
MAVKA
THE TRUE MYTH
LIVE ACTION FEATURE FILM
(INSPIRED BY UKRAINIAN MYTHS AND LEGENDS)
FILM.UA
GROUP

MAVKA

LOGLINE

Mavka is one of the forest lake's nymphs – creatures with an air of mystique and a dangerous allure. When she meets Lukian, a biology whizz, she has one job: to bring him to her lake, where mermaids and other nymphs lie in wait, ready to capture people's souls. But instead of bringing about Lukian's ruin, Mavka falls in love with him. As her feelings grow stronger, she starts to realize that the mermaids will go to any lengths to keep her on the dark side.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

GENRE: MYSTICISM, FANTASY, LOVE STORY
RUNTIME : 100 MINS
WRITTEN BY YAROSLAV VOITSESHEK
PRODUCED BY IRYNA KOSTYUK & ANNA ELISEEVA
PRODUCTION: FILM.UA GROUP
PRODUCTION PERIOD: 2025
THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2026

CONCEPT VIDEO

PART OF THE UNIVERSE

The feature film MAVKA is part of the Mavka Universe, which started out with the highly successful animated family movie MAVKA. THE FOREST SONG (2023). This huge hit was followed by a dance show for younger audinces (2023) and an animated series for children aged 6 to 10 is in the pipeline. MAVKA live action film is intended for a more mature audience aged 16+. Thus, Mavka Universe offers formats for fans of all ages and preferences.

The image of Mavka shown in the movie is inspired exclusively by the original source, namely Ukrainian myths and legends. According to folk beliefs, mavkas are the souls of once drowned girls, now — forest nymphs whose backs look frightening, with freakish spines that can be seen under the white smocks they wear.

Together with mermaids, they lure men into forest lakes, and drain their lives — and souls — away.

Mavka, the heroine of our film, is a complex character with a certain duality to her. She is whimsical, vengeful, dangerous, and hostile to people. But there is some tenderness and light in her too. Part of her can still remember what it means to be human, to love, to believe.

When she meets Lukian, a warm, genuine guy with a passion for nature and the forest, who falls in love with her, it helps her discover her best self. As a result, she can free herself from the prison of her own demonic nature. Love awakens her true self and makes her whole again.



PART OF THE UNIVERSE

The film is a finely-crafted blend of mysticism, drama, and elements of a thriller, but it also has an easy-to-follow storyline that draws it together as a coherent whole. The visual presentation will be full of modern riffs on ethnic motifs, and will be bursting with sensuality. Since the story is set in an alternative version of the present, the film will feature some cool and contemporary Ukrainian music.

A key reference for the film is the TWILIGHT movie franchise, a sensual love story between a vampire and an ordinary girl.

Our heroine beckons us into a world where darkness meets light, carnal passion meets pure love, and good takes the fight to evil. A new hit in the MAVKA Universe.

SYNOPSIS

Once every four years in the spring, when it's Mermaid Week, mermaids and mavkas, forest nymphs and dangerous mystical creatures, emerge from the forest lake, which is in fact a gateway to the Beyond, to hunt down people with filthy souls. In their minds, all people are good for nothing: they are traitors, liars, murderers, or thieves. Over the course of six days, they capture such people one by one, drag them to the bottom of the lake, and their vital energy turns into energy for the mavkas and mermaids to feed on for the next 4 years. The power accumulated in those six days allows them to perform a ritual on the seventh day of the Mermaid Week — in the Mermaid Night: they drag all the people who happen to be in the forest at that time to the lake, have enchanted them with the sound of the mavkas' singing.

Striking in their non-human beauty, the mermaids rule over the mavkas. They are purely demonic original creatures of the Beyond: they are in fact a high caste in the mystical world of the lake. They keep the mavkas tied to them with invisible threads. Mavkas are the souls of drowned girls from different decades. They have forgotten who they once were and what happened to them, and have therefore become vengeful, cruel tools in the hands of the mermaids. They have beautiful, magical voices that can "bend" people's minds and warp their reality.

Our Mavka goes out hunting for her prey, but on a path through the forest she accidentally falls under the wheels of an SUV. The driver, Lukian, a biology student who is camping in the woods as part of a science expedition, offers to take her to a doctor, but she refuses and stays with him in the camp, exhausted. While Lukian's friends are trying to figure out how to help her, Mavka heals herself, keeping a wary eye on Lukian.

SYNOPSIS

She is convinced he gives off the smell of a woman's tears, so he must have wronged his beloved, and Mavka decides to come back for him later. Lukian indeed does have a complicated relationship with his already ex-girlfriend Khrystyna, his fellow student, who immediately becomes jealous of the weird stranger.

But Mavka and Lukian suddenly find they are falling for each other: Mavka fails to “bend” Lukian’s mind despite making two attempts, and the more they talk, the more Mavka comes to admire him. She marvels at his efforts to protect the forest from poachers. He shows her the glorious beauty of nature, which Mavka had forgotten how to see. She had also forgotten how to do good.

The insidious plans of the mermaids, who feel threatened by the young man, prevent the two of them from becoming truly close. Mavka is also held back by her dark side, that of a forest creature from the Beyond, which still has power over her.
In the end, passion takes a hold of them both, and Mavka is willing to surrender to love. Having already learned about her mystical origins, Lukian is willing to love Mavka as she is.

But the mermaids intervene — and so too does Khrystyna. She turns into a mavka herself and seduces Lukian by playing tricks on his mind. On Mermaid Night, the mermaids hold a great feast in the forest of a kind never seen before, and the folks "invited" find themselves under the sway of the forest’s demonic forces. Mavka learns of Lukian’s “betrayal”, but she does not seek revenge: on the contrary, she feels pain, just as she had done in her past life. She heads to the lake, because she wants to spend the rest of eternity in the Beyond.

But at the bottom of it, she feels someone reach out and touch her. It is Lukian! He manages to get to her and save his beloved, and Mavka gets a second chance to live among people.

In the sequel, the mermaids plan an attempt to bring Mavka back to the forest lake: they revive a former lover from her past life and send him into the human world (where Mavka now lives with Lukian).

THE MOVIE'S WORLD

The movie is set in a fantasy world. It is a version of modern-day Ukraine in which ancient myths about cunning and beautiful mermaids and mavkas are brought thrillingly to life.
Deep in the heart of the Northern Ukraine's forests lays a picturesque lake inhabited by dangerous mystical creatures, mermaids and mavkas. The lake is also a gateway that connects our world to the world of the Beyond.

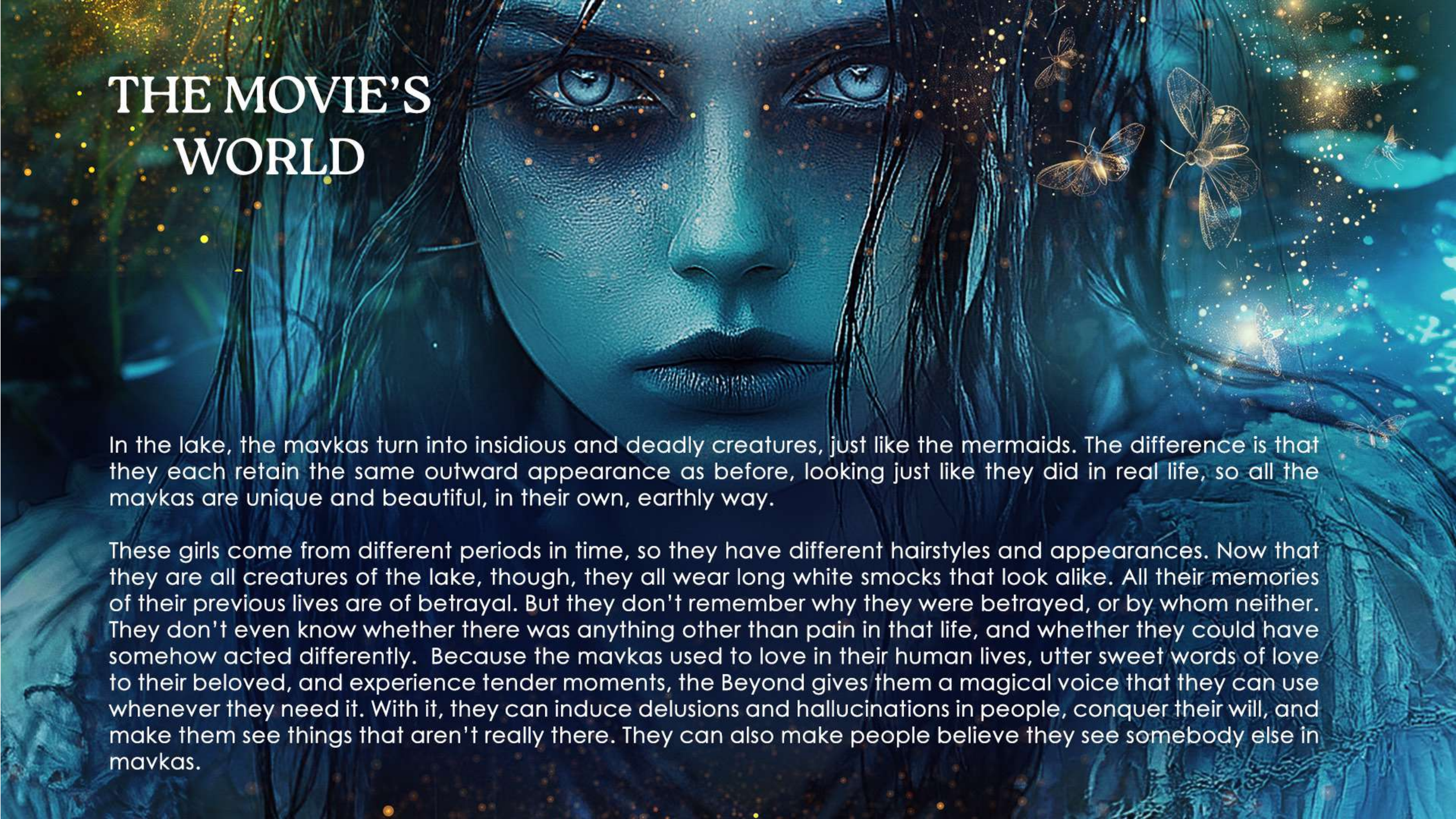
Once every four years, in a leap year, during Mermaid Week, which culminates in Mermaid Night, mavkas and mermaids emerge from the lake and enter the world of humans.
In the human world, mavkas hunt down people. They believe that the vast majority of them have filthy souls. They lure them to the lake to be drowned, and the mermaids fill the lake's plunging depths with the souls and the vital energy that once flowed through these people's veins. This energy accumulates in the lake and allows the mermaids and mavkas to perform a ritual on the final night of Mermaid Week. Full of strength, they can attract all the people who happen to be in the forest to the lake, to meet their doom, so that the nymphs can be powered by their energy for the next 4 years.

THE MOVIE'S WORLD

Mermaids are purely demonic creatures originally born in the Beyond, and truly belong there. Because of this, they hold sway over the lake: they are its mistresses. They never leave it, instead using the mavkas to hunt humans. Mavkas, in contrast, are once human girls who, at some point, took their own lives by drowning, because of their men's infidelity or due to unrequited love. The mermaids can sense when a girl is in desperate straits near the lake and, exploiting her state of mind, they influence her with their evil magic, strengthening her desire to end her life. That is how they lure the poor girls into the Lake of the Beyond.



THE MOVIE'S WORLD



In the lake, the mavkas turn into insidious and deadly creatures, just like the mermaids. The difference is that they each retain the same outward appearance as before, looking just like they did in real life, so all the mavkas are unique and beautiful, in their own, earthly way.

These girls come from different periods in time, so they have different hairstyles and appearances. Now that they are all creatures of the lake, though, they all wear long white smocks that look alike. All their memories of their previous lives are of betrayal. But they don't remember why they were betrayed, or by whom neither. They don't even know whether there was anything other than pain in that life, and whether they could have somehow acted differently. Because the mavkas used to love in their human lives, utter sweet words of love to their beloved, and experience tender moments, the Beyond gives them a magical voice that they can use whenever they need it. With it, they can induce delusions and hallucinations in people, conquer their will, and make them see things that aren't really there. They can also make people believe they see somebody else in mavkas.

THE MOVIE'S WORLD

But what is the mysterious, shimmering spine that can be glimpsed when the mavkas swim in the lake, gleaming from beneath their skin? It looks like a beautiful tattoo of a fern leaf along their backs. In certain cases, this spine can be seen glowing, revealing that the mavka is not actually a human. It is a special, vulnerable spot for these creatures, a focal point for sensitivity and pain. It is through these "backs" that the mavkas are able to sense people.

This luminescent tattoo glows whenever they feel excitement, when they are in danger, or when energy is transferred. It is also a place of pain in their bodies, and the mermaids use it to control them. Each mavka has an invisible thread tied to her, by which the mermaids can influence and control the mavkas at all times, and track their location. The most crucial thing about the spine of a mavka, though, is that it contains a nerve in which her life is stored.

The mermaids can take it away from a mavka by breaking the thread and throwing her into the abyss of the Beyond. But a mavka can also return to the human world if she has the energy to break the connection with the Beyond herself. That is why the mermaids make sure that mavkas give their energy to the lake, rather than storing it up within themselves.

Due to the nature of mermaids and mavkas and the interdependency between them, these beings can toy with human's dark side endlessly, wreaking havoc as they do so. Forbidden passion, tears, betrayal, lies, and evil: they accumulate these things and derive power from them, literally bathing in the lake full of them. They are constantly engaged in the task of transmitting to the Beyond the energy endlessly produced by mortal men and women — for humans never stop doing evil things.

CHARACTERS

MAVKA

A long time ago, in the last century, a beautiful young girl felt such heartbreak and shame at her lover's betrayal that she threw herself into a lake. After she did so, she was transformed into a mystical forest nymph – a mavka. In her human life, she had been a naive, cheerful, kind young lady, but that all changed at the bottom of the lake: for its deep recesses turned out to be the gateway to the Beyond. There, the mermaids made her forget who she had once been! The cruel creatures even made her forget her own name, and what had happened to her. It's not a lot of mavkas that inhabit the Lake of the Beyond. The one who is our protagonist, Mavka, stands out from the rest. It is immediately clear that she is special.

Mavka is now a still beautiful but demonic creature. She spends her time doing what the other mavkas do: acting as servants to the mermaids and exacting revenge for the harm done to her. When she meets a young student named Lukian, however, it changes everything. A series of obstacles prevent Mavka from casting her spell on him. Instead, she falls under a kind of spell herself: Lukian teaches her to see anew the beauty and harmony of the lush forest, to appreciate its rare inhabitants and the play of shadows on the centuries-old trees, to feel the warmth of an embrace, to look into the eyes of her beloved. These blissful moments bring Mavka back to remember of who she really is. She remembers what happened, and recalls the many beautiful things she once had in her life: being a human had not all been pain and suffering. At last, she learns to trust Lukian, and gives herself to him. The mermaids don't let Mavka get away easily, but eventually she manages to break the thread that ties her to them and go back to the human world.

CHARACTERS

THE MERMAIDS

The mermaids are creatures from the Beyond. They live along with mavkas in a lake. The lake is filled with the souls of drowned people, whose energy they have captured, turning it into their own life force. Mermaids are the mistresses of the lake, its superior caste. Strikingly, all the mermaids have the same face and physique, and they even speak in unison or complete each other's sentences, since they are united by the shared consciousness of the Beyond. In effect, they are one single complete organism.

They are alluring, but their beauty is truly "unearthly": their skin is perfect and white as silk, and they are very tall and elongated, with thin waists and long, straight hair decorated with mystical pearls from the lake. Their true nature as inhabitants of the Beyond is betrayed by their shrill, nasty voices, whose jarring sound is in stark contrast to their flawless appearance. That is why, in order to hunt people down, they need the mavkas, who are completely under their control.

CHARACTERS

LUKIAN (20)



Lukian is an intelligent and forward-thinking biology student who is passionate about studying the flora and fauna of his country. Lukian is tall and handsome, with an athletic physique. He doesn't look like a "nerd" at all, but everyone he meets is won over by his passion for exploring nature: people find him impressive and captivating.

Lukian is very engaging, and he is sometimes wilful and prone to taking risks. His imagination is easily sparked by ideas and people. Girls fall for his combination of intelligence, sensuality, tenderness, and strength. When in a relationship, he is genuine, decisive, and proactive, and always seems to get his way. He can be harsh at times though, and he is not afraid to make bold decisions: breaking off a relationship with a girl he doesn't love, for instance, or going to the very depths of hell with no guarantee that he'll be able to return. He knows that he can fall for only an extraordinary woman, and he is willing to surrender himself completely to an extraordinary love.



CHARACTERS

KHRYSTYNA (20)

Khrystyna is a beautiful, stylish biology student and Lukian's ex-girlfriend. She and Lukian dated for a year, but Lukian came to realize that she was too highly-strung, and prone to feelings of jealousy. Khrystyna would turn every unfounded suspicion about Lukian having been unfaithful into an epic outburst. Khrystyna is your typical drama queen, obsessive and maniacal. She is unable to build partnerships and believes everyone owes her something. That was why Lukian broke up with her. This was something that had never happened to Khrystyna before, and it dealt a big blow to her ego. And now she wants Lukian back, at any price...

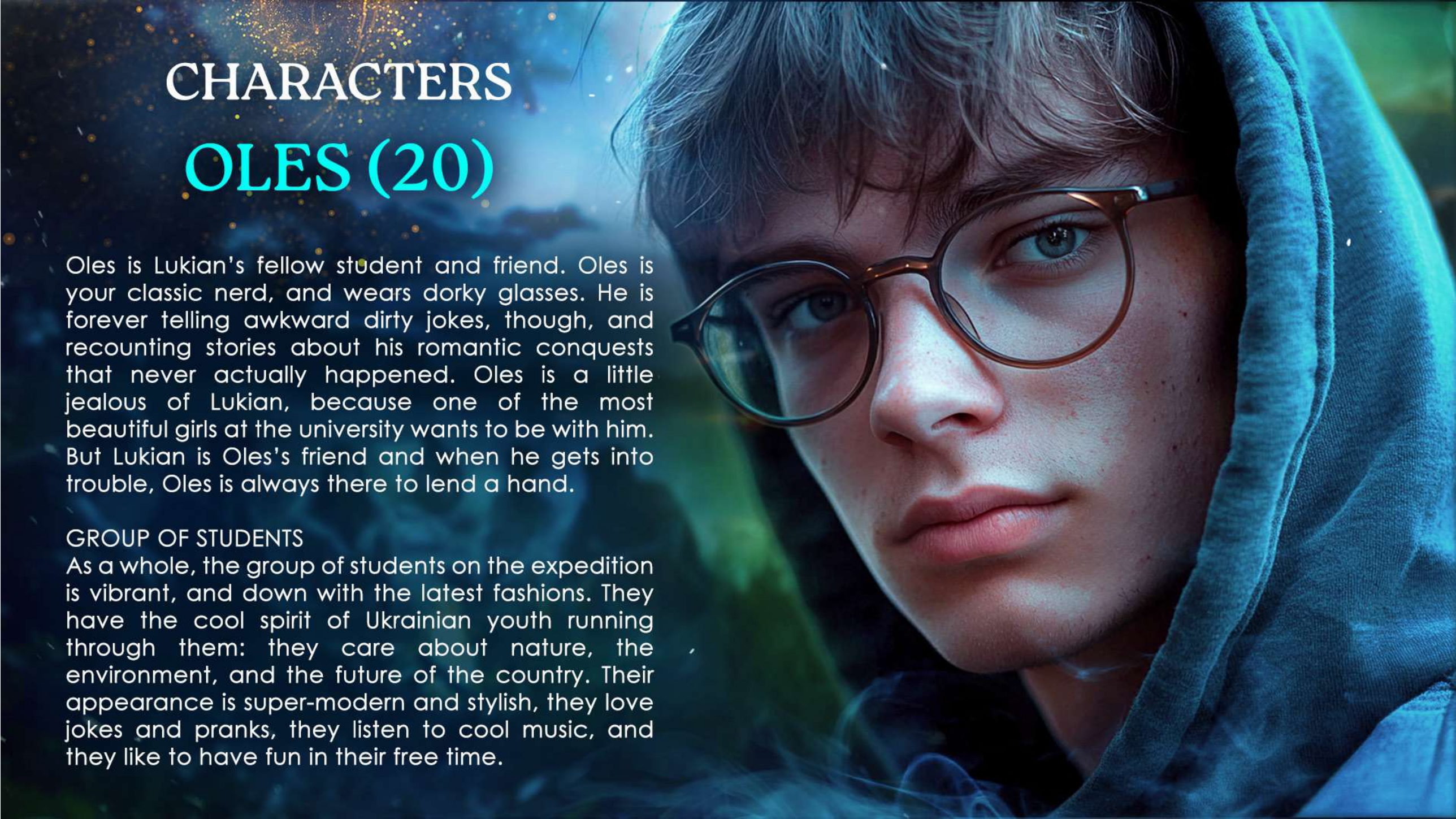
CHARACTERS

OLES (20)

Oles is Lukian's fellow student and friend. Oles is your classic nerd, and wears dorky glasses. He is forever telling awkward dirty jokes, though, and recounting stories about his romantic conquests that never actually happened. Oles is a little jealous of Lukian, because one of the most beautiful girls at the university wants to be with him. But Lukian is Oles's friend and when he gets into trouble, Oles is always there to lend a hand.

GROUP OF STUDENTS

As a whole, the group of students on the expedition is vibrant, and down with the latest fashions. They have the cool spirit of Ukrainian youth running through them: they care about nature, the environment, and the future of the country. Their appearance is super-modern and stylish, they love jokes and pranks, they listen to cool music, and they like to have fun in their free time.



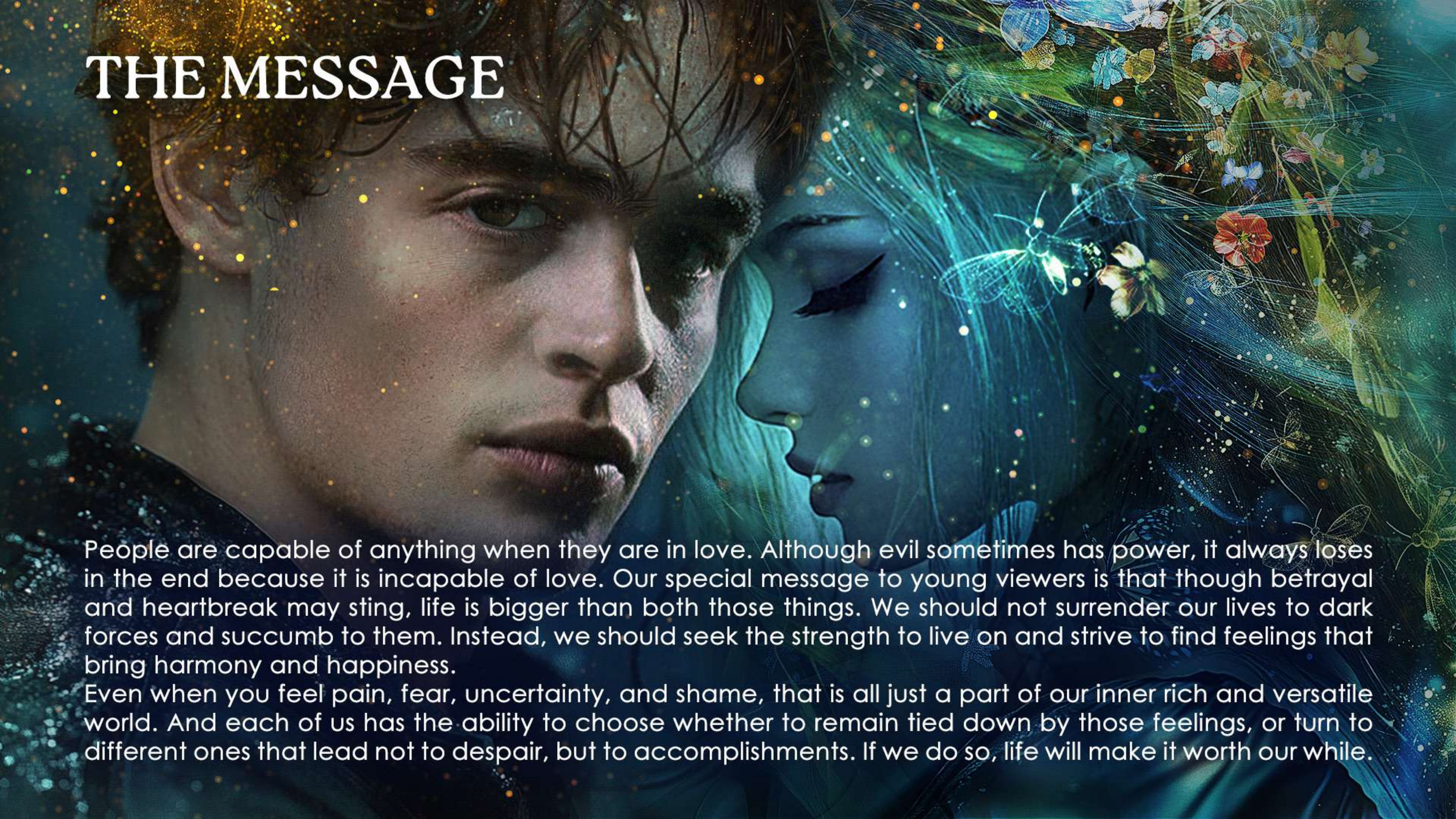
CHARACTERS



THE POACHERS

Kyrylo (30) and Yurko (24) are brothers who love hunting. They are blunt and direct, impudent, and poorly educated. To them, the forest and the natural world are nothing more than a training ground in which to hunt and have fun. They picked this attitude up from their father. They enjoy a thrilling challenge and like to test the limits of what they can get away with. If you were to compare them with the biology students, they are polar opposites.

THE MESSAGE



People are capable of anything when they are in love. Although evil sometimes has power, it always loses in the end because it is incapable of love. Our special message to young viewers is that though betrayal and heartbreak may sting, life is bigger than both those things. We should not surrender our lives to dark forces and succumb to them. Instead, we should seek the strength to live on and strive to find feelings that bring harmony and happiness.

Even when you feel pain, fear, uncertainty, and shame, that is all just a part of our inner rich and versatile world. And each of us has the ability to choose whether to remain tied down by those feelings, or turn to different ones that lead not to despair, but to accomplishments. If we do so, life will make it worth our while.

THE MISSION

We want this movie, MAVKA. THE TRUE MYTH, to be a new cultural phenomenon for Ukrainian audiences, especially among young people. We want young people to have their own local heroes who, on the one hand, stem from Ukraine's history and myths, and, on the other, are part of modern pop culture.

We know from our own experience how important it is for Ukraine to export movies with a modern feel to the widest possible audience abroad, thereby fulfilling the mission of cultural diplomacy. To promote our culture, our iconic characters and stock figures, our heritage, modernized and revitalized, our music, and our contemporary actors. All this works toward securing international recognition of the fact that Ukraine is a creative, modern country with something special to offer the world.



DISTINCTIVE ASPECTS OF THIS MOVIE

- The new characters in our live action film are like whole new worlds: deep, detailed, thoughtful, and designed to capture the imagination, just like the characters in the animated film MAVKA. THE FOREST SONG. In the movie, Mavka will have branded features and attributes that are unique to her: an amber amulet, a glowing fern tattoo along her spine, decorations in her hair, and the ability to change her eye color. In the same way, the entire world will be permeated with these details, which the audience will want to recreate. There is huge potential for L&M campaigns, just like the ones that the animated film provided. The target audience will be different, though. This will constitute the organic development of the Universe and of its scale.

- There is a substantial, relevant demand right now for myths and elements of folk culture to be interpreted anew, especially among younger audiences. We have been encouraging this trend for many years, so we now plan to expand and deepen it, and to spread it around the world.

- Music is at the heart of the movie, helping to build its atmosphere. Since the movie takes place in the present day, there is a great opportunity for cool collaborations, new soundtracks, and hit songs. We plan to wow audiences with the quality and style of the film, with our cinematic visual solutions, and unique special effects.

- We plan to delight the audience with quality, style, cinematic visual solutions, and prodigious special effects of a kind rarely seen in Ukrainian cinema.

MOODBOARD





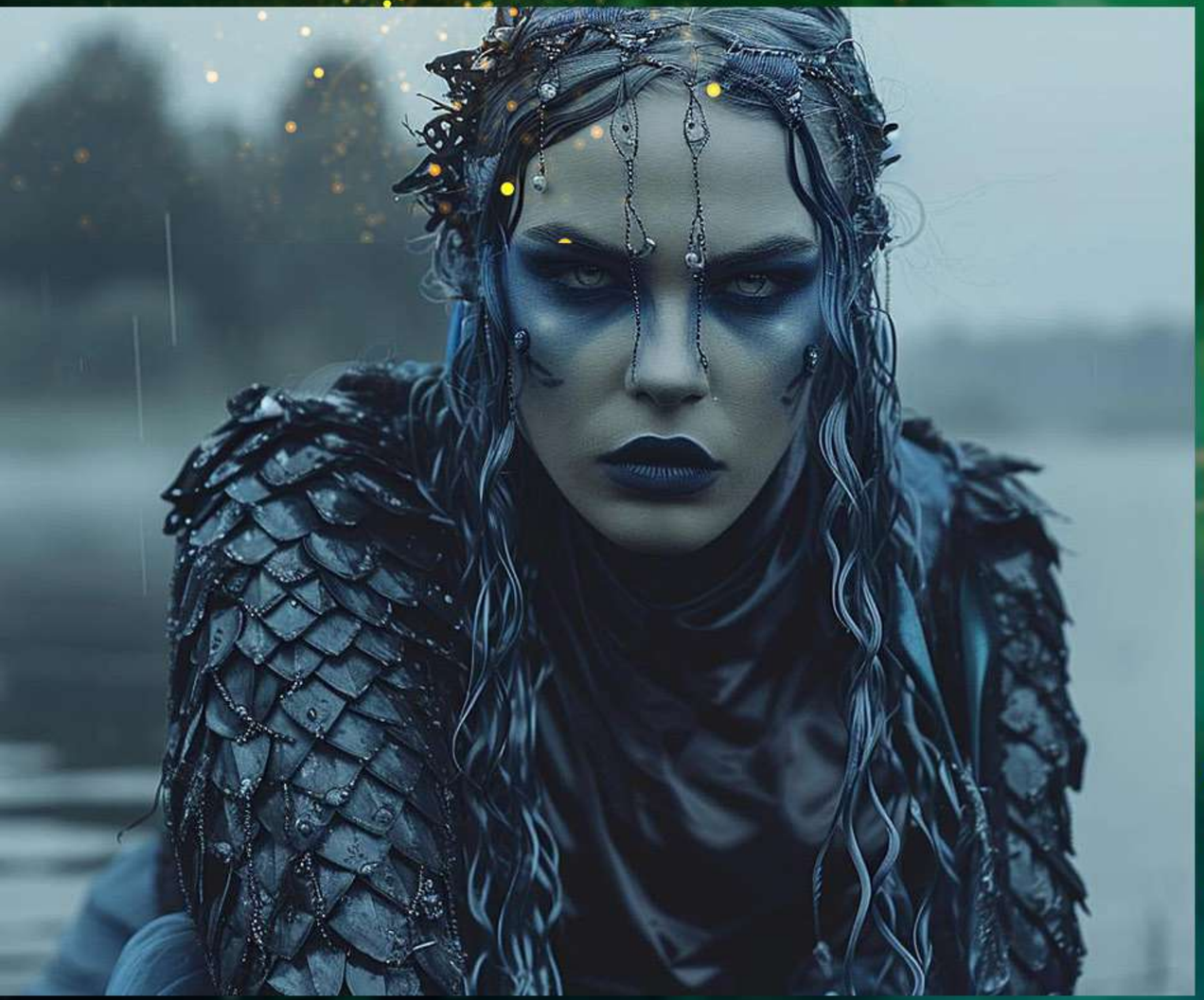
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2026: WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION

- Local theatrical release
- Worldwide release
- Local and worldwide digital release
- Local and worldwide TV release
- A wide licensing and merchandising program, along with collaboration

TEAM

PRODUCERS

IRYNA KOSTYUK



Producer of the most successful Ukrainian comedy film franchise CRAZY WEDDING, the highest grossing Ukrainian film ever MAVKA. THE FOREST SONG, and the top national horror hit THE WITCH. REVENGE.

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ANNA ELISEEVA



Producer of THE BEST WEEKEND comedy, the highest grossing Ukrainian film ever MAVKA. THE FOREST SONG, and the drama series THOSE WHO STAYED.

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SCRIPTWRITER

YAROSLAV VOYTSESHEK



Screenwriter of almost all Ukrainian blockbusters: THE STRONGHOLD, THE RISING HAWK, PULSE, THE STOLLEN PRINCESS, MAVKA. THE FOREST SONG, THE WITCH. REVENGE.

DIRECTOR

KATYA TSARYK



Film and music video director and producer, director of top-rated TV shows and live shows, including the 2020-22 Ukrainian Independence Day show, the legendary show INDEPENDENCE IN OUR DNA. THE COUNTRY'S BIRTHDAY, director of the concert National Legend Myroslav Vantukh, and many others.

DOP

YURIY KOROL



Director of photography of many Ukrainian hit films: MYRNIY-21, ON THE FRONT LINE, NOBLE TRAMPS, CYBORGS, THE RISING HAWK, PULSE, THE STRONGHOLD, ETC.

WE ALSO OFFER UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS WITH THE MOST FAMOUS UKRAINIAN ARTISTS - MUSICIANS, FASHION DESIGNERS, VISUAL ARTISTS, ETC.

ART DIRECTOR

ANNA OSMEKHINA

Creator of looks for mavkas and mermaids



Stylist, fashion editor, costume designer. Anna is the founder of the TTSWTRS brand, which launched in 2013 and has already become a global phenomenon. TTSWTRS clothes are worn by a host of celebrities: Emily Ratajkowski, Tina Kunakey, Nicki Minaj, Grimes, Winnie Harlow, Kourtney Kardashian, Kristen McMenamy, Tommy Cash, Róisín Murphy, Sita Abellán, and many others.

FILM ARTIST:

MAKSYM NIMENKO



Painter and graphic artist, known for his book illustrations and numerous exhibitions. He directed the films STOP-ZEMLIA, COFFEE WITH CARDAMOM, and an episode of the anthology series THOSE WHO STAYED entitled “Star”.

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