

WHEN IN ROME

Written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. TYPICAL HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Banks of lockers, separated by classroom doors. Hand painted posters vie for attention. Kids mill around.

CARDEA (14) saunters down the busy hallway. She wears up-to-the-minute fashion and carries the very latest model of cell phone and accessories. She is VERY popular.

She carries herself with an air of casual superiority. The other kids look at her with deep admiration.

Except for NATALIE, YVONNE and CHIARA (all 16), the "Borgias," the Heathers/Plastics of our story.

Natalie, the head of the serpent, and co-captain of the cheerleading squad, is even more perfectly perfect. She is a queen bee in training and (almost) everyone fears her.

Yvonne is gorgeous and dumb as a box of hair. She has honed her vacuous personality to an art. Granted, that art is as refined as finger painting, but she does it perfectly.

Chiara is Italian and speaks little English. Her withering gaze and biting remarks transcend language.

They glare at Cardea with a disdain that barely conceals burning envy. All three of these girls are always perfectly made up & dressed.

Cardea speaks directly to the camera throughout this scene.

CARDEA

Hi, my name is Cardea. It's September and I am just about to start 9th grade in a brand new school. I'd really like to tell you that this is what I look like, but actually - I'm kind of a dork.

In a puff of smoke, her clothes and hairstyle change to those of a significantly less stylish kid.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

Dang.

The other kids don't look at her at all now. Her posture and demeanor droop with the new look.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

The best thing about going to a new school is no one knows who you were before. You can adjust, fit in, and no one will know that you're actually just faking it. And boy am I faking it!

She looks around at the other kids and at her own clothes.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

This still isn't quite right. Oh! I forgot to mention, it's September 1982!

Everybody's clothes change to 1982 styles.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

Did you know that 60 years ago the word "teenager" was coined? It's true. (beat) By the way, this is a Catholic school.

The kids' clothes change to Catholic school uniforms.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

An all-girls Catholic school.

Boom - all the boys vanish.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

An all-girls Catholic boarding school.

Metal bars slam down over windows. Double doors at the front of the school CLANG shut like jail cell doors.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

(re the bars & doors)

That's exactly why I was sent here: maximum security. At least we don't actually wear these awful uniforms.

Clothes go back to 1982 street clothes. Cardea walks toward the outer doors in jeans and a plain t-shirt.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

There's just one more detail I forgot to mention. My school...

She puts her hands on the doors. Cardea flings the school doors open and steps outside.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
 ... is in Rome!

EXT. SAMI CAMPUS - DAY

Italian sunlight warms and colors everything. The campus is lush, with an umbrella pine-lined road running uphill from the main gate to a picturesque old villa.

On one side of the road a tennis/basketball court breaks up the greenery at the bottom of the hill. The dorm & school buildings are on the other side.

CARDEA  
 Welcome to Saint Agnes of  
 Montepulciano International, SAMI  
 for short. Pretty nice, right?  
 Classes are up there, dorm here. My  
 room is number 48.

She points to a window on the second floor, second from the end.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
 I have two roommates, but I haven't  
 met them yet.

She walks onto a large patio in front of the dorm building. Other girls and their parents lug suitcases in. Upperclassmen hug and chatter about their summer adventures.

A 'Welcome to SAMI' table is set up on the patio, manned by Natalie, Yvonne and Chiara. They welcome incoming freshmen girls and their parents. All three of them are pictures of courtesy and cheerfulness.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
 I bet you're thinking what a bunch  
 of spoiled rich girls populate this  
 place. And you'd be right - about  
 some of them. The rest? Well, most  
 of their parents work overseas, and  
 because of that girls have been  
 coming here since the 60s. That's  
 Sue, her father works for the  
 Canadian embassy.

SUE (14) crouches behind a bush taking pictures of the other students with an impressively large camera.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
 That group over there are military  
 brats.

(MORE)

CARDEA (CONT'D)

That's Francesca, like most of the girls here her father works in Saudi Arabia. Unlike any other girl here, she's captain of the cheerleading squad... so basically... Queen Bee;

FRANCESCA (17), surrounded by groupies, demonstrates a high kick. Her adoring crowd applaud her superior skill, then try and fail to kick as high.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

Rachel is Australian, but she came here from Lebanon. There are girls here from all over the globe. Point is, not a single one of these girls comes from where I come from. And that makes me unique. Too bad "unique" is a adolescent's word for "wrong." Anyway, here we are. A bunch of teen-aged girls away from parental supervision for the first time. Totally exciting! And a bit scary.

Another girl, TERRI (14), cries and hugs her parents.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

That's one of my roommates. I haven't met her yet, but I know who she is because I'm the omniscient narrator. How cool is that?

At the Welcome to SAMI table, Yvonne hands a new student a welcome packet and recites an over-rehearsed speech...

YVONNE

Welcome to SAMI! Here's a map of the campus, a short list of helpful Italian phrases, dress code, and all sorts of other helpful hints to make you feel at home.

... while Natalie checks her name off a list in a note book and Chiara makes a note next to the girl's name "brutta, ma con potenziale."

NATALIE

You're in room 40. Just go in these doors, up one flight and half way down the hall. You can't miss it.

As soon as the new girl walks away, Natalie reads the note.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
 I agree, "ugly, but with  
 potential."  
 (to the next girl)  
 Hi! Welcome to SAMI!

CARDEA  
 My goal is to learn how to blend  
 in. To become just like them...

Cardea makes a sweeping gesture taking in all of the girls  
 around her.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
 ... without becoming like them!

She indicates the Borgias.

Sue approaches their table, camera clicking away. The Borgias  
 pose and smile. Sue snaps a couple of pics then moves on.

The Borgias are so caught up with posing, they do not  
 immediately notice that Sue has gone. They discreetly glance  
 around to make sure no one sees them looking foolish.  
 Especially Francesca.

MISS HILLS, (30s) a very proper English lady and the  
 housemother, leads Terri and her parents to the Welcome  
 table.

MISS HILLS  
 Ladies, this is Teresa Brennan. Can  
 you help her get settled, please?

The Borgias exchange looks of exaggerated sympathy about  
 Terri's obvious distress, entirely for Miss Hills' benefit.

NATALIE  
 Of course.

Yvonne recites her speech even more cheerfully, but just as  
 stiff and unnaturally. Consequently - louder.

YVONNE  
 Welcome to SAMI! Here's a map! Of  
 the campus! A short list of  
 helpful! Italian phrases! Dress  
 code! And all sorts of other  
 helpful hints! To make you feel!  
 At home!

Natalie checks her name off the list.

NATALIE

Teresa --

TERRI

-- It's Terri.

NATALIE

Terri. You're in room 48. Go in these doors, up one flight. It's the second from the end. You can't miss it.

MISS HILLS

Thank you, ladies. You've been very helpful.

NATALIE

(sycophantically)

Our pleasure.

As Terri walks away, accompanied by Miss Hills and her parents, Chiara writes her comment in the note book.

CHIARA

(shakes her head)

Nessuna speranza.

NATALIE

(correctly translating)

No hope at all.

YVONNE

(totally wrong)

Like, totally ugly shoes.

Chiara and Natalie grimace at Yvonne.

CARDEA

(to camera)

Come on, let's go upstairs.

Cardea goes in through the patio double doors.

INT. DORM OFFICE - DAY

SISTER JOSEPHINE is a formidable presence - tall and imposing, uncertain age but not old, wears a very smart designer suit as opposed to a habit.

Miss Hills knocks on the open door.

SR JOSEPHINE

Come in, Miss Hill.

MISS HILLS

Hills.

SR JOSEPHINE

I'm sorry?

MISS HILLS

Hills - plural. Like the Seven Hills of Rome.

SR JOSEPHINE

Noted, and very apropos. Come in, please.

Miss Hills takes her place in one of the two chairs opposite the utilitarian desk where SR JOSEPHINE sits.

SR JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

This is the dormitory office. Your office. You must be available here for the girls every morning and afternoon, and all day on the weekends. During school hours you are free to go about your own business.

MISS HILLS

Thank you, Sister. This will do nicely.

SR JOSEPHINE

As this is your first posting as a housemother, I must warn you. These girls are very... shall we say... Machiavellian. They will find any weakness you possess and exploit it to their own advantage.

MISS HILLS

Machiavellian? But they're just young girls. Surely that's a tad extreme.

SR JOSEPHINE

The education we provide here at Saint Agnes of Montepulciano is top notch, Miss Hills.

MISS HILLS

I don't doubt it.

SR JOSEPHINE

I haven't finished. These young women arrive here already more worldly than most people twice their age.

(MORE)



SR JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Combine that with the fact that they are walking bags of hormones confined, for the most part, to this campus and you will be surprised at what they can accomplish. And with surprising finesse.

MISS HILLS

Thank you, Sister. I've looked after young people for many years. I can't imagine any situation I can not handle.

SR JOSEPHINE

It's exactly the situations you can't imagine that should worry you.

INT. DORM - ROOM 48 - DAY

A fairly spartan room at this point - three of everything: single beds, small bedside cupboards, wooden desks and chairs fill the space. Brick walls, tile floors.

At one end of the room is a large window with shutters that slide open. Opposite the window is the door and three lockable closets.

One bed is piled high with clothes and shoes, empty suitcases lie on the floor.

One bed is perfectly made, covered with a frilly bedspread and a tidy array of stuffed animals.

On the wall behind this bed hang posters: adorable puppies and kittens with cutesy captions; Ziggy; Miss Piggy; various Tiger Beat one-sheets: Rick Springfield, Matt Dillon, Christopher Atkins.

Cardea looks down at her own bare bed. She sizes up her roommates' beds then nods at her own bed. It's made! Sumptuous gold fabric drapes the bed while piles of pillows in a variety of gem-tones with gold thread accents crown it.

CARDEA

(to camera)

Let me explain --

At that moment the door flies open. In bounces BONNIE (14), full of confidence in a Rush t-shirt. She flops down on her bed, on top of all the clothes.

BONNIE

Hey.

Cardea looks down at her own plain t-shirt. She turns away for a moment, and when she turns back the t-shirt has Air Supply on it.

CARDEA

Hey.

BONNIE

(sarcastically)

Cool t-shirt.

CARDEA

Oh... thanks.

Cardea folds her arms over the offending balloon logo.

BONNIE

How bitchin' is this?

CARDEA

Bitchin'... ing... ly... bitchin'.

BONNIE

Right? No parents. The whole city of Rome as our playground. Hey! Do you know how to get to STIKI?

Cardea has no idea what Bonnie is talking about.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

STIKI - Saint Ivo of Kermartin International. The boys' school.

CARDEA

Oh! No. I'm new here.

BONNIE

No duh! We're all new here. What's your name?

CARDEA

I'm Cardea.

BONNIE

What kind of name is that?

CARDEA

(taken aback)

It's... uh... a stupid one. My parents are really old fashioned.

BONNIE

I like it. It's different. I'll  
call you Cardi. My name's--

The door opens, interrupting Bonnie. Terri mopes in. Her eyes red and puffy. She throws herself face down on her tidy bed and sobs into her stuffed animals.

Cardea and Bonnie look at each other, at a loss.

CARDEA

Go talk to her.

BONNIE

You go talk to her.

Cardea is confused. A mortal has never told her what to do before.

CARDEA

But I'm... you're just... you  
can't... Can you?

BONNIE

Go!

Cardea sits on the edge of the bed and pats Terri on the back. Bonnie perches on the windowsill, she lights up a cigarette.

CARDEA

There, there, Terri.

TERRI

How'd you know my name?

CARDEA

I'm the omniscient narrator.

TERRI

What?

CARDEA

I overheard you on the patio.

Terri smashes her face back into her pillow.

BONNIE

Wanna bum a smoke?

TERRI

(into her pillow)  
No, thank you.

Terri sits up, wipes her eyes and takes a good look at her two new roommates.

CARDEA  
I'm Cardea.

BONNIE  
You can call her Cardi.

CARDEA  
Yes, you may. And this is...

BONNIE  
(while inhaling)  
Bowihmy.

TERRI  
(whispers)  
What'd she say?

Cardea shakes her head/shrugs "I have no idea."

CARDEA  
Are you OK, Terri?

TERRI  
It's just that I know I'll miss  
them so much.  
(beat)  
Could you get off my bed, please?

CARDEA  
Sorry!

She jumps up, and Terri smooths the bedspread around herself.

TERRI  
(to Bonnie)  
I don't think we're allowed to do  
that in the dorms.

Bonnie takes a long drag in defiant response.

BONNIE  
Pets?

CARDEA  
What?

BONNIE  
Her. Bossy pants. Are you going to  
miss your pets?

During this exchange Cardea quietly, and magically, changes her bedding to look more like Terri's,

TERRI

Sure. I have a cat. Of course I'll miss her. Why?

BONNIE

Boyfriend?

TERRI

No.

BONNIE

You said "them." You'll miss "them." Who else?

TERRI

My family! My parents and my brothers.

BONNIE

Gag me!

Terri looks to Cardea for support, who smooths down her own new bedspread, which now looks like a toned down version of Terri's.

She arranges her one pillow with stuffed toys of mythical creatures. Posters have appeared over her bed, too. But instead of teen heart throbs and cutesy cartoons they feature gorgeous gods and punny cartoons.

'A Roman walks into a bar, holds up two fingers and says, "Five beers, please."'

TERRI

Don't you miss...?

Bonnie double takes the bed and posters. Is she seeing things? She shakes her head no.

BONNIE

Nah. It's just like every other time I've moved and left people behind.

Terri looks pleadingly at Cardea.

CARDEA

My family's not really that close. I used to know these three sisters, called the Dolores, who were all very sad, too.

BONNIE  
 (sneering)  
 They were ALL called Dolores?

Terri, intrigued, wipes her eyes.

TERRI  
 Why were they sad?

CARDEA  
 Oh. Um... I don't really know. They  
 were born that way. Then it just  
 sort of became their 'thing.'

BONNIE  
 Their 'thing' was to be sad. What  
 does that even mean?

CARDEA  
 (hurt)  
 People have 'things.' It's just the  
 way it is where I come from.

TERRI  
 Where do you come from?

CARDEA  
 Oh. Um, I'm actually Roman, but  
 not.

TERRI  
 I get it. I'm actually from  
 Colorado, but not. Most of us grew  
 up all over.  
 (to Bonnie)  
 I'm not bossy!

BONNIE  
 (falsetto; calling)  
 Dolores!  
 (in 3 different voices)  
 Yes? Yes? Yes?

Bonnie falls apart laughing at her own wit.

CARDEA  
 How long ago did your parents  
 leave?

Terri flings herself back into her stuffed toys. Her answer  
 is incoherent between the sobs and the stuffing. Bonnie takes  
 a long drag on her cigarette. She blows smoke out the window.

BONNIE  
What'd she say?

CARDEA  
(to Terri)  
What did you say?

TERRI  
They're still here!

And Terri is inconsolable again.

BONNIE  
Now ask her if she has any hobbies  
other than crying.

EXT. THE HILL - DAY

Behind Cardea, in the distance, is Rome.

CARDEA  
(to the camera)  
So those are my roommates. Terri  
and ... Bow... whatever her name  
is. And out there, beyond the  
gates, is Rome. The Eternal City.  
Where Italian is the language of  
love.

Cardea sits down on the grass.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
True confessions time. I'm not  
really 14. And I'm not new to Rome.  
I've lived here my whole life and  
my whole life began a LONG time  
ago. About 27... hundred years ago,  
give or take.

Cardea stands up and takes on an imposing air.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
I'm Cardea, the goddess of  
thresholds and hinges. (beat, she  
deflates) Shut up! I am! Well, I  
was. The Board decided thresholds  
and hinges do fine on their own and  
don't really merit divine  
intervention. So I'm being re-  
assigned, on a probationary basis.  
I'm the new goddess of teenagers.  
(proudly) It's a promotion.

Cardea looks askance at the camera. Then faces it full on.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

This is serious. I have to learn everything there is about being a teenager. And I only have four years to do it, then be on the job up on Olympus. Teenagers have been stumbling through life for the past 60 years with no goddess to look after them! If I fail I don't get the gig, and I shudder to think what my eternal punishment will be. I mean, look at Prometheus. All he did was give fire to humans and bang - he's paté for an eagle! And mortal teenagers would be faced with their own unthinkable punishment, of course. Probably get transmogrified into hedgehogs or something.

Cardea wanders away, hangs her head and looks dejected. She mutters to herself.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

Fine, don't believe me. See if I care. Omniscient Narrator, my foot... I don't know my roommate's name or how to get to the boys' school! Semi-niscient is more like it. Quasi-niscient? Pseudoniscient at best.

INT. CAFETERIA - EVENING

The room is filled with girls; some eat at tables. Others stand in line at the counter to get their food. Behind the counter a pair of Italian ladies dish out mounds of steaming pasta and crisp salad.

Cardea, Terri and Bonnie walk away from the counter, their trays filled with food. They face the sea of tables.

TERRI

How about over there?

They weave their way between chairs to an empty table and sit.

BONNIE

This food smells amazing.



They all take a bite and relish the yumminess.

BONNIE (CONT'D)  
This is like totally shweet!

CARDEA  
This is better than ambrosia!

TERRI  
We are totally going to get so fat,  
for sure!

CARDEA  
(laughing)  
You both speak so strangely!

BONNIE  
Don't worry, dork, we'll Valley  
Girl you in no time.

Natalie, Yvonne and Chiara walk away from the counter with their trays. They pass by the table where Francesca sits.

FRANCESCA  
Natalie, a moment.

NATALIE  
Hi Francesca. Wicked earrings!

FRANCESCA  
Don't be a spaz, Natalie. I just  
want you to see what's going on  
over there.

She indicates the table where Cardea, et al eat their dinner.

FRANCESCA (CONT'D)  
You can't expect to sit at this  
table if you can't even hold on to  
your own.

NATALIE  
What a bunch of lame posers. How  
dare they!

FRANCESCA  
Good girl. Let's do lunch. Mwah,  
mwah.

Francesca and Natalie air kiss. Then Natalie and her crew storm over to the other table.

NATALIE  
You can move now.

TERRI

Oh. No thank you. We're fine here.  
You're welcome to join us. There's  
plenty of room.

YVONNE

What Natalie means to say is "Move.  
Now."

BONNIE

What Terri means to say is "Nuh-  
uh."

CHIARA

Non sai chi siamo?

Subtitle: Don't you know who we are?

YVONNE

What Chiara means to say is "she  
loves cheese."

CHIARA

(exasperated)  
Non è che ho detto!

Subtitle: That's not what I said!

Miss Hills steps in to intervene.

MISS HILLS

Ladies, how lovely to see  
upperclassmen taking new girls  
under their wing. Could you please  
introduce yourselves to me? I'm  
still learning everyone's names.

Natalie and company reluctantly sit down with Cardea & co.

NATALIE

I'm Natalie, this is Yvonne and  
Chiara.

YVONNE

Hi!

CHIARA

Ciao!

TERRI

We met earlier, Miss.

MISS HILLS

Terri. I remember.

TERRI

This is ...

She indicates Bonnie, who has a mouth stuffed with food. Bonnie says something incoherent that sounds vaguely like "Bonnie."

CARDEA  
I'm Cardea. Cardi.

Miss Hills' interest is piqued.

MISS HILLS  
Cardea. What a unique name. I've  
only ever known one Cardea before  
and she had an unusual fondness for  
doors.

Cardea shoots a shocked look at camera.

MISS HILLS (CONT'D)  
I'm glad to meet all of you.  
(to Natalie)  
Maybe you can keep an eye on these  
girls and help them out?

NATALIE  
(far too cheerfully)  
Of course we will, Miss...?

MISS HILLS  
Hills. Enjoy your dinner, ladies.

NATALIE/YVONNE  
Thank you, Miss Hills.

CHIARA  
Grazie, Signorina Hills.

Miss Hills, satisfied, leaves the girls to join Sr Josphine at a table across the room.

CARDEA  
So, we're under your wing now, huh?  
You're like our own personal  
Pegasus.

NATALIE  
You calling me a horse?

CARDEA  
Never! Pegasus isn't a horse,  
he's... divine. Anyway, it's great  
because there is so much I don't  
know.

Bonnie follows her lead.

BONNIE  
Like how to get to STIKI.

TERRI

Yes! My brother goes there.

BONNIE

Or how to break rules without getting busted.

TERRI

Well, maybe not that.

NATALIE

Or who we are.

CARDEA

Or who you are.

Cardea looks directly and deeply into the camera and smiles.

CARDEA (CONT'D)

I think we all know exactly who they are. If there's one thing gods can do better than anyone else is be nasty. And these girls give even Hera a run for her money! Let's have some fun.

She nods and the scene transforms into an Italian restaurant complete with little red table lamps and wax dripped Chianti bottles. The girls are now dressed in 1960s men's suits and talk with exaggerated NY Italian accents.

NATALIE

You wanna know who we are?

CARDEA

Yeah. All of youz.

NATALIE

We're the ones in charge, capiche? We call the shots. All of 'em.

CARDEA

So you're a tough guy, huh?

CHIARA

Quanta influenza ha, capa?

Subtitle: How much pull she got, boss?

NATALIE

The usual amount of pull. Zero. Nothin'. Pow! Ping!

CARDEA  
You're really funny.

NATALIE  
What do you mean I'm funny?

CARDEA  
You're a funny gal.

NATALIE  
Funny how? I mean, what's funny  
about me?

TERRI  
You got it all wrong.

YVONNE  
Hey, Anthony --

BONNIE  
-- Her name's Terri.

NATALIE  
She's a big girl. She knows what  
she said. What'd you say?

CARDEA  
Just... just that I think you're  
funny.

Natalie makes a sudden movement towards Cardea who jerks back  
in fear. Natalie punches her twice on the shoulder.

NATALIE  
Two for flinching! Ah! I'm just  
jokin' here!

Natalie sits back in her chair, satisfied.

Cardea rubs her shoulder, then nods very quickly. All returns  
to normal.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
And this is our table.  
(to Yvonne & Chiara)  
Ladies, help our new friends with  
their chairs.

They both get up and stand behind Bonnie and Terri. As one,  
they yank the chairs out from under them. They land  
unceremoniously on the floor. Other girls in the cafeteria  
openly laugh.

Cardi jumps up before becoming the next victim. She looks like she could kill. She squeezes her eyes shut. When she opens them again, the Italian restaurant is back.

CARDEA

You're gonna pay for that, see.

She shoots an exaggerated-looking Tommy gun at the Borgias. Instead of bullets, spaghetti fires out, covering them in an impenetrable net of noodles.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Over transition:

CARDEA (V.O.)

And that's how you put the Italian  
in your fantasy sequence. Bada  
bing!

Cardi and all the other Freshman girls file in, fill rows of seats set up theater style. At the front of the room is a raised stage, complete with red velvet curtains and old fashioned foot lights. There is a lot of hubbub.

Miss Hills takes her place behind a podium on stage and speaks into a mic.

MISS HILLS

Hello. Quiet, everyone. Settle  
down, please.

The girls go quiet.

MISS HILLS (CONT'D)

Thank you. Welcome new boarders. My  
name is Miss Hills, I am the Head  
Housemother. If you have any  
problems at all, if you just want  
to have a bit of a chin wag, please  
do not hesitate to come to me. My  
door is always open.

CARDEA

(to camera)

Note to self: fix that door.

MISS HILLS

Now I'd like to introduce a very  
important person, your  
headmistress, Sister Josephine.

A smattering of tentative applause as Sr Josephine approaches the mic.

BONNIE  
 (whispers to Cardi)  
 She's a nun?! Where's her habit?

Cardi shrugs.

CARDEA  
 Maybe she's a plain clothes nun?

SR JOSEPHINE  
 Welcome, girls.

Sr Josephine drones on, unintelligibly, in the background.

CARDEA  
 (to camera)  
 You don't need to hear all this.  
 The important parts are:

Cardea points an invisible remote at Sr Josephine and pushes an invisible button with her thumb.

SR JOSEPHINE  
 ... on campus curfew for  
 underclassmen is 7:00 during the  
 week and 10:00 on weekends. There  
 are exceptions, and special  
 permissions will be considered...

Sr Josephine moves and talks in "fast forward" until the next important bit. She sounds like a sped up Walkman. Each time, Cardea uses her invisible remote.

SR JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)  
 ... Study hall is from 8 o'clock  
 until 9:30. Lights out at 10:00...

Fast forward.

SR JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)  
 ... visits to the boys' school are  
 currently forbidden for new  
 boarders.

Moans and grumbles from the crowd.

SR JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)  
 Of course, you will have ample  
 opportunity to fraternize during  
 organized events such as dances,  
 sporting events and other  
 chaperoned occasions...

Fast forward.

SR JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)  
 ... breaking of these rules in the  
 first instance will result in being  
 campused ...

CARDEA  
 (to camera; remote paused)  
 "Campused" means exactly what it  
 sounds like - not allowed to leave.  
 Totally imprisoned.

SFX CRASH of metal doors and bars from the opening scene.

SR JOSEPHINE  
 ... for a second offence I will  
 contact your parents, and should  
 the behavior continue I will be  
 forced to suspend or expel the  
 offender.

BONNIE  
 (to Cardi)  
 Harsh toke!

Sr Josephine steps away from the podium and Miss Hills takes  
 her place there.

MISS HILLS  
 Thank you, Sister.  
 (to the girls)  
 I'd like us all to chill for a  
 moment...

Sr Josephine becomes visibly apprehensive at this.

BONNIE  
 (to Cardi & Terri)  
 It's never a good sign when they  
 try to talk like us.

MISS HILLS  
 ... You are all new here. Away from  
 your families for the first time.  
 (MORE)



MISS HILLS (CONT'D)  
 Feeling a bit alone, a bit unsure  
 of yourself. Well, I too, am new  
 here and feel those feelings.

Sr Josephine puts her face in her hand. The girls in the  
 audience squirm uncomfortably.

MISS HILLS (CONT'D)  
 What you don't know is that I  
 corresponded with your parents  
 before you all arrived.

Now the girls look really uncomfortable, some very worried.

MISS HILLS (CONT'D)  
 Don't worry. I asked them to drop  
 off a bit of home before leaving  
 you in our hands.

Miss Hills steps into the wings and the curtains open to  
 reveal a table laden with packages. She returns to the  
 podium.

MISS HILLS (CONT'D)  
 Care packages from home! Come on up  
 here, ladies, find your goodies.

The mood in the room instantly lifts. The girls cheer and  
 rush the stage to find their care package.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Cardea, Terri and Bonnie climb the stairs and walk back  
 towards their room. Around them other girls do the same. They  
 each carry an open cardboard box filled with goodies.

Terri eats a home-baked chocolate chip cookie, Bonnie  
 rummages through store-bought candy, Cardi eats candy made  
 from dried fruit.

TERRI  
 I'm a total chow hound when it  
 comes to my mother's cookies.

BONNIE  
 (digging through her box)  
 Crap. Garbage. Grody. Ah ha - here  
 you are, my lovelies.

She pulls out a pack of Marlboros.

TERRI  
 Gag me with a spoon!

BONNIE  
Don't beat it till you try it.

TERRI  
(to Cardea)  
What are those?

CARDEA  
Carob-covered raisins. Good and  
good for you. Wanna try?

TERRI  
Uh, barf me out!

CARDEA  
Don't beat it till you try it.

TERRI  
You're right.

Terri instead grabs a ciggy from Bonnie.

BONNIE  
Not cool, dude!

Just then, Natalie, Yvonne and Chiara step out of nowhere and  
block their way.

YVONNE  
Well, lookie here. Freshmen  
goodies.

CHIARA  
C'è cioccolato?

Subtitle: Is there any chocolate?

Each Borgia grabs a box away from our trio. They rummage  
through them, letting undesirable snacks fall on the floor.

BONNIE  
What the hell?

TERRI  
That's mine!

CARDEA  
Give those back!

The Borgias split the booty, giving most of the chocolate to  
Natalie. They all take bites out of several goodies, dropping  
the remains either back into the boxes or on the floor.

NATALIE

Take a chill pill, you hosers.  
Consider this protection money for  
keeping an eye on you. You pay by  
supplying my chocolate habit.

YVONNE

She's a certified chocoholic.

Chiara knocks the cigarette out of Terri's hand.

CHIARA

Questo ti ucciderà.

Subtitle: That will kill you.

YVONNE

And clean up this mess. You want to  
get campused on your first day?

They dump what's left of the snacks all over the floor, step  
on some of it as they saunter away.

Terri and Bonnie are left shell-shocked. Cardi picks up the  
rumpled cigarette and defiantly puts it in her mouth.

At the far end of the hall, Miss Hills quietly watches the  
goings on.

INT. DORM - ROOM 48 - NIGHT

The girls get ready for bed. Terri wears a long nightgown,  
Bonnie is in an oversized t-shirt.

Cardea, in a nighty that looks like a Roman toga, comes in  
looking a bit worse for wear.

TERRI

I told you not to smoke that.

CARDEA

What happened to me?

BONNIE

You hurled.

CARDEA

What?

BONNIE

Barfed. Blew chunks. Prayed to the  
porcelain god.

CARDEA  
I don't know him.

TERRI  
The cigarette made you sick.

CARDEA  
I've tried that once. I did not  
enjoy it. Never again.

BONNIE  
You sure?

Bonnie waves her pack of cigarettes under Cardea's nose.  
Cardea goes a bit green.

Terri and Bonnie laugh at Cardi's expense, while Bonnie  
pushes the pile of clothes and stuff off her bed onto the  
floor.

TERRI  
I wish you'd make your bed.

BONNIE  
Why? It'll just get messed up again  
when I sleep in it.

Cardi looks to each girl in order to gauge what her own  
reaction should be. Bonnie laughs, Terri is not amused. Cardi  
glances at the camera, shrugs, and says...

CARDEA  
She tried it once, did not enjoy  
it, never again.

The girls laugh. They each pull back the covers on their beds  
in sync.

And scream.

EXT. DORM - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Outside room 48 the Borgias press their ears to the door.  
They all stifle giggles and run away down the hall holding  
bottles of ketchup and scissors.

INT. DORM - ROOM 48 - NIGHT

Revealed on each bed are the headless bodies of stuffed toys,  
dripping with ketchup "blood."

CARDEA

Who in Inferno would do this?

Terri gently scoops the remains of a teddy bear, holding it at arm's length.

TERRI

Mr Fluffernutter!

Bonnie swipes the decapitated creature off her bed, throws a blanket on top of the red mess, and flops down on top.

TERRI (CONT'D)

How can you be so heartless?

BONNIE

They're just toys. Who cares?

TERRI

It's my teddy bear!

CARDEA

It's an invasion of our space. They crossed our threshold!

There is a knock on the door.

MISS HILLS (O.S.)

May I come in, girls?

CARDEA

Hang on!

The girls hide the mess as best they can. Terri puts Mr Fluffernutter back on the bed and covers him up. Cardea opens the door and Miss Hills enters.

MISS HILLS

Is everything all right? I heard screams.

BONNIE

Everything's fine, Miss Hills. We were just joking around.

TERRI

Everything is not fine! Someone broke into our room and beheaded our stuffed animals!

Terri whips back her blankets to reveal Mr Fluffernutter's body.

MISS HILLS

Good heavens! Do you have any idea who it could have been?

BONNIE

No. No idea at all. But we can handle it. No biggie.

MISS HILLS

Well, if you suddenly realize you might know who did it ... don't tell me about it.

CARDEA

Excuse me?

MISS HILLS

You are very clever and resourceful young ladies. Wise beyond your years. You'll know what to do.

BONNIE

Are you telling us to retaliate?

MISS HILLS

I'm not suggesting anything one way or the other.

Miss Hills gives the girls a knowing smile.

MISS HILLS (CONT'D)

Good night. Lights out in half an hour. Don't forget.

(as she leaves)

All kinds of interesting things can happen after dark, can't they?

Miss Hills leaves as the realization of revenge dawns on Cardea.

CARDEA

(to camera)

Another thing we gods excel at is revenge.

INT. DORM OFFICE - NIGHT

Miss Hills is alone in the office writing with a plumed fountain pen. She looks different when she is in private, more beautiful, more regal. It's because she has dropped her Miss Hills guise and lets her true self appear: she is ABEONA, Goddess of Children Who Have Left Home.

She blows gently to dry the ink. The name at the bottom of the missive is Abeona. She rolls up the piece of paper.

She opens her window and a raven flies in. She attaches the rolled up paper to the raven's foot.

MISS HILLS

This is my first day's report,  
Mercury. Take care the Board  
receives it in one piece. Cardea  
did quite well for her first day.  
We must ensure her success.  
Understand?

The raven calls out in response then takes flight.

EXT. SAMI CAMPUS - SAME

A female figure stands in the dark watching the raven fly away. This is DISCORDIA, Goddess of Chaos and Strife.

DISCORDIA

Found you.

EXT. DORM BUILDING - NIGHT

All windows are dark, except for one: second floor, second from the end. A faint glow shows through the slats of the wooden blind.

INT. DORM - ROOM 48 - NIGHT

Terri sits on the floor under a blanket fort with a desk lamp.

There are sheets of paper strewn around her covered in hand-drawn maps of the dining room and other parts of the dorm. Colorful arrows point from one area to another, from this person's name to that. It's all very complicated looking.

REVENGE PLANNING FANTASY MONTAGE

The following snippets are all under Mission Impossible-style music.

- Cardea, dressed all in black, ducks under crisscrossed laser beams to get across the hall.

- Bonnie, also all in black, is lowered from the ceiling on a winch.

- Cardea clears the laser beams and knocks on Room 46's door. It opens a crack. An eye scans Cardea up & down before Sue lets her in.

- Bonnie reaches the floor. She steps on carefully chosen floor tiles to reach Room 50. She slides a scrap of paper under the door. A moment later another bit of paper slides back out.

- Split screen: Cardea & Bonnie hide in the shadows as they both stealthily make their way back to Room 48. Just one door over from where they were.

END MONTAGE

INT. DORM - ROOM 48 - NIGHT

The door SQUEAKS loudly and Terri immediately flips off the light. Cardea and Bonnie very quietly come in (in their pajamas).

BONNIE  
(loud whisper)  
It's just us.

Cardea addresses the door hinges.

CARDEA  
Seriously? I leave you alone for  
one day...

Terri turns the light back on. Cardea & Bonnie climb under the blanket.

TERRI  
Status report.

BONNIE  
They're all in.

TERRI  
I'm still not sure about this.

CARDEA  
I am. It's going to be a breakfast  
to remember.

INT. PE EQUIPMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Discordia surveys the room. She finds what she was looking for.



DISCORDIA  
Oh, this will do nicely!

INT. CAFETERIA - MORNING

All the girls are bleary-eyed as they pour themselves bowls of cereal, cups of coffee, and load up their plates with large bread rolls and Nutella.

Girls are in their pajamas, others have dripping wet hair, others have eagerly dressed for their first day of school.

Our heroes sit at the same table where they had dinner. They are experiencing the wonder of an Italian bread roll called a rosetti slathered with Nutella.

BONNIE  
Oh my god. Chocolate on bread...  
for breakfast!

CARDEA  
Forget ambrosia, this is better  
than nectar of the gods!

BONNIE  
You're weird. I like it.

TERRI  
My brother told me about these. I  
didn't believe him. Remember last  
night when I said how fat we're  
going to get?

Cardea & Bonnie puff out their cheeks to demonstrate.

RACHEL, (14) from Australia, approaches.

CARDEA  
Hi Rachel. Did you bring the stuff?

Rachel looks furtively around the room, reaches inside her bathrobe, and produces a jar.

RACHEL  
Got it right here.

She puts the jar on the table, it's Nutella.

TERRI  
I think we have enough, thank you.

RACHEL  
Sniff.

She holds out the open jar for Terri to sniff. Terri recoils with disgust.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Vegemite.

TERRI  
Oh my god, I had no idea it was  
that awful!

Rachel holds up an empty jar of Vegemite next to her cheek and grins. She sings the classic Australian Vegemite commercial jingle.

RACHEL  
We're happy little Vegemites, as  
bright as bright can be. We all  
enjoy our Vegemite for breakfast,  
lunch, and tea. Our mummies say  
we're growing strong every single  
week because we LOVE our Vegemite!  
We all ADORE our Vegemite! It puts  
a rose in every cheek!

TERRI  
(clapping)  
Very nice - but it barfs me out.

CARDEA  
Ah! That's the idea.

BONNIE  
And it has the added bonus of  
looking just like Nutella!

Bonnie cuts a rosetti open and spreads the Vegemite on thickly.

RACHEL  
Too much, mate!

CARDEA  
I think it's just right!

TERRI  
There's no way Natalie will eat  
that.

CARDEA  
You mean that 'certified  
chocoholic'? She won't be able to  
resist.

RACHEL

Good on ya.

Natalie and the Borgias enter the cafeteria. Cardea makes a big show of spreading "Nutella" on a rosetti. Then she "notices" the Borgias and pretends to be scared.

CARDEA

Oh no!

BONNIE

Quick, give them their table back!

Terri bursts into loud, dramatic tears. Rachel bolts away.

Cardea, Terri and Bonnie leave the table in a hurry. Cardea doubles back to pick up the rosetti with Vegemite on it.

She makes eye contact with Natalie who shakes her head "no." Cardea backs away without the rosetti.

Natalie, Yvonne and Chiara sit down and reclaim their rightful table - like three queens sitting on their thrones.

Cardea & Company walk by another table where Sue sits with other girls.

CARDEA

You're up.

Sue gets up and positions herself strategically behind a potted plant where she hoists a massive camera with an impressive telephoto lens into place.

Natalie picks up the Vegemite roll that Cardea left behind. The rest plays out in slow motion:

Natalie aims the roll for her mouth. Girls all around the cafeteria turn to watch. Including Francesca, captain of the cheerleading squad.

Cardea & Co stop at the door of the cafeteria, turn & watch. Yvonne and Chiara are smug.

Natalie takes an enormous bite. As she chews her expression changes from triumph to horror. Her eyes go wide as she searches for a place to spit out the offending morsel.

Sue busily snaps photos throughout, flashbulb exploding.

Yvonne and Chiara are caught in Natalie's spit zone. Unfortunately for Natalie, so is Francesca, whose expression changes from initial shock to utter contempt.

Back in real time, Cardea, Bonnie and Terri do a triple high five. They exit in triumph.

In a far corner Sr Josephine and Miss Hills have their breakfast.

SR JOSEPHINE

And so it begins.

Miss Hills smiles into her coffee.

Another teacher, the Coach, wearing sweat pants, leg warmers and a Flashdance-style sweatshirt, approaches the table. She carries a tray of food.

SR JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Ah, good morning, Ms DiCordia. Join us for breakfast?

DISCORDIA

Thank you, Sister, don't mind if I do.

Discordia sits and sips her coffee. She smiles at Miss Hills.

SR JOSEPHINE

Miss Hills, let me introduce you to our new coach, Ms DiCordia. Her presence is like a miracle. When our regular coach, Miss Bennett, arrived this morning she had a terrible accident in the equipment room. Something to do with badminton shuttlecocks and Lacrosse sticks.

MISS HILLS

Oh?

DISCORDIA

(enjoying it a bit)  
Yes. Just awful.

SR JOSEPHINE

It was divine intervention that Miss DiCordia was visiting and can take over for Miss Bennett as she recovers.

MISS HILLS

(suspiciously)  
How convenient.  
(to Discordia)  
Have we met before?

Discordia shrugs her shoulders, hiding a wicked smile behind her coffee mug.

INT. DORM - ROOM 48 - DAY

The girls are ready for their first day of school. With note books and pencil cases in hand, Bonnie and Terri wait at the door. Cardi hangs back.

BONNIE

Come on, dork.

TERRI

Can't be late on the first day.

CARDEA

Go on ahead, I'll catch up.

Bonnie and Terri leave. Cardi opens her desk drawer and takes out a scrolled parchment and quill. She writes:

CARDEA (V.O.)

Mortal Teenager Education Program,  
Progress Report One. Greetings  
Mighty Olympians. My first full day  
on Earth was very enlightening. I  
learned things about these lesser  
beings that I had never dreamed of  
before. For example, girls can be  
as conniving as several minor  
deities I know (I think you know  
who I'm talking about), and they  
can be astonishingly clever; being  
weird doesn't always mean being  
wrong. Furthermore, I learned that  
an almost religious importance is  
placed on toys in the shape of  
animals, the way they speak is  
confusing and friendship is  
everything. That one person's  
Nutella is another person's  
Vegemite. (I will attempt to send a  
sample of Nutella for your  
appraisal. I guarantee your  
approval). Above all else I learned  
that I have an unfathomable amount  
left to learn. Until tomorrow,  
yours humbly, Cardea.

Cardi blows on the ink, rolls up the scroll and opens the window. The raven is there, ready to take her missive.

CARDEA  
Thanks, Mercury!

Cardi picks up her school supplies and walks out of the room as the credits roll in front of her. She makes her way towards the school building, then stops when something catches her eye. Cardea comes right up to the camera, reaches up and "grabs" the credits.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
Wait!

She pulls them back up (or down) to the cast list. She finds the name of the actress playing Bonnie and sees the character's name for the first time.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
Ohhhh!

Cardi runs to catch up with her friends.

CARDEA (CONT'D)  
(shouts)  
BONNIE, Terri, wait up!

THE END