

Once A Pirate

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"Once a Pirate"

FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN NEAR THE COAST - DAY

It is the 1700's.

Two LARGE SHIPS exchange cannon fire at close range.

One ship dawns a RED FLAG with a SKULL on it. The other carries the flag of the British Royal Navy.

The PIRATE CREW attaches grappling hooks to the Navy vessel.

The pirate crew and BRITISH SAILORS exchange gunfire with flintlock rifles and pistols.

The pirate crew boards the naval ship.

CLIFF ON THE COAST

YOUNG ERIC, a boy of about 14 years and YOUNG MARIAH, a girl of around 12, watch the pirates raid the Naval ship. Both are dressed as noble children of the 1700's.

In the distance we see the pirate ship part from the Naval ship.

The Naval ship EXPLODES.

The children watch in both horror and amazement.

YOUNG ERIC

Whoa! I don't believe it! Those dirty pirates! I wish I could teach them a thing or two!

YOUNG MARIAH

Eric, your father's going to be angry that we snuck out to see this.

YOUNG ERIC

He's always angry.

YOUNG MARIAH

We should go back.

YOUNG ERIC

You're right.

Eric looks out at the remnants of the British ship.

YOUNG ERIC

I want to be a sailor like my brother
someday, so that I can fight pirates
too. I'd stop them all.

YOUNG MARIAH

You will, Eric. You will.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS' MANOR - DAY

THE STUDY

The room is of wealthy and tasteful design.

ERIC, now 22 and dressed as a nobleman, stands at a large window. He looks out passed the cliffs at the ocean.

ERIC'S FATHER, a British noble in his early fifties, enters the room.

ERIC'S FATHER

We're all set.

Eric does not respond.

ERIC'S FATHER

You're always staring out that window. What
are you looking at?

ERIC

What do you think?

ERIC'S FATHER

Are you still clinging to that?

Eric faces his father.

ERIC

You'll never understand.

ERIC'S FATHER

What? Arrogance?! Foolish youth?! I understood well enough to let Thomas live his dream and it left me without a son.

ERIC

But you have another.

ERIC'S FATHER

And I'll not lose you as well!

ERIC

Thomas died protecting our empire from piracy. As a noble I have a duty to do the same!

ERIC'S FATHER

You have a duty to your family!

ERIC

What about what I want?!

ERIC'S FATHER

You want to live in a fantasy world where you can avoid responsibility!

ERIC

No! I just want to be a sailor in the royal fleet!

ERIC'S FATHER

I forbid it! Now there will be no more discussion on this matter. You're mother and I are leaving with the Aldenbrookes tonight on a royal charter. You are to look after Mariah and handle my affairs while I'm away. Do you understand?

ERIC

Yes, you want me to sit on my hindquarters and twiddle my thumbs in your absence.

ERIC'S FATHER

Exactly.

Eric's Father exits the room.

ERIC

Not on your life.

EXT. ALDENBROOKE'S MANOR - DAY

A large house with a well decorated exterior.

A Eric's horse-drawn carriage with a DRIVER on top pulls up out front.

Eric exits the carriage and walks to the front door.

Eric knocks on the front door.

The front door opens. ELIZA ALDENBROOKE, a well-dressed woman in her forties, stands in the doorway.

She smiles.

ELIZA

Eric.

ERIC

Good afternoon, Lady Aldenbrooke.

ELIZA

You're always so formal. Come in.

Eric goes into the house.

INT. ALDENBROOKE'S MANOR - DAY

HALL

Lavishly decorated and lit by sunlight coming in through windows.

Eliza and Eric stand at the base of the stairs to the second floor.

ELIZA

So where are you taking my daughter this
afternoon?

ERIC

Just out to the cliffs.

ELIZA

The two of you really love the ocean don't
you?

ERIC

It's amazing.

MARIAH, now 20 and dressed as a proper lady, enters from
upstairs.

ELIZA

Mariah, Eric was just telling me about your
big plans today.

MARIAH

Well, I wish he'd tell me.

Mariah playfully glares at Eric.

ELIZA

Have you finished your studies today?

MARIAH

Yes, mother.

ELIZA

Then go and enjoy yourself, but make sure
you return before your father and I
leave this evening.

MARIAH

I will.

ERIC

Me too.

Eliza playfully elbows Eric.

ERIC

To see my parents off, that is.
Mariah sighs.

MARIAH
Let's go.

ELIZA
Goodbye dear.

MARIAH
Goodbye mother.

INT. ERIC'S CARRIAGE - DAY

MOVING

Eric and Mariah sit across from each other. Both change into common clothing.

MARIAH
Where are we going?

ERIC
To the harbor.

MARIAH
What half-witted adventure do you have planned today?

ERIC
It's a surprise.

MARIAH
I don't like your idea of the word "surprise".

ERIC
Where's your sense of adventure?

EXT. BUSY HARBOR - DAY

The area is alive with MERCHANTS and SAILORS who go about their daily business.

Many ships, both large and small, port at the harbor.

Eric and Mariah, now dressed as commoners, make their way through the crowded docks.

THE NEW HORIZON

A dilapidated, mid-sized, merchant vessel. The ship is ported at the far end of the docks.

CAPTAIN JOHN TAYLOR, a forty year-old man-of-the-sea, is on the top deck. He examines the sails on the foremast.

Eric and Mariah approach the ship.

ERIC
Permission to come aboard!

John sees Eric.

JOHN
Eric, you old dog! Come aboard!

Eric and Mariah board the ship. John meets them.

John gives Eric a big burly hug.

ERIC
Mariah, I'd like you to meet John Taylor.

MARIAH
Shipwright?

JOHN
Captain.

ERIC
John, this is Mariah Aldenbrooke. She'll be going with us today.

JOHN
(to Mariah)
You know your way around a boat?

Mariah gives John a cold stare.

MARIAH
I'll manage.

John shrugs as if to say "Sorry for asking".

JOHN

We'll be on our way in a few minutes. Just
doing some last minute safety checks.

John goes back to examine the foremast sails.

MARIAH

Safety checks? On this?

Mariah motions to the ship.

ERIC

It's a good ship.

MARIAH

Eric, what do you have us doing?

ERIC

John has some business to do and we're going
to help him.

MARIAH

Merchant?

ERIC

Smuggler.

Eric goes off to help John.

Mariah is in disbelief.

MARIAH

Smuggler?

EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY

The New Horizon sails on the open sea.

EXT. THE NEW HORIZON - DAY

John is at the helm. Eric and Mariah assist with the
sails. JOHN'S CREW handles the other varying duties on
board.

JOHN

Hoist the yellow flag!
Two crew members hoist a yellow flag at mainmast.

ERIC

Why the yellow flag, Captain?!

MARIAH

Yellow means there is sickness on board and
it warns other ships to keep their
distance.

JOHN

Good show, young lady! For my business it's
good to keep the British fleet away!

ERIC

(to Mariah)

How'd you know that?

MARIAH

Didn't you ever pay attention during our
studies?

ERIC

No. I was too busy dreaming about sailing.

Mariah sighs.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The New Horizon meets with a Spanish smuggling ship.

John's crew offloads cargo onto the smuggling ship from the
New Horizon.

EXT. THE NEW HORIZON - DAY

John, Eric, and Mariah oversee the cargo transfer.

JOHN

Something's not right. This captain's
taking too long.

John pulls aside one of his crew members.

JOHN

Have the men ready their guns. Quietly.

The crew member goes off to tell the others.

The SMUGGLER CAPTAIN, a Spaniard in a long coat, approaches John.

SMUGGLER CAPTAIN
Capitan Taylor, you are a generous man.

JOHN
I expect that generosity returned. Where's
my payment?

SMUGGLER CAPTAIN
Still on my ship.

JOHN
Bring it over.

SMUGGLER CAPTAIN
I'm not feeling generous today.

The Smuggler Captain pulls out a flintlock pistol. He points it at John.

JOHN
I hate when I'm right.

The SMUGGLER CREW pulls out rifles and pistols.

John's crew pulls out rifles and pistols.

Both crews wait in a standoff.

The Smuggler Captain laughs.

SMUGGLER CAPTAIN
I'll still kill you.

Eric and Mariah both pull out flintlock pistols. They point them at the Smuggler Captain.

ERIC
Try it.

JOHN
This can end one of two ways. Pay me and we go our separate ways or lose everything right now.

SMUGGLER CAPTAIN

Or maybe I just take your ship.

The Smuggler Captain goes to shoot. Mariah kicks his gun off target.

The Smuggler Captain fires, but hits nothing.

Both crews open fire on each other.

The Smuggler Captain draws his sword.

SMUGGLER CAPTAIN

Let's see how you are with the steel.

John pulls out his flintlock pistol.

The Smuggler Captain has a look of surprise.

John shoots the Smuggler Captain. The Smuggler Captain drops.

JOHN

Pretty good, I'd say.

Eric, Mariah, and John join the battle for the ship.

The smuggler crew quickly surrenders.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The New Horizon and the smuggling ship sail in opposite directions.

EXT. THE NEW HORIZON - DAY

Eric and Mariah stand with John at the helm.

ERIC

Why did you let them keep the cargo?

JOHN

Eric, I'm a simple smuggler. Had I kept the cargo after getting my payment, I'd be the pirate. Besides, maybe the new

captain will have better business sense
than the former.

John turns to Mariah.

JOHN

Young lady, I misjudged you and I apologize
for it. You have proved both strong
and cunning and you saved my life. You
can sail with my crew any time.

Mariah smiles.

INT. ERIC'S CARRIAGE - NIGHT

MOVING

It is early evening. Eric and Mariah quickly change back
into their noble attire.

MARIAH

Next time one of your adventures involves a
man dying right in front of me, please
let me know first!

ERIC

As if I knew that was going to happen.

MARIAH

We're going to be late.

ERIC

And our parents wouldn't expect less of us.

EXT. ALDENBROOKE'S MANOR - NIGHT

The driver stops Eric's carriage out front.

Mariah quickly exits the carriage. She runs to the front
door.

Eric sticks his head out of the carriage.

ERIC

Goodnight!

MARIAH

Goodnight!

Eric goes back into the carriage. Mariah goes into the house.

The driver whips the reigns. The carriage leaves.

INT. WILLIAMS' MANOR - NIGHT

HALL

Eric's Father and ERIC'S MOTHER, wait for Eric to arrive.
Eric enters from outside.

ERIC'S FATHER

You're late.

ERIC

Sorry, father. Your carriage is waiting out front.

ERIC'S FATHER

I know.

ERIC

Oh.

ERIC'S FATHER

We'll be having another talk when I return.

ERIC

Of course.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Goodbye dear.

Eric's Mother kisses him on the cheek.

ERIC

Goodbye, mother.

ERIC'S FATHER

Come along or we'll be late.

Eric's Mother and Eric's Father leave.

INT. ALDENBROOKE'S MANOR - NIGHT

HALL

Mariah stands by the front door with Eliza and MARIAH'S FATHER.

MARIAH

Can't you tell me where you're going this time?

ELIZA

I'm sorry, dear. You know we can't.

MARIAH

Can you at least tell me why you have to go?

MARIAH'S FATHER

We are escorting something important. That is all you need to know.

MARIAH

Why do you and the Williams always have to go away like this?

MARIAH'S FATHER

It is our duty to the throne. Now really, we must be going.

MARIAH

I love you both.

ELIZA

We love you too, dear.

Eliza and Mariah's Father both hug Mariah.

MARIAH'S FATHER

We shall return in four days. Try not to worry. Afterall, my future son will be looking after you.

MARIAH

Father, please.

Mariah's Father smiles.

ELIZA

Goodbye, darling.

MARIAH

Goodbye.

Eliza and Mariah's Father exit.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

A mid-sized ROYAL CHARTER sails within sight of the coastline.

EXT. ROYAL CHARTER - NIGHT

The ship is quiet.

Eric's Father stands near the bow of the ship. He stares into the sky.

Eliza approaches him.

ELIZA

Stargazing?

Eric's Father turns and sees Eliza.

ERIC'S FATHER

Eliza. What a surprise. I was just thinking about Eric, that's all.

ELIZA

And what were you thinking?

ERIC'S FATHER

I just don't know what I'm going to do with him.

ELIZA

He is a fine young man.

ERIC'S FATHER

I know that, but he wants to run off and fight pirates. Of all the rash-

ELIZA

(interrupting)

Can you blame him?

ERIC'S FATHER

Well...no, but I cannot condone it either.

ELIZA

We are fighting piracy.

ERIC'S FATHER

Yes, but in a safe, diplomatic way.

A CHARTER CREW MEMBER

approaches the CHARTER CAPTAIN at the helm.

CHARTER CREW MEMBER

Sir, there is a ship closing on our port side.

CHARTER CAPTAIN

Take the helm.

The charter crew member takes over the helm.

The charter captain pulls out his spyglass and looks through it off the port side aft of the ship.

EXT. THE EXECUTIONER - NIGHT

A large, pirate war vessel, with a very large PIRATE CREW.

CAPTAIN JARED BLACKWATER watches the Royal Charter as his ship advances on it.

SAI, an Asian pirate, approaches Jared.

SAI

They've picked up speed, Captain.

JARED

Close the distance. Powder to the guns.

SAI

Aye.

JARED

When we board them find the papers, do what
you wish with the women, kill the rest,
and burn the ship.

Sai bows his head then goes off to ready the crew.

CLOSE SHOT

of Jared's face. He smiles with the confidence that
victory is his.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS' MANOR - DAY

STUDY

Eric and Mariah sit at a small wooden table. They play
chess.

Eric thinks a while. He makes a move.

ERIC

Ha! Check!

Mariah instantly makes her move.

MARIAH

Checkmate.

Eric scratches his head.

ERIC

Damn. I never was much for strategy.

Eric stands. He walks behind his father's desk and pulls a
decorative sword off the wall.

ERIC

However...I wouldn't lose in a real battle.

Eric swings the sword around very elegantly and skillfully.

Mariah laughs.

ERIC

Oh, mock me, will you?

MARIAH

Don't make it so easy then.

ERIC

En garde!

Eric playfully pursues Mariah around the room until he catches her.

The two are very close for a moment.

They look into each others eyes.

We hear the BELLS RING at the front door.

The moment is ruined.

ERIC

I'd better check that. Hold this, please.

Eric gives the sword to Mariah.

Eric exits the room.

HALL

A SERVANT waits at the front door.

Eric enters the hall.

SERVANT

It's Lord Edward. Shall I let him in?

ERIC

Please.

The Servant opens the front door.

LORD EDWARD, a noble friend of the family, enters from outside. He has a solemn look on his face.

The Servant closes the door behind him and retires to another room.

ERIC

Good afternoon, Lord Edward. What brings
all the way out here today?

EDWARD

Eric, I'm afraid the news I bring sits heavy
on my heart. Is there somewhere we can
talk?

CUT TO:

EXT. A CEMETERY - DAY

It rains. Eric and Mariah stand at the Aldenbrooke
gravesite.

Edward stands with a group of NOBLES. They try to keep dry
as the funeral service comes to an end.

The nobles begin to disperse.

Edward approaches Eric. He puts his hand on Eric's
shoulder.

EDWARD

Eric...I...

ERIC

There is nothing to say, Edward. No words
will bring them back.

EDWARD

I know, Eric. I'm sorry.

ERIC

I wanted him to go, you know. I couldn't
wait for him to leave that night...

Mariah takes Eric's hand.

MARIAH

Eric, he knew you loved him.

ERIC

I want to know who did this, Edward.

EDWARD

Eric, I understand how you feel, but as I told you before we don't know who did it.

ERIC

You do not understand how I feel! I will have revenge for my parents lives!

MARIAH

Edward please, you must know something.

EDWARD

It was a pirate attack. That much is certain, but there was nothing left to point out any one pirate crew.

ERIC

Then they must all pay!

EDWARD

Don't be a fool, Eric! How will you track down every pirate in our waters when the entire British Navy cannot?!

ERIC

I'll become one.

Eric walks away.

EDWARD

Mariah, will you talk some sense into him?

Mariah runs after Eric.

MARIAH

Eric, wait!

Eric stops. Mariah catches up to him.

MARIAH

Eric...I'm coming with you. Those bastards killed my parents as well!

Edward sighs in disbelief.

INT. WILLIAMS' MANOR - NIGHT

STUDY

Eric and Mariah look over some maps on the desk.
Edward nervously paces.

EDWARD

How are you going to become pirates? Have
you thought of that?

ERIC

Edward, I don't come up with the plans.
Mariah does.

MARIAH

Don't worry. I've got it all figured out.

EDWARD

(sarcastic)

Oh good! Then it's all settled!

(beat)

This is treason you know!

MARIAH

Are you going to turn us in?

Edward stops.

EDWARD

No, but listen to me. What you are doing is
rash and idiotic...just promise me you'll
be safe.

Eric walks to Edward. He puts his hand on Edward's
shoulder.

ERIC

We'll be alright. I promise.

Edward sighs.

MARIAH

Eric, where exactly are we going to find a
crew?

ERIC

I know of a place.

INT. ROWDY TAVERN - NIGHT

A low-class place with patrons made up of SAILORS, DOCK WORKERS, and PIRATES.

Eric and Mariah enter dressed as commoners. Eric carries a rapier on his belt. Their presence isn't noticed

MARIAH

Are you sure about this?

ERIC

We need a crew and this is where we're going to find one.

MARIAH

Alright. Now, I've read up on this. The first thing you need to do is win their respect...without getting killed.

ERIC

How do I do that?

MARIAH

Find the toughest one in here and start a fight with him.

ERIC

I thought you said without getting killed.

MARIAH

Well, that part is up to you. Now...who's the biggest?

Mariah looks over the room until she spots BRIGGS, an enormous, African pirate armed with a cutlass.

MARIAH

He'll do.

Eric looks at Briggs and gulps.

MARIAH

Well, don't be shy.

Eric reluctantly walks up behind Briggs.

Eric taps Briggs on the shoulder. Briggs turns around and looks down.

BRIGGS

What do you want, little man?

Eric looks back to Mariah.

Mariah nods.

Eric turns back to Briggs. He sighs.

BRIGGS

Well?!

Eric slugs Briggs in the face.

The entire room goes SILENT.

Briggs isn't affected by the punch.

Mariah moves over to a group of sailors.

BRIGGS

Why would you do that?

ERIC

I...had to test you.

BRIGGS

Test me?

ERIC

Yep, you can take a punch.
Briggs punches Eric. Eric drops.

After a moment Eric manages to pull himself off the ground.

BRIGGS

So can you it would seem.

Briggs picks Eric up by the throat.

The room cheers.

BRIGGS

Let's see how well you die!

Mariah flirts with the sailors.

Eric kicks Briggs in the balls.

Briggs and Eric both drop to the ground.

The room goes SILENT again.

Eric gasps for air.

Mariah whispers to the sailors.

Some pirates grab Eric. They prepare to run him through.

Mariah's sailors approach the pirates. The LEAD SAILOR steps forward.

LEAD SAILOR

We can't let you kill him.

Briggs stands.

BRIGGS

Why not?

LEAD SAILOR

Because there is a lady present.

BRIGGS

Oh. My apologies.

Briggs punches the Lead Sailor.

The tavern comes alive as sailors and pirates attack each other.

Eric, Mariah, and the dock workers join the mix against both pirates and sailors.

Eric and Briggs face off again.

Briggs knocks Eric out the front door.

EXT. ROWDY TAVERN - NIGHT

Eric picks himself up off the ground.

Briggs comes out of the tavern.

Eric draws his rapier.

Briggs draws his cutlass.

They fight.

Eric is skillful, but Briggs overpowers him. Eric's rapier is knocked away.

Briggs is ready to kill Eric.

BRIGGS

You got a death wish, boy?!

ERIC

I need a crew. One that's tough.

Briggs stops.

BRIGGS

A crew for what?

ERIC

Pillaging, plundering. The usual.

BRIGGS

You have a ship?

ERIC

The finest money can buy.

Briggs picks up Eric's sword. He hands it to Eric.

BRIGGS

Let's talk.

INT. ROWDY TAVERN - NIGHT

The fight has subsided. All patrons have gone back to their drinks, except for those who are still unconscious on the floor.

Briggs, Mariah, and Eric sit at a table in a corner.

BRIGGS

What's the deal? You kids acquire a boat
and decide you want to play pirates?

ERIC

We're not playing. We're both able sailors.

BRIGGS

Aye, sailors, but not pirates. You wouldn't
last a day. And no crew, I don't care
how soft would accept a woman.

MARIAH

You let me worry about that.

ERIC

Look, we'll learn what we need to. You and
your men will get to split the majority
of any plunder we capture and all you
have to do is be a crew under our
command.

MARIAH

And no questions about our business.

BRIGGS

I would have to be a fool to accept such an
offer.

Eric and Mariah stand to leave.

BRIGGS

But...it takes a fool to be a pirate anyway.

Briggs stands.

BRIGGS

We have a bargain.

Briggs and Eric shake hands.

EXT. BUSY HARBOR - DAY

THE POSEIDON

The finest ship in the harbor.

Eric, Mariah, and Briggs stand at the dock. They look at the ship.

ERIC

This is the one.

BRIGGS

She'll do. Let's have a look on board.

ERIC

Not yet.

BRIGGS

Why not?

ERIC

Just wait here a minute.

Eric and Mariah approach a MAN near the ship.

ERIC

Excuse me, sir.

The man looks at Eric and Mariah.

ERIC

Are you the owner of this magnificent vessel?

POSEIDON OWNER

Yes, yes I am. Can I help you?

ERIC

I'd like to buy your ship.

The Poseidon Owner laughs.

POSEIDON OWNER

You'd better have a lot to barter with!

MARIAH

How about these?

Eric and Mariah present the titles to their families' lands.

MARIAH

The titles to the lands and estates of the
Williams and Aldenbrooke families.

The Poseidon Owner stops laughing.

POSEIDON OWNER

Is this some sort of joke?

ERIC

See for yourself.

The Poseidon Owner examines the titles. His eyes widen
immensely.

POSEIDON OWNER

You don't need a crew do you?

ERIC

Already have one.

POSEIDON OWNER

Then it's been a pleasure doing business
with you.

The ex-Poseidon Owner walks off with the titles. Eric
waves to Briggs.

Briggs approaches.

BRIGGS

What was that about?

MARIAH

No questions, remember?

BRIGGS

I must be goin' soft to put up with this.

ERIC

Let's check it out!

EXT. THE POSEIDON - DAY

Eric, Mariah, and Briggs examine the ship.

ERIC

What do you think, Mr. Briggs?

BRIGGS

A fine ship.

MARIAH

Now where is your crew?

Briggs looks off the ship towards the docks.

BRIGGS

There!

Briggs points.

Eric and Mariah look off the ship.

EXT. BUSY HARBOR - DAY

A group of around forty PIRATES approach the docks.

They are lead by CUTTER, an agile pirate armed with numerous bladed weapons; BURKE, a grisly pirate heavily armed with explosives; and PO, Briggs' right-hand man.

BRIGGS

signals the men from the ship.

Briggs' crew moves towards the Poseidon.

EXT. THE POSEIDON - DAY

Briggs turns to Eric and Mariah.

BRIGGS

They're coming.

ERIC

Briggs, I need to speak with you in the
captain's quarters immediately.

Briggs nods.

ERIC

Mariah, let me know when the crew arrives.

Mariah nods.

Eric and Briggs go into the captain's quarters.

INT. THE POSEIDON - DAY

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The room is well decorated. There is a large desk covered with maps and charts near a window at the back of the room.

Briggs waits for Eric to say something.

ERIC

I need to ask you something before we
proceed any further.

BRIGGS

What?

Eric circles Briggs. As he does he pulls out a small knife and conceals it behind his back.

Eric is ready to strike if he doesn't like the answer he hears.

ERIC

When is the last time you and your crew were
on a ship?

BRIGGS

I knew you'd ask that. It's been some time
now...months, but my crew is as tough as
they come.

ERIC

Then why has it been so long since you last
sailed?

BRIGGS

Our ship was destroyed and our captain was
killed.

ERIC

How?

BRIGGS

Let's just say there is no honor amongst
pirates.

Mariah enters from outside.

MARIAH

They're boarding.

ERIC

Good. Briggs, get them in order. I'll be
out to address them in a minute.

BRIGGS

Aye...Captain.

Briggs exits.

MARIAH

Well?

Eric puts his knife away.

ERIC

They didn't do it.

MARIAH

You know we can't trust them.

ERIC

I know...but we have to try. There is no
other way.

MARIAH

What are you going to say to them?

ERIC

I'll make it up as I go. Do you have any
suggestions for me?

MARIAH

Don't show them any fear.

EXT. THE POSEIDON - DAY

Briggs' crew including Cutter, Burke, and Po stand outside the captain's quarters. They are LOUD.

Briggs stands with them.

Eric comes out of the captain's quarters.

BRIGGS

Shut up, you dogs!

The men go SILENT.

ERIC

Thank you, Mr. Briggs.

(addresses the men)

I am Captain Williams.

CUTTER

I think we'll decide whose captain.

BRIGGS

Shut your mouth, Cutter!

ERIC

It's alright, Mr. Briggs.

Eric approaches Cutter.

ERIC

Who do you think should be captain, Mr.
Cutter? You?

Cutter looks to his fellow pirates then back to Eric.

CUTTER

I'd make a better captain than a pretty boy
like you.

ERIC

Show me.

Cutter reaches for his cutlass.

Before Cutter can draw his sword Eric has a flintlock pistol pointed at Cutter's head.

Burke reaches for his rifle, but stops when a blade is pressed to his throat.

Burke looks to see it is Briggs holding the sword.

BRIGGS

You're being rude.

Burke and Cutter both stand down.

ERIC

I am your captain! If you don't like it leave now! If you stay then maybe together we can become rich beyond your wildest dreams.

CUTTER

I seem to have had a change of heart, Captain Williams. My blades are at your service until you die. Now, let's get back to this rich beyond my wildest dreams talk.

ERIC

Later. Briggs, is this all of our men?

BRIGGS

Aye.

ERIC

This is not enough to sail a ship of this size.

BRIGGS

The men will recruit the rest. There's always sailors and thugs looking for work around these parts.

ERIC

Get to it then. I want this ship ready to sail by sun up tomorrow!

BRIGGS

Aye!

(to the men)

You heard the Captain! Move!

The crew gets to work.

INT. THE POSEIDON - NIGHT

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Eric, Mariah, and Briggs discuss plans at the captain's desk.

BRIGGS

The problem is not getting raided by other pirates on the way back to port.

MARIAH

We've thought of that.

ERIC

And that's why we've decided to raid them first.

BRIGGS

What?

ERIC

We are going to raid other pirate ships.

BRIGGS

A little soon in your career to start creating enemies isn't it?

MARIAH

It's safer than raiding British naval ships.

BRIGGS

Don't be so sure.

MARIAH

Pirates won't unite. Would you rather have the entire British fleet after us?

BRIGGS

There are pirates I fear more than the British fleet.

MARIAH

A man like you? Afraid?

BRIGGS

You've never met Captain Jared Blackwater, I
take it.

Mariah shakes her head.

BRIGGS

His ship is the Executioner and it's the one
other pirates pray they never cross.

ERIC

I can't wait to meet him.

BRIGGS

You do have a death wish.

Po and Burke enter from outside.

PO

Captain, the ship is ready to sail and has a
full crew.

ERIC

Good.

BURKE

Captain?

ERIC

Yes, Mr. Burke?

Burke stares lustfully at Mariah.

BURKE

When you're done with the wench can she pay
the crew a little visit?

ERIC

This wench just happens to be first mate.

BURKE

A woman?! I'll not take orders from a woman!

Mariah approaches Burke.

MARIAH

And why not?

BURKE

Cause you're meant to be seen and not heard!

MARIAH

Well, you don't have to listen if you don't want to...

Mariah knees Burke in the balls.

Burke drops to the ground.

MARIAH

But I wouldn't advise it.

Burke jumps up in a rage. He reaches for his flintlock pistol.

Mariah grabs Burke's hand before he gets the gun.

Mariah kicks Burke which pushes him through the door and out of the captain's quarters.

BRIGGS

Po, take Burke below deck.

PO

Aye.

Po exits the captain's quarters.

BRIGGS

You two are okay, but be careful. As I said before...there is no honor amongst pirates.

EXT. THE POSEIDON - NIGHT

Eric and Mariah stand at the stern of the ship.

ERIC

I'm finally a sailor. Captain of my own ship. I thought it would feel better than this.

MARIAH

Me too. I have to say I'm not all together comfortable with being the only woman on this ship. I know what pirates are like.

ERIC

How many have you known?

MARIAH

None, but I've heard plenty of things.

ERIC

Don't worry. I'll never let anything happen to you.

MARIAH

That's sweet.

ERIC

Mariah.

MARIAH

Yes?

ERIC

I just wanted to tell you that...you're the most...I mean, what I mean is I...um...I uh...

MARIAH

What is it?

ERIC

Oh...uh it's nothing...nothing important.

Mariah smiles and shakes her head.

EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY

The Poseidon, with full sails, moves across the water at a good pace.

EXT. THE POSEIDON - DAY

Briggs is at the helm. Eric stands near him.

ERIC

Mr. Briggs, are you certain these are pirate waters?!

BRIGGS

I'm a pirate aren't I?!

ERIC

That remains to be seen!

Eric laughs.

BRIGGS

Be happy! If I acted as a pirate I would've killed you and taken your ship already!

Eric stops laughing.

EXT. AN OCEAN COVE - DAY

The Executioner, bearing a red pirate flag, waits where the water runs deep.

EXT. THE EXECUTIONER - DAY

Jared stands at the stern of the ship. He looks through a spyglass out at the open ocean.

Sai and CARVER, a pirate with an eye-patch, both approach Jared.

CARVER

The guns are ready, Captain.

JARED

Weigh anchor. I want to be ready when the ship arrives.

CARVER

Aye, Captain.

Carver starts to leave.

JARED

Mr. Carver, how is the crew treating our guest?

CARVER

As well as we treat any sailor.

MAIN MAST

JARED'S CREW crowd around a BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER tied to the mast.

The crew members throw bottles and small knives at and around the British Officer.

The British Officer is severely wounded and near death.

EXT. THE POSEIDON - DAY

Briggs is at the helm. Eric and Mariah stand near him.

Eric looks off the stern of the ship.

ERIC

Seems you were right, Briggs!

Briggs and Mariah look off the back of the ship. In the distance a ship approaches. It has a pirate flag.

BRIGGS

Are you sure you're ready for this?!

ERIC

Come about, Mr. Briggs!

Briggs smiles.

BRIGGS

Aye!

Briggs turns the helm wheel.

Mariah moves down from the poop deck to where the rest of the crew is.

Po waits for her order.

MARIAH

Mr. Po, powder to the guns.

PO

We gonna see some action?

Mariah nods. She moves back up to the poop deck.

PO
(to the crew)

Powder to the guns!

EXT. OCEAN NEAR A COVE - DAY

The Executioner exchanges cannon fire at close proximity with a British naval frigate.

EXT. THE EXECUTIONER - DAY

The sounds of GUN and CANNON FIRE are all around.

Jared, armed with a cutlass and flintlock pistol, leads his crew.

JARED

Prepare to board!

Jared's crew attaches their grappling hooks to the British vessel.

JARED

Bring me their captain!

Jared's crew members SHOUT as they rush the British ship.

EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY

The Poseidon is locked up with a British pirate ship.

Eric's crew battles the BRITISH PIRATE CREW.

EXT. BRITISH PIRATE SHIP - DAY

Pirates battle pirates all over the top deck. They use rifles, pistols, and swords.

Po and Mariah fight alongside each other.

Cutter fights alone. He wields two blades with uncanny skill.

Briggs and Eric fight alongside each other.

Burke fights alone.

ERIC

(to Briggs)

I must find the captain!

EXT. THE EXECUTIONER - DAY

The battle has subsided.

Jared's crew hauls chests of gold over from the British ship.

Jared waits as Sai escorts the FRIGATE CAPTAIN to him.

JARED

I'm usually not so kind, Captain, but since
your reputation is so grand I thought
I'd give you the chance to live.

(to Sai)

Release him!

Sai let's go of the unarmed Frigate Captain.

Jared tosses the Frigate Captain a sword.

Jared pulls out his cutlass. They fight.

EXT. BRITISH PIRATE SHIP - DAY

The battle rages on between Eric's crew and the British pirate crew.

Eric and the PIRATE CAPTAIN attack each other with sabers.

EXT. THE EXECUTIONER - DAY

Jared fights with the Frigate Captain.

Both are skillful, but Jared easily defeats the Frigate Captain.

Jared knocks the Frigate Captain's sword away.

JARED

I'm disappointed. I expected more from a
Captain in the British fleet. Try this.

Jared pulls out a flintlock pistol. He tosses the pistol to the Frigate Captain.

JARED

Last chance to live.

The Frigate Captain raises the pistol to shoot Jared.

Jared quickly knocks the pistol aside and stabs the Frigate Captain through the throat.

The Frigate Captain dies.
Carver approaches Jared.

JARED

Are there any captives?

CARVER

No, they're all dead. Do we burn the ship?

JARED

No...leave it as a message for the rest of the
Royal Navy.

EXT. BRITISH PIRATE SHIP - DAY

Eric's crew has the upper hand in the fight against the British pirate crew.

Eric and the Pirate Captain pursue each other across the ship. They fight furiously.

Eric's rage overpowers the Pirate Captain.

Eric stabs the Pirate Captain in the stomach.

The Pirate Captain falls down. He slowly dies.

Eric looks for Briggs.

ERIC

Mr. Briggs, I want no quarter for any man on
this ship!

BRIGGS

Aye!

Eric joins the fight again.

LATER THAT DAY

The entire British pirate crew is dead. Their bodies
litter the deck of the ship.

Eric surveys the aftermath of the battle.

Mariah approaches Eric.

MARIAH

The men have cleared out the ship. The
entire crew is dead.

ERIC

I know...

INT. THE POSEIDON - NIGHT

CREW'S QUARTERS

The room is in good condition from the previous owners of
the ship.

Briggs, Cutter, and Po are confronted by Burke and a few
other crew members.

BURKE

I ain't sayin' today wasn't prosperous, but
I do think we need to lose the children
and take this ship for ourselves.

PO

You're talkin' mutiny.

BURKE

It's not a mutiny if we're all in on it.

CUTTER

Actually, that's what a mutiny is.

BURKE

Fine. It's a mutiny. We'll just toss Williams into the sea and we'll keep his lady for ourselves.

PO

They're both worth more than you are, Burke. Why don't we toss you into the sea?

CUTTER

Yeah, sorry Burke, can't help you with that. The Captain's gonna make me rich beyond my dreams and besides, he likes me. I can tell.

BURKE

Briggs? You're on my side, right?

BRIGGS

Burke, we've been shipmates for a long time, but right now you disgust me. If you talk anymore of mutiny I'll personally hang you from the yardarm!

Briggs storms out of the room.

CUTTER

See what you've done? You've gone and made him mad.

Cutter and Po exit the room.

BURKE

Fools.

EXT. THE POSEIDON - NIGHT

It is late. The ship sails towards the distant coast.

Eric stands at the stern of the ship. He looks out over the ocean.

Mariah is at the helm.

Briggs approaches Eric.

BRIGGS

We need to talk...privately.

ERIC

Of course.

Eric and Briggs exit into the captain's quarters.

Po approaches Mariah.

Burke watches from the side.

PO

You fought well today.

MARIAH

And so did you.

There is a moment of silence.

PO

I'll take the helm. You look tired.

MARIAH

Thank you, Mr. Po.

Po takes over the helm.

Mariah heads towards the bow of the ship.

BURKE

Takin' a fancy to the wench are we?

PO

Shut your mouth, Burke!

Burke smirks and walks away from Po.

INT. THE POSEIDON - NIGHT

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The room is lit by oil lanterns.

Eric and Briggs face each other.

BRIGGS

What was today about?

ERIC

What do you mean?

BRIGGS

No quarter?! Few pirates kill everyone on a
ship! You're in this for more than
just riches! Why?!

ERIC

You're not to ask questions!

BRIGGS

When my men are risking their lives I ask!
Now answer!

EXT. THE POSEIDON - NIGHT

Mariah stands on the port side of the ship. He stares up
at the stars.

Mariah is hit in the back of the head with a WOODEN CLUB.
She falls unconscious.

INT. THE POSEIDON - NIGHT

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Eric has moved away from Briggs.

BRIGGS

What do you have against pirates?!

Eric doesn't answer.

Briggs moves to Eric and grabs him.

BRIGGS

Tell me!

Eric pushes away from Briggs.

ERIC

What don't I have against them?! They have murdered my entire family!

There is a moment of silence.

BRIGGS

Mariah?

ERIC

Hers also.

BRIGGS

So this whole voyage is for revenge?

ERIC

Yes! The pirate that killed my family showed no mercy, no quarter and so I will show none for any pirate!

BRIGGS

What of me?! Do you want to kill me?!

ERIC

You're not the pirate I'm after. Look, I need your help. I'm not asking for kindness. You're being paid. Will you help me or will you just kill me and take my ship?

There is another moment of silence.

BRIGGS

I know the pirate you're after. He's the most feared, the most ruthless...and he's the only Captain 'round these parts that will slaughter a ship load just for pleasure. He's the same that killed my captain. Jared Blackwater.

ERIC

Where can I find him?

BRIGGS

You can't. You'll have to get his attention.

ERIC

Will you help me?

BRIGGS

Aye, but not for the gold...I want my revenge too.

EXT. THE POSEIDON - NIGHT

Eric and Briggs come out of the captain's quarters. They make their way up to the poop deck.

Po is at the helm.

Eric looks around.

ERIC

Where is Mariah?

PO

Last I saw she was headin' towards the bow.

Briggs looks around. He notices some of the men are missing, Burke in particular.

BRIGGS

Where's Burke?

PO

Don't know.

INT. THE POSEIDON - NIGHT

CREW'S QUARTERS

Mariah wakes up on the floor to find her hands tied behind her back.

Burke and a handful of the crew surround her.

Burke licks his lips.

BURKE

I've been waitin' to do this since I first laid eyes on you.

Burke reaches for Mariah's legs.

Mariah kicks Burke in the knee.

Burke stumbles back.

MARIAH

Keep waiting!

Mariah jumps to her feet.

Four of the crew advance on Mariah.

Mariah fights them with her hands still tied. She holds her own until she is hit from behind by Burke.

Mariah falls down.

BURKE

Grab her legs!

The four crew members grab Mariah and hold her legs open.

Mariah struggles.

BURKE

Hold her!

The crew members tighten their hold on Mariah.

Burke pulls out a knife.

BURKE

Now I'm really gonna enjoy this!

Burke advances on Mariah.

We hear a SINGLE GUNSHOT.

Burke is hit in the back of the arm by the bullet.

The surprise causes Burke to stumble to the floor.

Eric, Briggs, Cutter, and two other crew members come out of the darkness. They are armed with pistols and rifles.

ERIC

Let her go!

The four crew members release Mariah.

Eric helps Mariah away from them.

Burke stands.

BURKE

You've gone soft, Briggs! We could've taken
this ship for our own!

BRIGGS

My allegiance is to the Captain, not to a
backstabbing scab like you.

Briggs turns to Eric.

BRIGGS

Captain, you and Mariah don't want to be
here for this.

ERIC

Thank you.

Cutter cuts Mariah's bonds.

Eric and Mariah exit the room.

BURKE

What are you gonna do?

BRIGGS

I'm gonna show you how soft I am.

Briggs clenches his fists. He advances on Burke.

EXT. THE POSEIDON - DAY

The ship is anchored near the coast.

The entire crew, except for Mariah, is on the main deck.

Burke and his conspirators are tied up. They have been
severely beaten.

Eric approaches Burke.

ERIC

I should kill you where you stand.

BURKE

Do it.

ERIC

No. Briggs is quartermaster. He shall
decide your fate.

Briggs steps forward.

BURKE

(sarcastic)

So what else you got for me, Mr. Briggs?

Briggs looks around at the crew.

BRIGGS

Keelhaul him.

The crew ROARS in approval.

Crew members take Burke to the bow of the ship.

Burke screams and struggles as he is dragged.

ERIC

Briggs, what is a keelhaul?

BRIGGS

You'll see.

The crew members run a rope along the bottom of the ship.
They tie Burke to the rope.

Burke continues to struggle.

The crew members lower Burke into the water. They pull the
rope across the bottom of the ship.

ERIC

Will he drown?

BRIGGS

If he's lucky.

ERIC

And if he's not?

BRIGGS

The ship's bottom will tear his flesh open
and he'll die very painfully.

Eric looks ill at the thought of it.

ERIC

What of the others?

BRIGGS

They'll hang from the yardarm. What's wrong
with you? You look pale.

ERIC

I never expected this.

BRIGGS

This is what it is to be a pirate. We have
rules and when they're broken you pay
for it. You have killed too. What's
the problem?

ERIC

Not like this. I'll be in my quarters.

Eric goes into the captain's quarters.

Po is up on the yardarm. He makes a noose with some rope.

BRIGGS

Mr. Po! When you're ready!

Po holds the noose out.

PO

Bring 'em up!

The crew members escort Burke's conspirators towards the
main mast.

INT. THE POSEIDON - DAY

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Mariah is asleep on a pillowed couch on the left side of the room.

Eric walks up and watches over Mariah for a moment.

Eric softly caresses Mariah's hair.

Mariah slowly wakes.

ERIC

How are you?

MARIAH

I've felt better.

Mariah sits up.

ERIC

I'm sorry.

MARIAH

For what?

ERIC

For putting you into this.

Mariah stands.

MARIAH

I put myself into this! My parents were murdered also!

ERIC

I know. I know... I just...

Eric walks away from Mariah.

MARIAH

Eric, what's wrong?

Eric faces Mariah.

ERIC

What are we doing, Mariah? We've given up everything we know and for what? To

become butchers like the bastards we're
after. Are we now the same as they are?

Mariah walks up to Eric.

MARIAH

Revenge is never justified, but it's what we
wanted. If you wish to walk away from
it, just say the word and I'll be by
your side as I am now.

Eric thinks and there is a moment of silence.

ERIC

No. I'll finish what I've started. I just
don't want to see you hurt.

MARIAH

Don't worry. We'll get through this...
together.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

ERIC

Come.

Briggs enters.

BRIGGS

Punishment has been dealt.

ERIC

Burke?

BRIGGS

He did not survive.

ERIC

Get rid of the bodies.

BRIGGS

Aye.

Eric leaves the room.

Briggs turns to leave.

MARIAH

Briggs.

Briggs turns to Mariah.

MARIAH

Thank you.

BRIGGS

'Tis nothing. I'd do the same for any of my
men...or women.

Briggs smiles as warmly as he is able.

EXT. THE POSEIDON - DAY

Eric is on the poop deck.

Briggs and Mariah come out of the captain's quarters.

The crew members go about their duties.

ERIC

Mr. Cutter!

Cutter stops what he is doing.

CUTTER

Aye, Captain?!

ERIC

Weigh anchor!

Cutter nods.

ERIC

(to himself)

We've got a job to do.