

Episode 2

'True Edge'

Music.

VOICE OVER

Long Cat Media presents The Ballad of
Anne & Mary. Episode 2: True Edge.

SCENE 1. EXT. JOURNEY TO NASSAU

A mandolin plays (amongst other instruments).

ANNE V.O.

And so we left for Nassau. It wasn't
the open sea, but there was freedom
to be had there. An island of
pirates, but they had a code, and all
were expected to follow it.

The PIRATE CHORUS explodes into the space!

PIRATE CHORUS

Anyone can be a pirate
If elected by a crew
And we fairly share between us
Every penny we accrue
Cos a pirate is rewarded
If a pirate pulls his weight
In the Republic of Pirates
We are masters of our fate

SCENE 2. INT. PIRATE TAVERN, NASSAU - EVENING

Anne and John Bonny's FOOTSTEPS crunch as they approach the
tavern. They OPEN THE DOOR, and the hubbub within spills
out.

They enter.

LANDLADY

(distant) I'll bring it to your
table.

A man GUFFAWS at an unheard joke. Or maybe he's just drunk
and having a good time on his own.

LANDLADY (cont'd)

Who's next?

SUNG if formatted to the left.

SPOKEN if formatted in the centre.

ANNE

Look at this place!

JOHN BONNY

It's hot as hell.

ANNE

Think of the
Many tales these salty dogs could tell!

JOHN BONNY

I'm sure they could.
Careful, Anne. Don't make any eye contact...

BRUISER PIRATE (DOBBIN)

Out the way, shag-bag.

(He ELBOWS John out of the way.)

ANNE

Hey! Jingle brains...

ANNE (CONT)

If you value all your limbs stayin' attached to your body
You better not be messin' with the pirate JOHN Bonny!

JOHN BONNY

(warning) Anne!

PIRATES

(sarcasm) Ooooooooh!

BRUISER PIRATE

(laughs) What 'im? Old shifty eyes?
'Ere, ain't I seen you before, lad?

ANNE

Course you have! He's an experienced
pirate!

(They LAUGH. A lot.)

JOHN BONNY

Will you shut up, Anne!

ANNE

But you said they would cower in fear of your name?

JOHN BONNY

Don't push our luck, Anne.

JOHN BONNY (CONT.)

I'm terribly sorry for jostling you.

(Loaded pause)

BRUISER PIRATE

Well, we all make mistakes. Ta-ra.

(The pirates with Bruiser Pirate SQUAWK with derisive laughter and leave. John SIGHS with relief.)

JOHN BONNY

Stay here. Look pretty. Don't make a sound.

JOHN BONNY (CONT.)

I'll talk to some of the lads and see what jobs are going round.

ANNE

Oh! Good!

(John's FOOTSTEPS cross the tavern. We go with him.)

A fiddle player TUNES UP.

Suddenly, a HAND GRABS John's arm.)

WILKINS

Bonny! You're back in town!

JOHN BONNY

(loud) Wilkins!

WILKINS

(hushed, urgent) Keep your voice down. Seeing as you're here, I'd like a word. Quick: outside.

(They HURRY out the DOOR. The sounds of the tavern become MUTED as it shuts behind them.)

JOHN BONNY

I was hoping you'd be here.

WILKINS

Well, you're in luck. I've got a job for you. There's been too many raids of late - the governor looks weak. He hates looking weak. He needs an easy capture. What have you got?

JOHN BONNY

Nothing yet. Not been back long.

WILKINS

Keep your ear to the ground. Here: for your troubles-

(TINKLE OF COINS)

BACK IN THE TAVERN...

ANNE

Excuse me. Have you got any jobs going?

LANDLADY

No. Got nothin' for ya, gal.

ANNE

Look, I could scrub down your outhouse - I ain't fussed.

LANDLADY

What did I just say?
But - Calico Jack's recruiting.

ANNE

Calico Who?

OLD MAN

Calico Jack. They call him that cos of his fancy wardrobe.

At the other side of the tavern, Jack speaks-

JACK RACKHAM

(calls) Friends, gather round!

OLD MAN

Cor, look at him there, innee magnificent!

LANDLADY

Let's hear what he has to say.

Non-diagetic music becomes louder.

JACK RACKHAM

Were you to sail with me as your
Captain, you will need to adhere to
my rules.

Jack's STING (a BLARE of instruments).

JACK RACKHAM

One: If any Man shall steal any Thing in the Company, or
game to the Value of a Piece of Eight, he shall be maroon'd
or shot.

LANDLADY

If you're looking for a job, you
could do worse.

ANNE

(surprise) Me??

JACK RACKHAM

Two: If any Man shall lose a Joint in Time of Engagement, he
shall have 400 Pieces of Eight, if a Limb, 800.

ANNE

Can that be true?

LANDLADY

Oh, every word.
Old Jack'll see you right.

ANNE

You're paid if you get injured?
I've never heard the like.

OLD MAN

You're not wrong, lass.
I fought on-ship in Queen Anne's war
With blood and sweat and grit
And when I lost me 'and
the navy couldn't give a shit
They chewed me up and spat me out
And left me nowhere to go
So I came here

LANDLADY

To nowhere!

OLD MAN

Now nowhere is my home!
Nowhere's safe

THOMAS

Nowhere's free

OLD MAN AND THOMAS

Now nowhere is our home.

JACK RACKHAM

Three: If at any Time we meet with a prudent Woman, that Man that offers to meddle with her, without her Consent, shall suffer present death.

OLD MAN

(echoes quietly, in agreement) Shall suffer present death.

ANNE (cont'd)

You gotta be joking.

OLD MAN

Would you believe it's true. They've actually written an article banishing sex pests from the crew.

JACK RACKHAM

T'is written down, and you'll keep the vow
Until our your dying breath.
He who touches a woman without her consent shall suffer present death
Do not think for a moment that I will not enforce this.

(Anne pushes through the crowd to get to Rackham)

ANNE

Hello, excuse me! Sir! I'm pleased to meet you!

RACKHAM

Hello.

ANNE

My name is Anne.

RACKHAM

Right—

ANNE

Anne Bonny.

RACKHAM

Yes—

ANNE

And.. my husband is a pirate-

RACKHAM

Charmed I'm sure, but Anne my dear,
I'm just in the middle of something here.

(The crowd GRUMBLES at the interruption)

ANNE

Oh! Sorry! [Sorry!

MAN IN CROWD

Wait your turn, love.

(Rackham CHUCKLES, amused at Anne's enthusiasm)

MAN IN CROWD 2

Siddown!

RACKHAM

Now, then.

Four: Any man that strikes another shall receive 40 stripes
lacking one on the bare back.

*(The DOOR to the tavern OPENS, and John Bonny walks back in,
WHISTLING happily)*

ANNE

John! John! You're back! Where've you
been? Never mind, it doesn't matter.

ANNE (CONT)

How's this for a bit of good news
This Calico Jack is looking for crew.

JOHN BONNY

Small time pirate. I could do better.

ANNE

No no, you haven't heard the best
part...

ANNE (CONT)

I think I can persuade him to
Allow a woman on the crew.

JOHN BONNY

You don't honestly think he would sail with a woman

ANNE (cont'd)

I'm tough.

JOHN BONNY

You're a girl! You don't have a clue.

Think of it, Anne.

They'd make you

Work your fingers down to the bone

It would break you, Anne.

Plus every

Pirate ship is caught in the end

And they'd hang you, Anne.

[Music stops, undercutting John]

LANDLADY

Not if you're pregnant.

JOHN BONNY

You what?

LANDLADY

If you're pregnant, they won't
execute you. Just sayin'.

JOHN BONNY

Will you stop earwiggling, you old
hag!

LANDLADY

Oh that's lovely, that is.

ANNE

John, I don't understand.. Don't you
want to be a pirate anymore?

JOHN BONNY

Course I do. But only on the right
ship. [laughs] And as for you being a
pirate, how would that work? What
about all those men?

ANNE

John, didn't you hear Rackham's
rules? It sounds like I'd have more
protection on this ship than on land.

ANNE (CONT)

John, I think I want to do this.

JOHN BONNY
 Luckily it ain't your to job to
 think.

JOHN BONNY (CONT)

Now won't you
 Take your pretty backside to the bar and get us both another
 drink.
 Ta-dah!

[Coins CLINK on table]

ANNE
 What is that, John?

JOHN BONNY
 It's money, Anne.

ANNE
 Where in the hell did that come from?

JOHN BONNY
 Your handsome man.
 That's all you need to know.

[Across the pub, Jack's still going through his articles.]

JACK RACKHAM
 Article Five. Don't be a sneak. A tattle-tale. A Judas. So
 keep a weather eye open for men exchanging coin for
 information. He that would sell the lives of good pirates
 for personal gain shall suffer present death.

PIRATE CHORUS
 Shall suffer present death.

[Back at Anne's table...]

ANNE
 What's going on, John?

JOHN BONNY
 I don't know what you mean.

ANNE
 Something is wrong, John.

JOHN BONNY
 Christ, do you ever stop talking?

ANNE
 Where did you | get that bag of coins?
 Cos I ain't seen you do a lick of

ANNE (CONT)

Work since we got hitched
 So pardon me for wondering why
 We suddenly seem to be awful rich?

JOHN BONNY

Don't. You. Question. Me. Wife!

(John SLAMS his fist onto the table.)

ANNE

So I'm not allowed to speak, now? Who
 do you think you married! Where did
 the money come from, John??

JOHN BONNY

[whispered] Shut up, Anne, or you'll
 get us killed!

[loaded pause]

ANNE

You're a spy.
 For the governor.

JOHN BONNY

Shh, keep your voice down!

ANNE

You!

JOHN BONNY

Don't you test me, woman.

ANNE

Tell me right now.

JOHN BONNY

If you don't
 Button it and stop your nagging-

ANNE

Whatcha gonna do? Gonna
 Hit me, John? Like to see you
 Try.

OLD MAN

Oi! Captain Rackham said you ain't
 allowed to strike (another pirate)

JOHN BONNY

Another pirate - she's a woman
 (MORE)

JOHN BONNY (cont'd)
I can do what I like with my
chattel.

ANNE

Try and hit me. You'll be
dead before your punch has landed.

[Schwing of knife]

JOHN BONNY (cont'd)
You're mad! Your stepmother was
right! Someone needs to knock some
sense into you!

RACKHAM
John Bonny.

END OF MUSICAL SCENE.

SPOKEN from now on.

JOHN BONNY
(unnerved) You know my name? Because
you're looking for crew?

Calico LAUGHS.

CALICO JACK
I wouldn't have you on my ship if you
were the last man in Providence. But
I'm feeling charitable, so I'm going
to give you a chance to save
yourself... and those whose safety
you seek to compromise. Hear me now;
leave this island and never return.

Silence. SCRAPE of chair.

JOHN BONNY
Come on, Anne. We're leaving.

ANNE
No.

JOHN BONNY
Anne!

ANNE
I'm staying.

JOHN BONNY

(whisper) You don't understand. We need to get out of here. C'mon!

ANNE

I understand, alright. I just don't think he meant both of us. I ain't leaving. Certainly not with a stool pigeon like you.

JOHN BONNY

Anne, I will drag you out of here by your hair...

ANNE

(sotto) And I'll ask in a loud voice where that bag of coins came from.

JOHN BONNY

You wouldn't.

ANNE

I would. You know I would.

JOHN BONNY

You're a snake. The devil!

ANNE

Goodbye, John.

FOOTSTEPS as he leaves. On the way out, he passes the pirate DOBBIN.

DOBBIN

Leaving already shag-bag?

The DOOR closes. John Bonny has left the building.

JACK RACKHAM

What a slubber-degullion.

DOBBIN

'Nother drink, Jack?

The normal levels of hubbub return.

ANNE

Captain, wait! You're looking for crew... and... well...

The scene ends with a SWELL of PERKY PIRATE MUSIC.

SCENE 3. INT. KING'S COFFEEHOUSE, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON -
LATE EVENING

A musician plays the HARPSICORD. A ROAR of DRUNKEN LAUGHING and SHOUTING fades in. The sense of volatile, high-spirited chaos is much more intense (and BRAYINGLY POSH) than in last scene's pirate tavern.

MOLL KING
Is this your first visit to King's
Coffee House, Mr Pope?

ALEXANDER POPE
Indeed it is, yes.

MOLL KING
(shouts) Lucille! Get over here!
(genteel) May I introduce you to...
Lucille.

ALEXANDER POPE
(slimy) Hello Lucille. Tres bon!

Lucille GIGGLES.

POSHO NO 1
(distant) Charles is going!

MOLL KING
(sighs) Excuse me.
(shouts) Oi! If you're going to flash
the hash, do it outside!

The sound of PUKING.

POSHO NO 1
He's gone.

MOLL KING
Oh for pity's sake. Boys: take him
outside. Be gentle with 'im. He's a
viscount.

HEAVY
Right you are, Moll.

Door OPENS. Nathaniel pushes through the crowd.

NATHANIEL
(mutters) Into the fray.
(shouts) Excuse me. Coming through!

POSHO NO 2
 (distant) Dash it all! I swear these
 cards are marked!

 NATHANIEL
 I'm so sorry, did I elbow you in the
 ribs?

 POSHO NO 3
 (calls) Coo-ee! Mist!

 NATHANIEL
 (sotto) Oh God.

 POSHO NO 3
 The old rabble-rouser himself! Join
 us for a game, Mist!

The drunk revelers LAUGH and CHEER.

 NATHANIEL
 (sighs) Evening gentlemen. Can't
 stop--

 POSHO NO 3
 (to pals) Do you fellas read Mist's
 Weekly Post?

 MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
 (angry) Not any more. Mist seems to
 think the King's a blithering idiot,
 and Walpole worse than Blackbeard
 himself!

 NATHANIEL
 Equally dangerous, I'd say.

 MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
 (angry) Sounds very much like treason
 to me.

 NATHANIEL
 No no. Merely reporting the
 government's conduct.

 POSHO NO 3
 (to friend) Mist was in the stocks
 last year for libel. You should've
 seen it. It was hilaire.

 MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
 I chucked a rotted cabbage at his
 head.

NATHANIEL

Yes, you did. Others were kinder.

POSHO NO 3

Because we *love* you, Mist. You're so naughty!

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Less 'naughty' nowadays though. Eh? Lost your nerve, haven't you? Last few issues have been nothing more than a society rag.

NATHANIEL

Thought you said you didn't read it anymore?

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

(splutters) I, I don't! My wife told me!

POSHO NO 3

When are you going to stir the pot again? Poke the bear and make it roar? Roarrrr!

NATHANIEL

One mustn't poke the bear more than is prudent.

POSHO NO 3

Oh boo to that! Boo, I say! Boring! Boo to you, Nathaniel Mist!

More GUFFAWS, some BOOS.

NATHANIEL

Excuse me, gentlemen.

Their voices fade as Mist moves across the room, towards Moll.

NATHANIEL (cont'd)

(calls) Moll! Moll!

MOLL

Alexander Pope, put your penis away!

NATHANIEL

Moll!

MOLL

What do you want?? Oh, Nathaniel!

NATHANIEL
Lively crowd tonight.

MOLL
And every night. You drinking?

NATHANIEL
You know what? I'll have a glass of
rum. I'm feeling piratical.

MOLL
One piratical rum coming up.

NATHANIEL
Have you seen Captain Barnet? I'm
supposed to meet him here.

MOLL
Who?

NATHANIEL
Tall. Turnip-pated. Big, rakish scar.

MOLL
Oh, him. Over there. Tight-fisted
cove; he's been nursing that cup this
last hour.

NATHANIEL
Thank you, Moll.

MOLL
Enjoy!

Nathaniel WALKS over to Barnet.

NATHANIEL
(calls) Captain Barnet!

BARNET
(calls) Mist? About time!
(expectant) Sit, sit. Well? How did
it go? What did they say about me?

NATHANIEL
About you? Nothing. But you should
hear the story of Anne's first--

BARNET
(interrupts) Nothing? Really? Did
they not curse my name?

NATHANIEL

They did not, though there was plenty of cursing.

BARNET

Ugh, the mouths on those two...

NATHANIEL

Just Anne, actually. I didn't speak to Mary Read. She's unwell. Possibly dying.

BARNET

(glee) Really? What a pity!

NATHANIEL

Anne doesn't know. I didn't tell her.

BARNET

You should! She'll be devastated.

NATHANIEL

It's not that simple, Barnet. I promised to pass letters between them, to gain her trust. How am I to get Read to write back?

BARNET

Just make it up.

RUSTLE of paper.

NATHANIEL

What? No!
Look - this is the first letter--

BARNET

(interrupts) A letter from Bonny??
Give it here!

Barnet snatches the letter.

NATHANIEL

Barnet!

BARNET

Have you read it yet?

NATHANIEL

No!

BARNET

But you were going to.

NATHANIEL

No! Maybe.

BARNET

Now, let's see... (mutters) 'Dearest Read, I long for your...' blah blah blah.

NATHANIEL

Barnet, wait. Maybe we shouldn't...

BARNET

Hush. Bloody hell, the state of this. One... two... three quims! And two fundamentals! And that's just the first paragraph.

Oh! But this is good - (reads) 'PS. Nathaniel Mist will act as go-between. He has a pretty face, and might prove useful.' Oooh!

NATHANIEL

'Useful'? 'Pretty'?

BARNET

(satisfied) She likes you.

NATHANIEL

She really doesn't. (beat) What does she mean by useful?

BARNET

(sudden) Ahhh! Yesss! Oh excellent!

NATHANIEL

What is it?

BARNET

Confirmation! That's what! Listen to this!

(reads) 'As yet, our only route out of Newgate is 'R.T.' Rest assured I will contrive a plan to retrieve it.'

NATHANIEL

R.T.?

BARNET

Rackham's Treasure! What else?

NATHANIEL

As in... pirate booty?

BARNET

Perhaps, Mist, you could use your conversational skills to guide Miss Bonny into certain waters. Maybe she'll drop a few hints. Give a few coordinates. Sketch a map, even.

NATHANIEL

What? Why would she do that?

BARNET

Because she likes you!

NATHANIEL

You keep saying that. She doesn't.

BARNET

She will. Imagine how lonely she must be. How desperate.

NATHANIEL

I'm not some fortune-hunting rake, Barnet.

BARNET

Maybe you should be.

NATHANIEL

I beg your pardon?

BARNET

You're broke! Aren't you?

NATHANIEL

(shock) How did you..?

BARNET

Common knowledge, old bean. How many times has the government sued you for libel now? Thirteen?

NATHANIEL

(flustered) It's really none of your business...

BARNET

--And all those legal fees, ouch! Hard to run a newspaper with empty coffers. That's why you took this commission, isn't it? The great journalist reduced to writing a silly little pirate book.

NATHANIEL

No! And it needn't be silly at all...

BARNET

Relax, Mist. I'm not the enemy. That'd be the government. What they've done to you. Disgraceful. I'm on your side, man!

Beat. Nathaniel SIGHS.

NATHANIEL

Sorry. They watch every step I take, you know. Every word I write, they scrutinise for sedition. They thought fining me into penury, and the pillory, and throwing me into prison would shut me up. (beat.) And they were right. I haven't written anything of worth for months, now.

BARNET

There's no shame in it, Mist. You fought the good fight. But there comes a time we all have to lay down our sword.
So; what do you think?

NATHANIEL

About what?

BARNET

About hunting treasure!

NATHANIEL

I don't know...

BARNET

Just offer Bonny a shoulder to cry on. Be a friend! Or more.

NATHANIEL

'More'??

BARNET

Do whatever feels right. And then... ask her where the treasure is!

NATHANIEL

(sarcasm) What do we do then? Sail off to the Caribbean to claim it?

BARNET

Haha! You wouldn't last a minute in those waters.

NATHANIEL

(suspicious) So *you'd* claim it?

BARNET

No. I'd inform the Governor of the colonies. He'll return it to its rightful owners. If Bonny and Read didn't murder them when they stole it.

NATHANIEL

(baffled) You'd return it?

BARNET

That's what privateers do. Contrary to what some people think, including you I daresay, we're just trying to do the right thing. By protecting British interests. That's what the governor pays me for. (beat) Hmmm, there's not much in this for you though, is there?

Barnet CLICKS his fingers as he has an idea. Or pretends to have one.

BARNET (cont'd)

Ah! Here's an idea! If you find out where the treasure is, I shan't take my share of the profits from the book. You can have it all! What do you say?

NATHANIEL

Well! That would be splendid. But why would you do that?

BARNET

(kindly) You need it more. And for me, righting wrongs is more important.

NATHANIEL

I say. I think I've underestimated you, Jonathan.

BARNET

People often do. Handsome *and* principled? Surely not!

(MORE)

BARNET (cont'd)
You know what? This deserves a toast.

NATHANIEL
Your cup's empty.

BARNET
Still got a drop left. Cheers!
To righting wrongs! To adventure on
the high seas! To buried treasure!

Music SWELLS.

SCENE 4. INT. ANNE'S CELL, NEWGATE PRISON - AFTERNOON

The STILL QUIET of the inside of a cell, punctuated by
GRUNTS of pleasure and the SMACKING of lips.

ANNE
(full mouth) Ahhh! Is there anything
better than gingerbread? (drinks) And
good beer! Would you like some?

The GLUG of ale.

NATHANIEL
No thank you. I brought it for you.

ANNE
And Read? Did you give Read some?

NATHANIEL
(lying) Of course! Of course. She
enjoyed it very much.

ANNE
So you've seen her? Do you have a
letter for me?

NATHANIEL
Erm, well, the thing is... the thing
is...

ANNE
What is it?

Beat.

NATHANIEL
Nothing. Nothing. Here.

ANNE
(excited) Ahhh! Give it!

She opens the letter, PAPER rustling.

ANNE (cont'd)
It's... short.

NATHANIEL
Short? Is it? Short?

ANNE
Kinda formal, too. Not like Read...

NATHANIEL
Erm, well, errr, she was a little out of sorts...

ANNE
I know what it is.

NATHANIEL
(fear) You do?

ANNE
Read doesn't trust you yet. Probably thinks you'll publish our letters or something!

NATHANIEL
(unconvincing) Ah ha ha, I wouldn't do that.

ANNE
How did she look?

NATHANIEL
Oh, erm. It was rather dim, rather hard to see.

ANNE
She barely sings anymore. I heard she's unwell?

NATHANIEL
A little under the weather.

ANNE
(fear) Is she dying?

NATHANIEL
No! No. No, no, no, no, no. Course not.

ANNE

(relief) She ate the gingerbread,
didn't she? So she can't be too bad.

Nathaniel hastily changes subjects...

NATHANIEL

Yes. Tell me how you two met.

ANNE

(chuckles at the memory) Didn't Read
tell you?

NATHANIEL

Not yet, no.

ANNE

Ahhh. To be back there. That first
summer on The Revenge. And then...
Read.

The SCREECH of a distant seagull. The whisper of sea air...

Music. Anne's mood lifts.

ANNE (cont'd)

Two leagues out from Port Royal, we
spied an English ship, The Margaret
she was called, ripe for the picking.
And guess who was a passenger
onboard?

NATHANIEL

Mary Read! You captured her ship?

ANNE

(laughs) I said to Jack, 'tell this
scowling English prick to'--

NATHANIEL

(interrupts, loud) And what about the
cargo?

Such a boring question shakes Anne from her story.

The MUSIC STOPS ABRUPTLY.

ANNE

(confused) The cargo?

NATHANIEL

The spoils. Of The Margaret.

ANNE

We ate the food. We sold the rest.
Split the proceeds.

NATHANIEL

I hear some pirates bury their take?
Around Nassau, I imagine? Or further
afield, perhaps? Orrr..?

ANNE

Are you asking me where I hid me
treasure, Mist?

NATHANIEL

Haha! Ha! Noooo! Course not! I assume
you spent it! I mean, if you didn't,
you wouldn't still be in here...
would you? You'd pay your way out.
With... treasure.

ANNE

Unless I couldn't get to it.

NATHANIEL

Oh yes! Good point! Hadn't thought of
that. Is that the situation?

ANNE

It'd certainly make logical sense,
wouldn't it.

NATHANIEL

Well if you, if you need someone to
help with that--

ANNE

(interrupts) --Talking about money's
awfully vulgar, isn't it? I feel we
need to know each other better first.
Don't you think? Shall I tell you
about me and Read instead?

Nathaniel gives up.

NATHANIEL

Yes. Fine. I mean, please. (clears
throat) Go ahead. You and Read.

ANNE

(cheerful again) Grand.

Back into flashback... MUSIC!

ANNE (cont'd)

The Margaret surrendered immediately. When we boarded them, how they quivered to see Jack in all his finery. How they shook to see me in mine. They say a woman onboard brings terrible luck. But who, exactly, is it bad luck *for*?

FLASHBACK MUSIC SWELLS.

SCENE 5. EXT. DECK OF THE MARGARET - TWO YEARS AGO

The Revenge has captured The Margaret.

FEARFUL MURMURING and the odd HYSTERICAL SOB.

A PISTOL SHOT. The crowd SHRIEKS, then quiets down.

ANNE

Your attention, please! Welcome to the deck, Captain Jaaaack Rackham!

Rackham is in 'showman' mode, and though he sounds cheerful, friendly even, one could easily interpret the very worst from his words.

SONG -

JACK RACKHAM

Good | people of the | Mar|g'ret, may I be the
 First to welcome | you to the A|mericas
 Thank you for sur|rend'ring so | swiftly
 It really | does makes our | job so much | pleasanter
 While we transfer goods from your ship to ours, allow me to
 explain your situation...
 You are now | players on the | good ship Re|venge And I |
 trust that you will | find your parts a|greeable. You may |
 know me as | Captain Jack | Rackham. And I will | be your
 em|cee for the fore|seeable
 But | fear not - the | show will be | mercifully brief...
 [*sobs of fear, pause, rit*]
 Un|less you'd pre|fer to be | shipmates with | me?
 Would you like to be a pirate?
 Will you join our merry crew?
 If you sail with us, the show will last as long as we do For
 the pirate way is freedom
 To be free is quite the thing
 Such is the life of a pirate
 Till we dance for the pleasure of the king.

JACK RACKHAM (CONT)

But bear in mind, we only recruit
those with a certain... twinkle in
their eye.

JACK RACKHAM (CONT)

We will accommodate no bores or buffoons
No know-it-alls, no braggarts and no hypocrites Neither
machos nor mealy-mouthed suck-ups We will not take one
solitary lick of it.
But before you all rush to enlist...
There's | one little | something that | we always | do...
And eenie | meenie | miney mo... | You.

JACK RACKHAM (CONT) (cont'd)

Bonny, bring that one forward.

ANNE

Oi! Move it. Don't dally now.

Anne brings Read forward. Read GRUNTS as she puts up token
resistance.

ANNE (cont'd)

Stop struggling.

RACKHAM

Ahhh. Look at you. Such a glowering
countenance.

ANNE

Keep still!

RACKHAM

And the bearing of a soldier... am I
right?

READ

I was a soldier, aye.

RACKHAM

What's your name, boy?

READ

Mark Read.

RACKHAM

Well, Mark Read, we have a tradition
on the Revenge when we capture
another ship. Can you guess what it
is?

READ

Tea and cakes with the captives?

RACKHAM

This one thinks he's funny.

ANNE

You won't be laughing with my cutlass
in yer throat.

READ

You don't scare me, short-arse.

ANNE

You're one to talk, ya wee bastard!

BARNET

(laughing) He's a brave one, Captain!

RACKHAM

Reckless, anyway.

A THUD and a CRASH as a crate of China is dropped.

THOMAS

(distant) Sorry!

RACKHAM

(sighs) Oh Lord. Barnet, go help
transfer the cargo.

BARNET

Aye aye Captain!

NATHANIEL

(ghostly) Barnet? But he was... I
don't understand. How..?

PRESENT ANNE

Later.

NATHANIEL

(ghostly) I thought he was a
privateer... was he undercover?

PRESENT ANNE

Shhh, Mist, let me tell my story!

RACKHAM

(To Mary) Now then, Mark. Ship's tradition is to find out how the Captain of the captured vessel treats his people. So go ahead. What's your Captain Graham like?

The Captain of the other ship puts on a silly voice to disguise he's the one saying it -

CAPTAIN GRAHAM

Don't say a word! No-one likes a grass! Boo! Hiss!

ANNE

It ain't grassing. It's righting wrongs.

RACKHAM

(To Read) Was he a good Captain? Was he fair?

CAPTAIN GRAHAM

Best Captain I've ever met! Lovely man!

ANNE

Who is saying that??

READ

It's Captain Graham. He's disguising his voice.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM

No I'm not!

READ

Badly. In answer to your question --

(BACK INTO SONG)

The Margaret is dangerously crowded. There are bodies wherever you tread.
We sleep in our own filth and vomit
And more than a dozen are already dead.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM

No. Not true!

SAILOR

True! Sailor Freddie got flogged by the captain For an impudent look in his eye.
He weren't taking the piss!

FREDDIE

That's just 'ow me face is.

SAILOR

He got 21 lashes!

CAPTAIN GRAHAM

All lies!

READ

No it's not.
And the passengers' rations are measly
We're all living off scraps in the hold

SAILOR

It's the same for the crew!

SAILOR 2

We get no more than you!
While the Captain eats meat, we get maggots and mould

CHORUS

We asked for so little and got so much less.

(A flashback within a flashback!)-

DANIEL

(weak) I'll be fine, Read. I just
need to sleep.

READ

I asked for a little bone broth for my husb- ... for my
friend...
He was ailing with a fever
I was trying to get him help

READ (CONT)

Just a little air on deck or something hot to make him well
But the captain wouldn't hear it
All my begging left him cold
So he died hungry and thirsting
In a cramped and stinking hold

READ (CONT)

Captain Graham tossed his body
overboard.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM

That's how you bury the dead at sea,
you idiot.

READ

But not like that! Where is he!

SAILOR
He's over here!

CAPTAIN GRAHAM
No I'm not!

READ

First you packed us in for profit
Then you left us high and dry
Then you stripped the rings from off his fingers even as he
died
And you told me that was payment
For the funeral you'd provide
But there was to be no such funeral...
He was flung overboard, without ceremony, like the bones off
your plate.
... You didn't even let me say goodbye.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM
Oh please! That's just life at sea!
You and your friend weren't tough
enough!

(BACK TO DIALOGUE)

Read grabs him. He SQUEALS.

READ
His name was Daniel!

CAPTAIN GRAHAM
Get off me!

Rackham calls over.

RACKHAM
Mark Read, as you have hold of him,
would you bring Captain Graham to me?

Beat. Read accepts Rackham as her Captain as she says...

READ
Yes, *Captain* Rackham.

As Read DRAGS him forward--

CAPTAIN GRAHAM
Get your hands off me! You'll be
strung up for this!
None of you understand how to run a
ship! If you had my job...

READ
Shut your hole.

They reach Rackham.

RACKHAM
(calls) Will anyone speak up for him?
If he has shown kindness to any of
you, I will spare him.

SAILOR
(calls) He's 'orrible! He pays badly,
and never on time!

CAPTAIN GRAHAM
Oh, I see! You'll run me through for
slow wages?? From one Captain to
another, hear my side at least...

RACKHAM
Go on...

CAPTAIN GRAHAM
Well, I...

BOB THE CABIN BOY
(calls) He drowned my cat.

Beat.

ANNE
Uh ohhh! (laughs)

CAPTAIN GRAHAM
No-one cares about your bloody cat,
Bob.

RACKHAM
Step forward, boy. What happened?

BOB
She was mine, I called her Dinky
On account of bein' small
Caught a lot of mice and rats and saved a lot of grain an'
all

RACKHAM
An important job.

BOB
Yeah! But she'd sometimes be a nuisance. Gettin' awful
underfoot. She got in the way of the Captain... And he...
he... he...

(SOUND OF CAT GETTING BOOTED OVERBOARD. MEOWWWW... SPLASH!
BACK TO DIALOGUE)

CAPTAIN GRAHAM

Oh boo hoo! You think a pirate cares
about some mog??

RACKHAM

Do you know what they call me, young
Bob? They call me Calico Jack.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM

Oh shit.

BOB THE CABIN BOY

Dinky was a calico.

RACKHAM

Was she really! Well, now! The most
beautiful of all cats! The finest
coat! And you know what? I think
Dinky should be avenged. Don't you?

CAPTAIN GRAHAM

Oh no. Oh no.

BOB THE CABIN BOY

Yeah, I think so too.

RACKHAM

Come on, lads! Let him have it!

The Captain is picked up.

CAPTAIN

No! No! Put me down, we can talk
about this. It didn't happen how he
said. The cat slipped! I didn't...
waaAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

The Captain is THROWN overboard. A distant SPLASH. A CHEER.

SAILOR FRED

Good.

RACKHAM

A moment of silence, if you please.

Half a beat.

Right. That's done. (calls) Is the
cargo secure?

THOMAS
(calls back) Yes, Captain.

RACKHAM
(calls) Graham's second mate! Show yourself.

SAILOR
(fearful) I'm here.

RACKHAM
You're in charge now. We've left you enough provisions to get ashore.

SAILOR
Thank you, Captain.

RACKHAM
Good man.

DOBBIN
(calls) Revenge crew: over the planks!

The sound of FEET moving back over the boarding planks.
Sound of the PLANKS being hauled in.

RACKHAM
Thomas: what do we have?

THOMAS
Some casks of white lead and cudbear, a dozen articles of pewter, three... ah, two cases of English China.

ANNE
We should fence it in Nas--

READ
(interrupts) Captain Rackham?

ANNE
(aggressive) What do you want?

READ
I'm not talking to you. Captain, you said we could join the crew if we want? If we have... a twinkle in our eye?

ANNE

You are entirely lacking twinkle, mate! We don't need some dour, sour-faced old English son-of-a--

RACKHAM

(interrupts) Abe could use some help in the galley.

ANNE

(splutter) Can we afford another mouth to feed?

RACKHAM

I think we can.

BOB THE CABIN BOY

Can I join too?

ANNE

Jack! It's a democratic vote.

RACKHAM

It is! And I was just about to ask.
(to crew) Listen up, crew! A VOTE!

The hubbub dies down.

RACKHAM (cont'd)

Any objection to Mark and Bob joining the Revenge?

ANNE

Yes to Bob. No to the other one.

RACKHAM

Anyone else?

A CHORUS of 'yes, sounds good'.

RACKHAM (cont'd)

That's settled, then. Welcome to the crew, my darlings!
(bellows) ALL HANDS ON DECK.

Flurry of activity. The boatswain blows a WHISTLE.

CREAKING as ROPES are hauled, GRUNTS of effort.

(SONG)

RACKHAM (cont'd)

Set sail for New Providence.

PIRATES

Anyone can be a pirate
If elected by the crew
And we fairly share between us Every penny we accrue
Cos a pirate is rewarded
If a pirate pulls their weight Such is the life of a pirate
We are masters of our fate.

End of episode 2