Caterina fell asleep while studying, and she cannot wake up!

It's June 25, 1678, and Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia is about to be the first woman in the world to obtain a PhD. First, though, she needs her notes.

Solve weekly riddles alongside Caterina to find Elena's notes and wake up from the dream!
The clock struck the hour: 21:00. Caterina sighed as the students around her packed up and left the library. She had been in there since the morning and still had not written a word of her thesis.

“One more hour, and then I can go home and go to bed,” she muttered to herself. “If I can get my brain to work before then.” She stared at the blank document on her screen and the open book before her, but the pages began to blur. Blinking frantically in an attempt to bring the words back into focus, Caterina fought against the sleep that was overtaking her.

“Maybe I will just close my eyes for a minute to let them relax,” she thought as she began to drift off to sleep, “a nap will re-energize me.”

Her eyes snapped back open.

“No, no, no! I cannot fall asleep right now! I need to work on this thesis, and I cannot put it off any longer.”

Looking up from the book on her lap, Caterina moved to begin writing, only to find that her laptop was no longer in front of her. Not just that, but there was no table, there were no other students, and she was no longer in the library. She was now sitting at the bottom of one of the staircases leading to the upper loggia in the historic Palazzo Bo.
“Oh good, I found someone. I need your help,” said a woman as she rounded the corner. The woman was dressed lavishly and wore a cross on her breast. She looked familiar, but Caterina could not remember why.

“Forgive me, but who are you?” Caterina asked.

“My name is Elena,” the woman replied.

That’s it! Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, the first female graduate in the world. But...how was she here?

“I’m supposed to present my dissertation for my degree in two hours,” Elena continued.

Surely, this must be a dream. Caterina began to panic. She needed to wake up and continue working!

“I’m sorry to bother you, but I truly need your help. I need to look over my notes one more time before I present, but one of my professors took them to edit. There are far too many people attending my defense to fit in Palazzo Bo and I need to help move everyone to the Cathedral instead, so I do not have time to get my notes back,” Elena said.
“I am so sorry but I am in a hurry too, and I do not have time for this. I need to write my own thesis, and I don’t understand a thing I am supposed to be writing about,” Caterina replied.

“Well, what is your thesis on?” Elena asked.

“I am explaining two Aristotelian theses.”

“Okay, that is perfect! I am about to receive a doctorate in philosophy. Find my notes, and I’ll help explain your theses. You can even listen to my presentation.”

“Okay,” said Caterina. “But how do I find your notes?”

“My professor left a memo. I respect him deeply, of course, because he was my first teacher and he is a great scholar and priest. Sometimes his love of words, though, can make things so difficult! He’s having fun playing with me like he did when he still taught me as a child. He left a riddle to find his location. I need to leave, but I have full confidence that you can figure it out,” said Elena. “When you find him, his name is Don Giovanni Battista Fabris. If it helps at all, he’s a theologian and a scholar of philosophy. Oh, and he studies ancient Greek!”

With that, Elena walked swiftly away, leaving Caterina alone to decipher the riddle. Caterina looked down at the note in her hand...
Cara Elena,

I read your notes, and I will have suggestions for you by early afternoon. Come retrieve them from me when you are ready. To find me, solve this riddle:

Of Ancient Greece I was born
Of the Carraresi I was built
Look to the sky to find my coffers
Stay within my walls to hear theory of the body
In me, the children of Hippocrates face their final trial.

Cordiali saluti,
Prof. Fabris
"In me, the children of Hippocrates face their final trial...” Caterina mused. “That’s...oh! L’Aula di Medicina!” she exclaimed, already turning to ascend the stairs behind her into the upper levels of Palazzo Bo.

Making her way to the Aula, Caterina returned her thoughts to her unfinished thesis.

“I don’t understand why I can’t wake up! Ugh. Elena said that this Monsignor Fabris taught philosophy, right? Maybe I can ask if he has any ideas for the thesis.” Caterina thought to herself as she rounded the corner into the Aula.

Sitting at the end of a long u-shaped table, Monsignor Fabris was bent over a book, taking notes on a pad of paper to his side.

“Scusi, Monsignor Fabris?” Caterina asked

“Sì, how can I help you?” He replied.

“Do you have some notes for Elena?” Caterina responded.

“Oh, Elena! Remarkable Elena...she is so smart and dedicated,” Fabris began, excitedly.

“Yes, she sure is, and I’m so happy that she is getting her degree, but can I–”
“She has always been so devoted to her studies. I remember when she was a child and I was the family priest. Even before I began to tutor her she was extremely curious. The Cornèr family library was so important to her, even as she grew up! She read so many books in there. It was stunning. Oh! Do you know how many languages she studied?” Fabris cut in.

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“Six! She is just exceptional.” Fabris continued.

“I agree, Monsignor Fabris, and I am trying to help h–”

“Did you know that she is presenting today for her degree? You should attend! She is discussing works of Aristotle. Ah, I love Aristotle.” Fabris continued, “This feels very fitting. I remember the first time I introduced Elena to some of his theses. She was so young...Anyway, what can I do for you?”

Caterina sighed, “Elena wants to look over her notes once more before presenting her discourse. She said that you had taken them to edit, and she sent me to retrieve them.”

“Oh, the notes! Yes, I made some annotations, but I thought that Father Rotondi may have some helpful thoughts to add. He teaches theology here at the University, rather than philosophy, but he oversaw Elena’s studies for many years,” Fabris said.
“Oh...okay,” Caterina responded. “Do you know where I can find Father Rotondi?”

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“Of course, let me write it down,” Fabris said as he scribbled something on a piece of paper. Handing the paper to Elena, he begins to leave. “I must be going now, best of luck!”

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“Thank you!” Caterina replied. “Wait...best of luck?”

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Caterina looked down at the paper in her hand...another riddle.
Go outside and you will find a calming place to free your mind.

For over a century, here I’ve grown. Medicine and poison each hold their own.

I am a place of learning and a place of peace.
I am the place where nature and culture meet.
“Hmm... ‘medicine and poison each hold their own...the place where nature and culture meet’...” Caterina thought to herself. “It must be the Orto Botanico! I remember reading that they used to grow medicinal plants and poisonous ones for students to learn from.”

Glancing down at her watch, Caterina groaned. It had already been 40 minutes, and the botanical garden would be an extra 15-minute walk. She needed to wake up and get back to work. Caterina turned on her heel and ran out of Palazzo Bo, toward the botanical garden. She was determined to hunt Elena’s notes as fast as possible.

A few minutes later, Caterina sprinted past the gates of the Orto Botanico, wheezing as she frantically searched for Father Rotondi. Finally, seeing a man dressed in black sitting beneath a tree, Caterina stopped.

“Father- Rotondi?” she wheezed.

“Yes, I am he. Dear, why are you panting?” Father Rotondi replied. “Slow down and listen to the trees. There is much we can learn from these plants. This is a place for relaxation and contemplation – a spiritual place.”

To himself, he added, “I should bring Elena here after her discourse today. I am not sure she has ever been here, but she would love it.”
"Father, since you mention Elena, she is actually the reason that I am here," Caterina said. "I am trying to retrieve some of Elena’s notes so that she can review them before she presents. Professor Fabris said you have them?"

"Oh, I am so happy that Elena is finally presenting today. I have so much confidence in her. She deserves this degree. This journey certainly has not been easy for her, particularly as a woman. Did you know that I originally submitted her for a degree in theology?" Rotondi responded.

"But isn’t her degree in philosophy?"

"Indeed. The Cardinal denied our petition on the grounds that it would be too close to a woman becoming ordained... a shame, truly. Elena has always been so dedicated to her studies of religion – both academically and spiritually. She even became a Benedictine Oblate when she was only 19," Rotondi added.

"Oh. I remember that she tried to become a nun," Caterina replied.
She wanted to become a nun, but her father denied it, as he desired for her to attend college. I, of course, agree that Elena’s completion of a degree is very important for both her family and for women. She would have made an amazing theologian, though. She has always spoken with such eloquence, and the speed with which she grasped each new concept was amazing” Rotondi trailed off, thinking out loud.

“Never matter,” he said. “Professor Carlo Rinaldini has guided her studies in the subject masterfully. By the way, I, unfortunately, do not have Elena’s notes for you, my dear. I passed them off to Professor Rinaldini so that he could contribute his expertise. I assumed he would give them to Elena.”

“She thought that Professor Fabris still had them!” Caterina cried. “I need to get these notes back so that I can wake up! Where is Professor Rinaldini?”

“My dear, I would love to tell you, but unfortunately I don’t know. When Rinaldini picked up the notes from my office I was not there, so he just left a note with this hint...”
I stand beside the Bishop's seat.
The stories of San Giovanni, my walls repeat.

Look to the skies, in me, you'll find
the Saints, the Son, and Paradise.

After this place, there's not far to go
to return to Elena with notes in tow.
“I think that the Bishop’s seat is the Basilica di Santa Maria Assunta, and next to that is...the Baptistery! Yes, that must be it, of course – ‘the stories of San Giovanni’. It’s the Battistero di San Giovanni Battista!” Caterina exclaimed.

Once again, Caterina took off running across Padua to her next destination. When she arrived in Piazza Duomo, though, she found a large crowd blocking her way into both the Cathedral and the Baptistery. Determined to find Professor Rinaldini, Caterina slipped through the crowd, squeezing between those that had gathered for Elena’s presentation.

When she finally got into the Baptistery, Caterina found Professor Rinaldini simply standing, staring at the ceiling.

“It’s almost hypnotic, isn’t it? This wheel of saints and angels?” Rinaldini mused, staring at the depiction of Paradise above him. “Are you here to meditate as well?”

“No, professor, I’m looking for Elena’s notes, and I was told you have them,” Caterina responded.

“Oh yes, of course. I was just about to go deliver them to her. Not that Elena needs them, honestly. The annotations on these are very minor,” Rinaldini said, waving the notes in the air. “She’s undoubtedly proficient in the material, and it will be incredibly clear as soon as she begins her discourse.”
“I completely agree, professor, but she wants the notes regardless. I really need to deliver them quickly, I’ve been trying to track them down for hours” said Caterina.

Rinaldini shook his head. “Not to worry, not to worry. We can bring them to her together. You won’t be able to get into the Cathedral by yourself, anyway. There are dignitaries from all over the region, plus the Venetian rectors of Padua, who are attending. Most of the public will not be able to watch inside. On that note, who are you, may I ask?”

“I am...just a younger student,” Caterina said, trying to find the right words to explain her situation. “I also study philosophy, and I am writing on some of Aristotle’s theses, but I’m completely stuck.”

“Well, my dear, it’s lovely to see another young woman studying the material. You’re in the right place. Come now, you can explain your obstacle to me on the way. Elena is right next door.” Together, Caterina and Professor Rinaldini made their way into the Basilica Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta.

As soon as they entered the Cathedral, Elena rushed to meet them. “Oh thank goodness, you have the notes. I need to look over these quickly— I’m going to begin shortly,” she said.
“They have annotations by Professor Fabris, Professor Rotondi, and myself. But really, Elena, you know this material by heart. You understand it deeply and you always speak eloquently,” Professor Rinaldini said.

“Thank you, professor. I’m just nervous since the exact theses I have to discuss were revealed so shortly before the actual presentation. Regardless, thank you for retrieving these, Caterina,” Elena said.

“I hope you can stay to listen to Elena’s discourse,” Professor Rinaldini said to Caterina. “You seem like a very capable student. I suggest that you stay and listen closely to the presentation. You may find it very helpful in your own writing. I need to go help prepare everything, but if you are still here after everything has finished, I can help to clear up any confusion in your writing, as well.”

“Oh, thank you so much, Professor Rinaldini,” Caterina said as the professor turned and rushed away with Elena. Caterina took a seat to wait for the presentation to begin, but as minutes passed, she felt her eyelids once again becoming heavy.
As Caterina tried to keep her eyes open and stay in the dream, she heard the beginning of Elena’s discourse. The material sounded very familiar...it was the same thesis as the one on which Caterina’s own writing focused! Her eyelids became heavier and heavier, but Caterina fought to stay in the dream and listen to Elena’s explanation. Eventually, though, she could not stay any longer. The next thing she knew, Caterina opened her eyes and saw the familiar, blank document of her thesis in front of her.

Groaning, she stretched and prepared to retry writing her introduction. As she started typing, however, Caterina realized that this time the words flowed naturally from her fingers. As if Elena’s eloquence and expertise had transcended the dream, Caterina wrote furiously with newfound clarity.

"Hmm, sometimes I guess all it takes is a nap and a fresh inspiration," she thought to herself.