

The Raven Prince – chapter 10 – The portal

By Martin S. Beckley

Prudens snapped back into his body. Crouching down, he picked up the raven at his feet and spoke in Raymond's mind, 'It is vital that you do not return to Carcer castle. Do you understand me?' Raymond did not answer. 'I think Corvidae has dragged Olivia back.' Raymond struggled to break free, 'I must go, I must help Olivia.' His squawks and quaaas shattered the still air. Prudens tried to calm him, 'Your friend will be safe as long as you do not return. Corvidae wants you back to protect her from the Mortifera.' Raymond was not listening; he stabbed at Prudens's hand with his beak and scratched with his claws until he escaped. 'Raymond, I can change you back to your original form.' Raymond stopped; he flapped just out of reach. 'Please - change me now,' he pleaded. 'First you must gather the unkindness before it is too late.' A thick black cloud drifted over the parkland. Prudens watched it for a moment then realised the cloud was an enormous flock of small birds. 'Quick, come with me Raymond, we must get you out of here.' 'No. Change me back first.' Six birds dropped from the flock, closed in around Raymond, and forced him back to the castle. The remaining flock screeched and plunged towards the crowd.

Prudens yelled, 'Arm yourselves – the battle is upon us.'

Raymond's abductors shoved him through the chamber window and he fell to the floor. Corvidae scooped him up and spoke softly to him, 'My Prince, I now have the royal stone in my possession.' Her eyes took on a green glow. 'I am the rightful owner and you must protect me - it is in the prophecy.' Raymond fell under her spell. Corvidae pointed towards

Olivia and chanted, 'Dissolutio,' and the frozen mist melted. 'You three, slide the fissure shields into those grooves in the doorframe so that the crystals point towards each other.' 'When are you going to restore Raymond?' asked Edward. 'After he has fulfilled the prophecy.' Edward moved cautiously towards Corvidae. 'We want you to restore him now.' 'No!' Edward held up his shield, 'I know how to use this, you cannot hurt me. If you won't restore Raymond I will take him from you.' A green lightning bolt shot from Corvidae's eyes and hit Nina in the leg; she fell to the floor in pain. Corvidae spoke slowly to Edward, 'Put the shields in the grooves.' Edward did not move. Another bolt hit Olivia and she fell to the floor. 'JUST DO IT,' Corvidae screamed. Reluctantly, Edward slid the shields into place; they stopped halfway in. Corvidae rested the purple stone on the seeker tablet and the crystal globe hummed with energy. The crystals at the centre of the shields shone brightly. 'Expositus,' Corvidae chanted and placed her hand on the globe. Her eyes flashed green, subjecting the chamber to an eerie strobe effect. The space between the shields blurred and grew dark. The portal opened.

