

MANON

20.

GIACOMO

What about food, or rent. I could use a little more...

DE BERNIS

I thought you want to earn a living?

Giacomo nods.

He takes the few bills that De Bernis is offering.

CUT TO:

INT. TAILLEUR - DAY

Giacomo tries on a series of waistcoats, breeches, large cuffs and belts.

He tries on a bunch of wigs, tries powdering his hair.

Just the way he studies himself in the mirror, it's clear he's a little vain, but this is fun.

EXT. STREET, PARIS - DAY

Giacomo Casanova emerges on to the avenue looking polished, swarthy, handsome. Two passing women smile at him.

He smiles back. He feels a little like himself again.

INT. WIG-MAKER'S BASEMENT - DAY

Giacomo enters the dark room with a clothes bag to find someone making his bed, HUMMING a lovely tune. He assumes it's a maid.

GIACOMO

Good afternoon.

She spins, stands up straight, nervous to be in his presence.

Giacomo's jaw DROPS. She is the very model of beauty, pink-lipped, poised, delicate, with a clear, kind, direct gaze.

MANON

I'm so sorry. I wasn't expecting you.

START
CASANOVA

1/4

She steps toward him, silhouetted by the light behind her. She looks like an angel, and Giacomo can't hold back his immediate reaction:

GIACOMO

Your voice is beautiful, but tragic. The last time I was on the Grand Canal, I heard a bird singing inside a rich man's villa. I had no idea which window in a thousand its heartbroken song came from. It tormented me, as it cried out to be seen in all its beauty. To soar over the city, like it was born to, instead of suffering forever as something else.

She smiles a billion-watt smile.

MANON

You don't recognize me?

GIACOMO

Should I?

MANON

I am Manon. Mother sent me to neatening up--

GIACOMO

Manon? My Lord... last time I saw you--

MANON

I was 13.

Not anymore. She is now 18 and simply ravishing. Giacomo must compose himself immediately.

GIACOMO

I'm sorry for my... Manon, please, come sit. You are far above neatening up after a slob like me.

He pulls out a chair, opens the shutters to let a touch of light on her perfectly structured cheekbones.

MANON

I have heard so many stories from my family about you and your adventures, all the places you've been.

GIACOMO

I hope you don't believe *all* of it.

MANON

Oh, Sir, I love the stories. I've been nowhere. That's why I read so much. *LaPutain Errante*. *Venus dans le Cloitre*. I'd do *anything* to see Venice.

GIACOMO

I'd do anything to take you. There is nothing like Venice. So wonderfully crowded. Lying in bed at night, you can hear snoring, arguing, laughing, *lovemaking*...

MANON

I've heard it is a city where women are free to be as they wish?

GIACOMO

For a hundred years.

MANON

Paris is making strides, but it will be too late for me.

GIACOMO

What do you mean?

MANON

I am to be married in a month.

She doesn't sound too happy about it.

GIACOMO

Congratulations. To whom?

MANON

Monsieur Clement. My harpsichord teacher.

Giacomo is surprised to hear this.

MANON (CONT'D)

My mother says it's a good, safe match.

GIACOMO

Are you a good, safe girl?

MANON

I don't know what I am.

GIACOMO

I have felt that way most of my
life.

She grins, a connection blossoming between them. He knows
that he should put an end to this now.

GIACOMO (CONT'D)

You should go.

MANON

Must I?

GIACOMO

Yes. I'll walk you out.

EXT. STREET, PARIS - DAY

Giacomo holds the door as Manon steps out into the bright
sunlight. She picks a flower from a blooming tree.

MANON

Here.

She attaches a the tiny flower to his lapel.

MANON (CONT'D)

So you don't forget about me.

She is so confident, unafraid. And it's so attractive.

GIACOMO

Forget? I'm already thinking about
you. About the best advice I can
give to a young adventurer like
yourself.

MANON

Any parting thoughts?

Her tenacity reminds him of himself at that age.

GIACOMO

Be the flame. Not the moth.

SYLVIA (O.S.)

Manon?

They both look to see Sylvia approaching.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Go home. Now.

△ — END