

# CAMALEONTE

Written By

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**EXT. DIRT ROAD. FLORENCE - DAY**

A WAGON CART being pulled by a RIDER on his HORSE comes into frame. We aren't shown the contents of the wagon as the outline of the city disappears into the distance.

**SUPER: FLORENCE, ITALY, 1348**

**EXT. CITY LIMIT. FLORENCE - LATER**

We hear the sound of SHOVELS being put to work followed by objects being dragged along the ground.

BEAT

A BODY with DARK BOILS scattered across it is tossed into view. A slight pause before we see another.

Our rider slash undertaker goes back to his wagon - pulls another corpse off from it.

We pan out to see freshly dug GRAVES, but the dead outnumber them.

The faint sound of KNOCKING starts to build.

Tock...Tock...

Grows LOUDER.

**EXT. ALLEYWAY. HOUSE - SAME TIME**

**MATTEO DE LA TORRE**, early twenties, dark haired and with good looks to boot, pounds away on the front door of a Florentine home.

Tock...Tock...Tock.

In his hand is a VIAL containing a GREY LIQUID. Whatever it is, you would think twice about having a sip of it.

Matteo peers down at the vial - gives it a little SHAKE.

**INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

The door gently swings ajar, just enough for us to see the face of an OLD LADY. She peers through the small gap - gazes blankly at Matteo.

MATTEO

*Buongiorno, Madam. Today is your lucky day because I have exactly what you need.*

Matteo pulls the vial close to his face.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

*With this, you will no longer have to live in fear of the wretched poison that has spread across our land...*

The old lady scans the vial.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

*(Dramatic)*

*I give you, the cure for the Black Plague.*

The old lady's eyes are fixed on the vial - he's got her right where he wants her. Until:

Her husband pulls her away from the door - stares daggers at Matteo and SLAMS the door shut.

Matteo, just inches from the door, stares back at it, dejected.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

*(muttering)*

*vaffanculo.*

He picks up a RUCKSACK filled with more vials of the grey liquid - tosses the one he was holding inside.

#### **EXT. MARKET PLACE. TOWN PLAZA - LATER**

The town plaza resembles something closer to a ghost town than the vibrant city centre Florence has become known for.

Matteo lugs his rucksack past several VENDOR STALLS, many of which have been abandoned.

Several FLYERS with the words **GIULIO LAZZARI: THE MAD DOCTOR** can be seen plastered around the plaza.

Matteo makes his way through the maze-like market and approaches a pair of STREET VENDORS.

These are his two younger brothers, **FRANCESCO DE LA TORRE**, the middle child and someone who doesn't take crap from anyone, and beside him is **ALESSIO DE LA TORRE**, the youngest of the boys, who has an impish penchant for sarcasm.

Next to them is a PUSH CART carrying the same vials that Matteo was trying to sell earlier.

MATTEO  
How did we do today?

FRANCESCO makes an 0 with his hand.

MATTEO (CONT'D)  
What have the two of you been doing this whole time?!

FRANCESCO  
Scratch that. It's actually less than zero because I dropped one of them.

Pan to:

A SHATTERED vial on the ground. Birds peck away at its leaking contents.

ALESSIO  
Those smell awful by the way.

MATTEO  
Yeah? It's no worse than half of these streets.

Matteo hoists the rucksack onto the pushcart. Francesco notices.

FRANCESCO  
I could ask you the same thing. That sack looks pretty full.

MATTEO  
First off, I ask the questions. Secondly, I got rid of two of them. Almost sold a third but some old bastard got in the way.

Francesco and Alessio MOCK CLAP.

#### **EXT. CHUCH - TOWN PLAZA - CONTINUOUS**

A HERETIC, **CARLO BIANCHI**, mid 40's, stands in front of the church, within earshot of the De La Torre's.

Best recognized by his greying hair, patchy beard and the fact that he might've lost his mind, Carlo preaches to a small group of six, a fine mix of FANATICS and DRUNKARDS.

CARLO

The plague is the lords way of punishing us for the sins of our fathers and their fathers before them.

Alessio and Francesco turn to each other, both with a look that says "What's with this guy?"

CARLO (CONT'D)

In order to appease God, we must all face some form of punishment.

Carlo bends down - picks up a cane.

CARLO (CONT'D)

(points)

You...

One of the drunkards double checks - steps forward.

CARLO (CONT'D)

Today is the day you will engrave yourself as a part of history. The day that the world began to heal.

Carlo hands the cane to the drunkard - gets on his knees and points to the heavens.

CARLO (CONT'D)

Forgive us my lord!

The drunkard swings and catches Carlo on the BACK OF HIS HEAD. He yelps.

CARLO (CONT'D)

Not my head you idiot!

INTERCUT WITH:

**EXT. TOWN PLAZA - CONTINUOUS**

Carlo groans in pain. Matteo looks on - shakes his head.

FRANCESCO

Three Florins says he's faking it.

ALESSIO  
Five Florins says he's insane.

MATTEO  
(to Alessio)  
If we weren't broke, I'd take that  
bet.

Francesco eyes the rucksack again.

FRANCESCO  
What are we going to do about  
these?

Matteo ensures that the rucksack has no tears.

MATTEO  
We continue tomorrow. I just have  
to really drive the fear into these  
folk. This city is close to  
breaking, I know it.

From a distance, we see Carlo receive a lashing on his back.

ALESSIO  
(off Carlo)  
I think it might already be.

FRANCESCO  
It's already been a week. We'll be  
better off going back to  
pickpocketing or some other plans  
that worked in the past.

ALESSIO  
You know that I hate to give  
Francesco props, but I think he's  
right.

Matteo knows it's pointless when he's being ganged up on.

MATTEO  
I'm going to Pravo's. I'll see the  
both of you at home. Try not to  
break anymore bottles...

Matteo leaves. Francesco waits until the coast is clear.

FRANCESCO  
Think you can handle this?

ALESSIO  
Where are you going?

Francesco doesn't answer - already on his way.

ALESSIO (CONT'D)  
(Realizing)  
Again? You know she doesn't care  
about you right?

Alessio shakes his head. *Why does he always have to do the dirty work?*

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - LATER**

Matteo skulks through the alleyway. He SPOTS a commotion ahead. TWO POLICEMEN covered from head to toe drag a BEGGAR by his legs.

On closer inspection, the beggar is covered in horrendous BLACK BOILS. He screams in agony.

BEGGAR  
The lumps don't mean anything.

He coughs up a mixture of BLOOD and PHLEGM.

BEGGAR (CONT'D)  
Honestly, I've never felt better!

The two policemen ignore him - continue dragging.

FLORENTINE MAN  
(Desperate)  
Damn you! I'll kill you! Please,  
don't take me there!

Matteo stays hidden - waits for them to leave.

**EXT. PRAVO'S BUTCHER SHOP - LATER**

Matteo looks around at neighboring shops, most of them are closed or abandoned.

CUT TO:

**INT. PRAVO'S BUTCHER SHOP - CONTINUOUS**

**PRAVO** the local butcher, friendly but dimwitted, has a makeshift mask on that is made out of DIRTY CLOTH.

He spots Matteo and gives a quick NOD. He bends down to grab a slab of OLD MEAT - hands it to Matteo. Far from appetizing but it will have to do...for now.

PRAVO

People were asking me for the leftovers but I told them, you can't have those. They are reserved for my good friend Matteo.

MATTEO

Thank you, Pravo.

Matteo smiles. Pravo smiles back, but it fades quickly.

PRAVO

I hate to ask, but I am sure you know how tough things are right now.

Matteo dips his head - too embarrassed to face his friend.

MATTEO

I don't have your money right now but I promise you that I will have it soon. I'm working hard on something.

Pravo gives an understanding look, but we get the sense that he knows he won't be getting his money anytime soon.

PRAVO

Okay.

Matteo heads for the exit - stops.

MATTEO

Do you know where they're taking the sick?

PRAVO

I do not know if it has a name. All I have heard is that it is somewhere far away from here. Somewhere without any doctors or nurses, just the sick.

MATTEO

Do people who go there ever come back?

Pravo gazes back - doubtful. Matteo acknowledges.

**INT. BEDROOM. BROTHEL - LATER**

Francesco grunts loudly as he makes love to **JOANNA BELOTTI**, voluptuous and beautiful.



He kisses her passionately on the lips, neither wanting to pull back.

Francesco caresses her face as Joanna straddles him. He pulls her hair back as he continues to thrust before finally climaxing - the veins on his neck looking like they might explode at any moment.

Joanna plops to her back as Francesco rolls off to his side. She rests her head on his chest.

FRANCESCO  
Incredible.

JOANNA  
You sound surprised...

FRANCESCO  
I'm only surprised that Cassandra didn't tell us to keep it down.

Joanna laughs. They enjoy each others company for a moment - a moment of pure bliss for Francesco.

Joanna kisses him once more before standing up to get changed.

FRANCESCO (CONT'D)  
Already?

JOANNA  
*Mi Amore*, you know that I have to work.

FRANCESCO  
Who is it this time? That fat man Luca?

JOANNA  
Stop...

FRANCESCO  
If he tries any funny business again, I'll kill him.

JOANNA  
If he does, I'll kill him myself.

They laugh. Francesco pulls her in for another kiss.

FRANCESCO  
What if we got married?

Joanna is taken aback, unsure if Francesco is being serious. He doesn't flinch.

JOANNA  
Don't be crazy.

FRANCESCO  
Do you love me?

JOANNA  
Of course.

FRANCESCO  
Then what's so crazy about it?

JOANNA  
For starters, you don't have a job.

FRANCESCO  
I'm working on it.

JOANNA  
And you might be okay with it now,  
but will you be able to accept a  
whore for a wife?

FRANCESCO  
You know I don't care about that.  
I'll kill anyone who says anything.

JOANNA  
I hope you're prepared to kill a  
lot of people then...

A LOUD KNOCK on the door.

CASSANDRA (O.S.)  
You two better be done.

JOANNA  
Yes, *mama*. I'll be right down.  
(to Francesco)  
I have to go.

Francesco nods but his mood has clearly been dampened.

**EXT. STREET - LATER**

Matteo, lugging the SLAB OF MEAT over his shoulder, spots a commotion ahead of him. He scans his surroundings - No detours available.

Matteo INCHES forward, spots a WOMAN ON THE FLOOR groaning in agony. Her two DAUGHTERS look on, both nervous wrecks.

**ANTONELLI CERCI, 26**, a DOCTOR with a SCAR along the LEFT SIDE OF HIS FACE, runs over to the scene accompanied by the HUSBAND of the sick woman.

ANTONELLI

KNEELS down next to her, careful not to come into direct contact with her skin. He LIFTS THE LINEN on her shoulder to reveal a BLACK BOIL.

He reaches into his APOTHECARY CASE - pulls out a KNIFE. He pours an ALKALI BASED AGENT onto it before plunging it into the *bubo*. A stream of BLOOD and DARK COLORED PUS pours out from the boil.

Antonelli helps the woman to her feet before her daughters take a hold of her. The husband hands over several GOLD FLORINS to him.

Matteo's spots this. His eyes gleam from afar - *an idea perhaps?*

The crowd disperses and Antonelli places his tools back in his case. Matteo approaches, still carrying the slab of meat.

MATTEO

*Buongiorno.*

ANTONELLI

*Buongiorno, mister.*

MATTEO

What you did back there...very impressive.

ANTONELLI

*Grazie.*

Antonelli doesn't seem too interested in small talk but tries to remain polite about it. Matteo picks up on this.

MATTEO

You seem like a busy man so I will get right to it. I was wondering if you needed any help with your work.

ANTONELLI

I'm sorry, but I'm not looking for an apprentice right now.

MATTEO

I am not looking to be an apprentice.

Antonelli doesn't quite follow.

ANTONELLI  
Are you a doctor?

MATTEO  
Not exactly. I dabble in  
pharmaceuticals.

ANTONELLI  
(confused)  
I'm sorry but I don't think I can  
help you. *Addio*.

MATTEO  
(grabs Antonelli's arm)  
Just hold on --

Antonelli's mask of politeness finally slips. He SNAPS -  
pulls his knife out from his case.

ANTONELLI  
Leave me the hell alone!

ANTONELLI

Backs away - eyes stay locked on Matteo to make sure he does  
not follow.

MATTEO

Watches as Antonelli disappears behind a corner. He doesn't  
look disheartened, he's been a hustler his whole life. This  
is just a minor setback.

**INT. LIVING ROOM. MATTEO'S HOME - LATER**

Alessio TWIRLS the vial of Grey Liquid. OPENS it to smell -  
instantly regrets it.

Francesco sits in a CHAIR with his feet placed on the TABLE.

ALESSIO  
How long more before you reckon  
we're completely broke or dead?

FRANCESCO  
I can always count on you to  
lighten the mood.

ALESSIO

You were right to say that we are better off stealing than trying to pawn off Matteo's potions. Can you talk some sense into him?

FRANCESCO scoffs.

FRANCESCO

Me? When have I ever been able to convince him about anything?  
Also...

He walks over to Alessio - grabs his hand. We see that Alessio is MISSING his LEFT PINKY.

FRANCESCO (CONT'D)

...If my memory serves me well, you were a terrible thief.

Alessio rolls his eyes - pulls his hand away.

ALESSIO

And if my memory serves me well, I only got caught because I had to save you.

Matteo returns - panting but gleaming with excitement. He pulls Francesco's feet off the table.

MATTEO

Change of plans.

Matteo places the slab of meat down on the table.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

No more "potions".

ALESSIO

That's the most sane thing you've said all week.

MATTEO

Starting tomorrow, we are Plague Doctors.

ALESSIO

And we're back to being insane.

FRANCESCO

Plague Doctors?

MATTEO  
Doctors who specialize in symptoms  
caused by the Plague.

Francesco and Alessio turn to each other - both expecting the other to ask the first question.

FRANCESCO  
Please, go ahead.

Alessio gathers his thoughts.

ALESSIO  
None of us have any medical  
knowledge. We couldn't pretend to  
be doctors even if we tried.

MATTEO  
That's the beauty of this plan. We  
just have to act the part, and if  
we cure some people along the  
way...great. We just have to fix  
them up enough to get paid.

ALESSIO  
Okay, this is pretty dark...even  
for you.

Matteo almost feels insulted by this jab. Almost.

MATTEO  
You won't believe how much those  
guys get paid.

Francesco's eyes light up.

FRANCESCO  
How much?

MATTEO  
A lot.

Matteo gestures with his arms to reinforce his point.

FRANCESCO  
What do we need?

Alessio turns to Francesco.

ALESSIO  
Did I leave the room at some point?

FRANCESCO  
That was before I knew how much  
money we could make.

ALESSIO  
When were you ever concerned about  
money?

Sudden realization for Alessio.

ALESSIO (CONT'D)  
It's for her isn't it. She's just  
usi--

FRANCESCO  
Leave Joanna out of this.

Matteo WHISTLES loudly. The two brothers stop bickering.

MATTEO  
Aly, unless you have something else  
to propose, this is what we are  
going with.

Alessio knows Matteo has his number.

FRANCESCO  
Fine, but if we're doing  
this...we're going to have to at  
least look the part.

**EXT. TAILOR - THE NEXT DAY**

Matteo and Alessio exit the tailor with fresh threads.  
Francesco waits outside for them.

MATTEO

Sports a BLACK LEATHER OVERCOAT, A MASK WITH A SHORT BEAK, a  
TOP HAT, and a WOODEN CANE topped off with a STEEL HANDLE.

ALESSIO

A HOODED WHITE TRENCH-COAT with long, PADDED GLOVES and an  
APOTHECARY CASE.

FRANCESCO

A LONG CAPE draped over his clothes, with CHAINMAIL and a  
STEEL HELMET. His getup resembling a soldier more so than a  
doctor.

MATTEO  
 (To Francesco)  
 I cannot believe you went to the  
 blacksmith.

FRANCESCO  
 It's all part of my character. I'm  
 the muscle of the group.

ALESSIO  
 I thought I was the muscle?

Please.	MATTEO	FRANCESCO
	No way...	

ALESSIO  
 So what am I then?

MATTEO  
 I'm the brains, Francesco is the  
muscle and you're the accountant.

Francesco nods, his helmet and chainmail CLANKING as he does.

FRANCESCO  
 Yeah that makes sense.

ALESSIO  
 The accountant?! Why do you guys  
 get to have cool characters but I'm  
 stuck with something lame?

MATTEO  
 Because you're good with money and  
 I'm already the brains. Stop  
 complaining.

Alessio fumes.

FRANCESCO  
 How much money did we spend on  
 these?

ALESSIO  
 32 Florins.  
 (realizes he's feeding his  
 stereotype)  
 Fuck...

FRANCESCO  
 Ouch. I'm guessing that was the  
 rest of it then?



MATTEO  
Don't worry. These things are going  
to pay for themselves.

ALESSIO  
And if they don't?

MATTEO  
You really know how to kill the  
mood. You know that?

Francesco PATS Alessio on the back.

**EXT. HOUSE. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS**

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN answers the door - appears startled upon  
seeing our Plague Doctors.

MATTEO  
(Deep & Ominous)  
Do you have any sick?

MIDDLE-AGED MAN  
Who are you?

We hear a LOUD COUGH coming from inside. The MAN moves to  
slam his door shut - Matteo blocks him from closing the door.

The man GRABS a STOKER by his FIREPLACE - raises it up.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN (CONT'D)  
I don't want any trouble.

ALESSIO  
We're not here to hurt anyone.

Francesco puffs out his chest - plays up to his "character"

FRANCESCO  
(cracks knuckles)  
Or maybe we are...

Alessio gives him a look - "Not Now"

ALESSIO  
We're doct --

MATTEO  
Ahem.

ALESSIO  
We're Plague Doctors...We deal with  
illnesses caused by The Plague.

MATTEO  
Who is that inside? Maybe we can  
help.

The man contemplates.

**INT. MIDDLE-AGED MAN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

An OLDER MAN lays in his bed - wheezing and pale as a sheet.

MATTEO  
How long has your father been like  
this?

MIDDLE-AGED MAN  
About a day.

Matteo peels back a layer of clothing to reveal BLACK BOILS  
similar to the ones we saw earlier.

MATTEO  
It's good that we found you when we  
did. We might still be able to save  
him.

Matteo snaps his fingers - opens his hand with his palm  
facing up. The others all turn to him, baffled.

MATTEO (CONT'D)  
(annoyed)  
The knife...

Alessio realizes that was his cue. He digs into the  
APOTHECARY CASE, pulls out a KNIFE and hands it to Matteo.

MATTEO

Walks over to the FIREPLACE - BURNS the tip of the knife.

He gently PIERCES the boil, a stream of GUNK begins to  
TRICKLE out.

Francesco and Alessio glance at one another, surprised at how  
well the procedure is going.

Matteo moves the knife ever so slightly.

**SPLOOSH**

Pus ERUPTS from the boil - splatters onto Francesco's HELMET.  
The brothers start to PANIC.

The old man reels from the pain - KICKS out at Matteo.

MATTEO (CONT'D)  
Help me stop the bleeding!

Alessio frantically looks around - spots something. He runs  
over to some DRAPES hanging nearby - rips them down.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN  
NO! Not the drapes.

He rushes back to the patient to covers the wound.

After some time has passed, Matteo removes the drapes to see  
that the stopgap worked.

The boil has been FLATTENED and the only thing left is some  
BRUISING on the same spot.

The brothers take a moment to breathe a sigh of relief.

MATTEO  
Glad to be of service. If you'll be  
so kind as to pay us, we'll be on  
our way.

The Middle-Aged man looks around at his 'destroyed' home.

Splatters of blood and ooze run across the floor and his  
prized drapes are now in tatters.

He tosses a couple of GOLD FLORINS to Matteo.

MATTEO (CONT'D)  
Hold on, this is only half.

Francesco and Alessio WHISK Matteo out of the house.

#### **EXT. ROADSIDE - LATER**

The group sits by the road. Francesco holds his HELMET in his  
hands - tries to SCRUB it clean with his CHAINMAIL.

ALESSIO  
Still think this is a good idea?

Matteo appears in to be stuck in his own head - GAZES at the  
GOLD FLORINS in his palm.

FRANCESCO  
 (holding helmet)  
 You think I could return this?

Alessio gives him a rather grim-looking "no".

MATTEO  
 You both did good back there. But  
 you're right, if this is going to  
 work, we need to be better  
 prepared. We need a mentor.

Beat.

FRANCESCO  
 Maybe Aly is right. Maybe it is too  
 risky.

Matteo stands up.

MATTEO  
 Look around you...

Decadent streets, far from the glory days that once graced  
 Florence.

MATTEO (CONT'D)  
 Anything out here could be  
 considered a risk. This plague  
 could get any one of us. But I'm so  
 tired of struggling. That's all  
 we've done our entire lives. If we  
 make it out of this, I don't want  
 to struggle anymore.

Francesco and Alessio take this in. Matteo looks up and sees  
 the same POSTER from earlier. **GIULIO LAZZARI: THE MAD DOCTOR.**

FRANCESCO  
 Fine, but where would we start? One  
 of the hospitals?

ALESSIO  
 No self respecting doctor would  
 want to be a part of this.

Matteo RIPS the poster down.

MATTEO  
 What if we talked to someone like  
 us? An outcast.

He shows the poster to his brothers.

ALESSIO

Lazzari? No way, I've heard stories about him.

FRANCESCO

Like how he keeps dead bodies at home to experiment on?

ALESSIO

Yes, and I heard that he does a lot more than "experiment" on them.

Francesco is grossed out.

MATTEO

No one said that he was going to be the ideal candidate...

**INT. LIVING ROOM. GIULIO LAZZARI'S HOUSE - LATER**

GIULIO LAZZARI, Mid 50's, SHORT, PUDGY and BESPECTACLED, paces around his home. Matteo, Francesco and Alessio watch him - glance at each other, wondering who will break the silence.

ALESSIO

I have to ask because this is all I have been thinking about on the way over here.

(pause)

Do you have...relations with the bodies?

Matteo cannot believe his brother just asked that.

Giulio appears unfazed - eyes Alessio from head to toe.

ALESSIO (CONT'D)

What?

GIULIO

Just getting a good look...to get an idea of what I'll be working with if the plague gets you.

Alessio's eyes widen. Pure horror on his face. Giulio delights in his discomfort.

MATTEO

Can we get back to business?

Giulio turns back to Matteo - nods.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

We are looking for is someone to mentor us...show us the ropes, if you will.

FRANCESCO

Your craft could live through us.

Beat.

GIULIO

Okay.

The brothers are taken by surprise. They didn't think it would take that little convincing.

MATTEO

Really?

GIULIO

Any chance to stick it to those heathens who cast me out. What better way than by desecrating the 'good name' of doctors.

MATTEO

Wonderful. And here I was thinking that I'd have resort to blackmail.

The four of them start to laugh.

GIULIO

It's a good thing that you didn't.

(serious)

Because the last time someone tried to, it did not end well for them.

Flickers of panic can be seen on Alessio and Francesco, but Matteo does not flinch.

GIULIO (CONT'D)

(back to cheerful)

But, I see no reason as to why this cannot be the beginning of a beautiful partnership.

Alessio turns to Francesco. The look on his face SCREAMS "this guy is batshit crazy!"

MATTEO

Glad to hear that.

GIULIO

Now, shall we begin?

**EXT. GIULIO'S HOUSE. STREET - LATER**

Matteo, Alessio and Francesco walk away from Giulio's house.

MATTEO

Say what you want about the guy,  
but he really does know his stuff.

FRANCESCO

Seemed a little too cheerful while  
dissecting that corpse though.

ALESSIO

The less we see of him the better.  
He gives me the creeps.

MATTEO

That's why you're not the 'muscle'.

The brothers reach a fork in the road. Matteo stops.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

I'll meet you back at the house.

FRANCESCO

Where are you going?

MATTEO

I need to make one more stop.

**EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT**

Once a cornerstone of Florentine arts and drama, there's  
barely a soul outside.

Matteo arrives, his breath now icy from the chilly weather.

**INT. THEATRE - CONTINUOUS**

Matteo slips in by the back entrance. He sees an aspiring  
young actor, **ENZO**, rehearsing a scene. He walks towards the  
stage.

MATTEO

Bravo, truly captivating.

Enzo quickly turns to see who it is.

ENZO

Sorry, we're closed.

MATTEO  
Must be difficult. Someone with  
your raw talent but nowhere to  
showcase it.

ENZO  
(confused)  
Can I help you?

MATTEO  
I believe that we can both help  
each other.

Enzo takes a moment to process this.

ENZO  
You're very handsome but I'm going  
to have to pass. I know another  
actor who might be keen though.

MATTEO  
No, this isn't...I'm not trying  
to...

He pauses. Gathers his thoughts.

MATTEO (CONT'D)  
I have got an acting job for you.

Enzo's eyes widen - Matteo has his attention.

ENZO  
What's this for?

Matteo grins.

MATTEO  
How good are your makeup skills?

**EXT. STREET - THE NEXT DAY**

Our 'Plague Doctors', dressed in their costumes, walk along  
the streets with SWAGGER. Locals take notice and look on with  
curiosity.

FRANCESCO  
Moment of truth...

MATTEO  
He'll be here.

Right on cue, they see a small crowd up ahead spread out  
amongst themselves.



MATTEO (CONT'D)

Show time.

They reach the crowd and spot Enzo lying on the ground, looking 'deathly ill', with the actors makeup skills really selling this idea.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

(to crowd)

Move aside.

Francesco plays the role of crowd control, keeping everyone a safe distance from where Enzo is.

Matteo kneels down beside Enzo. Alessio digs into the APOTHECARY BAG and grabs a KNIFE, a LARGE SYRINGE and a METAL BOWL - hands them to Matteo.

Matteo proceeds to make a small incision on Enzo's bicep, as Alessio places the bowl below the cut - slowly fills ups.

ENZO

(whispering)

That really hurt.

MATTEO

Small price to pay for your craft.

ALESSIO

(To Enzo)

You're not supposed to be talking.

ENZO

(eyes closed)

You try getting your arm sliced open like a ham.

Francesco has his hands full as the crowd jostles to get a good view of the action.

MATTEO

Seal his wound.

ALESSIO

Pulls out a NEEDLE and THREAD from the bag. Gently stabs it into Enzo's flesh. Enzo resists the urge to wince.

MATTEO

Grabs the metal bowl, now half filled with blood. He hoists it into the air and dips a finger into the bowl. He takes his blood-dipped finger and DRAWS A CROSS ON ENZO'S FOREHEAD.

FRANCESCO  
(to himself)  
What the fuck?

Matteo mouths some incantations.

ALESSIO  
(whispers)  
What are you doing?

MATTEO  
Just wait...

ENZO

OPENS HIS EYES. He's been resurrected like a phoenix rising from the ashes. GASPS from the crowd.

ENZO  
(dramatic)  
You saved me. He saved my life!

The crowd ERUPTS. Matteo rises to his feet and soaks in every drop of adulation. He pulls Alessio and Francesco in - makes sure everyone knows that they are a team.

MATTEO  
My friends! Many years ago, I  
promised to give my life to serve  
the people of Florence. Remember  
the name, Matteo De La Torre!

CUT TO:

**MONTAGE - VARIOUS**

**INT. FLORENTINE HOME - THE NEXT DAY**

Matteo, FRANCESCO and Alessio are invited into another home.

Matteo performs his 'BLOODLETTING' practice once again.

Alessio lays the patient down next to a LIT FIREPLACE.

Our Plague doctors get paid.

**INT. BEDROOM. BROTHEL - THE NEXT DAY**

Francesco watches Joanna getting dressed. He plants a kiss on her and hands her some Florins.

Joanna's eyes scream "where did you get this money from?"

Francesco grins back.

**INT. TOWN PLAZA - THE NEXT DAY**

Matteo applies LEECHES onto the infected area of a patient.

More GOLD FLORINS are handed out to them.

**END OF MONTAGE**

**INT. LIVING ROOM. MATTEO'S HOME - DAY**

Alessio stacks FLORINS side by side on a table while Francesco tosses a Florin in the air. Matteo CATCHES THE COIN - hands it to Alessio to add to the collection.

ALESSIO

We've made the money back for the outfits, have enough to pay Giulio and Enzo and even have a little left over for us.

MATTEO

And in just three days.

Matteo looks back at Alessio and Francesco, unable to suppress his smugness any longer.

Alessio notices.

ALESSIO

What?

MATTEO

I seem to recall the two of you ridiculing this plan.

ALESSIO

For the oldest, you can really act like such a child sometimes.

Francesco reaches for the GOLD FLORINS - grabs a handful of them and HURLS them at Matteo. Without hesitation, Matteo plays along, wrecking Alessio's stacks of coins.

ALESSIO (CONT'D)

Stop it! I'm in charge of the money, remember?

Enzo enters and sees the commotion - wonders what he just walked into. Matteo SHOVES Francesco one last time before moving to Enzo.

MATTEO  
There's my star.

He pulls Enzo in for a HUG.

Alessio hands Enzo several Florins.

ALESSIO  
That's your share from the job.

Enzo STARES at the coins, mesmerized for a moment as they shimmer in his hands.

ENZO  
I haven't had a rush like that in a long time. Being able to perform out there, I can't thank you all enough.

FRANCESCO  
Perform? But you barely said anything.

MATTEO  
Ignore him, Enzo. He does not understand the intricacies of the fine arts like we do.

ENZO  
No, he's right. But I just love performing in front of an audience. I can't live without it.  
(beat)  
So when's the next one?

Matteo, Francesco and Alessio turn to one another - baffled.

ALESSIO  
We just needed to do it the one time to get the word out. Matteo, didn't you make that clear?

ENZO  
Well, I thought that there might be some room to experiment further.

MATTEO  
We'll risk being exposed if we do it again. I'm sorry, but we can't take that chance.

Alessio plucks a few more Florins from the pile.

ALESSIO  
It's been a difficult time for  
everyone. Here, you've earned them.

ENZO  
(offended)  
I don't want your gold. I want to  
perform.

MATTEO  
We just can't risk it.

Enzo realizes that he's not going to convince Matteo.

ENZO  
I'm sure there will be others who  
would love to hear about this.  
Maybe they'll try it themselves.

MATTEO  
Careful. You really want to go down  
this road?

Enzo doesn't flinch. His answer is a resounding YES.

ENZO  
(on his way out)  
Take some time to think it over.

Enzo leaves.

Matteo, seething, SLAMS his hand on the table - instantly  
regrets it.

**EXT. STREETS - DAY**

The '*Plague Doctors*' are performing the same ruse with Enzo.  
Matteo appears much less animated now.

Hidden amongst the crowd is Antonelli, who is watching them  
with MALICE.

**INT. LIVING ROOM. GIULIO'S HOUSE - DAY**

Matteo and Alessio watch as Giulio conducts an experiment  
with the GREY LIQUID that the brothers were trying to pawn  
off.

He UNCORKS the vial and tips a few droplets onto a RAT. The  
rat takes three more steps before collapsing onto its side.

GIULIO  
This will do nicely. I'll take  
three of them.

Alessio hands him two more vials.

ALESSIO  
(afraid)

What do you plan to do with them?

Giulio doesn't answer, just grins. He knows that Alessio is terrified of him and he loves it.

GIULIO  
Consider this my payment for your  
next lesson.

Matteo nods, but something else appears to be on his mind.

MATTEO  
About that. There might be some  
delays to our operation.

GIULIO  
What kind of delays?

ALESSIO  
We're being blackmailed by someone.

Giulio stares back - *will he be affected too?*

MATTEO  
I'm dealing with it.

GIULIO  
(staring at the dead rat)  
You could kill him.  
(back to Matteo)  
Make it look like the plague got  
him.

Matteo takes note.

ALESSIO  
(appalled)  
What's the matter with you?

Giulio shrugs his shoulders.

MATTEO  
That could work. The kid lives  
alone so no one is going to come  
looking for him either.

ALESSIO  
You can't be serious.

MATTEO  
(to Giulio)  
How should I get it done?

Giulio realizes his passing comment might have awakened a part of Matteo that he has not seen before.

**INT. ENTRANCE. BROTHEL - SAME TIME**

Francesco walks in - sees a number of WORKING GIRLS. He spots **CASSANDRA DIAMANTI**, the Madam of the establishment.

CASSANDRA  
She's not here.

FRANCESCO  
(confused)  
Where did she go?

CASSANDRA  
Picked up for the whole day.

FRANCESCO  
You can do that?

CASSANDRA  
For the right price...

Francesco fishes out more GOLD FLORINS.

FRANCESCO  
Is this enough to bring her back?

Cassandra checks - is amused.

CASSANDRA  
Normally, yes. But you're going to have to double, no...triple this if you want to outbid my other client.

FRANCESCO  
(realization)  
Luca...

Cassandra gives him a sympathetic look.

CASSANDRA  
I get it...who wouldn't fall in love with Joanna? A rare beauty. That being said, my other girls would be happy to be of service.

Francesco sighs, shakes his head.

Cassandra pinches his cheek.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)  
Suit yourself.

**EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT**

Matteo LURKS by the theatre. He spots Enzo from a distance - DUCKS behind a wall to avoid being seen. Enzo enters the theatre. Matteo makes sure his KNIFE is concealed in his robes. He makes his way towards the theatre.

Beat.

Out steps a figure who WATCHES as Matteo trials off inside.

**INT. THEATRE - CONTINUOUS**

Matteo CREEPS around - eyes still locked on his target. Enzo arranges a few TORN and TATTERED BOOKS on a table.

ENZO  
Hello, Matteo.

Matteo looks bewildered - *How did he know?*

ENZO (CONT'D)  
You're a lot clumsier than you think.

Matteo spins around to see that he's knocked a few items onto the floor.

MATTEO  
You messed up, Enzo.

ENZO  
I guess I was desperate. I just missed my craft. And now I'm going to pay for it with my life...

Matteo is caught off guard.

ENZO (CONT'D)  
That is why you are here, no? I'm surprised it's you though. I thought maybe you'd get Francesco to do it.

He did not expect such defiance from the young actor.



ENZO (CONT'D)  
(smiling)  
You don't strike me as a killer.

Matteo starts to breathe more heavily.

ENZO (CONT'D)  
If it'll make things easier...

Enzo pulls down his pants. Matteo shields his eyes.

MATTEO  
What are you doing?

Matteo slowly drops his hands to see that Enzo's LEGS are COVERED in BLACK BOILS.

ENZO  
They started showing up yesterday.  
I thought I could do one more  
performance but I get the feeling  
that's not going to happen.

MATTEO  
Sit down, maybe we can drain them.

ENZO  
(laughs)  
You're starting to believe that you  
really are a doctor. You should  
give acting a try.

MATTEO  
Come with me. I know someone who  
can help.

Matteo is already on the move - stops when he notices that Enzo is rooted to his spot. Enzo smiles - shakes his head.

MATTEO (CONT'D)  
Don't be a fool! It's not too late.

ENZO

His boyish smile is wiped off from his face. He clutches his mid-section that is now drenched in BLOOD. He slumps to the floor and behind him is Antonelli, holding a bloody knife.

Matteo recognizes Antonelli from before.

MATTEO  
You're the doctor from the street.

ANTONELLI

A real doctor. Not some fraud  
prancing around like he is one.

MATTEO

(dejected)

What have you done...

Enzo writhes on the floor as Antonelli inches towards Matteo.  
It dawns on Matteo that he's in danger.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

Look, uh...

Matteo STEALTHILY reaches for his knife.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

What do you want? Gold? For me to  
stop? Tell me.

ANTONELLI

What I want, is to cut out your  
lying, snake-tongue.

MATTEO

I was hoping you wouldn't say  
that...

ANTONELLI

Slashes at Matteo - narrowly misses him. Matteo lunges back  
and draws his own knife, CUTS Antonelli.

Antonelli touches the blood dripping from his forearm -  
smiles.

MATTEO (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Antonelli charges forward, SLASHES LEFT AND RIGHT, knocking  
Matteo of balance and onto his butt. Matteo scampers  
backwards as Antonelli moves in for the kill until...

Enzo WRAPS HIS ARMS around Antonelli's legs - causes him to  
FALL over like a giant redwood and right onto Matteo. His  
knife IMPALES Antonelli.

Silence.

Matteo's face is being SQUISHED up by the now dead Antonelli.

He pushes him off and crawls over to Enzo - checks his stab  
wound.

ENZO  
(weak)  
So you did have it in you after  
all...

Matteo tries to help Enzo get to his feet but Enzo doesn't have the energy to do so.

MATTEO  
I thought you were an actor, not a  
fucking comedian.

He turns back to Enzo - sees the whites of his eyes, the eyes of a deadman. He releases his grip on Enzo, kneels down and does the SIGN OF THE CROSS.

**INT. BUTCHER - THE NEXT DAY**

Matteo is deep in thought. We hear a voice in the background but it's distorted. The voice slowly grows clearer:

PRAVO  
More dead in the streets today.  
When do you think this will end?

He nods - half listening. Pravo notices.

PRAVO (CONT'D)  
Matteo, is everything okay?

Matteo snaps out of his trance-like state.

MATTEO  
Yes. Sorry, I've just been a little  
distracted.

PRAVO  
It's okay.

Pravo reaches for the OLD MEAT.

MATTEO  
Hey Pravo...  
(takes out Gold Florins)  
Here's your money plus a little  
extra. Thank you for understanding.  
I know things have been difficult.

PRAVO  
That's what friends are for.

Matteo stares at the slab of meat - takes out more Florins.

MATTEO

I could go for a fresher cut today.

Pravo takes the gold - nods.

**INT. MATTEO'S HOME - LATER**

Matteo returns. Francesco pulls him in - bolts the door.  
Alessio peers outside the window.

FRANCESCO

Did anyone follow you?

MATTEO

Do you really think I'd let someone  
follow me back here?

ALESSIO

You did let that doctor tail you to  
the theatre...

Matteo turns to Alessio.

MATTEO

Touché.

ALESSIO

I really think that we should lay  
low for now.

MATTEO

I told you, the threat has been  
dealt with. He was just some  
nutcase with a vendetta against us.

ALESSIO

That nutcase almost killed you.  
(to Francesco)  
Say something.

FRANCESCO

I think...we need the money. We  
can't stop now. We just need to be  
more careful.

Alessio is disgusted by their lack of concern.

MATTEO

It's settled then...

**EXT. COURTYARD. CERCHI MANSION - SAME TIME**

SIMEONE CERCHI, 50, exudes a POWERFUL and REGAL aura. He is surrounded by members of his family, with looks of concern on their faces. His youngest daughter, PAULA, early twenties approaches him.

PAULA  
Still no sign of Anto.

Simeone's nods, his worst fears all but confirmed.

SIMEONE  
Stay with your mother. Not a word  
of this.

PAULA  
She's going to find out eventually.

SIMEONE  
Not. A. Word.

Paula submits.

PAULA  
What will you do, Father?

Simeone scans his courtyard. Eyes each member of his family. Stops on Paula.

We sense a semblance of distrust within the ranks.

FADE TO BLACK