

# Into the Darkness

I designed my composition to accompany a climactic moment in a fantasy film. The film itself is set in an alternative timeline and would mingle fantasy and gothic conventions drawing on elements of the fairy-tale of 'the little red riding hood'. The characters, semiotic of the ones in the fable themselves include Scar(lett), the Wolf and other creatures in the forest which Scarlett ventures into, namely fairies.

I tried to create an immersive sound world by utilising three contrasting leitmotifs each of which represented the main characters. For example, in bars 1-5 Scar's leitmotif can be heard unaccompanied in the piano part, to represent her isolation, due to the lack of instruments at that moment, and also highlights her dedication for revenge as the gradually building texture portrays her quest into the forest, which is eventually clouded by the magic represented in more dissonant parts entering. In contrast, the Wolf's chromatic and disturbing leitmotif is heard in the low register of the cello and piano in bars 29-36, which again contrasts to the fairies lighter fluttering notes heard in the flute, accompanied by upwards arpeggiated chords to represent their flight in bars 22-26.

I drew a lot of inspiration from Hans Zimmer and his largely chromatic and innovative sounds and tried to encapsulate some of his fantastic descending and arpeggiated sequences from the movie inception, and also some of his more adventurous leitmotifs in his 'Pirates of the Caribbean' main theme, to accentuate my adventure and fairy-tale plot. In this, I recognised his use of fast paced and often syncopated rhythms and tutti textures to highlight dramatic moments. I also looked at his contrasting poignant and harsher, eerier sounds in Dune, of which I took inspiration by using col legno to create and a creepier, more percussive sound. However, I also re-watched and listened to the 'Forbidden Forest' theme in 'Harry Potter' for inspiration for my wolf theme as the chromatic and eerie minims and semibreves created a foreboding atmosphere. I also looked at Joe Hisaishi's Studio Ghibli film compositions such as 'Spirited Away', 'My Neighbour Totoro' and 'Howl's Moving Castle', trying to encompass the lively and magical tones of his sustained extended chords and the piano playing heard in Scar's theme at the start.

I structured my composition to follow the plot of my film. This follows Scarlett - Red Riding Hood - as she travels into the foreboding enchanted forest signified by the syncopated quaver rhythm at bar 13-representing the chaos of all the dying trees on the outskirts. She initially is on a quest to kill the beast who is head of the criminal organisation W.O.L.F., as she assumes that he murdered her parents and left her with an abusive aunt. However, her epiphany in bar 38, prompted by the Wolf's question and use of the nickname 'Scar', leads her to realise the Wolf is an old friend who supported her through her youth as a social pariah and orphan. She is then conflicted about her feelings of what to do which is represented by her theme in counterpoint with the Wolf's in bar 41-45. Here is a representation of the development of a leitmotif similar to bar 13 in the flute when Scar's leitmotif has a descending end and is up the octave. I frequently tried to alter and manipulate the leitmotifs in my piece, like in the ending, to give a sense of familiarity and continuity, but also represent the development and changing situation of each of the characters portrayed.

# Into the Darkness

The camera focuses in on the back of a girl's head as she comes into view. She is wearing a dark red hood. (She is the protagonist Scarlett)

She pulls on the sides of her hood, revealing that she seems worried or is trying to conceal something

The camera pans round and we can see she is holding a basket with some cookies in it. She takes a cookie

The musical score is written for a 4/4 time signature in a key with two flats (B-flat major or D minor). The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Flute:** Remains silent throughout the piece.
- Harp:** Plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics include *mf* > *mp*, *f* > *mf*, and *ff* > *f*.
- Piano:** Features "Scarlett's leitmotif" in the right hand, starting with dynamics *p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *f*, followed by a *subito p* section and a final *f* section. The left hand provides a bass line with *Red.* markings. The piece concludes with a *mf* chord.
- Violin 1:** Plays a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mf*, *f*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and *f*. It includes a *pizz* (pizzicato) marking.
- Violin 2:** Remains silent throughout the piece.
- Viola:** Plays a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mf*, *f*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and *f*. It includes a *divisi.* marking.
- Violoncello:** Remains silent throughout the piece.

As she takes a cookie a dagger is revealed in the basket from where the cookie was

She takes the dagger and plays with it, twirling it around her fingers

She puts the dagger in her pocket and takes a step forward towards a foreboding looking wood

Fl.

Hp.

Pno.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

With her free hand she pulls off her red hood, and we see it is a girl with long brown hair tied in a plat and 3 long claw-shaped scars across her face (wolf scratches)

Whilst walking at a fast pace towards the dark wood she unravels a cloth and we see she is carrying a piece of white chalk

13

Fl. *p* *ff* *mf* *<* *>* *rit.*

Hp. *f* *ff* *fff* *f* *mf* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *ff*

Pno. *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *f* *ff* *subito ff*

Vln. I *p* *mf* *f* *ff* *arco. ff* *mf* *rit.*

Vln. II *nat. p* *f* *ff* *arco. f* *mf*

Vla. *pizz. mp* *f* *ff* *mf* *f*

Vc. *p* *mf* *f* *pizz.*

The screen is almost completely black, as Scarlett stumbles unable to see in the foreboding darkness.

we start to hear whispering as we see large points of wings poking out behind various trees

We see a small glimmer of light. They look like fireflies dancing around the screen illuminating Scarlets face with amber light as they wizz by

**poco accel.**

19

Fl.

Hp.

Pno.

**poco accel.**

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

The camera moves behind the trees, invisible to scarlett and we see a gathering of faires bickering and pointing at Scarlett, some curious and playful, some scared and some threatening. They are dressed in a beautiful array of colours and adorned in petals.

The small lights dance around slightly more frantically towards Scarlett, as she pulls out her knife.

23

The fairies' leitmotif

Fl.

Hp.

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*p* *f* *ff*

*mf* *ff* *subito pp*

*subito ff* *fff* *subito pp*

*pp* *mf* *ff*

*subito p* *mp* *mf* *f* *subito ppp*

*p* *f* *ff*

*ppp* *mp*

*ppp* *mp*

The fairies disperse as  
Scarlett waves her knife.

Feeling scared, Scarlett pushes on to get away from the fairies.  
She senses something else is lurking in the darkness

26

Fl. *ff* *fff* *mp* *ff* **accel.**

Hp. *f* *ff* *f*

Pno. *mf* *ff* *mp* *fff* *mf* *f* *pp* *f* *ff* *mf* *f* *pp* *f* *ff*

Vln. I *arco. pp* *f* *pp* **accel.**

Vln. 2 *pp* *p* *pizz. f* *mf* *col legno. mf*

Vla. *mf pizz. pp*

Vc. *mf* *f* *mf* *div. f* *fff*

The Camera pans down to reveal a young man, roughly the same age as Scarlett with terrifying jet black eyes that are decorated with soot and mud drawings

He Announces himself as Lord of the Wilting Of Lasting Fears (W.O.L.F -an outcast group whose violence and brutality were known throughout the world), and asks of her intentions coming to such a dangerous land.

31

F1.

*mp*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *mp* *subito ff*  $\rightarrow$  *mp*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*  $\leftarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *mp*

Hp.

*mp*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *ff*

Pno.

*f*  $\leftarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *f*  $\leftarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *f*  $\leftarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *mp*

Vln. 1

*mf*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *mf*  $\rightarrow$  *mp*

Vln. 2

*ff*  $\rightarrow$  *mf*  $\rightarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *mf*  $\rightarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *mp*

Vla.

*arco.* *mf* *f* *f* *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *arco.*  $\rightarrow$  *mp*

Vc.

*ff*  $\rightarrow$  *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *mp*

Scarlett is startled and looks afraid yet defiant

She responds 'To slay that beast-the wolf, that murdered my family'

He looks at her intrigued and pulls back her hood to look at her face, revealing the wolf's claw scar across it

There is a look of guilt and confusion in his eyes.

His eyes crinkle in a sad smile of understanding

He backs away with terrified excitement

37

Fl.

*ff* ————— *mp*

Hp.

*mp* *subito ff* *mp* ————— *mf* ————— *f*

Pno.

*fff* ————— *ff* *f* *f* *f* ————— *ff*

Vln. 1

*ff* *mf* ————— *f* *f* ————— *mp*

Vln. 2

*f* *ff* *arco nat.* *mp* ————— *mf*

Vla.

*arco.* *ff* ————— *f* *ff* *mp.* ————— *mf* *>mp* *mp* ————— *mf* ————— *f*

Vc.

*fff* ————— *ff* *mf* ————— *f* *mf* ————— *f* ————— *mf*



One of the fairies grabs a nearby large tree branch and holds it above an unaware Scarlett's head

Scarlett continues to struggle but the fairies are overpowering her

48

Fl.

*f*  $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{3}}$  *ff*      *f*  $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{3}}$  *ff*

Hp.

*mf* ————— *f*      *f*

*f*      *mf* ————— *ff*

Pno.

*mf* ————— *ff*      *mf*      *f* ————— *ff*

*mf*      *ff*

Vln. I

*f* ————— *ff* =      arco *nat.* *subito mp*      *f*

Vln. 2

*f* ————— *ff* =      arco *nat.* *subito mp* ————— *mf*      *f* ————— *ff*

Vla.

*f* ————— *ff* =      arco *nat.* *subito mp* ————— *mf*      *f* ————— *ff*

Vc.

*f* ————— *ff* =      *nat.* arco *subito mp* ————— *mf*      *f* ————— *ff*

The branch falls and hits Scarlett hard on the head

Scarlett falls to the ground

The camera blurs to present her point of view, as we see her fumble about in the leaves for her knife which she dropped in the fight

She just manages to grasp the knife's hilt

A fairy kicks the knife out of her hand, and she falls unconscious (the screen goes black)

51

*rit.*

*fff* *mf* *p*

Fl.

*fff* *mf* *p*

Hp.

*fff* *mf* *p*

*fff* *mf* *p*

Pno.

*fff* *mf* *p* *pp* *mf*

*fff* *mf* *p*

*rit.* *pizz.*

*fff* *mf* *p* *ppp*

Vln. 1

*fff* *mf* *p*

Vln. 2

*fff* *mf* *p*

Vla.

*fff* *mf* *p*

Vc.

*fff* *mf* *p*