In Gary's latest, he says that every once in awhile, a baseball game comes along that is so transcendental that it makes every other sport look lame by comparison. Saturday night's game ALCS game between the Indians and the Red Sox was just that game. And that it laid the groundwork for last nights thrilling victory, which has the team one more win away from starting to eat away at the will of a Red Sox team that looked pretty cocky after game one.

Baseball, as Indians manager Eric Wedge likes to remind us, is a very difficult game. It's why he tends to resist the opportunity to upbraid his players, at least publicly, when they fail to perform. Indeed it's why Wedge steadfastly stood by his team during this middle of the season when they otherwise looked like they were on vacation, at least from hitting.

The tendency, of course, is to dismiss Wedge's assessment of the game as an excuse to cover for the mistakes that get made. If that's true, that's fine. Part of a manager's job is to have the backs of his players during the lean times. But Wedge issues that reminder as often as necessary predominately for one reason: it's true.

Of all the professional sports, baseball seems to be the easiest to play to the causal fan. Unlike football, there are few if any instances of all nine players ever having to move in concert at one time to accomplish a singular goal. Unlike

basketball or hockey, most of the time the players seem to be just standing around waiting for something to happen. Americans, in general, like their entertainment like they like their people-direct and with as little subtlety as possible. In that respect baseball will always suffer in comparison. You have a round bat, a round ball and you have to hit it square.

But every once in awhile, a baseball game comes along that is so transcendental that it makes every other sport look lame by comparison. Saturday night's game ALCS game between the Indians and the Red Sox was just that game. It set the table for Monday night's victory and for all that will follow as the Indians continue their march toward the World Series.

Unfortunately, those who know that game only by its final score will never appreciate its beauty, drama and suspense. They'll also never fully appreciate why this Cleveland Indians team deserves a special place in their hearts and minds.

By now, of course, everyone knows the story line. After about five hours of play, the Indians broke a 6-6 tie, scoring seven runs in the 11th inning and completely letting out whatever air remained in Boston's Fenway Park. While this was dramatic enough, it pales well in comparison to all that took place before it.

This Cleveland-Boston series features all manner of intrigue all of which was on display this past Saturday. The starting pitchers, so feared because of their reputations, were not able to contain the bats of their opposition. There was hand-wringing, of course, every other inning or so when David Ortiz and Manny Ramirez came to the plate. Not only couldn't they be stopped, they couldn't be contained. And who knew how important a seemingly innocent ground out in the top of the 6th inning that scored Jhonny Peralta would be?

But once Peralta scored, the game was locked into an endless loop of near misses and as Saturday night turned into Sunday morning, it was hard to imagine it would ever end. The fact that it did end and in such grand style for the Indians had nothing to do with luck, karma or any other such cosmic phenomena. It came down to heart.

Start, for example, with the very first inning. After the beat down of the night before, the easiest thing for the Indians to have done, knowing they were facing Curt Schilling, was lay down. Not intentionally, to be sure, but it would have had the same effect. Instead, Grady Sizemore, who took the collar the night before, started it off with a hustle double and came home on Victor Martinez's double. It sent a message to the Red Sox that what happened on Friday night stayed on Friday night.

Boston, of course, is nobody's weak sister. With Fausto Carmona struggling with his control, the three runs the Red Sox scored in the bottom of the third was no more of a surprise than how they scored them, mostly at the hands of Ortiz and Ramirez.

Ramirez, the displaced Clevelander by way of Washington Hts. in New York City, is quite a study. He is a testament to all that can be accomplished with a spotless mind. He could stand in the middle of a hurricane and eat a sandwich. Completely

unfazed by the circumstances or enormity of any situation, all he does is hit, with his bat, your bat or a waffle bat. And if he's not hitting, he's still scaring the bejeezus out of opposing pitchers anyway. Whereas Alex Rodriguez has a sensitivity meter with a hair trigger, Ramirez suffers no such burdens. It's why Ramirez will always perform whatever the setting and why Rodriguez will always struggle particularly when the stage gets bigger.

The third inning should have and could have buried the Indians, particularly with Schilling on the mound. But Schilling was not able to perform one of the most important tasks a pitcher faces: shut down the opposing team after your guys have just put a crooked number on the scoreboard. Following singles by Martinez and Ryan Garko, Peralta hammered a 3-run home run to temporarily give the Indians the lead, 4-3.

Though Carmona did struggle, his ability to hold Boston in the bottom of the fourth inning after the Indians had just taken the lead was bigger than most even recall at this point. It didn't work out so well in the fifth for Carmona, but getting out of the fourth was critical.

Like a boxer temporarily staggered, the Red Sox were able to regain the lead in the fifth, thanks in no small measure again to Ramirez. But by the time Franklin Gutierrez's chop grounder

allowed Peralta to tie the score in the top of the sixth, it was obvious to all that this was a team that wouldn't die. No matter where the Red Sox pounded the wooden stake, either they were missing the heart or, more likely, the heart of this team was just too big to be stilled.

If the Red Sox had any doubts about that at all, they were silenced in the bottom of the 10th. With Ortiz, Ramirez and Mike Lowell coming to the plate and reliever Tom Mastny on the mound, there were few fans in either city that gave the game much of a chance to make it to the 11th inning. Even when Ortiz grounded out to Peralta, that still seemed the most likely outcome.

But all Mastny did was retire Ramirez and Lowell on harmless fly balls to right field. That momentum shift turned into the onslaught by the Indians in the top of the 11th and is what, ultimately, tied this series at one game apiece.

Every game is ultimately the sum of its separate parts and often the mini-dramas that brought about

that final result get lost in the mix. And even if they do in this case, there is a major takeaway not to be missed. This team has heart and it has it in spades. The strength, character and will, all sports synonyms for heart, that it takes to prevail in such circumstances is widely talked about it but rarely witnessed. But when it's there, it's awesome in its power.

It directly led to Monday night's victory, not by momentum but by shear force of will. It propelled Jake Westbrook to reach down to find something that had been missing for most of the season. It pushed Kenny Lofton's hit over the right field wall. It's the reason Rafael Betancourt was able to squeeze still another magic inning out of his tired arm. It's why the Indians will win this series.

It's one thing not to be favored in a series or being forced to play in an unfriendly environment. It happens to every team. Simply overcoming those

odds is not, in and of itself, much of a deal. But overcoming adversity whatever the circumstances and with limited experience in dealing it is a much different issue. Not only did the Indians not let Friday's demoralizing loss carry over to Saturday's game, neither did they let the gut punches within the two games derail them from the mission at hand.

The Indians have had more talented teams in their existence that have accomplished much less. By winning on Saturday and again on Monday this team already has gone beyond expectations that were reasonable to make in the first place. The only thing that's left is to finish the job. Don't bet against them.