

The Ballad of Anne & Mary
Episode 1
'Take the Steel'

Distant waves against a shoreline. Music swells...

VO

Long Cat Media presents The Ballad of
Anne & Mary. Episode 1: Take the
Steel.

(Note - songs and musical scenes formatted to the left for
ease of differentiation. Dialogue is formatted in the
centre.)

Broadside balladeer BESS sings the tale of Anne & Mary. It
is fully orchestrated and the space is liminal.

OPENING SONG

BESS

Come, travellers and friends, gather round
A ballad have I to chill and astound
Of souls run aground, of good sailors drowned... At the
hands of Anne and Mary.
Man that is born of a woman hath only
The shortest of time for to be
And nowhere are folks more aware of that fate
Than the terrible, ravenous sea.
Where the waves they do tower
The winds they do blow
And krakens and monsters
Drag men down below.
But some Men are so wicked the devil himself Has cast them
back up from his hell...
Yes, some men - and some women as well.

ANNE

They say that my hair became red from the blood of the
innocent sailors I've slain

READ

They say we were crueller than Avery himself
And more vicious than Blackbeard or Vane
They say it's bad luck to have women on board

ANNE

And that two on one ship is a crime against God

ANNE & READ

And that crime will bring terrible luck to mankind They say
we're a plague and a curse

ANNE

Yes - they say lots of things about us.

GOSSIPERS AND BESS

(3/4) What kind of woman becomes a pirate?

GOSSIPER 1

How did these angels come to fall?

GOSSIPER 2

Men will be devils if they desire but

GOSSIPER 1 & 2

(4/4) How could a woman be a pirate at all?

BESS

(Slip jig) Flame hair'd Anne Bonny and dark Mary Read
Her raven locks stiff with the brine!

BESS AND GOSSIPERS

With breasts bursting free of their binding men's shirts -

READ

What? No they weren't!

BESS

And bountiful booty behind!

BESS AND GOSSIPERS

Their tight britches A-hugging voluptuous thighs -

ANNE

Now stop right there!

BESS

(4/4) With ruby red lips
And hellfire in their eyes
As they slip a fork'd tongue in your ear, do you try To
resist their unholy demands...
Will you join them - or die by their hands?

ANNE & READ

That's not true
Why aren't you listening to a word we're saying?

BESS

In a flash, the two beauties reveal their true form
As a hydra-beast, vile to behold

ANNE & READ

Stop with this nonsense!

BESS

Like a two-headed reaper they fight back-to-back
Hacking bodies and harvesting souls

ANNE & READ

No, you're oversimplifying!

BESS AND GOSSIPERS

They massacre all but
Who bow to their will
They feed off the lives
Of the sailors that they kill

BESS

And the last thing you'd see as their cutlasses spill
Your insides on the bloody deck is...
Our two she-devils locked in a kiss.

SCENE 2 - EXT. LONDON STREET. 1722. DAY.

The orchestral instruments are stripped away until it's just
the balladeer Bess standing on a busy London street corner
in 1722.

A horse-drawn carriage RUMBLES past. A cock CROWS.

A CROWD APPLAUDS.

BESS

Thank you!

The APPLAUSE continues.

BYSTANDER

Isn't she good?

BYSTANDER 2

I don't know how she remembers all
those words.

BESS

Thank you very much. Thank you.

A COIN lands in Bess's tin.

BESS (cont'd)

Ahhhh lovely. You're too kind. That
was 'The Ballad of Anne and Mary',
and I am selling the full text right
here, right now. So roll up! Get 'em
while they're hot, haha. Who's first;
you madam?

LADY

Yes please.

OLD MAN

I heard they took Beelzebub as a lover, I heard tell.

BESS

Amongst others.

OLD MAN

Disgustin'. How much?

BESS

Tuppence a broadsheet, good sir.

OLD MAN

Tuppence? Daylight robbery!

BESS

Includes a woodcut of the ladies in their britches.

OLD MAN

Oh, go on then.

YOUNG MAN

I'll take two!

WOMAN

'ere, give me one!

YOUNG MAN

Nice paper, this. Make good bum fodder after readin'.

Sound of coins dropping in a tin cup. Business is booming.

WOMAN

I seen them at the Old Bailey.

NATHANIEL

Oh really? What were they like?

WOMAN

You could smell the brimstone.

OLD MAN

We'll see 'em dance before long!

BYSTANDER

Oh, I love a good hanging.

WOMAN

No hangin' for them. Pleadin' their bellies, didn't they.

OLD MAN

Let 'em give birth then string 'em up, I say.

YOUNG MAN

And strangle the babes!

YET ANOTHER WOMAN

Aye. Devil spawn!

Focus switches back to the balladeer. NATHANIEL MIST creeps on her from behind.

NATHANIEL

Change for a shilling?

BESS

Nathaniel! Last time I saw you, you were in the stocks getting pelted with cabbages!
No, no, put your money away. Free for you, darling.

NATHANIEL

Business is good, eh?

BESS

Oh yeah. I barely get through the song afore I'm mobbed.

NATHANIEL

Did you write this one yourself?

BESS

Yeah. Did the woodcut too.

NATHANIEL

Wonderfully perverse.

BESS

Give the public what they want!

JONATHAN BARNET interrupts, impatient.

BARNET

Mist, it's almost one. I told the turn-key we'd be there by noon.

NATHANIEL
 Aye aye Captain! Coming.
 (to Bess) Goodbye Bess!

Nathaniel and Barnet walk off down the street, their boots
 CLICK-CLACKING on the cobblestones.

BESS
 (calls) Ta-ra! Mind how you go!

Barnet SIGHS fussily.

NATHANIEL
 Something upset you, Captain Barnet?

BARNET
 Over half a million souls in London
 and you insist on exchanging
 pleasantries with every man jack of
 them. And did you really pay for that
 'ballad'?

NATHANIEL
 Why not? It's research.

BARNET
 (outraged) That woman hasn't even met
 them!

NATHANIEL
 (laughs) Listen to this. (reads)
 'Anne Bonny and Mary Read:
 abominations pumped forth from
 betwixt the arse-cheeks of hell.'

BARNET
 Good God.

NATHANIEL
 Poetry.

BARNET
 I trust our book will be better
 written.

NATHANIEL
 Oh yes! Respectable enough for a
 drawing room, sensational enough to
 sell ten thousand copies!

BARNET
 (doubtful) 'Sensational'? Not sure I
 like the sound of that...

NATHANIEL

Barnet. The people want devils.
Dirty, sexy devils to offend and
titillate good Christians everywhere.
I will give them that.

BARNET

P-shaw! Nothing sexy about those two.
See this scar? See? Mary did that
with a cutlass while Anne laughed.

NATHANIEL

That's pretty sexy.

BARNET

No it's not!

NATHANIEL

I'll make it sexy.

BARNET

No! You're a journalist, stick to the
facts - and the fact is, they're
awful.

NATHANIEL

How awful?

BARNET

Violent. Insane. Not at all comely.
And they smell like a couple of dead
badgers preserved in cheap rum.

NATHANIEL

(laughs) Good job you caught 'em,
then.

BARNET

It is.

Nathaniel CLEARS HIS THROAT.

NATHANIEL

'Chapter 1: The Courageous Captain
Jonathan Barnet and his Apprehension
of the Hellcats Anne Bonny and Mary
Read.' Eh? What do you think?

BARNET

Hmmm. Or how about this - 'Chapter 1:
The Courageous Captain Jonathan
Barnet'?

Beat.

BARNET (cont'd)
That's it, that's the whole title.

NATHANIEL
Ummm.

BARNET
The focus of the story should be on
the hero, not the villains.

NATHANIEL
But Bonny and Read are rather famous,
and you're... not.

BARNET
That is exactly the problem! It's
ridiculous no-one knows who I am!

NATHANIEL
Our book shall set that right.

BARNET
(mutter) Shame we can't set it *all*
right, and put a noose round their
necks.

NATHANIEL
They'll likely die in prison.

BARNET
What if they're released?

NATHANIEL
The fee would be astronomical. They
couldn't afford it.

BARNET
They could earn it.

NATHANIEL
How?

BARNET
How do you think? This visit's
costing me a small fortune.

NATHANIEL
The turn-key takes most of that.

BARNET
True enough. (loaded) Although...

NATHANIEL
(impatient) What? What is it?

BARNET
(whisper) I've heard there's buried
treasure.

NATHANIEL
Oooh! You don't say!

BARNET
I do say.

NATHANIEL
Treasure!

BARNET
Someone might retrieve it for them,
pay their bond.

NATHANIEL
Who would they trust with such a
task?

BARNET
Oh, I don't know. A charming
stranger?

NATHANIEL
A charming stranger?

BARNET
(labored) Yes. A charming stranger.

NATHANIEL
Hang on. Do you mean... me?

BARNET
(jovial) You? Hahaha! Ah, Mist. Very
funny.

NATHANIEL
But... I wasn't--

BARNET
(interrupts) --Anyway, what need we
of treasure? Our book shall be our
fortune!
And here we are - Newgate Prison!
(sniffs)
God, you can smell 'em from here.

NATHANIEL
You have delicate sensibilities for a
pirate, Barnet.

BARNET
(flustered) I am not a pirate! I am a
privateer.

NATHANIEL
(teasing) A pirate by any other
name...

Nathaniel KNOCKS on a wooden door.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
(calls) Hello?

BARNET
(splutters) Privateers work for the
government...

A muffled SNORE from within.

NATHANIEL
...doing the exact same work as
pirates. (sotto) Gatekeeper's asleep.

KNOCKS louder.

BARNET
Privateering is a perfectly
respectable--

NATHANIEL
(interrupts)--I was only joking,
Barnet! (calls) HELLOOO!

A hatch OPENS.

GATEKEEPER
Who is it?

NATHANIEL
Good evening! T'is Nathaniel Mist of
'Mist's Weekly Post'. And Captain
Barnet, the hero who captured the
pirate ship Revenge! Here to see the
pirate hags, as arranged.

The hatch SLAMS closed. The DOOR OPENS.

BARNET

You know what, I just had a thought;
you should go in alone.

NATHANIEL

(surprised) What? Why? You've come
all this way. You've paid for both of
us--

BARNET

But what if they're too scared to
talk in my presence?

NATHANIEL

Oh.

BARNET

And we need them to relax. To open
up.

GATEKEEPER

(shouts) You comin' in or wot!

NATHANIEL

One moment! Bloody hell.

BARNET

I am decided. Go on. Go charm the
pants off them. I'll meet you later.

NATHANIEL

If you think that's best.

Barnet is already walking off.

BARNET

(calls) Don't believe half the things
they say, Nathan, do you hear?
They'll lie. Heaven knows what
nonsense they'll say about me.

NATHANIEL

(calls) Hang on! Where are we
meeting? And when?

BARNET

(calls) Midnight at King's
Coffeehouse! Good luck, Mist! You'll
need it!

Mist enters the prison. MUSIC SWELLS.

SCENE 3. INT. NEWGATE PRISON.

The DRIP, DRIP, DRIP of damp walls. MOANS from prisoners.

Mist and the TURNKEY walk the corridor. Their FOOT-STEPS echo.

TURN KEY

Not far now.

PRISONER 1

Bread! A little bread, please!

SPLASH.

NATHANIEL

Oh!

TURN KEY

Mind the puddles.

From a cell, a prisoner MOANS horribly.

PRISONER 2

(calls) Good sirs! Please help! My child is left alone while I am here!

TURN KEY

Quiet down!

PRISONER 2

(calls) My child is left alone while I am here!

PRISONER 3

(bellows) No-one locks a pirate up and gets away with it! Don't you know who I am? I be the fearsome pirate Anne Bonny!

NATHANIEL

Good God. Anne Bonny???

TURN KEY

Nah. That's Barbara. Bloody nuisance.

PRISONER 3

(loud) You dare treat Anne Bonny like this!

TURN KEY

We're moving her to the East block.

NATHANIEL
What's in the East block?

TURN KEY
Thicker walls.

PRISONER 3
(loud) I'll cut your gizzards out and
feed 'em to my lover! Har harrrrr!

In the distance, SINGING. It is a SEA SHANTY.

NATHANIEL
Is that them?

TURN KEY
Aye.

NATHANIEL
Like mermaids luring good men onto
the rocks!

They near Mary Read's cell (referred to from here as READ).
Read's voice is noticeably rasping, weak.

The turn-key THUMPS on the door.

TURN KEY
OI! READ! VISITOR!
(to Mist) I like to give 'em a
warnin' before going in. In case
they're having a shit.

NATHANIEL
You're a gentleman.

The door opens. Read erupts in a COUGHING FIT.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
Mistress Read?

Read MOANS.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
She's unwell?

Read PUKES on the floor.

TURN KEY
(innocent) Is she?

READ
 (delirious) Anne. I could've shot
 him. I should've tried harder.

NATHANIEL
 (To Read, tentative) Erm. Madam?

READ
 He betrayed us.

Read MOANS.

NATHANIEL
 (loud, slow) I'm here to interview
 you--

READ
 (interrupts) Go dock yerself, you
 weaselly hog-shagger.

TURN KEY
 I'll leave you two alone.

NATHANIEL
 No! Wait!

The door THUMPS closed.

The sound of the KEY in the lock.

Read HEAVES again. Bile SPLASHES against the stone floors.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
 Oh God.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
 Wait! Don't lock me in with her. Let
 me out!

He BANGS on the door wildly.

TURN KEY
 (muffled) Alright, alright.

NATHANIEL
 Let me out!

The turn key UNLOCKS and opens the door. Mist pushes past,
 distressed. The door SLAMS behind him.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
 (shaken) Good God! What's wrong with
 her? Is it... the contagion?

TURN KEY

Hope not.

NATHANIEL

(furious) You 'hope'. You little toe-
rag!

Nathaniel grabs him by the collar. He let's out a SQUEAL.

TURN KEY

Get off me!

NATHANIEL

(fury) This hell-hole's made me sick
once in my life before. If it happens
again, and you're to blame...

TURN KEY

(interrupts) It's... it's a sickness
of the womb! Her babe is killing her!

Nathaniel releases him.

NATHANIEL

If you're lying...
The other one - Bonny - is she well?

TURN KEY

Aye.

NATHANIEL

Then take me to her.

TURN KEY

We're already there: she's three
cells along.

They reach her door.

TURN KEY (cont'd)

(shouts) Bonny! Visitor!

KEY in door.

TURN KEY (cont'd)

(fed up) Go in.
(To Anne) Presenting 'Nathaniel
Mist'. Don't hurt him.

NATHANIEL

'Don't hurt him?'

The door CLANGS shut behind him.

The sounds of the prison are muffled through the thick walls.

The sound of a CHAIN SCARPING THE STONE FLOOR.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
(cheerful) Greetings, Mistress Bonny.
Thank you for agreeing to see me.

The CHAIN that attaches her to the wall CLANKS against the stone floor.

ANNE
Agreeing! (spits)

Anne HAWKS up a gobbet of phlegm and SPITS it.

NATHANIEL
Oh! Right on my boot. Lovely. I'll just... wipe that off...
(mutters) Clear phlegm. No sign of infection.

ANNE
Infection? What infection?

NATHANIEL
Nothing!
I heard you singing just now. Lovely!
What was the song?

ANNE
It's called 'Your Mother's A Public Ledger; Open to all Parties.'

NATHANIEL
(surprised) Is it really??

ANNE
(scathing) What? No.

NATHANIEL
Ah! I see; it was a joke! About my dear mother. May she rest in peace. May I sit?

Anne is silent. Nathaniel grabs the chair.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
Much obliged!
I beg your patience while I assemble this marvelous little device...

The SNAP of latches and CREAK of hinges.

ANNE

(mutters) What fresh perversion is this?

NATHANIEL

'What is it?' Allow me to explain! It's a portable writing desk for the traveling scribe, of my own design. I haven't decided on a name for it yet. It sits atop my lap like this, so I thought I might call it... the portadesk! See here? It has these tiny little drawers that hold all manner of implements...

The sound of tiny DRAWERS SLIDING OPEN AND SHUT.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)

...pencils... knife to sharpen them with... sealing wax... paper...

ANNE

Gonna draw the pirate queen's kettledrums, are ya?

NATHANIEL

Beg your pardon?

ANNE

Gonna empty your nutmegs in private staring at scratches on a little piece of paper? Pathetic.

NATHANIEL

Oh, no no no, I'm not here to draw your... drums.

Anne gets right in his grill.

Her voice low, menacing. Her chains CLANK.

ANNE

Listen to me jingle-brains; I'm not as obliging as the turnkey makes out. The last man who came looking for a pirate moll got plenty of pirate and very little moll. You get my meaning?

NATHANIEL

I think you might have the wrong end
of the stick-- wahhh!

She puts a foot in his crotch. His chair SCRAPES back. The
WOOD CREAKS. PENCILS fall everywhere. Nathaniel SHRIEKS.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)

(panic) Oh! Your foot! Miss Bonny!
It's right in my...

ANNE

...nutmegs. That's right! You'll be
picking them out of your bread basket
if you're not careful! Unless you
like that sort of thing? Will you pay
extra if I push a little harder? You
like a bit of pain, do ya--

NATHANIEL

No! No pain]! Please! I'm just a
writer! A journalist! I'm writing a
book! And I would like you to be in
it! That's all!

Anne withdraws her foot. The chair THUMPS down. The
remaining PENCILS fall everywhere. Nathaniel 'OOF'S' as he
lands.

ANNE

A book.

NATHANIEL

(husky) Oh thank God.

ANNE

What kind of book?

NATHANIEL

A history of pirates.

ANNE

And you want me to be in it?

NATHANIEL

Yes. And your friend: Mary.

Beat.

ANNE

A book about me and Read. I would
like to read that.

NATHANIEL

I will send you a copy as soon as it is done.

ANNE

(sarcasm) Oh, much obliged.

NATHANIEL

You *can* read?

ANNE

Better than you, I'll wager.
My father was a lawyer. He trained me to be his clerk.

Nathaniel LAUGHS. Then stops.

NATHANIEL

A joke! Surely? But... you're a girl.

ANNE

I was raised as a boy.

NATHANIEL

No! Really?

ANNE

So was Read, as a matter of fact.

NATHANIEL

Both of you? That's extraordinary!

ANNE

Quite the coincidence, isn't it.

Excited, Nathaniel WRITES, his pencil scratching against the paper.

NATHANIEL

(writes) 'What kind of woman becomes a pirate?'

Mist CHUCKLES.

Some of Anne's memory infiltrates the scene - WAVES, sea birds CAWING, the CREAK of wood and rope.

ANNE

I remember when Read told me, we were scrapping on deck.

Here we have something that's not quite a flashback, more a very present memory....

Read and Anne's voices are DREAMLIKE and FADE in and out. These are FRAGMENTS of a larger conversation that will only make sense later.

The CLANG and CLASH of practice swords. They GRUNT as they fight.

PAST READ
You sneaky cow!

PAST ANNE
Anne Bonny wins!

PAST READ
Can't believe I fell for that.

The memory FADES.

Anne's voice is full of longing.

ANNE
(soft) Ahhh Read.

Nathaniel SCRIBBLES notes, excited.

NATHANIEL
The readers will love this.

Anne BITES into an apple while he SPEAKS.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
An unnatural beginning! The seeds of perversion sewn from--

ANNE
(interrupts) Would you like an apple?

NATHANIEL
No, thank you. I must write down my thoughts in the moment...

Nathan's PENCIL SCRATCHES across the paper.

ANNE
(eating) Are ya sure? A visitor brought 'em, in exchange for a look at my bare left foot. I told him if he wants to see my right foot, he's to bring hot gingerbread next time.

Still writing...

NATHANIEL
(distracted) Oh yes?

ANNE
(loaded) So, where are my apples?

NATHANIEL
(distracted) Eh? They're right there.

Rattle of CHAIN. Foot in the crotch again. SCRAPE of the chair. CREAK of wood. PENCILS drop. Nathaniel SQUEALS.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)
My nutmegs!

ANNE
(aggressive) I wasn't talking about those apples.

NATHANIEL
(confused) Other apples?

ANNE
In a manner of speaking.

NATHANIEL
What's wrong with those ones?

She removes her foot. The chair CLATTERS DOWN.

ANNE
Jaysus Mary and Joseph! It's a metaphor! Eejit!

Nathaniel MOANS.

NATHANIEL
(faint) Metaphor?

ANNE
What's in this for me, that's what I'm saying! You get my story, but what do I get?

NATHANIEL
Why didn't you say that in the first place??

ANNE
Well?

NATHANIEL
You get... exposure.

ANNE
What the hell is that?

NATHANIEL
When the book comes out, everyone
will know your name.

ANNE
They already do, numb-skull.

NATHANIEL
Oh. So... what do you want, then?

ANNE
Thank you for asking.

Anne walks, retrieves a note.

ANNE (cont'd)
See this? I writ this note to Read,
but I don't trust the turn-key to
take it. So you will.
Wait, let me add a line or two.

Anne WRITES.

NATHANIEL
Now, then, Miss Bonny...

ANNE
I'll have another letter ready for
next time.

NATHANIEL
Next time? Now hang on... I was only
coming today...

ANNE
Good pencil. I'm keeping this.

Anne stops writing.

ANNE (cont'd)
Take it. And next time--

NATHANIEL
(interrupts) --You're not listening!
There won't be a next time! I'm not a
delivery boy!

ANNE

Do you want the whole story or not?

Nathaniel SCRAPES his chair further away. As he drags it--

NATHANIEL

(mutters) Assaulted. Insulted.
Ordered around! The cheek of it.

ANNE

Where are you taking that chair?

NATHANIEL

Beyond the reach of your chain! Where
you cant get to my... nutmegs.
(sits) There.
The thing is, Miss Bonny, I don't
want your *whole* story.

ANNE

But you're writing a book...

NATHANIEL

A book about pirate captains, and the
brave men who captured them. As for
you and Mary Read - well, to be
perfectly honest - you're the spice.

ANNE

The spice?

NATHANIEL

Yes. So I only need a handful of
details. How many men dead. How many
men bedded. Did you ever meet
Blackbeard? What was Calico Jack
like? Is he the father of your baby?
Or *both* the babies! That sort of
thing. You know; spice!

ANNE

I see. You're writing some lurid
fantasy.

NATHANIEL

(defensive) I wouldn't go that far.
I'm a *journalist*, after all--

ANNE

(interrupts) --A *journalist*! Why
didn't you say. In that case, you
should interview a *real* pirate.

(MORE)

ANNE (cont'd)
Like Calico Jack. Or Fenwick. Or
little Bob? Go talk to him.

NATHANIEL
Well, I can't. They're... dead.

ANNE
Ah yes. I forgot. The only ones left
are me and Read. And I don't feel
like talking to you anymore.
(grim) Get out.

NATHANIEL
Oh! But... but...

ANNE
Just make it up. You were gonna do
that anyway. Go on: get out.

NATHANIEL
Miss Bonny, I have no intention of
lying. I am simply responding to what
the public want to read--

Anne starts SINGING LOUDLY.

ANNE
(sings) GET THE FECK OUT OF ME CELL.
GET THE FECK OUT OF ME CELL. GET OUT,
GET OUT, BEFORE I CHUCK ME PISS-POT
IN YOUR FACE...

Nathaniel has to SHOUT over her.

NATHANIEL
(shouts) Alright! Alright! Fine.
DEAL. IT'S A DEAL.

Anne stops singing.

ANNE
What is?

NATHANIEL
The letter. I'll take it to her. It's
a deal.

ANNE
Nah. I've changed me mind. Get out.

NATHANIEL
But... but...

ANNE

Unless...

NATHANIEL

What is it? Tell me. Please. You were right; you're the only ones left. I suppose I do need you. What do you want me to do?

Beat.

ANNE

Read doesn't write. So you are to take dictation from her, and deliver her letters to me.

NATHANIEL

(sighs) I suppose I can do that.

ANNE

And... you'll do it as long as it takes me to tell the *whole* story. In whatever way I see fit.

NATHANIEL

Alright. Doesn't look like I have much choice. It's a deal.

ANNE

(surprised) Really? Huh. That was easy.

NATHANIEL

You call that easy??

Anne LAUGHS.

ANNE

Our first duel, Mist.

NATHANIEL

(peevied) And last, if you please.

ANNE

But I've got a sword, and you're fighting with a spoon. (cackles)

NATHANIEL

Yes alright, very good.

ANNE

Now. Where shall I start?

NATHANIEL

Well, now. Let me see. Where were you born?

MUSIC cue.

ANNE

Alright! County Cork, Ireland, 1698. My mother was a maid in my father's house. I was born on the wrong side of the blankets.

Nathaniel WRITES.

NATHANIEL

And what were your earliest memories?

A smile creeps into Anne's voice as she talks of her mother.

ANNE

The warmth of her. And the soft scratch of her calluses as she stroked my face. And she'd sing...

The Ballyeamon Cradle Song, which continues into the flashback.

ANNE

Sleep, sleep, grah mo chree.
Here on you mamma's knee.
Angels are guarding,
and they watch o'er thee...

The birdeens sing a fluting song.
They sing to thee the whole day long.
Wee fairies dance o'er hill and dale,
for very love of thee.
For very love of thee.

SCENE 4. INT. BED CHAMBER. DAY

A pleasant scene. Sweeping background music. A CHUCKLING toddler.

Anne's mother (Anne's voice, but full Cork) sings *The Ballyeamon Cradle Song* to her child.

SUNG:

MOTHER AND ANNE

(sings)
 Rest tired eyes a while,
 Sweet is thy baby's smile

MOTHER

Angels are guarding
 and they watch over thee.

(The toddler gives a shriek of LAUGHTER.)

MOTHER

Ach, she won't settle.

FATHER

(sings) Dream, Dream, grah mo chree.

The BABY SCREAMS.

FATHER

(spoken) Grainne, I have to go.

MOTHER

Ah, now. Anne barely gets to see you.
 (shouts) ANNE, put that knife down!

FATHER

She's fierce! If only she were a boy;
 I'd train her up to work alongside
 me. Father and son!

MOTHER

Well, now... there's a thought...

FATHER

Here's another - the Americas.
 There's opportunity to be had
 there... we could start afresh. Leave
 the auld wife at home!

MOTHER

Do you mean that?

FATHER

I do!

MOTHER

A new life together. Wouldn't that be
 something...

MUSIC ABRUPTLY STOPS.

MOTHER (cont'd)

Ah no. This isn't working. No. STOP.

NATHANIEL

Woah woah! Why are you stopping?

MOTHER

This isn't my memory; it's my mother's. Her story, not mine.

MOTHER AND ANNE

Let's skip forward, to the real beginning. When I took the reins for the first time. I was sixteen...

NATHANIEL

Fine. Please, go ahead.

SCENE 5. A STABLE, CAROLINA

Adventure music starts. A horse WHICKERS. Anne is SADDLING him.

ANNE

(to the horse) There, there, girl. We'll be gone soon.

1714. My mother had died three years before. I was living with my father and his wife in Charles Towne, Carolina. I was the bastard stain on his reputation, but he couldn't quite bring himself to throw me out - I had my mother's crinkly eyes, he said. But I had her fire, too.

PAST ANNE

(ghostly) ...shove it up your arse!

STEPMOTHER

(ghostly) You low-born cuckoo!

ANNE

My stepmother was pure deranged with respectability, so you can imagine how she felt about me. Ah now, if you want a portrait of cruelty that would make a pirate cringe... And yet my father would just look the other way.

FATHER

(ghostly) Anne, let's not rock the boat. And for pity's sake, try not to upset her.

Anne gets on the horse.

ANNE

Coward. Is there any wonder I'd take a horse and escape into town.
Hiiii!

The horse GALLOPS off.

SCENE 6. EXT. ROAD INTO CHARLES TOWN - NIGHT

Anne rides into town.

HOOF beats, the rushing WIND, a distant COYOTE doing it's coyote thing.

Anne's 'I want' SONG, to the beat of the hooves...

ANNE

Freedom! Oh what a delight!
I'm outta my | prison I'm going to Charles Towne
I'm gonna get drunk And I | might start a fight!
And I'm gonna | bed a man
A par|ticular man
I got John in my sights
For a few sweet | hours I'll be free From my | coward
father's house Yes to|night, for just one night...
I'll be a | girl who goes where she | damn well goes Taking
a | midnight ride in her | father's clothes
My | horse may be saddled, but | she's running free And she
| only truly gets to feel
The | rushing of the wind when she's with me
Soon I'm gonna | cut and run
For too long I've been a | loaded gun
Itching to | fire on the shackles that keep me here
Well no | more, enough, I'm done
I'm gonna | cut and run
I don't owe a thing to | anyone
And I'm gonna | cut off the anchor that weighs me down In a
flash | I'll cut and run
Cut and run...
They wanna | keep me small
They wanna | keep me all polite
They wanna | keep me mild
Keeping the | bastard child out of sight
My father calls himself an | honest man
A res|pectable man

But they're both twisted up inside
 They dress their cruelty up in | fancy clothes and politesse
 But | it is cruelty nonetheless
 They keep their greed and selfishness disguised
 They're keeping me | weak and sick with this | mock
 gentility Making me | wear this mask of res|pectability
 Well I | ain't gonna take it, | I'm gonna be free
 To wear my | rage and my pain
 And my | cruelty and my joy for all to see.

And this lad that I'm meeting is a pirate
 He's the most exciting lad I've ever seen Though he says
 right now he's... between ships He's | no less of a pirate
 to me
 And he's my guarantee
 I will | never be like them - I will be free! Free
 (to horse)
 Yahhh!
 I'm gonna | cut and run

Live in liberty and | bow to none
 No longer | trapped as a daughter in name alone
 No more | false facades, I'm done
 I'm gonna | cut and run
 Gonna make a husband of that John
 But until | then I will just have to be the stain
 On my | father and stepmother's upright name
 So I'll | drink, screw and fight till they're red with shame
 And then I'm gonna cut and run.

(Nathaniel intrudes into the past. The horse's hooves keep
 going, the wind continues to howl. He's a disembodied
 voice.)

NATHANIEL

Was Mary Read in Charles Towne? Is
 that how you met?

PRESENT ANNE

Oh no. Read was across the Atlantic
 back then, fighting the French.

The SOUNDS of BATTLE filter in. CANNON shot, the SHOUTS of
 men.

NATHANIEL

A soldier? No! Tell me!

ANNE

Ask her yourself. Although I warn
 you, Read can be awful private...

NATHANIEL

Mmm. Well, it'd be a shame to have to leave her out of the book...

ANNE

Don't do that!

NATHANIEL

So tell me what she told you about her life before you met.

The SOUNDS of BATTLE MELLOW to an army camp at night.
CRACKLE of a campfire. Soft WHICKER of a horse.

ANNE

Alright. Read's last campaign was in Belgium...

SCENE 7. EXT. ARMY CAMP - EVENING

The MURMUR of exhausted men. Read watches them from a short distance.

Read's 'I Want' SONG

READ

Look at these men
Their tired faces lit by | firelight
Bruised and battered from | fight after fight But | night
after night
We've sung together, my brothers and I.
This is my home
These lads my family and my | sanctuary
For these ten years I have been | free to be me
To a certain degree
They've only seen what I would have them see.
I was so | nervous when I joined at 21
I was a | far cry from the soldier I've become
I've lived and | fought with them and never been unmasked
Now I am | older than I was, and not as fast.
But being Mark, I have not been judged
When I have gambled, wrestled, cursed and drunk too much.
I've spoken freely all these years
Sharing jokes and stories, hopes and fears.
These are the pleasures of men.
...But all campaigns must end.
And once we sail tomorrow, bound for England, when
Will I ever feel these pleasures again?
What would it | be like to be | free
From | them that would ha|ve me bound in | corsets and
respectability.

This is the | life that I have had
 Through | camouflage and sheer audacity.
 Oh, but what would it be like?
 What would it be like to live as me?
 I could breathe.

SPOKEN -

The sound of RUNNING footsteps approaching.

DANIEL

Mark!

READ

Daniel?

DANIEL

Wait. Can I walk with you?

READ

...Of course...

SUNG -

READ

Daniel... Leaving Daniel hurts. Will I ever see him again?
 We've shared so much,
 And yet so few words.
 But he silently | seeks me out,
 and I too seek him out...
 To eat, to drink, to fight, to sleep...
 And then that night, when we were drunk
 And he pinned me to the ground
 There was a moment...
 Just one brief moment...

DANIEL

(interrupts) Mark. I have a question.
 Something has been on my mind.
 Something I have noticed.

READ

(to self) Oh no. No.
 (to him) Of course! What is it? Fire
 away!

DANIEL

Are you... forgive me.

READ

Go on.

DANIEL
Are you... I've seen the way you...

READ
(fearful) What?

DANIEL
Look at me. The way you look at me.

READ
(careful) What way is that?

DANIEL
Like you want me. Do you want me?

Beat.

DANIEL (cont'd)
Because I want you.

Nathaniel breaks in.

NATHANIEL
Oh no! What happened? Did he find out?

ANNE
He did.

NATHANIEL
And? Did he want Mark... or Mary?

In the background, the sound of KISSING as Read and Daniel go at each other.

ANNE
Either. Both!

DANIEL
(lustly groans) Oh my darling.

ANNE
He wanted Read. Meanwhile, in Charles Town...

The sound of KISSING as Anne and John Bonny go at each other.

JOHN BONNY
(lustly groans) Oh my darling.

ANNE
Oh John. John!

PASTOR

Will you stop kissing long enough for
me to marry you! Harrumph.
I now pronounce you man and wife.

JOHN BONNY

C'mere, wife.

They KISS again. The following is a MUSICAL SCENE, in which
some lines are spoken, some are sung.

SUNG -

JOHN BONNY

Do you love me, Anne?

ANNE

I love ya, John

JOHN BONNY

Tell me, am I
A handsome man, do I turn you on?

ANNE

You're not so bad.
[aside, laughs] Vainest man in North Carolina...

Where shall we go, John?

I heard of a place where pirates gather to -

JOHN BONNY

[interrupts] Why don't we go and visit your folks?

ANNE

My folks? But they don't like you. Or me.
We just eloped, John!

JOHN BONNY

Need I remind you we're totally broke?
They might want to give us a wedding present.

ANNE

Nah, let's not waste our time.
I heard
Tell, there's a place where the pirates congregate
Outside of the clutches of the law
A separate state of buccaneer mates
Ever hungry for that next big score
And you're a pirate! So you could find a ship there!

JOHN BONNY

Sounds | great. I'm sorry to piss in your rum

But maybe you've noticed we're living on crumbs?

ANNE

Well what are we waiting for? Let's set sail

JOHN BONNY

Or ask your parents for help!
The deed is done, the vows is read
They can't do nothing about it
A wee bit o' coin for the newly-weds
Would help the lovebirds out a bit

ANNE

This will not work, John.

JOHN BONNY

How do you know if we don't have a go?

ANNE

Fine.

[Walking. Time jump. A study: the TICKING of a grandfather clock, the SCRATCH of quill on paper.]

FATHER

(mutters) The purchase of 10 acres of land.

[Anne walks into his study]

FATHER

Anne!?

ANNE

Hello father.
Have you heard my happy news?
I know I ain't exactly | been a perfect daughter
But we wondered if we --
[The door OPENS]

STEPMOTHER

You!

ANNE

Ah shit, I thought you'd be out.

STEPMOTHER

Get outta here, you bastard child!
You rotten shrew! You low-born cuckoo!
You are the reason our name's defiled
We'll never be rid of the shame o' you.

ANNE

Screw you!

STEPMOTHER

Did you hear how she spoke to me?

FATHER

Yes dear. [clears throat impressively]
You heard your stepmother.
Don't ever darken our doors again.

ANNE

Shove it up your arse!

[A SLAMMED DOOR]

JOHN BONNY

Anne...
We'll try again.
When she's cooled | down
We'll try again.

ANNE

No, John. I told you it wouldn't work
We don't need their charity.
We could just | go, John.

JOHN BONNY

Anne...

ANNE

We've got all the wherewithals
You're a pirate after all
Onwards!

JOHN BONNY

Look, you don't understand-

ANNE

To The Republic of Pirates...

JOHN BONNY

The situation there is not that simple-

ANNE

...Nassau!

END OF EPISODE 1