
The Raven
A Modern Retelling
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TCM
Teacher Created Materials

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CHAPTER ONE



The New House

Right away, Heath didn't like the house. Maybe because it was really, really old. His family called it the "new house" because they'd just moved in, but the house must have been built in the 1800s.

His mom talked the house up. She said it had "character." When they first

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arrived, she pointed excitedly to each room and said, "Look how big!" Heath preferred his room back in California. It was much smaller, but at least it didn't have a weird, mildewy smell.

In this bedroom, there was a giant oak tree outside his window. For some reason, the tree made Heath's stomach turn. Basically, the room gave him the creeps.

Winter in upstate New York was horrible. The skies were gray, and the temperature was frigid. It wasn't until they moved to the East Coast that Heath realized how much he loved life in California. He also desperately missed Lenore, his best friend.

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CHAPTER TWO



A Mysterious Dream

The first night in the house, Heath barely slept. Though it didn't seem possible, he was pretty sure his room smelled worse after dark. Also, the house was much noisier at night. Each gust of wind set off a million sounds inside the house: creaks, squeaks, and shudders.

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If Heath wasn't fond of the oak tree during the day, he despised it at night. The tree cast a large, spidery shadow across his bedroom floor. In the early hours of the morning, when it was still dark, he dreamed that the tree's shadow grew, stretching across his bedroom walls. The farther the shadow spread, the colder his room became.

In the middle of the dream, the shadow stopped growing. The house became eerily silent. The stillness of the house was so complete that Heath felt like the world had frozen in place. This is when he heard the tapping at his window.

The sound made Heath sit up. He stared at the window from his bed. There was nothing there, just the cold December night and the ominous tree. The sound began again, a quiet but insistent rapping. Something invisible was tapping again and again at his window. Something, he thought, that was eager to get into his room.

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Against his better judgement, Heath walked toward the window and opened it. At first, he saw darkness and nothing more. But then, past the giant oak tree, he saw a familiar shape. It was Lenore. She was standing on his front lawn, looking up at Heath and laughing.

He felt the bitter winter air through the open window, and it gave him chills. Lenore had stopped laughing, and her eyes were sad. Heath was about to call her name when he woke up.



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Book Club Questions

1. What are some reasons Heath does not like his new home?
2. What are three adjectives you would use to describe Heath?
3. Why is Lenore so important to Heath?
4. Heath feels "detached" from the kids at his new school. What does this mean, and why does he feel that way?
5. How does the tone of the book change during the last chapter?
6. Do you think the raven is real? Why or why not?

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