

The Puzzling Raven

by Edgar Allen Poeticlicense

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I puzzled, weak and weary,
Over a curious volume: Crazy for Sudoku! (and More),
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door -
Where in the world do I put the FOUR?"

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in Covid September,
And each separate dying digit wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished to solve it; - or, at least I thought, to resolve it
From my books—tears of sorrow - sorrow for the huge chore -
For the mischievous editors, I implore -
where the heck do I put the FOUR?

And the sad uncertain rustling of rigorous (or warped) Logic
Thrilled me - filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
"Maybe I can solve this thing, if I just try an hour more -
Visitor, with your help...come, walk across the floor -
but where (the hell) do I put the FOUR?"

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Black creepy bird, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you" - here I opened wide the door; -
Please tell me, where to put the FOUR!

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Four?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Four!" -
Merely this, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore.
"This puzzle is impossible," I said, "I'm getting nowhere,
Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the Puzzly shore -
Tell me how to solve this... and nothing more!
At least tell me where to put the FOUR!"

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer "well the nine goes here, and furthermore--
the sixes, the sevens, and ones, as well...
I was blest with seeing this puzzling bird above my chamber door -
But angry too, as my frustrations soar,
WHERE THE HELL DO I PUT THE FOUR?"

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
He solved the whole puzzle in minutes, nay seconds flat! -
Till I scarcely I quietly muttered, "other friends have flown before -
Shall I try again? More Challengers? More Experts? Or...?"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

