

The Necessary Death of Charlie Countryman

by Matt Drake

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*We left the bridge and traveled on in the starstudded night
toward the world where no one was waiting for us.*

*- Márai Sándor, Famous
Hungarian Writer Who Wrote
Sixty Plus Books According
to the Internet Not That
Anybody Ever Heard of Him
Myself Included Because He's
Hungarian and Where the Hell
is Hungaria Anyway?*

FORMAT NOTE: Dialogue that is written in *italicized English*
is meant to be spoken in Hungarian and subtitled in English.

A YOUNG MAN'S FACE

Fills the screen. He's in his 20s, and he'd probably be handsome if his whole head wasn't SWOLLEN and GROSS and BLOODIED like it currently is. He is CHARLIE COUNTRYMAN.

A familiar VOICE sets the scene:

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
Here we are seeing it, dahlinge.
The very face of love. Look upon
the miracle it reveals, for this
boy, on this night, under the moon
so full.

Tears fall from his eyes, but weirdly -- they FALL UPWARD.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
And yet he weeps. For her, and for
us, and for the moonlight too, this
boy does weep.

We PULL BACK and FLIP OVER, to find that Charlie is DANGLING from a BRIDGE, HANGING UPSIDE-DOWN over a moonlit RIVER.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
Funny, how love is.

Charlie is barely conscious. He's being held by two TRACK-SUITED GANGSTERS. A MUSCLEY GUY stands at the rail, grinning.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
In every heart there is a dream, in
every dream a song, and in every
song there is a name.

CHARLIE
GABI!!

The Track-Suits laugh, and yank him up to the rail. A YOUNG WOMAN steps out. She's pretty. The kind of pretty that starts wars and makes your stomach ache. This is GABI.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Gabi? What...what are you...

Gabi smiles. Oh my god. She's pretty.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
Behold her, dahlinge -- the
beloved. Hers is the name in the
song of the dream, which echoes in
the space of his heart.

At Gabi's side, there's a MAN with a FACE LIKE A KNIFE.

KNIFE FACE

Life as a gay tuba player's not
looking so bad now, eh, Charlie?

CHARLIE

FUCK YOU!! FUKING FUKASS
FUCKFACE!!

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

Love is passion!

Charlie looks into Gabi's eyes.

CHARLIE

We're the pearl, Gabi. Us. The
rest is oyster.

Gabi WHISPERS in his ear. His eyes light up. And he smiles.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

Love is joy!

Gabi pulls back. BLAM!--a GUNSHOT. Charlie looks to his
gut. A ROSE OF BLOOD blooms there.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

Love is pain. Above all things
else, love is pain.

Gabi's holding a gun. Knife Face laughs.

KNIFE FACE

Darling, how could you?

Now Charlie IS FALLING.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

It's the same old story. Of love
and the promise it holds. Of life
and of living it in love. And
perhaps of a little bit of death.
Yes. Just a splash of death...

As his head crashes through the surface we FREEZE FRAME.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

...you know, to make us truly
believe. In love.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - DAY

TITLE: A FEW WEEKS EARLIER

Michigan Avenue bridge. CHARLIE is there staring into the
river. And yes, he is handsome.

Maybe not remarkably so, but still. A SOLID MAN in his early 50s comes up and hands Charlie a HOT DOG. He is SCOTT BAKER, Charlie's step-dad.

SCOTT
This a day or what?

CHARLIE
Yeah.

They eat. Scott's got a PINT BOTTLE. He takes a swig.

SCOTT
Sambuca?

Charlie takes a pull from the bottle.

SCOTT (cont'd)
Can I say something to you,
Charlie? In this moment, before it
all goes to shit?

CHARLIE
Okay.

SCOTT
She's my only home.

Charlie is felled by this.

SCOTT (cont'd)
You know?

CHARLIE
We don't have to do it, Scott. Not
today, I mean.

SCOTT
Nah. It's time. Gimme the 'buca.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Beeps, monitors, wires, and a COMATOSE WOMAN whose face is all but lost in swelling. Her head is shaved and scarred, her mouth crammed with tubes. She is MARY, Charlie's mom.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
It is here, ladies and gentlemen,
that the story begins for the boy.
And like all stories worth the
telling, it starts with goodbye.

Scott talks to a DOCTOR as Charlie sits in the corner.

DOCTOR
...once in hospice we switch to a
manual breathing apparatus, which
enables us to, um, ease her out.

SCOTT
Out where?

DOCTOR
Well. Out. There. Away.

SCOTT
Out there away. Good. I feel good
about that.

DOCTOR
Mr. Baker, I honestly believe
you're doing the right thing here.

SCOTT
In letting you suffocate my wife.

DOCTOR
The, um, procedure is facilitated
by a hospice careworker. Not me.

Scott just stares at him. Charlie takes a drink of Sambuca.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
Well. The hospice is on seven.
Shall I call a priest? A rabbi
maybe? Would your wife have--

SCOTT
Please. You've done enough. Go
fuck yourself.

The Doctor bows out. Scott winces, grabbing his back. He
shakes a BIG PILL out of a prescription bottle.

CHARLIE
Let me get one of those.

SCOTT
They're for my back.

CHARLIE
Okay. My back is killing me.

Scott gives him a pill. Charlie pops it.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Still hurts.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

Drawn curtains, muted tones, candlelight. Chinese-ish muzak twinkling appropriately. FAMILY MEMBERS are gathered. A NURSE stands over Mary, pumping breath into her lungs from a HAND-HELD APPARATUS. Scott stands by Mary's side.

Charlie is FLOATING UP ON THE CEILING. He calls down.

CHARLIE

Psst. Scott. What the fuck?

SCOTT

This is what happens. You ready?

Scott shushes Charlie. The nurse squeezes the apparatus, and it becomes FILLED WITH CRYSTALS OF LIGHT from Mary's mouth.

CHARLIE

What's that stuff?

SCOTT

Whatever you see, Charlie, it's the pills. Are you ready?

Some of the LIGHT ESCAPES. Charlie reaches for it as it fades. THUD!--he falls heavily to the floor. He gets up.

CHARLIE

May I be excused, Scott?

SCOTT

We're not eating broccoli here, Charlie. Jesus Christ.

CHARLIE

It's okay. You guys go ahead.

Scott stares at Charlie, giving him every chance.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

Here is what makes a life, dahlinge
-- such moments, and the choices we
make within them.

Charlie's eyes flash pure helplessness.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

It is how we become who we are meant
to become in the world. We choose.

Charlie leaves the room.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

Or not.

OUT IN THE HALLWAY

Charlie sinks into a CHAIR.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
Who do we become if we do not
choose, if we do not do the thing
that life itself is made of?

PEOPLE pass by Charlie. THEY HAVE NO FACES. Like in that
Star Trek episode. Charlie feels his face. IT IS GONE.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
We become no one, dahlinge.

Charlie looks down at his stomach. IT IS GONE, REPLACED BY
AN INFINITE VIEW INTO DEEPEST SPACE.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
And we are nothing.

THEN

A WOMAN we don't fully see takes a seat next to Charlie.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Took a powder, eh, Charlie?

It's MARY BAKER. She's her normal self. A lovely woman in
her 50s who should have a long time yet to live.

CHARLIE
Sorry about that, Mom.

MARY BAKER
I should've made you do your
homework, Charlie. I always knew.

CHARLIE
My homework?

MARY BAKER
I left too much up to you. When
you were young. Now you've got so
much fear.

CHARLIE
What? No. I'm okay.

MARY BAKER
You ran out of my death scene.

CHARLIE
I said I'm sorry.

MARY BAKER

I was always wrapped-up in my own
crap. Meeting Greg, and leaving
your Dad. Then meeting Scott and
leaving Greg. I could never get
the sequences right.

CHARLIE

You're a complicated lady.

MARY BAKER

I didn't mean to be, Charlie. And
now you're such a mess.

CHARLIE

This is good, you coming back from
the dead, us having this talk.

MARY BAKER

And ps? You're too sarcastic.

CHARLIE

What do I do, Mom? I've got a
whole life more, you know?

MARY BAKER

I don't know. Change.

CHARLIE

Change how?

MARY BAKER

I don't know. For the better.

CHARLIE

Tell me what to do, Mom. Be
specific. Please.

Mary Baker thinks. And thinks. Then decides.

MARY BAKER

Got it. Go to Bucharest.

CHARLIE

Bucharest?

MARY BAKER

Yes.

CHARLIE

Why?

MARY BAKER

I don't know. It seemed specific.
I have to go now, Charlie.

The ELEVATOR DINGS. And the door opens. A LOVELY GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN is inside.

LOVELY GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN
Going up?

MARY BAKER
I should frigging hope so!

CHARLIE
Mom, wait. I need another memory.
The one I've got, I don't want it
to be it...

FLASH TO:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Scott is dragging Mary to his truck. Two big dogs bark and follow. Mary's sweats fall down around her ass.

BACK TO SCENE

Mary laughs. It's a big and affecting laugh.

MARY BAKER
Oh, Charlie. You goof. Come here.

He leans into her. She kisses his forehead.

FLASH TO:

EXT. RIVER PARK - DAY

Charlie is seven. He and Younger Mary are at a picnic beside a river, giddily BURNING AN ANT with a magnifying glass.

BACK TO SCENE

MARY BAKER
Better?
(Charlie smiles)
Okay, then. I love you, Charlie.
Have fun in Bucharest.

Mary Baker gets in the elevator and the doors close.

INT. BORDERS BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Charlie is at the help desk. A SUICIDE GIRL is helping him.

SUICIDE GIRL
Dude, Bucharest? No, we don't have
any books on Bucharest. You know
why?

(MORE)

SUICIDE GIRL (cont'd)

Because no one from there can read or write is why. All they can do is have sex with child prostitutes and get AIDS. Oh wait. They can also harvest organs like nobody's business. It's world capital of that shit.

CHARLIE

Don't they have the gymnasts?
Nadia what's-her-face and all?

SUICIDE GIRL

You'd be a good gymnast too if you weren't allowed to menstruate.

CHARLIE

Nah, I'm too tallish.

SUICIDE GIRL

Go to Budapest. It's super pretty and they shoot all the pornos there.

CHARLIE

Is there someone else on duty?

SUICIDE GIRL

Dude, did you not just hear me fully hit on you like I was Lindsay Lohan or something?

CHARLIE

No, I did not.

SUICIDE GIRL

Where's your head at? I'm off at 11:30. Bring a bottle.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The radio clock reads 11:47. We see a half drunk BOTTLE OF TEQUILA on the driver's seat. We go WIDER to find Suicide Girl fucking the shit out of Charlie in the passenger seat. A TEAR falls from Charlie's eye. She doesn't notice.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Charlie stands on a Chicago-style back porch. He is DRUNK. He reaches into an old winter boot and pulls out a KEY.

INSIDE

Charlie enters a bedroom. A GIRL is asleep. This is MELISSA, Charlie's ex. He watches her until he hears a FART. Charlie laughs. Melissa wakes up and sees him.

MELISSA
Charles! What the fuck?

CHARLIE
You farted.

A RUSTLING in the far side of the bed. There's a GUY there.
ANOTHER FART sounds. Charlie doesn't laugh. He goes.

IN THE KITCHEN

Charlie is leaving. Melissa comes out. He PUKES in the sink.

MELISSA
We are not together, Charles. Why
are you vomiting in my sink?

CHARLIE
I like the symbolism. Who's that?

MELISSA
No one you know. Go home.

CHARLIE
(a half-assed stab)
You're my only home.

MELISSA
What are you talking about?

CHARLIE
Forget it.

Charlie turns on the faucet and runs the GARBAGE DISPOSAL.

MELISSA
I'm sorry about Mary, Charles. I
heard but I didn't know what--

CHARLIE
Don't say Charles. I'm Charlie.

MELISSA
Charlie is a little boy's name.

CHARLIE
Yeah? Is Charlie Rose a little
boy? What about Charlie Chaplin?
I suppose you think Charlie Brown
is a, wait...

A NAKED GUY enters. He's Ted.

TED
Melissa? Everything cool?

MELISSA
Fine. Just give us a minute.

CHARLIE
You farted.

TED
Who's this dude?

CHARLIE
I'm the one who didn't fart.

MELISSA
Go to bed, Ted.

CHARLIE
No, Ted. Don't go to bed. Forget
what she said. Stay here instead.
Ted. Please. Do not go to bed.
Not back where you far...Ted.

TED
What is he--

MELISSA
You farted. Okay, Ted? Who gives
a shit. Give us a minute.

Ted blushes.

CHARLIE
Ted's turning red.

TED
Hey, 'bro! Enough!

Melissa whispers in Ted's ear. Ted glares a bit, and goes.

CHARLIE
I was doing a Dr. Suess thing.
Using just his name and my mind.

MELISSA
You're not funny, Charles. Go home.

CHARLIE
I'm moving to Bucharest.

MELISSA
Romania? With the AIDS and the
organ harvesting?

CHARLIE
And the prostituting of children,
yes. It's the place for me.

MELISSA

It's obviously not working for you here. All you ever do is sit in your apartment and do nothing.

CHARLIE

You call it nothing, I call it masturbation.

MELISSA

You can jerk off anywhere.

CHARLIE

Don't mind if I do.

MELISSA

Let me ask you something, Charles.

CHARLIE

Charlie.

MELISSA

Did it ever occur to you that the only reason we fell in love is because I fell in love with you?

CHARLIE

Are you underlining pronouns with your voice?

MELISSA

Go away, Charlie. Fucking do something for once. Charlie.

CHARLIE

Take it worldwide. Like Godzilla. I see. Huh. Okay. Well, Melissa. I had a nice time being your boyfriend for a while even though all we did was fight and you made me cry when it was over.

He offers his hand to shake. She hugs him.

MELISSA

Take care of yourself, Charles.

CHARLIE

Charlie.

INT. CORPORATE LIMBO SPACE - INFINITE

Charlie walks down a hallway. He wears a suit. He reaches an office, knocks. A woman, JAN, is inside. She's happy.

JAN

Charlie, you so totally nailed the Save Secure Backup section.

(reading)

"Allows you to save a copy of the document which cannot be edited, but which can have functional VersaNotes attached to it."

(not reading)

Italics on the can? Are you serious? Frigging nailed it!

CHARLIE

I've got to quit today, Jan.

JAN

Pardon?

CHARLIE

This is my last day. Sorry about the notice.

JAN

Whoa. I told you you came back from bereavement too soon. Take the week. Don't do anything rash.

CHARLIE

I'm moving to Bucharest.

JAN

That's rash, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Still, Jan. It's something I've got to do.

JAN

Just who is going to write the User Guide for the Paperless Fax Sys?

CHARLIE

Maybe the Paperless Fax Sys doesn't need a User Guide, Jan. Being paperless and all.

JAN

You break my heart, Charlie. You son of a bitch.

INT. AIRPORT BAR - EVENING

Charlie and Scott are bellied up. Charlie thumbs through the ROUGH GUIDE TO ROMANIA. His DUFFEL BAG is at his feet.

SCOTT

To Bucharest. Wherever the hell.

They drink. Charlie looks a little piqued.

SCOTT (cont'd)

Proud of you, Charlie. Not an easy thing to chuck it all and fuck off into the great unknown.

CHARLIE

Yeah. I guess.

SCOTT

I want to say something, Charlie. Finally. For us both. Okay?

(Charlie nods)

We did the right thing. I know it.

CHARLIE

Yeah. I guess.

SCOTT

You've got to kill what you love to set it free.

Charlie puzzles over this.

SCOTT (cont'd)

You know, sometimes. Not always.

INT. AIRPLANE - EVENING

Charlie stares out the window.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

Look how sad, dahlinge. We want so badly to believe he does the right thing for himself. But how can we, when we know how it ends for him? I will tell you how -- because of love. We may comfort ourselves knowing that love awaits him.

An OLD MAN'S HEAD lolls over onto Charlie's shoulder. He tries to push the man back, but he wakes. His name is ISTVAN. He's got high gray hair and the bluest eyes.

ISTVAN

(thick Hungarian accent)

What do you mean with touching me?

CHARLIE

Your head fell on me.

ISTVAN

What is wrong on your face?
(touching Charlie)
The eyes. Here. You look bad.

CHARLIE

My mom died.

ISTVAN

Fúú. I am sorry for you. My wife
died many years time ago. I have
never had another woman since.

CHARLIE

Well, hopefully it won't be the
same for me. But I see your point.

ISTVAN

I am Istvan Banyai.

CHARLIE

Charlie Countryman.

ISTVAN

Why going to Budapest, Charlie?

CHARLIE

I'm catching another flight. To
Bucharest.

ISTVAN

I am in Bucharest one time. Never
again. *Fúú!*

Charlie takes out a BOOK.

ISTVAN (cont'd)

I see. You do not like to speak
with me. No trouble for me.

CHARLIE

It's not that. I just--

ISTVAN

What is wrong with you? Should you
not want to know what I am doing in
Chicago? Why an old Magyar man is
going to there?

CHARLIE

Maud-yar?

ISTVAN
Hungarian. Magyar is Hungarian
word for Hungarian. See, you can
learn something by talking.

CHARLIE
What were you doing in Chicago,
Istvan? I'm curious.

Istvan pulls a CUBS HAT from his bag.

ISTVAN
I'm going to see the Cubbies at
Wrigley's Field. I want to sing
Take Me Out To The Ballgame one
time before I die...

Istvan's blue eyes brighten and his face beams.

FLASH TO:

WRIGLEY FIELD

Istvan in the bleachers, holding a beer. Weeping happily.

ISTVAN
ONE! TWO! THREE STRIKES YOU'RE--

BACK TO SCENE

Charlie smiles.

ISTVAN
Now you do not wish to ask me how
an old Magyar man can be a Cubbies
fan who lives in Hungary?

CHARLIE
What I can't figure out is how you
became a Cubs fan, Istvan.

ISTVAN
The story of how is this: when I am
young my father buys tapes of Mr.
Jack Brickhouse and the Cubbies on
the black market and we listen
together under the blankets for
fear of being caught by secret
police. And then later my daughter
buys me the satellite to watch WGN,
the TV SuperStation. For me, the
Cubbies are same like the Hungarian
people. Long time suffering with
the good strong character.

CHARLIE

You make a lot of sense, Istvan.

ISTVAN

I told you, you can learn if you
talk to an old man sometimes. May
I show to you something incredible?

Charlie nods and Istvan pulls out a Cubs BATTING HELMET, the kind that holds two beers and has a straw hanging down to drink out of. Istvan puts it on and smiles.

ISTVAN (cont'd)

For my daughter. You think she
will love it?

CHARLIE

You kidding? Who wouldn't?

ISTVAN

Who wouldn't! This is what I
thought! Who wouldn't.

MANY HOURS LATER

It is night. Istvan is asleep, leaning on Charlie's shoulder again. A line of DROOL hangs from his mouth onto Charlie's shirt. Charlie sleeps too.

DAWN

Sunlight oranges Charlie's face. He wakes. Istvan still leans on him. He gently tries to move him. But Charlie BLANCHES, yanking his hand back. Something's wrong.

CHARLIE

Istvan? Sir?

Istvan's face is ashen. Charlie tries to shake him. He's unmoving, stiff as a board -- DEAD.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Oh shit. Oh no.

He DINGS the call button.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Hello? Can someone...is there a
doctor? This man is--

People begin to stir. The British FLIGHT ATTENDANT arrives.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

May I help you, sir?

CHARLIE

This man -- Istvan. I think he's,
um, I don't know. He was fine.
Earlier.

Flight Attendant reaches for Istvan's arm to check his pulse,
but SHE CAN'T MOVE IT. Rigor mortis. Charlie looks sick.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Is he...what can I do?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Be quiet. You'll alarm the others.
(to passengers)
Ladies and gentlemen, we have a
potentially grave situation
involving this man's mortality. Is
there a doctor on board?

THEN

A DOCTOR shakes her head over Istvan's body. The PILOT
confers with the flight attendants. Charlie remains in his
seat by the window. Trapped, stunned. After a bit, Flight
Attendant approaches Charlie. She's got a DRINK and a SHEET.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

I'm sorry, sir, but we have no
choice but to continue on to
Budapest. This man is from there
and it really does simplify things.

CHARLIE

I can't sit here.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Unfortunately, the flight is full.
We are sorry for the inconvenience.
(setting drink down)
Enjoy this complementary beverage.
We'll keep them coming.

CHARLIE

It's morning. There's a dead
person sitting next to me.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Only two hours more. Let's try to
make the best of it, shall we?

She places the sheet over Istvan. She goes.

LATER

Charlie's had enough drinks to be drunk. He DINGS the call button. Flight Attendant comes over.

CHARLIE

I have to go to the bathroom.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

You'll have to climb over, I suppose.

Charlie tries to squeeze, but the person in front of Istvan is reclining and asleep. Charlie tries to step over Istvan, but he FALLS into the aisle. Istvan's sheet MOVES.

ISTVAN (O.S.)

Psst. Charlie, come in to here.

Charlie lifts the sheet. Istvan smiles at him.

ISTVAN (cont'd)

I see your mother, Charlie. I tell her you are going to Bucharest. She smiles for you.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry you died, Istvan.

ISTVAN

Never mind. I see also my wife and she made some sex with me.

(then)

Charlie, I wish to ask you a special thing. It is my daughter -- perhaps you will give her my gift, and tell her she is my *édeshem lány*.

CHARLIE

Your daughter...adesh-em what?

Istvan is gray and dead again. Charlie comes out from under the sheet. Everyone's looking at him like he's a freak.

FINALLY

The plane has landed. Passengers disembark, moving around Istvan like he's, well, a dead body. Charlie is stuck there.

Soon, an AIRPORT OFFICIAL arrives with two other GUYS who are pushing a wheelchair. The official takes Istvan's bag from the floor. Charlie picks up the BEER HAT.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

This is your funny hat?

CHARLIE
I don't understand. What?

A HELPFUL PASSENGER is there.

HELPFUL PASSENGER
He is wishing to know if the funny hat is belonging to you.

CHARLIE
Yes. It is belonging to me. It's my funny hat. Ha ha.

HELPFUL PASSENGER
He says it is his, but he is lying. It was the dead man's funny hat.

The official takes the hat. Charlie turns to the passenger.

CHARLIE
What did you say? Tell him it's my funny hat.

HELPFUL PASSENGER
But it is not your funny hat.

CHARLIE
You're an asshole. How do you say you're an asshole?
(to the official)
He asked me to give it to his daughter. I have to--

AIRPORT OFFICIAL
Get the dead guy. Don't let the American take the funny hat.

INT. BUDAPEST FERIHEGY INTERNATIONAL - DAY

Charlie is in the terminal. The guys move Istvan away from the gate. The OFFICIAL has Istvan's WALLET. He opens it and pulls out a HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL. He pockets it.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
How do we choose, dahlinge, between something and nothing, if nothing is all we've ever done?

Charlie eyes the BEER HAT sitting on top of Istvan's bag.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
I will tell you: if something will bring us closer to love, we must do it! God dammit, we must do it!

Charlie breaks into a run. He's going for the hat. The official sees him. No time to react. Charlie's there. He SWIPES THE HAT and tears off down the corridor.

The official YELLS. TWO GUARDS note the commotion. Charlie's heading right for them. He doesn't see them.

SMASH. Charlie is knocked to the ground. He slides into the wall, in a heap. The guards yank him up. He flails.

CHARLIE
I need to give Istvan's daughter
this hat! You pricks! Lemme go!
IT'S HER FUNNY HA--

A TASER is out. ZZZAAP!--Charlie convulses, and goes limp.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Charlie sits at a table in a small room. He seems dazed. He checks his watch. He calls through the open door.

CHARLIE
Got a plane to catch. Hello?

He can see the TWO GUARDS. Guard One has the beer hat on, and is slurping coffee from a cup set in one of the holders.

Soon a weary-looking MAN in a cheap suit arrives. Guard One takes the hat off and hands it to him. He enters the room, holding the hat and Charlie's passport.

CHEAP SUIT
You knew this guy who died? Banyai
Istvan?

CHARLIE
Istvan Banyai.

CHEAP SUIT
In Hungary we say family name
first, name name second.

CHARLIE
My friend Richard Small should
never come here. Right?

CHEAP SUIT
Why does a guy want a guy he does
not know to take a hat to his
daughter? Why can't the guy take
the hat to his daughter by himself?

CHARLIE

It's an interesting question. You should ask it to someone who didn't just get tasered.

CHEAP SUIT

Do you think Banyai Istvan knew he was going to die? Or perhaps he said it to you after he was dead? Maybe you talk to the dead people like the boy in the Bruce Willis film?

(whispering)

"I talk to the dead people."

CHARLIE

First of all, he sees the dead people. And second, Banyai Istvan got this hat for his daughter. I thought, the poor guy died, his daughter should get the hat.

CHEAP SUIT

You are a hero of some kind? Like Bruce Willis in many other films?

CHARLIE

The guy who took the body from the plane also took money from the body's wallet. Which made me doubt the hat would ever get to the body's daughter. So. You know. Fuck this.

Cheap Suit's cell phone RINGS.

CHEAP SUIT

Nem igaz. Most? Bistos? Azzonal.

He hangs up and tosses Charlie's passport on the table.

CHEAP SUIT (cont'd)

Go to your plane or you will be detained more seriously.

CHARLIE

That's it?

CHEAP SUIT

There is a gypsy uprising in the car park. Lucky for you.

Cheap Suit heads out, taking the hat.

CHARLIE

What about the daughter?

CHEAP SUIT
Zotlán! Gyere már!

The OFFICIAL comes out of an office. Cheap Suit hands him the hat, saying something. Charlie jumps to his feet.

CHARLIE
 He's the fucker who--

CHEAP SUIT
 (to official)
See him to his plane. Make sure he gets on it.

EXT. TARMAC - DAY

Charlie climbs into a crappy commuter jet. He looks back. The official is on the tarmac, holding the hat.

CHARLIE
 Better give it to her, pal!

The official gives Charlie THE FINGER.

IN THE PLANE

Passengers file in. Charlie is in his seat. He notices something off in the distance, at the terminal.

We SWITCH TO HIS POV: it's an AMBULANCE. Two EMTs load a gurney into the back, a body laid on it. A WOMAN is there.

The official is still outside. Charlie knocks on the window, gesturing to the ambulance. The official gives Charlie ANOTHER FINGER. He's about to explode. He closes his eyes.

IN BLACKNESS

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
 You must do it, dahlinge. Wake yourself up and god damn do it!

The SOUNDS of running, frantic breathing.

SMASH TO:

THE TARMAC

With Charlie. He's racing like mad toward the ambulance. He's got the hat. In the background, the OFFICIAL struggles to his feet, grabbing for his WALKIE-TALKIE.

AT THE AMBULANCE

The EMTs and the woman hear YELLING. They turn to find Charlie racing toward them, waving the hat.

CHARLIE

Approaching the ambulance, calling to the woman:

CHARLIE
Istvan's daughter! Your father got
you this funny hat in Chicago!

The woman is confused. Charlie reaches the gurney. He stops. It holds an ALIVE GUY, his leg wrapped and elevated.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
You're not Ist--

BAM!--he's KNOCKED OUT OF THE FRAME. Tackled by a GUARD.

INT. LONG CORRIDOR - DAY

Charlie is handcuffed, getting pulled along by guards. The official walks out in front. Down the hall, CHEAP SUIT steps out of an office. He's covered in something red and sticky.

CHEAP SUIT
Put him with the gypsies.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL
You have some kind of shit on you.

CHEAP SUIT
Fucking gypsies.

INT. HOLDING CELL - DAY

Charlie sits amid a ragtag group of dark-skinned, brightly-dressed people. An OLD MAN is next to him, staring. He's wearing PINK EYEGLASSES. They have a BARBIE LOGO on them.

CHARLIE
How'd the uprising go?

The old man begins talking animatedly. Charlie listens.

LATER

A YOUNG MAN plays GUITAR, singing a tune of gypsy heartache. KIDS dance with WOMEN. Charlie claps along with the crowd.

THEN

Charlie listens. The old man in pink glasses is talking again. The DOOR opens. Cheap Suit motions for Charlie.

CHARLIE
 Pardon me, Ilya.
 (to Cheap Suit)
 What about these people? None of us
 are free until all of us are free.
 (to gypsies)
 Right?

The gypsies laugh: don't-be-ridiculous! WHAP! A TOMATO smashes into Cheap Suit's chest.

IN THE CORRIDOR

Cheap Suit opens the door to a room. Charlie looks in. A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN is standing there holding the FUNNY HAT. It is GABI, the *femme fatale* from the beginning, though right now she looks more like a girl who's father just died.

Charlie's face flushes and he gasps at her beauty.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
 This is how it happens, ladies and
 gentleman. One moment, nobody is
 your anything. Then boom!
 Somebody becomes your everything.

She smiles as best she can at Charlie. His mouth is open. She offers her hand. He grabs it like a lifeline.

GABI
Jo nápot kívánok. Banyai
Gabriella, vagyók.

CHARLIE
 Hello. I'm Charlie Countryman.
 Er, Countryman Charlie.

He holds her hand for too long. His whole being is alight.

GABI
 You have gone to so much trouble
 for my father and this funny hat.

CHARLIE
 No trouble at all.

GABI
 I want to ask, how did he...what
 happened, with my father?

CHARLIE

He fell asleep. And he just, um, he didn't wake up.

GABI

You are sure? There was no pain?

CHARLIE

No. He was asleep, on me. Here. You can almost see -- it's drool. I would have known, you know?

GABI

Okay. I see. Okay.

CHARLIE

He asked me to tell you something.

GABI

I don't understand, he asked you. How could he know we would meet?

CHEAP SUIT

That's what I said! It makes no sense!

CHARLIE

What I mean is, he said something. Maybe you'd like to hear it.

GABI

Please.

CHARLIE

He said you're his...a-desh em, um--

CHEAP SUIT

Édesem lány?

CHARLIE

That's it.

This lands on Gabi. She struggles to keep it together. Charlie gestures to Cheap Suit: what's it mean?

CHEAP SUIT

Candy child of my own.

CHARLIE

Are you sure?

Gabi looks at the hat. A TEARDROP slides down her cheek. It drops off her chin. Charlie CATCHES IT in the palm of his hand. Rightly, they consider this odd.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
I'm sorry about your father...

GABI
Gabi.

CHARLIE
Gabi. I'm sorry, Gabi.

She nods and GOES OUT. Cheap Suit follows her. We hear them talking. Something's wrong with Charlie. He looks dazed.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Gabi.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
The name in the song of the dream,
it echoes in the space of his heart.

CHARLIE
Gabi. Gabi, Gabi. Gabi.

He hears a THROAT CLEARING. He turns. Gabi is back.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Oh hey. Gabi. I was just...saying
your name.

She moves in close to him, right up under his chin.

GABI
Please. Would you allow me?

Charlie gulps. Gabi takes his arms and wraps herself in them. She closes her eyes and inhales from the place on his shirt where her father died. She pulls back.

GABI (cont'd)
Okay. Thank you, Charlie.

IN THE CORRIDOR

Gabi walks away.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
Gabi!

Charlie is coming after her, SHIRTLESS. She is confused. He offers his shirt. She hesitates.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
It's okay. I brought others.

She smiles and takes the shirt.

EXT. FERIHEGY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Doors slide open. Charlie is pushed out. He's still shirtless. Cheap Suit directs a GUARD to toss Charlie's bag out. Charlie stands there at a loss, for a while. He opens his bag and grabs a SHIRT. He sees a TAXI STAND.

IN A TAXI

Charlie sits in the back of an old Lada. The DRIVER is smoking West™ cigarettes. He offers one. Charlie declines.

TAXI DRIVER

Where to?

CHARLIE

If you just asked me where to -- good question. There a youth hostel or something?

TAXI DRIVER

You look like a guy who doesn't know where to go. Maybe I'll take you to the youth hostel. Okay?

CHARLIE

Okay.

EXT. TAXI - HIGHWAY - DAY

The smoking driver notices a car pulled over on the shoulder. It's a TRABANT -- a tiny robin's-egg-blue CAR -- with a CELLO strapped to its roof. A CRYING WOMAN is behind the wheel.

TAXI DRIVER

Poor thing. I'd stop, but a crying woman often gives me a hard-on.

Charlie sees that it's Gabi. She is crying into his shirt.

CHARLIE

Pull over!

TAXI DRIVER

I told you, I will get a boner.

CHARLIE

Stop the car, man!

TAXI DRIVER

You are in a love story or something? And boners are not a problem for you?

Charlie opens the door while the taxi is still moving.

ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

Charlie knocks on the window. Gabi rolls it down.

CHARLIE

That a cello on your roof or are
you just happy to see me?

(nothing)

It's a joke. Maybe not here. Sorry.

Gabi SNORTS magnificently, then blows her nose into Charlie's shirt. She pulls it away, realizing.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Please. I'm honored. Are you
okay?

GABI

I meant to follow the van with my
father. But I was crying.

CHARLIE

How long were you crying for?

GABI

I don't know. Time is not itself
when you are crying. You know?

CHARLIE

I bet we can catch it.

GABI

Never mind. I will just--

CHARLIE

No! You followed the van for a
reason. This is a critical time
for you. You've got to follow
through on this stuff. Trust me.

GABI

I don't know you.

CHARLIE

You know what my favorite baseball
team is, a). And b) you know that I
am pale and virtually hairless.

(off her confusion)

You saw before, without my shirt?

She stares at him.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I think I'm nervous.

EXT. M1 HIGHWAY - DAY

Charlie drives the Trabi through traffic.

CHARLIE

I had a car like this when I was five. Mine had a clapping monkey on top, but it was otherwise similar.

GABI

When do you become not nervous, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Soon. Now.

INSIDE

They're looking for the van. Neither speaks for a while, until Charlie can't not.

CHARLIE

So, you play the cello.

GABI

No.

CHARLIE

No?

GABI

What gave you that idea?

Charlie looks up to the roof.

GABI (cont'd)

Maybe you imagined it. Maybe you have some kind of fantasy about coming to the aid of a sad woman in a far away land? A sad woman who happens to play the cello?

Now Charlie stares at her.

GABI (cont'd)

Now I am making a joke. You do not understand?

CHARLIE

Sort of. Not really.

GABI

The joke is to imply that you are making this up in your mind.

(MORE)

GABI (cont'd)
 Because I am pretty, I'm
 vulnerable, I play the cello --
 it's a boy's dream, no?

CHARLIE
 You're pretty, I guess. If you like
 an otherworldly type of prettiness,
 which for me the jury is still out
 on. And anyway, I prefer the tuba.

Suddenly, Gabi's face falls. The VAN is just ahead of them.
 Charlie sees it too.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
 I'm sorry, Gabi. We should just--

GABI
 I play cello in the orchestra of
 the Budapest Opera House. My
 father was my teacher. From the
 time I was a little girl. This
 explains the cello, no?

CHARLIE
 Yes.

GABI
 Okay.

INT. MORTUARY VAN - DAY

In the cargo hold, Istvan's BODY is laid out in a white bag.
 SMOKE clouds the air. We MOVE through it, up to the front.
 Two GUYS are there, PÉTER and PÁL. Péter drives, Pál smokes
 from a HASH PIPE. They're both fucked up.

PÉTER
Taste familiar?
 (Pál shrugs)
Search your mind. You know this
taste. It is a taste you love.

PÁL
It tastes like hash. I love hash.

PÉTER
You don't sense an extra element?
A certain pungency which makes you
feel sentimental?

PÁL
I don't know. It's fucking hash.

PÉTER

*Hash that I brought from Slovenia
in my asshole.*

(Pál gags)

*Now you recognize it? The taste of
your mother's kiss after she has
spent the day licking my asshole?*

Pál takes out his CELL and pretends to dial.

PÁL

*Hello, Mom. Please stop licking
the assholes of my friends all day.
It's so embarrassing for me.*

Péter's laughing, too fucking high. He grabs for the pipe...AND THE VAN VEERS WILDLY TO THE RIGHT.

OUT ON THE HIGHWAY

Charlie and Gabi drive along. And suddenly...

THE VAN FLIES IN FRONT OF THEM, flipping over and over.

Charlie STOMPS the brakes. THUNK! Something heavy and white bounces across the hood.

The Trabant spins into traffic. Cars screech around it.

Charlie skids to a stop. The VAN creeks onto its side, PÉTER and PÁL are tangled up in the wreckage. Bloody and dead. Dust settles, quiet spreads. Charlie and Gabi sit there stunned. Gabi sees something.

GABI

Ápu?

Dazed, she gets out. Charlie sees what she's looking at: in the road, hanging out of the white bag, is ISTVAN'S BODY. Gabi walks into the road. Charlie leaps out of the car.

CHARLIE

Gabi, don't!

He grabs her and turns her away.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Don't. Please. You can't--

SMASH--she punches him in the face. But he won't let her go. SMASH--she punches him again. His mouth is bleeding.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Okay. Okay. Just--

SMASH--again. He takes it. He pulls her in. She SLUGS him in the stomach. Still, he takes it and holds her. She HITS him on the head a couple of times. He holds her.

WIDER

From afar, amid the horrible mess, we see Gabi begin to sob, her body heaving. Charlie holds to her as she drops to the pavement. He sits with her, cradling her in the aftermath.

LATER

Istvan's body is in an AMBULANCE. Gabi sits with it, dazed. Charlie stands outside, helpless. An EMT closes the doors.

Gabi looks at Charlie through the window, blank-faced and empty-eyed. The ambulance pulls away. Charlie waves.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
What does the world mean, dahlinge,
when it conspires to keep lovers
apart and their hearts at bay?

Charlie looks around. Cops and ambulances. A TV NEWS TRUCK. Flares and slow-moving traffic. Charlie looks in his hand. A set of KEYS with a TOY CELLO dangling from them.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
It means for to us to prove we are
worthy, that it is love we deserve.

AT THE TRABANT

Charlie rummages through Gabi's bag. He finds a cell phone. He checks it -- a picture of Istvan smiling. Then he finds a HANDGUN -- a silver nub nose .45. The handle is ENGRAVED in small type. Charlie reads:

CHARLIE
For Gabi. Should Cupid with his
arrow ever again appear...
(flips to other side)
...do blow his brains out because
you are my dear. Love Nigel.

Charlie puts the gun back in the bag. He opens the glove-box. He finds an old OPERA PROGRAM.

EXT. OUTER BUDAPEST - DAY

The Trabant passes endless arrays of Eastern Bloc apartment buildings. Charlie is behind the wheel looking dumbstruck.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Charlie pays for a MAP with a credit card.

CHARLIE
You speak English?

COUNTER GUY
No.

CHARLIE
You don't speak English?

COUNTER GUY
Not really.

CHARLIE
That's English.

COUNTER GUY
If you say so.

CHARLIE
Let me ask you this -- can you show
me how to get to the Opera House?

COUNTER GUY
No.

CHARLIE
Dude, I'm not in the mood. Really.

COUNTER
I'm sorry. I don't understand you.

CHARLIE
Wait here.

COUNTER GUY
Okay.

Charlie goes out.

THEN

He comes back in. He sticks the GUN in Counter Guy's face.

CHARLIE
Hey, I was wondering: do you speak
English?

EXT. BUDAPEST - DAY

Charlie drives. Nearing the city center.

ELSEWHERE

The Trabant passes City Park, and Heroes Square, then turns onto the city's most glorious street -- Andrassy.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY

A magnificent beaux-arts building. Charlie parks the Trabant.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY

Charlie enters carrying the CELLO and Gabi's BAG. A GUY in a BERET walks in behind him. He's got a CELLO.

UPSTAIRS

Beret walks down a hallway, enters a room. Charlie shadows.

AT THE ROOM

Charlie opens the door. An audition hall. Several CELLISTS sit against the wall. A few MEN AND WOMEN sit at a long table. A lone CELLIST plays for them. An AID sees Charlie.

AID
You're late. Take a seat.

CHARLIE
Uh, I'm not--

A pinch-faced MAN quiets them:

MAN
SILENCE, GOD DAMN IT!!

His voice echoes. The room is still. All eyes on Charlie.

CHARLIE
I'm, uh, a friend of Gabriella Baynai's. Banyai Gabriella's. Does anyone know--

Suddenly, the BEE-GEES' JIVE TALKIN' begins playing. It's coming from the bag. Charlie grabs around inside.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Hold on. This might be...

He pulls something out...it's THE GUN. People gasp and shrink back. A couple of judges dive under the table.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Sorry.
(finding phone)
Hello, Gabi's phone.

INTERCUT WITH: Gabi on the pay phone, at a HOSPITAL.

GABI

Charlie, this is me, Gabi. Where are you?

CHARLIE

At the Opera House. I've got your cello and your car.

GABI

And my gun, Charlie?

CHARLIE

And your gun, by the way. What's up with that?!

GABI

I overheard the police. There was an incident at a petrol station?

CHARLIE

Incident? Maybe. What'd they say?

GABI

An American in a Trabant with a cello on top used a gun to ask for directions to the Opera House.

CHARLIE

Shit. Yeah. That was me.

GABI

You realize they do not need Columbo to find such a person, Charlie. Yes?

CHARLIE

You know Columbo? I love Columbo. We actually have a lot in common.

GABI

Where exactly are you now, Charlie?

CHARLIE

I think I'm about to audition.

GABI

Do you see a loud man who looks like his face is in pain?

Charlie looks at the MAN who yelled. He's now enraged.

CHARLIE

I see him.

GABI
Give him the phone.

Charlie walks to BÉLA. Charlie hands him the phone. He listens. Then hangs up and looks at Charlie.

CHARLIE
You hung up.

BÉLA
Never mind. Come now, please.

CHARLIE
But--

BÉLA
IF YOU GOD DAMN PLEASE!

Béla heads out. Charlie follows, carrying Gabi's bag and cello, asking the other cellists a simple question.

CHARLIE
How many assholes can a guy meet in a day? There must be a limit, right?

IN AN OFFICE

Béla is on the phone. Charlie waits. Béla hangs up.

CHARLIE
I don't think we've been properly--

BÉLA
Never mind. Come.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE STEPS - DAY

Charlie stands there as Béla lights a cigarette.

CHARLIE
Guess I'll be going. Thanks for everything.

A COP CAR pulls up. Béla starts down the steps.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
That's the police. I can't--

BÉLA
Never mind.

CHARLIE
Stop saying that!

TWO COPS get out. Béla waves at them.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Why are you waving at them?

BÉLA
It has all been arranged.

CHARLIE
Arranged? What has?

The cops come. One draws his GUN, the other his HANDCUFFS.

COP
DOWN ON THE GROUND, SCUMBAG! NOW!

CHARLIE
What, what?! What is he saying?!

BÉLA
He is saying get down you...what is the word...soiled prophylactic?

CHARLIE
Soiled prophyl--

The cops SLAM Charlie down and cuff him.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Wait! Fuck! Whoa!

BÉLA
We made an arrangement. You will go for one night to jail and thus will have no further problem with the petrol station incident.

CHARLIE
That makes no sense! You can't--

BÉLA
NEVER MIND! Okay? We pulled many strings to make this arrangement occur. Now you must go to jail like a good boy. Okay?

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Charlie sleeps on a bench in a holding tank. A DRUNK GUY is comparing his shoe size to Charlie's.

LATER

Charlie is awakened by group of GYPSIES being herded in. He sits up. A BIG GYPSY sits next to him.

CHARLIE
You hear about the uprising? Out
at the airport?
(then)
You smell something?

Charlie looks down at his own feet. He's wearing a pair of vinyl LOAFERS covered in puke and god knows what. Charlie sees the DRUNK GUY passed out in a heap, wearing his shoes.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Hey! Dude! Yo!

The drunk stirs awake. He smiles at Charlie. Busted.

DRUNK
Okay. Okay.

He struggles to his feet. He tries to take off the shoes. He falls three times. Finally, he holds them out.

DRUNK (cont'd)
Okay?

Charlie reaches for the shoes, but the drunk PUKES VOLUMINOUSLY INTO THEM.

MORNING

The door opens. Charlie awakens. A GUARD motions to him.

GUARD
Jó reggelt, amerikai. Gyere.

INT. JAIL - DAY

Charlie is being processed out. An OFFICIAL stamps a bunch of papers and hands Charlie his passport.

OFFICIAL
Hello.

Charlie is confused.

GABI (O.S.)
He means goodbye.

Gabi is there. A look of dumb happiness settles on his face.

GABI (cont'd)
In Hungarian it's the same word for hello and goodbye. People think it is true for English. Hello, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Hello, Gabi.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Gabi and Charlie walk. Charlie has his face turned up to the sun. The picture of contentment.

GABI
I must explain what happened with
Béla. I am sure you are confused.

CHARLIE
Nah. It's okay. I feel good.

GABI
He is very good at helping with
situations. It could have been
worse for you, believe me.

CHARLIE
What about you? Are you okay? I
mean, with everything.

GABI
I am okay. Thank you for asking.
What is this terrible smell?

CHARLIE
Oh, yeah. Sorry.

He KICKS his shoes off into the far distance.

GABI
I think you are in shock.

CHARLIE
You eat breakfast, Gabi? I don't
usually, but today, man, I could.

GABI
Okay, Charlie. I don't usually
also, but today, yes, I would.

CHARLIE
Nice. You pick the place.

INT. GABI'S FLAT - DAY

Gabi is setting out breakfast. Charlie is taking a shower.

THEN

Gabi wears a dress now, looking lovely. Charlie's still in the shower. Gabi reaches high into a closet. She pulls down a pair of DUSTY MEN'S SHOES. She blows on them enigmatically.

SOON

Gabi knocks at the bathroom. Nothing. She opens the door.

GABI

I am sorry, Charlie, I must go now.

(nothing)

Charlie?

She peeks around the curtain. Charlie is lying down in the tub, asleep in the fetal position. Gabi shuts off the water. She smooths his hair away from his eyes. She looks down his body. Not bad. She covers him with a towel and goes out.

LATER

Charlie is wrapped in the towel, looking for Gabi in the flat. He finds the breakfast and a NOTE in the KITCHEN.

GABI'S VOICE

Dear, Charlie. I hope you are not too wrinkled from the water.

Charlie sees a NEWSPAPER. There is a STORY about Istvan's accident, and a sidebar article about the man himself.

GABI'S VOICE (cont'd)

I went to work. We will perform today in honor of my father.

Charlie picks up a TICKET.

GABI'S VOICE (cont'd)

You should come if you have no other plans.

IN THE BEDROOM: Charlie finds his bag. The SHOES are next to it, all cleaned up.

GABI'S VOICE (cont'd)

I found some shoes for you. I think they will fit with your foot.

Charlie is at Gabi's dresser. He opens a drawer. He finds a pair of her PANTIES. He inhales. Who wouldn't?

GABI'S VOICE (cont'd)
I want to say, I think you are a
sweet person, Charlie. I don't
know why I think this, but I do.

He sees HIS SHIRT neatly folded amid her underwear. He grins like a baby.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Charlie walks along in the shoes, appreciating how they fit. He reaches the steps of the Opera House.

GABI'S VOICE
I hope you will come today. I
think you have not had fun so far
in Budapest. Perhaps the opera
will cheer you up.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - MAIN AUDITORIUM

Charlie is in his seat. He's watching a production of CARMEN.

GABI'S VOICE
Ha ha. This is a joke. Because it
is Carmen. See you soon. Gabi.

Charlie looks down at the PLAYERS. He locates GABI, playing her cello. Her eyes are closed, and tears stream down her face, the pain washing over her.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
How do we know when it is love we
are in, dahlinge? When we can see
the world through another's eyes.

Charlie can't help but cry a little himself.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
When we can feel it through her heart.

THEN

Lovelorn DON JOSÉ is begging at the feet of the mysterious gypsy, CARMEN. But all Charlie can do is watch Gabi. Eventually, she glances up at him, and we...

SWITCH

TO A MYSTERIOUS POV: watching Gabi through BINOCULARS as she looks up into the crowd. She smiles slightly and shrugs.

Suddenly, our POV SHIFTS, and the binoculars sweep across the crowd, following the line of Gabi's gaze. Soon, we find CHARLIE. He waves at Gabi. And we...

REVERSE

To find a MAN looking through a pair of OPERA GLASSES. He lowers them. It is the KNIFE-FACED MAN from the opening scene. This is NIGEL.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
Of course the boy would like to
believe his beloved was born upon
their meeting. She was not.

Nigel's got the bottomless stare and the deep scars of a feral animal. He could be 34, he could be 56. It doesn't matter. All that matters is how evil he is, which is very.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
Like so many of us here, the girl
brings to love a troubled past, a
darkness of history.

We PULL BACK to find that the opera glasses are attached to the neck of a very frightened OLD MAN. He's being pulled out of his seat, choking on the chain. Nigel drops the glasses.

NIGEL
Cheers, mate.

Nigel gets up and leaves. Eyeing Charlie all the while.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
And so clouds do gather, dahlinge.

INT. OPERA HOUSE DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Gabi wearily puts her cello into its case. A WOMAN approaches.

WOMAN
A man is here to see you, Gabika.

CORRIDOR

Gabi comes out expecting to see Charlie, but it's...

GABI
Nigel.

NIGEL smiles a crooked smile. His eyes are more alive with sex and violence than any we've probably ever seen.

NIGEL
Hallo, gorgeous.

The hair on the back of Gabi's neck stands on end. Nigel runs his fingers through it, across her jawline, to her lips.

NIGEL (cont'd)
Good to see you as well, baby.

GABI
What are you doing here, Nigel?

NIGEL
Partaking of the arts. Care of the
soul and all that. What else?

GABI
It's just, I did not realize you
were back.

NIGEL
I wasn't. Til now.

GABI
Why are you here?

NIGEL
I just said why.

GABI
To see Carmen.

NIGEL
Yes, Carmen. The sad fucking cow.

Beyond Nigel, Gabi sees CHARLIE enter the corridor. She
subtly shakes her head, begging him off. Nigel notices.

NIGEL (cont'd)
Who's this, then?

GABI
Nobody. I want you to go, Nigel.

NIGEL
You're nobody, mate? Is that a
possible thing for one to be?

CHARLIE
Who are you?

NIGEL
Hold on, son. Have another go.
(Charlie is confused)
I need you to re-pose question,
minus a hundred percent of that
tone you took.

CHARLIE
Are you serious?

NIGEL
I am utterly.

GABI
Nigel, don't--

NIGEL
Let's go, boy-o. "Who are you?"
(Charlie gulps)
Don't piss yourself. Simply ask
who I am again.

Gabi's eyes implore Charlie to ask. He flattens his voice.

CHARLIE
Who...are...you...

NIGEL
Good. All robot like. Zero tone
detected. I'm Nigel. Who the fuck
are you? Besides nobody which is by
now well and truly established.

CHARLIE
My name is Charlie.

NIGEL
Hallo, Charlie. Who the fuck is
Charlie, Gabi?

GABI
Charlie is an American...tuba
player. Here to observe the
company. He is homosexual.

This characterization surprises Charlie.

NIGEL
Is he now? Must make you quite the
star cocksucker. Eh, Charlie?

GABI
Nigel, please, what do you want?

NIGEL
I heard about Old Istvan's
spectacularly horrible passing,
love. Came back to pay my respects,
such as they are.

GABI
I don't understand. It happened
yesterday. How could you have
heard?

NIGEL

You know me -- always an ear to the ground and an eye in the sky when it comes to the disposition of my darling Gabi, my truest love.

Gabi looks sick. Charlie tries to help:

CHARLIE

So you guys, ah, how do you...

GABI

Nigel was my husband, Charlie.

NIGEL

I beg your pardon, Gabi. Did you say was? Honestly? Fucking was? No, Gabi, no, Charlie. Not fucking was. Fucking is. Fucking meaning I currently fucking am. Til death do us fucking part.

Everything is still. Like after a tornado.

GABI

Charlie, I need to speak with Nigel. Perhaps you should go.

NIGEL

That's right, Charlie. Time to fuck off. But minus the shoes, yeah?
(shoes?)

The ones on your feet, you dim cunt. They belong to me.

Charlie looks down at what are evidently Nigel's shoes.

NIGEL (cont'd)

I'm devastated you'd let another man wear my shoes, Gabi. Even one as woeful and homosexual as Charlie.

CHARLIE

Hey, man, what's your--

CLICK--Nigel's got his hand in his pocket.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Did your pants click?

Nigel smiles a soul-freezing smile.

GABI

Please, Charlie, go.

Charlie can see that Gabi is scared. He removes the shoes.

GABI (cont'd)
 Someone at the Marco Polo Youth
 Hostel will have some shoes you can
 borrow. Yes?
 (no clue)
 The Marco Polo -- where you are
 staying?

AT THE STAIRS

Charlie looks back. Gabi's eyes are closed and Nigel is tenderly brushing his hand against Gabi's cheek. She makes no move away from his touch. Charlie turns to go, confused.

Gabi opens her eyes. They are full of fear. But when she sees Charlie's shoeless feet disappear up the stairs, she exhales a little.

INT. HOSTEL - EVENING

A bright, clean place with TRAVEL-KIDS of various nationalities wandering in and out. Charlie hands his passport to a CLERK. The clerk hands Charlie a key.

CLERK
 Top floor, my man. Enjoy your time.

CHARLIE
 Thank you for not being an asshole.

CLERK
 Thank you. For not being an
 asshole also.

INT. TOP FLOOR - HOSTEL - EVENING

Charlie steps out of the tiny elevator. He finds his room. He knocks. The door opens. It's a SMALL GUY with a MAPLE LEAF on his sweatshirt. His name's LUC.

LUC
 What's up, bro? Come on in.

INSIDE

Charlie enters. There is a LANKY GUY in a BLACK SUIT reclining on a bunk. This is KARL. He's German.

KARL
 Hi, man. Welcome. Your bed is
 that one. I am Karl. That's Luc.
 He's Canadian.

CHARLIE
Charlie. Good to meet you guys.

LUC
Just get here, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Yeah, today. No. Yesterday.

LUC
It's awesome, right? The people?
With their hugeness of spirit?

KARL
What you are hearing, Charlie?
It's what a Canadian sounds like.

Karl pulls a pair of SHOES from under his bunk.

KARL (cont'd)
Please. They are extra.

Charlie puts them on. Size 14 dress shoes.

LUC
We were going to get some beers,
maybe do some E. You up for it?

Charlie looks at Karl, who shrugs.

KARL
It is this aspect of a Canadian
which makes him tolerable, in my
opinion.

INT. BASEMENT PUB - HOSTEL - NIGHT

Karl and Charlie sit at a table in the cave-like space.

CHARLIE
I like your suit, Karl. Sharp.

KARL
Thanks, man. Big interview this
week. The suit enables me to pre-
visualize.

Luc approaches with three giant GLASSES OF BEER and sets them
down. Charlie grabs his and begins chugging.

LUC
Charlie, did Karl tell you he's
auditioning to become a porn actor?

KARL

Porn star. We don't say porn actor.

CHARLIE

That's your interview?

KARL

I am trying to find out what color my parachute is, Charlie.

LUC

You should see his penis!

(then)

I saw it. Up in the room.

KARL

Accidentally.

LUC

Yeah, obviously, accidentally.

What about you, Charlie?

CHARLIE

It's okay, I guess. Not freakish or anything.

LUC

No, what brings you to Budapest?

Charlie takes a drink and looks at the beer, as if something is off about it. Luc notices and WINKS at Karl.

CHARLIE

Well, I'm really supposed to be in Bucharest but this guy Istvan died next to me on the plane and then I got arrested trying to give his daughter a gift he brought home for her and it turns out she might be the coolest most beautiful woman I have ever seen anywhere. In person, on TV, the internet -- anywhere.

LUC

Dude, Bucharest?

KARL

Fucking Bucharest?

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Her name is Gabi. Gabriella. She plays cello. Your heart stops just looking at her and your ears and stomach go warm when she talks. I've never chosen before. I've got so much fear. But her, I'd choose. I do choose. Her.

LUC
Sounds magical.

KARL
Describe her titties.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
But it's complicated. Not only did
her father die on the plane, he was
also in a horrible car accident,
and I myself went to airport jail
and also real jail. I feel weird.

Karl shoots Luc a look. Luc smiles and shrugs.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Anyway, in addition to and on top of
all of this, there's this husband
character who looks like he could
chase down a lion, fuck it, eat it,
do basically whatever he wanted to
it. Total badass motherfucker. But
I feel like I think I already love
her. Which is fucked, I know.

Luc is giggling.

KARL
Charlie, how do you feel at this
time?

CHARLIE
As I mentioned above, weird. But
also strong. Alive. I feel brand
new in the world. I want to find
her. Posses her. Tell her that I
feel what she feels, that I can see
what she sees. You know, inside.

Luc can't keep a straight face.

KARL
You should be made aware, Charlie,
that Luc put ecstasy in your beer.

CHARLIE
He did? You did?

LUC
It's okay, bro. Mine and Karl's
are laced too.

Charlie looks around. EVERYONE IN THE BAR IS NAKED.

CHARLIE
Is everyone in here naked right now?

LUC
If we want them to be. Who among
us would like everyone in here to
be naked right now?

Charlie and Karl raise their hands. So does Luc.

LUC (cont'd)
Sweet.

LATER

Charlie's at the bar, smiling at the NAKED bartenders -- one buff GUY, one tattooed GIRL. The guy brings three beers.

CHARLIE
You guys look good. What you're
doing? Seriously, keep doing it.

Charlie delivers the beers. He hears the SOUND OF A CHOIR.
At the door, LIGHT IS STREAMING IN, and GABI is there.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Is she real? Can you see her?

Charlie stands. Gabi sees him. She smiles. He smiles.

LUC
Can we ever really see anyone?

KARL
Can we vote her clothes off?

Charlie weightlessly BOUNDS ACROSS TABLE-TOPS, SOARING OVER
PEOPLE to reach her. She doesn't notice because really it's
just the drugs. She's got Charlie's BAG.

CHARLIE
I said I like the tuba. Which isn't
even true. I love you. Which makes
me gay how exactly?

GABI
Excuse me?

CHARLIE
What did I say?

GABI
What is wrong with you?

CHARLIE
Let's go for a walk. With food as
our secondary objective. Romance
being the primary.

GABI
You are on drugs?

CHARLIE
Agreed. See that little-ish
Canadian person with the well-
dressed German fellow whose shoes I
now inhabit? He put ecstasy in my
beer. Not in a mean way. I think
he's a good person. A Canadian
person. Oh my god, your father
died. I am so sorry. Istvan.
What a guy he seemed like.
Remember how your tear landed in my
hand? That means something.
Everything. I know it.

GABI
I brought your bag.

CHARLIE
I want to make a list of all the ways
in which I am hopeful for my future
because you brought my bag.
(to the room)
Anyone have a pen?

She watches him as he searches his pockets for a pen. His
face is so open and sweet. She makes a choice.

GABI
You are hungry, Charlie? Perhaps
more so after all this talking?

CHARLIE
Yes, Gabi. Gabi. I am hungry.
Hungry in Hungary. How many times
has that been said? More than a
million, I bet. At least.

EXT. RÁKÓCZI ÚT - NIGHT

Gabi and Charlie stroll along the half-beautiful, half-tacky
commercial thoroughfare.

GABI
What would you like to eat? There
is Taco Bell/Pizza Hut Express.

CHARLIE
I can't believe you're already
married. This changes everything.
Not my feelings. But still!

Gabi can't help but laugh.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
I need to fight him. Nigel. What a dick. Why give you a gun? I'd give you a kiss. Period.

GABI
Can you tell me, Charlie, is it the drugs you are on or did you really not grasp that he is dangerous?

CHARLIE
I grasp-ed it, Gabi. I guess I don't want to be out here under the stars with you thinking about you being married, especially to Nigel. I'm sorry. I can't even comprehend the prettiness on your face right now. I'm trying not to float away. Which reminds me, I don't have your cell number, in case we get separated. Not that mine works here in the world due to I forgot to call my service provider. Bad idea in a new relationship, to not be accessible. What was the question?

She pulls her shirt up, revealing CIGARETTE BURNS scarred around her belly-button in the shape of a HEART.

GABI
I got this for my twenty-first birthday. Because I invited my friend Eszter to dinner. Nigel is a smoker.

Charlie touches the scar, speechless. She takes his hand and puts it to her temple.

GABI (cont'd)
You feel it? Like a hole? From the phone smashing my head because I was talking on it.

She moves his hand to her ribs.

GABI (cont'd)
There, the bumpy parts? A table leg against my ribs because a man gave me his seat on the metro.
(releasing his hand)
Your hand on me, Charlie, it could get you killed. I promise.

Reflexively, he pulls his hand away. Gabi SCREAMS in frustration. ALL THE LIGHTS EVERYWHERE GO OUT. Charlie gasps, the sight of her face in the moonlight.

GABI (cont'd)
What am I supposed to do? I've got
to bury my father, you know?

A single NEON SIGN SNAPS BACK ON. It says KISS HER.

CHARLIE
Too soon!

Gabi looks at him. All the lights COME BACK ON.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
To be worried. It will be okay.

GABI
You talk about a list of hopes for
your life. There is no list for
me. My father is gone and Nigel is
back. I have nothing to list and
nothing to give anyone. Okay?

Charlie sees a passing BUS. The AD on it shows CHARLIE,
DRESSED IN TUX, LIGHTING A CIGARETTE FOR GABI.

CHARLIE
A hero will rise, Gabi. And he is
me. You will see.

GABI
You are a tourist on drugs.

CHARLIE
Which might enable me to go into
your mind and press on the parts of
your brain that'd give you all the
hope in the world. Or perhaps I
now have the strength to throw you
into space where you'll have time
to orbit around and find some peace
on earth.

She laughs. Charlie sees a BILLBOARD: GABI, WEARING AN
APRON, WAGGING HER FINGER AT A LITTLE BOY WHO IS COVERED IN
SPAGHETTI. CHARLIE.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Can I say something to you, Gabi?
Not about Nigel because he freaks
my shit out, but about the other
stuff, your father and all.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)
(Gabi waits)
I understand.

GABI
Yes?

CHARLIE
That's all.

GABI
What do you understand?

CHARLIE
It.

GABI
Maybe you will explain it to me.

CHARLIE
There is no explanation. It is just hard. You know? To lose someone who is your home. Your only home in the world. You think, Jesus Fucking Christ, I'm all alone now. How did it come to this? I should have had a back-up home. Some other person or place or thing to go to, to feel safe. But I don't. Now I'm lost.

GABI
"Now I'm lost." The end? You cannot do better than this?

She's crying. Charlie looks for another sign. No luck.

CHARLIE
That's it, as I understand it. At this point. It's a process.

GABI
This is the thinking of a child. Now I am not lost. Now I am angry. My father died alone on an airplane. His body was thrown onto my car in traffic. I am too angry to feel lost. All I feel is angry.
(then)
There is KFC. I want KFC.

INT. KFC - NIGHT

Charlie and Gabi eat.

CHARLIE
You're going to need a different
memory.

GABI
What?

CHARLIE
Of your father. You can't have a bad
memory. You'll be stuck with it.
(off her dubious look)
What's the one you have? First
thing you think of?

FLASH TO:

EXT. M1 HIGHWAY - DAY

Istvan's BODY bounces across the hood of Gabi's car.

BACK TO SCENE

Her look of horror.

CHARLIE
You need to change it.

GABI
How?

CHARLIE
Think of something else.

FLASH TO:

EXT. M1 HIGHWAY - DAY

Istvan's BODY bounces across the hood of Gabi's car.

BACK TO KFC

GABI
Still there.

CHARLIE
It's hard.

FLASH THROUGH:

A SERIES OF IMAGES

- Young Istvan dances with Gabi's MOM in pool of light.
- Istvan drinks *Unicum* with his drunk musician friends.

- Istvan conducts an orchestra, his hair high and wild.
- Istvan watches the Cubs on WGN, TV Superstation.
- Istvan sits in a crowd watching young Gabi play solo cello.

BACK TO KFC

Tears fill Gabi's eyes.

GABI
So many.

CHARLIE
Pick one. One good enough to keep
the bad one unstuck.

FLASH TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Istvan sits in the BUBBLE BATH. He's got his eyes closed.
He's humming loudly, maniacally wielding an ORCHESTRA BATON.

BACK TO KFC

Gabi laughs. So does Charlie.

CHARLIE
Good?

GABI
Yes.

CHARLIE
See?

GABI
The wisdom of a child. Thank you,
Charlie.

Charlie beams, but Gabi's face falls.

CHARLIE
What?

GABI
Now I am lost.

CHARLIE
Yeah. It's a process.

GABI
Tell me I need to go to fucking
Bucharest, I will hit you.

EXT. RÁKÓCZI ÚT - NIGHT

Gabi and Charlie walk.

GABI
Time for goodbye, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Wait. I see a river. We could
walk alongside it. With the
moonlight and everything.

GABI
I'm sorry, Charlie. Like they say,
another time, another place. Right?

CHARLIE
Not right. Who is they? It's this
time, this place. All of this, it
means something. To us.

GABI
Us.

CHARLIE
Two letters, the whole world. All of
the past and future inside them like
an oyster you could live in forever.
How crazy is that? Us, a pearl.

She touches his cheek.

GABI
Goodbye, Charlie.

She walks off. He follows her. She stops. He stops.

CHARLIE
Hey.

GABI
Stay. Okay?

He nods. She walks off. He follows. She stops again.

GABI (cont'd)
Charlie, please.

CHARLIE
I don't know how to do it.

GABI
Do what?

CHARLIE

Let you walk way. I'm sorry.

She's at a loss. Half exasperated, half exhilarated. She stalks up to him. She pulls his ear to her mouth and says in Hungarian:

GABI

*Find me tomorrow and if I am not
crying I will kiss you.*

She pushes him away and walks off. He touches his ear.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

Love has a language all its own,
dahlinge.

Charlie turns to walk back. He can't contain his joy. He begins to RUN. As fast as he can. To nowhere at all. The people, the lights, the world -- all lost in a BLUR. Like in Star Trek when they go warp speed.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

And tonight, for the first time,
when the boy spoke it...

ELSEWHERE

Gabi is smiling like her heart is full.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

...he was heard.

BACK TO SCENE

Charlie runs. Until THWACK--he is HIT BY A TAXI. He TUMBLES over the hood, then SLAMS onto the sidewalk.

Charlie is dazed, tangled in a pile of himself. People stand over him. A MAN leans in. It's the TAXI DRIVER from earlier.

TAXI DRIVER

*Why are you running into the
street? This is part of your love
story? You fucking moron?*

CHARLIE

I think I've got a shot.

Charlie's eyes cloud over and he goes to sleep.

INT. HOSTEL ROOM - DAY

Charlie's asleep on a bloody pillow. Luc jostles him awake.

LUC
Charlie, bro, wake up. You're all
bloody.

CHARLIE
I got hit by a taxi.

LUC
Thank goodness you're alive. We've
got a parallel situation happening
with Karl. Have a look at this.

He pulls Karl in. A BIG ERECTION tents his suit pants.

CHARLIE
Holy shit!

LUC
Went in for his interview this
morning, comes back like this.

KARL
I do not feel well, Charlie.

LUC
One viagra, I told him to take.
Two tops. Karl, tell Charlie how
many viagras you took.

KARL
Five or six?

LUC
Five or six!

KARL
My head has no blood left in it.
I must go to a titty bar.

CHARLIE
You sure not a hospital?

KARL
A titty bar is my only hope.

Charlie touches his head in pain.

CHARLIE
Well, good luck. I'm sure it'll--

LUC
Wait. You're coming with, right,
Charlie? Karl is in crisis!

CHARLIE
I can see that, Luc. Very clearly.
But this girl, I need to--

KARL
Charlie, please, bros before hos.
Also, I might need to be carried.

Charlie reluctantly pulls his shirt on. He winces again.

LUC
Grab a couple vicodin.

Luc tosses him a BAG. Charlie opens it. It's full of drugs.

CHARLIE
They let you travel with this?

LUC
I'm Canadian. Try a B-12 patch.

INT. CLUB DOLCE VITA - DAY

It's nighttime-like. Girl on a pole. A bar. Your basic strip-club. The three guys drink beers.

LATER

Charlie and Luc are half drunk. Karl is getting his lap dance. The dancer is sweating, looking tired and annoyed. We can still see Karl's protrusion.

CHARLIE
Karl looks like Babar.

LUC
I'm worried about the bill. I hear
these places try to scam you.
Secret charges and shit like that.

Suddenly, Karl begins to MOAN. The Dancer jumps off him. Karl closes his eyes and convulses with great violence. Charlie and Luc do THE WAVE.

Karl comes over. He adjusts himself. Greatly relieved.

CHARLIE
Don't you need to clean up?

KARL
QI believe most of my ejaculate
stayed in my scrotum.

CHARLIE
I should go.

He signals the waitress. She brings the bill. Luc checks it. His face becomes ashen. Charlie looks.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Six hundred fifteen thousand.
That's what, a hundred bucks.

Karl grabs the bill. He is ashen too. He calculates.

KARL
Three thousand, what...

LUC
Three thousand ten.

CHARLIE
Three thousand ten what?

LUC
Dollars.

CHARLIE
American dollars?

They look sick. Charlie gets up and goes to the waitress.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Excuse me, our bill seems high.

WAITRESS
You must discuss with the manager.
(then)
Boss! You're on!

A MUSCLY SERBIAN GUY in a track-suit and no shirt comes out. We recognize him. He was on the bridge in the first scene.

DARKO
Hallo, I am Darko.

CHARLIE
Come on. Really?

DARKO
Really. There is a problem?

CHARLIE
Our bill. We had some beers and my friend got a few dances.

Darko takes the bill. He looks it over.

DARKO
I see. Yes. This is correct. Due to your friend shooting his load.

Charlie looks to the exit. Two track-suited bouncers are there -- PEDRAG and BOSKO.

CHARLIE

We don't have that kind of money.

DARKO

Come to my office. Perhaps we can make an agreement.

INT. CLUB OFFICE - DAY

Darko sits behind a desk. Charlie, Luc and Karl are on a couch. The thugs fill the doorway. Two PIT BULLS sleep on the floor. There are PICTURES all over the walls -- strippers and their round tits, gangsters and their Euro-crap Mercedeses.

DARKO

Okay. I need this money.

CHARLIE

Let's make an agreement, then.

DARKO

You pay me this money, I don't fuck you up. Agreed?

KARL

Hey, Darko, he told you, we do not have this kind of money.

DARKO

It is Darko. Perhaps if I put this pen into your asshole and write my name inside, you will remember?

Charlie laughs.

DARKO (cont'd)

Something is funny?

CHARLIE

Darko, come on. You're talking about autographing the inside of someone's asshole. It's funny.

KARL

It would not even help me remember. Who can read inside his asshole?

DARKO

A guy who's head is cut off and stuck up inside it. Okay?

(Karl wonders)

(MORE)

DARKO (cont'd)
Listen to me. Everything I say in
here? It is all possible.

CHARLIE
Can I go ahead and say what we're
all thinking, Darko?
(timing being all)
If you cut off his head and stuck
it up his ass, he'd be dead. You
can't read if you're dead.

Luc and Karl laugh. Darko EXPLODES, swiping all the shit off
his desk. The DOGS wake up, and BARK and SNARL.

DARKO
This is not play time, little
bitches!

CHARLIE
Darko, listen: we're staying at the
youth hostel. We have friends
there. So we're not exactly
invisible. Let's just come up with
a number we're all willing to--

Something Charlie's seen stops him. Something on the wall.
Darko turns to where he is looking. It's a PICTURE OF DARKO
smiling, with his arm around NIGEL.

DARKO
This photo is making you stop
talking a lot?
(nothing from Charlie)
Do you know this man who I am with?
Because how you look is how people
who know this man look when they
see him. He is this kind of man.

Darko stares at Charlie, searching his face.

DARKO (cont'd)
It would be very good for me to
know if this man is in Budapest.

CHARLIE
Would my knowing this affect our
situation with you?

DARKO
Stay within yourself. It would be
nothing for me to take you and your
friends to my cousin's restaurant and
put your faces into the machine where
he makes his pork rinds. Okay?

CHARLIE

All I can think about is how much money you say we owe you.

DARKO

Okay, my friend. Tell me where he is and your bill, your friend's load shooting, it is on the house.

CHARLIE

I'll need to call you with that information. After we leave.

Darko stares for a while. Then writes down his number.

DARKO

Okay, mister why not. You may return to the youth hostel with the other little bitches. But if I do not hear from you tonight, tomorrow latest, your nice American face will be made into a pork rind to be eaten by my dogs.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Charlie, Karl and Luc walk away. Karl and Luc buzz on adrenaline.

LUC

You were frigging awesome, Charlie!

KARL

Cool as ice. Like Belmondo and shit.

CHARLIE

I'll see you guys later...

Charlie turns down a different street.

KARL

What's his problem.

LUC

I think it's all complicated with that girl. Poor guy.

KARL

Oh, poor guy and his problems with a gorgeous piece of ass. I play the world's smallest piano for him.

He mimes playing the world's smallest piano.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY

Charlie climbs the stairs. In the window he sees a SIGN announcing the death of BANYAI ISTVAN. He tries to puzzle out the sign. The door opens. A couple of people come out, followed by BÉLA, dressed in a suit, wearing a SILK SCARF.

CHARLIE

Béla, hi. You're going to the thing? What is it? A memorial?

Béla pushes past him. Charlie grabs his arm.

BÉLA

DO NOT TOUCH ME, SIR!

Béla keeps walking. Charlie follows.

CHARLIE

What's your deal? I just want to pay my respects.

Béla gets to a car and climbs in.

BÉLA

Leave Gabriella be, sir. She's had enough pain from rogues such as yourself.

He closes the door and pulls away.

CHARLIE

No, wait! I'm not a rogue!

Charlie runs after the car. He's flying down the street.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

I'm not a rogue, Béla. Thank you for saying so. But I do like Gabi.
(still running, btw)
I guess it's more than like. More of a supernova in my fucking chest. I'm not backing down. No, Béla. She gave wings to these fee--

THWACK--Charlie disappears. An OPEN CAR DOOR has knocked him flat. Béla backs up. Charlie's moaning in the street.

BÉLA

Never mind. Get in.
(huh?)
GET IN THE GOD DAMN CAR!

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - COURTYARD - DAY

Charlie limps after Béla through an old baroque building's covered driveway, then into a beautiful courtyard.

INT. ISTVAN'S FLAT - DAY

It's oddly quiet. Charlie follows Béla into a darkened ballroom-sized space. It's crowded with PEOPLE. They're watching a VIDEO projected on the wall.

Charlie scans the room. He finds GABI sitting on the floor. Smiling up at the video with tears welling in her eyes.

ON VIDEO: ISTVAN's in a sunlit room. His cello rests between his legs. GABI'S VOICE is behind the camera:

GABI'S VOICE

*Don't be shy. We must document
your mastery for posterity.*

ISTVAN ON SUPER-8

Which should I do?

GABI'S VOICE

Glissando.

ISTVAN ON SUPER-8

*Glissando. We play it like it
sounds. Glissando. The pitch
rising and falling smoothly, with
no space, no separation. Only
variation of essence.*

Istvan draws his bow, sliding his finger up and down the fingerboard without releasing the string, producing an achingly beautiful sound. Someone yells:

SOMEONE

Bravo, Pishty!

Everyone concurs in cheers.

GABI'S VOICE

*Give us something juicy. Something
personal. The real Banyai Istvan.*

ISTVAN ON SUPER-8

*I am an old man with no juice left.
May I say something my father said?*

GABI

Is it about the Cubs?

ISTVAN ON SUPER-8

*It is a quote he would often say.
From Lenin.*

GABI'S VOICE

John, or Vladimir Ilyich?

ISTVAN ON SUPER-8

*Vladimir Ilyich, who killed twenty
million of his own people. Much
worse than marrying Yoko, yes?*

(Gabi's voice LAUGHS)

*Lenin said: I cannot listen to
music too often. It makes me want
to do nice things.*

(then)

You understand this quote, Gabika?

GABI'S VOICE

Yes, daddy.

ISTVAN ON SUPER-8

*Of course you do. Now put it away.
I must go pee.*

THE VIDEO ENDS. Everyone cries. They all look to Gabi. She musters a heartbroken smile. She sees Charlie. He waves. And her face does something surprising -- it explodes into a smile of genuine joy.

Now she's coming to him. Smiling, smiling, smiling. She takes a drink of WINE. Charlie's eyes brim with tears.

CHARLIE

God damn.

A TEARDROP rolls down Charlie's cheek. Gabi is there. SHE CATCHES IT. Gabi raises her hand to him. He raises his, the one he caught her tear in. They press their palms together.

GABI

*I said if you find me I would kiss
you. Are you ready?*

CHARLIE

What?

She eases into him, like he's the other half of a thing she once was, a thing perfect and complete, a thing that became nothing when it was divided in two by the bullshit world.

THEY KISS. Then she breathes into his ear.

GABI

Say my name, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Gabi. Gabi. Gabi.

GABI
Two letters with the whole world
inside them. Us. A pearl.

She moves in to kiss him again. But she misses.

GABI (cont'd)
I missed your face, Charlie!
(then, touching him)
Oh, Charlie. I missed your face.

CHARLIE
Are you drunk?

GABI
I would like to apologize. I
peeped at you.

CHARLIE
You peeped?

GABI
You were in the bath. I peeped.

CHARLIE
Oh...Well, that's okay. Did you,
was I...

She drains her glass and shoves it at him.

GABI
Keep them coming, cowboy.

IN THE KITCHEN

Charlie fills two glasses. A COMMOTION sounds from the front of the apartment. Bohemians rush away to see what's what.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

BÉLA faces off against an unwanted visitor -- NIGEL.

BÉLA
GET THE HELL OUT, YOU!

NIGEL
Still screaming, Béla? Still our
old excessively bothersome self?

BÉLA
You will not come in here, sir.
This is a private function.

In a flash, Nigel RABBIT PUNCHES Béla in the nose. Béla doubles over. His nose is BLEEDING, expertly broken. Nigel moves into the apartment. An ARTIST steps to him. Nigel raises a KNIFE TO HIS EAR.

NIGEL
Something to say, Van Gogh?

The artist thinks better of it.

NIGEL (cont'd)
Gabi!

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gabi's staring in the mirror. She's heard Nigel.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Nigel's looking around. Charlie steps in front of him.

NIGEL
Hallo, Charlie. Seen Gabi of late?

CHARLIE
She's not here.

NIGEL
Charlie, I meant to ask you before --
can you do the Louis Armstrong bit
with your cheeks? When he goes all
puffy-fish like?

CHARLIE
He played the trumpet, I think.

NIGEL
But you can do it, yeah? Being the
champion tubaist and cocksucker you
are reputed to be?
(Charlie does nothing)
The present occasion's a sorrowful
one, Charlie. Bring us some relief
in the form of funny face, yeah?

Charlie stares. Nigel sticks the KNIFE to Charlie's throat.

NIGEL (cont'd)
Go on, Charlie.

Charlie does nothing. FLICK. He nicks Charlie's neck with the knife. BLOOD drips down it. Nigel cinches the blade. Charlie's got no choice. He PUFFS OUT his cheeks.

NIGEL (cont'd)

Jesus me. If that's not the most
woeful bit of puffy-fishery I ever
did see. It occurs to me, Charlie --
maybe you're not a tubaist, maybe
you're not even an actual faggot.
Maybe the truth of it is you've got
designs on my wife. What do you
think, Gabi?

Nigel lowers the knife and turns. GABI's across the room
with her GUN trained on him.

NIGEL (cont'd)

You were meant to ring me, darling.

GABI

You need to leave, Nigel. Now.

NIGEL

It's time we spoke of reconciliation,
Gabi. I know I'm easily pegged as
the villain in our story. But I was
my best self when I was with you. I
want to be good again.

BLAM!--the WALL behind Nigel EXPLODES. He smiles.

NIGEL (cont'd)

You've got reservations. No
worries. You needn't decide just
now. True love waits.

BLAM!--she shoots. Into the wall again.

GABI

I promise I will shoot until I see
your face explode.

NIGEL

There's another matter, love. Your
father and I, we had a bit of
unfinished business. Now that he's
shuffled off this mortal coil, I
turn to you to help me close the
books on it.

(Gabi is confused)

You mean to say he never told you?

(she has no idea)

Béla? Perhaps you can spell it out
for her?

Gabi looks to Béla. He nods: he will explain.

NIGEL (cont'd)
The shrieking cunt does seem to
know all.

BLAM!--Gabi fires again. Closer to Nigel's head this time.
He squeezes Charlie's cheek.

NIGEL (cont'd)
I'm off, Charlie. But we'll get a
funny face out of you yet, yeah?

Nigel saunters through the crowd. He stops at Gabi. He
touches barrel of the gun.

NIGEL (cont'd)
The very gun I gave you. The
irony's fucking poetical, baby.
(then)
Bring yourself abreast, then ring
me to discuss. If you don't, I
will not hesitate to do like I do
and burn down the world.

LATER

Gabi and Béla are arguing. Charlie stands at the wall,
absently picking at a BULLET HOLE. He pulls out a BULLET.
He smells it. Gabi storms out. Charlie replaces the bullet.

INT. HIGH, WINDING STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Gabi whips down the staircase. Charlie tries to catch up.

CHARLIE
Gabi, wait.

She keeps on. He catches up to her and grabs her arm.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Gabi, hey, stop.

Charlie guides her to sit down on the stairs. He sits too.
They're quiet for a while. He takes her hand.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
What did he say? What's going on?

GABI
He said my father had evidence
proving Nigel murdered a Member of
Parliament. There is a video.

CHARLIE
Like a murder video?

GABI

Yes -- of Nigel and the man he worked for killing this man. My father obtained it somehow, and he used it to blackmail Nigel into leaving Budapest.

They sit there in silence for a while, then:

CHARLIE

Where is it now? The murder video.

GABI

Béla will not say. Because the man who is with Nigel on the video, he will want it too. Fucking Darko.

CHARLIE

Darko?

GABI

My father made an arrangement with Darko -- he would not show the video to anyone if Darko made Nigel go away. Darko makes arrangements.

CHARLIE

Um, I met a Darko today. A Darko who makes arrangements. You don't think it's the same--

GABI

Charlie!? What did you do!?

CHARLIE

My friend had a life threatening erection. Which required us to go to a titty bar. It was all perfectly logical and innocent. But these fuckers, they charged us three grand for a few beers and an orgasm. My friend's orgasm, not mine.

Gabi puts her head in her hands.

GABI

The arrangement -- what was it?

CHARLIE

There was a picture of Nigel. Darko saw me see it. I said if he let us go, I'd tell him where Nigel is. I'm supposed to call him.

Gabi gets up and heads wearily down the staircase.

GABI
You should have gone to Bucharest,
Charlie.

ON THE STREET

Gabi comes out. Charlie follows. Gabi waves at a passing TAXI. It doesn't stop.

CHARLIE
You know you can't go home.

Gabi WHISTLES. A cab stops. She gets in it.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Where are you going?

The question jars her. She looks around. She has no idea. Charlie motions for her to scoot over. He climbs in.

INT. MARCO POLO YOUTH HOSTEL - LOBBY

Charlie and Gabi enter.

CHARLIE
Can you...hold on for a second?

He goes over to the desk, where the CLERK is.

CLERK
What's up, my man? Good times?

CHARLIE
You have any single rooms?

He checks out Gabi. They whisper so she can't hear.

CLERK
You are going to hit that?

CHARLIE
What? No. I mean, we're caught up
in some heavy shit...

CLERK
My man, where is your handsome
American confidence?
(with a KEY)
I cannot give you this unless you
promise you are going to hit that.

CHARLIE
I promise.

CLERK
You promise what?

CHARLIE
I am going to hit that.

CLERK
My man. Third floor.

He tosses Charlie the key. Charlie goes back to Gabi.

GABI
He's right, you know? Confidence
is important.

THIRD FLOOR

Charlie leads Gabi down the corridor. LAUGHTER sounds from back at the stairwell.

LUC (O.S.)
Is that Charlie!

Luc and Karl are coming toward them. They are running and waving, but in SLOW MOTION. They're all kinds of fucked up. Each of them has a 1.5 litre bottle of COKE LITE.

KARL
Charlie! We are doing everything
in slow motion tonight!

LUC
Except talking!

KARL
And urinating!

LUC
You're on the wrong floor, Charlie!

Noticing Gabi, they shift to normal motion and straighten up, as if in the presence of an adult.

GABI
Hello.

CHARLIE
Karl, Luc, this is Gabi. Gabi,
Karl and Luc.

Luc bows. Karl kisses her hand.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
We were just...I got this
room...for safety.

LUC

*Gabi, please accept our condolences
for the loss of your father.*

GABI

*Thank you, Luc. Your Hungarian is
excellent.*

Luc laughs like a girl. Karl offers his bottle.

KARL

*Coke Lite, Gabi. It is delicious
yet caffeinated.*

GABI

Thank you, Karl.

Gabi reaches for the bottle. Charlie stops her.

CHARLIE

You probably shouldn't.

LUC

*You guys are electrified. Like
eels of happiness!*

KARL

Slippery yet happy. Ha ha!

CHARLIE

We should get going.

Luc and Karl make weird noises.

GABI

*I am happy to meet you both. I
hope to see you again.*

They praise this idea. Karl kisses her hand. Luc kisses her mouth. Karl kisses Charlie's hand. Luc kisses his mouth. They touch bottles and take off running in slow motion.

INT. THIRD FLOOR ROOM - NIGHT

Gabi and Charlie sit on the bed. From her BAG, Gabi takes out two SHOT GLASSES and a bulbous BOTTLE of PURPLE LIQUEUR. She pours herself a shot and downs it. She pulls a pained face. She pours Charlie one.

GABI

*Our national drink -- Unicum.
Welcome to Hungary, Charlie.*

He drinks it. Oh no. He convulses and coughs, nearly pukes. He wipes his eyes and gathers himself.

CHARLIE

So. This is. You look pretty.

She pours two more shots. She drinks hers. She suffers it and waits for Charlie drink his. He does. He suffers too.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

You're nervous? That's why we're drinking this stuff?

She fills the glasses again.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

I'm not nervous. I feel okay. A little sick.

She slams hers. Ouch.

GABI

Drink, Charlie.

He does. He vomits a bit, but swallows it.

GABI (cont'd)

I would like to tell you the story, Charlie. Of how a nice girl like me fell in love with a psychopath like him. I have not spoken about it in so long. I would like to tell you. Okay?

CHARLIE

Everything's blurry. But okay. I should be fine.

FLASH TO:

EXT. MUSIC SCHOOL - DAY

A gaggle of teenage GIRLS smoking cigarettes. They've got various INSTRUMENT CASES at their feet. Inhaling, coughing, laughing. By them walks a girl with a CELLO -- YOUNG GABI.

GABI (V.O.)

When I was seventeen, my life was music. Nothing else.

INT. PRACTICE ROOM - DAY

Young Gabi is alone with her cello, lost in concentration.

GABI (V.O.)

I was in love with what I could do.

She looks at her fingers. They're bleeding. She plays on.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DARK

Istvan watches TRAINSPOTTING, laughing his ass off.

GABI (V.O.)
My father would try to introduce me
to other things.

Young Gabi is next to him with her eyes closed, her hands miming playing the cello.

INT. ARCADE - NIGHT

Istvan plays CENTIPEDE.

GABI (V.O.)
But there was nothing else for me.

Gabi is on the floor, leaning against the game, air celloing.

BACK TO GABI AND CHARLIE

GABI
What else do I need when I can make
a sound that sounds like the breath
of god? When I can make myself and
anyone else cry with my own hands?
(then)
These are the things I would say.
Being seventeen and ridiculous.

CHARLIE
I wrote poems, about homeless
people and the death of my dog,
even though I didn't have one.

GABI
So you understand.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

Young Gabi walks down some stairs into a basement.

GABI (V.O.)
One winter, I discovered a place
where I could practice.

IN A BOILER ROOM

Gabi plays her cello in the glow of the furnace.

ANOTHER DAY

Gabi plays.

GABI (V.O.)
 What I did not know was above my
 place, there was a small flat.

WE RISE UP, like the sound, through the floor and we're in...

INT. SMALL FLAT - NIGHT

Cramped and dingy. A SEVERELY WOUNDED MAN lies on a bed.

GABI (V.O.)
 In this flat, was Nigel.

The music sounds, the man is still. From the bandages around his eyes, a TEAR falls.

ANOTHER DAY

In the BOILER ROOM, Gabi plays.

In the FLAT, Nigel strains to raise his arm even an inch.

GABI (V.O.)
 He listened to my playing as he
 struggled with his injuries.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Moving from boiler room to flat...

- Gabi plays. Nigel removes the bandages from his head.

- Gabi plays. Nigel pulls himself across the floor, sweating and straining to work his legs.

GABI (V.O.)
 Every day he would hear me, every
 day he would become stronger.

- Gabi plays. Nigel stands.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Gabi walks into the courtyard, heading for the stairs. She sees NIGEL waiting there, leaning on a CRUTCH.

GABI (V.O.)
 One day he approached me. He said
 my playing saved his life.

He smiles at her. He's not scary at all. He begins talking.

GABI (V.O.) (cont'd)
 He was the most beautiful man I had
 ever seen.

(MORE)

GABI (V.O.) (cont'd)
With his scars and his eyes. Like
some kind of wounded animal.

Nigel gives Gabi a FLOWER. She smiles.

EXT. SZABADSÁG BRIDGE - NIGHT

Gabi and Nigel walk across the span. Gabi talks, Nigel listens bemusedly. He pulls her into a kiss.

GABI (V.O.)
I had no idea who he was or what he
did. All I knew is he told me I
would someday heal the world with
my music, with what was in my soul.

BACK TO GABI AND CHARLIE

CHARLIE
He must have been different then.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gabi pulls a METAL CASE from a closet. She opens it. The bad-guy trifecta: GUNS, DRUGS and MONEY.

GABI (V.O.)
By the time I learned what he was,
it was too late.

ANOTHER SHOT

Nigel and Gabi argue. She tries to leave. He YANKS her back and SMACKS her in the face. He throws her down in the bed.

ANOTHER SHOT

Nigel pleads through the bathroom door.

GABI
I loved him like I loved my music.

ANOTHER SHOT

Nigel and Gabi are fucking.

BACK TO GABI AND CHARLIE

Gabi's face is a mask of shame. Until she wills it away.

GABI
I want you to do me a favor now,
Charlie. Okay?

CHARLIE

Anything.

GABI

Tell me I am not a bad person and
give me a kiss.

She is utterly serious and completely exposed. Charlie takes
her face in his hands and pulls her near.

CHARLIE

You are the least bad person I have
ever known, Gabi. You are lovely
in every way, and you are funny and
intelligent and musically gifted.

(then)

You are a good person, Gabi. A
very good person.

Charlie kisses her. A gentle kiss. But then he shies back a
little. His eyes are brimming with TEARS.

GABI

Charlie...

He wipes his eyes.

CHARLIE

It's okay. Go on.

She laughs, climbing onto the bed to straddle him.

GABI

You think you love me, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Probably.

GABI

You think things like this happen
to people?

CHARLIE

To some people.

GABI

What people?

CHARLIE

You know what people.

GABI

Us, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Yes, Gabi. Us.

GABI
Okay, Charlie. Us.

She pulls him into her chest. He breathes her in. He exhales. Something like relief. Like coming home. She begins to tear up herself. She holds his face to hers.

GABI (cont'd)
I will remember all of the things
you have said to me, Charlie.
Every word has gone into my heart.
(then)
Also, you looked nice in the bath
when I peeped at you.

She kisses him. Softly at first, and then harder, and then it's on -- she yanks away his clothes, and he removes her bra and panties with a dexterity that we might find surprising.

And they fuck. Er, make love. No, it's definitely fucking. Wait. Now they're making love. Okay, that right there? Fucking. Jesus. They're doing both. Is that even possible?

Of course it is.

LATER

Charlie and Gabi are all tangled together, her head resting on his chest. Charlie stares at the ceiling.

CHARLIE
My mom died.

GABI
What?

CHARLIE
Before I left. She died.

GABI
Charlie. I am sorry. You did not
tell me.

CHARLIE
You've had a lot on your plate.

GABI
What happened to her?

Charlie is quiet, then:

CHARLIE
I ran out of the room.

GABI
There was a fire or something?

CHARLIE
She was in a coma. We took her off
life support. I ran out of the room
before she, uh, finished dying.

GABI
Oh, Charlie. I do not think your
mother would be too upset that you
did not want to watch her die.

CHARLIE
I guess not.

Out of a silence.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Sometimes, in my head, the only
thing I can hear is the Wicked
Witch saying "what a world, what a
world." You know?

A longer silence. He closes his eyes. She reaches for
something at the side of the bed. She kisses him.

GABI
Yes, I know, Charlie.

She stares at the ceiling, her hand now gripping her GUN.

INT. THIRD FLOOR ROOM - MORNING

Charlie wakes up. Alone.

INT. MARCO POLO YOUTH HOSTEL - DAY

Charlie enters the lobby. The CLERK is there.

CLERK
My man who keeps a promise. Her
face told a story this morning!

CHARLIE
I don't have her number.

CLERK
Not a problem, my man. You hit it
right. She will come to you.

CHARLIE
Are you always here?

CLERK
Not always. But a lot. Yes.

UPSTAIRS

Charlie approaches his previous room. Loud music's sounding from inside -- N'SYNC, BYE BYE BYE. Charlie enters...He balks at the sight of LUC and KARL NAKED on the bed, their FEET AND HANDS PRESSED TOGETHER in a yogic *pas de deux*.

CHARLIE
Sorry!

Charlie starts to back out, but they groan and wriggle frantically. He approaches them. Each has his lips pursed and is somehow unable to talk. Weird. Charlie notices several empty tubes of SUPER GLUE piled on the bed.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Holy shit! You're glued together?!

They nod as he tries to pry them apart. They SCREAM, having already ripped many BITS OF SKIN away. Charlie turns the music off. Luc refers Charlie to a NOTE glued to his back.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Dear mister irresponsible, your friends are in a sticky situation due to you not doing what you said you would do. Do it soon or the situation will become worse. Darko.
(to Luc and Karl)
Sorry, guys. I'll, um, alert the front desk, I guess.

IN THE LOBBY

Charlie's at the front desk. A GIRL is on duty.

CHARLIE
What happened to...
(never mind)
Hi, my friends are glued together.
Could you maybe call somebody?

GIRL CLERK
Oh, yes. Of course.

She picks up the phone and thinks for a while.

CHARLIE
Maybe the fire department?

GIRL CLERK

You saw I was not sure. Thank you.

She dials. Outside, Charlie notices a Mercedes pull up. It's got SPINNING RIMS and BLACKED-OUT windows. A window goes down. It's DARKO eating PORK RINDS.

CHARLIE

There a back door or something?

GIRL CLERK

Down through the pub.

Darko's coming. Charlie BOLTS down the STAIRS.

IN THE PUB

Charlie FLIES through the PUB. Darko's on the stairs. Charlie makes for the back, KNOCKING into TRAVEL-KIDS.

Darko enters. Charlie UPENDS TABLES to block him. As if. Charlie HURDLES the BAR, and RACES back into the KITCHEN.

EXT. BACK DOOR - HOSTEL - DAY

Charlie BURSTS through the door, BOUNDS up the STAIRS.

ON THE STREET

From a side-street, Charlie HURLS HIMSELF out onto the busy sidewalk of Rákóczi. He rips through the crowd. He looks back. Yeah, Darko -- coming fast and unrelentingly.

Charlie VEERS into the street, DEAD INTO TRAFFIC. WHAANH!--a BUS SCREAMS BY, SKIMMING HIS NOSE. CARS SKID and SCREECH as he DARTS around them. He gains the opposite sidewalk.

Darko's in the street. Traffic's no problem. Fred Astaire, but violent, not as ugly. Charlie spots a METRO STATION.

INT. BLAHA LUJZA TER - DAY

Charlie VAULTS down some STAIRS and finds himself in an UNDERGROUND SQUARE. He spies the ENTRANCE to the METRO.

AT THE STATION

Charlie runs in. No sign of Darko. He hits the ESCALATOR, heading down, way down, under a gleaming futuristic half-dome ceiling. It seems not to ever end. Maybe in hell.

Charlie looks back -- Darko breaks into view and steps onto the escalator. He comes, pushing through people. Rude.

Charlie tries to step it up. It's too crowded. He notes a NARROW SLIDE-LIKE SECTION that separates the escalators.

Charlie THROWS HIMSELF onto the slide. WHOOSH!--now he's A BULLET. On the slide, STEEL KNOBS are spaced to deter punks from sliding down. The first knob's about to de-ball Charlie. But he BOUNCES up, enough to clear it. Nifty.

He looks back. Duh. Fucking Darko sliding after him.

Charlie slides and bounces, slides and bounces. He notices a SMILING WOMAN coming on the UP ESCALATOR. It's his...

CHARLIE

Mom?

MARY BAKER

Look at you, Charlie! No fear! Even though I said Bucharest! You goof!

ON THE PLATFORM

Charlie's BODY is SHOT OUT with great velocity. He tumbles, scrambles to his feet, over to the TRACKS. No trains. Shit. Charlie ducks behind a COLUMN. He peeks back to find Darko BARREL ROLLING onto the platform. All parkour and shit.

WITH DARKO. He stands. No sign of Charlie. He strolls forward. Bad motherfucker. TWO TRAINS pull into the station, one on either side. They stop. DOORS OPEN. And PEOPLE start to pour out. Darko surveys. With killer robot eyes.

WITH CHARLIE. He looks from train to train. What to do? People file into the cars. Soon the doors will close. Charlie peeks. Sees Darko, eyes sweeping, ready to pounce.

Charlie breathes -- one, two, three, he LAUNCHES HIMSELF across the platform, heading for the far train. Darko spots him, and SPRINGS toward the same train.

The DOORS ARE CLOSING. Charlie LEAPS into the air...Darko LEAPS too, his own doors closing...

They're both in the air...

WHOOSH!--Darko SLICES THROUGH the closing doors...

WHACK!--Charlie HITS THE SIDE OF THE TRAIN, and crumbles to the platform. Fucking missed on purpose. Clever Charlie.

The train pulls away. Darko stands, looking for Charlie in the next car. But Charlie is OUT ON THE PLATFORM.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

Charlie hurries along with an open, alive, giddy look on his face. He begins to run.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
 Look at the boy, ladies and gentlemen, as he speeds himself to the girl. Marvel at how far he has come in so little a while.

FLASHBACK THROUGH:

A SERIES OF SHOTS

- Charlie catches Gabi's tear in the airport.
- He holds Gabi amid the wreckage on the highway.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
 He has found beauty and goodness in an ugly hour.

- He rides with Gabi after he got out of jail.
- He watches Gabi play at the opera. She smiles up at him.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
 He has felt peace in his heart as his soul was at war.

- He and Gabi laugh and drink at Istvan's party.
- He and Gabi make love in the Hostel as the light of today's dawn falls across the bed.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
 He has even done some nice fucking!

BACK TO CHARLIE

He turns onto GABI'S STREET. He passes a TAXI STAND. A few DRIVERS mill about smoking. One takes notice of him.

TAXI DRIVER
Looking good, my friend! Love agrees with you!

Charlie smiles and waves.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
 Our story has been a sweet one, dahlinge. But we must remember...

Charlie enters GABI'S BUILDING.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
...it remains a story, one for
which we already know the end.

INT. GABI'S BUILDING - DAY

Charlie climbs the stairs.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
Today is the day the end will come.

AT GABI'S FLAT

Charlie knocks. The door is AJAR.

INSIDE

Charlie enters. And sitting there in shadow, an empty bottle of vodka and a pile cigarette butts at his feet, is...

NIGEL
Hallo, Charlie.

A flash of motion.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
Today is the day the boy will die.

Nigel's on Charlie, SLAMMING A FIST into his face.

A BIT LATER

Charlie comes to. Nigel is WRAPPING DUCT TAPE around him.

CHARLIE
What the fuck?

NIGEL
This morning's exam includes just two questions, Charlie. One, where is Gabi? And two, how was it?

CHARLIE
I don't know where she is...how was what...I don't--

NIGEL
You were positively aglow walking in here, Charlie.

CHARLIE
We didn't...nothing happened.

Nigel appraises Charlie. Like he wants to believe.

NIGEL

Listen, boy-o, I'm as gobsmacked as you that a woman like Gabi would let a runty fuck such as yourself stick his cock in her. But we need to accept the truth. Unbelievable and dismaying as it is.

Charlie makes a choice.

CHARLIE

At first, she stood in front of me and slowly peeled her shirt off, then she came over and kneeled--

SMASH TO:

SENSORY ASSAULT CHAMBER/TRUNK OF A CAR

Charlie's been BOUND and GAGGED with DUCT TAPE. His eyes are wild and darting under the maniacal pulse of a STROBE LIGHT.

He's got HEADPHONES taped to his head. They emit a TINNY MUSIC. We MOVIE IN on him, the sound gradually building, until it EXPLODES INTO A DEAFENING DEATH-METAL VERSION OF **THE MACARENA** PLAYING IN A CONTINUOUS AND MIND-SHATTERING LOOP!!

SOON

The trunk opens. Nigel peers down, laughing. Charlie can't hear anything due to The Maracena. Nigel takes a swig from a bottle of VODKA. Then he pours the rest into Charlie's nose.

THEN

The trunk opens. Nigel dumps a LOAD OF GARBAGE onto Charlie, burying him in rotten fruit, rancid meat, putrefied fat, etc. Charlie mouth-pukes.

ALSO

The trunk opens. Nigel lifts a BAG. Something is ALIVE inside it. He opens the bag. A GREASY RAT drops on Charlie.

INSIDE WITH CHARLIE

The STROBE PULSES, The MACARENA POUNDS. The rat is scurrying toward his face. It pads over his chin, to his nose, where a nice chunk of CHICKEN LIVER is stuck. The rat nibbles. The rat looks up at him. The rat has a FRENCH ACCENT.

RAT

Thees eez a sheety situation for you, Shallee, eez eet not? You shoood hav gone to Bucharest, no?

Charlie snaps, bucking and slamming and writhing his body.

FINALLY

The trunk opens. Nigel is talking on his CELL PHONE. He peers around and finds the RAT. He pulls it out by the tail. Dead and crushed. Nigel smiles: nice one, Charlie. He SHUTS OFF the strobe and the music. Nigel's still on the cell.

NIGEL

All right then, love. Old Istvan's place it is. Thanks for phoning.

(he hangs up)

Gabi. She always manages to come through for me, Charlie. I'm almost ashamed of it, the hold I seem to exert on the girl.

Charlie can't talk. Nigel's got a GUN.

NIGEL (cont'd)

I hope you've taken my point here today, Charlie. Love is a brutal, brutal thing. Pain begets pain, Charlie. It's the proper way of things. Yeah?

Nigel sticks the GUN in Charlie's face.

NIGEL (cont'd)

May you find peace in that place where gay tubaist impersonators go.

Charlie closes his eyes. Nigel squeezes the trigger...THWAP! Nigel is gone, blasted out of the frame. Huh?

Charlie hears BRAKES screech and a DOOR opening. He sits up. He's in a CARPARK. He sees NIGEL splayed out, groaning on the ground near a cracked up TAXI. A MAN stands over Nigel -- it's Charlie's TAXI DRIVER. He picks up Nigel's GUN.

TAXI DRIVER

Jesus Christ, man. What kind of love story are you in?

A COUPLE OF POLICE CARS squeal into the lot.

TAXI DRIVER (cont'd)

*Where have you been, assholes!
Look what I had to do!!*

COPS scramble out, GUNS DRAWN. They're SCREAMING at the taxi driver. He's yelling for them to hold on. They TACKLE HIM.

SCREECH!--the TAXI's wheels are spinning. Nigel's coming in reverse...

POP!POP!POP!--the cops spaz off a few rounds...

SMASH!--the taxi blasts through the space between the cop cars. Nigel yanks a J-turn and goes.

LATER

The TAXI DRIVER argues with a DETECTIVE. A Fire Dept. AMBULANCE is there. An EMT is cutting and ripping duct tape from Charlie's head and body. His eye is swollen shut and his cheek looks like John McCain's.

CHARLIE

I need to go.

EMT

*Think this is weird, last call I had?
Two guys glued together, naked.*

CHARLIE

I'm going to go.

EMT

*One of them, German kid? Cock like
a baby's arm, I swear.*

ANGLE ON: the Taxi Driver and the Detective. The EMT YELLS. Charlie is BOLTING.

DETECTIVE

Why is he running?

TAXI DRIVER

Fuck if I know.

(after Charlie)

*No thanks necessary! You crazy
fucker! I hope she is worth it!*

Charlie is gone around a corner. The detective has a pencil.

DETECTIVE

She? Who is she?

ON THE STREET

Charlie bursts into the light of day. Running, running, running. In the background, COPS emerge, but the fact of the matter is they don't really feel like running.

ANOTHER STREET

Charlie's in the clear. He slows and tries to rip the more constricting bits of tape away.

THEN

Charlie's running and running. He can't breathe. He stops and breathes. He starts running again.

EXT. ISTVAN'S STREET - DAY

Charlie's not sure which building is Istvan's. He enters one. He comes back out. He enters another. He comes out.

FINALLY

Charlie enters. He doesn't come back out.

ON THE STAIRS

Charlie's races up the winding staircase.

AT ISTVAN'S DOOR

Charlie rings the bell.

CHARLIE

Gabi!!

He tries the door. It is open.

INSIDE

He searches everywhere.

CHARLIE

Gabi?!

No sign of her.

RING, RING--the doorbell. Charlie looks out the PEEP HOLE -- PEDRAG and BOSKO, the track-suit goons from Darko's club. Charlie silently what-the-fucks and gingerly LOCKS the door.

IN THE HALLWAY

They draw GUNS. CRAACK--Pedrag SHOULDERS the door in.

INSIDE

They TRASH THE PLACE, looking for something.

PEDRAG

You think VHS, DVD, what?

BOSKO
Could be a flash drive.

Bosko's phone RINGS. He answers...

OUTSIDE

Charlie is on the LEDGE. He's three floors above the street. The WINDOW opens. BOSKO leans out with the phone.

BOSKO
For you.

Charlie takes it.

CHARLIE
Hello?

DARKO'S VOICE
Hey, mister just like the movies,
what are you doing there?

Charlie looks down. DARKO is leaning against his Benz, grinning up at Charlie, phone to his ear.

DARKO'S VOICE (cont'd)
Can you tell me, who is your travel
agent?

CHARLIE
Fuck you.

DARKO'S VOICE
Where is Gabriella?

CHARLIE
Fuck your mother.

DARKO
Oh, I do not like this talk.

Charlie moves further away from the window.

CHARLIE
I'm going to hang up and call the
police.

DARKO'S VOICE
Do you hear Beyonce', my friend...
(singing)
To the left, to the left.

Charlie looks to the left. Another window. PEDRAG is there. He SMASHES OUT the glass and YANKS Charlie inside.

INT ISTVAN'S FLAT - LATER

Darko's PIT BULLS pin Charlie to a chair . Pedrag and Bosko have resumed their search. Darko is laughing.

DARKO

A rat! That is beautiful. He has beautiful ideas for some things!

CHARLIE

What do you want from me? I told you he was supposed to come here. He's not here. Go find him.

DARKO

Tell me, what do you know about Banyai Istvan and Nigel?

CHARLIE

Nothing.

DARKO

Your name is what...Charlie? I like this name. Charlie. Don't make the world lose a Charlie. Don't make it lose a Gabi. Have a discussion with me. We will take a look at what is going on. Together. Okay?

CHARLIE

Istvan had a video.

DARKO

Where is this video now? Does Gabriella have this video? Does Nigel? The fucking police? Who?

Pedrag says something to Darko. They can't find the video.

DARKO (cont'd)

No video, no Gabriella, no Nigel. We have a Charlie. I don't even know what to do with one of these.

Bosko hands a CELL PHONE to Darko. He opens it. Its SCREEN shows a picture of Istvan and Gabi.

DARKO (cont'd)

Look at this. Hm. Maybe Istvan Banyai can phone his daughter from the grave, eh, Charlie?

He finds the speed dial for Gabi. He's laughing.

DARKO (cont'd)
 (as the ghost of Istvan)
 Hallo, Gabriella, this is your dead
 faaaather calling...
 (then)
 Okay, okay! Calm down. It is
 Darko. I am messing around.
 (then)
 I am with Charlie. I cannot
 believe you had sex with Charlie!
 Nigel was very upset apparently.
 (he holds the phone away)
 Are you all right, Charlie?

CHARLIE
 Let me--

Pedrag holds him down. The dogs snarl.

DARKO
 We need to speak about the video,
 Gabriella.

Darko listens. He's looking at Charlie.

DARKO (cont'd)
 That won't be necessary. Agreed.
 Okay. Bye bye.

He hangs up.

CHARLIE
 What's going on? Where is she?

DARKO
 I like you, Charlie. I would like
 to explain it all to you like in a
 James Bond film, but I will become
 so bored and we have things to do.

He nods to Pedrag. Pedrag cinches his arm around Charlie's
 neck. Sleeper hold. Charlie goes to sleep.

THEN

Charlie is jostled awake. GABI is there, looking down on him
 like an angel in the setting sun. He's been left in HEROES
 SQUARE, atop the TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER.

CHARLIE
 Gabi, I've been trying to...where
 have you been? Where am I?

GABI

I warned you, Charlie. I told you to stay away. Look at you now.

(Charlie stares)

What happened between us, it was a mistake. It is over now. I want you to go.

Charlie stands. There are TOURISTS all over the place.

CHARLIE

Mistake? No...this is...this is it, Gabi. Right? Us?

GABI

There is no us, okay? None of this happened until you came along talking about us. You are like a wind of shit in my life. I want you to blow away.

She hands him a TRAIN TICKET and walks away. It's to Bucharest, of course.

CHARLIE

I'm not...I don't...a wind of shit?

He follows her.

GABI

I told you, Charlie, you are a child. Your mommy dies and you think you can go on a big adventure to feel something different than what you are supposed to feel. But look around -- mommy is still dead, and you are still a child.

Charlie GRABS her arm and turns her around. He stares into her eyes. Something dawns on him.

CHARLIE

You're doing an Old Yeller.

GABI

What?

CHARLIE

You're trying to shoo me away. For my own good. Like Old Yeller. You can't Old Yeller me, Gabi. Not after what we did.

GABI

And what did we do that was so special? We fucked? What?

CHARLIE

We found each other. We made a home in the world. Together.

Gabi steels herself for the knockout.

GABI

I do not love you, Charlie. I could never love someone like you.

(laughing)

You did not think I could go from loving Nigel to loving someone like you, did you, Charlie?

Charlie reels. Gabi kills him.

GABI (cont'd)

The little boy is lost again. So sad to see. Go away, little boy. Blow your wind of shit into Bucharest or wherever you want. I promise you, no one cares.

Gabi goes. Charlie stands there as a bunch of JAPANESE TOURISTS take pictures of the boy with the annihilated heart.

INT. HEROES SQUARE METRO STATION - EVENING

Charlie is fiddling with money, trying to a) buy a ticket from the automated KIOSK and b) not cry. The machine's SCREEN FLITS, then displays the face of Charlie's MOM.

MARY BAKER

Took another powder, eh, Charlie?

CHARLIE

It's not the same, Mom.

MARY BAKER

I really should have made you do your homework.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I should've mentioned before, I don't understand what that means.

MARY BAKER

It's a for example, Charlie. I left you to make your own choices. I didn't help you enough. You felt alone, you were always scared.

CHARLIE
Of homework?

MARY BAKER
For example. A kid has homework,
but his Mom doesn't say hey, kid,
do your homework. The kid knows
he's supposed to do it. He thinks,
why isn't anyone telling me to do
this frigging thing I'm supposed to
be doing. Why I am being left
alone? Am I not loved enough to be
told to do my homework? See?

Charlie thinks about it. He sees.

MARY BAKER (cont'd)
I'm so sorry. Fear is a terrible
thing to have in your heart.

CHARLIE
It's okay. I probably would have
gotten killed anyway.

MARY BAKER
Oh, but, Charlie! Dying for love
is about as good as it gets, death-
wise, I think you'll agree.

CHARLIE
She called me a wind of shit.

She laughs, then gathers herself.

MARY BAKER
Old Yeller, Charlie. It's obvious.
(then)
Honestly, what kind of death will
you have if you go back to how you
were?

FLASH TO:

INT. CORPORATE LIMBO SPACE - INFINITE

Charlie sits in his suit in his cube doing something. A TALL
MAN smiles in, making a microphone with his hand.

TALL MAN
Houston, we have donuts. I repeat.
Houston, we have donuts.

BACK TO SCENE

Charlie looks into his Mom's face on the Kiosk screen.

MARY BAKER
Ergo, Charlie, I will not be selling
you a ticket today. Understood?

CHARLIE
I love you, Mom.

Charlie bounds up the stairs. His Mom smiles.

MARY BAKER
I love you, Charlie. So much.

NEAR THE SQUARE

Gabi walks to her Trabant. Tears stain her face. She wipes them away and gets in on the passenger side. Someone else is at the wheel...

NIGEL
I'm going to require a thank you,
darling.

GABI
Thank you.

He takes a DVD from the console.

NIGEL
You're sure Darko understood.

GABI
It is all he wants, okay? Let's
just fucking--

THE DOOR FLIES OPEN. CHARLIE grabs Nigel's HAIR and YANKS him out down, onto the pavement. Charlie's got CLUMPS OF HAIR in his fists. He lifts his foot...SMASH. DOWN ON NIGEL'S FACE!

Charlie jumps in the car, starts it and tears off.

GABI (cont'd)
Charlie, what are you doing?! You
are making a mistake--

CHARLIE
Everything. You said everything I
said was in your heart. I know
that means something. Everything.

Charlie checks the SIDE-VIEW MIRROR -- NIGEL's up and running. Like the fucking T-1000.

Uh oh. CARS backed up at a light. Charlie stops. Nigel's getting bigger in the MIRROR.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Your gun. Where is it?

GABI
I don't have it!

CHARLIE
That's unfortunate. Wish me luck.

GABI
What?

Charlie gets out.

GABI (cont'd)
Charlie, no!

IN THE STREET

Well. Okay. So Nigel proceeds to beat the shit out of Charlie. Charlie lands a couple of shots, but they're pretty much accidental, and also super goofy-looking. Mostly, it's an ugly, brutal, monumental ass-whooping -- one that passes beyond the physical, into the realm of metaphor.

Poor Charlie. He gave it a shot. But there he is, splayed out in a spreading pool head-wound ooze.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
To the beginning now, dahlinge,
where it all will end.

ON CHARLIE'S FACE

Swollen and bloodied. His TEAR falls UPWARD.

We PULL BACK and FLIP OVER, to find him DANGLING from SZABADSÁG BRIDGE, HANGING upside-down over the DANUBE RIVER.

Pedrag and Bosko hold his legs. Darko grins down at him.

GABI (O.S.)
Please, you have what you wanted.
Leave him alone.

CHARLIE
GABI!!

Charlie is yanked up to the rail. Darko holds the DVD. Gabi is there. Charlie is confused.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Gabi? What...what are you...

GABI
I am sorry, Charlie. You are not
supposed to be here...

Gabi's looking around, as if waiting for something. NIGEL
appears at her side.

NIGEL
Life as a gay tuba player's not
looking so bad now, eh, Charlie?

CHARLIE
FUCK YOU!! FUCKING FUCKASS
FUCKFACE!!

Charlie looks into Gabi's eyes. He's dazed.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Whatever this is, we're the pearl,
Gabi. Us. The rest is oyster.

Gabi smiles. The world falls away for a moment. She leans
in and WHISPERS in his ear.

GABI
I love you, Charlie. We made a
home in the world. Stay and love
me in it. Okay, Old Yeller?

His eyes light up. And he smiles...but Nigel steps between
them, his jaw clenched in jealous rage.

Gabi looks around again -- nothing. She pulls Nigel in and
KISSES HIM lightly on the mouth.

Charlie is confused, until he sees Gabi pull NIGEL'S GUN from
his waistband. BLAM! She blows a hole in his gut. Nigel
touches the hole and laughs.

NIGEL
Darling, how could you...

ON CHARLIE. He looks down. BLOOD stains his shirt. Oh no.
The shot passed through Nigel, into Charlie.

SIRENS SOUND and LIGHTS FLASH...Pedrag and Bosko exchange a
look. They release Charlie. He falls. To the gray waters
of the river flowing below. He crashes through the surface.

ON THE BRIDGE

POLICE LIGHTS and SIRENS. TWO SWAT VANS roar up. Darko
runs. So do Pedrag and Bosko.

Gabi searches the water. Sees nothing. Behind her, COPS in URBAN ASSAULT GEAR pile out of the VANS. Some chase Darko, others break for the other two.

NIGEL climbs to his feet. He reaches for his GUN on the ground. COPS surround him. He smiles at Gabi.

NIGEL

All this time...you kept my shoes.

He wheels on the cops, gun raised. POP!POP!POP! Nigel's body accepts many bullets and he dies.

An unmarked POLICE CAR is there. BÉLA gets out. He sees Gabi at the railing.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

Yes, dahlinge, the boy did die today.
But let us not weep for him.

Gabi's eyes well with tears.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

Let us take comfort knowing that in
his final hours...

Gabi stares into the water.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

...he came more alive than he had
in all the days of his life entire.

UNDERWATER

Charlie's body floats beneath the surface, being swept along by the current. His eyes are open, lifeless.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

For the boy chose love -- in
defiance of fear and the hazards of
this world, he chose love.

Charlie's HAND MOVES. To his stomach. He lifts his shirt.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

Fortunately, dahlinge, a funny
thing occurred. Something wondrous
and magical...

His wound is in his SIDE, not his gut. Charlie smiles.

ON THE BRIDGE

Gabi sees Charlie emerge. He waves.

CHARLIE
It's a flesh wound!

Gabi is so happy.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
Love chose him back.

BACK UNDERWATER

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)
And so, dahlinge, the boy is reborn
a man. A man in love.

Charlie smiles.

EXT. BUCHAREST, ROMANIA - DAY

TITLE: A FEW DAYS LATER

Charlie sits at a Belle Époque outdoor cafe. The sun is shining. His face is kind of fucked up, but otherwise he looks like his old fairly handsome self.

KARL is with him. Parts of his skin is scabby, but otherwise looking good in his SUIT. LUC approaches with some BEERS. He's scabby too, in his MAPLE LEAF clothes.

KARL
I have to say, I like it here. No one has yet touched my liver, and the prostitute I fucked last night must have been at least forty.

LUC
And the people, dude? They're kind of magical. With their quietness and their decency? Pretty awesome.

Charlie picks up his beer.

CHARLIE
Anything besides beer in this beer?

LUC
Bro, you know they took my stuff during the ungluing.

Charlie drinks. He checks his watch. Then he gets up.

KARL
Warren Beatty, off to put his thing down.

INT. GARA DE NORD - TRAIN STATION - DAY

Charlie waits on the platform. A TRAIN appears in the distance. But something is off -- it is FLOATING ABOVE THE RAILS. Oh shit. Charlie looks around.

On a BILLBOARD. AN OLD MARRIED COUPLE IN A DENTURE AD -- CHARLIE AND GABI.

On the ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE BOARD, over and over and over: CHARLIE & GABI: FOREVER, CHARLIE & GABI: FOREVER.

FLASH TO:

THE CAFE

Luc and Karl are laughing. Everyone around them is NAKED.

BACK TO TRAIN STATION

The train is nearing. Charlie's feet are EIGHT INCHES OFF THE GROUND. CLOUDS OF LIGHT MOLECULES BLOW OUT FROM UNDER THE TRAIN. Charlie steadies himself as the train stops.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

This is our story, ladies and gentlemen. Of love and the promise it holds. Of life and of living it in love...

GABI's in the door. She's got her CELLO, and she's wearing the CUBS BEER HELMET. She smiles. He smiles.

GABI

Say it, Charlie. Please.

CHARLIE

Gabi. Gabi. Gabi.

A CHOIR SINGS as she comes toward him.

ZSA ZSA GABOR (V.O.)

...of all and everything, dahlinge. For love is all, and love is everything.

Charlie gathers Gabi into his grown-up arms. And with one word, two letters...

CHARLIE

Us.

...a SUPERNOVA EXPLODES THE WORLD.

THE END