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“The Raven” Questions

p. 312

**Two levels of the poem** – ***level one*** – “The Raven tells of a man who grieves for his lost love, Lenore. A mysterious talking Raven appears at the speaker’s door, prompting him to question the bird about Lenore. The Raven responds to each question-including the question of whether the speaker will ever see Lenore again-with the single word “Nevermore,” leaving the speaker broken and devoid of hope.

***On the second level*** – the poem explores how grief and loneliness can turn to madness. Poe depicts a mind going to pieces-and watching itself in the process.

1. In the very first line of the poem, which words contribute to a dark, mysterious Gothic mood?
2. Summarize the action in the fourth stanza.
3. On p. 314, reread the stanza beginning with “Then this ebony bird”. What is the speaker’s first reaction to the bird that enters his room?
4. As the poem progresses, how does the speaker’s attitude toward the Raven change?
5. In what way is the word *nevermore* related to the emotional change?
6. What element of Gothic literature does the Raven’s speaking introduce into the play? Explain.
7. On p. 315, reread the stanza beginning with “But the Raven”. Restate what is happening in your own words.
8. On p. 315, in the stanza beginning with “Then, methought”, explain how the speaker’s psychological distress is becoming obvious.
9. In the last stanza on p. 315, what does the speaker want from the Raven?
10. List the two questions (there are only 2) the speaker asks in the poem.
11. What do you think the speaker wants to know when he asks each question?
12. How do the Gothic elements in the last stanza suggest an answer to the speaker’s questions?
13. What is the relationship between the Raven’s shadow and the speaker’s soul at the end of the poem?
14. After analyzing the poem, what do you feel the Raven finally comes to represent?