

THE ORACLE

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A skeptical spy must overcome his long-held bias in order to save a kidnapped child and himself after a dam breaks and flood waters begin to rise in a small Italian town.

EXT. COBBLESTONE STREETS - RUSTIC ITALIAN TOWN - NIGHT

Rain pounds down on a beat-up red Fiat compact car parked on the side of a steep cobblestone road in a rustic Italian town. The hilltop contains the ruins of a medieval castle.

In the background, a stone dam can be seen through the downpour. It's floodgates are dumping at full capacity, but it's not enough. Waves of water wash over the top of the dam.

INT. BEAT-UP RED FIAT COMPACT CAR - NIGHT

SEBASTIAN a tall man in his 50s, is cramped sitting inside the compact car. He's wearing a black rain slicker and talking on his cell phone. He has to raise his voice to be heard over the rain POUNDING on his car roof.

SEBASTIAN

You're lucky you were out of the office when this job came up.

SPY

(on the phone)

I thought the boss said they needed a safecracker?

SEBASTIAN

He did.

SPY

(on the phone)

I'm glad I never learned that skill in my training. I heard it was an odd job.

SEBASTIAN

It is. I thought the boss was pranking me when he told me about it. We still haven't found the diplomat's daughter. We hit a dead end, so the diplomat's wife decided to bring in a psychic.

SPY

(on the phone)

A psychic?

SEBASTIAN

That's what I said.

SPY

(on the phone)

Geez. Glad I didn't get that one.
Can you get out of it, Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN

Even though we have an official
boss, you know that the diplomat
really calls all the shots. Or at
least his wife does.

SPY

(on the phone)

Remember that psychic at the
Christmas party a few years ago.
She said you'd meet your soulmate
by "following, or finding the North
Star."

SEBASTIAN

It was by "finding the North Star."

SPY

(on the phone)

Yes, well you never did.

SEBASTIAN

No, I never did.

SPY

(on the phone)

Well, in any case, the boss is
making you follow this psychic's
advice.

SEBASTIAN

I've dubbed her "The Oracle" since
she didn't give me her name. She
said the girl we're looking for is
being held in a safe.

SPY

(on the phone)

Hence the need for a safecracker.

SEBASTIAN

Lucky me. I'm predicting that The
Oracle will call at any moment now.

His cell phone rings with the caller ID of "The Oracle".

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

That's her on the other line.

SPY

(on the phone)

Seems like the "woo woo" is rubbing off on you too. Maybe you can read my palms, when we're back in the office.

SEBASTIAN

Gotta go.

INT. ANCIENT HOUSE - SMALL ROOM - OUTSIDE OF FLORENCE / INT.
BEAT-UP RED FIAT COMPACT CAR - SPLIT SCREEN - NIGHT

Many miles away from the rainy town, standing at a rustic wood table, THE ORACLE, a short dark haired woman in her 50s, talks on the phone. Outside the full moon rises; the night sky is free of clouds.

The Oracle clutches a child's charm bracelet as she holds a small pendulum which swings back and forth over the middle of a map of a small Italian town. She marks the area on the map where the pendulum was swinging and sets it aside next to a pad of paper with a few sketches.

In a split screen, Sebastian talks with The Oracle as he sits inside his beat up Fiat as the rain pounds down.

THE ORACLE

Fia is being held in a safe in a mansion located in the center of town. It's on the South side of Rossi square.

SEBASTIAN

Fia?

THE ORACLE

The diplomat's daughter.

SEBASTIAN

Yes. Right.

THE ORACLE

I know that you don't believe in what I do, but this is important.

SEBASTIAN

Of course it's important.

THE ORACLE

A mother's daughter has been kidnapped. Fia is in grave danger and we need to find her very soon.

SEBASTIAN

Right.

THE ORACLE

I need you to listen closely.

SEBASTIAN

Okay.

THE ORACLE

I need you to write this down.

SEBASTIAN

I am.

He isn't writing anything down.

THE ORACLE

You're not. I need you to write this down.

SEBASTIAN

What?

THE ORACLE

Get a pad of paper and pen.

Sebastian looks outside his car. No one is observing him. He turns back to search the car and finds a pad and pen.

THE ORACLE (CONT'D)

And you might want to grab a flashlight and a zip lock bag for your phone, so it won't get wet.

He dumps a half eaten sandwich out of a zip lock bag and stuffs it into his pocket along with a flashlight.

SEBASTIAN

Got the paper, pen, plastic bag and flashlight. Ready to rock and roll.

THE ORACLE

This isn't a game.

SEBASTIAN

I know.

THE ORACLE

Fia will be terrified. She needs to know she can trust you.

(MORE)

THE ORACLE (CONT'D)

Tell her "Chiara sent you." Tell her that you know her secret nickname for me, it's "Stella Septentrionalis." Write that down.

Sebastian jots down the word phonetically.

SEBASTIAN

Stella Septentrionalis. Got it.

The Oracle refers to a sketch of a ornate red fleur de lis.

THE ORACLE

Are you familiar with the medieval flag of the city of Florence?

SEBASTIAN

It's a red stylized iris, it looks like an ornate fleur de lis.

THE ORACLE

That's it.

SEBASTIAN

I studied Italian history.

THE ORACLE

Look for that symbol. It'll be on the front door of the mansion where Fia has been taken. Use that symbol to identify the safe where Fia is being held.

SEBASTIAN

There's more than one safe?

THE ORACLE

There are three, all the size of bank vaults. Fia is being held in one used as a wine cellar. There may be more than one cellar. The fleur de lis symbol will help you find your way through the tunnels, if you get lost.

SEBASTIAN

Tunnels?

THE ORACLE

When the town floods.

SEBASTIAN

The town is going to flood?

THE ORACLE

You'll need to escape through the tunnels. There's a hidden entrance in the wine cellar. Be sure to locate it after you break into the safe. It's under the fleur de lis.

SEBASTIAN

Under the symbol. Got it.

THE ORACLE

Now this is vital. Once you're in the tunnel you must turn right at the first set of tunnels, then left, then right again. That final turn will lead you up and out. Write that down.

He writes it down.

THE ORACLE (CONT'D)

You're all set. You can try texting me if you need to but I'm not sure you'll have reception down there. By the way, you're a spy; shouldn't you drive a car with a color more discrete than red?

Startled he looks around his car, no one is there.

SEBASTIAN

Yes, well this was the only car that I could afford. It just happened to be red.

THE ORACLE

Maybe we can do something about that. You might want to get something roomier too. It seems like it's a tight fit. In any case, you need to get going. Now!

Sebastian starts up his car and screeches off.

EXT. RUSTIC ITALIAN TOWN CENTER - ROSSI SQUARE - NIGHT

Hidden behind a fountain in the town square, as the rain pours, Sebastian surveys a mansion with a red Florentine fleur de lis on the front door. A guard patrols the area.

Sebastian texts The Oracle: "guard on duty in front of mansion in Rossi Square". The Oracle texts back: "try the service entrance on the West side of the building."

EXT. SERVICE ENTRANCE OF ROSSI SQUARE MANSION - NIGHT

Sebastian stealthily moves through the shadows to the service entrance door which has been propped open. A man in a CHEF'S uniform, tries to balance holding a red umbrella as he hurls trash bags, one by one, to a trash bin. Sebastian reaches the service door and enters, undetected.

INT. LONG HALLWAY - ROSSI SQUARE MANSION - NIGHT

Sebastian stops in the shadows of the dark hallway to peer through an open door into a smoky, well-lit study containing a group of men smoking, drinking wine, and playing cards. A CARD PLAYER holds up an empty bottle of wine.

CARD PLAYER
(re: the empty bottle)
More wine!

A sexy female SERVER grabs the empty wine bottle. The card players turn to ogle her backside as she leaves the room. The server heads down the hallway in the opposite direction from Sebastian who cautiously follows her.

Sebastian watches from the hallway as the server heads into a kitchen, leaving the empty bottle on a counter before heading through a side door that leads down a series of steps.

INT. KITCHEN - ROSSI SQUARE MANSION - NIGHT

Sebastian follows the server down the stairs, leaving a trail of wet footprints behind him. After a moment, the chef who took out the trash enters with his wet red umbrella. He sets his umbrella aside and is concerned when he sees Sebastian's wet trail of footsteps leading down the stairs.

INT. BASEMENT - ROSSI SQUARE MANSION - NIGHT

Sebastian hides behind a few storage shelves as he surveys the basement. There's three large safes that are the size of bank vaults. The safe door on the far right is ajar.

The server emerges from the open safe with a bottle of wine. She closes the safe door, spins the lock shut, turns off the lights and heads back up the stairs with the bottle.

Sebastian turns on his flashlight and heads over to the safe that the server emerged from. He positions his ear on the safe door next to the lock and slowly turns the dial, pausing at the first CLICK. He stops and steps back.

He shines his flashlight on the safe door, examining it before moving his flashlight onward to study the other two safes. The third safe door, is the only one that contains a tiny Florentine fleur de lis engraved on the lock. He positions his ear next to that lock and turns the dial.

INT. KITCHEN - ROSSI SQUARE MANSION - NIGHT

The chef flips through a box with recipes, selecting and removing a few cards as the server emerges with the wine from stairwell to the basement. He turns to glare at her.

CHEF

Were you out in the rain again today? I've told you more than once, you need to wipe your feet before you come inside. Someone could easily slip and fall.

SERVER

I did.

The chef looks at her feet, they are dry. They both stare at the trail of wet footprints.

CHEF

Then who did that?

INT. WINE CELLAR IN SAFE - ROSSI SQUARE MANSION - NIGHT

Sebastian's flashlight illuminates a blindfolded, gagged girl FIA age 10, tied to a chair in the middle of a wine cellar. He reaches her and removes her blindfold. She's terrified.

SEBASTIAN

I'm Sebastian. I'm working for your mother. She asked Chiara to help me find you. Chiara said your secret nickname for her is "Stella Septentrionalis."

Fia relaxes when she hears the nickname and Sebastian removes her gag and restraints. They stare at the safe door as the basement lights turn on. The Chef and the server appear at the safe door and are shocked to see Sebastian and Fia inside. The Chef shoves the safe door closed and its lock CLICKS shut. Sebastian and Fia are cast into darkness again.

A sudden RUMBLING and CRASHING quickly approaches, reverberating through the building. Fia leaps out of the chair as Sebastian frees her of the final constraint. He shines his flashlight across the walls, looking for a tunnel.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

We need to find the tunnel. Do you know where it is?

FIA

No.

Sebastian spots a fleur de lis on the wall. On the floor underneath water seeps through a horizontal crack. Sebastian grabs Fia and leaps to the side, as the wall rips open and water bursts through, exposing the entrance to a tunnel.

SEBASTIAN

I think the dam just broke. We need head out through the tunnel. Now.

Sebastian and Fia head into the tunnel, struggling to push through waist deep water, as the safe fills up with water.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - NIGHT

Sebastian pushes Fia forward in front of him as they struggle against the force of the waist deep rushing water. The water almost sweeps Fia away a few times but, Sebastian is able to catch her each time.

When they reach another tunnel branching off, Sebastian glances at the oracle's directions that he wrote down. Turn right, then left, then right. The first two tunnels that they take lead upward. Sebastian pauses at third tunnel which heads downward and is completely filled with water.

Sebastian stares at the flooded tunnel for a beat. He motions to Fia that they'll need to enter it. She's terrified and doesn't want to go. He's hesitant as well. He shines his flashlight above the flooded tunnel. There's a worn Florentine fleur de lis, on the wall above the tunnel, barely visible. He nods to Fia. They both take deep breaths. He grasps her tightly as they plunge into the flooded tunnel.

Sebastian and Fia struggle, fully submerged in the rushing water as they head downward. They move more and more slowly, exhausting their final reserves of strength.

As they slow to a crawl, the tunnel appears to curve upward. Sebastian gives Fia a strong push. Fia gasps for air as her head bursts from the stream of water. Sebastian follows soon after. Water rushes down the tunnel as it curves upward. There's a rusted chain along the wall that Sebastian grabs and hauls Fia and himself up along the tunnel wall.

INT. MEDIEVAL CASTLE RUINS - NIGHT

A rusted grate with a worn Florentine fleur de lis is pushed open and Sebastian and Fia emerge and drop onto to the stone floor surrounded by the crumbling walls of the roofless castle's remains, drenched and exhausted. The rain has stopped and the full moon shines through the storm clouds.

Sebastian removes his cell phone from the plastic zip lock bag that had held his sandwich earlier in the night. He texts The Oracle "We're out". She text's back "Thank God! Where are you?" He replies "On the hill above town, inside the castle ruins. We make a good team Chiara, we should work together again sometime." She replies "I'm calling for help now. Stay where you are." He replies "Sounds good, I don't think I can take another step."

Sebastian removes his rain slicker and wraps it around Fia as she shivers.

SEBASTIAN

Are you okay?

FIA

I think so.

SEBASTIAN

Help is on the way.

FIA

Thank you.

SEBASTIAN

By the way what does "Stella Septentrionalis" mean?

FIA

It's Latin for the North Star. Chiara has always been my "North Star". That's what she does. She helps people find their way.

EXT. HILLTOP WITH CASTLE RUINS - NIGHT

The full moon illuminates the broken dam and the town below, devastated from the deluge of flood water. People move about with flashlights, as the rescuers begin their work.

EXT. MEDIEVAL CASTLE RUINS - NIGHT

A few police and an ambulance have gathered at a parking lot next to the castle ruins.

Sebastian and Fia are wrapped in blankets. Fia's parents arrive and rush to hug her. After their euphoric reunion, Fia indicates Sebastian. Fia's parents turn to thank Sebastian.

INT. BEAT-UP RED FIAT COMPACT CAR - NIGHT

Sebastian is cramped as he drives his beat-up red compact car up the cobblestone streets of the rustic Italian town, heading toward the castle ruins on the hill as he follows the directions of The Oracle on his cell phone.

The ORACLE

(on the phone)

Take a sharp left at the next turn, and one more left. You're almost there.

SEBASTIAN

I think I know where you're going with this. I'm glad we can finally meet Chiara. Or should I say, North Star.

THE ORACLE

(on the phone)

Fia told you my nickname.

SEBASTIAN

I rather like it, I have to say.

EXT. HILLTOP WITH CASTLE RUINS - NIGHT

The crescent moon shines above the parking lot in a cloudless sky. Sebastian parks his beat-up red car by The Oracle who is standing next to a sleek, roomy, black sedan. Sebastian gets out of his car and stares at The Oracle for moment. There's a visceral mutual attraction between them.

SEBASTIAN

Hello, North Star.

THE ORACLE

Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

You know Chiara, someone once told me I'd meet my soulmate when I found the North Star.

THE ORACLE

I thought you didn't take advice from psychics.

SEBASTIAN
Not until I met you.

The Oracle hands Sebastian the keys to the sedan. On the keychain is a red Florentine fleur de lis.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
What's this?

THE ORACLE
A thank you gift from Leonora.

SEBASTIAN
Who?

THE ORACLE
It's from the diplomat's wife.

SEBASTIAN
Got it.

THE ORACLE
With your height, you needed a car
that wasn't so cramped.

SEBASTIAN
And it's in black.

THE ORACLE
It's a much more discreet color for
a spy like you.

SEBASTIAN
Can I take you for a ride?

THE ORACLE
I thought you'd never ask.

EXT. ITALIAN COUNTRY ROADS - NIGHT

Sebastian's new sedan heads down the country road toward the horizon. Above the road in the clear night sky, the North Star glitters brightly.