

# NEVERMORE

Adapted from "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe.

## 1. BUSY TOWN CENTRE. EXT. DAY.

EDDIE, a morose young man in his early twenties, is sitting on a bench by the bus stop, apparently alone. He stares thoughtfully ahead. A BUS THUNDERS past, startling him. He takes a deep breath and resumes his former position. LEE, a cheerful teenager, comes into view beside EDDIE on the bench. He is holding a bunch of flowers. LEE indicates the bus, then moves towards it when EDDIE does not respond. EDDIE slowly gets up, then follows LEE onto the bus.

## 2. BUS. INT. DAY.

EDDIE and LEE move towards the back of the crowded bus and sit down. The bus drives off.

EDDIE (V/O)

I used to believe in miracles. But then I used to believe in a lot of things, like Santa Claus. I'm not sure of anything anymore. If only I could be certain that one day he'll wake up.

## 3. JASON'S HOSPITAL BEDROOM. INT. DAY.

A small private hospital bedroom. JASON, aged twenty, lies on a bed in the middle of the room, comatose, on life support. The room is bare, containing only a bedside cabinet with an empty vase on top and a chair. A young FEMALE NURSE is changing his drip. A young MALE NURSE stands by the bed, holding a clipboard.

FEMALE NURSE (replacing drip)

Well, that's done.

She begins to smooth down the sheets. The MALE NURSE watches her closely.

MALE NURSE

He's one of your favourites, isn't he?

FEMALE NURSE

I just feel sorry for him. He's been here for two years. His family don't come to visit any more, only that strange young man.

MALE NURSE

They've probably given up hope. The doctors think he should be allowed to die you know.

FEMALE NURSE (sighing)

I suppose it would be for the best...he looks so helpless lying there that sometimes I feel like pulling that damn plug out myself.

MALE NURSE

I didn't realise you were *that* attached to him.

FEMALE NURSE

It's just that he's so young...

She swallows hard and tries to maintain a professional attitude.

FEMALE NURSE

We'd better go. We've got eight more of these to see to today.

She moves away from JASON and goes to the door. The MALE NURSE swiftly ticks JASON's name off the chart on his clipboard and turns to follow her.

#### 4. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. INT. DAY.

Some time later. EDDIE and LEE are walking down the corridor towards JASON's room. LEE seems reluctant to go and lags slightly behind EDDIE. They reach the room and EDDIE opens the door.

#### 5. JASON'S BEDROOM. INT. DAY.

EDDIE walks into the room and stands at the foot of JASON's bed, gazing down at him affectionately. LEE goes over to the bedside cabinet and begins to arrange the flowers in the vase, deliberately averting his eyes from JASON.

EDDIE

I've brought someone to see you.

He looks at LEE expectantly. LEE looks worriedly at JASON.

LEE

Uh...hi. I'm Lee. We met before one time, at Joey's 21st, but I guess you wouldn't remember me....

EDDIE

You don't have to be scared. He doesn't bite.

LEE

Can he hear us?

EDDIE

I like to think so.

LEE

What happened to him?

EDDIE

He had...problems. I didn't see it. I wasn't there when he needed me most.

LEE

You mean he tried to...Oh God.

EDDIE

I was never *there*.

LEE

You can't blame yourself for this.

He moves towards EDDIE and puts his hand on his shoulder. EDDIE shrugs him off. JASON coughs. EDDIE gasps and leans down towards him.

EDDIE

Jason?

JASON (mumbling)

N...nevermore.

EDDIE screams and rushes out of the room, calling Jason's name.

## 6. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. INT. DAY.

EDDIE runs frantically down the corridor searching for a medic, knocking into passers-by. He spots a SECOND FEMALE NURSE and catches her by the shoulders, spinning her round.

EDDIE

I need a doctor for Jason Phillips!

SECOND FEMALE NURSE (calmly)

The doctor will be doing his rounds. You'd best speak to one of the attendant nurses.

She indicates the MALE NURSE from earlier, who is further up the corridor pushing a food trolley. EDDIE runs up to him.

EDDIE

It's Jason! You have to come with me now!

He takes the MALE NURSE's arm and begins to drag him towards JASON's room. The MALE NURSE looks over at the SECOND FEMALE NURSE. She shrugs and he motions to her to take the trolley.

MALE NURSE

Please calm down, sir.

## 7. JASON'S HOSPITAL BEDROOM. INT. DAY.

LEE is sat on a chair by the bed, watching JASON intently. EDDIE re-enters the room followed by the MALE NURSE.

EDDIE

I've brought the nurse Jason, it's OK. (TO NURSE) He's waking up!

MALE NURSE

I'm sorry sir, but I'm afraid that's most unlikely.

EDDIE

What are you talking about? He spoke to me!

MALE NURSE

That's not an abnormal reaction in a case like this. Spasms and contractions can occur...he might open his eyes, or make involuntary sounds.

EDDIE (angry)

Sounds? He spoke to me! What the fuck are you trying to say?

He moves towards the nurse, threatening. LEE stands up suddenly as if to grab him.

MALE NURSE

Sir, he's still comatose. Now, if you'll excuse me-

EDDIE

You fucking amateur! I want a second opinion!

LEE grabs EDDIE and pulls him back as he lunges forward.

LEE (quietly)

I think we should go.

EDDIE

You heard him too, didn't you?

LEE

We'll come back and see Jason tomorrow.

EDDIE seems about to protest, then drops back, defeated. LEE gives the nurse an apologetic smile, then manoeuvres the dazed EDDIE towards the door. He looks back at JASON.

LEE

Bye Jason.

He shuts the door.

### 8. OFFICE. INT. DAY.

A large room lined with computer desks. Identically-dressed office staff are sat behind them, hard at work. MICHAEL MARSH, the manager, a short, balding man in his early forties, enters the room. He is accompanied by ROYCE, the assistant manager, a slightly younger man. A few of the workers look up as they enter, then turn back to their computers. MARSH walks briskly to an empty desk at the back of the room.

MARSH

Where is he?

The worker nearest the empty desk, PETERSEN, a nervous looking man of thirty, looks up at MARSH.

PETERSEN

He called in to say there was a problem at the hospital sir.

MARSH turns to ROYCE.

MARSH (sighing)

Why am I not surprised? This is the third time this week. I can't continue to employ a man who is never here.

ROYCE

No sir.

MARSH

How *is* his friend?

ROYCE

There's virtually no hope for him at all sir, but Mr. Charles can't accept that.

MARSH

Well, if he's not in by tomorrow....

ROYCE

I understand sir.

MARSH nods and turns to leave the office, motioning to ROYCE to follow him.

MARSH (quietly)

A tragic business, but you have to draw the line somewhere.

ROYCE (nodding)

Oh, absolutely, sir.

## 9. EDDIE'S LOUNGE. INT. NIGHT.

A small, shabby flat in a severe state of neglect - dirty clothes and cutlery are scattered everywhere and the whole place is thick with dust. It is RAINING HEAVILY outside. EDDIE is sitting on the sofa, reading from a book, which is tattered and falling apart.

EDDIE (V/O)

"Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary, over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore...While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping, as of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door...'Tis some visitor', I muttered, 'tapping at my chamber door - only this and nothing more' "...nevermore... Why did he say nevermore?"

A TAPPING SOUND is heard from outside. EDDIE turns quickly towards the door. Muttering to himself, he gets up, puts the book down and opens the door wide.

EDDIE (peering outside)

Hello?

He waits expectantly, but there is no answer.

EDDIE (tutting)

Darkness there, and nothing more.

He shuts the door and goes back to his book. The SOUND is heard again. EDDIE begins to rise, then stops himself.

EDDIE (laughing)

It's just the wind, and nothing more.

The sound of BEATING WINGS is heard at the window, louder than the previous sounds. EDDIE jumps up.

EDDIE

Shit...

He walks towards the window.

EDDIE

Is someone playing games out there? Stop it!

The SOUND continues. EDDIE stoops down to look through the window.

EDDIE

Leave me alone!

There is a LOUD CRASH as the glass from the window shatters in his face. EDDIE falls backwards onto the floor as a large black RAVEN flies into the room. EDDIE watches in fear as the bird circles his head. He is too shocked to speak for a moment.

EDDIE

Get out, you horrible thing!

The RAVEN lands on the back of the sofa and sits still, staring at him.

EDDIE



Didn't you hear me? Go away!

RAVEN

Nevermore.

EDDIE has begun to rise, but collapses onto the floor again when the RAVEN speaks.

EDDIE

Oh God...Jason. Who are you? What are you?

The RAVEN chuckles.

EDDIE (to himself)

This isn't happening. I don't believe in these things anymore.

RAVEN

Nevermore! Nevermore!

EDDIE (rising)

No! You can't be real!

RAVEN

Nevermore! Nevermore!

EDDIE runs into the adjoining bedroom and slams the door shut.

#### 10. EDDIE'S BEDROOM. INT. NIGHT.

A small room with a double bed in the centre, dirty and untidy like the rest of the flat. EDDIE locks the door and falls onto the bed, looking back at the locked door in fear.

EDDIE

Other friends have flown before...tomorrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before. I'm just tired, that's all.

11. EDDIE'S LOUNGE. INT. NIGHT.

The RAVEN is still sitting on the back of the sofa. It ruffles its feathers and CAWS, then flies off through the broken window, leaving a single black feather behind.

12. EDDIE'S BEDROOM. INT. NIGHT.

Some time later. EDDIE is lying in bed with his eyes wide open, unable to sleep. He gets up and begins to get dressed again.

13. OUTSIDE HOSPITAL. EXT. NIGHT.

EDDIE SQUELCHES through the puddles left by the rain as he walks up to the hospital. He walks past the main entrance and goes round the back. He reaches JASON's bedroom window and looks through, watching him intently. He hears a CAW and turns around suddenly. There is nothing there, so he turns back to JASON.

EDDIE (quietly)

He's so alone.

The CAW is heard again. The RAVEN appears on JASON's bed. EDDIE jumps back in fear.

EDDIE

No! Not here.

EDDIE waits for the RAVEN to speak, but the bird simply stares at him.

EDDIE (determined)

You're nothing! You're a liar. He will wake up.

RAVEN

Nevermore!

EDDIE

You stay away from him!

EDDIE hurls himself at the window, trying to attack the bird, but it disappears and he smacks into the glass, falling to the ground with a LOUD THUD. VOICES are heard in the distance and a torchlight is shone near him. EDDIE stumbles to his feet and staggers away.

#### 14. EDDIE'S LOUNGE. INT. NIGHT

The telephone is ringing and an answerphone message comes on.

EDDIE's voice

Hi, this is Eddie. I'm not here right now but if you leave your message after the bleep I'll get back to you.  
Cheers.

The answerphone BLEEPS and PETERSEN's voice is heard.

PETERSEN's voice

Eddie, If you're there pick up. Marsh was in today. I'm sick of covering up for you. If you're not in tomorrow you can kiss your job goodbye.

#### 15. EDDIE'S BEDROOM. INT. DAY.

EDDIE is lying in bed, asleep. BIRDSONG is heard outside and light streams into the room. EDDIE's digital alarm clock shows 6.59 am. As the clock changes to show 7.00 am the ALARM SOUNDS. EDDIE moans and opens his eyes. He slowly gets out of bed and stumbles into the adjoining bathroom. He runs the cold tap and splashes his face with water, taking several deep breaths as he does so.

#### 16. EDDIE'S LOUNGE. INT. DAY.

EDDIE enters the lounge from the bedroom. He is wearing a suit and carries a briefcase. He sees that his answerphone has a message and is about to play it when he sees the feather lying on the sofa. He stares at it in anger and disbelief, then snatches it up.

EDDIE

What evil vision is this?

He drops the feather and walks over to the shattered window. He puts down his briefcase and kneels down. He runs his fingers over the shards of glass. Blood trickles down his hand. He stands up, picks up the briefcase, and hurls it at the answerphone, knocking it off the desk. The case is knocked open by the impact and papers and pens spill out onto the floor.

EDDIE

Fuck you all!

17. BLOCK OF FLATS. EXT. DAY.

A scruffy block of ten storey flats. PETERSEN stands outside, wearing a suit, which is partially covered by his duffel coat. He holds a briefcase in his right hand. He looks up at the top floor of the building, then at the watch on his left wrist.

PETERSEN (sighing)

This is your last chance, Eddie.

18. OUTSIDE EDDIE'S FLAT. INT. DAY.

PETERSEN walks up to EDDIE's front door and knocks sharply. There is no reply so he knocks again. He pushes the door lightly and it swings open. He enters the flat.

19. EDDIE'S LOUNGE. INT. DAY.

PETERSEN walks into the room, shutting the front door behind him.

PETERSEN

Eddie, you left the door open. Eddie?

He sees the shattered window and walks over to it. Suddenly he notices the blood on the shards of glass.

PETERSEN

Jesus...

He cautiously leans out of the broken window, looking down to the ground below.

EDDIE (oov)

What are *you* doing here?

PETERSEN jumps violently and turns round. EDDIE is standing behind him. He steps back from the window. EDDIE realises PETERSEN's mistake. He laughs.

EDDIE (contemptuously)

You thought I'd jumped.

PETERSEN

Didn't you get my message?

EDDIE turns towards the broken answerphone, which is lying on the floor, surrounded by the contents of the briefcase. PETERSEN sees this and looks worriedly at EDDIE.

PETERSEN

I came to get you for work.

EDDIE

I'm not going.

PETERSEN

Look Eddie, if you don't come in today you'll lose your job.

EDDIE

I've got more important things to do.

PETERSEN (sharply)

Aren't you listening to me? They're going to fire you!

EDDIE

I've got to go to the hospital.

PETERSEN

What the hell is the matter with you? It's like you're possessed or something!

EDDIE looks up sharply at this last remark.

EDDIE

What did you say?

PETERSEN

You don't care about anything anymore.

EDDIE (to himself)

Maybe I *am* possessed...that's why I see him.

PETERSEN

See who? Jason?

EDDIE

No, not Jason. *Him. It.*

PETERSEN

I don't understand.

EDDIE smiles sadly. PETERSEN touches his arm.

PETERSEN

Look, I have to leave now or I'll be late. Go pick up your case. You can see Jason after work - I'll come with you if you like.

EDDIE

I've got to go this morning.

PETERSEN

I'm trying to help you, Eddie.

EDDIE stares at him blankly. PETERSEN moves away. As he reaches the door he looks back at EDDIE.

PETERSEN (quietly)

Goodbye Eddie. Good luck.

## 20. CROWDED PUB. INT. DAY.

A small, homely, NOISY pub, filled with people from the local shops and offices on their mid-morning break. A group of EDDIE'S MALE COLLEAGUES are occupying a large table near the front of the pub. LEE stands behind the bar, serving.

FIRST OFFICE WORKER

-So I said to him, why don't you put your money where your mouth is, and he goes OK, how does fifty quid sound?

SECOND OFFICE WORKER

I've heard this one before.

FIRST OFFICE WORKER

No, it isn't a joke. Listen-

THIRD OFFICE WORKER

Course it is. You wouldn't agree to a bet like that on your wages, chickenshit.

The other men laugh at this. The FIRST OFFICE WORKER turns away and notices EDDIE entering the pub through the front door.

FIRST OFFICE WORKER

Well, look what the cat dragged in.

The men are silent as EDDIE walks past them.

THIRD OFFICE WORKER (muttering)

He's for it, the spook.

They laugh again. EDDIE ignores them and marches up to LEE, who is serving a customer.

EDDIE (loudly)

LEE!

LEE sees EDDIE and looks surprised. He quickly gives the customer his change and turns to speak to him.

EDDIE

I've come to get you. You said you'd come and see Jason.

LEE

What?

EDDIE

You said yesterday you'd come back tomorrow, and that's today.

LEE

I can't come now, I'm working. Why aren't you at work?

EDDIE (shrugging)

I don't think I have a job any more.

LEE

I really think you're spending too much time at the hospital.

EDDIE

He might wake up today.

LEE (sighing)

No he won't, Eddie. You heard what the nurse said - it was just a normal reaction.

EDDIE (determined)

He'll be OK as long as I'm there. I'm not going to leave him this time. Let's go, come on.



He moves away from the bar, looking to LEE to follow him.

LEE

Eddie, stop it. Why don't you face reality? He's never going to wake up!

EDDIE's colleagues hear LEE's last remark and turn to look at them, as do a few other people.

EDDIE (bitterly)

I thought *you* were different.

LEE

I'm sorry, Eddie.

EDDIE stalks away, glowering at his colleagues as he passes them.

THIRD OFFICE WORKER (to colleagues)

He's fucking crazy.

## 21. JASON'S HOSPITAL BEDROOM. INT. DAY.

The bed is empty. The young FEMALE NURSE is putting on fresh sheets. The young MALE NURSE stands by the bed with his clipboard as before. The FEMALE NURSE has tears in her eyes, and she wipes them away with the back of her hand.

MALE NURSE

Don't get upset. You said yourself that its better this way.

FEMALE NURSE

I know. I was just fond of him, that's all.

She moves away from the bed.

MALE NURSE

Are you done? There's a new one coming in at three.

The FEMALE NURSE looks angry for a moment, then nods.

## 22. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. INT. DAY.

EDDIE is walking along the corridor to JASON's room. The two nurses are approaching from the opposite direction. They exchange worried glances as they pass him. The FEMALE NURSE stops and looks back at him, but the MALE NURSE indicates to keep walking.

## 23. JASON'S HOSPITAL BEDROOM. INT. DAY.

EDDIE opens the door and strides into the room. He stops short when he sees that the bed is empty. He looks back into the corridor for the nurses, but they have gone. He turns back to the bed. The RAVEN is perched on top of it.

EDDIE (gasping)

You! What have you done with him?

RAVEN

Nevermore!

EDDIE

You cannot take him from me!

RAVEN

Nevermore!

EDDIE staggers back against the wall and shakes his head violently. He advances on the RAVEN, snarling.

EDDIE

Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!

He curls his fingers into claws and reaches out for the RAVEN.

DOCTOR (oov)

Excuse me, sir.

EDDIE jumps back and turns to see a middle-aged male DOCTOR framed in the doorway. He looks from the DOCTOR back to the bed. The RAVEN has gone. He takes a deep breath and turns back to the DOCTOR.

EDDIE

You startled me.

DOCTOR

May I ask what you are doing here sir?

EDDIE

I've come to see Jason. Has he been transferred?

DOCTOR

Sir?

EDDIE

I thought maybe he'd woken up and been transferred to another room.

DOCTOR

I'm afraid not sir. The young man passed away earlier this morning. I'm sorry.

EDDIE's eyes widen. He tries to speak but gasps air instead. He staggers back against the wall again, holding onto it to prevent himself from falling.

EDDIE

No!

The DOCTOR holds his hand out to steady him. EDDIE pushes him away. He stumbles out of the room.

#### 24. EDDIE'S FLAT. INT. DAY.

EDDIE enters through the front door, out of breath. He snatches the book up from the floor and runs frantically from the lounge to the bedroom and back again, searching for the RAVEN. He hears a CAW from the bedroom.

25. EDDIE'S BEDROOM. INT. DAY.

EDDIE runs back into the bedroom. The RAVEN is sitting on his bed.

RAVEN

Nevermore!

EDDIE flicks through the book, trying to find the poem.

EDDIE

Why won't you leave me alone?

The RAVEN chuckles. EDDIE shouts at it, reciting from the book.

EDDIE

Get thee back into a tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore! Leave no black plume as a token of the lie thy soul hath spoken! Leave my loneliness unbroken!

The RAVEN stares menacingly at EDDIE. He begins to sob and slowly collapses onto the floor.

EDDIE (quietly)

Leave my loneliness unbroken...leave my loneliness unbroken.

EDDIE curls up into a ball on the floor, still crying. He covers his face with his hands and whispers JASON's name. He gasps and slowly takes his hands away again. The RAVEN has gone. EDDIE sits up suddenly and begins to laugh hysterically.

EDDIE

You're nothing without him!

26. QUIET STREET. EXT. DAY.

LEE and PETERSEN are walking briskly down the street towards EDDIE's block of flats. Both look worried.

LEE

I wish I'd gone with him. He should have had someone there when they told him.

PETERSEN

I hope he hasn't done anything stupid. He's been acting very strange recently...seeing things.

LEE bites his lip and turns away. They reach the main entrance to the flats and go in.

27. OUTSIDE EDDIE'S FLAT. INT. DAY.

PETERSEN and LEE are standing outside the flat. PETERSEN knocks on the door but there is no answer. He knocks again.

PETERSEN

Eddie, it's me! Open the door!

He waits for a moment, but EDDIE does not answer.

PETERSEN

If you don't open this door I'm going to knock it through!

There is still no reply. PETERSEN steps back and hurls himself at the door repeatedly. The wood splinters. He pushes the door and it falls backwards off its hinges.

28. EDDIE'S LOUNGE. INT. DAY.

PETERSEN and LEE walk over the broken door into the lounge. They hear a NOISE from the bedroom and run to investigate.

29. EDDIE'S BEDROOM. INT. DAY.

EDDIE is huddled against the wall, still laughing. He staggers to his feet as LEE and PETERSEN enter.

PETERSEN (relieved)

Eddie! Why didn't you answer the door?

LEE

We came as soon as we heard. Are you alright?

EDDIE

It's over!

PETERSEN and LEE look at him, confused.

EDDIE

Don't you see? It has no power any more!

EDDIE picks the book up from the floor and hurls it through the door into the lounge.

EDDIE

Nevermore!

He sits on the bed, still laughing. PETERSEN and LEE look at each other worriedly.

### 30. BUSY TOWN CENTRE. EXT. DAY.

EDDIE is sitting on the same bench by the bus stop as before. He stares sorrowfully at the ground. A BUS THUNDERS past, but EDDIE does not react. LEE gets off the bus. He is carrying a bunch of flowers. He sits beside EDDIE on the bench, twisting his fingers together nervously. EDDIE does not acknowledge him. Another bus arrives and LEE gets up and walks towards it. He looks back at EDDIE. EDDIE rises and follows him onto the bus.

### 31. GRAVEYARD. EXT. DAY.

A small dilapidated church graveyard. Many of the stones are broken or overgrown. EDDIE and LEE walk slowly towards a well-kept gravestone. LEE kneels down to place the flowers on the grave. The sound of BEATING WINGS is heard and the RAVEN flies in and settles on the gravestone. EDDIE gasps and steps back. LEE straightens up and looks at EDDIE in surprise.

LEE

What's the matter? It's only a bird.

EDDIE

No..it's a demon. It's evil.

LEE

Eddie-

RAVEN

Nevermore!

EDDIE looks at LEE expectantly. LEE looks back at him, puzzled.

EDDIE (to RAVEN, determined)

I'm not afraid. You can't harm him now. Get away from here!

RAVEN

Nevermore!

EDDIE

It's just an old poem. It means nothing.

RAVEN

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting-

EDDIE

Nothing!

RAVEN

-Now upon the hardened tombstone, harsh and staring as before...

EDDIE (realising)

That's not how it goes...

RAVEN

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming, and the life that from him streaming stops beneath the cold stone floor-

EDDIE

Stop it! You're changing it! You cannot do this!

LEE

Eddie, what's wrong? Who are you talking to?

RAVEN

Since the soul of thy companion rots beneath the cold stone floor, thy'll be haunted - evermore!

EDDIE

No!

EDDIE steps back a few paces. The RAVEN chuckles and takes off, CAWING loudly. LEE jumps out of the way as it flies past him.

LEE

Jesus, Eddie...

EDDIE stares blankly ahead.

EDDIE (quietly)

It was *my* demon, all along. Evermore....

He faints. LEE manages to catch him before he falls. The RAVEN lands on a nearby gravestone and watches as LEE tries to revive EDDIE. It LAUGHS loudly to itself and flies off. The LAUGHTER continues, growing fainter until the RAVEN can no longer be seen.

**THE END.**