

The Raven

Edgar Allan Poe

Retold by Marek Vít

It was in a cold December, on the last night of the year. It was midnight and everything was dark. I was sitting in my room, almost falling asleep. There were books everywhere, ancient books of forgotten wisdom. I had been looking for something that could ease my pain, my sorrow for the girl I had lost, for the beautiful Lenore I had loved so much.



Suddenly there came a soft tapping sound, as if someone was gently knocking on the door. "It's just a visitor," I said to myself. But every little sound that night filled me with terror and my heart was beating fast. "It's just a visitor," I repeated to myself and stood up from my chair. "Just a late visitor, and nothing more."

My heart calmed down a little and I said, as if to apologize: "I'm so sorry I have kept you waiting, sir or madam. I was sleeping, you see, and you knocked so gently, so silently that I almost didn't hear it." I opened the door, but there was nobody there, only darkness, nothing more.

I peered into the darkness, all kinds of terrible thoughts and ideas coming to my mind. Finally, I whispered into the night: "*Lenore?*" And an echo whispered back: "*Lenore.*" Nothing more.



I turned to return to my room, to my sorrow and misery. Then I heard the tapping sound again, louder than before, but this time it was coming from the window. "Oh, it's just the wind, nothing more!" I thought but I felt that I had to explore the mystery, so that my heart could finally stop worrying.

I opened the window. A large black raven stepped in. Without stopping, without hesitating it flew and sat on the statue above my door, on the white bust of Pallas, the goddess of wisdom. It just sat there, and nothing more.

Overcoming my shock, I started smiling and said: "Tell me, what is your name?" I did not really expect an answer, but the raven said: "Nevermore". I could not believe what I had just heard, the bird had pronounced the word so

well, so clearly. I was sure that it had no meaning. After all, who had ever heard of a bird or an animal with such a strange name as 'Nevermore.'

But the word was the only thing that the bird had said. It did not move, it did not make a sound, it was just sitting there. I said quietly: "All my friends have left me, my hopes are all gone. Surely you will leave me in the morning, too, and I will be alone again." And the bird, as if it understood what I had just said, croaked: "Nevermore."

His answer frightened me but then it came to me that it was probably the only word the bird knew, the only word that it had been taught by an unhappy, miserable master before he died. Terrified but fascinated at the same time, I smiled again and pushed my chair in front of the door, in front of the bird, and sat down. I looked into the bird's terrible eyes. There was fire in them, and the fire was burning into me. What could the bird have meant by croaking "Nevermore?"



Sitting there, painful memories came back to me. This was the very chair where Lenore had sat so often, Lenore, who would never return to me, who

would never sit in the soft chair again. "You have to forget her!" I realized, "Forget the lost Lenore!" But the raven said: "Nevermore."

I looked at the bird: "Prophet!" I cried. "Whoever you are, whether a bird or a devil, whether the storm has sent you or it has thrown you into my life, tell me: Will my broken heart ever be healed? Tell me, I need to know!" The bird said: "Nevermore."

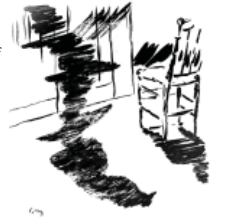


I cried again: "Prophet! Bird or devil, tell me, by God who is above us, tell me: Is Lenore with the angels in the garden of paradise?" But the raven just said: "Nevermore."

"Let this be our goodbye, then!" I shouted at the bird. "Get out, back where you came from, back into the storm. Leave nothing here, nothing that could remind me of all the lies you have told. Leave me to my loneliness, to my sorrow, leave the bust above my door! Take your ugly beak out of my heart and get out of my sight!"

But the raven said: "Nevermore."

And the raven still is sitting, still is sitting above my door. Its eyes are the eyes of a demon who is dreaming. The light of my lamp throws his large black shadow on the floor. And my soul will never be lifted from that shadow, never, nevermore.



Questions:

1. Why is the man sitting alone and sad in his room?
2. What interrupts the silence?
3. What does he think when he opens the door and there is only darkness?
4. How does he feel about the raven in the beginning?
5. What does their communication look like?
6. What does he learn from their "conversation"?
7. How does he feel about the raven at the end? What changes his opinion?
8. How does the story end?

Things to consider:

- What does the raven symbolize?
- The raven sits on the statue of Pallas. Is that symbolic, too?
- Why does the man keep on asking the raven questions?
- Is the story romantic? Explain why or why not.
- How can you translate the word "nevermore"?

ERNEST MILLER HEMINGWAY

Introduction

Ernest Miller Hemingway (1899-1961) was an American author and journalist. His economical and understated style had strong influence on 20th-century fiction, while his life of adventure and his public image influenced later generations. Hemingway wrote most of his works between the mid-1920s and mid-1950s and won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. He published 7 novels, 6 short story collections and 2 non-fiction works. Many of his works are considered classics of American literature.

Life

Hemingway was raised in Oak Park, Illinois. After high school he reported for a few months for The Kansas City Star, before leaving for the Italian front to enlist with the World War I ambulance drivers. In 1918 he was seriously injured and returned home. In 1922 he married (he married four times) and moved to Paris where he worked as a foreign correspondent. Here he was influenced by the writers and artists of "Lost Generation". After 1927 he divorced and married again for the second time. He divorced again after he returned from Spanish Civil War where he had acted as a journalist. In 1940 he got married to his third wife. They separated when he met his fourth wife in London during World War II. In 1952 Hemingway went on safari in Africa where he was almost killed in a plane crash. Hemingway had permanent residences in Florida and Cuba during 1930s and 1940s. In 1959 he moved from Cuba to Idaho when he committed suicide in 1961.

Writing Style

Hemingway was the master of short stories in prose. He was a great narrator.

Themes

wars (World War I, World War II, Spanish Civil War)

hunting

dangerous sports (bullfight)

life in Africa and Cuba

Characters

men living dangerous and adventurous lives (soldiers, fishermen, hunters, bullfighters,...)

Works

Fiesta (The Sun Also Rises)

A Farewell to Arms

For Whom the Bell Tolls

The Old Man and the Sea

A Moveable Feast

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

The Old Man and the Sea is the **story about a battle** between an old, experienced **fisherman** and a large **marlin** (mečoun). The old fisherman **Santiago**, has gone 84 days without catching a fish. He is so unlucky that his young **apprentice, Manolin**, has been forbidden by his parents to sail with the old man and has been ordered to fish with more successful fishermen. However, the boy still visits Santiago's cabin each night, helping him with fishing gear, getting him food and discussing American baseball. Santiago tells Manolin that on the next day, he will go far out into the Gulf to fish, confident that this time he will get lucky.

Thus on the eighty-fifth day, Santiago sets out alone, taking his boat far onto the Gulf. He sets his lines and, by noon of the first day, a big fish that he is sure is a marlin gets caught. Unable to pull in the great marlin, Santiago instead finds the fish pulling his boat. The struggle between the man and the fish lasts for two days. Santiago is completely exhausted, but proud of himself. He starts calling the fish a "brother" since their chances seem to be equal.

On the third day, the fish begins to circle the boat, indicating his tiredness to the old man. Santiago, now completely worn out and almost in delirium, uses all the strength he has left in him to pull the fish onto its side and stab the marlin with a harpoon, ending the long battle between the old man and the strong fish. Santiago straps the marlin to the side of his skiff and heads home, thinking about the high price the fish will bring him at the market and how many people he will feed.

While Santiago continues his journey back home, **sharks** are attracted to the trail of blood left by the marlin in the water. Santiago kills the first shark, but losing his harpoon in the process. He makes a new harpoon by strapping his knife to the end of an oar to chase off the next line of sharks. But the sharks keep coming, and by nightfall the sharks have almost eaten the marlin, leaving just a **skeleton** consisting mostly of its backbone, its tail and its head. When he finally reaches home, he slumps onto his bed and falls into a deep sleep.

A group of fishermen gather the next day around the boat where the fish's skeleton is still attached. One of the fishermen measures it to be 18 feet (5.5 m) from nose to tail. Tourists at the nearby café mistakenly take it for a shark. Manolin, worried during the old man's struggle in the sea, cries when he finds him safe asleep. The boy brings him newspapers and coffee. When the old man wakes up, they promise to fish together once again. Upon his return to sleep, Santiago dreams of his youth—of lions on an African beach.

Summarize each paragraph into one complex sentence: