <p>65</p> <p>70</p> <p><b>Stanzas 10-12</b></p> <p>14. What evidence can you find that shows the speaker is feeling sorry for himself?</p> <p>15. What is the author trying to figure out about the bird? What evidence shows this? (Stanzas 10-12)</p> |
| <p><i>This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing<br/>To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;<br/>This and more I sat divining<sup>9</sup>, with my head at ease reclining<br/>On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,<br/>But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,</i></p>   | <p>75</p> <p><b>Stanzas 13-15</b></p> <p>16. In which line does the speaker begin to get angry with the visitor?</p>  |

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| <p><i>She shall press, ah, nevermore!</i></p> <p><i>Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer<sup>10</sup><br/>Swung by seraphim<sup>11</sup> whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.<br/>80<br/>"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee — by these angels he hath sent<br/>thee<br/>Respite<sup>12</sup> — respite and nepenthe<sup>13</sup>, from thy memories of Lenore;<br/>Quaff<sup>14</sup>, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"<br/>Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."</i></p> <p><i>"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! — prophet still, if bird or devil! — 85<br/>Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,<br/>Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted —<br/>On this home by Horror haunted — tell me truly, I implore —<br/>Is there — is there balm in Gilead<sup>15</sup>? — tell me — tell me, I implore!"<br/>Quoth the Raven "Nevermore." 90</i></p> <p>9 Divining means "guessing"<br/>10 A censur is a container in which incense is burned.<br/>11 Seraphim are angels of the highest rank.<br/>12 Respite means a period of rest.<br/>13 The ancient Greeks believed the drug nepenthe would ease pain and grief by causing forgetfulness.<br/>14 Quaff means "to drink heartily".<br/>15 Here, balm in Gilead is a Biblical reference that means "Is there no relief for my suffering?"</p> | <p>17. Read footnote #13. What does the speaker want to forget?</p> <p>18. To whom do you think the "Tempter" is line 86 is? (<i>Hint: it's not the visitor.</i>)</p> <p>19. What does "balm in Gilead" mean?</p> <p>20. What meaning do you think "Nevermore" takes on, based on evidence from the text? How does the speaker react to this word? (Stanzas 13-15)</p> |
| <p><i>"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! — prophet still, if bird or devil!<br/>By that Heaven that bends above us — by that God we both adore —<br/>Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,<br/>It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore —<br/>Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."<br/>Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."</i></p> <p><i>"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting —<br/>"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!<br/>Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!<br/>Leave my loneliness unbroken! — quit the bust above my door!<br/>Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"<br/>Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."</i></p> <p><i>And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting<br/>On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;<br/>And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,<br/>And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;<br/>And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor<br/>Shall be lifted — nevermore!</i></p>  | <p>21. What question for the speaker ask the visitor?</p> <p>22. Explain the visitor's answer.</p> <p>23. Where is the visitor at the end of the poem? What does his presence mean for the speaker of the poem and his grief? Use evidence to explain. (Stanzas 16-18)</p> <p>24. Describe the speaker's state of mind at the end of the poem.</p>                     |