

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

The famous skyline is crisp against a heavenly blue sky.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Gaudy fall succumbs to winter. CHILDREN wearing jackets scamper between STATUES. TEENS toss water balloons.

POETS' WALK

Statues of SHAKESPEARE, ROBERT BURNS, SIR WALTER SCOTT, all identified with faded plaques, stand in frozen dignity. A TODDLER waddles up to Shakespeare, looks up. Shakespeare's eyes open. He smiles down.

SHAKESPEARE

"An angel!" Babe, hear my tale--

BURNS

Why do ye persist? There's a
divide t'wixt us no man will ever
cross.

The toddler cocks her head, looking between them as if, almost, she hears them...The statues are hopeful, but she loses interest, runs to her MOTHER. Shakespeare sighs.

SCOTT

Dinna fret, Willie. David's coming
to lead us down from these blasted
pedestals. I feel it in me bones.

BURNS

Ye got no bones, ye nodcock.

Burns raps on Scott's head. Bronze rings hollow.

SCOTT

If ye lose the poetry in yer soul,
Robbie Burns, why exist at all?

The Scotsmen glare at one another.

HONOR FITZHUGH, a frail, lovely young blond woman (20's) wanders up to them. She's an anomaly: dressed in the rich brocade and full sleeves, complete with sweeping headdress, of a Renaissance lady. A baroque pearl decorates her neck.

She stares at them dreamily, carries a big stack of books.

SHAKESPEARE

There remains yet a link t'wixt us
and them--"We are all such stuff
as dreams are made on."

She sets her books down on a park bench: poetry and an art book, "Michelangelo's Greatest Works." On the cover is Michelangelo's David. Eyes closed, she sits and traces the image with her finger, as if she's memorized every line.

Shakespeare and Scott exchange excited looks.

SCOTT

Mayhap she's the one the Pieta
said would bring himself out of
Italy?

BURNS

Poor wee Pieta. A nice Jewish
lady sitting alone in St. Peter's
surrounded by Catholics for five
hundred years...no wonder she's
daft.

The girl cocks her head, staring at them arguing so volubly. As if, almost...But she goes back to day dreaming. Burns slumps in disappointment.

BURNS

Pshaw! "More things in heaven and
earth than are dreamt of" was it,
Willie? Where?

He looks up, gets bird doo in the face. The others chuckle.

SHAKESPEARE

"A hit! A very palpable hit."

A water balloon SPLATS Shakespeare's face. A beat. Burns wipes the doo off. Shakespeare blows water away.

Honor shoos the pigeons and pulls a kerchief from her pocket to wipe their smears away.

BURNS

Thank you kindly.

Honor staggers back. Burns blinks.

BURNS

Do ye ken, lassie?

SCOTT

She's the one! She hears us, stab me if else!

Honor runs off, leaving her books on the bench and three glum poets, alone and unheard again.

BURNS

I told ye this world has no use
for poets. We die with our words.

The three Poets sadly stare into the distance where

IN FRONT OF A STAGE

OTHELLO plays before a sea of bored PARKGOERS. Many ADULTS use Blackberries. KIDS are restless.

Gap brat ALVIN, (13) plays a hand held video game, oblivious to the BEEPS drowning out the beautiful dialogue.

Only MIKE CASTIGLIONE, (16) seems mesmerized. He sketches pictures of the actors in costume.

CLOSE UP ON SKETCH: a style identical to Michelangelo's.

Next to him is RAFE CASTIGLIONE, (40's) a mean mountain of a man, a sour look about his mouth as he stares at

BETWEEN POETS' WALK AND THE STAGE

a table where PERRY BRUNELLI, (40's), Iago on steroids, supervises burly SECURITY GUARDS wearing badges. They set out brochures and trashy souvenir replicas of great art: the Mona Lisa as a psychedelic tee shirt, The Last Supper plastered on protein bars.

A kid smirks as he holds up a flashing button pin of the David. David's genitals blink on and off.

Across the grass, Brunelli and Rafe stare. Grudge way back doesn't begin to cover their antipathy.

Brunelli waves at Mike. Mike waves back, starts to rise, but Rafe jerks him back down.

RAFE

Son, Brunelli was scum back in
Tribeca, and he's still scum in
Park Avenue.

When Mike just stares at him mutely, Rafe scowls.

RAFE

He's angling to get you painting
his fakes just to piss me off.

MIKE

Couldn't be he likes me 'cause I'm
good at something so stupid and
useless as painting, huh?

They lock gazes. Mike gets in line for souvenirs, high fives Brunelli. For a beat, the drunkard disappears into King Henry V's 'terrible aspect,' but then Rafe sags back and swigs from a flask.

Intermission falls on stage. Lute MUSIC drifts across the park, wistful, sweet. Rafe sits up, listening.

ON A BENCH BY PERRY'S TABLE

Honor plays the lute as curious park goers wander over. We see now why she's dressed as she is. As she plays under Perry's possessive gaze, his workers unfurl a banner that reads: "Private showing: Renaissance treasures on loan from the Vatican for the first time in the U.S."

As more bystanders crowd over, Honor sets the lute aside, pulls a tiny statue of David from her pocket and sets it on the table. Perry glares between it and her.

Honor climbs on a park bench and claps her hands, a Renaissance lady in the flesh.

HONOR

Prithee join us, good citizens,
and recall the time when
civilization began. Renaissance
means rebirth--

ALVIN

Who cares any more?

She curtsies.

HONOR

We all owe a debt to what came
before us, bambino. And there
will never be another time like
the one that birthed me...

She indicates David.

HONOR

And him.

Off to the side, the Poets perk up with interest.

HONOR

Tell me, young sir, who was the
heart and soul of Florence?

Alvin puts headphones on and turns up his I Pod. Mike
gives him a 'loser' look.

HONOR

I'd cast a few more pearls, but
the lad's not catching today.

Alvin jerks off his headphones.

ALVIN

I'm not a pig.

MIKE

Michelangelo.

ALVIN

Shut up, Mike! At least my Dad
has a real job.

Mike clenches his fists. Rafe wanders up too late to hear.

HONOR

Peace, young sirs. Join us on Christmas Eve when for the first time ever, we have on loan from the Vatican one of Michelangelo's most famous paintings, The Holy Family. David, alas, will be with us only in spirit, but what a spirit it was.

She stares dreamily at the small statue. The other women in the audience do, too.

In his muscular style, Mike starts sketching the David. Perry eases over to watch.

ALVIN

Yeah, the perfect man.

HONOR

No. Better. Human.

Honor looks at them one by one, passion in her eyes.

HONOR

What if David wasn't just a pretty hunk of stone? What if he was Michelangelo's friend and inspiration, flaws and all?

She has them now. All but Perry, who's heard this before. He grits his teeth.

HONOR

If Michelangelo created the perfect man from imagination, then David's just a superior work of art. But if the greatest artist who ever lived was inspired by a real man--then the statue doesn't embody the man. The man embodies the statue. Michelangelo's inspiration.

Honor shares a cool look with Perry.

HONOR

More importantly, that man is living proof that a boy and a slingshot can change the world because he believed in the power of dreams. How could we not believe in him, too?

Perry cuts her off by moving forward.

PERRY

Yeah, yeah, join us at the grand opening and see real art.

Honor glares, accepts his hand down, speaks just for him.

HONOR

David really existed. And I'm going to prove it. In a week, I'm off to Florence.

POETS' WALK

Scott and Shakespeare do a high five.

SCOTT

Tolt ye it was herself!

BURNS

Whist! They'll never let him out of Italy even if she finds him.

Carrying her books again as the second act of Othello starts in the b.g., Honor wanders up to them. She smiles wistfully as she puts her hand on Shakespeare's heart.

HONOR

Stratford on Avon. The Globe. You were so lucky. I wish...

Sighing, she steps back and starts to turn away.

SHAKESPEARE

Sometimes, wishing makes it so.

Honor freezes, then rushes off. As she goes--

HONOR

Stress. It's stress.

Shakespeare and Scott do jubilant jigs in place on their pedestals and then give Burns a needling look.

BURNS

Ach, leave off tormentin' a mon!

AT THE TABLE OF SOUVENIRS

BURNS (O.S.)

Verra well! The maid we watch.

The forgotten tiny David glows in the afternoon sunlight.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FLORENCE, ITALY - GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA MUSEUM - DAY

And becomes the monolithic statue, all fourteen feet of him. Arms again laden with books, Honor stares dreamily up at the 'original'--or is he?

Closing time. The GUARD'S buzzer beeps. He exits. She's alone with her ideal man. David looks down--winks. Honor sidesteps into BACCHUS, God of Wine, BY MICHELANGELO.

SHAKESPEARE (V.O.)

Show her the way to David. Reveal
yerself, Bacchus.

Bacchus eyes Honor lustily, lifts his chalice to her.

BACCHUS

So I would, were she not a maid.

BURNS (V.O.)

Whist! Ye heathen pagan.

Honor stares up at Bacchus. She HEARS EVERY WORD.

BACCHUS

It's party time, lady mine! Taste
the fruit, or wither on the vine.

The mischievous SATYR behind Bacchus offers his grapes. Dazed, Honor reaches out, but the boy snatches them back.

BACCHUS

Honor, go to Caprese!

A beat. Honor feels her own forehead, takes her own pulse.

Michelangelo, (26) looks at her severely out of his portrait.

MICHELANGELO

"From time to time, pleasure comes
from favoring madness." Woman, go
to Caprese.

Michelangelo goes still again. Honor shakes his picture.
ALARMS JANGLE. GUARDS pour into the room.

HONOR

Michelangelo, wait! Latin,
Sanskrit, pig Latin, help me prove
David was real!

GUARDS haul her, kicking and screaming, to the exit.

EXT. VILLAGE OF CAPRESE - DAY

Wearing boots, Honor exits a squat mansion. Outside the house is a sign: "Caprese: Where Michelangelo Was Born."

INT. RARE BOOK STORE - DAY

Honor skims ancient art books in Italian. Next to her is a thick pad filled with handwriting below the proposed article title: "Michelangelo's David: Man, Myth or Monolith?" It's accredited, "By Dr. Honor Fitzhugh, PhD, Art Historian."

Honor opens an old Italian text to a drawing of a tiny church with a tilted steeple. Behind the church is a graveyard. English subtitle: "Where Michelangelo's parents are buried." Honor flips another page. Freezes. INSERT PICTURE: A woman who looks exactly like Honor in the same outfit she wore in the opening holds a CHUBBY BOY WITH CURLY HAIR. INSERT TITLE: "La Signora e Bambino, c. 1504. In the style of Michelangelo." Honor pays for the book.

EXT. VILLAGE OF CAPRESE - DAY

Honor compares a church steeple to the picture in the book. No, different. She walks on, comparing another.

As she continues into the more remote countryside, her cell phone RINGS. She answers it.

HONOR

Hi, Perry...The hostel's great.

She passes another church, compares it to the drawing. Again, wrong one. Disappointed, she walks on as she talks.

HONOR

No thanks, I have plenty of cash.
I've saved ten years for this
trip....The displays finished yet?

EXT. MAJOR NEW YORK CITY PRIVATE MUSEUM - DAY

Workmen tack up a banner: "Treasures Of the Vatican, Grand Opening Christmas Eve."

INT. MUSEUM - CURATOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Plush, filled with art. Antique weapons on the walls. Perry flips a jeweled dagger hilt to tip as he talks.

PERRY

When you coming home? I miss you,
Honnie.

He listens, scowls, but his voice is soothing and charming.

PERRY

You find anything, I'll use my
clout with the Vatican to help you
get it out on a loan.

(listens)

I could still meet you for a
couple days. Making love on a
Venice patio...no, we wouldn't
need wet suits. Of course I know
Venice is sinking. Dammit Honor,
when will you get over this
obsession with David? Don't you
have any romance in your soul for
a real man?

EXT. VILLAGE OF CAPRESE - HILLS OUTSIDE TOWN - DAY

Honor stops before a crumbling church, the phone propped on her shoulder as she turns the picture this way and that.

HONOR

He is real. To me...Bye.

She pockets the phone, comparing the steeples. Could be. She walks through the gravestones, making notes.

Behind the church is an isolated, huge tree, a thick brush pile below it. As she walks nearer, a bird flies from inside the brush pile. Curious, Honor moves brush aside.

Sunlight glints off something shiny below. She tears more brush aside, climbs down. A SKID, a THUMP.

HONOR (O.S.)

Ow!

A GASP.

INT. ROMAN CISTERN - DAY

Mystic light filters in. Honor sits up, shies away from her own dimly reflected face. She pulls at the brush above her head, allowing enough light to see a gorgeous, gilded, antique stand mirror with a peeling frame.

She leaps back at sight of a white foot, but the foot doesn't move. She pulls more brambles aside.

A six foot two life size replica of the David stares back at her. White, cold stone...or is he?

A long beat as almost her dream seems alive. Honor touches David's heart.

HONOR

Michelangelo, show me who he is.

Her eyes close.

INT. MICHELANGELO'S WORKSHOP - 1501 A.D. VISION - DAY

A rhythmic CHINK! CHINK! RESOUNDS with the music of creation. A workshop is crowded with sculpting tools. Half completed marble statues have a curious lifelike quality. To the side is a cramped bed, toiletries, and the mirror, BRIGHT, SHINY AND NEW.

MICHELANGELO (26), looking the same as the portrait Honor shook, CHINKS at a monolithic piece of marble. Large, perfect feet seem to spring full blown from the pedestal, poised to stride into destiny.

Outside, a dim CROWD ROAR builds along with distant, GALLOPING horses approaching at a perilous pace.

Michelangelo flips through a sketchbook filled with images of a perfect male face and form that can be only the David. Close up on signature: Michelangelo.

Michelangelo resumes sculpting, but the commotion GROWS.

SHOUTS (O.S.)

Dominico! Dominico! Dominico!

Michelangelo turns to the door, stops. He hurries back, guiltily hides the sketchbook and then bolts outside.

EXT. FLORENCE - 1501 A.D. TOWN SQUARE - VISION - DAY

The square, dominated by a huge octagonal church dome, bursts at the seams as RENAISSANCE FLORENTINES CHEER, STOMP, CLAP, watching a curve. The GALLOPING nears.

Michelangelo arrives, glances at the finish, where a gaudy red silk banner shimmers. Michelangelo glances at a woman.

MICHELANGELO

Who leads the Palio?

WOMAN

Dominico, as always!

MICHELANGELO

Jesu, he'll break his stubborn neck.

Worried, Michelangelo watches the curve. Closer the hooves THUNDER, closer. Tightly knit bareback RIDERS LOPE around a corner. A horse slips and falls, spilling its rider.

Two excellent riders vie for the lead: a slim young NOBLEMAN and gorgeous, curly haired DOMINICO, (Dom, 29).

Every muscle straining, Dom snatches the banner first, reins his Arab to a rearing halt. He hoists the banner in victory.

Dom leans down, passionately kisses lovely, tiny MARTA. She lifts up a chubby TODDLER with Dom's curly hair. Proudly, Dom takes the fearless boy on a victory lap.

INT. WORKSHOP - 1501 A.D. - VISION - NIGHT

REVELRY RINGS outside. Michelangelo sculpts by candlelight. Dom enters, a foot forward, scowling. HE IS THE DAVID: face, form, personality. Art embodied...or embodied art?

DOM

Michelito, before I leave, I must know--who did you get to be your perfect marble man?

Michelangelo continues to CHINK at the marble.

DOM

Why cannot you honor me my choice? I'm meant to die with a sword in my gullet, not as a symbol of your notions of perfection.

Slowly, Michelangelo sets the tools aside, turns.

MICHELANGELO

Think of Marta and the boy.

DOM

I will provide better for them as a a condotierre than as your bumbling apprentice.

(with a mock shudder)

Besides, if I linger one minute more, I'll have your stink of piety.

MICHELANGELO

Go, then! Toss me scraps on your way to glory! Cut my throat, leave me bleeding in the gutter, for such is my fate if I fail in this commission.

Michelangelo tosses his tools aside.

DOM

Artist? No, actor. Or actress.

MICHELANGELO

David was not perfect. He collected Philistine foreskins, he

was a roof peeper! I don't want perfection for my symbol of nobility--I want you...Stay.

Dom hands him his chisel.

DOM

This is your best friend now.

Michelangelo merely keeps his head bowed, refusing to take the chisel. Dom picks up his bag.

DOM

Someday, artists will whisper your name. But I wish for you something more precious than riches or fame--an occasional hangover. Many children. And much laughter.

Dom picks up his bag and moves toward the door.

DOM

If you cannot wish me well, at least wish me godspeed.

Still no answer. As Dom sets the chisel on the table, the hidden sketchbook slips and plops open on the floor, revealing his own naked form in many poses.

Dom KICKS the pad into the fire. He shoves Michelangelo against a wall, a vengeful warrior, not a nobleman.

DOM

I may be poor, I may be a bastard, but even I have the right to keep a piece of my soul private. Violate me again at your peril.

He hauls the mirror around before Michelangelo.

DOM

There's the one you really love. Sculpt yourself.

He SLAMS out. Like a man possessed, Michelangelo sketches. A bold, passionate face forms under the loving strokes. One that will, after all, be remembered: Dom. As David.

BACK TO CISTERN, PRESENT DAY - DAY

Shaking with the power of the vision, Honor climbs out. David waits patiently. As if he's waited a very long time. As sunlight fills the cistern, the mirror glows.

INT. GALLERIA DELL' ACCADEMIA MUSEUM - DAY

Behind a glass door, Honor glares at the MAYOR. He shakes his head. She talks in fluent Italian. He shakes his head. Outside the door, white coated historians measure the David 'replica', speaking with laughs and shrugs. SUBTITLES:

MAYOR (O.S.)

I do not have authority to let you
take him back to the U.S.

HONOR

Then I'll find someone who does.

EXT. THE VATICAN - DAY

QUICK CUTS: on Vatican Square, Honor walks into a building.

She walks out, crestfallen. Pulls the cell phone out of her pocket, looks at Perry's name. Shoves it back.

Resolve renewed, she enters a more imposing building. Exits, depressed, but then she marches up to a Swiss Guard.

INT. THE VATICAN - SISTINE CHAPEL - DAY

HIS HOLINESS, wearing a white cap and robes, nods on a gilt chair on a dais. Two red garbed CARDINALS hover over him. One carries an appointment book, glances at his watch.

The David replica's far more at home beneath Michelangelo's heaven than Honor. She looks up at the images above, blinks when they seem to look back. Clears her throat.

HONOR

Please, let me take him home with
me so I can research him properly
and prove David really existed. I
did find him, after all.

The Cardinals scowl at her boldness, but the Pope smiles.

POPE

Why must you prove this, daughter?

HONOR

Do you ever wonder what Michelangelo thought of while he worked?

POPE

Often. How much he wished to beat up my predecessor for not paying him. How sore his neck was....Should he become a pagan instead of self flagellating. What do you think he thought of?

HONOR

When I was little, my mother showed me David's picture. I asked if he used Goliath's head as a ball.

Even the Cardinals laugh.

POPE

And what did your mother reply?

HONOR

That I didn't look deep enough. That I'd asked the wrong question. By the time I became an art historian, I finally understood what she meant.

The Pope leans forward. Honor takes a deep breath.

HONOR

Your Holiness, if Michelangelo invented David, he's just a perfect work of art. But if the greatest artist who ever lived was moved to such passion by someone he knew....then he was real. So he's an example for me to live up to. If I try hard enough, I can be as bold, and brave. Not perfect. Better. Human.

The Pope is pensive. The Cardinal glances at his watch.

HONOR

Besides, it's almost Christmas. I was meant to find him. He doesn't need us...but we need him.

A RUSTLE draws Honor's gaze. Above, EVE shakes the Tree of Knowledge, drops a luscious apple in the Pope's lap.

The Cardinals stare up, open mouthed, but the Pope only swipes the apple on his sleeve, MUNCHES.

POPE

Grazie. You will take good care of him? See him safely home to Italy?

HONOR

Si, Your Holiness. I swear it.

He nods, holds his ring out. She kisses it.

INT. THE VATICAN - ST. PETER'S BASILICA - DAY

A wizened JANITOR sweeps up, chewing on a straw. Workers crate precious paintings, seal them with the Holy See.

More workers very carefully remove The Holy Family, with the plaque accrediting Michelangelo staying in place. The painting has hung there so long the wall is discolored. A worker swipes at the stain, but he only makes it worse.

The shadowed sanctuary is split by a ray of light. It crawls over the floor, up the PIETA'S feet, bathing JESUS'S legs.

When the luminous rays reach the Virgin's face, she lifts her bowed head. A slow smile breaks her sadness.

PIETA

It is begun, old friends, just as I told you.

A tear glimmers as she stares at the bare spot on the wall.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - CENTRAL PARK - POETS' WALK - DAY

Shakespeare, Scott do high fives, SLAP Burns on the shoulder. He almost falls off his pedestal.

PIETA (V.O.)

Do not fail me.

Shakespeare glares at Burns.

SHAKESPEARE

Ye hear that, Doubting Thomas?

"The game's afoot!"

The three poets hunker close, planning. But what?

HOTEL ROOM -- DAY

Tatty to the max day hotel with kitchenette, but even this is a strain for Rafe to afford. Rafe heats a can of soup as Mike walks in wearing his backpack.

RAFE

How was school?

Mike shrugs: whatever.

RAFE

You used to talk to me.

MIKE

You used to be interesting.

When Mike pulls books from his pack, Rafe lets it slide. Mike tosses aside his Algebra book to pick up a sci fi novel.

Rafe shoves a bowl of soup in front of him and tries to take the book but Mike holds it out of reach.

RAFE

You're barely passing Algebra now.

You got no time for that crap.

He grabs it out of Mike's hand, tosses it aside. Mike stares down at the soup. Rafe toys with his.

RAFE

So, you get accepted to intern at that law office?

Mike plays with his spoon, doesn't answer.

RAFE

I just want you to live up to your potential, son, not end up like...

Rafe takes a quick sip of soup.

MIKE

Maybe I'd rather be like you. At least, like you used to be.

They both look at a picture beside Mike's bed: Rafe, wearing dress blues in his Navy uniform.

RAFE

You're too smart for all that patriotic horse shit.

Mike jumps up and opens Rafe's coat, pulls out the flask and dangles it before his father.

MIKE

Here, take it and leave me the hell alone!

He grabs his sci fi novel and storms out. Rafe is left alone with his thoughts and they're not pretty.

EXT. MUSEUM - DAY - SUPER: SIX WEEKS LATER

People line the block buying tickets to the art show.

INT. MUSEUM - CUBBY HOLE OFFICE - DAY

Honor studies notes. A David poster and a Harvard diploma, cum laude, look down over her desk. Rafe enters, wearing janitor coveralls. He makes a half hearted attempt to sweep.

RAFE

What you planning, you dizty blond? CNN, CBS, KUNUTS, alluva 'em in the audience.

Honor takes a deep, steadying breath.

HONOR

Rafe, why do you think I date Perry?

RAFE

You can't have who you want.

She looks at him, startled.

RAFE

David ain't real, babe. He can't keep you warm at night or make you laugh when you get old. Take it from me...get real or get hurt.

HONOR

You sound like Perry. He grew up poor, without a father. He told me once he'd be in jail if not for a mentor who helped him learn the art business. It gave him purpose.

RAFE

Yeah, about two billion of 'em, and he don't care who he steps on along the way. He's the biggest black market art dealer in the US and someday you'll see it--

HONOR

Everyone needs dreams. Even him. Even you.

Rafe tries to move away, but Honor thrusts the picture she brought back from Italy under his nose. He stares down, shocked, at the girl who could be Honor. In 1504.

HONOR

Some things can't be explained. They have to be believed. I'm just the voice. That's why I'm about to risk my career. For kids like Mike. They need him as much as I do. It's Christmas. Wish me luck.

She hugs Rafe, exits.

OUTSIDE HONOR'S OFFICE

Perry walks up, holds out books on the Renaissance.

PERRY

I bought these for your
collection.

He sets them beside her door. Rafe exits, ignores Perry,
looks at Honor.

RAFE

I promised Mike I'd walk through
the sci fi exhibit with him, but
I'll be at the press conference.

He leaves. Honor glances at the books, back at Perry.

HONOR

You personally scouted through all
those dusty stacks, huh?

PERRY

Well...I personally paid the guy
who did.

His eyes twinkle as she laughs at his honesty. He's a
different man with Honor. For now.

PERRY

If you were a normal girl
impressed by jewelry and furs--
--I wouldn't be interested. You
drive me crazy. You know that,
don't you?

HONOR

I have to take David back to Italy
in a few weeks. Maybe you can go
with me.

PERRY

If I were the jealous type, I'd
take a sledge hammer to him just
to prove he's all in your head.

Don't make me wait any more,
Honnie. Venice is a great place
for a honeymoon.

He pulls her into his arms. She allows it but when he
tries to kiss her she turns her head away.

HONOR

I wonder what a lost Michelangelo
is worth on the black market, the
true David original?

PERRY

True passion, a man's passion,
scares you. But I'll fix that.

He tries to embrace her. She sidesteps.

HONOR

I have to do this. I've wanted to
prove he was real since I was a
little girl.

PERRY

Then kiss your career good-bye.

TRAVELING EXHIBIT ROOM - SCIENCE FICTION EXHIBIT

Mike lingers over fantastic original sci fi art posters.
Rafe's bored. Perry hurries up.

PERRY

Mike, you coming by to play chess?

Rafe moves between his son and Perry. Mike scowls, but
Rafe lowers his voice for Perry's ears alone.

RAFE

Mike wouldn't be any good at
numbers running, or forgeries.

PERRY

How many drunk and disorderlies
you have now, Rafe?

RAFE

Let's play. Just like old times. I
won't tell now either if you cry.

Mike sneaks into hearing distance. A volatile mix of emotions in his eyes as he stares at his father: love, hate, admiration.

PERRY

Badass Navy SEAL...you're good with a broom these days.

RAFE

I don't get pissed as easy, either. Nice try, but I'll find out why you're loading and unloading crates in the middle of the night.

PERRY

Can you spell security?

RAFE

I can spell F A K E. If you're just cautious, why are your goons supervising the crates instead of your insurer or the Vatican?

Rafe leans into Perry's face. Smiles slowly.

RAFE

One more little thing...Hurt Honnie or my boy and I'll kill ya. Like I shoulda done years ago. That much, I still remember of my training.

He exits, dragging Mike along, leaves Perry steaming.

INSIDE THE MUSEUM AUDITORIUM

It's packed with REPORTERS, CAMERAMEN. Perry enters.

Perry sits near the back with the MUSEUM CHAIRMAN, doesn't see Rafe ease into a seat behind them. They speak quietly.

PERRY

Give her enough rope.

Close up: In his pocket, Rafe turns on a tiny RECORDER.

CHAIRMAN

If she's been able to document provenance, the stone analysis may not be enough. Especially if anyone follows up with the lab....I may not be able to stop her promotion this time, Perry.

Honor takes the podium. Cameramen roll.

HONOR

Welcome. I'm Honor Fitzhugh, Art Historian for the museum. Near Caprese, I found an abandoned Roman cistern. And this.

As she pulls the curtain, flashes flare.

HONOR

I think this smaller statue is the true original. A prototype Michelangelo made because of the importance of this commission, which brought him thirty new assignments. Look at the face.

She waits while everyone studies the passion and humanity Michelangelo so brilliantly captured.

HONOR

Historians describe this look as *terribilita*. Emblematic, it is said, of Michelangelo and his creations. But if he was only twenty six when he sculpted David, who inspired him? Unless...David was someone he knew.

The reporters are on the edges of their seats now.

HONOR

Also in Caprese, where Michelangelo was born, I found an account of his trip to Carrara to select marble for the Pieta. His apprentice Dominico accompanied him. It seems Dominico quit after he and Michelangelo argued.

MALE REPORTER

How's that prove he was the model?

HONOR

He's described as tall, with curly hair and almond shaped eyes.

She points out David's features with the laser pointer.

Perry gives the Chairman a 'now' look. He rises, approaches the stage, pulling a thick print out.

Honor's eyes are closed. As if she memorized every line of David long ago. Perry scowls at the look on her face.

HONOR

Can't you feel it? Behind the passion. The sadness, the longing? For what, or whom...I guess we'll never know. But we can dream--

The Chairman snatches the mike, waves the report.

CHAIRMAN

Stone tests prove this statue is fake. It's an unknown type of man made material, not marble. Our office will make an official statement later today. The Vatican has given permission to have it destroyed.

A shocked silence, then the Chairman turns the mike off. Reporters exit, BUZZING.

CHAIRMAN

Was it worth ruining your career to foist a fake on this museum, Ms. Fitzhugh?

HONOR

The tests have to be wrong! Give me the number of the lab.

His phone BEEPS. He glances at the message.

CHAIRMAN

The disposal service is here.

HONOR

What will...they do with him?

CHAIRMAN

Pulverize him.

He exits backstage. Devastated, Honor looks at David.

In the now empty aisles, Perry stands, satisfied. Rafe blocks him as he turns to leave.

RAFE

Why?

Together, they watch Honor's goodbye. Honor kneels, wraps her arms around David's ankles, looks up at her ideal man.

PERRY

The great love of her childhood is about to become a pile of plaster. You need a planter, let me know.

Rafe stalks away, snapping off the recorder in his pocket.

RAFE

I'm gonna call the Vatican.

PERRY

Tell the Pope I said hello. If he takes your call.

Rafe exits, but Honor's oblivious.

Perry watches her grief, his expression ugly.

One of Honor's tears lands on a white toe. A streak of warm skin shows, but her eyes are closed.

HONOR

Michelangelo, you're my last chance. Save him....Oh God, why can't he be real?

Her plea ECHOES as the words reverberate past the ceiling....

EXT. NEW YORK SKYLINE - DAY

...Beyond the Empire State Building. To heaven itself.

INT. MUSEUM - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Glittering flakes flutter down on Honor's bowed head.

DAVID'S EYES POP OPEN.

A warm wave of color begins at his hairline, seeping down his neck, his torso, to his legs and feet. A BREEZE swirls the flakes in a magical eddy, faster as he gains color.

Perry is striding to the exit, but something makes him turn. He looks. Hidden in shadows, he freezes.

Honor is dumbfounded as white stone becomes flesh under her touch. Human, "David" smiles rakishly.

DOM

Touch a little higher if you like.
Five hundred years is a long time.

The deep voice speaks flawless English with an Italian accent. Honor looks up. A beautiful, quintessentially male face smiles down at her, a bruise on one cheekbone.

Honor scrambles up, looks at the flakes, back at him.

Dom steps down, stretches as if stiff. He scowls at his nudity, grabs a hat off a rack and holds it to his loins. The attached sunflower is strategically placed.

HONOR

What happened to the statue?

Dom glares at the David poster. Holding the hat as a shield, he sidles to janitor's overalls and ducks behind the curtain. He exits a beat later dressed in the coveralls, the slingshot draped over his shoulder.

Honor cynically eyes his awkwardness with the zipper.

HONOR

No zippers in the Renaissance.
Clever. So you're not just
another pretty boy actor. Who
hired you?

He jerks the zipper up. Honor massages her forehead.

HONOR

Perry maybe, to teach me a lesson?
Or Rafe, so I can share his real
world, too...no, he doesn't have
any money. Who could it be?

DOM

Five hundred years later and women
are still the same. They never,
ever, get to the point.

Behind the props, Perry stares, fascinated, at Honor's
flushed vitality: he's never seen her like this.

HONOR

OK smart ass, you want succinct?
Where was Michelangelo born?

DOM

Caprese. 1474. We grew up
together. He's three years
younger. I was his best friend.

Honor blinks at the ready reply.

DOM

Furthermore, he was a pompous,
pious horse's ass who never minded
his own business! I may sculpt
him, too, so he can have his
privates on display for five
centuries. Of course, I don't
know what they look like.

Dom rips the poster of himself down and TEARS it to bits.

DOM

No one would notice them anyway.
Are there more of these pictures?

HONOR

A few places. Like...everywhere.
You're the most famous statue
ever. Plates, cards, stationary.
You're tattooed on some woman's
butt, too, I'm sure.

His angry scowl softens to an intrigued look. Honor laughs.

HONOR

You did your research, at least.
David was a rogue, a womanizer--

DOM

I am not David. I am Dominico.

He looks around at the bright lights and curiously flicks a wall switch. On, off.

DOM

Fascinating. The prophecy said
I'd awaken in a new millennium--

HONOR

Yep. 2014. New York City, United
States of America. As if you
didn't know.

DOM

A New World. A New Age. Fitting.

He seems so...real. Honor backs again, totally disoriented.

DOM

Careful, signorina!

HONOR'S POV: He grabs, but she tumbles backward off the steps. Her head strikes the floor. She reaches out to David/Dom's beautiful, unforgettable face, whispers...

BACK TO SCENE

HONOR

Sometimes, wishing makes it so.

Dom lifts her effortlessly and strides off stage. Still hiding in the shadows, a cynical Perry uses a cell phone.

PERRY

The statue's been stolen. Look
for a tall guy in coveralls and
his pretty blonde girlfriend.

He leaves too. A quiet stage and then--

SHAKESPEARE (V.O.)

The game's afoot.

Even in the dimness, the white flecks that drifted off Dom glitter with promise.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DUSK

Across from the museum, hidden behind trees, the Renaissance rogue cradles Honor on his lap. A siren WAILS.

HONOR

I'm dreaming again.

Honor touches his face. He kisses her hand.

DOM

What is your name?

HONOR

Honor. Honor.

DOM

Honor....this will not be easy. I am Dominico Paolo Constantine Castiglione. You may call me Dom. But why were you crying? Tell me who hurt you and I will kill him.

HONOR

Wow.

His lips almost brush hers. She stares back. Is he lying? Does it matter? But as he moves in, she turns her head.

HONOR

Did Rafe hire you to get me away from Perry? No one's ever gone to this much trouble before--

DOM

Trouble? It's only beginning. Come. We go. I am hungry.

She pulls a chocolate bar out of her jacket. He sniffs.

HONOR

Chocolate. World's best
restorative. Even for Renaissance
men.

He tastes, stuffs the bar into his mouth, in ecstasy.

HONOR

For an actor, you really know your
history. Cortez brings chocolate
back from the New World--in 1528.

He cranes his neck back to view the skyscrapers.

DOM

How do you build them so tall?

HONOR

Steel. But you know that.

DOM

Is the tower of Pisa still there?

HONOR

Leaning, same as yesterday. How
come you're not surprised at
anything?

DOM

I expected much to change. Some
for the better. Some for the
worse.

A helicopter WHIRS into life from a helipad. He smiles.

DOM

So! Leonardo was right about
that, too. Do warriors use his
tanks?

HONOR

Leonardo...da Vinci?

DOM

Si. Mi amico.

Dazed, Honor allows herself to be dragged to POETS' WALK.

DOM

Are you ready to listen now?

HONOR

I've always wanted to solve life's
mysteries with a statue man in
overalls.

He stops and turns her to face him.

DOM

I must find my last descendant and
save him from my own mistakes.

HONOR

I'll get you a Salvation Army
uniform. And a bell--

DOM

The voice said my descendant
Raphael is vital to your own
world's future.

HONOR

I have a feeling you've been a
very bad boy, so you'll only get
coals in your stocking--

DOM

Do you ever shut up?

HONOR

If I hear something worth
believing.

DOM

If you believe in miracles, I need
one.

HONOR

If you're five hundred years old--
you are one.

Shakespeare and Scott stir. Dom hauls Honor to a stop,
glares at them. But they watch Honor instead.

SHAKESPEARE

"There is method in this madness."
Find Raphael.

SCOTT

"It's no fish you're buying. It's
men's lives." Do ye ken, lass?

HONOR

Leave me out of this!

Burns is disappointed when she covers her ears.

DOM

I have little of my own life left
and you want me to worry about a
man I wouldn't recognize?

SCOTT

Do I call ye Bathsheba? Or David?

Dom takes a furious step. Honor moves between them.

HONOR

Could you be a bit more
descriptive, Sir Walter? Pretend
he's Ivanhoe.

SCOTT

"If thou wouldst view fair Raphael
aright, visit him by pale
moonlight."

SHAKESPEARE

"But for these vile guns, he would
himself have been a soldier."

Dom clenches his fists, but Honor listens carefully.

HONOR

I get it. He's a soldier. He
lives by some moonlight. Now if I
can figure out who "he" is.

Christmas fantasy romance—AND OF COURSE 'HE' IS RAFE WHO
SAVE MANKIND FROM EXTINCTION IN THE NEXT MILLENIUM. KINDA
IMPORTANT STAKES, HUH? WOULD LOVE TO HEAR WHAT PEOPLE
THINK OF THIS.