

STARSTRUCK EPISODE ONE OF TEN

1 "AN ACT OF COWARDICE"

The SOUND of a horse's hooves CLANKING AGAINST WET COBBLE STONES is heard GROWING LOUDER, CLOSER.

FADE IN

2 EXT. NARROW STREETS - ARCETRI, ITALY - NIGHT

A horse drawn carriage can barely be seen through a torrential downpour as it races up and through narrow deserted streets.

ANOTHER TITLE APPEARS: "Hills Above Florence, Italy, 1642"

3 EXT. "IL GIOIELLO" - ARCETRI - NIGHT

As the carriage nears the broad expanse of the Villa Il Gioiello (The Jewel), the gate opens and it snuggles in.

A GATEKEEPER peers through the fierce rain checking to see if anyone has followed. Assured, he slams the gate shut.

4 EXT. "IL GIOIELLO" - COURTYARD - NIGHT

VINCENZO GALILEI, 35, stands at the door to the Villa holding a lantern. The carriage door is held open by a COACHMAN. A GENTLEMAN, 33, long hair, delicate almost feminine features, steps down and approaches.

GENTLEMAN

Thank you... You must be the great one's son?

(extending his hand)

Vincenzo... isn't it?

VINCENZO

(ignoring him)

You're putting my father in great danger...!

GENTLEMAN

But...?

VINCENZO

He's old and sick...

(turning away, leading him in to the house)

Be quick!

5 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - NIGHT

As the two move through the candlelit house, the SOUND OF A LUTE is heard. The delicate music and the quiet sound of the rain are transforming.

6 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - SITTING ROOM

GALILEO GALILEI sits off in a corner playing. He is old and blind. His son and the visitor approach.

GALILEO  
(after a time)  
What do you believe in?

The visitor self-consciously looks at Vincenzo.

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
You're uncomfortable.

GENTLEMAN  
Sir...?

GALILEO  
I understand there is an urgency to your being here. Sit. Have some wine.

VINCENZO  
Father...

GALILEO  
It would be rude to rush him out without a taste of our finest. Could you see to it?

VINCENZO  
(reluctantly)  
Yes...  
(he leaves)

The two are alone. The man studies him closely.

GALILEO  
Like what you see?

The visitor shifts uncomfortably.

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
That's what you're here for isn't it? To get under my skin...

A SERVANT arrives with the wine followed by Vincenzo. Galileo brings his glass to his nose enjoying the bouquet. The gentleman follows suit as the servant leaves.

GALILEO (CONT'D)

(a whisper)  
We had to let three others go. They  
were spying...

VINCENZO

Don't...

GALILEO

Even my son here has been ordered to  
report the names of anyone who tries  
to see me...

VINCENZO

(objecting)  
Enough!

GALILEO

They wouldn't even let me leave to  
see a doctor for an eye infection  
and now I'm blind. They burn everyone  
of my books that they can get their  
hands on in an effort to erase me  
from history...

VINCENZO

Father, be careful!

GALILEO

(waving him off)  
Don't worry... He'll keep our secret.  
He's a writer, a poet they tell me,  
looking for a subject that fits his  
view of the world.

Galileo holds up his glass and turns his head in the direction  
of the visitor and waits patiently.

GALILEO (CONT'D)

(finally)  
You will, won't you Mr. Milton?  
Keep our little secret?

MILTON

(worried, after a  
beat)  
Yes. Of course.

GALILEO

(indicating the wine)  
This Sun held together by water - as  
close to perfection as one can get  
in this life.

Milton moves in and clicks Galileo's glass.

MILTON  
 (after a taste)  
 Lovely.  
 (after a beat)  
 Mr. Galilei...

Not listening, Galileo picks up the lute and starts playing again.

GALILEO  
 Mr. John Milton...

Milton seems surprised.

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
 ...you're not giving yourself time  
 to enjoy the moment...

Galileo suddenly stops playing and turns towards him.

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
 Are you any good?

MILTON  
 At what?

GALILEO  
 At what you do...

Milton is stunned by this.

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
 ...words! Putting them together...  
 Saying something of value!

Unable to contain himself...

MILTON  
 (blurting it out)  
*The power of truth!*

Galileo considers this.

MILTON (CONT'D)  
 (then, sheepishly)  
 That's what I believe in.

GALILEO  
 (after a long beat)  
 Why are you here?  
 (then, almost brutally)  
 Do we know why you're here!?

MILTON  
 (ripping it out of  
 himself)  
 How could you...!?

VINCENZIO  
 (grabs Milton and  
 starts pulling him  
 away)  
 That's enough! It's time to go...

GALILEO  
 No! Let him finish the goddamn  
 sentence!

MILTON  
 (slowly, painfully,  
 beseechingly)  
*How could you... allow yourself...  
 to give up!?*

There is a pregnant moment of painful silence. Galileo blindly  
 stares without seeing:

CUT TO GALILEO'S MEMORY IN DISTORTED BLACK AND WHITE:

7 INT. TUSCAN EMBASSY - ROME - DAY

Galileo is with Ambassador Niccollini.

NICCOLLINI  
 ...they contend that you violated an  
 injunction handed down to you here  
 in Rome in 1616 forbidding you to  
 talk about, teach or write about the  
 Copernican system in any way...

GALILEO  
 Those were not the terms. The Pope  
 was there. Certainly he can testify  
 to the truth of the matter?

There is a long silence.

NICCOLLINI  
 (sadly)  
 I wouldn't count on your friend Pope  
 Urban VIII helping you in any way.

GALILEO  
 But he was there!

NICCOLLINI  
 (head hung low)  
 I know...

MEMORY ENDS - BACK TO SCENE:

8 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Galileo snaps out of his reverie and explodes with laughter.

MILTON  
 You were condemned for having  
 discovered the truth!

Galileo stands and finds the man's head with his hands.

GALILEO  
 (touching his hair)  
 Yes...  
 (his eyes, his nose,  
 his lips)  
 Yes... yes...yes...  
 (satisfied, sitting  
 again)  
 But for the life of me, I don't recall  
 your having been there!

MILTON  
 Like a coward, you recanted against  
 everything you knew to be true...

GALILEO  
 Coward? You do have a way with words.  
 And if you're not careful, you will  
 have a brilliant career poetically  
 twisting falsehoods into myths.  
 (thinking back)  
 You see, it started on the 4th day  
 after my birth.

MILTON  
 What started?

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK IN VIVID COLOR:

9 EXT. CATHEDRAL OF PISA - DAY

A small procession, a MOTHER holding a NEW BORN, a proud FATHER happily strumming a lute and a small group of RELATIVES and FRIENDS pass in front of The Leaning Tower of Pisa before entering the massive church.

A TITLE COMES IN OVER THE SCENE: "PISA, ITALY 1564"

10 INT. CATHEDRAL OF PISA - DAY

The camera pans around the gloriously beautiful and awesomely impressive interior of the great cathedral and finds the small group now standing at the baptismal font.

A PRIEST stands blessing the child, the baby Galileo, who looks up at him quizzically.

GALILEO (V.O.)  
 Everything was fine in my new short  
 life until that water was poured  
 over my head...

Seen from baby Galileo's POV, the water causes his vision to blur. The priest is continuous in his blessings. Everyone around is smiling with joy.

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 And then it happened. Or to be more  
 precise, it started happening...

MILTON (V.O.)  
 Once again, what started happening?

As his vision clears, baby Galileo's focus is drawn to the lantern which is suspended from a long cable in the center of the aisle above him.

GALILEO (V.O.)  
 The calculations...

His gaze zooms in on the lantern and a very small movement from side to side is detected.

THROUGH ANIMATION, THE DISTANCE OF THE ARC PAST CENTER AND OTHER VARIABLES OF THE THEORY OF THE PENDULUM ARE SCRIBED ON THE SCREEN IN A RAPID DREAMLIKE MANNER.

THEY ARE REFLECTED IN THE CHILD'S EYES AS THE CAMERA NOW MOVES IN CLOSE ON HIS FACE AS HE IS OBLIVIOUS TO THE CEREMONY TAKING PLACE AROUND HIM AND ONLY CONSUMED BY HIS VISION.

FLASHBACK ENDS - BACK TO SCENE:

11 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Milton is stunned, staring at Galileo who seems to be enjoying himself as he takes a big sip from his wine.

MILTON  
 (standing)  
 What do you take me for? Someone  
 here for your amusement...?!

GALILEO

No, someone who understands obsession.  
Someone who knows what it feels like  
to be plagued by images that don't  
leave you. In my case calculations...  
in yours, perhaps words? Although  
I'm still not convinced!  
(then, after a moment)  
Sit down.

MILTON

Actually, I think I'll leave...

GALILEO

(standing)  
Sit down before I have you tied down!  
(Milton slowly sits)  
If you think you can come in here,  
to my house, my prison and attempt  
to summarize my life according to  
some simplistic caricature, then  
you're wrong my friend.

Milton looks over and sees Vincenzo standing at the door.

GALILEO (CONT'D)

This is my house and my rules. And  
you're here to listen and maybe learn  
something that you didn't know. Do  
you understand?

Milton is silent.

GALILEO (CONT'D)

DO YOU UNDERSTAND!

MILTON

(finally)  
Yes.

Vincenzo silently backs out of the room.

GALILEO

Good.  
(screaming)  
More wine. This is not going to be  
easy...

The same servant enters pouring from a decanter which he leaves  
on the table before backing away. Galileo's sightless face  
turns following him as he goes.

GALILEO (CONT'D)

Deference.

(MORE)



GALILEO (CONT'D)

I'm still granted plenty of it. But understanding, true knowledge of who I am, the calculations of *me*, no one knows them. They're a secret. Shall we begin?

MILTON

Yes... But why would you reveal them to me?

GALILEO

Because you want to know, need to know. Otherwise you wouldn't have traveled all this way. Certainly you're not here to chat. You're a writer... a poet... and you will bare witness. Where shall we begin?

MILTON

(after much thought,  
weakly)

The trial? The Inquisition?

Close on Galileo's face.

GALILEO'S MEMORY IN DISTORTED BLACK AND WHITE AGAIN:

12 EXT. VATICAN - GARDENS - AFTERNOON

Galileo strolls with Maculano, a lawyer.

MACULANO

(fiercely)

You're in grave danger. The evidence is against you... Perjury under oath... disobeying an injunction...

GALILEO

That document is fraudulent and you know it! And His Holiness knows it! He can bare witness...

MACULANO

(looking around,  
speaking in a whisper)

Stop fooling yourself, Mr. Galilei. You're not here to be proven innocence.

BACK TO SCENE:

13 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Close on Galileo's face as if in a trance.

MILTON

I said, shall we start at the  
Inquisition?

GALILEO

(snapping back )

Heavens no! In order to even come  
close to understanding that fiasco,  
your **Coward's Story** must start much  
earlier. Say...

*The sound of a new born crying out with the shock of first  
life is heard...*

Galileo laughs as the screen -

DISSOLVES TO A FLASHBACK IN VIVID COLOR:

14 INT. ROW HOUSE - VIA DEL CUORE - PISA - DAY

The camera moves through the top floor of a 4 story building  
overlooking a noisy market.

GALILEO (V.O.)

...February 15th, 1564, 3 days before  
Michelangelo died in Rome at 90, I  
came screaming, screeching, clamoring  
into the world.

The baby is lifted by a proud and elated father, VINCENZO  
GALILEI, as a joyous, but tired mother, GIULIA AMMANANTI,  
looks on.

CUT TO:

15 INT. ROW HOUSE - VIA DEL CUORE - PISA - DAY

Close on Giulia' face as she shrilly throws a pot at a rapidly  
departing Vincenzo.

A TITLE READS: "**8 Years Later**"

She is surrounded by a young red headed Galileo, his brother  
MICHELANGELO (6), and his sisters VIRGINIA (4) and LIVIA (3).

GALILEO (V.O.)

Then...

(sighing)

...contradictions. Being born of  
noble but impoverished parents.

16 EXT. ROW HOUSE - VIA DEL CUORE - PISA - DAY

Vincenzo runs out of the building with a small sack of clothes  
and his lute over his shoulder.

Giulia now is throwing anything and everything she can get her hands on out the window at him as he makes his escape.

A shoe painfully finds Vincenzo's back with a thud.

GIULIA

And don't come back until you can pay the rent!

VINCENZO

You're crazy. You'll be lucky if I come back at all.

CUT TO:

17 INT. ROW HOUSE - VIA DEL CUORE - PISA - DAY

Giulia combs her long hair in front of a mirror in the bedroom. Her children run crazily in the background except for Galileo who studies her secretly from outside the door.

GALILEO (V.O.)

You see, she had the misfortune of marrying an artist, a dreamer. Her family were wool merchants from a high social station.

CLOSE ON: Galileo's face as he peeks in the room.

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They were like oil and water together. Perhaps she picked wrong. I can't ever remember her being happy, except...

*Giulia's ecstatic screaming filters in.*

DISSOLVE TO:

18 INT. ROW HOUSE - VIA DEL CUORE - PISA - NIGHT

Vincenzo and Giulia make hard passionate love. Giulia's cries break the stillness of the night.

CLOSE ON: Galileo's face watching.

CUT TO GALILEO'S MEMORY:

ONCE AGAIN THE SCENE IS RECALLED IN BLACK AND WHITE WITH DISTORTED PICTURE AND SOUND

19 INT. GALILEO'S HOUSE - PADUA - DAY

Galileo's mother (much older but still well preserved) is screaming as she twists and turns in a hair pulling slug fest

with Marina (Galileo's lover). Both women have fists full of each other's hair as they loudly and violently fight in the middle of the room.

GIULIA

You're a no good whore! And you  
will never have him... and you will  
never have my linens...!

Everyone, Galileo, his STUDENTS, his HOUSE STAFF, his 3  
CHILDREN, all look on in shocked disbelief.

MARINA

Crazy bitch! Let go of me before I  
kill you...

GIULIA

Low life tramp. We'll see who kills  
who...!

Galileo thrusts himself between the 2 women. Each of them  
let's go with one hand and starts pummeling him with the other.

GALILEO

Stop this insanity!  
(he takes a fist to  
the face)  
Ouch!

GIULIA

You're next. I didn't raise you to  
be great to squander it on a  
servant...

DISSOLVE BACK TO FLASHBACK:

20 INT. ROW HOUSE - VIA DEL CUORE - PISA - DAY

CLOSE ON: Galileo's face watching as Giulia continues with  
the almost sensual combing of her hair.

GALILEO (V.O.)

And she never let him forget the  
difference between them.

CUT TO ANOTHER FLASHBACK:

21 INT. THEATER - FLORENCE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON:

Vincenzo singing in a high and beautiful tenor voice from  
Count Ugolino's lament from the DIVINE COMEDY.

GALILEO (V.O.)

My father went to Florence and started to rebel against everything. There was a movement a foot to return to the power of the music of ancient Greece. The idea was to combine Greek myth with the music where the music grew out of the text.

Vincenzo brings his lute around and begins accompanying himself as he sings.

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He believed the lute could express the full range of human emotions - harshness, softness, weeping, sweetness - better than the organ.

The shot widens to include a number of MUSICAL EXPERIMENTERS accompanying him on viols.

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

His inspiration was Girolamo Mei - the most knowledgeable man in Italy on ancient music...

The camera pans to MEI standing off to the side listening.

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He was a scholar and he challenged my father to capture the Greek ideal...

The camera returns to Vincenzo and the ensemble.

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

... against all of the out dated modes which failed to fire the passions of the people and were dominated and promulgated by...

FLASHBACK ENDS - BACK TO:

22 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Galileo is silent, deep in thought. Milton waits for him to continue.

They have been joined by VINCENZO VIVIANI, 18.

MILTON

(after a time)

"Dominated and promulgated by..."

VIVIANI

The Church.

Galileo snaps back to life.

GALILEO

Ah, you're here. Mr. Milton, meet  
Vincenzo Viviani...

Milton shakes hands with Viviani who grins boyishly.

MILTON

The church?

GALILEO

He had it in his mind to do it his  
way. A Reprehensible thought. He  
said to simply rely on the weight of  
authority without searching out the  
arguments to support it is an act of  
absurdity.

MILTON

You obviously learned much from him.

GALILEO

More than I ever realized until  
recently.

FLASHBACK:

23 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

VIVIANI

Vincenzo's forays into sung speech  
eventually resulted in the production  
of *Euridice* at the Pitti Palace in  
1600. It was the first opera.

MILTON

And how do you know this?

VIVIANI

I'm here to know everything there is  
to know about the master.

GALILEO

And as my official biographer, to  
make up whatever he needs to to make  
the story work better.

MILTON

What about the truth?

GALILEO

What about it?

MILTON

I'm disappointed to hear you say that.

GALILEO

Why? Every life is a story. What's more important than firing the soul. If it takes a slight adjustment, a minor tweak in the rendering of the past to enliven it and make it *exciting* - what's wrong with that. God save us from being put to sleep by our very own lives!

MILTON

Where does that leave us then? Stuck in another one of your blind delusions...!

GALILEO

(angry, retaliating)

How dare you! I'm here under house arrest, my work banned, my good name tarnished, my sight gone and my life near over and you want to know where that leaves us?!

MILTON

(conciliatory)

But there is the issue of what is, what actually was. Surely you see that?

GALILEO

Careful, remember I'm blind.

MILTON

Hah! Hah!, funny! For better or worse, that is different than what might have been.

GALILEO

(playing with him)

I'm not so sure.

(turning to Viviani)

So here's a young man who hasn't been tainted by the cruelty of life yet. What do you think?

VIVIANI

I defer to you...

GALILEO  
 (to Milton)  
 This is youth today!  
 (back to Viviani)  
 You coward! You can't do that. I'm  
 asking for your opinion.

VIVIANI  
 (tentatively, not  
 sure)  
 I've always held that truth is  
 absolute. It's what you can see and  
 feel and prove by observation.

GALILEO  
 Hah!  
 (pause)  
 Hah! *Then how do you explain God?*

Viviani shrugs his shoulders. Milton looks on stunned!

SLAM CUT TO:

24 EXT. OUTER SPACE

A SWIRLING UNIVERSE WITH THE EARTH MOVING THIS WAY AND THAT -

GALILEO'S VOICE  
 (pridefully)  
 It does move...

GOD'S VOICE  
 I told you!

BACK TO SCENE:

25 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - CONTINUOUS

GALILEO  
 (smiling smugly)  
 Answer? You don't. Sometimes it's  
 nothing more than what seems like a  
 whisper in your ear. Leading you  
 along. And you know. In 1579 at the  
 age of 15, I had decided to become a  
 monk...

26 EXT. BENEDICTINE MONASTERY AT VALLOMBROSA - DAY

Galileo tonsured and wearing a hooded habit stands between  
 his father and the HEAD MONK and OTHER MONKS.



VINCENZO  
It will never happen!

HEAD MONK  
But it is what he wants. Mr.  
Galilei...

VINCENZO  
Look at him. He's not well. Look  
at his eye.

HEAD MONK  
It is a minor issue...

VINCENZO  
It is seriously infected. You have  
concerned yourselves so much with  
the next world that you are blinded  
to what is going on in this one!

HEAD MONK  
But we have a ceremony of initiation  
planned...

Vincenzo grabs his son by the arm and starts leading him away.

VINCENZO  
Then you will have to proceed without  
him.

27 EXT. APPENINES - DAY

A carriage speeds along a narrow road.

28 INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Galileo is tearful.

GALILEO  
I wanted to stay. I wanted to give  
my life to God.

VINCENZO  
It's not affordable. You're the  
oldest and, God forgive me... I want  
you to become a doctor! But first,  
we need to talk about the wool  
business.

As they ride in silence, Galileo's narration filters in.

GALILEO (V.O.)  
Something had happened to him. I  
remember thinking, those are not my  
father's words.

Galileo looks over at his father who turns away.

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He appeared to grow smaller before me. I knew then that he needed my help, and - perhaps more importantly - that I *could* help. It was the first time in my life that I remember thinking that I could change the course of something. And I pledged that what had happened to him, would never happen to me.

29 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

His son, Vincenzo, now stands between Milton and Viviani facing him.

VINCENZO

Does that explain, "Father Uncertain"?

Galileo remains silent.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

What exactly did that mean?

GALILEO

Those were the unfortunate words of a priest on a piece of paper...

VINCENZO

That piece of paper was my birth certificate! And if memory serves me correctly, similar comments appear on both of my sisters' birth records, or was it perhaps, "Birth from fornication on Virginia's"?

GALILEO'S MEMORY:

30 INT. HEAVEN

GOD

Is there something that I can do for you today Mr. Galilei?

GALILEO

Aah...

(hard for him to say)

Yes there is excellency. I'm about to be a father...of a child that is...and it's led me to think. I mean, I don't understand any of this.

(MORE)

GALILEO (CONT'D)

I know it's the most common thing,  
but seeing this life start and grow  
and all that... It's not very  
scientific at all! I mean ultimately  
everything is scientific. But, I  
guess what I really wanted to know  
is - and forgive me for asking - for  
putting it to you this way - but  
are... I mean, would you say... that  
miracles are scientific too?

A BABY'S SCREAM comes in over the scene loudly.

BACK TO SCENE:

31 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - CONTINUOUS

CLOS ON:

Galileo's face. Then with a sigh...

GALILEO

That was a long time ago and I'm  
sorry. If it were now, it would be  
different. In any event, our guest  
is here to understand what he sees  
as an act of cowardice on my part...

VINCENZO

Then what I just said should fit in  
perfectly.

VIVIANI

Vincenzo, if I may, you are not the  
subject of this discussion.

VINCENZO

Quiet toad! Excuse me, but I thought  
the subject was to try and understand  
the man, deeply and totally. But if  
you prefer to leave it at a  
superficial level again and simply  
prolong all the familiar  
misconceptions of greatness, I'll go  
now and leave you all to your  
fantasies...

(he starts out)

GALILEO

No!

(Vincenzo turns back)

You're absolutely right. Let's make  
sure that that version of this story  
is not the only one that survives.

(MORE)

GALILEO (CONT'D)

(to Milton)

Remind me to show you what my son  
and I are working on before you leave.  
That observation that I teased you  
with from my baptism, the beginning  
of my work on the theory of the  
pendulum, well Vincenzo and I are  
applying it to the creation of a  
clock that he is building. I'm very  
proud to be working with him...

GALILEO'S MEMORY

32 INT. HOUSE - PIAZZA DE MOZZI - FLORENCE -- NIGHT

It is the dead of night in the year 1589.

AND ONCE AGAIN THE SCENE IS RECALLED IN BLACK AND WHITE WITH  
DISTORTED PICTURE AND SOUND

Galileo, 25, works with his father, 69, in a room that is a  
clutter of weighted strings, plates, chisels, notes and  
camaraderie.

GALILEO

(scrapping a brass  
plate with a chisel)

The effect of the fifth is to produce  
a tickling of the eardrum...

VINCENZO

(picking up his lute)

An octave is twice the vibrations of  
the octave below it...

GALILEO

(picking up his lute)

The tension you feel when you're  
playing a seventh chord and it wants  
to go to the fourth above it is  
powerful...

Both playing together now.

VINCENZO

It's mysterious...

GALILEO

It's spiritual...

VINCENZO

It takes you out of the human...  
Yet it follows the laws of the  
physical universe...

GALILEO

And yet goes straight to the heart...

VINCENZO

(stopping)

Don't ever tell your mother this...

But, I think it's great that you  
didn't become a doctor...

Galileo stops playing and stares at his father.

DISSOLVE

33 EXT. POGGIO A CAIANO - NORTH OF FLORENCE -- DAY

It's summer.

TITLE READS:

**The country estate of Grand Duke Francis I and Grand Duchess  
Bianca Capello**

Festivities are at hand and dancing to the music of Vincenzo Galilei who is at the top of his form as he leads a SMALL GROUP OF MUSICIANS in the afternoon gaiety.

GALILEO (V.O.)

My father reached his zenith in the  
Medici court of Grand Duke Francis I  
and Grand Duchess Bianca Capello.  
He dedicated a book of madrigals to  
her and was a favorite.

The GRAND DUKE and GRAND DUCHESS dance to the music.

The Grand Duchess is exquisite, beguiling as she turns and  
cavorts and flirts with all.

A young Galileo in his early twenties looks on transfixed by  
her beauty.

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And I was often allowed to be part  
of the court scene.

The Grand Duchess locks eyes with Galileo. He immediately  
looks down embarrassed.

34 INT. POGGIO A CAIANO - DUCHESS CAPELLO'S CHAMBERS - EVENING

The Grand Duchess sits adjusting herself in front of a mirror.

The door opens and Galileo is led in by a SERVANT.

BIANCA CAPELLO  
 (seeing him in the  
 mirror, to servant)  
 Leave us.  
 (the servant backs  
 out closing the door)  
 I saw you staring at me.

GALILEO  
 My greatest apology your highness...

BIANCA CAPELLO  
 Why?

GALILEO  
 I beg your pardon majesty?

BIANCA CAPELLO  
 Were you staring?

GALILEO  
 I have never seen such perfect dancing  
 before, your move...

BIANCA CAPELLO  
 Liar. Master Galileo, I need you to  
 do something for me.

GALILEO  
 Yes, highness, anything...

She turns and starts towards him. Her breasts are bursting  
 to get out of her gown.

BIANCA CAPELLO  
 I need you to tell me the truth.

Galileo has difficulty finding a place to focus. He dares  
 not look her in the eyes, nor at her magnificent buxom, so he  
 settles nervously on the floor.

GALILEO  
 (stuttering)  
 I couldn't help... studying...  
 watching... your magnificent...  
 (before him, she lifts  
 his head up with her  
 hand under his chin)  
 ...beauty...Highne...

Her kiss smothers the word.

35 INT. POGGIO A CAIANO - DUCHESS CAPELLO'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT  
 Galileo and Bianca Capello make mad, passionate love.

GALILEO  
What if we're caught?!!

BIANCA CAPELLO  
(enjoying herself in  
more ways than one)  
You'll be put to death instantly...

GALILEO  
Oh God...

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Early that fall, they suddenly died.

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
Help me...

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Rumors abounded that Francis' brother  
Ferdinand, a cardinal from Rome who  
was against the marriage of his  
brother to his Venetian mistress was  
somehow responsible?

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
Please God...

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Had he poisoned them out of hatred  
for Bianca or to take over as grand  
duke of Tuscany?

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
PLEASEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!!!!!

They both spasm with pleasure and her laughter.

DISSOLVE BACK:

36 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

GALILEO  
It was a horrible mystery with  
terrible consequences for my father.  
He found himself out of favor with  
the new Medici court of Grand Duke  
Ferdinand.  
(he sighs, remembering)

FLASHBACK:

37 INT. HOUSE - PIAZZA DE MOZZI - FLORENCE - 1591 - NIGHT

Vincenzo, 70, is in bed coughing.

GALILEO (V.O.)  
I'm convinced that it killed him.

He is surrounded by his family - wife Giulia, daughters Virginia and Livia, sons Michelangelo and Galileo.

GALILEO (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
He lost his reason for living. Man  
needs a reason for living, to live.

VINCENZO  
(holding Galileo's  
hand, hardly a whisper)  
Tell me...

GALILEO  
I will take care of them.

He looks around at his mother, sister Virginia and her husband Landucci, his 16 year old brother Michelangelo and his unmarried sister Livia

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
You have nothing to worry about.  
(he gulps)

Vincenzo weakly signals Galileo to come in closer.

VINCENZO  
(whispering)  
Follow your truth. Don't be afraid  
to fight, but...

GALILEO  
(tears, a whisper)  
What?

VINCENZO  
...be smart...  
(his gaze locked on  
the ceiling)  
...don't let them...

Galileo pulls in closer to hear, blocking the last. Vincenzo's eyes glaze over.

Galileo pulls back wailing in pain and anguish.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

38 INT. "IL GIOIELLO" - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Galileo wails with the memory. Vincenzo stands next to him, holding his hand.



GALILEO  
Sometimes I hate this life!

MILTON  
(after a pause)  
Sir, what did he mean when he said  
"Don't let them...?"

GALILEO  
That was a long time ago. I'm an  
old man. I can't be expected to  
remember everything that's happened  
in my entire life.

He starts laughing.

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
It may come to me though.

Suddenly smiling with another memory.

VIVIANI  
What are you thinking about master?

GALILEO  
Breasts. Bianca Capello's breasts.

MILTON  
Did you really risk all...?

GALILEO  
Francis I was willing to spend nine  
years sneaking through dank tunnels  
from the Pitti Palace to the apartment  
where he kept her - leaving his wife  
and 6 children behind - just to visit  
those magnificent orbs.

MILTON  
But it could have cost you your  
life...

GALILEO  
I would have died happy.

VINCENZO  
Father, don't tease him.

MILTON  
You mean it didn't happen... ?

GALILEO  
What do you think?

MILTON

That the truth would be nice!

GALILEO

Is it possible that my possible  
'dalliance' with the tart of Venice  
might change your take on the worth  
of my existence?

MILTON

I just need to know if my trip here  
was to become enmeshed in an ancient  
spider's web of delusion and fantasy?

GALILEO

"Ancient spider?" That's good.  
(pause)  
Will you be leaving then?

Milton's glance goes from Galileo to Viviani to Vincenzo.

MILTON

(picking up his glass)  
I suppose I'll stay, on condition  
that I can get another glass of this  
miraculous beverage.

GALILEO

Huh! Manipulate me. Twist my arm.  
More wine for our young poet friend.  
He loves what I do.

DISSOLVE TO:

39 INT. UNIVERSITY OF PISA - SURGERY SUITE - DAY

A cadaver is being cut by a PROFESSOR as a small group of  
first year medical STUDENTS look on. Galileo is prominently  
situated amongst the onlookers.

PROFESSOR

We are ultimately all alike...

He reaches his hand in to the open body cavity of his subject  
and pulls out the poor man's liver, holding it high for all  
to see.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

This liver is shared by all mankind...

Galileo's eyes roll up in his head and he faints away. The  
other students gather round him coming to his aid.

40 EXT. UNIVERSITY OF PISA - PIAZZA DIE CAVALIERI - DAY  
Galileo, still grey in the face, stands with FRIENDS.

GALILEO  
What I'd really like to do is paint...

FRIEND #1  
That would go over big with your  
father and especially your mother.

GALILEO  
If I was rich and famous...?

FRIEND #1  
If...

Galileo poses, taking in the view around them, his thumb up  
as if readying for a brush stroke.

GALILEO  
I could do it you know...  
(everyone laughs)  
What?

FRIEND #2  
Maybe you should go find a live naked  
body to stare at first and make sure  
you don't faint dead away again.

Everyone explodes with laughter. Galileo chases his 'friend'  
around the plaza trying to beat him on the head.

GALILEO  
Asshole...

FADE OUT:

41 INT. TUSCAN COURT - OUTSIDE HALL - PISA - DAY

Galileo stands outside a lecture hall trying to make himself  
invisible.

LECTURER (O.S.)  
Is it a tool for play, an idle  
distraction, an abstract intellectual  
exercise? Or is mathematics perhaps  
a way to explain the planets and the  
stars...

42 INT. TUSCAN COURT - PISA - DAY

Galileo slips in, integrating himself among the WARDS OF THE  
GRAND DUKE who sit half interested in what is being said.

GALILEO (V.O.)  
His name was Ricci, Ostilio Ricci...

Galileo stands, his hand shooting up.

GALILEO (CONT'D)  
Excuse me sir, I have a question...

RICCI  
(annoyed)  
It had better be a good one!

GALILEO  
According to Aristotle, larger pieces  
of hail fall faster than smaller  
ones. What do you make of that?

Ricci's glance locks with Galileo's. A hint of a smile  
appears.

43 INT. TAVERN - PISA - NIGHT

Galileo and Ricci talk quietly off in a corner.

GALILEO  
I know I'm young and that I haven't  
been doing this very long, but I can  
tell you that they're wrong.

RICCI  
How do you know?

GALILEO  
I just do.

RICCI  
Not good enough.

GALILEO  
You mean to tell me that a bunch of  
irrelevant old Greeks...

RICCI  
Not good enough. You need proof...

GALILEO  
I know what I know.

RICCI  
Perhaps, but without proof, what you  
think you know is... irrelevant.

Galileo is silenced.

RICCI (CONT'D)

(finally)

So Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Euclid -  
all irrelevant?

GALILEO

Or, wrong.

RICCI

Understanding the unknown is not a  
game. It's a challenge. It requires  
daring, an adventurer's heart, an  
explorer's instinct. And there is  
no right or wrong, only the process...

GALILEO

But...

RICCI

Ever hear of Aristarchus of Samos?

GALILEO

No.

RICCI

He did a calculation on the sizes  
and distances of the Sun and Moon  
about eighteen hundred years ago.

GALILEO

How could he?

RICCI

On instinct and observation alone.

GALILEO

Was he right?

RICCI

How the hell should I know. But he  
did it. Later in his career he  
adopted a hypothesis...

(he looks around and  
whispers the next)

...that the Sun is at the center of  
the universe.

GALILEO

No.

RICCI

Yes. Read Archimedes' *The Sun  
Reckoner*. He talks about Aristarchus  
and his hypothesis that the earth  
revolves around the sun.

GALILEO

No.

RICCI

Yes.

GALILEO

Is it possible.

RICCI

I don't know.

GALILEO

But what about *primum mobile*?

RICCI

What about it?

GALILEO

We're taught that an angel of God cranks the stars around the earth every day.

RICCI

Maybe. But be smart. If you start thinking otherwise, you could lose your head.

44 EXT. ROME - CAMPO DIE FIORI - DAY

Hooded MEN accompany a wagon carrying GIORDANO BRUNO as it winds its way into the "Square of Flowers". Bruno's jaw is covered with an iron muzzle, a spike passes through his tongue.

GALILEO (V.O.)

Giordano Bruno was imprisoned for eight years for believing that the Earth traveled around the Sun and that the universe was infinite like the God who created it.

A LARGE CROWD stirs with expectation chanting for him to recant as the wagon arrives at its destination. The fire is started. Bruno is stripped naked.

The crowd erupts as Bruno is consumed by flames and the scene...

FADES TO BLACK

END EPISODE ONE