

Fool's Gold

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CINDY'S BAR AND GRILL - EVENING

A handful of cars and pickup trucks dot the dirt parking lot. Looks more like a restaurant than a bar.

INT. CINDY'S BAR AND GRILL - CONTINUOUS

Dim lighting and thick smoke make the ambiance of this hole-in-the-wall. Mismatched tables and chairs speckle the floor and booths line the walls.

Two DRUNK MEN stand on a small stage, prop each other up. They rock back and forth as they sing into their microphones - "I got you babe."

About ten MEN and WOMEN occupy some of the tables. BILLY (40s), thin man with a five-day-old beard dressed for winter, sits at a booth.

MARK (30s), portly and tired looking, sits across from Billy.

BILLY

Wow.

Billy's eyebrows show his amazement, as Mark finishes off the last bite of his burger. Mark licks his fingers.

MARK

What?

BILLY

That has to be the fastest I've ever seen a burger disappear.

Mark wipes his mouth with his sleeve.

MARK

Thanks.

Billy snaps back to business. He pushes the document holder to the side of the table with one hand, a map is in the other.

BILLY

Okay. Our camp is here.

He leans over the table, points to the map so Mark can see.

MARK

Yeah.

Billy's finger traces along the paper.

BILLY

Here is where we need to be tomorrow. Exactly at noon.

Mark slurps his soda down. He pauses.

MARK

How do you know it is noon here?
Maybe, it is supposed to be noon
east coast time?

Billy contemplates this, but then can't believe he just did.

BILLY

The map is from this area.

MARK

Oh.

Billy composes himself.

BILLY

Now, where was I?

The door to the bar swings open, helped by the wind.

An OLD MAN, 80s, slowly walks in, cane in hand. He is Native-American, wears a heavy coat, old boots, and a bandanna around his neck.

The Old Man waddles to an empty chair at a table.

Billy jumps up and shuts the door. The Old Man looks back at Billy and nods his head.

The Two Drunks finish the song. The sparse CROWD intermittently claps. Billy returns to the booth.

MARK

Do you think there will be a lot of
climbing?

BILLY

Why? Worried you won't make it?

The concern on Mark's face quickly changes to a smile.

MARK

Uh, no. I was worried about you,
being old and all that.

BILLY

Thanks for your concern, but I'll
make it fine.

Billy returns to the map and studies it. The Old Man gets up from his chair and makes his way to the stage.

A MAN IN THE CROWD sits at another table with some other men. He yells at The Old Man.

MAN IN THE CROWD

Not again. We don't want to hear
your stories.

The Old Man continues, unfazed. He relies on his cane to help him amble up on the stage.

Mark taps Billy on the arm.

MARK

Hey, look up there.

Billy looks up from the paper toward the stage, but returns back down in concentration.

BILLY

I have to figure the timing out.
The old man is least of my worries.

The Old Man pulls a bar stool that is on the stage over to him. He sits on it and pulls the microphone close.

OLD MAN

The Ancient Ones see all things.
Nothing happens without it being
foretold.

The Man in the Crowd is now more agitated.

MAN IN THE CROWD

Someone get him off there.

OLD MAN

The white man comes to take all
things from us, and give nothing in
return.

Billy again traces the page with his finger. He strokes his chin - deep in thought.

BILLY

You need to pack plenty of water.

Mark's gaze is locked on the Old Man on stage. He doesn't respond to Billy.

BILLY

Okay?

Mark is still fixated on stage. Billy notices. He slaps Mark's arm. Mark snaps back, not happy.

MARK

What the... I'm just listening to
the Indian.

BILLY

Right now, you need to listen to
me. We can't get the gold unless
we follow this exactly. We need to
get to...

The Old Man comes out of his long pause.

OLD MAN
This is what they say about...

BILLY
Zapata Falls.

OLD MAN
Zapata Falls.

Mark and Billy look at each other, then to the Old Man on stage. He stares at them.

After what seems like an eternity, Billy continues.

BILLY
Looks like the gold is in the
stream at the base of the falls.

On stage, the Old Man continues.

OLD MAN
Two men will search for gold.

Mark listens to the Old Man on stage. Billy breaks the spell again.

BILLY
Hey. We need to concentrate here.
We only get one shot at this. We
can listen to old Indians all day
long when we get the gold.

MARK
Okay. Sorry. Base of the falls.
Go ahead.

BILLY
We wait until the park ranger is
done for the day.

The Old Man continues in the background.

OLD MAN (O.S.)
One man looks with his eyes, but
loses his head.

BILLY
We will hide until the coast is
clear, then make our way to the
falls.

OLD MAN (O.S.)
The other man will find the gold,
if he looks with his feet.

MARK
Do you know exactly where it will
be?

BILLY

No, but it can't be that hard to find.

OLD MAN (O.S.)

Finding the gold is easy --

MARK

I just hope we find enough. I need to get out of this mess I'm in.

The Man in the Crowd has heard enough. He makes his way up to the stage.

BILLY

Yeah, I am barely keeping my head above water.

OLD MAN (O.S.)

Keeping it or your life, that's the hardest decision to make.

The Man in the Crowd, now on stage, grabs the microphone from the Old Man.

MAN IN THE CROWD

Thank you very much for that...
NOT.

Men in the crowd boo and cat call. The Old Man gets up from the stool and makes his way off the stage.

Mark and Billy watch the commotion.

MARK

They sure aren't very nice to the old man.

MAN IN THE CROWD

We're here for some karaoke, aren't we?

CROWD

Yeah.

BILLY

It won't matter after tomorrow. Let's get out of here. We need some rest.

Mark and Billy get up from the booth. Billy throws some money on the table.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - ZAPATA FALLS - EVENING

A PARK RANGER looks around, then walks away from a cave entrance. His flashlight illuminates the pathway as he goes.

Billy and Mark emerge from the bushes. They creep up to the steam running from the cave entrance.

Billy leads them through the cave entrance.

INT. CAVE - ZAPATA FALLS - LATER

Billy stands in front of the falls, stares in a trance. Mark follows and taps him on the shoulder.

MARK

Look. This is it.

He points to the base of the falls. Billy turns.

BILLY

Yep, let's get it before the Ranger gets back.

Mark jumps in the steam. He fishes around with his hands.

MARK

I think I see something between these rocks.

He struggles. Turns to Billy.

MARK (CONT'D)

I need to get under these rocks.

Mark takes a deep breath and goes under water.

He strains to reach between the big rocks, they come loose.

His head is crushed.

BILLY

MARK.

Billy jumps in. He pulls on Mark, but his body is stuck. He tugs on him multiple times.

Billy gives up the fight.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Mark.

He pauses, shakes his head. Then, his head snaps up.

BILLY (CONT'D)

The Indian. Loses his head. One gets with his feet.

Billy struggles to remember. He moves to the side of the stream at the base of the falls.

He sits, removes this shoes and socks. He puts his feet in the water.

Moments later, he pulls his legs out. Gold nuggets between his toes. He does this multiple times.

He throws the nuggets into a bag he brought.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - ZAPATA FALLS - EVENING

Billy comes out of the cave alone. He pulls the bag up tight.

From behind --

WHACK!

The Old Man from the bar stands over Billy's body as it lays on the ground.

He has a stick in his hand. He picks up the bag.

OLD MAN

You should have listened to me.

As he walks away --

WHACK!

The Man in the Crowd from the bar stands over the Old Man's body, stick in his hand.

MAN IN THE CROWD

I DID. Every freaking night.
Thanks.

He picks up the bag and walks away.

He whistles "I got you babe."

FADE OUT: