

Eldorado

by

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Based on Edgar Allan Poe's poem.

FADE IN:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

War! Shields and swords shine with the dazzling glint of reflected sunlight, as steel clashes against steel and roaring battle cries fill the air.

A sword pierces a knight, who's shoved backwards. Till the sword protruding out of his back impales another knight.

The sword is pulled back. Both knights fall to the ground, revealing the attacker: SIR ECHELON (30's), soaking wet with blood, shoulder pierced by an arrow - he sweeps the horizon with his knifelike stare.

Knights finish off their dying opponents on the ground and the sound of clashing steel slowly dies.

ECHELON
Reform the line!

An army starts lining up in rows behind him.

The sound of a horse galloping. Echelon turns. A horse stops by him. The RIDER carries a scroll.

RIDER
I have an urgent message, my lord.
From the Queen.

Echelon takes the scroll. A shadow covers him. And the rest of the army. Something's blocking the sun.

All eyes look up to the sky. And go wide.

Echelon yanks the rider down, squats, raises his shield to protect them both from --

A dense arrow-storm pelts upon the army as...

Under the shield, Echelon's eyes race across the scroll.

QUEEN (V.O.)
Sad news falls on the kingdom, Sir
Echelon. After a 30 year search,
Sir Wishart returned empty handed.

EXT. FIELD - SUNSET

The blazing sunball hides behind the horizon, black silhouetting a lone rider.

QUEEN (V.O.)
Another Seeker must be appointed at
once. For our need is greater than
it has ever been.

Echelon rides away from the battlefield - clenched teeth, he pulls out the arrow from his shoulder.

QUEEN (V.O.)

We've fought this war for two
soldiers' lifetimes and our gold
reserves are running low...
We must find it. You must find it.
You shall be the next Seeker.

INT. DARK CHAMBER - NIGHT

Candlelight casts a warm glow on a blank parchment. A quill dips into an inkwell.

SIR WISEHART (80's), spiritless eyes, writes as a candlelight casts his flickering shadow on the wall.

WISEHART (V.O.)

Failure. Coward. Accusations fly
fast in the kingdom's winds. And
more shall come. I can feel it.

Like a ghost, Echelon appears out of the shadows, pressing his sword against Wisehart's neck. Who smiles a bitter smile. And keeps writing.

WISEHART (V.O.)

How long will it be before someone
asks me --

ECHELON

You found it, didn't you? You found
Eldorado.

WISEHART

I found lots of things. But not the
City of Gold.

ECHELON

I heard a lot about you. You're not
of the kind that gives up.

WISEHART

I'm not of the kind I used to be.

ECHELON

Really? Which kind are you now?

Wisehart grabs a tattered book. Offers it to Echelon.

WISEHART

Here is your answer. An account of
my experiences during my journey.
They could help you in yours.

Echelon sheathes his sword.

ECHELON

If you did not find the city, how
would your experiences be of help?

Wisehart leaves the book on the table.

WISEHART

How many men are you taking?

ECHELON

I ride alone.

WISEHART

No one rides alone in the quest for
Eldorado. You will be followed.

ECHELON

By whom?

Wisehart smiles. And offers him the book again.

ECHELON

I will write my own memories once I
find the city.

Echelon leaves. But his shadow on the wall stays! Wisehart
stares at it, not surprised. The shadow lets out a soft hiss
before leaving too. Wisehart opens the book. And writes.

WISEHART (V.O.)

And so... Another Seeker sets out
to find Eldorado. Soon, treacherous
rumors will poison his mind.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Echelon drinks from a wooden cup as pale female TWINS with
rotten teeth whisper to his ears, one at each side of him.

WISEHART (V.O.)

For he seeks what no eyes could
ever see. And ignorance drives the
pestilent tongues that speculate.

Echelon. Hypnotized by the whispers: loud, penetrating
hisses, like the voices of a hundred snakes.

WISEHART (V.O.)

It is said that King Fiendrick has
found the city. And that he is
secretly mining its gold.

His eye. Retinal blood vessels become visible. Forming a web
that turns into a...

DENSE THORNY THICKET

where a dark robed Echelon carrying a bow, sprints, jumps, ducks and puffs as he bullets through, crossing slices of moonlight that bleed through the thicket canopy.

WISEHART (V.O.)

Many a knight was sent to spy on the king. Many wonder where do the royal carrier falcons go. And what messages do they carry.

He glances up at the sky as he keeps running. Remiss of the sharp thorns that scratch his cheek. Shoulder. Leg. Arm.

WISEHART (V.O.)

Only the king handles the carrier falcons. And they fly too high and too fast to be followed.

He shoots one more glance at the sky before reaching a...

CLEARING

where he knee-slides across the grass, as his hand grabs an arrow from his quiver, eyes glued to the sky where...

A falcon crosses the full moon.

He raises his bow. Eyes narrow. And shoots --

An arrow pierces the night sky with a razored whistle. Hits the falcon - it lets out a strident shriek and plummets down.

Hitting the ground with a sick THUD. Echelon kneels by the falcon. Retrieves a small scroll tied to its leg.

His eyes race frantically across the text. What he reads, knots every muscle in his jaw.

WISEHART (V.O.)

Fools. Fiendrick's falcons carry many dirty secrets. But not Eldorado's location.

He crumples the scroll. Throws it away.

MONTAGE

Echelon rides through a dark, misty forest with strong sunbeams penetrating through the tree canopy.

WISEHART (V.O.)

Dead end after dead end. That is the Seeker's path. But it is the Seeker's oath to never stop looking.

Echelon (50's) rides along a muddy road, under heavy rain.

WISEHART (V.O.)
He shall travel the world till it
seems too small for him.

Echelon (60's) plods through a swamp.

WISEHART (V.O.)
He shall face and defeat many
enemies.

Echelon (70's) climbs up a snowy mountain path. A wolf jumps at his throat - he unsheathes his sword and slices its head off.

WISEHART (V.O.)
But there is one foe he won't
defeat. That no knight could ever
defeat. The shadow that follows
him. The shadow of Death.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Echelon (80's) sits by a bonfire - its flickering flames cast his shadow on the stone wall. The shadow suddenly stands!

Echelon's eyes go wide as he notices.

WISEHART (V.O.)
And once there's nowhere else to
look, and no one else to ask...

ECHELON
Shadow... Where could it be, this
land of Eldorado?

If a Cobra could talk, it would sound pretty much like:

SHADOW
Ride gallant knight, ride towards
the Valley of Shadow, if you wish
to find the land of Eldorado.

EXT. VALLEY OF SHADOW - DAY

Echelon rides towards a misty valley. A wicked storm brews in the horizon, lightning spitting from every cloud.

WISEHART (V.O.)
A pilgrim once asked me if Eldorado
really existed. To which I replied
"Of course it does... as long as
someone keeps looking for it".

Echelon disappears as he is swallowed by the thick mist.

FADE OUT.