

**Episode One**

**The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi**

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Based on the novel by Jacqueline Park

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"The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi"

Episode One

Opening Credits

Fade In:

1 EXT. OSTIA PORT -- NIGHT 1

CLANG, CLANG, CLANG of the ship's bell as the four-masted galley *Triton* eases out of the port in a heavy fog. A figure stands at the stern, an eery silhouette looking back at the port to...

Two people standing on the quay enshrouded in fog. One is DANILO DEL MEDIGO, a ten-year old boy, sorrowfully watching the ship.

The fog clears for a moment to reveal the second person: MATURE GRAZIA DEI ROSSI DEL MEDIGO, aged 51, a well-dressed woman observing Danilo with concern.

The ship and the silhouette on the stern move away, gradually swallowed by the darkness.

Mature Grazia turns to leave, but Danilo stays, staring out at the black mist that has taken the ship.

MATURE GRAZIA

Danilo...

He hesitates and then finally turns away and walks with the woman to a fancy carriage with a liveried driver. She climbs into the coach.

Danilo follows, hesitating to take one last look at the sea.

2 EXT. VIA APPIA ANTICA -- NIGHT 2

The coach's ironbound wheels CLATTER along the road towards the city.

3 INT. COACH -- NIGHT 3

Danilo slumps in his seat, upset.

Mature Grazia studies him with concern.

- 4 EXT. VIA APPIA ANTICA NEAR ROMA -- NIGHT - NIGHT 4  
The coach travels through the night towards the city of Roma in the distance.
- 5 EXT. PONTE DEI QUATTRO CAPI, ROMA - NIGHT 5  
The coach rattles across the ancient bridge over the Tiber River.
- 6 EXT. PORTA SAO PAULO, ROMA - NIGHT 6  
The coach clammers along the roadway and through the huge arch and under the massive twin battlements of the Porta Sao Paulo into the city proper.
- 7 EXT. VIA GUILIA, ROMA - NIGHT 7  
The coach continues along the cobblestoned street, past homes and under archways.
- 8 EXT. OUTER GATES, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA -- NIGHT 8  
The coach clatters up to the gates and stops in front of one of the largest, most magnificent palazzos in Roma. The huge door slowly swings open.  
The coach eases through the gates, into the grounds of the palazzo.
- 9 EXT. SQUARE, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - NIGHT 9  
The carriage crosses the square and pulls up in front of the palazzo entrance.  
The Driver climbs down and assists Mature Grazia and Danilo out of the carriage with their luggage and up the stairs to the doorway.
- 10 INT. RECEPTION CHAMBER, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA -- NIGHT 10  
Mature Grazia and Danilo, both carrying travel cases, enter the long reception chamber leading to a broad staircase.  
A person appears at the very far end coming down the staircase, carrying a torch and dressed in a servant's uniform:

10 CONTINUED:

10

ALESSANDRO, Isabella's major domo. He approaches the pair and bows to them.

ALESSANDRO

I will conduct you to your rooms,  
signora.

He takes their bags and motions for them to proceed. Mature Grazia, with Danilo just behind and followed by Alessandro, moves through the long chamber.

Lit only by two torches, the pair can catch glimpses in the flickering light of the burnished marble patterns on the floor, the rows of twenty-foot tall Corinthian columns coated in gold gilt lining both sides of the room, the life-sized statues posed on pedestals along each wall, and the massive vaulted ceiling swirling with painted figures. (*This describes the Reception Chamber today, which in the 1600s was turned into a jewel of the Roman Baroque and no longer appears as it did in the Renaissance of the 1520s.*)

They reach the far end and proceed up the very wide staircase.

At the top of the staircase, another figure with a torch appears: COSTANZA, Isabella's maid. She bows to Mature Grazia and Danilo.

COSTANZA

Welcome, Lady Grazia.

She takes Mature Grazia's bag from Alessandro and moves down the corridor.

Mature Grazia and Danilo follow.

ALESSANDRO

This way, young sir.

Mature Grazia and Danilo stop. Danilo looks to Mature Grazia.

DANILO

Mama?

Mature Grazia looks at him: what can she say?

Danilo turns away and heads after Alessandro.

Mature Grazia observes wistfully as...

Danilo and Alessandro, lit by the torch, move away into the darkened cavern of the palace.

10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

Mature Grazia finally turns and moves towards Costanza, waiting rather impatiently at a doorway along the corridor. Grazia passes frescoes and sculptures barely visible in the flickering torchlight.

11 INT. MATURE GRAZIA'S ROOM, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA -- NIGHT

11

Costanza places the luggage at the foot of a bed in a very large and very grand room with paintings and lush furnishings.

COSTANZA

It is called the room of the fishes.

See?

(indicates the ceiling)

Mature Grazia looks up.

The ceiling has schools of painted fish swimming on it. (*Note: I assume that this is an actual room in the Palazzo but could find no reference to it.*)

COSTANZA (CONT'D)

Madama chose it for you because you were born under the sign of Pisces.

Mature Grazia, distracted, moves to the window.

MATURE GRAZIA

How kind.

She look out the window.

Her POV of the open courtyard and the rooms of the opposite wing. A torch light can be seen moving from room to room, until it stops at a distant room.

Mature Grazia observes wistfully.

COSTANZA

Good night, Lady Grazia.

Costanza leaves abruptly, closing the door behind her.

MATURE GRAZIA

(staring out the window)

Good night.

Mature Grazia turns into the room, lit by a single candle on a table.

12 INT. MATURE GRAZIA'S ROOM, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA -- MOMENTS LATER 12

CLOSE UP on a quill dipping into a well of ink and moving to a sheet of parchment, where it SCRATCHES out words.

WIDE on Mature Grazia sitting at the table writing as OVER:

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

I dedicate this libri segreti, this secret book, to my son, Danilo, to be read when he crosses the threshold of manhood. In it, I will tell all so that you may know whence you came and why you have been torn from the father you love dearly and brought to live in this great palazzo.

DISSOLVE TO:

13 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE NEAR MANTOVA -- DAY 13

Title over in handwritten Renaissance script:

Mantova

1487

Three figures gallop on horses across the early spring countryside - a man on a black Araby stallion (DANIELE DEI ROSSI - PAPA - aged 31) and two children on ponies (CHILD JEHIEL, a boy aged 11, and CHILD GRAZIA, a girl aged 12). They are dressed affluently and appear happy and healthy. They gallop past lakes reflecting the distant hills of northern Italy.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

I will begin on Holy Thursday in the Christian year 1487. Eastertide for Christians, Passover for us Jews. A perilous time for all.

A fourth rider, a young man, approaches them - the Marchese, FRANCESCO GONZAGA, age 21. The three riders pull up and stop. Papa and Francesco move off slightly for a private conversation.

Child Grazia and Child Jehiel observe.

13 CONTINUED:

13

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Until that day, I had lived the twelve  
 years of my life in a child's  
 paradise. We lived in Mantova and  
 our family had permission to ride  
 the Gonzaga family horses and the  
 Marchese himself even stopped to  
 speak with Papa.

Francesco talks in serious tones. Papa listens alarmed.

Child Grazia observes in concern.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 But after that day, nothing was ever  
 the same again.

14 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE MANTOVA - AFTERNOON

14

The three riders gallop at full speed across the countryside,  
 past the lakes, and towards the skyline of Mantova, with the  
 bell tower and dome of the Basilica of Sant'Andrea looming  
 over the red-hued brick and terra cotta tiled buildings.

15 EXT. STREETS OF MANTOVA - AFTERNOON

15

Papa leads Child Grazia and Child Jehiel as their horses canter  
 through the streets.

16 EXT. PIAZZA DELLE ERBE, MANTOVA -- LATER

16

Papa leads Child Grazia and Child Jehiel, on their steeds,  
 into the large piazza dominated by a clock tower and the  
 Rotonda di San Lorenzo. They all pull up short at...

A large crowd listening to a friar, BERNARDINO DA FELTRE,  
 preaching under the clock tower. His preaching echoes across  
 the piazza.

BERNARDINO DA FELTRE  
 We must, in the name of the Almighty,  
 expel these usurers who exploit  
 Christians with their evil money  
 lending. They make themselves rich  
 while at the time they rob all of us  
 and keep us poor.

Papa leads Child Grazia and Child Jehiel slowly around the  
 crowd towards the other side of the piazza.

16 CONTINUED:

16

Suddenly, three bare-footed FRANCISCAN BROTHERS bar their way.

FRANCISCAN BROTHERS  
Infidels! Usurers! Death to Jews!

The three riders pull their horses up short.

Child Grazia is taken aback in shock. She notices...

OTHER PEOPLE in the piazza beginning to move in on them.

FRANCISCAN BROTHERS (CONT'D)  
You feed on human blood. You're  
leeches! You corrupt the souls of  
Christians!

Papa nods to them courteously and turns his stallion around.

PAPA  
(to Child Grazia and  
Child Jehiel)  
This way.

CHILD GRAZIA  
But Papa... !

PAPA  
Now!

They head back, away from the Brothers and the piazza.

17 EXT. LANE WAY, MANTOVA -- MOMENTS LATER

17

The three riders canter down the lane way, all alarmed.

18 EXT. DEI ROSSI HOUSE, MANTOVA - AFTERNOON

18

The three riders bring their horses to a stop outside a large, affluent home, a *mezuzah* hung at eye level the door. They dismount as a SERVANT emerges from the house to take charge of the horses.

19 INT. DEI ROSSI HOUSE, MANTOVA -- LATER

19

Papa, Child Grazia, and Child Jehiel enter the affluent house. Child Grazia runs to MAMA (Rachel), 28 and 8-months pregnant.

CHILD GRAZIA  
Mama!

19 CONTINUED:

19

She clings to her mother in alarm, followed by Child Jehiel.

MAMA

What is it, my darlings? Did you  
enjoy your ride?

She looks to...

Papa, standing by the door, a look of fear on his face.

20 INT. DINING ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, MANTOVA -- EVENING

20

A bustle of activity as the large extended family, various  
SERVANTS and SLAVES - including ZAIRA, the children's nurse;  
MOSES, the *shohet* (kosher butcher) and his wife, MONNA MATILDA;  
ROV ISAAC, the old rabbi; DANIA, the tutor's wife; CECILIA, a  
young servant girl; CATERUCCIA, a Tartar slave girl - scurry  
about packing up household valuables and clothes. Dania and  
Cecilia SOB and WEEP.

Child Grazia wraps jewels and silver, including a *menorah* and  
*seder* plates, with Zaira and a pale, distraught Mama. Child  
Grazia observes the fear and anger among the others while  
Papa tries to calm them.

MONNA MATILDA

We can't trust them.

PAPA

Stanch your tears and make haste.  
Marchese Francesco guarantees our  
safety.

ROV ISAAC

Christians have broken their promises  
in the past.

Cateruccia scowls in agreement.

PAPA

You forget, Rov Isaac. The Gonzaga  
fortune is invested in our bank.  
They protect us to protect their own  
fortune.

MONNA MATILDA

Then why would he, the Marchese,  
allow this friar, this Fra Bernardino,  
to speak such evil, such hatred  
against us?

20 CONTINUED:

20

PAPA

Please, Monna Matilda, he is providing us with safe escort to the boat...

ROV ISAAC

They can never be trusted.

PAPA

Rov Isaac, please. Marchese Gonzaga is a man of...

DAVIDE, the tutor suddenly hurries in.

DAVIDE

They are here. Two carts. Ten armed men.

Papa looks to them all: "What did I tell you?"

Child Grazia smiles to herself, pleased with Papa.

21 EXT. PORT OF MANTOVA -- NIGHT

21

Two carts filled with the 18 dei Rossi family members and escorted by ten men on horseback clatter up to the squalor of the port. LAYABOUTS and PROSTITUTES, wearing yellow badges, huddle on the steps leading down to the River Mincio and disdainfully scrutinize the carts.

PAPA

Wait here.

Papa jumps down from the cart and moves to an inn at the top of the stair.

Child Grazia and Child Jehiel snuggle up to Mama, shivering with cold. Zaira sits next to them, adding her own warmth.

Davide tries to comfort his still-sobbing wife, Dania.

Child Grazia spots...

A golden barge among the crafts.

CHILD GRAZIA

Mama, the Marchese's barge. Just as Papa promised.

Rov Isaac GRUNTS in a scowl.

Papa returns, followed by a drunken BARGE CAPTAIN.

21 CONTINUED:

21

BARGE CAPTAIN

This one here.

He points an old, worn barge without any canopy.

Mama SWOONS in alarm. Child Jehiel CRIES. The others all react with dread, MURMURING and WHINING.

Papa pulls a thick rope of gold from his money belt and holds it out to the Captain. The Captain GRUNTS in acceptance.

22 EXT. BARGE ON THE MINCIO RIVER -- NIGHT

22

The barge eases down the river through the murky, cold night.

All are huddled together for warmth.

Child Grazia clings to her mother who appears weak. Mama GROANS, trying to quell the pain. Child Grazia holds her.

Everyone looks to her in alarm.

Papa, concerned, moves to the Barge Captain.

Child Grazia watches as...

Papa issues orders to the Captain who GRUNTS in assent.

Papa returns to Mama and Child Grazia.

PAPA

We'll put into Borgoforte. We'll move on later. When you can.

Mama, too weak to say anything, nods in thanks.

23 EXT. PORT OF BORGOFORTE -- NIGHT

23

The barge eases up to a dock lit by torches. The Captain hurls the landing rope onto the dock.

Mama immediately pulls herself up unsteadily, then GROANS with the sharp pain of a contraction. Zaira helps her.

Child Grazia and Papa move to steady her when suddenly...

DOCKMASTER (O.S.)

Who the hell are you?

They look up to see a giant figure on the dock.

## CAPTAIN

Signore, I'm the captain of this craft. And the master here... The Jew insisted I put in here. But as I say, I am simply a sailor for hire and I had no...

## DOCKMASTER

Where is this Jew? Is he afraid to reveal the horn that grows out of his head?

Child Grazia is taken aback and turns to see...

Papa, moving into the light, removing his *berretta*, and bowing low.

## PAPA

I am the Jew, dockmaster. Daniele dei Rossi traveling under safe conduct from the Marchese of Mantova with a wife about to give birth at any moment and...

## DOCKMASTER

Not here she don't.

Papa passes him a scrolled document.

## PAPA

This is our safe conduct pass, issued by...

The Dockmaster tosses the document back at him.

## DOCKMASTER

We welcome no Jews in our town on the eve of Easter day.

## PAPA

But my wife, as I said, is very...

## DOCKMASTER

Try the dockmaster at Governolo. He is willing to soil his hands with Jewish gold. But here, at Borgoforte, we fear God and love Christ.

He glowers down at them.

Papa stares back, containing his anger. Mama GROANS, her face contorted with pain and terror. Zaira comforts her.

23 CONTINUED: (2) 23

Child Grazia clings to her and looks to Papa.

Papa turns to the Captain very calmly.

PAPA

There are Jews at Governolo. They  
will take us in.

Mama puts on a brave face for him.

He stares back at her in deep concern.

24 EXT. BARGE ON THE RIVER MINCIO - DAWN 24

The barge makes its way down the river as the sun rises.

25 EXT. PORT OF GOVERNOLO - MORNING 25

The Captain secures the barge to the dock while Child Grazia sits with her barely-conscious Mama. The others huddle around in exhaustion and despair. Suddenly...

MAMA

Ohhhhh!

Child Grazia looks at her in alarm but then sees...

Papa emerging from the dark on shore.

PAPA

There is an inn. Not luxurious, but  
habitable. We can stay there.

Everyone is relieved. They help Mama up.

26 INT. THE OX INN, GOVERNOLO - MORNING 26

The weary group straggle into the inn, helping the MOANING Mama who is very unsteady. They look up in amazement at...

A filthy, run-down inn. Papa counts coins into the INNKEEPER's hand.

INNKEEPER

Good, for one room.

PAPA

One room! But there are eighteen of  
us.

26 CONTINUED:

26

Mama MOANS.

INNKEEPER

You will have to take turns sleeping.  
The bed can accommodate four, two at  
each end, if they sleep still, and...

PAPA

But my wife, she is...

INNKEEPER

One bed or none.

27 INT. ROOM AT THE OX INN, GOVERNOLO - MORNING

27

A large rat scurries from under the bed amid SCREAMS and  
SHRIEKS. Zaira leaps at it, shaking her cape.

ZAIRA

Vata! Vata, vata!

The rat scampers away and everyone stares at the tiny,  
windowless room and single bed. Dozens of flies BUZZ about.

MONNA MATILDA

It stinks like a broken piss pot.

Mama MOANS in greater pain.

Zaira moves to Mama, supported by Papa and Moses.

ZAIRA

Madama dei Rossi, hurry. Into the  
bed with you. Now.

Child Grazia hurries to the bed and pulls back the cover,  
under which ...

Dozens of lice suddenly leap and dance.

Child Grazia cringes, but quickly brushes the bed as Papa and  
Zaira help Mama into the bed. She GROANS in pain.

ZAIRA (CONT'D)

(to Davide)

Go. Find a doctor. Or a midwife.

Dania steps forward in alarm.

DANIA

No! He cannot. The streets, they  
are full of danger. Davide would...

27 CONTINUED:

27

ZAIRA

And what about this woman here?  
 What about her danger? Tell me,  
 signora, will you see her die here?

Child Grazia and Child Jehiel react in alarm at the word "die".

ZAIRA (CONT'D)

(to Davide)

Now go!

Davide reluctantly turns and heads out. Dania follows him.

The flies flitter about Mama's face.

Child Grazia, trying to hide her growing fear, swishes the  
 flies away from Mama, who gives her a weak smile.

Papa sits with them, staring into Mama's eyes.

28 INT. ROOM AT THE OX INN, GOVERNOLO - DAY

28

All is quiet in the gloomy room as the figures huddle about  
 half asleep.

Child Grazia has fallen asleep by her mother, also asleep but  
 breathing uneasily. Papa continues to stare at his wife in  
 dread when FOOTSTEPS are heard.

Everyone stirs. Child Grazia awakens and sees...

Davide and Dania entering, alone. Their faces betray failure.

DAVIDE

We're sorry, but...

Mama stirs awake.

DANIA

The midwife... She said she cannot  
 touch a Jew.

PAPA

Why ever not? What did she say?

DANIA

The warts. She said the warts would  
 never heal and... I'm sorry, master,  
 but... I'm sorry.

PAPA

And a doctor?

DAVIDE

He... He is sorry, but he cannot attend a Jewess. He is too afraid.

PAPA

Afraid of what?

DAVIDE

Of the townspeople. Of what they would do to him. And to his family.

Papa takes it in, a rage boiling up inside him and finally exploding.

PAPA

Why? Why, O Lord? Why punish her for my sins? Punish me. I am the sinner. Punish me.

Mama sits herself up, much to Child Grazia's surprise.

MAMA

(forcefully)

Daniele! We must accept the will of God.

PAPA

But I cannot endure your suffering.

MAMA

I can.

With a MOAN, she falls back onto the bed.

Papa moves to her and she motions him closer.

MAMA (CONT'D)

(whispering, stuttering)

You must go into the countryside and find... Find what our child will need... Swaddling bands... Sweet oil... Salt to rub on him... Honey. And a wet nurse... I am too weak to feed the babe...

Papa makes to protest, but she places her hand on his lips.

MAMA (CONT'D)

For me, Daniele... Do it for love of me and our babe.

Papa silently agrees.

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

MAMA (CONT'D)

And take the boy. He needs the air.  
Grazia can stay with me.

Papa rises, takes Child Jehiel's hand, and heads out.

Mama watches them go and then, with steely resolve, turns to  
Rov Isaac and Moses.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Come. We must talk.

(to Zaira, Monna  
Matilda, and Child  
Grazia)

Take wine. Bathe your foreheads. I  
will need you soon.

Child Grazia moves with Zaira and Monna Matilda to the wine  
cask. Zaira dips a cup in and each of them dips a cloth into  
the wine and rubs it onto their foreheads. Behind them, Mama  
talks with Rov Isaac and Moses, their VOICES SUBDUED, until...

ROV ISAAC

Wait for the master, I beg you,  
madonna.

MOSES

No, I cannot. I cannot do it.

MAMA

You can do it. And you will.

Child Grazia and the two woman turn back to Mama.

MAMA (CONT'D)

We are going to take the baby from  
my womb.

The women GASP. Others in the room MURMUR and MOAN.

Child Grazia looks confused, not knowing what this means.

ZAIRA

No, madonna, no. You...

MAMA

I am dying!

Child Grazia freezes in shock.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Graziella...

28 CONTINUED: (3)

28

Quivering with emotion, Child Grazia moves to her mother's side. Mama clasps Child Grazia's hand.

MAMA (CONT'D)

I chose you to stay with me because  
I need you to give me strength. You  
are young for the task. But then...  
I am young to die.

Child Grazia's body heaves as she starts to cry.

MAMA (CONT'D)

No, no. Your strength. I need your  
strength.

Child Grazia fights back her tears.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Listen. Listen very carefully.  
Zaira will soak some linen in a  
potion.

(to Zaira)

In the pocket of my coat.

Zaira turns away to retrieve the potion while Mama continues her instructions to Child Grazia.

MAMA (CONT'D)

When I raise my hand like this...  
(raises her left hand)  
Squeeze the cloth a drop at a time  
onto my tongue. One drop at a time.  
On my tongue. Do you understand?

CHILD GRAZIA

(through barely  
contained sobs)

Yes... Yes, Mama...

MAMA

And remember. You are my strength.  
No crying. No tears. Only love and  
strength.

She stares at her daughter a long moment.

Child Grazia's sobs subside as she stares at her mother. Mama does not remove her eyes from Child Grazia throughout the following.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Are you ready, Ser Moses?

28 CONTINUED: (4)

28

MOSES

Oh, madonna, I cannot...

MAMA

Do it!

SOBBING is heard throughout the room as Moses, tears coursing down his cheeks, approaches the bed with an unsheathed mohel's (circumcision) knife. He dips the knife into the wine.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Uncover my belly.

Zaira does so, exposing Mama's large, swollen abdomen.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Pray for me, rabbi.

Rov Isaac MUMBLES prayers through his SOBS.

MAMA (CONT'D)

I am ready, Ser Moses.

MOSES

Oh, madonna...

MAMA

Do it now!

The knife flashes through the air and Mama WAILS.

MAMA (CONT'D)

The baby... Quick... The baby.

She lifts her arm up.

Child Grazia immediately squeezes a drop of lotion into her mother's contorted mouth. Another drop. Another drop. As Mama, her face twisted in pain, stares up at her daughter. When suddenly, SLAP and a BABY'S CRY.

Child Grazia turns to look and sees...

Monna Matilda holding the squirming, slippery ball of mucous. She motions to Moses, who slices the umbilical cord.

Child Grazia turns back to Mama, still staring up at her.

CHILD GRAZIA

Mama!

Mama says nothing. Her eyes stare blankly up at Child Grazia.

28 CONTINUED: (5) 28

Child Grazia looks down at her mother in confusion as Zaira's hand reaches across and closes Mama's eyes.

ZAIRA

She is dead, Graziella. Your mother  
is dead.

Child Grazia stares at her mother as the baby CRIES.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 EXT. PORT NEAR FERRARA - DAY 29

Title over in handwritten Renaissance script:

Ferrara

1487

The bags, boxes, and packages of the dei Rossi family are piled on a small dock as the barge pulls away down the Po River.

Papa, Child Grazia, Child Jehiel, Zaira carrying BABY GERSHOM, and the 13 other members of the household stand with the baggage. Papa looks around and is clearly concerned.

CHILD GRAZIA

Where's La Nonna? Didn't she send  
anyone?

Papa hesitates and looks to Zaira.

ZAIRA

We'll walk to the house.  
We'll send a wagon back to pick  
everyone up.

Papa nods in agreement and leads Child Grazia, Child Jehiel, and Zaira with the baby towards the distant skyline of Ferrara.

30 EXT. ESTE CASTLE, FERRARA - DAY 30

Papa and the others trudge past the magnificent Este Castle.

31 EXT. PALAZZO DEI DIAMANTI - DAY 31

And past the grand palazzo with its 8,500 white (with pink veins) marble blocks carved to represent diamonds.

32 EXT. CATTEDRALE DI SAN GIORGIO - DAY 32

And past the Romanesque cathedral in white marble with three cusps and a series of loggias, small arcades and rose windows, statues and numerous bas reliefs.

33 EXT. DEI ROSSI HOME, FERRARA - DAY 33

And finally arrive at the magnificent dei Rossi home. Child Grazia and Child Jehiel stare up at it in awe.

34 INT. ENTRANCEWAY AND STAIRCASE, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY 34

A liveried PORTER leads Papa, Child Grazia and Child Jehiel, who cling to one another, and Zaira, carrying Baby Gershom, up a grand staircase while over:

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

We finally arrived at the home of  
Papa's parents in Ferrara. The house  
itself, grand, open, luxurious...

35 INT. RECEPTION ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY 35

The Porter pulls aside a set of heavy curtains and ushers Papa, Child Grazia, Child Jehiel, and Zaira with Baby Gershom into the massive reception room with every meter of wall space covered with tapestries and fine Persian carpets and crowded with gold and silver bowls and pitchers, crystal vessels and cameos in frames. In the middle stands grandmother dei Rossi, LA NONNA - short, squat, and squinty.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

But life within it was narrow,  
confining, and mean.

LA NONNA

Take off your boots, children. The  
carpet under your feet cost your  
honoured grandfather three hundred  
gold ducats at Constantinople.

She glowers at them.

Papa bows timidly. Child Grazia and Child Jehiel follow his example and remove their footwear.

35 CONTINUED:

35

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 In the dei Rossi family it seemed  
 that my father, the eldest son, was  
 despised by his parents almost to  
 the point of loathing.

36 INT. BANK, FERRARA - DAY

36

La Nonna ushers Papa, Child Grazia, and Child Jehiel into the bank where GRANDFATHER, an exalted, resplendently dressed old man greets them and stares hard at them.

GRANDFATHER  
 How is your health?

PAPA  
 (nervously)  
 Fine, Signore Padre.

Child Grazia is surprised at her father's unease.

GRANDFATHER  
 And the children?

CHILD GRAZIA  
 We are well, sir. As well as can be  
 expected after our ordeal and the  
 terrible loss.

Grandfather squints at her.

37 INT. DINING ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - NIGHT

37

All sit around the table in an extremely large and richly decorated dining room. At the table are Child Grazia, Papa, Child Jehiel, Zaira, La Nonna, Grandfather, UNCLE JOSEPH (30), AUNT DOROTEA (28), and female cousin RICCA (15). All are quiet and withdrawn. Joseph COUGHS, clearly not a well man.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 Papa's younger brother, my Uncle  
 Joseph, lived there with my Aunt  
 Dorotea and cousin Ricca.

Child Grazia observes...

Papa, particularly withdrawn and hardly eating.

Finally, she works up her nerve and speaks.

CHILD GRAZIA

Papa told us that as a boy he would ride in the Este park and we were hoping that the dei Rossi family still had that right.

LA NONNA

We haven't kept ponies in years.

Child Grazia, taken aback, looks to Papa for support.

But he remains withdrawn.

CHILD GRAZIA

Both Child Jehiel and I are accustomed to a weekly ride. The exercise keeps us free of coughing and phlegm.

LA NONNA

Your cousin Ricca has managed to remain quite healthy without careening all over the countryside on wild animals.

Ricca smirks at Child Grazia. Joseph COUGHS.

Again, Child Grazia looks to Papa for support.

And again, Papa remains oblivious.

GRANDFATHER

My son.

Papa does not respond.

LA NONNA

Daniele!

Papa jerks back and looks to them.

GRANDFATHER

I fully expected you to be occupied with your responsibilities today at our bank. Yet I did not see you there.

PAPA

Oh... Uh, yes. I am sorry, father. I was... I was...

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

GRANDFATHER

You must bear in mind, my son, that the Ferrarese bank is the mother of all the dei Rossi branches. We carry a heavy responsibility.

PAPA

Yes, father. I will do my utmost to...

They all fall silent again. Joseph COUGHS and HACKS.

LA NONNA

(to Child Jehiel)

And we arranged a tutor for you. Nataniele. Present yourself to him tomorrow at sunrise for your lessons.

Child Jehiel silently assents. Child Grazia also takes note.

38 INT. ATTICS AND STOREROOMS, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - NIGHT 38

Zaira leads Child Grazia and Child Jehiel, looking barely awake and carrying their writing cases, through a warren of attics and storerooms, past servants sleeping against sacks or in stairwells.

39 INT. CLASSROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - NIGHT 39

Zaira KNOCKS on the portal and NATANIELE, the tutor, pulls aside the curtains. He is surprised to see Child Grazia. She and Child Jehiel are about to enter when...

LA NONNA

No, no, Grazia.

They turn around to see La Nonna approaching.

LA NONNA (CONT'D)

No girls. This is serious work.

CHILD GRAZIA

But I am serious.

LA NONNA

Come along. There is plenty of women's work to be done.

CHILD GRAZIA

What about Latin?

(MORE)

39 CONTINUED:

39

CHILD GRAZIA (CONT'D)

I have already committed to memory  
Virgil's *Eclogues* and have begun  
Cicero's *Epistles*...

LA NONNA

It is not proper for a Jewish maiden  
to read Latin.

CHILD GRAZIA

That is the most foolish thing I  
ever heard in my life.

LA NONNA

Do you dare to call me foolish?

CHILD GRAZIA

It is not your person that I impugn,  
Madonna La Nonna. It is your ideas.

La Nonna SLAPS Child Grazia hard in the face.

LA NONNA

You will go to the *sala di guistizia*  
and wait.

Stunned, Child Grazia moves off. La Nonna looks to Zaira.

Who observes the old woman coolly.

40 INT. SALA DI GUISTIZIA, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY

40

Child Grazia lays sobbing on the floor of the *hall of justice*,  
a bare room, furnished with a trestle table, three crude  
chairs, and a small washstand with a basin on it.

The door opens and La Nonna enters, followed by a RABBI, and  
MAESTRO GIORGIO, a large, strapping steward.

La Nonna and the Rabbi move to the table and sit on one side.  
La Nonna silently beckons Child Grazia to sit opposite her.

Child Grazia does so.

LA NONNA

Beginning with Eve, women have  
followed the paths of curiosity and  
pleasure, with what sad results you  
know well. You are an educated girl.  
Do you remember what wise King Solomon  
told the King of Sheba?

## CHILD GRAZIA

While one might find one good man among a thousand, he had never found among all women even one who was virtuous.

## LA NONNA

Well, then, you can understand that women are in the greatest danger of falling prey to sloth and corruption. We have a special duty to little girls to keep them from such folly.

She turns to the Rabbi, who takes over the "lesson".

## RABBI

Why was Eve not formed out of man's head?

Child Grazia is about to answer, when...

## RABBI (CONT'D)

In order that she might not be clever and learn more than was good for her. And why not out of his eye or ear? So that she should not be curious, wishing to see and hear everything. And why was she not formed out of his mouth? So that she might not be talkative. Or out of his heart so that she may not be passionate. No, she was formed out of his rib to avoid these pitfalls. The rib is hidden from sight and must serve as an emblem of modesty and virtue. Forget the mind. And subdue the flesh. Women must work. Work, work, and more work.

He turns to La Nonna.

## LA NONNA

It is books and study that have corrupted your virtue, child. And it is my solemn duty to minister to you...

(turning to Giorgio)

The rod.

Child Grazia reacts in horror.

Giorgio ambles to the rack on the wall with several birch rods. He selects one and looks to La Nonna.

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

La Nonna shakes her head.

Giorgio selects a heavier rod.

La Nonna approves.

LA NONNA (CONT'D)

Strip her.

Child Grazia begins to panic, SCREAMING.

CHILD GRAZIA

Papa, Papa! No!... No... Save me.  
Papa!!

Giorgio moves to Child Grazia and lifts the hem of her *gamorra* and raises it over head, exposing her back. Child Grazia is hauled before La Nonna and forced to kneel.

She waits, sobbing and trembling. And waits. Until...

LA NONNA

Stroke the first.

WHOOSH, SLAP! As the rod strike's Child Grazia's back. She SCREAMS.

WHOOSH, SLAP! Drawing blood and another SCREAM. She looks up at...

La Nonna staring coldly down at her.

WHOOSH, SLAP! - SCREAM.

Giorgio then pulls the *gamorra* back down over her back as Child Grazia tries to control her SOBBING.

LA NONNA (CONT'D)

Off with you now.

SOBBING, Child Grazia struggles to her feet and limps out of the room.

41 INT. CHILD GRAZIA'S ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - NIGHT

41

Child Grazia lay on her bed, miserable, comforted by Zaira.

Papa enters sheepishly and crosses to her, exchanging looks with Zaira.

41 CONTINUED:

41

PAPA

Graziella, oh my Graziella, I am  
so...

CHILD GRAZIA

No!

She turns away from him, burying herself in Zaira's dress.

He sits by her bed, wounded and contrite. He looks to Zaira.

Zaira encourages him to press on.

PAPA

Grazia, please. Please, let me...

CHILD GRAZIA

No. Leave me alone.

PAPA

I have brought you a book...

CHILD GRAZIA

Books corrupt girls. We are not  
allowed to read them.

PAPA

Who said anything about you reading?

Papa opens the book and begins to read aloud from Virgil's  
*Aeneid*.

PAPA (CONT'D)

Arms, and the man I sing, who, forc'd  
by fate, And haughty Juno's  
unrelenting hate, Expell'd and exil'd,  
left the Trojan shore. Long labours,  
both by sea and land, he bore, And  
in the doubtful war, before he won  
The Latian realm,...

Child Grazia lies motionless, facing away from him, but is  
slowly warmed by the words and Papa's voice. Until she joins  
him, reciting by heart while he reads.

PAPA/GRAZIA

... and built the destin'd town; His  
banish'd gods restor'd to rites  
divine, And settled sure succession  
in his line, From whence the race of  
Alban fathers come, And the long  
glories of majestic Rome.

41 CONTINUED: (2) 41

Papa and Zaira exchange warm looks. Zaira snuggles up to him intimately. He places his arm around her.

42 INT. DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY 42

Their VOICES CONTINUE OVER a MONTAGE of "women's work" activities throughout the house and over time as Child Grazia gradually matures into GRAZIA, a young woman of 15 who drearily...

Kneads bread dough...

Darns stockings...

Sifts flour...

Feeds Baby Gershom (the one task she does delight in)...

Makes beds...

Dresses a capon...

Carries a tray of food into Uncle Joseph, very ill in bed...

Puts 3- year old TODDLER GERSHOM to bed ...

... with the other women and servants, including Aunt Dorotea and cousin Ricca, now 17, who shoots Grazia mocking looks.

PAPA/GRAZIA (V.O.)

O Muse! The causes and the crimes  
relate; What goddess was provok'd,  
and whence her hate; For what offense  
the Queen of Heav'n began To persecute  
so brave, so just a man; Involv'd  
his anxious life in endless cares,  
Expos'd to wants, and hurried into  
wars! Can heav'nly minds such high  
resentment show, Or exercise their  
spite in human woe?

All while La Nonna observes with haughty righteousness.

43 INT. ENTRANCEWAY AND STAIRCASE, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - NIGHT 43

A RABBI and FIVE MEN - the *parnassim* or leaders - of the Jewish community are ushered into the house with sombre faces.

43 CONTINUED:

43

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
Then, a crisis in the lives of  
Ferrara's Jews.

44 INT. SYNAGOGUE, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - NIGHT

44

The Rabbi and Five Men talk with Papa, Grandfather, and La Nonna. Grazia and YOUNG JEHIEL, now 14, look on with Zaira.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
Duke Ercole d'Este issued a *grido*  
reinstating the wearing of a yellow  
badge by all Jews.

MAN #1  
It is an unbearable mortification.

MAN #2  
To be marked with the same brand as  
the whores.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
A large yellow circle must be worn  
on our outer garments to set us apart.

RABBI  
Fra Bernardino is back. If the Duke  
signs this ruling, it will be an  
invitation for him to spread his  
slanders. We know what happened in  
Mantova.

The Rabbi reveals two strongboxes at his feet.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
Five hundred gold ducats. Enough to  
buy the Duke five altarpieces by the  
finest masters.

GRANDFATHER  
I will match that sum with five  
hundred more. But I cannot allow my  
son to call on the Duke.

RABBI  
We need someone who can command an  
audience. Someone who has a way  
with him...

GRANDFATHER  
Not my son.

44 CONTINUED:

44

Grazia is puzzled at Grandfather's refusal.

RABBI

He will be purified by prayer. He will walk through the den of vipers without being tempted.

PAPA

(to Grandfather)

I must go, father. I must.

GRANDFATHER

It is out of the question. It is asking too much.

Again, Grazia is puzzled. Then the Rabbi approaches her and Young Jehiel, takes their hands, and leads them to the *bimah*, the elevated podium at the front of the synagogue for reading the *Torah*.

All look on, wondering what the Rabbi is doing.

RABBI

The Lord in His wisdom has shown me the way. And this child is the key.

GRANDFATHER

You want to send my granddaughter to plead with the Duke?

RABBI

No, sir. I mean to send this child and her brother with their father, to petition the Duke. For if anything will secure Daniele's honour, it is the witness of his little ones.

FIVE MEN

Amen.

All clearly accept this solution.

45 EXT. DUKE'S CASTLE, FERRARA - DAY

45

Papa, Grazia, and Young Jehiel ride their horses up to the magnificent castle entrance, clatter over the drawbridge across the moat and through the gate.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And so Papa, Jehiel, and I journeyed to the Duke's castle...

46 INT. GRAND ROOM, DUKE'S CASTLE, FERRARA - DAY

46

The DUKE dressed all in black and festooned with gold and silver jewelry crosses the large room with its neo-Renaissance ceiling displaying the Este coats of arms. The Duke greets Papa warmly and is introduced to Grazia and Young Jehiel.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

... for an audience with the Duke himself. And that is where I first met the Duke's daughter.

DUKE

(introducing her)  
Madonna Isabella.

ISABELLA, aged 16, coolly acknowledges Grazia and Young Jehiel.

Papa and the Duke talk while Grazia and Young Jehiel observe and Isabella remains aloof, superior.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Ah, yes, Daniele, I know. I understand why you have come. But I cannot rescind the order. I gave my sacred word to Fra Bernardino. His prayers turned the tide for us against the Venetians and I promised him anything his heart desired. And he desired the restoring of the yellow badge.

Grazia looks to Papa; how can he counter such an unequivocal rejection?

PAPA

Oh! *Dio mio*, I have forgotten the gift!

The Duke brightens in anticipation.

Papa turns to GROOMS who approach with saddlebags.

PAPA (CONT'D)

The community of Jews wishes to make a tribute to Your Magnificence.

DUKE

This is not a bribe to persuade me to rescind the *grido*?

46 CONTINUED:

46

PAPA

Oh, hardly. It is what it is: a gift. And it would pain me to return these golden ducats and tell them their gift was spurned.

DUKE

Nor would I offend my Jews. So by accepting this gift, I cannot rescind the *grido* without appearing... Well, you see my position.

PAPA

Indeed, sir. I appreciate it completely.

Isabella smirks at Grazia.

DUKE

But... A solution perhaps...  
(pauses)  
A wager? In a game of Zara?

Papa blanches at the word.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Your gift against my *grido*.

Papa reluctantly agrees.

47 INT. HALL OF GAMES, DUKE'S CASTLE, FERRARA - DAY

47

A very large room with a very high, arched ceiling divided into eleven panels, each containing a scene describing a different sport. A trestle table covered with a green baize cloth, a silver cup, and a set of dice lay before the Duke and Papa. Grazia and Young Jehiel stand off to one side, Isabella off to another side. (Zara is a game where you cast three common dice and guess the total score obtained.)

DUKE

Damn the devil. We cannot play Zara, my friend. We have no *barratiero*.  
(turns to Young Jehiel)  
Here, you...

Young Jehiel steps forward but Papa intercedes.

PAPA

No.

DUKE

(laughs)

You afraid your son will catch his  
father's contagion, Daniele.

PAPA

Not my son.

They stand there in silence a moment until...

GRAZIA

I will do it, sir.

DUKE

You?

GRAZIA

I am fifteen years old and can quote  
all of Cicero's orations to the Romans  
*sensa libro*.

DUKE

(to Papa)

Is that true? All of Cicero?

PAPA

I believe so.

DUKE

Then you are a rival to my own  
illustrious daughter.

(indicates Isabella)

Well, then, my little prodigy, you  
shall be the *barratiero*.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

With that, he instructed me on the  
tasks of the *barratiero*, or croupier.

The Duke shows Grazia how to place the dice in a cup, shake  
the cup, and toss the dice along the table.

MATURE GRAZIA (CONT'D)

Not a complicated task, I can tell  
you, my son. But one that demanded  
good nerves and perfect control, as  
I was about to find out.

Grazia shows the Duke that she can do it, tossing the dice  
along the table. She is very aware of Isabella's mocking  
gaze.

They prepare to play the game.

47 CONTINUED: (2)

47

DUKE

And remember, a vast fortune rides  
on your throw.

Grazia places the three dice in the cup and shakes it. Papa looks calm, but is holding his breath in dread.

GRAZIA

Place your bets, gentlemen! What  
numbers will you have?

PAPA

Seven.

DUKE

Nine!

She throws the dice onto the green cloth.

They roll to a stop: a four, another four, and a one.

DUKE (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Zara!!

The Duke LAUGHS UPROARIOUSLY while Papa sags, struggling to maintain his calm, relaxed demeanour.

Grazia and Young Jehiel observe in horror - all is lost!

Isabella smiles in satisfaction.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Too bad, Daniele. Too bad for the  
Jews. But you cannot deny I won  
fairly with your own daughter as the  
*barratiero*.

PAPA

Indeed I cannot, sir. The ducats  
are yours.

DUKE

And the *grido* stands. Now, what say  
you to a glass of wine to celebrate.

PAPA

I would be honoured, sir.

They turn to leave when the Duke changes his mind.

47 CONTINUED: (3)

47

DUKE

But first... I have a proposal for you. It grieves me to see you return to your people with such a sad message. What say you to one more round of Zara?

Grazia and Young Jehiel look to Papa who remains very calm.

PAPA

By all means.

DUKE

Double or nothing.

They all stop: what does he mean?

PAPA

Double or nothing, sir?

DUKE

You win, I rescind the *grido*. You lose, you pay me two thousand golden ducats.

Grazia and Young Jehiel are stunned at this, but not Papa.

PAPA

It's a bet.

Isabella smirks in confidence.

They gather around the table. Grazia takes up the cup and dice and prepares a second round.

Grazia shakes the cup and in a TREMBLING VOICE:

GRAZIA

Place your bets, gentlemen. What numbers will you have?

PAPA

Seven.

DUKE

Nine.

The dice skitter across the green surface and stop: two, three, two.

PAPA

Zara!

47 CONTINUED: (4) 47  
 Young Jehiel and Grazia SHRIEK in delight when they notice...  
 The Duke scowling and Isabella clearly unhappy.  
 They immediately quell their noisy enthusiasm.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 And thus Papa had the dreaded *grido*  
 rescinded and we Jews were spared  
 the ignominy of the yellow badge.

DISSOLVE TO:

48 INT. MATURE GRAZIA'S ROOM, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - NIGHT 48  
 Mature Grazia sits at her desk writing.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 We returned home from our little  
 gambling adventure with the Duke,  
 but were hardly treated like the  
 saviours we were.

49 INT. DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY 49  
 La Nonna stands at a window looking out at...

50 EXT. DEI ROSSI HOME, FERRARA - DAY 50  
 Zaira, with a small bag, climbs onto the back of a cart and  
 is taken away down the street.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 La Nonna had used our absence to  
 marry off Zaira through a *penumbra*,  
 or marriage broker. That way she  
 ensured that Papa not marry her.

51 INT. GRAZIA'S ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - NIGHT 51  
 Grazia sits alone and forlorn in her bed.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 So I lost my precious nanny, my Zaira.  
 And my Papa, who no longer came to  
 read at night and was away all the  
 time I knew not where.

52 INT. GRANDFATHER'S STUDY, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY 52

Grazia is cleaning the study lined with books.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
And I was forced back to my household  
duties. Women's work. Day in, day  
out, month after month...

Her "cleaning" soon becomes caressing - the books, their pages,  
their smells, their ideas. Suddenly...

SLAM, BANG! The study door opens and La Nonna bursts in.

Grazia scrambles to "clean" the books.

But La Nonna has other concerns.

LA NONNA  
Have you seen your father?

Grazia hesitates, uncertain.

LA NONNA (CONT'D)  
Quickly! Have you seen him?!?

Armed SOLDIER #1 pushes in behind her and surveys the room.

SOLDIER #1  
Surrender him, in the name of the  
Duke.

There is a great deal of NOISY COMMOTION outside the study.

53 INT. ENTRANCEWAY AND STAIRCASE, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY 53

Servants, Dorotea, Joseph (appearing sickly), and Ricca all  
scurry about in panic as armed SOLDIER #2 bars the exit.

Papa hurries in from one of the rooms.

SOLDIER #2  
No one leaves this house until we  
have Baruch dei Rossi in our custody.

Grazia emerges from the study with La Nonna in alarm.

Then from the tops of the stairs.

53 CONTINUED:

53

SOLDIER #3

He is here! I have him!

SOLDIER #3 forcefully hauls Grandfather down the stairs.

Papa steps up.

PAPA

Why are you taking him? What is the charge?

Soldier #1 whips out a dagger and flashes it at Papa's face.

SOLDIER #1

Shut your insolent mouth or I'll cut off your Jew's nose.

Papa falls silent. Everyone freezes and watches as Soldier #3 drags Grandfather down the staircase and out the door with the other Soldiers.

Immediately, everyone breaks into alarmed CHATTER.

Grazia looks to...

Papa, who has a look of great concern on his face.

La Nonna mounts the staircase and turns to face everyone.

LA NONNA

Quiet!!

Everyone falls silent.

LA NONNA (CONT'D)

I order you all - family and servants - go to your accustomed tasks. The bank will open. On time. Lessons will be conducted. Dinner will be prepared. And I will get to the bottom of this matter. Go now. And shush your chatter!

Everyone disperses, quietly MUMBLING.

Grazia observes...

Papa, who heads for the exit, a look of guilt on his face.

La Nonna notices and is suspicious. Then, she spots Grazia lingering.

53 CONTINUED: (2)

53

LA NONNA (CONT'D)

Grazia!!

GRAZIA

(startled)

Yes, Madonna La Nonna.

And Grazia turns back into the study.

54 INT. DINING ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - NIGHT

54

All are gathered for dinner with the conspicuous absence of Grandfather and Papa.

LA NONNA

Your Signore Padre is being held in the dungeon. For a crime he did not commit. For a crime that his own son, Daniele...

(to Grazia and Young Jehiel)

Your father, committed. His cursed gambling. He's become obsessed with it again and has again gotten us all into serious trouble. It appears he is heavily in debt to his patrician friends and has resorted to a heinous crime - coin clipping.

Everyone GASPS and CHATTERS around the table.

LA NONNA (CONT'D)

Your grandfather then passed on some of these coins and that is why he has been arrested. Even though he is perfectly innocent. But worse, the Duke has closed every Jewish business in Ferrara. Even though they are all perfectly innocent.

Grazia bows her head in shame as La Nonna glowers at her.

LA NONNA (CONT'D)

Your father has gone to the Duke to confess his crime. He could lose his head. At the very least, both his hands will be cut off.

Grazia swoons, trying not to betray her great distress.

55 INT. GRAZIA'S ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - NIGHT

55

Grazia lays awake in the dark, distress in her eyes. There is a KNOCK on the door and she turns over to see...

The door open slightly and a figure holding a candle - Young Jehiel.

YOUNG JEHIEL

I cannot sleep. May I sit in here with you for a while?

GRAZIA

I'm wide awake as well.

He crosses to the bed and sits on it.

YOUNG JEHIEL

Why does she hate Papa so much? La Nonna?

GRAZIA

I cannot fathom it. Usually, the firstborn son is revered, but Papa...

YOUNG JEHIEL

They loathe him. Absolutely loathe him. And to say such terrible things about him. Papa would never...

GRAZIA

No, he wouldn't. Not Papa.

YOUNG JEHIEL

Then why would she say such... ?

GRAZIA

Papa!

She has spotted Papa, standing at the doorway.

PAPA

Graziella... Young Jehiel....

He enters and moves to the bed where he sits. Their eyes scan Papa: Does he still have his hands?

PAPA (CONT'D)

Worry not. I still have my hands. I am the most fortunate of men. The Duke has granted me full clemency.

(MORE)

PAPA (CONT'D)

An unprecedented act of mercy. Your grandfather has been released. And tomorrow, all the Jewish shops and banks can reopen.

GRAZIA

I knew you were not a cheater. I knew you would never do a wrong thing.

PAPA

Ah, but I did.

They both look at him in shock: This can't be true.

PAPA (CONT'D)

I am guilty of coin clipping. And I must be tried for my crime.

YOUNG JEHIEL

But you said full clemency...

PAPA

By the Duke. And he has remanded me to my own people for justice and punishment. The *Wad Kellilah*.

GRAZIA

Just for clipping a bit of gold off the edge of some coins?

Papa reaches into his pocket and removes a gold ducat. He holds it up for Grazia.

PAPA

What do you see on the coin?

She looks at...

The coin with an engraved head on it.

GRAZIA

The Duke.

PAPA

Because the Duke himself personally guarantees the amount of gold the coin contains. When I tamper with the gold coin, I tamper with the integrity of the man himself.

They look at him in disbelief: Why would he do it?

55 CONTINUED: (2)

55

PAPA (CONT'D)

I gambled and I shouldn't. I owe a lot of money, and...

GRAZIA

But still, Papa, it is your first offence and surely you will be given...

Papa holds up her hand to stop her.

PAPA

Grazia, it is not my first offence.

She looks at him in surprise.

PAPA (CONT'D)

Gambling, it is my weakness. And as a young man, gambling brought havoc down upon myself, my family, and all the Jews in Ferrara. They forgave me then, but a second time...

Silence as Grazia and Young Jehiel exchange looks and struggle to take in the gravity of the situation.

PAPA (CONT'D)

I was a young Jew with "golden hands" who once won hundreds of ducats in a game. One merchant, Ambrogio, was ruined. He lost everything. "Stolen" from him by a "cheating Jew". The next day, he stormed into our bank and stabbed the first Jew he saw. My older brother. Davide. The dei Rossi firstborn.

Silence. The children try to absorb this shocking news.

PAPA (CONT'D)

And now, I must be judged...

56 INT. ENTRANCEWAY AND STAIRCASE, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY

56

A procession of Jewish ELDERS and RABBIS move into a private synagogue off the entranceway.

PAPA (V.O.)

... by the *Wad Kellilah*.

56 CONTINUED:

56

Grazia and Young Jehiel watch nervously as the doors are closed.

They sneak up to the door and peer through a crack

Through the doors of the synagogue as the men assemble and Papa sits before them.

Grazia and Young Jehiel exchange anxious glances.

YOUNG JEHIEL

What are they... ?

GRAZIA

Shhhhh!!

They watch in anxious silence.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And the *Wad Kellilah's* ruling...

Through the door, the Rabbi makes his pronouncement.

RABBI

Banishment from Ferrara.

Grazia and Young Jehiel exchange looks of horror: banishment!

57 EXT. DEI ROSSI HOUSE, BOLOGNA - DAY

57

Title over in handwritten Renaissance script:

Bologna

1489

A panorama of Bologna featuring the top of the Basilica di San Petronio, the dome of Santuario de Sama Maria della Vita, and the Asinelli and Garisenda towers.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And so our little family moved into the tiny Casa dei Rossi in Bologna. It was a steep descent from our life in Ferrara.

Then a tiny house wedged between its neighbours on a cramped, crowded street of arcaded homes.

Grazia and Papa, now 35 but appearing much older, hurry out of the house and down the street.

57 CONTINUED:

57

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I was at first thrilled because  
 Bologna has a most excellent  
 university. I was just as quickly  
 disappointed when I discovered that  
 the university is restricted to males.

58 EXT. DEI ROSSI BANK, BOLOGNA - DAY

58

Papa and Grazia enter the very tiny dei Rossi bank.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 As part of his exile, Papa was forced  
 to work as a mere clerk in our small  
 family bank.

59 INT. DEI ROSSI BANK, BOLOGNA - DAY

59

Grazia moves into the tiny, cramped bank where she takes up  
 her post sitting at a table with ledgers.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 But Papa had no heart for such menial  
 tasks and so I, unable to attend the  
 university, soon became the clerk at  
 the dei Rossi bank of Bologna.

She confidently greets a CUSTOMER.

60 INT. DEI ROSSI HOUSE, BOLOGNA - DAY

60

Grazia enters the house and is greeted by an excited Papa  
 brandishing a letter.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 Until one day a letter arrived from  
 Ferrara. From the Duke himself.

PAPA  
 You have been honoured, Grazia. A  
 great honour.

GRAZIA  
 What? What is it? What?

PAPA  
 You have been selected to portray  
 Esther, Queen of the Jews, in the  
 wedding procession of the Duke's  
 (MORE)

60 CONTINUED:

60

PAPA (CONT'D)  
 daughter, Isabella. In Ferrara.  
 Next month.

Grazia looks at him stunned.

GRAZIA  
 Me? Why me?

PAPA  
 The Duke asked the *Wad Kellilah* for  
 a Jewish queen to grace his daughter's  
 procession. It is a tradition in  
 Ferrara.

GRAZIA  
 The *Wad Kellilah* would hardly select  
 me, Papa, after...

PAPA  
 (laughs)  
 No doubt they proposed other Jewish  
 maidens for this honour, but the  
 Duke will accept only Grazia dei  
 Rossi.

GRAZIA  
 So we can all return to Ferrara! We  
 can go back to...

PAPA  
 No, no. Alas, the invitation is for  
 you and you alone.

Grazia looks at him; an idea flickers across her face.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 And so I returned...

61 INT. ENTRANCEWAY AND STAIRCASE, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY 61

Grazia is lead up the grand staircase by an aloof Giorgio.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 ... to my grandparents' house in  
 Ferrara...

62 INT. ATTIC ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY 62

Giorgio leaves Grazia in a small, bare room.

62 CONTINUED:

62

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 ... where my status was even lowlier  
 than it had been when I'd lived there  
 several years earlier.

63 INT. SEWING ROOM, DEI GRAZIA HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY

63

La Nonna sits in a chair imperiously issuing commands.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 As for my grandmother, the old war  
 continued between us. This time  
 over my costume as Esther, Queen of  
 the Jews.

Several Servants fuss and tug and pin at shiny gray satin material covered with hundreds of little red satin bows that is draped shapelessly onto Grazia, who is mortified at such a ridiculous costume.

GRAZIA  
 It is tasteless and vulgar ...

LA NONNA  
 This is the garment ...

GRAZIA  
 ... and stupid and silly ...

LA NONNA  
 ... you will wear ...

GRAZIA  
 It makes me look more like ...

LA NONNA  
 ... and that's an end to that!

GRAZIA  
 ... a fool than a queen.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)  
 Until frustration and exhaustion ...

64 INT. ATTIC ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY

64

Grazia lays in bed, pale, sweating, and bleary.

La Nonna, Dorotea, Ricca, and several servants sit in vigil.  
 The dress is on full gaudy display on a dressmaker's dummy.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

... put me to my bed with dyspepsia and melancholy. The complete venture was now in jeopardy. Desperate that the Duke not be offended by the failure of Esther, Queen of the Jews, to make her appearance, ...

A sudden flurry of activity, everyone rising in expectation.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

... La Nonna went so far as to contact a very great and famous physician.

A very tall, extremely well-dressed Jewish doctor - JUDAH (LEONE) DEL MEDIGO (28)- appears at the doorway. He bows to everyone and surveys the room, including the gaudy dress.

LA NONNA

Oh, Messer Leone del Medigo, we are honoured to have so great a man grace our humble domicile.

He barely acknowledges La Nonna and instead strides purposefully, gently, to Grazia in bed.

JUDAH

Is this the patient, Madonna Grazia?

LA NONNA

Indeed she is, Messer Leone.

JUDAH

Are you Esther, Queen of the Jews?

Grazia looks up at the extraordinarily handsome and gentle man in awe.

LA NONNA

Not unless she can overcome her sudden frailty. We have no idea what has come over her.

Judah looks from Grazia...

To La Nonna...

To the dress.

JUDAH

And what is that?

64 CONTINUED: (2)

64

LA NONNA

It is the dress of Esther, the Jewish Queen.

JUDAH

The young lady is supposed to be a queen, madonna, not Punchinello.

GASPS in the room. Grazia looks in greater amazement.

LA NONNA

It is satin. We thought that it would...

JUDAH

The Duke will have you on the rack for mocking him. He expects something rich and regal from us Jews. Pearls. And velvet. Jewels from your strongbox, fit for a queen. Please, have it removed.

Everyone remains frozen, awaiting La Nonna's response.

JUDAH (CONT'D)

And then, all of you, you may go about your business. Except you.

(points to Ricca)

You will please stay in the room for modesty's sake.

No one moves, still awaiting La Nonna's response.

JUDAH (CONT'D)

Go now, all of you. Out!

La Nonna finally breaks and turns to the other.

LA NONNA

You heard Messer Leone. Everyone out. And take the dress, too.

They all scurry out of the room except Ricca.

Grazia watches in amazement and delight.

Judah gently addresses Grazia.

JUDAH

My name is Judah. May I try to help you overcome your debilitation?

Grazia nods yes.

64 CONTINUED: (3)

64

JUDAH (CONT'D)  
Very good. Do you suffer pain?

Grazia shakes her head no.

JUDAH (CONT'D)  
Lassitude? Cramp in any limb? An  
ache in the belly?

GRAZIA  
Only this nausea. And vomiting.

JUDAH  
In the morning or evening? Or at  
dawn?

GRAZIA  
Any time I rise from my bed.

JUDAH  
And when is that?

GRAZIA  
My grandmother insists they fit the  
dress on me so they can...

JUDAH  
The dress that was here?

GRAZIA  
Yes.

He ponders for a moment and then declares very gently.

JUDAH  
I will ask you for a sample of urine.  
There is much to be learned from  
that. And an examination, of course.  
You have my word I will not hurt  
you.  
(to Ricca)  
Will you please pull back the  
coverlet.

Ricca pulls back the coverlet and Judah leans over Grazia.

JUDAH (CONT'D)  
Lie very still and breathe quietly.

His hands gently presses and probes her stomach.

She lies still, feeling calm and reassured.

64 CONTINUED: (4)

64

He bends down and listens as he applies his hand around her stomach.

He leans close to her face, peering into her eyes.

JUDAH (CONT'D)

Please open your mouth very wide.

Grazia does so and he peers into her mouth. They are face to face with only the SOUND of their GENTLE BREATHING.

JUDAH (CONT'D)

Now please turn over for me.

She does so and he probes up and down her back.

She remains still, feeling a sense of peace and satisfaction.

He motions for Ricca to cover Grazia and Ricca does so.

Grazia stares in reverence at Judah.

JUDAH (CONT'D)

(to Ricca)

Could you please send for a quill and ink and vellum, please.

RICCA

Yes, sir.

Ricca moves out of the room.

GRAZIA

Do you now know why I vomit up my food?

JUDAH

Ah, my dear, if I knew the answers to all the questions beginning with "why" I would be Jehovah Himself and not a humble physician.

GRAZIA

But if you do not know what ails me, sir...

JUDAH

Not to know the cause does not mean that we cannot affect a cure.

GRAZIA

Yes, of course. As in Aristotle's logic.

64 CONTINUED: (5)

64

JUDAH

You have read Aristotle?

GRAZIA

Oh, yes.

JUDAH

Then you understand my position.

GRAZIA

How then will you cure me?

JUDAH

For one thing, I will prohibit any nasty medicines and purges. And for another thing, no ridiculous-looking costume dresses. Only the very best for someone who must be the queen of the Jews.

Grazia looks at him, pleased and amused, yet skeptical.

GRAZIA

And you believe that will be enough.

Ricca re-enters carrying the quill, ink, and vellum, which she presents to Judah.

JUDAH

(to Ricca)

Thank you, signora.

(to Grazia)

Perhaps a more suitable diet will help augment the anxiety you feel over the wardrobe.

(begins to write)

Daily consumption of galinga. It stimulates and heats the brain properly. Cinnamon in the wine to comfort a cold and humid stomach and encourage menstruation.

He smiles at her very warmly.

She observes him with great respect.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

At that first meeting there was nothing in him or his prescriptions that did not command my fervid obeisance.

65 INT. ATTIC ROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, FERRARA - DAY

65

An extremely beautiful gown is fussed over by the Servants as Grazia stands mightily impressed. It is made of thick velvet with a fur-lined cloak and ornamented with gold.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And my faith in him was rewarded by a dramatic improvement in my well-being.

A Servant places a tiara studded with emeralds and carnelians on Grazia's head. She beams and looks to...

La Nonna, observing with a sour scowl.

66 EXT. PIAZZA DELLA CATTEDRALE, FERRARA - DAY

66

CROWDS of people gather in the piazza, many in costumes - jugglers, street musicians, horsemen, fancy carriages.

And Grazia in her resplendent dress arriving on a litter carried by Servants.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

However, on the day of the wedding procession, I was greeted by a very large surprise. Very large, I must emphasize.

Her eyes widen in shock at the sight of...

A live ELEPHANT draped in colourful satin with a saddle on its back and a small, turbaned Indian KEEPER, bowing and smiling at Grazia. He places a ladder against the massive beast and motions for her to come.

Grazia turns to La Nonna in protest and alarm.

GRAZIA

La Nonna, I cannot possibly... There is not even the remotest prospect that I could...

LA NONNA

The Duke insists. It is part of the tradition. And your grandfather ordered the beast all the way from Constantinople. Now climb the ladder!

Grazia hesitates, working up the nerve.

66 CONTINUED:

66

The Keeper grins at the base of the ladder, inviting her.

She gingerly approaches the elephant, when...

The elephant shunts the ladder to the ground and stomps it into splinters. Everyone SHOUTS in alarm.

Grazia freezes in terror.

LA NONNA (CONT'D)

Giorgio! Quick, retrieve another ladder!

Giorgio runs off while Grazia starts to swoon. Then a rapid CLIP-CLOP of a galloping horse on the cobblestones catches her attention. She turns to see...

A rider dressed in a resplendent velvet doublet, heavy golden chain, and a berretta with red, purple, and black feathers streaming from it gallops straight for her.

He pulls the horse up and dismounts before her - a handsome, muscular young man: PIRRO VINCENZO GONZAGA, 20.

Grazia stares at him enthralled: she has never such beautiful man.

He strides up to her, thrusts one foot forward, sweeps his cloak behind him, and bows low.

PIRRO

Respects, ma'am. The Duke sends his best wishes to the Jewish queen. And the bride, Madonna Isabella, begs her to accept these colours as a token of gratitude for the wedding offering.

He stands erect before her and pulls a carved wooden box from beneath his cloak. He opens it for her.

Inside are three ribbons - red, purple, and black - attached to a gold plaque in the shape of the elephant.

Grazia looks from the box to...

Pirro, who gazes down at her.

PIRRO (CONT'D)

May I?

Grazia says and does nothing but stare into his eyes.

66 CONTINUED: (2)

66

Pirro stares back, lost in her eyes.

They stand there with their eyes locked in embrace for a long moment, as if nothing else is around them. Time stands still.

When a LOUD GUSHING SOUND is heard and Pirro quickly grabs Grazia and pulls her away from the elephant.

A flood of excrement from the elephant splashes on the cobblestones.

Pirro quickly fastens the plaquette over her shoulder and across her breast.

His hand brushes against her bosom.

Her eyes widen with delight.

And Pirro is suddenly jumping onto his horse and galloping off, his ribbons streaming behind him.

Grazia watches after him, moving to get a better view until she is at the base of the new ladder held in position by Giorgio.

She cranes to see Pirro and, without thinking, lightly climbs the ladder to get a better view.

She clambers into the saddle on the elephant's back just in time to see...

The galloping figure of Pirro disappearing into the city streets.

She sighs and smiles in satisfaction and then, with a start, abruptly realizes where she is: on the back of the elephant!

A MUSICAL FANFARE and CHEERING CROWDS OVER.

67 EXT. STREETS OF FERRARA - DAY

67

The MUSIC and CHEERING CONTINUES OVER as the wedding procession of spectacular floats and gorgeous costumes wends its way through the decorated streets of Ferrara and past hundreds of cheering people.

Grazia is in her magnificent dress and astride her elephant.

Her eyes scan the colourful crowd, searching and seeking in vain. She then looks down at...

The gold elephant plaquette with its coloured ribbons.

- 67 CONTINUED: 67
- And smiles to herself.
- The procession moves past the Comune di Ferrara (Palazzo Municipale).
- 68 EXT. DUKE'S CASTLE, FERRARA - DAY 68
- The procession approaches the Duke's Castle and Grazia, on her elephant, lumbers past the cheering crowds ...
- Across the drawbridge over the castle moat ...
- And into the castle grounds.
- 69 INT. BANQUET HALL, D'ESTE PALAZZO, FERRARA - NIGHT 69
- Long tables with hundreds of guests enjoy a resplendent feast of capons, fish, pies, and elegant pastries molded into figures and glazed with coloured sugar.
- Sitting at one of the tables is Grazia, surveying the diners, still seeking and searching, when she notices...
- Everyone turns to look at something.
- Grazia follows everyone's gaze to see...
- The Duke enter with his wife, LEONORA, followed by their daughter, Isabella and her husband Francesco, now 24.
- Grazia studies them with an air of calculation.
- 70 INT. DANCE HALL, D'ESTE PALAZZO, FERRARA - NIGHT 70
- MUSIC and swirling figures in the crowded dance hall.
- Grazia moves around the outer edges, still seeking and searching.
- As the dancers gambol about her in their party finery.
- Finally she spots...
- Pirro dancing with a young woman.
- She stops and gazes at him, love struck.
- He dances and dances.
- She gazes and gazes...

70 CONTINUED:

70

At him dancing until, his eyes notice her. He holds his eyes on her.

She stares at him, too awestruck to look away.

Until the Duke and Isabella pass between them, the Duke limping on a sore foot. When they have passed, Pirro has vanished from the dance floor.

Grazia looks about for him in vain. Then, she notices...

Isabella and the Duke, limping into a side robing room.

She heads towards the room.

71 INT. ROBING ROOM, D'ESTE PALAZZO, FERRARA - NIGHT

71

Grazia peers into the room from the doorway to see...

The Duke sitting with Isabella helping him prop his gouty foot up on a stool.

GRAZIA

Sir? Signorina...

Grazia moves into sight and curtsies before them.

DUKE

Ah, the little Jewess.

(to Isabella)

What is her...?

ISABELLA

Grazia, is it not?

GRAZIA

Yes.

DUKE

You have done the Jewish people proud today.

GRAZIA

Excellency, is it appropriate for me to beg a great favour of you on this happy day?

DUKE

Ask away.

GRAZIA

It is about my father, sir. He longs to be restored to the light of your sun.

DUKE

Daniele's exile is no doing of mine, child. It is a matter for the Jewish council to settle.

GRAZIA

But your word carries such weight, Excellency.

DUKE

You want me to intervene with the Jews?

GRAZIA

Yes, sir. It would seem a hard thing to an ordinary man to take the part of one who had injured him as my father injured you, sir. But to men of generosity and greatness of soul such as you, it is a natural and easy thing to forgive and even befriend the criminal.

She prostrates herself at her feet and waits nervously. The Duke is amused but Isabella is irritated.

ISABELLA

Get up, girl. You take a great liberty to bother my father with such a sordid affair on this happy occasion.

GRAZIA

I chose the occasion because I knew his heart would be full to overflowing.

DUKE

Full to overflowing? Where did you learn to speak so glibly?

GRAZIA

I speak what is in my heart.

DUKE

Hmmph, you speak what you learned from Cicero. Has your father been teaching you Latin?

71 CONTINUED: (2)

71

GRAZIA

No sir, Greek. I learned Latin from my tutor as a child...

DUKE

Well, you are quite the little rhetorician, Signorina Grazia.

GRAZIA

Rhetoric is cold porridge if it cannot warm the hearts of the hearers.

DUKE

A rhetorician and an aphorist. You have brought us much pleasure today on your elephant. But I do not interfere in the internal affairs of my Jews.

Grazia slowly rises, desperately thinking.

GRAZIA

You could bring him back, sir, to perform some special service, just as you brought me here.

ISABELLA

Unfortunately, there are no more elephants to ride. And so goodnight.

Grazia hesitates, then realizes she can push no further. She bows and turns away as OVER:

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Duke Ercole's compliments could not disguise the fact that I had failed to rescue my father.

72 INT. STAIRCASE, D'ESTE PALAZZO, FERRARA - NIGHT

72

Grazia, downcast and defeated, glumly descends the grand staircase.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Of what use were my rhetorical flourishes if I could not persuade him to champion my cause? Of what use was my daring if I could not evoke his sympathy?

Her face immediately brightens when something catches her eye:

72 CONTINUED:

72

Pirro at the bottom of the stairs smiling up at her.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The one bright memory I took away  
was of the young cavalier I dubbed  
my Knight of the Este Colours.

Pirro is escorted away by friends, but glances back to...

Grazia on the staircase.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 INT. MATURE GRAZIA'S ROOM, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - NIGHT

73

Mature Grazia sits at her writing table

There is a KNOCK on the door. Mature Grazia quickly closes  
her writing papers.

MATURE GRAZIA

Yes?

The door opens and Constanza steps in and sardonically  
announces.

COSTANZA

Sorry to disturb you, Lady Grazia,  
but I saw your candle light. Madama  
wants you to know she'll need to see  
you very early tomorrow. She's  
expecting a courier with a very  
important message first thing and it  
will need immediate attention.

MATURE GRAZIA

Very well, thank you.

Constanza leaves, closing the door.

Mature Grazia looks down at her writing table and fondles the  
gold elephant plaquette with its coloured ribbons remembering  
the excitement of first love.

FADE OUT:

END OF EPISODE ONE