

Fortune & Fate

by
Jesse Bernstein

EXT. ROC ISLAND - DAY

GREY SMOKE FILLS OUR VIEW.

We DESCEND into it... and find we are ABOVE A ROCKY PLATEAU dotted with BOULDERS and dozens of six-foot tall NESTS, each filled with EGGS the size of a toddler...

... the area around the nests seems to SPARKLE as if from a thousand stars...

...and as WE CONTINUE TO DESCEND, we see this sparkle is from the THOUSANDS OF DIAMONDS AND JEWELS that litter the ground.

Crawling among this treasure trove is an international band of modern-day PIRATES AND MERCENARIES. They shove fistfuls of jewels into bags, pockets, even down their shirts and pants.

They work quickly, fueled by something more than greed -- a sense of danger.

Among them we find REIS (40s), the crew's fat first mate.

REIS
(loud whisper)
Quick as you can, now!

Near him, a young VIZIER (magician) uses chalk to write glyphs on small stones that he then tosses into the air, where they BURST INTO GREY SMOKE. The smoke expands around them like a fog, hiding them from any watchful eyes above.

Reis is about to go back to his own gathering when something - *someone* -- catches his eye:

ONE MAN is not scooping up diamonds. We see him only from behind, but two things we quickly note: his clothes (a unique mix of boating-apparel-meets-REI) and the mysterious, EMERALD-GRIPPED GUN at his hip.

The Man manipulates an ancient-looking variation of a sextant, checks its readings against a small map. He disappears around one of the large nests...

Reis, curious, follows.

At the far side of the nest, The Man stops. Eyes the ground.

He pulls a maglight from his pocket and passes the beam over the diamonds at his feet. Suddenly, from under a pile of jewels, A PURPLE LIGHT BEGINS TO GLOW. The man crouches down, and in the purple light we get our first glimpse at the face of:

SINBAD CHALACK. A modern-day incarnation of that famous sailor. Mid-to-late thirties, stubbled, swash-buckling and cool. Indiana Jones meets Danny Ocean.

His eyes shine with a light of their own -- "Gotcha."

He digs among the jewels and at last pulls out a TWENTY SIDED DIAMOND the size of a man's fist. Its purple glow fades.

REIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The Tupelo Diamond!

Sinbad spins, alert, as Reis stumbles out of the fog:

REIS (CONT'D)
(excited whisper)
That is the Tupelo Diamond -- !
We shall be *rich*, Captain! Richer
and more powerful than --

SINBAD
"We" nothing, Reis.

Sinbad shoves the diamond into a pouch and cinches it shut.

REIS
But, Captain, don't be *greedy*! That
diamond is worth more than ten men
could spend in ten lifetimes.

SINBAD
I've been looking for this for
twenty years. It's worth more to me
than money.

REIS
(not listening:)
First, we kill the crew --
(then, realizing:)
What do you mean? A thing like that
-- to simply sit in your
collection?!

SINBAD
Reis, you've got enough diamonds in
your pockets for you to propose to
all of your girlfriends and still
have some left over to give to
their sisters.

REIS
Listen to me, Sinbad --

But they're interrupted by an agitated MERCENARY rushing up to them --

MERCENARY 1
Captain Sinbad!

ELSEWHERE AMONG THE NESTS:

The SMOKE IS THINNING as several of the crew crowd near one of the nests, straining to see up into it. Sinbad and Reis arrive.

SINBAD
What's going on -- ?

Over the rim of the nest comes the crew's pockmarked Quartermaster, MARSEI (early 30s, lean and wiry). In his arms: one of the giant eggs.

SINBAD (CONT'D)
Marsei -- are you insane? Put that back!

Ignoring him, Marsei jumps to the ground, starts stuffing the egg into a large bag.

Sinbad yanks him up by the arm -- their eyes lock --

-- suddenly there is a PREHISTORIC ROAR from above. Everyone freezes in fear -- even Sinbad. All eyes turn skyward.

MERCENARY 2
... The roc...

REIS
The smoke -- it's lifting...!

ON THE VIZIER: his smoke-stones used up, he's now on his hands and knees, stuffing diamonds into a pouch. Absorbed in making up for lost looting-time that, he's missed the first roc cry -- but he definitely hears THE SECOND ROAR!

A WIND blows away the last of the protective smoke -- a wind generated by the giant batting wings of...

THE ROC. Creatures twice the size of a man, with avian heads and wings but leathery bodies. Huge talons. Beaks and teeth.

This incursion into their territory has them pissed.

They attack --
-- living dive-bombers, tearing men to shreds --