

The Raven Prince – chapter 2 - Cerulean Bay

By Martin S. Beckley

Raymond flapped and crashed about colliding with walls and ceiling. 'What have you done to me?' he yelled at Corvidae, but the words spewed from his beak as a series of angry 'quaaas'. She smiled lovingly at him, 'Be calm my Prince, for the days of justice are nearing.' Corvidae's luminous green eyes crept into his mind and a soothing numbness seeped through his body. Anger and resentment dissolved, reformed and surfaced as courage and loyalty. 'You must go to Cerulean Bay and bring me the blue stone. The guards are fierce but gullible.' He surrendered to her absolute control. Edward and Nina's throats were sore from screaming at him, but Corvidae blocked their voices. To Raymond, his friends were a noiseless blur fading from memory. He flapped onto the window ledge, extended his black wings to their full span and flew out on his first mission. Corvidae collapsed, exhausted. An oily blackness filled her eyes and she moved no more.

Raymond instinctively flew towards the low rumble of swirling air that signalled a thermal and hitched a ride to a higher altitude. From there, he could see the deep blue water of Cerulean Bay glimmering in the sunlight. He glided low over the small beach and across the cliff face. A colony of gulls was nesting on a ledge and each time Raymond flew past, they screamed confrontational warnings at him. A flash of blue caught Raymond's eye from a

small crevice just above the gulls' ledge and he flew in to investigate. The gulls launched an assault, flying straight at him with screeches and squawks. Fifty gulls surrounded him in a chaos of noise, wings and snapping beaks. They pushed him away from the cliff and then returned to their ledge. He tried repeatedly; each time the gulls beat him back. Raymond retreated to the beach and, for the first time, he missed his friends. 'What would Edward do?' he thought. He studied the cliff and a dangerous idea developed. He would need to be brave for this to work. Before he chickened out, he leapt into the air and flapped hard climbing higher and higher until he circled above the gulls. He let out a loud 'KWACK' and dived towards the ledge. The startled gulls soared up to meet him. Raymond fought through the maelstrom. Webbed feet pounded his head, sharp beaks tore at his wings and still he pushed downwards. In desperation, a gull slammed into his chest. The pain was immense and Raymond fell the remaining distance to the ledge. The gulls gathered, watching for signs of life, but Raymond lay dead still on his side. After a few minutes, they lost interest. The plan had worked. Raymond got to his feet, made the small jump to the crevice and was inside. The gulls, angered by the trick, crowded around the entrance and blocked his only way out. Raymond held the blue stone triumphantly in his claw but he was now a prisoner.

