

GARDENIA'S PERFUME

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

A board written at the top of the wall of the station displays the name of the village: ESPINA

There is not a soul in the station, except the station guard, an elderly man.

He glances up at the station clock.

INSERT THE CLOCK: IT SHOWS A QUARTER TO TEN.

Suddenly, a whistle is heard. A train appears around the bend.

The train approaches slowly and finally pulls up alongside the platform.

It looks as though no-one is going to get off the train.

Suddenly, at the door of one of the carriages, appears a beautiful woman in her late twenties, GARDENIA.

She steps off the train onto the platform, her suitcase in her hand.

The elderly station guard sniffs the air. He turns round to see where the sweet, intoxicating smell of perfume is coming from.

Gardenia walks along the platform, swinging her hips as though she were hearing music. She passes the elderly station guard, stunning him with her perfume.

She continues walking until she disappears around the corner. The elderly station guard is rooted to the spot.

EXT. THE MAIN STREET OF THE VILLAGE - DAY

Gardenia is walking along the street. As she walks among the people they smell her perfume, stop what they are doing and turn to look at her. The men become quite intoxicated while the women look at her spitefully.

She continues walking gracefully along the street.

A few man are sitting round a table outside a café, talking. They stop as Gardenia passes by. They smell the perfume that impregnates the air. The proprietor comes out to see what is happening. He follows her with his eyes, motionless.

She walks to the church, which is open.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

She goes in. A few people are praying.

An old woman is deep in meditation when she notices a fragrance in the air. She looks at the woman next to her, but the other woman is dozing. Suddenly, she wakes up! The two women look at each other puzzled. They both sniff the air at the same time.

As she enters the church, Gardenia crosses herself. She looks up at the statue of Christ crucified, with an air of compassion and pity.

INSERT THE CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Finally, the other worshippers turn round to see where the fragrance is coming from. They see a stunning figure standing at the main entrance!

The priest emerges from the left side on the altar, sniffing the air. He stops when he sees Gardenia.

Gardenia crosses herself and leaves.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

As she leaves the church, a CROWD is waiting for her outside! She walks elegantly through the crowd, her perfume wafting on the air.

Seconds later, the priest and the worshippers come out of the church. They watch Gardenia as she makes her way along the street.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

Gardenia stops in front of an abandoned house.

She turns to see if she has been followed, but there is nobody around.

She opens her purse and takes out a yellowed envelope, with her name written on it.

INSERT THE ENVELOPE: TO GARDENIA

She opens it and takes out a key which is inside.

She moves towards the main door of the abandoned house, opens it, and goes inside.

Some curious observers appear near the house! Somehow they have been following her.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Gardenia goes in.

A man is behind the counter. He sniffs the air as she enters.

Gardenia picks up a basket and begins shopping.

He gives Gardenia a large smile, but it only lasts for a few seconds.

His wife enters, sniffing the air. She makes it clear that she disapproves of his flirting. The man assumes a serious expression.

Gardenia takes her goods to the counter, pays for them and leaves.

EXT. CAFÉ - DAY

As Gardenia enters the café, the proprietor rushes to serve her.

The women on the other side of the street are watching her.

The proprietor arrives with a cup of coffee.

Seconds later, men begin to arrive at the café.

They are curious about her presence and her beauty.

Now, there is a group of men around her.

Suddenly, the women arrive and the group dissolves. One by one, the men are dragged away by the women.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT

There is a single light coming from the window. Music is playing inside the house. Suddenly, a figure moves into the darkness.

It's a man. He is carrying a bouquet of flowers. He is afraid of being seen. He knocks on the door. It opens and the man goes inside.

Minutes later, another man arrives on his bicycle. He leans it against the wall and knocks on the door. It opens the first man comes out quickly. He glances at the second man, gives him a wry smile and runs off. The second man goes in.

INSERT: HOURS LATER.

Now, there are a number of vehicles in front of the abandoned house: Horses, bicycles and donkeys.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A large group of furious women is walking towards the church.

The priest is waiting for them in front of the main door. They go in. The last one runs and finally enters. The Father closes the door behind them.

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

The sun has set. The village street is empty. It looks like a ghost city from a western movie.

Silence.

Suddenly, a murmuring noise is heard. It is coming from the end of the main street...from the CHURCH!

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The women are leaving the church. They form a group in front of the church. Some are inciting the others.

A young woman arrives brandishing a stick wrapped in fabric. Another woman sets fire to it. One by one, the others do the same.

The priest looks worried about what is happening.

The first woman with the stick leads the group to the abandoned house! They rush furiously towards it, while the priest crosses himself and remains in front of the church.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT

There is a light inside the window of the house. Inside, the same music is playing. Gradually, the sound of the music wafting from the house mingles with the murmuring of the furious crowd.

They appear at the corner.

They march towards the abandoned house.

The music continues to play inside.

The mob approaches.

They stop in front of the abandoned house.

Silence.

The music continues playing and then, seconds later it suddenly stops.

Double silence!

A woman props a stick against the doorway to block it.

The leader of the group throws her flaming torch into the house. It shatters the window.

Silence.

They wait.

The DOORKNOB of the front door is being frantically rattled from the inside, but the door doesn't open!

The fire rises up, covering the window.

Other women begin to throw their torches at the house.

The abandoned house is aflame.

The angry faces of the crowd are illuminated by the yellow-orange glow of the flames.

Now they are leaving, slipping away silently, one by one, into the night. The only sound is the crackling of the red-hot flames.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - MORNING

The abandoned house has now been reduced to a pile of ashes. A thick pall of smoke is rising up from the ruins, filling the sky all around.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF THE VILLAGE - DAY

Now the smoke has covered the entire village.

The people on the street sense something is wrong when they see the gray sky. There is a foul smell on the air.

The woman that led the crowd night before sniffs the vile odor. She puts a scarf over her mouth and looks up at the sky. It is gray!

Smoke continues to pour out of the abandoned house.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The priest, who is praying, smells the odor too. He puts his hand over his face and goes out to see what is happening.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The priest and the worshippers come out. They look at the gray sky. They cover their faces with their handkerchiefs, using them as masks.

The sky above the entire village is covered by the smoke from the abandoned house.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

INSERT: A SUNDAY, TEN YEARS LATER.

The people walking along the street are wearing masks because

of the smell. The odor has continued for ten long years!
They go to church, with sad expressions.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

One by one, the people enter the church.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The church is crowded. The priest is wearing a mask too. He crosses himself and starts the mass.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF THE VILLAGE - DAY

The street is empty. There is nobody around. It is like a ghost city in an American western movie.

Silence.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The priest prepares to give the Communion to the congregation.

The murmur of prayer mingles with the whistle of a train.

The first worshipper to receive the host is a man. He raises his mask to receive it. Suddenly, he catches his breath as he smells something different on the air. He grins.

The priest and the worshippers cannot understand why he has removed his mask and is smiling.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

The train has just arrived. A pretty woman steps out of the carriage. She is about 20 years old.

A young station guard stops to look at her. She is such a graceful young woman.

A guy fixing a board stops what he is doing. He takes off his mask to wipe the perspiration from his brow, and as he does so, he notices a sweet, pleasant smell.

One by one, the people at the station take off their masks as they smell the young woman's perfume.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

All the worshippers remove their masks. The communion service is halted.

The priest just looks the people as they run out the church without their masks. He stands at the altar, motionless,

then, he decides to follow them.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF THE VILLAGE - DAY

The pretty young woman is walking along one side of the street.

THE MURMUR OF A CROWD IS HEARD!

The crowd is walking along the street from the other direction, as though they were about to fight a duel.

The woman approaches them.

They advance towards her!

Silence.

They MEET EACH OTHER!

She stops and looks at them! She gives them an angelic smile.

They look at her, surprised! She looks like GARDENIA! They smell a sweet perfume on the air.

One by one, the men SMILE AT HER!

Then they step aside to let her pass.

She continues walking in the direction of the abandoned house.

The remaining people throw off their masks!

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

She arrives in front of the ruined house.

A board painted with the number of the house is half burned.

INSERT THE BURNED BOARD: 65

She opens her purse and takes out a yellowed letter.

She checks the number on the letter with the board. They are the same.

A tear rolls down her young face. She starts to walk through the ruins.

All she can see is a pile of rubble.

She takes her purse, opens it and takes out a picture, which is inside. She looks at it and another tear drops onto the picture.

INSERT THE PICTURE: GARDENIA IS HOLDING A BEAUTIFUL BABY GIRL IN HER ARMS.

The young woman smiles with satisfaction.

THEN THE CROWD APPEARS AT THE CORNER!

The young woman turns to watch them arriving.

The crowd approaches her carrying sticks, scythes, hammers and other implements.

The same woman that led the mob ten years before is at the front of the group!

The young woman waits for them calmly.

Finally, they arrive in front of the burned house.

The leader approaches the young woman...

The two look each other...

Silence.

Then...The leader offers her a hand to shake...

Silence.

The young woman gives hers in return. They shake hands.

Then, all of them, including the priest, begin to clap enthusiastically.

They start using the tools to work on the place, as another group arrives with wood. They start to build a new house on the place.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

INSERT: DAYS LATER

The train has just arrived. A lot of people are getting out of the carriages. They are tourists. One of them sniffs the air and smells something nice.

One by one, the others do the same.

They smile with satisfaction at being there. They move out of the station to the center of the village. The locals seem happy with the tourists' presence.

A new board is hanging above the platform in the station, showing the new name of the village:

INSERT THE BOARD: GARDENIA

FADE OUT