

Episode Five

The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi

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"The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi"

Episode Five

Opening Credits

FADE IN:

1 INT. VARIOUS ROOMS, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - AFTERNOON 1

A MONTAGE of the paintings, sculptures, and tapestries on display in the various grand rooms of the Palazzo Colonna.

The SOUNDS of DINERS CHATTING and LIVE MUSIC echoes through the rooms and corridors coming from the dining room.

2 INT. DINING ROOM, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - DAY 2

The CHATTING and MUSIC CONTINUE while MATURE ISABELLA and a large number of HOUSEHOLD GUESTS sit at the dining table enjoying the food, the conversation, and the music, while being served an elaborate meal by a team of SERVANTS.

Among them is MATURE GRAZIA, who can barely touch her food.

Mature Isabella takes note of this.

MATURE ISABELLA

Lady Grazia, the food today is not to your liking?

MATURE GRAZIA

Pardon, Madonna Isabella, the food is, as usual, excellent. It is not the food, it is my own preoccupations.

MATURE ISABELLA

Preoccupations?

MATURE GRAZIA

Nothing of any import, my lady. Nothing to concern your time or...

MATURE ISABELLA

I think today that we are all preoccupied. Any time now we should be hearing word, shouldn't we?

MATURE GRAZIA

Yes.

MATURE ISABELLA

But tell me, Lady Grazia, is your concern with the outcome of the negotiations? Or with the well-being of your son, Danilo?

Mature Grazia hesitates; Mature Isabella studies her closely.

MATURE GRAZIA

I should think that both are intimately connected.

MATURE ISABELLA

How so?

MATURE GRAZIA

If General Frundsberg can be convinced to withdraw the German army, then the Pope, Rome, and all of us, including Danilo, are saved. If the Germans cannot be swayed, then...

MATURE ISABELLA

They will sack and pillage Roma. And hang the Pope.

There is a MURMUR of consternation around the table.

MATURE ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Do you sometimes wish you had chosen to accompany your husband to Constantinople and be far removed from all this peril? For both you and Danilo?

Again, Mature Grazia hesitates and weighs her answer well.

MATURE GRAZIA

I relish doing service for you and my countrymen here, in the land of my birth.

MATURE ISABELLA

And your son? Why must he be here, with you? And not with his father?

MATURE GRAZIA

Next year, when Danilo is of age, he may choose to live where he wishes.

(MORE)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

MATURE GRAZIA (CONT'D)
And with whom. His mother. Or his
father.

MATURE ISABELLA
I would think, then, that Danilo
will have a difficult choice.

Mature Grazia says nothing as CHATTER continues around her.

3 INT. GRAZIA'S BEDROOM, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - NIGHT

3

Mature Grazia sits at her writing table.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
Dearest son Danilo, I take up my
story now in 1499. After six years
of marriage, Judah and I had finally
consummated our marriage and to
celebrate he suggested we move to a
new place. Leave behind the pain of
Firenze and...

4 EXT. VISTA OF VENEZIA - DAY

4

Title over in handwritten Renaissance script:

Venezia

1499

A view of Venezia and the Grand Canal.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
. .. move to Venezia, where he became
body physician to Count Giovanni
Sassatello, General of the Republic
of Venezia. We moved to the island
of Murano.

Across the open water of the Venetian Lagoon to the island of
Murano.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Judah's position provided us, as is
customary,...

5 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

5

A modest but comfortable cottage on a canal.

5 CONTINUED:

5

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
... with a house, a mule, an allowance
of oil, fish, and grain, and an
astronomic stipend of twenty-five
ducats a month.

A gondola pulls up to the house with a passenger - Messer
ALDUS MANUTIUS, age 49, slim, sprightly, with bright eyes,
round spectacles and a very bushy head of wiry hair standing
out in all directions. Aldus is greeted by JUDAH, now 36.

6 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

6

Judah and Aldus sit at Judah's desk in his small studio.
GRAZIA, now 24, sits off to one side.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
Our very first visitor was Messer
Aldus Manutius, scholar, printer,
and founder of the celebrated Aldine
Press of Venezia.

ALDUS
But Maestro Leone, your translation
of Hippocrates' veterinary treatise
is known all over Italy. You are
ideal for the task. You translate
and I publish and the whole world
will read Plutarch's *Moralia*.

JUDAH
Precisely the problem, Ser Aldo.
Every stupid idea ever conceived can
be duplicated with this press of
yours and spread like trash throughout
the world.

ALDUS
If not Plutarch, Maestro, then Sappho.
Her poems are overdue a translation.

JUDAH
Sappho, no. But, Ser Aldo...

ALDUS
Maestro?

JUDAH
I can recommend another for the job.
One whose command of Latin and Greek
is unparalleled and whose hand is
immaculate.

ALDUS
Latin and Greek?

JUDAH
I taught her myself.

ALDUS
Her?

Judah turns to indicate Grazia. Aldus is taken aback and ponders a way out of this suggestion.

Grazia, too, is surprised and doesn't know what to say.

JUDAH
After all, a woman's delicate touch would not go amiss in the maze of Sappho's ambiguities. If Grazia is willing to take on the task.

ALDUS
(considering)
A woman's touch for a woman's poems. Besides, you will be there to assist the work. You need only cross the bedchamber to correct your scribe.

JUDAH
Now, one moment, Ser Aldo. If she is to do it, you must find her another editor. When it comes to scholarship, Madonna Grazia is, so to say, her own man.

Aldus LAUGHS and turns to Grazia.

ALDUS
Madonna *ebrea*, what say you to your honourable husband's suggestion?

Grazia looks back at him, warming to the idea.

GRAZIA
Perhaps my honourable husband has forgotten that I will soon be preoccupied with the duties of motherhood.

ALDUS
You are with child?

GRAZIA
Not yet.

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

JUDAH

But we do plan to be very shortly.

ALDUS

Ah, but perhaps, until that blessed event occurs, you could undertake a first draft of Sappho's work?

Grazia hesitates, now really warm to the idea.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And that was how I began my career as a scholar.

7 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

7

Grazia sits at a writing desk. She pores over three different texts, two in Latin and one (on ancient papyrus) in Greek. She writes her translation with a quill on vellum sheets.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Every day I toiled over the ancient manuscripts, turning their Latin and Greek texts into the Tuscan tongue.

8 INT. DINING ROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

8

Grazia and Judah sit down to a noontime meal served to them by their SERVANTS.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And each noon, Judah arrived home promptly to dine and perform our marital duties, to fulfill our promise to Diamante Bonaventura and conceive a child. This noon time act quickly became a ritual observance to us both.

9 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

9

Grazia pours water into a bedside basin.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And when I say ritual, I do not use the word loosely. First, the rose-scented water that would purify us for our labours.

CUT TO:

9 CONTINUED:

9

Grazia pours a small measure of oil into a bedside dish.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Next, the sweet oil to ease the
passage of the life-giving ooze from
Judah's body to mine.

CUT TO:

Judah and Grazia, her head covered in a shawl, kneel in prayer.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Then prayers together. I approached
the task of lighting Judah's fire...

CUT TO:

They ease into bed and into one another's arms in a gentle,
near-chaste embrace.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... in the same spirit as when I lit
the Sabbath candles each Friday
evening.

CUT TO:

They make tender love yet methodical love.

CUT TO:

Grazia and Judah finish their lovemaking. He rolls off of
her and they both lie back. He closes his eyes in sleep,
hers remain open in frustration.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And the growing disappointment at my
failure to get pregnant...

10 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

10

Grazia scratches away with her quill and manuscripts.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
... was offset by the satisfaction I
felt with the scratching of my quill.

Throughout the following, Grazia ages from 24 to 35.

11 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY 11
Grazia pours the rose-scented water into the basin.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
Word came from Ferrara that Ricca...

12 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY 12
The words flow out of the quill tip onto the vellum sheet.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
... was pregnant with Jehiel's third
child.

13 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY 13
Oil is poured into a dish by the bed.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
And from Mantova that Isabella
Gonzaga...

14 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY 14
Grazia sits writing.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
... was pregnant with her first.

15 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY 15
Grazia and Judah kneel in prayer.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
All while I remained childless. But
always ...

16 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY 16
Grazia continues to write.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
... my quill beckoned. Sappho gave
way to ...

17 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY 17

Grazia and Judah make tender, methodical love.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
... Aristophanes. First *The Flies*.
Then *The Birds*.

18 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY 18

Aldus Manutius presents Grazia with a bound and printed copy of her book.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
Both brought me acclaim and a deep
sense of accomplishment and pleasure.

The pages are in an elegant script accompanied by fine engravings.

Grazia surveys the pages with great satisfactions while Judah looks on with pride.

19 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - NIGHT 19

Judah sleeps. Grazia lies awake and sees...

DIAMANTE standing at the foot of the bed, smiling at her.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
So it was natural that my inability
to keep my promise to Diamante and
bear the daughter she had lost was
transferred to my work as a writer.

20 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY 20

Grazia writes with a different kind of energy.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
It began as a modest poem on her
life modeled after Boccaccio's *De
Claris Mulieribus*.

REVEAL Diamante sitting across from her.

DIAMANTE
Just a few more pages, Grazia.
(MORE)

20 CONTINUED:

20

DIAMANTE (CONT'D)

One or two other women of courage to
keep me company.

Grazia observes her and returns to writing.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

So I did not stop with Diamante and
wrote of other heroic women. Isotta
Nogarola, the great scholar of
Firenze. Ginevra Almieri, who fought
her way back to life from the grave.
The virago Caterina Sforza. Until I
created a gallery of women in what I
soon titled *The Book of Heroines*.

Suddenly: BANG! BANG! BANG! On the door. Diamante is gone.

21 INT. ENTRANCE, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

21

Grazia opens the door to...

JEHIEL, now 34 (it is 1510), appearing exhausted, bedraggled,
and tense. He carries a large bag stuffed with his belongings.

JEHIEL

Help me, sister.

She is stunned.

22 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

22

Grazia sits with Jehiel who quickly gobbles up some food and
drink.

GRAZIA

We will petition Marchesana Isabella.

JEHIEL

What possible good would that do?

GRAZIA

The Duke is her brother. She can
speak on your behalf.

JEHIEL

And why would she do that? She hates
us dei Rossis.

GRAZIA

She is willing to do anything if there is some benefit to her.

JEHIEL

And what would that be? What benefit to her if her brother forgives me of witchcraft and blasphemy?

GRAZIA

First, we establish that you did no such thing. And then we...

JEHIEL

But I did.

GRAZIA

... we offer Isabella some precious jewels that I have from La Nonna and...

JEHIEL

But I did!

Grazia stops short and looks in alarm at her brother.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

I did commit witchcraft and blasphemy.

Silence. She is in disbelief; he in shame and frustration.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

I am not clever like you or like Judah. I work in a foundry, Grazia, making cannons. Do you have any idea how much I earn there, either in terms of respect or money? Do you think I could gain access to the Duke's court as a foundry man? Support my wife and my children as well as I would...

GRAZIA

As well as she demands? Your wife is nothing but...

JEHIEL

Grazia, please! It is not Ricca. It is my own... I sold Hebrew amulets to the ladies and gentlemen of the Duke's court and I forecast their futures with Tarot cards.

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

GRAZIA

You told me those cards were just a game.

JEHIEL

I have the gift, Grazia.

GRAZIA

The gift? What gift? What are you...?

JEHIEL

The gift of prophecy. The gift of magic. I have an angel in my head.

GRAZIA

Oh, Jehiel, how could you...?

JEHIEL

Christians will pay any price for Jewish magic. That is how I became a member of Duke Alfonso's court. How I could afford the fine clothing. Sail the river on the *bucentaur*. I actually galloped at the Duke's side hunting wild boar. Me! A foundry man.

GRAZIA

And the Duke approved of your... magic?

JEHIEL

He was my number one customer. And my number one agent. All the court came to me because of him.

GRAZIA

Then why has he issued this summons for you to meet his inquisitor?

JEHIEL

I also... I also concoct potions.

GRAZIA

Potions?!

JEHIEL

Not just by myself. With an apothecary of my acquaintance. The medical profession, Grazia, does not hold a God-given right to dispense remedies.

22 CONTINUED: (3)

22

GRAZIA
What remedies? What potions?

JEHIEL
Venus's favours. For barrenness.

Grazia stops short.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
And Duke Alfonso's wife...

GRAZIA
Lucrezia Borgia. She was barren?

JEHIEL
So the Duke came to me for help.
And... And it worked, Grazia. She
became pregnant immediately. After
years of failure she was pregnant!

Grazia ponders this with alarm and fascination.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
But last month, in her seventh month,
the baby was born premature and
stillborn. Madama Lucrezia fell
into a fever and nearly died. When
she recovered, she denounced me.
And now the Duke's men are hunting
for me. I need to flee before they
find me here.

GRAZIA
Venus's favours?

JEHIEL
Yes.

GRAZIA
It worked? She became pregnant?

JEHIEL
Yes, but...

GRAZIA
Many babies are born dead, Jehiel.

JEHIEL
True, sister, but...

GRAZIA
And many mothers fall into a fever
and do not recover.

22 CONTINUED: (4)

22

JEHIEL

Yes.

GRAZIA

It is not necessarily your potion
that killed the baby.

JEHIEL

Grazia, we're dealing here with
Christian nobility. Logic is not
what they seek. They seek a
scapegoat.

GRAZIA

And the Jewish cabalist is perfect
for the role.

JEHIEL

I need to get to Roma. And after
that, somewhere out of reach of Lord
Alfonso. I cannot face the torturer.
Perhaps Greece. I do not know. I
only know that... I will never..
Never see you or my family again.

They stare at one another a long, painful moment.

GRAZIA

I will approach Isabella Gonzaga...

JEHIEL

No, no, no. It is no use. Please,
help me, Grazia. Please.

GRAZIA

Yes, yes, of course. But first you
must help me.

He looks at her: Help her how?

23 EXT. ROOF, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - NIGHT

23

A stool sits in the middle of the roof area bathed in an eerie
moonlight and flickering torchlight.

Grazia enters, moves to the stool, and sits on it. She appears
apprehensive.

A moment later, a figure in a long, white tunic with a red
belt and a helmet garlanded with drawn snakes, moves to Grazia.
It is Jehiel.

23 CONTINUED:

23

He places a marble vase down. From beneath his tunic, he retrieves a long bone of a man's leg with a sponge attached to it.

JEHIEL
(muttering)
AN INCANTATION IN HEBREW.

Grazia observes this with barely-disguised skepticism mixed with fascination.

He kneels before Grazia and kisses the tiles. He then takes the sponge and dips it into the vase.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Let us trace Pluto's circle on the
tiles with this dragon's blood.

He removes the sponge from the vase soaked with red water and paints a large circle around Grazia on her stool.

She watches, amazed and amused.

He retrieves a deck of cards from beneath his tunic and begins to shuffle them.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
(mumbling)
ODD-SOUNDING INCANTATION.

Finally he stops and holds up the deck before Grazia.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
Draw five cards.

She selects five cards and pulls them from his hand.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
Now lay them out in the shape of a
Greek cross.

She leans off her stool and lays the cards, face-down, on the tiles in the shape of a Greek cross with four arms of equal length.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
Now you must turn them over one by
one. Starting at the top and going
around the clock.

GRAZIA
And the one in the centre?

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

JEHIEL

That is the one that will seal your
fate.

She reaches down and turns over the top card -

The Lovers: a man and a woman, their hands joined, beneath a
nude, blindfolded Cupid about to launch an arrow.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

The Lovers. It shows the struggle
between sacred and profane love. It
forecasts the coming of a test. You
will subject yourself to a trial.

Grazia listens intently, trying to believe.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

Turn the next card.

Grazia turns the next card over and it is upside down. She
starts to turn it right.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

No!

He snatches the card from her hand and lays it down as it was
turned over, upside down.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

You must not defy Fortuna, Grazia.
An upside-down card reverses the
meaning.

GRAZIA

Is that bad?

JEHIEL

In this case, yes. The obverse
meaning of the Lovers is delay,
disappointment, and divorce.

GRAZIA

Divorce?

JEHIEL

I do not create these portents,
Grazia. I merely divine them. Delay,
disappointment, divorce. That is
what threatens you, unless...

GRAZIA

Unless?

23 CONTINUED: (3)

23

JEHIEL
Turn the next card.

She turns over the next card -

The Wheel of Fortune: A winged, blind-folded figure turns a golden ring balanced on the back of an aged man in a ragged white garment and festooned with the legend "*Sum sine regno*" - "I do not rule."

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
The Wheel of Fortune. It tells you to believe in the signs. You are not the master of your own fate, no matter how much you wish to be.

Grazia ponders this.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
The next card.

Grazia turns over the fourth card -

The Hanged Man: a youth in green hose hanging upside down by one foot.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
The Hanged Man. He predicts reversal of the mind. Rebirth. He orders you to reverse your thinking and to prepare for the approach of new life forces. He orders you to surrender.

GRAZIA
To what?

JEHIEL
To Venus.

Grazia is startled.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
You and your husband have incurred her wrath. How you offended her I do not know. Look up, Grazia.
(motions upwards)

They both look up at the night sky riddled with stars.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)
She is there among them, looking down, cursing you with barrenness. Ask her what you must do.

23 CONTINUED: (4)

23

Grazia studies the night sky, getting caught up in Jehiel's ritual.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

Repeat after me. I conjure you,
luminaries of heaven and earth.

GRAZIA

I conjure you, luminaries of heaven
and earth.

JEHIEL

And in the name of the twelve hours
of the day and the three watches of
the night...

GRAZIA

And in the name of the twelve hours
of the day and the three watches of
the night...

JEHIEL

And the thirty years of *shemitta* and
the fifty years of jubilee. ..

GRAZIA

And the thirty years of *shemitta* and
the fifty years of jubilee. ..

JEHIEL

And the name of the angel Iabiel,
who watches over wombs,. ..

GRAZIA

And the name of the angel Iabiel,
who watches over wombs,. ..

JEHIEL

And of the angel Anael, ruler over
all manner of love,. ..

GRAZIA

And of the angel Anael, ruler over
all manner of love,. ..

JEHIEL

To look into her mirror and find
there a child for me.

GRAZIA

To look into her mirror and find
there a child for me.

23 CONTINUED: (5)

23

She looks to Jehiel who stares fervently heavenward. He then faces Grazia.

JEHIEL

Now touch the last card and kiss it.

She picks up the card in the centre of the cross without turning it over and kisses it.

Jehiel takes the card from her and places it down...

Face up in the middle of the cards - The Empress: A big, luminous golden woman with green hands.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

The Empress! Fruitfulness and fertility. But she demands powerful purification.

Grazia looks at him: How can I purify myself?

Jehiel produces a small vial of fluid from within his tunic.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

Fortuna smiles on you, sister. This is a potion of Venus's secret ingredients, handed down by the ancients. Drink it to purify yourself and Venus will be propitiated.

He extends the vial to her.

She stares at it, hesitating.

In the flickering torchlight the vial appears ominous.

She finally takes the vial from Jehiel and slowly raises it to her lips.

Pauses.

Then drinks it down.

JEHIEL (CONT'D)

You will produce a healthy son.

She looks to him exuding gratitude and conviction in the whole process. Then catches herself.

GRAZIA

Quick, before Judah returns from ser Manutius's Philhellenic Academy. We haven't much time.

23 CONTINUED: (6)

23

She leaps up and begins to gather up everything.

JEHIEL

And you will help me, sister? Escape
to Roma?

GRAZIA

Of course I will. Now hurry. Judah
will not appreciate our little ritual.

They scramble off the roof with the stool and Jehiel's props.

24 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

24

Jehiel stands before a gondola packed with his belongings.
Grazia and Judah bid him farewell.

JUDAH

We will do our utmost, brother-in-
law, and speak to the Duke on your
behalf.

GRAZIA

We will make things right for you.

JEHIEL

No one can ever make things right
for me. But I do have a request of
you.

GRAZIA

Anything.

JEHIEL

My wife. I know how you feel about
her. But I must ask you. Will you
watch over her and my little boys?
Will you, Grazia?

GRAZIA

I promise to love your sons as if
they were my own children. And I
will respect Ricca as your wife and
as the mother of your children.
More I cannot promise, Jehiel.

JEHIEL

More I cannot ask.

He kisses Grazia and holds her close to him, fighting back
his emotions.

24 CONTINUED:

24

He then embraces Judah and, without looking back, turns and climbs into the gondola which glides away down the canal.

Grazia falls into Judah's arm, SOBBING.

JUDAH

Such a price to pay for such foolishness.

Grazia SOBS.

JUDAH (CONT'D)

Will you be all right, Grazia? Shall I stay home this morning?

GRAZIA

No, dear husband. I have my work and you have... On second thought, perhaps it would be better if you stayed home.

She takes his hand and leads him into the house.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Three days later we received a coded message from Roma announcing Jehiel's safe arrival and we rejoiced. But our jubilation was short-lived.

Jehiel's gondola disappears down the canal.

25 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

25

Grazia packs a bag, including the jewels from La Nonna.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

A dispatch arrived from Ferrara with news that the dei Rossi *banco* and all its assets had been confiscated.

26 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

26

Grazia, with her bag, is helped into a gondola by Judah.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And that my baby brother, Gershon, was held prisoner accused of treason for not revealing the whereabouts of his brother, Jehiel.

The gondola pulls away.

27 EXT. GRAND CANAL, VENEZIA - DAY

27

Grazia sits in the gondola as it wends its way through the canals of Venice. Grazia notices growing crowds of people and bonfires lit along the shore.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
I left immediately for Mantova.

Suddenly a large flotilla of gondolas approaches from the opposite direction. The crowds lining the shore SHOUT: "KILL THE TRAITOR!"

GRAZIA
What is it?

GONDOLIER
The traitor, Francesco Gonzaga.

Grazia's GONDOLIER eases their craft to the side and parks.

The flotilla nears them, the crowds SHOUT LOUDER.

The central barge has FRANCESCO GONZAGA set up on a high box surrounded by guards with unsheathed swords held aloft. He has a ferocious scowl on his face.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
Francesco Gonzaga, the hero of
Fornovo, had betrayed his Venetian
patrons by trading his Venetian
generalship for a high-paying
commission from the hated French.

Many barges follow piled high with booty: silver plate and suits of armour; sumptuous hangings; furnishings; and five barges with very fine horses.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He had been captured and brought to
Venezia in chains, along with many
barges of booty captured with him.

Grazia watches in amazement and with some amusement.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It had been many years since our
lives had intersected with the
Gonzagas. Yet this man's wife,
Isabella, may again hold the key to
my own family's fate.
(MORE)

27 CONTINUED:

27

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It was her brother, Duke Alfonso of
Ferrara, who had issued the charge
against Jehiel and who now held
Gershom.

28 INT. DEI ROSSI HOUSE, MANTOVA - DAY

28

The darkened, boarded-up house is suddenly lit up as the door
is opened. Then windows as figures move into the entranceway.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
But first, I had to move Jehiel's
family from Ferrara, where they had
been evicted, to my empty family
house in Mantova.

Grazia leads RICCA, her THREE INFANT BOYS, all CRYING, and
DOROTEA into the empty house, its furnishings covered in
shrouds.

Grazia gets to work, opening more windows and pulling the
shrouds off the furniture.

Dorotea shepherds the CRYING infants away into other rooms.

Ricca stands in the middle of the room, SOBBING.

GRAZIA
Ricca! Ricca, we have much to do
and no time for angst.

RICCA
Oh, Grazia, what am I to do?
Everything is gone. My beautiful
house. My fine silver service.

GRAZIA
Ricca...

RICCA
My beautiful rock crystal vessel
with the ormolu mounting.

GRAZIA
Ricca... Ricca...

RICCA
And what will happen to me? Deserted,
my children unprotected.
(MORE)

28 CONTINUED:

28

RICCA (CONT'D)
How could he leave me here buried,
neither wife nor widow? I cannot
mourn, nor can I marry.

Grazia finally gives up.

29 INT. GRAND ROOM, GONZAGA REGGIO, MANTOVA - DAY

29

ISABELLA GONZAGA, now 36, holds forth on her dais surrounded
by dozens of courtiers and citizens.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
I immediately wrote a note to Madonna
Isabella requesting an audience.
And she replied immediately.

ISABELLA
Madonna Grazia!

She motions for Grazia to come forward.

Grazia moves forward from among the many courtiers.

Isabella extends her hand and Grazia bows and kisses it.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)
This lady, Madonna Grazia Ebreia, is
an old friend whom we have not seen
in many years. We will speak with
her in private. And summon Master
Federico into our presence.

The courtiers and citizens all withdraw, leaving behind a
half-dozen maidens and two footmen.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)
Grazia, tell us of your literary
work. We have heard it praised
extravagantly.

GRAZIA
The *illustrissima* is too kind. I
merely translate the great works of
others.

ISABELLA
Not your translation, Grazia, but
your own work that I wish to hear
about.

GRAZIA

My own work?! But how did you ever hear of... ?

ISABELLA

Maestro Judah, your own husband, speaks very highly of it. Now tell me what this work is to be called.

GRAZIA

The Book of Heroines. It deals with the lives of heroic women.

ISABELLA

Tell me, Grazia, by what process have you selected your heroines?

GRAZIA

I mean to concentrate on modern women, with only a sprinkling of the ancients to establish the model.

ISABELLA

And these modern women, who are they?

GRAZIA

Caterina Sforza, the Virago of Forli, is one.

ISABELLA

Ah, yes, poor woman. And who else?

GRAZIA

A young woman I knew in Firenze who is the inspiration for this book. A Jewess of no particular talent or notoriety who gave her life for the love of a child.

ISABELLA

Another dead one. And who else?

GRAZIA

Your illustrious sister of beloved memory, Duchess Beatrice of Milano.

ISABELLA

Quite so. But Grazia, my honourable sister is, alas, dead like so many of your candidates. Who do you have that is alive and breathing?

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

GRAZIA

A young scholar in Firenze who has immured herself in a convent for life to pursue scholarship. Her father has completely disowned her because she refuses to marry.

ISABELLA

A decision I find quite incomprehensible. Surely we women are meant to be married. Why else has God arranged the race in two sexes?

A courtier approaches with a ten-year old boy, FEDERICO GONZAGA.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Ah, Federico. Come here to your mother.

The boy approaches and formally kisses her hand.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

This is Grazia del Medigo, a woman scholar.

The boy bows before her.

FEDERICO

Honoured, Madonna Grazia.

ISABELLA

Grazia worked very hard at her Latin and Greek as a young girl, just as your mother did. And now Madonna Grazia is known throughout Italy. And that is why you too must study your Virgil.

FEDERICO

Yes, mama.

ISABELLA

You may go now, Federico.

FEDERICO

Yes, mama.

The boy turns to leave.

ISABELLA

Federico.

29 CONTINUED: (3)

29

He stops and turns back.

She extends her hand again. He bows and kisses it, but this time Isabella clasps the child's hand and pulls him to her for a short but fervent embrace.

She releases the boy and he moves off with the courtier.

GRAZIA

He is a lovely boy, *illustrissima*.
You are truly blessed.

ISABELLA

Yes. And you, Grazia. You have not
had children? Or are your books
your only offspring?

GRAZIA

Maestro Judah and I have not yet had
the good fortune.

Isabella suddenly leans forward, very close to Grazia, and speaks confidentially.

ISABELLA

I saw an old friend of yours last
week. In Bozzuolo. He was very
eager for news of you.

Grazia blanches, but quickly recovers so as not to betray any emotion. She remains silent.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Do you not want to know who it was,
Grazia?

Grazia still remains silent.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Very well. What news do you have
from Ferrara? I understand that
your brother, Maestro Jehiel, has
landed himself in serious trouble
with my brother the Duke.

GRAZIA

But it is not Maestro Jehiel who has
reaped the punishment. The one being
tortured in the dungeon is my younger
brother, Gershom, who is totally
blameless in the affair. Would you
intercede on his behalf?

ISABELLA

I could but what good would it do?
My brother is bitterly disappointed
by the death of his heir.

GRAZIA

But it was my brother Jehiel's doing,
not Gershom's.

ISABELLA

When it comes to satisfying a
vendetta, one member of the family
is as good as another. Now, about
your Book of Heroines, I would be
disappointed if you did not consider
me fit company for the spinster
scholar of Firenze and the rest.

Grazia reacts - so this is what Isabella is after.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Of course, you understand that my
offer to petition my brother on behalf
of your brother in no way represents
a bid for membership in your
sisterhood.

GRAZIA

Of course, *illustrissima*.

ISABELLA

You know how, as a scholarly scribe,
to phrase such petitions. My
secretary, Messer Equicola, is, like
all men, hopeless on such matters.

GRAZIA

I shall gladly serve as your secretary
in this affair, Marchesana.

ISABELLA

And you are aware, I assume, of my
husband's incarceration in Venezia.

GRAZIA

Yes, madama. I am most grievously
sorry.

ISABELLA

The Venetians have offered to ransom
my husband. Do you have any idea
what their price is?

29 CONTINUED: (5)

29

GRAZIA

No. I can only imagine it would be high.

ISABELLA

The price is... The price is Federico.

Grazia is shocked, while Isabella's facade of self control almost cracks.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

They release my husband, but keep my child. That innocent babe is to stand as hostage for his father's promise not to engage against Venezia once he is released.

GRAZIA

I hardly know what to say, *illustrissima*. It places you in an impossible predicament.

ISABELLA

And if I do not comply, my husband, the gallant Marchese, has threatened to cut my vocal chords.

GRAZIA

And what are your intentions?

ISABELLA

I have so far managed to hold on to the boy. But now the Pope has insinuated himself into it. He has offered to house Federico in the Vatican palace under his own supervision. That monster means to take from me my last and finest treasure. I hope that God ruins him and he dies!

She quickly composes herself and becomes very businesslike.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

The best line of approach we can take is to plead a mother's love. It is the truest thing we can say and truth is always the best argument, is it not?

Grazia looks at her with genuine sympathy.

29 CONTINUED: (6)

29

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Thus I became her secretary, but for once did not feel badly used. I was flattered that she had asked me, a humble scribe, to speak up in her name against a marchese, a doge, and a pope. Three men who had turned a lovely little boy into a pawn in their power struggles.

30 INT. GRAZIA'S ROOM, GONZAGA REGGIO, MANTOVA - DAY

30

Grazia sits at a writing table writing.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And so I moved into the Gonzaga reggio to work with Marchesana Isabella and the letters and petitions began. On behalf of my brother, Gershom, and the marchesana's son, Federico.

31 EXT. DEI ROSSI HOUSE, MANTOVA - DAY

31

A wagon pulls up in front of the house. Grazia is in the back. Several SERVANTS help her lift the battered body of GERSHOM, wrapped in a cloth, his face bruised and swollen, from the back of the wagon.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

The petition for Gershom proved successful and its timing proved crucial. My baby brother, now a young man of 23, could not have survived another day of torture in the Duke's dungeon.

32 INT. DEI ROSSI HOUSE, MANTOVA - DAY

32

Grazia applies lotions to the swollen, blistering welts that cross Gershom's back in stripes.

Dorotea enters with a bag of lotions and ointments.

GRAZIA

Where is Ricca? We need her help.

DOROTEA

I shall tend to your brother. He is, after all, my son.

GRAZIA

Stepson. I feel weak and need to lie down. Where is Ricca?

DOROTEA

I can tend the boy.

GRAZIA

Where is she?!

Dorotea hesitates. Then, finally...

DOROTEA

Madonna Grazia, I have tried. I have tried in every way. I am so ashamed.

GRAZIA

What? Where is your daughter?

DOROTEA

She is no daughter to me.

GRAZIA

Just tell me where she is!

DOROTEA

Ricca no longer lives here. She is gone.

GRAZIA

Gone where? Dorotea, will you please stop speaking in hints and explain what has happened?

DOROTEA

She lives with a merchant. A rich German. From Dusseldorf. He has taken over a big house in the Via San Giacomo and she lives there with him.

GRAZIA

She lives there, with a man, openly?

DOROTEA

Yes, Grazia, but people understand. They know she is a deserted woman, neither wife nor widow.

GRAZIA

And her children? She is the mother of three children.

32 CONTINUED: (2)

32

DOROTEA

She said if she had to live one more day in this nunnery, she would slit her throat.

GRAZIA

Not a bad solution.

Gershom GROANS.

GRAZIA (CONT'D)

What is it?

GERSHOM

We are well rid of her.

GRAZIA

But Gershom, her children. She is their mother.

GERSHOM

They are particularly well rid of her.

DOROTEA

Go, Grazia. Rest. I will tend to Gershom.

GERSHOM

Go, sister. You have done your utmost.

33 INT. BEDROOM, DEI ROSSI HOUSE, MANTOVA - DAY

33

Grazia sits on the edge of the bed, slumped over, head between her knees, MOANING.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

At first, I cursed the fits of nausea.

Grazia lifts her head in sudden awareness.

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

But then I realized. Jehiel's potion had indeed worked.

34 INT. ISABELLA'S PRIVATE SUITE, GONZAGA REGGIO - DAY

34

Isabella Gonzaga, her face distraught, reads the latest missive from the pope.

34 CONTINUED:

34

Grazia observes her with sympathy.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

But while one petition was successful,
the other was not. As Madama feared,
our efforts to keep her son were
finally defeated.

Isabella turns to Grazia, all business.

ISABELLA

Very well, then we must delay his
departure. He cannot go until an
appropriate escort has been arranged.
Until that time, he shall remain
here.

GRAZIA

I shall write his Holiness
accordingly. With the right tone of
solicitous concern...

ISABELLA

Concern for the boy's safety and
well-being.

GRAZIA

Precisely, madonna.

Grazia moves out of the room through the heavy red curtains.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

There was nothing now to keep me in
Mantova. Gershom was recovering.

35 INT. GRAZIA'S ROOM, GONZAGA REGGIO - EVENING

35

Grazia packs her belongings

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Madonna Isabella's need for my
secretarial services was over. So I
resolved to announce my departure.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

GRAZIA

Enter.

The door opens and a young LADY-IN-WAITING appears, a sly
smirk on her face.

35 CONTINUED:

35

LADY-IN-WAITING

Pardon, Lady Grazia. But madama
want to see you in her private suite.

GRAZIA

Now?

LADY-IN-WAITING

Yes, immediately. She would like
you to hurry, because...

GERSHOM

Because?

LADY-IN-WAITING

Because she has a surprise for you.
A very special surprise.

The girl TITTERS and smirks and hurries out of the room.

Grazia ponders this.

36 INT. ISABELLA'S SUITE, GONZAGA REGGIO - EVENING

36

Grazia approaches the heavy curtains, behind which VOICES
CHATTER and LAUGH. A MAN'S LAUGH is heard.

Grazia hesitates as...

The Lady-in-Waiting emerges from behind the curtains.

LADY-IN-WAITING

You had better go in at once, Madonna
Grazia. Madama has been inquiring
after you all evening.

GRAZIA

Who has she got in there?

LADY-IN-WAITING

The gentleman who is to escort Prince
Federico to Roma. Just arrived home
from the French court.

The Lady-in-Waiting hurries off, leaving Grazia alone outside
the curtains, listening to the CHATTER and LAUGHTER. She
hesitates, wanting to turn away, when she catches SNATCHES of
CONVERSATION from a MAN'S VOICE.

MAN (O.S.)

Madonna Grazia, does she still...
(fades under)

36 CONTINUED:

36

ISABELLA (O.S.)

She is still slim and pale and pliant
as a reed. I'll tell you, cousin, I
am taking my life into my hands to
reintroduce you to her, for you are
quite certain to fall in love with
her all over again.

Grazia reacts. Quivering, she eases the curtain aside enough
to peek through.

Through the curtains, Isabella chats with LORD PIRRO, now 39,
but still gallant and striking.

PIRRO

The last time I encountered her was
when I escorted her to see you.

ISABELLA

The money for the Battle of Fornovo.

PIRRO

Yes, and she cut me dead. Perhaps
she will not be happy to see me.

Grazia watches, stress and emotion playing on her face.

ISABELLA

Perhaps yes, perhaps no. We shall
see. I have promised her a surprise
and if you are nothing else, you are
certainly that.

Grazia turns and runs away.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

God knows I wanted to stay.

37 INT. GRAND STAIRCASE, GONZAGA REGGIO - NIGHT

37

Grazia, with her packed bag, runs down the staircase and out
through the gates

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

But my feet obeyed my command and
delivered me from temptation.

38 EXT. VENEZIA - DAY

38

Grazia, in a gondola, makes her way across Venetian lagoon
towards the island of Murano.

38 CONTINUED:

38

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
Two jewels from La Nonna's treasure
trove bought me my passage home.
And there I could finally share my
wonderful news with Judah.

39 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

39

Grazia enters the house excited.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
I had not yet told anyone and now,
finally...

She stops short at the sight of...

Judah, his face downcast, full of foreboding.

Grazia is immediately concerned: "What is it?"

40 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

40

Fingebat lies on the bed, WHEEZING.

Grazia sits with him and pets him.

JUDAH
A stroke. Three days ago. I believe
he's just been hanging on in the
hope of seeing you.

Fingebat's eyes recognize Grazia and his body perks up ever
so little before fading back into lethargy.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
My life's companion, the gallant
Fingebat, ceased to draw breath that
very night. His death robbed me of
the excitement I hoped to share with
Judah over the new life stirring in
my belly.

41 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

41

Grazia sits writing, her belly swollen with child.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
By June, it seemed that everything
was fecund and growing - the trees
(MORE)

41 CONTINUED:

41

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
and flowers outside my door, the
babe in my womb, and the manuscript
in my *studiolo*.

A SERVANT enters.

SERVANT
Madama, Ser Aldus Manutius is here
to see you.

GRAZIA
Show him in.

The Servant leaves while Grazia straightens herself out to
receive him.

Aldus enters, carrying papers.

ALDUS
Good day, Madonna Grazia. I hope I
do not disturb your efforts but I
have just received the most
extraordinary proposal and I just
had to share it with you immediately.

GRAZIA
Greetings, Ser Aldus. And what is
this that is so extraordinary.

He passes her the papers.

ALDUS
Marchesana Isabella Gonzaga has
offered to sponsor the publication
of your *Book of Heroines*.

Grazia takes the papers and quickly reads them.

ALDUS (CONT'D)
She is a powerful and wealthy patron
to have, Madama Grazia. This will
truly establish your reputation as a
great author. All of Italy will be
able to read of your heroines and
they will become as famous as their
author and champion...

GRAZIA
Ser Aldus.

He stops his excited blabbering.

41 CONTINUED: (2)

41

GRAZIA (CONT'D)

The Marchesana is suggesting I include the story of Anaxarete.

ALDUS

Yes. She disdained her suitor and was turned to stone by Venus. Hmmm, yes. Sacrificing herself for chastity...

GRAZIA

Ser Aldus, the book is about contemporary women. Not about the ancients whose stories have been often told.

ALDUS

True, madonna. But if she sponsors the book, then I can publish it. And isn't that why you wrote it?

GRAZIA

She also suggests here that a recent addition to my book, Christine di Pisan, lived in Paris and that makes her unsuitable.

ALDUS

You know how the Marchesana hates the French.

GRAZIA

Next she will suggest including her little dog, Aura: "For she is female, after all, and a great delight to the *illustrissima*."

ALDUS

You exaggerate, Lady Grazia.

GRAZIA

She intends to take over my book as she has tried to take over everything else.

ALDUS

But it will be published and...

GRAZIA

Better unpublished and unseen than tailored to the taste of this whimsical, egocentric lady.

41 CONTINUED: (3)

41

She picks up her manuscript and shoves it in a drawer.

ALDUS

But Lady Grazia, you cannot mean
that you would...

She turns and gives him a look of such power that...

He immediately stops his objections.

ALDUS (CONT'D)

Of course, as the author, you can do
whatever you wish. But should you,
at some future time, wish to rethink
this decision, then I would be more
than...

GRAZIA

Yes, yes, Ser Aldus. If I ever
rethink, I shall let you know
immediately. Now, if you will excuse
me, I am not feeling well and I need
to...

(suddenly winces in
pain)

ALDUS

Are you quite all right, Lady Grazia?
Is there anything I can do?

GRAZIA

No, thank you. I am quite...
(cries in pain)

Water dribbles to the floor from beneath her dress.

Aldus watches in alarm.

GRAZIA (CONT'D)

Could you ask the servants to send
for my honourable husband immediately
please.

ALDUS

Of course, of course.

He hurries out of the room while Grazia slumps to the chair
in pain.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

My daughter and your sister, Fioretta,
came six weeks before her time, but
not without travail.

42 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

42

Grazia lies in bed, exhausted, sweating, PANTING, MOANING, her large belly exposed. A MIDWIFE carefully kneads the belly with her fingers.

Judah works closely with the Midwife.

FEMALE SERVANTS hover about in the background.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
Some days before her delivery, she
turned herself upside down in my
womb.

MIDWIFE
Yes, the little creature is turning.
A finger length at a time, but
turning.

GRAZIA
Please... Please, stop. Just for a
minute...

MIDWIFE
But if we stop...

JUDAH
Lady Grazia needs some respite.
Just a few moments to regain her
strength.

MIDWIFE
Very well.

The Midwife removes her kneading fingers and sits back.

Judah holds a goblet of water for Grazia to drink.

JUDAH
You are so brave and so strong,
Grazia. Just a little while longer
and the baby we've waited so long
for will be here in your arms.

She looks at him, hope flickering amidst her exhaustion.

MIDWIFE
O Dio! It has slid back. Feet facing
out.

42 CONTINUED:

42

She is feeling Grazia's belly and immediately begins her kneading work again.

43 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - NIGHT

43

The efforts of the Midwife and Judah continue by candlelight as a near-delirious Grazia struggles to concentrate and stay awake.

JUDAH

We have moved it, Grazia. It is about halfway now. Before long the head will be...

Grazia suddenly SCREAMS and contorts her face in pain.

MIDWIFE

Contractions have begun.

JUDAH

We must hurry. It will be strangled inside her.

Judah and the Midwife leap into action as...

Grazia squirms on the bed. She swoons and loses consciousness.

MATURE GRAZIA

Like Madonna Lucrezia Borgia, I fell victim to feverish delirium.

A series of blurred images of human-like shapes and VOICE-LIKE SOUNDS FADE IN and OUT.

MATURE GRAZIA (CONT'D)

I languished in some limbo land of velvety blackness that descended, then lifted, then blackened again.

44 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

44

BLURRED IMAGE slowly drifts INTO FOCUS: Judah, the Midwife, Servants, all looking down on...

Grazia, easing into consciousness. She studies the faces above her for a moment, reorienting herself.

Then it hits her and she lifts her hands to hold the baby.

MIDWIFE

She wants the child.

44 CONTINUED:

44

The Midwife and Servants all back away. Judah drops his eyes from her.

Grazia quickly realizes that the baby is dead.

And despite her fatigue, SOBS uncontrollably.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

I had trafficked with cursed magic
and had swallowed the devil's potion.
I knew I had offended God and thus
had exposed myself - and my daughter -
to His wrath. My baby girl, Fioretta,
was dead.

45 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

45

Grazia sits at her writing desk working hard.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

So I threw myself into my work as a
translator. The sentimental might
opine that since I was childless, my
books were my children. But that is
twaddle. The printed book was a new
thing in the world, a weapon of
incalculable potency to help the
poor and ignorant raise themselves
up. This possibility gave me pleasure
and satisfaction.

46 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

46

Grazia helps Judah pack his belongings.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Then, in 1513, Pope Julius finally
died and Isabella Gonzaga had her
beloved boy, Federico, returned to
her as a worldly thirteen-year old.
And in 1515, the French crowned a
new king, Frances I, who immediately
set out to march on Milano and claim
it as a legitimate possession of
France. But first he had to overcome
a miserable malady that prevented
him from sitting on a horse for long
periods.

46 CONTINUED:

46

GRAZIA

What other physician would they call
to help the King regain his seat, so
to speak?

JUDAH

Grazia, it is not funny. I am weary
of these farewells and welcome-homes.

GRAZIA

Honourable husband, this has occurred
so many times between us that I hardly
regard this journey as anything
unusual.

He looks at her with regret.

47 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

47

Title over in handwritten Renaissance script:

Venezia

1515

Grazia sits at her table writing.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Alone, with no baby and my husband
away and even my longtime companion,
Fingebat, now gone, I threw myself
into my work. The weeks turned into
months until your father Judah was
forced to follow the French king and
his army into battle.

A Servant enters with a letter.

SERVANT

Madama, a letter has arrived from
the King of France.

Grazia takes the parchment, opens it, and reads it quickly.

KING FRANCIS (V.O.)

Madame: It pains me to inform you
that Maestro Judah has been wounded
in the field at Marignano while
succoring me. He assures me that
his wounds will heal with time and
he leaves here today in the care of
one of my most valued lieutenants.

48 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

48

A gondola emblazoned with the arms of the Brotherhood of San Rocco and enshrouded in black curtains glides towards the house.

KING FRANCIS (V.O.)
God willing, their party should reach
Venezia in ten days' time.

Grazia watches in dread from her balcony. She turns and hurries into the house.

The gondola eases up to the house.

Grazia hurries out the door with the Servant.

Two MEN appear from the gondola, helping Judah who is pale and weak-kneed.

Grazia stares at him in alarm but she is suddenly distracted by something even more shocking.

A third figure now appears from the gondola, a silhouette against the bright sunlight.

Grazia stares intently, trying to confirm what she is seeing.

Lord Pirro Gonzaga steps out of the gondola.

Grazia is stunned speechless, staring at him as...

The two Men ease Judah to her. Judah stares at Grazia.

While Grazia stares past him to...

Pirro.

JUDAH
(very weakly)
Grazia...

Grazia snaps out of her shocked state and looks to her husband.

GRAZIA
We must get you up to your bed.
(to the Men)
Please, up the stairs and to the
right.

But Judah holds back.

JUDAH

Grazia...

She embraces him, but looks over Judah's shoulder to...

Pirro, observing from the gondola.

Judah releases her and moves into the house under the escort of the Men.

SERVANT

This way, if you please, sirs.

Pirro follows them, directly past Grazia, hardly acknowledging her.

They all move into the house and Grazia stands by the gondola struggling with her unexpected emotions.

A moment later, Pirro returns and addresses her punctiliously.

PIRRO

Madame dei Rossi del Medigo, I am the personal envoy from the King of France, asked by the king to convey Maestro Judah home.

GRAZIA

Lord Pirro, I...

(hesitates, then with
composure)

I extend my gratitude to you for your efforts and to the king for tending to my honourable husband's needs.

PIRRO

Your honourable husband has borne the rigours of the journey with much courage and strength. We consulted a doctor at Milano who predicted your husband will recover, albeit slowly. But I recommend you consult a Venetian doctor to confirm that opinion.

GRAZIA

Yes, I shall contact a physician known to my husband whom he trusts and respects.

The two Men return from inside the house.

48 CONTINUED: (2)

48

PIRRO

I regret I cannot undertake that task for you as I have not yet paid my respect to the Doge. But with your permission, I will return this evening.

GRAZIA

Certainly, Lord Pirro.

Pirro bows and turns back into the gondola with the two Men. They push off and paddle away.

Grazia stands watching for a long time, until...

The Servant returns from inside the house.

SERVANT

Madama, are you not coming in to see your husband? He is asking for you.

GRAZIA

(startled)

Oh, yes! Yes, I'm coming.

She stares for another moment at the disappearing gondola and then hurries into the house.

49 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

49

Grazia stands at the balcony staring across the lagoon toward Venezia.

Behind her, in the bedroom, a PHYSICIAN examines a barely conscious Judah.

Grazia continues to stare across the water distractedly.

PHYSICIAN

Lady del Medigo...

(louder)

Lady del Medigo...

Grazia turns to the Physician in surprise.

PHYSICIAN (CONT'D)

Maestro Judah has been treated skillfully. There is no inflammation of the wound and no fever.

GRAZIA

Thank you, doctor.

49 CONTINUED:

49

He turns to leave and she escorts him out of the bedroom.

50 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

50

Grazia escorts the Physician down the stairs to the door.

PHYSICIAN

All that he needs is rest and plenty of licorice tea. Licorice is very beneficial to the brain. And keep his head swathed in a wet bandage, soaked in a tisane of comfrey and linden leaves.

GRAZIA

Certainly, doctor.

PHYSICIAN

Oh, and do not be alarmed if his mind seems to wander. The shock will wear off in time and he will regain his senses.

GRAZIA

I thank you so much for coming on such short notice.

PHYSICIAN

No, no. To treat one so important and honoured as your husband is an honour, Lady Grazia.

He bows and moves out the door.

51 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

51

Grazia stands on the balcony, staring across the water.

Judah GROANS from the bed and Grazia immediately moves to him.

GRAZIA

Yes, Judah. What is it? Are you in pain?

JUDAH

(mumbling)
Are you there?

GRAZIA

Yes, I am here.

51 CONTINUED:

51

JUDAH
Are you there?

GRAZIA
Yes. It is your wife, Grazia.

JUDAH
Grazia?

GRAZIA
Yes.

JUDAH
(reassured)
Ah, Grazia... Grazia...
(slips into
unconsciousness)

Grazia sits staring tenderly at Judah.

He lies sleeping.

She stares at him, but gradually, her focus shifts from Judah to the open window and wide lagoon behind her.

52 EXT/INT. BALCONY AND BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA -52
NIGHT

Grazia, dressed for bed in her *gamora*, her hair down, sits on the balcony staring across the dark lagoon in the moonlight.

Judah MURMURS in his sleep.

She looks into the bedroom.

Judah sleeps.

Grazia returns her gaze to the open water. She is tense, anxious.

Suddenly, the SWISH, SWISH of PADDLES in WATER. Grazia perks up and stares out into the blackness.

A lantern eases towards the house from the black lagoon.

Then the bow of a gondola appears.

Then a figure stands in the boat: Lord Pirro.

Grazia bolts into the house, grabs a lit candle, and dashes through the bedroom.

53 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - CONTINUOUS 53

Grazia dashes down the stairs.

To the front door. Where she stops, breathless.

She pulls the door open and pushes herself through.

54 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - CONTINUOUS 54

Grazia steps outside, in her *gamora* and with her hair down, and fixes her eyes on...

Pirro, climbing out of the gondola. He stops short, surprised by her presence.

She stares at him, uncertain, vulnerable, determined.

He returns her stare, probing her with his eyes.

She receives his look with eyes wide open.

He moves to her, bows as a gracious gentleman, and speaks formally.

PIRRO
Madonna Grazia, I am here at the
service of...
(stops short)

They stare into one another's eyes, frozen together as when their eyes first met, twenty-three years earlier.

He goes to speak.

She very gently shushes him: "No words" and she leads him into the house.

55 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - CONTINUOUS 55

And up the stairs with the candle.

Past the bedroom where Judah sleeps.

56 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - CONTINUOUS 56

And into her studiolo, where she places the candle on her desk. The moonlight streams in through the open shutters.

He stands back and observes her.

She remains still by her desk, observing him.

And so begins a kind of dance as they slowly ease towards one another and circle around one another. Their eyes gradually reel the other in across the space between them.

Until they are a whisper away from one another.

Until they kiss, a kiss postponed by twenty-three years.

She starts to undress him, undoing his doublet, while he showers her with kisses.

Then undoes his *camicia* as his kisses continue. She kisses his chest and torso.

She kneels to pull off his boots. He caresses her hair.

She peels him out of his hose, fondling and kissing his thighs. His calves. His feet.

He pulls her to her feet and undoes her *gamora* and lets it drop to her feet.

They stand together naked, their fingers delicately fondling their faces. Hair. Shoulders.

Their caresses become more urgent, more aggressive, more eager.

They sink to the floor. He climbs on top of her and slides himself into her. He slowly thrusts in and out of her willing body as if his Venus rod were a hammer. Her eyes remain locked on his, her fingers fondling his face.

His rhythm increases.

The fondling turns to clutching, kisses to nipping and biting, quiet breathing to loud panting and grunting.

Until he lets out a LONG, SUPPRESSED ROAR.

And slumps over her

CUT TO:

Grazia is astride the prone Pirro. Her long hair lashes at him and flies about as if she were riding a horse.

Her riding becomes faster and more furious, her TINY WHIMPERS GROWING TO BARELY RESTRAINED HOWL.

56 CONTINUED: (2)

56

Until she slumps over him.

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE:

A tray with vials of oil, a goblet of wine, glasses, a bowl of fruit, and jars of jellies sit on the floor.

Next to the tray, Grazia rubs the oil into Pirro's muscular back.

Pirro kneads Grazia with the oils.

They sip wine and nibble on the fruit and jellies.

Pirro reaches his fingers into the jelly and scoops some out. He reaches across to Grazia and smears it on her lips and then licks it off. They both GIGGLE.

She reciprocates, smearing jam on his chest and licking it off. Their GIGGLING becomes LOUDER.

And he smears it on her breast and licks it off. They GIGGLE LOUDER.

And she smears a huge dollop all over his torso and rubs her face in it, GIGGLING uncontrollably.

He then pulls her onto himself and rubs himself against her, spreading the jam all over her. Their GIGGLING is now LOUD and uncontrollable.

They SHUSH one another, but this only makes them GIGGLE HARDER.

Until they fall into one another, their eyes lock, and the GIGGLING SUBSIDES.

They lay very still and stare at one another with unbearable intimacy and foreboding.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

We hardly spoke a word to one another the entire night. We needed no words to tell us that our hearts were as firmly entwined as our bodies. When two equals join in giving pleasure to each other, that and only that is true love, my son. The more delicate the balance, the greater the tension, the richer the pleasure.

FADE OUT:

56 CONTINUED: (3)

56

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I think that, that night, we came as
close as imperfect beings can come
to perfect equilibrium.

57 EXT. VENEZIA - DAWN

57

The sun rises over Venezia.

58 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAWN

58

Grazia and Pirro finish dressing.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
There never was the slightest doubt
that we would say goodbye. We both
knew better than to ask for more
than one night in paradise.

PIRRO
I have owed you a debt for a long
time, Grazia. At Marignano I found
my chance to begin repayment. The
King needed someone to conduct Maestro
Judah back to Venezia.

GRAZIA
But that is a lackey's job.

PIRRO
I did it to serve you. A gift, or a
stirring speech, or to ride up in
full armour and sweep you off your
feet, none of these would be enough.
I needed to humble myself before
you. Only then could I make
restitution for the indignity I
inflicted on you all those years
ago. And God gave me the opportunity
when he put the life of someone you
cherish into my hands.

Grazia reacts to the last statement: How much does she truly
cherish Judah? How much does she really want Pirro?

59 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

59

Grazia bids farewell to Pirro at his gondola where the Boatman
waits. He steps into the boat and gestures to the Boatman.

59 CONTINUED:

59

The Boatman reaches down and picks up a long, wrapped package, which he passes to Pirro.

Pirro returns to Grazia on land.

PIRRO

You are ever in my thoughts, Grazia,
and will ever be as long as I draw
breath. For proof, I leave you this.

He presents her with the package.

PIRRO (CONT'D)

I spent my last penny on it when I
was young and it is still the dearest
thing I own.

He turns away, climbs into the boat, and draws the curtains.
The Boatman pulls away as Grazia stands and watches.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Should I regret the achievement of
such perfection? I cannot.

60 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

60

Grazia slowly unwraps the package, first peeling off the wax
seals.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

I took it as a brief return to Eden
after more than twenty years of being
cast out.

She undoes the strings that binds it and loosens the layers
of wrapping - paper on the outside.

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

And so God must have meant it. For
the seed of that sowing, which came
into flower nine months later, was
you, my son.

Unwraps the linen. Then the silk jacket.

To unfold a painted canvas: Mantegna's portrait of Grazia.

She stares at the portrait in awe, her emotions profoundly
touched.

61 INT. GRAZIA'S ROOM, GONZAGA REGGIO - NIGHT

61

The portrait sits on an easel.

Opposite the easel, Mature Grazia writes at her writing table.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

From that moment until this one, the
portrait has never left me. When I
die, it will be yours. Guard it
well. It is a talisman of the
splendour of your birth and of the
great love that brought you into
being.

62 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - DAY

62

Grazia sits with Judah while he eats. He now appears stronger.

GRAZIA

Judah.

He looks at her.

GRAZIA (CONT'D)

I... I am pregnant.

Judah barely interrupts his eating, disguising any surprise
or concern.

She studies him carefully, waiting for his response.

Finally he looks at her and smiles.

JUDAH

We are, finally, to become parents.
I am very happy.

She smiles, relieved.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

I could have seized that moment to
confess my indiscretion to Judah.
But he could read the calendar as
well as any man.

63 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - NIGHT

63

Judah, now much healthier, enters and crosses to Grazia, now very large with child, writing at her table, across from the Mantegna portrait.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

He chose instead to treat my pregnancy
as a blessing for us both. And so a
great lie was foisted upon you - and
upon Lord Pirro - and ourselves.

He embraces her and caresses her swollen belly.

JUDAH

You work too hard and too long on
these translations. You must preserve
your energy for your time is
approaching.

Suddenly, BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! On the door below.
Both Grazia and Judah jump in alarm.

GRAZIA

Judah! It's someone trying to break
into our house.

64 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - NIGHT

64

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! As Judah and Grazia hurry down
the stairs to the door.

GRAZIA

Do not open it, whatever you do!

A MUFFLED VOICE is heard from the other side of the door.

RABBI MESHULLAM (O.S.)

Maestro del Medigo!... Open up!...
Maestro del Medigo!

Judah unbolts the door and pulls it open.

GRAZIA

Judah, no!

To reveal RABBI MESHULLAM, 80 years old, standing there very
distraught.

64 CONTINUED:

64

JUDAH

Rabbi Meshullam, what are you doing
out at this hour? What has happened?

He stands there staring back at him in great alarm.

65 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - NIGHT

65

Judah and Grazia sits with Rabbi Meshullam in earnest
conversation. They are all very upset.

RABBI MESHULLAM

Ten days! All of us have to vacate
our homes and move to that ghetto in
ten days. April 10.

Judah slams his fist into the table in anger.

GRAZIA

But why? Why all of a sudden have
us Jews fallen from favour?

Rabbi Meshullam shrugs.

JUDAH

For the same old reasons. Venezia
is no longer the great, thriving
city it once was. Fortune now smiles
on Portugal. So there must be someone
to blame. And who better than the
perfidious nation of Jews the
Venetians have allowed in their midst.

RABBI MESHULLAM

And do not forget, Portugal thrived
after they expelled the Jews.

GRAZIA

But that had nothing to do with
Portugal suddenly...

JUDAH

Of course it didn't. That would
require intelligent understanding
and analysis of reality. And they
have no tolerance for such complexity.
They need an easy target. Someone
to blame.

RABBI MESHULLAM

I will not live in that prison.

(MORE)

65 CONTINUED:

65

RABBI MESHULLAM (CONT'D)
I'd rather live in the ruins of
Mestre... I'd rather die.

GRAZIA
Judah, you can appeal to General
Sassatello. He is your patron and
respects you...

JUDAH
Yes, yes, of course. Or, the Sultan
has written to me again.

GRAZIA
No, no, I could never move to
Constantinople!

JUDAH
We shall see what the General can do
for us.

RABBI MESHULLAM
Ahhh, I would not hold out much hope.
I am the wealthiest Jew in Venezia,
as you know. I've tried bribes. No
amount of money will stir them this
time. On April 10, we must all move.
All of us. To the ghetto of San
Girolamo.

66 EXT. VENEZIA - DAY

66

A single barge packed with people and belongings moves down a canal.

It joins several other barges, similarly packed.

Among them, Judah and Grazia travel on a large barge with Rabbi Meshullam and his FAMILY.

Until a huge flotilla of barges, gondolas, and small craft all wend their way along the canal.

On both shores, the Venetians gawk, staring out their windows and gathering on the bridges, gloating.

Grazia clings to Judah in disbelief and distress. He remains stolid and dignified as he quells his anger and despair.

The huge flotilla moves like a funeral through the canals of Venezia.

67 EXT. GATES TO SAN GIROLAMO GHETTO - SUNSET

67

The boats proceed past the rundown homes of the San Girolamo ghetto, with their windows all bricked up.

Grazia, Judah, and Rabbi Meshullam stare at their new neighbourhood in dismay. The Rabbi's family WEEPS openly.

All the boats finally cluster and line up at a prison-like wall where Venetian officials process the Jews.

RABBI MESHULLAM

I would rather die than spend my
final days in this prison. I would
rather die.

Then, a sleek gondola comes up behind pushing its way past all the other boats to the front of the line. A VOICE is heard from behind the curtains, BELLOWING orders at the boatman.

VOICE (O.S.)

Pass them by! Pass them by! Pull
up there! Not *there*, you ham hock!
Can you not see the mud? Over to
the dry part!

Grazia, Judah, and the others observe this in irritation. SOMEONE speaks up.

SOMEONE

It's Bellini Ebrea, that Jewish
courtesan.

The gondola docks and a large fan, held by a much-bejeweled arm, emerges from behind the curtains. Next comes a large foot in a very high *pianelle* or platform shoe.

VOICE

Where is the parasol, you slow-moving,
dim-witted creature?

The boatman hurries to the parted curtain and opens a parasol.

All are watching in high anticipation, including Grazia and Judah.

Finally, the lady herself emerges, dressed in gaudy finery with a low-cut bodice all but revealing her breasts. A mask covers her eyes.

Grazia and Judah immediately start in recognition.

67 CONTINUED:

67

GRAZIA

It is Ricca.

JUDAH

I know.

As Ricca climbs out of the boat, a second woman follows her:
old, haggard Dorotea.

Ricca leads the boatman and her mother along the shore,
ANNOUNCING as she goes.

RICCA

I have the top storey in the building
at the left corner. My things will
arrive tonight. And be careful with
my lute. It is a treasure from the
hand of Lorenzo de Pavia.

Grazia and Judah observe in dismay.

GRAZIA

How sad. I hate them both, but
still... how sad.

JUDAH

Save your pity. That woman has
accomplished what few of us can in
our lives. She has found her true
vocation and practices it with notable
success.

68 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOME, SAN GIROLAMO GHETTO - DUSK

68

Judah and Grazia pull up to a dark, run down structure.

They both stare at in despair.

Suddenly, behind them: CREAK, SLAM! RATTLING CHAINS.

They both turn to see and iron gates close behind them and
the SOUND OF CHAINS AND LOCKS.

Judah clenches his jaw in anger, Grazia slumps in sadness.

69 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, MURANO/VENEZIA - NIGHT

69

A single room, dark, cramped, and filthy.

Judah and Grazia stand on its threshold.

GRAZIA

Oh, Judah. They mean to bury us here.

Judah moves into the room.

JUDAH

Look at this. Hardly fit for an animal. You are right, they mean to bury us here.

GRAZIA

You can apply for a new position.

JUDAH

To what end. What you see here, in this room, in this ghetto, what you see is the future.

GRAZIA

No, Judah, please don't be so...

JUDAH

Venezia is only the first. Soon another will spring up in some other city. Parma, perhaps, or Trento. Then another and yet another. Until finally, there will be a ghetto in every city. Right now, Venezia is no longer a place where Jews can live freely. Soon, Italy itself will not be a fit country. Then, all of Christendom.

GRAZIA

Judah, please don't. That could never happen.

JUDAH

Oh, but it will. Here, in this cursed year of 1516, the Venetians have enclosed the Jews out of sight. We are an offense to men. But soon, others will be an offense and they too will be enclosed in some place. A poor man is an offense to one with a full belly, a madman an offense to one who has all his wits. Why not enclosures for them? And it will not be long before these pariahs - us imprisoned Jews - we will be blamed for bringing these misfortunes down upon ourselves.

(MORE)

69 CONTINUED: (2)

69

JUDAH (CONT'D)

We will be accused, jailed, whipped,
like common criminals. And it will
be seen as our own fault. After
decades - or centuries - we will be
gathered up like a crop of rank weeds
and burned.

GRAZIA

Who would want to live in such a
world?

A NEWBORN BABY CRIES.

70 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOME, SAN GIROLAMO GHETTO - DAY

70

A SQUALLING, newborn baby - INFANT DANILO - is held aloft by
Judah and passed to the waiting arms of Grazia, lying on a
makeshift cot in their cleaned-up but still decrepit room.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

You were the first boy child born in
the Venetian ghetto. I called you
Danilo - little Daniele - in memory
of my father.

Grazia holds the newborn to her, glowing with maternal love.

Judah smiles down on her.

71 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOME, SAN GIROLAMO GHETTO - DAY

71

Clusters of people move down the narrow, muddy street AMIDST
LOUD NOISES: VOICES SHOUTING, DOGS BARKING, A GENERAL
CATERWAULING.

Chamber pots are emptied into the sluicing mud of the street.

72 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOME, SAN GIROLAMO GHETTO - DAY

72

Grazia, now fully dressed, sits in a chair breastfeeding Infant
Danilo.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

We were, of course, denied the
services of a wet nurse in the ghetto.
So I nursed you myself. Why do women
relinquish this pleasure? Those
were moments I treasured.

(MORE)

72 CONTINUED:

72

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Moments that made the ghetto - the
 crowding, the racket, the stink -
 bearable.

Judah enters.

GRAZIA
 Well? What word from General
 Sassatello?

JUDAH
 He has tried everything. Written
 letters to everyone, even the Pope,
 extolling my skills and services,
 all in the hopes of pressuring the
 Venetians to release us. But...

Grazia is downcast.

JUDAH (CONT'D)
 Actually, Pope Leo was so impressed...

GRAZIA
 What?

JUDAH
 He has offered me the post of his
 body physician.

GRAZIA
 (in disbelief)
 You?! Physician to the Pope?

JUDAH
 In Roma!

DISSOLVE TO:

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

73

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK at the door as Mature Grazia sits writing
 at her table. She quickly daubs the ink dry with her blotter,
 covers over the manuscript, and crosses to the door.

COSTANZA, with a candle and an envelope, is on the other side.

COSTANZA
 Lady Grazia, a letter.

Mature Grazia snatches the letter from her.

73 CONTINUED:

73

COSTANZA (CONT'D)
From Master Danilo in Piacenza.

MATURE GRAZIA
Thank you.

Costanza stares at her in a surly way. Mature Grazia closes the door and hurries to the light of the writing table, tearing open the envelope.

She sits reading the letter as the VOICE of DANILO, aged 10, is HEARD OVER:

DANILO (V.O.)
Madonna Madre. This dispatch is being written all in a rush to reach you by the fastest courier. Today, I saw history made before my eyes.

74 EXT. ARMY ENCAMPMENT - DAY

74

A series of quick, impressionistic vignettes:

DANILO, aged 10, standing in a muddy, cold miserable encampment, observes wide-eyed at...

A large group of angry soldiers, dressed in filthy tatters, shout and gesture towards...

GENERAL FRUNDSBERG, an elderly, uniformed man who pleads and gesticulates with the men.

DANILO (V.O.)
I witnessed a mutiny and I saw a great general fall trying to subdue his men. But these German soldiers roared and raged like wild beasts.

Soldiers ROARING HEARD UNDER:

SOLDIERS
We want money! Give us money!

General Frundsberg, red in the face and tears in his eyes, pleads.

DANILO (V.O.)
With tears streaming down his face, old Frundsberg begged them to serve the Emperor and wait for their pay.

74 CONTINUED:

74

Two soldiers threaten the General with their halberds, long shafts with axe-like blades and pointed spikes on their ends.

The General suddenly convulses and staggers backwards.

DANILO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Two in the front lowered their
halberds at him and he fell back
from apoplexy. He lay still as a
corpse before our eyes.

The General falls and lies still.

DANILO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We left immediately and later heard
he was dead. You and the Holy Father
will be the first to know.

Danilo is lead away by his unseen escort.

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

75

Mature Grazia continues reading the letter.

DANILO (V.O.)
I am learning a great deal here about
soldiering. They have offered to
make me a suit of armour if I choose
to embrace the profession of soldier.
I explained that my honourable father
hopes that I will enter university
and become a scholar and rabbi like
himself. But of course there is
still much time for me to make up my
mind and that neither you nor Papa
would make me do what I do not feel
in my own heart.

Mature Grazia stares at the letter, pondering its author.
There is a KNOCK on the door. Mature Grazia sets aside the
letter, crosses to the door, and opens it to Mature Isabella.

MATURE ISABELLA
Pardon me, Lady Grazia. But have
you heard?

Mature Isabella enters the room.

MATURE GRAZIA
I have just received a dispatch from
Danilo.

75 CONTINUED:

75

MATURE ISABELLA

And does he mention Frundsberg?

MATURE GRAZIA

That he is dead.

MATURE ISABELLA

Then it's true. That leaves only one general to deal with, my nephew, the Duke of Bourbon. That will make the negotiations much easier.

(beat)

How does Danilo sound? Is he well?

MATURE GRAZIA

Very well. And very excited over witnessing such events.

MATURE ISABELLA

He is being well cared for, as you know. Your young man may end up being a soldier yet, Grazia.

MATURE GRAZIA

That will be for him to decide.

MATURE ISABELLA

Yes. Yes, of course. Well, good night. I hope you can sleep better now that you've heard some news.

MATURE GRAZIA

Thank you, Madonna Isabella. Good night.

Mature Isabella withdraws and Mature Grazia closes the door and then stares at the letter, pondering its author.

FADE OUT:

END OF EPISODE FIVE