

A woman in a long, dark dress stands with her back to the camera, looking out over a dark, misty forest. The sky is filled with a vibrant green aurora borealis, which is the primary light source in the scene. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and ominous.

When the Aurora Borealis is gone, the darkness will kill.

Martha's Tale

A Feature Film

Logline

Martha's story is a fantasy-horror drama that takes place in an imaginary and rich small village in the North sometime at the end of the 18th century. Martha must navigate a deadly prophecy and make a terrible sacrifice, or the once-beautiful village will descend into chaos and bloodshed.

Martha

Martha is in love. She has a secret relationship with the one we learn to know as the witch - Nina. The lovers have planned for a future together but their plan is not final and Martha isn't ready for the events when they start to unfold violently.

Martha is married and has a child, a small toddler. Martha's father is the Baron, the one who has and uses the power in the village.

The ultimate sacrifice is for her to bear.

Sacrifice is the eventual and final expression of love.



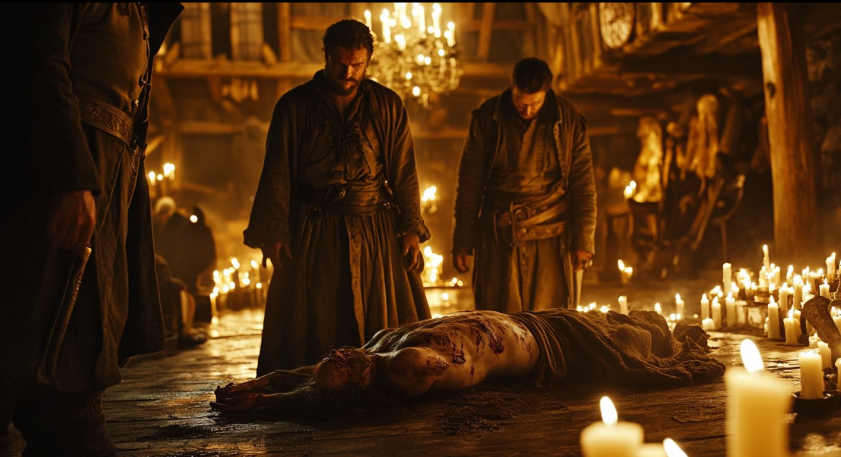
The World of Martha's Village

The story is set to a pseudo Karelian village in 18th century. The fashion resembles victorian era, combined with more authentic northern styles and fur coats. The architecture is a combination of rich Karelian decorative culture and viking age dining halls and victorian bedrooms.

The Village's signature are the Aurora Borealis, the northern lights that always and endlessly glow on winter nights. It is in the core of the tradition of the villagers to respect the beauty and magical light pouring from the sky.

The village culture is victorian era brought closer to modern day with some magical elements. Women's share of the power is a theme underlined through this selection.

"You have forgotten..."



Synopsis

In an isolated village bathed in the eerie glow of the northern lights, **Martha** (25) and her husband **Alvin** (35) appear to live a quiet life. But the village is bound by ancient rituals: to keep the northern lights burning, sacrifices must be made. As winter tightens its grip and the lights fade, Martha finds herself drawn deeper into the village's dark secrets, led by the mysterious outcast **Nina** (38).

Nina, a woman shunned by the village and suffering from a mystical burden, carries the memories of a hundred-year-old sacrifice—one that is about to repeat itself. She reveals to Martha that the village's beauty and light have always required blood, including the murder of three men. The two women share a secret, forbidden love, and Nina's twisted guidance begins to awaken Martha's own power and ambition.

As bodies begin to pile up and fear grips the village, Martha's moral compass fractures. Torn between her loyalty to Nina and her horror at the rising death toll—including Alvin's gruesome murder—Martha begins to understand the true cost of survival in this harsh world. Yet, the deeper she goes, the more she realizes that she is as much a part of the ritual as Nina.

Martha and Nina's love is shadowed by secrets. Nina has not been entirely truthful: the ritual is not just about maintaining the lights—it is also Nina's only chance to free herself from the curse that binds her. As Martha grows more entangled in the violence, she faces a choice: to side with Nina and become complicit in the ultimate sacrifice, or to rebel against the darkness that threatens to consume them both.

The climax arrives in a final confrontation as Martha, bearing the weight of her father's legacy, must decide whether to wield the power that comes with sacrifice or to seek another path. But in the village, where blood has always paid for light, can any other path truly exist?

The film's tone blends stark, haunting beauty with creeping horror. **Martha's journey** is one of transformation—from a quiet, obedient woman to a figure of power who must face her darkest fears. In the end, as the aurora borealis flickers back to life, Martha is left questioning whether her actions have saved her village or merely doomed it to another cycle of blood and light.



"I rode through the dark, and nothing hurt me"





"If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge".

Writer's word

Martha's Tale explores themes of sacrifice, power, free will, and aesthetics. I'm fascinated by victimhood, particularly how sacrifice plays a central role in the human experience. In my story, I've left the supernatural entity demanding sacrifices undefined. **Nina**, the witch, acts as a conduit, like a railway conductor enforcing payment without benefiting directly. Sacrifice is non-negotiable.

The village clings to the northern lights as part of its identity, preserving its past out of fear that change will bring ruin. This extends to aesthetics—the lights must stay because they always have. But the question at the heart of the film is, why don't they choose otherwise? Why keep sacrificing for something that might not be necessary?

Modern philosophy questions free will, and that idea inspired me. Can we see alternatives to what we know? This tension fuels the characters' choices.

Martha's story was born from nightmares. I gave myself dramaturgical tasks during sleepless nights, shaping a world of fantasy. Initially set in a southern European village, I later found inspiration in the north—my own home, where myths haunt the darkness. I embraced the fantasy genre, which allowed me to play with aesthetics freely, drawing inspiration from *Bridgerton* and *The Village* by Shyamalan. The visually stunning *Poor Things* by Yorgos Lanthimos influenced me to push the boundaries of Martha's world.

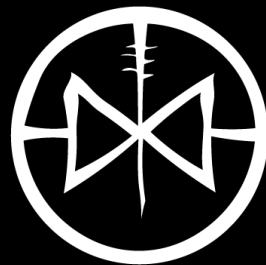
The darkness of the **polar night (kaamos)** offers a striking visual starting point, and I aim to create a beautiful, haunting film.

I like to describe this project as if *Bridgerton* was horror, directed by **Greta Gerwig and Sofia Coppola**, set in a mythical northern world.

Themes of collective memory also run through the film, reminding us of historical atrocities, as history seems to repeat itself, despite our efforts to remember.



Script
Antti Kairakari



WHATEVERGROUP