

THE RAVEN

TING SZU KIONG

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EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

The Moon casts shadows of demented branches onto the sloped graveyard filled with cracked and weathered gravestones that have slanted in all directions probably giving way to the fattening roots of the trees.

A raven lands onto the top of a newly erected gravestone. A whispering sound of a man, our PROTAGONIST, READING a supernatural book can be heard as we draw nearer to the new gravestone that bears the name Lenore.

We then fly over hills and country sides and arrive at a closed window of a mansion. The reading sound persists. We then go through the closed window...

INT. CHAMBER ROOM - NIGHT

And through a curtain to see a vast and shadowy chamber room. Books are littered on the table and floor. We see the back view of our protagonist with unkempt hair.

The fireplace cast its flickering light onto the shelves of untidy books, window curtains, door and statue of Pallas above the door. There is a lamp above the statue of Pallas. On the floor before the fireplace, a piece of glowing ember dies off.

An open book lies on the protagonist's lap. The READING slows down as he begins to nod his head in tiredness.

Sound of TAPPING is heard. The protagonist lifts his head to let light from the fireplace illuminate half of his tired face. The sad insomniac eyes look to the direction of the tapping sound.

PROTAGONIST

(muttering to himself)

It must be some visitor tapping at my door. Nothing more.

Our protagonist chooses to ignore the tapping sound. But before he begins to doze off, the window curtains near the door suddenly waves and gives a loud RUSTLING sound that startles the protagonist. The book on his lap drops onto the floor, exposing pages that illustrate the hooded Death holding a sickle.

He has not recovered from the fright. Sound of pounding HEARTBEAT accompanies the wide eyes that fixes their gaze at the curtains which have already stopped moving for some time. Silence fills the room.

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His unkempt hair beats against his cheek as he shakes his head.

PROTAGONIST
(muttering to himself)
It has to be some visitor
entreating the entrance of my door.

The protagonist almost jumps as the tapping sound resumes. This time it is louder.

PROTAGONIST
(calling out to the door)
Sir... or Madam, I sure heard you.
I am coming. I am opening the door.

The protagonist lifts himself up and tiredly walks to the door. He pushes the door wide to see a descending flight of stairs before him that seems to drop into the abyss of darkness.

He is transfixed by the pitch blackness for some time. Then his lips mutters a name.

PROTAGONIST
Lenore

He looks out with longing eyes but is returned with a moment of silence. He delivers a sad sigh and begins to retreat into his chamber room.

To his surprise, an ECHO of the name comes from the abyss. He steps out of his room, peers and stares into the darkness hard.

A WALKING sound approaches.

A hooded figure appears on the stairs and shows a sickle.

The protagonist immediately enters his room and shuts his chamber door.

As he is still breathing heavily, an even louder TAPPING sound comes from the window.

The protagonist swallows his saliva trying to regain his composure.

PROTAGONIST
(breathing heavily)
It must be the wind. I will
explore. I will explore.

He cautiously walks to the window curtains with trepidation. The desperate tapping persists.

He opens the curtains to reveal a closed wooden window. The urgency in the beating sound increases.

The protagonist summons his courage by taking a breath and quickly opens the window. To his surprise, there is nothing outside the window except for the over-sized Moon. Silence has taken over. He looks out of the window to inspect.

PROTAGONIST
(muttering to himself)
There is nothing more.

The silence is suddenly broken when a black bird flutters its wings into the protagonist's face and flies into the chamber room.

The protagonist watches as it makes one round around the vast room. The wind from its wings leafs the pages of the book that has fallen on the floor. Now it is showing images of hell (Plutonium shore). The bird lands on the statue of Pallas (Goddess of Wisdom).

He laughs.

PROTAGONIST
Hahaha... So, it's just a raven.
So, tell me your name, you
wandering raven from the nightly
shore.

The raven stands as still as another statue.

PROTAGONIST
(To the statue of Pallas)
Dear Goddess of Wisdom. What have
you just grown on your head? A
tumor?

RAVEN
Nevermore

The protagonist squints at the raven, trying to register whether he has just heard the bird talking.

The bird proudly stands on the Goddess's head. Light from the lamp behind radiates out of the bird giving it an air of majesty albeit it is almost silhouetted.

The protagonist gazes up at the bird with eyes gleaming with marvel and steps forth.

PROTAGONIST

Tell me your name once more.

RAVEN

Nevermore

The protagonist stares at the bird in disbelief.

PROTAGONIST

What reason do you have to visit my chamber from Plutonium shore?

RAVEN

Nevermore

PROTAGONIST

What are you? Are you just my mind's metaphor?

The raven flaps its wings and repeats the word.

RAVEN

Nevermore, Nevermore, Nevermore

The protagonist's smile fades away giving way to uncertainty and fear.

PROTAGONIST

(muttering to himself)

This bird can only say Nevermore. Other than Nevermore, it says nevermore. It must know something. It knows my broken heart too well. It knows that I wish my love to return to me once more. My Lenore. This raven has come from hell to mock at my hopeless, pathetic state. This dreadful raven must have known it all in my core.

The protagonist looks up at the bird which returns a look.

PROTAGONIST

No, no. How can it be? It is only a bird. Just a bird. Nothing more. Yes, how can a bird know more vocabulary? How can I be so silly to expect a bird to speak more? It must be just my mind's metaphor. Nothing more. Birds come and go. By tomorrow, this raven will be gone, just as my hope has gone before. Just as my Lenore... But... But

(MORE)

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PROTAGONIST (cont'd)
there must be a significance. What
does this ominous bird mean by
Nevermore?

The protagonist's almost frantic eyes searches the floor. He fixes his gaze upon his velvet chair and fetches it. Quickly he settles down and stares at the bird just as he stares into the pitch darkness outside the door.

Time seems to have halt as the man and bird freeze, staring hard at each other as though a telepathic mind wrestling is taking place.

Soon, flames creep up the bird's black eyes. The protagonist reaches for his chest as though a spear is piercing through his heart. He issues a long scream that echoes down the dark flight of stairs outside the chamber room.

PROTAGONIST
(screaming)
Arrrrr!

The protagonist's face has sunk into the velvety cushion of his chair, weeping.

Through a wine bottle, we see a distorted image of the protagonist raising his head.

The sooty fumes that trail from the tips of candle flames dance in the air.

The protagonist sniffs as though his sense of smell is heightened.

PROTAGONIST
Smell of heaven. Angels. I saw
angels coming for Lenore. You,
raven. I now know why you have come
to visit me from Plutonium shore.
It is extremely kind of you. So
kind of you to come to help me
forget my lost Lenore.

RAVEN
Nevermore

Patience begins to wear off his face.

PROTAGONIST
If you have come from Plutonium
shore which is hell, then what are
you? Are you good or evil? Do you
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PROTAGONIST (cont'd)
bring any healing medicine to help
me forget my Lenore?

RAVEN
Nevermore

The protagonist kneels on the floor. His hands clenched
against each other so hard they tremble. He speaks with his
clenched teeth.

PROTAGONIST
I want to see her in heaven. Will I
ever see my Lenore?

RAVEN
Nevermore

Rage spreads up his face.

PROTAGONIST
Bird or fiend, leave my chamber
room at once back to your hell!
Leave me with my loneliness
unbroken! Remove your beak out of
my heart and quit the bust above my
door!

RAVEN
Nevermore

Tears stream down the protagonist's cheek. The raven's eyes
gleam at him.

PROTAGONIST
Noooo!

The raven spreads its wings so that its shadow engulfs the
protagonist.

We move backwards through the opened window which shuts by
itself.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

The camera continues to pull out of the window to let us see
the entire mansion. Death sits on the large Moon while a
raven flies past.