

FIRST MATE

Written by

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Based on

The Tryals of Stede Bonnet and Other Pirates.

Nicholas Trott
1719

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FADE IN:

TITLE: "This is a true story."

INT. PROVOST DUNGEON - NIGHT

TITLE: "Charles Town, South Carolina, October, 1718"

IGNATIUS PELL, (28) tall and lean, sits chained in a dark cell. NICHOLAS TROTT, (55) distinguished and sharp of mind, enters and sits in front of him.

TROTT

Mr. Pell, I'm Nicholas Trott, Vice Admiralty Judge for the prosecution. Do you understand the charges and potential penalties at work here?

PELL

Yes. Well, some.

TROTT

May I ask you questions about him?

PELL

I'm not a pirate.

TROTT

Mr. Pell, you have no written pardon or privateer commission. You are an accomplice to murders and acts of piracy. He called you his first mate.

PELL

I'm not a pirate.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

TITLE: "Two Years Earlier"

INT. GOVERNOR EDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

TOBIAS KNIGHT, (38) a pompous, weasel of a man, enters carrying a small chest. CHARLES EDEN, (43) stately, but sour, ignores him as he paints at an easel.

KNIGHT

The rice farmer is late. Governor Eden?

EDEN

Rice Farmer, Tobias?

KNIGHT

Colonel Rhett. He's detained. I wonder if he'll arrive at all.

EDEN

What? How do you mean?

KNIGHT

I warned a few of our associates that they may find our coast troublesome.

EDEN

Rhett will soon discover that farming is a far more survivable vocation. What's that?

KNIGHT

Teach calls it a merry contribution to ensure --

EDEN

Just leave it. Tobias, I want absolute discretion with these people. Nothing traceable, understood?

Knight places the chest on the desk and opens it.

KNIGHT

Our associates are as interested in discretion as we are. And they will pay handsomely for it.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Men and women sit at a porch table.

INT. ONE ROOM APARTMENT - DAY

Pell makes the sound of waves on a windy ocean. His hand slides a one-inch wide, metal ship over a blue sheet. MARCELLA, (20) a beautiful woman, lays under it.

PELL

This is the merchant ship, Marcella.

Pell's hand slides the toy ship over her covered body.

PELL (CONT'D)

It sails from Cuba to a Virginia port.

Pell gently rolls the ship to and fro on the fabric. He guides another tiny ship. He makes a cannon noise.

PELL (CONT'D)

Look, Captain Kidd's pirate ship Fancy attacks.
He surprises Marcella and chases her North.

He rolls the toys between her covered breasts.

MARCELLA

(Playing along)

Help. I must get these chickens back to Cuba.

PELL

Then, they head South. And this is where...

Pell grins and moves the ships below the sheet.

PELL (CONT'D)

... the Captain discovers Marcella's treasure.

She laughs and pushes him off. The toys fly to the floor.

MARCELLA

Where's the English Navy when I need it?

PELL

Never where you want them. Care for a drink?

Pell stands. His bare foot steps painfully on a toy ship.

PELL (CONT'D)

Oww. Captain Kidd's revenge.

He rubs his foot, picks up the toy ship, then the other.
Pell lays them on a table and pours rum from a bottle.

Suddenly, loud BANGS on the door startle them. GEOFF
KYLE, (23) portly and prone to sarcasm when anxious,
walks right in. He holds up a parchment.

KYLE

Pell, I did it. I signed us. The
Tristan. Get your bag and -

PELL

Kyle. What?

MARCELLA

What do you mean, signed, Kyle?

PELL

The Tristan? You got us jobs?

KYLE

Tell your landlady here you're moving out. We
leave in an hour. Nice knowing you, Marcella.

Kyle exits, slamming the door. Silence.

MARCELLA

You said you were finished with this.

PELL

Marcella, you don't understand.

MARCELLA

You don't know where you're going, or when you're coming back. Do you expect me to be here whenever the devil that is?

PELL

I want you to wait. I know it might be long. I'll make more than last time.

Marcella swipes the little toy ships off the table.

MARCELLA

I don't care. I hate this... and you.

Pell takes a breath, then picks up his boots and bag.

He heads to the door.

MARCELLA (CONT'D)

Wait, Pell. I'm sorry. I hate you leaving me again, that's all. Please.

He slows, then stops and looks down. He reaches down and picks up one of the toy ships and rolls it in his fingers. He turns and holds the ship up for her. She takes it.

MARCELLA (CONT'D)

What's this? So thoughtful. Much better than a ring.

PELL

I'll come back with more, I promise.

MARCELLA

Promises. Someday, Marcella. I'll be your rich fool. I'll have my own ship. I'll ...

He touches her face which quiets her.

PELL

I hate me too. Leaving, that is.

MARCELLA

Be safe, Pell. Just come back.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

WOMAN #1 serves wine to STEDE BONNET, (29) wimpy, red haired, and flamboyantly dressed. He writes in a book. Sitting at the next table is RICHARD TOOKERMAN, (38) a clever, plump man. He converses with PITCH (70) and MARKO (65), while offering advice to young RUSS (17).

TOOKERMAN

All countries use different flags. If it's British, it'll be the Red Ensign.

Pitch raises a red cloth napkin and waves it like a flag.

TOOKERMAN (CONT'D)

A Red Ensign is always a British merchant or Navy.

MARKO

Russ, you've seen the Red Ensign. It's solid red with a Jack in the corner.

TOOKERMAN

Just before they fire, they'll drop the false color and switch to their pirate flag.

Stede looks up from his writing and sees Pitch lower the red cloth then raise a black one.

RUSS

Why? They're going to rob them anyway.

PITCH

If they switch to a pirate flag, it makes it perfectly legal to fire on them.

MARKO

No, Pitch, it's less illegal. Slightly.

Stede draws a black pirate flag on a ship's mast.

TOOKERMAN

Firing a shot over their bow usually stops them. If the merchants fight back, the pirates might kill a crewman to settle them down.

Stede writes "No Killing" on a page.

TOOKERMAN (CONT'D)

At this point, the pirates board the ship, disable the rigging and --

Stede takes a sip of wine, then slides his chair over.

STEDE

My good sirs, you seem to know many pirate practices. Care to reveal some insider secrets?

TOOKERMAN

Aye, I do know a few. First, if you want to be a good pirate...

(Points to his suit)

Don't wear that. What's your name?

STEDE

Stede Bonnet.

TOOKERMAN

Steve?

STEDE

No. Stede. As in a horse? A steed?

TOOKERMAN

Oh, Stede. Richard Tookerman. Meet Mist'ers Pitch, Marko, and master Russ.

STEDE

Gentlemen. Mr. Tookerman, after the pirates secure the ship, what's next?

TOOKERMAN

Break it down to make repairs, sink it --

PITCH

If there's too much loot, they'll steal the ship, and the merchant crew will join up.

MARKO

Aye, they'll be forced to join up, or...

STEDE

Or...?

TOOKERMAN

Or they'll get their brains blowed out.

STEDE

That seems rather harsh. What about...

Stede's book lays open to a drawing of a two-masted ship. Its specs are listed with some crossed out or reduced.

WOMAN #1

Many pardons, Major Bonnet, but you have been ordered by the Lady Bonnet to meet her outside.

Stede's eye twitches. The men try to keep from laughing.

EXT. BARBADOS ROAD/TAVERN - NIGHT

LADY MARY BONNET, (25) thin and beautiful, frowns while sitting in a carriage. Sitting on top, a driver waits.

INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Mary glares as Stede enters and sits next to her.

He stares out the window. A whip CRACKS and they're off.

MARY

Why are you always down here? If it's not a tavern, it's a bank or that horrid shipyard.

EXT. CARRIAGE/BARBADOS ROAD/SHIPYARD - NIGHT

The carriage passes ships. One is under construction.

EXT. CARRIAGE/BONNET ESTATE/GATE - NIGHT

Servants observe the carriage driving toward a mansion.

MARY (O.S.)

My cousin arrives next week. I must...

INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Stede looks at the house and sighs.

MARY (O.S.)

...buy ten new dresses. I hear Paris...

INT. BONNET ESTATE - NIGHT

They walk in. Stede follows her as she nears a bedroom. She pauses at the doorway and turns to him.

MARY

Really? You are such a fool.

She chuckles and closes the door in his face.

He clutches his book. Engraved on its cover is REVENGE.

INT. OFFICE OF TOBIAS KNIGHT - NIGHT

PERRY, (60) a polished man, knocks, then opens the door.

PERRY

Colonel William Rhett, sir.

Knight closes a side office door and moves to his desk.
WILLIAM RHETT, (50) solid and confident, walks in.

KNIGHT

Colonel, come in. How was your voyage?

RHETT

Disappointing, Chief Justice.

KNIGHT

Well, that appointment hasn't been confirmed.
For now, I'm merely the Governor's counsel.

Knight sits and waves to a chair. Rhett keeps a distance.

KNIGHT (CONT'D)

How may I be of service, Colonel?

RHETT

Last month I received a commission from Governor
Spotswood. I'm here as a courtesy.

KNIGHT

A courtesy? Why make such a gesture?

RHETT

I'm hunting off North Carolina. We nearly caught
Jennings this morning, but his fleet was
waiting. Pirates seem to roam free here. My
opinion? Your Governor is tolerant of them.

Knight scoffs.

RHETT (CONT'D)

South Carolina is not. My commission
allows me to sink, kill or arrest any
pirate off Carolina shores, North or
South.

KNIGHT

How many ships do you have?

RHETT

Just one. The Henry. Ten guns and a crew of 70.

KNIGHT

One seems more than ample.

RHETT

After this morning, I doubt it. If you have any
concerns, please take them up with Spotswood.

KNIGHT

Excellent, Colonel. You have the
Governor's full support.

RHETT

Thank you, Mr. Knight. I must get back.

Rhett exits. Knight returns to a side door and opens it.

INT. SIDE CHAMBER OFFICE - NIGHT

EDWARD "BLACKBEARD" TEACH, (35) the pirate, smokes.

KNIGHT

I didn't say which Governor.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "JULY, 1717"

Tristan's Red Ensign flag flies over JACOB HARGRAVES,
(57) a burly captain. He nears Pell as Kyle steers.

JACOB

Mr. Pell, hold steady.

PELL

Aye, Captain. We're pulling a bit lee, sir.
These two-masted sloops have stability --

A BOOM of a distant cannon.

LOOKOUT #1 (O.S.)

Ship astern. Ship astern, Captain.

Pell and Jacob near the rail and lift spyglasses.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA/REVENGE - DAY

A Red Ensign flag whips. The approaching ship is Revenge.

EXT. TRISTAN/DECK - DAY

JACOB

Red Ensign. She's a patrol. Mr. Pell,
hold us windward and anchor.

PELL

Aye, port fifteen degrees. All stop.

The anchor drops and sails lower. Pell raises a spyglass.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Sailors stand dressed in uniforms. One man, is dressed in a flamboyant suit. He takes a bow.

PELL

Captain, those aren't English uniforms.

JACOB

Keep a distance. What's your business?

STEDE

Good day, sir. I'm Stede Bonnet. We'd like to bargain with you. Who might you be?

JACOB

Captain Jacob Hargraves of the Tristan. Just what are you bargaining for, Steve?

STEDE

Oh, for the love of... Now, Mr. Tucker.

EXT. REVENGE - DAY

The Red Ensign is pulled away, revealing a pirate flag. Stede's men draw their pistols.

EXT. REVENGE/GUN PORTS - DAY

Five cannons pop out as the ship comes alongside.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

STEDE

Your goods, Captain Hargraves. Please, do not move. I assure you, we will make this easy.

EXT. TRISTAN/DECK - DAY

Pell and the Tristan crew stop still.

JACOB

You stripy dressed bilge rat. You picked the wrong ship. Our hold is nearly empty, Steve.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

STEDE

It's Stede.

The pirates toss hooked lines to Tristan's rail and pull.

ROBERT TUCKER, (40) quiet and surly, flanks Stede.

TUCKER

None of your theatrics today. I need a few of their crew. I'll handle this.

STEDE

Captain Hargraves, would you ask that man there...you? Have him collect any weapons.

EXT. TRISTAN/DECK - DAY

Jacob nods to Pell.

Pell grabs a bag and collects the crew's guns and knives. Jacob shows his pistol. Then hides it up his sleeve.

Pell tosses the bag over to Revenge.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

The hulls bump, rafted up. Tucker cocks his gun.

STEDE

Please, Captain, I implore you. Do not try anything foolish. This will go quick.

EXT. TRISTAN/DECK - DAY

BOOTH, Revenge's Boatswain, steps on board with others.

Booth passes in front of Jacob. The captain lurches and grabs him. He raises a pistol to Booth's head.

JACOB

Right, you weevils. Get off my ship, sail on and I'll let him live. You and your...

A gunshot blows a hole in Jacob's head. Pell ducks.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Tucker holds a smoking pistol. He raises another one.

EXT. TRISTAN/DECK - DAY

Jacob releases his grip on Booth but he too has a bullet hole to the head. They drop like two bags of sand. Pell raises his hands. The crew follows his lead.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

STEDE

No. No firing. I've asked you a hundred times, Tucker. You just killed our best rigger. Now, what do we do?

TUCKER

(Ignoring him)
Anyone else?

EXT. TRISTAN/DECK - DAY

Pell's hands are tied behind him.

More pirates step over the rail, pistols drawn. Some go below to the ship's hold. Pell watches Tucker closely.

INT. TRISTAN/HOLD - DAY

A pirate turns a corner and aims his gun. At a cow.

Another turns in an alcove and sees PERKINS (29) behind a double-barreled cannon. Matchmaker is written on it. Perkins locks eyes on the pirate then lights a fuse.

The pirate raises his gun. A BLAST sends him flying.

Another pirate enters and seeing the second barrel, ducks as Perkins fires his second shot. The pirate rises and aims. Perkins surrenders.

EXT. TRISTAN/DECK - DAY

Perkins is shoved next to Pell and similarly bound.

Pirates lift the cannon and cow over the rail to Revenge.

Stede rakes a cane through coins in an open chest.

STEDE

Your captain was correct. Your ship was nearly empty.

(MORE)

STEDE (CONT'D)

I must apologize for his death. I did warn him not to do anything.

TUCKER

Which of you are the officers?

Pell, Kyle, Perkins, and BIRCH, (19) step forward.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

You'll be held on board.

STEDE

To the rest of you, I highly suggest you volunteer to join our crew.

DUNKIN, NICHOLS and a dozen others step forward.

Marko, Pitch and other pirates escort them over.

TUCKER

No one else? Volunteers get on board.

They cross over to Revenge. Pell looks back to the remaining ten men of Tristan's crew standing silent.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - DAY

Pirates shackle the four officers and remove their gags.

From outside gunshots CRACK. Screams. More gunfire.

Tucker comes down, unlocks Perkins, then drags him across to the ladder. Tucker trains his gun on him.

Sounds (O.S.): A gunshot. Perkins groans. A splash.

Tucker returns and unlocks Kyle. Tucker drags him across.

KYLE

No. No. Please don't. Pell help.

PELL

Sir, what if we join your crew?

KYLE

Aye. I'll join your crew. I'm - I'm a pilot. Please. Let me join your crew?

Tucker stops dragging Kyle. He walks back to Pell.

TUCKER
 If you join, then you live.
 (Aims at Birch)
 What about you?

Birch nods fervently. His pants darken. Liquid drips.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

A Red Ensign is hoisted as Revenge leaves Tristan adrift.

Aside from Jacob's body, the deck is otherwise empty.

A ship appears far on the horizon. It's the Henry.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Stede and Tucker sit as Dunkin, Ridge, and Nichols are brought in. Stede places a contract in front of each.

STEDE
 You made a good choice this morning, gentlemen.
 Here's how things work...

EXT. TRISTAN/DECK - DAY

Rhett steps over Jacob's body. Others climb down to Tristan from the rafted up Henry. Masters descends below.

MASTERS (O.S.)
 Captain!

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - NIGHT

Revenge's sails are full under a starry night.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - NIGHT

Kyle, Pell, and Birch wait in the dark, still chained.

BIRCH
 We're not pirates, Pell. What do we do?

PELL
 As he said. Become pirates or die.

Tucker and pirates come below and unlock Pell.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Stede sits at a table in front of bookshelves and a large bed. Pirates shove Pell into a chair opposite him.

STEDE

Mr. Pell?

PELL

Aye. Ignatius Pell.

STEDE

Mr. Pell, your captain wrote in his log you were his first mate and Boat-Swain? Is it Bo-Swan or boat-SUN? I can never remember. Bo -

PELL

Bosun. It's spelled like boat-swain.

STEDE

Bosun, right. Our own bosun was Mr. Booth. He was killed with your captain.

PELL

He deserved it.

STEDE

You're a professional sailor, yes? Former Navy officer or something?

PELL

I am. Why?

STEDE

It's difficult to explain. Mr. Tucker, the man who shot your captain, is a bit of a... He's a far more capable sailor than I. In many ways, the men respect -

PELL

Are you really the Captain?

STEDE

Yes. When I read you were a real sailor, I thought, you could help me.

PELL

Help you?

STEDE

Yes. You could observe Tucker. When he says we should go here, or do that, you could tell me if it's the right thing.

PELL

Sounds like you need a doctor, more like.

STEDE

Mr. Pell, I'm sorry about how things went today. But I want to hire you.

PELL

Hire me?

STEDE

Things are done differently here on Revenge.

PELL

I had guessed that.

STEDE

For one thing, rather than the crew taking a share of what we acquire, I pay them by the month. It breaks the pirate code, and Tucker doesn't like it, but it's my ship. Take a look at this.

PELL leans in as Stede unrolls a parchment for him.

PELL

You pay wages? As in a salary?

STEDE

Yes. My crew all have a two-year contract. Here I've outlined your position, duties, and, this section here. How much were you paid as the first mate on Tristan?

PELL

What?

STEDE

On the Tristan. How much did they pay you?

PELL

Forty pounds a year, but I never --

STEDE

I'll pay you forty pounds. Every month.

PELL
Forty pounds...

STEDE
Every month. This ship needs someone like you.

PELL
It looks new. Who did you steal it from?

STEDE
Steal it?

BEGIN FLASHBACKS:

EXT. BONNET ESTATE/FIELDS - DAY (SIX MONTHS EARLIER)

Stede stares, eye twitching, at workers harvesting under a bright sun. Mary talks to LADY while children play.

STEDE (O.S.)
Only a few weeks ago, I was the owner of a sugar plantation in Barbados. I had a wife, children, and many servants.

INT. BONNET ESTATE/ORNATE ROOM - DAY (FIVE MONTHS AGO)

Mary yells at Stede. He turns from her, staring off.

STEDE (O.S.)
I had many discomforts in a married state and wanted a new life. One day I decided to...

EXT. BARBADOS/SHIPYARD - DAY

Stede walks with Tookerman and points to his diagrams.

STEDE (O.S.)
...take most of my fortune and build a ship that would take me there.

INT. BARBADOS TAVERN - DAY (FOUR MONTHS AGO)

Stede rolls a contract. Pitch smiles at Marko and Russ.

STEDE (O.S.)
All I needed was a crew and load it up.

I/E. BONNET ESTATE/ENTRY/DOOR - DAY (TWO MONTHS AGO)

Stede drops an envelope on a table and walks out.

STEDE (O.S.)

One day, I left a note.

INT. BONNET ESTATE/ORNATE ROOM - DAY

Mary's hand opens the envelope. She pulls out several parchments and sits. Her eyes read over a page.

STEDE (O.S.)

I told my wife not to expect my return. I left her all of my property and remaining fortune.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT/OPEN SEA - DAY

Stede unfurls a pirate flag as PILOT #4 steers to sea.

STEDE (O.S.)

I signed it Captain Stede Bonnet.

INT. BONNET ESTATE/ORNATE ROOM - DAY

Mary lifts her head, drops the papers and faints.

STEDE (O.S.)

Buccaneer of the Seven Seas.

END SERIES OF FLASHBACKS

Back to Scene

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

PELL

You're a farmer from Barbados?

STEDE

I was a gentleman of society. Now, I'm a gentleman of piracy. My crew works to increase our holdings and run the ship. They can be difficult to control sometimes. I keep telling Mr. Tucker to minimize violence.

PELL

Minimize violence? What about Captain Hargraves, or Perkins, or the whole damn crew of the Tristan?

Rhett steps down to Perkins. He pulls the gag down.

PERKINS

It was Steve Bonnet.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Back to Scene

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

STEDE

Actually, I detest killing. We've had ten deaths so far. Three today. I so want to reduce our average. If only Mr. Tucker --

Tucker enters.

STEDE (CONT'D)

Back to business.

PELL

Let me understand. You bought this ship, pay your crew a salary, sack other ships, then -

STEDE

What do you say?

PELL

Two years at forty pounds a month?

STEDE

With an option to renew.

TUCKER

If you're still living.

PELL

Where do I sign?

Stede slides the contract.

STEDE

Welcome aboard Mr. Pell. Mr. Tucker, meet Ignatius Pell, our new Bo-Swan.

Begin MONTAGE:

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

Revenge heads into a merchant ship's path.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Virginia, August 1717"

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP/DECK - DAY

Merchant sailors step up to a rail to get a look.

From their vantage point, Stede stands in front a far larger crew. He takes off his hat and bows.

Pell, Kyle, Nichols, now in uniforms, carry crates.

They pass the same sailors now bound and gagged.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - DAY

A cow stands in the empty hold. Crates pop into frame.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "South Carolina"

Pirates roll barrels in front of Stede as he kisses the hands of women in bright dresses. He smiles wolfishly.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST RIGGING - DAY

Pell and Birch work the lines. Pell looks down at Stede and the women. He turns back to his work.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - DAY

More crates appear. Bright dresses. Then Lingerie.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

The Revenge fires a shot ahead of a three-masted ship.

SUPERIMPOSE: "New York, September, 1717"

INT. MERCHANT SHIP ROGERS/HOLD - DAY

Stede offers a bottle apologetically to a bound Captain.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Stede removes books from a shelf revealing a compartment. He pulls out a chest. He removes a handful of coins.

EXT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Stede hands small bags to Kyle, Nichols, then Pell.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Tucker aims and shoots an attacking sailor.

Bonnet rants at him but he keeps his guns pointed.

EXT. REVENGE/HOLD - DAY

More crates and chests fill the hold. A cow moos OS.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. GOVERNOR EDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

KNIGHT

He's now calling himself Blackbeard.
He's sunk fifteen ships and killed
over 700. A rumor persists he sacked a
French ship, La Concorde, then killed
anyone who refused to join his crew.
He now calls it Queen Anne, or Queen
Ann's Revenge. I'm not sure. Locating
a witness to confirm this rumor has
been difficult.

CUT AWAY TO:

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - NIGHT

Fire casts a long shadow from Teach. Sailors' throats are
cut by pirates and they fall overboard.

Back to Scene

KNIGHT

As unfortunate as all that is, we
received another contribution.

Knight plops down a bag of coins and letter. Eden peruses
the letter, then lowers it to a candle. Fire burns
through Teach's signature as Eden drops it in a tray.

EDEN

Yes, unfortunate. Is that all, Tobias?

KNIGHT

One more, sir. A wealthy plantation owner from Barbados has become something of an enigma. He's known as "the Gentleman Pirate" having, in a few weeks, commandeered at least 11 ships.

EDEN

What's his name?

KNIGHT

Bonnet. Stede Bonnet.

EDEN

Ambitious. How many has he killed?

KNIGHT

That's just it. Only sixteen.

EDEN

Sixteen? From eleven ships?

KNIGHT

According to ample witnesses, after they surrender, Bonnet takes their cargo, apologizes for the trouble, and lets them go.

EDEN

Lets them go? I've never heard of such a thing.

KNIGHT

Bonnet does have one caveat to this practice. Any ship he finds registered out of Barbados -

EXT. TOPSAIL ISLAND - NIGHT

The Barbadian ship Francesca floats peacefully offshore, then explodes in a massive fireball.

Francesca's crew stands speechless on the beach. Bonfires illuminate fruit crates, rum bottles and their faces as Revenge glides away into the night.

EXT. REVENGE/POOP DECK - NIGHT

Francesca sinks. Bonnet turns to face his cheering crew, now numbering near seventy. While most wear Revenge's uniforms, some appear in more traditional pirate garb.

STEDE

Thank you, Mr. Russ. An excellent show. Men, tonight we head South to warmer climates.

(MORE)

STEDE (CONT'D)

There we can dance with women (cheers), drink like men (more cheers), and shop in St. Thomas.

Stede raises his fist in triumph. His crew is silent.

TUCKER

St Thomas?

STEDE

Yes, I spent many wonderful times there. It's quite enchanting. I'm sure the men -

TUCKER

Every privateer and pirate hunter gets their Letters of Marque there. St. Thomas is the last place we want to be.

STEDE

Where do you suggest, then?

TUCKER

Nassau. Pirate haven. It's in the Bahamas.

STEDE

Yes, I know where Nassau is, Mr. Tucker. Mr. Pell, may I see you a moment?

Pell walks to Stede who takes him aside.

STEDE (CONT'D)

Is Nassau in the Bahamas?

PELL

Yes. It's a pirate haven.

Stede nods then turns back to the concerned crew.

STEDE

Men, forget St. Thomas. Let's head to Nassau, a pirate haven. It's in the Bahamas.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK/THE OPEN SEA - NIGHT

We pull away from Pell as the crew cheers around him. Revenge turns South into a lightning speckled fog.

INT. BONNET'S CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Rain splatters the taffrail windows as Stede lays on his bed. He reads Shakespeare's HENRY V and pauses at -

INSERT - BOOK PAGE (FOCUSED ON)

"...this tun of treasure;..."

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Rain pours. Tucker stands with PILOT #1. He looks up.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - DAY

Ridge peers through a spyglass as his lookout perch sways. Above him, Pell and Birch make repairs.

PELL

The crossbeam, Birch. Can you reach it?

Birch reaches the beam and guides it to Pell. Pell loops a rope through one end, ties it off, then drops the line.

PELL (CONT'D)

Well done, Birch. That's it.

Pell and Birch descend. They pass by Ridge.

RIDGE

Double rum for you boys.

Ridge's eyes catch a glimpse. He lifts his spyglass up.

RIDGE (CONT'D)

Ship to port!

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT/RAIL - DAY

Tucker pulls his spyglass and steps to take a look.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

RIDGE (O.S.)

Ship to port.

Stede rises. He tosses his book on the table.

The book bumps his wine glass spilling some on the book.

EXT. REVENGE/RAIL - DAY

Tucker, Pell and Russ lift spyglasses near a rail.

EXT. PELL'S SPYGLASS VIEW - DAY

Parts of a giant ship peek through heavy fog and rain at a far distance. It flies a Red Ensign and a Union Jack.

EXT. REVENGE/RAIL - DAY

STEDE

Well?

RUSS

I reckon Jamaican or from the Leewards.

TUCKER

Two miles out, Bonnet. 400 tons and a few guns likely. It's too big for us.

Stede raises his own spyglass up to his eye.

STEDE

No, Mr. Tucker, it's a ton of treasure.

EXT. REVENGE/STERN - DAY

An enormous Union Jack unfurls high over Revenge.

EXT. REVENGE/RAIL - DAY

Pell observes Tucker shake his head as he walks midship.

TUCKER

Follow me, Mr. Pell.

EXT. REVENGE QUARTERDECK - DAY

Tucker leads Pell around the busy crew.

TUCKER

Mr. Pell, hoist all you've got to catch her. Mr. Dunkin run the guns below. Go for the mast. I am in charge.

INT. CANNON DECK - DAY

Dunkin dodges crew pulling a cannon.

DUNKIN

Move the guns to port, lads. You know
the move. Go for the mast. Reload.
Repeat.

EXT. REVENGE/RAIL - DAY

Stede monitors their course. Tucker returns.

TUCKER

We'll have one shot. I still say she's too big.

STEDE

The fog will hide us. Don't worry.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

Revenge's two masts peek through the fog just behind its
prey. The larger ship, Protestant Caesar, runs slower.

Revenge closes in on the starboard side.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

TUCKER

Mr. Nichols, on my mark.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

The bow of Revenge nears Protestant Caesar's stern.

INT. CANNON DECK - DAY

Dunkin sees Caesar's stern pass into view.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

TUCKER

Ready to strike the colors.

EXT. REVENGE/RAIL - DAY

Pell raises his spyglass.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

TUCKER

Swap colors.

SLO-MO SEQUENCE:

EXT. PROTESTANT CAESAR/DECK

Axel lifts and unfolds a parchment.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT

Tucker raises his hand, ready to give a command to fire.

EXT. REVENGE/RAIL - DAY

Pell leans over the rail as he looks through his telescope. Several cannons poke through the enemy ship's rail balustrade.

EXT. REVENGE/RAIL

Pell lowers his spyglass and spins away from the rail.

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE:

INT. TRISTAN/BELOW DECK - DAY (SEVERAL DAYS AGO)

Hands draw on parchment. Perkins speaks to Rhett.

Hands turn the parchment showing a drawing of Revenge.

END SLO MO SEQUENCE

PERKINS

It was Steve Bonnet. He called his
ship --

EXT. CHARLES TOWN, NORTH CAROLINA/DOCK - DAY

William Rhett and Masters pass out parchment flyers.

RHETT

... Revenge. It's a two-masted
schooner. Hello, please look out for
this ship?

Axel takes a flyer as Rhett continues to alert others.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Back to Scene

EXT. PROTESTANT CAESAR/DECK - DAY

Axel opens the drawing fully as rain smudges the ink.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - DAY

The Union Jack drops away revealing a black pirate flag.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

TUCKER

Fire.

Immediately several cannons BLAST from

EXT. PROTESTANT CAESAR/RAIL - DAY

the merchant ship's guns peeking through the rail.

EXT. REVENGE/PORT SIDE - DAY

Cannonballs BLAST Revenge's hull and a gun port explodes

INT. REVENGE/GUN DECK - DAY

taking out cannons and a few men. Wood shatters.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

A BLAST and Pell falls to the deck. The shot decimates five feet of rail and men are blown out to sea.

EXT. REVENGE/RAIL - DAY

A CRASH sends wood raining on Stede. He dives to safety.

STEDE

My ship...

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

A cannonball takes out the pilot. Other SHOTS and EXPLOSIONS kill more crewmen. CRASHES of iron and wood.

Tucker, rises and points.

TUCKER

Fire, fire!

EXT. REVENGE/PORT SIDE - DAY

Crewmen get off the floor, then swivel the cannon to aim it back. Dunkin lights a fuse.

EXT. PROTESTANT CAESAR/DECK - DAY

The shot hits a fore railing, splinters through it then hits a crewman carrying a box of gunpowder. An explosion.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Tucker grabs Kyle and replaces him as the pilot.

TUCKER

Hard to starboard Mr. Kyle. Nichols, tend the artillery and engage. Mr. Pell?

EXT. REVENGE/BOW - DAY

Pell hears Tucker's call as he heads aft, then a BOOM. Looking above, Pell covers as debris just misses him.

EXT. PROTESTANT CAESAR/DECK - DAY

Wyer lowers his hand to fire. Guns Blast.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Stede crawls under the starboard forecandle railing.

EXT. REVENGE/FOREMAST - DAY

A cannonball snaps a foremast crossbeam. A section of the beam falls, smashing the forecandle railing above Stede.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Pell hears a CRASH behind him. He turns.

The forecastle's balusters snap and fall with jagged and jagged ends pointed down-- then slice into Stede's back.

Stede screams then is still. A huge wave canopies over the deck as the ship rolls starboard. The water hits Stede and washes the Captain inches from the open rail.

Pell turns his back on Stede and closes his eyes as rain soaks him. Stede groans. Pell opens his eyes.

Another wave closes in. The surge hits Stede and he spills over. Pell grabs Stede's wrist just in time. With his other hand, Pell clings to a rope. His wet grip strains to hang on to both.

PELL

Help!

Birch slides from the ropes above, lands, then reaches over. Together they pull Stede to the deck, then away from the open rail. They drag Stede to safety. Birch stands back and catches his breath.

Pell lifts Stede over his shoulder. He turns to Birch.

PELL (CONT'D)

He's dying. We have to get him --

A sudden blast of water blows Birch through the railing.

Pell screams. He's gone. He turns and carries Stede aft.

STEDE

Get us out...

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Kyle fights to turn the ship. More BOOMS.

Tucker steadies himself from a line and searches the fog for the galleon. Flashes appear in the fog. Then BOOMS.

TUCKER

Mr. Nichols, hold fire. Where the devil... Mr. Kyle, ten degrees starboard.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Rain intensifies. Pell steps behind Tucker.

PELL

Mr. Tucker, the Captain is...

TUCKER

Mr. Pell, Where have you -- Is he
alive? Mr. Kyle, keep us in the storm.

Flashes pop deep within the fog. Booms follow. Tucker and Pell wait for shots to land. Nothing. Tucker leads Pell

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Get him inside.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

Revenge escapes into the foggy storm.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Tucker and crewmen enter. Pell rests Stede on a table.

TUCKER

He's out. Get the bottle.

Tucker pulls wood from Stede's thigh. Stede groans as Tucker pours rum over his wound. Marko wraps it.

Pell backs to exit outside.

EXT. REVENGE MIDSHIP - DAY

Pell picks up a halyard line as CREWMEN #4, #5 and #10 drag the dead to stern. Pell looks out to the sea.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Kyle shakes as he steers a far calmer ship.

PELL

Birch is dead. Anyone else you know of?

KYLE

This is a bloody fool's errand. We must jump.

PELL

We need a time and a place and without Tucker.

KYLE
How far is Nassau?

PELL
1000 miles. But mate, Nassau is no place to hide
or jump. That's a worst-case plan.

KYLE
What of Bonnet? What if he dies?

PELL
Then Tucker becomes captain.

Pell looks over his shoulder beyond the row of the dead
to stern. Tucker emerges and approaches.

PELL (CONT'D)
Here comes the sweet man, now.
(Then)
Orders, sir?

TUCKER
Keep on to Nassau. We have to reach a
friendly port if he's to live.

PELL
The Captain?

TUCKER
Four days may be too long.

KYLE
Aren't there other places before Nassau?

TUCKER
Not that this is your concern, Mr. Kyle, but no.
Nassau is our best choice.

PELL
The Turks Keys are on the way. That's
a friendly port.

TUCKER
Mr. Pell, I am in command. Understood?

PELL
Aye, Quartermaster.

TUCKER
We have associates in Nassau.

EXT. FREEPORT SHORE- DAY

The Porter, engulfed in fire, sinks. Queen Anne, moors nearby. Marquette, a smaller ship, rests further away. Queen Anne and Marquette fly black flags.

GIBBENS (32), boatswain of Queen Anne, stands deck of the larger ship. We hear his voice echo across the water.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - DAY

GIBBENS

You have been given your option,
Captain. What be your answer?

CAPTAIN DANIELS, (50) watches his burning ship, PORTER, sink. Like his 40 men guarded by a 100 pirates around him, Daniels is on his knees and bound.

CAPTAIN DANIELS

No. Not me.

GIBBENS

As you say. Your sentence is -

Smoke puffs out from a group of pirates. A drum beats slowly. A figure, dark and tall, stands in the drifting smoke. Daniels and his men stare at the crackle just below the figure's face, steam and smoke waft from it. Dressed in black, Edward Teach approaches Daniels.

TEACH

All who choose death, meet death.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

Revenge sails alone, listing slightly to port.

Over its battle-worn deck and crew, it flies no flag.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Stede wheezes as he sleeps. Rum pours into a glass next to his head. Tucker lifts the glass to Stede's lips.

STEDE

Tucker. How far to Nassau?

TUCKER

A day. I need money for repairs and medicine.

Stede motions to his bookshelf. Tucker swats a dozen books and pulls out the chest. Tucker bags a few coins.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

All right. It won't be long Bonnet.

He closes the chest, inserts it back, then turns to exit.

STEDE

How many, Tucker? How many dead?

TUCKER

Over half. 38 in all. Repairs will take months. What were you thinking?

STEDE

Once we repair the ship, we'll hire more crew. I think we need more guns. Can you -

TUCKER

No, you bloody fool. You nearly killed us by attacking that ship. We need a different strategy. All of us think so.

STEDE

Let's repair the ship. Then discuss it.

TUCKER

It's already done.

Tucker leaves. Stede sighs at his books on the floor.

EXT. REVENGE/THE PORT OF NASSAU - NIGHT

Revenge glides into port with its black banner tied in a knot. Pell, Tucker and the rest of the crew line the rails. In their view lay a deadly flotilla.

As Revenge approaches the city, it passes Queen Anne.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - DAY

Gibbens notes the flag and the name of the damaged ship.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

TUCKER

Full stop and anchor. Prepare the boats.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - NIGHT

Crewmen disperse across the ship and drop anchor. Pell crosses midship to the landing boats. As he passes, Tucker grabs his shirt collar and stops him cold.

TUCKER

While I tend to Bonnet, you and Mr. Kyle will remain on board. If either of you is missing for a minute, you'll both get your throats cut.

STEDE

Haven't we proven our worth?

TUCKER

No.

Nichols and two others carry Stede to the boat. As Stede passes, he sees Pell a few yards away.

STEDE

Pell... Pell, my, my...friend.

As they're lowered to the bay, Tucker locks eyes on Pell. Pell turns away and busies himself with a knot on the rail.

EXT. PORT OF NASSAU - NIGHT

Crew row the landing boats on as Tucker remains watching.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY (DAYS LATER)

Stede sleeps. Pell enters and shelves a stack of charts. He observes the books then sees a one-inch wide toy ship, small and metal.

He gingerly picks it up and rolls it in his fingers.

STEDE (O.S.)

That's the Ark Royal.

Pell turns to see Stede awake.

STEDE (CONT'D)

Fifty-five guns. It was Sir Walter Raleigh's. He loved that ship.

Pell holds the ship closer to see better.

STEDE (CONT'D)

He bought it when he was thirty-two. But he owed a lot of money to Elizabeth the first. He gave the Ark Royal to her for 5000 pounds against his debt. It was worth a lot more. She stole it from him actually.

PELL

What happened to it?

STEDE

Elizabeth used it against the Armada. Years later, it was to be the flagship of the English Navy. But as they moved it through a river, it struck bottom. Its anchor bore a hole right through its own hull and it sank right there. They broke it up soon after. Very sad.

PELL

Did you read that in one of these books?

STEDE

No, my father told me that one. He loved tales of adventure, pirates, and battles. He could really tell a story. He died when I was six. At that moment I became rich. Then, I became a bore.

PELL

Then you chose the sea.

STEDE

I did. And you? Why the Navy?

PELL

My parents died when I was young and my brother, Rowley, raised me. He joined the Navy when I was nine and brought me on as a cabin boy. A year later, he was dead. I had nowhere else. After six years, I decided I had enough of battles and death. I never thought I'd end up on a ship like this.

Pell returns the ship to the shelf. Stede stares off.

STEDE

Given the chance, I would leave this course of life I've made and --

Tucker bursts into the chamber with crewmen in tow.

TUCKER

We have a visitor. You both should come.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Stede limps past his crew. A fresh red stain soaks through his suit jacket. Drums startle Pell and Kyle. Dozens of pirates board Revenge on all sides with drawn cutlasses. Stede and his crew are forced back to the poop deck. The drum stops and the pirates stand silent.

STEDE

Welcome, friends. My name is -

Drumming begins again, only slower. Deeper.

EXT. REVENGE/FORECASTLE - DAY

A group of six pirates comes forward in column formation. Each holds a rope with metal boxes dangling at both ends. Smoke pours from these creating thick, black clouds.

EXT. REVENGE/POOP DECK - DAY

Six pirates approach. A dark figure, hidden by the smoke, walks within the group.

Pell sees Tucker smiling.

Teach emerges the cloud with his beard crackling with sparks and smoke. He draws his cutlass and faces Stede.

TEACH

All who choose death...

The drumming stops.

TEACH (CONT'D)

...deserve a merry life and a short one.

Teach and his men laugh and cheer. Stede relaxes slightly as Tucker claps. Teach meets his eyes.

TEACH (CONT'D)

Mr. Bonnet, we have much to discuss.

STEDE

Captain Blackbeard. I would like to...

TEACH

Call me Teach. Blackbeard's my professional name. Let's me and you --

Stede wobbles and holds a hand against the growing stain on his back. Nichols catches and steadies him.

NICHOLS

Inside. Out of the heat.

They help Stede off the deck while Pell and Kyle observe the crowd of pirates standing guard around the ship.

PELL

(To Kyle))

Welcome to Nassau.

INT. BONNET'S CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Blackbeard smokes. Stede sits with a red wine. Pell, Tucker, and Gibbens stand nearby as Pitch pours rum.

TEACH (BLACKBEARD)

I took stock of your history my dear Captain Bonnet. You have demonstrated a remarkable affectation as an "artist of the sea."

Stede stares blankly. Pitch turns to Stede.

PITCH

He means a pirate.

STEDE

Oh. Thank you, Captain Black -- Captain Teach. However, let us agree that you are the truest, be it sailor, privateer or "artist of the sea."

TEACH

I'm happy to hear you say that, Captain. As I would like to offer you, and your crew, a way to increase your holdings, your knowledge, and save your reputation.

STEDE

What do you mean, my reputation?

TEACH

Until your skirmish with that 400-ton gunny, you plundered eighteen ships in four months with only a few deaths. While governments and priests condemn murder, we artists of the sea, find it mandatory for one's reputation. As such, many do not consider you a pirate at all, Mr. Bonnet.

STEDE

Who are you talking about?

Stede winces and presses a hand against his bleeding back. Teach calmly refills Stede's glass and smiles.

TEACH

I'm only repeating what I hear. Throughout the Caribbean, it's known you're as much a killer as a Covent Garden nun. They know you're only interested in the theater, not real pirating. They know your ship and they're coming for you. Mr. Bonnet, let us consider the facts, hm?

STEDE

Facts?

TEACH

You're in no condition to maintain command. Your ship is barely seaworthy. You've lost most of your crew. You won't survive another battle and privateers are hunting you.

STEDE

What do you want?

TEACH

I suggest we sail together, you and I. You can rest and recover. I'll repair Revenge, restore your crew and get you whatever you want. Women, drink, furry animals...

STEDE

More books?

TEACH

Aye, more books. Gibbens, we have books in our stores, yes? Think of it. We can be ready in 3 weeks. Until then, stay onboard Revenge, read, and rest. What do you say, Bonnet? Are we agreed?

Stede looks to Tucker. Tucker nods. Stede turns to Pell.

STEDE

Mr. Pell, what do you say?

Pell, reads their faces. They wait for his answer.

PELL

Well, sir. Captain, ah. We should be --

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

KYLE

Partners? You threw in with Blackbeard? Marcella would be proud.

(Pulls on his uniform)

Do we still have to wear these?

PELL
It's not Blackbeard anymore, it's Teach.

KYLE
Teach, huh? So four ships together.

PELL
Aye. It would be safer in some ways. But it's the crew...

KYLE
You mean those blokes aren't gentlemen pirates, too? Blimey. I'd had never guessed.

PELL
Keep a sharp eye. Somethings going on with Tucker.

KYLE
Tucker's no gentleman. He's all pirate.

PELL
Aye, but Teach, he's worse than anyone. And now he's our captain.

EXT. REVENGE/STERN - DAY (THREE WEEKS LATER)

Teach puffs on a cigar. The fleet sails into a sunset.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Pell, Kyle and Ridge's eyes all follow Teach.

TEACH
Bosun, straight ahead and full sail West.

PELL
Aye, Captain. On due course West and keen.

Teach walks off the cockpit toward the bow.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Teach strolls over the restored deck and crew. Nobody wears a uniform.

EXT. REVENGE/FOREDECK - DAY

Teach sees Matchmaker on the foredeck. FORE LOOKOUT stands on the rail, his back to Teach. The cannon is secured by a breech rope and fuses.

Teach looks up at the Fore Lookout then lowers his cigar to the fuse. With a BOOM, the man is blown out to sea.

Teach turns around and passes by the crew.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Teach returns. Pell holds eye contact with him.

TEACH
Trouble, Bosun?

PELL
No, Captain.

Stede walks up. He holds a book and looks pathetic dressed in a nightshirt and cap.

STEDE
I heard a shot. What happened?

TEACH
Bosun, report to Mr. Bonnet what you saw.

PELL
Captain Teach fired a cannon shot which took out our Fore Lookout, Sir.

STEDE
What? Why?

TEACH
Bosun, explain to Mr. Bonnet why.

PELL
The Captain shot the lookout because if he doesn't shoot a few crewmen now and then, they will forget who he is.

TEACH
Today's lesson: Fear of death. When a man sees me and fears his death, I have the same power of fifty armed men around me.

The crew yells in agreement.

TEACH (CONT'D)

When a man sees two hundred of us, we'll strike him with a fear of ten thousand.

All crew cheer.

Pell turns to Stede who stares at Teach.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

TITLE: "March, 1718"

The sun glistens as the four pirate ships turn North.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Stede, still dressed in night gown and cap, is surrounded by many more bookshelves. As he reads, Stede is distracted OS by seagulls, then a bell chimes.

He turns back to his book. The ship creaks. A shout OS.

He looks up, then refocuses. His wood wall creaks. He looks up from his book and sighs.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/MAST - DAY

Ridge sees Adventure far to the North. He pulls a green flag out, attaches it to the mast, and whistles.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/COCKPIT - DAY

CAPTAIN RICHARDS (40), crosses the helm and looks up at the signal. He takes out his spyglass and walks up.

RICHARDS

Mr. Gibbens, signal Revenge we're taking the next ship. First mate, lay in?

TUCKER

Aye, Captain Richards. Straight at 'em.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/MAST - DAY

Gibbens opens a box and pulls a red streamer. He hoists it. He then pulls out a pistol and fires it out to sea.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

PELL
Signal off the Queen Anne, sir.

Teach raises his spyglass, then lowers it, calculating.

TEACH
Mr. Pell, signal back infinity.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - DAY

Pell's hands open a box of flags. He unrolls a green flag with an infinity sign. He raises it and six bells ring.

INT. BONNET'S CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Stede hears the bells and gets up.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Stede pokes his head out and sees the infinity flag. He takes his cap off and turns back inside.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

As the four pirate ships advance on Adventure, the two outer ones move faster and away from the inner two.

EXT. HIGH ABOVE THE ORCHID - DAY

Adventure cruises South as two ships separate out from two others. The center two ships maintain their course.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Stede, now dressed in black suit and hat, emerges into daylight. He pulls a spyglass and surveys the attack.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

Teach's ships fire from two pirate ships as the Adventure can't help but sail in to the box formation.

EXT. ADVENTURE/DECK - DAY

DAVID HERRIOT (30) stands with his crew. Cannonballs SPLASH to the left and ahead of his ship. He sees the black flags of the attacking ships.

HERRIOT

All Stop. Raise the white and anchor.

He turns to his bosun as a white flag is unfurled.

HERRIOT (CONT'D)

Very impressive, Blackbeard.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

Adventure, anchored now, is surrounded on three sides. A fourth pirate ship circles them all.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE - DAY

Gibbens, Tucker, and crewmen stand along the railing with pistols drawn as Queen Anne comes alongside.

EXT. ADVENTURE/DECK - DAY

Pirates throw hook ended lines over. Others aim pistols.

Adventure's crew stand with hands raised.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - DAY

Crewmen pull lines to raft the ships together. Gibbens watches as Tucker and pirates prepare to board.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - DAY

The two hulls bump. Tucker and forty crewmen, pistols drawn, step over to the Adventure deck.

EXT. ADVENTURE/DECK - DAY

Pirates spread out all over the ship. Tucker moves to the hold and points his gun into it.

Revenge bumps hulls as it rafts up on the opposite side.

TUCKER

Anyone below has ten seconds to get topside or your captain dies.

Instantly, six Adventure crew scramble up, arms raised.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Any more?

Herriot, smirks and shakes his head. Tucker, satisfied, motions for to the pirates to go below.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Let's begin.

(To Herriot)

You, with me.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Tucker escorts Herriot to Teach, Pell, and Stede.

TEACH

Ha. Two shots and you quit?

HERRIOT

I know your flag, Captain Blackbeard. I'd rather join than die.

TEACH

What's your name?

HERRIOT

David Herriot. Adventure is yours.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - DAY

Dozens of crates are brought over the rail. Gibbens stands watching as another crewman tallies the take.

INT. QUEEN ANNE HOLD - DAY

The men bring the crates below, stacking them in a section of the hold with a significant empty space.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Pell steps alongside the rail to Stede.

PELL

Sir, do you think we -- Captain?

STEDE
Marvelous isn't it?

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - DAY

Crewmen bring a large locked chest and place it at Gibbens feet. He strikes the lock with a hammer until it breaks. His face is stoic as he rifles through coins. Then he stops cold, staring into the chest. He slams it.

GIBBENS
Speed men. Compel the new crewmen.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

Pulling back from the stern of Adventure, the ship joins the other four ships all flying black pirate banners.

A cannon fires.

Two more ships come along side the four.

The six ships approach a lone merchant ship.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Pell watches from a perch as merchant crew are bound. Teach turns and walks off. Pell looks to the sea.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

Ten ships sail behind the Queen Anne. All fly black.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. QUEEN ANNE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: "April, 1718"

Stede, Richards, Teach, and Herriot sit at a table. Kyle, Pell, Tucker, and pirates stand in front of other crew. Most drink rum. Teach smokes a cigar. Gibbens approaches the table holding a small but very heavy, burlap bag.

GIBBENS
And this, I saved for last. Weeks ago, we sacked the Adventure, if you remember.

HERRIOT

I have heard of it.

RICHARDS

Aye, the galleon. That was a good take.

Gibbens places the bag on the table with a loud bump.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

What are you hiding in there, Gibbens?

GIBBENS

In the last few months, we added 500 men and sacked every ship. Our holds are full. We lost not a man to the cutlass.

NICHOLS

Only Morton who dropped a lantern on a box o' powder. BOOM.

MARKO

Bye, Morton.

GIBBENS

Alas, poor Morton. Men, when I saw this under the gold and pieces of eight that day, I said to myself, this deserves a special occasion.

Pell's attention, like everyone else, is on the bag.

GIBBENS (CONT'D)

We've now fourteen ships strong with over 700 crew. As we raise a glass to you, Captain, now known to all as Commodore Teach, accept this token of our esteem. We your crew, we artists of the fleet, present you with...the world.

Gibbens pulls the burlap. On the table is a brilliant gold sphere, 6" in diameter. A raised relief map of the earth covers the object. Everyone leans closer. Teach wraps his hands around it. He tries to lift it, but can't. It's too heavy.

TEACH

What an object to heave. What's inside it?

GIBBENS

It's solid gold, sir. Eighty pounds of it.

TEACH

This be a true prize, indeed. Mercy.

Pell watches Teach's hands grip and encapsulate the globe. Teach rolls it to Richards who stops it.

TEACH (CONT'D)

Captain Richards, pick our next course on that.
I'm weary of the Caribbean.

Stede, far healthier now, raises a hand.

STEDE

Commodore, may I suggest a course?

TEACH

Ha. Of course, Mr. Bonnet.

MARKO (O.S.)

Anywhere but St. Thomas.

STEDE

Commodore, in the months prior to my coming onboard, my crew and I sailed off the Carolinas. Now armed with your Fear of Death tactics, I suggest Charles Town harbor would be an attractive and simple target for us.

HERRIOT

What do you mean simple?

Stede reaches for and places a parchment on the table, then a bit of charcoal. He draws a rough map.

He reaches into his coat and places the small Ark Royal ship on his drawing.

Stede's hands slide the toy ship over his drawing.

STEDE

Let me show you. Ships entering port are nearly always slavers from Africa. But a ship leaving will, most likely, be heading to Europe and filled with provisions, passengers, and gold.

Stede draws a group of black ships.

STEDE (CONT'D)

We'd set up our ships en masse here. A blockade of sorts. As a ship emerges...

(he slides the toy ship out)

...we'd cut her off, board her, and within the hour she'd be empty.

TEACH

And add her empty carcass to the blockade.

RICHARDS

(Rolls the globe back to Teach)

I don't need this, Teach. Bonnet, your plan has merit. Well done.

HERRIOT

I agree with Richards. I like it.

TEACH

Does anyone suggest another course? No? Well done, Bonnet. Here, you get to carry this.

Teach rolls the globe to Stede. It lands painfully in his lap. Teach stands.

TEACH (CONT'D)

Charles Town by unanimous vote.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - NIGHT

Pell broods as he ties a line. Crewmen come topside, some disembark to other ships. Kyle walks up.

KYLE

I know. You wanted a gold globe too.

PELL

Not exactly.

KYLE

At least we're heading to a spot where we can jump and walk back to Virginia.

PELL

Kyle, don't say things like that. Any direction with these bastards is the wrong one. But you may be right, this may give us a chance.

INT. GOVERNOR EDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "May, 1718"

Knight pushes his way through a noisy crowd then closes the door. Eden sits at his easel and paints fruit.

EDEN

Welcome back, Chief Justice. It appears you're a highly wanted man.

KNIGHT

There's only one man truly wanted in the Carolinas, sir...

EDEN

Thank you, Tobias, I -

KNIGHT

...and his name is Edward Blackbeard Teach.

Knight sits without any invitation. Eden gets up.

EDEN

Drink, Tobias? Let's both have one.

Eden pours two glasses. Knight drains his in one sip.

EDEN (CONT'D)

How was Charles Town?

KNIGHT

After five days, Teach and Bonnet have sacked nine ships and taken fifty hostages.

EDEN

Poor Governor Spotswood. Sounds like a real crisis for him. Calm down. We stand to gain from this.

KNIGHT

Charles, we're not safe. The governors of Virginia and South Carolina have issued more commissions to hunt down pirates and their accomplices. Accomplices, Charles. That crowd out there wants you to do the same.

EDEN

Have them write a letter.

Knight gets up and over to a large wall map. He picks up a paintbrush and dips it in paint. Knight draws on it.

KNIGHT

Let me give you a geography lesson. We're pressured from South Carolina, here, and Virginia, up here to our North, and Teach from the sea.

EDEN

That map was expensive. Your point?

KNIGHT

If we appear tolerant of piracy to our constituency or worse, the King...

EDEN

You believe it may implicate us?

KNIGHT

It will implicate us, Charles. But if we go against Teach, he'll turn on us. We're surrounded.

Eden ponders. The noise outside his door grows.

EDEN

I see. I was hoping the English fleet would resolve things with Teach.

Eden studies the wall map and Knight's circles.

EDEN (CONT'D)

I have it. And mark me, Tobias, we will gain from this. You'll need to draft a letter and take it to him. Where is Blackbeard now?

KNIGHT

Still in Charles Town. Negotiating.

EXT. PORT INLET CHARLES TOWN - DAY

Several ships float rafted together while several ships with pirate flags moor around them.

INT. QUEEN ANNE/HOLD - DAY

Stede, Tucker, Teach, and a dozen crew stand in before a large group of prisoners. Gibbens holds a parchment.

SAMUAL WRAGG (45) and MARKS (35), listen intently.

TEACH

This is a list of medical supplies we need. I need a volunteer to go into town, acquire them from Spotswood, and return by sundown.

WRAGG

Will you guarantee our safe release if we do this?

TEACH

Aye. I'll return your ships and free all of you. If you don't, every one of you will be executed, your head sent to the Governor, and all your ships burned and sunk. Do we have an accord?

WRAGG

Yes, I'll go. May I take Mr. Marks.

TEACH

Aye. I'll also send two of my crew
along.

EXT. PORT INLET CHARLES TOWN - DAY

Wragg and Marks row a small boat away from Queen Anne.
Two DRUNK PIRATES riding along, drink and provoke them.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - DAY

Kyle and Pell watch the small boat near a jetty.

KYLE

I wish we were rowing that boat, Pell.

PELL

Yes, that is one job I'd do for free.

EXT. CHARLES TOWN STREET/THE SALTY PENGUIN - DAY

Drunk pirates stumble with Marks and Wragg.

DRUNK PIRATE #1

Meet us on the Jetty before sunset.

WRAGG

Yes, sir. We'll be there.

Pirates walk into a quiet tavern. A ruckus ensues and
several MEN exit. A handful of coins drop on the bar OS.

PIRATE #11 (O.S.)

Rum for me and my friend.

EXT. PORT INLET JETTY - NIGHT

Marks and Wragg wait next to crates and blankets.

INT. BONNET'S CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Stede and Herriot sit at a table while Tucker, Pell, Kyle
and other crew stand by. Teach enters with Gibbens.

HERRIOT

We should kill a hostage and send him to --

TEACH

Nay, I know why they're late. Hear this.

STEDE

What is it?

Teach hands the letter to Gibbens.

GIBBENS

My Dear Captain Teach,

BEGIN MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

EXT. PORT OF PLYMOUTH, ENGLAND - DAY

An armada of large ships unmoors from docks in England.

GIBBENS (O.S.)

Several Men of War vessels, under the authority of Admiral Rogers, left England April tenth.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

A fleet of four English galleons sail Southwest.

GIBBENS (O.S.)

This armada sails for the West Indies via the colonial coasts of New York and will arrive in the Carolinas by mid May.

Many cannons are placed. Dozens of guns are uncrated.

GIBBENS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Their commission is simple. Wipe away the scourge of piracy in the New World.

INT. GOVERNOR EDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Evans signs his name to a parchment titled "Royal Pardon and Amnesty." "Edward Teach" is written near the top.

GIBBENS (O.S.)

I beseech you and your crew to accept a King's pardon that Governor Eden alone will grant. Please send a delegation at once. Signed Tobias Knight, Chief Justice, North Carolina.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

STEDE

Is this a trick to pull us in?

TEACH

I would think the same, but look.

Teach passes letters out. All of them have Tobias Knight's signature.

TEACH (CONT'D)

I have history with this man. And leverage.

HERRIOT

What has this to do with the hostages?

STEDE

Perhaps Governor Spotswood hopes they'll solve his blockade problem in time.

HERRIOT

They could be here any hour. We must retreat.

TEACH

Aye, but not before getting what we want.

STEDE

Can we please make it quick?

EXT. JETTY OFF THE PORT INLET - NIGHT

Marks and Wragg sit on a crate. A pirate ship pulls closer to them. The two men stand to meet it. The ship sails right past them and into the inlet.

WRAGG

Wait. We have your supplies. And more.

Cannon and pistol fire drown out their voices. Wragg and Marks frantically wave and yell. Other ships pass by.

EXT. PORT INLET CHARLES TOWN - NIGHT

The ships enter the port with cannons blasting. Flags with three 7's fly on each. Citizens scramble in fear.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - NIGHT

PELL

Mr. Russ, reset the artillery.

Pell hears a man call to him from the dock below.

MARKS

(Holds up a bottle of medicine)
Hello. Ah...ah-hoy...Ahoy, sir.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE/DECK - NIGHT

Crates are hoisted above Pell and Nichols. Teach and Stede stand next to Marks and Wragg, tied to the mast.

WRAGG

After this we waited for the Governor's doctors to bring the medicine. I sent Marks outside where we left your men. He couldn't find them.

MARKS

Your men deserted us. We looked everywhere. I tried to send a message but no one dared do it.

WRAGG

We even tried rowing it back ourselves but our boat capsized.

MARKS

You must believe us, Captain. Please.

STEDE

We have more than what we asked for.

TEACH

But what of our men?

Tucker enters with the drunk pirates who are chained.

TUCKER

I found them. Drunk in an alley.

TEACH

Mr. Tucker, release the hostages. Mr. Pell, move us out. Sail Northwest.

PELL

Aye, sir. Northwest.

TEACH

(Quietly to Stede)

Let us strategize together, Captain.

EXT. CHARLES TOWN TO THE OPEN SEA - NIGHT

The fleet exits the port entry. Revenge, Queen Anne and Adventure break West away from the others in its fleet.

INT. QUEEN ANNE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Teach pours a glass of wine then swigs from the bottle.

TEACH

What do you think about the English armada?

STEDE

Honestly, I'm against them.

TEACH

I mean, of Eden's warning.

STEDE

We have six gun ships and a host of full store ships. I'm averse to any risk of losing them.

TEACH

I lean that way too.

STEDE

Eden said if we take the King's pardon, they can't touch us.

TEACH

So you're favorable to the pardon?

STEDE

Aye. Yourself?

TEACH

A pardon would ease my mind.

STEDE

Then let's go see Governor Eden.

TEACH

Bonnet, I need your help. The pardon isn't the problem. But, I don't think I'll survive the trip.

STEDE

Are you ill?

TEACH

No. Privateers are on the prowl in the Carolinas. It's dangerous. All of them want my head.

STEDE

Yes, I can imagine that.

TEACH

Aye. I don't dare go there without a pardon in hand.

STEDE

What can I do, Commodore?

TEACH

Well, if you were to go for me. Take a small boat, travel under another name.

STEDE

I see.

TEACH

Meet with Eden, get us pardons and then meet us back at Topsail. Revenge will be waiting for you to be her Captain again.

STEDE

You've thought of everything, Teach.

TEACH

Aye.

EXT. SAILBOAT - DAY

Marko swivels the boom around and catches a wind. Stede watches the ships leave him in their wake.

STEDE

I need new shoes.

INT. GOVERNOR EDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

PERRY

Sir, a Captain Stede Bonnet is here.

EDEN

Bonnet?

PERRY

Something to do with Captain Teach, Sir.

Knight comes in from the side office and up to the door.

EDEN

Yes, please show him in, Perry.

Stede walks directly to Eden. Marko hangs by the door.

KNIGHT

Captain Bonnet. How good of you to come. I'm Tobias Knight, Chief Justice. Stede Bonnet, this is Governor Eden.

EDEN

Captain Bonnet, welcome.

STEDE

Good day, gentlemen. I am here to collect a pardon for myself, my crew and Commodore Edward Teach.

EDEN

This must be a relief for you.

STEDE

It is. For my crew as well.

EDEN

Good. What's next? Retirement?

STEDE

St. Thomas and a petition.

EDEN

Sounds like a wonderful idea.

Knight unrolls a large parchment and points to a section.

KNIGHT

Here is the proclamation and we'll sign and seal this here. This guarantees passage and innocence. As long as you renounce piracy.

STEDE

Excellent. And what about my crew?

KNIGHT

Yes, you can sign for your crew as well. How many officers and regular crew do you have?

STEDE

Mercy. Mr. Marko, help me here. How many crew do we have across our fleet?

MARKO

For all of us? I'd guess fifty officers and 750 hands.

KNIGHT

Plus yourself, Captain.

STEDE

Roughly 800. Why, Mr. Knight?

KNIGHT

For the tax.

STEDE

Tax? What tax?

KNIGHT

The pardon tax. Officers are thirty pounds, seamen are ten, and you, Captain are 100. So that adds to ...

EDEN

£9,100.

KNIGHT

This is why he's the Governor.

STEDE

£9000? I wasn't aware of this tax.

KNIGHT

We did mention this in our letter.

STEDE

I didn't read it. We don't have --

MARKO

I have ten pieces of eight, Captain.

STEDE

Mr. Knight, what are our options to resolve this?

MARKO

(Holds up a coin)

Oh, I found another one.

KNIGHT

We'll take a promissory note. We can waive the interest.

STEDE

Bless you, Mr. Knight. I suppose we should add another £100 for Commodore Teach.

KNIGHT

Oh that won't be necessary. He already paid his tax.

EDEN

Teach sealed his papers last week.

STEDE

Teach's papers? I thought... Last week?

KNIGHT

Yes. Teach has his pardon. These are yours and these are for your crew.

EDEN

Is there a problem, Captain?

Stede dizzily approaches the stack of papers.

STEDE

(Eye twitches)

Chief Justice, please, may I, allow me to, I wish to, may I review... I don't understand -

Stede falters, shuffling through the documents.

STEDE (CONT'D)

What have I... Where do I sign?

Knight points and Stede signs a paper, another, then another. Knight seals the wax. Stede is physically weak.

KNIGHT

Congratulations, Captain. We're done here.

Stede, stunned, walks to the door, then realizes he forgot his papers. He scoops them up and leaves.

EXT. TOPSAIL ISLAND - DAY (DAYS LATER)

SPYGLASS P.O.V. - A man's feet walk in sand. They stop near on a ridge. He kneels at the trunk of a curved palm tree.

A man digs deep in the sand. After a few moments, he drops something in the hole, then replaces the sand.

Tucker stands, brushes the sand off and heads off the way he came.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - DAY

Pell, lowers his spyglass from his perch within the hold.

His view through the hold opening looks directly out to the ridge with the palm tree.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Pell climbs out from the opening from an unusual angle. He climbs down from the heavily inclined deck and to the beach.

EXT. TOPSAIL ISLAND - DAY

Pell passes the crew of fifty as they shelter beneath the hull. Pell continues past them, then spots a sailboat.

He recognizes it. He walks out to meet them. Stede hops out of his boat to meet Pell.

STEDE

What happened? Where is our fleet? Where is Teach?

Stede steps on the beach. He fixes his gaze on the lone ship. Revenge lays on its side looking dead.

PELL

Teach is gone. He took everything except the Revenge and about fifty of us.

STEDE

Pell... Everything?

PELL

Teach packed Adventure up, took a skeleton crew and abandoned the other ships. He said he left your goods, but I can't guarantee anything. I'm sorry, Captain.

Stede drops. He screams and sobs. He rages bitterly.

Herriot leads the crew out to investigate his wailing.

PELL (CONT'D)

Captain?

STEDE

Blackbeard, you know death but I know hatred.

Pell kneels down. Stede stares off, his eye twitching.

STEDE (CONT'D)

You taught me many things, Captain. Now you will learn. You think you know me. But you don't, Blackbeard. You will.

Crewmen chuckle as they surround Stede and Pell. Stede, seething, pushes Pell out of the way. Enraged, draws his cutlass and swings it, stopping against a laughing crewman's neck. Then points his sword at the silent men as he rages on.

STEDE (CONT'D)

No more mercy. We will take and kill and take more.

Pell steps back and finds he's part of the circle watching Stede's mad tirade.

STEDE (CONT'D)

I only want to know which direction that devil went. I have a King's pardon. If you want one, then sail with me. I am going to kill that bastard.

INT. HOUSE/PARLOR - DAY

A woman pours clear liquid into a glass. Teach's hand takes it then brings it to his mouth. Another woman gives him a foot massage. Eden and Knight receive similar treatments from other women.

TEACH

I think I'm married to a few of these.

KNIGHT

That sounds expensive.

TEACH

It is. But to have much, is to owe much.

EDEN

My congratulations, Commodore. Your latest campaign was the peak.

KNIGHT

Bonnet was quite shaken from our meeting. He had no inkling of what was happening.

TEACH

The fool.

EDEN

The most pathetic pirate since Captain Kidd.

TEACH

I almost feel sorry for him. But now he's free to find yet another new life.

EDEN

Perhaps as a pirate hunter?

KNIGHT

That reminds me, Governor. That Rhett fellow is back and demands a meeting.

TEACH

William Rhett? He's as much a sailor as Bonnet.

EDEN

Tobias, let's not concern ourselves with business while we enjoy the Commodore's hospitality.

KNIGHT

Of course. You do seem to have it all, Commodore.

TEACH

I like my merry life. I'll hang my pardon on the door and wait out the stormy season. I'll have to look for something to do in the meantime. Any ideas, Eden?

A woman slinks down next to Eden. Teach smiles.

EXT. TOPSAIL ISLAND - DAY

Pell and crew wade in waist high water, pulling halyards. Revenge is dragged into the rising tide. The men strain, then the ship rights itself.

Stede views the action standing from a ridge next to a curved palm tree. Tucker comes through the brush.

STEDE

What brings you this way, Tucker?

TUCKER

I left something here, but now...

He looks around, then up to Stede who looks around too.

STEDE

Nothing here now. Let's get aboard.

They walk toward the sea. Tucker looks back to the palm.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "July, 1718"

Revenge sails South flying a Red Ensign.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Tucker, Pell, and Kyle survey the horizon. Stede steps up and sips from a bottle. He is dressed all in black.

STEDE

What's the report? Any ships?

PELL

No enemies if that's what you mean. Only a British ship to the Northeast. Do we have a course, sir?

HERRIOT

We have only a few barrels of provisions. Maybe a couple days worth. We must make port soon.

STEDE

I need to check something.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Books are tossed and a chest is pulled out from the wall.

TUCKER

He took everything.

Stede opens it and finds two coins and a small heavy bag. Stede lifts the bag out and dumps the contents.

Out rolls a lead cannonball.

STEDE

The bilge eating whore.

PELL

(To Tucker)

Didn't Teach specifically say he left that globe for the Captain?

TUCKER

He did. Someone took it. Probably you.

STEDE

We don't have time for this. Stop. We need to find...

(Then)

Mr. Pell, have the lookouts find a ship. Any color. Any flag.

(MORE)

STEDE (CONT'D)

(Then)

Do we have any black paint?

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - DAY

RIDGE surveys the horizon. Stede and Pell stand below.

RIDGE

That's the only one I see, sir. English.

STEDE

Mr. Pell, set course to intercept.

PELL

Sir. What are you saying? We lose our pardon if we attack. They're English.

STEDE

Mr. Pell, come with me.

EXT. REVENGE/POOP DECK/TAFFRAIL - DAY

Stede has Pell look over the stern. Nichols hangs by ropes while brushing black paint over Revenge's name.

STEDE

While Stede Bonnet and the Revenge crew enjoy their amnesty, a new ship and another captain will attack an English merchant.

PELL

You can't Captain. You just got your pardon.

Stede turns and speaks aloud to the crew on deck.

STEDE

My lads. Men, the Revenge sails no more. Hereafter, call our ship the Royal James. And me? Call me Captain Thomas.

Crewmen cheer. Pell steps off. Kyle catches up to him.

KYLE

Is he serious? Didn't we just get our lives back?

PELL

You need to apologize again for signing us to the Tristan.

KYLE

Your right. I'm sorry. I hear Marcella is married now and has ten children.

PELL

I think Blackbeard forgot somebody.

KYLE

Look on the bright side, Pell. We only have another year to go.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

FORTUNE, a fifty ton sloop flying the Red Ensign, sails East. Revenge crosses its stern, cannons BLAST and splinters the Fortune's name and sections of taffrail.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

The crew watches the ship after the blast.

STEDE

It's coming lads, wait for it.

HERRIOT

Nay, twenty more they make a run for it.

NICHOLS

I thought we hit her well enough.

RUSS

Aye, we hit her square.

STEDE

(Annoyed)

Fear of death indeed. Ready port guns.

Then, a white flag is hoisted up Fortune's mast.

NICHOLS

Look.

STEDE

Ah. Told you. Hold your fire, Mr. Russ. Mr. Tucker, please lead the boarding party.

EXT. REVENGE/FORTUNE - DAY

Hulls bump as Stede's crew steps across. They resort to rusty cutlasses and broken bottles as weapons.

Fortune's crew sit with their hands behind their heads.
The crew step over. Pell and Tucker follow and go below.

INT. FORTUNE/HOLD - DAY

Pell and Tucker climb down. The hold is packed with food and supplies. Tucker turns and walks to the back. Pell finds a jar of pickles. He pulls one out and takes a bite. Tucker returns with a crate over his shoulder.

TUCKER

Mr. Pell, why aren't you loading?

PELL

Why are you?

INT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Stede listens as he stands in between Tucker and Pell.

PELL

Clearly, we don't need all of this. But Teach showed us how a store ship can give us an advantage. We can use the Revenge --

STEDE

You mean the Royal James.

PELL

Ah, the Royal James for attack, and the Fortune to protect our goods.

TUCKER

It would make waiting out the hurricanes easier having more provisions and room.

STEDE

Aye. Very good. Bring me Fortune's Captain.

INT. GOVERNOR EDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Rhett patiently waits. He studies a coastal wall map marked up with black circles. Eden and Knight walk in.

EDEN

Good to meet you, Colonel Rhett.

RHETT

Someone ruined your map, Governor.

KNIGHT

It was out of date.

EDEN

I should commission a new one.

RHETT

You've made other commissions, Governor. Some are not happy with them.

EDEN

Oh? I didn't know maps were subject to art critique?

RHETT

I mean Blackbeard and Bonnet. First, it's a disgrace to pardon any of them. Second--

KNIGHT

The Governor didn't pardon them, Colonel. King George the First did.

RHETT

Far be it from me to explain legalities to you experts. But the King's pardon is for crimes committed before January 1718.

EDEN

Your point, Colonel?

RHETT

Blackbeard blockaded Charles Town five months after that. Remember? May?

KNIGHT

Blackbeard and his crew have renounced their pirating ways. Model citizens.

RHETT

Perhaps a South Carolina judge will see it differently.

EDEN

Trott?

RHETT

He's a good judge, Governor.

KNIGHT

Just what are you implying, Rhett? That pirates won't get a fair trial here?

RHETT

No, I'm sure you'll give them more than a fair trial. But Spotswood is gathering evidence for crimes committed by pirates this year.

KNIGHT

Blackbeard retired. I am sure Bonnet did too. I'd forget about them and go home.

Rhett takes a paint brush and dabs it in ink.

RHETT

There are other pirates, Chief Justice.

He lifts the brush to the map.

RHETT (CONT'D)

In fact, I recently added a ship to my fleet. The pirate got away, but
(Draws an X on Charles Town)
I know where he lives.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: "August, 1718"

Stede, Herriot and Richard Tookerman stand over Stede's table. Herriot points to a map.

HERRIOT

Here we are in Delaware Bay.

STEDE

Where is Blackbeard, Tookerman?

TOOKERMAN

North Carolina. Either in Bath or Ocracoke.

STEDE

We'll look for Adventure in Bath first.

TOOKERMAN

You'll what?

STEDE

No, not that kind of adventure. His ship.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - NIGHT

Marko carries a crate and drops it to the floor. He slides it then hears a cracking sound. A stream of water sprays his boots. He climbs the ladder up to a bell.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - NIGHT

Pell works from a ratline at mid mast. He hears the alarm and descends. He and others meet Marko at the hold.

MARKO

We've a leak.

Nichols heads to stern. Pell lowers himself.

EXT. REVENGE/HOLD - NIGHT

Pell pulls two crates out from the wall. Seawater pours in from a hole and on to a rotted wedge. He picks it up. Nichols descends with a hammer.

NICHOLS

Wedge it again or something else?

PELL

Wedge it.

Pell moves to a box near a post and pulls a round wedge. He hands it to Nichols. Nichols positions the wedge to the hull. Pell lifts the hammer and strikes it. It squeaks through the hull and slows the leak to a trickle.

PELL (CONT'D)

It's sealed for now. The sides are rotting.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

TOOKERMAN

I'll put the word out regarding Teach and Adventure. Anything else?

STEDE

Would you have a suggestion for where to wait out the storms?

Tookerman peruses the map, then lays a finger on it.

TOOKERMAN

Here. Cape Fear River.

HERRIOT

Why there?

TOOKERMAN

It's warm, everyone minds their own business and you can hide out for weeks.

STEDE
Cape Fear. I favor it.

TOOKERMAN
It's where I careened my ship before I lost her.
Damn privateers.

HERRIOT
What ship was that?

TOOKERMAN
Sea Nymph.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

Sea Nymph and Henry sail North. Other ships flying
merchant flags or Red Ensigns pass by heading West.

EXT. HENRY/DECK - DAY

Rhett's attention is fixed on a storm to the East.

RHETT
A small gale.

CREWMAN #10
Only the start of 'em, sir. Next one's going to
blow with double that in a week. Where to next?

RHETT
Let's head back to the harbor. Everyone else is
packing it in.

Rhett aims his two pistols out to sea and fires them.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

With Rhett's signal, the pair of ships turn West.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Pell climbs out of the hold and sees Stede, Tookerman,
and Herriot. Tookerman takes a bag of gold from Stede
then climbs over the side to his boat. Pell approaches.

PELL
Captain, we had a hull leak. It's repaired
temporarily, but it won't last.

STEDE

Why? I thought Teach's men fixed everything.

Tucker walks up to the group.

TUCKER

Trouble?

HERRIOT

Large leak in the hull.

PELL

The wood Teach used wasn't the best. It's rotting. There will be others.

STEDE

But why now? It wasn't leaking before.

PELL

We're really heavy, Captain. Between the us, Fortune and Francis, we're carrying the loot of five full ships. Some wedges and repairs are now below the waterline.

HERRIOT

Should we stop for repairs?

TUCKER

Let's go back to Topsail.

PELL

Why Topsail, Tucker?

TUCKER

We might not make --

STEDE

No. Not Topsail. I'm never going back to that accursed place. We'll make a stop in a friendly port and take stock.

HERRIOT

The men will want their pay.

STEDE

Yes. Mr. Herriot, gather the crew aft, and get the chests.

PELL

(To Tucker)

I didn't think you liked Topsail, Quartermaster. What changed?

TUCKER

Slog off.

EXT. REVENGE/POOP DECK - DAY

Stede steps up as Herriot and Pirate #7 slide a few large chests to him. The men quiet down.

STEDE

My lads, in the last few weeks, we've captured five ships and our coffers and crates are full.

Cheers. Stede opens the chest and pulls out a bag.

STEDE (CONT'D)

As you know, I have always paid my crew a salary as if they were common workers. You are anything but common. You are pirates and we live by a pirate's code.

More cheers. Pell steps through the crowd to see better.

STEDE (CONT'D)

Today, we restore the code with shares. A full share. £500 for each of you.

Pell is dumbfounded and turns to Kyle.

KYLE

We can buy our own ship, Pell.

STEDE

Come along, artists of the sea, receive your share.

The crew steps up to get their bag of gold.

KYLE

With £500 in your pocket, you may get another chance with Marcella after all.

Pell steps forward with Kyle, but then slows. He stops.

KYLE (CONT'D)

What is it?

PELL

The pirate code, Kyle.

KYLE

The pirate code makes us rich, Pell.

PELL
No, it makes us pirates.

KYLE
We've lived as pirates. Why not get paid like them?

PELL
We were forced to live as pirates.
Nobody is forcing me to take this.
Don't you understand? If I take it,
I'm lost.

Stede holds a larger bag high.

STEDE
And men, a double share of £1000
pounds for our First Mate, Ignatius
Pell.

Cheering. Pell looks to Kyle and then to Stede. He takes a step forward, then turns and walks away. The group quiets down as Stede watches him go below to the hold.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - DAY

Pell inspects the wedge as Stede descends the ladder.

STEDE
You forgot your share, Mr. Pell.

PELL
My contract is with Stede Bonnet not you, Captain Thomas. I have eleven months and six days left on Revenge. I didn't sign anything new.

STEDE
Now you make more. I changed the terms.

PELL
You've changed more than that.

STEDE
What's the difference? One day I'm a pirate, the next, I'm a privateer. A week later, I'm somebody else and a pirate again. Next week, I'll be Stede Bonnet walking in St. Thomas.

PELL
That's your choice. We both chose the sea, Captain, but I didn't choose this.

(MORE)

PELL (CONT'D)

You forced me. Or Tucker did. Now there's Herriot. I don't know who is in command.

STEDE

You're right, Pell. Shall we renegotiate?

PELL

What?

STEDE

Your contract. Let's revise it.

PELL

How do you mean?

STEDE

How much did Captain Bonnet pay you on board the Revenge.

PELL

He paid me forty pounds a month.

STEDE

Bloody cheap bastard. I need a man to supervise repairs. I want to hire you. When they're done, I'll give you double your double share: £2000.

PELL

Can we call it something other than a share?

STEDE

Call it a bonus. And once repairs are done, you can go.

PELL

You mean, go free?

STEDE

Yes.

PELL

Sweet mercy. Can Mr. Kyle go as well?

STEDE

I'll agree to that. What do you say?

PELL

Where do I sign?

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - NIGHT

An overcast sky hides any moonlight as the ship glides South. Freshly painted letters spell out ROYAL JAMES on its taffrail.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - NIGHT

A man moves in the shadows across the deck while the rest of the crew sleeps.

INT. REVENGE/CREW QUARTERS - NIGHT

Kyle wakes and rolls out his hammock. He pours the last few drops of cider in to a stein. He shakes the empty bottle and heads to the hold.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - NIGHT

A crate slides away from the hull wall exposing a wedge repair from cannonball damage. A hand sticks a knife along the wedge's side. Tucker digs into the hole. Water sprays in.

Kyle turns a corner and sees him.

KYLE

Hey, Tucker, what are you --?

Tucker looks up and comes after him. Kyle scurries up the ladder just as Tucker clutches a rung.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - NIGHT

In an instant, Tucker is topside. Kyle runs to the bow. Tucker's knife lands into the railing next to Kyle. Tucker walks to Kyle, pulls out his pistol and takes aim.

Kyle dives overboard.

Tucker looks over the rail and pulls the knife out. He walks back to the hold.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - NIGHT

High in his perch, Ridge watches him.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - DAY

Pell, Stede, Tucker and Herriot observe water streaming from the hull. A wedge remains but a jet of water streams from one side.

PELL

I was hoping I wouldn't have to deal with this so soon.

STEDE

Why is this happening?

PELL

This is lower and larger than the others. More pressure. We should really stop for a few weeks and do it right.

TUCKER

Bonnet, Topsail is a mere five miles to our South. Perhaps we should --

STEDE

Mr. Tucker, if anyone mentions Topsail to me again, I'll run him through. Mr. Pell has his plan and I will remind you, Quartermaster, that he is in charge of this.

Pell runs his fingers over fresh, splintered wood near the leak. He turns. Tucker doesn't make eye contact.

PELL

No, we can fix this temporarily but we must stop soon. Nichols, get the hammer.

Tucker leaves and climbs topside. Pell watches him.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

PILOT #5 steers the ship. Tucker stands behind him as Herriot appears.

HERRIOT

What's your draw to Topsail? A woman?

TUCKER

Topsail? Nothing. Just a good place to repair the hull. That's all.

HERRIOT

No, there's more than that. You repeatedly mention Topsail even though there are better spots for repairs.

(MORE)

HERRIOT (CONT'D)

(Then)

You need to return. That's it. You left something, Tucker.

TUCKER

What do you know?

HERRIOT

Mr. Tucker, have you broken the code? Cut me in for half and I'll make sure you get there.

TUCKER

Half? Get mucked.

HERRIOT

How much then? Forty/Sixty?

TUCKER

Twenty. No more.

HERRIOT

Done. What is it? Oh, go on, tell me.

TUCKER

There's a ridge up from where the ship was. Sea hedges with a palm. The palm hangs over like a fish hook. I left a bit of something under it.

HERRIOT

I'd reckon it's more than a bit.

(Then)

Did you scuttle the repairs so we'd have to go to Topsail?

Tucker looks at Herriot.

HERRIOT (CONT'D)

Thank you Mr. Tucker.

TUCKER

For what?

HERRIOT

For your offer of a better deal. I don't tell anyone you hid a bit of something, I won't say you sabotaged the ship, and you'll give me half.

TUCKER

Maybe you'll have an unexpected accident.

HERRIOT

No fights on board ship. But that's in the pirate's code, too.

(MORE)

HERRIOT (CONT'D)

I see how much you honor it, but I'll take my chances.

TUCKER

All right, half.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - DAY

Water gushes in from the hole in the hull. A crewman pumps a bilge up and out through the joist. Nichols holds the wedge like before and a large hammer slams on it. The water trickles but is sealed. The crewman stops pumping.

STEDE

Keep that bilge going, Mister, or I'll make you governor of a sand bar.

HERRIOT

Is that all, Mr. Pell?

PELL

For this one. Nichols and I'll check the rest.

INT. REVENGE/HOLD - NIGHT

Pell supervises a crewman sealing a repair with pitch.

PELL

That's all we can do for now. Well done, Nichols, pack up.

NICHOLS

Gads, we've been down here all damn day.

PELL

Aye. I don't know what I need worse, sleep or food. Probably food.

NICHOLS

I need to eat. I hope there's some daylight left. How long will these patches keep?

PELL

Maybe a week if nobody digs into them.

NICHOLS

Hmm?

PELL

Nothing. See you up there.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - NIGHT

Pell emerges. He walks to the cockpit and looks around.

PELL
Have either of you seen Mr. Kyle?

PILOT #5
No, sir.

HERRIOT
I haven't seen him all day.

PELL
Kyle. Mr. Kyle.

Pell looks up then walks around the whole ship. No Kyle.

INT. REVENGE/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Pell knocks and then enters. Stede, Herriot and Tucker review the map.

PELL
Captain, we've reinforced the seals,
but I'll wager they fail within the
week. We must stop.

STEDE
All right, Pell. I suggest we head
directly to Cape Fear. Herriot?

HERRIOT
I'd prefer to stop for a few days in
port, but not if the ship could sink.

STEDE
See to it, Mr. Pell. Cape Fear.

PELL
Aye, sir. Captain, I can't find Mr.
Kyle.

STEDE
Kyle? Mr. Tucker have you seen him?

TUCKER
No. I haven't.

STEDE
He must be here. Get everyone.

EXT. REVENGE/POOP DECK - NIGHT

The crew gathers as Pell steps up.

PELL

Kyle? Has anyone seen him?

No response. Pell frantically looks at faces.

PELL (CONT'D)

Spread out. Look everywhere.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - NIGHT

Calls for Kyle are heard throughout the ship. Herriot watches Tucker who looks out to sea.

HERRIOT

Strange thing about Mr. Kyle disappearing just as the ship started leaking, don't you think?

TUCKER

I had nothing to do with it.

HERRIOT

With what?

(Then)

I like this deal even better, Tucker. Say, seventy/thirty?

Pell slows his pace. He looks at each of the pirates looking for his friend. He sees Tucker talking to Herriot, but they are not looking. Herriot is smiling.

PELL

What happened to Kyle, Tucker?

TUCKER

I haven't any idea. Maybe he jumped ship.

Pell reaches for his knife. Herriot steps in.

HERRIOT

No, Pell. No fights. Mr. Tucker says he has no knowledge of anything. You must, by the code, believe him.

PELL

I'll respect the code. But not the man.

Pell walks toward the stern and sees Stede. Stede shakes his head. Pell veers off to his quarters.

INT. PELL'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Pell enters, takes out his knife and DRIVES it in a beam. He takes off his shirt and then sits in his hammock with his eyes closed. He reaches to the wall, and picks out the small Ark Royal toy. Pell studies it a moment and rolls it in his fingers. Then, he blows the candle out.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER - DAY

Stede's three ships fly the Red Ensign as they enter the river's mouth. Royal James sails way ahead of the others.

EXT. REVENGE/TAFFRAIL - DAY

Ridge holds his telescope aft. Pell and Stede watch.

RIDGE

A mile now, sir.

STEDE

Slow us to let them to catch up. Then, get me close to them.

Stede walks brusquely up to the railing.

PELL

Mr. Nichols, slow to quarter. Five degrees starboard and hold the course.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER - DAY

The two ships move closer to the Royal James. Then they come within an earshot of the frustrated captain.

EXT. REVENGE/TAFFRAIL - DAY

STEDE

If you do not maintain our speed, I swear, I will blow up your ship.

Four bells ring. The captain walks down.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - DAY

Stede pulls out a map and holds it up to read.

HERRIOT

Can I help navigate, Captain?

STEDE

Rivers are not my forte but I'll figure it out.
Full ahead, Mr. Pell.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER - DAY

Three ships sail into the river's mouth.

Ships pass in the opposite direction flying Red Ensigns
and others.

Stede's ships glide past small islands and inlets. Then,
they pass by a large inlet that leads far back.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Stede and Herriot observe the inlet. The end is hidden by
a bend and thick brush.

STEDE

What do you think?

HERRIOT

It offers shade, but it may be a slough.

STEDE

A slough?

HERRIOT

A shallow. Large ships like ours run aground at
low tide. Could be ideal for repairs though, if
we place them right.

STEDE

Scout it. You and Tucker. Take Mr. Russ. Pell,
let's hold here.

PELL

Aye, sir. Strike the mains. Ready anchor.

Herriot and Tucker lower a landing boat. Herriot, quips
and chuckles MOS, but Tucker broods quietly.

Pell watches the boat's departure. They row into the
inlet and disappear behind the bend.

Pell leans way over the side to see better.

STEDE

What are you looking for, Mr. Pell?

Pell, startled, turns back to Stede.

PELL

The end of it.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER INLET/LANDING BOAT - DAY

Herriot, Russ and Tucker row deep into the quiet inlet. Herriot slides a long pole ahead of them to test the starboard depth. The pole disappears and his arm submerges. He repeats the action on the port side.

HERRIOT

This would be a good place to drop a body, eh, Tucker?

TUCKER

Will you leave it?

They row on. Turning a corner, they discover a hidden lagoon with a wide sandy area. They pause and drift in.

HERRIOT

Take a look. I favor this.

TUCKER

Aye, it may work.

HERRIOT

Hold here a moment.

They row. Again, Herriot slides the pole directly below them. His arm submerges into the inky water.

TUCKER

Good?

HERRIOT

Aye, plenty deep.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - NIGHT

Torches light the ships way as the three file through. They arrive at the lagoon's beach in a single row.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - NIGHT

Pell looks over the ship's slow moving side to gauge the distance to the beach. He quickly raises his hand.

PELL

That's it. Drop anchor.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - NIGHT

All three ships set along the riverbank, hidden from the rest of the river by trees.

EXT. REVENGE/COCKPIT - NIGHT

PELL
Ok, lads, get some sleep.

A crewman pushes a cart to the hold. They lower it as Pell and others go below.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "September, 1718"

Stede, Russ, Ridge, and other crewmen walk a riverbank path. Some carry muskets. Stede swats at a mosquito.

A rabbit springs from brush and a pirate raises his rifle but he's too late. He and two others race after it disappearing over a hill.

Stede hears men talking far away. Then a bell. Hammering. He walks up the riverbank and pushes the branches away. Two large ships are rafted up. One lists to port.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Stede, Tucker, and Herriot drink rum and sit at a table. They pick at a roast rabbit on a plate.

HERRIOT
If they're rafted up, I'd say three full canoes.

STEDE
I like it. Tucker?

TUCKER
Aye. Twenty men should take them.

STEDE
We can compel some of their crew to help finish repairs.

HERRIOT
I thought they were done?

STEDE

A few small jobs left. Then, that's it for Mr. Pell.

TUCKER

Meaning?

STEDE

Nothing. He's been working every day for six straight weeks. He needs a rest.

HERRIOT

I've never seen ships in better shape.

STEDE

Aye. I can't wait to get out to sea.

HERRIOT

Where do you propose we go next?

STEDE

Finding Teach is priority-- Ocracoke, Bath, possibly Nassau. After that, I'm in favor, again, of St. Thomas.

TUCKER

Bloody, hell.

HERRIOT

Hold, Tucker. Why? Letters of Marque?

STEDE

Well, that and no mosquitos.

TUCKER

There are mosquitos everywhere.

STEDE

With fresh ships and clean names we can go after the Spanish.

HERRIOT

Think of it, Tucker, you can kill all the Spanish you want and not hang for it. A perfect job for you.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - DAY

Pell and Nichols, shirtless and in bare feet, stand on ratlines, high above. They see over the trees to the wide river to the West. Nichols swats a mosquito.

NICHOLS

Gads, Pell, what's worse? The heat or these mosquitos?

PELL

The last time I did this, Nichols, it was in a thunderstorm. Mosquitos are nothing. Slide that over. Stay away from bananas. Eat some garlic.

Nichols pushes the beam across. Pell positions the line and pulley, then ties it off. He pulls it tight.

Pell steps up higher and walks along the beam, holding tight to the lines above him for balance.

NICHOLS

What are you doing? I thought we was done.

PELL

We are. I need to cool off.

Pell drops from the beam and pencil dives into the water.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

He surfaces and sees a canoe lowering over the side.

Crewmen climb a rope ladder down. Pell swims over.

PELL

Herriot, what's this?

HERRIOT

Two ships are moored at the river. We're taking them.

PELL

Hold, mate. Was this Bonnet's idea?

HERRIOT

Aye, he saw the ships and drafted the plan with Tucker and me.

PELL

What if they fight? You know we're cut off from escape this way.

HERRIOT

Crimeny, Pell. It's two beleaguered merchant ships. How now, come with us.

PELL

I'm not dressed for a siege. Besides, I'm responsible for the ship and crew, not this.

Pell swims out to the middle. Two other canoes lower.

Soon three boats, full of pirates, row out to the river.

Pell swims to the hull and climbs up.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

The canoes glide up the inlet. Herriot waves for them to stay close to the port side brush.

As they float closer, they see the taffrails of the ships. They ready their pistols and cutlasses. Rounding the bend, they see the names of the ships. One, leaning slightly port, is Henry and the other, Sea Nymph.

Herriot waves for the boats to stop.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Stede walks to the railing as Herriot climbs over.

STEDE

Well?

HERRIOT

Those aren't merchant ships. They're privateer war ships. One is called Henry. The other is Tookerman's Sea Nymph.

Pell, his hair still wet, emerges with fresh clothes. Stede and Herriot ignore him.

PELL

Herriot, you made quick work.

STEDE

We need to convene everyone. Now.

EXT. REVENGE/POOP DECK - DAY (DUSK)

The crews of all three ships stand with torches.

Stede raises his hands and keeps his voice low.

STEDE

Men, as you know, two ships are rafted up at the mouth of the inlet. Mr. Pell, what of the repairs?

PELL

Major repairs are done. Ready to depart.

STEDE

Well done, Mr. Pell. With that, I'll offer our plan. On our way out, we fire on them, make a run for it back to the sea, then find Teach.

TUCKER

We should move cannons to the Francis.

HERRIOT

Put them all on the port side and empty them on the way out.

STEDE

Yes, any objections or other proposals?

HERRIOT

Since we need to make a quick get, we might wait until dawn.

STEDE

Why, Mr. Herriot?

HERRIOT

This river is difficult to navigate at night. Lots of shoals. We may find ourselves aground.

STEDE

We'll have torches to light our way.

TUCKER

That makes us an easy target. In the daylight, we can merge into shipping lanes, change our flags, or split up.

HERRIOT

Such a clever man, Tucker.

STEDE

Mr. Tucker, move the cannons to the port side. We'll go at first light.

As Matchmaker passes over them, Stede approaches Pell.

STEDE (CONT'D)

Swap the false colors.

EXT. HENRY/DECK - DAWN

Rhett emerges from the rear quarters to the railing as Henry, now fully righted, floats on its own.

Rhett swats a mosquito leaving a smashed bloody insect on his hand. His eyes focus past the splotch of blood to a ship approaching.

He sees the black flag flying overhead.

Rhett whirls to his crew and heads midship.

RHETT

Hoist mains and shove off. Forward now. Lively men. Ready guns. Prepare to fire.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAWN

The Henry pulls slowly forward and turns to port. Royal James nears and turns to port as well. Cannon fire from Royal James' five guns BLAST Rhett's ships.

EXT. HENRY/DECK - DAWN

An explosion of wood and metal.

RHETT

Fire as you will. Turn hard port and bracket them in.

He pulls out his pistols and shoots two shots at the turning Royal James which, in turn, fires again.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Pell sees the two ships, then cannons firing. He ducks.

PELL

Get down.

Cannonballs hit the foremast beam Pell just repaired. Half of a foresail hangs ripped and useless.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

Henry, now holding at the mouth of the inlet, turns to starboard. Sea Nymph comes up behind it, blocking Royal James' port side. Sea Nymph's guns aim.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

HERRIOT

We're cut off. Keep to starboard.

STEDE

Mr. Pell, twenty degrees to starboard.

HERRIOT

Twenty degrees? Bonnet, that's too far.

STEDE

Twenty degrees, Mr. Pell.

PELL

Aye, twenty to starboard and hold.

TUCKER

Mr. Russ, fire. And again.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

Cannons fire from the Royal James.

EXT. HENRY/DECK - DAY

Cannonballs sail wildly over Rhett's head.

RHETT

Hard to port. Fire!

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

Henry turns, looping to engage Royal James. Sea Nymph flanks close behind to starboard. Guns BLAST from both.

Royal James and Francis ride the bank as shots smash their hulls. A shot hits Francis' mast, snapping it.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

STEDE

Keep a distance from their --

Royal James scrapes the rocky bottom. The crew topples forward. Pell rolls as the ship leans to starboard.

EXT. HENRY/DECK - DAY

RHETT

Got you. Get closer. Stay out of their lines.

EXT. REVENGE/FORECASTLE DECK - DAY

Russ rises up, aims, then touches Matchmaker's fuses.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

An EXPLOSION on Henry's forecastle blows a man over. Another hits the cockpit.

EXT. HENRY/COCKPIT - DAY

The pilot spins, falling to the deck. He reaches for the wheel and pulls on it. Henry turns into the riverbank.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

The Henry slides, running aground. The crew fall to the rail. Its deck rises and faces open to the pirates.

EXT. HENRY/DECK - DAY

Rhett recovers and looks over the rail. He sees the Sea Nymph bearing down. He waves them off and yells.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

Sea Nymph points in line with Henry's stern

EXT. SEA NYMPH/DECK - DAY

The pilot looks to port which leads to the pirate's cannons. He looks to starboard. The Henry, riverbank and shoal leave him little room to make a turn. Rhett waves him off. The pilot turns hard starboard, but it's too late.

The ship slides on the shoal and Sea Nymph runs aground. It's crew spills forward. Rhett surveys for damage.

RHETT

Take any wounded below. Everyone else, get loaded up and come with me.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Pell sees the privateer ships, both aground. Royal James crewmen fire muskets, killing a couple. Nichols climbs up and hands a musket to Pell. Musket fire crackles. Pell looks behind him to the open forest. Nichols fires.

Nichols turns to Pell, but sees only an abandoned gun.

STEDE

Fire men. Kill them. Fire all cannons. I'll kill any man who flees from this fight.

More shots crackle. Cannon BOOM from Francis.

EXT. HENRY/DECK - DAY

Three men are blasted over. Another falls from musket fire. Rhett looks over to Stede's ships.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Stede and the crew fire their guns with vigor.

STEDE

C'mon you bilge rats. Put up your swords.

Pell sees men in the trees behind them. He runs back.

PELL

They're in the woods across and behind us.

Stede rises and looks, then ducks. The rail splinters.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/WOODS - DAY

RHETT

Captain, I am William Rhett. I have one hundred and forty men and unlimited ammunition. We can keep firing until you are dead or you give up.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

STEDE

Come and fight us on board, you stinking moles.

More musket fire. Stede holds his gun on his men.

STEDE (CONT'D)

Keep firing. Kill them.

EXT. SEA NYMPH - DAY

A breeze fills the sails. The hull slowly slides back.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/WOODS - DAY

RHETT

Padilla, climb up and look for a shot.

(To Royal James)

Captain, I implore you. Make this easy. You must surrender or you will die.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

NICHOLS

Captain, look there.

Sea Nymph slides free and pivots into deeper water.

HERRIOT

The tide must be rising.

STEDE

Get Mr. Russ, now.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

Padilla climbs, spying the Royal James as he goes.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

STEDE

Fire on them, you dogs.

Crew fire over the rail. Tucker loads his gun and looks to Bonnet. Then sees Herriot. He cocks his pistol.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

Sea Nymph turns toward the inlet.

EXT. REVENGE/FORECASTLE DECK - DAY

Russ appears. Stede grabs him.

STEDE

Mr. Russ, when they meet us midship, you are to blow our powder. We can escape, lads.

RUSS

Captain, no, we must surrender.

Stede shoves Russ to the rail. Russ falls. Ranting, Stede moves in and draws his cutlass and holds it over him.

STEDE

That's an order, Mr. Russ. You will comply, or I will cut your throat.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/WOODS - DAY

Padilla stops climbing. A head appears above the rail.

He aims.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Russ recovers and gets on his knees.

RUSS

Captain, I --

Padilla fires from across the water.

As he stands directly in front of Stede, Russ's forehead explodes over Stede's face. Herriot tackles Stede to the deck. Tucker crouches and looks around. Herriot pins the bloody Captain down.

HERRIOT

Stay down.

Pell looks at Stede's bloody face held down to the deck. Muskets crackle.

He backs up and higher to sees a ship entering the inlet.

EXT. SEA NYMPH/GUN PORT - DAY

A port side cannon slides out, ready to fire.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - DAY

Pell backs into the box of flags. He turns and opens it.

Tucker looks over the rail, he sees Pell at the mast.

INT. SEA NYMPH/GUN DECK - DAY

A torch hovers over a fuse.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - DAY

Pell pulls out and attaches a white flag to a line.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Herriot holds Stede's head to the deck. Bonnet spits his words. His eyes widen. He sees Tucker.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

Sea Nymph's bow meets Royal James' stern.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Eyes widening further, Stede sees Tucker with both guns.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Tucker's guns raise to Stede and Herriot. Herriot looks up to meet Tucker's eyes.

EXT. REVENGE/MAST - DAY

Pell pulls the line to hoist the white flag.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Tucker steadies his aim then his shoulder explodes.

He spins and falls to the deck, his guns flying.

Herriot looks up and sees Nichols holding a musket.

Pell raises the white flag as fast as he can.

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER/INLET - DAY

The flag billows over Royal James. Rhett looks up.

RHETT

Hold all fire.

Sea Nymph slows alongside. Men emerge from the woods.

EXT. REVENGE/DECK - DAY

Stede, held by his men, stops struggling. His twitching eye sees Rhett and men step on deck, taking aim. With hands raised, Pell steps in front of Stede to shield him.

PELL

We surrender.

INT. GOVERNOR EDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Eden brushes red onto his painting. Knight walks in.

KNIGHT

Governor, I have some news. It's about Bonnet.

INT. PROVOST DUNGEON - DAY

Stede and Herriot sit chained to their chairs.

STEDE

How long before we stand trial?

HERRIOT

Soon enough.

STEDE

What's your defense, Herriot?

HERRIOT

Well, I could tell the truth, and say I immediately volunteered to join the crew when I was captured.

STEDE

That's one angle.

HERRIOT

Or, I could tell the truth, and say I was forced to join on pain of death.

STEDE

Also a good one.

HERRIOT

But the best one? I was so rich, I thought it would be fun to be a pirate. But that would be the insanity plea.

STEDE

It won't work. I asked.

A guard enters with another man behind him.

GUARD #1

Captain Bonnet, your priest is here.

Both men look. A man holding a Bible steps from the dark.

TOOKERMAN

Hello, my children.

INT. JUDGE'S PARLOR - DAY

Knight walks through the doors and sees William Rhett, sitting at a table with Trott.

KNIGHT

Colonel, I believe congratulations are in order. You must tell me every detail.

RHETT

Mr. Chief Justice. What a surprise. May I introduce you to Judge Trott?

KNIGHT

Judge Sir Nicholas Trott? I'm Tobias Knight, your counterpart in North Carolina.

TROTT

Yes, I've heard of you. Are you here for Bonnet's trial, too?

KNIGHT

Actually, no. I'm hoping to hire Colonel Rhett.

RHETT

Hire me? For what?

KNIGHT

I don't know if you know this, Judge, but Mr. Rhett is a first rate pirate hunter.

TROTT

You don't say? Colonel, perhaps you can tell about it at dinner. I'll see you later.

Trott gets up. Knight takes Trott's seat.

KNIGHT

He's certainly familiar with you.

RHETT

Yes, he's my brother-in-law.

INT. PROVOST DUNGEON - NIGHT (PICK UP FROM OPENING SCENE)

Trott sits in the dark cell across from Pell.

PELL

I'm not a pirate.

TROTT

You must tell me the truth, Ignatius.
Were you an officer aboard the Revenge
or Royal James?

PELL

Aye, I was the Bosun, then First Mate.

TROTT

Were you provoked by Captain Bonnet or
anyone else to join his crew?

PELL

Aye, I was provoked.

TROTT

Did you live under threat of death by
Bonnet or a member of his crew?

PELL

Aye, by one in particular.

TROTT

Did you ever pressure or threaten
anyone with pain or death to join your
crew.

PELL

No, and it wasn't my crew, Judge.

TROTT

Did you ever torture or kill anyone?

PELL

I never even fought anyone.

TROTT

Is that a no?

PELL
It's a no. I never hurt anyone.

TROTT
Did you ever directly rob anyone?

PELL
No.

TROTT
Force someone to unmentionable acts?

PELL
You mean... No. Never.

TROTT
Last question, did you take a share?

PELL
What?

TROTT
Did you ever take a share of Bonnet's
loot?

EXT. MARSHAL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A carriage pulls away leaving Pell and two guards in the front of the large house. They step up and enter.

INT. MARSHAL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A guard ascends stairs behind Pell.

He's led into a bedroom. The door is closed, then locked.

A bell chimes as a breeze blows the curtains. The open window has iron bars.

Pell hears a soft knock. The door unlocks, then opens.

TOOKERMAN
Good evening, Mr. Pell. I'm Richard Tookerman.
At the request of Captain Bonnet, have arranged
for you to be moved here.

PELL
What is this place?

TOOKERMAN
My friend the Marshal owns it.

PELL
What's this about?

TOOKERMAN
Listen closely. Put this on and meet
me out front in an hour.

PELL
What? Where's Bonnet?

TOOKERMAN
You'll see him soon, but stay here. Keep quiet
and wait for the next bell.

Tookerman hands Pell clothes and closes the door.

Pell checks the door. It's unlocked. He walks back to the
window. He sees a carriage. Tookerman loads a crate. He
then holds the clothes up. It's a lady's dress.

INT. MARSHAL'S HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

The house is dark and quiet. Pell peers out the window.

Tookerman loads the cart now hitched to horses.

The bell chimes. Pell silently steps out the door.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Stede and Herriot, both in women's dresses and hats, wait
on the road.

Pell arrives as Tookerman pulls his cart up.

TOOKERMAN
Get in.

STEDE
Pell, where's your dress?

PELL
What is this?

TOOKERMAN
We're getting you out of South
Carolina.

HERRIOT
Tookerman's got it sorted. You'll see.

STEDE
We're disappearing. Come on.

PELL
Where are we going?

TOOKERMAN
I'll tell you on the way. Get in.

STEDE
We'll find you another dress.

A horse whip cracks and the carriage drives away.

INT. MARSHAL'S HOUSE - DAY

Trott bursts through the front door and pushes his way through a multitude of police and guards. He enters a bedroom only to find two guards. He looks in another, but finds it empty.

He opens the door to a third. Trott sees a dress hanging. Then he sees him. Pell sits in a chair, quietly waiting.

EXT. MARSHAL'S HOUSE - DAY

Pell and Trott sit in the garden. STEWART holds a note.

TROTT
That was Spotswood's recommendation?

STEWART
Yes, sir. £700 pounds for him.

TROTT
Tell him I concur, but only if taken alive. Send word to the Colonel too.

PELL
£700 to catch one man? Pirates are underpaid.

TROTT
You made a good choice last night, Ignatius. Did you get any sleep?

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Stede reaches to Pell. The cart pulls away. Stede's face.

END FLASHBACK

PELL

What's going to happen?

TROTT

Bonnet and Herriot will be killed or brought back and tried. Then hang.

PELL

No, what's going to happen to me?

TROTT

That's entirely up to you, Ignatius.

PELL

Me?

TROTT

If no one contradicts your testimony, you may live through it.

PELL

That's not reassuring.

INT. CHARLES TOWN COURTROOM. - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "October, 1718"

The courtroom is packed as the fifty crew of Royal James shuffle in. Trott sits at the bench, wearing a heavy wig. A CLERK sits at a table.

THOMAS HEPWORTH, (40), steps in with a stack of papers. A bad storm wails outside the court's large windows.

TROTT

Before we commence this morning is there a representative for the defense here?

HEPWORTH

I am, your grace, Thomas Hepworth.

TROTT

Would you please update the court on the whereabouts of your clients?

HEPWORTH

Yes, sir. Captain Bonnet and David Herriot have been at large for three days and I...

The courtroom goes wild with cheers and applause. Trott, ever calm, holds his hands up until it's silent.

TROTT

Please, do not do that. Please continue Mr. Hepworth.

HEPWORTH

The King's guard suspect Richard Tookerman had something to do it. He's missing too. That's all, your grace.

TROTT

The jury shall hear testimonies for both the prosecution and defense of all prisoners, present at the bar or otherwise. Clerk, please name the defendants.

(Then, to himself)

Say hello to Will for me, Bonnet.

CLERK (O.S.)

Mr. Bonnet. Mr. Clark. Mr. Herriot. Mr. Tucker.

EXT. PORT INLET CHARLES TOWN - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: "November, 1718"

Henry rolls through the chop. It's pouring rain.

EXT. HENRY/DECK - NIGHT

Rhett looks through his spyglass as thunder cracks. He turns to Masters and points to a ship.

RHETT

One more. Over there.

EXT. PORT INLET CHARLES TOWN - NIGHT

Henry turns toward the boat. Lightning strikes over.

EXT. PORT INLET CHARLES TOWN - NIGHT

Stede, Herriot and CUTTING BIRD, (35) an American Indian, row a canoe away from the single masted sailboat. The rolling sea sprays and tosses the boat like a cork.

STEDE

When I see Tookerman next, he'll remember this night. What was he thinking?

HERRIOT

No provisions?

STEDE

And half full of seawater. Thank God our friend here didn't leave us. Thank you, Cutting Bear. Where is he taking us?

HERRIOT

If it's straight ahead, it's Sullivan's Island. Good place to hide.

EXT. HENRY/DECK - NIGHT

The ship passes by the sailboat. It's nearly completely capsized. Rhett squints looking back and sees a boat.

EXT. SULLIVAN'S ISLAND - NIGHT

The rain stops as Cutting Bear pulls the canoe ashore.

CUTTING BEAR

I not paid bring you here.

STEDE

Send the bill to Tookerman.

HERRIOT

Yes. He found you. He can pay you.

CUTTING BEAR

That wasn't agreement.

STEDE

We just abandoned was our boat. What did you expect?

(To Herriot)

We have to meet Tookerman soon. How are we going to do that?

HERRIOT

(To Cutting Bear)

You must take us there.

STEDE

Yes. Then you can collect your money.

Stede turns to Herriot.

STEDE (CONT'D)

And why was Tookerman so adamant about the meeting being at Topsail?

MAN'S VOICE #1

Ahoy.

The three stop to discern the source of the voice in the dark. A small torch is thrown in at their feet.

MAN'S VOICE #1 (CONT'D)

Who are you and where are you going?

STEDE

I can't see you, sir.

HERRIOT

Who are you?

MAN'S VOICE #2

Who are you and where are you going?

STEDE

I am Thomas, this is Cutting Bear, and you, sir?
I didn't catch your name?

HERRIOT

I'm Martin --

Shots blast Herriot's head and chest. Cutting Bear screams and runs away. Four shots pop through his back and he ploughs through the sand and lays still.

Stede raises his hands. Dark figures surround him.

EXT. CHARLES TOWN ROAD - DAY

A black carriage surrounded by cavalry rolls down a hill the city. A few people yell and wave black cloths.

INT. BLACK CARRIAGE - DAY

Stede stares off, his eye twitching, oblivious to the scene around him. Then he looks out the window.

EXT. CHARLES TOWN ROAD - DAY

A large, cheering crowd lines the street all the way.

EXT. CHARLES TOWN COURTHOUSE - DAY

Stede steps out and the crowd roars. Although chained, he waves, smiles, and then proudly enters the structure.

INT. CHARLES TOWN COURTHOUSE - DAY

WORKERS leave their desks to catch a glimpse of Stede.
His escorts push him through to the Courtroom.

INT. CHARLES TOWN COURTROOM - DAY

Stede walks in. Trott holds his hands up amid cheers.
Stede waves, then sits among his crew. Pell stands in a
witness box. The jury walks in and they sit.

The CLERK of the court stands and reads from a parchment.
They sit at the prisoners' bar as the jury looks on.

CLERK

Jurors for our Sovereign Lord the
King, we do upon their oath present
Stede Bonnet alias Thomas, of
Barbados, Mariner, Robert Tucker, of --

Trott strikes a gavel.

TROTT

If there are no objections, we can
dispense with the roll call. Since you
weren't here for the preliminaries,
Major Bonnet, do you understand the
charges against you?

STEDE

I do, your grace.

TROTT

And how do you plead, Major?

STEDE

Not guilty, your grace. I will have a
defense that shall convince this court
of my innocence.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Crates of evidence are carried in.

TROTT

We define piracy as robbery committed
upon the sea. A pirate is a Sea thief.

Bonnet's pirate flag is held up by the Clerk.

TROTT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It is a crime so odious and horrid in
all its circumstances.

Books. Chests. A cutlass.

TROTT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Some calling them Sea-Wolfs, others
Beasts of Prey, and Enemies of
Mankind.

A pistol. Hargraves' log book. A toy Ark Royal.

TROTT (CONT'D)
Some of these prisoners at the bar
were part of Teach and Bonnet's crew.

A leather bound book titled "Revenge." Contracts. A
cannonball rolls out of a burlap bag. A sack of gold.

TROTT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The ship he purchased was named
Revenge. He hired his crew and paid
them, at first, a wage. Later he
returned to the pirate practice of
distributing shares.

The faces of the crew: Tucker, Point, Marko, Ridge,
Nichols, and Dunkin.

HEPWORTH
Mr. Pell, do you know all of the
prisoners at the bar?

PELL
I know them very well, sir.

HEPWORTH
Did the prisoners receive shares?

PELL
Yes, sir.

HEPWORTH
Did you take a share, Mr. Pell.

PELL
No. I did not.

Pell raising his hands. A dress Stede wore. Herriot's
face.

TROTT
Later changing his name to Captain
Thomas and his ship to Royal James. It
was one of the vessels that lay off
the Charles Town harbor in May with
Teach.

The drunk pirates sit in the witness box.

WRAGG

Bonnet and Blackbeard took Mr. Marks and me prisoner, then sent us to retrieve their demands. These two threatened us.

More crates are brought in. Jewelry. Pistols.

TROTT (O.S.)

Piracy is an act against God and Mankind. Beyond goods, it robs both victim and perpetrator of their very nature.

NEDY comes to the rail. Dozens of bags of gold are placed on the table.

TROTT (CONT'D)

Mr. Nedy, any questions for Mr. Pell?

NEDY

Bosun, do you not remember when we left Topsail, we were to go to St. Thomas?

PELL

I believe you thought we were going to St. Thomas. But the first vessel we saw, we took. You took your share from it. You know you did.

TROTT

Mr. Nedy, Did you take a share?

NEDY

I did. But I was forced against my will.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

The jury watches as Tucker is sworn in.

TROTT

Do you know the man at the bar?

PELL

I know him very well. Mr. Tucker was our quartermaster.

TROTT

He did not refuse his shares, did he?

PELL

No.

TROTT

Robert Tucker, do you have any questions to ask the King's witness.

TUCKER

No, sir.

TROTT

Very well, then. You may --

TUCKER

But I am a witness to a murder committed by your King's witness here.

TROTT

Oh? Please explain, Mr. Tucker.

TUCKER

He killed our pilot, Mr. Kyle. I saw him.

STEDE

That can't be possible.

TUCKER

I tried to stop him, but he said if I told anyone, he'd murder me.

PELL

That's not true. Kyle was my friend.

TROTT

Can anyone confirm Mr. Tucker's story?

Several pirates raise their hands.

TROTT (CONT'D)

(To Marko)

You saw Mr. Pell kill Mr. Kyle?

MARKO

Yes, but it was I who tried to stop him. Mr. Pell said he was going to kill me.

TROTT

Mercy. Are there two witnesses that can testify on behalf of Mr. Pell?

RIDGE

I saw what happened. Mr. Tucker threw a knife at Mr. Kyle, then was going to shoot him. Kyle jumped over and was lost.

TROTT

That's a single witness. Is there anyone who can argue for Mr. Ridge's version?

From the gallery, a man stands.

KYLE

I'm a second witness.

TROTT

And who are you, sir?

KYLE

Geoff Kyle, Former Pilot of Revenge. I escaped and swam to shore. Swear me in, Judge. I'll tell you that Tucker is a lying, murderous, son of a swamp -

TROTT

Well now, Mr. Tucker, I think we can strike your accusation from the record. Let's adjourn for today.

A gavel sounds. Pell, exhausted, leaves the stand.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

EXT. MARSHAL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The carriage leaves Pell unescorted at Marshal's House. He pulls out the Ark Royal and rolls it in his fingers. Pell turns to the road and walks toward a glowing city.

INT. OLD EXCHANGE AND PROVOST DUNGEON - NIGHT

Stede sleeps in his bunk. He rolls over and eases from sleep. He opens his eyes and finds Pell sitting.

PELL

I have to talk to you. I want to apologize.

STEDE

For what, Pell?

PELL

I don't know.

STEDE

For being a pirate?

PELL

What?

STEDE

You're the best pirate of us all.

INT. MARSHAL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pell wakes up in his dark room.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. CHARLES TOWN COURTROOM - DAY

TROTT

Mr. Bonnet, you are representing yourself?

STEDE

Yes. I may have something to offer in my defense. Please ask your questions, your grace.

TROTT

Major Bonnet, who commanded your ships?

STEDE

Well, I did. Against my inclinations, however.

TROTT

Mr. Pell, is that true? Was he your Commander?

PELL

He was our captain. Actually, Mr. Tucker had more power than Major Bonnet.

TROTT

Major Bonnet commanded everyone to return to piracy within days of receiving his pardon, isn't that true?

PELL

Again, Tucker had more power.

TROTT

Mr. Pell, please do not evade the question. It's clear that you have some sympathy toward the Major, but was Bonnet the Commander or not?

PELL

Mr. Tucker was more of the captain, sir.

STEDE

Yes. I wasn't actually in charge of the fleet, your grace. I was forced. Mr. Tucker was the commander. He killed Captain Hargraves and at least fourteen others. He's the real Captain.

TROTT

Are there any other witnesses against Mr. Tucker.

All pirates at the bar raise their hands.

TROTT (CONT'D)

Is there anyone else?

PELL

Your grace. I observed Mr. Tucker stealing and engaging in brutal violence. I witnessed the murder of my previous captain, Jacob Hargraves.

TROTT

Did Major Bonnet commit murder?

PELL

No, your grace. He hated killing.

TROTT

Mr. Tucker, do you have anything to say?

TUCKER

Just that I thought we might go to St. Thomas when we had our pardon and Bonnet took us back to pirating. I always suggested we go there.

The pirates laugh at this. Pell shakes his head.

EXT. CHARLES TOWN COURTHOUSE - DAY

A gavel is heard through an open window.

INT. CHARLES TOWN COURTROOM - DAY

Evidence lays all over three long tables.

TROTT

Major Bonnet, your closing statement.

STEDE

Thank you. I must confess myself a sinner, but I am not guilty of what I am charged with.

(MORE)

STEDE (CONT'D)

I felt so much guilt upon my conscience by my former piracies and robberies. When I received my pardon, I wanted to go to St. Thomas. I continually requested to go there for a commission. But when we sailed out to sea, and saw the vessel called Fortune, Mr. Tucker and some of the rest held a consultation to take it. But I opposed it, and told them to put me ashore, leaving them to go where they pleased. Pirating was against my inclination, Judge Trott.

TROTT

You felt so much, what did you say, "guilt upon your conscience?"

STEDE

Yes, your honor, sir. I felt it deep within my very soul.

TROTT

Why not retire to North Carolina to reflect on your former wicked course of living? You might have repented and not engaged in new atrocities. You might not have attacked Colonel Rhett. You might not have attempted escape with Herriot.

STEDE

But my inclinations, my intention was -

-

TROTT

Your intentions aside, Major, by your choices and actions, you have sent men to their deaths and robbed men more than of their gold.

STEDE

I was forced to be a pirate.

TROTT

Major Bonnet, you were a pirate before the pardon and a pirate after. But really, Bonnet, you became a pirate when you bought that ship, abandoned your family, extorted a crew, and handed others over to the likes of Blackbeard or Mr. Tucker.

(MORE)

TROTT (CONT'D)

As Revenge's captain, you shipwrecked your own life and the lives of so many others. You are a damn pirate.

A clerk hands a note to Trott. He reads it, then smiles.

CLERK

From Governor Spotswood, sir.

INT. GOVERNOR EDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Eden sits with several men. Knight walks in.

KNIGHT

Governor? Who... What is this?

EDEN

Sit down, Tobias. Blackbeard is dead.

KNIGHT

Really? How wonderful.

EDEN

The king's guard raided his home and found something.

POLICE GUARD

Yes, Mr. Chief Justice. We found several letters from you to Blackbeard. The contents of these letters led us to conduct a search.

KNIGHT

What kind of search?

POLICE GUARD

This morning they several crates of Teach's cargo hidden on your estate.

KNIGHT

What? Governor you and I both --

EDEN

Save it for the inquest, Chief Justice.

POLICE GUARD

Mr. Knight, I am hereby arresting you on the charge of collusion and conspiracy. Would you come with us, sir?

KNIGHT

Governor, you must do something.

EDEN

If your testimony is sound, you might receive mercy and, even a pardon.

Eden approaches Knight. Knight's eyes pleading.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Tobias, sound testimony.

KNIGHT

Yes, Governor. I understand.

INT. CHARLES TOWN COURTROOM - DAY

TITLE: "December, 1718"

The room is silent. The Jury Foreman stands.

TROTT

Of the charges of piracy on the high seas, robbery, torture and murder please address the court with your verdicts.

JURY FORMAN

Your grace, our unanimous verdict is all are found guilty, with --

Some in the gallery crowd boo while others applaud.

TROTT

All?

JURY FORMAN

With four found not guilty, sir. These include Thomas Nichols, Rowland Sharp, known as Point, Johnathan Clarke, and Ignatius Pell.

TROTT

The sentence that the law has appointed to pass upon you, is, Major Bonnet, Robert Tucker, and all others so named, shall go from here to a place of execution. You shall be hanged by the neck, until you are dead. Those not guilty are discharged. We are dismissed.

EXT. COURTYARD BALCONY - DAY

Kyle and Pell stand on a balcony overlooking a gallows. Dunkin, Marko and other crew's heads are covered. Nooses are fitted around their necks. Within moments they hang. Tucker is brought to the gallows next.

KYLE

I've been waiting for this.

Tucker drops and swings. Other pirates hang still.

PELL

So long, Mr. Tucker. Here he comes.

Stede passes through a crowd. Some cheer. Others boo.

KYLE

I hear he wrote an appeal to Governor Spotswood.

PELL

Aye. It was a mad proposal.

KYLE

You think? He'd take amnesty in exchange for his arms and legs cut off? I'd take hanging over that.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Stede, eyes twitching, is led up to the gallows alone.

STEDE

I'll speak out against piracy. I never killed anyone. I can show you my pardon.

His head is covered. A noose comes over.

STEDE (CONT'D)

I'll put wickedness aside. I'll spend the rest of my days in sackcloth. I'll pray continually, that God would --

The gallows floor drops.

SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS:

STEDE TAKES A BOW.

HARGRAVES SHOT.

STEDE STRUCK BY THE WOOD BALUSTRADES.

THE CONTRACT.

THE PIRATE FLAG.

THE TOY ARK ROYAL.

END SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS

Back to Scene

Stede's boots drop and suddenly stop. He swings.

EXT. COURTYARD BALCONY - DAY

KYLE

First Teach and now Bonnet. We
outlived them both.

PELL

Let's go.

EXT. CITY ROAD - DAY

They come down a stairway and pause in the sunshine.

PELL

We need a ship heading North.

KYLE

I didn't think you'd want to get back
to sea that quick, Pell.

PELL

Hold, Kyle. Listen close. Don't ever
sign us up for anything again. Ever.

KYLE

Don't worry. I bought my own boat a
few days ago. It's right over there.

PELL

Kyle, how did you buy a boat?

KYLE

You didn't take a share, but I did.
Swimming half a league with gold in
your pants isn't as easy as it sounds.

PELL

Geoff Kyle, you're a damn pirate.

KYLE

It's not fancy. Only a single mast.
You can be my Boat-swain. I've got a
contract you'll need to sign.

PELL

Fine. I have one stop on the way.

EXT. TOPSAIL ISLAND - DAY

Kyle waits on board his sailboat. He strains to see Pell.

KYLE

What are you doing?

Pell digs in the sand at the ridge near a palm. He
reaches into the hole.

Pell walks back to the boat.

KYLE (CONT'D)

What did you find?

EXT. VIRGINIA DOCKS - DAY

PELL

Thanks, Captain. See you later?

KYLE

Where are you going? I thought we'd
have a few ales and talk about the old
times.

(Then)

Only a jest. Tell her I said hello.

EXT. VIRGINIA STREET - DAY

Pell walks through the town and nears the boarding house.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE/FRONT PARLOR - DAY

Marcella walks to a front parlor. She wipes a table with
two toy ships on it.

She notices, out the window, a figure sitting at a porch
table. She walks to the door.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Marcella emerges and sees him. Pell's gaze is fixed on something.

He looks up and smiles at her.

On the table in front of him, spins a small golden ball.

TITLES OVER BLACK:

TITLE: "Tobias Knight was found guilty of collusion with pirates and later pardoned. Eden resigned soon after."

TITLE: Mary Bonnet remarried in 1725. She died 25 years later at age 60. She was survived by three children."

TITLE: "Ignatius Pell was last reported sailing his own ship off a Virginia coast in 1722."

FADE OUT:

THE END