

CARAVAGGIO

Written by

Richard Vetere

Based on his stage play *Caravaggio*

06/28/2021

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ON BLACK:

ON SCREEN: ROME 1610

SOUNDS OF THE CITY: LOUD, DEEP, HUMAN VOICES -- LIFE AT ITS FULLEST -- OVERLAPS INTO FOLLOWING SCENE

FADE IN ON:

EXT. GHETTO OF "ORTACCHIO" - THE EVIL GARDEN - ROME - NIGHT

SMALL GROUPS of DRUNK MEN and PROSTITUTES SHOUT insults and seductions at one another.

CARAVAGGIO, intensely aware, in his 30's, piercing black eyes, wears a dramatic-looking black and gold tight fitting jacket with a red vest and a rapier dangling from his belt and a leather satchel of wine in his hand.

At his side are GIULIO MANCINI and PETRONIO TOPPA. MANCINI is the eldest, a poet, former merchant, wearing expensive rich green and gold and Toppa is younger, a painter, wearing formfitting blue jacket and brown vest.

CARAVAGGIO searches the 'Ortacchio' looking for something which might be unattainable.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHAPEL OF SANTA MARIA DEL POPOLO - ROME - NIGHT

Drunk, Caravaggio, Mancini and Toppa approach the chapel sharing a satchel of wine. Caravaggio pushes open the chapel door.

INT. CHAPEL OF SANTA MARIA DEL POPOLO - ROME

ANNIABLE CARRACCI, late 30s, stands in the aisle looking up at a painting. He is dressed humbly in brown non-distinct clothing despite his fame. Though his eyes sparkle with intelligence, there is pained expression on his face as if haunted by some impending doom he can't articulate.

Hearing voices at the front door, he covers the canvas and hides behind an altar.

Caravaggio ENTERS the chapel.

CARAVAGGIO
I need more light!

Mancini and Toppa follow behind him LAUGHING, blessing themselves and kneeling as they walk down the aisle.

TOPPA

Bless me father, for I have sinned.

MANCINI

God knows you're a sinner. He doesn't need to be reminded.

CARAVAGGIO

Get me another torch!

Mancini pulls a torch up off the center pew as Caravaggio stops at a covered painting, the *same* canvas Carracci was looking at it. Caravaggio directs the light to brighten the canvas.

The painting is enormous. It's THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL. It's an astonishing work for its time. It's bold in its showing of unblemished humanity.

Its portrayal of fragile human beings in a religious setting presents to the Renaissance and Catholic mind a novel idea -- God can be found in Mankind's imperfections.

All three are in awe, even the painting's creator.

MANCINI

Magnificent.

TOPPA

Splendid.

MANCINI (quickly)

You'll win the competition.

TOPPA (quickly)

You'll gain the commission.

CARAVAGGIO (makes sign of the cross)

Be all my sins remembered.

Caravaggio takes a slug of the wine, throws the satchel at Toppa then turns to the other side of the aisle and pulls away the canvas opposite his.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

And here is Carracci's.

Caravaggio throws the torch light across Carracci's painting. It is the same subject, the conversion of Paul, but it's a prettier painting, far less realistic, more idealized version of faith and suffering.

Carracci peeks from behind the altar.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
Perfect saints with halo's spinning
like golden rings.

MANCINI
Awful.

TOPPA (quickly)
Putrid.

CARAVAGGIO
Yes it is. But *this* is what the
Church wants.

Caravaggio looks up to God and says:

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
You despise what I paint. Because I
expose You for what You are!

In the shadows, Carracci knocks over a small unlit torch. All
three men turn, ready to pounce.

MANCINI
What was that?

TOPPA
A demon!

Carracci steps out from behind the altar. Caravaggio
recognizes him and puts his rapier back in its sheath.

CARAVAGGIO (AT HIS FRIENDS)
I'll deal with this demon. Meet me
at the Tavern of the Hawk.
(off their hesitation)
Go!

Mancini and Toppa turn and leave the Church. Caravaggio walks
down the aisle to Carracci.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
Anniable.

CARRACCI
I'm shocked to hear you pray.

CARAVAGGIO
My prayers are in defiance.

CARRACCI
God will take notice.

CARAVAGGIO

I only hope he does.

(then)

Your work is brilliant. You will win the commission not me.

Carracci looks over Caravaggio's painting.

CARRACCI

Let me say now, to your face, that despite how much I despise your realistic style, I admire it.

CARAVAGGIO

You painted like me once. Not caring what anyone thought. Your *Butcher Shop*. The way the meat hung from hooks on the walls.

CARRACCI (SHOCKED TO REMEMBER)

I painted that when I was twenty-one! When I lived near the Arena. I sold it to a merchant for bread and meat.

CARAVAGGIO

It was magnificent. I even said to myself, "some day, Michele, you will do work as good as that."

Carracci gives Caravaggio a slight bow of his head and walks away dejected and leaves the church. Caravaggio watches him.

SCREAMS OF LAUGHTER OVERLAP INTO FOLLOWING SCENE

CUT TO:

INT. BROTHEL - PIAZZA DEL POPOLO - NIGHT

Caravaggio ENTERS the TORCH-LIT two-story structure. He struts into the brothel with a wide charming smile amid shouts of "Michele!" coming from most of the topless or scantily clad WOMEN and "Caravaggio" from some of the male PATRONS.

A young prostitute, ISABELLA, rushes over to him and he hugs her.

ISABELLA

Michele, Ranuccio Tomassoni and his brothers were here asking for you.

CARAVAGGIO

I'm sure they were. Isabella,
you're a true beauty but stay out
of the sun. Now, get me something
to eat and drink.

Caravaggio notices a young man, Fabrizio, drinking at a table
with a stump for a left hand as a YOUNG WOMAN sits silently
beside him.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

Fabrizio, what happened?

He holds up the bandaged stump.

FABRIZIO

I lost it to a Spaniard in Milano.
He insulted me.

CARAVAGGIO

Lucky for you you're right handed.
A poet writes with his heart but he
still needs his fingers. (to YOUNG
WOMAN) And she must be a great
inspiration.

Caravaggio sits at a table with Mancini and Toppa as Isabella
brings bread to the table and Toppa grabs her ass as she
walks past him. She playfully slaps at him as YOUNG WOMAN #2
steps past the table.

Caravaggio jumps and stops at her, touching her face. She is
startled and still.

CARAVAGGIO (TO HER) (CONT'D)

Botticelli would call you 'Venus.'

(then)

You're from Florence.

YOUNG WOMAN #2 (SURPRISED)

Si. How did you know?

CARAVAGGIO

Your complexion. So rare in Rome.

Just then Caravaggio sees a woman sitting alone at a table.
She is Lena, 20s, captivating, vulnerable and self-contained
all at the same time. He ignores everything around him, walks
over to her, stops, and stares in silence.

She looks up at him.

LENA

What? You've never seen a woman before?

CARAVAGGIO

Women I've seen, you I haven't.

He moves to her but just then a SOLDIER steps out of nowhere, takes her hand and pulls her from the table into the another room and she is gone.

MARIA (V.O.)

Hey! Michele!

Caravaggio turns up and sees MARIA (30s), standing on the stairs, her arms folded across her chest, starring at him. Earthy, boisterous and voluptuous, she demands attention.

MARIA

When you're here in my house it's me you look at and nobody else.

CARAVAGGIO

When I am in your house, I look at you and no one else.

He walks to her slowly, impulsively pulls her into another room.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - BROTHEL - NIGHT

Caravaggio and Maria pull one another's clothes off making love like ferocious creatures. With the door half open blasts of torch light, SHOUTS and LAUGHTER explode beyond them. They are completely oblivious to it all.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROTHEL - PIAZZA DEL POPOLO - DAWN

Caravaggio pushes open the brothel doors appears shattering the early morning silence. He's drunk, exhausted, spent.

He steps outside and BUMPS into a DRUNK. Caravaggio and the Drunk step back grabbing at their daggers. They recognize one another. The drunk is RANUCCIO TOMASSONI.

CARAVAGGIO

Ranuccio? I thought I smelled lily sweet perfume.

Caravaggio and Ranuccio lock eyes.

RANUCCIO (30s) is a well-built, handsome, clean-shaven man unlike Caravaggio, not dressed as an artist but as a swordsman, and wealthy one at that, in fine silk blue and gold with the family emblem embodied on his vest.

He wears guards on his wrists for sword fighting and rings on his fingers and expensive bracelets and a colorful scarf of the finest silk.

Ranuccio calls over his shoulder.

RANUCCIO TOMASSONI
It's that cretin, Michele di
Merisi.

Two more drunk men step out of the shadows. They are OTTAVIO and GIOVAN TOMASSONI (30s) wearing rapiers in their belts and expensive jewelry. They have the poise of military men.

Caravaggio stiffens as the Tomassoni brothers slowly take a stance ready to pounce on Caravaggio.

RANUCCIO TOMASSONI (CONT'D)
You owe me ten scudi.

CARAVAGGIO
You'll have it. When I'm ready.

Ranuccio grins as he and his brothers edge closer to Caravaggio. The brothel door FLINGS OPEN and Mancini and Toppa stumble out. When they realize what they just walked into, they put their hands on their rapiers and stand to either side of Caravaggio. The sides are now even.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
Your father was a warrior but his
sons belong in a convent.

All six men step back, pull their swords from their belts ready to pounce when -- THUMPING OF BOOTS on cobblestone rattles the dawn.

They all turn to see SEVERAL KNIGHTS OF MALTA walking across the piazza in their direction.

The KNIGHTS are stunningly attired in black and silver with the bold emblem of the Knights of Malta on their chest plates. They carry their long swords proudly and intimidate by their sheer presence and reputation.

Both sides back away. Caravaggio can't take his eyes off of the Knights.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
To be a Knight of the Order of
Malta is the highest honor.

Ranuccio turns to Caravaggio.

RANUCCIO
One day I will soak the piazza with
your blood.

Ranuccio and his Brothers disappear into an enormous rising
sun, orange and red, GLARINGLY rising over the rooftops
soaking the street with its brutal LIGHT.

Caravaggio to Mancini.

CARAVAGGIO
One day I will soak the piazza with
Ranuccio's blood and be damned.

The sun drowns Caravaggio in a blood red LIGHT.

THE LOUD SOUND OF HORSES OVERLAPS INTO THE FOLLOWING SCENE

TO BLACK:

FADE IN ON:

FLASH FORWARD SEVERAL WEEKS

A FULL WHITE MOON IN A MILKY WHITE SKY

1 EXT. CARRIAGE - ROME - NIGHT 1

A carriage races through the streets, visible is the insignia
of a cardinal of the Catholic Church, giving it significant
status.

2 INT. CARRIAGE - ROME - CONTINUOUS 2

The only passenger is CARAVAGGIO, 30s, wearing a dramatic-
looking black cape drinking wine from a satchel, peering
through the window to see if he is being followed.

He looks differently than he did when we saw him earlier. He
is now focused, concerned and alert.

CUT TO:

3

EXT. PAPAL SECURITY ROAD BLOCK - NIGHT

3

The carriage pulls up to TWO GUARDS. The FIRST GUARD steps over to the carriage.

FIRST GUARD

This road is closed to all in and out of Rome.

Caravaggio leans toward the window.

CARAVAGGIO

I am traveling with special permission from Cardinal Del Monte.

Caravaggio hands the First Guard OFFICIAL PAPERS. A SECOND GUARD joins the first. The Guards look over the papers.

SECOND GUARD

Where are you traveling to?

CARAVAGGIO

Malta.

FIRST GUARD

Malta is under siege from the Turks. Are you a knight?

CARAVAGGIO

No. But I am a guest of the knights.

Impressed, the First Guard hands Caravaggio his papers.

FIRST GUARD

Be alert. The roads are treacherous with bandits.

CARAVAGGIO

(playfully)

I will be on the alert.

(then)

Would you like some wine, gentlemen?

FIRST GUARD

No, thank you.

The Second Guard waves to the Driver.

4

INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

4

Caravaggio takes a slug from the satchel then peers out the window looking down at the flickering lights of Rome - glimmering like stars.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARRIAGE - BOAT DOCK - CONTINUOUS

The carriage stops. Caravaggio steps out and it quickly pulls away leaving him. He staggers then manages to steady himself.

Without luggage, other than a satchel to hold a sketch book and ink, he moves to the small but seaworthy boat also with the flag and insignia of a cardinal of the Catholic Church.

He steps up to a DOCK GUARD and presents him the official papers.

CARAVAGGIO

I believe you've been waiting for me.

The Dock Guard looks them over and hands them back.

DOCK GUARD

We were. But the tide isn't. We shove off immediately.

Caravaggio steps aboard and it is clear he is the *only* passenger. He recognizes ANDREA, a young sailor.

CARAVAGGIO

Andrea. My Saint Matthew.

He steps over to him and touches his face gently.

YOUNG SAILOR

(lights up)

Caravaggio? So you are the passenger we were waiting for.

(beat)

You do know that Malta is a treacherous destination.

CARAVAGGIO

Not as treacherous as Rome is for me right now.

HEAD SEAMEN (O.C.)

All hands to cast off!

YOUNG SAILOR
I have to man my post. Can I find
you later?

Caravaggio reaches out his hand and holds it tenderly.

CARAVAGGIO
Yes. Let's find one another in the
shadows.

Andrea rushes off as the boat slowly pulls away from the
dock.

Caravaggio stands at the stern, turns and looks forward into
the darkness where the boat is headed. His eyes, his
demeanor, reveal anticipation and hope as the stars and the
full moon light the vessel's way.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. BOAT - TYRRHENIAN SEA - DAWN 7

A boat sails along on the calm seas.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. BOAT - TYRRHENIAN SEA - CONTINUOUS 8

Caravaggio is on the deck searching the skyline for Malta.
The boat's grizzled CAPTAIN stands beside him. Caravaggio sees
something faintly on the horizon.

CAPTAIN
Malta.

Caravaggio strains to get a better view. The fortress stands
high on the rocky promontory of Mount Sciberras.

THUNDER blasts in the distance. Caravaggio looks up perplexed
since the sky is clear.

CARAVAGGIO
Thunder?

CAPTAIN
Cannon.

The Captain goes back to his work as Caravaggio looks towards
Malta undeterred.

CUT TO:

9

EXT. HARBOR - CASTEL SANT'ANGELO - MALTA - DAWN

9

Caravaggio's boat slowly ENTERS the harbor and now that he can see the harbor clearly, what he sees puts a pit in his stomach.

Smoke rises up from the docks where anchored boats burn, the shoreline littered with DEAD and MANGLED BODIES -- the RUINS of a recent vicious and bloody battle.

KNIGHTS race to and fro putting out fires and tending to the WOUNDED. MOANS and CRIES of PAIN emanate from the shoreline and echo out toward the harbor.

CUT TO:

10

EXT. BOAT - BEACH - MALTA - CONTINUOUS

10

Since the dock is damaged, Caravaggio's boat runs aground on the beach. Caravaggio views the carnage, smells the stench of BURNING FLESH and sees the blood in the water.

As he is about to put his foot down into the sea, he stops and looks up to see ALOF DE WINGACOURT standing on the beach, dressed magnificently in his battle attire with blood staining his breast plate and a gold sword in his hand. He stands over the bodies of TWO DEAD TURKS he clearly just killed.

Alof has a beard that is going gray and it hides several deep scars but not all of them. His nose has been broken several times in battle and is elegantly dressed in brown leather and silver. He is oblivious to the surrounding hell-like environment, looks to Caravaggio and proudly lifts his chin. His eyes shine with delight to see Caravaggio and a slow smile crosses his lips.

Just then a CLOUD OF SMOKE covers the beach from the burning carcass of a small ship stuck in the harbor. Caravaggio COUGHS and when the smoke is gone, so is Alof.

CUT TO:

11

INT. ENTRANCE HALLWAY - CASTEL SANT'ANGELO - CONTINUOUS

11

Caravaggio steps up into the castle and is quickly confronted by STEFANO DELLA CROCE, early 30s, tall, well-built, a Knight with the rank of captain.

STEFANO

I am Stefano Della Croce, the Grand Master's Captain at Arms, at your service. This way please.

Stefano leads Caravaggio along the path.

STEFANO (CONT'D)

Your visit took us by surprise. We only received the cardinal's message last night. I hope you had a smooth crossing.

CARAVAGGIO

We weren't attacked by bandits nor Turks.

STEFANO

God was with you.

CARAVAGGIO

(grins)

I didn't see him, but then it was the dead of night.

STEFANO

This way, please.

He turns and walks down the hallway and Caravaggio follows.

12

INT. HALLWAY - CASTLE SANT'ANGELO - CONTINUOUS

12

As they walk, despite how austere the castle seems, Caravaggio notices weapons and even some artwork on the walls. He notices one painting in particular and stops.

Stefano also stops, perplexed.

STEFANO

Is something wrong?

CARAVAGGIO

I'm admiring this Tempesta.

STEFANO

You appreciate his battle scenes?

CARAVAGGIO

I applaud his use of blood, death and darkness.

STEFANO

I know very little of art but I can
see the artist understands war.

CARAVAGGIO

I know very little of war but I can
see that the Grand Master
understands art.

Stefano nods then leads Caravaggio further down the hallway.

13

EXT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

13

Stefano stops in front of a thick wooden door with Caravaggio behind him. He opens the door to a room which resembles a prison cell.

STEFANO

Your quarters.

14

INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

14

Caravaggio ENTERS deeper into the small room. It is stark, unadorned.

There is a table with a bucket of water and a bible sitting on it as well as a small enclave where to kneel and pray. The window has iron bars on it.

There is a bed with a mattress, a blanket and a single pillow but nothing else. He touches the mattress and makes a face.

STEFANO

The Grand Master will call for you
when he is ready.

He turns and leaves Caravaggio alone, closing the door.
Caravaggio HEARS a key in the lock.

CARAVAGGIO

Wait.

He shoves the door but it doesn't move. It is *locked*.
Caravaggio sits on the hard bed facing the window and looks north towards Rome imagining what is going on at the Vatican.

CUT TO:

EXT. - SAINT PETER'S BASILICA - ROME - DAY

At dark brooding sky with a shaft of light cutting through the overcast -- desperate to dispel the gloom.

INT. VATICAN OFFICE OF THE TREASURE COUNCIL - ROME - DAY

CARDINAL DEL MONTE, 50s, who has the cunning intelligence of a fox and the physical presence of a lion, ENTERS. A shaft of sunlight cuts through the large windows.

Del Monte hurries passed BISHOPS and CARDINALS walking directly up to POPE CLEMENT VIII, 60s. Dressed in his papal robes and magnificent jewels and his red velvet robe, he is pious, old and ill.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Your Holiness.

He kisses the Pope's ring as the Pope reaches out his hand.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
Why isn't Caravaggio here?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
A thousand apologies but Caravaggio is attending to a new and very important commission.

Pope Clement VIII nods to what everyone in the room is facing -- TWO LARGE PAINTINGS hanging side by side covered by velvet curtains.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
Proceed.

Cardinal Del Monte bows then faces the gathering.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Anniabile Carracci.

Carracci, still dressed humbly, stands and walks to one of the curtains and pulls it open unveiling his own painting: *The Assumption of the Virgin*. There is a gasp at the piety and visual beauty of the painting.

Cardinal Del Monte then walks to the other curtain pulling it aside revealing Caravaggio's *The Death of the Virgin*.

Caravaggio's canvas immediately elicits MOANS OF DISBELIEF from those who have no understanding of his achievement as well as SIGHS OF AWE from those who know what he has accomplished.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
I choose Anniabile Carracci's canvas
to adorn the chapel.

Pope Clement VIII stands and leaves the room. As soon as he does, everyone rushes to examine the paintings.

Carracci steps forward and bows in gratitude then quickly steps closer to Caravaggio's painting, looking up at it. Cardinal Del Monte steps over to him.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
You deserve to win the commission.

CARRACCI
Who's his model?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Her name is Lena.

CARRACCI
Where is he?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
He should have arrived on Malta
this morning.

CARRACCI
Malta, for God's sake why?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
The Grand Master requested him to
paint his portrait.

CARRACCI
And does the Grand Master know that
Caravaggio is wanted for murder?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Let's pray the news continues to
travel slowly.

CARRACCI
You actually believe you can get
him a pardon.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Without a pardon he's a dead man.

A Bishop steps over to Del Monte and Carracci.

BISHOP
Our pontiff would like to see you
for dinner this evening. In his
private quarters.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Of course.

The Bishop walks away. Del Monte turns and sees Carracci once
again staring at Caravaggio's painting.

CARRACCI
Where can I find this Lena?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
The Ghetto of *Ortaccio*. Why?

CARRACCI
I need to know how he does it.

They both look at the painting.

CUT TO:

EXT. VALLETTA - MALTA - NIGHT

The moon throws a light over the stone fortress.

KNOCKING OVERLAPS INTO THE FOLLOWING SCENE

17 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - MALTA - NIGHT 17

The room is pitch black. The KNOCKING wakes Caravaggio.

CARAVAGGIO
Huh?

He stumbles out of bed just as the door opens.

STEFANO
The Grand Master is ready for you.

CUT TO:

18 INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE THE GRAND MASTER'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT 18

As the walk through the torch-lit hallway Caravaggio notices
frescoes on the wall. Stefano stops at the door.

STEFANO
He is expecting you.

He opens the door and both men ENTER.

19

INT. THE GRAND MASTER'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

19

Alof de Wignacourt is sitting behind a thick wooden table.

Caravaggio takes him and the room in. The high ceiling is covered with a mural and the large windows are stained glass. There is art everywhere on the walls.

Alof looks up from his paperwork, Caravaggio notices that he looks pained. His eyes can't hide what he still suffers from; all his old war wounds and other more deeper agonies.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

I apologize for the hour. Welcome to Valetta and my sanctuary.

CARAVAGGIO

Titian, Raphael and Tempesta. And in your hallway you have a taste for grisly scenes of slaughter and martyrdom.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

I do indulge myself but the frescos have a purpose. They keep the glory of the order ever before the eye.

CARAVAGGIO

And the others?

Alof stands and gestures to the paintings.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

Titian is here for his understanding of human nature. Rafael for his understanding of human grandeur. Tempesta for his understanding of human history.

CARAVAGGIO

And who do you have here for an understanding of the human *soul*?

Alof smiles. Caravaggio smiles back.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT

I am Alof de Wignacourt.

CARAVAGGIO

Yes, you are, and I am honored.

Caravaggio bows in reverence.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
It gives me great pleasure to
welcome the great Caravaggio to
Malta.

CARAVAGGIO
It gives me a greater pleasure to
be here.

Alof sits and gestures to Caravaggio to join him. He does.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
We met once before. In Rome. I was
at the unveiling of your painting,
The Calling of Saint Matthew.

CARAVAGGIO
In the Contarelli Chapel. Yes. I
remember our meeting well.

The two men share a moment of mutual respect and admiration.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
You came to our humble island at a
difficult time. The Turks attacked
just before you sailed into the
harbor.

CARAVAGGIO
I've heard how your Knights protect
our civilization, now for the first
time, I've witnessed it.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
They will return.

CARAVAGGIO
I will be at your service if you
need my sword.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Have you ever fought in battle?

CARAVAGGIO
No.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Then it is fortunate that it is
your *brush* I employed.

STEFANO

We were concerned that we would be unable to get you interested in coming here. Considering all the commissions you are offered in Rome.

CARAVAGGIO

Rome was growing stale for me.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

Stale? An interesting choice of words.

CARAVAGGIO

Why so?

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

On my last visit I witnessed how it has become a savage, sinful city. An embarrassment to the Vatican itself.

CARAVAGGIO

Yes the Vatican can be quite sensitive.

STEFANO

I was told you traveled with very little.

CARAVAGGIO

I didn't want to miss the tide.

Alof notices Stefano's attitude toward Caravaggio with curiosity.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

Do you know much about us?

CARAVAGGIO

I know that you are both God's great warriors.

STEFANO

Our motto is "Discipline, Trust and Death to the Infidel." We live sparsely, we pray for God's guidance and we are celibate.

CARAVAGGIO

Celibate? Yes. To purge the soul, no doubt.

STEFANO
The soul, the heart, the mind.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
We are having a dinner in your
honor tomorrow tonight.

CARAVAGGIO
In my honor?

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Yes. My men want to meet you. I
want you to meet them. It might
help you in your creation of my
portrait.

He stands and walks to the door and Caravaggio follows.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT (CONT'D)
Here, away from your life in Rome,
you will soon find that the world
outside these walls means nothing.

CARAVAGGIO
Nothing, Grand Master?

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Nothing.

He gestures to the end of the empty hall.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT (CONT'D)
You may go back to your room to
rest. Stefano will direct you.

Alof closes the door leaving Caravaggio alone with Stefano.
Without saying a word, Stefano turns and walks down another
corridor, Caravaggio follows.

CUT TO:

20

INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

20

Caravaggio ENTERS the dark room, he turns quickly to Stefano.

CARAVAGGIO
The bed is too hard. That window is
too small. I need light in the
morning! I am Caravaggio. This *room*
is no better than a prison cell.

STEFANO

We all live like this. You can always travel back to Rome. The next boat sails the first thing tomorrow with the morning tide.

CARAVAGGIO

What is it about me that you do not like, Stefano? My face? My attire? Everything? What?

STEFANO

You are correct.

CARAVAGGIO

About?

STEFANO

Valetta was not made for comfort. It was once a prison.

Stefano closes the door and locks it behind him.

CARAVAGGIO

Why are you locking me in?

He hears only Stefano's boots moving down the hallway.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

Fool!

Caravaggio lies back on the bed and wonders about what is going on in Rome.

POPE CLEMENT VIII (V.O.)

He's a murderer.

CUT TO:

23

INT. PAPAL CHAMBERS - ROME - CONTINUOUS

23

Cardinal Del Monte and Pope Clement VIII sit across one another at a table enjoying their dinner.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

Caravaggio killed Ranuccio in self defense.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

Ranuccio Tomasoni's family have been very generous to our Holy Mother Church.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Caravaggio is a great painter.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
Tell *that* to Ranuccio's brothers.
They demand retribution.
(then)
However, this painter of yours does
intrigue me. He isn't afraid.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
He's been on his own most of his
life. Like many today, his mother
and father were both killed by
plague. I first met him when he was
a young man living on the streets.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
It is no secret that your stable of
artists has made you a wealthy man,
Francesco. I have no doubt that you
have enough saved to get our Holy
Mother Church out of debt.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Rumors of my financial well-being
are greatly exaggerated.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
And as numerous as the sightings of
Christ directly after the
Crucifixion.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Your point, your Holiness?

POPE CLEMENT VIII
You have secured safe passage for
Caravaggio to Malta without my
permission. Another rumor?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (surprised)
No.

POPE CLEMENT VIII
(off his look)
I *am* the Pope. Nothing escapes me.
(then)
Does this protege of yours have
faith?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
In *abundance* your Holiness.

Pope Clement gestures to his assistant who quickly hands him official papers. Pope Clement hands the papers to Cardinal Del Monte.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

His arrest record. It's biblical in scale. He once threw artichokes at a waiter and nearly blinded him. He said the artichokes were rotten.

Cardinal Del Monte places the papers down. He has seen them before.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

Allow him to return to Rome and he will make his penance.

The Pope coughs.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

God is calling me.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

I pray that God be still. We need you *here*.

The Pope catches Cardinal Del Monte's obvious attempt at false flattery and laughs.

POPE CLEMENT VIII

Always in such a hurry to take my place.

(then)

Our conversation is over. Enjoy desert elsewhere.

(then)

There will be *no pardon* for Caravaggio.

The Pope reaches out his hand for Cardinal Del Monte to kiss his ring. He does, bows and leaves.

THUNDEROUS VOICES FROM THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA OVERLAPS INTO...

CUT TO:

24

EXT. DINING HALL - CASTEL SANT'ANGELO - MALTA - NIGHT

24

A HUNDRED KNIGHTS, LOUD and exuberant, intimidating and fierce, ENTER and fill the enormous hall. They are followed by knights with missing limbs.

They are followed by SEVERAL YOUNG BOY VALETS and behind them TWO DOZEN TURKISH SLAVES in chains who are there to serve the food and drink. On the wall high above is the KNIGHT'S EMBLEM.

Caravaggio ENTERS, escorted by Stefano and brought to his prominent seat at the head of the table. The Knights watch him in silence, judging him quietly.

Alof ENTERS, sits beside Caravaggio. Stefano sits beside Alof. Alof stands facing the knights.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT

Once again we have proven to the world that we knights are the glorious shield of Christian Europe and a bulwark against the Turks.

CHEERS and SHOUTS fill the room as some Knights draw their swords and thrust them into the air or at the slaves who are immobilized by fear.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT (CONT'D)

To tradition and to God our Father.

They drink their wine in silence. A BISHOP appears at the door.

BISHOP

Let us pray.

They all bow their heads in PRAYER. Caravaggio looks around at the sudden sincere solemn atmosphere of the room.

RIOTOUS LAUGHTER OVERLAPS INTO...

CUT TO:

25

INT. DINING HALL - CASTLE SANT'ANGELO - MALTA - LATER

25

SEVERAL ROASTED PIGS are being cut up in the center of the room as the Slaves pour wine out of large barrels then serve it.

Alof turns to Caravaggio.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT

Come with me.

Alof turns to a door in the stone wall behind him. He ENTERS and disappears, Caravaggio follows.

26

INT. INNER SANCTUM - CONTINUOUS

26

Caravaggio ENTERS a small room lit by torches and encased in gray and brown stone with large barred window which looks out to the sea.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT

This is where I want to pose for the portrait. In the mornings the light is glorious.

(off Caravaggio's look)

Of course as soon as you decide, paints and brushes will be delivered.

CARAVAGGIO

Grand Master, you should be aware that I dislike doing portraits.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

And why is that?

CARAVAGGIO

I don't paint to please.

(then)

I am painting your portrait because in Rome when the knights enter the piazza, the hoodlums fall back and the cavalier bow with admiration.

(then)

That said, your eyes will stay on your side of the canvas until the portrait is completed.

(off Alof's look)

And you take the portrait as *is*.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

But I will have suggestions.

CARAVAGGIO

Then get Anniabile Carracci.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

I don't want Carracci. It is you I want.

(then)

Why do you dislike his work? Do you question his faith?

CARAVAGGIO

No. I question his taste.

Alof bursts out in laughter. There's a moment of genuine affection between the two men.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Return to the festivities. You are
the guest of honor.

CARAVAGGIO
So I am.

27

INT. DINING HALL - LATER

27

Caravaggio puts his arms around a KNIGHT sitting beside him
and both are LAUGHING, then Caravaggio jumps up on the table
and raises his cup.

CARAVAGGIO
To the great Knights of Malta!

The Knights respond and CHEER.

KNIGHTS
Death to the heathens!

The Knights now BANG on the table with their plates and pans
making a PULSATING SEXUAL SOUND. Some Knights are joining in
but others seem offended.

Caravaggio then leads some of the Knights on the table in a
dance where they are swinging their hips, SHOUTING and
swaying. Caravaggio slips and falls to his chair LAUGHING.

Stefano emerges from the other side of the table.

CARAVAGGIO
Stefano!

STEFANO
What do you think of my brothers in
arms?

CARAVAGGIO
Great men. All of them. Including
you, Stefano.
(then)
How long have you been a Knight?

STEFANO
Ten years. I came from Marseilles
when I was a boy. I studied under
the Grand Master himself. I learned
soldiering from him.

CARAVAGGIO
Your family?

STEFANO
They are my family.

CARAVAGGIO
 You're fortunate then.

Just then, a KNIGHT pulls Caravaggio back to the table.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
 Ha!

Caravaggio dances crazily on the table with other Knights. Some of them are making obscene gestures. Stefano watches Caravaggio and their eyes lock.

Stefano leaves.

CUT TO:

28

EXT. RAMPARTS - CASTLE SANT'ANGELO - CONTINUOUS

28

Still drunk and believing he was following Stefano, Caravaggio finds himself walking along the castle walls. A GUARD is off in the close distance keeping a look out.

A young boy, ROBERTO, a page, appears on the far side of the rampart. He is blond and his hair is lit by the moonlight.

CARAVAGGIO
 Did Stefano come this way?

Roberto shakes his head.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
 You don't speak but you understand, good.

Roberto nods.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
 I'm from Rome. It's crowded and noisy. Right now I'd be with my friends in the Tavern of the Hawk or the Tavern of the Moor. Unless we go to the *Ortaccio*, the Garden of Evil.

A LIGHT falls across them. They look up. The light is from a window above them. Roberto eases back out of the light not wanting to be seen.

STEFANO (O.C.)
 Roberto!

Both Caravaggio and Roberto look down the rampart and see Stefano walking towards them.

Afraid, Roberto quickly turns and runs away in the other direction. Stefano reaches Caravaggio but looks past him.

STEFANO (CONT'D)
I'm looking for a page. He just
broke curfew.

Caravaggio drunkenly stumbles, gathers himself and gives a mock bow to Stefano.

CARAVAGGIO
Many pardons. Whatever you put in
your wine here on Malta is
certainly potent.

STEFANO
We are aware of your life in Rome.
The bars. The brothels. The fights.
The prostitutes.
(then)
I say to you, Michelangelo da
Merisi Caravaggio, tread carefully.

CARAVAGGIO
And I say to you, your eyes shine
magnificently in this light.

Stefano glares sharply at Caravaggio and is about to walk away when Caravaggio catches him by the arm.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
I have no intention of offending.

Without answering, Stefano turns and leaves the rampart. Caravaggio turns and faces the wind coming from out of the darkness and the sea.

LAUGHTER FILLS THE NIGHT AIR AND OVERLAPS INTO...

FLASHBACK TO:

29

EXT. BROTHEL - PIAZZA DEL POPOLO - NIGHT

29

Caravaggio and Ranuccio lock eyes in the early morning twilight.

RANUCCIO
One day I will soak the piazza with
your blood.

CARAVAGGIO
I will soak it with yours.

FLASHBACK END:

30 EXT. RAMPARTS - CASTLE SANT'ANGELO - NIGHT

30

Caravaggio stands alone.

CARAVAGGIO
(to himself)
Ranuccio.

He is drained by the memory.

CUT TO:

31 INT. INNER SANCTUM - DAWN

31

Caravaggio faces Alof, who is dressed in fully body armor holding a staff with a long sword on his belt and Roberto at his side.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Is the light satisfactory?

CARAVAGGIO
Yes. It is. Is that what you intend to wear?

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Yes. Does it meet with your approval?

Caravaggio moves around Alof, inspects the armor and touches Alof who flinches in pain. Caravaggio does not react.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT (CONT'D)
You have no reaction to my pain.

CARAVAGGIO
I take one look at your scars and I know you live with pain. You expect pain. You *enjoy* pain.

Caravaggio steps back and takes in the entire picture: Alof in his costume and Roberto in his.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
Roberto, stand at his side. There. Good.

Roberto stands where he is told as Caravaggio steps behind the easel and quickly sketches, having already mixed the paints.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Suffering is a great teacher.

CARAVAGGIO
Pain teaches nothing. But it does
beget anguish and despair.
(then)
Where is Stefano today?

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
I told him to leave us alone. I
felt he was distracting you.

CARAVAGGIO
Move just a fraction to your left.

Alof does what he is told.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Am I in the light?

CARAVAGGIO
You are the Grand Master of the
Knights of Malta. You are *always* in
the light.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
If that is God's will.

There is another moment of understanding and affection between them. Caravaggio readies himself and begins the portrait.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. VALLETTA - MALTA - NIGHT 32

The moon bathes the fortress in an eerie light.

33 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - MALTA - CONTINUOUS 33

Caravaggio sits in candle light at his table and continues a sketch of a *young woman's face*. As he sketches more we see it is LENA.

SOUNDS OF THE CITY OF ROME: LOUD, DEEP, HUMAN VOICES -- LIFE
AT ITS FULLEST -- OVERLAPS INTO...

FLASHBACK TO:

34 EXT. GHETTO OF ORTACCIO - THE EVIL GARDEN - ROME - DAWN 34

Caravaggio walks beside contained FIRES as they burn beside
small houses with dark smoke swirling up into the dead air.
PROSTITUTES stand on balconies or behind Venetian blinds.

Alone, Caravaggio walks searching not for sex but for
something else entirely. He sees Lena. He stops. He stares.

LENA

What? You've never seen a woman
before?

CARAVAGGIO

Women I've seen, you I haven't.

LENA (REMEMBERS)

Oh, yes, I remember, at the Tavern
of the Hawk. You're the poet.

CARAVAGGIO

Painter.

LENA

Two scudi for the hour. My room is
back there.

CARAVAGGIO

No. *Five scudi* and you come with
me.

LENA

Where?

CARAVAGGIO

To *my* home.

She nods. They make their way through the crowd towards the
border of the *Ortaccio*.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

How long have you been in Rome?

LENA

Three weeks.

CARAVAGGIO
Then I found you just in time
before Rome corrupts you.

LENA
Has it corrupted you?

CARAVAGGIO
It tried and failed.

LENA
You were stronger?

CARAVAGGIO
No, I embraced it.

They continue and disappear in the shadows from the fires.

FLASHBACK END:

35 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - MALTA - DAWN 35
Caravaggio is writing a letter with the rising sun.

CARAVAGGIO
Dear Cardinal Del Monte...

36 EXT. VALLETTA - MALTA - CONTINUOUS 36
The BRIGHTLY BURNING SUN rises over the fortress.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. ROME - SAINT PETER'S BASILICA - DAY 37
Clouds cover the city.

38 INT. PAPAL CHAMBERS - ROME - CONTINUOUS 38
Cardinal Del Monte stands beside the dying Pope Clement VIII
who lies in his bed, his breathing is erratic. A Bishop
stands behind him in attendance.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Do you have any needs, your
Holiness?

POPE CLEMENT VIII
(struggling)
To breathe *without* pain.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Would you like me to hear your
confession and give you absolution?

POPE CLEMENT VIII
No.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Concerning the papal pardon for
Caravaggio, is it possible to
dictate it to the bishop now? So
that we can get your signature?

The Pope's breathing stops. Cardinal Del Monte makes the sign
of the cross.

CUT TO:

39 INT. CARDINAL DEL MONTE'S PRIVATE CHAPEL - DAY 39

The Cardinal is on his knees and grips the rosary around his
neck. He looks up and sees Caravaggio's *Medusa* hanging on the
wall.

His ASSISTANT steps quietly over to him.

BISHOP
Your Eminence, there is something
you should see.

40 INT. CARDINAL DEL MONTE'S VILLA LUDOVISI - CONTINUOUS 40

Cardinal Del Monte sees TWO MEN standing on the street facing
the villa.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
How long have they been there?

BISHOP
Not long. But I do remember seeing
them yesterday. Who are they, your
Eminence?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Bounty hunters.

Cardinal Del Monte pulls down the curtains.

CUT TO:

41 INT. SAINT PETER'S BASILICA - LATER 41

Cardinal Del Monte is with the COLLEGE OF CARDINALS who have gathered to select a new pope.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. SISTINE CHAPEL - ROME - DAY 42

White smoke rises from the chapel signifying that a new pope has been selected.

CUT TO:

43 INT. PAPAL CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS 43

Cardinal Del Monte faces the new Pope. Pope Paul V is vigorous and vital, youthful and energetic.

POPE PAUL V

I cannot and I will not tolerate
these random killings in our city.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

He killed in self-defense.

POPE PAUL V

Our Lord turned the other cheek.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

Your Holiness, our Lord didn't live
in Rome at the turn of the
sixteenth century. We have emerged
from the Dark Ages but the
barbarian hordes still have their
hold on us. Their ways are still in
our blood.

POPE PAUL V

Our faith will change all that.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

Caravaggio asked me to present this
to you as a gift in hopes that you
will have mercy on him. He painted
it before he left Rome.

Cardinal Del Monte nods to his aide to remove the cover from a canvas.

POPE PAUL V

Is he still on Malta?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
 Yes. He writes me short notes. I
 hear that the Grand Master had a
 dinner in his honor.

The painting is the *Weeping Magdalen*. It is clear by his
 reaction that the Pope is moved.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (CONT'D)
 I've never seen so much love and
 pain in one face.

Cardinal del Monte places a PETITION on the table for the
 Pope to see.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (CONT'D)
 And this here is a petition signed
 by nine of your most respected
 cardinals asking you to pardon him.

The Pope glances at the list of names.

POPE PAUL V
 Explain to me your devotion to this
 Caravaggio?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
 Our Holy Mother Church needs such
 advocates for our flock in such
 dire times.

POPE PAUL V
 You are a politician to the core.

Pope Paul V struggles not to be moved.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
 Michelangelo, Titian, Botticelli, Da
 oVinci. He *is* one of them.

The Pope waves his hand for the Cardinal to leave but Del
 Monte *knows* he is making his point.

44

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE PAPAL CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

44

As Cardinal Del Monte leaves the private chambers, he is
 confronted by the Tomassoni brothers OTTAVIO and GIOVAN.

GIOVAN TOMASSONI
 Cardinal Del Monte!

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
 Yes?

OTTAVIO TOMASSONI
I'm Ottavio Tomassoni. Ranuccio's brother.

GIOVAN TOMASSONI
I am Giovan Tomassoni. We would like to inquire if you know the whereabouts of the painter Caravaggio?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
I secure his commissions, gentlemen, I do not schedule his appearances.

(then)
I am sorry for your loss and bless your brother Ranuccio's soul. I will offer prayers for him this Sunday at mass but his demise is a matter for the police, not me.

GIOVAN TOMASSONI
If anyone knows where he is hiding, you do.

OTTAVIO TOMASSONI
You should be aware that we have employed bounty hunters.

Cardinal Del Monte watches with apprehension as they bow and leave.

CUT TO:

45

INT. INNER SANCTUM - MALTA - DAWN

45

Caravaggio paints furiously as Alof poses with discipline.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
I have learned a few things about you. Your father died in the plague.

CARAVAGGIO
Many fathers died in the plague.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
A man without a father must be compelled to search for him all his life. Not long after he died, your mother died as well.

Caravaggio paints, fully absorbed.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
When you look face to face with God
on Judgement Day, what do you think
his likeness will be?

CARAVAGGIO
God wears a hood.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Of course he does. He fears that
his love will blind us. His love
can be a terrible light.

CARAVAGGIO
His love? Where is it?

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
You have seen it, my son.

CARAVAGGIO
I have?

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
It is in your painting *The Call of
Saint Matthew*. When I first saw it
I was in a troubled place in my
faith. God was testing me. But your
painting took me back to the fold.
Just the way our Savior stood in
the shaft of light with his finger
pointing to Matthew. In the silence
you could hear him saying, "I've
come for you."

A HORN blasts through the room from atop the castle walls.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT (CONT'D)
The Turks are in the harbor.

He rushes out as Caravaggio rushes to the window hearing
AGONIZING SCREAMS.

46 EXT. TYRRHENIAN SEA - CONTINUOUS

46

FIRES are floating on the sea toward the shore.

47 INT. INNER SANCTUM - CONTINUOUS

47

Caravaggio gathers his courage and leaves.

48 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 48

Caravaggio ENTERS grabs his sword and rushes out.

49 EXT. FORTRESS - CONTINUOUS 49

Caravaggio sees Alof directing his Knights toward the FIRES floating towards them out of the morning mist.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Lorenzo, form a line! Giacomo, take
your men to the boat! The rest hold
your ground!

Caravaggio realizes that the fires are actually *Knights* nailed on wooden crosses and set afire to be burned alive.

The SCREAMS of agony drown out the SHOUTS from the Knights who race into the waist-deep water to pull the burning Knights into the water.

Caravaggio is unable to move when STEFANO, seeing him, grabs him.

KNIGHT
This way!

They rush quickly to reach the boat and pull it to shore as a burning Knight nearby SCREAMS in pain.

BURNING KNIGHT
Help me, brothers, help me!

Caravaggio and Stefano pull the still breathing Knight to the sand, as Caravaggio covers him with his own shirt getting a minor burn as he does.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT (O.C.)
Stand guard!

Caravaggio turns to see Alof with Stefano at his side now standing on the shoreline.

As the rising sun burns the mist away, SEVERAL TURKISH CORSAIRS appear. They are headed for the beach. It is a TRAP.

Alof turns to the beach to see where his Knights are appointed and sees Caravaggio. Their eyes lock.

At that moment Caravaggio is compelled to prove himself, to embrace the Knights in a way he wasn't expecting.

He races to join Alof as CANNONS on the turrets of the castle walls EXPLODE over his head.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Return to safety!

CARAVAGGIO
I belong here with you!

Alof turns to rally his Knights.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Steady your nerves, my brothers.
The dervishes will attack us...
(looks out)
Now! Here they come!

The TURKS reach the beach and disembark their Corsairs rushing in with the tide, swinging their curved swords and WAVING their flag of the gold ball and crescent moon.

TURKS
(in Turkish)
Kill the infidel!

Just then the beach EXPLODES with CANNON BLASTS from the TURKISH offshore ships.

Caravaggio throws himself to the sand as CANNON BALLS hit the beach EXPLODING on contact right on SEVERAL Knights. They are blown up and cut in two as body parts, sand and sea fly into the air and back down again.

Caravaggio raises his head preparing for the onslaught when another CANNON BALL SHELL hits the dock BLOWING UP SEVERAL MORE Knights. They SCREAM in pain as they lose limbs.

Splinters of wood rain down on Caravaggio, Alof and Stefano. One particular sharp piece cuts into Caravaggio's shoulder.

Caravaggio falls to his knees as his shoulder BLEEDS. Seeing that it is a flesh wound, he quickly wipes the blood away with his bare hand. Just then the Turks swarm the Knights.

It is too late for Caravaggio to run. He finds himself in the thick of it. Turks and Knights fight in hand to hand combat all around him.

A Turk, slashing his sword, comes at Caravaggio who slashes his sword back. Caravaggio's sword rips into the Turk's flesh. He pulls his sword out of the Turk bringing with it flesh, muscle and pouring blood, there is a GURGLING SOUND as the Turk falls to his knees.

Caravaggio quickly joins Aloy and Stefano and together they form a circle to protect one another from the fanatical Turks.

Caravaggio looks to Stefano fighting off several Turks and then to Aloy, on one knee, fending off two Turks at once.

Caravaggio rushes to assist Aloy who pushes himself up, stabbing one of his attackers through the heart. The other attacker comes at him as Aloy loses his balance in the sand, again falling to one knee. The attacking Turk swings his sword at Aloy cutting him slightly above the eye.

Caravaggio jumps in front of the attacking Turk to protect Aloy by jumping on the Turk, KNOCKING him to the ground with his hand on his throat. He throws the Turk on his side then reaches for the Turk's sword and pulls it from him.

He then sticks him in the heart with it. The Turk SCREAMS a death MOAN and dies, as Caravaggio struggles to his feet and turns to see Aloy heroically fighting off several TURKS. Caravaggio again rushes to Aloy's aid.

Just as Caravaggio reaches Aloy, a Turk is on top of Aloy ready to thrust his sword into him. Caravaggio swings his sword with all of his strength, nearly cutting the Turk's head off from behind.

Aloy looks up at Caravaggio with gratitude. He was certain he was about to die. Seeing the headless Turk fall backward onto the sand, Caravaggio is shocked, appalled and confused by the sensations of fear and exhilaration.

Just then, MORE KNIGHTS arrive from the barracks chasing the Turks back into the sea, battling them on the beach as hacking, cutting and thrusting of swords and lances continues all around Caravaggio.

Caravaggio watches as Stefano leads the Knights in pursuit of the Turks who are now throwing themselves into the sea in desperate hopes of reaching their ships.

But the cannons from the castle EXPLODE onto the Turkish Corsairs and they begin to BURN. SCREAMS come from the boats.

The retreating Turks are now caught between their burning ships and the pursuing Knights.

Stefano leads the Knights who are hacking away at the confused and lost Turks who are doing all they can to survive and avoid capture.

Caravaggio, out of breath and holding his wounded shoulder, drops his sword and watches as the Turks are hacked to death like cornered prey.

The burning excitement in his eyes reveals how the battle has ignited a fiery animal instinct in him to kill or be killed.

Aware of the victory, Alof gets down on one knee and bows. He looks up to the sky and makes the sign of the cross.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
To God. To victory.

Alof turns to Caravaggio and nods his head slowly his eyes gleaming with the same passion that Caravaggio just felt.

CUT TO:

50

EXT. BEACH - MALTA - LATER

50

Exhausted and drained, Caravaggio walks through the carnage. The beach is strewn with the DEAD and the WOUNDED from both sides.

The Knights are collecting the BODIES of their dead comrades for burial while other Knights have dug a huge hole in the sand and toss the dead Turks into it.

Alof stands in command as Stefano and more Knights put DOZENS OF TURKISH PRISONERS in chains.

Caravaggio walks away when he sees two banners in the sand. One is the CRESCENT MOON and the other THE CROSS.

WOUNDED TURK (O.C.)
(in Turkish)
Water.

Caravaggio sees a YOUNG WOUNDED TURK moving among the dead. The Turk raises his hand out to Caravaggio who kneels beside him.

The wounded Turk grips Caravaggio's arm and holds onto it tightly. Caravaggio takes a water satchel off his belt, lifts the Young Turk's head and gives him water. The Turk grabs the satchel and drinks deeply.

Just then Stefano appears.

Before Caravaggio can react Stefano thrusts his sword into the dying Turk with blood splashing on Caravaggio.

Caravaggio jumps to his feet.

CARAVAGGIO
He was a boy!

STEFANO
He was a *Turk*.

Stefano turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

51 INT. DINING HALL - CASTEL SANT'ANGELO - NIGHT

51

Alof, with Caravaggio standing at his side, addresses the Knights.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Today our prayers are for those who
sacrificed their lives. To die for
our Faith is our pledge as Knights
of Malta.
(silence)
Today I saw courage from one who
had not taken our oath.
(looks at Caravaggio)
Please kneel.

Caravaggio kneels. Alof takes his sword and presses it firmly
on Caravaggio's shoulder.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT (CONT'D)
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio,
you are hereby today an Honorary
Knight of Malta.

Alof turns to Stefano, who brings over a fine sword made of
gold and hands it to Caravaggio.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT (CONT'D)
Ordine di Obbedienza.

Alof gestures for Caravaggio to stand. Caravaggio stands,
proudly. The Knights stand in unison and CHEER him.

Alof then hands Caravaggio a *palm-sized emblem* of the
Knights.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT (CONT'D)
This sword was a gift from the King
of France. It's pure gold with the
inscription in silver. This was
once mine. And now it's yours.

Caravaggio bows, then displays the sword proudly and lifts it to the crowd. They CHEER once more.

Stefano leans into Caravaggio and whispers in his ear.

STEFANO
The Grand Master *despises* the King
of France.

CUT TO:

52 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - DAWN 52

Caravaggio wakes, looks at his emblem and sword on the table he then sees the soft blue dawn emerging.

CUT TO:

53 INT. INNER SANCTUM - DAWN 53

Caravaggio ENTERS the room. He intensely looks over the unfinished portrait. He picks up his brush. He approaches the portrait gingerly then *paints*.

54 INT. INNER SANCTUM - LATER 54

Alof and Stefano ENTER as Caravaggio, focused and deliberate, continues to paint. Alof goes to the canvas but Caravaggio stops him with a glare.

Alof stops. Caravaggio places his brush down.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Have I been a subject worthy of
your talents?

CARAVAGGIO
Have my talents been worthy of the
subject?

Caravaggio nods then steps back. Alof faces the canvas. His entire being exhales with amazement and approval.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
You've painted my body and captured
my soul. I have no regrets. No
suggestions. You may think of me
vain but this portrait will be
viewed for centuries to come. Holy
men will admire its beauty while
sinners fear its truth.

Caravaggio leaves the room. Stefano stares at the portrait with jealousy.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT (CONT'D)
Leave me to gaze.

Hurt, Stefano leaves the room as Alof absorbs the portrait.

CUT TO:

55 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - NIGHT

55

Exhausted Caravaggio lies on his bed. The door opens. He quickly stands.

Alof appears in the doorway and looks at Caravaggio with a mixture of awe and also longing. The moment between the men suddenly defines their growing relationship.

Alof takes a step towards Caravaggio then stops himself before he goes too far. He turns abruptly and leaves the room. Caravaggio slowly goes to the door and closes it.

He sees the nearly completed sketch of Lena on the table, sits and sketches.

RANUCCIO TOMASSONI (V.O.)
Lena!

THE SOUND OF VOICES, SHOUTS, LAUGHTER AND TAUNTING OVERLAPS INTO...

FLASHBACK TO:

56 EXT. GHETTO OF ORTACCIO - THE EVIL GARDEN - ROME - NIGHT 56

Ranuccio faces Caravaggio and Lena.

RANUCCIO TOMASSONI
You're with *this* cretin?

CARAVAGGIO
I thought I smelled a horse stable.

Caravaggio stiffens as both Ottavio and Giovan, both drunk, step out of the shadows ready to pounce. Ranuccio grins as he and his Brothers edge closer to Caravaggio.

RANUCCIO TOMASSONI
She's *my* Lena.

The brothers pull their swords from their belts.

LENA

No!

CANNON FIRE OVERLAPS INTO THE FOLLOWING SCENE

FLASHBACK END:

57 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - MALTA - DAY 57

CANNON FIRE

Caravaggio sits up abruptly from his sleep as bright afternoon light falls across his bed.

The first thing he sees is the sketch of Lena on the table. It is nearly complete. He has yet to complete her eyes, her lips. He is now aware of the CANNON FIRE.

58 EXT. PRISON YARD - CASTEL SANT'ANGELO - CONTINUOUS 58

Caravaggio is looking over a large yard where TURKISH PRISONERS, captured on the beach, are now SLAVES. The stench is strong.

Caravaggio watches as DOZENS of ARMED KNIGHTS lead DOZENS of TURKISH PRISONERS off into the far side of the yard.

The PRISONERS are then made to get down on their knees. With their hands tied behind their backs, the Knights come up behind them and begin to behead them one at a time.

Caravaggio watches as other PRISONERS gather up the bloody heads and put them in bags.

The PRISONERS then place the BAGS near the THREE CANNONS. Knights open the bags, take the heads out, place them in the cannons and BLAST the heads out to their targets.

The targets are SEVERAL TURKISH CORSAIRS lingering in the harbor. Caravaggio finds a small charcoal rock and sketches the face of a Turk on a slate rock in front of him grimacing in fear about to be beheaded.

Stefano walks over to Caravaggio.

STEFANO

The Grand Master wants you.

Caravaggio gets up and walks away. Stefano sees the sketch and rubs it out with his boot.

CUT TO:

59

INT. PRIVATE QUARTERS - CASTEL SANT'ANGELO - DAY

59

Caravaggio stands facing Alof.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
You are aware of how pleased I am
with the portrait.

CARAVAGGIO
Yes.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
There is something more I want to
discuss with you. Please, sit.

Caravaggio sits.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT (CONT'D)
I want a *second* portrait. I have a
pose I want to suggest.
(off his look)
You are disappointed?

CARAVAGGIO
That was *not* our agreement.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
True. But you will be *paid* for your
work.
(off his look)
It pains me that you want to leave
us.

CARAVAGGIO
I had a life before Malta.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Is not this life here fulfilling?

CARAVAGGIO
In some ways, yes. In many ways,
no.
(then)
Am I a prisoner?

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
You have *never* been a prisoner.

Caravaggio leaves. Alof stands, closes the door then pulls a
dagger from his desk drawer, pulls up his sleeve and cuts
himself.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
God forgive me.

He quickly stops the bleeding. There is a KNOCK at the door.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

Yes.

Stefano ENTERS.

STEFANO

It *is* an excellent painting.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

Yet still you don't trust him?

STEFANO

He is not one of us.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

Then prove to me his soul is not worthy.

Stefano leaves as Alof shudders with his struggle.

CUT TO:

60 INT. INNER SANCTUM - DAY 60

Caravaggio paints Alof with Roberto as they pose and Stefano watches.

61 INT. INNER SANCTUM - LATER 61

Caravaggio labors over the canvas. Roberto falls asleep. He collapses for a moment, then gets up, immediately horrified.

With his gloved hand, Stefano SMACKS Roberto across his face room. Caravaggio picks up Roberto and glares at Stefano.

Stefano puts his hand on his sword. Caravaggio puts a slight dab of paint on his nose.

Alof LAUGHS. Humiliated, Stefano glares at Caravaggio who goes back to his canvas.

Alof is clearly pleased by Caravaggio's humanity and shuns Stefano who is pained by Alof's reaction.

CUT TO:

62 INT. INNER SANCTUM - DAY

62

Caravaggio and Alop are alone in the room as Caravaggio paints.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Is there a man there on your
canvas? Or an emblem of faith?

CARAVAGGIO
I painted a man.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Do you see anything else?

CARAVAGGIO
I don't see angels buzzing over
your shoulder or saints standing on
your nose.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
If you did, there'd be no room on
the canvas for the man or his
faith.

CARAVAGGIO
What about his desires? Is there
room for what he aches for?

Caravaggio touches Alop's cheek as if to kiss him. Alop
doesn't move. Rejected, Caravaggio turns back to the canvas.

CUT TO:

63 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - NIGHT

63

Caravaggio continues his sketch.

CARAVAGGIO (V.O.)
No, stand *there*. In the moonlight.

FLASHBACK TO:

64 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S HOME STUDIO - ROME - NIGHT

64

Caravaggio pulls away the curtain allowing moonlight to wash
over Lena's face.

CARAVAGGIO
What do they call you?

LENA

Lena.

He walks around her, his eyes inquire into her entire being with charm.

She undoes her hair and it falls over her shoulders. She drops her undergarments then gets down on the bed.

CARAVAGGIO

And you are from Grosolie.

LENA

How did you know?

CARAVAGGIO

The brow mostly. And the eyes.

He turns away, leans over his water basin and bathes his face and tries himself.

LENA

Have you been there?

CARAVAGGIO

No. When you live in Rome you don't have to travel to see the world. The world comes to you.

(then)

You left Grosolie to escape the plague.

LENA

Yes! I told my mother I want to go to Rome. She said, "go while you are still young." And she followed me.

He then places his canvas between her and the window.

LENA (CONT'D)

You want a model? But you are paying me too much.

CARAVAGGIO

Just looking at that face, I see my Virgin and you are worth every scudi.

LENA

You're posing me for the Virgin and you have me naked? I can't do that.

CARAVAGGIO

No. Not nude.

(off her look)

You're hungry. I'm sorry I didn't realize.

(she nods)

Take some bread and meat.

She eats hungrily from food on the table.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

I used to eat like that.

He pours her water and hands it to her.

LENA

You came here poor?

CARAVAGGIO

When I first came to Rome I swallowed what dogs wouldn't eat to stay alive.

LENA

How *did* you survive when you came to Rome?

CARAVAGGIO

I painted.

LENA

Why are you looking at me like that?

CARAVAGGIO

I see all *life* in your face.

FLASHBACK END:

65

INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - MALTA - NIGHT

65

The sketch is complete.

CUT TO:

66

INT. INNER SANCTUM - DAY

66

Caravaggio stares closely at the canvas, at Alof, then steps back.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
 I've been where you tread, my son.
 I was once a slave to the flesh. I
 see the agony I once lived now
 alive in your eyes.

Alof turns to the canvas.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
 Splendid.

Caravaggio moves past him to leave, Alof takes his hand.

CARAVAGGIO
 Yes?

Both men take in the moment. Caravaggio leans in.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
 There is nothing to fear between
 you and I. What we feel, what we
 do.

Caravaggio kisses Alof, then steps back. Alof allowed the
 kiss but then, just as abruptly, he also steps back. The
 tension between the two men is electrifying.

Caravaggio realizes he needs to leave. Alof moves to follow
 him and stops himself.

CUT TO:

67

INT. THE GRAND MASTER'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - NIGHT

67

Alof is kneeling before a small statue of Saint Peter when
 Stefano ENTERS with a LETTER from Caravaggio.

Alof makes the sign of the cross, stands and looks to
 Stefano.

STEFANO
 It's addressed to Cardinal Del
 Monte in Rome. This time I opened
 and read it.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
 I did not give you the authority to
 read his mail.

STEFANO
 You told me to prove my concerns.
 (off his silence)
 (MORE)

STEFANO (CONT'D)

He asks if there has been any progress in his *pardon* from the Pope.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT

A pardon? Send the letter ahead then look into the meaning of his request.

Alof sees the sketch of Lena with the letter.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

What is that?

STEFANO

A sketch with the letter.

Alof looks.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

Send it ahead as he had it.

STEFANO

He's lied to us.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

Be careful Stefano, I am fond of him.

Stefano leaves.

CUT TO:

68 EXT. COURTYARD - VALLETTA - DAY

68

Caravaggio follows Stefano through the courtyard which leads to a chapel.

69 INT. THE CHAPEL OF SAINT JOHN - DAY

69

Stefano leads Caravaggio to a large, blank wall. There is plenty of light from the stained glass windows.

CARAVAGGIO

Why are we here?

STEFANO

The Grand Master wants *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist* on this wall. And when you are done with that he wants a *Cupid* in his private chambers.

CARAVAGGIO
Why is my door locked at night?

STEFANO
For your protection. We knights
have many enemies.

Stefano leaves as Caravaggio looks at the wall, livid.

CUT TO:

70 INT. THE CHAPEL OF SAINT JOHN - DAY

70

Caravaggio works quickly. The images of Saint John's beheading are already clear. The painting is stark and bleak. He stops, looks at it. It expresses his very feelings.

He paints a trail of blood flowing from Saint John's neck to the bottom of the canvas *spelling out his name in blood*.

Caravaggio steps back shuddering from a memory.

FLASHBACK TO:

71 INT. BROTHEL - PIAZZA DEL POPOLO - ROME - NIGHT

71

Caravaggio, Mancini and Toppa share a satchel of wine as they stand facing the dark stretch of the piazza waiting.

MANCINI
There!

They see Ranuccio and his two Brothers appear at the far end walking towards them.

The two groups of men walk towards one another reading their swords. When they are only a few feet away they stop.

RANUCCIO
You owe me scudi.

CARAVAGGIO
Here, take it.

Caravaggio pulls scudi from his pockets and it drops to the ground at this feet.

With his sword in hand, Ranuccio rushes at Caravaggio but stumbles off balance as Caravaggio raises his sword forward to protect himself. The steel cuts deeply into Ranuccio's belly.

Caravaggio pulls out his sword. Ranuccio glares at Caravaggio, stunned, he holds his open wound, turns and staggers away.

Caravaggio is immobile as he looks at the *blood* on his sword.

FLASHBACK END:

72 INT. THE CHAPEL OF SAINT JOHN - MALTA - DAY 72
Caravaggio paints frantically.

73 INT. THE CHAPEL OF SAINT JOHN - LATER 73
Caravaggio stands facing the completed painting with anxiety and despair.

74 EXT. THE CHAPEL OF SAINT JOHN - DUSK 74
Caravaggio steps out of the chapel towards the beach.

75 EXT. BEACH - VALETTA - CONTINUOUS 75
Caravaggio walks along the beach seeing Stefano walking from the fortress towards him with two GUARDS.
Stefano gestures to the Knights to continue keeping guard and to walk on. Caravaggio turns to walk in the opposite direction but Stefano follows him.
Realizing that he has no choice but to confront Stefano on the empty beach, he stops and turns to him.

STEFANO
Am I interrupting your praying?

CARAVAGGIO
I wasn't praying.

STEFANO
Then why out here?

CARAVAGGIO
Looking for Sicily which never seemed so alluring. I never knew what real loneliness was until I came to this island.

STEFANO
But there is God everywhere?

CARAVAGGIO
I wasn't talking about that kind of
loneliness.

76 INT. THE GRAND MASTER'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS 76

Alof stands at the window seeing Stefano and Caravaggio on
the beach below.

77 EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS 77

Caravaggio and Stefano walk on.

STEFANO
The moonlight has always fascinated
me.

CARAVAGGIO
The moon has no light of its own.

STEFANO
That's heresy.

CARAVAGGIO
It's science.

STEFANO
When I was in Rome with the Grand
Master I saw some of your work. You
paint men more beautifully than I
have ever seen.

CARAVAGGIO
I thought art didn't interest you?

STEFANO
I wasn't talking about art.

CARAVAGGIO
I haven't touched another human
being in months.

STEFANO
You talk of months? I talk of
years.

CARAVAGGIO
You said the knights have enemies
even here at Valletta. What am I to
make of you?

STEFANO
You don't trust me.

Caravaggio grabs Stefano and kisses him on the mouth. Stefano pulls away, then walks off.

CARAVAGGIO
Stefano?

STEFANO
It is settled now.

CARAVAGGIO
What is settled?

Caravaggio watches Stefano disappear down the beach then looks up at Alof's window.

78 INT. THE GRAND MASTER'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS 78
Alof steps away from the window in anger.

CUT TO:

79 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - NIGHT 79
Caravaggio ENTERS his room, closes the door then quickly writes another LETTER to Cardinal Del Monte.

CUT TO:

80 INT. THE GRAND MASTER'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - DAY 80
Caravaggio faces Alof who gestures to the wall.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
I want my Cupid there.

To Caravaggio's relief, Alof turns and leaves.

81 INT. THE GRAND MASTER'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - LATER 81
Caravaggio paints quickly as Stefano watches him.

CUT TO:

82 INT. THE GRAND MASTER'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - NIGHT 82

Caravaggio sits, exhausted. His *Cupid* is a sickly and vile old man. Caravaggio is pleased and yet at the same time, apprehensive.

CUT TO:

83 INT. INNER SANCTUM - NIGHT 83

Alof and Stefano ENTER the empty room together. Alof gazes on the Cupid.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
The devil has come to Valletta.

84 INT. CARAVAGGIO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 84

Caravaggio hears the sound of BOOTS coming down the hallway. The boots stop at his door.

He gets up and grabs his sword but the door flies open and SEVERAL MASKED KNIGHTS quickly rush in, overwhelm him and drag him out.

CUT TO:

85 INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT 85

With his face streaked with blood, Caravaggio is chained to the wall facing Alof and Stefano flanked by FOUR KNIGHTS wearing hoods.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
On this earth there is no greater
evil than duplicity

CARAVAGGIO
I don't have the courage for
duplicity!

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
It pains me to see you this way but
I've placed my own dear brother on
the rack. His spine is broken but
he is no longer a heretic. Now, he
is a believer.

CARAVAGGIO
And a cripple.

Stefano slaps Caravaggio.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Don't you see the value of your
soul?

STEFANO
Answer him!

CARAVAGGIO
I grew up on the streets where I
learned that for refuge and
shelter, there is only the flesh!
And if I've ever known God, it is
when I've held someone.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio.
You have painted my body and now I
will save *your* soul.

CARAVAGGIO
How will you save my soul?

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Through pain.
(then)
Put him on the rack.

The Four Knights and Stefano unlock his chains and place him
on the rack as he desperately struggles.

CARAVAGGIO
You have no right to judge me!

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
I have the right given to me by the
Inquisition. I have the right to
judge the heretic.

(then)
Seeing your paintings I was sure
you carried God's love. But I've
learned that you have no belief, no
faith. And without faith you are an
incomplete man.

(then)
You will scream out for your God
and rise above your suffering.

CARAVAGGIO
No!

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
 (to Stefano)
 Pull.

Stefano nods to the Two Knights who pull on the rack.
 Caravaggio SCREAMS. Overwhelmed by Caravaggio's suffering,
 Alof looks away.

Caravaggio remembers...

FLASHBACK TO:

86

INT. BASILICA OF SAINT AUGUSTINE CHAPEL - ROME - DAY

86

Caravaggio is painting the *Death of the Virgin*, an altarpiece
 having staged PROSTITUTES, HOMELESS, surrounding Lena who
 lies on a bed with her arms outstretched.

Cardinal Del Monte ENTERS. Caravaggio sees him and puts down
 his paints.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
 It's so real I find it painful.
 (then)
 But you pose this whore to be the
 Blessed Mother?

CARAVAGGIO
 Her name is Lena.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
 But as the virgin? The mother of
 God?

CARAVAGGIO
 She's a woman.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
 With dirty feet. She looks like a
 corpse.

CARAVAGGIO
 She's dead.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
 And these others? You take beggars
 off the street and paint them
 exactly as they are.

LENA
 He paints their torment.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Who is this *woman*? Why is she
talking to me?

CARAVAGGIO
(proudly)
She is Lena from Grosolie.

Frustrated, Cardinal Del Monte walks away and Caravaggio
rushes after him.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
I don't put halos around them like
Carracci. I paint people. Just as
God made them.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Yes, God made disease and death but
nobody needs to be reminded. When I
first found you, you *lived* on
nothing. You *had* nothing. Michele,
listen to me. We are so very close
to what you want. In public
everyone denies your brilliance but
behind closed doors they worship
your canvases. Play along just a
little and you will own your own
villa someday. I have secured the
commission for you to complete a
Weeping Magdalene. You wanted that
commission and I got it for you.

CARAVAGGIO
Yes. I wanted that commission. I'll
use Lena as my Magdalene.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Impossible!

Cardinal Del Monte leaves. Caravaggio walks back to his
canvas finding Lean looking at it.

LENA
It *is* so painful. You can see how
she suffered.

CARAVAGGIO
Yes, she suffered.

FLASHBACK END:

87 INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - MALTA - DAY

87

Caravaggio is still conscious as Alof leans in to him.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Are you the devil himself? Who are
you?

Caravaggio SPITS blood.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT (CONT'D)
Was my love not dear to you?
(then)
God's love can be a terrible light.
Be all your sins remembered.

Alof nods to one of the Hooded Knights.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Pull.

Caravaggio SCREAMS.

FADE TO:

88 INT. CORRIDOR - PRISON - DAY

88

Caravaggio is unconscious, breathing with difficulty. Pained,
Alof leaves the room. Stefano stays.

89 INT. INNER SANCTUM - NIGHT

89

Alof, sits at his table holding another LETTER. Stefano
ENTERS.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Is he dead?

STEFANO
No.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
He killed a man. Ranuccio
Tomassoni.

STEFANO
He must die.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
If he survives the night, place him
in the bell. Leave!

Stefano quickly leaves as Aloy struggles.

90 INT. CORRIDOR - PRISON - CONTINUOUS 90

Barely alive, Caravaggio lies on the rack now drifting in and out of consciousness. Stefano ENTERS with Two Knights. Once sure that he is alive, they slowly unstrap Caravaggio from the rack.

91 EXT. CASTEL SANT'ANGELO - CONTINUOUS 91

Stefano leads the Two Knights who drag a nearly dead Caravaggio along the castle wall.

92 EXT. BELL-SHAPED HOLE/CELL - CONTINUOUS 92

Stefano steps back as the Knights pause over an eleven-foot bell shaped narrow hole in the castle's rock. They place Caravaggio down and allow him to fall into it.

93 INT. BELL-SHAPED HOLE/CELL - CONTINUOUS 93

Caravaggio hits the bottom of the cell and MOANS in agony, closing his eyes.

Caravaggio looks up at the BLUE LIGHT from the moon.

VOICES OVERLAPS INTO FOLLOWING SCENE

FLASHBACK TO:

94 EXT. PIAZZA DEL POPOLO - ROME - NIGHT 94

Caravaggio stands over Ranuccio who lies on his back, bleeding and MOANING as VOICES rush to him from the far end of the piazza.

He looks up at A HALF A DOZEN CARABINIERI racing toward him with swords drawn and a single torch lighting their way.

CARAVAGGIO (nonplused)
Carabinieri.

MANCINI
Michele...

Mancini staggers up to Caravaggio, dazed, bleeding from the head. His appearance shakes Caravaggio from his bafflement.

Right behind Mancini, Caravaggio sees Lena tending to Toppa.

CARAVAGGIO
Take care of him!

LENA
Yes!
(then)
Where do I find you?

Caravaggio rushes to Lena helping her lift Toppa up. With both Toppa and Mancini wrapped around Lena, Caravaggio kisses her strongly on her mouth.

CARAVAGGIO
I killed Ranuccio.

LENA
God, save you.

CARAVAGGIO
Meet me at the Cardinal's villa in
Porta Pinciana.

LENA
Yes.

With Toppa and Mancini at her side, she disappears down a cobblestone street into the darkness.

Caravaggio HEARS Ottavio and a bloodied Giovan, both near exhaustion and in pain, carrying a motionless Ranuccio to his feet as rush off into a nearby alley, away from the police.

Caravaggio then turns watching as both men quickly make their way down the piazza in the opposite direction of the police. He follows them into the darkness.

95 EXT. STREETS OF ROME - CONTINUOUS 95

Caravaggio races through the narrow streets with the voices of the Carabinieri behind him.

96 EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS 96

Caravaggio turns down an alley.

97 EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS 97

They race through the courtyard and turn down a second alley.

98 EXT. SECOND ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

98

He ducks into the shadows out of breath listening to the VOICES. The VOICES grow faint. Caravaggio steps out of the shadows out of breath.

He sees a light at the end of a long alley. He walks to it.

99 EXT. BATTISTA BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

99

Caravaggio walks up to the sign on the narrow street which reads BARBER SHOP. The barber shop, the doctor's office of the time, has its curtains drawn. A tiny light glows from the back room. Caravaggio looks around then opens the door.

CUT TO:

100 INT. BATTISTA BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

100

The barber, LOUIS BATTISTA, 40s, a short, stocky man is wearing a white apron and is covered in dried blood as he works on Caravaggio who sits in the barber's chair.

Battista washes Caravaggio's wound, draining his sponge in a large bucket.

BATTISTA

Your wounds aren't that bad.

He pays Battista *scudi*.

CARAVAGGIO

I was never here.

BATTISTA

You were never here. Just your blood.

Battista dabs the wound again as Caravaggio MOANS in pain. He hands Caravaggio an open bottle of wine.

Caravaggio leans back and takes a big slug of the wine. As he does, Battista takes a dirty bucket filled with blood and flesh, walks to the back door, opens it and dumps it out.

CUT TO:

101 EXT. BATTISTA BARBER SHOP - LATER IN THE NIGHT

101

Caravaggio stands in the shadows outside the shop watching Ottavio and Giovan carry a slumping Ranuccio inside.

Battista watches as they put Ranuccio, pale and silent, in a chair. He walks over to Ranuccio and stands over him. He looks.

BATTISTA
This one's dead.

Ottavio and Giovan look to him in disbelief.

Ottavio and Giovan then lift Ranuccio out of the chair. Ottavio manages to hand Battista *scudi*.

Battista takes the money.

BATTISTA (CONT'D)
He was never here. Just his blood.

He opens the door and holds it open for them as they SNEAK Ranuccio's dead body out.

Caravaggio continues to watch them through the window as they disappear into the shadows. Battista comes to the door and *splashes* the blood from his bucket down into the sewer. Caravaggio steps away to avoid getting wet then rushes into the darkness.

FLASHBACK END:

102 INT. BELL-SHAPED HOLE/CELL - MALTA - DAY 102

WATER SPLASHES into the cell drenching Caravaggio. He attempts to crawl up the rock but it is impossible.

He can only look into the sky where the sun follows a shaft of light down across his face. He collapses.

He lies on the hard rock in a ball remembering...

FLASHBACK TO:

103 EXT. CARDINAL DEL MONTE'S VILLA LUDOVISI - ROME - NIGHT 103

Caravaggio cautiously makes his way to the side entrance of the villa in the Porta Pinciana.

104 INT. CARDINAL DEL MONTE'S VILLA LUDOVISI - CONTINUOUS 104

Caravaggio ENTERS seeing Cardinal Del Monte, wearing an apron, busy with his alchemical experiment in a room filled with bottles of colored water, chemicals and tubes -- a primitive lab.

He HEARS something and turns. Caravaggio closes the door.

CARAVAGGIO
Ranuccio Tomassoni is dead. I
killed him.

Saying nothing, Cardinal Del Monte quickly looks over his minor wounds and then leaves the room.

Caravaggio sees Lena standing outside looking in. He opens the door. She rushes to his side.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
The others?

LENA
I took them to the Tavern of Hawk.
Maria is caring for them.

She holds him. Cardinal Del Monte re-enters without his apron.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
You need to leave Rome now.

CARAVAGGIO
Why?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Last month the Vatican issued a
banda capitale for all murderers
without exception. Anyone charged
with murder faces arrest and
execution where they are found. The
aggrieved parties and any bounty
hunters they employ can carry out
the warrant.
(to Caravaggio)
You killed the son of a war hero.
Your life is worth nothing as we
speak.

CARAVAGGIO
Malta.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
I will send a messenger now. Pedro!

The Bishop quickly ENTERS as Cardinal Del Monte writes a note.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (CONT'D)
I will write the Grand Master that
you have accepted his commission.
(MORE)

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (CONT'D)

I can arrange an official Vatican vessel to take you there.

He hands the Bishop the note.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (CONT'D)

(to Bishop)

Rush to the dock. This note must get to the boat to catch the next high tide.

The Bishop rushes off.

CARAVAGGIO

How long will you need to secure a pardon from the Vatican?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

It will take some time, Michele. Perhaps a year, perhaps two. Perhaps *more*.

CARAVAGGIO

I have faith in you.

Cardinal Del Monte leaves the room. Caravaggio and Lena face one another.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

I refuse to give into fear.

She embraces him as he keeps his nerves steady.

CUT TO:

105

INT. CARDINAL DEL MONTE'S VILLA LUDOVISI - NIGHT

105

Caravaggio and Lena pack a small bag of Caravaggio's clothing, some of his paint brushes, paints and tightly wound canvases.

Caravaggio takes Lena's face in his hands touching it gently with his finger tips.

In the dim light he looks seeing her, the surroundings, the light as they all blended together -- a moment, an impression, in *how* he creates and *what* he creates.

106

EXT. CARDINAL DEL MONTE'S VILLA LUDOVISI - CONTINUOUS

106

Cardinal Del Monte waits for Caravaggio and Lena next to a carriage. They appear. A VALET places Caravaggio's things on the carriage and then disappears.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

There is wine to warm you on your travels.

(then)

Pope Clement is dying. And perhaps, in God's infinite wisdom, I may be given the reigns of our Holy Mother Church.

Caravaggio holds Lena gently and kisses her.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (CONT'D)

Be careful, be wise, be tolerant and you will be safe.

CARAVAGGIO

When was I ever any of those things?

He looks to Lena.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

Don't let Rome devour you.

LENA

Come back.

CARAVAGGIO

I will. Have no fear.

He ENTERS the carriage. He leans out the window.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

I am Michelangelo de Merisi Da Caravaggio!

(to the driver)

Go!

INT. CARRIAGE - ROME

Caravaggio follows back, stares ahead, overwhelmed, fearing everything.

FLASHBACK END:

- 107 EXT. VALLETTA - MALTA - NIGHT 107
A fog covers the castle.
- 108 INT. BELL-SHAPED HOLE/CELL - CONTINUOUS 108
A THICK ROPE flies down into the cell. It dangles there next to the unconscious Caravaggio.
A small stone comes flying down into the cell. It hits Caravaggio's shoulder. He stirs.
Another stone flies down into the cell and bounces off the wall.
Caravaggio comes to, looks around. He sees the rope. He is startled by it. He aches but stands and looks up but he can't see anything or anyone only the bright light from the moon.
He grabs hold of the rope and puts his feet up against the walls.
He slowly, gingerly and with much agony, pulls and pushes himself up and out of the cell.
- 109 EXT. BELL-SHAPED HOLE/CELL - CONTINUOUS 109
Caravaggio reaches the top of the cell and is out of it. He struggles to his feet.
He sees that the rope is attached to the chain link in the castle rock. He is weak and disoriented and hopes it's not a trap.
Just then a FIGURE emerges from the shadows, but he can't make out WHO it is. All he can see is that they are small and slight.
The FIGURE walks away from the cell. Caravaggio, knows that he must risk it. He follows, striving to make his way through the shadows.
- 110 EXT. CASTLE WALL - CASTEL SANT'ANGELO - CONTINUOUS 110
Caravaggio is nearly crawling along, following the Figure as it moves ahead of him.

111 EXT. DOCK - CONTINUOUS

111

Caravaggio is now on the dock. He stops. He watches as the Figure walks into the moonlight toward a FISHING BOAT. The moonlight falls across his pale face. It is Roberto!

Roberto reaches the boat and hands MONEY to one of the THREE LOCAL FISHERMEN who are in the boat and preparing to leave.

Caravaggio watches as Roberto walks past him, scared of him, yes, but putting his life in jeopardy for the man who once protected him.

He disappears back toward the castle as Caravaggio turns to the fishing boat. The Fishermen are WAVING to him to follow. He pushes his body to make it to the boat.

Caravaggio falls into the boat and rights himself, amazed at what is happening to him. The Fishermen quickly push off from the dock and as they do, they raise the sail. Moonlight falls across their faces. They look like sea-worn but sublime angels to Caravaggio.

One of them offers him BREAD and WATER, he eats and drinks, never taking his eyes of the worn faces in this boat.

112 EXT. VALLETTA - DAWN

112

The sunlight rises up and over the castle walls.

STEFANO (V.O.)
Caravaggio has escaped.

113 INT. THE GRAND MASTER'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

113

Stefano faces Alof at his breakfast table. SLAVES and Roberto stand nearby.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
How?

STEFANO
He had an accomplice.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
(to the slaves)
Out!

The Slaves and Roberto leave. Alof turns to his map on the wall and gestures to it as he speaks.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT (CONT'D)
 If he survives the journey the only
 place he could sail would be
 Sicily.

Alof quickly finds official papers and writes a warrant, then
 signs and stamps it with the official seal.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT (CONT'D)
 Ready provisions, horses and six
 men. We sail to Pozzallo with the
 next tide. No one will defy a
 warrant from the Inquisition.

STEFANO
 Yes, sire.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
 I also want you to dispatch
 messengers immediately. Have them
 go up the coast all the way to
 Catania with copies of this
 warrant. This warrant supersedes
 all pardons other than one from the
 pontiff himself.

STEFANO
 If he is not in Pozzalla or
 Syracuse or Catania?

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
 Then we follow him to Rome! I want
 him back at Valletta. His arrogance
 defiles our vows. His treachery is
 blasphemy. I want him in chains!

CUT TO:

114 EXT. BOAT - TYRRHENIAN SEA - DAY

114

Caravaggio, lying face up in the boat, waked as the sun to
 fall across his face.

CUT TO:

115 EXT. BEACH OUTSIDE OF SYRACUSE - DAY

115

The boat carrying Caravaggio sits on the beach. Caravaggio is
 weak as the Fishermen help him to stand. He places a foot on
 the beach.

A Fisherman hands him a wooded stick that he can use to help him walk.

CARAVAGGIO
Where are we?

FISHERMAN
Syracuse.

CARAVAGGIO
Sicily. Thank you.

Caravaggio makes his way from the dock.

CUT TO:

116 INT. POPE PAUL V'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - ROME - DAY 116

Cardinal Del Monte and the Pope are enjoying a lunch as the Pope signs official papers.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
Caravaggio is no longer on Malta.
(then)
There seems to have been a
misunderstanding with the Grand
Master.

POPE PAUL V
A misunderstanding?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
I am short on details. However,
what I have learned from a dear
friend of mine who knows everything
that occurs in Sicily, is that
Caravaggio is now in Syracuse. The
local officials recognized him. He
is now their prize and they offered
him a very large commission to
paint.
(then)
I feel he will be safe there for
now, Your Holiness.

POPE PAUL V
Caravaggio is not my concern.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
But *this* should be.

Cardinal Del Monte places official looking bank records in front of the Pope.

POPE PAUL V

What are these?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

These? Oh, these are those annoying *unpaid bank notes* for the loan your successor foolishly mismanaged. Pope Clement VIII was a pious man but not educated to the ways of banking. Now, sadly to say, the loans are due. In *full*.

POPE PAUL V

But that would be difficult. The Vatican can't pay all this now.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

Well, your Holiness, I believe I may be of some service.

POPE PAUL V

Yes?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

I have a friend, not as close a friend as you, or as close as the Almighty, but this friend has the authority to ease the Vatican's interest payments. I will make it an *interest* of mine and see that he does.

Cardinal Del Monte sees a canvas on the wall.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (CONT'D)

His *Weeping Magdalene*.

(to the Pope)

You keep it close.

POPE PAUL V

It moves me.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

A man with a gentle soul painted it. He is also a sinner, blasphemer, a wretched soul, yes, but not a murderer.

POPE PAUL V

I will consider Caravaggio's predicament.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

Thank you. But consider it as quickly as possible, your Holiness. The Grand Master is not someone to tolerate a misunderstanding for very long.

POPE PAUL V

And those? Can you speak to your friend?

He gestures to the bank papers.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

Of course. And I will make him listen.

CUT TO:

117

INT. THE CHAPEL OF SAINT JOHN - MALTA - DAY

117

Beneath *The Beheading of Saint John*, Alof stands at the head of a table with Stefano seated to his right and several KNIGHTS in attendance.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

With the authority invested in me as Grand Master I call this trial to order to denounce the heathen Michelangelo de Merisi da Caravaggio and cast him out of our Holy Order of Knights. Does anyone here and present speak for him?

(silence)

I will. His duplicity mocks us.

(then)

"Sin entered the world through one man and death through that sin."

They all bow.

CUT TO:

118

INT. VILLA - SYRACUSE - DAY

118

Caravaggio, now dressed in finer clothing, completes a LETTER to Cardinal Del Monte. A VALET appears and Caravaggio hands him the letter.

CARAVAGGIO

Post this to Rome.

The Valet takes the letter and leaves. Caravaggio returns to his sketch.

CUT TO:

119 EXT. KNIGHT OF MALTA SLOOP - STRAIT OF SICILY - DAY 119
Alof and Stefano stand at the bow looking towards Sicily.

CUT TO:

120 INT. VILLA - SYRACUSE - DAY 120
Caravaggio is busy working on a canvas. The Valet ENTERS.

VALET
They are here.

CARAVAGGIO
Tell me who they are.

VALET
All the influential men in Syracuse
and their daughters.

121 EXT. VILLA - CONTINUOUS 121
Caravaggio finds a DOZEN YOUNG WOMEN standing in line. Beyond the Women are their wealthy FATHERS vying for his attention along a DOZEN MEN to be cast as grave diggers and priests.

Caravaggio steps up to MARGARITA, who looks like Lena.

CARAVAGGIO
Close your eyes, please.
(then)
Pulzone would pay a ransom for
these eye lids...
(touches her cheeks)
And your complexion... evokes... so
much.

She opens her eyes, embarrassed by his attention.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
I choose you.

He points his fingers at the faces and bodies that appeal to him for the painting.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
 You... and you... you... and you.
 Follow me.

CUT TO:

122 INT. CARRACCI'S LOFT - ROME - DAY

122

Lena ENTERS the loft as Carracci leads her to a space facing a canvas.

CARRACCI
 You were difficult to find. I spent
 entire *nights* in the Ghetto.

She looks around in awe.

LENA
 The great Carracci. And I am in his
 studio.
 (sharply)
 I spend every night in the ghetto.

She sees that he is painting an angel.

LENA (CONT'D)
 I've always loved your angels.

CARRACCI
 My angels? Why do you love my
 angels?

LENA
 Because they *look* like angels.

CARRACCI
 Have you ever seen an angel?

LENA
 No, but if I did, I am sure they
 would look like yours. Just to see
 one is such a *comfort*.

CARRACCI
 How do you feel about Caravaggio's
 work?

LENA
 What do I feel? What I am supposed
 to feel.

She sighs then gets undressed.

CARRACCI
What are you doing?

LENA
Excuse me?

CARRACCI
I want you to pose for me.

LENA
Oh.
(then)
Do you know when he returns from
Malta?

She stops undressing.

CARRACCI
I saw his *Death of the Virgin*.
(off her look)
What does he tell you when you pose
for him?

LENA
He tells me nothing.

CARRACCI
Nothing?

LENA
Do you want me to pose or talk?

CARRACCI
This was not a very good idea.

LENA
There are other *things* we can do.
For the right price.

CARRACCI
There is nothing *else* we can do.

LENA
He once said he saw all life in my
face.

An instant of understanding flashes across his face. He gets
his wallet and pays her more than she expected.

CARRACCI
Here. And thank you.

LENA

This much? But I haven't done anything?

CARRACCI

But you have.

LENA

If I did it was not on purpose.
(then)
You artists are very difficult men.

CARRACCI

But we need you, our muse.

LENA

Oh, yes, you need us.
(then)
If you see him, tell Caravaggio I cannot wait much longer.

He shows her to the door and she leaves.

CUT TO:

123 EXT. VILLA - SYRACUSE - DAY

123

Caravaggio paints quickly, his eyes hardly ever leaving Margarita as she lies on her back on the ground. All the models are posed shirtless, with shovels and the men acting as priests wearing the vestments.

CUT TO:

124 INT. VILLA - NIGHT

124

Caravaggio has just completed *another* letter and hands it to the SERVANT along with a rolled up canvas. The Servant leaves.

CUT TO:

125 EXT. DOCK - POZZALLO - SICILY - DAY

125

Alof, Stefano and the Knights have docked.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

We ride!

They ride toward the city.

CUT TO:

126 INT. CARDINAL DEL MONTE'S VILLA LUDOVISI - ROME - DAY 126

Cardinal Del Monte reads Caravaggio's letter, then closes it.
He writes a reply.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
(writes)
Come north, dear boy. Come north.

CUT TO:

127 INT. VILLA - SYRACUSE - DAY 127

Caravaggio faces his painting with the CITY AUTHORITIES, some
of the male models and Margarita. He then removes the cover.

There is a hushed SILENCE in the room.

MARGARITA
All they say about you is true,
Michele.

Margarita, thrilled by what she sees.

CARAVAGGIO
You are an excellent Saint Lucy.
You remind me of Lena.

MARGARITA
That is wonderful. I hear so much
about her.

The Valet ENTERS.

VALET
This just arrived by messenger.

The Valet rushes up to Caravaggio handing him a written
message and Caravaggio reads it immediately, looking
apprehensive.

CARAVAGGIO
Are the knights here?

VALET
There is word they are just leaving
Pozzallo and are on their way up
the coast.

Caravaggio goes ashen. The Valet leaves. Caravaggio turns to Margarita then the canvas.

CARAVAGGIO
I will complete it now. I must
leave Syracuse.

MARGARITA
Will you be safe?

CARAVAGGIO
Without a pardon from the pontiff I
will never be safe.

CUT TO:

128 EXT. VILLA - DUSK

128

Caravaggio is dressed like a swordsman with a rapier in his belt and holding a small bag of fresh clothing at his side. He walks along the garden of the villa allowing himself some fresh air.

He stops and looks around, listening to sounds, scanning the surrounding hills for any visible signs of his enemies. Caravaggio takes a deep breath, gathers his courage and walks out of the safe haven of the villa and walks into the approaching darkness.

CUT TO:

129 EXT. THE CITY OF MESSINA - DAY

129

The SUN RISES over the small, compact city which is hemmed in by mountains.

130 EXT. STREETS - MESSINA - CONTINUOUS

130

Caravaggio walks through the wide streets, less congested than Syracuse and less populated with the poor.

There are fewer Spanish soldiers than in Syracuse and Caravaggio feels less threatened. He walks with a stride.

131 EXT. LAZZARI VILLA - DAY

131

Caravaggio stands before the gate of the villa, this time he looks more than presentable. A SERVANT opens the gate for him.

132 INT. LAZZARI VILLA - CONTINUOUS

132

Caravaggio faces GIOVANNI LAZZARI, a man of distinction and wealth. Lazzari is reading Caravaggio's paper of Safe Passage.

LAZZARI

These are papers of Safe Passage
from the Senate in Syracuse.

CARAVAGGIO

Yes. I was told to present them to
you when I reached Messina.

LAZZARI

(smiles)

Our city would be honored to have
the esteemed Caravaggio to stay in
Messina as long as he wishes.

(warmly)

You will be safe here.

Caravaggio is relieved.

CUT TO:

133 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MESSINA - DAY

133

The DEAD BODY of a man who looks like Caravaggio lies on a slab. Caravaggio stand over the body with SEVERAL dumbfounded HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS at his side.

CARAVAGGIO

How old is this corpse?

The Attendants exchange looks.

FIRST ATTENDANT

Two days.

Caravaggio nods. He then checks to make sure the door is securely locked and pulls down the blinds allowing just enough light in. He turns to the attendants.

CARAVAGGIO

You, stand there.

(to second Attendant)

And you, stand there.

SECOND ATTENDANT

Whatever you say, master.

Caravaggio quickly sketches.

CUT TO:

134 INT. LAZZARI VILLA - NIGHT

134

Caravaggio, looking successful and relaxed, watches as Lazzari has a reception of POWERFUL MEN of Messina enjoying *The Resurrection of Lazarus*.

Lazzari takes Caravaggio aside.

LAZZARI

The knights are on their way here.
You have two days before they
arrive.

Caravaggio nods. Lazzari hands him a LETTER OF SAFE PASSAGE.

LAZZARI (CONT'D)

This is a letter of safe passage.
When you reach Naples bring it to
the Marchese di Caravaggio.

(then)

Are you a relation?

CARAVAGGIO

No. I was named after Michelangelo.
My true name is Michelangelo
Merisi. I took the name of my town.
But the marchese has always been as
a kindly uncle to me. But tell me,
is this safe passage more powerful
than a warrant from the Grand
Master?

LAZZARI

Here in Messina, yes. I am not
confident it will do you any good
outside this city however.

CARAVAGGIO

I appreciate your kindness.

(then)

It's best I leave immediately. I
don't need much to travel.

Lazzari hands Caravaggio a bowl of holy water.

LAZZARI

Holy water from the chapel. Would
you like to bless yourself?

CARAVAGGIO
I don't need it. All my sins are
mortal.

CUT TO:

135 EXT. STREETS - THE CITY OF MESSINA - DAY 135

Alof, Stefano and Knights on horseback have just ENTERED the city. As they make their way to Lazzari's villa they are EYED in both awe and suspicion by LOCAL CITIZENS.

136 EXT. LAZZARI VILLA - LATER 136

Alof, Stefano and his Knights sit on their horses facing Lazzari.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Caravaggio, the painter, was he
here?

LAZZARI
Never. You can search all you want.

Stefano eyes Lazzari.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Do you defy the Inquisition?

LAZZARI
I wouldn't dare.

Alof nods to Stefano.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
He's not here now. But he was. He
must be in Catania. Back to the
docks.

Alof hits his horse and moves on. Lazzari takes a deep breath as Alof and the Knights ride away.

CUT TO:

137 EXT. CHARTERED BOAT - TYRRHENIAN SEA - DAY 137

Caravaggio stands at the bow looking out at mainland Italy.

CUT TO:

138 EXT. KNIGHT'S SLOOP - HARBOR - CATANIA - DAY 138

Alof, Stefano and his Knights look out toward the city with Mount Etna looming in the background.

CUT TO:

139 EXT. BOAT - BAY OF NAPOLI - DAY 139

Caravaggio stands at the bow looking out on Naples, a large cosmopolitan city twice the size and population of Rome. It has tall buildings which cast dark shadows on its Greek inspired grid of streets.

Caravaggio is thrilled to be back on the mainland and a few more steps closer to Rome.

CUT TO:

140 EXT. MARCHESE DI CARAVAGGIO'S VILLA - NAPLES - DAY 140

Caravaggio is led through s garden by a VALET. The RIVIERA DI CHIAIA is a refuge of natural beauty with gardens of flowers of every color, with orange trees and cedars.

The Valet stops and Caravaggio is face to face with the MARCHESE DI CARAVAGGIO, 60s, a wise and elderly man.

MARCHESE

Michele, at last, after so many years.

He embraces Caravaggio who closes his eyes in relief.

CUT TO:

141 INT. MARCHESE DI CARAVAGGIO'S VILLA - NIGHT 141

Caravaggio dines with the Marchese.

CARAVAGGIO

My mother loved you. She said you were good to us long before I was born.

MARCHESE

God had no mercy on your family. Nor on you. But your fame has more than compensated for the misery the Merisi's endured.

(then)

(MORE)

MARCHESE (CONT'D)

Paint, sleep, live. Whatever you need is here. My gardens are a refuge for the mind, the spirit and the heart.

CARAVAGGIO

Have you heard anything from Rome?

MARCHESE

Nothing. Don't worry, the knights dare not come here for you. I have my own security. My own bodyguards. They would need an army to pry you from me.

CARAVAGGIO

I need to write to Cardinal Del Monte.

MARCHESA

I will provide all you need.

CUT TO:

142 EXT. DOCK - CATANIA - DAY

142

Alof, Stefano and the Knights walk to their boat and board it bringing in provisions and food for their horses.

Alof then pulls civilian clothing from his saddle bag and then takes off his Knight emblem respectively putting it in the bag. The other Knights are perplexed.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

Caravaggio has powerful friends in Naples. We won't get near him if we're recognized.

They understand and follow his lead and change their clothes.

CUT TO:

143 EXT. RIVIERA DI CHIAIA - DAY

143

Caravaggio sits in the garden. Several small but impressive canvases lie against the tables and chairs. It is clear that he is working diligently despite his restlessness.

He sees a LONE HORSEMAN. One of the Marchese's SECURITY MEN steps out behind Caravaggio so that the Horseman would see him. The Horseman, dressed as a swordsman, nods in a polite gesture and continues to slowly ride by.

Caravaggio is suspicious but then when the Horseman disappears, he relaxes.

CUT TO:

144 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF RIVIERA DI CHIAIA - DAY 144

The Horseman, a Knight, reaches a small camp where Alof, Stefano and the other Knights wait.

KNIGHT

He's there. There is security at the villa but we can take him.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

There will be citizen blood spilled if we take him by force. Let's bide our time. He will make the mistake, not us.

CUT TO:

145 INT. CHAPEL - MARCHESE'S VILLA - NIGHT 145

Caravaggio kneels alone at the altar and stares at the cross. He can't pray. His lips can't move. He just stares, restless and lonely.

LAUGHTER AND SHOUTS OVERLAP INTO...

CUT TO:

146 EXT. OSTERIA DEL CERRIGLIO TAVERN - NAPLES - NIGHT 146

The most celebrated tavern in all of Europe at the time. It stands near the Via Sanfelice.

147 INT. OSTERIA DEL CERRIGLIO TAVERN - CONTINUOUS 147

Caravaggio is drinking at a table in one of the two rooms that make up the tavern. The tavern is NOISY, LOUD and BOISTEROUS, in sharp contrast to the gardens.

He is in deep conversation with and surrounded by POETS, ARTISTS, WRITERS and SPANISH SOLDIERS. Long stairs lead to the top floor where COURTESANS stand and wave to the MEN they are trying lure into their private bedrooms.

The food and wine are flowing as Caravaggio sits with his arm around a Courtesan.

Drunk, Caravaggio kisses the Courtesan, and as he does, TWO MEN approach his table. He doesn't recognize them but WE DO. They are the Two Knights who were traveling with Stefano though now they are dressed as Swordsmen.

Without warning, the FIRST SWORDSMAN pulls his rapier from his belt and slashes Caravaggio across the face. The thrust could have been deadlier but the Courtesan saw him coming and SCREAMED alerting Caravaggio to move just in time.

Blood pours from the wound. Caravaggio falls backward from his chair. Despite the bleeding, Caravaggio grabs his rapier and slashes the First Swordsman across the arm slicing it deeply.

There is pandemonium in the tavern as chairs, food and bottles as well as mugs go flying in all directions.

Caravaggio uses the distraction to throw his chair at one of the Swordsman and barrel over him KNOCKING him down.

Caravaggio then rushes through the CROWD pushing people aside as he runs out of the tavern being chased by the Two Swordsmen.

148 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

148

With the Two Swordsmen in pursuit Caravaggio races out into the street. Stefano jumps out in front of him. Caravaggio can't believe his eyes.

Stefano slashes his sword across Caravaggio's chest, leaving a CUT a foot long. The only thing that saves Caravaggio from certain death is that he jumps back.

Finding strength he didn't know he had, he turns and races down the darkened alley with Stefano and the Two Swordsmen in pursuit.

Caravaggio sees a church at the end of the street and with blood coming from his nose and staining his shirt, he races for the church with Stefano and the Knights gaining on him.

149 EXT. CHURCH - NAPLES - NIGHT

149

Caravaggio reaches the church, climbs the church steps and reaches the front door. He tries to open it but it is locked.

CARAVAGGIO
Sanctuary!

He bangs on the door, turns and sees Alof, now dressed like the Grand Master, alone and determined.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

You!

Alof pulls out his sword. Caravaggio turns to the door again and bangs it again.

The door OPENS and a FRIAR, in his long brown cloth and sandals, stands there.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)

Sanctuary!

Caravaggio pushes passed him and ENTERS the church.

150 INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

150

Caravaggio rushes down the aisle toward the altar struggling not to collapse.

151 INT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

151

Alof and Stefano ENTER pushing passed the Friar and through the vestibule.

FRIAR

Who are you?

They place their Knights of Malta emblems over their disguises for him to see.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT

He's our prisoner.

FRIAR

This is a church.

ALOF DE WIGNACOURT

Stay out of our way.

Alof and Stefano walk down the aisle towards Caravaggio. He falls on the altar steps watching them approach, his face and clothing bloodied.

CARAVAGGIO

Sanctuary...

The Friar rushes in front of Alof.

FRIAR
Don't you dare touch this man!

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
He is wanted by the Inquisition.

The Friar hesitates. He is afraid of the Inquisition. He looks to Caravaggio.

CARAVAGGIO
Please...

The Friar is wavering. Alof lifts his sword. Caravaggio musters all of his bravery.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
Sanctuary. I beg of you.

Caravaggio stands with his rapier ready in his bloodied hand. The Friar finds fortitude and stands in front of Caravaggio.

FRIAR
I am the pastor of this church and this man asks for sanctuary.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Step aside. Or die.

FRIAR
In the name of Christ I *grant* it!

Alof is perplexed. He is taken back by the Friar's courage. Caravaggio now collapses at the altar's steps.

CARAVAGGIO (MUTTERING)
Sanctuary...

Alof and Stefano, their swords drawn, are immobile.

FRIAR (STERNLY)
Leave my church.

Alof and Stefano realize they have no choice, turn and walk back down the aisle, then leave the church.

The Friar follows them, bolts the door behind them then rushes up to Caravaggio who is now lying on the marble floor, blood flowing from his wound.

CARAVAGGIO
Sanctuary.

FRIAR

Yes.

DISSOLVE TO:

152 INT. STUDIO - RIVIERA DI CHIAIA - DAY

152

With a scar running down the side of his face, Caravaggio paints an unusual painting. He is looking into the mirror at his now bearded face, with a slowly healing wound under his left eye, using himself as a model. It is *David with the Head of Goliath* that he is painting.

CUT TO:

153 INT. POPE PAUL V'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - ROME - DAY

153

The Pope and Cardinal Del Monte are looking at *David With the Head of Goliath*.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

He sends it as a gift. The Marchese wrote me that Caravaggio was nearly killed by the knights in Naples.

POPE PAUL V

Extraordinary.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

That is his face -- Goliath, though now pained and wounded from his current ordeal.

POPE PAUL V

And the model for David?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

The face of the young man who first came into my life all those years ago. A face of innocence and sympathy.

(then)

Protect him with a pardon and I will make sure that the House of the Borghese is filled with Caravaggio's.

POPE PAUL V

The pardon is yours. Send it to every church from here to Malta.

He waves to a priest who brings the PARDON to him.

POPE PAUL V (CONT'D)
 I want ownership of this painting.
 And all others we can secure from
 the knights.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE
 Of course.

The Pope signs the pardon and hands it to Cardinal Del Monte.
 Cardinal Del Monte kisses the Pope's ring then rushes away.

CUT TO:

154 EXT. MARCHESE'S VILLA - NAPLES - DAY

154

Caravaggio, looking worn but healed, sits with the Marchese eating lunch when a VALET appears handing the Marchese a LETTER.

The Marchese looks over the letter than hands it to Caravaggio.

MARCHESA
 It is for you from Cardinal Del
 Monte.

Caravaggio quickly reads it.

CARAVAGGIO
 I have my pardon. The Cardinal
 writes that it is being announced
 in every parish from here to Malta.

MARCHESE
 Excellent.

CARAVAGGIO
 I need to return to Rome.

MARCHESA
 Yes but for now, stay until you are
 well.

CARAVAGGIO
 I need to get back to Rome, to
 Lena, to Cardinal Del Monte, to my
 world. That is the only way I can
 truly heal.

MARCHESE
 If you must then I will give you an
 escort to the frontier of my
 influence stretches to the harbor.
 (MORE)

MARCHESE (CONT'D)

I will also provide you with a letter of safe passage. It will protect you. Once out of the harbor you can take a small boat directly to Rome.

Caravaggio kisses his hand in gratitude.

CUT TO:

155 EXT. MARCHESE DI CARAVAGGIO'S VILLA - DAY 155

The Marchese watches Caravaggio ride off in a carriage with his own Soldiers.

156 EXT. ROAD TO DOCK - CONTINUOUS 156

Caravaggio is in a carriage traveling north protected by SEVERAL of the Marchese's Soldiers. His canvases are rolled up and at his side. He nervously looks out the window scanning the horizon for Alof.

Seeing no one, he sits back.

CUT TO:

157 EXT. MARCHESE DI CARAVAGGIO'S VILLA - DAY 157

The Marchese stands at his gate flanked by his own Soldiers.

Riding towards him is Alof, Stefano and Several Knights. They are now dressed as Knights of Malta.

When they reach the gate Stefano dismounts and hands the Marchese Alof's *arrest warrant*

The Marchese looks it over then hands it back to Stefano.

MARCHESE

Your warrant means nothing to me.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT

You defy the Inquisition?

MARCHESE

I defy its authority and yours.
Leave my property. Now.

He turns to his own MEN which outnumber the KNIGHTS. There is a tense moment as both sides are in a stand off. Alof flinches. He nods to his Knights and they ride away.

MARCHESE (CONT'D)
Not everyone will defy that
warrant.

CUT TO:

158 EXT. MARCHESE DI CARAVAGGIO'S VILLA - DAY 158

Alof, Stefano and the Knights ride their horses. Alof pulls up his horse and stops. The Knights stop with him.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
There is a small harbor over the
hills. I know a direct route. We
can reach Naples before he does.

Alof and his Knights gallop off the road and over the hills.

CUT TO:

159 EXT. CARRIAGE - ROAD TO NAPLES - DAY 159

Caravaggio looks out the window and smiles to himself seeing the harbor and his escape.

The carriage and escort take him down toward the dock.

160 EXT. FELUCCA DOCK - CONTINUOUS 160

Alof, Stefano and the Knights reach a felucca which is destined for Rome. Alof approaches the small boat's captain, CAPTAIN DEFINO, 40s, a hardened man who is stunned to see Alof.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
This is a warrant for one of our
knights. If he boards your boat you
have orders to detain him.

CAPTAIN DEFINO
Who orders this?

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
The Grand Master of the Knights of
Malta.

Stefano hands him the warrant, then leaves to move on to the next boat. The Captain is clearly intimidated.

161 EXT. DOCK - CONTINUOUS

161

Caravaggio's Escort brings him to the dock. Caravaggio gets out of the carriage.

CARAVAGGIO

Thank you.

They ride off. Caravaggio feels safe so he reads the dock information and sees that there are SEVERAL felucca leaving for Rome.

He heads toward one of them.

162 EXT. FELUCCA - DOCK - CONTINUOUS

162

Caravaggio carrying his possessions, including his paintings, reaches the felucca as SEVERAL PASSENGERS are boarding. The Captain stands behind a SAILOR taking tickets. The Sailor looks to Caravaggio.

CARAVAGGIO

One ticket. One way.

SAILOR

Destination?

CARAVAGGIO

Rome.

CAPTAIN DEFINO (O.C.)

Wait.

Caravaggio and the SAILOR both turn. The Captain walks over to Caravaggio with a CARABINIERI at his side.

CAPTAIN DEFINO (CONT'D)

Are you a Knight of Malta?

Caravaggio doesn't answer.

CAPAIN DEFINO

Open your bag.

Caravaggio doesn't move.

The Captain nods to the Police who takes the bag and opens it. They all see the *Knight of Malt emblem* that Alof had given him back at the ceremony on Malta. Caravaggio stiffens.

CAPTAIN DEFINO

There's been a warrant issued for
the arrest of a Knight of Malta
traveling these waterways.

Caravaggio shows the Captain his papers of Safe Passage.

CARAVAGGIO

My name is Caravaggio. I'm a
painter. I have papers of safe
passage from Marchese di
Caravaggio.

The Captain looks at the papers and hands them back to
Caravaggio.

CAPTAIN DEFINO

You fit the description of a wanted
man.

CARAVAGGIO

I'm on my way to Rome. I have a
pardon from the Pope.

CAPTAIN DEFINO

Where's the pardon?

CARAVAGGIO

I've been told it was just issued.

CAPTAIN DEFINO

This warrant is signed by the Grand
Master. I have no choice but to
detain you.

CARAVAGGIO

(sharply)

I have papers of safe passage from
marchese.

CAPTAIN DEFINO

I am not defying the Inquisition.

The Captain turns to the Police at his side.

CAPTAIN DEFINO (CONT'D)

Arrest this man.

Caravaggio turns to the Police.

CARAVAGGIO

You have no jurisdiction over me!

Caravaggio is ready to fight but before he can react, the Police and the Captain grab hold of him and drag him away.

Caravaggio drops his possessions. His rolled up canvases lie on the dock.

CARAVAGGIO (CONT'D)
My paintings!

The Police drag him off.

CUT TO:

163 EXT. FOSSA DI SANT'ELMO PRISON - NAPLES - DAY 163

The prison, built by the Spanish and under Spanish rule, is a large and dark building standing on the heights above the city.

164 INT. FOSSA DI SANT'ELMO PRISON - CONTINUOUS 164

TWO PRISON GUARDS lead Caravaggio, who is in chains, through a corridor. PRISONERS in their cells SCREAM out of insanity or sheer terror.

CARAVAGGIO
I don't belong here! Tell the
warden. I have money!

They pull him by his chains, leading him onward. SEVERAL GANG MEMBERS overhear him and trade looks among themselves.

165 INT. ASSEMBLY ROOM - PRISON - CONTINUOUS 165

Caravaggio is lead through to a room where chained PRISONERS are eating at large tables. Many are deathly ill and SEVERAL collapse right there on the spot gasping for air and trembling.

Caravaggio is filled with terror as he is dragged away.

166 INT. ENORMOUS CELL - CONTINUOUS 166

Caravaggio languishes in an enormous cell with a HUNDRED PRISONERS. All kinds of HUMAN NOISES fill the room from SCREAMS OF AGONY, FEAR, INSANE LAUGHTER and COUGHS OF DEATH.

We see many LOST SOULS whose dead eyes and vacant expressions match the characters Caravaggio created on his many canvases.

Here is where the barefoot under class live when not on the streets. They are the impoverished and the starving called the *lazzaroni*.

Caravaggio stands in the middle of this cell his eyes searching for ENEMIES and there are many: there are YOUNG MEN with syphilis, OLD SOLDIERS looking to kill anyone for sport with their bare hands as well as GANGS who are looking to rob anyone of anything including their lives.

The GUARDS are few and indifferent.

Caravaggio grabs the bars and wants to scream out to the Guards but knows that if he looks or acts scared he will be attacked.

He turns his back to the bars and looks over a Gang that is approaching him. There are FOUR MEN with scarred faces and incensed, desperate, making their way toward him.

A shaft of light from a window above cuts through the dank, heavy air of the cell. It falls across Caravaggio's face.

GANG MEMBER #1

You have money?

Caravaggio is surrounded by the Gang and they are just about to pounce when he pushes himself off of the bars and jumps right into their midst, SCREAMING like a madman.

Two scatter but two stay and fight. Caravaggio punches and kicks at them knocking them down. One of the Men opens his mouth and digs deep into his shoulder with his teeth.

Caravaggio lets out a SCREAM of pain. He then grabs the Man's head and bangs it against the bars.

Another MAN comes out of nowhere, seemingly foaming at the mouth, and bites Caravaggio on his cheek.

Caravaggio SCREAMS then pulls the Man off of him hitting him harder and harder until he falls.

There are SHOUTS from the other prisoners as reluctant Guards open the cell and rush in fighting their way past the other Prisoners to Caravaggio.

The Guards grab Caravaggio and haul him out of the cell with blood dripping from his shoulder, mouth and nose.

CUT TO:

167

INT. POPE PAUL V'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - ROME - DAY

167

Cardinal Del Monte and the Pope read over a LIST.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

Michele would be honored to accept these commissions from the Vatican.

POPE PAUL V

I would like him to begin as soon as he returns. And I have decided to advocate a ceremony for Caravaggio. A display, a festival.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

I will compose a guest list, your Holiness. I am sure that Michele would be honored and pleased that his exile has now ended.

POPE PAUL V

Where do you expect he is?

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

If he boarded the felucca he should be in Rome perhaps as early as tomorrow.

POPE PAUL V

I want you to sail for Malta. I want you to *demand* from the Grand Master all the canvases Caravaggio painted. They belong to my family now. They belong in Rome in the House of Borghese.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

You want *me* to go to Malta?

POPE PAUL V

Who else? You are the only one I would trust with his work. I will give you safe passage.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE

And an armed guard.

CUT TO:

168

INT. HALLWAY - PRISON - NAPLES - DAY

168

Alof and Stefano walk tentatively down the hallway and stop at a cell. Alof faces a GUARD.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Caravaggio.

GUARD
He has a fever. The malaria.

Seeing the concern on the Guard's face, Alof looks through the cell bars seeing Caravaggio chained to a chair, slumped forward, alone.

STEFANO
Grand Master, it isn't wise.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Open it.

The Guard does. Alof ENTERS the cell. Stefano does not.

169

INT. DUNGEON CELL - CONTINUOUS

169

Slumped in his chair Caravaggio, feverish and delirious, looks down as Alof steps up to him.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Why did you leave us? You led me to believe you had found your God.

CARAVAGGIO
(muttering)
My... God...

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
I saw it in your paintings. I need to know, does faith guide your hand?

CARAVAGGIO
My... questions... guide me.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Who is your God?

CARAVAGGIO
The faces.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
What faces?

CARAVAGGIO
The faces... I paint.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Who *is* your God?

CARAVAGGIO
The God *beyond* your God.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Your sins condemn you.

Caravaggio looks up directly into his eyes with a moment of clarity.

CARAVAGGIO
(sharply)
But my paintings saved your soul.

Alof leans into Caravaggio and whispers so no one else can hear.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Was not my love dear to you?

Caravaggio looks deeply into his eyes.

CARAVAGGIO
(whispers)
How could I love what I fear?

Caravaggio falls back in his chair, closing his eyes with his head up. Alof stands back.

The WARDEN 40s, an ex-soldier with a pained expression, steps up to Alof and Stefano.

WARDEN
If this prisoner can pay I will
release him to your custody.

STEFANO
We cannot take him on the ship.

WARDEN
Suit yourself.
(to Caravaggio)
What's in your pockets, prisoner?

Caravaggio manages to pull some lira from his pockets and the Warden quickly scoops them up. He counts it then turns to the Guard.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Release him.

Caravaggio struggles then stands.

CARAVAGGIO
My paintings? Where are my
paintings?

No one answers him so he staggers away out of the cell down
the hallway.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Where will he go?

WARDEN
What does it matter? If he has no
more money and he goes back to
harbor where he was arrested
there's nothing between there and
here but swamp.

The Warden leaves as Alof takes a step but Stefano steps in
front of him.

STEFANO
We need to return to Malta, sire.

Alof watches as Caravaggio staggers away.

ALOF DE WINGACOURT
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio!

Alof and Stefano watch as he disappears into the dark of the
prison.

CUT TO:

170 EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE FOSSA DI SANT'ELMO PRISON - CONTINUOUS 170

The gates open and Caravaggio, seriously ill with nothing but
the dirty clothing he is wearing, steps out.

He stumbles, regains his balance, then walks with a limp and
COUGHS. PEOPLE who see him look on with disgust and disdain
and either rush away or throw rocks at him.

He continues staggering on.

CUT TO:

171 EXT. DOCK - NAPLES - DAY

171

Alof, Stefano and Several Knights reach their boat and board
it in silence.

CUT TO:

172 EXT. SWAMP OUTSIDE NAPLES - DAY 172

Caravaggio attempts to maintain his focus so he is headed in the correct direction. He is at the tip of the swamp and stops.

He knows he must head north so he continues and ENTERS the swamp.

173 EXT. SWAMP - LATER 173

Caravaggio stumbles through the swamp under the boiling sun as he burns from his own fever.

He hears VOICES, unsure if he is imagining them or not. He hides down in the ankle deep, murky waters next to a tree.

He sees a gang of ROBBERS searching the swamp. He tries not to breath too loudly so they won't hear him. They travel passed him.

CUT TO:

174 EXT. DOCK OUTSIDE PORT'ERCOLE - LATER 174

Caravaggio looks out and sees fishing boats sailing away. He turns to an OLD SAILOR sitting there drunk, old, oblivious.

CARAVAGGIO
Port'Ercole?

The Old Sailor just stares at him.

Caravaggio walks along the dock following the fishing boats along the shore.

CUT TO:

175 EXT. BEACH - DAY 175

Caravaggio, drenched in sweat but chilled and shivering, walks along the white sands of the beach beneath the dreaded boiling sun.

He looks out toward the sea mistakenly believing that what he sees is the felucca, *his* ship, a short distance off the coast.

He walks trying to keep pace with it.

176 EXT. BOAT DOCK - PORT'ERCOLE - CONTINUOUS

176

Caravaggio reaches a small dock.

A YOUNG BOY is working on the dock, looks up and sees Caravaggio. Caravaggio steps over to him having difficulty speaking, breathing.

CARAVAGGIO
What is this *place*?

YOUNG BOY
Port'Ercole.

Caravaggio nods, then stumbles past the Young Boy. Realizing that Caravaggio is ill, the Young Boy rushes inland for help.

177 EXT. BEACH OUTSIDE PORT'ERCOLE - CONTINUOUS

177

Caravaggio stops and looks up at the blazing sun. He feels as if he's in a furnace. He struggles on.

CARAVAGGIO (V.O.)
I tried to find that harmony
between what I saw and how I lived.
And failed.

178 EXT. AN EMPTY STRETCH OF BEACH - CONTINUOUS

178

Caravaggio continues to walk looking out at the sea seeing what he imagines to be his ship on the horizon.

CARAVAGGIO(V.O.)
There's is a life going on beyond
this life. A life that separates us
from all our mistakes... from
accidents and pain...

He looks up at the sun and kneels at first, then falls onto the beach.

Dressed in tattered clothing of vivid gold and red, Caravaggio lies motionless on the white sand, at the edge of the blue sea, under the pure white light of the sun.

He reaches his arms towards the sun.

CUT TO

179

EXT. BEACH OUTSIDE PORT'ERCOLE - CONTINUOUS

179

TWO NUNS from a small hospital off the beach led by the Young Boy, appear. They rush to Caravaggio's side.

CARAVAGGIO (V.O.)

That is how God has been to me all my life. Just out of reach.

(then)

Perhaps the light tells me to love the mystery and then let go.

The Nuns comfort him with water to drink then rubbing his forehead with it. They place a light blanket over him to ease his trembling.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (V.O.)

Your Holiness, I've been informed that Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, was found dead the day before yesterday, July 18th, on the Tyrrhenian coast outside Port'Ercole.

TWO WORKERS appear with a stretcher and rush over to Caravaggio.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (V.O.)

He was made aware of your pardon.

CUT TO:

180

INT. PAPAL CHAMBERS - ROME - DAY

180

Alone, the Pope faces Caravaggio's PAINTINGS.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (V.O.)

As you demanded, I have secured all the canvases from the Knights and all that he created that were not painted on the walls.

The paintings are gloriously realistic, intense, brutal and filled with a searching for faith.

CARDINAL DEL MONTE (V.O.)

They will be brought to your private residence in Rome.

The Pope is clearly affected.

CUT TO:

181

EXT. BEACH OUTSIDE PORT'ERCOLE - DAY

181

As the Two Workers and the Two Nuns strain to ease Caravaggio onto the stretcher, he turns and sees Aloy standing on the beach, directly in front of the sun, facing him.

Stefano stands behind Aloy. Behind them is a small BOAT on the beach with Several Knights keeping it from moving with the tide.

Alone, Aloy walks to Caravaggio, reaches him and stops. The Workers and Nuns ignore him as they steady the stretcher to place Caravaggio on to it.

Aloy looks down at Caravaggio.

ALOY DE WINGACOURT

Forgive me.

Caravaggio strains to look into Aloy's eyes. His own eyes *still* beam with intelligence and searching -- despite being overwhelmed with suffering until, having lost all strength, he closes his eyes, falls back and dies.

CARAVAGGIO (V.O.)

What you see in the art, you will
find in the artist. What you see in
the artist, you will find in the
man.

Aloy watches as Caravaggio's body is lifted up and carried off the beach.

THE END