

STEALING AMERICA

by

R. B. Taylor

FADE IN:

EXT. CASTLE WOLFEGG - NIGHT

Rain teems down on a forbidding, fifteenth century castle. A gloomy mist rises, obscuring the blood-red full moon.

A sandstone-carved EAGLE, vicious beak and talons, stares down at a jet black carriage-and-four which pulls to a stop.

The exhausted HORSES, sweat and breath steam. The COACHMAN wearily sheathes a wicked-looking whip.

SUPERTITLE: CASTLE WOLFEGG, BAVARIA, GERMANY, 1901.

The carriage door opens and a PRIEST, 35, pale and cadaverous alights. He steps into a deep puddle, grimaces, then moves aside, unfurling an umbrella.

INT. CASTLE WOLFEGG - NIGHT

Two angelic girls, MARTE, 11 and GRETEL, 9 peer through the window.

MARTE

They're here. All the way from Rome.

GRETEL

The Holy Father himself.

Gretel almost swoons. Their uniformed NANNY, 55, catches her.

MARTE

Wrong. He's only a cardinal.

NANNY

Get away from there. What will His Grace think of you?

EXT. CASTLE WOLFEGG - NIGHT

CARDINAL DEVERE, 65, severe, patrician, not the most godly of men, pauses on the step of the carriage, his scarlet robes the only splash of color in the grim landscape.

The Cardinal glares at the puddle. The Secretary glares at the Coachman.

The Coachman leaps from his seat and sweeps his cloak off his shoulders and onto the puddle.

The Cardinal steps out and onto the cloak.

INT. CASTLE WOLFEGG - NIGHT

COUNT WOLFEGG, 45, stern, Franco-Prussian War hero, and his MILITARY ATTACHE, resplendent in full military fig, watch the Count's SERVANTS and his family, WIFE and six CHILDREN, all in line, bow and curtsy to The Cardinal.

THE CARDINAL
(impatient)
Children. Truly a blessing.

The Cardinal cursorily waves his hand, blessing them all, then glances at Count Wolfegg.

THE CARDINAL
My time is short, sir.

Count Wolfegg bows stiffly.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Marte and Gretel watch The Cardinal and the Priest, Count Wolfegg and his Military Attache march along the long hallway.

GRETEL
(to Marte)
Do you feel blessed?

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Count Wolfegg studies a letter.

COUNT WOLFEGG
You're the Holy Father's Special Envoy?

The Cardinal hesitates. The Priest leaps to the rescue.

PRIEST
We are from the Vatican, sir.

Count Wolfegg, notes the evasion but nods.

THE CARDINAL
And now, sir, he map.

Count Wolfegg gestures to a gargantuan desk, covered in maps.

The Cardinal licks his lips and leafs through the ancient maps - ornate, gorgeously drawn and colored.

The bullet-headed, close-cropped Military Attache watches The Cardinal become agitated.

THE CARDINAL

The map, Count Wolfegg. I am looking for the map, sir.

COUNT WOLFEGG

This is the finest collection of maps in all Europe, Your Grace, the world. Which map do you - ?

THE CARDINAL

The Waldseemuller Map.

COUNT WOLFEGG

The Waldseemuller Map? It doesn't exist.

THE CARDINAL

Oh, it exists.

COUNT WOLFEGG

A myth. A legend. If it did exist, it hasn't been seen since -

THE CARDINAL

- 1506. In Florence, Italy four hundred years ago when it was entrusted to the Priory of San Marco. It fell into the hands of the Borgias when they ransacked the priories, and, according to rumor it was then sold to the King of Spain. What happened next is uncertain, but documents I now possess indicate Napoleon himself took possession, and it was hung in a secret chamber in the Palace of Versaille. It disappeared during the Huguenot uprising of the nineteenth century and was thought destroyed. Some say it was rescued by the Knights of Malta. Perhaps it was. A scholarly abbott swore to me from his deathbed that he saw the map in the Cistercian abbey of St Bosphurus, which lies not ten kiloetres from here.

All eyes turn to the family portraits on a wall - and one of a CISTERCIAN ABBOT.

THE CARDINAL

When the Abbey was deconsecrated, your forebear bequeathed the library to you.

The Cardinal gestures to the magnificent collection of ancient books.

Count Wolfegg and his Attache exchange wary glances.

COUNT WOLFEGG

I can assure you, Your Grace, if
the Waldseemuller map were here...

The Priest scans the books on the shelves. All eyes follow the Priest's gaze to a blood-red folio on the shelf.

THE CARDINAL

The folios, sir.

Count Wolfegg hesitates, then nods at his Military Attache, who takes the outsize folio from the shelf. He places it on the desk.

The Cardinal opens the blood-red folio.

THE CARDINAL

Ptolemy.

COUNT WOLFEGG

It is the Ptolemy, Your Grace. And
it is more than two thousand years
old, Your Grace.

The Cardinal grunts. Then rips the covers from the folio.

COUNT WOLFEGG

This is an outrage. Who are you,
sir?

THE CARDINAL

Fear not, Count. I am who I say.

The Cardinal holds out his hand. The Priest whips out a switchblade and hands it to the Cardinal. A glittering silver blade springs from its hasp.

COUNT WOLFEGG

No man, not even a man of god draws
a weapon in my house.

Count Wolfegg wrenches a scimitar from the wall. The Military Attache's hand grips his revolver in its holster.

The Cardinal hesitates, then slices the blood-red covers. He slides a folded parchment from inside. He unfolds it.

THE CARDINAL

Oh, The Map. I've a devoted a
lifetime to this search. At last,
The Map.

All eyes gaze at the gorgeous map - the beautiful lines, the vibrant colors - a glorious work of art.

EXT. ROAD TO FLORENCE - DAY

The road snakes lazily through the rolling green hills of Tuscany. A light mist hovers over the River Arno, which fairly sparkles in the early morning sun.

SUPERTITLE: BASED ON A TRUE STORY ... LARGELY ...

A donkey-drawn cart trundles by on squeaking wheels. A gnarled old HAULER sits up front, driving. Caged livestock SQUAWK and MOO on the back of the cart.

MARTIN, 19, in peasant's garb, dozes beside the Hauler.

HAULER

There it be, young sir.

Martin wakens and his eyes light up with a keen intelligence. He gazes wide-eyed, innocent at -

- the spires and turrets of the walled City of Florence, which rise majestically through the drifting mists.

MARTIN

Florence. The City of Dreams.

SUPERTITLE: FLORENCE, ITALY, 1506.

The Hauler's eye falls on Martin's satchel with its rolled parchments and canvases

HAULER

That's what they say, young sir.
I've seen the young artists come
and go, their heads full of dreams.
The bars and cafes are full of 'em.
Waitin', hopin'. So many called, so
few chosen.

MARTIN

Waiting tables will not be my fate.

HAULER

No?

MARTIN

In Florence, they say, a man can
make his mark on history.

HAULER

And who shall I remember as makin'
his mark on history?

MARTIN

Waldseemuller. Martin
Waldseemuller.

INT. DA VINCI'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Niccolo MACHIAVELLI, 40, intelligent, charismatic, a true Renaissance man, gestures at a steampunk contraption - eight rifles mounted around a spindle.

MACHIAVELLI

Each gun fires its bullet in
rotation. Eight guns.

Master LEONARDO DA VINCI, 60, gestures to APPRENTICE 1 who cranks the handle which rotates the rifles. APPRENTICE 2 demonstrates the reload.

DA VINCI

But only two men to fire it.

MACHIAVELLI

We can't compete with the Spanish
or the Germans for manpower. So we
beat 'em with firepower.

Piero SODERINI, 55, President of Florence, picks up a colossal MATCHLOCK PISTOL - the Renaissance version of a Magnum 44 - and shudders.

SODERINI

I have a city to run.

MACHIAVELLI

That's not all. The Master and I
have been tossing around a few
ideas.

SODERINI

Ideas. Ideas. Enough with the
ideas, Machiavelli.

A model flying machine whizzes past Soderini's head. A hang-glider with a pair of feathered wings sits in a corner.

SODERINI
Flying machines?

DA VINCI
One day man will fly, Piero.

Soderini stares at a massive crossbow. A parachute. A model of a crude armored tank. And a full-sized rowboat, its oars at the ready.

SODERINI
You've spent taxpayers' money on a rowboat?

Machiavelli smiles and gestures to the Apprentices who fit the cover to the rowboat.

MACHIARELLI
The boat-that-sails-underwater. We could destroy the Spanish armada with a fleet of these.

Da Vinci pats the muzzle of a giant cannon.

DA VINCI
I call them WMD.

MACHIARELLI
Weapons of Major Destruction.

SODERINI
Do any of these contraptions actually work?

DA VINCI
They're in the development phase.

MACHIARELLI
Works in progress.

SODERINI
But no one wants to attack us.

MACHIARELLI
We are the wealthiest nation on earth. Everyone wants to attack us.

SODERINI
It's all plots and conspiracies with you Machiavelli. Schemes and ideas. One day you will be leader of Florence. But for now, I am in charge.

Soderini spots a mannequin, a kind of crude robot.

SODERINI
What do you call that?

DA VINCI
Roger.

SODERINI
Roger?

Leonardo opens Roger's front revealing a complicated system of wheels and pulleys.

DA VINCI
Runs on a system of cogs and wheels. Like the works of a clock. One day machines will wage war, Piero.

Da Vinci winds the mechanism and Roger steps forward.

SODERINI
Christ in heaven. The treasury will have a fit if they find out where the taxation florins are going. The citizens won't stand for it. Not in a, er -

MACHIABELLI
Election year?

SODERINI
Florence is a peace-loving city. Gentle people, as of doves. We will not be caught up in a -

Soderini ducks a flying machine.

MACHIABELLI
An armaments race, Piero? We are in an armaments' race.

SODERINI
And it must stop.

EXT. CITY WALL - MORNING

The cart trundles off, leaving Martin clutching a cheap bag and his satchel of parchments and canvases.

Martin gazes in awe at the gateway to Florence. He takes a deep breath. He passes through the city gates.

EXT. FLORENCE BOULEVARD - MORNING

Into a boulevard which teems with ARTISANS and TRADESMEN, MERCHANTS and BANKERS, scurrying about their business.

Tall buildings, spires and turrets tower over him. He pauses as the BUZZ - the ROAR - of this great city washes over him.

The ARCHIVIST, 70, wizened but spry in his monk's cassock strides toward Martin.

ARCHIVIST
Brother Martin?

MARTIN
Archivist.

ARCHIVIST
The journey from France was not too arduous?

The Archivist leads Martin through a bustling throng of Artisans and Hawkers, hawking food and ale and souvenirs.

MARTIN
No, Archivist. Thank-you for meeting me. Brother Placidus sends his regards.

ARCHIVIST
Placidus and I - we sharpened quills and rolled parchments, oh, it seems like the Dark Ages ago.

EXT. FLORENCE STREET - DAY

Two horses and a cart CHARGE along the street. MICHELANGELO, 25, buffed, handsome, and RAPHAEL, 22, streetwise, medievally grungy, sit on the front seat, white-knuckling the buckboard.

Two MARBLE QUARRIERS struggle to hold a huge block of roped marble. It CRASHES around on rollers in the back of the cart.

The driver, a dark-complected MOOR, casually holds the reins, eyes on pretty girls - everywhere but on the road.

MICHELANGELO
Where did you learn to drive? The bloody Sahara?

The Moor shrugs - non comprende.

RAPHAEL
He doesn't understand you.

MICHELANGELO
 Bloody Moors. They could at least
 learn the language.

EXT. FLORENCE STREET - DAY

The Archivist steps onto the cobble-stoned street. The carriage careers around a corner as -

The Archivist - god by his side - holds his ground before the rampaging horses.

Michelangelo and Raphael hang to the buckboard and brace. The Moor pulls on the reins. The horses WHINNY and rear. The ropes holding the marble SNAP.

The Quarriers are hurled from the cart. The ton of marble lurches forward on the log rollers. Raphael and The Moor leap from the buckboard.

Michelangelo freezes, as a ton of marble rolls toward him. Martin leaps on to the cart and rugby tackles Michelangelo clear as the marble CRASHES through the cart.

Michelangelo rises and dusts himself off. The furious Archivist bears down on him.

ARCHIVIST
 Louts. Threatening the lives of
 innocent citizens.

MICHELANGELO
 If you watched where you were
 going.

ARCHIVIST
 Insolent wretch!

He thrashes Michelangelo with his cane.

MICHELANGELO
 Oww! Do you know who I am?

ARCHIVIST
 I know exactly who you are.
 Michelangelo Buonarotti. Artists.
 Decadent and depraved. An affront
 to god and his church.

MICHELANGELO
 Next time you want a little baby
 Jesus or a Virgin Mary for your
 wall, don't come to us.

ARCHIVIST
 (thrashes him againb)
 Blasphemers!

MICHELANGELO
 Oww!

RAPHAEL
 Get a life, you crazy old priest.

The Archivist thrashes Raphael for good measure.

EXT. FLORENCE STREET - DAY

Martin hurries from Michelangelo and Raphael, arguing with The Moor. He catches up to the Archivist striding ahead.

The Archivist deftly sidesteps a rolling wine barrel and its WINEMAKER. Martin leaps out of its way.

ARCHIVIST
 Placidus speaks highly of you. He says you have vision. I frown on "vision" myself. Sounds like an artist. You can use the compass and the protractor? You can grid and project?

MARTIN
 Yes, Archivist.

ARCHIVIST
 Our standards are high. The Priory of San Marco is the highest seat of learning in all Europe.

MARTIN
 I am honoured, Archivist.

Martin pauses as his eyes feast on the sights of Florence. The Archivist darts into an alleyway.

EXT. FLORENTINE ALLEYWAY - DAY

Martin catches up to the Archivist.

ARCHIVIST
 Bearings, boy. A man must have bearings.

MARTIN
 Yes, Archivist.

ARTISTS scurry about, bearing framed masterpieces. Martin peers through an open window and sees a MALE MODEL put down the cross, take off his crown-of-thorns and join the ARTIST for a goblet of wine.

ARCHIVIST

This is the artists' quarter. The sewer of Florence! And this is the effluent. As long as you are with us you will avoid artists.

MARTIN

Yes, Archivist.

Martin spots a scruffy bunch of ARTISTS and other LOW LIFE who sit at an outside table at The Brush and Easel Pub, drinking wine and throwing dice.

ARCHIVIST

Florence is awash with decadence and degeneracy. All men are not created equal. Education? Democracy? Bah! They question the church's authority. They question god himself. A good scourge for all of them.

A pair of gorgeous WHORES call to Martin from the balcony of Madame Uffizi's whorehouse and bare their luscious breasts. Martin gapes, then shields his eyes. He opens them and looks around. But The Archivist is gone.

EXT. FLORENCE STREET - DAY

Machiavelli and Soderini stride along the busy street.

SODERINI

Master da Vinci should stick to his painting.

MACHIARELLI

We are surrounded by enemies, Piero. Spain. Germany. The Ottomans.

SODERINI

And we pay three thousand highly-trained mercenaries to protect us.

A pair of drunken FRENCH MERCENARIES sit at a cafe table, guzzling wine with a pair of PAINTED LADIES.

MACHIAVELLI

There's our protection, Piero.
French mercenaries. Do you think
 they'll stick around when the
 arrows start flying?

A beggar, ONE-EYED RON, staggers up on his crutches. He thrusts a fistful of postcards at Soderini.

ONE-EYED RON

Artwork. Genuine art.

Soderini brushes him aside. He smiles at a MOTHER and tickles her baby's chin. Machiavelli looks at the postcards.

MACHIAVELLI

What've you got for us today, Ron?

ONE-EYED RON

Giotto, sir. Greatest artist who
 ever lived.

Machiavelli glances at the childishly drawn naked ladies.

MACHIAVELLI

He certainly was.

Machiavelli presses a gold coin into Ron's hand.

MACHIAVELLI

Travel safely, Ron.

Machiavelli and Soderini pass two Warrior Monks, loitering with evil intent. SECOND WARRIOR MONK grasps the handle of his sword. FIRST WARRIOR MONK stays his hand.

FIRST WARRIOR MONK

No. It must be visible. Public.
 What they call a "political
 statement".

Second Warrior Monk sheathes his blade.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Martin looks desperately for the Archivist. A STREET ARTIST sketches portraits of tourists in charcoal. A SECOND STREET ARTIST draws da Vinci's "The Last supper" on the pavement in brightly-colored chalk. TOURISTS drop coins in his cap.

JUGGLERS juggle, a SWORD SWALLOWER swallows, a FIRE-EATER eats fire, strolling MINSTRELS serenade.

One-eyed Ron thrusts his pictures at Martin.

HAWKER

Genuine Giotto, sir. Been in the family for centuries. Breaks my heart to sell it. Ten florins, sir. Ten florins to you, young sir.

MARTIN

(studies the postcards)
That's not Giotto. It doesn't even look like Giotto.

HAWKER

School of Giotto, sir. Five florins for the school of Giotto, sir.

The crowds MURMUR. Martin sees citizens gawk and CHEER as Machiavelli and Soderini pass by.

CROWD

(chants)
Machiavelli! Machiavelli!

Machiavelli pauses and holds up his hands. Silence.

MACHIARELLI

Citizens, friends, we Florentines are fortunate. We are free and equal. The only democracy in all Europe. Other nations are ruled by kings and tyrants. These tyrants envy us our wealth. They fear our ideals of freedom and democracy. They believe we are dangerous and a threat to their power. One day, we may have to fight for our beliefs. As long as we all draw breath Florence will remain free.

The crowds CHEER. Soderini kisses babies and presses flesh.

The crowd reaches out for Machiavelli celebrity-style. He shakes hands. WOMEN kiss him and almost swoon.

Mme Uffizi's beautiful whores flash their lovely breasts.

MACHIARELLI

Aah, Piero, truly everyone in Florence is an artist.

Martin taps LISA, 20, on the shoulder.

MARTIN

Who is that?

LISA
 You're not from around here, are
 you?

Lisa turns around and Martin stares into the most beautiful
 eyes in all Christendom.

MARTIN
 No. I'm lost.

Lisa sees the rolled parchments in his shoulder bag.

LISA
 You're an artist.

MARTIN
 A map maker.

LISA
 You're a map maker? And you're
 lost? Hmmm ... That's Machiavelli.

MARTIN
 I've heard of Machiavelli... They
 say he has the craftiest mind in
 all Europe.

LISA
 He has the greatest mind in all
 Europe. The other one's Soderini.
 Our gonfalonier, our elected
 president. But Machiavelli is the
 brains behind Soderini. Machiavelli
 has made Florence what she is.

The Warrior Monks move forward. Second Warrior Monk collides
 with Lisa.

LISA
 Hey, if you pinned back that hood
 maybe you'd see where you're going.

SECOND WARRIOR MONK
 Know your place, woman.

Lisa pokes him in the chest.

LISA
 And what would a celibate like you
 know about women?

The Second Warrior Monk draws his sword.

LISA
Whoa, a zealot.

SECOND WARRIOR MONK
You dare defile me, woman?

LISA
Your mother defiled you, giving
birth!

Second Warrior Monks raises his sword to strike Lisa.
Martin's hand clenches Second Warrior Monk's wrist.

MARTIN
You would strike an unarmed woman?

The Second Warrior Monk HISSES and he presses his razor sharp
blade against Martin's throat.

MARTIN
An apology remains in order, sir.

First Warrior Monk grips Second Warrior Monk's arm and
hustles him away. Leaving Martin with those beautiful eyes.

LISA
I could have handled them. But
thank-you.

MARTIN
My pleasure.

The Warrior Monks draw their swords.

Machiavelli poses for a quick charcoal portrait with a
CITIZEN. The Warrior Monks bear down on him.

LISA
Machiavelli.

Martin wades through the crowd. He snatches the Sword
Swallower's sword. CRIES and SCREAMS ring out.

The Warrior Monks swing their swords. Machiavelli pushes
Soderini out of danger. He grabs at something - anything -
the Fire-eater's flaming torch.

Martin attacks the Second Warrior Monk. They thrust and
parry, feint and lunge.

First Warrior Monk swipes once, twice, thrice, slicing
Machiavelli's torch to a stub. He raises his sword.

ANTONIO, a strapping young Security Guard in a cheap, gaudy uniform, leaps into the fray. His blade flashes. Thrust, lunge. He runs First Warrior Monk through to his very bowels.

Second Warrior Monk heaves and Martin's sword arcs through the air. And lands in the Sword Swallower's hand.

Second Warrior Monk cuts and slices, but Martin ducks and sways. The Warrior Monk forces Martin back. Back. Martin tangles in easels and paintings. He falls. The Warrior Monk raises his blade -

Lisa grabs a rapier from the Juggler and tosses it to Martin. Martin catches it, as the Warrior Monk's blades swings down. Martin thrusts his rapier up and into the Second Warrior Monk's tripes. The Second Warrior Monk collapses.

The Archivist grabs Martin.

ARCHIVIST

Quickly! You have no idea what
you've done. Come! Now!!

The Archivist hauls Martin through the gaping, heaving crowds.

Machiavelli watches Antonio search the body. He rips a leather and linen SCAPULA from the First Warrior Monk's throat. On the scapula - a drawing of a bloodied crown of thorns atop a Maltese cross.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S OFFICE - DAY

ENRICO, 40, Machiavelli's fussy, bureaucratic secretary, places a dusty old book on Machiavelli's desk. Machiavelli studies the illustration of the bloodied crown of thorns and the Maltese cross.

ENRICO

The crown of thorns atop the cross
of Malta. The symbol of an ancient
order of Warrior Monks who fought
the Saracens in the Crusades of
1216. The order flourished,
especially in its heartland of
Bourbon. It is believed the order
died out in the fourteenth century.

MACHIAVELLI

Bourbon? Bourbon, where have I
heard that recently?

A KNOCK at the door and Enrico beckons in Antonio.

MACHIAVELLI

I owe you my life.

ANTONIO

It was nothing, sir.

Machiavelli notes the cheap and gaudy uniform.

MACHIAVELLI

You're a - ?

ANTONIO

Security guard, sir. At the palazzo gallery.

MACHIAVELLI

We train our docents well.

ANTONIO

I used to be a bodyguard for Cesare Borgia, sir. But I've a wife and a little one, and I needed something a little ...

MACHIAVELLI

Steadier? It seems I need a bodyguard myself. Are you available?

ANTONIO

For you, sir? Of course.

MACHIAVELLI

Thank you.

Parting smiles and Enrico ushers Antonio out.

MACHIAVELLI

And the young peasant boy?

ENRICO

He seems to have disappeared. But he dropped this.

Enrico hands Machiavelli a parchment. Machiavelli gazes at the beautifully drawn map of Europe.

MACHIAVELLI

A map maker?

ENRICO

It would appear so, sir.

EXT. DEPARTMENT OF NAVY - NIGHT

The Spanish flag flutters atop a darkened building. A pair of giant cannons silently guard the entrance.

SUPERTITLE: DEPARTMENT OF NAVY, MADRID, SPAIN.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF NAVY - NIGHT

A shadowy figure forces the lock on a heavy oak door.

INT. NAVAL ARCHIVES - NIGHT

A lantern reveals a HAND rifling through files. The hand removes a faded GREEN VELLUM folio.

OUTSIDE: horses' hooves CLATTER.

Intrepid seafarer, AMERIGO VESPUCCI, 45, grimaces and stuffs the folio in his satchel. He blows out the lantern.

EXT. DEPARTMENT OF NAVY - NIGHT

PRIOR JOHN, 40s a hard line, holy war warrior and WARRIOR MONK 1 dismount their horses.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF NAVY - NIGHT

Vespucci tries to close the heavy oak door but the busted lock stops him. CLANK! The door at the far end of the hallway opens. Vespucci slips back inside the archives.

Prior John and Warrior Monk approach, spot the busted lock.

INT. NAVAL ARCHIVES - NIGHT

Prior John sees the gap in the files.

EXT. DEPARTMENT OF NAVY - NIGHT

A nervous Vespucci sways, almost falls from the second floor ledge. He stares at Prior John's stallion below. The stallion stares up at Vespucci - nostrils flaring in challenge.

Vespucci takes a deep breath and drops ... balls-first onto the steed.

VESPUCCI

Oooohh.

The steed bucks and effortlessly throws Vespucci, who SLAMS into the cobblestones.

VESPUCCI

Aaahhh.

INT. NAVAL ARCHIVES - NIGHT

Prior John and the Warrior Monk race to the window. They see the stallion gallop away.

They see Vespucci crawl to the second steed and somehow clamber aboard. The second steed charges off with Vespucci frantically clawing for the pommel and reins.

INT. ROYAL COURT, BALLROOM - NIGHT

Elegant young BELLES and handsome young BUCKS gyrate on the dancefloor. Male hands paw at female waists and bums. Faces flush, bosoms heave, hips thrust.

All eyes are drawn to Princess JOANNA, 21, daughter of King Ferdinand of Spain who minuets with a carefree sensuality.

SUPERTITLE: SPANISH ROYAL COURT, MADRID.

CARLO, an impossibly handsome young violinist and his band of grungey MUSICIANS play a sexy minuet.

Princess Joanna smiles coquettishly at Carlo. CROWN PRINCES in silk and velvet finery watch Princess Joanna hungrily.

Prince PHILIP of Bourbon, 30ish, a future tyrant in a warrior's linen and leather, swaggers across the ballroom.

Philip dismisses a WINE WAITER with a toss of his head and gazes ravenously at Princess Joanna.

A foppish, English ROYAL guzzles wine and goggles at Joanna.

ROYAL

Lord, I'd give half my kingdom to win that fair heart.

PHILIP

It's not her heart I'm after.

The Royal glances nervously at the sword on Philip's hip and scurries after the wine waiter.

Joanna glances at Philip as she dances by. His thin lips crack a smile. Joanna dismisses him contemptuously.

The minuet finishes and one lucky PRINCE escorts Joanna off the dance floor. The royals APPLAUD.

Joanna sits and fans herself. She beckons Carlo.

JOANNA

Play for me. Play me something from
your heart and your soul.

CARLO

And what does Her Highness favour?

JOANNA

An air? A grace?

CARLO

If grace be a gift from god, I see
god's greatest gift before me. How
can your humble servant do justice
to a grace such as yours?

The females SIGH at such romanticism.

JOANNA

You could try.
(draws him close, whispers
in his ear)
Give me fifteen minutes.

CUT TO:

Prior John wades through the dissolute revellers, knocking
the wine from the English Royal's hand. He joins Philip.

PRIOR JOHN

Vespucci has escaped.

PHILIP

And his logs?

PRIOR JOHN

They too.

PHILIP

All roads lead to Florence.

PRIOR JOHN

And Machiavelli survived. A peasant
boy intervened. We are looking for
him, but he disappeared.

Philip grunts dismissively.

PRIOR JOHN

Do not underestimate Machiavelli.
He may be an intellectual and a -
(sneers)
- a liberal -

PHILIP

That's two reasons to kill him.

PRIOR JOHN

- but the Florentines love him. He fills their minds with ideas of freedom and democracy and he grows more powerful by the day. He is also very well-informed.

PHILIP

An agent?

Philip scans the room. Carlo.

PRIOR JOHN

He is an agent and he has the princess's ear.

PHILIP

And he is a musician. That's three good reasons to kill him.

Carlo finishes his little air. Joanna leads the applause with fervent CLAPPING.

EXT. PALACE TERRACE, MADRID - NIGHT

Joanna awaits in a deserted corner of the darkened terrace. FOOTSTEPS approach. Her heart soars, then sinks. Philip.

PHILIP

Expecting someone else?

JOANNA

The guard room is beyond. I'll have someone show you out.

PHILIP

I am Philip of Bourbon, Your Highness.

JOANNA

Bourbon. Oh yes. Soldiers, priests and lots of pig farms.

PHILIP

A rustic kingdom, it is true, Your Highness, but I offer it to you in exchange for your fair hand.

Joanna laughs at him. Philip chuckles along with the gag.

PHILIP
And your father's throne.

JOANNA
My father will never permit it.

PHILIP
I think he will.

JOANNA
My father is the King of Spain.

PHILIP
Oh, you think I'm a rough sort of
fellow. It's true. I know little
about art or music. I shoot, I
hunt. What can I say? I like
killing things.

Philip's eyes dance at the thought.

EXT. PALACE BATTLEMENT - NIGHT

Prior John drags the struggling Carlo to the wall.

PRIOR JOHN
May god have mercy on your artist's
black soul.

Prior John hurls Carlo over the battlement wall.

EXT. PALACE TERRACE - NIGHT

Philip caresses the ruby pendant at her breast. Joanna
recoils. A SHRIEK pierces the still night.

PHILIP
But I do know one thing about
artists.

A body hurtles toward Joanna. Carlo thumps to the ground at
her feet. Joanna SCREAMS.

PHILIP
Their value increases dramatically
at their death.

A gay minuet TRILLS in the ballroom.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER, MADRID - DAY

Philip and the ageing King FERDINAND, 75, stroll amongst the
torture devices. Ferdinand caresses a disembowelling hook.

KING FERDINAND

What made Spain the power she is?
War and bloodshed! And the deaths
of a hundred thousand soldiers!
That's what made Spain great.

He slams the disembowelling hook into a bench.

KING FERDINAND

My wife Isabella was a remarkable
woman. She could smell a heretic
from twenty paces.

PHILIP

Her Majesty was an inspiration to
us all.

KING FERDINAND

If only my daughter were so
dutiful. She lacks piety. She
neglects her religious duties. All
she thinks of is art. And music.
And poetry.

King Ferdinand listlessly spins a spiked Catherine wheel.

PHILIP

There will be no art or music in my
house, Your Majesty.

King Ferdinand looks at Philip doubtfully.

KING FERDINAND

You want my daughter's hand? What
can lowly Bourbon offer Spain?

PHILIP

Florence, Your Majesty. And then
the world.

INT. ROYAL CHAPEL, MADRID - DAY

A veiled Princess Joanna and a ceremonially-clad Prince
Philip kneel at the altar rails before a CARDINAL.

CARDINAL

What god has joined together, let
no man put asunder ...

JOANNA

(whispers to Philip)
My father has given you my body.
But my heart and soul remain my
own.

PHILIP

Fine by me.
 (his eyes rake her
 gorgeous body)
 Oh, what sport tonight.

INT. PRIORY OF SAN MARCO, MAP ROOM - DUSK

The ancient flat earth maps with their demons and scary monsters gaze down at Martin who wears a monk's cassock. He pours sand - which blots the ink - into the trays on the desks.

Several MONKS sit at desks drawing, transcribing, mapping.

FIRST MONK

Ink!

Martin wheels a trolley to his desk and fills his ink well.

SECOND MONK

Parchment!

Martin bustles to Second Monk's desk and delivers parchment.

THIRD MONK

Vellum!

Martin scurries to deliver the vellum. The Archivist beckons the harassed Martin to his desk.

ARCHIVIST

Can you be trusted, boy? After your behavior in the piazza last week.

MARTIN

Yes, Archivist.

ARCHIVIST

There are things in heaven and on earth you cannot be expected to understand.

(hands him a document)

Take this to Master da Vinci. You will await his reply, and return at once. Do not loiter. Do not talk to artists.

INT. DA VINCI'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Da Vinci sits at his workbench, reading the Archivist's letter. Beakers bubble, test tubes steam.

Martin gazes at two portraits of Lisa - Mona Lisa. She grins in one. Frowns in the other.

DA VINCI
 Couldn't quite get it right. I
 don't paint any more. Artists look
 within for answers. The questions
 lie within. But the answers lie -

EXT. DA VINCI'S ROOFTOP - NIGHT

TELESCOPE VIEW OF: The starry heavens.

MARTIN (O.S.)
 In the stars?

DA VINCI (O.S.)
 In science. Sight Betelguese.

The telescope focuses. Da Vinci and Martin stand on the rooftop
 with charts and telescope.

MARTIN
 Twenty seven degrees, fifteen minutes.

DA VINCI
 Triangulate. Mark it.

MARTIN
 Rome.

Martin calculates and pinpoints Rome on the flat earth map.

DA VINCI
 (consults chart)
 Orion. Triangulate. And mark.

Martin pinpoints Alexandria on his map.

MARTIN
 Alexandria.

DA VINCI
 Alexandria is twelve hundred leagues
 south west of Jerusalem. That is
 known. Scale and plot.

Martin scales and plots the point. Martin frowns - Jerusalem is
 not at its centre.

MARTIN
 No. That can't be right. The Scripture
 says Jerusalem is the centre of the
 world.

DA VINCI
 Unless?

MARTIN

Unless ... the world is round. No.
No. The world cannot be round. That
is heresy.

DA VINCI

That is science.

Lisa bursts in, in a filmy white dress, splattered in blood.

LISA

Can we borrow a cup of varnish,
Master?

MARTIN

Are you all right? Are you hurt?

LISA

(a rose in her cheeks
suddenly)

Oh. The map-maker. No, I'm fine.
Raphy's painting St Catherine,
dying a martyr's death. Guess who's
playing Cathy? You're a monk?

MARTIN

Not quite.

DA VINCI

Are your chums interested in a
commission, Lisa?

LISA

I'm interested in a commission.

MARTIN

You're an artist?

DA VINCI

It's the Priory of San Marco.

LISA

(hopes dashed)

Oh.

EXT. BRUSH AND EASEL PUB - NIGHT

Martin and Lisa - paint still splattered across her nose -
approach the front door.

MARTIN

I've been told not to loiter with
artists and models.

LISA
Why? We don't bite.

MARTIN
The Archivist says models are ...

LISA
Whores? Not all of us.

Lisa pushes open the door.

INT. BRUSH AND EASEL PUB - NIGHT

A Dante's Inferno. MUSICIANS jam. Gorgeous MODELS gyrate. THIEVES pick pockets. GAMBLERS throw dice. One-eyed Ron slumps drunkenly at the bar.

A nervous Martin follows Lisa to the bar where Michelangelo and three MACHO GAYS, and Raphael, with a bevy of beautiful ART GROUPIES gather.

LISA
Michel. Raphy. This is Martin, the map maker, the man who saved Machiavelli!

Michelangelo appraises the slim, angelic acolyte.

MICHELANGELO
You jest.

LISA
Where did you learn such swordplay?

MARTIN
At the monastery in France - the Abbot encouraged us in fencing and archery. Anything to take our minds off -

MICHELANGELO
- other things.

The Macho Gays titter. GUIDO, mine host of the Brush and Easel slams a pitcher of wine on the bar.

GUIDO
For the man who saved Machiavelli.

ANGELA, 22, Guido's beautiful buxom daughter bats her eyelids at Martin. Lisa's eyes shoot daggers at Angela.

LISA
Eyes off. He's a man of the cloth.

ANGELA

The church won't save him, god
won't save him, not if you get your
claws into him.

Martin offers the document to Michelangelo.

MARTIN

You are Michelangelo.

Michelangelo nods - but of course. He scans the document.

MARTIN

I've brought you a commission.

MICHELANGELO

San Marco? That crazy old priest? The
man's a sadist. One scourge too many
if you ask me.

RAPHAEL

What do they want? Creation?
Annunciation?

MICHELANGELO

Worse. Nativity.

RAPHAEL

Oh god.

LISA

Will you two stop complaining? It's
not a "school of". At least it's work
and you can put your names on it.

MICHELANGELO

(waves the document)

You think I'll put my name to this?

RAPHAEL

We need the money, Michel.

MICHELANGELO

Whoring my god-given talents for the
glory of god. That's irony for you.

MARTIN

I'll tell them you're not interested.

MICHELANGELO

No. No need to be hasty.

LISA
 All whores have their price,
 Michel?

A FEW MINUTES LATER:

Martin and Lisa sit at a table. Martin gazes at the PLAYWRIGHTS writing, LUTISTS jamming, a Toulouse-Lautrec LOOKALIKE sketching Mme Uffizi's beautiful whores. Martin gulps his goblet of wine.

LISA
 I am a painter. A damned good painter. But most of the commissions come from the church and they're forbidden to women.

MARTIN
 And so you model?

LISA
 As long as I have my looks. The work dries up when women reach a certain age. Of course, there's always work for older men.

Martin stares at her. She stares back.

MARTIN
 You've got paint on your nose.

LISA
 (goes cross-eyed, looking for it)
 Would you mind?

Martin gently rubs her nose with his handkerchief.

LISA
 And you?

MARTIN
 I was abandoned on the monks' doorway. They took me in. Raised me. It was a closed world. One day I saw the Abbot working on a map and it took me to places I've never been. I sailed the seas and I saw new lands. Lands no one had ever seen. There's a whole new world out there. New lands, new horizons.

LISA
 And you will map it.

MARTIN

One day I will.

LISA

(re handkerchief)

I think you need to wet it.

Martin blushes and chugs his wine. He licks the handkerchief and rubs again. The musicians PLAY a romantic melody.

LISA

Thank you.

(raises her glass in a
toast)

So, we're both lost in Florence.

MARTIN

Yes. No. Look!

Martin fishes a beautifully drawn map from his satchel.

MARTIN

I drew a map of Florence. The streets. The river. Here's the Priory. Master da Vinci's studio. And this is where we are. Here.

LISA

How clever. You could make money out of this. Run off some copies. Sell 'em in the piazza for a florin. The tourists will love 'em.

MARTIN

I can't. I've taken vows.

LISA

Poverty?

MARTIN

And fidelity.

The musicians PLAY a VERY romantic tune.

LISA

Any others I should know about?

Lisa flashes a mischievous smile. Which leaves Martin's heart leaping and his knees wobbling. He takes another gulp of wine.

OUTSIDE: A bell TOLLS.

MARTIN

Good lord!

He looks around - lost. Lisa points to his map.

LISA
First Left. Right. Left again.

Martin nods his thanks.

EXT. PRIORY OF SAN MARCO - NIGHT

Martin races toward the priory. The huge oak doors are closing. Martin leaps through the gap.

INT. PRIORY DINING HALL - NIGHT

The monks sit at long dining tables, lost in prayer. Martin tiptoes in and takes his seat. A deep and profound silence. Martin hiccups. All eyes turn toward him. The Archivist glowers.

The wall-eyed, stump-toothed KEEPER-OF-THE-IMPLEMENTS wheels a squeaky trolley and ladles thin gruel into bowls. Martin gazes at a painting of a beautiful ANGEL ascending to heaven.

INT. THE OLD MASTER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Machiavelli enters, smiling and greeting wealthy PATRONS. The drop dead gorgeous CHASTITY sits at the bar. She smiles at Machiavelli and sips wine from a goblet.

MACHIARELLI
Do I know you?

Chastity nods and smiles. Machiavelli spots a painting of her on the wall - gloriously and voluptuously nude. He takes a real close look at the painting.

MACHIARELLI
Nice brushwork.
(to BARTENDER)
Get the lady something special.

CUT TO:

A WINE WAITER pours wine for Machiavelli. Amerigo Vespucci is sitting opposite.

MACHIARELLI
Wine, Amerigo? It's a '92 - they were still using naked virgins to crush the grapes.
(peers at his food)
Is it me, or are the servings here getting smaller? Welcome home, Amerigo!

VESPUCCI

Sshh! Not so loud. There's Spanish agents everywhere. They're trying to kill me, Niccolo.

MACHIAVELLI

Why do the Spanish want to kill you?

VESPUCCI

Because of this.

Vespucci furtively withdraws the GREEN VELLUM folio from his satchel. Machiavelli flicks through the folio.

MACHIAVELLI

Ship's logs. They're yours?

VESPUCCI

Well, Spain financed the expedition, so technically ...

MACHIAVELLI

What you might call "intellectual property". But why do the Spanish want to kill you?

VESPUCCI

Because I discovered this land, Niccolo. I was there first. Oh, it's big, Niccolo. Huge. And Christopher bloody Columbus gets all the credit.

MACHIAVELLI

So you stole your logs back.

VESPUCCI

I threatened to take my discovery elsewhere. Then I stole my logs back.

MACHIAVELLI

What do you want me to do?

VESPUCCI

I don't know. You're Machiavelli. Think of something.

MACHIAVELLI

We're landlocked. We don't have a navy. Just a couple of gondolas on the river.

Machiavelli slices the head from a feathered lark and pops it in his mouth. He ponders.

MACHIAVELLI

We could fit out a ship. Fly a flag of convenience out of Genoa. And claim it for Florence!

VESPUCCI

These ideas of yours, they're so - I don't know - there must be a word for it.

MACHIAVELLI

We'd have the trade routes. Build an empire. Proof, Amerigo. Do you have proof?

VESPUCCI

The logs.

MACHIAVELLI

Logs are not enough. A map. Where's your map?

VESPUCCI

Aaah. On the way home we were attacked by pirates. Do you know the punishment for letting pirates take your maps?

MACHIAVELLI

Death.

VESPUCCI

Not just any death. Long, painful, Spanish-style death.

MACHIAVELLI

You threw the map overboard?

VESPUCCI

(nods sadly)
Maritime law. But I was there first, Niccolo.

MACHIAVELLI

I'm sorry, Amerigo. You know how touchy the Spanish are. One look at their land and they'll invade us for sure.

EXT. FLORENCE CITY GATES - NIGHT

Prince Philip and General OLOROSSO ride steeds through the city gates, leading a convoy of fifty SPANISH SOLDIERS - armed to their back teeth.

EXT. BRUSH AND EASEL BAR - NIGHT

One-eyed Ron staggers drunkenly from the bar and into the street. The Spanish convoy bear down on him.

Prince Philip gestures to Olorosso, who thrashes Ron with his swagger stick.

INT. PRIORY OF SAN MARCO, MAP ROOM - NIGHT

A candle stub illuminates Martin, sitting at a desk, mapping. He lays down his quill and casts sand over the map. His eye falls on the heavy oak door to the archives.

CUT TO:

Martin stares through the barred window. Darkness. He opens the door and enters.

INT. ARCHIVE, STAIRS - NIGHT

Martin descends the winding steps.

ARCHIVIST

The archives are forbidden to students.

The Archivist appears behind Martin.

MARTIN

I'm sorry, Archivist. Curiosity got the better of me.

ARCHIVIST

Curiosity is dangerous, boy.

MARTIN

Even for map makers?

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The Archivist sees the sand-covered map.

ARCHIVIST

What's this?

MARTIN

Nothing, Archivist. A sketch.

The Archivist blows the sand from the map. Of a round world.

ARCHIVIST

What sort of world is this?

MARTIN

I was just ... imagining.

ARCHIVIST

The Lord God saith: This is Jerusalem.
I have set it in the mid of the
nations and the countries that are
round about her.

MARTIN

Was the prophet Ezekiel a map-maker?

ARCHIVIST

You dispute the word of god. That is
heresy.

Prior John appears, wearing a simple scholar's cassock.

PRIOR JOHN

Heretic, Archivist? There's no mention
of heresy in Ezekiel, Archivist.

The Archivist plants himself in front of Martin's map.

PRIOR JOHN

(re Martin)
Who is this?

ARCHIVIST

This is Brother Martin, Prior. A
student from France. He shows great
promise.

Prior John eases the Archivist aside and takes Martin's map.

PRIOR JOHN

You think the world is round?

MARTIN

I, I don't know what I think, Prior.

PRIOR JOHN

Not so long ago you would burn at the
stake for this. Fortunately, we live
in more enlightened times.

Prior John torches the map on the candle stub. He drops the
flaming map in the sandbox where it chars and blackens.

The sound of rushing FOOTSTEPS. A MONK bursts in.

MONK

Come quickly, Prior!

INT. PRIORY CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Prior John and Monks crowd the windows. Martin and the Archivist join them and crane for a view.

BELOW: Prince Philip and his convoy march along the avenue.

MARTIN

Who are they?

The Monks CHEER.

MARTIN

Why are we cheering?

PRIOR JOHN

Florence is infested with thinkers and philosophers who challenge god's word. Men of "liberal" persuasion like Machiavelli who dazzle and tempt with their wit and their gaudy talents. And scientists and artists who neglect their duty, which is to the greater glory of god. No more!

INT. MICHELANGELO'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Michelangelo chips away at the tight buttocks of his masterpiece, "David". He hears the CLIP of hooves.

Raphael paints "The Three Graces" - naked. Lisa looks over from her painting.

LISA

Honestly, Raphy. They're the three Graces. Modesty. Humility. Chastity. Can't you give them some clothes?

Raphael smirks. Lisa paints an exquisite painting of Martin as the Archangel Gabriel. She hears voices CRY.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Loud female SCREAMS - of orgasmic delight. Chastity bounces and humps away atop of Machiavelli.

EXT. PALAZZO VECCHIO - NIGHT

Philip, General Olorosso and the Spanish troops halt before the Palazzo Vecchio.

INT. PALAZZO VECCHIO, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Machiavelli, Antonio and Enrico hurry along the corridor.

ENRICO

They made a clandestine landing in
Genoa and rode here immediately.

Soderini bustles towards them, half-dressed.

SODERINI

Niccolo, what's going on? There are
Spanish soldiers in the streets.

MACHIARELLI

Who are they, Enrico?

ENRICO

Philip of Bourbon and his troops,
sir.

MACHIARELLI

(memory jogs)
Bourbon ...

INT. THE GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Machiavelli and Soderini, Enrico and Antonio burst in. Philip
admires an ornate throne.

MACHIARELLI

Prince Philip. Florence salutes
Your Highness. We would have
extended a more formal welcome if
you'd informed us of your visit.

PHILIP

The Ancient Throne of Florence. What
exquisite workmanship. You Florentines
really are wonderful craftsmen.

MACHIARELLI

A work of art. Purely decorative.

PHILIP

Thrones have a function. Kings -
(eyes fix on Machiavelli)
- sit on them. And rule commoners.

SODERINI

Welcome to Florence, Your Highness.
I am Piero Soderini -

MACHIAVELLI

You have ignored all diplomatic protocols, Your Highness.

PHILIP

You must be Machiavelli.

MACHIAVELLI

May I remind you, sir, that uninvited troops are a violation of international law.

PHILIP

Only fifty troops. Still, that's fifty more than you've got.

WAITERS wheel in trolleys of food and drink.

SODERINI

Your Highness must be famished after such a long journey. You must try our new wine. We've put bubbles in it. We call it Asti.

PHILIP

A spring water, lightly chilled.

The WAITER who hovers nearby, looks baffled. Soderini gestures impatiently - fetch him water!

PHILIP

Diplomatic protocols, Machiavelli? Very well, a small proclamation.

Philip nods cheerfully to General Olorosso.

OLOROSSO

(reads a document)

Hear ye and let it be known that Prince Philip of Bourbon, doth hereby claim the Ancient Throne of Florence and doth declare himself legitimate Ruler of Florence, its environs and all who reside therein.

A stunned silence.

MACHIAVELLI

Florence recognizes no ruler. Florence is a democracy.

PHILIP

Not any more she isn't.

INT. PIERRE POL ROGER'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Pierre POL ROGER, commander of the French Mercenaries, gulps a glass of wine, laughs and hurls pots of paint at a pair of naked NYMPHETTES who cavort with stringed instruments and luscious fruits on Pierre's four-poster bed.

Pol Roger chortles and hurls himself onto the bed. The nymphettes SQUEAL in delight.

The door SLAMS open and Machiavelli enters.

MACHIAVELLI

Pierre.

POL ROGER

Ca va, Niccolo. What do you think?

Machiavelli glances at a painting on an easel - distorted, childish and 400 years before Picasso.

MACHIAVELLI

Hmm ...

(to business)

Pierre, we are paying you top florin for protection. So, tell me how did a company of foreign troops march undetected through the city gate, across the Ponte Vecchio and into the palace?

POL ROGER

Foreign troops? Here? Who? I will investigate, Niccolo. Heads will roll!

Machiavelli tosses Pol Roger's uniform at him.

MACHIAVELLI

Make them Spanish heads, Pierre. Three thousand French mercenaries. And fifty Spanish soldiers. Surely your lot can handle that.

INT. PALAZZO VECCHIO, MAIN GALLERY - DAWN

Exquisite food including a whole, feathered peacock rests on a buffet table. A WAITER pours sparkling wine into the top glass of a giant pyramid of wine glasses.

Philip gazes at a painting on the wall.

PHILIP

I don't know much about art, but I do hate this modern stuff.

Antonio and Soderini stand by.

ANTONIO

Pisano. 1352. Only a hundred and fifty years old.

PHILIP

Florence, huh? Even the security guards know their art.

Philip's eyes light up at a painting of the semi-naked, BOUND and BLEEDING Lisa as St. Catherine.

ANTONIO

Raphael, sir. A rising talent.

PHILIP

And who is this exquisite creature?

ANTONIO

A local model, sir.

SODERINI

Your Highness must accept it, as a gift from the people of Florence.

Machiavelli and Pol Roger stride across the gallery.

MACHIARELLI

Bourbon. You will rescind your claim to Florence and remove your troops immediately.

PHILIP

And if I refuse?

MACHIARELLI

Commander Pol Roger has three thousand crack French troops at his disposal.

PHILIP

Fifty good men of Spain versus three thousand French mercenaries. Sounds like a fair fight to me. Oh have you met my bride?

Machiavelli spots Joanna, dressed in sombre black.

PHILIP
Princess Joanna -

MACHIAVELLI
(the truth hits)
- of Spain.

Machiavelli's eyes lock on Joanna. Her face is a stony mask.

PHILIP
My troops are merely an advance party. There are ten thousand fully trained, Spanish soldiers marching on Florence as we speak.

Pol Roger pales.

MACHIAVELLI
Pierre?

POL ROGER
You didn't mention the ten thousand Spanish troops, Niccolo.

Philip takes a knife and taps it against a wine glass at the bottom of the pyramid. Harder. Louder. The pyramid CRASHES in a cascade of shattered glass.

PHILIP
Ladies and gentlemen! The Right of Kings to rule is Divine. God has anointed me the ruler of Florence. At midday, seven days hence, Florence will surrender.

Machiavelli glances at the sorrowful Joanna. She forces a sympathetic smile.

PHILIP
There will be no discussion. No negotiation. Any who oppose me will be executed. Without trial. Spanish style.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Enrico shows Machiavelli and Soderini a genealogy tree.

ENRICO
Philip's great great great Uncle was Prince Humberto of Bourbon. Prince Humberto was the bastard son of the Emperor Charlemagne.

MACHIAVELLI

The last king of the Ancient Throne of Florence.

SODERINI

His claim is legitimate?

ENRICO

All the royal houses are related, so technically, every ruler in Europe has a claim.

SODERINI

I think now would be the perfect time for one of your ideas, Niccolo.

Enrico circles the date on a calendar.

ENRICO

We have seven days, Chancellor.

Machiavelli packs papers into a satchel.

MACHIAVELLI

Fear not, Piero. There is one power even the Spanish bow down before.

EXT. THE VATICAN - DAY

The papal flag flies proudly above the Vatican palace.

INT. PAPAL CHAMBER - DAY

A portrait of the Warrior-Pope Julius II - armored, sitting on a horse and wielding a brute of a broadsword - hangs on the wall, and gazes down at Da Vinci who studies a scale model of the New Vatican. A PAPAL SECRETARY ushers Machiavelli in.

MACHIAVELLI

Master, what are you doing here?

DA VINCI

Julius asked me to help out on his New Vatican.

MACHIAVELLI

You designed it?

DA VINCI

You can't be serious. Look at it. It's hideous.

POPE JULIUS - aka The Warrior Pope - 65, enters, wearing the Renaissance equivalent of sweats. A SWISS ARMY GUARD follows bearing two glittering rapiers.

POPE JULIUS
(re the model)
What do you think, Machiavelli?
Pretty impressive, huh?

MACHIABELLI
Very impressive, Holy Father.

POPE JULIUS
The old place was looking a little shabby. What about that basilica? And the palazzo? My monument, my crowning achievement.

MACHIABELLI
All to the glory of god.

POPE JULIUS
Yes, yes. Of course.

Pope Julius holds out his hands and the Swiss Guard passes him the rapiers. Pope Julius SWISHES them in the air.

POPE JULIUS
You amuse us with your rapier wit, Machiavelli. Show us your wit with a rapier.

Pope Julius tosses a rapier to Machiavelli, who drops it.

MACHIABELLI
Sword play is not my strong suit, Holy Father.

POPE JULIUS
En garde!

Machiavelli snatches at his rapier. Julius swings lustily and the swords CLASH.

MACHIABELLI
Philip of Bourbon has marched into Florence with a fool notion of claiming her.

POPE JULIUS
So I heard.

MACHIABELLI
You support him?

POPE JULIUS

The Divine Right of Kings is enshrined
in Holy Scripture, Machiavelli. Not
that you've ever read any scripture, I
daresay.

Pope Julius heaves and swipes. Machiavelli parries.

MACHIAVELLI

"The Lord is the Spirit and wherever
the Spirit of the Lord is, he gives
freedom". Corinthians -

POPE JULIUS

Don't Corinthians me, Machiavelli.
What if this freedom business catches
on? Peasants overthrowing their
rightful rulers. Anarchy. Chaos.

They lunge and parry.

MACHIAVELLI

There is no anarchy in Florence.
Only art. Monuments to the glory of
god. You'll need our artists for
your remodel, Holy Father.

POPE JULIUS

You're threatening to withhold your
artists?

MACHIAVELLI

No. But I beg the Holy Father's
intervention.

Machiavelli hangs his blade out limply, like letting the boss
win a round of golf. Pope Julius heaves mightily and
Machiavelli's blade arcs across the chamber, decapitating the
scale model's golden dome.

MACHIAVELLI

Too good, pontiff. Far too good.

Pope Julius glares at the decapitated model, but smiles the
victor's satisfied smile. The Swiss Army Guard hands him a towel
and Julius towels off.

MACHIAVELLI

You can put a stop to this, Holy
Father.

POPE JULIUS

Bourbon's claim to the throne is
legitimate.

MACHIAVELLI

You would bring an Italian State under Spanish rule?

POPE JULIUS

Florence is a den of degeneracy. Artists. Scientists. You thumb your noses at the rest of us with your notions of artistic freedom. You tax the rich! What next? Spain will bring you into line. As God's representative I command Florence to yield.

INT. THE BRUSH AND EASEL - DAY

The usual riff raff - artists, whores, thieves, One-eyed Ron - drink and carouse.

Vespucci sings a bawdy shanty with a band of MINSTRELS.

VESPUCCI & MINSTRELS

The Captain had a daughter/Who fell
in deep sea water/And by her
squeals we knew the eels/Had found
'er private quarters.

Two Spanish Soldiers, Sgt. RIOJA and Cpl. JEREZ swagger in. A sullen silence descends.

Rioja sees the "No Spitting" sign on the wall and spits contemptuously on the floor. Jerez leers at lovely Angela.

RIOJA

We're looking for a fugitive from Spanish justice.

Rioja spots Vespucci, sloping towards the back door. Rioja and Jerez spring after him.

The Sword Swallower swings his sword. Rioja ducks. The Juggler hurls his daggers - one, two, three. They THUD into Jerez' breastplate.

The Whore fishes a stiletto from her garter and flicks it. Right between the eyes of Rioja's helmet.

The lutist CRACKS Rioja with his lute. The Fire Eater breathes flames in Jerez' face.

INT. BRUSH AND EASEL, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Rioja and Jerez limp along the dark corridor, blades stuck in breastplate and helmet. Lute strings hang off Rioja. Jerez' beard smokes.

They see the back door swinging. They sprint through it.

BEHIND THEM: Vespucci emerges from the toilet. A hand grasps his shoulder. Vespucci almost faints. It's Antonio.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Enrico crosses another day off the calendar with his quill. Machiavelli, Soderini and Vespucci sit around the desk.

MACHIAVELLI

Bourbon, Spain and the Vatican are all in this together. But why? Spain invades Florence. That I understand.

VESPUCCI

Spain'll invade anything. Put up a wall and a gate and Spain'll invade it.

MACHIAVELLI

The Pope? He commandeers all our artists for his New Vatican. But why are they trying to kill you, Amerigo...? This land of yours?

VESPUCCI

Beautiful! Land of milk and honey. Columbus thinks it's a bunch of islands. But it's not, Niccolo, it's bigger, much bigger. It's a lost continent I'm sure of it.

MACHIAVELLI

So that's their plan.

SODERINI

What's their plan, Niccolo?

MACHIAVELLI

Spain has waged wars with the English, the French, with everyone, for centuries. My agents tell me their coffers are empty. They can't afford to conquer this new land. So where do they get the money? They invade Florence and raise taxes on every citizen.

SODERINI

No. No raising taxes. Not in an -

MACHIAVELLI

There won't be an election, Piero.
Not if Bourbon gets his way. The
Pope gets out our artists for his
New Vatican and all the pagan souls
in this brave new Christendom. Oh,
it's a pretty little plan.

SODERINI

Tell me you've got a better one,
Niccolo?

MACHIAVELLI

We're going to steal The Lost
Continent from the Spanish.

VESPUCCI

I like it.

SODERINI

Steal? A whole continent?

VESPUCCI

I like it a lot.

MACHIAVELLI

And claim it for Florence.

SODERINI

Have you got proof for this claim?

Vespucci pushes his tattered old logs across the table.

VESPUCCI

Proof? Well, more what you'd call
"evidence".

Machiavelli rolls up a document and holds it aloft.

MACHIAVELLI

The Spanish don't know we don't
have a map.

INT. PALAZZO VECCHIO, MAIN GALLERY - NIGHT

Machiavelli, Soderini, Vespucci and Antonio stand before
Philip, who tries the throne out for size.

PHILIP

I see you've returned to Florence,
Amerigo. I believe you have
property belonging to Spain.

Vespucci smiles and takes the tattered, green vellum logs from his satchel.

MACHIAVELLI

A little proclamation, Bourbon.

PHILIP

Your Highness. Kindly refer to me as Your Highness.

MACHIAVELLI

Piero?

Soderini clears his throat and reads from a parchment.

SODERINI

Hear ye and let it be known that the City of Florence, doth hereby claim all lands discovered by Amerigo Vespucci on his recent world voyage, their environs and all who reside therein.

PHILIP

And what proof do you have of these claims, huh? Logs are not enough.

MACHIAVELLI

We have a map.

PHILIP

Rubbish. The map was thrown overboard.

VESPUCCI

Lucky I made a copy.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Vespucci paces the room. Machiavelli sits at his desk.

VESPUCCI

They'll want to see a map.

MACHIAVELLI

We need a map maker.

INT. MARTIN'S CELL - NIGHT

Bright moonlight shines on Martin, asleep in his cot. A rough hand clasps his mouth. His eyes shoot open. Antonio gestures - sssh. Martin nods and Antonio removes his hand.

ANTONIO

The Chancellor wants to see you.

MARTIN

Chancellor Machiavelli is no friend of the Church.

Antonio presses his dagger to Martin's throat.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Machiavelli, Soderini and Vespucci sit around the desk, watching Martin study the old logs and make calculations on a parchment.

MARTIN

These logs are a bit vague.

VESPUCCI

I'm a seafaring man. Never much for paperwork.

Martin puts down his quill.

MARTIN

You say this land is on the Western route to China?

VESPUCCI

Yes.

MARTIN

According to your readings, you're two thousand leagues from China. This is not the Western route to China.

VESPUCCI

Don't tell me what is isn't. Insolent unwhiskered pup. Call yourself a map maker!

MARTIN

Maps do not lie.

VESPUCCI

What do you know of the world out there? I sailed into the unknown, boy. I saw this land. I was there.

MACHIAVELLI

The map doesn't need to be entirely ... accurate.

MARTIN

(rises)

I draw maps for the glory of god.
It is a sacred trust. And I will
not betray it. I'm sorry. I don't
know what you've found but unless
the world is round, this is not the
trade route to China.

INT. PRINCESS JOANNA'S SITTING ROOM - DAY

Machiavelli stands before Princess Joanna.

MACHIAVELLI

You are the daughter of Spain. If
you were to speak in our defence,
surely your father will listen.

JOANNA

You would have me betray Spain?

MACHIAVELLI

Florence cherishes her freedom,
Your Highness. Look around you and
see what this freedom has yielded.
The most beautiful art, the most
beautiful city in the world.

JOANNA

My father has given me to Bourbon. I
am his now.

Machiavelli glances at a painting.

MACHIAVELLI

The Rape of the Sabine Women ...
(change of subject)
Carlo spoke so highly of you. Your
love of art and music and poetry.

JOANNA

(face lights up)
Carlo.

Joanna steps forward and winces in pain.

MACHIAVELLI

Your Highness? Are you all right?

Machiavelli stares at the mirror behind Joanna. It reflects
ugly red welts on her back and shoulders.

MACHIAVELLI

Your husband?

JOANNA

I cannot help you. Good evening,
Chancellor.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Machiavelli gazes through a window at Florence's dreaming
spires. Soderini paces the room.

MACHIAVELLI

I've glimpsed the future. I have
seen what this man will do and it's
bloody and it's brutal.

SODERINI

We have no choice, Niccolo.

Enrico crosses another day off the calendar.

ENRICO

The Spanish Army is four days'
march from our city walls.

SODERINI

We're defenceless. We have no army.
Commander Pol Roger has fled and we
don't have a mercenary to bless
ourselves with.

MACHIAVELLI

They're French, Piero. What do you
expect?

ENRICO

I fear we shall have to negotiate,
sir.

MACHIAVELLI

No.

SODERINI

You get above yourself,
Machiavelli. I am the elected
leader. We must negotiate.

MACHIAVELLI

Florence will not negotiate with
tyrants.

INT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

A dirty, sweaty Lisa heaves a bag of pigment into a mortar.
She grunts as she lifts a barrel of water and SLOSHES it
with the pigment.

MICHELANGELO (O.C.)

Lisa?

LISA

Haven't you heard? They abolished slavery fifteen hundred years ago.

INT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Lisa stands before Machiavelli.

MACHIARELLI

Michel tells me you and the map maker are close.

Michelangelo carves David who has taken shape - chiselled buttocks, generous genitalia.

MICHELANGELO

Not as close as she'd like.

Lisa glares at Michelangelo.

MACHIARELLI

Florence needs him. You are going to convince him -

LISA

How am I going to do that? He's a monk.

MACHIARELLI

You're an attractive girl.

LISA

Oh. My feminine wiles, right? Fine, except women are not allowed in the Priory. Our presence defiles the holy men of god.

MACHIARELLI

There's got to be a way.

Lisa looks slyly at Michelangelo and Raphael.

LISA

Well, San Marco have offered Michel and Raphy a commission.

MICHELANGELO

Oh, no. Don't bring us into it.

LISA

And I could accompany them.

MACHIAVELLI
 (getting the picture)
 Artists have to work at night.

RAPHAEL
 So we don't corrupt the monks with
 our degenerate habits.

LISA
 There's a condition. I work on the
 mural. And I put my name to it.

MACHIAVELLI
 That's two conditions.

MICHELANGELO
 No. What if we're caught? Did you
 know they're got a dungeon? Whips
 and racks and instruments they
 shove up your -

MACHIAVELLI
 How do you know?

Raphael and Lisa smirk.

MICHELANGELO
 I have friends. I've been told.

MACHIAVELLI
 (to Lisa)
 Deal.

LISA
 Not so fast. And I get commissions
 from the City. Public buildings.
 State galleries.

MACHIAVELLI
 (wearily)
 Deal.

EXT. PRIORY, ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The wall-eyed, stump-toothed Keeper of the Implements opens
 the door to Michelangelo and Raphael, who drag in trestles
 and ladders.

RAPHAEL
 Spare us a hand, brother?

The Keeper of the Implements grunts and shrinks away as if
 from the devil himself.

MICHELANGELO
Bloody fanatics.

Lisa, dressed as a male apprentice, hair tucked beneath a cap, staggers in with a load of ladders and paint.

The Keeper of the Implements glares at her suspiciously and sniffs. Lisa bares her teeth and GROWLS and he backs away.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Michelangelo and Raphael lie on the scaffold and paint the ceiling above them, which is illuminated by the ring of lit candles studded in their brimmed caps. Paint drips in Michelangelo's eye.

MICHELANGELO
God, I hate murals.

Lisa stops painting and hands him a cloth.

LISA
Stop whingeing.

The rickety scaffold sways with their movements.

LISA
Are you sure this is safe?

RAPHAEL
Right as rain.

LISA
Fine. I'll go find him.

INT. PRIORY, HALLWAY/STAIRS - NIGHT

Lisa pads silently along the hallway. She sees the coast is clear and climbs the stairs.

INT. PRIORY, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Lisa glides through the shadows, counting the doors as she passes. She quietly opens a door.

A MONK kneels on the floor, scourging his bare back with a cat o' nine tails.

Lisa closes the door. She quietly opens the next door. It CREAKS. She slides in.

INT. MARTIN'S CELL - NIGHT

Lisa grimaces. The cell is empty.

INT. ARCHIVE - NIGHT

Dusty MANUSCRIPTS and MAPS lie on a desk. Martin gazes at the BLOOD-RED folio he holds and opens it.

MARTIN

Ptolemy.

Martin finds the right page. He scratches calculations on a parchment with his quill.

VOICES and FOOTSTEPS approach. Martin hurriedly replaces the folios on the shelf and blows out the lamp. He scurries behind a bookshelf as -

- Prior John, the Archivist, Prince Philip and the Papal Secretary enter.

PHILIP

Vespucci's a fool. There's no way he could have blundered onto this land.

PAPAL SECRETARY

They say they have a map.

PHILIP

They're bluffing.

Martin strains to listen. He spots his calculations and manuscript, left on the desk.

PAPAL SECRETARY

Nevertheless, The Holy Father insists the folios return to Rome. For safekeeping.

The Papal Secretary takes the blood-red folio from its shelf.

ARCHIVIST

They have been under our protection for centuries.

PAPAL SECRETARY

It's too great a risk.

Prior John picks up the calculations.

PRIOR JOHN

What's this?

The Archivist takes a look and recognizes Martin's calculations.

A hand grasps Martin's shoulder. He panics, but it's Lisa, still dressed as a boy. He's confused but then he looks into her eyes.

ARCHIVIST
Someone's been at the Ptolemy.

PRIOR JOHN
Who?

The Archivist looks ready to confess.

Lisa and Martin sneak out.

INT. ARCHIVES, STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Martin and Lisa scurry up the stairs. Followed by Prior John, Philip, The Archivist and the Papal Secretary.

PRIOR JOHN
This is the boy who saved
Machiavelli?

ARCHIVIST
Yes, Prior John.

PRIOR JOHN
I'll deal with you later.

INT. PRIORY, LIBRARY/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Prior John and the others charge through the library and along the corridor.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Prior John and the others race into the chapel. They see the ladders and scaffold.

PRIOR JOHN
Who's up there?

MICHELANGELO
No one. Just us artists.

Philip shakes the rickety ladder.

PRIOR JOHN
Come down here.

RAPHAEL
Wouldn't want to defile you or
anything.

Philip shakes the ladder - harder.

PRIOR JOHN
I said come down here.

The scaffold CREAKS and GROANS and collapses. Pots of paint, brushes and Michelangelo, Raphael and Lisa CRASH to the floor. Paint showers Prior John, Philip, the Archivist and the Papal Secretary.

MICHELANGELO
Oww. Christ Almighty.

ARCHIVIST
Blasphemer.

The Archivist grabs a length of scaffolding and thrashes Michelangelo.

MICHELANGELO
God, I swear, no more baby Jesuses.

The Archivist thrashes him again.

PRIOR JOHN
Have you seen a boy?

RAPHAEL
A boy? No.

MICHELANGELO
Just us boys.

RAPHAEL
Three boys.

MICHELANGELO
Painting.

Philip peers at Lisa. She bows her head. Philip tries to remember "his" face.

PRIOR JOHN
They're only painters.

PHILIP
The map-maker.

Prior John nods his agreement. The Archivist thrashes Michelangelo once more for good measure.

INT. CHAPEL, CONFESSIONAL - NIGHT

Martin peers through the confessional grille and sees Prior John, Philip, The Archivist and The Papal Secretary leave.

INT MACHIAVELLI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Martin and Lisa, still dressed as a Boy Apprentice, stand before Machiavelli, da Vinci and Vespucci.

MARTIN

It is written about in ancient Chinese scrolls. Norse chronicles describe it. The Phoenicians drew maps of it.

VESPUCCI

Of what?

MARTIN

A huge land mass. A lost continent. Ptolemy called it Novus Mundus.

MACHIAVELLI

The New World.

VESPUCCI

The New World! As soon as I laid sight of her I knew she was special! El Dorado. The Fountain of Youth. Who's Ptolemy?

MARTIN

A Greek astronomer. He believed the world was round -

VESPUCCI

Round? You're mad, boy.

DA VINCI

The boy's right. I've known about it for years.

MACHIAVELLI

Well, who would have thought it.

Machiavelli gestures - go on.

MARTIN

Ptolemy charted a map with eight thousand map points. And I think his map points of Novus Mundus correspond with Commander Vespucci's logs.

VESPUCCI

The New World. Wait till bloody
Columbus hears about this.

MACHIARELLI

You say Columbus didn't discover
this land, Amerigo?

VESPUCCI

No. He found a few islands. Calls
them the West Indies.

MACHIARELLI

But Bourbon knew about the Ptolemy.
from his chum Prior John. So he
knew about the New World.

MARTIN

The monks thought Ptolemy was
heresy. Until Columbus found his
islands. Then they knew there was
something out there.

MACHIARELLI

These map points of Ptolemy.
They're in the Priory of San Marco?

MARTIN

No. They've been removed.

MACHIARELLI

Removed to where?

MARTIN

The Vatican.

Machiavelli's heart sinks.

INT. LISA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Martin gazes at the paintings on the wall.

MARTIN

You painted these?

LISA

Yes.

MARTIN

They're beautiful.

LISA

Thank you.

MARTIN

Truly you have a gift.

LISA

But no one wants to buy them. I don't have a "name".

Martin gazes at the painting of the Archangel Gabriel. The candle flickers.

MARTIN

Is that - ?

LISA

Yes.

MARTIN

Do I really look like that?

LISA

A little artistic licence, perhaps.

The lamp gutters and dies. Darkness.

LISA

I'm out of candles.

A SCRAPE of flint on flint. A spark. A taper flames.

Martin lights a candle on the brim of Lisa's cap. He lights another. A third. Illuminating her beautiful face.

MARTIN

You're an artist.

LISA

You're an artist.

MARTIN

A humble map maker.

LISA

You're more than a map maker.
You're an artist.

Their lips draw closer.

MARTIN

(change of subject)
Will Florence really be destroyed?

LISA

No. Machiavelli will think of something. He always does.

No more subjects to change. Their lips move closer. And touch.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S VILLA - DAWN

Machiavelli drunkenly guzzles a goblet of Asti and refills it. He watches the sun rise over his beloved Florence.

MACHIAVELLI

(slurred)

I'm out of ideas, Antonio. Bereft. Not a s-single idea.

Antonio cannot find any words. A KNOCK at the door. Antonio ushers Joanna in. She removes the hood from her head.

MACHIAVELLI

Your Highness. Some refreshment?

JOANNA

My husband is sleeping. I don't have much time.

Machiavelli tries to look sober.

JOANNA

My husband plans to strip Florence of all her treasures. Her gold. Her art. Everything of value will be sold to the highest bidder. The rest he will burn to the ground.

Machiavelli is suddenly sober.

MACHIAVELLI

Oh, my beautiful Florence.

Joanna takes his hands in hers.

JOANNA

There must be something you can do.

Machiavelli squeezes her hands.

INT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Michelangelo's chisel slips. A chunk of marble flies off David.

MICHELANGELO

You want us to break into the Vatican?

MACHIAVELLI

That's the plan.

Machiavelli picks up a goblet of wine, next to a bowl of fruit which Raphael is painting. Raphael frowns at the disruption.

MICHELANGELO

You're as crazy as da Vinci.

MACHIARELLI

The Pope has asked Master da Vinci to recruit artists for his New Vatican.

MICHELANGELO

(rubs his thrashed
shoulder)

No. No more angels. No more baby
Jesuses.

MACHIARELLI

You don't have to take the job. I
need someone on the inside for
twenty-four hours.

RAPHAEL

They'll know it was an inside job.

MACHIARELLI

Not if they don't know there was a
robbery.

Machiavelli thinks better about drinking the wine. He takes an apple from a fruit bowl. Raphael pauses mid-brushstroke and sighs.

MICHELANGELO

And what if they do find out? The
scourge? The rack? Ritual
disembowelment? It'll make the
Spanish Inquisition look like a
communion breakfast.

Machiavelli moves next to David, whose ample member is at his face level.

MACHIARELLI

You would turn your back on
Florence? She who has suckled you
at her bosom, nurtured these
fragile seeds of talent until they
have bloomed gloriously into
genius.

MICHELANGELO

If push comes to shove.

MACHIAVELLI

Listen, you two. Once Spain takes over you can forget all this.

Machiavelli swats David on his buffed buttock.

MACHIAVELLI

Bourbon will flog everything you've ever done. The rest he will destroy. It'll be all fig leaves and nativity scenes for you, my boy.

Machiavelli's eye falls on David's prodigious genitalia.

MACHIAVELLI

That's if they don't execute you for blasphemy.

INT. FLORENCE PRISON CELL - DAY

A filthy unshaven prisoner, FRANCO the FORGER, 55, slumps, shackled to the wall. The door CREAKS open.

INT. FLORENCE PRISON, VISITING ROOM - DAY

Franco, short, round and shifty sits opposite Machiavelli.

MACHIAVELLI

Hello, Franco. They treating you well?

FRANCO

Well enough. 'Cept for the rats. I can't stand rats.

MACHIAVELLI

There's rats in your cell?

FRANCO

No. Rats in the food.

MACHIAVELLI

I need your help, Franco.

FRANCO

Oh that's nice. You're the one who banged me up in here.

MACHIAVELLI

Florence needs you.

FRANCO

Right now I'm not thinking what I
can do for Florence. But what
Florence can do for me.

MACHIABELLI

How does a full pardon sound?

INT. DA VINCI'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Martin, Antonio, Vespucci, Michelangelo and Raphael sit
around and watch da Vinci and Lisa pin architectural
blueprints to a board. Machiavelli and a freshly shaved and
bathed Franco enter.

MACHIABELLI

Everyone here? Do you all know -

MICHELANGELO

- Franco -

RAPHAEL

- the Forger.

Raphael advances threateningly on Franco.

RAPHAEL

I thought you were in jail.

(to the others)

He's been knocking out cheap copies
of our work for years.

FRANCO

Cheap copies? Think of it as
homage.

RAPHAEL

Forgeries.

FRANCO

Reproductions.

MACHIABELLI

Enough. We need an ink-and-paper
man.

Machiavelli gestures to Vespucci's logs, sitting on the
bench. Franco puts a crude loupe to his eye and studies them.

FRANCO

Egyptian papyrus. Nautical bond.
Twenty-four ply, cross hatch. Very
rare these days. It'll cost you.

MICHELANGELO

That'd be right.

MACHIABELLI

The ink?

FRANCO

(peers through his loupe)
 Hmm. Cobalt. Cadmium and what's
 this? A pinch of cardamon. Long
 time since I've seen that.

MACHIABELLI

But you can mix it?

FRANCO

Of course. I'm Franco. I'm an
 artist.

Michelangelo scoffs. Machiavelli moves to the blueprints.

MACHIABELLI

Right. The Vatican. These are the
 blueprints. As you can see it is a
 bastion. The most heavily fortified in
 Europe. Patrolled by five hundred
 Swiss Army Guards - trained assassins,
 the most lethal killers in the world.

Michelangelo, Raphael and Vespucci look worried.

MICHELANGELO

And we're a couple of artists, an
 artist's model -

LISA

Excuse me!

MICHELANGELO

- a map maker, a politician, and a
 geriatric fruitcake.

DA VINCI

The only fruit around here is you,
 Michel.

MICHELANGELO

Shut it, old man. Did I leave anyone
 out? Oh, yes, a security guard.

MACHIABELLI

We've got no choice. We have to
 break in.

(MORE)

MACHIAVELLI (CONT'D)

Get the proof of Amerigo's discovery. Then our young friend here will draw us a map.

MARTIN

I'm sorry. I cannot steal from the Holy Father. It's like stealing from god himself.

MACHIAVELLI

Julius is not god. He just thinks he's god.

MARTIN

I'm no thief in the night. I will not break into the Holy Palace.

MACHIAVELLI

I am giving you a priceless opportunity. Commander Vespucci has discovered The New World. And you will be the first man to map it.

MARTIN

The pope is god's representative on earth. I have sworn by all that's holy to serve him. I'm sorry.

Martin hurries out. Machiavelli gestures to Lisa - get him.

EXT. FLORENCE, RIVERSIDE - NIGHT

Martin strides along the riverside. He stops and gazes up the bright stars, searching. Lisa races after him.

LISA

Did Master da Vinci not say, follow the stars?

MARTIN

The monks back in France all believed in me. Brother Placidus was like a father to me. "You will put us on the map," he used to say. I've failed him and I've failed myself.

Lisa spots the cathedral nearby. She takes Martin's hand.

INT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Lisa and Martin gaze at the magnificent architecture, the stained glass windows, the ceiling murals.

LISA

The artists of free Florence
created this beauty. For the glory
of god. And Philip will sell it
off. Or destroy it all. It is your
duty as a map maker, as an artist,
to reveal the truth. Prove the
monks' belief in you. Draw the map.

Martin wavers.

INT. DA VINCI'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Machiavelli and da Vinci stand by the blueprints. Martin and
Lisa sit down with Michelangelo, Raphael, Vespucci and Antonio.
Machiavelli smiles a welcome back.

MACHIARELLI

You know the layout, Master. Where's
the Ptolemy likely to be?

DA VINCI

(points to blueprint)

This is the Papal Crypt. The tombs of
every pope are here. St. Peter himself
is buried here. This is a vault under
the crypt. That's where the Ptolemy
is, I'm sure of it.

Machiavelli and da Vinci refer to the blueprints throughout.

MACHIARELLI

The crypt is under the papal
chapel. The chapel is ringed by an
open courtyard. Guarded at all
points by Swiss Army. This inner
building rings the courtyard.

DA VINCI

Which is ringed by another courtyard.
And then an outer building. Swiss Army
Guards at all entrances and exits. No
blind spots.

MACHIARELLI

And the outside of the building is
moated and guarded. Every second of
every day.

MICHELANGELO

So how do we get in undetected?

RAPHAEL

And how do we get away?

Machiavelli gestures at the boat-that-sails-underwater.

DA VINCI

The boat-that-sails-underwater.

MICHELANGELO

You can't be serious.

RAPHAEL

You're not getting me in that.

MACHIARELLI

(points to blueprint)

You're already in here. Amerigo will command the craft.

VESPUCCI

Hold on. Does it work?

DA VINCI

Well, it hasn't been fully tested.

VESPUCCI

Has it been tested at all?

MACHIARELLI

Call it a maiden voyage. We sail under the Tiber which flows into the moat.

(points to blueprint)

Which feeds these viaducts which feed water to the Papal Palace.

DA VINCI

These are the bathrooms. Along this corridor, across this atrium, up these stairs here and you're on the roof of the outer building.

MICHELANGELO

How do we get over the courtyard? Fly?

Leonardo gestures to the feathered wings.

DA VINCI

Exactly.

MICHELANGELO

You've really lost it this time, old man.

MACHIARELLI

Go on, master.

DA VINCI

A hundred paces across the courtyard.
Six cubit wingspan. I can fly someone
in as long as they weigh no more than,
say, a hundred and ten pounds.

Beat. All eyes turn to Lisa. She smiles bravely.

DA VINCI

But she's strapped in. She can only
land on a flat roof.

MICHELANGELO

The chapel roof is angled. Steeply.

MACHIARELLI

The Pope's residence. Here. It's
flat. So, we've got Lisa on the
roof of the residence. We throw a
rope across. She secures it and we
pulley across. Fine. Now we're all
on the roof of the inner building.

MICHELANGELO

How do we get across to the chapel?

DA VINCI

The chapel is the oldest building in
the Vatican. The supports are wood.
(indicates a cross bow.)
One of my WMD's. Ten times the
tensile strength of a conventional
bow.

Raphael picks up the crossbow.

DA VINCI

I'll modify it to fire rope and you
pulley yourselves across.

Raphael aims the crossbow.

DA VINCI

Careful -

The crossbow accidentally fires and the arrow rips through a
shattered window, totalling it. Outside, we hear a CRASH,
glass SHATTER, a HUMAN CRY.

DA VINCI

Weapons don't kill, you know. It's
the idiots who use them.

MACHIAVELLI

So now we've only got one problem.
 (pinpoints on the
 blueprint)
 Back here. The atrium.

DA VINCI

The only way forward. One way in,
 one way out. And you have to get
 past two guards.

MACHIAVELLI

No windows. No vents.

MICHELANGELO

It's impossible.

DA VINCI

Unless the guards don't see you.

RAPHAEL

You've invented some invisibility
 machine, have you?

MICHELANGELO

Hold on. Where are you going to be
 during all this?

DA VINCI

I'm the brains. You're just a hired
 hand, Michel.

MACHIAVELLI

The Master is needed here. He has
 other things to attend to.

MICHELANGELO

(mutters)
 Can't wait to find out what.

MACHIAVELLI

Carry on, Master.

DA VINCI

Antonio, would you mind? The last
 painting in that rack?

Antonio rifles through the rack of canvases and holds up a
 life-sized, almost photographic self-portrait of Da Vinci.
 Michelangelo goggles. Raphael gawks.

RAPHAEL

What the f - ?

DA VINCI

A little experiment of mine. Super-realism I call it. All light and shade really. One day there will be a machine that takes - never mind.

MACHIABELLI

What do the guards actually see?

DA VINCI

Red velvet wall paper. A gilded mirror. Clock. Marble inlay tall boy. And a Botticelli Crucifixion. Which is utter rubbish actually.

MACHIABELLI

The Master is suggesting we paint that on a life-size screen. The guards think the screen is real. And we can pass behind the screen.

Lisa, Michelangelo and Raphael look doubtfully at each other.

MACHIABELLI

You're the greatest artists in history - so you keep saying.

DA VINCI

A realistic still life portrait. Any apprentice could knock it off.

EXT. MACHIABELLI'S VILLA - NIGHT

Antonio sees Machiavelli to his door.

MACHIABELLI

Good night, Antonio. Sleep well. We have much to do.

ANTONIO

Good night, Chancellor.

Antonio departs.

INT. MACHIABELLI'S VILLA - NIGHT

Machiavelli hangs his cap on the stand.

MACHIABELLI

Sweetheart? I'm home.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Machiavelli enters, ripping off clothes in anticipation. Rioja and Jerez hold daggers to Chastity's throat.

RIOJA

His Highness wishes to see you.

INT. PRINCE PHILIP'S SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

A lustful Philip stares at the portrait of Lisa/St Catherine. The door opens and Rioja and Jerez shove Machiavelli in.

PHILIP

Machiavelli. In three days the Holy Father will journey from Rome and I will be crowned King of Florence.

MACHIAVELLI

So you can steal our treasure and empty our coffers.

PHILIP

You forgot the rape and pillage, but no mind.

MACHIAVELLI

All to finance your invasion of The New World.

PHILIP

You figured it out, huh? I admire you, Machiavelli. You rose from the gutter and you've turned Florence into what she is. It's against the natural order of things, but that makes it all the more remarkable. It's true. I have great plans. They go far beyond Florence.

MACHIAVELLI

You want to enslave the entire world.

PHILIP

No, merely rule it. You've got the greatest mind in Europe. You're a man of vaulting ambition. Why limit your horizons to Florence? Join me, Machiavelli, and we will rule the world.

Machiavelli is taken aback.

PHILIP

I see you're tempted. Join me.

EXT. VATICAN - DAY

Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and Lisa, disguised as a Boy Apprentice approach the city gates with crates marked Artist Supplies on a cart.

INT. PAPAL RESIDENCE FOYER - DAY

An efficient SWISS ARMY CAPTAIN studies the documents Michelangelo hands him. He peers suspiciously at the crates of Artist Supplies.

CAPTAIN

Artists.

He looks suspiciously, very suspiciously at Lisa. He waves them through.

INT. VATICAN STUDIO - DAY

Michelangelo, Raphael and Lisa unpack the crossbow and the hang glider/flying machine from the crates.

INT. ATRIUM - DAY

Two SWISS ARMY GUARDS stand rigidly to attention.

Michelangelo, Raphael and Lisa measure the atrium, the blue velvet couch, the Botticelli on the wall.

INT. VATICAN STUDIO - DAY

Lisa paints walls, Raphael paints the life-size blue velvet couch, Michelangelo, paints the marble tall boy and da Vinci paints the Botticelli, on the giant atrium-width canvas.

RAPHAEL

Twelve hours till midnight.

MICHELANGELO

We'll never make it.

LISA

We have to make it.

EXT. RIVER TIBER - NIGHT

The calm waters of the Tiber ripple. A periscope surfaces.

EXT. MOAT - NIGHT

The ripple progresses along the Vatican moat.

EXT. VIADUCT/TUNNEL - NIGHT

The boat-that-sails-underwater surfaces. Antonio, Martin, Machiavelli, and Vespucci clamber out gasping for breath.

MACHIAVELLI

Well done, Amerigo. We'll be back.

VESPUCCI

Godspeed.

EXT. VIADUCT/TUNNEL - NIGHT

Machiavelli, Martin, and Antonio pause at the iron gate to a water tunnel.

Antonio takes a steel lever from his shoulder bag and heaves. And again. The iron gate SNAPS and they move into the tunnel.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

They creep along the tunnel.

INT. WATER PIPE - NIGHT

Antonio climbs up the inside of the pipe. He hammers at a grille at the top of the pipe.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Antonio clambers into the bathroom. Steam rises from the communal baths. Antonio lowers a rope down the pipe.

INT. WATER PIPE - NIGHT

Martin grabs the rope and climbs up the pipe.

INT. VATICAN STUDIO - NIGHT

Lisa, Michelangelo and Lisa gaze at the finished work. It's so real, Raphael shakes his head in disbelief.

RAPHAEL

Do you think it'll ever catch on?

MICHELANGELO

Never.

A bell TOLLS.

INT. VATICAN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The faint sounds of Gregorian CHANTS.

Machiavelli, Martin, and Antonio slip along the corridor. Pause.

MICHELANGELO

The priests return to their cells
after vespers. Then the Guards secure
the building.

The chanting finishes. All wait apprehensively.

INT. ATRIUM - NIGHT

Michelangelo enters with a blueprint and whistles a jaunty tune. Lisa and Martin follow with the rolled-up screen. Two brutal-looking SWISS ARMY GUARDS grip their lances.

MICHELANGELO

Only us. Couldn't sleep. Thought
we'd get on with it.

They set up ladders and hurriedly secure ropes and raise the ROLLED SCREEN to roof level.

A heavy door OPENS. Marching BOOTS.

INT. HALL/ATRIUM - NIGHT

Two relief Swiss Army Guards enter through HEAVY OAK DOOR. They march forward. They face the two Swiss Guards they are relieving in a ceremonial change over.

INT. VATICAN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

In that instant, when all four guards are not looking, Lisa and Raphael tug hidden cords. The super real screen unfurls in front of the three of them.

The two relieving Swiss Guards turn ninety degrees and face the atrium - the screen actually.

Not a muscle moves. The first two Swiss Guards march through the door and close it with a bang.

INT. ATRIUM - NIGHT

Lisa and Raphael join Michelangelo in the narrow space behind the screen. They secure the bottom of the screen with weights.

Machiavelli, Martin and Antonio join them.

EXT. OUTER BUILDING, ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Antonio and Martin help Lisa into da Vinci's hang glider.

Martin squeezes her hand. Lisa summons her courage. She spreads her feathery wings and leaps from the rooftop.

And flies. Martin's heart is in his mouth.

MICHELANGELO
I don't believe it.

BELOW: Two Swiss Army Guards march across the courtyard.

EXT. VATICAN SKIES - NIGHT

Lisa adjusts her direction, but a cable snaps. She loses altitude. Then direction.

EXT. OUTER BUILDING, ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The five watch open-mouthed.

MICHELANGELO
Now I believe it.

EXT. VATICAN SKIES - NIGHT

Lisa jiggles her wings left, then right. She drops. Fast. And skews toward the wall. At the last second she veers left and careers through an open window.

INT. POPE'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Pope Julius SNORES in a king size four poster. CRASH. He awakes with a start. He stares at the vision of Lisa rising from the floor, angelic in her WHITE DRESS, her wings outstretched. Julius crosses himself in awe.

POPE JULIUS
Do you have a message?

LISA
Pray.

POPE JULIUS
Pray?

LISA
For the sins of the world. On your
knees. Hands together. Eyes closed.

Pope Julius clammers out of bed and onto his knees. Lisa slips out the chamber door.

INT. PAPAL ANTE-ROOM - NIGHT

Lisa spots a pair of SWISS ARMY guarding the ante-chamber door. She slips back inside.

EXT. OUTER BUILDING ROOF - NIGHT

Martin anxiously scans the Papal chamber window.

MARTIN

I'm going after her.

MACHIARELLI

No. If it comes down to Florence or the girl, it's Florence.

INT. POPE'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Pope Julius opens his eyes and sees Lisa still standing there. She spreads her wings. Julius closes his eyes and prays.

LISA

About the sins of the world? It wasn't Eve. It was Adam. And the snake.

Lisa slips out the door and onto a balcony.

EXT. POPE'S TERRACE GARDEN - NIGHT

Lisa looks round herself in despair. She sees more SWISS ARMY GUARDS in the courtyard below.

She sees the hanging gardens against the wall. She removes the wings and stashes them behind giant pot plants. She hauls herself up the hanging garden trellis.

EXT. OUTER BUILDING ROOF - NIGHT

Martin points to Lisa climbing up the hanging garden.

EXT. POPE'S TERRACE GARDEN - NIGHT

The trellis gives way and Lisa hangs, three storeys up.

EXT. OUTER BUILDING ROOF - NIGHT

Martin bites his lower lip

EXT. POPE'S TERRACE GARDEN - NIGHT

Lisa clambers up and onto the roof.

EXT. BOTH ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Antonio swings a rope across the courtyard. It snakes through the air -

- to Lisa. She catches it and ties it around a gargoyle on the rooftop.

Antonio fixes the hook and pulley to the rope. Martin grasps the hook. He glances at the Swiss Army Guards below, but they see nothing. He swings across the courtyard. Lisa helps him clamber onto the rooftop.

Martin sends the pulley and hook back. Raphael climbs in. Michelangelo grips his hand.

MICHELANGELO

Just another cross we artists bear.

Antonio pushes Raphael out.

INT. VATICAN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The Two Swiss Army Guards remain on guard. Not a muscle flickers.

A gentle breeze ripples the screen. One Guard raises an eyebrow a millimeter. He watches the screen, but it doesn't move again.

EXT. OUTER BUILDING ROOF - NIGHT

Michelangelo sees Antonio pulley across to the other side. Michelangelo waits at his post by the secured rope.

EXT. INNER BUILDING ROOFTOP, NORTH SIDE - NIGHT

Machiavelli, Martin, Raphael, Antonio and Lisa crouch behind carved statues of the saints.

The bell TOLLS. The clock in the clock tower reads 12.30. Two Swiss Guards march along the perimeter of the courtyard. They reach the end of the courtyard, about turn and return.

MACHIARELLI

The guards use that clock for their changes. We've got fifteen minutes to get in. And fifteen minutes to get out.

Antonio aims the crossbow at the chapel across the courtyard. He fires and a rope snakes across the courtyard. The arrow THUDS into the wooden support of the clock tower.

Martin attaches a pulley and launches himself. He gets half way across. And the arrow bends.

Three quarters of the way across. The arrow bends more.

Almost there, but the rope sags and Martin hangs there.

The arrow SNAPS. Martin grabs at a stone demon with one hand and grasps the rope and arrows with the other. He swings fifty feet above the courtyard.

Martin hauls himself up, face to face with the demon, then clambers onto the roof. He ties the rope around the demon.

EXT. INNER BUILDING/CHAPEL ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Machiavelli and Lisa watch Antonio test the pulley and launch himself forward. He skims along the rope to the chapel rooftop and Martin helps him up. A pebble dislodges. It CLATTERS down the roof and onto the courtyard below.

Everyone hides. The Swiss Army Guard looks up and reaches for his sword. He scans the rooftops. Nothing.

Antonio sends back the pulley. Raphael grabs it. Antonio removes a harness from his satchel and assembles it.

EXT. SISTINE CHAPEL ROOFTOP/WALL, WEST SIDE - NIGHT

Raphael sits in a harness swinging in mid-air. Antonio slowly lowers it until Raphael reaches the stained glass window. He jerks the rope and Antonio stops lowering the harness.

Raphael takes glass cutters from his belt and cuts the glass panel of Adam and Eve.

ON THE ROOFTOP: Machiavelli looks anxiously at the clock - twenty to one.

ON THE WALL: Raphael removes the glass panel.

INT. SISTINE CHAPEL - NIGHT

Raphael enters through the cut window.

EXT. SISTINE CHAPEL ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Antonio lowers Martin in the harness.

INT. SISTINE CHAPEL - NIGHT

Martin clambers through the cut glass window.

INT. SISTINE CHAPEL - NIGHT

Martin and Raphael march through the chapel.

MARTIN
What is this?

RAPHAEL
The Sistine Chapel. The Pope wants
Michel to do the ceiling.

Martin glances at the plain ceiling.

MARTIN
Could do with it.

INT. PAPAL CRYPT - NIGHT

Raphael and Martin wander through the tombs of the Popes. They come to a door. It's bronze. And it's locked.

RAPHAEL
Oh no. It's one of those number locks.

MARTIN
His birthday? His coronation?

EXT. CHAPEL ROOF - NIGHT

Machiavelli looks worried. Clock reads 12.45.

INT. PAPAL CRYPT - NIGHT

The bell TOLLS. Martin and Raphael look glumly at each other.

RAPHAEL
His wife's birthday? His mistress? All
popes have got mistresses.

Martin looks at an inscription on Pope Julius's vacant tomb.

MARTIN
"Glory be to the mighty who conquer."

RAPHAEL
You think praying will help?

MARTIN
Luke. The third book of the gospel.
Chapter six. Verse fourteen. Three.
Six. Fourteen.

Raphael spins the tumblers. He turns the handle and the door swings open.

INT. SECRET CHAMBER - NIGHT

Martin and Raphael pass a bloody shroud, an ancient trunk.

RAPHAEL
The shroud of Turin.

MARTIN
The Ark of the Covenant.

Martin points - bookshelves.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Swiss Army Guards button tunics, buckle their sword belts and prepare for the Change of the Guards.

INT. SECRET CHAMBER - NIGHT

Martin and Raphael rifle through ancient books and folios.

INT. INNER BUILDING, ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Machiavelli looks anxiously at the clock - 12.55.

INT. SECRET CHAMBER - NIGHT

Raphael scans a dusty tome titled "Book of Revelations".

RAPHAEL
Hey, there is a second coming. It's on
January 21st -

Martin finds the BLOOD RED folio - Ptolemy.

MARTIN
Got it!

Martin takes a second, blood-red folio from his backpack and swaps them over.

EXT. CHAPEL ROOFTOP/INNER BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Machiavelli looks anxiously at the clock: 12.58. He signals frantically to Antonio on the chapel rooftop.

Antonio looks up at the clock. He takes the cross bow and fires straight up.

Arrow and rope snake through the air. And thump into the eave of the tower roof. Antonio monkeys up the rope.

INT. CRYPT/CHAPEL - NIGHT

Raphael closes the crypt door and spins the tumblers. He and Martin race through the papal tombs.

INT. SISTINE CHAPEL - NIGHT

Martin and Raphael sprint through the chapel.

EXT. CLOCK TOWER - NIGHT

12.59.

Antonio grabs a wooden chock off the floor and shoves it in the giant cogs of the clock mechanism.

EXT. CHAPEL WALL - NIGHT

Raphael refits the stained glass window.

EXT. CHAPEL ROOF - NIGHT

Raphael clammers onto the chapel roof.

CUT TO:

Machiavelli, Martin, Lisa, Antonio and Raphael race across the chapel roof.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Swiss Army Captain frowns through the window - it's still 12.59.

INT. CLOCK TOWER - NIGHT

The cogs strain. The wooden chock bends.

The clock hands move within seconds of 1.00 a.m.

The giant bell hammer creaks ominously.

EXT. INNER/OUTER ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Machiavelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Antonio, Martin and Lisa race across the rooftop.

Lisa grabs the pulley and hook.

Michelangelo grips the rope on the outer rooftop.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

They race along the corridor.

EXT. CLOCK TOWER - NIGHT

The wooden chock snaps.

The bell hammer swings and the clock strikes. Once.

INT. GUARD ROOM - NIGHT

The Change of the Guards march across the courtyard.

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

The gang clatters down the stairs.

INT. PAPAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The atrium Change of the Guard march down a corridor.

AHEAD: the screen.

INT. PAPAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The gang races along the corridor.

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The atrium Change of Guard marches along the corridor.

ON: The Gang -

ON: The Change of Guard.

They reach the screen simultaneously.

INT. ATRIUM, BEHIND SCREEN - NIGHT

The gang hold their breath in the atrium behind the screen. Lisa and Raphael scurry up the ladders.

INT. ATRIUM - NIGHT

The Four Swiss Guards ceremoniously face each other for the change over.

And in the instant they all turn away - Michelangelo pulls on the cord, raising the screen. Lisa and Raphael cut the ropes and grab the rolled-up screen.

The relief guards look at Michelangelo whistling jauntily, and Raphael and Lisa taking notes.

MICHELANGELO

Evening. Anywhere a man might get a cup of tea? Hmm?

INT. BATHROOMS - NIGHT

Machiavelli, Martin and Antonio clamber down the pipe.

EXT. VIADUCT/TUNNEL - NIGHT

Vespucci helps Machiavelli into the boat-that-sails-underwater.

VESPUCCI

Did you get it?

Machiavelli holds up his satchel and grins.

INT. BOAT-THAT-SAILS-UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Packed in like sardines. Martin and Antonio row. Vespucci steers. Machiavelli peers through the crude periscope.

The submarine lists forward and descends. It THUMPS the bottom of the river. It springs a leak. And another.

EXT. TIBER RIVER - NIGHT

Vespucci, Martin, Antonio and Machiavelli - holding the satchel aloft - surface and are swept along on the Tiber's currents.

INT. PALAZZO VECCHIO - DAY

Philip sits comfortably on the throne.

PHILIP

Do you accept me as your rightful ruler? Long to reign over you?

Soderini and Enrico stand before Philip.

SODERINI

Yes, Your Highness.

PHILIP

Majesty. It's Majesty. Get used to it. Practise it.

SODERINI & ENRICO

Your Majesty.

PHILIP

Where is Machiavelli?

SODERINI

I wish I knew, Your High -, Your Majesty.

PHILIP

You Florentines have had it too easy for too long with your ideas of freedom and equality. Machiavelli refuses to bow before me. Time to show him I mean business.

EXT. BRUSH AND EASEL - DAY

One-eyed Ron staggers out of the bar. General Olorosso, Rioja and Jerez and two SOLDIERS march toward the bar.

ONE-EYED RON

Wanna buy some postcards?

OLOROSSO

Get out of our way.

ONE-EYED RON

Five for a florin.

AIDE

He said -

ONE-EYED RON

Ten for a -

Jerez looks tempted but Olorosso whips out his sword and runs Ron through.

ONE-EYED RON

- florin.

One-eyed Ron collapses. Olorosso and Rioja head for the bar. Jerez hurriedly pockets the postcards.

INT. BRUSH AND EASEL - DAY

Olorosso sweeps glasses off a table with his sword.

RIOJA

Where is Machiavelli?

Silence. Rioja smashes bottles behind the bar. Guido reaches for The Peacemaker. Rioja caresses Angela's lovely throat with his sword.

One of Madame Uffizi's whores lifts her skirt. Olorosso backhands her to the floor.

OLOROSSO

I said where is Machiavelli?

Silence. Jerez grabs a lute and smashes it. The lutist rises to his feet and Jerez stabs him with his sword.

The Soldiers smash the artwork on the wall. The bar patrons rise to protest. And the soldiers attack, smiting, cleaving. SCREAMS and CRIES.

OLOROSSO
(spits)
Artists.

INT. MADAME UFFIZI'S WHOREHOUSE - DAY

Spanish soldiers burst in on WHORES and their CLIENTS. The whores scream as the soldiers seize lamps and set light to the velvet drapes and settees.

INT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S STUDIO - DAY

Rioja and Jerez slash priceless paintings with their swords.

They come face to crotch with the sculpted David. Rioja stares at David's outsized member, and slices it off.

INT. MARKET PLACE - DAY

Spanish soldiers SMASH paintings, charcoal portraits and sculptures. STALL HOLDERS protest and the Soldiers beat them senseless with the hilts of their swords.

SCREAMS and CRIES. The commedia dell'arte actors try to escape but soldiers kick and punch them.

A soldier hauls barrels off the long-distance Hauler's cart.

LONG-DISTANCE HAULER
That's a client's property.

The soldier draws his flintlock pistol and shoots him.

A Soldier forces the Fire-eater to breathe flames on a torch. The soldier sets alight a market stall. And another.

Men, women and children try to flee the INFERNO. SPANISH ARCHERS fire a volley of arrows. Citizens crumple.

EXT. CITY OF FLORENCE - DAY

Machiavelli, Martin, Vespucci and Antonio canter on horseback. Machiavelli sees a spiral of black smoke. He frowns and spurs his horse into a gallop.

EXT. MARKET PLACE - DAY

Machiavelli, Martin, Vespucci and Antonio walk their horses through the devastation.

INT. SODERINI'S OFFICE - DAY

Machiavelli stands before Soderini and Enrico.

MACHIAVELLI

You've done a deal with Bourbon?

SODERINI

Your plans have brought us death and destruction, Machiavelli.

ENRICO

We had no choice. We had to negotiate.

MACHIAVELLI

And you think surrender will save us? No, we must never-

SODERINI

No, Machiavelli. No more ideas. I'm banishing you from Florence.

MACHIAVELLI

Banished? No, Piero, we can -

SODERINI

I'm doing you a favor, Niccolo. Leave now. Or Bourbon will execute you as a traitor.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

The dead lie in caskets. Machiavelli pats the long-distance Hauler's shoulder. He spots One-eyed Ron in the next casket and places a coin on his eye. He hesitates, uncertain, then lifts the eye patch and places a second coin.

MACHIAVELLI

Travel well, old friend. Your death has not been in vain.

INT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S STUDIO - DAY

A distraught Raphael gazes at his slashed masterpieces. Lisa blinks back tears and hugs him.

A dazed Michelangelo stares at the emasculated David. Da Vinci puts an arm around him.

DA VINCI

It was the finest work I've ever
seen, Michel.

MICHELANGELO

Ruined.

DA VINCI

Make another one. Surpass yourself.

Machiavelli and Vespucci survey the wreckage.

VESPUCCI

Bourbon will kill you. You have to
leave, Niccolo.

MACHIARELLI

Innocent Florentines lie dead,
Amerigo. I cannot leave.

Martin sits at a bench. He finishes a calculation and holds
up Vespucci's green-bound logs and the blood-red Ptolemy.

MACHIARELLI

Commander Vespucci's log references
and Ptolemy's map points - they
match.

MACHIARELLI

Draw the map.

A LITTLE LATER:

Franco the Forger gestures at the blank canvas on an easel.

FRANCO

Egyptian papyrus. Nautical bond,
twenty-four ply cross hatch. Devil
of a time finding it.

MACHIARELLI

(picks up a bottle)
These are the inks?

FRANCO

Cobalt. Cadmium and a pinch of
cardamon.

Franco beams at Machiavelli and awaits his payment.
Machiavelli raises an eyebrow. Franco nods.

FRANCO

Right. For Florence.

MACHIAVELLI

For Florence. Thank-you, Franco.

All eyes turn to Martin. Lisa squeezes his arm encouragingly. Martin takes up his protractor and compass.

DA VINCI

Shall we start at Jerusalem?

(consults Ptolemy)

Twelve. Ninety-six.

Martin protracts and compasses. He dips his quill in the ink and draws the first map point.

A LITTLE LATER:

Martin finishes the map points for Europe.

A LITTLE LATER:

Martin finishes outlining Europe.

MARTIN

A mythical sea-creature would be nice. About there.

Raphael picks up a delicate brush.

MICHELANGELO

Hold on. The mythical sea-creature is mine.

RAPHAEL

Have you ever painted a sea-creature? Requires imagination, Michel.

MICHELANGELO

Excuse me.

MARTIN

Could you color in Europe?

MICHELANGELO

You want me to "color in"? I am Michelangelo.

Machiavelli appears beside them, warningly.

MACHIAVELLI

Michel.

MICHELANGELO

Right. What color would you like?

INT. PAPAL CHAMBER - DAY

A VATICAN NUN adjusts Pope Julius's travelling cloak. Julius swishes his sword and slots it in his scabbard.

The Papal Secretary enters and nods - time to go.

POPE JULIUS

I love coronations. The pomp. The pageantry. The Florentine peasants crushed beneath jackboots.

EXT. VATICAN FORECOURT - DAY

Swiss Army Guards watch Julius mount his steed.

JULIUS

To Florence.

INT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

A nearby church bell TOLLS. Raphael admires his sea-creature.

Machiavelli joins Martin and Michelangelo and gazes at the outline of Africa.

MACHIARELLI

How's it going?

MARTIN

Well.

Lisa mixes more ink and hands it to Martin.

MARTIN

Michel, I need you to connect the map points.

MICHELANGELO

You do know they call me The Divine One. The greatest artist on earth. And you want me to join the dots?

DA VINCI

Isn't that how you paint all your pictures, Michel?

MICHELANGELO

Shut it, old man.

LISA

Connect the dots, O Divine One.

DA VINCI
 (reads from Ptolemy)
 Thirty-seven. One hundred and one.

Martin compasses and protracts. Michel joins the dots.

A KNOCK on the door. Silence. Antonio cautiously opens the door. Guido and Angela enter bearing the Renaissance equivalent of take-out boxes.

RAPHAEL
 Food!

MICHELANGELO
 You have to try these tomato cheesy things.

Guido beams and dispenses his pizza. Angela pours wine. Machiavelli takes a bite of the pizza.

MACHIARELLI
 Tomato cheesy things all round.

Everyone dives into the food.

GUIDO
 I was thinking of calling them Florentines.

LISA
 Florentines are chocolate and dried fruit pastries.

MACHIARELLI
 Where are you from, Guido?

GUIDO
 Pisa.

Everyone raises a slice of pizza.

EVERYONE
 Pisa!

EXT. GATES OF FLORENCE - NIGHT

Pope Julius and his Swiss Guards ride through the gates.

INT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Take out boxes, pizza crusts and dirty wine glasses litter the studio.

Martin wearily completes Europe. The map is gorgeous and complete except for a big space - The New World. Lisa squeezes his hand encouragingly.

LISA
The New World?

MARTIN
The New World.

LISA
(reads from Ptolemy)
Ninety-eight. Two-o-one.

Everyone watches Martin protract and compass.

INT. PALAZZO VECCHIO - NIGHT

Philip, Soderini, Enrico, Olorosso and Prior John welcome Pope Julius. A Wine Waiter hands the Pope a goblet.

POPE JULIUS
Everything is prepared?

PHILIP
Yes, Holy Father.

Pope Julius drinks his wine.

POPE JULIUS
Hmm. It's got bubbles in it. Most refreshing. Where's Machiavelli?

PHILIP
Banished, Holy Father.

ENRICO
Actually, he was seen comforting families of the dead. Yesterday.

PHILIP
(to Prior John and Olorosso)
Sharpen your pikestaffs, gentlemen. Bring me Machiavelli's head.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S VILLA - NIGHT

Rioja and Jerez smash glassware, priceless furniture and sculpture. They stop at a wall which is covered top to bottom with drawings and paintings of exquisite female nudes.

RIOJA
Seems a shame.

JEREZ
It's pornography.

RIOJA
Well, it's art really.

They nod at each other and carefully remove the drawings.

INT. DA VINCI'S LABORATORY - NIGHT

Philip and Olorosso stare at the bubbling, steaming beakers and the jars of preserved animals and human organs.

PHILIP
What devil's work is this?

Philip spots the colossal MATCHLOCK PISTOL. He picks it up, feels its weight and its comfortable grip.

INT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

The church bell TOLLS. The gang stand around and gaze awestruck at Martin's map - a work of sheer beauty.

MARTIN
May I present - the New World.

MACHIABELLI
It's a masterpiece.

ANTONIO
(at the window)
Soldiers.

Machiavelli gathers the logs and puts them in a satchel. Martin and Lisa roll up the map.

EXT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Prior John and two Spanish Soldiers smash the door with an axe.

INT. MICHELANGELO & RAPHAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Prior John ignores da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo. He scopes the studio and sees Martin race upstairs. And Machiavelli head out the back.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Vespucci, Machiavelli, clutching the satchel and map, and Antonio flee. Vespucci sees Prior John galloping on horseback after them. Vespucci heads one way. Machiavelli and Antonio flee the other.

INT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Machiavelli and Antonio race into an alleyway. Dead end.

Machiavelli and Antonio face Prior John and Warrior Monk. They draw their swords.

Antonio fights valiantly against the pair - parry, thrust. But he weakens. Prior John heaves and Antonio's sword flies through the air.

Machiavelli's eye catches a movement. He sees Martin and Lisa on a rooftop above.

Prior John bears down on them, sword drawn. Machiavelli hurls the satchel and map. It arcs upwards... upwards... Martin grasps it - loses it. And grasps it again.

Martin and Lisa flee along the rooftops. Prior John is torn by indecision. He turns his steed.

EXT. ROOFTOPS/ BACK STREET - DAY

Martin and Lisa sprint along rooftops leaping from building to building.

Prior John follows on horse in streets and alleys below.

On the rooftop, Lisa slips on the sloped rooftop. Rolls down and over the edge. She holds tight to the guttering.

Prior John looks up and sees Martin grab Lisa. He hauls her to safety.

Martin and Lisa leap across an alleyway to the steeply graded roof of a church. Martin loses his footing and slides to the edge. He clutches at a demonic gargoyle.

EXT. GALLERIA - NIGHT

Machiavelli and Antonio sidle along the galleria wall. Around a corner. And slap into a pair of SPANISH SOLDIERS. Antonio thumps one and grabs his sword. Stabs the other one.

They slip through the door.

INT. MAIN GALLERY - NIGHT

The safety of the main gallery. Except six SOLDIERS are removing masterpieces from the walls.

The soldiers drop the paintings, draw their swords and attack. Antonio shields Machiavelli, his blade a blur.

Machiavelli takes refuge behind a Venus de Milo.

Antonio lunges and thrusts his sword into a soldier's guts.

A Soldier swipes his sword. Machiavelli feints left and the blade slices off an arm. The Soldier swings. Machiavelli feints right and the blade slices off Venus's other arm. The Soldier swings again. Machiavelli grabs Venus's arm and thumps the Soldier on the crown, poleaxing him.

The four Spanish Soldiers fan and attack Antonio from angles. They nick an arm, slice his side. Antonio back pedals under a barrage of steel.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

The demonic gargoyle tears from the roof. Martin drops -
- but clutches a clothes line below. The clothes line SNAPS. Martin swings on the clothes line to the balcony across the street. Martin throws the line back.

BELOW: Prior John and a trio of ARCHERS arrive.

Lisa swings on the line. Arrows WHISTLE past her. She lands beside Martin on the balcony, catches it monkeys along the line which holds silk and satin fineries. She climbs through an apartment window.

BELOW: Lacy knickers land on Prior John's upturned face.

ABOVE: Martin and Lisa hurry through the balcony door.

INT. BOY'S ROOM - NIGHT

A TEENAGE BOY lies in bed, gazing enraptured at One-eyed Ron's dirty postcards. Martin and Lisa charge through.

MARTIN
You'll go blind.

LISA
No he won't.

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

Machiavelli races up a flight of stairs. One Spanish Soldier chases him. A Second Soldier races up the opposite flight of stairs. Machiavelli is pincerred. He sees the chandelier. He leaps from the marble banister onto the swinging chandelier. He grins triumphantly at the two Soldiers and the chandelier tears from its chain and CRASHES to the floor.

Machiavelli, flat on his back, groans and looks at a Spanish Soldier, standing over him, leering, sword raised.

Antonio appears behind and runs him through with his sword.

EXT. STREETS/STEPS/ALLEYWAY, - DAY

Martin and Lisa race from the apartment building and sprint along a narrow street. Prior John closes in on his horse.

Martin and Lisa turn and charge down the city steps. Prior John CLATTERS after them on his horse.

Martin and Lisa race into an alleyway. A brick wall at the end.

MARTIN

Where are we?

LISA

You're the map maker!

MARTIN

Aah, there it is.

He points to a narrow passageway. They dash into it -

- and emerge at the far end.

AHEAD: Warrior Monks. BEHIND: Spanish soldiers. And Prince Philip, mounted on his horse. He recognizes Martin. And Lisa He leers. Martin and Lisa veer off.

Philip charges on his horse and scoops Lisa up.

MARTIN

Lisa.

Philip pulls up. He holds a dagger to her throat.

PHILIP

The map, if you please.

MARTIN

If you let her go.

PHILIP

Fair enough.

Martin hands over the satchel and map. Philip gees his horse.

MARTIN

You lied.

PHILIP

What are confessionals for?

Philip spurs his steed and gallops off.

INT. GALLERY, WORK ROOM - NIGHT

Machiavelli and Antonio retreat into the work room. The last two Soldiers chase them. Machiavelli bumps into a workbench and a canvas falls off and unrolls on the floor.

The soldiers smite and lunge at Machiavelli and Antonio. Cans and bottles of paint topple and pour and drip on the canvas.

Smite and thrust. More paint falls and drips onto the canvas.

Antonio heaves the sword from the First Soldier and runs him through. Thrusts again and runs the Second Soldier through.

Machiavelli and Antonio touch swords in victory. Machiavelli glances at the canvas. Antonio follows his glance - to the abstract drips and lines on the canvas - 450 years before Jackson Pollock.

MACHIARELLI

Hmmm.

EXT. FLORENCE STREET - NIGHT

Martin sprints along the street. Through narrow alleyways he spots Philip and Lisa one block down.

EXT. PRIORY - NIGHT

Martin sees Philip alight at the Priory and drag Lisa inside.

INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

The troll-like Keeper of the Implements grins through the stumps of his teeth.

Lisa is tied to the Catherine wheel. Philip caresses her cheek with the lash of a whip.

PHILIP

Let's play a little game, shall we?
I ask you a question. You answer
and I torture you.

LISA

What sort of game is that?

PHILIP

At least I don't kill you.

The door SLAMS open. Martin bursts in, snatches a sword from a bench and advances on Philip. Philip clutches the whip.

But Martin doesn't see the Keeper of the Implements who clubs him on the back of the head. Martin crumples to the floor.

A LITTLE LATER:

Martin comes to, suspended by a pair of metal rings hanging by a pair of chains to the ceiling.

Philip rips off Lisa's skirt, revealing a thin white slip. Martin struggles in his shackles. Philip's thin lips smile.

PHILIP
(to Martin)
Do you like to watch?

A red-hot poker glows in a forge, but Martin holds his tongue.

PHILIP
I'll throw this out there for
anyone to answer - where's
Machiavelli?

Philip spins the Catherine wheel and Lisa is immersed in a trough of water.

MARTIN
Lisa!

Philip spins the wheel. Lisa emerges gasping, from the water. Philip's eyes rake Lisa's dripping-wet body.

PHILIP
Oh what sport.
(to Martin)
Where's Machiavelli?

Keeper of the Implements slips on a leather glove with razor sharp blades which snap open and closed on the fingers. He advances on Martin.

PHILIP
The Cat's Paw. Sometimes known as
the Spanish Tickler. One of my
favorites.

Martin raises himself like a gymnast on the rings. He rotates 360 and kicks the Keeper - into the RED HOT forge. The Keeper SCREAMS.

Philip spins the wheel, immersing Lisa.

The Keeper grabs a cleaver, swings at Martin. Martin raises and lowers himself, twists and evades the murderous blows.

The Keeper charges again, his cassock smoking. He swings the blade. Martin reverse 360s and kicks the Keeper who rockets backwards into an Iron Maiden. Martin swings back and forward and slams the Iron Maiden's spiked door closed.

The chains rip from the ceiling. Martin lands on his back, a chain fastened at each wrist. Philip advances, sword drawn.

Martin swings one chain and it tears the sword from Philip's grasp. Philip picks up a disembowelling hook. Martin swings the chain as the Keeper forces his way out of the Iron Maiden. The hook THUDS into the Keeper - right between the eyes. He sinks to the floor.

Martin swings the chain again, whiplashing Philip across the cheek. He collapses.

Martin climbs to his feet. He races to the Catherine wheel and spins it. Lisa is unconscious. Perhaps dead. Martin unties her. He presses on her chest. And again. Her eyes open. Martin rips off his shackles and holds her tight.

Martin sees the satchel and maps on a bench.

INT. PRIORY, FRONT FOYER - NIGHT

Martin - grasping the satchel - and Lisa leg it.

LISA

The Abbot encouraged you in
gymnastics?

They sprint toward the front door.

Prior John and a pair of Warrior Monks enter. Martin and Lisa back off. Prior John and the Warrior Monks chase.

Martin And Lisa head back into -

INT. PRIORY, LIBRARY - NIGHT

- and charge toward the open door to the archives. The Archivist blocks his way.

ARCHIVIST

No, Brother Martin.

MARTIN

I'm sorry, Archivist.

Martin snatches the Archivist's lantern and he and Lisa race into the archives.

INT. ARCHIVES STAIRWAY - NIGHT

They clatter down the stairs. FOOTSTEPS ECHO behind them.

INT. ARCHIVES - NIGHT

They race across the archives to a passageway.

INT. CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Martin holds up the lamp. Passages and tunnels honeycomb endlessly off the main passage.

ARCHIVIST (ECHOEY, O.S.)
Martin, will you damn your eternal
soul for this woman

MARTIN
Yes.

Lisa squeezes his hand, blinks back a tear or two.

ARCHIVIST (ECHOES O.S.)
Then you will burn for all eternity.
There's no way out, Brother Martin. No
way out.

INT. CATACOMB PASSAGE - NIGHT

Martin and Lisa see dark passages honeycomb into the darkness.

INT. BURIAL CRYPT - NIGHT

Martin and Lisa move into the crypt. SKULLS leer at them from the walls.

EXT. PALAZZO - NIGHT

Machiavelli and Antonio keep to the shadows. They look left: Patrolling Soldiers - their swords glint. He looks right: Mounted Warrior Monks, malevolent in their hooded cowls.

Machiavelli sees the Palazzo across the street.

ANTONIO
Go in there.

MACHIARELLI
Antonio?

Antonio breaks for the alley down the street. The Soldiers and the Warrior Monks spot him and chase.

Machiavelli moves across the street to the Palazzo.

INT. PALAZZO, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Machiavelli moves along the corridor. He spots Philip, nursing his bruised cheek and Olorosso through an open door.

PHILIP

First, I will torture Machiavelli.
Execution's too good for him. Then
the map-maker and his whore. And
then every artist, musician and
poet in this godforsaken sewer.

Machiavelli quickly opens another door and slips inside.

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM & BATHROOM - NIGHT

Machiavelli moves through the bedroom and opens another door.

Joanna lies in her bathtub. It is alabaster white and the corner is scalloped like a giant shell. The wall behind is painted like a sky with fluffy white clouds.

MACHIARELLI

Your Highness, my apologies for
this -

JOANNA

No need to apologize, Chancellor.

Joanna rises naked from the scalloped shell bathtub, like Botticelli's "Birth of Venus".

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Machiavelli and Joanna lie in each other's arms.

JOANNA

Last night was the critical time in
my cycle.

MACHIARELLI

(blinks)

My son will be King of Spain? But
I'm a democrat.

Machiavelli chuckles and kisses Joanna tenderly.

EXT. PALAZZO, BALCONY - DAY

Philip gazes toward the city walls. Olorosso is at his side.

OLOROSSO

Our forces are two hours away.

Philip smiles his thin smile. The smile vanishes when he spots Machiavelli stroll from the Palazzo, hair mussed, buttoning his shirt. Machiavelli waves.

MACHIAVELLI

Morning! Nice day for it!

Machiavelli ambles away.

EXT. ROAD TO FLORENCE - DAY

GENERAL AMONTILLADO, watches from horseback as his ADVANCE TROOPS march on Florence.

INT. DA VINCI'S STUDIO - DAY

Machiavelli glances at the wall clock - 11.00 am.

MACHIAVELLI

Has anyone seen the map maker?

Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Vespucci and Antonio shake their heads.

MACHIAVELLI

We'll need to buy some time.

Machiavelli studies the rotator gun, the giant cannon and crossbow, the parachutes, the flying machines, and Roger.

EXT. CITY RAMPARTS - DAY

A ragtag platoon of art gallery SECURITY GUARD/DOCENTS in their cheap and gaudy uniforms stand at attention by the weaponry. Machiavelli nods - they'll have to do.

Da Vinci peers through his telescope. He signals Antonio.

DOCENT 1 lights the fuse of the cannon. A deafening ROAR. The projectile fires. And the cannon smoulders and splits in two.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. ROAD TO FLORENCE - DAY

General Amontillado hears a WHISTLE. The giant cannon ball lands and EXPLODES. The horses WHINNY and fall. SOLDIERS are hurled through the air, SHRIEKING.

BACK TO:

A SECURITY GUARD fires the rotator-gun. BLAM. BLAM. BLAM.

CUT TO:

Spanish Soldiers are hit and fall, SCREAMING, in showers of blood.

BACK TO:

A Security Guard fires the massive crossbow.

CUT TO:

Amontillado and his troops watch fearfully as a parachute opens and slowly descends. It hits the ground. BANG.

A flying machine buzzes past, crashes into the ground and EXPLODES. The Spanish troops panic.

BACK TO:

Da Vinci peers through his telescope.

DA VINCI
Who said they wouldn't work?

MACHIAVELLI
Any more tricks?

DA VINCI
Just the one.

CUT TO:

The smoke clears. Amontillado waves his sword.

AMONTILLADO
Forward.

The Advance Troops hesitate. Move forward. Stop.

FIRST SOLDIER
Sir?

First Soldier points. At Roger.

The Soldiers stare in disbelief. WHIRR. Roger steps forward. The Soldiers spring back. WHIRR. Roger's arm jerks up.

FIRST SOLDIER
He's got a note.

AMONTILLADO
Get it, man.

First Soldier approaches tentatively. He snatches the note.

AMONTILLADO
What does it say?

FIRST SOLDIER
(reads it)
Hello. I'm Roger.

SECOND SOLDIER
Maybe it's a Trojan horse.

THIRD SOLDIER
Come on. The Trojan horse hid a
battalion of soldiers. It was
twenty cubits by ten.

SECOND SOLDIER
What's a cubit?

TICK. TICK.

FIRST SOLDIER
It's ticking?

AMONTILLADO
What are you saying, man? The damn
thing's a clock?

FIRST SOLDIER
Don't know, sir.

TICK. TICK ... KERBOOM.

INT. PALAZZO, PHILIP'S CHAMBER - DAY

Philip hears the BOOM. Joanna enters.

JOANNA
A troop of Florentine docents is
attacking your army.

PHILIP
What?

Philip frowns and hurriedly adjusts his coronation costume.

INT. BRUSH AND EASEL BAR - DAY

Machiavelli peers through a crack in the shutters. Spanish Soldiers guard the entrance to the Cathedral.

ANTONIO

They'll never let us inside. Even
if we had the map.

Machiavelli turns and faces the hushed patrons - Madame Uffizi's whores, the macho gays, the Artists, Jugglers, the Sword Swallower, the Commedia dell'arte players, the troubadors.

MACHIARELLI

Citizens of Florence. You came to this
city with nothing but your talent and
your dreams. You came seeking freedom
and opportunity.

Cries of YEAH.

MACHIARELLI

Firenze floreat!
(translates)
Florence will triumph!

Everyone CHEERS.

MACHIARELLI

Ars longa vita brevis!

All look blankly.

MACHIARELLI

Art is -
(struggles to translate)
- good!

Rousing CHEERS. Fists and tankards BANG on tables.

MACHIARELLI

Florence has nurtured your dreams.
Supported your art. But now we
approach our darkest hour. Our
freedom, our lives are in peril. Will
you lay down your quills, your
brushes. Will you fight?

Jaws clench. Teeth grit. Muscles clench. They ROAR.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

CITIZENS watch Pope Julius and his entourage approach the cathedral. Rioja and Jerez bow as Julius sweeps past them and into the cathedral.

INT. BRUSH AND EASEL PUB - DAY

Machiavelli signals from the shuttered window as Philip, Joanna and their entourage approach.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

The Spanish Soldiers guard the cathedral and watch the troubadours sing a wistful tune of love lost.

The heavily-painted commedia dell'arte actors act. The sword swallower swallows. The juggler juggles a rapier, a broadsword and a battleaxe.

The whores watch from Madame Uffizi's upper windows.

As Philip and his entourage reach the Spanish soldiers -

- the juggler throws his rapier and battle-axe to Citizens. The Fire-eater breathes fire on a bottle of brandy and hurls it at the Soldiers. The Molotov SMASHES and bursts into flames. The troubadours attack Soldiers with their lutes.

Rioja and Jerez shield Philip and Joanna and force their way through the riot. Bottles and bricks rain down on them.

Machiavelli, Antonio and Vespucci race across the town square, into the brawling maelstrom, toward the cathedral.

The Sword Swallower pulls a broadsword from his throat and attacks a Spanish soldier. The muscle-bound Macho Gays wade into the brawl, fists flying. Rioja sneers at Macho Gay 1, who lifts him up by the throat and hurls him through a shop window.

Philip and Joanna stagger through the Cathedral door.

INT. CATACOMBS, BURIAL CRYPT - DAY

Martin and Lisa sit forlornly on the floor of a catacomb, surrounded by coffins and leering skulls.

MARTIN

Lost again. Some map maker I am.

LISA

You mapped the world.

MARTIN

Fat lot of good that'll do us. Hold
on - my map. My map of Florence.

Martin scrabbles through his satchel and holds up his map.

MARTIN

Look. Here's the Priory. The
cathedral is there. We must be
here. If we go down that tunnel.

INT. CATACOMBS - DAY

Martin and Lisa move along a dark passageway. It splits into
two, long dark passageways.

AHEAD: a lamplight, advancing toward them. Martin and Lisa's
eyes light up. But it's The Archivist.

ARCHIVIST

Repent, Brother. No way out.

MARTIN

North. Two hundred paces.

Martin and Lisa flee along the other, dark passageway.

INT. CATACOMB, TUNNEL - DAY

The Archivist is lost and confused and very, very afraid. His
torch splutters. Then expires.

ARCHIVIST

No way out.

Pitch blackness.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

Guido and Angela strike at Soldiers with the Peacemakers.

The Rioters hurl pottery, glassware and statues of naked
nymphs at the Soldiers. Pavement Artists hurl paint.

General Olorosso smites citizens with his sword. He spies
Machiavelli and Antonio separate in the crush. Olorosso
smiles and raises his sword.

CUT TO:

A whore in Madame Uffizi's upstairs window fishes up her
skirt and flings her stiletto.

BACK TO:

The stiletto arcs through the air and into Olorosso's back.

Prior John arrives on horseback and sees Machiavelli slip into the side entrance of the cathedral.

Prior John draws his sword and cleaves through the crowds.

INT. CATHEDRAL, TRANSEPT (WING) - DAY

Prior John strides along the transept.

AHEAD: a door.

INT. CARDINAL'S OFFICE - DAY

The door is kicked off its hinges. Prior John enters.

PRIOR JOHN

Intelligence such as yours is a gift from god, Machiavelli. You serve only yourself.

Machiavelli calmly awaits him.

MACHIAVELLI

I serve Florence.

Prior John draws his sword.

PRIOR JOHN

This steel is bathed in the blood of heathens and heretics.

Machiavelli's eyes scope the desk - no weapons. Only a tray of blotting sand, an inkpot, a quill, and one of those perpetual motion executive's ball toys.

MACHIAVELLI

Surely you don't want to make a martyr of me.

Prior John moves towards Machiavelli, his sword raised.

PRIOR JOHN

You'll thank me, Machiavelli. Believe me, you don't want to face an Inquisition.

Machiavelli flings the sand in Prior John's eyes. Prior John staggers and clears his eyes. Machiavelli hurls the ink in his eyes. Prior John swings his sword and knocks the executive's toy off the desk.

The balls scatter, Prior John slips on a ball - and falls onto the sharpened quill in Machiavelli's outstretched hand.

Machiavelli withdraws the quill. Prior John stares at his mighty sword, then the bloodied quill.

MACHIAVELLI

Truly, the pen is mightier than the sword.

Prior John collapses, dead.

INT. CATHEDRAL, VESTRY - DAY

A gloomy Soderini watches ATTENDANTS robe Pope Julius. Julius admires the Ancient Crown of Florence.

POPE JULIUS

The old order is restored.

SODERINI

His Majesty will need an advisor, I daresay?

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

The cathedral is packed. Pope Julius, bearing his ceremonial shepherd's crook, and his attendants march to the altar.

Soderini, Vespucci, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Foreign Ambassadors watch Philip march regally along the aisle, Princess Joanna beside him. Philip's eye arrows to the altar - the Crown of Florence!

JOANNA

You will have your heir, Bourbon.
But he will not be your son.

Philip clenches his jaw.

INT. CATACOMB PASSAGE - DAY

Martin and Lisa count the paces along the passage.

MARTIN

One nine nine. Two hundred.

Lisa pinpoints their position on the map. They reach a branch in the passageway.

LISA

East. One hundred paces.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

Philip kneels before the Pope. The Pope raises the Crown.
Machiavelli bursts in.

MACHIAVELLI

Stop!

PHILIP

My right to rule is divine,
Machiavelli. You will not stand
between me and my god.

MACHIAVELLI

Who am I to stand between a man and
his god? But I hereby inform you that
Amerigo Vespucci discovered the lands
known as The New World - and does
formally claim them.

Vespucci rises and takes a bow.

PHILIP

Proof, Machiavelli.

Machiavelli holds aloft the Captain's logs.

MACHIAVELLI

Commander Vespucci's logs.

PHILIP

You need a map.

INT. CATACOMBS - DAY

Lisa's finger points to the Cathedral on the street map and they
look up at the stone ceiling above them.

MARTIN

The Cathedral should be above us.

LISA

It must have a crypt.

They pace along the chamber. But no sign of a crypt. Then Lisa
spots a hole set in the wall at head height.

The lamp splutters. Darkness.

LISA

This way.

INT. CRYPT - DAY

Martin and Lisa move through the cathedral crypt. They spot a stairway. They climb it. To a wooden trap door. They heave on the wooden trap door. It won't budge.

INT. ABBEY - DAY

All eyes on Pope Julius. Who stands on the trap door.

POPE JULIUS

If you have a map, Machiavelli,
provide it.

Julius steps off the trap door. It flies open and Lisa ascends from the darkness, angelic in her WHITE DRESS. Julius's jaw drops and he crosses himself in awe. Martin leaps out of the trapdoor.

MACHIAVELLI

(sigh of relief)
The proof, gentlemen.

A FEW MINUTES LATER:

All watch as Martin slowly and dramatically unrolls his map on a huge easel - Europe... Asia... Africa...

MACHIAVELLI

Holy Father, dignitaries, free
citizens of Florence, allow me to
present - The New World.

And for the first time in the history of mankind - the continent the whole world will know as America. The congregation bursts into APPLAUSE.

PHILIP

This is wonderful, Machiavelli. I
congratulate Commander Vespucci. As
King of Florence I am now undisputed
King of the New World.

Philip nods at Pope Julius who raises the crown.

MACHIAVELLI

We have not claimed The New World for
Florence. We will sell our claim to
the highest bidder. Spain's mortal
enemies.

Machiavelli points to the Foreign Ambassadors.

MACHIAVELLI

England. France. Portugal. Holland.

The crown hovers.

JOANNA

(whispers to Philip)

You are about to lose us Florence
AND the New World. My father will
not be pleased.

PHILIP

The New World belongs to me!

MACHIAVELLI

Withdraw your claim to the throne
and Florence will withdraw her
claim to the New World.

Philip whips out the colossal Renaissance Magnum.

PHILIP

You artists and liberals and
intellectuals look down your noses
at me.

Philip snatches the altar candle and thrusts it at the map.

PHILIP

Well let me tell you something. You
will kneel before me. All of you.
Now.

Philip aims the matchlock. Machiavelli gestures - everyone
kneel. They all kneel. Except Machiavelli.

PHILIP

You too. Oh, especially you,
Machiavelli.

Michelangelo leaps to his feet.

MICHELANGELO

No. You've destroyed my David.
You've burned every angel and baby
Jesus, every Annunciation and
Nativity scene I've ever painted.

Michelangelo points to the colored-in bits and the joined
dots on the map.

MICHELANGELO

If that is my lasting contribution
to art, then I shall happily die
for Florence.

Philip points the matchlock. Then aims it back on
Machiavelli. He pulls the trigger.

CLICK.

DA VINCI

That one we didn't test.

Philip turns the candle on the map. But Julius swipes the
candle with his ceremonial shepherd's crook.

JOANNA

As the Daughter of Spain, I am placing
you under arrest. There will be no
trial. You will be executed - Spanish
style.

Philip continues to wave the matchlock. He backs away.

PHILIP

I will be back with my good men of
Bourbon. And Florence will burn.

Philip descends through the trapdoor and into the catacombs.

Silence for a beat. Then the crowd ROARS. MACHIAVELLI nods at
da Vinci and da Vinci nods at Machiavelli.

Soderini grins and presses flesh and tickles a citizen's baby
under the chin.

Lisa and Martin hug each other and hug Michel and Raphael.

The crowd flocks to gaze at Martin's glorious map - Asia,
Africa, and written across Novus Mundus - AMERICA.

VESPUCCI

Ameri-GO. With a G.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

Machiavelli and his Gang emerge from the cathedral.
Machiavelli gestures for silence.

MACHIAVELLI

You have fought courageously and
heroically. Florence is free.

The citizens of Florence ROAR.

INT. CATACOMBS - DAY

Philip wanders in the pitch black, hopelessly lost. Skulls and death masks grin hideously.

ARCHIVIST (ECHOES O.S.)
Repent, Brother. No way out.

INT. BRUSH AND EASEL - DAY

A quivering Corporal Jerez sits on a bench, flanked by two Macho Gays. He tries to escape, but the two Macho Gays restrain him. A Third Macho Gay sits in front of him and pours Jerez a goblet of wine.

Jerez gulps and contemplates a fate worse than death.

MORPH into a Renaissance painting of the Pub and its patrons.

INT. MICHELANGELO'S STUDIO - DAY

Michelangelo chisels a fig leaf for *David*.

MORPH into self-portrait of Michelangelo.

SUPERTITLE: Michelangelo's statue of David remains the most potent symbol of Florentine resistance and freedom.

CUT TO:

Raphael paints at his easel.

MORPH into self-portrait of Raphael.

SUPERTITLE: Raphael became one of the finest paintings of the Renaissance. His paintings are regarded as true masterpieces.

INT. DA VINCI'S STUDIO - DAY

Roger II watches Da Vinci play a steampunk barrel organ which sounds uncannily like a Moog synthesiser.

MORPH into portrait of Da Vinci.

SUPERTITLE: Da Vinci's genius is unparalleled. He continued to paint, play music and invent until his death in Paris in 1519.

INT. LISA'S STUDIO - DAY

Lisa stares at herself in the mirror then applies paint to a self-portrait on her easel.

MORPH into the *Mona Lisa*.

SUPERTITLE: The mystery surrounding the identity of the *Mona Lisa* has never been solved.

It is the most famous and best loved painting in history and hangs in the Louvre in Paris.

It is insured for \$100 million.

INT. MACHIAVELLI'S VILLA - DAY

Machiavelli sits at a desk and writes. He sips a glass of wine and gazes through his window to his beloved Florence.

Chastity - as drop dead gorgeous as ever - bounces twins on her lap. Machiavelli picks up his quill and writes a title page - *The Prince*.

MORPH into oil painting of Machiavelli.

SUPERTITLE: Machiavelli, the greatest mind of his day wrote *The Prince*. It was the first best seller in publishing history and is still in print to this day.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKET PLACE - DAY

A BEGGAR hawks Martin's maps.

BEGGAR

Artist's maps. All the artists' studios. See where the famous artists live.

BEHIND HIM: Martin's studio.

INT. MARTIN'S STUDIO - DAY

Martin sits at his workbench and draws a map. The Map of America hangs on the wall.

MORPH into the map.

SUPERTITLE: The Waldseemuller map - the birth certificate of America - is housed at the Library of Congress, Washington DC and is valued at ... priceless.

THE END