

GOLD FEVER

Written by

The Monster

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INT. HATCHBACK CAR DRIVING DOWN HIGHWAY - DAY

LIVIA, 30s, flips through her cell looking at all the missed calls from various collectors and lawyers. She puts her high end phone into her Gucci purse. Staring out the window, she grimaces and utters a stressed SIGH. ARI, 28, notices.

ARI

I know it hurts. That is why I have a surprise for you.

LIVIA

I don't see how digging in dirt is going to help me. I don't want to work. I need money. Lots of it. Fuck those cavorting cock consuming collectors!

ARI

This will get your mind off of it. You will get to see why I like gold panning. I find it calming, relaxing and exciting.

LIVIA

What's so exciting about specs of dirty gold?

Livia unconsciously rubs her diamond encrusted gold chain.

ARI

It is the thrill of finding colour in your pan. Where hard work can payoff. Usually the payoff is the thrill of seeing specs in the pan. But sometimes, you get something meaningful or strike it rich.

LIVIA

Sounds lame.

ARI

Maybe you will get lucky and find a nugget. Big nuggets are worth thousands of dollars. An ounce of gold is worth about three thousand. It's basically free money. We just take the gold to a refinery once we have enough. They test it, smelt it and pay cash. It's tax free baby!

Ari grins and winks at Livia. She grimaces, turns her head to watch the forest undulate by. The car zooms down the highway.

EXT. DIRT ROAD BY A RIVER WITH JAGGED ROCKS PROTRUDING - DAY

Ari is walking away from the car with buckets, pans, shovels and a satchel. Livia, displeased, struggles to get the camping gear out of the trunk. She yanks the backpack out and stumbles back. As she closes the hatch, she sees a can of gold spray paint roll towards the back of the trunk.

ARI
(growing excitement)
Come on!

He drops the equipment by the river. Livia drops the backpack and reluctantly walks over.

ARI (CONT'D)
The key to finding gold is knowing
where to look.

LIVIA
In the ground?

ARI
Yeah... something like that. You
gotta read the river. Look at the
terrain. Look to see if there is
bedrock exposed. Look over there.

They look and see bedrock going into the river and large boulders with gravel and sand between them.

LIVIA
Those are rocks. I don't see any
gold there.

ARI
That is where we dig. That is where
we find the best gold. Real gold.

LIVIA
Uh... that's too much work. I'll
just watch.

ARI
I thought you might say that so
just watch how I do it and you will
see. It's fun.

Ari scoops dirt by the river's edge, fills the pan with water and shakes it vigorously until he is almost out of dirt. Bit by bit, he washes the dirt out until he has black sands. He swirls the water gently with tapping the side of the pan to reveal a few flakes of gold.

LIVIA
That's it!

ARI
Just try it ok! You dig there.
Where the sandy part is. It will be
easy for you. I'll get you started.

Ari goes to the sandy spot by the river's edge. Survey's the area first and shovels dirt into the pan and fills it with water. Livia reluctantly starts swirling.

ARI (CONT'D)
Just shake the pan side to side and
then scoop up a little water to
pull the dirt off.

She does as instructed. Little by little the dirt is removed. Big chunks of jagged gold begin to appear. Livia's jaw drops.

LIVIA
Is is... that gold!?

Ari smiles warmly and gestures to keep going. Livia begins breathing more heavily and the shaking of the pan reveals even more gold. She squeals excitedly.

LIVIA (CONT'D)
How much did you say per ounce?!

ARI
About three thousand.

Excitedly she jumps up and down yanks the spade shovel out of his hands and puts another scoop into her pan.

ARI (CONT'D)
Whoa whoa whoa! You gotta finish
getting rid of the dirt first
before putting in another scoop.
The secondary pan is where you keep
your gold and concentrates.

Livia starts panning furiously. Ari smiles warmly.

ARI (CONT'D)
I will pan over here by the rocks.

Livia's phone RINGS. She pauses. Phone RINGS.

LIVIA
Shit!

ARI
Just ignore it.

She doesn't listen and goes to her Gucci purse and pulls out her phone.

LIVIA
Hello... What do you mean you can't get the collectors off my back? I owe how much plus that much interest? What! They can't take my house and my assets. What am I paying you for. You're supposed to be the best lawyer for this!

Livia's VOICE fades into the distance as she walks towards the car.

Ari continues to pan. The water reflection on his face as his eyes light's up. In the pan, a heavy concentration of round gold pea size nuggets mixed with chunky fine gold.

ARI
Honey! I have something to tell you. But first, let me show you...

A PANG! Ari falls face forward into the river hitting his temple on a jagged rock. His pan and contents fall into the river. Standing over him is Livia holding a shovel.

LIVIA
Oh shit! Shit shit shit.

She paces back and forth. She looks at Ari face down in the river and she looks and the gold she dug up. She starts digging a hole but it is too hard for her as there are too many big rocks. She shoves and rolls Ari into river.

A crazy look in her eyes as watches Ari slowly float away. Frantically, she goes back to her sandy spot digging up lots of gold and piling it into the spare pan.

She empties most of the contents in her purse and stuffs it with gold. She poorly hides all the other stuff.

She looks in the wheel well where Ari hid the car keys. She drives off hurriedly as the sun begins to set.

INT. SMELTING FOUNDRY - DAY

Dirty with her now dirty Gucci purse she approaches ZACK, 50s, and plunks down the purse.

LIVIA
I have some gold to sell. Lots of
gold. Is it true it is three
thousand per ounce.

ZACK
Actually it is three thousand five
hundred per ounce.

Excitedly she pours out the gold. Zack examines it.

ZACK (CONT'D)
You have rocks there. They are
worthless.

LIVIA
What! You just trying to steal my
gold you crook!

Zack pulls out a rock hammer. Livia takes a step back. Zack
smashes one of the gold rock and it shatters into pieces to
reveal the interior is rock.

ZACK
See. Just rocks. Someone tricked
you. Gold is generally smooth or
rounded.

LIVIA
Smash another.

Smash after smash including the fist sized ones all reveal
that they are rocks.

ZACK
Sorry. They are worthless.

LIVIA
It can't can't be. I I...

Livia walks away and drops to her knees upon realizing her
circumstances. SIRENS in the background come and go. She
drops to her knees shaking and sobbing.

Zack just looks at her confused.