[Now back to your regularly scheduled programming!]

(sand + wind ambience)
(WoW casc ambience either amb_desertenchanted_day03 OR **forestsnowday**)
(SUPER melodramatic reading)

I met a traveller
from an antique land who said;
Two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand in the desert.
Near them, on the sand, half sunk - a shattered visage lies.
Whose frown, and wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
tell that its sculptor well those passions read
which yet survive.
Stamped on these lifeless things;
the hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal, these words appear;
"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings.
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains.
Round the decay of that colossal wreck,
boundless and bare, the lone and level sands
stretch far away."

(laugh with like a pht sound)
Pffft like what?

Anyways I'm gonna talk about Pirates now.
(first track from Make Up, 3.55 secs length)
(INTRO: Miharu Koshi - さりげなくジンジャーエール)

Alright, certified freak seven days a week;
What **A**re **P**irates?

Let's start with etymology and work back from there.
The English word Pirate comes from the Latin word Pirata (pee-rahta), Sea Robber,
which in turn comes from the Greek word Peiratēs (pay-rah-tiss) - meaning one
who attacks ships. Fittingly, much of the first writing regarding Pirates
originated in Greece. Even though piracy as a practice has existed since humanity
first took our commerce to the sea, and the oldest records of Piracy are from Egypt,
it didn't come into its own as a well documented, ubiquitous profession until about
the 12th century B.C. in the big G and for a while it was actually perfectly
respectable to be a Pirate within Grecian culture. Uh, there are tons of references
to Piracy at the time as like a regular person thing to do. It was like - declaring
you were a Pirate was the same as telling someone you work as an HR File Clerk
or a cashier at Yogurtland or something. Alas, how the tides must turn, the era of
normal pirate time couldn't last forever, and as Greece came into its Classical
Period, public opinion, in particular the opinion of high ranking politicians and military
leaders, shifted to viewing Piracy as a disgraceful and eventually downright evil trade.
Which sort of worked in curbing its popularity, or at least the public admittance
to it, but had the adverse effect of elevating Pirates to an almost folk-hero status in
the eyes of any who had cause to detest the power structures fighting to supress them.
Well before Pirates made their way into our fiction, they had
already become conduits of the populous' resentment of the powers that be -
a vague idol of rebellion one could honor quietly from the shore
even if they were still regularly selling your neighbors into Capital S for
the price of a used 1992 Civic EG Hatchback. As time went on, this cognitive
dissonance became easier to maintain, and by the time we reached the Golden
Age of Piracy, a period of time from the 17th to the 18th century wherein
pirates left their greatest mark on both written history and our pop culture,
one thing had become abundantly clear. Stories about Pirates are cool as shit.
Books detailing their adventures, both fiction and non-fiction,
began flying off the shelves in every store that could stock them.
In fact, our entire image of pirates, the reason so many were able to ascend
to a sort of sainthood within our story-telling, is attributed to a single book
published during this time. Captain Charles Johnson's A General History of the
Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pyrates - published in 1724.
At the same time this new demand for tales of roguish adventurers in
far-off lands was taking the West by storm, French archeologist
Antoine Galland (on-twan gya-lon) had just completed the first European
translation of the most iconic collection of written tales on the planet.
The One Thousand and One Nights.
The translation did ***numbers***. So many that by the end of the century
the Nights could be read in German, Italian, Dutch, Danish, Russian, Flemish, Polish,
Yiddish, and English - among others. Galland (gya-lon) was credited with ushering
in an entire era of Fantasy story-telling within France. It was huge.
Its many characters rapidly became part of the foundations of 18th century
Pop Culture and beyond; Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sinbad being chiefly
among them. 300 years later, Sinbad would grace the silver
screen in one the greatest Pirate movies of all time.
And barely anyone would see it.

The year is 1992 and the House of Mouse just dropped their 4th film in a run of back
to back bangers that would later come to be known as the Disney Renaissance.
A little gem called Aladdin, maybe you've heard of it. On top of being the highest
grossing animated film of all time upon its release, Aladdin was also the first Disney
film to cast a traditional celebrity in a starring role. Something that would come
to cause a great deal of division between the company and Robin Williams because
he didn't really want to be used to sell the movie and especially didn't want to be
used to sell its merchandise, going so far as to stipulate the limitation of the use
of his likeness in his contract. But, Disney being Disney, they did it anyways.

(I'd like to thank Jeffery Katzan-bug)

We won't get into that here, Lindsay Ellis has an excellent video on it
that you should check out if you haven't. The point is even though Katz did our
boy dirty there was no going back. The stage had already been set. Gone were
the days of animated features containing casts of conventional voice talent,
and so began the era of selling animations with star studded billings.

Shortly after its release, the writers of Aladdin - Ted Elliot and Terry Rossio - began ssssssschemin on a new flick for Jay Rock's kingdom. "If one adaptation from the Thousand Nights had worked", they thought, "why don't we try another?" A decade later, what they had come to write would finally see the light of day as Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas - a certified hood classic. And the tremendous charm it posseses extends even to its very origins as a production. See, in July of that year, Disney, under Jeffrey Katzenberg, had announcedtheir plans to the public to adapt the voyages of Sinbad into a theatrical feature. But 2 years later, in 1994, Katz was forced to resign from his seat as chairman of the company and leave. Immediately turning around to sue Disney for 250 big ones and using the settlement to bankroll his new studio; DreamWorks SKG.
Basically ever since, it's been a running joke within the animation community that DreamWorks has lifted or at the very least taken a lot of creative inspiration from its contemporaries at Disney and Pixar due mostly to the inherent bitterness in its foundations. And this isn't helped by the fact that Katzenberg did almost nothing but make enemies at both of these companies for like 20 years straight. Uh - an infamous example being when Katz had allegedly heard the entire original plot and approach of an upcoming Pixar film, A Bug's Life, from the at-the-time head of Pixar's animation department and his at-the-time good friend John Lasseter. The story goes, Katz immediately realized its potential and, hoping not to fall behind a Disney-allied studio, sent his team to work on a DreamWorks response to it - right away. Thus, we have Antz. Even today there are still discussions being had about the many characters and plot elements DreamWorks has seemingly poached from its peers. But there's only one we can prove.

Because it happened in front of us.

Sinbad.

Legend of the Seven Seas is the only film we can say, irrefutably, that Katzenberg ever sacked from another studio.

It began its life as a project by being stolen by its owner - from himself.

And I can't imagine a more fitting way for it to begin.

So let's jump in.

Sinbad opens with a silky smooth fade from the DreamWorks logo to a fathomless, blackened sea of stars, the camera dollying backwards through a cluster of constellations as the title card appears. The film's opening track, aptly titled "Let the Games Begin", composed by Harry Gregson-Williams, gently accentuating the off-kilter tone we opened on as we descend to the center of a celestial sphere. As we come to a stop, an ensemble of strings briefly scurry across our ears in harmony with our first character materializing into frame. Introducing Eris - the best DreamWorks villain of all time.

(gxth shawty ft. lil tracy 1:54)

Eris's introduction is really cool.
Uh, the decision to do away with the scheming antagonist cutaway often found within animated features, choosing instead to open the film with one, gives Sinbad's first 10 minutes an exceptional sense of immediacy. We know whatever is about to take place is the work of this character, and we're informed of this in like 40 seconds before our story sets sail. It establishes a pattern the film will rely on throughout the rest of its runtime to develop its plot, *while* subverting the deployment of this trope within its genre, *while* designating our protagonist and his foil their mythological archetypes, *while* allowing its hard opening sequence to flow seemlessly without interruption once it begins. And this also tees up an Audience Superior Position, meaning we begin our story knowing more about its events than its characters, which the film later utilizes to great effect against us when the truth of its emotional apex isn't made clear to its protagonist or its spectators. Eris' divine gift is Deception, so she begins the film by instilling within us a false sense of confidence.

Also, I'm in love with how she summons Cetus as a constellation and then gives them a corporeal form as a means of reflecting the transition from the ethereal to the Earthly, and the external to the internal forces of our story.

Anyways, let's get down there.

Cetus splashes into the sea in sync with the low thunder of a bass drum as a ship enters frame right, our Noble Prince, immediately followed by another to its left, our Black-Hearted Thief. The visual dichotomy between them is super on the nose, but this lack of subtlety does nothing to impede on the quality of their imminent clash or the film in general. We cut from our extreme wide of the sea, to a ground level shot aboard the latter ship's deck - its small crew stood at attention as their captain, clad in crimson, swaggers forward with a dog at his side as a familiar voice begins to ring out across its bow. Cut to reverse, we're still on the floor - but now we get a good look at his companion. This dolly shot actually does some surprisingly heavy lifting. We still haven't seen our characters, or heard any of their names, besides the - sea monster - but we know whose ship we're on. Spike the Dog is a brilliant addition to the Pirate cinema form that, in retrospect, feels like a no-brainer. Rather than our first close-up being of our protagonist, someone we've just been introduced to as a man without a conscience, we're shown the exceedingly happy pup at his side - our first moment of pushback against the way he's introduced to us and then consistently characterized by nearly everyone not a part of his crew, including himself, in the film; A Black-Hearted Thief.
Cut again and we get a behind the shoulder shot as our mc gazes towards the sun-drenched horizon. Another classic adventure homily the film relies upon to communicate the intrepid nature of its leads. Very Raiders of the Lost Ark. Jump to our second close and we're officially introduced to the titular rapscallion of our tale.
(clips of ppl saying Sinbad, maybe chronologically)

With our hero acquainted and his ambitions made clear; we now enter what is, affectionately, just 7 minutes of animated flexing.

And it is some of the coolest shit ever.

The once static camera has come to life, turning into another member of the ship's now-exhilirated crew. Williams' score heaves itself into the foreground, while, in one motion, Sinbad swings to the Prince's ship, unsheathes his swords in the middle of a double backflip, then lands to take on 4 soldiers singlehandedly. Cut back to the ship - by the way it's called the Chimera, in every Sinbad book, comic, show, movie, whatever, it's called the Chimera - uh, cut back to the *Chimera*, and Spike launches himself on a purpose-built dog specific catapult and takes out 2 more before touching the floor. Cut again, and the crew join the assault. This is sincerely one of my favorite ensemble fights ever. Every character's style, from their weapon choice to their means of traversal throughout the environment, is *super* unique and illustrative of their place within the crew's dynamic. The first two land, each holding one end of a staff - their especially unorthodox fighting style reflective of their mutual rank as the premier comic relief of the crew, then Kale, ripping off an entire board from the ship and immediately launching a soldier out of frame with it, perfectly juxtaposes Sinbad's dexterity while Jed plumets *into* frame, under the board, and rips the camera along with him to throw a handful of bombs at some soldier's feet. Cut from the explosion, Sinbad is balanced atop one of his swords, cuts the rope in his hand to bind a soldier's ankle in place while simultaneously blocking another's swing, planting his sword into the deck to side flip around him, forcing *him* to cut the other rope, sending the first one flying, then catching his sword as it falls, and turning them into devilsticks to fend off another 2. This choreography is some of the most imaginative and insane that I've ever seen in a feature film. This is 2008 Monty Oum Dead Fantasy II shit. And I love that they play on just how much of a spectacle for spectacle's sake it is moments later with Kale commenting that Sinbad's last move, a horizontal pinwheel kick a la The Matrix: Reloaded but with dual cutlasses instead of a pole, was a bit over the top - only to then catch a man's blade in his teeth and flip him overboard with nothing but his neck. Anyways, let's speed this along a little bit. Only one member of the opposing crew can hold his own, and Sinbad knows him by name.
(pway "Pwoteous" cwip UwU)

Sinbad wants to steal the ship's treasure, The Book of Peace, which seemingly protects the entire known world but is also described as just being for 12 specific city states? Uh, I don't know, it doesn't really matter how it works. What matters right now is that Sinbad is chasing a bag. Proteus demands to know where he's been because they were BFFs before Sinbad went MIA as a kid and Sinbad is doing his darndest to seem like he doesn't care.
(whispering, quickly)
But he does.
S & P share a brief duel, then Cetus interrupts it with his long long hands. Some comedy noises occur, the pair team up to defeat the beast with this particularly awesome set piece, and as it slips back into the briny deep Sinbad pushes Proteus out of the way and is yoinked into the abyss rrrrrright down with it - Proteus only being stopped from trying to save him in turn by his soldiers. Given how limited our time is to develop a sense of their bond before Sinbad leaves him in jail for like an hour of runtime, I think the latter half of this first sequence does an excellent job of conveying how close they truly were through the same physicality it defines the rest of the crew with. More than just stating they were friends once, which Sinbad plays down, it makes it a point to show us how well coordinated and natural feeling their movements are in tandem and how similarly they fight and think. Also I love the guy who's spit out and then immediately charges back towards Cetus. Some very strong extra-pissed-guy-in the charge of the Rohirrim in Return of the King energy. Anyways, Sinbad's unda da sea, and Eris finally makes her formal appearance. Sinbad and Eris strike a deal stipulating he steal the Book of Peace and PostMate it to Tartarus in exchange for his life and more stacks than he knows what to do with so Sinbad accepts and follows Proteus to Syracuse with every intention of following through. I like just how strongly opposed Proteus' dad, King Dymas, is to Sinbad's pressence at the celebration because a lot of times interclass friendship - in particular in animation - is significantly downplayed in how classism, both conscious and unconscious, can actually effect the poorer member of that friendship. Like Princess and the Frog, to use a contemporary example, uh it's really weird and kind of fucked up that like Charlotte La Bouff and her father are grossly wealthy specifically off of sugar plantations and the thought never once occurs to them to just, airily, without feeling any real hit to their personal financial security, cut a check to the Black family who has waited on them for the duration of Charlotte's life. And then the film like makes it a point to frame it as virtuous on Tiana's part for not feeling bitter about that. About the deep southern sugar baron whose wealth is predicated on the slavery of her grandparent's generation not, you know, helping her without demanding exorbitant labor in exchange for it. Then again, (teeth inhale) kind of on brand. Anywas, Dymas is mad, some more comedy noises occur from the crew - I adore the bit of Jed just endlessly unloading weapons from nowhere - Proteus defends Sinbad, and with little time to spare we're introduced to the second lead of the film; Marina. Proteus' soon-to-be. Sinbad recognizes her too, but this time the recollection is one-sided, and he departs empty handed with a frown - leaving Eris to impersonate him and steal the book instead, kicking off the Odyssey which comprises the rest of the film.

Speaking of Odysseys - we're in Greece!

Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas is a film about Sinbad the Sailor in about as liberal the sense of the word "about" can be used, but to be clear, I don't think that's a bad thing nor is it an irregularity *for Sinbad*.
The original Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor are a collection of episodic tales, what's called a story-cycle, based in Baghdad during the reign of Harun al-Rashid of the Abbasid Caliphate in around the year 790-ish.
The first of the seven is a frame-story, a structural technique used throughout The Thousand Nights, to establish an in-universe narrator to another character acting as the reader's stand-in. There isn't 1 Sinbad, there are 2.
Sinbad the Porter and Sinbad the Sailor.
The story goes, an impoverished servant briefly rests on a bench outside
of a rich merchant's home, where he prays to Allah about the injustice
of a world which allows the rich to live in ease while he struggles endlessly but
remains poor. This guy gets it! I just feel like Big Daddy La Bouff could've dropped
something crazy in the tip jar for the one time and fixed like most of Tiana's problems.
("**PATREON DOT COM SLASH BREADSWORD**" would b funy 2 say here)
The merchant overhears this and sends for the man to be let inside, whereupon they
realize they share the same name. And you'll never guess what it is. Sinbad the Sailor,
tells Sinbad the Porter, he came into his wealth by Fortune and Fate
across seven magical voyages, which he then tells to the Porter -
giving him a more expensive gift at the end of each of the tales.
The moral of the cycle being if nobody got me I know Allah got me.
The thing is, again, the first translation of this the Western World was
introduced to was in in the early 1700s. We're talkin real deal Pirate season.
And, a lot of the more specific religious aspects of The Nights in general,
were either edited out by Galland (gya-lon) or sort of ignored by its readers. So
what we're left with is just the voyages themselves. The poor Sinbad is the audience
so we drop him and the frame, instead focusing entirely on the adventures of the
other Sinbad who transcended his poverty by way of sailing, while the hottest book in
town is our pal Charles Johnson's being read by a populous who idolizes Pirates for
doing exactly that. The re-tooling of Sinbad into a Pirate was a natural next step,
and his name eventually became so synonymous with Piracy, even some Japanese
Pirate films that have nothing to do with Sinbad, have been localized in the West
as Sinbad movies. Shout outs Toshirô Mifune (toe-she-ro me-foo-neh) I loved you
in The Lost World of Sinbad. And the next step of separation wasn't far behind.
Sinbad began appearing in films, shorts, and tv shows - always with a different
cultural makeup, age, demeanor, and narrative alignment. The first depiction of
Sinbad on screen in the West was Ub Iwerks' (uh-b ee-wurks) Sinbad the Sailor in
1935 and the following year, he made his maintstream debut in Popeye the
Sailor Meets Sindbad the Sailor, wherein Sinbad as a Bluto
echo fighter raps his introduction to the audience.

(Bluto rap)
(cut to Uzi)

Oh shit.

The tennuous connection to the original tales would continue to wax and
wane with the tides of each new rendition. Ray Harryhausen's Sinbad trilogy
with Columbia Pictures, for instance, portrays Sinbad as hailing from Baghdad
and even tries to capture some of the elements of each of his voyages, while
Richard Wallace's Sinbad the Sailor stars Douglas Fairbanks across Maureen
O'Hara in a secret Eighth Voyage wherein they discover the lost treasure of
Alexander the Great. So, by the time we reach Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas,
what better way to revisit the story than to not only lean all the way into him
being a Pirate, but to begin his adventure in the same collection of sunny
peninsulas that so much of our cultural conception of Pirates came from?
And then, even better, why not combine the adventuring spirit of Sinbad, with
the populism and aesthetic of Pirates, but the *structure* of a famous Greek tale?

Check this out.

DreamWorks' Sinbad is based on a Greek legend, written to illustrate
the Pythagorean (pie-thag-ree-in) ideal of friendship. Pythias (pee-thee) is accused
of and charged with plotting to kill Dionysus I of Syracuse and requests to be
allowed to travel home and settle his affairs before he's put to death. Believing
he'd simply flee and never return, Dionysus refuses his request - so Damon, his
companion, offers himself in his place. Should Pythias not return, Dionysus
insists, Damon will be executed for the crimes instead. Dionysus is all
but convinced Pythias had fled, and on the last day he has to return,
he calls for Damon's execution - but just as the axe is about to fall,
Pythias comes back to stop it. So astonished by the love of their friendship,
Dionysus pardons them both and sets them free. Amusingly, the reason Pythias
gives for being late, is that Pirates had captured his ship and thrown him overboard.

So.
This is a pretty clear analog, right?

Sinbad is Pythias, Proteus is Damon, Dymas is Dionysus.
The story being set in Greece also allows for some pretty esoteric jokes
that I really appreciate. Like, here, when Eris meets Sinbad, she mentions
that he must have seen her likeness on the temple walls, and he hesitates
before giving this clearly half-hearted response. This reads as him being
naturally pretty confused and nervous, of course, but it doubles as a jab at
Eris' ego because historically Eris didn't have any temples and she was
hardly ever portrayed in artwork at the time. This radical change in structure
relative to Sinbad's other cinematic adaptations also allows for an audience
surrogate to be reintroduced to the narrative without requiring a cumbersome
framing device. Marina is Sinbad the Porter, and this time what she
laments is a thirst for experiences - not riches. Marina is a fantastic proxy,
because, not only is it most natural for her to be given exposition from
Sinbad and Proteus as to their relationship with one another and the world
as they traverse it, because both of them are subjects as unfamliar to her as they
are to us, but her emotional reactions to what she learns and how these characters
behave provide a really comforting mirror. In specific, I think her reaction
to Sinbad failing Eris' test - this sort of unrefined, frustrated insistance that
the circumstances themselves are the problem rather than the people within them -
is one of the most honest responses to a plot twist I've seen a character meant to reflect us give. Also, speaking of realistic reactions, who decided to put
Spike whimpering at the site of Sinbad about to be executed in the movie?
What is your fucking problem bro? Literally, every time I watch this movie -
I've watched this like *13 times this week* - it still makes me cry when he whimpers
like that. Oh my god you are a monster for that. Marina's enthusiasm for the
adventure they're on is unmistakable, even in their greatest moments of peril, and
the ways in which this consistently clashes with Sinbad's childish imitation of
disdain towards her makes for some of the funniest and most organic back and
forth found in DreamWorks' catalogue. The apology fight she has with Sinbad after
she saves them from the sirens doesn't feel like animated characters bouncing
off eachother for a bit, it feels like a regular argument that takes on the character
of a bit to us - which is a huge difference. Honestly I think most of what makes
Sinbad work so well as a film, beyond its spectacle, is how outstanding its 2
women characters are. Eris is, and you cannot argue me down from this,
the best character DreamWorks has ever made. I will die on this hill. And Marina
is absolutely electrifying! Possessing more traits of an adventure protagonist
than Sinbad himself and acting as a perfect ballast between his and Proteus'
respective extremes. And this extends to the film's use of color as well. Sinbad
is cloaked in Reds and Browns, while Proteus dawns Blues and Golds, and Marina
- is draped in all 4. I mentioned before that the film's lack of subtlety isn't an
indication of its quality and this is sort of what I mean. Its structure, its very
foundation lies in dichotomy and the means of finding unity within that and
when leaned into, this elevates the work rather tham harming it. One of
my favorite instances of this use of contrasting blues and reds in the film,
is at the end of their SSX Tricky rescue mission when Sinbad and
Marina crash onto the ship and are enveloped by a sail on its deck.
When we cut to a shot from their side, gazing into one another's eyes, the sun
illuminates them from behind - diffusing the light into a warm, peachy
glow in the middle of this otherwise frigid waste of blues and whites.
I think this very in-your-face style of visual storytelling also does well
in complimenting the instances of delicacy when they are there.
Sinbad's muffled reverence of Proteus and deeply repressed love for Marina
causes him to interact with her, physically, in a really interesting way
compared to most animated feature protagonists and their love interests.
Following their initial interaction on the ship where he carries her out
of his cabin, as he's trying to establish his feigned contempt for her,
he only makes any kind of contact with her in instances of extreme danger.
Which like, yeah, of course, but - in the moments where he is given time
to *choose* how he does so - he grabs her sleeves instead. It's only after
they're falling down the mountain that he realizes she'll be hurt
if he doesn't let go and actually holds her. This makes the following
scene where he delibaretely touches her hand for the first time -
both her reaction of shock and his reaction to it to lightly place her hand
on the wheel instead of committing to holding it - all the more tender.
I also find it really endearing that just like DreamWorks' last adventure film
containing a love traingle, Legend of the Seven Seas is like way too horny
but to allow for this precarious romantic dynamic to work, all of that sexual
energy had to be channeled to Eris specifically. It just makes her more of
a bad bitch and I'm glad that that was the move. The cosmic bubble bath
into snowglobe transition match-cut from the constellation behind it? Queen.
Also, this as good as time as any to mention it, this film's cast is *crazy*.
Brad Pitt nails the precocious sarcasm and underlying sensitivity of Sinbad,
Catherine Zeta-Jones *kills* as Marina, her delivery from her most enchanting
to her most scathing lines is so consistently on point, Michelle Pfeiffer as Eris
has got to be a top 5 casting decision for any animated character ever, and
Joseph Fiennes (fines) as Proteus honestly steals the show despite how little screentime
he has. The way he sends that "when you knew how much it meant to us" line?
(play clip 20:10)
Bro was on it.
Also, Frank Welker, the original voice of Fred Jones from
Scooby-Doo, plays Spike which I just really appreciate.
Scoob lineage in your cast is always a net positive.

After Sinbad reveals to Marina that the reason he and Proteus had
drifted apart was because Marina herself - her arrival in Syracuse so
many years ago being what had finally afflicted him with envy for
Proteus' life, causing him to flee - they nearly share a kiss. But echoing
her hesitant, somber response to Proteus' proposal earlier in the film, she
stops it before it happens. The soothing score underlying the moment they
shared briefly recedes and then quickly returns as a frenetic collection of
strings and choir vocals - instantly shifting the scene's gentle and bittersweet
tone to one of mischevious anxiety. Our adventurers have finally reached Tartarus.
As they approach the edge of the world, and what lay beyond it, the string sections
dashing over the now-heightened crashing of the wake against the Chimera
continue to gain momentum as Sinbad calls for Rat to give him a lookout.
Rat declares that the world just ends and that they're surely done for, to
which the comedic pair respond with a flat Earth joke - once more iterating upon
the gag of their placing bets on the various circumstances they've run into over
the course of the film. What follows is the single coolest set piece in the entirety
of Pirate storytelling history. Sinbad repeats what Eris had told him, to follow the star
beyond the horizon, and after he repeats it a second time, we cut to a wide shot
of the towering water jets encompassing our world's end - the score being
forced out of the foreground by an explosion of wind. As it returns, it
evolves again, this time from an anxious break to an exultant reprisal
of Sinbad's leitmotif - as he orders the crew to free all sheets.
They're not going to sail to Tartarus, they're going fly to it.
Even before the especially cool part happens, you know, where they
sail a boat on the winds off the edge of the planet into a shimmering void
of lightning towards the gate of what the Greeks described as Hades New Game Plus,
the care taken to show the Chimera's crew actually enact all of Sinbad's orders to
make it possible, is I think where the film shows its truest self. Legend of the
Seven Seas is the most unabashed expression there is of the belief that Pirates
simply are cool as shit. Nearly all of its grandiose uses of dynamic camera work
throughout it is spent following its crew in what feels like a series of assiduously
rehearsed dances. The way in which Rat, in particular, is capable of navigating
the ship's rigging is otherworldly. What most Pirate films simplify to a single line
in the crest of its action, if their Captain even gives a specific order at all
during its runtime, Sinbad dedicates entire, uninterrupted minutes to.
The way it frames this interaction between the Chimera and its crew as a waltz rather than a cumbersome necessity, is perhaps best portrayed
by the torch sequence immediately following their departure from
Syracuse. There is no dialogue, and there is no focus; there is only the
sounds of the sea and of the ship as its crew steps, swings, and spins
in time with the music. This brief sequence is even given its own track
within the score. "Lighting Lanterns". Anyways, the Chimera takes flight.
The sense of scale and the use of Williams' fantastic theme for Sinbad, is
rapturous to say the least. Marina insists that she go with Sinbad, and he
accepts. The pair holding eachother in the same way they had previously
to retreat from danger, now willingly swinging into the heart of it together -
surrounded on all sides by the coalescence of their chromatic identities.

The pair lands in a desert, mimmicking the sea, where Eris
has been waiting. She reveals the true scope of her intentions, as
any good adventure villain does in the third act, and at the end of her
"you suck just as much as I do" speech to Sinbad, she gives
him a chance to prove her wrong. A test of his supposedly
absent heart. Just like Damon and Pythias, Eris too believes
that if Sinbad must return to meet his death - he'll choose to
flee, not just for his life but the woman he and his friend love.
Sinbad declares he'll go back, his theme once again swelling
beneath his heroism, and he takes three steps. And then Eris says
he's lying, and the ground crumbles beneath him, and he fails.

Marina and Sinbad return to the mortal world and
it's here, stranded on a sand bar nestled upon the outskirts
of eternity, that Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas reaches
beyond itself to interrogate the once-prevalent cinema
of Piracy and our once-tremendous love for it. Sinbad's insistence
upon his own monstrousness in spite of what we know to be his true
character, represents the change in cultural appetites that swept the genre
away 40 years ago. Leaving in its place an industry almost entirely reliant
upon the enemies of our former heroes as the protagonists of their stories -
not allowed to be too critical of even fictional versions of their dominion lest
the military pull their cartoon sized checks out of the Marvel Cinematic
Universe or Transformers or whatever for mentioning they are sometimes mean.
The remission of adoration for these now eroding monoliths of storytelling.
And Marina's rebuke of this self-resignation, her insistance that there is yet
good in him, is ultimately the film's - and its author's - appeal to its audience.
That this genre does not have to stay deceased.

Sinbad returns to face his death, the same as Pythias,
and the same as the colossi he's carried on his back since
he first entered frame on the deck of the Chimera.

And just like our tale from so long ago, his valiance is rewarded with
his life. Eris is forced to return the Book of Peace, which we still
have no understanding of, because he kept his word, Dymas apologizes
for misjudging him, Proteus and Sinbad make up, and having made his
peace with Marina, sends her with his blessings to set sail with the Chimera,
surprising Sinbad as they cheerfully embark on a new adventure -
into another sun-drenched horizon.

Happy endings are my favorite.

I wish I could come up with one for this.

I don't think that there is another screenwriter alive on the planet
who wanted to see the return of Pirate cinema more than the pair
who toiled away at feature after feature for Disney just for permission
to adapt Treasure Island. I mean, Ted Elliot and Terry Rossio
are responsible for the only 3 major efforts to bring the Pirate genre back
to life in the West. John Logan may have written the final script for
Sinbad, but Ted and Terr are the ones who handed it off to him.

And it didn't work.

Treasure Planet lost Disney millions and
spelled the end of their traditional animation, and Sinbad
did the same for DreamWorks. Marina, Sinbad, Proteus, Kale,
Eris, Dymas - this is the last time we ever saw hand-drawn
characters from the studio. When interviewed about Sinbad's
performance, Jeffrey Katzenberg said; "I think the idea of a traditional
story being told using traditional animation is likely a thing of the past."
Pirates of the Caribbean, their final effort, was a brief success, sure,
but it inspired no others and it wasn't long before the reigns were
taken from them there as well. By its third film, At World's End, it
began to sink into something wholly separate from its inceptive idenity -
Disney going so far as to cut the scene where Jack Sparrow finally
explains *how* he became a Pirate hunted to the ends of the Earth
by the East India Trading Company in the first place.

(people ain't cargo mate)

Too outwardly critical of a specific government and
Disney didn't want to lose money. I'm willing to bet
whoever made that call probably didn't get Captain Blood.

("we the hunted, will now hunt!" - 1:02:58-ish of Captain Blood)

Even if the crescendo of the film is a deliberate reflection of Blood's.

(clippy bippy triple shippy)

I love Sinbad.
The first time I saw it, as a kid, I leapt to my feet and spent the rest of the
day running and jumping and yelling and fashioning a stick I found
into a saber; imagining I too was this wondrous character who is
impossible to be - sailing through a world that never existed, but
should have. And I think, at their base, that's what Pirate stories
have always been. An exercise in our collective imagination. One
where a new adventure awaits on the edge of every horizon.

I love how visually captivating it is.
Just like The Road to El Dorado, it characters were
traditionally animated while its environments and its
background actors were rendered digitally. What it lacks in
polish relative to its older siblings, though, it more than makes up for
in design and animation. Every glimpse of the sky in Sinbad feels
like looking up at the threshold of a dream. Its pacified purples,
brilliant blues, and halcyon oranges only matched by the
wonder of the actions of the characters beneath them.
To so fluidly portray such grace of movement in harmony with
its many independent background elements, created in a completely
different medium *while* the camera tracking around them is moving
at a pace that's rarely matched to this effect even today, is a Herculean
task to have achieved and its entire animation team deserves endless
cheer for accomplishing it. Sinbad is a Pirate film set in Ancient Greece
with a downhill tandem snowboard chase through an ice cave and two separate
skydiving sequences. Even if it reused a couple of instances of animation
from the studio's previous works to save money, its original environments
are so striking that even later Pirates of the Caribbean films call back to
them. The way Sinbad launches himself with a Ballista into the face
of a thousand foot tall ice cliff with a knife held perfectly in his
mouth is one of the most whimsical stunts in anything I've ever seen.
They had our boy finessing through environments like a Breath
of the Wild any% run and it's crazy. I love how stupid it is.
I mentioned a couple times how its central plot device
is literally never given any meaningful attempt at an explanation
and that is fantastic. A good adventure is never about understanding
the mechanics of the world it takes place in, a good adventure explains just
enough to follow its path and then tells you to stop worrying about it.
And Tom Finan understands this beautifully.
He cut it to the bone, leaving out almost any chance
for exposition dumps or anything else that isn't instrumental
to its progression, and, as a result, Sinbad moves along at an
incredibly brisk pace of 86 minutes for a tale that covers a whole
shitload of ground. I counted, and there are only like 2 moments in the
entire film I would cut down - and it's by a second or 2 each.
Its romance is rushed and schlocky, but in a really endearing
way, half of the Chimera's crew is never even given names,
and its score is unreasonably good. Arguably Sinbad's weakest sequence,
the attack of the Sirens, purely because the water effects used for them
look considerably worse than anything else in the film, is more than made
up for by this being the strongest moment in Williams' compositions
and the awe-inspiring design of the environment it takes place in.
The Dragon's Teeth defies all physical laws, effectively being a mega-ramp
made of water, and there's so much joy in not needing to justify its existence.
I love how its music synchronizes with the clashes of Proteus and Sinbad's
blades during their introduction to further articulate the depth of their duality.
I love that the last lines of the film are a cheesy call-back to an argument
from the beginning of their voyage followed by a kiss just like the
ending of Against All Flags. And I love that they cut so many corners
with its lighting, that by any objective metric it is genuinely bad,
but it somehow manages to not be within context and actually helps to
underscore its already melodramatic, dream-like aesthetic.
Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas is not
conventionally a great movie, but it is the *best* Pirate movie
because it correctly contends that the real foundation of our love of
Pirates has always been the desire to encounter something new. Peiratēs (pee-rah-tyce),
from Peiráomai (pay-roh-my), meaning "I attempt", in turn from Peîra (pay-ruh),
"to experience". Sinbad first acquainted himself with us in moving images as a
cartoon from the same man who designed Mickey Mouse, so if Pirates had
to die, why not try to give them a rebirth in the medium they rightfully
belong in? Where thought can be given form free of restriction
and their titanic stature in our narrative memory can be given a new day?

But still, it wasn't enough.

It ran DreamWorks 60 mill to produce and it peaked at 6th
place beneath Legally Blonde 2 and Finding Nemo, only pulling in 7
million its opening weekend. The week after its release, Disney's Pirates of the
Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl premiered, all but assuring that Sinbad would
sink to the box office floor. An ironic twist of fate considering its genesis.
It eventually made back $20 million, but it was just too late.
DreamWorks' era of traditional animation had come to a close,
and the extraordinary world of Pirate cinema took its last breath with it.

It sucks, but, that's just what happens to things we love.

Sic Transit Gloria, right?
Even glory fades.

The Pirate's Gold, The Sea Hawk, The Black Pirate,
The Buccaneer, Captain Blood, The Black Swan,
Captain Kidd, Frenchman's Creek, The Spanish Main, Against
All Sails, The Pirates of Penzance - all but forgotten by most.

Our most grandiose creations and our most ubiquitos heroes,
will some day be lost. And we will build new ones, and then
they will diminish in turn. But the phantom pains will always
remain. An acute awareness that something alive was once there.
Westerns, Musicals, Noirs - Pirate films were
not the first genre to wither beneath the tides of time and
they certainly won't be the last. Maybe some day you'll see a flash
of a now long-abandoned form in a contemporary work, a one-off medium
budget from some studio with money to burn, and it'll feel like a lightning bolt
struck you in the chest and you'll go; "Yes! That's it! That's what we were missing!"
And then it too will recede. The pedestal is revealed but for a moment
and then is covered once more by the wax and wane of the shifting sands.

Maybe that's why they imagined Hell as a desert.

Have a good night.

(sand + wind ambience)
(WoW casc ambience either amb_desertenchanted_day03 OR **forestsnowday**)

(OUTRO: Never Hurts To Try - Magical Mc'Ino Band)

Hey! Thanks for watching.
Big big big thank you to my *Patrons* for making this video possible, uh,
especially *these* guys, and a ***very*** special thank you to;

(patwons UwU)

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