



La Sindrome di Stendhal

The Stendhal Syndrome

Dario Argento

ITALY, 1996

120 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Medusa Film**
 Producer: **Dario Argento, Giuseppe Colombo**

Screenplay: **Dario Argento, inspired by Graziella Magherini's book "La Sindrome di Stendhal"**

Cinematographer: **Giuseppe Rotunno**

Editor: **Angelo Nicolini**

Production Designer: **Antonello Geleng**

Music: **Ennio Morricone**

Principal Cast: **Asia Argento, Thomas Kretschmann, Marco Leonardi, Luigi Diberti, Paolo Bonacelli, Julien Lambroschini, John Quentin**

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"I set myself a goal of showing 1,000 different ways of dying, and I'm nearly there!"

– Dario Argento

After a period of fascinating, uneven work, the master of Italian horror has returned to his roots in awesome style. *The Stendhal Syndrome* is simply one of the most innovative, obsessive and genuinely unsettling thrillers since...well, since *Deep Red* and *Suspria* shocked and inspired audiences years ago.

In its audacious, breathtaking opening segments, a woman – played by Asia Argento, Dario's daughter and Italy's biggest young female star – desperately runs through the legendary Uffizi Gallery in Florence. Gradually she becomes transfixed by the paintings on the walls. As she moves from Botticelli's "Primavera" to Caravaggio's "Medusa", a strange sensation takes hold of her. At Bruegel's "The Flight of Icarus", she falls into a hallucinatory trance, literally entering the paintings. Suffering from temporary amnesia, she is helped back to her hotel room by an attractive young man. There she again falls into an art work, a reproduction of Rembrandt's "Nightwatch".

In this painting she learns her true identity; she is Anna Manni, a policewoman assigned to solve a series of grisly sex murders in Rome. Shuttling back to reality, she encounters the man who helped her that morning: he's in her bed, ready to rape her and holding a razor blade in his teeth. As the film progresses, Anna is transformed

physically and emotionally as the rapist shadows every aspect of her life, her lovers and, especially, her dreams. Only a brutal and horrifying confrontation can rid her of this evil.

As visually lush as all his recent work, *The Stendhal Syndrome* features a far more focused script and terrific performances all around. For those unfamiliar with Argento's work, this is an excellent introduction to one of the horror world's great treasures.

– Noah Cowan

Dario Argento was born in Rome, Italy, in 1940. He began his career as a film critic, then moved into screenwriting, working with Bernardo Bertolucci on Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West*. His directorial debut, *The Bird With the Crystal Plumage* (70), won awards for best film and best new director at the Italian Academy Awards; he gained international recognition with 1977's *Suspria*. Filmography: *The Bird With the Crystal Plumage* (70), *Cat o' Nine Tails* (71), *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* (72), *La cinque giornate* (73), *Deep Red* (76), *Suspria* (77), *Inferno* (80), *Tenebrae* (82), *Creepers* (85), *Opera* (87), *Two Evil Eyes* (co-director) (90), *Trauma* (93), *The Stendhal Syndrome* (96).

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