

# *MANTIS*

Written by

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MAGNIFICA

FADE IN:

1. INT. CORRIDOR/CASTLE - UNCLEAR DAWN

UNCLEAR DAWN, slightly hazy with white.

The STAIRS are WINDING UP. A fairly narrow space leads upward.

DAY: She, with a white face whose beauty resembles a blade, it is very defined. She goes up the FIRST STEP of the cool stairs. Her voluminous silver and white gown flows in layers at the hem.

The woman climbs hurriedly up the stairs, to the top. The sound of her boot heels is loud: KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK!

Faster and faster, step by step, she climbs up the winding stairs.

KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK

The narrow space is overcome by her small feet in their decorative shoes.

KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK. Step by step, up.

The hem of the dress waves.

Day is already starting to run, winding/twisting/dragging on the stairs, up.

KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK - KNOCK KNOCK

Finally, she reaches the top of the stairs and enters the chilly castle CORRIDOR.

She hurries to the massive door.

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The hem of her dress waves again, impressively.

The woman glides, glides further.

She comes closer to the door, holding her hands far in front of her. She presses with all her strength against the wings and pushes them forward.

The door gives way to the side and opens wide outward.

Day steps inside.

## 2. INT. DAY ROOM/CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Day enters the room and pauses in the middle of it.

Interior: square, cool with dark wooden furniture against the walls. Light, but still a bit hazy.

The white-faced woman draws air into her lungs. She starts moving, goes to the window, then stops, opens it wide, and embraces the perfectly flat horizon:

It is the surface of the sea. It looks like Venice, but it is not. It is an image of Venice in a dream, slightly shrouded in fog.

The image is of a city floating in empty waters, where canals replace streets and steps plunge into the water, fringed with seaweed.

Domes and campaniles are first discovered reflected in the canal, slightly undulating, and then in the sky, equally vibrating, but less tangible because they are always slightly blurred by the glow enveloping them.

Buildings are scratched but never fully defined.

Day whispers under her breath:

DAY  
Things are as they seem...

She continues to observe the landscape outside the window:

The surfaces of the water paths, instead of streets, are undulating with motorboats, barges, slides, and gondolas going in all directions.

MAID enters the room, a figure similar to Day in appearance, as if her younger incarnation. She is holding a wicker basket in her hand.

Day turns away from the window and looks at the maid.

DAY

Time for today's harvest.

The maid approaches with an empty basket. She nods.

MAID

Yes, lady.

3. EXT. PINK CHERRY ORCHARD/CASTLE - PINK DAWN

ORCHARD is filled with shapely, branchy trees.

In the background is the castle.

A high ladder rests against each cherry tree trunk.

Empty baskets are strewn around.

Day walks through the center of the set, carrying her wicker basket in her hand.

A pink dawn FLASHES thanks to the powdery flowers on the fruit trees.

Day, with basket in hand, approaches one of the sprawling trees. She climbs to the top of the ladder again and again, again and again. She stops at the very top and starts picking fruit.

Matte light spreads all around.

At a slight distance, on one of the ladders, the maid happily picks up the cherries. She pours the fruit into her basket. Pink, pastel cherry buds FALL densely FROM THE TREES and fly across the orchard.

ORCHARD'S WIND buzzes around:

ORCHARD'S WIND

(in a male voice)

Shhhh... "Observe, listen, rarely judge, and don't want too much." Shhhhhh...

Another series of pink, pastel cherry buds descends thickly from the trees and spreads across the orchard in the wind.

ORCHARD'S WIND

...because science is the most beautiful of comforters for the afflicted soul...

Day takes a break from work and watches the flying powdery petals with infatuation.