

COD38 - SCENE 4 (RL)

Russ, Paco, Owl Man, Heron Man, and Chip are tending to Heron's injuries and raising questions ...

PACO

I think the major question is: what or who is in the basement? Who or what attacked Heron Man?

RUSS

Yes, yes, but why was it only Heron Man? Why not Owl Man? What do you make of it, Owl?

OWL MAN

The answer lies not in what has happened but in what is about to happen.

Just then, the basement door suddenly opens with a crash as the door slams against the wall. Filling the doorway is a cloud, or a fog, or a dense mist, moving, broiling, undulating, and moving slowly into the room. From the lower part of the cloud, three crows emerge. They begin marching in single file encircling the writers.

HERON MAN

That's what got me ... a murder of crows ... trying to murder me!

OWL MAN

Chip, if you will, my good man, please tell the story of *The Three*

Crows of Dead Mountain.

CHIP

Thinkin' the same thing myself, bird
guy. And this ain't the first time,
mind you.

Before Chip begins, the group of writers moves tightly together, as the crows continue their slow march encircling the circle of authors—well, mostly authors. Chip, though no writer or author, is a storyteller certainly, and that counts, doesn't it?

CHIP (cont'd)

Everyone in these parts has heard the tale, though no one has ever claimed to have been to, let alone even seen, Dead Mountain. Everyone knows it's somewhere about. Everyone and that's me included.

The writers have jostled Chip to the center of their tight circle surrounding him, as the circle itself is being circled by the marching crows.

CHIP (cont'd)

Well, it seems long ago, as night fell, a cloud-like we see here filling the doorway came to town and stopped at the general store as people backed away and huddled together much as we are doing now. Out of the cloud came the three crows and they cawed and cawed and cawed three times. People started shouting "X and Y and Z," with everyone swearing to high heaven that the crows had announced their names ... the

crow's names, not the people's names.

By this time, the crows had completed one trip around the gathering, making no further sounds.

OWL MAN

Stay awake, gentlemen. That's one time around, it's the third time that will determine it.

CHIP

That's right, Owl, when the crows had encircled the crow three times ...

Here Chip began to sneeze uncontrollably and could not seem to stop. Owl Man slapped him hard on the back and the sneezing stopped.

CHIP (cont'd)

...there was a "knowing" among the crowd, definite, palpable, but not quite utterable. I wasn't there, but I've heard tell from those who were that their lives changed, changed in ways no one could have predicted or expected, changes that had nothing to do with anything that one wanted or was hankering after. Total surprise to each and every. As one wag said to me, "Chip, that day, those crows, circling around us three times, that day changed our future."

HERON MAN

But how, Chip? How was the future changed?

CHIP

I asked that myself many times,

Heron. But no one could ever give me an answer. All they ever said was that one day, the crows from Dead Mountain will circle you three times and then you will know.

OWL MAN

The crows have completed two turns.

And the crows kept marching, slow, measured, intentional. No sound, except for the clawed feet hitting the wooden floor.

PACO

Owl, how did you know to ask Chip about Dead Mountain and the three crows?

OWL MAN

Years ago, I dreamed about it, and when we arrived here, and when Chip showed up, I knew from my dream what was coming. I recognized it and was ready, but not quite sure until we were in the basement, and I heard Heron Man attacked.

PACO

So, do you have any idea what the change will be when the crows complete their marching?

Owl Man watched the floor as the Crows neared completion of their third turn. He shook his head up and down as if saying "Yes," or agreeing with something, smiled, and began responding to Paco's question.

OWL MAN

Have no fear, my friends. The crows are seeding our future, and I believe it will have something to do with our modus operandi, our writing, our authoring, and our telling what needs telling. And that includes you, Chip. I can't be sure but that is my best sense. And now, I suggest we close our eyes and welcome whatever the crows have in mind for us as their gift from Dead Mountain, as they complete their fateful marching and return to their cloud.