

The Star in the East

by  
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Based on his novella

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FADE IN

EXT. ROME - SUNSET

A cab stops near the facade of a monastery, Gothic and ancient even by Roman standards, close to the Vatican.

BETH BETHLEN (late 20s), climbs out, carrying a small suitcase and wearing a Boston Red Sox jacket. Beth is lovely, but her skin is pale and her eyes are hollow. She's too thin.

She puts her case down and pulls a bundle of tattered papers from her pocket. The first sheet shows:

A FADED MAP, CENTURIES OLD

The map shows a maze of tunnels, ancient and secret. Beth retrieves her bag and ENTERS the monastery.

INT. MONASTERY, ROME - CONTINUOUS

Beth makes her way through the gates and into a hallway where a MONK awaits. He looks up from his desk. Beth reaches into her shirt and reveals a chain hanging around her neck. At the end of the chain is an oddly-shaped pendant: a key. She opens a phrase book. Her Italian isn't perfect.

BETH (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
The, uh, Graveyard of Secrets.

WAITING MONK (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
The Keepers are expecting you.

The guard stands unlocks a door with a heavy, antiquated key.

INSIDE:

Beth enters the darkened back room and finds a light switch. At the far end is a door -- not exactly hidden, but it's made of the same stone as the wall and it's easy to miss.

Beth struggles to push the door open, hearing HEAVY COUNTERWEIGHTS SHIFT. She pulls a flashlight out of her pocket and starts down a stairway of narrow, damp stone.

INT. TUNNELS BENEATH ROME - MOMENTS LATER

With the flashlight to guide her, Beth makes her way through a maze of tunnels, a dark and secret way. Water DRIPS, ECHOING in the vast darkness.

Beth Stops, breathing heavily. She checks the map. She swallows a pill from a prescription bottle, gathers her suitcase, and continues.

INT. UNDERGROUND VAULT

Beth emerges into a cavernous, domed room that was old in the Renaissance. Bookcases climb to the ceiling far above.

THREE MEN in monk's robes step forward, while NINE MORE hold back, making a ring around a stone table. There are corridors and a winding staircase behind them. Opening her phrase book, Beth swallows and approaches.

BETH (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
Is this the Graveyard of Secrets?

MONK #1 (ACCENTED ENGLISH)  
Welcome, Mrs. Bethlen.

BETH  
I ... um, I'm looking for a book. The History of the Bethlens.

MONK #2  
I'm sorry, my child. We can give the book to only the Bethlen heir.

BETH  
That's my husband. Gaspar. I ... I'm here to, uh, claim it for him.

The monks shift and frown awkwardly.

BETH (CONT'D)  
My husband's father spent his life looking for that book. He died looking for it.

MONK #1  
Dr. Bethlen, the Nativity scholar. He was a brilliant man.

BETH  
I have the key. It belonged to Gaspar's great-grandfather.

MONK #3  
And his before him, my child, and his before him. That key is ancient.

MONK #2  
You should know ... we have only the first volume of three.

BETH  
(smugly)  
I already found the other two.

MONK #1  
Did you? Extraordinary.

MONK #2

Be careful. Keep those books hidden. And safe. They are the keys to a ... a very special legacy.

BETH

I know. It's this, isn't it?

She produces a rolled parchment from her purse and hands it to Monk #3. He unrolls it. It shows AN ANTIQUATED ENGRAVING OF A JEWEL SET IN GOLD, nearly the size of a man's palm. The monks glance at one another with scarcely-contained surprise.

BETH (CONT'D)

My husband's father had that engraving when he died. The gem must be priceless.

MONK #2

More so than it appears, for this gem carries with it a secret. One that has remained untold for more than two-thousand years.

MONK #1

Come back to us. With your husband.

BETH

No. No, you don't understand.

(deep breath)

This ... this is my last trip. I'm dying, father.

(smiles sadly)

Heart condition. Degenerative. A few months. Maybe a year.

(holds back tears)

My husband will be hurting. Alone.

This is my last gift to him. I want to give him his family.

The Monks bow their heads, sadly.

MONK #1

May God bless you, child.

MONK #2

We'll show it to you, if you like. But you may not take it. I'm sorry.

BETH

Could I ... could I leave you something? To give him?

MONK #2

We'll keep it with the book.

BETH  
Thank you.

MONK #1  
One more thing. The Bethlen legacy.  
Your husband will have to know  
where to take the books. And he'll  
need to answer certain questions.

BETH  
(brightens)  
I already found the answers. Well,  
all but the last one, anyway.

MONK #1  
Did you? Even your husband's father--

Beth produces another engraving, an antique STAR CHART.

BETH  
The sky above Bethlehem. The first  
Christmas.

MONK #2  
That's not the date scholars  
usually accept.

BETH  
(grins)  
No. It's not.

EXT. ROME STREETS - NIGHT

The streets are dark. Beth leaves a BANK, pulling her  
suitcase, her head bowed against the cold.

She turns a corner and runs into FOUR MEN IN DARK CLOTHING.

Two are Italians. One is a Hungarian bodyguard, ABBAN. The  
other is also Hungarian: COUNT BETHLEN TAMÁS, an aristocratic  
man in his fifties. He is thin but fit and wiry strong. He  
stands back in the shadows.

Beth opens her mouth to SCREAM, but a fifth man grabs her  
from behind and covers her mouth. Abban produces a small  
pistol from his coat pocket.

MAN #1 (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
Be silent.

He nods to the man holding Beth. The man releases her. She  
shrinks back, afraid.

MAN #1 (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
(CONT'D)  
Your case. Give it to me.

Tamás steps forward, and Beth sees his face. Recognizing him, She takes a step closer.

BETHLEN

Tamás! Thank God. What's th--?

She never finishes. Before she can reach Tamás, Abban lunges forward, jamming the gun into her face. Beth staggers back, her eyes wild with terror. Abban follows. Beth backs into the wall behind her and GASPS. She raises a trembling hand to her chest. She's weak.

TAMÁS

What is it? What's happening?

The blood drains from her face. The shock is too much.

BETH

H ... heart ... need ...

Again, she doesn't finish. She slumps slowly to the cold ground and whispers her last word.

BETH (CONT'D)

Gaspar --

Abban kneels by her body. He looks up, his eyes wide.

MAN #2 (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)

Should I call an ambulance?

TAMÁS (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)

(ignores the question)

Get my book. Hurry!

The men search, but finds only clothes and toiletries.

MAN #1 (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)

She doesn't have it!

Tamás KICKS the suitcase furiously.

TAMÁS

God Dammit!

Beth lies still.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. FENWAY PARK - DAY

Autumn. It's the Sox and Yankees. Two outs, a runner on. The Sox are down by one. THE CROWD IS GOING NUTS.

GASPAR BETHLEN, late 30s, in Red Sox Uniform, steps in, batting lefty. No pitch. The YANKEES MANAGER comes out to make a change. A RELIEF PITCHER trots in. The CROWD BOOS.

Gaspar steps into the opposite batter's box, smiling, batting right-handed. The CATCHER gives the sign. The PITCHER tenses and FIRES. The UMPIRE raises his fist.

UMPIRE  
Strike one!

Another pitch. Gaspar swings.

BAM!

No question. This one leaves the Green Monster far behind. The crowd is on its feet, UTTER BEDLAM. The game is over. Gaspar's homer won it.

INT. FENWAY PARK CLUBHOUSE - LATER

The clubhouse is pandemonium. The MEDIA gamely tries for interviews. A CAMERAMAN has his video camera trained on Gaspar as an attractive REPORTER holds a mike to his face.

GASPAR  
Well, you never know. I thought I'd made pretty good contact, I had my arms extended, so I was hoping ...

Seeing the reporter's incredulous look, he grins.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Okay, okay. Yeah, I knew it was gone. Moment I hit it.

Another PLAYER approaches, a serious look on his face.

PLAYER  
Hey, Gaspar. Skip needs to see you.

Gaspar looks toward the manager's office. Through a large glass window, he sees DAVE O'BRIEN, the manager, a grizzled vet, his face grim. Gaspar nods at the still-running camera.

PLAYER (CONT'D)  
He said right away.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

O'Brien closes the door as Gaspar enters.

O'BRIEN  
Sit down, okay?

Gaspar, concerned and confused, obeys. The Team Manager kneels beside him.

GASPAR  
Dave, what is it?

O'Brien struggles for words.

O'BRIEN  
It's Beth.

Gaspar opens his mouth but doesn't answer.

O'BRIEN (CONT'D)  
There was a call for you. From Italy.

GASPAR  
Italy? No. She's not in Italy. She's in Florida.

O'BRIEN  
It was her heart.

GASPAR  
(desperate, clutching at straws)  
No, no. The doctor's say she's got months. Maybe years. They--

O'BRIEN  
Christ. I'm sorry, son.

GASPAR  
But it's not time yet.

EXT. MANAGER'S OFFICE

Through the glass window of O'Brien's office, the other players gather to watch, silently, solemnly.

Gaspar collapses, broken. His whole world is falling apart.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

It is raining. Gaspar and a SMALL CROWD have gathered around a casket. Gaspar SOBS. Dave puts his arm around Gaspar's shoulder, covering him with his umbrella.

EXT. BOSTON, NEAR BEACON HILL - DUSK - WEEKS LATER

The leaves on scraggly trees are starting to fall. Gaspar leaves a market, clutching a small bag of groceries.



He passes a bar where a FEW REGULARS are gathered around a TV watching a Red Sox game.

On the screen, a Boston batter pops out weakly. An ANNOUNCER calls the end of the game:

ANNOUNCER (FROM THE TV)  
And that's your ball game, folks.  
The Red Sox lose, three to one.  
Without Gaspar Bethlen, Boston's  
hopes are fading fast. They're six  
games back now....

Inside the bar, the Boston faithful are crushed.

Gaspar turns and walks away. No expression, not even a shrug. A dead man's walk.

EXT. GASPAR'S BEACON HILL HOME - LATER

Gaspar passes a week's worth of newspapers he hasn't bothered to collect and lets himself in.

INT. GASPAR'S BEACON HILL HOME

Gaspar sets his grocery bag down and glances at his ANSWERING MACHINE. The light is blinking. He pushes the button, and hears the machine's MECHANICAL VOICE:

MECHANICAL VOICE (FROM THE MACHINE)  
You have ninety-three messages.

The first message begins to play, KELLY, a woman in her 30s.

KELLY (FROM THE MACHINE)  
Hi, Mr. Bethlen. This is Kelly from  
the children's hospital. I just  
wanted you to know that the kids  
here really miss your visits. If--

Gaspar stops the message. He presses another button.

MECHANICAL VOICE (FROM THE MACHINE)  
All messages erased.

He falls into a kitchen chair and buries his face in his hands; the weight of exhaustion and sorrow are too much.

EXT./INT. GASPAR'S BEACON HILL HOME - MONTHS LATER

Snow on the ground. Inside, Gaspar sits alone, huddled in a chair, wrapped in a blanket. He hasn't shaved in days. He looks like hell. He's staring at a TV. It's not turned on.

The PHONE RINGS. AGAIN. AGAIN. Gaspar doesn't move. The MACHINE picks up. He winces when he hears BETH'S VOICE.

BETH'S VOICE (FROM THE MACHINE)  
This is Beth and Gaspar. Leave us a message, okay?

BEEP! Dave O'Brien leaves a message.

O'BRIEN (V.O. FROM THE MACHINE)  
Gaspar? Hey, it's Davey. None of us have heard from you, and I ... Christ. I don't know what to say. I just wanted you to know that the team's thinking about you, huh? And, uh, you know. Merry Christmas and all.  
(beat)  
I'm so sorry about Beth. Let us know you're okay, okay? Yeah.  
(beat)  
Say, did you ever figure out what she was doing in Rome?

CLICK. He hangs up. Gaspar frowns.

INT. GASPAR'S BEACON HILL HOME, STUDY - LATER

Gaspar sits at Beth's desk, still exactly as she left it. He starts the computer. While it's booting, he opens her drawer. He pulls out a folder labeled "Gaspar's Christmas Mystery."

Inside he finds two receipts: both are signed by WILL KLAUS. Gaspar frowns. He also finds a package, neatly wrapped. He opens it and finds a SMART PHONE, along with a sheet of paper with four rows of numbers written in a woman's neat hand.

EXT. BOSTON STREETS - DUSK

A light dusting of snow covers a narrow street. Quaint storefronts are dressed in holiday finery: garlands on street lamps, glittering lights in the windows. Street vendors sell hot chocolate and roasted chestnuts.

Gaspar, well dressed beneath an overcoat, black fedora, and warm scarf, is huddled against the cold. His attention is on:

The SMART PHONE'S GPS APPLICATION

THE COORDINATES ON THE MAP APPLICATION CHANGE as Gaspar moves along the CROWDED SIDEWALK. He checks the coordinates against a sheet of paper with four rows of carefully scribed numbers. Two are clearly coordinates. He's getting closer.

Gaspar passes a group of CAROLERS without noticing them. A few more yards, and then he stops.

The numbers on the GPS match the first two rows of numbers on the paper. Gaspar looks up. He's standing in front of:

KLAUS AND SON, AN ANTIQUARIAN BOOK SHOP

He looks at the paper again. The third row of numbers matches the address neatly painted in the window above the shop's front door. He nods: a puzzle almost solved.

INT. ANTIQUARIAN BOOK SHOP

BELLS JINGLE as GASPAR ENTERS.

A well-organized shop with rare editions, rows of shelves overfilled with old books. Ropes of evergreen and holly garland surround the room, twinkling with white lights.

WILL KLAUS, 20s, boyish, sits behind the counter working studiously on a laptop, with books and papers spread around him. He's wearing. He looks up when Gaspar ENTERS.

WILL  
Can I help you find something?

GASPAR  
Uh, yeah. Maybe.

As he steps closer, Will gets a look at Gaspar's face for the first time and His eyes widen with a double take.

WILL  
Whoa. Wicked.

Gaspar holds back a sigh. He's used to this. Ignoring the "wicked," he hands Will the paper with the numbers. Will recovers quickly, trying to be cool. He grins.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Not exactly a box score, huh?

Gaspar raises an eyebrow. Will smiles sheepishly and nods to a BOSTON RED SOX PENNANT on the wall behind him, along with a few autographed balls, framed ticket stubs, etc. A shrine.

WILL (CONT'D)  
(grins)  
Switch hitter. Career three-oh-five batting average. Three-sixteen from the left side, three-oh-one from the right. But power from the right.

GASPAR  
(defensive in spite of himself)  
I've got power from the left.

WILL  
 (not to argue, but ...)  
 You had twenty-two homers batting  
 right-handed, nine as a lefty. And  
 fifty-three more at-bats from the  
 left side.

GASPAR  
 That's 'cause right-handed pitchers  
 know better than to challenge me.

WILL  
 Well, statistically, righties threw  
 fastballs thirty percent--  
 (on Gaspar's glare:)  
 But now that I think about it, not  
 in what you'd call a challenging  
 sort of way.

Gaspar waits. No expression. Tired, sad eyes. Chagrined, Will  
 looks back to the paper.

WILL (CONT'D)  
 So what's this?

GASPAR  
 (nods and shows his GPS)  
 I think these first two numbers are  
 GPS coordinates.

Gaspar shows Will the GPS phone. Will's impressed.

WILL  
 Wicked. Where to?

Gaspar points patiently to the GPS map. Duh.

GASPAR  
 Here.

WILL  
 Oh! Uh, yeah.

Gaspar point to the third row of numbers.

GASPAR  
 And this looks like--

WILL  
 Our street address. Sure.

GASPAR  
 Which brings me to the last  
 numbers. Those ... well, not so much  
 with the cracking yet.

WILL

There I can help. Now that you've put it in context ... it's one of our inventory control numbers. And I just happen to know exactly which book that number belongs to.

INT. ANTIQUARIAN BOOK SHOP, BACK ROOM

Will opens a vintage safe.

WILL

I was told a gentleman would come by to fetch this book, probably around Christmas.

(smiles sheepishly)

When the gent is Gaspar Bethlen of the Red Sox, you kinda remember.

Will finds a leather-bound volume. A slip of paper is with the book. He hands the book to Gaspar. Will keeps the paper.

GASPAR

What is it?

WILL

Genealogy. Roots of the Bethlens, Volume 3. I had a hell of a time tracking it down, lemme tell ya. It's the only copy.

GASPAR

You didn't happen to find it in Rome, did you?

WILL

No. Why?

GASPAR

Beth ... Beth was in Rome.

Will shifts uncomfortably. He wants to say something, but...

Gaspar turns his attention back to the book.

GASPAR (CONT'D)

I can't read this.

WILL

No Hungarian, eh?

Gaspar shakes his head, perplexed.

WILL (CONT'D)

Any idea what it's about?

GASPAR  
Again with the "I can't read this."

WILL  
Your wife said your great-great  
grandfather's in here.

Gaspar looks back at the book. His brow furrows thoughtfully.

GASPAR  
My great-great grandfather.

WILL  
Yeah. By the way, I'm Will Klaus.

The shake hands. Gaspar recognizes Will's name.

GASPAR  
You knew my wife. I saw receipts.

WILL  
Yeah. Beth. She hired me.  
(with sympathy)  
She was great. Look, I was really,  
really sorry to ... You know.

Gaspar manages a ghost of a smile, just for a second, and  
nods. He changes the subject abruptly.

GASPAR  
Why'd she hire you?

WILL  
She thought you might need help.  
With a mystery. Hey, listen. I'm  
about to close. Let's get a beer.  
What'd'ya say?

GASPAR  
No. Thanks and all, but I ... I  
really need to get home.

WILL  
You saw the receipt. I'm already  
bought and paid for.

GASPAR  
It's okay. You're fired.

Gaspar turns to leave.

WILL  
But she already paid me.

GASPAR  
Keep it. I'm just not up to this.  
Okay?

Gaspar reaches the door. Will calls after him.

WILL  
She said you'd be like that.

Gaspar turns back, surprised, a little hurt, a little angry.

WILL (CONT'D)  
It's what she wanted.

Will just said the one thing that might change Gaspar's mind.

GASPAR  
Beer, huh?

EXT/INT. QUAIN T BOSTON PUB

Through a large frosted window, brick walls are adorned with wreaths, and a crackling fire blazes in a fireplace.

Inside, Gaspar and Will have found a table in a more or less private nook. Gaspar and Will nurse beers.

GASPAR  
So how'd you meet my wife?

WILL  
I helped her with research. Well, a contact of mine and I did. A friend in Hungary. Her name's Hapsburg Anasztázia. Ana.  
(grins, gushes)  
She's ... gosh. She's an amazing woman. Ana, she--

GASPAR  
(cuts him off)  
What kind of research?

WILL  
Oh. Uh, tracking that book down, mostly.

GASPAR  
In Hungary?

WILL  
Not exactly. I've never really traveled much. Not yet. Someday, though....

Will sees Gaspar's impatient look and curbs the rambling.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Anyway. On the Internet. Yeah, see, I'm more of a reader.

GASPAR

Gotcha.

WILL

That's what I do. I track down odd facts. Missing branches in the family tree, historical tidbits. Stuff like that.

(a lopsided grin)

It's like being a detective. Just without all the danger and guns and, you know, anything that might make it even remotely cool.

GASPAR

That's a job?

WILL

I'm working for you, aren't I?

GASPAR

Only 'cause firing you didn't take.

WILL

And you gotta admit, detective sounds way cooler than research assistant.

No answer, but Gaspar's look says "not so much."

WILL (CONT'D)

I found your book, didn't I? What's the deal with it, anyway?

GASPAR

It's a mystery.

WILL

Yeah. That clears it up. C'mon. Detective. Bought and paid for.

GASPAR

It's kind of a tradition. Every year, Beth makes...

(A beat. This is hard.)

...made a mystery for me.

WILL

Right. The annual Christmas mystery. She told me. You have to solve it to find out what your present is.

GASPAR

Beth -- she knew the end was coming. She knew she wouldn't be there to see me solve it.

(swallows)

(MORE)



GASPAR (CONT'D)  
They found some of the clues. The police. She had them with her when ...

WILL  
It must be hard.

GASPAR  
It's what she wanted.

WILL  
What were the, uh, clues?

He slides two sheets of parchment from his pocket to Will.

GASPAR  
Here.

Will unrolls them and finds, on the first, an illuminated engraving of a jewel. This is the same engraving that Beth had in the opening scene. Will's eyes spring open.

WILL  
Wicked!

GASPAR  
No kidding.

At a nearby table, a MAN IN DARK CLOTHING pretends to read a newspaper as he uses a high tech GADGET to eavesdrop.

WILL  
What ... I mean, jeez! What is this?

GASPAR  
Yeah, see, that's pretty much the question. Detective.  
(beat)  
Beth said my dad had this picture. She says to find that gem, we'll have to solve a mystery that's puzzled scholars for more than two-thousand years.

WILL  
Two-thousand--! Well. How hard can that be?

GASPAR  
Yeah. Good thing she hired a detective.

WILL  
Maybe the next clue's in the book.

GASPAR  
(wryly)  
If I could just read Hungarian.

WILL  
(a little too eagerly)  
My friend can help. Ana. In Hungary.  
(catches himself and smiles)  
She's amazing. Uh, I mentioned  
that, didn't I?

GASPAR  
Amazing. Yeah. Seems like.

Will smiles sheepishly. Gaspar opens the book. As he does, a folded, yellowed receipt falls out. He picks it up.

WILL  
Clue?

The man in dark clothing is watching from behind his paper.

GASPAR  
(shakes his head)  
It's an ATM receipt. Maybe from the  
previous owner?

WILL  
I doubt it. Look, that's from a Boston  
bank. The book came from Budapest.

GASPAR  
Beth must have put it in here.

WILL  
So what does it mean?

Gaspar's brow furrows as he considers. He shakes his head.

GASPAR  
I just wanna know what the hell my  
wife was doing in Rome.

EXT. QUAIN T BOSTON PUB - NIGHT

Gaspar and Will shake hands. Will walks back toward the shop,  
and Gaspar climbs into his luxury sedan.

The man in dark clothing has been watching them. He opens a  
MOBILE PHONE and dials. He has a working class Boston accent.

MAN IN DARK CLOTHING  
He has the book.  
(beat)  
Huh? No. Just one book.  
(beat)  
No. Not three. One.

EXT. ANTIQUARIAN BOOK SHOP - LATER

Will's about to open the door with his key, but he stops, frozen. IT'S BEEN FORCED OPEN. He takes a deep breath. Then he ENTERS, slowly, cautiously.

INT. ANTIQUARIAN BOOK SHOP

Will creeps through the stacks. No one there.

THE DOOR TO THE BACK ROOM IS OPEN. Will tiptoes to the door.

Inside, he finds a ROUGH-LOOKING MAN at his safe. He's just gotten it open, and has shoved the cash and rare volumes aside. He's looking for something else.

WILL

Hey!

The man turns and pulls a gun out of his coat. Will dives for cover. The man FIRES. The bullet SPLINTERS the wood of a bookcase. Before Will can stagger to his feet, THE MAN FLEES.

INT. GASPAR'S BEACON HILL HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

In sleep, dreaming, Gaspar smiles. He wakes slowly, and for a moment, through his half-closed eyes, pale and silver fingers of moonlight fanning over the empty pillow next to him look like a woman's hair, soft and luminous. But when he reaches out to touch it, the spell is broken, and he deflates.

KITCHEN - LATER

Gaspar opens his refrigerator. It contains only a pizza box and the last four cans of a sixpack. He opens the pizza box and SIGHS. It's empty. He thinks about making coffee, but the bin is empty, too. He takes a beer.

KITCHEN - STILL LATER

Gaspar sits at his table, where he's pushed aside a stack of unopened mail. He sips the beer and flips through the book. The engraving of the gem is on the table. Beth's chair is empty. He looks at it with sad, longing eyes.

For a moment, he fingers the pages with Beth's handwriting, a tender and lonely gesture. Then he sits upright, suddenly, as an idea occurs to him.

EXT. SUBURBAN BOSTON BANK - NIGHT

It's not a nice part of town. It hasn't been in a long time. Gaspar stands in front of the vintage ATM, his overcoat buttoned against the cold, gazing, lost in memory.

FLASHBACK:

THE SAME SPOT, A FEW YEARS EARLIER - DAY

The neighborhood is slightly nicer, slightly cleaner. The ATM is new. YOUNG GASPAR and Beth, newlyweds, are getting money.

GASPAR  
It's not much of a honeymoon.

Beth smiles and touches his cheek.

BETH  
It's always a honeymoon when I'm with you.

GASPAR  
I wish I could give you more.

BETH  
Someday we'll go to Europe. We can start planning it. Huh? C'mon. We'll make a a scrapbook.

GASPAR  
I'd like that.

BETH  
We'll go to Hungary. How about that?

GASPAR  
My dad always wanted to do that. He wanted to trace his ancestry.

BETH  
We'll finish what your dad started. That'll be my gift to you, my sweet orphan boy. I'll give you your family.

GASPAR  
(he leans in to kiss her)  
You already have.

Beth tucks the cash and RECEIPT carefully into her purse.

BACK TO SCENE:

Gaspar looks down at the NOW YELLOWED RECEIPT and smiles.

EXT. NEARBY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Gaspar walks back to his car and drives. A driver is watching from a nearby car.

INT. GASPAR'S BEACON HILL HOME, BEDROOM - LATER

Gaspar stands on a chair, looking for something in a closet. He finds A DUSTY BOX hidden at the very back of the top shelf. He pulls it down.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

At the table, Gaspar opens the box and pulls out an old scrapbook. He opens it and finds a collection of worn travel brochures and articles. He smiles, finding a crisp new envelope addressed in Beth's neat hand: MY BELOVED.

He opens it ... and finds a hand-drawn grid with neat numbers. It's a puzzle, kind of like a soduko. Gaspar reaches for a pencil, and chews the eraser thoughtfully.

GASPAR  
Aw, Beth, honey, you know I need  
your help with the math.

Pencil to paper, he starts to solve.

EXT. ANTIQUARIAN BOOK SHOP - THE NEXT MORNING

As Gaspar arrives carrying a briefcase, TWO UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS are still investigating. A HANDYMAN repairs the lock on the open door while Will and JIM KLAUS (60s) look on.

INT. ANTIQUARIAN BOOK SHOP, BACKROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Will is finishing some paperwork as Gaspar ENTERS.

GASPAR  
What happened here?

WILL  
Wild party. The guest of honor was  
a burglar.

JIM  
(looks back from the door)  
Bastard shot at my son.

GASPAR  
Holy shit! You okay?

Will nods.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Did he get anything?

WILL  
Nothing. He had the safe open, but  
he totally ignored everything.

JIM  
Cash, rare books, everything.

GASPAR  
So what was he after?

JIM  
If I didn't know better, I'd swear  
it was that book of yours.

GASPAR  
My book? You're kidding!

WILL  
You didn't leave it, did you?

Gaspar hefts the briefcase, showing it.

GASPAR  
No, it's right here. I didn't  
realize it was valuable.

WILL  
Makes me wonder if someone else  
knows about that jewel. Uh, Dad?

JIM  
Help Mr. Bethlen. I can finish up.

WILL  
Thanks.

He starts toward the desk. Gaspar follows.

WILL (CONT'D)  
So what can I do for you?

Gaspar shows will the paper with Beth's puzzle. Now he has  
more numbers.

GASPAR  
More coordinates.

WILL  
Here again?

GASPAR  
(nods)  
And three more stock numbers. Just  
like the last one.

WILL  
That's funny. I don't recognize  
these. Here. Let me check.

Will punches the keys on a slightly antiquated terminal. He  
shakes his head.

GASPAR  
I don't understand. These are your  
numbers, right?

WILL  
Sure looks like our system, yeah.  
But look, see? Nothing.

JIM  
(from the door)  
Why not check the shelves?

GASPAR  
(before Will can protest)  
Are these in numerical order?

WILL  
The first two are the category.  
See? This is travel. Then -- hey!

Gaspar is already moving.

ANOTHER PART OF THE STORE:

Gaspar follows the numbers ... closer ... closer...

Then, between two volumes clearly labeled with inventory  
stickers on their spines, he finds an unstickered book –  
right where the missing stock number should be.

He pulls it out: it's a travel guide to Budapest, Hungary.

WILL  
I'd swear that's not one of our books.

Gaspar opens the book and finds an envelope with Beth's neat  
handwriting: Merry Christmas, My Love!

Gaspar smiles.

ANOTHER PART OF THE STORE:

WILL finds another book without a sticker: a Hungarian Phrase  
Book.

ANOTHER PART OF THE STORE:

At the top of a ladder, Gaspar finds a third book: this one is a tiny BANK BOOK.

BACK AT THE DESK:

The books are spread on the desk, along with three envelopes, all addressed in Beth's handwriting. Gaspar is looking at the travel book thoughtfully. Will opens the bank book.

WILL  
What's this?

GASPAR  
Looks like a bank book. I can't read it.

WILL  
How 'bout the envelopes?

GASPAR  
Here we go.  
(smiles, a little nervous)  
Beth's last mystery.

Will smiles, too, solemnly, proud to share the moment. Gaspar opens the first envelope. Inside he finds ... another page of numbers. Another code.

WILL  
Well. That clears things up.

GASPAR  
(frowns)  
It's not like the others.

Also, a century-old, black and white photograph of a European family arriving in America; the fog-shrouded promised land of New York is visible in the background.

Gaspar touches the photo, gently, and remembers:

BETH (V.O.)  
We'll finish what your dad started.  
That'll be my gift to you, my sweet orphan boy. I'll give you your family.

Gaspar turns the photograph over and finds two words in mirror writing: "Find Them."

WILL  
Find them.

GASPAR  
Written backwards. Those people are my ancestors.



WILL  
Find them. Your family.

GASPAR  
My family. I think I'm supposed to  
trace my roots back. Like my dad.  
(beat)  
The book ... Roots of the Bethlens.  
You said there were three volumes.

WILL  
Yeah. But I haven't actually seen  
volumes one and two.  
(realizing)  
Hey, I wonder if the thief thought  
we had the other volumes?

GASPAR  
Where are they?

WILL  
No idea. But I bet Beth knew.

GASPAR  
And she left them for me to find.

WILL  
Your Christmas mystery.

Will slides the unopened envelopes to Gaspar.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Try the others.

Gaspar opens the second envelope and pulls out some papers.

GASPAR  
(puzzled)  
Travel vouchers?

WILL  
Like gift certificates. Flight and hotel.

GASPAR  
In Budapest.

Gaspar opens the next envelope and finds another certificate,  
this one made on a home computer. It's for WILL KLAUS,  
CONSULTING RESEARCH DETECTIVE. Gaspar looks at Will and  
raises an eyebrow.

WILL  
(shrugs)  
I told you. One detective. Uncool,  
but bought and paid for. I'm part  
of your present.  
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)  
(sheepish grin)  
Merry Christmas.

GASPAR  
This wasn't something you could  
have, you know, mentioned?

WILL  
Of course not. I promised a lady.

Gaspar shrugs, conceding the point. He pulls the smart phone  
out of his coat pocket and checks the contacts.

GASPAR  
So the next clue's in Hungary.

WILL  
Budapest. Maybe I can help.

He turns to a shelf beneath this Red Sox shrine.

WILL (CONT'D)  
This is my personal travel shelf.  
You've got Beth's books, but you  
never know. Here.

Gaspar glances at the titles. Exotic global locations.

GASPAR  
You don't travel.

WILL  
I read. A lot.

As he scoops up a couple of the books:

WILL (CONT'D)  
But someday.

Gaspar turns his attention back to the phone.

GASPAR  
Oh, of course. Beth programmed the  
number in.  
(looks skyward as he dials)  
Thanks, hon.  
(beat)  
Yes, I need to know when the next  
flight to Budapest is. From Boston.

WILL  
Here's a couple of books on  
Budapest. I kept them special. Just  
in case I ever got to meet Ana.

Gaspar ignores him. He's listening to his phone.

GASPAR  
 Yeah, soon as possible. Two  
 passengers.  
 (Looks at a clock on the  
 back wall. His eyes widen.)  
 Uh yeah. I can make that.  
 (mutters)  
 Maybe.  
 (beat)  
 Gaspar Bethlen and Will Klaus.  
 Yeah, we'll be there.

He ends the call.

WILL  
 Huh? Wait. What's happening?

GASPAR  
 Get your coat. It's someday.

JIM  
 (amused)  
 You'd better hurry.

WILL  
 Wait. Whoa. Where are we going?!

GASPAR  
 Airport.

He buttons his coat as Jim brings Will a Sox jacket and cap.

WILL  
 Airport? What's there?

GASPAR  
 Planes. Long lines. Bad food...

WILL  
 (mutters)  
 Pulling frickin' teeth...

GASPAR  
 You got a passport, right?

JIM  
 It's in the drawer under the  
 register?

WILL  
 It is?!

JIM  
 Here, I'll get it.  
 (to Will)  
 What, you think you're the only one  
 who talked to Miss Bethlen?  
 (MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)  
 (to Gaspar)  
 Rest her soul.

Gaspar holds up his gift certificate.

GASPAR  
 Bought and paid for, right? Detective?

WILL  
 You fired me.

GASPAR  
 (moving to the door)  
 Didn't take.  
 (beat)  
 Will, I wasn't there when Beth  
 died. I ... I wasn't with her. This  
 is the best I can do.

WILL  
 I know. Really. But ... I can't just  
 ... Dad...

Jim hands Will his passport from behind the counter.

JIM  
 Go on. See the things you've been  
 reading about, huh? Meet this Ana  
 you've been pinning over.

Way embarrassed, Will nods his head back toward Gaspar in a  
 very clear 'not in front of the company!' sort of way.  
 Hissing through clenched teeth:

WILL  
 Ana's just a friend, Dad.

JIM  
 Go!

Gaspar is already moving through the front door. Will grabs  
 ONE LAST BOOK from behind the counter and hurries to follow,  
 still protesting:

EXT. ANTIQUARIAN BOOK SHOP - CONTINUOUS

GASPAR  
 Taxi!

WILL  
 I don't even have a suitcase!

GASPAR  
 Me either. Checking luggage is a  
 bitch.

(MORE)

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
 But I'm pretty sure they have  
 stores in Hungary. Uh, they do,  
 don't they? Taxi!

A taxi pulls over.

WILL  
 Gaspar...!

GASPAR  
 If someone comes back for that book,  
 I don't think it oughtta be here.

Gaspar climbs in. Will scrambles in after.

WILL  
 Okay, that's a good point.

INT. JETLINER - NIGHT

Gaspar is trying to sleep while Will works with the three  
 sheets of codes, the Roots of the Bethlens book, the  
 Hungarian phrase book, and a notebook, which he's spread out  
 on the meal tray. Suddenly, he grins.

WILL  
 Bingo.

GASPAR  
 (sits up)  
 Oh?

WILL  
 I cracked the code. Well, one of  
 'em, anyway. It's a book code.

GASPAR  
 Come again?

WILL  
 See, it's a kind of a code that uses  
 a book. A word replaces a series of  
 numbers. To crack the code, you need  
 a copy of the exact same edition. Any  
 slight variation, and it won't work.  
 See these numbers along the top here?  
 (Gaspar nods)  
 The page number, the line number,  
 and the number of characters away  
 from the left margin. That gives  
 you the first word. These numbers  
 give you the second. And so on.  
 Without the right book, even a  
 computer couldn't crack it.

GASPAR  
Not bad. What about the other two?

WILL  
They've pretty much got me stumped.

GASPAR  
(smugly -- he guessed first)  
You need the other volumes. Detective.

Will gives him a blank stare. He hadn't thought of that.

WILL  
You're not so bad with the problem  
solving yourself.

GASPAR  
My dad was a scholar.

WILL  
Right. I read one of his books.  
(rolls his eyes)  
Of course you did.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Was he disappointed you didn't follow him?

GASPAR  
Are you kidding? He was thrilled. Hell,  
he was a bigger a Sox fan than you are.  
(beat)  
Beth was the scholar. Dad was crazy  
about her.

WILL  
I'm glad I got to meet her. She was--

GASPAR  
Amazing?

WILL  
Good word.

Gaspar's sadness returns, falling over him like a blanket.  
His hint of a smile fades. He turns to the window.

GASPAR  
So what did you find out?

WILL  
Not much. It says, "Find the  
beginning; seek what he sought." The  
rest is just numbers. More  
coordinates for your GPS, maybe.

GASPAR  
I guess we'll see.

WILL  
My friend Ana can help.

GASPAR  
Did you talk to Beth about this Ana?

WILL  
A little. Maybe. A time or two. The word amazing might have come up.

GASPAR  
So why haven't you met her?

WILL  
We're just friends. Okay? I helped her find some references here in America. She did her thesis on Chekhov. Can you believe it? Chekhov!

GASPAR  
Star Trek?

WILL  
Russian playwright.

GASPAR  
Ah.

WILL  
I've talked to her. I talked to her when I was looking for the book. We talked for -- God! Hours. She's --

GASPAR  
(grins, interrupting)  
Amazing?

WILL  
Okay, so my vocabulary can use a boost. But yeah. We've never even met, and I already think of her as my best friend. When we talk, it's just ... it's just magic. You know? I know that sounds just all kinds of stupid.

Gaspar doesn't answer. His look and hint of a nod say plenty. It does sound stupid. But he understands. He's been there.

INT./EXT. TAXI - DAY

MONTAGE: Will and Gaspar take in the sights of old Budapest, decorated festively for the winter holiday, as the taxi takes them from the airport to an upscale hotel.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Gaspar and Will unload shopping bags, their only luggage.

GASPAR  
Check in, okay?

WILL  
You're not coming?

GASPAR  
(shakes his head)  
You go ahead. Call amazing Ana. I  
want to check the clue out.

The mention of Ana stops Will's protest. As he nods, PULL  
BACK TO REVEAL:

A THUG, WATCHING FROM A DISCREET DISTANCE.

The man who's following them in Budapest is hired muscle.  
Big, unshaven, dressed to blend. He taps on a PHONE.

EXT. BUDAPEST STREETS - AFTERNOON

Gaspar walks in his overcoat and fedora, passing rows of  
buildings. Here and there, one of the buildings has been  
restored to something suggesting its former majesty. Most are  
shabby after decades of neglect. A few are gone utterly,  
leaving only rubble and dust in the gap, like missing teeth  
in unsightly smiles.

Periodically, Gaspar checks his GPS PHONE APPLICATION against  
the written coordinates: he's getting closer. At last he  
comes to a stop in front of:

EXT. IMPOSING BUDAPEST BANK

The coordinates match the first numbers on Gaspar's notebook;  
the third row confirms the street number. The logo matches  
the bank book. Two rows of numbers remain. Gaspar ENTERS.

INT. IMPOSING BUDAPEST BANK

Gaspar approaches a TELLER with a PHRASE BOOK.

TELLER (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
May I help you?

GASPAR  
(opens the phrase book)  
Uh ... wait. Just a sec...



The teller smiles and motions to a MANAGER. The Manager takes her place at the window.

MANAGER  
May I help you, sir? I speak English.

GASPAR  
Uh, yeah. I think I'm here about an account.  
(shows the numbers)  
Is this one of your numbers?

MANAGER  
Is this your account, sir?

GASPAR  
No. It's ... I think my late wife might have opened it.

Gaspar hands the manager the bank book.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Here's the book.

MANAGER  
I'm sorry for your loss.

Gaspar nods his thanks. The manager enters the digits into the computer and makes a few MOUSE CLICKS.

MANAGER (CONT'D)  
It's a safety deposit box. I'll need to see some identification.

Gaspar produces his passport. The manager examines it.

MANAGER (CONT'D)  
Thank you, Mr. Bethlen. You have the combination, yes?

GASPAR  
(glances at the numbers)  
Maybe. What happens if I don't?

MANAGER  
Then I should imagine the box will not open. If you'll follow me?

The manager steps out from behind the counter and leads Gaspar past the customer service area, across the imposing lobby, and finally to the safe:

MANAGER (CONT'D)  
Bethlen is a very old and prestigious name here in Hungary. They are nobility, or rather, they were when we had such. Did you know that?  
(MORE)

MANAGER (CONT'D)  
They didn't fare well under the  
Communists, alas. But then, who did? Ah!  
Here we are.

INT. SAFE

The manager enters a combination into a safety deposit box.  
Then he steps aside.

Looking at the notebook, Gaspar enters the last row of  
numbers. He breathes a SIGH OF RELIEF when he hears the  
satisfying CLICKS OF THE LOCKS OPENING.

Gaspar peers inside and finds a LEATHER BRIEFCASE.

MANAGER  
Will there be anything else?

GASPAR  
Uh, no. I don't think so. Thanks.

The manager nods and EXITS.

Gaspar opens the case, and finds ANOTHER LEATHER-BOUND BOOK --  
The Roots of the Bethlens, Volume 2. Also: a PACKAGE WRAPPED  
IN CHRISTMAS PAPER and an ENVELOPE. Gaspar closes the case.

EXT. BUDAPEST STREETS - LATER

Gaspar walks back toward the hotel. As he cuts through a  
narrow lane, he nearly runs in to TWO THUGS. One of them is  
the thug who's been following him.

THUG  
(Hungarian Accent)  
Your case. Give it to me.

GASPAR  
I don't think so.

Gaspar turns, planning to run the other way, but TWO MORE  
THUGS are there, blocking his way. Gaspar turns back to the  
first two thugs.

THUG  
Perhaps you'd like to think again.

Gaspar nods and holds out the case.

GASPAR  
Beth, I hope this isn't breakable.

As the thugs steps forward to grab it, Gaspar abruptly swings  
the case, catching the thug under the chin. HE DROPS.

The other thug races forward. Gaspar blocks his punch with the case and knocks the man down with a hard BLOW to the jaw. He falls, too.

The other men are running now, close. Gaspar bolts blindly.

Gaspar reaches the end of the lane and turns right, but sees TWO MORE MEN approaching. He turns back to his left -- the way seems clear -- and runs that way.

Gaspar reaches a T intersection at the end of the street. One way is an obvious dead end. He runs the other way.

THE FOUR MEN ARE GAINING. The leader thug, the one Gaspar slugged with the case, is right behind them.

Gaspar reaches a DEAD END. He turns -- the men behind him are close. There is no where to go, but:

UP. Gaspar leaps onto a dumpster and tosses the case to a ledge above. He is able to leap and reach the ledge. He pulls himself up after the case, grabs it, and from there is able to scamper to the roof of the three-story building.

GASPAR RACES ACROSS THE ROOFTOP. He reaches the edge and stops for one heartbeat.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
(mutters)  
Christ. I hate heights.

Gaspar takes a step back and runs again. This time, he doesn't slow. He jumps across the narrow alley to the next rooftop -- and then to the next.

Gaspar pauses to catch his breath. He looks back to see four of the thugs making the leap across the first alley.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
You gotta be kidding me.

Gaspar runs, leaping to the next rooftop, and then to the next, where renovation is underway. Scaffolding and framing, along with piles of lumber, block the view to the next building. Gaspar sprints through the labyrinth of obstacles.

At the edge, he comes to an abrupt stop. The next building is missing -- only a pile of rubble remains in the foundations far below. Gaspar looks around frantically. He HEARS THE SOUND OF CLOSING PURSUIT. He can't go back.

He's got one chance. He grabs a LONG TIMBER BEAM and DROPS IT ACROSS THE GAP, making a precarious makeshift bridge.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
I hate heights ...

MEANWHILE: THE THUGS race through the construction and reach the gap. There is no sign of Gaspar.

THUG #2 (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
Where is he?

THUG #3  
(points to Gaspar's  
bridge)  
There!

Carefully, gingerly, the four men start across the plank. As soon as the fourth is on the bridge, Gaspar appears from behind a pile of bricks -- he hasn't crossed.

He races forward and KICKS the plank bridge. One man FALLS. The others realize what's happened and begin RUNNING BACK as fast as they dare.

GRUNTING WITH EFFORT, GASPAR lifts the plank a few feet, spilling the men. They fall, SCREAMING, and land hard on the rubble three stories below.

Gaspar grins. Then, behind, he hears PURSUIT: TWO MORE MEN.

GASPAR  
Oh come on!

Gaspar sprints across the bridge.

The two men reach the plank before he reaches the other side. Together, they lift the plank, dislodging the far end from the next roof and sending it falling.

Gaspar throws the case to the next roof and LEAPS. The plank CRASHES IN THE RUBBLE. Gaspar grasps the edge of the next building, barely holding on. He pulls himself up to the rooftop, grabs his case, and runs. The last two men SHOUT IN HUNGARIAN, but Gaspar ignores them.

At the far side of this building, he finds a drain pipe. He slides down, and drops the last few feet to the alley below.

He sprints to the end of the alley, and runs in to the FIRST THUG and ONE OTHER MAN.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Great. You're down here, too.

Gaspar backs up. Against the wall, he finds a plank of wood, about the same length of a baseball bat. He smiles.

The two men approach, carefully, professionals ready to attack. Gaspar raises the plank like a bat. Before the men can react, he swings for the fences, taking them both down with two fast swings, both left handed.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
I totally have power from the left  
side.

Gaspar bolts to a BUSY MAIN STREET, with plenty of traffic.  
He pulls his phrase book out of his pocket as he runs.  
Finding what he's looking for, HE RAISES HIS HAND AND SHOUTS:

GASPAR (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
(CONT'D)  
Taxi! Taxi!

INT. HOTEL LOBBY/BAR - LATER

Gaspar is talking to TWO POLICE OFFICERS. As the police  
leave, Will spots Gaspar and waves him over to the bar area.  
Will has the book. Gaspar still has the case from the bank.

WILL  
Hey! I called Ana. She's meeting us.

GASPAR  
Huh? What, now?

Will nods and hands the book to Gaspar.

WILL  
In the bar. Uh, is now bad?

Gaspar rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

WILL (CONT'D)  
What happened? How'd it go?

GASPAR  
Not so good. I was attacked.

WILL  
What!?

GASPAR  
I'm alright.

WILL  
Gaspar --

Gaspar is walking toward the FAIRLY CROWDED hotel bar. Will  
follows and looks around.

GASPAR  
Is this Ana of yours here?

WILL  
We're a little early. What --

GASPAR  
(interrupting)  
What does she look like?

WILL  
To be honest, I don't know.

Will shifts uncomfortably. Gaspar gives him a wry look.

GASPAR  
Don't tell me. You just read about her.  
Don't you kids know about Web cams?

Will shrugs, embarrassed.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Probably some stuffy old librarian  
type. Bug eyes, hair in a bun --

A woman approaches, waving, HAPSBURG ANASZTÁZIA, 20s,  
Hungarian, exotic and Lovely.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Not bad for a librarian.

WILL  
You know, I think I'm gonna have a  
lot of overdue books.

She reaches them, still smiling, and extends her hand.

ANA  
You must be Will.

A second too late to be cool, Will accepts her handshake.

WILL  
Wow.

Gaspar grins, amused.

ANA  
Excuse me?

GASPAR  
Hi there. I'm Gaspar Bethlen. This  
is my hired assistant, Will Klaus.

WILL  
Detective.

GASPAR  
You must be Ms. Hapsburg.

Ana smiles and shakes their hands.

ANA

Ana. It's a pleasure to meet you.  
(to Will)  
Although after all the late night  
talks, I feel I know you already.

Ana glances down, and then looks up at Will through her  
lashes. Will reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a  
book -- the volume he grabbed as he was leaving the store. He  
offers it to Ana.

WILL

I brought you a present. Sorry I  
didn't have time to wrap it.

ANA

(delighted)  
Chekhov! In the original Russian!

WILL

The first printing.

ANA

Better than flowers. The way to my  
heart. You know me so well already.

Will beams. Gaspar shakes his head.

GASPAR

Oh dear God. There's two of 'em.

ANA

Come, I have a table.  
(to Gaspar)  
Would you believe this is the first  
man I've ever met that's as well-  
read as I am?

As she takes Will's arm and steers him into the bar:

GASPAR

I can see this is gonna be a fun  
conversation.

INT. HOTEL BAR, CORNER TABLE - LATER

Drinks have arrived, the conversation is underway.

GASPAR

So Will here tells me you're an  
expert on my family.

ANA

(hedging)  
Yours is a very ... notable family in  
my country, Mr. Bethlen.

GASPAR  
Gaspar. Please.

ANA  
Gaspar. If I may?

Gaspar nods. Ana opens the book and shows Gaspar a chart.

ANA (CONT'D)  
Today, only two branches of the  
Bethlen family survive. You are the  
last heir to one branch.  
(a hint of discomfort)  
The other ... you have a distant  
cousin here. Did you know that?

Gaspar shakes his head.

WILL  
(showing off)  
Count Bethlen Tamás. In Hungary,  
the surnames come first, you know.  
(on Gaspar's wry look:)  
Research. Detective.

ANA  
Each of the two branches, yours and  
Tamás's, is heir to a part of a legacy  
that stretches all the way back to the  
family's origin. One branch has  
inherited property, wealth, and title.

GASPAR  
Figures that's not my branch.

WILL  
What about the other?

ANA  
Just ... legends and rumors. Something  
about a legacy that's more than land  
or title.

GASPAR  
The gem.

Gaspar shows her the engraving of the gem. Her eyes widen.

ANA  
Where did you get this?

GASPAR  
My wife found it in some notes my  
father left. I think. Could this be  
the, uh, legacy thing?



ANA

I think your wife must have  
discovered something amazing, sir.

WILL

And she left us a trail to follow.  
(to Ana, hopefully)  
Uh, maybe we can talk more tonight.  
Over dinner, maybe?

ANA

I'd like that. I'd love to show you  
both my city.

GASPAR

You two go ahead.

WILL

C'mon. You haven't left home in  
months. It's time to live a little.

GASPAR

No. I ... uh, no.

WILL

Gaspar--

GASPAR

I'm here because it's what Beth  
wanted. Don't push. Okay?

ANA

But there's such joy in experiencing  
a new culture. Don't you think?

GASPAR

Joy doesn't come so much from what  
you experience, but from what you  
share, I think. I'll just see things  
that will make me ache, because I  
can't share 'em with Beth.

ANA

You must have loved her very much.

Gaspar smiles sadly.

MONTAGE:

EXT. BUDAPEST CHRISTMAS MARKET - LATER

While THE PRETTIEST, MOST ROMANTIC CHRISTMAS SONG YOU'VE EVER  
HEARD PLAYS, Will and Ana walk hand in hand through an open  
air market, where craft booths line crowded, narrow pathways.

EXT. BUDAPEST MUSEUM

They walk to a museum and find it closed. LAUGHING, they throw coins in the old stone fountain.

INT. BUDAPEST BAR

They find an open bar and warm their wet and nearly frozen feet in the light of a fire and talk.

EXT. BUDAPEST BRIDGE - LATE NIGHT

Walking back toward the hotel, they pause on a stone bridge that arced like a taut bow to watch the light of gas lamps and stars twinkling and dancing in the dark water far below.

Will takes her in his arms, and they dance to music only they can hear. Then he kisses her.

WILL (V.O.)

And then I kissed her. And you know what? I knew, even then, it was my last first kiss; the one kiss I'll remember till the end of my days.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - THE NEXT MORNING

Gaspar and Will are finishing their breakfast. The briefcase is next to Gaspar's chair.

WILL

Do you believe it? Do you ... do you really think love can happen so, you know, fast?

GASPAR

(gently)  
Beth thought so.

WILL

Jeez, listen to me. You still haven't told me what you found at the bank.

Gaspar puts the case on the table and opens it.

GASPAR

Another book. I used it to decode the next message.

(reads)

Remus' and Peter's Graves, Adam's birth above. Text your answer to four-seven-six-one-three.

WILL  
Did you try the number?

GASPAR  
(nods)  
I sent a few random answers. The  
only reply is a question mark.

WILL  
Beth must have set up an auto  
reply. Wicked clever.

GASPAR  
That's my girl. Any idea what it means?

WILL  
Easy. You know Remus's brother, right?

GASPAR  
Uh, Br'er Rabbit?

WILL  
(shakes his head)  
That's Uncle Remus. She means  
Remus, twin brother of Romulus.  
(grins and taps his head)  
Detective. Steel trap, man.

GASPAR  
(blinks)  
My instinctive response is ... gimme  
your lunch money, nerd.

WILL  
No way. I'm gonna need it if we're  
going to Italy. Hope those voucher  
things are still good.

GASPAR  
Italy?

WILL  
C'mon. You gotta know this.  
(beat)  
Romulus founded the city of Rome  
when he killed his twin brother,  
Remus. Saint Peter is supposed to  
be buried there, too.

GASPAR  
What about Adam's birth?

WILL  
The Creation of Adam. Dude, it's the  
painting on the Sistine Chapel  
ceiling! I'm tellin' ya. Steel trap.

GASPAR  
Lunch money.

Will mimes a steel trap with his hands and makes the SOUND:  
tw-WAP!

WILL  
A fact would have to chew off its  
own leg to get outta here.

GASPAR  
(that's where Beth was)  
Rome.

WILL  
We need to get there before the  
bastards that attacked you come back.

GASPAR  
(frowns thoughtfully)  
Yeah. I think ... I think maybe we need  
some help. Someone with influence.

WILL  
(realizing)  
And you have a relative in town.

GASPAR  
Beth wanted me to find my family. I  
think it's time we paid a visit to  
this Count Bethlen Tamás.

WILL  
Got a number?

GASPAR  
Unlisted. But I got an address.

INT./EXT. TAXI - DAY

Gaspar and Will sit in the back seat. Gaspar wears his  
fedora; Will wears his cap. They drive into the country until  
they turn into a winding driveway.

The driveway runs between two farm buildings of white stucco  
with gently sloping roofs of rust-colored tile and climbs up  
a low hill to an imposing stone MANOR HOUSE: a castle.

GASPAR  
(gaping)  
That must be the house.

WILL  
I don't think anything that big can  
still be called a house, boss.

GASPAR  
We totally shoulda called.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

As the cab pulls away, Will and Gaspar stand with luggage -- one bag each -- by an entrance designed to intimidate.

WILL  
We shoulda had him wait.

GASPAR  
I couldn't find the words in my phrase book.

Gaspar shrugs and pulls the DOORBELL CORD. After a beat, he pulls again. A sudden noise makes them jump. With a GROAN AND A SQUEAL, the door slides open.

COUNT BETHLEN TAMÁS stands blinking in the sun, regarding them from the shadows of foyer.

He wears a crisp white shirt with a tie over black trousers along with a slightly threadbare smoking jacket. He does not smile, and there is no hint of welcome in his dark eyes.

TAMÁS (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
What do you want?

GASPAR  
Uh ... sorry ... do you speak English by chance? My name is Gaspar Bethlen. From America. I'm ... I'm a way distant, like a zillion times removed cousin, I think.

The count's eyes open wide with surprise. Then, a smile stretches across his thin face. It doesn't reach his eyes.

TAMÁS  
Please forgive my manners. I am not accustomed to visitors, least of all distant relations. Won't you please come inside?

INT. MANOR HOUSE, ENTRANCE

Gaspar and Will follow the man into a foyer, where a magnificent stairway winds up to a second floor balcony. Much of the furniture is covered with heavy sheets, and lighter spots on the bare floors hint at pieces that are missing.

TAMÁS  
Pardon my dust. Most of the servants are off tonight.  
(MORE)

TAMÁS (CONT'D)  
 So I am hardly prepared to be a host.  
 But family forgives, yes? Come,  
 there's a sitting room just here.

INT. ANA'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE

ANA ENTERS her tidy efficiency flat and drops an arm-load of groceries on the counter. She hits PLAY on her ANSWERING MACHINE, and shrugs out of her coat as a message starts:

WILL (V.O. FROM THE MACHINE)  
 Hey, Ana, it's Will. Sorry I missed  
 you. I'll give you a call later,  
 okay? Gaspar and I are riding out to  
 the country to visit that relative  
 of his, Count Bethlen --

ANA TURNS, STARTLED, spilling her bag on the counter.

ANA (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
 Oh, no--

She grabs her coat and keys and runs, leaving the groceries on the counter.

INT. MANOR HOUSE, SITTING ROOM - MEANWHILE

Shabby, faded opulence, the ghost of old nobility. On one wall stands a CASE FILLED WITH FENCING FOILS and masks and an impressive collection of trophies.

Will and Gaspar sit awkwardly, lest their weight snap the GROANING, brittle wood. There is a small globe paperweight on one of the tables.

TAMÁS  
 Here, let me get you something to  
 drink, eh? I have a nice Tokai...

The Count turns to rummage around in a cabinet.

GASPAR  
 No, we're good. Really.

TAMÁS  
 Nonsense. Besides, it's opened. You  
 know it doesn't keep. Here, I have  
 some glasses somewhere...

GASPAR  
 I don't mean to intrude on your  
 hospitality or your privacy, sir.  
 If I can just tell you why--

TAMÁS

Oh, I know exactly why you're here.  
In fact, I've been going to quite  
some trouble to locate you! Of  
course, had I known that you'd come  
straight to my doorstep, why, I  
could have saved myself a great  
deal of time and trouble.

Bethlen turns, holding a REVOLVER pointed directly at  
Gaspar's heart. Gaspar and Will leap to their feet.

TAMÁS (CONT'D)

I'll thank you to stay where you  
are. I assure you, this weapon is  
loaded and serviceable, and I shall  
not hesitate to use it.

Gaspar holds his hands up struggling to keep his voice calm.

GASPAR

Whoa, wait --

TAMÁS

That's close enough! Coming cap-in-  
hand to rob a man in his own home!  
Just like your father.

GASPAR

(stunned, confused)  
My dad...?

TAMÁS

Now, then. I believe you have  
something that belongs to me.

GASPAR

Okay, seriously. I don't know what  
you're talking about.

TAMÁS

Pray, don't insult me. You have a  
set of books detailing the history  
of my family.

GASPAR

(angry now)  
Our family.

TAMÁS

Keep your pretensions to yourself,  
American. Those books are rare and  
valuable, and the property of this  
estate. I want them returned. Now.

Gaspar picks up the heavy globe paperweight. It's about the  
size of a baseball. It fits right in his hand. Yeah, perfect.

GASPAR

Catch.

He throws the paperweight to the Count, hard. Without thinking, the old man scrambles to avoid the flying paperweight and drops the revolver.

Gaspar moves quickly. He kicks the revolver away. It slides across the room and under a tall, ornate cabinet.

Gaspar gives him a hard shove and he falls. The Count scrambles after the weapon.

WILL

Run!

Gaspar darts back to the foyer and to the main door, with Will close behind. In the foyer, they meet FOUR MEN coming from the opposite direction. These men are bandaged -- THEY ARE SOME OF THE SAME MEN THAT CHASED GASPAR AFTER THE BANK.

WILL (CONT'D)

He said the servants were off.

GASPAR

I guess goons don't count.

They turn back to the sitting room, but the Count is there with his revolver. He FIRES, missing them.

Gaspar and Will turn and flee. As they run:

GASPAR (CONT'D)

See? Guns. Guess you're a cool detective after all.

WILL

I was okay with the uncool.

They turn and go the only way they can -- up the stairs to the second floor balcony.

TAMÁS (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)

Stop them!

WILL

Wait! We're going up!

The Count FIRES again, splintering the wall behind them.

WILL (CONT'D)

Gaspar, up is never the way out!

They reach the balcony. The Count FIRES. The bullet SMASHES the wall between them, showering them with plaster. Without thinking, Gaspar and Will sprint in opposite directions.



Will looks back and sees that Gaspar isn't with him. Two thugs are behind. Will runs, muttering to himself.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Yeah, great. Split up. 'Cause that  
always works.

GASPAR, MEANWHILE, RUNS DOWN ANOTHER WIDE OPEN CORRIDOR.

Gaspar passes a hallway guarded by TWO SUITS OF ARMOR. He drops his bag and pushes one over. It FALLS WITH A GREAT CLANG, and ONE OF THE THUGS trips over it.

Before the man can recover, Gaspar slams the shield down on the man's head, knocking him out cold.

The other man, JAEL, comes more cautiously, wielding a sword he picked up from the crashed armor. He swings the blade at Gaspar, a blow that would have taken his head off had he been slower to raise the shield.

The two men fight; Gaspar can barely defend himself.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE

ANA arrives in a SMALL CAR. She parks where the taxi dropped Will and Gaspar. She rushes to the door and POUNDS on it.

INT. MANOR HOUSE

IN THE OPPOSITE HALLWAY, Will FLEES, WITH TWO GOONS RIGHT BEHIND HIM. One is ABBAN, the thug who watched Beth die.

Will is faster; he's gaining ground. But he's running out of hallway. He ducks into a side room.

The men turn into the doorway, but Will SLAMS IT SHUT IN THEIR FACES, knocking Abban down.

The other leaps over him, but Will is waiting with a huge vase. He SLAMS it down on the man's head, SHATTERING it. The man drops.

WILL  
I so hope that was valuable.

Abban recovers quickly. He's pissed. Will grabs his case and runs back to the hall. The man is after him.

GASPAR MANAGES TO KNOCK THE MAN HE'S FIGHTING OUT, clubbing him under the chin with the shield. He turns and runs back toward Will.

Will DUCKS INTO A BEDROOM -- there is no exit. Abban has him cornered. They struggle, and Will manages to knock Abban back just as GASPAR ENTERS. Gaspar punches, hard. Abban falls.

GASPAR

We gotta get out of here.

Gaspar looks at the tall window. It's surrounded by ornate iron work, but opens outward. Beyond, he can see a bit of trellis -- a possible way down. Will scrambles to the window and RATTLES IT.

WILL

Locked!

ABBAN regains his feet and charges. Gaspar steps out of his way and lifts the man by the scruff of his shirt and his belt. Using the man's own momentum, Gaspar hurls him toward the window. The man CRASHES through and falls, SCREAMING. He lands with a THUD.

GASPAR

Open.

WILL

Wicked.

GASPAR

You know, you say that a lot.

WILL

You just threw a guy out a window!

GASPAR

He started it.

Will pushes the shattered window up and starts down the trellis. Gaspar drops the bags after him. At that moment, the Count charges in, his weapon lowered. He FIRES WILDLY.

Gaspar grabs a lamp off the bedside table and throws it at the Count. The Count ducks. Before he can recover, Gaspar grabs the bedspread off the bed and races to the window, hooks a corner on the ornate ironwork at the base of the window, AND SWINGS DOWN.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE

From the window, the Count FIRES again.

THEY RUN, passing the MOANING ABBAN, circling back to the front of the house. There, they see MORE HIRED GOONS spilling out of the front door. Will and Gaspar run down the driveway. The goons pull guns.

GOON #1 (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)

Stop!

He FIRES. Will and Gaspar run faster. ANOTHER SHOT.

IN THE DRIVEWAY, Ana sees Will and Gaspar sprinting. She races back to her car.

Will and Gaspar are still running.

ANA's CAR squeals toward Gaspar and Will and stops abruptly when she reaches them, raising a cloud of dust. The passenger door swings open.

ANA

Get in!

TWO MORE SHOTS. The goons are catching up.

WILL

Ana?

ANA

Hurry!

INT. ANA'S CAR

They climb into the tiny vehicle. Before Gaspar has closed the back door, ANA PEALS AWAY.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE

Behind them, the hired goons COLLECT THEMSELVES.

GOON #1 (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)

Get a car! Get a car!

INT. ANA'S CAR

Ana drives fast.

GASPAR

You're not going to believe what happened to us! That crazy old man tried to kill us!

ANA

Oh, I believe it. Bethlen Tamás is not a good man.

WILL

You know him?

Ana's knuckles are white where her fingers grip the steering wheel. She does not look away from the road.

ANA  
Of course I know him. He's my  
grandfather.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE

The Count watches the car disappear into the distance.

TAMÁS  
(cold, furious, betrayed)  
Anasztázia.

INT. ANA'S CAR

Ana steers off the main road, checking her mirror constantly.

WILL  
You really think he woulda shot us?

GASPAR  
The bullets pretty much convinced me.

ANA  
He is a small and desperate man who  
believes he is entitled. That makes  
him ruthless.

Will reaches out to touch her shoulder, and she takes his  
hand gratefully.

GASPAR  
You saved our lives.

ANA  
I should have warned you.  
(beat)  
My grandfather is something of a  
relic. A living reminder of old ways.  
He fought like a demon to regain the  
estate. He was one of the very few old  
nobles to do so, you know. All of  
Hungary rejoiced. But the effort broke  
him. Now the creditors are calling,  
and I don't think the castle will be  
his much longer. One more relic of  
Hungary's dying culture.

GASPAR  
The gun kinda killed my sympathy.

ANA  
 I don't blame you. I loved my  
 grandfather for the man I thought he  
 was; I've never quite forgiven him  
 for the man he is.

FLASHBACK:

INT. MANOR HOUSE, SITTING ROOM - SEVENTEEN YEARS EARLIER

TAMÁS SHOUTS at a WOMAN, 30s, who resembles Ana.

ANA (V.O.)  
 My mother tried to stop him. They  
 argued -- something about swindling  
 some landowner or cheating some banker.

THE WOMAN PROTESTS, SHOUTING BACK. Tamás sweeps a stack of  
 papers off a table as his anger swells to rage.

ANA (V.O.)  
 She tried to remind him what it  
 means to be noble.

TAMÁS SLAPS the woman hard enough to make her fall. Still  
 shouting, he points at the door.

ANA (V.O.)  
 He responded by disowning her.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: THE CHILD ANA, five or six years old,  
 huddling in the doorway, watching, sobbing.

ANA (V.O.)  
 He hasn't spoken to any of us since.

BACK TO SCENE:

ANA  
 It is our heartbreak in Hungary.  
 Our culture is fading to memory,  
 and memory is fleeting. I don't  
 want the home of my ancestors to  
 become a hotel or a Pizza Hut.

GASPAR  
 I understand.

ANA  
 But I don't want to see the house in  
 my grandfather's grasping, miserly  
 hands, either. I don't want to see a  
 proud legacy tainted. He's desperate.  
 He's mortgaged or sold everything --  
 hired those terrible men--

WILL

That gem oughta buy off a few creditors.

ANA

My great-grandmother used to talk about it when I was a girl, but she talked about it as though it were a legacy of, well, knowledge.

GASPAR

Something we're kinda short on right now.

ANA

All I know is my grandfather can't get it. To claim ... whatever it is, one needs proof that he or she is the rightful heir.

WILL

That proof'll be in the books. But who do we ... uh, prove it to?

ANA

I don't know. Supposedly ... you take the proof to the place where our family line began. You answer four questions.

GASPAR

What questions?

ANA

Who is the founder of your line? Where did he travel? What lead him thither? And what did he find?

GASPAR

That's not a lot to go on.

WILL

A mystery that's puzzled scholars for more than two-thousand years.

ANA

So what now?

WILL

We need to get to Italy.

GASPAR

Will, stay here.

WILL

Gaspar, I've spent my whole life reading books. Now I'm ... I'm goddamn in one. I'm not ready to stop yet.

GASPAR  
You don't have to come.

WILL  
Yeah. Yeah, I kinda do. I think ... I think I need this. Maybe almost as much as you do. Besides. Bought and paid for, remember?

GASPAR  
You're fired. Again. Double fired.

WILL  
That's like a double negative.  
Meaning hired. You need a detective.  
(cutting off further protest)  
And because I promised your wife.

Gaspar takes a breath, and then lets it out. He nods. Again, that's the one thing he's not going to argue with.

GASPAR  
Thanks, Will.  
(to Ana)  
Can you take us to the airport?

ANA  
My grandfather will have men there.  
It's the first place they'll look. I told you. He's desperate now.  
(beat)  
Take the train.

EXT. BUDAPEST TRAIN STATION - LATER

While Gaspar buys tickets, Will kisses Ana goodbye. They hold one another for a long moment.

ANA  
Come back. Soon.

WILL  
I promise.

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Will and Gaspar share a roomette with facing seats. Just as the train starts moving, Gaspar sits bolt upright.

WILL  
What is it?

GASPAR  
Look.

Through the window, they see FOUR MEN running to the train.  
They recognize them from the Count's manor.

GASPAR (CONT'D)

Damn.

WILL

They probably bribed the ticket guy.  
They'll know right where we are.

GASPAR

C'mon.

INT. TRAIN, HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Will and Gaspar leave the compartment, carrying their bags.  
They find a PORTER, and Gaspar hands him a wad of bills.

GASPAR

We'd like another compartment.  
Preferably near the front.

PORTER (HUNGARIAN ACCENT)

I'm sorry. The train is full.

Gaspar hands the man more bills.

PORTER (CONT'D)

There's a crew car. Not fancy.

GASPAR

It'll do.

The porter leads them through the train, and past a sign that  
says NO PASSENGERS BEYOND THIS POINT. The Porter uses a key  
to unlock it. As they pass through:

WILL

Those men'll find us sooner or  
later. In Rome, if not before.

GASPAR

(to the Porter)

Wait. Any chance you can find two  
guys about our size? That are  
getting off before we get to Rome?

PORTER

I know two men. A little taller  
than that one, but close. They'll  
be getting off at the next station.

GASPAR

Will, gimme your coat and hat.



As Will unbuttons his jacket, Gaspar gives the porter his overcoat and fedora, as well as some more bills.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Give 'em these. Buy whatever  
they're wearing. Just be sure they  
wear our coats and hats when they  
get off. Okay?

Will smiles as he understands.

INT. TRAIN CREW COMPARTMENT - LATER

The crew compartment is basically the same as the last one, just a little shabbier. The train comes to a stop. Gaspar and Will press their faces to the glass.

ON THE PLATFORM, they see TWO MEN leave the train, wearing the coats and hats they gave the porter. Seconds later, the FOUR GOONS pour out of another car and race after them. They catch them at the far end of the platform.

THROUGH THE WINDOW: THE men argue with the decoys.

WILL  
C'mon ... move, dammit...

At that moment, the men realize their mistake. They turn and run toward the train. The train begins to move.

WILL (CONT'D)  
C'mon ... c'mon...

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM

The men are closer, closer ... The train is gaining speed. The men sprint, waving their arms and SHOUTING. They reach the train and try to grab a handrail...

Too late. The men are standing on the platform, staring, arms at their sides, when the station disappears from view.

INT. MANOR HOUSE, SITTING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A PHONE RINGS. The Count ANSWERS.

TAMÁS (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
Yes?  
(beat)  
Damn! Which train?  
(beat)  
No, no. It doesn't matter. I know  
where he's going.

INT. TRAIN CREW COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

The train is deep in the European countryside. Will looks up from the travel book he's studying.

WILL  
Mind if I ask a question?

Gaspar shrugs.

WILL (CONT'D)  
You gave up baseball.

Gaspar nods.

WILL (CONT'D)  
A switch-hitting first baseman with  
power ... mostly from the right...

Will smiles at Gaspar's glare.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Mind if I ask why?

GASPAR  
Baseball ... It's like anything. If  
you're gonna do it, really do it,  
it takes love. When Beth died...  
(beat)  
My love for the game ... it was just  
... you know. Gone. Everything. It  
all died with Beth.

WILL  
Man. I don't know what to say.

GASPAR  
But then I look at you and Ana ...  
and I remember. What it felt like  
to be that in love, that alive.

WILL  
I hope we can find what you and  
Beth had.  
(smiles, embarrassed)  
Of course, I can already hear my  
friends back home. They'll tell me  
to slow down.

GASPAR  
Yeah. Tell 'em to piss off.

Will raises his eyebrows, surprised and amused.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Life is short. Make the most of every  
precious, fleeting, goddamn moment.  
(MORE)

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
(nods to Will's book)  
No offense, but look at you. All those books. But you never took time to see the world.

WILL  
I guess I was waiting for the right moment.

GASPAR  
The right moment ... it never comes. You have to make it.  
(beat)  
That's what Beth used to say.

WILL  
(nods. beat.)  
Why do you want the gem so bad?

Gaspar looks at him, wondering what the hell he means.

WILL (CONT'D)  
It's not like you need the money. Is it just to keep that count dude from getting it?

GASPAR  
Beth wanted me to have it.  
(fights to keep from choking up)  
I just want some ... piece of her. Something that means she's not gone.  
(composes himself)  
I want something to hold on to.

A moment of silence as Will absorbs. Then:

WILL  
Would you do it again? Knowing how it was going to ... you know.

GASPAR  
End?  
(Will nods)  
Yeah. Yeah, I would. Even knowing all the agony that comes after, I'd do it all again. In a heartbeat. Between the grief and ... and no Beth at all, I take the grief every time. And I'd thank God for it.

EXT. ROME - THE NEXT MORNING

Just after sunrise, the city is golden. A cab takes Will and Gaspar through the ancient city.

Buildings are decorated tastefully for the holiday. Gaspar is focused on the GPS. Will holds an Italian phrase book.

GASPAR  
(points at a street ahead)  
There! Turn there. Left.

WILL (POOR ITALIAN)  
(flipping frantically  
through the phrase book)  
Uh ... sinistra! Sinistra!

The cab makes the turn near THE BANK BETH VISITED.

GASPAR  
Shouldn't be much farther.

WILL  
Look. A bank.

INT. ROME BANK - MOMENTS LATER

In the VAULT, a BANK MANAGER shows them a SAFE DEPOSIT BOX. Gaspar enters the combination and nods to the manager:

WILL  
Grazie.

The manager nods and leaves as Gaspar opens the box. Inside, he finds a thin envelope.

WILL (CONT'D)  
No book.

GASPAR  
No...

They take the envelope to a small table in the vault and OPEN the envelope. Inside is a MAP AND A KEY, the ones Beth had in the opening. Gaspar passes the map to Will. Will takes the map to a table and blows off a cloud of dust.

WILL  
Good thing Rome doesn't change much.

Gaspar turns the map over and discovers a STICKY NOTE that Beth attached. A few lines are written in her neat hand. Unconsciously, gently, his fingers trace the last two words. He reads it and hands the note to Will.

BETH (V.O.)  
These two objects, along with the  
engraving of the gem, were with your  
father when they found his body.  
Finish what he started, my love.

WILL  
She didn't know about that Count...

GASPAR  
Dad ... We always thought it was just  
a ... a mugging or something.

WILL  
Think he knows where we're going?

GASPAR  
We better hurry.

EXT. MONASTERY, ROME - LATE MORNING

Gaspar and Will approach the building slowly.

INT. MONASTERY

The same chamber from the opening scene -- unchanged. Gaspar looks at the map and starts toward the back of the room. Another STOCKY MONK sits at the desk. He looks up.

STOCKY MONK (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
That's not open to the public.

GASPAR  
Just a sec.

WILL  
Uh, un secondo....

Gaspar fumbles in his pocket, revealing the maps and the key pendant, as he retrieves the Phrase Book. THE GUARD'S EYES WIDEN WHEN HE SEES THE KEY.

STOCKY MONK (ENGLISH)  
American?

GASPAR  
(nods)  
I'm, uh, looking for something  
called the Graveyard of Secrets.

STOCKY MONK  
Your name?

GASPAR  
Gaspar Bethlen.

The Monk picks up a phone and dials. He speaks softly, making it difficult for Gaspar to hear him.

STOCKY MONK (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
Someone has come. A Gaspar Bethlen.  
American. He has a key.

EXT. MONASTERY - MEANWHILE

TWO MEN IN EXPENSIVE ITALIAN SUITS AND SUNGLASSES watch the library entrance. One has A MOBILE PHONE.

MAN IN ITALIAN SUIT #1 (ITALIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
He's inside.

EXT. MONASTERY

The Monk hangs up the phone.

STOCKY MONK  
The Keepers will see you.

He stands and opens the door.

MONTAGE: Gaspar and Will retrace the steps Beth took.

INT. UNDERGROUND VAULT - LATER

THE TWELVE MONKS ENTER from the stairway. Gaspar and Will ENTER, blinking, amazed.

MONK #1  
Welcome, Gaspar Bethlen.

GASPAR  
Uh, yeah. Hi.

WILL  
My God. What is this place?

MONK #2  
We are humble servants of the church, my son.

MONK #1  
But for nine centuries and more, we have guarded the secrets of the great families of Europe.

MONK #3  
How may we help you, Mr. Bethlen?

GASPAR  
I think you have a book for me.

MONK #2

The first volume of the History of the Bethlens. Your wife has already established your claim. Assuming, of course, that you are Gaspar Bethlen.

GASPAR

I have my passport...

MONK #3

That will suffice.

Gaspar hands him the document. The Monk takes the passport to the computer and scans it.

WILL

Uh, how long will that take? We're kinda in a hurry here....

The computer BEEPS.

MONK #3

Mr. Bethlen, your identity is confirmed.

(On Gaspar's surprise)

We are quite well funded, and most decidedly a part of the twenty-first century.

The first Monk turns to his brothers.

MONK #1

Do the keepers agree?

One by one, the twelve keepers nod solemnly. Then:

MONK #1 (CONT'D)

Your vault is number three-seven-nine-nine-four-three. The book is there, along with something else.

GASPAR

The gem?

MONK #1

(shakes his head)

A package. Your wife left it with us. For you. Come, I'll show you.

MONK #3

Blessings, Mr. Bethlen. May God's grace lead to you what you seek.

The other Monks retreat as Gaspar and Will follow Monk #1.

INT. MONASTERY

The Stocky Monk looks up as FOUR MORE MEN IN ITALIAN SUITS approach, moving purposefully toward the door Gaspar took. He starts to rise.

STOCKY MONK  
Arresto--!

Before he can finish, one of the men FIRES A HIGH-CALIBER SILENCED PISTOL. The guard slumps, dead. The men do not slow.

INT. UNDERGROUND CORRIDOR

The Monk leads Gaspar and Will into a chamber lined with ancient vaults like the drawers in a mausoleum. The place is labyrinthine and vast, with corridors, stairs, and twists.

MONK #1  
Here we are. Your key will work here, and nowhere else. Don't try the others; they are protected by mechanisms subtle and dangerous.

Gaspar nods, inserts his key carefully, and gives it a TWIST. The mechanism GROANS, and Gaspar hears STONE COUNTERWEIGHTS SHIFTING. The Vault slides open.

Inside, Gaspar finds another LEATHER-BOUND BOOK and a package addressed in Beth's hand to: "My Beloved."

WILL  
Wicked.

GASPAR  
Damn straight. Uh, sorry, Father.

Gaspar slips the book and the package into his bag.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Thank you. Thank you for this.

MONK #1  
Come, my son. Let us--

Before he can finish, the men in Italian suits appear from the corridor. The first man carries his silenced pistol.

MONK #1 (CONT'D)  
What --

MAN IN ITALIAN SUIT #1  
Before I shoot you, I would like to know if you have retrieved the book.



GASPAR  
It's right here.

WILL  
Gaspar --

MAN IN ITALIAN SUIT #1  
Show me.

Gaspar moves toward the man slowly, with the bag extended toward the man in his left hand. Just as Gaspar reaches the man, he KICKS, hard, and the MAN DOUBLES OVER in pain.

GASPAR  
No.

GASPAR THROWS A PUNCH with his free hand, knocking the man down. The gun goes sliding down the corridor.

WILL  
Father, run! RUN!

Will moves, trying to pull the Monk after him. Before the other men can recover from their surprise or draw their weapons, Gaspar reaches for the key on its chain around his neck and dives for another one of the vaults -- NOT HIS.

MONK #1  
Bethlen, no!

Gaspar jams his key into the vault and, with effort, TWISTS. At once, he hears again the sound of HEAVY COUNTERWEIGHTS SHIFTING AS THE ANCIENT MECHANISM WORKS. GREAT SLABS OF STONE, each weighing tons, CRASH DOWN from the ceiling on both sides of the corridor, sealing the vaults.

ANOTHER CRASH BEHIND THEM. At the far end of the corridor, ANOTHER STONE SLAB SLAMS DOWN, raising a great cloud of dust.

WILL  
Holy crap, Gaspar!

GASPAR  
Okay. That's not what I thought that was gonna do.

AND THEN ANOTHER, several yards, closer, and ANOTHER AFTER THAT. The corridor is being sealed, section by section. They'll be trapped in moments. GASPAR PUSHES THE SURPRISED MONK ahead of him.

WILL  
Run!

They bolt, as THE STONE SLABS FALL, one by one, chasing them, closer, closer ... The MEN IN SUITS recover and follow, running for their lives.

Gaspar, Will, and the Monk turn a corner, sprinting. The men in suits are right behind them, barely making the turn as a SLAB FALLS, sealing the corridor.

At the far end of the corridor, there is ANOTHER GROAN as counterweights shift again, straining to push the final slab before the main vault UP FROM THE FLOOR.

ANOTHER SOUND from above. Stone seals about the size of an outstretched hand slide away from openings in the ceiling. JETS OF WATER from the canals above stream down, flooding the corridor. Soon the water is ankle -- and then knee -- deep.

Gaspar bows, protecting his bag with his body. The water is rising fast.

WILL (CONT'D)  
It's flooding. Right. Of course  
it's flooding.

The SLABS FALL FASTER. One of the men falls, but the others don't slow. Before he can regain his feet in the rising torrent, a STONE SLAB SLAMS DOWN, crushing him.

The SLABS are close -- they barely stay ahead. The exit is just ahead, but it doesn't look like they're going to make it. The slab rising from the floor is chest high and rising.

#### INT. UNDERGROUND VAULT

Will makes it over the slab. Gaspar SHOVES the Monk, sending him sprawling over, too. Gaspar leaps, throwing his bag. Grunting, he reaches the top of the slab, but it is rising with him, pushing him close to the stone ceiling. He's going to be crushed.

At the last instant, he slides over and drops hard to the floor of the vault. The men behind them aren't so lucky. They are sealed in the corridor. The stone is nearly thick enough to muffle their SCREAMS.

The Monk races to a set of WAIST-HIGH LEVERS set into the floor and, using all of his body weight in the effort, moves one. He hears MORE COUNTERWEIGHTS and the distant sound of water draining from the still-sealed corridor.

The Monk makes the sign of the cross and mouths a prayer.

WILL  
(panting)  
Those men ...

MONK #1  
Will be dealt with.

WILL  
There'll be more outside.

GASPAR  
Is there, uh, another way out?

MONK #1  
(uncomfortable)  
We are the Keepers. Our oaths do not permit us to interfere in the matters of the families whose secrets we guard.

From above, they hear the SOUND OF CHURCH BELLS echoing. The Monk smiles and gestures to the stairs behind him.

MONK # 1  
But of course, all are welcome to join us in holy prayer, my son.

EXT. MONASTERY - LATER

MONKS exit the monastery and walk through an open Roman plaza. As they enter the crowded square, two of the monks slip off their robes and hand them to Monk #1. They are Gaspar and Will, still in their damp clothes.

GASPAR  
Grazie, Father.

The Keeper holds a finger to his lips, and then makes the sign of the cross in benediction. Gaspar slings his bag over his shoulder and slips into the crowd.

EXT. ROMAN STREETS

Will and Gaspar move fast, weaving through side streets and alleys, looking over their shoulders for signs of pursuit. Will carries the book; Gaspar fumbles with Beth's envelope.

WILL  
What is it?

Gaspar shows Will a memory card for the Phone taped to a note in Beth's hand: Begin where he traveled.

GASPAR  
(reads)  
Begin where he traveled.

WILL  
Who?

Gaspar gives him a "Seriously?" glare.

GASPAR  
You tell me. Detective.

Gaspar looks at the contents, one by one.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Business card. Paperback book.  
Shirt. CD.

WILL  
What's the book?

Gaspar holds it up: a cover photo shows kids playing in a swimming pool.

GASPAR  
Kid's pool games.

WILL  
No help there. What about the  
business card?

GASPAR  
A university professor. Astronomy.  
Here in Rome.

WILL  
Any idea what that has to do with  
your family?

GASPAR  
My dad was a professor.

WILL  
But not astronomy.

Gaspar shakes his head.

GASPAR  
Religion. He specialized in the  
Nativity. Beth was one of his  
students. That's how I met her.

Will smiles. Gaspar's talking about Beth and his father without changing the subject. Gaspar unfolds the shirt: a golf shirt with a Polo logo. He pauses to look at it.

WILL  
Golf shirt. Sweet. Uh, maybe admire  
it later, okay?

They start moving again, still looking over their shoulders. No sign of trouble.

GASPAR  
Maybe we lost 'em.

Gaspar manages to get most of the items back in the envelope.

WILL

How about the memory card thing?

Gaspar fumbles with the phone to insert the memory card. It's tricky since they're still moving fast. It's an MP3 music file. A familiar old children's song PLAYS:

SINGERS (FROM THE PHONE)

John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt,  
His name is my name too.  
Whenever we go out  
The people always shout,  
There goes John Jacob Jingleheimer  
Schmidt.  
Tra la, la, la, la, la  
John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt,  
His name is my name too--

WILL

(moving again)

Okay, I think that's enough.

Gaspar nods and stops the music. He follows.

GASPAR

His name is my name, too.

WILL

That's not much help. What's the CD?

GASPAR

Bill Haley and the Comets. Any ideas?

WILL

Unless your ancestor is the Fonz,  
this detective is stumped.

GASPAR

We need to know what's in that book.

WILL

At least we have all three.

Will stops. He sets the book down on a table at a sidewalk bistro. He has an idea.

WILL (CONT'D)

Give me your phone. I can text the  
pages to Ana.

Gaspar slides the phone over. As Will starts taking SNAPS with the phone's camera, a WAITER drops menus on the table.

WILL (CONT'D)

We gotta keep moving.

GASPAR  
We need a plan.

WILL  
Those guys could still be behind us.

Gaspar looks around. No sign. There are at least three directions open for escape. Seems safe enough. He shrugs.

GASPAR  
At least we'll be caffeinated.

EXT. BISTRO - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Will and Gaspar are seated at the table, drinking espresso. Will's PHONE RINGS. Will answers; Gaspar opens the paperback.

WILL  
Hello? Ana, hey! Yeah, yeah, we're okay. Just a sec. I'm gonna put you on speaker.

INT. ANA'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE

Ana sits at her kitchen table with a laptop computer. The pages that Will sent are open. She's talking on a phone.

ANA  
I just got the pages you sent.

WILL (V.O., FROM THE SPEAKER)  
Can you read them?

ANA  
It's difficult. The writing is ... archaic. This is an ancient record.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ANA AND GASPAR AND WILL IN THE BISTRO.

ANA (CONT'D)  
It was began by a man named Bethlen. That was his only name, not just the surname. He left the monastery of his father with his two sons.

GASPAR  
The two branches of the Bethlens.

ANA  
To his older son, Bethlen bequeathed his lands and earthly wealth. To the other, the legacy.

WILL  
The gem.

ANA

When war raged across Europe, one of your ancestors took the gem back to the monastery, so the monks could protect it until his progeny could someday return and claim it.

WILL

Dude, what is it with your family and monasteries?

ANA

But here's the interesting part. Guess what Bethlen's father's name was?

WILL

It was Gaspar, wasn't it?

ANA

It was! How did you know?

GASPAR

(realizing)

His name is my name too.

ANA

So it's a family name. Dating back to the founder of the Bethlen line.

WILL

Yeah, nobody hangs a name like Gaspar on a kid without a damn good reason.

(seeing Gaspar's glare)

Uh, no offence.

GASPAR

If I had a dollar for every time some playground punk called me Gaspar the Friendly Ghost ...

WILL

Yeah, or...

(sings in the style of the Clash's Rock the Cashbah)

Rock the Gas-par...

Another glare silences the song.

ANA

Just what we already know. To claim the legacy, return to the place of Bethlen's father. With the books. And the answer to the four questions. It's a sort of a password, I guess.

WILL

Where's that?

No answer. Gaspar fingers the Polo logo on the short idly as he browses the paperback.

GASPAR  
It would help if we knew who this  
first Gaspar was.

ANA  
I'll do a Web search.

She launches a Web browser and types.

ANA (CONT'D)  
Hmmm. Not much help. There's more  
than ten thousand hits. A lot of  
them are about the famous American  
baseball player.

GASPAR  
I think we can rule him out.

WILL  
There's a Portuguese sausage  
company, an eighteenth-century  
pirate, a city in Brazil, a Flemish  
artist, an actor in Argentina--

GASPAR  
(interrupting)  
Ana, try Gaspar and Marco Polo.

Will looks puzzled. Gaspar points to the shirt.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
It's not a golf shirt. It's a Polo  
shirt. Detective.

Then, Gaspar holds up the paperback book, open to a chapter on Marco Polo, the water game. Will Grins.

Meanwhile, Ana makes a few CLICKS on the keyboard and:

ANA  
That's more like it. Yes ... Marco Polo ...  
Oh. You're not going to believe this.

GASPAR  
What?

ANA  
Marco Polo claims to have visited  
the tombs of three men called  
Melchior, Balthasar ... and Gaspar.

WILL  
Uh, who?



ANA  
The Magi. The three wise men who  
visited the Christ Child in Bethlehem!

GASPAR  
No. Uh uh. That's impossible.

WILL  
Gaspar, it adds up! Your Dad's  
research! He was a nativity scholar!

GASPAR  
C'mon. We're talking about the  
literal frickin' Magi. Gold, myrrh,  
frankincense! That can't be right.

WILL  
Why not?

GASPAR  
I mean, come the hell on! There's  
no proof Jesus even existed.

WILL  
Actually, that's not true. There's--

GASPAR  
Really? Really? A lecture? That's  
what you think I'm looking for here?

WILL  
There's one way to find out. Text  
the answer.

Gaspar nods and enters "GASPAR THE MAGI" and hits SEND. After  
a second, there is a reply: THAT'S RIGHT, MY LOVE! NOW THE  
NEXT ONE!

ANA  
If it's true, we know the answers to  
the remaining questions! Who is the  
father of your line? Gaspar the Magi.  
Where did his journey take him?

WILL  
(excited)  
To Bethlehem, the city of David.

Gaspar enters the word BETHLEHEM and hits send. Then:

GASPAR  
I don't believe it.

The reply: YES! AND WHAT LED HIM THERE?

WILL  
What led him? The star in the east.

ANA

Try it.

Gaspar enters The Star in the East and hits SEND. Then, he received a reply: MORE SPECIFIC?

WILL

I guess the star in the east is a little too obvious. A mystery scholars have been trying to solve for two-thousand years.

GASPAR

Good thing I got a detective.

ANA

The answer will be something specific.

Will holds up the business card, grinning.

WILL

Something an astronomer can help with.

ANA

Be careful, both of you.

WILL

Ana, I ... I ...

GASPAR

(rolls his eyes)

Oh for God's sake, wuss. Tell her.

A too-long, awkward moment.

ANA

Would it help if I said I love you too, first?

WILL

(smiles)

It might. I love you, Ana.

ANA

Come back soon.

WILL

I will.

INT. ANA'S APARTMENT

As Ana hangs up, smiling, she hears a SUDDEN SOUND, a CRASH, at her front door. The smile vanishes. She spins, startled. ANOTHER CRASH, LOUDER. Before Ana can react:

EXT. ROMAN UNIVERSITY OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Gaspar and Will find a UNIVERSITY OFFICE BUILDING. Gaspar looks back, watching the other pedestrians intently.

WILL  
Maybe they gave up.

GASPAR  
Is that what you think?

Will doesn't have to answer. They trot to the door and ENTER.

INT. ROMAN UNIVERSITY OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Gaspar shrugs and KNOCKS. After a moment, JASON COOK opens the door. He is in his 40s -- English, balding, and tweedy. He has a friendly smile.

COOK  
Yes?

GASPAR  
I'm sorry to disturb you, sir. My name is Gaspar Bethlen. I think you might have known my wife, Beth--

COOK  
Why yes! She said you'd be by some day. I'm just finishing a call. Why don't you wait in the library?

INT. ROMAN UNIVERSITY, LIBRARY - LATER

A comfy, book-lined study room. Will and Gaspar are sitting at a table. Will's got a stack of open books.

WILL  
There's not much about the Magi in the Bible. They only appear in one Gospel.

GASPAR  
Does it say where they came from?

WILL  
No. It doesn't give their names, either. In fact, it doesn't even say how many there were.

GASPAR  
No. Three. Three kings. You know.  
(sings)  
We three kings of Orient are... Blah, blah, blah, but see it says three!

WILL

Uh uh. Three gifts are mentioned.  
Beyond that, the Bible only says  
that wise men came from their own  
country, somewhere to the east.

GASPAR

That narrows it right the hell  
down. So what do we know about 'em?

As he speaks, Will points at various pages in the open books  
with growing enthusiasm.

WILL

Well, the Magi were priests of  
Zoroastrianism, famous around the  
world as astrologers. Magi is where  
we get the English word magic.

GASPAR

So if these priests had seen  
something in the stars, some sign--

WILL

They would have followed it. Even  
to the ends of the Earth.  
(pulls another book over)  
Okay. This is what we know. First,  
the star appeared at least twice --  
once as a sign to the Magi, and  
then as a sort of directional sign  
over Bethlehem. Early GPS.  
(another book)  
Two more things. The star moved --  
it went before them. Finally, it  
stood over Bethlehem to pinpoint  
the location of the baby Jesus.

GASPAR

Handy.

At that moment, Cook ARRIVES and joins them. As he sits:

COOK

Sorry for the delay, gents. How can  
I help?

GASPAR

Professor, do you think it's  
possible that there was a ... a  
literal Star of Bethlehem?

COOK

That's what your wife wanted to know.  
Astronomers like me have wondered for  
two-thousand years. I've heard  
theories. Fireball meteors.

(MORE)

COOK (CONT'D)  
A supernova. But none of those really  
fits the bill, eh?

WILL  
I don't think so.

COOK  
Let's go to the planetarium and  
take a look, shall we?

INT. ROMAN UNIVERSITY PLANETARIUM - LATER

This is not a modern planetarium. It's an old place, small,  
with a dome driven by elegant gears and brass clockwork --  
like some fantastic, steam-punkish machine imagined by da  
Vinci. It is a delicate and beautiful instrument.

Will has brought books from the library. Cook works the  
antiquated levers that move the stars in the dome of the sky.

COOK  
Now then. Many astronomers suggest a  
planetary conjunction. Specifically,  
a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn  
that occurred in the year seven BC.  
The two bright objects seemed to  
combine to make one new one.

He adjusts his controls, and the great clockwork SPINS AND  
WHIRS as the stars shift their positions in the dome.

COOK (CONT'D)  
There. You see?

The two lights are close, but they are not touching.

GASPAR  
(shakes his head)  
They're close. But they don't  
really look like one star, do they?

WILL  
And the Magi were star gazers. A  
conjunction wouldn't have fooled  
them. No way. And it doesn't move,  
appear twice, or hang over one place.

COOK  
I guess not.

Will looks at the Web browser on the phone.

WILL

Besides, according to this, the magi kept, like, wicked records, and the conjunction just didn't cause much of a fuss.

GASPAR

So what did?

WILL

In fact, the only thing that caused a stir at all was a comet.

COOK

Yes! The Persian astronomers made notes. Here, I'll show you.

He moves the levers again, and the stars shift. A great comet now appears on the eastern horizon.

COOK (CONT'D)

The sky in the year sixty-six.

GASPAR

A comet...

He reaches into his jacket and retrieves the Bill Haley CD.

GASPAR (CONT'D)

Could it have been Halley's Comet?

COOK

Almost certainly. Most of the world made note of it, including the Persian priests.

WILL

That can't be it. The year sixty-six is, like, way too late for the birth of Christ.

GASPAR

But the comet returns. Right?

COOK

Every seventy-six years.

GASPAR

So when was Christ born?

COOK

Around the year eight BC at the earliest. That's the usual cutoff.

Will frowns, about to speak, but Gaspar is faster.

GASPAR  
Halley would have come around in  
about twelve BC. Is that right?

Cook nods. He adjusts his levels, turning the sky back.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
So that's four years too early.

WILL  
No. No it isn't.

GASPAR  
What do you mean?

Will hands Gaspar a book and points at a passage.

WILL  
Look. Roman historical records and  
the Bible accounts suggest that the  
crucifixion happened around thirty-  
six AD. Let's start with that.

COOK  
Agreed. That's clear enough.

GASPAR  
So it's simple. Take thirty-six AD.  
Subtract thirty-three. That gives  
us the year three AD, right?

WILL  
Not so fast. Why thirty-three?

GASPAR  
That's Christ's age when he was  
crucified. Uh, right?

WILL  
No, the Bible never gives an age.  
(points to another book)  
Look. Jesus is called rabbi. Back  
then, you had to be, like, close to  
fifty to be a rabbi. And here, in  
the Gospel of John, Jesus compares  
his life to the temple in  
Jerusalem, and calls it 'forty and  
six years in the building.'

GASPAR  
Did the temple take that long to build?

WILL  
No way.

COOK  
Oh! Obviously, Christ is saying that  
he is the same age as the temple.

WILL  
That puts Christ at forty-eight  
when he was crucified.

GASPAR  
So if I've got the math right here,  
Jesus would have been born in the  
year twelve BC.

The comet rises again in the east.

WILL  
A year that Halley's comet  
appeared!

COOK  
Just so.

WILL  
And in twelve BC, Halley was noted  
with, like, total awe. They called  
it a harbinger of a golden age.

COOK  
It would have appeared twice, once  
heading toward the sun, once  
passing back on its orbit back into  
deep space. It would have appeared  
to hang over one point.

A moment of realization: illumination and numinous awe.

GASPAR  
Oh my God. Oh my God.  
(to Will)  
You are a detective.

WILL  
I get the job done.

EXT. ROMAN UNIVERSITY - LATER

As Will watches, Gaspar types "Halley's Comet" and hits SEND.

GASPAR  
Here goes nothing.

A beat, and then a reply: RIGHT! Gaspar and Will exchange a  
grin. Gaspar glances back at the screen and sees a MESSAGE  
DOWNLOADING.



WILL  
What is it?

GASPAR  
(both crushed and elated)  
It's a video file. From Beth.

WILL  
Want me to, uh...

He points a thumb away, offering privacy. Gaspar simply nods.

EXT. ROMAN UNIVERSITY - LATER

Will sits on the rim of a fountain, waiting. He's reading an online text: The Travels of Marco Polo. He looks back at the entrance, where GASPAR sits on the marble stairs, alone.

Gaspar clicks PLAY on the phone. Beth's image fills the screen. INTERCUT between Beth's video message and Gaspar.

BETH  
It's so hard to record this, my  
dear, sweet man, because these are  
the last words of mine you will ever  
hear. And there is so much, so very  
much I wish I could say. I have  
tried to say it all, every day  
during our precious, golden time  
together, but I know that all the  
days in all the years in all the  
great and endless eons of the  
universe are not enough, not nearly,  
to say all the things you want to  
say to the one you love. Forever  
isn't nearly long enough.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE:

Images of Beth and Gaspar's life together, dancing, walking hand in hand, laughing, dreaming. INTERCUT with Beth on the screen, Beth in her bedroom recording the message, and Gaspar watching the message.

BETH (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
It makes me sad to think how much  
time we wasted on things that never  
matter, not in the long run. But  
then, maybe they do matter. Maybe  
everything matters, even the smallest  
things, because they are all a part  
of our love, our life, and nothing  
that we do for love is ever lost. You  
have been my sun and my stars, the  
bright light of my life, the center  
of all my joy. Sweet Gaspar.  
(MORE)

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

How can I stand to leave you? I miss you already. But this is not the time for good-byes, my dear. This is a time for the giving of a gift! This is my last gift to you, my love, one last Christmas memory. I'd planned to give you just some elaborate family tree. But I found so much more than I expected! Can you imagine what it was like to discover the great mystery of your past?

END MONTAGE. INTERCUT Between Gaspar and Beth.

Gaspar smiles as his eyes slowly fill with tears.

BETH (CONT'D)

By now, you must know that you are the heir to something wonderful. So go on, begin the last leg of your journey. Find the tomb of Gaspar the Magi. Marco Polo found it. You can, too. You'll have to answer questions. I found the answers; I know you can, too.

(beat)

But first, I am going to close by giving you a command, and you must obey, because the last wish of a dying woman is sacred.

(swallows)

I want you to live, Gaspar. Be a part of the world. Experience. Love. Matter. Don't you dare, don't you dare shut yourself off and throw away the precious gift time has given you. Life is so short, and we are so fragile. But every second is a miracle; every heartbeat is more precious than all the gems in the universe. I have to leave you for a while, and I am at peace with that. It doesn't frighten me, because I know, my love, that someday, we'll be together again. Maybe then, I'll find all the words I need to tell you how very much I love you, and will always love you, and how grateful I am for all the joy you've given me. You've been my life, Gaspar, and I am so, so very grateful. Oh, Darling!

The message ends; Gaspar weeps, the last goodbye.

EXT. ROME - SUNSET

Will and Gaspar walk. Will has The Travels of Marco Polo.

WILL  
You sure you're okay?

GASPAR  
Just tell me what you found.

WILL  
Yeah. Okay.  
(beat)  
Marco Polo claims to have visited  
the tomb of the Three Wise Men. The  
Magi. Problem is, he doesn't say  
where it is.

GASPAR  
Too much to hope he left a map, huh?

WILL  
Nothing I can find.

GASPAR  
Right back where we started, then.

WILL  
No wait. According to legend, here's  
supposed to be a drawing. In his  
original manuscript.

GASPAR  
Can we get a copy?

Will shakes his head.

WILL  
It was never published. For some  
reason. But the original ... that's  
in the Old Library. In Venice.

Gaspar looks hopeful. Will SIGHS, beaten.

WILL (CONT'D)  
But it's almost never displayed.  
Not to the public. I don't know how  
we can get them to show us.

Gaspar considers. He has an idea.

GASPAR  
I need a rare book.

WILL  
I'm totally your guy. Which one?

GASPAR  
One any museum or library would  
sell their nuts for.

WILL  
Huh?  
(getting it)  
Oh! Not something we're gonna find  
at a ... legitimate dealer. But yeah,  
maybe. I'll make some calls.

GASPAR  
I'm gonna need an ATM.

WILL  
You're gonna need a whole bank.

EXT. VENICE CANALS - THE NEXT MORNING

A GONDOLIER stops at a dock near the famous and ornate OLD  
LIBRARY. Will and Gaspar scramble out.

WILL  
The Old Library. Sixteenth Century.  
It's the masterpiece of designer...

Seeing Gaspar's amused look, he smiles and mines the STEEL  
TRAP again, complete with the NOISE.

WILL (CONT'D)  
I'm telling you. A fact's gotta  
chew off its own leg.

GASPAR  
The poster on your bedroom wall.  
Was it Star Wars or Tron?

WILL  
Return of the Jedi.

GASPAR  
Christ. Even among nerds you're lame.

WILL  
And the Red Sox.

GASPAR  
Touché.

Gaspar looks around nervously.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
See anybody ... you know. Suspicious?

WILL

No. Not yet. Anyway, they won't stop us going in. Getting out's going to be the hard part.

GASPAR

Especially since we don't have an exit strategy.

WILL

We don't even have an entrance strategy.

GASPAR

I was planning to just knock and ask for help.

WILL

Good thinking. 'Cause that's been working out great for us.

GASPAR

Which is why we need a getaway plan.

WILL

We need a car.

GASPAR

No cars in Venice.  
(on Will's embarrassment)  
That fact musta chewed its own leg off, huh?

WILL

Let me see your phone.

Gaspar hands the phone to Will. Will opens the Web browser.

WILL (CONT'D)

Here we go. Just outside the city. There's a parking garage called Tronchetto. We can rent one there.

GASPAR

Go get a car. Be ready to move.

WILL

Gaspar --

GASPAR

I'll be careful.

INT. OLD LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Gaspar enters and gawks, despite himself, at the magnificent, cavernous room. He approaches a Help Desk.

INT. OLD LIBRARY, OFFICE - LATER

Gaspar sits in an office across a dusty, ornate desk from older ITALIAN LIBRARIAN in a dapper but somewhat dated suit. A neatly-wrapped and very large bundle sits on the desk.

GASPAR

I'm told you're the gentleman I can  
talk to about a ... little donation.

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN

I'm sure that's very generous, Mr.  
Bethlen. But the Old Library in  
Venice isn't ...  
(smirks)  
...a used bookshop.

Gaspar opens his bundle. The librarian's eyes pop open, wide as dinner plates. He GASPS.

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

Dear God. Is that ... a Gutenberg?!

GASPAR

One of the proofs.

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN

That can't be! None exist!

GASPAR

One does. The last copy in existence.  
And the original binding. Uh, that's  
important, right?

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN

This book is priceless. Priceless!

GASPAR

Oh, believe me, it had a price.  
Maybe we can make a little ... deal.

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN

We couldn't begin to offer a  
fraction of what this is worth.

GASPAR

Well, how 'bout a little ... trade then?  
See, there's something here I'd like  
to take a look at. Just a look. And  
this is yours.

INT. OLD LIBRARY

JAEL and ABBAN, NOW IN SUITS. They look around, quickly, and move with ruthless precision.

INT. OLD LIBRARY, SUBBASEMENT VAULT - MOMENTS LATER

A place where manuscripts are stored, far from public view, and where skilled artisans restore ancient volumes. A few loose pages and cracked bindings are spread on a massive wooden table, along with glue and other supplies. Locked glass cabinets hold books only rumored to exist.

Gaspar follows the librarian to the table. Gaspar places his volume on a chair. The Librarian watches it with greedy eyes.

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN  
So as you can see, Mr. Bethlen,  
your book will be cared for,  
protected, and treasured. Forever.

GASPAR  
Then we have a deal?

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN  
Just a look, right? You won't touch?

Gaspar nods. The librarian points to a gilded volume in a glass case.

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)  
This is the book.

As Gaspar examines it:

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)  
Marco Polo was the greatest  
traveler of his day. He journeyed  
from Italy through the middle east,  
all the way to Asian. He claimed to  
have met Kublai Khan himself.

GASPAR  
You really think that's true?

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN  
Who can say? But then, how else  
would he have known of Kublai  
Khan's existence?  
(beat)  
This is the oldest extant copy. But  
I've never seen a map.

GASPAR  
Open it.

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN  
Mr. Bethlen, please. The Marco Polo  
manuscript is never displayed.  
Scholars wait years, decades, for a  
glimpse. It--

Before he can finish, JAEL and ABBAN KICK THE DOOR IN, SPLINTERING THE OLD WOOD. The Librarian GASPS.

ITALIAN LIBRARIAN (ITALIAN WITH  
SUBTITLES) (CONT'D)  
What is the meaning of this!

JAEL and ABBAN move closer, guns ready. Gaspar grabs a tray of glue and throws it at the thugs, splashing the thick liquid in their faces.

Jael CRIES OUT in pain. He FIRES WILDLY, SHATTERING the glass in front of the Polo manuscript. They stagger forward, guns in hand, trying to wipe the goo from their faces.

With a great heave, Gaspar pushes the table over, trapping the struggling thugs beneath its great weight.

The Librarian lets out a CRY -- part GASP, part GIRLISH SCREAM. He scrambles after the books and loose pages.

Seeing that the glass cabinet is now shattered, Gaspar opens the Polo manuscript, turning past dozens of handwritten pages. Then he goes through again. THERE IS NO MAP.

GASPAR  
There's no map.  
(turns back to the  
scrambling Librarian)  
There's no map!

The Librarian scrambles after papers. The thugs struggle.

Gaspar starts to open the book again, and happens to bend the lower gilded edge just so, so that only the smallest bit of every page is visible.

THERE IS A HIDDEN PICTURE THERE -- the map!

(See: <http://themetapicture.com/hidden-messages-in-books/>)

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Whoa!

Gaspar SNAPS a picture with his phone.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
No wonder they never published the  
map. It was hidden!  
(to the Librarian)  
You can keep the book.

Jael and Abban are nearly free. Gaspar sees and BOLTS.



EXT. OLD LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Gaspar EXITS the library, looking around frantically to get his bearings. Across the square, THREE MORE MEN IN SUITS spot Gaspar. Again, these are more of the Counts men. We've seen most of them before. He sees them at the same time.

MAN IN ITALIAN SUIT #1 (ITALIAN WITH  
SUBTITLES)

There he is!

EXT. STREETS OF VENICE

Gaspar runs, with the men after him, racing through crowded streets, dodging street vendors, performers, and pedestrians.

He races along the Grand Canal, crowded with boat traffic, until THREE MEN in front of him move to cut him off. He stops, but the men behind him are gaining. He's trapped.

There's only one way to go. He sprints toward the crowded Canal and leaps to a boat -- and then to another -- never relaxing his momentum and leaping across the canal, boat to boat, like a skipping stone.

The MEN chasing him aren't so lucky. Gaspar looks back to see two of them tumble into the water. He grins, but it fades in a wink. TWO MORE are on this side of the canal, and closing.

Gaspar runs. He turns a corner, and comes to a fast stop -- another, narrower canal blocks his way. He's about to turn around, but the MEN are gaining. He spots an EMPTY GONDOLA.

He grabs the steering pole just as the men reach him. Swinging the pole, he catches one man in the jaw, KNOCKING him down. Before the other man can react, Gaspar swings the pole low, KNOCKING the man's feet out from under him and sending him spilling into the canal.

Gaspar turns to run back the way he came, but he's cut off. TWO MEN race toward him, weapons drawn. Gaspar runs back to the canal, jabs the long pole into the water, and POLE VAULTS ACROSS. He loses himself in the crowd.

He runs a few more yards to another canal, where he sees a WAITING MOTORBOAT TAXI. Gaspar leaps in.

GASPAR  
(to the pilot)  
Tronchetto! Uh ...

He scrambles for the phrase book. No luck.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
 Parking Garage ... uh ...  
 (faking Italian)  
 di, uh parkingo garagio ...

The PILOT rolls his eyes as he pulls out into the canal.

Looking back, Gaspar sees MORE MEN arriving at the spot where he leapt into the water taxi. The pilot speeds up. Looking back, Gaspar sees the frustrated men SHOUTING. There's not another boat or taxi waiting; they have no way to follow.

EXT. TRONCHETTO PARKING GARAGE - LATER

Gaspar sprints toward the garage, looking for a sign for the rental car area. Before he reaches it, a tiny SMART CAR races up to him and BEEPS the horn. Will is driving. Gaspar jogs to the car and opens the passenger door.

GASPAR  
 This is supposed to be a car?

At that moment, Gaspar sees two men, now on MOTORCYCLES, riding at speed. One of them has a gun. He FIRES.

WILL  
 Will you just get in?

INT./EXT. SMART CAR

GASPAR  
 Go! Go!

Before Gaspar can close his door, Will shoves the car into reverse, and speeds backwards, weaving around the approaching traffic. He doesn't get far: another armed MAN ON A MOTORCYCLE is closing in from behind. Trapped again.

There is only one way to go. Will shifts back to DRIVE and turns back into the massive parking garage.

WILL  
 Where are we going?

GASPAR  
 Out of here!

WILL  
Then where?

GASPAR  
 Working on it.

WITH THE CYCLES IN HOT PURSUIT, Will races through the deck, dodging traffic and angry pedestrians.

GASPAR, MEANWHILE, looks at the picture he took in the library. Then he grabs Will's phone and launches the GPS. He compares the maps.

THE CYCLES are gaining. Will accelerates. As he turns a tight corner, he clips the passenger mirror, knocking it loose.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Will!

WILL  
Don't worry. I got the extra insurance coverage.

GASPAR  
Good thinking. Yeah. 'Cause that's what I was worried about. Careful!

Will races around the tight corners of the deck. His tires SQUEAL as he avoids pedestrians and cars without slowing.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Whoa! People! Don't ... hit ... the ... people!

Will WEAVES to avoid cars backing out at the same time from opposite sides of the aisle.

INSIDE THE CAR, Gaspar turns his attention back to the maps.

Near the top of the deck, close to the adjacent office building, they seem to be cut off again. The cycles are right behind them. Will turns the only way he can: right into a freight elevator. He SLAMS ON THE BRAKES.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
(sarcastically)  
Elevator. Good thinking.

Gaspar leaps up and pushes the button: down. Frantically, he mashes the CLOSE DOORS button again and again. THE HEAVY DOORS SLAM DOWN just in time. Gaspar races back to the car.

As he SLAMS the door and the elevator starts moving:

WILL  
Anything?

GASPAR  
Persia.

WILL  
Persia ... wait, IRAN?!

MEANWHILE, IN THE DECK, the CYCLISTS WATCH THE NUMBERS above the elevator. A SECOND ELEVATOR ARRIVES.

Seconds later, in the elevator with the Smart Car, the OPPOSITE DOORS OPEN -- inside the office building.

GASPAR  
Okay, that's not good.

WILL PUNCHES THE GAS AND GOES. Surprised and SCREAMING workers dive out of the way. A second elevator door opens and the three men on motorcycles come ROARING out.

The SMART CAR races through crowded hallways, making a circuit around the building. The car is just small enough to make the tight turns. Will doesn't slow.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
(scanning the GPS)  
The maps match. Kinda.

THE CYCLES, faster and more maneuverable in the tight corridors, are gaining.

GASPAR ZOOMS THE GPS DISPLAY.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
Marco Polo found the tombs in a place called Saveh. Just south of Tehran.

WILL TURNS A CORNER. A CROWD HAS GATHERED, TALKING in the halls. Will BEEPS the horn. The scattering, SCREAMING. The cycles are right behind them.

Will turns to avoid a JANITOR mopping the floor and FOUR WORKERS carrying a desk. The janitor spills his soapy water and, as the Smart Car passes, the startled men drop the desk.

THE LEAD CYCLIST SLIPS IN THE SPILLED WATER and, swerving to avoid the desk, WIPES OUT. The others try to avoid him -- unsuccessfully. It's a pileup.

Will sees an opening: the main entrance. HE CRASHES THROUGH THE DOUBLE DOORS, down a small flight of concrete stairs, across the sidewalk, and into the main road. Lost in traffic, he speeds away.

EXT/INT. ROME AIRPORT - DAY

Will finds Gaspar, and hands him a boarding pass.

WILL  
Here you go. We fly to Istanbul,  
and then change planes for Tehran.

As they start walking to the gate:

GASPAR  
Do they, uh, like Americans there?

WILL  
We can tell 'em we're Hungarian if  
it'll make you feel better.

GASPAR  
We don't speak Hungarian.

WILL  
Neither do they. Relax. Westerners  
travel there. It should be fine,  
especially if you know someone.

GASPAR  
Uh, do we know anyone?

WILL  
Would you believe there's a chapter  
of the Red Sox nation in Iran?

Will grins and shows Gaspar his phone, which displays a WEB  
PAGE WITH GASPAR'S PICTURE IN HIS RED SOX UNIFORM. The  
writing is in Farsi.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Turns out you've got a fan club there.

GASPAR  
Huh. Who knew?

EXT. TEHRAN AIRPORT - LATER

A JETLINER touches down.

INT. TEHRAN AIRPORT - LATER

Gaspar and Will deplane, to find EIGHT SMILING IRANIAN MEN  
waiting in Red Sox jackets, shirts, or caps. Several of them  
are waving Red Sox pennants. They are athletes, amateur  
ballplayers. One of them is MASOOD MORTAZAVI, 20s.

EXT. IRANIAN COUNTRYSIDE - LATE AFTERNOON

A VAN drives down a dusty road south of Tehran, passing  
buildings that seem impossibly ancient -- and others that  
could have been built last week.

INT. VAN

Gaspar and Will sit on the bench seat behind the driver:  
Masood. Another of the IRANIAN MEN IN A RED SOX BALL CAP sits  
next to him. Gaspar holds a baseball and bat.

WILL  
How much farther?

MASOOD  
Not very. There's only one good  
hotel. Very famous. I know the  
owner. I made a reservation for you.

GASPAR  
Masood, thanks.

MASOOD  
Anything for Gaspar Bethlen of the  
Red Sox of Boston!

GASPAR  
Do you know of any ruins in the area?  
A fortress, maybe. Or old tombs?

MASOOD  
Ah, you mean Kala Atashparastan.  
Several miles into the desert. A holy  
place, old as dirt. I can take you  
there in the morning if you like.

GASPAR  
That'd be great.

He writes his name on the baseball and tosses it over his  
shoulder. He turns. PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

The OTHER IRANIAN BASEBALL FANS are crowded onto the van's  
back benches. With huge smiles, ALL REACH FORWARD EAGERLY  
with balls, bats, and baseball cards.

IRANIAN BALL PLAYER  
Can you please explain the infield  
fly rule?

EXT. IRANIAN BUSINESS HOTEL - SUNSET

The van pulls into the driveway. Gaspar and Will climb out  
with bags, as well as an arm-load of bats and a bag of balls.

GASPAR  
Thanks again, really. I'll sign the  
rest of these tonight, and I'll  
have 'em for you tomorrow, okay?

The Iranian men smile and wave enthusiastically.

INT. IRANIAN BUSINESS HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Gaspar and Will check in. A CLERK hands them their keys.

CLERK (ACCENTED ENGLISH)  
 Here you are, Mr. Bethlen. Your  
 guest arrived before you. He's  
 waiting in your room.

Will and Gaspar exchange worried glances.

GASPAR  
 Guest?

CLERK  
 Yes sir. Your cousin. Hungarian  
 gentleman. You were expecting him, yes?

GASPAR  
 (grimly)  
 Yeah. Is he alone?

CLERK  
 He is. Is there a problem?

GASPAR  
 (hefts a baseball bat)  
 Not yet.

INT. IRANIAN BUSINESS HOTEL, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The door to Gaspar's room is ajar. Gaspar looks at Will; Will  
 nods. Ready. Hefting the bat, Gaspar KICKS the door open. He  
 and Will BURST IN.

INT. IRANIAN BUSINESS HOTEL, GASPAR'S ROOM

A sitting room divides the suite's two bedrooms. THE COUNT is  
 seated at a table. He STANDS.

TAMÁS  
 Pray, lower your club. I am alone  
 and unarmed. Getting a revolver  
 into this barbarian country is more  
 than I can manage. Let us talk like  
 gentlemen, if you can manage it.

GASPAR  
 What do you want, Tamás?

The Count meets Gaspar's eyes. The Count looks away first,  
 turning his head down to study the tile in the floor.

TAMÁS  
 (hesitantly)  
 As I recall, you came to my house  
 looking for help. You found me ... a  
 desperate man. A broken man.  
 (MORE)

TAMÁS (CONT'D)

Perhaps you can understand that,  
yes? You know what it is, I think,  
for a man to lose his entire world.

GASPAR

Tamás, I asked you a question. What  
do you want?

TAMÁS

(takes a deep breath)  
I've come to ask for your help.

WILL

You gotta be kidding.

TAMÁS

I don't know how much you know  
about my house .... It is a proud  
part of my family's --  
(the words are hard)  
of our family's past, of our heritage.  
It is a proud part of Hungary's  
heritage. I call it my house, but it  
was never that. I only hold it in  
trust. I hold it for our family, sir. I  
hold it for our people. It is far more  
than a house. It is a part of our very  
soul, both as a family and as a nation.

GASPAR

I suppose there's a point to this?

TAMÁS

You'll find this difficult to  
understand. Your branch of the family  
abandoned Hungary when the storm clouds  
gathered. What do you know of our land,  
and what it has suffered? You left your  
heritage behind. Bah. You're not a  
Bethlen. The great families leave their  
souls behind when they flee.

GASPAR

If you've come to ask me for something,  
you have a strange way of going about it.

TAMÁS

(beat, softer)  
I have not come to ask, American. I  
have come to beg. If I am not good at  
it, forgive me. I am a proud man from a  
proud line. I have had little practice.  
Give it to me. Save our family's honor.  
If you care anything, anything at all  
for blood, or for the past, save this  
last shadow of glory. Please.



GASPAR

I might have been more inclined to help you if you hadn't attacked my friend and me. And if you hadn't killed my father.

TAMÁS

I did no such thing. I hired men to retrieve that which was mine. Italians can be ... enthusiastic. Your father paid a thief's price.

WILL

Gaspar, if he killed your Dad...

GASPAR

(stunned, realizing)

Beth.

TAMÁS

Young man, pray, step to the window.

The Count gestures to the window behind him. Will obeys. He steps past the Count and pushes the curtain aside and peers down at the street one floor below:

EXT. IRANIAN BUSINESS HOTEL, STREET

There, TWO OF THE COUNT'S MEN -- JAEL and ABBAN -- are holding a struggling and gagged ANA.

INT. IRANIAN BUSINESS HOTEL, GASPAR'S ROOM

WILL

Ana!

TAMÁS

Don't think I won't kill again.

EXT. IRANIAN BUSINESS HOTEL, STREET

Certain they have been seen, the men force her into a car.

INT. IRANIAN BUSINESS HOTEL, GASPAR'S ROOM

Gaspar turns back to the Count, his eyes wild with fury.

GASPAR

You son of a bitch. Your own granddaughter!

TAMÁS

I did what I had to.

Will leaps for Tamás's throat, holding him against the wall.

WILL  
Where is she? WHERE?

Gaspar pulls the struggling Will back.

GASPAR  
Easy.

TAMÁS  
(slumps, GASPING)  
She is a traitor to her name and  
her heritage. She's no bloody use  
to me. You want her? Claim the gem.  
Give it to me. And she's yours. Do  
we have an understanding?

Gaspar takes a deep breath, his fists clenched, and nods.

TAMÁS (CONT'D)  
Excellent. Where is the gem?

GASPAR  
A place called Kala Atashparastan.  
In the desert.

TAMÁS  
I'll be there at sunrise, waiting  
with my men. Claim the gem and give  
it to me, and the girl is yours.  
But mark me. If I catch even the  
faintest whiff of treachery, she's  
dead. Do we have an understanding?

Defeated, Gaspar nods again.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - PREDAWN

The sky is turning pink as an older white pickup truck leaves  
the suburban area and turns into the lonely desert. A loose  
tarp covers the cargo bed.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - PREDAWN

Masood is driving; Gaspar and Will are seated next to him.  
Neither of them seem to have slept much. Will is reading a  
Web page on Gaspar's phone.

GASPAR  
What's that?

WILL  
Huh? Oh. Uh, I've been reading up  
on Marco Polo.  
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)  
He claimed to have found a great  
castle in the desert where the  
people worshipped fire.

GASPAR  
That doesn't sound too likely.

MASOOD  
Just wait.

Will closes his eyes and bows his head.

WILL  
I had to do something. I ...

GASPAR  
I know. We'll get her back.

WILL  
Tamás isn't planning on letting her  
go, you know.

GASPAR  
I know.

Masood crests a hill, then points ahead. In spite of  
themselves, Gaspar and Will GASP WITH WONDER.

#### EXT. KALA ATASHPARASTAN MONASTERY - SUNRISE

The monastery is nearly the size of a small mountain rising  
from the desert. Its terraced walls, levels, narrow windows,  
arches, and square towers seem to have been hewn directly  
from the living rock of the desert itself.

It is the red-tan of the sands, save where light glints like  
stars when it catches bits of glass or mosaic, and three  
great domes capped with blue tile that shimmer like lakes.

Great, colorful banners adorned with holy symbols hang down  
from all the walls. In the distance, they hear the SOUND OF  
BELLS, low and solemn. The outer areas, surrounded by two  
concentric walls, each more than 50 feet tall, are deserted.

Narrow ladders lead to the top of each of the two concentric  
outer walls on the outside; narrow, uneven stairs carved into  
the stone lead down on the inside.

#### INT. PICKUP TRUCK

GASPAR  
Oh my God.

MASOOD  
Told you.

WILL

Uh oh.

EXT. KALA ATASHPARASTAN MONASTERY

Two SUVs are parked to block the road just outside the walls. The gate is closed, but narrow stairways carved into the stone lead to the top. The pickup truck comes to a stop.

The doors of the SUVs open, and TEN MEN climb out. These are thugs that we saw at the Count's manor -- including Jael and Abban. Abban is heavily bandaged and seriously pissed.

Abban holds the struggling ANA. Her hands are tied and she is gagged. Abban holds a knife to her throat. TAMÁS is the last to climb out. He stands close to Ana.

Gaspar and Will climb out of the pickup. Gaspar has his bag.

TAMÁS

That's close enough, American.

WILL

Let Ana go first.

TAMÁS

You are in no position to bargain. Cooperate, or I'll kill the bitch and take the books. My men may not have been able to bring guns with them, but the Arab markets provided.

The men reach into their jackets for long hunting knives.

TAMÁS (CONT'D)

But there is no need to be unpleasant. Throw the books to me. Gently.

GASPAR

I'm starting to get used to this.

Gaspar tosses the bag to Tamás. Tamás opens the bag, checks to see the books, and zips it back shut, satisfied.

TAMÁS

Kill them all. The Americans first.

The TEN MEN -- the thugs we've seen before and a few others -- step forward slowly, moving to surround Gaspar and Will, coordinated professionals.

GASPAR

You should have kept your bargain, Tamás. You've got hired goons--

(to the goons)

--no offence--

(MORE)

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
(to the Count)  
--but I brought the Red Sox nation.

Masood climbs out of the cab, carrying three baseball bats.  
FIVE MORE MEN -- the Iranian baseball fans we saw earlier,  
leap out from under the tarp.

ABBAN (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
The what nation?

JAEI (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
Maybe a terrorist cell?

Gaspar reaches into his pocket and pulls out a BASEBALL. He  
looks at Will and smiles.

GASPAR  
You know, I have missed this.

With a sudden motion, he THROWS THE BALL with all the  
strength in his arm and hits ABBAN, the man holding Ana, in  
the forehead. He drops, reeling. Ana, free, tries to run, but  
Jael grabs her. She struggles. The remaining men charge.

Gaspar, Will, and the Iranians are outnumbered, and their  
attackers are professionals. But the Iranians are athletes,  
ballplayers, and the bats give them reach. They put up a good  
fight -- for a while at least.

Seeing his chance, Tamás grabs the books and flees toward the  
ladder leading to the top of the first wall, the outer one.  
He calls to Jael as he runs:

TAMÁS (HUNGARIAN WITH SUBTITLES)  
With me! Bring the girl!

Will sees the Count escaping toward the monastery.

WILL  
Ana!

Will tries to get to her, but the Count's men are there. He  
fights, blocking a knife blow with his bat.

One of the Iranian men falls, bleeding from a stab wound in  
the side. Gaspar rushes to his side, taking down the attacker  
before he can finish the Iranian man off.

THE COUNT, JAEI, AND ANOTHER GOON REACH THE LADDER at the  
outer wall. Jael slashes Ana's bonds and forces her up ahead  
of him. They're getting away.

THE FIGHT CONTINUES -- another Iranian falls, badly hurt.  
Gaspar and Will fight harder, growing desperate.

THE COUNT AND THE MEN with Ana are still climbing the  
treacherous, narrow ladder. They are nearly to the top.

WILL BLOCKS A KNIFE SWING WITH HIS BAT, but the swipe lops off the top of his bat. This isn't going to go well. Will, desperate, lunges forward and catches the attacker under the chin with the end of the bat. The man drops.

Another man is about to stab Will from behind, but Gaspar tackles him. As Gaspar struggles with the man:

GASPAR  
Go get her! Go!

Will races after the Count and Ana.

Gaspar and the Iranians are starting to get the edge on the Count's men, but the fight is still brutal and intense. Another Iranian falls, badly hurt. Momentum swings wildly.

Gaspar takes down the man who attacked him, swinging his bat with his left hand only. He tosses the bat to his right hand and swings again, taking down another man. Masood grins.

MASOOD  
Switch hitter. With power.

Will reaches the outer wall ladder and starts up, fast.

THE COUNT, ANA, JAEL, AND ABBAN are descending the narrow stairway on the other side of the outer wall. They reach a switchback and continue down.

THE FIGHT, MEANWHILE, slowly turns. Only a few of the Count's men are standing, and the Red Sox nation fight like demons.

WILL REACHES THE TOP OF THE WALL -- a dizzying height. Cautiously, he starts down the stairs on the other side.

THE COUNT FOLLOWS JAEL AND ABBAN as they force Ana across the sand and between jagged spikes of rock toward the inner wall. The Count still has the books. They reach the next ladder.

Will races down after them.

Another Iranian falls; Masood catches him. Gaspar slugs his attacker. Only two of the Count's men are standing. Seeing their chance, they RUN, racing toward the outer wall ladder.

MASOOD (CONT'D)  
He's hurt. These men need a doctor.

GASPAR  
Go. Take them.

MASOOD  
Mr. Bethlen --

GASPAR  
Go, pal. And thanks. I owe you.

MASOOD

Go Red Sox! Defeat the Yankees of  
New York. And these bastards.

Gaspar grins, winks, then turns to run toward the ladder as Masood and the Iranians help the hurt men into the truck.

Will sprints to the inner wall and starts up. He's gaining. The Count and his entourage have not reached the top yet.

The fleeing men reach the top of the outer wall. Before they can start down, Gaspar, now at the top of the ladder, grabs one of them by the leg, and HEAVES. The man falls, SCREAMING.

The other man kicks, but Gaspar avoids the blow and makes it to the top of the outer wall. The man swings his knife, but Gaspar ducks and nearly tumbles off.

GASPAR

Heights...

Gaspar punches, and the man loses his knife. Now, they are both unarmed. They FIGHT. As he punches:

GASPAR (CONT'D)

I ... HATE ... heights!

Will reaches the top of the ladder on the inner wall. Ana, still gagged, sees him and GRUNTS. Jael races at Will, but Will DUCKS and uses Jael's momentum to flip him off the wall.

Jael manages to grab the ladder to slow his fall and lands hard in the sand. He GRUNTS, barely moving.

Ana kicks Abban, freeing herself. She spits out the gag.

ANA

Will!

The Count backs away, watching. He has the books.

TAMÁS

Stop him!

Abban races to Will. They struggle, and Abban seems to be getting the better of him. Will lands a blow, and Abban drops his knife. It slides to the edge of the wall.

At the top of the outer wall, Gaspar gives the man a shove. The man tumbles down the narrow stairs and then off, also landing in the soft sand. Gaspar sees Will struggling.

Ana rushes to Will's aid, saving him -- but only for the moment. The Count charges and swings the book bag, knocking her off the wall. She holds on to the edge by her fingers.

Gaspar's not going to get there fast enough. Unless ... Seeing one chance, he pulls the ladder to the top of the outer wall and throws it across the gap, making a precarious, rickety bridge. He closes his eyes for a second, gathering courage.

GASPAR  
It's not that high. Not that high...

He starts across, running rung to rung. The ladder bends under his weight. It's not going to hold. Gaspar dares to look down and sees the jagged rocks far below.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
It's totally that high!

Will manages to push Abban away and races to Ana. Will reaches down and grabs her hands. Abban recovers and charges. Slamming in to Will. Ana FALLS again, but manages to CATCH THE TOP OF ONE OF THE GREAT BANNERS HANGING A FEW FEET DOWN.

Will punches Abban, who staggers back. Holding on to the edge of the wall, Will lowers himself down.

WILL  
Ana! Grab my legs!

Abban sees Gaspar coming. He races out onto the ladder bridge to meet him. Abban, professional killer, gets the edge quickly. It's not going well for Gaspar.

ABBAN  
I watched your wife die, American.  
Now I'm going to kill you.

Fury turns the tide. Enraged, Gaspar leaps at the man.

GASPAR  
Like hell.

Struggling to keep from falling, they fight just a yard or two from the inner wall. The ladder is slipping from the ledge on the outer wall. In the distance, BELLS TOLL again.

INT. KALA ATASHPARASTAN MONASTERY, BELL TOWER - MEANWHILE

A BELL RINGER in white robes notices the commotion at the walls below. Startled, he races down to the monastery.

INT. KALA ATASHPARASTAN MONASTERY

THE BELL RINGER, shouting in FARSI, charges into a room with where MORE BROTHERS IN WHITE ROBES have gathered. One of the brothers races to a vintage wall phone and DIALS.



BROTHER (FARSI WITH SUBTITLES)  
Police?

EXT. KALA ATASHPARASTAN MONASTERY - MEANWHILE

ANA manages to grab Will and hold tight. He struggles to pull them back to the ledge, but the weight of two bodies is too much for him. It's all he can do to hold on.

ANA  
Will!

THE COUNT SEES WILL AND ANA'S PREDICAMENT and races forward, stomping hard on Will's hands. Will is going to fall ...

GASPAR NEARLY FALLS. He stares Abban in the eye.

GASPAR  
This is for Beth, you son of a bitch.

With a last desperate move, Gaspar sends Abban falling to the jagged rocks, where his SCREAM is abruptly silenced.

The ladder is falling -- Gaspar runs.

BELOW, JAEL AND THE MAN GASPAR FOUGHT ON THE FAR WALL begin to recover. Both manage to stand. Jael points to the fight on the wall above. The men start moving to the second ladder.

THE COUNT STOMPS WILL'S HANDS AGAIN. Will sees his chance: the KNIFE that fell by the edge of the wall. With one hand he lunges and grabs it.

WILL  
Ana, hold on!

Will lets go of the ledge and SLASHES the nearest tie holding the banner. With all the grace and panache of Errol Flynn in a pirate movie, he swings down on the heavy fabric. Ana holds on for dear life.

GASPAR LEAPS AND REACHES THE EDGE OF THE INNER WALL just as the ladder tumbles down. He sees Will, and gapes, impressed.

GASPAR  
That's one damn cool detective.

WILL AND ANA FALL THE LAST FEW YARDS, landing softly in the sand. Ana, hurt, collapses. Will kneels and helps her to her feet. She's dizzy but seems okay.

WILL  
Ana! Oh my God. Are you okay?

ANA  
I will be.

THE COUNT IS WAITING FOR GASPAR, a knife ready. He SLASHES, and Gaspar nearly tumbles off the wall. Despite his age, the desperate Count, an accomplished fencer, is ruthless with the deadly blade, and Gaspar is unarmed.

The FIGHT is swift and brutal. The Count slashes again, ripping Gaspar's shirt and opening a shallow cut that bleeds. Gaspar is either going to be stabbed or lose his balance and fall to his death on the rocks below.

TAMÁS

Happy Christmas, American bastard.

Another SLASH, and Gaspar ducks. With his body low, Gaspar pushes forward, knocking the Count back. The Count is off balance and nearly falls. Now behind him, Gaspar grabs his arm and wrenches it back. Gaspar takes the knife.

GASPAR

Yeah, shove this up your chimney, asshole.

MEANWHILE, below, Jael and the other man close on Will, ready to attack. Will has the knife, ready to fight, even against two men. ANA steps in front of him, her eyes cold with fury.

ANA

Let me ask you a question. My grandfather is bankrupt. How is he paying you? Not a check, surely?

WILL

You got cash up front, right?

The first man lunges but Jael puts a hand on his shoulder to stop him. With eyes narrow and cold, Jael opens a phone.

GASPAR FOLLOWS THE COUNT DOWN THE LADDER. They reach the bottom and Gaspar pushes him toward Will and Ana, holding a knife at his back. They arrive just in time for the Count to see his men storming away. His last spark of hope fails.

ANA

Your check bounced, grandfather. That's the trouble with hired help.

WILL

Uh, technically, I'm hired help.

ANA

Except for Will.

Gaspar moves the knife from the Count's back to his throat.

ANA (CONT'D)

Gaspar, no. Don't. Please.

Gaspar looks at her, surprised.

ANA (CONT'D)  
This is a holy place.  
(beat)  
He's my grandfather.

Slowly, Gaspar nods and shoves the Count away.

GASPAR  
Get out of my sight, Count.

TAMÁS  
You can't be serious. My men have  
gone. I'll die in the desert.

ANA  
Leave, grandfather. Now. Before I  
change my mind and kill you myself.

The Count nods. Then, with a desperate move, he turns and kicks Gaspar's wrist. Stunned, Gaspar drops the knife. The Count grabs it and slashes ... too late.

He gasps. His eyes widen in shock as he dies. As he falls, Ana pulls her knife free from his back.

ANA (CONT'D)  
I warned you.

Beyond the walls, POLICE CARS ARRIVE, lights flashing.

INT. KALA ATASHPARASTAN MONASTERY - LATER

Gaspar, Will, and Ana ENTER SLOWLY, gaping in unabashed wonder. Ana is weak; Will has his arm around her waist. Gaspar's chest is bandaged.

WILL  
You need a doctor.

ANA  
Later, my love. I have to see this.

Will nods. Will looks at Gaspar and smiles.

WILL  
If I didn't know better, I'd swear  
you look almost happy.

GASPAR  
I can almost feel Beth here with me.

WILL  
At the end of the last mystery.

GASPAR  
The last mystery.

A MONK is waiting for them near the gate. His skin is dark brown and weathered, and he wears a white turban and robes.

Gaspar is not sure how to greet the man, so he folds his hands as though in prayer and bows his head. Smiling, the man reached out and touches Gaspar gently on the forehead.

GASPAR (CONT'D)  
We should have brought Masood. We don't speak Farsi!

MAGI #1  
Do not worry. My English is excellent. Welcome. I speak for the brothers of the Magupati.

WILL  
The Magi!

MAGI #1  
(nods)  
You have, I think, three books for me?

GASPAR  
I got 'em right here.

Gaspar, Will, and Ana follow the Magi into a corridor of sand-colored stone and clay, which opens into a wide courtyard. Paths lead to caves that run deep into the rocky heart of the mountain, and more stone steps lead up to the great fortress.

The man in the white robes leads them to the stair and upward. They come to another gate and follow the man through. He leads them through a warren of corridors, chambers and passageways. Some are of the same sandy stone and clay; others are covered with vast, tiled mosaics.

INT. KALA ATASHPARASTAN MONASTERY, GREAT HALL

Other men in robes and turbans are there to greet them.

MAGI #1  
Pardon my companions. They do not speak your language, but they wished to come and greet you. We have your legacy to return to you. I trust you have the answer to our questions?

GASPAR  
I hope so. You, uh, want to ask now?

MAGI #1

Not yet. First, come. There is something I wish to show the heir of Gaspar the Magi.

The other Magi follow. As they walk:

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)

You have read Marco Polo's account of his journey here all those long years ago, have you?

WILL

I have. I don't know how much of it was true.

ANA

I wouldn't have thought any of it, and yet, here I am, in Kala Atashparastan.

MAGI #1

To believe and to question. That is the beginning of wisdom. But tell me, what did Marco report?

WILL

He claimed to have found a place called Kala Atashparastan, a name which he claimed meant the castle of the Fire-worshippers.

MAGI #1

An interesting name. Did he say how the place came by such a title?

WILL

He said the people worshipped fire.

MAGI #1

Marco Polo was not entirely correct.

At the end of the corridor, they come to two great wooden doors, shut tight. The man smiles again. With the help of two of the other robed men, he opens the great doors.

Gaspar enters a vast chamber, one more magnificent by far than any cathedral he had ever entered. Will and Ana follow, with the Magi behind them.

Mighty pillars surround the hall, supporting a great domed ceiling. Tile mosaics, each nearly three stories tall, adorn the walls behind the circle of columns. The mosaics depict the journey of the Magi with their gifts, until they came at last to the manger in a cellar cave in Bethlehem.

Tile work on the inside of the grand dome recreate the night sky, with the tail of a long comet pointing toward the final mosaic of the Christ child, flanked by gently smiling Mary and baffled, awe-struck Joseph.

At the center of the chamber stands a great altar hewn from the stone foundation itself. Upon either end of the altar two great fires burn, which give no smoke.

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
You have come for your legacy. But first, I will tell you its secret. In days gone by, three Magi followed a star in the east to worship a newborn king. They took with them offerings -- gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

As the Magi speaks, the story seems to come to life in the shadows cast by the flickering fires: Three men, with camels, journey across the vast desert.

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
They said: 'If he takes gold, he is an earthly king; if frankincense, a god; if myrrh, a healer.'

On the dome above, the comet reflects the light of the fires.

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
They followed the star, and when they arrived at last, the youngest of the Magi went in to see the child.

The mosaic of the Christ child in the manger. Then, a shadow image in the fire: one of the magi talking to a man.

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
To his very great surprise, he didn't find a baby at all. He found a man who seemed to be his own age. The man accepted his gift of gold, and gave the Magi a closed casket in return. And the youngest of the men came out, full of wonder.

The mosaic, showing the second of the magi, carrying a cask.

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
Then in went the second, who was a man of middle age. And to him also the child seemed to be of his own age.

Another shadow image, showing what the magi describes:

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
This man accepted the gift of frankincense, and gave in return another closed box. And the second of the wise men came out dumbfounded.

The mosaic again, followed by more shadow images:

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
Then in went the third, the eldest. He conferred with an older man, who accepted the gift of myrrh, and gave a third box. When the three Magi were together again, each told the others what he had seen, and they were amazed.

The mosaic, showing the three Magi adoring the child.

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
So, in they went, together, and saw the child as he was: a babe.

Another mosaic: the wise men with their chests, riding home. Shadow images become slowly real, as if the story is coming to life as the magi narrates.

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
They opened their caskets, and each found a simple black stone.

Each man gazes at a plain black rock: dumbfounded and not impressed. Uh, a rock?

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
The youngest suggested that perhaps the child had given rocks to remind them to be firm as stone in faith. But the other two Magi threw their stones into a well. And then there descended from heaven a burning fire, which came straight to the well and into the two stones.

The well blazes with light brighter than any earthly fire -- holy and frightening.

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
When the three Magi saw this miracle, they trembled and wept.

BACK TO SCENE, on the FIRES BLAZING ON THE ALTAR:

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)  
The Magi took some of this fire and carried it here. To this day, we keep those holy fires burning.

WILL  
Oh my God. Oh my God.

MAGI #1  
You see, Marco Polo was not entirely correct. We do not worship fire. The fire is merely a symbol, but of light so much grander that mere fire doesn't begin to do it justice.

Gaspar falls to his knees, a look of wonder in his eyes: a moment of utter peace and transformation. Will and Ana kneel with him, awed. The light of the fires is numinous, like starlight, or the halos of saints and angels.

ANA  
It's a miracle, isn't it?

Trembling, Gaspar looks up at the magi.

GASPAR  
There are only two fires here.

MAGI #1  
The youngest of the Magi was wiser. He did not throw his stone away.

GASPAR  
Which--?

The single word is all he can manage.

ANA  
You already know the answer.

MAGI #1  
Who was the father of your line?

GASPAR  
Gaspar. Gaspar the Magi.

MAGI #1  
(nods)  
And where did he journey?

GASPAR  
To Bethlehem. The City of David.

MAGI #1  
(nods again)  
What led him thither?

Gaspar looks up to the comet worked in tile on the dome.

GASPAR  
The star in the east. The comet we know as Halley.



MAGI #1  
 (nods again, smiling)  
 And what did he find?

Gaspar, tears in his eyes, trembling, can't find the words.

WILL  
 Gaspar, tell him.

Gaspar looks at the mosaic of the Christ child.

GASPAR  
 (a deeper, truer answer)  
 Grace. Peace.

The Magi beams.

INT. KALA ATASHPARASTAN MONASTERY, TREASURY - LATER

Gaspar, Will, and Ana follow the man into a large room lined with walls covered with open nooks, like the inside of a vast honeycomb. Most of the nooks are covered with curtains; those exposed contain boxes of wood or elaborately worked metal, scrolls or books, or bits of sculpture or jewelry.

ANA  
 My God! What is all this?

MAGI #1  
 Treasures given to us for safekeeping.  
 Any would be the prize of any museum on  
 Earth. The secrets here could shake the  
 very foundations of what scholars think  
 they know of history.

ANA  
 It seems a tragedy that these  
 wonders are lost to the world.

MAGI #1  
 Not lost. Merely held until the time  
 is right. But here, one of the  
 treasures, at least, I can show you.  
 It is yours now, Gaspar Bethlen.

A man brings a ladder and scampers up. Moments later, he climbs down, cradling a wooden casket in one arm. He carries it reverently to Gaspar and bows as he presents it.

The box is smooth and dust-free. It is a little more than a foot long, and perhaps half that wide and deep. It is obviously very old. Gaspar takes a breath and OPENS THE BOX.

The box is lined with folds of dark, velvety cloth. Gaspar unwraps it to find a jewel as large as his hand with the fingers outstretched.

It is the gem from the engraving, far more brilliant in life. The setting is of gold, intricately worked, radiating out like rays of pure light from the brightest star in the darkest sky.

The stone itself is a red so deep that it is almost black, and there is incandescent fire in its depths, like the ones burning beneath the great dome.

WILL  
I don't know what to say.

ANA  
It's like seeing a fingerprint of  
God Himself.

Gaspar can only gaze with wonder.

GASPAR  
I think ... almost ... I understand...

WILL  
What?

GASPAR  
Why wise men would leave hearth and  
home to follow a star into a cold  
world, no matter where it might lead.

MAGI #1  
Only one Magi was wise enough to  
prize his stone, so there is no other  
like it on Earth. It is called the  
Star in the East. We had no worthy  
setting, but we did the best we  
could. It is a jewel beyond price.

Gaspar trembles. He covers the stone again with the velvet cloth, because it is already wet with his tears.

EXT. KALA ATASHPARASTAN MONASTERY - LATER

Gaspar and Will help ANA into a small, two-seater car.

MAGI #1  
Don't worry. He'll get her to a  
very good doctor, then he'll be  
right back for you.

GASPAR  
Thanks, my friend.

WILL  
(as he leans in to kiss her)  
I love you, Ana.

ANA

And I you. Come to me.

WILL

Always.

As they drive away, the Magi approaches Gaspar hesitantly.

MAGI #1

I have an ... awkward question that I wish to ask you. Do you mind?

GASPAR

Anything.

MAGI #1

It is only this. The jewel ... may I ask, what do you plan to do with it?

GASPAR

I don't follow you.

MAGI #1

Will you display it in your home?  
Sell it?

GASPAR

I can't say I've got a plan yet. But neither of those options feels right.

MAGI #1

The Star in the East has been hidden too long. You must realize that what you have is worth billions. More than that. I say mere billions only because I can't imagine who could afford to pay even a fraction of the true worth.

GASPAR

I see your point.

MAGI #1

Nonetheless, I had hoped you might be willing to sell. What you have -- were it revealed to the world -- it has the potential to do a great deal of good.

WILL

I'm not sure I understand.

MAGI #1

For years, the Magi have collected money from the patrons who support us, money we may use only for acquiring treasures like the Star in the East.

(MORE)

MAGI #1 (CONT'D)

We would display it and study it -- at museums and universities all around the world. We hope this glorious symbol might begin to heal at last wounds that have endured too long.

GASPAR

I don't know. Somehow, it just doesn't seem right to sell something like this.

MAGI #1

Is it better to have the jewel lost and forgotten in a place like this?

GASPAR

Of course not.

MAGI #1

And what of the money? As I said, it is given for this purpose, and this purpose alone. Is it better that it sit unused?

(he hands Gaspar a check)

This is money that a man could use to do good in the world. It is not much, a mere fraction of what the jewel is worth --

GASPAR

Done.

Gaspar laughs, seeing the surprised expressions.

WILL

Gaspar! Wait. Beth's last gift--

GASPAR

I found it. It's not the rock.

MAGI #1

You realize that while the sum we can offer is large, you could do much better if you so choose.

GASPAR

No doubt. But I know you'll do the right thing. Me, I'm not wise enough for that. Besides, the gifts were to the Magi. You are their heirs. Not me. As for the money, I wouldn't take it at all, but as you say, maybe I can use it to do some good. I want to make my days matter, sir. I want to live.

MAGI #1

(raises a hand in blessing)

Use it well, Gaspar Bethlen.

GASPAR

I will.

The magi turns and leaves them. Gaspar and Will start walking toward the road. As they walk:

WILL

I thought you wanted something to hold on to.

GASPAR

It's time to let go.

WILL

You wanted to feel close to Beth.

GASPAR

I do. Closer than ever. I always will.

WILL

What did you find?

GASPAR

(smiles gently)  
Grace. Peace.

WILL

So what's next?

GASPAR

I don't know. Maybe I'll try baseball again. I hear the Sox could use a switch hitter with power.

WILL

Yeah. Power.  
(mutters)  
From the right.

Gaspar looks at the check and shakes his head.

GASPAR

This is a lot of money.

WILL

What're you gonna do with it?

GASPAR

Oh, I've got some charities in mind. Beyond that, I don't know. I thought I might pay off the mortgage on a castle in Hungary.

WILL

But that Count's gone...!

GASPAR

Yeah. But he had a point. Hungary  
needs its past.

(beat)

I thought I might give it to his  
granddaughter.

(grins)

She's an amazing woman.

WILL

(returns the grin)

Amazing. Yeah. I can't wait to get  
back to her.

GASPAR

Not going back to the shop, then?

WILL

(smiles sheepishly)

Dad can watch it for a while.

GASPAR

Well come on then. Let's go have us  
a merry Christmas. What'd'ya say?

FADE OUT.