

Screenplay

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

We see the outline of a long haired man in the darkness. Only his eyes are illuminated, as if wearing some strange robber's mask of light.

First shot from the side, and he's looking down pensively. His eyes flick back and forth across the floor, as if pondering the answer to some question.

Second shot from above, and he looks up into the camera, staring -- apparently disturbed and perhaps frightened.

Black screen. Title: The Raven

EXT. MARKET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Narrator walks along street with a prim lady on his arm. They give each other sideways glances, they are smiling; happy. We hear the clip clopping of a horse drawn wagon nearby.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Bird's eye view of Narrator's desk, illuminated by candles and a newly revived fireplace; covered with large, archaic looking books--each open to a certain page. He's thumbing frantically through the one immediately before him.

Close up shots on the open books, displaying strange forbidden rites and secrets relating to revival of the newly dead. We hear his paging and murmuring in the background.

Fade between shots of his face, with eyes beginning to droop, and of turning pages. Then there is silence.

Bird's eye view of desk. We see the Narrator is motionless, his head limp and hanging forward. Fade to black.

INT. STUDY - DAY (DREAM)

Black screen. We hear the churning of a pestle and mortar.

Camera on, close up of pestle and mortar which the Narrator is apparently employing in the creation of some compound. Pan back, a full shot of his kitchen where various basic ingredients are strewn about. He's following a recipe outlined in one of his books.

Close up shots on the labels on the various containers, each faintly reminiscent of the occult.

## INT. BEDROOM - SUNSET (DREAM)

Bird's eye view of the bedroom floor. The bed has been flipped onto its side to make room for the ritual taking place. The Narrator is on his knees, bent over a large circle drawn on the floor, apparently composed of the mixture he had developed over the day. He is pouring out the last from the mortar.

He sits up and we see he has constructed a hexagram made of powder.

## INT. STUDY - NIGHT (DREAM)

Camera shot from behind Narrator as he stares out of his window at the passing of the sun. He holds a knife in his hand and raises it up to look at. Camera shot of his reflection in the knife as he stares into it. The sun sets as he does this. It is time for the ritual to begin.

## INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (DREAM)

Camera follows behind Narrator who ceremoniously leads us into the bedroom, holding a candle in one hand, a knife in the other, and a book nestled beneath that arm. Queue strange trance music like <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SONGcgo7TOk> as we slow motion our way through the aperture, long hair bounces upon shoulders in anticipation, the candle's light illuminates the bedroom before us and dances across the tiny dunes of the hexagram.

Fade through various shots of the Narrator on his knees before the sigil, reading incantations from the book. Music stepped up in tempo.

His reading abruptly stops, closing the book and laying it on the floor. He's staring forward, raising both hands above the middle of the hexagram; one is closed around the knife, the other is open, palm facing upward. Blur hands into foreground, as the knife is applied to the open hand.

Close up on center of hexagram, blood drips into it, filling it. In the reflection we can see the hands above; the knife still employed.

Camera back on Narrator as he withdraws his arms, discarding the knife and wrapping his hand in multiple layers of some cloth he had prepared. Now, ceremoniously he takes the candle and holds it closely over the nearest corner of the hexagram. It ignites.

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Bird's eye view of hexagram as it languidly turns to flame.

An oily red flame emerges and his face is lost to view. We hear him coughing; choking.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT (DREAM)

Camera shot lost in the smoke as we hear him stumbling toward the window in the study to ventilate the apartment. He reaches the window, which he struggles with in the choking air before finally opening.

Camera shot from behind the Narrator as the smoke moves as a single organism from his apartment into the night's sky. He steps forward, looking up into the sky.

Camera shot on the sky, the red smoke has painted a strange picture upon the clouds, abstract and sinister. It's joined by a new soundtrack of a "gentle tapping" apparently emanating from beyond the clouds.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Narrator is back at his desk with his books. Close up on his eyes as they suddenly open, and he raises his head as if startled. The fire has died down and a faint light dances on the floor.

He looks over at his window. The curtains are drawn but move slightly. He gets up and moves promptly to the window where he draws the curtains aside and peers upward out the window. Seeing nothing there he draws the curtains back, picks up a candle and moves to his bedroom where everything is in order: his bed has not been moved; there is no hexagram on the floor. We see a faint relief cross his face, in apparent realization that it was only a dream. But then the "gentle tapping" resumes, apparently emanating from his chamber door.

He looks at his clock and sees it is the witching hour.

NARRATOR

Who on earth could it be at this hour?

More tapping.

NARRATOR

Coming! Why I do apologize, you see it's quite late and you caught me dozing off.

(CONTINUED)

He moves to his door and begins to unlatch the various locks he's installed.

NARRATOR

You see, I could barely hear you knocking, you do it so softly.

He pulls the door open, but is stopped by a last chain lock.

Camera from other side of door. There is utter darkness save the light from the aperture, providing a silhouette of the Narrator. He peers through the aperture, then backs up and shuts the door. We hear him unlatching the chain lock, and then he opens the door completely. His entire body is outlined; his features are lost but we can tell he is peering out into the void toward the camera. He freezes, apparently recalling his dream, maybe thinking it was real after all, and was perhaps successful in recalling her ghost.

NARRATOR

Len ... Lenore?

O.S. VOICE

Lenore!

He steps back in some fright, hesitates, then shuts the door. Black screen.

Camera from within chamber. We see the Narrator with his back against the door, exasperated, looking down, his eyes in shadow.

EXT. MARKET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The couple come to an antiques store. There is a bust of some personage in the display window.

LENORE

Oh look, Allan, how quaint! Let's do go in.

ALLAN

Certainly, my dear.

They enter the store. The shop keeper is busy unloading the contents of some boxes when he notices them.

SHOP KEEPER

My friends, welcome! You've come to the right place. We have a little piece of every corner of the globe here.

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LENORE

What can you tell me about that marble bust in the window there?

SHOP KEEPER

My dear lady, what a keen eye you have! What exquisite taste! And what else should I expect--my, look at you. That is none other than Pallas Athena, recently acquired from our friends in Greece, apparently carved sometime in the mid 16th century. I'm sorry to say by whose hands is unknown, the signature on the bottom has been somewhat effaced.

Lenore and the shop keeper banter on about the myth of Athena and the battles fought for the name of Pallas. Allan (the Narrator) leaves them to it, wondering to the further reaches of the store, finding there a set of ancient looking book cases, each supporting an equally ancient assortment of books, all leather bound. Close up on the titles, one of which is called the Necronomicon. He retrieves it from the shelf and begins to peruse. We see that he is immediately struck by the strangeness and apparent authenticity of the content.

ALLAN

A queer assortment of literature you keep here.

Shop Keeper looks over at Allan and adopts a look of dismay. He hurries over to the book cases.

SHOP KEEPER

There are many strange and unusual things in this world, my friend. As I said, we have a little piece of it all here, even from those mystic biblical lands in the middle east.

Um ... if I may.

Shop Keeper holds out his hands for the book to be given back. Allan glances once more at the pages, raising his eyebrows, then closes the book and hands it to the other man.

Shop Keeper begins to put the book back in its place.

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## SHOP KEEPER

I'm afraid I have a bit of business  
to take care of down the street.  
Perhaps, there is something you'd  
like to purchase before I close up  
the shop for the day?

The Shop Keeper looks over at Lenore who is still admiring the sculpture, and the question is left to linger.

A tapping sound begins, and seems to come from all directions.

## INT. STUDY - NIGHT

We are back before the Narrator, with his back to the door, looking down. The tapping sound continues, this time with an exact locality: the window near his desk.

He goes to the window, pauses, then draws the curtains quickly as if to catch whatever it is unawares. We see his reflection in the glass, and then, as his expression changes to bafflement and shock, point of focus fades to the other side of the glass, and we see a large, "regal" looking raven. Their eyes overlay each other--it's as if they're staring intently at the other. The raven taps on the window with its beak. The Narrator decides that the only thing to do is to open the window, which he does.

The bird flutters its wings and proceeds to step through the portal. Surprised and amused at this the Narrator steps back to give it a wide berth. The bird does not look at him as it hops onto the floor and then from one platform to another until it reaches the bust of Pallas installed over the chamber door.

The Narrator is broken from his transfixed state by a chill wind that flows through the still open window; he moves to shut it. He looks up at the clouds for any remnants of his dream vision--suspicious that he might be dreaming still--and is relieved to see no trace.

## NARRATOR

So that was you, eh?

He fumbles for the cigarette case in his jacket pocket, and looks around the room for a box of Lucifer matches. Close up on warnings on match box. He delicately draws one from the box, strikes it, and lights the cigarette dangling from his mouth--he winces at the odor and swings his arm to put out the match. Close up on the match head, still a faint ember, trailing fine wisps of smoke, slow motion fade into smoke

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trailing from his cigarette, fade into smoke exhaled through his nose.

NARRATOR

Well, do you have a name? What should I call you?

RAVEN

Nevermore.

The Narrator is surprised and amused at its ability to speak. We see the wheels of deduction churning in his mind.

NARRATOR

Cold, eh? I suppose you'll be leaving once it warms up. It's ok, I'll let you out, just ... tap.

RAVEN

Nevermore.

NARRATOR

Your master must have been a happy one.

He pulls a chair before his guest and takes a seat. The bird's shadow grows toward him, reaching quietly across the floor, up the legs of his chair, over the velvet cushioning, over his hand on the armrest ...

INT. STUDY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Camera on the same armrest, but it is daytime in the chamber, and it is someone else's hand, that of a female's, that of Lenore's. She's looking out the window while resting ...

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

The shadow creeps over his body, until only his eyes are illuminated.

NARRATOR

No!

He rises suddenly and begins to run toward the shadow's source, seemingly an infinite distance away--the walls have melted into darkness.

EXT. FOREST FIELD - TWILIGHT

NARRATOR

Lenore?

He hits an obstacle full on and is halted in his tracks. The camera adjusts to the half-light--as his eyes presumably are--and we see that it is a large, feathered object, towering slightly above him. He backs up and finds himself in a field at twilight; before him stands a crow man. The sound of a sword fight emanates faintly from the distance; the angry scream of a woman can be heard.

NARRATOR

Lenore!

He tries to pass and the bird man blocks him.

NARRATOR

Wretch!

EXT. FOREST GLADE - BATTLE SCENE - TWILIGHT

Lenore, dressed and otherwise symbolically equipped as Athena, crosses swords with a crow man. We can hear the Narrator's calls to her, but apparently she cannot.

EXT. FOREST FIELD - TWILIGHT

The Narrator attempts to fight his way to her; each attempt is muted or sidestepped, but he is apparently making progress, evinced by the sound of swords drawing closer.

With each attempt the number of bird men blocking his way increases by one.

EXT. FOREST FIELD / GLADE - BATTLE SCENE - TWILIGHT

Choreography depicting his own struggle is interleaved with Lenore/Athena's ongoing battle.

EXT. FOREST GLADE - BATTLE SCENE - TWILIGHT

He arrives at the moment she slain.

NARRATOR

No!

(CONTINUED)

The bird men fade into the darkness and he is left alone in a spot light with the remains of her memory: the sword, shield, and breastplate of Athena. He lifts and holds the breastplate to his chest; hanging his head as the spotlight shrinks to a pin prick and then evaporates into thin air.

Fin.