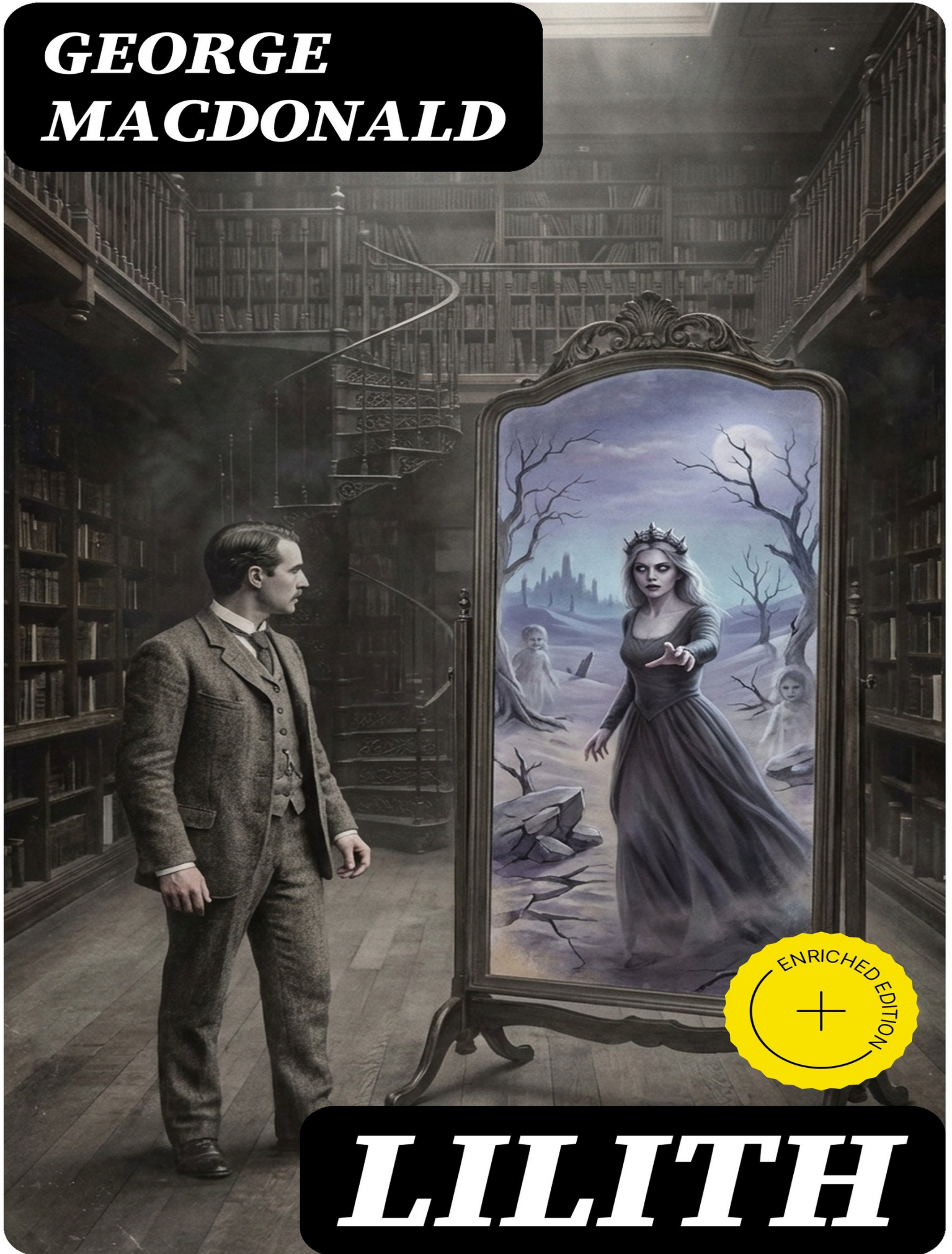


**GEORGE
MACDONALD**



LILITH

George MacDonald

Lilith

Enriched edition. A Romance

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Cara Whitlock

EAN 8596547339502

Edited and published by DigiCat, 2022



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Introduction

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Between the fierce pull of the self and the difficult grace of surrender, George MacDonald's *Lilith* traces a perilous passage through a dreamlike borderland where life brushes death, desire tempts judgment, memory unsettles identity, and wandering souls wrestle with the cost of becoming, inviting readers to step past the safe surfaces of waking into a night-world whose shifting beauties and terrors test courage, compassion, and the possibility of renewal while asking, with relentless courtesy, what freedom means when every choice echoes beyond the body's horizon and whether love can unmake the prisons we build for ourselves.

Written by the Scottish Victorian author best known for pioneering modern fantasy, *Lilith* belongs to the late nineteenth century's fascination with dream-visions and metaphysical romance. It is a work of visionary fantasy that moves between an old house's library and an adjacent otherworld whose logic is moral as much as physical. First published in the 1890s, the novel stands near the end of MacDonald's career, gathering decades of reflection into a concentrated fable. Its scenes unfold in indeterminate, often nocturnal spaces—gardens, wastes, halls, and silent dwellings—composed less to map geography than to stage encounters of conscience, desire, and awakening.

At its outset, the book follows Mr. Vane, the introspective heir to an ancient house, who discovers in his library a gateway into a contiguous realm and falls in with a grave,

paradoxical guide. Crossing over, he meets figures who seem both persons and emblems, among them the formidable Lilith, whose presence focuses the story's searching questions rather than supplying easy answers. What begins as a curious exploration becomes a moral journey in a landscape that responds to inward states. The narrative remains intimate in voice, grounded in Mr. Vane's perceptions, yet it opens continually onto vistas that resist literal explanation.

MacDonald's style here is lyrical and grave, combining plainspoken candor with an incantatory rhythm that turns scenery into argument. Images do as much work as plot: wells, lamps, forests, and thresholds recur as nodes where ethical choices gather weight. The book's voice is patient, sometimes austere, sometimes tender, and its pace alternates between hushed stillness and sudden, visionary intensity. Though the story has quests, perils, and marvels, it treats them less as spectacle than as occasions for an inner clarity that arrives by degrees. The effect is dreamlike without vagueness, as if waking logic were politely suspended to let deeper causality speak.

Among its central themes are the formation of the self, the uses and abuses of desire, and the costly difference between possession and love. The tale constantly returns to questions of mortality and transformation: what it means to die, to sleep, to awaken, and to consent to being changed. It probes responsibility to others in a world where isolation looks like strength but hollows the heart. Knowledge, too, comes under gentle scrutiny, as cleverness yields to a wiser humility. Throughout, the narrative honors childlikeness not

as naivety but as a practiced openness to truth—an orientation that keeps cruelty from masquerading as freedom.

These concerns remain pressing for contemporary readers. In an era rewarded for self-optimization and compulsive display, the book's meditation on will and love asks what kind of agency actually heals a life. Its patient attention to grief, rest, and renewal speaks into cultures of exhaustion, while its insistence that freedom includes responsibility to others challenges habits of isolation. The narrative's symbolic clarity provides a safe distance from today's polarities, yet it also sharpens moral intuitions by tracing consequences without finger-pointing. Rather than offering a program, *Lilith* creates imaginative room in which readers may examine desire, choose attentiveness, and practice hope.

Finally, a word about significance: *Lilith* occupies a formative place in the lineage of modern fantasy, demonstrating how the genre can carry searching metaphysical inquiry without sacrificing narrative wonder. Its world feels at once archaic and startlingly fresh, and its questions remain unclosed, inviting renewed attention at different stages of a reader's life. Approached with patience and a willingness to dwell among symbols, the novel rewards not by solving mysteries but by deepening them into meaning. It endures because it treats imagination as a moral faculty and because it dares to ask what kind of love makes us truly alive.

Synopsis

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Lilith, first published in 1895 by George MacDonald, begins in a rambling ancestral house whose library holds more than books. Its young heir, Mr. Vane, senses patterns and presences in the shelves until an enigmatic librarian, Mr. Raven, appears and hints that the study's mirror is a doorway. Drawn by curiosity rather than conviction, Vane follows Raven through the glass into a strange, spare country where landscape and conscience echo one another. The passage is quiet rather than violent, and Vane's rational habits remain intact, but the new world immediately subjects him to meanings he does not yet understand.

In the other realm, Mr. Raven proves to be a grave-keeper and guide who tends a vast place of sleepers awaiting a day beyond ordinary time. He urges Vane to embrace a paradoxical rest that would remake him, but Vane, wary of surrender and eager to act, declines. Their conversations establish the book's central tension between self-will and yielded life, between restless doing and receptive transformation. Vane wanders on, determined to test reality for himself. His travels combine pastoral stillness with sudden peril, and every encounter seems to demand a moral response as much as a practical choice.

Vane discovers a forest community of childlike beings known as the Little Ones, whose innocent trust and lively growth are threatened by a withering adulthood that comes when they cease to learn. As some harden into dull giants,

others remain playful, thoughtful, and vulnerable. The Little Ones receive Vane as a friend and would-be protector; he, in turn, feels responsible for their safety and development. The scenes establish a vision of growth measured inwardly rather than by size or prowess. Through tending gardens, telling stories, and attempting to lead, Vane begins to grasp love as patient stewardship rather than conquest.

News of a walled city, Bulika, ruled by a beautiful and terrible queen named Lilith, draws Vane into harsher terrain. Travelers speak of gates closed to mercy, of streets emptied by fear, and of a court where desire becomes domination. On the way, Vane endures thirst, bewilderment, and pursuit, and he meets Mara, a severe yet compassionate woman whose presence tests his motives. Mara embodies a discipline that pierces pride without destroying hope. She prepares Vane to face Bulika's enchantments and the queen's allure, insisting that genuine help for the oppressed cannot be severed from the reform of the helper.

Resolved to free the endangered children and confront the city's cruelty, Vane strives to chart a direct path and finds only mazes. Illusion and resistance multiply, exposing how his haste repeats the logic he opposes. Under Mara's guidance, he enters a house of sorrow where tears cleanse rather than weaken, and he revisits Mr. Raven's counsel about a transformative rest he still resists. The narrative balances outward effort with inward unmaking, pressing Vane to consider whether deliverance can be forced from outside or must be received through surrender. The story's landscapes narrow until moral choices become inescapably concrete.

The conflict culminates in encounters with Lilith herself, whose poise and power mask a refusal to yield. A recurrent image of the clenched hand concentrates the book's meditation on possession, pain, and release. Around this, sleepers wait, children risk becoming what they fear, and the city's fate appears tied to the quality of one will. Mr. Raven reappears to restate the paradox of dying in order to live, not as a riddle to solve but as a doorway to pass. Time stretches and contracts; vigil replaces haste; and Vane faces the cost of allowing love, rather than pride, to prevail.

Without disclosing its final turns, Lilith endures as a visionary romance that brings myth and Christian mysticism into intimate conversation with everyday moral struggle. MacDonald probes whether identity is secured by assertion or received through self-surrender, and whether death is an end or a passage toward truer awakening. The book's dream logic, unsettling beauty, and exacting compassion have influenced later fantasy, including writers such as C. S. Lewis. Its questions outlive its plot: what kind of life is worth waking into, and what must be relinquished to reach it? The novel leaves readers pondering transformation more than spectacle.

Historical Context

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George MacDonald's *Lilith* appeared in London in 1895, late in the Victorian era's fin de siècle. MacDonald (1824–1905), a Scottish ex-Congregational minister turned novelist and essayist, worked within Britain's bustling literary networks centered in London. The book addressed a readership shaped by circulating libraries, notably Mudie's Select Library, and by publishers who favored morally serious fiction. In this world of industrial Britain, expanding print culture, and vigorous public debates on faith and art, MacDonald offered a visionary romance. Its opening within a scholar's private library reflects the period's domestic book culture and the authority accorded to texts, learning, and institutional guardians of knowledge.

Victorian religious life was marked by controversy and reassessment. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and German "Higher Criticism" challenged traditional readings of Scripture, prompting crises of belief across denominations. MacDonald, educated at King's College, Aberdeen, served as a Congregational minister (1850–1853) before resigning amid doctrinal disputes. His later essays and *Unspoken Sermons* (1867–1889) articulated a theologically generous Christianity that emphasized divine love and moral transformation over punitive dogma. Aligning with Broad Church currents associated with figures like F. D. Maurice, he wrote fiction that staged spiritual testing and renewal—frameworks that undergird *Lilith's*

austere, allegorical exploration of sin, repentance, and awakening.

The title invokes Lilith, a figure with roots in Jewish tradition: a nocturnal being named in Isaiah 34:14 and elaborated in medieval and early modern lore, including the Alphabet of Ben Sira. Victorian Britain saw vigorous interest in comparative mythology and folklore, visible in publishing and in visual culture, from Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Lady Lilith* (1860s) to literary reworkings of biblical imagery. The Theosophical Society (1875) and a popular appetite for occult subjects fed the era's mythic imagination, while James G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) broadened discourse on ritual and myth. MacDonald drew on such currents while maintaining an unmistakably Christian symbolic frame.

MacDonald had helped shape modern fantasy decades earlier with *Phantastes* (1858), a dream-vision romance indebted to Coleridgean Romanticism and to German writers such as Novalis. *Lilith* returns to that mode with a late-Victorian sensibility, employing allegory, pilgrimage structures, and visionary geographies in dialogue with Dante and Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Its threshold in a domestic library and passage through a reflective surface echo Victorian fascination with books, mirrors, and the interior life. The period's periodicals and lending libraries nurtured audiences for such imaginative prose, while also expecting edifying purpose—conditions that encouraged MacDonald's fusion of narrative enchantment with ethical and theological inquiry.

The 1890s in Britain juxtaposed confidence and unease: imperial power and progress coexisted with social tensions, labor agitation, and artistic rebellion. Aestheticism and Decadence—prominent in venues like *The Yellow Book*—provoked debate about art's moral responsibility. Oscar Wilde's 1895 trials crystallized anxieties about aesthetic autonomy, sexuality, and public virtue. Against this backdrop, MacDonald's late romance offered a counterpoint, rejecting cynicism and sensation in favor of spiritual seriousness. Without polemicizing, *Lilith* participates in fin-de-siècle conversations by treating beauty as morally consequential and by recasting desire, authority, and selfhood within an explicitly ethical cosmos, rather than the amoral or purely aesthetic values some contemporaries proclaimed.

MacDonald's career spanned preaching, poetry, children's stories, and adult romances; he sustained himself through lecturing and prolific publication. He toured the United States in 1872–1873, expanding his readership and securing income. Chronic respiratory illness led him to spend long periods in the milder climate of Bordighera, Italy, during the 1880s and 1890s, where he continued to write. Like many Victorians, he endured multiple family bereavements, and his essays repeatedly confront death, judgment, and hope. His later fiction, including *Lilith*, treats sleep, death, and awakening not as sensational devices but as vehicles for moral testing and purification within a Christian metaphysical horizon.

Lilith was published in London in 1895 by Chatto & Windus as *Lilith: A Romance*. It arrived to a culture

accustomed to layered allegory in novels yet increasingly receptive to psychological interiority and symbolist suggestion. Circulating libraries helped the book find readers. Contemporary notices acknowledged its severity and beauty while differing over its theological cast and obscurity, a response typical for MacDonald's adult romances. The work's seriousness, biblical diction, and dense symbolic architecture set it apart from popular sensation fiction, aligning it instead with a minority Victorian tradition of visionary narrative addressed to patient, reflective, theologically literate readers.

Taken together, the novel's biblical allusions, medievalizing pilgrimage, and domestically anchored threshold speak to late-Victorian efforts to reconcile modern doubt with inherited Christian metaphysics. By invoking a contested mythic feminine figure within a rigorously moral universe, MacDonald engages contemporary debates about authority, desire, and the nature of evil without resorting to journalistic topicality. His narrative neither endorses Decadent detachment nor capitulates to reductive dogmatism; instead, it revives visionary allegory for a fin-de-siècle audience saturated with scientific and aesthetic argument. In doing so, *Lilith* reflects its era's anxieties while asserting a countervailing confidence in spiritual growth, restorative judgment, and enduring, ultimate meaning.

LILITH

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CHAPTER I. THE LIBRARY

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I had just finished my studies at Oxford, and was taking a brief holiday from work before assuming definitely the management of the estate. My father died when I was yet a child; my mother followed him within a year; and I was nearly as much alone in the world as a man might find himself.

I had made little acquaintance with the history of my ancestors. Almost the only thing I knew concerning them was, that a notable number of them had been given to study. I had myself so far inherited the tendency as to devote a good deal of my time, though, I confess, after a somewhat desultory fashion, to the physical sciences. It was chiefly the wonder they woke that drew me. I was constantly seeing, and on the outlook to see, strange analogies, not only between the facts of different sciences of the same order, or between physical and metaphysical facts, but between physical hypotheses and suggestions glimmering out of the metaphysical dreams into which I was in the habit of falling. I was at the same time much given to a premature indulgence of the impulse to turn hypothesis into theory. Of my mental peculiarities there is no occasion to say more.

The house as well as the family was of some antiquity, but no description of it is necessary to the understanding of my narrative. It contained a fine library, whose growth began before the invention of printing, and had continued to my own time, greatly influenced, of course, by changes of taste and pursuit. Nothing surely can more impress upon a

man the transitory nature of possession than his succeeding to an ancient property! Like a moving panorama mine has passed from before many eyes, and is now slowly flitting from before my own.

The library, although duly considered in many alterations of the house and additions to it, had nevertheless, like an encroaching state, absorbed one room after another until it occupied the greater part of the ground floor. Its chief room was large, and the walls of it were covered with books almost to the ceiling; the rooms into which it overflowed were of various sizes and shapes, and communicated in modes as various—by doors, by open arches, by short passages, by steps up and steps down.

In the great room I mainly spent my time, reading books of science, old as well as new; for the history of the human mind in relation to supposed knowledge was what most of all interested me. Ptolemy^[2], Dante, the two Bacons^[1], and Boyle were even more to me than Darwin or Maxwell, as so much nearer the vanished van breaking into the dark of ignorance.

In the evening of a gloomy day of August I was sitting in my usual place, my back to one of the windows, reading. It had rained the greater part of the morning and afternoon, but just as the sun was setting, the clouds parted in front of him, and he shone into the room. I rose and looked out of the window. In the centre of the great lawn the feathering top of the fountain column was filled with his red glory. I turned to resume my seat, when my eye was caught by the same glory on the one picture in the room—a portrait, in a sort of niche or little shrine sunk for it in the expanse of

book-filled shelves. I knew it as the likeness of one of my ancestors, but had never even wondered why it hung there alone, and not in the gallery, or one of the great rooms, among the other family portraits. The direct sunlight brought out the painting wonderfully; for the first time I seemed to see it, and for the first time it seemed to respond to my look. With my eyes full of the light reflected from it, something, I cannot tell what, made me turn and cast a glance to the farther end of the room, when I saw, or seemed to see, a tall figure reaching up a hand to a bookshelf. The next instant, my vision apparently rectified by the comparative dusk, I saw no one, and concluded that my optic nerves had been momentarily affected from within.

I resumed my reading, and would doubtless have forgotten the vague, evanescent impression, had it not been that, having occasion a moment after to consult a certain volume, I found but a gap in the row where it ought to have stood, and the same instant remembered that just there I had seen, or fancied I saw, the old man in search of a book. I looked all about the spot but in vain. The next morning, however, there it was, just where I had thought to find it! I knew of no one in the house likely to be interested in such a book.

Three days after, another and yet odder thing took place.

In one of the walls was the low, narrow door of a closet, containing some of the oldest and rarest of the books. It was a very thick door, with a projecting frame, and it had been the fancy of some ancestor to cross it with shallow shelves, filled with book-backs only. The harmless trick may be excused by the fact that the titles on the sham backs were

either humorously original, or those of books lost beyond hope of recovery. I had a great liking for the masked door.

To complete the illusion of it, some inventive workman apparently had shoved in, on the top of one of the rows, a part of a volume thin enough to lie between it and the bottom of the next shelf: he had cut away diagonally a considerable portion, and fixed the remnant with one of its open corners projecting beyond the book-backs. The binding of the mutilated volume was limp vellum, and one could open the corner far enough to see that it was manuscript upon parchment.

Happening, as I sat reading, to raise my eyes from the page, my glance fell upon this door, and at once I saw that the book described, if book it may be called, was gone. Angrier than any worth I knew in it justified, I rang the bell, and the butler appeared. When I asked him if he knew what had befallen it, he turned pale, and assured me he did not. I could less easily doubt his word than my own eyes, for he had been all his life in the family, and a more faithful servant never lived. He left on me the impression, nevertheless, that he could have said something more.

In the afternoon I was again reading in the library, and coming to a point which demanded reflection, I lowered the book and let my eyes go wandering. The same moment I saw the back of a slender old man, in a long, dark coat, shiny as from much wear, in the act of disappearing through the masked door into the closet beyond. I darted across the room, found the door shut, pulled it open, looked into the closet, which had no other issue, and, seeing nobody, concluded, not without uneasiness, that I had had a

recurrence of my former illusion, and sat down again to my reading.

Naturally, however, I could not help feeling a little nervous, and presently glancing up to assure myself that I was indeed alone, started again to my feet, and ran to the masked door—for there was the mutilated volume in its place! I laid hold of it and pulled: it was firmly fixed as usual!

I was now utterly bewildered. I rang the bell; the butler came; I told him all I had seen, and he told me all he knew.

He had hoped, he said, that the old gentleman was going to be forgotten; it was well no one but myself had seen him. He had heard a good deal about him when first he served in the house, but by degrees he had ceased to be mentioned, and he had been very careful not to allude to him.

“The place was haunted by an old gentleman, was it?” I said.

He answered that at one time everybody believed it, but the fact that I had never heard of it seemed to imply that the thing had come to an end and was forgotten.

I questioned him as to what he had seen of the old gentleman.

He had never seen him, he said, although he had been in the house from the day my father was eight years old. My grandfather would never hear a word on the matter, declaring that whoever alluded to it should be dismissed without a moment’s warning: it was nothing but a pretext of the maids, he said, for running into the arms of the men! but old Sir Ralph believed in nothing he could not see or lay

hold of. Not one of the maids ever said she had seen the apparition, but a footman had left the place because of it.

An ancient woman in the village had told him a legend concerning a Mr. Raven, long time librarian to “that Sir Upward whose portrait hangs there among the books.” Sir Upward was a great reader, she said—not of such books only as were wholesome for men to read, but of strange, forbidden, and evil books; and in so doing, Mr. Raven, who was probably the devil himself, encouraged him. Suddenly they both disappeared, and Sir Upward was never after seen or heard of, but Mr. Raven continued to show himself at uncertain intervals in the library. There were some who believed he was not dead; but both he and the old woman held it easier to believe that a dead man might revisit the world he had left, than that one who went on living for hundreds of years should be a man at all.

He had never heard that Mr. Raven meddled with anything in the house, but he might perhaps consider himself privileged in regard to the books. How the old woman had learned so much about him he could not tell; but the description she gave of him corresponded exactly with the figure I had just seen.

“I hope it was but a friendly call on the part of the old gentleman!” he concluded, with a troubled smile.

I told him I had no objection to any number of visits from Mr. Raven, but it would be well he should keep to his resolution of saying nothing about him to the servants. Then I asked him if he had ever seen the mutilated volume out of its place; he answered that he never had, and had always

thought it a fixture. With that he went to it, and gave it a pull: it seemed immovable.

CHAPTER II. THE MIRROR

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Nothing more happened for some days. I think it was about a week after, when what I have now to tell took place.

I had often thought of the manuscript fragment, and repeatedly tried to discover some way of releasing it, but in vain: I could not find out what held it fast.

But I had for some time intended a thorough overhauling of the books in the closet, its atmosphere causing me uneasiness as to their condition. One day the intention suddenly became a resolve, and I was in the act of rising from my chair to make a beginning, when I saw the old librarian moving from the door of the closet toward the farther end of the room. I ought rather to say only that I caught sight of something shadowy from which I received the impression of a slight, stooping man, in a shabby dress-coat reaching almost to his heels, the tails of which, disparting a little as he walked, revealed thin legs in black stockings, and large feet in wide, slipper-like shoes.

At once I followed him: I might be following a shadow, but I never doubted I was following something. He went out of the library into the hall, and across to the foot of the great staircase, then up the stairs to the first floor, where lay the chief rooms. Past these rooms, I following close, he continued his way, through a wide corridor, to the foot of a narrower stair leading to the second floor. Up that he went also, and when I reached the top, strange as it may seem, I found myself in a region almost unknown to me. I never had brother or sister to incite to such romps as make children

familiar with nook and cranny; I was a mere child when my guardian took me away; and I had never seen the house again until, about a month before, I returned to take possession.

Through passage after passage we came to a door at the bottom of a winding wooden stair, which we ascended. Every step creaked under my foot, but I heard no sound from that of my guide. Somewhere in the middle of the stair I lost sight of him, and from the top of it the shadowy shape was nowhere visible. I could not even imagine I saw him. The place was full of shadows, but he was not one of them.

I was in the main garret, with huge beams and rafters over my head, great spaces around me, a door here and there in sight, and long vistas whose gloom was thinned by a few lurking cobwebbed windows and small dusky skylights. I gazed with a strange mingling of awe and pleasure: the wide expanse of garret was my own, and unexplored!

In the middle of it stood an unpainted inclosure of rough planks, the door of which was ajar. Thinking Mr. Raven might be there, I pushed the door, and entered.

The small chamber was full of light, but such as dwells in places deserted: it had a dull, disconsolate look, as if it found itself of no use, and regretted having come. A few rather dim sunrays, marking their track through the cloud of motes that had just been stirred up, fell upon a tall mirror with a dusty face, old-fashioned and rather narrow—in appearance an ordinary glass. It had an ebony frame, on the top of which stood a black eagle, with outstretched wings, in his beak a golden chain, from whose end hung a black ball.

I had been looking at rather than into the mirror, when suddenly I became aware that it reflected neither the chamber nor my own person. I have an impression of having seen the wall melt away, but what followed is enough to account for any uncertainty:—could I have mistaken for a mirror the glass that protected a wonderful picture?

I saw before me a wild country, broken and heathy. Desolate hills of no great height, but somehow of strange appearance, occupied the middle distance; along the horizon stretched the tops of a far-off mountain range; nearest me lay a tract of moorland, flat and melancholy.

Being short-sighted, I stepped closer to examine the texture of a stone in the immediate foreground, and in the act espied, hopping toward me with solemnity, a large and ancient raven, whose purply black was here and there softened with gray. He seemed looking for worms as he came. Nowise astonished at the appearance of a live creature in a picture, I took another step forward to see him better, stumbled over something—doubtless the frame of the mirror—and stood nose to beak with the bird: I was in the open air, on a houseless heath!

London; he is known for large-scale works like the oratorio *Messiah* and for influential instrumental music.

15 A figure from the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 19) who, according to the story, looked back at the destruction of Sodom and was turned into a pillar of salt; the phrase is commonly used in later literature as an emblem of backward longing or forbidden looking.

16 In the Hebrew Bible Rachel is one of the matriarchs and the beloved wife of Jacob; later prophetic and liturgical texts (e.g., Jeremiah 31:15) depict Rachel as mourning her lost children, an image invoked in literary and religious contexts.

17 Astarte is the name used in classical and Biblical-era sources for a major ancient Near Eastern goddess associated with fertility, war, and sexuality (often paralleled with the Mesopotamian Ishtar), worshiped in the Levant and surrounding regions in the 2nd–1st millennia BCE.

18 A phrase drawn from the New Testament (Ephesians 2:2) used in Christian writings to denote a dominant evil spiritual power or demonic influence; in 19th-century fiction it is often invoked to indicate malevolent supernatural authority.

19 Cokayne is an English surname historically borne by a gentry family; 19th-century readers would have recognized it as a quaint aristocratic name MacDonald uses as a mock title.

20 An archaic spelling of William Shakespeare, the renowned English playwright and poet (1564–1616); MacDonald invokes him here by name in dialogue.

21 Latin words: homo = 'man' and corvus = 'raven'; the phrase refers to a metamorphosis from human to raven (Corvus is also the scientific genus name for ravens and crows).

22 A small, hardy horse breed originating in the Shetland Islands of Scotland, fully grown but notably diminutive; MacDonald uses it to indicate very small, adult horses.

23 A leech is a blood-sucking worm historically used in medicine; in this passage the phrase 'white leech' denotes a blood-sucking creature in the story rather than a modern medical device.

24 Bulika is the fictional city/state in MacDonald's novel, portrayed as an ancient, wealthy, xenophobic place ruled by the princess and hostile to strangers and children.

25 The capitalized term 'Shadows' in the text refers to a specific group of apparently malevolent or supernatural forces mentioned in the story, allied with the princess in the narrator's account.

26 Hybla (in Sicily) and Hymettus (a mountain near Athens) are classical place names long associated with fragrant flowers and honey; MacDonald invokes them poetically to evoke exceptional floral sources for wine.

27 A pitcher-plant (genera such as *Nepenthes* or *Sarracenia*) is a carnivorous plant whose modified leaves form water-holding 'pitchers'; the passage alludes to such a plant secreting or storing water.

28 Hecate is a goddess from ancient Greek religion and mythology traditionally associated with magic, crossroads, ghosts, and the night; literary usage (as here) often evokes a sinister or witchlike gait or presence.

29 Lilith is a figure from Jewish folklore and some later traditions, variously portrayed as a night demon or a woman who left Adam; accounts and attributes differ across sources and time periods.

30 Eidolon is a Greek-derived word meaning an image, phantom, or apparition; in 19th-century literature it is often used to denote a double, spectral likeness, or projected self.

31 Mr. Raven is a speaking raven character in this novel who is later revealed to be Adam (the biblical first man) within the story's allegorical framework.

32 An archaic form of the word for a large crossbow or bolt-throwing engine used in medieval warfare; here it evokes a fast, missile-like motion rather than naming a modern weapon.

33 An obsolete plural form likely referring to medlars (Mespilus or related fruits), a small pome fruit once commonly eaten in Europe but uncommon in modern diets.

34 An older spelling of 'paean,' meaning a song or shout of triumph or praise; MacDonald uses it to describe the victorious shout or celebratory song.

35 A specific group in the novel: a colony of small children or childlike folk who live apart from the city, build nests in trees, and play a central communal role in the story.

36 A central young woman in the novel who leads and cares for the Little Ones; she is deeply loved by the narrator and her death is a major event in these chapters.

37 A named location in the novel where the narrator takes Lilith; in the narrative it functions as a place of confrontation and attempted moral change for the princess.

38 A veiled woman in the story, later called the 'Mother of Sorrow,' who tends to Lilith and conducts the spiritual and corrective process that the princess must undergo.

39 A personified dark presence in the text that attends and influences the princess, depicted as an overshadowing inner or spiritual power rather than a simple physical character.

40 The children's colloquial name in the book for the large beasts used as mounts and bearers (context shows these are elephants); presented as 'wise CLUMSIES' by the narrator.

41 An older spelling of 'dais,' meaning a raised platform or throne; here it refers to the platform in the palace where the princess sat.

42 A recurring animal character in these chapters — a white leopard that aids and defends the Little Ones, notably rescuing a child and assisting the narrator.

43 A named boy among the Little Ones, noted in the text for his speed and courage; he famously leaps to and rides the white leopardess in the rescue scene.

44 A traditional Christian epithet (Latin: Mater Dolorosa) for the Virgin Mary emphasizing her grief at Jesus' sufferings; in literature it can also denote any compassionate, mourning maternal figure.

45 The biblical first man from Genesis in Judeo-Christian tradition, commonly portrayed as the progenitor of humankind; George MacDonald uses the name to evoke that scriptural character and associated themes.

46 The adjective 'Stygian' alludes to the River Styx of Greek mythology and the underworld, so a 'Stygian lily'