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Behind the Veil

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Screenplay

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT - 1590 - VELLANO ITALY

The lights are on in the house and a woman is screaming in pain.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM

We see a pregnant woman in the midst of labor; she is in agony. A MIDWIFE is by her side attending to her and is very worried that things are not going well.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY

GIULIANO is pacing worriedly; he looks anxious. His wife's screams can be heard from the other room. The midwife steps out of the bedroom into the hallway and addresses the husband.

MIDWIFE

Pray

(Thrusts a rosary into
Giuliano's hand)

She dashes back into the room and the woman's screams grow louder.

INT. - SMALL HOME CHAPEL

Giuliano falls to his knees in front of the crucifix praying fervently. His wife's muffled screams can still be heard in the background.

GIULIANO

Pater noster, qui es in caelis,
sanctificetur nomen tuum. Adveniat
regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua,
sicut in caelo et in terra
Please, Please, Please father
If you spare their lives I will
give the child to your service
Please, Please, Please God

A baby's cry is heard in the background. Giuliano looks to the crucifix with tears in his eyes.

INT. - SMALL HOME CHAPEL - DAY - 5 YEARS LATER

We see Giuliano and his beloved daughter, Benedetta, kneeling in prayer in front of the same crucifix.

GIULIANO AND BENEDETTA

(together)

PATER noster, qui es in caelis,
sanctificetur nomen tuum. Adveniat
regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua,
sicut in caelo et in terra.

Benedetta stumbles and than stops forgetting the words. She looks up at her father, he smiles and at her and begins saying the first syllable of the next word gently encouraging her.

GIULIANO

Paaaaaa....

Benedetta smiles, remembering the verse and continues reciting the prayer.

BENEDETTA

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis
hodie, et dimitte nobis debita
nostra sicut et nos dimittimus
debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos
inducas in tentationem, sed libera
nos a malo. Amen.

INT. - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benedetta is kneeling on the cold stone floor by her bed

BENEDETTA

Credo in Spiritum Sanctum, sanctam
Ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum
communione, remissionem
peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem
et vitam aeternam. Amen.

Giuliano enters the room and Benedetta stops and looks at him.

BENEDETTA

Papa must I finish my knees are
bleeding from kneeling and im cold.

GIULIANO

Benedetta we must be as devoted to
God as he is to us. Finish your
prayers.

(CONTINUED)

Giuliano turns and exits

BENEDETTA

Pater noster, qui es in caelis,
sanctificetur nomen tuum. Adveniat
regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua,
sicut in caelo et in terra

INT. - CHURCH - DAY - SUNDAY MASS

The church is filled with parishioners. Everyone is kneeling in prayer. We see Benedetta, her father and mother.

PRIEST

DOMINE Iesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi,
qui ex voluntate Patris cooperante
Spiritu Sancto, per mortem tuam
mundum vivificasti: libera me per
hoc sacrosanctum

Benedetta moves her lips praying silently, her eyes closed tightly

EXT. - CHURCH - DAY - A BIT LATER

People are leaving the church. Benedetta skips out of the church and into a nearby olive grove.

EXT. - OLIVE GROVE - DAY - SPRING

Benedetta is walking amongst the trees singing the Lord's Prayer when all of a sudden she hears a bird echoing the same tune. She keeps singing walking around trying to find the echoing bird. Benedetta finally finds the bird perched on a branch (it is a nightingale)

BENEDETTA

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

(The bird copies after her)

BENEDETTA

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

(The bird copies after her)

BENEDETTA

Stop copying me
(Sings)

(MORE)

On earth as it is in heaven

the bird looks at her but is silent. Benedetta smiles and giggles happily at this new development.

EXT. HEAVY BRUSH - JUST TO THE WEST OF THE OLIVE GROVE -
(CONTINUOUS)

We see a wolf slowly moving toward Benedetta. (His point of view). He has caught her scent and is stalking the small child.

EXT. OLIVE GROVE (CONTINUOUS)

Benedetta turns to the right unknowingly moving toward the wolf but the nightingale swoops down by her head and turns her to the left away from the wolf. She giggles thinking it is a game and happily follows the bird. The wolf growls and retreats back into the brush.

EXT. - DIRT ROAD LINED WITH OLIVE TREES - BENEDETTA'S HOUSE
IN THE DISTANCE - TWILIGHT.

Benedetta hums her prayers while walking home. We see the nightingale flying ahead of her towards the house.

INT. - HOUSE - BENEDETTA'S ROOM - NIGHT - 3 YEARS LATER

Benedetta enters her bedroom wearing her nightgown and approaches her bed. She's holding a rosary. She lifts up her gown and we see her knees are bruised and scabbed from daily meditation. She kneels carefully, slightly wincing in pain and bows her head grasping the rosary. We see the nightingale is perched on her windowsill watching over her.

BENEDETTA

CREDO in Deum Patrem omnipotentem,
Creatorem caeli et terrae. Et in
Iesum Christum, Filium eius unicum,
Dominum nostrum, qui conceptus est
de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria

INT. - HOUSE - BENEDETTA'S ROOM - DAY

Benedetta is folding clothes, packing a satchel. The nightingale is still perched on the windowsill

BENEDETTA

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly-minded, for
with blessing in his hand, Christ
our God to earth descendeth, our
full homage to demand.

(The nightingale echoes her. Benedetta's mother opens the door

MIDEA (BENEDETTA'S MOTHER)

Benedetta its time to go, your
father is waiting.

Benedetta quickly packs the remaining clothing into the bag and runs out the door.

EXT. - HOUSE - DAY

Benedetta exits the house and hugs her mother goodbye. Her father is loading a horse with luggage when she notices the nightingale perched on the fence. She runs up to the bird.

BENEDETTA

Goodbye, old friend.

Benedetta's father rides up.

GIULIANO

Its time to go Benedetta

Benedetta goes to her father and he grabs her hand helping her onto the horse. They pass the fence and ride off along the olive tree lined dirt road. Benedetta's mother and the nightingale watch as they ride away.

EXT. - CONVENT - DAY

Benedetta and her father arrive at the convent. He helps her off the horse and than knocks on the enormous wood doors of the convent. Benedetta looks up at her father.

GIULIANO

Be good principessa

A NUN answers, opening the door.

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA

I love you papa

The nun signals that it is time to go and takes Benedetta inside. The giant doors close and than Giuliano turns to leave, tears streaming down his face. Giuliano embraces Benedetta and leaves.

INT. CONVENT - CHAPEL - DAY - 20 YEARS LATER

We hear the beautiful angelic voices of the nuns singing. Benedetta is laying prostrate on the floor. Face down, she is wearing a plain muslin gown and is barefoot. The nuns are kneeling in the pews and Benedetta is praying silently as the priest blesses her with holy water. Two nuns come over, One on each side and help her into a kneeling position. A third nun comes over it is Mother Piera with scissors in hand. Mother Piera walks behind the kneeling Benedetta, grasps her long brown flowing hair and cuts it off at the chin. the priest walks in front of the kneeling Benedetta and begins asking her, her vows.

PRIEST

Dear friends in Christ, let us now
pray to the Father of all good
gifts, uniting ourselves with the
prayer of all the Saints...

The nuns song grows louder and Benedetta joyfully rises and is smiling.

MONTAGE - MUSIC UNDER

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - 1 YEAR LATER

bededetta's hair is long again. Benedetta wakes at dawn, dresses quickly,tucks her hair into her habit and leaves the room, we hear bells in the distance, she is humming happily.

INT. - DINING ROOM - MORNING

The Nuns are chatting and eating breakfast: Sausage, eggs, bread, tomatoes and mozzarella are all on the table. The nuns are obviously taking pleasure in each others company and happily eating.

EXT. - PASTURE - DAY

Benedetta and Mea are feeding the animals. Benedetta has a apron full of grain and is throwing it for the chickens while Mea fills the pigs troughs. Sister Angelina, is brushing a horse when she finishes she pets him and gives him apples, than kisses him on the nose before moving on to her next task.

INT. - BARN - DAY

We see Benedetta and some of the other nuns milking the cows.

EXT. - GARDEN - DAY

Benedetta and the other nuns are in the garden. Benedetta is gathering tomatoes in her apron. The nuns are talking and laughing. Benedetta takes a bite of a tomato smiles and passes it on.

INT. - CONVENT - WORKROOM

There are a number of silk looms and the nuns are weaving fabric.

INT. - EVENING PRAYER

The nuns are singing, they come up one at a time and light a candle.

INT. - HILL ABOVE

It is night and we see the convent windows are lit and hear the end of the nuns sweet song.

FADE OUT

INT. - CONVENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Benedetta, MEA, and a few other nuns are baking bread for dinner that evening.

SISTER LUCIA
Have you ever noticed how much
better warm bread tastes after
fasting?

(CONTINUED)

SISTER ANNA

Well of course it would taste exceptionally wonderful after fasting, Mother Piera says it's God's way of rewarding those who suffer in his name

MEA

Have you ever noticed how much harder it is to endure the sufferings of fasting while making bread. I feel as though my stomach might turn into itself every time I smell the sweet grain baking.

BENEDETTA

What you suffer from is not hunger but the devil trying to dissuade you from doing God's will. By resisting temptation you are honoring the Lord.

SISTER LUCIA

How do you resist when the temptation is so strong?

Sister Lucia takes a round loaf of bread in her hands and smells it, breathing it in.

BENEDETTA

Well when I feel the devil tempting me I simply remember God's glory and marvel in the beauty of his creations. I think how wonderful he is to have blessed me with these hands to pray with and feel. And how spectacular he is to have created everything I love so dearly in the world.

LUCIA

Well I love bread and I'm hungry

BENEDETTA

Who do you think created the flour that's in that bread?

Benedetta picks up a small handful of flour and throws it at the young nun. The young nun laughs and throws flour at Benedetta it is not long before the nuns are now engaged in a full fledged flour fight in the kitchen

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA

Who do you think created laughter
and the joy that fills up your
soul?

Benedetta twirls in the midst of the flour filled air
joyfully

BENEDETTA

(Joyfully while twirling)
God is great!

MOTHER PIERA

Sisters!

The nuns stop their flour fight immediately and stand up
straight knowing that they are about to be reprimanded.

MOTHER PIERA

Who is responsible for this?

Benedetta steps forward her head is bowed in shame.

MOTHER PIERA

I would expect such behavior from
the young nuns but you.... You know
that wasting food is a sin. In
penance you shall continue your
fast for another night.

Mother Piera directs her attention to the entire room

MOTHER PIERA

Clean up this mess and finish your
work in silent prayer

The sisters begin cleaning and dusting the flour off
themselves and Mother Piera exits.

INT. - CONVENT - DAY

Benedetta is walking through a corridor

INT. - CHURCH - DAY

Benedetta enters a beautiful church. There are high
ceilings, columns and beautiful wooden pews, light showers
in from the windows as Benedetta kneels in
prayer. Benedetta closes her eyes

CUT TO BLACK

INT. - CHURCH - DAY (VISION)

When Benedetta opens her eyes she sees that the church has been transformed into a magnificent garden. Grass has taken the place of the cold stone floor, foliage is everywhere and has overgrown the pews, great trees have taken the place of the columns, the tree canopies and a starry sky is now above her. At the front of the church a beautiful sparkling fountain stands where the pulpit once was. Benedetta stammers to her feet in shock and amazement. She begins looking around in wonder when an ANGEL appears by her side and guides her to the fountain.

ANGEL

This is scented water from the heavens and "whoever wants to take water from the fountain must purge his cup or not come nearer"

BENEDETTA

I don't understand

The angel begins to leave as he responds leaving Benedetta standing alone by the fountain

ANGEL

If you want to know God lift all earthly desires from your heart

Benedetta looks into the water and as she is about to touch it she sees a reflection. She looks closer and a banshee leaps from the water and out toward Benedetta. We cut to black. Benedetta's eyes open and she sees that the garden is gone her eyes roll back and she collapses in the chapel.

INT. - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Benedetta wakes up in her bed and is disoriented. Mea and SISTER AMBRA are by her bedside when she regains consciousness.

BENEDETTA

(confused)

what happened? I was in the chapel, and there were trees and...

Benedetta starts to get up but the older nun stops her and interrupts her (Benedetta is now in a seated position)

SISTER AMBRA

Calm down dear, you collapsed in the chapel

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA

(confused)

But the angel...and the fountain...
and there was grass

SISTER AMBRA

Shhh...shhhh...you have been
fasting for to long. here have some
broth you don't have your wits
about you

Sister Ambra feeds Benedetta some soup from a bowl.

INT. - CONFESSIONAL

BENEDETTA

Father, everyone keeps telling me
that my mind is playing tricks on
me. But I cannot get the images of
what I saw in the chapel out of my
mind.

FATHER RICORDATI

What did you see? Tell me what you
think happened.

BENEDETTA

I was in the church praying but
when I opened my eyes the church
had been transformed into a garden
and an angel appeared to me. He
told me to purge myself of all my
worldly possessions, but then I
looked in the water and there was a
demon... I'm so confused father. I
don't know if it was the Lord
speaking to me or if it was the
devil trying to coax me... but it
couldn't have been the devil.. why
would the devil tell me how to be
closer to God...but God wouldn't
send a demon...the more I think
about it the more nonsensical it
seems, but I know I wasn't
dreaming...

FATHER RICORDATI

that is quite a dilemma sister.
Pray for suffering. pray for
illness. the devil thrives on
instant satisfaction and pleasure
if your vision was indeed a message

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FATHER RICORDATI (cont'd)
 from god he will bless you with
 suffering. for it is only when we
 suffer that we are able to
 experience gods grace and fulfill
 his will.

INT. - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benedetta is kneeling by her bed praying fervently, she is sweating and has a fever.

BENEDETTA
 Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis
 hodie, et dimitte nobis debita
 nostra sicut et nos dimittimus
 debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos
 inducas in tentationem, sed libera
 nos a malo. Amen.

Benedetta crawls into bed and continues praying as she closes her eyes.

BENEDETTA
 Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis
 hodie, et dimitte nobis debita
 nostra sicut et nos dimittimus
 debitoribus nostris. Et

INT. CONVENT - MOTHER PIERA'S ROOM - NIGHT

There is a loud scream and Mother Piera wakes up abruptly

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Several nuns rush in to see what the commotion is about and they find Benedetta in bed. She is pale, drenched in sweat from fever and is in a trance like state screaming and contorting in pain. She is going in and out of consciousness

MOTHER PIERA
 (Concerned)
 Good heavens!

Rushes to Benedetta's bedside and feels Benedetta's head

MOTHER PIERA
 (Extremely concerned)
 She's burning up. SISTER ANGELA go
 fetch some towels and water from
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER PIERA (cont'd)
 the well. SISTER Dona go run into
 town and fetch the doctor! Hurry!

The two nuns quickly exit the room to complete the tasks that have just been given to them. After they leave Benedetta begins contorting in pain. She arches her back screaming and grasping at the sheets. Suddenly, she opens her eyes and speaks lucidly through the pain for a few moments

BENEDETTA
 (In a pain tinged voice)
 Please...make it stop

MOTHER PIERA
 God does not give us more than we
 can handle. just hold on one day
 you'll see that this is a great
 blessing your suffering is not in
 vein

Benedetta groans in pain before gaining her composure for a few more seconds before being overtaken

BENEDETTA
 (In agony, crying)
 I am not worthy of suffering. I am
 not worthy...make it stop.

She screams in pain arching her back off the bed and continuing to twist her body in pain.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. CONVENT- BENEDETTA'S ROOM (VISION)

Benedetta's room has been transformed into a barren desert. She is being encircled by scorpions, boars, and lions. The scorpions begin to crawl all over her body and she screams and flails attempting to get them off of her. The boars and lions begin to come closer and are about to attack when suddenly a beautiful man dressed in flowing clothing and yielding a great staff appears. The man pounded his staff on the desert ground and a great light shines from it, driving the animals away and saving Benedetta. the man approaches Benedetta and helps her to feet.

JESUS
 Don't be afraid Benedetta

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA

Who are you? how do you know my name?

JESUS

It is I, Jesus.

Benedetta falls to her knees and bows

BENEDETTA

I am sorry, your grace. I am not worthy to be in your presence.

Jesus kneels down and lifts Benedetta's chin.

JESUS

I would not be here now if you were not worthy. now rise my dear Benedetta there is much I must tell you.

Benedetta and Jesus rise together and begin to walk together side by side.

JESUS

Those animals who meant to harm you were not gods creatures but demons in disguise. As long as you stay true to the Lord I will always be here to help you by beloved. But you must be strong, there will be others who try to harm you and lead you away from god. Benedetta you mustn't be fooled by them.

Jesus is enveloped in a burst of light so bright Benadetta must shield her eyes - cuts to black

INT. - MOTHER PIERA'S STUDY - DAY

MOTHER PIERA

Sister Benedetta has been ill and experiencing night terrors for the past two weeks.

FATHER RICORDATI

Has the doctor determined what ails her?

Mother Piera shakes her head no

(CONTINUED)

FATHER RICORDATI

So its true... god has blessed her
with suffering...

MOTHER PIERA

Yes and she has been gifted with
visions as well

FATHER RICORDATI

(happily)

It seems that the Lord has smiled
upon us sister, Benedetta's gift
will bring the convent great
fortune.

MOTHER PIERA

She is growing so weak though
father I don't know how long her
body will be able to withstand
these trials

FATHER RICORDATI

Yes, Sister Benedetta's experience
is quite unusual. She is not only
in communication with the Lord, but
with the devil as well....

MOTHER PIERA

What?

FATHER RICORDATI

Yes, I knew it was a possibility
after she described her first
vision to me. It seems as though
her body is being used as a
mystical battleground of
sorts. She should have a
companion, someone to help her
navigate the tribulations ahead...

MOTHER PIERA

do you think that's necessary
father?

FATHER RICORDATI

you said it yourself, Sister
Benedetta is growing weak, and
physical weakness brings spiritual
doubt we need to ensure that she
does not give in to the temptation
of the devil.

Mother Piera nods in agreement

(CONTINUED)

FATHER RICORDATI
 She needs someone who's spiritual
 resolve will fortify her own.

INT. CONVENT- HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mea is holding a candle in one hand and a bag of her belongings in the other, she puts down her bag, takes a deep breath, knocks on Sister Benedetta's door and begins talking to her through to wood.

MEA
 Hello? Sister Benedetta? Mother
 Piera sent me....

Mea hears Benedetta through the door

BENEDETTA
 (Passionately)
 No No No

Puts her ear to the door and than knocks again, this time with more vigor.

MEA
 (Loudly)
 Sister Benedetta?

Benedetta screams and Mea opens the door and rushes in.

INT. CONVENT- BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mea enters Benedetta's room. Benedetta is in the midst of a vision and is screaming and contorting. Mea stops in her tracks for a moment, she drops her candle in shock and than rushes over to Benedetta and than pins her arms to the bed and tries to stop her from contorting and tries to wake her up.

MEA
 (Desperately)
 Benedetta?.....Benedetta!

INT. CONVENT- BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM-NIGHT (VISION)

Benedetta is chained to her bed and Satan (disguised as a hansom man) is whipping her with a steel chain. she screams in agony and is bleeding. he stops comes close to her, running his hand along her body. his hand caresses her face and he moves his face so close to hers that their lips are almost touching.

(CONTINUED)

SATAN

Benedetta, Beautiful Benedetta. You
can make all of this stop. Be my
bride...

He shows her a beautiful golden ring

SATAN

just say the word and I will give
you every earthly pleasure
imaginable.

Benedetta spits on his face.

BENEDETTA

The only bride I will ever be is a
bride of Christ.

Satan is angered and he puts the ring on Benedetta by force.

SATAN

You will be mine, I will break you
my love

Satan retrieves the steel chain from the floor wraps it
around his hand and with a chuckle and a sly smile begins
whipping Benedetta with renewed vigor, enjoying the pain he
is inflicting on her and taking in her misery. She screams
with every lash.

INT. CONVENT- BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benedetta is screaming in pain, She is still in the midst of
her vision Mea is standing next to her pouring water in a
basin when Benedetta becomes lucid. She is weak

BENEDETTA

Is he gone?

Mea sits on the bed and cradling Benedetta in her arms
sponges water on her face.

MEA

It's over, your safe now.

Benedetta sighs and rests her head in Mea's lap. Mea strokes
her hair

MEA

Rest, you need your strength.

Mea continues to stroke Benedetta's hair as she begins to
softly sing a prayer as if it were a lullaby.

(CONTINUED)

MEA

PATER noster, qui es in cœlis;
 sanctificatur nomen tuum: Adventiat
 regnum tuum; fiat voluntas tua,
 sicut in cœlo, et in terra. Panem
 nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie:
 Et dimitte nobis debita nostra,
 sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus
 nostris: et ne nos inducas in
 tentationem: sed libera nos a malo.

INT. CONVENT- BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Mea and Benedetta are sleeping. Mea's body is entangled with Benedetta's and she is laying on her chest. Mea wakes up slowly and than jumps out of bed when she realizes where she is not only in Benedetta's bed but laying on her chest. The sudden motion causes Benedetta to wake up.

MEA

I'm sorry, I must have....

Benedetta cuts her off takes her by the hand.

BENEDETTA

Thank You.

Benedetta kisses Mea's hand and places it against her face, holding it and laying on it as she falls back asleep. Mea smiles modestly, sits on the bed next the Benedetta and strokes her hair as she sleeps. we hear a loud noise outside the room and Mea jumps and pulls away from Benedetta. She runs to the door, opens it, and sees an elderly nun has dropped a chamber pot. Mea goes to help her clean it. Benedetta wakes up, sitting up in bed, she get up to help the elderly nun as well.

INT. COUNTRY SIDE

We see a horses galloping and drawing a carriage along a country side

INT. - SMALL FARM HOUSE

Bishop Stephano exits the carriage. He is followed by two middle aged priests. Bishop Stephano flings open the farm house door and enters. There is a young disheveled man (GIOVANI) by the fireplace (he looks terrified). The two priests grab his arms and shove him into a chair roughly.

(CONTINUED)

BISHOP STEPHANO
You lied Giovanni

GIOVANNI
I didn't, I didn't

BISHOP STEPHANO
God hates a liar

Bishop Stephano reaches over his shoulder and angrily backhands Giovanni with all his might.

INT. - FARMHOUSE - DAWN

We see Bishop Stephano and the two priests leave the house exhausted the priests knuckles are bloody. Bishop Stephano stops to right himself and fixes his hat and garb and than gets into the carriage. we see the carriage driving through the countryside. We see farmers stopping their work and making the sign of the cross as they see the bishop's carriage pass. We see Benedetta and the nuns plowing the fields. Lucia waves happily to the passing carriage but than quickly stops and makes the sign of the cross when she sees all the other nuns doing it around her.

INT. CARRIAGE

Bishop Stephano takes a drink of water from a cup, he looks out the window at the surrounding landscape. he sees the nuns, shakes his head and lays his head back in his seat, exhausted, the situation is not good.

INT. CONVENT- WORKROOM

The nuns are sewing clothing. Mea is working on an apron and pricks herself with the needle.

MEA
Ow

A drop of blood falls on the pristine white cloth. Mea shakes her finger in pain and puts it in her mouth. Benedetta tears off a piece of cloth and takes Mea's hand, wrapping the wounded finger. We see the blood seep through the bandage. Nearby SISTER AMBRE sees this and smiles.

INT. BISHOPS QUARTERS - FLORENCE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Bishop Stephano is sitting in a large bath. Steam is rising. He is dictating to a young hansom brother, ALFANZO, who is sitting nearby writing his every word.

BISHOP STEPHANO

And that concludes the confession of Giovanni Maginni. He has professed that all of his claims were lies and shall be punished in accordance to papal law.

Brother Alfanzo stands and brings Bishop Stephano the document to sign. Brother Alfanzo than carefully lays the document on a nearby chair and than takes a sponge and begins to wash the bishops shoulders. The bishop smiles and relaxes into the tub.

smashcut

Int. Convent - Bathing Room - Night - Lit By Candles

Benedetta is sitting in the water and Mea is washing Benedetta's back with a sponge. Mea holds up a sheet and behind the sheet we see Benedetta's naked silhouette as she gets out of the bath and puts on her white cotton night gown. Mea looks away.

Int. Convent- Benedetta's Bedroom

Benedetta is sitting at the edge of her bed and Mea pours her a cup of pear wine.

MEA

Drink this remember Mother Piera said a glass before bed would help sooth your night terrors.

Benedetta takes the glass and drinks from it smiling at Mea. Benedetta gets up sipping her wine and looking out the window

BENEDETTA

You know I think the moon is lovelier in the springtime.

MEA

Yes but sometimes I wonder why god chose to make it so distastefully hot.

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA (AS JESUS)
 You know you really shouldn't
 question my will Mea.

Benedetta turns to face Mea who thinks she is joking

MEA
 (lightly/playfully)
 Well I wasn't questioning your will
 but rather the reason for Gods.
 Although you are very gifted sister
 I doubt even you could be
 responsible for the temperament of
 the weather.

BENEDETTA (AS JESUS)
 Maybe Benedetta might not be able
 to paint the sky with countless
 speckled lights or sprinkle
 dewdrops on the morning leaves but
 I can.

Mea begins backing away

MEA
 Benedetta stop it that's not
 amusing.

BENEDETTA (AS JESUS)
 I am very fond of Benedetta and you
 have proven to be a great ally to
 her. Mea, it is I your Lord and
 savior. I have come to bless you
 with a gift and consummate our holy
 bond.

MEA
 No stay away. Father Riccotti
 warned us about you. He said the
 devil would be cunning and try to
 steer us away from the Lord.

Benedetta walks toward Mea and reaches out to touch her. Mea
 leaps back dropping the bottle of pear wine. Benedetta
 kneels down and swipes her finger across the floor dipping
 it in the wine. the wine on her finger is now blood.
 Benedetta goes up to Mea and makes the sign of the cross on
 Mea's forehead elongating the final line down Mea's nose and
 across her lips as she drew closer and whispered

BENEDETTA (AS JESUS)
 (whispering)
 This is my blood, the blood of the
 new and the everlasting covenant.

(CONTINUED)

Benedetta kisses Mea. Benedetta lays Mea on the floor and kisses her as she unties the top of Mea's nightgown and kisses Mea's exposed neck. We see Mea's nightgown being lifted off of her by Benedetta and then Benedetta running her hands along Mea's naked body. as Benedetta's fingers caress Mea's skin, the pear wine turns to blood staining Mea's porcelain skin. we see Benedetta's fingers trace down Mea's thigh and begin to move along her inner thigh. Mea arches her back and flings her head back in pleasure.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Mea wakes up naked in bed with Benedetta. Benedetta is laying on Mea's chest and after carefully getting out of bed being sure not to wake Benedetta Mea quickly puts on her nightgown and exits the room.

Ext. - Field - early morning.

It is obviously hot despite the early hour. Mea is walking through a field in her night gown praying aloud for guidance.

MEA

O Lord. What have I done? Heavenly Father please guide me. Was what transpired last night truly blessed? did your son truly gift me with an unequivocal gift? Or have I fallen pray to the tricks of the devil and betrayed you?

Mea comes to a river and begins to wade in its water. She touches the surface with her fingertips making ripples and than lays down in the clear water as if she is being re-baptized.

MEA

Please Lord tell me what to do,
Please give me a sign.

Mea hears birds chirping, the sound of wind rustling in the trees, and finally the sound of rushing water. the sound of water grows louder as we see Mea's eyes widen and mouth part in ecstasy.

INT. CONVENT- BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Mea enters the room soaking wet. Her nightgown is now nearly seethrough. She unties the top string of her nightgown and the wet fabric falls to her feet. We see Mea's back as she walks to the bed and crawls back in. Benedetta wakes from the stirring and retracts upon seeing that both she and Mea are naked.

MEA

This is true and good. we are
blessed. God gave me a sign.

Mea leans in and kisses Benedetta as she pulls her under the sheets.

INT. - CONVENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

There are several nuns already there busy at work. Josepha is making a lattice crust on a cherry pie while Isabetta pits cherries and Leonetta needs pie dough. Mea and Benedetta enter the kitchen together and part each going to a different part of the kitchen. Mea goes to Isabetta and begins pitting cherries while Benedetta crosses the kitchen and begins helping Leonetta with the dough.

SISTER ISABETTA

So...How are you today?

MEA

I am well. tho...fulfilling God's
will is more daunting than I
expected.

SISTER ISABETTA

Being a bride of Christ is no easy
task. Is Benedetta still having
night terrors?

MEA

No, she slept quite well last night

SISTER ISABETTA

That's wonderful your compassion
toward Benedetta must truly have
pleased God.

Benedetta comes over to where Sister Isabetta and Mea are pitting cherries

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA

May I take these

Gesturing at the bowl of pitted cherries.

MEA

Of course

Mea and Benedetta's hands graze each other as Mea hands Benedetta the bowl. Benedetta smiles as their eyes meet. We can feel the sexual tension between the two women. Benedetta walks over to where Leonetta is and begins filling a pie shell with the cherries.

BENEDETTA

I understand the silk sold at market brought a great deal more than we anticipated.

SISTER LEONETTA

Indeed we have been fortunate this season. God seems to be smiling on us.

INT. CONVENT - WRITING ROOM

Benedetta finishes writing a letter she is happy

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY

Benedetta is walking down the corridor with her letter. she is beaming and has a lightness in her step.

EXT. CONVENT - GATE - DAY

Benedetta hands the letter to a man on horseback who takes it and walks away.

INT. BENEDETTA'S FAMILY HOME

We see Benedetta's father reading the letter. his wife is listening as he reads.

GULIANO

Dear Papa, the most extraordinary thing has happened to me. The Lord has blessed me with sight. I have seen and experienced amazing things. I am so full of his love I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GULIANO (cont'd)
feel as though I might burst from
joy. I hope you and mama are well.
love always. Your principessa.

With tears welling Guiliano grabs his wife's hand and squeezes it.

EXT. ORCHARD - UNDER A PEAR TREE

Benedetta is teaching Sister Lucia, Mea, Anna, and a few of the younger (ages 10-13) girls how to read. Sister Lucia is reading quietly to herself.

SISTER LUCIA
And it shall be a token of a....
Sister Benedetta whats this word?

Benedetta comes over and Sister Lucia points to the word covenant.

BENEDETTA
covenant.

Sister Lucia smiles and continues to read softly to herself as Benedetta walked around and checked on the other girls progress. Benedetta comes up behind one of the young girls, ROSA, who is practicing her writing.

BENEDETTA
Your doing wonderfully. That's
really lovely Rosa

Benedetta continues to check on the girls until she comes up to Mea. She kneels down looking over Mea's shoulder and placing a hand gently on Mea's knee. Mea closes her eyes as she feels the warmth of Benedetta's hand through her habit. A bell rings from the convent in the distance.

SISTER LUCIA
SUPPER!

Sister Lucia quickly begins gathering up her things. Benedetta stands, moving away from Mea

The nuns gather up her things and swiftly walk through the orchard toward the convent. Benedetta stays behind. She sits down under the tree and smiles as she watches the sunset silently praying.

INT. CONVENT - CHAPEL - NIGHT

The nuns are singing a Gregorian chant. The nuns are going up the the alter and lighting candles one by one. as Benedetta rises to light her candle she is overtaken by the rhapsody of a vision. As Benedetta is walking down the isle two angels are present scattering flowers in front of her. instead of approaching the candles Benedetta walks up to the statue of Mary. In her vision Mary is animated and in a loving gesture gives Benedetta the two angels as guardians. We see that the nuns notice Benedetta's odd behavior and begin giving one another inquisitive glance as they witness what is happening. Several nuns rush toward Benedetta who is now on the floor sobbing and help her to her feet. they than help the frail Benedetta escorting her out of the chapel. Mother Piera comes up to Mea

MOTHER PIERA

Benedetta's visions are wearing on her. Go be with her she will need you tonight.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mea walks into Benedetta's chamber and closes the door behind her. Benedetta walks up to Mea. Mea kisses Benedetta passionately and unties her nightgown, which than falls to the ground leaving her naked.

INT. - CONVENT - WORK ROOM - DAY

The Nuns are working in the silk weaving room

SISTER COSA

It was very Peculiar, I don't like it, seeing things and talking to invisible spirits its the devil if you ask me.

SISTER JOSEPHA

Don't be so cynical. Can't you see shes blessed.

SISTER ANNA

Have you heard her screaming at night. Those spirits torture her. If that's what you call blessed I want no part in it.

(CONTINUED)

SISTER COSA
Its the devil

SISTER JOSEPHA
well if you think it is the devil
than Benedetta will need your prays
and support more than ever.

INT. - BISHOPS CHAMBER - FLORANCE ITALY

Bishop Stephano is at his desk signing documents when he
hears a knock at the door.

BISHOP STEPHANO
Come in.

Brother Alfanzo enters carrying a portfolio and rosary.

BISHOP STEPHANO
What news do you bring brother?

Brother Alfanzo looks inside The portfolio he is carrying

BROTHER ALFANZO
The shipment of candles for the
Cathedral just arrived from the
Sisters of Santa Chiara.

BISHOP STEPHANO
Very good

BROTHER ALFANZO
There is one additional matter
father...

BISHOP STEPHANO
yes?

BROTHER ALFANZO
There is talk in the realm about a
young nun in Pescina that has been
blessed with visions.

BISHOP STEPHANO
Is there any truth to these claims?

BROTHER ALFANZO
We have not received any reports of
a new visionary from the Provost of
Pescina.

(CONTINUED)

BISHOP STEPHANO

Then this is merely hearsay and if no concern to me. if idle gossip marked the presence of God the whole world would be holy the Church cannot bother itself with the truth of the town canard.

BROTHER ALFANZO

My apologies father

Bishop Stephano looks down and goes back to signing papers and Brother Alfanzo seeing that his presence is no longer desired bows his head and than exits the room.

INT. CONVENT - NIGHT

Sister Josepha is walking through a hallway urgently. She is holding a candle and she stops and knocks on a door. Sister Josepha opens the door and we see Sister Cosa sit up in bed. we see Sister Josepha tell Cosa something but do not hear what is being said. Sister Cosa abruptly gets out of bed. Her reaction tells us something urgent has happened but we are not sure what.

INT. CONVENT- BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benedetta's eyes open widely and she arches her back moaning as Mea kisses her breasts and moves her hand suggestively under the sheet.

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY

The Nun with the candle moves to the next door and we see her knock abruptly. as she knocks we see Sister Cosa in the background who is now dressed and holding a candle hurrying down the hall in the opposite direction.

INT. - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benedetta rolls over on top of Mea and begins kissing her neck. Moving down Mea's body, she kisses Mea's breasts and then moves down to her stomach, eventually disappearing under the sheet all together.

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY

Several nuns have now been woken up and are urgently walking down the hallway in the opposite direction of Sister Josepha, who is still waking nuns.

INT. CONVENT- BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mea is arching her back moaning and screaming. Benedetta is still under the sheet.

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY

Sister Josepha approaches Benedetta's door. She puts her hand on the door handle and is about to turn it when she hears a loud scream. Josepha is startled and knocks on the door assuming Benedetta is having one of her visions.

INT. CONVENT- BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

We hear a knock and the two women jump fearing they have been discovered. They look at the door waiting for it to open. But instead they hear Sister Josepha's voice through the door.

SISTER JOSEPHA

Come quickly sisters! Mother Piera
has fallen ill.

Benedetta and Mea quickly get out of bed and begin putting on their habits the pieces of which are scattered on the floor around the room.

INT. CONVENT - MOTHER PIERA'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mother Piera is laying in bed. the room is lit with candles and there are nuns all around her kneeling in prayer. Benedetta enters the room with Mea close behind and immediately kneels, makes the sign of the cross and begins to pray. Mother Piera sees Benedetta and calls her over.

MOTHER PIERA

Benedetta. Come here my dear
child.

Benedetta stands and goes to Mother Piera's side.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER PIERA

The Lord has chosen you. You are
blessed by his grace he will guide
you and you will be a great leader.
Everyone will look to you now. Watch
over the flock

Benedetta squeezes Mother Piera's hand and nods accepting
the responsibility.

EXT. CONVENT - GRAVEYARD.

Mother Piera has died and the nuns are gathered at her
burial they cry and pray as the priest recites the eulogy.

FATHER RICORDATI

nos proinde trado suos somes pessum
; terra ut terra , cinis cineris ut
cinis cineris , pulvis ut pulvis ;
in certus quod certain spes of
resurrection ut eternus vita.

INT. CONVENT - WRITING ROOM

All of the nuns are gathered and Father Ricordati stands to
address the group.

FATHER RICORDATI

With the passing of Mother Piera a
new head abbess must be elected to
be the spiritual leader of our fair
convent.

Sister Ambra stands

SISTER AMBRA

I would like to nominate Sister
Benedetta Carlini, its what Mother
Piera would have wanted.

FATHER RICORDATI

All in favor of Sister Benedetta
say I

GROUP OF NUNS (TOGETHER)

I

The majority of the nuns say I but we notice Sister Cosa
doesn't say anything. Benedetta doesn't notice Cosa's
disagreement with the consensus and stands up happily and
begins hugging everyone.

INT. CONVENT - MOTHER PIERA'S OFFICE - DAY

Benedetta is sitting behind a large desk writing things down as she asks Sister Leonetta questions.

BENEDETTA

What did the crops yield this harvest?

SISTER LEONETTA

10 bushels, its not a lot but it should be enough to sustain us through the winter.

BENEDETTA

And the silk sales? What did they yield?

SISTER LEONETTA

We made more than expected at market nearly a thousand Lira.

BENEDETTA

That is very good news indeed. Thank you Leonetta.

Leonetta begins to leave but Benedetta stops her.

BENEDETTA

Before you go to afternoon prayers, would you fetch Mea? It is time for her reading lesson.

SISTER LEONETTA

Of course, right away

Leonetta leaves the room and goes to get Mea. As she leaves, Father Ricordati enters and addresses Benedetta.

FATHER RICORDATI

You seem like you are adjusting quite fittingly.

BENEDETTA

The Lord has been kind to me through the transition.

FATHER RICORDATI

And how are you copping with your visions of late? Do you still feel the devil is trying to sway you from God's grace?

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA

I feel closer to the Lord than ever
before no trickery or earthly
temptation could make me sway from
his grace.

Father Ricordati looks pleased at this answer, there is a knock at the door and Mea opens it. Entering Benedetta's office, she is holding a copy of the book of common prayer. She sees that Father Ricordati is in the room and begins to apologize for interrupting.

MEA

Pardon me, father I didn't know you
were speaking to Sister Benedetta

Mea begins to turn to leave when father Ricordate stops her.

FATHER RICORDATI

No, its OK sister I was just about
to bid Sister Benedetta farewell

Father Ricordati turns and exits leaving Mea alone in Benedetta's office.

BENEDETTA

why don't we begin today's lesson
with a reading from the book of
genesis.

Benedetta goes over to a nearby bookshelf and removes a bible from the shelf. As she turns around Mea pushes her against the shelf and kisses her passionately. Benedetta drops the bible on the floor and we see Mea's hands roam over Benedetta's body, groping her breast as the two women continue to embrace. Benedetta continues to kiss Mea as she pushes away from the wall and now pins Mea against the desk. Mea pushes back and twirling Benedetta around and pinning her against the desk instead. Benedetta is now seated on the desk and we see Mea's hands roam down Benedetta body. Mea lifts Benedetta habit grabbing at her thighs as she nestles her body in between Benedetta's spread legs eliminating any space between the two women. We see blood beginning to drip down Benedetta's forehead but the two women don't seem to notice and in the midst of their passionate kisses. Mea feels something wet drip on her face and gently pulls away to see what it is. When she looks at Benedetta she sees the blood, backs away shocked and than screams loudly.

CUTAWAY:

EXT. CONVENT - CHAPEL - DAY

The chapel is filled with nuns kneeling and praying in afternoon prayer. Father Ricordati is among them. We see his head suddenly whip around after having heard Mea's scream. He immediately rises from his kneeling position and heads towards Benedetta's office.

INT. CONVENT - ABBESS' OFFICE - DAY

Benedetta looks puzzled but suddenly realizes what has happened as she looks down at her hands and sees blood beginning to flow. Blood begins to seep through Benedetta's habit and the stigmata is now fully revealed. Benedetta falls to her knees shocked and begins to cry.

BENEDETTA

My Lord, there are others who are
better than me. I don't deserve
this since I am a sinner

Father Ricordati rushes in and upon seeing that Benedetta has received the stigmata immediately makes the sign of the cross and drops to his knees. Benedetta suddenly gasps as she throws her head back and when she looks up her eyes are glazed over and cloudy she stands and walks out of the room in a trance

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY

Benedetta begins walking down the hallway still in a trance and turns a corner. Father Ricordati and Mea begin to follow her but lose her not knowing if she turned again or went down the stairs.

MEA

Where did she go?

Suddenly there is a scream and we hear a commotion coming from the chapel downstairs.

FATHER RICORDATI

The Chapel.

The two set off down the hallway

INT. CONVENT - CHAPEL - DAY

Father Ricordati and Mea enter the chapel to see Benedetta high in the air walking along a narrow rafter beam. The nuns are in a tizzy wondering what is happening and fearing for Benedetta's safety. The nuns gasp and several fall to their knees and pray as they see Benedetta turn on the rafter and step onto a branch of one of the chandeliers. The chandelier tilts to one side with the introduction of Benedetta's weight and she steps on the next branch of the chandelier moving nimbly to the other side. The nuns then see Benedetta lightly hop to the next chandelier and the nuns gasp as Benedetta's body goes off kilter and then regains balance on the unstable chandelier suspended in the air. Benedetta once again moves across the chandelier which tilts with each shift of her weight moves from the chandelier to the top of the crucifix at the head of the church. standing atop the crucifix Benedetta looks straight at the nuns, eyes still glazed over and foggy and begins addressing the nuns as if she were possessed by Christ himself.

BENEDETTA

My children you will never be able
to climb the Mount of Perfection
without the true guide on which to
lean I am your Lord your Christ
follow Benedetta for it is my will.

The entranced Benedetta then steps down from the top of the crucifix onto the altar. Her eyes suddenly become clear and then she collapses on the table. Mea (who looks extremely concerned) and Father Ricordati Rush to Benedetta who is unconscious.

FATHER RICORDATI

quickly lets get her to her chamber

Father Ricordati picks Benedetta up in his arms and walks out of the Church with Mea following close behind. After they exit the onlooking nuns begin to murmur and discuss what has just happened. They exit the chapel and disperse throughout the convent. We see Sister Leonetta talking with SISTER ANGELA and Sister Lucia as they walk out of the chapel and down the hallway.

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY

The three nuns (Leonetta, Angela, and Lucia) walk down the hallway as they discuss what just happened.

(CONTINUED)

SISTER LEONETTA

Sister Mea looked quite worried. I hope Sister Benedetta is going to be able to recover from such an extraordinary trial.

SISTER ANGELA

I've heard stories about God blessing those most precious to him with the stigmata but I never imagined it would be Benedetta.

SISTER LUCIA

I thought only saints received the stigmata and were blessed with holy consumption. Is Sister Benedetta a saint?

SISTER LEONETTA

We can't presume to know God's plan. All will reveal itself in time...All we can do now is pray and do our best to abide by his will.

The three women stop in front of a door and Sister Angela opens it.

INT. CONVENT - WASHROOM

The three women enter the wash room and separate each beginning a different task. Sister Leonetta goes over to a large basin of soapy water, kneels, and begins washing dirty linens in it. A young nun (SISTER ZITA) comes over and picks up a basket of wet (clean) laundry and we follow her as she carries it out of the washroom.

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY

Sister Zita walks down the hallway and out the convent door into the courtyard.

EXT. CONVENT - COURTYARD - DAY

Sister Zita walks to the nearby trees where there are clotheslines strung we see that Sister Cosa and Sister Maddlena are already there taking down clean dry laundry. Sister Zita puts down her basket and begins hanging the wet laundry. We hear Sister Cosa and Sister Maddlena talking.

(CONTINUED)

SISTER MADDLENA

I wonder what Christ meant when he told us to follow Benedetta? Are we meant to experience Christ's grace through her?

SISTER COSA

That's ridiculous Maddlena God would never reveal himself through a woman. It is the devils trickery, don't be fooled.

Sister Cosa finishes folding the last apron from the clothesline places it in her basket and begins heading from the trees toward the convent. Before she gets to the convent door another nun (Sister Rosa) calls to her from behind.

SISTER ROSA

Sister Cosa!

Sister Cosa stops to address Sister Rosa

SISTER ROSA

Are those the fresh work aprons? I'm supposed to finish Mea's chores in the garden but my apron is in the wash.

SISTER COSA

Why isn't Mea doing her own chores? God doesn't like laziness.

SISTER ROSA

She is tending to Benedetta.

Sister Cosa obviously disapproves but nods and than tilts the basket down allowing Sister Rosa to take a clean apron.

SISTER COSA

Hurry now don't doddle your already overdue for evening chores.

Sister Cosa turns around and continues heading toward the convent door. We follow Sister Rosa as she puts on the apron over her habit and heads over to the garden. When Rosa gets to the garden she passes by Sisters KATERINA and DONA who are picking tomatoes.

SISTER KATERINA

(Obviously lying)

Last week I witnessed her have a vision. The Lord possessed her, his light radiated from her like the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SISTER KATERINA (cont'd)
morning sun and than both her feet
lifted from the floor at once and
she began to speak in tongues.

SISTER DONA
After supper I am going to bring
her a few of these tomatoes. Sister
Leonetta told me that Mea only
gives her broth and I fear she has
become frail from hunger.

SISTER KATERINA
I have been praying for her and I
think God wishes that I spend more
time with her, Mea is very young
and Benedetta needs someone whose
relationship with God that is as
strong as her own.

Katerina picks up the basket and puts one final tomato in it
before walking into the side door of the convent and into
the kitchen.

INT. CONVENT - KITCHEN

There are several nuns preparing dinner for that evening
Katerina walks over to the counter and places the basket of
tomatoes down. Sister Josepha takes one of the tomatoes from
the basket and begins slicing it. As she speaks, Sister
Leonetta also takes a tomato from the basket and slices it
while listening.

SISTER JOSEPHA
The convent seems so alive. you can
feel the Lord's spirit everywhere.
Benedetta's visions have had such a
wonderful effect. I've never seen
the young nuns so eager to embrace
the word of the Lord and develop
spiritually. I nearly fainted when
Sister Lucia asked if she could do
tonight's bible reading.

Josepha adds the tomatoes she has just sliced to a bowl and
begins slicing fresh mozzarella adding it to the bowl of
freshly sliced tomatoes while Sister Leonetta begins slicing
basil into delicate strands.

SISTER LEONETTA
(laughing)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SISTER LEONETTA (cont'd)
Remember when Lucia used to sneak
cured meat on Fridays and doze off
during bible study.

SISTER JOSEPHA
Its Benedetta. her unwavering
devotion is infectious and has
inspired faith in others.

Sister Leonetta sprinkles the basil over the tomato and
mozzarella salad and than takes off her apron before walking
out of the kitchen and into the dinning room.

INT. CONVENT - DINNING ROOM

The dinning room table is filled with delicious looking food
and the nuns are cheerfully talking and drinking wine when
Leonetta enters the dinning room and places the mozzarella
and tomato salad on the table before taking her seat.
Josepha and another young nun are close behind and both
place dishes on the table before occupying 2 of the 3 empty
seats at the table. Sister Ambra stands to say grace and the
nuns quiet.

SISTER AMBRA
Let us thank the Lord our God for
the beautiful meal he has provided
us and for Benedetta who he has
chosen to commune through and who
has brought us closer to him. Amen

All of the nuns make the sign of the cross. Sister Ambra
sits down and the nuns begin to eat in silence as Sister
Lucia stands and begins to recite a passage from the Bible.

SISTER LUCIA (CONTINUOUS)
Trust in the Lord with all your
heart and lean not on your own
understanding. In all your ways
submit to him.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER - NIGHT.

We still hear Lucia's voice reciting the bible passage as we
see Mea disrobe.

INT. CONVENT - DINNING ROOM

we fade to Sister Lucia reading from the Bible

SISTER LUCIA

She is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire can compare with
her.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER - NIGHT.

We see Mea and Benedetta naked on the bed in the candle lit room. Their kisses are soft and brimming with affection and Mea cant help but smile in the midst the exchange.

SISTER LUCIA (VOICE)

Her ways are pleasant ways, and all
her paths are peace.

Mea traces her fingers along the curves of Benedetta's naked body gently caressing every hill and valley until coming to her inner thigh.

SISTER LUCIA (VOICE)

She is a tree of life to those who
take hold of her. Those who hold
her fast will be blessed.

BENEDETTA GASPS AND ARCHES HER BACK IN PLEASURE AS IF BREATHING IN LIFE FOR THE FIRST TIME. SHE PULLS MEA CLOSE. BENEDETTA'S GRASP IS SO TIGHT WE CAN SEE HER FINGERS DIG INTO MEA'S BACK. MEA HELPS BENEDETTA INTO BED AND THAN LAYS NEXT TO HER PLACING HER HEAD ON BENEDETTA'S CHEST AND FALLS ASLEEP STILL FULLY CLOTHED IN HER HABIT.

INT. - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

MEA WAKES UP TO SEE BENEDETTA IS KNEELING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM AND PRAYING FERVENTLY ONCE AGAIN. MEA QUICKLY GET'S UP AND THAN GOES OVER TO BENEDETTA.

MEA

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PRAYING?

BENEDETTA IGNORES MEA AND CONTINUES TO PRAY. MEA SIGHS DEEPLY, SHE IS OBVIOUSLY WORRIED.

MEA

LET'S GO

(CONTINUED)

MEA HELPS BENEDETTA UP AND THEN LEADS HER OUT THE DOOR.

INT. CONVENT - WASHROOM

BENEDETTA IS SITTING SILENTLY IN A BATH WHILE MEA GENTLY RUNS A CLOTH OVER BENEDETTA'S SKIN. WE SEE THAT BENEDETTA'S BODY IS RIDDLED WITH WOUNDS; LASHES ON HER BACK FROM THE WHIP, WOUNDS ON HER KNEES FROM PRAYING AND THE STIGMATTA ALL LEAVE THE BATH WATER TINTED RED. SISTER KATERINA ENTERS THE ROOM AND TAKES OVER WHAT MEA IS DOING CONTINUING TO HELP BATHE THE FRAIL BENEDETTA.

INT. CONVENT - WORKROOM - DAY

BENEDETTA ENTERS THE WORKROOM AND COLLAPSES ON HER KNEES CRYING. THERE IS A BEAUTIFUL STAIN GLASS WINDOW IN THE ROOM AND THE SUNLIGHT IS REFLECTING AN IMAGE OF THE CROSS ON THE STONE FLOOR WHERE BENEDETTA IS. BENEDETTA LOOKS UP AT THE IMAGE OF CHRIST AND MAKES THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, TEARS STREAMING DOWN HER FACE.

BENEDETTA

I AM NOT WORTHY OF YOU MY LORD.

BENEDETTA LOOKS DOWN, WE SEE HER TEARDROPS STAIN THE STONE FLOOR AS THEY FALL. SHE FEELS A HAND ON HER SHOULDER AND WHEN SHE TURNS TO SEE WHO IT IS BENEDETTA SEE'S CHRIST AND SEVERAL SHADOWED FIGURES IN THE BACKGROUND.

JESUS

FROM THIS DAY YOU MUST PROTECT BOTH YOUR PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL PURITY. NO MEAT, EGGS, NOR ANY DRINK BUT WATER MUST PASS YOUR LIPS. THE ANGEL SPLENDITELLO WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU. HE WILL GUARD YOUR SPIRITUAL PURITY AND REMEDY

(CONTINUED)

YOUR VICES.

SPLENDITELLO WHO WAS ONE OF THE SHADOWED FIGURES STEPS FORWARD INTO THE LIGHT. SPLENDITELLO IS A EXTREMELY HANSOME YOUNG MAN WITH LONG CURLY HAIR. HE IS WEARING A WHITE ROBE WITH GOLD EMBELISHMENT ON THE SLEVES AND A CROWN OF FLOWERS ATOP HIS HEAD. IN HIS RIGHT HAND HE CARRIED A 2 FOOT LONG GREEN WAND. ONE SIDE OF THE WAND WAS COVERED IN FLOWERS WHILE THE OTHER WAS ADORNED WITH THORNS.

"I AM NOT THE DEVIL BUT YOUR JESUS"
AS SHE DOES THIS THE ANGEL SPLENDITELLO DRAGS THE THORN COVERED SIDE OF HIS WAND OVER BENEDETTA'S

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING.

Benedetta is sitting up in bed signing papers and eating sliced red tomatoes while Mea is sitting in a nearby chair mending a tear in Benedetta's night gown. There is a knock on the door and Father Ricordati enters the room. Benedetta stops what she is doing and gives him her full attention.

BENEDETTA

Father, I'm so glad you've come.

FATHER RICORDATI

Of course, blessed child. How are you feeling? (taking note of the stigmata wounds on Benedetta's head and hands). Has the Lord communed with you since you received the stigmata.

BENEDETTA

No, but during my last vision an angel who called himself Splenditello told me to trust Father Ricordati. He said that above all others I should obey you and take your guidance.

Father Ricordati looks pleased with this development

FATHER RICORDATI

Today is the day of Saint Benedict, your saint's day, go in ecstasy at your pleasure, I, give you permission

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA

Thank you, father

she bows her head and kisses his ring

Father Ricordati leaves the room and Benedetta goes to get out of bed but loses her balance and stumbles. Mea quickly goes over to help her and but Benedetta is able to regain her balance on her own.

MEA

You have to slow down. You're still weak.

Mea squeezes Benedetta's hand and softly kisses her before going to retrieve Benedetta's nearby habit and helping her dress. Mea helps Benedetta put on her tunic pulling it down over her head and than smoothing out the fabric while running her hands over the sides of Benedetta's petite figure. Next Mea takes the Coif gently pulls back Benedetta's hair before covering the beautiful long brown wavy locks. Mea than takes the veil and pins it to the coif. She kisses Benedetta softly and stands back to check her work.

MEA

(satisfied with her work)

There, that's better. Now you look like a proper abbess.

BENEDETTA

(lightly)

Thank you. I don't know how I would manage without you.

Benedetta kisses Mea and smiles and than her face grows serious.

BENEDETTA

But you mustn't neglect your chores. now off you go.

Mea smiles and quickly kisses Benedetta once more before leaving

INT. BARN - DAY

Mea is filling her apron with feed before going outside.

EXT. BARN - DAY

Mea hums a happy tune as she goes outside and scatters seed for the chickens in the yard. She notices that Sister Isabetta is pumping water into a bucket. When Mea finishes feeding the chickens, she goes over to where Isabetta is and begins brushing a horse. Isabetta pours the water into the trough and then begins brushing the horse with Mea.

SISTER ISABETTA

Receiving the wounds of Christ is a great blessing. Is Sister Benedetta well?

MEA

She's slowly regaining her strength.

Mea continues to brush the horse with long rhythmic strokes.

MEA

Do you ever question God?

SISTER ISABETTA

I think we all do. Only Christ is perfect. During times of uncertainty the only thing we can do is pray and have faith.

Sister Anna runs over excitedly.

SISTER ANNA

(calling to them)

Sister Mea, Sister Leonetta, come quickly! we're playing Hunt the Slipper in the courtyard!

The two women look at each other smile and laugh before running through the pasture to catch up with Sister Anna.

INT. CONVENT - ABESESSES' OFFICE - DAY

We see Benedetta in her office, she is looking out the window watching Mea and the other Nuns playing and smiles to herself. Benedetta than becomes somber she signs deeply takes her seat and picks up a knife from her desk. She takes the knife and begins using it to widen the stigmata wounds on her hands. As she digs the blade into her flesh the expression on Benedetta's face and the small noises she makes reflect how painful this process is. A drop of blood falls on a white piece of paper on her desk.

INT. CATHEDRAL - BISHOP STEPHANO'S OFFICE - DAY

Red wax is poured on an envelope and a man imprints the papal seal on it. We see Bishop Stephano who then places the envelope in Brother Alfanzo's hand. The two men walk out of the office and part ways. Bishop Stephano walks down a hall and then follows the procession of altar boys into a filled cathedral. The Cathedral is filled with the sound of angelic voices. Singing the Nunc dimittis

INT. CONVENT - CHAPEL - NIGHT

The sisters are singing the Nunc dimittis and we see Sister Benedetta and a few other nuns walk into the convent and take their places in the pews.

INT. SMALL FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Alfanzo and two other priests enter Giovanni's house. The priests take him forcefully by the arms. When Giovanni struggles and resists one of the priests hits him abruptly knocking him unconscious. The priests drag Giovanni outside.

EXT. SMALL FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Giovanni's unconscious body is tied to a nearby tree whose top the priests have cut off. The priests begin to pile wood around the base of the tree and Giovanni regains consciousness as the priests finish placing wood around his legs. The beautiful singing of the nuns continues as we see brother alfanzo make the sign of the cross before taking a torch and lighting the wood beneath Giovanni's feet. The music comes to a crescendo as we see the wood fully ablaze and Giovanni screaming and face contorting in pain.

INT. CONVENT - CHAPEL - NIGHT

We see Benedetta's face she is crying and makes the sign of the cross. Father Ricordati kisses the altar and processes out of the church. The nuns begin to file out. Sister Benedetta is anxious, it is apparent something is bothering her.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Benedetta walks into her room and after retrieving a whip from a nearby table collapses to her knees and begins lashing herself.

BENEDETTA

(crying hysterically)

O My Jesus, I offer this for love
of Thee, in reparation for my sins.

O My Jesus, I offer this for love
of Thee, in reparation for my sins.

O My Jesus, I offer this for love
of Thee, in reparation for my sins.

Mea walks in the room and is shocked at the sight of Benedetta whipping herself. She quickly removes the whip from Benedetta's hand and kneels down cradling Benedetta in her arms as Benedetta completely breaks down.

MEA

Shhhh shhh shhh. it's OK...Whats
wrong? Tell me what happened.

BENEDETTA

I am too impure I am a sinner. I am
not worthy of the stigmata or of
Jesus!

MEA

Of course you're worthy. The Lord
doesn't make mistakes.

Mea kisses Benedetta gently on the head.

MEA

You need to rest. All will be well
tomorrow.

Mea removes Benedetta's Veil and head dressing and than gently removes her tunic before helping her to her feet. We can see blood seeping through Benedetta's under gown from the lashes on her back. Mea helps Benedetta into bed and begins singing softly while gently running her fingers through Benedetta's hair.

MEA

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly-minded, for
with blessing in his hand, Christ

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MEA (cont'd)
 our God to earth descendeth, our
 full homage to demand.

When Benedetta sees Christ appear, he is handsome and dressed in a red robe. Christ is followed into the room by SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA and several shadowed figures which appear to be angels. Upon seeing Christ, Benedetta turns to Mea.

BENEDETTA
 I don't know if it is the devil's
 work; pray to God for me. If it is
 the devil's work I will make the
 sign of the cross on my heart and
 he will disappear

Benedetta makes the sign of the cross but the figures remain. Mea continues to stroke Benedetta's hair. She says a few soothing words and than continues to sing.

MEA (CONTINUOUS)
 It's OK, God's grace is nothing to
 fear.

(Sings)
 King of kings, yet born of Mary, as
 of old on earth he stood, Lord of
 Lords, in human vesture, in the
 body and the blood; he will give to
 all the faithful his own self for
 heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
 spreads its vanguard on the way, as
 the Light of light descendeth from
 the realms of endless day, that the
 powers of hell may vanish as the
 darkness clears away.

At his feet the six-winged seraph,
 cherubim, with sleepless eye, veil
 their faces to the presence, as
 with ceaseless voice they cry:
 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord
 Most High!

JESUS
 I have come to take your heart

BENEDETTA
 (laughs)
 what would you do, my Jesus! You
 have come to take my heart but I
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA (cont'd)
dot have permission from my
spiritual father

JESUS
Oh, you will see he will have no
objections. Remember your confessor
did give you his blessing to
fulfill God's will without
hesitation" this is my will.

Upon hearing this Benedetta realizes it is useless to resist

BENEDETTA
Where will you take my heart from?

JESUS
From the side

Christ than slid his sleeve up his arm and than tore
Benedetta's heart from her body. Benedetta screams in pain
and we see Mea look down showing extreme concern while
continuing to sing and stroke Benedetta's hair. Benedetta
looked at her heart which was covered in blood.

BENEDETTA
But how can I live without a heart
now that you have left me without
one? How will I be able to Love
you?

JESUS
For me, nothing is impossible

A feeling of contentment washes over Benedetta and she
smiled softly.

JESUS
(Christ strokes Benedetta's
cheek.)
Now rest my child I will return in
3 days time and take you as my
bride and on that day I shall
become one with you and my heart
shall beat within your chest.

Christ kisses Benedetta on the forehead and than he, St.
Catherine and the others processed out the door while
Splenditello perched himself atop Benedetta's small desk in
the corner of the room. Benedetta closes her eyes and falls
asleep to the sound of Mea singing.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - DAY.

Mea enters the room followed by Father Ricordati and a doctor. Mea is kneeling on the floor praying fervently murmuring quietly to herself..

MEA

She has been praying since dawn and refuses to eat. When she told me what happened I didn't believe her but she has no heart beat.

BENEDETTA

(looking up from her prayers)
Of course I don't Christ took my heart. last night and will not return for three days.

The doctor goes over to Benedetta's bedside and searches for a pulse but cant find one.

DOCTOR

(in disbelief)
This is impossible

BENEDETTA

(smiling)
Nothing is impossible for Christ.

FATHER RICORDATI

What did else did Christ tell you?

BENEDETTA

(Hesitantly)
He said that he wished to marry me in a solemn ceremony and that preparations must be made.

FATHER RICORDATI

Why are you so hesitant to tell me what Christ has asked of us

BENEDETTA

I have never known Christ to reveal himself so publicly I fear it may be the devil's trickery.

FATHER RICORDATI

Obey Christ's will. Fast today to cleans your body of impurity and Pray to purify yourself spiritually. I must go and begin making preparations there is much to be done.

Benedetta acquiesces, nodding, Father Ricordati, Mea and the doctor than leave the room. She notices Splenditello shift in the corner and than closes her eyes tightly and continues to pray.

INT. CONVENT - DINNING ROOM - DAY

All of the Nuns are gathered at a table eating a sumptuous meal. They quiet upon seeing Father Ricordati and Mea enter the room. Mea takes her seat at the table while Father Ricordati goes to the head of the table and begins to address the nuns.

FATHER RICORDATI

Christ has communed with Benedetta
and intends to take her hand in
marriage in three days time.

Shocked the nuns being to murmur among themselves.

FATHER RICORDATI

Silence sisters, there is much to
be done.

The nuns quiet

FATHER RICORDATI

Servants must be sent to borrow
altar robes. Send word to the
Sisters of Santa Chiara for candles
and we must reach out to the other
nearby convents for flowers and
pillows. Go now we must work
quickly.

The nuns get up in a tizzy and disperse.

EXT. CONVENT - COURTYARD - DAY

We see a servant hastily leave the convent, mount a horse,
and ride off toward town.

INT. CONVENT - CHAPEL - DAY

The nuns are busy decorating the ch apple. They are hanging
the fine silks they have woven.

EXT. CONVENT OF SANTA CHIARA - GATE - DAY

We see the servant knock on the door urgently. A nun answers it.

SERVANT

I must speak with the abbess I have urgent news from the Convent of the Mother of God.

The nun lets her in.

INT. CONVENT - ABBESSES' OFFICE - DAY

The Provost of Pescina enters to find Father Ricordati sitting behind the desk and busily doing work.

PROVOST

Is it true? Has Sister Benedetta been blessed with the marks of the stigmata? Has the Lord truly communed with her and promised to appear in 3 days time?

FATHER RICORDATI

Yes we are truly blessed

PROVOST

This will bring great glory to Pescina and as the Provost I feel it is my duty to oversee the preparations of the ceremony. Word of Benedetta's encounter with Christ is already spreading throughout the town.

There is a knock at the door and Sister Lucia enters.

SISTER LUCIA

Father Ricordati come quickly!

Sister Lucia turns and exits the office and both Father Ricordati and the Provost follow her.

EXT. CONVENT - COURTYARD - DAY

Sister Lucia swings both of the wooden convent doors open at once. Outside the courtyard is filled with people lining up with gifts and donations for the ceremony. There are nuns taking the gifts and thanking the townspeople. Father Ricordati and the Provost walk into the courtyard and marvel

(CONTINUED)

at the sight. Sister Dona sees Father Ricordati and approaches him.

SISTER DONA

Father isn't this magnificent? What should we do with all of the donations? Should we put them in the Chapel, and the people...they are all asking questions. what should we tell them?

Father Ricordati begins to answer but before he has a chance we see the Provost is standing on a overturned wooden crate and begins addressing the people in the courtyard.

PROVOST

(Loudly)

Thank you all for your generosity. What you have heard is true! God has blessed Pescina.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mea enters the room to find Benedetta still kneeling on the floor praying. She notices that Benedetta's dinner is still on the table untouched.

MEA

Iv drawn your nightly bath.

Benedetta winces as she stands up her knee's have been worn raw from kneeling for so long and blood trails down her calves.

INT. CONVENT - WASHROOM

Mea lifts Benedetta's nightgown off over her head. We see Benedetta's body which is now riddled with wounds. There are lashes on her back from the whipping, the marks of the stigmata, on her hands, feet, head, and side, and her knees are still bleeding from kneeling in prayer for so many hours. Splenditello walks up behind Benedetta caressing her and tracing the flower side of his wand down the spine of Benedetta's naked back. We see Benedetta remove Mea's veil and head cover and than kiss her gently. Benedetta remove's Mea's tunic and undergown in between kisses. As Benedetta sinks into the bath water Mea straddles her. Benedetta runs her fingers alone down Mea's spine causing her skin to cover in goosebumps.

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY

Sister Isabetta is walking down the hall and opens the washroom door. she suddenly stops in her tracks and through the cracked door see's Mea rocking her body vigorously atop Benedetta's before throwing her head back in ecstasy.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER - MORNING

Mea is laying next to Benedetta with her head resting atop Benedetta's breast. she absently runs her fingers along bendetta's stomach as she tries to listen for a heartbeat. Hearing nothing she kisses Benedetta's exposed nipple and than looks up smiling

MEA

Do you feel empty without a heart?

BENEDETTA

My chest is so filled with Christ's love it would be impossible to feel empty.

Mea smiles at this response and kisses Benedetta's hand.

INT. CONVENT - CHAPEL - DAY

The chapel is now in disarray, there are flowers, fabric, pillows, and various other donations strewn everywhere. We see the provost in the center of the room directing the nuns.

PROVOST

(Seeing white fabric atop the altar)

No the top of altar should be draped in light blue silk not white cotton.

Sister Rosa nods and begins removing the white fabric from the altar.

PROVOST

(Pointing to three ornate wooden chairs)

Those should be in the choir, facing the altar.

As the Provost continues to spew orders, Sister Anna and Sister Katerina go over to one of the chairs, lift it together, and begin to move it to the choir on the other side of the chapel.

(CONTINUED)

PROVOST

And those, those pillows should be lining the altar but you have to cover the floor with fabric first... Christ has already suffered for our sins his feet should not have to endure this stone floor.

EXT. CONVENT - PASTURE - DAY.

Benedetta and Mea are walking together in a pasture next to the river. Benedetta lays down underneath a tree and Mea sits beside her. The sound of rushing river water and a birds song can be heard in the distance. Mea picks a flower smells, it and than beings examining the peddles and tracing them with her fingers.

MEA

(looks at Benedetta)
Are you frightened about tomorrow?
Do you want to marry Christ?

BENEDETTA

(looking at the sky through the leaves of the tree)
God's will shall be fulfilled regardless of how I feel or what I want.

Mea picks several more flowers and begins making a crown by weaving their stems together.

MEA

Tis the burden bequeathed to us
from eve....

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY OUTSIDE CHAPEL - DAY

Outside the Chapel Sister Benedetta and several other nuns are preparing to begin the procession. Sister Ambra places the crown of flowers atop Benedetta's head.

SISTER AMBRA

You look lovely.

Sister Benedetta smiles graciously and then turns to two novice nuns dressed as angels and adjusts their dresses making sure they look perfect. she handed each novice nun a basket of flowers to be scattered as they process. Then picks up the crucifix and takes her place at the head of the

(CONTINUED)

procession. melodic music begins playing through the doors. Benedetta takes a deep breath and then two novice nuns open the double doors of the chapel.

INT. CONVENT - CHAPEL - DAY

The chapel is breathtaking. There are rugs covering the stone floors. The room is glowing with the flicker of several hundred candles. The top of the altar is draped in fine blue silk, the walls are covered with colorful fabrics, and an image of the Madonna and child is hung. There are so many flowers that after thoughtful arrangements had been put in place the excess were strewn throughout the chapel. The pews are filled with the nuns of the Convent of the Mother of God and Father Pablo, FATHER ANTONIO PAGNI, and MESSER PIRRO TORRIGIANI are sitting in the three wooden chairs facing the altar which the provost had place in the choir. When melodic music began and the novice nuns opened the door everyone stood. Everyone in the procession begins singing the "Veni Creator Spiritus"

PROCESSION OF NUNS (TOGETHER)

(Sing)

Veni, creator Spiritus mentes
tuorum visita, imple superna
gratia, quae tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paraclitus, altissimi
donum Dei, fons vivus, ignis,
caritas et spiritalis unctio.

Tu septiformis munere, digitus
paternae dexteræ tu rite promissum
Patris sermone ditans guttura.

Accende lumen sensibus, infunde
amorem cordibus, infirma nostri
corporis, virtute firmans perpeti.

As Benedetta floats gracefully down the isle followed by Sister Lucia, who is holding a bowl of incense and moving her arms in a forward circular motion to disperse the frankincense throughout the air. Sister Lucia is followed by the two novice nuns dressed as angels who are walking side by side and happily scattering flowers. Sister's Anna and Rosa are the last in the procession and are carrying beautiful thick candles and they walked side by side behind the novice nuns. Upon reaching the altar at the end of the aisle Benedetta bows to the image of Jesus on the crucifix and hands the crucifix in her hands to a nun waiting at her right. Benedetta than kneels in front of the Alar at the head of the chapel and continues singing. As each of the

(CONTINUED)

nuns behind her reached the end of the isle they bowed to the image of Jesus on the crucifix at the head of the chapel and than separated taking there places at the left and the right of the isle in the first row of pews. Benedetta is now alone at the head of the church, her hands are trembling, everyone is watching her and she alone is singing the "Veni Creator Spiritus"

BENEDETTA

(Sings)

Hostem repellas longius pacemque
dones protinus; ductore sic te
praevio vitemus omne noxium.

Per te sciamus da Patrem noscamus
atque Filium.

As Benedetta sings the chaple and people around her become blurry, until it is as if they do not exist at all. There is then a brilliant, blinding light, and as her eyes adjust Benedetta sees Jesus walking toward her followed by MARY and a procession of saints led by St. Catherine of Siena. Benedetta overwhelmed by the people who have just assembled in front of her looks to St. Catherine of Siena.

BENEDETTA

What have all these people come
here to do?

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

You will see.

BENEDETTA

(Innocently)

Why don't you tell me? I want to
know so I can prepare myself

Jesus than stepped forward holding a beautiful red heart with three arrows piercing the valves, atrium, and pulmonary artery. A gold band crowned the heart encircling the aorta.

JESUS

(Taking Benedetta's hand and
having her rise)

Rejoice, today I will marry you.

BENEDETTA

Oh, my bridegroom is that my heart?

JESUS

No, it's mine, I wanted you to have
it. I shall become part of you and
we shall be forever bonded.

(CONTINUED)

Benedetta opens her arms and tilts her her head back closing her eyes tightly in anticipation of the pain that accompanied the removal of her own heart.

JESUS

Lay bare your breast

Benedetta opens her eyes and raises her head to look at Christ as her arms fall to her sides.

BENEDETTA

I don't want to disrobe here in the presence of so many people

JESUS

Where I am, there is no shame

Benedetta acquiesces hesitantly revealing her bare side. Jesus than inserts the gleaming heart into Benedetta's body.

JESUS

Give me your hand I wish to put a ring on you.

BENEDETTA

(Protests)

But Jesus, I am not worthy

Mary than steps forward and takes Benedetta's right hand as Jesus places the ring on her left ring finger.

MARY

Be it onto me according to thy word

BENEDETTA

(Echoing Mary)

Be it onto me according to thy word

At that moment Benedetta was overcome with a feeling of happiness and could not stop herself from smiling. She than kissed the ring Jesus had placed on her finger

BENEDETTA

(To Jesus)

Thank you my Lord, for this and for all of the other ways you have blessed my life.

JESUS

No one will be able to see this ring but you. You must be patient and take care that my heart remains pure.

(CONTINUED)

Everyone in the chapel watches as Benedetta rises to her feet and than turns to address them.

BENEDETTA (AS JESUS)

(With a more melodic tone than her normal voice)

So that you, sinners, know that in this, my bride, there cannot enter the slightest trace of pride or vanity, it is not she who sees, who speaks, or who hears, but it is I who see, speak, and work these things in her.

When my bride was born her father promised her to me. and when she was a girl I used to take the form of a nightingale and watched over her until I sent her here and than I did not appear to her again until she had grown and was strong enough to carry out my word for the salvation of your souls

I have sent you the greatest servant I have in the world so you can see that I do not dwell in the proud of heart that are full of vice. I have placed you in her hands and I told her that when she wants me to punish you, she should simply pray to me, and I will punish you immediately so be sure not to provoke her or me to anger.

I wanted the signs of the passion to be greater in her today than ever. I want all who live in this convent to discover these signs so that they may be a constant source of strength and reminder of my passion. It was I who ordered that she be the abbess of this convent and I have made her a mirror for all other nuns, anyone who does not believe in my bride, shall not be saved.

Benedetta (as Jesus) begins singing the "Te Deum"

BENEDETTA (AS JESUS)

(Sings)

Te Deum laudamus: te Dominum
confitemur. Te aeternum Patrem

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BENEDETTA (AS JESUS) (cont'd)
 omnis terra veneratur. Tibi omnes
 Angeli, tibi Caeli et universae
 Potestates
 (Time elapse)
 quemadmodum speravimus in te. In te
 Domine speravi: non confundar in
 aeternum.

Benedetta than awoke from her trance-like state and than processed out of the chapele as if seeminly unaware of everything that had just transpired.

INT. PROVOST'S OFFICE - PESCIA

Father Antonio Pagni, Messer Pirro Torrigiani and the Provost are in the office and are in the midst of a conversation.

PROVOST
 Word of Benedetta's commune with God has already spread through the town if we don't act soon we will not be able to quell its spread.

FATHER ANTONIO PAGNI
 We cannot simply take the word of a woman. Especially one who has the gumption to call for a public ceremony that did not in fact validate any of her claims.

MESSER PIRRO TORRIGIANI
 If Benedetta gained the support of the people and her claims prove to be false. It would be disastrous.

PROVOST
 We have no choice. We must launch an investigation into the validity of Benedetta's mysticism immediately.

MESSER PIRRO TORRIGIANI
 I will ride to Florance and denote our situation to Bishop Stephano. You begin the inquiries and lead the investigation until his arrival.

Father Antonio and the Provost nod in support of this.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Benedetta is in her room she goes her desk and retrieves a small knife and than sits on the edge of the bed. Seeing what she is about to do Splenditello speaks.

SPLENDITELLO

Don't do that, don't deface the gift the Lord has blessed you with.

BENEDETTA

I have to for the Lord, everyone is watching me now, I need them to believe.

Benedetta begins widening the marks of the stigmata on her feet. Her face contorts in pain and Splenditello strikes her wrist with the thorny side of his wand but Benedetta ignores him and the pain and continues to widen the wounds. Sister Leonetta enters the room and Benedetta quickly hides the knife in the sleeve of her habit.

SISTER LEONETTA

Father Pablo asked to see you, he's waiting for you in your office.

Benedetta gets up from the bed and addresses Sister Leonetta

BENEDETTA

Thank you, please tell him I will be there shortly.

Leonetta nods and than exits the room. When the door closes, Benedetta quickly goes to her desk and puts the knife away, hiding it in the very back of the drawer. Before turning to exit the room herself.

INT. CONVENT - ABBESS'S OFFICE - DAY

Benedetta enters her office to find Father Pablo waiting for her. He is holding a letter and does not look happy.

FATHER RICORDATI

I have just received word from the Provost that there is going to be an investigation into the legitimacy of your visions.

BENEDETTA

Let them come I have nothing to hide.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER RICORDATI

You will be relieved of your position as abbess for the duration of the investigation and you will only be allowed to resume your post if and when your visions are deemed authentic.

BENEDETTA

But who will lead the sisters? You cannot leave them without a spiritual guide who will safeguard the salvation of their souls?

FATHER RICORDATI

Sister Ambra will assume the position of abbess in your absence.

FATHER RICORDATI

Are you certain that there is nothing you wish to confess in the safety of this room? Once the investigation begins if you are found to be deceitful I will not be able to protect you.

BENEDETTA

There is nothing to confess Father. Christ is my savior and he has entrusted me with his heart and the responsibility of communing his will to others.

A young girl (9 years old) knocks on the door.

YOUNG GIRL

The Provost has just arrived and is waiting for Benedetta in the classroom.

INT. CONVENT - CLASSROOM - DAY

All of the nuns are sitting at the tables and are talking amongst themselves, no one knows why they have been called there or whats going on.

SISTER ANGELA

(To Sister Dona)

Do you why we've all been summoned?

(CONTINUED)

SISTER DONA

No, I hope everything is OK.

SISTER ANNA

(To Sister Donna)

Do you think something has happened
to Father Ricordati.

The door to the study opens and the Provost walks in followed by a scribe. The nuns quiet and he begins to speak.

PROVOST

Concerns have been raised about the legitimacy of Sister Benedetta's visions. We are going to be investigating these claims and will be summoning each of you throughout the week to take your testimony. Thank you. You may go and resume your daily chores now.

The nuns begin to talk amongst themselves and file out of the room. Benedetta enters the room and the provost addresses her

PROVOST

(Gesturing)

Please, take a seat.

Benedetta sits in a chair across the table from the Provost.

PROVOST

Let's begin with the stigmata...

The provost stands up and walks over to Benedetta. He closely examines the wound on her head. He takes each of her hands within his own examining the wounds carefully.

PROVOST

How many rays did you see?

The provost takes his seat again and than jots something down in his portfolio.

BENEDETTA

Five big ones, but there were rather more that came from the head, though small ones.

The scribe is sitting to the right of the Provost and diligently writes down Benedetta's answer

EXT. CATHEDRAL - FLORENCE, ITALY - SUNSET

We see Messer Pirro Torrigiani riding swiftly on a horse down a dirt road and a large Cathedral comes into view and we see Pirro arrive in front of the Cathedral and than hand the reins of his horse to a servant as he hastily enters the building.

INT. CATHEDRAL - HALLWAY OUTSIDE BISHOPS OFFICE - FLORENCE, ITALY

Messer Pirro knocks on the Bishop's office door.

BISHOP STEPHANO (THROUGH THE DOOR)

Come in

Messer Pirro enters the Bishops office.

MESSER PIRRO TORRIGIANI

We would like to request your presence in Pescina. The abbess of the convent of The Mother of God claims to be a mystic.

BISHOP STEPHANO

Do you have reason to doubt her claims?

MESSER PIRRO TORRIGIANI

We do..

INT. CONVENT - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

The Provost is still siting in the same spot while Benedetta is now standing up and walking around the room. We can see that it is now night through a stain glass window with the image of Christ on the cross. Candles have been lit giving the room a warm glow.

PROVOST

During your vision in which you married Christ did you feel like you were yourself?

BENEDETTA

I don't think I was in myself like the other times, I was unable to see the other sisters and was not aware of what I was doing...I remember making the sign of the cross and than I departed from my normal senses.

(CONTINUED)

PROVOST

Did you see Jesus and the Virgin
during the mystical marriage?

BENEDETTA

I saw them infallibly and not in my
imagination.

PROVOST

Are you certain?

BENEDETTA

Yes.

PROVOST

That is sufficient for tonight we
will resume tomorrow. We will be
examining your wounds again
tomorrow morning.

The Provost and scribe stand and leave the room. Benedetta begins to blow out the candles around the room. Benedetta looks at a stained glass window with the portrait of Christ and makes the sign of the cross. She then blows out the last candle causing the room to go completely dark.

EXT. CONVENT - COURTYARD - DAWN.

We hear someone humming a happy tune and see Sister Madellena exit the convent and walk out into the courtyard. as she walks through through the pasture toward the barn we see a carriage drive through the gates. Bishop Stephano, Brother Alfanzo and 2 other clergymen exit the carriage and than enter the convent.

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY.

Brother Alfanzo knocks on Benedetta's door, when she opens it he abruptly enters.

EXT. CONVENT - GARDEN - MORNING

One of the men we saw arrive with Bishop Stephano walk up to Sister Katerina. He says something to her and than we see the two depart together towards the convent.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM

He takes the chair from the corner of the room and places it next to Benedetta.

BROTHER ALFANZO
Please take a seat, sister.

Benedetta obeys and sits. Brother Slfanzo than takes both of her hands in his own and begins meticulously examining them.

INT. CONVENT - CLASSROOM

Bishop Stephano places both hands on the table and leans over toward Sister Lucia who is sitting across from him.

BISHOP STEPHANO
(In an intimidating tone)
Have you ever witness Benedetta
inflict the marks of the stigmata
on herself?

LUCIA
(shakes her head)
No

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM

Sister Benedetta has removed her veil and head dressing and Brother Alfanzo roughly wraps Benedetta's long hair in his left hand and than cuts it off with a knife. He drops the hair on the floor and than begins examining the wound on Benedetta's head.

INT. CONVENT - CLASSROOM

Bishop Stephano is now questioning Sister Katerina, who is sitting where Sister Lucia once was.

BISHOP STEPHANO
Describe Benedetta's dietary
restrictions.

SISTER KATERINA
She wont eat meat or eggs, and will
only drink water.

BISHOP STEPHANO
Have you ever witnessed her
purposely eat any restricted foods.

(CONTINUED)

SISTER KATERINA

yes, once, but she immediately
winced in pain and couldn't stop
vomiting.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER

Brother Alfanzo pours water into a basin and than wets a cloth. He goes over to Benedetta and then washes the wound on her head. When the dried blood is scrubbed off, a small opening becomes visible and fresh blood begins to flow down Benedetta's forehead. Satisfied with this Brother Alfanzo begins circling around the sitting Benedetta in a predatory fashion as he questions her.

BROTHER ALFANZO

Do you have continuous pain were
you were marked by the stigmata?

BENEDETTA

On Sundays, they seem to be numb;
on Mondays and Tuesdays I have
almost no pain; and all the other
days I have great pain, especially
on Fridays.

INT. CONVENT - ABBESS'S OFFICE

Bishop Stephano and the 2 clergymen are gathered in the abbesses' office. Brother Alfanzo walks through the door and the men begin to discuss their finding.

BROTHER ALFANZO

The stigmata is genuine.

BISHOP STEPHANO

Are you certain?

BROTHER ALFANZO

Yes, blood flowed freely from all
five wounds and her answers were
consistent with someone blessed
with the passion.

BISHOP STEPHANO

I have also found that Benedetta's
visions are probable. Thus far in
my inquiries none of the other nuns
have seen her behaving in a manner
inconsistent with what that of a
true mystic.

(CONTINUED)

There is a knock at the door. One of the clergymen answers the door and Sister Isabetta walks into the room.

BISHOP STEPHANO

Good evening, sister.

SISTER ISABETTA

Good evening, (curtsying respectfully) I apologize for my intrusion but something has been weighing heavily on my conscience and I feel it is my obligation as a bride of Christ to ensure that our convent be free from the devil's influence.

BISHOP STEPHANO

Do you have any reason to believe that the devil has corrupted one of your fellow sisters?

SISTER ISABETTA

I'm quite certain one of Christ servants has fallen pray to his trickery. And whats worse is that she has convinced herself that she is doing God's work.

BISHOP STEPHANO

Sister Benedetta?

SISTER ISABETTA

I understand the severity of my accusation but I witnessed it with my own eyes.

BROTHER ALFANZO

What did you witness, sister?

SISTER ISABETTA

Benedetta and Mea bathing together. But the devil had obviously seduced them with promises of corporeal pleasures for Mea was straddling Benedetta and stirring so vigorously top her that I fear she corrupted herself.

All of the clergymen are shocked and recoil upon hearing this. After taking a moment to regain his composure Bishop Stephano responds to what Sister Isabetta has just disclosed to them.

(CONTINUED)

BISHOP STEPHANO

That is indeed a serious accusation
and I assure you I shall
investigate this with great
scrutiny at first light.

INTO. CHICKEN COOP - MORNING

Mea is in the chicken coop and is carefully collecting eggs
and placing them in a basket. Once the basket is full she
exits the coop and begins walking toward the convent.

INT. CONVENT - KITCHEN

Sister Josepha and Sister Anna are busy preparing breakfast.
Sister Mea enters the kitchen and goes up to Sister Josepha.

MEA

(Handing Josepha the basket of
eggs)
3 dozen fresh from the hen

SISTER JOSEPHA

(Smiling)
Thank you sister.

Mea begins to leave the kitchen when she is approached by
Brother Alfanzo.

BROTHER ALFANZO

Bishop Stephano wishes to see you
please come with me.

Before Mea has a chance to respond Brother Alfanzo turns and
begins walking away leaving Mea with no choice but to follow
him.

INT. CONVENT - ABBESS'S OFFICE

Bishop Stephano is pacing in the office and looking out the
window at the landscape in the distance. The door opens and
Brother Alfanzo enters with Mea following close behind.

BISHOP STEPHANO

Please sit sister. (Gesturing
towards a chair)

Mea takes her place in the seat and looks up at Bishop
Stephano as if she is waiting for a clue as to what is about
to happen.

(CONTINUED)

BISHOP STEPHANO

There is no way to put this delicately so I will just get right to it. have you willingly participated in a unholy relationship with Sister Benedetta?

Mea looks shocked. The Bishop's question catches her completely off guard. Her breath catches in her chest and she is unable to respond. Seeing the scared look on Mea's face Bishop Stephano prompts her again.

BISHOP STEPHANO

(pressuring her)

Did Sister Benedetta force you to participate in immodest acts deemed sinful in the Bible?

Mea nods shamefully

BROTHER ALFANZO

I know this is difficult, but we need you to tell us everything. We need to clarify if the deeds worked through Benedetta were inspired by angels of Paradise or demons from Hell.

Mea looks guilty and shameful as she takes a deep breath and begins to give her testimony against Benedetta.

MEA

After disrobing and going to bed Benedetta would wait for me to disrobe, (Narrative) once I was exposed she would grab me by the arm and throw me by force on the bed. (beginning to cry) She would embrace me forcing me under her and would begin kissing me as if I were a man. she would speak words of love to me and would stir on top of me until both of use corrupted ourselves.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Mea enters the room soaking wet. Her night-gown is now nearly see through. She unties the top string of her nightgown and the wet fabric falls to her feet. We see Mea's back as she walks to the bed and crawls back in. Benedetta wakes from the stirring and retracts upon seeing that both

(CONTINUED)

she and Mea are naked. Mea ignores Benedetta's reaction and kisses Benedetta as she pulls her under the sheets

MEA

I tried to resist her, and several times I would refuse to come to her chamber at night(Narrative)but she would come and find me and climb atop me in my bed and forced herself upon me.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Mea walks into Benedetta's chamber and kisses Benedetta passionately as she unties her nightgown, which then falls to the ground leaving her naked.

Bishop Stephano and Brother Alfanzo are shocked by Mea's testimony. Bishop Stephano clears his throat.

BISHOP STEPHANO

How often did this happen?

MEA

She forced herself upon me at least 3 times a week sometimes for 3 or 4 hours at a time.

Upon hearing this Brother Alfanzo shakes his head in sadness and disgust.

MEA

(Narrative)

She would grab my hand by force, and have me put my fingers into her genitals, she would hold my hand there and stir herself so much that she would corrupt herself... and also by force she would put her fingers into me and move them until I corrupted myself.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

We see Mea and Benedetta naked on the bed in the candle lit room. Their kisses are soft and Mea can't help but smile in the midst the exchange. Mea traces her fingers along the curves of Benedetta's naked body and up her inner thigh. Benedetta gasps and arches her back in pleasure as if

(CONTINUED)

breathing in life for the first time. She pulls Mea close. Benedetta's grasp is so tight we can see her fingers dig into Mea's back.

BISHOP STEPHANO

Did these acts only occur while you were in Benedetta's chamber?

Mea look down shamefully shaking her head no, then she looks off into the distance as she beings to respond

MEA

(Narrative)

She would often call me to her office for reading lessons and would touch my breasts and kiss me, telling me words of love before forcing herself upon me.

INT. CONVENT - ABBESS'S OFFICE (FLASHBACK)

Mea pushes Benedetta against a bookshelf and kisses her passionately. Bannedetta drops the Bible in her hand on the floor and we see Mea's hands roam over Benedetta's body groping her breast

Mea is now crying uncontrollably and both Bishop Stephano and Brother Alfanzo have obviously heard enough they.

BROTHER ALFANZO

(in a comforting tone)

Thank you for being so honest it couldn't have been easy. Benedetta has obviously fallen pray to the devil and you're a victim. Your testimony is more than sufficient I don't think anymore is necessary.

Mea gets up and leaves the office still crying hysterically. after Mea has left the room Bishop Stephano and Brother Alfanzo discuss the proper way to punish Benedetta.

BROTHER ALFANZO

I find it horrific that Benedetta committed such shameless deeds during the most solemn hours of our Lord and of his Mother and other saints, and that after doing these indecent things they went to take communion without confessing...

(CONTINUED)

BISHOP STEPHANO

I agree the circumstances in which they carried out their relationship and their disdain for their spiritual obligations are as damning as the acts themselves.

BROTHER ALFANZO

I find myself conflicted. I examined Benedetta's stigmata wounds myself and they are legitimate, its undeniable that God did bless her with the passion and yet now it also seems undeniable that she is also being manipulated by the devil....how is that possible?

BISHOP STEPHANO

it seems to me as though both are true. Benedetta is blessed and can commune with God and being influenced by Satan. It's as though Satan and Christ are using Benedetta's body as a mystical battleground.

BROTHER ALFANZO

It would be blasphemous to burn a true mystic but we cannot ignore the devil's influence on her. How do we punish such a person...

INT. CONVENT - CHAPEL

Benedetta is kneeling in one of the pews praying intently. Brother alfanzo and one of the Bishop's clergymen enter the chapele and approach Benedetta. Brother Alfanzo takes a letter from his portfolio and begins reading it aloud.

BROTHER ALFANZO

It is finding of this investigation that you are guilty of consorting with the devil and engaging in several lascivious and immodest acts. You shall be punished in accordance with the laws of our Lord Jesus Christ and under the authority of Pope Clement ii.

The clergyman and brother alfanzo both grab hold of one of Benedetta's arms and escort her out of the chapele

INT. CONVENT - MEA'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mea enters the room shuts the door and collapses sliding her back down the door until she is seated on the floor crying hysterically with her knees in her chest.

INT. CONVENT - BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER

Bishop Alfanzo and the clergyman forcefully push Benedetta into the room and slam the door behind her. The Men begin sealing up the door with stones leaving only a small space at the bottom of the door where they have cut away at to wood (for the passing of food and water).

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY

We see Sister Cosa watch as Brother alfanzo and the clergyman escort Benedetta to her room. We see a handsome man who we recognize as Satan from one of Benedetta's early visions walk up behind Cosa

SATAN

Excellent job my love

SISTER COSA

She was a pawn to Satan's deceit.
We had to protect the convent my
Lord.

SATAN

There's only one problem my love

Satan leans over and whispers in Sister Cosa's ear.

SATAN

I'm not your Lord

Satan begins to softly chuckle victoriously as Cosa realizes what she has done.

INT. CONVENT - CLASSROOM (FLASHBACK)

After the Provost finishes speaking the nuns get up from their seats and begin to talk amongst themselves and Benedetta enters the room as the rest of the nuns file out of the room. Cosa sees Isabetta and quickens her pace until they are walking next to each other.

(CONTINUED)

SISTER COSA

I told you Benedetta was under
Satan's spell.

ISABETTA

No she couldn't be there has to be
some other explanation

SISTER COSA

The Devil is the only explanation
haven't you noticed how peculiarly
shes been acting lately and what
better way to disguise the devils
work than by passing it off as
God's

ISABETTA

maybe you're right...

SISTER COSA

We need to protect the convent from
the devil's influence at all costs.
I'm going to tell the provost that
I witnessed her faking the
stigmata.

ISABETTA

There has been something bothering
me

SISTER COSA

The devil has a hold on her, you
are only hurting God by protecting
her.

ISABETTA

You're right, Benedetta has fallen
pray to Satan and shielding her
will only undermine God's will and
put the convent at risk.

SISTER COSA

Go to the Bishop tonight and tell
him why you know Benedetta has
given into Satan's charms. It's the
right thing to do.

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

as Brother Alfanzo and the clergyman place mortar and stones in front Benedetta's door, we see Sister Cosa's eyes well up with tears having realized what she has done. Sister Cosa suddenly begins to run down the hallway as if she is trying to escape what she has just done.

INT. CONVENT - BELL TOWER

Cosa runs up the stairs of the bell tower and collapses in tears upon reaching the top.

INT. CONVENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Brother Alfanzo and the clergyman place the final stones in front Benedetta's door, sealing her in.

INT. CONVENT - BELL TOWER

Sister Cosa is kneeling tears streaming down her face. she looks out at the moon and begins to pray.

SISTER COSA
(remorsefully)
Forgive me father for I have
sinned.

EXT. CONVENT - WINDOW LOOKING INTO BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER

Benedetta is kneeling in prayer while looking at the moon out the window. The nightingale from her childhood fly into her window and perches on the window seal and Benedetta smiles knowing that it is Christ and that he is watching over her.

EXT. CONVENT - WINDOW LOOKING INTO BENEDETTA'S CHAMBER
(AFTER CREDITS HAVE BEEN DISPLAYED)

The nightingale is perched on the window sill and Benedetta is praying. As the camera shot widens and the exterior of the building is shown we see the shadow of a body hanging from the bell tower (Cosa has hung herself)