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THE MEPHISTO WALTZ

MAY 5, 1970

Q. M. PRODUCTIONS

*Property of*





"THE MEPHISTO WALTZ"

"THE MEPHISTO WALTZ"

Screenplay by

Ben Maddow

From The Novel by

Fred M. Stewart

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154 CLOSE SHOT - ANOTHER MOUTH

Or so it seems until the CAMERA PULLS back. It is really a grotesque hole torn through the wall of a house, beyond which there is some kind of dark movement: a grove of cypress trees weaving in the wind.

155 INT. RUINED NINETEENTH CENTURY HOUSE- "NIGHT"

In the f.g., Paula stands on the landing of the staircase halfway between the ground floor and the upper floor. She wears an old-fashioned, long, white nightgown, like she did as a child. All that is left of the balustrade are a few ornate pickets. Paula has been listening to the SOUND of the CYPRESSES. They SCRAPE on the torn roof. The PIANO is being PLAYED somewhere in the house.

Paula looks down the staircase -- into a vast, empty living room. The long, yellowed lace curtains billow inward from the broken panes. The room is completely empty of furniture, except for a brass bed, stripped to its mattress; and on the mattress lies a black Labrador dog. He lifts his head to look up at Paula, SNORTING to get the scent.

156 MED. CLOSE SHOT - PAULA

She's been staring down at him, but now she twists around, to look at the stained mirror hung on the wall of the landing. It reflects the upper staircase and the corridor on the second floor, full of vague shadows.

157 MED. SHOT - PAULA

reflected in the mirror. There is a movement beyond her; some sort of floating, moving light, as if someone had cast a shadow across a window. The "MEPHISTO WALTZ" CONTINUES, growing insistently louder.

PAULA

Myles? Is that you?

At this exclamation, the PIANO STOPS. Silence. Then the SOUND of sharp, decisive FEET coming up the staircase below her. Paula turns again. Frightened at what she sees, she backs up against the mirror as if to let someone pass by. SOUND of the FOOTSTEPS CONTINUES.

Now, past Paula and her reflection, climbing to the landing, and then beyond, is Duncan Ely. His skin is pale; the lips are quite bloodless. The blue suit in which he had been buried is moldering in several

Cont.

X



157 Cont.

places, and has great ragged holes in it where the fabric has rotted away. Open-eyed, he nevertheless passes Paula without a sign of recognition.

DUNCAN

(as he reaches the  
second floor)

I'm here. I'm ready to do it.

Paula, by moving away and to one side can see Duncan's back as he crosses the second floor corridor and enters a door, leaving it open.

A drawing thumbtacked to the door flutters in the wind: it's Abby's crayon portrait of her mother.

158

MED. CLOSE SHOT - PAULA

PAULA

(warning)

Abby --!

159

MED. SHOT

As Paula climbs the steps up from the landing, her knees, her arms strain to run, SLOW MOTION. She presses against the weight of the air.

160

MED. SHOT - DUNCAN ELY - IN OPEN DOORWAY

He is holding something to the light: it's the vial with the blue oil. He is trying to see the level of the liquid.

DUNCAN

(to Paula)

Really. I don't want to hurt her.  
She's a bright little thing. But  
I have no choice. He wants it  
done -- right now.

PAULA

Don't. Please don't!

DUNCAN

(turning back  
into the room)

I'm sorry. It's part of the  
bargain.

161

MED. SHOT

CAMERA MOVES in to the mirror, which now reflects the whole inside of the upstairs room which Duncan has just entered.

Cont.



161 Cont.

It is Abby's room in the Laurel Canyon house. She is curled up, asleep, under the patchwork cover which Paula had made for her before she was born. Duncan Ely holds one of Abby's hands, and in his other hand, he holds the open vial.

162 CLOSE SHOT - PAULA

She screams, but there is absolutely no sound.

163 MED. CLOSE SHOT

MOVING WITH THE VIAL as Duncan tilts it, to pour several drops onto Abby's forehead.

ABBY  
(not moving)  
Mommy, --

DIRECT CUT TO:

164 INT. CLARKSON BEDROOM - CLOSE SHOT - PAULA - NIGHT

A child's hand touches her shoulder.

ABBY  
-- Mommy, Mommy--!

Paula awakes.

165 MED. CLOSE SHOT - MYLES

His eyes have been partly open, but he shuts them now.

166 MED. CLOSE TWO SHOT - ABBY AND PAULA

PAULA  
Darling, what's the matter?

ABBY  
I had the most awful dream.

PAULA  
So did I. It's nothing. It's not real. It's not real. It'll go away.  
(lifting her up)  
Darling, you're warm. Maybe we'll take your temperature. All right?

Paula carries Abby out of the room.