

Whispers of Italia

written by

Michelle Lynn Taubman

ACT 1, SCENE 1

EXT. ROME, ITALY-NIGHT-1958

FADE IN:

The CAMERA GLIDES toward VATICAN CITY, where the illuminated dome of ST. PETER'S BASILICA rises majestically against the midnight sky. St. Peter's Square has fallen quiet. Stone saints stand watch above the sweeping colonnades.

A small GROUP OF NUNS crosses the square, their footsteps echo against the ancient stone.

A automobile passes in the distance, its headlights briefly flooding across the square before disappearing down a narrow street.

CHURCH BELL CHIMES.

The CAMERA GLIDES away from the landscape of the square, past an iron gate, and along a narrow passageway lined with weathered stone.

An old STREET LAMP flickers.

Beneath its glow A BLACK RAVEN perches quietly. Still watching, tilting its head.

THE RAVEN CAWS.

The loud caws break the silence. The raven spreads its wings and flies into the darkness.

The camera travels up a weathered stone facade of an ancient building, higher until it reaches a single illuminated window.

THE CAMERA MOVES CLOSER.

Behind the glass -A WOMAN'S SILHOUETTE moves quickly. Only fragments of her are visible- long blonde hair, a sweep of an elegant dress, and a glimpse of PEARLS. Then she disappears from view.

ACT 1, SCENE 2

INT. ANCIENT CHURCH- NIGHT

THE CAMERA CLOSES IN ON.

Elegant heels striking ancient marble, moving quickly through the ancient church.

The hem of a polished European dress sweeps across the floor, and her Pearls catch a sparkle of light.

THE CAMERA RISES, REVEALING.

VIVIAN GRACE SINCLAIR (35), a Hollywood leading lady defined by the polished glamour of the 1950s. Blonde waves, red lipstick and her signature pearls. Feminine, and effortlessly magnetic, Vivian has mastered the glamorous image Hollywood expects of her. Beneath the Hollywood face, lives a warmer, wittier and more adventurous woman that few people ever get to see.

Tonight, that perfect image is beginning to unravel. Her blonde waves have loosened. Her breathing is unsteady.

Vivian wears an elegant off-the-shoulder European evening dress, sculpted through the bodice and waist before falling into a graceful mid-calf skirt.

Clutched against her chest is A SCREENPLAY.

She slows down, looks behind her cautiously, and sees nothing. The CAMERA focuses on the title of the screenplay-

THE WOMAN IN PEARLS.

Vivian turns pages until she gets to one with her notes. Her finger traces a line on the page. She raises her eyes.

At the end of the corridor stands an ancient WOODEN DOOR. Vivian looks at the screenplay, then at the door, she realizes it's a perfect match. She approaches, and pushes it open.

ACT 1, SCENE 3

INT. ANCIENT CHURCH- CHAMBER ROOM

Vivian hesitates before completely entering the room. A dim WALL LAMP flickers near the doorway, casting an uneven glow across the room.

Vivian takes in the room as it appears untouched for decades. Old religious artifacts and dust-covered books spread across book shelves. An antique cabinet rests beneath a historic painting. Torn curtains frame a rather large window.

Vivian looks down at her screenplay. She turns the page, studies it for a few seconds and looks around. She searches further into the chamber. She stops and the light catches another shelf far along the wall.

She approaches and the flickering light reveals a collection of antique crosses arranged across its shelf. Wooden crosses, silver crucifixes, and ornately carved crosses. Vivian studies them and looks back at the screenplay. Something doesn't match. Her eyes continue to search until she spots a cluster of crosses covering up a WOODEN BOX. She goes over and reaches behind them and pulls the WOODEN BOX forward. Dust falls off as she studies the box, and realizes it's what she is looking for. Then she opens the box.

Inside the box is an ANTIQUE JEWELLED CROSS unlike any of the others.

Aged gold with intricate details of deep ruby-red stones and other precious gems surrounding the central jewel.

The flickering light catches the stones. A flash of crimson sparkles across Vivian's face as she stares at it. Then she looks down at the screenplay. It's a match again.

VIVIAN

Oh my God...

CREAK

Vivian freezes. Her eyes move toward the open doorway.

FOOTSTEPS. Vivian looks back where the sound is echoing. Another step becomes louder.

Vivian takes the cross from the box and clutches THE SCREENPLAY- THE WOMAN IN PEARLS against her.

The lamp FLICKERS. Vivian moves frantically toward the doorway. She opens the door, peers out, and then slips out.

CUT TO:

ACT 1, SCENE 4

EXT.VATICAN-ALLEYWAY-NIGHT

The heavy wooden door BURSTS OPEN.

Vivian emerges into the night. She finds herself against the stone wall, catching her breath. A narrow cobblestone alleyway stretches before her, enclosed by centuries-old buildings. Dim street lamps cast pools of light beneath balconies and old glass windows.

Vivian gathers her dress and starts down the alley.

Then she stops. At the opposite end of the street stands a MAN. He is immaculately dressed in a dark tailored overcoat and polished shoes.

A large BLACK HAT covers his face. One hand rests upon an ornate walking cane. Vivian stares at him.

The man takes a step toward her. There is something unusual about the way he moves. A striking LIMP. His cane TAPS the cobblestones.

Tap (CANE). A STEP.

Vivian's expression changes. She has no idea who he is, but something tells her not to wait around and find out.

TAP (CANE). TAP.

Vivian turns, and she runs.

Her heels STRIKE rapidly against the cobblestones as she disappears around the corner. Behind her the man follows with his cane. He never runs.

Vivian turns into another narrow passageway. A row of shuttered windows rises above her.

She looks back, and the passage behind her is empty. Vivian slows, and there is silence and the sound of the cane echoes. Vivian turns forward, and a hand suddenly pulls her into the hidden doorway of a dark building.

Vivian GASPS. Before she can cry out, a hand covers her mouth.

She looks up and DOMINIC VALENTI (40s), a handsome Italian-American vineyard owner rooted in family, tradition and the land. Dark-haired, masculine and impeccably polished. His sophistication is understated, shaped by old Italian values rather than Hollywood appearances.

Vivian's eyes widen with recognition. Dominic removes his hand.

VIVIAN

Dominic...

He raises a finger to his lips. Quiet, and they both listen.

TAP (CANE).

The sound of the cane echoes somewhere beyond them.

Dominic pulls Vivian farther into the doorway. They stand close, and Vivian looks toward the alley.

Dominic looks at her and then something catches his attention. The jeweled cross in her hand. His expression shifts to recognition. Vivian catches it. She looks from Dominic to the cross.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
You know what this is?

Dominic doesn't answer.

TAP (CANE).
Closer.

Dominic looks toward the passageway, and then back at Vivian. He takes her hand.

DOMINIC
Follow me.

Dominic leads her from the doorway. Still clutching the jeweled cross, Vivian follows him through a maze of narrow stone passageways. Their footsteps echo into darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROME- CHURCH INTERSECTION- NIGHT

The MAN WITH THE CANE reaches the intersection.

He stops and looks down the empty street, and then in the opposite direction. There is no sign of them. Vivian and Dominic are gone. The man stands beneath the amber glow of a street lamp. His face still remains hidden beneath the wide brim of his black hat.

His hand tightens around the cane. TAP.

Church Bell RINGS. The man adjusts the brim of his black hat.

CUT TO BLACK.

A final bell echoes through the darkness.

Then

WHISPERS OF ITALIA- TITLE SCREEN

The faint sound of Italian music begins to play.

OPENING CREDITS BEGIN TO ROLL.

A large photograph from the previous evening's glittering red-carpet gala.

GEORGE CARRINGTON smiles beneath a storm of flashbulbs.

Beside him stands his elegant WIFE, her arm comfortably linked through his. Vivian stares.

The cheerful love song continues. Suddenly, it doesn't sound quite so cheerful. Her eyes move to the elegant ring on her finger. She touches it and then removes it. Vivian places the ring beside the photograph.

A KNOCK.

She says nothing.

Another KNOCK.

The door opens anyway.

GEORGE CARRINGTON (58) enters, President of Silver Lights Pictures. A tall Silver Fox that wears authority well. A former Hollywood playboy, he's only grown more attractive with age and is accustomed to getting his way.

George closes the door.

In the vanity mirror—

Vivian catches his reflection. George catches hers.

That familiar, devastating smile.

GEORGE
There's my favorite girl.

Vivian doesn't smile.

VIVIAN
Last time I checked I was second at
best.

George removes his sunglasses.

GEORGE
Vivian Grace, you're always my
number one.

VIVIAN
Really? Then why wasn't I with you?

She picks up the newspaper with him and his wife's photos.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Or did your wife suddenly develop
an interest in red carpets?

She turns the photograph toward him. George exhales.

GEORGE
Vivian, do we need to go over this
again?

She rises.

VIVIAN
You have a way with words, George.

GEORGE
I told you last night was
complicated.

VIVIAN
You told me you weren't going.

GEORGE
I wasn't.

Vivian looks at the photograph.

VIVIAN
She looks lovely, by the way.

GEORGE
Don't do this.

VIVIAN
Do what?

A silence for a few seconds.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
I understand, George.

GEORGE
Do you?

VIVIAN
Perfectly.

She holds up the news photograph again.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
You have a wife for red carpets...
and me for dressing rooms.

GEORGE

Vivian...

VIVIAN

Maybe if I were Marilyn Monroe
you'd finally decide I was worth
leaving your wife for.

George looks at her.

GEORGE

Marilyn Monroe doesn't have
anything to do with this.

VIVIAN

You're right.

She glances toward the ring.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

She's a bombshell that would
destroy your world.

Vivian picks it up, takes George's hand, places the ring
firmly into his palm.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

But I am not that bombshell. Here,
Mr. President.

George looks down.

GEORGE

No, you're a star. Don't forget it.

Vivian reaches for it.

VIVIAN

But I'm not the main star in your
life.

George closes his hand around it.

GEORGE

You're one in a million, baby.

The faintest smile escapes Vivian. She catches herself.

VIVIAN

Don't.

GEORGE

Don't what?

VIVIAN
Charm me. That's how I got the ring
in the first place.

George steps closer.

GEORGE
You got the ring because I love
you.

VIVIAN
You love me behind the scenes...
It's the spotlight you seem to have
trouble with.

George's smile disappears.

GEORGE
Last night had nothing to do with
your picture.

VIVIAN
It has everything to do with me.
The papers are whispering that
Vivian Sinclair has lost her
sparkle.

She looks at the paper and then at him.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
And suddenly the president of
Silver Lights doesn't want his
favorite girl anywhere near a
camera.

GEORGE
And that's what you think this is
about?

VIVIAN
I don't know what to think anymore.
I don't know whether you're ashamed
to love me... or afraid I'm not
worthy of leading roles.

George looks at her.

CUT TO:

ACT 1, SCENE 6
MOMENTS LATER-DAY

INT. VIVIAN'S DRESSING ROOM-

The radio plays softly. George stands behind Vivian at the vanity. He places the ring beside her pearls.

GEORGE

Look at me.

Vivian doesn't, and George lifts her chin.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

The Vivian Sinclair I know, could make ten bad pictures and there would still be a line waiting for movie eleven.

Vivian looks at him.

VIVIAN

Like I said, Mr. President you have a way with words. Romanticizing box office flops.

George smiles.

GEORGE

There she is. My star.

Vivian rolls her eyes.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

And for the record, I'm not embarrassed by you.

VIVIAN

You just prefer me without photographers.

GEORGE

I prefer you without most people.

Vivian looks at him. George moves closer and he kisses her softly.

For a moment, Vivian allows herself to melt into him, but then she pulls away.

VIVIAN

You're still married.

GEORGE

I'm aware.

VIVIAN

I'm glad one of us is.

Vivian turns back toward her mirror.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
So why are you here?

George's expression changes.

GEORGE
Because I have something that's
going to cheer you up.

VIVIAN
Diamonds didn't work.

GEORGE
This is more expensive.

Vivian turns, and George crosses to his leather portfolio. He removes a screenplay, and places it on her vanity.

Vivian looks down.

THE WOMAN IN PEARLS - WRITTEN by SEBASTIAN MORELLO

Her eyes linger on the title. Then drift toward the pearls around her own neck.

VIVIAN
The Woman in Pearls... It sounds
like a classic.

GEORGE
That's the idea.

Vivian notices the screenwriter's name.

VIVIAN
Sebastian Morello. Italian?

GEORGE
Very.

Vivian opens the screenplay.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
This is what you need, Vivian.
Seven weeks away from the
headlines, the whispers, all of
Hollywood. You go to Italy and make
a great picture.

Vivian looks up from the pages.

VIVIAN
Seven weeks away from Hollywood...

A little smile. She flips another page.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
I've always wanted to see Italy. I
just never imagined I'd be working
when I finally got there.

GEORGE
I'll make sure you have some fun.

Vivian looks at him.

VIVIAN
You're coming?

GEORGE
Not for the whole picture. I'll fly
over when you shoot the Amalfi
Coast.

Vivian smiles.

VIVIAN
How convenient.

GEORGE
I have excellent timing.

George checks his watch.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Production meeting at two.

Vivian looks at the clock.

VIVIAN
That's twenty minutes.

GEORGE
Then start reading.

He heads toward the door. Vivian looks after him.

VIVIAN
I'm still angry with you.

George turns.

GEORGE
I know.

He smiles and exits. Vivian looks down at the vanity. The ring George returned to her rests beside— THE WOMAN IN PEARLS

She leaves the ring untouched, and picks up the screenplay. She Opens it. THE CAMERA MOVES IN ON THE SCREENPLAY TITLE

THE WOMAN IN PEARLS WRITTEN— SEBASTIAN MORELLO.

MATCH CUT TO:

ACT 1, SCENE 7

INT. SILVER

LIGHTS PICTURES— CONFERENCE ROOM—DAY

The same screenplay rests on a polished conference table.

Around it are photographs of ROME, TUSCANY, and the AMALFI COAST. A man's hand turns the cover.

SEBASTIAN MORELLO (57), an Italian-born screenwriter who works between Rome and Hollywood. Handsome and charming, with a warm Italian manner and dry wit.

Beside him sits ARTHUR "ART" BENNETT (56) a sharply dressed, mixed-race Black cinematographer and Silver Lights veteran. Quietly confident, he has known Vivian for years.

George sits at the head of the table. The door opens. Vivian enters and immediately spots Art.

VIVIAN

Art Bennett. Finally. Someone in this building I trust.

Art rises.

ART

Keep your voice down. I have a reputation to protect.

Vivian embraces him.

VIVIAN

You're coming to Italy?

ART

Somebody has to make you look good.

VIVIAN

And here I thought the angels did all the work.

ART
Angels do Christmas. They don't
perform miracles on close-ups.

SEBASTIAN
In Italy, we have both.

Vivian turns, and Sebastian rises and extends his hand.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Sebastian Morello.

They shake.

VIVIAN
I started your screenplay.

SEBASTIAN
Started?

Vivian points toward George.

VIVIAN
He gave me twenty minutes.

SEBASTIAN
George, the woman needs at least
sixty.

GEORGE
Twenty or sixty. It's a done deal.

George slides the location photographs toward Vivian.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Rome first. Tuscany. Amalfi. Then
back to Rome.

Vivian glances at them. George taps the Amalfi Coast
photograph.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I have a big surprise for you in
Amalfi.

Vivian looks up.

VIVIAN
Well I hope it's better than
yesterday's headline.

GEORGE

Ocean terrace, Red wine, Frank Sinatra...Art will take care of the rest.

ART

As always, Mr. Carrington.

She picks up a photograph of Rome.

VIVIAN

But why Italy? We have everything here at Silver Lights Studios.

SEBASTIAN

The heart of the story is In Italy. You can't recreate that kind of magic.

VIVIAN

The magic is right here in the Hollywood studio.

GEORGE

Vivian, magic or not, Sebastian gets the final say.

VIVIAN

Last time I checked... it's the director's final call.

SEBASTIAN

Miss Sinclair... This may be your last opportunity to set sail in Hollywood. If I were you I'd listen to what the captain orders.

A SECRETARY appears in the doorway.

SECRETARY

Mr. Carrington, they're waiting for you upstairs.

George rises.

GEORGE

Art. Sebastian.

Then to Vivian.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Try to stay out of trouble.

VIVIAN
Where's the fun in that?

George smiles and exits. Vivian gathers her screenplay.

SEBASTIAN
Miss Sinclair. One favor.

She turns.

VIVIAN
Yes, captain Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN
Just don't change my ending.

VIVIAN
Ahoy to that!

SEBASTIAN
All aboard to Italy.

VIVIAN
Here we come... Let's just hope we
don't go overboard.

.

Vivian slips the screenplay beneath her arm.

ACT 2, SCENE 1
HOLLYWOOD HOME- BEDROOM- DAY -1958

INT. VIVIAN'S

A romantic 1950s song plays in the background from a tabletop radio. An open suitcase stretches across Vivian's bed.

The CAMERA GLIDES across the beginnings of seven weeks in Italy with luggage and clothing scattered all over. Silk dresses, floral dresses, satin gloves, high heels, French perfume, and lipsticks. A velvet jewelry case filled with pearls.

Vivian carefully folds a glamorous evening dress. A curl of CIGARETTE SMOKE drifts across the frame. Vivian stops.

PRISCILLA SINCLAIR (39), Vivian's older sister and glamorous opposite, enters carrying folded clothes in one arm and a cigarette in the other. A striking, rebellious painter with dark hair, smoky eyes, and a small tattoo near her wrist.

VIVIAN
Priscilla.

PRISCILLA

What?

Vivian looks at the cigarette.

VIVIAN

I told you not to smoke around my clothes.

Priscilla looks at it.

PRISCILLA

It's barely lit.

VIVIAN

That's usually how cigarettes work.

Amused, Priscilla rolls her eyes, and puts out the cigarette.

PRISCILLA

Seven weeks in Italy and you're worried about smelling like smoke.

VIVIAN

I can't be walking around set smelling like a chimney.

Priscilla picks up another dress. Vivian spots a faint streak of paint on her hand.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Is that paint?

Priscilla examines it.

PRISCILLA

It's dry.

Vivian takes the dress from her.

VIVIAN

You're done helping.

PRISCILLA

I just got here.

Priscilla grabs a pair of heels.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Fine. Shoes.

She holds them up.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
These?

VIVIAN
Rome.

Another pair.

PRISCILLA
These?

VIVIAN
Tuscany.

Priscilla stares at her.

PRISCILLA
You're assigning geography to
shoes?

VIVIAN
Wait until we get to the jewelry.

Priscilla amused begins to roll her eyes.

ACT 2, SCENE 2
HOLLYWOOD HOME -BEDROOM- MOMENTS LATER- DAY

INT. VIVIAN'S

She notices a striking dress laid separately across a chair,
and she picks it up.

PRISCILLA
And this?

Vivian looks over.

VIVIAN
Amalfi.

Priscilla looks at the dress, then at Vivian.

PRISCILLA
George?

VIVIAN
Maybe.

PRISCILLA
Is he coming?

VIVIAN
He's meeting me in Amalfi.

Priscilla nods and carefully folds the dress.

PRISCILLA
Then Amalfi gets the good dress.

VIVIAN
Amalfi gets several good dresses.

PRISCILLA
Of course. Dress to Impress.

Priscilla places the dress into the suitcase.

VIVIAN
Always sis.

PRISCILLA
Seven weeks of your life in Italy?

VIVIAN
It will go by fast.

PRISCILLA
It's a long time.

VIVIAN
It's Italy. It's not Antarctica.

Priscilla pauses.

PRISCILLA
it's just that we always talked
about going to Italy as kids.
Remember?

Vivian smiles at the memory.

VIVIAN
Of course. You were going to paint
Florence.

PRISCILLA
And you were going to become a
movie star in Rome.

VIVIAN
I was twelve, Priscilla. Give me a
break.

PRISCILLA
You were dramatic.

VIVIAN
I was a dreamer.

PRISCILLA
Some things don't change.

They laugh. Priscilla looks around at the dresses, jewelry and overflowing luggage. Her expression softens.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Well... we didn't have much back then. But we had big imaginations.

VIVIAN
We still do.

PRISCILLA
Only now one of us is actually going.

VIVIAN
I'll get you there someday.

PRISCILLA
One day.

She picks up another dress.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Until then I will paint Rome.

Vivian smiles, and the sisters continue packing.

ACT 2, SCENE 3
ESTATE- LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

INT. CARRINGTON

A magnificent Beverly Hills living room. The decor is dressed in old Hollywood glamour.

A cigarette burns in a crystal ashtray beside a half-finished cocktail.

HAZEL CARRINGTON (50), George's striking wife. Beautifully made-up and still glamorous, with a sharp sophistication and undeniable sensuality.

Beneath her silk robe, elegant lingerie suggests she dressed with George in mind. Hazel lounges on the sofa, cocktail in hand.

Across the room, George speaks into the telephone.

GEORGE
No. Keep the Rome schedule.

Hazel takes a slow sip.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Vivian Sinclair leaves Friday. I
want everything ready when she
arrives. Her last picture doesn't
define her.

Hazel listens.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
The Woman in Pearls could put her
right back where she belongs.

George hangs up, and he loosens his tie. Hazel watches him.

HAZEL
Finished running Hollywood?

GEORGE
For the next five minutes.

HAZEL
Good.

She rises and crosses toward him.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
I'd like some time with my husband.

Hazel straightens his tie.

GEORGE
I thought you were supposed to take
it off.

HAZEL
I'm getting there.

Hazel takes his hand and places it at her waist.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
You haven't even noticed?

GEORGE
Noticed what?

Hazel gives him a look.

HAZEL
George.

She opens her robe slightly.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
I got it for you.

George smiles.

GEORGE
I noticed.

HAZEL
You didn't say anything.

GEORGE
I was working.

HAZEL
You're always working...
Especially lately.

GEORGE
Hazel...

HAZEL
You're going to Italy, aren't you?

GEORGE
For part of the production.

HAZEL
Amalfi? I do listen when you talk,
George.

She sets down her glass.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
I'll come with you.

GEORGE
To Amalfi?

HAZEL
Why not?

She moves closer.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
Sunshine. Champagne. My husband...
Unless there's some reason you
don't want your wife there.

GEORGE
I'll be working.

HAZEL
You're always working.

Hazel reaches for the knot of her robe.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
Maybe you've forgotten about other things.

She unties it. The silk robe slips from her shoulders and falls to the floor. Hazel stands before him in elegant lingerie. George's gaze settles on her. She steps closer.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
There you are, babe.

GEORGE
Hazel...

HAZEL
What?

She takes his hand.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
I'm still your wife.

GEORGE
I know.

Hazel kisses him. George hesitates for a split second and then kisses her back. There is still chemistry and history between them. Hazel pulls back.

HAZEL
Come upstairs.

George looks at her, and Hazel extends her hand.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
Then act like my husband.

George takes her hand, and then pulls her into him. Hazel smiles as he kisses her. She wraps her arms around his neck, and George sweeps her into his arms.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
George!

He kisses her again as he carries her toward the bedroom. Hazel's silk robe remains behind on the living room floor.

CUT TO:

ACT 2, SCENE 4
BEDROOM -LATER NIGHT -1958

INT. CARRINGTON ESTATE-

Soft moonlight filters through sheer curtains. George's shirt lies on the floor. Under the white sheets, George and Hazel are wrapped around each other, exchanging slow kisses.

Hazel settles against his chest with a satisfied smile.

HAZEL

Well...

George looks down at her.

GEORGE

Well what?

HAZEL

Apparently you haven't forgotten everything.

GEORGE

Careful.

HAZEL

I'm complimenting you.

She kisses him, and George returns it. Hazel runs her fingers through his silver hair.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

I needed this.

GEORGE

I know.

Hazel studies him.

HAZEL

Maybe there's hope for us.

George brushes a strand of hair from her face.

GEORGE

Maybe there is.

HAZEL

Good. Then I'm coming to Amalfi.

George's expression changes.

GEORGE

Hazel...

HAZEL

What?

GEORGE

I'll be working.

HAZEL

And I'll be vacationing.

She settles comfortably against his chest. Hazel closes her eyes, and George stares at the ceiling.

CUT TO:

ACT 2, SCENE 5
DAY -1958

INT. PASSENGER PLANE-

The plane is flying through the clouds. Vivian gazes out the window. On the seat between her and Sebastian rest THE WOMAN IN PEARLS.

Sebastian unfolds a telegram, and Vivian notices.

VIVIAN

Bad news?

SEBASTIAN

We lost the church.

VIVIAN

The one we're shooting in?

SEBASTIAN

They pulled the permit.

VIVIAN

Then we use another church.

SEBASTIAN

It's not that simple.

VIVIAN

Okay, Capitan.

Sebastian looks at her.

SEBASTIAN

You're learning.

Vivian rolls her eyes.

A SOUND from the Intercom can be heard.

AIRPLANE CAPTAIN (V.O.)
Ladies and gentleman, we are
beginning our descent into Rome.

VIVIAN
See? That's the Captain.

Sebastian looks annoyed but keeps silent. Vivian turns toward the window. The CAMERA follows her gaze out through the window. WHITE CLOUDS consume the frame.

MATCH CUT TO:

ACT 2, SCENE 6
CHURCH- DAY-1958

EXT. ROME- ANCIENT

White clouds drift across the Italian Sky. The CAMERA descends through them as a centuries-old church emerges below. A sleek 1950s black automobile waits at the curb. The door opens. The CAMERA shows polished black shoe hitting the pavement and then the sound of the CANE TAP.

VITO BELLINI (58), heir to a legendary Italian fortune. Impeccably dressed, with a wide black hat, elegant cane and unusual limp.

Vito climbs the church steps.

INT:CHURCH- CONTINUOUS

Candles flicker beneath rows of ancient crosses. A PRIEST waits near the altar. Vito removes his hat.

PRIEST
The film permit has been withdrawn.

VITO
And the Americans?

PRIEST
The production company has been notified.

VITO
Good.

PRIEST
They'll find another church.

VITO
Let them.

Vito moves toward a shelf crowded with crosses and religious artifacts. Vito reaches behind the crosses and retrieves an ornate wooden box- the same one Vivian discovers in the opening sequence. The priest watches uneasily.

PRIEST

Perhaps it shouldn't remain here.

Vito looks down at the box.

VITO

It has remained here longer than
both of us.

He slides it far back behind the crosses, concealing it.

PRIEST

And if someone finds it?

Vito carefully shifts one final cross in front of the box,
and it disappears completely.

VITO

They won't.

Vito turns and walks away. His cane: TAP. TAP.

The CAMERA remains behind, moving toward the shelf as it
zooms in on the crosses, and religious artifacts.

CUT TO:

ACT 2, SCENE 7
DAY-1958

EXT. ROME-

A sleek black car sweeps through the bustling streets of Rome. Vespas weave between automobiles. Ancient buildings rise above crowded cafés and colorful storefronts. Traffic is crowded between the narrow streets.

Inside the car, Vivian smiles as she watches through the window. She lowers her sunglasses.

CUT TO:

INT: HOTEL LOBBY-ROME-DAY

Vivian crosses a magnificent marble lobby.

Behind her, a BELLHOP struggles with an impressive mountain of luggage.

The HOTEL CLERK slides a room key across the desk.

HOTEL CLERK
Benvenuta a Roma, Miss Sinclair.

Vivian takes the key.

CUT TO:

INT: VIVIAN'S HOTEL SUITE- MOMENTS LATER

The door opens, and Vivian enters an elegant suite overlooking Rome. The bellhop follows with her luggage.

Vivian takes in the view, and then notices something waiting on a table- A beautiful arrangement of WHITE ROSES.

Beside them, a long velvet jewelry box. Vivian moves toward the box and opens it. A delicate strand of beautiful PEARLS. A card rests beneath them. She picks up the card.

VIVIAN
(reads the card)
Thinking of you.

Vivian touches the pearls. She crosses to the mirror and holds the strand against her neck. For a moment, she studies her reflection, and smiles. George is still very much with her.

CUT TO:

ACT 2, SCENE 8
NIGHT

INT. ROMAN RESTAURANT-

A lively neighborhood restaurant. Italian music fills the air, wine glasses clicking and conversation ignites the room. Vivian sits around a crowded table with Sebastian, Arthur and several members of the film crew.

The pearls now rest around her neck. A WAITER places an enormous bowl of pasta in front of Vivian. She stares at it.

VIVIAN
Is this really the special?

SEBASTIAN
You asked for Italian.

Vivian looks at the mountain of pasta.

VIVIAN
I didn't ask for all of Italy.

Arthur laughs. Vivian attempts to twirl the pasta around her fork, and it promptly slips back onto the plate.

ARTHUR
Need a camera trick?

VIVIAN
I need a smaller fork.

Sebastian takes a sip of wine.

SEBASTIAN
Seven weeks. You'll learn.

Vivian tries again, and then takes a bite.

VIVIAN
Who knows... Maybe Italy will bring
out the best in me.

Arthur raises his glass.

ARTHUR
To Italy!

The others raise theirs.

ALL
To Italy.

Vivian joins the toast.

CUT TO:

ACT 2, SCENE 9
-ROME - MORNING

EXT. HOTEL TERRACE

Morning sunlight washes across the terrace. Vivian, Sebastian and Arthur sit before a traditional Italian breakfast. Pastries, fresh fruit, eggs, bread, jam, Nutella, and hot cappuccinos. A WAITER adds yet another plate.

Vivian stares at the growing spread.

VIVIAN
Jesus. If they keep feeding me like
this...I will have to buy a new
wardrobe.

ARTHUR
I'll shoot you from the shoulders
up.

Vivian smiles.

VIVIAN
That's why I like you, Arthur.

She takes a bite of pastry anyway.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
This country is dangerous.

Arthur glances over the terrace, and below CREWMEN load camera equipment into production trucks. His expression changes.

ARTHUR
They're loading my cameras.

VIVIAN
Didn't we just get here?

Sebastian sets down his cappuccino.

SEBASTIAN
Change of plans. We're moving up
the vineyard scenes.

VIVIAN
Because of the church?

Sebastian nods.

ARTHUR
Tuscany?

SEBASTIAN
Tuscany, indeed it is.

Arthur looks toward the morning sky.

ARTHUR
Better light anyways.

Vivian takes another sip of her cappuccino.

VIVIAN
So we're trading mortal sins for
wine grapes?

Sebastian raises his cup slightly.

SEBASTIAN
Benvenuta in Italia.

ACT 2, SCENE 10
COUNTRYSIDE - DAY-1958

EXT: ITALIAN

A caravan of production cars winds through the Tuscan countryside. Vibrant Green rolling hills, lush cypress trees and an endless rows of grapevines beneath the Italian sun.

INT: PRODUCTION CAR- CONTINUOUS

Vivian sits beside the window. She looks more prepared for a red-carpet premiere than a vineyard. She is dressed in an elegant fitted dress, heels and the strand of pearls George gifted her.

Sebastian flips through THE WOMAN IN PEARLS beside her.

VIVIAN
Now this looks like Italy.

Sebastian glances outside.

SEBASTIAN
Wait until you taste it.

In the distance, a magnificent stone estate surrounded by acres of vineyards. Vivian leans toward the car window.

CUT TO:

ACT 2, SCENE 11
VINEYARD - DAY

EXT: VALENTI

The production cars roll through the gates. Crewmen unload cameras, lights and wardrobe trunks. Arthur surveys the property, already studying the light.

Vivian steps down from the car. She is dressed in glamour from head to toe- off shoulder satin dress, luminous pearls, and elegant heels. She looks overdressed against the rows of vines.

Across the vineyard A handsome man works among the vines. Vivian approaches.

VIVIAN
Excuse me.

The man continues working.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
I'm looking for a Mr.Valenti.

DOMINIC VALENTI (42), straightens and turns. Ruggedly handsome, grounded and quietly confident.

DOMINIC
You found him.

Vivian looks him over.

VIVIAN
You're Dominic Valenti?

DOMINIC
Last time I checked.

Vivian removes her sunglasses.

VIVIAN
Vivian Sinclair.

Dominic looks at the dress, the pearls, and the heels.

DOMINIC
I know who you are. You look like
you're headed to a red carpet
premiere.

Vivian glances down at herself.

VIVIAN
I was told I was going to work.

Dominic looks at her heels.

DOMINIC
In that outfit?

Vivian looks at his dusty boots.

VIVIAN
Apparently, we have different
uniforms.

A trace of a smile from Dominic.

DOMINIC
Apparently.

Vivian looks across the vineyard.

VIVIAN
So you're letting an entire film
company take over your property?

DOMINIC
Letting is a generous word.

VIVIAN
You don't like movies?

Dominic glances toward the cameras being unloaded.

DOMINIC
I like grapes. Movies, I'm still
deciding... Maybe you can convince
me?

Vivian smiles.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)
Vivian!

She turns.

VIVIAN
Movie takes are about to start.

Vivian starts back towards the crew. Her heel catches in the uneven ground. She picks up her foot to regain balance. Dominic notices, and Vivian catches him trying not to smile. She smiles and then walks away.

CUT TO:

ACT 3, SCENE 1
FILM SET- DAY- 1958

EXT. VALENTI VINEYARD-

The vineyard has transformed into a 1950's movie set. Cameras, lights, and movie props flood the location. Crewman moving between rows of vines.

THE DIRECTOR (50s), a seasoned movie director that commands the set with authority .

Arthur stands behind the camera, framing Vivian between the vines. Vivian is transformed into her character from THE WOMAN IN PEARLS. She is in an elegant dress, heels, and pearls around her neck.

CLAP! A clapperboard snaps shut.

THE WOMAN IN PEARLS (FILM)-ACT 3, SCENE 2- TAKE ONE.

DIRECTOR

And... action!

Vivian moves between the vines carrying an aged piece of paper. She unfolds it and across the top reads LA LEGGENDA DELLA PERLA

VIVIAN- CHARACTER

The pearls do not bring fortune.

She turns the aged paper.

VIVIAN- CHARACTER (CONT'D)

They lead you to it.

Vivian hesitates because something about the words catches her.

DIRECTOR

Cut!

The set comes alive around her.

Sebastian approaches, screenplay in hand.

SEBASTIAN

You lost the line.

VIVIAN

No. I found something.

She points to the aged paper.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

La Leggenda della Perla. Did you make this up?

SEBASTIAN

No. The legend is real.

VIVIAN

I thought it was part of your story.

SEBASTIAN

It is. I borrowed from the folklore and built the story around it.

Vivian reads again.

VIVIAN
 "The pearls don't bring fortune.
 They lead you to it."

She looks up.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
 What fortune?

SEBASTIAN
 According to the legend, something
 IS hidden beneath a cross.

VIVIAN
 Something?

SEBASTIAN
 That's where legend becomes
 mystery.

Vivian reaches for the screenplay in his hands.

VIVIAN
 "Beneath the cross..."

Nearby Dominic carries a wooden crate between the vines. He stops and listens.

VIVIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 What exactly did you write me into?

Dominic looks toward them, and Vivian doesn't notice him.

CUT TO:

ACT 3, SCENE 2
 HOME- NIGHT

INT. VALENTI FAMILY

An old Tuscan home glowing in the Tuscan night. Stone walls, traditional heirlooms, family photographs, and religious artwork.

Dominic sits across from his grandfather, LORENZO VALENTI (80S), an old-world Italian patriarch whose gentle manner conceals a lifetime of family secrets.

They speak quietly in Italian.

DOMINIC
 Lo sceneggiatore conosce la
 leggenda.
 (The screenwriter knows
 the legend.)

Lorenzo looks up.

LORENZO

Quanto?
(How much?)

DOMINIC

Le perle.
(The pearls)

LORENZO

E la croce... Dove l'ha imparato?
(And the cross. Where did
he learn that?)

DOMINIC

Dice che e il folkore.
(He says it's folklore.)

Lorenzo shakes his head.

LORENZO

Il folklore e cio che la gente
chiama verita dopo che e trascorso
abbastanza tempo.
(Folklore is what people
call the truth after
enough time has passed.)

DOMINIC

Pensi che ci sia da preoccuparsi?
(Do you think there's
reason to worry?)

LORENZO

Se stanno solo girando un film, no.
Se iniziano a seguire la
leggenda...
(If they're only making a
movie, no. If they start
following the legend...)

KNOCK. KNOCK. Silence. Dominic and Lorenzo exchange a look.
Dominic opens the door.

ACT 3, SCENE 3
VILLA

EXT: DOMINIC

Vivian stands outside.

VIVIAN
Please tell me losing electricity
is part of the authentic vineyard
experience.

Dominic almost smiles.

DOMINIC
Your villa?

VIVIAN
Completely dark.

She looks past him at the illuminated house.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Yet somehow Italy still likes you.

Dominic grabs a flashlight. Vivian smiles politely at
Lorenzo.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Sorry to interrupt.

Lorenzo notices the pearls around her neck.

DOMINIC
Come on.

CUT TO:

ACT 3, SCENE 4
- NIGHT

INT. VIVIAN'S VILLA

The door CREAKS open. Darkness. Dominic enters first with the
flashlight, and Vivian follows into her rented Tuscan villa.

VIVIAN
I liked this place better when I
could see it.

Dominic moves toward the electrical panel.

DOMINIC
Old house. Old wiring.

Vivian looks around the house.

VIVIAN
I hope I'm not sleeping in a
haunted house.

THUD. A noise somewhere deep in the house, startles Vivian.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Please tell me that was the wiring.

Dominic shines his flashlight in the hallway.

DOMINIC
Wiring doesn't walk.

VIVIAN
That's reassuring.

He returns to the electrical panel. Vivian lights a candle, and moves farther into the room. The flames throw long shadows across the room. Vivian then stops.

Above her bed — A WOODEN CROSS. Vivian stares at it.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
That's strange.

DOMINIC
What?

VIVIAN
I've been here all day. I never noticed that.

Dominic looks at the cross.

DOMINIC
Crosses are typical in a traditional Tuscan Villa. Just like Hollywood... you may find a framed movie title.

VIVIAN
That's right.

Vivian's eyes drift to the bedside table. On it- THE WOMAN IN PEARLS and next to it is an old leather-bound bible. Vivian looks from the screenplay and then to the Bible, and then the cross.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
It doesn't mean Italy may be playing with magic.

Suddenly BANG!

The shutters SLAM against the window. Vivian GASPS and instinctively jumps toward Dominic.

He catches her. For a moment She's in his arms. Their faces close.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Sorry. I think all this magic is
getting to me.

DOMINIC
Don't apologize. I don't mind.

Vivian realizes he's still holding her.

VIVIAN
I noticed.

Dominic smiles, and pulls away. Vivian smooths her dress.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
What was that?

Dominic moves toward the window. He opens the shutters, and nothing. The vines outside are perfectly still. Vivian looks over his shoulder.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Still don't believe in magic?

Dominic stares into the darkness.

DOMINIC
It's supernatural.

Behind them the candle beside the screenplay suddenly GOES OUT.

They turn.

CUT TO:

ACT 3, SCENE 5
MOMENTS LATER

INT. VIVIAN'S VILLA-

Another candle extinguishes, and then another.

BANG!

Darkness closes around them. Vivian moves closer to Dominic. His eyes go immediately to the wooden cross.

DOMINIC
Don't touch it.

Vivian looks at him.

VIVIAN
Touch what?

Dominic realizes his mistake.

DOMINIC
The cross.

VIVIAN
Why would I touch the cross?

He doesn't answer. Vivian studies him.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
You know something about this
legend.

DOMINIC
I grew up hearing stories.

VIVIAN
What kind of stories?

Dominic looks toward her screenplay.

DOMINIC
The kind people stopped telling.

Vivian picks it up.

VIVIAN
Sebastian says the pearls lead to a
fortune beneath a cross.

DOMINIC
Fortune isn't always a gift.

Vivian stares at him.

VIVIAN
That's not in the screenplay.

Dominic realizes he's revealed too much. CLICK! Every lamp in the villa suddenly FLARES ON. They both turn toward the electrical panel. Dominic hasn't touched it. Vivian looks at him.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
You didn't do that.

DOMINIC
No.

For the first time, Dominic looks genuinely unsettled. A faint rustling. Vivian turns. The pages of THE WOMAN IN PEARLS begin turning by themselves.

One after another, and another, and they stop. Vivian approaches. The screenplay has opened to LA LEGGENDA DELLA PERLA.

Vivian looks at Dominic. Neither speaks. Then, faintly in the distance the sound of CHURCH BELLS RINGING.

Vivian looks toward the window.

VIVIAN
There's a church nearby?

Dominic doesn't answer immediately.

DOMINIC
Not that nearby.

Vivian looks back at the open screenplay. The wooden cross hangs silently above her.

CUT TO BLACK.

ACT 3, SCENE 6
FILM SET- DAY

EXT. VALENTI VINEYARD-

MONTAGE- DAYS OF FILMING

CLAP!

Vivian, dressed in an elegant period gown and pearls, moves through the vines as Arthur's camera tracks her.

DIRECTOR
Cut!

Arthur lowers the camera.

ARTHUR
Beautiful.

Sebastian looks up from his screenplay.

SEBASTIAN
Beautiful isn't mysterious.

Arthur gives him a look.

ARTHUR
I'm the cameraman. Mystery is your department.

Sebastian almost smiles, and the Director does another take. Vivian studies the aged parchment.

VIVIAN- CHARACTER
Every pearl leaves another clue.

DIRECTOR
Cut!

Vivian turns toward Sebastian.

VIVIAN
You're really making me work for
this fortune.

SEBASTIAN
So is the audience.

Arthur smiles behind the camera. Dominic works several rows
away, tending the vines. He glances toward Vivian.

VIVIAN
Still deciding about movies?

DOMINIC
I'm still a wine guy. I might grab
a popcorn. I still have to be
convinced.

He returns to the vines. Vivian smiles as the crew prepares
for another take.

Arthur follows Vivian with the camera, and Suddenly the
CAMERA JAMS.

ARTHUR
Hold it.

The Director signals cut. Arthur checks the buttons and lens
as Sebastian approaches.

SEBASTIAN
It's blurry.

ARTHUR
That's weird. It became out of
focus and stopped. Not my doing.

Arthur adjusts it, and the camera rolls again. He looks at
Sebastian.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
That's never happened before.

Sebastian glances toward Vivian. She stands alone between the
vines. Later the crew resets. Arthur and Sebastian watch
Vivian rehearsing.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
She's getting wrapped up in that legend.

SEBASTIAN
That's what a good actress does.

Arthur keeps watching her.

ARTHUR
I'm not talking about the character.

The cameramen begin to change the lighting. The crew moves.

SUNSET comes into the frame.

DIRECTOR
That's a wrap!

The crew applauds and begins packing equipment. Sebastian closes his screenplay. Arthur secures his camera.

ARTHUR
Dinner?

SEBASTIAN
Wine first.

ARTHUR
Now you're thinking like a true Italian.

They head off together, and Vivian gathers her things. Dominic approaches.

DOMINIC
Any plans tonight?

VIVIAN
A glass of wine and a script read.

DOMINIC
My grandparents are having dinner. You can have some wine and great conversation. Come join me.

VIVIAN
Is this where you convince me vineyard life is better than Hollywood life?

DOMINIC
Maybe.

He takes in her glamorous costume.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
But leave the movie star at home.

Vivian raises an eyebrow.

VIVIAN
Excuse me?

DOMINIC
Nothing fancy. Just Vivian.

VIVIAN
And what exactly does Vivian wear?

DOMINIC
Surprise me.

Vivian watches him go.

CUT TO:

ACT 3, SCENE 7
HOME- DINING ROOM- NIGHT

INT. VALENTI FAMILY

A warm Tuscan dining room. Candles glow over a long wooden table overflowing with pasta, vegetables, bread and wine. Vivian enters in a soft floral dress, her hair loose, makeup softer.

Around her neck is the delicate PEARLS George sent to her. Dominic looks up.

DOMINIC
There she is. You look beautiful.

MARIA VALENTI (70S), warm, outspoken and incapable of believing anyone has eaten enough, emerges from the kitchen carrying another enormous dish.

She takes one look at Vivian.

MARIA
Too thin.

VIVIAN
That's a nice welcome.

Maria kisses Vivian on both cheeks.

MARIA
Sit. Eat.

VIVIAN

I haven't even taken my coat off.

MARIA

You can eat with a coat.

Dominic laughs. At the head of the table sits LORENZO VALENTI (80s), reserved and deeply traditional. Where Maria fills a room with warmth, Lorenzo quietly observes it.

His eyes settle on Vivian's pearls. Maria begins filling Vivian's plate, and keeps filling it.

VIVIAN

Maria. I have to fit into a dress tomorrow.

MARIA

Then they make a bigger dress.

Dominic laughs.

VIVIAN

I like your grandmother.

DOMINIC

Everyone does until the third plate.

Maria points the serving spoon at him.

MARIA

You were raised on my third plate.

DOMINIC

That's why I'm afraid of it.

Even Lorenzo hides the faintest smile behind his wine glass. Vivian looks around at the family photographs. One catches her attention, a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN in her 20s in the vineyards.

VIVIAN

Is that your mother?

DOMINIC

Yes.

VIVIAN

She was beautiful.

DOMINIC

She died giving birth to me.

Vivian softens.

VIVIAN
I'm sorry.

DOMINIC
I never knew anything different.

Maria reaches across and touches his hand.

MARIA
He came home with us and never
left.

DOMINIC
I tried once.

Maria shakes her head.

MARIA
He was seven.

DOMINIC
I made it almost to the road.

MARIA
Without shoes.

VIVIAN
And your father?

A slight change at the table. Dominic takes a sip of wine.

DOMINIC
Never met him.

VIVIAN
You don't know who he was?

DOMINIC
No.

Lorenzo lowers his eyes. Maria immediately reaches for the
pasta.

VIVIAN
Nobody knew?

MARIA
More pasta?

Dominic looks at her.

DOMINIC
Nonna, she still has pasta.

MARIA
Not enough.

She adds another spoonful.

DOMINIC
These two raised me. I had
everything I needed.

Maria pats his cheek.

MARIA
Almost everything. He still needs a
wife.

DOMINIC
Nonna.

Vivian nearly chokes on her wine.

MARIA
What? I said nothing.

DOMINIC
You said exactly something.

VIVIAN
I think I'm staying for dessert.

MARIA
Now she understands Italy.

CUT TO:

ACT 3, SCENE 8
DINING ROOM- LATER

INT. VALENTI FAMILY HOME-

Dessert plates, and a nearly empty bottle of wine. Vivian
touches the pearls around her neck.

VIVIAN
Speaking of Italy... There are so
many stories and legends.

DOMINIC
Vivian.

VIVIAN
Your grandson scared me half to
death last night.

Maria looks at Dominic.

MARIA
What did you do?

DOMINIC
Nothing.

VIVIAN
He told me fortune isn't always a gift.

Maria's expression changes, and Lorenzo sets down his glass.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Then the lights came on by themselves, my screenplay started turning its own pages and church bells started ringing.

MARIA
Lorenzo...

Vivian catches it.

VIVIAN
See? There it is again.

DOMINIC
What?

VIVIAN
Every time I mention this legend, everyone suddenly forgets how to talk.

LORENZO
Because the story you are filming is not the whole story.

VIVIAN
What's missing?

Lorenzo's eyes settle on the pearl necklace George gave Vivian.

LORENZO
The family who possessed the cross.

Maria's demeanor becomes uncomfortable.

MARIA

She came here for dinner.

LORENZO

She came here wearing the story
around her neck.

Vivian instinctively touches her pearls.

VIVIAN

These?

Lorenzo nods.

LORENZO

Pearls have been part of the legend
for generations.

VIVIAN

What happened to the family?

Lorenzo considers how much to reveal.

LORENZO

They became very fortunate.

VIVIAN

Sounds like a jackpot.

Lorenzo holds her gaze.

LORENZO

With fortune comes a heavy price.

VIVIAN

What price?

Lorenzo doesn't answer. Maria grabs the wine bottle and fills
Vivian's glass.

MARIA

More wine.

Vivian looks at her.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Some stories are better after
dessert.

Vivian looks down.

VIVIAN

I already had dessert.

Maria reaches for another plate.

MARIA

Then you need another dessert.

Dominic laughs.

DOMINIC

Don't fight it.

Vivian raises her wine glass.

VIVIAN

Fine. If I can't fit into my wardrobe, I'm blaming all of you.

Maria clinks her glass against Vivian's. Lorenzo doesn't smile. Whatever he knows he isn't telling her.

CUT TO:

ACT 3, SCENE 9
NIGHT

EXT. VALENTI VINEYARD-

Moonlight spreads across the vines. Vivian and Dominic walk toward her villa. Vivian carries her heels in one hand, barefoot along the path.

VIVIAN

Your grandmother nearly killed me tonight.

DOMINIC

With pasta?

VIVIAN

Pasta. Bread. Dessert. Wine. More dessert.

DOMINIC

She liked you.

VIVIAN

I liked her.

DOMINIC

They both liked you. That doesn't happen very often with women I bring home.

Vivian raises an eyebrow.

VIVIAN
How many women are we talking
about?

DOMINIC
Not enough to answer that question.

They continue through the vines.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
Tomorrow you head off?

VIVIAN
Amalfi. Then back to Rome.

DOMINIC
If you still have questions about
the legend... ask me.

VIVIAN
I thought you didn't want me asking
questions.

DOMINIC
I didn't.

VIVIAN
And now?

DOMINIC
Now I'd rather you ask me than go
searching for answers alone.

They walk a few more steps.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
Besides, Tuscany isn't the only
place you'll find me.

VIVIAN
No?

DOMINIC
We distribute our wine throughout
America. New York, Chicago,
California.

He looks at her.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
I'm in Hollywood more than you'd
think.

VIVIAN
A vineyard man in Hollywood.

DOMINIC
It's the off-season. I travel.

VIVIAN
And here I thought you didn't like movies.

DOMINIC
I'm still deciding.

They reach Vivian's villa. Dominic stops, and the teasing stops.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
I'd like to see you again.
After you leave here.

VIVIAN
I'd like that.

Dominic holds her gaze.

DOMINIC
Good.

He starts to step away, but stops. He turns back and catches Vivian by the waist and pulls her toward him. He kisses her.

Vivian is caught completely off guard. Then she kisses him back. The kiss deepens, and they separate.

Vivian looks at him, slightly breathless.

VIVIAN
I wasn't expecting that.

DOMINIC
Neither was I.

VIVIAN
You're a very convincing Italian.

Dominic smiles, and starts backing away.

DOMINIC
E stata una serata meravigliosa,
amore mio.
(It's been a wonderful
evening, my love)

Vivian smiles, watching him disappear down the moonlit path. The CAMERA shows the vineyard lights shimmering smaller and smaller until they become tiny light spots.

MATCH CUT TO:

ACT 3, SCENE 10
- MORNING

EXT. TUSCAN COUNTRYSIDE

The Production trucks and car drive away from the vineyards. Morning sunlight sparkles across the window.

INT: PRODUCTION CAR- CONTINUOUS

Vivian sits beside the window, staring out. Sebastian sits beside her, screenplay open across his lap. Arthur sits up front. A small smile appears on Vivian's face. Arthur catches her expression.

ARTHUR
You look happy.

VIVIAN
It must be all the Italian food.

SEBASTIAN
Or the Italian man.

VIVIAN
Don't you have a movie to make?

SEBASTIAN
I do with the star of the movie.

Vivian shakes her head and looks back out the window.

Then the CHURCH BELLS RING in the landscape. Another distant sound of the BELLS RINGING.

VIVIAN
There it is again.

Sebastian looks up from the Screenplay.

SEBASTIAN
What?

VIVIAN
The bells.

The sound of the bells continue to grow louder.

RING!

MATCH CUT TO:

ACT 3, SCENE 11
DAY- ROME-1958

INT. ANCIENT CHURCH-

RING!

The same bell THUNDERS through the ancient church.

Rows of wooden pews, religious statues, and crosses cover the aged stone walls.

At the rear of the church is The collection of crosses concealing the wooden box. Vito moves slowly down the center aisle, his wide-brimmed hat shadowing his face.

ENZO ROMANO (40s), Vito's trusted associate, a discreet man with ears throughout the surrounding villages, follows several feet behind.

Their footsteps echo through the church.

ENZO
Word travels quickly around here.
The film company left the vineyard
this morning.

Vito continues walking.

VITO
And Vivian Sinclair?

ENZO
She's been asking questions.

VITO
What kind of questions?

ENZO
About the legend.

Vito stops, and then turns.

VITO
Who told her?

ENZO
Sebastian knows part of it. She's
been spending time with the
Valentis.

VITO
Lorenzo.

Enzo nods. They continue toward the rear of the church.

ENZO
Should we stop her?

Vito looks toward the crosses.

VITO
No. She knows a story. Let her
believe that's all it is.

His eyes settle on the hidden wooden box. Enzo's eye catch an enormous, timeworn ORNATE MIRROR against the stone wall.

Vito's reflection appears beneath the shadow of his hat.

Enzo stares. Something doesn't appear right. In the mirror Vito's face begins to change and his skin drains ghostly pale. His cheeks are hollow and dark veins creep beneath his skin. His eyes turn BLACK.

Two sharpened FANGS emerge. Enzo stumbles backward.

Vito turns.

VITO (CONT'D)
What?

Enzo can't answer and his eyes remain fixed on the mirror.

VITO (CONT'D)
What are you looking at?

Enzo points.

ENZO
Your face. It changed.

Vito slowly turns toward the mirror. His reflection is normal.

VITO
There's nothing there.

ENZO
I saw it.

Vito steps closer, and studies his reflection.

CRACK! A violent streak of WHITE LIGHT tears across the mirror like lightning.

CRACK! Another flash.

Vito's reflection transforms into Ghostly skin, hollow cheeks, blackened eyes, dark veins, and fangs.

A DEMONIC VAMPIRE VERSION OF VITO stares back at him. Vito freezes with fear.

VITO
Dio mio.
(My god.)

Another streak of supernatural light flashes through the glass.

For a fraction of a second the vampire looks ancient.

KNOCK.

Vito and Enzo turn. There is silence.

KNOCK AGAIN

The sound comes somewhere behind the collection of crosses. Enzo takes a step back.

ENZO
What was that?

Vito stares toward the crosses, and doesn't answer. He looks back toward the mirror. His reflection is human again.

Then Enzo sees something else.

ENZO (CONT'D)
Vito...

Vito follows his stare. In the MIRROR'S REFLECTION, several rows behind them, A DARK FIGURE stands motionless between the pews.

Vito spins around to look at the actual pews, but NOTHING IS THERE.

He immediately looks back into the mirror. The dark figure has vanished. Enzo has had enough.

ENZO (CONT'D)
I'm leaving.

He backs away, then hurries toward the church doors. The heavy doors open, then SLAM shut behind him. Vito remains alone, and his breathing is heavy.

He looks at the mirror, and his normal reflection looks back.

Then a faint sound from the rear of the church. Almost a whisper.

WHISPER (O.S.)

Vivian...

Vito turns, and his eyes settle on the COLLECTION OF CROSSES. Behind them, only a small portion of the WOODEN BOX can be seen. Vito stares toward the wooden box in a trance.

SMASH TO BLACK.

ACT 4, SCENE 1
GEORGE'S OFFICE- DAY

INT. SILVER LIGHTS PICTURES-

California sunlight stretches across George Carrington's office. George sits behind his desk reading an old book. On his desk lies open- a faded illustration of a beautiful Italian woman wearing a strand of pearls. Across the page:

THE LEGEND OF PERLA

Beside it are translated notes, Sebastian's screenplay for THE WOMAN IN PEARLS, and production photographs recently sent from Italy.

George looks at the words- THE PEARLS MAY BRING FORTUNE TO THE WOMAN....

He flips through Sebastian's screenplay. On the corner of his desk rests the travel itinerary. Beside it, an early promotional mock-up for THE WOMAN IN PEARLS.

The movie poster features VIVIAN GRACE SINCLAIR. George studies her photograph.

His SECRETARY enters carrying a folder.

SECRETARY

Your flight leaves at six.

George closes the book.

GEORGE

And Mrs. Carrington?

The secretary hesitates.

SECRETARY

She cancelled her ticket this morning.

George looks up.

GEORGE
Cancelled?

HAZEL (O.S.)
I did.

George turns. Hazel stands in the doorway, dressed elegantly and composed.

CUT TO:

ACT 4, SCENE 2
- GEORGE'S OFFICE -CONTINUOUS

INT. SILVER LIGHTS PICTURES

GEORGE
Give us a minute.

The Secretary exits. Hazel enters, and her eyes move across George's desk. She notices everything including the book, the screenplay, and Vivian's promotional poster.

HAZEL
Researching Italian legends now?

GEORGE
I'm producing one.

Hazel picks up the poster photograph of Vivian. The pearls in the picture catch the sunlight. A strange GLIMMER passes across them.

Hazel's expression changes.

For a second the pearls seem to TIGHTEN around Vivian's throat. Vivian's photographed eyes SHIFT toward Hazel. Hazel drops the photograph suddenly.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Hazel?

She stares down at it.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What happened?

HAZEL
I thought.... Never mind.

Hazel notices the open suitcase on the leather sofa, and then the travel itinerary.

GEORGE

What happened to Amalfi?

HAZEL

Don't play dumb with me, George.

GEORGE

Is that the way I get treated after everything I've provided for you. The lifestyle...

HAZEL

You mean the lifestyle you're also giving Vivian?

GEORGE

Come on, baby. Vivian is business.

HAZEL

Business.

GEORGE

Yes.

HAZEL

Then maybe you should start treating her like it.

GEORGE

Come on, Hazel.

HAZEL

You want me to believe she's business and I'm the marriage contract.

GEORGE

That's not what I said.

HAZEL

You didn't have to.

GEORGE

Come with me.

Hazel looks at him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Amalfi. Just like we planned.

HAZEL

And Vivian?

GEORGE
She's making a picture.

HAZEL
For you.

GEORGE
For the studio.

HAZEL
You convinced yourself there's a
difference.

George reaches for her.

GEORGE
Baby...

Hazel gently stops his hand.

HAZEL
Go.

GEORGE
Go where?

Hazel glances toward his suitcase.

HAZEL
Italy.

George wasn't expecting that.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
Go see your movie. Go see Vivian.
Go find whatever it is you're truly
seeking.

GEORGE
And what exactly is that?

HAZEL
Whether you're going there for the
picture...or for her.

GEORGE
And what are you going to do?

Hazel picks up her handbag.

HAZEL
For once, George, whatever I want.
You should try being that honest
with yourself.

The PHONE RINGS. Neither moves. It rings again, and George answers.

GEORGE
George Carrington.

He listens, and his expression changes.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What happened?

George listens.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
No. Keep shooting.

Hazel watches him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'll be there tomorrow.

George hangs up. Hazel gives him the slightest knowing smile.

HAZEL
There's your answer.

She heads toward the door.

GEORGE
Hazel...

She stops.

HAZEL
Just don't come home and tell me it
was business.

Hazel exits. George remains alone. His eyes fall to Vivian's poster photograph. He picks it up. Vivian almost stares back at him, pearls around her neck.

MATCH CUT TO:

ACT 4, SCENE 3
TERRACE- DAY

EXT. AMALFI COAST-

Vivian's REAL PEARLS shimmer beneath the Italian sun.

WIDEN- Vivian stands on a terrace overlooking the brilliant blue Mediterranean.

Lemon trees spill over ancient stone walls. Fishing boats glide across the sparkling water below. Sebastian approaches carrying several freshly revised screenplay pages.

SEBASTIAN
Your next scene.

Vivian takes the pages and reads.

VIVIAN
A boat?

SEBASTIAN
Tomorrow morning.

Vivian looks toward the sea, and then down at her dress.

VIVIAN
Sebastian, what exactly am I wearing on this boat?

SEBASTIAN
I wrote the scene. I didn't dress you.

VIVIAN
Well, somebody better tell wardrobe. If I'm getting anywhere near that water, I need to know if we're thinking bikini, or floral dresses.

SEBASTIAN
The scene will be a splash with a bikini.

VIVIAN
Art needs to know about the sea splash. Salty waves and close-ups don't always show my best sides.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
I heard that.

Vivian turns, and Arthur approaches, carrying his light meter.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I can light your face. Your hair is between you and the weather.

VIVIAN
Then somebody better make it calm skies and no chance of humidity.

Sebastian shakes his head.

SEBASTIAN
Enough small talk. Can we discuss
the scene now?

VIVIAN
Okay, Captain... The floor is
yours.

She looks back at the pages, and her playful expression
slowly fades.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
"Before the the moon is full again,
the pearls must be returned to the
sea."

She looks at Sebastian.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Returned to whom?

Sebastian glances toward the Mediterranean.

SEBASTIAN
That's the part of the legend we're
filming tomorrow.

VIVIAN
On the boat?

SEBASTIAN
Sì, signorina.

A BOAT HORN sounds from below. Vivian looks toward the sea.
Her fingers touch her pearls.

CUT TO:

ACT 4, SCENE 4
COAST- MARINA- DAY

EXT. AMALFI

The Mediterranean sparkles beneath the Italian sun. A
production boat waits at the dock as CREW load cameras and
equipment.

Vivian stands nearby in a glamorous one-piece, sunglasses and
pearls. Arthur checks his camera.

Vivian touches her hair.

VIVIAN
How's the hair?

ARTHUR
Ten out ten.

VIVIAN
Good rating.

DOMINIC (O.S.)
Sorry I'm late.

Vivian turns. Dominic approaches along the dock. Her smile grows bigger.

VIVIAN
You made it.

DOMINIC
Italian word of honor.

Sebastian looks from Vivian to Dominic.

SEBASTIAN
I wasn't aware we were adding a
love story to my script.

VIVIAN
Don't you have pages to worry
about?

SEBASTIAN
Apparently not enough.

DIRECTOR
All aboard.

Dominic offers Vivian his hand. She takes it and steps aboard. Sebastian watches them.

SEBASTIAN
Definitely not in my screenplay.

CUT TO:

ACT 4, SCENE 5
SEA- PRODUCTION BOAT- DAY

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN

The boat sits anchored offshore. The magnificent Amalfi Coast rises behind them. Arthur positions the camera. Vivian stands at the bow, wearing a strand of costume pearls for the scene.

DIRECTOR
And... Action!

Vivian looks toward the endless blue sea. Slowly, she removes the pearls. She holds them above the water.

VIVIAN- CHARACTER
Before the moon is full again, what
was given must be returned to...

DIRECTOR
Cut!

Vivian draws the pearls safely back from the water. Sebastian hands her the next page. She glances down at the next page.

VIVIAN
The pearls were never returned.
She looks at Sebastian.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Then what happened?

SEBASTIAN
The sea demanded a sacrifice.

VIVIAN
What kind?
Dominic answers.

DOMINIC
The woman wearing them.
Vivian turns to him.

VIVIAN
You know what happens?

DOMINIC
My family knows a version.

Vivian looks back at the page and reads.

VIVIAN
Medusa came from the sea to collect
what was owed.
She looks up.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Medusa?

THUD. Something strikes beneath the boat, and everyone freezes.

Another THUD. This one harder. Arthur lowers his camera. Vivian peeks over the side.

A DARK SHADOW moves beneath the water, following A PALE WOMAN'S FACE. Dark strands twist around her head. Vivian GASPS and loses her balance as Dominic catches her.

DOMINIC

Vivian.

She points toward the water.

VIVIAN

There was a woman.

Dominic looks, and there is nothing. Vivian looks at the pearls clutched in her hand.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Maybe these belong back in wardrobe.

CUT TO:

ACT 4, SCENE 6
COAST- MARINA- LATE AFTERNOON

EXT. AMALFI

The production boat is back at the dock as the crew unloads equipment. Both Vivian and Dominic step back on land.

VIVIAN

You knew that story.

DOMINIC

Part of it.

Vivian turns to Dominic.

VIVIAN

You keep forgetting to mention part of these stories.

DOMINIC

Vivian, I didn't think they were real.

They are walking away from the crew. Vivian glances back toward the sea.

VIVIAN
I'm beginning to reconsider that...
What did your family tell you?

Dominic hesitates.

DOMINIC
That Sebastian's version isn't the
whole story.

VIVIAN
What's missing?

DOMINIC
The woman in Pearls had a name.
Perla.

VIVIAN
Perla.

DOMINIC
My grandfather used to tell me her
story when I was a boy.

VIVIAN
Why would your grandfather know it?

Dominic looks at her.

DOMINIC
Because the legend has been in my
family for generations.

VIVIAN
And you're just telling me this
now?

DOMINIC
You didn't ask.

Vivian gives him a look.

VIVIAN
I'm starting to understand why
you're single.

DOMINIC
You've been wondering?

VIVIAN
Don't flatter yourself.

She starts walking a little faster, and then Dominic catches
up.

DOMINIC

Vivian.

She turns, and he takes her hand. This time, she lets him. They continue along the waterfront together. She looks happy.

ACT 4, SCENE 7

EXT. AMALFI COAST-

WATERFRONT- EARLY EVENING.

The Amalfi sunset floods the waterfront as Vivian and Dominic stroll the waterfront, hand in hand.

DOMINIC

Feeling better?

VIVIAN

Ask me again when I'm somewhere an old legend can't reach me.

DOMINIC

That could be difficult when Italy is the land of legends.

VIVIAN

Then I guess you'll have to protect me.

Dominic stops their stroll.

DOMINIC

I could do that.

VIVIAN

You're so confident.

DOMINIC

You called. I will deliver.

VIVIAN

Is that so?

Dominic pulls her gently toward him. He kisses her, and Vivian kisses him back.

A BLACK CAR pulls up near the hotel. George steps out and looks toward the waterfront and then stops. He sees Vivian and Dominic kissing. They separate, and Dominic takes her hand. They continue to walk toward the hotel. Neither sees George.

A BELLMAN approaches and reaches for George's luggage.

BELLMAN
Mr. Carrington. We've been
expecting you.

George keeps his eyes on Vivian.

GEORGE
Thank you.

The bellman takes his luggage. George watches Vivian and
Dominic disappear inside.

CUT TO:

ACT 4, SCENE 8
PRODUCTION ROOM-NIGHT

INT. AMALFI HOTEL-

Camera equipment, film canisters and production materials
fill the room. Art sits at a table reviewing stills from the
day's shoot.

Vivian enters.

VIVIAN
The hardest-working man I know. Do
you ever sleep?

ART
No time for sleep. I am trying to
make the best picture for my
career.

VIVIAN
Well, Italy's certainly helping.
The lighting, the breeze, the
limoncello...

Art looks up, amused.

ART
Have you been drinking that
limoncello?

VIVIAN
Not yet. But I'm in the mood for
one.

Art laughs.

Vivian notices Sebastian's research on the table. An OLD
PHOTOGRAPH catches her eye, and she picks it up. A beautiful
young Italian woman stands outside a centuries-old church.
Pearls around her neck.

Clutched in her hand— A JEWELLED CROSS. Vivian studies the photograph. She turns it over—

PERLA BELLINI-ROME-1928

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Perla.

Art looks over. Vivian turns the photograph toward him.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Dominic told me about her. So she
wasn't just part of the legend?

Art joins her. Vivian examines the jeweled cross, and then the church behind Perla.

ART

Apparently not.

Vivian turns the photograph over again.

VIVIAN

Rome. 1928... And there's the
cross.

ART

The one from the screenplay?

Vivian nods. She looks at Sebastian's research spread across the table.

VIVIAN

Why does Sebastian have a
photograph of her?

Neither has an answer.

A CREW MEMBER appears in the doorway.

CREW MEMBER

Art, they need you downstairs.

ART

Coming.

Art starts toward the door. He looks back at Vivian.

ART (CONT'D)

Don't stay up all night playing
detective.

VIVIAN
I'm an actress. We prefer
pretending.

Art smiles and exits. Vivian looks back at the photograph.
The lights FLICKER. Vivian looks up.

Silence. Then RING. A distant church bell. Another RING.

Vivian turns.

WHISPER (O.S.)
Vivian...

She freezes. Across the room, an old standing mirror catches
her reflection.

Vivian looks into it. For a split second-

PERLA BELLINI (25), a hauntingly beautiful Italian ghost with
long, blondish hair cascading down, ethereal skin. Her ivory
1920s wedding gown is stained with blood, her sorrowful eyes
holding the secrets of a bride murdered on her wedding day.

STANDS BEHIND HER. Pearls around her neck. The jeweled cross
clutched in her hand.

Vivian spins around, and finds nothing. She turns back to the
mirror, only her reflection. Vivian looks down at the
photograph.

MATCH CUT the DARK DOORWAY of the CHURCH behind Perla in the
PHOTOGRAPH.

MATCH CUT TO:

ACT 5, SCENE 1
VIVIAN'S ROOM- NIGHT

INT. AMALFI HOTEL-

VIVIAN'S HOTEL-ROOM DOOR OPENING.

Vivian enters, carrying the photograph. She closes the door.
A SOUND from the darkness.

Vivian freezes.

VIVIAN
Hello?

A lamp CLICKS ON. George sits in a chair.

Vivian GASPS.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
George! You scared me half to death.

George rises.

GEORGE
Not exactly the welcome I was expecting.

Vivian stares at him and then remembers.

VIVIAN
Oh, my God. Amalfi.

GEORGE
You forgot.

VIVIAN
I didn't forget. I just didn't know you were coming tonight.

GEORGE
I told you I'd meet you here.

VIVIAN
You said during Amalfi. You never said which day.

GEORGE
Should I leave?

Vivian hesitates.

VIVIAN
George, I...

GEORGE
It's all right. I'll get another room.

He reaches for his jacket and heads toward the door. Vivian watches. George stops.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Although I did bring you a few things. He gestures toward a table.

A box of her favorite chocolates, her favorite perfume and an elegantly wrapped jewelry box.

Vivian smiles.

VIVIAN
You remembered.

GEORGE
I remember everything about you.
I've been thinking about you every
day.

VIVIAN
George...

GEORGE
Come here, baby.

He opens the jewelry box. Inside is a fancy DIAMOND HEART
BRACELET.

VIVIAN
It's beautiful.

GEORGE
Not nearly as beautiful as you are.

He fastens it around her wrist. His fingers linger against
her skin.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I missed you.

VIVIAN
I missed you too.

George touches her cheek. Vivian leans into his hand.

He draws her into his arms. They embrace each other. George
kisses her and Vivian kisses him back. George slowly draws
away. His eyes remain on hers.

GEORGE
Does he kiss you like that?

Vivian is surprised.

CUT TO:

ACT 5, SCENE 2
VIVIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

INT. AMALFI HOTEL-

Vivian backs away.

VIVIAN
You saw us.

GEORGE
I saw enough.

VIVIAN
Then you know I like him.

GEORGE
How much?

VIVIAN
I don't know yet.

GEORGE
What does he give you that I don't?

VIVIAN
He isn't embarrassed to be with me.

GEORGE
I've never been embarrassed by you.

VIVIAN
You love me when the cameras stop
rolling. He doesn't care who's
watching.

GEORGE
You know it's complicated.

VIVIAN
You're married, George. It's not
that complicated.

George steps closer.

GEORGE
Do you still love me?

Vivian meets his eyes.

VIVIAN
You know I do.

George touches her cheek.

GEORGE
Then don't ask me to leave tonight.

VIVIAN
I didn't.

Vivian takes his face in her hands and kisses him. George
draws her against him and they kiss more passionately. He
wraps his arms around her waist, lifting her slightly.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

George...

GEORGE

What, baby?

VIVIAN

I've missed this.

He kisses her again, more passionately. Vivian slips his jacket from his shoulders. It falls to the floor. George brushes her hair aside, kissing her neck. She closes her eyes, holding him closer. Her fingers loosen his tie. George draws back.

GEORGE

You have no idea how beautiful you are.

Vivian smiles and pulls him into another kiss. They move toward the bed. George slips off her heels. They begin to get undress and make out. There is a brief moment that George brushes a strand of hair from her face.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I love you.

VIVIAN

I love you too.

He kisses her tenderly. Vivian wraps her arms around him, pulling him closer. They kiss deeper. Then George reaches for the bedside lamp. CLICK. Moonlight spills through the balcony doors. Their silhouettes embrace each other in the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT 5, SCENE 3
VIVIAN'S ROOM- MORNING

INT. AMALFI HOTEL-

Warm morning sunlight fills the room. George stands near the bed, buttoning his shirt. Vivian lies beneath the sheets, watching him.

The DIAMOND HEART BRACELET circles her wrist. George catches her looking.

GEORGE

What?

VIVIAN

Maybe I'm just enjoying the view.

George grins. He sits beside her. Vivian straightens his collar. George takes her hand and kisses it.

GEORGE
Breakfast?

VIVIAN
I have to see what Sebastian has
planned for torturing me first.

GEORGE
Lunch, then.

VIVIAN
Maybe.

GEORGE
I'll take maybe.

George leans down and kisses her. Vivian kisses him back. He reluctantly rises.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'll see you later, my love.

VIVIAN
See you later.

George opens the door.

CUT TO:

ACT 5, SCENE 4
CORRIDOR- CONTINUOUS

INT. AMALFI HOTEL-

Dominic approaches Vivian's room with two coffees and a small paper bag in his hands. He reaches her door and it opens.

George steps out, and Dominic stops. George recognizes him but doesn't speak. George quietly closes Vivian's door. Dominic glances at the door, then at George.

George walks past Dominic, and Dominic remains frozen with the two coffees still in his hands. He looks once more at Vivian's closed door, and turns around, walking away.

CUT TO:

ACT 5, SCENE 5
HOTEL- PRODUCTION ROOM- MORNING

INT. AMALFI

Sebastian studies script pages at a cluttered table. Vivian enters, carrying Perla's photograph.

SEBASTIAN
There's our leading lady.

VIVIAN
And there's the screenwriter of the
year.

She places the photograph before him.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Tell me about her.

Sebastian studies it.

SEBASTIAN
Perla Bellini. Rome, 1928.

VIVIAN
I knew that. Why do you have her
photograph?

SEBASTIAN
Because the woman in my screenplay
was real.

VIVIAN
And the murder?

SEBASTIAN
That too.

Vivian looks at him.

VIVIAN
You failed to mention that before I
signed the contract.

SEBASTIAN
She was murdered on her wedding
day. In the very church where we're
hoping to film the final sequence.

VIVIAN
Who killed her?

SEBASTIAN
That's what I've been trying to
discover.

He points to the jeweled cross in Perla's hand.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
I believe that cross is part of the
answer.

VIVIAN
And you think it's still in the
church?

SEBASTIAN
If it hasn't been disturbed in
thirty years.

VIVIAN
Well, this is becoming quite a
production.

SEBASTIAN
Be careful, Vivian.

CUT TO:

ACT 5, SCENE 6
TERRACE- MORNING

EXT. AMALFI HOTEL-

George finishes an espresso overlooking the Mediterranean.
Dominic crosses the terrace toward the waterfront.

GEORGE
Mr. Valenti.

Dominic stops.

DOMINIC
Mr. Carrington.

GEORGE
A word?

Dominic approaches.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Vivian means a great deal to me.

DOMINIC
Then let her decide what that
means.

GEORGE
We've known each other a long time.

DOMINIC
I imagine you've shared quite a
history in the movie business.

GEORGE
More than you know.

A few seconds of silence.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
She's a remarkable woman.

DOMINIC
On that, we agree.

Dominic walks away, and George watches him go.

CUT TO:

ACT 5, SCENE 7
WATERFRONT- AFTERNOON

EXT. AMALFI COAST-

Fishing boats drift along the harbor. Dominic stands near the
water. Vivian approaches.

VIVIAN
There you are. I couldn't find you
anywhere. Thought maybe you left
for the wine country.

DOMINIC
Then what would you do? Vivian
Sinclair.

VIVIAN
Something's not right. I'm an
actress, Dominic. I can tell when
someone's putting on a performance.

DOMINIC
I came by your room this morning.

VIVIAN
You saw George.

Dominic nods.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Sorry. We have a history.

DOMINIC
I know.

Vivian takes Perla's photograph from her handbag.

VIVIAN
There's something I need to show
you.

Dominic examines it.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Sebastian says Perla was murdered
on her wedding day. In Rome.

DOMINIC
My grandfather knew about the
wedding.

VIVIAN
Did he know who killed her?

DOMINIC
He never said.

Vivian points to the jeweled cross.

VIVIAN
What about this?

Dominic looks closer.

DOMINIC
I've seen it in my grandfather's
papers. He said it must never leave
the church.

VIVIAN
We're filming there tomorrow. The
church permit came through.

DOMINIC
Then I'm coming with you.

VIVIAN
Are you sure?

DOMINIC
I'm sure.

CUT TO:

ACT 5, SCENE 8
CHURCH-LATE AFTERNOON

EXT. ROME- ANCIENT

A SILVER LIGHTS PICTURES production truck arrives in the cobblestone square. Crew members unload cameras and lighting equipment.

INT. ANCIENT CHURCH- CONTINUOUS

Art adjusts his camera near the altar. Sebastian reviews the script. Vivian enters in an exquisite 1920s wedding gown, her lace veil framing her face. Costume pearls adorn her neck.

Art looks up.

ART
Now that's a picture.

VIVIAN
I'd hope so. You're the mastermind
behind the camera.

George approaches, admiring her.

GEORGE
You look extraordinary, my love.

VIVIAN
Thank you, George.

He gently straightens her veil.

GEORGE
Ready?

VIVIAN
As ready as a bride can be with a
very haunting future.

Sebastian joins them.

SEBASTIAN
Let's hope that's only in the
screenplay.

VIVIAN
With your imagination, I wouldn't
count on it.

Across the church Dominic watches Vivian and George together. Art moves behind the camera.

ART
Places, everyone!

Vivian takes her position at the altar. George steps aside, watching her.

ART (CONT'D)
Camera rolling.

CREW MEMBER
Rolling.

DIRECTOR
Action!

CUT TO:

ACT 5, SCENE 9
CONTINUOUS

INT. ANCIENT CHURCH -

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS:

Vivian stands at the altar, her bridal veil cascading over her shoulders. She turns toward the empty pews.

A faint WOMAN'S VOICE whispers through the church.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Le perle appartengono al mare...
(The pearls belong to the
sea...)

Vivian glances toward the pews. The candles flicker. Suddenly, the church appears as it did in 1928.

SHADOWY WEDDING GUESTS fill the pews.

At the altar stands PERLA BELLINI, wearing a bloodstained bridal gown and clutching the JEWELLED CROSS. Perla slowly turns toward Vivian.

PERLA (IN ITALIAN)
Attenta.
(Beware.)

Vivian looks down.

BLOOD spreads across the white silk of her wedding gown. She gasps, stumbling backward.

ART
Cut!

The church returns to normal. The blood has vanished. George rushes toward her.

GEORGE

Vivian!

He calms her.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What happened?

VIVIAN

I saw her. The woman in the photograph.

George looks toward the altar.

GEORGE

There's no one there.

VIVIAN

I know what I saw.

George studies her trembling hands.

GEORGE

I've seen you play frightened a hundred times. That wasn't acting.

Vivian looks past him. A collection of OLD WOODEN CROSSES hangs along the church wall. For an instant, Perla stands beneath them. Then disappears.

VIVIAN

I need some air.

George guides her toward the exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROME - CHURCH SQUARE - DUSK

A black car waits across the square. VITO BELLINI watches the church entrance. Enzo sits behind the wheel.

ENZO

Should we go inside?

Vito tightens his grip on his ornate cane.

VITO

Not yet.

CLOSE ON: THE CANE.

FADE OUT.

ACT 6, SCENE 1
NIGHT

INT. ROME RESTAURANT-

The cast and crew of *The Woman in Pearls* celebrate their final night of filming. Candlelight flickers across a long table with wine glasses and half-finished plates.

Waiters arrive carrying a DARK CHOCOLATE TIRAMISU CAKE topped with strawberries and limoncello shots.

ART

Now that's how you finish a picture.

VIVIAN

Chocolate, strawberries, and limoncello shots. Italy certainly knows how to make a girl happy.

SEBASTIAN

I thought winning an Academy Award did that.

VIVIAN

Why choose when I can have both?

Laughter spreads across the table. George rises, lifting his glass.

GEORGE

To an extraordinary cast, a remarkable crew, and our leading lady, Vivian Sinclair. You've given us a performance audiences won't soon forget.

VIVIAN

Let's hope they remember it for all the right reasons.

ALL

Salute!

Glasses clink. Vivian looks toward the restaurant window. Across the street, beneath a streetlamp, stands PERLA in her white wedding gown. A car passes, and Perla vanishes. Dominic notices Vivian's expression.

DOMINIC
What is it?

VIVIAN
I just saw her again.

DOMINIC
Perla?

Vivian nods. George notices their exchange.

GEORGE
Everything all right, Vivian?

She forces a smile.

VIVIAN
Of course. I think the limoncello
is starting to kick in.

Vivian looks back toward the empty street.

CUT TO:

ACT 6, SCENE 2
ENTRANCE -NIGHT

EXT. ROME RESTAURANT

The celebration breaks up. George approaches Vivian as the others exchange goodbyes.

GEORGE
You've hardly said a word since
dessert.

VIVIAN
I've finally run out of them.

GEORGE
I'm worried about you, my love.

VIVIAN
I'll be all right.

GEORGE
What happened in that church wasn't
like you.

VIVIAN
Because I wasn't acting.

He studies her.

GEORGE

Then promise me you'll get some rest.

VIVIAN

I'll try.

George kisses her cheek and rejoins Art and Sebastian. Dominic approaches.

DOMINIC

You think Perla wants you to return to the church?

VIVIAN

She kept appearing beside those old crosses.

DOMINIC

Vivian, don't go there.

VIVIAN

Good night, Dominic.

She heads toward her waiting car, and Dominic watches her leave.

CUT TO:

ACT 6, SCENE 3
SIDE CHAMBER- NIGHT

INT. ANCIENT CHURCH-

CLOSE ON: THE JEWELLED CROSS. Aged gold and deep ruby-red stones.

Vivian stands beside a wooden cabinet, clutching the screenplay for *The Woman in Pearls*.

She has found the small wooden box concealed behind the collection of antique crosses.

VIVIAN

Oh my God...

A FLOORBOARD CREAKS. Footsteps echo beyond the doorway. Vivian grabs the cross and her screenplay.

She hurries out.

CUT TO:

ACT 6, SCENE 4
ALLEYWAY- NIGHT

EXT. VATICAN AREA-

Vivian rushes from the church into a deserted cobblestone street.

Behind her- TAP. TAP. TAP.

THE MAN WITH THE CANE emerges from the shadows, his black hat concealing his face. Vivian quickens her pace, and he follows. She turns a corner and runs. Suddenly, a hand pulls her into a hidden doorway.

Vivian GASPS. It's Dominic, and he covers her mouth.

The cane taps closer, and then moves away. Dominic releases her.

DOMINIC
Follow me.

He takes her hand, leading her through a narrow outdoor passageway.

EXT. ROME - STREET INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

The Man with the Cane reaches the intersection. He looks both ways, and no sign of them. His cane strikes the stones. TAP.

CUT TO:

ACT 6, SCENE 5
PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

EXT: ROME- NARROW

Dominic and Vivian stop beneath a stone archway.

DOMINIC
Are you okay?

VIVIAN
I'll live. These shoes won't.

He smiles and is relieved. Vivian opens her hand, revealing the jeweled cross.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Look what I found. Just where
Sebastian's screenplay said it
would be.

DOMINIC
My grandfather drew that cross.

VIVIAN
And warned you it must never leave
the church.

A distant CHURCH BELL sounds. The ruby stones begin to glow.

A cold wind sweeps through the passageway as the ghost
whisper intensifies.

PERLA (O.S.)
Restituiscile al mare...
(Give back to the sea)

Vivian turns.

PERLA stands beneath a flickering streetlamp, her wedding
gown stained with blood. Dominic sees her too.

DOMINIC
Dear God...

Perla raises a trembling hand toward the cross, then the
streetlamp goes dark. When it flickers back on, she
disappears.

VIVIAN
She wants something returned to the
sea.

DOMINIC
The pearls.

Vivian looks toward the distant church.

VIVIAN
Then we go back.

CUT TO:

ACT 6, SCENE 6
NIGHT

EXT. ANCIENT CHURCH -

VITO BELLINI stands near the church steps. A black automobile
pulls alongside him. ENZO steps out.

ENZO
Did you get it?

VITO
She has the cross.

ENZO
Then we should leave Rome.

VITO
My family has been running from
this for thirty years.

He turns toward the church.

VITO (CONT'D)
Not tonight.

Another car approaches, and George steps out.

GEORGE
I'm looking for Vivian Sinclair.

Vito turns.

VITO
Go home, Mr. Carrington.

George stops.

GEORGE
You know who I am?

VITO
I know who she is. And what she's
carrying.

George steps closer.

GEORGE
Then you'd better tell me where she
is.

A church bell begins to RING.

VITO
We're out of time.

CUT TO:

ACT 6, SCENE 7
NIGHT

INT. ANCIENT CHURCH-

Vivian and Dominic enter through the enormous wooden doors.
The jeweled cross glows in Vivian's hand.

George spots Vivian and Dominic approaching the church doors.
He hurries after them.

GEORGE
Vivian!

She turns, surprised.

VIVIAN
George?

GEORGE
I told you I was worried.

VITO appears behind him.

VITO
Put the cross back.

Dominic moves protectively beside Vivian.

DOMINIC
Who are you?

The man removes his hat.

VITO
Vito Bellini.

Vivian recognizes the surname.

VIVIAN
Perla Bellini?

VITO
My father's niece. She was supposed
to marry that day.

VIVIAN
But she was murdered.

Vito looks toward the altar.

VITO
My father killed her. She intended
to return the pearls to the sea. He
wanted fortune.

DOMINIC
And you knew?

VITO
I found out afterward. I've spent
thirty years making sure the truth
stayed buried.

A violent RUMBLE shakes the church. Dust falls from the
ceiling.

VITO (CONT'D)

The pearls are beneath the altar.
He hid them there with the cross to
protect his fortune.

VIVIAN

But the cross wasn't there.

VITO

I moved it years ago. I thought
hiding it would keep the curse
asleep.

The rubies ignite. A panel beneath the altar CRACKS OPEN.
Inside rests a SMALL VELVET BOX. Vivian approaches, and she
opens it.

A magnificent necklace of LEGENDARY PEARLS. A violent gust
extinguishes the candles. The church doors SLAM SHUT. A low,
terrible sound rises from beneath the floor.

GEORGE

Vivian, come away from there.

The jeweled cross begins to tremble. Vivian tries to release
it, but she cannot.

VIVIAN

George...

The cross erupts with GOLDEN LIGHT. It grows higher, wider,
and until it is ENORMOUS GOLDEN CROSS towering way above the
altar.

An invisible force lifts Vivian from the ground.

DOMINIC

Vivian!

He rushes toward her. A wall of seawater erupts across the
church floor, throwing him backward. George catches Dominic
before he strikes the stone steps.

GEORGE

Get up! We have to reach her!

They struggle toward the altar against the rising water. High
above them, Vivian's back meets the enormous cross. Her arms
extend along its beams, held in place by an unseen force.

Her clothing transforms into delicate ivory drapery, her
silhouette bathed in radiant golden-white light. She appears
almost angelic. A living Renaissance image of resurrection.

VIVIAN
I can't move!

GEORGE
Vivian! Look at me!

She turns her face toward him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'm here, my love! I'm not leaving
you!

The stone walls TREMBLE. Then dissolve into a vast, dark
MEDITERRANEAN SEA. Moonlight falls across towering waves.
Something enormous moves beneath the surface.

Vito drops to his knees.

VITO
Forgive us...

A monstrous female figure rises from the water.

MEDUSA rises, her serpentine hair coiling and twisting.
Pearls gleam like a crown upon her head.

Her gaze fixes upon Vivian. A thunderous cry shakes the
cross. Perla appears at the foot of the altar, still wearing
her bloodstained wedding gown. She looks up at Vivian.

PERLA
Restituiscile al mare.
(Return them to the sea.)

The velvet box bursts open. The necklace rises through the
air, floating toward Vivian. The pearls settle into her
hands. Her arms are suddenly free to move. Below, George and
Dominic struggle against the current.

DOMINIC
Vivian! The pearls!

Vivian looks toward Medusa, and then down at the black water.

VIVIAN
They were never ours to keep.

She opens her hands, and the pearls fall into the sea.

Medusa releases a frightening CRY. A blinding golden light
erupts from the cross. The water surges upward.

CUT TO WHITE.

ACT 6, SCENE 8
DAWN

INT. ANCIENT CHURCH -

The church stands undamaged in silence. Morning sunlight scatters through the stained glass. The stone floor is dry. Vivian lies near the altar, fully dressed. Dominic kneels beside her.

DOMINIC

Vivian?

Her eyes open.

VIVIAN

Please tell me that wasn't part of
the picture.

Dominic laughs with relief. George rushes to her side.

GEORGE

Thank God.

He touches her face gently.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I thought I'd lost you.

Vivian touches his hand.

VIVIAN

I'm still here.

Across the church, Vito sits against a pillar, shaken.

The jeweled cross has returned to its original size. It rests inside the wooden box behind the antique crosses.

PERLA appears beside the altar. Her wedding gown is now pure white. She smiles at Vivian, and then fades into the light. Vivian watches with tears in her eyes.

CUT TO:

ACT 6, SCENE 9
DAWN

EXT. ANCIENT CHURCH -

Dominic waits near the church steps. George walks beside Vivian, and he stops her.

GEORGE

Vivian. Don't walk away from me.

She turns.

VIVIAN

George...

GEORGE

I nearly lost you tonight. And all I could think about was everything I haven't given you.

VIVIAN

You have a wife, George.

GEORGE

I know.

VIVIAN

Hazel deserves an answer. So do I.

GEORGE

What if I told you I don't want to go home without you?

Vivian is shaken.

VIVIAN

Then I'd ask what happens when we get there.

George struggles to answer.

GEORGE

Give me a chance to find out.

VIVIAN

I've spent years loving you behind the scenes. I can't promise you another year.

GEORGE

I'm not asking for a year.

He steps closer.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I'm asking you not to stop loving me tonight.

Vivian's eyes fill with tears.

VIVIAN

That's the trouble, George. I haven't.

He draws her into a tender embrace for a few seconds. Then Vivian steps away. Dominic approaches, keeping a respectful distance.

DOMINIC
Are you all right?

Vivian looks at George, and then at Dominic.

VIVIAN
Ask me after a slice of tiramisu
and a glass of wine.

She walks toward the waiting car. George and Dominic remain standing in the morning light. Neither knows what she will decide.

CUT TO:

ACT 6, SCENE 10
SEA- DAWN

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN

Golden sunlight scatters across the water. THE CAMERA
DESCENDS BENEATH THE SEA SURFACE.

Far below, among ancient stones on the seabed- THE LEGENDARY
PEARLS. They rest peacefully in the sand. They sparkle in the
morning light.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT 6, SCENE 11
PICTURES- GEORGE'S OFFICE- DAY-1959

INT. SILVER LIGHTS

A NEWSPAPER SLAMS onto a polished mahogany desk.

THE WOMAN IN PEARLS IS HOLLYWOOD'S NUMBER ONE HIT BOX-OFFICE!

Another newspaper lands beside it.

VIVIAN SINCLAIR NOMINATED FOR BEST ACTRESS

A third headline:

THE WOMAN IN PEARLS EARNS BEST PICTURE NOMINATION

George Carrington stands behind his desk, studying the
headlines. A proud smile crosses his face. He picks up a
publicity photograph of Vivian from the film.

For a moment, the powerful studio president is simply a man
looking at the woman he loves.

The telephone RINGS.

George answers.

GEORGE
Carrington.

He listens and his expression changes.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Put Miss Sinclair through.

He sits, waiting.

CUT TO BLACK.

VIVIAN
Hello, George.

THE END.

END CREDITS ROLL as the Original theme song 'WHISPERS OF
ITALIA' plays.