

and presses his hands in prayer.

Censing at the altar, a PRIEST in lavish attire recites the office of the Ninth Hour.

The ECHO of his monotone VOICE travels around the colonnade, bouncing off the walls.

THE PRIEST (O.S.)

'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for
the courts of the Lord: my heart and my
flesh crieth out for the living God.'

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE GRAND HOTEL EUROPE/FABERGE SUITE (ST PETERSBURG) -
NIGHT

Shimmering patterns of the wallpaper are reflected in the large windows, framed by sumptuous drapes.

On the bed, Angela lies, asleep.

The door of her Suite opens noiselessly.

A ray of light falls in, accentuating a silhouette of a man
-- Dmitry Voronov.

He walks in and closes the door behind him. The upper half of his face is covered with the black silk mask. In his hand he holds another mask - a sinuous one, studded with Swarovski crystals.

Dmitry Voronov softly approaches the bed and puts the Swarovski mask onto it.

SILENT, he stands, gazing at Angela for a while then reaches out and strokes her hair.

MALE VOICE/DMITRY VORONOV (V.O.)

Amidst the noisy ball, in Hell

Of everyday distress,

I've seen you, but the secret's veil

Was covering your face...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE GRAND HOTEL EUROPE/FABERGE SUITE (ST PETERSBURG) -
DAY - MORNING

Angela opens her eyes.

The sun rays sift through the gap in the drapes.

On the bed lies the sinuous mask studded with Swarovski crystals, the two black ribbons attached to either side of it.

Angela reaches out and takes the mask. The crystals send a rainbow of sparkles across the room.

She gets out of bed, puts the mask on and looks in the mirror, admiring her reflection in it.

A KNOCK on the door. Angela opens it.

In strides Bounour.

BOUNOUR

What's this sparkling on your face?

Angela goes back to the mirror and looks at her reflection.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

A gift...

Bounour goes to the table set for breakfast and plucks an éclair from the plate.

BOUNOUR (CONT'D)

From whom?

ANGELA

A friend...

BOUNOUR

(munching on the éclair)

What friend?

ANGELA

I don't know.

BOUNOUR (CONT'D)

What do you mean?

ANGELA

I mean, he hasn't introduced himself.

BOUNOUR

How did you two meet? In a dream?

ANGELA

He appeared before me after dusk.

BOUNOUR

An imaginary friend?

ANGELA

A real one...

BOUNOUR

Really? What's this thing about the dusk then?

ANGELA

I think he likes the mystery of being incognito. It gives a certain freedom, you know.

BOUNOUR

Non, chérie, I don't.

ANGELA

(excited, swirling across the room)

Imagine, it's like the Ball Masquerades of the medieval court!

Bounour flops into an armchair.

BOUNOUR (CONT'D)

I don't get it.