

Sleeping Beauty of Catania

Episode 1
Somebody to Love
(Pilot)

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INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS. WHILE EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO PORTRAY HISTORICAL INCIDENTS AND SETTINGS ACCURATELY, SOME CHARACTERS, TIMELINES, AND DETAILS HAVE BEEN DRAMATIZED WHERE THE HISTORICAL RECORD IS INCOMPLETE.

FADE IN:

OVER BLACK, "SOMEBODY TO LOVE" BY JEFFERSON AIRPLANE SLAMS IN.

INT. CASTELLO DI LEUCOTHEA - DAY

Super: CATANIA, SICILY - APRIL 19, 1911

Empty stone corridors. Bare walls. Sunlight cuts through tall, unfurnished rooms.

INT. CASTELLO DI LEUCOTHEA - DAY

SUPER: "CATANIA, SICILY - APRIL 19, 1911"

Empty stone corridors. Bare walls. Sunlight cuts through tall, unfurnished rooms.

ANGELINA MIOCCIO, 19, tears streaming, SPRINTS through the echoing castle. Her HEELS POUND against new tile, each step ricocheting off the stone.

She tears past blank doorways, unused fireplaces, a grand HALL with no furniture - a beautifully built shell.

She doesn't slow.

INT. CASTELLO DI LEUCOTHEA - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Angelina grabs the rail and hurls herself upward...

INT. CASTELLO DI LEUCOTHEA - UPPER LANDING - CONTINUOUS

She bursts out onto-

EXT. CASTELLO DI LEUCOTHEA - TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Blinding daylight. Wind snatches at her long dark hair.

Angelina crosses the stone roof, steps quick but deliberate, drawn toward the PARAPET. "SOMEBODY TO LOVE" swells.

She reaches the edge.

She stops.

CLOSE ON ANGELINA

Her face is wet but calm now, streaks of dried tears on her cheeks. The song drops slightly under, leaving only her breath and a high tremor of guitar.

She looks down.

HER POV – STREET BELOW

Far below, a small FIGURE stands in the street, lost in the distance – a MAN staring up, framed by a growing knot of ONLOOKERS.

To her, he is tiny. Insignificant.

BACK TO ANGELINA

Her eyes lock on that point. No flinch. No hesitation.

She lifts her gaze to the sky.

SMASH TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: "SLEEPING BEAUTY OF CATANIA"

INT. PALAZZO MIOCCIO – SCHOOLROOM – DAY

SUPER: "FOUR YEARS EARLIER – 1907"

ANGELINA'S GOLDEN YEARS.

A bright but formal upstairs room. A BLACKBOARD. DESKS.

ANGELINA, 16, and her younger sisters LIA, 14, and ARIELLA, 12, sit with SMALL RED HARDCOVER NOTEBOOKS.

Their mother, RIVA closes a lesson book.

RIVA

That's all for today. Remember your homework.

She hands each girl a red notebook. The sisters bolt up and hurry out.

INT. PALAZZO MIOCCIO – UPSTAIRS HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

The girls spill into the corridor.

ANGELINA
I hate those lessons. They're so boring. I don't want to do that homework.

LIA
(snickers, shushing)
Angie, shh. Mother hears everything.

LIA (cont'd)
She says the lessons will help us when we're married.

ARIELLA
I'm going to tell Mother and Father you said that.

Angelina whirls on her.

ANGELINA
(fist half-raised)
You'd better not.

Ariella LAUGHS and darts away.

ARIELLA
I'M GONNA TELL MOTHER AND FATHER!

ANGELINA
(chasing)
YOU WATCH! I'M GOING TO GET YOU!

Lia races after them.

They tear down the hall, LAUGHING – then slam full-speed into MARIA, a servant, knocking everyone into a tangled heap.

RED NOTEBOOKS and PENCILS scatter.

MARIA
(wincing, getting up)
Girls! Girls! This is not a park!

The three sisters scramble to their feet, pale and guilty.

ANGELINA / ARIELLA / LIA
(together)
We're sorry, Maria.

MARIA

(angry)
I'll tell your mother and father
you're running around like wild
animals. Go to your rooms. Now.

The girls scoop up their notebooks and slink away.

INT. PALAZZO MIOCCIO – UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR – MOMENTS LATER

They walk, subdued.

ANGELINA

(quiet, to Ariella)
Idiot. This is your fault.

ARIELLA

(snaps back)
You threatened me.

LIA

(dry)
You're both idiots. Be quiet.

Angelina's room is the last one.

Next door: her older brother MOSES'S ROOM.

On the floor by his door: a SMALL GREY BOOKBAG, forgotten.

Angelina pauses, eyes narrowing. She glances up and down the hall. Empty.

She crouches, unties the bag, rummages. A UNIVERSITY TEXTBOOK.

She slips her RED NOTEBOOK into the bag instead, ties it closed.

ANGELINA

(soft, pleased)
Moses, it's your turn for home
lessons.

She hugs the textbook to her chest and slips into her room.

INT. ANGELINA'S ROOM – LATER

A modest but comfortable room. Angelina lies on her bed, the stolen textbook open.

It's a BOOK OF ITALIAN LOVE POEMS.

Her cheeks are flushed. Her heart pounds. She turns pages hungrily.

ANGELINA
(whispering to herself)
I want love like this. I want to feel all of this.

She smiles, overwhelmed.

A SOFT KNOCK at the door – unheard.

The DOORKNOB TURNS. LIA and ARIELLA peek in and step inside.

LIA
(whisper)
Angie doesn't know we're here.

ARIELLA
What is she doing?

LIA
Reading. That's not Mother's homework.

Ariella straightens.

ARIELLA
(calling)
Angie. Angie. ANGIE!

Angelina startles, slamming a hand over the page.

ANGELINA
What? What are you doing in here? Who said you could come in?

The sisters trade a look.

LIA
We knocked. You didn't answer. So we came in. What are you reading?

Angelina hesitates, blushing.

ARIELLA
That's not Mother's lessons. Where did you get that book?

ANGELINA
(stammering)
I... borrowed it.

LIA
 (arms crossed)
 You "borrowed" it?

LIA (cont'd)
 From where?

Angelina exhales, caught.

ANGELINA
 It's a book of love poems. I took it
 from Moses's bookbag.

Lia and Ariella BURST OUT LAUGHING.

LIA
 If Moses finds out—

ARIELLA
 (finishing)
 —he'll kill you.

Angelina frowns, worried they'll tell.

LIA
 Don't worry. We won't say anything.
 He came back and took his bag. He'll
 know it's gone when he needs it.

Lia points at the book.

LIA (cont'd)
 So? What's it about?

Angelina can't help smiling, eyes bright.

ANGELINA
 Love. Real love. It's so beautiful.
 I'm in love just reading it.

ARIELLA
 (flat)
 Really.

ANGELINA
 Let me read you some.

She sits up and reads a SHORT PASSAGE (we don't hear the exact words).

Lia and Ariella listen, baffled, the poetry going over their heads.

Angelina closes the book, moved.

ANGELINA (cont'd)
I can't live without this kind of
love. I want to be in love like this.

Lia and Ariella glance at each other, then LAUGH.

ARIELLA
Angie, did you bump your head when we
crashed into Maria?

ANGELINA
(annoyed)
I'm fine. Get out. Both of you.

The sisters retreat, still giggling, and close the door.

Angelina looks down at the book, holds it to her chest, eyes
shining.

FADE OUT.

INT. ANGELINA'S ROOM — LATE AFTERNOON

Angelina lies on her bed, lost in her brother's TEXTBOOK OF
ITALIAN LOVE POEMS.

A KNOCK at the door. Not her sisters' rhythm. Her eyes
widen.

ANGELINA
(under her breath)
Damn. He's home.

She grabs the book and opens the door.

MOSES, early twenties, tall, stands there, stone-faced. In
his hand: ANGELINA'S RED HOMEWORK NOTEBOOK.

ANGELINA (cont'd)
(nervous)
Hi, Moses. You're home.

He lifts the notebook slightly. No smile.

Angelina gives a weak chuckle, reaching for it. Moses pulls
it out of reach and steps past her into the room.

MOSES
(dry)
Indeed I am.

ANGELINA
I can explain what happened—

MOSES
 (cuts her off)
 Angelina, I'm sure you can. You
 always can. I don't care to hear it.

He only calls her "Angelina" when he's angry. She knows it.

MOSES (cont'd)
 I was in class. The professor asked
 me to read a poem from that book.

He nods at the TEXTBOOK in her hands.

MOSES (cont'd)
 I reached into my bag and pulled out
 this.

He wiggles the RED NOTEBOOK.

MOSES (cont'd)
 My friend Carlo said, "That's his
 sister's home lessons." The whole
 class laughed.

Angelina goes pale.

MOSES (cont'd)
 The professor asked, "Mr. Mioccio,
 are you here to be a housewife or to
 learn literature?"

Angelina almost laughs, then freezes when Moses's look
 darkens.

MOSES (cont'd)
 (snaps)
 Angelina. This is not funny.

She flinches, eyes filling.

ANGELINA
 (small, sincere)
 I'm so sorry. Please don't tell
 Mother and Father.

ANGELINA (cont'd)
 Your textbook is beautiful. The poems
 are... I fell in love with it.

Moses studies her.

MOSES
 Read me one.

She blinks, then opens the book and reads. Her voice is shy at first, then full, heartfelt.

Time passes in the rhythm of her reading. Moses's expression softens.

MOSES (cont'd)
(finally, a sigh)
Angie, next time ask. If I don't need it, you can borrow it.

He nods at the book.

MOSES (cont'd)
Keep it for now. I need it back Friday.

MOSES (cont'd)
I won't tell Mother and Father. Just don't let them see you with it.

Angelina lights up, throws her arms around him.

ANGELINA
Thank you, Moses.

He smiles despite himself, then gives her a light swat on the head with the RED NOTEBOOK before handing it over.

MOSES
Don't be late for dinner.

He winks and exits.

Angelina opens the notebook. Her eyes widen – the HOMEWORK is neatly done in Moses's hand.

She smiles.

FADE OUT.

INT. PALAZZO MIOCCIO – DINING ROOM – EARLY EVENING

A long, polished dining table. ALESSANDRO at the head. RIVA at the opposite end.

Along the sides: MOSES, GIACOBBE, ANGELINA, LIA, ARIELLA.

Behind Alessandro stands PIETRO, the massive head servant – a silent sentinel.

The family eats.

RIVA

Girls, what happened today? Maria said you were running and crashed into her.

The sisters go still. Alessandro sets down his utensils, watching them now. Moses and Giacobbe keep their eyes on their plates.

Pietro's gaze slides to the girls. One eyebrow lifts.

RIVA (cont'd)

Well? Angelina?

Angelina swallows her mouthful, takes a sip of grape juice.

ANGELINA

(stammering)

We were playing. We turned the corner and ran into Maria. She fell. We said we were sorry.

She glances at Riva, then at Pietro. He's looking straight at her. She looks down.

ALESSANDRO

(annoyed)

Angelina, you're sixteen, not six. You all know better than to run in the house.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)

Soon you'll be married, with your own home and children. You must behave like a lady.

Angelina lowers her eyes, cheeks hot. Lia and Ariella trade worried looks.

RIVA

All three of you will have extra home lessons and homework.

The girls sink in their chairs.

Alessandro snaps his fingers, still looking at them, and tilts his head slightly toward Pietro.

ALESSANDRO

Pietro, have the girls do extra cleaning around the palazzo. On top of their lessons. For the rest of the week.

On the girls: they swallow hard.

On Pietro: the faintest smile.

PIETRO
It'll be a pleasure, Alessandro.

Angelina's shoulders tighten. Lia stares at her plate.
Ariella blinks back tears.

ALESSANDRO
(to the boys)
Boys, how was your day? I trust it
was not as "productive" as your
sisters'.

Moses and Giacobbe exchange a quick look.

MOSES
(clears throat)
My day was good. I have several
papers due in two weeks. I'll be
working late at the university
library.

ALESSANDRO
Your mother and I are proud of you,
Moses. You set an excellent example
for your sisters.

He turns a pointed look toward the girls.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
I hope each of you learn from your
brother.

Riva smiles, nodding.

Moses keeps his eyes on his plate, uncomfortable, not
looking at his sisters.

RIVA
Giacobbe, how was your day? You're
close to graduating, aren't you?

GIACOBBE
It went well. We're starting to
prepare for final exams.

ALESSANDRO
(to Moses again)
Moses is almost finished at the
university. You've started the
paperwork?

A beat – Moses has forgotten.

MOSES

No, Father. But it's on my calendar.
I'll take care of it by the end of
next week.

ALESSANDRO

Very good. I need you at the tannery.

Moses nods, tight.

Alessandro looks down the table at Angelina.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)

Angelina, you're sixteen now. Very
soon you must take a husband.

She blinks, caught by the formality of it.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)

Your mother and I have discussed this
for some time. We want you to know.

Angelina feels suddenly exposed. "I must take a husband?"

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)

In the next weeks, we'll prepare your
public debut. We'll visit family and
friends—

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)

—and take you to the theater.

For a moment, excitement flickers. The outside world.

ANGELINA

I'll see the city? Outside the
palazzo?

ALESSANDRO

Yes. But after today, you're still
not ready.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)

I'm hiring an etiquette and poise
teacher. She'll show you how to
behave in public.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)

I've instructed Maria to take your
measurements. I'll order new clothes.
Women's clothes. Clothes of
substance.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
 You're no longer a child. You're a
 woman. How you carry yourself
 reflects on this family. On me.

He fixes her with a hard look.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
 You cannot bring shame or dishonor on
 us.

The weight lands. Angelina stares at her plate.

Moses leans slightly toward Giacobbe, murmuring.

MOSES
 (low)
 Angie has no idea what they're
 getting her into.

Giacobbe gives a small, sad nod.

ALESSANDRO
 Enough talking. Eat.

Cut wider: the family resumes their meal in heavy silence.
 Pietro looms behind Alessandro, watching everyone.

FADE OUT.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF NAPLES — CAMPUS — MORNING

SUPER: "NOVEMBER 1907 — NAPLES, ITALY"

Four FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS cross the courtyard toward a stone
 lecture hall.

ALFIO, 18, GIOVANNI, 19, FILIPPO, 17, and GUGLIELMO, 18,
 carry books, coats over their arms. They're relaxed; they
 know they're early.

GIOVANNI
 Hey, Alfio. How are things with
 Marcia?

FILIPPO / GUGLIELMO
 Yeah, Alfio. How is Marcia?

GIOVANNI
 (teasing)
 You two have been steady since July.
 You never talk about her. Why?

A shadow crosses Alfio's face.

ALFIO
(quietly)
She left me. In August.

They stop. The others look at him.

ALFIO (cont'd)
I got a letter. Goodbye, that's all.
A few days later I saw her... with
someone else.

FILIPPO
Shit. I'm sorry. You looked happy.

GIOVANNI
Forget her. You're a good-looking
guy. You'll meet someone else.

They each clap him on the shoulder.

FILIPPO
You will. Someone better.

ALFIO
(half-smile)
Maybe.

GUGLIELMO
Come on. If we want seats near the
front, we'd better hurry.

They pick up the pace toward the building.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NAPLES – ACCOUNTING LECTURE HALL – LATER

Packed rows of STUDENTS. The four friends have scored seats
near the front, ledgers and notebooks open.

At the BLACKBOARD, the PROFESSOR writes figures and
accounts, lecturing on principles of business accounting.

Alfio watches, intent. Numbers come easily to him; his pen
moves fast.

The board fills with a SAMPLE LEDGER. Students scribble,
frown, erase.

PROFESSOR
For next time, complete this series
of problems–

He writes a list of HOMEWORK ITEMS on the board.

Alfio's eyes track each line. He writes it down—and as the professor speaks, Alfio's hand keeps moving, working through the problems.

His friends are still copying when Alfio tears a page from his notebook, stands, and walks to the front.

A low murmur.

ALFIO
(to professor)
Here's the homework, Professore. My notes are below the ledger.

The professor stares at the sheet, surprised.

PROFESSOR
Thank you... Alfio.

Alfio gives a small bow and heads back up the aisle.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF NAPLES — CAMPUS — MOMENTS LATER

The four spill out of the building.

FILIPPO
What the hell was that?

ALFIO
What?

GIOVANNI
You turned in three days of homework in about three minutes.

GUGLIELMO
It'll take us normal humans three days.

Alfio shrugs, a little cocky.

ALFIO
If you need help, ask.

They shove him playfully. Alfio flashes the mano in fico gesture at them; they laugh.

The four friends head off across campus, joking as they go.

FADE OUT.

INT. ALFIO'S HOME — LATE AFTERNOON

SUPER: "NAPLES, ITALY"

A modest rented flat in a working-class neighborhood. Clean but worn.

Alfio enters with his books.

ALFIO
Mama, I'm home.

He drops his books on the kitchen counter and kisses his mother on the cheek.

SOFIA, 40s, in an apron, is cooking.

SOFIA
(playful scold)
Alfio! Not on the counter. I cook there, this isn't your bedroom.

Alfio laughs, scoops up the books, and disappears down the hall.

SOFIA (cont'd)
(calling)
And don't be late for dinner! Cold food is bad for you!

ALFIO (O.S.)
Yes, Mama!

She smiles and goes back to the stove.

The front door opens again. ANTONIO, late 40s, in a worn jacket, steps in, a little out of breath, COUGHING into a handkerchief.

ANTONIO
Papa's home!

SOFIA
Antonio, how was your day?

ANTONIO
Busy. Problems with three construction contracts. The City, the lawyers, the trade syndicates... everyone is fighting.

SOFIA
Will they work it out?

ANTONIO

Maybe. Maybe not. Until they do,
every road project is stalled. I
can't sign off on payments.

He rolls his eyes.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

We're standing on the sidelines
watching three roosters fight.

Alfio steps back into the room, hearing this.

ALFIO

I'm sorry, Papa. That sounds awful.

Antonio shrugs.

ANTONIO

At least we get paid, even when
nothing gets done.

Alfio and Sofia chuckle.

SOFIA

Both of you, go wash your hands.
Dinner is ready.

They head off to wash up.

INT. ALFIO'S HOME — DINING AREA — EARLY EVENING

A small round wooden table. Simple food, three plates.

Antonio, Sofia, and Alfio sit, eating.

ANTONIO

How was your day at the university?
How are Giovanni, Filippo, Guglielmo?
They never visit anymore.

SOFIA

Yes, they've forgotten us.

ALFIO

Classes are going well. Accounting is
easier than I expected. Giovanni,
Filippo, Guglielmo are just busy with
school work.

Antonio smiles, winks at him.

ANTONIO

Don't get too comfortable. It's only your first year. Second month. It will get harder.

Alfio thinks of his earlier cockiness in class.

ALFIO

I remember, Papa.

A thought hits him.

ALFIO (cont'd)

Excuse me a moment. I forgot something.

SOFIA

(puzzled)

You're excused. Hurry back.

He taps the table twice and hurries out.

Moments later he returns with a handful of MAIL.

ALFIO

I forgot the post. There's a lot today.

Antonio and Sofia both groan.

ANTONIO

More bills.

Alfio hands the envelopes to Sofia. She starts sorting as the men keep eating.

One envelope makes her pause. She stares at it.

Alfio notices.

ALFIO

Mama? What's wrong? You went pale.

ANTONIO

Sofia?

She silently turns the envelope so they can see.

Thick, cream-colored parchment. Embossed family crest. In elegant script:

DAL PALAZZO DEI MIOCCIO

Alfio frowns. Antonio's jaw tightens.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
After all these years... what the hell
do those people want?

SOFIA
(sharp)
Antonio! They're our relatives.

ANTONIO
I'm glad they're our distant
relatives.

Antonio gives a bitter little laugh, glancing at Alfio.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
Son, do you know when they last
wrote? When you were six months old.

He turns back to Sofia.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
Do you remember their visit? You'd
cooked all day.

Sofia says nothing.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
They brought fine gifts, but wouldn't
sit down. Wouldn't touch your food.
Riva looked ready to faint.
Alessandro like he'd vomit just being
here.

A beat.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
They came to see the zoo.

He means himself, Sofia, and baby Alfio.

SOFIA
(scolding)
Antonio!

Alfio is stunned.

Antonio leans toward him.

ANTONIO
Alfio, did you know the Mioccios
offered me a king's ransom not to
marry your mother?

ALFIO

What?

Sofia's silence confirms it.

ANTONIO

Sofia... remember what they planned for you at twenty?

SOFIA

(quiet, tearful)
Please don't.

ALFIO

Mama? What happened?

She can't answer.

ANTONIO

They wanted to sell her to a rich old man. Old enough to be her grandfather. Contracts ready, everything signed. Your mother had no say.

He meets Alfio's eyes.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

I stopped it because she loved me. We ran to Naples so they'd leave us alone.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

That's how these rich Sicilian families work. Marriage as business deal. Young daughters as currency. To hell with love, respect, happiness.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

The girls they can't sell, they send to convents.

A silence. Sofia looks down.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

Open it, Sofia. Let's hear what they want.

She carefully opens the envelope, unfolding the heavy paper.

SOFIA

(reading)
They send their greetings. They hope we're well. They heard Alfio is

(MORE)

SOFIA (cont'd)
studying accounting at the
university. They say they're proud of
him.

She reaches the end, swallows.

SOFIA (cont'd)
(nervous)
They want us to visit them.

ANTONIO
With what money?

SOFIA
They say they'll pay for everything.
Lodging, food, the trip to Sicily.

Antonio throws up his hands.

ANTONIO
Of course. Now the zoo travels to
them.

SOFIA
What should I write back? They ask
for a reply.

Antonio exhales, resigned.

ANTONIO
Fine. We'll go.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
But if they insult us, we come
straight home.

He looks at Alfio.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
Looks like you're going to meet your
cousins.

Sofia manages a small smile.

ALFIO
How are they, Mama?

SOFIA
I don't really know. We've never met.
Your aunt and uncle have five
children. Two sons. Three daughters.

ALFIO
I see.

They eat again. Suddenly Antonio is wracked by a deeper COUGH, pulling out his handkerchief. When he lowers it, there is a streak of BLOOD.

SOFIA
(alarmed)
Antonio!

ANTONIO
(waving it off)
I'm fine. Don't worry.

He taps a finger on the table, thinking.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
These people are up to something.
After all these years, suddenly they
write, invite us, pay for everything...
It doesn't smell right.

He turns back to Alfio, serious.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
You're going to be a brilliant
accountant. Maybe the best in Italy.
Never trust the rich, son. They'll
use you as long as they can. And when
they're done, they throw you away.

SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. MIOCCIO PALAZZO — VARIOUS — DAY

PUNISHMENT WEEK.

A brief overview: Angelina, Lia, and Ariella spend their days doing heavy cleaning and maintenance around the palazzo, then home lessons with Riva after dinner, then extra homework late into the night. They fall into bed around 11 P.M., only to be woken again at 5 A.M. by Pietro.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY — 5 A.M.

Pietro strides down the second-floor hall, BANGING on doors. He carries THREE BUNDLES OF WORK CLOTHES.

Ariella opens her door, half-asleep in her nightgown.

ARIELLA
(pleading)
Pietro, please, let us sleep a little
longer. We only slept a few hours. We
(MORE)

ARIELLA (cont'd)
won't tell Father.

PIETRO
(sharp)
No, you lazy cow. Put your work
clothes on. Now.

He THRUSTS the bundle into her chest, almost knocking her
back.

Angelina and Lia, equally exhausted, peer out of their
rooms, taking this in.

Pietro turns to them with a grin.

PIETRO (cont'd)
Are you lazy cows ready?

Angelina and Lia both flush with anger, but hold it.

ANGELINA / LIA
Yes.

He HURLS the clothes at them. The bundle smacks Angelina in
the face. She swallows hard, fighting the urge to curse him.

He throws the next bundle at Lia; it hits and knocks the
wind out of her. She's about to cry. Angelina takes her
hand, staring straight at Pietro.

ANGELINA
Don't give him the pleasure. Be
strong.

Pietro laughs. Lia nods, recomposing herself.

Five minutes later, all three girls are in rough WORK
CLOTHES. Pietro marches them off.

INT. MAIN GALLERY – MORNING

Pietro leads the girls into the main gallery. ANA, an older
servant with kind eyes, waits with buckets and rags.

PIETRO
(to Ana)
Ana. Take Lia and Ariella up to the
attic. Have them clean there.

Angelina's heart sinks; she'd hoped to be with Ana too.

PIETRO (cont'd)
(to Angelina)
You're with me.

Fear flashes across Angelina's face.

PIETRO (cont'd)
(to all three, amused)
At eight, report to the kitchen for
breakfast. I don't want you telling
your parents I starved you.

He takes Angelina away. Ana gently ushers Lia and Ariella
toward the attic stairs.

INT. PALAZZO GALLERY - LATER

Pietro and Angelina stand in the high-ceilinged gallery.
Tall WINDOW PANES, a LADDER, a BUCKET of detergent, a
SPONGE, and CLEAN RAGS wait.

PIETRO
You'll wash all these windows. Then
sweep and mop the entire floor.

PIETRO (cont'd)
I want it done before breakfast.

He leaves her alone.

Angelina stares at the vast room, suddenly very small. One
girl given the work of ten servants.

She starts.

INT. PALAZZO GALLERY - 7:30 A.M.

The windows gleam. Angelina, filthy and sweaty, pushes a MOP
across the gallery floor.

FOOTSTEPS approach. She looks up.

MOSES and GIACOBBE enter, carrying a CANVAS BAG. They stop,
shocked by her state.

MOSES
Angie. We barely recognize you.

Angelina frowns; Giacobbe covers his nose.

GIACOBBE
You need a bath.

MOSES
(quickly)
Giacobbe. Not kind.

GIACOBBE
(contrite)
I'm sorry, Angie.

Angelina's eyes fill.

ANGELINA
It's fine. I'm sorry I'm not
presentable. I've never looked or
felt this bad.

MOSES
Don't apologize.

They look around, taking in the spotless gallery.

MOSES (cont'd)
How did you clean all this? It takes
ten servants.

ANGELINA
I've been working since five. I'm so
tired, and the day isn't even half
over.

ANGELINA (cont'd)
We sleep four hours, then that pig
Pietro wakes us.

GIACOBBE
(to Moses)
We hear it every morning. Father told
us not to come out or we'd join you.

Moses nods grimly.

Angelina's shoulders shake.

ANGELINA
It was an accident. We said we're
sorry, and look at us.

Moses takes out a handkerchief, gently wipes her tears.

MOSES
I tried talking to Father. I told him
the punishment was too much.

MOSES (cont'd)
He got angry. Said if I questioned
him again, he'd punish me too.

Angelina looks down.

ANGELINA
Thank you for standing up for us.

He gives a small smile, then glances around to check for
Pietro. Coast clear. He opens the bag.

MOSES
We brought you something.

Angelina's face brightens.

ANGELINA
What is it?

MOSES
Chocolates and candy.

She practically jumps.

MOSES (cont'd)
(hands them over)
Here.

Angelina bites into a chocolate, blissful, then stuffs the
rest into her deep pockets.

ANGELINA
Thank you. Both of you.

Moses and Giacobbe smile.

MOSES
Where are Lia and Ariella?

ANGELINA
Upstairs. Cleaning the attic.

They both wince.

GIACOBBE
Who's with them?

ANGELINA
Ana.

Moses exhales.

MOSES

Good. We're going up to see them.
They're getting candy too.

ANGELINA

You don't know how happy they'll be.
Just tell them not to eat too much.
Breakfast is in half an hour.

MOSES / GIACOBBE

We'll tell them.

They head for the attic stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. PALAZZO – ATTIC – CONTINUOUS

Dusty beams, trunks, old furniture. LIA and ARIELLA scrub under ANA's supervision.

The TRAPDOOR opens; Moses and Giacobbe climb up.

ANA

Good morning. What are you boys doing here?

MOSES

Checking on the girls.

ANA

They're fine. Tired. They've been working since five.

GIACOBBE

We know. Angie told us. We just came from the gallery.

Ana nods.

ANA

(calling)

Girls. Your brothers are here.

Lia and Ariella shuffle over, filthy and exhausted.

MOSES

We brought you something special.

He opens the bag. Their faces light up.

LIA / ARIELLA

Thank you!

They hug their brothers, smearing dirt on their clothes.

MOSES
(laughing)
Now we'll need a bath too.

They all laugh. Moses hands out candy; Lia and Ariella slip it into their pockets.

GIACOBBE
Angie says don't eat too much. You have breakfast in less than half an hour.

The girls nod.

MOSES
(to Ana)
Would you like some?

ANA
(smiles)
No, thank you. It's for them. They deserve it.

Moses nods.

WIPE TO:

INT. PALAZZO KITCHEN — 8 A.M.

Angelina, Lia, and Ariella eat breakfast at a rough table. Pietro stands nearby, watching.

ARIELLA
(whispering)
Angie—

PIETRO
(barks)
Quiet! No talking.

Ariella jumps and eats in silence.

8:30 A.M. The girls finish. Pietro stands before them with a CLIPBOARD.

They wait, tense.

PIETRO (cont'd)
(smiles thinly)
Lia and Ariella, meet Ana on the second floor. You'll clean all the
(MORE)

PIETRO (cont'd)
 guest rooms.

LIA
 (blurts)
 That's too much for two people.

PIETRO
 You can manage. Angelina cleaned the whole gallery. Did the work of ten servants.

Angelina shoots him a look.

Ariella wipes away a tear.

PIETRO (cont'd)
 Angelina, you'll clean all three kitchens. Start with this one.

Angelina's fists clench at her sides; she forces herself not to move.

PIETRO (cont'd)
 Move, you lazy cows. I've been treating you far too well.

MONTAGE – PUNISHMENT WEEK

– Angelina scrubs pots in one kitchen, then another, steam and grease everywhere.

– Lia and Ariella strip beds and scrub floors in guest rooms, lugging heavy linens.

– Pietro checks his clipboard, ticking off assignments, occasionally barking orders.

– When his back is turned, Angelina slips a piece of chocolate into her mouth; Lia and Ariella do the same upstairs.

– Evening: the girls sit with Riva in the schoolroom, eyes drooping as she drills them in lessons.

– Late night: three sisters at their desks, doing extra homework by lamplight, barely keeping their eyes open.

– Lights out. They collapse into bed.

– Dawn: Pietro's fist BAM BAM BAM on the doors again.

END MONTAGE.

FADE OUT.

EXT. PALAZZO MIOCCIO — WALLED GARDEN — DAY

FINAL DAY OF PUNISHMENT WEEK.

Angelina works alone in the garden. Hands and knees in the dirt, she PULLS WEEDS, TILLS SOIL, PLANTS SEEDS, LAYS SOD. She's filthy, exhausted.

A JUG OF WATER sits nearby, along with a SMALL LEATHER SATCHEL.

Inside the satchel: her RED HOME-LESSONS NOTEBOOK. In a hidden pocket: MOSES'S LOVE-POEM TEXTBOOK.

Pietro is nowhere in sight; he's elsewhere on the property, supervising electricians installing a new TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

INT. PALAZZO — VARIOUS — DAY

Lia and Ariella work indoors with ANA, doing minor cleaning. It's a comparatively easy day for them.

BACK TO:

EXT. WALLED GARDEN

Angelina rises, stretches, and looks around. No sign of Pietro.

She walks to her satchel, pulls off her GARDEN GLOVES, takes out the TEXTBOOK, and smiles—peace flickering back into her face.

She carries the satchel to a SECLUDED CORNER of the garden, sits, opens the book, and reads.

The world falls away. Just her and the poems.

ANGLE ON: GARDEN ENTRANCE

PIETRO STRIDES IN, SCANNING.

PIETRO
(to himself)

Where's that cow? Where did she go?

He prowls the paths, head on a swivel, listening.

CUT TO:

Angelina, hidden, lost in the book.

She doesn't see or hear him approach.

He spots her. Locks on like a torpedo.

A slow, nasty grin.

PIETRO (cont'd)
 (whisper, to himself)
 I got you.

He steps in and SNATCHES the book from her hands.

Angelina JERKS, looks up.

Pietro.

Fear jolts through her, then instant rage.

ANGELINA
 (screams)
 THAT'S MINE! GIVE THAT BACK TO ME!

Pietro LAUGHS.

She lunges, clawing for the book.

He holds it HIGH above her. She jumps, reaching, but he's taller, stronger.

PIETRO
 (laughing)
 This isn't your home-lesson notebook.

PIETRO (cont'd)
 Where did you get it? Who gave it to you?

ANGELINA
 (pure rage)
 GIVE THAT BACK!

He drops his free hand to her upper arm and SQUEEZES HARD.

She WINCES.

ANGELINA (cont'd)
 (screams)
 YOU BASTARD! YOU'RE HURTING ME!

He YANKS her.

PIETRO

(angry)
I'm taking you to your father, you
lazy cow.

Angelina fights. She PUNCHES at him with her free hand.

ANGELINA

(screams)
LET ME GO, YOU BASTARD!

She flails, trying to break free.

Pietro hauls her up and FLINGS her over his shoulder. She
KICKS and HAMMERS at his back.

He marches toward the palazzo.

CUT TO:

INT. PALAZZO – HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

Ana, Lia, and Ariella walk down the hall, chatting,
laughing.

They hear the commotion first. Then see it:

Pietro, striding toward them with Angelina over his
shoulder, thrashing.

ANGELINA

(fighting)
PUT ME DOWN, YOU SON OF A BITCH!

Lia and Ariella GASP. They and Ana freeze, then step aside.

Ariella's eyes go to Pietro's hand—the TEXTBOOK.

Lia sees it too. Both girls start to CRY. They grab onto
Ana.

ARIELLA

(small)
Oh, Angie...

LIA

(choked)
He caught her.

ANA

Girls, what happened?

Through tears, Lia and Ariella spill out the story of the love-poem book.

Ana's eyes fill.

ANA (cont'd)
Girls. Come. We can't help Angie.
All we can do is pray and hope God
protects her now.

She looks up.

ANA (cont'd)
(soft prayer)
Please protect Moses too.

Ana leads Lia and Ariella away, all three stricken.

CUT TO:

INT. ALESSANDRO'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Alessandro works at his desk.

The door BANGS open. Pietro enters without knocking, Angelina still over his shoulder, fighting.

Alessandro looks up, startled, trying to process the scene.

ALESSANDRO
(roaring)
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?!

Pietro drops the TEXTBOOK onto the desk.

PIETRO
I caught Angelina reading this.

Alessandro instantly recognizes MOSES'S BOOK.

Pietro hauls Angelina off his shoulder, about to DUMP her into the visitor's chair.

As she goes down, Angelina twists and RAKES her nails across his face.

Pietro yelps, clutching his cheek as BLOOD starts to run.

She lands in the chair, breathing hard.

Pietro's other hand comes up, ready to BACKHAND her.

PIETRO (cont'd)

You—

Angelina cuts him off, eyes blazing. She knows the word he's reaching for.

ANGELINA

(defiant)

GO AHEAD! SAY IT! DO IT!

CLICK!

Alessandro now stands, a .50 CALIBER REVOLVER leveled at Pietro. Hammer cocked.

Calm. Deadly.

ALESSANDRO

(even)

Pietro. I can't let you damage my investment.

Angelina stares at him.

ANGELINA

(shocked)

I'm your what?!

Alessandro doesn't look at her. Doesn't answer.

He glances at the CLOCK.

ALESSANDRO

Moses is due back from the university in the next few minutes. Bring him here.

Pietro, breathing hard, lowers his hand, blood still on his face. He shoots Angelina a murderous look, then exits.

Alessandro holsters the gun with practiced ease.

Angelina sits in the chair, shaking, eyes fixed on him.

FADE OUT.

EXT. PALAZZO MIOCCIO — FRONT STEPS — DAY

MOSES approaches the palazzo, bookbag over his shoulder.

On the landing, PIETRO stands "on guard." A FRESH WHITE GAUZE PATCH covers one cheek, faintly BLOOD-STAINED.

Moses clocks it as he comes up the steps. Pietro stares.

PIETRO

(dry)
Your father wishes to speak with you.

MOSES

Regarding what?

Pietro breathes in, rolls his eyes.

PIETRO

He'll let you know.

MOSES

I'll see him now.

Moses steps past him. Pietro opens the door; they go inside.

INT. PALAZZO – GRAND GALLERY / STAIRS – CONTINUOUS

Moses and Pietro walk across the gallery toward the stairs.

On the SECOND-FLOOR BALCONY, ANA, LIA, and ARIELLA watch.
Lia and Ariella's faces are tight, red-rimmed.

Moses glances up. No Angelina.

MOSES (V.O.)

The textbook.

He looks sideways at Pietro's bandaged cheek.

MOSES (V.O.) (cont'd)

Pietro and Angie must've fought.

A tiny smile at the corner of his mouth.

They reach Alessandro's study.

INT. ALESSANDRO'S STUDY – MOMENTS LATER

Pietro opens the door.

PIETRO

Moses.

Moses enters. Pietro closes the door behind him, staying outside.

ALESSANDRO sits behind his desk.

In the VISITOR'S CHAIR: ANGELINA. Hair a tangled mess, dress dirty, face flushed with anger. Her eyes are BLOODSHOT from crying.

On the desk: MOSES'S LOVE-POEM TEXTBOOK.

Angelina meets Moses's eyes. A steady look: she didn't give him up.

ALESSANDRO
Moses, please sit.

MOSES
Father, I prefer to stand.

A beat. Alessandro nods.

ALESSANDRO
Fine.

Moses slips off his coat, bookbag, and drapes them neatly over the empty chair.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
Pietro caught Angelina reading your textbook. Apparently she stole it from you.

MOSES
No, Father. I let her borrow it.

Alessandro, on autopilot, starts to turn toward Angelina—then stops, double-takes.

ALESSANDRO
Angelina, you see your brother confirm—Moses, what did you say?

MOSES
(calm, steady)
I let her borrow it. I insisted that she read it.

Color drains from Alessandro's face.

Angelina's eyes well. Moses has just taken the bullet.

ALESSANDRO
(shocked)
What did you do? Why?

There's a flicker of betrayal in his voice.

MOSES

Angie appreciates fine literature.
She has a voice and a heart for
poetry. She's gifted.

MOSES (cont'd)

Father, let me show you.

Moses reaches into his coat, pulls out an ENVELOPE, removes
several PAGES.

He crosses to Angelina, softening.

MOSES (cont'd)

(gently)

Angie. Please read these to Father.

Angelina smiles up at him, moved. She takes the pages, opens
them, and begins to read.

Her voice is raw but full of feeling as she reads the LOVE
POEMS.

Alessandro listens, stunned. The words are young, earnest,
romantic.

ALESSANDRO

(blurts)

WHO WROTE THAT TRASH?!

Moses turns, smiling faintly.

MOSES

Father, you did. Over twenty years
ago, when you were courting Mother.
You wrote these— and many more.

A beat. Alessandro is rocked.

MOSES (cont'd)

Has it been that long that your
heart forgot?

Alessandro has no answer.

MOSES (cont'd)

My professor wanted us to find
unpublished poems and read them in
class. I asked Mother for help.
She gave me these.

MOSES (cont'd)

Don't worry. No one knows you wrote
them. I got a perfect ten on the

(MORE)

MOSES (cont'd)
assignment. Thanks to you.

Moses reaches to the desk, picks up his TEXTBOOK, then kneels in front of Angelina.

He sets the book on her lap, looks up at her.

MOSES (cont'd)
This book is yours now. No one will ever take it from you again. Not Pietro. Not Father. No one.

ANGELINA
But you need it for class.

MOSES
(smiles)
I'll get another.

He takes her hand, helps her to her feet, then looks to Alessandro.

MOSES (cont'd)
Angie, let's go. Get cleaned up. There's no more punishment.

Moses guides Angelina toward the door. She gives her father one last look, then exits with her brother.

Alessandro remains behind his desk, speechless and suddenly small.

FADE OUT.

INT. PALAZZO MIOCCIO — HALLWAY — DAY

ONE WEEK AFTER PUNISHMENT WEEK.

The house has settled.

LIA and ARIELLA, in simple kitchen clothes with CHEF HATS, walk down the long hall toward the stairs, excited.

LIA
(happy)
Hurry, Ariella. Mother is going to teach us to bake cookies.

Elsewhere in the palazzo, ANGELINA sits with ANA, learning sewing and embroidery. Afterward, MARIA will take Angelina's measurements for new adult clothes.

BACK TO HALLWAY

Far ahead, PIETRO comes toward the girls.

A fresh GAUZE BANDAGE is still taped over his cheek. The scratches haven't fully healed.

As they draw closer, Pietro scowls.

Ariella leans toward Lia, whispers. Lia nods.

They pass each other.

Then, in unison, the girls whirl around.

LIA / ARIELLA
(scream, taunting)
ANGIE GAVE YOU A POUNDING!
PIETRO GOT BEAT UP BY A GIRL!

Pietro GROWLS, spins around, starts after them.

Lia and Ariella squeal and SPRINT away, laughing down the corridor.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CATANIA — INDUSTRIAL SECTOR — MIOCCIO TANNERY — DAY

SUPER: "CATANIA, SICILY — 1907"

A BLACK HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE pulls up to the tannery gates and rolls inside, stopping before the ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING.

Inside the carriage: SALVATORE, late 30s, a high-powered corporate lawyer. Short, slightly obese, thinning hair, expensive suit. He owns one of the largest law firms in Italy and Western Europe. He has represented ALESSANDRO MIOCCIO for years—against the government, private plaintiffs, business rivals. He famously broke a tannery union attempt by persuading the courts that Alessandro's operation was a "small family business." Alessandro keeps him on retainer.

The CHAUFFEUR hops down, opens the carriage door.

Salvatore steps out with a BRIEFCASE, adjusts his glasses, and heads inside.

INT. TANNERY ADMIN BUILDING — STAIRWELL — MOMENTS LATER

Salvatore eyes the STAIRS with mild irritation.

SALVATORE
(to himself)
No elevator. Of course.

He sighs and climbs to the THIRD FLOOR.

INT. ALESSANDRO'S OFFICE SUITE — OUTER OFFICE — CONTINUOUS

Salvatore enters. At a desk sits ALESSANDRO'S ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, a man in his late 20s. He looks up, recognizes Salvatore at once.

SALVATORE
Hello. Is Alessandro in? He said he needed to see me today.

ASSISTANT
Yes, sir. He said to go in when you arrive.

SALVATORE
Thank you.

Salvatore crosses to the INNER DOOR, opens it, and steps in.

INT. ALESSANDRO'S OFFICE — CONTINUOUS

Alessandro looks up from his desk, breaks into a smile, comes around to greet him with a hug.

ALESSANDRO
(warm)
Salvatore. How are you? I hope your trip went well.

SALVATORE
I'm fine. The trip was fine.

He glances back toward the stairwell.

SALVATORE (cont'd)
(wry)
Alessandro, you need to install an elevator.

ALESSANDRO
(laughs, winks)
I'm working on that.

They share a chuckle. Salvatore gets to business.

SALVATORE

You said there was some business you wanted to discuss.

ALESSANDRO

Yes. Come, let me show you.

Alessandro leads him into an ADJACENT ROOM with a long TABLE. Spread out on it: LARGE BLUEPRINTS.

Salvatore steps up, taking in the plans.

SALVATORE

Is this what you wanted to talk about?

ALESSANDRO

Yes. But first, some context.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)

I'm in the process of purchasing a lot here in Catania. That's where this building will go.

Salvatore studies the drawings, rubs his chin.

SALVATORE

I see. Are you running into problems?

Alessandro exhales.

ALESSANDRO

The local residents and the City are fighting me. The City's legal counsel has filed injunctions. I'm stuck.

SALVATORE

Can you show me the orders?

Alessandro steps back to his desk, pulls a STACK OF COURT PAPERS, returns, and hands them over.

ALESSANDRO

Here.

Salvatore skims.

SALVATORE

We can challenge these and try to have them overturned.

ALESSANDRO

(hard)
Respectfully, I don't want "try."
(MORE)

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
I want to know if I can win.

Salvatore breathes in.

SALVATORE
You've known me for years. I never
promise outcomes. I go through the
process, I argue for you. The judge
decides in your favor if you prevail.

He softens, reassuring.

SALVATORE (cont'd)
What I will do is file challenges
first thing tomorrow and put my firm
on this as top priority. We'll appeal
to higher courts outside Sicily.

SALVATORE (cont'd)
I know many of those judges, their
history. They may decide in your
favor.

Alessandro nods, somewhat reassured.

SALVATORE (cont'd)
Have you spoken with these neighbors
about your plans?

ALESSANDRO
Yes.

SALVATORE
And?

ALESSANDRO
They say I have no right to buy that
land. That it's sacred.

SALVATORE
Sacred?

ALESSANDRO
They say a Greek temple once stood
there. It was dedicated to Leucothea.

SALVATORE
Leucothea?

ALESSANDRO
A sea goddess. Protector of sailors
in danger.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
The locals say that piece of earth is damned. Nothing grows on it. At night they see lights, hear moans and screams.

SALVATORE
And what do you think?

Alessandro laughs.

ALESSANDRO
Salvatore, these people are stupidly superstitious. Old wives' tales.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
They want to scare me away with ghost stories.

He taps the blueprints, amused.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
They actually gave me an idea. I'm going to call the building Castello di Leucothea. Just to spite them.

Both men laugh.

Salvatore slides the injunctions into his briefcase, then looks back at the plans.

SALVATORE
This place is enormous. Are you moving there?

ALESSANDRO
(smiles)
Yes it is. No.

SALVATORE
Then what's it for?

ALESSANDRO
It's a wedding gift. For Angelina.

Salvatore's eyes widen.

SALVATORE
Your daughter is sixteen. She can't marry now.

ALESSANDRO
I know. Come, let's sit.

They move back into the main office, sit across from each other. Alessandro takes a breath.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
You've never married.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
You told me women don't find you appealing.

Salvatore nods, acknowledging.

Alessandro taps a finger on the desk, lifts an eyebrow, leans in.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
(low, deliberate)
Would you consider marrying my daughter, Angelina, when she comes of age?

Salvatore blinks.

SALVATORE
I'll be in my forties. She'll be eighteen, nineteen?

ALESSANDRO
Yes. And as my wedding gift, you get the Castello di Leucothea.

Salvatore nearly tips in his chair.

SALVATORE
(incredulous)
Alessandro, I'm too old to play adolescent practical jokes.

Alessandro bristles.

ALESSANDRO
(flat)
You've known me for years. You've represented me in countless cases. You know when I propose something, I don't play games.

Salvatore studies him, sees he's serious.

SALVATORE
My apologies. Tell me more.

Alessandro smiles, leans back, opens a desk drawer, and pulls out a STACK OF PHOTOS.

He hands them over.

ALESSANDRO
Here's Angelina.

Salvatore looks. His breath catches.

SALVATORE
She's beautiful. One of the most
beautiful young women I've ever
seen.

Alessandro leans back, proud.

ALESSANDRO
She needs a bit more refinement.
She's not ready to meet you yet. But
you will.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
I'm hiring an etiquette and poise
teacher to teach her to behave like a
lady.

Salvatore smiles.

SALVATORE
I will wait patiently for her.

Alessandro nods, satisfied.

ALESSANDRO
When our families join, we'll be one
of the richest, most powerful
families in all of Europe.

Salvatore's smile shifts—something darker.

SALVATORE
Most definitely we will be.

FADE OUT.

EXT. LEUCOTHEA LOT — OUTSKIRTS OF CATANIA — DAY

SUPER: "OUTSKIRTS OF CATANIA — 1907"

Several weeks after his meeting with Salvatore.

A HORSE-DRAWN LIMOUSINE BUGGY rattles along the road.
Inside, ALESSANDRO reads a LETTER, smiling.

SALVATORE (V.O.)

Alessandro, I hope this letter finds you well. We have appealed and rescinded the injunctions filed against you. The City's legal counsel made glaring errors in their reasoning. A judge in Rome agreed and overruled them. You are now cleared to finalize the purchase of the Leucothea lot. My firm will also assist you in obtaining permits so you can begin construction as soon as possible.

SALVATORE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Your future son-in-law, Salvatore.

Alessandro folds the letter, slips it back into his coat.

The buggy rolls to a stop at the EDGE OF AN EMPTY LOT. Sparse houses dot the distance. The city is slowly pushing outward.

The CHAUFFEUR, MICHELE, hops down, opens the door.

MICHELE

We're here, sir.

Alessandro steps out onto the dirt road, waves Michele back.

ALESSANDRO

Wait here.

Michele stays by the buggy, lights a cigarette.

Alessandro walks to the lot's boundary. NOTHING GROWS. Not even weeds. He steps onto the soil.

The earth is HARD, almost stone-like under his shoes.

He looks up. Birds cross the sky.

A BREEZE rises, kicking up dust. It thickens into low, shifting CLOUDS of grit.

The SUNLIGHT begins to RED-SHIFT, the world tinting toward blood.

Alessandro glances around. Moving things SLOW—cart wheels, distant pedestrians—until everything STOPS.

Sound collapses into a LOW, DISTANT RUMBLE.

ALESSANDRO (V.O.)
 (frightened)
 What is happening to the world?

He runs back toward the buggy.

Michele stands exactly where he left him, cigarette raised.
 The SMOKE hangs motionless in the air.

ALESSANDRO
 Michele.

No response. Alessandro's voice ECHOES strangely.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
 (screams)
 MICHELE!

Nothing.

He pokes Michele's shoulder. It's like stone. He pokes the
 HORSE. Solid. Frozen.

He looks up—BIRDS are pinned in the red sky, motionless.

He pulls out his POCKET WATCH. The hands are stopped.

Then—a GIRL'S GIGGLE. Disembodied. Coming from everywhere
 and nowhere.

Alessandro whirls.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
 (shouts)
 ANGELINA!

The name echoes into the distance.

A YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE answers, amused.

HER (O.S.)
 Fool. I'm not Angie.

More giggles. Closer.

ALESSANDRO
 WHO ARE YOU? SHOW YOURSELF.

HER (O.S.)
 Demand, demand, demand. Little man.

He turns in circles, trying to locate the voice.

HER (O.S.) (cont'd)
(tsk-ing)
Alessandro, you're amusing.

ALESSANDRO
(snaps)
Be careful. I am a powerful man. I
can destroy you.

Her laughter turns low and dangerous.

HER (O.S.)
(demonic rasp)
Idiot. You can't do anything to me.

Dust swirls tighter around him.

HER (O.S.) (cont'd)
(light, playful)
What you see around you is a little
demonstration of my power. You are
entirely under my whim.

A beat.

HER (O.S.) (cont'd)
Alessandro, I'm right behind you.

He spins.

She's there.

HER—mid-20s, dressed like upper-class Sicilian society.
Perfect posture. Wire-rimmed SUNGLASSES. Skin pale with a
faint olive undertone. Beautiful. Wrong.

Alessandro is struck dumb.

He reaches toward her. Mid-gesture, his arm and body LOCKS
in place.

ALESSANDRO
(scared)
What did you do to me?

HER
I just stopped you from doing
something you'd never live to regret.

She slips a hand into his coat, effortlessly.

She pulls out his HEAVY REVOLVER.

HER (cont'd)
 (smiles)
 You're a violent little man indeed.

She snaps open the cylinder, tilts it. ROUNDS rain onto the hard dirt.

She holds the gun up between them. With a thought, METAL TWISTS and WARBLERS, collapsing into a warped, useless lump. She lets it drop.

Panic flickers across his face.

ALESSANDRO
 I'll pay you whatever you want.

HER
 Men like you think you can buy your way out of anything. You can't buy me.

She reaches into another pocket, retrieves a fat WAD OF NOTES.

She lights the bundle ON HER PALM with no spark, no match. It flares, then crumbles to ASH. She dusts her hands. The ashes fall between them.

ALESSANDRO
 (hoarse)
 What do you want from me?

She takes off her sunglasses. Her eyes remain closed a beat.

Then she opens them.

Black VOIDS stare back at him, each filled with SWIRLING GALAXIES, tiny stars flaring and dying.

She smiles softly.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
 (choking)
 Who... what are you?

HER
 Who and what I am isn't important.

HER (cont'd)
 I'm here to warn you about what you will do, and what you will wrought.

She gestures lazily to the lot.

HER (cont'd)
This land where you plan to build
your monstrosity is cursed.

HER (cont'd)
The castle is not for Angelina. It's
your monument to your hubris.

HER (cont'd)
It will be a monument to death as
well.

HER (cont'd)
This land, this castle, this
marriage will cost you everything.

He listens, but his eyes are hard.

ALESSANDRO
I will build on this land. I will
build the castle.

She studies him, then nods once.

HER
Then the die is cast.

She lifts her index finger and taps his forehead, very
gently.

HER (cont'd)
(in Irish Gaelic)
Go ndéanfaidh an t-am dearmad ort,
agus go bhfanfaidh an domhan as
ríocht go síoraí.

Subtitle: May time swallow you, and may it never return to
normal again.

Alessandro blinks.

The world SNAPS BACK. Color shifts to normal. The rumble
fades.

HER is gone.

His warped gun and the blackened ASHES of his money lie at
his feet.

He turns. Michele stands by the buggy, cigarette halfway to
his lips, smoke rising normally. The HORSE flicks its tail.
BIRDS cross the blue sky.

Alessandro walks to the driver, shaken.

ALESSANDRO
 (covering)
 Michele... let's leave. Now.

MICHELE
 Yes, sir. At once.

Michele opens the door. Alessandro climbs in.
 The buggy rolls away from the Leucothea lot.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CATANIA TRAIN STATION - DAY

SUPER: "CATANIA, SICILY - MID-DECEMBER 1907"

Alfio's family has come by train and ferry from Naples, then by train from Messina. Alfio is home from university on winter break.

A TRAIN exhales steam as passengers step down. ALFIO, early 20s, and his parents ANTONIO and SOFIA emerge with modest LUGGAGE, taking in the station.

ALFIO
 Papa, what does this Pietro look like?

Antonio pulls a FOLDED PHOTOGRAPH from his coat, fumbles it open. All three lean in.

SOFIA
 (nervous)
 Like I said, he doesn't look friendly.

Antonio nods, eyes on the photo.

ANTONIO
 I know. Come. Let's find him. I'm certain he'll stand out.

They move toward the station building.

INT. CATANIA TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Crowds, porters, noise. Alfio and his parents scan faces.

Alfio spots someone, breath catches.

ALFIO
 (gasps, points)
 Mama, Papa. There. That's him.

SOFIA
 Where?

ALFIO
 There.

They follow his finger.

Across the hall stands PIETRO, tall, imposing, stone-faced. The healing marks from Angelina's "pounding" are still visible on his face.

Antonio whistles under his breath.

ANTONIO
 (low)
 This guy is tall. And ugly.

Sofia lets out a nervous giggle. Alfio takes a breath.

They start walking toward Pietro.

ALFIO
 (quiet)
 I have a feeling the Mioccios don't really want us here.

ANTONIO
 Agreed.

They stop in front of Pietro. He looks them over, expression unreadable.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
 (firm)
 Are you Pietro?

PIETRO
 Yes.

Pietro lifts his arm and SNAPS his fingers. A STATION ATTENDANT hurries over with a LUGGAGE CART.

The attendant loads their bags without a word.

Pietro turns and walks ahead. Alfio and his family fall in behind him.

As they walk, Alfio murmurs to his parents.

ALFIO
Did you see his face?

SOFIA
Yes.

Antonio nods once.

SOFIA (cont'd)
(whispers)
It looks like he got in a fight with
a woman. A woman did that to him.

They trade glances.

ANTONIO
(under his breath)
I think we're walking into a
hornet's nest.

FADE OUT.

CONTINUED: ARRIVAL AT PALAZZO

FADE IN:

EXT. MIOCCIO PALAZZO — DAY

The buggy turns through the gates of the Mioccio residence
and pulls up to the grand front entrance.

A LINE OF SERVANTS stands ready.

Pietro steps down first, then Alfio and his parents. Pietro
gestures to the buggy. Servants move quickly, retrieving the
luggage and carrying it inside.

PIETRO
They will take your luggage to your
guest rooms. Later, I will show you
your rooms.

Alfio and his parents nod, a little tense.

PIETRO (cont'd)
Please follow me.

INT. MIOCCIO PALAZZO — GALLERY — CONTINUOUS

Pietro leads them into an opulent GALLERY: high ceilings,
paintings, marble, polished wood.

Alfio's eyes widen, taking it all in.

Antonio and Sofia are unmoved. They have seen this world before.

INT. MIOCCIO PALAZZO — PARLOR — MOMENTS LATER

Pietro leads them into the PARLOR.

Inside, the entire MIOCCIO FAMILY waits:

— ALESSANDRO

— RIA

— MOSES

— GIACOBBE

— ANGELINA

— LIA

— ARIELLA

— ANA

— MARIA

Pietro steps aside, then slips out to attend to other duties.

Antonio and Sofia freeze for a beat as old memories wash over them. Their stomachs tighten. They have not stood in this room in more than twenty years.

Alfio is too busy looking at the artwork and architecture to notice his parents' reaction.

Alessandro steps forward, all charm.

He takes Antonio's hand first.

ALESSANDRO
Welcome to my humble home.
Antonio meets his eyes.

ANTONIO
(serious)
Thank you, Alessandro.

Alessandro turns to Sofia. She dips a small curtsy; he takes her hand and kisses it.

Sofia falls back into the social graces of Sicilian high society. She once belonged here.

ALESSANDRO
You are still beautiful.

SOFIA
(shy)
Thank you.

Alessandro turns to Alfio.

ALESSANDRO
You must be Alfio. I'm honored to have you here. I have heard so much about you.

ALFIO
Thank you, Uncle Alessandro.

He blinks, surprised.

ALFIO (cont'd)
You have?

Alessandro smiles and nods.

CUT TO:

INT. PARLOR — OTHER SIDE — CONTINUOUS

Ria and the Mioccio children watch their father greet the guests. Ana and Maria stand nearby, ready if needed.

RIA
(smiles, to her children)
Children. Please stay here.

Moses and Giacobbe stand together, quietly talking, not really paying attention to the adults.

Lia and Ariella are bored. Then Ariella notices something.

She leans toward Lia, whispers.

ARIELLA
Angie is staring at something over there.

We see ANGELINA, eyes locked on Alfio across the room. Her hands fidget. Color rises in her cheeks.

Lia watches her closely.

LIA
 (whisper, noticing)
 She's nervous about something over
 there. She's blushing.

Ariella peers in the same direction.

ARIELLA
 (whispers)
 Maybe she's sick.

Lia shrugs.

RIA AND THE GUESTS

Ria calls across the room.

RIA
 (calling)
 Please, come meet our children.
 Alfio, go meet your cousins.

Alessandro, Ria, Antonio, Sofia, and Alfio cross toward the children.

Alessandro stands aside as Ria takes over.

She begins introducing the children to the guests.

When Alfio reaches Angelina, time seems to slow.

RIA (cont'd)
 Alfio, this is Angelina.

Angelina is fighting inside herself, on the edge of a panic attack. Her fingers twist in her skirt.

Alfio's heart hammers. She is the most beautiful girl he has ever seen.

Angelina attempts a curtsy and nearly loses her balance.

Alfio instinctively reaches out and catches her before she falls.

ALFIO
 (soft, nods)
 Angelina.

She looks up at him, embarrassed, still in his hands.

ANGELINA
(quiet, shy)
Call me Angie.

A beat—too much for her.

Abruptly, Angelina pulls away and BOLTS from the room.
Everyone watches, puzzled.

Alfio stands there, stunned, eyes following her.

RIA
(embarrassed)
Lia, Ariella—go see what's going on
with Angelina.

LIA / ARIELLA
Yes, Mother.

Lia and Ariella take off after their sister.

Ria turns back to the guests.

RIA
I'm so sorry. Please forgive
Angelina. She's a little shy.

Alessandro laughs. Moses and Giacobbe smile.

Antonio and Sofia smile politely.

ANTONIO / SOFIA
It's fine.

Alfio is still staring in the direction Angelina ran,
frozen.

ALFIO (V.O.)
Angie... you're so beautiful.

FADE OUT.

INT. ANGELINA'S BEDROOM — DAY

The BEDROOM DOOR stands open.

LIA and ARIELLA step in and see ANGELINA in the corner,
seated on the floor, curled into herself and CRYING.

Ariella crosses to her and sits down, trying to lighten the
mood.

ARIELLA
Angie, you ran away! You almost
fell on your face!

ANGELINA
(sobbing)
Both of you, please go away.

Lia and Ariella trade a look. Lia frowns, disapproving.

Ariella's face falls.

ARIELLA
Angie, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have
said that.

She wraps her arms around Angelina.

ANGELINA
(sobbing)
I'm stupid. I made myself look so
stupid in front of Alfio and his
family.

ARIELLA
No, Angie. It's not like that.

ANGELINA
(insists)
Yes it is.

Ariella keeps holding her, trying to comfort.

Lia's gaze drifts around the room. She spots the TEXTBOOK ON
LOVE POEMS on Angelina's nightstand.

She picks it up, flips through a few pages, reads a line or
two. Then she sets the book back down.

We see it CLICK for her.

LIA (V.O.)
Angie, you're in love with Alfio. I'm
so happy for you.

A small smile touches Lia's face.

She moves closer.

LIA
Angie. It's going to be fine. Nobody
is mad at you. We're up here to see
if you're okay.

LIA (cont'd)
Do you want to talk about it?

ANGELINA
(quick)
No.

LIA
That's fine. You don't have to.

LIA (cont'd)
Ariella and I are always here for
you.

ARIELLA
Yes, Angie.

ANGELINA
(quietly)
Thank you. Both of you.

Lia sits down on Angelina's other side.

LIA
(gentle but firm)
Angie. We have to go back downstairs.
You can't hide here forever.

LIA (cont'd)
We'll be with you.

Angelina lifts her head, looks at her sisters. Ariella and Lia nod and smile.

Angelina pushes herself up. Together, they stand and head for the door.

FADE OUT.

INT. MIOCCIO PALAZZO — MAIN DINING ROOM — NIGHT

Hours later.

The MIOCCIO FAMILY, ALFIO, ANTONIO, and SOFIA sit around the long DINING TABLE. Dinner is underway. Candles. Fine china.

PIETRO stands behind ALESSANDRO's chair, flanked by four SERVANTS who move quietly, serving dishes, pouring WINE.

Lia and Ariella watch the wine service with interest.

LIA / ARIELLA
 (happy)
 Father, will we get wine too?

ALESSANDRO
 No.

The girls deflate, disappointed.

A beat.

ALFIO
 (to Alessandro)
 Uncle Alessandro... do you have apple
 juice?

Conversation pauses. Alessandro, Ria, and the others glance
 at him.

ALFIO (cont'd)
 (worried)
 Did I say something wrong?

Alessandro chuckles, reassuring.

ALESSANDRO
 No, no. Absolutely not. Of course we
 do.

He snaps his fingers toward a servant.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
 Please serve apple juice to my
 nephew.

Lia and Ariella brighten.

LIA / ARIELLA
 We want apple juice too!

The servant nods, moves to comply.

MONTAGE — DINNER

— Plates passed, wine and apple juice poured.

— Adults in conversation: business, family, polite small
 talk.

— Alfio and Angelina steal GLANCES at each other across the
 table, quickly looking away, then back. Tiny smiles.

— Lia notices the exchange, watching with a small, private
 smile. Angelina and Alfio are oblivious to being observed.

LIA (V.O.)
He loves Angie too.

END MONTAGE.

BACK TO SCENE

Later. The meal has stretched on. Dessert plates, half-empty glasses.

Angelina is a little tipsy from wine. Her cheeks are flushed.

Alessandro turns to Alfio.

ALESSANDRO
Alfio, would you like to do a little something for me?

Antonio and Sofia immediately look at their son.

ANTONIO (V.O.)
Here it comes.

ALFIO
(nervous)
Sure, Uncle Alessandro.

Alessandro rises from his chair.

ALESSANDRO
Please, follow me.

Alfio stands as well.

Suddenly, Angelina jumps to her feet and sways slightly.

ANGELINA
(happy, impulsive)
Can I go too?

Lia, farther down the table, looks concerned.

LIA (V.O.)
Oh, Angie. You're making it too obvious.

Alessandro considers for only a heartbeat.

ALESSANDRO
Sure, Angelina. Come with us.

Lia is floored.

LIA (V.O.)
 What just happened?

Alessandro, Alfio, and a tipsy Angelina step away from the table.

As they walk out, Angelina slips her arm through Alfio's. He gives her a startled, nervous look. He can smell the wine on her breath.

They exit toward Alessandro's study.

FADE OUT.

INT. MIOCCIO PALAZZO – ALESSANDRO'S STUDY – NIGHT

Alessandro, Angelina, and Alfio enter the STUDY.

As in his office at the tannery, a smaller ADJACENT ROOM holds a long TABLE covered in ACCOUNTING BOOKS and ledgers.

They step inside.

ALESSANDRO
 Alfio, settle a dispute my
 bookkeepers are having.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
 One says we're short. The other says
 we're not.

Angelina watches both men, alert.

ALFIO
 (shy)
 Sure, Uncle Alessandro. Let me see
 what you have.

Alessandro gestures to the table.

ALESSANDRO
 Everything's there.

Alfio nods. Angelina moves with him.

MONTAGE – ALFIO AT WORK

– Alfio stands over the books, scanning columns, jotting numbers.

– Angelina gathers loose sheets at his direction, helping sort them into different stacks.

– He murmurs brief explanations; she listens but doesn't quite follow, still trying.

– Once or twice, she stumbles; he catches her without looking away from the page.

– In the doorway, Alessandro watches, expression tightening as the minutes pass.

END MONTAGE.

Alfio steps away from the table and walks toward Alessandro, troubled. Angelina falls in beside him, sensing something is wrong.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
(picking up on it)
Alfio. What's wrong?

Alfio meets his eyes.

ALFIO
Your numbers aren't adding up. I
can't reconcile your books.

A beat. Then:

ALFIO (cont'd)
You're losing two thousand five
hundred eighty-five lire a day, and
I can't see where it's going.

The color drains from Alessandro's face.

ANGELINA
(worried)
Is someone stealing from my father?

ALFIO
I don't know. I don't have proof. I
can only report what I see in those
books. I stand by my work.

He glances back at the table.

ALFIO (cont'd)
I've run the numbers six times. I end
up at minus twenty-five eighty-five
every time.

ALFIO (cont'd)
To find out where that money is
going, I'd have to do a thorough
audit of all the departments in your
(MORE)

ALFIO (cont'd)
tannery.

ALESSANDRO
(swallows)
Can you show me?

Alfio nods and leads him back to the table. Angelina trails them.

Alfio talks Alessandro through his calculations. Angelina hands him the different sheets where he's written totals and cross-checks.

ALFIO
This missing revenue could be bad accounting practices, employee theft, or incompetent money management.

Alessandro bristles at "incompetent money management."

ALFIO (cont'd)
(gently)
Uncle... when was the last time you ran a formal accounting audit at the tannery?

Alessandro looks at him, guilt in his eyes. He says nothing.
He never has.

ALFIO (cont'd)
(quiet, concerned)
I see.

They stand there a beat amid the ledgers, the unspoken hanging in the air.

DISSOLVE TO.

INT. MIOCCIO PALAZZO — PARLOR — NIGHT

Alessandro, Alfio, and Angelina walk back toward the PARLOR. Their faces are gray with what they've just discovered about the tannery.

They enter.

The room is mid-conversation. Lia and Ariella run around playing. Antonio chats with MOSES and GIACOBBE. Sofia and Ria are deep in their own talk.

As Alessandro, Angelina, and Alfio step in, the room goes quiet.

RIA
Alessandro? Alfio? What happened?

Alfio looks to Alessandro. Alessandro nods once, then faces the room, taking a breath.

ALESSANDRO
Alfio discovered disturbing discrepancies in the tannery's accounting ledgers. He recommends a formal audit.

A beat. Then Alessandro puts on a smile.

ALESSANDRO (cont'd)
Alfio is the finest and most professional accountant I have ever worked with. Alfio, thank you for your candor.

Alfio gives a small bow.

ALFIO
Thank you, Uncle Alessandro.

Angelina looks at Alfio with quiet pride.

ANTONIO (V.O.)
I see it all. This whole trip was to get his hands on my son, and I can't stop it.

FADE OUT.

THE END OF
PILOT.

THE BLACK SUN.