

## **VIDEO MAPPING – VOICE OVER**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **NARRATOR**

The city of Rome is an immense open-air construction site.

The election of Pope Paul V marks the beginning of a new era of grand architectural and artistic commissions.

Just outside the city walls, near Porta Pinciana, the Borghese family acquired a plot of land covering around 50 hectares.

#### **SCIPIONE BORGHESE**

My name is Scipione Borghese. My uncle Camillo became Pope Paul V, head of the Church and the Papal States, in 1605.

He made me a cardinal, and so today I serve as Cardinal Nephew, Secretary of State, and Head of the Curia — a position of great power and prestige.

We Borghese are of Tuscan origin, from Siena. We arrived in Rome at the beginning of the 16th century and quickly rose within Roman aristocratic society.

We acquired various palaces across the city, villas in the hills of Frascati, and a vineyard with adjoining land near the Pincian Hill.

Here, I built a villa outside the city walls — unique in its architecture, adorned with remarkable works of art, and surrounded by a variety of gardens.

A place of "delights", where I can retreat with joy.

The Casino Pinciano was built under my watchful eye, first by the architect Flaminio Ponzio and, after his death, by Giovanni Vasanzio. Its design draws on the model of the 16th-century suburban villa — a structure harmoniously nestled within nature.

My passion for art and antiquity led me to assemble one of the most impressive collections of my time.

They call me "The Delight of Rome", like Emperor Titus, for the wealth I invested in the arts — though I was equally committed to supporting those in need.

I was a patron of young sculptors, painters — men and women — poets, and musicians.

On the ground floor of my Casino, I curated a gallery of both ancient and modern statues. Many of the ancient ones were uncovered in archaeological excavations, which were common at the time. Magnificent works emerged from the earth — like the Sleeping Hermaphrodite.

I had a Latin inscription engraved near the open-air theatre in the Parco dei Daini —

the Lex Hospitalis. I wished that any visitor, any free soul of good will, might enjoy the beauty I've placed here.

I, guardian of Villa Borghese, declare: whoever you are, if you come freely and with good intent, you need not fear rules or restrictions — go where you like, ask what you wish, leave when you will.

These delights are more for the guest than for the host. Respect

such beauty — and you will always be welcome.

## CHAPTER II

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### **NARRATOR**

More than a century has passed since Scipione's death. Times have changed — and so has artistic taste. In the latter half of the 18th century, Prince Marcantonio IV feels the urge to renew the Casino's decor and layout.

### **MARCANTONIO IV**

I am Prince Marcantonio IV Borghese. Like my ancestor Scipione, I am devoted to art and beauty.

I commissioned architect Antonio Asprucci and his son Mario to oversee the restoration and redesign the interior spaces and collection layout.

Asprucci brought in Sicilian painter Mariano Rossi to fresco the entrance hall ceiling with scenes from Roman history.

At its centre, Camillus defeats the Gauls — a work I commissioned in honour of my son Camillo's birth in 1775.

I also moved the sculpture of Marcus Curtius on horseback — once on the side façade — into the entrance hall, plunging into the chasm to save Rome.

A great innovation was the new placement of key sculptures at the centre of the rooms — including Bernini's masterpieces, originally intended to be viewed only from specific angles.

Asprucci introduced a thematic harmony between sculpture and the painted ceiling of each room.

Entirely new is the Egyptian Room — born of our growing noble fascination with exoticism, seen also in the gardens.

To my son Camillo, I leave a marvel that I believe I have made even more extraordinary — in its interiors and in the gardens I expanded and reimagined.

### CHAPTER III

#### **NARRATOR**

At the close of the 18th century and the dawn of the 19th, the political balance of Europe is upended. After the Revolution, the French impose a new regime on Rome. The city becomes first a republic, then a province of the Napoleonic Empire.

#### **CAMILLO II**

I am Camillo, eldest son of Marcantonio IV and brother to Francesco. I married Paolina

Bonaparte — sister to Emperor Napoleon.

Because of this family tie, and my political position, I was compelled to sell some of the most important archaeological works in our collection to Napoleon.

It pained me greatly to see pieces, lovingly collected by my ancestors, leave our home.

Still, I resolved to continue celebrating and enhancing our remarkable collection. Not only the interiors — but the park as well.

I expanded the estate by purchasing additional land and brought in architect Luigi Canina.

He designed a monumental new entrance with Greek-style propylaea on Piazzale Flaminio. I also asked him to construct the smaller buildings now so admired in English-style gardens.

I had to restore Villa Borghese to the marvel it has always been.

## **NARRATOR**

And he succeeded.

Ancient sculptures still in the estate were placed along the once-bare façade and throughout the rooms.

Like his predecessors, he commissioned works from leading contemporary artists

— such as the famous portrait of Paolina as Venus Victrix, sculpted by Antonio Canova.

He also acquired numerous paintings, including Danaë by Correggio.

His brother Francesco, who succeeded him, continued the work — leading archaeological digs along the Via Casilina, where they unearthed the famed Gladiator Mosaics, unparalleled in their vivid depiction of combat.

Rome was then the ultimate stop on the Grand Tour. From across Europe, esteemed travellers visited the Eternal City — and Villa Borghese. They painted it, wrote about it, sang its praises. The estate enjoyed great renown — hosting legendary parties and grand festivities.

## **CHAPTER IV**

## **NARRATOR**

In the early 20th century, Rome — newly crowned capital of the Kingdom of Italy — was seized by a furious wave of urban development. Many noble mansions were lost.

In 1902, the Kingdom of Italy purchased Villa Borghese — thanks to the people's passionate plea to preserve the gardens and the beauty they held. The government listened — and the Villa was saved.

The park was entrusted to the City of Rome, on the condition that it be cared for and remain open to the public — just as Scipione had intended, three centuries earlier.

The Casino Nobile became the Borghese Gallery Museum.

Its secret gardens and rooms were restored.

Lost masterpieces were brought home — like Bernini's Rape of Proserpina, once gifted by Scipione to Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi, nephew of Pope Gregory XV.

Among other acquisitions, two self-portraits of Bernini — young and old — symbolise the legacy of an artist whose vision and genius helped shape this place into what it is today.

Ancient Roman, Greek, and Egyptian-inspired art. Caravaggio. Raphael. Guido Reni. Bernini. Canova. Timeless masterpieces.

An astonishing range of styles — the feeling of stepping not just into a museum, but into a work of art itself.

A place reached by crossing a vast park of groves, secret gardens, sudden vistas — criss-crossed by pathways, fountains, and the busts of illustrious figures.

This is the Borghese Gallery. A place that has welcomed visitors for centuries — and still, today, overwhelms us with wonder.

## **INFORMATIONAL VIDEO – VOICE OVER**

Same voice as Scipione, with a warm, welcoming tone

### **SCIPIONE BORGHESE**

Welcome! I am Cardinal Scipione Borghese, creator of the Borghese Gallery.

You are invited to explore this extraordinary collection — but do remember to book your ticket and time slot in advance.

Visits are limited to two hours.

And, of course, there are a few rules to follow. Entry is granted in groups every sixty minutes, on the hour.

Large and medium-sized bags must be left at the cloakroom. No food or drink is allowed inside the galleries.

Flash photography is not permitted.

Please maintain a distance of at least one and a half metres from the artworks. And speak in hushed tones.

The gallery also offers services and facilities to enhance your visit. Our audio guides are available in several languages.

We provide free maps and guides for children.

We are fully accessible. For full details, please visit the Accessibility page on our website.

A cafeteria is available.

And the bookshop offers a wide range of items and souvenirs. Now, it's almost time to close...

I do hope you will visit the gallery soon.

*And don't forget — follow us on social media!*