

CHASING TIME  
Written by Susan Lee Hahn

**Pilot Episode One: It Starts with an Apple**

Inspired by the **Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine**, (1599)

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CHASING TIME

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Season 1: Episode 1:

It Start with an Apple

TEASER

EXT. TUSCANY/MEDICI VILLA - 1475 - DAWN

The wind surges and swirls across the lush, green, rolling hills of the Tuscan countryside, up and over the stone fortress and into the Medici compound with fourteenth century villas, sculpture gardens, painting studios, barn, and an alchemist's workshop.

INT. ALCHEMISTS WORKSHOP - 1475 - CONTINUOUS

The glowing light inside reveals an open caldron, which bubbles with metals and strange herbs. Tending to the brew is SOFIA MERLINI (35), a Botticelli beauty with an out-of-this-world intelligence and a fearlessness for the dark arts. Watching on in wonder is BRUNO MEDICI (40+), a rugged Italian who's completely enamored with her.

Sofia takes a silver tube from around her neck and sucks the liquid into it like a straw. Bruno hands her a shiny red apple. She punctures it with the sharp end of the tube and lets the liquid seep deep into the core of the apple.

EXT. MEDICI VILLAS - DAWN

The morning sky shows sharp slivers of sunlight as Sofia scurries quickly to the barn with Bruno close behind her.

INT. MEDICI VILLAS/BARN - DAWN

Sofia gently approaches an old black stallion at the back of his stall. She makes soft sounds to encourage him and stretches out the apple in her hand. The horse limps slowly toward her. She feeds him the apple with the silvery liquid.

Within moments, the decrepid horse transforms into a younger, more viril version of himself. He snorts and stomps. Sofia opens the stall door, then the barn door, and lets the stallion race out, reborn into his younger body.

Sofia and Bruno follow him. They chase the surging stallion on horseback across the hills, as if chasing time itself.

The stallion finally slows at a pond and drinks, his coat lathered in sweat. Sofia dips her shawl in the cool water and drapes it over the steaming horse. Bruno's eyes are alive with passion. She smiles triumphantly.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEDICI VILLA - NIGHT

A long table stretches across a sprawling stone patio, lively with conversation amongst the artists, scientists, and writers as food and wine flow freely. Candles light the dark night as Bruno stands to make an announcement.

BRUNO

(calls their attention)

Tonight we welcome one of  
Florence's most talented artists to  
the Medici Villas. Please welcome  
Sandro Botticelli. May you find  
beauty and inspiration. Salute!

Sandro nods his thanks. Bruno motions for him to stand and speak, but he too shy and humble. Sofia smiles at him.

The evening finally winds down and the crowd disperses. Bruno exchanges a look with Sofia. Sandro seems smitten with her.

Bruno plucks an apple from a bowl of fruit, tosses it in the air, crunches into it, and walks toward his private villa at the top of the hill. A flock of peacocks scatter in his wake.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRUNO'S HILLTOP VILLA - NIGHT

Soon after, Sofia climbs the steps to his villa. A full moon hangs low in the sky like a spotlight. Inside, rooms of candles glow brightly, as if the place is on fire.

INT. BRUNO'S HILLTOP VILLA - CONTINUOUS

Sofia follows a row of lighted candles to Bruno's bedroom where he waits naked for her with desire pulsing through him, his body glistens with sweat. She slips out of her clothes and into his arms. He kisses her with so much passion that it takes her breath away.

They make love with a virility and a sensuality that almost transcends the physical world, like the stallion's run. Their lovemaking finally wanes, and Sofia figures it out.

SOFIA

You took it! The potion!

Bruno answers her with a passionate kiss.

BRUNO

You are the light of my soul.

SOFIA

How much did you take?

BRUNO

Just enough.

SOFIA

Bruno! It could've killed you.

BRUNO

It didn't kill me. It made me feel more alive than I've ever felt!

SOFIA

What does it feel like?

BRUNO

It feels like I was reborn, with a kind of magical energy that pulses in my veins. Life tastes delicious and every breath is ecstasy. I can't even describe the bliss.

SOFIA

I don't want to lose you.

BRUNO

You won't lose me, Sofia. *We will be together forever.*

He kisses her tenderly and looks deeply into her eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEDICI VILLAS/SCULPTURE GARDEN - YEAR 1475 - DAY

Sofia sketches a nude model while other artists sculpt and paint the model. Bruno watches. They exchange a passionate look. She continues her work.

Sandro Botticelli watches her closely. He finally asks her to pose for him. She agrees. He positions her as the Goddess Flora from the BIRTH OF VENUS.

ACT ONE

**TITLE CARD: 528 YEARS LATER, CHICAGO, IL - SPRING 2018**

INT. SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO - PRESENT DAY

Botticelli's the **Birth of Venus** flashes on the screen in a classroom centuries later, but the pose is the exact same.

ISABELLA BUONAVITA (35+) stands at the front, surrounded by a classroom of students, perched at their easels. She's a mixture of an erudite Italian and a street-smart Chicagoan with chiseled features and uncompromising, long, dark hair.

ISABELLA

Venus on the Half-shell, also known as *The Birth of Venus*, by Sandro Botticelli. Here he takes Humanism up a notch because she's naked, the first time a woman's body was celebrated so unabashedly.

She flips to another image, *SPRING*, also by Botticelli. She rotates between the two paintings, the face of Venus looks similar to the pregnant Goddess in *La Primavera*.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

*La Primavera* or *Spring*, notice that now Venus is knocked up. Good for her! All that nakedness put to good use. There are many things we can say about with these paintings: Iconic. Erotic. Timeless.

She flips back to *Venus on the Half-Shell*.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Let's talk about the wind. Anyone?

STUDENT #1

The wind comes from the Blue guy.

ISABELLA

Zephyr. Other forces at work here?

The room is quiet. The students look at each other.

STUDENT #2

The flowers?

ISABELLA

The flowers fall to earth, pulled by gravity. What does that mean?

They students don't answer quickly enough for her.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

The physical world like our earthly bodies or these flowers are captive to certain laws of nature: gravity, life, death, etc. The wind exists higher up, within the spiritual world.

Renaissance art isn't just about Jesus and his Mamma anymore. The word, Renaissance literally means re-birth in Italian because it's the *re-birth* of ancient Greek ideals, mythology, and allegorical stories. There are always forces at work that we can't grasp. As artists, it's our job to reveal light and air and energy. Subtle. Powerful. Sublime. This is your final exam. Challenge yourselves!

Isabella motions to two model in diaphanous clothing who stand between two blowers, pointed at different angles so the models' hair and clothes flow in opposite directions. The students clip their sketch paper to their easels in anticipation of the opposing winds, which create an intriguing and challenging session.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Who's afraid of a little wind! This is the Windy City! We'll do a five, ten, and a twenty minute sketch with some one minute sketches thrown in for fun. You won't know how much time you have with each sketch, so make every second count!

The students groan slightly.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

And no whining! You are artists! Time is your best friend and your worst enemy. You will never have enough time, so make the best of every moment. Let's go!

Isabella turns on the blowers, which are like opposing forces that battle for the air. She blasts the song, LUNA sung by Alessandro Saffina, which hangs in the air around them.

A SERIES OF SHOTS as the students sketch quickly, their images emerge with varying degrees of talent. Isabella walks around, her hair and clothes rise up with the wind. *The Birth of Venus* is still on the screen and hovers behind her. She goes to an easel and whips up a sketch. Her passion to create is undeniable. Her sketch is spectacular.

As the class ends, PROFESSOR PLENZA (55) a small, eccentric Italian man with a kind smile appears at the doorway.

PROFESSOR PLENZA

Your students love you and you  
always make them better artists  
because you challenge them.

ISABELLA

Thank you Professor Plenza! I mean,  
Dean Plenza.

PROFESSOR PLENZA

It seems like just yesterday when  
we were in this very class. You  
were my most talented student,  
ever. My how time flies.

He regards her sketches and is visibly moved. She offers one to him. He takes it, studies it. It's brilliant.

ISABELLA

My parting gift to you!

PROFESSOR PLENZA

Where am I going?

ISABELLA

Not you.

PROFESSOR PLENZA

(Smiles knowingly)  
Isabella, I met with the committee  
regarding your tenure.

ISABELLA

You'd think that I'd want to know  
what they said and if they offered  
it to me, but *do not tell me*.

PROFESSOR PLENZA

What? Why?

ISABELLA

Because I'm leaving! Today is my last day.

PROFESSOR PLENZA

You got into that summer program in Florence! I hoped my glowing recommendation helped.

ISABELLA

I did, but that's not why I'm leaving. Life is too short and I can't squander any more of my time here, though I do love teaching. I need to take a run at being a great artist. I'm not growing here. I'm not challenging myself. I'm not coming back.

PROFESSOR PLENZA

I understand. We'll miss you. I just want to say that I'm so sorry about your mother.

ISABELLA

Thank you for the flowers.

PROFESSOR PLENZA

I know it was a long and debilitating illness. She was so lucky to have you as her daughter.

ISABELLA

Thank you for your condolences.

PROFESSOR PLENZA

I hope you don't mind me asking, but I've read a little about the disease that she died from-

ISABELLA

Huntington's Disease.

PROFESSOR PLENZA

It's genetic, right? Do you have...

ISABELLA

I don't know! I don't want to know. I just know that if I don't do something different, something bigger, something that scares the life out of me, then I will die or a part of me will die.



He puts his hands on her shoulders, looks at her with tears in his eyes, then brings her in for a big hug.

CUT TO:

EXT. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO - DAY

Isabella descends the front steps of the Art Institute, past the flanking stone lions and the rhythmic drummers who are keeping time on garbage cans. She looks back, takes out her last sketch and lets the wind whip it out of her hands and into the sky. She watches, looking resolved and nostalgic.

EXT. THREE-FLAT APARTMENT - DUSK

Isabella arrives home to an old, worn-out brownstone.

INT. THREE-FLAT APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

She takes some mail out of the slot: Isabella and Francesca Buonavita. She glances at the fistful of hospital bills and puts them back in the box and climbs up to the top floor.

INT. ISABELLA'S CHICAGO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Her attic apartment has slanted ceilings and a view of the EL tracks. She sits down on a window seat looking west toward the sunset. She pours two glasses of wine, placing one next to an urn on the window sill with her mother's ashes in it.

She clinks glasses as the sun sets, then drinks them both. The noisy EL train clanks by her window, then rattling continues after the train is out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - TUSCAN COUNTRYSIDE- DAY

A similar rattling sound overlaps the sound of a train as it speeds across the Tuscan countryside. Isabella sketches the landscape, like lovers lounging amidst the sensuous hills. The timeless hills are bright green and peppered with flowers, newness.

She is so engrossed that she doesn't notice that the movement of the train has caused her open bag to inch closer to the edge of the empty seat across from her. The train lurches, stops, lurches again, the bag tumbles to the floor.

The urn with her mother's ashes drops out first and cracks down the center like an egg. Some of the ashes spill out. Isabella attempts to repair the crack with mini-pads and a shawl that she wraps around it. She scoops up the ashes on the ground with her sketch and folds it to contain them.

EXT. SMALL TUSCAN TOWN - TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Isabella descends with her two bags and the scarfed urn tucked under her arm. The train attendant speaks rapidly to her in Italian, but she doesn't understand that he's telling that there won't be another train to Florence until tomorrow.

The train pulls away. She wheels her one suitcase, her other bag on her shoulder and trudges to the Piazza at the center of town where she climbs the bell tower with the urn. It's almost dusk and the Tuscan hills take on a golden glow.

She says a few quiet words to her *Mama*, then scatters her ashes. A strong wind gusts the ashes away.

The bells in the tower ring, as if heralding her mother into the next world and catapulting her on her journey.

EXT. SMALL TUSCAN TOWN - TRAIN STATION - DAY/NIGHT

Isabella takes out some snacks from her backpack and waits for a train that never arrives. Time passes. She walks back to the piazza, but the town has closed up for the evening. She goes back to the train station and sleeps on a bench.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

LA SIGNORA MERLINI (60+) is a woman of timeless beauty and enduring energy. She stands at the sink, carefully mixing her coffee 'brew' while LO FREDO (70+) a bald, rugged Italian man with an Etruscan nose and shining eyes sits at the table.

We don't see La Signora's face yet.

LO FREDO  
(in Italian)  
Do not fret. She will be here.

LA SIGNORA  
I've been waiting so long for her.

LO FREDO  
This artist who is coming. She is not her. She is a brand new person.

LA SIGNORA

No one is a *brand new person*, Lo Fredo.

LO FREDO

She is just a talented artist who may or may not be the reincarnation-

LA SIGNORA

Amorosa is our last hope.

LO FREDDO

You know, she's not really Amorosa.

La Signora gives him a look that stops him cold.

INT. TRAIN STATION - SMALL TOWN IN TUSCANY - MORNING

Isabella gets on the next train with her suitcase and smaller bag. She no longer carries the broken urn.

EXT. TUSCAN COUNTRYSIDE- CONTINUOUS

The train moves swiftly, then slows down as it approaches the train station in Florence.

EXT. TRAIN STATION/FLORENCE, ITALY - DAY

Isabella steps onto the platform and walks between slices of sunlight and shadows as she makes her way to the street.

EXT. SANTA MARIA NOVELLA - CONTINUOUS

Isabella crosses the Piazza as church bells chime her arrival. She stops and takes it all in. At last, **Italy**.

EXT. FLORENCE - NEARBY SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Isabella searches on a side street and finds an old, fortress-like building. The sculpted doorknocker stares back with a terrifying face. She buzzes *La Signora Merlini*.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

La Signora and Lo Fredo have been awake all night, waiting for Isabella. La Signora jumps at the sound of the buzzer.

INT./EXT. LA CASA DI MERLINI - CONTINUOUS

The enormous door opens without a sound, as if magically. Isabella looks up, the sky shifts. She enters the fortress.

INT. LA CASA MERLINI - GROUND FLOOR/STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

At the top of the center staircase is a skylight that illuminated the six flights at an angle. A door opens on the top floor. A voice calls to her.

LA SIGNORA (O.S. ITALIAN ACCENT)  
Isabella?

ISABELLA  
Signora Merlini?

LA SIGNORA (O.S.)  
Si. Si. Wait. I will help you!

She catches a glimpse of Isabella below as light streams down from above. Both women ascend and descend, moving in and out of light and shadows. They meet in the middle. La Signora hugs her with intensity. Isabella is taken aback.

ISABELLA  
I'm Isabella Buonavita.

LA SIGNORA  
(unusually overjoyed)  
Yes. Yes, I know. Welcome!

La Signora helps her with her suitcase, tears in her eyes.

ISABELLA  
Are you all right, Signora?

LA SIGNORA  
Perfetto! Never better. Come! Come!

It's suddenly clear that La Signora is an older version of **Sofia Merlini from the Renaissance**. They arrive at the top floor. Lo Fredo sees Isabella and is overcome with emotions.

ISABELLA  
Ciao! I'm Isabella Buonavita.

LO FREDO  
It's so nice to see you again.

ISABELLA  
See me again? Have we met?

LO FREDO  
My English. *It's nice to meet you!*

Lo Fredo and La Signora stare at her. She's self-conscious.

## ACT TWO

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

La Signora shows Isabella into the front room, which is filled with artwork and antique Italian furniture. The wall-to-wall paintings look like Botticelli himself could have painted them. Isabella is enraptured.

ISABELLA  
These paintings are magnificent! Do you know who did them?

LO FREDO  
A very talented painter who lived a long time ago. La Signora can tell you more about her.

ISABELLA  
A woman painted these?

LA SIGNORA  
I'll get us some coffee. Lo Fredo?

He declines. La Signora hustles to the kitchen.

LO FREDO  
(to Isabella)  
I must go. I will see you bright and early on Monday morning.

ISABELLA  
You will?

LO FREDO  
Si! I am Lo Fredo. You are attending my workshop.

He kisses her on both cheeks, then admires her again.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

La Signora looks flustered as she prepares coffee and biscotti. She consults an old piece of parchment paper with some notations on it. She stuffs it in the back of a drawer, then pinches in some odd looking elements into the espresso.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Isabella stands alone in front of a painting of a handsome, Italian man. The look in his eyes is pure love and passion. The painting reverberates with a Deja Vu sensation...

INT. AMOROSA'S RENAISSANCE ART STUDIO - FLASHBACK - DAY

For several strange seconds, Isabella is transported back to the studio where the female, Renaissance painter Amorosa (an earlier incarnation of herself) stands at her easel and paints her lover, ANGELO DONATI.

ANGELO (IN ITALIAN)

You are my whole heart and soul.

AMOROSA (IN ITALIAN)

Turn your head slightly to the right. Now look at me.

This is the look that she paints, which is also on her face.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

La Signora enters and watches Isabella stare at the painting. Isabella looks like she's coming out of a trance.

ISABELLA

These are just so mesmerizing.  
Please, tell me about the artist.

LA SIGNORA

In good time. Let's talk about you.  
What is your *storia*, your *history*?

ISABELLA

Not much to tell. I'm an only child. My mother died recently and I left my job as a professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. I have no other family that I know of and no other source of income to cover my mother's medical bills. It's not much of a story.

LA SIGNORA

Brava!

ISABELLA

Why do you say that?

LA SIGNORA

Because you are free! You can paint something brilliant on the canvas of your new life. How exciting.

ISABELLA

That's one way to look at it.

LA SIGNORA

It's the only way, *my dear*.

La Signora hands Isabella her coffee and the biscotti. Isabella sips the coffee and looks enthralled with it.

ISABELLA

What is in this coffee? It's delicious.

LA SIGNORA

It's my special brew. You like it?

Isabella nods, drinks. La Signora looks so pleased.

CUT TO:

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Her room is at the front of the building with great light, antique furniture, and a timeless feel. La Signora opens the door to the balcony to let in the fresh air. Sounds from the street waft in as church bells ring.

LA SIGNORA

Ahh! The city is welcoming you!

ISABELLA

You know, I've always dreamed of coming to Florence.

LA SIGNORA

Perhaps Florence has been dreaming of you too. Who knows!

Isabella looks curious. La Signora leaves her to unpack. Isabella takes out a framed photo of her with her mother. She lays down on the bed and falls asleep.

A while later, she awakes to the sounds of a street fair or a crowd outside her window. She goes out on the balcony, but the streets are nearly empty since it's lunchtime.

Isabella looks concerned, as if she's losing her mind. La Signora knocks, enters, and joins her on the balcony.

ISABELLA  
It's beautiful here.

LA SIGNORA  
It is.

La Signora looks at her, as if *she's beautiful*.

ISABELLA  
As tired as I am, I don't want to  
sleep anymore.

LA SIGNORA  
It's better to get on our time.

ISABELLA  
I've never had jetlag before. It's  
kind of playing with my head.

LA SIGNORA  
Let me sho you our beautiful city.

EXT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - DAY

La Signora walks with a youthful bounce and wears a colorful shawl. *She's a throwback to another time*. La Signora loops her arm through Isabella's as if they're old friends.

Isabella wears her "Chicago" clothes and looks out of place.

LA SIGNORA  
Here in Italy, we always walk arm-  
in-arm. It is okay with you?

ISABELLA  
Yes.

They look like mother and daughter as they walk the streets.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS OF FIRENZE - DAY

La Signora is like the queen of Florence. Everywhere they go, doors open and people greet her with reverence and respect.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

La Signora sips her coffee, while Isabella eats hungrily. It's Springtime and the flowers are starting to bloom.



EXT. THE STREETS OF FLORENCE - DAY

Isabella and La Signora walk through Piazza Della Republica where they stop for gelato and watch the people.

EXT. PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA - RENAISSANCE FLASHBACK - DAY

Isabella has another quick flashback of the piazza during the Renaissance. It is crowded with people and smells of manure.

As Amorosa, she holds her nose and hurries through the crowd.

EXT. PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA - PRESENT DAY - CONTINUOUS

Isabella stops eating her gelato, as if the smell continues.

LA SIGNORA  
Non ti piace?

ISABELLA  
(sniffs the gelato)  
No, I like it. It's just, uh, I  
think I'm no longer hungry.

Isabella throws her gelato away. La Signora looks concerned.

EXT. THE STREETS OF FLORENCE - CONTINUOUS

They weave through the streets, which are more crowded.

EXT. THE DUOMO - CONTINUOUS

They stop to look at the magnificent gilded bronze Ghiberti Doors: ***The Gates of Paradise***. La Signora stops, then looks as if she's remembering something.

They walk up the steps to the Duomo as pigeons disperse.

INT. THE DUOMO - CONTINUOUS

They enter the iconic church at the heart of Florence. La Signora lights a candle. Isabella does the same. They ascend the stairs to the top of the Duomo. La Signora sips her coffee from a flask, which seems to work like jet fuel.

ISABELLA  
What is in that coffee?

LA SIGNORA  
Shall I slow down?

ISABELLA  
No! You're just hard to keep up  
with or I'm out of shape. I'm not  
even going to ask how old you are!

La Signora smiles, amused.

EXT. TOP OF THE DUOMO - CONTINUOUS

The city unfolds before them. Isabella is overjoyed.

ISABELLA  
Why do I feel as if I belong here?

LA SIGNORA  
Perhaps you do belong here.  
Sometimes, it takes a while for our  
souls to catch up to our lives.

ISABELLA  
I don't know what that means, but  
it sounds so profound and poetic.

La Signora smiles and gives her a little hug.

EXT. VIA CORSO - CONTINUOUS

Isabella and La Signora walk briskly up Via Corso toward the  
Ponte Vecchio, swept up with the vibrating, rush hour crowd.

The energy of the crowd and the timelessness of iconic art at  
every turn transport Isabella back to another time and place.  
Her perceptions ricochet between the present day and glimpses  
of her previous lifetime in Florence during the Renaissance.

EXT. THE LOGGIA/PIAZZA SIGNORIA - CONTINUOUS

They walk across the Piazza Signoria past the famous  
sculptures that line the covered galleria of the Loggia:  
Perseus, The Rape of the Sabine, The David, etc. Isabella has  
intermittent glimpses of the Loggia in its present day and  
from the days of the Renaissance before these sculptures were  
in place.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE UFFIZI GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

They walk under the archway where artists sketch portraits. The crowd pulses toward the Ponte Vecchio. CARLO PIACENZA (40), weathered, chain-smoking artist with wolf-like features sketches a portrait. He spies La Signora and is suddenly on the alert. He zeros in on Isabella and leaves his easel abruptly. He follows them, staying hidden in the crowd.

INT. THE UFFIZI GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

It's five-thirty and they're no longer letting visitors in. La Signora nods at the guards who open the doors for them.

INT. THE UFFIZI GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

La Signora leads Isabella to the Botticellis - The La Nascita di Venere (**Birth of Venus**) and La Primavera (**Spring**). Isabella stops in front of them, mesmerized, overjoyed. La Signora watches Isabella as she looks at them.

ISABELLA

These are my favorite paintings.

LA SIGNORA

Now that you live here, you can see them anytime. They're all yours!

La Signora looks up at a camera on the wall, as if speaking to someone else. She straightens her posture, flashes a look.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO MEDICI (70+), a decrepid man with regal and distinctive Italian features watches them with longing in his eyes. On the monitor, La Signora positions Isabella so he can only see the back of Isabella's head. She gives him a purposeful look.

Over his shoulder hangs another Botticelli portrait of Sofia. His private room is filled with high-tech monitors and a piece of apparatus that looks like a small dialysis machine.

He hooks up to the machine and a silver liquid shoots into his veins. It's similar to the drops in the horse's apple from the Fourteenth Century Alchemist's caldron.

The elixir works in seconds as he settles into a trancelike state, a look of ecstasy, combined with a look of Medusa-like terror crosses his face as his body transforms to a younger version of himself.

BRUNO

Sofia my love, we will be together again. I can feel it in my veins.

He laughs to himself and breathes in new life. He leans in to catch a glimpse of Isabella, but she moves out of view.

CUT TO:

INT. UFFIZI GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

They spend a few more moments in the gallery, admiring the Botticelli paintings from various vantage points. They leave.

La Signora stops in front of Michelangelo's haunting painting of Medusa with snakes for hair and a terrifying expression.

ISABELLA

It's hard to believe Michelangelo painted that. It's so unnerving.

LA SIGNORA

It was meant to be a warning.

ISABELLA

What kind of warning?

La Signora keeps walking. Isabelle stares at the image.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF FLORENCE/SANTO SPIRITO - DUSK/NIGHT

La Signora walks briskly, arm looped through Isabella's. They cross the Ponte Vecchio and traverse the winding streets.

A SERIES OF SHOTS from dusk to darkness as images from a previous lifetime intermingle with the present. The city is timeless, and also new and beautiful as Isabella traverses two worlds simultaneously. Unbeknownst to her, *they are being followed*. La Signora glances over her shoulder. *She knows*.

An old man sweeps the steps of his Apothecary. He nods to La Signora, it's hard to tell if he's past or present - or both!

EXT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They arrive home. La Signora turns around, as if to warn the follower. Carlo ducks out of sight.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

La Signora offers Isabella something to eat. She declines and instead, stares intensely at Amorosa's other paintings.

LA SIGNORA

You must be tired. You should get some sleep to readjust to our time.

ISABELLA

I don't know what it is about these paintings, but I feel as if I've seen them before. Were they ever on loan to a museum or on exhibit?

LA SIGNORA

No. Never.

La Signora stands, waits for her to say goodnight.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Isabella goes out to the balcony and has another flashback.

EXT. AMOROSA'S BEDROOM - BALCONY - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

It's the same balcony, but she's Amorosa and she's pregnant. Angelo Donati rubs her pregnant body with love and sensuality. They kiss passionately.

EXT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - ISABELLA'S BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Back in the present moment, Isabella notices a glowing cigarette nearby on the street, as if someone is watching. The cigarette goes out. She goes back inside looking worried.

CUT TO:

### ACT THREE

EXT. PIAZZA SAN MARCO - L'ACCADEMIA/LO FREDO'S WORKSHOP - DAY

It's Monday morning and about a dozen artists from all over the world wait for Lo Fredo to open the gates. They chat.

La Signora arrives with Isabella who looks like a school girl with her mother on the first day of class.

Lo Fredo opens the door. Even with his age, his body has a power and a presence as he glides across the courtyard with the energy of a fireball.

LA SIGNORA

It's always so good to see you.

She looks up at the monitor, as if speaking to someone else.

LO FREDO

La Signora, your beauty grows with each passing year.

He answers, as if speaking for someone else. The two of them share a look. He kisses her on both cheeks.

INTERCUT TO:

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bruno watches them on a monitor from his private, alchemy-tech bedroom. He's clearly still in love with La Signora.

La Signora steps aside and Bruno sees Isabella for the first time. He leans in, gasps, and is moved to tears.

EXT. ACCADEMIA COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Lo Fredo welcomes all the students and leads them to the center of the courtyard.

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bruno zooms in on La Signora. She gives him an intimate look.

EXT. ACCADEMIA COURTYARD - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

Lo Fredo moves the students to the center of the courtyard where they set up easels for sketching, a morning ritual.

LO FREDO

Let's all welcome our new student, Isabella Buonavita! She's Italian.

ISABELLA  
Actually, I'm Italian American.

LO FREDO  
Your soul is Italian, my dear and  
such a beautiful last name. It  
means GOOD LIFE. As I wish for you.

ISABELLA  
Thank you.

The others welcome her and put her at ease.

LO FREDO  
We also have the great fortune to  
sketch today one of the most  
beautiful women who ever lived in  
Firenze. La Signora Merlini!

La Signora is taken by surprise. She protests, but ends up at  
the center of the courtyard, positioned so Bruno can see her.  
She gives him a deep look of love, longing, and intimacy.

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bruno stares at the monitor with intense longing. They stare  
into one another's eyes across time, forever united.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE PRESENT AND the PAST...

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - 1480, ITALY - DAY

Sofia stands in the middle of the room, drops her robe and  
stands naked for him to admire. He takes in her beauty. She's  
goddess-like and pregnant. He kisses her body slowly. She  
brings his face to hers, the most intimate moment is the way  
they look at one another.

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - PRESENT - DAY

Bruno watches her on his monitor as the students sketch her.  
He has the same look in his eyes.

EXT. ACCADEMIA COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The sketching session is over and La Signora takes her leave.

EXT. STREETS OF FLORENCE/SANTO SPIRITO - DAY

La Signora is alone and winds her way through the back streets of Florence, across the Arno, away from the crowds.

Carlo follows her, but has trouble keeping up. This cat and mouse game builds to a crescendo. La Signora doubles back so she's now following him. He turns. They're face-to-face.

CARLO  
Signora Merlini!

LA SIGNORA  
Why are you following me?

CARLO  
I am Carlo Piacenza, the son of Gianni and Maria Piacenza.

LA SIGNORA  
Do I know them?

CARLO  
They taught at the Università di Firenze. They were scholars in Renaissance History of the Occult.

LA SIGNORA  
An honorable profession.

CARLO  
They decoded *The Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine*. You know Basil Valentine. He was a Monk who discovered an immortality elixir during the fifteenth century. My parents unlocked the key to an immortality potion.

LA SIGNORA  
Well, good for them! No one wants to live forever.

CARLO  
Not good for them. They took it And died.

LA SIGNORA  
I'm so sorry for your loss.

La Signora moves quickly away from him and slips through a narrow passage down an ancient alleyway. She's gone.



EXT. ALCHEMIST'S COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

La Signora slinks through a concealed opening. A spark of light flares up at the end of the shadowed passageway.

EXT. ALCHEMIST'S COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The ALCHEMIST (80+), a lumbering, swarthy man with piercing eyes greets her with reverence. His surroundings are mystical with strange birds and untamed vines around piles of metals.

La Signora speaks in a friendly tone. He looks worried.

LA SIGNORA

Tell me. Maybe I can help you.

ALCHEMIST

There's nothing you can do, La Signora. The *Polizia* came and asked me some questions about those professors. I don't know how they found me.

LA SIGNORA

What professors?

ALCHEMIST

The ones who died.

LA SIGNORA

Why did the police come to you?

ALCHEMIST

They came here, and I gave *things*.

LA SIGNORA

How did they find you?

ALCHEMIST

They told me that you sent them.

LA SIGNORA

I don't know them. I didn't send them. I would never do that!

She looks worried. She pays for her packages and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

It's late afternoon and the workshop is ending for the day. Bruno hasn't moved, which has caused him to age significantly so he looks like he's over a hundred.

Bruno quickly hooks himself up to his machine. The apparatus straps his arm in place, then a needle punctures his vein, and the silvery liquid enters. His first expression is one of terror, death, and endless addiction.

A few moments later, the elixir takes effect and he looks like he's in pure bliss. The elixir's effect transforms his body from a decrepid old man to a vibrant, younger version.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Carlo scans the passengers and finally spies MICHAEL DONATI (40+) with his American stride and Italian good looks. They greet one another like old friends, holding back tears.

CARLO

You look fat.

MICHAEL

You look old.

They hug for a long moment, connected in so many ways.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRATTORIA ALONG THE ARNO - DAY

Carlo orders a bottle of wine. They raise their glasses.

MICHAEL

A tuo padre - to your father.  
Remember when he first taught us  
how to fence? He almost killed me!

CARLO

Remember when he first taught us  
how to drink?

MICHAEL

He almost killed me then too.

CARLO

He loved you!

MICHAEL  
Your father had the best laugh.

CARLO  
And the best Grappa!

They laugh, clink glasses.

MICHAEL  
(suddenly serious)  
It had to have been an accident.  
Your father would never do that to  
himself or your mother.

Carlo makes a gesture to stop talking about it.

CARLO  
He loved you like a son.

MICHAEL  
He told me that I was in line to be  
your best friend, or your brother.

CARLO  
Both tough jobs. You don't have the  
balls for that.

MICHAEL  
(raises his glass)  
To Gianni, for teaching us about  
friendship and family.

CARLO  
And whiskey!

They drink again.

MICHAEL  
And to the beautiful Maria, may we  
always remember her laughter and  
her sparkling eyes, and her gnocchi!

They're both teary-eyed. Carlo throws back another glass.

CUT TO:

EXT. ACCADEMIA COURTYARD - DAY

Some of the other students invite Isabella out for drinks.  
She accepts and quickly calls La Signora.

INT. LO FREDO'S QUARTERS - ACCADEMIA - CONTINUOUS

Lo Fredo looks exhausted and older. He takes out a vile from his dresser drawer and puts the silver compound to his nose, then snorts it. He sounds like a horse, then his nose starts to bleed. He leans his head back as his phone rings.

LO FREDO

Pronto.

INTERCUT TO:

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bruno looks strong and vibrant.

BRUNO

I want her here tomorrow.

LO FREDO (O.S.)

You can't take her away from Sofia.

BRUNO

Then just for the day! We'll have a field trip. I'll send a driver to pick up you and your students.

LO FREDO (O.S.)

I'm not going.

BRUNO

Bring the whole workshop! I need to see her in the flesh. It has been centuries since I last saw her.

LO FREDO (O.S.)

She's a different person, Bruno.

BRUNO

I understand. But she's also Amorosa somewhere in her beautiful, evolved soul. She even looks like her.

LO FREDO (O.S.)

It's too risky. You want me to bring twelve new people to a location that you've been keeping a secret for centuries?

BRUNO

At some point, and hopefully soon,  
I won't care if someone finds this  
place. It won't matter. You know  
the plan. **It's time.** When I saw  
Sofia today, I could tell that she  
knows it's time too. We're ready.

INT. LO FREDO'S QUARTERS - ACCADEMIA - CONTINUOUS

Lo Fredo's nose continues to bleed. He looks at himself in  
the mirror, old, bloody, and exhausted.

LO FREDO

What time are you picking us up?

EXT. TRATTORIA ALONG THE ARNO - DAY

Isabella and several of her artist classmates arrive at the  
same trattoria where Michael and Carlo are still eating and  
drinking across the patio. Michael notices her. They're a bit  
drunk, with lots of laughing and crying and eating.

Michael has a quick "vision" of Isabella dressed in  
Renaissance clothing, sitting along the Arno, but not at a  
trattoria. He gets a strange look in his eyes.

Carlo follows his gaze and whistles his dismay.

MICHAEL

What?

CARLO

Do not look at her?

MICHAEL

Why not? She's beautiful.

CARLO

She lives with *La Stregga Nonna*.

MICHAEL

Who?

CARLO

La Signora!

MICHAEL

That woman who was friends with our  
grandfathers?

CARLO

She was our grandfathers' age.

MICHAEL

She must be over a hundred by now.

CARLO

I saw her on the street with the woman who you're staring at, then I followed them. She's at Lo Fredo's workshop so she must be an artist.

MICHAEL

Of course she's an artist! That must be your late Babbo at work, helping me with my love life.

CARLO

Since when do you need help with your love life? Didn't he teach you anything?

MICHAEL

(Standing up)

She just looks like someone I should know.

He starts to walk over to her when Carlo stops him.

CARLO

I saw La Signora earlier today. *She looks exactly the same, not a day older.*

MICHAEL

So? A lot of women have plastic surgery. Maybe it's good genes.

CARLO

Michael, she's *Strega Nonna!*

MICHAEL

Strega Nonna is a fairytale to scare little kids.

CARLO

Seeing her scared the hell out of me and I'm a grown man.

Michael and Isabella's eyes meet. There's an instant connection since she sees him for a flash of a section as Angelo, the man who rubbed her pregnant, Renaissance body.

MICHAEL

You'll excuse me, I'm going to  
introduce myself. Coming?

At their table, Michael and Isabella lock eyes. One of the  
artists recognizes Michael.

CARLO

Ciao, tutti!

MICHAEL

(to Isabella)  
I'm Michael Donati.

ISABELLA

Isabella Buonavita, piacere.

ARTIST #1

(to Michael)  
Are you *the* Michael Donati from the  
Donati gallery in New York?

MICHAEL

I am.

ARTIST #1

What are you doing here? Scouting  
for artists, we hope?

CARLO

He's here to see me.

MICHAEL

We're old friend.

ARTIST #2

Are you reviewing portfolios?

MICHAEL

At some point, yes.

CARLO

He's reviewing pretty girls right  
now. That's his other profession.

The women giggle, roll their eyes. Carlo and Michael sit down  
and join them. Carlo is very entertaining.

Throughout their time together at the Trattoria, Isabella and  
Michael get quick glimpses of the other as their Renaissance  
counterparts (Amorosa and Angelo).

Time passes. It's time to go home. Michael insists on walking Isabella home. She agrees. Michael bids goodnight to Carlo.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREETS OF FLORENCE - CONTINUOUS

The streets are half empty, the shops all closed.

ISABELLA

Aren't you staying with him?

MICHAEL

No. He drinks too much and he snores. I'm at the Excelsior.

ISABELLA

Much nicer, I'm sure.

They look at one another. *It's too soon.*

MICHAEL

Tell me more about you.

ISABELLA

(slightly drunk)

Well, I'm an artist, a painter. I've got a lot more talent than I'm using, which drives me crazy!

MICHAEL

Having the talent or not using it?

ISABELLA

Both! Mostly, not using it to my full potential. Maybe I'm kidding myself, but I think I've got brilliant inside of me. I hope someday to illuminate it.

MICHAEL

With that kind of passion, you're bound to unleash it.

ISABELLA

Maybe. I don't know. Who knows!

MICHAEL

What else drives you crazy?

She stops. Smiles. He lets the attraction simmer.



ISABELLA

I don't want to tell you because  
it's going to sound like a line.

MICHAEL

Tell me! I won't take it  
personally.

ISABELLA

You should take it personally.

MICHAEL

Now you have to tell me. Come on!  
Everyone's a little crazy.

ISABELLA

I sometimes see you and you're  
another person, another man.

MICHAEL

(stunned)  
Isabella...

ISABELLA

Maybe this is some kind of extreme  
case of jetlag that lasts for days.

MICHAEL

Isabella, I can hardly believe...

ISABELLA

Don't judge me. Maybe you just look  
like someone I've met before.

MICHAEL

Does this vision of me as another  
person come with a sensation, like  
you're waking up from a dream?

ISABELLA

Yes! Why do you ask?

MICHAEL

And I'm part of that dream?

ISABELLA

Maybe. Forget it! I might be a  
little drunk, that's all.

MICHAEL

I have that too! I see you and then  
there's kind of an eclipse in my  
brain and for a flash of a second,  
you're someone else.

(MORE)

## MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Someone I know really well, but I'm not sure who you are. I know I've never met you before, not in this lifetime.

She looks at him. They connect on a profound level. They're about to kiss when they're suddenly interrupted by La Signora.

## LA SIGNORA

(Calling to her)

Isabella! I was so worried. I've been texting you, but you didn't answer. I thought you might be lost, or...

They turn around to see La Signora float over in a big cape that billows behind her. She looks other-worldly.

## ISABELLA

I'm so sorry to worry you! I went out with some new friends from the workshop. We had so much fun, and I must've lost track of time.

Michael stares at La Signora. He looks stunned, speechless.

## LA SIGNORA

I'm just glad you're alright.

## MICHAEL

*La Signora?* Do you remember me?

## LA SIGNORA

No. Mi dispiace. Isabella, let's go. It's late.

## MICHAEL

La Signora, I'm Michael Donati, the grandson of Cosimo Donati. You knew my grandfather very well.

## LA SIGNORA

I'm sorry. I don't know who you are. Isabella, you've got a big day tomorrow.

## MICHAEL

We met almost forty years ago. I was with my grandparents. We were at the Palio. You sat in front of us. I'll never forget it. *How is it that you look the same?*

LA SIGNORA  
I'm sure it wasn't me.

MICHAEL  
I'm sure it was. No one looks like  
you. You're still so beautiful.

LA SIGNORA  
You flatter me, Mr. Donati.

MICHAEL  
Please, call me Michael.

LA SIGNORA  
We need to be on our way. Nice  
meeting you, Mr. Donati.

MICHAEL  
May I walk you home?

LA SIGNORA  
No need. We're right around the  
corner, though we appreciate it.

Isabella and Michael exchange a look as La Signora hustles  
her around the corner and down the block to their home.

Isabella turns around and sees Michael as himself and then as  
Angelo, standing in the street with the same intense look.

CUT TO:

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

La Signora insists on serving coffee to sober her up before  
she goes to sleep. Isabella is alone in the living room with  
Amorosa's paintings. She examines them in her drunken state,  
convinced that the man in the painting looks like Michael.

ISABELLA  
I think Michael looks just like  
this guy in the painting.

LA SIGNORA  
I think you need some coffee.

ISABELLA  
Won't it keep me up?

Isabella examines a painting of a young woman who looks a lot  
like La Signora with a young daughter in a garden.

LA SIGNORA  
Not this coffee.

ISABELLA  
This one looks like you! Do you  
have a daughter?

LA SIGNORA  
I did have a daughter.

La Signora leaves before she gets into the conversation.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

La Signora goes to the kitchen to make the "brew" and puts in  
a few unidentifiable herbs from the alchemist's visit.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Isabella stares at the painting of the mother with the young  
daughter and HEARS giggling and chatter in Italian.

La Signora returns. The smell of coffee distracts her.

LA SIGNORA  
Here, drink this.

ISABELLA  
Please tell me about this artist. I  
just love her! She's everywhere and  
I still can't get enough of her. I  
want to paint like her. She was  
clearly one of the greatest  
painters in history, but why have I  
never heard of her? Amorosa? Was  
that her first name or last name?

LA SIGNORA  
That was her only name. She lived a  
long time ago, during the  
Renaissance when Michelangelo was  
sculpting the David, Botticelli was  
painting his masterpieces, and  
artists and writers and scientists  
tapped into the Divine Energy that  
defined the times.

ISABELLA  
What do you mean, *Divine Energy*?

LA SIGNORA

The mystics believed that there are places in the world and times throughout history when Divine energy is more readily available to humans. They believe that this divine energy became available during the Renaissance and possibly, during the last few decades when technology boomed and changed the world. Both times, the intangible membrane that separates the physical and the spiritual worlds had a little crack, a little tear so the visionaries could access energy from a higher source and advance the world and mankind.

ISABELLA

I've never heard that theory before.

LA SIGNORA

Just look at the face of Michelangelo's David and ask yourself, how could one man create something so magnificent all on his own? He must have had some divine energy at his disposal in order to sculpt something so timeless.

ISABELLA

Maybe Amorosa had a little of that Divine Energy.

LA SIGNORA

Maybe she did.

ISABELLA

These are over five hundred years old? Why aren't they in a museum?

LA SIGNORA

They will be when I die. They've been in my family for generations. It's almost time to let them go.

ISABELLA

You're not sick, are you?

LA SIGNORA

I'm fine.

ISABELLA

Tell me more about her, please!

Isabella gently touches the painting and has that reverberation again, as if it's coming to life. She hears laughter and chatter in the recesses of her mind.

La Signora points to another painting of a young woman.

LA SIGNORA

This one is a self portrait.

Isabella studies it.

ISABELLA

I know this might sound a little crazy, but I think she looks a little like my mother when my mother was younger.

LA SIGNORA

That doesn't sound crazy. I too think she looks like your mother.

ISABELLA

How do you know what my mother looked like?

LA SIGNORA

You have a photo of her by your bedside. I saw it when I was cleaning. She was beautiful.

ISABELLA

She wasn't that beautiful at the end of her life. It was terrifying to see her so emaciated and sick.

LA SIGNORA

I'm so sorry.

Isabella sobers up quickly.

ISABELLA

I should go to bed. I'm sorry that you had to come out in the middle of the night looking for me.

LA SIGNORA

It's okay. I'm just happy you're here and making friends and having such a good time.

ISABELLA

I am having a *great* time. Thank you for everything.

LA SIGNORA

It is my pleasure. You have no idea how happy I am that you're here.

La Signora kisses her goodnight. Isabella hugs her.

After Isabella has gone to bed, La Signora sits alone in front of Amorosa's paintings. She has a haunting flashback.

CUT TO:

INT. AMOROSA'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK TO THE RENAISSANCE - DAY

The same room as the one that Isabella sleeps in, except it's during the Renaissance (no electricity, etc.). The furniture reflect the time period. A younger Sofia holds her daughter Amorosa who is in the throes of a very difficult labor.

The only other person in the room is Angelo Donati. The two of them try to save her life as she gives birth to a girl.

CUT TO:

#### ACT FOUR

EXT. ACCADEMIA COURTYARD - DAY

Lo Fredo greets his students, but doesn't open the gate for them. Instead, he comes out to the street and leads them to a limousine bus that's waiting close by.

EXT. ACCADEMIA COURTYARD/PIAZZA SAN MARCO - CONTINUOUS

Michael drinks coffee in a cafe across the street and searches for Isabella who's late. She finally arrives alone and after all the others are on the bus. She doesn't notice Michael as she hurries to Lo Fredo.

ISABELLA

I'm so sorry I'm late! I overslept.

LO FREDO

You're here now. It's a very special day. Get on. We're leaving.

INT. LIMOUSINE BUS - CONTINUOUS

Lo Fredo calls everyone to attention. He looks tired and old.

LO FREDO

Good morning *Tutti!* We're about to embark on a very special journey. I cannot tell you exactly where we're going, but you'll know when we arrive. But first here are a few rules that you must follow. Rule number one: no cell phones. If you don't turn in your cell phone now, you'll be asked to leave before we depart. That goes for Ipads and Apple watches and any other technology. There will be no gps and no photos.

He passes a basket around and they all drop their cell phones in it. Isabella starts whispering.

LO FREDO (CONT'D)

Rule number two: No talking or whispering. If you feel compelled to speak, you may converse with your own imaginations.

The students look at one another with a mix of fear and curiosity. No one speaks.

LO FREDO (CONT'D)

Rule number three: Ask questions, which technically contradicts rule number two, if you're paying attention. I'm sure you're all wondering where we're going and why. *Are you being kidnapped? Will you be asked to drink Koolaid? Will you return as the same that you are now?* Please consider these questions and any others that you might have, except you must sit quietly with these questions. You won't know the answers right away, if ever. One of the most crucial parts of being an artist is your ability to be okay with not knowing and to trust the process.

The students exchange looks as they deposit their phones.



LO FREDO (CONT'D)

*Curiosity will keep you alive and  
will keep your artwork fresh.*

Remember, you were chosen for my workshop on more than your skills and techniques. You were chosen for your vision, your artistic courage, and your originality. When you are at this level and at the level of the place where we're going, you must strive for greatness. Most of you will not achieve this, but it's in the questioning, the striving where you'll find it, if you have it. And if you're comfortable being mediocre, please, take back your cell phones and your flimsy imaginations, and get off the bus.

Lo Fredo looks at the group, his gaze lingering on Isabella. He sits down, looks out the window. The bus pulls away.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS OF THE TUSCAN COUNTRYSIDE

The luscious hills and small farms roll by as the bus twists and turns, retracing its steps to confuse the passengers.

Inside the bus, the artists look out with wonder and awe. Some of them sketch the landscape or each another. Curiosity and tension hang in the air.

EXT. MEDICI VILLAS - DAY

The bus pulls turns down an unidentified dirt road, which stretches for several miles and finally arrive at the gated compound with the Medici family crest on the big, iron gate.

The gates open, revealing the Renaissance Villas and several newer buildings on the expansive land, peppered with gardens, ponds, and large open spaces.

INT. LIMOUSINE BUS - CONTINUOUS

Lo Fredo addresses them as the bus stops.

LO FREDDO

Welcome to the Medici Villas. Many people don't even know this place exists, it's that exclusive.

(MORE)

## LO FREDDO (CONT'D)

You must be invited to attend and you must show brilliance beyond the best of the best. We are here today because one spot will become available and you are all being considered for a sojourn here. *This is the opportunity of a lifetime.* There is no financial cost to join the Medici Villas. You pay with your time, which is our only real commodity anyway.

The doors open. Isabella was the last one on the bus and is the first one to descend.

## EXT. MEDICI VILLA - CONTINUOUS

Bruno walks energetically down the path to the front gate and nearly bursts into a run when he sees her. The other artists descend and stare in wonder. Bruno hugs Lo Fredo, then addresses the others with an eye mostly on Isabella.

## BRUNO

Welcome everyone! I'm delighted to meet have you join me for a day of enchantment at the Medici Villas. In all of my years at the helm of the Medici Villa - and there have been many - we've always had a long list of potential candidates. However, I consider it a twist of fate because one of you who will get the chance to join us here.

Bruno smiles encouragingly, like he wants to hug them all.

## BRUNO (CONT'D)

Andiamo! Let's go. Please feel free to wander away and remain at any of the gardens and do some work. You are artists! Be inspired! There will be a bell a half an hour before lunch, which is served on the patio attached to the central villa. We eat family style because here at the Villas, *we are family.*

## LO FREDO

Thank you, Bruno. It's a huge privilege to be here.

(MORE)

## LO FREDO (CONT'D)

If anyone even entertains the idea of staying past your welcome, you will NOT be considered for the spot and you will be asked to leave my workshop. Otherwise, enjoy! Take it all in.

Bruno mingles with the artists as they walk toward the compound. He tries to position himself next to Isabella, but the others vie for attention. Isabella hangs back.

Several 'artist gardens' are peppered throughout the grounds where nude models pose for painters and sculptors. It's the Garden of Eden for artists. Many of Lo Fredo's artists stay to work. Bruno speaks to Isabella so she can't drop off.

The poetry garden is dotted with writers, some reciting their work, others are off writing amidst the spectacular foliage.

The sculpture area has huge, outdoor spaces for over-sized, environmental pieces. Kinetic sculptures come to life on the landscape as the wind moves.

The music area has an outdoor performance venue big enough for an orchestra with state-of-the-art recording studios inside, and various practice rooms. Beautiful music resounds.

The agriculture center has interior and exterior spaces, which are bright and open and filled with hardy plants and flowers, some of which are new hybrids and unidentifiable.

The zoology center houses everything from domestic dogs to large exotic animals, along with an elaborate lab for cloning endangered species.

By the time they get to the stables with thoroughbred horses, only Isabella and couple of others remain with Bruno.

BRUNO

(to Isabella)

What do you think so far?

ISABELLA

I think it's spectacular.

He turns to the few others and addresses them (not her).

BRUNO

I invite you to explore on your own. My tour ends here. I'll see you all at lunch.

They thank him and move toward the gardens, Isabella starts to leave, but Bruno taps her on the shoulder.

## EXT. MEDICI VILLAS - ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE - CONTINUOUS

A sculptural looking building sits at the edge of the property. It's made of CLT (cross-laminated timber) with solar energy, atmospheric water-generation tubes, etc.

ISABELLA

This is beautiful. What is it?

BRUNO

The Environmental Science Center,  
where we have the best minds  
collaborating on ways to combat  
climate change and save the planet.

## INT. ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The building has a cool, open feel. Scientists and lab technicians are busy at work. Bruno calls over TONINA DE LA TERRA, an exotic looking, dark-skinned woman in her forties with nerdy glasses and an endearing smile.

BRUNO

Please allow me to introduce you to our resident genius and idealist, Tonina De La Terra. She's the creator of this project and has made great strides. She has even developed a way for plants to mutate and adapt to new environments. With each incarnation they grow stronger.

ISABELLA

That's wonderful! It's an honor to meet you.

TONINA

The honor is all mine.

She looks at Bruno, as if they know something she doesn't. She motions for them to follow her. Bruno lets her go first.

ISABELLA

Where are you from?

TONINA

I was born in China. My father is French and Malaysian. My mother is American, but that's just where my body is from. Asking where I'm from on a metaphysical level is a completely different conversation.

ISABELLA

What do you mean?

Tonina looks at Bruno. He nods slightly.

BRUNO

Tonina came here with the team that first mapped DNA. They were the original geniuses and now sources like Ancestry.com and other avenues for DNA testing as common place.

ISABELLA

That's fascinating!

BRUNO

But that's not the whole story of where a person is from.

TONINA

(right on cue)

In addition to mapping one's DNA to show the physical makeup of a person's body, we've been able to map the components of one's soul.

ISABELLA

Really? How?

TONINA

The soul also has a history and specific components, much like the way DNA does. We've identified over two thousand distinct *Soul Breeds* and have markers for determining where a person's soul resided before their current incarnation.

ISABELLA

Wow. I'm not even sure that I understand what that means.

TONINA

Say, for instance, one of your previous incarnations was in India. Your soul markers would indicate that location and that lifetime.

ISABELLA

What exactly are 'soul markers?'

TONINA

Think of them as sparks of energy, like an isolated section of a roaring campfire, your soul being the fire. With each incarnation, your soul fire gets stronger and more intense. Everytime you experience life on earth, you get more sparks, thus, more flames. That's precisely why every soul need to reincarnate.

Bruno shifts. Isabella looks at him. He smiles. They've arrived at her soul mapping lab.

ISABELLA

So you can tell who I was in a previous lifetime without hypnotizing me or guessing?

TONINA

Yes, though sometimes we can only determine where you lived, but often we can identify exactly who you were. Would you like to try it?

ISABELLA

YES! What do I have to do?

TONINA

Just breathe.

Tonina takes a strange tube and demonstrates to Isabella how to breathe into it. She complies. Bruno looks eager.

ISABELLA

So you can figure out who I was before I was this version of me?

TONINA

That's the goal.

ISABELLA

How did you even think of this?

BRUNO

This is why we have visionaries here, Amore. At the Medici Villas, we help you discover your own true brilliance and then nourish it.

ISABELLA

This is just amazing.

TONINA

This is an amazing place.

ISABELLA

How long have you been here?

Tonina hesitates, looks at Bruno. The bell rings.

BRUNO

Come! We don't want to be late for lunch. Thank you, Tonina.

ISABELLA

Aren't you coming to lunch?

TONINA

I'll be there eventually. I want to process this sample.

ISABELLA

Will we get the results before I have to leave here?

Tonina catches a slight nod 'no' from Bruno.

TONINA

Probably not. It's takes time.

Bruno leads Isabella toward the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEDICI VILLA/PATIO - DAY

One long table is set up on the expansive patio. An array of delectable food circulates. Bruno sits at the head with Lo Fredo by his side.

Isabella sits close by as the other artists chatter about their dayr. Bruno whispers something to her, letting her know to keep quiet about the soul mapping. She nods. Lo Fredo gives him a look. Bruno just smiles.

Lo Fredo clinks his glass to call everyone's attention.

LO FREDO

If you think this is the most magical and inspiring place you've ever been, please, raise your glass in a toast to my old, dear friend, Bruno Medici.

(MORE)

## LO FREDO (CONT'D)

To your time and dedication spent  
nurturing the next generations of  
artists and visionaries. Salute!

Everyone toasts to Bruno. He nods graciously. The merriment continues. Before the artists scatter to their various gardens and artwork, Bruno makes another announcement.

## BRUNO

Thank you all for being here. I'm  
really enjoying having you here.  
Since there are so many of you, I'd  
like to extend the invitation  
through dinner. Please, join me.

Lo Fredo frowns, but the crowd goes wild with excitement.

## EXT. MEDICI VILLAS - ART GARDEN - DAY

Isabella picks a spot at a lush garden where several nude models strike interwoven poses. The exercise harkens back to Giambologna's sculpture, *The Rape of the Sabine*.

She can hear Bruno's voice from a nearby garden reciting poetry aloud. The SOUND of it mesmerizes her. She looks over.

After a while, Bruno visits the garden where she's working. He interacts with some of the other artists, keeping up the ruse that he's still deciding who gets the spot.

He leans into Isabella's work and examines it. He smiles. She looks so happy. When the models take a break and the others start to leave, Bruno quietly asks Isabella to walk with him.

## EXT. MEDICI VILLAS - CONTINUOUS

Bruno and Isabella walk up the hill behind the main villa and toward the private residences. He chats with her, charms her, and makes her laugh. They arrive at the steps to his private villa. Peacocks scatter in his wake, as if they're his pets.

## INT. MEDICI VILLA - BRUNO'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The rooms are filled with paintings, sculptures, and exquisite furniture. She's in awe. He's attentive to her.

## BRUNO

Do you like it here, Isabella?



ISABELLA

I love it here! I can't believe this place even exists.

BRUNO

Tell me, what do you love about art in general?

ISABELLA

Everything! I love looking at art and letting it move me. I love thinking about art and mining for new ideas in my mind of things that I hope to create. I love the process of creating art, any art - painting, drawing, sculpture. I love challenging myself to become a better artist. I love the power of art and how it can capture a moment in time either in someone's life or in a moment in history, in a culture. I love what art reveals about the human experience. I love the way art gives me hope and makes me strive for something more. I love how art brings people together and creates a kind of timeless legacy. Mostly, I love being an artist, the way it feels in my body and the way it both calms me and excites me at the same time. That's probably a longer answer than you were hoping for!

BRUNO

Not at all! I could listen to you speak all day.

ISABELLA

I doubt that.

BRUNO

I heard from Lo Fredo that you're staying with La Signora. If you don't mind me asking, how is she?

ISABELLA

She's fine. Wonderful, I think.

BRUNO

How do you feel about her?

ISABELLA

I love her! She's like a second mother to me already. My mother recently died, and I thought I'd always feel alone, but meeting La Signora made me feel like I belonged to someone again. It's probably a ridiculous thing to say or even believe, but-

BRUNO

It's a beautiful thing to say, and La Signora is a beautiful woman, inside and out.

ISABELLA

So you know La Signora?

BRUNO

I do.

ISABELLA

So you know what I'm talking about?

BRUNO

Absolutely.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEDICI VILLAS - OUTDOOR DINING PATIO - NIGHT

Bruno and Lo Fredo are back at the head of the table. Everyone is giddy from their day at the Medici Villas. Tonina joins them and sits next to Isabella. They have an easy rapport. Isabella inquires about the soul mapping test.

TONINA

(cautiously)

It's clear that you have a very old and evolved soul.

ISABELLA

Is that a good thing?

TONINA

It's a great thing!

Lo Fredo watches their interaction and whispers to Bruno.

LO FREDO

(quietly)

You cannot take her yet, Bruno.

BRUNO

Soon.

LO FREDO

You're already pushing it having us stay for dinner.

BRUNO

Darkness makes us harder to find.

Bruno looks at Lo Fredo. They're in a standoff.

CUT TO:

EXT. PIAZZA SAN MARCO - L'ACCADEMIA - NIGHT

The black limo bus pulls in after the cafes and bars have all closed. Carlo and Michael wait in the shadows, unseen.

INT. LIMOUSINE BUS - CONTINUOUS

As Lo Fredo hands back their cell phones, he's adamant about the secrecy.

LO FREDO

Nessuno! You are not to tell anyone where you were today. The Medici Villas are very exclusive and very private. If you tell anyone, we will know that you shared this secret and you will never be invited back to the villas or my workshop. Am I clear?

The group nods in agreement.

CUT TO:

EXT. PIAZZA SAN MARCO - L'ACCADEMIA - CONTINUOUS

The artists descend. Marco and Carlo spy Isabella.

MICHAEL

Now I can sleep, knowing she's home safe from wherever she was.

CARLO

Nope, now you cannot sleep! Notice the crest on the window.

MICHAEL

What is that?

CARLO

It's the Medici Crest. They were at the Medici Villas. *This is bad!*

MICHAEL

Why?

CARLO

Because the man who runs it, Bruno Medici is a very dangerous man.

MICHAEL

Do you even know him?

CARLO

No, but my parents knew of him. According to their research, he might even be Basil Valentine.

MICHAEL

Who is Basil Valentine?

CARLO

He was a Monk who lived in the Fourteen hundreds and was rumored to have discovered the alchemy potion for immortality. He wrote, *The Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine*, a text my parents studied at great length.

MICHAEL

Are you sure you're not getting carried away? She just went on a field trip.

CARLO

Your little lover girl will never be safe if she has anything to do with Bruno Medici.

MICHAEL

I wish she was my 'lover girl.'

Before they can reach her, La Signora steps in and hugs her.

CARLO

There's La Signora. I told you!

MICHAEL

I know. I saw her last night. She hasn't aged a day in over forty years ago. Something's not right.

CARLO

Something is *very, very wrong*.

They watch as La Signora and Isabella head off into the darkness. Michael looks after Isabella with longing.

CUT TO:

### ACT FIVE

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Isabella and La Signora sit quietly. Isabella looks like she's bursting to tell her, but can't say a word.

LA SIGNORA

Do you want to tell me about your adventure at the Medici Villas?

ISABELLA

You know! How do you know? Oh thank God. I thought I'd die from holding in this much excitement!

LA SIGNORA

Hold on, I'll get us something to eat and drink.

La Signora goes to the kitchen. Isabella follows.

ISABELLA

I'm not really hungry because ate too much. You wouldn't believe the food there! It was so delicious. It was like a dream.

LA SIGNORA

It is always like a dream there.

ISABELLA

You've been there?

LA SIGNORA

Yes! I know Bruno Medici.

ISABELLA

He said he knew you. He said you were beautiful inside and out. He was so kind to me and thoughtful.

LA SIGNORA

He's hard to resist.

ISABELLA

I didn't mean it like that! He's an old man, more like father figure to me, though I never had a father. And besides, I like Michael Donati.

LA SIGNORA

Tell me everything about your dat at the Medici Villas. It's okay. I imagine Lo Fredo swore you all to secrecy, but I'm different.

They go back into the other room. Isabella eats and talks.

ISABELLA

(in mid sentence)

...Then I breathed into this high-tech tube and the woman, Tonina said she could map the origins of my soul, like DNA mapping, but for your spirit. It's so fascinating! And you should see the gardens and all the science being done there!

LA SIGNORA

It sounds like quite the adventure. Perhaps you should get some rest. I'm sure Lo Fredo won't approve if you're late again tomorrow.

ISABELLA

I wish I could tell Michael.

LA SIGNORA

Do not tell Michael. And don't even call Michael.

ISABELLA

Why can't I call him?

LA SIGNORA

It's true what they say, 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder.' Let him miss you a little. It's good for him. Good for you, too. Keep your power to yourself.

Isabella laughs at her own eagerness, then says goodnight.  
 Later, when the house is quiet and dark, she calls Lo Fredo.

INTERCUT TO:

INT. LO FREDO'S QUARTERS - ACCADEMIA - NIGHT

Lo Fredo has a haunted look as he shoots up. He waits for the elixir to shift from terror to bliss, then answers the phone.

LO FREDO

Pronto.

LA SIGNORA

We have a problem.

LO FREDO

We have many problems, amore.

LA SIGNORA

What's the first problem on your list of problems?

LO FREDO

Bruno Medici.

LA SIGNORA

What about Bruno?

LO FREDO

Just Bruno. He's a pain the ass.

La Signora laughs, which makes him laugh too.

LA SIGNORA

You're just noticing that now?

LO FREDO

What's your number one problem on your list of problems?

LA SIGNORA

I guess the same, *Bruno*.

This time, neither of them laugh.

CUT TO

INT. CARLO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Carlo and Michael men sit amidst the clutter of his parents' research with charts of the Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine. Carlo takes out a bottle of Grappa and pours two shots.

MICHAEL

Either they were geniuses or totally crazy.

CARLO

(lifts his shot glass)  
To totally crazy.

MICHAEL

Aren't we supposed to drink Grappa *after* a meal?

CARLO

Grappa has no rules.

MICHAEL

Sort of like your life.

CARLO

My life has rules: You live, then you die. Those are the rules.

MICHAEL

You really think they found this, whatever this really is?

He points to the wall and the array of drawings and equations and other stuff they don't understand (ala Beautiful Mind).

CARLO

My parents weren't crazy or suicidal. They were close to proving the secret alchemy for the immortality potion, the Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine. I think that's what they took, which killed them.

MICHAEL

Your father was a little crazy!

CARLO

You can't let Isabella go back there or you could lose her.

MICHAEL

Go back where?



CARLO

Are you not paying attention? Bruno Medici might be Basil Valentine. If he is, then anyone who's close to him could get sucked into taking the potion. You do not want her near him!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ACCADEMIA/ PIAZZA SAN MARCO - DAY

Isabella is early for class and sits on the steps and sketches some gnarly vines growing on a nearby tree.

Michael watches her from across the piazza as he drinks his coffee. The morning sun angles in and eclipses his vision, providing him with another glimpse of Renaissance Amorosa.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bruno zaps himself with the elixir, transforms to a younger version, and turns on his monitors. He watches Isabella sketch the intertwining vines, which look like two lovers in the throes of passion or two people trying to get free.

EXT. ACCADEMIA COURTYARD/PIAZZA SAN MARCO - DAY

Michael sneaks in and sits next to her on the steps.

MICHAEL

(refers to drawing)  
Do you mind if I take a look?

ISABELLA

(all smiles)  
Hi!

She shows him her sketch of the vines and the allegorical figures who are intertwining and/or struggling.

MICHAEL

Holding on or letting go?

ISABELLA

You tell me.

He hands her a business card.

MICHAEL

I want to make sure you have my  
cell phone number. In case, well...

ISABELLA

Thanks.

She tucks it in her bag. They gaze into one another's eyes.

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - INTERCUT

Bruno looks startled. He leans in...

BRUNO

What the hell!

ISABELLA (ON THE MONITOR)

So you're an art dealer?

MICHAEL (ON THE MONITOR)

I'm always looking for new artists.

ISABELLA (ON THE MONITOR)

Artists! We're a dime a dozen.

MICHAEL (ON THE MONITOR)

Not you. You're one-in-a-million.

CUT TO:

EXT. ACCADEMIA COURTYARD/PIAZZA SAN MARCO - DAY

Michael sits down and leans against her.

MICHAEL

When I first saw you, I was sure  
that you were a thoroughbred  
Italian, but that accent is  
throwing me off.

ISABELLA

I grew up in Chicago. You?

MICHAEL

I was born here in Florence, but  
moved to New York when I was ten.

ISABELLA

You were born here?

MICHAEL

The Donatis are an old Florentine family. One of my ancestors, Gemma Donati was married to Dante.

Michael gets another glimpse of her as Amorosa.

ISABELLA

What was it like growing up here?

MICHAEL

Wonderful. Magical. Extraordinary.

ISABELLA

Let me guess: Hide and seek in the Duomo? Kick-the-can on the Ponte Vecchio? Tag at Forte Belvedere?

MICHAEL

I fenced a lot.

ISABELLA

Fenced?

MICHAEL

(gestures)  
Sword-fighting.

The sun shifts. This time she catches a glimpse of him from their other lifetime as Angelo Donati with a similar build, Italian features, and the same warm, loving smile.

ISABELLA

Did you wear the tights?

MICHAEL

Yep. I loved the tights!

ISABELLA

I never knew anyone who fenced.

MICHAEL

My father was a fencing champion, so was my grandfather, and his father before him. All the Donati men were expert fencers.

INT. BRUNO'S INTERIOR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bruno looks stunned. He picks up the phone. *It is him!*

CUT TO:

INT. ACCADEMIA/LO FREDO'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Lo Fredo eats breakfast as the phone rings. He answers.

LO FREDO

Pronto!

BRUNO (O.S.)

You have an unwanted visitor.

LO FREDO

Are you here?

BRUNO (O.S.)

Angelo Donati.

LO FREDO

The juice must be getting to you, Bruno. We haven't seen him since the fifteen hundreds.

BRUNO

Not him! That little kid from New York who used to come here with his grandfather. He's outside talking to Isabella.

LO FREDO

That kid? He's harmless!

BRUNO

He's not a kid anymore and he's far from harmless. *She's got that look.*

LO FREDO

You're over-reacting, Bruno.

BRUNO

I want her at the Villa *tomorrow.*

LO FREDO

Tomorrow!

BRUNO

I don't want Isabella in Florence with that Donati around.

LO FREDO

He's not the same Donati!

BRUNO

He looks just like him. You'll see.

LO FREDO  
You should see how happy La Signora-

BRUNO  
Tomorrow, Lo Fredo.

LO FREDO  
She's not ready.

BRUNO  
She's ready. Ask her to show you  
the sketch of the vines.

LO FREDO  
*La Signora is not ready.*

The phone goes dead.

EXT. ACCADEMIA COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The students arrive and set up their easels. Isabella lingers, talking to Michael. Lo Fredo catches a glimpse of him and looks startled. *It's him. Bruno's right.*

Lo Fredo approaches them, gets a better look at Michael.

LO FREDO  
Isabella! *Andiamo.*

MICHAEL  
(whispers)  
Have dinner with me tonight.

ISABELLA  
(whispers)  
Pick me up at seven. Do you want  
the address?

MICHAEL  
(whispers)  
I know where you live, with La  
Signora.

LO FREDO  
(suspicious, dismissive)  
Buon giorno. You'd best be leaving.

MICHAEL  
Lo Fredo, do you remember me? I'm  
Michael Donati. I used to try to  
sneak into your workshop with my  
Friend, Carlo Piacenza to see the  
nude women.

LO FREDO  
One of the little perverts!

MICHAEL  
I'm an art dealer now and wondered  
if I could come -

Lo Fredo cuts him off rudely and escorts Isabella inside.

Michael peers through the open gate to courtyard, which Lo Fredo closes quickly. Class begins.

LO FREDO  
Before we begin, Isabella, please  
show us your sketch of the vines.

ISABELLA  
How do you know about the vines?

Lo Fredo motions impatiently. She hands him the sketch.

LO FREDO  
*Eccoci!* This is the kind of passion  
we all strive for, the kind of  
tension. Are they lovers or  
enemies. In this simple sketch  
there is: Life. Death. Love. Loss.  
Betrayal. Reunion. *Brava!*

He shows it to the class, then hands it back to her.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

As Isabella comes home as La Signora exits the building.

ISABELLA  
I have a date with Michael tonight!

La Signora looks upset, then quickly softens.

LA SIGNORA  
You must be thrilled. Andiamo!

ISABELLA  
Where are we going?

LA SIGNORA  
Shopping! Didn't you just tell me  
that you have a date.

Isabella smiles, hesitates.

ISABELLA

Yes, but I don't have any-

LA SIGNORA

It's my treat! Luckily for you, I know every shop in Florence.

La Signora looks her arm though Isabella's arm. They set out.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS OF THE SHOPPING SPREE

La Signora is royalty in Florence as she takes Isabella to the finest shops and selects elegant clothes, shoes, accessories, and a specially blended scent. She even fits in a quick visit to the hair salon.

Isabella transforms from a earthy artist into a stylish, stunning woman.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Isabella finishes getting ready. La Signora helps her.

ISABELLA

If you don't mind, would you please tell me about your daughter?

LA SIGNORA

You remind me so much of her.

ISABELLA

I hope that's not hard for you.

LA SIGNORA

No! It's wonderful that you remind me of her. I hope I remind you of your late mamma.

ISABELLA

You do!

LA SIGNORA

Then we're even.

ISABELLA

How old was she when she died?

LA SIGNORA

About your age, maybe a little younger.

ISABELLA

Oh my! I'm so sorry. How...

LA SIGNORA

She died in childbirth.

ISABELLA

Oh that's horrible! And the baby?

LA SIGNORA

She lived.

ISABELLA

Where is your granddaughter now?

La Signora looks at Isabella, as if deciding what to say.

LA SIGNORA

You don't need to fill your head with these things. You have to get ready for your date with the handsome, Michael Donati.

ISABELLA

You think he's handsome?!

LA SIGNORA

*YOU think he's handsome.*

ISABELLA

I do! I think he's so handsome and so interesting and he smells so good. He's got this great laugh...

CUT TO:

EXT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR

Michael is early for their date and overhears her enthusiasm for him. He smiles, rings the buzzer.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Michael climbs the six flights with flowers in hand. At the top, La Signora opens the door and greets him.

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Michael hands La Signora the flowers.



MICHAEL

For you.

LA SIGNORA

Not for Isabella?

MICHAEL

No, for you, for letting me share  
your time with Isabella.

La Signora nods, accepts the flowers graciously. Isabella arrives and looks ravishing! Michael is speechless.

LA SIGNORA

Have fun, you two.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS OF THEIR EVENING TOGETHER

EXT. STREETS OF FLORENCE - NIGHT

The city feels alive like only Florence can feel. It's as if they're in a conversation with the streets and the artwork.

- Sculpted faces on ancient door knockers, gargoyles, and statues all seem to smile back at them.

- They stop by a mosaic fountain and throw in a coin, making the same wish silently together.

- They pass Santa Croce on their way to dinner and stop in to pay their respects at Michelangelo's tomb.

These moments ricochet between the present time and glimpses of their past lives together on these very same streets.

EXT. UPSCALE RISTORANTE - NIGHT

Michael takes her to classy restaurant. They order, eat, drink, and sit close to one another. It's very romantic.

CUT TO:

INT. LA SIGNORA'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY

La Signora opens the door to find Lo Fredo. She takes one look at him and knows what's about to happen.

LO FREDO

I'm so sorry, Sofia. I do not have good news, but I need to tell you myself, in person.

LA SIGNORA

I already know.

LO FREDO

Did Bruno tell you?

LA SIGNORA

No. I just know. How strange, after all these many years, I feel as if I don't have enough time.

She fights back her tears. Lo Fredo hugs her gently.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALONG THE ARNO - CONTINUOUS

They walk and talk. Stop for some Gelato. Eat from one another's cone. They have an intimacy that transcends the amount of time that they've spent together in this lifetime.

They simultaneously get an "other worldly" view of the other.

ISABELLA

It just happened again.

MICHAEL

What?

ISABELLA

That weird Deja Vu. Probably the first signs of my nervous breakdown. *No need to worry.*

MICHAEL

It must be contagious. I have a strong premonition that we were lovers in another lifetime, right here in Florence.

ISABELLA

(laughs)

That's the best pickup line I've ever heard!

MICHAEL

I'm serious. I haven't had this sensation since I was kid.

ISABELLA  
So you've been crazy for a while?

MICHAEL  
I have, but this kind of crazy  
feels like we're meant to be  
together. *You feel it, I can tell.*

She kisses him. They each see a glimpse of the "other" merged into the kiss. They look at one another, *it's true.*

EXT/INT. MICHAEL'S HOTEL - NIGHT

They walk back along the Arno until they arrive at his hotel. They enter his room. He turns on music. They dance on the balcony, then move inside to the bed and make love, their bodies intertwining like the vines.

Michael watches her in the moonlight as she falls asleep.

ISABELLA  
(softly, barely awake)  
Michael, are you sleeping?

MICHAEL  
Wide awake, dreaming of you.

ISABELLA  
I forgot to give you my present.

MICHAEL  
What present?

ISABELLA  
It's in my bag.

He opens her handbag and finds the sketch of the vines rolled up and with a bow on it. He smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASA MERLINI - EARLY MORNING

Michael and Isabella arrive in a taxi to find La Signora waiting outside with Lo Fredo, standing next to a black limo.

Isabella and Michael get out of the taxi. Michael sends the taxi away. Isabella looks confused. Michael notices the Medici crest on the car. He looks heartbroken and terrified.

LO FREDO  
Signor Donati, we meet again.

MICHAEL  
Where are you taking her?

ISABELLA  
What's all this?

LO FREDO  
So many questions! It's too early.

Michael glares at Lo Fredo.

MICHAEL  
I'd like to visit Isabella at the  
Medici Villas. How do I arrange to -

LO FREDO  
That's impossible.

ISABELLA  
The Medici Villas? Is that what  
this is? How did you know? I didn't  
say anything, I swear to you!

LO FREDO  
It's okay. You were chosen for the  
spot, but you must leave right now.

ISABELLA  
This minute? But I haven't had time  
to prepare for it...

Lo Fredo looks at La Signora.

LA SIGNORA  
*Time!* The most unpredictable  
element of our human existence.  
*It's time for you to go, my love.*  
*Go, be brilliant.*

ISABELLA  
But I'm not packed. I can't go now.

LA SIGNORA  
I've packed your suitcase.

La Signora motions for the driver to put it in the trunk.

ISABELLA  
(to La Signora)  
May I have just another moment  
alone with you?

LA SIGNORA  
Of course, my love.

La Signora puts an arm around Isabella and leads her inside.

MICHAEL  
How long will she be there?

LO FREDO  
No one knows.

MICHAEL  
May I at least speak with her while she's there?

LO FREDO  
I'm afraid not. No cell phones allowed. The artists must stay focused.

MICHAEL  
So it's a cult.

LO FREDO  
No. It's an artist colony, the only one of its kind in the world.

They wait in awkward silence until the two women emerge. They both look like they've been crying. Lo Fredo avoids La Signora's gaze. Isabella hugs La Signora.

LA SIGNORA  
We'll be together again. Ti Promesso. I promise you.

Next, Isabella throws her arms around Michael.

ISABELLA  
(whispers to him)  
I'm sorry. I have to go.

MICHAEL  
I love you!

LO FREDO  
Isabella, you cannot keep a man like Bruno Medici waiting.

Lo Fredo holds the door open. She gets in the back seat. Michael and La Signora both have painful expressions.

INT. THE MEDICI LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Isabella watches Michael and La Signora disappear as they turn a corner. Lo Fredo closes his eyes, exhausted.