

DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

Written by

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FADE IN.

SUPER: ENGLAND, SPRING 2020

EXT. MANSION GROUNDS - DAY

As though someone is descending through the clouds, an aged estate comes into view. The land and gardens are vast where paths wind through topiary and hedges trimmed with precision. The layout is exact and uniform except...

Unruly vines sprawl over archways and random wildflowers, that will not be contained, spill out of their precise plots and pop up in odd places in the grass.

An archway leads to a view of a muddy pond with shoots breaking the surface. Spring flowers surround it's edge and lead to an open patio by a stunning and clear swimming pool.

Through the doors is a spacious interior with masculine classic antiques and taxidermy set perfectly, yet, oddly contrasted with eclectic pieces that seem disjointed.

INT. MAIN FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

NALINA (52) the Latin housekeeper, passes through the hall, her long, thick, brown hair perfectly rolled and pinned at the nape of her neck, head high. Her apron is impeccably pressed. She carries a tray with port and 4 crystal glasses as she enters the great room.

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

The room has high ceilings and a large masculine fireplace with mantle. On it sits a life-sized picture of a handsome MARCUS ALPORT(62) in fine, but eccentric clothes. He has a soft smile and mischievous glint in his eye. He holds a lotus.

There are other lotus details in the decor from pillows to carvings in the wood, fabric, etc. They mix in with other paraphernalia including several fog horns in varying sizes. Nalina sets down the tray on an ornate side board.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

It took 30,000 and most of the year
to make. But that's how it goes
with cremation diamonds.

CLARENCE(66), a dignified executor holds open an ornate box with a large diamond.

Looking on is a seated RICHARD (66) relaxed, wearing a crucifix on a chain around his thick neck in his casual but fine suit, his long legs crossed, fingers folded.

ANDY (50) fit, hair long, sits near him wearing unusual, but stylish, zen looking attire adorned with samsara symbols.

Last is VICTOR (62) slight and serious in a formerly high-end suit complete with gold cufflinks fashioned after the scientific atheism symbol.

Nalina expertly pours port into the glasses. She seems invisible to the men, except for Clarence. They never look at, nor acknowledge her. This happens throughout their conversation as she serves them and tops up their drinks.

Clarence sets the box down on a small circular stand positioned at the center of the half-circle of men.

CLARENCE

It's the carbon from the bones and hair that make the diamond. He saved all the hair he could for years to make it bigger. Andy WHISTLES and reaches ...

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

No touching please. Only the winner of the diamond may do so.

RICHARD/ANDY/VICTOR

Winner?

CLARENCE

Yes,

Clarence pulls out a paper and sealed envelope from his pocket. He reads ...

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

"Since the favorite activity of my friends and I is to argue ..."

RICHARD/ANDY/VICTOR

Debate!

CLARENCE

"... to argue, we shall have one last hurrah before settling my estate. In this sealed envelope
(Clarence holds it up)

(MORE)

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
 is a question. You shall judge
 whose argument is strongest and
 that individual will win the
 diamond. This ..."

ANDY
 Oh that will be fun.

VICTOR
 How long have we got?

CLARENCE
 ___ minutes. But there is more.

VICTOR
 We might as well get this out of
 the way first.

CLARENCE
 But...

RICHARD
 I agree.

ANDY
 Me too.

CLARENCE
 I think ...

VICTOR
 (not taking no for an
 answer)
 We insist.

CLARENCE
 Very well.

Clarence opens the sealed envelope. In shaky handwriting are
 the words, WHERE AM I NOW? He grins and readies his watch. He
 places the card down.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
 Begin.

He starts the time. The friends peer at the card. Andy bursts
 out LAUGHING.

ANDY
 Where am I now? Right there in the
 box!

VICTOR
 Agreed.

RICHARD
Well, his body is.

BEAT.

CLARENCE
So ... Three-way tie?

They all look at each other.

RICHARD
We should go deeper.

ANDY
Yes.

VICTOR
I maintain he's in the box.

RICHARD
I disagree.

ANDY
So do I.

VICTOR
Reason?

RICHARD
His body and "him" are two
different things. You can't
discount the soul.

ANDY
Nor atman.

VICTOR
There's no proof there's atman or
souls.

RICHARD
The bible says spirits arose after
Jesus's resurrection.

ANDY
Everyone's atman transmigrates.

VICTOR
The Bible's translation is flawed
and reincarnation is the byproduct
of Plato's philosophical musings.

ANDY

No, his are just the first known mentions of the subject.

RICHARD

Based on philosophy, not visits with deity.

ANDY

That doesn't make them false.

RICHARD

It doesn't make them true either.

ANDY

Well, I submit that Marcus believed it. Look at how he uses the lotus in his decor. A symbol of enlightenment, rebirth.

RICHARD

I thought it stands for purity and virtue.

ANDY

Actually its beauty.
(thinking)
Or is it a name?

VICTOR

We're off topic. What's your answer to the question?

RICHARD

His soul is in heaven.

VICTOR

Really? I thought according to your Bible he might be somewhere else.

RICHARD

Why would you say that?

VICTOR

The Phillips merger?

RICHARD

He said sorry.

VICTOR

How about Barbados? Columbia? The diamond mines ...

ANDY

Oh, and him singing Lady Marmalade
when he streaked through ... Nalina
plugs her ears.

RICHARD

Ok, he might be in purgatory.
But either way his spirit is
residing in a world of spirits.

ANDY

He's simply reincarnated and
learning new lessons.

VICTOR

Like what? How to moo because now
he's a cow?

ANDY

Do not disrespect the cow!

RICHARD

Maybe instead of mooing he's
learning the art of wooing.

VICTOR

Wooing?

ANDY

Where did that come from?

RICHARD

He said once his greatest regret
was a servant girl.

ANDY

A servant?

VICTOR

His father would've put a swift end
to that!

RICHARD

Apparently he did.

CLARENCE

Gentlemen, I think it only fair to
warn you that this is a winner
takes all situation.

RICHARD/ANDY/VICTOR

What?

CLARENCE
That's what I was trying to tell
you. The winner of the diamond wins
the entire estate.

ANDY
Everything?

VICTOR
All 1.34 Billion?

CLARENCE
And all of this.
(indicating around them)
Yes.

RICHARD
I thought he was splitting it three
ways?

ANDY
So did I!

VICTOR
(to his friends)
Quiet!
(to Clarence)
Restart the time!

CLARENCE
I'm not permitted.

VICTOR
Why not? You're in charge!

CLARENCE
I follow my client's instructions
to the letter. You have __ minutes
left.