

# **RESTORATION**

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INT. MONK'S CELL - FLORENCE, ITALY - 1506, ANNO DOMINUM

Semi-darkness. Guttering candles. Damp stone walls. An easel with its back to us. A painter works at the canvas mounted on it, his face obscured. The crown of his head reveals a monk's fringe.

The frame surrounding the canvas is bulky, wooden, crude - someone's slapped up sturdy timbers, creating an elongated pentacle that's shaped like a coffin.

Behind the painter stands a heavy wooden door. Next to it, sits a reverent novice named BROTHER VINCENZO.

SOUNDS outside the door. Brother Vincenzo rises and waits. The tiny metal grate set in the door SCREECHES open. These two are not only in a monk's cell, but a prison cell. Brother Vincenzo peers out into the hallway.

INT. DUNGEON HALLWAY - SAME

In the hall stands the most powerful man in the Western World -- POPE ALEXANDER VIth. Well-fed, well-known, in full regalia. Surrounded by attentive, fawning Cardinals.

INTERCUT BETWEEN CELL AND HALLWAY

BROTHER VINCENZO

Your Eminence! We're honored by  
your--

The Pope cuts him off with a curt wave of a gloved hand.

POPE ALEXANDER

The work is proceeding?

BROTHER VINCENZO

He's nearly finished, Your  
Eminence.

The Pope cranes his neck to peer at the back of the painter. The portrait he is working on is stunning. It features a Medieval man being burned at the stake.

The Pope's eyes narrow in hatred. He turns and SPITS. Charming. His flunkies follow suit, all crossing themselves like their boss just did. A frightened ALTAR BOY wipes the Pope's chin with a lace handkerchief.

POPE ALEXANDER

He will finish in time?

BROTHER VINCENZO

There have been no... disturbances,  
Your Eminence. Brother Umberto is  
very strong.

POPE ALEXANDER

No one is that strong, boy.  
Remember this.

When Pope Alexander steps back, light from the hallways falls across the face of the painter, BROTHER UMBERTO SPEZIALE. His face is covered with leprous scabs. His lips move silently as he paints.

His eyes are clouded-over white. Blind.

The Pope blesses the two through the tiny grate and slides the shutter closed. The sound ECHOES through the space.

Outside the cell's sole window, the late afternoon sun shines on one of Florence's magnificent Renaissance palazzi.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DODGE MUSEUM - AFTERNOON - PRESENT DAY

Modern-day Los Angeles. 500 years later.

The new Dodge Museum. The darling of art and architecture critics alike, the Dodge Foundation has spared no expense in creating an uber-Museum to house its uber-renown collection.

The paintings on the wall are expensive, famous, or both. The Dodge throws money at anything it wants. Frequently.

Fauvist Sunflowers, Soup Cans, Depression diner patrons in a night-time cityscape, mustachioed cavalrymen charging, etc.

Around the corner walks BEATRICE MATHESON, a middle-aged woman wearing a San Diego Padres cap. Dedicated, intelligent, focused.

INT. STAIRWELL LEADING DOWN - SAME

Beatrice walks past a sign reading for "Museum Personnel Only." She pushes through a security door.

INT. RESTORATION DEPARTMENT DOWNSTAIRS - SAME

Beatrice strolls through the back rooms of the museum, where the real magic happens.

Work spaces branch off a central corridor, each one designated to a different time period. Smooth, perpetual artificial daylight bathes this part of the Dodge.

Beatrice passes a Pre-Raphaelite Room with a Restorer dabbing at a drowned Ophelia caught on canvas. A Mayan and Incan room with a team delicately chiseling limestone slough off a priceless pre-Columbian statue. An Antiquities department filled with stunning Louis IVth and Chippendale Armoires, chests, and chairs. All priceless treasures.

INT. RENAISSANCE RESTORATION DEPARTMENT - SAME

Beatrice arrives at a work space sporting a plaque proclaiming the domain of "Beatrice Matheson -- Assistant Curator for the Restoration of Renaissance Art."

A painting sits on an easel, covered with fabric. The frame is familiar, though: bulky, wooden, crude... a coffin-shaped pentangle. Five centuries have taken their toll in patina and rot.

Beatrice slips on a painter's smock. Straps a surgeon's magnified light to her forehead.

Next to her lie the tools of her trade: palette knives, tweezers, surgical sponges, and cotton swabs.

She pulls on latex gloves and a mask. She gently lifts the cover.

POV

A bland landscape. A Renaissance Heaven with a lamb lying down with a lion, the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve, etc. The portrait of the Medieval man being burned at the stake is gone.

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE

Okay, baby... whaddya got for me?

She moves the magnifying glass lamp to the surface.

PRUDHOMME (O.S.)

I hate to barge in on your little chat.

Beatrice holds her breath. The Renaissance Curator JEAN-MICHEL PRUDHOMME - Beatrice's boss. Smooth. Urbane. Van Dyke beard. He didn't get this far "restoring paintings." And he knows it.

Beatrice lowers the mask. Takes off the baseball cap. Her long hair tumbles out from beneath.

A tall, suited MAN stands with Prudhomme, looking slightly out-of-place. And looking good, too.

PRUDHOMME

Beatrice, this is... Forgive me,  
I'm horrible with names...

MAN

Lucas. Jonathan Lucas.

Prudhomme also didn't get this far being horrible with names. He just decides which to remember and which to forget.

PRUDHOMME

Ah, yes. Mr. Lucas, this is one of  
my Assistant Curators--

BEATRICE

Beatrice Matheson.

LUCAS

How do you do?

PRUDHOMME

Beatrice, I have a meeting with the  
Director in a few minutes. I was  
wondering if you'd give Mr... um,  
Lucas the rest of the tour?

BEATRICE

Uh, actually Jean-Michel, I--

PRUDHOMME

I knew I could count on you.

With that, he's gone. Leaving them an awkward silence.

LUCAS

Have I... have I just been passed  
off here?

BEATRICE

It's one of my boss' least subtle  
tricks.

She SNAPS off her gloves and FLICKS off the light.

BEATRICE

Right. The two dollar tour.

LUCAS  
Actually, Ms. Matheson, I don't  
need it.

BEATRICE  
Really?

LUCAS  
Truth be known, I'm more interested  
in what you do.

This catches her off guard. She regards him for the first  
time.

LUCAS  
What you're working on here, for  
instance.

Beatrice pulls her gloves and mask back on.

BEATRICE  
Okay. You asked for it.

Lucas steps in behind her and suddenly Beatrice is quite  
aware of his imposing presence.

LUCAS  
(regarding his closeness)  
Doesn't bother you, does it?

BEATRICE  
No, no... It's just I'm used to  
being alone. Working alone, I mean.  
Um...

LUCAS  
Jonathan.

BEATRICE  
Jonathan... if you're gonna be  
this, um, close... I mean, to the  
painting. The warmth and the  
moisture from your breath can have  
a... on the...

Beatrice hands him a mask and turns back to the painting.  
Lucas grins at her through his.

BEATRICE  
Okay, "Restoration 101". First of  
all, I think the Director and my  
boss just bought this on a whim. To  
reward a gallery.

A painting like this one, it might not ever get shown. The work of an apprentice? With no real artistic merit? It'd probably just get stuck away in one of our climate-controlled vaults.

LUCAS  
For all eternity?

BEATRICE  
Exactly. But... see, what DeMarchelier and Prudhomme probably forgot is...  
(indicating the canvas)  
A painting this old, doesn't just show its age, it shows its lineage. See these tiny little, hair-line cracks?

EXTREME CLOSEUP - THE PAINTING

Pointing with the tip of a forceps. Indeed, a microscopic lattice-work of fissures covers the surface of the landscape.

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE  
This kind of build-up tends to mean something significant. The medium that carries the pigment? It evaporates over time. See these kinda swirly marks?

EXTREME CLOSEUP - THE PAINTING

Under the landscape's watery hues, we do glimpse a different set of paint strokes underneath.

BACK TO SCENE

LUCAS (O.S.)  
Whoa.

Beatrice holds up a hand-held black light wand. Slowly runs it over the painting. There's definitely something there.

LUCAS  
Wait... you're talking about another painting? Underneath this one?

Beatrice steps back to allow Lucas to look. Beatrice isn't sure how to stand near this magnetic man. Can't help but breathe him in.

BEATRICE

That's right. A "ghost." And maybe a very friendly ghost, too.

LUCAS

You can tell that? Even with this... this other painting on top of it?

BEATRICE

That's what Scambo's for.

CUT TO:

INT. X-RAY ROOM - SAME

Beatrice has lashed the painting onto a tray that passes it through an X-ray machine, like an airport security detector. Above it, some wag's taped a photo of Sylvester Stallone's buffed bod with the head of the Mona Lisa: "Scambo".

BEATRICE

We've got carbon dating and all, but an X-ray scanner's still the fastest way.

LUCAS

Hence "Scambo?"

BEATRICE

Right. We mostly use him to spot forgeries, but he's helpful at times like these.

The painting moves into Scambo ever-so-carefully, like a patient being enveloped in a CAT scan.

BEATRICE

Bye-bye, baby.

The object of Lucas's bemused smile blushes and tinkers with the resolution on Scambo's monitor.

COMPUTER MONITOR

The painting comes into view. The image of Paradise shifts and readjusts as Beatrice tinkers. Like a lens trying to focus on something deeper.



BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE  
So, uh... buying or selling?  
(off his look)  
What is it you do, Jonathan?  
Besides watching restorers restore?

LUCAS  
I work for the State Department.

BEATRICE  
Really? What brings you here to  
Dodge City?

LUCAS  
This painting, actually.  
(off her look)  
Sorry. Kinda buried the lead.

BEATRICE  
Kinda. Since when did George Bush  
show an interest in the Arts?

LUCAS  
Since your Museum bought this  
painting from the Wittenberg  
Galleries.

Beatrice returns her attention to Scambo's monitor and the shifting outline clarifying underneath the landscape.

LUCAS  
I take it you've heard of them?

BEATRICE  
You've heard of Osama bin Laden,  
right?

LUCAS  
So you don't have a very good  
opinion of the Wittenbergs?

Beatrice looks away from the monitor.

BEATRICE  
You know what, Jonathan...? I just  
work here.

LUCAS  
I understand. I'm here because  
State's been asked by this  
prominent French family to look  
into the Dodge's purchase.

Seems the Wittenbergs might've bought this from the Nazis during the war.

BEATRICE

Ah. So, if you prove it's stolen... the Dodge is out a painting?

LUCAS

An illegally sold painting. Not illegally bought. We believe your Museum purchased it in good faith. It's the Wittenbergs we're after. Don't worry, the Dodge will get its money back.

BEATRICE

But no painting.

LUCAS

Well, you said so yourself, right? An apprentice's work? No real artistic merit?  
(noticing)  
Is that what we're looking for?

COMPUTER MONITOR

The image has settled on the ghostly outline of the portrait from the monk's cell.

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE

OhmyGod.

LUCAS

What?

BEATRICE

Wherever this came from, Jonathan -- the Wittenbergs, whoever -- I don't think they knew what they had.

She readjusts Scambo to check the edges of the canvas.

COMPUTER SCREEN

Miraculously, the image of the martyr becomes precise, defined. It's the painting from the beginning of the story and in the lower right-hand corner...

...the spidery signature of "Speziale" comes into focus.

Along with "ANo DM 15o6."

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE

Oh... my... God...

LUCAS

"Speziale"? Never heard of him.  
Is he somebody important?

Jonathan looks to her for an answer, but Beatrice can't reply...

...because she's crying. Tears of joy.

CUT TO:

INT. X-RAY ROOM - LATER

The printer attached to Scambo cranks out its last photo.

Shot after shot of the portrait hidden under the landscape.  
Beatrice bundles them together in a stack, still elated.

Lucas watches her, bemused. In the distance a BELL GOES OFF.

BEATRICE

Closing time already. Guess you  
never got that tour. Sorry.

LUCAS

I think I got what I wanted.

He heads for the door.

BEATRICE

Wait! Mr. Lucas! Please... please  
don't tell anyone about this. I  
mean, not yet.

LUCAS

You think I don't understand  
ambition? I might be a Civil  
Servant, but I'm--

BEATRICE

No, I mean, it's just that it might  
be a bit... premature to tell  
anyone what this is.

LUCAS

I don't think the content of the painting will effect this case in any negative way. I mean, you're sure it's really a Speziale under there, right?

BEATRICE

I'll do some more research, but... Yeah. I think so.

LUCAS

Then it'll only be more valuable to its rightful owner. But not the Wittenbergs. That's the main point.

BEATRICE

Yeah, well, on that we agree.

LUCAS

And I'm sure you wouldn't mind the publicity surrounding this discovery. I mean, career-wise.

Beatrice grimaces just a bit. He's punched a small button.

BEATRICE

Ah, now, that's...

LUCAS

Okay, maybe I'm getting ahead of myself. Anyway, if you decide to take that landscape off, will you call me?

Still off-base from his earlier comment, Beatrice eyes him warily.

LUCAS

'Cause, if you do... I wanna watch.

BEATRICE

(surprised)

Are you serious?

LUCAS

Yeah. Definitely. I find this... fascinating.

BEATRICE

You must have one incredibly boring life, if you wanna sit behind me and watch me pluck at chips of paint for hours on end.

LUCAS

Well, let's just say I'd like to be there if it happens again.

BEATRICE

If what happens again?

Lucas crosses back to where she stands, filling her field of vision. She finds herself entranced by his nearness.

LUCAS

If you get that look of joy on your face.

He gives her arm a squeeze. And her skin a small static charge.

LUCAS

I say keep going. Your secret's safe with me, *Beatrizia*.

With that he turns on his heel and heads for the door again. Beatrice bites her lip, reluctant to just let him walk away.

BEATRICE

Mr. Luc... Jonathan.

His hand on the doorknob, he stops and turns.

BEATRICE

Thanks. For showing an interest in what I do.

He gives her the warmest smile she's ever had the glory of basking in, and passes through the door.

Beatrice stands there a moment with her stack of loot, just staring, just wishing he were still in the room, and then...

...snaps out of it. Time to get to work.

CUT TO:

DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE MUSEUM - MONTAGE

Beatrice sifts through stacks of books, supplies, requisition slips, etc.

She pores through research. Glances at the painting on the easel in the adjacent room. Tantalizing. Promising. Priceless.

She digs into the Dodge's exhaustive library. Shuts another book and can't resist. Steals down to the painting.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. RENAISSANCE RESTORATION DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Beatrice sits on her stool, eating lunch and staring at the Speziale. Almost willing the painting to give her the answer she seeks.

She looks around to make certain no one's watching her. She pulls off her latex glove. Reaches out, mesmerized. Gently touches the surface of the painting. Definitely not Museum policy.

POV

Beatrice stares into the painting, her vision becoming filled with it. Closer, closer, closer... until all definition is gone. Until she's lost in its hypnotic minutia. The tiny pointillist dots of color that make up the whole. And then somehow...

...she sees past all that, to see the portrait lurking just underneath.

CUT TO:

INT. THE RENAISSANCE RESTORATION DEPARTMENT - LATER

Beatrice finally starts to remove the landscape to reveal the martyr.

She gently wipes down the surface, painstakingly starting at an upper corner with cotton swabs and solvent. One wipe too few and nothing comes to light. One wipe too many and an unknown masterpiece is lost forever.

She slips on her gloves, slowly, not taking her eyes off the painting. Grabs the lighted magnifying lens on its swing arm, and brings it down over the top right corner of the canvas.

Beatrice picks up one of her "surgical" tools from the tray next to her. She takes one last look at the painting, catches her breath, and leans in.

With measured patience and skilled hands, she secures one small piece of the dried pigment. Slowly pulls it loose.

The overhead lights suddenly flicker with an almost human moan. The computer monitor across the room BUZZES and HISSES with static. She jumps with a small YELP.

Beatrice surveys the room as all the electrical equipment haltingly comes back to life. Lets out a breath. Laughs at herself.

BEATRICE

Okay, okay, I got it. I been here too long. I'm going home.

She peels off her gloves. Time to call it a day.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSEUM PARKING GARAGE - EARLY EVENING

Beatrice carries an armload of the Scambo pictures, along with an overstuffed leather satchel slung over her shoulder.

She gets to her car. Pops the trunk. Dumps her treasures in. As she SLAMS the trunk, she jumps because...

...ROHALIO CASTRO, a museum groundskeeper, stares right at her. Dark circles surround his eyes. Beads of sweat dot his forehead and upper lip. He is shaking, ever so slightly.

And he holds a weed-clearing scythe.

Beatrice looks around her, not quite sure if she's the target of his unwavering gaze. Sees no one nearby.

Castro stands transfixed, seemingly looking through her.

Unsettled, Beatrice slides into her car. SLAMS THE DOOR shut. ROARS out of the garage.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Beatrice kicks open her front door, juggling her armload of papers as she tries to keep her handbag from falling off her shoulder.

She steps over to a big dining room table, pushing piles of art and science magazines out of the way, and plops her books down. She straightens, stretching her back. Despite her creative job, her living space is fairly bland and tame.

Beatrice drops her keys into a bowl next to her answering machine. Checks the message counter: a big red zero.

BEATRICE

And the hits just keep on coming.

She starts to unbutton her shirt as she heads towards the shower. But as she passes the dining room table...

...her eyes fall on the book at the top of her stack.

POV

"Speziale" burnished into the cover in gold letters.

BACK TO SCENE

She regards it for a few moments, her eyes glossing over, as if her mind is taking her elsewhere.

Beatrice shakes herself out of her daydream. Heads for the shower.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - EVENING

Now cleaned up, Beatrice adjusts her bathrobe as she trots into the kitchen to pull a WHISTLING TEA KETTLE off the burner.

She pours herself a big mug of green tea. Holds the steaming cup to her nose. Closes her eyes. Lets the steam play across her cheeks. Her face relaxes for the first time in days.

She opens her eyes...

POV

The two far walls of her apartment, covered with paintings she herself created back when her creativity flowed.

Beatrice's work mimics the Renaissance style - religious iconography, etc., but with a cool modern sensibility. Rather like Rauschenberg's collage period. Saints fly over cityscapes, Madonnas cradle Saviors in barrios, Seraphim battle Succubae in hotel parking lots. Dozens of finished images line the walls.

But in the very corner, an easel stands with a blank canvas waiting on it. Not a single brushstroke or pencil line adorns the surface. As if her Muse left her entirely.



BACK TO SCENE

Beatrice stares at the blank canvas with a mixture of longing and frustration. The stress creeps back into her face.

She turns her back on her creative corner and heads for the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Beatrice sleeps fitfully, tangled in her sheets. Her brow wrinkles, as her eyes swing wildly under her lids...

DREAM SEQUENCE - INT. RENAISSANCE RESTORATION DEPT. - NIGHT

Beatrice moves through the darkened room she normally has bathed in light.

The painting sits on the easel in front of her, giving off an oddly fluctuating glow.

As she nears the painting, she sees what's causing the glow...

POV

A flickering light dances behind the canvas, piercing through the edges where the canvas is not flush with the frame.

BACK TO SCENE

Mesmerized, she reaches her bare hand out towards it...

The light seeps through the hair-line cracks of the top layer of pigment, creating a glowing spider-web of bright red rays.

As her hand touches the surface, it gives under her fingertips like thick fluid. Her fingers disappear into the soft canvas.

She slides more fingers into the amorphous surface, as the light streaming through the cracks intensifies. Beatrice smiles, as if playing with the painting.

The cracked layer of paint suddenly creeps up her fingers, engulfing her entire hand. It crawls up her wrist.

Beatrice tries to pull free, but she's caught, like a fly in amber. Light pours out of the fractures in her skin, as the effect THROTTLES its way up her shoulder and neck.

Tears stream down her face as the crackling curls around her jaw-line. Enters her mouth.

As her eyes splinter and light shoots from them, Beatrice finds the voice to SCREAM...

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - EVENING

...and sits bolts upright, panicked.

Slowly she snaps back to reality, realizing where she is. Puts her hand to her chest, tries to slow her breathing.

BEATRICE

Holy shit... I have got to get a life.

As she collects herself, her eyes fall on the alarm clock next to her bed.

6:57 AM. She grimaces. Three minutes before the alarm would go off! With a groan she hauls herself out of bed.

CUT TO:

INT. RENAISSANCE RESTORATION DEPARTMENT - MORNING

Beatrice enters with a cafeteria tray, but comes up short because...

...a MAN IN OVERALLS stands transfixed in front of the canvas, his hands in front of his body, where she can't see them.

BEATRICE

'Scuse me? How'd you get in here?

The man spins on his heels.

CASTRO

I... I could not.

Beatrice's blood suddenly runs cold. It's the groundskeeper who was staring at her yesterday.

Castro's breath comes in short bursts. The tendons in his hands bulge as his fists clench.

BEATRICE

This area is off limits to...

Trying not to take her eyes off him, Beatrice sets the tray down on the cart in front of her. And then sees what's in his hand.

POV

A matte knife, blade already out.

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE

Jesus.

She looks from the knife to the painting behind him.

CASTRO

I could not.

BEATRICE

What are you...? How did you get in here?

CASTRO

I... I had to. He told me.

BEATRICE

Who told you? What are you doing in here?

Castro just stares at her, eyes brimming, sweat running down his temples and neck.

BEATRICE

I... I want you to leave.

CASTRO

I... I had to try--

He takes a small step forward.

Beatrice straightens her back, clenches her jaw.

BEATRICE

Out! Now! Before I call security!

Castro still moves towards her, the knife held in his hand. Beatrice makes a conscious effort not to look at the weapon, to keep her eyes on his.

CASTRO

Please... You do not understand...

BEATRICE

I understand that you'd better  
leave! Now! Do you want me to call  
security?!

CASTRO

It will not matter... We will all  
be dead.

Castro comes to a halt. A pause. No one breathes.

What little control over her fear Beatrice had finally  
breaks, and as she finds herself about to scream...

...he drops the knife down on the cart next to the painting.

CASTRO

I have failed. God have mercy on my  
soul. I have failed.

He lifts up the cross around his neck. Kisses it. Tears flow  
down his cheeks.

CASTRO

Please, I beg of you. Do not do  
this thing. Do not--

Beatrice takes a breath. Finds one last reserve of strength.

BEATRICE

Out, now!!!

Castro staggers past her, sobs wracking his body. Beatrice  
watches as he stumbles out the door.

Her whole body caves in relief as the DOOR SLAMS behind him.  
She finally swallows, as she takes in what just happened. As  
her mind comes back into focus, she rushes over to the  
painting...

Her masterpiece is unharmed. She almost embraces it in  
relief.

BEATRICE

Thank God.

The painting glows in its frame. She grabs the phone.

BEATRICE

Security? This is Beatrice Matheson  
in Restoration. There was a man  
down here just now from the Grounds  
Crew?

Listen, I want you to make sure he never comes down here again, okay? I don't want him anywhere near the place. In fact, no one comes down here unless they're on my list. No one! All right? Good.

She hangs up. Looks at the matte knife. Picks it up. Shudders, retracts the blade, and drops it in the trash can next to her.

She picks up a piece of toast, but doesn't have the stomach for it now. Drops the toast in the trash too.

Beatrice pulls up her chair. Carefully moves the magnifying glass into place. Her breath catches. That was a close one.

She shakes it out, and slowly resumes her work.

Within seconds, she's lost in her painting once again.

CUT TO:

INT. RENAISSANCE RESTORATION DEPARTMENT - MORNING

Days have passed. Beatrice still slaves away in her surgeon's gear and Padres hat. She looks tired. Border-line obsessed.

Finally, she yawns. Rubs her eyes. Takes a moment to disengage, sit back, and stretch her arms.

She's produced results... almost miraculous results.

POV

The top quarter of the painting is nearly exposed. The martyr's face is still covered, but Speziale's turbulent sky and the tip of the burning stake are visible. The colors are eerily vibrant, almost too rich for a painting this old.

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE

This would make one hell of a stained glass window...

"Stained glass window" jogs something in her brain. She looks at her watch.

BEATRICE

Jesus... Sunday?! Dammit...!

She rips off her smock. Scoops up her bag. Runs out the door, stabbing the light switch as she goes...

...leaving the partially-revealed masterpiece alone in the dark.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - LATER

Beatrice dashes up the steps, late for the service. She still wears her ball cap and rumpled clothes.

INT. LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - SAME

She tiptoes down the aisle, trying to find a seat without disturbing anyone. She draws a disapproving look from the OLD WOMAN next to her.

As Beatrice settles herself, the PRIEST at the altar delivers his weekly sermon.

PRIEST

And as a final thought on the Inner  
Light... I give you the words of  
St. George. George Harrison.

A slight stir from the assembled.

PRIEST

From a Zen poem he admired.  
*"Without going out of your door,  
you can know all things of earth.  
Without looking out of your window,  
you can know the ways of Heaven."*

Beatrice looks at the Priest in admiration. His words seem to captivate everyone in attendance.

PRIEST

*"The farther one travels, the less  
one knows. The less one really  
knows."* Take a moment my friends,  
to listen to your own Inner Light.

As the Priest looks out over the crowd, his gaze falls on Beatrice. Without missing a beat, he hits her with a quick wink and continues his sermon.

PRIEST

For like the man said, do not be so busy being a human doing, that you forget to just be a human being.  
Amen.

Beatrice blushes slightly, looking down and smiling. The Old Woman clucks her tongue and crosses herself.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - SAME

The service over, the parishioners exit. Some stop to pay their respects to the Priest. Beatrice hangs back, watching him from the doorway arch.

As the last straggler heads down the steps, the Priest turns his attention to her. She smiles, and steps across to him.

The Priest looks her wardrobe up-and-down with a disapproving shake-of-his-head. Taps her cap.

PRIEST

Not very respectful.

BEATRICE

What can I say? I was in a hurry.  
At least I made it.

PRIEST

Working on the Sabbath again?

BEATRICE

I got a good priest. Says he can get me off for good behavior.

PRIEST

You? Good behavior? Am I talking to the Beatrice Matheson?

BEATRICE

Yes, Father What-a-Waste.

They hug. The priest is actually a Bishop and Beatrice's twin brother MARCUS. Good-natured, Holy. Quite something in the looks department. As handsome as Beatrice is pretty.

BEATRICE

Hiya, Little Bro.  
(they part)  
You ready?

PRIEST/MARCUS

What're ya, kidding? I've been waiting all week for this!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - AFTERNOON

CRACK! A pop fly arcs right into a Dodger's glove.

The home-team crowd ROARS in approval as a Padre trots back to the dugout. Time for the seventh inning stretch.

Marcus BOOS the Dodger fielder. He and Beatrice are the sole Padres supporters in a sea of Dodgers fans. Marcus wears a large Padres jersey over his usual black shirt and priest collar. Beatrice munches on a chili dog as Marcus shakes his head.

MARCUS

You pray and pray, but nothing ever changes.

Waiting for her comeback... which doesn't come.

MARCUS

What, no Catholicism crack?

BEATRICE

Huh? What?... Oh, yeah.

MARCUS

What's up with you? It's like you're miles away.

BEATRICE

Try centuries...

MARCUS

Okay, you win. I am now completely lost.

BEATRICE

I'm sorry. It's work. The Museum. I think... I think I'm onto something really big.

MARCUS

A Curatorship?

BEATRICE

No. We all can't just leap-frog to the top like you, Marcus.



MARCUS

Too bad. I was hoping you were about to tell me you were getting out of that dead-end--

He catches himself, but too late. Beatrice's face clouds over.

MARCUS

Bea, I'm sorry. But I mean, this restoration stuff... I know you love it, but it just seems pointless to me. You're spending all your time working with other peoples' artwork, but you're ignoring your own.

BEATRICE

I told you, Marcus, I find it satisfying. Even exciting, like I'm uncovering a story that's hundreds of years old.

(off his look)

I'm like a... like a detective or something.

MARCUS

Ahhhh. You pick and you wipe and...? All things shall be revealed?

BEATRICE

Everything's the Bible with you. All I'm saying is... for me it's like some sorta trust builds up. Between me and the painter. A bond.

MARCUS

Are you saying you get a sense of connection, to something greater than yourself?

BEATRICE

Yes! Exactly! I reach out, across the years, and I bring his work back to life. I bring him back to life!

MARCUS

Resurrect him.

BEATRICE

And why shouldn't I? This new piece I'm working on?

It's by Umberto Speziale of  
Firenze. I mean, he's one of the  
best. The best. And he gets to live  
again. I ensure Brother Umberto  
immortality, and he... he...

MARCUS

Gives you happiness? Bea... you  
ever thought you should look for a  
living man to do that?

Beatrice taps the very noticeable crucifix around his neck.

BEATRICE

Speak for yourself. Point is:  
Umberto gives everyone happiness.  
So few people can do that. And I  
help bring him to them. So... I  
guess I've learned that's enough.

MARCUS

But you gotta miss it. Don't you?  
Your own art? I remember days would  
pass before I heard from you, you  
were so wrapped up in your  
painting. But then, just...  
nothing. What happened?

BEATRICE

I... I s'pose I knew I'd never  
create anything like the artists  
that inspired me. Only if I was  
lucky. I guess I figure... if I'm  
ever gonna get close, it might as  
well be to the real thing.

MARCUS

Huh. When you put it like that...  
maybe I see what you mean.

He does know what it is to be close to greatness. Greatness  
one's not sure if one can attain. They sit in silence for  
long moments. Until Marcus snaps back to life.

MARCUS

Well, Detective, it's still the  
Sabbath. And in my Book, the  
Sabbath means...?

BEATRICE

Bangkok Rox?

MARCUS

Bet your ass.

BEATRICE

Nice mouth.

MARCUS

Hey, I can talk dirty. Just can't  
do anything about it. ALL RIGHT  
LET'S GO!!!

The stretch over, the players run out onto the field, and this time both brother and sister cheer their beloved Padres.

CUT TO:

INT. ROHALIO CASTRO'S HOUSE - GARAGE - EARLY EVENING

CRASH! A length of shiny new chain is dragged from a tool-box. A metal hook is fastened to one end.

Rohalio Castro loops the chain around a trailer hitch. Tugs at it. Secures it. Exhaust comes from a tail-pipe nearby. A low MURMUR of a MUSCLE CAR ENGINE hangs in the background.

Castro grabs the other end of the chain. Ties a metal knot around his wrists.

In front of Castro sits his old Camaro, the motor running hot.

He walks to the front of the car. Like some profane version of Jacob Marley, Rohalio has chained both of his legs as well. The chains around his ankles STRETCH to their limit and THRUM tight. They lead to the back wall where they are padlocked to a pair of stout pipes.

Rohalio stretches to hit a button on the wall. The GARAGE DOOR RUMBLES open. A darkened driveway beyond leads to a sleeping middle class street.

Rohalio opens the car door. Jams a Club between the wheel and the gas. The engine, still in park, SHRIEKS in protest.

CASTRO

Father...

He stares at the automatic gear-shift. Smoke gathers around him, accompanied by the engine's WHINE. He reaches for the gear-shift...

CASTRO

Why hast thou forsaken me?

...and CRANKS it into Drive. The engine SQUEALS as the car leaps forward, BARRELING down the driveway towards the street.

The chain attached to the bumper furiously RATTLES out.

He hurriedly kisses the crucifix around his neck as...

...the chains around his wrists go TAUT.

A SCREAM as the Camaro JERKS at the end of the drive, then TEARS onward with a terrible RENDING SOUND.

CUT TO:

INT. THAI RESTAURANT - SUNSET BOULEVARD - SAME

A plate of greasy fried noodles CLUNKS down on the table between Beatrice and Marcus. As noisy rock 'n roll plays over the digital jukebox, the two play chess at an enormous board, watching downtown Sodom go by outside.

The usual motley assortment of Sunset Boulevard regulars pass them: Hopheads. Hookers. Homeless hustlers. A strung-out punk sees Marcus' collar and shouts at him through the window.

PUNKER

You ain't no Father o' mine!

BEATRICE

You know, Marcus, I always wondered why you stayed here in L.A.

MARCUS

I guess I figured there was no place on earth more God-forsaken.

BEATRICE

You're serious, aren't you?

MARCUS

Really. I mean, where else would I be more needed? If the Devil showed up in L.A., think anyone would notice? 'Til it was too late?

The Punker flips them both the bird.

BEATRICE

You make a good point.

MARCUS

And, of course, you were here.  
Didn't want to go through that  
whole "twin withdrawal" thang.

Beatrice grins.

The Punker mercifully heads on, now RANTING to himself.

Marcus moves a chess piece.

MARCUS

So... who's it of? This picture of  
yours?

BEATRICE

"Painting". That's part of the  
detective work. I don't know.

MARCUS

Isn't that sorta thing pretty well  
documented? I mean, who a painter  
painted and when and all that?

BEATRICE

Usually. But that's not even the  
weird part. Get this: it was  
painted a year after Speziale died.

MARCUS

That can't be easy. Even for a  
fellow man of the cloth.

BEATRICE

More your line of work, but... no.  
Anyhow, we know the subjects of all  
Speziale's other works. They're all  
catalogued. But this one looks  
totally one-of-a-kind. It'd help,  
though. Figuring out who he  
painted. To establish its  
legitimacy.

MARCUS

There could be... another  
explanation, of course. Why no one  
knows all that stuff.

(off her look)

Maybe you're not supposed to know.  
Maybe it was... "off the books".

BEATRICE

Like he was embarrassed by it?

MARCUS

Why not? Brahms burned all his notes so he'd look like a genius. Maybe Brother Umberto didn't like his final work, so he...

BEATRICE

No. The brushstrokes are different. And it's unsigned. It's an apprentice's work on top of his. I'm pretty sure it was done after he died.

MARCUS

Why?

BEATRICE

Would you watch a student paint over your masterpiece?

MARCUS

I would if I hated the painting enough. Or who it was of.

BEATRICE

Well, regardless of who painted it, Jonathan still says we have to--

MARCUS

"Jonathan"...?

BEATRICE

Wha...? Oh, uh, yeah, the guy from the State Department.

MARCUS

On a first-name basis with a Government agent, are we...?

Beatrice focuses like a laser on the chess board, but not before Marcus sees the flush in her cheeks.

MARCUS

Bea! You old dog! Do you have a crush already on this--

BEATRICE

No! I mean, he's nice, and...

MARCUS

Uh-huh...

BEATRICE

Oh, leave me alone.

She moves a piece. Marcus casts his eyes over the board.

MARCUS

Well, when you're ready to get married, I know a guy who can perform the ceremony for you.

(pondering for a second)

Check. Mate, I think.

Beatrice examines the board for a moment, grins, and reaches forward. Flicks her king with the tip of her finger.

EXTREME CLOSEUP - CHESS BOARD

The king topples in slow motion.

Just as it's about to hit...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ROHALIO CASTRO'S HOUSE - GARAGE - LATE EVENING

RRRIIIPPP! A patrolman pulls out a piece of yellow police tape. Neighbors in nightgowns and bathrobes stare. A priest stands on the edge of the crowd, aghast.

A pair of veteran LAPD Detectives, PAULSEN and THOMAS, cross under the tape and step onto the scene. They're greeted by Assistant Medical Examiner RAMSEY.

RAMSEY

Gentlemen, meet Signor Rohalio Castro's better half.

(walking a few paces)

And this is his--

THOMAS

Yeah, yeah. We get the picture.

The Detectives stand ten feet from each other, staring down.

PAULSEN

Some pretty twisted shit.

THOMAS

Gang-related?

RAMSEY

Nope. Word is, he's a clean, God-fearing, middle-class guy. Straight-on suicide.

THOMAS

Was a clean, God-fearing, middle-class guy.

PAULSEN

Think God knows what he did to himself? Suicide's a mortal sin, you know.

RAMSEY

Maybe he'll get points for originality. Oh, and get this. Turns out he works at the Dodge.

PAULSEN

The Museum? You're kidding.

RAMSEY

Maybe that's where he learned how to do this shit.

(off their look)

Our boy here's been drawn and quartered.

THOMAS

...Jesus.

RAMSEY

Like you said: some pretty twisted shit. Some pretty twisted Medieval shit.

The two Detectives look around, dumbfounded. Thomas realizes something and lifts up his shoe. Something drips from the sole.

THOMAS

Ahhhh... sonuvabitch.

PAULSEN

Now that's gotta be a first.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEATRICE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME

Another engine REVVING. Marcus' Porsche. Beatrice hops out.

BEATRICE

I see the Archdiocese still doesn't pay you enough.



MARCUS

Hey, I signed on for chastity, not poverty. That's Brother Umberto's department. Oh, speaking of which, send me a picture of your mystery painting. I'll see if I can dig up anything on my end.

BEATRICE

Thanks. See you soon, Baby Bro.

MARCUS

Yep. *Pax vobiscum*, Bea.

BEATRICE

Right back at ya.

MARCUS

And tell your boyfriend I said hi.

Marcus GUNS HIS WHEELS and takes off. She flips him a playful sibling finger. Beatrice's smiles fades as she turns to her darkened apartment building.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF HER APARTMENT - SAME

Beatrice drops her bag next to the pile of books from the other day. They're still untouched. She whips off her cap. Tosses it onto the couch.

The light on her answering machine blinks. She punches the button.

MACHINE

You. Have. TWO. Messages.

BEEP. The nerdish voice of CHIP CAPACELATRO comes on first.

CHIP'S VOICE

Um... Bea... hey! This is Chip. Capacelatro? From work? Oh... 'Course it's... I mean, how many Chip Capacelatros you know? Anyways, um, so listen, I hope this isn't like, you know, like sexual harassment or anything, but... I wondered if you wanted to, like, go out some time? With me, I mean? Of course, with me. What an idiot. Me, I mean... not you. Anywa--

Beatrice presses fast forward. Chip's still talking.

CHIP (O.S.)  
 ...be with my Prayer Group. But  
 tomorrow... just like drop by.  
 Right down the hall there in the  
 Furnit--

Clearly not an option. She fast forwards again. BEEP.

LUCAS' VOICE  
 Beatrice? Jonathan Lucas.

Beatrice leans in, very pleased...

LUCAS' VOICE  
 Thanks for letting me, um, watch  
 you work the other day. It was  
 quite something. Listen, I'm back  
 in L.A., and I was wondering if I  
 might come over to your office  
 tomorrow? Nothing new on my front,  
 unfortunately. Still... guess it  
 keeps me coming back, right?

BEATRICE  
 Right. Leave your number.

LUCAS' VOICE  
 Hope your work's progressing well.  
 Okay, I'll let you go.

BEATRICE  
 Don't let me go! Come on, leave  
 your number!

LUCAS' VOICE  
 Oh... and your secret's still safe  
 with us, by the way. Umberto and--

BEATRICE  
 LeaveyournumberleaveyournumberLEAVE  
 YOURNUMBER!

LUCAS' VOICE  
*Ciao, Bella.*

BEEP. The one that got away.

BEATRICE  
 Shit!

She looks at the machine a moment. She can't resist. Rewinds.  
 Starts the message again.

LUCAS' VOICE  
 Bea? Jonathan Lucas. Thanks for  
 letting me, um, watch you work the  
 other day...

Beatrice grins like a schoolgirl.

CUT TO:

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE AT THE DODGE - MORNING

Beatrice leafs through her book on Speziale...

INSERT - THE BOOK

Speziale's work is exquisite. Saints being martyred:  
 Sebastian with arrows, Catherine's wheel, Peter inverted on  
 the cross, etc.

Each plate reads: "From the Collection of the Vatican."

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE  
 The Vatican certainly cornered the  
 market on you, Umberto. Why not  
 this one?

She flips faster. No sign of a martyr on the stake. Shuts the  
 book, partially out of frustration, partially out of  
 anticipation of what her find will mean for history... and  
 her career.

CHIP (O.S.)  
 Get my message?

CHIP CAPACELATRO stands in the doorway. Beard, glasses, pony-  
 tail. In the 70s, he would have been cute. In the present, he  
 needs a shave and a Dustbuster. He also wears a rather  
 prominent hand-made crucifix.

CHIP  
 Thought you'd be home on a Sunday  
 night. Sabbath and all.

BEATRICE  
 Um... yeah. Hi, Chip. I got in  
 kinda late. Sorry.

CHIP  
 I brought coffee. Happy Monday.

He CLUNKS DOWN a styrofoam Winchell's cup.

CHIP

Sooooo... Whaddya say? I mean, I know I'm only a lowly Conservator...

BEATRICE

Actually... um... I don't know how to say this, Chip, but...

CHIP

Is it the religious thing? I promise--

BEATRICE

No, no. I don't have any--

CHIP

Ahhhhh... I got it. I'm such an idiot. You're seeing someone else, aren't you? And I--

BEATRICE

Uh... yeah. Maybe. A little. Perhaps.

CHIP

Whoa. Sounds pretty serious.  
(laughs at his own joke)  
Okay then, just friends. But... if it doesn't work out--

BEATRICE

Right. Gotcha. Thanks, Chip.

CHIP

Can't blame me for trying. Oops!  
The Man!

He ducks out the door, passing by Prudhomme. Chip makes a face behind the Curator's back. Beatrice grins despite herself.

Prudhomme spins around but just misses it. He sidles in.

PRUDHOMME

Is he selling copies of "The Watchtower" or are you just slumming with the help?

BEATRICE

We work together, Jean-Michel. You might not know that, up there in the sky boxes, but some of us--

PRUDHOMME

I'm not here to trade insults, Beatrice. That gentleman from the State Department? The Director wasn't too pleased he was down here.

BEATRICE

You brought him down. I didn't even wanna talk to him.

Prudhomme peruses the walls in an attempt at nonchalance.

BEATRICE

So... did you really buy my landscape from the Wittenberg Gallery?

Prudhomme peers closely at an El Greco print.

PRUDHOMME

Your landscape? Listen, Beatrice... I would prefer it if you didn't speak to him anymore.

BEATRICE

I beg your pardon?  
(no answer)

Jean-Michel, I'll talk to whoever I please. I mean, I'll agree not to talk to him about the painting, if that's what you want, but--

PRUDHOMME

Your annual review is coming up, soon, Beatrice. I'd hate to think how your attitude mi--

BEATRICE

Jesus, Jean-Michel, you're not my Dad. I said I won't talk to him about the painting, so I won't talk to him about the painting. That's all.

PRUDHOMME

Very well...

He heads for the door.

PRUDHOMME

Beatrice, you know just because I've given you some freedom in the past...

don't think I can't take that away  
from you. Anytime I want. And, by  
the way... it isn't your landscape.  
It's the Museum's. Remember that.

BEATRICE

Sure... I'll keep that in mind.

She watches him leave. Waits until he's gone and then...

...flips him the bird. It feels good. Does it again. Draws  
two from her holsters and brandishes them, grinning.

Finally, Beatrice comes down from her childish high. Struts  
over to the easel where her masterpiece awaits. Gently  
removes the cover.

BEATRICE

You don't like him either, do you,  
Umberto? That's right. You wish old  
Jean-Michel would just... take a  
flying fuck at a rolling doughnut.  
Don't you?

She turns on her digital camera. Snaps a couple of pictures.

Beatrice pulls on her mask and cap. The anguished torment of  
the martyr is now visible. The same martyr Brother Umberto  
painted so many centuries before.

BEATRICE

That's right. What she said.

Still smiling, Beatrice bears down. And loses herself in five  
centuries of history.

CUT TO:

INT. PRUDHOMME'S OFFICE - EVENING

Prudhomme sips a brandy, speaking into a pocket dictator. In  
contrast to the Assistants' basement offices, the Curators'  
are opulent, with spectacular nighttime L.A. views.

PRUDHOMME

Notes for weekly meeting with  
Director DeMarchelier. Re: Beatrice  
Matheson. Oh, and Grace? Make sure  
this stays in-house. No copies.  
(sips)

Begin: "Phillip, I'm concerned  
about the atmosphere in my  
Restoration Department created by  
Beatrice Matheson--"

SLISSSSSH. Something goes bump in the night. Out in the  
gallery.

Prudhomme pauses, listens... nothing. Clears his throat.

PRUDHOMME

Um... "... Created by Beatrice  
Matheson. I think we need to  
examine whether she should continue  
to be employed by the Dodge Mus--"

SLISSSSSH again. Like something slippery crossing marble.  
Prudhomme CLICKS off the tape recorder.

INT. RESTORATION ROOM - SAME

Beatrice leans into her work, transfixed. She wipes a swath  
across the ancient surface of the painting.

INT. SECOND FLOOR OF THE GALLERY - SAME

Prudhomme steps out onto a balcony overlooking the  
Renaissance section of the Dodge. Nothing. The semi-darkened  
paintings below are all there is to greet him.

Prudhomme shrugs, turns back to return to his office.

SLISSSSSH. Slimy. Maybe reptilian. He spins around.

PRUDHOMME

Carl? Carl... ?

He walks the length of the balcony, heading down into the  
gallery. Nothing but the ECHO of his Paul Stewart loafers on  
the new parquet.

PRUDHOMME

Carl?!

SLISSSSSH. It was right behind him. Prudhomme turns and  
eyes...

...a Brueghel nearby. The serpent in it seems to be  
slithering up the Tree of Knowledge.

Blinks. Trick of the light.

SLISSSSSH. He turns to see...

...a Bosch demon grinning its wet, sharp teeth. Grinning at him.

Just something in the corner of his eye. But then, he notices...

...a Titian of Pontius Pilate washing his hands and the WATER DRIPS down off the canvas. A stripe of blood widens in it.

INT. RESTORATION ROOM - SAME

Beatrice leans back a little, staring at her work. Rubs her eyes and stretches. Looks at it again and smiles.

INT. GALLERY - THE SAME

Prudhomme steps to one side, nervous.

The eyes of Pilate follow. As do the eyes of Mary in Botticelli's Pieta hanging right next to it.

Prudhomme spins.

POV

The whole head of a Goya Barbarus has turned to follow him. As has the thorn-crowned Jesus in Raphael's rendering of the Stations of the Cross.

Now all the paintings are watching Prudhomme. Really watching him. Not just following with their eyes, but turning their heads to track him. And their eyes are dead and cold.

BACK TO SCENE

Curator for the Renaissance Collection Jean-Michel Prudhomme starts to run, his footsteps RIFLING off the walls.

INT. RESTORATION ROOM - SAME

Beatrice plucks at something on the surface of the painting. Absent-mindedly drops the forceps on the cart next to her. They CLATTER just as...

INT. GALLERY - SAME

... Prudhomme trips over one of the benches in the center of the gallery and SPRAWLS headlong.

LANDS face down in front of...



POV

Calvary. Christ's final agonizing moments on the cross. As only the divine El Greco could have rendered it. Jesus looks down in fear and suffering.

BACK TO SCENE

Prudhomme tries to stifle his SCREAMING because the painting is truly coming to life. And he is truly losing his mind.

THUNDER clouds rumble as the gallery fills with the CRIES of the three crucified victims. The WHIPS and JEERING of the Roman Legionnaires. The CHANTING and MOANING of the crowd.

CLOSEUP - PRUDHOMME'S EYE

The cross in the center of the painting is reflected in the pupil of Prudhomme's eye. The figure nailed to it writhes in pain.

CUT TO:

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE - LATER

CLOSEUP - BEATRICE'S EYE

The magnifier light reflected in it.

BACK TO SCENE

Beatrice has wiped away nearly half of the landscape. She beams in the transcendent translucence of the portrait underneath.

A RAP at the door. Jonathan Lucas leans into the room.

LUCAS

Am I interrupting?

BEATRICE

No, no! 'Course not. I'm glad you...

(looks at her watch)

It's late! How'd you--?

LUCAS

The guard. Flashed my credentials, and he graciously complied.

BEATRICE

Oh. Um... you never left a number, so I couldn't...

LUCAS

My fault. Sorry. Listen, can I make it up to you? Join me for a little stroll? Get some air?

BEATRICE

In L.A.? You really are from out of town.

LUCAS

How about dinner, then?

BEATRICE

I know just the place.

CUT TO:

INT. THAI RESTAURANT - SAME

Beatrice and Lucas sit across the same chess-board, Lucas looking a bit out-of-place in his tailored suit. They're well into a couple of beers, and Beatrice is feeling fine.

LUCAS

He's an Honest-to-goodness Bishop?

BEATRICE

(laughing)

"Honest-to-Goodness"? I haven't heard anyone use that in years! You're not one too?

LUCAS

What...? Oh, like your brother? No, no! Quite the opposite, in fact.

He moves a pawn into position.

BEATRICE

(under her breath)

Thank God.

Lucas smiles. She catches herself.

BEATRICE

But, yeah, my brother's a Bishop.

LUCAS

Wow. Doesn't that bother you? To think your twin's chucked everything to be a... a...?

BEATRICE

Father? It's never really occurred to me. But, now you ask: No. Not particularly. Should it? I mean, I guess I've always thought I'd have to share Marcus.

After scanning the board for some time, she makes a move.

LUCAS

Why's that?

He scoops up her piece with a quick attack.

BEATRICE

'Cause he has... This is gonna sound funny, but... he has Faith. Real Faith. Faith with a capital "F". He really believes. And I've always known that.

LUCAS

Really? No tales out of school? About your "better half"?

BEATRICE

Welllll... he wasn't always like this. Fact is, I was the religious one. Growing up.

LUCAS

You?

BEATRICE

Yeah. Baptism, confirmation, the works. But when my...

She catches herself. Lucas looks into her eyes.

BEATRICE

...my parents were killed in a car crash right after our 17th birthday. And my Faith just... went away. I didn't understand how a "just and merciful God" could do something like that, to two people who lived such good lives...

Lucas puts his hand on hers. His touch sends a thrill through her body, snapping her out of her melancholia.

BEATRICE

It affected Marcus too. Took longer, though.

He was actually headed for a PhD.  
In physics, if you can believe it.  
He was brilliant. Caltech was after  
him.

LUCAS

Impressive.

BEATRICE

And then, out of the blue, he just  
goes "I'm going to become a  
priest". And he did it. And then,  
before I could even get used to  
that... BAM! He's a Bishop. By the  
time he's thirty.

LUCAS

So, what made him lose it?

BEATRICE

Well, I don't know if I'd consider  
becoming a priest "losing it". You  
make a decision like that - to turn  
away from something you so  
obviously excel at - and you gotta  
be onto something pretty important.  
Don't you think?

She slides a piece, hesitates letting it go, then does.

LUCAS

Sure. But don't you wonder how that  
Faith called him, but left you? I  
mean, you're twins...

He captures her newly-moved piece. She scowls.

BEATRICE

Just born at the same time, really.  
A normal brother and sister. That's  
all.

LUCAS

But you and Marcus are more closely  
related than you are to either of  
your parents. I mean, you share  
everything. The same flesh.

(off her look)

I guess all I'm saying is: don't  
you sometimes wonder how come he  
got it and you didn't?

BEATRICE

Just... all the time.

LUCAS

Ahhh. I guess I've been a little nosy here. Looks like maybe I owe you an apology.

The WAITRESS slaps down the check.

BEATRICE

No, you owe...  
 (looking at the bill)  
 ...\$34.87.

CUT TO:

INT. THE RESTORATION ROOM - SAME

Jean-Michel Prudhomme shuffles into the room.

A thousand-yard stare is affixed to his face. He's aged a few decades. His lips move like Umberto's did centuries before.

Almost by rote, Prudhomme crosses to a work bench and takes down a nail-gun. Rummages through the trays of tacks, nails, and sinkers -- his lips still moving. Finds what he's looking for...

POV

Three wicked 16-penny spikes.

BACK TO SCENE

He smiles ruefully.

PRUDHOMME

It... is accomplished.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE BEA'S APARTMENT - SAME

Two mouths interlocked, limbs intertwined, Beatrice and Lucas neck on the stoop. She seems astonished at the depth of her passion, but can't bear to stop.

Finally, Lucas pulls away and they catch their breath.

LUCAS

It's... uh... been great seeing you again, *Beatrizia*.

BEATRICE

Woah. Woah, woah, woah. Y'know...  
Y'know how people at a concert clap  
like idiots for an encore, even  
though they know the band's gonna  
come out and play anyway?

LUCAS

Yeah...?

BEATRICE

Okay, so... I'm attracted to you,  
you're attracted to me. Are we  
gonna clap for the encore or... are  
we just gonna do something about it  
now?

No answer. Lucas leans in and they start to kiss again.  
Perhaps that's an answer, but then...

LUCAS

The last concert I went to was in  
1983. Kenny Loggins. Nobody clapped  
afterwards. And he didn't come out  
for an encore.

BEATRICE

Okay, okay... I think I get the  
point. *Mea culpa, mea culpa.*

Beatrice retreats up one step, still holding his hands in  
hers.

BEATRICE

So... how long you here for...  
Jonathan?

LUCAS

As long as it takes, *Beatrizia.*

BEATRICE

Uh-huh. And... and what are you  
doing tomorrow night?

LUCAS

Taking you to dinner. And this  
time... I choose where.  
(kissing her hand)  
*Ciao, Bella.*

And he's gone. Beatrice has to lean against the door for a  
moment and catch her breath.

She finally heads inside to the emptiness that awaits her, closing the door with a...

INT. RENAISSANCE GALLERY AT THE DODGE - SAME

CRACK! A sound like BONES SPLINTERING.

In the semi-darkness, a man strains. Cries. A white-knuckled hand is turned backwards to grip a picture frame.

The sagging head and shoulders of Jean-Michel Prudhomme hang in front of a painting. Then... another fearsome CRACK.

Prudhomme starts to SCREAM. Blood froths up and fills his mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. BEATRICE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Beatrice can't sleep. The sky's lightening. She sits up on the edge of her bed and starts to dress.

CUT TO:

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE IN THE DODGE - SAME

Beatrice flicks on the overheads. The place is empty.

BEATRICE

*Ciao, Umberto.*

She crosses to the painting. Removes the cover. Takes in the portrait a moment, beaming.

Her PHONE RINGS. She jumps. Looks at the display...

INSERT - PHONE

"Marcus - Work".

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE

You're in early.

MARCUS' VOICE

Mass. I don't have a choice.

BEATRICE

And to think you gave up academia for this... So what's up?

INT. THE ARCHDIOCESE RECTORY - SAME

Marcus' book-lined study -- a study in contrast from his sister's cluttered, modern surroundings.

MARCUS

I got your pictures. Did some research. Your boy here's a Saint.

INTERCUT BETWEEN BEATRICE AND MARCUS

BEATRICE

I don't think so. He doesn't have any of the usual hagiographic symbols--

MARCUS

Insider information. This is Saint Simeon of Gethsemene. I guess it makes sense.

BEATRICE

Sure. Saints were Brother Umberto's specialty. Why wouldn't it?

MARCUS

Saint Simeon? You really are the lapsed Catholic poster child, aren't you? Bea, at one point Simeon's face was the most recognized in Christendom. What year was this done?

BEATRICE

1506.

MARCUS

Pope Alexander the Sixth.

BEATRICE

If you say so.

MARCUS

It still doesn't add up, though. Simeon died during the Plague. Burned at the stake.

BEATRICE

Umberto painted Saints from all time periods. Why doesn't it--



MARCUS

Bea, Simeon of Gethsemene was burned at the stake... by the Church.

BEATRICE

By the Church? You're telling me a Saint was killed by... by order of the Vatican?

MARCUS

Thus, his handle: "Simeon the Heretic."

BEATRICE

What'd this guy say that made him so bad?

MARCUS

You name it, he said it and did it. All anathema. Turns out Simeon was working for the "other guy."

BEATRICE

"Other guy"... what, the "devil"?

MARCUS

Yup. An honest-to-God Satan worshipper. Maybe the worst in history. And all right under the Vatican's nose. I think that's what ticked them off so much. The Vatican torched ex-Saint Simeon and put him on the Index. In fact, Alexander the Sixth made a point of destroying all known images of him. Except, I guess... this one.

BEATRICE

Which would explain why I couldn't figure out who he was. And since it was painted over...

MARCUS

It lasted a good long time. And you say an apprentice did the top painting?

BEATRICE

Looks that way.

MARCUS

Strange.  
 (gazing at his printout)  
 Freaky-looking thing.

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE - SAME

BEATRICE

Which brings us back to Brother  
 Umberto. Why does a devoutly  
 religious man paint a portrait of a  
 notorious Heretic?

Chip suddenly bursts through the door. Beatrice jumps.

CHIP

Bea, you gotta come upstairs,  
 quick!

BEATRICE

Wha--?

CHIP

Man-O-Manischevitz! Come on!

He heads for the door.

BEATRICE

Uh, Marcus, something's come... I  
 gotta go.

MARCUS' VOICE

What's goi--?

BEATRICE

I don't know. Look, I'll call you  
 later.

MARCUS' VOICE

Okay. Be good. *Pax vobiscum*, Bea.

Beatrice hangs up.

CHIP

(from the hallway)  
 Bea! Please! Come on!!!

BEATRICE

All right, all right! I'm coming.  
 Christ...

INT. GALLERY - SAME

Christ's visage hangs on the cross, in the El Greco masterpiece.

And below the Son Of God...

BEATRICE

Oh, my God...

POV

Jean-Michel Prudhomme is crucified on the frame of the painting.

Blood has dried down Prudhomme's chin and the front of his silk shirt. Crimson stalactites run down the wall from his pale bare feet and one alabaster hand.

BACK TO SCENE

Beatrice is drawn in mortification. Chip just crosses himself.

Ramsey directs the EMTs, as the Museum Director - PHILLIP DEMARCHELIER - stands under the body with Detectives Thomas and Paulsen. DeMarchelier is middle-aged, Hugo Boss-ed, trim, capped teeth and blow-dried.

EMTs and cops struggle to bring the painting and Prudhomme down.

DEMARCHELIER

For Christ's sake, be careful!

EMT

Sir, I really don't think he's gonna--

DEMARCHELIER

I'm talking about the painting! Lord knows how much damage he's already done to the frame!

THOMAS

Jesus, don't get all choked up.

PAULSEN

And you're saying you never heard of this "Rohalio Castro" guy?

DEMARCHELIER

Gentlemen, I have nearly thirty people working for me in Buildings and Grounds alone.

Beatrice slips under the yellow tape. A COP gets in her way.

COP

Miss, this area is--

BEATRICE

I... I work with him. He's... my boss.

DEMARCHELIER

Beatrice! Perhaps you can help these gentlemen? You saw Jean-Michel yesterday, didn't you?

The Cop lets her by. Chip tries to duck under as well, but is grabbed by the collar.

PAULSEN

"Beatrice?" Beatrice Matheson?

BEATRICE

That's right. How'd--?

THOMAS

What time did you see Prudhomme yesterday?

BEATRICE

We... we talked briefly. In the morning, sometime. I think.

THOMAS

And what did you discuss?

Paulsen holds up Prudhomme's Dictaphone in an evidence bag.

PAULSEN

Got this from the victim's office. You and him have an argument?

BEATRICE

No, not really.

(off their look)

We... We, um... talked about a painting I'm restoring. Why--?

PAULSEN

Is that all?

BEATRICE  
Yeaaaah... What--?

THOMAS  
Miss Matheson... would you  
characterize your relationship with  
Mr. Prudhomme as "close"?

BEATRICE  
I don't think anyone would.

PAULSEN  
And how 'bout Rohalio Castro?

THOMAS  
How would you characterize your  
relationship with him?

BEATRICE  
I don't even know who--

PAULSEN  
Tore himself in two, the other  
night.

THOMAS  
No mean feat.

BEATRICE  
What?

PAULSEN  
Seems to be going around.

BEATRICE  
Hold on... Are you implying I'm...  
that I have something to do with--?

PAULSEN  
I dunno, Miss Matheson. Am I?

BEATRICE  
I don't have...! I have an alibi--

THOMAS  
For six o'clock this morning?

BEATRICE  
Of course.

PAULSEN  
That's funny. Security says you  
logged in at... what time was it,  
Ron?

THOMAS  
5:30. This morning.

PAULSEN  
Go figure. Same security guy also  
said you reported having words with  
Rohalio Castro.

THOMAS  
Just the other day.

DEMARCHELIER  
Gentlemen, I can assure you Miss--

BEATRICE  
I was on the phone with my--

CHIP  
She was with me!

They all turn to see Chip still trying to get by the Cop.

CHIP  
Chip Capacelatro! I'm in Furni--

THOMAS  
Uh-huh.

A beat as the detectives look the two over.

Paulsen produces a business card for Beatrice.

PAULSEN  
Anything jogs your memory, Miss  
Matheson, our number's on there.

THOMAS  
Then again... we might be calling  
you.

PAULSEN  
Yeah. Stay in town.

The two detectives leave the others to watch the EMTs and  
Ramsey pry Prudhomme off the frame.

RAMSEY  
Break the fingers. I'll sign for  
it.

They start to snap Prudhomme's un-nailed hand off the frame.  
CRACK. CRACK. CRACK. The Coroner sees Beatrice turn away.

RAMSEY

Hey, don't sweat it, lady. This  
guy's prints are all over  
everything. Nail gun, frame,  
ladder. I'd say this here was a...  
whaddya call it? "Solo  
installation."

They try to pull the spike out of Prudhomme's calcified claw.

RAMSEY

Did the feet and the hand, then...  
shoved the ladder and just... held  
on. Incredible will power. Really  
kicked it old school.

(off their look)

The nails don't kill you...

His audience looks about ready to lose their lattes.

RAMSEY

Your scapula and your clavicles  
snap and you just... cave in. Not  
the nicest way to go.

Now that Prudhomme's off the frame, Beatrice can see that his  
torso has imploded, leaving his ribs and shoulders creepily  
pliant.

RAMSEY

Your colleague here drowned in his  
own blood.

Beatrice turns and bolts. Chip chases after her.

CUT TO:

INT. DEMARCHELIER'S OFFICE - LATER

Beatrice finishes washing her face in the bar sink. If  
Prudhomme's office was a step up from hers, this office is  
one giant leap for Museumkind. Stunning views of morning L.A.

DeMarchelier hands her a towel. He's already finished most of  
a tumbler of Talisker. Chip stands by, dancing from foot to  
foot.

Beatrice dries her face. Notices herself in the mirror. Dark  
circles under her eyes, ashen skin.

BEATRICE

Should I be getting a lawyer here?

DEMARCHELIER

I don't know. Should you?

BEATRICE

You're worse than them. No.

DEMARCHELIER

Well, what were you doing here so early? Not that I have anything against my employees working extra hours, of course.

CHIP

I said she was with m--

DEMARCHELIER

Dick, you mind waiting for us outside?

CHIP

It's "Chip". I--

DEMARCHELIER

Better yet... why don't you just head back to work for a bit? Thanks. For your help.

Chip gives Beatrice a "will you be okay?" look. She smiles gamely. He slinks out.

The Director stills awaits her answer.

BEATRICE

I... I couldn't sleep. I've been restoring that landscape you bought from the Wittenbergs.

DEMARCHELIER

I think you can put that on hold for now. The French lawyers have been all over us since the damn thing got here. Now with all the heat we've got from... recent events, I'd suggest we just keep it buried for now. One catastrophe at a time. Drink?

BEATRICE

Almost noon. Why not?

DeMarchelier fixes them each a stiff one.

DEMARCHELIER

Jean-Michel might have been a...



BEATRICE

Prick.

DEMARCHELIER

Yees, as you say... Regardless, he certainly didn't deserve to go like that.

BEATRICE

Seems like he thought he did.

DEMARCHELIER

I suppose so.

(a beat)

Listen... it would behoove you in your new title, if you.. kept that Wittenberg information to yourself. For now.

BEATRICE

My "new title"?

DEMARCHELIER

(hands her a drink)

Here you are... Acting Curator.

BEATRICE

"Acting"...? Jesus, that didn't take long.

DEMARCHELIER

And what is the proper amount of time to mourn before we name a new Curator? Do we just let the Museum grind to a halt while we pretend we miss our dear, departed comrade?

BEATRICE

I don't know... It just seems so c--

DEMARCHELIER

Beatrice, despite what many may think of our artistic trappings, the Museum is a business. And I need people under me to help run it. Not to mention, once word of this gets out...

BEATRICE

It isn't gonna look good?

DEMARCHELIER

You tell me: "Curator Crucifies  
Himself on Priceless Religious  
Masterpiece"? I'd like the world at  
large to think we have a semblance  
of normalcy around here. Two times  
in the paper in as many days?  
You're next in line, so...  
(raising the wrist again)  
I'm hoping our new Acting Curator  
for the Renaissance Collection  
can... help me out.

He wags his still-outstretched drink. Beatrice can't help but smile. They CLINK glasses.

BEATRICE

That's life in the big, tough world  
of museums, huh?

DEMARCHELIER

Atta girl.

They drink.

CUT TO:

INT. BALCONY OVERLOOKING THE GALLERY - LATER

Beatrice closes the big paneled doors behind her.

BEATRICE

Yesssss!!!!!!

She struts along the balcony, the queen of all she surveys.  
Until she notices...

POV

The enormous gap on the wall where the El Greco stood. And  
the crime scene tape surrounding it. Her smile fades.

BACK TO SCENE

An elderly janitor kneels in front of the painting and wrings  
out a mop into a bucket. BLOOD SLUICES into the water. He  
senses Beatrice's gaze.

JANITOR

Just my luck. The only thing that  
stains marble. Blood.

He goes back to wringing out the mop.

Her jubilation turned to guilt, Beatrice crosses her arms across her chest and heads for her office.

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - LATE AFTERNOON

Afternoon services have just ended. Marcus keeps an eye on the altar boys as they finish their duties.

He spies someone sitting in a pew he wasn't expecting: Beatrice.

He walks over to where she sits. As he approaches, she gives him a weak smile and an even weaker wave.

BEATRICE  
Hiya, Baby Bro.

MARCUS  
I must be halfway to sainthood. I accomplished my first miracle: I got you to come to church willingly.

BEATRICE  
Oh, y'know, I... I just wanted to see you.

Marcus slides into the pew in front of her.

MARCUS  
Are you okay? You seem...

BEATRICE  
I... I got promoted today. To Curator. Well, "Acting" Curator, but...

MARCUS  
What? Are you serious? Bea... that's great!

Beatrice's eyes mist over.

MARCUS  
Isn't it...?

BEATRICE  
Yeah, well... you'd think so...

MARCUS  
But...? What am I missing here?

BEATRICE

The only reason I got the job is  
because my boss crucified himself!

She bursts into sobs.

MARCUS

What...?

BEATRICE

He killed himself, for no reason!  
He died in pain, all alone...

MARCUS

Bea, are you serious?

BEATRICE

He killed himself, and I was  
celebrating! I was pissed off at  
him, I wanted him out of my life.  
Out of my way. And he... he...  
What's wrong with me?!?

MARCUS

Bea... you're human. You got handed  
a high and a low, both at once.  
Stretched you up and down. You  
can't beat yourself up over that.

BEATRICE

I just... I just don't know what to  
think...

Marcus pauses for a moment, then removes the cross from  
around his neck.

MARCUS

Here, try this...

BEATRICE

Marcus, no! You've had that since  
your Confirmation! I can't--

MARCUS

Please. Plenty more where that came  
from. Besides... I know the guy who  
makes 'em.

He places the chain around her neck.

BEATRICE

Marcus, I... I don't know how much  
good it'll--

MARCUS

Shhhh. Try it. You'll like it.

Beatrice gazes at the tiny silver cross.

MARCUS

It's always brought me peace of mind. Helped me see through the fog. Maybe it'll help you too. And maybe now you'll stop asking to borrow my car.

Caught off guard, Beatrice laughs out loud, prompting him to follow suit. The sound ECHOES in the quiet of the cathedral.

CUT TO:

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Beatrice sits on a stool, staring at the painting. Chip appears in the doorway, one hand behind his back.

CHIP

Ta-daaa!

He presents a jelly doughnut skewered with a birthday candle.

CHIP

Wanted to be the first to congratulate you.

BEATRICE

DeMarchelier already told people?

CHIP

I got my sources. Congratters.

BEATRICE

Thanks. And thanks again for... you know... for bailing me out.

CHIP

No sweat. I'm a big fan.

Beatrice takes the donut. Blows out the candle. Splits it in half.

CHIP

You just better be innocent. Kidding... kidding!

Before he takes a bite, he tilts his head in a silent prayer. Turns to the painting, mouth open... nearly spilling.

CHIP

Holy... is that what I think it is?

Beatrice's spine tightens as she realizes her mistake. Starts to draw the cloth cover back over it, but he grabs her wrist.

CHIP

Beatrice, have you been holding out on me?!? Is that...

(squinting at the signature)

It is! It's a Speciale!

BEATRICE

Don't get too worked up. I'm putting him on hold for a while.

CHIP

What?!? You gotta be joking! "On hold?!" You should be--

BEATRICE

Chip, please... Not right now.

CHIP

But, but, Bea, you're the Curator now, you can do whatever you want! I mean, something like this? You should keep going! This is huge! You could stake your whole career on--

BEATRICE

I know, I know, but... truth is, I've been "encouraged" not to continue. More or less.

CHIP

Hmmm. More's the reason.

BEATRICE

Things are gonna need to quiet down around here. Everyone's gonna be a little... you know.

CHIP

My experience, Bea? The number of people telling you you're wrong is directly proportional to your likelihood of being right. I think Oscar Wilde said that. Or maybe it was Mr. T?--

BEATRICE  
I'm not saying I'm wrong, Chip.  
Just that--

CHIP  
Then why not just keep going? This  
is unbelievable! You can't just--

LUCAS (O.S.)  
I agree.

Lucas stands in the doorway with flowers.

Beatrice jumps up to meet him.

BEATRICE  
Jonathan?! What are you doing here?

LUCAS  
I heard about your colleague. I'm  
so sorry.

BEATRICE  
God. Didn't take long to get out.

LUCAS  
I work for some pretty connected  
people.

CHIP  
Hel-LO?

BEATRICE  
Oh, yeah... I'm sorry. Chip, this  
is Jonathan Lucas. From the State  
Department.

CHIP  
"State Department"?

BEATRICE  
Jonathan, this is--

CHIP  
Chip Capacelatro. Furniture  
Restoration. Right next door. We  
work together. We're sorta  
friends... Together.

Lucas shakes Chip's offered hand, feigning oblivion. He Hands  
Beatrice the flowers.

LUCAS  
I wasn't sure we were still on.

BEATRICE

Oh, God! I'm so sorry. The day's  
just been--

LUCAS

Nonono. I understand. We can do it  
some other--

CHIP

Yeah. Some other time is probably--

BEATRICE

Chip.

(to Jonathan)

No, I'd welcome the... I really  
need to get out of here for a  
while. Just let me get my bag.

She heads into her office. Chip is right on her heels.

CHIP

You know what I think, Bea? I think  
you might be missing the Big  
Picture here. Fact is: I think you  
need me.

BEATRICE

Why's that, Chip? 'Cause you're  
here and Jonathan's in D.C.?

CHIP

Ummmm... Actually, I was talking  
about that Big Picture. The  
Speziale. But we can talk about you  
and this guy Jon--

BEATRICE

Chip.

CHIP

Okay, okay. Look... what I meant  
was... I think you need a carpenter  
to look at this thing. Not a  
restorer.

He points out the window looking into the Restoration Room.  
Lucas gazes at the painting, head cocked.

CHIP

This is more my line of work.

(off her look) )

See, most frames are just like...  
well, you know, the frame of a  
drum. To stretch the canvas.



Her look says: "And?" She heads back into the other room; Chip follows.

CHIP

But this one... the canvas has been pulled over it like some sorta after-thought. And these top pieces here? They're a cap. "Mortise and tenon."

BEATRICE

What, like you'd find in a door?

CHIP

Yeah. A very well-built door. Take them out and the whole thing would collapse. Not good frame-building, but really good carpentry. Mind if I look at it a little closer? While you're with... I'm sorry, I didn't catch the name?

LUCAS

Jonathan.

CHIP

Jonathan.

BEATRICE

Sure, Chip. Knock yourself out. Literally.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE - SAME

BEATRICE

God help me, sometimes I really just wish he'd...

LUCAS

What?

BEATRICE

That he'd just... just... Oh, never mind.

LUCAS

Every once and a while, *Beatrizia*, you have to tell people like that to go to Hell. God Squadders? It's the only way to get them out of your life. I know the type. And I don't have one iota of patience for them.

BEATRICE

Mmmm. You know what? I really don't  
wanna talk about Chip. I wanna talk  
about... I'm so glad you... I mean,  
I--

LUCAS

Me too.

He links his arm in hers as they head out.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE IVY - EVENING

Candlelight. Beatrice obviously has never been to any place  
like this since she's been in L.A.

Beatrice and Lucas talk and laugh across the table. Things  
are definitely heating up.

CUT TO:

INT. BEATRICE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Things have really heated up. They're going at it by the bed.

BEATRICE

Should've changed the sheets.

LUCAS

Shhh...

BEATRICE

Didn't wanna assume--

LUCAS

Shhhh. You have me now, Bea.

BEATRICE

I do? I... I do.

Lucas pulls his shirt off, revealing a torso that would make  
Michelangelo's David blush. Beatrice savors the touch of his  
smooth skin as Lucas begins to unbutton her blouse.

He suddenly draws back.

LUCAS

Whoa. Where'd this come from?

INSERT - BEATRICE'S NECK

Marcus' cross gleams in the low light.

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE  
Present from my brother. Does  
it...?

LUCAS  
I'm sorry, it's just...

BEATRICE  
No, no... it's okay. Here...

She pulls it off. Drops it onto the nightstand. Lucas grins  
at her.

LUCAS  
Much better.

He slides her blouse off. Nuzzles her neck.

Beatrice moans as Lucas moves down.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEATRICE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Beatrice wakes up, smiling. The place next to her is empty.  
She sits up, disoriented. Picks her blouse up off the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

She slips into her shirt as she checks her apartment.

There's no Jonathan anywhere.

Then she sees a note pinned to her easel.

INSERT - THE NOTE

Written in a very precise hand: "Call me?"

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE  
Still didn't leave your number.

A smile slowly creeps over her face.

CUT TO:

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE - LATE MORNING

Beatrice pushes through the door. She's very relaxed, singing softly to herself.

She's brought up short by DeMarchelier, standing beside her uncovered painting, his face red with rage.

DEMARCHELIER

So last night I'm giving Mrs. Paumgarten a tour? And she wants to see the painting she helped pay for? The one we bought from the Wittenbergs for over two million--?

BEATRICE

Hold on. I can explain--

DEMARCHELIER

I sure as fuck hope so!

Not an auspicious start to her new job. Beatrice's smile fades.

BEATRICE

Phil, something's going on with that painting--

DEMARCHELIER

I'll tell you what's going on with it, Beatrice! Half of it's missing! That's what's going on with it! People, when they come to this Museum, Beatrice? They pay to see an entire painting.

BEATRICE

I can explain--

DEMARCHELIER

Call me a crazy dreamer, call me old-fucking-fashioned, but that would not seem to be the case here!

BEATRICE

Phil, please. If you looked closer, you'd see it's a Spez--

DEMARCHELIER

Now you fucking listen to me! You are going to find some way - some fucking way - to restore that painting! Do you understand me?!

BEATRICE  
Restore it? It's--

DEMARCHELIER  
Do you understand me?! Yes or no?!

BEATRICE  
You aren't listening to--

DEMARCHELIER  
Goddammit! Yes or no!

BEATRICE  
I... I'll do what I can.

DEMARCHELIER  
You'll do better than that! I cannot... I cannot fucking believe this! I trusted you, Beatrice! I already announced you! I counted on you. And you... what are you, insane?! You go off the deep end, like Prudhomme?! What the hell is the matter with you people?! What were you thinking?!

BEATRICE  
If you'd ju--

DEMARCHELIER  
Don't interrupt me! Just fix this fucking painting! NOW!

He storms past her into the hallway beyond. Beatrice hears his shoes TAPPING on the linoleum, fading into the distance.

Her mood ruined, she slumps onto the stool in front of the painting.

BEATRICE  
You pompous... Just fuck off and let me do my work!

Drops her head into her hands.

CHIP (O.S.)  
Morning.

Beatrice groans. She does not feel like dealing with him now.

CHIP  
I was just coming back from the cafeteria, and I heard the Boss--

BEATRICE  
Chip, no offense, but I--

CHIP  
Tell me something. How old'd you  
say this painting was?

BEATRICE  
Chip, please--

CHIP  
Humor me. How old?

BEATRICE  
Um... five hundred years. Give or  
take.

CHIP  
Huh. Well... the painting might be  
five centuries old, but the frame  
is a heckuva lot older.

BEATRICE  
That's not unusual. Artists--

CHIP  
Recycled frames. I know. I got my  
PhD in Art History, too, you know.

BEATRICE  
I wasn't... Look, all I'm saying  
is, the frame could be a lot older  
than the--

CHIP  
Fifteen hundred years older?

BEATRICE  
...What?

CHIP  
That's right.

BEATRICE  
Hold on. You're saying... you're  
saying this frame is from... before  
Common Era?

CHIP  
Just about. Which brings us to the  
next contestant on "The Price is  
Right." Besides being shaped like a  
door, it's made outta cedar.  
(off her look)

Cedar's not a great wood. I mean, it's fine to line a hamster cage, but it's not very stable. Like: doesn't last for two thousand years.

BEATRICE  
Okay, so, it's well-preserved.

CHIP  
Very well-preserved. Now, I know you know your Art, but how well d'you know your Good Book?

BEATRICE  
Not as well as you, maybe, but I can get by.

CHIP  
Good. 'Cause this is where it gets all New Testament. Ever heard of Golgotha?

BEATRICE  
What? I don't--

CHIP  
The hill Christ was crucified on.

He grabs the frame. Flips the entire painting over.

CHIP  
There are holes in the wood, Bea. Where nails were driven in.

He runs a fingertip across one section of the frame, indicating a jagged hole in the wood.

CHIP  
I found iron filings still in them. Filings that're two thousand years old. I checked with the lab.

BEATRICE  
What are you--?

CHIP  
And there's blood on the wood, too. I sent a sliver to the lab last night. Took them hours 'cause they didn't know what they were looking at. It's human blood.

Beatrice's gone very quiet.

CHIP

Just touching this thing gives me  
the shakes.

He gingerly places it back on the easel.

BEATRICE

Are you trying to tell me this...  
this frame is built out of wood  
from...?

CHIP

The Cross. The Cross that Our Lord  
and Savior Jesus Christ was  
crucified on.

Beatrice just stares at the painting.

INT. THE OFFICE OF DIRECTOR DEMARCHELIER - SAME

DeMarchelier sits at his desk, staring out at the view.

He absent-mindedly TAPS A PENCIL on his desk. Looks down at  
it. TAPS again.

He slowly touches the mahogany top. It's smooth. Polished. He  
seems mesmerized by the surface.

DeMarchelier BUZZES HIS INTERCOM, still TAPPING the pencil.

DEMARCHELIER

Carlene? Call down to Maintenance.  
Ask them to send up a hatchet.

CARLENE'S VOICE

A... hatchet, sir?

DEMARCHELIER

Yesss... I, um... I have a small  
project I need done here. Oh, and  
I'll also need some... cleaning  
solvent. A few cans... will be  
fine. And maybe some drop cloths.

CARLENE'S VOICE

Ummm... Whatever you say, sir.

DeMarchelier CLICKS OFF. He's staring straight ahead, looking  
oddly content.

He has stopped tapping. His hand strokes the surface of the  
desk.



The other hand presses the pencil down until it SNAPS in half.

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE - SAME

Beatrice and Chip rifle through her illustrated Saint anthologies.

A historical chronology shows images of martyrdom. Burnings, boilings, garrotings, hangings, crucifixions...

INSERT - BOOK

But "Simeon the Heretic" just receives a blank page and a notation: "No known icon available."

BACK TO SCENE

Beatrice pulls down her ear-marked book on Umberto Speziale.

INSERT - SPEZIALE BOOK

A fairly decent rendering of Speziale in his final year. The portrait's dated 1505. And Umberto looks healthy -- no leprosy or blinded eyes.

BACK TO SCENE

She's about to close the book when Chip sees...

CHIP

Hold on.

INSERT - SPEZIALE BOOK

The signature. "Brother Vincenzo Capitelli."

BACK TO SCENE

CHIP

"Brother Vincenzo Capitelli"?

BEATRICE

The apprentice?

Beatrice reaches for another book.

INT. CARLENE'S DESK OUTSIDE DEMARCHELIER'S OFFICE - SAME

Carlene RAPS on the door, trying not to drop the box she's holding. Looks down at the folded drop cloths, four cans of paint thinner, and a red-headed fire axe.

CARLENE

Mr. DeMarchelier? I've got the supplies you asked for.

The door OPENS a crack. DeMarchelier looks out. He scans her and her parcel.

CARLENE

Everything... all right, Mr. DeM--?

DEMARCHELIER

Fine. Fine. I'll take that.

He grabs the box. Puts his shoulder into closing the door.

CARLENE

Can I... give you a hand, maybe?

DEMARCHELIER

No, no. Take the rest of the day off, Carlene.

CARLENE

Um... Okay, sir. Whatever you--

SLAM. Carlene jumps back.

She grabs her bag. Digs out her keys.

CARLENE

A day off is a day off.

She heads out of the office before her boss changes his mind.

From behind the door to DeMarchelier's office, there comes a THUNK. Pause. THUNK. Pause. THUNK...

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE - EVENING

THUNK. Beatrice drops a book in frustration. Finally, she finds the one she's looking for. An index of Renaissance apprentices.

BEATRICE

Okay, Vincenzo... let's see what you were up to.

She finds: "Capitelli, Vincenzo Carlo. Novice Jesuit Friar and Apprentice to Umberto Speziale of Florence. 1489-1505."

BEATRICE

...Died the same year as Umberto?

She flips to the lone page on Brother Vincenzo.

CHIP

That doesn't look good.

INSERT - INDEX BOOK

An illustration of the monk's cell. Brother Vincenzo tries to paint while rays of light pierce him from...

...a coffin-shaped canvas resting on an easel. It's her painting. Another older Monk's body lies at Vincenzo's feet.

BACK TO SCENE

CHIP

And that guy lying there... Is that...?

BEATRICE

Brother Umberto...?

INSERT - INDEX BOOK

The caption under the picture reads:

"The Temptation of Brother Vincenzo"

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE

Tempted by what?

INT. DEMARCHELIER'S OFFICE - SAME

The L.A. city lights are visible outside.

Director DeMarchelier has finished demolishing his wooden desk. He holds the axe, panting, tie and mind askew. He has the same crazed look on his face as Castro and Prudhomme.

Most of the kindling has been gathered in the center of the room. The drop cloth has been torn into strips and soaked.

DeMarchelier chucks the axe. Steps into the mess.

He picks up one long piece of wood. THUNKS it vertically in the center of the pile. It teeters but stays erect.

He puts his back up against the post. Grabs one end of the drop cloth. Winds it around his legs. Innocent as a child.

DEMARCHELIER

I am sorry for having offended thee. I am sorry for having offended thee. I am sorry for having offended thee...

DeMarchelier pauses for a moment, entirely entwined in the gas-soaked cloth. He uses his free hand to remove a Zippo. FLICKS it. Stares at the flame.

DEMARCHELIER

Father... into thy hands, I commend my spirit.

WHOOSH.

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE - SAME

The fire alarm BLARES, startling Beatrice and Chip. The SPRINKLERS HISS to life, soaking everything in the room.

BEATRICE

What the hell...?!

She flings the cloth over the Speciale, before following Chip out the door.

INT. DODGE MUSEUM LOBBY - SAME

Beatrice and Chip find themselves trapped among a throng of Museum employees frantically heading for the exits.

Beatrice looks around for the source of the fire. Spies a thick wall of smoke pouring over the edge of the upstairs landing... where DeMarchelier's office is.

She pushes her way through the crowd. Up the stairs.

Chip looks back to see if she's still with him.

CHIP

Bea?!

She's not there. He scans the chaotic crowd. Sees her take the first flight up. Realizes where she's headed.

CHIP

Bea! No!

He tries to make his way after her, despite the crush of people.

INT. CARLENE'S DESK OUTSIDE DEMARCHELIER'S OFFICE - SAME

Beatrice holds her shirt over her mouth, swatting her way through the fumes. Thick clouds of dark smoke ooze out between the door and its frame.

She grabs the door handle. Jerks back in pain. It's red hot. She snags the sweater off the back of Carlene's chair. Wraps it around her hand. THROWS OPEN the doors...

INT. DEMARCHELIER'S OFFICE - SAME

She's blasted in the face by the infernal heat of a raging INFERNO. In its center, a blackened form that used to be DeMarchelier THRASHES against a burning pole, SCREAMING.

DEMARCHELIER  
ALL DEAD!!! ALL DEAD!!!

BEATRICE  
PHILIP! NO!!!

She starts in, hoping to somehow rescue him...

...when the ceiling above COLLAPSES in a rain of fiery debris.

CUT TO:

EXT. DODGE PARKING LOT - LATER

PANDEMONIUM. Fire engines. Rescue teams. Police cruisers. The building has been evacuated. The late workers huddle in a stunned group.

Paulsen and Thomas receive a report from a FIREFIGHTER.

FIREFIGHTER  
Saved most of the upper floor, but  
the east end is just gone.

PAULSEN  
Any idea what started it?

FIREFIGHTER  
Looks like it was started  
deliberately.

The double doors BANG open. EMTs ROLL OUT a gurney with a body bag on it. Ramsey walks with them.

PAULSEN  
What we got this time, Doc?  
Garroting?

THOMAS  
Stoning?

RAMSEY  
Just about.

ZIIIP. The Coroner opens the body bag.

RAMSEY  
Burnt at the stake.

A second gurney comes out, with someone strapped to it.

PAULSEN  
Well, Lordy me...

THOMAS  
If it ain't Miss Matheson.

Beatrice lies silent, an oxygen mask over her mouth and a bloodied bandage around her head.

PAULSEN  
Surprise, surprise.

THOMAS  
Working after hours again, are we?

PAULSEN  
Third time's a charm. What's her  
deal?

RAMSEY  
She's banged up pretty badly, but  
she'll live. We need to get her to  
the E.R. ASAP.

PAULSEN  
Okay, go. Call us if she comes to.

The EMTs load Beatrice into a waiting ambulance.

THOMAS  
Now, where's that four-eyed dude  
with the ponytail?

A COP comes through the doors.

PAULSEN  
Whatcha got there?

The Cop holds up a plastic evidence bag.

INSERT - EVIDENCE BAG

A small silver cross. Beatrice's cross.

BACK TO SCENE

COP

Found it just inside the door.

Paulsen takes the bag. Turns it over.

EXTREME CLOSEUP - THE CROSS

A small inscription on the back: "Marcus Matheson 3/17/1984".

BACK TO SCENE

The two detectives give each other a knowing look.

PAULSEN

Another Matheson?

THOMAS

"On the phone with my brother."

PAULSEN

Maybe our little firebug's got an accomplice.

THOMAS

Let's get on this before it's too late.

They head for their car.

Chip watches them from the shadows of the building. As the detectives ROAR away in their Taurus, he slips back inside.

INT. BEATRICE'S OFFICE - SAME

Chip steps around the puddles of sprinkler water, making his way to the easel where the Speciale sits.

He pulls back the cloth, a determined look on his face.

CHIP

Okay, Umberto... let's see what you're hiding.

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - LATE EVENING

General chaos. The doctors handle the usual assortment of injuries and patients.

Beatrice rests amid a web of tubes and wires, alone in a closed-off room. A DOCTOR consults with her NURSE, as she looks over the chart.

DOCTOR  
Some head trauma, but luckily no  
deep cranial bleeding. She should  
be okay.

The Doctor returns the chart to its place at the end of the bed. They both leave the room.

Beatrice lays alone, the machines SIGHING and BEEPING around her.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCHDIOCESE RECTORY - SAME

Marcus sits writing at his desk, going back and forth between several open books and his computer. A KNOCK at the door.

MARCUS  
Yes?

The CARETAKER leans in.

CARETAKER  
Father? Two policemen are here to  
see you.

MARCUS  
Police?

CARETAKER  
Yes sir. They say it's important.

MARCUS  
Of course, show them in.

The Caretaker gives a respectful nod, backs out, and opens the door wide. Paulsen and Thomas stride in, checking out their surroundings.

PAULSEN  
Gotta admit, when we looked you up,  
this is the last place I thought  
we'd find you.



MARCUS

I'm sorry, what can I do for you,  
Officer--?

PAULSEN

(flashing badge)

It's "detectives." We've got a few  
questions for you, Father.

THOMAS

'Bout where you've been this  
evening.

MARCUS

Been? I've been here most of the  
day. Since the late afternoon, at  
least.

PAULSEN

You sure about that?

MARCUS

Positive.

THOMAS

Didn't pop over to the Dodge? See  
your sister?

MARCUS

Bea? What does she--

PAULSEN

Seems Miss Matheson might have had  
a hand in the fire at the Dodge  
this evening.

Marcus bolts out of his chair.

MARCUS

Fire?!? Is she--?

THOMAS

Hospital. Mild concussion. Maybe a  
broken bone or two.

MARCUS

Oh God...

PAULSEN

'Zat surprise you, Father?

MARCUS

"Surprise" me?!... Where is she?

PAULSEN  
Sacred Heart.

THOMAS  
Bein' looked after.

MARCUS  
Why are we just standing here? Take  
me to--

He steps towards them. They grab their guns. Marcus halts.

PAULSEN  
Ah-ah-AH, Father. You just stay  
right where you are.

MARCUS  
What's going on?

Thomas reaches into his jacket. Pulls out the evidence bag.

THOMAS  
We wanna know how this might've  
gotten to the site of the fire.

He holds it up, so that Marcus can see the silver cross.

MARCUS  
My cross... I gave that to Bea,  
just the other day.

PAULSEN  
Izzat so?

Marcus feels tears welling up inside him.

MARCUS  
Oh Bea... Heavenly Father, please  
show your mercy on us...

PAULSEN  
Might be a little late for prayer,  
Father. Right, Ron?

Thomas just stares at Marcus - stock still.

THOMAS  
(distorted voice)  
There is little time, My Son.

Thomas' voice is like a child WHISPERING in a rushed flow,  
just a millisecond off his real voice.

The pages of the books on the desk LIFT at a corner, as if a breeze has sprung up.

THOMAS

The Fallen One hath come for thy world.

PAULSEN

Yo? I don't know if you noticed, Ron, but we're in the middle of a--

Paulsen freezes in place.

He and Thomas speak in perfect unison. The same ethereal Voice is channeled through both men.

THOMAS & PAULSEN

The Door hath been opened, and the world God Wrought doth lay in peril.

MARCUS

What... who are you?

THOMAS & PAULSEN

I Am Myself! He! That Is!

Their shared Voice is enormous. Triumphant. LIGHT ERUPTS from their eyes and mouths. An ethereal glow appears around them. The breeze becomes a FULL WIND.

MARCUS

Oh my Lord...

THOMAS & PAULSEN

Be not afraid. I hath no human form. In this method doth I now come to you. In the hearts and souls of Mine own human hosts.

MARCUS

"Human hosts"? What do you--?

THOMAS & PAULSEN

See my pure form! As the Master sent me to Saul! On the Road to Damascus!

A blinding pillar of light appears in the center of the room. Marcus shields his eyes. Paulsen and Thomas are momentarily obliterated in its power. And the Voice is now truly terrifying.

THOMAS & PAULSEN  
I AM MYSELF! HE! THAT IS!

Marcus is bathed in Holy Light. Tears stream down his face.  
The light changes. With a flash...

MARCUS' IMAGINATION - EXT. GOLGOTHA - TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO

Paulsen and Thomas hang from crosses on either side of a brilliant white luminescence.

Marcus stands at the base of the Cross, looking back and forth between the two possesses detectives, standing amidst the crowd of mourners and onlookers. The Ancient city of Jerusalem in the distance.

THOMAS & PAULSEN  
"Then an Angel came down from  
Heaven, holding in his hand the Key  
to the Abyss"!

Marcus is unable to face the piercing light coming from the figure hanging over him. The sky is TURBULENT and ROILING. The SOUNDS are those Prudhomme heard the night before.

MARCUS  
Why... why are you showing me this?

THOMAS & PAULSEN  
As it is written!

MARCUS  
As what is written?!

THOMAS & PAULSEN  
"And the Key was of two parts and yet one! And those two parts shall open the Door and reveal All unto the Kingdom of Earth"!

MARCUS  
"The Door"? What "Door"?!

THOMAS & PAULSEN  
They know this, My Son!

MARCUS  
"They"? Who--?

THOMAS & PAULSEN  
They who are born of the shadows!  
The minions of the Fallen One!

The CHAOS of Golgotha grows to a fever pitch. LIGHTNING has joined the flashes.

MARCUS

I don't... I don't understand--!

THOMAS & PAULSEN

Believe! The Demon was sent by The  
Fallen One! The Morning Star! He  
Who Was Most Loved Of God And Is No  
Longer!

MARCUS

S... Satan?

THOMAS & PAULSEN

And it is temptation!

MARCUS

What is temptation? What are you--?

THOMAS & PAULSEN

Beware! "And those two parts shall  
open the Door and reveal All unto  
the Kingdom of Earth"! As it is  
written!

A terrible TEARING signals the rending of the Temple curtain  
as the CRYING increases.

THOMAS & PAULSEN

He hath entered into thine own  
House! Corrupted thy other flesh!  
Clad in the stolen skin of a man!

MARCUS

I can't--

THOMAS & PAULSEN

Believe! Hosannah in the Highest!  
Eli-oi-ah! Have Faith and Believe!

MARCUS' IMAGINATION ENDS

INT. ARCHDIOCESE RECTORY - PRESENT DAY

Another FLASH. Marcus is once again in his office.

He pants. Clutches at the desk. The silence is frightening.

Paulsen and Thomas drop to the ground, limp and groaning.

Marcus shakes himself. Regains his composure.

MARCUS  
What did they...?

He sees his cross in the evidence bag on the floor next to the detectives. The words of the angels suddenly make sense.

MARCUS  
Oh my God... "corrupted thy...?"  
Bea!

He grabs the cross. Leaps over the prostrate forms of the detectives. BURSTS through the door.

CUT TO:

INT. X-RAY ROOM AT THE DODGE - SAME

Chip PUNCHES BUTTONS. Starts a new scan. SCAMBO WHINES to life as he continues to stare at the screen.

CHIP  
Wait a minute... Did I just see--

CTHUNK CTHUNK CTHUNK! BOOM!!!

A sudden IMPLOSION. Anything not nailed down FLIES towards Scambo. The monitor KNOCKS Chip in the temple, throwing him to the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - SAME

Beatrice hasn't stirred from her unconscious state.

A shadow falls across her. Her eyes flutter open.

Jonathan stands at her bedside.

BEATRICE  
J... Jonathan...?

LUCAS  
Let's get you out of here,  
*Beatrizia.*

BEATRICE  
Am I...?

LUCAS  
It's time to go.

She takes his hand. He gently pulls her from her bed.

CUT TO:

INT. X-RAY ROOM AT THE DODGE - SAME

Chip slowly regains his senses. Stunned, he lifts his head.

Most of the X-ray machine is gone. The monitor and a few stray pieces lie scattered about, but everything else has been sucked into the center of...

...the painting. At the center of a MAELSTROM of energy and debris, the painting hangs in the air, unsupported.

The image is gone. Beatrice's painting is now a ROILING, pearly white.

Scambo's cables lead into it. Just disappear into the CHURNING white hole, bound by five pieces from the Cross of Christ.

The monitor is turned on its side. It's on. The image FLICKERS AND SPITS.

Chip crawls over to where it lays. The image rolls. Holds.

Chip's eyes widen as he stares into the monitor. Lifts the monitor up and stares deeply.

A ghostly luminescence illuminates his face. The light grows, as do his pupils.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - SAME

Paulsen and Thomas stumble down the stairs of the church, clutching their heads.

They CLAMBER into their waiting car. Paulsen grabs the radio.

PAULSEN

Two-oh-seven, I need an update on  
that Matheson woman at Sacred  
Heart...

Thomas CRANKS THE ENGINE. GUNS THE CAR out into traffic.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CITY STREETS - SAME

Marcus WHIPS his Porsche around a corner, narrowly missing a bus.

INT. MARCUS' PORSCHE - SAME

Marcus has his cell phone pressed to his ear as he fights his way through the L.A. traffic.

MARCUS  
Yes, the State Department. Hurry,  
please!

CUT TO:

INT. STATE DEPARTMENT HALL OF FLAGS - SAME

A GUARD answers a phone. Dark. The wee hours.

GUARD  
Security, night desk.

INTERCUT BETWEEN MARCUS AND GUARD

MARCUS  
Yeah, I'm trying to reach someone  
in Reparations?

GUARD  
"Repar-what"?

MARCUS  
Reparations? Or Restitution maybe--

GUARD  
Sir, this is the State Department.

MARCUS  
I'm looking for a Jonathan Lucas?  
Could I speak with someone in his  
office?

GUARD  
"Jonathan Lucas"? Let's see...  
Lucas, Lucas... Oh... oh yeah. You  
next o' kin?

MARCUS  
What?



GUARD

There's an address here, for donations to the family, if you want that.

MARCUS

Donations? I just want to speak with Lucas!

GUARD

Sir, didn't anyone tell you?

MARCUS

Tell me what?!?

GUARD

Sir... Mr. Lucas died three weeks ago.

Marcus is stunned. Lets the phone drop.

GUARD'S VOICE

Sir? You still there? Sir?...

CUT TO:

EXT. DODGE MUSEUM PARKING LOT - SAME

Jonathan leads a still-groggy Beatrice towards the front door. Angry clouds roll over the building.

BEATRICE

Wha... The Museum? But... we were just in the hospital--

LUCAS

Shhh. Come with me.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DODGE MUSEUM LOBBY - SAME

Marcus and Beatrice walk past the spot where the El Greco once hung, still surrounded with yellow tape.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BEATRICE'S OFFICE - SAME

Beatrice realizes they're moving very quickly.

BEATRICE  
How'd we...?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. X-RAY ROOM - SAME

Beatrice finds herself standing before the painting, still floating in the middle of its spiraling energy.

BEATRICE  
Oh my God... What...?

Jonathan stares at the center of the room in wonder. Scambo's cables still lead into the frame.

LUCAS  
My dear *Beatrizia*... You  
really did it...

INT. POLICE CRUISER - SAME

Paulsen yells into the radio as Thomas navigates traffic.

PAULSEN  
Two-oh-seven... say again?

COP'S VOICE  
She's not here, sir. She wasn't  
checked out. No one remembers  
seeing her leave.

PAULSEN  
Shit!

THOMAS  
You thinkin'...?

PAULSEN  
Back to the Dodge.

They ROCKET through a red light, cutting off several cars.

INT. X-RAY ROOM - SAME

Beatrice steadies herself against the console, as Jonathan circles the painting - mesmerized.

LUCAS  
When Jesus was killed... the  
curtain of the Temple was rent.

Theologians always assumed that meant the Temple of the Jews in Jerusalem. Instead... it was the Temple of Manon.

BEATRICE

Wh... "Manon"? Jonathan, I... I don't--

LUCAS

The disruption of the Crucifixion tore a hole into Hell. A Gate. And when the only Son of God was sacrificed by the Romans, He descended into the pits of Hell, and spent three days taming the demons. He returned... with the keys to Hell.

BEATRICE

The same keys in Revelations? Is Jesus... the Angel John was talking...?

LUCAS

To seal the Gate to Hell, the Church framed it with relics from The Cross. But soon it wasn't enough. The temptation was too great.

BEATRICE

Jonathan... How do you know all this...?

LUCAS

So the Vatican painted the warning, to hide the Gate from mankind. For all eternity.

He stops directly in front of the painting. Its light plays across his features.

LUCAS

And then the Key was hidden, secreted in a place where no one would ever think to look. Some place malleable, fallible...

He turns to face the reeling Beatrice, leering at her with an inhuman smile. His eyes are dead. His skin is a pallid gray.

LUCAS

Human.

BEATRICE

Oh... God, no...

LUCAS

You, *Beatrizia*, are part of that  
Key.

Beatrice's eyes fall on the monitor.

POV

Chip is trapped, screaming. He presses against the glass. A blinding light illuminates him from behind.

BACK TO SCENE

BEATRICE

Chip? Chip! No...!

A wet RIPPING sound. Beatrice turns back to Lucas.

Jonathan Lucas stands before her naked, almost gleaming, larger than before, as if he's about to burst out of his skin. Like some demonic newborn. Smoke rises from his shoulders and back. His clothes lay rotten and smoldering at his feet.

LUCAS

You wished your little friend to  
Hell, Beatrice. And we granted you  
your wish. You should be pleased.

BEATRICE

N-n-n-no.

Beatrice staggers back, trying to shield herself.

LUCAS

Your every wish granted by my  
Master, listening from behind his  
prison doors. Castro and Prudhomme  
and DeMarchelier - anyone in your  
way - all punished. For you. You  
never said: "No, I don't want it!  
No success! No fame! No  
advancement!" No... love.

BEATRICE

No...

EXT. THE DODGE PARKING LOT - SAME

Marcus' Porsche SCREAMS into a turn, slamming against a guard wall, as he BLASTS into the parking lot.

He barrels straight for the doors of the museum, coming to a SCREECHING halt at the foot of the stairs. He jumps out of the car and starts for the door...

...only to stop short, as he sees in the sky over the building.

POV

A swirling mass of clouds, lit from inside by what looks like a raging, oily fire.

BACK TO SCENE

MARCUS

God, no!

Whips around as Paulsen's and Thomas' car TEARING into the lot as well. Paulsen uses the car's PA.

PAULSEN'S VOICE

Matheson! Stop right there!

Marcus sprints through the doors.

INT. X-RAY ROOM - SAME

Beatrice tries to back away, fighting her tears while Lucas gazes into the monitor.

LUCAS

I envy your friend. Safe in the embrace of my Master. Safe in the absence of God.

Beatrice is terrified. Her mind is spinning. At that moment, she spies...

POV

A jagged piece of pipe on the floor.

BACK TO SCENE

LUCAS

As you have lived since we took your parents from you. In the absence of God.

BEATRICE

Nononono...

LUCAS

With one simple stroke, my Master  
started your fall from Grace.

BEATRICE

Nooo!!!

She grabs the pipe. Swings it against Lucas' head. His neck  
CRACKS.

Lucas turns. He's unfazed. He stops her second swing with an  
upraised hand.

LUCAS

The man whose skin I took was  
human, *Beatrizia*. But I am not!

He chucks the pipe across the room. Reaches out for her face.

BEATRICE

No. I... I... believe.

LUCAS

Believe?! You, the eternal  
agnostic? We have done our work  
well. It is too late for you.

He strokes her cheek in mocking tenderness.

LUCAS

And now that you have uncovered the  
Gate, the way is clear for my  
Master...

He has backed Beatrice against the wall now, pressing his  
dead naked flesh against her.

LUCAS

My Master... and yours.

MARCUS (O.S.)

Bea!!!

Marcus stands in the doorway, shielding his eyes and trying  
to see through the light storm.

BEATRICE

Marcus! Don't...!

Lucas turns to face him, a grim smile spreading across his  
cracking face.

LUCAS

Ah, the true Believer. Now, we can begin.

Paulsen and Thomas appear behind Marcus, brandishing their guns.

THOMAS

Holy shit...

PAULSEN

Let her go!

Lucas lets Beatrice go. The detectives push past Marcus and slowly advance into the room.

THOMAS

Hands on your head!

Lucas walks towards them, calm and steady.

THOMAS

Slow up, pal, or we're gonna have words!

BEATRICE

Don't let him near you!

THOMAS

I said back off!

PAULSEN

Stop right there! Now!

Lucas is right on top of Thomas.

THOMAS

Don't make me shoot you, mother--!

Lightening fast, Lucas grabs Thomas' gun. Puts it in his own mouth. Thomas tries to pull it away.

Lucas pulls the trigger. BLOWS OFF the top of his own head.

He doesn't move. Doesn't flinch. Just remains standing with the back of his skull missing and his eyes closed.

PAULSEN

Holy shit. What'd you just--?

THOMAS

I didn't... I didn't...

Thomas slowly removes the gun from Lucas' mouth, utterly at a loss. Lucas is still standing.

Marcus makes a dash for Beatrice, now hysterical on the floor.

MARCUS

Bea!

BEATRICE

Jonathan... Oh God...

Lucas' eyes snap open. He grabs hold of Thomas's outstretched arm. BREAKS it. Rips the gun out of his hand.

Paulsen turns on him. Lucas BELCHES a stream of crimson fire, engulfing Paulsen completely.

As the detective falls to the ground, BURNING alive, the demon turns his attention back to his crying captive.

THOMAS

(whimpering)

Our Father, who art in Heaven...

Another column of hellfire ERUPTS from Lucas. Thomas disappears in the conflagration, becoming a charred pile of steaming flesh.

Both detectives are dead. Reduced to smoldering piles of hot ash.

Lucas turns back to Beatrice and Marcus. His face torn and disfigured. Smoke pours from every orifice and crack.

LUCAS

Shall we?

Marcus tenses, ready to defend his sister. But she just stares at the Gate. Transfixed.

BEATRICE

Your Master listens? Whatever I want...

LUCAS

Yes. But too much of a good thing can kill you, *Beatrizia*.

BEATRICE

Or you. I... I want you through there!



LUCAS

What?!

Lucas shrieks as he's dragged backwards towards the Gateway.

BEATRICE

Through the Gate! I believe! I  
believe!!!

The demon's fingers dig into the floor, RENDING it as he is pulled backwards.

BEATRICE

Go to Hell, you bastard!

LUCAS

Noooooo!!!

Lucas scrabbles at the frame, trying to save himself, trying not to be pulled, his rotten skin peeling and falling off his body.

With a final inhuman SCREAM he's sucked into the void.

Beatrice collapses into Marcus' arms.

MARCUS

It's okay, it's okay...

BEATRICE

Marcus, we... we have to help...

She points to Chip still trapped on the monitor.

BEATRICE

It's Hell. I... I opened it. I'm  
the Key. From Revelations. And I...  
I put him there. Chip.

MARCUS

You?

BEATRICE

He's an innocent man, Marcus.  
Someone with Faith. And I put him  
there. In Hell.

They stare at the monitor.

MARCUS

Then... I'll... I'll have to go in.  
(off her look)  
Bring him back.

BEATRICE  
What...? Marcus, no.

MARCUS  
This is... this is what I've  
trained for, Bea. What I'm supposed  
to do.

BEATRICE  
Marcus, you can't--

MARCUS  
This is my whole life's work. It  
comes down to this. This is... this  
is what I do, right? Save souls?

BEATRICE  
But... but I should... I should be  
the--

MARCUS  
Do you have the Faith it requires?

Beatrice starts to reply, but her words die in her throat.

MARCUS  
Exactly.

He pulls out the evidence bag out of his pocket. Tears it  
open. Fishes out the cross. Puts it on. Beatrice watches, her  
eyes filled with tears.

MARCUS  
A total stranger, too. God's  
certainly testing me.

He grabs hold of one of the cables.

MARCUS  
I'll get your friend, Bea. You pull  
us back out.

Beatrice kisses him on the forehead.

BEATRICE  
Go with God, Marcus.

Marcus smiles gamely as he clutches hold of the cable and  
steps into the maelstrom at the center of the Gate...

...letting out a ROAR as he's pulled at, attenuated, and  
disappears.

A blinding FLASH of light. Beatrice is thrown to the floor. She writhes there, pulling at the cable, as the Angel's VOICE resounds once again.

ANGEL (O.S.)

"And the Key was of two parts and yet one"!

BEATRICE

What?! What are--?!

ANGEL (O.S.)

"And those two parts shall open the Door and reveal All unto the Kingdom of Earth"!

BEATRICE

What are you telling me? Why are...?

She falls back as the cable goes slack.

BEATRICE

Marcus...?

And then falls silent, GASPING as she sits up.

POV

The frame is calm. No sound. Nothing within the frame but darkness. Total. Complete. Silent wind WHIPS through the room.

BACK TO SCENE

Beatrice steps towards it, getting closer and closer...

Marcus plunges back through. Crumples to the ground in front of Beatrice, still grasping his end of the cable.

His clothes are singed and torn. His face and hands smoke as if on fire.

BEATRICE

Marcus?! Where's Chip...?

MARCUS

CLOSE IT! DESTROY IT!

His voice RASPY, like his mouth is filled with razor blades.

BEATRICE

But... how can I...

MARCUS  
HURRY! BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!!!

Beatrice looks back at the silent painting, motionless in the air.

BEATRICE  
The frame...!

She picks up the pipe and stalks towards it.

BEATRICE  
Take out the cap... the Keystone...

Mustering what little strength remains, she CRACKS the top piece of the frame with the pipe. Splinters shower the air.

BEATRICE  
It will collapse!

She summons her strength. Takes a mighty WHACK at the top of the frame again. Nothing. She does it again. And again.

Marcus writhes on the floor behind her, consumed by an unholy smoke.

The mortise and tenon begins to shift. A crack BREAKS along the edge of the frame.

MARCUS  
HURRY, BEA!!!

Beatrice redoubles her efforts as she POUNDS.

The cap CRACKS and begins to BREAK AWAY.

BEATRICE  
Break, damn you! BREAK!!!

She BEATS away at it.

The frame gives with an enormous CRASH.

WHOOSH! The frame topples. IMPLODES.

Beatrice throws herself aside. Covers her head with her arms. Waits for the end.

But nothing happens.

Warily, she peeks through her fingers...

POV

The painting is gone. The entire thing. Utterly consumed. No sign of it at all.

BACK TO SCENE

Beatrice stares at the empty space where the painting had been.

BEATRICE  
That's it. Nothing else can come  
out. Nothing. Ever.

She drops to her knees. Tears stream down her face.

BEATRICE  
That's it. Praise God.

Behind her, the charred smoking form of Marcus slowly rises from the floor.

MARCUS  
The Key of Faith to open the Gate  
in Hell...

Beatrice's blood goes cold. His voice is enormous.  
Frightening. Deep.

MARCUS  
...the Key of Faithlessness to seal  
it forever.

Beatrice's eyes lock on the Scambo monitor.

BEATRICE  
Nooo... Nooooo!

POV

Chip and her brother Marcus pound at the monitor from the other side. They're prisoners. Trapped in Hell.

BACK TO SCENE

MARCUS  
The follower of God becomes the  
slave of Manon. The decrrier of God  
becomes the savior of Manon.

She spins to face not Marcus, but a splintering, burning shell that resembles her brother.

The moving shadows from the broken lighting give Beatrice glimpses of the face behind Marcus' face. The jagged teeth. The dead flesh tint. The goat's eyes.

Marcus' voice becomes fuller, more commanding, more horrifying.

The clothes ROT off his body.

The silver cross around his neck MELTS with a hiss.

LUCIFER

And all will know the pain of my  
retribution!

Beatrice curls in a ball as the Fallen One smiles down at her.

Immense black wings ERUPT from the back of the ruined husk that was Marcus Matheson.

And Lucifer begins to LAUGH. Free at last.

Guaranteed never to return to Hell. His mocking LAUGHTER echoes out...

EXT. DODGE MUSEUM - SAME

...from the bowels of the Museum, over all of Los Angeles...

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF AMERICA - SAME

...over all of America...

EXT. SATELLITE VIEW OF EARTH - SAME

...and over all the world.