

LAZARUS IN NEW YORK



Movie Treatment
by Wayne Zeitner

Based on the novel
The Green Man
by Mark D. Pendergrass

It is appointed unto man once to die.
– Hebrews 9:27

Lazarus was raised from death; the following week he vanished from scripture. 2,000 years later a young musician in New York City grows suspicious of a kindly Jewish deli-owner...becoming the target of an unusual gang watching the old man.

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HISTORICAL NOTE

In John's Gospel Lazarus is briefly more famous than Jesus, prompting Temple leaders to plot his death. But if Lazarus had been killed at the height of his celebrity, history would surely have recorded the fact.

Legend has Lazarus and his sisters fleeing Israel by sea, bound for Cyprus...or Syria...or Constantinople. More recent speculation centers on France.

His fate is one of Christendom's enduring mysteries.

TITLE CARD

Ste Croix en Jarez, France
 Carthusian Monastery, 1314 AD

Close-Up on a carved face--a Green Man--in the middle of a wooden door, which slowly opens. Inside, at the far end of the dimly-lit Rectory sits a middle-aged man, writing on parchment...thinking back on his youth--which we visit in flashbacks to Biblical times. Returning from the second flashback, we are very tight on his face. He has aged. We pull back to reveal him in a modern-day apartment, fidgeting with a large gold coin--recognizable from the last flashback as having come from the mouth of a fish. This man has been alive for over 2,000 years.

Manhattan, Kansas
 Present Day

23 year-old GABRIEL MALEK is home alone, cutting down U-Haul boxes on the front porch of a married-students' dorm building. A K-State delivery truck brings him a large crate. His FATHER, a professor, has hitched a ride in the truck. Dad reminds son that the couple are invited for dinner that night to celebrate the youngest sibling Michael coming home from the hospital.

Dad leaves. Gabe pulls the crate inside, locking the door and drawing the blinds. The trunk contains a large Green Man carving identical to the one at the Monastery. The crate also holds several stacks of ancient parchment.

Manhattan, New York
 3 Months Earlier

Gabe is playing his trumpet for tips in front of a Greenwich Village bookstore. A pretty girl walks by and drops \$5 in his case, then pulls out a key to open the bookstore. Gabe is discouraged by his paltry take, so when a Help Wanted sign goes up in the window of the deli across the street, he rushes over to apply. But a street-bum gets there at the same moment--struggling with Gabe for the doorknob until the door starts to open from the inside. Then the bum runs away.

The deli-owner opens the door and steps outside: it's the 2,000 year-old guy, ZEDDIKER, who looks to be in his mid-60s. Gabe introduces himself. The older man is struck to meet a trumpeter named Gabriel. But before the conversation goes anywhere, they hear the street guy screaming from about 30 feet away, and they turn just in time to see him leap in front of a fast-moving bus--an apparent suicide.

Zeddiker quickly pulls Gabe into the deli, locking the door behind them. "Why are you here Gabriel? What is your mission?" Gabe is stunned by the suicide and doesn't answer. The deli owner persists: "Gabriel, why are you in this realm today?" Gabe protests that he's just a kid from Kansas tryin' to break into the NYC jazz scene, and he needs a day job to survive. Zed evidently thinks the kid is The Angel Gabriel: "Do not toy with me Gabriel. The minute you arrive, Andras kills his host."

Gabe is spooked and eager to get away. Zed finally relents, but insists the kid not go out front where police and bystanders have gathered. Instead he shows Gabe out an underground back door. But as Gabe walks past the older man to leave, Zed slips the large gold coin into the kid's jacket pocket.

AUDIO ALARM! Cut to a Pawnshop interior, where an overweight, middle-aged PROPRIETOR scrambles from his cash register to look at his beeping PC. A warning message flashes and he calls out: "Zeddiker gave the coin to that kid!" Three scruffy employees enter--they could be cousins of the suicide guy. "Who's out there to follow him?" the boss demands. A guy with a Bluetooth ear-piece answers: "Chemos is out there taking pictures by the bus. Wait--" The guy listens to his phone: "Chemos says nobody came out the front door." The boss is angry: "That idiot Andras!" None of them notices at that moment a young man with a trumpet case walking past their storefront window.

Gabe discovers the coin when he gets back to his one-room apartment above the Glass House Jazz Club. The next day he shows up--sans trumpet--at the bookstore to see if the Help Wanted sign is still up in the deli window: it's not. He meets the pretty clerk, SHELLY, who says she saw the whole suicide episode the previous day. Gabe tells her he turned down the gig and asks about Zed's mental state...showing her the coin. She vouches for the deli-owner. Gabe notices all the leafy-faced posters and carvings around the store: "That's the Green Man" Shelly tells him. Suddenly Gabe sees the sign go back up in the deli window, and he runs out (leaving the coin) to re-apply for the job. Zed hires Gabe as his new bicycle delivery driver.

The Pawnshop guys spot Gabe riding around the Village. After his rounds, he gets paid and zips over to the bookstore, but Shelly's gone for the day--leaving a note for him to call the next day (Saturday/Sabbath, the deli is closed). Followed home by Chemos, Gabe works his night-shift down in the club--busing tables, washing dishes, sweeping floors and shutting off the lights after midnight--then trudging upstairs to his apartment.

Gabe sleeps in past noon and calls Shelly right away. She invites him to stop by the store at closing time. Sweet. When he goes outside to buy a *Bratwurst* from the street vendor, one of the Pawnshop guys walks past him with a sensor, which reads negative: no coin. The Proprietor tells them over the phone that it must be up in his apartment, but they should wait 'til Gabe leaves.

That evening at the bookstore Gabe and Shelly pore over some numismatic books and conclude that the coin is likely from the 1st century AD. Shelly asks if she can keep the coin and take it to a nearby Pawnshop for more info. Over Chinese takeout, they discuss her interest in the Green Man and briefly get into Gabe's backstory about leaving home and K-State because of his dad's recent religious conversion. Suddenly Gabe's phone beeps and he's gotta run back to start work at the club--inviting Shelly to come see him play some evening.

At home he finds his apartment ransacked...laptop is open to a photo of Gabe with his kid brother Michael. Doesn't appear that anything is missing, so he runs down to work. Later that night Gabe and the club owner repair the door lock. Later still Gabe lies in bed, unable to sleep, so he goes out for a walk...ending up in front of the deli. Suddenly several Pawnshop dudes surround him, one holding a sensor. No coin again. The Proprietor instructs them via Bluetooth to bring Gabe into the shop. At that moment the deli door bursts open and Zeddiker comes out with his arms raised, speaking a foreign language and marching right at the attackers--who flee in great distress. Zed pulls Gabe inside. Again.

Gabe is freaked out and demands to know who those guys are. "They are the scourge of God's earth...but they cannot harm His children." Calming down, Gabe asks about the coin. "Yes, it is mine. And you deserve an explanation...coffee?"

Zeddiker tells the whole tale of the coin and its owner--which we watch in continuous sepia-toned flashback. The coin was a Bar Mitzvah gift to a lad named El'ea'zaros by his father, Chief Engraver for Herod Antipas. Zeddiker speaks in third person to conceal his true identity. We meet El'ea'zaros' older sisters, Marisha and Marska, learn how their parents died when he was 17 and how Marisha spiraled down into prostitution. The boy meets a young local Rabbi named Yehowshua--recongizable from Zed's opening flashbacks as the man writing in dirt near an adultress--Marisha. The Rabbi also is seen casting seven demons from her at a later time. The narrative arrives at El'ea'zaros illness and coma. As Zed reaches the pinnacle of the Lazarus-Come-Forth narrative, he is overcome with emotion and slips into first person. Gabe catches this and is stunned that Zeddiker thinks himself to be the resurrected Lazarus.

It's now almost noon Sunday and the deli isn't open...so Zed makes lunch. While they eat, Gabe asks if the guys who attacked him are connected to the story. "Yes. They are the seven spirits driven from Marisha two millennia ago." Gabe swallows hard. "Demons? What do they want?" Zeddiker isn't sure...mostly they just watch him. Sometimes they can be annoying. "You were in danger the moment you came to work for me." Gabe seeks reassurance: "But you said they can't hurt me." Zeddiker replies: "I said they cannot harm God's children." Gabe: "Which includes me, right?" Zeddiker: "Does it?" Whoa. Lunch is over. Gabe says thanks and excuses himself. Neither of them is pleased with the way their morning ended.

That night Gabe plays with the Glass House Band. During the last set, a gorgeous YOUNG WOMAN in a skin-tight pencil dress enters, sitting down front near Gabe. After the set she approaches him in a seductive manner and says she's heard him play before outside the bookstore. She says he's cute, slips something into his back pants-pocket and playfully kisses him on the cheek. Then she strolls out. Gabe reaches into his pocket and pulls out several crisp \$100 bills. What the--?

Monday morning Shelly is the first Pawnshop customer, asking the proprietor about the coin. When he feigns ignorance and makes a low-ball offer, he does so in a very different voice than we've heard before. A tall ATHLETIC MAN, mid-30s, in an ill-fitting sports coat enters the shop and stands a respectful distance behind Shelly. The proprietor begins to perspire and a look of fear comes across his face--he hands the coin back to Shelly, shields his face with a magazine and rushes into the back room. Shelly shrugs and leaves dissatisfied.

The athletic man locks the door after Shelly, then calls out a name: "Ardad!" The proprietor answers from the back room, using his other voice: "Leave us alone! We have not harmed your precious El'ea'zaros." The tall man is there to assure the Demons that the coin will be returned later that day. ARDAD replies: "Good. Now please leave us--you have no jurisdiction here." The man asks about Andras, but gets no answer, so he leaves. Gabe does, in fact, retrieve the coin from Shelly and return it to Zeddiker later that morning when he reports for work.

Back at the Pawnshop, the gorgeous young woman in the skin-tight pencil dress enters, pulling a rolling suitcase. The proprietor doesn't recognize her until she speaks to him in a male voice. Ardad is stunned: "Andras?" Yep. The suitcase is full of cash. The girl that the demon ANDRAS has "possessed" is from a wealthy family. Andras is a loose-cannon, but he brings in cash...and with this hot female body, he can more easily get close to Gabe. Ardad doesn't like the tactics, but he'll let it play out a while.

Gabe and Shelly are on a "date" at a fancy restaurant. She says she's taking a semester off from NYU to earn some money and research the Green Man mystery--thinking he may have been an actual person. Gabe admits he studied Romance Languages at K-State. But mainly he wants to ask her about Zed's Lazarus delusion. She processes the odd tale with unsettling calm: "I want to meet him next Saturday. Can you take the weekend off?"

MONTAGE OF THE FOLLOWING WEEK

Gabe zips around on his delivery bike;
 Shelly waves to him from the bookstore window;
 The couple pores over stacks of books at a library;
 Shelly comes to hear Gabe play at the club;
 Gabe delivers a sandwich to the gorgeous young woman at a table outside a Village coffee shop--she tips him \$100;
 Zeddiker sits alone in the pre-dawn dark fiddling with the coin;
 Gabe & Shelly eat lunch on a park bench in Washington Square;
 Andras/Andrea tries on expensive women's clothes at a fancy store;
 Gabe at BANK w/\$100 bills; writes "Recording" on DEPOSIT SLIP;
 A demon wearing EARBUDS installs AUDIO/MICROWAVE GEAR on the PAWNSHOP ROOF aimed at Zeddiker's apartment;
 Gabe at the club looks at the CALENDAR with the club owner;
 Demon Chemos exits a cab, enters LAGUARDIA AIRPORT TERMINAL.

Demon/Proprietor Ardad and Femme-Fatale Andras are alone in the Pawnshop. Andras brings up a sore subject: killing Gabe, because "the kid is faithless." Ardad says no: Gabe's under Zed's covering. He reminds Andras that the demons' mission is to "keep the old man quiet", not stir things up. Andras changes the subject: "Where did you send Chemos last night?" Ardad: "He is researching our young trumpeter and will return next week, possibly in a new host."

Manhattan, Kansas. The Malek home. Chemos spies on Gabe's dad, MOM and kid brother, MICHAEL, at their evening meal. Michael looks sullen and irritable, fills his plate, then gets up and heads for his bedroom. Chemos shifts around to the other side of the modest bungalow to observe Michael's room, checking his stash of \$100 bills while waiting. Soon Michael climbs out his bedroom window and ducks into the back alley...trailed by the demon Chemos.

Manhattan, New York. Saturday in the Deli residence. Gabe and Shelly stand silently together facing Zeddiker. It is an awkward moment. The older man strokes his chin, then speaks to Shelly: "In telling you this fantastical tale, did my employee say if he believes I am Lazarus of Bethany?" She hesitates: "He's not sure. He *wants* to believe." Zed isn't making it easy on Gabe, who clearly betrayed a confidence. Shelly summons her courage, saying she's seen the Jewish deli owner at her church several times. Now he recognizes her as the singer of The Apostles Creed at Lord's Chapel and recounts his spiritual ecstasy hearing her lovely voice exalting Jesus Christ. Shelly looks into Zeddiker's face...her mouth hangs open in a dawning realization. "The resurrection and the life..." Her face is a blur of memory and emotion. She reaches out for Zeddiker's hand: "You...*touched* him?"

Shelly's knees buckle and Gabe catches her. She won't let go of Zed's hand, and he is pulled down to his knees. The girl begins to sob deeply. Gabe is nearing panic, but Zeddiker shushes him...stroking Shelly's hand and allowing the waves of emotion to wash over her. After a while she regains her composure, rising and excusing herself to powder her nose. Gabe marvels; Zed replies: "The spirit of Christ dwells deeply in this young woman. She just now was struck that I am a living link to her Savior...it overwhelmed her. I have seen it many times, and I never tire of it." The bathroom door opens and Shelly returns, smiling sweetly: "Mister Zeddiker: you are the Green Man of Rosslyn Chapel."

Ardad, Andras and three other Demon Guys huddle around the Pawnshop PC eavesdropping on the deli conversation. The picture from their rooftop camera only shows the back of Zed's chair, but the audio is catching every word.

Zed to Shelly: "My dear child, you have solved a very old puzzle. I did not think those pieces could fit together without inside knowledge." Shelly confesses that her grandmother Lillian, of Glens Falls, NY, was born a St. Clair. Zed gets it: Lillian is his granddaughter, which makes Shelly his great-great granddaughter.

Back in the Pawnshop Ardad has heard enough, and orders his crew into action. A demon still listening calls out: "They're packing up to travel somewhere!" Ardad isn't alarmed: "Yes, we know where they're going."

1) Chemos in Kansas has discovered Gabe's Romance Language expertise, has dispossessed his "bum" host to possess young Michael Malek. Michael/Chemos gets on a bus back to NYC.
 2) Gabe, Shelly and Zed drive upstate New York to visit Lillian. On the drive up, Shelly asks Zed why he keeps his identity a secret, getting unexpected answers that include the Shroud of Turin, Knights Templar and some Medieval Popes (with flashbacks).
 3) Professor/dad Malek explores the Missing Person's FAQ on the Kansas State Police website.

Grandma Lillian's House, upstate New York. It's sunset Saturday when the deli-ites arrive at the picturesque acreage estate. Turns out Lillian set her granddaughter up with the bookstore job in hopes the girl would "discover" great-great grandpa Lazarus...a speculative plan that only worked accidentally when Gabe entered the scene. We also learn that Lillian has been serving as the administrator of Zeddiker's widespread investment and land holdings...but she's over 80 now and wants her granddaughter to take on the job. Gabe's phone rings: it's kid brother Michael, announcing he'll be in NYC the next night. Whoa. A minute later the phone rings again, Gabe sees it's his dad, so he excuses himself to step outside onto the front porch.

Dad tells Gabe that Michael's gone. Gabe assures dad that Michael is OK--enroute to NYC for a visit. Gabe sees a vehicle stop down by the main road; emergency flashers on. He hangs up and walks toward the road--met by Andras/Andrea. It's an ambush: four demons grab him. Ardad steps up and speaks a Latin phrase--whereupon Andras/Andrea collapses as if shot dead. Ardad speaks again and Gabe stiffens as if struck by lightning. Thus begins an audacious gamble on Ardad's part to have Andras possess Gabe's soul. The young man fights bravely, but quickly realizes he's no match for the Satanic Powers--he calls out for Jesus Christ to help him.

BOOM! Shelly, Zed and Lillian are stunned as the entire house shakes from a nearby explosion. Shelly reacts: "Gabriel!"

Back outside Gabe and six others lay unconscious on the driveway. A tall athletic man, mid-30s, in an ill-fitting sports coat stands among them. Shelly arrives first and kneels beside Gabe. Zeddiker surveys the situation, seems to know what happened and checks in with the tall stranger...evidently an Angel, who reports:

1) that Gabe was attacked illegally and called out for help;
 2) that all six demons were expelled and disembodied;
 3) that Zed should abandon the deli and relocate far away while the demons are busy trying to find and possess new hosts.

Zeddiker says the seventh Demon, Chemos, has possessed Gabe's kid brother and will surely kill Michael without some intervention.

The Angel resists: "No intervention. They possessed him legally. It's not your fight; I can't get involved." Zed protests that the other six spirits are likely to all enter and possess Michael. "Then don't go back to New York." And he leaves.

The six formerly-possessed people follow the Angel down to the van for their ride into town, and thence back home. Lillian brings a blanket for Gabe, who Shelly is shepherding back up to the house.

Sunday morning in Lillian's kitchen. She, Zeddiker and Shelly are passing around and signing documents from a laptop and portable printer. The management torch is being passed. Gabe shuffles in sleepily and everything stops. He walks straight to Zed, embraces him and holds on tight, crying. Presently he turns to face the women with a big, tear-filled smile on his face.

That afternoon, as the trio drives back to NYC, Gabe floats the idea of translating and publishing Lazarus' diaries. Zed says he'll discuss it later: "First tell me about young Michael Malek."

INTERCUTTING between the Pawnshop, where Michael/Chemos arrived late afternoon. To the Deli, where Zed, Gabe & Shelly arrive at dusk, taking care to not turn any lights on. Cut to the Kansas Malek home at night; dad and mom on a laptop tracking Michael's phone via GPS on their family cel-account.

SIMULTANEOUS EVENTS:

- 1) Michael prints out a map to the Glass House, checks the surveillance cameras--no lights on at the deli. He opens a drawer and pulls out a handgun, then retrieves a dusty old book with a pentagram on the cover, opening to a page entitled 'INCANTATIONS'. Six dark shadowy shapes begin to swirl like smoke along the ceiling above Michael's head. He recites from the book, unleashing a violent and frightening scene, as he 'ingests' all six spirits--leaving him unconscious on the floor.
- 2) Professor/Dad online buying a plane ticket to LaGuardia, NYC.
- 3) Zed and Shelly are in a windowless room feverishly working on their laptops. Gabe sits alone copying out scriptures from a large Bible onto a yellow notepad. Presently Zed helps Shelly pack up to escort her home, leaving Gabe to his studies.
- 4) Shelly and Zed arrive at an unknown interior apartment hallway. She hands him her key, he unlocks the door and ushers her in without turning on any lights, crossing to lower the blinds.

Monday morning dawns bright and sunny in the deli residence, but Zed adjusts the blinds to block the sun's rays, explaining to Gabe: "They will not have seven different bodies to spy on us today, but their desperation makes them unpredictable."

The duo prepare for conflict: Gabe is fitted with a light, modern bullet-proof vest beneath a K-State sweatshirt. Apparently no deli employees will be arriving, since Zed called Avi to say the business is closing. The day's plan: Zed will approach Gabe's apartment door until Michael cries out in pain--the demon/host's skin starts to burn within 30 feet of a heavenly being. Then Zed

will back off as Gabe enters the apartment to commence the exorcism. Gabe frowns, double-checks his notes.

INTERCUTTING breakfasts:

Deli: Zed pops bagels into a toaster;

Shelly's apartment: pulls bagels from toaster;

Kansas: mom Malek pours herself a cup of hot tea;

Upstate New York: Lillian pours orange juice;

LaGuardia airport: dad Malek eats an Egg McMuffin at taxi-stand;

Pawnshop: Nobody there. It's empty.

The hallway to Gabe's apartment. Zed gingerly tip-toes toward the door. He arrives, but there is no sound from inside. Weird. Gabe joins him and prepares to enter.

Close-up of a door handle. The door bursts open, wood splinters fly; a young man hurtles into the apartment. Shelly, sitting at her kitchen table, screams in alarm. A large handgun with noise-suppressor appears in her face. It is held by Michael Malek.

Back in Gabe's apartment, Zeddiker stands in the middle of the room, both hands on his head. Gabe sits on his bed, confused: "Where else would Michael go?" Gabe's phone rings--it's Michael. Via video chat Michael--speaking in Andras' voice--reveals Shelly, unconscious, tied to a chair and gagged. Gabe is instructed to come alone to the Pawnshop alone.

Professor/Dad is in a Checker Cab driving into Manhattan.

Zed is driving Gabe to the Pawnshop, but the young man is distraught over Shelly. He says he'll surrender to free her. Zed refutes that: "If you surrender, Andras will kill her--just to see your reaction. Then he will kill you, and by this time tomorrow Michael will be dead. You surrender and everybody dies."

Zed parks his car a few doors down from the Pawnshop. Gabe inserts a Bluetooth earpiece and Zed dials to establish a connection. Gabe exits and heads toward the Pawnshop. Zed walks around a corner the other way.

Gabe arrives at the shop, crouches down to crawl unobserved to the front door. As he reaches up to turn the knob, the door opens and he is pulled inside by Michael--who now has the strength of seven men. Michael holds Gabe in the air by one arm: a muzzle-flash, a gunshot, Gabe gasps and drops to the floor. Not the way he'd hoped this would unfold. Despite wearing a bullet-proof vest, the impact has cracked a rib. Suddenly the lights go out and the loud music stops--Zed's work. While Michael is distracted, Gabe knocks the gun from his hand.

Thus begins an extended, epic battle with Gabe aiming to exorcise the seven Demons from his kid brother by name: Ardad, Andras, Chemos, Lanithro, Gallu, Belphegor and Surgat (these are actual names from Christian demonology). During most of the fight Shelly is tied to a chair in the middle of the Pawnshop showroom...now fully awake and frantically trying to free herself.

The violent struggle includes bullets flying, demons exhaled, Latin recited, damsel threatened, windows smashed, dad arriving, shovels swinging--and culminates in all three Maleks battered-and-bleeding on the floor. In Gabe's woozy brain, the last moments of the fight are interspersed with flashbacks to his idyllic childhood with baby brother Michael, their mother's love contrasted with their father's cold refusal to attend church with them. Gabe sees Shelly recite the last expulsion, followed by Zeddiker's arrival. Then everything goes black.

In that blackness we hear Shelly whispering: "Gabriel? Sweetie, time to wake up." We fade back in to Gabe's K-State apartment, present day. He fell asleep in an easy chair, a stack of parchments on his lap. The Green Man carving and steamer chest are on the floor beside him. Shelley holds a large bag of groceries and walks over to their refrigerator, reminding him that they have to be at his folks' place in an hour: "Michael's home."

Gabe gets up and follows Shelly, wrapping his arms around her waist and resting his head on her shoulder as she unpacks: "Is this still our honeymoon?" She laughs and says classes don't start 'til Tuesday. "Mmmm...I'm stayin' right here 'til then." As Shelly turns around to embrace her sleepy new husband, the camera travels back to the wood-carved Green Man until its face fills the frame.

DISSOLVE TO an identical Green Man, but this one made of stone. It is revealed as part of a patio behind a high-desert bungalow.

TITLE CARD
Sandia Park, New Mexico

A man sits at a patio-table with a cup of coffee and laptop. Over his shoulder, we see him open an e-mail containing a photo of Gabe and Shelly, with Michael, mom & dad Malek happily posing at the dining room table. Camera moves around to show the man's face. Lazarus smiles.

FADE OUT