

The Raven summary

It is midnight on a cold evening in December in the 1840s. In a dark and shadowy bedroom, wood burns in the fireplace as a man laments the death of Lenore, a woman he deeply loved. To occupy his mind, he reads a book of ancient stories. But a tapping noise disturbs him. When he opens the door to the bedroom, he sees nothing—only darkness. When the tapping persists, he opens the shutter of the window and discovers a raven, which flies into the room and lands above the door on a bust of Athena (Pallas in the poem), the goddess of wisdom and war in Greek mythology. It says “Nevermore” to all his thoughts and longings. The raven, a symbol of death, tells the man he will never again (“nevermore”) see his beloved, never again hold her—even in heaven.

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