

## The Raven Prince – chapter 3 - Repleo

By Martin S. Beckley

Raymond waited for the gulls to get bored but they guarded the entrance with fierce determination. He tried edging slowly towards the entrance, he also tried charging it, but each time the gulls stood their ground. He spent a few hours squashed down in the darkness at the back of the crevice hoping that the gulls would think he had gone. Even when the flock flew out for food, ten gulls remained on guard. All through the night, they kept watch. Now the sun was high in the sky and glistened off the blue water in the bay. Raymond was thirsty. Water had collected in a small hole in the floor, but Raymond's beak was not long enough to reach it so he looked around for another source of water. He noticed a few scattered stones and had an idea. He dropped the stones into the hole until the water level raised enough for him to drink. Sunlight pierced the gloom and reflected off the water, its brilliance dazzled Raymond. Suddenly he realised how to escape. He crept as close to the entrance as he could without disturbing the gulls. Holding the blue stone up to the sunlight he directed the reflection outside. The flash of light temporarily blinded the gulls; Raymond rushed out and took to the sky.

Olivia gently returned to consciousness, and found she could only move her head. She opened her eyes slowly to discover she was still in the nightmare, trapped in the block of solidified mist. She was still groggy and she let out a pathetic whimper. 'Are you ok?' Nina asked. 'I guess so. Where's Raymond?' Nina nodded towards the crumpled figure on the floor. 'The witch turned him into a raven and he flew out the window.' Olivia watched Corvidae's

motionless body and asked, 'Is she dead?' Edward shook his head, 'I don't think so.' The sudden beating of wings startled them. Perched on the window ledge, a black-silhouetted bird watched them and waited. Corvidae stirred weakly on the floor. Her blacked eyes took on their green luminosity and a streak of green energy burst from her eyes hitting the bird in the chest. Olivia screamed, 'RAYMOND!' The bird's life energy slowly transferred to Corvidae. Replenished, she stood and watched the bird's drained husk topple outside and join the other donors at the foot of the keep. After a respectful silence Corvidae spoke, her tone softened with emotion. 'They give their lives so I may live - they humble me. My duty is to see justice done and the crimes against my people rectified.' Another fluttering of wings interrupted Corvidae's flow. She smiled, 'My Prince returns.' Raymond flew past her, dropping the blue stone into her outstretched hand. Edward asked, 'Perhaps we could help you?' Olivia and Nina gaped sceptically at Edward. 'If you let us go,' he added, winking at the girls. Corvidae grinned, 'Thank you. When I summon the Mortifera you may relinquish your life energies to them.'

