She's No Lady

by

David Warrack

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FADE IN:

EXT. DOCK AT NEW PROVIDENCE (NOW THE BAHAMAS), APRIL, 1718, DUSK

SAILORS disembark from a large sailboat onto noisy waterfront scene. SAILOR is almost run down by horse and carriage driven by A WEALTHY MAN in his thirties with sharp features and high colour, and his BUXOM COMPANION, a formidable Amazon. GNARLED LOCAL MAN (GLM) spits at the dust of the departing vehicle.

GLM

Bastard.

SAILOR

Who the hell was that?

GLM

Goddamn Chidley Bayard.

He hurls another impressive lob of spit in Chidley's direction.

Thinks he owns the roads on top of everythin' else.

SAILOR

Rich?

GLM

Stinkin'. What's it t' you?

SAILOR
(holding out a coin)

I'm doing research on the wealthy.

GLM's eyes light up. He reaches for the coin with a filthy hand.

And his companion?

GLM

His mistress, Maria Espartero. For now. Tomorrow, next week, who knows? Women, money, money, women –he takes, he uses, he tosses away, and goes out and gets more, more, more.

He takes the coin and studies it.

SAILOR
(producing a second coin)

Where did you say he lives, again?

GLM

I didn't.

SAILOR

But you will.

GLM

Follow the beach. You'll see it 'round the second turn. Nothin' else like it. A bloody castle.

SAILOR
(giving him the coin)

You never saw me.

GLM
(studying the 2nd coin)

Blind, that's what I am, sir.

He looks up. The sailor has vanished.

Where'd'e go?

:

EXT. BEACH OUTSIDE BAYARD'S MANSION. ALMOST DARK.

Sailor arrives as Bayard and Maria come out onto the balcony, laughing, intimate.

Sailor climbs a tree, secures a post by the horse barn with a rope, scrambles over the wall, and disappears inside the barn.

Maria unbuttons Bayard's shirt.

Barn doors open, and SOUND of hooves on cobblestones. HORSE emerges with Sailor on back, totally nude. The Sailor, out of disguise, is obviously a woman, and a beautiful one at that – Anne Bonney. She rides underneath the balcony. Bayard and Maria are mesmerized. Horse up on back legs and claws at the air as Anne salutes them with her sword. She brings the horse down, turns it towards the water, and urges it forward. Horse and rider sail over the wall and disappear down the beach in the moonlight.

EXT. THE SWORD INN, NEW PROVIDENCE, THE FOLLOWING EVENING.

Bayard arrives on horseback with three HENCHMEN. Raucous SOUNDS from inside the tavern.

INT. THE SWORD INN.

A MOTLEY CROWD of the lowlife and the lowerlife interact like a human broth. They sing.

CROWD

Buy me some heaven with treasure,
Some rum and a woman to bite,
It's easy to tell we're goin' t' hell,
So I'll take me heaven tonight.

Song continues as full production number emphasizing the high spirits and low morals. Bayard and his gang enter. He grabs a BARMAID by the wrist.

BAYARD

I'm looking for a woman.

BARMAID

There's news.

Crowd nearby erupt in laughter.

BAYARD

She stole one of my horses.

MUDDER BAR TAR, a massive black woman with a voice that would pierce steel removes his hand from the barmaid.

MUDDER
(saracastically)

I always ask the horse thieves to make themselves at home in that corner over there.

BAYARD

You will cooperate, or I'll have Governor Rodgers close you down.

MUDDER

Hear that, boys? Drink up, cuz we're closin' soon.

A huge BEARDED PIRATE with a monstrous, overflowing mug of rum, gets up from a nearby table and approaches Bayard.

BEARDED PIRATE

Sez who?

MUDDER

Chidley Bayard, meet Edward Teach.

BAYARD
(impressed)

Blackbeard? Why, Mudder – you do attract them, don't you?

MUDDER

Yep. They come for the cookin'.

More laughter.

BLACKBEARD

Say the word, and y'can serve his head on a platter!

Bayard's henchmen don't know how to respond. Bayard holds up a hand to stop them.

BAYARD

I have no quarrel with you.

BLACKBEARD

Y' didn't until y' threatened my woman.

MUDDER

That's a laugh. You'd have to take a bath first.

BLACKBEARD

There're a lotta things I'd do fer a woman, but …

BAYARD

There's a reward.

The entire room goes immediately silent.

MUDDER, BLACKBEARD

How much?

BAYARD

Ten gold coins.

BLACKBEARD

That's four each!

MUDDER

We'll take it.

BAYARD

Where is she?

BLACKBEARD

Right behind you.

As Bayard swivels, he drops the gold coins in Blackbeard's hand. GLM comes forward.

GLM

You sold her out. Goddamn shameful!

MUDDER

Oh, she'll be fine.

Blackbeard sits down, Mudder standing over him as they divide the spoils. Bayard slowly takes in Anne, definitely no longer in disguise.

BAYARD

You have an animal of mine.

ANNE

I'd return her, but we've grown quite attached.

BAYARD

I'm not surprised, given how little was separating you … as I recall.

ANNE

If I let her go, what could take her place?

BAYARD

Perhaps you could be convinced to ride something else?

ANNE

No – I'm very particular about what I jump on.

BAYARD
(invading her space)

What makes you think I'm giving you a choice?

He turns to his men.

Bring her along.

The three bodyguards go after her and end up on the floor within moments. Anne has her sword at Bayard's throat.

ANNE

Perhaps I could have some say in the matter now?

Before Bayard can answer, Maria hurls herself at Anne's back from out of the crowd, cutlass in hand.

MUDDER

Anne. Behind you.

Anne rolls clear. The women fight a fierce battle. Finally, Maria is disarmed, and at Anne's mercy. Despite cries from the drunken rabble to finish her off, Anne does something worse.
She sings.

ANNE

I'm starting not to like you.
I'm starting not to care.

As the song progresses, bit by bit, stroke by stroke, she undresses Maria with the tip of her sword, leaving her totally humiliated. Then she turns to Chidley. He backs up. She now invades his space and they are face to face.

ANNE

Would you like to see that horse now?

BAYARD

Definitely.

As they exit, he throws some coins at Maria on the floor.

Use the money to take some lessons.

Anne exits with Bayard, followed by the still dazed henchmen. Blackbeard goes to the door and toasts her with his mug.

BLACKBEARD

What a woman!

MARIA

I will kill that bitch.

A young, ridiculously handsome, swashbuckling PIRATE helps her cover herself.

PIRATE

Ye'd be needin' an army t' be getting' the better o' that lady.

MARIA

She's no lady. She's a whore. I find her, I kill her.

PIRATE

Have a nice … short … life.

Maria pulls her clothes around her and goes up the stairs behind the bar. Blackbeard approaches the pirate.

BLACKBEARD

Well, if it ain't the honorable competition. Mudder, meet Calico Jack Rackham.

MUDDER

You're too young t' drink, let alone do all the things they say you've done!

JACK

Rumours. Nothin' but rumours.

BLACKBEARD

Last time I laid eyes on you …

JACK

I'm sorry about that. But she was way too young for you.

BLACKBEARD

And way too old for you!

MUDDER

I have work to do.

JACK

But Anne – she's perfect.

BLACKBEARD

Didn't you hear? She's no lady.

JACK

That's what I mean. She's perfect!

BLACKBEARD

You know her?

JACK

I know of her. I've seen her, many times, but we've not met.

BLACKBEARD

You disappoint me.

JACK

Even Calico Jack knows when he's overmatched!

He sings.

She's no lady, no fancy airs,
No skill at cookin' or sewin'
Or dancin' or throwin'
Those catered affairs.

He goes on to explain all the reasons he loves Anne from afar, joined by an equally appreciative Blackbeard. They end together.

JACK, BLACKBEARD

Though the diamond is rough,
I just can't get enough of Anne.

They turn to more available bosoms.

EXT. COURTYARD BELOW BALCONY WHERE BAYARD FIRST SAW ANNE. MIDNIGHT.

They dismount. One of the pissed-off bodyguards takes their horses to the barn.

BAYARD

What do you want?

ANNE

What do you want?

BAYARD

You know the answer to that question. Answer mine.

ANNE

I want the horse.

BAYARD

She's yours.

He starts toward the house. She does not follow.

Anything else?

ANNE

A horse needs a barn.

He hesitates. He calculates. He decides.

BAYARD

Done.

He takes her by the hand and tries to lead her up the stairs. She resists.

More?

She takes in the house with an appraising eye.

You can't be serious.

She nods, ever so innocently.

You have large appetites.

ANNE
(directly)

Immense.

He pauses. He laughs.

BAYARD

But dear lady, if I gave you the house, where would I live?

ANNE
(whispering)

I would most certainly expect my husband to live with me.

Bayard stops laughing.

BAYARD

I beg your pardon?

ANNE

Is the bedroom upstairs?

BAYARD

Yes.

ANNE

I'll be there.

She goes up the stairs, opens the door, and turns back.

Don't join me unless you agree to my terms.

She exits inside the house. He follows, as if in a trance.

INT. SWORD INN. TWO MONTHS LATER. EARLY AFTERNOON.

Anne enters with PIERRE on her arm. He is a dandy, larger than life.

Greetings all around.

MUDDER

Anne, or should I say Mrs. Bayard? Where have you been hidin' yourself?

ANNE

I've been in plain sight. Part of society. Remember? You're the ones that are in hiding.

MUDDER

I never thought of that. What's that on your arm?

ANNE

This is Pierre. Mudder, he could do a dress for you that would force

Blackbeard to take a bath.

MUDDER

He makes dresses? A man who makes dresses?

PIERRE

I make dresses. I make suits. I make hats. I make boots.
I design anything, extraordinaire.
I have the eye and the hand and the flair.

MUDDER

Maybe so, but you sure do talk funny.

ANNE

He may be strange, but he's never boring, and a hell of lot more dependable than certain others I've been hanging around.

PIERRE

She has great taste in everything but men.

MUDDER

Welcome to the club.

PIERRE

But with me, she has nothing to worry about.

MUDDER

Who'd've guessed?

PIERRE

I excel at excess. I know no boundaries. In my life, and in my imagination, I'm … huge!

He, of course, sings.

Pick any person that you can name,

A wild kinda guy or a crazy dame,
A party type of any stripe,
I'm bigger than that.

The song never stops extolling his virtues.

MUDDER

Well, Pierre, if I ever decide I need that dress, you're my …

She pauses to consider.

man.

Mudder places drinks in front of Anne and Pierre.

So, where's that husband of yours?

ANNE

Well, actually, that's why I'm here. By the time I finish this drink, I need to be out that door, cuz not long after that, Chidley Bayard will be coming through it looking for me, and he won't be alone.

PIERRE

And he won't be happy.

MUDDER

Since when was he ever happy? What happened?

ANNE

Maria happened. Chidley lasted almost an entire two months as a faithful husband. I surprised him at his exclusive gentlemen's club, upstairs, where the members go to find their private pleasures. He was finding it with Maria Espartero.

PIERRE

Who does not dress well at all!

ANNE

Well, she's pretty damned experienced at undressing.

MUDDER

What did you do?

The whole tavern is hanging on the answer.

ANNE

I was actually quite controlled. I didn't kill anybody. Chidley, however, did lose a tooth in the struggle, while I was locking him in the closet.

PIERRE

And tell them about Maria!

ANNE

I hoisted her up the flagpole in place of the flag. Even saluted her before I left. I don't know much Spanish, but it sounded like she may have been using a few choice words of blasphemy.

MUDDER

No!? Such behavior. And at a gentleman's club.

ANNE

Anyway, I rode back to the house, took as much cash as I could carry, set fire to the mansion …

MUDDER

You did what?

ANNE

Stopped to grab Pierre from his shop – I mean, whatever I do, I have to look good.

PIERRE

She has style.

ANNE

And headed here. I didn't know where else to go. And now I need passage out of here. I have time for one good drink and money for one good sail.

Calico Jack appears out of the crowd.

PIERRE

Oo. I like this establishment.

JACK

My crew is already onboard. We sail within the hour. I'm your man.

ANNE

I don't want a man, I want a boat. I've had enough of men to last me a lifetime.

PIERRE

You will never hear those words out of my mouth.

ANNE

Done. Let's go.

As they exit, THREE ROUGH CHARACTERS rise to follow. Mudder stands in their way, arms crossed.

FIRST CHARACTER

Out of our way.

She socks him, and he falls to the floor, out cold. The other two rush her and she bangs their heads together. She speaks to no one in particular.

MUDDER

So many men, so little choice.

She steps over them and goes back to work.

EXT. THE REVENGE, A FULL-RIGGED SAILBOAT, AT THE HELM, 2 P.M.

Jack introduces his first mate PARSONS, an imposing hulk of a man, totally bald.

JACK
(to Anne and Pierre)

Ye'll be wantin' t' get on the good side o' this one. Parsons. Me first mate and me fast friend.

ANNE

Like a church parson?

PARSONS

No.

ANNE

Short. To the point. I like that.

JACK

If ye want anyone at your back, ye want 'im.

PIERRE

I think I'm going to love this life.

ANNE

Pierre. We're not joining them. They're providing passage.

JACK

Where to?

ANNE

Anywhere. As far away from here as I can get.

PIERRE

Jamaica? They love bright colours in Jamaica!

ANNE

Why not?

JACK

I have another suggestion. Stay with us.

ANNE

No thanks. I left the pirate life behind.

JACK

Were ya likin' whatcha found? My God, lass, that's not where ye belong.

ANNE

I'm still looking for where I belong.

EXT. MONTAGE.

Anne meeting THE CREW. Parsons at the wheel. Jack and Pierre looking out to sea. Cross-cut with Bayard at his burning home, coming out of the Sword Inn, and shaking his fist at the distant image of the REVENGE in full sail.

EXT. SHIP'S DECK. EARLY EVENING.

A full moon lights the way for the ship.

Jack sings.

JACK

Not a lot else you could ask for
Once the sun has said goodbye
Than to be out on the deck,
Feeling like a speck
Underneath the sky.

The song, "Throw the Moon a Thank You" celebrates the joy of being at sea. Eventually, the crew join in.

ANNE
(to Jack)

I found it.

JACK

Where ya belong?

ANNE

I tried to leave.

JACK

Gets in yer blood. Welcome home.

ANNE
(raising her voice)

Pierre!

Pierre arrives.

We need to discuss a new wardrobe.

Crew cheers. Pull back to see the ocean smile.

INT. BELOW DECK OF THE REVENGE. TWO WEEKS LATER. MID-DAY.

Two pirates, DUNCAN, a fortyish beanpole, and PEDRO, a dark, taut, menacing creature, have Pierre cornered.

DUNCAN

We know she has a bundle of cash. We've all heard the story. Where does she keep it?

PIERRE

I haven't the slightest idea. Now, shouldn't you be on deck yelling ahoy or something?

PEDRO

Nah. We like it down here. It's quiet. No one to bother us.

DUNCAN

A perfect place for an accident to happen.

PIERRE
(to Pedro)

Is this where you had yours?

PEDRO

What you say?

PIERRE

That scar on your face. At first I thought it must have been in some brave battle, but now your friend tells me …

PEDRO

Shaddup or I run you through wid my knife.

PIERRE

Oh, you're so brutal. I love that.

DUNCAN

Last chance, big mouth. Where's the money?

PIERRE

Um, let me think. Oh, there.

He points. They turn. It's Anne.

ANNE

Is there a treasure hunt nobody told me about?

Pierre joins Anne.

Let's go up and ask.

Pedro lifts his knife as if to throw it. Before he's completed the backward motion, Anne flicks it into the air with her sword and catches it with her other hand. She points to the stairs.

EXT. SHIP DECK.

Pedro and Duncan come up onto the deck, followed by Anne and Pierre. They go up to the helm.

PARSONS
(to HELSMAN)

I'll take it. Get Jack.

He looks at the four of them.

Tell me the story. I love a good story.

PIERRE

The boys here were threatening to kill me. Nothing too dramatic, really.

PARSONS

What'd ya do?

PIERRE

It's what I didn't do. I didn't tell them how to steal Anne's money.

PARSONS
(to Duncan)

What's your story?

DUNCAN

We were just kiddin'.

PARSONS
(to Anne)

Did you hear them?

ANNE

I did.

PARSONS

Guilty?

ANNE

As charged.

Jack arrives.

JACK

What's the charge?

PARSONS

What's that one where ye threaten t' kill someone unless they tell ye where someone's hidin' their stash?

JACK

Extortion.

PARSONS

That's it.

JACK
(to gathered crew)

Men, and woman, what say ye?

CREW

Guilty!

JACK

Hang 'em, flog 'em, hoist 'em, on the riggin' or over the side?

Men shout out their opinions.

Hoist ‘em has it.

ANNE

Ain’t justice grand?

Crew members tie them up and start to rig a hoist.

VOICE

(O.S.)

Ship ahoy!

Jack jumps up to the raised platform behind the helm. Parsons tosses him a large looking-glass.

JACK

I don’t believe it. At last!

PARSONS

Who is it?

JACK

The CALIBAN.

Uproar from men.

Battle stations, boys. Untie Duncan and Pedro. We’ll see what they can extort from someone in a real fight! Congratulations, Anne. First battle under our flag. Fly the skull an’ crossbones, ye cutthroats! Be quick. Let ‘em know we mean business. Helmsman, bring ‘er round. Get on those line men!

ANNE

The CALIBAN?

JACK

We've wanted this chance for two years. English. Transportin' three things: weapons for their troops here, gold t' buy whatever they can't steal, an' African slaves, those unlucky enough t' have survived the journey. Their captain is James Thompson. Blood Thompson. They don't come any worse.

ANNE

Are we sure we want to do this?

JACK

Desperately!

EXT. BATTLE MONTAGE.

REVENGE chases after the CALIBAN, which turns to face them. Ships side by side, guns firing. Hooked ropes haul them closer. Once they are side by each, the pirates jump onto the other ship. Large and small battles. Even Pierre is caught up in it. Blood Thompson is easily identified, but well defended. He handles a sword well. Anne climbs main mast, adjusts her wardrobe and swings down on a rope to drop in front of Thompson topless. His surprise gives her the advantage, and she has him at her mercy. His men are called to surrender, and one by one, they do.

ANNE

What say ye?

PIRATES

Over the side.

Jack joins her.

How long to rig a plank?

JACK

Not long.

ANNE

Oh, t' hell with it.

She forces Thompson to the side and up on the rail. He is teetering. She hands her sword to one of the SLAVES who has been brought out of the hold. He charges at the captain, who loses his balance and falls into the water.

JACK

Now fer the rest o' ya. Join us or join yer captain. What'll it be?

A BRITISH OFFICER steps forward.

OFFICER

By the rules of the sea, we are your prisoners. You cannot force us to make such a ridiculous choice.

Parsons steps forward without a word, effortlessly lifts the man off the deck, walks to the edge, and ignoring his screams, throws the officer overboard.

JACK

Now, as I was sayin' …

PRATT, one of the British sailors, approaches Jack.

PRATT

Petty Officer Pratt, sir. Am I addressing Calico Jack Rackham, sir?

JACK

Aye.

PRATT

We await your orders, Captain.

Other sailors follow his lead, and repeat his mantra.

SAILORS
(various)

We await your orders, Captain.

JACK

We have rules, and they're not that different from yours. The Captain is God. You obey the Captain. The first mate is Jesus. When you're talking to him, you're talking to me.

A WAG pipes up from the group of British sailors, pointing to Anne.

WAG

And who's she? The Virgin Mary?

All laugh except Parsons, who slowly approaches the Wag. Sailors part in fear. Parsons lifts him up and looks at Jack.

JACK

It's O.K., Parsons. We could use someone with a sense of humour 'round here.

Parsons drops him. The Wag jumps up.

WAG

Three cheers for the Captain!

ALL

Hoorah! Hoorah! Hoorah!

JACK

Let's sail. Who's your helmsman?

CUTLER emerges.

CUTLER

Able seaman Cutler, sir.

JACK
(pointing at Parsons)

You answer to him. Crews as before, but Parsons, choose six men t' stay with ye. British weapons t' the REVENGE. Fer now. Once ye've earned our trust, they'll come back t' ye.

Anne stands up from tending to one of the slaves.

ANNE

We're going to have to find some help. Some of these men are in a bad way.

JACK

We'll head to San Salvador. It's closest.

ANNE

I'll stay here.

JACK

I suspected ye might.

Jack returns to the REVENGE. Ropes are freed. As they work, they sing. First the pirates, then the converted sailors join in.

CREW

We're invincible, we're going on forever.
We're invincible, we're never going to die.

As they sing, the ships drift apart. Finally, the camera draws back as they turn and sail off together.

INT. GOVERNOR'S HEADQUARTERS, NEW PROVIDENCE, TWO WEEKS LATER, MORNING.

Governor WOODES ROGERS is at his desk. 50's. Distinguished. Somewhat portly, but aura of power surrounds him. SOUND outside his office. Voices raised. Door flung open. Chidley Bayard storms in, followed by young, ever so well put together TIMMONS.

TIMMONS

I'm sorry, sir. I asked him to wait.

ROGERS

Thank you, Timmons. That will be all.

Timmons closes the door behind him.

BAYARD

I want her found, I want her tried, and I want her executed.

ROGERS

Sir, you really must state what's on your mind.

BAYARD

This is no time for banter. I need action. I need satisfaction.

ROGERS

What you need is to sit down.

He does, then immediately jumps out of his chair.

BAYARD

Dammit, Rogers. You're the Governor. You're the King's representative. Do something.

ROGERS

I have. If you'd allow me to speak, I'd explain.

BAYARD

I don't want explanations. I don't want excuses. I want Anne. Do you hear me?

ROGERS

Chidley. My friend. The entire garrison can hear you.

He goes to the door and opens it.

Timmons? Has he arrived? Send him in, please.

He goes back to his desk and leaves the door open.

BAYARD

This had better be good.

MADISON CROSBY appears at the door. Magnificent poster boy for the British Navy – right down to the blonde locks. He lightly knocks on the open door.

ROGERS

Ah, Captain Crosby. Come in, come in. Chidley Bayard, may I introduce one of the King's finest naval officers, Captain Madison Crosby.

Bayard and Crosby shake hands, studying each other.

BAYARD

Captain Crosby.

CROSBY

Sir.

ROGERS

Captain Crosby has been briefed on the situation, and as of this morning, he has standing orders to pursue and capture Anne Bonney, Jack Rackham, and their crew with the utmost speed and dedication.

BAYARD

I don't give a damn about Rackham or the rest. I want my wife returned. And I remind you that her name is now Anne Bayard.

ROGERS

Well, I'm afraid we do give a damn about Rackham and the rest. A fortnight ago they captured a major British vessel, the CALIBAN. Reports have it that the Captain was killed. There were many other casualties. And an extensive shipment of weapons, ammunition, and gold was onboard, not to mention a considerable human cargo.

BAYARD

Slaves?

ROGERS

Perhaps as many as one hundred!

BAYARD

So this is what it took to spur you to action. It wasn't enough that Anne Bonney …

ROGERS

Ah, ah, ah – Bayard.

BAYARD.

Bayard … assaulted me, burned down my house, stole thousands of dollars in cash, and left the island without the permission of her husband. All major crimes. But nothing. Until now.

ROGERS

Hear me out. I knew that Crosby had been dispatched by the King. His reputation far exceeds anyone available to us here. I had intended to send him out after Anne regardless. The recent attack on the CALIBAN merely adds to the urgency of his completing his mission.

BAYARD

Captain, if I may ask – do you feel you know this area well enough to track them down?

CROSBY
(to Rogers)

May I speak freely?

Rogers nods. Crosby addresses Bayard.

I have studied the islands extensively. And since my arrival, I have acquired some new recruits who are intimately familiar with these waters. We will find them. And we will bring them to justice.

BAYARD

Do not underestimate them. They are experienced criminals.

ROGERS

They have met their match in Captain Madison Crosby, I promise you.

CROSBY
(to Bayard)

I understand the nature of your loss, sir. We will return her to you.

BAYARD

Oh, I don't want her returned to me. I want her returned to stand trial. I want her to suffer as I have suffered. I thought I had found the perfect woman. I gave her everything.

ROGERS

Perhaps the perfect woman cannot be found.

BAYARD

To the contrary. She can be found. She can even be … acquired. My mistake was not keeping her in her perfect place.

He sings.

The perfect woman has a perfect face,
With the lips and the eyes and the nose in place.
There's a bit of blush there upon the cheek
That should be freshened up at least once a week.

He proceeds to describe her, always returning to the chorus:

The perfect woman, so easy to define,
'Cause generally when she is yours,
I wish that she were mine.

Rogers buys in to the description, while Crosby is appalled. At the end of the song, Bayard prepares to leave.

BAYARD

I look forward to the success of this mission. Our entire civilized society depends on your doing your sworn duty. Godspeed.

He exits. Rogers and Crosby exchange a knowing glance.

ROGERS

For God and country.

CROSBY

Indeed.

EXT. DECK OF CALIBAN. JUST OFF THE PORT OF SAN SALVADOR. LATE AFTERNOON.

Men getting into boats to take them to shore. Jack and Anne oversee the activities.

JACK

We'll need to rename the ship. Can't be goin' too far with "Caliban" on 'er bow.

ANNE

Oh, I'm sure the boys will have a few ideas in the tavern tonight.

JACK

We've ended up with a couple of fine crews. I couldn't've been doin' it withoutcha.

ANNE

They're a good bunch. Just had to whip them into shape.

JACK

Comin' ashore?

Anne looks over in the direction of a YOUNG SAILOR.

ANNE

I have some business to attend to.

JACK

Plannin' on whippin' 'im int' shape?

ANNE

I'll do my best.

JACK

Good luck I must admit, he caught me eye as well. I was beginnin' t' question me leanin's.

ANNE

On your way. There should be enough women in San Salvador to keep you on the straight and narrow.

Jack goes over the side and climbs down to the waiting boat. Anne approaches the sailor.

What's your name, lad?

YOUNG SAILOR

Mark, sir, I mean, ma'am, I mean … how would ye prefer t' be addressed?

ANNE

How about calling me Anne?

YOUNG SAILOR

O.K. – Anne.

ANNE

So, are you old enough to drink rum, boy?

YOUNG SAILOR

I've had me share.

ANNE

Then follow me. One of the advantages of being the only woman onboard is private quarters, where you can stash your private stock.

YOUNG SAILOR
(looking around)

Yer sure ‘tis allowed?

ANNE

Consider it your initiation.

INT. STAIRS INTO HOLD.

They come down, Anne first. She turns to appreciate the descent of the young man.

ANNE

Follow me. It’s a little cramped, but we’ll make do.

They proceed through cramped quarters. At the end, Anne opens a door.

INT. SMALL CABIN.

They enter a room barely large enough for the two to stand in. Basically a bed and a cabinet.

YOUNG SAILOR

‘Tis cozy, that’s fer sure.

ANNE

Sit down.

Sailor eyes the bed and sits on the floor. Anne laughs and takes a bottle out of the cabinet. She takes the top off and hands it to the sailor.

Sorry, no glasses.

YOUNG SAILOR

What’s the point?

He salutes her with the bottle, takes a healthy slug, and passes it to Anne, who raises the bottle to him, and does a five second chug.

ANNE

Ah. Fine stock. You know, you look awfully cramped down there. Come and sit on the bed.

YOUNG SAILOR

I'm fine here, really.

ANNE

Then I'll join you there.

She does. To make room, the sailor has to go on his side. They are facing each other about an inch apart.

I see what you mean. It does feel good down here.

Anne puts her hand on his face.

God, I've never felt skin that smooth. You haven't even started shaving yet, have you?

YOUNG SAILOR

Sure I have. I just shave really close.

ANNE

How about your chest? Do you have hair on your chest?

YOUNG SAILOR

A bit. Not much.

ANNE

I don't believe you. Show me.

YOUNG SAILOR

I don't think that's such a good idea.

ANNE

I think it's the best idea I've had in a long time. Come on. Be brave.

She unbuttons his shirt, takes it off. He's left with a well-weathered shirtwaist.

Indulge me.

The sailor considers for a moment, then slowly removes the garment. We observe this from behind, so we see the shock on Anne's face.

You're a woman. My God, I don't believe it. I'm seducing a woman. Um, I think I'll just pop back up on the bed.

The sailor puts the shirtwaist back on. Anne shakes her head, has a drink, hands the bottle to the sailor, and starts laughing uncontrollably. Soon, they are both howling.

Can we try that "What's your name?" thing again?

SAILOR

'Tis not really Mark.

ANNE

I guessed that much.

SAILOR

'Tis Mary. Mary Read.

ANNE

Well, Mary Read, how did you manage to get in the British Navy?

MARY

The lights were low in the recruitin' room.

They both lose it again.

ANNE

You can't be serious. No one found out?

MARY

Ye did the same yerself. We've all 'eard the stories. I thought, well if she can do it, so can I!

ANNE

Good God. You picked the wrong life to imitate. Why didn't you just find yourself a husband?

MARY

Why didn't you?

ANNE

Look – I left England to … I just didn't like the choices available to me.

She sings.

I could've been a wife, but what a thing to be,
You promise him your life and your monogamy.

Song, "Choices" is a duet outlining what was available to them, and why they chose life at sea disguised as men.

ANNE

Speaking of choices, let's get to shore and join the party. I think Jack might be buying!

INT. TAVERN IN SAN SALVADORE. EVENING.

Evening is in full swing. Anne is just finishing her story. The men are loving it.

ANNE

So I said, "Indulge me." She took it off, and you know what? She was right. Not a single hair on her chest.

Jack stands up. He's pissed, but who isn't? He sings "Relief".

JACK

My God, I'm so relieved you're not a man.
My God, now I can breathe again, I can.
I was really beginning to wonder
If the Gods had made a terrible blunder,
Why my heart started pounding at the sight of you.
One plus one was the wrong kind of two.

It's a tour de force. They egg him on. It's a different kind of love song! At the end, he gets Mary up for a dance.

PIERRE
(to Anne)

Looks like I may have some more wardrobe demands.

ANNE

Long as it's not a wedding dress.

PIERRE

Do I detect a tinge of jealousy?

ANNE

No. Envy. I'm happy for them. They seem to have hit it off instantly. Me? Men, men everywhere, and not a one I want.

Pierre furrows his brow.

Well, for more than a night, that is.

Pierre suddenly jumps up.

PIERRE

Michael!!

He races to the door, where MICHAEL RADCLIFFE has just entered the tavern. He is a ruggedly handsome, tall redhead in his late twenties. Pierre throws his arms around him. Michael is somewhat uncomfortable with the gesture, but obviously happy to see Pierre. They make their way back to Anne's table.

Anne, this is Michael Radcliffe. Michael, Anne Bonney.

MICHAEL

The Anne Bonney? Terrible fugitive Anne Bonney. Anne Bonney Bayard? I have one word for you.

She goes for her sword.

Bravo! Bayard deserved all of that and more. Let me buy you a drink.

He goes to find a barmaid.

ANNE

Does he like girls?

PIERRE

Alas, yes.

ANNE

Is he attached?

PIERRE

No.

ANNE

I'm in love.

Michael returns with drinks.

MICHAEL

I think I'm getting out of medicine and buying a tavern. It's obviously where the money is.

ANNE

You're a doctor? I'm impressed.

PIERRE

A doctor without a clientele. Your dear husband forced me out of town. Ah, the power of money.

ANNE

What brought that about?

PIERRE

He was protecting your servant Pierre. A bunch of Bayard's drunken goons attacked my dress shop. They were tearing the place apart, and threatening to do the same to me. Michael was passing by, saw what was going on, and came to my rescue.

ANNE

You took on the whole gang?

MICHAEL

They were drunk. I wasn't. Nothing really.

PIERRE

Nothing?! He was phenomenal. In five minutes they were all either out cold, or out the door.

ANNE

Not bad for a doctor.

MICHAEL

I guess I should have been a bit less aggressive. I'd still have a job.

ANNE

I've got a proposition for you.

MICHAEL

Pierre, cover your ears.

ANNE

Nothing like that … yet. What do you think of the idea of being a ship's doctor?

MICHAEL

Possible. However, one would need a ship.

ANNE

Actually, we just picked one up today.

MICHAEL

How convenient.

PIERRE

You see, the truth is, we're pirates.

MICHAEL

Now, Pierre – I had heard the stories about Anne Bonney, but … forgive me …it doesn't seem to be the perfect fit for you.

PIERRE

I'm full of surprises.

MICHAEL

O.K. Well, it's unquestionably the most interesting offer I've ever had!

ANNE

Then it's settled.

MICHAEL

Whoa – I have to think … I mean, isn't there a rather large element of danger involved here?

ANNE

Live dangerously. You might like it.

Michael sits back. He ponders. He looks around. He smiles.

MICHAEL

I might at that.

Jack and Mary join them.

JACK

Too much talk. Not enough celebration. Who's this?

PIERRE

Michael Radcliffe. Meet Calico Jack Rackham, our Captain. And the recently revealed Mary Read.

MICHAEL

Congratulations on the revelation.

MARY

Thank you.

JACK

Mr. Radcliffe.

ANNE

Actually, it's Dr. Radcliffe. We're trying to convince him to be our Dr. Radcliffe.

JACK

We'd keep ye busy, that's for sure. Now, we have work t' do.

PIERRE

Aren't you the one who just said we should be celebrating?

JACK

This is fun work. We have t' choose a captain for the second vessel in our fleet.

ANNE

I think a fleet is a minimum of three.

JACK

One ship at a time, matey. We'll get there.

MICHAEL

And how is this captain chosen?

MARY

A swordfight. Winner takes the prize. Even I know that.

MICHAEL

I promise. I'll learn quickly!

Jack gets the crowd's attention. He jumps up on a table and fires two shots in the air. A dead rat falls into his glass. He lifts it out, tosses it in the corner, and takes a sip.

JACK

I hate it when that happens. Alright, ye'll all be payin' me heed. We have us a new ship. We be needin' us a new Captain. It's not fer me t' choose. But if ye want the position, ye have t' earn it. Here. Now. Open t' one and all. Who'll be steppin' up?

Petty Officer Pratt stands.

PRATT

Are any of us ex-patriots allowed to compete?

JACK

Absolutely.

Duncan comes up to Pratt. Looks him up and down, then addresses Jack.

DUNCAN

Wha' 'bout those under threat of penalty?

JACK

That threat is lifted. Ye fought well fer us. We'll let the charges drop. That's two. Anyone else? Parsons?

PARSONS

I'm yer first mate.

JACK

And the best a man could be askin' fer. Come on, lads. Speak up.

RITTER edges out of the crowd. He is a barrel chested, imposing figure.

RITTER

I'm in.

JACK

Welcome Mr. Ritter. I've never seen ye beaten. I'm a wee bit glad I'm not havin' t' compete. One more. Is there one more?

ANNE

There is. What the hell. I kind of like the idea of "Captain Anne".

Jack jumps down from the table.

JACK

Done then.

He turns to Pratt.

First in chooses his opponent.

PRATT

I'll take the lady.

JACK

As ye wish. Rules of engagement. This is not a fight t' the death. When ye have the other at yer mercy, y've won. Two bouts, then the winners duel. And since what we really want t' do is get back t' the drinkin', we'll have the elimination rounds fought at the same time. Agreed? Go to it.

With no preamble, each of the four combatants draw their swords. In a relatively short amount of time, Anne has her sword at Pratt's throat, and Ritter stands over Duncan.

JACK

I didn't even have time t' finish me rat-infested rum. Shall we proceed?

Anne and Ritter turn to face one another. This is a much longer battle. Both are prodigious fighters. Anne prevails.

JACK

Outstanding! Now, t' make this official, I need Ritter, Duncan, and Pratt t' shake hands with our new Captain.

They do, not happily at first, but finally accepting their situation.

ANNE

Ritter. I need a first mate.

RITTER

I'm there.

JACK

Anne, what'll it be? Ye get t' name 'er.

ANNE

The QUEEN ROYAL.

JACK

Congratulations.

Crowd disperses.

MARY

D'ya give lessons, then?

ANNE

Anytime.

MICHAEL

I'm signing up.

PIERRE

The QUEEN ROYAL. Can I do the design?

ANNE

No.

MICHAEL
(to Anne)

That was a magnificent display.

ANNE

I haven't begun to show you what I have to offer.

MICHAEL

You're refreshingly direct.

ANNE

People die young around here. I say enjoy it while you can.

MICHAEL

You've just nudged out Aristotle as my favourite philosopher.

ANNE

Bet he never made Captain.

MICHAEL

Hated the water.

Jack, Mary, and Pierre have been watching this exchange with amusement.

JACK

So Captain Anne, can I steal him away for a bit?

ANNE

Long as you bring him back.

JACK
(to Michael)

We have some boys upstairs that need tending to.

MICHAEL
(to Anne)

Duty calls.

ANNE

I'll keep your seat.

Michael goes up the stairs with Jack. Anne watches them all the way. The tempo of activity rises around her, with Pierre holding court, Mary being his best audience, and others congratulating Anne. We hear her sing in her mind as the surrounding chaos retreats into the distance.

Could this be the chance I've been waiting for?
Could this be my dream?
I'll never know unless I give it a try.
Could this be my one opportunity
To catch that elusive moonbeam,
And maybe look lady luck in the eye?

At the end of the song, she returns to being part of the party around her.

INT. SWORD INN. EVENING.

Bayard enters with a LARGE CONTINGENT of menacing, heavily-armed men. Bit by bit the chatter dies down, as the denizens eye him warily. His men guard the door, and position themselves menacingly around the room. Bayard swaggers around the tavern as he speaks.

BAYARD

I am offering a reward. One hundred pieces of gold for anyone who will tell me where to find Anne Bayard and Calico Jack Rackham. I know that at least some of you know where they are. Why not help?

MUDDER

I thought y'had the entire British navy doin' yer dirty work for ye. What d'ya need us fer?

Bayard goes up to her.

BAYARD

I am not a patient man. Their attempts to find the pirates, to date, have failed. I despise failure

He looks around the room.

There is an alternative. I could take you outside one by one and use … other means to solicit the information. But that would be so gruesome.

A WASTED OLD SALT speaks.

WOS

I know where they are.

BAYARD

At last. Some cooperation. Yes?

WOS

They're at sea.

He laughs. Nervous laughs throughout the room. Bayard jerks his head to one of his men. WOS is taken ouside, protesting all the way. A shot is heard after the door closes. Silence.

MUDDER

Yer not the law.

BAYARD

In point of fact, I am a law unto myself. Like it or not, money is power. I have the money, and as a result, I can do pretty much whatever I please. Now, where was I? Ah, yes, politely asking for help. Has anyone reconsidered?

The three rough characters that Mudder confronted earlier stand as one.

RC#1

We've 'eard some things.

RC#2

We'll tell ya.

RC#1

But not 'ere.

RC#3
(glowering at Mudder)

We'll need protection.

BAYARD

The three wise men. How fitting. Come with me.

They exit. The guards follow.

MUDDER

Idiots. Bastards.

Blackbeard appears out of the deepest shadows.

BLACKBEARD

I wasn't plannin' t' leave so soon.

MUDDER

Best I know, they're still at San Salvador. You have t' beat Crosby and warn 'em.

BLACKBEARD

We sail t'night. I know y'had yer heart set on beddin' me down. It'll have t' wait.

MUDDER

Life's full o' tragedy.

EXT. DOCK AT SAN SALVADOR. MORNING.

Blackbeard stands on the dock, watching the REVENGE and the QUEEN ROYAL sail away.

EXT. DECK OF QUEEN ROYAL.

Cutler at the helm. Anne and Ritter stand behind. Michael and Pierre nearby.

EXT. DECK OF REVENGE. Jack and Parsons behind the helmsman, Mary nearby.

Pull back to see both ships turn into open water.

EXT. DECK OF QUEEN ROYAL.

VOICE

(O.S.)

Ships ahoy.

Ritter points aft. They all turn. Anne looks through a looking glass.

ANNE

It's Crosby. Two ships.

EXT. DECK OF LEAD BRITISH VESSEL.

Crosby runs up to the helm.

CROSBY

We've got them!

EXT. DECK OF REVENGE.

PARSONS

There! Coming from the cove. Two more.

JACK

Dammit. Hard Starboard. We'll be best t' try 'n' outrun 'em.

Pull back to see REVENGE chased by two ships, and gradually pulling away. Pan to Queen Royal, surrounded by the other two.

EXT. SIDE OF QUEEN ROYAL.

Michael slips into the water amidst the mayhem and climbs on Crosby's vessel.

EXT. AFT OF LEAD BRITISH VESSEL.

Michael cuts a stay to drop anchor on the ship, then manages to go down into the hold.

Pull back to see QUEEN ROYAL maneuvering around the anchored ship, the other British man-of-war following.

INT. AFT GUNBAY ON LEAD BRITISH VESSEL.

Michael surprises the gunner and takes over, firing on the unsuspecting sister ship.

EXT. SISTER SHIP.

We see it forced to alter course, not wanting to engage one of its own.

EXT. DECK OF QUEEN ROYAL

All cheer as they realize they are pulling away from the fray.

INT. AFT GUNBAY OF LEAD BRITISH VESSEL.

Michael is overcome.

EXT. DECK.

Angry and frustrated Madison Crosby yelling at crew. Michael is brought up to him.

CROSBY

Take him way. Chain him up. He's all I've got.

Crosby storms into his cabin.

EXT. HELM OF QUEEN ROYAL.

PIERRE

Anne. Michael's missing.

ANNE

What do you mean, missing? Find him.

WAG

He ain't here.

RITTER

Where is he?

WAG

He gave us the advantage. I saw him in the water 'tween the ships. It had t' be 'im got their anchor down.

ANNE

He was the one firing on the other ship.

PIERRE

I told you he was phenomenal.

WAG

Don't know what that word mean, but I'll wager 'e's fish food now.

ANNE

I don't think so. He's the only card they can play. Ritter –where's the nearest port to San Salvador with a British jail?

RITTER

Rum Cay.

ANNE

Let's catch up with Jack. We've got some planning to do. And Pierre …

PIERRE

At your service.

ANNE

Mr. Designer – I've got a challenge for you!

EXT. RUM CAY. STREET FESTIVAL. SATURDAY NIGHT.

Huge crowd of partygoers mingle on the main street leading down from the waterfront.

A group of two well-dressed couples come to the fore. As we get closer, we realize it is Anne with Blackbeard, and Mary with Jack.

They work their way through the throng to an imposing structure at the far end away from the dock. It is recognizable as a jail by the bars on the windows. As they about to turn the corner, they draw back, seeing two GUARDS at the entrance, across from a wooded area. A huddled conference is called.

EXT. GATE OF RUM CAY JAILHOUSE.

Anne approaches the guards, smiles, and nods.

GUARD #1

Good evening, ma'am.

ANNE
(with a southern accent)

Good evening to y'all.

GUARD #2

I wouldn't stroll too far in that direction. No lights down there. Could be dangerous for a fine woman such as yourself.

ANNE
(oozing charm)

I wouldn't be afraid if you came with me.

GUARD #2

Can't leave my post, ma'am.

ANNE

Oh, come on. I promise I won't bite … too hard.

He glances at his partner. His partner shrugs.

No one will know. This can be our secret.

Guard #1 blushes and gestures in the direction of the bushes.

GUARD #1

Just don't take too long.

Anne lets out a girlish giggle, takes Guard #2 by the hand, and leads him off. Guard #1 laughs to himself. He turns in the direction of the main street when he hears a noise. It is Mary.

MARY

Good evening officer. I wonder if you could help me. My friend seems to have disappeared and I'm simply beside myself with worry. I thought I saw her walking in this direction.

GUARD #1

Is your friend quite tall, with red hair?

MARY

Why yes. That's her! Was she here? Where did she go? What's happened to her? I don't see her anywhere. Is this a prison? She isn't inside this awful place is she? Wait. Is that her over there?

The guard, distracted by the seemingly frantic Mary, does not see Jack sneaking up behind him out of the shadows. Jack places his pistol at the guard's head.

JACK

At least ye could be havin' the decency t' answer one of the lady's questions.

GUARD #1

Which one?

MARY

Where are your keys?

He hands them to Mary as Blackbeard and Anne approach.

JACK

Duty completed?

BLACKBEARD

Aye. Secured ‘im t’ the tree with ‘is own trousers, and covered ‘is mouth with ’is own … undergarment!

ANNE

Ah, the wages of passion.

MARY
(to guard)

Alright, my friend. Lead on.

GUARD #1

Where to?

JACK

We’d be after a tour of the cell belonging to Dr. Michael Radcliffe.

BLACKBEARD
(up close and personal)

Quickly and quietly.

INT. STAIRS LEADING TO CELLS INSIDE JAILHOUSE.

Guard leads the others down the stairs.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CELLS.

Guard stops in front of one of the cells.

GUARD #1

This is it.

MARY

Which key?

Guard #1 shows her, and she opens the cell.

INT. CELL.

Michael gets up from his cot.

MICHAEL

My God. How did you manage this?

BLACKBEARD

The power of sex.

JACK

I'll never underestimate a woman again in my life.

ANNE

How are you?

MICHAEL

Alive. Let's get out of here.

ANNE

Not so fast. Pierre made something for you. He wanted me to let you know he was guessing on the size, but hopes he came close.

Jack pulls a dress and shoes out of a bag and hands it to Michael. Michael balks.

JACK

I just know ye'll be lookin' lovely.

BLACKBEARD

Come on, lad. There are no guards out front.

MARY

We have t' be outta here before someone notices.

Michael scrambles into the dress with Anne's help.

MICHAEL

Is this absolutely necessary?

ANNE

No, probably not. But it will make a great story!

He finishes. They exit the cell, locking Guard #1 in behind them.

JACK

Let's go.

INT. STAIRS LOOKING UP.

Michael stumbles with the discomfort of his attire. All enjoy it.

EXT. PRISON GATE.

Jack comes out first, looks around, gestures others to follow. They run towards the main street.

EXT. MAIN STREET.

The five-some mix in with the huge crowd. At one point Anne flirts with one of the British soldiers along the way. Michael does the same, before Jack and Blackbeard pull him away. The soldier shows some suspicion, but Mary distracts him. Finally, they reach the end of the street leading onto the dock area.

EXT. RUM CAY DOCK.

They find their boat, pile in, untie the stay, and start rowing out to their ship.

EXT. BOAT ON THE WATER WITH RUM CAY RECEDING IN BACKGROUND.

ANNE
(sings)

We're invincible, we're going on forever.

JACK

We're invincible as anyone could be.

MARY

And we are proud of what we've done,

BLACKBEARD

Because, of course, we've won!

ALL

There isn't a thing that life can bring that we won't turn to our advantage.

Pull back slowly.

We're invincible. We're invincible.
We're invincible, we're never gonna die.

INT. RODGERS' HEADQUARTERS, NEW PROVIDENCE, MORNING.

Bayard is with Rodgers and Crosby. He is in full flight.

BAYARD

Utterly ridiculous. The level of incompetence is unparalleled. We are the laughingstock of society. Not only do we have trouble finding them, when we do find them we let them get away, or when we do manage to actually capture one, we can't hang onto him. You must have known they'd come after this preposterous Dr. Radcliffe. Why weren't you prepared? Why were they not ambushed? How can this happen? Will someone give me some answers?

RODGERS

Chidley, please. We are as upset and frustrated as you are. We were to be lying in wait for them. That was absolutely our plan. We simply

did not expect them to try something that quickly. We don't even know how they figured out where he was.

CROSBY

Best we can assume is that it was a lucky guess.

BAYARD

Oh, that is wonderful. They're smarter than us and luckier than us. If I had the power, I'd replace you both. I will certainly be informing the King of my displeasure.

RODGERS

There is really no need for that.

CROSBY

I consider it my sworn duty to complete this mission. I promise …

BAYARD

I have had enough of your promises. I'll find them if I have to put together my own navy to do it.

RODGERS

You must reconsider. We have the resources. It is simply a matter of time.

CROSBY

They will be captured. They will stand trial. They will be executed, according to the law of Great Britain.

BAYARD

One month. I will give you one month. After that …

RODGERS
(to Crosby)

Can you do it?

CROSBY

Consider it done.

RODGERS
(to Bayard)

You have your answer.

BAYARD

Time will tell. In the interim, I'm upping the stakes. One hundred pieces of gold on EACH of their scruffy heads. Calico Jack Rackham. Edward Blackbeard Teach. Dr. Michael Radcliffe. This other woman that helped in the escape. And two hundred for Anne.

RODGERS

They have embarrassed the Crown. The Crown will find them. We do not require a reward.

BAYARD

Then you'd best get moving. Because trust me, you are going to have competition!

INT. SWORD INN. EVENING.

SOLDIERS enter. One of them reads from a proclamation.

SOLDIER

Hear ye. This is a notice on behalf of Mr. Chidley Bayard, friend of the Crown. Rewards are now placed for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Calico Jack Rackham, Edward Blackbeard Teach, Dr. Michael Radcliffe, Anne Bonney Bayard, and "another woman known to be associating with above-said pirates."

He posts the notice and exits. As the door closes, Mudder tears the notice off the wall.

MUDDER

Hey, Pierre. You didn't make the list.

PIERRE
(from a far corner)

Always underappreciated. Always.

MICHAEL
(same corner)

Ah, I appreciate you Pierre.

BLACKBEARD

And he's got the dress t' prove 't!

MUDDER

And Mary. We'' have t' start callin' ye Mary the mysterious. They don't even know yer name.

MARY

Look out Mudder. They might get us mixed up, and Chidley'll be comin' after ye.

MUDDER

Let 'im come. I've always wanted t' deck a friend o' the Crown!

JACK

What might they be offerin'?

MUDDER
(lookin' at the proclamation)

Oh, just remembered – I don't read.

Michael comes up to her and takes a look at the sheet.

MICHAEL

Jack. On guard! One hundred gold pieces for each of us.

JACK

For that kinda money, I may be turnin' meself in!

MICHAEL

And the winner is Anne Bonney Bayard. Two hundred on your head.

ANNE

Anything on my body?

MUDDER

Quiet, all o' ye priests, gamblers, pirates, whores, an' assorted seamen. Listen t' Mudder. If I ever catch wind of the fact that any one of ye even thought about collectin' on these rewards, then here's my … proclamation. I will personally knock ye out, run ye through, fry y'up, 'n' serve ye 'round fer all t'eat. Any questions?

JACK

What side dishes would ye be servin'?

MUDDER

Diced tongue.

BLACKBEARD

Oo …one o' me favorites.

Room gradually returns to cacophony. Focus in on Michael and Anne.

MICHAEL

Doesn't this bother anybody?

ANNE

What?

MICHAEL

We're all sitting here within a few miles of the head quarters where they just issued a massive rewards for our capture. I'm brave, but I'm not stupid. This is no game.

ANNE

Never thought it was.

MICHAEL

I think it's tempting fate a bit too much to hang out this close to Rodgers and Bayard.

ANNE

Exactly what they'll be thinking. So they would never look for us here.

MICHAEL

What about the boats? They're hidden to some degree, but they're not what you'd call tiny vessels. If they're discovered, we're discovered.

ANNE

I agree with that. We won't stay long. Just time enough to stock up. And time enough for you and I to find some privacy.

MICHAEL

I must admit, your cabin, for all it's … charm and intimacy … does make one feel somewhat … cramped, shall we say. I thought Captains got to use the bigger quarters.

ANNE

I've had fancy. With Chidley. I'm fine there.

MICHAEL

However …

ANNE

However …

They both look upstairs, then over to Mudder. She smiles and nods.

INT. ROOM ABOVE TAVERN.

Anne and Michael in bed.

He sings.

MICHAEL

I've been through some changes, good times and the rest,
Life sometimes arranges it that way.

The song is "Nothing Prepared Me For You". It is sung as in a video where sometimes they are seen singing, and sometimes "in action" while voices heard as underscoring.

In the final shot they are shown facing each other.

BOTH

Nothing prepared me for you.

INT. STAIRS COMING DOWN FROM ROOM.

Michael comes down the stairs. Looks for Jack.

INT. JACK"S TABLE.

Jack and Mary are literally under the table. What they are doing there requires little imagination.

MICHAEL

Sorry to interrupt, but Jack, I need to talk.

JACK

So talk.

MICHAEL

Don't you want to … finish?

JACK
(to Mary)

Shall we take a break?

MARY

Aye. But not for long!

JACK

T'is a promise.

They reassemble themselves and emerge from under the table.

Now, what is it that's so important? I thought you two had retired fer the night.

MICHAEL

Anne's asleep. But I can't stop thinking about how exposed our ships are.

Pierre joins them.

PIERRE

Exposure. One of my best-loved topics.

MICHAEL

We have to move them to a more secluded island.

JACK

And we will. Now can I get back to …?

MICHAEL

Jack, I'm serious.

JACK
(Pulling Mary closer)

So am I.

MARY

Very serious!

MICHAEL

Look – I can't sleep anyway. Why don't I take a skeleton crew and move the QUEEN ROYAL to one of the tiny islands beyond Great Abaco?

PIERRE

I'll go. I'm not getting any action around here.

They all look at him as if he just arrived from another planet. Perhaps he did.

JACK

Well, I suppose – we could be meetin' ye there in a day or so. Take Parsons. He knows the island. We've used it before.

MICHAEL

Done. Pierre, find Parsons. Tell him to choose anybody that happens to be somewhat sober.

JACK

Ye'll not be goin' tonight, will ye? Aren't ye afraid o' the dark?

MICHAEL

See you soon. Get back to business.

Jack slides under the table with Mary. Pierre is titillated.

PIERRE

Does Mudder really know what goes on around here?

Michael laughs and pulls him away.

INT. ANNE'S BEDROOM. EARLY MORNING, JUST BEFORE DAYLIGHT.

Anne wakes to storm outside.

ANNE

Michael?

She closes the windows, with some effort.

INT. STAIRWAY DOWN TO TAVERN.

Anne barely able to be seen. Carrying a candle. Lightening lights up the room.

ANNE

Michael?

She descends the stairs. Goes around the room. Raises a couple of heads and lets them drop to the table. Storm is raging outside. Finally finds Jack and Mary passed out, tangled together under their table.

Jack. Mary? Wake up. Hey.

Mary stirs. Sees Anne. Smiles. Cuddles closer to Jack.

MARY

Oh, hi. Why aren't ye sleepin?

ANNE

Mary, have you seen Michael?

MARY
(trying to go back to sleep)

Gone. With Pierre.

ANNE

Where? When? He shouldn't be outside in this storm.

Mary's eyes open suddenly. She jumps up and looks outside.

MARY

Jack. Jack! Get up. Jack!!

He stirs. She kicks him.

JACK

Ow. What is it?

MARY

Look outside.

He does. Starts to go back under table.

JACK

Don't worry. It'll pass.

MARY

Jack – Michael, Pierre, Parsons, they've all gone.

He suddenly remembers Jumps up, hits head on table, tosses it over and drinks spill. Others stir and complain. Jack runs to the door, Anne after him.

ANNE

Will someone tell me what's going on?

Jack throws the door open, rain pours in, driven by gale-force winds.

JACK
(yelling)

Michael!

He runs out half naked out into the horrific downpour. Anne and Mary follow.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE TAVERN.

We can barely see them.

ANNE

Tell me where he is.

JACK

He took the ship.

MARY

In the middle of the night.

JACK

He said it wasn't safe. They'd find us. Needed to move out.

ANNE

No! He was with me. He wasn't with you.

MARY

He came down and found us. We were supposed to meet him …

JACK

Pierre went along. I told him to take Parsons. I don't know who else. I don't even know how long ago.

All three look out to sea.

EXT. BEACH. AFTERNOON.

It is calm. Bodies are washed up on the beach. Jack is called over by one of his men. They have found Pierre's body. Another pirate comes running down to them. They all look up, Jack gives an order, and they disappear into the trees above the beach. A company of British soldiers arrive, followed by Rodgers. Not far behind is Bayard. They walk along examining the bodies. Bayard comes to Rodgers standing above Pierre.

BAYARD

At least one down. And it didn't cost me a farthing.

Bayard does not catch the disgusted look on Rodgers' face.

EXT. DECK OF REVENGE. AT SEA. EARLY EVENING.

Mary brings some tea to Anne, who is seated alone against the base of a mast.

MARY

Tea?

ANNE

No.

She pulls a bottle out from under a blanket and takes a sip.

MARY

Company?

ANNE

Don't know.

MARY
(sitting beside her)

They didn't find his body. There's no reason to believe …

ANNE

Mary. He's gone. He's dead. Let it be.

Silence.

MARY

Poor Pierre.

ANNE

Probably already decorating the Pearly Gates.

MARY

Or Satan's den.

ANNE

He always did have a thing for red.

She takes another swig, passes it to Mary, who does the same.

MARY

Heaven. Hell. Who invented them?

ANNE

Priests. Good for business.

MARY

Michael was a fine man.

ANNE

He was a bloody miracle. I don't get it.

MARY

What?

ANNE

It. Anything. Everything. Why bother?

MARY

Have t' do somethin'.

ANNE

Maybe we should've tried options one to three.

MARY

No. This is where we belong.

ANNE

Easy for you to say. You've got Jack.

MARY

Fer how long? T'is not forever. Fer today. Maybe tomorrow.

ANNE

I love ya, Mary Read, but I hate your happiness. I want you to suffer like me.

MARY

I loved him too.

ANNE

Not like I did, girl. And I'll never love another. I swear to God I won't.

She looks out to sea. She sings quietly.

I was ready for anything I had to do,
But nothing prepared me for you.

EXT. DOCK AT NEW PROVIDENCE. MORNING.

Bayard with Crosby.

BAYARD

They have to be demoralized. This is a perfect time to press our advantage. I want you out there day and night until you find them.

CROSBY

Forgive me, sir. While I understand your commitment to this search, I take my orders from Governor Rodgers.

BAYARD

Who takes his orders from me.

Rodgers is seen behind Bayard.

RODGERS

Excuse me, sir. That requires some explanation.

BAYARD
(caught out)

Governor. We were just discussing how we proceed from here.

RODGERS

We proceed by the book, good sir. We proceed by the law. If we do not, we are no better than those we are seeking.

BAYARD

What calumny! Comparing us to common criminals?

RODGERS

Sometimes the line is not as easily drawn as we might hope.

BAYARD

I protest.

RODGERS

I have received, under seal, a recommendation from the King. He has asked me to consider an amnesty for all pirates in the region, in the hopes of bringing some stability to a volatile climate. He has given me the honour of making the final decision on the matter.

BAYARD

Needless to say, that is not possible. Not possible at all. We must, that is, you must reject the proposition out of hand.

RODGERS

Captain Crosby? What is your opinion?

CROSBY

Meaning no offence to Mr. Bayard, I do think it deserves some consideration. Imagine, if we were to come to some sort of truce with these fellows and work together building an inclusive society we could all be proud of. That would be an achievement of no small magnitude.

BAYARD

Outrageous! I can see offering a truce to some of the less notorious brigands, but you must remember, these are the bandits who mercilessly attacked the CALIBAN, killed the commander and God knows how many others, and stole the ship along with all the gold, weapons, ammunition and slaves it carried. You don't compromise wih murderers and thieves of that degree of heartlessness. Surely our King would not countenance it, if he knew all the facts. Why should you?

RODGERS

Your argument is well taken. Captain Crosby, prepare to sail. You will take a fleet of six ships. You will find the REVENGE. At whatever cost, you will return the survivors of the battle for trial. Then, and only then will we offer amnesty to any remaining pirates.

(to Bayard)

Will that satisfy you, sir?

BAYARD

Entirely.

CROSBY

As you wish, Governor. I will make the preparations.

BAYARD

Do you hear that?

RODGERS

What, sir?

BAYARD

The sound of screams to come!

EXT. THE ARCHIPELAGO SOUTH OF ANDROS ISLAND. EARLY AFTERNOON.

We see THE REVENGE in the passage between two islands. Two British ships are poised at the top of each island, and two following behind at a distance.

EXT. THE REVENGE. THE HELM.

Jack behind Helmsman.

VOICE

(O.S.)

Ships ahoy, aft. Closing.

Jack runs up to high spot above helm and looks back. He turns and yells down.

JACK

Battle stations boys. If we can't outrun 'em, we may have t' face 'em.

EXT. DECK OF THE REVENGE.

Men running to positions. Anne and Mary from separate directions meet and head for the helm.

EXT. HELM.

Anne and Mary join Jack.

JACK
(to Helmsman)

We'll reach the end of the island well before 'em. Swing port to open sea, and let's see if we can catch us a good breeze.

EXT. BOW OF REVENGE APPROACHING THE END OF THE ISLAND.

VOICE

(O.S.)

Ships ahoy. Coming towards us!

EXT. HELM.

We see the shock on all their faces.

EXT. DECK.

Men showing mix of fear, determination, anxiety, anger and acceptance.

EXT. BATTLE SEEN FROM ABOVE.

The REVENGE is quickly surrounded with nowhere to turn and no escape route.

EXT. DECK.

Jack down amidst them.

JACK
(in a rhythm)

Fire. Again. Stick together. Fight. Take them one by one. Don't panic. Cover your mates. Pick your targets. Show them who you are!

He sings.

We won't run anymore. We are done, the guns are at the door.

Men join him.

Let us die, let us go, heads held high, doing what we know.

They continue singing through the song "We Won't Run" as they fight a ferocious battle against overwhelming odds. Jack is shot. He falls. Mary sees it and runs over, pulling him behind some gathered sails for temporary protection. The battle rages around them.

JACK

We're invincible, we're goin' on forever.
We're invincible, we're never goinna die.

He dies.

The battle continues, but the sound is muffled. Her song expresses thoughts that come and pass in a moment, so the blurred action is slowed down behind to accommodate the extended reality.

MARY

Singing quietly.

In another lifetime, far from the blood and the battles
Around us today, I knew you.

She finishes "In Another Lifetime". We return to real time. Battle cries. Anguish. Screaming. Mary is overcome by four men. Anne, fighting in another area, is finally subdued by the force of dozens of men surrounding her. We draw back and see a scene of horrible carnage. The battle is over.

EXT. HELM. LEAD BRITISH VESSEL.

Crosby watches in horror. He is approached by BRITISH SAILOR.

BRITISH SAILOR

It is over, sir. They have all surrendered.

CROSBY
(mockingly)

But of course. We had God on our side.

INT. JAILHOUSE AT NEW PROVIDENCE. DUSK.

We follow a priest down the corridor between rows of cells holding pirates, following a set of two BURLY JAILORS. They stop in front of a cell at the end.

JAILOR #1
(to priest)

Make it quick. There's no souls here worth savin'.

INT. CELL.

Anne on bench facing wall. Cell door opens. She does not turn around.

PRIEST

Sister, come and find comfort in God.

Jailor shakes his head, closes cell, and locks it. Anne's back straightens.

I have come to give you solace.

She turns slowly in disbelief.

ANNE

You're alive.

PRIEST

Let us pray.

They kneel side by side facing away from the corridor.

ANNE

How? What happened? No one could have survived that storm.

We, of course, see that the priest is Michael.

MICHAEL

I was washed up unconscious at a beach beyond New Providence. A local fisherman found me. It took nine days before I could even move. I was pretty battered up. By the time I came back to look for you, you'd all left.

Their hands find each other.

ANNE

I never thought …

MICHAEL

Shh. How could you know?

JAILOR #1

Time's up, soul saved or not.

Michael whispers something to Anne, gets up slowly and leaves.

INT. COURTROOM AT NEW PROVIDENCE. MID-AFTERNOON.

Rodgers is seated high above the others at a rather crude suggestion of a judge's bench. He is addressing a ragged line of generally wounded and in some cases mutilated pirates, including Mary and Anne. A smug Bayard observes from the front row, while a less satisfied Crosby watches standing at the back of the room.

RODGERS

You have all been found guilty of robbery, treason, piracy, and murder. For the first crime, the court will confiscate all of your property and belongings. For the other three crimes, the law clearly states that you will be hung by the neck until dead. This sentence will be carried out at dawn tomorrow morning. Do any of you wish to address the court?

ANNE

I do, sir.

RODGERS

The court recognizes Anne Bonney Bayard.

ANNE

Mary Read and I wish to plead our bellies.

RODGERS

I beg your pardon?

ANNE

Under British law, you cannot execute an innocent child.

RODGERS

But of course. How does that apply?

ANNE

Both of us are with child. We are pregnant. If you kill us, you kill the innocent children we are carrying.

The courtroom erupts.

RODGERS

Silence.

Gradually, the room grows silent.

How am I to know this is true?

An immaculately dressed GENTLEMAN of immense girth, cleanshaven and fortyish, stands.

GENTLEMAN

Governor, may I address the court?

RODGERS

Who might you be?

GENTLEMAN

Dr. Stanley Learn of Jamaica. I just arrived from Ocho Rios on a rather uncomfortable vessel. I felt I had to come when I was appraised of the proceedings by a messenger sent from one …

He reads.

Mrs. Mudder Bar Tar, proprietor of the Sword Inn.

RODGERS

Please come forward.

He does.

What information do you have to contribute?

GENTLEMAN

I am a medical doctor. My card.

He places it up on Rodgers' desk.

Two weeks ago, the young ladies in question …

He reads again.

Anne Bonney and Mary Read, came to me complaining of symptoms which were easily recognizable. I examined them and congratulated them on the fact that they were both well on their way to the happy state of motherhood.

He beams.

RODGERS

Are you sure?

GENTLEMAN

Sir! My credentials have never once been questioned. I have delivered many babies in my day. I know when a woman is with child. These two ladies are, beyond question, within a few short months of giving birth to what I believe will be the first child for each of them.

RODGERS

The court thanks you for your making the journey here today.

Gentleman turns to exit, smiling at Anne and Mary as he passes by.

I am convinced the ladies are indeed allowed, by law, to plead their bellies. However, I am not prepared to release them unless someone of stature is prepared to take responsibility for their plight, and I do believe that neither of the fathers of these children are still alive.

Priest rises.

PRIEST

Governor Rodgers, I would be prepared to accept them into our parish.

RODGERS

And you are …?

PRIEST

Father Sebastian, of the Church of Immaculate Redemption in San Salvador.

RODGERS

What is your proposition?

PRIEST

These two tortured souls came to me many months ago and asked to be saved. They confessed their sins, which I admit did take some time, and were welcomed as beloved members of our congregation. When I heard this trial was taking place, I, as did Dr. Learn, came as quickly as I could. I would be more than willing to take responsibility for them and their unborn children.

RODGERS

I must confess that I find this all to be most unusual. However, I bow to the power of the law, and I place them in your care. There are conditions. After the children are born, if I ever hear of either women participating in any activity even remotely questionable, I will pursue them with all due diligence and see that they are prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Do I make myself clear?

Bayard jumps out of his seat.

BAYARD

I will not allow this charade to continue. Stop it, now. Do not release those women or I will have you removed from your position.

RODGERS

Arrest this man.

The two burly jailors from the cells, who have been standing on either side of the line of prisoners, take Bayard by either arm.

BAYARD

On what charge?

RODGERS

Contempt of court. Take him away.

Bayard is taken away, not quietly. Tumultuous reaction.

Order. Father Sebastian. Get them out of here before I change my mind.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM.

Michael comes out with Mary on one arm and Anne on the other. They are greeted by "Dr. Learn" and Mudder.

MICHAEL

Dr. Learn, I must thank you for your contribution.

DR. LEARN

Can I change now? How d' people wear this crap? No room t' breathe.

ANNE

Blackbeard? I had no idea. Where's the beard? How did you learn to talk like that? Did you actually have a bath?

MARY

How were ye talkin' him into it?

Mudder and Blackbeard look at each other.

ANNE

Well, I'll be damned.

MICHAEL

Please. You're with a man of the cloth.

MUDDER

I don't think that cloth will be on fer long.

ANNE

Trust me.

BLACKBEARD

Let's get outta here. I need a drink. And a change of clothes. And then I have t' go in hidin' til the beard grows back.

MUDDER

I have just the place.

They start off. Anne holds Michael back.

ANNE

Michael. We can't go. They're hanging the rest of them at dawn.

MICHAEL

It's already taken care of.

ANNE

How?

They start to follow the others. His voice fades as they get farther away.

MICHAEL

Well, to start with, there are three hangmen. They're all paid off, so we never even get to where the ropes are around the necks. So, everyone is brought out together. All twenty of them. But the guards are being, shall we say replaced in the guard room. So, at the right moment, we have twenty men with forty horses appear. They pretend to knock the guards down, and the prisoners get up on the extra horses. We all meet at the Sword Inn and off to the boats before the real posse can follow.

By this time, they are out of hearing range.

EXT. REVENGE. AFT. NIGHT.

Anne, Mary, and Michael are watching New Providence recede.

ANNE

I really thought it was over.

MARY

When he was deliverin' the sentence, I thought "This is it."

MICHAEL

Never underestimate Father Sebastian.

ANNE

Or Dr. Learn. Where did he come up with that name?

MICHAEL

Oh, Anne, come on.

MARY

Even I got that. Learn. Teach. Teach. Learn.

ANNE

Edward Teach. Of course.

MICHAEL

I love you. You're somewhat slow, but love is forgiving.

ANNE

Get below, and prepare for a frontal attack.

MARY

Michael. Thank ye. Jack would have been proud.

He exits.

ANNE

Mary, I have an apology to make. After I thought Michael was dead, I told you I wanted you to suffer like me. I didn't mean it. I never thought Jack would …

MARY

Of course. But, I guess the idea of his dying … I mean, it was almost like this game, ye know? And then, Pierre, and Parsons, and all the others, and then Jack. He was so young. And he was so alive. And I almost, no, I really did believe he was invincible. I really did.

They put their arms around each other. It is a long embrace. Mary leaves. Anne sings.

ANNE

When the battle's done,
When the guns are silent,
When the screams have faded
And the swords are put away,

She sings "What Was It For?" The question remains unanswered. The credits roll.

FADE OUT.