

Eternity's Gate

by
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OVER BLACK -- OUR PROLOGUE

A MALE VOICE NARRATES, casual, matter-of-fact.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
Ages ago, it first appeared...

AT A SHADOWED ALTAR, an EGYPTIAN SAGE hovers over:

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
Eternity's Gate.

It's an IVORY BOWL, so pure it seems to reflect infinity itself. Into its rim he inserts THREE KEY-LIKE OBJECTS that angle upward and inward to form a pyramid.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
No one knows for sure where it came from,
but legends say it can pierce time --
peer into the past, glimpse secrets long
hidden.

A GLOW forms around the Gate as the Sage pauses to scribe A DRAWING of it onto A PARCHMENT -- then places a GOLDEN LOOP on the pyramid's apex, squints as **the GLOW FLARES TO BLINDING WHITE:**

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
Problem is, along with it came a Curse.

THE SAGE LIES DEAD, eyes lifeless, the Gate and its parts scattered by his sprawled arm.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
Something about disturbing the forces of
the universe. Not that that ever
stopped anyone from wanting it.

TWO WARRIORS battle fiercely, a cloth bag holding the bowl and its parts lying between them.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
Mainly because people always believe they
can get around the Curse -- that maybe
it's not real...

Both Warriors are MORTALLY STABBED.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
Fools. Then, somewhere along the way
the Gate was lost.

AN EGYPTIAN SHIP sinks, men diving off of it, the bag with the Gate and its parts FLOATING TO SHORE.

THEN: A DOG carries the bag through a BUSTLING MARKET...
BURIES IT in the dirt floor of a stall... TROTS OFF.

THE SAME MARKET: centuries later, now just crumbling
stone, sand -- and TANKS, BATTLING. Germans versus the
Allies. A BLAST and the THE GATE is uncovered.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)

Until, like a bad penny, it reappeared.

IN THE AFTERMATH, a German soldier picks up the decayed
bag with the Gate and its parts, THROWS IT CARELESSLY
into a cart with other booty, a BRIEF GLOW FADING as
the LOOP FALLS OUT and is tossed into another cart.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)

The thing is, almost no one knew what
they had. Which didn't keep people from
looking for it...

Soldiers wheel carts toward U-BOATS, the Gate going to
THE U-231, the Loop heading elsewhere -- ONE MAN seeing
the Gate and keys: KAPITAN GUNT HAR KEMP, intrigued.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)

From wondering where it went...

AMONG OTHER SUBS, the U-231 submerges -- and AS WE HOLD
ON THE WATER bubbling --

CHURCHILL (V.O.)

Or the Curse from striking again.

A JAGGED CRACK OF LIGHTNING PIERCES THE SKY

and WAVES CRASH on a STORMY NIGHT. WORDS APPEAR:

The Chesapeake Bay
January, 1945

And A VINTAGE CAR SKIDS to a stop. TWO MEN step into a
FIERCE LASH of wind and rain: OSCAR SMITH, hatchet-faced,
and SEBASTIAN MEEKER, bookish, in their 20s, here on
furtive business. They glance to --

A DOCK -- seeing, illuminated by the sweeping beam from a
nearby LIGHTHOUSE, waiting: GUNT HAR KEMP, in a Nazi
Uniform, the U-231 LOOMING behind him. The SAME CAPTAIN
we saw above. ANOTHER LIGHTNING FLASH takes us to:

THE THREE MEN HUDDLED ON THE DOCK -- MAKING A PACT

bending against the wind, hands clasped together, each
clutching AN ANCIENT KEY: the keys we've seen before.

SMITH

These keys bind us, so that none may
proceed without the other -- so our
secret remains between us. Agreed?

Their faces show grim assent, and as THUNDER RUMBLES --

MEEKER AND SMITH -- LATER

watch the u-boat fight its way from the bay, through
CRASHING WAVES and JAGGED BOULDERS, swallowed by thick
fog. Suddenly, there's the GRINDING SQUEAL of METAL
AGAINST ROCK --

-- and with the sickening sound of METAL GIVING WAY --
with Meeker's face creased with concern -- as another
LIGHTNING FLASH CRACKS:

INT. A ROWDY AND BOISTEROUS CANTINA -- NIGHT

South American natives drinking, CHEERING on TWO MEN who
ARM WRESTLE across a wooden surface. More words appear:

**The Andes Mountains
Five Years Ago**

And a door BLOWS OPEN, icy wind FLURRYING SNOW past
THOMAS CHURCHILL, OUR NARRATOR. Day-old beard scruff,
grad-school-rumpled. He pulls down the furred hood of
his jacket and looks around, on a mission.

MOMENTS LATER

Churchill leans in to a GRIZZLED BARTENDER, urgent.

CHURCHILL

I'm looking for someone. Professor Myers
-- from the dig? Was he here?

The Bartender just stares. Churchill plops down money.

THE BARTENDER

He was looking for the old German:
Jaeger.

CHURCHILL

(surprised)
There's a German? Where?

The Bartender stares. Churchill, impatient, plops down
more money.

THE BARTENDER

Try Hell.

The Bartender points; we see now that the Arm Wrestlers are straining over A COFFIN. Damn.

CHURCHILL

This German -- did he leave anything behind? Is that where the Professor is?

The Bartender stares again. This time, Churchill grabs the Bartender's collar, JERKS HIM.

CHURCHILL

I'm out of money, and patience.
(snatching back his money)
Now, where's the Professor?

INT. A SHADOWED SECOND-STORY ROOM -- AT THAT MOMENT

WIND WHISTLES, a gas LANTERN FLICKERS. Crouched at a trunk, PROFESSOR JAMES MYERS, late-30's, an academic, a good man who's waited long for this moment. He hesitates:

Then CRACKS OPEN the trunk. Sees A NAZI UNIFORM, neatly folded -- under it clothes and possessions -- and an OILCLOTH PACKET, that he takes out, opens. Inside of it are AGED YELLOWED PAPERS -- lists, typewritten pages --

-- and A MANIFEST, listing subs -- U-658, U-339 -- and their officers. One name in particular stops him: KAPITÄN GUNTHER KEMP, associated with THE U-231. He almost can't believe what he sees.

A GOLDEN SHIMMER comes from the trunk, as if light flared and died. James reaches, carefully removes a small LOOP OF GOLD -- the one we've seen before. His eyes shine with excitement --

And A SOUND comes from outside the door, and as he looks:

THE DOOR TO THE ROOM IS SHOVED OPEN

Churchill on the landing. Surveying a now empty room, and the trunk, and an open window, wind blowing curtains. He moves to the window, sees FOOTSTEPS IN THE SNOW leading to the cantina -- as, OVERLAID, a PHONE RINGS.

WILL (PRELAP)

Hello?

INT. A TYPICAL AMERICAN FAMILY ROOM

WILL MYERS, 8 years old, James' son, an earnest, open boy, has just answered his phone. He doesn't know it yet, but this is the last time he'll talk to his Dad.

JAMES (FROM THE PHONE)
Will. Will, it's me.

WILL
Dad!

CROSSCUT TO THE BOISTEROUS BAR -- AND JAMES

on a decades-old pay phone, scanning the crowd suspiciously, the packet and Loop clutched against him.

JAMES
I found it, son. I finally found it.

Will's mother SARAH has just picked up an extension.

SARAH
James? Found what?

JAMES
Evidence, Sarah. A manifest, from a German supply Sergeant -- and more, showing that a u-boat did go to the U.S. With the lost treasure, and maybe with Eternity's Gate too. Eternity's Gate, Sarah. Do you know what that means?

Will's eyes widen with wonder, aware of the significance.

JAMES
But I need to send it all to you. I don't know who to trust, and if it should fall into the wrong hands --

SUDDENLY, WILL AND SARAH --

hear THE BUZZ of a DIAL TONE. They've been cut off.

SARAH
... James? James!

AS BACK IN THE BAR

James has just hung up the phone. Because, next to him, is Churchill. Staring at him with -- concern? Menace?

CHURCHILL
Professor. You left camp without telling anyone. Is something wrong? Did you find what we've been looking for?

James just stares. He's hidden the Parchment and the papers behind his back, Churchill trying to get a look.

But JUST THEN: Churchill SPOTS TWO MEN ENTERING the bar, one squat, the other towering: HAWKINS and QUORT. Their eyes meet -- and Churchill SWEEPS DRINKS off the bar, starting an INSTANT MELEE -- chairs TOSSED, PUNCHES thrown --

-- James plunging into and through the chaos, Churchill TRYING TO FOLLOW -- but BLOCKED by Hawkins and Quort, jerking his head as Quort SMASHES A FIST through a wall.

Desperate, Churchill SEES THE COFFIN. PULLS IT OFF ITS STAND, and it LANDS WITH A THUNK, knocking Quort and Hawkins back, the BODY SPRAWLING OUT, Churchill bolting --

OUTSIDE -- WHERE HE BURSTS THROUGH THE DOOR

sees James fleeing into the teeth of the blizzard, and takes off after him. Hawkins and Quort emerge and follow, all of them swallowed by the snow...

WHILE BACK IN THE FAMILY ROOM -- SARAH'S ON THE PHONE

SARAH
(frantic with worry)
Yes, Operator, I've been cut off. Can you help me? Please, it's an emergency...

And as Will listens, his face etched with concern, his life changed forever...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

WILL -- NOW 13 YEARS

The Golden Loop on a leather necklace around his neck as he gives a POWER POINT PRESENTATION to his HISTORY CLASS, PROJECTED IMAGES SHIFTING between photos and video: of Nazis marching, subs being loaded and submerging, jewels.

WILL
1945. The end of World War II, and high-ranking German officials, realizing the end was near, used a secret convoy of u-boats to transport stolen bounty to South America. Gems, artifacts, gold -- in short, a fortune in treasure.

Darby, Maryland
Present Day

The class hangs on every word. Except for Will's best friends AUSTIN BROWN and LILY CHEN, who are wary about what Will might say next -- and the teacher, MR. GRAY, equally wary. OLD NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS are now projected.

WILL

Around the same time, on a stormy night, there were reported sightings of a u-boat near us in the Chesapeake Bay -- and here's where it gets really interesting.

Austin and Lily share a look: uh oh. Gray's brow furrows.

WILL

There have long been theories that that very u-boat had been shanghaied -- stolen -- from the convoy by a German Captain -- and that it carried among its treasure a legendary lost artifact --

MR. GRAY

Mr. Myers --

WILL

(speeding up)
-- and that it was brought here so its contents could be hidden by unknown co-conspirators --

WILL

-- but the sub sank --

MR. GRAY

Mr. Myers --

WILL

(fast)
--- which means that somewhere at the bottom of the Chesapeake lies an ancient magical artifact and lost Nazi treasure.

MR. GRAY

Mr. Myers, enough! I've warned you, this is history class, not Mythology 101.

WILL

But this isn't a myth, it's a valid historical theory.

MR. GRAY

It's mere speculation. Name me one reputable expert who believes otherwise.

Lily and Austin hands shoot up, hoping to interrupt.

AUSTIN

Mr. Gray!

LILY

Mr. Gray!

WILL

My father.

Austin and Lily sag: they tried. Will stares defiantly.

MR. GRAY

Mr. Myers. Your father... was a fine man, who had some unfortunate obsessions. Including a belief in this fairy tale.

WILL

My father. Was a professor who did what any true historian should do: went and searched for history instead of sitting on his giant butt passing judgement.

Austin and Lily bury their heads in their hands.

THE CLASS

... Ooooh.

A DIGITAL CAMERA VIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE -- LATER

Will sits in front of the Principal, Gray pacing angrily, occasionally jabbing a finger at Will.

AUSTIN (O.S.)

Wonder what they'll do to him this time?

LILY (O.S.)

You shouldn't be spying. And since when does a phone have telephoto capabilities?

EXT. A QUAD OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL -- AFTERNOON

Austin's aiming his cell phone at the office while Lily skillfully plays with a hacky-sack.

AUSTIN

Since I got a chip from an uncle who knows a guy who cloned a prototype.

(re: Will)

Maybe chop off a thumb.

Three girls pass, Austin flashing what he believes is an irresistible smile.

AUSTIN

Ladies.

LILY

Austin. No one thinks you're charming.

AUSTIN

Of course they do. I'd be offended if I didn't know you were kidding.

LILY

I'm not kidding. I don't even like you.

AUSTIN

Sure you don't. You got candy? My blood sugar's plummeting.

They sit, and Lily roots through her backpack, pulling out various items: chapstick, a Swiss Army knife, etc.

AUSTIN

Seriously. You think he'll be suspended?

LILY

Hope not. But telling us about the treasure is one thing, putting it in a report and calling the teacher a butt is another.

She hands Austin a candy bar. He's been watching her take things out with fascination.

AUSTIN

I've got a little cut too.
 (she hands him a band-aid)
 And ear wax.
 (she pulls out a q-tip)
 That is amazing.

LILY

I have a Chinese Mom. She sends me out prepared for any possible disaster, natural, man made, or interstellar.

Will is fuming his way toward them.

AUSTIN

(WHAPPING her arm)
 Quiet. Here he comes.

LILY

(PUNCHING Austin hard back)
 Don't you ever touch me again.

AUSTIN

Owww. You've got major rage issues, you know that?
 (to Will)
 So, what's it to be? Hanging? Flogging?

WILL

(flopping onto the lawn)
 Aaaaaaaaagh.

AUSTIN

Alright, listen, don't panic, we'll get through this.

(MORE)

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

I've got a cousin who's a lawyer, sure he got his degree online, but he could plead insanity or at the very least offer a hefty bribe.

LILY

It's not like you didn't know better.

AUSTIN

And she will not be a character witness.

WILL

More community service at the public library -- at this point it might as well be a permanent job -- and either an F or a make-up paper, as long as I stick to --
(making quote marks)
-- 'historical fact.'

LILY

Which of course you'll do, because you want to become an 'historian,' and F's won't get you into college. Last month it was the Library of Alexandria, before that, Atlantis. When will you learn?

AUSTIN

You know, young lady, there's more to life than grades.

LILY

Yes, well, some of us need scholarships to get into college, and unlike you, I have ambitions beyond reform school.

AUSTIN

Why do you constantly seek to wound me?

A distant HONK. Austin peers.

AUSTIN

It's your Mom. You think she heard?
(waving)
Hi Dr. Myers.

Will's Mom stands by her car, hands on hips, angry.

LILY

She heard.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE -- LATER -- AS WILL STORMS IN his Mom trailing, and FLINGS his backpack down.

WILL

It'd be great if my own mother took my side for once.

SARAH

That's not the point --

WILL

It is the point. Everyone thinks he was crazy. How can you just let them?

SARAH

Will. Your father and his theories -- do you know how often I saw him try to prove them and fail?

WILL

(lifting the Golden Loop)

What about this? This isn't a failure.

SARAH

It's a loop of gold. Maybe associated with an artifact, in a treasure no one's ever found, that he died pursuing.

WILL

That he sent after the phone call, which means he might not be dead.

SARAH

Will... I loved him. I wish he were with us. But it's been years. He's gone. I don't want you to end up like him is all. Chasing things that aren't there.

A beat, and:

WILL BANGS OUT OF THE HOUSE

-- stalks to AN OUTBUILDING, Sarah watching him sadly.

AND INSIDE THE OUTBUILDING -- IS JAMES' OFFICE

Marvelously cluttered with manuscripts, books, artifacts. WILL SITS in a CAPTAIN'S CHAIR out of Verne's Nautilus, near a window, EARLY EVENING LIGHT spilling over him.

On his lap is a SCRAPBOOK: *'To Young Explorer Will, From His Questing Dad, in Honor of his 8th Birthday. For all the adventures that have been and all those to come.'*

He turns pages, SEEING PHOTOS: of Will with James and Sarah in front of Mt. Rushmore; near a crumbling Egyptian pyramid; James and Will pointing at cave paintings...

And THE LAST PHOTO, of James with his arm around Will -- the caption underneath reading '*Off to Find the Lost Treasure and Eternity's Gate.*' As Will thinks --

A FLASHBACK, SEPIA TONED -- WILL IN HIS DAD'S OFFICE

JAMES

(kneeling in front of Will)
History, Will, doesn't just teach us about the past. It gives us truths about today, and can warn us about tomorrow. That's why Eternity's Gate is important.

AND AS THE WILL OF THE PRESENT -- SUNSET FRAMING HIM closes the book, missing his father...

A QUICK FLASH -- OF A MAN

CRASHING through a second story window, tumbling down a slanted tiled roof -- two MEXICAN POLICIA leaning out of the window, SHOUTING -- others SWARMING HIM as he HITS THE GROUND. As we see the man is CHURCHILL --

INT. A MEXICAN JAIL -- AT DAWN

Churchill lies on a ratty bunk, staring at the ceiling, unshaven, gone a bit to seed since the last time we saw him. A GUARD TILTS in a chair outside the cell.

THE GUARD

One more hour, and you will wear the hangman's noose.

CHURCHILL

It was bound to happen some day, my friend. Do you believe in curses?

THE GUARD

Any reasonable man does.

CHURCHILL

I can't run from mine. So que sera sera. And this sera was almost worth it. Wake me when it's time.

He places a hat over his eyes -- as a MEXICAN LAWYER, seersucker suit, slightly seedy, approaches the Guard.

THE LAWYER

Get up.

CHURCHILL

I still have an hour. Let me sleep.

The Lawyer gives some documents to the Guard.

THE LAWYER

His bail has been covered, the judge has been bribed, the senorita and her father have been paid for the indiscretions.

Churchill raises his hat, peers at the lawyer: what's going on? The Lawyer holds out a photo to him.

THE LAWYER

This man has been looking for you.
(off Churchill's surprise)
A plane is waiting.

A PLANE BANKS THROUGH CLOUDS IN THE NIGHT SKY

Jet engines WHINING, and then:

EXT. A GOTHIC MANSION -- NIGHT

Perched above the ocean, thick clouds blocking the moon. An URGENT DOORBELL rings: DING DONG; DING DONG.

AND THE FRONT DOOR OF THE MANSION

is SHOVED OPEN. Framed is Churchill.

CHURCHILL

Where is he?!

Only echoes and shadows. He bounds up a SWEEPING STAIRCASE, past A PORTRAIT of a younger version of the master of the house, *Sebastian Meeker*, who made the pact decades ago. From darkness, THE BUTLER looms, and:

A MOMENT LATER: The Butler's on the phone, as we see who it is: Hawkins, from the Andes, a Cockney.

HAWKINS

It's Churchill. He's here.

INT. A MOVING LIMOUSINE

On a phone, listening, is ROGER TORRANCE, Errol Flynn with the heart of a snake. With him is the giant from the Andes, Quort. As Torrance scowls, and the CHAUFFEUR, an icy blonde, MIRA, FLOORS IT:

INT. MEEKER'S BEDROOM

Meeker, frail, much aged, lies in his bed, CANDLELIGHT FLICKERING, his eyes closed. A SHADOW crosses him: Churchill at his bedside. Meeker stirs, sees him.

MEEKER

You've come.

CHURCHILL

Not that I don't appreciate the timing,
but why now, after so many years?

MEEKER

My guilt and fear kept me silent. But
now, there's only absolution...

CHURCHILL

(leaning forward, intense)
Is this about the Curse?

MEEKER

I brought it on us, as you suspected.

CHURCHILL

I knew it. It's because of the Gate,
isn't it? Where is it?

MEEKER

Hidden...

Fading, Meeker presses something into Churchill's hand: A
RING, with an amethyst inlaid into a DISTINCTIVE CREST.

MEEKER

There's a trail... Things... sent away...

He pulls Churchill close; murmurs what only Churchill can
hear. Then Meeker's eyes widen: he's seen something.

MEEKER

Because -- a spy. There.

Meeker jabs a finger at HAWKINS IN THE DOORWAY, Quort
with him -- then clutches Churchill's arm hard.

MEEKER

Forgive me. Find the Gate. Lift the
Curse.

And Meeker dies -- just as Hawkins FLINGS A SHIRUKIN that
IMBEDS WITH A THUNK next to Churchill's head.

Churchill tries to get to the door but he's blocked by
Quort -- who moves with a quickness that belies his size
and THROWS CHURCHILL into furniture.

Another SHIRUKIN WHIZZES and Churchill rolls, dodges, and
TOSSES A LAMP that BOUNCES OFF QUORT like a toy.
Churchill circles.

CHURCHILL

Guys, what say we chat about old times
instead of indulging in this violence.

Hawkins pulls out a long dagger.

CHURCHILL

Or not.

Churchill looks around, sees only one way out. Sighs.

CHURCHILL

Just once I'd like to leave by the front
door like a reasonable person.

And he CRASHES THROUGH a window. Quort and Hawkins see
Churchill staggering to a motorcycle and SPEEDING OFF.

TORRANCE ENTERS, Mira behind him.

TORRANCE

Well?

HAWKINS

Meeker got on to me somehow. But I
overheard. He sent some things away.

TORRANCE

Find out where.

As Quort overturns a desk, and Hawkins scatters papers --

OUTSIDE -- CHURCHILL'S MOTORCYCLE

disappears into the night, leaves skittering in its wake.

AND WE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE DARBY PUBLIC LIBRARY -- A CRISP AUTUMN DAY

Neo-gothic, ivy climbing its walls. Will stands with his
Mom, who's dropping him off, her car idling nearby.

SARAH

I'm not sure this is the time for me to
be going to a conference.

WILL

Mom. I'm sorry about what happened at
school -- but you're supposed to give a
talk, Austin's Mom's expecting me, and
I'll be fine. I'm not five any more.

She gives him one of those 'affectionate mom' looks.

SARAH

Tell me about it. Just keep the drama to a minimum, okay?

WILL

Always. Mostly.

As they smile:

INT. THE CAVERNOUS FRONT LOBBY -- AT THE FRONT DESK

Is MS. CREEL, squinting down her nose at Will, holding a Community Service Slip with his name on it.

MS. CREEL

More public service? Shall we just put a cot in the historical archives for you?
(sniffing)

Although I suppose there is a recent donation that needs sorting.

Will's not quite able to hide his smile.

INT. THE LIBRARY -- A BACK AREA

Ms. Creel leads Will past stacks, HEELS CLACKING.

MS. CREEL

If anything is missing, you will be held accountable. If anything is damaged, you will be held accountable. If anything --

WILL

-- is anything, I know, I'll be held accountable.

Ms. Creel glares at him as they round a corner to:

THE ARCHIVE AREA

An arched window lets in filtered light. BOOKS and scrolls everywhere, OLD NEWSPAPERS and artifacts. He takes it in, a place he loves no matter how often he's here. Ms. Creel indicates boxes stacked by bookshelves.

MS. CREEL

Unpack them, inventory them, and try not to take as long as you usually do. They're to be organized, not perused.

She walks off. Will looks at the boxes: 'Donated by the Estate of Sebastian Meeker'.

THE ARCHIVE AREA -- A MONTAGE

As Will carefully takes things from the boxes, handling them reverently in the way of someone who loves history:

Magazines from the 30s and 40s: '... 78's... Newspapers, pulps... And A CHILDREN'S BOOK, Meeker's NAME AND ADDRESS written in a child's hand on the frontispiece...

And then: A PHOTO of a young Meeker, and a brass desk plaque: '*Sebastian Meeker, Chief Officer, Bank of the Chesapeake, 1944*'...

And finally, A BOOK. Leatherbound: '*History of the World, Vol 7, Lost Treasures and Hidden Mysteries*'. He opens it, reads in the frontispiece, inscribed in an OLD MAN'S TREMULOUS HAND: '*Property of the Meeker Estate.*'

Something's stuck in the book's pages: AN ENVELOPE, slightly yellowed, OLD. Will slides it out. It's addressed to '*Sebastian Meeker, Bank of Chesapeake.*' No return address, but the postage stamp is German.

He takes A LETTER from the envelope, and as he unfolds it -- SOMEONE'S THERE. HE STARTLES, seeing Austin and Lily.

WILL

Aaaah. What are you doing here?

AUSTIN

Don't worry, Ms. Creel's deaf as a post, we snuck past her again.

LILY

No way we'd let our best friend face her alone.

(checking out the magazines)

Cool.

AUSTIN

(picking up some L.P.s)

What are these things?

LILY

Records.

(Austin stares dumbly)

For playing music? From the old days?

AUSTIN

Seriously. Are they like Frisbees?

LILY

Tell me you're only pretending to be an idiot -- because it's totally working.

AUSTIN
 (reading a box:)
 Sebastian Meeker. Who's he?

No answer from Will. He's just read the letter and he's staring at it, disbelief mixed with excitement.

LILY
 Will? What is it? What's wrong?

Will doesn't answer, just slowly sits on a box, stunned.

LILY
 Will?

AUSTIN
 Maybe he has a fever. Do you have a fever?

WILL
 It's this letter. I think... I think it's about the lost Nazi treasure.

AUSTIN
 He does have a fever.

Lily takes the letter, and she and Austin read it.

*December 1944
 Meeker,
 The package shall be delivered as scheduled.
 Kemp*

LILY
 (searching her memory)
 Kemp. How is it I remember...

WILL
 that name? I've only mentioned it a hundred times. The German my Dad found in the Andes? -- the supply Sergeant named Jaeger? -- had a manifest with the names of the treasure convoy's Captains. And one of the Captain's was --

LILY
 -- Kemp.

WILL
 Gunthar Kemp. Who Dad thought brought his sub to the Chesapeake.

LILY
 ... This can't be the same guy.

WILL

Why not? Look, Dad always said there had to be someone who could convert the treasure to money, and Meeker was a banker. And this letter does refer to a package -- which could mean a treasure.

LILY

But, why'd Meeker send all this stuff here? And why's the letter in the book?

AUSTIN

It's not the only thing in the book.

Austin's looking at the LEATHERBOUND BOOK -- where, peeking out from a tear in the lining, is A PHOTOGRAPH.

A MOMENT LATER -- WILL HOLDS THE PHOTO

Austin and Lily beside him. The photo's brown-tinted, on heavy cardboard, with THREE MEN (a young Meeker, young Kemp and young Smith) posing stiffly side-by-side in front of trees and a stone mansion. Will points.

WILL

That's him: Sebastian Meeker.

AUSTIN

Who are the other two?

WILL

Maybe one of them's Kemp. But you know, I think I recognize that building.

(beat)

And I think it's just outside of town.

AT THE FRONT DESK

Ms. Creel's stamping books. Will HURRIES PAST, the leatherbound book under his shirt.

MS. CREEL

Excuse me, young man --

WILL

Sorry, gotta go, dentist appointment.

Lily and Austin SCURRY PAST as well.

AUSTIN

Us too.

MS. CREEL

And who are you?

As the kids exit, Ms. Creel sniffs.

MS. CREEL
Troublemakers.

Passing the three kids as they exit is CHURCHILL -- who gives them a glance as he heads to the front desk.

CHURCHILL
Excuse me.

Ms. Creel keeps stamping.

CHURCHILL
Excuse me.

She holds up a finger, stamps two more books, then looks at him. Yes?

CHURCHILL
I was wondering if you could help me.
I've been researching local libraries and
their archival collections --

MS. CREEL
I'm sorry, but our collection is closed
to the public until some recent
inventorying has concluded.

CHURCHILL
Oh, that is such a disappointment.
Couldn't you make an exception?

He gives her a smile. An icicle glares back.

MS. CREEL
Absolutely not. Under no circumstances
do we ever --

He takes her hand, looks deeply into her eyes.

CHURCHILL
Please? Just this once?

She stares.

THE ARCHIVE AREA

Churchill is opening one of Meeker's boxes, Ms. Creel nearby, her icy exterior melted.

MS. CREEL
Just let me know if you need anything.

CHURCHILL

I will, Emiline. Thank you so much.

A BELL DINGS from the front desk. She gives him her version of a seductive smile, then reluctantly leaves. And as Churchill turns to the box --

AT THE FRONT DESK

Ms. Creel approaches, then slows -- seeing, waiting there: QUORT AND HAWKINS.

BACK IN THE ARCHIVE AREA -- AT THAT MOMENT

Churchill, holding a book, hears a DISTANT SCREAM.

INT. THE ENTRY HALL OF THE LIBRARY -- LATER

The sign on the front door has been turned to 'Closed.' MS. CREEL is BOUND AND GAGGED behind the desk.

WHILE IN THE ARCHIVE AREA

Torrance, with his hirelings, surveys Meeker's donation.

TORRANCE

Tear it apart if you have to. But find out what he sent that's so important.

As they start, A SOFT SOUND comes from the shadowed bookshelves. Torrance holds up a hand: wait.

AND A MOMENT LATER --

in the stacks, where the sound came from, QUORT APPEARS. He stops, looks around. Nothing here -- except, STRETCHED ON A SHELF just behind him, trying as best he can to look like books, CHURCHILL.

A moment, Churchill scarcely breathing, then:

TORRANCE (O.S.)

Never mind.

A beat, and Quort moves

BACK TO THE ARCHIVE AREA

Where Torrance holds a book as Quort reappears: the CHILDREN'S BOOK, Meeker's name and address written in a child's handwriting on the inner cover.

TORRANCE

We may have what we need.

And as CHURCHILL PEERS OUT from the stacks:

AUSTIN (PRELAP)
It's Meeker's childhood estate.

THE OLD MEEKER MANSION -- DUSK

Foreboding, decaying, overgrown with ivy, with gables, turrets, walls charred from a long ago fire.

At the foot of a driveway gone to weed, Will holds up THE TINTED PHOTO, comparing it to the actual building -- Austin reading from the web page of an historical society popped up on his i-phone, Lily looking on.

AUSTIN
He lived in it until just after the war,
when there was a fire. Moved because
every time he tried to repair it,
something went wrong.
(hesitating)
Rumors were it was cursed.

Will heads to the mansion, Lily following.

AUSTIN
(after them)
You did hear that part, didn't you?
About the curse?

LILY
Man up.

AUSTIN
Easy for you to say.

INT. MEEKER'S ESTATE -- A LARGE ENTRY HALL -- EVENING

Shadowy. The kids enter, pushing aside cobwebs, Lily pulling flashlights from her pack and handing them out.

AUSTIN
Don't tell me, that's actually some sort
of Chinese Mary Poppins bag.

They switch on the flashlights, the beams picking up cobwebs, rotting timbers, debris, dust everywhere.

AUSTIN
Spider!

As he starts flailing, Lily rolls her eyes -- then sees something through a massive door that's partly open.

BEHIND THE DOOR -- THE KIDS MOVE IN

Austin with one last swat. Seeing, in shadowed evening light, lining the walls, TOWERING BOOKSHELVES. With as many books on the floor as on the shelves, most of them mildewed, but still, unmistakably, this is THE LIBRARY.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

FLASHLIGHTS play along the shelves. Will pauses, looks at a book he's holding: the one from Meeker's donation. Runs his hand along the spine.

On it, there are INDENTATIONS and IRREGULARITIES. He looks at the shelves, eyes scanning, then goes to:

A ROW OF BOOKS ON A SHELF, most of the books missing or decayed, but enough left to show that this is A SERIES: *History of the World, Vol. 1-30*. Will's book is *Volume 7*.

As Lily and Austin come over, he moves aside books, seeing in the wall behind them, INDENTATIONS.

He hesitates, then inserts his book into place. A CLICK, and a panel in the back wall SLIDES SIDEWAYS. Will shines his flashlight into a DARK CAVITY.

WILL

There's something in there.

AUSTIN

Most likely hairy big-toothed spiders.

Will hesitates, then reaches in, probes the cavity --

AUSTIN

(can't look)

That like to munch on fingers...

-- and pulls out a BRONZE BOX, elaborately carved, very old, with a SERIES OF INTERLOCKING DIALS on it. He tries to open it but can't. SOMETHING RATTLES inside of it.

WILL

It's a puzzle box. Impossible to open without the right combination.

AUSTIN

I'm excellent at puzzles. Let me try.

Austin takes the box and starts to fiddle, as Will again aims his beam at the cavity.

WILL
There's something else in there.

AUSTIN
Nope, it's impossible.

As Austin puts the puzzle box into the backpack, Will reaches -- and pulls out AN ANCIENT KEY: one of the ones the co-conspirators held decades ago. As he does, SOMETHING HAPPENS:

THE GOLDEN LOOP around Will's neck begins to GLOW FAINTLY, as does THE KEY --

And, from nowhere, a WIND STIRS and then WHIRLS -- dust and scraps of paper dancing in it, coming toward them, then AROUND THEM, and as it does --

-- WITHIN THE WHIRLWIND, A GHOSTLY IMAGE wavers -- of a YOUNGER MEEKER placing the key and the box into the bookshelf -- an image that dissipates as the GLOW AND THE WIND FADE -- but only after MEEKER STARES AT WILL as if looking into his soul.

The last paper settling, the kids look at each other.

AUSTIN
Did you...

See that? They nod. Will looks at the key.

WILL
I think I've seen this...

LILY
Will.

WILL
I know I have.

LILY
Will!

Will looks up. Standing in the door to the library: TORRANCE, his hirelings flanking him. A beat as they all stare at each other, then, Torrance holds out a hand.

TORRANCE
May I?

He wants the key.

WILL
Who are you?

TORRANCE
 (ignoring the question)
 Please. If you don't mind.

WILL
 No.

Torrance nods, and Hawkins moves quickly behind Will and DIMPLES HIS NECK with the sharp point of a shirukin, FREEZING HIM. A moment, then:

AUSTIN
 I say give him a peek.

Will carefully hands him the key, Hawkins steps back, and Torrance turns the key over, examining it.

Austin nods and gives a little smile to Mira.

AUSTIN
 Hi.

She just stares.

TORRANCE
 Interesting. This is centuries old.

WILL
 More than two thousand years, actually.
 Mesopotamian, maybe Sumerian.

Torrance looks at him. Considers him.

TORRANCE
 Well. A young historian.
 (indicating the backpack)
 Now the rest.

WILL
 I don't know what you're talking about.

TORRANCE
 I believe you do. Everything you have.

Again he holds out a hand, but Will doesn't budge. Their eyes lock and hold -- the moment full of threat -- when:

CRASH -- Churchill SMASHES IN through the window, GLASS SHATTERING, shards flying. Rolls, POPS UP -- and after a quick glance between he and Torrance, of recognition -- he SHAKES OFF GLASS --

CHURCHILL
God, I hate that.

-- then turns to Will, points at the backpack.

CHURCHILL

Okay, listen. Give me whatever you have
and get the hell out of here. You have
no idea what you're in the middle of.

Will looks back and forth, caught between a rock and a
hard place as Torrance's hirelings take a step forward.
Lily can see where this is heading.

LILY

(through her mouth, aside)
On three.

AUSTIN

(gets it)
Three? Oh no, please, not thr --

LILY

Three!

And she DIVES, SLIDES, SNATCHES THE KEY from Torrance,
pops up -- A SHIRUKIN thrown by Hawkins THUNKING into the
wall next to her, pinning her to it by her sleeve --

-- as Quort grabs Will by the shirt collar, lifting him --
and Mira SWIPES at Austin, her long nails SLICING THE
AIR, barely missing him.

AUSTIN

Wow!!!

Will, gasping, gropes -- then GRABS A HEAVY BOOK from a
shelf, BRINGS IT DOWN HARD on Quort's head --

-- who staggers and drops Will, bumps into a RUSTING SUIT
OF ARMOR, overturning it into Hawkins, who also staggers
as ANOTHER SWIPE of Mira's SPARKS off the armor and Lily
pulls free from the wall --

-- and the kids CLATTER FROM THE HOUSE, Hawkins, Mira and
Quort taking off after them --

-- as Torrance GRABS A SWORD from the suit of armor,
swings it at Churchill, who GRABS A WINDOW STAY and
BLOCKS THE BLOW with a CLANG.

TORRANCE

You have no business here.

CHURCHILL

More than you do.

CLANG, Churchill barely blocks another strike -- and they FENCE AND PARRY, metal SPARKING, Torrance the far better fencer, Churchill backing up --

CHURCHILL

Hey, hold on a second. Let's talk about --

SPANG, no let up, and Churchill retreats into --

THE MAIN HALL

then backs up a grand staircase, fending off strikes. Spang, spang. He's completely out of his league.

CHURCHILL

-- really, let's just talk about this.

TORRANCE

There's nothing to talk about.

CHURCHILL

How about a truce? A deal?

TORRANCE swings, barely missing. Guess not. They're on a balcony that overlooks the main hall. Torrance thrusts, his blade jabbing just past Churchill's ear.

CHURCHILL

JUST A SECOND! MAKE ME AN OFFER! JUST MAKE ME AN OFFER!

Torrance pauses.

TORRANCE

All right. Does it matter who has the Gate, as long as it's off your hands? Get it to me, I'll make you rich, I promise I'll use it just once, then I'll dispose of it properly. And your supposed Curse -- will be lifted.

CHURCHILL

Not bad... I'll think about it.

And CHURCHILL LEAPS OFF THE BALCONY, grabs onto A CHANDELIER. Hangs there as it sways, then JERKS, drops a few inches, then DROPS TO THE FLOOR, CRYSTAL SHATTERING.

CHURCHILL

(staggering up)

Owww.

THUNK. The sword shivers in the floor next to him, thrown by Torrance.

CHURCHILL

I said I'd think about it.

And he flees, out the window he came in.

As Torrance stares after him, Mira enters through the front door. She shakes her head at him: No luck.

TORRANCE

Find them, find Churchill. And I want to know who the children are. The boy... seemed familiar.

And as Mira moves to start her task:

EXT. SOME BUSHES -- NIGHT

FEET POUND PAST: Hawkins and Quort. A moment, and the BUSHES RUSTLE. The kids are hiding there.

Austin carefully takes Will by the shoulders.

AUSTIN

(very calmly)

All right. I need you to listen to me.

(shaking him)

What in God's name is going on here!?

WILL

They're clearly after the Gate. And somehow I recognize two of them...

He sees the puzzle box peeking from Lily's pack.

WILL

Let's find out what's in that.

He melts away, Lily following. Plaintively:

AUSTIN

Will the madness never cease?

EXT. JAMES'S OFFICE -- NIGHT -- LATER

A faint glow comes from inside.

WILL (O.S.)

It's a lighthouse.

INT. JAMES' OFFICE

Under an OLD-FASHIONED FLUOROSCOPE -- the type found decades ago in shoe stores -- is the SHADOWY OUTLINE of a DISTINCTIVE LIGHTHOUSE nestled inside the puzzle box.

LILY

... That's in a box. Why?

AUSTIN

Okay, both of you. We have a situation. Involving letters and keys and Loops and scary people and weird winds and WHO CARES ABOUT A LIGHTHOUSE!!!

A moment, then he looks at the fluoroscope, realizing:

AUSTIN

I've seen this before.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

The kids gather around a booted up computer, Austin working it. On it, a photo, of 'The Sorrel Bay Lighthouse,' its outline matching the fluoroscope.

WILL

Sorrel Bay... Sure. Look --

Will pulls from a pile A SCRAPBOOK of his Dad's, '*The Lost Treasure of The Chesapeake*,' pages through it.

WILL

It's one of the spots where my Dad thought the u-boat could have sunk.

He stops on a map of the Chesapeake, points at one of several 'X's' dotting it: Sorrel Bay.

WILL

And the key we found -- remember I said I'd seen it? Well, I had.

(turning more pages)

On the parchment fragment my Dad found in Egypt, that shows part of the Gate.

He stops on THE PARCHMENT we saw the Sage scribing so long ago -- with half the parchment torn off, right in the middle of a drawing, so that what we do see is:

TWO MEN reacting in fear to THE HOLLOW PYRAMID made of notched lines, the GLOWING LOOP at its apex, connected to what we don't see, the Gate on the missing half.

Will takes THE KEY from the pack, puts it beside the pyramid. It matches exactly one of the notched legs.

WILL

It can't be a coincidence. That key's part of the Gate.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

Which means we're on the trail of the lost treasure.

(beat)

And we need to go and find it.

LILY

No. Will, there are people after us. Adults. With guns and weapons.

AUSTIN

Not to mention there are, you know, glowing things.

WILL

I don't care. This was my Dad's last quest. Part of what pulled him to it was that it was right in his back yard. Not in some distant place, far away, but right here -- and I'm going to finish it. I'm going to prove he wasn't crazy. I'm going to find that treasure.

(his eyes shining)

And if I do -- we do -- you --

(indicating Lily)

-- you can get into any college you want, without worrying about paying for it.

(to Austin)

And you. You'll be --

AUSTIN

-- rich. Really, really rich. I'm in.

Will hesitates, then puts his hand out.

WILL

So what do you say? Here's to finding the treasure, and Eternity's Gate.

A moment, and Austin adds his hand. Then looks at Lily.

AUSTIN

(hopefully)

We'll be rich.

And Lily SIGHS, shakes her head --

LILY

Trapped with fools.

Then puts her hand on top of theirs. The pact sealed. And after a moment of it all sinking in:

LILY

But what'll we tell our parents?

EXT. A TRAIN -- NIGHT

Clacking past, long grass bending.

INT. A TRAIN CAR

Austin's on his phone, working his magic.

AUSTIN

Yes, Mrs. Chen, your daughter's fine, but Dr. Myers wants us to spend the night, to assist her in some research that will provide early college credit for your lovely and talented child... No, she's not available, nor the good doctor either, they're preparing the chemicals -- no, no, not dangerous chemicals at all, that would be wrong, wouldn't it? Hold for a moment, will you?

He touches his phone.

AUSTIN

Yes Mother, I told you, Dr. Myers cancelled her trip and we're spending the night... No Mother, Dr. Myers is not available right now, she's on a house call... Yes Mother, doctors still do house calls.... No Mother, I do not need underwear. Hold on a second.

He touches his phone.

AUSTIN

Mrs. Chen, have I ever told you how delicious your wontons are?

AT THE FRONT OF THE CAR

Will is looking out the window, Lily asleep near him. Austin flops down in the otherwise deserted car.

AUSTIN

Handled. Ginormous trouble eventually, but for now, we're good. Night.

He closes his eyes -- and as he does Will touches the Loop around his neck, thinking.

AUSTIN

(shifting, mumbling)
Be nice to know who's after us though.

And he's asleep.

Will looks out the window, lost in dreams of his Dad and adventure -- and as the landscape passes by:

DISSOLVE TO:

OUTSIDE JAMES' DARKENED OFFICE -- NIGHT

A motorcycle parked in the shadows.

IN THE OFFICE

Someone shines a flashlight around: CHURCHILL. His beam plays across artifacts, manuscripts, books, the jumble that's James' office -- then STOPS, on something on the wall, that's partially blocked by books:

A FRAMED PHOTO, of THREE MEN at a train station, ready to disembark on an expedition -- James in the middle, his arms over the shoulders of CHURCHILL AND TORRANCE.

Churchill sees THE COMPUTER, still glowing with life, SCREENSAVER ON. Moves to it. Taps a key and UP POPS A WEB SITE: with TRAIN SCHEDULES on it. He eyes it, then --

HIS MOTORCYCLE -- IN TOWN -- LATER

Roars past the fisheye of an ATM -- as --

INT. A HI-TECH ROOM -- SOMEWHERE

Mira is at a womb of monitors, Torrance just entering.

MIRA

Found him.

On a monitor, the same angle we saw above, of Churchill.

A COUNTRY ROAD -- LATER

Churchill thrums, bent over handlebars, his motorcycle paralleling TRAIN TRACKS. Far ahead, heading away from him, is his goal: WILL'S TRAIN.

The tracks split from the road, GOING DOWNWARD into a gorge, and as they do --

SPANG -- a BULLET CLIPS off a branch, and, startled, Churchill glances back, sees HEADLIGHTS.

THE PURSUING CAR -- IS TORRANCE'S LIMO

Quort driving intently, Torrance in the back seat, Hawkins leaning out, SQUEEZING OFF another shot.

CHURCHILL DUCKS

sees ahead, approaching, AN OLD BRIDGE, a slight natural rise next to it -- and he also sees --

BELOW THE BRIDGE

the train approaching it.

CHURCHILL

fighters for control as a bullet SPARKS off his cycle, then decides. Only one way out.

He revs it -- and as a BULLET BLOWS HIS REAR TIRE he FLIES OFF THE RISE by the bridge --

AS BEHIND

Torrance sees this, as --

CHURCHILL PINWHEELS

his cycle SLAMMING into the opposite wall, EXPLODING INTO FLAMES -- Churchill LANDING HARD on top of the train --

AS, INSIDE THE TRAIN

All three kids asleep, Will is JOLTED AWAKE by A THUMP on the roof at the far end of the car --

WHILE ON THE TOP OF THE TRAIN

Churchill scrabbles, slides, GRABS DESPERATELY the edge of the roof, hangs on, and as the train rounds a bend:

ABOVE -- ON THE BRIDGE

Torrance's limo SKIDS TO A STOP and Torrance gets out.

Looks at the motorcycle as it EXPLODES into a shower of flame -- and then at THE TRAIN, RECEDING into the distance. And as his eyes narrow, and BEHIND HIM in the sky, A HELICOPTER approaches and descends --

INSIDE THE TRAIN

Will walks cautiously through the car, heading toward where he heard the thump.

At the end of the car, he carefully slides open the dividing door and enters --

THE COUPLING PLATFORM

train CLACKING, tracks whizzing by.

Takes only a couple of steps when the door to the outside is KICKED OPEN, Churchill hanging there, legs scissoring.

CHURCHILL

Help.

Will just stares. Churchill's hand slips, regrips, wind blowing against him, trees whizzing past.

CHURCHILL

Please?

Will reaches, grabs Churchill by the belt, pulls him in, Churchill collapsing flat on his back.

CHURCHILL

Thanks.

WILL

What are you doing here?

Churchill holds up a weary hand.

CHURCHILL

Relax kid, I come in peace. Pieces, more like it. Name's Thomas Churchill.

He struggles painfully to a sitting position.

CHURCHILL

You wouldn't have any Advil, would you?

WILL

How did you --

CHURCHILL

Find you? Not as easily as I would have liked, I can promise you that. God, it hurts to land on top of a train. Here.

Churchill holds out the photo that was in James' office.

CHURCHILL

I was in the Andes with your father.

Will looks at the photo, realizes:

WILL

That's where I've seen you. This was in --
(his expression darkening)
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

-- in my Dad's office. You were in my Dad's office.

CHURCHILL

Guilty as charged. Looking for you. Because you've got what I need, and because you can still get out of this mess -- something that I can't do, given that Meeker was my Uncle.

(off Will's look)

Yeah, my Uncle. Who brought the Curse on our family because he brought the Gate here. You've got to know about the Curse -- your Dad said he told you everything.

Churchill prods a spot on his back and WINCES.

CHURCHILL

So here's the deal. The only way for me to get rid of the Curse is to find the Gate and all of its parts and get rid of them -- bury them where they can't be found. But since I don't know where it all is, you need to give me everything you have and get out of my way -- let me find it so I can finally be free. And if you don't? -- if you keep sticking your nose where it shouldn't be? Assuming that guy doesn't get you --

(indicating Torrance's image

-- eventually the Curse will. Because sooner or later, no matter what you do, no matter how hard you try, that Curse always jumps out and bites you right in the...

He trails off, stops. Because Will has an odd expression on his face: something strange is happening behind him.

Churchill slowly turns, the SOUND OF A HELICOPTER filtering in, and sees just DROPPING INTO VIEW, hanging by a harness, HAWKINS --

-- who gains a purchase on the platform -- spots Will as he STRIKES with A DAGGER --

-- CHURCHILL DODGING, then DIVING, wrapping around Hawkins and penduluming off the train -- catching Will's eye as he does --

CHURCHILL

Damn Curse.

-- then rising from view as Lily and Austin BURST IN.

LILY

What's going on? We heard a helicopter.

Will doesn't answer. Just sees THE PHOTO Churchill showed him flapping away in the wind.

OUTSIDE -- A HELICOPTER

-- the same one we saw earlier descending from the sky -- flies over a moonlit landscape, Hawkins and Churchill dangling from it. Churchill holds on for dear life, legs wrapped around Hawkins, one hand tight on the rope, the other fighting off the dagger.

CHURCHILL

Ever hear about a thing called deodorant?

HAWKINS

Shut up.

With his free hand, Hawkins CLUBS CHURCHILL on the side of the head -- who slips, nearly loses his grip, seeing:

BELOW HIM --

a dizzying view of trees, and at the edge of his vision, a river passing by.

AND ABOVE -- IN THE CHOPPER -- QUORT

who pulls the rope up, hand-over-hand, Mira piloting.

WHILE HAWKINS --

pushes the dagger closer and closer to Churchill's face, despite Churchill's efforts.

CHURCHILL

(straining)

What say... we just... grab a beer?

HAWKINS

Always talking. Give me your tongue so I can cut it out.

Beat.

CHURCHILL

Okay.

And he LICKS HAWKINS' CHEEK. Hawkins RECOILS, shoves Churchill away --

-- and Churchill PLUMMETS, falling -- pinwheeling --

-- finally SPLASHING into the river far below.

WHILE ABOVE -- IN THE CHOPPER

Hawkins climbs in as Quort and Mira see nothing but a ripple in the river, where Churchill disappeared --

And as Mira angles the CHOPPER off into the night...

INT. THE TRAIN CAR -- THE KIDS GATHERED

Austin's been doing research on his phone.

AUSTIN

Okay -- Churchill, Thomas L. Parents died when he was a baby, lived with his --
 (with significance)
 -- uncle Sebastian Meeker for a while --
 (continuing)
 -- until he was kicked out of three prep schools, claimed he was framed every time, that he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Then he sort of bounced around the fringes: skippered a boat in the Bahamas that sunk, had several scrapes with the law, freelanced here and there but nothing really stuck -- basically was a really unlucky guy -- kind of a theme with his family. Other than that I got nothing.

LILY

... You terrify me.

AUSTIN

Thank you. Seems to me the only reason a guy like that'd want the treasure is for no good. Right Will?

Will doesn't say anything to contradict Austin --

AS WE CUT TO:

INT. A PACKED BAR -- NIGHT

The CAMERA MOVING through the crowd, toward a booth, a typical bar band playing typical bar band music --

-- FINDING CHURCHILL, still dripping from his little dip in the river. Drinking from a pitcher of beer, brooding, an ATTRACTIVE DRUNK WOMAN draped all over him, sweet if a bit clueless.

THE WOMAN

Aren't you the cutest thing?

CHURCHILL

Have you ever really wanted something, but the closer you get to it the more trouble it gives you?

THE WOMAN

Sweetie, the closer you get to me I'll give you all the trouble you want.

CHURCHILL

You want to hear a story?

THE WOMAN

A bedtime story?

CHURCHILL

It starts in China 3000 years ago.

THE WOMAN

It is a bedtime story.

CHURCHILL

There's this artifact. Got some special powers. It first showed up somewhere around the Shan Dynasty...

As Churchill talks, we'll see WASHED-OUT SCENES illustrating his words, starting with:

A WARLORD, in a tent with the wind whipping, SOMETHING GLOWING BRILLIANTLY as he peers at it, the glow growing to swallow him.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)

... when a Warlord used it to find the secret of an enemy's attack plan, winning a kingdom.

There is a great battle, THE WARLORD RAISING HIS SWORD in victory.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)

But, afterwards, he was struck blind.

The Warlord CROUCHES IN AGONY, BLOOD coming from his eyes.

NOW: Arabians ride horses across the desert at night, their robes flapping, led by a BANDIT KING.

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
*And in Sumeria, around 300 B.C., there's
 the legend of a Bandit King...*

*THE ARABIANS have their horses reigned to a stop in front
 of the GAPING MAW OF A CAVE.*

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
*... who used it to find a fortune buried
 a thousand years before.*

*A QUICK FLASH of the Warlord in his tent, squinting at
 SOMETHING GLOWING.*

*THEN, torches lit, the Bandit King and his men press
 forward into a chamber in the cave, where GLITTERING
 JEWELS confront them.*

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
*But he went mad after his family died in
 a plague.*

As the Bandit King cradles his family in grief:

CHURCHILL'S FACE:

CHURCHILL
 You see the theme here? Own it, you get
 screwed. Or in my case, because my Uncle
 brought it here, even though I did
 nothing wrong --

Churchill SLAMS down his beer.

CHURCHILL
 -- my life's a big pile of crap.

THE WOMAN
 ... This isn't a happy story, is it?

CHURCHILL
 See, his Curse was to have it spread to
 his family. Which means, everywhere I
 turn, no matter what I do, something bad
 always happens. Not always right away --
 sometimes I'm just sort of toyed with,
 made to think everything's okay -- but
 then wham! -- it always comes crashing
 down. Like now -- I'm this close to my
 ticket out of the Hell that's my
 existence, but I just can't close the
 deal. And you know why?

Suddenly, A HAND grabs Churchill, WHIRLS HIM. A hand belonging to the woman's HUGE AND PISSED-OFF BOYFRIEND.

THE BOYFRIEND

The only deal you're closing is your face at the end of my arm.

CHURCHILL

Damn Curse.

As a FIST IMPACTS Churchill --

EXT. A YACHT -- NIGHT

A party in progress, spilling across the whole boat, dancing, beautiful people, caviar. Mira pilots the helicopter to a settled landing on the deck.

INT. AN ELEGANT STATEROOM

The sounds of the party are muffled here. Art, antiques, dot the room. Torrance, with controlled anger, gestures.

TORRANCE

This caviar? -- only comes from one tiny village in Russia. This beef? From one herd in the mountains of Japan. All of this --

(he sweeps the room)

-- one of a kind. Unique. And I could get them. But this one little thing -- why is it so difficult?

HAWKINS

(a moment of hesitation)

Well...

Torrance casts an icy gaze on Hawkins, who clams up.

TORRANCE

Churchill, yes, he's always been a wild card -- but three children? One of them, I come to find out, the son of a man who was nothing to me? Who you now tell me was on the same train with Churchill?

Mira punches a button and a CLEAR MAP of the Chesapeake DROPS, with train tracks and glowing dots overlaid.

MIRA

These are the towns the train services.

TORRANCE

Then you know where to look. Find them.
I want that Gate. Can you imagine?
Bluebeard's lost treasure -- the missing
gold mines of King Solomon -- all mine?

Torrance stalks to a door, opens it, TWO GIRLS WAITING on
the other side, the party in full swing. Looks back --

TORRANCE

And once you do find them, do whatever it
takes to get that Gate. Whatever it
takes. Understood? I will not be
stopped. By anyone.

This hangs... and he leaves.

EXT. A DEPOT -- DAY

The train pulling to a stop, STEAM HISSING.

INSIDE THE TRAIN

Austin sleeps. Lily shakes him.

LILY

Wake up, we're here.

AUSTIN

No more chocolate, Beyonce, I'll have
champagne instead.

Lily disgustedly WHAPS him.

AUSTIN

(snapping awake)
What!?

A LIGHTHOUSE PERCHES ON A PROMONTORY

overlooking the Chesapeake Bay. Boarded up, paint
peeling, under the slate gray of an overcast sky: the
Sorrel Bay Lighthouse. The kids stand looking at it.

INT. THE LIGHTHOUSE

The door is SHOVED OPEN, light slanting in through dust --
followed by the kids, who AIM FLASHLIGHTS, picking up a
hollow interior, debris on the ground, rotting timber.

WILL

This was built in the late 1800s. Closed
down about 20 years ago.

AUSTIN

Man, it stinks in here.

Their beams shift to the curve of STAIRS winding upward against the inner core.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

They climb the stairs, loose chunks of dirt falling from under their feet. Lily's flashlight plays above. She seems to see something.

LILY

Am I crazy, or are the walls moving?

There does seem to be A RIPPLING in the blackness above. And then, a SOFT CHITTERING. Will notes white splotches on the walls, touches it.

WILL

Guys.

(sniffing it)

This is guano.

AUSTIN

As in... poop?

WILL

... From bats.

Again they play their light upwards. Seeing now that the wall is a SOLID MASS OF RESTLESS BATS. A beat.

AUSTIN

(whispering)

I say we be really really quiet.

He takes a step backwards -- and his foot nudges a LARGE CLOD OF DIRT. That drops. FALLS. Hits the ground below. SPOOM.

They all freeze. A RUSTLING comes from above, a disturbance in the force that seems to settle. But then:

THE WALLS ERUPT into A STORM OF BATS. That FLURRY around the kids, a rage of wings -- Lily almost knocked off the stairs, Will grabbing her.

AUSTIN

Cover your ears!

Amidst the chaos, Austin is bent over his i-phone. He presses a button, and as they do, AN EAR-PIERCING WHINE splits the air, coming from the phone.

The bats SQUEAL, RECOIL, stream through cracks in the walls, emptying the place.

The last bat flaps out as Austin punches off his phone. They stand in the silence, then look up, to what awaits them at the top.

INT. THE LAMP ROOM -- ATOP THE LIGHTHOUSE

The kids step into this dusty chamber, over a few fallen boards. The cracked windows give a breathtaking 360 degree view of the surrounding landscape and the choppy bay, gray under the overcast skies.

At the center of the room is the ROTATING LIGHTHOUSE LAMP, rust eating away at its carriage. On its side is a power console, dusty, long-idle.

Will moves to a DUSTY PLAQUE on the wall. Wipes it off with his sleeve, staring at the top, revealing WRITING.

A funny expression comes over his face -- he's realized something -- and as we read J. WILTS MEMORIAL LIGHTHOUSE, he continues wiping, explaining something.

WILL

You know, every lighthouse has a name -- but they also have an official designation. Denoted by its coordinates.

And now revealed are numbers: 37 30 13; 76 16 56

WILL

Specifically, by its latitude and longitude.

Will looks at his friends. He's just solved the riddle of how to open the box.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Will has taken the Puzzle Box out of his backpack. He TURNS THE DIALS to match the numbers on the plaque. The last dial CLICKS into place -- and the box POPS OPEN.

Nestled in it is a MINIATURE REPLICA LIGHTHOUSE. As Will takes it out:

AUSTIN

There's nothing else in there? No note, no map?

WILL

Just this.

He points. On the miniature lighthouse, there's A YELLOW DOT painted at the top, where the light might come out.

Will places the lighthouse on a counter, lines it up with the real lighthouse. The YELLOW DOT POINTS TO THE BAY.

A MOMENT LATER

The three are straining to TURN THE CENTRAL LIGHTHOUSE LAMP, which groans under years of disuse. It gives way and slides into place, the lamp pointing toward the bay, the same direction as the miniature lighthouse.

Will moves to a power console. Is preparing to push the power lever down. Lily notes something:

LILY

Will.

She indicates a gap in the power housing. Tangled wires are revealed, some of the insulation frayed.

LILY

It might not be safe.

WILL

(after a beat)

We haven't got a choice.

He looks at his friends, then pulls down the power switch. And from somewhere within the bowels of the lighthouse there's A WHINE, revving up, fluctuating --

-- and the lamp FLICKERS, gives out then COMES UP AGAIN as the hum GROWS IN INTENSITY, the light growing...

Then, SPARKS come from the housing -- the three ducking -- and the THE LAMP FLARES into a BLINDING BEAM --

-- and the beam PIERCES THE MISTY OVERCAST outside --

-- ARROWING TO A CIRCLE OF LIGHT on the bay, right in the middle of a jagged semi-circle of rocks.

The kids STARE AT THE SPOT, then at each other -- could this be it? -- where the sub is?

-- and then, THE HOUSING EXPLODES into a SHOWER OF SPARKS and smoke, and the place goes black. Through the gloom:

AUSTIN

... What now?

WILL
We find out if it's down there.

EXT. A DOCKSIDE PUB -- 'THE RUSTY SCOW' -- AFTERNOON

Fog drapes the streets, a FOGHORN MOANS, shadowy figures drift in and out of alleys on business best left unasked.

AUSTIN (O.S.)
Relax. This is the kind of place you come to if you need something.

INT. THE PUB

Packed, noisy, filled with wharf rats, shady characters -- drinking, laughing, BETTING ON DARTS, some on furtive business. The kids are at the door, Will and Lily wary.

AUSTIN
In fact, my Uncle owned one of these.

LILY
Figures.

Austin surveys the crowd, zeroes in on a glowering EYE-PATCHED MAN at a corner booth, who the crowd studiously avoids as he drinks a beer: TELFAIR. Austin instinctively knows this is his man.

A MOMENT LATER

The kids approach the booth, even Austin a bit tentative.

AUSTIN
Excuse me, sir, do you have a moment?

Telfair SLAMS his empty glass down and GLARES at them. Austin shakily signals A WAITRESS.

AUSTIN
Garconette. Four beers please.

WAITRESS
(in a foghorn voice)
You have got to be kidding.

AUSTIN
Not for us. For him.

A BIT LATER

Telfair is draining the last of the four beers, the kids watching with awe. He slams the final glass down, wipes his mouth, then looks at them: well?

AUSTIN

We need some supplies. Top secret.
And fast.

Telfair hesitates, then lets out A LONG RUMBLING BURP that ruffles Austin's hair. A beat.

AUSTIN

Assuming you can get them.

TELFAIR

Nothing I can't get. But it'll cost you.
A lot.

AUSTIN

No problem. We have money.

WILL

(into Austin's ear)
No we don't.

There's a CHEER near them. A BURLY GUY collects a wad of money, having just won his umpteenth game of darts.

AUSTIN

We'll get money.

THE BURLY GUY

Anyone else think they can take me on?

AUSTIN

She'll do it.

All eyes turn to them, and Austin angles a thumb at Lily. A beat and the place ERUPTS into RAUCOUS LAUGHTER.

THE BURLY GUY

Her? A girl? Try to beat me?

Lily's expression darkens: there's a thunderstorm coming, and you do not want to be there.

THE BURLY GUY

A little girl? An itty bitty, teeny
weeny, frilly willy little girl? Hawww.

If Lily were a bomb, she'd be just about to explode.

AUSTIN

You, my friend, have just unleashed the
dogs of Hell.

A DART

Imbedding in the bull's-eye. A CHEER from the crowd.
AND LILY dances in triumph, arms raised a la Rocky.

LILY

That's right. Who's the champ, who's the
champ you giant wiant tub of blubber?

Austin collects money from the chastened Burly Guy.

AUSTIN

Anyone else? Line up, one at a time.

LILY

(as they do)

Behind my back this time!

And as the crowd CHEERS AGAIN:

EXT. THE DOCKS -- NEAR A WAREHOUSE

Water laps under a pier, fog still thick. Will and Lily
watch as Austin hands money to Telfair, a pile of
equipment in a tied-up boat nearby.

AUSTIN

Pleasure doing business with you.

TELFAIR

Tell anyone and I'll slit your throat.

AUSTIN

No need for a receipt then.

LATER

The boat putts out onto the bay, Telfair watching.

As the kids are swallowed by the fog, Telfair moves to a
pay phone -- probably the last one left in America -- and
dials.

Someone answers on the other end.

TELFAIR

You know them people you were looking
for? I've spotted them. Sheepshead Bay.

From the mist behind Telfair, A FIGURE LOOMS. Grabs him,
spins him, SWINGS, decking him, knocking him unconscious.

The figure listens to the receiver for a moment: it's
CHURCHILL.

TORRANCE
 (from the phone)
 Hello?

CROSSCUT TO: THE OTHER END OF THE PHONE

And Torrance, on his yacht. Who senses who it is.

TORRANCE
 Churchill? Is that you?... If it is,
 the offer still stands.

A moment, as Churchill considers, then:

AN UNDERWATER POV

Of fish and kelp.

AUSTIN (O.S.)
 Do you read me, do you read me, Blue Dog
 Down? Is all well?

ABOVE -- ON THE BAY

In the shelter of rocks picked out by the lighthouse beam, bobbing in the gray of thick fog, are Austin and Lily on the motorboat, seeing on A VIDEO MONITOR the same view as above -- as well as a SONAR DOT tracking Will's progress along a topographic map.

AUSTIN
 (into his headset)
 I repeat, Blue Dog Down, is all well? Is
 all well?

Lily's had it. She RIPS the headset off of him.

LILY
 No human on Earth should have to put up
 with you in their head!
 (putting it on)
 You okay?

AUSTIN
 (reaching for the headset)
 Give it back.

LILY
 Get your hands off.

As they scuffle for it:

BELOW -- WILL

in a wetsuit and SCUBA gear, swims along the bottom, a pinhole camera imbedded in his facemask.

WILL

I don't see anything yet.

CROSSCUT WITH ABOVE

AUSTIN

(fast, into Lily's
mouthpiece)

There's a channel around the big rocks to
your right.

He sticks his tongue out at Lily, who shakes her head as:

BELOW: Will kicks around the rocks. Ahead, SOMETHING
HUGE LOOMS, covered in sand and silt. He kicks toward
it.

WILL

There's something here.

Will swims right up to it. Takes a hand and wipes mud
away from a surface. Revealing a painted if rusting
inscription: U-231.

And we see the whole thing now: the SUNKEN U-BOAT, a
JAGGED HOLE gashed into one side. The import of this is
not lost on all three kids.

LILY

(from the radio)
... You were right, Will.

WILL

(quietly)
My Dad was right.

After a moment:

ABOVE -- Austin SPLASHES A CANVASS BAG overboard.

AUSTIN

It's time to bring this puppy up. Tell
him the baby is coming to the crib.
Repeat, the baby is coming to the crib.

LILY

(into her headpiece, very
deliberately)
The idiot has dropped the package.

BELOW -- THE CANVASS BAG

has settled near the sub. Will swims up to it, zips it open, revealing folded white canvass material.

ABOVE -- A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Will breaks the surface.

AND A LITTLE AFTER THAT -- ON THE BOAT

The three kids huddle around the monitor, seeing the sub from a camera Will's left behind. Will has changed from his wetsuit back into street clothes.

Will looks at the other two, then PUSHES A BUTTON on a remote.

BELOW

Along the length of the u-boat are long white canvass tubes: what was in bag. A BURST from each, and from condensed air cannisters the TUBES INFLATE.

And, AMID A STORM OF BUBBLES, the sub shifts and groans, and begins to pull free from the bottom.

ABOVE -- THROUGH THE FOG

Surrounded by the jagged rocks that brought it down, dramatically, the sub slowly BURSTS TO THE SURFACE, the kids watching as it settles, water streaming off of it --

-- then it floats there, moss hanging, the past come alive. A moment as they take it in, and:

EXT. THE U-BOAT -- LATER

The kid's boat nestles against it, as

INSIDE THE U-BOAT -- A SKELETON

in a Nazi uniform peers at us, A FLASHLIGHT playing across its hollow eyes.

AUSTIN (O.S.)

Gross.

REVEAL: INT. THE SUB -- THE CONTROL ROOM

Dark, dripping, the kids passing uniformed skeletons, flashlights casting shifting shadows.

WILL
 I know the floor plan of these boats.
 Cargo hold's this way -- cargo's 'gebühr'
 in German. That's where the treasure
 will be.

Austin passes a staring skeleton.

AUSTIN
 Hey. I'm going to be really rich.

A DOORWAY

On it, a plaque: Kapitän Gunthar Kemp. WILL pushes it open, peering in as his flashlight plays across the room. A UNIFORMED SKELETON leans against a wall, in a Captain's uniform: GUNT HAR KEMP -- or what's left of him. Will studies him for a second, then:

LILY
 Will.

She's moved down the hall, where she stands in front of another door, marked Gebühr. Cargo.

A MOMENT LATER

The three stand there. Will about to open the door. Hesitating. Knowing what a big moment this is.

AUSTIN
 (very quietly)
 Really, really rich.

Will opens the door. It squeaks from years of non-use. He aims his flashlight, and sees that --

THE CARGO HOLD

Is empty. Nothing here but metal walls.

AUSTIN
 ... Or not.

As they move in, Will's face reflects his disappointment.

WILL
 It can't be. My Dad couldn't have been wrong.

Lily puts a comforting hand on his shoulder.

AUSTIN
 Guys.

Austin's flashlight has picked up a sparkle in a corner. Will goes over to it, picks up: A RUBIED BRACELET. And he understands.

WILL
The treasure was here. But it was
unloaded -- before the sub sank.

LILY
... So where is it?

INT. THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN

As the three kids enter.

WILL
Look around. Maybe we can find a clue.

LILY
After all this time, and all this water?

WILL
We have to try.

Austin holds up a ledger: pulpy, dripping. He doubts it'll work. But, Lily's seen something.

LILY
Will.

She points. To WILL'S NECK, where there's a **FAINT GLOW** coming from under his collar.

He pulls the necklace from under his shirt, revealing **THE LOOP, which is GLOWING SLIGHTLY. It seems to TUG A BIT -- toward a wall, toward a crooked and decayed painting -- then settle and fade.**

A moment, and Lily removes the painting. Revealing A **WALL SAFE.**

Austin **CRACKS HIS KNUCKLES.**

AUSTIN
Allow me.

LILY
Don't tell me. Another relative.

AUSTIN
The internet.

A POV -- FROM INSIDE THE SAFE

As it's opened, revealing the kids peering in. A FLASHLIGHT momentarily BLINDS US, as

WILL

shines his flashlight into the safe. Sees something.

As he reaches in to retrieve it, the Loop begins to GLOW AGAIN -- brighter than before, even brighter as he pulls out AN ANCIENT KEY, identical to the key found before.

The new key STARTS TO GLOW -- and the FIRST ONE DOES TOO, visible through the lining of the backpack --

-- AND THEN: A WIND stirs, from nowhere. WHIRLING around the skeleton.

And as it does, THE SKELETON FILLS OUT, becoming a person -- becoming Captain Kemp -- flesh covering his bones, then stripping away, then appearing again -- as he REACHES OUT toward the kids, GRASPING, the kids shying away --

-- until the wind and the glow fade, the skeleton becoming only bones, then DISSOLVING INTO DUST --

-- as A RING that was on Kemp's finger CLINKS TO THE FLOOR and rolls to a stop at Will's feet.

Austin and Lily are unaware that they're hugging each other -- until Lily realizes what she's doing, and SHOVES AUSTIN away. Ewww.

Will picks up the ring, eyes it, and then all three kids look at each other: What are we dealing with? Then:

CHURCHILL

Play time's over.

Churchill's at the hatch, holding a gun on them.

CHURCHILL

Time to let the big boys handle this. Give.

They stare. He motions.

CHURCHILL

Everything, now. I'm tired of messing around with a bunch of kids.

WILL

How did --

CHURCHILL

I find you? Around here, everyone knows Telfair's the guy to go to. Everyone. So hand it over. You have three seconds.

WILL

Or you'll shoot us?

CHURCHILL

Yes. In the head. Come on, come on. Before it's --

There's a BUMP up above. Beat.

CHURCHILL

-- too late.

Churchill throws his hands up in frustration.

CHURCHILL

Of course it's too late. Damned Curse. Stupid kids!

He stalks out. Beat.

AUSTIN

Curse?

Churchill sticks his head back in.

CHURCHILL

Move it. Now!

OUTSIDE -- TORRANCE'S YACHT

floats, Torrance silhouetted, looking at:

THE U-BOAT

where a launch is moored, Hawkins, Quort and Mira just climbing off of it -- but stopping, hearing THE PUTTER OF A BOAT heading away -- and seeing:

WILL AND THE OTHERS -- IN THEIR BOAT

Churchill steering through rocks toward shore. Will HOLDS THE REMOTE he used to inflate the bladders. Punches a button.

AND ON THE U-BOAT

the attached bladders BURST. And the deck jolts, bubbles streaming from below, the deck tilting.

Hawkins Quort and Mira scramble back onto their launch as the sub starts to sink --

WHILE ON SHORE

Will, Churchill and the others scramble off the boat as it slides onto the beach. Near them is the very dock we saw Meeker and his co-conspirators on during the War.

As they look back to see Mira piloting her launch back toward the yacht -- Austin SNATCHES THE GUN from Churchill's belt --

AUSTIN

HAH!!

-- and aims it at Churchill, dancing around.

AUSTIN

Who's on top now, buster? -- huh, who's the man now?

CHURCHILL

Put the gun down.

AUSTIN

Not until we get answers!

LILY

Austin, put the gun --

POW. The gun GOES OFF, the bullet flying off harmlessly.

AUSTIN

(dropping the gun like a hot potato)

Yow!

LILY

-- down.

She carefully picks the gun up, then:

LILY

(calmly, to Churchill)

Now, could you please tell us who owns that yacht before --

(yelling at Austin)

-- SOMEBODY GETS HURT!

CHURCHILL

Alexander Torrance. Made millions in dot com. What he wants he gets, and right now he wants the Gate. Which means we're in big trouble if we don't get to my car--

Which is parked on a side road. Will sees something.

CHURCHILL

-- and get out of here...

Churchill TRAILS OFF -- as he sees what Will sees: streaking from the yacht, A HANDHELD MISSILE, fired by Quort, who holds a missile launcher like it's a toy --

AND THEY DIVE -- the missile HITTING THE CAR, EXPLODING IT into a shower of flame, metal and debris.

Churchill raises up, peers at it.

CHURCHILL

... Damn Curse.

AUSTIN

(to Will)

Might be a good time to tell us a little bit more about that Curse thing.

WILL

Every ancient artifact has one.

LILY

And you didn't mention it because?

Before they can pursue it further:

CHURCHILL

Time for Plan B.

Churchill scrambles to his feet, because, steaming toward the dock, almost at it, is Torrance's yacht.

WILL

Which is?

A BULLET ZINGS THE DIRT near them, fired from the yacht.

CHURCHILL

Run!

IN UNDERGROWTH EDGING THE BEACH

The four of them run frantically, pushing aside branches, almost tripping on roots, finally breaking through into:

A CLEARING

where LONG-UNUSED RAILROAD TRACKS stretch off, amidst WWII vintage abandoned and rusting equipment.

WILL

(gets it)

These tracks -- must have been how the treasure was unloaded way back when.

They see, back at the bay:

TORRANCE'S YACHT

Touching the dock. And as it does, FLYING OFF OF IT, speeding toward them, a STATE-OF-THE ART ATV, Hawkins driving, Mira behind him.

BACK IN THE CLEARING

Churchill looks around. Spots AN OLD PUMP RAILCART on the tracks.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

They're on the railcart, pumping the handle up and down, their efforts and a slight downslope building up speed.

AUSTIN

(sees something)

I think we need to go faster.

The ATV BOUNDS into view and races toward them.

The four PUMP FRANTICALLY, gaining more speed, but not enough as the ATV pulls alongside, Hawkins LEVELLING A PISTOL -- the moment frozen --

-- but the ATV HITS A RISE, Hawkins' gun flying off --

-- Mira LAUNCHING HERSELF onto the railcart, wrapping onto a surprised Austin from behind --

-- Hawkins WHIPPING A BOLO ROPE around Will's ankle, pulling him toward the edge.

The CART GOING FASTER now, the downgrade even steeper.

Austin flails, and Churchill pries Mira loose and she crouches, glares at Churchill.

CHURCHILL

Love what you've done with your hair.

She SWIPES, her nails cutting Churchill's forearm.

CHURCHILL
Not so much your nails.

Lily pulls a METAL PIPE free, FLINGS IT at Hawkins, giving Will a momentary reprieve. But:

WILL
That was the brake!

There's A DROP-OFF ahead, the rusted tracks deteriorated.

Churchill GRABS MIRA, tosses her onto THE PUMP HANDLE, which SPRINGBOARDS HER back onto the ATV --

-- the impact JARRING HAWKINS, freeing Will --

-- just as the railcart and the ATV HIT THE DROP-OFF, and PLUNGE DOWN IT, wildly out of control -- the ATV CRASHING at the bottom of the slope, Mira and Hawkins flying --

-- THE RAILCART PLOWING through woods, mowing down small trees, miraculously missing others --

Then emerging onto A BLACKTOPPED ROAD -- passing a PUZZLED DRIVER, Austin shrugging at him --

Then rolling down an off-ramp, into a parking lot, settling to a stop at the DRIVE-THRU SPEAKER of a McDonald's.

FROM THE SPEAKER
May I help you?

AUSTIN
... I could use a Big Mac.

CHURCHILL
We need to get out of sight. I've got a safe house nearby.
(off Will's look: a safe house?)
I've been here a lot.

WILL
(understands)
Looking for the treasure.

CHURCHILL
Only way to end the damn curse.

EXT. AN ALLEY -- NIGHT

A BUCKET OF FOOD SCRAPS is tossed out of the back door of a bustling Chinese restaurant.

ABOVE IT -- IS CHURCHILL'S APARTMENT -- A CONVERTED LOFT

Churchill snapping a curtain shut.

CHURCHILL

Keep watch.

LILY

I thought you said this place was safe.

Churchill pulls out a Tequila bottle and a shot glass.

CHURCHILL

It was until you got involved. Now there are three more people for Torrance to track. I tried to keep you out of it.

Churchill stalks to a couch, sits, his back to them, pours himself a shot, downs it.

AUSTIN

... What now?

Will is staring at Churchill, slightly distracted, something else on his mind.

WILL

The treasure was taken somewhere. We just need to find out where.

AUSTIN

How?

Will doesn't answer, just heads to Churchill.

AUSTIN

(after him)

Never mind.

(to Lily)

Been nice if he'd've told us about the Curse.

LILY

He was afraid if he did we wouldn't help him.

AUSTIN

Still should have told us.

And as Austin notices CHURCHILL'S JACKET hanging on a chair:

AT THE COUCH -- WILL ARRIVES

and stands there, staring at Churchill as Churchill pours himself another shot.

WILL

What happened -- in the Andes? The night my Dad... you know.

CHURCHILL

Don't dwell on the past, kid. It'll only make you crazy.

WILL

Tell me.

Churchill downs the shot. Then:

A FLASHBACK

As if we're watching fragments of documentary footage. First, we see A CRUMBLING STONE CHURCH, abandoned, surrounded by peaked mountains...

CHURCHILL (O.S.)

After a stash of German treasure was found in a church...

THEN, A CRUMBLED BASEMENT WALL, with jewels behind it...

CHURCHILL (O.S.)

... your Dad mounted an expedition to find out how it got there. Hoping it would lead to evidence about the lost u-boat.

THE EXPEDITION SMILES AND MUGS for the camera, some of them students, some of them natives, prominent: James, between Churchill and Torrance...

CHURCHILL (O.S.)

Torrance financed it and I signed on as a guide. Turns out all of us had our own agendas.

(beat)

But your Dad got suspicious of Torrance.

TORRANCE is talking furtively with Quort and Hawkins.

CHURCHILL (O.S.)
 So, when he found church records
 indicating a German joined the priesthood
 after the war, and was still alive...

James is going through old church records.

CHURCHILL (O.S.)
 ... he snuck off to find him, keeping it
 to himself.

A CLOSE up of Torrance, like he's seen something O.C..

CHURCHILL (O.S.)
 Or he thought he did.

Then, James looking at us, SMILING.

CHURCHILL (O.S.)
 The last I saw him, he was running from
 Torrance's men, into a blizzard.

NOW -- IN THE APARTMENT

Will silent for a moment.

WILL
 ... Did Torrance kill him?

CHURCHILL
 I don't know. At the end of the day,
 though, it wasn't someone. It was some
thing. The Gate.

WILL
 But my Dad wanted it -- for a museum.
 For good.

CHURCHILL
 Doesn't matter. The Gate gets you no
 matter what your reason is -- different
 ways for different people. Me, because
 my Uncle's Curse was to see his family
 suffer. Kemp: he ended up at the bottom
 of the ocean. And your Dad...

He trails off.

CHURCHILL
 Finding the Gate won't bring him back,
 you know.

They study each other -- when:

AUSTIN

Hey!!

Austin STALKS UP, thrusts out TWO IDENTICAL RINGS -- one that came from Kemp's skeletal hand, the other that we saw Meeker give Churchill.

AUSTIN

You want to explain this?

He means the second ring.

CHURCHILL

You went through my stuff?!

AUSTIN

Just the pocket of your jacket, and I'm glad I did. You had another ring just like Kemp's. You ever planning on telling us about it? Where you got it? Why both men have it?

Churchill SNATCHES his ring back.

CHURCHILL

No. Because it's none of your business.

AUSTIN

Because you want the treasure for yourself.

CHURCHILL

Because you need to go home before the Curse has me arrested for child endangerment. Now leave.

AUSTIN

Not going to happen.

CHURCHILL

You bet it will.

AUSTIN

Will not.

WILL

Absolutely will not

LILY

Guys.

Lily's pulled something out of her backpack.

LILY

I hate to interrupt the debate club, but those rings. I've seen them before.

She holds up THE CARDBOARD PHOTO, of Kemp, Meeker, and the yet-to-be-identified Smith. They all wear IDENTICAL RINGS -- the rings our group possesses.

The kids look at Churchill, expecting answers.

CHURCHILL

What?

Lily points at Will.

LILY

Look, he's not going to give up, believe me, so you might as well level with us. Where'd you get your ring?

CHURCHILL

(shrugs)

Don't say I didn't try. My Uncle gave it to me when he died.

LILY

Did he say anything when he did? About anything?

Silence. She points at Will again: stubborn.

CHURCHILL

Other than he tried to ignore his part in the heist, hoping the Curse would just go away?

They glare at him. This isn't the info they want and Churchill knows it.

CHURCHILL

(shrugs: all right)

Not about the ring. But he did say there were three people involved...

WILL

Each with a part of the Gate.

(chewing it over)

Three keys, three rings... and three conspirators.

Will points now to each man on the photo. First: Kemp.

WILL
 One to bring the treasure over.
 (then Meeker)
 One to fence it
 (then Smith)
 And one to hide it.
 (beat)
 Which means, we find him, we find the
 treasure. And those rings are the key to
 finding him.

AUSTIN
 (turning to the computer)
 Bring it on.

LATER -- AUSTIN IS AT CHURCHILL'S COMPUTER

The other three watching as Austin leans back. He's been
 working the internet. And he can't believe it.

AUSTIN
 Nothing. Absolutely nothing, on that guy
 or the rings. Meaning, wherever those
 rings come from, it's not on the net.
 Believe me, if it was, I'd've found it.

Will's examining one of the rings.

WILL
 These have been designed -- like they're
 part of an organization. Someone
 somewhere must know something about them.

Churchill SIGHS. Despite himself, he's had an idea. The
 kids look it him. He doesn't say anything.

WILL
 Look. We need to work together. We're
 not going anywhere. You're not. So we
 might as well help each other.

CHURCHILL
 (finally:)
 There might be someone someone we could
 talk to.
 (quickly)
 But just us. You two are staying here.
 (he points to Lily)
 You, to guard everything, and you --
 (pointing at Austin)
 -- just because you're annoying.

AUSTIN
 Hey --

LILY
 Quiet. You are annoying.

CUT TO:

EXT. A PAWNSHOP -- NIGHT

Tucked away on side streets, fog wisping.

INT. THE PAWN SHOP

A BELL TINKLES as Churchill and Will enter, Will taking in the dusty clutter, the vaguely unsavory air. A WOMAN comes from the back -- beautiful, with an eye patch -- who stares with open hostility.

CHURCHILL
 (aside to Will)
 Let me handle this, she and I are old friends.
 (arms spreading wide)
 Eleanor...

Eleanor WHIPS OUT an ANTIQUE PISTOL from behind the counter, points it right at Churchill.

CHURCHILL
 (holding his hands up)
 Okay, slow down, I meant to call.

She moves the gun to point at his groin.

ELEANOR
 'And I meant to not pull the trigger, officer.' Give me a reason not to.

CHURCHILL
 (moving his hands down to his cover his groin)
 Old times sake?

ELEANOR
 I said a reason not to. Who's the kid?

Churchill pulls Will in front of him.

CHURCHILL
 His name's Will. Like a brother to me.

ELEANOR
 Then I take him down first.

Will gulps at the gun barrel now pointing at him.

CHURCHILL

Show her the ring.
 (as Will fumbles in his
 pocket)
 We need you to identify this.

Will holds out the ring. She barely gives it a glance as she moves the pistol to Churchill's head.

ELEANOR

Why would I do that when I could kill you instead?

WILL

(quickly)
 This has an Arabian cat's eye amethyst -- incredibly rare. With writing -- I think it's runic. And a crest -- Romanesque, late Augustine. I'm guessing it's from some sort of secret order. We need to know which order.

Eleanor hesitates, then casts her eye at Will. Despite herself, she's intrigued.

ELEANOR

Not usual, a kid knowing history.

A beat, then:

INT. THE BACK ROOM

Eleanor is at a table, examining the ring under a jeweler's loupe, as Will looks around at the magnificent clutter filling the shelves around him:

A two headed lizard, a bizarre mask, a skull with a ruby inlaid, a WWII era torpedo. Will starts to touch it.

ELEANOR

(sharply)
 Hands off.
 (Will freezes)
 Functioning and dangerous. You never know when you might need one.

There's a crossbow on a shelf staring at Churchill, as well as manacles.

CHURCHILL

(re: the ring)
 So, what do you think?

Eleanor picks up the pistol, BLAM, a bullet lodges right near Churchill's head. He freezes.

ELEANOR

I only talk to the kid.

(to Will)

I've never actually seen one of these, but I know it.

(looking up, to Churchill)

What have you got him involved in?

Churchill doesn't answer. She levels the pistol at him.

CHURCHILL

You said not to talk.

(she's about to fire)

Okay, okay. I didn't involve him in anything. He's just very stubborn.

A moment, then she looks at Will.

ELEANOR

There's an organization. Started out bootlegging in the 20's, bookmaking, anything on the fringes to make black market money. But these days they're much worse. Really bad people. They haven't worn these in public for decades, because they don't want to be known. And believe me, you don't want to know them.

WILL

Where are they?

ELEANOR

You don't listen. You don't want to know.

CHURCHILL

You might as well tell him. Take it from me.

Eleanor considers, then indicates the ring.

ELEANOR

I tell you, I keep this.

CHURCHILL

What if we need it?

ELEANOR

(with dripping sarcasm)

Or I could just kill you.

OUTSIDE THE PAWN SHOP

Will and Churchill walking away, Eleanor in the doorway with the ring. Churchill waves back at her.

CHURCHILL
 Goodbye. Thanks.
 (not looking at her now)
 Is she smiling?

WILL
 (glancing back)
 She really doesn't like you.

CHURCHILL
 Are you kidding, she loves me.

A BULLET SHATTERS A BRICK in a wall near his head. Both he and Will fast walk down the street.

CHURCHILL
 She just doesn't know how to express it.

CUT TO:

EXT. A MONASTERY AT THE EDGE OF TOWN -- NIGHT

Several buildings, including a central, stone church and several outbuildings.

A sign tells us this is: St. Theresa Mission -- Historical Landmark.

INT. THE CHURCH

Cathedral-like, with stone arches, stained-glass windows, rough-hewn wooden pews. A ROBED MONK is giving a tour to tourists, a Monk lighting candles.

THE TOUR-GUIDE MONK
 ... established two hundred years ago,
 the monastery proper still functions...

ANOTHER MONK -- round, with a bowl-cut, the stereotype come to life -- moves up to WILL AND CHURCHILL, who are just inside the entrance taking it all in.

THE ROUND MONK
 I'm sorry, no more tours today, but
 you're welcome to return tomorrow.
 (nodding at a collection box)
 Any contribution you make will go to
 those less fortunate.

A benign smile and he moves off.

Will sees the Monk that was lighting candles move through AN ARCHED DOOR near the altar -- then notices that Churchill is uncomfortable.

WILL

You okay?

CHURCHILL

Churches have always given me the creeps. Too many candles in one place I get antsy. Wouldn't put it past Eleanor to steer me wrong just to see me squirm.

WILL

Don't worry. We're where we should be.

Will points out that, over the arched door, is THE CREST that was on the ring.

LATER -- AT THE ENTRANCE

The Two Monks are closing the heavy wooden door on the last of the Tourists.

THE ROUND MONK

Bless you, my son.

THE TOUR-GUIDE MONK

(as the door is locked)

Tourist duty sucks.

THE ROUND MONK

(pulling out a cigarette)

You got a light?

Churchill emerges from the shadows, grabbing their heads and BANGING THEM together.

LATER -- A CONFESSION BOOTH

The two unconscious Monks are stuffed in, tied and gagged, in their underwear, Churchill pulling shut a curtain on them, he and Will wearing their robes.

They head to the arched doorway -- Churchill pausing to pull money from the Collection Box. Will's appalled.

CHURCHILL

Hey, it is for the less fortunate.

They pass through the arched doorway --

INTO A DARK HALLWAY

where THREE MONKS walk down a long hall bordering a mist-covered, moonlit cloister. Will and Churchill, their hoods up, pass them, heading in the opposite direction.

ONE OF THE THREE MONKS

Domini securum.

Will and Churchill bob several times back. As they move on:

CHURCHILL

Let's find what we came for and go.

WILL

Which is?

CHURCHILL

Photos, records. Anything that might give us the name of the third conspirator.

WILL

A registry. This appears to be modelled after, or at one time was, an order of Benedictine monks. Because the cloisters are there, and the living quarters there -- which means any records or valuable artifacts are most likely in --

INT. A CHAPEL -- DESERTED

WILL

Here.

Will and Churchill take in an ornate gem. Stained-glass windows let in tinted moonlight, candles flicker, marble statues scattered around, a gold altar.

CHURCHILL

A chapel?

WILL

Their most private place.
(eyeing a statue)
Eleventh century. Wow.

Will walks to the altar, Churchill trailing and seeing GLASS TOPPED COFFINS lining the room, eerily preserved human figures in them, hands folded, staring up.

WILL

They keep their most treasured in the
safest place possible...

He stops at a coffin on the side of the altar. Inside of
it is an Honored Brother holding A BOOK.

WILL

With their Honored Brothers.

CHURCHILL

... Pretty good, kid. Your Dad would be
proud.

Will examines the side of the coffin, sees A RECESSED
DIVOT: the inverse of the rings they've found.

He pulls a ring from his pocket, puts it in the recess.
There's a HISS and the top SLIDES OPEN. And as he
reaches for the book, and DISTANT CHURCH BELLS RING --

A MOMENT LATER

Churchill and Will have the book open on the altar, and
are turning pages, studying it. They stop. On a page
with HANDWRITTEN NAMES, a date after each of them.

Specifically, they're eying two names, one on top of the
other: Sebastian Meeker and Gunthar Kemp, the same date
associated with both them.

Will and Churchill look at each other -- they found it --
then back to the book, the CHURCH BELLS ringing again.

CHURCHILL

Noisy for a monastery.

WILL

(distracted as he reads)
Call to vespers. There.

He points to a name just below Kemp's, THE SAME DATE
AFTER IT as Meeker and Kemp's: Oscar Smith.

WILL

Maybe that's our guy. He joined the same
day.

Churchill sees something, at the entrance of the chapel.

CHURCHILL

You know when you said vespers -- just
what are they?

WILL

The time when Monks gather to worship,
usually in...

He realizes what he's saying, looks up and sees: MONKS,
fifteen or so of them gathered at the entrance.

WILL

... the Chapel.

(beat)

Maybe they aren't bad guys after all.
Maybe they're real Monks.

All of the Monks PULL PISTOLS and point them at them.

CHURCHILL

With guns.

Churchill grabs the book, looks around -- no way out
except the way they came in.

The Monks slowly approach.

A beat, and Churchill WHIPS OUT his own pistol, POINTS IT
AT THE HEAD of the Honored Brother who held the book.

CHURCHILL

Freeze or I shoot the dead guy!

The Monks hesitate for a moment, confused -- and then:

INT. A HALLWAY

Will and Churchill run past us -- skidding around a
corner and out of view.

A moment later, a herd of Monks follow, clattering around
the corner and disappearing from view as well.

After the last footstep has faded:

INT. CHURCHILL'S APARTMENT

Austin works Churchill's computer, the others around him,
the Registry on a table nearby. ON THE MONITOR, from a
newspaper obituary, is a PHOTO OF Smith, Lily comparing
it to Meeker's photo of the three men.

LILY

That's him. Oscar Smith.

AUSTIN

(reading)

He was already a successful businessman before the war, in import export, known to be a collector of antiquities, and --
(meaningfully)
-- he studied architecture in college.

CHURCHILL

The perfect guy to help bring in a treasure, and build a place to hide it.

WILL

With the organization a perfect place to have met Meeker and Kemp, since they were all three members at the same time.

AUSTIN

(scanning the article)

After the war, Smith became paranoid. Withdrew from the world. Thought something bad was going to happen to him, so he became a recluse, obsessed with death. Last anyone saw him was in 1946.

Suddenly, AUSTIN'S CELL RINGS, then Lily's, then Will's.

WILL

(going pale)

... It's my Mom.

LILY

It's mine.

AUSTIN

Mine too. Don't look now but we've just been busted by the Mommy network.

They look at each other: what are we going to do?

AUSTIN

Okay, no problem, I'll handle this.

He's about to answer, when:

CHURCHILL

Hold on. Cell phones can be traced.

AUSTIN

You don't know my Mom. She won't quit until the National Guard's brought in.

CHURCHILL

Five seconds.

Austin takes a deep breath, answers his phone.

AUSTIN

(in a rush)

Hi Mom, don't worry, we're fine, we're on a huge adventure, can't tell you any more about it right now, tell the other Moms everything's okay, we'll talk soon, love you, bye bye.

He hangs up. Beat.

LILY

That's handling it?

All the kid's phones RING AGAIN and Austin grabs Will's and Lily's and FLINGS THEM, SHATTERING them.

AUSTIN

That is.

LILY

What about your phone?

AUSTIN

(pressing a button)

Muted. Rembrandt wouldn't destroy his paints, would he?

(turning to the computer)

Now, let's find out where Smith reclused to, shall we?

CUT TO:

INT. TORRANCE'S YACHT

Torrance is at a desk with an ANCIENT PARCHMENT spread out in front of him: the other half of the parchment that Will has. On this fragment, we see what Eternity's Gate looks like: a bowl like object, a glow around it. (What Torrance doesn't have yet is some critical information, that's on Will's parchment: that the keys and the Loop are a vital part of making the Gate function.)

He looks up as Mira enters from a hi-tech room.

MIRA

There was just a cell phone call, to one of the kids. We've locked its signature, and we're tracking. We've got them.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SWAMP -- NIGHT

The group walks along a trail, their flashlights stabbing through mist. Nightbirds CAW, and here and there the UNDERBRUSH RUSTLES with the scurry of an animal.

Austin WHIPS his flashlight toward a rustle.

AUSTIN

What was that!?

ANOTHER RUSTLE, and another whip.

AUSTIN

What was that!?

Lily SNATCHES HIS FLASHLIGHT from him. As he grabs back at it, and the two scuffle -- ahead, Will's flashlight picks out something:

LOOMING FROM THE MIST -- A MARBLED, PILLARED WALL

with a heavy stone door, cut into a hill, moss-draped trees sheltering it. A crypt.

AUSTIN

... Whoever heard of building a crypt in the middle of nowhere and just moving in to die?

CHURCHILL

The Curse makes you do all sorts of strange things.

A POV -- FROM INSIDE THE CRYPT

As the door is SLID OPEN. FOUR FLASHLIGHTS angle in, picking up a long corridor: A CAVE PASSAGEWAY, supported here and there by beams and stone.

Churchill notes A TORCH on a wall --

AND A FEW MOMENTS LATER

he touches a match to it -- and a ROW OF INTERCONNECTED TORCHES FLARE to life. Under flickering light, we now see irregular stone tile on the floor, and at the far end the impression of a larger space -- A CHAMBER.

Lily steps forward --

CHURCHILL

Wait --

And as she puts her weight on a tile, SUDDENLY, A STONE PISTON, four feet in diameter, POUNDS DOWN from the ceiling, other pillars POUNDING the length of the corridor, Austin pulling Lily back before she's crushed.

As the pistons withdraw back into the ceiling:

AUSTIN

You okay?

LILY

(nodding)

Thanks.

CHURCHILL

(peering at the far end)

Whatever's down there, Smith didn't want anyone to get to it.

Lily's intently eying the tunnel.

LILY

I can. Get to it.

(they all look at her)

There was pattern for the pistons. Down, then up for five seconds, then down, never two right next to each other, always in groups of three.

(beat)

I can do this.

AUSTIN

Hey.

He looks her right in the eye.

AUSTIN

Are you sure -- ?

She nods.

LILY

I'm sure.

AUSTIN

(to the others, shrugging)

She's sure.

She steels herself, and then she moves.

And as the pistons POUND DOWN, she dodges one, finds a space between two more, avoids another, hugs the wall, avoids yet another -- always moving forward, just avoiding disaster -- until:

-- she reaches the end of the hall, spots a LARGE BUTTON and PRESSES IT. The pistons withdraw into the ceiling.

LILY
(calling back)
It should be safe now.

AUSTIN
(to Will and Churchill)
You first.

THE CHAMBER -- AS THEY MOVE INTO IT

Is lit by flickering torches. Filled with objects from Smith's life: oriental carpets, rosewood furniture, an antique chessboard, a STEREOSCOPE, a table with feet resembling claws, even a WWII VINTAGE CONVERTIBLE ROADSTER --

-- and, in a leather-backed chair, A SKELETON, shreds of decayed clothing hanging from it, one of THE RINGS on its hand, A SHOTGUN resting on its lap pointed at the skull, where a hole gapes in its frontal area: SMITH.

CHURCHILL
Looks like he couldn't take it any more.

LILY
Hey.

She's at a table, where, among old books and other collectables are ROLLED-UP PAPERS -- and A CARDBOARD PHOTO that she holds up.

LILY
It's the same as Meeker's.

It is: it shows Meeker, Kemp and Smith in front of Meeker's house.

Churchill unrolls the papers, identifying them as:

CHURCHILL
Architectural plans.

They show a large room, and an intricate door.

CHURCHILL
From the looks of them, for a place where a treasure could be hidden.

Will moves closer to Smith, to get a better look -- and SOMETHING HAPPENS:

A GLOW, from the LOOP AROUND HIS NECK -- and then from THE TWO KEYS outlined in the pouch of Lily's backpack -- and then, from SMITH'S SKELETON, FROM WITHIN the tattered fabric of A POCKET.

-- and as Will approaches the skeleton, reaches to retrieve the third key, and as he touches it -- THE AIR SEEMS TO CRACKLE WITH ENERGY --

-- and wind STIRS, WHIRLS -- the glow flares, INCREASING IN INTENSITY, ENVELOPING THEM, casting A GOLDEN TINT over everything --

And suddenly, all around them, THERE'S A RUSH OF THE PAST COMING TO LIFE -- IMAGES jumping together, WARPING, cutting from one scene to another, from one location to another -- SHOWING US WHAT HAPPENED SO MANY YEARS AGO:

IN A LIBRARY -- AN ANGRY SMITH confronts a younger Meeker, pointing to an ANCIENT TOME that's opened to a page dealing with the Gate.

SMITH

What have we done?

YOUNG MEEKER

I don't understand --

JUMP TO -- Smith, slamming his hand on the book.

SMITH

This book -- ancient -- about the Gate. We suspected its power -- but so much we didn't know...

JUMP TO -- Smith shattering a glass in a fireplace, Meeker watching.

SMITH

It's Cursed. Do you understand? We're cursed. And we can do nothing.

JUMP TO A MOMENT LATER -- Smith grabbing a frightened Meeker by the collar.

SMITH

The third key's at the bottom of the bay -- where the Curse will get us if we even try to retrieve it --

ANOTHER JUMP: Smith slumped in a chair in despair.

SMITH

And the Loop -- somewhere in South America -- lost -- and we need it all to remove the Curse: the keys, the Loop, the Gate, everything. But we can't --

ANOTHER JUMP --

SMITH

We can't --

ANOTHER JUMP -- and now Smith STARES RIGHT AT WILL. Madness within his eyes..

SMITH

You. Who are you?

Will is taken aback; is Smith actually seeing him?

SMITH

Who are you? What do you want?

-- and Smith LEAPS ONTO WILL, CHOKING HIM as he drives Will back --

SMITH

The Gate -- it's the cursed Gate!

-- STRANGLING WILL. Churchill moves to pull Smith off, and as he does:

THE TIME WARP DISSOLVES -- and as it does, so does the flesh on Smith, the hands clutching Will's throat turning to bone -- then to dust -- and then Smith is gone.

And as the wind dies, and the glow fades, as everyone absorbs what happens, Lily moves to Will.

LILY

Are you all right?

In answer, Will only looks to his hand, where he holds the third key.

Then: there's A SCRAPE -- a noise from the tunnel. All four look and see:

TORRANCE and his group, stepping from shadow into light, staying just outside the chamber. He casts an eye at Will.

TORRANCE

You are a very resourceful young man. If only I'd known what your father had found, and that he'd sent it to you...

Will is staring back at Torrance with hatred.

WILL

You killed my Dad.

TORRANCE

Regrettably, no. But not for lack of trying. In the end, the storm took him.

Will suddenly RUNS AT Torrance. Almost gets him, But Quort grabs him, throws him back, hard, onto the floor.

Churchill moves, even Lily and Austin, involuntarily, to help Will, but a CLICK OF PISTOLS from Mira and Hawkins and they freeze.

Torrance looks down at Will.

TORRANCE

Just like your Father. Stubborn.
(to his group)
Kill them.

Torrance's hirelings are about to step forward, when:

LILY

One... two...

AUSTIN

I know, THREE!

And Lily PUNCHES THE BUTTON and the cylinders POUND DOWN -- Torrance and his group DIVING out of the way --

-- Churchill scooping up the architectural plans and the key, Lily stuffing the photo into her backpack --

LILY

Remember the pattern!

-- and Will and Churchill plunge one way down the tunnel, Lily pulling Austin the other.

AUSTIN

(dodging)
Yipe, oops...

Torrance FIRES A PISTOL at Will and Churchill, a piston coming down just in time, the BULLET RICOCHETING off it.

Austin and Lily are in a niche, Austin refusing to move.

AUSTIN

I can't go on!

Through the spaces between the cylinders, MIRA WEAVES TOWARD THEM, grinning evilly, talons out.

AUSTIN

Never mind.

As Austin pulls Lily into the pistons this time:

Torrance NODS AT QUORT -- who GRABS one of the descending pistons, grips it tight, GEARS GRINDING --

-- and WRENCHES IT FREE and sends it ROLLING INTO THE TUNNEL, bowling over cylinders, SHATTERING THEM, sending the whole mechanism grinding to a halt.

OUTSIDE THE TUNNEL

as dust spumes, Will, Churchill, Lily and Austin stumble out, look around.

CHURCHILL

That way --

But he's stopped short. As THWUNK -- a dart imbeds in his back. His eyes go glazed --

CHURCHILL

Damn Cur...

-- and he tumbles face first.

Will hesitates -- wants to get the plans and the key from the fallen Churchill -- but is forced to DUCK, as Hawkins emerges and FIRES an anaesthetic dart that just misses.

LILY

(grabbing him)

Come on.

She drags him toward the swamp, Austin following.

THE SWAMP -- A LITTLE LATER

Night birds cry, the moon casting an eerie light.

Hawkins, Quort and Mira CRASH THROUGH undergrowth, probing marshy hiding places with rifles and sticks, mist weaving tendrils through hanging branches and moss.

IN WATER

partly covered by overhanging branches, the three kids are submerged up to their neck, motionless, Hawkins, Mira and Quort just steps away, their feet coming closer --

-- almost on them as Will's EYES GROW WIDE. Seeing, swimming right by him, A WATER MOCCASIN. Death inches away, its tail brushing against his nose. He stifles his reaction, Hawkins right there, when:

TORRANCE (O.S.)

Never mind.

The feet hesitate, then leave.

TORRANCE

stands near the crypt, holding the plans and the key, as his three hirelings approach.

TORRANCE

(referring to the plans)

We've got these -- to tell us the treasure's hiding place. And him -- to tell us everything they know. The children don't matter any more.

As Quort hoists Churchill like a rag doll and throws him over his shoulder --

IN THE SWAMP

Will, Lily and Austin huddle, shivering, Will particularly despondent. Lily sees something on Austin.

LILY

You're not going to like this.

AUSTIN

Like what?

She reaches, pulls A LEECH off of him with SUCKING SOUND.

AUSTIN

(after a beat, surprised)

That actually wasn't so bad.

(to Will)

What now?

WILL

I don't know.

LILY
 (rooting through her pack)
 Look. We've got two of the keys, and the
 photos --

WILL
 But not the plans --

AUSTIN
 Maybe we --

WILL
 Could what? Those plans were our way of
 finding where the treasure was. Without
 them, there's no chance.

AUSTIN
 Hey, where's this coming from anyway?

WILL
 From reality. What made me think I could
 do this when no one else could? No one --
 not even my Dad. I'm such a loser.

AUSTIN
 Will... SNAP OUT OF IT!

Will blinks.

AUSTIN
 LOOK HOW FAR YOU'VE GOTTEN US!

LILY
 Almost to something nobody even believed
 existed. That's not so bad.

AUSTIN
 SO FIND US THAT TREASURE!!

Will stares at him.

AUSTIN
 COME UP WITH SOME SORT OF A PLAN!!

WILL
 (after a slight smile)
 I will if you stop yelling.

They smile at each other, then something dawns on Austin.

AUSTIN
 That actually was a leech, wasn't it?

Lily nods, and Austin shivers with disgust.

AUSTIN
Yuuuuucccccchhh.

INT. THE CRYPT

The kids pick their way over the debris into the chamber.

LILY
What are we looking for?

WILL
Anything we might have missed. They have the plans, but they still have to figure out where the treasure room is. Maybe there's a map here, or something else we missed...

He trails off. He's looking at something.

AUSTIN
What?

WILL
Let me see both of the photos.

Lily pulls them from her pack, hands them to him.

WILL
I thought so. They're not the same.

Lily and Austin peers at the photos.

AUSTIN
They aren't?

WILL
Nope. See? Each is slightly off kilter from the other.

They are.

WILL
Because they go in that.

He points to a table, and A STEREOSCOPE.

AUSTIN
Hey. I've seen one of those.

WILL
In my Dad's office. I know.

He sticks one of photos into one of two slots in front of lenses: a perfect fit.

WILL

It's a stereoscope. An old fashioned device for viewing 3-D photos.

Puts the other photo in a parallel slot. Then looks through the viewfinder.

HIS POV

Is a 3-D IMAGE of the men in front of Meeker's mansion. And POPPING OUT OF THE BRANCHES of the tree, previously hidden, is A MAP.

WILL

looks at his friends.

WILL

Now all we have to do is save Churchill and get that third key.

AUSTIN

... Is there an alternate plan?

INT. ELEANOR'S PAWN SHOP

Where she looks up as Will and his friends enter. Will reflexively raises a hand.

WILL

Don't shoot.

He holds up the second ring.

WILL

We want to trade.

CUT TO:

EXT. TORRANCE'S YACHT -- DAWN JUST BREAKING

The yacht moored at the same dock we saw 60 years ago.

AT THE SHORELINE

Will crouches in the hazy gray of the morning, watching Lily and Austin shuffle-carrying something long and cylindrical toward the boat they left grounded on shore.

AUSTIN

(hissed)

Be careful.

LILY
 (hissed)
 Be quiet.

AUSTIN
 (hissed)
 You be quiet.

Will looks at the yacht.

ON THE DECK

Hawkins and Quort look out at the sun just rising.

HAWKINS
 Beautiful. Reminds me of butterflies.

Quort spits into the water, as, unnoticed, Will crawls behind them, through a door.

HAWKINS
 You've got no poetry in your soul, you know that?

INT. A STATEROOM

WHAP, Torrance hits Churchill -- who's tied to a chair -- across his face. Just the two of them here.

CHURCHILL
 (shaking off the blow)
 I told you, you know everything I know.

TORRANCE
 Why don't I believe that?

WHAP, another blow -- then Torrance picks up the architectural plans, holds them in front of Churchill's face.

TORRANCE
 Where is this?

CHURCHILL
 I don't --

WHAP.

CHURCHILL
 Will you please stop that.

TORRANCE
 Not until I'm sure you're not lying to me.

Torrance holds up the key.

TORRANCE
What's this for?

CHURCHILL
I... don't know. Maybe to unlock the
room?

He's lying, but he's not about to give key information to
Torrance -- and he CLOSES ONE EYE, expecting another blow
-- but it doesn't come. He peeks out at Torrance, who's
just standing there.

TORRANCE
You know, I believe you.

CHURCHILL
... You do?

TORRANCE
And do you know what else? I don't think
you know anything useful at all.

He picks up a pistol.

TORRANCE
Which means I don't need you any more.

CHURCHILL
Wait a minute! -- you still don't know
where the treasure's hidden.

TORRANCE
Neither do you. I'll find it eventually.
And as for the keys? -- I'll just break
the door open. I'm so sorry you chose
not to join the winning team. Bye bye.

As Torrance points the pistol at him, Churchill SPOTS
SOMETHING: WILL, crouched and hiding behind a desk,
having snuck in through a partially open stateroom door.

Will mouths the words 'stall him,' then taps his wrist
like a watch is there, mimes stretching taffee.

EXT. THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

Lily turning the engine of the boat off, peering at the
yacht in morning mist, a couple hundred yards away.

As the boat drifts, she looks to Austin, who's crouched
at an open panel on the cylindrical object -- which we
now see is THE TORPEDO from Eleanor's pawn shop.

AUSTIN

Did the patch lady say the red wire or
the black wire activates it?

(raising a hand to stop
Lily's whap)

Just kidding.

(muttered)

I think.

BACK IN TORRANCE'S STATEROOM

Torrance is about to fire at Churchill.

CHURCHILL

Uhh... Wait!!!

TORRANCE

... For what? Unless you know something.

CHURCHILL

Not exactly. It's just, I've been
wondering something. About how you found
my Uncle.

TORRANCE

... What?

He levels the pistol again. Will taps his wrist.

CHURCHILL

No really, wait!! I'm going to die
anyway, the Curse was bound to catch up
with me, I just want to know, all my life
I was trying to get my Uncle to admit
what he'd done and somehow you got on to
him and planted a spy there, just how did
you do it?

Torrance considers this. His ego gets the best of him.

TORRANCE

Okay, a dying wish, I looked into every
single German Captain, found a relative
with a letter with a reference to Meeker,
he fit the bill, and there you have it.

(levelling the pistol)

Goodbye.

CHURCHILL

Wait!

Will is counting down with his fingers. Ten, nine...

TORRANCE

Why?

... eight, seven...

CHURCHILL

I... don't know?

Torrance, fed up, is about to pull the trigger -- when Hawkins hurries in.

HAWKINS

Sir.

TORRANCE

Now you're interrupting? Is anyone aware I'm trying to kill someone here.

HAWKINS

We have a problem.

OUTSIDE

Steaming toward the yacht is the torpedo. As it HITS THE YACHT, EXPLODING AGAINST THE HULL:

IN THE STATEROOM

Zero. The boat is rocked, Torrance and Hawkins barely maintaining their balance, Churchill flung down to the ground as his chair tips over.

TORRANCE

What in the --

(to Churchill)

I'll kill you in a minute.

And he and Hawkins rush out. Will comes over to Churchill, starts to untie him.

WILL

(explaining)

Eleanor traded for the torpedo. Don't ask which body part of yours I had to throw in.

With Churchill untied and regaining his feet, Will grabs the key and starts out of the room.

WILL

Come on.

CHURCHILL
 (indicating the plans)
 What about -- ?

WILL
 We don't need them.

EXT. THE FOOT OF THE DOCK

Will and Churchill run toward us, Torrance's crew swarming the yacht, loosening lifeboats, the yacht tilting and sinking, as --

AWAITING

is a WWII VINTAGE CONVERTIBLE, the one that was in the crypt, Austin behind the wheel as Will and Churchill hop in --

AUSTIN
 Runs pretty well considering.

-- and Austin SCREECHES away.

A COUNTRY ROAD -- AUSTIN SPEEDING

and occasionally checking the rear view mirror for pursuit, Will in the passenger seat peering into the stereoscope, Churchill and Lily in the back seat leaning forward as the car bounces on ruts.

WILL'S VIEW -- OF THE MAP

WILL (O.S.)
 We should be on the correct road.

BACK TO THE COUNTRY ROAD

WILL
 If it parallels train tracks...

They see the tracks.

WILL
 ... until they head onto an old bridge.

The tracks do, veering onto a bridge and out of view.

AUSTIN SWERVES to avoid a pothole, throwing his passengers to the side.

CHURCHILL
 Who put you behind the wheel?

AUSTIN

Stay mellow, I can handle this. I've had plenty of practice on Deathrace 3000.

He hits a rut and the CAR BOUNDS, everyone flying.

AUSTIN

Whoopsie.

WILL

(peering back into the scope)
There should be a fork up ahead.

(there is)
Go left.

Austin SWERVES, mowing down some undergrowth as he fishtails onto the new road.

CHURCHILL

I really should be driving.

AUSTIN

Relax. DUCK!

They all do, almost decapitated by a branch.

DOWN THE ROAD

Undergrowth is thickening, overgrowing the road, slowing their progress.

WILL

(peering into the scope)
Up ahead, a road should branch off.

He's right. AHEAD, barely visible through years of overgrowth, is the opening to a dirt road. Austin turns onto:

THAT ROAD

where weeds poke, branches obstruct, Austin barely creeping along.

WILL

(sees in the scope:)
There should be railroad tracks -- on the right.

There are. Peeking though undergrowth, rusting.

LILY

They look like they haven't been used for a long time.

AUSTIN
 (meaningfully)
 Maybe since they brought 'something'
 here.

WILL
 (looking into the scope)
 Is there a barn ahead?

And the auto breaks through into --

A CLEARING

where a DILAPIDATED OLD BARN looms, rusting machinery nearby, the train tracks ending against it, and a peeling sign half-falling off of it: Smith's Shipping.

The car SQUEAKS to a stop, and they all stare.

WILL
 ... I think we're here.

INT. THE BARN

Dust motes float in sunlight slanting in through gaps. The main barn door CRACKS OPEN and the four enter, rats scurrying away. They look around and see --

-- shipping bins, scattered machinery, conveyors and carts, and AN OLD HOISTING CRANE with chains hanging from it -- chains that dangle into a DARK HOLE.

They move to the hole and peer down, seeing:

A DEEP SHAFT

with two rusting ladders, one on each side, plunging down into darkness. A flashlight aimed by Lily probes the depths. Vaguely, the bottom is visible a long way down.

WILL

looks at the hoisting machinery over the shaft, and then at the chains.

WILL
 Maybe they used that to lower the
 treasure.
 (looking at the others)
 Which means...

LILY AND AUSTIN
 (hardly believing it)
 ... we may have found it.

A beat as they absorb this. Then:

CHURCHILL

Only one way to know for sure.

CHURCHILL

is now at a ladder, ready to step onto it, to test it to see whether it will hold his weight.

CHURCHILL

Shall we?

And he puts his full weight on the rung. He winces, but it holds.

A moment, and he takes another step down -- no problem -- then another, then another --

-- and Will, wearing the backpack, goes to the other ladder. Looks at his friends.

LILY

You sure...?

... that you want to do this? Will nods. He's sure.

WILL

I have to know.

And he steps. First onto one rung -- it holds -- then onto the next, then the next, descending.

Both ladders GROAN and CREAK as Will and Churchill go down. Here, a bolt STRAINS but doesn't give. There, an OMINOUS SOUND comes from a rung but holds --

UNTIL -- A WRENCHING SOUND -- of metal trying to pull away from metal -- and CHURCHILL'S LADDER SHIVERS.

He and Will stop, look at each other. After a beat:

WILL

Maybe we should...

Go back up?

CHURCHILL

Can't give up now. Not so close.

And then: SPANG -- a bolt GIVES WAY on Churchill's ladder, and the LADDER JERKS.

Above, Lily and Austin look at each other: oh no.

Will and Churchill look at each other. A frozen moment.
This is not good.

Then, a GRINDING METALLIC sound -- SLOW, AGONIZING --
from Churchill's ladder -- then SPANG, a BOLT RICOCHETS
off the wall right next to Will's head --

-- and THE LADDER GIVES WAY -- Churchill holding on for
dear life as it SLAMS AGAINST the opposite wall just
above Will, Churchill KNOCKED LOOSE, grabbing a hanging
chain --

-- and a REACTION BEGINS as WILL'S LADDER PULLS LOOSE,
folding to the other side -- BAM, hitting that --

-- Will dropping but GETTING A GRIP on a ladder that
wrenches free -- AND BAM, hits the opposite wall --

-- and BOTH DROP, getting holds on chains and ladders,
weaving their way down the shaft, barely avoiding
disaster, dodging the domino effect of the ladders, as:

-- ABOVE, from the weight of both of them, the LONG-
UNUSED HOIST-CHAIN GIVES WAY, a link SNAPPING --

-- and the two PLUMMET into the blackness -- HITTING THE
BOTTOM, avoiding ladders that bounce around them --

-- and then Will sees, UNSPOOLING DOWN TOWARD HIM, THE
CHAIN from the hoist -- but Churchill GRABS HIM and pulls
him to safety as the CHAIN PILES INTO A MOUND.

AND ABOVE, as the last of the chain settles, the LAST
CLINK of the chain coming up to them, LILY AND AUSTIN
peer down. Seeing only blackness.

LILY

(yelling)

Will! Will, are you okay?

WILL

(yelled up, distant)

I've been better.

CHURCHILL

(distant)

Damn curse.

AUSTIN

(yelling)

We'll get a rope and come down.

LILY
 (to Austin)
 Where are we going to find a rope?

AUSTIN
 (yelling down)
 Maybe.

They both seem to see something as:

BELOW -- FLASHLIGHTS ARE SWITCHED ON

Will and Churchill taking some steps through the gloom of a passageway, vague CRUNCHINGS and SCURRYINGS underfoot.

WILL
 (re: the crunching)
 What's that?

CHURCHILL
 What say we just ignore it, shall we?

A few more steps and they're in:

A LARGE NATURAL CAVERN

shadowed, dark, pick-axes and long-unused tools scattered around, old carts on disintegrating tracks that end at a THICKLY OVERGROWN OPENING, a few strands of light peeking through roots, THE BAY visible below outside.

WILL
 This looks to be from around the 1800's -- probably used to get grain to boats in the Chesapeake.

CHURCHILL
 Until Smith used it for his own purposes.

His flashlight picks up SKELETONS in worker's uniforms.

CHURCHILL
 And killed whoever helped him retool it.

WILL
 The same way Kemp would have killed his men and dumped his u-boat --

WILL AND CHURCHILL
 (together)
 -- except the Curse got him first.

Will's flashlight picks up something in the center of the cavern.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

They're at A PORTABLE GENERATOR, Will holding a flashlight for Churchill, who pulls a chain --

-- and the GENERATOR SPUTTERS, then REVS, then LIGHTBULBS ringing the room FLARE --

-- and we see that Will and Churchill are standing on a RAISED PLATFORM with a railing at the front of it -- and they're looking at --

A LARGE, METAL DOOR. Art deco in feel. Highlighted subtly by spotlights.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER -- THEY'RE AT THE DOOR

Examining it. Hundreds of SMALL CIRCULAR OUTCROPPINGS dot it, some protruding more than others. The effect is like reverse stars in dull silver.

Will thinks. Pushes one. It recedes, goes flat, but nothing else happens.

CHURCHILL

Seems like you've got the right idea.
But which ones?

Will looks back at the raised platform, with its railing at the front. And has an idea.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

He stands at the railing, holding the stereoscope -- which he raises to his eyes, and sees:

HIS POV OF THE DOOR

with three of the protrusions STANDING OUT.

WILL -- lowers the stereoscope, and then --

A FEW MOMENTS LATER -- CHURCHILL

with Will directing him, PUSHES ONE OF THE PROTRUSIONS, the one sticking the farthest out. And there's A SOUND deep within the door, as if a mechanism is engaging.

Churchill hesitates, then presses a second protrusion, again directed by Will -- to MORE GRINDING within. And then, THE THIRD ONE.

And THE DOOR SEEMS TO HEAVE, to moan from deep within -- and it slowly SWINGS OUTWARD, toward them.

A moment, then:

THEY STAND AT THE OPEN DOOR

ready to enter, and Churchill looks at Will. Hesitates.
A sense of the unknown waiting for them.

CHURCHILL

Whatever's behind that, there's something
you need to know first.

Will waits.

CHURCHILL

It was no accident my Uncle sent his
boxes to your library. He kept track of
everyone who was looking for the
treasure. Everyone. He knew about your
Dad. Knew it was your job to archive at
the library. And when he died, he told
me he wanted someone to find it who'd do
the right thing with it. You.

WILL

Not you?

CHURCHILL

He couldn't find me. I was too busy
running from something I couldn't escape.

WILL

We worked this out together.

CHURCHILL

Guess I forgot that was possible.
Worrying about everything always going
sour made it hard to look past my own
nose. Maybe that was my real Curse.

WILL

Then let's do something about it.

And they step --

THROUGH THE DOOR

flashlights probing darkness -- Will seeing a lever on
the wall, that he pulls down, and --

THE ROOM LIGHTS UP

A cavern. Filled with treasure. Gold coins, paintings,
artifacts -- swords, chalices, candlesticks, a whole
variety -- and jewels, all sparkling.

WILL
 (quietly)
 We've found it...

A moment, then:

TORRANCE
 Congratulations.

Torrance and his three hirelings step into the room -- Mira with a gun aimed at Lily and Austin, Hawkins with a gun pointed at Will and Churchill, freezing them.

TORRANCE
 You've accomplished what your father never could have. You should be proud.

A beat, and Torrance looks at Churchill.

TORRANCE
 Wondering how I found you? Sub-q tracker, implanted when you were unconscious. It's called covering your bases.

Torrance scans the treasure.

TORRANCE
 A fortune. Pales in comparison to this, though...

Torrance aside some jewels -- revealing A BOWL of the finest ivory, so smooth as to almost gleam:

TORRANCE
 Eternity's Gate.
 (beat)
 Shall we get to why we're all here?

As Quort reaches for Will's backpack:

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Torrance is crouched at the Gate, the backpack open. With Will's half of the Parchment, that he joins it with his half.

They match up perfectly. The torn drawing of the Gate is now complete: a bowl with the three keys sticking from it, triangling to a point where the Loop nestles.

TORRANCE
 (studying it)
 Ah. Now I understand how the Gate works.
 (MORE)

TORRANCE (CONT'D)
 (glancing at Churchill)
 You lied to me about the keys. They're
 not for the door at all.

CHURCHILL
 (shrugging)
 Sorry about that.

Torrance reaches into the backpack, pulls out the **THREE KEYS**. They begin to **glow faintly**.

TORRANCE
 You see, my half of the parchment --
 which I found in the Sahara, by the way --

He takes one of the keys, **INSERTS IT** into a hole in the rim of the Gate. **A FAINT GLOW comes from the Gate.**

TORRANCE
 -- only explains what the Gate can do,
 not how to make it work.

He inserts **THE SECOND KEY -- the GLOW INCREASING --**
 Will fascinated, watching despite himself as a **WAVERING CURTAIN OF ENERGY appears.**

TORRANCE
 The legends about it are right -- it can
 pierce time -- see whatever your heart
 desires. But it can do so much more.
 You can actually interact with the past.

Torrance puts the **THIRD KEY** into place, **VAGUE IMAGES appearing now within the curtain -- SHIFTING, RANDOM, fleeting -- of THE PAST: historical landscapes, Renaissance painters, a WWII tank, ancient buildings...**

TORRANCE
 Provided I have that. Which my parchment
 didn't show either.

He indicates **the Loop GLOWING** on Will's neck -- and as he holds out a hand for Will to give it to him --

SUDDENLY:

AUSTIN
THREE!

Lily **KICKS MIRA IN THE SHIN**, doubling her over, her gun flying off --

And Churchill **SHOVES HAWKINS** as Hawkins **FIRES**, the bullet hitting a chalice near the bowl, **KNOCKING THE GATE OVER**, the keys falling out, the curtain fading --

-- and a **FIGHT IS ON** -- one that spills from this chamber into the outer chamber, the artifacts and the tools scattered around coming into play:

HAWKINS attacks Lily, throwing shirukins, Lily dodging, flinging jewels, rings, bracelets at him -- whatever she can -- to try to stop him -- but his attack's relentless.

MIRA attacks Austin, who barely avoids her deadly swipes:

AUSTIN

Hold it. Seriously, hold it. Really, hold it.

He grabs a shield but a nail **JABS THROUGH IT**.

AUSTIN

Yipe!

QUORT brings an **ANCIENT MACE** down at Will -- **WHAM** -- Will dodging -- **WHAM** -- dodging again --

-- until Quort **GRABS HIM** by the neck -- Will purpling -- but **KICKING HIM IN THE GROIN**, Quort doubling, Will gasping --

TORRANCE snatches up a sword, **SWINGS IT AT CHURCHILL**, who tries to parry with things that keep being cut in half: a candlestick, a rotted wooden slat, a spear --

UNTIL -- all the battles reach a cascading climax:

WITH: Will and Churchill side by side -- Quort **RAISING A CRATE**, about to bring it down as Will scrabbles his hands behind him to find something --

-- Churchill without a weapon to defend himself from Torrance's sword strike, **SCRABBLING HIS HANDS** behind him as well --

-- while **AUSTIN** is trapped in a **GRAIN CART** -- Mira **JABBING** just past his head, her nails **IMBEDDING INTO WOOD**.

As she struggles to pull free, Austin falls off, inadvertently sending her and the cart rolling toward:

LILY -- who's been cornered by Hawkins, who's found a dagger, who's about to strike, but is **BOWLED OVER** and into the cart as it rolls past, going toward:

Will and Churchill, who each bring forth something to defend themselves: Will -- A SKULL, that he FLINGS AT QUORT, hitting him between the eyes, staggering him --

-- and Churchill, grabbing A SKELETAL ARM -- poking its bony fingers into Torrance's eyes -- staggering him --

-- and Will and Churchill SHOVE their opponents into the cart as it passes -- the cart CRASHING THROUGH the wall of vines and roots, flying out toward the bay.

Lily grabs Austin in disbelief:

LILY

You -- you saved my life.

AUSTIN

Actually -- it was a kind of an --

And suddenly, she plants a big kiss on him.

AUSTIN

(dazed)

... accidemendrdle..?

Churchill LOOKS OUTSIDE -- sees the cart floating in the bay, unconscious bodies sprawled on it -- then looks back into the chamber.

Will is nowhere to be seen.

CHURCHILL

Will?

There's A GLOW coming from the treasure chamber. As the three move toward it --

A HAND appears at the opening to the outside, climbing up:

AND IN THE TREASURE CHAMBER

Will's crouched at the Gate. He's just re-inserted the last of the three keys, the ENERGY CURTAIN WAVERING as before, as he removes the Loop from his neck.

CHURCHILL

Will, you don't want to do this!

Ignoring him, Will brings the Loop closer to the apex of the pyramid, AN ENERGY BUBBLE GROWING around him...

LILY

Will!

And as he places the Loop onto the pyramid and the glow BECOMES IMPOSSIBLY BRIGHT, Churchill, Austin and Lily SHIELDING THEIR EYES --

WILL
(looking at them)
I have to see my Dad.

AND THE BUBBLE BLOOMS --

and inside it, soft-focused, diffuse: Will sees HIS FATHER.

They're in -- and yet not in -- an abandoned MOUNTAIN HUT -- straw on the floor, wind and snow howling outside a window, James huddled, trying to keep warm --

-- and he looks up and sees Will. Their eyes meet. A moment, as James can't believe what's in front of him.

JAMES
... Will?

WILL
Dad.

JAMES
I don't -- does this mean...?

WILL
I did it, Dad. I found the Gate.
And you were right.

CHURCHILL
(from a great distance)
Will...!

Will takes a step toward his Dad.

JAMES
Will -- don't.

Will hesitates, puzzled.

JAMES
You can't. There are forces --
things -- not to be tampered with.

Will wants to come closer to his father. You can see it in his eyes.

JAMES
 Searching for the Gate -- it cost
 me everything.

Suddenly, there's a rumbling, the hut SHAKING.

WILL
 Dad --

JAMES
 (looking around)
 It's the Gate.
 (right to Will)
 Listen to me. I'm proud of you --
 so proud of you -- for what you've
 done -- you've grown into such a
 fine young man --

MORE RUMBLINGS, items falling off shelves.

JAMES
 But you have to go now.

LILY AND AUSTIN
 (distant)
 Will...!

JAMES
 The Gate is too powerful. Do you
 understand? Do you know what you
 have to do?

Will hesitates --

JAMES
 Go, before it's too late. Do what
 is right.

... then nods -- and, pain in his eyes and in his
 heart, he reaches for the Loop.

JAMES
 Goodbye son.

WILL
 Goodbye, Dad.

And Will takes the Loop off...

THE AURA BEGINS TO FADE, reality in the form of the treasure room coming back into focus, Churchill, Lily and Austin there, still shielding their eyes but able to see more now that THE GLOW IS DIMINISHING, James visible on the other side -- but FRITZING IN AND OUT, Will preparing to throw the Loop into the curtain --

WILL
(staring at his)
I (love you) --

But he's cut off -- because TORRANCE LEAPS AT HIM, and GRABS THE LOOP from him, knocking him down --

TORRANCE
No! I'll have this.

-- holding a pistol -- the curtain fading but still there, James still visible on the other side.

Churchill takes a step forward to stop him, but TORRANCE FIRES, grazing him on the arm, sending him spinning.

Will gets up, tries to come at him, but Torrance KICKS him in the abdomen, knocking him down. Places the Loop back on --

And they're within the bubble, as its glow begins to grow again:

TORRANCE
I'll have it all.

He levels his pistol at Will --

TORRANCE
And the Curse is for fools.

But as Will stares up at the gun, and Torrance is about to fire -- JAMES GRABS HIM from behind -- and PULLS HIM BACK into the curtain --

-- and as they fall back, the GATE IS KICKED, KEYS AND THE LOOP JARRING LOOSE -- and the aura fluctuates, diminishes, James falling into the hut --

-- while Torrance is caught in A TIME WHORL -- energy spinning around him -- Torrance becoming older, then younger, a baby then an old man, SCREAMING as he's sent ricocheting off to nowhere--

-- the CURTAIN COLLAPSING -- Will catching his father's eyes as it does -- James mouthing the words:

JAMES
I love you, son.

And the time AURA COLLAPSES, folding in on itself -- taking the Gate and the keys with it --

AS SOMEWHERE: the GATE WHUMPS HARD into the ground, IMBEDDING, all but a just a glimpse of it buried --

-- while BACK IN THE CAVE the Loop rolls and settles. Everyone too stunned for the moment to do anything.

And then: Will bends and picks up the Loop. Stares at it. Then meets Lily and Austin's eyes.

LILY
I'm sorry Will.

WILL
I'm not. Not any more.

Will looks at Churchill.

CHURCHILL
It's gone. The Curse. I can feel it.

He's not sure how, or how he knows, but Will nods. He knows too. It's gone for him as well.

They stand there a moment, then:

AUSTIN
Will... Uh... About the treasure...
Are we still on with the whole let's all
get rich thing?

Lily PUNCHES HIS SHOULDER.

LILY
Idiot. You think that's important right
now?

AUSTIN
What?! I'm just trying to be practical.

LILY
Idiot, idiot, idiot.

AUSTIN

Does this mean the romance is off?

Will has seen something, near where the Gate was: A BRACELET, that he picks up, with a curious expression.

LILY

What is it, Will? What's wrong?

WILL

This bracelet. It's pre-Columbian. Doesn't fit with the rest of this treasure. In fact, I'd say it's...
 (looking at them all)
 ... it's from somewhere in the Andes.
 (beat)
 From the Gate.

Churchill takes the bracelet from him. Studies it.

CHURCHILL

You know -- there was a village -- that we passed through in your Dad's expedition. That had jewelry that looked a lot like this. That he was heading toward during the blizzard.
 (beat)
 That was cut off soon afterwards. By an earthquake. That nobody's been able to get to it for years.

WILL

... Which means -- Dad could be there. He could still be alive.

The gravity of this sinks in.

AUSTIN

In the Andes? Meaning, we've got another trip to make?

They all stare at each other.

AUSTIN

Can I at least spend a little bit of the treasure first?

And as he begins to stuff jewels into his pocket:

DISSOLVE TO:

THE ANDES

Snow capped mountains. A stream, water dancing as it ripples and flows.

And the CAMERA SHIFTS. MOVES. Passing THREE KEYS scattered among the underbrush --

... SETTling ON CLoTHES against a tree -- Torrance's clothes -- nothing else but dust --

And AN ACTIVITY nearby: A DOG, looking just like the one we saw centuries ago -- vigorously BURYING THE LAST PORTION OF THE GATE'S IVORY SURFACE.

And as the dog trots away, the CAMERA RISING, following it -- we see A VILLAGE, around it signs of fallen MOUNTAIN DEBRIS blocking a trail, cutting it off --

-- and A WHITE MAN, limping, using a cane, coming out of a hut: James, Will's Dad.

-- and as the dog approaches him, and THE CAMERA RISES even further... and we see the towering mountains of the Andes and the clear blue sky:

WE FADE OUT:

THE END