

BLACKBEARD

Part One
"Guilty Treasures"

Written by
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FADE IN:

EXT. ROYAL NAVY HEADQUARTERS - ENGLAND - DAY

To ESTABLISH the power and authority of the British Navy. A SUPER reads:

Bristol, England
Royal Navy Headquarters
1717

INT. ROYAL NAVY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A very powerful man, **ADMIRAL JOSEPH PENNINGTON**, studies a waggoner, or book of charts, using a small divider to measure distances. **LIEUTENANT ROBERT MAYNARD** enters. At 28, he's a rising star of the Royal Navy. He strides properly up to Pennington's desk, holds his hat under his arm.

PENNINGTON
Stand at ease.

Maynard relaxes, but not a lot.

PENNINGTON (CONT'D)
You're here, Lieutenant, because His Majesty himself needs your services -- even beyond your skill as a navigator.

MAYNARD
(impressed)
And he shall have whatever he needs, sir.

Pennington turns the waggoner around on his desk for Maynard to look at.

PENNINGTON
Our naval artists have compiled this reference, reflecting the sea lanes that stretch from Barbados to the South Seas. Yet these charts are virtually useless to all but the most heavily armed merchant or naval vessels.

Pennington pauses, posing an implicit challenge to Maynard. A beat, then he offers:

MAYNARD
Piracy, sir?

PENNINGTON
Indeed. What do you know of it?

MAYNARD

I know that it is illegal and that the King wishes it stopped.

PENNINGTON

(nods)

His Majesty means to restore safe passage to the sea lanes. The 'carrot' has been an amnesty offered to all pirates who give up their ways. Your mission, Lieutenant, is to be our advance scout. Determine what our 'stick' shall be. We mean for you to travel to New Providence. Investigate those outlaws still operating --by any means necessary -- and report back, so that we might mount an offensive.

(hands sealed envelope)

Your orders. They include letters of marque to serve as your introduction and -- in extreme cases -- allow you to commandeer property in the service of your mission.

MAYNARD

Is my mission to be held in secrecy, sir?

PENNINGTON

(smiles)

Only to the pirates. You'll travel to the Americas by merchant ship to avoid attention. Naval ships should follow by early spring and you will lead them into battle as necessary. You leave tomorrow.

MAYNARD

Aye, sir.

Pennington closes the waggoner and slides it across.

PENNINGTON

I'm afraid that we know very little about the hundreds of islands these criminals frequent. But this is what we do know.

Maynard takes the waggoner and holds it crisply to show that it is in good hands.

MAYNARD

Thank you, sir.

PENNINGTON

There is one other thing, Lieutenant.
You will be responsible for the escort
of a minor child to New Providence.

MAYNARD

Sir? Is such duty consistent with a
mission of such importance to His
Majesty?

(beat)

All due respect.

PENNINGTON

She is the daughter of a very
important man.

Pennington smiles.

PENNINGTON (CONT'D)

Miss Ormand? If you please...

A beautiful young woman, **CHARLOTTE ORMAND** (20), enters.

PENNINGTON (CONT'D)

Miss Ormand, I should like to
introduce you to Lieutenant Robert
Maynard. Lieutenant, Miss Charlotte
Ormand.

Maynard is taken slightly aback, but tries to hide it. He
nods very courteously.

MAYNARD

Miss Ormand.

CHARLOTTE

Lieutenant. I am most appreciative
of your kind offer, and will do my
best not to burden you.

PENNINGTON

Do you foresee any difficulties with
the assignment, Lieutenant?

MAYNARD

(changing his tune)

None whatsoever, sir.

PENNINGTON

(nods)

Godspeed, Lieutenant. Miss Ormand.

MAYNARD

Thank you, sir.

Dismissed, Maynard salutes Pennington, takes the waggoner and exits with Charlotte.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A handsome ship, currently bearing no flag, in full sail.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - DAY

On the deck, a collection of pirates pass the time some on watch, others getting fresh air, singing a SEA SHANTY as they work. A SUPER reads:

The West Indies
Off the Island of St. Vincent

Up in the rigging, completing a repair and standing watch at the Crow's Nest, is boatswain **ELIAS RANSOM**. He's humming along with the shanty from below when suddenly he sees something on the horizon and yells --

RANSOM

Sail ho!

On deck, the singing stops immediately. They are not alone. The tallest man on the bridge, **EDWARD TEACH**, coal-black hair and beard, pulls his spyglass up sharply with the crisp precision of a born leader.

TEACH'S POV - ANOTHER SHIP

A French merchant ship, Le Concorde, proudly flies the national colors. It is heading in the direction of the Queen Anne's Revenge.

BACK TO SCENE

Teach turns to quartermaster **WILLIAM HOWARD**, informs him:

TEACH

Get Captain Hornigold up here now.
And pipe to quarters, Mr. Howard.

HOWARD

Aye, Mister Teach.
(shouting)
Pipe to quarters!

Howard takes off and, as he does, we hear the PIPE SOUND alerting all hands to their stations. Teach is still looking through the spyglass as the second mate, **ISRAEL HANDS**, approaches. Teach hands him the spyglass, and he takes a fast look. As he does, WE SEE fully the nasty scar across Hands' face from a previous battle.

HANDS
(re: ship)
She's a might big one.

TEACH
That she is. I fancy her, I do.
We need her provisions.

Sailmaster **TWO-FACE ASKIN** takes note. He taps pilot **MOSES HOBBS**, currently steering the ship, nods in Teach's direction. Hands gives the spyglass back to Teach.

HANDS
(low whisper)
The men'll be there for ya.

Before Teach can respond, they are interrupted by a gravelly voice belonging to **CAPTAIN BENJAMIN HORNIGOLD**, 50s, wearing a black eyepatch.

HORNIGOLD
What have we, Mister Teach?

TEACH
Believin' she's the French slave ship, Le Concorde, Captain. Saw her last year in port about this time. Several guns, not the crew to fire them, you may lay to that.

HORNIGOLD
We've no need for slaves, Mister Teach.

TEACH
Captain, when's the last time the men had full rations? I say we sleep with full bellies tonight, I do.
(to Hands)
Raise our French colors, Mister Hands. We will show no guns ourselves, but come alongside like a Peeping Tom and board her like a lover.

HORNIGOLD
Belay that, Mister Hands.
(firmly; to Teach)
We let her pass.

EXT. LE CONCORDE - DECK - DAY

Le Concorde is manned by a small crew.

The **FRENCH FIRST MATE** hands **CAPTAIN JEAN D'OCIER** a spyglass.

D'OCIER'S POV - THE QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE

Rapidly approaching, flying the French flag.

EXT. LE CONCORDE - DECK - DAY

D'Ocier lowers his spyglass.

CAPTAIN D'OCIER
(sub-titles)
They fly French colors.

FRENCH FIRST MATE
(sub-titles)
Maybe they make trade with us.
(smiles)
We could use more wine.

D'Ocier nods, not quite ready to agree, as he peers through his spyglass again.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - POOP-DECK - DAY

Teach presses his case.

TEACH
(won't back down)
We can take her... Captain...

HORNIGOLD
Mister Teach, we can leave her, too,
and that we will do. You may lay to
that.

The rest of the crew come on deck to see this test of wills. Teach's eyes glare and his taut muscles flex. Within Teach's line of sight, he trades glances with Israel Hands who nods, fingers his pistol. Teach lets his deep voice boom out across the deck.

TEACH
Gather round, mates!
(MORE)

TEACH (CONT'D)

(to Hornigold)

Captain, seems since you lost that eye of yours, you also lost your vision. Ya be playin' it safe -- now that you're a rich man -- because ya want to take the Crown's pardon when we return. We all know it.

(to crew)

But we ain't kissin' no royal asses are we, men? Because we're pirates, and I say we show it straight away.

There are a lot of murmurs of agreement. Men itching for action.

HORNIGOLD

(stone furious)

Stand down, Mister Teach. I've made my decision.

TEACH

(just as determined)

And I've made mine. I call for a vote, right here, right now.

(to crew)

Make me your captain, and we'll take that Frog ship. We'll drink her wine and eat her food tonight!

That draws a big reaction from the men. Hitting his populist stride, Teach continues.

TEACH (CONT'D)

And when I'm your captain, we'll make plans to find Kidd's buried treasure and split it so's every man gets his share.

HORNIGOLD

Captain Kidd buried no treasure.

TEACH

So you told us. Some of us been thinkin' that's cause you want it for yourself.

Two-Face Askin breaks from the group, unsheathing his cutlass as he moves on Teach.

ASKIN

Liar! Ya scurvy dog!!

As Askin begins to swing that cutlass with lethal intent:

TEACH REACTS

Reaching into his waistcoat with his right hand, pulling out a pistol from his bandoleer. As the pistol is aiming at Askin, his left hand reaches in and pulls out a second pistol which he aims in the other direction.

Teach SHOTS ASKIN through the heart, dropping him like a stone to the deck.

Without missing a beat, Teach fluidly drops the spent pistol to the deck, reaches back inside his waistcoat and produces a third pistol. It's --

ARMED MUTINY

-- as Israel Hands has two pistols out, too. So does ship's carpenter **JOSEPH PRESCOTT**.

The three men and their six guns cover a lot of territory. Teach drills Hornigold with a look that says a lot about his seriousness. Hornigold addresses his crew.

HORNIGOLD

A vote's been called, men. And by our code, you shall have it. Those who stand with me, we'll move portside. Those who wish to stand with Mister Teach, you go a'starboard.

Looks are traded all around. The key here is to pick the winning side. A few men move to each side. **DR. PETER BRUCE**, in particular, tries to blend with the wood, hoping to choose right at the last instant.

First to choose Hornigold's side is gunner **SNAKE LEAVITT**, a surly, weather-beaten killing machine.

First to line up on Teach's is seaman SENG, an Asian pirate with a larcenous attitude. He pounds a fist against his chest toward Teach in a sign of solidarity.

Seeing the decision in the balance, Hands speaks directly to Hornigold but really for the benefit of the men.

HANDS

You been a fine pirate to follow, sir, I'll give you that. But like Mister Teach says, your heart ain't in it no more.

EXT. LE CONCORDE - DECK - DAY

D'Ocier has been watching the events closely on the QAR through his spyglass.

CAPTAIN D'OCIER
 (sub-titled)
 I don't like the look of it! We
 cannot lose our cargo.

He turns to his First Mate.

CAPTAIN D'OCIER (CONT'D)
 (sub-titled)
 Come about!

The French crew jump to.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - POOP-DECK - DAY

From the Crow's Nest, Ransom stares at the French ship, shouts down.

RANSOM
 They're coming about, Captain!

The ship's pilot, Hobbs, turns to Hands.

HOBBS
 If we mean to overhaul that ship, we
 need to do it now.
 (indicates Askin)
 Especially bein' as our sailmaster's
 dead on the deck.

Seaman **ENOCH SANBORN** pushes past a couple of men to take his position on Teach's side. Teach shouts up to Ransom, being replaced in the rigging by another seaman, who's got the big picture POV from above.

TEACH
 Who do you stand with, Mister Ransom?

RANSOM
 (to Teach)
 You got my vote Mister Teach! Let us
 take what is ours!

And with that, the floodgates are open. The men swarm Teach's side. Indicating Hornigold, Teach turns to Howard.

TEACH
 Put Mister Hornigold in chains, Mister
 Howard.

(MORE)

TEACH (CONT'D)
(to men)
Prepare for battle!

The men swarm to stations.

HANDS
Lay on more top sail!

HOBBS
We'll take 'em on their starboard,
Mister Hands.

RANSOM
(from the lookout)
Frogs laying on more sail!

Teach notices that Snake Leavitt, Hornigold's first supporter in the vote, stands momentarily frozen.

TEACH
Mister Leavitt. You can go with Mister
Hornigold or you can do it my way
and share in the spoils.

SNAKE
Vote's a vote. You be the captain
now. I fight for you.

TEACH
Get to it then Snake.

Snake nods, moves to work on the sails.

Teach turns to Hands as they view the French ship in the distance.

TEACH (CONT'D)
We just took one ship today, Israel.
Let's take us another.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE PURSUIT

As the Queen Anne's Revenge strikes out to capture Le Concorde.

A) The French ship has the lead, but the Queen Anne's Revenge (QAR) is on the move.

B) On the QAR, the crew scrambles to adjust sails to take maximum power from the prevailing winds.

HANDS
Ease'way the sheets, Mister Leavitt.

HOBBS
Bear away, Mister Ransom .

C) Teach re-loads his pistols, placing them just-so in his bandoleer.

TEACH
Gunners below!

D) Hands sights through his spyglass, sees that the French ship is much closer. Then he kisses his index and middle fingers, touches them to his facial scar for luck.

E) Prescott barks orders below decks to see that the cannons are made ready to fire.

F) Teach views Le Concorde with his visible eye. The QAR is almost upon the French, coming up on the starboard side.

EXT. LE CONCORDE - DECK - DAY

D'Ocier looks back at the QAR, through his spyglass.

CAPTAIN D'OCIER
(sub-titled)
Now only a few men on deck.

FRENCH FIRST MATE
(sub-titled)
Out here... maybe they are lost.

D'OCIER'S POV - THE QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE

The QAR has brought down the French flag and is raising the SKULL-AND-CROSSBONES.

EXT. LE CONCORDE - DECK - DAY

D'Ocier looks like he has seen hell itself.

CAPTAIN D'OCIER
(sub-titled)
Great God! Pirates!

FRENCH FIRST MATE
(sub-titled)
We must surrender.

CAPTAIN D'OCIER
(sub-titled)
We cannot. They will kill us if we do.

WE SEE what Captain D'Ocier has seen. The Queen Anne's Revenge is opening up its cannons, preparing to fire.

CAPTAIN D'OCIER (CONT'D)
(sub-titled; shouting
to crew)
Lay on more sail! Prepare cannons!
(to French First Mate)
We must fight or die!

Suddenly, there is a round of CANNON FIRE coming from the pirate ship.

From the looks of the few men on the deck of the French merchant ship, they know they must rally quickly to stand a chance.

EXT. QAR/LE CONCORDE GUN DECKS - INTERCUT CANNONS - DAY

A full MONTAGE of cannon fire from both ships.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - DECK - DAY

Where instantly Teach, Hands and Howard are joined by a swarm of pirates emerging as one from the hold.

TEACH
Board 'em strong, me hearties!

As they take the deck, they let loose with a BLOOD-CURDLING CRY OF WAR. They begin to toss grappling hooks from their ship to the French ship, pulling them together stern to stern, boarding from the portside of the QAR.

It is breathtaking how fast the ships are pulled together. Teach's men have practiced this in battle many times before.

EXT. LE CONCORDE - CONTINUOUS

Where the war cry has the desired effect of creating confusion, fear and total panic.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - CONTINUOUS

As the grappling hooks pull the ships closer, several pirates are already rappelling across the divide, riding ropes rigged from the masts. They also fire GRENADO SHELLS, POWDER FLASKS and STINKPOTS to soften up and confuse their enemy. They also make use of the BLUNDERBUSS to fire a burst of scrap iron and nails into the face of their enemy.

BLACKBEARD
Board 'em strong men!

As the ships close, the pirates swarm from QAR onto:

EXT. LE CONCORDE - CONTINUOUS

Already descending into chaos, dark smoke obscuring and confusing. Out of this, Teach emerges, tall, fierce and frightening as he leads the charge on board.

TEACH
Surrender or die!

This begins a MAN-TO-MAN ON DECK BATTLE fought with a mixture of pistols (the most popular firearm), cutlasses (the most popular blade), daggers, muskets and hand to hand combat. Teach has several men at his side who are strong allies. Notably:

A) Hands... wading in with the first wave... with a long-musket... showing enough patience to decide who needs to go first, then blowing him away... then using the musket as a blunt instrument...

B) Seng... a brilliant master of knife-combat with a martial arts tinge... an artist...

C) Howard... using a cutlass to lethal advantage... he is a natural talent at fencing...

D) Sanborn... a solid and fearless man... a dagger in one hand and a pistol in the other...

E) Even Hornigold supporter, Snake, is out there, fighting with fury...

D) During this violent ballet, Teach focuses in on French Captain D'Ocier. He engages him in a battle with cutlasses. It ends with Teach's blade poised at the D'Ocier's throat.

TEACH (CONT'D)
Lay down your weapons, Captain.

CAPTAIN D'OCIER
Déposer vos bras!

The few French still putting up resistance stop fighting.

TEACH
I'll be havin' that sword of yours.

Reluctantly, but with dignity, Captain D'Ocier delivers his sword over to Teach. The pirates CHEER LOUDLY at their success. Teach turns to Hands, wiping blood from his hands on his clothes.

TEACH (CONT'D)

Strip her cargo, then we'll sink her.

HANDS

Aye, Captain.

As Hands moves to his task, Teach bellows to the sky:

TEACH

There's not a man alive who can stop me!

Seizing command -- taking his first ship -- this is the biggest day in any pirate's life. Teach is a man transformed and a legend begun!

EXT. NEW PROVIDENCE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

High angle of the growing town, defined by its access to the sea for all shipping, save for the largest merchant ships or the huge man-of wars.

A SUPER reads: New Providence Capital of the British Bahamas
A SMART CARRIAGE (Eden's), turns into the township's main street.

EXT. NEW PROVIDENCE - DOCK AREA - DAY

On the dock, a long-decayed pirate hangs in chains inside a metal gibbet cage as a discouragement to piracy.

Fresh off a small quarterboat, Lieutenant Robert Maynard, introduced earlier, tests his land legs, helping Charlotte Ormand, off the boat and onto the dock.

MAYNARD

Watch your step now, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

I know my footing will always be sure, Robert, so long as I am with you.

Maynard smiles. This is courtship, getting serious, colonial style. Both on land now, it's a moment they've each dreaded.

MAYNARD

I have greatly enjoyed our time together.

CHARLOTTE

As have I, in so many ways.

MAYNARD

I'll escort you to your father's protection then.

CHARLOTTE

I'm sure that won't be necessary.

MAYNARD

Oh, it will. The docks of New Providence are no place for a young lady alone. I will see to your safe transfer, then I'll report to the Governor's office.

Charlotte looks down the dock, sees a stocky man in a powdered wig, alight from his carriage and approach. This is Governor CHARLES EDEN. Charlotte seems stricken.

CHARLOTTE

Governor Eden is already here.

MAYNARD

(flustered)

I didn't expect to be greeted personally by any means. Are you quite sure?

CHARLOTTE

Quite.

Charlotte turns to Maynard, speaks urgently.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Oh, Robert, I do pray you won't think me dishonest, but the Governor is here to greet me, not you.

MAYNARD

Charlotte, is there something you should have told me, perhaps?

CHARLOTTE

(miserable)

On the ship -- when we talked about the Yellow Fever which took my parents years ago?

MAYNARD

Of course. The reason you are so keen to study medicine.

CHARLOTTE

Yes. And when I told you about the man who agreed to adopt me and administer my inheritance until I can rightfully claim it?

MAYNARD

Yes...

CHARLOTTE

Your Governor Eden is my step-father.

Maynard's eyes go wide, trying to process this.

EDEN (V.O.)

Charlotte, dear girl!

Charlotte turns, hugs Eden.

CHARLOTTE

Father!

As they break their embrace, Charlotte makes her introductions.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Governor Charles Eden may I present to you Lieutenant Robert Maynard of the Royal Navy.

MAYNARD

I am honored sir.

EDEN

Are you the same Maynard due in from England?

MAYNARD

Indeed. I was assigned passage on the very ship your daughter sailed.

CHARLOTTE

So I had a Navy escort to New Providence, father. I told you not to worry, that I would be in safe hands.

Eden looks over Maynard. Young, handsome, probably smitten already with his daughter.

FLASH CUTS - MAYNARD AND CHARLOTTE

From the ocean voyage. The two are on deck, enjoying each other's company, holding hands. Maynard offers her his coat in rough weather. Eating by candlelight. Playing cards, laughing. A definite relationship in bloom.

BACK TO SCENE

Eden regards the two of them.

EDEN

Yes, I can imagine that you were.

Eden indicates his carriage waiting at the end of the dock.

EDEN (CONT'D)

You must be exhausted, dear girl. We shall take you home straight away.

(to Maynard)

Good day, Lieutenant. I'll expect you to call once you are settled.

CHARLOTTE

Certainly the Crown can offer the Lieutenant a room with us during his stay. And you are the Crown's representative in New Providence.

EDEN

You've been gone so long, I must consider your needs first.

Beyond a parent's concern, Eden seems extremely unwilling to accommodate.

CHARLOTTE

Then I need to have the Lieutenant seen to properly.

Eden tries to steer Charlotte out of Maynard's earshot.

EDEN

Charlotte, I have my mind up here.

CHARLOTTE

I will not hear of such rudeness, father. He simply must come with us.

Eden looks between Maynard who's averting his eyes and his willful daughter. Game and match.

EDEN

You're right, my dear. Why not kill two birds with one stone?

(MORE)

EDEN (CONT'D)
(to Maynard)
Please. Join us.

Maynard smiles. Eden smiles back, weakly.

INT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - BELOW DECK - DAY

Teach strides through the aftermath, using his one good arm to apply pressure to his other arm, wounded in battle.

Ship's carpenters, led by Prescott, are already at work making repairs.

Still others take stock of the new barrels and provisions being brought aboard and search them. This plunder includes:

LARGE WOODEN CHEST

Carried by two men, Israel Hands and Seng. It is placed before Teach. Using an ax, Teach BREAKS THE LOCK. He lifts the lid, revealing the contents -- A collection of MAPS AND CHARTS are on top. Teach inspects them briefly, then grabs them up under his one good arm, revealing underneath a small but glittering collection of GOLD PIECES OF EIGHT.

TEACH
Tell the men we'll be dividin' their shares on the morrow.

HANDS
It's a decent size treasure... for a slave ship.

TEACH
(re: charts)
This here's the treasure.

HANDS
How so, Cap'n?

TEACH
Even a dead reckonin' in the noon day sun can't help if ya don't know where you're goin'.
(beat)
Fetch me Hornigold, straight away.

Teach replaces the maps in the chest, then takes off, heading over to the:

TRIAGE AREA

... where the broken and cut bodies are being triaged. This is as much of a "clean zone" as conditions allow for surgery.

Teach now looms over pirate seaman Enoch Sanborn, whose face is drenched in sweat, biting down hard on a WOODEN DOWEL jammed between his teeth. Laboring over him, his face also drenched in sweat, is ship's doctor, Dr. Peter Bruce. He is assisted by Elias Ransom who survived the attack intact and serves in the aftermath as a surgeon's assistant, handing Dr. Bruce instruments from his SURGEON'S KIT, an unrolled canvas case.

DR. BRUCE

We're nearly done.
(to Ransom)
Give him another.

Sanborn unclenches his teeth long enough for Ransom to remove the dowel from the man's mouth. A strangled CRY OF PAIN comes from him, quenched by a long swallow from a bottle of rum. Then the dowel goes back in.

DR. BRUCE (CONT'D)

All right, then. This should do it.

Dr. Bruce saws with greater strength and perseverance. Solved by a clean saw through the leg being operated on.

TEACH

Ya listen here, Sanborn. We got need of help in the galley. That's your place now. And you'll be gettin' a share and a half now of what's comin' to you.

Sanborn looks up at Teach, actually thankful to hear that. Imagine the excruciating pain he's feeling but when the dowel is removed he says:

SANBORN

God Bless you, Captain Teach! You're a fair man, you is!

Dr. Bruce nods at Ransom to finish up with Sanborn, which involves tying off veins and arteries with ligatures. Dr. Bruce stands up, indicates a cut on Teach's sleeve.

DR. BRUCE

Allow me to take a look at you.

TEACH

Not till the men are seen to.

Dr. Bruce is already looking at the cut.

DR. BRUCE

The worst are, for now.

Teach pulls off his shirt. He's well-muscled and quite lean. He has a gash on his left arm which Dr. Bruce examines and proceeds to go to work on with CURVED NEEDLE, held in a leather sewing device with a thumb hole, pulling the waxed cotton thread.

TEACH

Aye, Doctor Bruce, took her easier than most today, I'd say.

Dr. Bruce observes two men, holding a DEAD PIRATE by the hands and by the feet, and swinging him 1 - 2 - 3 and TOSSING HIM OVERBOARD, through a hole in the side of the QAR.

DR. BRUCE

A dying man takes no solace in being one of the few.

TEACH

He took his chances.

Teach indicates the booty chest, brimming with gold pieces.

TEACH (CONT'D)

And those that lived will split these spoils, and if the men stay loyal, even the ultimate treasure of Captain Kidd.

DR. BRUCE

Perhaps you should not speak so openly of Kidd's treasure in case it does not exist.

TEACH

Maybe ya should keep your mouth dribblin' to medicine, Doctor Bruce.

DR. BRUCE

(quickly)

Of course it exists. I meant only if it is not possible to find it.

Israel Hands approaches, pushing former-Captain Hornigold ahead of him. Hornigold's 12-year-old cabin boy, CAESAR, tags along. He's a second generation slave, and as much a personal valet as anything.

HANDS

Captain Teach, sir, how would you be seeing this situation with Mister Hornigold?

Teach inspects Hornigold and with his free arm pours a shot of rum and then another. He hands one over to Hornigold. Then he raises his own.

TEACH

As it is. The pupil outshines the master.

Teach quickly downs his rum. Hornigold watches, still holds his.

HORNIGOLD

You'll pardon me, Mister Teach, if I don't drink to that.

Hornigold takes his rum and downs it.

TEACH

No matter, Hornigold. Tonight ya can still eat as my guest in the Captain's quarters.

HORNIGOLD

And if I refuse your generous offer?

TEACH

Your choice. Ya can eat as a gentleman and be put ashore in New Providence, or ya can refuse and be marooned on 'Hell-on-Earth' if that's more to your likin'.

At the very mention of "Hell-on-Earth," Hornigold tenses.

HORNIGOLD

I will see you tonight then.

Teach nods, and Hands leads Hornigold away. Caesar starts to follow, but is stopped by --

TEACH

Caesar!
(to Hornigold)
The boy works for me now.

Hornigold nods. He knows the rules. He nods to Caesar that it's okay to stay. Teach grabs the boy and drags him after him toward the upper deck.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - DECK - DAY

SIX AFRICAN SLAVES are tethered together in chains, squinting and shielding their eyes in the sun. Howard watches over them as Teach comes up from beneath decks with Caesar in tow.

HOWARD

These have been in the dark for months. They're no good to us.

TEACH

These are the best of the lot?

HOWARD

The only ones. Rest got sick on the way over, got tossed overboard.

TEACH

We'll be needin' more cannon fodder. Let's see what we've got.

Teach begins to examine the men, grabbing their mouths, forcing them open to look at their teeth.

HOWARD

Better to set them adrift.

TEACH

Because they're sick, Mister Howard, or because they're Africans?

HOWARD

We can pick up some fine men in New Providence is all I'm saying, sir.

TEACH

All pirates are outlaws. No point in caring what color a man is, long as he's strong. Ya feed 'em, they'll get better.

(mind made up)

We take 'em in.

(to Caesar)

Come here, boy. I never heard you speak. Where were you born?

CAESAR

Caesar born in New Providence. No African.

TEACH

You ever had a proper daddy?

Caesar shakes his head, no. Teach indicates the slaves.

TEACH (CONT'D)

You pick one now, Caesar.

Caesar looks over the slaves. When it becomes clear what is going on, five of the six slaves start to speak excitedly, lobbying for salvation. One man, though, looks away, too proud to beg. Caesar indicates that man to Teach.

CAESAR

I take him.

At Teach's motion, Howard begins to unlock the connecting chain that binds the slave to the others.

EXT. CARRIAGE - MONTAGE - DAY

For its time, a graceful and speedy thing, characterized by its light weight, flexibility and elegant design. This is cutting edge in 1717, especially in the Bahamas. It travels along through a dirt road path which cuts through, basically, paradise. Beautiful green foliage, crisp blue sky, towering palm trees. Between the plantations, the island feels pristine.

INT. CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

The interior is as equally well-appointed as the exterior. Leather and velour, mounted with true craftsmanship. It is as good as it gets but, even so, there is no denying the bumpy rumble that goes with being a passenger.

Eden sits protectively with his daughter, casting his eyes outside, distracted. Maynard, keeping a stiff upper lip in an uncomfortable situation, tries to make small talk.

MAYNARD

The ride is quite fine, Governor.
English craftsmanship, I assume?

Eden turns back from the window.

EDEN

It came to New Providence in pieces,
and was assembled not two blocks
from the ship it came in on.

CHARLOTTE

Father, you must be so proud of your
new toy.

EDEN

Hardly a toy, I should think.

MAYNARD

(laughs)
No, Governor. I should think not
either.

They are interrupted by the abrupt stopping of the carriage. Instinctively, Maynard is at the window of his side of the carriage, looking out to make an assessment. Eden checks his side nervously.

MAYNARD'S POV - OUTSIDE

A large tree has been felled across the road. The jungle foliage nearly approaches the road making the way around it not an easy task for a carriage.

BACK TO SCENE

Maynard falls back into the carriage, pulls a pistol from his waistcoat and proceeds to load a musket ball into it.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Do you suffer many bandits on this route?

EDEN

None foolish enough to rob the governor.

CHARLOTTE

From the coach we are in, all they may know is we have money they want.

EDEN

(re: gun; to Maynard)

I'm sure you won't be needing such a thing.

Maynard nods his understanding, keeps loading. He throws the carriage door open, jumps to the ground.

MAYNARD

Stay inside.

EXT. / INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Pistol drawn, Maynard leaves the carriage, eyes scanning the landscape. What he sees is dense foliage, essentially preventing an alternate escape, if needed.

The CARRIAGE DRIVER has gotten down, and is calming the horses.

Maynard kneels at the base of the tree. A pile of sawdust is at the ground. He picks up some, smells it.

Maynard stands, giving his pistol to the carriage driver.

MAYNARD

Keep watch.

Maynard moves to the carriage.

CHARLOTTE

What is it?

MAYNARD

The tree's freshly cut.
(to Eden)
Do you have another gun?

EDEN

This is madness.

Eden leans out of the carriage, begins to shout:

EDEN

YOU MUST COME NO FURTHER! I AM GOV -

Maynard pushes Eden back into his seat.

MAYNARD

Criminals have no regard for
authority.

Charlotte, who's been looking around, slides a WOODEN BOX out from under the seat. Inside is a beautiful pistol placed on a purple cushion. Maynard inspects it. Loaded.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Have you fired it before?

EDEN

(waving him off)
Of course not.

CHARLOTTE

Give it here. I will.

There is the sound of a GUNSHOT from outside. Maynard hands the weapon to Charlotte.

MAYNARD

Hold it with both hands. Aim for the
chest.

EDEN

Sir! I take exception!

MAYNARD

You may be the Governor, but you are
not invincible.

Maynard pushes his way through the carriage, and rolls out from the opposite side. He crawls on his elbows under the carriage.

MAYNARD'S POV - THE SITUATION OUTSIDE

The carriage driver is lying on the ground - shot. Wearing a mask, a ROBBER stands over him, holding a smoking muskatoon. The Robber begins to move toward the carriage. He flings the door open.

INTERCUT: THE FIGHT

The Robber looks inside. Eden is closest, Charlotte behind him.

ROBBER #1

We'll be takin' the girl now.

From behind Eden, WE SEE Charlotte, holding the pistol with two hands, both arms extended.

CHARLOTTE

Oh no you will not!

Simultaneous to her pulling the trigger, Eden pushes her arms away:

EDEN

Charlotte!

The gun FIRES but, off-target now, the bullet grazes the Robber on the cheek. He stumbles back, holding his hand to his face.

ROBBER #1

She shot me!

Suddenly, Maynard is upon him with his sword, held to his chest.

MAYNARD

And I'll do worse.

Charlotte screams from the carriage.

CHARLOTTE

Robert, behind you!

Maynard turns his head, sees ROBBER #2 running from the jungle toward him. In that moment, Robber #1 pushes aside Maynard's blade and makes a run for it, disappearing into the jungle.

Now it's Maynard and Robber #2 facing off with drawn swords. Thrust -- Maynard knows what he's doing -- Parry -- so does this Robber --

The battle goes back and forth.

ROBBER #3 emerges from the jungle.

Meanwhile, Charlotte sneaks out of the carriage, moves to the carriage driver to render aid.

Robber #3 joins the fight. Now the odds are two-on-one, but Maynard is good, very good. Cornered, Maynard turns, runs straight into a tree, using his momentum to run up it, then flip over the Robbers, giving him an element of shock and disorientation to exploit. This gives him the jump in the fight, allowing him to slay one of them, Robber #2.

In the final one-on-one, Maynard and Robber #3 are both evenly matched. It's a stalemate -- until, inexplicably, Robber #3 turns and runs.

Behind Maynard is Charlotte, holding his pistol with both hands.

EXT. OPEN WATER - DAY

Le Concorde gracefully submerges into the deep.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - DECK - DAY

Teach and the men watch as Le Concorde disappears finally into the ocean below. The surviving French sailors have also been brought on deck to observe. Teach turns to Captain D'Ocier who stands next to him, his hands pinioned behind him.

TEACH

What do you Frenchies say? Au-revoir?

CAPTAIN D'OCIER

Oui. You have made your point today very clear.

TEACH

Not clear enough.

Teach nods to Howard who, along with a couple of other men, proceed to blindfold D'Ocier and move him to the edge of the boat.

THE GANG-PLANK

A plank of timber, protruding some seven feet or so beyond the edge of the boat, out over the sea. D'Ocier is hoisted up onto the plank by Teach's men.

BACK TO DECK

Teach addresses the French sailors.
He speaks in English, and Dr. Bruce
TRANSLATES HIS WORDS into French.

TEACH

Sailors of France pay heed. Your
Captain, he has to pay the price for
losing his ship.

(beat; for translation)

DR. BRUCE

Les marins de salaire de France font
attention à. Votre Capitaine, il
aurait dû renoncer immédiatement.

TEACH

Because he fought and lost, his ship
has been sunk, and he will be fed to
the sharks.

(beat; for translation)

DR. BRUCE

Parce qu'il a combattu, son bateau a
été coulé, et il sera nourri aux
requins.

(waits for Teach)

TEACH

Them's a ya which can go on account
as a pirate and sail with us, we'll
take ya. All the others, we'll feed
to the sharks.

(waits for Teach)

DR. BRUCE

Ceux-là de vous qui souhaite habiter
comme un pirate, nous vous prendrons.
Tous les autres, nous nourrirons aux
requins.

Teach waits as Dr. Bruce finishes the final translation, then
nods to Howard. They begin to prod D'Ocier with a cutlass to
the back, moving him forward down the plank.

Another pirate pours a bucket of ROTTING MEAT into the water
below. SHARK FINS are seen almost as soon as they hit the
water.

The French sailors are horrified; the pirates think this is
great sport.

Eventually, D'Ocier is standing on the edge of the plank,
knowing what lies below. He balks at moving, but the cutlass
pierces his skin, invoking an involuntary reaction, and he
falls to the water below.

D'Ocier floats momentarily in the water. Several shark fins appear and begin to circle, and the water runs red.

INT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Teach enters, moving about, inspecting his new quarters. Hornigold has a fine collection of leather-bound books, including several by Shakespeare, and the Bible. Teach picks one up, leafs through it, then slams the book shut, uninterested.

Teach then turns his attention over to a collection of maps and charts left behind by Hornigold. They are rough and general, but Teach treats them with respect and care. The table that they are spread across will later double as the table for officer's dining.

A beat, then there's a KNOCK on the door. Teach moves to the door and opens it. It's Caesar and he has the African slave with him. They carry the wooden CAPTAIN'S CHEST. Teach waves them in.

TEACH

Well, get in.

Caesar and the African slave enter, and Teach closes the door, points to a corner.

TEACH (CONT'D)

Put it there.

(to Caesar)

You gonna have any problem with servin' me here, same as you served Hornigold?

CAESAR

No...

TEACH

Good boy.

Now Teach speaks loudly to the slave, as if he can't hear.

TEACH (CONT'D)

My name is Teach. Teach!

(gesturing)

Say it! Teach!

The slave knows what he's being asked to do, even if he's not quite sure how to do it.

SLAVE

Th--a--atch.

TEACH
 Not Thatch! Teach!
 (exasperated)
 Begads!
 (to Caesar)
 That's his name now since he can say
 it partways.
 (pointing at slave)
 Thatch! You are Thatch!

And so, an African slave with a real name and a real family, comes to find himself named Thatch and a father-figure to a cabin boy named Caesar. Teach speaks to Caesar.

TEACH (CONT'D)
 Once ya learn him English, ya tell
 him if he ever double-crosses me --

Blackbeard gestures to himself, trying to put his essence into something simple for the slave.

TEACH (CONT'D)
 -- the great -- Black -- Beard --
 that I'll have Doctor Bruce cut his
 tongue out and then when I kill him
 he won't even be able to scream.

Caesar gets the picture all right. Avoiding eye contact with Teach, he leads Thatch out the door and closes it. Teach waits for the door to close, then turns his attention back to the chest, carefully removing the new maps and charts. There is a mirror inside the chest that reflects Teach's image back at him. He strokes his long, black beard.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - LONG SHOT - DAY

The carriage approaches the mansion, a beautiful home in paradise with the feeling of a wealthy plantation.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - THE FRONT - DAY

The carriage parks as several slaves under the supervision of BIG JOHN go about attending to horses and luggage.

Maynard jumps out first so he can assist Charlotte out. As Eden appears, Maynard offers to help but Eden spurns him.

CHARLOTTE
 It's a bit remote, I'm afraid.

MAYNARD
 (blown away)
 It's quite impressive.

EDEN

(sarcastic)

We certainly hope you'll be comfortable.

(direct order)

I do hope you'll join me in my office as soon as you've had a moment to get settled, won't you, Lieutenant?

MAYNARD

Of course. And, Governor, I might suggest moving a watchman to the front of the premises. As a precaution.

Eden speaks to Big John.

EDEN

Big John, you're to stand guard here until we tell you otherwise.

Big John nods, and Eden moves off into the mansion.

Finally alone a moment, Charlotte allows her hand to rest on Maynard's forearm.

CHARLOTTE

You saved our lives.

Modest, Maynard nods toward the mansion.

MAYNARD

Please, show me around.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - THE FRONT - DUSK

To ESTABLISH the passage of time.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - OFFICE - DUSK

Eden sits at the table with his Collector of Customs, TOBIAS KNIGHT, a man who drinks, eats and cuts corners with equal passion. Eden leans in, speaks conspiratorially.

EDEN

Charlotte has become even more stubborn since her return, and this meddlesome naval officer already had his hooks in her and was not about to let go.

KNIGHT

Then you had no choice but to go ahead as if nothing was wrong. Thank God you're alive.

EDEN

(contained fury)

Yes, but one of our men is dead and the other wounded. And that step-daughter and that scoundrel Maynard are in fine form.

KNIGHT

It's a dreadful situation.

EDEN

(contained fury)

Precisely. She will turn 21 next week, and she will be alive to claim her inheritance.

KNIGHT

Unacceptable.

EDEN

Oh, do tell, Tobias, do tell.

There's a KNOCK at the door, a slave woman, LULU, shows Maynard in. He stops in his tracks when he sees Eden with Knight.

MAYNARD

Sorry. Am I interrupting?

EDEN

Not at all, Lieutenant Maynard. I was simply telling Mister Knight how handy you seem with a sword.

MAYNARD

You may thank His Majesty for the training.

Knight stands, does a slightly officious bow.

KNIGHT

My name is Tobias Knight, the magistrate and customs collector for New Providence.

EDEN

I have asked Mister Knight to join us so that he, too, might hear your report.

Eden gestures for Maynard to take a seat, which he does.

As the conversation continues, Eden pours a drink for each man from an elegant crystal decanter.

MAYNARD

Mister Knight, Governor. With the war ended, His Majesty believes the Crown's interests will be best served by cracking down on tariff runners and piracy.

EDEN

There is no news there, sir. Simply more empty words.

MAYNARD

That is the purpose of my visit. To begin turning those words into action.

KNIGHT

(to Eden)

He sounds like Spotswood, doesn't he?

EDEN

The Virginia governor does have a holier-than-thou attitude on the matter.

MAYNARD

It is true that Governor Spotswood has complained to London that New Providence is a safe haven for pirates, and that it is affecting shipping lanes to his own colony.

EDEN

Balderdash!

KNIGHT

The simple fact is, Lieutenant, that the pirates are well-armed and we are not.

MAYNARD

That could change. I am to inform you that several warships have been dispatched to your aid.

Maynard places an envelope before Eden that is sealed with red wax. As Eden opens it and reads, Maynard summarizes.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

You are also to continue offering pardons to all pirates who swear an oath to never return to their former enterprise.

Eden takes the letter to his desk, places it in a corner drawer and locks it.

EDEN

I will keep your letter of marque
for safekeeping during your stay.

MAYNARD

As you wish.

EDEN

I warn you, though. All you are
doing is stirring a hornet's nest.

KNIGHT

The pirates will simply go elsewhere.

MAYNARD

Possibly.

(beat)

But at least they will no longer be
your problem when they are gone.

Eden and Knight trade looks. They do not look all that relieved at the prospect.

Eden, hating the awkwardness, raises his glass into the air.

EDEN

A toast! To the Lieutenant for saving
my government the expense of hanging
at least one of those craven outlaws!

Eden, Knight and Maynard toast their glasses into the middle of frame, as we:

MATCH CUT:

INT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DUSK

Another dinner in progress, this one attended to by Teach, Hands, Dr. Bruce and Hornigold. The glasses clinking in the middle of this frame are filled with brandy.

TEACH

To the Queen Anne's Revenge! The
scourge of the seas.

For as elegant as the last dining space was in Eden's mansion, this one is basic. The wood table where the charts were previously unfolded now serves as the dining table.

DR. BRUCE

Hear, hear. The War with the French may be over for now, but my disdain for them has hardly abated.

HANDS

Nobody on this ship signed no damn treaty, you may lay to that.

TEACH

I mean to scare more than just wet frogs, I do. So I'll be havin' a new name for myself.

DR. BRUCE

Captain Edward Teach is a fine name.

TEACH

For a gentleman, not a pirate. And my enemy may believe I will give quarter as a gentleman. But for Blackbeard... all men will know that Blackbeard asks no quarter, and gives none himself.

From this point on, Teach is now BLACKBEARD and will be referred to as such.

DR. BRUCE

Captain Blackbeard? I do like that.

BLACKBEARD

Just Blackbeard.

HANDS

Blackbeard...

HORNIGOLD

(still stung)

Aye, what's in a name, Teach? A rose by any other name would smell as foul should it not?

Blackbeard looks at Hornigold, shakes his head, turns to Dr. Bruce.

BLACKBEARD

Who spoke that first?

DR. BRUCE

I believe he's mis-quoting that playwright. Shakespeare.

Blackbeard nods, turns his attention back to Hornigold.

BLACKBEARD

Had ya studied your gut with the same interest ya studied your damned theater books, ya might well still be sitting at the head of this here table.

HORNIGOLD

Aye, but I have learned much from reading those books.

Caesar enters with a plate of turtle steaks, and begins to place a steaming helping on each man's plate.

BLACKBEARD

About what, Mister Hornigold?

HORNIGOLD

About betrayal, Mister Teach, among other things.

BLACKBEARD

Careful with your tongue. Lest we serve it for dinner in place of this turtle.

(to Caesar)

Leave us be.

Caesar immediately backs out of the room. Everyone but Hands has been served.

HANDS

I ain't got no food!

Blackbeard slams his palm on the table, rattling the dishes with its power.

BLACKBEARD

I don't care!

(beat)

Take Hornigold's.

Hands waits for no protest, sliding Hornigold's in front of him immediately. A beat. Blackbeard looks at Hornigold, and it's as if they are the only two people in the room.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

We both knew this day would come.

HORNIGOLD

Maybe I never had the dark soul required for piracy. But I'm quite certain you have the black heart to match your beard.

(venomously)

Captain.

BLACKBEARD

I can see now we won't be partin' as friends. So if you'll give me what I need, we can end it here.

HORNIGOLD

What do I have that the great Blackbeard would need?

BLACKBEARD

The last letter what come from you old friend Captain Kidd's pen before he was hung.

HORNIGOLD

Why would I have such a thing?

BLACKBEARD

Ya sailed with him. Ya told Muldoon 'bout it 'fore he got run through and died.

HORNIGOLD

If I had it, and it told me where his treasure be, don't you think I'd have been there by now?

Blackbeard's hand grabs a MEAT KNIFE and slams it through Hornigold's hand, pinning it to the wood table below.

BLACKBEARD

Too many questions, not enough answers.

Blackbeard looks to Dr. Bruce who puts his canvas surgical case on the table and begins to roll it open.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A dinner in progress between Eden, Maynard, Knight and Charlotte. A beat of awkwardness as silverware scrapes on fine china. Finally, Eden turns to Knight and says:

EDEN

You should have seen it Tobias. I thought I might lose my own head when Charlotte pointed my pistol at that highwayman.

CHARLOTTE

You pushed me aside, father. Had you not, the outcome would have been different.

KNIGHT

What did you teach her on that ship, Lieutenant? It's hardly right for a woman to be handling a pistol.

EDEN

Or pretending to be a doctor.

Maynard responds to Charlotte being ganged up on by rhetorically coming to her aid.

MAYNARD

I should think the wounded coachman is alive tonight because of your daughter's attention.

(to Charlotte)

Very impressive.

Charlotte blushes, pleased at the acknowledgement.

EDEN

Perhaps, Lieutenant, you should pay the rent for the space she wishes to have in town for her --

CHARLOTTE

Medical practice.

EDEN

Yes, of course.

CHARLOTTE

The money is mine, father. I could find other ways to spend it less responsibly.

EDEN

You have not yet come of age.

CHARLOTTE

I will be 21 in mere days.

EDEN

At that time, you may bring the matter up to the court.

MAYNARD

Would not that be you, as the chief magistrate of New Providence, Mister Tobias?

Knight does not like the direction of the conversation and, so, decides to change it.

KNIGHT

You're a Naval man, Lieutenant Maynard. Aren't you supposed to be lost when off the water?

MAYNARD

I grew up on a small farm outside of Bristol. When my father was called for the War with France, not to return, I was in charge of all that he once did for my dear mother. I suppose I learned to lead men by leading my brothers first.

This brings a polite chuckle from the table.

KNIGHT

Have you been called upon to kill men before today, Lieutenant Maynard?

CHARLOTTE

Mister Knight, surely you embarrass the Lieutenant.

Looks are traded at the table.

MAYNARD

(to Charlotte)

No, it's fine.

(to Eden, Knight)

I have killed no man who was not deserving of his fate.

Maynard delivers this with just a touch of threat in his manner. Eden and Knight shift uncomfortably.

CUT TO:

INT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Hornigold's hand has both the ring and pinkie fingers cut down to stumps. Dr. Bruce finishes cauterizing one of them with an open flame.

BLACKBEARD

Out of respect to what's been between us, I've only taken the ones you don't need. We're running out, though, and you know how Dr. Bruce loves to cut.

HORNIGOLD

Teach...

BLACKBEARD

It's Blackbeard now. Like I said.

HORNIGOLD

And like I said... there's no Kidd's
treasure and no letter either.

Blackbeard nods to Dr. Bruce who leans a palm with his full
weight on Hornigold's hand, and readies a SCALPEL.

HORNIGOLD (CONT'D)

This is butchery!

BLACKBEARD

No. That's next. We'll save your
other eye for last.

Blackbeard again nods to Dr. Bruce. As the scalpel makes
contact with Hornigold's middle finger:

HORNIGOLD

Stop!

Dr. Bruce holds up for a moment.

HORNIGOLD (CONT'D)

There's a letter. But it's not what
you think. It's the letter he sent
his wife after being sent to London
for trial... only that...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEWGATE PRISON - CELL - DAY

A nightmarish place of confinement where London's criminal
underworld awaits trial and death by hanging. Jammed in with
petty thieves, cutthroats and highwaymen, we find CAPTAIN
WILLIAM KIDD, wearing tattered clothes and shivering from
illness, hunched in a corner writing on a scrap of paper.
Rats scurry by.

KIDD (V.O.)

My dearest Sarah. They say I will hang tomorrow at Tyburn. I see this now for the best. Newgate Prison is, by any account, a bottomless pit of violence. I fear they will try to confiscate our estate and everything within it. If that should happen, you should seek the counsel of John Gardener, who I have traded with on occasion and may be in a position to help you and the children. I have treasured his friendship greatly, although you may find him a strange bird with much to say. Naturally, I have treasured your love and our life together more than anything. That it ends this way speaks to the treachery of powerful men. Much love always, William.

Kidd looks at the letter, then carefully folds it and places it inside an envelope. As he does, we hear:

HORNIGOLD (V.O.)

It's under the fifth floorboard, beneath the turtles down below, in a tin can.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Blackbeard opens the tin can that is placed before him by Hands, inspects the letter.

BLACKBEARD

(sarcastic)

If there's no treasure, Mister Hornigold, ya wonder why's ya hid it so good.

HORNIGOLD

Same reason you will. Maybe it's important.

(shrugs)

Maybe it's just a letter.

Blackbeard toggles his steak knife slightly in Hornigold's hand.

BLACKBEARD

No riddles.

HORNIGOLD

(gritted teeth)

You can cut off my arms and legs and I'll have nothing more to say to you. You have what I had. And if you're lucky, you'll do better with it than I did.

BLACKBEARD

How'd ya get it?

HORNIGOLD

Took it from Kidd's wife when I came to pay my respects.

BLACKBEARD

How much respect did ya pay her?

HORNIGOLD

Enough to stay warm on a cold night in February.

BLACKBEARD

(laughs)

You stole from a widow you lay with! By God, Hornigold, there may still be hope for you!

Blackbeard pulls the knife out of Hornigold's hand, wipes it with a dirty table rag, then uses it to cut away at his dinner.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

(yelling O.S.)

Caesar! Bring in Mister Hornigold's dinner.

(to Hornigold)

You should eat. Keep your strength up.

Blackbeard -- a stone sociopath if ever there was one -- chews his tortoise with gusto, smiles at Hornigold.

EXT. QAR - DAY

Blackbeard waves goodbye to Hornigold, now being set adrift in one of Le Concorde Jolly boats. His hand is wrapped in a bloody white rag.

EXT. QAR - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A beauty shot, showing the QAR back at full-sail.

EXT. NEW PROVIDENCE - THE HARBOR - DAY

It's another beautiful day in paradise. Out in the harbor, WE SEE several ships docked, now including the QAR.

A LONG BOAT

Blackbeard stands in the stern, looking like the dark version of George Washington crossing the Delaware. Certain supplies are loaded, and a selection of the pirate crew do the rowing.

EXT, NEW PROVIDENCE - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Where Maynard and Charlotte stroll arm-in-arm. Although it's a rough town, it's less threatening by day and even the pirates tend to respect women who are taken, especially ones who are the Governor's daughter. Lulu exits behind them, carrying recently purchased supplies.

CHARLOTTE

I do suppose we should return now and prepare for the party, shouldn't we?

MAYNARD

(teasing)

21 years. You've turned of age. You'll have to make that decision yourself.

CHARLOTTE

I wish my true parents had lived to spend their own money, rather than give it to me.

A low-life PANHANDLER holds his hand out to Maynard. He's able-bodied, though, and more than a little threatening.

PANHANDLER

Spare change for a poor sailin' man?

Charlotte nods to Lulu, who produces a single coin and places it in the man's hand, whispering into his ear.

LULU

Don' be drinkin' with that, you hear?

Mood kind of broken by the begging, Charlotte turns to Maynard.

CHARLOTTE

We'll go home then.

(MORE)

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
(hugging him closer)
I am so happy you stayed on in New Providence.

MAYNARD
Happier than your step-father, I'm afraid.

CHARLOTTE
It's not you, Lieutenant Maynard.
(off his reaction)
On this birthday, my parents' money is no longer under his jurisdiction. I am determined to use it for my own purposes.

They've stopped in front of SILAS BRIDGES GENERAL STORE.

MAYNARD
Might I guess we have come here not just for the company of panhandlers?

Charlotte smiles. Nods toward the door into the building they are in front of:

INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Goods from all over the world find their way here. The shopkeeper, SILAS BRIDGES, stocks supplies as Maynard and Charlotte enter.

CHARLOTTE
Mr. Bridges. I should very much like to show Lieutenant Maynard, well, you know.

BRIDGES
Of course.

Charlotte leads Maynard to a BACK CORNER of the store. It's an ad-hoc medical practice, complete with a selection of herbs and medicines.

CHARLOTTE
I'm afraid my father thinks I am only talking about this.

MAYNARD
(looking around)
Your doctor's office.

CHARLOTTE

I did study in England as he thought, however, I was learning medicine from a very fine physician. I am not yet a credited doctor, but only because women are not allowed to be such in prosperous England. But here the people's needs do not allow us to wait for an official one to show up.

MAYNARD

You are a woman of surprise and ambition.

CHARLOTTE

Do you think less of me as a result?

MAYNARD

Quite the contrary.

This qualifies as 18th century flirting. Before it can go further, however, Charlotte sees Bridges looking over at them from behind the sales counter.

CHARLOTTE

My parents' memory will be kept alive through my work. And, if I can, I will fight this yellow fever that took them with all my strength.

MAYNARD

Your parents would be quite proud, I'm certain.

Charlotte beams at hearing her dream spoken aloud.

CHARLOTTE

I would so have liked for them to have known you.

Charlotte sees that Bridges has moved away. She impetuously kisses Maynard.

EXT. THE DOCKS - LONG BOAT - DAY

Blackbeard steps off the boat, speaks to Hands.

BLACKBEARD

Ya handle things here.

HANDS

Save a bottle for me.

BLACKBEARD

Take care of business and you'll be crackin' Jenny's teacup, too, ya will.

Blackbeard starts off, but Hands stops him.

HANDS

Captain!

(beat)

Now that Askin's dead, you'll be needin' a new sailmaster.

BLACKBEARD

That I will. Ya know where I might find one?

HANDS

Israel Hands, sir. I stands ready.

BLACKBEARD

Begad, Israel! There's not a more loyal man than ya, I knows that. But a ship's course is plotted with the brain, not the heart. Besides, I need ya too much in other matters.

Blackbeard slaps Hands heartily across the back and takes off, chuckling to himself at the silliness of the offer. Hands looks slighted.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - DUSK

The carriage and several other carts are left in front. The windows glow with candlelight and lanterns.

And from inside, WE HEAR the sound of a BAROQUE ENSEMBLE playing classical music.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BALLROOM - NIGHT

Seemingly the social event of New Providence is Charlotte Ormand's simultaneous return and ascent into eligible womanhood. The elite is all here, including Tobias Knight, local merchants and wealthy planters, wearing their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. Maynard watches Eden dance with Charlotte, and the music ends, Eden steps forward:

EDEN

Friends, tonight marks a special night for a beautiful young girl. My step-daughter...

Eden catches Charlotte's eye in his line-of-sight. She mouths the word "daughter" and blows him a kiss.

EDEN (CONT'D)

My daughter, Charlotte, has not only recently returned from Mother England, but she has returned a cultured and refined young woman... a woman of twenty-one years of age!

Everyone applauds. Eden takes Charlotte's hand and she does a modified curtsy of appreciation and smiles that magnificent radiant smile.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you, father.

(to crowd)

And thank you for your kindness in attending. Many of you also knew my parents, and I believe their spirits live on in all of you. They chose Governor Eden to raise me, before the Fever claimed them, and he has done a most satisfactory job of it. Finally, there is one introduction I simply must make.

(points to Maynard)

Lieutenant Robert Maynard saved the lives of both my father and myself only days ago. We would not be here were it not for his courage. Please extend him your most generous New Providence welcome.

More APPLAUSE for Maynard. He makes a slight bow of acknowledgement.

The baroque ensemble begins to play (a minuet), and everyone in the room knows what must happen next. Maynard offers his hand to Charlotte. She accepts and he escorts her onto the dance floor. As they dance together:

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Will you talk to him tonight?

MAYNARD

(smiling)

Not a doctor yet, but already giving orders.

Charlotte playfully slaps at him.

CHARLOTTE

Do you feel as if I am rushing us into things?

MAYNARD

(shakes head)

The other night, when asked if I had killed people? For your sake, I won't answer that even now. But I have seen men die, seen the life slip from them like a mist, and I can assure you that all of them had regrets only for things they had not done. To you, Charlotte Ormand, I mean to rush headlong and heart-first.

Charlotte smiles, pulls him closer still. Maynard's smile is wiped away from his own face by something he sees over her shoulder --

-- It's Tobias Knight, being greeted by a man who seems to be not of the same class as the others in the room. His clothes are rough, and he looks as if he has been sleeping rough himself.

FLASHCUT - THE MAN

It's Robber #1, as his cheek is hit by the bullet from Charlotte's gun as it is blocked by Eden.

BACK TO MAYNARD

It's a match! Somehow the man who tried to kill them is here, at the Governor's mansion, talking privately with the Governor's key man! Maynard is so taken aback that he misses a step.

CHARLOTTE

Still getting your land legs, Lieutenant?

MAYNARD

(covering)

Yes, I suppose I am.

Maynard watches Robber #1 disappear. Another beat, then Knight disappears out of the party, too.

Maynard steers Charlotte off the floor, walks her by the arm to a discrete spot.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

I must go.

CHARLOTTE

Why on Earth now?

MAYNARD

It pertains to my mission but I don't wish to worry you. I promise you I will return as soon as possible.

(kisses her hand)

My dear Charlotte.

Charlotte reacts by pulling him into a kiss. Afterward, Charlotte playfully removes a white handkerchief from Maynard's pocket and kisses it, leaving a lipstick print, then gives it back to him.

CHARLOTTE

This will have to do until then. My dear Robert.

Maynard nods, moves out of the party.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - FRONT - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Robber #1 has a large covered wagon waiting to go. Knight gets in the back, and the wagon pulls out.

Maynard arrives in time to see them go. He sees that the slave Big John is guarding the horses and wagons out front.

MAYNARD

Big John, do you know who the man was who left with Mister Knight?

BIG JOHN

No sir.

MAYNARD

Do you know where they are headed?

BIG JOHN

Don' know nothin' about that, sir.

MAYNARD

Yes, well, I need to pass on an important message to Mister Knight. I shall require a horse immediately.

(sensing his resistance)

This is at the direct insistence of the Governor.

Big John knows enough not to contradict a man in a uniform. He nods and begins to untie one of the horses.

BIG JOHN

This one's just watered.

Maynard sizes Big John up. About the same size.

MAYNARD

Trade clothes with me.

Big John really has no idea what Maynard's up to. Maynard starts to remove his naval jacket, and Big John reluctantly does the same with his.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - LONG SHOT - NIGHT

The wagon pulls past the mansion in the distance.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - FRONT - NIGHT

As the downscale Maynard rides off into the darkness, he leaves behind one scared slave, wearing a dress uniform of His Majesty's Royal Navy.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - LONG SHOT - NIGHT

Maynard gallops away in hot pursuit of the wagon.

EXT. NEW PROVIDENCE - ROAD INTO TOWN - NIGHT

Under the MOONLIGHT, the wagon driven by Robber #1 moves quickly. Following at a safe distance is Maynard. He's staying off the main road and hanging close to trees and other cover.

The wagon rolls into the township proper.

EXT. NEW PROVIDENCE - DOCK AREA - NIGHT

Hands and Snake stand armed watch over a collection of booty. It includes barrels, crates and even a small chest.

A beat, then Robber #1 drives his wagon up to them. Snake shines an ACCUSING LANTERN up to illuminate the man.

SNAKE

Avast! Who goes there?

ROBBER #1

A friend in court.

HANDS

Let's see him then.

Knight nearly falls out the back of the wagon, and begins to waddle toward them.

KNIGHT

Mister Hands. We weren't expecting you so soon.

(rubbing hands together)

Shall we let them get started? And where is Captain Hornigold?

Hands nods. Snake and Robber #1 all set to work placing the contraband chest into the back of the empty wagon. As Hands and Knight stand together:

HANDS

The ship's not Hornigold's no more.

KNIGHT

Oh, my.

HANDS

Belongs to Cap'n Blackbeard now.

KNIGHT

Blackbeard?

Hands gets in Knight's face.

HANDS

You don't say his name out loud like that. 'Less you know him. He's killed men for less.

(shrugs)

'Course, he's prepared to honor the same deal such as you had before with Hornigold.

Down one of the side alleys, WE SEE Maynard observing.

KNIGHT

Of course. Why spoil a good thing?

Although no good is coming from this, it's unclear exactly what the relationship is, or what it means, or how far up it goes. Knight, however, does give Hands a wax-sealed envelope which he stashes in his great-coat.

Knight jumps back in the back of the wagon, and Robber #1 starts the horses up, and it heads down the road. Hands turns to Snake.

HANDS

We got a lot of drinkin' to catch up on, men. To the Boar and Thistle...

The two men start off. Suddenly, Hands whirls, catches Maynard just starting out of the alley.

HANDS (CONT'D)

Show yourself!

Maynard bends quickly, picks up an empty rum bottle. He stumbles out of the alley.

MAYNARD

S'nobody but me...

Snake marches up to look him over.

SNAKE

You been watchin' things you got no business watchin'?

MAYNARD

Only been watchin'... my bottle.

There is a definite and unpredictable criminal quality to Snake. It seems like a 50/50 proposition that this is about to get violent. He takes the bottle from Maynard, holds it upside down. A single drop falls out. A beat, then:

HANDS

He's empty.

(to Maynard)

Looks like you better be goin' with us.

Hands and Snake lead Maynard away. He casts a backward glance at the departing wagon, disappearing into the darkness.

EXT. BOAR AND WHISTLE - NIGHT

The bars do a wicked business, supplying sailors, pirates and others with rum, good food and whores. With a new ship in town, the joint is jumping.

INT. BOAR & THISTLE - NIGHT

Blackbeard holds forth, drinking with members of his crew as his audience, including the Inn's owner, the bawdy and outspoken SALLY DUNBAR, a woman with a body full of tattoos.

BLACKBEARD

We put our sails up, and leaned into the wind, you may lay to that.

HOWARD

Tell the one about the three-legged green turtle and the blind cook!

BLACKBEARD

Aye, that's a good one, it is. We
was outside of Barbados --
(shouts O.S.)
Israel! We been warmin' the wood for
ya.

Make some way.

Hands approaches with Maynard. Sally looks him over.

SALLY

Not seen you around. And I seen 'em
all, if you know what I mean.

MAYNARD

Name's Maynard.

Maynard sticks out his hand to Sally. Blackbeard spits in his
own palm, then intercepts Maynard's hand and shakes it.

BLACKBEARD

Ya be drinkin' with Blackbeard hisself
now. The greatest Pirate you ever
laid eyes on, loaded to the gunnels
or not...

SALLY

I'm leavin' before he gets carried
away with himself.

HANDS

Set us up proper, Sally.

Sally takes off. As she does, Hands leans in to Blackbeard,
whispers in his ear.

HANDS (CONT'D)

He was drinkin' in the alley, might've
seen us runnin' the rig.

Blackbeard nods knowingly, leans into Maynard.

BLACKBEARD

Ever go on account Maynard? Live the
freelance life, as it were?

Maynard pauses, playing all the possibilities out. The only
obvious elimination is the truth. A Royal Navy Lieutenant
probably doesn't get out of the Boar & Thistle alive.

MAYNARD

Never tried piracy... no.

Blackbeard's eyes narrow. Maynard, knowing he needs to make
this sound better, just flat-out lies.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Did a little privateering... during
the War with France...

BLACKBEARD

Did ya? Well, we took a French one
just last week. Now, who's to say
what's the difference 'tween pirates
and privateers but a piece a paper
from some damned king? Frogs didn't
get no nicer, ya ask me.

(beat)

What ship ya off of?

MAYNARD

Between ships.

(scrambling)

Last sailed with the... Singing
Merchant out of Bristol.

BLACKBEARD

As what? Ya don't mind me askin'...

MAYNARD

Navigator, more or less. Gave that
up to come to the Bahamas... to see
the sun in winter.

BLACKBEARD

Come to paradise, ya does, so why're
ya drinkin' in an alley at night?

MAYNARD

Killing time, I suppose.

BLACKBEARD

That so? What was your pay grade as
a merchantman?

MAYNARD

Three pounds.

BLACKBEARD

If ya sailed with me, you'd see more.
We operate no prey, no pay... but we
also take more'n our share of plunder.

Blackbeard sees the distance in Maynard's eyes.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Ya hangin' the jib on old Blackbeard,
are ya?

MAYNARD

(quickly)

No. A sailor's gotta sail for somebody. Might as well be for himself instead of some merchants in London.

BLACKBEARD

Ya can bet your deadlights on that, me bucko.

Maynard looks across the room and sees the Panhandler who hit him up earlier in the day -- when he was escorting Charlotte, dressed in his Royal Navy uniform. Worse, the Panhandler is looking at him, moving in his direction.

MAYNARD

(to Blackbeard)

Somebody I might know...

Maynard crosses the bar to intercept the Panhandler.

He presses a coin discretely in the Panhandler's palm, starts to steer him toward the door.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Take your business elsewhere, friend.

The Panhandler pulls back, resisting.

PANHANDLER

Ain't your friend, and I got my rights to be here, I do.

(grabbing his coat)

Almost didn't recognize you without your fancy coat...

(loudly)

Hey! This here --

The Panhandler has turned to address the entire Inn crowd. Maynard pulls him by the shoulder and the Panhandler comes about with clenched fist that CLOCKS MAYNARD a hard one.

He staggers back... and suddenly, the ROOM IS ALIVE. The floor show is about to begin...

Maynard CLOCKS THE PANHANDLER in the gut and, as he doubles up, he hits him with a solid right uppercut.

The Panhandler comes stumbling forward, after Maynard, knocking him into a table.

Chairs are crashed and bottles broken. When the Panhandler comes up with a broken chair leg, using it as a club against his opponent, Maynard shows where his combat experience comes in.

Maynard literally grabs the swung chair leg in mid-flight, then with the Panhandler frozen in action, he punches a DARKNESS INDUCING left-jab straight into the Panhandler's nose.

The Panhandler goes down limp. He's completely unconscious on the floor and Maynard is left holding the chair leg.

The bar crowd breaks into SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE. As Maynard pivots to take this all in, Blackbeard approaches.

BLACKBEARD

Looks like the two of ya knew each other all right.

MAYNARD

Tired of him shootin' his mouth off with his lies.

BLACKBEARD

Good fer ya!

Blackbeard slaps him warmly. This fight has the salutary effect of proving Maynard to be a man who can be trusted by a pirate.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Ya gave that hornswaggler the heave ho, ya did.

Blackbeard ROARS with laughter, puts an arm around Maynard and steers him to the bar.

SALLY

Just so you know the rules. You can fight in here all you want, but no knives and no guns. Understand?

MAYNARD

Got it.

Blackbeard taps his glass. Sally pours them each a glass of rum. Blackbeard produces his powder horn from under his jacket and pours some gunpowder into his drink.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Gunpowder?

BLACKBEARD

Gives it the clap of thunder, it does.

Blackbeard drains his, pours some gunpowder into Maynard's glass, swirls it together.

MAYNARD

Had plenty already tonight.

Blackbeard emits a LOW-GROWL that shows his simmering displeasure. Maynard gets the point. Nobody likes to drink alone.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

But what's a few more?

BLACKBEARD

Nothin' between friends. Now tell me about that navigatin' -- ya ever plotted a course for treasure before?

SALLY POURS TWO MORE SHOTS FOR BLACKBEARD AND MAYNARD.
BLACKBEARD -

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - MORNING

The ship sits at anchor in New Providence harbor.

INT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - LOWER DECK - DAY

Maynard is sprawled out in a dirty corner, amid supplies which include live chickens. Their CLUCKING does not appear to make much of a dent in his awareness.

There is, however, a rat that is crawling up his body. From his legs all the way to his face. The rodent begins to sniff and nibble at Maynard's nose.

Maynard shoots bolt upright!

MAYNARD

Aaahh!!

Maynard looks around at his surroundings. He's terribly hungover and sea sick, and the rat at his nose has company at his feet.

He looks over at the clucking chickens. He sees Snake Leavitt with his hand, literally, in the chicken coop.

SNAKE

You even look at me again and you're a dead man. You understand?

Maynard nods, then has to turn away to throw up.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - DECK - MINUTES LATER

As Maynard groggily emerges onto the deck, he sees that he is no longer on dry land but on board a pirate warship.

His eyes widen as he sees that this ship is crewed by bona fide pirates -- not a Royal Navy uniform in sight. His knees practically give out and he steadies himself on a sail line.

MAYNARD

It can't be.

Maynard fights for control. Meanwhile, under Howard's watchful eye, Seng, Thatch and Ransom are involved in raising the anchor by rotating a huge winch with sheer muscle power.

HOWARD

Put your backs into it men.

(beat; to Hands)

She's free, sir.

HANDS

Raise main sails Mister Howard!

Maynard manages a strangled SHOUT:

MAYNARD

... No!

Hands approaches, looks him over.

HANDS

Trust you had a fine rest, you did,
Mister Maynard.

MAYNARD

I have to get off this ship.

HANDS

Too late for that, I fears. We are
bound to seek our fortune.

MAYNARD

I've been taken against my will.

Hands looks at him a beat, then breaks out LAUGHING.

HANDS

Go sleep it off a bit longer, then
we'll get you situated. I know
drinking the Captain's gunpowder 'n
rum concoctions can twist a man's
head off. None of us is fool enough
to do it with him anymore even once.

(pointedly)

Let alone five times.

MAYNARD

You don't understand... I can't
stay... there's someone waiting for
me...

HANDS

I was gonna take it easy on you, but now you're gettin' on my nerves, you are. Get to swabbin' the deck right now or face the sharp end of my temper.

Order dispensed, Hands turns to leave, but Maynard reaches up and grabs his jacket to stop him.

MAYNARD

I have to talk to the Captain.

HANDS

Need your rights taken care of?

Maynard nods. Hands nods back. Turns and shouts to all the crew on deck.

HANDS (CONT'D)

We got us a sea lawyer!

From the reactions, everybody on deck but Maynard knows this is not going well for him.

MAYNARD'S POV - BLACKBEARD'S FACE

Looking hard at him. Speaking so close and so upset that the spit literally flings from his mouth.

BLACKBEARD

I bought you drinks and drank with ya man-to-man, and this is how you repay me? Ya cowardly dog! Every man on this Queen Ann's Revenge carries his weight or he faces the punishment.

WE ARE ON:

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - DECK - CONTINUOUS

Maynard is now strapped, barechested, to the mast.

BLACKBEARD

And them's that disobey an order face the worst kind. Once a man finds himself on Blackbeard's crew, he don't leave except through the Gates of Hell itself. Read the charges.

As Blackbeard steps back, Hands addresses the men. There is an order and formality about what's to transpire.

HANDS

For refusing a lawful order, defyin'
the will of the Captain, this man is
sentenced to a dozen lashes,
punishment agreed to by a vote of
the crew.

The crew reacts. Even twelve lashes with this device can be
devastating.

They've seen it and many have felt its bloody sting.

HANDS (CONT'D)

(to Howard)

Mister Howard, as quartermaster, you
may let the cat out of the bag and
go to work.

Howard nods. The "cat" is a cat-o'-nine-tails which Howard
removes from a red baize carrying bag. It is a whip that
spindles out like an octopus into nine separate cords, each
about a half-yard long. At the end of each, a "blood knot" is
tied to inflict further pain.

Howard sets about the punishment, making each lash strong and
effective.

Each snap flings blood and skin from Maynard's back. The
anguish can only be imagined.

As this happens, Blackbeard keeps up a running commentary on
the rules of piracy and honor on the seas. Edited into the
rhythm of the whipping, it goes like this:

BLACKBEARD

(whip!)

After this justice is served, Mister
Maynard --

(whip!)

-- you'll see things different, you
will.

(whip!)

The pirate's life is yours now.

(whip!)

This fine day --

(whip!)

-- you join the Brethren of the Coast.

(whip!)

You will receive one and a half shares
of all booty.

(whip!)

You will sail this ship up and down
the seaboard.

(MORE)

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

(whip!)

Strong men will fear you.

(whip!)

But these men here now will live
with you --

(whip!)

-- and die with you if they have to.

(whip!)

Forget your family.

(whip!)

Forget your friends.

(whip!)

We are all you have.

At the end, as Maynard is cut free, he refuses to fall to his feet. Instead, he forces himself to stand through his pain, eyes narrow and focused, challenging all the eyes looking back at him.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY

Charlotte stares out the open window to the beautiful panorama before her. Definitely lost in thought, terribly conflicted. A beat, then Lulu enters, carrying a tray of tea.

LULU

Some tea, ma'am?

CHARLOTTE

No, thank you, Lulu.

Lulu sets the tea service down on the table anyway.

LULU

I'll leave it, jus' in case.

Lulu stands looking at Charlotte, looking outside the window. She knows her place, but also that something terrible may have happened to someone she likes.

LULU (CONT'D)

Get you anything else, ma'am?

Charlotte turns, smiles, knowing how much she's trying to help.

CHARLOTTE

I'll be fine. As soon as Lieutenant
Maynard returns, all these thoughts
I'm having will disappear.

LULU

He'll be back soon, he will.

With that, Lulu backs out, giving Charlotte her space.

CUT TO:

INT. QAR - CREW QUARTERS - NIGHT

This is where the pirates live and where they bunk. No privacy, stale air, depressing. That's why Prescott, the carpenter, demonstrates his skills with the SQUEEZE BOX, entertaining the men with a version of THE GOLDEN VANITY, a song it seems that everybody knows the words to.

MEN

(singing)

There was a ship that sailed on the
lowland sea, And the name of our
ship was the Golden Vanity.

Even in here, however, there is rank and Maynard and Thatch, as the two least senior men on-board, have been relegated to the back reaches.

MEN (CONT'D)

(singing)

And we feared she would be taken by
the Spanish enemy --

IN THE BACK

Maynard's shirtless frame is stretched prone and face-down on his too-small hammock, his arms and legs hanging limply off the side. Thatch tends to him, carefully applying grease to Maynard's back as an ointment.

THATCH

-- biwag gwanda niniwag --

TRANSLATION

These men are even cruel to their own color.

Maynard has no idea what he's saying but understands there is a human need to communicate.

MAYNARD

I know we don't understand each other
but if you help me, I'll help you
get your freedom.

THATCH

-- aani piish yaayang --

TRANSLATION

Do you know where we are?

MAYNARD

The important thing is to let them think you are broken. But in our minds we must stay strong.

THATCH

-- ndawaa wiidgemaagan dash --

TRANSLATION

I have a wife and four children.

MAYNARD

I've just gotten engaged. I wonder if your people do that.

Moment interrupted by quartermaster Howard --

HOWARD

Think you should drink some water, Mister Maynard. You're delirious, talkin' to an African.

Howard offers water to Maynard.

MAYNARD

And he is talking back to me.

HOWARD

(nods)

I want you to know that, with the cat today, if I'd backed off, the Cap'n would've noticed and he'd have made it worse for you --

Maynard cuts him off.

MAYNARD

Mister Howard, you were only doing your duty as you saw it. As you should.

HOWARD

It's not a bad life, you know. The pirate's life. There's others on board been taken, same as you, and they come to see what's what. You will, too.

MAYNARD

I already see what's what. You may count on it.

HOWARD

Glad to know that, I am. Do you think you're up to a short walk?

Maynard looks up. The expression on his face says "not hardly."
Howard looks guilty but delivers his message.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Cap'n wants to see you in his cabin
right away. He's expecting you.

Maynard nods, braces for the worst.

MAYNARD
Give some room then.

Maynard tries to swing out of the hammock, steadied by Howard
on one end and Thatch on the other. He's in terrible pain,
but he's standing.

INT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Blackbeard is smoking a long-stemmed pipe. A beat, then Howard
enters, points out Blackbeard to Maynard who walks stiffly
forward. Maynard refuses to speak first. Blackbeard just looks
him over, continues smoking, then:

BLACKBEARD
Cat got your tongue, too, I see.

Blackbeard smiles at his play on words.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Sting'll go away in a few days,
scabs'll take weeks more. Of course,
a navigator like yourself, you've
seen men flogged before.

MAYNARD
Usually when they'd put the ship at
risk in some way.

BLACKBEARD
There ya be! If I'd let you carry
on, the men'd get ideas. They've
seen ya punished proper, they'll
hold no grudges now.

MAYNARD
What do you want from me?

BLACKBEARD
Now that's a decent question, it is.
(MORE)

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

We lost our sailmaster through an unfortunate turn of events. So ya see, the Queen Anne's at a bit of a disadvantage, settin' out for the high seas such as we are. We got us some new maps off our last prize. You wanna look at 'em?

MAYNARD

(shocked)

You want me to act as your sailmaster?

BLACKBEARD

Ya may not remember things so good, but ya laid it out at the Boar and Thistle all right. Ya been takin' dead reckonings, makin' latitude out of the noon-day sights with your quadrant, and probably as fair as any at findin' a true longitude. Am I right?

Maynard thinks this one over, too. The man who plots the course helps determine where the ship goes.

MAYNARD

Sailmaster's a good job for me.

BLACKBEARD

See? That whippin' put some sense back in ya like it was s'posed to. Welcome aboard.

MAYNARD

There'd be one thing I need to know.

BLACKBEARD

Only one? I count my blessin's.

MAYNARD

Where are we bound to?

Blackbeard smiles again, takes another long thoughtful puff on his pipe.

BLACKBEARD

Chance of a lifetime. We're bound for treasure, Mister Maynard.

MAYNARD

Does treasure have a latitude and longitude?

OFF this provocative question.

INT. QAR - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

A nautical chart is rapidly unfurled. It's Blackbeard, showing what he's got to Maynard.

BLACKBEARD

What do ya make of this?

Maynard is awed by the detail on this chart. He quickly unfurls the next page, and the next...

MAYNARD

These are among the most detailed charts I've ever laid eyes on. Where did you get them?

BLACKBEARD

We relieved some Frogs of them, bein' as they didn't need them no more where they was headed.

Maynard picks up a great leather-bound book full of sea-charts and maps and begins to flip through it rapidly.

MAYNARD

These are the ports, soundings, creeks, rivers, capes and coasts of the entire Bahamas, and a good deal more. They're invaluable.

BLACKBEARD

I knew it! Other than bein' in French, would ya say they're as good as Captain Kidd's?

MAYNARD

(confused)
Kidd's?

BLACKBEARD

(impatient)
How good are they?

MAYNARD

These are superior to Kidd's and, I should imagine, to the Navies of England and France.

BLACKBEARD

How would ya be knowin' that?

Maynard pauses. It's a good question. He comes back with:

MAYNARD

You're not the only man who's heard things from a drunken sailor.

BLACKBEARD

Aye there's the rub. And there be islands on these maps I've never seen in all my years sailin' these waters. Kidd left his treasure on one of 'em, I'm sure of it.

Blackbeard goes back to the original map, points at a group of islands.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Ya know enough French to read me these names?

MAYNARD

La ville de beaucoup de ponts...

BLACKBEARD

In English.

MAYNARD

Yes, let's see then... Bridge, uh, Bridgetown... Saint Peters... the island of the gardener... uh, Gardener's Island... Gallant Marie's...

BLACKBEARD

We're sailin' there, we is. You plot us a course.

MAYNARD

To which island?

BLACKBEARD

Even if I knew, I wouldn't be tellin' ya until I knew I could trust ya. Can I trust ya, Mister Maynard?

MAYNARD

I woke up on your ship, not you, mine. I should think the question better put from me to you.

Blackbeard laughs. He likes Maynard's direct style.

BLACKBEARD

Ya just sail us straight and true.

Maynard stares back down at the map.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - OFFICE - DAY

Governor Eden lays face-down on a massage table as a MASSEUSE gives him a rub-down. Charlotte stands at the window, looking outward, disconsolate. A beat, then Lulu enters, carrying Maynard's Royal Navy jacket, dress breeches and shoes.

LULU

Beggin' pardon, Miss Charlotte, but
thought --

CHARLOTTE

My God! What has happened to him!?

LULU

Seems Lieutenant Maynard done give
up this to Big John the other night,
in exchange for Big John's old clothes
and such.

CHARLOTTE

Why on Earth would he do that?

LULU

Big John says he was followin'
somebody or some such.

Eden props himself up on his elbows, suddenly very interested.

CHARLOTTE

Robert did say he had to leave on a
matter of urgent business.

EDEN

I think there's another explanation.

Eden looks at Lulu, who gets the message, starts backing out.

LULU

I'll be gettin' along now.

Lulu leaves the clothes, exits.

EDEN

Perhaps he'd been planning to desert
his duty.

Charlotte is not about to agree to anything like that.

CHARLOTTE

I don't believe that.

EDEN

He is sent to New Providence without a command. He sees an opportunity to leave, but cannot do so in a naval uniform.

CHARLOTTE

No. He was planning to ask you for my hand in marriage.

EDEN

Then perhaps he is but a rogue, looking to marry up. Someone at the party knew him for the scoundrel he is and was soon to expose him. Would you not agree that, under such circumstances, his disappearance seems far less mysterious?

CHARLOTTE

I know what I saw and what I felt, and I know he felt it, too.

Eden sits up, allows the servant to hand him a robe which he pulls around him.

EDEN

My dear girl, it pains me to no end to be the bearer of such bad news. I, too, was taken in by this Maynard's spit-and-polish.

CHARLOTTE

You have no proof. He must be given the benefit of the doubt. We must send men to search for him.

Eden gestures for Charlotte to sit down. He takes the chair across from her.

EDEN

Not so fast, I'm afraid. Before your party, he asked me at great length about your finances. He was most interested in whether your birthday would signal your own financial independence.

Charlotte is stunned. She looks away, her eyes beginning to moisten.

EDEN (CONT'D)

In any case, I told him I would continue to administer your inheritance and that any money would be spent on Charlotte, for Charlotte, and even her husband would have to see me first before spending a farthing.

CHARLOTTE

And what did he say?

EDEN

Not a word. He left that evening, as you know. I'm terribly sorry, my dear.

Eden reaches over and pats her hand in consolation.

EDEN (CONT'D)

It's more important than ever that you sign the papers which allow me to continue to protect you from such greedy men.

OFF Charlotte, who has much to think about.

EXT. QAR - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

The ship moves through choppy waters, and an incoming fog.

INT. QAR - BELOW DECKS - NIGHT

Maynard is now living with the five other senior pirates: Dr. Bruce, Israel Hands, William Howard, Elias Ransom, Snake Leavitt. Sanborn hobbles around on his new peg-leg. The conditions aren't that much better than with the crew quarters, but there is a little more room to stretch out per person. Here they each have a bunk, and there is a shared common table -- occupied at the moment by Ransom who is sewing a new black flag.

HOWARD

You call that a proper Jolly Roger, do you, Mister Ransom? Where be the Skull-and-Crossbones?

Ransom holds up the flag.

RANSOM

This come straight from the Captain's head. The Devil, he be holding the hourglass on account of time runnin' out, and the arrow and the bleedin' heart on account of dyin' if you fight Blackbeard.

Maynard looks up from the built-in desk area, then returns his attention to writing a letter by candlelight.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

My dearest Charlotte. I pray that you will someday read this letter and, whatever disposition which may befall myself, that you will feel secure in knowing that you were loved, truly and deeply...

Maynard's profession of love is interrupted by the over interest and outright heckling from his bunkmates, particularly Snake.

SNAKE

Read us what you wrote there.

MAYNARD

Thank you for the offer, Mister Leavitt, but no.

RANSOM

Ain't nobody called our old pirate Snake by the name of Mister Leavitt long as I been a 'sailin' here.

Snake looks square at Maynard. He just doesn't like this man and on a pirate ship, you call it as you see it.

SNAKE

You ain't no pirate, that I know. Men like you collect taxes, they do, but they don't rob ships.

Maynard knows he's being challenged. He takes a moment to choose his strategy.

MAYNARD

According to the King's law, anyone who serves on a pirate ship is a pirate. You have a problem, you should take it to His Majesty, not to me. I'll hang like the rest of you.

This actually gets a few laughs, scoring points for Maynard, which only makes Snake madder.

SNAKE

From the minute they brought you aboard, there was always somethin' fishy 'bout you.

MAYNARD

Really, sir? I should have thought what you were smelling was more poultry than anything else.

Snake gets up in his face, not happy with the possibility of being called out as a chicken thief.

SNAKE

You tryin' to say somethin'?

MAYNARD

(standing)

I believe I'll see how the weather is topside.

Maynard takes his leave. The group watches him go. A beat, then Hands turns to Snake.

HANDS

Sailmaster. That should've been me, ya know.

Snake nods. Oh, does he know...

EXT. QAR - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

On the night shift, pilot Hobbs keeps the ship sailing.

MAYNARD

Good evening, Mister Hobbs. N'or by n'or'east?

HOBBS

Aye, sir.

MAYNARD

How goes she tonight?

HOBBS

The fog, she's a rollin' over us like a blanket.

Maynard takes a moment to appreciate the weather conditions.

MAYNARD

What orders have we from the Captain?

HOBBS

To maintain course, so long as you
give the word.

(honest fear)

We're blind, sir.

MAYNARD

(nods)

We will slow her down some. And I'll
stay on deck with you until sun-up.

HOBBS

Aye, sir.

Maynard nods, continues with his letter, while standing,
writing on the surface of the Captain's chart station by
lantern light.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

I am in the custody of a man the
world shall likely come to know as
Blackbeard. Do not think he will
take issue with my writing to you.
Instead, he encourages it, so keen
is the Captain to see that his
reputation for unbridled villainy be
spread as quickly as possible.
Violence lurks behind every shadow
in this world of pirates. I don't
fear death but rather that it may
catch me before life with you ever
has a chance.

Maynard inhales from the handkerchief Charlotte gave him on
the night he left.

EXT. STREET NEAR BOAR & THISTLE - NIGHT

A regular horse and cart stops down the street of this rough
neighborhood. Big John helps Charlotte out of the cart.

CHARLOTTE

You stay here, Big John.

BIG JOHN

(looking around)

But Miss Charlotte...

CHARLOTTE

I can take care of myself.

(bottom-line)

If you don't stay with the horse, it
will be stolen.

BIG JOHN

Yes, ma'am.

Charlotte takes a deep breath, heads down the street. Big John watches her, very concerned.

INT. BOAR & THISTLE - NIGHT

Charlotte enters and she is not ignored. An attractive young woman who is not a prostitute is a definitely unusual sight. Most of the men begin talking about her immediately.

CHARLOTTE

I'm looking for the owner of this establishment.

AD-LIBS from the men -- "Ah, the owner she wants, does she?" -- and such. Sally Dunbar approaches her.

SALLY

That'd be me. I'm Sally Dunbar. What brings you to the Boar & Thistle? The fine food? The pleasant company?

CHARLOTTE

May I ask you if you were here two nights ago?

SALLY

Sit down.

Sally indicates a table, and Charlotte takes a seat. Sally leans in, speaks confidentially.

SALLY (CONT'D)

Now I want you to laugh, like we're old friends, and then I'll laugh like we're both old friends.

CHARLOTTE

Why must we do this?

SALLY

Because if you don't have a friend in this place, you might not leave it the way you come in.

Charlotte looks in her eyes, nods. Then she LAUGHS LOUDLY, puts a hand on Sally's shoulder, speaks into her ear.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you.

Now Sally breaks out LAUGHING. High-stakes female bonding moment, circa 1717. Now Sally looks at all the gawking men.

SALLY

Anybody bothers me or my friend, ya
don't drink here no more. Understand?

The men in the bar complain, but mostly, they get the picture.
Sally turns her attention back to Charlotte.

SALLY (CONT'D)

I was here. What'dya care?

CHARLOTTE

My fiancée came to town that night,
but he never returned.

SALLY

Whereabouts was he expected?

CHARLOTTE

Governor Eden's home. My stepfather.

Sally nods. This is big news, even though she's hardly
surprised.

SALLY

Look around. We don't usually serve
the upper class.

CHARLOTTE

He was not dressed as a wealthy man.
He wore a long, rough-made overcoat
and pants with holes.

SALLY

(remembering)

I saw him. Miss, this man, he didn't
look much like a fiancée, even
forgetting appearances. He got in a
bar fight, and he left with pirates.

CHARLOTTE

Pirates! Like these men...?

(off her nod)

Where can I find them?

SALLY

These men, you don't want to find.
And, even if you did, you won't.

CHARLOTTE

Did he, through any circumstance,
happen to mention my name? Charlotte?

Sally shakes her head. She's not a therapist; conversation
over.

SALLY

Do you have someone waiting for you?

CHARLOTTE

Outside.

SALLY

Let me walk you out there.

Sally gets up, leads Charlotte out, to still more HOOTS from the men who are partying.

EXT. QAR - MAIN DECK - DAY

In heavy, heavy mist, Maynard stands watch behind pilot Hobbs. Although there is light in the sky, the diffusion and the relative silence gives the deck an otherworldly feel.

In the background, Thatch swabs the deck alone. He gets all the hard jobs first. Caesar appears, hands him a piece of hardtack and some chewy cooked turtle.

CAESAR

Biscuit. Meat.

THATCH

Thatch-eat-biscuit-meat.

CAESAR

Yes.

Thatch eats, flashes Caesar a smile.

THATCH

Yes.

From his perspective, Maynard notices this moment, but then Thatch and Caesar disappear from view, hidden by the INCOMING FOG. Howard soon joins Maynard and Hobbs on deck.

HOWARD

Quiet.

MAYNARD

Fog won't be burning off anytime soon either...

Suddenly.

ANOTHER SHIP

Emerging through the mist... and practically ON TOP OF THEM!

(MORE)

ANOTHER SHIP (CONT'D)
 For a moment, TIME SEEMS TO STAND
 STILL as Maynard stares across a
 twenty foot divide at his COUNTERPART
 on the other ship. A lifetime is
 lived in this one second and then --

BACK ON THE QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE

-- it's an immediate panic.

MAYNARD
 Call to quarters!!!!
 (to Hobbs)
 Take evasive action, Mister Hobbs.

HOBBS
 We givin' chase, or runnin'?

MAYNARD
 We're not prepared to fight.

HOWARD
 You're sailin' with Blackbeard, Mister
 Maynard. He's always prepared to
 fight. Call it, or I will!

Maynard freezes. Howard yells toward his men in the ropes.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Prepare to come about!!!

INT. QAR - BELOW DECKS - CONTINUOUS

HOWARD (V.O.)
 On deck, my hearties!

As the pirates scramble to their stations. Tumbling out of
 hammocks, grabbing lethal weapons, preparing for murder.

INT. QAR - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Blackbeard scrambles to load his pistols and slide knives and
 swords into his bandoleer. Caesar enters.

CAESAR
 What does Captain need?

BLACKBEARD
 Get me my cannon fuses boy.

Caesar begins to root around in a large box, producing several
 long cannon fuses.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Ya hear who called it? Was it
Maynard?

CAESAR
No, Captain. Mister Howard.

Blackbeard frowns, turns to face Caesar. His coarse coal-black beard -- now grown to cover the whole of his face -- is twisted into crazy ringlets.

BLACKBEARD
Tie 'em up smart, and be quick about
it.

EXT. QAR - MAIN DECK - CONTINUOUS

Hands has joined, and the deck is alive with men trimming sails and preparing the ship to come about. The tension is in the close encounter and the possibility of immediate battle.

HANDS
Full about, Mr Hobbs. And lay out
your foresail, Mister Prescott!

RANSOM
(to the crew)
By your stations me hearties!

HOWARD
Hold her course steady, Mister Hobbs.

In the middle of this, Blackbeard emerges on deck -- but we have never seen him like this.

BLACKBEARD
Transformed now into the fearsome
"Blackbeard" of pirate legend. He
wears a long black coat, black hat,
bandoliered cutlasses, pistols and
swords.

His beard has slow-burning cannon fuses lit in it and the curling wisps of smoke make him even more frightful.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Prepare for battle!

The men gasp. Blackbeard approaches his key officers.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Well, what'cha lookin' at?

HOWARD
Y'er on fire, Cap'n.

BLACKBEARD

And I look like the Devil's own
brother, don't I?

(to Ransom)

Run up the Black Flag!

Ransom sets to work running up the newly designed DEVIL AND
BLOOD flag designed for Blackbeard. He looks at it approvingly.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

That will send a shiver through their
bones.

(to Maynard)

Where are they now?

MAYNARD

Dead ahead. We've come about.

(points)

They must be running.

BLACKBEARD

By damn, catch them!

MAYNARD

(not happy about it)

I make them not far at our speed.

(quietly)

It's good.

BLACKBEARD

What'cha talkin' about Maynard?

Maynard has a plan, and he's taking a chance with the mercurial
Blackbeard. Still, he speaks with direct urgency.

MAYNARD

The way you look. They'll give up
before letting the Devil send them
straight to hell.

Blackbeard points to his smoking beard with pride.

BLACKBEARD

Cannon fuses.

MAYNARD

After, you take everything you need
from the ship, but kill no one. Set
them adrift.

BLACKBEARD

Why would Blackbeard the Devil do
that? I give quarter to none.

MAYNARD

That's Edward Teach's way.
Blackbeard's is to let them get back
to port where they'll spread the
story of Blackbeard, the greatest
pirate who ever sailed, who crushes
those who resist him but is merciful
to those who surrender.

Blackbeard considers this a moment. Nods his head.

BLACKBEARD

Let 'em spread news 'bout Blackbeard,
so's to speak.

MAYNARD

(shrugs)
You may just live to be an old man.

RANSOM

Sail ho, Captain!

BLACKBEARD

Fire, Mister Leavitt!

INT/EXT. QAR - GUN DECK - DAY

A salvo of CANNON is fired into the mist in the direction of
the merchant ship.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

Blackbeard and several of his men lean across to the other
boat as it comes into view.

He delivers a bravura performance as a homicidal maniac through
a METAL TRUMPET used to amplify his voice to the other boat.

BLACKBEARD

Your ship's been taken by Blackbeard.
If ya fight now, we send you straight
to Hell, after we torture ya, of
course, because I'm the Devil himself.
But if ya give up now, we let ya
live, after we plunder your takin's.

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP - DECK - DAY

The GRAPPLING HOOKS are already going over, pulling the boats
closer together. The MERCHANT CAPTAIN on the other ship looks
over at Blackbeard and sees his own death.

BLACKBEARD

Speak or die!

From the other ship, the Merchant Captain drops his weapon to the deck.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN

We surrender to Blackbeard.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

The pirates begin to WHOOP and HOLLER BLOODY MURDER as they start to cross between the ships.

Snake observes Blackbeard turn to Maynard. Blackbeard's pleasure only makes Snake's bile worse.

BLACKBEARD

Tell Dr. Bruce, he'll have no call
for cuttin' today.

With that, Blackbeard hurls himself across the divide, relishing his fearsome image.

Maynard closes his eyes for a moment, breathing in the morning air, relieved to have avoided terrible bloodshed.

THE MERCHANT SHIP - NIGHT

Burning, flames licking through the mist. And yet, next to it, evidence that Blackbeard has done something he has never done before...

LONG BOAT - NIGHT

Filled with the displaced crew, including the merchant captain.

EXT. QAR - MAIN DECK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

In stark contrast to the blood-soaked aftermath of the first battle we saw, this is pure celebration. The rum is flowing freely. Dr. Bruce has a particularly wide-grin on his face as he inspects a SHIP'S MEDICINE CHEST recovered with the plunder. A nice wooden piece, full of medicine and herbs in glass bottles with cork stoppers. State-of-the-Art.

DR. BRUCE

Mercury... This will improve morale
among the men and certainly among
the wenches they chase.

Blackbeard notices Maynard staring out at the Long boat and its crew.

BLACKBEARD

Mister Maynard, no cause for petulance. Didn't kill nobody.

But burnin' the ship, that's piratical type tradition, it is.

MAYNARD

(nods)

Those men stand a good chance in these heavily-traveled waters. They'll probably make it.

BLACKBEARD

Right you are. So have some grog.

MAYNARD

I should review the charts, adjust our course.

BLACKBEARD

Just so's you get us there whilst the men are in fine inclination.

MAYNARD

What's there... when we get there?

BLACKBEARD

Captain's prerogative to know that, it is.

MAYNARD

(reverse psychology)

I understand. No need for me to know.

Maynard starts to take off, but Blackbeard stops him.

BLACKBEARD

Captain Kidd's last letter. Talks about John Gardener bein' a friend he treasures and his strange bird. People been talkin' about him hidin' out on Gardener's Island, but nobody knew where that was. It weren't charted. Then you read me the French maps in English, as ya recall.

MAYNARD

Ile du Jardinier... the Island of the Gardener.

BLACKBEARD

That's how I figures it.

Blackbeard slaps Maynard on the shoulder.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - FRONT - DAY

Eden prunes at his roses, a favorite pasttime. Nearby, the carriage is parked. Knight, recently arrives, walks up to Eden.

KNIGHT

The roses are lovely.

EDEN

They give me no pleasure, Tobias. Knowing that Maynard is dead, that would bring a smile to my face.

KNIGHT

We know that he left in rough clothing, that he ended up in the Boar and Thistle, and that he left in the company of pirates. He will have been found out for who he really is by now, and floating at the bottom of the sea.

EDEN

I suppose you're right. The biggest problem is Charlotte. She will soon want me to transfer all funds to her name and I can stall only so long.

KNIGHT

Yes, I've been considering that.

EDEN

And?

KNIGHT

She is bereaved over Maynard's disappearance, is she not?

EDEN

Yes...

KNIGHT

So she is not in her right mind, so to speak, to make such grand decisions for herself.

EDEN

I see.

(MORE)

EDEN (CONT'D)

(working out the alibi)

She is mentally unstable and, therefore, needs to be sent away -- to London even -- to receive proper care. I would continue, of course, to administer her estate while waiting for her full recovery.

KNIGHT

As magistrate, I have the power to commit her. The conditions in asylums are dreadful, of course. A delicate woman such as her could easily die there.

Eden considers this carefully, then shakes his head.

EDEN

It's a good plan, but perhaps overly complicated.

KNIGHT

Of course, but another attempt on her life may arouse suspicions -- if it is done too soon.

EDEN

There is one other way to go.

(off Eden's reaction)

She wants to practice medicine.

I'll let her do just that. It will keep her distracted.

(bottom line)

If she harps on the money, though, we have our options.

Eden turns back to his pruning, only now he has a look of some satisfaction on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE QAR - SAILING MONTAGE

At sea, on the way to what we will soon know as Gardener's Island. Beauty shots to ESTABLISH the length of the voyage and the idea that it is not a short run.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - DAY

Swaying palm trees, sandy beaches, spectacular blue ocean. Nothing short of paradise..

EXT. QAR - DECK - CONTINUOUS

Blackbeard stands on the deck with his crew.

BLACKBEARD
She's a beauty, she is.

HANDS
Captain, the men're wantin' to know
why we're here.

BLACKBEARD
You tell 'em now. It's treasure,
plain and simple. And every man who
stands with us in gettin' it, gets
his full share.

Blackbeard pulls his spyglass up, sights out over the island.

POV

From the interior of the island, smoke curls up from a fire
somewhere.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Smoke.

BACK TO SCENE

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
(to Maynard)
Let's bring the Queen Annie around
the lee side of the island. Rather
we see 'em 'fore they see us.

Maynard nods. Speaks to Hobbs.

MAYNARD
Hard a port, Mister Hobbs.

EXT. LONG BOAT - SEA - DAY

A shore party made up of Blackbeard, Hands, Maynard, Howard,
Snake, Dr. Bruce and Thatch.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - MOMENTS LATER

As the boat bottoms out in the sand, Blackbeard leads them
ashore, splashing his boots through the warm island water. As
they move into the island from the beach, they see a deep
hole.

HANDS

Somebody's been a diggin' for
somethin' here all right...

Maynard is already scanning beyond the hole. He gestures
outward, his voice shocked.

MAYNARD

Look...

HOLES

The landscape is pock-marked,
literally everywhere by dug up holes.
Dozens....

INT. HOLE

Blackbeard's face and several of his men peer down. He throws
his head back, roaring with LAUGHTER.

BLACKBEARD

Feast your eyes, me hearties! Some
poor soul's saved us a lot of
blisters.

MAYNARD

Maybe.

DR. BRUCE

If a man knew where a treasure was,
he'd dig a single hole, I should
think.

Blackbeard makes that low GROWL that translates to admitting
the truth of what's been said, but not much liking it.

HANDS

(pointing)
There's a path...
(to Howard)
You lead the way, Mister Howard.

Howard nods, begins leading the group as it strikes out for
the path, crossing the sandy beach. Suddenly:

INT. BOOBY TRAP - CONTINUOUS

Wooden blades come slicing up through the sand! Into Howard,
catching him painfully in one leg.

HOWARD

I'm stuck!

Dr. Bruce rushes forward to render aid.

Blackbeard takes charge of everything else, scanning the nearby vicinity.

BLACKBEARD

All of ya, spread out now, and keep
a strong watch out for trouble.

The men begin to establish a perimeter. Blackbeard and Hands move to Dr. Bruce and Howard.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Some kinda booby trap?

HANDS

For trappin' animals, if you ask me.
Seen these before.

BLACKBEARD

Well, Howard, we ain't gonna let
anybody serve ya up for dinner, ya
may lay to that!
(to Dr. Bruce)
Whatdya think?

DR. BRUCE

The leg is most likely to get
infected. Perhaps we should --

HOWARD

I'm walkin' off this damned island,
Doc.
(between gritted teeth)
On both legs.

Dr. Bruce nods. Turns to Hands.

DR. BRUCE

I'll need some help lifting him off
the stake.

Hands moves to give an assist. Blackbeard moves off, approaches Maynard, steers him away, an arm around his shoulder.

BLACKBEARD

How might ya feel 'bout scoutin'
ahead, seein' what's what, 'fore we
go there in the mornin'?

MAYNARD

Seems like a good idea. I can take
Thatch with me.

BLACKBEARD

I'm gonna let a newly pressed man
and a slave go alone? No. You 'n
Snake head on up.

MAYNARD

But I don't trust him.

BLACKBEARD

And he don't trust you. Fine state
of affairs, ya ask me.

Blackbeard moves off, sees Snake taking a drink of rum,
relieves him of the bottle.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

(to Snake)

Ease up, Snake. Ya gonna need to
keep your head on straight to keep
up with Maynard.

Blackbeard laughs, sinks beneath a palm, taking a hit of rum.
From separate sides of the group, Maynard and Snake check
each other out.

DELETED

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - JUNGLE - DAY

Maynard and Snake make their way through the plush foliage.
They're both pushing ahead, determined, neither speaking to
the other. We hear only the HEAVY BREATHING from their
exertion. Finally:

SNAKE

You're goin' the wrong way.

MAYNARD

We're headed to where the smoke was
seen. What better plan might you
have?

SNAKE

Just don't be leadin' me into no
trap is all I'm sayin'.

MAYNARD

(exasperated)

And how would I know to do that?

SNAKE

Don't rightly know. But you didn't
seem all that surprised to see Mister
Howard get hisself cut.

MAYNARD

I was as surprised as you were.

SNAKE

So you says.

Suddenly, Maynard stops, holds out a hand to caution Snake to hang back. Snake seems ready to contest this, but Maynard lays a silent hand on his pistol. Snake stops.

The two men stand there, each straining to hear. And what they do hear is the sound of something RUSTLING in the jungle.

Both men have their pistols out, eyes scanning the jungle around them. Are those eyes staring back?

Suddenly, a CREATURE leaps through the trees, straight onto Snake, knocking him to the ground and attacking him fiercely.

SNAKE (CONT'D)

Sink me!!

It's a SNARLING DOG -- clawing at a man's flesh, barking loudly, all making for a terrifying effect.

Maynard tries to pull it off, gets his hand bit for his effort. He perseveres and manages to rip its grip from Snake's. A beat. It's Maynard staring at the dog, baring his teeth, pulling a knife from his jacket. Growls from both sides. Then the dog retreats into the bushes.

As it scampers away, Snake takes aim with his weapon.

MAYNARD

No!

Snake fires anyway, probably misses because, along with the REVERBING GUNSHOT, there is also the BARKING DOG sound.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

You sodden bastard!

SNAKE

No critter chews my leg and gets away with it!

MAYNARD

That smoke and that dog meant there are people on this island, and now they know we're here.

Maynard shakes his head in disgust, peering out into the jungle, on alert.

Stepping out of the shadows is a man with a musket, backed by two other men, both armed. The man is CALICO BILLY, and the dog sits contentedly at his side. He's close to sixty years old, long white hair in a pony tail, skin deeply tanned and lined from too much sun.

CALICO BILLY

Some of us have prayed every day for you to come.

(looks upward)

Thank you God!

(to Maynard))

Morgan gets excited. Sorry.

Maynard and Snake are relieved of their weapons by the other two men. One of the men with Calico Billy begins to blubber, unable to contain his emotions. He's just losing it.

CALICO BILLY (CONT'D)

(to crying man)

Get ahold of yourself, Marks, you hear me?

(to Maynard, Snake)

Takin' your weapons just till we get to know each other. Names Calico Billy. These men is Marks and Stephens. Now who might you be?

Maynard, seeing a chance to find an ally here, puts out his hand.

MAYNARD

Robert Maynard.

SNAKE

Don't be makin' nice.

CALICO BILLY

(hopeful)

Have you been sent to rescue us?

A beat, then from the bushes, we hear:

BLACKBEARD (V.O.)

Well, sir, God didn't send us, you may lay to that. More like the Devil hisself!

It's Blackbeard, and the rest of the landing party. Blackbeard is armed to the hilt, brandishing both a sword and a cutlass. Another beat, and WE SEE pistols and muskets poking from the foliage as the rest of Blackbeard's landing party emerges. Calico Billy shrugs, a good natured rogue, if ever there was one.

CALICO BILLY

Well, Calico Billy's the name.
Pleasure to make your acquaintance.

Calico Billy drops his own pistol to the ground. Maynard looks at Blackbeard, not able to contain his surprise.

MAYNARD

You followed us!

BLACKBEARD

And a good thing, too!
(seeing his reaction)
Aw, Maynard, ya didn't think I could
just let ya go adventurin' on your
own so soon, did ya?

Blackbeard laughs, happy to see how his judgment has been borne out.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - VILLAGE - DAY

Blackbeard and the landing party move Calico Billy and his two men into the middle of a small hard-scrabble settlement. Constructed of what appear to be modest supplies of a small sailing ship that has been pilfered and taken apart board by board. Robinson Crusoe meets Swiss Family Robinson.

In the center of the small village is a ship's steering wheel, mounted to a wooden beam, that a collection of young children play with.

There may be a dozen or more people watching, some hiding in the makeshift huts, and others, especially several children, walking out to touch the pirates, to re-assure themselves that what they see is real.

THESE PEOPLE ARE IN SHOCK. Calico Billy addresses the group.

CALICO BILLY

The day has finally come. We found
some visitors, or maybe some visitors
found us. Anyway, they ain't kilt us
so far. So everybody just keep your
distance.

Rather than shrinking away, MADDY, a proud woman wearing tattered clothing, her face lined by age and exposure, pushes forward, addresses Blackbeard.

MADDY

Please sir. I have child who 'as not seen no life but this island. If you'll take us wherever it is you're headed, I can cook and I'm handy with a broom, and the young 'un don't eat much.

CALICO BILLY

Maddy, I'll be a talkin' to Captain Blackbeard here. Now step back.

Maddy holds her ground a beat longer than is comfortable -- to the edge of defiance, but not over. As she backs away, Blackbeard grabs her by the arm.

BLACKBEARD

Women are bad luck on a pirate boat. But if I get what I'm lookin' for, then ya never know...

Blackbeard lets her go, nods to Calico Billy to keep going and indicates that Hands should prod him along. Blackbeard falls in next to Maynard.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Mister Maynard, I'm gonna trust ya to see somethin' cause ya had the chance to kill Snake and make a run for it and ya didn't do it.

Blackbeard pulls Captain Kidd's letter from his breast pocket and presses it into Maynard's hand.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Captain Kidd stopped at this island on his way to New York to surrender. When they was gonna hang him, he wrote this last letter to his wife.

MAYNARD

What do you want me to do with it?

BLACKBEARD

Read it. Maybe I missed somethin'.

MAYNARD

Dr. Bruce could read it for you.

BLACKBEARD

That doctor's good at one thing only, cuttin' people. He ain't that great a thinker. But I know you are.

(shrugs)

If you're gonna get your share, you're gonna have to earn it.

Blackbeard moves ahead to join Hands. Maynard keeps looking straight ahead.

EXT. CALICO BILLY'S HUT - DAY

It's an open-air front, looking out into the shared village courtyard. On the outside, Blackbeard's landing party, including Maynard, are posted menacingly throughout, their weapons drawn. Nonetheless, they are still the object of the rapt attention of the children. Maynard scans the letter that Captain Kidd had written his wife, read since only by Hornigold, Blackbeard and now himself.

INT. CALICO BILLY'S HUT - DAY

Calico Billy sits across from Blackbeard. Dr. Bruce amuses himself looking over all of the furnishings. They are simple to the extreme, but there are certain artifacts that could only come from ship wreckage.

CALICO BILLY

We was all shipwrecked here, probably ten years ago. We lost track, more or less.

DR. BRUCE

You stopped counting the days?

CALICO BILLY

After a while, just seemed like what's the point, nobody's comin'. That's why some of the people are stirred up.

(to Blackbeard)

We wasn't meanin' no disrespect to your men. Just don't get strangers around here.

BLACKBEARD

We ain't no mission of mercy.

CALICO BILLY

No, sir. I can see you're a pirate first.

Blackbeard nods, his point taken. He carefully takes a moment to light up his pipe, look around.

BLACKBEARD

Ya dug a lot a holes around.

CALICO BILLY

Man's gotta do somethin' with his time.

BLACKBEARD

Givin' lies to Blackbeard is a bad way to start a friendship. Tell him, Dr. Bruce.

DR. BRUCE

The Captain has been known on occasion to suffer bouts of ill temperament. I should advise honesty.

BLACKBEARD

(to Calico Billy)

Now then... your real name wouldn't be John Gardener, would it?

Calico Billy looks surprised. Looks over at Dr. Bruce who nods. Calico Billy gets the point.

CALICO BILLY

No. Gardener's dead. He was here.
(to Dr. Bruce)
Well, his body still is, but his spirit's long passed.

A pet bird, a MACAW, puffs out its chest and gives a full-throated exclamation:

MACAW

Gardens of Gold.

CALICO BILLY

Now ya shut your trap Ruby. We got company.

THE MACAW, RUBY, ANSWERS WITH:

RUBY

Good huntin'.

BLACKBEARD

Didn't see any macaws on the way over here. Don't seem natural to this island.

The implication is clear: where did this one come from?

CALICO BILLY

It was Gardener's.

Calico Billy looks at Blackbeard's larcenous mug, just gives it up without a battle.

CALICO BILLY (CONT'D)

Captain Kidd himself left Ruby here with him.

BLACKBEARD
That there bird belonged to none
other than Captain Kidd?

CALICO BILLY
That'd be the facts of the matter.

Blackbeard leans back, takes another deep puff on his pipe.

BLACKBEARD
Now we're gettin' somewheres.

As the smoke curls in the air between the two men --

EXT. CALICO BILLY'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

-- where Maynard continues to stare at Captain Kidd's letter. He's staring at it with such intensity, though, that it goes beyond reading comprehension. Maynard picks up a stick, begins to scratch in the dirt.

INSERT - THE GROUND

The stick begins to trace numbers in the dirt... Assembling a pattern... Solving a puzzle...

RETURN TO SCENE
Maynard looks up, stunned. He's figured it out. He has knowledge that Blackbeard does not have, and he's not sure what he's going to do about that. He looks over at Blackbeard inside the hut, smoking his pipe, talking to Calico Billy.

INT. CALICO BILLY'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

-- as Blackbeard turns his attention back to Calico Billy.

BLACKBEARD
So, ya still diggin' those holes, or
ya found what you're lookin' for?

CALICO BILLY
Gardener was here when we wrecked.
Keepin' up his tradition, fer
somethin' to believe in. Anyhow,
he'd been marooned here by Kidd --

BLACKBEARD
Gads! Kidd left him with his treasure?

CALICO BILLY

Seems so. But Kidd didn't tell him where it was. Said as soon as he'd cleared his name up in New York, he'd come back and he and Gardener'd split it.

BLACKBEARD

But he never came back 'cause they strung him up at Newgate.

Calico Billy nods. He's actually relieved to have someone to talk to about this -- even if he is a larcenous pirate.

CALICO BILLY

I dig one a day, every day. They all thinks I's titched in the head, but I don't pay 'em no never mind. Truth is, it's the only thing that kept me from killin' myself.

(can't stop himself)

I suppose ya know where it is.

Blackbeard keeps his poker face. He looks away, sees Maynard staring over at him from outside, holding the letter. Blackbeard stands, grabs Calico Billy by his ratty shirt and pulls him to his feet.

BLACKBEARD

Get up.

Blackbeard pulls Calico Billy outside, hands him off to Hands. Yells toward Maynard:

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Maynard! Get in here.

Maynard heads over. Hands notices, grumbles.

HANDS

Scutter that...

Inside the hut, Blackbeard stands with Ruby, the macaw, on the coat sleeve of his forearm.

BLACKBEARD

Pieces-a-eight... pieces-a-eight...

Maynard enters.

MAYNARD

Bird come with the shipwreck?

BLACKBEARD

Name's Ruby. Can't even learn itself somethin' new.

(conspiratorially)

Belonged to Kidd hisself.

MAYNARD

(authentically curious)

Calico Billy tell you anything?

BLACKBEARD

Oh, he talked, but he ain't got nothin' to say.

(re: letter)

What about that?

MAYNARD

No.

(off-his-reaction)

Not yet.

Blackbeard gives him an extra second of scrutiny, turns his attention back to Ruby.

BLACKBEARD

Speak! Damn you!

RUBY

Gardens of Gold... Good huntin'...

BLACKBEARD

Says the same things over 'n over.

MAYNARD

Maybe that's your clue.

Blackbeard turns back to Maynard.

BLACKBEARD

You think this bird knows somethin'...

Maynard shrugs. Maybe.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Stay here and listen.

Blackbeard starts to leave.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

I'm gettin' the prisoners to start diggin' now.

MAYNARD

You mean, the villagers?

BLACKBEARD
Calico Billy's been diggin' a hole a
day. Their turn to help.

MAYNARD
Some of them don't look well. It
could kill them.

BLACKBEARD
(nods)
Better them than us.

Blackbeard takes off, leaving Maynard, his mind spinning.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - OFFICE - DAY

Eden sits at a dressing table, having his wig fitted by a
servant. A beat, then Lulu sticks her head inside.

LULU
Gov'ner, sir, Mister Knight is here
to see you.

EDEN
Send him in.

Lulu nods, lets Knight in. Eden examines the fit of his wig
in the mirror, dismisses the servant with:

EDEN (CONT'D)
Leave us.

Eden turns to Knight, pours them each a brandy from an elegant
decanter.

KNIGHT
How are you, Charles?

EDEN
When I want that man Maynard to
disappear, he invites himself into
my coach. When I want to keep my
eye on him, he disappears. How should
I be?

KNIGHT
It is a touch confounding.

EDEN
Pray tell, Tobias, pray tell.

KNIGHT
May I inquire as to how Charlotte
has responded to his disappearance?

EDEN

She will scarce leave her own room.
(sarcastic)
She stands by the window waiting for
her brave Navy Lieutenant to return.

KNIGHT

Her heart will mend.

EDEN

Not soon enough for me, I can assure
you.

From outside, there is sound of GUNFIRE. Both men hurry to
the window.

EDEN AND KNIGHT'S POV - OUTSIDE

It's Charlotte, holding a musket, taking target practice at a
series of coconuts lined up on the nearby fence post.

CRACK!

She loads the weapon.

CRACK!

Another coconut shatters explosively.

BACK TO SCENE

Knight turns back from the window, notes matter-of-factly to
Eden:

KNIGHT

She seems to have overcome the fear
of leaving her room quite handily.

Eden burns, leads Knight over to sit down.

EDEN

What has gotten into that girl?

Eden pours himself a second brandy. He cringes at the sound
of another GUNSHOT.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Now, what have you found?

Knight looks around, satisfying himself that there are no
others within earshot.

KNIGHT

We know he told your slave, Big John, that he was following me into town. I have told Big John that if he repeats this story to anyone else, he'll hang and that seems to have done the job.

EDEN

We must assume that Maynard saw you collecting our 'tax.'

KNIGHT

There's no way of knowing. But he was last sighted at the Boar and Thistle. I had some men threaten to cut the whore who served him. She says he was carried out dead drunk by pirates.

EDEN

Perhaps they have killed him then.

KNIGHT

No one seems to know. And they have already set sail.

EDEN

Are these friendly pirates?
Reasonable men?

KNIGHT

They worked for the man who has replaced Hornigold. A man named Blackbeard.

EDEN

What do we know about this Blackbeard?
Besides his flair for nom-de-plumes?

KNIGHT

His real name is Edward Teach. He wants to meet with you when he returns to New Providence.

Eden massages his temples like he has a terrible migraine.

EDEN

Make certain he bathes first.

Knight nods his agreement.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - ABOVE THE VILLAGE - DAY

Maynard stands on the bluff, looking out over the sea.

MAYNARD'S POV - ROCK FACE

It's a massive outcropping of rock. And, at near water level, there is a cave opening revealed during low tide.

BACK TO SCENE

Maynard bites his lip, mind-racing.

MAYNARD'S POV - VILLAGERS

Nearby, a couple of the villagers are struggling with a hole.

BACK TO SCENE

Maynard takes off, heads down the bluff, back toward the village.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - THE VILLAGE - DAY

Several of the pirates amuse themselves teaching Ruby, the macaw, to speak pirate words, or generally lazing around.

Blackbeard approaches Maynard as he enters the compound, holds up a tankard of ale.

BLACKBEARD

Fourteen more in one day. At this
rate --

MAYNARD

It could still take a hundred years.

BLACKBEARD

Ya got a better idea, Mister Maynard?

Blackbeard looks at Maynard, and Maynard has to avoid eye contact.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Ya do, don't ya? Well, out with it.

MAYNARD

If I help you find this, will you
take these people back to New
Providence?

BLACKBEARD

You're makin' deals with Blackbeard?

MAYNARD

There's no reason not to help them.
There's room on the Queen Anne.

BLACKBEARD

A man speaks like ya, sounds like he's lookin' to see the tails of the Cat again.

Blackbeard stares at Maynard, the stakes clear. Maynard holds his gaze, doesn't back down.

MAYNARD

Save these people. That's all I ask.

BLACKBEARD

They can stay in the deep hold, so long as I don't see 'em the whole time.

MAYNARD

I'm sure they'll be grateful.

Blackbeard nods, looks across the way to the pirates amusing themselves with Ruby.

BLACKBEARD

It's the bird, isn't it?

MAYNARD

(shakes head)

The bird sounds like it was trained by Gardener, and he didn't know where it was. It's the letter itself. Gardener. Treasure. He was pointing to this island. You got that right. But that's not the message.

Blackbeard looks impatient. Maynard pulls out the letter, spreads it in front of the two of them, gestures to the entirety of it.

BLACKBEARD

T'ain't the bird, t'ain't the letter?

MAYNARD

The actual letters -- the a's, b's, c's -- what he wrote to his wife, it's a code beneath the letter. See, each letter has a number value. Each line adds up to a number. That number becomes a letter. Those letters spell out the message.

BLACKBEARD

Mister Maynard, ya have my attention but don't try my patience.

MAYNARD

The message is: 'Low tide, hidden cave.'

Blackbeard sits frozen for a moment as the import of what he's just heard sinks in. A beat, then he shoots to his feet, letting out the BIGGEST WAR CRY he's ever let out. It rumbles like war drums across the island.

EXT. BLUFF - DAY

Blackbeard squints through his spyglass toward the sea cave. Standing behind him are Maynard, Dr. Bruce, Hands, Snake and Calico Billy.

SPYGLASS POV - THE CAVE

Revealing the opening at low tide.

BLACKBEARD (V.O.)

Kidd knew what he was doin', you may lay to that, men. He buried it during low tide...

BACK TO SCENE

As Blackbeard lowers his spyglass --

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

... and that's just when we're goin' in after it.

HANDS

Ain't we s'posed to take it under a full moon, accordin' to the legends and all?

BLACKBEARD

I take my treasure when I please, Israel, ya may lay to that.

DR. BRUCE

(to Calico Billy)

It is odd, however, that you have been here years and never thought about this.

CALICO BILLY

(ashamed)

No...

MAYNARD

(consoling)

I'd have never thought of it without the clue.

BLACKBEARD

(to Hands, Snake, Dr. Bruce)

Believe that, eh? A code.

DR. BRUCE

Yes, Mister Maynard, quite an accomplishment.

SNAKE

Makes you wonder how he came up with it.

All eyes turn to Maynard. On the defensive, he must say something.

MAYNARD

I'd seen it used before, I suppose.

BLACKBEARD

Where'd that be?

MAYNARD

I mean I'd heard of it being used.

HANDS

Sailin' twenty-five years, never heard of it myself.

DR. BRUCE

I have.

(off their reactions)

The Royal Navy has several codes, as I understand the matter.

MAYNARD

(quickly)

He's right. I'd heard the same thing. We had a couple of ex-Navy who used them in the last War with the French.

There's a beat where suspicion hangs over his statement. Blackbeard, though, is focused on his place in history.

BLACKBEARD

(admiringly)

Kidd was a smart one, he was.

(pointing at cave)

But we're takin' it home and he's many years a'hanged. So who's the smarter?

Blackbeard ups his spyglass again, takes another long look.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Time we go in and take a look.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - LONG BOAT OUTSIDE CAVE - DAY

Blackbeard, Maynard, Dr. Bruce, Hands, and Calico Billy are in the Long boat, floating outside the cave, trying to get a good look inside.

Snake and two ND crew members provide the muscle as rowers.

Here's the physics.

The tide is going out and, as it does, the water level lowers, revealing the cave opening and allowing the boat to come closer to being able to enter. Effectively, this means there's about a foot of water standing inside the cave, draining out inch-by-inch.

Blackbeard turns to Thatch and one of the ND pirates, BENJAMIN DOW.

BLACKBEARD
Thatch and you, get inside, start
pokin' around.

Thatch and Dow scramble off the Long boat and wade inside the cave. Thatch carries a crude pick-ax and Dow, a torch.

INT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - FIRST CAVE - DAY

Dow lights the torch and he and Thatch wade further into the first cave, moving just high enough that they are out of the water. Behind them, WE SEE the Long boat with Blackbeard peering inside.

(The geography of the cave is such that its mouth is an entrance to a deeper cave which is above the area that is constantly flooded by the tides. A safe, dry haven.)

Dow and Thatch move further into another cave entrance.

INT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - SECOND CAVE - DAY

Dow and Thatch scramble in.

As they do, there's a CRUNCH from the ground. They lean down to get a look. Dow's torch lights up the image of a HUMAN SKULL!

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - LONG BOAT OUTSIDE CAVE - DAY

Blackbeard grows impatient. Shouts into the cave.

BLACKBEARD

Dow!

No reply.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Thatch!

No reply.

Not waiting, Blackbeard clambers out of the boat, followed by Dr. Bruce, Maynard, Snake, and Calico Billy.

INT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - SECOND CAVE - DAY

Thatch and Dow are discovering more human bones, as Blackbeard and the group struggle into the cave.

BLACKBEARD

Find somethin' already, did ya?

Bruce crouches, inspects the pile of bones.

DR. BRUCE

It's a human skeleton, no doubt.

Blackbeard takes this all in with admiration.

BLACKBEARD

Kidd knew all the tricks, he did.

MAYNARD

What do you mean?

BLACKBEARD

Bury a man on top of what's what.
Anybody sees it thinks they come
across a shallow grave and look no
more.

SNAKE

(re: Maynard)

He ain't never even heard of the
Dead Man's Chest.

Snake shakes his head, disgusted with Maynard's ignorance.

Snake looks Maynard in the eye with murderous intent.

SNAKE (CONT'D)

You ain't no pirate.

Maynard, feeling the eyes upon him, has to act. He grabs Snake by the collar.

MAYNARD

Listen, Snake, you want to join --

(indicates skeleton)

-- our friend there, you keep it up.

I was just thinkin' this is hard
rock. Nobody buried anything
underneath him.

(spitting it out)

And you may lay to that!

Blackbeard nods approvingly at Maynard.

BLACKBEARD

Maynard's got a point, he does.

Must be a warnin'. Let's keep goin'.

The group begins to move further into the next cave.

DELETED

INT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - THIRD CAVE - DAY

Increasingly eerie, now lit only by the torchlight, as the group moves further inside.

DR. BRUCE

Cap'n, ain't we gettin' too far in?
Won't the water be comin' back up
soon?

BLACKBEARD

Quit your complainin', Mister Bruce.

They have to scramble across a slippery rock floor. As they do,

POV

a FLURRY OF BATS start to SCREECH and FLY around them, set off by the light which Dow carries.

BACK TO SCENE

Dow panics - causing him to drop the torch.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Get it!

The torch slides down the wet rock floor. If it goes out, they will be in pitch blackness. Maynard grabs for it, manages to catch it a split-second before it falls.

But Maynard falls against a pile of rocks, causing them to reveal a glimpse of something sharp and metal, obviously man-made.

Maynard flinches. He blinks, not sure he saw what he saw. Blackbeard lurks behind him, takes the torch.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

What's that ya saw?

Blackbeard holds the torch up close to the rock, and gets a better look.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Shiver me damn timbers! The Devil
hissself couldn't a put that there.
(yelling to everybody)
Get these rocks off'n that!

The rocks are of the size that Kidd and his men could have put around a treasure chest so they are also the size of rocks that Blackbeard and his men can get off. With effort.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Careful, boys. I want that back as
pretty as the day he laid it down.

One by one, as the rocks disappear, they reveal a

RUSTED METAL TREASURE CHEST

Blackbeard takes a long hard look at the treasure chest, uses a hand to brush away muck and slime from it.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

I dreamed of this beauty, I did.

Blackbeard uses a small dagger to jam the lock and break it. He opens the chest: it is stuffed with PIECES OF EIGHT, GOLD JEWELRY and worth a fortune. Blackbeard grunts again, this time not in anger, but sheer lack of words to express himself. That's left to Snake:

SNAKE

We'll be loaded to the gunnels with
this holy fortune.

BLACKBEARD

This makes me the greatest pirate
ever, it does.

From the second cave, Dr. Bruce who's been standing watch,
enters.

DR. BRUCE

The tide is coming in faster now!

BLACKBEARD

Almost ready.

DR. BRUCE

You'll be swimming out in minutes,
or drowning.

But Blackbeard is not listening. Bruce retreats.

BLACKBEARD

Now what's this?

Rummaging through the gold, he has found a SEALED BOTTLE with
an ANIMAL HIDE inside it.

MAYNARD

(urgently)

Whatever it is, you should look at
it later.

Blackbeard scoops it up, sticks it inside his inside jacket
pocket. Turns to Thatch and Dow.

BLACKBEARD

Put your backs in it and let's be
off. Smartly now!

Thatch and Dow start to close the lid and, as they do, Dow
manages to palm a big jewel. Seen by Blackbeard.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

What was it ya was, 'fore I brought
ya to the Queen Annie, Mister Dow?

Dow looks down at the ground. Blackbeard waits for the answer.

SNAKE

He was a pick-pocket, in London, he
was. Tells the story all the time.

Blackbeard nods. Gets close enough to Dow that his breath
smells even worse than the cave.

BLACKBEARD

What'cha got in that pocket, Mister
Dow?

Slowly, Dow reaches in and produces the jewel, hands it over to Blackbeard.

DOW

I was gonna give it back. Just wanted to look at it, is all.

BLACKBEARD

Ya know the rules? Don't ya?

Dow nods. He knows. Blackbeard hands one of his pistols to Thatch.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Ya want to be a full-pirate, Thatch? Earn your own full share? Shoot him.

Thatch holds the gun. It's the first gun he's ever held, even though he's seen how it's used and he knows what he's supposed to do.

THATCH

Cap'n, no.

Blackbeard's face does not change, remains implacable. Thatch picks up the gun and aims it directly at Dow. Dow winces, expecting the worst. As the tension builds, Thatch finally hands the gun back to Blackbeard.

THATCH (CONT'D)

Thatch no kill Dow.

Blackbeard nods, accepts the gun. Then, suddenly, he turns the pistol on Dow and SHOTS HIM STRAIGHT THROUGH THE HEART! The sound of the GUNFIRE REVERBERATES throughout the cave. Dow drops to the slimy cave floor. Blackbeard turns to Calico Billy and Snake.

BLACKBEARD

You get the honors of carryin' the treasure.

(to Thatch)

Ya won't act as a pirate, so ya can't sail with us no more Thatch. Stay here in the cave.

Blackbeard and the others start to move off but see that Maynard lingers.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Men die, Mister Maynard. That's the pirate's life.

(to Hands)

Fewer shares to split, not that we was really gonna give Thatch a taste anyhow.

Snake grabs Maynard by the arm, pulls at him, his black heart allowing him to say the evil words:

SNAKE

Nobody's gonna miss 'em.

Maynard jerks his shoulder away.

MAYNARD

No!

As Snake now tries to pull him back with both hands, Maynard pushes back hard. Snake swings first. A fight with some good give-and-take. Blackbeard produces two pistols from his bandoleer and aims one at each man.

DR. BRUCE (V.O.)

Captain! Hurry!

BLACKBEARD

The two of ya can settle your quarrel
by a duel tonight.

(to Maynard)

But you're comin' with us now or
I'll shoot ya myself and feed ya to
the sharks with 'em.

Maynard sees the reality of the situation, plays for time.

MAYNARD

Thatch took care me after my flogging.
At least I'm going to say goodbye.

Blackbeard shrugs.

BLACKBEARD

Suit yourself. Make it quick or we
leave ya with him.

Blackbeard and his men start to drag the chest out, as Maynard approaches Thatch. In the DIM SHADOW, it's hard to make out what's being said. Maynard speaks quietly to Thatch, his back turned to the others.

MAYNARD

Can you swim?

Thatch shakes his head, "no." Maynard does a pantomime.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Move your arms and legs. Try to get
back to the island. I'll come looking
for you later.

Thatch nods. Maynard claps a hand on his shoulder. Speaks louder now.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Thatch.

Maynard turns and follows Blackbeard and the others out. As they move away, Thatch stands in the disappearing light, until he is LOST IN DARKNESS.

DELETED

EXT. CAVE - DAY

Blackbeard and his pirates row away from the cave entrance which is now almost entirely covered by the high tide.

EXT. NEW PROVIDENCE - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

To ESTABLISH the hustle and bustle of commerce and activity in an island capital with a heavy pirate population.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Charlotte enters with Lulu at her side. Both are carrying blankets and other supplies. The shopkeeper, Bridges, seems surprised to see them.

CHARLOTTE

Mister Bridges. So nice to see you again.

BRIDGES

Miss Ormand, I was under the impression you would not be needing the space anymore.

CHARLOTTE

And why might that be?

BRIDGES

Well, uh, there's been... 'talk'... about the young man's disappearance and such.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, I know, sir. But I have determined that my best chance at finding him again lies in meeting local citizens who may have information.

BRIDGES

Here?

CHARLOTTE

Better here than keeping my distance
at the Governor's. Not too many locals
just 'drop by.

(to Lulu)

We'll be setting up near the back.

(points)

Over there.

Lulu takes off to get to work.

BRIDGES

Miss Ormand, may I inquire as to
whether you have the permission of
the Governor to do this?

CHARLOTTE

You may.

Bridges waits expectantly for an answer. A beat, then
Charlotte smiles.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

My step-father wants me to be happy,
and I will be most happy to accept
your kindness in supplying this space
to serve those who might need my
help.

Bridges thinks for a moment about whether this actually answers
his question, decides that, for now, it does.

BRIDGES

Of course.

(beat)

As long as you're practicing medicine,
would you be so kind as to look at
my eyes?

CHARLOTTE

Your eyes?

BRIDGES

I can't seem to see past my hand
these days, even with my glasses. I
thought perhaps you might have a
potion.

Charlotte smiles, takes Bridges by the hand.

CHARLOTTE

Please, come back and we'll have a
look.

Charlotte leads the nearly blind Bridges to the back of the
store.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - VILLAGE - NIGHT

A major pirate party: singing, dancing, drinking, fighting. All the men from the Queen Anne's Revenge have come in on the ship's Jolly boats. Blackbeard is drunk with both rum and success, poring over his new found riches since the treasure chest sits at his feet. He has Maynard brought before him.

BLACKBEARD

How do ya wish to fight it out?

MAYNARD

I don't. More death -- mine or Snake's -- won't bring Thatch or Dow back.

BLACKBEARD

No. But it gives the men somethin' to entertain them.

MAYNARD

You don't need a navigator anymore?

BLACKBEARD

Hands can find our way back to New Providence if Snake kills you. Once I get there, I can find lots of navigators. Besides, Code of Brethren says you'll fight and so's do I. Pistols or swords?

In the firelight, Maynard's eyes can still be seen looking hard at Blackbeard. He takes his time mulling his choice.

FLASHCUT - MAYNARD'S POV

On Blackbeard. As Maynard -- in his imagination -- shoots him.

BACK TO SCENE

Maynard nods his agreement to Blackbeard.

MAYNARD

Pistols.

BLACKBEARD

That's a manly way to do it. I'll see to it then. Now let's talk some more business.

Blackbeard pulls the animal hide out, holds it out for Maynard.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

What do you make of this?

MAYNARD

(reading)

'Ten more chests. Sally Dunbar's
back.'

From Blackbeard's reaction, Maynard can tell this is the first
that Blackbeard has heard this.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

What did you think it said?

BLACKBEARD

I don't read so good. But I know
Sally Dunbar. She's the whore in
New Providence. You know what this
is, Maynard?

MAYNARD

Another clue?

BLACKBEARD

It's a sign that I can trust ya now.
Ol' Kidd hisself has reached back
and told you'n'me to go back to where
we met. Can't be no coincidence.

MAYNARD

Yet you still want this duel?

BLACKBEARD

What can I do? Rules is rules.

MAYNARD

(no use)

But why did Sally Dunbar's name get
on something that was buried with
Captain Kidd's treasure?

BLACKBEARD

Who'd ya think introduced her to
whoring? It was Kidd hisself.

Maynard plays this out in his head, sees a way to push a new
agenda.

MAYNARD

If I don't die tonight, I'll chart a
course for New Providence immediately.

EXT. CALICO BILLY'S HUT - NIGHT

Maynard enters. Calico Billy sits with his wife, Maddy, and
their small son.

MAYNARD

It is most urgent I speak to you
before the duel. Alone.

Calico Billy nods to his wife and she exits with the boy.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Do you love your wife?

CALICO BILLY

All my heart, all my days.

MAYNARD

I have a love as strong, but
completely new. We must fight for
these women.

CALICO BILLY

Not sure what you're askin' here...

MAYNARD

I agreed to the duel for one reason
only. Blackbeard will not let you or
your family off this island. He will
not keep his word. But if I win, we
will escape in the Jolly boat. While
I am dueling, the pirates will be
distracted. Take your family to the
shore, bring provisions for two weeks.

CALICO BILLY

We can't survive like that.

MAYNARD

We can. Because I will get us to the
trade routes where merchant ships
can find us.

CALICO BILLY

How do you know to do that?

MAYNARD

Because my real name is Lieutenant
Robert Maynard of the Royal Navy. I
was impressed into service aboard
his infernal ship and they do not
know my true mission. After we escape
together, I will recruit a ship to
stop him once and for all.

(beat)

Are you with me?

CALICO BILLY

I'm with you, sir.

Calico Billy makes a military like salute. Maynard grabs his hand, puts it down at his side. Now Maynard hands his letter off to Calico Billy.

CALICO BILLY (CONT'D)

What's this then?

MAYNARD

If I am to die tonight, it will be an easier death if I know my beloved Charlotte will know how I truly feel.

CALICO BILLY

What good is givin' it to me? You said he won't take my family.

MAYNARD

It's your fall-back plan. Maybe he will take you alone if you promise to serve him. Go with him to New Providence, he'll have to re-supply his ship. Try to deliver this letter for me to Miss Charlotte Ormand. She will help you make arrangements for another ship to return with you to bring the others off the island.

Calico Billy accepts the letter from Maynard.

CALICO BILLY

I'll give this back to you when we set to sea by first light.

Maynard nods, grim-faced, knowing what's ahead for him.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - CORNER - NIGHT

At the same time, in another corner, Hands lays out the two pistols that will be used in the duel. He carefully loads one, then the other. Then, with the second weapon, he carefully inserts the tiniest of tree twigs into the firing mechanism so it jams, then breaks it off at the end where it cannot be seen.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

The bonfire is huge, and men are partying hard -- Blackbeard's crew is mingled with the people from the island, including Calico Billy and his wife, Maddy. Blackbeard strides through the crowd, stands in front of the fire, then raises one of his pistols to the sky and FIRES. As he gets everyone's attention

BLACKBEARD

By Order of the Brethren, I say as Captain that Snake Leavitt and Robert Maynard should settle their quarrel in a duel. Snake started the fight, so Mister Maynard has chosen the weapon -- pistols. If neither man be killed, then a fight to the finish with cutlasses.

Maynard inhales from the handkerchief with Charlotte's lips on it. He sees Snake take yet another swig from a jug of rum.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Mister Hands, arm 'em up.

Hands gives a pistol to Maynard, and a pistol to Snake.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

On my count of three. One... two... three --

Both men raise their weapons. Maynard, sober, gets his shot first. TIME SLOWS DOWN --

He SQUEEZES the trigger. Nothing. The pistol has jammed!

Snake smiles, now taking his time aiming his shot.

TIME STARTS AGAIN --

Maynard -- in a single, fluid move -- CARTWHEELS in the sand toward Snake and, as he does, he comes up with a HAND OF SAND and throws it into Snake's face!

Snake fires instinctively but the sand and Maynard's movement throw off the accuracy of his shot and it manages to catch only the billow of Maynard's sleeve.

Maynard's other hand comes round in a haymaker, CRACKING against Snake's jaw, sending him sprawling backward into the sand.

Maynard leaps upon Snake and is beating on him until Snake manages to roll and get in a few licks on Maynard.

Hands and Prescott are dispatched to pull the two combatants apart. Blackbeard nods his approval toward Maynard.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Nicely done, Maynard.
(to Hands)
Give 'em the cutlasses.

Both Snake and Maynard are given cutlasses.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Get it done. Only one comes out alive.

Maynard and Snake are surrounded by pirates yelling and cheering. There is no escape from this circle.

At first, the two men circle each other, each coiled, waiting to strike.

Snake makes the first move. He's incautious in his attack, and Maynard's parry deflects and attacks in return.

A cutlass is a short sword designed for the closer-in fighting of sea battles. Both Snake and Maynard know how to handle one.

Forehand... the sword is heavy...

Backhand... it's a broad-blade designed to tear apart muscle and bone...

Maynard sustains a cut in his arm and drops his cutlass to the ground. Forced to close with Snake, they each struggle to control Snake's cutlass. Maynard forces Snake's hand over the curling orange edge of the bonfire and holds it there -- despite his own pain -- until Snake drops the cutlass into the flames.

Maynard breaks free, tuck-and-rolls into the sand and comes up with his own cutlass.

In an instant, he has the drop on Snake and the tip of his own cutlass draws a small pool of blood to emerge from Snake's shirt.

Having gained the upper hand, Maynard is poised to end Snake's life with his cutlass. He pauses, out of mercy -- -- but the pirates demand blood.

VARIOUS

Finish him! Goodbye Snake! Shiv him!
Run him through!

Maynard stares at Snake..

FLASHCUT - THE CAVE

With Dow lying dead and Thatch stuck and desperate, knowing now that he has been left to a watery grave.

BACK TO MAYNARD

Maynard stares down at Snake. Their eyes hold... back... and forth... pure hatred. Finally:

MAYNARD

Nobody's going to miss him.

The same exact words that Snake spoke about Thatch and Dow earlier in the cave. Snake knows this is not good.

Maynard stands. He turns his back on Snake and begins to walk away.

Snake scrambles to his feet. He's making a running lunge at Maynard to bring him down when --

Maynard swings around!!!

He knew it was coming and, as he whirls, he thrusts with his blade with all his power.

The blade buries itself in Snake's black heart. He has a single moment of enlightened consciousness before his mind gets the message that the body is dead.

Then -- he drops like a stone -- a killer who will kill no more.

Maynard lets the body fall to the ground with astonishing finality.

It's quiet, until Blackbeard stands, thrusts a fist into the air.

BLACKBEARD

Ya walk tall with pirates now,
Maynard, straight and true.

The pirates CHEER. Maynard turns and, without a word, walks through the line of pirates, past Blackbeard, into the darkness of the jungle.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - SHORE - EARLY MORNING

At the Jolly boat, Calico Billy waits nervously with Maddy and child. They are already seated in the boat along with some provisions. He stands at the shore, a sword at the ready, and a couple of pistols stuffed in holsters.

When Maynard emerges from the jungle, Calico Billy tenses, until he hears:

MAYNARD

Let's waste no time.

Maynard emerges.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Have you seen any sign the African,
Thatch?

CALICO BILLY

No sir, I ain't seen hide nor hair
of him.

Maynard nods -- that's that. They push the Jolly boat into the water, get inside and begin to quietly row themselves off the island.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - VILLAGE - DAY

For starters, the bonfire is nothing more than a pile of smoldering embers. Everywhere there are drunken and hungover pirates, laying as if they were dead under trees and propped up against crates, etc.

Snake is still there, as he was last seen, impaled with Maynard's cutlass. A pool of blood coats the sand under the body, and his face seems frozen in that moment of intensity immediately before his death.

Caesar runs up to Blackbeard.

CAESAR

Cap'n, Cap'n. Someone take your boat.

Blackbeard sits up, trying to make sense of this.

BLACKBEARD

The Queen Annie!?

CAESAR

No, Cap'n. Jolly boat.

Blackbeard blinks his eyes, wondering exactly what he's being told.

BLACKBEARD

Ya sure it's gone?

Caesar nods. Blackbeard scrambles to his feet, murder in his heart.

EXT. OPEN WATER - DAY

To ESTABLISH the Queen Anne's Revenge, back in motion.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

Sailing again and traveling with the gold. Blackbeard allows the pirates, one at a time, to come up to look at the gold and jewels. Seng picks up a ring.

SENG

Tiger's Eye. Very powerful.

BLACKBEARD

Ya keep it then Seng, 'cause we'll be needin' that power all the more.

Seng puts the ring on his finger, smiles, takes off. Hands approaches.

HANDS

Lookouts don't see anything.

BLACKBEARD

Tell 'em to keep lookin'. Maynard can hide only so long, but he can't out-run us.

HANDS

We'll find him, Captain, so ya can kill him yourself.

Blackbeard nods approvingly at this prospect.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - INLET - DAY

Maynard and Calico Billy, hidden behind jungle foliage, watch the Queen Anne's Revenge sailing in a westerly direction.

MAYNARD

She continues that direction, we go the opposite.

Maynard nods to himself, approving his own plan.

CALICO BILLY

(getting excited)

What's it like back in the towns, Lieutenant? Everything's gotta be different.

MAYNARD

Calico, you will just have to wait and see for yourself.

Maynard slaps Calico Billy on the back, moves away. Calico Billy takes a deep breath of the island air, then follows after him.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - OCEAN - DAY

The Jolly boat makes its way in the opposite direction of the Queen Anne's Revenge.

MADDY

Look!

Calico Billy's wife points.

POV

Thatch is waving, hanging PRECARIOUSLY onto a rock ledge.

CALICO BILLY (V.O.)

Lieutenant, it's Thatch!.

BACK TO SCENE

Maynard takes a long look OF RELIEF.

MAYNARD

That's Thatch all right!!

Maynard eases the Jolly boat toward the rocks.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

We must hurry. There's no time.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

Blackbeard turns to Hands.

BLACKBEARD

Let's come about Mister Hands.

HANDS

What fer?

BLACKBEARD

Because, Israel, we already gone far enough in this direction to catch him if he was goin' this way.

HANDS TURNS AND SHOUTS:

HANDS

Prepare to come about, Mister Hobbs!

The pirates jump into action.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - OCEAN - DAY

Maynard and Calico Billy are rowing the Jolly boat with all they've got. It's hard, strenuous work, but they do not shirk it. They are men, hell-bent for freedom, and this is the price they must pay.

Maddy and the child huddle together. Suddenly, from behind, there's an EXPLOSIVE ROAR.

It's a cannonball firing through the air. The cannonball lands within feet of the Jolly boat, and the impact in the water, nearly swamps the boat.

EXT. GARDENER'S ISLAND - OCEAN - DAY

The Queen Anne's Revenge closes in on the Jolly boat. Blackbeard calls down, through his metal trumpet.

BLACKBEARD

Surrender your boat, Mister Maynard,
or we'll take the cannons to ya again.

(pointedly)

This time we be close enough not to
miss ya.

Maynard knows he's been caught and there's no escape.

MAYNARD

The boat is yours.

Maynard turns to Calico Billy and his family.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

INT. QAR - BELOW DECK - DAY

Blackbeard has Maynard, Calico Billy and his family before the assembled crew. Blackbeard turns to Dr. Bruce who is reading Maynard's letter, given earlier to Calico Billy.

BLACKBEARD

Doctor, that letter that Calico was
carryin' for him, what's it say?

DR. BRUCE

It's a love letter. To his fiancée,
a Miss Charlotte Ormand in New
Providence. The step-daughter of the
Governor. He writes as if he is a
merchant seaman.

BLACKBEARD

What kinda merchant seaman thinks he
can steal a boat from pirates and
live?

Maynard looks down. He knows he will soon die. There's no
point in arguing.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

(to Calico Billy)

Who'd he tell you he is?

CALICO BILLY

He was only tryin' to help my poor
family, Cap'n.

Blackbeard puts a gun to Calico Billy's head.

BLACKBEARD

Answer my question.

Calico Billy braces for the worst. Suddenly, Blackbeard whirls,
grabs his child and puts the gun to the little boy.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Startin' to remember anything?

Calico Billy looks to Maynard. He can't bear this decision
that's been placed before him.

CALICO BILLY

Don't kill him, please. His mother
nearly died havin' him.

BLACKBEARD

Then talk.

MAYNARD

Your fight's not with him.

Maynard steps forward. If he is to die, he will do so with
dignity.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

I am a lieutenant in the Royal Navy.

The assembled pirates are stunned. Maynard seems to visibly
straighten, and addresses Blackbeard with the tone of a
courageous naval officer.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

If you drop these people unharmed in
New Providence, I shall see to it
that you are given safe passage if
the authorities should attempt to
stop you.

BLACKBEARD
The authorities?
(roaring)
I am the 'authorities'!!!

Blackbeard puts a knife to Maynard's throat.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
You still dare to bargain with me?

MAYNARD
You have your treasure because of
me, I believe.

BLACKBEARD
And I'm sure ya meant to steal it
from me, soon as ya could.

Blackbeard turns to Hands.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Mister Hands, put Calico and his
kind in chains.

HANDS
What about Maynard?

BLACKBEARD
Somethin' different for him. Take
him to sick bay.
(to Dr. Bruce)
We needs to fix him so he never runs
no where again.

Several pirates set to work, doing Blackbeard's bidding.

INT. QAR - SICK BAY - DAY

Maynard struggles as more opium liquid is placed in his mouth.

BLACKBEARD
Give him more.

DR. BRUCE
The opium will stop him cold any
second.

Maynard continues to thrash about then suddenly starts to sit
up --

MAYNARD
God Save the...

-- and then Maynard passes out on the table.

Blackbeard watches, gives a nod to Dr. Bruce. The doctor takes a good strong shot of rum himself, then holds the saw up to Maynard's legs and prepares to make his first cut.

Suddenly, Maynard's hand reaches straight up and grabs Dr. Bruce by the throat! He spits the opium in Dr. Bruce's face! He never took any of it in.

Maynard moves quickly off the table. In a second, he is on his feet with the saw at Dr. Bruce's throat. All the other pirates in the room have guns and knives out for Maynard. It's a temporary stalemate.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

(to Blackbeard)

The Code of the Brethren. You say you live by it. The Code says nothing about maiming.

DR. BRUCE

(trembling)

Perhaps we should follow the code.

BLACKBEARD

Aye, Maynard. The Code it is.

Blackbeard and Maynard share a look of mutual hate.

EXT. HELL-ON-EARTH - DAY

Establishing the remote, isolated and barren island.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

The sight gives Blackbeard pleasure.

BLACKBEARD

Dead Man's Island. Hell-on-Earth.

(to Hands)

Bring Maynard up. Let's show him his new home.

EXT. HELL ON EARTH - ISLAND - DAY (2ND UNIT)

Two of Blackbeard's pirates maneuver the Jolly boat and Maynard is prodded out at knife point, onto the island.

EXT. QAR - STERN - DAY

As much as possible, this moment is played as intimate and confidential between Blackbeard and Maynard, shutting the other pirates out of the conversation.

BLACKBEARD
Ya betrayed me, Maynard.

MAYNARD
And you've betrayed human decency.

BLACKBEARD
See now? That's the difference
between us. A man looks me in the
eye and tells me what's what, he's
earned my trust. That's man to man.
All your honor and duty, don't mean
a thing.

MAYNARD
And what trust is earned in killing
the innocent?

Blackbeard nods to one of the pirates in the Jolly boat.

EXT. HELL ON EARTH - ISLAND - DAY (2ND UNIT)

The pirate throws a large piece of folded sailcloth to Maynard.
As it does:

BLACKBEARD
Makes no difference ya still got
your legs. There's no place to run
to from here.

Maynard catches the sailcloth. The Jolly boat rows away.

INSERT

The sail cloth falls open, revealing inside a standard pistol,
shot, powder and a single bottle of drinking water.

EXT. QAR - STERN - DAY

BLACKBEARD
The Code says ya get one shot left
for ya. I'd take it soon as possible
so's ya don't starve and go insane
at the same time.

EXT. HELL ON EARTH - ISLAND - DAY (INTERCUTS)

MAYNARD
I may die, but I will surely die
more sane than you ever were.

BLACKBEARD

I'm goin' back to New Providence,
 Maynard. Done some business before
 with the Governor there. I'm sure
 he'll take kindly to permittin' me
 to romance this young Charlotte,
 bein' as I'm closin' in on more
 treasure than he ever saw.
 Don't imagine you ever tasted the
 fruits of that young lassie of his
 but, I assure ya, I will. That oughta
 drive a man like you insane.

Maynard grabs the pistol. He begins to load it as fast as he
 can. He has one single shot.

Maynard stands, takes aim at Blackbeard standing in the stern.
 The distance is too far. Still, Maynard squeezes the trigger
 and the shot FIRES.

The shot catches Blackbeard superficially in his left arm,
 ripping through the fabric.

BLACKBEARD

Shakes it off with an insane laugh. He shouts back toward
 Maynard, throwing his jacket back at him.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

That's the end of ya, Maynard.
 (his real emotion)
 Ya could've been a great pirate.

As Blackbeard's bloody jacket floats in the sea --

CLOSE SHOT - PUSH IN - MAYNARD

Watches the QAR recede in the distance. Maynard has chosen to
 die in Hell --

CLOSE SHOT - PUSH IN - CHARLOTTE

Standing on the docks of New Providence, looking out to sea,
 as if she knows --

CLOSE SHOT - PUSH IN - EDEN

Writing at his desk, looking up a moment, as if he hears
 something --

BLACKBEARD - Part One - Zabel

130.

CLOSE SHOT - PUSH IN - BLACKBEARD

Continuing his insane laugh, as we:

FADE OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED

BLACKBEARD!



BLACKBEARD

Part Two
"Showdown"

Written by
Bryce Zabel

FADE IN:

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

The pirate vessel Queen Anne's Revenge is in full glorious sail.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE (QAR) - DECK - DAY

The treasure chest found on Gardener's Island is open on the deck. Spread out around it on sail cloth are various piles of jewels and coins. BLACKBEARD sits on a stool, performing as master of ceremonies while first mate ISRAEL HANDS physically hands off each share. Quartermaster WILLIAM HOWARD, checks off each name in a book as it is called.

HOWARD

Moses Hobbs, step forward. One share.

MOSES HOBBS, the ship's pilot, steps forward and receives his share, then returns to his place among the men.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Enoch Sanborn, step forward. One share for piracy. One-half share for loss of a leg.

ENOCH SANBORN, the cook who lost his leg in the Concorde fight, hobbles up to receive his share from Hands.

SANBORN

Hope that leg a yours heals up proper and soon, sir.

Howard nods. The two share the bond of mutual injury. Sanborn goes back among the men and the process repeats itself.

HOWARD

Seng, step forward. One share.

SENG, the Asian pirate who always seems to be looking right through you, steps forward and receives his share.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Joseph Prescott, step forward. One share.

JOSEPH PRESCOTT, the ship's carpenter, steps forward and receives his share.

The pay-out gives us the chance to see how splitting the booty lays out the hierarchy on the ship, and re-introduces us to our main characters.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Elias Ransom, step forward. As bo'sun,
one and a half shares.

ELIAS RANSOM, the ship's boatswain, steps forward and receives his share.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Dr. Bruce, step forward. As ship's
doctor, one and a half shares.

DR. PETER BRUCE, the amputation happy ship's doctor, steps forward and takes his share.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Me, being quartermaster. One and a
half shares.

Howard makes a show of taking his, turns to Hands.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Mister Hands, step forward. First
mate and actin' sailmaster, one and
three-quarters share.

Hands takes his. Howard turns to Blackbeard.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
And Mister Teach, sir, ste--

Howard catches himself. Giving an order to Blackbeard to "step forward" seems risky.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
As captain, according to the Code of
the Brethren, two shares.

In his own time, Blackbeard gets up off his stool to claim his booty. Howard, no fool, leads the men in giving the Captain a ROARING CHEER.

EXT. HELL ON EARTH - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

The island is almost barren, certainly not the tropical paradise they encountered on Gardener's Island.

1) Maynard climbs a steep, rocky hill, taking stock of his situation.

2) In the near distance, down near the water, he sees an obviously MAN-MADE CROSS.

3) The sight quickens his pulse and his pace. He begins to jog down the hill, toward the cross.

4) As he reaches the cross, Maynard sees a body of ANOTHER MAROONED SAILOR who has built his own gravesite. The skeleton's hands are perfectly arranged across his stomach, and his legs are straight together. The man has obviously laid down to die.

5) Maynard inspects the site. Under a nearby rock overhang, the man has left behind all his worldly belongings. For Maynard, they're a blessing -- including a tinder box with the materials he'll need to make fire, a pick-ax, but, even better, a bottle with paper inside which the man was planning to send as a message.

Maynard pulls out the locket that Charlotte gave him before he left, sets it in front of him, takes the paper from the bottle, dips the pen and begins to write:

MAYNARD (V.O.)

Dearest Charlotte, although the chance of this letter ever finding you is small, it gives me hope to write you now. And if my thoughts can travel the ocean to find you --

Maynard stares off into the distance, looking for the right words, but he sees something else. He sets the pen down and begins to walk again.

It's a HALF-COMPLETED RAFT!

Time had obviously run out on the dead man. Maynard's VOICE-OVER continues:

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

-- then I, too, may travel the same ocean and bring you that letter in person.

And these words, he speaks out loud.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

After I have killed Blackbeard!

EXT. NEW PROVIDENCE - DOCK AREA / TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The center of commerce for the entire island. Fresh fruits and vegetables in one outdoor stand, butchered meat hanging in another. People herd goats and pigs through the streets. Several carpenters are at work on a new building, working from a shaky bamboo scaffolding. Along the row of businesses, we stop at one in particular, the General Store.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

The shopkeeper, SILAS BRIDGES, stands on a ladder, pulling down supplies from a high shelf for a customer. His glasses are so thick that he can still barely see. Working in the rear of the store in an area that now doubles as her ad-hoc medical practice, CHARLOTTE feels the throat of a LITTLE GIRL, under the watchful eye of her MOTHER.

CHARLOTTE

Can you stick out your tongue and say aaahh for me?

LITTLE GIRL

Aaahh.

CHARLOTTE

(to mother)

How long has she been sick?

MOTHER

About a week.

(worried)

Do we need to bleed her?

Charlotte shakes her head, measures out a small amount of herb from one of her jars.

CHARLOTTE

We're not going to cut your beautiful little girl unless we need to. You brew this up into a good tea, three times a day. Add some honey to make it easier to go down. I'll stop by at your house in a few days and check on her again.

The mother nods.

MOTHER

God bless you, Doctor Ormand.

CHARLOTTE

Not a doctor yet, I'm afraid. Mister Bridges just cleared out this corner so that people who need medicines and such can take care of their business all in one place.

The mother hesitates at the door.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Something else?

MOTHER

I was just wondering why you do it?
You must not need money, being the
Governor's adopted daughter and all.

Charlotte has never been asked the question so straightforwardly. She takes a moment to consider it. Decides to answer with the truth.

CHARLOTTE

I was orphaned as a young girl. Fever
took my own beloved parents. I
promised myself that I would try to
help others escape such a fate.

MOTHER

But down here? People can be rough.

CHARLOTTE

(nods)

My fiancée, Robert Maynard,
disappeared one night not far down
the street. I believe if I work here
long enough, and get to know the
townspeople better, I'll find out
what happened to him.

She is interrupted by the sound of GUNFIRE from outside.

Charlotte moves into the General Store. Bridges is busy pulling his wares in off the street.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

What is it, Mister Bridges?

BRIDGES

Pirates, Miss Charlotte. Best to
close shop and wait for them to calm
down.

As Bridges bolts and locks the front door of the store, Charlotte returns to the mother and daughter.

CHARLOTTE

(to mother, daughter)

Leave through the back door, quickly.
Keep down.

Charlotte opens the rear door and ushers mother and daughter out.

EXT. DOCK AREA - DAY

The GUNFIRE continues as Blackbeard and his entire crew swagger up the wharf, heading into town. Hands, Howard, Dr. Bruce, Ransom, Prescott, Hobbs, Sanborn, Seng, Thatch and several other ND pirates from the Queen Anne's Revenge.

BLACKBEARD

Give wide berth! Blackbeard and his
pirates comin' through!

Another ROAR from the men. Like a sports team that just won the championship, the spirits of the men are sky-high and several are FIRING MORE ROUNDS into the air in celebration. Blackbeard holds his cutlass proudly up to the air to get their attention.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Tomorrow and the next day and the
next after that, we'll be
provisioning. Boar and Thistle, that's
where we meet fer your assignments
and such.

SANBORN

What about today?

BLACKBEARD

(smiles)

Today? Today, by damn, we are all
rich men today! Take your liberty!

The pirates surge forward, unleashed. One pirate takes a goat from a citizen, tries to ride it like a horse, and when it balks, he shoots it...

Shopkeepers rush to lock their doors...

Citizens caught on the street try to hide...

CORNER OF MAIN STREET

Two REDCOAT soldiers, NOBLE and CARLTON, look nervously at each other, watching what amounts to a PIRATE RIOT.

NOBLE

What do we do, Sergeant Carlton?

CARLTON

Nothing.

They watch as another pirate kisses a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN walking on the street, and when her HUSBAND tries to protect her, he smashes the man in the face with his fist, sending him sprawling, then clubbing him with an empty bottle of rum.

NOBLE

We have to do something.

CARLTON

Except that commerce dictates that pirates are welcome, more or less.

NOBLE

Not shooting ones.

THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Yet another pirate -- armed with an ax -- prepares to attack the bamboo scaffolding which supports the workers.

As they realize the plan, the workers try to scramble down.

It's a race between the workers and the pirate but... THE SCAFFOLDING IS CUT... sending the scaffolding crashing to the pavement below.

BACK TO REDCOATS

Noble has seen enough. He steps out lively, toward Blackbeard.

NOBLE

I say, sir. Might I have a word with you?

Blackbeard looks at his men and winks. This could be fun.

BLACKBEARD

And what might that word be?

NOBLE

The port of New Providence does not allow gunfire. We, of course, would be happy to keep your weapons safely for you until the time of your departure.

BLACKBEARD

Ya would, would ya? Well, I say we'll be happy to hold yer guns while we're here.

NOBLE

What?

Blackbeard turns to Caesar.

BLACKBEARD

Caesar, ya may take his weapons.

At the sight of Caesar with his hands out for his weapons, Noble pulls back defensively.

NOBLE

The boy shall do nothing of the sort!

Noble instinctively starts to put his hand on the tip of his cutlass --

-- Blackbeard instantly outdraws him. His cutlass is out in a burst and fully brandished.

BLACKBEARD

Ya'd draw on me, would ya?

A split-second behind, Noble still has his own cutlass drawn.

NOBLE

Who has drawn on whom, sir?

BLACKBEARD

I'm Blackbeard, ya damned fool. Ain't ya heard of Blackbeard? Scourge of the seas. More famous 'n Captain Kidd hisself!

NOBLE

Not around here.

Blackbeard turns to his men.

BLACKBEARD

No one but me. He's mine.

With that, Blackbeard swings his cutlass at Noble. The Redcoat counters and STEEL CLANGS COLD... again... and again...

Blackbeard's men respect his wishes. They've formed a group around him, but it's his fight to win or lose.

The second Redcoat, Carlton, has reluctantly come to Noble's aid. Noble yells at him.

NOBLE

Stand back!

Carlton is pulled away, forcibly, by a couple of pirates.

And this is how fast life and death are dispensed on the docks of New Providence. Like nothing more than a rooster fight in a cage.

It's back and forth... but Blackbeard is the swordsman... every blow struck gives him a bit more insight into how he will defeat his opponent.

When Blackbeard is ready, he parries, then smacks his opponent's shoulder with a bone-crushing back of the blade -- and the involuntary reaction causes the blade to fall loose from his grip.

Before the blade can hit the ground, Blackbeard thrusts and his blade dissects Noble's heart then retreats back out of his body.

Noble has a look of great surprise and clarity... and then it's gone. He falls to his knees, then to the ground dead.

Blackbeard turns to Hands, notes matter-of-factly:

BLACKBEARD

He drew on me first.

HANDS

Capt'n, sir, we done caused enough trouble for one day. Let's us get off'a this street, get to drinkin' instead a killin'.

As they move away, Blackbeard shouts over his shoulder to a couple of his men, points to the dead Redcoat.

BLACKBEARD

Tie some rocks on him and throw him off the pier. Make sure he don't bob up again while we're in town.

HANDS

People saw for themselves.

BLACKBEARD

Yes, Mister Hands, that they did.

But people can forget these things quick, they can. No sense leavin' a reminder for 'em to get excited about.

One man grabs the feet, the other under the Redcoat's shoulders and they begin to move him up toward the dock.

As Blackbeard moves along, he sees Carlton being held by a couple of his pirates. Blackbeard grabs him by the collar.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Ya saw nothin' here today. Men what see things don't live to tell of 'em. Ya catch my drift?

Carlton nods. Blackbeard smiles to Hands, having proved his point. Blackbeard's pirates throw Carlton to the ground and move off with the others.

EXT. HELL ON EARTH - ROCKS - DAY

CLOSE SHOT - Blackbeard's sodden coat snagged on some rocks. Maynard's hand comes into frame and pulls the soggy mass out of the sea.

He inspects the rip in the coat sleeve where he nicked Blackbeard.

MAYNARD

(wry)

There's the warning shot. The next one will find its mark --

(imitates Blackbeard)

'Me Hearties!'

EXT. HELL ON EARTH - DAY

In contrast to Blackbeard's inhumanity in disposing of the dead, Maynard clears away the debris from around the skeleton, and places Blackbeard's jacket over it.

MAYNARD

Never liked that color.

He carefully finishes burying the skeleton of the marooned pirate, smoothing out the dirt on his newly dug grave. As he does, WE SEE that he continues his letter with the paper and pen left by the dead pirate.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

The dead deserve respect and I have now treated the last occupant of this island so. As for myself, I have only to close my eyes and see your face... to give me every motivation to leave this God forsaken island and return to you as soon as possible.

EXT. THE RAFT - DAY

Maynard works on completing it.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

At this time of year, traffic should be quite common in the shipping lanes. The challenge will be to get ten miles out. If I can make it, I can come home and, as we intended, be your loving husband...

Maynard continues his work on completing the raft.

BY THE FIRE - NIGHT

A small fire burns, providing the only light on the island. Using a tree branch, hewed with his ax into a makeshift sword, Maynard practices his swordsmanship, preparing for his showdown with Blackbeard.

THE TIDEPOOL - DAY

Maynard attempts to catch small fish during low tide, using his shirt as a net.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

I cannot say that conditions are good for they are not. There is no meat, only fish, and they are small, boney, exceedingly difficult to catch and hardly filling even then.

Maynard fishes out a bobbing coconut from the sea, breaks it open on a rock and drinks the juice.

AMONG THE TREES - DAY

Maynard grabs bugs from the bases, placing them in a piece of clothing and wrapping them up to eat later. Hungry, he forces himself to eat one.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

But I will do what is necessary to keep up my strength for I will need all of it for when I return.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Prescott and Sanborn break through the front door.

They're drunk and on a roll. They start to steal food, tobacco and rum as the shopkeeper, Bridges, cowers behind his counter.

Slowly, they realize that Charlotte stands near the rear of the store, holding a pistol with both hands, and it's aimed at them.

PRESCOTT

You shouldn't be doin' that. There's two of us, and the man who don't get killed, he'll have to kill you to set things right.

Charlotte nods.

CHARLOTTE

Better than nothing. I'd still have put an end to one of you.

SANBORN

Assumin' you could even hit us.

CHARLOTTE

I have been training quite regularly of late. I assure you that your chance of living is about the same as the Redcoat soldier butchered outside.

The two men look at each other. Neither one of them really ready to take a fifty percent chance of dying.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Now, the way I see it, you've got what you came for. Out of respect for you being at sea, Mister Bridges has even given it to you for no charge. Isn't that right, Mister Bridges?

Bridges is only too quick to nod his agreement. Now Prescott nods to Bridges, a piratical tip of the hat.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

But now, the situation dictates that honorable men such as yourselves should leave peaceably.

(pointedly)

There is a fine pub at the inn down the street. The Boar and Thistle.

Prescott and Sanborn look at each other.

PRESCOTT

I could use another drink.

SANBORN

And so might I.

They both take off. Charlotte lets out a breath, her own heart racing. Bridges looks like he's about to kiss her.

INT. BOAR & THISTLE - DAY

It's a big pirate party. The men are in high spirits and there is SINGING and VIOLIN MUSIC. Dancing, too. Other men play cards and dice games, already beginning to gamble away their loot. Blackbeard enters, an arm around Hands.

BLACKBEARD

Now here's where we belong, not
streetfightin'. Ya order us up while
I give old Sally's back a look.

HANDS

Ya gonna just rip the dress off her
in front of everybody?

BLACKBEARD

Ain't no class in that, Israel. Least
I can do is pay her to go upstairs
so she can keep her dignity... such
as it is...

Blackbeard laughs at his own joke, takes off. Sanborn and
Prescott enter:

SANBORN

We're here to splice the mainbrace,
we are!

Prescott shouts in the general direction of a few of the women.

PRESCOTT

Which one of you's gonna help me
spend my swag?

Blackbeard spies SALLY DUNBAR serving drinks to a few of his
men.

BLACKBEARD

Sally. You're a sight for sore eyes.

SALLY

(laughs)
Then you been at sea too long,
Blackie.

Sally starts to turn her attention back to the bar. He
scrambles in front of her, blocking her path.

BLACKBEARD

Let's talk anyway, in private.

SALLY

Not now. Look at all the customers
you brung in here.

BLACKBEARD

They don't matter.

SALLY

They do to me.

BLACKBEARD

Pay ya two and a half times what
you're worth.

SALLY

Not for sale no more.

She turns her back on him. As she does, Blackbeard slides a bag of Spanish gold doubloons across the bar to Sally.

BLACKBEARD

My gold says ya don't need their
money tonight.

Sally takes the gold coins, holds them tight. She yells to her BARKEEP:

SALLY

It's all yours for a while.

Before the barkeep can protest, she leads Blackbeard up a back set of stairs.

INT. BOAR & THISTLE - SALLY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A tiny room, with a single window to the outside world and some fresh air, with a bed, a mirror, a dresser and a metal bathtub on the floor. Blackbeard sits on the bed, makes a "take-it-off" hand gesture.

BLACKBEARD

Let me see your backside.

SALLY

(defensively)

The body's not what it used to be.
There's been some hard years.

BLACKBEARD

I'm sure ya still got some good road
up ahead, but that t'ain't what
interests me first off today.

SALLY

Well, you paid to see it, whatever
the reason...

From behind, WE SEE Sally's cotton peasant blouse fall off her shoulders. Her back and her arms are nearly completely tatted out. Still, in the middle of this sea of ink, her back features a large, quite menacing, TATTOO. The tattoo is that of a CRYING VULTURE. Blackbeard stands behind her, eyeing the tattoo.

BLACKBEARD

Tell me 'bout that vulture one.

SALLY

Why? You seen it before. It's not like we're strangers.

BLACKBEARD

Never took that good a look before. Where'd ya get it?

SALLY

Ah, Blackie, don't ask to know that.

Blackbeard squeezes her arm hard.

BLACKBEARD

I'm not askin'.

With his free hand, Blackbeard sticks a finger in the bath to check the water. Sally tries to change the subject.

SALLY

Only been used once. All yours.

Blackbeard roughly lets her go, begins to shed his own clothes.

BLACKBEARD

Start talkin'.

SALLY

Captain Kidd marked me with it. Gave me opium till I passed out, then had a man put it on me one night.

Blackbeard slides his body into the bath water. He takes his time settling in, then picks up where the conversation stopped.

BLACKBEARD

Know who it was tatted ya like that?

SALLY

Think Kidd called him Gardener, somethin' like that.

(thinking about it)

I was just a girl. Almost innocent.

Sally instinctively picks up a wash cloth and begins to wash Blackbeard's face clean.

BLACKBEARD

Why you?

SALLY

I was the youngest workin' that night.
He said he wanted someone healthy
enough to live a few years.

BLACKBEARD

What's it mean, Sally?

SALLY

I don't know. Swear to God, Blackie.
I ain't even seen it, 'cept in a
mirror.

Blackbeard nods, speaks with finality.

BLACKBEARD

It's a treasure clue, Sally. Soon as
I figure out what it means, you're
comin' with me.

SALLY

You always said women were bad luck
on pirate ships.

BLACKBEARD

Not when they got a treasure map on
their backs. Then they're good luck.
(psycho)
I can flay ya like a deer, and take
the skin with me, if'n that's your
preference.

Sally goes to her small chest of drawers and finds a piece of
paper underneath. She hands it to Blackbeard. He opens it.
It's a drawing of the tattoo.

SALLY

Wanted to see it myself. Had somebody
draw it up. Lied about only seein'
it in the mirror.
(beat)

Blackie, I got a good business. If I
leave it, I'll never get it back.

BLACKBEARD

S'pose I could take this instead.

Blackbeard smiles and, oddly enough, she smiles back. A psycho
pirate and a broken woman. The perfect couple for the moment.

EXT. HELL ON EARTH - CLOSE ON MAYNARD - DAY

Maynard stands on the shoreline, looking in on the island.
We're practically inside his eyes. The man has "gone inside."

He's thinking carefully, his mind focused by danger, resolve, love and, not insignificantly, thoughts of revenge.

This man means to kill Edward Teach, or Blackbeard, one way or another. His thoughts are so intense that we can hear them.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

I cannot stay here. I am stronger today than I will be tomorrow. The sea is the only way. This has to work. I will not die.

MAYNARD'S POV - THE RAFT

It has come quite a way from the half-finished affair he inherited from the dead man he found upon being marooned. It's been finished with British precision, despite being only a rudimentary raft made out of found objects, tied together with tree bark skinned with the pick-ax. It's even been provisioned by coconuts, hollowed out to hold rain water.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Doesn't need to think about this anymore. He knows that it is time to act.

He strides confidently to the raft, pushes it out into the water, and paddles his way out, heading over the waves. The entire time he does not look back.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

The downtown area is the spill-over from the Boar & Thistle. Open fires, men chasing women in the fountain, plundering and pillaging.

In the shadows, with the sound of partying in the distance, Blackbeard huddles among his closest cronies -- Dr. Bruce, Hands, Howard, Ransom and Seng. He has a bottle of rum in one hand and a glass in the other. He's pouring for everybody.

BLACKBEARD

Spirits are high tonight, they are.
Let's drink to us all bein' rich.

Blackbeard raises his glass, and the others start to follow.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

The pleasure of treasure!

The glasses are clinked together.

ALL

The pleasure of treasure!

BLACKBEARD
(winks to Hands)
Tell 'em.

HANDS
There's more of it. Lots more.

Looks are traded from man to man. This is a surprise to everyone.

BLACKBEARD
All the riches we got now, boys, we got maybe twenty times that much waitin' for us.

DR. BRUCE
My God. How?

BLACKBEARD
What Captain Kidd buried on Gardener's island was just what he meant to keep with him till he could clear his name. Both Sally and Calico Billy said as much. Kidd always meant to go back to claim the rest.

HOWARD
Where is it?

Blackbeard unfolds the drawing of the vulture.

BLACKBEARD
Here.

The men all study the drawing in the torchlight.

RANSOM
Cap'n, that's no map. It's just a picture.

BLACKBEARD
It be a clue, ya jackass.

HANDS
Not to me it ain't.

Seng has visibly reacted to this.

BLACKBEARD
Ya got somethin' to say, Seng, let's hear it.

SENG
Seng know where your treasure is.

BLACKBEARD

(to men)

Ya see?

SENG

My people know about Vulture Island.
Very bad place. Bad spirits.

BLACKBEARD

Ya know how to get there?

SENG

We don't go there, Cap'n. Very
dangerous.

BLACKBEARD

You'll take us there Seng. We're
more dangerous than anybody else.

HANDS

We left Maynard for dead. Who's gonna
sail us there?

BLACKBEARD

Ya wanted that job, Mister Hands.
Now it's yours. You and Seng'll plot
the course.

(beat)

Now here be the plan. We let the
crew sow their oats in town, tellin'
'em nothing. Soon as we's provisioned
and I resolve these few particulars,
we take off to make our claim.

Blackbeard has the pirates mesmerized, all willing accomplices
in any conspiracy.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Them that's run off, we don't go
lookin' for 'em. No sense splittin'
the treasure more'n we have to...

Suddenly, in the shadows, they see TOBIAS KNIGHT. He's with
several Redcoats. One of them is Carlton, who witnessed
Blackbeard kill Noble.

KNIGHT

Captain, a word if I might.

Blackbeard hands the bottle to Hands, moves to join Knight in
the shadows.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Big John sits on the front steps, whittling on a piece of wood. Suddenly, he hears a sound from the nearby trees.

BIG JOHN
Somebody out there?

From the trees, Calico Billy, Maddy and their little boy emerge. They have obviously walked out this entire way on foot.

CALICO BILLY
Name is Calico Billy, and this here
is my family. This be the home of
Governor Eden?

We can actually see Eden peering out through the window.

BIG JOHN
(skeptically)
You gots business with the Governor,
you do?

CALICO BILLY
It's his daughter, actually, name a'
Charlotte.

The front door opens. It's Eden, standing there holding a candle, in his nightshirt.

EDEN
I'm Eden. What about my daughter?

CALICO BILLY
I got some news for her. Direct from
her fiancée.

EDEN
Last words, I imagine?

CALICO BILLY
Don't know if he is dead yet. Soon,
maybe.

EDEN
How do you know this?

CALICO BILLY
Me and my family, we was shipwrecked
until the pirates came. He was with
'em. They found out who he was,
marooned him. They took us to New
Providence and washed their hands of
us.

(MORE)

CALICO BILLY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Anyways, this Maynard, he done give
me a letter to give your daughter.

Calico Billy has the letter in his hand. Eden grabs at it.

EDEN

I'll take it.

Calico Billy pulls it away. Not yet.

CALICO BILLY

I'm pretty sure he'd want me to give
it to her direct.

Eden rolls his eyes, exasperated.

EDEN

What do you want from me, man?!

CALICO BILLY

My family needs a place to sleep for
a night or two, and we need to find
work someplace.

EDEN

You can stay in the horse barn. At
daylight, I'll have Big John take
you up the road where they have work.

CALICO BILLY

We'd be obliged.

The two men nod at each other, deal done. Eden holds out his
hand expectantly.

EDEN

The letter.

Calico Billy hands Eden the letter. Eden points toward the
back.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Behind the house.

Calico Billy shuffles off with Maddy and their son.

INT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Eden sits at his desk, drinking rum, reading Maynard's letter.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

Oh, Charlotte, I take hope from the thought of you reading this letter, possibly in front of a roaring fire. I am currently sailing under the forced service of that most damnable pirate, Blackbeard. We are currently on board his pirate vessel, the Queen Anne's Revenge and, sooner or later, are bound to return to New Providence. If you receive this letter before I arrive, I beseech you to greet our arrival with a contingent of His Majesty's best troops and, if necessary, the cannons of the Royal Navy itself. Should I survive, I will fight these pirates with all my heart. Should justice finally come to these outlaws, your father should see to it that Blackbeard hangs first for his crimes.

Eden rolls his eyes, turning to the next page.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

If the worst comes, dear Charlotte, do not mourn me dead. Remember instead how deeply I felt for you. My duty to country can never --

In disgust, Eden crumples the letter up. He has heard enough and has no need to hear Maynard's romantic or patriotic notions.

He is startled by a KNOCK on the door. It's Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Excuse me, father.

Charlotte enters, sees her father standing there, red-faced, holding the letter.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Oh, my. Did I disturb something?

Eden moves quickly to place the letter in his desk drawer and to lock it.

EDEN

More complaints from dissatisfied constituents. Politics is so wearisome, it's a wonder anyone should wish to be a part of it. Tea?

Charlotte shakes her head. Eden begins to pour himself another drink from the decanter.

CHARLOTTE

What was this particular letter about?

EDEN

That damned foolish Leo Chatfield insists on constantly sticking his nose where it does not belong. Please, sit.

Eden indicates the other sitting chair but Charlotte remains standing.

CHARLOTTE

What business does Mister Chatfield presume to know about?

EDEN

Oh, he was... he was...

(inspired)

Honestly, Charlotte, I was trying to protect you. Leo has started a petition against you, saying that you are not a real doctor, and therefore should not be allowed to practice medicine.

CHARLOTTE

(offended)

I will speak to him immediately!

EDEN

Please, do not! It would embarrass me greatly. In fact, I rather agree with him that you must stop this silly idea of yours. It will not bring back your parents, or your Lieutenant Maynard. And look how it agitates you. You are not even sleeping at night.

CHARLOTTE

It is not the work. I thought I heard someone talking outside. I wasn't sure.

EDEN

A family of vagabonds looking for a hand-out. Not to worry, my dear, I've allowed them to stay out back and be on their way in the morning.

Eden smiles that smarmy, deflective smile, and sips away at his rum. Charlotte stays a beat.

CHARLOTTE

Then I will be going to sleep soon.
Good night.

Charlotte begins to take off but Eden touches his cheek expecting a kiss that she does not feel like giving. She gives him a perfunctory peck and takes off.

As soon as the door is closed, Eden leaps to his feet, opens the desk drawer. He removes Maynard's letter and tosses it into the fire, watching it burn.

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

After days at sea, Maynard hangs to the final piece of the sinking raft. There are few things as reality altering as spending the night on the open ocean, fearing sharks, starved, dehydrated, terribly sunburned.

Maynard is simply delirious, in and out of consciousness, his vision is blurred.

He is just about jarred out of his wits by his COLLISION WITH ANOTHER BOAT.

As we get oriented, we understand three things about this boat, things that dawn on us in this order:

It is a Jolly boat.

There are men on board this boat.

They are all dead.

They are the men set adrift from the merchant ship that the Queen Anne's Revenge encountered in the fog. Maynard had managed to spare their lives by having Blackbeard set them free. It made no difference, in this case, only delaying the inevitable.

Maynard expresses shock, hope, fear and despair in as many seconds. But he ends up on a final emotion: SURVIVAL.

Maynard snaps himself out of this mind-trip long enough to abandon his "ship" and swim for the Jolly boat which is floating away.

He pulls himself into the Jolly boat. The men have simply dehydrated and baked into rough leather under the unrelenting Caribbean sun.

Maynard sets to work, pulling one of the bodies and sending it to the sea below.

MAYNARD

God rest your soul... if I can avenge
your death... I promise you I will...

As Maynard tosses another body over, a straight razor falls out of the man's pocket. Maynard stoops to pick it up, sees the sun glint off the blade.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

And I'll give Blackbeard a shave
he'll never forget...

It's grisly work but Maynard is on it with a passion.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - DAY

An elegant carriage is driven to the front. Getting out are Blackbeard and Eden's subordinate, Knight. Eden appears at the door, now dressed in his finest attire to greet them.

EDEN

Captain Teach. Very good of you to
visit in person.

BLACKBEARD

Good a ya to send the invitation.

KNIGHT

The Captain has long been a-sail and
gladly accepts your hospitality.

EDEN

Not sailing so long as a Captain as
I understand the matter.

BLACKBEARD

If you're speakin' of Hornigold, the
man's a stone coward.

EDEN

We need talk no more of it. My
courtesy is extended to the captain
of the Queen Anne's Revenge. You.

Charlotte enters from the house.

CHARLOTTE

You may have him for your business
when I am done with mine.

Eden rolls his eyes at his headstrong step-daughter.

EDEN

Captain, may I present my daughter, Charlotte Ormand? Charlotte, this is Captain Edward Teach.

BLACKBEARD

I'm sure the pleasure is mine, my lady.

CHARLOTTE

People in town say that my fiancée left the Boar & Thistle in your company when you were last in port.

BLACKBEARD

I've left the Boar in the company of many o'er the years.

CHARLOTTE

His name is Lieutenant Robert Maynard of the Royal Navy.

Blackbeard stiffens at the mention of the name, but he does not betray his true feelings.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Do you know him?

BLACKBEARD

I knew him as plain ol' Robert Maynard. The bastard begged to sail with me.

CHARLOTTE

Are you not a pirate, sir?

EDEN

My dear, you speak disrespectfully.

BLACKBEARD

She speaks her mind, and why not?

CHARLOTTE

My point is why would a Royal Navy Lieutenant lower himself to sail with a pirate? I should like to know the complete truth about the fate Lieutenant Maynard suffered whilst on board your ship.

Blackbeard looks like he's going to lay it all out.

BLACKBEARD

The truth is we was good friends,
and we found some treasure together,
we did. But one of my mates caught
him stealing from it and shot him in
the back. It's not a pretty story,
and I hate to tell it to you like
this, but that's what happened.

CHARLOTTE

You lie!!!

BLACKBEARD

Seems more'n likely that all the
lyin' was on his part. Either he was
Royal Navy and he lied to me, or he
wasn't and he lied to you.

(shrugs)

Matters not now, does it?

CHARLOTTE

(defeated, but curious)

Did he... ever... mention me?

BLACKBEARD

That he did. On his dyin' breath.
Said he was caught, fair and square.
Then he asked me to take care of his
Charlotte. Until now, I had no idea
where to find ya.

The moment is damn creepy that even Eden has to break it up.

EDEN

(to Charlotte)

My dear, perhaps you should go lie
down. Try to compose yourself.

(to Blackbeard)

Captain, please join me inside.

Blackbeard follows Eden and Knight inside. Charlotte steadies herself, fighting for control.

INT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - OFFICE - DAY

Eden holds court from a chair that is clearly the power seat. Blackbeard and Knight sit across an elegant coffee table from him.

BLACKBEARD

I'll say this straight out to ya,
Governor. Blackbeard don't like bein'
summoned in front of his men. Gives
'em the wrong idea.

EDEN

Yes, Captain, I understand. But slicing one of His Majesty's soldiers in front of the entire town of New Providence, well, that can also give people the wrong idea. The last week has not been a pleasant one.

KNIGHT

The Captain was drawn upon first.

Eden slams his cane against the table.

EDEN

By damn, I don't care!

We know that Blackbeard is a stone sociopath, yet Eden does not seem to fear him.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Hornigold never did any killing. We kept our dealings simple. You can sell stolen goods here only when people do not have to think too much about how you got them.

Eden takes a cleansing breath.

EDEN (CONT'D)

You're either in or you're out. This is how we do it. My rules.

Blackbeard settles back. He's violent, but not with everyone.

BLACKBEARD

You have a point, Governor.

Blackbeard slides a bag of gold coins over to Eden.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Accept my apologies for the mess.

Eden takes the gold, but is not satisfied, even as he places it into his locked desk drawer.

EDEN

It's bigger than me, I tell you. People are stirred up and they need to see punishment delivered. And you need to get your men under control. A Royal Navy ship is due any day.

BLACKBEARD

We've done moved the Queen Anne to over behind the west islands. Tallest ship in the King's navy won't see us when they arrive.

EDEN

No matter. You should still sail soon and let this bloody chapter blow over.

Eden looks over at Knight, nods for him to go to their prearranged pitch.

KNIGHT

One more item. Punishment demands we hang some men. To show order, and restore confidence in Governor Eden.

EDEN

I have a vagrant sleeping in my barn. Take him.

Now both Knight and Eden look at Blackbeard. His move. Blackbeard shrugs.

BLACKBEARD

I got a wayward slave, just breakin' in as a pirate. 'Spose ya can have him, too. Save me the training.

Knight nods, case closed.

KNIGHT

That should do it then. We'll prepare the trial. And it would be best for you to stay with us until your sailing arrangements are final, so as not to be seen in town.

BLACKBEARD

Ya don't trust me, do ya?

Knight looks to Eden who makes a "what can you say" kind of gesture.

KNIGHT

Good then. And now, Captain, have you anything for us?

Blackbeard nods, indicates the gold he has given Eden.

BLACKBEARD

There's plenty more where that come from. I'll be needin' some help protectin' it when I come back next.

EDEN
Do tell, Captain.

Blackbeard smiles, turns to Knight.

BLACKBEARD
Get somethin' to take it all down
with.

KNIGHT
We never put our arrangement in
writing.

BLACKBEARD
Ya never stood to make as much money
as ya do when this treasure pays
out.

(firm)
I want me a piece of paper what says
our deal. Nobody needs to ever see
it, unless ya double-cross me.
(beat)
Trust works both ways, ya know.

Eden considers this, then nods to Knight who dips a pen and
prepares to write.

EDEN
Draw two copies for our signatures.
(points)
Lock mine in that drawer when we're
done.

Eden leans forward, ready to listen further.

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

Maynard has the Jolly boat to himself, having sent the previous
occupants to the bottom of the sea.

The sun is brutal.

Maynard looks out and from his POV the world looks WASHED-OUT
YELLOW. The color is draining from his life, and there is too
much light everywhere.

In minutes, or hours at best, life will ebb away -- after a
long, hard struggle -- from the body of Robert Maynard,
Lieutenant of the Royal Navy.

In a SERIES OF DISSOLVES, Maynard squints into the horizon
and watches as a DARK SPECK becomes a... MOVING OBJECT...
which becomes a SMALL SAILING SHIP... and which finally becomes
a flesh and blood ship.

Maynard sees the only thing that could give him hope, besides the presence of the woman he loves. The ship is flying the UNION JACK!

EXT. ROYAL NAVY SHIP, THE JANE - DECK - DAY

Maynard, a warm blanket pulled around him, looks out over the horizon, drinking hot tea. He is being watched over by Lieutenant JACK SPECTOR. Captain ELLIS BRAND approaches.

BRAND

You should come below.

(to Spector)

Have you not informed him that the men have made quarters for him?

SPECTOR

Several times, Captain.

Maynard, frankly, looks like hell. His hair and beard are matted, his skin is burned to a crisp, his lips are split. His gaze is distant and his voice is halting. Yet, even so, there is a small smile on his face.

MAYNARD

To know that... I am on a ship... of the Royal Navy...

(overcome with emotion)

I had to see us at sail for myself.

Brand puts a paternal palm on his shoulder.

BRAND

We should be at anchor in New Providence harbor within days.

MAYNARD

We can pick up Blackbeard's trail there, I'm certain.

BRAND

Lieutenant, my orders are not to engage pirates until directed to do so by the local governor.

MAYNARD

The local governor is a criminal who tried to kill his own daughter.

BRAND

Have you proof of such a serious charge?

MAYNARD

Oh, he's too cunning to leave his tracks. But I know... I know...

Brand looks at Maynard who looks like he could be hallucinating and, in any case, is not the most reliable witness Brand has ever seen.

BRAND

Well, while you are gaining back your strength, I will look into that as well.

Brand helps Maynard up.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Please. You must go below and rest.

Maynard nods, takes a final look outward over the ocean. His resolve tells us this is a man who means to set some things straight, and soon.

INT. COURTROOM - NIGHT

A show trial, conducted in the dead of night by lantern light. Barely more than some wooden tables and chairs. The main giveaway as to its purpose is the powdered wig and black robe worn by Tobias Knight, who sits as the local judge. He nods to a Redcoat who opens a back door.

Thatch and Calico Billy are brought in by another Redcoat. Both men are shackled.

KNIGHT

The two of you have been accused of the murder of Private John Noble of His Majesty's Royal Armed Forces. We have before us a William Shattuck, also known as Calico Billy, and the slave known as Thatch.

(motions)

Take your seats. Sergeant, let us call the witness.

Waiting outside the door is Bridges, the nearly-blind shopkeeper. He holds a small bag of gold coins in his hand -- it's the same bag as Blackbeard handed Eden in his office (minus half the coins) -- counting them. He hurriedly puts them away as a guard motions him inside.

As they enter, Knight motions for Bridges to come forward. The guard has to push him because he can't properly make out Knight's gesture.

KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Mister Bridges, the court understands that you personally observed the murder of Private Noble. Is that correct?

BRIDGES

Yes, your honor. From the window of my store.

KNIGHT

Very good then. Can you point out the men who murdered the soldier in question?

Bridges feels the gold in his pocket and a couple of pieces fall to the floor. He points in the direction of the two accused men.

BRIDGES

The two of them.

KNIGHT

You're quite certain?

Bridges looks at Knight, helplessly. He's not quite sure what he's supposed to say.

Knight gives him just the slightest of nods which the guard interprets for Bridges with another push to the back.

BRIDGES

Yes, sir. It was them.

KNIGHT

Well, there it is. A positive identification from a witness.

Knight turns to Thatch and Calico Billy.

KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Do you have anything to say for yourselves?

CALICO BILLY

I say these charges has been as cooked up as any stew I've ever tasted. Your witness is blind as a bat.

KNIGHT

Do you deny sailing with pirates?

CALICO BILLY

I was tryin' to get my family home. We stayed below decks for near two weeks with no sunlight, nor barely food nor water. We was more like prisoners.

KNIGHT

Why did Blackbeard take you along then?

CALICO BILLY

He's a superstitious man. Thought it would bring him back luck on his treasure hunt to kill me.

KNIGHT

Nevertheless, although we are a friendly community to men of the sea, we cannot tolerate the murder of His Majesty's troops.

CALICO BILLY

But you have the wrong men!

Knight simply ignore him, nods towards Thatch.

KNIGHT

Can the slave speak?

Thatch looks up at Knight.

THATCH

Thatch no kill nobody.

KNIGHT

Well, despite both your gallows protests, the witness says otherwise.

Knight brings the gavel down.

KNIGHT (CONT'D)

I find you both guilty of piracy. I sentence you to hang at noon one week from today in the town square.

(to guards)

Take these vermin away.

Several Redcoat guards hustle Thatch and Calico Billy out of the room. As they leave the door, we hear the sound of Calico Billy's wife WAILING.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - DAY

Eden prunes his prize imported roses.

In the background, Hands, Robber #1, Sanborn and another pirate, can be seen making themselves 'at home.'

A determined Charlotte approaches Eden.

EDEN

Hello, dear. Such a beautiful day.

CHARLOTTE

Quite. I've just returned from town.

EDEN

I do wish you would stop putting yourself so at risk.

CHARLOTTE

The point is that people are saying that two pirates are to hang soon. This, of course, cannot happen without your say-so.

EDEN

I am merely preserving law-and-order, keeping the peace, if you will.

CHARLOTTE

Law-and-order? Father, this Blackbeard has been living in our home for days. I feel it in every bone of my body that he knows more about my Robert's fate than he lets on. And, although I did not see it myself, others whisper that it was he who murdered that soldier.

EDEN

Careful. One mustn't make false accusations. The two men set to swing were convicted in a proper court of law.

CHARLOTTE

By Tobias Knight, I understand, and no jury. And that man has no more will to stand up to you than those roses to your shears.

Eden puts down his small pruning shears and turns to Charlotte, peeved.

EDEN

As my daughter --

CHARLOTTE

Adopted.

Eden's eyes flash at the correction.

EDEN

Very well, then.

CHARLOTTE

Please, hear me out. There are pirates camped on our own grounds, drinking and swearing till all hours. God alone knows what manner of treachery they are planning.

EDEN

Being a sailor is no crime. The good which come by ship keep New Providence strong and prosperous.

CHARLOTTE

Yet if I am your daughter as you say, should you not still keep them at a distance?

EDEN

They will do nothing. Captain Teach has them under his control.

CHARLOTTE

Is that man blackmailing you? Are you in fear for your life?

Eden turns back to his pruning.

EDEN

I assure you, I am in no danger.

CHARLOTTE

Can the same be said for the citizens of New Providence?

Charlotte lets the words sink in, then turns on her heel and departs.

INT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte is asleep in her bed. A beat, then the door opens. A bottle is set on the table in the room. Another beat, and Charlotte has a knife to her throat and a hand over her mouth. It's Blackbeard.

BLACKBEARD

Ya scream, and ya'll be joinin' your lyin' friend Maynard.

Charlotte nods her understanding. He takes the hand from her mouth.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

I be shippin' out on the morrow.
Time for a fare-thee-well.

CHARLOTTE

I'm not one of your dock girls,
Captain.

BLACKBEARD

Right about that, ya are. That's why
I'm here.

Seeing how vulnerable she is, Charlotte simply sits up and gets out of bed, testing his limits. She pours two glasses of rum from his bottle.

CHARLOTTE

We should know each other better,
don't you think?

BLACKBEARD

If that's how ya want this, it's
fine by me.

CHARLOTTE

Now if you mean to treat me proper
and not like one of your harlots,
you'll turn your back a moment and
let me gather myself.

BLACKBEARD

Damn, woman, ya are a fiery one.

Blackbeard turns momentarily. Charlotte takes a solution from her medical bag we've seen her use at the General Store. She pours a small vial of some medicine into Blackbeard's drink. She shakes her hair down.

CHARLOTTE

You may turn.

Blackbeard turns. Charlotte lifts her glass.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

To a proper introduction.

Blackbeard drains his entire drink, slamming the cup back on the table.

BLACKBEARD

All's proper here.

Blackbeard moves in to kiss her, but she pulls away.

CHARLOTTE

Not quite yet, sir.

Charlotte pours him another rum.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
I'm most curious. By what rights
would a man come into a woman's room --
in her own father's home?

BLACKBEARD
Missy, the Governor's the one who
tol' me the what's what.

The impact of this sinks in on Charlotte. She has been offered to Blackbeard as some kind of prize.

CHARLOTTE
I see.

BLACKBEARD
It's business. Many a back's gettin'
scratched.

CHARLOTTE
Was it business that caused Lieutenant
Maynard to sail with you?

BLACKBEARD
Said he could navigate a ship and we
had a use for a man who could do
that.

CHARLOTTE
He came aboard willingly?

Blackbeard looks at her. She seems to be going OUT-OF-FOCUS before his very eyes.

BLACKBEARD
Came aboard like a pirate, and left
like one, too. What's the difference?

CHARLOTTE
Did he... did he suffer?

BLACKBEARD
(so tired)
I...hope... so...

Blackbeard's head falls to the table. He's out cold. Charlotte, shaking, takes off.

INT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Charlotte enters the office, goes straight to Eden's fine desk. She begins to go through it looking for what she's not sure.

LULU (O.S.)
Help you find somethin', ma'am?

Charlotte turns around, sees Lulu.

CHARLOTTE
Lulu, it has become quite dangerous
for me to remain here. I must leave
immediately.

LULU
May I pack some things for you?

CHARLOTTE
One bag. And hurry.

Lulu nods, starts to take off. Charlotte's eye is on the single
locked desk drawer she's seen Eden use before.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Lulu?

Lulu stops, turns.

LULU
Ma'am?

CHARLOTTE
Come in, please. Close the door.

Lulu does as she's told.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
As you know, my step-father has
welcomed the pirate Blackbeard into
this house.

LULU
Yes, ma'am.

CHARLOTTE
You knew Lieutenant Maynard when he
was here. Did he ever do anything
which would cause you to believe
that he, too, was a pirate?

LULU
Wouldn't really be my place to say,
ma'am.

CHARLOTTE
You may speak freely.

LULU

The Lieutenant, he loved you, not a life a stealin'. That's how I saw it.

CHARLOTTE

(nods)

Thank you.

Charlotte points to the locked drawer.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

The key to this drawer. Where is it?

LULU

I don't know as the Governor'd want you to be lookin' in there, ma'am.

CHARLOTTE

No. I'm quite sure he would not.
(firmly)
The key.

Lulu nods, moves to the corner of the area rug, rolls it back. Inside a stitched area, she produces the key.

EXT. DOCK AREA - DAY

A Royal Navy Jolly boat with a contingent of sailors (BLUECOATS) on board rows to the harbor with Maynard. Brand's first mate, Spector, is out first. He approaches one of the locals -- the PANHANDLER who Maynard fought in the bar.

SPECTOR

This man needs to see the nearest doctor.

PANHANDLER

There's somethin' of a doctor practicin' at the General Store. Right up the street, over there.

The panhandler points up the street into the town square. Already it seems a crowd has started to gather.

SPECTOR

Seems to be a busy day.

PANHANDLER

It's a hangin', it is. A double one. People come from all over the island.

The man takes off, leaving Spector shaking his head. He helps Maynard off the boat. The panhandler turns, sees Maynard now and shouts:

PANHANDLER (CONT'D)
And he should hang with 'em, far as
I'm concerned.

He takes off again. Spector watches, turns back to Maynard.

SPECTOR
Seems to know you, Lieutenant.

MAYNARD
Long story.

Maynard manages a weak smile for Spector.

INT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Blackbeard sleeps heavily with his head on the table, seemingly still out cold. There's a banging on the door.

EDEN (O.S.)
Charlotte! I need to see you at once!

More banging. Blackbeard picks his head up off the table. It is pounding with grog, gunpowder and opium that has not been fully slept off.

He stares at the door, still not awake enough to answer.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Very well, then. I'm coming in!

Eden throws the door open, scans the room, sees Blackbeard and not Charlotte.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Good God, man, what have you done?

BLACKBEARD
Nothin'. It's what she done to me.

Eden looks at him blankly.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
She drugged me, man! She left me
here to die!

Blackbeard pulls himself to his feet. Looks around.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Where the hell is she?

EDEN
That is precisely what I need to
know.

BLACKBEARD
(waving him off)
She's gone. And you're better off
without her.

EDEN
She's gone with my copy of our
agreement.
(off his reaction)
It was locked in my desk last night.
Now it's missing.

BLACKBEARD
You better get her under control.

EDEN
Me? You were supposed to take her to
your ship last night.

BLACKBEARD
I wanted to get to know her a little
better first, Governor.

EDEN
You stupid beast!

BLACKBEARD
Listen here, Governor. Out of respect
for our being partners now, I'll let
that one go, but not a second. Ya
catch the drift here?

EDEN
I have a hanging to see to at noon
today and, according to our agreement,
you are already to have been gone.
Do you catch my drift?

BLACKBEARD
Ya figure she's in town now, do ya?

EDEN
Where else would she be?

BLACKBEARD
I can have 'er picked up, like we
planned.

EDEN
You can't go to town! The man who
sliced that soldier in front of
witnesses cannot attend the hanging!

It's a good point. Blackbeard pours himself some more grog
from the bottle.

BLACKBEARD

My men'll take care of it, you may
lay to that.

OFF Eden's reaction.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

In the front, Bridges looks up from behind the counter, and looks like he's seen a ghost. In the back, with one eye toward the front of the store, Charlotte packs her belongings with the assistance of Lulu. On the desk is a letter with letterhead that reads "Governor Charles Eden." A loaded pistol is laid next to her pen and paper. She hears:

BRIDGES (O.S.)

Miss Ormand, someone needs to see
you!

Charlotte flinches, places her hand on the pistol. A beat, then Spector appears in full uniform, flinches himself at the sight of this armed woman.

SPECTOR

Ma'am, Lieutenant Spector of the
Royal Navy ship, the Jane. Is there
a problem?

CHARLOTTE

The Navy is here? Finally! I need to
speak to someone in charge.

SPECTOR

First, however, we've a man in need
of a good look-see.

CHARLOTTE

Of course. What happened to him?

SPECTOR

He was marooned, then at sea without
food or water for days more.

Charlotte stands, grabs the letter from Eden and her small bag, inside of which she throws a few final instruments.

CHARLOTTE

I can come with you now.

MAYNARD (O.S.)

Charlotte?

Charlotte turns. It's Maynard. He's thin, his beard has been shaved, his long hair is tied back in a proper pony-tail. But his eyes which were dull a second ago are coming alive.

CHARLOTTE

Robert?!

Spector smiles at Maynard.

SPECTOR

I say, you are a well-known man in this town.

(backing out)

I shall leave you in capable hands, then. If you'll excuse me.

Spector takes his leave, moving past Bridges, and exiting through the front door. Lulu sees that she, too, is out-of-place.

LULU

I'll be tendin' to matters -- outside matters --

Charlotte turns to Maynard and the emotion just overwhelms her.

CHARLOTTE

They wanted me to believe you were dead.

MAYNARD

Not quite yet.

She impulsively throws her arms around Maynard's neck.

CHARLOTTE

I knew you would return to me.

MAYNARD

It's all that kept me alive.

CHARLOTTE

The Governor said you weren't who you said you were.

MAYNARD

I'm afraid your father is the one in disguise.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, I know. And I cannot bear to call him by that name.

(disgusted)

Father...

Charlotte nods, this squares with what she's come to know to be true now.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

We are not safe here.

Charlotte takes Maynard by the hand, and together they exit through a back door.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Eden's carriage pulls past the gallows and through the rubber-necking townsfolk. As it passes, we catch a glimpse of Eden. Sitting across from him -- Hands and Robber #1.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - MARKET PLACE - DAY

Maynard and Charlotte find themselves in a staging area for the nearby market, full of chicken coops, caged or otherwise contained animals, and other goods.

MAYNARD

What is it, Charlotte? What is the danger?

CHARLOTTE

It forms on all sides.

She thrusts a letter in front of him.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Here.

Maynard begins to read the letter. It's clear quickly what this letter is:

MAYNARD

This is an agreement between your father and Blackbeard.

CHARLOTTE

To divide some pirate treasure he seeks in exchange for protection from prosecution.

MAYNARD

Yes. The lost treasure of Captain Kidd.

(intense)

Is he here now? Blackbeard?

CHARLOTTE

He was until last night. Staying in the comfort of the same room as you first did, his filthy men camped outside.

MAYNARD

My God!

CHARLOTTE

Lulu overheard them. She says they were to leave today, before the hanging. It was Blackbeard himself who told me you were dead, that you stole treasure from him.

MAYNARD

A black tongue to match his beard.

CHARLOTTE

I have to know now. I don't care what the answer is so long as it is the truth.

MAYNARD

Anything.

CHARLOTTE

Why did you really leave? That night?

MAYNARD

The man who attacked us in the carriage -- who you shot at? He was a guest at your party. I saw him talking with Knight and followed them into town. It was then that I was impressed into service by Blackbeard himself. I could hardly reveal my true calling, although I was eventually found out and marooned as a result.

MAYNARD TURNS TO SEE:

MAYNARD'S POV: END OF ALLEY - MAIN STREET

Eden's coach stopping at the end of the alley. Hands and Robber #1 surreptitiously alight and merge in with the townsfolk.

BACK TO SCENE

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

What are his two henchmen up to?

No good I'm sure.

This time it's Maynard who takes Charlotte by the hand, begins to move through the alley at a good clip. On the move, briskly:

CHARLOTTE

What was it like? Please tell me.

MAYNARD

It was a form of madness. You shouldn't be burdened with it.

CHARLOTTE

You must have wished for death.

Maynard stops suddenly, his back against the wall.

MAYNARD

Not my own. Blackbeard's.

They have a view into the town square. He nods in that direction.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Look.

WHAT THEY SEE IS:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - COURT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The two thugs have disappeared amidst the preparations for the noon hanging, Eden's carriage is stopped outside the Court House which is guarded by several Redcoats. Eden is alighting and greeting Captain Brand.

BRAND

Captain Ellis Brand, Royal Navy,
Governor.

EDEN

Very good, Captain. Please come in.

They enter the Court House.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Maynard and Charlotte watch them go.

MAYNARD

That is Captain Brand, the officer who rescued me. His orders were to report to your father.

CHARLOTTE

Does he know what kind of man he is?

MAYNARD

I have told him but he may believe my charge to be the rantings of a man too long in the midday sun.

Charlotte takes a second letter and hands it to Maynard.

CHARLOTTE

This is the Letter of Marque which you gave to the Governor yourself. Perhaps you may have need of it again.

Maynard takes it, glances quickly, folds it into his inside pocket. He nods about the value.

INT. COURT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Eden and Captain Brand enter. Brand, his hat under his arm, per protocol.

EDEN

What is your report then?

BRAND

I have reason to believe that pirates, led by one who calls himself Blackbeard, may soon be in port if they aren't here already.

EDEN

Blackbeard, yes. But he has left. Two of his men hang today at noon.

BRAND

I will attempt to find out Blackbeard's course and move to intercept him immediately.

EDEN

I wouldn't do that.

BRAND

Governor?

EDEN

They're quite tricky, these pirates. No telling where they might go, but at least they won't be here. Stay for the hanging. The weather should be very equable, and I'm certain your men could enjoy their leave in town.

BRAND

I will, of course, give that due consideration. But I would like your authorization to give pursuit.

Eden looks at Brand. Another Navy straight-arrow.

EDEN

What is the source of your information about Blackbeard?

BRAND

Last week, in the sea lanes, we found a survivor of his ship. A Royal Navy Lieutenant who'd been marooned.

EDEN

A Lieutenant?

BRAND

(guarded)

Robert Maynard. He claims to know you.

EDEN

(considers this)

No. The name is hardly familiar.

(beat)

Am I to understand that you must have my permission to engage these pirates?

BRAND

Yes. A mere formality, I assume.

EDEN

Assume nothing, Captain, I am in charge here. I will consider your request. Where shall I find you?

BRAND

We are at harbor.

EDEN

See you at the hanging then.

Brand sits momentarily, a bit stunned. Eden waves him away impatiently.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Well, be off, then.

Brand nods slightly, takes his leave.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Back to Charlotte and Maynard, watching Brand exit.

CHARLOTTE

We need to speak to him immediately.

Maynard nods, looks around suspiciously.

MAYNARD

Yes. But there are men here who would stop at nothing to prevent that.

As they scan the surroundings, the preparations for the hanging are in full gear. A gallows, capable of hanging two men at once, has been set up and there is anticipation among the crowd of citizens who come to see pirates hang as a form of community sport.

MAYNARD AND CHARLOTTE

Cross the main street -- losing themselves in the crowd -- taking in this tableau of execution-to-come. As they do, Calico Billy's wife, Maddy, rushes up to them.

MADDY

Lieutenant, you're alive!

A Redcoat looks over at them. Maynard quickly steers her away.

MAYNARD

Please, madam, walk with us, and call no attention. Have you seen your husband?

She points across the square.

MAYNARD AND CHARLOTTE'S POV - THATCH AND CALICO BILLY

Both are under careful guard from several Redcoats.

MADDY (V.O.)

They mean to string him up, they do, but it's that pirate Blackbeard who should swing!

BACK TO SCENE

Maynard sees Calico Billy and Thatch.

MAYNARD

What are the charges?

MADDY

They say he killed a Redcoat soldier.
But he was with me. We were among
the last to be let off the boat, and
the soldier was already dead.

CHARLOTTE

(to Maynard)

Of course they'd rather hang a slave
and a castaway than a pirate.

Maynard looks around, sizes up the situation a little more
fully, turns to Maddy.

MAYNARD

The soldiers will allow you to see
your husband. Go there now, and tell
him that I will do all that is
possible to spare him but he must be
prepared to fight. But go!

Maddy takes off. Maynard grabs Charlotte and they head away
from the square after Brand.

EXT. DOCK AREA - DAY

Maynard and Charlotte catch up with Brand.

MAYNARD

Captain!

BRAND

Lieutenant Maynard.

MAYNARD

Captain, sir, I must speak to you on
a matter most urgent.

BRAND

If your concern remains the pirate
Blackbeard, I am awaiting the
Governor's order before I am
authorized to pursue him.

CHARLOTTE

I am Charlotte Ormand, Governor Eden's
adopted daughter.

Maynard hands the letter of agreement to Brand.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

From the Governor's own desk. My father is a business partner to pirates, including Blackbeard.

MAYNARD

He wishes to give him a head start on you.

BRAND

This hanging then?

MAYNARD

A distraction, a delaying tactic. And, worse, the two men to be hanged are not pirates but a shipwrecked father and a new slave, recently arrived.

Brand looks at Maynard, then moves across to Spector.

BRAND

Mister Spector, return to the ship and prepare a boarding party, fully armed.

SPECTOR

Aye, aye, sir!

Spector sets to the task. Brand returns to Maynard and Charlotte.

BRAND

What time is this hanging?

MAYNARD

Noon.

Brand pulls out his pocket watch and checks it. He calls to Spector.

BRAND

Throw caution to the wind, Mister Spector!

Back to Maynard.

BRAND (CONT'D)

You win another battle, Lieutenant.

MAYNARD

Sir?

BRAND

With the Governor's authority suspect,
we must turn our attention to stopping
this Blackbeard as well.

Maynard nods.

EXT. QAR - AT ANCHOR - COVE - DAY

The QAR rides at anchor in a concealed cove. A Jolly boat containing Blackbeard and several of his men, approaches the side of the ship.

EXT. QAR - SIDE OF SHIP - DAY

A rope ladder is thrown overboard to the Jolly boat, and Blackbeard begins to climb aboard the ship. He turns to the other pirates.

BLACKBEARD

Now ya go back and collect Hands and
the girl. Quick and easy, understand?

The pirates nod agreement, and the Jolly boat takes off.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The anticipation is full-on, and we are minutes way from a good hanging. Three ornate chairs have been brought out into the viewing area -- front-row seats, if you will -- and are occupied by Eden and Knight with a third open. In the crowd, Maddy wails as Calico Billy and Thatch are marched toward the gallows.

THE GALLOWES

A HANGMAN approaches Calico Billy and Thatch. He takes the noose and hangs it loosely around Calico Billy's head. Nearby a MINISTER reads from the Bible.

MINISTER

Behold, the Lord's hand is not
shortened, that it cannot save;
neither his ear heavy, that it cannot
hear:

NEAR THE DOCK

Charlotte waits expectantly as twenty Royal Navy BLUECOATS led by Spector disembark from the Jolly boats.

MINISTER (V.O.)

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

The Bluecoats move quietly off the quay to take positions.

BACK TO SCENE

The crowd settle down for a good double hanging.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

CALICO BILLY

No, sir. You got that wrong, sir. My hands ain't defiled by no blood.

They ain't what I'd call clean but killin's not part of it by a long shot. I'm a father and a husband.

The Minister gives Calico Billy a look that might, for an instant, be interpreted as hopeful. Then, with no comment, the Minister simply begins reading again.

MINISTER

None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.

The Minister closes his Bible, crisply, job finished.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

We pray for your lost souls. Amen.
(re: Thatch)
Same goes for the heathen.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Spector signals the Bluecoats into position.

EXT. THE SQUARE - GALLOWES - DAY

The Hangman silently begins to tighten the noose around Calico Billy's head. The Minister, meanwhile, takes off, walks down from the gallows and takes a seat in that third chair next to Eden and Knight. A beat, then Knight stands:

KNIGHT

By the authority invested in me by His Majesty, after hearing all relevant evidence, it is my finding that these two men have committed murder of a soldier in the service of His Majesty. They are hereby committed to hang.

Knight sits down, quite pleased with himself. From the crowd, though, there is a COLLECTIVE GASP.

MAYNARD

As he jumps down from one rooftop to the next, making a dangerous but surprisingly quick approach to the gallows.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Stand down!

Maynard has his sword out and, as he glides in front of the crowd, he slices the hangman's noose from Calico Billy, then Thatch.

He then kicks into the two Redcoat guards who were standing on the gallows, sending them sprawling. Maynard jumps to a halt on the gallows. He's wearing his Royal Navy uniform, clean-shaven, resolute, addressing the crowd.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Good people of New Providence. These men are not pirates. They are innocent of murder.

Maynard kicks the Redcoat guard's weapons toward Calico Billy and Thatch, speaks urgently to them.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Point them at something Red, but don't shoot. Men are on the way.

CALICO BILLY

(not comforted)
They'd best be quick about it.

THE COMMOTION BELOW

Stirred by this raw display of derring-do as well as Maynard's declaration of injustice. Knight is on his feet first with the rebuttal --

KNIGHT

You stand down, sir! You are interrupting a lawful hanging!

MAYNARD

(points to Knight,
Eden)

These men are the true criminals!

This bold proclamation stuns the crowd. Eden moves to nip it in the bud.

EDEN

Guards! Arrest this man!

Maynard draws his sword and brandishes it with one hand. With the other, he brandishes a letter.

MAYNARD

This letter confirms a partnership between Governor Eden and the pirate Blackbeard, in the Governor's own penmanship.

Maynard, Thatch and Calico Billy look down and see a half dozen Redcoat rifles aimed square at them.

EDEN

Lies! You will hang with these men, Mister Maynard, as the pirate you are.

(to crowd)

This man sailed with Blackbeard himself. He is no member of the Royal Navy. He is nothing but an impostor.

MAYNARD

Perhaps the townspeople can judge for themselves.

The Royal Navy BLUECOATS are popping up everywhere by stealth. On rooftops, behind corners, in windows. They have the drop on the men in Red. As they do, Captain Brand strides through the crowd, in his best pressed dress uniform, looking like an Admiral.

BRAND

Soldiers of England, lay down your arms, and no one will be hurt. Know this: the man before you, Charles Eden, is no longer your lawful Governor.

The Redcoats begin to look at the situation. Their guns are trained on the gallows, not at the Bluecoats. But the Bluecoats have all their weapons trained on the Redcoats. Slowly at first, then faster, the Redcoats begin to put down their weapons.

Knight, as agitated as we've ever seen him, takes a pistol from one of the nearby Redcoat guards and aims it square at Brand. He starts to pull the trigger -- and Brand draws his own weapon and SHOOTS KNIGHT, square in the chest. Knight hits the ground hard. Brand turns to Eden.

BRAND (CONT'D)

Charles Eden, you are under arrest for conspiracy to commit piracy and to cover up murder.

EDEN

I am no pirate, sir! And I am no murderer!

BRAND

(dismissive)

You have betrayed the public trust. I am assuming the Governorship until one can properly be appointed by London.

Two of Brand's Bluecoats have followed behind him, and take Eden into custody toward the Court House.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - LATER

In the aftermath, Brand stands with Spector and Maynard, looking over the situation.

BRAND

(to Spector)

Your orders are to bring Blackbeard back for public hanging but, if that is not possible, he should be taken dead and his body returned.

SPECTOR

Aye, aye, sir.

BRAND

The question, of course, is where to find him?

MAYNARD

Miss Ormand seems to feel that Blackbeard would already have set sail. I've found no one who can challenge that.

SPECTOR

None of Blackbeard's crew were here for the hanging?

Maynard shakes his head. Brand nods, taking this in.

SPECTOR (CONT'D)

And what of the corrupt magistrate, Knight?

BRAND

Last minute confession, perhaps?

MAYNARD

He has, regrettably, died of his wounds.

BRAND

Governor Eden seems to be the only hope then.

(to Spector)

You spoke to him.

SPECTOR

He has been steadfast in his denial of any alliance with the pirate.

BRAND

Perhaps a rougher interrogation?

MAYNARD

Men lie under torture, Captain. Believing he was finished, he is most likely to lie and send us on a wild goose chase.

BRAND

Have we any choice?

The three men consider this. Then:

MAYNARD

Sir. I have an idea. With your permission...

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Eden sits at the table, glaring at the window, looking out over the commotion outside. Maynard enters.

EDEN

You've made a vast mistake, Lieutenant, relying on a letter that I can assure you is nothing more than a cheap forgery, born out by my enemies.

MAYNARD

The jails are full of innocent men. I suppose it should come as no surprise then that such a letter should be found safely locked within your own desk.

EDEN

No doubt it was you who enlisted my daughter to conduct your illegal search of my personal property.

MAYNARD

I assure you her suspicions were entirely her own, based on your own behavior, sir.

Eden nods. Taking no bait.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

No curiosity about your friend, the magistrate, Tobias Knight?

EDEN

(not that interested)
Another victim of your over-reach, Lieutenant. God rest his poor soul.

Maynard, who just told Brand the truth that Knight was dead, springs his trap on Eden.

MAYNARD

Yes, but God will have to wait.

That gets Eden's attention fully.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

A lucky sort, Mister Knight, taking that direct shot and still being well enough to talk. A bag of Spanish doubloons in his pocket stopped the bullet.

Eden tries to maintain a poker face but he is clearly shocked.

EDEN

He survived?

MAYNARD

(nods)

And he appears to be quite willing to testify against you in exchange for his own freedom. I've just come from him.

EDEN

The man is a liar! Always has been!

Looking past Eden through the window, Maynard sees men moving Knight's body, carrying it like a bag of dirt.

He moves in front of the window to block Eden's view.

MAYNARD

Be that as it may, his testimony is enough to hang you. However, under the proper circumstances, I have been assured Captain Brand could be convinced to spare your life.

EDEN

(suddenly interested)

What circumstances?

MAYNARD

Blackbeard has sailed. The question is where.

EDEN

If I knew where, that would be an admission of guilt, would it not?

MAYNARD

Governor, you have fallen prey to temptation but, I can assure you, Captain Brand seems to be a strong believer in redemption. However, with every passing minute that Blackbeard sails, I am equally certain that Captain Brand's belief falters a bit more.

Eden nods to himself. Time to cut a deal.

EDEN

I have your word that I will not hang?

Maynard nods.

EDEN (CONT'D)

His ship is bound for Vulture Island.
He says it is a two week voyage. He
would reveal no more of his plans.

MAYNARD

Very good, then. There is one more
matter that must be dealt with.

Maynard nods to the Bluecoat standing at the door. He opens
it and Charlotte enters. She moves toward Eden.

EDEN

My dearest daughter...

CHARLOTTE

You tried to have me killed to gain
my inheritance.

EDEN

No.

CHARLOTTE

And when that didn't work, you gave
me to a pirate for his pleasure.

EDEN

This has all been a most unfortunate
misunderstanding.

CHARLOTTE

Indeed. Let me clear the matter up
perfectly.

With that, Charlotte hauls off and SLAPS EDEN HARD ACROSS THE
FACE! Hard enough, it nearly buckles his knees.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Never call me your daughter again.

Charlotte turns and moves to the door. Maynard escorts her.

INT. COURTROOM - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS - DAY

There is just enough release now for the two of them to have
a moment together. Charlotte cups the same hand she used to
slap the hell out of Eden tenderly on Maynard's face.

CHARLOTTE

I was to examine your health after
your long ordeal. I'm afraid I have
been most derelict.

Maynard takes her hand and kisses it, and allows himself the
first real smile he's had in a long while.

MAYNARD

I assure you, I am feeling better.
Much better.

This is our first romantic kiss we've allowed ourself since Maynard's return. But even this kiss cannot, yet, lead to much more.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

I must report this information
immediately.

CHARLOTTE

In our haste, I left important medical
supplies which may be needed. I
will get them and meet you at the
dock.

Another quick kiss, and they're off, separately.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Charlotte enters.

CHARLOTTE

Mister Bridges?

Nothing. It's quiet, and Charlotte is unsettled. She looks behind the counter. It's:

BRIDGES

Dead. A knife through his heart,
literally. His glasses shattered on
the ground next to him.

Charlotte GASPS.

She staggers back then jumps! A hand is on her shoulder.

SHE SPINS AROUND AND SEES:

HANDS

Standing there with Robber #1.

ROBBER #1

Didn't want to part with his gold.

HANDS

Take a lesson, girly, when next the
Captain asks you to part with your
own treasure.

Charlotte backs up, but her back is literally and figuratively against the wall.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

They hustle her out the back door into a waiting wagon.

As this happens, Lulu rounds the corner, sees this happening, and runs screaming after them. But she's too late.

EXT. DOCK AREA - DAY

Brand and Spector are now preparing the Jolly boats for departure. Maynard approaches.

MAYNARD

Blackbeard is sailing for Vulture Island. By my charts, it is two to three weeks sail from New Providence.

BRAND

And the treasure?

MAYNARD

Unclear. However, Blackbeard appears to have opinions on the matter, opinions he is keeping to himself.

SPECTOR

We should be re-provisioned and ready to sail by morning.

Brand nods, turns his attention to Maynard.

BRAND

Lieutenant, as the ranking member of the Crown's interests, it is my duty to assume the Governorship until a replacement can be sent. Lieutenant Spector will command the Jane. I should like you to sail under him as First Mate.

MAYNARD

Yes, sir.

Maynard sees Lulu running toward him.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Excuse me, sir.

Maynard moves to intercept Lulu.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Lulu, what is it?

LULU

They done took her, sir. From the store where she did her doctorin'. Them pirates took Miss Charlotte.

Maynard's face grows hard.

MAYNARD

Did you see this with your own eyes?

LULU

I did, sir, I surely did.

He takes Lulu by the shoulders.

MAYNARD

Stay here.

Maynard returns to Brand and Spector.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Blackbeard has taken at least one hostage. Miss Ormand.

Spector and Brand know what this means.

BRAND

I see.

Maynard's jaw sets firmly and he speaks with great resolution.

MAYNARD

Sir, I believe, given this information, that you should reconsider your position and retain the command of the Jane.

BRAND

If I do so, Lieutenant, then New Providence will succumb to lawlessness. That cannot be allowed.

MAYNARD

In that case, I request command of the Jane.

Brand is taken aback by Maynard's boldness.

BRAND

As I said, Mister Spector is to have that honor.

SPECTOR

(pointedly)

An honor that has already been given.

MAYNARD

(to Spector)

And well-deserved under ordinary circumstances.

(to Brand)

Sir, I have sailed with this pirate, Blackbeard. It is one thing to know where he sails. I know how he sails and how he thinks. To capture him will require instant decisions and I am prepared to make them.

Brand considers this carefully.

BRAND

I do see your point. However, will not your fiancée's predicament distract you?

MAYNARD

Quite the opposite. It will focus my mind on the task at hand as never before.

BRAND

You have commanded ships of the Jane's class before?

MAYNARD

On three occasions, sir.

BRAND

Still, Lieutenant, I am reluctant.

Maynard pulls another letter from his breast pocket, hands it to Brand.

MAYNARD

Sir, these are my orders from Admiral Pennington. I submit this letter of marque to you only as a last resort.

Brand begins to read it over. Hands it back.

BRAND

The Admiral is quite clear that in matters of combatting piracy, I am to give you great leeway, up to ceding control of my own ship.

Hearing this, Spector clears his throat. He is stand-up Royal Navy all the way.

SPECTOR

Captain, if the Crown wishes it so,
I should be pleased to serve under
Lieutenant Maynard on this mission.

MAYNARD

As First Mate. I cannot do this
without your experience with the
Jane. And the support you have from
the crew, of course.

SPECTOR

Indeed. You shall have it.

BRAND

So be it then. Gentlemen, prepare to
sail.

Brand nods his agreement.

EXT. QAR - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Blackbeard and his crew are back on the open seas, in full
sail, looking for treasure.

EXT. QAR - MAIN DECK - DAY

Blackbeard looks out over the ocean, letting the breeze blow,
finishing a pipe. Hands approaches.

HANDS

You expecting to see somethin' out
there, Cap'n?

BLACKBEARD

My mind says no, but my gut tells me
to look.

(smiles)

'Course, that could be from drinkin'
too much gunpowder in my grog.

HANDS

Aye, sir. Men are mustered, if you're
ready.

Blackbeard nods. He follows Hands. The men are gathered on
deck.

HANDS (CONT'D)

Hobbs was supposed to bring her up
by now.

BLACKBEARD

Wait here.

Blackbeard disappears below.

INT. QAR - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - MINUTES LATER

Charlotte sits, staring out the window. Hobbs watches her. A beat, then Blackbeard appears and his look says just how upset he is.

HOBBS
Cap'n, I tried.

Blackbeard growls his response, turns to Charlotte.

BLACKBEARD
Men are expectin' a weddin'. Last thing ya wanna do is disappoint a ship crawlin' with pirates.

CHARLOTTE
Are you insane?

BLACKBEARD
The Governor, he done gave his permission.

CHARLOTTE
I am now of legal-age and I will marry only who I wish to. That does not include you.

Blackbeard lurches forward, his sociopathic menace in full bloom.

BLACKBEARD
If ya marry me straightaway, then the men know to stay away, that ya belong to the Cap'n. If ya don't, then you're fair game, ya may lay to that.

CHARLOTTE
Robert Maynard will find you and cut your throat. Whatever fate befalls me, nothing can change yours.

Blackbeard looks at Charlotte, sees her will, throws her back against the wall.

BLACKBEARD
Suit yourself.
(to Hobbs)
Put her in chains below, Hobbs.

Blackbeard turns, done with her.

EXT. QAR - MAIN DECK - MINUTES LATER

From below, Blackbeard emerges back in front of the men. Now he flashes that other creepily upbeat side to his personality.

BLACKBEARD

Here's the what's what, men. God hisself has the last laugh on ol' Blackbeard. He's finally brung me the one woman can withstand my charms. So I's decided to forget about the young shrew.

(to Hands)

Mister Hands, double rations tonight.

(to men)

I'll celebrate with ya as a free man!

The men let out a ROAR of approval.

EXT. THE JANE - DAY

An HOURGLASS is turned over.

A BELL IS RUN to mark the end of one watch and the beginning of another.

Men go up the ropes and men go down the ropes.

And -- standing resolutely throughout all of this -- is Maynard, a tormented man. He looks hard toward the water ahead.

Spector, serving as first mate, leaves a small group of sailors, approaches Maynard.

MAYNARD

Before you speak -- the men are loyal and true, but wish to know if their current captain -- having suffered such hardship on land and sea -- is now up to the task of dispatching a man of Blackbeard's reputation? Is that the long and short of it?

Spector nods, more or less.

SPECTOR

People say that this Blackbeard is not a man, but an agent of the Devil. If not the Devil himself.

MAYNARD

He is a man, same as any able seaman, not a myth. He will bleed and die as any other.

SPECTOR

Yet you told Captain Brand that you had indeed shot Blackbeard. On the island of your marooning.

Maynard takes this in, re-living the moment he was left on Hell-on-Earth.

MAYNARD

My aim will be true this time, if I can close the distance.

SPECTOR

Aye, sir. It seems we have the same problem now. What course will bring us closer?

Maynard looks to Spector, sees his concern, and tries to deal with it with a smile.

MAYNARD

N'or, n'orwest should line me up nicely, I should think. I will plot the full course under the noon day sun.

SPECTOR

As you wish.

MAYNARD

And, Mister Spector, God willing, The Jane will outrun the Queen Anne's Revenge. We are lighter, trimmer and, therefore, a good deal faster.

SPECTOR

If we can have the weather gauge over him, we could fire first. But we cannot reasonably bear the brunt of his cannon for long.

MAYNARD

In that case, there are other places to defeat a pirate than the open sea.

(off Spector's reaction)

Just take me there with all due speed, if you will.

SPECTOR

Aye, sir.
(shouting O.S.)
N'or n'orwest!

Spector nods his salute, then moves off. Maynard's focus returns to the sea, PUSHING IN on the distant horizon.

EXT. QAR - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The familiar pirate ship at sail.

INT. QAR - BELOW DECKS - DAY

Dark and squalid. Charlotte is, as promised, in leg chains. Three men, led by Hobbs, enter, carrying a lantern.

HOBBS

Maybe you should'a said 'I do' when
he give you the chance.

Her eyes narrow as she steels herself against the threat that Blackbeard promised her.

CHARLOTTE

Just leave me be.

HOBBS

A pretty thing like you? Never.

She feels the floor around her and finds a BOAT HOOK. Even though her hands are shackled, she's able to grasp it and bring it up to Hobbs's throat.

CHARLOTTE

Stay back or I'll slit you like a
pig.

HOBBS

Will you look at that, boys? Barely
sailing with us and already she's
ready to cut us down to size.

CHARLOTTE

Yes. And I know exactly where it
hurts most.

It's a stand-off. Charlotte is not fearless -- she's terrified -- but she is brave as they come. She does not look like she will be taken without some blood spilled.

HOBBS

Bet you do.

A beat as we wonder how this will end. Then Hobbs holds up a set of keys and dangles them before her.

HOBBS (CONT'D)

Ain't sayin' I wouldn't want some of
that sweetness but that ain't why
we're here. Cap'n says there's other
things you're good for.

Hobbs tosses her the keys.

HOBBS (CONT'D)

Looks like you're in a real state
there, so why don't you unlock
yourself?

Charlotte grabs the keys, begins to go to work on her shackles.

INT. QAR - SICK BAY - DAY

Hobbs lets Charlotte in. Dr. Bruce writhes on one of the cots in a cold sweat. Charlotte takes one look at him and turns to Hobbs.

CHARLOTTE

How long has he been like this?

HOBBS

Don't know. I came in to get some
pain elixir and that's how he be.
Seems our doctor needs a little
doctorin' himself.

CHARLOTTE

If I refuse?

HOBBS

Cap'n said to throw you overboard.

CHARLOTTE

Stand guard outside if you must.

Hobbs and the others stand there.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Wait outside! If I need something,
I'll call for you.

Hobbs and the others trade looks. He nods for the others to back out. He stays.

HOBBS

I'm not to take my eyes off you.

Charlotte ignores him, focused instead on Dr. Bruce. She touches his forehead.

CHARLOTTE

Can you talk?

DR. BRUCE

...help...me...

Charlotte soaks a cloth with water and starts to douse his body with it.

CHARLOTTE

I intend to.

He continues to shake and goes back out of consciousness. Charlotte searches the nearby cabinet and finds a pipe. She sniffs it.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

How long have you been without opium?
(shaking him)

I say, Doctor, how long have you
been without opium?

DR. BRUCE

...since we left... someone

CHARLOTTE

Someone stole your supply. Imagine.
On a pirate ship, no less.

DR. BRUCE

...I'm...dying...

CHARLOTTE

From what I know, you may wish you
were dying but you probably will
make it through. I will sit with
you.

(to Hobbs)

If you have anything to drink on
this ship besides rum, I suggest you
have your friends bring it to me
now. Potable water with lime would
be best.

Charlotte continues to mop Dr. Bruce's brow.

SPYGLASS POV - VULTURE ISLAND

Seen clearly in daylight, it actually does look like a vulture,
dominating the island.

BLACKBEARD (V.O.)

Looks like a vulture all right.

EXT. QAR - UPPER DECK - DAY

Blackbeard lowers his spyglass, speaks to Hands.

BLACKBEARD

Maynard, if he follows, he'll take
the safest harbor.

(points)

That one.

(points again)

That's why we go there, Mister Hands.

HANDS

Aye Captain.

Hands nods, moves off to speak to Hobbs at the wheel.

Blackbeard looks at this spyglass again. As he lowers it, he
sees that Caesar is near.

BLACKBEARD

Don't look at me like that. What'd
ya want?

CAESAR

No more cabin boy. Caesar fight for
Blackbeard.

BLACKBEARD

Aw, ya ain't still sore we had to
let Thatch hang, are ya?

CAESAR

Thatch good fighter. Teach Caesar
good.

(again)

Caesar fight for Blackbeard.

BLACKBEARD

Look at yourself, boy. Barely old
enough to hold your rum and you want
to be getting yourself killed.

Caesar stares at Blackbeard, not backing down.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

This about the treasure?

Caesar nods.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

And what does a puny little bastard
like you need with money?

CAESAR

Treasure buy Caesar to be free.

BLACKBEARD

If ya get your freedom, who's gonna
serve me my dinner?

CAESAR

Caesar. Blackbeard pay Caesar.

Blackbeard throws his head back and laughs at the sheer improbability of a black man being paid by a pirate for his labor.

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - DAY

Maynard takes measurements of the sun using his cross-staff. Thatch approaches him with a hot mug of what is, presumably, coffee.

MAYNARD

Thank you, Thatch.

Thatch doesn't leave.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Something else?

Maynard puts down his cross-staff.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

It's all right, Thatch. You can speak freely.

Thatch listens, tries to find the right words.

THATCH

You kill pirates?

MAYNARD

With any luck, yes, they'll meet a swift end on the sharp blades of our cutlasses.

THATCH

Not boy.

MAYNARD

Caesar?

THATCH

Boy no kill.

MAYNARD

Battle takes a life of its own and sometimes doesn't spare the ones it should.

THATCH

Kill Thatch. Not boy.

MAYNARD

He won't die on my blade and I'll
instruct the men. Very well.

(bottom line)

'Boy no kill.'

It's a hard thing between them. Maynard picks up the crossstaff
and hands it to Thatch.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Hold it just so, looking into the
sun.

Thatch smiles, enjoying the lesson.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - BEACH - DAY

Blackbeard and his men land in their Jolly boats. The group
includes Hands, Howard, Ransom, Prescott, Hobbs, Seng and
Caesar. A reluctant Charlotte travels in place of Dr. Bruce,
tied to the one-legged Sanborn.

BLACKBEARD

Kidd had a fear a' booby traps, way
Gardener told it. Might'a got it
here. So if'n this is his big
treasure, best all be careful where
ya step.

(to Charlotte)

Ya got Dr. Bruce's medical bag?

Charlotte nods, remarks pointedly:

CHARLOTTE

If any man gets hurt, there is no
pain killer.

BLACKBEARD

Don't underestimate what a hard shot
of rum can do for a man.

(shouts)

Gather round.

Blackbeard pulls some twigs from his pocket and holds them
up.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Draw up. Short stick walks point.

The men begin to draw one by one. Ransom draws the short stick.
He looks stricken, but all the faces looking back look
relieved.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - JUNGLE TRAIL - DAY

Ransom leads a single file line of pirates into the ever thickening jungle. Charlotte is in the middle.

BLACKBEARD

Ransom, you're a lucky man today.

RANSOM

So far, so good, Cap'n.

HOBBS

He ain't lucky yet. Walkin' out with pockets loaded with treasure, that's lucky.

Ransom has to start using his cutlass to whack away at some of the heavy foliage.

BLACKBEARD

Nature's a callin', I'll be right behind ya.

Blackbeard goes off trail and begins to relieve himself. As he does, he WHISTLES a little SEA SHANTY. Business done he hitches up his pants, moves to the trail. He looks around and he's lost the group. Across the way, he sees movement, strikes out through the brush after it.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Hell's fire...

Blackbeard keeps walking, cutting across toward the jungle. He takes one step and there's a SHUDDERING SOUND underneath him. Just enough time for Blackbeard's eyes to dart back and forth --

THE BOTTOM FALLS OUT

-- Suddenly, Blackbeard plunges deep into a pit. He tumbles and lands in a lump at the bottom. He looks around and sees that there are dozens of snakes inside this pit. Most people would scream. Blackbeard looks disgusted:

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Ya got my jacket dirty.

ON THE TRAIL

The expedition keeps marching ahead, not knowing anything has happened. Hobbs pauses a moment, thinks he hears something but decides he hasn't and keeps moving forward.

BLACKBEARD

Slowly rising, not wanting to set
the snakes off.

They coil and wriggle and HISS.

Blackbeard HISSES back at the snakes like a demented Dr. Doolittle. Slowly, slowly, slowly, Blackbeard begins to unsheathe his cutlass, coming out inch-by-inch.

The cold steel glints in the sunlight from above. At the same time, Blackbeard uses his other hand to reach for his pistol, slides it loose from his bandoleer.

One of the snakes is coiled, its head rising, ready to strike.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

(low whisper)

Let me put some more fork in those
tongues of yours.

Exploding in action -- startling us as much as the snakes -- Blackbeard swings and takes the head of the coiled snake clean off. His blade rakes through the rest. As one wraps around his leg, he shakes it into the air and slices it as it falls.

Another snake is ready to attack. Blackbeard SHOOTs it dead. He immediately drops that pistol, pulls another one from his bandoleer and FIRES, taking out another snake.

THE PIRATES

React to the sound of GUNFIRE. They turn and begin to run in the direction of the sound. What they see is:

THE SNAKE PIT

Smoke curls up over the edge. The pirates peer in over the edge. Looking back is Blackbeard, surrounded by smoke and dead snakes, looking like Satan.

BLACKBEARD

First man to get me out gets an extra
half share.

And, with that, the race is on.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - LATER

The pirate crew marches on in hot, sweaty silence. Except for Blackbeard and Hands, who hang back.

BLACKBEARD

All them snakes didn't live in that pit. Catch my drift?

HANDS

(nods)

Somebody put 'em there.

BLACKBEARD

(nods)

Good news for us.

Hands looks confused, not sure how a pit full of snakes can be good.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Think about it, Israel. Somebody here don't want company. Reason is, I figure, they're sitting on Kidd's treasure, they is.

At a small clearing they pull over to drink water, take a breather.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Ransom, you keep scouting ahead.

Ransom nods, takes off. Sanborn, the now one-legged cook, opens up a cloth bag with hard-tack biscuits inside. Howard makes a face, pulls a clump of berries off a bush, turns to Charlotte.

HOWARD

Figure these are fair eatin'?

CHARLOTTE

If you try them and don't die, that would be my opinion.

Howard looks at the berries, then the hard-tack. He throws the berries down, grabs a hard-tack.

HOWARD

Aw, damn...

Blackbeard laughs, grabs the berries and starts eating.

BLACKBEARD

Ain't made a food what can kill me.

PRESCOTT

Cap'n, you mind me askin' you a question?

BLACKBEARD

Depends on whether I like it or not.
(off Prescott's
hesitation)
Aw, go on.

PRESCOTT

Well, me and some a the others, we
was wonderin'... where we goin'?

BLACKBEARD

We're lookin' around, that's what
we're doin'. What? Ya thought we had
some pretty little map with an 'X'
to mark the spot?

PRESCOTT

(beat)
Well... yes...

BLACKBEARD

Only two people know where the
treasure lies, the ghost of Captain
Kidd and me.

They hear the sound of the JUNGLE as a man runs through it.
It's Ransom, barreling out of the foliage, breathing heavily.

RANSOM

Think you better see this.

UP AHEAD

The group follows Ransom, all on
double-time. But what they see stops
them in their tracks. What they see
are the SKULLS of three pirates on
PIKES! Blackbeard turns to Prescott:

BLACKBEARD

Not quite the map we were fancyin'
but it'll have to do.

HANDS

Been here a long time.

BLACKBEARD

Goin' back to Kidd, ya ask me.

Seng looks the most disturbed.

SENG

Vulture Island, very evil. Go home
now.

BLACKBEARD

'Course it's evil Seng. We're here.

HANDS

Everybody check your powder. Let's
be ready to fight.

The mission just got more dangerous, as we:

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - DAY

Maynard has the men gathered. As opposed to Blackbeard's motley crew, these are -- with the exception of Calico Billy and Thatch -- men wearing the uniform of the Royal Navy. Nearly twenty men are gathered, several that we'll get to know are CORDINGLY, PHILLIPS and WOODWARD.

MAYNARD

Soon we will arrive at Vulture Island.
Our mission is to bring the pirate
Blackbeard to justice, dead or alive.
The men under his command are cruel,
larcenous murderers. They are
experienced in battle and adaptable
in their tactics. They are not given
to taking prisoners. With these
opponents, it is kill or be killed.

(re: Calico Billy,
Thatch)

We have brought these men with us
because they have sailed, as I have,
with Blackbeard. They can identify
his pirates for you to kill.

The men stare back at Maynard. If this is a pep talk, they are missing something.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

To your advantage, these men are not
trained in the service of the Royal
Navy. You men are disciplined and
effective fighters. Your weapons are
among the best arms ever produced,
and you have been drilled in their
proper and deadly use. It is clear
that when the battle is joined that
we will prevail.

Maynard looks from man to man. We are seeing his resolve and his leadership. It has all been said, except for one thing:

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

God Save the King!

THE MEN RESPOND:

THE MEN God Save the King!

SPECTOR

Dismissed.

The men break ranks, and Maynard turns back to watching the sea ahead of them.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - INTERIOR - DAY

Blackbeard and the pirates continue their journey into the heart of the island.

At the head of the line, suddenly Ransom crouches makes a silent hand signal. The hand signal passes down the line, one by one.

Blackbeard moves quietly to the front, next to Ransom. The two men speak in WHISPERS.

RANSOM

Thought I saw something.

(points)

Through there.

Blackbeard nods, moves forward. He gets an eyeful.

EXT. GHOST VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Looks like a home to a native population. This is NOT the shipwrecked Swiss Family Robinson model found on Gardener Island. This is strictly native living. Nothing used in construction but what's there on the island, probably made with tools that were made by the people who live here.

Blackbeard pulls back. Again, back to hand signals, he motions to Hands and the others.

They begin to spread out throughout the jungle, encircling the village.

Blackbeard FIRES HIS WEAPON into the air.

In unison, the other pirates emerge into the village, WHOOPING and HOLLERING like the band of marauders they are, all brandishing cutlasses, muskets and pistols.

This goes on for a bit and then it dawns on them...

The only people making any noise are them. Even weirder, they are the only people in the village.

The pirates STOP WHOOPING and now there is only SILENCE.

BLACKBEARD

Where the Devil is everyone?

They begin a hut-by-hut search. Nothing. Nobody.

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - DUSK

Spector approaches Maynard who's looking through his spyglass at Vulture Island.

SPECTOR
Shall we set anchor?

MAYNARD
Something is not right.

SPECTOR
See something?

Maynard continues to look, collapses the spyglass.

MAYNARD
No.

SPECTOR
Seems like the natural harbor.

MAYNARD
We can't have beaten Blackbeard here.
He had too much lead, and we were
becalmed for more than two days.
He's here. We'd be sitting ducks
here at daylight.

SPECTOR
I'll continue to look for a more
discrete anchorage.

MAYNARD
Yes.

Maynard nods, continues looking.

INT. VULTURE ISLAND - GHOST VILLAGE - NIGHT

The pirates are asleep in small groups, a small fire still burning, mostly embers.

Charlotte has her hands tied around a palm tree, incredibly uncomfortable, but Blackbeard is not concerned with her comfort.

Prescott stands watch in the moonlight, eyes nervously scanning the area. Seng is nearby, back turned.

PRESCOTT
Where you figure everybody went?

SENG
Ghosts.

Prescott peers into the darkness. It is kind of creepy. He puts a hand on Seng's shoulder.

PRESCOTT
You don't think this place is haunted?

Seng turns around. He has painted his face in some extreme mask!

PRESCOTT (CONT'D)
Damn!

Seng continues to calmly finish his war paint.

SENG
No people here.

PRESCOTT
That don't mean --

SENG
Just spirits.

Prescott looks at Seng, wondering if he should stay close by for protection, or run as far away as he can. Charlotte tries her best to use friction from sliding her hands up and down the tree to cut through her rope, but it's not working and, besides, where will she go? She looks out to the water, hoping against hope for rescue.

Some kind of ANIMAL SOUNDS come from the jungle. Prescott lights a pipe, trying to calm his nerves.

PRESCOTT
Ain't no ghosts here, 'cept maybe
you, Seng.

With a preternatural awareness, Seng holds up a hand to quiet him. As they listen, we are in Seng's hearing POV as the sounds die down... and down... into SILENCE...

Seng is going into some kind of trance state. After several beats of this, there is one single sound heard, a mere LEAF BEING CRUSHED -- but it's enough for Seng to tilt his head and peer into the darkness.

Is that a man out there?

PRESCOTT (CONT'D)
That a ghost?

In answer, the man lifts a bamboo reed to his lips and blows hard.

From out of the darkness, a dart flies toward Prescott, striking him firmly in the neck. He begins to stagger.

Seng, however, moves like a leopard, springing toward the man. While a lot of pirates are larcenous thugs, capable of acts of extreme violence, Seng is all that, plus an athlete.

Prescott stumbles toward the others. Suddenly, his eyes roll back and he falls to the ground, near the pirates. Blackbeard pushes him away.

BLACKBEARD

(drunk)

Keep your damned distance...

Meanwhile, disappearing into the darkness, Seng, like a jungle predator, gives chase to the dart-blower through the jungle.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - GHOST VILLAGE - DAWN

The men begin to stir awake in the morning light. Sanborn is already at work, along with Caesar, cooking up some grub on a newly-stoked fire..

As Blackbeard rises, he sees Prescott still laying on the ground and gives him a kick.

BLACKBEARD

Ya worthless bag, Prescott. You're supposed to be on guard duty, ya is.

Hands approaches.

HANDS

Seng ain't here neither.

Really pissed now, Blackbeard gives Prescott a street-brawl kick with his boot.

BLACKBEARD

Get up! Ya been drinkin' when ya should've been watchin'!

Prescott doesn't answer, but the force of the kick does roll him over.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

He's been bushwhacked. Stone dead, he is.

HANDS

Maynard?

Blackbeard now sees THE DART sticking out of Prescott's neck. He pulls it out, waves it in front of Hands.

BLACKBEARD
Work a savages.

Hands sees something on the perimeter.

HANDS
Look here, Cap'n.

Blackbeard stands. Emerging from the jungle is Seng. He has the DART MAN tied up with jungle vines.

BLACKBEARD
What have we here, Seng?

SENG
Ghost.

BLACKBEARD
Looks flesh-and-blood to me.

The Dart Man begins to speak excitedly to Blackbeard, obviously terrified.

HANDS
What the hell is he sayin'?

SENG
He begs for you to kill him quickly.

BLACKBEARD
You can understand that gibberish?

SENG
My people, his people, come from same father, live in different islands, speak many same words.

BLACKBEARD
Try sayin' something back to him.
Ask him where everybody went.

Seng speaks in our NATIVE language. The Dart Man speaks back. Seng turns to Blackbeard.

SENG
He say other men here long time ago, like us, pirates. He say his people kill most of them.

BLACKBEARD
That'd be Kidd and his crew.

SENG

After they leave, his people,
everyone, they get sick. Only he
live. He was boy.

HANDS

'Bout time the heathens die from us
'stead of the other way around.

BLACKBEARD

Shut your hole, Hands.
(to Seng)
Tell him I'll let him live but I
want the treasure.

More TRANSLATION back-and-forth.

SENG

He say Gods would punish him. He
rather die now.

Blackbeard nods.

BLACKBEARD

Tell him he has more to fear from
Blackbeard than from the Gods.

Seng continues to translate.

POV THROUGH SPYGLASS - VULTURE ISLAND - DAY

Maynard patiently scans the island. He sees signs of smoke.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

Mister Spector, if you will!

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - DAY

Spector comes to his side. Maynard hands him the spyglass and
points.

MAYNARD

Blackbeard. Take a bearing on that.
Then we will head to the south side
and make anchor where we will least
likely be seen. I will take Cordingly
and Phillips with me to scout.

SPECTOR

Are you sure you should take that
risk?

MAYNARD

If men may be asked to die on this mission, can I show no less of myself?

SPECTOR

Aye, sir.

Spector takes off.

SPECTOR (CONT'D)

Mister Cordingly! Mister Phillips!

Maynard pulls his jacket tighter, makes certain that his pistol is primed and ready.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - GHOST VILLAGE - DAY

Underneath one of the decaying huts, the Dart Man is tied up between two logs, arms and legs outstretched.

It's an improvised STRETCH RACK. It has obviously taken the man close to the breaking point and he CRIES OUT in pain.

Blackbeard sits on a stump, looking over the drawing of Sally Dunbar's tattoo.

Charlotte, still tied up herself, can't even cover her ears. Finally, in frustration:

CHARLOTTE

If he was going to speak, he would have done so. There is no purpose to this torture.

BLACKBEARD

Killed one of my men. Purpose enough.

CHARLOTTE

The last pirates he knew brought disease that killed his entire village. He was trying to scare you into leaving.

BLACKBEARD

Ya want a turn on the rack yourself, woman?

CHARLOTTE

You have a map. Use it.

Blackbeard stomps over to Charlotte, holds the drawing in front of her.

BLACKBEARD

If ya can read this, I'll give ya a share of treasure.

CHARLOTTE

(exasperated)

I cannot fathom how you came here without a plan.

BLACKBEARD

Oh, I one. Growin' up orphaned learned me that much. My plan was to get here and see what's what.

Blackbeard points his index and middle fingers at his eyes, then outward.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Nothin' like seein' for yourself.

Charlotte studies the drawing.

INSERT - THE MAP

Pan down from the vultures 'tears', down through the 'waterfall' and onto an indentation in the rock face that resembles a face. The 'face' is not obvious at first glance.

BACK TO SCENE

Where Charlotte takes in the more intricate detail of the tattoo.

Blackbeard glowers and pulls the drawing away, stomps back.

CHARLOTTE

So I'm supposed to feel sorry for you because you had no parents. I lost mine, too, but it didn't turn my heart to stone. Let that man go.

BLACKBEARD

(to Hands)

Stretch him some more.

Charlotte watches, helpless.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - DAY

Maynard leads Cordingly and Phillips purposefully through the jungle.

CORDINGLY

What are these insects eating that they grow so large?

PHILLIPS

You, Mister Cordingly. They dine on you.

Phillips finds himself caught in a FOOT SNARE which, with lightning speed, snatches him up into the air.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

Help!

Suddenly, Phillips finds himself hanging helplessly from a tree.

MAYNARD

Stay calm, Phillips. We'll get you down.

Cordingly stares up at his comrade, more than a little freaked out. He speaks to Maynard in a low voice.

CORDINGLY

Blackbeard?

Maynard indicates the vine.

MAYNARD

Blackbeard would use rope but only if a cannon or a gun or a sword could not be found. He likes to make short work of it.

Maynard starts to pull palm fronds underneath Phillips to soften a fall. Motions for Cordingly to pitch in. From upside down in the tree, Phillips pleads, a bit loudly:

PHILLIPS

Lieutenant, sir?

MAYNARD

Keep it down, Mr. Phillips. No sense attracting more company than we may already have. Do you have a knife?

Phillips shakes his head.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Mister Cordingly, you'll have to stand on my shoulders.

Maynard gets down on his knees, allowing Cordingly to stand on his shoulders.

As Maynard slowly stands, the gap between Cordingly and Phillips narrows. Still, they are still six inches away.

Maynard's knees start to shake. Suddenly, they are face-to-face with Sanborn -- out picking some berries -- who takes in the THREE-MAN EXTENSION.

SANBORN

Maynard?!

Maynard pushes to stand on his toes... extending Cordingly an extra three inches... as Phillips stretches his body to its utmost limit...

The knife is handed off -- Phillips reaches up and slashes the vine --

Phillips topples from the tree onto Maynard and Cordingly --

And that's all Sanborn has to see to turn and run. Which he has limited success with, trying to move quickly on his CRUTCH.

Maynard scrambles to his feet and races after Sanborn, tackling him to the jungle floor below. Even as Sanborn starts to scream, Maynard gets a hand over his mouth.

MAYNARD

Listen here, Sanborn. My quarrel's not with you, being a cook, not a killer any more. Charlotte Ormand? Is she alive?

Maynard doesn't take his hand off Sanborn's mouth. But his head nod says that she is.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - GHOST VILLAGE - DAY

Charlotte has been left tied to the tree.

Blackbeard, Hands and Howard are huddled in the shelter with Seng and the Dart Man, who now appears to be extremely close to his limit.

HANDS

He'll talk soon, he will, or he'll die soon. Either way.

BLACKBEARD

He's not good to us dead, Israel.

HANDS

Stretch him some more?

BLACKBEARD

Make him believe you are. We don't
want to kill him until he talks.

Hands gets up to apply (or seemingly apply a little more pressure). Seng says something to the Dart Man in his native language.

Finally, the man CRIES OUT in what sounds like an incoherent babble, tears streaming down his cheeks (like the crying vulture?). At the end, Seng turns to Blackbeard.

SENG

He believe Devil has sent you to
test him.

BLACKBEARD

He's right about that.

On the outskirts now, WE SEE Maynard, Cordingly and Phillips. Sanborn has a pistol to his backside.

Maynard and Cordingly, using hand signals, indicate they are moving to the other side of the encampment. When they have taken their position, Maynard gives the high sign to Phillips.

Phillips nudges Sanborn with the gun.

PHILLIPS

Now.

SANBORN

(screaming)

The savages are coming! The savages
are coming! Help me! Help me!

Sanborn looks to Phillips to see if that was good enough.

Phillips nods, then uses the butt end of the pistol to whack Sanborn on the back of the head, knocking him unconscious. Phillips moves quickly into the jungle, aiming for the side where Maynard and Cordingly are.

The pirates, meanwhile, are on the alert.

HOWARD

That's Sanborn!

HANDS

Which direction?

Howard points to where Maynard and the Royal Navy Bluecoats have been.

HOWARD

There!

BLACKBEARD
Get over to him!!!

The pirates move out of the encampment in a swarm.

As they do, Maynard crawls low toward where Charlotte is. Finally, she makes him out.

CHARLOTTE
Robert...

MAYNARD
(urgently)
Make no sound.

Maynard whips out his knife, uses it to cut through the rope that binds her around the tree.

CHARLOTTE
The native over there - they have
been torturing him - poor wretch.

Maynard pulls her to her feet and, they move over to the Dartman.

Charlotte kneels down beside his wracked body and feels his pulse.

Nothing.

She looks helplessly at Maynard. No words needed.

Maynard, holding her hand, heads out of the encampment, in the opposite direction the pirates went.

Maynard, Cordingly, Phillips and Charlotte disappear into the jungle undergrowth.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - JUNGLE TRAIL - DAY

Maynard and his recon team, plus Charlotte, hurry back through the jungle to The Jane.

CHARLOTTE
I knew you would come.

MAYNARD
Now that you're safe, we can send
Blackbeard and his men straight to
the Hell they so richly deserve.

Charlotte nods, not relishing the thought of her man in battle. But there is something else on her mind, and she just blurts it out.

CHARLOTTE

I know where the treasure is.

Maynard is, to say the least, stunned.

MAYNARD

What? Why would Blackbeard tell you?

CHARLOTTE

He doesn't know. At least, not yet.

I only just now deduced it myself.

(off his reaction)

His 'clue' is a vulture crying tears.

MAYNARD

Yes, he told the Governor it was a tattoo on the back of the barkeep at the Boar and Thistle.

CHARLOTTE

Ask this. If this is Vulture Island, how does an island cry?

MAYNARD

Thundershowers? They're quite common --

CHARLOTTE

-- Not from the rain. From a waterfall or a stream.

Maynard looks back toward the island.

POV - THE VULTURES HEAD

Its image outlined against the sky.

BACK TO SCENE

Maynard stops in his tracks.

MAYNARD

I was blind. A waterfall makes perfect sense.

(mind racing)

Blackbeard will soon come to understand this as well.

CHARLOTTE

Let him.

Charlotte takes Maynard's arm and pulls him tight.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Oh, Robert, let him find the treasure
or spend the rest of his evil life
looking for it. I have all I want in
you.

MAYNARD

Yet... I have sworn an oath.

OFF two people torn between love and honor.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - GHOST VILLAGE - DAY

An irritated Blackbeard drags a sore-headed, hopping Sanborn back into the village and flings him to the ground, and pulls out one of his pistols. The other pirates gather round for the action.

BLACKBEARD

Picking berries were ya? I have a
good mind to shoot your other leg
off!

Fortunately for Sanborn, Blackbeard sees that Charlotte has escaped - enraging him even more.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

The woman's gone!

He storms over and discharges his pistol at the empty space once occupied by Charlotte. He realizes he has been duped and by whom.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Maynard!

(to Hands)

Give that native another stretch. I
don't care if ya pull him apart this
time.

Hands moves over to the Dartman.

HANDS

He's dead as doornail Captain!

BLACKBEARD

Didn't know nothin' anyway.

Blackbeard pulls out the drawing again, stares at it, looks out over the island.

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - NIGHT

Several Bluecoats stand watch on the ship.

INT. THE JANE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Tight and confined. Maynard, Spector and Charlotte stand around the chart table which has a map of Vulture Island spread before them.

MAYNARD

We must sail to the four island cluster here, so our guns can fire upon them in the morning.

SPECTOR

The soundings here are barely passable. In there, we could certainly run aground.

MAYNARD

We have all night. We can move slowly.

The looks from both Spector and Charlotte are skeptical.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

We have no choice.

(to Spector)

You yourself heard Captain Brand's charge. To bring Blackbeard back, dead or alive. Better we crush his skull with a cannonball.

(to Charlotte)

Can you honestly ask me to run after what he has done to you?

CHARLOTTE

And you.

(considers this)

No. I understand.

MAYNARD

(to Spector)

Stay with the Jane, and lead the cannon attack at dawn. I will lead a mission to find this damned treasure and secure it, if it exists. We believe it to be somewhere beneath the eye of the Vulture.

Spector nods his salute, starts to take off.

SPECTOR

I'll brief the crew.

Maynard grabs Spector by the arm. Not done.

MAYNARD

Blackbeard will soon realize the answer to the treasure's location does not reside in his dead native but in his own intellect. If he survives your cannon attack, he will likely be close behind me. Make sure my crew includes your best sharpshooters.

Spector nods, takes off. Charlotte and Maynard are alone now. She throws her arms around him and pulls him tight.

CHARLOTTE

(kidding)

When this business is done, Robert, perhaps you may consider a quiet life, such as a farmer, or a shopkeeper.

MAYNARD

At the very least, I should like to retire from hunting pirates.

They look at each, both knowing they are trying to hide rawer emotions from each other with humor. Still, Charlotte cannot let it go without saying:

CHARLOTTE

I am going with you.

MAYNARD

No, Charlotte --

CHARLOTTE

(firmly)

I have lost you too many times to think of doing so again.

Maynard looks at her, sees the resolve, knows that this issue is settled.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - GHOST VILLAGE - NIGHT

Blackbeard, Hands and Howard are huddled in the shelter with Seng who points over at the dead Dartman.

SENG

He knew. Just die too soon.

BLACKBEARD

He ain't the only one. That Charlotte, she was figurin' it out for herself.

HANDS

Where the treasure was?

BLACKBEARD

I could see it in her face. So I
been doin' some thinkin' of my own.
She knew less about it than I do, so
the answer's simple, not hard.

Blackbeard lays out the drawing.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

The tattoo... that vulture takes us
to the island... so here we are. Up
there, by the vulture, there's some
runnin' water, so the scouts say.
That water's our tears. And the tears
are where we find the treasure.

(bottom line)

By dawn, we make our move to take
it.

Blackbeard stands, leaves the shelter.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - JUNGLE TRAIL - DAWN

Maynard leads the Away team of six Bluecoats, including
Cordingly, Phillips as well as Thatch. Charlotte has changed
into men's clothing, more appropriate to the journey which is
incredibly hazardous.

Charlotte pulls close to Maynard.

CHARLOTTE

What was it like when you were pressed
on Blackbeard's ship?

MAYNARD

Better to speak of that, after we
have finished here.

CHARLOTTE

I want to know now. We shall have no
secrets between us, ever.

MAYNARD

Lonely.

CHARLOTTE

How did you prevent them from finding
you out for so long?

MAYNARD

(long pause)

It is easier for a civilized man to appear uncivilized than for a monster to be seen as a gentleman.

CHARLOTTE

Not for the monster who pretends to be my father, it wasn't.

Maynard nods. She certainly has a point. They continue to walk in silence.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - JUNGLE TRAIL - DAWN

The leading Bluecoat slashes his way through the jungle creeper and hoists himself up the trail by way of a hanging vine.

POV - A SWAYING 'BASKET' - DAWN

Suddenly, without warning, the vine pulls on the 'basket' and TWENTY COCONUTS are released and they become LETHAL PROJECTILES - raining downward.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - JUNGLE TRAIL - DAWN

The coconuts pelt down on the luckless Bluecoat with the force and weight of cannon balls - several land on his head and body - striking him to the ground instantly.

Charlotte pushes forward to his aid while Maynard signals the other men to spread out, then looks up at the 'basket'.

POV - THE SWAYING 'BASKET' - DAWN

Several coconuts remain in the net - poised dangerously - about to fall.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - JUNGLE TRAIL - DAWN

MAYNARD

You are in danger. You must move away.

CHARLOTTE

He's dead, poor man.

POV - THE SWAYING 'BASKET' - DAWN

The remaining coconuts whistle down.

VULTURE ISLAND - JUNGLE TRAIL - DAWN

Maynard pulls Charlotte out of harms way. Maynard grabs the Bluecoats rifle and the group moves out..

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - DAWN

The Jane is now within range of the ghost village.

SPECTOR

Stand by to fire, Master Gunner!

The Master Gunner makes the closed fist salute favored by the Royal Navy.

MASTER GUNNER (V.O.)

Aye sir!

(to cannon crew)

Stand by to fire!

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - GHOST VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar comes running back into camp.

CAESAR

Cap'n! Cap'n! Navy ship! Navy ship!

That gets everyone's attention.

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - CONTINUOUS

Spector is ready to launch.

SPECTOR

Fire, Master Gunner!

MASTER GUNNER (V.O.)

Aye aye sir!

INT. THE JANE - GUN ARRAY - DAWN

The MASTER GUNNER has six guns at his command. He sets them off by going to the gunner at each one and shouting:

MASTER GUNNER (V.O.)

Fire! Fire! Fire!

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - GHOST VILLAGE - DAWN

Blackbeard and his men, not planning for cannon fire, are suddenly jolted awake when A CANNON BALL rips through one of the huts, blasting it apart with the force of a hurricane.

A SECOND CANNONBALL
Literally breaks a branch off a tree.
It falls on one of Blackbeard's
pirates, knocking him to the ground,
crushing his back and squeezing the
life out of him in a single action.

BLACKBEARD

Strides out of his hut into the center of the attack. He shakes his fist at the sea.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Damn ye, Maynard!!

Hands and Seng dive out of the hut, following Blackbeard.

A THIRD CANNONBALL

Destroys the hut that Blackbeard just left.

SENG
(nods)
Now he ghost.

Everywhere men are flying out of their accommodations, as the cannon balls continue to fly.

BLACKBEARD
Grab your weapons!

The men start to grab pistols, muskets, cutlasses and everything else they came ready to rumble with.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Let's head for our treasure, lads.

As the barrage STOPS, Blackbeard and the remaining pirates are out.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - TREASURE CAVE TRAIL - DAY

Maynard, Charlotte and the group are pushing their way through a tangle of vines.

MAYNARD
The cannons have stopped.

But Charlotte HEARS something above the pervading tropical noises. She holds up her hand.

CHARLOTTE

Listen!

The group halt in their tracks - standing rock still.

Through the steamy atmosphere, is the distinct sound of a trickle of water. Charlotte listens intently, turns and peers in the direction of the source.

It is coming from above her -

CHARLOTTE'S POV - TREASURE CAVE - ROCK FACE

Of a small stream trickling and splashing down a towering rock face.

We trace the water down the rock face until it eventually passes over a 'face' etched in the limestone.

CLOSE ON CHARLOTTE AND MAYNARD

CHARLOTTE

The vultures' tears - look Robert -
that image in the rock - it was in
Sally's tattoo - I'm sure of it.

They all look up at the 'clue'. Maynard takes a few steps up toward the rock face, looking intently at the 'face'. He looks off to his left ---

POV - TREASURE CAVE - ENTRANCE

An entrance to a cave, covered in vines, quite eerie.

A COLONY of bats swoop out.

BACK TO SCENE

Maynard and Charlotte exchange excited looks.

MAYNARD

Captain Kidd hid it well. But he
still needed someone to be able to
find it.

Charlotte pushes past and grabs Maynard by the hand and pulls him up toward the cave entrance. The excited group follow on their heels.

EXT. THE TREASURE CAVE - ENTRANCE

Maynard, Charlotte and the group peer into the cave mouth.

Maynard points to Thatch and one of the sailors.

MAYNARD

Thatch, you and Simpkins stand watch.

Thatch nods.

THATCH

Anything Maynard want.

MAYNARD

Let's take a look in here.

(to another Bluecoat)

Light up some torches.

The group move cautiously in.

INT. TREASURE CAVE - ENTRANCE

Maynard leads Charlotte and the group down into the cave.

Torches light up the tunnel.

They pass a rock formation, from which is carved a giant Easter Island style of STONE GOD, standing sentry. It looms menacingly above them.

Maynard and Charlotte look up at the statue.

MAYNARD

Kidd went to a lot of trouble if he built that...

CHARLOTTE

It looks more like a sacred place for the people who lived here.

MAYNARD

Something Kidd used it for his own purposes.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - JUNGLE TRAIL - DAY

Sanborn is hobbling on point - prodded along by Blackbeard - when they find themselves crossing a trampled jungle trail.

SANBORN

Look Captain - someone's been along 'ere.

Blackbeard kneels down to take a closer look at the trail.

BLACKBEARD

Pretty recent to, by the look of things. Think we'll tag along lads.

Blackbeard pushes Sanborn forward - along the new trail.

INT. TREASURE CAVE - FIRST TUNNEL

Maynard and the group are dwarfed by the cavern. Crystals glimmer in the twisted limestone formations.

INT. TREASURE CAVE - SECOND TUNNEL

The group turn a bend and disappear into a smaller tunnel.

INT. VULTURE ISLAND - TREASURE CAVE - DAY

This IS the moment we've been waiting for -- the reveal of the vast treasure of Captain Kidd.

As our group clears into the cave, this is what they see:

THE TREASURE OF CAPTAIN KIDD!

Imagine the treasure we had in the single chest from Gardener's Island. This is twenty times as much. But the chests are open, overflowing...

MAYNARD

These are not displayed for men.
They're being offered to their Gods.

As the group walks in among the riches, each person touches, picks up, lets drop through their hands --

Spanish gold doubloons...

Spanish silver pieces of eight...

Jewels of every kind: diamond, ruby, garnet, amethyst, opal, sapphire, malachite, emerald -- some are loose stones but many more are in elaborately crafted rings, necklaces, pendants, reliquaries, crosses -- it's breathtaking...

PHILLIPS

Can't believe... I'm even touching this...

Maynard's men can hardly be blamed for having their eyes pop out. Most of these seamen are from the poor working class who are in the Royal Navy in the first place because they have no money.

CORDINGLY

I've never... I... I've never even dreamed of seeing such riches...

Charlotte picks up a gold statue, turns it over in her hands.

CHARLOTTE

I have read about this. This is Incan. Pizarro himself may even have taken this from Atahualpa.

(looking around)

There may be a hundred of these. Each one is... priceless...

A moment, as the enormity of this find sinks in on everyone. There are simply no more words to say.

Oddly (or maybe not so oddly), one of the men, Phillips, is simply overcome with emotion. He begins to tremble and his he begins to gasp, fighting for control. Maynard puts a hand on his shoulder.

MAYNARD

Easy, Phillips. It's exceedingly strange for all of us.

PHILLIPS

I feel as if I've died, that this is a dream, and I'm in some tropical Heaven.

Maynard stands there with his hand on Phillips, steadying him. No proper words. Interrupted by:

Thatch staggering in - he has blood pouring from a wound in his arm. Charlotte hurries to his aid.

Thatch obviously has something to say, but his breath is taken away by the glittering array.

MAYNARD

Thatch! What is it?

THATCH

He comes. Blackbeard!

INT. TREASURE CAVE - ENTRANCE TUNNEL

The peaceful cave now shattered by the sound of GUNFIRE.

Maynard and his group hurry up to the mouth of the cave.

EXT. TREASURE CAVE - ENTRANCE

Maynard and his group move low out of the cave entrance that is being peppered by musket shot - to find the lone Bluecoat defending the entrance - firing at piratical figures advancing up through the jungle terrain.

The area soon turns into a battlefield - Maynard and his men have the higher ground. They are able to defend.

MAYNARD

Fight, men, with all your heart!

BLACKBEARD

-- and his pirates have the stronger challenge. They must attack, up the hill.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

That treasure be ours by rights.
Kill any damn Bluecoat what stands
in our way!

And, with these declarations, all Hell breaks loose. This is not close-combat but a mid-range shooting war. Both sides take cover behind rocks, popping up to fire off a shot, then duck down and prime their guns for a second round... and a third... Maynard turns to Charlotte.

MAYNARD

Keep down.

Charlotte's expression says it all. She will not sit this one out. Maynard hands her a gun and powder.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Aim for the chest.

Charlotte nods. Now, in the back-and-forth of combat, several men will die. One will be a Bluecoat extra... Another will be a Pirate extra... But there will be two other deaths which mean something...

PHILLIPS

Sees that Maynard is pinned down. He pops up to FIRE his weapon and, as he does, Blackbeard using a muskatoon, pops up and FIRES.

The musket ball catches Phillips just below the neck, piercing through his throat, throwing him to the ground.

Charlotte rushes to his aid. She sees how serious it is.

She tries to staunch his wound with a cloth handkerchief but, within seconds, the handkerchief itself is drenched.

Blackbeard pulls out another of his pistols and aims at Maynard. He misses!

BLACKBEARD

Damn ye Maynard!

PHILLIPS

Help... me...

Phillips's eyes are glassy and far, far away. His life is ebbing away quickly.

CHARLOTTE

The ball went straight through, Mister Phillips. We'll stop --

Phillips reaches up, grabs her hand in his. He squeezes hard.

PHILLIPS

Can't... breathe...

CHARLOTTE

Don't talk. Please.

During this, Hobbs belly-crawls from one rock to another.

PHILLIPS

Kill... Blackbeard...

Phillips's eyes go lifeless. Charlotte closes his eyelids over them. She looks over to Maynard. He knows.

In a rage, Maynard rises, exposing himself but meaning to get a shot off on Blackbeard.

MAYNARD

Bastard!!

Hobbs has positioned himself to the side of Maynard, outside of his vision, but not Charlotte's. He's aiming his gun --

Charlotte aims her gun, she takes that extra second. She's got a straight shot at his chest, you can almost see the bullseye target painted on it.

Charlotte pulls the trigger --

Hobbs is hit straight through the heart. He dies before his body even hits the ground.

Hands assesses the situation, stands up and shouts:

HANDS

Back off, men! We'll get 'em later!

The pirates begin to fall back. Blackbeard is furious.

BLACKBEARD

No!! Blackbeard never retreats!!

But it's too late. His pirate gang have gone.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - TREASURE CAVE - DAY

In the aftermath of the battle, Maynard and his Bluecoats assess their damage, lick their wounds.

CORDINGLY

Two dead, one wounded.

Maynard turns to Thatch.

MAYNARD

Can you follow them?

Thatch nods.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

So they don't know they are being followed?

Thatch nods again.

THATCH

Thatch good hunter. Follow Blackbeard.

Maynard nods, gestures for him to go now.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - GHOST VILLAGE - DAY

Thatch crouches in the jungle foliage. He's less than ten feet from them and no one knows he's there. That's how good he is.

PICK UP Seng, our other stealth artist, high above in a tree, looking down. That's how good he is. Seng makes a silent motion down below.

As we get a look, WE SEE that Blackbeard sits with his hands tied behind his back. Hands stands before him as a prosecutor.

HANDS

We can't beat 'em here, Cap'n. They got the upper hand.

BLACKBEARD
(bellowing)
You're a damn coward!!

SANBORN
I hates to agree with Hands on this
one, Cap'n, but they got us outgunned.

BLACKBEARD
And you, Sanborn, I let ya live after
ya lost your leg, even gave ya a
job. This is how ya repay me?
Traitor!!

RANSOM
(to Hands)
We all follow ya, Israel.
(to Blackbeard)
I'm real sorry 'bout this, sir, but
what's the use of treasure if'n you're
too dead to enjoy the fruits of it?

HANDS
We still got the treasure from
Gardener's Island. That's more'n
most of us thought we'd ever see.

Hands pricks his finger with the knife he's been using to
whittle a stick.

HANDS (CONT'D)
Then I calls for a blood oath.

He passes the knife around and every member of the camp fire
pricks his finger and touches the blood to the next pirate's.

BLACKBEARD
That'd be the only honest blood ya
spill today.

Hands strides forward, slaps Blackbeard across the face.

HANDS
Shut up! It's settled.

RANSOM
We'll put ya off at the next port,
Cap'n. Show ya the same consideration
ya did ol' Captain Hornigold.

HANDS
Back up, men. We're leavin' while we
still can.

Thatch has seen and heard everything he needs to. He moves
cautiously and quietly back into the jungle.

Seng makes a high sign (all clear) to the pirates, starts to climb down. He drops to the ground.

SENG
Maynard send slave, Thatch.

BLACKBEARD
Perfect. Maynard will know we're leavin' in an hour or less.

Hands cuts the rope binding Blackbeard loose. As soon as he's free, Blackbeard backhands Hands across the face, knocking him to the ground.

HANDS
Hey! You told me to hit ya!

BLACKBEARD
Not so hard, I didn't.

Blackbeard shakes his hands loose to restore the circulation.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Here's how it lays down now. We'll sail straight out, till they're sure we're leavin'. At night, we come about, tuck in other side of the island. Give him some time to load the treasure. When he leaves with it, we'll be upon him before he can draw a breath.

He lights up his pipe, a satisfied look on his face.

INT. VULTURE ISLAND - TREASURE CAVE - DAY

From the looks of it, Thatch has just told his story to the assembled group.

MAYNARD
Well, that's it then. He'll have set sail near first light, and so we must be on our way.

CORDINGLY
Sir? What about the treasure?

MAYNARD
To load this on the Jane will take days, which we don't have.

CORDINGLY
But --

MAYNARD

Mister Cordingly, we are Royal Navy sailors, not pirates. Our job is to stop Blackbeard, not line our pockets.

Maynard throws a rucksack at Cordingly.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Fill it, and we'll share it with the crew for their bravery.

(to everyone)

We move now.

A tough choice made.

EXT. THE JANE - DAY

The anchor is lifted. Charlotte, Maynard and crew.

SPECTOR

Hands aloft! Loose top'ls!

The wind catches the main mast. The ship begins to set sail.

MAYNARD

Lay her on the starboard tack, Mister Spector.

Cordingly and another Bluecoat climb the rigging to the release a secondary sail. Maynard joins Woodward at the helm.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

Due south southeast for New Providence, Mister Woodward

WOODWARD

Aye, sir.

The naval WHISTLES sound as the crew is in full departure mode.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

Blackbeard eyes the Jane through his spyglass.

BLACKBEARD

South southeast, Mister Hands.

HANDS

Aye, Cap'n.

A revived Dr. Bruce approaches Blackbeard.

BLACKBEARD

Ah, Dr. Bruce. Ya look no worse for the wear.

DR. BRUCE

The best medicine I could take was to take no more medicine.

Dr. Bruce notes that Blackbeard's specially designed pirate flag is being run up the staff.

DR. BRUCE (CONT'D)

Raising the new Jolly Roger, Captain?

BLACKBEARD

Damn straight, ya be. Blackbeard is coming for his treasure and there's no reason in hidin' it.

The Queen Anne's Revenge is now on the heels of the Jane. Blackbeard turns to Dr. Bruce.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Ya may want to sharpen those saws of yours.

EXT. THE JANE - DAY

Maynard and Charlotte stand with Spector on the bridge. Woodward shouts down from the crow's nest.

WOODWARD (V.O.)

We're being followed, Captain.

MAYNARD

Followed?

Maynard takes Spector's spyglass and sees for himself.

MAYNARD'S POV - THE QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE

In what looks like hot pursuit, sails fully unfurled.

BACK TO SCENE

Maynard realizes what's happened.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

The Queen Anne's Revenge.
(pissed)

There was no mutiny. It was all staged for our benefit.

SPECTOR

Good God, why?

MAYNARD

He knew he couldn't beat us on land. On the open sea at close distance, he knows he has the advantage with his guns. He means to kill us out here and go back for the treasure.

SPECTOR

We don't have it.

MAYNARD

Precisely. And now we know something he doesn't.

SPECTOR

Their ship is bigger and carries more cannon power. Ours is smaller and faster. We can outrun them.

MAYNARD

In theory, yes. But my mission is to destroy Blackbeard and his piracy, not to run from it. Or endanger any more unsuspecting vessels.

SPECTOR

Lieutenant, with respect, perhaps you are letting your difficulties with Blackbeard cloud your judgment.

MAYNARD

We will not run. We will fight. Prepare to come about and engage.

Spector looks at Maynard, a man who does not appear ready to change his position.

SPECTOR

Come about, Mister Peters!

The stage is set for battle.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

Blackbeard sights through his spyglass at the Jane. He stands with Hands, Howard and Ransom.

BLACKBEARD

By God, they're coming about! I knew it!

(MORE)

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
(roaring with laughter)
He still means to kill me. Maynard's
the one bastard more stubborn than
me!

HANDS
Call to quarters?

BLACKBEARD
As never before.

HOWARD
Call to quarters!

BLACKBEARD
(to Hands)
Israel, with Hobbs dead, I'll need
ya to man the guns below. Shoot 'em
hard and true.

HANDS
Blowin' Maynard to Hell, that's a
dream come true.

Hands hurries away, to below decks.

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

The Queen Anne's Revenge can be seen rapidly approaching the Jane. Traveling in opposite directions, the two ships are set to meet each other stern to bow.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE - DAY

Blackbeard instructs Howard and Ransom (at the helm).

BLACKBEARD
Bring us in, nice 'n close. So's I
can have a chat.
(to Howard)
And make sure that Hands and the
gunners are ready to give a full
broadside on my command. But
cannonballs only at the sails
themselves. Add in grapeshot and the
like to kill any man on deck.

As Blackbeard disappears toward his cabin.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
I want the Jane left floatin' in
case they're makin' off with my
treasure.

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - DAY

On the Jane, Maynard confers with Spector.

MAYNARD

He won't fire as long as he thinks
he can intimidate us into
surrendering.

SPECTOR

But he can't?

MAYNARD

Not in our vocabulary. But as long
as there is talk, I want a full crew
on deck. When you hear me say, 'To
the death' --

Maynard looks around. Even on the open sea, he doesn't like to give up much. He WHISPERS into Spector's ear and gets a nod in return.

EXT. OPEN SEA - QAR AND THE JANE - DAY (SEATTLE UNIT)

The two ships come alongside each other.

EXT. QAR AND THE JANE - CLOSE PASS - INTERCUT - DAY

Blackbeard appears on deck with his trademark cannon fuses lit in his beard. Accompanied by young Caesar.

Coming so close they can yell at each other, Blackbeard and Maynard confront each other verbally from ship-to-ship, from the Revenge to the Jane. Blackbeard has his trademark cannon fuses lit in his beard.

BLACKBEARD

Come on over, Maynard. We can talk.

MAYNARD

Light all the cannon fuses you want
in your ugly beard. We have nothing
to talk about.

BLACKBEARD

Think we do. Ya surrender, I might
even let ya keep some of the booty.

MAYNARD

What I have to say to you, Blackbeard,
I will say with cold steel.

Blackbeard lifts a chalice of rum to his rival.

BLACKBEARD
I ask no quarter, and I give none.

MAYNARD
I ask for nothing more.

BLACKBEARD
To the death then.

MAYNARD
To the death.

As Maynard makes this statement, Spector moves toward the center of the boat, speaking to each crew member he passes.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

On board the QAR, Blackbeard yells to his crew.

BLACKBEARD
Run out the guns! Run out the guns
Mister Hands!

INT. QAR - GUN DECK - DAY

Hands and his gunners are at the ready - fuses light.

HANDS
Fire! Fire!

The Pirate gunners touch off the powder pans.

CLOSE UP: THE ROAR OF CANNONS!! BOOM!! BOOM!! BOOM!!

EXT. QAR AND THE JANE - DAY (SEATTLE UNIT)

As the ships close on each other, Blackbeard's cannons deliver THE BROADSIDE to the Jane.

EXT. QAR - SAILS - DAY

Smoke engulfs the Jane as the grapeshot shreds the sails and come crashing down on a Bluecoat(1) - killing him.

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - DAY

In the ensuing chaos Maynard coolly issues orders to Spector.

MAYNARD
Fire, Mister Spector!

INT. QAR - GUN DECK - DAY

Charlotte puts her fingers to her ears as Spector screams out the order to the gunners.

SPECTOR
Fire! Fire! Fire!

The gunners put the smoking wicks to the powder pans.

EXT. JANE - CANNONS - DAY

CLOSE UP the cannons as The Jane fires its own BROADSIDE.

The smoke and destruction delivered by this many cannons firing from both ships is radical.

Maynard's cannonballs, however small, are able to penetrate Blackbeard's ship.

EXT. QAR - RIGGING - DAY

Sanborn, hanging onto the rigging, fires his pistol across at a Bluecoat (2) on the Jane.

EXT. JANE - DECK - DAY

As the Bluecoat (2), falls dead another Bluecoat (3) - pops up and shoots across at Sanborn.

EXT. QAR - RIGGING - DAY

SANBORN spins off into oblivion.

Blackbeard, beard still smoking, screams above the din.

BLACKBEARD
Re-load and run-out, Mister Hands!
(to Ransom)
Steady! Starboard a point, Mister
Ransom!

Ransom, at the helm adjusts course.

EXT. QAR - CANNONS - DAY

Side angle as Blackbeard's cannons roar out. They're aimed high at the sails.

EXT. JANE - DECK - DAY

One of The Jane's MASTS COMES TUMBLING DOWN onto BLUECOAT (3), crushing him to death.

Blackbeard's grapeshot has a devastating effect on the Bluecoats and other sails, although it's hard to say through the SMOKE.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

A jubilant Blackbeard shouts to his men.

BLACKBEARD

She's helpless in the water. Come about Mister Ransom and we'll finish her off.

The pirates, including Seng, Hands and Howard, cheer and scream blood curdling yells. They are armed to the teeth, and clamber up onto the gunnels ready to board The Jane.

Caesar sticks close to Blackbeard.

EXT. QAR AND THE JANE - SECOND PASS - INTERCUT - DAY

The two boats come upon each other in dense, acrid smoke, hanging in the air from the deadly sea battle.

IT'S QUIET, too. Broken by Blackbeard's shout:

BLACKBEARD

Ready! More grape shot. Blow these King lovin' sots clear back to England.

HOWARD/HANDS

Death to the King!

The pirates unleash a deadly rain of grenade and small arms fire falls upon the Navy ship.

Ransom leaves the helm and heads into the melee.

EXT. JANE - DECK - DAY

A BLUECOAT (4), amid the barrage, pops up from cover and fires off his musket at:

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

Ransom, narrowly missing him, splinters fly - Ransom fires back.

More pirates haul on the ropes attached to the grappling irons.

EXT. JANE - DECK - DAY

The two ships come closer together.

Cordingly heroically fires at the pirates.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

HANDS spots Cordingly and lets him have it with a musket.

EXT. JANE - DECK - DAY

Cordingly takes some grapeshot in the face. It's as if his face is on fire. Maynard pulls him below decks.

INT. JANE - BELOW DECKS - DAY

Maynard and the wounded Cordingly collide with Charlotte as she comes forward to help.

There is something else going on here, but we're not quite sure what it is. Bluecoats seem to be moving the bodies, probably trying to sort the mere wounded from the dead.

EXT. QAR - DECK

Blackbeard and his pirates continue their tirade of shouts and abuses, firing erratically at The Jane.

Ransom reloads his musket and fires --

EXT. JANE - DECK - DAY

Bluecoat (5) gets it in the chest. Multiple holes cover his chest - but he manages to get a shot off from his pistol at:

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

Ransom -- reels backwards -- his life gone.

The smoke from the cannon clears, Blackbeard's ship is secured alongside.

EXT. JANE - RIGGING - DAY

The Jane has struck its colors as a sign of surrender. The Union Jack is lowered, SHREDED BY GRAPESHOT.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

In the blinding smoky chaos of the aftermath, Blackbeard tries to get a view of the Jane. He sees a deck with a dozen bodies strewn about on it.

BLACKBEARD

Looks like we gave the 'what for.
Time to go get the 'for what.

Blackbeard, Hands, Seng, Howard and Caesar and other pirates rappel across the sides into the smoke.

EXT. JANE - DECK - THE BOARDING OF THE JANE - DAY

Out of the smoke, the pirates swarm onto the Jane, unchecked.

Blackbeard emerges, fierce and frightening as he leads the charge on board. The first thing he sees is the tattered Union Jack on the deck. Blackbeard spits on it.

BLACKBEARD

At the end, a coward, nothin' more.

HANDS

Still could be some below.

Blackbeard looks around at the bodies. The Jane is strangely quiet.

BLACKBEARD

Only a few hidin'. Look at all the
dead men here.

As they strut across the carnage, Blackbeard see something he can't believe he saw. He leans down and turns a body over. It is a Royal Navy uniform stuffed with straw.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

What the Devil?

EXT. THE JANE - DECKS - THE FINAL BATTLE - DAY

Blackbeard starts kicking at the rest of the bodies.

They're all stuffed with straw, wearing the Royal Navy jackets.

INT. JANE - BELOW DECKS - DAY

Wounded seamen and Bluecoats are being tended to by Charlotte and Thatch.

Spector and a dozen Bluecoats, however, are able and armed. Ready to go.

Maynard listens to the noises from above deck. He holds his hand up for silence.

MAYNARD

They're on board.

Charlotte listens to the movements from above.

Maynard and his men hold their collective breath.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

(quietly)

We have surprise, His Majesty, the pride of the Royal Navy and our own courage. Time to take the battle to him.

Maynard then lets out a WAR-WHOOP such as we've never heard from him before, Spector and the Bluecoats join in. Charlotte watches with trepidation as they charge out.

EXT. QAR - DECK - DAY

Blackbeard hears the full-throated ROAR from the real Bluecoats as they emerge from below decks - Lead by Maynard and Spector.

Blackbeard turns -- momentarily taken off guard.

This begins a MAN-TO-MAN ON DECK BATTLE fought with a mixture of pistols, cutlasses, daggers, muskets and hand to hand combat.

Hands wades in... with a long-musket... firing wildly at the Bluecoats -- then as he is forced to use the musket as a blunt instrument -- he is instead brought down by a volley of shots.

Blackbeard sees Maynard through the obscuring smoke.

BLACKBEARD

Damn ya to Hell, Maynard!

Maynard gets of a shot at Blackbeard, catching him in the shoulder. Blackbeard spins away.

Maynard is charged by Caesar. Far more experienced, Maynard steps deftly aside. Caesar keeps going, plunging his sword into the side of the ship. Maynard puts his sword to Caesar's throat.

MAYNARD

Thatch is below, helping with the wounded. If you want to live, go to him now.

Howard charges Maynard, he swings his cutlass and takes him down. In so doing, he has to move away from Caesar who now has the ability to hurt Maynard.

Blackbeard appears out of the smoke.

BLACKBEARD

Slice him!

Maynard and Caesar share a moment of decision. Caesar throws down his weapon and runs to the stairs.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

I'll kill ya myself and eat ya for breakfast later!

Blackbeard is shot again by a Bluecoat, but Blackbeard turns on him and cuts him down.

Seng... the brilliant master of knife-combat... takes on Spector and a Bluecoat, dispatching the later but then brought to his death by Spector.

Maynard leads his men into a full-on charge against Blackbeard and his remaining band of pirates.

Howard... using his cutlass to lethal advantage... takes on an overwhelming number of Bluecoats before disappearing under a mountain of flashing swords.

The battle begins to resemble a riot.

INT. JANE - BELOW DECKS - DAY

Caesar scrambles below decks and runs over to Thatch. They exchange a rushed, but powerful, embrace. Charlotte looks up from her nursing duties, allowing a small smile even as she direct them with:

CHARLOTTE

More water. Quickly now!

Caesar grabs a leather bucket and runs off.

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - MAN-TO-MAN - DAY

Blackbeard and Maynard face off against each other. It's our major choreographed fight, the time when it's all on the line and one will live and one will die.

Both men pull their pistols and fire.

Blackbeard's pistol misfires but Maynard's mini-ball finds its mark.

BLACKBEARD

I been hit by better 'n ya before.

Blackbeard comes at Maynard with his cutlass raised and more fury than ever.

They parry across the deck, backward and forward.

Blackbeard swings his cutlass downward onto Maynard with such force that it breaks Maynard's cutlass at the hilt when it strikes Maynard's cartridge box.

Undaunted, Maynard jumps back, throws away his sword and fires his pistol catching Blackbeard with another shot to the chest.

Blackbeard staggers backward --

-- as with all worthy adversaries, there is a moment of acknowledgment --

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)

Well done, lad.

-- but a moment such as this cannot last long -- all things must end --

MAYNARD

No. Not done enough.

And, with those words, Maynard swings his cutlass blade with all the power and force he can muster.

The sword slices clean into Blackbeard's neck -- it takes a full second for Blackbeard's face to know that the body is dead -- and it shows -- Finally, it is over...

A silence falls momentarily over the Jane's deck.

Dr. Bruce steps up from Blackbeard's cabin, where he has been hiding, and looks over at the body.

Maynard looks down at Blackbeard. Charlotte comes to his side - followed by Thatch and Caesar.

... Then a ROAR OF CHEERS erupts from the throats of the Jane's Bluecoats and crew.

EXT. VULTURE ISLAND - ON THE JANE - DAY

Spector directs the Bluecoats as they load the chests and lockers of the treasure using a block and tackle system of pulleys and ropes.

SPECTOR
Careful, men! The King himself will
want to see our cargo!

EXT. THE JANE - DECK - CONTINUOUS

Maynard and Charlotte watch the work, content that, finally, they may have a moment together.

MAYNARD
Pirates believe a woman on-board
brings bad luck.

CHARLOTTE
Certainly, that was true for
Blackbeard. Would you prefer I find
another way home?

MAYNARD
Never! I should think you will be
less an ill omen and more... a good
luck charm.

CHARLOTTE
Oh, so you would like me to stay?

MAYNARD
Very much so.

They turn their attention back to the loading going on.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)
We have more treasure than Alexander.

CHARLOTTE
What becomes of it?

MAYNARD
My duty is to return it to the Crown.

CHARLOTTE
And will you not be entitled to a
commission for your role in bringing
it back safely?

MAYNARD

I have already accepted a small token.

Maynard pulls a ring from his pocket. It's a beautiful ruby, part of the treasure.

MAYNARD (CONT'D)

I should like very much to forget my life as a pirate, and begin my life as your husband.

Maynard places the ring on her finger. Charlotte kisses him. Standing watch, Spector has observed this, and he shouts out.

SPECTOR

Hurrah! Hurrah!

And now the rest of the men on deck join in.

THE MEN

Hurrah! Hurrah!

Maynard and Charlotte do a little bow for their audience.

EXT. THE JANE - FROM ABOVE - SUNSET

Moving briskly under full sail in a "bloody" sunset, full of treasure and pirate free -- as we:

FADE OUT.

THE END