Florence, Italy

Dan Cahill didn’t realize just how many policemen there were in the world until he became an international art thief.

At this early hour, the Santa Maria Novella train station was crammed with travelers. Businessmen with briefcases, students chugging espressos, tourists with too much luggage, and two teenagers, one with a stolen priceless thirteenth-century book in a backpack.

That would be him.

Dan hung his thumbs on the straps of his pack, hugging it closer to him. He almost felt that Marco Polo’s original manuscript, *Il Milione* — the one that had been lost for centuries until he and his sister had found it hidden in the Colosseum in Rome — was actually emitting heat. Was that why he was sweating so badly?

Or was it the fact that there seemed to be a policeman every five feet?

“Polizia everywhere,” his sister, Amy, murmured.
“They’re checking passports at the boarding platforms,” Dan noted. He watched as a uniformed officer stopped two young students about to board a train. They were older than he and Amy, but the girl had brown hair to her shoulders like Amy, and the boy was wiry like Dan.

At least he and his sister had fake passports and disguises. He couldn’t get used to the sight of Amy in a blond wig, and his heavy framed glasses screamed DORK, or whatever that was in Italian. Il Dorko?

“What we need is a distraction,” Amy murmured. “If they look at our passports too closely, we could be in trouble. We’ve got to get on that train to Switzerland!”

“Because when a deranged psycho gives you orders, it’s important to snap to,” Dan said.

The text had come only a few hours before.

Perhaps you notice that your loved ones continue to accept our Vesper hospitality. This is due to your previous treachery. They will remain our guests until you complete four more tasks. The first of these will be in Lucerne, Switzerland. I suggest you get yourselves there immediately, lest the number of our little party dwindles.

Vesper One
Their enemy Vesper One was a big fan of the mocking taunt. Every word was a thrust to the heart, letting them know that he was holding members of their family hostage and was prepared to kill them.

Dan stared up at the train departures board as if it would hold all the answers. Why was he here, desperate and scared, instead of back in Massachusetts, trying to scam himself out of math homework like any normal thirteen-year-old?

Wherever they turned, headlines screamed the news: *IL CRIMINE DEL SECOLO!* The crime of the century. They had stolen a Caravaggio from the Uffizi Gallery, and now they were on Interpol’s most-wanted list. Which would have been sort of cool if he didn’t have to be afraid of going to jail for ten thousand years.

Lives were on the line. Lives of people they had become close to, including Reagan Holt, Ted Starling, and Natalie Kabra. Twelve-year-old Phoenix Wizard. And people they loved—theyir Uncle Alistair Oh and their guardians, Fiske Cahill and Nellie Gomez. That was the hardest thing to bear. Fiske had disappeared in California, and Nellie had been kidnapped right off the streets of Paris.

The destinations on the board blurred, and Dan rocked on his feet with weariness. He heard the hiss of an espresso machine. Over his head the loudspeaker announced a track change in Italian
and English. Everything seemed to fade a little. “I’m so beat I could lie down right on the floor,” he told Amy. “When was the last time we slept?”

“Day before yesterday?” Amy asked with a frown. “I know what you mean. This is some jet lag. Let’s get a coffee while we make a plan.”

“Oh, yeah, jet lag. That must be it,” Dan agreed as he trailed after her to the espresso bar. “Not the fact that we pulled off a museum heist, went without sleep and food, and oh, yeah—did I mention this—almost got killed? Jet lag. That’s why we’re tired.”

“Well, if you want to get technical,” Amy said, but she summoned up a smile for her brother. She pushed balled-up paper money at the counterman and held up two fingers for coffee.

“I wonder what he wants us to steal next,” Dan said. “I think I maxed out my museum heist skills.”

“If we could just get one step ahead of them . . .” Amy murmured. She took the change from the counterman and handed an espresso to Dan.

He took a sip and his face turned red. He let out a series of explosive coughs, stamping his foot with each one. Passersby turned and stared, and Amy saw a policeman’s gaze sweep the crowd, looking for the source of the commotion.

She grabbed the now-empty espresso cup and put it back on the counter, pushing Dan forward and quickly maneuvering him through the crowd.

“I said distraction,” she hissed. “Not pandemonium.”
“I couldn’t help it,” Dan wheezed. “Dude, what was that sludge I just inhaled?”

“Just Italian coffee,” Amy said. “Look, the train to Lucerne leaves in fifteen minutes. We have to take a chance.”

Dan scanned the crowd. “You know what we need? A—tuba!”

“A what?”

Dan pointed with his chin. Off to their right, a tuba seemed to be floating through the crowd. Dan began to follow it, with Amy trailing behind. Suddenly, it dropped out of sight. Amy and Dan skirted a family running for a train and saw a slender young woman slumped on a suitcase, holding a tuba and crying. A large sticker on a small trunk read WILMINGTON WOWZABELLES EUROPEAN TOUR.

“Distraction!” Dan crowed.

They moved forward, not knowing what they’d do or say but knowing they had the perfect opportunity for . . . something.

“Need a hand with that?” Dan asked the girl. “I happen to have experience as a tuba wrangler.”

She looked up, startled. Her eyes were a warm brown behind her delicate wire-rimmed glasses. She smiled. “Thanks, but I think I have it covered.” Dan detected a slight Southern accent. Suddenly, her eyes filled with tears. “Actually, I don’t! I missed the train, and I have the tuba and all the costumes! It’s all Heather’s fault. She just had to get her last Italian gelato before the train. She told
me to just watch the tuba for *two seconds* and she’d come back. If I don’t make it to Zurich in time, I’m doomed!"

“Hey, we’re going to Switzerland, too!” Dan said.

“You are?” She swiped at her tears. “I’ll miss the concert. My suitcase is with Ms. Mutchnik, and my charger’s in my bag, so I can’t even call them. And I c-can’t speak Italian!” she exclaimed, her eyes wide, as though this was the final awful thing that had happened.

“You can borrow my phone,” Amy offered. “And you could take the train to Lucerne with us and then go to Zurich from there. We can travel together.”

“Really? That would be so awesome! Europe kind of freaks me out, y’all, to tell you the truth,” the girl confided, leaning toward them. “I’ve never traveled much.” Awkwardly, the girl struggled to her feet. She stuck out her hand. “Vanessa Mallory, from Wilmington, South Carolina.”

“Mark Farley,” Dan said, remembering the name on his fake passport just in time. “This is my sister . . .” His mind was a blank.

“Caroline,” Amy supplied. “But you can call me Carrie! We’re from Maine,” she improvised.

“It’s so awesome that I bumped into you,” Vanessa said, shouldering one of the bags.

They hurried to the track and got in line behind a wealthy-looking woman with a large trunk and several suitcases. She was dressed in a fur coat and hat, even though it wasn’t that cold. She spoke sharply to the police
officer at the train door in rapid Italian. He shrugged.

Finally, the line moved forward. Amy pulled the Wowzabelles trunk, and Dan grabbed the tuba.

“On your way to a concert?” The policeman smiled. Vanessa nodded. “We’re on a European tour,” she added proudly.

“And what is a Wowzabelle?” he asked.

“Awesome singers,” Amy said, handing over her passport.

Dan waited while the policeman scrutinized the photo, comparing it to Amy. Then he reached for Dan’s.

It seemed to take long seconds before he handed back the document. He ticketed the trunk. “This will go in the oversize compartment—pick it up in Zurich. Welcome aboard.”

Only Dan heard Amy’s long sigh of relief as they boarded the train and found their seats, stowing the tuba overhead.

Dan glanced out the window. A man in a raincoat was talking to the friendly policeman. He had a nose like the beak of a raptor, and his dark hair looked as though he’d blow-dried it with an airplane propeller.

Dan looked away, checking out the station, but his gaze snapped back. He didn’t know why, exactly. Maybe because the man wasn’t showing the officer a ticket or a passport, he was just leaning in, talking to him. And all the while his gaze swept the station.

Detective, Dan thought, as the policeman pointed to the Lucerne train.
The man scanned the windows as he walked alongside the train. Dan shrank back.

He nudged Amy and tilted his head.

“Can I use your phone, Carrie?” Vanessa asked Amy. “I really need to call Ms. Mutchnik.”

Vanessa leaned forward for the phone, and Amy crashed back against the seat. Now shielded by Vanessa, she was able to watch the man as he moved, his gaze on the windows.

The train started with a lurch. They saw his face briefly as they slid past him. He started to run as he tried to catch up and jump aboard. Had he seen them? The train accelerated, and he was left behind on the track. Dan and Amy exchanged a relieved glance. He could have been just a guy who missed his train. But somehow Dan didn’t think so.

“I’m perfectly fine,” Vanessa was saying. “The Farleys are awesome—they’re from Maine, which is, like, the nicest state ever. I have Heather’s tuba, I have the costumes, and I even have a sandwich. No, you
don’t have to meet me at the station . . . oh, whatever. No! Don’t call my parents! I am so incredibly fine. . . .”

As the city of Florence receded, Dan felt himself relax. He and Amy had learned during the hunt for the 39 Clues to grab rest when they could. He yawned. The slight sway of the train reminded him of his grandmother Grace’s hammock on the lawn on a warm September afternoon, back when he had nobody chasing him, and nobody missing, and nobody to save. He felt as though he could finally sleep.

The hand came out of nowhere. Dan almost scissored out a powerful kick but was glad he didn’t. Did breaking a conductor’s kneecap get you thrown off a train in Italy?

The guy said something in Italian. Then the English penetrated Dan’s foggy brain. “Ticket and passport. We’re crossing the border.”

“Oh. Sorry.” Dan handed the conductor his ticket.

“Grazie.”

“De nada,” Dan said.

“That’s Spanish,” Amy whispered.

“No, it’s whatever,” Dan said. “I’m too tired to think.”

“You guys slept through Milan,” Vanessa said.

“Jet lag,” Amy said. Her phone buzzed. By now Dan recognized the sound. It was the special phone Vesper One had sent to them, the phone that he used for his text messages. The DeOssie secure smartphone
that was used by spies and soldiers. Vesper One had reconfigured it so that they couldn’t reply to his messages.

He could always get to them. They could never get to him. The guy didn’t play by the rule book.

Vanessa stood up. “I’m going to find some snacks. Anybody want anything?”

“Anything crunchy,” Dan said. He handed her a couple of euros. “But if you can find American potato chips, we’ll be friends forever.”

She flashed a grin. “I’ll work my mojo.”

As soon as Vanessa started down the aisle, Amy scrambled for the phone in her pocket.

Lucerne is such a great place to shop. While you’re there, can you pick up a de Virga mappa mundi for me? Don’t worry, you don’t have to gift wrap it. I need it soon, though. Four days from now, bright and early. Or else.

“I wish this guy would stop making jokes,” Dan said through gritted teeth. “And giving ultimatums. Do you know what de Virga mappa mundi means? Sounds like a pasta dish.”

“Mappa mundi means ‘world map,’” Amy said. She tapped out a quick text to their research team at the comm. center back home in Attleboro, Massachusetts. In a large attic room they had banks of computers,
an array of handhelds, and sleeping quarters. They even had their own satellite, the Gideon. Amy had spent a fortune on a communications bunker in case something like this happened. She wasn’t paranoid or psychic. Just wicked smart.

RECEIVED NEXT TARGET: DE VIRGA WORLD MAP.

In less than a minute, a reply came from her boyfriend, Evan.

GOT IT. ALL OK?

OK FOR NOW Amy tapped back.

Then she plugged the words de Virga map into the search engine on her smartphone.

“‘The de Virga map is a medieval map of the world that was created in Venice between 1411 and 1415,’” she read to Dan. “It was discovered in Croatia in 1911.” Amy frowned as she scrolled through the information. “Then it went missing for good, right before it was going to be put up for auction in Lucerne in 1932. It was withdrawn from the auction and nobody ever saw it again. Well, that explains why Vesper One directed us to Lucerne. We should head right for that auction house and see if we can get access to their records.”

Dan frowned. “But how can we find a map that disappeared almost eighty years ago? That’s impossible!”
“Haven’t you gotten it yet?” Amy asked. “We’re expected to do the impossible.”

Dan looked at her bleakly. “And we’re expected to do it fast.”

The train slowed, then stopped. Dan pressed his face to the window. “What’s going on?”

“It’s okay,” Amy said. “When we cross the border, sometimes they change personnel.”

Dan watched as a group of train conductors left the small building and headed for the train. He relaxed back into his seat.

Then he shot forward again. Trailing behind the men and woman was a man in a shabby raincoat. A man with messy hair and sharp eyes . . .

“It’s him,” Dan told Amy. “He caught up to us. He’s going to board the train!”

“I bet he’s Interpol,” Amy said, biting her lip. “We passed so far, but I don’t know if we’ll get by the international police force.”

“Where is Vanessa?” Dan wondered. “She’s our cover. I never thought I’d say this, but snacks just aren’t that important!”

Just then the door at the end of the car opened. The man in the raincoat entered. He followed closely behind a train official, who politely asked a couple for their passports. Dan twisted and saw Vanessa heading down the aisle, her hands full of bags of chips and pretzels. She squeezed past the man and the train official.

Vanessa waved the bags at them cheerfully.
“Whew,” Dan said. “She’s back. Are you ready to be a Wowzabelle? I’ll take the tuba, and maybe you can pretend to be asleep . . . we might fool him. How’s your South Carolina accent, y’all?”

Amy gripped Dan’s wrist. “That’s it!” she exclaimed. “Something has been bothering me about that girl. When we first met her, do you remember how she introduced herself?”

“Sure. ‘Hi, I’m Vanessa Mallory.’”

“‘Vanessa Mallory from Wilmington, South Carolina.’ Wilmington is in North Carolina.”

Dan slowly turned to look at Vanessa. She was now blocked by a couple with a baby. Impatient to get by, she tried to help them with their stroller. Dan noted the tight, angry look on her face as she snarled a remark at the parents. Suddenly, her pretty face looked hard.

Suspicions started to flip through his brain like someone shuffling a deck of cards. Why had she been so friendly? How come she’d agreed to travel with them so quickly? It had seemed like they’d been the ones to approach her and offer to travel together, but did she set herself up to be approached?

They’d been played. By a tuba!

Amy grabbed her backpack. “Come on. We’ve got to get off this train.”
“It hurts,” Nellie said.

“I know,” Reagan said. “No pain, no gain.”

“Do you think they made that expression up for bullet wounds?”

If Nellie expected Reagan Holt, Olympic-level triathlete, to lighten up on her, she was dreaming. Nellie and Reagan were two hostages standing in a bare concrete bunker, but they might have been in an expensive health club for all the focus Reagan was bringing to the session. She’d refused to acknowledge that Nellie’s bullet wound was any big deal (“Oh, please, it was more like a graze.”), refused to concede that without proper equipment they couldn’t train (“We’ve got a wall and a floor, don’t we?”), and dismissed the idea that Nellie could be too weak to try (“There is no try. Only do. Yoda said that, and he was awesome.”).

“Pain is pain,” Reagan said. “Gain is gain. If you
don’t rotate that shoulder, it will freeze up, and you’ll be no help to anybody.”

Nellie wanted to rotate it into Reagan’s chin for a nice, satisfying sucker punch, but she knew her tormentor was right. She rolled her shoulder, letting out a hiss of pain.

Fiske Cahill winced and looked over at her sympathetically. In his jumpsuit he looked so pale and thin. She was used to seeing him in black jeans and sweaters, an elegant bohemian. Natalie Kabra stared vacantly at the same spot on the wall she’d been looking at for the past twenty minutes. Nellie was still waiting for Natalie’s natural gifts as a schemer and a fighter to kick in. So far, no such luck. Alistair Oh lay back on the sofa, his eyes closed. In some ways, Nellie thought, the isolation and deprivation were hardest on Alistair.

No . . . they were hardest on Phoenix Wizard. Phoenix sat on the floor cross-legged, only a few feet away. He stayed close to Nellie now. He was only twelve years old and he missed his mother. He wouldn’t say it out loud, but Nellie could see every bit of the sorrow and fear he was experiencing in his liquid brown eyes. She winked at him, then made a face behind Reagan’s back. He grinned.

“You’re doing great, Gomez!” Ted Starling cheered her on. He couldn’t see her, but he could hear her grunts and hisses, Nellie knew. Ted had developed
phenomenal hearing since he’d lost his sight. He always sat in a chair near the door, just in case he could pick up noises from outside. It was Ted who had determined that they must be underground.

“That’s it. Gently now,” Reagan said to Nellie. “We’ll move on to the hard stuff tomorrow.”

“This . . . isn’t . . . the hard stuff?” Nellie spit out through gritted teeth.

Reagan grinned. “You really hate me right now, don’t you?”

“Immeasurably.”

“Good. Give me ten.”

Nellie sighed. Her shoulder felt stiff. It ached. Her stomach felt empty. Whoever was preparing meals for the hostages had a rudimentary grasp of cooking. Peel potatoes. Boil. Serve. Nellie’d been enrolled in a cooking course in Paris when she got seized. She’d been about to enjoy a crisp, buttery croissant and a café au lait at her neighborhood café . . .


Nellie pushed against the wall. She straightened her arms, then went forward again in a modified push-up.

“Excellent,” Reagan said.

“Ow,” Nellie grunted.

“Only nine more and you’re done.”

Reagan had dropped to the floor and was doing push-ups.

“Five . . . nine . . . ten!” Nellie said. She sank down against the wall, resting her head against it.
“I think,” Reagan said as she moved up and down like a piston, “we should all have a plan to keep in shape.” She jumped up and clapped her hands. “Okay, listen up, people. It’s time we set up an organized schedule for exercise.”

Alistair opened his eyes. “My dear, I haven’t exerted myself in years.”

“Then it’s way past time to start, old man.”

“I think it’s a good idea,” Ted said. “We need to keep our muscles active. And our minds. They’re trying to play with our heads. Classic stuff. Strip us of our identities, not let us know what time it is . . .”

“Feed us carbs,” Natalie said.

Nellie rolled her shoulder again. She felt perspiration break out at her hairline. She hated to admit it, but Reagan was right. They had to be prepared. There were things they could do.

“I’m going to work on individualized training plans for each of you,” Reagan said. “This is going to be awesome!”

Alistair closed his eyes. “I was right,” he said. “This is hell.”
Amy and Dan moved quickly through the train, adapting their gait to the gentle swaying motion. They passed through the doors into the next car and then the next. Amy glanced behind nervously. The conductor was moving swiftly. Behind him she saw the inspector. Had he seen them? Was he following them?

“We’ve got to find a place to hide!” she hissed to Dan. “He’s gaining on us!”

Dan pointed to a door marked bagaglio. “Remember that the guy said there was a place for oversized luggage?”

“But it’s got to be locked.”

Dan was already fishing in his backpack. He took a long, slender piece of metal and slipped it between the lock and doorjamb. He leaned in and wiggled it.

“What are you doing?” Amy hissed. “And whatever it is, hurry!” She glanced over her shoulder. The inspector was only a car away.

The door popped open and they quickly slipped inside. The small space was crammed with items:
bulging overlarge suitcases, trunks, boxes, and a pet carrier with an orange cat that hissed at them angrily.

Amy leaned against the door and waited for her heartbeat to slow. “Since when can you pick a lock?”

“Remember when you paid that security expert to give a seminar at our summer gathering?” Dan asked.

For the past two summers, Amy had gathered together the Madrigals, the under-the-radar branch of the Cahill family, at their mansion in Attleboro. After the race for the 39 Clues, the cousins who had been with Amy and Dan at the end—who had stood together to stop the Clues from falling into the wrong hands—all became Madrigals.

Amy had taken it upon herself to train them. She had also invited experts in all kinds of fields—rock climbers, computer software engineers, race car drivers, cryptologists—to give short seminars. She’d presented it in the spirit of fun, but she had a deeper purpose. For the past two years, she’d been preparing them for this. She and Dan had tangled with the Vespers before, and she’d known in her bones they’d be back. She’d dreaded it.

Only a few months after they’d returned from the Clue hunt, Fiske and Nellie had told them about a ring that the Madrigals had protected over the centuries. They’d gone to Switzerland with Fiske to pick up the ring from Grace’s Swiss bank. There, the Vespers had stalked them. One of them, Casper Wyoming, had
almost killed them. She never wanted to look into his cold eyes again.

She touched the black-faced Swiss watch on her wrist. The watch face now contained the ring. Hidden in plain sight. At least she could keep that safe.

“I remember,” she said. “Lawrence Malley. He was an expert in security systems.”

“Aka Lightfinger Larry.” Dan grinned. “He was also wanted in five states.”

“Great,” Amy groaned. “I sent you to a tutorial with a crook.”

“It got us in here, didn’t it?”

“I guess I’m grateful to him, then,” Amy said doubtfully.

“Don’t be,” Dan said. “The first lock I opened was on your diary. Don’t worry, I read two pages and fell asleep.”

Suddenly, they heard voices outside. Amy and Dan froze. A voice spoke in rapid Italian. The doorknob rattled. Amy looked around frantically, but there was no time to hide.

More Italian. Amy heard the word chiave—key.

A smack against the door, as if someone had slapped it in frustration. Then footsteps heading away rapidly.

“We’d better get out of here!” Amy whispered.

“Sure, but they can do the heavy lifting.” Dan pointed to the large leather trunk of the fashionable Italian lady they’d seen at the station. “Are you thinking what I’m thinking?”
“I hope not,” Amy said. “Because that would be a huge problem for me.”

Dan was already using his metal device on the lock. It sprang open, and he lifted the lid. He began to toss out piles of ski clothes, shoes, dresses, and sweaters.

“What are you doing?” Amy asked. “This place looks like the mall during prom week.”

Dan dug into his pack and came up with a multi-tool gadget. It had a hammer/pliers device on the top and a variety of knives and cutters concealed in the handle. “I bought this baby while you were looking for a charger for the DeOssie phone,” he said. He began to use a tool to drill discreet holes in the trunk. “Nice trunk, but it’ll be better with breathing holes.”

“Both of us are going to fit in there?” Amy asked. “I don’t think so.”

“No, you’re going in that,” Dan said. He indicated a long nylon bag. Amy unzipped it and saw a snowboard.

“In here?”

“It’s just until we get on a luggage cart. Then we’ll get out. It’s the only way. Look.” He shook the luggage tag with the printed destination at her. “‘Engelberg.’ These are both getting unloaded at the next stop.” Amy swallowed. Suddenly, the long black bag looked like a coffin.

Just then they felt it: the smooth deceleration of the train. There was no time to think of something else. Quickly, they stuffed the clothes behind a pile of suitcases. Dan climbed into the trunk.
Amy stuffed her pack and Dan’s in the bottom of the bag, then quickly slipped into it. She felt the snowboard digging into her back. “But what if—”

He shook his head. “We don’t have time for what ifs. We haven’t for a long time.”

She looked into his intent green eyes. He was right. They had burst through all their what ifs long ago, starting with the worst one of all.

*What if Grace dies?*

*What if we can’t find the clues?*

*What if we get caught?*

*What if we get killed?*

Either things happened or they didn’t. All you could do was deal with it.

Dan closed the trunk lid and Amy wiggled one hand out and latched it, then zipped herself into the bag. She closed her eyes and breathed. The air felt stuffy and she placed her mouth as close to the hole as she could. She felt the train come to a smooth stop. Footsteps approached in the corridor outside. She heard the door open.

She heard someone enter the car and circle it. Even the footsteps sounded careful . . . like the person would miss nothing. . . .

“Niente,” someone else said impatiently.

*Niente* . . . nothing. She was relieved to hear the train conductor argue something about the schedule. She could pick out random words in Italian, that was all.
She felt herself being lifted and tossed onto the luggage cart. The impact shuddered through every bone. Suddenly, she realized that other suitcases might be tossed on top of her. Maybe even the trunk! She panicked and reached for the zipper just as the cart began to move.

Her heartbeat tripped double-time. She was rolling now, and a bump told her she was off the train. She felt the rumble of the wheels. Then the cart stopped.

She eased down the zipper and tried to peer out. All she saw was hard blue sky. She felt the chill of mountain air. She eased the zipper down a bit more.

The train attendant was stepping back onto the train. A porter exited the Engelberg station, hurrying to meet the fashionable older woman surrounded by her suitcases. A young guy in a bright nylon jacket jumped off the train behind her—the snowboarder, Amy guessed.

The inspector stood on the step of the train, coolly surveying the station. Waiting to see if they’d disembark, she guessed. Any moment the porter would head this way to collect the bags.

Amy dared to unzip the bag a bit more. She could feel the sharp gaze and the stillness of the man just standing, looking . . . waiting.

Some late-arriving passengers hurried to board the train. The fashionable lady pulled out her cell phone and then pointed to the luggage cart, signaling
to the porter that the large trunk was hers.

The train whistle blew. Go. Go. Go . . .

The train began to pull out, its speed way too slow for Amy.

She lifted her head slightly so that her eye was just above the zipper. The inspector still gazed out at the platform. At last he turned away and slipped back inside the train. With trembling fingers she unzipped the rest of the bag and wriggled out, then grabbed the packs and quickly zipped it back up. She was shielded from the porter by the stack of suitcases. She eased over to where the leather trunk lay and flipped the latches.

The trunk didn’t open.

The lock in the middle had been clicked. The porter must have done it on the train.

“Dan!” she whispered frantically. “Can you hear me?”

“Open it!” She heard a thump as he kicked the top.

“I can’t! It’s locked!”

“Stick it!”

“Stick it?”

“Not stick it! Pick it!”

Amy glanced over quickly. The lady in the hat gestured for the porter to hurry. The young man had stopped at a vendor and was paying for a sausage roll. She had seconds before the porter would come for the trunk.

She dove for Dan’s backpack. The slender piece of metal lay right on top of his rolled-up T-shirts. She
stuck it in the lock and wiggled it. Nothing happened.
“It’s not working!”
“Wiggle it!”
“I’m wiggling!”

Desperately, she reached for Dan’s multi-tool. She shoved the metal pick between the lock and the trunk. She held it steady, then brought down the hammer with all her strength.

The lock blew. Springs rolled along the platform. The lock pinged as it hit the concrete.

Dan peeked out. “That’s one way to do it.”

“Come on!” Amy yanked on his arm, pulling him out, and slammed the lid shut. In another ten seconds, the porter would be there. “As soon as he sees the broken lock, he’ll start asking questions. They could arrest us for stealing those clothes!”

Dan looked around quickly. “We’ve got to cross the tracks to the other platform.”

They heard the sound of a whistle as a train began to roll into the station.

Amy paled.

“And we have to do it right now!” Dan grabbed his pack and shoved Amy’s at her. She felt the vibration of the oncoming train under her feet.

A train began to slide into the station. They jumped onto the track. Amy felt as though she were moving in slow motion. All those months and months of hard training didn’t seem to help her legs move when fear was draining her of strength. The people
on the opposite platform turned slowly to look, their mouths open.

Dan pulled at her hand hard and she leaped the last few inches onto the next platform as the train roared into the station. The blast of air against her neck made her shudder.

She bent over double, catching her breath. The waiting passengers stared at them, shaking their heads.

“Guten tag,” Dan said cheerfully, and waved.

“We’d better get out of here before we attract any more attention,” Amy murmured.

They quickly left the station and walked toward the center of town. “Let’s contact Sinead and Ian,” Amy suggested. “We can circle back to the station and catch a commuter train to Lucerne in a bit.”

“Don’t forget Evan.” Dan batted his eyelashes at her. “Oh, Evan, I missed you so…”

Amy ignored him, but inside she felt the instant flood of warmth that was caused by just hearing Evan’s name. On the train, she had resisted the impulse to type I miss you.

Mostly, she missed talking to him and texting him without other people hearing and reading what she said. All of their text messages to each other were now public property. Evan was no longer just her boyfriend. He was practically an honorary Madrigal. He’d been enfolded into the group because of his tech knowledge, and he’d been invaluable so far.
They found a wooden bench under a stand of pines and sank onto it gratefully. For the first time, Amy realized that they were in an astonishingly beautiful place. The mountains rose above them, already white with snow. The town was picture perfect, with timbered buildings and roads free of cars.

“Why does Switzerland look like one big cuckoo clock to me?” Dan asked.

“Because you have no soul,” Amy answered. “One of these days I’m going to come to a place like this and actually enjoy myself.” She tugged at the blond wig on her head and stuffed it in her pack. “Wow, I’m glad to get rid of this.”

Dan took off his glasses with fake lenses. “So who do you think that Vanessa Mallory was?” he asked. He fished out an apple from his pack and bit into it. “A cop?”

“She could have been working with the guy in the raincoat. It’s hard to say.”

“Better contact Attleboro. They might have a clue for the clueless.”

Amy put her phone on speaker with the volume low and added a video feed so that they could see each other.

Sinead’s face appeared on the screen. “Ames! I’m so glad you called. We weren’t sure what happened to you.”

“Sorry. We fell asleep on the train. Then we ran into a little trouble.”
Sinead frowned. “Where are you now? Are you all right?”

“We’re fine. Some little ski town close to Lucerne. We’re catching the next train.”

Suddenly, Sinead was shoved out of the way, and Ian Kabra filled the screen. “That’s enough chit chat. Listen, we have news. We’ve got a Vesper ID for you from Cahills in the field. Erasmus did a cross-check and confirmed it. Vesper Six is Cheyenne Wyoming.”

“Cheyenne?” Amy asked, her heartbeat speeding up. “Any relation to Casper?”

“Cheyenne is his twin sister. But I have worse news. Casper is definitely still alive.”

Amy glanced at Dan. He looked as pale as she felt. Just hearing Casper’s name brought back the fear.

Dan swallowed. “Bummer. And the guy has a twin? That’s just wrong.”

“I’m sending a photo to Dan’s phone.”

Dan reached for his phone. “Bring me the face of evil,” he intoned.

“Any more information you can give us on the de Virga map?” Amy asked.

Sinead entered the frame. “We’re checking some Cahill contacts in Switzerland. We think you should definitely start at the auction house where it was last seen.”

“That’s where we’re headed.”

Dan held up his phone. “Meet Cheyenne Wyoming.”
Amy stared at the picture of a striking blonde. “Never seen her before,” she said.

Dan studied the photo, then gave a start of recognition. “Oh, yes, you have,” he said, bending over his smartphone.

“Amy?” It was Sinead. “I’m going to turn off the speaker. Evan wants to talk to you privately.”

Amy turned off the speaker and pressed the phone to her ear.

“I just wanted to have a moment alone,” Evan said. “Every time I talk to you, it feels like the whole world is listening.”

Hearing his murmur, Amy felt as though Evan had just enveloped her in one of his comforting hugs. “I know,” she said softly. “I was thinking the same thing. I’m so sorry that you got dragged into my mess. You didn’t sign up for this.”

“I did sign up for this,” Evan said. Across the many miles, she heard the firmness in his voice. “You’re in trouble. Do you expect me to just walk away?”
“I wouldn’t hold it against you if you did.”
“I know you wouldn’t. That’s only one of the reasons I’m crazy about you. I’ve got a million more.”
“Just a million?” she teased.
“Okay, a million plus one—your cat.”
She giggled. “You’re bonding with Saladin?”
“Somebody has to protect that cat from your cousin Ian. And I even feed him. The cat. Not Ian. He’s on his own. Anyway, if that doesn’t get me Perfect Boyfriend status, I don’t know what will.”
“Emptying the litter box?”
“Hey. I have my limits.”
Amy laughed. She had the phone pressed to her ear so tightly it burned. She closed her eyes, picturing his face. . . .
Ian’s crisp voice broke in. “All right, lovebirds, let’s move on. No offense, but I believe Amy and Dan might need a short course in style and class.”
“Is this the nonoffensive part?” Dan asked. “I can’t wait until you really insult us.”
“Let’s deal with reality, shall we? You don’t just walk into an auction house in your jeans and backpacks. You have to blend in. And that’s going to be hard.” Ian sniffed. “Considering that you’re Americans.”
“What are you talking about, dude?” Dan asked. “This is my best SpongeBob T-shirt.”
“Exactly my point,” Ian said. “An auction is a place of taste and refinement. If you barge in looking like . . . well, you . . .”
“I get your drift, Ian,” Amy said, cutting him off. “Do you know the most exclusive shop in Lucerne?”

“Of course. Here’s an idea,” Ian said. “Video your trip to the store, and I can advise you. Or else you’ll emerge looking like a mushroom, and Dan like he just rolled out of bed.”

Amy sighed. Just when she started to almost like Ian again—after all, he’d flown across the ocean and had been working around the clock to help—his snob quotient went through the roof.

She felt a sharp elbow in her ribs. Dan thrust his phone in her face. He had imported the photograph into a sketch program on his phone. He’d colored the bright blond hair brown and the eyes dark. He’d added a beauty mark above Cheyenne Wyoming’s lip.

Amy gasped. It was Vanessa Mallory!

She quickly told the others what Dan had figured out. “But why was she tailing us?” she wondered.

“Vesper One wants to keep tabs on us,” Dan said. “What else?”

“Remember, it’s in his best interest to keep you two out of jail,” Evan pointed out. “Maybe he sent her to make sure you got over the border.”

“It’s still creepy,” Amy said.

“Speaking of creepy, she probably knows where you are right now,” Evan said. “I’ve been looking at the manuals for the Vesper phone. I’m guessing that there’s a GPS embedded in it, too.”

Amy shivered as she glanced at the few pedestrians
walking by. Was Cheyenne watching them right now? Was Casper?

“Can we dismantle it?” she asked.

“You don’t want them to know that you know it’s there. But you can learn how to turn it off and on. You’ve got to be careful—it’s got to look like satellite disturbance.”

“Let Dan do it,” Amy said. “He’s better at these things than I am.”

She handed Dan the Vesper phone. Dan tossed his apple core into the bushes. He pried off the back of the Vesper phone and listened to Evan.

“Yeah, yeah, I got it. Then what do I . . . oh, gotcha. Cool. Awesome! Take that, V-One!”

“Can we turn it off for a bit?” Amy asked.

“I think you can get away with it,” Sinead said. “Just get to Lucerne as soon as you can. There’s an auction at three. That can give you cover.”

“Got it.” Amy snapped the phone shut. She almost wished she didn’t know about the GPS.

That meant that Vesper One could get to them anywhere. Anytime.