

GIORDANO

Original Screenplay
by

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FADE IN ON

THE BLACK IMMENSITY OF DEEP SPACE

WE ARE MOVING FORWARD, imperceptibly, or at the speed of light: impossible to tell in the infinite void of the cosmos. At length, one of the tiny stars ahead grows brighter; a moment later, it whips by as a massive sun, disappearing BELOW THE SCREEN, finally giving us a sense of the fantastic speed at which we are traveling. TITLES BEGIN.

An unfamiliar, mauve, double-ringed planet comes and passes us at a vertiginous speed. Then, once again, relative stillness. A smaller, opaque body whips by out of the darkness; moments later, we speed through a shower of meteorites; then more black void.

Now SOUNDS seem to issue from the endless cosmos. Pleasant, tone-pure, oddly syncopated - music, as it turns out - haunting but unrecognizable: as might be heard a thousand years hence.

A comparatively colossal, still unfamiliar celestial body comes and goes, underscored by the changing music: a different set of alien bars, yet closer to our range of appreciation. The space before us grows more deserted, darker, permitting us to discern, approaching ahead, the confines of our SOLAR SYSTEM. Synthetic musical notes FILL THE TRACK: Phil Glass, Preisner, perhaps - more of our time, in any case.

Pluto whips by, then Uranus. We speed toward our sun. The TRACK YIELDS to more familiar chords, less distant, it seems: Piazzolla, symphonic Beatles, Ragtime, Stravinsky. We are moving - slowing down - through our cosmic neighborhood, as well as back through audio time; to the beginning of our century, and further back still. Snippets of Berlioz come and go, Ravel, Wagner, Beethoven, Mozart, Bach. *

Saturn glides past, BELOW THE SCREEN. Our Sun looms ahead, massive, blinding. It fills the SCREEN, thunders past ABOVE US, then Mars, the Moon, finally Earth: luminous, beautiful, a blue pearl starkly drawn against the black, velvety background.

INT. ROME HOLY OFFICE, PRISON CELL - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES. Through a small, bared window, a man with a tonsured head stares out into space over reading glasses. He is gaunt and marked by years of incarceration. WE MOVE INTO CLOSE-UP: he is MOANING - HUMMING, perhaps - a touch of soul, gospel, maybe. But soon it becomes clear that the melody runs along bona fide Renaissance lines. He turns to the vellum on his knees and writes.

His hands are bandaged, the bandages are stained with dry blood.

BRUNO (V.O.)
 (whispered)
 "But he who begins by loving
 Christianity better than the truth,
 follows by loving his church better
 than Christianity..."

CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY - DAYBREAK

A centuries old massive stone building, shrouded in mist and darkness. A flickering yellowish light can be distinguished, moving inside along a line of windows, in a corridor.

BRUNO (V.O.)
 (same)
 "Only to end loving himself more
 than all"

THE TRACK yields to penitent MALE CHORAL VOICES. SUPERIMPOSE:

"San Domenico Maggiore Monastery, Naples, 1575."

INT. MONASTERY CHAPEL - DAYBREAK

A sparsely furnished, somber chapel, with plain wooden pews and stone floors. Some FIFTY DOMINICAN MONKS CHANT into their beards.

CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY, CORRIDOR/LIBRARY - DAYBREAK

A hesitant candle casts gigantic shadows on the walls of a dark library. The candle is in the perfectly manicured hand of Prior SISTO LUCCA, a strong-jawed but fastidious-looking monk in his fifties, with an affected demeanor, oddly prim for his stout constitution.

GIORDANO BRUNO, the man from the prison cell, twenty years earlier, now in his mid-twenties, and also wearing the brown cassock of a Dominican monk, follows on LUCCA'S heels. WE TRACK them moving in noiseless complicity along endless rows of books.

LUCCA stops, BRUNO bumps into him...AS TITLES END.

LUCCA (LOUD WHISPER)
 Will you kindly stop treading on my
 bloody heels?!

BRUNO
 (same)
 Sorry...!

LUCCA produces a large key from the sleeve of his cowl, opens a heavy door to the...

INT. FORBIDDEN BOOKS DEPOSITORY, CONTINUOUS

The door creaks open. LUCCA and BRUNO come into a small, cupboard-like room with more books and parchments standing on dusty shelves.

LUCCA
Don't forget there's a good reason
why we keep these books locked up in
here...

BRUNO
Fear of the truth?

LUCCA darts him an amused look, runs the candle along a row of books. Most are covered in dust but some have clearly been consulted recently as the dust has been disturbed and we can read the names of the authors: Paracelse, Erasmus, LUTHER.

LUCCA
What will it be, this time?

BRUNO scans the titles, avidly. LUCCA watches him, his gaze caressing the curling locks in the back of BRUNO'S head, inebriated by the physical intimacy.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
Hurry.

BRUNO finally pulls the LUTHER out of the shelf, turns to face LUCCA, inches away.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
Get caught with that one, you're on
your own, my boy.

BRUNO
(leafing pages greedily)
I'll just say the Prior let me have
it. You'd back me up, wouldn't you,
Prior Lucca?

He grins mischievously.

LUCCA
You missed your true calling,
Giordano, you'd've made a wonderful
buffoon.

He rearranges books to dissimulate vacant space left by Luther tome.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
'Course, that would require faith,
not reason. I forget you'll have
none of that!

BRUNO
(shuts Luther, suddenly
excited)
So you've read what I wrote! What
did you think?!

LUCCA
I suppose you expect praises!

BRUNO
Your honest opinion.

LUCCA pulls a manuscript out of a drawer, agitates it in BRUNO'S face.

LUCCA
About this childish attempt to confound the work and cloud the memory of a true thinker?!

BRUNO
(guffaw of disbelief)
What?! You can't be serious!
Nothing I say there violates the true essence of St. Thomas's thought!

LUCCA
(lowers voice)
You can fathom "the true essence" of Saint Thomas Aquinas?! Don't make me laugh!
(finds circled passage)
What does this mean, "philosophical faith"?! Faith is not a matter of philosophy, but of belief!

EXT. MONASTERY - DAYBREAK

SHOOTING THROUGH A WINDOW. LUCCA can be seen holding the candle, pulling BRUNO by the cassock, back to the library, arguing excitedly.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL a second window; in fact WE ARE SHOOTING from a spartan cell across the cloister of the monastery.

A HOODED MONK, his back to CAMERA, stands in the shadows, watching LUCCA and BRUNO.

INT. LIBRARY - SAME TIME

BRUNO and LUCCA arguing.

BRUNO
Reason is the only noble path to truth!

LUCCA rubs BRUNO'S nose against the dusty book-shelves.

LUCCA
Have you taken the time to read even one of these manuscripts Aquinas left behind for us, before sitting down to mock and misconstrue his thinking?!

BRUNO
You know I have!

LUCCA
Then, you should know St. Thomas was
guided by faith and faith only!

Suddenly, a huge shadow is projected on the bookshelves. The two men start, then relax as they see a large moth fluttering around the candlelight.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
Christ, I must be out of my mind,
allowing you back in here...!

BRUNO
(voice down)
I have the greatest respect for
Saint Thomas, but there is no place
for faith without reason!

LUCCA shoves BRUNO into a deep chair.

LUCCA
What do you know about truth and
reason, you arrogant braggart!
(shakes manuscript in his
face)
St. Thomas was old enough to be your
father before presuming to commit
one thought of his to paper!

BRUNO
Give me one reason why faith can not
be...reasonable--!

LUCCA
(he's not listening)
You...you...you couldn't conceive
such moderation: you're too starved
for recognition, too eager to flaunt
your feathers!

Suddenly realizing it, BRUNO lets out a cackle of delighted laughter.

BRUNO
You like it!

LUCCA glares at him, indignant.

LUCCA
No! What you have written can send
you straight to the stake, you
bloody fool!

BRUNO laughs louder.

BRUNO
Always let your heart speak louder
than your fear! You taught me that.

LUCCA
I taught you caution, as well, you
imbecile!

BRUNO
No, no, no...you like it!

He grabs the manuscript, lets the pages cascade over LUCCA'S
head, plants a kiss on his tonsure.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
He likes it!

LUCCA
Stop it! You're behaving like a
child! Your ideas need gestation,
they're not complete, they're raw.
There is insight in them, yes, but--

BRUNO plants another kiss, LUCCA pushes him away.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
I said stop it!

BRUNO
He likes it!

LUCCA
SHHH!

BRUNO picks up the candle, runs off, CACKLING delighted,
leaving LUCCA picking up sheets in the dark.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
You're nothing but a conceited, blow-
hard, narcissistic, self-
applauding...ehr...fornicator!

INT. CELL ACROSS THE WAY - DAYBREAK

THE MONK, still unseen by us, follows BRUNO'S progress past
the corridor windows in the glow of the candlelight.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. NAPLES BUSINESS STREET - DAY

The glaring sun. WIPE TO PICK UP BRUNO and FATHER MONTALCINO,
a gaunt priest with bony fingers and dark circles under his
eyes, moving along a sunny street, loaded with candles.

The street is lined with small businesses and crowded with
PASSERS-BY, MERCHANTS, PROSTITUTES. BRUNO greets everyone
familiarily.

BRUNO
(ironic)
The Holy Trinity and the Immaculate
Conception as well, of course...?

MONTALCINO

Of course! Mysteries too! Miracles
are mysteries! God is a mystery!
The Church is a mystery!

BRUNO

Lots of mysteries...

MONTALCINO whirls to face him.

MONTALCINO

Don't you realize The Lord could
strike you dead right now, if He so
desired?!

(BRUNO steals a glance at
the Heavens)

Aren't you afraid to burn in hell
for all eternity for uttering such
blasphemies?!

TWO PROSTITUTES lean idly in a doorway. The younger blows
BRUNO a kiss.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE

Giordano! Where've you been hiding?
Don't you love us anymore?

BRUNO grins at them, then an afterthought to MONTALCINO.

BRUNO

Yes, that is a long time. Maybe the
Virgin Mary won't mind keeping me
company!

MONTALCINO crosses himself, real fear creeping in.

MONTALCINO

You've gone completely mad?! Are
you possessed by Satan?!

BRUNO

Oh, no, I talk to the Evil One on a
regular basis. Funny fellow,
incidentally...

BRUNO sees two young novices, OCTAVIO and BENITO, following
them behind a low wall, calls their attention, behind
MONTALCINO'S back.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

May he rain stones on you,
Montalcino, for taking his name in
vain!

Gamely, OCTAVIO and BENITO toss pebbles high over the wall.
They rain down on MONTALCINO who spins back to find BRUNO
faking a trance.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

May Satan rain stones on all those
who deny his power! Stones, stones,
more stones!

More pebbles rain down on MONTALCINO, who drops his load of candles, crosses himself, runs as if fleeing Lucifer himself.

BRUNO laughs, picks up his candles. OCTAVIO and BENITO join him. A SECOND PROSTITUTE strolls past, pulls up BRUNO'S cassock, playfully.

SECOND PROSTITUTE
Room for one more, in there,
Monsignor?!

OCTAVIO and BENITO chuckle roguishly. A YOUNG PALLA PLAYER leans out of a doorway.

FIRST PALLA PLAYER
Father Giordano, what about that re-
match you owe me?!

BRUNO hands the candles to the novices, dashes up, snatches the solid-wood racquet and ball from the youth's hand, steps into the low-rent court, sends a powerful shot off the court's high walls at a SECOND PALLA PLAYER in the far end. The youth returns it with a powerful backhand.

BRUNO mocks being impressed.

SECOND PALLA PLAYER
He can't beat you, he plays like a
girl! Take me on, Father!

BRUNO tosses back the racquet, goes on his way.

BRUNO
Sunday! Promise!

A SALAMI VENDOR steps out from behind his stand.

SALAMI VENDOR
Ah, Father Bruno!
(produces salami from
under counter)
Extra dry, double pepper: as you
asked.

BRUNO feels its hardness, sniffs it expertly, eyes the flirting SALAMI VENDOR'S DAUGHTER, squeezes suggestively.

EXT. MONASTERY ACCESS ROAD - DAY

BRUNO, OCTAVIO and BENITO approach the monastery. BRUNO slices the salami with a penknife, passes it out. OCTAVIO and BENITO carry the candles.

OCTAVIO
Father Giordano is right: Milano
salami is too salty. Bolognese,
that's salami!

BENITO
Bolognese?! Nothing but fat.

BRUNO
 What do you two know? Neapolitans,
 we invented salami!

BENITO
 Ever try salami from Calabria?

BRUNO
 Dog meat!
 (barks, OCTAVIO laughs)
 Salami was what my grandmother use
 to make, God rest her soul!

OCTAVIO
 (only half kidding)
 So, you do believe in God, Father?

BRUNO looks at him, smiles.

BRUNO
 (beat)
 If God is not true, He's a very
 happy invention. Without it, I
 would lose my mind.

OCTAVIO and BENITO exchange serious looks.

EXT. PANORAMIC, MONASTERY - NIGHT

The gloomy building under a clear night.

INT. OUTHOUSE - NIGHT

BRUNO, CLOSE, reads at the light of a flickering candle. His face is flushed, strained, veins bulging. Finally, the tension leaves him as he defeats his constipation.

REVEAL he is sitting on a toilet-like stone, in a dark, grimy outhouse, with the Luther half way through it open on his lap. A CREEK CAN BE HEARD RUNNING under the structure.

BRUNO'S dirty nail traces a phrase in the book: "TAM INFINITA EST DIVINA POTESTAS UT SINE ECCLESIA ESSE POSSIT."

BRUNO
 (translating, to himself)
 "The power of God is so infinite, He
 has no need for the Church."

He takes in the weight of the words, shuts the tome.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 "No need for the Church..."

He looks at the name on the cover - "LUTHER," - thoughtful, puts it inside a hole in the wall, picks up a loosened stone.

INT. TURRET - NIGHT

The dark figure of the MONK we perceived earlier can be made out inside, watching through a window.

From this HIGH ANGLE, over the edge of the outhouse door, BRUNO is seen pushing the stone into its niche; satisfied, he blows off the candlelight, opens the door, hurries across the garden. QUICK FADE TO BLACK AND

CUT TO:

INT. MONTALCINO'S CLASSROOM - DAY

A half-dozen NOVICES in a cold-looking classroom, head down, arms stretched out beside them, on their knees - repenting their sins aloud.

FATHER MONTALCINO, his back to his class, holds a Bible open and writes on the blackboard - "PROVERBS 2:7."

OCTAVIO and BENITO sit in back. They exchange conspiratorial looks, quietly tip-toe out of the room.

EXT. CLOISTER - CONTINUOUS

OCTAVIO and BENITO run across the cloister, laughing.

INT. MONTALCINO'S CLASSROOM - DAY

MONTALCINO turns from the blackboard, sees them hurrying into another classroom, slams Bible shut on his desk and stalks out angrily.

MONTALCINO
Carry on with the reading...

The moment he is gone, the entire class rush to the windows.

INT. BRUNO'S CLASSROOM - DAY

OCTAVIO and BENITO join a standing-room-only lesson. The teacher's desk is vacant, BRUNO sits among his students.

FIRST NOVICE
(puzzled)
I am the center of the universe?

The NOVICES laugh.

BRUNO
Yes, you! And I!
And Octavio, there!

OCTAVIO and BENITO smile, BRUNO points to the ceiling.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 And that cockroach! The center moves with the observer. In fact, the universe has no center. If it did, it would have to fit inside something, a circumference, and have a limit, and well...I don't believe it!

He climbs on a desk, holds up a piece of chalk in his hand.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 Imagine you grew wings and flew to that limit, the edge of the Universe and from there you threw out this piece of chalk...

He does - out the window.

EXT. CLASSROOM - DAY

LUCCA is passing by. The chalk hits him in the head. He reacts.

BRUNO (O.S.)
 As far as you could...!

INT. BRUNO'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO on a roll.

BRUNO
 Where would it fall? Wouldn't it have to land at a point somewhere... beyond the limit of the Universe?

The NOVICES are spellbound.

MONTALCINO (O.S.)
 But, where is God in this amusing story of yours, brother Giordano?

All turn. MONTALCINO stands in the doorway.

MONTALCINO (CONT'D)
 We all here know He is the center of the Universe.

BRUNO
 Brother Montalcino, welcome! I'm pleased you've finally decided to learn something new.

A ripple of LAUGHTER runs through the admiring NOVICES. MONTALCINO bristles with jealousy; he casts a scathing glance about and the room soon quiets down.

MONTALCINO
 You've not answered my question.

BRUNO

You seriously need to hear such an obvious explanation? God is everywhere, of course!

With arms wide open, he might be referring to himself. MONTALCINO glares at him, then turns to go.

MONTALCINO

Octavio! Benito!

He nearly bumps into prior LUCCA, coming up the steps, holding the piece of chalk. MONTALCINO avoids the prior's gaze, stalks past. OCTAVIO and BENITO trail, reluctant.

BRUNO sees LUCCA, steps down from his desk, jingles a small bell. The NOVICES fall out, jostling one another playfully.

FIRST NOVICE

I'm the center!

SECOND NOVICE

I'm the center!

LUCCA approaches with a stern look on his face, deposits the piece of chalk in BRUNO'S hand, holds his finger up, in silent warning. BRUNO leers, guiltily.

INT. LUCCA'S MONASTERY CELL - NIGHT

LUCCA reads BRUNO'S manuscript at a plain, orderly desk. He comes to the last sentence, puts it down, thoughtful. WHISPERED FEMALE VOICES, CONTAINED GIGGLES are heard. He blows off his candlelight, moves to his window.

HIS POV TWO STORIES BELOW:

BRUNO and OCTAVIO let the SALAMI VENDOR'S DAUGHTER and a GIRLFRIEND through a window. The VENDOR'S DAUGHTER slips, laughs, BRUNO pulls her in exposing her buttocks.

LUCCA turns away, sullen.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

TWO YOUNG NOVICES tend to a vine, laugh and hurl each other grapes.

FIRST NOVICE

I'm the center!

SECOND NOVICE

You're the center, I'm the center!

An older, THIRD NOVICE stands up on the other side of the vine, exasperated.

THIRD NOVICE
 Stop it, already! Madonna...!
 (mocking)
 I'm the center, you're the center!
 (grabs his crotch)
 Here's your center!

As CAMERA CLOSES on the outhouse over the running creek.

INT. OUTHOUSE - DAY

The spying MONK, seated on the throne, reading the Luther. WE DO NOT SEE HIS FACE but, if we have been observant, the hands are not BRUNO'S. The hiding stone has been removed.

The MONK closes the book and WE

SMASH CUT TO:

THE IMMENSITY OF SPACE.

WE SPEED FORWARD (TO THE YEAR 1595). A RINGED PLANET WHIPS PAST, DISAPPEARS ABOVE THE SCREEN, FLOODING THE FRAME and WE

CUT TO:

INT. ROME HOLY OFFICE, PRISON CELL - DAY

SHOOTING through the small, bared window. BRUNO, once again in his late forties, sits in a blinding shaft of heavenly sunlight. He writes on a sheet of vellum on his lap.

BRUNO (V.O.)
 (whispering)
 "God is not religious. Religions divide the peoples of the world, while God seeks to unite all men. Legions shall perish in senseless slaughter before realizing that God weeps the suffering of all His children alike."

WIPE TO:

INT. VATICAN - DAY

BLUE SKY - A FRESCO. A multitudinous papal ceremony, conveying the splendor and the power of XVith Century Rome.

POPE CLEMENT VIII (his back to CAMERA) greets important FOREIGN VISITORS, AMBASSADORS and the sort.

BISHOP CARCATERRA, a simian-looking, severely pox-marked man, is featured close to the Pope.

A PAGE announces a new arrival.

PAGE
His Excellency, the Ambassador of
Venice, Leonardo Donato!

AMBASSADOR DONATO, a small, prim man, with nervous eyes,
makes his way up the receiving line, bows before the POPE.

AMBASSADOR DONATO
Your Holiness...

He kisses the POPE'S ring. CLEMENT VIII clasps DONATO'S hand,
pulls him close and speaks into his ear.

POPE CLEMENT VIII (O.S.)
I understand your Doge has denied my
request for extradition on the Bruno
case. Most regrettable.
(DONATO begins to compose
an answer)
Not now...

POPE CLEMENT VIII releases him, turns to the next VISITOR in
line. DONATO moves on, rattled.

DISSOLVE TO:

OUTER SPACE - BLACK

We are speeding backwards (to the year 1575). A SHOWER OF
METEORITES whips past, quickly become specs against the
receding blackness. SOUND OF HEAVY ARMORY FADES IN.

WIPE TO:

EXT. NAPLES MONASTERY, ACCESS ROAD - DAY

A jumble of hooves approach at a trot on a muddy road, under
HEAVY RAIN. TWO DOZEN SWISS GUARDS escort two high-ranking
members of the Catholic Church and a NUN on horseback.

INT. MONASTERY CHAPEL - DAY

BRUNO and several NOVICES help WORKERS fix rainwater leaks
above the frescoes. NEIGHING OF HORSES. BRUNO looks out the
stained-glass window, knits brow, worried.

EXT. MONASTERY COURTYARD - DAY

The massive gates open and the muddy riders - the NUN with a
donkey in tow, loaded with luggage - are let into the
enclosure. The gates close behind them.

MONTALCINO and TWO NOVICES hurry out of the main building to
greet the arrivals.

CARDINAL SANTASEVERINA, a strong-featured, unpleasant man, who appears to be permanently short of breath, despite his prominent, carbuncled nose, dismounts the lead horse. He wears a sword and a breast-plate over his cassock.

The second visitor, CARCATERRA (later BISHOP CARCATERRA), dressed in a dark, plain robe, also drenched to the bone, shadows him as they move toward the entrance.

The NOVICES tend to the animals. MONTALCINO makes haste to SANTASEVERINA'S reins.

PRIOR LUCCA appears and bows deferentially at SANTASEVERINA.

LUCCA
Welcome to San Domenico, Eminence.

SANTASEVERINA slaps mud off his cassock, barely deigns LUCCA an icy glance, stalks toward the building, suddenly letting out a LOUD SNEEZE. LUCCA bows at CARCATERRA, who drills silent holes on him as he files past.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
Monsignor...

The nun, SISTER CONSTANZA, a tightly wound woman of thirty, with a strikingly attractive face and piercing, intelligent eyes, nods at LUCCA.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
Welcome to Naples, Sister...

She responds with a thin smile, follows SANTASEVERINA and CARCATERRA into the building.

LUCCA raises his eyes to BRUNO watching from a window.

INT. MONASTERY LOBBY - DAY

SANTASEVERINA and CARCATERRA are lead by a FRIAR CONCIERGE across the main lobby, escorted by TWO SWISS GUARDS.

A group of MONKS chatting in the hallway fall silent, bow respectfully as the visitors pass them, then exchange loaded looks among themselves.

SISTER CONSTANZA follows the action from under her brow as she hurries after them, up a flight of marble steps.

INT. RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS - DAY

SANTASEVERINA is lead by the CONCIERGE along a second story corridor to a set of ornate double doors.

He is shown into a luxurious suite of rooms, then the CONCIERGE opens the door across the hall, shows SISTER CONSTANZA and CARCATERRA into stark cells, then leaves.

The TWO SWISS GUARDS post themselves outside SANTASEVERINA'S doors, close them. The SLAM LEADS THE

CUT TO:

INT. CLOISTER - DAY

SISTER CONSTANZA reads a hand-written document.

SISTER CONSTANZA
 "He said heretics must be listened
 to because they may hold the answers
 to untold mysteries."

SANTASEVERINA, cleaned up and dressed in an elegant, silk-trimmed cassock, stands facing BRUNO in the center of the cloister. CARCATERRA, a step behind him, follows the proceedings with the emotion of a corpse.

SISTER CONSTANZA (CONT'D)
 "He said Christ is not God and God
 has no need for the Church. He said
 the Virgin was not a virgin, and..."

SANTASEVERINA
 (impatient)
 Do you deny having said these
 things, brother?!

BRUNO
 Can I know who authored that report,
 Monsignor?

He darts a glance at MONTALCINO who holds his gaze, imperturbable.

SANTASEVERINA snatches the report from SISTER CONSTANZA.

SANTASEVERINA
 Who wrote this report is no concern
 of yours! What matters is the lack
 of faith evidenced by the
 monstrosities quoted in it!

The entire congregation follows the inquiry with attention. LUCCA, PONTERROTTO, OCTAVIO and BENITO with special interest.

BRUNO
 (wary)
 I just ask myself simple questions.
 Must we rely only on faith when we
 can be certain?

SISTER CONSTANZA lifts her gaze, looks at BRUNO for the first time.

SANTASEVERINA'S eyes narrow to a mean line.

SANTASEVERINA

Do you deny having said that...

(reads)

"The natives discovered in the West Indies are as much at the center of the Universe as the Church, or Rome?"

BRUNO

(without missing a beat)

Well, could they have developed a perfectly valid calendar, four-thousand years before the dawn of Christianity, if they were not at least at the center of their universe?

SANTASEVERINA glares at BRUNO, like a bull.

SANTASEVERINA

Their universe?! There is only one Universe and Christ is at the center of it! You dispute this?!

SISTER CONSTANZA holds BRUNO.

BRUNO

I believe the Universe has no center, Your Eminence, therefore I can hardly dispute that He is.

SANTASEVERINA knits brow, befuddled.

BENITO AND OCTAVIO exchange admiring glances.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

(waving, emboldened)

I'd say Christ is at the center of the universe, as much as anyone of us here.

SANTASEVERINA

You make yourself equal to God?!

LUCCA'S eyes flash him a silent warning.

BRUNO

Unless one makes oneself equal to God, Your Eminence, one cannot understand Him.

SISTER CONSTANZA glances at SANTASEVERINA, then again looks at BRUNO, can not prevent registering amused satisfaction.

ON BRUNO, SLOW APPROACH OVER FOLLOWING:

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Make yourself grow to a greatness
beyond measure, believe that nothing
is impossible, think yourself
immortal and capable of
understanding all, still in the
maternal womb, adolescent, old,
dead, beyond death.... Then, and
only then, you may understand God.
(searching eye contact
with SANTASEVERINA)
Don't you agree? Monsignor?

SANTASEVERINA'S lips quiver with contained rage. CARCATERRA gazes at BRUNO contemptuously. Finally SANTASEVERINA'S face contorts strangely, gestating and ultimately unleashing a heaven-splitting SNEEZE. IT DIES LONG AFTER WE HAVE

CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY CHAPEL - DAY

PRIOR LUCCA conducts mass. His hand makes the sign of the cross. The CUT gives the impression he is blessing SANTASEVERINA'S SNEEZE.

BRUNO and the rest of the congregation follow the rituals from the pews. CHORAL MUSIC SWELLS, UNDERSCORES FOLLOWING MONTAGE:

- . SANTASEVERINA absolving a sinner from behind the wicker screen inside the confessional booth.
- . BRUNO watches MONTALCINO and several other MONKS pray, awaiting their turn to go into the confessional.
- . LUCCA raises the golden chalice.
- . TWO MONKS exit the confessional; MONTALCINO and the FRIAR CONCIERGE enter it, one on each side.
- . SANTASEVERINA slides the left-side dividing door shut, slides right-side open.

VOICE (O.S.)

(through screen)

Forgive me Father, for I have
sinned.

- . BRUNO'S gaze comes to rest on three icons on the representing the Holy Trinity.
- . In the confessional booth, a hand produces the Luther book from the sleeve of a cassock, holds it close to the wicker screen. SANTASEVERINA leans closer, interested.
- . LUCCA genuflects before the Christ.
- . BRUNO crosses himself, does a double take:
- . SANTASEVERINA leaves the confessional WITH THE LUTHER TOME UNDER HIS ARM.
- . BRUNO blinks, unsure of what he has glimpsed.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY OUTHOUSE - DAY

The flimsy door explodes open, BRUNO bursts in, frantically removes the stone: the cache is empty. His mind races.

INT. MONASTERY RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS - DAY

WE PULL LUCCA along the marbled corridor. He exchanges nods with CARCATERRA, who crosses him on the way, comes to the double doors guarded by the TWO SWISS GUARDS, knocks.

SANTASEVERINA (O.S.)

Enter!

LUCCA opens the door, steps into...

INT. SANTASEVERINA'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

LUCCA comes in. SANTASEVERINA sits on the bed, with his head under a towel, bent over a steaming porcelain basin held by SISTER CONSTANZA'S helpful hands.

LUCCA takes in the scene, closes the door behind himself.

LUCCA

You sent for me, Your Eminence?

SANTASEVERINA takes his head from under the towel, breathless, red as a beetroot, motions toward a small reception room.

SANTASEVERINA

Have a seat, Prior...

He lets out a LOUD SNEEZE.

LUCCA

(quietly)

Bless you...

SANTASEVERINA blows his nose.

SANTASEVERINA

This bloody job will finish by taking my life!

LUCCA moves into the reception room, pulls a chair, is taken aback by the sight of the Luther tome on the table. He meets SISTER CONSTANZA'S serenely impeaching gaze.

SANTASEVERINA joins him; in second thought, moves to one of his open trunks, takes out a bottle of port, pours himself a stiff shot. OVER ACTION:

SANTASEVERINA (CONT'D)

Up and down these miserable roads,
month in and month out, year after
year, and for what?

(MORE)

SANTASEVERINA (CONT'D)

Our monks rather fraternize with
whores than with Christ. Most
disheartening, I must say...

(pours LUCCA a drink)

And now this...this Bruno affair.

(picks up Luther tome)

One of the others came forward,
thank God...

(fixes LUCCA)

Related in most incriminating detail
how brother Giordano was able to get
his hands on such filth.

LUCCA mumbles something unintelligible, SANTASEVERINA tosses
the book on the table between them.

SANTASEVERINA (CONT'D)

Luther, God damn his eternal soul!
Have you read him?!

He picks up a fruit tray, offers it to LUCCA who grabs an
incongruously large handful of grapes, wanders to the window.

LUCCA

Ugh? No. Well...of course,
I've...glanced through it, Your
Eminence...

SANTASEVERINA watches him with sadistic relish, sucking the
seeds out of a fat grape, spitting them out before popping
the fruit into his mouth.

LUCCA (CONT'D)

That is...to be able to...
ascertain...

He darts a nervous glance toward SISTER CONSTANZA, moving
about in the bedroom. SANTASEVERINA lets up.

SANTASEVERINA

That will be all for now, sister.
(hands her book)

Make sure this gets put away where
it belongs.

SISTER CONSTANZA takes the book, stands before LUCCA,
expectant.

LUCCA stares at her a moment, then fumbles for his keys in
his cassock, singles out to her the one to the book
depository, visibly ill-at-ease.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

SISTER CONSTANZA glides along the marbled floors, holding the
Luther book against her chest. FATHER MONTALCINO appears
through a door, carrying a chalice.

They exchange affable beams.

INT. SANTASEVERINA'S SUITE - DAY

SANTASEVERINA joins LUCCA at the window, carrying the bowl of grapes. On the garden below, SEVERAL NOVICES can be seen horse-playing while tending to the vines.

SANTASEVERINA

Where have we failed them, brother Sisto? You, tell me.

(sets bowl on sill, moves back to bedroom)

Nothing but bad news reach Rome from the Southern monasteries, these days. Not a week goes by without one of your monks being stabbed in a fight; caught stealing; in a brothel; and God knows what not.

(sorting his wardrobe)

Common criminals! Is that what we're breeding down here?

LUCCA returns grapes to the bowl, tries to show some composure.

LUCCA

Brother Giordano has an impulsive nature, Your Eminence. Careless, even, but...

SANTASEVERINA

Yes...?

LUCCA

He's...brilliant. Perhaps the most extraordinary mind to pass through these walls, since Aquinas.

SANTASEVERINA

Really?

(thinly-veiled sarcasm)

I can appreciate as well as the next man why you might find his youthful company...well...rousing, Prior?

(puts on his robes)

But we're not discussing his brilliance now, nor his questionable charm, but the manifestly pernicious nature of his ideas.

(growing annoyance)

I see the way they look at him, the younger novices. Titillated, admiring his...his...his...

LUCCA

Singularity?

SANTASEVERINA

Ecco! Singularity.

(discards tight collar, irritated)

Individuality is the enemy of the Church, Prior!

(MORE)

SANTASEVERINA (CONT'D)

We're fighting a cancer eating at the heart of Rome! He's not the only one with his head filled with these new...ideas! His Sanctity has ran out of patience, and I've just about had my fill of it as well!

He picks a larger collar, pours himself another drink. LUCCA gazes out the window, ponderously. Beat.

LUCCA

(coarsely)

So, someone must be punished.

SANTASEVERINA darts him a conspiring glance, sips his port, runs his thick tongue over his grinning lips, like a fat snake, then approaches LUCCA and looks out the window.

SANTASEVERINA

If I'm forced to use that God-damned book, you will be called to answer alongside your boy.

(LUCCA looks at him)

Nothing could fall farther from His Sanctity's wishes. Still, solid proof of heresy must somehow materialize.

LUCCA turns back to look intensely out the window.

FLASH: LUCCA IN THE BOOK DEPOSITORY, FLAILING AT THE PAGES OF MANUSCRIPT BRUNO LETS CASCADE OVER HIS HEAD.

LUCCA casts his eyes.

LUCCA

There are some writings...

SANTASEVERINA studies him and his eyes betray a glint of satisfaction.

INT. MONASTERY LIBRARY - DAY

BRUNO looks out the window.

HIS POV: SISTER CONSTANZA follows MONTALCINO across the cloister, into the chapel.

BRUNO'S lips curl into a lascivious grin. He returns the book to a shelf, hurries out through the library.

INT. MONASTERY CHAPEL - DAY

SISTER CONSTANZA follows MONTALCINO through the chapel. They cross themselves as they pass the altar.

He deposits the chalice on a stand, leads SISTER CONSTANZA up the library stairs.

INT. MONASTERY LIBRARY - DAY

BRUNO hurries past MONKS studying. Some look up from their reading.

BRUNO turns into the staircase with youthful impetuosity, collides with MONTALCINO and SISTER CONSTANZA coming up. CONSTANZA drops the book. BRUNO looks into her eyes, flirting intensely, kneels to help her, is suddenly staring at the LUTHER.

SISTER CONSTANZA quickly kneels beside him. Their eyes lock.

SISTER CONSTANZA
(whispers, urgently)
You must leave at once. Save
yourself!

BRUNO'S puzzled mind races. SISTER CONSTANZA picks up the book, continues quickly up the stairs. MONTALCINO glances at BRUNO unpleasantly, follows her. BRUNO looks after them for a moment, then hurries down stairs.

INT. CLOISTER - DAY

BRUNO bolts out of the chapel. The SWISS SOLDIERS march into the courtyard. BRUNO knows what's good for him: he takes off in the opposite direction.

INT. SANTASEVERINA'S SUITE - DAY

The SWISS GUARDS march across the yard. PULL BACK TO REVEAL WE ARE IN SANTASEVERINA'S SUITE, SHOOTING THROUGH THE WINDOW.

LUCCA lays BRUNO'S Aquinas manuscript on the table, looks out the window, troubled. SANTASEVERINA dresses in the b.g.

SANTASEVERINA
I know how you feel, father... But
love for God must be greater than
love for any of His creatures.

LUCCA dips his hands in the grape water, distractedly cleansing his fingers. RAIN begins to pelt the window panes.

SANTASEVERINA (CONT'D)
(approaches him)
We're wasting your talents so far
away from Rome, Prior...
(LUCCA looks at him)
The Holy Inquisition needs more men
like you.

LUCCA looks at him AS DISTANT THUNDER UNDERSCORES THE

CUT TO:

EXT. A FIELD BEHIND THE MONASTERY - DAY

HIGH SHOT. BRUNO runs from the building under HEAVY RAIN.

SANTASEVERINA (V.O.)
His Sanctity has the highest regard
for loyalty. Together, you and I
could go very far.

CAMERA descends into the woods as BRUNO runs past AND WE

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. VATICAN GARDEN (SAME PAPAL CEREMONY SEEN EARLIER) - DAY

AMBASSADOR DONATO walks along the flowery paths alongside
POPE CLEMENT VIII.

AMBASSADOR DONATO
(trying hard to please)
Your Sanctity, I assure you His
Serenity, the Doge, championed your
request most forcefully...

SISTO LUCCA, seventeen years older than at the monastery,
excuses himself from a group of FOREIGN VISITORS. WE PULL HIM
along a gravel path. He looks more dignified, wears the cloth
of a Cardinal.

AMBASSADOR DONATO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
But Venice invoked its independent
republic status and, well, in the
end the Council voted how it saw
fit...

LUCCA joins POPE CLEMENT (we see for the first time that he
is former CARDINAL SANTASEVERINA), kisses his ring,
devotedly.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
Cardinal Sisto Lucca, Ambassador.
My right hand in foreign affairs.

AMBASSADOR DONATO
(bows)
Eminence...

POPE CLEMENT heads for a perfectly manicured maze.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
(thinly veiled sarcasm)
Ambassador Donato from the free
Republic of Venice was just giving
me a lesson on democracy...

AMBASSADOR DONATO
(leers)
Your Holiness, I beg you...!

LUCCA gives DONATO an icy smile.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

(amused)

No, no, I should like to hear the
end of it! I'm most curious to
understand what moves Venice...

CAMERA RISES as the three walk away, into the maze.

POPE CLEMENT VIII (CONT'D)

...to invariably choose to test the
will of the only powerful friend it
has left these days - Rome!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VENICE, ESTABLISHING - DAYBREAK

Monumental, splendid. A small ship rolls on the low tide. A
SAILOR lowers its sails. A capped figure hurries away along
the quay, escorted by TWO SWISS GUARDS. *

POPE CLEMENT VIII (V.O.)

Fortunately, I can count on Cardinal
Lucca's gift to usher in a good
measure of common sense when others
fail me.

INT. DOGE'S PALACE, BEDROOM - DAYBREAK

A door cracks open and a tiny, wretched DOG rushes in barking
furiously, hops on top of the DOGE'S ornate bed. RAPID KNOCKS
AND AN ANXIOUS, URGENT VOICE follow.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Excellency, Excellency...!

ANDREA MOROSINI, the Doge of Venice, an attractive, sharp-
witted, eccentric and intensely likable man in his late
fifties, with a frank laugh and a voracious appetite for the
pleasures of life, lifts his head from under soft pillows.

DOGE MOROSINI

What is it?!

A SECRETARY looks in the door.

SECRETARY

Rome's Ambassador asks to see you at
once, Your Excellency!

The DOGE grunts like an untimely roused lion, his mind
finally grinding into gear.

DOGE MOROSINI

What...? Who!
(sensing the time)
At this hour?!

The little DOG continues to bark; the DOGE backhand-slaps it off the bed, like a bug. YELP!

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)
Well, don't just stand there, fetch
my clothes!

The SECRETARY hurries in. The DOGE rips off the plush comforters, revealing part of a naked, young woman.

INT. DOGE'S PALACE, LIBRARY - EARLY MORNING

SISTO LUCCA stands by rich book shelves, reading a gilded tome. FOOTSTEPS. He does not turn.

The DOGE stalks in, followed by his SECRETARY, irritable.

SECRETARY
Your Eminence... The Doge is here.

LUCCA reads a moment longer before returning the book to the shelf, then turns to face the DOGE.

LUCCA
Forgive the early hour, Your
Serenity, but I've only just arrived
from Rome and am expected back,
without delay. I trust you and I
will be able to resolve this Bruno
business to His Sanctity's
satisfaction in time for my
departure with the evening tide.

The DOGE listens, sizing him up. When LUCCA has finished, he forces a broad grin.

DOGE MOROSINI
Have you broken fast, Monsignor?

This, as he closes a set of black enameled doors on CAMERA'S *
NOSE AND WE

MATCH CUT TO:

THE BLACK IMMENSITY OF SPACE. WE ARE SPEEDING THROUGH A
SHOWER OF METEORITES.

DOGE MOROSINI (V.O.)
Is His Holiness aware that your own
inquisitor, here in Venice, Father
Saluzzo...

WIPE TO:

INT. DOGE'S PALACE, RECEIVING ROOM - DAY

THE DOGE paces, obviously vexed.

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)
 ...has been questioning Bruno for weeks, unable to come up with any proof of heresy at all?!

LUCCA stands at the window, gazing at the Venice lagoon, stirring a cup of tea with a precious spoon.

LUCCA
 If brother Bruno is innocent, as we ourselves hope, then he has nothing more to fear from a Roman court than from a Venetian one...

DOGE MOROSINI
 Our courts have already interviewed all available witnesses. Venetian law clearly states that...

LUCCA lets the spoon fall in the saucer, annoyed, fixes the DOGE with penetrating intensity.

LUCCA
 You are missing my point, entirely, Your Serenity... Giordano Bruno is a Neapolitan, he is not subject to Venetian laws! Any further delay to deliver Bruno to Rome can only be viewed by His Holiness as a direct, personal affront.

(forcing a benign smile)
 Let us not haggle over what Father Saluzzo did or did not find during his interrogations; that's quite irrelevant at the end of the day...

DOGE MOROSINI
 I regret His Holiness feels challenged, Cardinal. Nothing could be further from Venice's intentions than to vex Rome. But the entire case against Bruno rests on a few spiteful letters from one disgruntled pupil of his -Mocenigo.

LUCCA
 The nephew of a former Doge, like yourself, is he not? A man of honor.

DOGE MOROSINI
 A fool...!
 (regretting his outburst)
 "Unus testis, nullus testis!" Your Inquisition's own rules!

LUCCA
 "One witness, no witness," indeed...
 (turn to window)
 Of course, one can always find other witnesses.

(MORE)

LUCCA (CONT'D)
Perhaps one who will shed a more
suitable light on the facts.

The DOGE'S eyes flash with contempt.

DOGE MOROSINI
I don't think you quite appreciate
how we Venetians regard justice,
Monsignor!

LUCCA
We are getting nowhere, are we,
Excellency?

He puts down his tea cup, pulls a delicate silk hanky out of
his sleeve, steps up to the tall window, patting his lips.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
Tell me, Where is you daughter these
days?

DOGE MOROSINI
I beg your pardon?

LUCCA
You have a daughter, do you not?
Marchesa Morosini?

DOGE MOROSINI
(puzzled)
Morgana, yes...

LUCCA
Only child?

DOGE MOROSINI
Regretfully... Her mother died
bringing her into this world. Why?

LUCCA reaches under his gold-embroidered scapular.

LUCCA
I think there is something you
should see, Excellency.

He holds out an envelope baring the seal of the Vatican. The
DOGE holds LUCCA'S gaze, blinks first, takes the envelope,
opens it, reads the official-looking document inside.

LUCCA scans the skies out the window, impassive. His eyes
follow whimsically a flock of circling pigeons.

THE DOGE folds the document with tremulous hands, must steady *
himself against the furniture.

LUCCA turns, studies the DOGE for some beats. *

LUCCA (CONT'D)
Now, Your Serenity, if we got down
to business?

The DOGE looks at him, shaken to his core.

EXT. VENICE, ESTABLISHING PIAZZA SAN MARCO - EARLY MORNING.

TWO PASSERSBY walk briskly in the early-morning fog.

INT. LUCCA'S VENICE BEDROOM - SAME TIME

LUCCA sits at a small table facing a window, leisurely eating his breakfast in his sleeping clothes.

LUCCA

And one more thing... He is the shrewdest man you will ever come across. And clever. You must be cunning yourself or he'll see right through you. I want to know every word he utters, even in his dreams. Report well and you may see the light of day still, brother.

(beat)

Take him away.

TWO GUARDS take away a man in chains. LUCCA resumes eating, then turns pensive to contemplate the canals.

INT. VENICE, PRISON CELL - DAY

BRUNO, also looking seventeen years older than in the monastery, but not as marked as in his Roman cell seven years later, writes on a sheet of vellum. DRAGGING CHAINS, LOCKS are heard - he looks up.

The door opens and CELESTINO DE VERONA, the man in chains, gaunt, 30's, wearing a silk suit in tatters, with inordinately large, insane eyes, is brought in by the GUARDS.

BRUNO looks at the bizarre, high-strung individual. The GUARDS remove the prisoner's shackles - apologetic.

BRUNO

Orazio..

He holds up a spent inkwell.

FIRST GUARD

I'll try, Signor Bruno.

He leaves.

CELESTINO drops his bundle, holds his arms akimbo, speaks in loud, irritating bursts of energy.

CELESTINO

I am Celestino de Verona! I cooked for the Prince and the slut he married. Where is the kitchen?

BRUNO regards him, appalled. CELESTINO kicks his bundle to the opposite corner, punches the hay sack, making himself comfortable.

CELESTINO (CONT'D)
I invented marinara sauce! Two ripe tomatoes; an ear of garlic sliced thin - like rose-petals; one Sicilian onion minced into small cubes; seven large leaves of basil washed and chopped into tiny...!

PUSH ON BRUNO, listening with growing horror. He charges the door, rattles the bars.

BRUNO
Guard! GUARD!!!

His VOICE ECHOES long after we

CUT TO:

INT. VENICE INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

BRUNO faces his inquisitors. He looks frayed.

BRUNO
Ink was promised me days ago! I can't possible be expected to defend myself without being able to put thought to paper...

Behind a rostrum sit three inquisitors: SALUZZO, a thick-necked, bovine-looking man, plagued by nervous tics and dressed in red, and his TWO ASSESSORS dressed in black, listening immutable.

A SCRIBE takes down the deposition in a corner of the austere, wood-paneled room.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
The litany of calumnies is way too long!

SALUZZO - wink, squint, twitch, blink.

SALUZZO
We'll look into it.

He signals his FIRST ASSESSOR to proceed. The FIRST ASSESSOR peruses a letter bearing the Mocenigo family seal: the central motif of which is a black swan.

FIRST ASSESSOR
This question of magic, again...
Your accuser--

BRUNO

Slanders, reverend Father! For some time now, my pupil has been...well, disappointed with my teachings...

SALUZZO studies him - twitch, blink, wink.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

He comes to me for philosophical knowledge! "Teach me the Art of Memory," he first says - a totally scientific method to recall one's knowledge, at which I happen to be rather brilliant...

(the SCRIBE hesitates)

That's right, "brilliant," take it down! "Fine," I say. Next day it's magic spells, he wants! This obsession with magic goes way back, mind you, to the time I taught him cosmology, as a boy. I explain I know nothing about these things but he refuses to believe me!

WIPE LEFT TO:

ZUAN MOCENIGO being deposed. He is a striking-looking individual with oddly disparate, nervous eyes, large, bony hands, and effeminate manner.

NOTE: ALL DEPOSITIONS OF WITNESSES DURING VENETIAN TRIAL, SHOT IN CLOSE-UP. AS A STYLISTIC CHOICE, WITNESSES WILL BE INTERCUT, CREATING THE ILLUSION THAT THEY TESTIFY CONTEMPORANEOUSLY, IN MODERN, CONFRONTATIONAL STYLE.

MOCENIGO

I have no doubts he delved in black magic, Reverend Fathers! He once showed me a book of conjure he was working on!

INT. MOCENIGO PALACE - ZUAN'S LOGGIA/STUDY ROOM - DAY

BRUNO pours water into a glass, puts an envelope on top, inverts the glass with theatrical flair, removes the hand supporting the paper. The water does not spill out - magic! BRUNO grins wildly at CAMERA.

MOCENIGO (V.O.)

I've seen him perform black magic before my very eyes!

WIPE RIGHT TO:

INT. VENICE INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

BRUNO before his inquisitors.

BRUNO
 A complete falsehood, Reverend
 Brother! The closest I've ever come
 to delving into the occult is...pick
 my nose! Ha!

WIPE DOWN TO:

MOCENIGO, INCENSED.

MOCENIGO
 He did! Practiced black magic, read
 forbidden books, wrote forbidden
 words! That's why he was expelled
 from his order!

WIPE UP TO:

BRUNO, EXAGGERATEDLY OUTRAGED.

BRUNO
 I was not expelled, Reverend
 Fathers, I left the Dominicans!

EXT. UNDER A BRIDGE, NEARING ROME - DAY

BRUNO, wearing trousers and a shirt, rummages through a bag,
 discards other old clothes, keeps a cap, stuffs his Dominican
 cassock inside. He hears voices, runs up the embankment.

An oxen-pulled cart driven by TWO PRIESTS is passing by.
 BRUNO remembers his tonsure, quickly covers it with the cap,
 calls and runs after them, is invited to climb on board.

BRUNO (V.O.)
 To avoid being unjustly tried for
 heresy. Like I'm being tried here,
 today!

CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY NEAR ROME - NIGHT

Pitch black. BRUNO, holding his bag over his head, calls at a
 somber-looking monastery, under TORRENTIAL RAIN.

A MONK opens the gate, holds up a lamp, studies the soaked
 man before him. BRUNO talks a streak; the MONK shakes his
 head in the negative, BRUNO removes his cap, shows it.

The MONK holds the light closer, regards him suspiciously,
 slams the gate on his face.

BRUNO (V.O.)
 I planned to rejoin the Church in
 some other monastery - teaching was
 my life...

EXT. ROME, CAMPO DEI FIORI - NIGHT

HIGH SHOT, ESTABLISHING. RAIN. LIGHTNING floods the crowded piazza. BRUNO, looking gaunt and soaked to the bone, stands among scores of CLAMORING BYSTANDERS.

BRUNO (V.O.)
But some weeks later, in Rome...

THE CLAMOR DROWNS THE VOICE OVER. A CONVICT, prisoner of a leather restraint, is raised to a platform by TWO HENCHMEN.

The FIRST HENCHMAN fishes out the terrified CONVICT'S right hand, holds it down on a wooden block. The CONVICT writhes, pleads and struggles uselessly.

The SECOND HENCHMAN raises an efficient-looking hatchet and a moment later a hand flies toward a basket. The CROWD CLAMORS.

The severed hand misses the basket, releasing a surprisingly large amount of blood on the stone platform. The FIRST HENCHMAN tosses it casually inside.

The TWO HENCHMEN grab the head of the CONVICT who resists, desperately shaking it one way and the other.

The FIRST HENCHMAN finally succeeds in fishing out his tongue, but not before receiving a vicious bite on his finger. Without apparent anger, he unsheathes a large knife and unceremoniously cuts the prisoner's tongue off, tosses it into the basket. The CROWD CHEERS.

The TWO HENCHMEN throw the CONVICT into an awaiting cage, with the help of a rope raise it over the crowd. The dangling cage takes its place alongside a half-dozen others holding similarly grisly, blood-dripping cargo. Stones and other debris fly toward the miserable CONVICTS. LOUD JEERING, INSULTS FADE TO SILENCE AS...

BRUNO watches in mute horror, growing flustered with anger. He does a double take:

HIS POV, ACROSS THE SQUARE: SEVERAL DOMINICAN MONKS pray on their knees.

BRUNO frowns, unsure of what he has seen, makes his way through the tight, CLAMORING CROWD, confronts a RAVING PREACHER. SOUND FADES BACK IN.

RAVING PREACHER
The plague is among us by the will
of God almighty, to cleanse the
world of heretics! To avenge our
Lord Jesus Christ...!

BRUNO shoves him aside, reaches a vantage point from where he can now confirm his suspicion.

CLOSER ANGLE. MONTALCINO prays into his beard, a rosary in his hands.

BRUNO'S foot kicks a bottle; he picks it up, breaks its neck against the cobblestone.

WE FOLLOW HIM through the clamoring CROWD. He stands behind MONTALCINO, presses cutting edge to MONTALCINO'S neck.

BRUNO
Don't move.

MONTALCINO freezes, looks up, has difficulty recognizing BRUNO in this outfit, under layers of grime.

MONTALCINO
Giordano...?

BRUNO
How can you pray, you hypocritical bastard, after denouncing one of your own!

MONTALCINO tries to make words.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
Not a sound! No, that's right, pray! Today's the day God has chosen I end your miserable life...

MONTALCINO
Not me, brother! I was not the one who denounced you...!

But his words are drowned by new CLAMOR from the CROWD. Another cage is raised. BRUNO is brusquely knocked to the ground by a running PASSERBY.

MONTALCINO runs off. BRUNO goes after him.

BRUNO
Montalcino, damn you!

EXT. ROME, TRASTEVERE STREET - DAY

BRUNO runs after MONTALCINO, enraged. MONTALCINO turns a corner, collides with a stray dog, loses some ground.

EXT. SECOND TRASTEVERE STREET - DAY

MONTALCINO faces a cul-de-sac, runs back, takes a short, dark alley, toward the foggy river - BRUNO after him.

EXT. BRIDGE OVER TIBER RIVER - DAY

MONTALCINO runs along the embankment, climbs onto the bridge, slips. BRUNO catches up, breathless, beside himself, hurls MONTALCINO against the railing, puts the glass to his throat.

MONTALCINO
 Brother, think! Why would I
 denounce you?!

BRUNO
 Because you hate me!

MONTALCINO
 I admire you...I envied you, God
 knows I did, and I ask for His
 forgiveness, but I respected you.

BRUNO
 Lies!

MONTALCINO
 It was Prior Lucca who testified
 against you!

BRUNO
 You despicable, shameless liar!

He chokes him.

MONTALCINO
 It's...true! He...turned over some
 papers you wrote. He...signed the
 warrant against you!

BRUNO
 (fighting the realization)
 Liar, liar, liar! I'll kill you!

MONTALCINO
 Ask how...he...became minister...
 here, in Rome...for...The Holy
 Inquisition!

BRUNO eases his grip, MONTALCINO cuts loose, scrambles across
 the foggy bridge. BRUNO goes after him.

HORSES HOOVES, CARRIAGE WHEELS. MONTALCINO turns.

SEVERAL CUTS: TWO HEAVY, BLACK HORSES pulling a flatbed
 bursts out of the wall of fog, strike MONTALCINO, violently,
 propels him over the bridge's railing.

BRUNO lunges forward, grabs MONTALCINO'S cassock. MONTALCINO
 dangles in the void. They lock eyes.

MONTALCINO (CONT'D)
 Help me, brother!

MONTALCINO'S cassock tears and he falls. His hooded head
 strikes a protruding metal with an ugly thud before
 disappearing through the blanket of fog. SPLASH!

BRUNO looks into the black void, aghast.

BRUNO
 Brother...!

A grimy hand touches BRUNO'S shoulder; he spins, startled, faces the rawboned FLATBED DRIVER, runs off, collides against the flatbed, falls on lie-covered corpses piled on it, runs into the night, horrified.

INT. ROME, HOLY SEE - DAY

A PAGE carrying a stack of envelopes glides silently along a richly-appointed corridor posted with SWISS GUARDS, knocks softly on a door, lets himself into...

INT. LUCCA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

...Approaches SISTO LUCCA, seated on a high-backed chair behind an ornate desk, signing papers. He wears a purple silk cassock and a prominent ring on his right hand.

The PAGE murmurs a reverence, delivers some of the envelopes, picks up outgoing mail. LUCCA sifts through his mail, stops at one particular envelope, puzzled: "MONSIGNOR SISTO LUCCA. IN MANO."

He slides a delicate paper cutter through it, reads the note inside: "Public Baths, 6 PM. I need money, Giordano."

LUCCA stares at the note. FOOTSTEPS. He quickly folds it into his sleeve.

INT. ROME BATHS - DAY

LUCCA, ill-at-ease with a sheet wrapped around his nudity, moves through a large flag-stoned room full of steam. He is escorted by a voluptuous PROSTITUTE eating an orange with sensuous abandon.

Scantly clad MEN AND WOMEN, as well as a number of DOGS prowl the room at leisure. The SCENE IS SLIGHTLY OVERCRANKED, oddly grotesque.

Private booths line one of the walls. A few of them are vacant, others have the curtain closed and flapping betrays activity within. LAUGHTER, SIGHS, MOANS, THE BARKING OF DOGS seem oddly distant under the SOUND OF RUNNING WATER.

TWO YOUNG PROSTITUTES wrapped in wet sheets, pass carrying a cage with a large rat inside. They simper and smile at a tall, naked OLD MAN with a very YOUNG GIRL. The OLD MAN taps at the bars of the cage, speaks to the rat.

OLD MAN
Mio fratello!

The rat SCREECHES furiously; the OLD MAN lets out a perverse cackle of laughter.

The PROSTITUTE leads LUCCA to a back booth, opens curtains.

INT. PRIVATE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO sits against a corner, naked, obsessively scrubbing his pale, haggard body with sponge and soap. His tonsure is beginning to grow back. He lifts his eyes to look at LUCCA.

They hold one another for a few seconds. Finally, LUCCA turns away, takes a seat on the other end of the marble bench.

LUCCA
(waving PROSTITUTE off)
Bring food.

She rubs her fingers together, LUCCA produces a leather pouch filled with money and hands the woman a few coins without as much as a glance.

LUCCA scans the dripping walls: MOANS, GROANS, LAUGHTER and sporadic BARKING echo in the vaulted ceilings, fill their silence for some beats. Then...

LUCCA (CONT'D)
How long have you been in this hell?

BRUNO
Worse out there... Disease everywhere.

LUCCA
Why didn't you contact me earlier?
Look at you!

BRUNO smiles, distant.

BRUNO
Worried about my health, Father?

A beat.

LUCCA
It was not what you think.

He averts BRUNO'S penetrating gaze, watches him soap his flank and thighs for some moments.

BRUNO
Was it fear?

LUCCA
You never should have crossed swords with Santaseverina! You left me no choice! How many times did I warn you--?

BRUNO
Ambition?

LUCCA
Recklessness! Yours!

BRUNO

When betrayal's best, betrayal must
be the choice, I suppose.

LUCCA

Where you get the nerve to--!

BRUNO

I must leave Rome. Did you bring
the money?

LUCCA glares at him, sets the pouch between them; a delicate dagger falls from the folds of his sheet, bounces tunefully on the marble floor. BRUNO'S eyes go from the weapon to LUCCA'S embarrassed gaze.

LUCCA

I didn't know what to expect...

BRUNO lets out a tired laughter, spies the contents of the pouch. LUCCA reaches out to him but...

The curtain opens, the PROSTITUTE carries in fruit and wine, sets it down, lies comfortably beside BRUNO, exposing her voluptuousness. LUCCA glowers at her.

LUCCA (CONT'D)

Get out! OUT, YOU BRUTE!

He forcefully removes her from the booth, sits close to BRUNO.

LUCCA (CONT'D)

Giordano, listen...I can fix
things... I wield power, now.

BRUNO regards him with something resembling pity.

LUCCA (CONT'D)

Where could you possibly go?! You
belong among us. Stay. Let me help
you. Everything can be like before.

He finds his hand clasping BRUNO'S naked thigh. BRUNO looks at it, then at LUCCA. Their faces are inches apart, LUCCA trembles like a leaf.

LUCCA (CONT'D)

I never would have let them hurt
you... must believe that. You never
understood my...friendship, boy, I--

*

BRUNO

Nobody speaks the truth when there
is something they must have, do
they, father?

LUCCA knits brow, puzzled. BRUNO'S hand swings into FRAME and the heavy coin pouch strikes LUCCA'S face with stunning violence. LUCCA recoils, confused, a line of blood running from his lips - suddenly feels his nakedness.

BRUNO starts off, LUCCA snatches up the dagger, blocks the exit. BRUNO looks at the weapon, then offers his bare chest. LUCCA holds him, overwhelmed by emotion. BRUNO pushes past.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
I loved you too, Father.

LUCCA
Giordano!

He staggers out of the booth. A LOUD RAT SCREECH startles him. The OLD MAN with the cage eyes the dagger, gasps in mock horror. LUCCA pushes the cage with the back of his hand, hurling the rat across the floor, goes after BRUNO, chased by peals of the OLD MAN'S LAUGHTER.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
There is no place you can go we
won't find you! Giordano!

BRUNO disappears into a wall of steam.

LUCCA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
GIORDANO!!!

His ECHO lingers after WE

MATCH DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. VENICE CANAL - DUSK

A gondola emerges silently from a WALL OF THICK, WINTER FOG. BRUNO rides in the stern, enveloped in a dark velvet cape. He wears a hat and sword, has trimmed his professorial beard and gained back his lost weight.

SUPERIMPOSE: "VENICE, 1577, TWO YEARS LATER."

DISTANT TURKISH MUSIC beckons, BRUNO raises his eyes.

HIS POV: a luminous comet appears drawn against the velvety evening sky, like one bold, shimmering brush stroke. It seems to glide silently behind high clouds.

The GONDOLIER follows BRUNO'S gaze, smiles, wistful.

GONDOLIER
Bello, eh, Maestro..?
Beautiful, huh, Master...?

BRUNO
Can make an atheist half believe in
God.

The GONDOLIER shakes his finger in mock reproach.

EXT. MOCENIGO PALACE, LANDING STAGE - DUSK

Brightly lit windows, a ball in progress inside.

BRUNO'S gondola pulls up to quay. He pays the GONDOLIER, quickly climbs a set of steps. A MAID lets BRUNO into the house through a side entrance. *

INT. MOCENIGO PALACE, BACK ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO removes his cape, sword, hat (his tonsure has disappeared), hands them to the MAID. Underneath it, he wears a dark velour costume, clean cuffs and collar. He nods congenially at the half-dozen COOKS and SERVANTS seen through the open kitchen door, busy preparing lavish dishes.

INT. MOCENIGO PALACE, CORRIDOR - DUSK

BRUNO moves familiarly past rich walls adorned with the paintings of illustrious Mocenigos, former Doges and the sort. The TURKISH MUSIC reaches from the floor above.

A door opens and YOUNG ZUAN MOCENIGO, a boy of thirteen, steps out of his loggia/study room in BRUNO'S way. He eyes the clock on the wall. BRUNO follows his gaze, smiles brightly at him.

BRUNO

Never be punctual, if you can afford to be late, my dear Zuan.

YOUNG MOCENIGO

But you can't! Teach me a magic spell or I'll tell Father!

He too smiles, but his is the smile of a malevolent dwarf. BRUNO would love to break his little neck.

BRUNO

(grins)

Well, let's not start our day on a sour note, shall we...?

He turns to the painting of a splendidly attired gentleman.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Who's this marvelous-looking gentleman? *

YOUNG MOCENIGO

You know who he is: my uncle, Massimo Mocenigo, a former Doge, a great man!

(points to phallic-shaped pendant on his chest)

See this? Cavalieri di Rodi, by order of Pope Leo X!

BRUNO
(eyes flashing irony)
Indeed...!

YOUNG MOCENIGO runs his open hand over his chest, dreamily.

YOUNG MOCENIGO
I too shall wear it one day!

BRUNO grins at him intensely.

BRUNO
You'll look splendid with it!

ZUAN suspects mockery but pride wins the day.

YOUNG MOCENIGO
I will, I too shall be a powerful
man!

BRUNO
I'm quite sure of it.
(motions to study room)
In the meantime, shall we?

INT. MOCENIGO PALACE, RECEPTION ROOMS - NIGHT

FIFTY GUESTS dressed in outrageously extravagant carnival costumes, dance, mingle and laugh in a luxuriously appointed sitting room overlooking the lagoon. A large table overflows with delicacies, wines and liquors. THREE TURKISH FEMALE MUSICIANS play string and percussion instruments.

In a small, adjoining alcove, MOCENIGO SENIOR, a short, greedy-looking man of dark complexion, disguised as a magus, sits with SIX PLAYERS around a beautiful gaming table, playing tarots for high stakes. He lays a heavy bet.

FIRST PLAYER
(re heavy bet)
You forget the pest has already
killed a third of my clients,
Excellency!
(throws in his hand))
I'm out.

Among the disguised players is a bishop, a real bishop: MONSIGNOR GUIDO, a remarkably short, slippery-looking man with wet lips, clad in a heavily-embroidered silk robe. He pays loose attention to the game, more interested in VERONICA FRANCO, a beautiful courtesan (read high-class prostitute), her made-up nipples fashionably exposed over the décolleté of a voluptuous, raw silk dress, bending his ear and sharing his glass of Champagne. *

ZUAN MOCENIGO stalks in, holding a glass filled with water in one hand and pulling a resigned BRUNO by his sleeve, like a toy, with the other.

YOUNG MOCENIGO
 Father, watch!
 (to BRUNO)
 Do it again, Master Bruno!
 (to MOCENIGO SENIOR)
 He can do magic!

BRUNO beams apologetically, puts his hand on ZUAN'S shoulder.

BRUNO
 We are interrupting, Zuan. Later,
 perhaps...

YOUNG MOCENIGO
 (obnoxiously capricious)
 Father, make him do it!

MOCENIGO SENIOR
 Let's see, then, what's got the brat
 so excited. Amuse us, Bruno!

BRUNO
 (checking his anger)
 Your son has a most vivid
 imagination, Excellency. I was
 merely teaching him the mysteries of
 nature...

MOCENIGO SENIOR
 Modesty does not suit you. Go on,
 if you make me laugh I'll pay you a
 night with Veronica!
 (caressing her lips)
 Even though her rates have hit the
 ceiling since she slept with the
 King of France!

LAUGHTER ripples through the PLAYERS.

VERONICA FRANCO
 Tonight I'm booked, actually...

MORGANA MOROSINI, a splendid-looking woman, appearing
 gigantic due to forty-centimeter wooden heels, suddenly
 clatters through, laughing excited.

MORGANA
 The sky has cleared! Everyone out!

Her face is hidden behind a delicate porcelain mask. She
 wears a very provocative taffeta décolleté and green-blue
 hair, shaped like the horns of an ibex. *

BRUNO'S jaw drops at the fantastic apparition. MOCENIGO
 SENIOR notices and cackles mordantly.

MOCENIGO SENIOR
 Marchesa Morosini!
 (MORGANA turns)
 Let Zuan's tutor kiss your hand
 before he swallows something nasty.

BRUNO shuts his mouth, grins, touches MORGANA'S outstretched hand with his lips.

BRUNO
Giordano Brunus Nolanus. Your
servant, Marchesa.

MORGANA
(through the staring
porcelain)
We shall soon see about that...

BRUNO ogles her, fascinated. MORGANA moves off, opens a set of double doors and leads out onto a large marble terrace.

MORGANA (CONT'D)
Everyone out to the terrace!
(motioning to the bishop)
You too, Monsignor Guido, please
join us!

BRUNO looks after her, aroused. MOCENIGO SENIOR does not move from his seat; instead he doubles his bet.

MOCENIGO SENIOR
That tedious comet will be there
long after we've finished this hand.
(addressing GUIDO)
It's five hundred ducats to you,
Monsignor. If you don't have enough
the Morosini bank will grant you a
loan, won't it, Marchesa?

GUIDO
Good Heavens, no! The Morosini's
rates are far too rich for my
parishioners!

He chuckles, cruelly. VERONICA FRANCO celebrates his quip with a mirthless laugh, takes his arm, follows MORGANA and the others to the...

EXT. TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

MORGANA stands at the balcony, holding the hand of a beautiful young TURKISH PRINCESS, also wearing stilt shoes and a provocative gown.

MORGANA
(to GUIDO)
What do you think comets are,
Monsignor?

BRUNO is within ear-shot, can not resist the pull of the question, makes his way toward the balcony with the sour-looking ZUAN in tow.

GUIDO
They are God's messages, Marchesa,
heralding the return of our Lord,
Jesus Christ.

MORGANA
(addressing BRUNO)
And, do you agree, Master Bruno?

BRUNO
Not at all. Comets, in my view, are
errant worlds, crisscrossing the
infinite universe, very much as each
one among us.

GUIDO
Infinite! Well, now, there is a
wild notion! And you base
this...theory...on what exactly,
Sir? Some of that magic young Zuan
seems so dazzled by?

MOCENIGO SENIOR joins them escorted by several females, all
taller than himself. He picks up a book, holds it up.

MOCENIGO SENIOR
(jocularly)
Careful, Monsignor, master Bruno is
a publish author! He has a growing
reputation to protect!

He hands BRUNO'S book to GUIDO, who peruses its cover: "De'
Segni De' Tempi," interested.

GUIDO
"Signs of the Times...!" How
fateful a title for a man of
thought! I would still like to hear
your answer, Signor? *

BRUNO
(to GUIDO)
Observation makes what I say quite
obvious, Monsignor. Reason makes it
truth.

GUIDO
Faith is far sharper than the eye
when it comes to understanding the
mysteries of nature, in my view.

MORGANA (O.S.)
Must we rely only on faith, when we
can be certain?

BRUNO turns to her, surprised to hear himself quoted from
long ago. ZUAN notices, pulls BRUNO by the sleeve.

YOUNG MOCENIGO
I'm bored with this comet. Come,
master!

MORGANA
Boredom is a clear sign of
imbecility, Zuan, darling. Don't go
around flaunting it.

She takes BRUNO'S hand, draws him away.

MORGANA (CONT'D)
 Master Bruno has better things to do
 tonight than pour his wisdom down a
 bottomless pit.
 (to BRUNO))
 Don't you, Signor?

ZUAN drills holes on her departing figure.

BRUNO
 As you said, Marchesa: we shall soon
 see...

MORGANA lets out a burst of brilliant laughter.

YOUNG MOCENIGO
 Father, today Giordano was late!

MOCENIGO SENIOR ignores him. ZUAN takes a tarot, sets it on
 top of the glass, glances after BRUNO, jealously.

YOUNG MOCENIGO (CONT'D)
 Father, look!

He inverts the glass, the water spills all over MOCENIGO
 SENIOR who gives him a resounding slap.

MOCENIGO SENIOR
 Va via, imbecile!
Beat it, imbecile!

YOUNG MOCENIGO is knocked back AND WE

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MOROSINI'S PALACE, MORGANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BRUNO falls back on plush pillows. MORGANA, still wearing her
 porcelain mask and part of her outfit, makes love to him. She
 is on top, plays rough. Both are soaked in perspiration, this
 is once-in-a-lifetime sex.

BRUNO kisses her arms, breasts and neck, tries to reach her
 evasive face.

BRUNO
 Let me...Let me see you...

He attempts to remove her mask, MORGANA catches his wrists,
 laughs; she is strong and nimble, pins him down, rides him
 mercilessly. He pulls a hand free, again reaches for her
 mask. MORGANA is quicker, grabs it, rubs her breasts against
 his face, shaking her head and clicking her tongue, laughing.

MORGANA
 No, no, no, no...!

BRUNO

Let me...Please, let me see you...

MORGANA

No!

BRUNO

Oh! Yes, now, yes! Closer.....

*

MORGANA

Yes!

(raises her mask to the
Heavens)

Oh, God all mighty...!

They climax with shuddering moans. MORGANA rolls off BRUNO panting, spent. They lie, catching their breath. Then...

MORGANA (CONT'D)

You didn't learn that in the
monastery, did you Father?

BRUNO sits up as if someone had pushed a red-hot rod up his ass, stares at the mask. Underneath it, MORGANA laughs, this time she lets him pull it off, revealing SISTER CONSTANZA.

BRUNO stares at her, speechless, suddenly lets out a cackle of thrilled stupefaction, raises his hands in sham horror.

BRUNO

Peccato mortale!

They laugh, their bodies entwine once again, kiss hungrily. MORGANA lets out a SHRIEK as they fall off the bed.

NEW ANGLE - LATER

Moonlight pours in through the Venetian blinds. The ghostly light bars the lax bodies of BRUNO and MORGANA tangled in the sheets. MORGANA toys with BRUNO'S locks, wistful.

MORGANA

When I returned to Rome, I was
pleased to hear they had lost your
trace... A few weeks later, I
myself had left the Church.

BRUNO

Why so?

MORGANA

(shrugs)

Too tight a fit for me, I suppose.
(runs a finger on his
neck)

Rome is not for the kind-hearted...

BRUNO

And I thought you were Rome's
immaculate conception!

They laugh, kiss. Then, wistfully...

MORGANA
Seems so long ago, Rome...
(up-beat)
Is it true you once met the Pope?

BRUNO sits up.

BRUNO
Meet him?! I sang with the Pope!

MORGANA laughs.

EXT. TUSCANY, COUNTRY LANE - DAY

A plush Vatican carriage with the Papal seal on its door speeds through beautiful countryside, pulled by a team of white horses.

BRUNO, in his late teens and filled with youthful enthusiasm, rides inside the cab, bending a resigned PRIOR LUCCA'S ear.

BRUNO (V.O.)
Pious V had heard about my
precocious talent in the Art of
Memory...

INT. VATICAN - DAY

A vast, richly appointed gallery, with shining marble floors, overlooking a labyrinthine garden.

SISTO LUCCA - in his prime - paces anxiously before a set of ornate double doors flanked by SWISS GUARDS. His FOOTSTEPS ECHO against the high vaulted ceilings.

BRUNO (V.O.)
And summoned me to Rome when I was
not yet eighteen!

LUCCA pauses at the doors, leans closer, in an attempt to eavesdrop. One of the GUARDS clears his throat and LUCCA resumes pacing.

INT. POPE'S AUDIENCE ROOM - DAY

POPE PIOUS V, an old man with tremulous limbs, sits on an ornate chair flanked by CARDINAL REBIBA, listening attentively, thoroughly entertained. *

BRUNO (V.O.)
Prior Lucca accompanied me, happy to
show me like a performing seal.

BRUNO eagerly operates a series of concentric wheels engraved with Greek and Latin symbols.

BRUNO

So, Omega at sixteen, and nine South
for Oracle, say, and I can recall
Psalms 104: "God, you are Infinitely
Great!

(beams at POPE, moves
wheels)

Or, Epsilon nineteen East, for
example: Judges 5:3: "Domino canam
Domino Deo Israel" "I will sing to
The Eternal, Sing to the God of
Israel!"

(puts finger to temple)

It's all here, Holy Father...

(touches wheels)

With the help of these.

He concludes the demonstration with an uncertain semi-bow.

The POPE stares at him for some moments, finally nods,
smiles, totally baffled - but good at this sort of thing.

POPE PIOUS V

Remarkable, remarkable... Brother
Giordano...?

(cocks head ever-so-
slightly)

From...?

CARDINAL REBIBA

Nola, Your Sanctity. A small town
near--

REBIBA'S words die in the POPE'S annoyed side-glance.

POPE PIOUS V

(nods, pleased)

A Neapolitan... My mother came from
Naples, did you know that, brother
Giordano?

BRUNO beams, then shakes his head. The POPE'S tired,
reminiscing gaze floats out the window

POPE PIOUS V (CONT'D)

She liked to sing, too, Mamma...

He begins to hum softly. His old voice is shrill and thin,
but perfectly pitched.

BRUNO smiles, nods at REBIBA approvingly, begins to
disassemble his contraption, joins in the well-known tune,
humming along with the POPE.

REBIBA takes a deep breath, resigned.

POPE PIOUS V finally lets the last note die with a sigh and
speaks to no one in particular.

POPE PIOUS V (CONT'D)
 Of all man-conceived things, the
 most divine is music, past songs and
 present. The best I have forgotten.

BRUNO
 It suffices to search your memory,
 Your Sanctity. They're there. Past,
 present, future is all the same.

The POPE turns to BRUNO, stirred.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 There are not really three Times,
 but one perfect Time, Infinite Time
 where all the songs ever sang are
 waiting to be remembered. His
 Sanctity need only command it.

He shuts the case; it locks with a CLICK-CLOCK of finality.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. MORGANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BRUNO is lost in thought.

BRUNO
 Pious V, the Great Inquisitor. To
 think that sweet, old man turned out
 to be the most blood-thirsty of all
 popes...

MORGANA pushes him onto his back, throws herself on him,
 laughing.

INT. MOROSINI PALACE, LIBRARY - NIGHT

A massive fireplace crackles with life in a large library.
 Platters with food left overs lie about. MORGANA and BRUNO,
 partly covered by delicate blankets, play "Memory" on a
 Persian rug.

NOTE: THE GAME CONSISTS OF SPREADING A FULL DECK OF CARDS,
 FACE DOWN, ON A FLAT SURFACE. THE FIRST PLAYER THEN FLIPS
 OVER TWO CARDS, HOPING TO MAKE A MATCH. IF A MATCH IS MADE,
 HE GETS TO KEEP THE CARDS AND PLAYS AGAIN. IF THE TWO CARDS
 ARE A MISMATCH, THE PLAYER REPLACES THEM, FACE-DOWN, EXACTLY
 WHERE HE FOUND THEM AND PASSES THE HAND. IN THE END, THE
 PLAYER WITH THE MOST CARDS WINS.

BRUNO'S memory is obviously exceptional, he is mercilessly
 sweeping the field.

MORGANA is not a good loser: she kicks and pinches BRUNO like
 a spoiled brat every time he finds a match; but not
 violently: there is sexual innuendo in her every move. BRUNO
 laughs and teases her. OVER ACTION:

BRUNO

Religions are like glow-worms: they need darkness in order to shine, you see?

MORGANA

I'm just a woman, I know nothing about these things, of course, but so, for you, there is no room for philosophical enlightenment within the Church?

BRUNO

Isn't it obvious? The Church abhors knowledge - physics, metaphysics..- Because it knows that knowledge is made of a much harder stuff than faith. When faith and knowledge collide, the former shatters.

MORGANA

To some, the Church is very useful.

BRUNO makes a match, MORGANA pinches him. He chuckles.

BRUNO

Why do you feel obligated to defend the Church? You too felt forced to leave it, didn't you?

MORGANA

Women like myself can never be forced, darling, only persuaded.

(grins, beat)

I don't defend the Church, but I feel it's beneath you to display your talent for philosophy by making sarcastic remarks about religion.

BRUNO

If one's abilities are only mediocre, modesty is mere honesty; but if you possess great talents, it is hypocrisy.

MORGANA

(sarcastic)

Well, then, rest assured: you will never be called a hypocrite.

(fails to make a match)

But every man's faith is sacred to him, therefore it ought to be sacred to you too.

BRUNO

I can't see why, because other people are simple-minded, I should respect a pack of lies. I respect only truth.

MORGANA

I did not join the Church seeking enlightenment, if you must know, but a sense to my life.

BRUNO

And did you find it? Did the Church help you in any way?

MORGANA

If it did not, it is probably because I am far too frivolous and spoiled a creature to endure its rigors.

BRUNO

Finally truth!

MORGANA

(ignoring the irony)

I don't think most common people are lucky enough to have direct access to metaphysical truths: so religion is simple schemata by which they are able to grasp it. In other words, religion gets them where they need to go.

BRUNO

As a wooden leg takes the place of a natural one, you mean?

MORGANA

If you haven't got a natural leg, a wooden one is very useful.

BRUNO studies her, aroused.

BRUNO

That makes a priest into a curious cross between a moralist and a deceiver, doesn't it? A peddler of fraud.

Beat. Four cards are left in the field; BRUNO flips over one of them, reaches for a second card, MORGANA holds his hand.

MORGANA

Let me win the last hand.

BRUNO smiles, flips over a different card than intended - a mismatch. MORGANA quickly flips over the matching pairs, delighted, kisses BRUNO a few times before...

MORGANA (CONT'D)

If religion is a fraud, it is a pious fraud.

BRUNO returns her kisses.

BRUNO

Fraud, nonetheless.

They get entangled.

NEW ANGLE - LATER

The TURKISH PRINCESS, dressed in mauve, weightless silks glides into the room like a medusa. She carries two liqueur glasses, hands one of them to MORGANA who lies curled on the rug among the playing cards in disarray, staring at the fire. She kisses her on the lips, exits past a SERVANT arriving with a clearing tray.

BRUNO, loosely wrapped in a bedsheet, is perched halfway a wooden ladder, holding a short candle, reading a red tome from a bookshelf. His eyes scan the pages with the same eagerness we recall from the forbidden book depository. PUSH.

MORGANA watches him sipping her liquor, amused, then suddenly laughs. The MUSIC IN BRUNO'S MIND abruptly stops, he looks at MORGANA, back in this world.

BRUNO

What?

MORGANA

I've never been neglected this way before. It suddenly struck me as terribly funny.

BRUNO

Who is this...Copernicus?

MORGANA

Some queer friend of my father's brought it from Germany, or Poland, I can't recall.

(reaches out to him)

Come...

BRUNO

He believes the Earth revolves around the Sun.

MORGANA

Yes...?

BRUNO

So do I!

MORGANA

Course you do. Come. Come...

BRUNO

Could I keep him?

MORGANA

Him?

BRUNO

Yes.

(holds book tightly)

He's alive!

MORGANA
 Father hardly reads these days,
 anyway. Too busy politicking.

BRUNO
 I thought your father was a banker.

She waves toward the wall.

MORGANA
 Same thing, isn't it?

BRUNO follows her gaze to the large oil portrait of DOGE MOROSINI, dressed in all the splendor of his office. BRUNO'S jaw drops, realizing MORGANA is the daughter of the Doge of Venice. He turns to her, speechless.

MORGANA laughs, wiggles her fingers at him.

MORGANA (CONT'D)
 Come.

Instead, she springs to her feet, stalks naked past the SERVANT, scoops BRUNO up in her arms - like one would a toddler - carries him away. BRUNO carries the leather-bound book in his arms.

MORGANA drops BRUNO on a large couch, tosses book aside, snaps up BRUNO'S sheet, balloons it voluptuously above their heads, lets it descend on them as she crawls on him, growling like some predatory beast.

THE SERVANT clears leftovers from the table AS WE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOROSINI PALACE, TERRACE - DAY

A GONDOLIER and a MAN stand on a rolling gondola, some twenty yards from the shore, in the Venice Lagoon.

CAMERA PANS to the large, marble terrace where SIR FRANCIS WALSINGHAM, a tall, imposing gentleman, elegantly dressed in black, hair still combed wet, stands sipping tea, watching.

WALSINGHAM
 (British accent)
 The Turks are creeping back. Spain
 and Austria snap about Venice's
 flanks... He can't afford to turn
 down the dozen ships I offer in
 England's name!

MORGANA (O.S.)
 He can and he will, Sir Francis,
 unless you strike a bargain.

WALSINGHAM turns, MORGANA breakfasts on a table set for four.

WALSINGHAM

He demands four dozen ships! Has he lost his mind?!

MORGANA

England needs his help or else you wouldn't be here.

A gust of wind slaps the awnings.

MORGANA (CONT'D)

Excuse me, I'm chilled...

She starts toward the house.

WALSINGHAM

You can convince him, Henry!
Elizabeth will know how to reward you.

MORGANA tosses him a wicked smile as she goes into the house.

MORGANA

No doubt, but will you?

Round the corner, out of sight, BRUNO, half dressed and wrapped in a warm blanket, steps onto the terrace. He carries a few sheets of parchment, a quill and ink, happy.

HIS POV: The MAN on the gondola removes his silk robe, hands it to the GONDOLIER, dives into the chilly-looking waters.

BRUNO walks round the corner, to the main terrace, is surprised by WALSINGHAM'S presence.

BRUNO

(embarrassed)

Oh! I'm sorry, I ignored there were other guests in the house...

WALSINGHAM

Not to worry. The Morosini has always been a most informal household.

(head bow)

Francis Walsingham. How do you do?

BRUNO

(in kind)

Giordano Bruno.

(beat)

There's some madman swimming out there!

WALSINGHAM follows his gaze to the lagoon.

WALSINGHAM

Indeed there is.

A SERVANT arrives with a tray of fruit, bread and a fresh pot of tea, serves BRUNO, replenishes WALSINGHAM'S cup.

BRUNO takes a seat, sets his ink and parchments on the table.

WALSINGHAM (CONT'D)
You write, Signor Bruno?

BRUNO
Philosophy. My quest is truth.

WALSINGHAM
(sympathetic)
Tall order.
(turns to the lagoon)
Risky business, too.

WHAT HE SEES: the man swimming ferociously on the choppy waters.

MORGANA returns, wrapped in a silk shawl.

MORGANA
Ah! I see you two have met.

She waves at the swimmer, BRUNO follows her gaze, puzzled.

WHAT HE SEES: the mad swimmer, THE DOGE, as he climbs onto the landing. His naked body steams in the chilled air. He waves back, gaily, steps into a bathrobe held by a SERVANT.

BRUNO looks at WALSINGHAM, embarrassed.

MORGANA (CONT'D)
(runs fingers through
Walsingham's hair)
Have you informed Giordano we were
lovers, Francis?

WALSINGHAM
Grow up, Henry...

BRUNO shifts, uneasy.

MORGANA
Calling me Henry won't change a
thing, you know?
(grabs apple from tray)
I've been trying to make Sir Francis
court me ever since I was a little
girl...
(shrugs, fickle)
Heart of ice... English, you know.

DOGE MOROSINI, looking anything but that, stalks up the marble steps flushed and grinning like a boy.

DOGE MOROSINI
Well, well, look at all the early
risers! One can hardly sleep past
eleven in this bloody household,
anymore. It's disgusting!

The SERVANT hurries to set a chair for the DOGE, pour tea.

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)
 Take that infusion out of my sight!
 Beer is what I want!

The SERVANT hurries off.

MORGANA
 I thought you were sleeping at the
 palace, father? Veronica said...

DOGE MOROSINI
 (disgusted grimace)
 That woman, she's got that wretched
 dog with her again! Can't get any
 serious sleep with a creature
 licking your toes all night long!
 (gives BRUNO an intense
 once-over)
 Ha!

MORGANA
 Father, this is Giordano Bruno...

DOGE MOROSINI
 (broad grin)
 The thinker...!

BRUNO
 (bows)
 Signor...
 (tightening his blanket)
 I'm sorry, I didn't expect...

He eyes MORGANA, mortified; she takes perverse pleasure in
 his discomfort.

DOGE MOROSINI
 (taking a seat)
 What do you make of this chap, Sir
 Francis? Makes a living with a
 quill, apparently. Can he be
 trusted?

WALSINGHAM
 A quills can be a formidable weapon,
 Excellency. On the other hand,
 Morgana has always shown remarkable
 discernment in her choice of
 friends.

BRUNO relaxes some; MORGANA touches her father's face.

MORGANA
 My God, father, you're freezing!

DOGE MOROSINI
 Nonsense! Where is that beer?

On cue, the TURKISH PRINCESS materializes with a pitcher of
 beer and serves the DOGE.

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)
 (pulling MORGANA by her
 waist, to BRUNO)
 Quite a dish, isn't she?
 (BRUNO leers at
 WALSINGHAM)
 Don't expect you do much thinking
 around her, do you?
 (chuckles, roguishly)
 Plenty of time for that when you
 can't get it up anymore!
 (ogling PRINCESS))
 And even then...!

DOG YELPS; the DOGE rolls his eyes, ducks, grabs his beer,
 slips away, pulling WALSINGHAM by the sleeve.

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)
 Come, Sir Francis, let's settle our
 business now...

WALSINGHAM
 It was a pleasure, Signor.

BRUNO nods politely, MORGANA leans on the balustrade.

HER POV: VERONICA FRANCO steps down from a gondola with the
 little dog in her arms, wiggles her fingers at CAMERA.

MORGANA waves back, turns to BRUNO, grinning mischievously.

MORGANA
 I leave her in your most able hands.
 I shan't be long...

She starts after the DOGE and WALSINGHAM. VERONICA FRANCO'S
 barking mutt scurries up the stairs.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

MORGANA joins WALSINGHAM and the DOGE. BRUNO can be seen
 watching them as the mutt jumps into his surprised arms.

WALSINGHAM
 (all business)
 You offer little certainty of
 success, Excellency. Eighteen ships
 is my last offer.

The DOGE remonstrates loudly; he knows how to drive a
 bargain.

MORGANA
 May I suggest a compromise, father?

DOGE MOROSINI
 Will it make any difference if I say
 no?

MORGANA
 (to WALSINGHAM)
 Two dozen ships, fully armed, and I
 vow to personally deliver the names
 of the conspirators.

WALSINGHAM
 Not for a moment would I dream of
 putting your life in jeopardy,
 child!

MORGANA
 Nor I Venice's. She is my business
 too.
 (turns to the DOGE)
 Father?

The DOGE considers, looks at WALSINGHAM.

DOGE MOROSINI
 Well?

CUT TO BLACK AND
 FADE IN ON:

INT. PARIS, LOUVRE - KING'S BEDROOM. [MILD STROBOSCOPIC
 EFFECT]

SEVERAL QUICK CUTS. EXTREME CLOSE-UP: the blood-shot eyes of
 a PRIEST glance SCREEN LEFT. A HAND pulls the head of a
 wooden cross concealing a dagger, thrusts it repeatedly into
 a death-pale male torso under a fine nightshirt. NO BLOOD
 COMES OUT. A MOUTH GASPS, SILENTLY. The priest, MONTALCINO,
 laughs soundlessly. SOUND OF HEART-BEAT FADES IN AND WE

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MOROSINI PALACE, MORGANA'S BEDROOM - DAWN

BRUNO wakes up in a cold sweat. He turns to MORGANA, sleeping
 soundly beside him, in the pale light of DAWN. He touches her
 temple. HEARTBEAT SLOWS DOWN as he slips quietly out of bed.

EXT. TERRACE, LATER

A thin, still fog hangs over the lagoon. CAMERA REVEALS
 BRUNO, at the table, intensely concentrated, writing.

MORGANA stands at her bedroom window, wrapped in a sensuous
 robe, watching him. She opens the window.

MORGANA
 (seductively)
 Signor...

BRUNO looks up from his work, smiles.

MORGANA opens her robe slowly: she is stark naked under it.

BRUNO puts down the quill to go. MORGANA shakes her head no.

MORGANA (CONT'D)
 Hu-uh... You abandoned me.
 (waves a letter)
 Get dressed. Your printer's proofs
 are ready.

INT. PRINTER'S BACK ROOM - DAY

BRUNO, clad in a new outfit, corrects proofs with MORGANA by his side. The PRINTER/BOOKSELLER, a cagey, anxious-looking fellow, looks over BRUNO'S shoulder.

MORGANA shows BRUNO she likes seeing him involved in his work, kisses him on the cheek, then moves off.

WE FOLLOW her to the store front. She flips through books on shelves. An OWLISH-LOOKING MESSENGER in a dark suit appears at the window, watches MORGANA for a moment, then moves off.

In back, BRUNO red-lines sections of the proofs. The PRINTER watches, resigned, begins taking down types from a cupboard.

The MESSENGER enters the store, approaches MORGANA. They exchange a few words and he passes her a note.

BRUNO does a double-take, glimpses MORGANA concealing the note in her sleeve.

BRUNO
 (to PRINTER, snappily)
 I expect this back in two days.

The PRINTER means to protest, but BRUNO has picked up his coat and hat, and stalked to the front of the store.

The MESSENGER passes hurriedly outside the window.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 Friend of yours?

MORGANA
 Pardon?

BRUNO
 (curtly)
 Who was that man?

MORGANA pouts, making light of the matter.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 Don't try to be funny!

Morgana's eyes flash with sudden anger. BRUNO grabs her arm, leads her roughly outside.

EXT. VENICE STREET - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO holds MORGANA, points after the MESSENGER making the corner.

BRUNO
He calls you Henry too?!

MORGANA laughs, BRUNO grabs her wrist, tries to reach into her sleeve.

BRUNO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
What's that he gave you?!

MORGANA
(wresting arm free)
What are you doing?!

BRUNO
I demand to know who that man was!

MORGANA slaps him.

MORGANA
You have no idea what effect such
language has on me!

She stalks off. BRUNO looks after her, burning with self-loathing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOCENIGO PALACE, ZUAN'S LOGGIA/STUDY ROOM - DAY

SHOOTING IN THROUGH THE WINDOW. BRUNO stands at the glass, an open book in his hand, his restless eyes on the grey day outside.

YOUNG MOCENIGO can be perceived behind him, rearranging a precious Murano crystal doll collection, reciting a lesson. He suddenly notices BRUNO'S distraction, demands his attention. BRUNO turns and, to YOUNG MOCENIGO'S surprise, leaves the room in haste.

EXT. MOROSINI PALACE, ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

URGENT DOOR KNOCKS. PUSHING A SERVANT as he glides silently along the marble floors. He opens the door, BRUNO storms in.

SERVANT (O.S.)
Salve, Signor Bruno...

BRUNO turns.

BRUNO
Morgana!

SERVANT
The Marchesa has left, Signor.

BRUNO
What? Left, where?

SERVANT
I don't know, Signor - with the
English gentleman, two days ago.

BRUNO stares at him, stunned.

SERVANT (CONT'D)
She left something for you.

INT. KITCHEN - SHORT TIME LATER

PULLING AWAY from a note in BRUNO'S hands, written in a
strong, bold script, signed, "M."

MORGANA (V.O.)
We think caged birds sing, when in
fact, they cry.

BRUNO stares at the letter, then looks wide-eyed at the
SERVANT who holds a torn envelope in his hand. CAMERA PUSHES
INTO BRUNO'S GAPING MOUTH AND WE

MATCH CUT TO:

THE BLACKNESS OF DEEP SPACE

A malformed moon whips by, leaving a view of...

INT. CELL - NIGHT

A STARRY NIGHT SKY. PULL BACK through prison cell bars. The
disturbingly suggestive PANTING, MOANING AND GROANING OF TWO
MEN FILL THE TRACK.

CELESTINO (O.S.)
So, I'm stuffing a piglet for
dinner, and the lusty bitch says,
"Stuff me, instead!" I oblige, of
course - I am her servant, and serve
I must. But, it was bound to
happen...

Relieved we DISCOVER BRUNO and CELESTINO DE VERONA, going
push-ups side by side in their Venetian prison cell.

CELESTINO (CONT'D)
The Prince walks into the kitchen
and, well...here I am today.
(collapses, exhausted)
Women, priests and chicken never
have enough! And you? What brought
you here?

BRUNO
 (exerting himself to one
 last push-up)
 Envy, fear, ignorance, slander...
 (collapses)
 Take your pick.

INT. VENICE, INQUISITORS' ROOM - DAY

The PRINTER/BOOKSELLER on the witness seat. His reluctance to deliver his words, especially good ones, betrays his green-eyed personality.

PRINTER/BOOKSELLER
 A good catholic...? Hum...yes, I
 suppose so, Excellency, but like
 many of the writers I've published,
 he shared with them that...self
 destructive bent, you know... Never
 satisfied with anything, are they?

WIPE LEFT TO:

SALUZZO

He leans forward on his elbows, ponderously -blink, twitch.

SALUZZO
 Brother Giordano, after you obtained
 your Doctor in Philosophy's degree,
 in Toulouse, you taught there three
 years. Then one day packed your
 bags and left. Why?
 (blink, blink)

BRUNO looks at him innocently.

BRUNO
 Yes...

EXT. TOULOUSE ALLEY - DAY

PULLING BRUNO, SLIGHTLY OFF-AXED, falling under the weight of SEVERAL STUDENTS being beaten and hacked to pieces by SOLDIERS AND ARMED PROTESTANTS clamoring "Death to Catholics!"

BRUNO (V.O.)
 Some people suggested a change of
 air.

BRUNO plays dead under the bodies, terrified.

QUICK CUT BACK
 TO:

INT. INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

BRUNO smiles at SALUZZO. SALUZZO stares back, puzzled.

SALUZZO
But, why Paris?

SHORT WIPE LEFT
TO:

PRINTER/BOOKSELLER

PRINTER/BOOKSELLER
Bloody intellectuals!

He eyes the Heavens AND WE

CUT TO:

SPACE

SPEEDING BACKWARDS. THE SUN WHIPS INTO FRAME, FLOODS THE
SCREEN BEFORE WE

PAN DOWN TO:

INT. PARIS CLASSROOM - DAY

BRUNO stands in front of a large blackboard on which
HENNEQUIN, one of BRUNO'S disciples, puts the final touches
to the sun in a drawing of Copernicus' heliocentric model.

BRUNO (V.O.)
The pest had spared Paris. I just
needed a place where I could teach
in peace.

BRUNO SHOUTS to make himself heard over the CLAMOR of the
STUDENTS, fiercely divided over his views.

BRUNO
Copernicus has turned Aristotle's
system on its head!

He backslaps the blackboard, startling HENNEQUIN who betrays
effeminate surprise to derision from the STUDENTS.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
The Sun is in the center! Earth
turns around it, not the other way
around, as you've been taught till
now!

TWO STERN-LOOKING YOUNG MEN lead the conservative camp.

FIRST YOUNG MAN
Why, that's absurd!

BRUNO

My friend, the absurdity of the universe is proportional to ours. Stop being absurd yourselves, and you'll soon see how everything I'm telling you makes perfect sense!

SECOND YOUNG MAN

Blasphemy! Did not Joshua say in the presence of Israel, "Sun, stop over Gabaon?!" Sun, stop - not Earth!

FIRST YOUNG MAN

(springing up in support)
"And you, Moon, stop over the valley of Ajalon?!"

The classroom is on the ground floor; the door and windows are open to the street, permitting those left outside the standing-room-only lecture to join in the heated argument.

BESLER, BRUNO'S other young secretary and disciple, taking notes on a portable writing desk, springs to his feet.

BESLER

Only fools and asses take the Holy Scriptures literally, don't they, Master?!

Without missing a beat, BRUNO shoves BESLER back to his seat, points to his notebook.

BRUNO

Write, Besler, write: I'm talking.

SECOND YOUNG MAN

(seething with contempt)
Is it your teaching, then, that we must ignore the word of God, which we all know to be infallible?!

The conservative camp remonstrates loudly, drowning what words follow out of BRUNO'S mouth.

THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW, MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC LEAGUE, dressed in black, with a red cross on their chest, can be seen shoving their way up through the CROWD.

At the blackboard, BRUNO traces the circle around Copernicus's universe with his finger.

BRUNO

I say ignore Copernicus as well! He is only partly correct.

(proudly)

I, Giordano Bruno, Magis Elaborata Theologia Doctor, say to you...

He takes the eraser, wipes off the circle enclosing the model.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
The Universe is end-less... In-fi-
nite.

The students quiet down as the fantastic notion dawns. BRUNO makes many dots representing stars beyond the solar system.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
And there are numberless suns and
worlds, such as ours...!

FIRST LEAGUER
(from outside)
How dare you!

SECOND LEAGUER
Sacrilege!

FIRST LEAGUER
Only God is infinite! You will lose
your tongue for speaking such
blasphemies!

BRUNO
(grins)
Maybe God won't hear me.

SECOND LEAGUER
God can hear you! God is
everywhere!

BRUNO
That's a contradiction in terms,
can't you see?! If God is infinite
and God is everywhere, how could he
fit in a finite universe?

Pushing and shoving breaks out among the lectured.

EXT. STREET, CONTINUOUS

SEVERAL BRUNO SYMPATHIZERS and MEMBERS OF THE LEAGUE take to their fists. SOUND OF HOOVES AND RATTLING OF SABRES. A contingent of the KING'S SOLDIERS ride up, the CROWD on the street parts for them. The CATHOLIC LEAGUE MEMBERS retreat.

TWO OFFICERS dismount, make their way to the classroom. The FIRST OFFICER produces a gold-trimmed envelope.

FIRST OFFICER
Giordanus Brunus Nolanus!

The silenced crowd makes way as BRUNO steps outside, tosses chalk, brushes his palms, somewhat apprehensively.

INT. PARIS LOUVRE, REAL TENNIS COURT - DAY

HENRI III, the King of France, a slender, distinguished man in his late twenties, plays Jeu de Paume (REAL TENNIS) with his cousin, THE DUKE OF GUISE, a dashing, athletic man with a scar on his cheek. Judging from their evident fatigue, this has been a long, hard match.

The spectators follow the contest from a long court-side verandah, behind a net. The camps are clearly divided: DE GUISE'S sympathizers, his "GUISARDS," militant members of his Catholic League - like DE GUISE dressed in black and armed to the teeth - eat, drink and cheer rowdily, encouraged by the LEAD GUISARD, DE GUISE'S favorite knight.

HENRI III's camp, composed of an equal number of women and men - NOBLES and MINIONS - appears subdued. The Spanish Ambassador, BERNARDINO DE MENDOZA, a refined man of aquiline features - a De Guise ally - occupies a buffer zone with AIDES.

A DOZEN GREYHOUNDS lie around the King's vacant, high-backed chair.

PULLING BRUNO

Hat in hand and looking as if he just stepped out of his classroom, arrives escorted by the TWO OFFICERS and a PAGE.

PAGE

Giordano Brunus Nolanus, Your Majesty!

HENRI III welcomes the excuse to catch his breath.

NOTE: ALL ITALIAN DIALOGUE, SUBTITLED.

KING HENRI III

(points to reserved seat)

Ah, Bruno! Benvenuto, si accomodi!

Ah, Bruno! Welcome, please join us!

His Excellency, Ambassador Castelnau, has strict instructions to make you feel at home.

BRUNO

(bows, relieved)

Honorato, Maestà.

Honored, Your Majesty.

MICHEL DE CASTELNAU, Seigneur de la Mauvissière, a genial man in his sixties, motions to the free seat on his right.

CASTELNAU

Allow me to introduce to you, Don Bernardino de Mendoza, Spain's Ambassador, Signor Bruno.

BRUNO and DE MENDOZA exchange polite nods, then BRUNO goes on nodding at the rest of the rubber-necked NOBLES looking his way.

At the far end of the court, DE GUISE bounces the ball off the wall, impatient.

DE GUISE
Finish catching your breath, Your Majesty?

HENRI III nods, agreeably, prepares to receive serve. DE GUISE serves. HENRI III returns well, DE GUISE nearly falls, attempting to reach the ball, which goes astray.

CASTELNAU applauds, enthusiastically.

CASTELNAU
You appear to have brought His Majesty a most auspicious reversal of fortune, Signor Bruno.

BRUNO
It would give me great pleasure if that were so, Excellency.

HENRI III exchanges sides with DE GUISE, walking around the net. DE GUISE bolts it, drawing roguish LAUGHTER from his camp.

HENRI III takes his position at the service line, crosses his gaze with BRUNO'S. BRUNO smiles, encouragingly. HENRI III serves: fault.

DE GUISE
A double-fault at this junction could prove fatal, Your Majesty. Careful!

KING HENRI III
You're not attempting to disturb my concentration, are you, cousin?!

DE GUISE
I didn't imagine that possible, Sire. Beg your pardon.

HENRI III takes his second serve. DE GUISE returns a bullet. HENRY III fails to reach. Once again, they change sides. The GUISARDS CHANT - an early form of hooliganism.

DE GUISE serves. A bullet. HENRI III scrambles to return the fast ball, finds himself easily displaced. DE GUISE moves around his backhand for an easy shot.

DE GUISE (CONT'D)
(scornful)
Let's see if you've finally mastered the tambour, Sire!

He whacks a blistering shot at a buttress on the right wall, jutting out at an angle. HENRI III lunges to reach the ball, crashes violently against the wall, loses his racquet, takes a bad fall.

An alarmed GASP rises from the gallery. DE GUISE bolts the net, helps HENRI III up. HENRI holds his wrist, pained.

DE GUISE (CONT'D)
Are you all right, Your Majesty?

KING HENRI III
Quite all right. Play on...

He smiles reassuringly at the gallery; his MINIONS applaud, regain their seats.

REFEREE
Game for the Duke of Guise! The
score is five-all!

HENRI III picks up his racquet, prepares to receive serve, concealing pain.

CASTELNAU leans toward BRUNO.

CASTELNAU
(under his breath)
I believe His Majesty is suffering.

DE GUISE serves. HENRI III returns badly, winces in pain.

KING HENRI III
(moving toward the net)
I must apologize, cousin, I'm afraid
I won't be able to finish our match
after all.

DE GUISE echoes the murmur of disappointment which ripples through the gallery.

DE GUISE
(for all to hear)
Perhaps one of your noblemen will
care to finish in your stead, Sire!

DE GUISE (CONT'D)
(sneering at gallery)
Anyone?

NOBLEMEN and MINIONS exchange awkward glances.

DE GUISE (CONT'D)
I suppose this is what's wrong with
France, these days! Not much
solidarity towards her King, is
there?! How about you...?
(almost mocking)
Seigneur de la Mauvissière? Care to
defend your King's honor?

CASTELNAU
(embarrassed)
I'm afraid I'm no match for his
Excellency's youth.
(beat)
Chess, perhaps!

His attempt to savage some dignity draws some friendly chuckles.

KING HENRI III
I'll be glad to finish the game
myself, cousin. Some other time...

DE GUISE
(deridingly)
You mean - mañana?

AMBASSADOR DE MENDOZA and the LEAD GUISARD celebrate the retort. DE GUISE removes his gripping glove, starts to walk off the court.

BRUNO (O.S.)
Ehr...Your Majesty, if I may...?

DE GUISE turns.

WIPE TO:

BRUNO - on his feet. All eyes on him.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
Would you allow me to finish your
match, Sire?

HENRI III blinks, glances at CASTELNAU.

KING HENRI III
(uncertain)
Well, I...

DE GUISE
(deridingly)
Aren't you that...philosopher?!

BRUNO
Don't let that intimidate you,
Excellency, I assure you philosophy
is not black magic!

HENRI III's camp roars with much welcome LAUGHTER. DE GUISE does not like it, he starts back.

HENRI'S eyes question CASTELNAU. Obviously there is much more at stake here than a game of racquets.

BRUNO leans close to the King.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
(sotto voce)
Si fidi, Maestà.
Trust me, Majesty.

HENRI III scrutinizes BRUNO for an eternal four seconds; then...

KING HENRI III
Banco!

His eyes sparkle as he turns to the gallery.

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)
Our learnt visitor, Giordano Bruno,
will take on His Excellency in my
stead!

(to DE GUISE)
That is - if you don't mind matching
yourself with superior wits, cousin?

More friendly LAUGHTER. BRUNO bows gracefully, removes his coat, rolls his sleeves. DE GUISE fits his glove back on, stares down at BRUNO.

DE GUISE
You'll need more than wits to win
this game for His Majesty, I'm
afraid, Signor.

On cue, HENRI III hands BRUNO his own, royal racquet.

BRUNO
Thank you, Sire.

The PAGE promptly brings a pair of velvet slippers out to the court. Bruno removes his shoes, puts on the slippers and starts toward the Service Side of the court, somewhat disoriented.

DE GUISE
Ehr...
(signals opposite end)
You are on the receiving end, I'm
afraid.

REFEREE
The score is fifteen-love! The Duke
of Guise serves!

DE GUISE
Sure you wish to go through with
this exercise, Doctor?

BRUNO
The onus of all philosopher is to
believe in the impossible,
Excellency.

DE GUISE sneers at HENRI III.

DE GUISE
Indeed it must be...

HENRI III holds BRUNO'S gaze with a dignified smile.

DE GUISE serves a bullet. BRUNO swings late, misses the ball completely. A LOUD CHEER comes from DE GUISE'S hooligans.

REFEREE
Thirty-Love!

CASTELNAU glances at HENRI III with concern. HENRI III stares ahead.

BRUNO repositions himself, takes stock of the court's dimensions.

DE GUISE serves another racket. BRUNO miss-hits it miserably, sends the ball to CRASH off the thirty-foot ceiling.

The GUISARDS roar with LAUGHTER.

DE GUISE
(holding up his racquet)
Would you prefer a Spanish racquet,
Signor? I find they have more
character.

DE MENDOZA celebrates the quip with discrete applause. CASTELNAU casts his eyes, flushed with embarrassment.

HENRI III stares stonily ahead, fondling one of his hounds.

DE GUISE picks up the stray ball.

DE GUISE (CONT'D)
Busting the king's balls is against
the rules, Signor!

Another ROAR OF LAUGHTER from his rogues.

BRUNO studies his unfamiliar, stringed racquet, grips it a bit longer, readies for the next serve.

REFEREE
Forty-love! Match point!

DE GUISE serves another blistering shot. BRUNO does not move. The GUISARDS spring to their feet, cheering victoriously.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
Fault!

DE GUISE grins at HENRI III, shows him a tiny space between his thumb and forefinger, prepares to take his second serve.

BRUNO waits until DE GUISE is committed to his serve, then takes two steps forward, follows the bounces of the powerful shot, strikes the ball on the rebound, lobbing high.

A disconcerted DE GUISE scrambles to hit the ball back.

BRUNO is perfectly positioned; he sends the ball back on an erratic course against the walls. DE GUISE loses his sense of direction. BRUNO lays a Chase - an option to serve.

The King's supporters, surprised, CLAMOR in approval. HENRI III smiles discretely at CASTELNAU, speaks softly.

KING HENRI III
Honor is saved.

The REFEREE notes his board.

REFEREE
Fifteen-forty! Signor Bruno will
defend his Chase!

BRUNO and DE GUISE exchange sides, BRUNO to serve.

DE GUISE
(at the net)
You like to prolong your agony,
Doctor...

BRUNO
A most Christian weakness, I'm
afraid, Excellency. Please, be
indulgent.

BRUNO stands at the *Service End*, hits a soft, high ball,
perfectly placed into the corner of the Service box, where it
virtually dies on a helpless DE GUISE.

REFEREE
Thirty-forty!

APPLAUSE from the HENRI III's camp. DE GUISE inspects the
ball, suspicious, tosses it out of play.

BRUNO
I've cast no spell on it, I assure
you, Your Excellency.

LAUGHTER from the royal gallery. DE GUISE glares at BRUNO.
The PAGE tosses BRUNO another ball.

BRUNO serves. This time DE GUISE is ready. He smashes the
ball against the back wall. BRUNO receives it on the rebound,
sends it on a lobbing trajectory, directly into the Winning
Gallery - a smaller opening on the far end of the side wall,
scoring an outright point.

REFEREE
Forty-all!

HENRI III beams, allows himself some hope.

DE MENDOZA nods in good sportsmanship.

BRUNO serves again. An easy serve DE GUISE plays with assured
dexterity.

BRUNO is ready for the return; he sends the ball straight
into the *Grille*, a small square, in one corner of the court.

BRUNO
That's also a point, isn't it
Excellency? I haven't played this
funny game in some time...

DE GUISE fumes.

REFEREE

Advantage Signor Bruno! Match
point!

BRUNO takes his position to serve for the match. DE GUISE
prepares to receive, pacing, like a caged lion.

DE GUISE

Serve like a man, for once!

BRUNO

Sure you could handle it,
Excellency?

DE GUISE

(incensed)

Serve!

BRUNO bows. One could hear a pin fall. BRUNO holds the ball
up, offers it to HENRI III, serves a surprising, blistering
shot.

DE GUISE grins a secret victory, feeling in the more familiar
ground of fast balls, returns a powerful backhand. They
settle into a rally. Soon, DE GUISE is doing all the running,
BRUNO, stock still, in the center of the service side, toys
with him. DE GUISE pants: it becomes painful to watch.
Finally, BRUNO moves slightly sideways and prepares for the
kill.

BRUNO

Let's find out if you've mastered
the tambour, Excellency!

As he delivers a murderous smash into the angled buttress. DE
GUISE tries in vain to guess the erratic bounces of the ball,
swings at air and ends on his ass, defeated.

NOBLES, MINIONS AND GUESTS rise in victory. HENRI III is on
his feet, applauding enthusiastically. He stalks onto the
court. BRUNO bows before him, elated.

DE GUISE picks himself up.

DE GUISE

(bristling)

Where the devil did you learn to
play this game?!

BRUNO

(beaming)

You play beautifully, as well,
Excellency.

DE GUISE

I demand a rematch!

KING HENRI III

Come, now, cousin, don't be a sour
loser. We beat you fair and square.

DE GUISE eats his next words, stalks off, fuming.

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)
Bravo, Giordano!

The gallery echoes his praise.

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)
(taking BRUNO'S arm)
Oblige me, Signor, we have much to
talk about...

They walk away through the applauding COURTIERS and GUESTS,
trailed by the GREYHOUNDS AS WE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOUVRE, GARDENS - ANOTHER DAY

WIDE. BRUNO and HENRI III stroll with the GREYHOUNDS in tow.
HENRI III wears a velvet gown with little skulls embroidered
on the sleeves. His wrist is bandaged.

KING HENRI III
It is said you live a godless life.
Is that true, Giordano?

BRUNO
Not a godless life, Sire. At the
moment, I live a churchless life.

KING HENRI III
Then, what is your religion?

BRUNO
Does His Majesty suppose God cares
about our religions?

KING HENRI III
God may not. Kings must, I'm
afraid.

BRUNO
If my religion ever sees the light
of day, it will not be one of these
head-severing, book burning
religions we know today but a true
philosophy. One of reconciliation,
Sire. Not only of Protestants and
Catholics, but of Man and God.

HENRI III tries to restrain a flash of recognition in his
eyes.

KING HENRI III
These are dangerous ideas, Giordano.

BRUNO
Seeking truth often is, Majesty.

They have come to a terrace leading through open doors into a casual wing of the palace. HENRI studies BRUNO as they climb a set of steps.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
Did I offend you, Sire?

KING HENRI III
No. I know what you are saying,
better than you think.

INT. COLLATION ROOM, CONTINUOUS

CATHERINE DE'MEDICI stands in the middle of the high-ceiling yet warm reception room, waiting.

HENRI III and BRUNO come in with the GREYHOUNDS in tow.

KING HENRI III
Mamma!

BRUNO bows.

CATHERINE DE'MEDICI
Come sta il mio caro figlio?
How is my beloved son?

KING HENRI III
Ti ho fatto aspettare? Mi dispiace,
Mamma.
**Have I kept you waiting? I'm sorry,
Mother.**
(smiles at BRUNO)
How time flies in rich company.

They move toward a sitting set. MUSIC FROM A STRING TRIO in the far end of the room fills the air. The GREYHOUNDS lie down pell-mell on the intricate parquet floors.

CATHERINE DE'MEDICI
Are you all right? I heard you hurt
yourself playing.

KING HENRI III
(flexing bandaged wrist)
Victory works wonders on pain,
Madame.

CATHERINE takes a seat, SERVANTS immediately begin serving beverages and cakes.

CATHERINE DE'MEDICI
(eyeing SERVANT, bothered)
Your win over your cousin has the
palace in a complete state of
hysteria.

KING HENRI III
I owe it to our visitor, Giordano
Bruno, Mother.

CATHERINE DE'MEDICI
 (a wary once-over)
 So...you are Bruno...

She turns her attention to the pastries while BRUNO puts his lips to the tip of her disinterested hand.

BRUNO
 Majesty...

KING HENRI III
 A frank, enlightened mind come to us from Naples! He rescued me from a most embarrassing defeat.

CATHERINE DE'MEDICI
 I don't know whether I should congratulate or reproach you, Signor. In times such as we live, inflicting useless victories on one's rivals could bring one very bad luck.

KING HENRI III
 Mamma, per piacere!
Mother, please!
 (makes evil-eye sign)
 Jettatura! Malocchio!

He turns to BRUNO to change the subject.

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)
 Incidentally, how may I show my gratitude for your most opportune intervention, Giordano? Even philosophers must indulge some mundane desires?!

BRUNO
 By allowing me to dedicate my last book to His Majesty, Sire?

CATHERINE chooses a cake from a tray presented by a SERVANT.

CATHERINE DE'MEDICI
 What does your book speak about, Doctor, may I know?

BRUNO
 (enthused)
 It is called "Dei Umbris Idearum," it explains the art of memory...

KING HENRI III
 (impatient)
 Philosophy, Mother. Ideas. Bold, new!
 (to BRUNO)
 At any rate, I shall be delighted.

CATHERINE DE'MEDICI
 (turning away)
 We have serious state business to
 tend to. Dispatch your guest, Your
 Majesty.

KING HENRI III
 Yes...Ehr...
 (takes BRUNO'S arm)
 Will you come see me again,
 Giordano, and explain the enigmas of
 your philosophy to Mother and my
 friends?

BRUNO
 I should be greatly honored, Sire.
 (bows at CATHERINE)
 Signora...

She barely acknowledges him, chooses another pastry. HENRI
 and BRUNO start toward the far door.

A PAPAGAYO on a golden perch spreads its fulgorant wings.

PAPAGAYO
 "DOWN WITH SCARFACE!
 LONG LIVE KING HENRI!"

HENRI shares a private chuckle with BRUNO.

KING HENRI III
 Gift from Queen Elizabeth...
 (mischievous glance back)
 Mother disapproves.

He motions with his hand. A waiting SERVANT scurries up with
 several meters of forest-green velvet folded into a gift.

HENRI III takes the fabric and puts it in BRUNO'S surprised
 arms, then takes the fancy pouch out of his pocket and slips
 it into BRUNO'S, with a jingle of gold.

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)
 And, thank you, again, Giordano...
 (BRUNO'S looks speechless)
 It's not often I don't regret
 trusting a foreigner.

INT. VENICE, PRISON CELL - DAY

BRUNO, squatted by the window, writes. He looks unhinged,
 ready to blow up; plugs fashioned from bread-dough stick out
 of his exasperated ears.

In the b.g., CELESTINO DE VERONA can be perceived
 gesticulating broadly and talking to him non-stop.

BRUNO (V.O.)
 I am a philosopher, not a
 theologian! My books are about
 philosophy, not religion!
 (MORE)

BRUNO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It's oats to me how God and my
 neighbor choose to communicate!

EXT. VENICE, PIAZZA SAN MARCO - DAWN

The silhouette of YOUNG MOOR hurries across the lightly populated square, under a light drizzle. The BELL CHIMES in the cathedral's belfry.

SALUZZO (O.S.)
 But, did you not write - and I
 quote:

INT. VENICE, INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

SALUZZO reads from a file.

SALUZZO
 "The closer to religion, the further
 away from God?"

EXT. DOGE'S PALACE, BOCCA DEL LEONE - DAY

A lion's head with an open mouth is affixed to a heavy door. Beneath it is the inscription: "DENONTIE SECRETE." The YOUNG MOOR approaches, cautiously slips an envelope with Mocenigo's swan family seal into the lion's mouth.

BRUNO (O.S.)
 Yes, but only in a philosophical
 sense, of course...

WIPE RIGHT TO:

INT. INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

BRUNO addresses the inquisitors, intense.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 For God is a whole -as thought is a
 whole. While ideas are single, and
 every religion is an idea of how we
 should honor God!

SALUZZO squints, successfully confounded, darts an irritated glance at the ASSESSORS.

INT. ROME, HOLY OFFICE - DAY

PULL BACK FROM POPE GREGORY XIII's trembling hands, holding a book. BRUNO's name is on its cover, and the title: "Arca di Noe."

Daylight streams down from high windows into the majestic amphitheater. The POPE sits in a pulpit, plainly dressed but wearing the tall, top-heavy seven-tier Papal crown.

SANTASEVERINA (O.S.)

He writes the most outrageous and
offensive imprecations against the
Church, Your Sanctity! Blasphemies
against the Heavens!

POPE GREGORY XIII peruses the book, clearly suffering from
dementia, unaware of the implications.

POPE GREGORY XIII

Ah, yes, yes...acqua...

CAMERA REVEALS SANTASEVERINA, clad in the purple robe of a
Cardinal, flushed with frustration. He sits opposite the
POPE, flanked by a grave-looking LUCCA wearing the cloth of a
bishop.

SANTASEVERINA

Pardon?! Giordano Bruno is a
convinced and dangerous heresiarch,
Your Holiness!

CARDINAL ARIGONI, an elderly, pale, bony man with colorless
eyes, stands by POPE GREGORY with handkerchief at the ready.

SANTASEVERINA (CONT'D)

His ambition is to lead a new
religious movement. Even has a name
for his followers, already.
Giordanisti, he calls them!

The POPE squints, cups his ear with a trembling hand, ARIGONI
leans closer, dries the POPE'S dripping saliva.

ARIGONI

(louder)

"Giordanisti," Your Sanctity!
"Giordanisti!"

The POPE looks at SANTASEVERINA, obviously at a loss.

SANTASEVERINA

(points to LUCCA)

Why, if bishop Lucca had not let him
slip through his fingers five years
ago, we would have tried and
excommunicated him long ago!

The POPE nods, knits brow questioningly at ARIGONI.

ARIGONI

(leaning in, louder)

We should have excommunicated him
long ago!

The POPE looks at LUCCA alarmed, wondering perhaps why they
are speaking about LUCCA'S excommunication.

LUCCA looks down at his folded hands, enduring patiently.

SANTASEVERINA
 Brother Giordano must be stopped,
 Your Holiness! He now has the ear of
 the King of France!

POPE GREGORY XIII
 (to ARIGONI)
 A deer from France...?

BRUNO'S book slips from the POPE'S grip and tumbles down the steps. A PRIEST hurries to pick it up.

ARIGONI
 His Holiness needs to rest. Take
 him to his chamber.

TWO PRIESTS lift the POPE out of his seat, carry him away in a seated position.

A prolonged, HIGH-PITCHED FART recedes with him as the POPE is taken to the back of the amphitheater where a door silently opens.

LUCCA sighs, relieved.

ARIGONI (CONT'D)
 Bishop, you care to comment?

LUCCA
 I believe a new science is being
 born, Cardinal. Its discoveries are
 in apparent contradiction with the
 letter of the scriptures but may
 well contain a grain of truth.
 Brother Bruno is far from alone
 exploring these new conceptions...
 (eyes SANTASEVERINA)
 Either the Church assimilates this
 fresh movement of ideas or we
 exclude ourselves from the world of
 science altogether.

SANTASEVERINA remonstrates; CARDINAL ARIGONI, obviously his superior, lifts a hand permitting LUCCA to speak on.

LUCCA (CONT'D)
 Great minds have always been part of
 the Church, Eminence.

SANTASEVERINA
 Giordano Bruno, a great mind...?!
 He's a conceited braggart with his
 head stuffed full of heretical filth--
 -!

LUCCA
 We never should have chased him
 away! We sharpened his mind; we
 made him what he is and now--

SANTASEVERINA
 You made Bruno what he is, not us!

ARIGONI

In any event, great mind or not,
brother Giordano has become too
important to ignore.

(to LUCCA)

He should be with us, not against
us.

EXT. PARIS STREET, NEAR NOTRE DAME - DAY

WIDE. CAMERA SINGLES OUT a white Vatican coach pulled by six
foaming horses along the busy street, loaded with luggage.

Inside rides LUCCA, set features and tired, accompanied by
THREE VATICAN STAFF.

ARIGONI (V.O.)

I am leaving this matter under your
responsibility, brother Lucca. You
know Bruno better than any of us.

The coach turns a corner, allowing CAMERA to pick the swift
progress of TWO CAPPED FIGURES taking the steps, down to...

EXT. BANKS OF THE SEINE - CONTINUOUS

The TWO CAPPED FIGURES, their backs to CAMERA, approach a
docked *peniche* (period barge). The first figure - the
MESSENGER we met at the printer's, in Venice - glances back
over his shoulder, knocks softly on the cabin door. A moment
later, the door opens and he shows the other visitor in.

INT. BARGE - LATER

Pulling away from the face of BERNARDINO DE MENDOZA.

DE MENDOZA

(hushed tones)

Queen Elizabeth's death will solve
nothing if De Guise's army is not
landed in England on time!

PULLBACK REVEALS a RAPACIOUS-LOOKING MAN in his late twenties
sitting in half-shadows, in a corner, behind DE MENDOZA.

In the opposite corner sits the pox-marked man we soon come
to recognize as BISHOP CARCATERRA, dressed as a civilian.

MORGANA (O.S.)

You truly expect the Morosini bank
to finance such risky proposition,
without even knowing who guarantees
the deed, Ambassador?

CAMERA REVEALS an androgynous-looking MORGANA - hair trimmed *
short, entirely devoid of make-up - ravishing.

DE MENDOZA

You're not exactly giving us the funds for free, Marchesa. At the rates you charge, a little risk should not be--

MORGANA has picked up her gloves to go.

MORGANA

Very well. If Spain will play her cards so close to her chest...

DE MENDOZA puts a delicate hand on her sleeve.

DE MENDOZA

Marchesa, please...

(forces a smile)

These are justified precautions, I assure you, designed only to protect Venice, as well as ourselves.

(MORGANA considers)

You will be given full details once the funds have safely reached England.

He darts a tense side-glance at CARCATERRA.

DE MENDOZA (CONT'D)

You have our word.

INT. VENICE, INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

BRUNO springs to his feet, exasperated, a GUARD shoves him back down to his seat.

BRUNO

My accuser says, my accuser says! My accuser has bird-droppings for brain, Reverend Father! Why, my relationship with the King of France was not that sort of thing at all! Our discussions were never of a religious nature. King Henri admired my philosophy, and that was all we ever talked about!

KING HENRI III (O.S.)

Fellatio with ice-cubes?!

EXT. LOUVRE GARDENS - DAY

HENRI III, wearing a surprising pair of green, emerald sunglasses, plays croquet with one of his MINIONS, trailed by a small crowd of COURTIERS. He wears a bandage on one foot, walks with the help of a beautiful striped-colored mallet. He speaks in low tones to BRUNO who strolls by his side.

KING HENRI III

What a delicious idea...!
(obviously aroused)

(MORE)

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)
I wonder why Veronica did not oblige
me...?

THE MINION hits his ball, misses.

MINION
Your turn, Majesty!

HENRI III hands the mallet to his personal SERVANT.

BRUNO
You were in Venice during
summertime, Sire.

KING HENRI III
Ice cubes, of course! Be strictly a
winter delight, wouldn't it?

They share a roguish chuckle. The SERVANT proceeds to make
HENRI'S shot, immediately hands the mallet back to the king.
HENRI'S ball scores through the loop.

MINION
Bravo, Sire!

HENRI takes a bow, acknowledges the group applauding behind
him, turns to BRUNO, sotto voce. *

KING HENRI III
What am I to do with these turnips,
Giordano?

He notices BRUNO admiring his sun glasses, takes them off,
forces them in Bruno's hands, moves on.

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)
Take them, they're yours.

BRUNO
Your Majesty...!

HENRI waves him off.

KING HENRI III
Tell me, has she aged well?

BRUNO puts on the shades, marvels at the new green world.

BRUNO
Women like Veronica Franco do not
get older, Majesty, only better.

HENRI laughs, takes BRUNO'S arm, they walk away, leaving the
game and the COURTIERS at a loss.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOUVRE, KING'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

HENNEQUIN approaches the dining table where HENRI III dines with BRUNO, CATHERINE DE'MEDICI, DE MENDOZA, the QUEEN and a half-dozen FAVORITES. He holds a luxuriously-bound book. He bows at the King and hands the book to BRUNO, then retires. BRUNO stands and offers the book to HENRI III with a deep reverence.

HENRI III reads the dedication, hands it to the MINION on his left to pass around, then stands and kisses BRUNO on both cheeks. He lifts a glass, makes an announcement. Everyone but CATHERINE DE'MEDICI and DE MENDOZA celebrate with applause.

SALUZZO (O.S.)

Did you inform the King you were a defrocked apostate when he offered you a seat in the royal college?

WIPE DOWN TO:

INT. VENICE, INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

SALUZZO leans avidly on his elbows - blink, twitch.

SALUZZO

Well...?

BRUNO

What need?! Spain's Ambassador had made sure the King was told that lie long before! I should have been happy to reconcile myself with the Catholic Church...

INT. PARIS, ROYAL COLLEGE OF CLUNY - DAY

BRUNO lectures in a large, high-ceilinged auditorium with plenty of light. He stands on a raised platform, before the familiar sight of STUDENTS arguing violently over his views.

BRUNO (V.O.)

But I was told I would have to disown my writings. In any event, it mattered little to His Majesty, I suppose. I was named reader *extraordinaire* on the merits of my ideas alone. Religion played no part...

INT. LOUVRE, KING'S LIBRARY - DAY

HENRI III and BRUNO stand before an odd-looking contraption, similar to the one BRUNO demonstrated for Pope Pious V in his youth, with concentric moving wheels, and myriad symbols.

BRUNO is using it to recall passages from the Bible HENRI III holds open in his hands, making a powerful impression.

BRUNO (V.O.)

King Henri was a deeply curious man. He wished to learn about the art of memory and I obliged him, of course. He was thankful. Till much later, he didn't strike me as the sort of monarch who cared how others would view his acts. He was a man of courage.

HENRI III touches the wheels with obvious apprehension.

KING HENRI III

The art of memory frightens me. Is it magic?

BRUNO

Natural magic, Sire: science.
(motions to apparatus)
Try for yourself.

HENRI III operate the wheels with BRUNO'S help.

BRUNO (V.O.)

We had much in common: we both were men of destiny, deeply misunderstood.

HENRI III accomplishes the exercise.

BRUNO

Bravo, Your Majesty!

APPLAUSE. HENRI III glances back and CAMERA REVEALS A DOZEN COURTIERS seated in a semicircle - some with dogs on their laps - applauding enthusiastically.

EXT. PARIS, SPANISH EMBASSY - DAY

A three-story house, resplendent in the midday summer sunshine. A garden with stone benches. A long table overflowing with fruit, bowls of nuts and other delicacies. *

A reception celebrating the new Gregorian calendar is in progress. A banner makes a humorous reference to the ten days lost with the change. TEN PRETTY SERVANT GIRLS bearing numbers 1-to-10, pass filling wine glasses.

They take OUR VIEW to MICHEL DE CASTELNAU and BRUNO drinking and talking to a lively group of NOBLES by a grill roasting chickens. We recognize a pedantic DE GUISE SYMPATHIZER from the tennis match surrounded by CRONIES.

DE GUISE SYMPATHIZER

(to BRUNO)

Your lessons are causing quite a stir, Doctor. The Catholic League has apparently threatened violence unless the King removes you from Cluny forthwith!

BRUNO
Truth always kicks up a little
dust...

DE GUISE SYMPATHIZER
(stabbing chicken off
grill)
So do cocks and look where they end
up!

LAUGHTER from his CRONIES. DE MENDOZA, who has overheard this
last, joins the group.

DE MENDOZA
Let's hope the dust settles before
you lose sight of the real aim of
philosophy, Doctor.

BRUNO
Which is, Ambassador?

CASTELNAU
(hoping to defuse a
confrontation)
I understand you're being posted to
London, Ambassador De Mendoza?
(DE MENDOZA turns)
You think the English will accept
Pope Gregory's new calendar or will
they prefer to remain ten days
behind the rest of the civilized
world?

DE MENDOZA
As long as a heretic sits on her
throne, England will remain an
island of discord, Ambassador.
(back to BRUNO)
The aim of philosophy, Doctor -to
finish my thought- is to discourage
the temptation to reinterpret the
unerring word of God.

BRUNO
On the contrary, Ambassador:
Philosophy is a license to probe
all, especially that which appears
to be true.

DE MENDOZA
Philosopher - and wit! Remarkable!
His Majesty must find you most
entertaining, indeed!
(to someone behind BRUNO)
Ah, how propitious, Monsignor! I
seem to have painted myself into a
philosophical corner of sorts. Would
you come to my rescue?

All turn to face SISTO LUCCA. BRUNO'S heart takes a leap.

LUCCA
 (bowing, politely)
 Ambassador...

DE MENDOZA
 Allow me to present to you His
 Excellency, Seigneur de La
 Mauvissière, the King's Ambassador
 to England, back among us for a
 visit.
 (under his breath)
 Short, let's hope.

LUCCA
 (nodding at CASTELNAU)
 Seigneur...

DE MENDOZA
 And Giordanus Brunus Nolanus, Doctor
 in Philosophy. A praised new
 acquisition of Henri's court, I'm
 being told.

BRUNO bristles, LUCCA'S eyes flash with irony.

LUCCA
 Doctor...

BRUNO, less good at this sort of game, tries to smile, red as
 a pepper.

DE MENDOZA
 Monsignor Lucca visits us from Rome,
 as Ambassador to Pope Gregory.
 (favoring BRUNO)
 Doctor Bruno and I were just
 matching wits over the religious
 merits of philosophy. I would be
 grateful to yield to your erudition
 in this field, Monsignor. In any
 case, I'm afraid I've neglected my
 other guests way too long.
 (bows graciously at group)
 If you'll excuse me, gentlemen...

LUCCA stirs BRUNO gently away.

LUCCA
 Well, well, what a most unexpected
 and pleasant surprise!

BRUNO
 Speaking for yourself, of course.

LUCCA
 (smiles)
 Come, now... The tree of rancor
 never bore fruit, Giordano. I
 myself have long ago forgiven your
 most uncivil departure. I'm bearer
 of good news.

(MORE)

LUCCA (CONT'D)

His Sanctity thinks the Church can not afford to have you playing for the other team. I am here to express his desire that you regain your rightful place among us.

BRUNO

Really? Is Pope Gregory aware that I've grown accustomed to reading and saying what I please...

LUCCA

(a wicked smile)

Times are changing. The Church will soon be prepared to admit that the Heavens are changing as well. It's all a question of balance, a little give-and-take. You compose a simple statement of faith, recognize a few mistakes and Rome overlooks--

BRUNO

Mistakes?

(ironic)

Not my books, of course. Or does Pope Gregory think ideas may be wiped out like so many days from the calendar?

LUCCA

You shall write more - and better - books. Don't waste this opportunity, Giordano. Pope Gregory is quite ill. Who knows how accommodating the next pontiff shall be?

TWO BISHOPS approach. One of them is CARCATERRA.

FIRST BISHOP

(to BRUNO, stuttering)

Eh-eh-eh-excuse me...

(to LUCCA)

Ha-ha-have you met Bi-bishop Ca-ca-car-carcaterra, Monsignor?

LUCCA

(obviously has)

Bishop...

(to BRUNO)

Think it over... Your place is among your brothers, Giordano.

He holds BRUNO'S gaze a moment, goes. BRUNO looks after him.

MORGANA (O.S.)

I didn't know you were on speaking terms with the Church, once again?

BRUNO turns, finds himself facing MORGANA - radiant in a shimmering, organza suit. He cannot help a rush of emotion.

MORGANA (CONT'D)

(smiles)

Don't look so frightened, I'd just like a word with you.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BRUNO'S PARIS ROOM - NIGHT

BRUNO and MORGANA make passionate love by a flickering candlelight. They climax, slowly disentangle themselves, spent. They lie apart, catching their breath. MORGANA whispers, satisfied.

MORGANA

Peccato mortale...

BRUNO chuckles softly, barely conscious.

NEW ANGLE, LATER

BRUNO and MORGANA lie spooned in the milky glow of moonlight filtering in through the ballooning, voile. After a time, MORGANA stirs, snuffles BRUNO'S neck.

MORGANA (CONT'D)

Nothing has changed. Strange...

BRUNO

Does it frighten you?

MORGANA

Nothing frightens me. Certainly not you!

BRUNO

"We think caged birds sing when in fact they cry."

MORGANA

That meant you, silly, not me!

BRUNO

I behaved stupidly.

MORGANA

Without a doubt. But that's not why I left.

BRUNO

Is it over between you?

MORGANA looks puzzled.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Walsingham...

MORGANA

What?!

(laughs)

You thought me and...?!

(more brilliant laughter)

Did you really believed Sir Francis
and I had an affair?! My poor
darling...!

(rises on one elbow)

Didn't father explained I left on
important Venice business?

BRUNO

I never dared see your father after
that day.

She laughs louder, kisses him.

MORGANA

Oh, my sweet Giordano! At this
moment, I almost love you back.

(kisses him, then...)

I hear you're a regular guest of
King Henri, these days. Will you
take me with you next time?

BRUNO

If I know you at all, you hardly
need my invitation to attend Henri's
court.

MORGANA

But I want to come with you, silly.
Must I beg?

BRUNO

You wouldn't know how.

(she bites his ear)

I'll have to see... I have many
other requests...

She bites harder, they get involved. MORGANA lets out a
SHRIEK as they roll off the edge of the bed.

INT. TAILOR'S SHOP - DAY

MORGANA sits on a stool, smoking a pipe. TWO LADIES whisper
behind her back, scandalized.

BRUNO, on a verbose roll, is being measured for a suit by an
OLD TAILOR.

HENNEQUIN and BESLER, obviously a couple, hold open the
forest-green material offered by HENRI III, listen to BRUNO,
enraptured.

BRUNO

Instead, the Church claims to preach
truths in the strictest sense of the
word. There lies the deception!

(MORE)

BRUNO (CONT'D)

And this is why, as friends of
truth, we must oppose all religions!

HENNEQUIN and BESLER assent, convinced; the OLD TAILOR
prefers not to hear, glances toward the TWO LADIES, uneasy.

MORGANA

I'm just a woman, I know nothing of
these things, of course, but didn't
they teach you anything useful at
the monastery? Even I understood
religion must be taken with a pinch
of salt.

BRUNO

I disagree. If the Church had the
courage to present religion as true
merely in an allegorical sense, I
would have no quarrel with it.

A sly grin at the OLD TAILOR who buries his face in his work.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Well...practically.

Through the above, BRUNO has been perusing a book of fashion
designs. He shows a page to MORGANA. She approves, eagerly.

SHOT FROM THE STREET, THROUGH WINDOW:

BESLER and HENNEQUIN look over MORGANA'S shoulder. Their
reaction is horror. BRUNO points out the design to the
TAILOR. The old man looks at BRUNO, doubtful. BESLER and
HENNEQUIN turn to MORGANA, plead. MORGANA blows smoke in
their faces, ruffles their hair, laughs.

INT. LOUVRE, BALLROOM - NIGHT

BRUNO, looking rather uncomfortable in his new, extravagant,
forest-green suit (matching emerald sun-glasses), stands
facing a YOUNG NOBLEMAN in a lavishly decorated ballroom,
crowded with COURTIERS and COURTESANS, CHILDREN and DOGS also
dressed for the occasion.

HENRI III, wearing earrings and pearls, and an eccentric pour- *
point with buttons in the form of skulls, follows the antics
with interest from a high-backed throne, center stage. He
seems in good spirits but looks pale and ill. He is
surrounded by CATHERINE DE MEDICIS, his QUEEN, MINIONS and
FAVORITES, among them MICHEL DE CASTELNAU.

MORGANA, HENNEQUIN and BESLER stand nearby. OVER ABOVE:

YOUNG NOBLEMAN

You claim, Signor Bruno, that the
earth turns at great speed around
the sun and that at the same time it
turns upon itself, like a spinning
top!

SISTO LUCCA, dressed in white, with a crucifix on his chest, follows the exchange with a group of CLERGYMEN, DE MENDOZA, DE GUISE and SEVERAL DE GUISE SYMPATHIZERS.

LUCCA sees and crosses nods with MORGANA. OVER ABOVE:

YOUNG NOBLEMAN (CONT'D)
 How is it then, Signor, that if I
 throw my cane in the air...
 (throws it)
 It falls right back into my hand,
 and not ten paces behind me?

HENRI III lets out a little cough, finding the question most clever, then turns to BRUNO.

ZUAN MOCENIGO, a young man now, obviously gay and wearing a costume conceived to eclipse a queen's coronation, is let into the room. He hands his cape, hat, walking stick to a PAGE with world-wise ease and hurries down the stairs to the ballroom, visibly excited to be witnessing...

BACK TO DEBATE:

BRUNO smiles at the YOUNG NOBLEMAN, removes his glasses, pockets them, puts out his hand.

BRUNO
 May I?

The YOUNG NOBLEMAN hands over his walking stick, gamely.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 Thank you. Have you ever been on
 board a ship, Sir?

YOUNG NOBLEMAN
 I have, indeed, more than once.

BRUNO
 Excellent! When you stand on the
 deck, and the ship moves through the
 waters...

He stalks across the length of the room, the amused CROWD parting before him.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 Throw your cane, high in the air!

He hurls the cane high in the air - much higher than the YOUNG NOBLEMAN had - stalks ahead, his open hand outstretched before him.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 It will also fall back into your
 hand!

He finds himself facing MOCENIGO, blinks, surprised.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Zuan?!

MOCENIGO flashes an unsettling smile, glances up at the descending stick, moves BRUNO'S awaiting hand, making sure he catches it.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

(without missing a beat)

And yet, the ship is in motion!

A moment of stunned silence. Someone begins to clap, others join in, the noise swelling to a thundering round of APPLAUSE.

KING HENRI III stands.

KING HENRI III

Listen to him and heed his words, my friends! His mind is full of such prodigies!

BRUNO casts MOCENIGO a side-glance, whispers loudly.

BRUNO

What the hell are you doing in France?!

MOCENIGO

(joins in applause)

You owe me seven lessons, Master.

BRUNO stares in disbelief. HENRI III takes BRUNO'S arm, leads him back to center stage, kisses him.

KING HENRI III

Bravo, my friend!

ZUAN MOCENIGO joins DE GUISE'S small group applauding over-enthusiastically. SISTO LUCCA, next to whom he happens to stand, eyes him with displeasure.

MOCENIGO

(elbowing LUCCA)

I know that genius! He owes me seven lessons!

LUCCA leans away from his nervous elbow, forces a thin, condescending smile. MOCENIGO offers his gloved hand, LUCCA shakes the tip of his fingers, guardedly.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

Zuan Mocenigo, Cavalieri di Rodi...

He becomes aware of LUCCA'S attire, realizes his religious hierarchy.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

By order of His Holiness, Pope Gregory...

(caresses his non-existent pendant)

(MORE)

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

My pendant has not yet arrived, by the way. Could you find out what's the hold-up?

LUCCA'S eyes flash with scorn; he turns ahead, flushed.

NEW ANGLE, DE GUISE

As he steps forward.

DE GUISE

That this...magician...should amuse His Majesty with his bag of tricks is one thing, Sire. That he should use his sway over the Sovereign of France to lure the country away from the virtuous influence of The Catholic Church is quite another!

MOCENIGO frowns, addresses LUCCA in low but angry tones.

MOCENIGO

What's he saying?! He's the greatest philosopher of our time! I should know: he owes me seven lessons!

(off LUCCA'S speechless stare)

Usually takes a while, no? You know...

He makes what could be interpreted as a masturbatory gesture, to represent phallic-shaped pendant missing from his chest.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

For the pendant? My father sent Rome a small fortune to get me that bloody--!

WIPE TO:

HENRI III

He cools off his feverish face with a precious ivory fan.

KING HENRI III

The Duke of Guise seems to think you are my evil genius, Giordano.

BRUNO

Perhaps His Excellency ignores I was brought up in the Catholic faith, Majesty?

DE GUISE

The fact is you were expelled from your order for disobedience, is it not?

LUCCA looks on, impassive.

BRUNO
 Since a young age, I've felt
 compelled to seek truth and wisdom
 in nature.
 (to HENRI III, more
 confidently)
 Religion is useful for it provides
 moral guidance. But religion is not
 equipped to judge science. It can
 even be an obstacle to understanding
 it.

CATHERINE DE MEDICIS glances at HENRI III, displeased.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 (to DE GUISE)
 As far as my leaving the Dominican
 order, I left because the Church
 proved too small to house the truths
 I sought!

A wave of indignant GASPS runs through the assembly.
 CATHERINE DE MEDICIS drills holes into BRUNO.

MOCENIGO lets out a nervous cackle of LAUGHTER. Heads turn.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 (to DE GUISE, over
 protestations)
 And while my philosophy is based on
 long reflection and sound arguments,
 Excellency, I don't presume you
 wouldn't be able to prove it wrong,
 with better arguments of your own!

DE GUISE
 I am a soldier, not a theologian.

BRUNO
 That is quite obvious. But you have
 an eminent theologian with you today
 who can.
 (addresses LUCCA)
 Can you not, Monsignor Lucca?

All turn to LUCCA, suddenly highly uncomfortable. MOCENIGO
 can not keep still, thrilled to be almost in the spotlight.

HENRI III motions at LUCCA.

KING HENRI III
 Step forward, Monsignor, please!

LUCCA reluctantly makes his way to the center of the room,
 steps into the ring, bows at HENRI III.

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)

The question before us is the religious implications of this theory concerning the movement of the earth? What do you think?

LUCCA scans the expectant faces; finally...

LUCCA

I think the Earth can not move through the Heavens, Your Majesty. The Earth is not a planet...

HENRI III turns to BRUNO.

BRUNO

On what grounds do you base this belief, Monsignor?

MORGANA watches, concerned. HENRI III turns back to LUCCA.

LUCCA

The Holy Scriptures, young man. God created the Heavens above and the Earth below. "In medio stat terra!"

HENRI III turns back to BRUNO: intellectual tennis.

BRUNO

"In the center is earth." Ah, yes...

(beat)

Literally? I mean, I'm surprised a learned theologian such as yourself should interpret such infantile principles as--

LUCCA

I'm a man of faith! The word of God was not laid down to be interpreted, but to be trusted and obeyed!

BRUNO

Very well... Don't the scriptures also say, elsewhere: "Earth is eternal?"

LUCCA knows this is a leading question -but where? He does not answer.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

They do, don't they...? Then, God had no need to create it, did He? Earth was always there.

LUCCA'S mind races, BRUNO enjoys every second of his distress.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

You must recall, father, don't you? "Terra vero in aeternum stat:" Ecclesiastes 1:4;

(MORE)

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 page 674, sixth line, second column,
 on the left, in the Bible you kept
 beside your own, night table, back
 in our monastery...
 (eyes HENRI III, cocky)
 If memory serves me well... It was
 some time ago.

HENRI III turns to LUCCA, thoroughly entertained.

LUCCA
 Well, yes, but...figuratively
 speaking--

BRUNO
 Oh, not literally, then? Or
 literally only when it suits the
 Church?

LUCCA
 Is it not written in the book of
 Genesis that: "In the beginning, God
 created the heavens and the earth"?

BRUNO
 It is also written that God first
 created light, and then the sun,
 which is a contradiction...

LUCCA
 But would you say there was a
 contradiction in the sentence: "In
 the beginning, God created the
 heavens and the earth"?

BRUNO
 I think that is an allegory. There
 was never any beginning, and there
 will never be an end.

LUCCA
 How can the universe exist if it was
 never created?!

BRUNO
 How can God exist if He was never
 created?

The room is silent - a pin could be heard drop. LUCCA looks
 around helplessly. HENRI III is taking a perverse pleasure in
 the confrontation, makes no move to intervene.

DE GUISE simmers with anger, MORGANA notices it, worried.

BRUNO takes a step toward the King, pointing at LUCCA.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 This is the kind of pharisee the
 Church produces, Majesty! Truth is
 never really an issue for them.
 (COURTIERS stir, to LUCCA)
 (MORE)

BRUNO (CONT'D)

If you are here today, Monsignor, is it not because you were sent by Rome to woo Giordano Bruno back into her bosom? Did you not propose to me, just the other day, that the Church would be ready to welcome me back, if only I would disown my writings? Your mission is to turn scholars into slaves. Surely God could not have given Man a discerning spirit, only to have the Church silence it when it does not suit her aims!

LUCCA glowers at BRUNO who stares back defiantly.

LUCCA

(bowing at HENRI III)
I humbly ask Your Majesty's permission to withdraw.

HENRI III shrugs, disappointed.

KING HENRI III

I enjoyed the game.

INT. MOVING CARRIAGE - NIGHT

BRUNO and MORGANA ride through the foggy Paris night.

MORGANA

Your only possible ally in the Church!

BRUNO

I don't need him, I have the King's support.

MORGANA

My God, how can you be so brilliant and so naive, all at once?!

BRUNO

He was waiting for my reply. Now he has it! I shall never go back!

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CARRIAGE - DAY

LUCCA, dressed in a somber, purple frock, grim-faced and choked with rancor, rides a carriage through a Paris park. The vehicle comes to a stop outside a small mansion. LUCCA steps down, raises a heavy bronze knocker on the front door.

INT. MOCENIGO'S PARIS RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - DAY

BELL CHIME. Through several open doors, a YOUNG MAN, evidently gay, can be seen splashing in a bath.

MOCENIGO, wrapped in a silk robe, his face covered with a sort of green grease, hair wrapped in steaming towels, appears making haste for the staircase landing. KNOCKING CONTINUES.

MOCENIGO
Manolo! Are you deaf?!

A middle-aged MAYORDOMO, obviously just awoken from a siesta, hurries into the richly appointed reception, opens the front.

LUCCA
Signor Zuan Mocenigo, if you may.

MOCENIGO (O.S.)
(irritated)
Who is it, Manolo?!

EXT. MOCENIGO'S RESIDENCE - DAY

LUCCA takes a step back, looks up at the green creature leaning out the balcony balustrade.

LUCCA
Cardinal Sisto Lucca. We met at His Majesty's debate. You recall?

MOCENIGO squints, fickle.

MOCENIGO
Huh...? No... I'm sorry, I'm not receiving, today, I--

LUCCA
It's about your Cavalieri di Rodi title, Signor...

MOCENIGO
(suddenly all ears)
Oh?!
(frantic with excitement)
One moment, I'm coming down immediately!

INT. MOCENIGO'S RESIDENCE - DAY

LUCCA steps in, hands his coat to the MAYORDOMO. EXCITED SOUNDS, SHATTERING GLASS reach from upstairs.

LUCCA stands at the window, hands clasped behind his back, grinning perversely.

INT. VENICE, INQUISITORS' ROOM - DAY

BRUNO sits facing FATHER SALUZZO and his TWO ASSESSORS. There is thinly-veiled mockery behind BRUNO'S apologetic tone.

BRUNO

I know a life such as mine can be disconcerting to follow. Too many characters, ha! It hardly seems real to me as well. I was born in Nola, in the winter of 1548. My father, Giovanni Bruno, was a soldier; my mother, Fraulissa, worked at home. I had no brothers or sisters...

SALUZZO

Enough! We know all that!
(twitch, twitch)
We want to know why you left France?! Were you not involved in the religious troubles there?!

BRUNO

Troubles?!

SALUZZO

Wasn't one of the King's knights murdered during a violent outbreak at one of your lectures?! Isn't that the reason you were forced to leave France?!

BRUNO

(ostensibly appalled)
Forced to leave?!

EXT. LOUVRE GARDENS (THE TUILERIES) - DAY

SLOW PAN. A bright but windy day at the end of summer. GARDENERS work the different sections of the royal garden: a maze, a vegetable patch, beds with symbolical shapes.

BRUNO (V.O.)

The king poured nothing but love and praise on me...

KING HENRI III (O.S.)

(frantic whispers)
I am no longer a catholic, I'm a heretic! I have heretic friends! They post notices, my own people! Doubt, suspicion! I'm their King, for the love of God!

HENRI III and BRUNO stroll into FRAME, arm-in-arm. HENRI limps badly. CAMERA FOLLOWS TIGHTLY BEHIND.

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)

Too many interests... Too much, too much...venom in the air!

He turns back, suddenly catching...a dozen chaperons, trying to eavesdrop - COUNSELLORS, STEWARDS, TWO DOMINICAN PRIESTS, an OFFICER, TWO GUARDS - a half-dozen steps behind. They look away.

KING HENRI III (CONT'D)
 They fear they will one day see a
 protestant on the throne, I'm
 told...
 (grins, sardonically)
 Maybe I'm dying and don't know it...
 Ha!

BRUNO forces a smile. HENRI III steals another glance back,
 halts, points to a patch of artichokes, suspicious.

GARDENER
 Artichokes. From Naples, Your
 Majesty...

He cuts one in half and presents it to the King who sniffs
 it, unenthusiastic.

BRUNO
 Boiled and dipped in garlic olive
 oil, salt, vinegar, and a pinch of
 pepper. Nothing else tastes quite
 like it, Sire.

HENRI III nods, moves on, preoccupied.

KING HENRI III
 I must ask a great favor from you,
 Giordano...

BRUNO
 My life, if you must have it,
 Majesty.

HENRI III looks at him, fondly.

KING HENRI III
 No. Just your trust.

EXT. ENGLISH CHANNEL, CHOPPY SEAS - DAY

A gray day. A ship battles high swells.

KING HENRI III (V.O.)
 England fears Spain, and is wary of
 all papists. And rightly so: my
 cousin, the Duke of Guise, has had
 his heart set on invading her for
 quite some time.

EXT. LOUVRE GARDENS - DAY

PUSHING BRUNO and HENRI III. HENRI steals a wary glance back.

KING HENRI III
 With Spain's help, he might succeed.
 There may even be a plot to
 assassinate Elizabeth, we have
 learnt...

BRUNO looks on, concerned.

EXT. ENGLISH CHANNEL, CHOPPY SEAS - DAY

PULLING FROM A CLOSE-UP OF BRUNO, facing the oncoming wind at the prow of the ship.

KING HENRI III
I've sent Ambassador Castelnau back to London, with instructions to do what he must to persuade the Queen to wed my brother, Francois...

EXT. LOUVRE GARDENS - DAY

PULLING BRUNO AND HENRI III.

KING HENRI III
She's been reluctant to marry at all and, Francois, my little frog, he's a bit...
(make regretful grimace of unattractiveness)
Well...froggy-looking.

EXT. LONDON, FRENCH EMBASSY STREET - DAY

A carriage pulls up. BRUNO debarks, checks a note in his hand. The embassy front door opens and TWO WELCOMING BUTLERS hurry out, unload BRUNO'S luggage.

EXT. LOUVRE GARDENS - DAY

TRACKING BRUNO AND HENRI III.

KING HENRI III (V.O.)
In any event, the marriage would guarantee Elizabeth her safety. I am sure she will see it that way too. You can provide invaluable assistance to Ambassador Castelnau.

EXT. LOUVRE GARDENS - DAY

TRACKING BRUNO and HENRI III.

BRUNO
(gloomy)
I've let you down, Sire. I know this is not the only reason you wish to see me leave France.

HENRI III steals a glance at the trailing chaperons, looks into BRUNO'S flooded eyes.

KING HENRI III

Kings are seldom free to choose their friends, Giordano. It is true, all the troubles...your presence in France, at the moment, has become...how shall I say it?

BRUNO

You don't need to, Sire, I understand.

HENRI III looks at BRUNO, grateful, produces an envelope bearing the royal seal.

KING HENRI III

This is for Ambassador Castelnau. Present yourself to him.

INT. FRENCH EMBASSY, DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

A DOZEN GUESTS, EMBASSY OFFICIALS, some with WIVES, dine at a long, plentiful table with CASTELNAU, MADAME CASTELNAU, BRUNO and MORGANA.

BRUNO gesticulates broadly, addressing his spellbound audience. LECLERC, CASTELNAU'S secretary, a thin, stork-like man with beady eyes, regards him with distaste.

CASTELNAU'S DAUGHTERS, aged fifteen and twelve - on the other hand - with fascination.

KING HENRI III (V.O.)

He will welcome you in his household with open arms. Your reader's stipend will be continued, as long as I am King...

INT. FRENCH EMBASSY, LIBRARY - DAY

BRUNO tutors CASTELNAU'S DAUGHTERS. They are obviously under his charm.

KING HENRI III (V.O.)

You shall write many wonderful books in peace...

INT. EMBASSY, BRUNO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BRUNO, naked, sits at his table, writing by candlelight. He is grinning mischievously. MORGANA, also naked, emerges from under the table, puts her arms around his neck, kisses him.

KING HENRI III (V.O.)

And I shall be happy to know that I made that partly possible.

EXT. LOUVRE GARDENS - DAY

BRUNO faces HENRI III before a bed of tulips, moved.

BRUNO
I don't deserve such kindness, Sire.

HENRI III takes his arm, moves him along.

KING HENRI III
Every man deserves what parting
gifts befall him, Giordano.

BRUNO
And yet, my hands are empty...

HENRI leans close to him, smiles, wickedly.

KING HENRI III
Just say a word about my future...

BRUNO eyes drift to the huddle of black-robed PRIESTS,
watching them from the edge of the garden - like vultures.

EXT. BOAT ON THE ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

BRUNO gazes into the horizon.

BRUNO
Beware of priests, King Henri.

A wave breaks on the prow, showering BRUNO BEFORE WE

CUT TO:

EXT. KENILWORTH CASTLE, ENGLAND - DAY

SLOW-MOTION, DISTORTED SOUND. A full-armored horse foaming at
the mouth charges ahead carrying a KNIGHT on its back. SOUND
AND IMAGE BROUGHT DOWN TO NORMAL CRANK AS...

The KNIGHT clashes brutally with his adversary in a
tournament field. The opponent's lance shatters, causing the
sharp, splintered shaft to pierce the KNIGHT'S underarm
protection, seriously wounding him. A LOUD CLAMOR rises from
the CROWD.

MORGANA winces and looks away, leads BRUNO through myriad
MUSICIANS, JUGGLERS, ACROBATS, and other ENTERTAINERS - all
part of the year's Royal Progress taking place in and around
COUNT LEICESTER'S medieval fortress.

CASTELNAU, LECLERC, AMBASSADOR DE Mendoza and several SPANISH
DIPLOMATS are also in their group. We recognize among them,
the RAPACIOUS-LOOKING YOUNG MAN seen with DE MENDOZA earlier
in Paris, now chatting animatedly with BRUNO.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, a vigorous, distinguished man of impeccable manners, accompanies PRINCE LASKI, a sinister-looking man in his sixties, wearing long, stiff whiskers and a thick beard reaching well below his chest. A small entourage of POLISH GUESTS follows.

Suddenly LASKI lets out a boisterous, surprisingly merry laugh, obviously thoroughly entertained by the event.

ON THE ROYAL STAND

SIR FRANCIS WALSINGHAM, as usual dapper and somber, follows the visitor's progress from under the Queen's canopy with COUNT LEICESTER. He excuses himself from the formidable-looking QUEEN ELIZABETH and goes.

TRACKING AMBASSADOR DE MENDOZA

Escorting MORGANA with his delegation of SPANISH DIPLOMATS in tow. BRUNO, SIDNEY and the rest trail them.

WALSINGHAM intercepts the group, affably.

WALSINGHAM

Welcome, Ambassador. Her Majesty shall be delighted you were able to join this year's Progress...

DE MENDOZA

We would have not missed it for the world, Sir Francis!

(addressing MORGANA)

Have you met Her Majesty's Councillor, Sir Francis Walsingham, Marchesa?

MORGANA fixes WALSINGHAM.

MORGANA

I've not had the pleasure, no.

BRUNO does a double-take, watches WALSINGHAM and MORGANA go through the pantomime of introduction, puzzled, then insinuates himself toward WALSINGHAM with the intention to say something, but WALSINGHAM quickly leads MORGANA away, toward the Queen.

WALSINGHAM

I hope you don't find our games too violent, Marchesa. An unfortunate accident...

QUEEN ELIZABETH

(who has overheard)

Women love to see men bleed, Sir Francis, haven't you learnt that yet?

(giving MORGANA a penetrating once-over)

Don't we, Madame?

MORGANA
 (without missing a beat)
 Especially from the heart, Your
 Majesty.

COUNT LEICESTER darts a self-conscious glance at MORGANA,
 meets ELIZABETH'S teasing eyes.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 Come, sit by my side, dear!
 (her eyes flash with
 immediate sympathy)
 A woman of wit is a milestone worth
 noting.
 (eyes LEICESTER)
 Don't you agree, Robert?

COUNT LEICESTER
 Indeed, Majesty...
 (kissing Morgana's hand)
 Marchesa...

MORGANA and DE MENDOZA cross glances as she takes the seat
 beside the QUEEN. WALSINGHAM approaches.

WALSINGHAM
 Ambassador De Mendoza wishes to pay
 his respects, Your Majesty.

He yields and DE MENDOZA curtsies before QUEEN ELIZABETH.

DE MENDOZA
 We were deeply honored by your most
 thoughtful invitation, Majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 My father taught me to keep my
 friends close, but my enemies even
 closer, Ambassador. Have you met
 our host this year, Count Leicester?

DE MENDOZA
 My lord...

COUNT LEICESTER
 Welcome to Kenilworth, Ambassador. I
 hope you're enjoying the
 festivities!

DE MENDOZA nods, retreats.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 (to SIDNEY who approaches
 with LASKI)
 Did our distinguished guest, Prince
 Laski, enjoyed the tournament?

On hearing his name, LASKI perks up. A TRANSLATOR whispers in
 his ear and LASKI smiles broadly.

PRINCE LASKI
 (Polish, subtitled)
 Your knight died very well, Majesty!

The QUEEN'S TRANSLATOR darts an alarmed glance at WALSINGHAM, then whispers into QUEEN ELIZABETH'S ear. She smiles at LASKI.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 I am pleased you found the spectacle stimulating, Excellency. I regret to inform you, however, that my knight is not quite dead yet and might even recover.

LASKI'S TRANSLATOR relays the news to LASKI who first appears disappointed, then lets out one of his stentorian peals of laughter.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
 Your Highness, may I introduce Signor Giordano Bruno, Ambassador Castelnau's gentiluomo?

He motions to BRUNO who steps forward a bit too eager.

BRUNO
 (bowing deeply)
 Your Royal Highness...!

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 Majesty will do, Signor...
 (sizing him up)
 Bruno, yes...
 (to CASTELNAU, only half joking)
 Your resident papist philosopher, is he not, Ambassador?

CASTELNAU
 Signor Bruno is hardly what one might call a papist, Your Majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 Oh?
 (addressing BRUNO)
 Ma Lei non è dominicano, vero?
You are a Dominican, are you not?

BRUNO
 (delighted)
 Ero, Maestá. Ho abbandonato l'abito, molto tempo fa.
Was, Your Highness. I abandoned the frock long ago.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 Yes, I suppose a priest can do that, can't he?
 (to entourage)
 A privilege not even I can afford!

WALSINGHAM and LEICESTER celebrate her quip.

QUEEN ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 Ma, l'abito non fa il monaco, caro
 Signore.
**Though, clothes do not the man make,
 dear Sir.**

CASTELNAU
 I can assure Your Majesty, that
 Signor Bruno is most definitely not
 in the pay of the Pope.

DE MENDOZA
 Nor of the King of Spain, Your
 Highness...

BRUNO
 Nor of anyone else, for that matter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 (glowering at BRUNO'S
 conceit)
 That's quite a balancing act. I'm
 told you hold most unorthodox views
 concerning the heavens. Is it so?

BRUNO
 Some of my views challenge
 conventional religious wisdom, that
 is correct, Your Majesty. But my
 position vis-a-vis the Heavens is
 purely philosophical.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
 If it will please Her Majesty, I
 have asked Signor Bruno to accompany
 us to Oxford. A disputation on the
 subject of Copernicus will take
 place in honor of our distinguished
 guest, Prince Laski. I thought
 Signor Bruno's views might enliven
 the debate...

QUEEN ELIZABETH
 Now, there is an idea! I am most
 curious to hear what my professors
 will make of this gentleman's cosmic
 riddles.

(departing)
 I am putting my barge at your
 disposal, Sir Philip. Show our
 esteemed Continental guests that the
 English too know how to throw a
 party when the occasion merits it.

WIPE RIGHT TO:

INT. VENICE, INQUISITORS ROOM - DAY

MOCENIGO sports an ugly sneer.

MOCENIGO

Doubts that he is a heretic?! Not on my life! He traveled all over heretic countries! He even admitted to me living like them!

SHORT WIPE LEFT
TO:

BRUNO

As he springs to his feet, a GUARD pushes him back down.

BRUNO

If I spoke to heretics and lived the way they do, it was to better be able to refute them!

SALUZZO

(slapping the book)

Did you not write of Queen Elizabeth -- she who usurped the throne, murdered the rightful heir, and blasphemously nominated herself Head of The Church and Protector of the Faith -- did you not name her "Divine Elizabeth?!"

BRUNO

While I was in England, I was often at court, Reverend Father - her court! You mean to make a courtly compliment a test of orthodoxy?! Is this a measure of the wisdom of your justice?!

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON, FRENCH EMBASSY - NIGHT

A cab pulls up at the embassy building, BRUNO and MORGANA climb down. BRUNO is tipsy, singing in Italian.

MORGANA laughs, points to a lit window, puts a hand to his lips, hushes him.

BRUNO kisses her, finds his key, opens the door. MORGANA realizes she has forgotten her gloves.

MORGANA

My gloves!

BRUNO runs after the departing carriage. MORGANA steps inside the mansion.

INT. EMBASSY, ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

MORGANA comes in. SHOUTS echo through a corridor. CASTELNAU'S door is ajar - he can be seen holding a red-ribboned file, shouting at someone OFF SCREEN.

CASTELNAU
(outraged)
Invasion?! I know nothing about
such a plan! King Henri seeks an
alliance with England, not war!

DE MENDOZA paces into view, a second later the RAPACIOUS-LOOKING YOUNG MAN leans into the light, shuts the door as...

MORGANA steps back unseen.

DE MENDOZA (O.S.)
(through closed door)
This will put a French queen on the
throne of England, you fool!

BRUNO returns with Morgana's gloves. The SHOUTING continues, BRUNO frowns, MORGANA puts a finger to her lips.

MORGANA
(whispers)
The Ambassador is still at work.
Come...

She takes his hand, leads a disconcerted BRUNO up the stairs.

INT. BRUNO'S ROOM - LATER

BRUNO sits at his desk, naked, writing by candlelight, lips moving almost imperceptibly, pen dipping into inkwell, racing along the writing sheet.

BRUNO (V.O.)
(whispering)
...A bigger, luminous body which
sheds its light on a smaller opaque
body produces a cone of shadow whose
base lies in the opaque body...

MORGANA lies tangled in the bedsheets. She stirs...

MORGANA
Come back to bed...

BRUNO raises a finger, dips his quill, never takes his eyes from his racing pen.

INSERT: BRUNO'S hand draws circles "A," "B," "C," and lines "D," "E," representing the sun, the earth, its ecliptic relationship.

BRUNO (V.O.)
 From the base of "C" to the point
 "E," with an angle greater than...

WIPE LEFT TO:

INT. VENICE, INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

SALUZZO and the ASSESSORS behind the inquisitor's table.

FIRST ASSESSOR
 Well, but, with all due respect,
 Signor Mocenigo, if you knew brother
 Giordano was a heretic, then why did
 you invite him into your home?

WIPE PAN TO:

MOCENIGO, CLOSE.

MOCENIGO
 I didn't know how much of a heretic
 he was, Your Excellency! He lied to
 me! Giordano Bruno is a compulsive
 liar!

OVER ABOVE CLOSE IN ON HIS FACE AS IT MORPHS INTO THAT OF...

INT. MOCENIGO PALACE, ZUAN'S LOGGIA/STUDY ROOM - DAY

YOUNG ZUAN MOCENIGO, SLIGHTLY DISTORTED BY THE WIDE-ANGLE. He
 shouts at BRUNO, at the top of his lungs.

YOUNG MOCENIGO
 Liar, liar, liar! Teach me your
 magic spells or I shall have you
 kicked out of my house!

BRUNO stares at him for a moment. MOCENIGO holds his gaze,
 defiant. BRUNO grins - he would like to break his stupid
 neck. Instead, he picks up his books and strolls out.

MOCENIGO stalks after him.

YOUNG MOCENIGO (CONT'D)
 It is not yet time!

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - DAY

BRUNO packs his few belongings. MOCENIGO stands at the door,
 like a little guard, bristling.

YOUNG MOCENIGO
 And where do you think you are
 going?! You still owe me seven
 lessons!

BRUNO quickly straps his bag, leaves the room.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO heads for the back door, MOCENIGO at his heels, growing increasingly frightened by what he has provoked.

YOUNG MOCENIGO
If you leave, I will tell my father
you refused to read my lesson!

BRUNO takes his cape and hat from a hanger.

YOUNG MOCENIGO (CONT'D)
You put a foot outside that door and
you can forget about ever coming
back!

BRUNO takes a quirky, teasing step outside.

BRUNO
I feel as if...you've just delivered
me from Hell, Zuan. Thank you!
(eyes painting)
I hope you fulfill your dream of
becoming Cavalieri di Rodi. Ciao!

He leaves. ZUAN shouts after him, weeping, incensed.

YOUNG MOCENIGO
You still owe me seven lessons!

His SHOUTS FADE long after WE HAVE

CUT TO:

INT. FRENCH LONDON EMBASSY - BRUNO'S BEDROOM

BRUNO sleeps with his head on his desk, beside the nearly-extinguished candle. CAMERA REVEALS the empty bed behind him.

CRASHING SOUND. BRUNO opens his eyes, puzzled, notices MORGANA missing from the bed, EXITS FRAME.

INT. CASTELNAU'S STUDY - NIGHT

MORGANA holds a short candle. She picks up a fallen paper-weight from the floor, replaces it on Castelnaud's desk, quickly goes through the contents of a drawer, finds the red-ribboned file, opens it, scans it.

A map of the Southern coast of England. "SUSSEX" AND "PORTSMOUTH" appear circled with thick, bold arrows pointing inland from the coast.

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

LECLERC spies through his bedroom door ajar.

INT. CORRIDOR/CASTELNAU'S STUDY - SAME TIME

Morgana's eyes race through the document.

Her hand turns a page, the name "FRANCIS THROCKMORTON" appears circled next to several sums of money.

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA, CLOSE ON MORGANA, bent over the file on the desk. FLOOR CREAKING IS HEARD, she closes file in haste, ties ribbon, replaces it in drawer, shuts it as...

BRUNO (O.S.)
(loud whisper)
What are you doing in here?!

MORGANA turns to face him, grins mischievously.

MORGANA
I suddenly felt a terrible craving
for tobacco. You think the
Ambassador might have any here?

BRUNO
Tobacco?!
(pulling her out)
God knows I possess a discreet
nature, but do you take me for a
fool?! First, that charade with Sir
Francis at Kenilworth, now I find
you nosing around in here...

INT. STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO leads MORGANA up the stairs.

BRUNO
What sort of roguery are you mixed
up in?!

MORGANA
(kisses him)
My, my, you have a fertile
imagination...

BRUNO ogles her exposed breasts.

BRUNO
I'm afraid I'm going to have to
spank you - or something...

She rolls out a throaty laugh.

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

LECLERC spies as BRUNO and MORGANA enter their bedroom, horse-playing, holding back laughter, then closes his door.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONDON, THEATRE NEAR WOODED PARK - DAY

WIDE. A typical Elizabethan theatre. Circular, open-roof, apron stage. CREW and ACTORS milling about.

BRUNO (V.O.)

If King Henri saw in me a perspicacious pair of eyes for him in England, I let him down miserably. But he was right about one thing: London became the most prolific period of my life. I wrote my six most important dialogues there, and put on a play I had completed earlier in France.

ON STAGE

BRUNO, in an ebullient mood, sits round a large table with ACTORS for a reading of a comedy. WILLIAM, a young actor in his early twenties, with a lively, witty disposition reads "Bernardo;" RICHARD, rather plump, "Bonifacio;" a young boy, HENRY, reads "Mistress Carubina."

In the pit, a SCRIBE works at a table cluttered with quills, inkwells and sheets held down by stones. The THEATRE MANAGER sits behind him, watching the work.

WILLIAM

"Which of us is me? Is it I? Or is it you?"

RICHARD

"You are you, I am I--"

BRUNO

No, no, no! Put a bit of life into it, won't you, Richard?! You sound like a...cook, stirring a pot of porridge!

The other ACTORS laugh.

RICHARD

A pox on it! I haven't the slightest clue what this all means!

BRUNO rolls his eyes.

WILLIAM

It's not him, Giordano, it's the writing!

BRUNO

I beg your...! Just read your lines
and leave the writing to the author,
won't you, Will?

WILLIAM gives an exaggerated bow, catches sight of something
OS, discards libretto, springs to his feet, relieved.

WILLIAM

Ah, lunch!

MICHEL DE CASTELNAU, looking very ambassadorial, approaches
through the wooded park in the company of MORGANA, a
nobleman, SIR FULKE GREVILLE, and SEVERAL EMBASSY EMPLOYEES,
including LECLERC. They reach the clearing where the theatre
sits.

TWO SERVANT GIRLS with heavy baskets full of food, serve
lunch as the actors assemble a makeshift table. OVER ACTION:

CASTELNAU

Greetings, greetings, my friends!
Your vibrant voices carry crisply
through the woods, though I detect
distress and dissension in the tone.
Problems?!

WILLIAM

The text is the problem, Sir! It
resembles English, but nobody can
tell what the dickens is going on!

BRUNO

Perhaps you'd like to write the play
in my place?

WILLIAM

(heading for the food)
It would be the better for it,
Master Bruno.

All laugh, BRUNO chases him, twists his ear in good humor.

BRUNO

Really? What would you have them
say here, instead?

WILLIAM

(heaping food on bread)
Oh, I don't know, Gio...
"Speak love, speak!
Riddle my heart with your arrows,
Bleed till the penultimate drop
Has drowned my last bit of sorrow!"
(shrugs)
Something along those lines?

BRUNO is surprised by WILLIAM'S eloquence. MORGANA applauds.

MORGANA

Bravo, young man!

BRUNO

(to SCRIBE who is busy
taking it all down)
No, no, no, don't write that. You're
a good actor, Shakespeare, but
you've no ear for dialogue!

CASTELNAU

I thought it had a ring to it as
well.

(turning to FULKE)
Giordano, allow me to introduce Sir
Fulke Greville, Queen Elizabeth's
most admired philosopher.

The men exchange polite if chill greetings, immediately
disliking one-another.

SIR FULKE

Tell me, Doctor, are you sure it is
fitting for any honest philosopher
suddenly to start writing for the
theatre?

SHAKESPEARE

It is as fitting for a philosopher
to write comedy as for an ass to
discuss philosophy, if you'd ask me.

SIR FULKE

(grins, uncertain)
Yes...well...
(to BRUNO)
What is the subject of your play, I
pray? Her Majesty, the Queen, asked
me to--

SHAKESPEARE

(eating voraciously, mouth full)
The subject changes like the moon,
m'Lord...

BRUNO

Pay no heed, Sir Fulke. William is
a lad who loves to hear himself
talk. Actors often are, I've
discovered...

SHAKESPEARE mocks sealing his lips, chews away.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

"Il Candelaio" is partly the story
of a candlestick who becomes a
goldsmith, partly that of a pedant
who--

SIR FULKE

(glances at CASTELNAU
confounded)
A candlestick who becomes a
goldsmith?!

SHAKESPEARE

Neapolitan humour, Sir Fulke. You are to understand a sodomite who is converted to the love of women. A very strange occurrence, I grant you and clearly the reverse of what nature intended. Rumor has it there is such a man in existence, though not, I think, an Englishman.

This time, SIR FULKE can not help a hearty chuckle.

NEW SHOT, LATER

HIGH ANGLE, CLOSING ON BRUNO and SHAKESPEARE. They lean against a tree inside the wooded area, chatting and laughing. SHAKESPEARE wears BRUNO'S emerald sun glasses.

SHAKESPEARE (CONT'D)

Oh, to be rich and well traveled! Rome Paris, Prague... But, Venice, my God! Someone should write a play about it!

MORGANA joins them with a basket of fruit.

MORGANA

What are you two prattling about?

SHAKESPEARE

Your Venice, me' Lady! Giordano has filled my head with visions of meandering, snaking canals. Perfect place for intrigue, deceit and...

(turning to BRUNO)

Jealousy, that's it! A jealous king, a moor! Running amok through that maze, like a ghost with his head cut off! A charming tale of envy, lust, chicanery and...

(strangling MORGANA)

Mmmuuuurder!

SHAKESPEARE and MORGANA laugh, BRUNO feels excluded.

BRUNO

Too melodramatic. Will never work.

ANGLE ON THE THEATRE BUILDING - SAME TIME

STAGE HANDS work on sets.

SIR FULKE (O.S.)

The last thing the Queen would wish would be to offend King Henri, but the fact is her ambassador to Paris warned Elizabeth about your guest's tempestuous religious past and, well...

REVEAL SIR FULKE AND CASTELNAU at one of the improvised tables, drinking beer.

SIR FULKE (CONT'D)

Her Majesty's concerned, naturally.

(a glance toward woods)

Did you know Doctor Bruno had been excommunicated by the Calvinists, in Geneva, just a handful of years ago?

(CASTELNAU did not)

Indeed! A play or a public dissertation by such an individual could be denounced by our Puritans as proof of Her Majesty's weakness in dealing with religious dissent. In any event, I'm to keep an eye on Bruno. Thought you should know.

CASTELNAU

I appreciate your candor, Sir Fulke, of course. But, never fear:

Giordano Bruno's main concern is the infinity of the Universe; he avoids religious questions like the plague.

SIR FULKE

I certainly hope so...

EXT. RIVER THAMES - SUNSET

A beautiful summer evening. The red globe of the sun sinks below the horizon.

The royal barge adorned with lanterns glides on the smooth surface of the river. MUSIC carries crisply.

SIR FULKE (V.O.)

I don't think papist views - or sodomy, for that matter - would go down too well with the professors at Oxford...

INT. QUEEN'S BARGE - SAME TIME

BRUNO, LASKI, SHAKESPEARE, SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, SIR FULKE, BEARD AND JONES, two university professors, and a HALF-DOZEN INTELLECTUALS, sit around a large table, eating a lavish meal. SHAKESPEARE has been drinking heavily.

SHAKESPEARE

(singing)

"Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be
strewn: Not a friend, not a friend
greet..."

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

(tossing him a coin)

There's for your pains, young man.

SHAKESPEARE
 (tossing coin into the
 water)
 I take pleasure in singing, sir!

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
 Then, think of us, for goodness'
 sake!

LAUGHTER. SHAKESPEARE chews into a carnation from the table,
 leans into a DIGNIFIED-LOOKING GENTLEMAN picking a cigar out
 of a silver box.

SHAKESPEARE
 (petals dripping from his
 mouth)
 I'll say, you look very familiar,
 Sir. Have we met?

DIGNIFIED GENTLEMAN
 (eyes him with disdain)
 I very much doubt it, young man.

SHAKESPEARE
 That, that weed from America?

DIGNIFIED GENTLEMAN
 Uhm? Yes...
 (glides cigar under his
 nostrils)
 Tobacco...

SHAKESPEARE
 They look deliciously expensive. May
 I please have one?

DIGNIFIED GENTLEMAN
 (flushed by his impudence)
 Certainly not.

SIR SIDNEY stands, holds up his glass.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
 May the Lord make this dinner a
 source of wisdom and philosophy.
 Horace it was who said that
 eloquence flows from full glasses
 and, by my faith, he was right! So,
 gentlemen, I drink to you!

The GUESTS reply in kind.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (CONT'D)
 After which Doctor Giordano Bruno
 has agreed to expound the doctrine
 that made him famous in Paris.

PROFESSOR BEARD
 (leaning toward FULKE)
 Are we seriously considering
 offering a Spaniard a post at
 Oxford?

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
 Science knows no frontiers,
 Professor. And Giordano Bruno is a
 Neapolitan, not a Spaniard.

SERVANTS pick up dirty dishes, bring in the next course.

The DIGNIFIED GENTLEMAN lights his cigar, SHAKESPEARE sniffs the blue smoke drifting his way, leans into the man again.

SHAKESPEARE
 (loud whisper)
 Of course! Now I recall! You're
 the gentleman who had that
 little...problem...with the
 Dalrimple girl at Ludgate Hill, the
 other night, are you not?

The DIGNIFIED GENTLEMAN suddenly blushes, violently. SHAKESPEARE smiles innocently. The DIGNIFIED GENTLEMAN casts quick side glances, promptly produces one of his precious cigars, hands it to SHAKESPEARE, moves away to another seat.

SHAKESPEARE does not mind, he runs the cigar under his nostrils, mimicking the DIGNIFIED GENTLEMAN, lights it on a candle, takes a deep drag, is overcome by a vicious fit of coughing.

PROFESSOR JONES
 Signor Bruno, would you now be so
 kind as to give us your views on
 Copernicus?

BRUNO
 I have not come along to expound the
 philosophy of Copernicus, but my
 own, which is far more ambitious.
 I've given the Pole's philosophy its
 logical extension...

PROFESSOR JONES
 (holding up copy of
 Copernicus' book)
 In any event, this Copernicus claims
 the earth moves...!

BRUNO
 He does not claim it, sir, he
 demonstrates it!

PROFESSOR BEARD
 (snorts)
 Have you ever taken the trouble to
 read the foreword to his book?

BRUNO
 I have read it, sir, just as you all
 probably have...

PROFESSOR JONES

Copernicus admits having invented
the concept of the earth's movement
to facilitate his calculations...

(points to book))

Says so right here!

BRUNO

A simple precaution. Copernicus
knew that his theory would offend
censors of every creed and cretins
of every color. That is why his
book is preceded by a disclaimer,
which nobody of any sense could
possibly take seriously--

PROFESSOR JONES

(to SIR SIDNEY)

I don't think I should care to have
a bloody foreigner calling me a
cretin!

BRUNO

Truth is blind to nationalities,
evidently.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Gentlemen, gentlemen...!

(conciliatory, to BRUNO)

Many find it difficult to admit that
the earth turns toward the east,
completing its course in twenty-four
hours, for then why do we not see
the clouds flying through the air at
great speed toward the west? How
will you explain that to our
students?

BRUNO

What childish question!

(SIR SIDNEY'S face
darkens)

We inhabit our planet just as fleas
inhabit our bodies. The term
"Earth" means not only the solid
ground we stand on, but the globe in
its entirety: oceans, flames, air,
vapors, clouds included...

The PROFESSORS laugh scornfully.

PROFESSOR BEARD

Do stars also pass air when they've
eaten too much, Doctor?!

More LAUGHTER. SHAKESPEARE blows smoke into PROFESSOR'S face.

SIR FULKE

Doctor Bruno, you say you have given
the doctrine of Copernicus its
necessary extension... What do you
mean by--?

BRUNO

Copernicus is a mathematician, I am a philosopher. He proved the movement of the earth around the sun with his calculations. I have declared that the universe is infinite!

PROFESSOR JONES

Infinite?! Why, that's preposterous!

SHAKESPEARE borrows a quill and ink, writes on a small notebook.

BRUNO

You think so? Why? Isn't God's power infinite?

PROFESSOR JONES

(haughtily)
Naturally!

BRUNO

Did God not create the Universe?

PROFESSOR JONES

Of course!

BRUNO

Then, isn't the Universe the effect of an infinite power?

PROFESSOR JONES

And your point?!

BRUNO

Simply this: Could God's limitless power produce a confined and narrow world that does not resemble him?

PROFESSOR JONES clears his throat, at a loss for words. PROFESSOR BEARD comes to his rescue.

PROFESSOR BEARD

For my part, when I look at the sky above my head I see movement. When I observe life around me I understand that everything has a beginning and an end. And when I feel the earth beneath my feet, it is solid and most definitely still.

SHAKESPEARE

I feel, I feel! Think, don't feel!

PROFESSOR BEARD

(has had enough)
Can somebody tell me what this, this...vulgar, effeminate lotario is doing amongst us?!

*

SHAKESPEARE draws on his cigar, is overcome by another fit of coughing, tries to make light of it, laughing gaily.

SHAKESPEARE
I've been asking myself the same
question since we left London.
(cough, cough)
A pox on your constipated pedantry!

He accidentally knocks over a tankard of beer on PROFESSOR BEARD. BEARD grabs a sauce boat from a servant's tray and throws the contents at SHAKESPEARE who leans back out of the way, permitting the sauce to attain SIR FULKE, instead.

SIR FULKE
Bloody hell...!

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
Good God! Wit, friends! Fight only
using your wits! Please!

SHAKESPEARE
That would be too one-sided, Sir!

This as a slab of bloody roast-beef lands on his face AND WE

CUT TO:

EXT. THAMES RIVER, LONG - NIGHT

THE BARGE moves slowly upriver, taking with it the FREE-FOR-ALL, RIOTOUS SHOUTS, THE MUSIC, THE SHATTERING OF GLASS AS WE

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRENCH EMBASSY, UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA. WE MOVE slowly along the silent, dark corridor. BRUNO'S bedroom door is ajar, a light flickers inside.

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

MORGANA sits at the desk, writing in haste by candlelight.

Her quill flies along the page: "...CONSPIRED WITH FRANCIS THROCKMORTON IN ELIZABETH'S DEMISE..." FLOOR CREAKING.

MORGANA looks back.

INT. CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

PULLING LECLERC as he steals silently toward BRUNO'S bedroom. He pushes the door open, enters.

WE FOLLOW him as he approaches MORGANA, writing at the desk.

The quill signs: "Henry."

She seals the envelope, turns back and hands it to LECLERC.

MORGANA
Waste no time.

LECLERC conceals the envelope in his jacket, leaves at once. MORGANA looks after him, worried.

EXT. OXFORD UNIVERSITY - DAY

ESTABLISHING. A coach pulls up before one of the red brick buildings.

ZUAN MOCENIGO, clad in a splendid, sky-blue velvet suit, steps down, walks into the building.

INT. OXFORD UNIVERSITY, RECEPTION - DAY

MOCENIGO stalks in, taps the floor with his walking stick, asks for directions. A CONCIERGE points down a hallway, a STUDENT leads him away.

RECTOR OF LINCOLN (O.S.)
Don't be so conceited, my dear fellow. You're not truly a "modern man," as you claim. This idea of yours, this absurd notion that the Earth moves...

MOCENIGO is shown into a vast, wood-paneled lecture room.

RECTOR OF LINCOLN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Has been around for centuries!
("Ayes!" ripple through the room)
Why, Nicolaus De Cusa...

The RECTOR OF LINCOLN, a tall man with a full head of gray hair, broad whiskers and a booming baritone, is on his feet, addressing BRUNO, who stands at the lectern.

RECTOR OF LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Niketas of Syracuse before him, Heraclides and several others have held it before you. You're just one more stupid ass who believes it!

The room roars with LAUGHTER.

MOCENIGO makes his way along the back, frowns, angrily.

BRUNO waves his hand at those present in the Neapolitan fashion encouraging the laughter to play itself out.

PRINCE LASKI (with his TRANSLATOR whispering in his ear), enjoys himself immensely.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY and CASTELNAU sit in the front row, exchange amused glances.

SHAKESPEARE sits at a desk, in back, dipping in a large inkwell, writing on small slips of paper, obviously inspired and ignoring the ruckus up front.

DOCTOR CULPEPPER, a grave, old man turns to him, disturbed by the persistent GRATING SOUND of his quill.

CULPEPPER
Do-you-mind?!

SHAKESPEARE stops writing, makes a mocking grimace behind his back, then continues writing.

BRUNO waits for the laughter to subside. Then...

BRUNO
Other great minds have contemplated this notion before me, indeed. But one thing is to show an ass he is in error, quite another to put him in possession of the truth!

The PROFESSORS protest loudly.

MOCENIGO applauds enthusiastically from the back of the room.

MOCENIGO
Bravo!

Heads turn. Among them, SHAKESPEARE, who regards him amused. A rodent-looking OXFORD PROFESSOR, springs up from his seat.

OXFORD PROFESSOR
Enough hot air and dibble-gabble!
Are you a Copernican, yes or no,
Sir?!

*

BRUNO
(dismissive)
A Copernican! I hold the mobility of the Earth on solid grounds of my own. But to deny that the labors of Copernicus marked the dawn of something much larger than a new astronomy would be a serious sin of which I shall not be found guilty.

A SECOND OXFORD PROFESSOR takes the floor.

SECOND OXFORD PROFESSOR
But, if God is at the center of the Universe, it must follow that there be an end to it, for only visualizing the limit to some thing, may one conceive its center.

BRUNO
 God is an infinite sphere, where the
 center is everywhere, and the
 circumference nowhere...

CULPEPPER suddenly perks up.

CULPEPPER
 (to himself)
 Extraordinary...!

He bulls past SHAKESPEARE, muttering excited. SHAKESPEARE puts the pen down, gathers his papers, worried that he be the cause of the man's sudden excited departure.

WE PUSH CULPEPPER as he hastens up the center aisle, past MOCENIGO who eyes him queerly and into...

INT. CULPEPPER'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

CULPEPPER climbs a short ladder, reaches an upper shelf, finds a book, flips its pages agitated. The ghost of BRUNO'S VOICE reaches from the...

INT. LECTURE ROOM - SAME TIME

SHAKESPEARE approaches MOCENIGO, admires his costume. MOCENIGO elbows him.

MOCENIGO
 I know that genius, he owes me seven lessons!

SHAKESPEARE
 (studying him, intrigued)
 Does he?

ON BRUNO

Who is saying...

BRUNO
 All that is dear to man, and which reaches to the confines of the known Universe...

CULPEPPER ENTERS FRAME, reading through the thick tome open in his hand, WE PUSH HIM toward the lectern.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 Provide ample proof of the concentric...

CULPEPPER
 (overlapping with BRUNO)
 "...ample proof of the concentric movement, owed to the rotation of the sphere as a whole."

BRUNO stops talking, eyes his audience nervously. A murmur of confusion ripples through the room. The RECTOR OF LINCOLN sits up hesitantly.

RECTOR OF LINCOLN
What's that you read, Doctor?

CULPEPPER
(holds up book)
De Cusa!

CASTELNAU AND SIR PHILIP turn, perplexed.

CULPEPPER flips back a few pages, climbs on the lectern next to BRUNO, reads aloud.

CULPEPPER (CONT'D)
"God is an infinite sphere, where
the center is everywhere, and the
circumference nowhere..."
(holds book up)
Verbatim! The nerve!

Some of the PROFESSORS protest angrily others begin to LAUGH,. Soon the LAUGHTER is general and uproarious. The RECTOR gets to his feet, appalled.

RECTOR OF LINCOLN
Good God! Have you dared plagiarize
what you've been lecturing here?!

BRUNO
(without missing a beat,
over protestations)
The fact that someone expressed my
views before me, does not make my
statements less true, Sir!

LOUD HACKLING. SHAKESPEARE stands against the door, laughing, heartily. But his merriment is clearly at the PROFESSORS' expense, not BRUNO'S.

MOCENIGO regards him strangely.

The RECTOR OF LINCOLN takes a step forward, flustered.

RECTOR OF LINCOLN
That may very well be, but a
parrot's room and board would cost
Oxford University a great deal less
than the seat you seek among us,
Signor! This is an outrage!

SIR FULKE glares at CASTELNAU. SIR PHILIP SIDNEY puts him at ease by laughing, obviously amused by BRUNO'S nerve.

RECTOR OF LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Order! ORDER!!!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OXFORD GROUNDS - DAY

BRUNO exits the lecture building, flanked by SHAKESPEARE and MOCENIGO, exasperated.

BRUNO
Where must a soul go, to be rid of
you?! What are you now doing in
Oxford, anyway?!

MOCENIGO
The question should be, what are
you, Master? Casting your pearls
before swine! I've come all the way
to England with an honest offer of
patronage!

SHAKESPEARE
(suddenly interested)
Patronage?

MOCENIGO
(ignoring him)
Come back with me to Venice! There
you shall be appreciated for all
your worth, Master.

BRUNO
(scoffing snort)
Venice?!

SHAKESPEARE
May I come too...?

BRUNO
(to MOCENIGO)
You think I've lost my mind?!

SEVERAL IRATE PROFESSORS approach.

A berlina drives along, CASTELNAU beckons through the window.

CASTELNAU
Giordano!

BRUNO heads toward the vehicle, MOCENIGO on his heels.

MOCENIGO
I will guarantee your protection! I
know it's sudden, Master, you need
not reply right away...

He hands over an envelope with the Mocenigo family seal.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)
The details of my proposition. You
will find it is exceedingly
generous.

BRUNO eyes MOCENIGO, pockets envelope, climbs into vehicle.

BRUNO
 (to SHAKESPEARE,
 impatiently)
 Coming?

SHAKESPEARE looks at MOCENIGO, smiles.

SHAKESPEARE
 Leave Zuan in a strange city,
 without a Cicerone?! I wouldn't
 think of it! I'll see you back in
 London!

He approaches to close the coach door.

SHAKESPEARE (CONT'D)
 (under his breath)
 God knows I need a Maecenas more
 than you do.

The berlina pulls away, BRUNO sticks his head out the window.

BRUNO
 But the performance!

SHAKESPEARE
 I'm a bloody professional actor,
 aren't I? I shall be there in time
 to act! Have a safe journey back!

He wiggles his fingers after BRUNO, turns to MOCENIGO,
 sporting a wide grin.

SHAKESPEARE (CONT'D)
 Now, then...!
 (takes his arm, brightly)
 Are we famished?!

INT. WESTMINSTER COURT - DAY

LECLERC is lead by a SECRETARY into a soberly appointed
 office. WALSINGHAM turns away from the window, receives the
 sealed envelope from his hands, rips it open, reads Morgana's
 letter, folds it, thoughtful.

WALSINGHAM
 No reply.

LECLERC backs away. WALSINGHAM returns to the window.

WHAT HE SEES:

QUEEN ELIZABETH plays with three Pekinese dogs in the garden.
 WALSINGHAM ENTERS SHOT, joins her; they discuss the letter in
 his hand. She gives it only a moment's thought, speaks a few,
 determined words, resumes playing with her pets as WALSINGHAM
 heads back.

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

BRUNO and CASTELNAU, up to their knees in mud, struggle with the help of SEVERAL FARMERS to dislodge the berlina from a deep ditch, under LOUD, TORRENTIAL RAIN.

BRUNO
Wonderful trip! In one week I
managed to let King Henri down and
outlive Queen Elizabeth's welcome!

CASTELNAU
Your mind often surprises me,
Doctor, but never more than when it
underestimates you!

BRUNO falls on the mud as the carriage is finally dislodged.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROME, HOLY SEE DINNING ROOM - DAY

An envelope bearing the familiar MOCENIGO family seal, travels across a white dinning room on a silver tray, carried by the white-gloved hand of a YOUNG PAGE.

TWO DOZEN BISHOPS, CARDINALS and VATICAN HIERARCHY breakfast at individual white-clothed tables with silver cutlery.

The PAGE reaches a table where LUCCA, his back to CAMERA, eats a lush mango with knife and fork. He wipes his lips with a monogrammed linen napkin, then takes the envelope from the awaiting tray. When the PAGE has departed, he opens it.

CAMERA CREEPS round him as he reads it, then folds it neatly on the table, resumes breaking fast. His eyes wander, catching - for a second only...

CARDINAL SANTASEVERINA, across the room, watching him from behind the figure of BISHOP CARCATERRA.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Heavily foaming horses pull Castelnau's berlina along a cobblestoned street.

INT. BERLINA - SAME TIME

BRUNO and CASTELNAU ride in the cabin, soiled with dry mud from head to toe. BRUNO holds a bottle: he has been drinking.

CASTELNAU
You think the King or I give a damn
about the opinions of an unruly herd
of English pedants?!

BRUNO
 (distressed)
 I have embarrassed France and you.
 As well as myself--

CASTELNAU
 Come, now, we know your worth, my
 dear friend! That debate was an ill-
 conceived idea which I should never
 have endorsed.

A SHOT RINGS OUT, then another. CASTELNAU draws open the
 curtains of the window, alarmed.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The carriage makes its noisy way along a crowded street.
 Unusual commotion; PEOPLE run about excited. SHOTS heard in
 the distance. The carriage becomes bogged down by the CROWD.

INT. BERLINA - CONTINUOUS

CASTELNAU addresses a MAN IN THE STREET.

CASTELNAU
 You, Sir, what's the ruckus?!

MAN IN THE STREET
 (frantic)
 A plot to 'sass'nate me'Queen, sir!
 Three men 'ave been arrested!

He is carried away by the rushing MULTITUDE.

CASTELNAU
 Mon Dieu...
 (to DRIVER)
 Make haste to the embassy! GO!

The DRIVER punishes the team, but the animals balk at the
 sheer number of DEMONSTRATORS brushing past them.

BRUNO'S eyes catch sight of...

WHAT HE SEES:

A MAN stands over a CATHOLIC WOMAN cowering on the ground. He
 rips a small pious medal from her neck, holds it up.

MAN
 She's one of them bloody Catholics!

He buries a dagger in the CATHOLIC WOMAN'S throat.

BRUNO moves instinctively to help. CASTELNAU holds him back.

CASTELNAU
 You've lost your mind?!
 (calls out)
 DRIVER!

THE DRIVER again whips the horses, finally breaks through the parting humanity. BRUNO turns back.

HIS RECEDING POV: SOLDIERS armed with swords, literally hack the CATHOLIC WOMAN to pieces.

BRUNO registers the horror, looks at CASTELNAU, shaken.

CASTELNAU (CONT'D)
 King Henri can forget about his
 wedding now...

INT. FRENCH EMBASSY, DINNING ROOM - DAY

CASTELNAU, BRUNO, MORGANA, LECLERC, MADAME CASTELNAU, her TWO DAUGHTERS, and SIR PHILIP SIDNEY lunch on roasted pheasant. The air is charged with circumstance. For some time, only the TINGLING of silverware on porcelain is heard. Finally...

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
 And, how are the rehearsals coming
 along, Doctor? Ready for the
 opening?

BRUNO
 Nearly, Sir Philip.

MADAME CASTELNAU
 The play will be a great success,
 I'm sure!

BRUNO
 The illusion might be accomplished,
 in any event: Sir Philip has
 promised to drag along other
 prestigious personalities!

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
 That will hardly be necessary, I
 assure you, Doctor. Indeed,
 everyone I know can't wait to see
 your play. Besides, What best way
 to take their minds off the events
 of late, than some well inspired
 laughter!

CECILIA, CASTELNAU'S older daughter, a spirited girl of sixteen, puts down her silverware, riled.

CECILIA
 How can we speak of plays, when the
 Queen's life has been threatened?!

MADAME CASTELNAU
 (frowning at her outburst)
 Darling...!

MORGANA lays a conciliatory hand on CECILIA'S.

MORGANA

I think sweet Cecilia actually makes a most valid point, Madame. Violence has become so commonplace that we no longer take any notice of it. Indifference, seems to be the norm, these days.

BRUNO

Sign of the times...

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

You agree, then, Doctor?

BRUNO

Well, take ten steps in any direction and you will see that the mood in the street is anything but gloomy.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

I grant you we English have a rather double-hearted relationship with violence: in the one hand we abhor it; in the other we draw disproportionate satisfaction from violent retribution. But, indifference? Hardly.

CECILIA

In any case, now you have your man, and soon enough you will have your execution!

CASTELNAU glowers at his daughter, who turns away, saucily.
SIR PHILIP smiles, tolerantly.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

I understand Ambassador De Mendoza too, has been questioned and may soon be invited to leave England. Are my tipsters up to date, Excellency?

CASTELNAU

King Felipe is outraged by the insinuations of Spain's involvement in the assassination plot. His mighty armada is on full alert. I believe Walsingham will act with caution. But in diplomatic circles everyone concedes De Mendoza was probably chin-deep into the conspiracy, and was the victim of an elaborate plan to prevent a De Guise-led invasion of England. The name Henry Fagot has been floated as that of his mole.

BRUNO reacts, looks at MORGANA. MORGANA reaches for the pepper mill, perfectly poised, meets LECLERC'S anxious eyes.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY searches his memory bank.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
Henry Fagot? A foreigner?

CASTELNAU
No one seems to have the slightest clue. But I wouldn't like to be in the man's shoes: De Mendoza has vowed to skin alive the traitor.

CECILIA
Sir Philip's point, in any case, was that his countrymen seem more than happy to mix their mayhem with a bit of theatre!

CASTELNAU slams the table.

CASTELNAU
Ça suffit comme ça!
That's quite enough!

CECILIA bolts the table. Beat.

CASTELNAU (CONT'D)
I apologize to you, Sir Philip. My daughter imagines herself in love with an English lad and has lost all sense of perspective or decorum.
(reaches for decanter)
More wine?

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY graciously allows CASTELNAU to replenish his glass.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
Ah, love, what a sweet torment...!

INT. FRENCH EMBASSY, BRUNO'S ROOM - NIGHT

BRUNO and MORGANA play "memory" on the undone bed. BRUNO is winning, as usual. MORGANA peruses MOCENIGO'S written proposition.

MORGANA
Zuan's is a very generous offer, besides London is no longer safe for you.

BRUNO
You want me to walk straight into the hands of the Inquisition?!

MORGANA
Venice is not Rome, darling, Venice is a free republic.
(MORE)

MORGANA (CONT'D)

You think father would allow any harm to come to you?

BRUNO fails to match a pair.

BRUNO

That man they arrested - Throckmorton - you know him, don't you?

MORGANA

(a burst of laughter)
Of course I do! So do you, don't you remember? We met him during the Royal Progress, at Kenilworth, last June.

BRUNO studies MORGANA'S perfectly innocent eyes. She fails to make a pair as well.

BRUNO

We could go to Wiesbaden. My disciple, Besler, wrote me. He thinks I could teach there. My books are gaining acceptance all over Germany.

*

MORGANA

You, tolerate German Lutheranism?!
(laughs)
For how long? You moan and bemoan about the Church, but at heart you are a die-hard Catholic, my dear!

A beat, BRUNO considers.

BRUNO

Odd... I haven't thought about myself that way for quite some time. But I suppose you are right.

MORGANA

I know I am. Besides, You imagine it will take the Germans long to learn you were excommunicated by the Calvinists?

BRUNO ponders, reaches for the last two pairs of face-down cards.

MORGANA (CONT'D)

Let me win the last hand!

He smiles, flips over a wrong pair, MORGANA kisses him. They get involved.

EXT. THEATRE - DAY

Fair weather. THREE MUSICIANS greet the arriving AUDIENCE with lute and flute music.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

The gallery is filling quickly.

MORGANA, CASTELNAU and his FAMILY, LECLERC, SIR FULKE, SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, WALSINGHAM, as well as a number of NOBLES and LADIES, file to the best seats.

BRUNO spies from behind the curtains.

DE MENDOZA arrives with SEVERAL SPANISH DIPLOMATS, sits near MORGANA who chats with MADAME CASTELNAU and her DAUGHTERS.

BACK STAGE, SHAKESPEARE passes last-minute slips of paper to RICHARD, buttons up his costume. RICHARD reads the note, disconcerted. SHAKESPEARE gives him a reassuring cheek pat.

ZUAN MOCENIGO, dressed in a fabulous carmine, silk suit, full with a high-top, feathered hat and golden sword, makes his entrance accompanied by a YOUNG DANDY avid of society. They file noisily in the row behind DE MENDOZA, drawing attention.

BACKSTAGE, SHAKESPEARE writes one last note, steals a glance toward BRUNO, slips note to RICHARD with a new word of advice. RICHARD looks at the previous note, seems confused. SHAKESPEARE retrieves the previous note, hands it to "Mistress Carubina," further befuddling RICHARD.

The curtain opens, BRUNO shrinks into the shadows, petrified.

LATER

The play is in full swing. SLOW APPROACH. SHAKESPEARE commands the stage, addressing RICHARD.

SHAKESPEARE
"Is it I? Or is it you?"

RICHARD
("depressed")
"You are you, I am I.
What can say I
So fair Victoria love me?"

The AUDIENCE watches attentively, but unresponsively.

BRUNO agonizes, spies the audience, waiting for a laugh which does not come, shrinks back, about to be sick.

SHAKESPEARE grabs RICHARD'S hand, like if he were a lady, drills holes into his eyes, meaningfully.

BRUNO stares at the floor, contemplating suicide.

SHAKESPEARE
You say to her, and not despair:
"Speak, love, speak!"

BRUNO looks up.

SHAKESPEARE (CONT'D)
 "Riddle my heart with your arrows,

BRUNO frowns.

SHAKESPEARE (CONT'D)
 "Bleed it till the penultimate drop
 Has forever quelled my bloody
 sorrow!"

The AUDIENCE laughs. As does MORGANA, recognizing SHAKESPEARE'S contribution.

BRUNO fights anger, obviously torn by the sudden success.

The YOUNG DANDY watches MORGANA, speaks into MOCENIGO'S ear, interested. MOCENIGO gossips about her.

BRUNO snatches up a copy of the libretto, flips through the pages, frantic.

ON STAGE, emboldened, RICHARD stalks to "Mistress Carubina," takes a quick peek at the note concealed in his sleeve.

RICHARD
 "What cunning can express
 The favour of her face?
 To whom in this distress,
 I do appeal for grace."

"CARUBINA"
 "Grace not, but Cupid, which doth
 aspire
 To be God of Desire
 Swears if he were fair,
 I wish my love were a leprechaun"

SHAKESPEARE watches them, thrilled.

The AUDIENCE laugh uproariously. WALSHINGHAM and SIR SIDNEY exchange approving glances with CASTELNAU.

RICHARD
 "My saint I keep to me,
 And Victoria herself is she,
 Victoria fair and true
 The leprechaun is you!"

More LAUGHTER. RICHARD makes a hasty exit.

Backstage, BRUNO glares at him.

BRUNO
 What the Devil is going on out
 there?!

Richard leers, grabs a new hat, rushes back onto the stage.

RICHARD
 "I am I, like Sun is Moon,
 Sitting alone upon my thought
 In melancholy mood I wrought..."

The lines flow on. BRUNO spies out, catches sight of...

SIR SIDNEY enjoying the performance. MORGANA, and CECILIA laugh.

BRUNO watches a few beats, leaves through a back exit, shaking his head, happily resigned.

LATER

BRUNO sits in the upper gallery, watching the play unnoticed.

SHAKESPEARE holds center stage, RICHARD'S and "MISTRESS CARUBINA'S" silhouettes are seen kissing, behind a "moon."

SHAKESPEARE
 "Desire can have no greater pain.
 Than for to see another man,
 The things desired to attain;
 Nor greater joy can be than this:
 That to enjoy that others miss."

He takes a deep bow. The AUDIENCE breaks into spontaneous, enthusiastic APPLAUSE.

RICHARD and "CARUBINA" rejoin SHAKESPEARE on stage to bow.

BRUNO applauds, moist-eyed.

SIR SIDNEY stands.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
 Author, author!

BRUNO shrinks.

MORGANA tosses a bouquet of flowers onto the stage. MOCENIGO leans into the DANDY...

MOCENIGO
 Rumor has it, the Marchesa was once
 Walsingham's lover!

The YOUNG DANDY is thrilled by the gossip.

PUSH IN ON DE MENDOZA, in the row ahead, as he turns back.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)
 Giordano met them both in Venice,
 when Walsingham was a guest of the
 Doge, years ago.

BRUNO has become aware of the exchange and seen DE MENDOZA'S reaction. His mind races, suddenly understands MORGANA has been exposed to MENDOZA as the traitor.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Author!

SHAKESPEARE signals BRUNO.

SHAKESPEARE

There!

The AUDIENCE turns, applauds. BRUNO stands, takes a coy bow, looks at SHAKESPEARE, who leers back at him, mischievously.

BRUNO makes his way down toward MORGANA who applauds with the rest, leans close to whisper in her ear - much as SISTER CONSTANZA once warned BRUNO of danger at the monastery.

BRUNO

You must leave.

She looks at him puzzled. BRUNO signals DE MENDOZA, intense.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

At once.

He moves on.

MORGANA casually finds DE MENDOZA'S chilling gaze through the applauding AUDIENCE, smiles and gets to her feet.

WALSINGHAM has not missed a beat; he drills LECLERC, then slips away discretely.

BRUNO climbs onto the stage, SHAKESPEARE nudges him forward, forcing him to take a bow on his own.

BRUNO sees Morgana's vacant seat - bows out, searches her, worried.

INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

BRUNO rides the moving vehicle. SHOTS ARE HEARD. The horses refuse a corner, rear up, BRUNO sticks his head out.

The front of the FRENCH EMBASSY is in flames. A DOZEN ARMED THUGS shatter windows with stones.

FIRST THUG

Death to the Dominican!

SECOND THUG

Viva España!

BRUNO calls to the DRIVER.

BRUNO

Wait for me here!

He debarks and scurries toward the back of the mansion.

INT. FRENCH EMBASSY - NIGHT

BRUNO hurries in through the rear entrance, smoke fills the corridors. SEVERAL SERVANTS carry buckets of water.

BRUNO
MORGANA!

TWO SOLDIERS bring in a wounded LECLERC.

LECLERC
She's not here! Leave at once, for
Christ's sake!
(BRUNO runs up the stairs)
Go before you get us all killed,
man!

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO rushes up the stairs, into his bedroom, grabs the stack of papers on his work table.

INT. BACK ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO hurries down the stairs. SEVERAL SOLDIERS arrive with an EMBASSY STAFF ESTABLISHED EARLIER, hurry toward the front of the mansion. BRUNO looks at LECLERC, hesitates.

LECLERC
Go, man, I'll be alright!

BRUNO nods, takes off.

EXT. EMBASSY - NIGHT

BRUNO runs toward the awaiting carriage. The SECOND THUG spots him.

SECOND THUG
There he is!

All run toward the carriage. BRUNO jumps in.

BRUNO
Go! GO!!!

The DRIVER whips the horses.

BRUNO looks out the back window, watches the thugs chasing the carriage lose ground - the embassy building in flames.
SHOTS FADE AS WE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONDON HOSTEL - DAY

BRUNO, looking seedy and unshaven leaves a small hostel, in a low-rent part of town. He looks worried.

EXT. LONDON BACK STREET - DAY

BRUNO walks in haste, steals a glance over his shoulder.

EXT. LONDON EXECUTION SQUARE - DAY

BRUNO inches his way through a PRAYING, CHANTING CROWD amassed in the square.

SOLDIERS hold THROCKMORTON (formerly referred to as RAPACIOUS-LOOKING YOUNG MAN) on a hanging platform. An OFFICER reads the execution order, barely audible over the CLAMORING CROWD calling "Death to the traitor!," "Death to all Catholics!"

A smaller crowd of CATHOLIC FANATICS are kept at bay by a line of SOLDIERS. The EXECUTIONER passes the noose over THROCKMORTON'S head, turns.

EXECUTIONER'S POV: a dark berlina, with the Royal seal on the door holds the high ground.

WALSINGHAM'S face appears at the window. He acquiesces with a slight nod, taps the ceiling of the carriage with his walking stick and the berlina drives off.

The EXECUTIONER pulls the lever. The trap opens and THROCKMORTON body falls. His neck snaps with an ugly CRACK! The CROWD CHEERS.

BRUNO skirts the exacerbated multitude, watching the grisly spectacle with reluctant fascination.

The EXECUTIONER unsheathes a glistening knife and slashes open THROCKMORTON'S abdomen. THROCKMORTON'S entrails pour on the cobblestones.

The CATHOLIC FANATICS break through the SOLDIERS, rush the ghastly prize, fighting over the scattered innards, soaking the last drop of blood with garments and handkerchiefs.

BRUNO looks on, sickened. A hand touches his shoulder, he turns back, startled. A SOLDIER shouts over the CLAMOR, cocks back his head, BRUNO follows his gaze to:

WALSINGHAM beckoning from inside the berlina. He throws the door open.

HORSE HOOVES, GALLOPING, BRUNO turns. A team of horses is driven into the square through the parting multitude.

WALSINGHAM
Climb in, man!

INT. BERLINA - DAY

BRUNO hurries into the cabin. The DRIVER closes the door, shutting out some of the CLAMOR.

BRUNO
Where is Morgana?!

WALSINGHAM
She's safe, she's left England. I suggest you do the same. De Mendoza has spread the rumor you were involved in the plot. I'm afraid I can no longer guarantee your safety.

BRUNO holds his gaze a moment, suddenly exits the berlina.

WALSINGHAM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Think this madness will one day end, Doctor?!

BRUNO takes in the scene a moment.

BRUNO
As long as there are religions to divide men, God will be merciless.

EXT. EXECUTION SQUARE - DAY

WALSINGHAM holds him - they know they probably will never see one another again. He shuts the door, the carriage pulls away.

DELIRIOUS CLAMOR from the square, BRUNO turns. CAMERA RISES FRAMING the horror: THROCKMORTON'S body is dismembered by a team of horses pulling in opposite directions. The CLAMOR FADES AS WE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARIS, LOUVRE - DAY

The real tennis court sits in a patch of glorious sunshine. BIRDS SING, a GARDENER waters the bougainvilleas growing on the walls. The ghost of BALLS HITTING RACKETS ECHOES in the mind.

PULL BACK TO INCLUDE BRUNO looking out through a window, sitting on the end of a silk-upholstered bench, inside a richly appointed hallway, waiting, lost in thought. A gold gilded book on his lap: "EXPULSION OF THE TRIUMPHANT BEAST."

BRUNO watches TWO GUISARDS walk across the garden like they own the place. MOANS. Puzzled, BRUNO decides to investigate. WE TRACK him to a door from where the MOANS come accompanied by THRASHING SOUNDS. He glances back, cracks the door open.

HIS POV: KING HENRI III in a mirror, torso naked, flagellating himself with a three-throng whip.

A SERVANT waits by his side, holding wet compresses. The GREYHOUNDS turn in circles, WHINING, nervously.

BRUNO opens the door some more.

HIS WIDENING POV: CATHERINE DE'MEDICI watches the ritual, with a scowl on her face. HENRI III hands the whip to the SERVANT and she walks away.

BRUNO hurries back to his seat, pretends to look out the window as a door opens and CATHERINE DE'MEDICI stalks out.

BRUNO stands and bows.

CATHERINE DE'MEDICI
 (passes without a glance)
 Il mio figlio non può riceverLa,
 Signor Bruno. Ne oggi, ne mai più.
**My son can not see you, Signor
 Bruno. Not today, not ever again.**

She goes. BRUNO looks at the intended gift in his hand.

The door opens again and HENRI III, eyes on the ground and stooping, emerges with MINIONS and his GREYHOUNDS.

BRUNO looks after him. He picks up his hat to go, and his eyes fall on:

HIS POV THROUGH A GLASS DOOR: the collation room: the deserted PAPAGAYO perch.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARIS STREET - EVENING

BRUNO walks at a fast clip, deep in thought. MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC LEAGUE come down a side street. Crosses, saints, a statue of the Virgin Mary bob above the penitents. Much PRAYING AND SHOUTING to the Heavens, threats and loudly voiced condemnation of heretics and Protestants.

BRUNO moves aside, against the wall. A DANGEROUS-LOOKING GUISARD confronts him.

GUISARD
 You! What is you religion?!

BRUNO stalls, frightened...

BRUNO
 I'm...a...Dominican...

The GUISARD drills holes into him but is distracted by other prey. BRUNO presses along - suddenly stops.

WIPE TO:

MORGANA

Her back to CAMERA, stands outside BRUNO'S apartment building (the same where he once held his private lessons), waiting.

BRUNO'S heart takes a leap, he bounds toward her, flushed with life. MORGANA starts to walk away. BRUNO runs.

BRUNO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
MORGANA!

She turns - but it is not MORGANA.

BRUNO goes looking forlorn into his building.

INT. BRUNO'S PARIS ROOM - NIGHT

BRUNO rummages through a dark armoire, frantic. He finds what he is looking for: a leather bag. He removes a manuscript, we spy its title: "De Magia," finds the crumpled envelope inside it bearing MOCENIGO'S family seal.

He opens it, extracts MOCENIGO'S proposal, scans it under the candlelight. The flame FLOODS THE SCREEN AND WE.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. THE VENICE LAGOON - DAY

Scoops of white cumulus-nimbus glide slowly against a steel-blue, winter sky.

THE OLD GONDOLIER drives his gondola with long, RHYTHMIC STABS into the murky water. After a silence, he eyes the sky.

GONDOLIER
Bella giornata, eh, Meastro..?
Beautiful day, huh, Master..?

BRUNO rides on his feet, facing the sun from behind his emerald sun-glasses, letting the mild sun caress his face. He smiles and nods, distant, then closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUVRE, KING'S BEDROOM - DAY

HENRI III, not quite dressed yet, sitting by a window, reading a letter. RHYTHMIC SOUND OF OAR STABBING THE WATER CONTINUES.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. VENICE LAGOON - DAY

BRUNO, eyes closed, behind the emerald glasses.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. KING'S BEDROOM - DAY

A short, muscular DOMINICAN PRIEST (not Montalcino), holding a good-sized wooden crucifix, waits inside the open door, next to an ADVISOR. GUARDS can be seen, posted outside.

HENRI III folds the letter, looks at the PRIEST who nods reverentially, beckons him impatiently.

The DOMINICAN PRIEST approaches, whispers in the King's ear, whispers. HENRI III nods slowly.

THE PRIESTS'S BLOOD-SHOT EYES LOOK SCREEN LEFT, AS IN BRUNO'S DREAM.

He puts the crucifix to his lips, kisses it, offers it to HENRI III who leans forward to do the same. And then, the PRIEST'S hand pulls the head of the crucifix unsheathing a lethal-looking double-edged dagger, buries it in HENRI'S gut.

HENRI III looks at him with surprise, springs to his feet, oddly vexed.

KING HENRI III
You killed me!

The ADVISOR takes a step forward SLIGHTLY OVERCRANKED, shouts out the alarm.

THE PRIEST slides the knife making a long cut, then stares at the King's intestines emptying into his disbelieving hands.

HENRI III drops back on his chair, chalk-pale but oddly calm.

SEVERAL GUARDS burst into the room with swords drawn. THE PRIEST turns to them, serene.

A sword comes down, splits his head open like a melon. A second sword blow nearly severs his shoulder.

BLOOD SPLASHES HENRI'S face.

MATCH CUT BACK
TO:

EXT. VENICE LAGOON - DAY

As WATER SPLASHES BRUNO'S face. His startled hand knocks his sun-glasses into the water. He tries to catch them.

CAMERA UNDERWATER

The emerald glasses drift slowly PAST CAMERA as the gondola carrying BRUNO glides past above.

BACK TO BRUNO

Staring after his precious loss.

EXT. MOCENIGO PALACE - LATER

The gondola pulls up at the landing stage. The YOUNG MOOR sits on the doorsteps, smoking his water pipe. He does not look a day older.

MOCENIGO (O.S.)
(impatient)
I do understand! But I already know
all about the movement of the
planets, the sphere, the infinity of
the universe...

INT. MOCENIGO'S PALACE, LIBRARY - DAY

MOCENIGO'S Murano doll collection sits on shelves, behind a large desk littered with books, quills, inkwells and calculating instruments. MOCENIGO dusts his dolls with peacock-feathers.

MOCENIGO
...the stars, the moon and the
tides! I want you to teach me
magic!
(turns)
Magic, you understand?!

BRUNO, before a blackboard set on an easel, illustrates the Copernican system, enduring - sick with frustration.

BRUNO
How many times must we go through
this, my dear Zuan?!

MOCENIGO
You told the King of France he would
die murdered by a priest! That was
powerful magic! Teach me how to
tell the future.

BRUNO
Keep your eyes open in the present,
Zuan. That's the only magic I know
to guess the future.
(puts down chalk)
Now...

MOCENIGO glares at him, seething with resentment.

MOCENIGO

And the miracles of Christ - were they magic or witchcraft?!

BRUNO

Christ was a Jewish scholar initiated in the Egyptian mysteries.

MOCENIGO

Not the son of God, born to a virgin?

BRUNO

You tire me.

(kicks easel, exasperated)

God is not a person! How do you think He could beget a son?! I'm wasting my time with you!

He storms out of the room, slams the door behind himself.

MOCENIGO

(after him)

We're not through, yet!

INT. MOROSINI PALACE, MORGANA'S ROOM - DAY

MORGANA stands naked at her open window, enveloped in the sensuously ballooning voile curtain, smoking her pipe.

BRUNO lies in bed, tangled in the sheets, in the foetal position, lost in thought. An erotic engraving by Raimondi has been carelessly left on the night table. DISTANT DOGS BARK.

MORGANA

Love never used to make you gloomy.

BRUNO tears the sheets off himself, gets up, begins to dress.

BRUNO

I'm wasting my life with that imbecile! Time is slipping through my fingers! Besler wrote me, again. Real students await me in Frankfurt!

MORGANA

So, leave Mocenigo!

BRUNO

And waste my time here instead?!

BRUNO at once regrets his words. MORGANA puts out her pipe, walks slowly to the bathroom.

MORGANA

No, better leave for Germany before you become a total bore!

BRUNO reaches for her, she moves out of reach, slams the door behind herself.

EXT. VENICE CANAL - DUSK

BRUNO rides a gondola through a dark, murky canal. It pulls up at MOCENIGO'S palace.

INT. MOCENIGO'S PALACE, BRUNO'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

A SERVANT pulls down papers, books and belongings from BRUNO'S armoire.

MOCENIGO is bent over a manuscript, "De Magia," scanning it intensely. A SECOND SERVANT stands guard at the door.

EXT. MOCENIGO PALACE, LANDING STAGE - DUSK

The MOOR smokes on the steps. BRUNO debarks, files past him.

INT. MOCENIGO PALACE, CORRIDOR - DAY

BRUNO hangs his hat, cape, makes his way along the portraits corridor, enters...

INT. BRUNO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

MOCENIGO pretends to supervise the TWO SERVANTS' work, replacing BRUNO'S belongings into the armoire. The "De Magia" manuscript lies on the bed. MOCENIGO acknowledges BRUNO.

MOCENIGO

Rats. You mustn't leave papers in damp places.

He stalks out, followed by the SERVANTS. BRUNO stacks the manuscript, thoughtful.

INT. MOROSINI ACADEMY - DAY

A GLASS HARMONICA PLAYER caresses his wine-filled, crystal glasses in a corner of the warmly lit room, creating fragile-sounding MUSIC.

On an especially draped table, VERONICA FRANCO lies, in all her voluptuous splendor, face up, bearing dozens of gold-pinheaded acupuncture needles on her naked body. They give her the appearance of a beautiful porcupine.

A CHINESE ACUPUNCTURIST circles his subject with balletic grace as he inserts two last needles, then proceeds to heat some of their heads with a tiny, long stemmed torch.

ANDREA MOROSINI'S philosophical circle, a gathering of dozen of Venice most notable INTELLECTUALS, follow the experience with alchemists' fascination.

A beautiful LEVANTINE SERVANT goes serving precious glasses of an opaline-green beverage.

BRUNO and MORGANA are in back, bickering in loud whispers. BRUNO holds a ribboned manuscript under his arm.

BRUNO

Besler thinks I could start my own academy, in Germany! What did you imagined, I'd give up philosophy to be with you?!

MORGANA

It crosses a woman's mind...

She moves off, rolls her eyes at the approaching DOGE, exasperated.

DOGE MOROSINI

(conciliatory)

Children!

He gives MORGANA a reassuring look, takes BRUNO'S arm, leads him away.

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to eavesdrop but, as a man of some worldliness, Giordano, I can tell you that to seek happiness away from one's people, is to chase a shadow. The whole of Venice is still toasting your last book. Bask in the glory, young man.

THE CHINESE ACUPUNCTURIST demonstrates VERONICA'S lack of sensibility in her anesthetized body, by pricking her nipples. THE DOGE ogles her.

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)

If you knew how quickly youth will slip through your fingers...

(clearly alluding to

MORGANA)

Allow yourself some happiness! Even a philosopher must know that's the only sensible purpose of life!

(sees manuscript)

The second volume?

BRUNO

Yes...

(hands it to DOGE)

What did you think of the first part?

DOGE MOROSINI

Dangerous. Too hot, even for Venice.
Print it here and it will make the
lagoon boil.

BRUNO

I figured that much. I'm taking it
to Frankfurt, in the morning...
(looking after MORGANA)
In any case, I need a change of air.

SENATOR CALDONI, a tall, thin man, resembling a stork,
overtly gay, approaches and eyes BRUNO, charmed.

CALDONI

When will we mortals have the honor
of reading your new book, doctor?

The DOGE ostensibly hides the manuscript behind his back.

DOGE MOROSINI

Book?!

CALDONI lets out a wicked chuckle, turns to the spectacle.

CALDONI

Marvelous magic, Andrea!

DOGE MOROSINI

Shanghai surgeons call it science. I
witnessed there how they put to
sleep a gangrenous hand. The boy
who owned it watched with us while
they amputated it with a dull
butcher's saw.

CALDONI gags, about to be sick, to the DOGE'S delight.

EXT. MOCENIGO'S PALACE - NIGHT

BRUNO'S lighted gondola pulls up to quay. BRUNO debarks in
haste. The YOUNG MOOR sits on the steps, smoking his water
pipe. *

BRUNO

Hold the gondola...!

The YOUNG MOOR grins strangely after BRUNO from behind the
cloud of blue smoke, then turns to...

HIS POV: A flat-bottom, official sailboat carrying a black-
hooded figure and SEVERAL GUARDS, comes out of hiding, from a
side canal, pulls silently up to quay. *

INT. MOCENIGO PALACE, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

BRUNO stalks down the corridor, notices the door to his room
ajar, pushes it open: everything is in perfect order - but
not a book in sight.

Mystified, he opens the wardrobe - empty. FOOTSTEPS, he steps out to the corridor: A SERVANT hurries away.

BRUNO
Where are my books?! The rest of my
things?!

He follows the SERVANT.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO enters, goes to the desk. The pile of books we saw earlier has disappeared.

BRUNO
(puzzled)
Zuan?

No reply. He tries the door to the loggia - locked - heads for the door, finds himself face to face with a SECOND SERVANT who tries to run away. BRUNO holds him back.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
You! What's happening here?!
(shakes him)
Speak, you fool! Zuan!

TWO OTHER SERVANTS enter with cudgels. He lets the SECOND SERVANT go and runs off.

EXT. MOCENIGO PALACE, LANDING STAGE - NIGHT

MOCENIGO watches from the loggia's window as BRUNO runs out of the palace, skids to a stop before THREE ARMED GUARDS. They draw swords.

BRUNO pushes the FIRST GUARD into the water, faces the other two. He manages to connect a few punches but is finally subdued.

A PRIEST INQUISITOR in a black cassock, with a veiled cowl, watches as BRUNO is thrown into the awaiting sailboat, then his veiled eyes go to the loggia window where MOCENIGO turns away.

INT. LOGGIA - NIGHT

MOCENIGO stuffs and envelope and stamps it with his family seal.

INT. VENICE PRISON - NIGHT

BRUNO lands on the stone floors, the iron door is bolted behind him with finality.

WIPE TO:

INT. ROME, HOLY SEE - DINNING ROOM - DAY

The familiar envelope bearing MOCENIGO'S family seal travels on the PAGE'S silver tray.

The PAGE reaches LUCCA who, his back to CAMERA, eats a tiny banana with knife and fork. He wipes his lips with his napkin, takes the envelope, opens it as the PAGE leaves.

CAMERA CREEPS around him, this time catching a flash of victory in his eyes as he crushes the letter in his fist.

EXT. VENICE, ESTABLISHING - DAY

Early-morning fog floats over the still lagoon.

INT. DOGE'S PALACE - DAY

MORGANA rushes along a corridor, on the verge of hysteria. The DOGE'S SECRETARY sees her coming, hurries to stop her.

SECRETARY
Marchesa, His Serenity asked not to
be--!

MORGANA pushes open the black, double doors.

INT. DOGE'S RECEIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THE DOGE is in dressing down SALUZZO'S TWO ASSESSORS.

DOGE MOROSINI
How dare you act on your own?! I'm
to be informed before any such
action is to be undertaken! Advise
the Inquisitor General I shall
protest in the strongest terms
possible his behavior to the Pope!

MORGANA bursts in.

MORGANA
Father, Giordano has been arrested!

The DOGE glances at the ASSESSORS.

DOGE MOROSINI
That will be all!

He leads MORGANA out, onto the...

INT. DOGE'S PALACE TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

MORGANA
That cretin, Mocenigo, denounced him
to The Inquisition!

DOGE MOROSINI
I know... I thought Giordano had
left for Germany.

MORGANA
(eyes flooding)
So did I, but... Oh, God, I
convinced him Venice was safe!

DOGE MOROSINI
Get a hold of yourself, child!
Giordano has many friends in Venice,
we'll--!

MORGANA
Giordano has enemies too! Powerful
ones! In Rome!

DOGE MOROSINI
We are not in Rome!

MORGANA
That's what I told him! Now, he's
behind bars!

DOGE MOROSINI
Let me handle this. I won't
tolerate this sort of...terrorism.
Not even from Rome.

INT. VENICE, INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

MOCENIGO testifies. He is on a roll.

MOCENIGO
He said Mary was far from a virgin
and certainly not the mother of God
but of a magus by the name of Jesus,
whose father was most likely not
Joseph, but a neighbor named...

WIPE DOWN TO:

BRUNO - HIGH ANGLE

BRUNO
You have only Mocenigo's word for
that nonsense!

WIPE LEFT TO:

MOCENIGO - CIRCULAR TRACK, TIGHT

MOCENIGO

He says the Holy Eucharist is nothing but flour and water, that he has often chewed it and it tastes like chicken liver, and that the Pope should write a bull ordering that a touch of salt and pepper be added to the mix to make it more appetizing.

BRUNO - BOOM DOWN TO CLOSE-UP.

BRUNO

Compounded nonsense!

MOCENIGO - EXTREME CLOSE-UP.

MOCENIGO

Christ was a sinister individual, a vulgar charmer of crowds, incapable of real miracles; the apostles nothing but vagabonds, too lazy for real work.

ON SALUZZO - BLINK, TWITCH

MOCENIGO leans forward, conspiratorially.

MOCENIGO

He also told me he speaks to Satan on a regular basis, and that he is a pretty funny fellow.

The TWO ASSESSORS exchange doubtful glances.

INT. VATICAN LIBRARY - DAY

THE EYES OF POPE CLEMENT gain intensity on a canvas, under the brush of a MASTER ARTIST of evident genius. The likeness is remarkable, including his unflattering, ruddy, carbuncled nose.

LUCCA, hands clasped behind his back, watches the ARTIST work. TWO ARTIST ASSISTANTS mix pigments on a work table.

POPE CLEMENT VIII, in all his pontifical splendor, sits on his throne, posing. A PAGE slowly waves a large fan for his comfort. OVER ABOVE:

POPE CLEMENT VIII

(flushed with anger)

Mocenigo's testimony is falling apart! The man is an idiot! We need a corroborating witness. I thought you had someone inside?!

INT. VENICE PRISON - DAY

The WARDEN and TWO GUARDS bow, respectfully. MORGANA is let into the massive building, is led up a set of wooden steps, to the cell block.

INT. BRUNO'S PRISON CELL - DAY

A GUARD stands by the open door. MORGANA nurses BRUNO'S bruised face, speaks in a loud whisper.

MORGANA

Don't worry?! Rome is invested in this process! I know the beast from the inside, remember?

BRUNO

Even Rome must have corroborating witnesses, to make heresy charges stick. Mocenigo has no one.

MORGANA

Mocenigo has relations! His family ties go all the way up to the Pope!

METALLIC SOUND OF DOORS, VOICES; the GUARD mumbles something, MORGANA kisses BRUNO, steps out of the cell, BRUNO moves to the door as the GUARD locks it.

MORGANA (CONT'D)

(holding back tears)

I couldn't live without you. You know that, don't you, you fool?!

BRUNO'S eyes grin.

BRUNO

It crosses a man's mind.

MORGANA tries to smile; no longer able to hold back the flood of tears, she hurries away.

INT. VENICE, INQUISITORS' ROOM - DAY

The tonsured head of a MONK, his back to CAMERA, faces SALUZZO and his WO ASSESSORS.

MONK

Nothing the church preaches can be proven. There is no hell. Sins are not punished. Moses pretended to speak to God; in fact he invented the commandments himself, to fool his people.

CAMERA MOVES TO REVEAL THE MONK IS CELESTINO DE VERONA. His hair has been trimmed, his voice is frailly composed, his eyes insanely intense.

CELESTINO

To believe there is only one world
is a sign of enormous ignorance.
The Earth turns around the Sun.
There are innumerable worlds like
ours, turning around innumerable
stars.

SALUZZO leans forward, keen.

SALUZZO

And brother Giordano pronounced
these heresies in your presence, did
he?

CELESTINO

(frowns)
In my presence? I don't
understand...

FIRST ASSESSOR

You heard Giordano Bruno say these
things yourself, did you not?!

CELESTINO

Oh! No! I say these things to you.

SALUZZO and the ASSESSORS exchange puzzled glances. CELESTINO
lets out a wild cackle of laughter.

CELESTINO (CONT'D)

These are my own, profound beliefs!
(looks to the Heavens)
The Lord himself sent them to me. To
me!

SALUZZO casts his eyes, appalled.

INT. VATICAN LIBRARY - DAY

LUCCA watches POPE CLEMENT pose - bristling with anger. The
portrait has advanced. It is an excellent rendition, hairy
carbuncles and all. The ARTIST seems pleased.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

You can't explain it?! I can! You
left that dimwit locked up with him
too long! And what's the result?
One more Giordanisti!

*

The MASTER ARTIST implores POPE CLEMENT to sit still.

LUCCA

Perhaps we could ask Venice to re-
examine...

POPE CLEMENT springs to his feet, stalks to the canvas,
studies the work. His eyes flash, his hand goes to his nose.
The MASTER ARTIST darts a quick, worried glance at LUCCA.
OVER ACTION:

POPE CLEMENT VIII

Can't you see there is no time left
to re-examine anything at all?! The
case is bleeding to death! Request
Bruno's extradition before we lose
the damned thing!

He glares at the ARTIST and storms out.

EXT. PRISON COURTYARD - DAY

BRUNO plays solitary handball against a wall. CELESTINO DE
VERONA stands beside him, hands in his pockets, speaking non-
stop, obviously insane.

CALDONI (V.O.)

You are requesting extradition for a
hypothetical heresy Reverend Father!

EXT. PORT OF VENICE, ESTABLISH - DAY

A boat, all sailed up, rolls on the choppy, high tide.

CALDONI (V.O.)

A single concrete proof,
substantiating the charges...

INT. DOGE'S PALACE, CHAMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF TEN - DAY

SALUZZO and his TWO ASSESSORS face COUNT CALDONI, the DOGE
and the COUNCIL OF TEN. CLERKS, SCRIBES and SECRETARIES come
and go. CALDONI has the floor, addresses SALUZZO.

CALDONI

(perusing a letter)
...against the accused has yet to be
found!

SALUZZO stares at CALDONI from under his brow.

AMBASSADOR DONATO follows the proceedings seated with several
observing SENATORS.

FIRST ASSESSOR

The competent tribunals in Rome will
find it, Excellency.

The DOGE clears his throat.

DOGE MOROSINI

Venetian courts are incompetent, you
say?

SALUZZO darts his FIRST ASSESSOR a scolding glance.

SALUZZO

What my assessor means, Your Serenity, is that Rome may have access to more facts... The accused is already a fugitive from a previous inquiry, in Naples.

FIRST ASSESSOR

A boat especially chartered by the Holy See, to take Bruno back, awaits in harbor, Excellency!

DOGE MOROSINI

(eyeing SALUZZO, ironic)

Yes, well, that is a nuisance, isn't it? Enough to rewrite the laws, I suppose?

SALUZZO

(blink, twitch, snort)

What my assessor means...

DOGE MOROSINI

(getting up)

The matter will be put to a vote, as required by Venetian law. Convey that to Pope Clement, if you may, Reverend.

(ironic grin as he goes)

Meantime, I suggest you tell your boat captain he should set sail back while the tide is still high.

SALUZZO bows, bristling as the DOGE exits without giving him another look.

EXT. MOCENIGO'S PALACE, LANDING STAGE - DAY

The YOUNG MOOR smokes his pipe. His eyes go to the second story window where MOCENIGO'S SHOUTS can be heard.

INT. MOCENIGO'S PALACE, LIBRARY - DAY

A SERVANT stands at the door watching MOCENIGO shatter his Murano doll collection with a heavy fire-stoker.

MOCENIGO

(striking seven times)

HE-STILL-OWES-ME-SE-VEN-LESSONS!!!

His shouts fade long after WE

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOROSINI PALACE - BATHROOM

The DOGE sits in a large, Roman bath, sipping wine, exhausted. The TURKISH PRINCESS rubs his back. MORGANA runs in, exulting.

MORGANA
Is it true?! The Council voted
against extradition?!

DOGE MOROSINI
(smiles, acquiescing)
Rome will now have to satisfy
herself with the verdict of our
courts. The way the testimony is
headed, I'm afraid His Sanctity will
be greatly disappointed.

MORGANA kisses him.

MORGANA
Thank you, father.

She hurries out, beaming. MOROSINI looks after her, smiles, closes his eyes as the TURKISH PRINCESS steps into the bath with him.

EXT. PRISON COURTYARD - DAY

MORGANA strolls with BRUNO in the sun.

MORGANA
Under the law, Saluzzo must deliver
his report forty days after the last
witness has been heard. The
inquisitors are stretching
Mocenigo's testimony to comical
lengths. Father believes it is just
a matter of days before Rome faces
the fact that the evidence is not
there to convict you.

BRUNO
(beat, somber)
Rome will not give up. No matter
how absurd the testimony.

INT. VENICE, INQUISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

MOCENIGO writhes on the witness seat.

MOCENIGO
He said he loved women, was sorry
he'd not known as many as king
Solomon.

(MORE)

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

So-called "sins of the flesh" are a contradiction in terms, he said, because nature is divine and without them nature would become extinct.

WIPE RIGHT TO:

COUNT CALDONI on the witness seat. He looks sincerely astonished.

CALDONI

Sins of the flesh?! What preposterous absurdity! Never have I come across a more moral, spiritual man in my life!

WIPE UP TO:

LOW ANGLE, VERONICA FRANCO

She licks her full, purple lips under the prodigiously broad brim of a malachite-green slouch hat.

VERONICA FRANCO

He was very clean. I doubt I've ever seen a cock maintained in such immaculate condition! And I've seen a few.

INT. VATICAN LIBRARY - DAY

POPE CLEMENT poses, holds a document in his hands, cannot sit still any longer.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

Good God, that circus must be stopped! I want Bruno brought to Rome at any price!

He stands, shoves the document into LUCCA'S hands, glares at his portrait. The painting is almost finished, the carbuncles barely evident now. The MASTER ARTIST watches sheepishly POPE CLEMENT inspect his work. OVER ACTION:

LUCCA

May I be ruthless, Your Sanctity?

POPE CLEMENT VIII

(booming)
Can we afford not to?

He storms out.

EXT. VENICE PORT - DAY

The Vatican boat rolls in the calm tide of dawn. SAILORS lower its sails.

INT. DOGE'S PALACE - DAY

LUCCA, wearing the purple cape we saw him in when he met the DOGE, arrives accompanied by the TWO SWISS GUARDS. He knocks on the door bearing the Bucca del Leone relief engraving. A moment later, a SERVANT opens it. A SECRETARY appears behind him, wrapping himself in a robe-de-chambre, obviously just awoken. When he sees LUCCA'S dress, his eyes open wide.

LUCCA
I am Cardinal Sisto Lucca, Pope
Clement's nuncio. I'm here to see
the Doge.

The SECRETARY bows, motions LUCCA in. CAMERA FRAMES THE FULL, DAY-TIME MOON, PANS TO THE SKY, HIDING THE

DISSOLVE TO:

A FLOCK OF PIGEONS

Circling the sky. Reveal the DOGE'S terrace.

A PIGEON lands on a window sill, pecks the wood, COOING. LOUD VOICES, it turns.

PIGEON'S POV: DOGE'S RECEIVING ROOM. SISTO LUCCA waves official-looking papers, rants at the shaken DOGE. The DOGE pulls himself to his feet, ambles to the window, short of breath, opens it.

THE PIGEON flies off as the DOGE leans on the open window, shattered.

DOGE MOROSINI
This is all so...vulgar, so vague...
(sighs, disgusted)
What guarantees do I have that Spain
won't later demand my daughter's
life, regardless of
what...arrangement...you and I
concoct here today?!

LUCCA
(folding document)
Persuasion is Rome's specialty, Your
Serenity. Leave Spain to us. His
Sanctity will guarantee your
daughter's safety once his request
has been satisfied.

The DOGE looks at LUCCA, deeply troubled.

EXT. MOROSINI PALACE - SUNSET

THE SUN SINKS behind monumental Venice. THE DOGE waddles on the edge of the lagoon, by the landing stage, staring into nothingness. His breath steams in the icy air.

LUCCA (V.O.)
 Rome has no interest in your
 daughter, Excellency.
 (beat)
 Giordano Bruno we must have.

MORGANA (O.S.)
 Father...

The DOGE blinks, does not move.

MORGANA kneels beside him, holding a lantern.

MORGANA (CONT'D)
 What are you doing here, at this
 hour? You'll freeze to death. Come
 out...

THE DOGE lets her draw him out of the water, sits heavily on
 the steps, looks into her eyes.

She puts the bathrobe over his shoulders, kisses him, dries
 his hair, tenderly.

MORGANA (CONT'D)
 Why have you sent the servants away?
 (no response)
 What's wrong?

The DOGE sighs heavily.

DOGE MOROSINI
 Everything is wrong, isn't it? From
 the day we are born, we do nothing
 but make vain attempts to shake off
 the wrongs we've been saddled
 with... The original sin, then the
 ones we commit on our own... Never
 ends...

MORGANA
 What's happened?

DOGE MOROSINI
 Rome has sent an important emissary.
 Giordano's extradition request will
 be reviewed.

MORGANA
 (stunned)
 But Rome's request was voted down!

DOGE MOROSINI
 There is new evidence.

MORGANA
 What?! Who is the emissary?

DOGE MOROSINI
 A cardinal close to the Pope. Sisto
 Lucca.

MORGANA gasps.

MORGANA
Sisto Lucca is Giordano's sworn
enemy! Giordano must not be
extradited, do you hear me, father?!
(she grabs his hands)
Swear to me there will be no
extradition!

The DOGE stares at her, mortified.

DOGE MOROSINI
It is out of my hands. The full
Senate must now vote. It's the law.

MORGANA
But the Council heard all the
evidence!

DOGE MOROSINI
New evidence, I tell you!

He stalks away. MORGANA'S eyes burn after him.

MORGANA
What evidence? WHAT EVIDENCE?!

INT. TURKISH BATH - DAY

THE DOGE and SENATOR CALDONI sit on a long bench against a
marble softly lit by a skylight.

CALDONI stares at BRUNO'S "De Magia, Volume II" in his hands.

CALDONI
(looks at DOGE, bewildered)
This is grotesque! Bruno is no more
guilty of heresy than I am of the
pigeon droppings in San Marco
square! You know that yourself!

DOGE MOROSINI
I loathe it more than you, my
friend, believe me... But Rome has
threaten to retaliate with all her
might if we fight on. The Republic
can no longer afford this trial. We
have no other choice.

CALDONI stares at the DOGE, devastated.

EXT. VENICE, PIAZZA SAN MARCO - DAY

The square is deserted. A BELL TOLLS calling assembly.

INT. VENICE, PRISON CELL - DAY

BRUNO hangs on the bars of his window, staring out. HOLD.
BELLS TOLL, distant.

INT. VENICE, SENATE AMPHITHEATER - DAY

TINTORETTO'S large, imposing "PARADISE" fills the SCREEN.
SHUFFLING OF FEET, MURMURING OF MULTITUDINOUS VOICES
underscore the theme of the painting showing many angels.

CAMERA PANS DOWN TO REVEAL the DOGE, dressed in all his
serene splendor, seated in a golden chair, flanked by SIX
COUNCILLORS dressed in red robes.

SOME TWO-HUNDRED SENATORS wearing voluptuous, black robes,
occupy rows of back-to-back benches for twelve, oddly
disposed at a ninety-degree angle to the back wall where the
DOGE presides a voting session of the "Consiglio Del
Pregadi."

The scene is anything but solemn; the room buzzes with noisy
activity: PAGES deliver slips of paper, drink, snacks.
SENATORS debate loudly among themselves. SECRETARIES,
SCRIBES, OFFICERS come and go.

TWO SECRETARIES stand guard beside a balloting box and three
tall bronze cups containing, respectively, the small white,
green and red fabric voting balls.

The SENATORS file by, chatting among themselves, select a
ball and deposit it in the box.

MORGANA, flanked by VERONICA FRANCO, follows the proceedings
from an aisle reserved for NOBLES. She turns and looks at
ZUAN MOCENIGO with bitter contempt. He holds her gaze,
defiant, then turn as...

A PAGE rings a tiny, bright-sounding BELL. The house comes to
order, SENATOR CALDONI takes the floor.

CALDONI

Your Serenity, Councillors, Fellow
Senators, Pregadi... Before we
proceed to the vote, I feel
compelled to share with you new
evidence which has come to my
attention and which must be brought
to bear on the decision by our most
distinguished Council of Ten to deny
Rome her request for Giordano
Bruno's extradition.

A MURMUR ripples through the assembly. LUCCA scans the
SENATORS, filled with anticipation.

CALDONI (CONT'D)

(holding up manuscript)
Giordano Bruno's own words,
Excellencies!

(MORE)

CALDONI (CONT'D)
I have here, his last, unpublished
work, "De Magia..."

PUSH TO CLOSE-UP OF MORGANA. She gasps, stunned, turns
disbelieving countenance on...

WHAT SHE SEES: DISTORTED BY EMOTION: THE DOGE on his throne.
He tears his eyes away from her with the reluctance of
someone gazing away from a gruesome, but riveting sight.

CALDONI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I have reviewed these most
regrettable writings with
consternation and sadness...

MORGANA sinks in her seat, pale as chalk. CALDONI'S VOICE
fades behind the RISING SOUND OF HER HEART BEAT. She stands,
sits, stands - aimless.

VERONICA FRANCO turns to her with concern. MORGANA lets out a
harrowing, ugly MOAN. Heads turn. Her eyes roll back as
VERONICA FRANCO catches her fall AND WE

CUT TO:

SPACE - NIGHT

FAINT STARS TWINKLE AGAINST THE VELVETY BLACK, ENORMOUSLY
REMOTE. REVEAL MORGANA, eyes swollen, regard vacant, walking
under a thin drizzle, along a deserted street - her long, wet
gown dragging behind her.

INT. MOROSINI PALACE, DOGE'S RECEIVING ROOM - NIGHT

PULLING MORGANA as she moves slowly along the marble
corridor.

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA. We enter the dimly lit room. The DOGE sits
at his desk, writing. He looks at CAMERA, stands holding the
vellum he is writing on.

MORGANA stands before him, looks at the vellum in his hand.

MORGANA
A stroke of a pen is all Giordano
means to you?
(beat, into his eyes)
What evil comes between us, father?

DOGE MOROSINI
Giordano was--

WHAM! MORGANA slaps him, violently, expressionless.

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)
Rome--

WHAM! Morgana's hand lands a backslap; this time a thin line
of blood runs down from the DOGE'S lip.

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)
 You don't understand...
 (eyes flooding)
 They left me no choice!

MORGANA swings a third time, the DOGE clasps her wrist.

DOGE MOROSINI (CONT'D)
 Haven't you learnt anything from
 me?!

She snatches her wrist back, stalks around the room, like a caged, wild beast.

MORGANA
 NO! NO! NO! NOOOOOO! I love him,
 father! Love! True love!
 (stares at him, horrified)
 Oh, my God! Oh, my God!

She collapses, sobbing, disconsolately. The DOGE approaches her, tries to put a hand on her head, MORGANA pulls away, tears flowing freely now.

MORGANA (CONT'D)
 I will never forgive you, father.
 Venice was not Rome - that I learnt
 from you!

DOGE MOROSINI
 Without Rome, Venice would sink in a
 sea of blood!

MORGANA
 So be it, if I can have him back!

DOGE MOROSINI
 It is not...possible, my child.

MORGANA
 He trusted you. Like a boy trusts a
 father. What are you getting out of
 this?!

THE DOGE bites his lips. MORGANA stares at him with deep contempt, then her eyes soften, take a distant cast.

MORGANA (CONT'D)
 (calmly)
 You will never lay eyes on me again.

She goes. The DOGE looks after her, shattered.

EXT. THE VENICE LAGOON - WIDE - NIGHT

A full moon blankets the dark city with a milky glow. HOLD.

EXT. MOROSINI PALACE - NIGHT

The DOGE slowly descends the steps from his terrace to the landing stage.

He comes to a stop at the edge of the lagoon, removes his robe. His movements are deliberate, ritualistic.

When he is naked, he steps into the icy water, swims away along the reflection of the moonlight shaft. A cloud hides the moon and he is swallowed by darkness. CAMERA SLOWLY TILTS TO THE STAR SPANGLED SKY AND WE

CUT TO:

DEEP SPACE

WE ARE MOVING THROUGH THE BLACK INFINITE, TOWARD DISTANT CONSTELLATIONS, DRIFTING AIMLESSLY, IT SEEMS, AS THE FRAME TILTS SLIGHTLY, ONE WAY THEN THE OTHER. A SUN SUDDENLY BURSTS OUT OF THE DARKNESS, FLOODS THE SCREEN AND WE

CUT TO:

EXT. ROME STREET (1599) - DAY

THE SUN IN THE SKY. WIPE DOWN to a busy Roman street. SUPERIMPOSE:

"ROME, SEVEN YEARS LATER."

ZUAN MOCENIGO, CLOSE, dressed in a flamboyant pink or fuchsia suit, with a tall, feathered hat, bounces up and down, evidently thrilled to be in Rome.

MOCENIGO

Why didn't you wear that charming
pink organza coat I gave you,
Manolo?!

PULL BACK REVEALS he is riding a foaming, splendid-looking stallion along the busy street. MANOLO, his majordomo, escorts him in a lesser mount, looking winded with a loaded mule in tow. *

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

You look absolutely dashing in it!

From portly MANOLO'S look, we seriously doubt it.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

Instead, look at you! I can't take
you in with me in those rags!

INT. HOLLY OFFICE - DAY

MOCENIGO follows a YOUNG PRIEST along a richly appointed corridor.

YOUNG PRIEST

And, who shall I announce, Signor?

MOCENIGO

Zuan Mocenigo, Cavalieri di Rodi!

The YOUNG PRIEST gives him a once-over, MOCENIGO'S hand goes self-consciously to his nonexistent pendant.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

The...title is...pending...

The YOUNG PRIEST comes to a stop, excuses himself, goes into an office, closes the door on MOCENIGO.

MOCENIGO paces to a large window overlooking a garden, removes his gloves, anxious, then flashes a fulgurant smile at the attractive SWISS GUARD posted at the door.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

Wonderful outfit.

The GUARD remains stoic, MOCENIGO holds up his nose up, turns as the YOUNG PRIEST reappears, ill-at-ease.

PAGE

I am sorry, Signor. Cardinal Lucca is not in at this time. I suggest you write him a--

MOCENIGO

(flushed with anger)

Write?! I've just ridden seven days from Venice and you want me to write?! I demand to see the cardinal at once!

He pushes past the surprised YOUNG PRIEST, catches a glimpse of a tail of red cloth slipping out through a closing back door.

THE SWISS GUARD steps inside, MOCENIGO glares at him and at his outfit.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

I was just being polite! That vomit-green bonnet! Ghastly!

He marches out, catches sight of LUCCA moving swiftly away through the garden. He rushes the balustrade.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

(booming)

Let His Eminence know that if he thinks he can discharge his obligations to Zuan Mocenigo that easily, he is very much mistaken!

(shouting across the garden)

You owe me my title! I shall obtain satisfaction, one way or another!

LUCCA disappears through an archway.

INT. MOROSINI'S ROMAN RESIDENCE - DAY

A small but lavish palazzo furnished in elegant, Venetian taste. INSISTENT DOOR KNOCK. The TURKISH PRINCESS, looking somewhat subdued, hurries to open the front door. Outside stands MOCENIGO, dressed in yet another fabulously extravagant outfit.

MOCENIGO
Marchesa Morosini's residence?

TURKISH PRINCESS
(bowing respectfully)
Yes, Signor, but la Marchesa is not receiving--

MORGANA (O.S.)
It's alright, Fez...

MORGANA comes down a set of stairs to the entrance hall wearing an elegant if somber-looking gown. She nods at the TURKISH PRINCESS who glides out of sight.

MORGANA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Well, well...

MOCENIGO
Marchesa.

MORGANA
What an unexpected if hardly pleasant surprise, Zuan...

MOCENIGO
I trust what I have to say will change your feelings towards me, Marchesa. May I come in?

MORGANA
We are still Venetians, after all.

MOCENIGO
Thank you.

MOCENIGO takes in his surroundings, removes his hat. MORGANA makes no attempt to take it; not finding anything to hang it on, MOCENIGO puts it under his arm.

MORGANA motions toward the...

INT. STANZA - CONTINUOUS.

MORGANA leads MOCENIGO in, offers him a seat, moves to a refreshments table. MOCENIGO strolls to the window overlooking a quaint garden: TWO CHINESE MEN work a flower patch.

MOCENIGO

Rome becomes you, Marchesa. You look more ravishing than ever.

MORGANA glances at him, mildly amused.

MORGANA

I thought you only liked boys, Zuan, darling? Tea?

MOCENIGO

I do, fear not, Marchesa.

(to tea)

Yes, thank you. Green, if you have any.

(he approaches her,
sincere)

I was most distressed to hear about your father's passing. He was a remarkable man and a great Doge.

MORGANA looks away.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

How is Master Bruno? Seven years is an awfully long time waiting in prison to be tried.

MORGANA

I suppose we are indebted to you for that.

MOCENIGO

(beat)

I know you've always had a low opinion of me, Marchesa and I suppose deep down I am the nincompoop you consider me to be.

MORGANA does not contradict him, hands him his tea.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

Thank you. However, despite what you might think, I am a man of my word. Fools usually are.

MORGANA

Yet, you betrayed Giordano.

MOCENIGO

No man can rightly serve two masters, Madame, and I was bound to Rome... I was foolish to expect Cardinal Lucca would live up to his end of the bargain once I had outlived my usefulness to the Church, however, but there you have it.

(sincere)

Tell me, how is Master Bruno?

MORGANA turns to the window to conceal her flooding eyes.

MORGANA

I only know what filters out,
rumors, bits of gossip. Some say he
has lost his mind.

MOCENIGO

Never! Not Master Bruno.

MORGANA

The Pope has been away from Rome
during most of the last two years
and his case has been collecting
dust on the Vatican shelves.
Meanwhile, Giordano lingers in
there, like some forgotten animal.

MOCENIGO

No more. I've decided to withdraw
my testimony against him.

MORGANA'S heart takes a leap, she turns to look at him.

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

I made a terrible mistake and I
intend to correct it. We must get
word to Giordano, before his trial
resumes.

MORGANA

That's impossible. I have not been
able to see him once in all the time
I've been in Rome. No letters, no
messages, nothing gets through.
Three years ago, I even tried to see
the Pope to no avail. The doors are
shut.

MOCENIGO tosses his hat on a chair, stirs his tea, pondering.

MOCENIGO

We must get word to him, somehow...
You recall Monsignor Guido?

MORGANA

Guido? No...I'm afraid I don't...

MOCENIGO

Yes, yes, I am certain you met him
once, at one of my father's carnival
balls!

(cheeky)

He prayed to different gods back
then. Veronica Franco, among other
vices.

MORGANA

During the sighting of the comet!
Yes, of course! The little bishop.

MOCENIGO

A bishop no longer. He's the
Vatican's head of protocol, now.

(MORE)

MOCENIGO (CONT'D)

He's crawled up the ladder, the little worm. He won't care to fall from grace, not after reaching such heights.

INT. HOLY OFFICE, CARDINAL GUIDO'S OFFICE. 241

MORGANA, wearing a black suit, sits facing CARDINAL GUIDO (previously BISHOP GUIDO), across a precious gold-gilded desk. He reads a document.

GUIDO

This is a great deal of money, Marchesa.

(MORGANA manages the ghost of a smile)

Still, the Inquisition rules are very strict. Only immediate family may visit prisoners...

MORGANA

I am all Giordano Bruno has, Eminence. And yet, I've been denied access to him exactly seventy-three times.

GUIDO

Why come to me? Why now?

MORGANA fixes him.

MORGANA

It was Veronica Franco's idea, Your Eminence.

(GUIDO reacts, sensing danger)

She learnt about your appointment and suggested I appeal to your warm, Venetian heart. She even offered to personally appeal to your superiors, but I told her that would most likely confuse them. Was I wrong?

GUIDO draws a quick, uneasy smile. The wicked implication of past sins is abundantly clear despite Morgana's civil tone. He finally folds the envelope into his sleeve and stands, putting an end to the audience.

GUIDO

I can not take this decision on my own, Marchesa. We shall let you know.

INT. HOLY SEE PRISON - DAY

RICCI, a stout guard with a friendly face, moves swiftly down a cell-block corridor, carrying clean linen.

The cells are fairly large and airy, with a bed, a stool, a table and doors open to a common courtyard, where SEVERAL PRISONERS kick something resembling a soccer ball.

RICCI goes into...

INT. BRUNO'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

BRUNO, wearing reading glasses, sits at a table writing the voluminous document we have seen him write in earlier scenes.

He looks older - seven prison-years older. And yet, his eyes have lost none of their spark. He does not lift his eyes from his work.

BRUNO

Ricci, I need more ink...

RICCI goes about his chores.

RICCI

(good-naturedly)

In all these years I haven't heard you say please, once. Ricci this, Ricci that: a letter, a message, more ink, clean sheets, warm socks.

(eyes heavens)

A roof under my head, three meals a day and no creditors! What a life! Tell me, what do I have to believe in to be locked up in here?

(exits)

Madonna...!

BRUNO keeps his eyes on his writing, smiles...

BRUNO

And...Ricci!

FOOTSTEPS return, BRUNO looks up from his writing, stunned.

WIPE TO:

MORGANA at the open door, flanked by RICCI and a PRISON WARDEN, her heart at her throat.

PRISON WARDEN

You have one hour, Marchesa.

He and RICCI depart.

BRUNO stares at MORGANA, speechless, unaware he has gotten to his feet. He tries to make words, his eyes suddenly flood.

MORGANA'S own tears flow freely as she throws herself into BRUNO'S arms. They bond in a tight embrace, she covers his face with small kisses, touching it in disbelief. SOUND OF METAL DOOR, COUGHING, they break apart, awkwardly.

BRUNO offers MORGANA the chair, sits himself on the cot. She puts down her gloves, takes in the place, unable to bring her nervous eyes to rest on one thing. Finally, noticing the document Bruno is writing, she tries to sound up-beat.

MORGANA
You're writing!

BRUNO
I've been...Yes...It's all done now...
(increasingly obsessive)
It's something I...Well, Pope Clement needs to understand the essence of my thought.

MORGANA
I too wrote you. All my letters came--

BRUNO
He has been mislead, see?
Misinformed. I am sure, if Clement knew why I--

MORGANA takes his face in her hands to get his attention.

MORGANA
Giordano, I have good news. Zuan has withdrawn his testimony.

BRUNO
(not listening)
Hmmm? Yes...
(stacking document)
When Clement reads this, you see, he will understand that the only--

*

MORGANA
Don't you know what that could mean?!

BRUNO
...solution for the Catholic Church is to embrace my doctrine!

MORGANA stares in disbelief, shakes him.

MORGANA
Giordano! Look at me! You mustn't write anything! Without their only witness--

BRUNO
(his mind racing)
He will have no choice but to let me go, see? Once he realizes that the world is changing. You do understand?!

MORGANA stares at him terrified, sobered, kisses him as her eyes flood over.

MORGANA

Yes, my love...

INT. HOLY OFFICE, AMPHITHEATER

POPE CLEMENT presides a meeting with FIVE CARDINALS, among them LUCCA, CARCATERRA (upgraded from bishop) and a small, dark, sinister-looking CARDINAL BELLARMINO.

CLERKS, GUARDS and PAGES complete the setting.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

(strongly displeased)

Bruno has spent his entire life preaching doctrine hostile to the scriptures and you can't pin down a single, concrete point of heresy on him?!

LUCCA

(flustered)

We still have only one witnesses against him--

CARCATERRA

Who now has recanted!

POPE CLEMENT VIII

Recanted?!

CARCATERRA

(taking pleasure)

Cardinal Lucca promised him the Cavalieri di Rodi title in exchange for his testimony. Naturally, now he is upset, Your Holiness.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

(puzzled)

Upset? Why? You mean you didn't give the damn thing to him?!

LUCCA

Give him proof that the Church tampered with his testimony, Your Holiness? I thought it more prudent to--

POPE CLEMENT groans, displeased. BELLARMINO clears his throat, POPE CLEMENT looks at him.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

Yes, Cardinal...?

BELLARMINO

Well...the way I see it, Your Holiness...

(nodding at LUCCA)

If I may, brother...

(back to Pope)

(MORE)

BELLARMINO (CONT'D)

Mocenigo's testimony is of minor importance, this late in the game. I have reviewed brother Bruno's books and, in my humble opinion, they contain ample evidence to support heresy charges. The trick is to get Bruno to admit to it as such, for his heretic ideas are often shrouded in metaphor or cloaked in allegorical fiction. I would be most interested to witness, with my own eyes, how this man has managed to skirt the hard questions and remain alive for so many years?!

INT. HOLY OFFICE COURTROOM - DAY

BRUNO on the witness chair. He has lost weight, looks more anxious, on edge: a man about to go off the deep end.

ARIGONI, the eldest of the Cardinals, sits behind the rostrum with a tall stack of BRUNO'S books before him, flanked by the CARDINALS seen earlier.

MONKS and NOVICES follow the proceedings from seats on one side of the room. BELLARMINO is among them, in the last row.
OVER ABOVE:

LUCCA

But your books contain grave errors against our faith, brother. Are you prepared to retract them?

BRUNO springs to his feet.

BRUNO

It has never been my intention to hurt the Holy Church, Reverend Father! You find the opinions set forth in my writings contrary to the Catholic faith and I am willing, since you demand it, to declare them impious.

POPE CLEMENT sits on a high-backed chair in the shadows - back-stage, as it were - listening attentively.

BRUNO (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But it was God who first deposited them in my immortal soul. Was God wrong to send them to me...?

CARCATERRA slams the rostrum, angry.

CARCATERRA

We've had just about enough of that, brother!

BRUNO

(louder)
God cannot be wrong--!

CARCATERRA

You shall refrain from raising your voice!

BRUNO

(louder, still)

If He put them there, it must have been because He wished these opinions to come to light...

(ARIGONI signals the GUARDS)

In order that from their apparent opposition to the Scriptures a deeper truth be born!

TWO GUARDS shove BRUNO down onto his seat.

LUCCA

We all know you possess a fairly clever mind, Giordano, but you are not here to preach your doctrine but to answer the questions of this court!

CARCATERRA

Are you prepared to ask God forgiveness for your errors, yes or no?!

BRUNO glares at LUCCA, then at the GUARDS, waits until they have released him.

CARCATERRA (CONT'D)

Well?!

BRUNO

Has it been proved that they are errors?

CARCATERRA

(slam-shuts file)

This hearing is over!

BELLARMINO (O.S.)

Eminency, if I may...?

The CARDINALS turn. BELLARMINO, dressed in a magnificent lilac gown with gold trimmings, slowly makes his way to the rostrum, picks up one of the books.

He studies its cover: "DE INFINITO," approaches BRUNO, perusing its pages.

BELLARMINO (CONT'D)

(a thin smile to LUCCA)

May I, brother?

LUCCA yields the floor.

BELLARMINO (CONT'D)
 (deceivingly gentle tone)
 Did you not write in this book that
 the Universe is infinite, brother?

BRUNO
 I did! I believe it to be so.

POPE CLEMENT emerges from the shadowy corridor, stands in
 back of the room, in plain view. All turn. He makes sign to
 continue the interrogation.

BELLARMINO
 Very well... But is the Universe
 not contained within the limits of
 the Heavens?

BRUNO
 In appearance only. In reality,
 nothing is finite, nothing is
 limited, least of all the Heavens...

BELLARMINO
 (nods, beat)
 That is not proven, is it? It too
 is a matter of faith, is it not?

BRUNO darts an uncertain glance at LUCCA.

BELLARMINO (CONT'D)
 Strange, for a fervent supporter of
 reason.

BRUNO
 It is an intuitive truth
 demonstrated by logical argument.
 God being an infinite power, he can
 not desire a restricted Universe.

LUCCA registers secret satisfaction.

BELLARMINO
 (smiles)
 Perhaps... But still, it is not an
 absolute certainty. I mean, there
 is no irrefutable evidence of it, is
 there?
 (BRUNO holds BELLARMINO'S
 grave gaze)
 In other words, it still requires
 faith to believe it is so, doesn't
 it?

BRUNO
 Every philosophical belief
 necessarily requires some degree of
 faith, Monsignor.

BELLARMINO

Thank you. Your beliefs, then, are -
and that is precisely the point you
so adamantly contest - based on
faith. Only on a faith other than
the faith of our Holy Catholic
Church, are they not?

POPE CLEMENT meets LUCCA'S uncomfortable gaze, turns to
BELLARMINO, pleased.

BRUNO

Religion is not the keeper of the
truth. Reason and knowledge are!

BELLARMINO

(quiet satisfaction)
But that, brother Giordano, is
precisely what makes your beliefs -
as far as our Holy Church is
concerned - heresies, you see?

BRUNO blinks. LUCCA casts his eyes. BELLARMINO closes the
book with finality.

BELLARMINO (CONT'D)

Now, I think we are through for
today.

He turns to POPE CLEMENT, nods respectfully, returns the book
to the rostrum.

POPE CLEMENT approaches, obviously pleased with BELLARMINO'S
performance, fixes LUCCA with a harsh glare.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

I suggest you sharpen your pen,
Cardinal Lucca. This was the way I
had hopped this inquest would be
conducted from the start.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

LUCCA kneels at the altar, praying devotedly, like we've
never seen him before. He seems profoundly troubled.

LUCCA

(whispers)
Forgive me, Lord, for I have sinned.

He crosses himself and stands to go. MORGANA steps out of the
shadows, startling him.

MORGANA

This is how you live with yourself?

LUCCA

What are you doing here?! There is
nothing I can do for Giordano.

He starts off, MORGANA stands in his path.

MORGANA

You can't expect me to believe that!
Giordano is nearly mad! His destiny
is in your hands. Pope Clement
listens to you!

LUCCA

Not any more. Giordano sealed his
fate when he allowed an ocean of
heresies to flow from his pen.
Nobody can help him now!
(he bulls past her)
Pardon me...

MORGANA

(calling after him)
Can't you forgive him for what he
did to you in Paris?!

LUCCA stops, turns to her, glowering.

MORGANA (CONT'D)

When you surrendered his writings in
Naples, I thought it was
ambition...but now...
(uncomprehendingly)
What more could you possibly aspire
to? No, revenge is more likely, but
is only part of it: you are an
envious, bitter man, who can not
accept the fact that Giordano could
not love you in the way you love
him!

LUCCA blushes violently.

LUCCA

Have you lost your senses?!

MORGANA

Have I? A woman senses these
things, Eminence--

LUCCA

Leave at once or I shall have you
arrested!

FOOTSTEPS, ECHOING DOOR SOUNDS, they turn.

TWO CARDINALS enter the church, kneel on pews across the
nave.

LUCCA looks at MORGANA. She holds his gaze, defiant. He pulls
her into a corner.

MORGANA

(low tones)
I don't hold it against you,
Cardinal. We're all only human. I
tried to possess him too.
(beat)
Cannot be done.
(MORE)

MORGANA (CONT'D)

People like Giordano don't really need anyone, you see. They need only their ideas - and their ideas need them right back. I envy you, actually: you can help him, I cannot.

THE TWO CARDINALS leave the church. LUCCA looks at MORGANA for some moments, then goes.

MORGANA (CONT'D)

I am begging you! If not to save him, to save yourself.

LUCCA registers only a slight pause before walking into the FLOOD OF DAYLIGHT.

EXT. ROME - PANORAMIC - SUNSET

The sun founders behind mauve hills.

INT. VATICAN, LUCCA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

LUCCA sits at his table, reading BRUNO'S document by candlelight. The ANGLE reminds us of another time, long ago, when LUCCA read BRUNO'S first manuscript, at their monastery. After a moment, he puts down the document, stares at the flickering candlelight, troubled.

INT. HOLY OFFICE, AUDIENCE ROOM - DAY

BELLARMINO, ARIGONI and the other CARDINALS are present. POPE CLEMENT presides from his throne, attentive.

LUCCA holds BRUNO'S eighty-page document in his hands.

LUCCA

Your Sanctity, I have examined the document brother Bruno addressed you and, well...perhaps you should read it yourself.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

I intend to do no such thing, brother Lucca. These proceedings have taken far too long already. What do you make of it?

LUCCA scans the faces of the other CARDINALS.

LUCCA

It is a strange document, Holy Father. I can hardly say whether it is religion or philosophy. Or poetry.

(MORE)

LUCCA (CONT'D)

It is expressed in such a way that it is not clear whether the infinite space and the numberless worlds are pure fiction or the expression of a hard and fast belief...

POPE CLEMENT leans slightly forward.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

Am I to understand that you find nothing in all those pages that could be described as heresy?!

LUCCA clears his throat, increasingly uncomfortable.

LUCCA

Your Eminence, every word I have read could be described as heresy.

(pause)

But if there is heresy in this document, then some heresies may be synonymous with truth and wonder.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

(a dark, dangerous pause)

You seem to forget the purpose of this trial, brother Lucca. Perhaps your feelings cloud your reason. I am putting Cardinal Bellarmino in charge of this inquest.

Before LUCCA can retort, BELLARMINO steps forward, produces a one-page document.

BELLARMINO

I have prepared a list of eight propositions I believe cover the extent of brother Giordano's errors, Your Holiness.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

Very well. I want a full recantation. Get it under *strict* interrogation, if need be. This trial must come to an end, once and for all.

BELLARMINO'S SECRETARY rises and begins to read from it.

SECRETARY

"One: denying that Christ is God.
Two:..."

INT. HOLY SEE PRISON, TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Little stars twinkle like tiny lamps against the black immensity of space. PULL BACK TO REVEAL we are looking at them through a small, bared window.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
 "Claiming the existence of
 innumerable worlds such as ours."

BRUNO dangles in the air, tied behind his back. He is
 undergoing the "*strappado*" - barely conscious.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
 "Three: denying the existence of the
 Holy Trinity."

CARDINAL BELLARMINO sits with TWO PRIESTS holding crosses
 behind a table. All are red on their faces from interrogating
 BRUNO, exhorting him to repent. But their SHOUTS are barely
 audible, DISTORTED as if under water. This is how BRUNO hears
 them, his thoughts far away.

BELLARMINO (V.O.)
 "Four: affirming that the Earth
 revolves around the Sun..."

VOICES FADE AND...

FLASH: SPACE: WE DRIFT GENTLY AHEAD THROUGH TWINKLING
 STARDUST.

BRUNO'S eyes shift direction.

SEVERAL PRISONERS crowd a bared window, nerves frayed,
 getting a taste of what lies in store for them.

BRUNO'S eyes shift again.

LUCCA and SEVERAL RELIGIOUS FIGURES on a balcony witness the
 proceedings.

INT. VATICAN, POPE'S PRIVATE CHAPEL - DAY

DOWN SHOT. POPE CLEMENT kneels on a prayer stool. BELLARMINO
 comes into the otherwise deserted chapel, crosses himself,
 kneels on a stool behind CLEMENT.

BELLARMINO
 Holy Father, I am concerned. Brother
 Giordano seems intent on refusing to
 repent. Either, he is very brave or-
 -

POPE CLEMENT VIII
 Bruno must be broken! On no account
 must he go to the stake. God knows
 we don't need a martyr on our hands.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - DAY

BRUNO sits, strapped down to a heavy chair, with his arms
 fastened down to the armrests, bruised, dirty, suffering
 excruciating pain.

BELLARMINO nods at the bull-like TORTURER who leans over BRUNO holding a pair of coarse pliers.

He grabs one of BRUNO'S hands in which three nails have already been pulled out, fastens one of the intact fingers to the wood, proceeds to...

BELLARMINO (V.O.)
 "Five: believing demons can be saved
 from hell."

The pliers pull out a nail, tearing flesh, ripping cartilage, exposing bone.

BRUNO cries out in agony. WE HEAR ONLY THE EXACERBATED, SLOW, RIPPING SOUND OF FLESH AND CARTILAGE.

LUCCA grips the railing - otherwise his face is a mask of stone.

BELLARMINO (V.O.)
 "Six: believing that other men lived
 before Adam."

BRUNO drops his head back, his half-conscious gaze floats to the balcony above.

BRUNO'S INVERTED POV: LUCCA looking down at CAMERA.

BELLARMINO (V.O.)
 "Seven: believing in the infinity of
 the Universe."

BRUNO'S eyes blink slowly.

FLASH: MORGANA'S FACE, IN BED IN VENICE, LAUGHING - LONG AGO.

BELLARMINO (V.O.)
 "Eight: denying the virginity of
 Mary."

BRUNO'S blood-shot eyes shift to:

BELLARMINO'S mouth shouting at him. His voice EXPLODES into THE TRACK. A powerful, ferocious voice, highly incongruent with his small frame and mild manners.

BELLARMINO
 CHRIST ALMIGHTY COMMANDS YOU TO
 ABJURE YOUR HERESIES! COMMANDS YOU!

The TORTURER inspects BRUNO'S eyes, shakes his head at BELLARMINO. BELLARMINO looks at the hour glass. The upper half is now empty. He turns to the balcony.

LUCCA holds his gaze for a moment, then turns and walks away.

CUT BACK TO:

HOLY SEE, PRISON CELL - NIGHT

BRUNO lies in his cot, feverish, delirious. His bandaged hands are stained with blood. MORGANA sits beside him, overcome by grief. RICCI stands at the door, on the look-out.

MORGANA
For the love of God, Giordano, give
them what they want! I beg you...!

She kisses him, weeping disconsolately. BRUNO opens his eyes.

BRUNO
They will...ne...ver...free me,
don't you see?

MORGANA
You don't know that! Give them the
words they want! Give them the
words!

BRUNO holds her, his blood-soaked hand touches her face.

MORGANA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Please, my love...

A long beat, BRUNO nods. And a tear rolls out.

EXT. ROME - DAY

PANORAMIC ESTABLISHING.

CARCATERRA (V.O.)
Giordano Bruno, your books have been
found to contain grave errors...

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

A FULL HOUSE. POPE CLEMENT presiding. BISHOPS, PRIESTS, NUNS - MORGANA one of them - crowd the courtroom.

BRUNO on his knees, arms outstretched at his sides, faces the POPE. CARCATERRA reads from a lengthy document.

CARCATERRA
His Holiness, Pope Clement, wishes
to show God's infinite mercy
granting you eight opportunities to
cleanse your soul of your sins
against Christ and the Holy Church.

MORGANA sits on pins and needles, filled with anguish and anticipation. Her eyes meet GUIDO'S, watching her sympathetically from across the room.

CARCATERRA (CONT'D)
Do you renounce your claim that
Christ is not the Son of God?

BRUNO finds MORGANA'S supporting gaze.

BRUNO
(coarsely)
I...renounce it.

CARCATERRA
Your denial of the Holy Trinity?

BRUNO
I renounce it.

CARCATERRA
The salvation of demons?

BRUNO
I renounce it.

Sinking with each renouncement, his gaze meets LUCCA'S.

CARCATERRA
The existence of man before Adam?

BRUNO
I renounce it.

CARCATERRA
The existence of multiple worlds,
such as our own?

BRUNO scans the gathering, eyes flooding, growing upset.

BRUNO
I...I renounce it.

CARCATERRA
Your absurd, unholy claim that the
earth revolves around the Sun?!

MORGANA nods pleadingly at BRUNO. He swallows bitterly.

BRUNO
I...renounce it.

CARCATERRA
Do you renounce the infinity of the
Universe?

BRUNO
I...
(angry tears choking him,
shakes head)
The infinity of the universe...?

MORGANA exchanges a concerned glance with LUCCA. BRUNO looks at her, finally casts his tearful eyes.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
I do, I renounce it...

LUCCA and MORGANA breathe relief.

CARCATERRA
 (beginning to fold
 document)
 And your denial of the virginity of
 Mary, mother of Christ?

BRUNO steadies himself, short of breath.

BRUNO
 The virginity...?

CARCATERRA looks up from his papers. MORGANA holds her
 breath. BRUNO'S eyes are on...

CARCATERRA'S mouth.

CARCATERRA
 (ECHOING EFFECT)
 The virginity of Mary, mother of
 God!

LUCCA immutable.

BELLARMINO heard through LOW-SPEED SOUND DISTORTION.

BELLARMINO
 Have you understood the question,
 brother...?

BRUNO'S blinks - OVERCRANKED - as his eyes shift to...

BELLARMINO - DISTORTED BY A SHORT LENS - moves his lips but
 WE HEAR NO WORDS.

FLASH: THE DAGGER CUTTING KING HENRI III'S ABDOMEN, HIS
 STUNNED FACE LOOKING AT THE INNARDS EMPTYING IN HIS HANDS.

BRUNO looks at LUCCA - he looks like a helpless child.

MORGANA - that sinking feeling.

WIPE LEFT TO:

NORMAL CRANK AND SOUND RESUMES. BRUNO lets out a short,
 nervous guffaw.

BELLARMINO (CONT'D)
 (leaning forward, adamant)
 Do you deny the virginity of Mary,
 mother of God, brother?!

BRUNO suddenly relaxes, takes a deep breath.

BRUNO
 Well...It is not that I deny it... I
 mean, I don't, just, can't... accept
 the, the, the Virgin's... Mary's
 virginity...that is, the actual...

POPE CLEMENT gazes at him inscrutable. CARCATERRA leafs
 through a TAGGED BOOK.

CARCATERRA

Did you not write...?!
(reads quickly)

"The Virgin Mary was not a virgin,
for it would be contrary to the laws
of nature for a virgin to give
birth?" You don't believe our
Lord's mother was a virgin, brother?

BRUNO

Well... Not exactly, no.

MORGANA'S face collapses. LUCCA casts his gaze.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

But belief has nothing to do with
it. Reasonably...

He stands, addresses POPE directly, his voice gaining
confidence.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

You see, Holy Father, by definition,
a virgin is a woman whose hymen has
not yet been broken, is it not?

The POPE'S eyes squint to a mean line.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Perhaps she was a virgin - Mary...
(addressing all)
I mean, it is quite possible that
Mary was never, you know, actually
...entered.

CARDINAL ARIGONI remonstrates loudly, POPE CLEMENT raises his
hand for quiet.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Well, it would not have been
impossible for a man - her husband,
Joseph, I mean, of course - to
introduce his seed through the
natural orifice in some...other way.
(mortified GROANS from the
CARDINALS)

That is, well, I mean, without
having to actually...

He struggles to find an acceptable word, opts for a
restrained but abundantly clear gesture: driving home his
fist.

CARCATERRA springs to his feet, appalled.

CARCATERRA

Good God! Must we sit here and
listen to this outrage, Your
Holiness?!

MORGANA'S eyes are flooded but she cannot help a smile of
recognition. BRUNO raises his voice over the protestations.

BRUNO

I don't maintain this is fact, you understand, Eminencies. I am merely advancing this hypothesis as a more reasonable explanation--!

LOUD CHAIR DRAG, BRUNO turns. POPE CLEMENT has begun to leave, shaking his head. BELLARMINO calls to order AND WE

WIPE TO:

INT. ROME'S TOR DI NONA PRISON - NIGHT

LUCCA and a JAILER holding a torch, pull their dancing shadows along a dark, echoing corridor. They come to a door, the JAILER introduces a heavy key in the lock.

INT. ROME'S TOR DI NONA PRISON CELL - NIGHT

The door opens, LUCCA stoops in. The JAILER holds up the smoking torch, illuminating the lugubrious quarters with dank walls and no head room.

BRUNO, soiled and wasted, lies curled on a stone bench. LUCCA drops the ribboned document next to him. BRUNO opens his tired eyes, looks at it, then focuses on LUCCA.

BRUNO

What did you think?

LUCCA

Pope Clement never read a word. What I think does not matter. Your only chance now is--

BRUNO

It matters to me, Prior.

(beat)

Your honest opinion.

LUCCA holds him a moment, then looks away. BRUNO'S lips curl into a wan, ashen smile.

BRUNO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

He likes it...

LUCCA turns back, grimly.

LUCCA

I speak for Clement. He offers you the means to pursue your work in the retreat of your choice. All you must do is retract your opinions.

(beat)

Save your life. I beg you!

BRUNO

And be forgotten?

LUCCA
 (beat, stunned)
 What?! You think throwing your life
 away will change that?!

A dim glint of mischief lights up BRUNO'S eyes.

BRUNO
 It worked for Jesus...

LUCCA stares - speechless.

EXT. HOLY OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

DOWN SHOT. The Holy Office prison gate opens and BRUNO, hands tied behind his back, is brought out by A DOZEN SWISS GUARDS.

He is accompanied by a large number of PRIESTS, other RELIGIOUS FIGURES and MONKS brandishing wooden crosses.

NOTARY (V.O.)
 Giordano Brunus Nolanus, having
 declared you an impenitent,
 obstinate and tenacious heretic, His
 Holiness, Pope Clement VIII, hereby
 banishes you from our immaculate
 Church.

A CROWD waits outside the stone building, obviously alerted to BRUNO'S transfer. The GUARDS keep the hackling multitude at bay, cut a swath through them as they make their way down the street. Invectives and debris fly BRUNO'S way. He endures stoically. But for the defiant grin on his face, the scene is reminiscent of Jesus's march carrying the cross to the calvary.

EXT. ROME STREET - DAY

The CROWD has swelled to several hundred. The GUARDS make their way to the MADRUZZI PALACE. The gates open and BRUNO is led in over LOUD HACKLING AND YELLING.

NOTARY (V.O.)
 "The charges against you having been
 proven, we, Pompeo Arigoni, Luigi
 Madruzzi, Antonio Bellarmino, Ilario
 Carcaterra, Inquisitor-General
 declare you guilty of heresy and
 condemn you to the penalty of death
 by fire, as provided by the law."

INT. MADRUZZI PALACE - DAY

The GOVERNOR OF ROME, MADRUZZI, an elderly Cardinal of patrician bearing, BELLARMINO, ARIGONI, CARCATERRA, a total of nine, stone-faced CARDINALS, as well as other OFFICIALS, stand behind the bench of the court.

BRUNO is on his knees, guarded by TWO GUARDS. A NOTARY reads from a pronunciamiento.

NOTARY
 "To be executed by the Governor of Rome, to whom we herewith surrender you."

The NOTARY breaks off, turns to MADRUZZI.

MADRUZZI
 Have you anything to say?

BRUNO fixes his inquisitors.

BRUNO
 Yes: You who pronounce this sentence against me, you tremble more than I!

MADRUZZI waves his hand disgusted and BRUNO is dragged away.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 THE CHURCH TREMBLES MORE THAN I!

His words FADE AFTER WE HAVE

CUT TO:

INT. HOLY OFFICE, POPE'S AUDIENCE ROOM.

PULLING AWAY FROM MORGANA, gaunt, ashen-featured, clad in a nun's habit.

MORGANA
 If you allow Giordano's execution to take place, his death shall be remembered for centuries to come, Holiness. I think of the future of the Church as well when I implore for his life.

POPE CLEMENT sits on his high-backed chair, his bored gaze lost out an open window.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
 Only martyrs loyal to the Church shall be embraced by history. Giordano Bruno will not be remembered any more than yesterday's foul weather or today's sunshine.
 (stands to go)
 In any event, you can't expect to make the same deal twice, Marchesa.

MORGANA
 (beat)
 I beg your pardon?

POPE CLEMENT VIII

Surely you know you are alive only
because brother Giordano is here,
with us?

MORGANA knits brow, confused. The POPE regards her with
perverse pleasure.

POPE CLEMENT VIII (CONT'D)

I was sorry to hear your father
found it unbearable to live with the
bargain he struck.

He walks past her. MORGANA must holds on to a chair.

FLASH: PULLING THE DOGE - CLOSE - SWIMMING UNDER THE
MOONLIGHT, FAR FROM SHORE, GASPING, EXHAUSTED.

MORGANA'S eyes go to the floating voile ballooning by the
open window and she runs toward it, crying, beside herself.

SUBJECTIVE: THE WINDOW CLOSING IN. TWO SWISS GUARDS stand at
attention on each side of it. CAMERA FLIES past them, into
the void, the ground rushes towards us from several stories
below.

But MORGANA is being held at the window by the SWISS GUARDS.
POPE CLEMENT can be seen in the b.g. walking out the double
doors. MORGANA'S CRIES merge with the shouts of a CLAMORING
CROWD THAT PRELAP...

EXT. ROME STREET - NIGHT

PULLING BRUNO shouting through a parting, clamoring CROWD.
Unbearable heresies, judging by the look of horror in the
faces of the THREE FRIARS escorting BRUNO, brandishing their
crucifixes at his possessed soul.

FIRST FRIAR

Giordanus Brunus Nolanus, this is
your last chance to save your soul!

SECOND FRIAR

Do you renounce the infinity of the
Universe?

THIRD FRIAR

Do you accept the only, divine truth
of the Scriptures and take Christ,
our Lord, back into your heart?!

The VOICES have merged incomprehensibly.

FIRST FRIAR

The Holy Trinity, the transmutation
of the blood and the flesh of Lord
Jesus Christ?!

INT. VATICAN, POPE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

POPE CLEMENT watches from his window with odd detachment.

SECOND FRIAR (V.O.)
The Virgin Mary, mother of God, and
her immaculate conception...?!

EXT. CAMPO DEI FIORI, SEVERAL SHOTS - NIGHT

BRUNO shouts his way into the square, his words unintelligible under the CLAMOR of the CROWD.

BRUNO'S POV: THE PYRE approaching at the end of the human corridor barely held back by a cordon of GUARDS.

MORGANA, desperate, makes her way along the pressing multitude, trying to keep BRUNO in sight.

THE SUN breaks over Rome's skyline as LUCCA watches from a vantage point.

DAWN opens on the square dotted with the flickering torches.

TWO EXECUTIONERS secure three ladders against the pile of wood and fix faggots at the bottom of the pyre.

The GUARDS rush BRUNO up the center ladder. TWO BLACK FRIARS reading from open Bibles climb beside him on the lateral ladders.

BRUNO continues to SHOUT, his voice rising over the CLAMOR. We pick up loose words: "Infinity," "Eternity," "Sins and demons of the church."

FLASH: SPACE: A STAR WHIPS BY, EXPLOSIONS ON ITS SURFACE FLARING UP SPECTACULARLY.

BRUNO cries over the praying.

BRUNO
God is everywhere...! No need for
religion! No need for Church!

MOCENIGO, looking grimly euphoric, stands in the CROWD. He elbows the BYSTANDER beside him, says something to him, points at BRUNO, with a frightfully eager grin on his face.

The FIRST EXECUTIONER fastens BRUNO to the stake.

BRUNO (CONT'D)
Divina potestas ut sine ecclesia
esse possit!

A GUARD tries to shut his mouth, BRUNO bites him. The GUARD strikes BRUNO, grabs his tongue with his glove, spikes it with a nail.

MORGANA SCREAMS, turns away in horror.

MOCENIGO gapes with mouth open, ridden with guilt.

LUCCA, flanked by the GOVERNOR and other CARDINALS, meets BELLARMINO'S gloating gaze, then looks away.

CARDINAL GUIDO turns to LUCCA.

GUIDO
God have mercy on our souls.

LUCCA
Is there a God? He would have
struck me dead for what I've done.

BRUNO continues to emit sounds but his voice is broken, blood pouring down his naked chest.

MORGANA collapses overcome by grief.

THE SUN breaks over the buildings surrounding the square.

A BYSTANDER watches in awe at...

HIS POV: SUNLIGHT strikes BRUNO'S head - casts him in a heavenly light. BYSTANDERS throw themselves to BRUNO'S feet. They are forcefully removed by SOLDIERS.

LUCCA'S eyes find MORGANA'S. She holds his gaze. A moment of contact - unbearable pain.

The BLACK FRIARS climb down, the ladders are removed. BRUNO is presented a crucifix on the end of a long wooden perch; he turns his eyes away with contempt.

The EXECUTIONERS set fire to the pyre; the flames rise with voracious appetite, GROWL AND CRACKLE.

BRUNO behind the lapping flames eyes the Heavens, trance-like. His lips are moving - smiling, perhaps. WE ARE VERY CLOSE, THE ROARING OF THE FIRE, THE CLAMOR OF THE CROWD, YIELD TO HIS WHISPERED WORDS...

BRUNO
I'm the center!
You're the center!
We're the center!

EXT. NAPLES MONASTERY GARDEN - DUSK

YOUNG BRUNO, OCTAVIO, BENITO and several YOUNG MONKS horse-playing around a crackling bonfire, one balmy, summer night, long ago.

ALL
You're the center!
I'm the center!

CAMERA FRAMES the sky above them, the first stars shining through AND WE

DISSOLVE TO:

THE IMMENSITY OF SPACE

We speed forward, through the tail of a familiar comet. The solar system closes in, Pluto, Mercury, Saturn whip by, then the Sun, Mars - Earth.

ALL
We're the center!
We're the center...!

CHANTING FADES into gentle, melodic music: Renaissance, Mozart, Vivaldi - synthesized Beatles and beyond as...

TITLES ROLL.