

# That's So Raven

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A praying mantis mysteriously perched itself on a lime-green pillow I recently grabbed off a shelf at Target. "What the?" was my reaction. Hauntingly motionless, it seemed to tell me without words: "stop with the odious errands, go home, be still."

Have you ever had a surprise insect encounter such as this? An inexplicable dog bond? Repeated day sightings of an owl? Dolphin fascination? Everyone has an animal tale to tell, says world-known animal educator Ted Andrews, author of the classic "Animal Speak."

Ted prowls into Pittsburgh on March 23 for an Animal Speak workshop from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Nuin Center, 5655 Bryant Street, Highland Park. He encourages audiences to spread their wings and recognize what animal encounters mean when we have them—in waking hours or dreams. "They give us clues into what's going on around us and within our lives," Ted, ahem, speaks.

This workshop won't decipher the meaning of Rover's yip. "It's not about animal communication." Rather, Ted offers practical insights into the natural world's inherent symbology and how understanding it can work to our advantage. Hawks caution us to see the big picture. Squirrels teach us preparedness. Ants are masters of order and discipline. And the ass encourages, well, humility. When these creatures show up in our lives, we need more of what they have.

"Anytime I'm confused about anything, I take a walk in the woods and see what animal stands out. This always helps resolve my situation," Ted says. What if he loses his way during contemplation? "Ravens have shown me the right direction out of the woods."