

Episode Six

The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi

Written by Jim Purdy

Based on the novel by Jacqueline Park

Leader Media Productions Limited
1200 Bay Street, Suite 506
Toronto, ON M4V 2A5

416 963-9836

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"The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi"

Episode Six

1 EXT. PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - DAY 1

The palazzo looms large and magnificent over the piazza that bustles with citizens hurrying about on foot, on horse, and by carriage.

2 VARIOUS ROOMS, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - DAY 2

MONTAGE of various massive rooms with staff bustling about cleaning and tending the magnificent sculptures, the brilliant paintings, the glorious tapestries.

Gradually, a VOICE is HEARD, growing VOLUME.

MATURE ISABELLA (O.S.)

... I am, of course, always your loyal servant, Holy Father. But I must nevertheless confide my growing concerns...

3 INT. ISABELLA'S PRIVATE SUITES, PALAZZO COLONNA - DAY 3

Mature Grazia takes down dictation from Mature Isabella.

MATURE ISABELLA

... over the Emperor's incursion on our lands. Negotiations have failed to end the German advance on the Holy City, the negotiators are returning empty-handed and...

MATURE GRAZIA

(suddenly stopping)

They are returning.

MATURE ISABELLA

Yes. I am sorry, Lady Grazia, has no one informed you. The negotiations have concluded, unsuccessfully, and Lord Pirro is coming home with Danilo within the week.

Mature Grazia collects herself, relieved and excited at the news.

MATURE ISABELLA

Tell me, Lady Grazia, which of the two are you most looking forward to seeing? Your son, Danilo, or my cousin, Lord Pirro.

MATURE GRAZIA

I am pleased that both are returning to us safely, madonna.

MATURE ISABELLA

Lord Pirro has grown quite close to your son over the course of their trip.

MATURE GRAZIA

Yes, and Danilo is very fond of Lord Pirro.

MATURE ISABELLA

They have a natural affinity, would you say?

MATURE GRAZIA

Shall we continue with your letter to His Holiness?

MATURE ISABELLA

Yes, but first there has always been something that has troubled me about your son.

Mature Isabella notices...

Mature Grazia squirming uncomfortably.

MATURE ISABELLA

Hmmm, Grazia, have I touched a chord? Uncovered a secret?

MATURE GRAZIA

Madonna, please, I...

MATURE ISABELLA

Come, Grazia, tell me. Is the father someone I know?

Mature Grazia turns her face away, trying to avoid the question.

Mature Isabella leans close and takes Grazia's face in her hand and turns Grazia to face her.

MATURE ISABELLA

Let us have a game. I will ask you questions and you will answer them. But you must tell the truth.

MATURE GRAZIA

This is a child's game, madonna. And what you speak of is not a childish matter.

3 CONTINUED: (2)

3

MATURE ISABELLA

Oh, it is something that happened long ago,
like a fairy tale. It is someone known to
me? Correct?

MATURE GRAZIA

(resigned)
Yes, madonna.

MATURE ISABELLA

But not a Jew?

Mature Grazia silently, wearily, indicates yes.

MATURE ISABELLA

A Christian. Handsome. Known well to
me... A member of my family, perhaps?... A
kinsman?

Again, Mature Grazia wearily indicates yes.

MATURE ISABELLA

A kinsman of mine in Venezia directly after
the battle of Marignano in 1515... Someone
in your house nine months before your son
was born...

Mature Grazia says nothing.

MATURE ISABELLA

I should have known. Lord Pirro of
Bozzuolo.

MATURE GRAZIA

Madonna, please. Neither my son nor Lord
Pirro are aware of this...

MATURE ISABELLA

Of course not. But he is the boy's father
by blood, and you cannot keep this father
from his son, Grazia. You know it in your
heart.

Mature Grazia says nothing.

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

4

Mature Grazia sits, too troubled to write. Finally, picks up the quill
and begins.

4 CONTINUED:

4

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Danilo, I hope you can see the terrible quandary I, and therefore you, are in. And you can see how it has unfolded, not by design but by a series of decisions that seemed so right at the time of their making.

5 EXT. VISTA OF ROMA - DAY

5

Title over in handwritten Renaissance script:

Roma

1516

Vista of Roma circa 1516.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

For a while, when you were a babe and we first moved to Roma, I thought all was resolved. My secret safe.

6 EXT. PIAZZA SAN PIETRO (ST PETER'S), ROMA - DAY

6

The piazza bustles with people, moving past the Vatican Obelisk through the square to the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican Palace.

St. Peter's Basilica is a construction site with labourers working on the ground floor level (it won't be completed for another 110 years in 1626). Also, there is no curved colonnades yet.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Pope Leo received Judah with all the pomp and ceremony due to a chief body physician.

7 INT. VATICAN PALACE, ROMA - DAY

7

A bustling hive of activity as well-dressed men move about the extraordinary rooms filled with frescos and sculptures.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

He was among the many accomplished men in the service of this magnanimous patron: Two Latin Ciceroists, Pietro Bembo and Jacopo Sadoleto.

Two learned cardinals, PIETRO BEMBO and JACOPO SADOLETO, move past.

7 CONTINUED:

7

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
The singer Gabriele Merino.

CUT TO:

GABRIELE MERINO sings with the organist.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
A sculptor, Michelangelo Buonarroti.

CUT TO:

MICHELANGELO chisels away at marble where the massive figure of Moses emerges from the white stone.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
And painter Raffaello Santi.

CUT TO:

RAFFAELLO mixes paints the partially-completed *Christ Falling on the Way to Calvary*.

8 INT. STANZA DI ELIODORO, APOSTOLIC PALACE, ROMA - DAY

8

POPE LEO X sits on a dais surrounded by SWISS GUARDS and a large convocation of church dignitaries - CARDINALS, BISHOPS, PRIESTS - and COURTIERS.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
Under Pope Leo, Roma shone like a beacon,
beckoning every artist, poet, and humanist
in the peninsula.

JUDAH, now 53, dressed in a plain robe to his knees and covered by a black cloak with a fur collar, approaches Pope Leo.

He kneels before him and kisses the Pope's ring while Leo blesses him.

Others observe, particularly a clutch of Cardinals gathered around CARDINAL ALFONSO PETRUCCI, age 25, who all watch with a sinister air.

9 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA DAY

9

A small house among the ancient pillars and arches of the Portico d'Ottavia on the River Tiber. It is a busy market street with a lot of activity.

9 CONTINUED:

9

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And do you remember our sweet little house
the Pope had provided for us?

GRAZIA, now 40, appears in the doorway holding a ONE-YEAR OLD DANILO.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Close by the River Tiber? In the Jewish
quarter? I felt so protected by those
sheltering arches.

Grazia returns inside.

10 EXT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA DAY

10

Grazia carries the baby to her writing desk and pauses, thinking.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Even those of us on the periphery were
touched by the outpouring of creativity.

Grazia puts the baby down and opens the drawer of her desk and removes
the *cassone*. She opens it.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Buried in their dusty *cassone* were my
heroines, untouched for years and now
suddenly calling out to me to be released.

Inside, the handwritten manuscript: *The Book of Heroines*.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Reading the pages brought them instantly to
life.

She sits down and begins to read.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

If ever there was a time and place for
them, Leonine Roma was it. The city was
teeming with enlightened printers and
publishers. Surely, there must be one
among them willing to publish my Book of
Heroines despite its lack of patronage.

11 EXT. CHIGI VILLA (NOW VILLA FARNESINA), ROMA - EVENING

11

A magnificent villa across the River Tiber. Coming down the steps in
greeting is ADULT GERSHOM, now 30 years old.

11 CONTINUED: 11

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

I even regained my baby brother, Gershom, who was living in Roma as an agent to the Pope's banker, the wealthiest man in Roma, Agostino Chigi.

Adult Gershom embraces Grazia and welcomes Judah. He leads them into the entrance, under the Chigi Coat of Arms: 4 panels containing 2 images of 6 mountains arranged in a pyramid under a star and 2 images of an oak tree.

12 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA DAY 12

Grazia, now 43, working on her manuscript.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Revision became a joyful task. Never was a poet more inspired by his muse than I was by your wide, unblinking eyes peering up at me as I composed.

She pauses and looks down to see THREE-YEAR OLD DANILO playing on the floor.

13 EXT. CALLIERGES PUBLISHING OFFICE, ROMA - DAY 13

Grazia moves down the street and into the doorway of the Callierges publishing office.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And, indeed, a Greek press, Callierges...

14 INT. CALLIERGES PUBLISHING OFFICE, ROMA - DAY 14

Grazia sits with the publisher ZACHARIAS CALLIERGI and signs contracts.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

... did agree to publish my Book of Heroines. After so many years of travails, all seemed to be going so well for us.

15 EXT. OTTAVIA SQUARE AND STREETS - DAY 15

A white plume flounces and bounces along from its perch on a *beretta*.

A heavy gold chain hangs from the neck of a fancy, ornate collar.

- 15 CONTINUED: 15
- MARC ANTONIO NINO parades ostentatiously across the square and down the street, attracting the stares of people with his expensive wardrobe.
- TWO GYPSIES spot him and follow him closely.
- 16 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY 16
- Grazia holds a CRYING Baby Danilo and observes in alarm from her second storey window as the Gypsies move in on Nino.
- Then she notices...
- 17 EXT. OTTAVIA SQUARE AND STREETS - CONTINUOUS 17
- A BODYGUARD, a large, hulking man with his sword unsheathed, walks adjacent to Nino, his eye on the Gypsies.
- The Gypsies take note and hurry away.
- Nino and his Bodyguard approach the Del Medigo house.
- 18 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - CONTINUOUS 18
- Grazia stands in the doorway holding Baby Danilo and greeting Nino.
- GRAZIA
- Can I tell him what it is pertaining to?
- NINO
- (impatient, patronizing)
- Maestro del Medigo is expecting me.
- GRAZIA
- Yes, I understand, but if you could just say what...
- NINO
- (forcefully)
- It is a matter between him and I.
- Grazia steps aside and shows Nino in. The Bodyguard remains standing outside.
- 19 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - CONTINUOUS 19
- Grazia shows Nino to the door of Judah's studiolo where he enters.

19 CONTINUED:

19

NINO

Ah, maestro Leone del Medigo, how good of you to see me.

And closes the door.

Grazia hesitates and then, with Baby Danilo starting to CRY again, she hurries upstairs with him.

The door to Judah's studiolo remains closed.

The Bodyguard remains at his post outside the building.

20 INT. NURSERY, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

20

Grazia sits nursing Baby Danilo, wondering what's going on downstairs. Finally, she hears movement.

She moves to the window with Baby Danilo. She sees...

21 EXT. OTTAVIA SQUARE AND STREETS - CONTINUOUS

21

Nino and his Bodyguard move down the street away from the house.

22 INT. NURSERY, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - CONTINUOUS

22

Grazia quickly puts Baby Danilo in his crib and hurries out.

23 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - CONTINUOUS

23

Grazia comes downstairs to see Judah's studiolo door still closed.

She goes to the door and KNOCKS.

No response. She CALLS to him.

GRAZIA

Judah?

No response. She tries the door handle; the door is locked.

She steps away, concerned.

24 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - EVENING

24

Judah emerges from the studiolo looking disturbed.

24 CONTINUED:

24

Grazia studies him closely, her concern growing.

GRAZIA

Who was that strange man?

Judah says nothing.

GRAZIA

I thought for sure he'd be jumped on coming down the street. That gold chain and that fancy collar. It was practically an invitation to rob him.

Judah does not acknowledge.

GRAZIA

It was good that he had that bodyguard. Heaven knows what might have happened otherwise.

Judah remains silent.

GRAZIA

What was his business here with you?

JUDAH

Is Danilo still asleep?

GRAZIA

Yes, I finally got him to go down.

JUDAH

Good.

GRAZIA

I'll get him up just before dinner.

JUDAH

Good.

Judah falls silent. Grazia backs off from asking anymore questions.

25 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - NIGHT

25

Grazia and Judah lie in bed in the darkness.

He rolls over heavily and then lies still.

A moment later he throws off the coverlet.

Another moment and Judah pulls the coverlet back up.

25 CONTINUED:

25

Grazia tries to ignore him and sleep, but she is troubled.

A while later, Grazia senses that...

The bed beside her is empty.

She looks to see...

Judah standing at the window looking out at the night. He turns to her.

She quickly closes her eyes and pretends to sleep.

26 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - MORNING

26

Grazia comes downstairs holding Baby Danilo.

Judah, wearing a phylactery on his head, rocks gently as he recites prayers from a Torah.

Grazia moves through the room with Baby Danilo, careful not to disturb Judah. While Judah CHANTS, she breast feeds Baby Danilo.

After a moment, Judah's CHANTS STOP. Suddenly,

JUDAH (O.S.)

We must leave Roma immediately.

Grazia is thunderstruck, completely unprepared for this.

GRAZIA

May I ask why?

JUDAH

We must leave. We have little time.

GRAZIA

But Judah, you must tell me the reason...

JUDAH

You need to mind your own affairs, Grazia, and not meddle in mine.

GRAZIA

I would say being torn from my home and scattered to the winds is my affair.

JUDAH

I cannot tell you.

GRAZIA

I will not budge until I know the reason for this upheaval.

JUDAH

It's better for you that you don't know.

GRAZIA

It has to do with that courier who came to see you yesterday.

JUDAH

I repeat: It's better for you that...

GRAZIA

I'm right. It has to do with that courier.

JUDAH

Yes.

He falls silent and avoids looking at her.

GRAZIA

What did he want of you?

No response.

GRAZIA

Judah, look at me.

He reluctantly, half-heartedly looks at her

GRAZIA

I am your wife, Grazia, not some cretinous slave. I deserve your confidence.

He hesitates, struggling, until finally...

JUDAH

I had hoped to keep this from you.

She stares at him, not letting him off the hook.

JUDAH

If you must know, one of the cardinals has concocted a scheme to murder the Pope.

Grazia is shocked.

JUDAH

That courier yesterday, Nino, he is that cardinal's secretary. They want my help. They want me to apply a series of poisoned bandages to the Pope's fistula when I treat him.

Grazia eases herself down into a chair, very upset.

GRAZIA

Would that kill him?

JUDAH

Oh yes.

GRAZIA

What did you say?

JUDAH

I told him no, of course. But he would not accept my no, and in the end, I had to force him out the door with his sackful of ducats.

GRAZIA

Oh, Judah. That sounds dreadful. But you did the only thing you could.

JUDAH

(upset and frightened)

None of that matters. I am implicated now in a plot to kill the Pope. If this plot is discovered, Cardinal Petrucci and his friends will certainly look for a place to lay the blame and I am the logical candidate. Men will say anything under torture. The rack makes cowards of us all.

Grazia absorbs this, her mind racing, seeking other options.

GRAZIA

I believe we should consult with Gershom before we take any irrevocable action.

JUDAH

Your little brother?!

GRAZIA

He has his own identity now, Judah. He is part of the great world and understands its workings.

(MORE)

26 CONTINUED: (3)

26

GRAZIA (CONT'D)

He has an orderly mind and - not the least -
we can trust him. We risk nothing in
seeking his opinion.

JUDAH

We must be on the road by dawn tomorrow.
That is my final word.

He moves off into his studiolo.

27 EXT. CHIGI VILLA (NOW VILLA FARNESINA), ROMA - DAY

27

Grazia and her MAID approach the grand villa.

Above the door is a bas relief of the Chigi coat of arms: 4 panels
containing 2 images of 6 mountains arranged in a pyramid under a star
and 2 images of an oak tree.

28 EXT. GARDEN, CHIGI VILLA (NOW VILLA FARNESINA), ROMA - DAY

28

Gershom and Grazia stroll through the garden in intense discussion.
The Maid waits by the villa.

GERSHOM

I agree with you completely. To run away
would put the worst complexion on the
matter. You must not leave Roma. At least
not before the Pope is told of this
conspiracy.

They walk along in silence for a moment, thinking.

GERSHOM

Yes, the Pope must be warned. And the
sooner the better.

GRAZIA

Must Judah go to him, then?

GERSHOM

(ponders this)

Judah may not be the best man for the job.

They walk in silence, considering possibilities.

GERSHOM

But wait.

They stop.

GERSHOM

Ser Chigi. Yes, Agostino Chigi is the one to do it. He will tell the Pope for us.

GRAZIA

But what makes you think he will do it?

GERSHOM

You see, Ser Chigi's brother is married to Cardinal Petrucci's sister, a mite close for comfort if this conspiracy is brought to light. So, it will be in my master's interest to expose the plot and thus place a corridor between himself and the plotters. Yes, Ser Chigi will be pleased to warn the Pope for us. It will serve his interests as well as ours.

GRAZIA

Oh, Gershom, I'm not so sure. What if Chigi chooses to warn his kinsman Petrucci and names Judah as the villain of the piece?

GERSHOM

Out of the question. Grazia, try to understand. Agostino Chigi holds patents granted to him by the Pope that make him the richest man in Roma. We maintain offices in London, Alexandria, Constantinople, Lyon, and a half-dozen Italian cities. By his own estimate Ser Chigi numbers his employees at over twenty thousand. And this vast edifice is built on the Pope's confidence. Can you believe that Chigi would risk all that to protect a wild crazy boy who has proven nothing but an embarrassment to him from the beginning?

GRAZIA

Cardinal Petrucci is...?

GERSHOM

Is twenty-six years old and lately he's aligned himself with Duke Urbino against the Pope and against Firenze and for his home republic, Siena. So he's already in opposition to Pope Leo.

Grazia remains uncertain and unconvinced. Gershom moves to her and takes her firmly by the shoulders.

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

GERSHOM

Sister, know me as a brother who loves you and who wants above all to protect you and your husband and your little boy from those vultures that nest in the Vatican. Whatever you may think, Ser Chigi is our man. He will happily tell the Pope Judah's story and put Judah in the most favorable and innocent light. Because it will be to his advantage to do so.

GRAZIA

(conceding)

But who will tell Chigi?

GERSHOM

You will. At once.

29 INT. FOYER, CHIGI VILLA (NOW VILLA FARNESINA), ROMA - DAY 29

A SERVANT leads Gershom and Grazia across the long foyer past the frescoes that decorate the walls and ceiling.

But Grazia pays no heed to these glorious artworks.

The Servant leads them up a grand staircase.

30 INT. BEDROOM, CHIGI VILLA (NOW VILLA FARNESINA), ROMA - DAY 30

AGOSTINO CHIGI, a large man of 51, sits submerged in a copper tub of steaming water leaning back against a pillow, his eyes half closed. Those eyes suddenly burst open.

CHIGI

Cardinal Petrucci!!

He motions to a Servant.

Grazia, Gershom, and several Servants stand by as Servant #1 hurries to Chigi with a towel. He stands and Servant #1 dries him off while Chigi fires questions at Grazia and Gershom.

CHIGI

Did this Nino mention a specific time?

Grazia nods "No".

CHIGI

A specific sum of money?

30 CONTINUED:

30

Grazia again indicates "No".

CHIGI

Where was Judah to obtain the poison? Was he expected to prepare it himself?

Grazia indicates that she doesn't know.

CHIGI

Were any other conspirators mentioned? Any names at all? That is most important. Agitate your memory.

Grazia concentrates but clearly doesn't remember.

CHIGI

The name of any cardinal or bishop or prince who might have been mentioned.

GRAZIA

Would not such information come more readily from one of the underlings, such as the secretary who came to corrupt my husband?

Chigi, wrapped in a towel, crosses from the copper tub to a giant ebonywood bed.

CHIGI

Never fear, madonna, all avenues will be explored. I find conspiracy to be the most despicable of all crimes. And poison the slyest of all methods.

His Servants scurry about bringing his clothes and preparing to dress him.

CHIGI

Besides, I have my own reasons for seeing young Petrucci brought to justice. He is a beast and the world would be well rid of him.

Grazia looks to Gershom who gives her a look back: "See? Nothing to worry about."

31 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - NIGHT

31

Judah sits listening skeptically to Grazia and Gershom.

31 CONTINUED:

31

GERSHOM

From now on, we communicate only by letter.
In Hebrew. And we burn each letter after
we read it.

Judah is not convinced.

GRAZIA

Ser Chigi assured us.

GERSHOM

And he's a man of his word.

GRAZIA

It's the word of one of the most powerful
men in Roma.

GERSHOM

And a man who absolutely hates Cardinal
Petrucci.

Judah relents.

GERSHOM

Very good. Now, I must away home. Just
remain here. Do and say nothing. Wait for
the messages. And wait for the matter to
be resolved. And it will be, in due time.

Judah looks at Gershom in appreciation.

GERSHOM

Fare thee well. I must away.

Gershom heads out.

32 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

32

A COURIER dressed wearing the Chigi coat of arms: 4 panels containing 2
images of 6 mountains arranged in a pyramid under a star and 2 images
of an oak tree.

He knocks on the door of the del Medigo house.

The Maid answers and accepts the letter delivered by the Courier.

33 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

33

Grazia reads the letter to Judah.

33 CONTINUED:

33

GRAZIA

Marc Antonio Nino arrested today and put to the torture. Stand fast.

She passes it to Judah who peruses it.

He then holds it into the flame of a candle and burns it.

Baby Danilo watches the flame flare up in fascination.

Judah allows the page to burn and then he scoops Baby Danilo up into his arms for a huge hug and LAUGH.

Grazia watches warmly.

34 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - NIGHT

34

A figure dressed in black (Gershom) CLATTERS up to the door on a horse and dismounts.

The Maid answers the door and ushers Gershom in.

35 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - NIGHT

35

Gershom sits with Grazia and Judah.

GERSHOM

A physician has been named and arrested. Giovanni Battista da Vercelli. Ser Chigi has it from the Pope himself. Maestro del Medigo, you are safe from suspicion.

GRAZIA

But the case is not yet closed.

JUDAH

With three men under torture in Castel Sant'Angelo the case is far from closed. But sufficient for this day is the bounty thereof. Let us simply accept that God has granted us a stay and let us celebrate. Ser Geronimo, may I offer you a glass of wine?

Grazia retrieves the glasses and pours wine into them from a cask.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Within days, more arrests followed one upon the other.

(MORE)

35 CONTINUED:

35

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Cardinal Petrucci was arrested by the Pope's guards and taken to the Maracco, the most horrible of Sant'Angelo's dungeons. There he was joined a week later by old Cardinal Riario and a week later, two more cardinals. Then, on July 16, Cardinal Petrucci was strangled in his cell. And later that same month, Pope Leo appointed 31 new cardinals, doubling the College of Cardinals and stocking the ranks with men who would offer total loyalty or timely bribes.

Grazia, Judah, and Gershom drink their wine and enjoy the freedom from the conspiracy.

GERSHOM

And Ser Chigi has asked me to extend his invitation to sup with him in his villa next week to continue our celebrations.

36 INT. CHIGI VILLA (NOW VILLA FARNESINA), ROMA - EVENING

36

Gershom leads them through the magnificent villa the two ground-floor loggias with its frescoes by Sebastiano del Piombo, Giulio Pippi, Baldassare Peruzzi, and Raffaello Santi.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Ser Chigi invited us all to sup in his magnificent villa. I was particularly enthralled by the vast panorama by Raffaello Santi, the prodigy of our age.

They stop before Raffaello's panoramic ceiling fresco, *Banquet of the Gods*, and stare up at it.

GERSHOM

The design was Raffaello's, but only one figure in the entire panorama has been actually executed by the master's hand. Try to determine which one that is.

Grazia stares at the work in wonder.

GRAZIA

But what am I to look for?

GERSHOM

Look for the same quality you would seek in
a great poem, where grace and life are
implicit in every line.

Grazia, determined to find the figure, lies down on the floor and
stares up at ceiling.

The figures on the ceiling all appear the same.

Gershom observes her in bemusement. Judah as well is amused.

Grazia, in frustration, pulls herself up to her feet when she spots...

A figure in one of the lunettes, a female posed with her back to the
viewer.

CHIGI (*O.S.*)

Ahhh! You have a good eye, madonna. That
is indeed the one!

They all turn to see...

Agostino Chigi smiling at them all.

CHIGI

I must congratulate you. Not a few
connoisseurs have failed this test. And
with your consent I will conduct you into
the loggia of Galatea where you can peruse
the master's hand to your heart's content.

37 INT. LOGGIA, CHIGI VILLA (NOW VILLA FARNESINA), ROMA - EVENING 37

Chigi escorts Grazia into an adjoining loggia where he grabs her
shoulders and spins her around to face...

A fresco on the adjoining wall of Galatea, aloft in her scallop-shell
chariot, driving a team of dolphins across a froth of waves.

CHIGI

Magnificent, is she not?

Grazia nods in agreement. Throughout the following, they move to the
fresco and study it carefully.

CHIGI

I knew the lady. Believe me, he does not
do her justice.

37 CONTINUED:

37

GRAZIA

You knew Galatea?

CHIGI

(laughs)

No, the model, Madonna. I knew the model. Every poet in Italy has tried his hand at describing her. Even I took my poor turn at it. None of us succeeded. Not even my Raffaello has done her justice.

GRAZIA

May I know the name of this paragon?

CHIGI

Imperia.

Grazia reacts with surprise.

CHIGI

Yes, the legendary courtesan. Pursued by every great man in the peninsula. And it is on her account that I invited you to sup with me.

Grazia is taken aback.

CHIGI

(offering his arm)

Shall we go in?

He leads her out of the room.

38 INT. DINING ROOM, CHIGI VILLA(NOW VILLA FARNESINA), ROMA - EVENING

Grazia, Chigi, Judah, and Gershon sit around the table CHATTING amiably as they sip wine and eat their meal while Servants wait upon them.

CHIGI

Ser Geronimo, show Maestro Leone the library. I am sure he will be most interested in several of the treatises I have collected.

GERSHOM

Certainly, Ser Chigi.

(to Judah)

Brother-in-law.

The two rise and move out of the room as Chigi turns to the Servants.

38 CONTINUED:

38

CHIGI

That will be all for now.

The Servants all move out until Chigi is alone with Grazia.

Chigi then turns to Grazia and takes her hand to speak quietly, in confidentiality.

CHIGI

What I tell you now, Madonna Grazia, are intimate secrets. I speak to you of the tenderness of a woman's heart and of the callousness of a man. You may have heard that Imperia committed suicide.

GRAZIA

Yes, I knew that.

CHIGI

Poison. For three days and nights I stood at her bedside praying, but to no avail. The divine Imperia died for the love of an unworthy man.

(leans very close)

I am that man.

He becomes emotional and turns away to compose himself.

CHIGI

This woman who commanded the most highly regarded and powerful men in the land wanted only the one she could not command. I broke her heart. Do you not agree that this story cries out to be told?

Grazia smiles noncommittally.

CHIGI

I have asked you here to beg a favour, Madonna. I would give much to see my Imperia enshrined in your Book of Heroines. That is my request.

Grazia finally understands where Chigi has been going and remains noncommittal, now knowing what to say or do.

39 EXT. CHIGI VILLA(NOW VILLA FARNESINA), ROMA - EVENING

39

Grazia leaves with Judah and Gershom. Gershom suddenly stops.

39 CONTINUED:

39

GERSHOM

You refused Ser Chigi?!

GRAZIA

I told him I would seriously consider including Imperia in the next edition.

GERSHOM

And if there is no next edition?

GRAZIA

It is my book. And I have already refused Isabella Gonzaga her request, so why should I now relent for Ser Chigi?

GERSHOM

Because he's publishing your book.

GRAZIA

My book is being published by Callierges, the Greek.

GERSHOM

Everyone in Roma knows that Ser Chigi set up the Greek press for Callierges. Grazia, how could you?

Grazia is stunned.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

If I were Chigi, I thought, I would stop the publication. But I still had something to learn about Agostino Chigi.

40 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

40

A COURIER delivers a large parcel of letters to Mature Grazia, now 45. She opens and reads throughout the following. SEVEN-YEAR OLD DANILO clambers about her, helping her open the letters. Several bound copies of The Book of Heroines are on the shelf. It is 1520.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

My Book of Heroines was published by Callierges Press with each word as I had written it. Agostino Chigi gave his patronage to me with no strings attached. So I resolved then and there to include Imperia in all subsequent editions. But, sad to say, by the time the second edition came out, Agostino Chigi had died.

(MORE)

40 CONTINUED:

40

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Only a few days before his protege,
 Raffaello, in the spring of 1520. First
 Chigi, then Raffaello, and then, a year
 later, Pope Leo. And that changed all of
 our lives.

41 EXT. GERSHOM'S HOUSE OUTSIDE ROMA - DAY

41

Title over in handwritten Renaissance script:

Roma

1522

Gershom unpacks his belongings into a small house on a hill overlooking
 Roma.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
 Gershom lost his sinecure at the bank with
 the death of Chigi. He retired to live on
 his investments.

42 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

42

MATURE JUDAH, now 59, packs up his medical gear. A concerned Mature
 Grazia observes with Seven-Year Old Danilo.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)
 And Judah lost his patron with the death of
 the Pope. The Pope's successor, Adrian VI,
 inherited an enormous debt that put the
 entire city into a recession. But the
 worst was yet to come. Plague. Again.

From outside, the SOUNDS of RAUCOUS NOISE and EXPLOSIONS IN THE
 DISTANCE.

MATURE JUDAH
 I have never seen it more virulent. Even in
 Firenze in the nineties. This is much
 worse. All of Roma is like a tomb.

MATURE GRAZIA
 Why must they make all that constant noise?
 It is enough to drive any sane person mad.

MATURE JUDAH
 To stir up the air and dispel the demons.
 Absurd superstition.

42 CONTINUED:

42

MATURE GRAZIA

People are desperate.

MATURE JUDAH

We are reverting to the worst excesses of the Dark Ages. Your brother Jehiel would make a fortune here selling his amulets and potions.

MATURE GRAZIA

Please be very careful. If you catch this, then all of us are quarantined in this house.

SEVEN-YEAR OLD DANILO

Papa, please stay home. Please. I don't want our house painted with a red "X".

Mature Judah beckons Seven-Year Old Danilo to him. They embrace.

MATURE JUDAH

I am physician, Danilo. People need my help. You wouldn't want me to abandon all those people, would you?

SEVEN-YEAR OLD DANILO

But, Papa...

MATURE JUDAH

And Danilo... I need help. Would you help me?

The boy looks up at Mature Judah.

MATURE JUDAH

I need someone to look after your mother. Could you do that for me? And make sure she stays well and does not worry? Will you?

SEVEN-YEAR OLD DANILO

Yes, Papa.

MATURE JUDAH

And no one will paint a red X on our door and lock us in, I promise you.

Mature Judah holds the boy tightly to him, looking at. ..

Mature Grazia, who stands by observing.

42 CONTINUED: (2)

42

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

People also turned to magicians and mystics
and cabalists to free them of the demons
and furies they felt infected the city.

Mature Judah releases Seven-Year Old Danilo and leaves.

43 EXT. STREETS OF ROMA - DAY

43

Four Litter Bearers carry a curtained litter through the near-empty
streets, with many doors painted with a red X.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Even brother Gershom had a gypsy, Dido, he
insisted would help us. I thought it
foolishness, but when he told me the gypsy
had once been *ruffiana* to the courtesan
Imperia, I could not resist.

44 INT. LITTER - DAY

44

Mature Grazia sits in the litter behind closed curtains.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

But I agreed to see this Dido only at
Gershom's home, for Judah would have no
truck with such pagan superstitions.

Mature Grazia rides along listening to LOUD RAUCOUS SOUNDS and
EXPLOSIONS. As well, SHRIEKS and CRIES of pain.

Then a new sound, a DISTANT VOICE:

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)

See my body! See my body!

Mature Grazia CALLS OUT to the litter bearers.

MATURE GRAZIA

Stop! Stop here a moment!

The litter comes to a stop. Mature Grazia parts the heavy curtain and
peers through to see.

45 EXT. STREET, ROMA - DAY

45

The building facade, the door marked with a large, red "X," the windows
boarded up.

45 CONTINUED:

45

Mature Grazia peers through the litter curtains up the facade to...

The loggia on top where a YOUNG GIRL stands naked, her arms raised, slowly turning her body, CALLING OUT to Mature Grazia.

YOUNG GIRL

See my body, madonna! See my body. It is as healthy as yours. See? There are no buboes. No signs of any illness. Please get me out of this house, Madonna. Please save me.

Then, suddenly, other naked figures appear, raising their arms and similarly twirling and CALLING OUT.

OTHERS

Save me! See my body. I have no pestilence. Save me! See my body.

46 INT. LITTER, ROMA - DAY

46

Mature Grazia pulls the curtains closed quickly and calls out.

MATURE GRAZIA

Move on! Quickly! Move on!

The litter begins to move again as Mature Grazia clutches her ears to try to cut out the sounds.

YOUNG GIRL & OTHERS (O.S.)

See my body. Save us. We have no pestilence. See my body.

47 EXT. GERSHOM'S HOUSE OUTSIDE ROMA - DAY

47

Gershom hurries up to the litter as it arrives at his house. He parts the curtains and helps Mature Grazia out.

GERSHOM

Welcome, sister. Dido is already here.

He motions to a nearby cart, brightly painted, with a BLACKAMOR standing beside it, naked except for a band around his hips and an orange turban. In the cart, sitting on a pile of straw and swathed in veils, her face unseen, "Dido" in fifteen shades of crimson with gold flashing from her fingers, ears, and teeth.

Gershom and Mature Grazia approach the cart.

47 CONTINUED:

47

The Blackamoor assists Dido from the cart. She bows before Mature Grazia and Gershom.

DIDO

Hail, mistress. I have come to bring you the wisdom of the ancients. Dido, at your service.

GERSHOM

Allow me to present the illustrious scholar and poet Madonna Grazia dei Rossi del Medigo, wife of the miraculous healer Leone del...

DIDO

Grazia? Dei Rossi!?

She pulls the veils back to reveal the face of an old woman. She presses close to Mature Grazia, who backs off, repulsed.

DIDO

Do not retreat, little Grazia. It is Zaira. Your own Zaira.

Mature Grazia suddenly recognizes her long-ago nanny, now aged 63, and SCREAMS in delight. They hug and kiss.

Gershom and the Blackamoor look on in surprise.

MATURE GRAZIA

This is Gershom.

ZAIRA/DIDO

No!!

MATURE GRAZIA

Yes!

The old woman stares and smiles at a perplexed Gershom.

MATURE GRAZIA

This is Zaira, our old nanny. She was there, at your birth.

ZAIRA

There? I brought him into this world. And helped your poor, beloved mother into the next.

MATURE GRAZIA

But what are you now doing in Roma? How did you come here?

ZAIRA

How I came here and got to be this way no longer matters. I am who I am.

MATURE GRAZIA

Then you must come and live with us in the Portico d'Ottavia. The house is big enough and there is a little room...

ZAIRA

(holding up her hand)

Grazia, Grazia, not so fast. Look at me and tell me what you see.

MATURE GRAZIA

A woman honest and honourable, and full of virtues.

ZAIRA

You see an old whore with a face like a cauliflower and a body riddled with French boils. Syphilis. I sell lies to credulous dupes. I am everything you detest, Graziella. I would rather be taken to the Hospital of San Giacomo in a cart and end my days befouled by pus and vomit than soil your life and loved ones with my corrupt presence.

MATURE GRAZIA

But there must be something that we can do.

ZAIRA

Graziella, I would like to accept your aid. I am too old to play the whore and too honest for a witch. But a laundress.

MATURE GRAZIA

A laundress?

ZAIRA

With a small amount of money, I could open a Spanish laundry and earn my keep as an honest woman.

MATURE GRAZIA

Of course, Zaira.

They shake hands and continue chatting as OVER:

47 CONTINUED: (3)

47

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

From that time on she arrived each Monday to collect our laundry. And we spent the rest of that afternoon talking away. She told me of her time with the legendary Imperia who died for the love of a man. But that man, she revealed, was not Agostino Chigi, but another whom she would not reveal.

48 INT. STUDIOLO, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

48

Mature Grazia sits at her writing desk while EIGHT-YEAR OLD DANILO studies his books nearby. It is now 1523.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

So in my second edition of The Book of Heroines I wrote the story of Imperia but did not name the man for whose love the great courtesan gave her life. By then, the pestilence had gone and the new Pope had died, replaced by yet another.

A Servant enters.

SERVANT

Madama, pardon, but there is a man. He wants to see you.

MATURE GRAZIA

Who is he?

SERVANT

He says he is your brother.

MATURE GRAZIA

Gershom?

SERVANT

No, it is not your brother Gershom.

Mature Grazia leaps up and hurries out of the room, followed by Eight-Year Old Danilo and the Servant.

49 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE - DAY

49

Mature Grazia hurries to the entrance where a man stands. He is 47 and has a thick beard, bare, filthy feet, and matted hair.

49 CONTINUED:

49

Mature Grazia stops in shock. Eight-Year Old Danilo turns and runs back up the stairs, CRYING.

Mature Grazia approaches, staring.

JEHIEL

It is I, Grazia, your brother Jehiel. Am I such a stranger to you that you do not recognize me?

She stares at him in amazement.

50 INT. KITCHEN, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

50

Mature Grazia, Mature Judah, and Jehiel sit at the table where he eats.

JEHIEL

He is descended from the princes of one of the lost tribes of Israel and has authority from God himself. This David draws thoughts as pure and sparkling as spring water. Wherever he goes, people flock to listen to his wisdom.

MATURE JUDAH

And what brings this holy man to Roma?

JEHIEL

Not a holy man, but an emissary from his brother, King Joseph of the tribe of Reuben.

MATURE JUDAH

One of the lost tribes of Israel?

JEHIEL

Not lost. It flourishes in the wilderness of Chabor in constant war against the Turk. It is this war which conjoins Prince David with the Pope and all the Christian princes of Europe.

MATURE JUDAH

(incredulous)

An alliance between the Christian princes of Europe and this suddenly rediscovered lost tribe of Israel?!

JEHIEL

Please, brother-in-law, hear me out.

(MORE)

50 CONTINUED:

50

JEHIEL (*CONT'D*)

I have consulted my master, Prince David Reubeni, and he agrees to accept you as our translator at the court of the Vatican.

Mature Judah reacts very coolly to the suggestion.

JEHIEL

It is a great honour, brother. For the first time, a Jew will be received not as a supplicant or a servant, but as an ambassador equal to any Christian.

MATURE JUDAH

I am sorry, but that is quite beyond my powers.

(hesitates)

But I do know of someone eminently suited for the job.

(indicates Mature Grazia)

A scholar of great repute among both Jews and Christians and someone of your own blood who will bring honour to your house.

Mature Grazia sits there trapped by Judah's suggestion.

Mature Judah gloats at her.

51 EXT. PIAZZA SAN PIETRO (ST PETER'S), ROMA - DAY

51

A small crowd has gathered.

Mature Grazia, dressed in her finest dress and wearing jewels, stands with Jehiel with his beard and matted hair.

MATURE GRAZIA

Why must I be dressed in such finery while you...

JEHIEL

Grazia, we are not here as beggars but as the equals of princes.

MATURE GRAZIA

Then why do you appear lower than the scurviest street sweeper?

JEHIEL

We who surround Prince David must not rob him of his allure.

51 CONTINUED:

51

MATURE GRAZIA

And will Reubeni appear bare footed in as filthy cloak with matted hair?

JEHIEL

Grazia, he will appear as...

There is a sudden swell of excitement and activity in the square as several hundred people move in, following DAVID REUBENI, a tiny "monkey-man" dressed like a prince and riding a white charger.

JEHIEL

... as grand as a Christian prince wearing the jewels that the faithful have donated to his crusade.

The silly monkey-man on the white horse parades across the square followed by hundreds of his followers.

At the Vatican gates, the Swiss guards open them for Reubeni to prance through on his white horse.

Jehiel takes Mature Grazia by the arm and they follow Reubeni through the gates.

52 EXT. VATICAN PALACE, ROMA - DAY

52

Reubeni and his concierge, including a devoted Jehiel and an incredulous Mature Grazia, make their way into the Vatican, past the gardens, the fountains, the Belvedere Palace, towards the Pope's private apartments.

53 EXT. BORGO, VATICAN PALACE, ROMA - DAY

53

The procession comes to a halt.

Reubeni, still on his horse, glances over to. ..

Jehiel, standing with Mature Grazia. Jehiel immediately leaps forward and scurries over to the horse. There he bends over, kisses Reubeni's foot, and clasps his hands together to receive the holy foot.

Reubeni, all self-centered pomp, plants his foot into Jehiel's hands and ceremoniously dismounts. Jehiel, immediately on his knees, kisses the hem of Reubeni's robe.

Mature Grazia watches all this with disapproval.

Jehiel rises from his knees and whispers into Reubeni's ear.

53 CONTINUED:

53

Reubeni immediately HISSES and raises his hand in outrage as if to strike Jehiel, who drops to his knees. Reubeni then spits ferociously at Jehiel and turns to glower at...

Mature Grazia, who is taken aback at the ferocity of the stare.

All other eyes turn to her.

Reubeni spins away and heads into the Pope's quarters, followed by everyone else. They push past the prostrate Jehiel and the distressed Mature Grazia.

Left alone, a very upset Jehiel staggers over to Mature Grazia.

JEHIEL

Oh Grazia, I have offended my master mightily. He will never forgive me.

(drops to his knees and mumbles in prayer)

I thank God every day of my life for not making me a woman.

(beating his breast)

Forgive me for staining Jehovah's escutcheon with the touch of a woman.

Mature Grazia observes with growing understanding.

MATURE GRAZIA

Jehiel. Go in. Make your peace with him.

JEHIEL

You are not offended?

MATURE GRAZIA

I am a woman, Jehiel, and I find no shame in that, no matter what your messiah or any other Jewish sage, all of whom are male, may have to say about it.

Jehiel looks to his sister in admiration, bows to her, and scurries off after all the others, leaving Mature Grazia alone.

She stands before Raffaello's "Fire at the Borgo" when a hand suddenly clasps hers.

MATURE PIRRO (O.S.)

Grazia. Turn. Look at me. You need not speak. Just one look from those eyes is all I ask. Then if you wish I will leave you.

53 CONTINUED: (2)

53

She turns to look into the face of MATURE LORD PIRRO, now 52, standing beside her in a uniform with a black armband. She immediately notices the band.

MATURE PIRRO

I am in mourning.

MATURE GRAZIA

I am sorry. For whom are you...

MATURE PIRRO

My wife.

Mature Grazia reacts: He is free. She immediately covers up any display of hope or longing for him.

MATURE PIRRO

The plague at Bozzuolo. She was a virtuous woman and a good wife, even though there was no love between us. Nor could she produce a living child. Only dead ones, alas. So, deprived of love and fatherhood.

MATURE GRAZIA

Lord Pirro, I am indeed truly sorry.

MATURE PIRRO

Grazia, I cannot believe even now that I am seeing you.

He traces the outline of her face with his fingers with immense tenderness.

She is immediately swept up in the old emotional pull to him.

MATURE PIRRO

We must leave here. Come with me, Grazia.

MATURE GRAZIA

No. I cannot. My brother...

MATURE PIRRO

Will you not grant me one hour?

MATURE GRAZIA

I have a new life.

MATURE PIRRO

I have no designs on your life, Madonna. I simply ask for one hour of your time.

She looks into his eyes and cannot resist.

54 EXT. VATICAN PALACE, ROMA - DAY 54

Mature Pirro escorts Mature Grazia out of the Palace.

55 EXT. BELOW PORTA SAN SPIRITO, VATICAN PALACE, ROMA - DAY 55

They walk along the high wall and stop below the massive gate with its huge archway entrance and two columns on either side.

MATURE PIRRO

Grazia, we have so little time. Let us not waste any of it on politesse.

He reaches for her hand. She withdraws it.

He steps close to her.

MATURE PIRRO

Have you forgotten Venezia, lady?

Mature Grazia hesitates: She has definitely not forgotten, but...

MATURE GRAZIA

We cannot simply climb into a convenient bed every time we encounter each other.

Mature Pirro stiffens, as if struck.

MATURE GRAZIA

I thought you understood that there could never be anything further between us. My husband, your wi...

(breaks off)

MATURE PIRRO

May I escort you back to the Vatican palace?

Mature Grazia immediately regrets her rebuff, but...

MATURE GRAZIA

Thank you.

They move off together.

56 EXT. VATICAN PALACE, ROMA DAY 56

Mature Grazia and Mature Pirro approach the Vatican Palace where they stop to say goodbye.

56 CONTINUED:

56

MATURE GRAZIA

There was no call for me to speak to you as I did.

MATURE PIRRO

Quite the opposite. I was presumptuous to believe that I would hold the same place in your heart as you do in mine.

Mature Grazia goes to speak, but remains silent, uncertain.

MATURE PIRRO

For a moment today, I thought I had been given one last chance. But...

He bows, turns, and walks away.

Mature Grazia watches him go, regret and anguish on her face.

57 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - EVENING

57

Jehiel dines with an uneasy Mature Grazia, an impatient Mature Judah, and Eight-Year Old Danilo.

JEHIEL

My master is leading us to Portugal to raise funds there against the Turks.

MATURE GRAZIA

I am glad he has forgiven you. But must you go with him?

JEHIEL

Prince David is a messiah. He knows divinity and his teachings are the word of ...

MATURE JUDAH

Jehiel, do you hear what you are saying?

JEHIEL

I am speaking the divine truth as handed down through the tribes of Israel and...

MATURE JUDAH

You are speaking heresy.

Shocked silence falls around the table.

57 CONTINUED:

57

MATURE JUDAH

The belief that a man, through his own capabilities, has the power to become a terrestrial God. What do you call that?

JEHIEL

But Prince David is no ordinary man. He is...

MATURE JUDAH

The first and most fundamental law of Moses: There is only one God. Claiming otherwise is heresy. And the Catholic church burns such heretics.

MATURE GRAZIA

Do you see the danger you are in?

MATURE JUDAH

And the danger in which you place us all, your family?

Jehiel observes them coolly, then rises to leave.

JEHIEL

You have nothing to fear. I leave in the morning with Prince David. And you need never see me again.

He turns heel and stomps out of the house.

MATURE GRAZIA

Jehiel! No, please!

She runs after him.

58 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - EVENING

58

Jehiel hurries away into the darkness of the city.

Mature Grazia runs out of the house and calls after him.

MATURE GRAZIA

Jehiel, no! Jehiel, come back! Jehiel!

Mature Judah joins her. Followed by Eight-Year Old Danilo.

MATURE JUDAH

Grazia, it's for the best.

58 CONTINUED:

58

MATURE GRAZIA

He's my brother.

MATURE JUDAH

He could destroy us all.

MATURE GRAZIA

You are always ready to think the worst.
That Christians are always out to hate and
destroy us.

MATURE JUDAH

And they aren't?

She turns away and moves into the house. He follows, leaving the
street empty.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

And we didn't hear from my reckless,
irresponsible, but lovable brother for two
years. And then...

FADE OUT:

Title over in handwritten Renaissance script?

Roma

1526

FADE IN:

59 EXT. EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

59

The same street, now daytime two years later.

JEHIEL (V.O.)

Dear Sister: The worst has come to pass.
Only a miracle of haste and generosity can
save me now.

Mature Judah, now 63, hurries out of the house dressed for travel.
Following him are Mature Grazia, now 51, and DANILO, aged 10. They are
carrying Judah's bags.

JEHIEL (V.O.)

I am held here under house arrest in ransom
of five hundred golden ducats. Find this
money for me, Grazia.

A Servant appears with a horse. They pack the bags on the horse.

59 CONTINUED:

59

JEHIEL (V.O.)

Get it to me quickly before they hand me
over to the King's Great Inquisitor for
burning at the stake.

Mature Grazia and Danilo bid farewell to Mature Judah who climbs upon
the horse and rides away.

JEHIEL (V.O.)

My life is in your hands, trusted sister.
Hurry, for God's sakes, hurry. Signed,
Jehiel dei Rossi at Tavira, Portugal, June
3, 1526.

Mature Grazia and Danilo move into the house, leaving the street empty.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

A cloud of despondency settled over me,
from which I was rescued by Madonna
Isabella, who reappeared in my life.

60 EXT. PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - DAY

60

A litter arrives at the Palazzo.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

She was now living in the borrowed Palazzo
Colonna right in Roma and requested my
services as secretary two days a week.

61 INT. ISABELLA'S PRIVATE SUITES, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - DAY

61

Mature Isabella, 52, greying hair and heavysset, dictates while Grazia
sits writing.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

Which quickly grew to four, then five,
until I spent more time at the Palazzo
Colonna than in my own house under the
Portico d'Ottavia. This helped assuage my
fear for Jehiel in Portugal.

MATURE ISABELLA

Thank you, Grazia. I will leave you to
compose these in your own immaculate hand.

A SERVANT enters and curtsies to Mature Isabella.

61 CONTINUED:

61

SERVANT

Pardon, madonna, but there is a caller for Lady Grazia.

MATURE ISABELLA

Very well, tell him she'll be right there.

The Servant leaves.

MATURE ISABELLA

Do not be long. You know how important these documents are to Mantova.

MATURE GRAZIA

Yes, madonna.

Mature Grazia leaves following the Servant.

62 INT. RECEPTION CHAMBER, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - DAY

62

The Servant leads Mature Grazia across the massive reception chamber to a scruffy, swarthy CORSICAN.

CORSICAN

Forgive the intrusion, madonna.

MATURE GRAZIA

It is all right. What is your business?

CORSICAN

A delicate matter concerning my friend, Dido.

MATURE GRAZIA

Dido? Zaira. Yes, what is it?

He hesitates, embarrassed.

CORSICAN

She has taken herself to the Hospital of San Giacomo. It's the disease. She's gone blind and...

(hesitates, upset)

Oh, madonna, she's lying in a filthy room with fifty other prostitutes on straw pallets drenched with piss. If you ever loved her, get her out of that sewer. All that is needed is a doctor's letter and a place where she will be cared for.

62 CONTINUED:

62

MATURE GRAZIA

My husband is away. We cannot wait for him.

She thinks a moment and then quickly rises and hurries out of the room.

63 INT. ISABELLA'S DRESSING ROOM, PALAZZO COLONNA - DAY

63

Mature Grazia enters the room where Mature Isabella sits.

MATURE GRAZIA

I beg your pardon, Madonna Isabella, but I need help in a matter of life and death.

Mature Grazia proceeds to explain to Mature Isabella while OVER:

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

What I then presented was a coloured version of Zaira's affairs, one tailored to the lady's taste. Zaira had been my nurse, which was true, and a woman of uncommon virtue, also true, with whom life had dealt harshly, true as well. She was now blind, but not due to the French disease brought on by enforced prostitution, but after years of embroidering in bad light. My sweetened version worked.

MATURE ISABELLA

What is needed is a man of authority and presence.

(thinks a beat)

My kinsman, Lord Pirro of Bozzuolo is in Roma.

Mature Grazia reacts but immediately suppresses her feelings.

MATURE ISABELLA

He is definitely the one to take care of this matter. I will send for him at once. You go home and make a room ready for the invalid. Lord Pirro will bring her to you before this day is out. One can always depend on Lord Pirro.

64 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - EVENING

64

A litter stops before the house under the escort of Mature Lord Pirro.

64 CONTINUED:

64

Mature Grazia appears at the door and moves to the litter where a human shape appears beneath a dirty blanket. She reaches for the blanket.

But is intercepted by Mature Pirro's arm. He gives her a look of warning: "It is better that you do not look."

Mature Grazia thrusts aside his arm and pulls back the blanket to see...

Wide, sunken staring eyes sunken into what had once been a face but was not a mass of running sores oozing pus and blood. The mouth moves, struggling to speak, but cannot.

Mature Grazia is shocked and upset, indeed sickened.

Mature Pirro stands by her side, ready to take her away.

But determined, Mature Grazia reaches under the blanket and clasps her filthy hand crawling with vermin. She fights back her tears.

MATURE GRAZIA

Zaira... Oh, my Zaira. You are home, now,
Zaira. It will be all right now.

Finally, Zaira starts to make some sounds, INCOMPREHENSIBLE MUTTERINGS at first, and then...

ZAIRA

(incomprehensible
mutterings)

Grazia... Grazia... Grazia....

MATURE GRAZIA

(to Mature Pirro)

Get her in the house please.

Mature Pirro moves in to lift Zaira, but she stops him.

ZAIRA

Thank God you came to me, my little
Graziella.

Mature Pirro lifts her out of the litter.

65 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - NIGHT

65

Mature Pirro eases Zaira into a basin of hot water while Mature Grazia stands by.

66 INT. ANTEROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - NIGHT 66

Mature Pirro carries Zaira into an anteroom and lays her on a bed.

Mature Grazia follows and lies down beside Zaira, holding her in her arms like a baby.

DISSOLVE TO:

67 INT. ANTEROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAWN 67

Early dawn light caresses the entwined figures of Zaira and Mature Grazia.

Zaira suddenly stirs and pulls herself up, much to Mature Grazia's surprise.

ZAIRA

Am I forgiven?

MATURE GRAZIA

Of course you are. God has mercy. He forgives.

She settles Zaira back down and begins to recite to her.

MATURE GRAZIA

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
He leadeth me beside the still waters. He
restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the
paths of righteousness in His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death, I fear no evil for
Thou art with me...

Mature Pirro's hand gently touches Mature Grazia's shoulder. She stops and stares at the lifeless shape of Zaira in her arms. She gently eases the body down onto the bed.

And gently eases her own body into Mature Pirro's arms where she cries. He holds her close to him.

She feels the comfort and strength he provides.

He scoops her up in his arms and carries her out.

68 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAWN 68

Mature Pirro carries Mature Grazia in and places her on the bed. When he releases her and rises to leave, she clings to him and pulls him down with her.

She holds on to him for dear life and he grasps her with the same powerful need.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

69 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY 69

Mature Grazia, naked beneath the sheets, suddenly awakens in Mature Pirro's naked arms. She looks in alarm at her lover.

MATURE PIRRO

Grazia, you must marry me. There is no other way for us.

MATURE GRAZIA

I am still married and I cannot...

MATURE PIRRO

Grazia, Grazia. We have fought against this, both of us, all of our lives. And yet, every time we meet...

MATURE GRAZIA

Judah is my husband, away from home on an important mission for me, and I cannot just...

MATURE PIRRO

And between times, when we do not meet. Can you honestly tell me I am ever far from your thoughts? You are in mine, every single day. I cannot escape you.

MATURE GRAZIA

Please... Please, I need time.

MATURE PIRRO

You are not prepared to entrust your life to me? To prove my devotion and sincerity, I wish to declare my intentions towards your son.

(MORE)

69 CONTINUED:

69

MATURE PIRRO (CONT'D)

That I intend to adopt him and raise him up
as my own. For I love every part of you
Grazia, including everything that you love.

Mature Grazia looks at him, hesitating, ready to reveal the truth. But she remains silent.

MATURE PIRRO

I must leave for Lombardia today. But I
must know my fate soon Grazia. I can see
happiness within my grasp. Please do not
snatch it away from me again. I must know
your decision the day I return to Roma.

Mature Grazia silently assents.

70 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - EVENING

70

Mature Grazia lights the Sabbath candles. Danilo approaches with a letter.

DANILO

Mama, a letter. From Papa in Portugal.

Mature Grazia turns to him in alarm.

MATURE GRAZIA

I... My eyes are very tired. Could you
read it to me?

Danilo opens the letter and scans it. He suddenly looks up at his mother upset.

Mature Grazia stares at her son in dread.

DANILO

It's Uncle Jehiel. He's dead.

Mature Grazia MOANS and swoons. Danilo catches her before she passes her out and falls.

DANILO

Mama... Please...

He helps her across the room to the stairs while the letter remains on the table as OVER:

70 CONTINUED:

70

MATURE JUDAH (V.O.)

Beloved wife: Prepare yourself for the worst. Your brother is dead. I arrived too late to save him. I made several attempts to negotiate with the five hundred ducats...

71 INT. BEDROOM, DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - EVENING

71

Danilo helps a distraught Mature Grazia to her bed.

MATURE JUDAH (V.O.)

But there was no use. Your brother died a martyr, burned on a pyre. There is no more to say save to call on God to comfort you...

Danilo sits with his mother, comforting her.

MATURE JUDAH (V.O.)

... in this terrible loss and to watch over our brother Jehiel, who, in his martyrdom, must surely have achieved a stay in paradise.

72 INT. ISABELLA'S PRIVATE SUITES, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - DAY

72

Mature Grazia, all in black, sits weeping with Mature Isabella, who responds with genuine empathy.

MATURE JUDAH (V.O.)

Signed, Judah del Medigo at Tavira, Portugal, August 10, 1526.

MATURE ISABELLA

Perhaps you forget, Grazia, that I too have lost brothers. Imprisoned for life as traitors in a dungeon by their own brother. Even after all these years he will not forgive them. Nor will he let me even visit them. My brothers are as deeply planted in the dank earth as your brother's ashes and I can do as little as you to bring them back.

(noting Mature Grazia)

There, you have stopped weeping.

MATURE GRAZIA

Yes, you have helped me bear my burden, madonna.

MATURE ISABELLA

You have eased my pain, Grazia. Your tears opened a chamber in my heart I thought was sealed forever. And you will return to my service once your month of mourning is up.

MATURE GRAZIA

Yes. Yes, of course I will.

MATURE ISABELLA

Excellent. For I need your services.

Mature Grazia rises and moves towards the door to leave.

MATURE ISABELLA

You know that the Germans are marching this way. They plan to teach the Holy Father to respect his feudal lord, Emperor Charles?

Mature Grazia stops and turns back.

MATURE GRAZIA

Yes, but I thought that Lord Pirro was going to Milano...

MATURE ISABELLA

Too late. Milano fell to the Germans.

MATURE GRAZIA

And Lord Pirro?

MATURE ISABELLA

Ordered to Paris to solicit aid for the Pope from King Francis.

Mature Grazia tries to disguise her surprise and disappointment.

MATURE ISABELLA

So things are not unfolding well for us. I will definitely need all of your skills if we are to maneuver our way through the Gordian knot of difficulties that lay ahead.

MATURE GRAZIA

Yes, madam.

MATURE ISABELLA

And Grazia. Given that you are virtually my full-time secretary.

(MORE)

72 CONTINUED: (2)

72

MATURE ISABELLA (CONT'D)

And given the dangers that we are about to face here in Roma. I invite you to move your family into this palazzo. For your safety.

MATURE GRAZIA

I appreciate such a generous offer, madonna. I will take it up with my honourable husband upon his return from Portugal.

73 EXT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

73

Mature Judah approaches the house. Danilo, dressed in black, bursts out the door and runs to him. Mature Judah embraces him warmly.

Mature Grazia, also in black, watches from the doorway.

74 INT. DEL MEDIGO HOUSE, OTTAVIA, ROMA - DAY

74

Mature Judah and Mature Grazia talk.

MATURE JUDAH

The barbarians are at the gate and within the year, a holocaust. Italy is doomed.

MATURE JUDAH

If she were my patient, I would tell its relatives that the time had come to say goodbye. Which is exactly what I propose we do.

Mature Grazia reacts with concern.

MATURE JUDAH

I have written Suleiman the Magnificent, agreeing to enter the Sultan's service in Constantinople.

MATURE GRAZIA

I am not so sure we need to take such drastic steps as to abandon our home and our...

MATURE JUDAH

(intransigent)

The matter is decided. You must obey me in this, Grazia.

MATURE GRAZIA

(angered)

I cannot agree to go and certainly not to carry my son back into the Dark Ages because of some phantom in your imagination.

MATURE JUDAH

You are aware that Milano has fallen to the Germans. And they are at this very moment marching on your old home in Mantova. Hardly a phantom.

MATURE GRAZIA

I will not go with you to Turkey. Nor will Danilo.

MATURE JUDAH

You are my wife and Danilo is my son and you are both coming with me to Constantinople.

MATURE GRAZIA

Danilo is not your son!

A terrible silence of shock. Then a GROAN from Judah.

MATURE GRAZIA

(intransigent)

He is not yours to take. He will stay here with me. He will be told the truth. It is his right to know his father.

MATURE JUDAH

I am his father.

MATURE GRAZIA

You know you are not. His father is...

MATURE JUDAH

(cutting her off)

No! Spare me that knowledge, Grazia. The name is not the issue here, nor the man.

MATURE GRAZIA

But Danilo is our joint concern, Judah. We have deceived him with our silence.

MATURE JUDAH

I will not give him up. I cannot!

MATURE GRAZIA

We have kept him from his true father. We must give him back.

MATURE JUDAH

He is the only son I will ever have.

MATURE GRAZIA

You have no choice. I will tell him tonight with or without you!

Mature Judah sags in despair.

Mature Grazia moves to him in sympathy. Their anger is spent.

MATURE GRAZIA

Judah... We have suffered from the lie that came between us once. We must not allow a second lie to come between us and our son. We must tell him the truth.

MATURE JUDAH

The truth... The truth is that by the law of Israel, being the son of a Jewish mother, Danilo is a Jew.

MATURE GRAZIA

Then tell him that. And tell him how much you love him. That is as important as any law. But tell him the truth.

MATURE JUDAH

Very well.
(turning to her)
But not yet.

MATURE GRAZIA

(irritated again)
You are bargaining over Danilo like a pawnbroker, Judah. I will not have it.

MATURE JUDAH

(harsh)
Oh yes you will! Let me remind you that I too have a stake in this boy, Grazia. I have nurtured him. Taught him. Trained him in the rituals of our people. And dreamed of standing at his side on the bimah and seeing him welcomed into the community of Jewish men. I have earned the right to fight for my son, have I not?

74 CONTINUED: (3)

74

Mature Grazia silently assents.

MATURE JUDAH

Danilo is a little more than a year from the time he must prepare to become a man by the laws of Israel. I propose that we make that year a time of probation for him in the Christian world. You will introduce Danilo to all the delights of the life you have chosen for him and for yourself...

Mature Grazia goes to protest, but is cut short.

MATURE JUDAH

Oh, yes you have!

MATURE JUDAH

If we are after truth, let us have the whole truth. I know that I am fighting for both you and my son.

Mature Grazia remains silent; she cannot deny it.

MATURE JUDAH

At the end of a year, you will divorce me or not, as you choose. Danilo, with all the facts laid out before him, will choose either his blood father and the Christian life, or me and the life in which he has been raised. But until the year is up, there will be no talk of divorce, no conversions. All I ask is one year to make my case.

Mature Grazia silently as agrees as OVER:

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

So it was agreed. And two days later, you and I journeyed ...

75 EXT. OSTIA PORT - NIGHT

75

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

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

... to Ostia in Madama's coach to say our goodbyes to the man you had known all your life as your father.

75 CONTINUED: 75

On the quay, enshrouded in fog and watching the ship, are Danilo and Mature Grazia.

76 EXT. OUTER GATES, PALAZZO COLONNA - NIGHT 76

A coach passes through the gates, into the grounds of the palace.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

That night I sat at this table and vowed to trace for you the long road from my own childhood through your birth and up to the present.

77 INT. RECEPTION CHAMBER, PALAZZO COLONNA - NIGHT 77

Mature Grazia and Danilo follow the servant, ALESSANDRO, up the staircase where they are met with another servant, COSTANZA, who bows to them both.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

My *libro sigreto* is done. My tale is told. You know all. What you make of it and how you use it is up to you.

Costanza leads Mature Grazia one way down the hall towards her room.

Alessandro leads Danilo in the opposite direction.

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

This year, 1527, is a year of decision for Italy, for me, and for you.

78 INT. GRAZIA'S BEDROOM, PALAZZO COLONNA, ROMA - NIGHT 78

Mature Grazia sits at her table writing

MATURE GRAZIA (V.O.)

When it is done, you will have chosen a religion and a father. I know you will choose wisely. Whatever you decide, do it with your whole heart. Remember: *carpe diem*. Seize the day. With both hands.

She stops writing, puts the quill down, blots the ink on the page, and closes the manuscript with an air of finality.

FADE OUT:

END OF EPISODE SIX