

Phantasm — Original Story Concept & Synopsis

Background:

The people of the kingdom of Celestia celebrate stories of magic, which eventually evolved into what we know as nature. Every century, they hold a festival called *Phantasm*. The kingdom's subjects gather in the castle to move in congregation to the forest where the eldest tree, which contains the world's magic, lies sleeping. Decorated with fairy lights, flowers, vines, and engraved tables with delicious meats, cheese, freshly baked bread, and wine around the tree. People sing, dance, eat, and children play the game of make-believe, pretending to be pirates and fairies.

When the sun sets, the crowd quiets, and a sigil appears on the forest ground. The people stand in a line and watch as forest animals walk, fly, hop, and slither in succession towards the sigil. The first animal, the biggest of them all, brings forth the Ancient Fire Bowl, and the lottery begins. The rest of the animals bring forward a variety of unusual objects and place them in the bowl. At every celebration, the random tale selected depends on the objects used in the lottery. Each time an object is placed, the face of someone from the crowd would illuminate from the fire, and the winds whisper their name. One by one, different names are called, and once the last person is selected, the lottery concludes. Those selected are called the Dreamers; anyone from any class may be chosen, and it is a dignified honor to be so. From the following day until the thirteenth day, Dreamers must experience the oldest and most venerated tales, no matter the outcome. The Dreamers undergo all the difficulties and turmoil of their appointed characters.

Once the celebration concludes, Celestia holds a masquerade ball at the castle. All the people of the land attend and recognize the Dreamers, who are the special guests of this party. Before the guest enters the castle, a magical mirror will decide which untaken character or creature of the tale best fits their personality. The mirror is said to be imbued with properties that can reflect a person's true self, making it the perfect deciding factor in these matters. The chosen figure that best represents the guest influences the design of the mask. Though this is purely for symbolic reasons, the guests aren't required to experience the lives of the characters they receive. When the clock strikes midnight, everyone moves into the castle garden and removes their masks. At this point, the moon shines brighter than it has in the past century, turning everyone and everything back to normal. The Dreamers regain the identities they held before the celebration, until a new group is selected next *Phantasm*. If a Dreamer died during the ritualistic celebration, the party becomes a funeral to honor their life, forever immortalized in the legacy of *Phantasm*.

Story Synopsis:

The chosen fairy tale for the semicentennial *Phantasm* is Little Red Riding Hood. The Dreamers vary in society, background, and knowledge. The person selected to be Little Red is William Ashford, the Crowned Prince of Celestia, a womanizer who is desirable to the women in the kingdom. The Wolf is Scarlet Grason, the rebellious daughter of the Captains General and best friend to Prince William. The Grandmother is Agatha Ward, an older woman who favors tradition and is close-minded and intolerant of people who are different. She is the Duchess of Foresters, a territory of Celestia, home to the artisans and poets. Finally, the Hunter is Clara Wright, a female artisan, poet, and pacifist who lives in Foresters. She has always refused her father's request to go hunting together as she believes animals don't deserve to be killed for sport. The characters will be forced to endure challenges and act in morally questionable ways, all in the name of completing the story. Their relationships and perspectives on life will change in uncertain ways that may be difficult, if not impossible, to reverse.