

QUARRELS WITH MY AMANUENSIS

V22 SCRIPT 6-22-26 WEB POST

1. OPENING SEQUENCE: PIGEONS ON BRUNELLESCHI DOME

Aerial, birds eye view of Brunelleschi dome,
Swooping around majestic structure with views of Renaissance
Florence in the background. Pigeons roosting on the parapets.
Then a couple of pigeons swoop down from cathedral and enter
the workshop of Benvenuto Cellini. Cellini is working by his
furnace in one room talking out loud to the air.

o Cellini is bearded, middle-aged man who is working on
a piece of sculpture

SPOKEN IN ITALIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES:

“Questa mia travagliata vita racconto
a orecchi che mai prima non l’udirono,
per rendere grazie a Dio della natura,
che mi condusse a sì fatta sorte;

SUBTITLE:

Hear this troubled life of mine
I tell to ears that never heard it told before,
Praise be to God for having delivered me to this moment

Ché se alcuna opera mia venne alla luce,
fu Egli che domò la malignità della mia fortuna.

SUBTITLE:

For if great works of mine have come to light,
It was He who tamed the malice of my fate.”

Vita, gloria e virtù smisurata han fatto
tanta grazia e bellezza nelle mie opere,
che pochi possono uguagliarmi, nessuno superarmi.”**

SUBTITLE:

Such grace and beauty through my works displayed
That few can rival, none surpass me quite.

2. PRIVATE OFFICE IN CELLINI STUDIO DONATO JOURNAL:

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- o Donato is seen in his private room/bedroom within Cellini's studio residence. The two pigeons then enter through a large, brightly lit outside window. Donato's room and dsole authorance and peck about on his desk. Donato is writing at his desk in his journal, speaking the words as he writes
- o First couple of lines are delivered in Italian which, as with Cellini above, morph into Italian-accented English

DONATO:

"Ah, il mio maestro parla spesso d'umiltà, come semplice mano di Dio, ma non senza ricordarci la propria grandezza."

SUBTITLES: "Ah, my maestro speaks often of humility, as merely the hand of God, but never without reminding us of his own greatness."

Orsù—la mia saga.O

SUBTITLES: Here is my saga.

3. THE STORY THAT UNFOLDS IS ESSENTIALLY DONATO'S HAND WRITTEN JOURNAL TEXT THAT IS BROUGHT TO CINEMATIC LIFE

DONATO: (now speaking in Italian-accented English)

I am Donato di Niccolo de Fiesole

I am a competent scribe, but also a trained scholar and translator. I speak and write Greek and Latin fluently and have already translated important classical texts.

But I need money and must take menial work at low pay. Literary friends in Venice have arranged a secretarial assignment with world- famous sculptor and goldsmith, Benvenuto Cellini who is known not only for his unsurpassed craftsmanship but also for his colorful even notorious life...

Venetian colleagues hope I can convince my maestro to dictate his memoirs. All of Italy hungers for the details of his scandalous life: Artist, fighter, murderer, lover, sodomite. Moreover, I would get *200 gold crowns if the memoir is published. Enough to marry Aleada, my lovely sweetheart, and pursue my studies.*

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So far Cellini has resisted the notion of setting down the details of his life.

4. BRIGHTLY LIT METALLURGICAL STUDIO FIRST INTERACTION WITH CELLINI:

- o Cellini upon meeting Donato is gruff and irascible:

CELLINI: "Farai come ti dico."

SUBTITLE: "You will do what I say."

Pigeons peck at each other aggressively

DONATO: (vocalizing words entered in his journal) The maestro is disappointed that I'm just a secretary, a scribe, with no practical workshop skills; not like his beloved Bernardino. So I'll be his secretary, his amanuensis, if not his apprentice.

CELLINI: (now in Italian-accented English)

I need to dictate a letter to Marco Antonio setting a price of his latest commission.

(begins by dictating correspondence to Donato)

- o But after a couple of routine work-related letters Cellini breaks into a reverie over a work he is just completing and sighs wearily:

CELLINI: When I believed my life to be at its end, I examined my soul and wondered what of my works would remain when I was gone.

DONATO: (to himself) A perfect opening: (To Cellini) Maestro the world surely needs a written record of your achievements, something more durable even than gold.

CELLINI (aghast) "No, no, my genius won't be frozen in words. The gleaming works shall have the last word, not the scratchy pen of a scolding editor."

5. CANDLELIT BEDROOM: DONATO MEETS WITH HIS LOVELY FIANCE, ALEADA

DONATO: (Donato complains to his lovely fiancé, Aleada that) My dear Aleada, "The maestro has no regard for me or my workshop skills, I am his "Fourteen year-old Donatino, – I am almost 17! He wonders how you could love me, my senior "by 5 years." It is only 2 years.

No doubt thinking of the boyish Bernadino. Who died tragically. One of the few glimpses I've had of the braggart's heart.

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Sadly he has no interest in recording his memoirs.

ALEADA: Donatino, let me meet the great man. I can reach him. Like most men he is hungry for glory and immortality. And the charms of women. We have a mutual friend, Tulia d'Aragona; he adores her poetry.

DONATO: Well...as a poet perhaps you will be able to penetrate the maestro's artistic armor, his arrogance and condescension toward women. *But watch out, he's a terrible letch.*

ALEADA: *I understand men like him. I can cure him of his ambivalence.*

6. DONATO AND ALEADA MEET CELLINI IN HIS STUDIO

o Cellini is very flirtatious

ALEADA: Maestro, I am so honored to meet you. Our friend Tulia d'Aragona sends her regards.

CELLINI: I am a great admirer of Tulia. Donato tells me you write poetry? *Donato, you must bring me some of her work! I should like to hear your written "voice."*

ALEADA: Maestro, I too should like to hear *your* voice! The whole world wants to hear everything you have to say.

CELLINI: Oh I don't have the time...

ALEADA: Look at this beautiful gold statue. A noble material. It should last an eternity. But most likely a thief in the future will laugh at its beauty and greedily melt it down for profit.

But you see the poet's words are not so easily smelted. Your genius is richer than gold itself. **Hammer your legacy into words as well as stone.** (Cellini physically melts in her adoration)

Why not have our Donatino set down your musings while you work.

CELLINI (giddy, entranced) Donato, do you think you could do that (as if hearing the notion for the first time).

DONATO: I have already offered to do this...(Cellini doesn't even hear Donato who is totally irrelevant)

CELLINI: Done! We start tomorrow!

The two pigeons peck at one another affectionately as if a kiss.

7. CELLINI STUDIO: CELLINI CONVINCED TO DO MEMOIR: AWKWARD
FIRST ATTEMPTS

- o At their next meeting agrees to give it a try,

CELLINI: At least I'll get some work out of you!"

DONATO: (to his journal) His first attempt is awkward and self-conscious and even blasphemous

CELLINI: "All of Eternity will be grateful for my unique and unexpected contribution to its otherwise dull and unchanging empire."

- o The pigeons stop pecking, look up with bemusement.

DONATO: Please, Maestro refrain from words that put yourself above God. Or that you are the only artist alive. Remember your great friend Michelangelo. Who even you would admit is your superior.

Cellini nods grudgingly.

8. CELLINI AND DONATO BECOME **INEBRIATED IN AN OSTERIA:** FIRST
ATTEMPT AT CRITICISM

DONATO: (Taking a swig of drink) Messere: there is something I've been planning to share with you. An experiment. I do not just transcribe your words, or dress up the grammar. I weave the tales into a grand story, a great masterpiece of your masterpieces!

CELLINI: Create a masterpiece for me? Impossible, **I am the sole author of my life and my masterpieces**, not the plaything of a puerile young man! This is not what we agreed.

(taking a swig) Let God hear this: You are a most unreliable scribe, a disappointing amanuensis overall. (Puts his mug down with a thud.) You shall not speak for me to eternity, sanding down my rough edges, my praises and complaints to the heavens.

(Then retreating into solitary thought. The pigeons waddle about befuddled.)

CELLINI: (half-crying in self-pity) If only you could be more like my darling Bernardino ***He understood me, you want to reform me!***

DONATO: *No Messere, that is not correct. I do not want to change who you are. Remember Aleada's words, "**History must hear your essence or hear you not at all.**"*

Cellini shoots back:

CELLINI: *I don't take advice from women, even if they imagine themselves gifted poets. **Beauty is not an argument.***

How is it anyway that such a beautiful specimen should take interest in you, Donatino, a mere boy; two or three years her junior; you a virgin most likely?

DONATO: «Messere, Vi posso assicurare ch'io stesso ebbi a gustare la dolcezza di quella donna.»

SUBTITLES: "Messere, I can assure you that I have tasted of her sweetness,"

DONATO TO HIS JOURNAL: I feel a wave of shame as I say this.

CELLINI (drives on): "A passing infatuation, a puerile intellectual attraction, a puppy love?"

DONATO: Maestro, Aleada and I are deeply in love. We intend to marry and have beautiful children.

CELLINI: Children? A woman of that beauty would not spoil her perfect body on children. And if she is a true poet, **no way she'd waste her poetic ecstasies on mere childbearing.**

(The pigeons stare at each other in confusion and dismay)

9. CELLINI STUDIO: "THE HEAD MUST HANG, GRAVITY BELONGS TO DEATH"

CELLINI: Donato, I need you. Today even my own genius alludes me.

- o Early evening in the workshop. A clay model on a table. Donato watching. Cellini dissatisfied.
- o He keeps altering the figure. Nothing works. Then something happens
- o Cellini suddenly grabs the clay. Twists the body. Raises the arm. Turns the head. The pose appears. The hero holding

Medusa's head. We watch timelapse visual showing the form taking shape.

CELLINI: (whispers) "It is not the body that moves." "It is the moment after victory."

- o Donato looks at the sculpture. Suddenly understands. Cellini continues quietly.

CELLINI: "The monster is dead... but the hero is still trembling."

DONATO: (writing in his journal) "In that instant I glimpsed what the maestro truly sees — not the world, but the movement of the soul within it."

CELLINI: "The dead head must hang. Gravity belongs to death." Donatino, we capture unseen forces. You can call that exaggeration, hallucination. I call it the struggle of truth searching for a way out of its trap. **To escape its own shadow.**

10. ONE TALE IS EXTREMELY OUTRAGEOUS: BANDITS

DONATO: The struggle for truth goes on. One outrageous story comes to mind. *I nearly believed it.*

Cellini (spoken): (we visualize this scene)

"I rode a lonely road with only a servant when brigands sprang from the brush and blocked my path. Most men would have yielded. I was merely annoyed.

I measured them—steel, daggers, one with a gun—and spurred straight at them. One seized my reins; I struck him back. Another raised his weapon—I fired first. They broke. I chased them a little way, calling them cowards, bidding them stand and fight. They vanished into the woods—as such men always do."

11. DONATO AND ALEADA WALKING BY THE ARNO: DONATO EXCITEDLY RELATES TALE TO ALEADA

DONATO: Aleada, his physical courage, his self possession!

ALEADA: My naïve Donatino, I know all about about this incident, it happened in Fiesole near my auntie's house. Sure he was attacked by bandits, and he held them off bravely. But he would surely have fallen if not for some passing soldiers.

You must challenge him. Dig. He must not think you are an all-believing chump. Remember you are the artist on the hunt.. His truth will not come to you on a golden platter!

12. DONATO AND CELLINI IN THE STUDIO: DONATO CONFRONTS
CELLINI ABOUT LIE

DONATO: Maestro, before I record your incredible account of the bandit attack, I hear that soldiers came to your aid?

CELLINI: (unapologetically) **"Non lascerò che nessuno, né nulla, mi detti legge – tantomeno il passato."**

SUBTITLES: "I will let no one nor thing tell me what truth is, nor be dictated to by the dreary, facile debris of the sickly past. [delivered in Italian]

"The past is an unfinished contest."

DONATO: There's something else. (now speaking to Cellini). You said that an itinerant goldsmith visiting from Rome calls your work garish and inferior?

CELLINI: Yes, and he actually knocks my beautiful bronze off a display table. Perhaps by accident. At which point I drew my dagger. I ask him to pick up the sculpture. Instead this very stupid man draws his own dagger.

(we visualize this scene)

He lunges at me and actually cuts my arm. The duel begins, I force him to the ground, I look around at the crowd which is agape, and then embracing victory, plunge my blade into his heart. (We see him wipe the blood from his knife and walk away calmly.)

DONATO: (responding in horror) **"You killed him? Cellini shrugs.**

CELLINI: **"He insisted."**

DONATO: How is it that discerning artist, a genius, who speaks for all humanity, could revel in murder and violence? The lasting wounds to your own body, I've seen the opium.

CELLINI: (Hand waves in dismissal) **"It is with the same resolute heart that I plunge the much deserved dagger as when I fashion my masterpieces."**

DONATO: *(to himself)* Surely this does not belong in the memoir.
The black and white pigeons flee the scene in horror.

13. DONATO AND ALEADA WALKING IN PARK: DONATO EMBARKS ON
"ANTI-MEMOIR"

DONATO: Aleada, I am vexed. The memoir on the one hand is so powerful, a window onto a great soul. But its brazen inaccuracies, its blasphemous and even criminal assertions...

ALEADA: If you really feel that way...give it up, no? Return to your studies. I now have a bit of money...

DONATO: No, no. I have an idea. **"I create an alternative memoir, La Vita Veritas** (The True Life," that preserves his singular essence for history.

ALEADA: "The true life?" But don't you destroy **the essence as you attempt to save it?**" (pause) **You're obsessed.**

DONATO: **Sure I'm obsessed.**

ALEADA: Yes, with fame, money, immortality, like your pathetic maestro. (Twinkle in her eye.) **I'm obsessed only with you, Donatino, and expect you to return the favor!**

DONATO: *Aleada, tease me with your divine love. Never doubt you are the first in my heart and soul...*

We watch Donato take out an unused journal volume, bound in black, placing it next to the red-bound book that houses the current memoir. He entitles it, "*La Vita Veritas*," the *true* life.

- o **Two pigeons, one white and one black light upon his desk jumping about both manuscripts in delight.**

14. CELLINI DICTATING TO DONATO IN STUDIO MAKES MOST
DISTURBING CLAIM "I CAN PREDICT MY OWN MAESTROPIECES"

CELLINI: Come here Donatino. Look at this fine lump of clay!
It is a masterpiece

DONATO: (Uncomprehending) It is a lump of clay.

CELLINI: No, it is a masterpiece. You see: **"I can predict my own masterpieces.**

- o Donato's face blanches in pure horror.

DONATO: Maestro, you may be a genius. But each act of genius is a gift given to you from above. A gesture from God himself, you are his vessel!

CELLINI: Piffle, the genius is mine, given by no man or God but completely drawn from myself, out of nothing but my soul!
[Emphasize by having the line spoken in Italian].
God listens intently to what I have to say!

DONATO: (to himself) "Blasphemy" ***I will take care that this is not in the memoir, My "anti-memoir" that is.***

15. **DONATO AND ALEADA IN CANDLELIT BEDROOM: ROMANTIC INTERLUDE** DONATO AND ALEADA

ALEADA: How is the manuscript coming along?

DONATO: You mean, "the manuscripts." Very well, thank you

ALEADA: Does the maestro know about your "anti-memoir?"

DONATO: I'm not sure... My love, feel my pulse: (we hear his heart pounding furiously)

"I feel myself, taking the clay of his outrageous discourse and turning it into pure gold!"

We imagine the figure of Cellini literally morphing into a gold statue. **Aleada looks on with concern. I don't know, you are looking for the pure Cellini. Not the brazen Cellini who is maybe the real genius.**

16. **DONATO EDITING BOTH MANUSCRIPTS SIMULTANEOUSLY IN HIS OFFICE**

- o A few snippets of Cellini dictating race by to indicate passage of time.
- o Two parallel manuscripts, one red bound, one black, lay splayed upon his desk, the pigeons looking on indifferently

17. **MORNING SCENE IN DONATO'S OFFICE: CELLINI HAS SEIZED THE ANTI-MEMOIR**

- o One early morning before the maestro has arrived Donato discovers to his horror: *The anti-memoir black volume has disappeared!*
- o He goes into Cellini's office and finds the book under a few papers
- o While shuffling madly through the Cellini's jumbled desktop, Donato also uncovers Cellini's private diary,

DONATO: He's never mentioned a diary. I would not otherwise violate another man's diary. But haven't I been violated?
(starts to leaf through the diary)

Look here: **He describes his, "quarrels with my amanuensis."**

Further on.

CELLINI:...Even if I must reject his interpretations." I will grant you this, continues Cellini in his journal, "the lad will be indispensable to bringing my genius to the world.

O lucky man: His very contact with me will make him part of history.

Perhaps I am even beginning to like him." (We imagine Cellini with a mischievous glint in his eye.)

DONATO: (to himself) I feel a wave of rapture until I remember his reputation. More than once charged with unnatural acts, even imprisoned; (A flash of Cellini being shackled and led to jail.).

Then word "Aleada" jumps off the page!

CELLINI: (reciting from his diary) It was a gentle spring evening and I was alone in my rooms dreaming of my life and good fortune. When I hear a knock and someone has let themselves in with a key. Suddenly the young beauty is before me and these words emerged from her as if from a songbird:

"ALEADA:" In Italian: «Benvenuto, toccami con quella grazia stessa con cui ami e plasmi i tuoi capolavori d'oro.»

A pregnant pause before the subtitle appears to shock the audience.

"Benvenuto, touch me with the same grace with which you caress your golden masterpieces."

- o **Donato grabs his own manuscript and races home, stealing as he leaves an ornate dagger.**

18. INTERIOR CANDLELIT ROOM: DONATO CONFRONTS ALEADA
Donato confronts Aleada

ALEADA: You know he is a complete fabulist. He lies everywhere and to everyone, to his art, to himself, to the Lord God above.

How is his intimate journal any different? **It is his genius...and his weapon!**

Besides: I would never submit to that braggart, nor betray my precious love for you!

I'll tell you what this is: **(She spits out in Italian):**

Le patetiche fantisie autoerotiche di un uomo ormai oltre il suo tempo ("The pathetic erotic fantasies of a man beyond his prime.

ALEADA: Donatino, I beg of you, give up your "anti-memoir;" Do what he wants or move on. You both want different things. Forget this obsession: it is driving you crazy, driving us apart.

Donato is visibly enraged.

ALEADA: My love, I implore you: Take time to think, think.

(Donato barely hears her. To himself Donato thinks,)

DONATO: Perhaps it is time the maestro feels to tip of his own dagger!

19. CELLINI'S STUDIO: DONATO CONFRONTS CELLINI
Donato rushes down a Florentine street, imagining Cellini's response:

CELLINI: (in Donato's imagination)

"**Si, ti futato!**, such is my right! and the dagger tip bites into Donato's hand.

When Donato then bursts into the studio...

DONATO: "Blackguard: You brag about seducing my precious Aleada! You proudly confess it in your journal. What say you?"

CELLINI: (lamely)

«E che importa? Se pure l'ho posseduta — ma soltanto nella mia fantasia, dove il diritto è tutto mio.

"And what does it matter? That I simply possessed her in my imagination, where the right is entirely mine."

"And what business do you have going through my private papers?

DONATO: You stole my manuscript!

CELLINI: "Stole? First, I gave you no permission to compose this fallacious document, to digest my truth."

DONATO: Yes (sputters Donato), your perverted recollection, lies, calumny, self-aggrandizement")

CELLINI: **I own everything you do, even your outlaw text.**

Everything. (He is about to say more but holds his tongue.)

Donato's head swirls: For a moment he imagines Cellini saying

CELLINI: (In Donato's imagination) "Everything: I own you, I own your lover!" (sexual menace)

Donato looks down at his tunic and the concealed dagger. But Cellini remains silent and the dagger remains in the tunic.

DONATO: (to himself) For once the braggart keeps his trap shut and eludes death.

20. DAYTIME IN THE HALL OF CELLINI'S HOUSE: CELLINI STOPS DONATO AS HE PREPARES TO LEAVE WITH ALL HIS BELONGINGS

- o The next day Donato packs up his belongings and prepares to leave.
- o As he does, we hear in the distance Cellini speaking to himself in another room, as if still dictating his memoirs, but now only to himself.
- o But then as Donato noisily takes his departure, Cellini calls out plaintively, as if nothing has happened

CELLINI: "Donato, come here? I need you. I have a beautiful memory we must save to our memoir!

Donato enters the maestro's office.

Sit: I have something to say to you. My dear Donatino, I will confess it to you with an open heart. **My imagination is bigger than the world. It is my gift, is also an illness!**

I admit that I lusted after your beautiful fiancé. It entered the bawdy, lawless theater of my imagination. I am sorry.

Among my gifts is unsurpassable self-knowledge! I recognize I can be a confabulating shit (twinkle in the eye).

You could say (echoing Aleada's earlier words):

Le patetiche fantisie autoerotiche di un uomo ormai oltre il suo tempo. ("The pathetic erotic fantasies of a man beyond his prime)

Donato reluctantly puts down his bags: *When Cellini doesn't see him, Donato returns un-used dagger to shelf.*

The pigeons pick fleas off one another.

21. THE WORK CONTINUES, TIME PASES SWIFTLY

o Time passes, the seasons change:

DONATO: (writing in his journal) We resume work. The incident is forgotten.

In November she announces that she is pregnant and we plan our marriage.

22. DONATO VISITS VENICE BOOKSTORE/TIME PASSES AND BOTH MEMOIR AND ANTI-MEMOIR APPROACH COMPLETION

Donato bursts into Aleada's house

DONATO: Aleada, I think we have enough to show to the publishers!

ALEADA: Which version?

DONATO: Both! Let the publishers decide!

We watch Donato arrive in Venice. A gondola delivers him to a crowded bookstore

- o Donato takes both manuscripts to the publishers in Venice, setting of his publisher friends.
- o Donato makes a flourish of removing the two bags from his rucksack and laying them on a broad table side by side, Red for the lightly edited version, black for his La Via Veritas.
- o We take a time-sped trip thru the canals of Venice, with the sun rising and setting to convey the passage of time.
- o Donato returns to the offices and is met with hugs
- o **The publishers are ecstatic, raving in vernacular Italian, beaming and gushing, rubbing their hands together.**

SUBTITLES: "You have found the true Cellini, you know him better than he knows himself.

PUBLISHER: *We publish your version immediately. You will be paid well! If the Maestro agrees.*

23. CELLINI'S STUDIO: DONATO RELAYS CELLINI PUBLISHER'S VERDICT

- o The scene open as we find Donato and Cellini sitting at a table with the two manuscripts in front of them. Cellini has his head buried in his hands. He is whimpering

CELLINI: (quietly) "I no longer want to leave a memoir"

DONATO: Messere, remember Aliada's words: you must not cheat history of your story, you have a heavenly obligation...

CELLINI: "Excuse me, but these words are more convincing from beautiful lips!"

29. DONATO RELATES EVENTS TO ALEADA

DONATO: He says he's made up his mind. He won't publish any memoir!

ALEADA: Just maybe I could convince him...

DONATO: "Aleada, you must not approach him. *We know what goes on in his head.*"

The roosting pigeons flutter away in fright.

30. CELLINI'S STUDIO: **THE INFERNO**

That night Cellini goes to his scribe's desk, where he holds up and reads from the "red" codex. He pours over the pages from each book, reading out loud short segments from each highlighting the difference in tone. Drinking as he does so.

31. DONATO WRITING IN HIS JOURNAL

DONATO: (writing in his journal).

(Donato is shown weeping.)

DONATO: I can hardly believe the news.

(Cellini holds a lantern up to a polished but distorting bronze mirror to examine his reflection. He smashes the lantern on the desk setting off an inferno.)

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CELLINI: "I shall not be tamed!" History will hear my voice or no voice at all!

- o We see Donatto picking up all his belongings that have been thrown into the street.

DONATO: The project ends.

CELLINI: I will never again to attempt a memoir.

(The pigeons are nowhere to be seen.)

We see Donato crying in Aleada's arms.

DONATO: "I have lost my beautiful writings!"

ALEADA: Don't despair my love. I too have lost beautiful poems, my whole notebook once! Never recovered notes from the heart, but you must move on, there are always more!

32. DONATO RECEIVES A PACKAGE AT HIS HOME

The seasons change to indicate short passage of time.

ALEADA: Donato, a package for you. From Venice.

DONATO: Oh my god, the manuscripts, they kept copies!

ALEADA: Hmm, too light for both (holding the package up in the air. Donato tears open the package).

DONATO: It's the red, only the red!

(The white pigeon flutters away leaving his partner behind)

ALEADA: (reads out loud a note enclosed in the package). Donato, given the demise of your project we return the maestro's original draft. Unfortunately, we did not retain a copy of the other. Hope you have one. (Donato buries his head into his hands.)

33.DONATO AND ALEADA WALK ALONG ARNO: DONATO CONSIDERS RECONSTITUTING HIS ANTI-MEMOIR

ALEADA: When do you give it to the beast?

DONATO: I don't plan to. He doesn't want it.

ALEADA: You must. It's his.

DONATO: I plan to reconstitute my beautiful version.

ALEADA: What? **"I am your lover, not your lawyer!** But surely this is a crime! He'll sue. No one will touch it. *You must abandon the counterfeit.*

DONATO: *It's not a counterfeit, La Via Veritas will be more authentic than his undigested outpourings.*

Besides "I know those who would pay handsomely..."

- o **ALEADA:** (angry) You and Cellini both are obstinate and obsessed. You want to hammer your truth onto someone else's face!

Hai tempo solo per la tua ossessione, non per me.

SUBTITLES: "You only have time for your obsession, none for me!"

27.DONATO IN FEOSOLE OVERLOOKING FLORENCE: DONATO RECONSIDERS THE DECISION TO RESTORE HIS VERSION

DONATO: I cannot sleep. To quell my exploding mind I smoke a pipe of opium I'd stolen from Cellini he kept for his pain.

As I drift into a thought dream I hear Aleada's words, "You are as obstinate as he,

"The same desire to shape reality to your liking and call it an "essence." Really it is just your truth hammered onto someone else's face.

(Cellini's face morphs into gold)

At least with the maestro there **may be lying, but not pretending!** He makes no attempt to hide himself or primp in front of God.

(Cellini fashions a gold sculpture)

(We see him looking into a polished bronze mirror just like Cellini in earlier scene.)

My vain attempt to re-create my masterwork. Impossible!.
Let the blasphemous text stand!

Gold Cellini statue morphs back into Cellini's human form

DONATO: (to his journal) But how do we save his great memoir from the intolerant eyes of the present?

Ecco! I know a place so corrupt that it is safe!

I offer the manuscript to my Venetian contacts, someone who specializes in salacious materials. **It will be hidden amongst the filth.**

Hopefully one day, maybe in a hundred years, the manuscript is recovered. **When "history has become inured to obscenity and blasphemy."**

The two pigeons flutter in midair as if to say, "scandale!"

28.DONATO RETURNS TO VENETIAN BOOKSTORE, SECRETS MANUSCRIPT
Donato returns to Venice and visits a **tawdry** bookstore where we get a peek of naughty materials. He puts the black volume into the hands of the bookseller, entrusting him to preserve it for another age.

DONATO: (Donato writes in his journal) "The unpleasantness is soon forgotten. I get a teaching post at the Academia teaching Greek language and philosophy.

We marry and almost immediately have a healthy baby boy.

I set about ambitious translations of newly recovered ancient texts. (Donato pouring over manuscripts) **I struggle to keep myself from imposing my own contemporary notions** of love and beauty and godliness upon the pagan meanings of the past... **[close up] which is my wont.**

Fade to black.

CODA #1A: THE CONFESSION: BABY DAUGHTER IN ALEADA'S ARMS

- **A title appears on screen: "Il Confezione.**
Rolling text reads: Upon the birth of their second child, a girl, Aleada, holding her new babe in arms. Donato comes to her bedside with a mirror so that she can appreciate this perfect moment.

ALEADA: "Donato, there is something I must tell you.

DONATO: Not now, talk has no place in this beautiful moment.

ALEADA: No, it must finally be told in the face of our bliss:

"I had known Cellini before I knew you, before he became your maestro. Through Tulia d'Aragona. In our poetry circle. We had a flirtatious relationship. Nothing more. He was much older, I was not much more than a school girl. So I confess I played on that earlier connection when you needed my help.

Why did I conceal it from you? Not to arouse your jealousy of course. Little mistakes piled on one another. Stupido!

Donato: "**Ti capisco**" ("I understand.").

Hear me Donatino, let me be truthful: I was a flowering coquette just sensing her powers (brushing aside his facile understanding). "Don't make this too easy," she says with an ironic laugh. Look what a mess the coquette has made!"

DONATO: You will always be my coquette.

ALEADA: Donato, there's more: When you stole into his journal I went to Cellini again. I was trapped. I thought I could set things right. Be a handmaiden to your masterpiece. Still over-confident of my persuasive charms.

I cursed the old fool for his lustful fantasies, the hurt it had caused you. **Le patetiche fantisie autoerotiche di un uomo ormai oltre il suo tempo** ("The pathetic erotic fantasies of a man beyond his prime.) Those were the words I used. And he seemed genuinely chastened and ashamed.

Donato: "**Ti capisco, ti capisco,**" "I understand, I understand."

ALEADA: But that wasn't the end of it (she says, waving a hand to indicate he must withhold comment): I went to him again, yes, *behind your back*, Despite your command. when he rejected the Black Book. Surely I could change his mind again. **The old leech took it as a lustful invitation.**

He confessed his love for me, bawled like a baby. I mocked his absurd advances. It did not end well. (**Donato starts to freak**) Don't go mad, my love, **my confession does not cross that boundary** (holding up her hand).

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It ended there. But I did leave him in...a state. *It must have set off the drunken fury that ended in the fire.*

I am infinitely sorry, my love, your beautiful writings, your precious words, the singular inspirations that visit just once and are then gone. (Pause) Your wounded honor...

And for how in any way it has discolored our love...

Donato: "Ti capisco." They embrace.

FINITO

CODA #1B: **ROLLING TEXT** WITH HISTORICAL DETAIL

- o Donato and Aleada go on to have a loving marriage, two more children. Aleada maintains her passion and commitment to poetry, alongside her role as mother and wife. Her work finds its way into a Florentine archive and survives to this day.
- o In historical fact, *La Vita* is eventually re-discovered, but not until the 18th century, almost two centuries after Cellini's death.
- o Its significance was established and celebrated by Johan Wolfgang von Goethe who proclaimed it one of the masterpieces of world literature.

29.CREDITS ROLL

30.CODA #2: ATTENZIONE!: ONE FINAL CONSIDERATION

ROLLING TEXT:A parting thought: Perhaps we have got it wrong, and the manuscript returned to Donato by the publisher after the fire was not the uncensored memoir, but Donato's anti-memoir!

- o We see Donato embracing affectionately a **black** codex, that is, the anti-memoir (as opposed to the **red**) and putting it in the hands of the bookseller.

ROLLING TEXT:In which case, history has left us with Donato's version after all, and the world will never know what was in the raw, uncut version.

- o *The black and white pigeons dance and peck mischievously about on Donato's desk, tearing scraps of paper from both drafts before fluttering off happily.*

CREDITS

*Written, directed, performed, edited and synthesized by
Donald Stewart*

*Inspired by "La Vita," the autobiography of Benvenuto
Cellini*

*In historical fact, La Vita was not published in Cellini's
lifetime. It is eventually re-discovered, but not until the
18th century, almost two centuries after Cellini's death.*

*Its significance was established and celebrated by Johan
Wolfgang von Goethe who proclaimed it one of the
masterpieces of world literature.*

Artificial intelligent tools employed:

*MidJourney for anchor plates
Eleven Labs for voice synthesis
Runway for lip sync and image transformation
Final Cut for compositing
Eagle for image management*

*Music
Monteverdi, Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria, L'Orfeo*

*Paintings
Benvenuto Cellini Giving Instructions to His Assistant,
Bernardino Manellini
by Solomon Alexander Hart
Portrait of a Youth
by Sandro Botticelli*

Full 40-minute piece under development