

THE TREASURE GALLEONS

by

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Based on a true story.

FADE IN:

EXT. PANAMA - SEASHORE - DAY (1707)

Curly red locks bob in the breeze behind a big sand castle.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Beautiful redheaded DONA MARIA (40) runs toward a clearing.

DONA MARIA
Ferminito!?

She runs out onto a smooth rock where she slides to a tipsy stop near a cliff's edge. A pebble rolls toward the edge.

DONA MARIA
FERMIN!

INTERCUT - SEASHORE / CLIFF

Far below the cliff, redheaded YOUNG FERMIN (5) digs, using jagged oyster shells, a moat around his splendid sand castle.

YOUNG FERMIN
Mama! Come see what I made!

Maria strains to see over the cliff's ledge.

DONA MARIA
You're too young, *mi tesoro*, to go off on your own like this!

Fermin stands and steps back to admire his masterpiece as water flows into the moat's trench.

DONA MARIA (O.S.)
Fermin! Do you hear me?

Maria hazards to the very tip of the ledge.

Fermin looks up when the pebble drops near him.

DONA MARIA
You must come home at once before your father returns--

Her foot slips--

Dona Maria falls...and lands hard on the rocky shore below.

Horrified, Fermin runs to her side.

YOUNG FERMIN

Mamaita!

Maria is unresponsive.

It's clear... She's dead.

Fermin's remorseful eyes move to the shells in his hands.

EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL - SUNSET

A horse in full run receives its rider's whip to the rump.

EXT. SEASHORE - SUNSET

DON ANTONIO DE ECHEVERZ, cloaked in shadow, dismounts and emerges from the foliage, horsewhip in hand. His angry eyes take in the tragic scene before him.

Blood streams into the sand castle's moat.

DON ANTONIO

Fermin!

Still hovering over Maria, Fermin turns his tear-filled gaze to the ominous, threatening outline of Don Antonio.

YOUNG FERMIN

I can't wake her, Papa.

Don Antonio's boots crush through the sand masterpiece.

DON ANTONIO

What have you done?

The whip's lash dangles from his white-knuckled hand.

PRE-LAP: BOOM! A cannon blast.

EXT. THE SPANISH MAIN - CARIBBEAN SEA - DAY (1715)

Six Spanish warships bear down on a small Dutch vessel.

SUPER: "The Spanish Main - 8 years later"

A plume of smoke drifts off the huge flagship's bow, as if fired directly by the maiden figurehead, which resembles Dona Maria, hand to her brow, searching.

The flagship comes alongside the encircled little vessel.

EXT. DUTCH SHIP - DAY

From their surrounding ships, three handsome Spanish brothers (early 20s) and a dozen militiamen leap to the deck while their crews vie for the best views along rails and spars.

The dark-haired Spaniards face off against a vicious crew of 15 light-haired DUTCHMEN.

PEDRO, the dashing d'Artagnan-type brother, raises his sword high, as do his two brothers.

PEDRO

I claim this vessel on behalf of
His Catholic Majesty King *Felipe* of
Spain!

Dutchman LUDOLF (20s) rushes them, followed by the crew, all with swords drawn.

LUDOLF

Claim this, you filthy Spaniards!

It's on! A lively sword fight sprawls across the deck.

The 15 Dutchmen fight as if three times their number.

But Pedro displays a skill far superior.

PEDRO

I've heard the Dutch are a hearty
people.

His brother MANUEL, a fervent Aramis type, defends his corner with more heart than skill.

MANUEL

And brave.

TORO, the robust Porthos of the trio, sidesteps as...

Ludolf charges, misses... His sword drives into the rail, much to Toro's amusement.

Ludolf turns and lands his fist on Toro's unfazed chin.

TORO

Feisty too.

Toro moves on as Ludolf works to free his impaled sword.

MICO (V.O.)

When the Fair closes, can we help
Papa take the treasure to Spain?

EXT. PANAMA - PORTOBELO FORTRESS RUINS - DAY

Two dirty feet dance along mossy cannon parapets.

Below, FERMIN (now 12...going on 25), nobly dressed redhead, strolls alongside the wall, drawing in a sketchbook.

FERMIN

Don't be *absurdo*. Father has plenty of other sons to do his bidding.

Barefoot, dark-haired MICO (15, with all the sweetness and mental capacity of a 6-year-old) hops down before Fermin in an en garde stance using a tree branch for a sword.

Fermin steps around him, too lost in his drawing to look up.

Disappointed, Mico peeks at the sketchbook and grimaces at the drawing of an evil man with a whip.

MICO

What's that?

Fermin shuts the book with a reprimanding look.

Mico shrugs it off and jumps back up to the parapets.

Annoyed, Fermin absently rubs his chest. A nervous tic.

MICO

Why don't you like heights?

FERMIN

Why don't you go in the water?

MICO

El capitan de mar goes on the water, not in it.

FERMIN

A sea captain? I thought you wanted to be a soldier.

MICO

If you can be an artist and a scholar, then I'll be a sailor and a soldier.... Just like Pedro.

Mico wields his branch-sword as if in a great battle.

EXT. DUTCH SHIP - TOP DECKS - DAY

Pedro disarms man after man in the spirited sword fight, working his way toward the helm where...

Blond Dutch CAPTAIN XANDER POPA's steely blue eyes watch the battle with a building rage, which he unleashes on Pedro with his sword the moment they're face to face.

An intense duel between youth and experience ensues until...

Pedro stuns Xander with a circular disarming maneuver. Pedro raises his sword tip to the elder Dutchman's throat.

PEDRO
SURRENDER OR YOUR CAPTAIN'S LIFE!

Ludolf sees and throws his sword down. He shouts orders in Dutch until every Dutchman backs down. Their weapons drop.

DON ANTONIO (O.S.)
What is your name, *verspieder*?

XANDER POPA
Who calls me a spy?

Stoic patriarch Don Antonio - the cross of knighthood on his coat - steps past men who clear a path to the large warship's rail. He is Fermin's drawing personified.

XANDER POPA
I assure you, *capitan*, we are not--

PEDRO
"Your Excellency" to you, *Holandes*.

MANUEL
You're addressing Portobelo's *Royal Audiencia de Plata, Don Antonio de Echeverz y Subiza de Navarra*.

The string of incomprehensible words mystify Xander.

TORO
Most would bow--

LUDOLF
Portobelo? We must be a hundred leagues east of there.

TORO
Portobelo rules all of New Spain when the Great Fair comes to port.

Xander and Ludolf exchange a look of heightened intrigue.

Don Antonio reprimands Toro with a heated glare.

DON ANTONIO
Show me your papers, *Holandes*.

Xander reaches into his vest.

A trio of swords whip up to his face.

Xander slowly pulls out papers.

The swords withdraw.

Pedro takes the papers to Don Antonio, who scans them.

XANDER POPA
I was invited to trade my wines
with the governor of Cartagena.

DON ANTONIO
I see here only the signature of
Don Juan del Hoyo Solorzano, whose
authority is questionable at best.

Xander clams up as Toro takes him roughly by the arm.

TORO
Only a pirate or a spy would turn
to the likes of Solorzano.

DON ANTONIO
(to Pedro)
Put these men in chains belowdecks.
(to his own crew)
Senor Zaleme, take the men you need
and secure this vessel.

Loyal, unquestioning ZALEME does as told while Pedro ushers
the prize crew across a boarding plank to the warship.

Toro shoves Xander to Manuel's custody and goes to the rail.

TORO
Zaleme? Papa, both Pedro and Manuel
have already laid claim to the
other prizes. You promised--

DON ANTONIO
Senor Zaleme is your ship's master.
You will be *el capitan*--

TORO
Gracias, Papa!

DON ANTONIO
--until you do something foolish.

Toro considers, nods: fair enough. He beams a toothy smile and heads toward the Dutch ship's two aft cabins.

EXT. ECHEVERZ ESTATE - GATE - DAY

Long shadows stretch across the sleepy village in the b.g.

Fermin, his nose in a book, walks alone through the gate adorned by a simple family crest with two crossed swords.

Behind him, a dusty Mexican driver pulls up. Halts his cart.

FERMIN
(excited)
Have you news from *Mejico*?

EXT. ECHEVERZ ESTATE - PRIVATE ROAD - DAY

Fermin runs toward a magnificent Spanish villa.

INT. ECHEVERZ VILLA - SITTING ROOM - DAY

A redheaded Spanish girl plays harpsichord for her 5 dark-haired sisters who listen with varying interest.

In the corner, JOSEFA (20s) embroiders a man's neck cloth.

Fermin bursts into the room with the letter. The music halts.

FERMIN
It came. The master artist has
accepted me!

JOSEFA
Accepted...for what?

FERMIN
The apprenticeship in Mexico City.

Blank stares.

FERMIN
I'm going to be an artist!

Josefa and all the girls flock to him with accolades.

EXT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - HELM - DUSK

Manuel and Pedro set a heavy wine barrel down and pry the lid branded "Tuscany." Each laps up a palmful of its contents.

PEDRO
Ah! *La prima!* These wines will make
a fine trade at the Fair!

Don Antonio drinks a cupped handful and nods his approval.

MANUEL

You sure you want Toro in charge of
a vessel that carries nothing but
wine in its hold?

INT. DUTCH MERCHANT - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DUSK

Toro slurps from a cup as he paints the family crest onto the
open door's exterior. He backs up to assess. It's bad.

TORO

I should have Fermin do this--

PEDRO (O.S.)

TORO! Don't dawdle!

Startled, Toro trips backward into a large portrait frame
that creaks away from the wall. He peeks behind it...

EXT. DUTCH MERCHANT - DUSK

Toro sticks his head out from the cabin.

TORO

Pedro! Manuel! Bring Papa. I'm
about to become his favorite son!

INT. DUTCH MERCHANT - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Don Antonio, Pedro, Manuel and Toro face the painting: morose
King Philip V appears handsome and young, yet volatile.

PEDRO

The King of Spain...on a Dutchman?

MANUEL

Perhaps the captain is loyal to
Espana after all?

Toro smirks, taps the frame. Triggers it to open on hinges.

Behind the painting: a huge Caribbean map with red markings.

PEDRO

El Holandes doth protest too much.

TORO

They've tracked our movements.

PEDRO

Not just our movements. Look...
Carrera de Indias.

Pedro traces a line from South America to Panama to Cuba to Florida up toward Spain.

PEDRO

They know our treasure route!

Toro points to another line drawn from Mexico to Cuba.

TORO

General Ubilla's route as well.

MANUEL

And judging by their cargo, they're friendly with every rival nation.

Don Antonio focuses on a tiny island east of Miami, FL.

The initials "HJ" are written over the island.

Pedro sees where he's looking and becomes incensed.

PEDRO

They're planning an ambush with that pirate Henry Jennings!

DON ANTONIO

This, my sons, is why we trust no one who sails the Spanish Main without royal invitation.

They all stare at the map, which MORPHS into:

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - DAY

Don Antonio's flota sails west from Cartagena toward Panama.

JOSEFA (V.O.)

The annual flotillas transported New World treasure to the Old World by a secret route for 200 years--

MICO (V.O.)

To avoid pirates?

INT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - BELOWDECKS - DAY

All the Dutchmen are engaged in animal stalls full of hay.

JOSEFA (V.O.)

Yes, Mico, to avoid pirates.

EXT. ECHEVERZ ESTATE - SEASIDE VERANDA - DAY

Josefa teaches with a map on an easel. Her class is a dozen young native and African children...and Mico.

MICO

Why hasn't there been a Treasure
Fair in Portobelo since I was born?

I/E. UNDERWATER - DAY

Fermin swims shirtless along the colorful reef. Severe scars across his chest are distorted by the refractive light.

JOSEFA (V.O.)

The ships dare not sail during war.

Sensing something, Fermin rubs his scarred chest and glances up at a cannon, green with rust, that juts out above the surface. Nothing but calm, blue sky up there.

Fermin resumes his quest for sea treasures - starfish, sand dollars, broken coral. He places them in a bag.

He swims to a big conch shell perched on a rock. Just as he reaches for it, a huge shadow overtakes the reef.

JOSEFA (V.O.)

But now the guns of war are silent.

Everything in the water shakes with a muffled BOOM! The conch falls and disappears down into the stirred-up sand.

Fermin swims up to the...

SURFACE

...where Don Antonio's 7 ships sail past, into the harbor.

Another BOOM! As if fired by the flagship maiden figurehead.

EXT. PORTOBELO VILLAGE - DAY

Mico runs, shouts; spurring curious villagers to life.

MICO

Los galeones! They're here!

EXT. PORTOBELO BAY - DAY

A longboat filled with men is rowed toward shore where Mico and enthusiastic villagers wait to greet them.

EXT. CUSTOMS HOUSE - DAY

Fermin steps out in his noble garb, his hair still wet. He takes a deep breath and rehearses with confidence...

FERMIN

Hola, Father. While you've been terrorizing the Caribbean, I've been accepted to apprentice--

A horse-drawn cart speeds past, nearly hitting him.

Fermin steps back and catches his breath...

He looks out at the harbor full of ships. His courage wanes.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - DAY

Don Antonio, Manuel, Toro and Mico lead an impromptu parade of singing, dancing celebrants.

EXT. CUSTOMS HOUSE - DAY

Surrounded by the throng, Don Antonio heads for Fermin.

Fermin swallows hard. Timidly approaches his father. Awkward, yet hopeful, he extends his hand for a handshake.

FERMIN

Bienvenido, señor.

Don Antonio studies his hand a moment. Notices his wet hair.

DON ANTONIO

The water makes your hands soft.

Any hope Fermin had drains from his countenance.

DON ANTONIO

Even a silver master must work with his hands, *hijo mio*.

Fermin frowns as Don Antonio tousles his wet red hair, leaving Fermin's hand untouched, and his ego crushed.

MICO

(shows his rough hands)

Look, Papa. I climb trees.

Don Antonio nods his approval and leads Mico inside past several guards who bow to Don Antonio.

FERMIN

Silver master?

TORO
Better you than me, *companero*.

Toro musses Fermin's hair with a quick hug, then goes inside.
Manuel lags behind and hands a long, flat box to Fermin.

MANUEL
Art supplies from Cadiz.

Elated, Fermin accepts the gift with a hug and Manuel's obligatory tousle of his hair. Fermin looks around.

FERMIN
Where is Pedro?

MANUEL
Firstborn takes first watch.

EXT. PORTOBELO HARBOR - PEDRO'S WARSHIP - DAY

Pedro supervises a flurry of activity from the helm.

RIGGER (O.S.)
SAIL! SAIL!

Pedro looks out to sea. A Spanish frigate approaches.

PEDRO
Solorzano.

EXT. DUTCH MERCHANT - HOLD - DAY

Zaleme oversees the removal of dozens of barrels from various nations, each lifted by a pulley system.

Through the hole in a hoisted barrel, a wide eye peers out.

INT. DARK BARREL - DAY

The stowaway suffers a violent thump when the barrel lands. A crowbar pries open the lid-- Blinding daylight floods in.

Zaleme's silhouette blocks the sun. He looks down, surprised.

EXT. PEDRO'S WARSHIP - DAY

Pedro monitors the now closer frigate through a spyglass.

JULIA (O.S.)
Take your hands off me, *je beest!*

On the nearby Dutch ship Zaleme tries to control fiery young Dutch woman JULIA, who puts up a significant struggle.

ZALEME

We've a stowaway, Don Pedro!

Julia calms upon sighting handsome Pedro, but stays defiant.

JULIA

What have you done with my father?

Pedro shrugs, "Who?"

JULIA

Kapitein Alexander Popa. Owner and captain of this vessel.

PEDRO

And why is such a lovely senorita--

JULIA

I am ship's cooper, you pirate. My brother safely stowed me away from lecherous fiends like you.

PEDRO

Hear that, Zaleme? Pirates and fiends. We are arrant knaves all--

The ship's bell rings and Pedro looks out to where the sun sinks low behind Solorzano's approaching frigate.

PEDRO

Let the senorita see her *familia*, then place her under guard on Manuel's ship. I'm sure the nuns of *la Concepcion* will be happy to keep her company.

Pedro hurries off while a deckhand helps Zaleme subdue Julia.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - NIGHT

One big block party filled with dance, song and drink.

INT. PUBLIC HOUSE - NIGHT

Filled to capacity with sailors, officers and locals.

Don Antonio heads a long table. The entire family is present. Males at one end. Females at the other.

DON ANTONIO

By the time we sail for Havana every ship will be weighted to the boards with treasure and goods.

Next to Josefa near the middle of the table, Manuel - wearing the cravat she'd embroidered - puts his arm around Josefa.

MANUEL

As long as there's room for a very important passenger.

(kisses Josefa's cheek)

I'll forsake victuals and starve before I make another voyage without my senora.

As Toro scarfs down his food like an animal, Pedro watches Fermin pick at his half-eaten plate with a fork.

PEDRO

Ferminito, you know not what it is to be hungry when stores run empty.

JOSEFA

And let's pray he never does.

The brothers all toast on it.

MICO

To Fermin's hunger.

The brothers laugh.

DON ANTONIO

Our Fermin only hungers for knowledge, isn't that right?

Fermin shrugs, then takes a defiant bite of food.

TORO

And what of my quest for knowledge?

Dubious looks all around. He leans in, gossipy.

TORO

I've knowledge about the new queen.

MANUEL

I heard she's an ugly princess from Italy.

Josefa jabs him in the ribs.

TORO

The queen awaits a dowry of gems from the Orient. General Ubilla loads them in Veracruz as we speak.

(lowers voice)

(MORE)

TORO (CONT'D)

And...the queen will not consummate
until the jewels arrive in Madrid!

The others groan in disbelief and dismissal.

TORO

Tell them, Papa. Did the king not
tell you this himself?

DON ANTONIO

There may be some truth to it.

MANUEL

But they'll have been married for
months by the time we reach Madrid.

JOSEFA

Won't that...irritate the king?

TORO

It would certainly "irritate" me!

MICO

I hope Manuel's right.

MANUEL

About what?

MICO

If she's ugly, the king won't care
if he has to wait to consume her.

Toro and Pedro break out in uproarious laughter.

DON ANTONIO

¡Basta! That is not what makes this
voyage so important.

Don Antonio stands, commanding the whole table's attention.

DON ANTONIO

I'll need every one of my sons to
do his part.

MICO

All of us?

Don Antonio nods.

FERMIN

"Do our part"?

Don Antonio spreads his arms to all his boys.

DON ANTONIO

As soon as we close the Great Fair,
you shall all voyage to Spain with
me to present the king's treasure.

Fermin drops his fork.

The brothers all toast each other while Josefa and the
sisters fall into a frenzy of chatter amongst themselves.

FERMIN

All except for me, you mean.

Don Antonio raises his cup to Fermin and smiles as he sits.

DON ANTONIO

It's time you find your sea legs
with the rest of your brothers.

Fermin stands. Bangs his fist on the table.

FERMIN

But...you said if I completed my
language studies with high marks, I
could apply for an apprenticeship
anywhere I want. I'm for Mexico.

DON ANTONIO

A better course has been chosen.
Our king has called you to train
under the royal *Maestre de Plata*.

FERMIN

I don't want to be a silver master!

Don Antonio stands, drawing the eyes of surrounding patrons.

DON ANTONIO

The king wishes it!

FERMIN

What about my wishes?

An intense standoff ensues until... Don Antonio turns to the
others present, cup raised.

DON ANTONIO

Long live the king. And his new
queen!

EVERYONE

¡Viva el rey!

All toast each other.

Fermin's eyes fill with emotion... He runs out.

Manuel moves to go after him, catches Don Antonio's forbidding head shake and reluctantly stays put.

At the entrance Fermin slams into a cross of knighthood, just like Don Antonio's, emblazoned on the coat of...

Shady military COMMANDER SOLORZANO. A hard, calculating man.

Fermin looks up at Solorzano, intimidated, then runs off.

EXT. HARBOR - DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP (MOORED) - NIGHT

The maiden figurehead searches out toward sea.

INT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - BELOWDECKS - NIGHT

Zaleme waits, arms crossed, for Julia to hug Xander and Ludolf goodbye through the bars of the stall.

Julia ends the embrace. Solemn, she follows Zaleme to the stairs. She primps her mussed hair held up by a single pin. Over her shoulder, she gives Ludolf a conspiratorial smile.

Ludolf opens his palm to show Xander a matching hairpin.

EXT. PUBLIC HOUSE - NIGHT

Mico and the sisters exit and go to a waiting coach.

At the door, Josefa and Manuel kiss before he goes back in.

INT. PUBLIC HOUSE - NIGHT

Solorzano sits at the table with Don Antonio and his three elder sons. He places papers on the table.

SOLORZANO

Why have you detained an innocent merchant?

DON ANTONIO

If you mean the Dutch spy vessel, she is now legally mine. Condemned and paid for.

SOLORZANO

War's over, Antonio. Not every foreign ship is a spy--

PEDRO

Address my father properly, commander!

Don Antonio motions for Pedro to calm himself.

SOLORZANO

Forgive my familiarity, general. I thought as a fellow knight--

DON ANTONIO

Commander Solorzano, please state your business. I've a Fair to organize.

Solorzano pushes the papers toward Don Antonio.

SOLORZANO

The king's new list of attendees for the Fair. I thought you should know that Henry Jennings is among them. At the request of Jamaica's governor.

Pedro stands, angry.

Don Antonio's fierce gaze tells all his sons to leave.

As they exit, Don Antonio leans in, menacing...

DON ANTONIO

You sail into my harbor and dare speak the name of Henry Jennings in my son's presence?

EXT. PUBLIC HOUSE - NIGHT

Pedro storms out in a rage. Growls at the air.

Toro and Manuel emerge and go to try to calm him.

PEDRO

I knew that son of a--

MICO (O.S.)

Who is Henry Jennings?

The brothers turn to see Mico hiding by the door.

Pedro's countenance immediately softens.

PEDRO

Mico, you little snoop!

MANUEL

Jennings was an English privateer--

TORO
More like a pirate.

PEDRO
He sunk my first warship. He was in collusion with Solorzano, just like these cursed Dutchmen.

MICO
Where is Collusion?

All laugh. Pedro throws an arm around Mico.

PEDRO
Come. Papa can handle Solorzano. Tell us about your adventures.

Toro turns in the opposite direction.

TORO
This is where I leave you, *hermanos*. The night is young, as are the dancing senoritas in town!

PEDRO
Do not forget to relieve Zaleme at midnight, Toro.

MANUEL
And stay out of trouble.

Toro waves them off.

Pedro, Mico and Manuel walk arm in arm down the street past the Customs House where...

Fermin sits under a sconce with his sketchbook, unnoticed. His lonely eyes watch them all disappear into the night.

INT. PUBLIC HOUSE - NIGHT

Indignant, Solorzano stares at Don Antonio, then rises.

SOLORZANO
I'll do as you command, General Echeverz. But the treaty is clear. England must be represented at--

DON ANTONIO
If Jennings sails within one mile of this harbor, his salvo will be met by our twelve pounders.

Solorzano nods, then hesitates. With mock forgetfulness, he pulls a letter from his coat and hands it to Don Antonio.

SOLORZANO

From the king. Good news...I hope?

Don Antonio stares at the royal seal with some apprehension.

Solorzano grins, bows and goes to join his men who are entranced by a beautiful painted female African dancer.

EXT. CUSTOMS HOUSE - NIGHT

Pedro marches toward Fermin who's fast asleep on the bench.

PEDRO

Fermin, it's after midnight--

Pedro hears a shout. He goes around the corner--

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Toro holds his own against five of Solorzano's BRUTES.

When Toro sees Pedro he smiles to reveal a missing tooth and nods an invitation for Pedro to join in the fray.

Pedro pulls out his pistol-- A sucker punch from the side knocks the pistol from his hand.

More disoriented than hurt, Pedro retaliates with his fists as two more gang up on him until Toro frees himself to help.

The brutes overwhelm them with a pile-on until a pistol SHOT scatters the brutes off.

Toro looks around stunned, disappointed the fight is over.

Eyes closed and one finger in his ear, Fermin aims the smoking pistol skyward. He opens his eyes. Lowers the pistol.

Pedro draws his sword on the brutes.

PEDRO

We're done here, senores. Go back to your ship before we arrest you.

BRUTE LEADER

Senor, if anyone's arrested it should be him.

All but Pedro look to see Toro's "Who, me?" expression.

PEDRO

He'll be dealt with. Now go.

The brutes gather their pride and shuffle off.

Pedro sheathes his sword and pries the pistol from Fermin, whose shock is evident.

FERMIN

What happened?

Toro glances toward a smitten dancer in a doorway.

INT. ECHEVERZ VILLA - PARLOR - DAY

Toro, bruised and hungover, sits amidst the entire Echeverz clan who stand and sit throughout the room in audience.

Native servants watch and listen from doorways.

Fired up, Don Antonio paces before them all.

DON ANTONIO

The magnitude of our king's mission seems lost on some of you.

He looks at Fermin who sulks below the colorful family crest.

DON ANTONIO

I am responsible for the entire treasury of *Espana*.

Toro nods off.

DON ANTONIO

As commander of the *Tierra Firme*...

Don Antonio kicks Toro's boot, startling Toro awake with a grimace that reveals his missing tooth.

DON ANTONIO

...I expect every member of this *familia* to remember... this house represents the king.

(to the females)

Excuse, I must speak with *mis hijos* alone.

Obedient, Josefa and the sisters and servants all exit.

DON ANTONIO

One of you may not reach Madrid.

Fermin perks up, finally interested.

DON ANTONIO

(to Toro)

What have you to say in defense of your behavior last night...when you were supposed to be on watch?

TORO

(mumbles)

I was "irritated."

The brothers all snicker under their breath.

Don Antonio stops pacing, ready to explode.

DON ANTONIO

You *muchachos* find humor in too many things!

(to Toro)

It's clear you're not ready to command a ship.

Toro is ready to argue, then nods with humiliated resolve.

Fermin, incredulous, steps forward.

FERMIN

Why is it whenever one of your sons TRULY WANTS SOMETHING, you see it as your duty to TAKE IT AWAY?

Fermin storms out.

Don Antonio starts to go after him, then stops himself.

The brothers all exchange looks.

PEDRO

Papa, shouldn't you go and--

Don Antonio waves him off. He pulls the king's letter from his pocket, contemplates it. Comes to a conclusion.

DON ANTONIO

Toro, if you do well, and watch over Fermin on our voyage to Cuba...I may reconsider whether you complete the voyage to Spain.

Humbled, Toro nods.

EXT. PORTOBELO - DAY

Ships from all nations are moored near the fleet whose sails are stripped from the masts.

The village is now a city of tents made from sails.

A train of 200 pack mules led by native guides and militia make their way from the jungle into town.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Fermin takes in the view from where he sits atop a large, smooth rock with his sketchbook and supplies.

Carefully placed rocks, coral and shells are arranged as a shrine-like wall at the edge.

MANUEL (O.S.)

Those won't bring her back.

Fermin doesn't turn around when Manuel approaches.

Manuel looks over Fermin's shoulder to see a sketch of a beautiful windswept woman standing at the cliff's edge, heedlessly reaching out to a pelican as it flies by.

Fermin points across the bay to the busy fair in full swing.

FERMIN

Shouldn't you be helping Father?

MANUEL

You're more important.

Fermin snorts his skepticism.

MANUEL

You should talk with Papa.

FERMIN

I've talked about being an artist since I can remember.

MANUEL

Part of talking is listening.

Fermin fake-laughs as he gathers his things and stands.

FERMIN

Was he listening when you told him you wanted to be a priest?

MANUEL

If it weren't for pilot school I'd never have met Josefa. Now I'm a good pilot, and a good husband... I would have been a terrible priest.

Manuel pulls out a ruby heart set in silver on a neck chain.

MANUEL
Recognize this?

Tears form in Fermin's eyes.

MANUEL
Josefa says, "Give it to the nuns."
It could feed a family for a year.
But I'm too selfish. Mama gave it
to me. How can I part with it?

Fermin looks away, choked with emotion.

MANUEL
We have a duty to family, Fermin.
Silver from the mines of Potosi
runs through Echeverz veins.

FERMIN
The only treasures I care about are
what I find in the sea.

Fermin pushes past Manuel. His foot slips.

Manuel instinctively grabs Fermin. Their feet knock a shell
over the ledge. It shatters on the rocks far below.

They share a moment of poignant torment as Manuel leads
Fermin to more solid ground. He pokes Fermin in the heart.

MANUEL
Where your heart is, *hermano*, there
will your treasure be also.

Manuel keeps walking while that stops Fermin in his tracks.

FERMIN
Manuel...

Manuel turns.

FERMIN
You'd have made a good priest.

EXT. PORTOBELO CATHEDRAL - DAY

Don Antonio enters. Clutches a gold rosary.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

Alone in a pew, Don Antonio prays in agony over the rosary.
The king's letter sits by his side, its seal broken.

ELDERLY PRIEST (O.S.)
 What troubles you, my son?

Without looking up, Don Antonio shakes his head.

DON ANTONIO
 He asks too much of me.

An ELDERLY PRIEST approaches the end of the pew.

ELDERLY PRIEST
 Perhaps he is testing you.

DON ANTONIO
 (a tone of irony)
 That he is.

ELDERLY PRIEST
 Pray for his strength.

DON ANTONIO
 I'd rather have God's.

Confusion clouds the priest's face.

Don Antonio picks up the letter, kisses his rosary, and stands to exit the other end of the pew.

EXT. PORTOBELLO - GREAT FAIR - DAY

Guarded stacks of silver ingots line the cramped streets.

Pedro roams through the crowds. A keen eye out for trouble.

EXT. GREAT FAIR - GYPSY SECTION - DAY

Fermin mopes down an aisle where dark-skinned hawkers display exotic wares of a Middle Eastern flavor.

Two gnarled hands dangle a Persian rug to block Fermin's way. The rug is lowered to reveal a TOOTHLESS HAG. Her breath nearly bowls Fermin over.

TOOTHLESS HAG
 A gift fit for a king...

She gestures to the shiny junk behind her.

But all Fermin notices is an exotic teenage girl covered by colorful veils. Covered except her beautiful, painted eyes.

Fermin is mesmerized.

TOOTHLESS HAG
It from Constantinople... An
ancient bestiary.

Fermin tears his eyes from the girl to look at the hag.

FERMIN
It?

TOOTHLESS HAG
Surely senor know the holy pelican.

Fermin looks back at the girl who holds up a small trinket.

FERMIN
Pelican? That is no pelican.

Solid gold. The raptor-like bird's long neck curves to allow
its sharp beak to pierce its breast. It hangs by its spread
wings from a gold chain. Beautiful. Mystical.

TOOTHLESS HAG
In piety. The Pelican in Her Piety.

Something about the trinket beckons Fermin to reach for it...

TOOTHLESS HAG
She speak to you, no?

EXT. ECHEVERZ ESTATE - GATE - DAY

Fermin walks trance-like with the gold pelican in his hands.

TOOTHLESS HAG (V.O.)
The mother pelican, like the Christ
of your God...

INT. ECHEVERZ VILLA - STAIRWAY - DAY

Fermin stumbles upward, in a daze.

TOOTHLESS HAG (V.O.)
...She give blood from her own
breast and bring back life to her
dead babies.

He involuntarily scratches at his chest.

INT. FERMIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

An artist's studio. The canopied bed seems out of place.

Fermin rummages through a trunkful of sketchbooks until he
finds a particular book. Opens it. Flips through pages...

Childlike watercolors of a pelican feeding blood to her dead chicks. A lot of angry blood-red paint on every page.

Mystified, Fermin sits on the bed where the gold trinket lies. He compares it to his drawings.

A solemn Toro draws his attention as he steps in the room.

TORO

You know, the greatest artists
aren't in Mexico.

FERMIN

I know. They're in Europe. But the
master painter in Mexico chose me.

Toro picks up the trinket. Examines it with reverence.

Fermin sighs. Looks up. Sees the trinket in Toro's hand.

FERMIN

Some old woman insisted it's--

TORO

The Pelican in Her Piety.

Toro hands back the bird as if it's too sacred for him.

TORO

You're so much like Mama.

FERMIN

I barely remember her anymore.

TORO

(wistful, jealous)

She gave you her hair, her art. Her
stubbornness. The choice is made.
Now show the world - and Papa -
that you will become a master,
wherever you are.

FERMIN

How'd you become a fount of wisdom?

TORO

I suppose if you dig deep enough,
you're bound to strike water...

(whimsical)

Even in a desert.

(lowers voice)

Don't tell anyone, but I too wish I
didn't have to go to Spain. That
loco gloomy king scares me.

DON ANTONIO (O.S.)
 TORO! FERMIN! Help load the king's
 treasure!

FERMIN
 Even more than Father?

Toro crosses himself with an emphatic nod of his head.

SERIES OF SHOTS - PANAMA TO CUBA

-- Don Antonio's 7-ship fleet sails in a grand formation.

-- Don Antonio, on the lead ship, shouts orders. Looks around... Sees Fermin lean over the rail, seasick.

-- Toro tries to teach knots to Fermin, who, green from seasickness, keeps tying up his own hands.

-- Fermin turns over the hourglass, but is so weak he falls into it, sends it spinning, and falls into the ship's bell.

-- Toro finds Fermin face-down in a swinging hammock.

-- The fleet enters Havana's bay fortified by castles on both sides and a busy port within.

EXT. HAVANA PORT - DAY

Don Antonio's fleet is moored with four other large ships.

Sailors, officials and militia busily offload.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

Don Antonio and gaunt Fermin step from a skiff to find an entourage of officers waiting.

Egomaniacal GENERAL UBILLA steps forward.

GENERAL UBILLA
 General Echeverz?

They all bow slightly to each other.

DON ANTONIO
 At your service, General Ubilla.

Ubilla leads Don Antonio and Fermin toward town.

GENERAL UBILLA
 We've little time and much to do...

Don Antonio looks out at the four moored ships.

DON ANTONIO
Is this the whole of your flota?

EXT. HAVANA - HOUSE OF TRADE - DAY

Fermin follows the generals into a small official building.

GENERAL UBILLA
We lost two ships at Veracruz.
Another two in passage to Havana.

INT. HOUSE OF TRADE - INNER OFFICE - DAY

Ubilla, Don Antonio and Fermin stand before piles of red-ribbon-bound sheaves of documents.

FERMIN
How does a *capitan de mar* "lose"
four ships?

GENERAL UBILLA
(irate, to Don Antonio)
Who is this ill-mannered urchin?

Don Antonio places a firm hand on Fermin's tense shoulder.

DON ANTONIO
Fermin is my...clerk.

Hurt and angry, Fermin shakes off Don Antonio's hand and flips through some of the paper stacks.

DON ANTONIO
The boy asks a valid question,
general. How did you "lose" these
ships?

GENERAL UBILLA
The hurricanes came early. They
were sunk. But due to my superior
seamanship, all were not lost.

FERMIN
These are cargo manifests. You
can't possibly get all this onto
just four ships, with the queen's
jewels, passengers, supplies--

GENERAL UBILLA
No one is asking your opinion, boy.

DON ANTONIO
The fact remains, general, that
while you've been sinking your own
(MORE)

DON ANTONIO (CONT'D)
ships, I've been busy acquiring new
ones from our enemies.

That strikes a nerve with Ubilla.

FERMIN
Maybe General Ubilla should just
buy one of your ships... You could
use the money to hire more crewmen.

Both generals look at each other, impressed.

LATER

Fermin's red hair sticks up behind the stacks where he works.

DON ANTONIO (O.S.)
A thousand pesos? That's piracy!

Fermin rips away a red ribbon from a bundle of papers.

GENERAL UBILLA (O.S.)
Two thousand for the English prize?

After an unexpected silence, Fermin peeks over to see...

Ubilla and Don Antonio shake hands.

DON ANTONIO
Fermin, draw up a bill of sale.

Fermin sighs, disappears behind the stacks. Chides himself.

EXT. HAVANA BAY - DAY

Manuel and Pedro oversee activities from atop their
respective poop decks.

Toro swabs Don Antonio's main deck.

From Manuel's crow's nest above, Mico shouts, points...

Solorzano's frigate and a French warship sail toward them.

INT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - BELOWDECKS - NIGHT

Xander and Ludolf whisper in Dutch (subtitled).

LUDOLF
I am ready to get out of here.

Ludolf shows Xander the hairpin reshaped into a crude key. He
uses it to pick the lock on his ankle. It CLICKS open. Loud.

XANDER POPA

Shh! Not now! We'll have to wait
for the midnight guards.

LUDOLF

But...why?

XANDER POPA

The marquis is famous for his
weekly banquets...and distilled
drink.

EXT. MORRO CASTLE - NIGHT

A line of aristocratic coaches with wigged footmen deliver
their wealthy patrons to the mainland entrance.

INT. MORRO CASTLE - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

A grand party with wigged noblemen and women, plumed military
officers and other well-to-dos in attendance.

Pedro and Toro are partnered with two infatuated young
senoritas in a group dance alongside Manuel and Josefa.

Next to Don Antonio in the wings, Mico watches in awe.

Cuba's jovial, colorful governor, the elderly MARQUIS DE
TORRES, in a very tall and long wig, watches the dance from a
crowded table of sycophants.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

Ah, if only we were young again.

He leans to his wife next to him romantically until he's
startled by her aged ugliness.

Across the room, Fermin weaves through the pressing crowd.

The dance ends. The entire room shifts like a kaleidoscope as
dancers leave the floor and everyone moves to tables.

Fermin, swept up by the crowd, ends up near the marquis.
Disoriented, he bumps the marquis' ugly wife.

FERMIN

My apologies, senora.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

Have you lost your seat, young man?

FERMIN

I'm looking for my father, the
captain-general.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
 Captain-general of Cuba you have
 found, but I am not your father.

He looks quizzically to the pretty señoritas seated nearby.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
 Am I?

Those in hearing laugh. Except the wife.

The marquis beckons Fermin to lean close, which he does.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
 Perhaps you really are my son...

The marquis lifts his wig by the ear. Reveals a mix of gray
 and red hair. He gives Fermin's head a playful rub.

FERMIN
 My apologies, Your Excellency. I
 meant to find General Echeverz...of
 the *Tierra Firme* galleons.

The marquis looks around until he spots Don Antonio's family
 taking their seats at a long table.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
 But they all have such dark hair.

FERMIN
 Our mother had red hair, but only
 saw fit to pass it to me and one of
 my sisters.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
 I get mine from some distant
 relation of the past...

The marquis indicates red-haired Judas Iscariot in a huge
 knock-off of da Vinci's LAST SUPPER painting on the wall.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
 We do not like to speak of him!

Fermin chuckles at the Marquis' sense of humor.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
 Come sit with me. Tell me of your
 travels. I tire of these toadies.

He waves his wife to yield her seat.

Indignant, she stands and goes off in a snit.

FERMIN

I don't wish to impose--

MARQUIS DE TORRES

Nonsense. She needs her beauty sleep. And I need to hear the adventures of a young man.

Fermin slinks into the vacant seat.

FERMIN

I'm afraid I've had no adventures to speak of.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

The young never appreciate their youth...

INT. BANQUET HALL - DON ANTONIO'S TABLE - NIGHT

Everyone enjoys a hearty meal.

Don Antonio and his sons watch in amazement as Fermin laughs with the marquis like old friends.

PEDRO

There is hope perhaps that our Fermin will come around to the life of an officer after all.

Toro guzzles his wine.

MANUEL

He certainly has mastered the language of courtier prattle.

MICO

Fermin knows a lot of languages.

Toro spits out his wine with laughter.

INT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - BELOWDECKS - NIGHT

Xander, Ludolf and their crew creak the stall doors open.

Three drunk guards sit around a game of cards. Only one guard is awake. The other two snore where they sit.

The awake guard pivots his head at the sound of the escaping men just as Xander's fist comes down on his face. He's out.

Ludolf leads everyone toward the steps.

EXT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

From the hatch bay, Ludolf spots a cluster of alert guards in front of the captain's cabin, marked by the Echeverz crest.

LUDOLF

That's where the royal treasury is.

XANDER POPA

We'll need your sister to pull off
a ruse to get past them.

They both look at Manuel's ship nearby.

They duck as an ornate carriage rolls past on the street,
then sneak off toward the gangplank.

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

Xander is first to jump down from the gangplank. As he stands
up straight a sword tip greets his face.

Mico, sporting a fierce expression, trains his sword on
Xander who doesn't dare move.

PEDRO (O.S.)

Captain Popa. I don't believe
you've met our brother Miguel.

Xander and his men all look to see that Pedro, Toro and
Manuel stand with swords drawn behind Mico.

TORO

We call him Mico.

Mico's countenance softens. He lowers his sword, extends a
friendly hand to Xander...who is thoroughly confused.

MICO

¡Hola!

Pedro shouts to the guards near the cabins on board.

PEDRO

SEÑOR FRANCISCO! Come take charge
of your prisoners!

Don Antonio's chief pilot FRANCISCO and the others turn,
mortified to see the Dutchmen crowded along the gangplank.

The Spanish crewmen draw their swords and rush to the scene.

PEDRO

Before they can eat us out of another night's rations, take them to the marquis' jail. Let them at last be someone else's problem.

Francisco and his men usher the Dutchmen to the dock.

PEDRO

Your fate will be up to the viceroy whenever he sees fit to arrive.

XANDER POPA

What of my daughter?

Pedro spots the hairpin-key in Ludolf's belt as he passes. He grabs it before Ludolf can react.

PEDRO

I think the marquis can make room for another conspirator.

LUDOLF

You can't put her in jail!

Pedro indicates the parked carriage.

PEDRO

Worry not, senores. I shall see to it she arrives in grand fashion.

EXT. HAVANA JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

The carriage parks out front. Pedro steps out and turns to help Julia step down.

JULIA

Thank you for allowing me see them.

PEDRO

Familia must support each other.

She accepts Pedro's hand for assistance, then steps away, but he doesn't let go until she turns to face him.

He turns his hand over, palm up, expectant.

Her expression moves from bafflement to alarm as Pedro reaches to her face and...

Pulls the remaining hairpin from behind her head.

Her hair falls around her face and shoulders.

Pedro admires this new look a moment.

PEDRO
Muy bien. Though I'm not sure your
 brother will agree.

He places the pin inside a pocket. Pats it for safekeeping.

Julia huffs off toward a waiting guard at the entrance.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Xander and Ludolf stand when they see Julia approach their crowded cell full of Dutchmen.

LU DOLF & XANDER POPA
Yulia!

Pedro nods to a guard who lets them both out of the cell.

JULIA
 May I have a few moments?

PEDRO
 As long as you wish... *Hulia la Hooper.*

She scoffs at the name and follows Xander and Ludolf into another cell where they all fall into a family hug.

The guard locks the cell behind them.

When the embrace ends, Julia looks around for the guard and Pedro... Both gone. Anger flushes her face.

INT. HOUSE OF TRADE - INNER OFFICE - DAY

Mico sweeps up red ribbons. More ribbons litter the table still stacked high with more papers than before.

Manuel argues with Toro and Pedro about coordinates over a large map and charts spread across another table.

Don Antonio walks in and takes in the sight.

DON ANTONIO
 Where is Fermin?

His sons all look up and shrug.

INT. BANQUET HALL - DAY

In the mostly empty hall, Fermin paints finishing touches on his smaller copy of the Last Supper painting hanging above.

In Fermin's version everyone is redheaded except Judas.

The marquis enjoys a manicure by two pretty señoritas behind Fermin. He compares the two paintings with approval.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

You are quite the renaissance man!

Fermin steps back. Sizes up his work, unsure if he likes it.

Two officers follow Don Antonio into the great hall.

Don Antonio approaches the marquis, hat in hand, while Fermin pretends to be too wrapped up in his work to notice him.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

General! Come see your talented son's work. You must be very proud.

Don Antonio scans the two paintings. Unimpressed, he turns his back to Fermin to address the marquis.

DON ANTONIO

Please forgive my interruption,
Your Excellency. Might I have a
word with my...talented son?

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

Don Antonio paces, agitated, before a defiant Fermin.

DON ANTONIO

The *escrivano* at the House of Trade
tells me you have not shown your
face since the day we arrived. And
now I find you making a mockery of
our Savior, pestering the marquis--

FERMIN

It is not a mockery! And, unlike
you, the marquis enjoys my company.

Don Antonio stops and clenches his fist in frustration.

Fermin instinctively cowers.

This stops Don Antonio cold. His anger turns to puzzlement.

He reaches for Fermin, who angrily evades him.

DON ANTONIO

You cannot fathom that I might wish
your company? My own son? I see now
I have made a mistake.

Fermin's fear and anger turn to concern.

DON ANTONIO

Like Toro, you're not ready for this voyage. So now you can have all the time you want for your...scribbling.

Don Antonio puts his hat back on, ready to leave.

DON ANTONIO

You'll sail home after the flotilla has departed.

FERMIN

Home? To Panama?

Don Antonio walks away down the long, echoey hall.

After a moment of shock, Fermin runs after Don Antonio.

FERMIN

No! It's too late for Mexico. I must go to *Espana*! You said so yourself... The king "wishes" it.

DON ANTONIO

I'll make excuses for you.

FERMIN

But, Father, why can't--

Don Antonio stops and turns abruptly.

Again, Fermin cowers.

DON ANTONIO

(more hurt than angry)

That is why. You fear...but do not respect.

Don Antonio turns and walks away, leaving Fermin stupefied.

INT. BANQUET HALL - DAY

Fermin bursts into the room and runs to his easel.

The marquis watches Fermin take his tools, make hasty changes to the canvas, then step back to look at it.

Satisfied, Fermin drops his tools and looks at the marquis as if he wants to tell him what happened. He rubs his chest absently. Too emotional to speak, he runs from the room.

The marquis peeks at and mulls over the painting:

Judas Iscariot is now an evil Don Antonio.

INT. HOUSE OF TRADE - OFFICIALS' OFFICE - NIGHT

The marquis signs a document for a wigged official, then turns to Don Antonio and Ubilla.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

There you are, generals. You're cleared to sail next week. I'm only sorry that you'll have to put up with that wretched Frenchman--

Wigged, powdered, feathered and all-around French Frenchman CAPITAINE D'AIRE bursts in.

CAPITAINE D'AIRE

First my dog is stolen, now my departure is delayed...again!

Flustered, Solorzano follows d'Aire in.

SOLORZANO

Capitaine d'Aire, you must wait until I have expelled the pirates who lurk in the Bimini Islands--

CAPITAINE D'AIRE

Ah! And why do Dutchmen "lurk" near my ship? Honestly...Dutchmen!?

DON ANTONIO

Dutch? Has there been a jailbreak?

MARQUIS DE TORRES

My apologies, general. I was about to tell you... With all the desertions due to the delays, I've a solution to man your ships. But you may not like it very much...

INT. HAVANA - PUBLIC HOUSE - NIGHT

Zaleme and several officers enjoy a meal when...

Pedro rushes toward them, grabs a chair from another table, sits to face Zaleme. He slaps a document on the table.

PEDRO

A reprieve for the Dutchmen?

ZALEME

Only for the voyage.

PEDRO

In all of Havana there are no men
who can crew a fifty-ton rowboat?

ZALEME

All I've found on this island is a
salty old stray dog.

Pedro slumps in defeat. He has no better ideas.

PEDRO

I suppose it won't be the first
time a prize crew is forced to crew
their own vessel... You'll be
armed?

ZALEME

Of course, and we'll never allow
more than six on deck. The rest
will stay in the galley or their
hammocks.

PEDRO

(grins at the thought)
Even with good wind, make them row.
Keep them too weary to raise arms
against you.

ZALEME

(nods, smiles)
There is a bright side. No payroll.
And once we're in Spain, they'll
become the king's burden.

Pedro warms to that.

EXT. MORRO CASTLE - BALCONY - NIGHT

Wearing a masquerade mask, Fermin surveys a display of
fireworks over the bay. He's a bit tipsy post-gala.

The marquis, also in a mask, with a cigar and goblet in hand,
holds his cigar out to Fermin to take a puff.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

Life's only regrets are of things
never tried.

Fermin nearly turns green just looking at it.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
Worried *su padre* would not approve?

This motivates Fermin. He swipes the cigar. Takes a drag.

For a moment he's fine, then turns green and runs to the rail high above the stony shore. And heaves.

He sees a colorful ship bobbing in the water.

FERMIN
It feels like I'm back on the ship.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
Ah... The novice sailor's torment.

The marquis walks to the rail and snags his cigar from Fermin. Heedless of Fermin's anguish, he takes a puff.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
You know the secret to never be sick at sea?

Fermin stands just as the Marquis exhales smoke at him.

FERMIN
(chokes, waves at smoke)
Never smoke *la cohiba*?

MARQUIS DE TORRES
La cohiba comes from Mother Earth.
Only she can save you from--

Fermin turns and heaves some more over the rail.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
--Father Neptune's wrath.

Fermin looks out to the ship-filled harbor lit by fireworks.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
You must pay homage. Keep always your eyes upon Mother Earth.

FERMIN
But...if we're at sea, how can--

MARQUIS DE TORRES
Even at sea there's a horizon. Let her steady your eyes so that your legs know the balance of things.

Fermin looks beyond the harbor to town. He stands up straight. Takes a deep breath... Already looks healthier.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
And...you must take her with you.

FERMIN
The Earth?

MARQUIS DE TORRES
A pinch of dirt beneath the
nostrils soothes a dizzy head.
(toasts the air)
A few drops of gin and bitters
never hurts either.

Fermin's skeptical. His eyes move to the treasure fleet,
which hums with activity. He grows melancholy.

FERMIN
I was going to ask Senor Melendez
why all the maestros paint Judas
Iscariot with red hair.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
You mean Miguel Jacinto Melendez?
The royal artist?

Fermin nods, dejected. He removes his mask.

The marquis studies Fermin with empathy.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
When I was your age, I went on a
great adventure...

Fermin's drunken eyes glaze over as he watches the ships.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
They deemed me too young for the
army, so do you know what I did?

Fermin shrugs.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
I liberated a knife from my
brother...

The marquis detaches a sheathed knife from his belt.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
...and I joined the Spanish army.

Fermin nods, not fully listening.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

But I suppose I could have stayed
in Sevilla...as my father wished.

That gets Fermin's attention.

The marquis hands him the sheathed knife.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

This has protected me through three
governorships, four wars, five
hostile tribes in *la Florida* and a
hundred pirate attacks.

FERMIN

But...I just want to be an artist.

Fermin offers the knife back, but the marquis refuses it.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

I am old. But a young man must have
always a strong, sharp knife at his
belt... Even a young artist.

Fermin's eyes follow the marquis' masked gaze upon the ships.

EXT. BIMINI ISLANDS - BAY - DAY

Solorzano's frigate sails toward two small islands where
several mostly English warships are moored offshore.

EXT. JENNINGS' SHIP - MAIN DECK - DAY

Larger than life in voice, countenance and stature, Welshman
HENRY JENNINGS stands by as Solorzano climbs aboard.

HENRY JENNINGS

I was beginning to think you'd
never arrive, commander.

(not joking)

I was hoping it meant I could keep
your share.

SOLORZANO

Captain Jennings, with fourteen
million pesos in registered
treasure, I think the delays in
Cuba were well worth the wait.

Jennings grins while his pirates whoop and cheer.

SOLORZANO

But your rendezvous with the
Dutchmen has been found out.

All stop and Jennings goes nose to nose with Solorzano.

HENRY JENNINGS

Don't test my patience, commander.

SOLORZANO

They've changed their course. If you leave today, you'll find Puerto Rico Bay is ideal for an ambush.

EXT. MORRO CASTLE - BALCONY - DAY

On a table, Fermin's open sketchbook shows a realistic pelican vulning her breast of blood to feed her babies.

With the trinket hanging from his neck, Fermin watches through a spyglass the loading of treasure and passengers onto the heavy-laden ships.

A team of Africans struggle to keep a canopied sedan chair bearing a fussy, obese WEALTHY MAN from tipping as they carry him across the gangplank onto one of Ubilla's ships.

Fermin scopes the little Dutch ship. No passengers. No treasure. Just a few busy crewmen preparing to sail.

Fermin's thoughts spin until he arrives at a clear decision.

He removes a page from the sketchbook, scrawls a note, folds it, and addresses it in calligraphy: "Marquis de Casa-Torres"

He second-guesses himself briefly, then rushes off.

EXT. HAVANA BAY - DAY

A beautiful, calm, sunny day filled with street music. All of Havana cheers for the departing flotilla of 12 ships.

The castle fortress fires two booming guns in salutation.

Wealthy passengers wave from the rails of most the ships.

1) Ubilla's flagship fires two guns in return salute, and the procession is under weigh. Ubilla soaks in the accolades.

2) The small ship purchased from Don Antonio follows.

3-5) Three heavy-laden ships follow in tight formation, the last a classic galleon bearing the obese rich man.

6) Capitaine d'Aire's French frigate stands out in France's colors. At the helm, d'Aire is impatient with the fanfare.

7) Next, Don Antonio helms his warship. Larger and better armed than the rest, she commands the admiration of all. Toro works the lines with the crew.

8) On Manuel's ship Mico waves from high in the rigging. Josefa waves from the poop deck, which looms high above...

9) The little Dutch merchant, aka *la Holandesa*. Julia waves from the bow, pretending to be a luxury passenger. The crew work the main sail under Zaleme's watchful eye.

10-12) Two more ships behind them are followed at last by Pedro's 40-gun ship, a smaller version of Don Antonio's warship. Pedro steps to the poop deck for one last big wave to the people of Havana who cheer to a deafening pitch.

EXT. OCEAN - DUSK

The ships sail in consort on calm seas away from the sunset.

EXT. *LA HOLANDESA* - QUARTERDECK - DUSK

A lowly cabin boy in a shabby wool cap paints detail over the sloppy job Toro had done on the door's family crest.

The door is suddenly pulled open from inside by Zaleme who nearly runs into the boy on his way out.

ZALEME

What are you doing...

Zaleme double-takes.

ZALEME

Don Fermin?

The cabin boy shushes him, looks around, sporting a thick mustache of dirt. It IS Fermin.

He pushes Zaleme back inside and shuts the door.

INT. *LA HOLANDESA* - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DUSK

Angry, Zaleme paces before Fermin who wipes the dirt from below his nose, smearing his face.

ZALEME

We must flag down the capitana, drop anchor... Your father will be--

FERMIN

No! Please, senor. No one has to know. I promise, if you get me to Spain without my family knowing...

Fermin shows him the gold pelican necklace.

FERMIN

...I'll pay you the worth of this.

ZALEME

You think you can buy my loyalty?
Put that away before these
cutthroats see it!

Fermin stuffs the pelican back in his shirt.

FERMIN

I just... Please don't tell. I'll
do whatever you say. I'll work.
I'll earn my bunk.

ZALEME

Bunk? If you stay, Don Fermin, it's
a hammock belowdecks for you...
(stops pacing, considers)
These men are dangerous. Should
anything happen, I keep a *pistola*
under my bed. Do you know how to
fire a weapon?

Fermin nods, then shows Zaleme the marquis' knife.

ZALEME

Bueno... I'll introduce you as...

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - DUSK

Zaleme stands before Julia and some of the crew with Fermin.

ZALEME

...my apprentice, Fermin Gonzalez.

Zaleme's only two Spanish officers, seasoned MENDEZ and young BERNARDO, look on with confused recognition.

LUDOLF

Welcome aboard, *bisono* Gonzo.

Laughter from the Dutch crew.

Xander pulls Fermin's cap off to reveal his red locks.

FERMIN

Hey! Give that back.

XANDER POPA
(Dutch, subtitled)
Say your prayers, lads. We have a
Judas Hair aboard.

Several crewmen cross themselves, genuinely concerned.

Xander throws the cap back at Fermin with disgust.

A huge, matted Great Pyrenees dog rubs up against Fermin.

LUDOLF
We've named him Capitana. Even he
outranks you.

Fermin trembles as he puts his cap back on.

EXT. PUERTO RICO - SAN JUAN BAY - NIGHT

Torrential rain, wind and waves.

Jennings' fleet of pirates, moored far inland for protection,
takes a terrible beating from a severe tropical storm.

Hail stones smash through Jennings' cabin window.

Jennings sticks his head out and curses the violent sky.

EXT. FLORIDA STRAITS - NIGHT

Calm. Stars are painted across the clear sky. The crescent
moon shines over calm waters and the 12-ship flotilla.

Lit by huge lanterns astern, Don Antonio's flota lags behind.

EXT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - POOP DECK - NIGHT

A calm wind barely luffs the sails.

Under lamp light, Don Antonio sits with a pipe and writes.

Sensing something, he eyes a clear jar of oil hung from the
rail. A milky swirl of sediment has risen from the bottom
toward the top. It looks like an upside-down tornado.

The image distorts when pilot Francisco steps behind it.

DON ANTONIO
Shark's oil never lies, senior.
(looks to the horizon)
Let's obtain a full report from
Ubilla's pilot in the morning.

Francisco nods, solemn.

EXT. MANUEL'S SHIP - BOW - NIGHT

Seated with Josefa at his side, Manuel makes notes on his charts while studying the brilliant stars.

Josefa nuzzles Manuel's arm.

JOSEFA

I never imagined how romantic this could be. It's so peaceful.

MANUEL

Too peaceful...

Mico lies face-up on the deck nearby, humming.

MANUEL

I'm not so sure General Ubilla was right about the early season.

JOSEFA

I thought the delays saved us from the summer storms. No?

MICO

(sing-song)

"June too soon. July stand by.
August come they must. September
remember. October all over. In this
the mariner trusts."

Josefa smiles, but Manuel frowns and mumbles to himself...

MANUEL

July stand by...

EXT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - POOP DECK - NIGHT

Don Antonio lifts the shark oil against the starry backdrop.

DON ANTONIO

August come they must...

EXT. PEDRO'S SHIP - POOP DECK - NIGHT

Pedro puffs his pipe and eyes the vastness to the south.

PEDRO

In this the mariner trusts.

A brilliant lightning strike draws his eyes to the east.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

Six oars from the lower galley deck row *la Holandesa* past Manuel's ship, which has caught a nice wind.

As *la Holandesa* pulls into Don Antonio's warship's shadow, Fermin mops the deck, his back to Manuel.

With a trumpet (megaphone), Don Antonio shouts to Zaleme...

DON ANTONIO
FOR THE CHIEF PILOT!

One of Don Antonio's sailors pitches a tethered package that lands on the Dutch ship's deck at Fermin's feet.

Fermin does his best to grab the package, remove the tethered line and keep his back to Don Antonio.

DON ANTONIO
GODSPEED!

Zaleme salutes Don Antonio and continues ahead under row.

EXT. FRENCH FRIGATE - POOP DECK - DAY

Impatient Capitaine d'Aire watches the exchange.

With little effort from her rowers, *la Holandesa* easily sails up to and past d'Aire with an acknowledging salute.

Fed up, d'Aire shouts orders down to his men.

CAPITAINE D'AIRE
Harness the Spaniard's wind!

The French crew hurries to change the main sail, but just as they catch up the wind dies and the sails sag.

CAPITAINE D'AIRE
I HATE this New World! Even her
wind does not cooperate! Long live
France!

FRENCH CREW
Vive la France!

EXT. *LA HOLANDESA* - MAIN DECK - DAY

Fermin brings his bucket to the rail just as the rowers stop, bringing the ship to an abrupt halt in the dead wind.

The dog, ever by Fermin's side, gets underfoot as Fermin tries to catch his balance. He tumbles over the dog, bucket in hand, and the entire contents go flying, drenching...

Julia...just as she steps out from the forecastle quarters.

In shock, Julia just stands there for a moment before she goes into an incoherent rant in Dutch.

At the same time in the b.g., Zaleme shouts orders in English to those in the riggings to regain the wind, while Mendez screams in Spanish at the rowers belowdecks.

Bernardo whistles.

The French ship is now alongside. D'Aire sees the dog.

CAPITAINE D'AIRE

(French, subtitled)

That's my dog! You thief! First you take my wind. Now you take my dog!

The dog growls and barks incessantly back at d'Aire.

Fermin stands in a stupor watching the chaos unfold.

EXT. BAHAMA STRAITS - NIGHT

Another clear night. Calm waters. Quarter moon.

The entire fleet is divided into three sections:

Ubilla's five ships sail north near Miami.

D'Aire's frigate gains speed into open waters...to the east.

Don Antonio's six ships lag far south of Ubilla's.

INT. LA HOLANDESA - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Zaleme, Bernardo and Mendez enjoy tea with Julia, all seated before the life-size painting of King Philip V.

Fermin enters with a tray full of food. He kicks the door closed behind him to keep the dog from following him in. He stops cold upon sighting Julia.

Julia turns to Zaleme with an air befitting a grande dame.

JULIA

You dare allow this buffoon to serve me food after today? Am I to wear the gravy and the wine on my dress now?

Fermin steadies the tray and crosses to Zaleme's end of the table to avoid her, making Zaleme very uneasy.

Fermin manages to put the tray down with Mendez's assistance.

JULIA
 Alright, lad, begone now. We'll
 serve ourselves.

Fermin nods, bows, backs out.

A BOOM outside causes Julia to spill her tea on her skirt.

EXT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - HELM - NIGHT

Through a ring of smoke from one of his fired cannons, Don Antonio watches d'Aire's aft lantern head to the right.

DON ANTONIO
 Another warning shot... FIRE!

Toro lights a cannon... Another BOOM rings out.

DON ANTONIO
 That arrogant Frenchman...

Pilot Francisco emerges in his night clothes.

DON ANTONIO
 Record this in the log. Precise
 time, heading...every meticulous
 detail for the king to see this
 treachery.

Francisco rubs his eyes, yawns...turns it all into a sloppy salute with a nod. He fumbles his way to the captain's cabin.

Don Antonio takes out his spyglass and searches...

His lens finds the feather-capped captain on the poop deck, facing him as if he knows he is being spied.

D'Aire steps to the rail and thumbs his nose at Don Antonio before whipping back to bark orders to his men.

EXT. HAVANA - BULL-FIGHTING ARENA - DAY

Solorzano makes his way through the cheering crowd until he reaches the private box where the marquis sits with his wife.

Solorzano stands, blocking the wife's view of the bull fight.

MARQUIS DE TORRES
 Did Jennings suspect our deceit?

SOLORZANO

The armada is assured safe passage.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

Very good. Have a seat.

His wife shoots the marquis a death glare.

SOLORZANO

You're too kind, Excellency. But I've news of foreigners cruising the Tortugas. I must take leave.

Solorzano bows, retreats and leaves.

The marquis leans to his wife.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

It takes a pirate to stop a pirate. Am I not brilliant for appointing the commander, *mi amor*?

His wife grins and loops the marquis' offered arm.

EXT. PUERTO RICO - SAN JUAN BAY - DAY

In the light of the rising sun, the devastation of the dwindling storm is evident.

Jennings' ships are all battered, broken, beached or sunk.

Jennings, furious, steps out from the cabin on his flagship.

HENRY JENNINGS

I hope those bloody Spaniards are rotting at the bottom of the sea.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - DAY

Xander winces in pain and flexes his knuckles as his hands push on a spar.

Behind him, Fermin helps push the spokes of the capstan around in a circle with the crew, Ludolf behind him.

The dog walks in step alongside Fermin.

Ludolf and Xander speak cryptically in Dutch (subtitled).

LUDOLF

Shouldn't we have seen Captain Jen--

XANDER POPA
 Don't speak his name aloud, fool!
 (glances back at Fermin)
 We've already passed the islands.
 Something foul is in the air.

They both look out to the cloudy sunrise.

XANDER POPA
 He's not coming.

Ludolf turns his frustration on Fermin and trips him up.

Fermin goes down hard.

The dog stands over him protectively and growls at Ludolf.

LUDOLF
 (in English to Fermin)
 You know why Pyrenees are bred?

Fermin brushes himself off and gets up, ignoring Ludolf.

LUDOLF
 To protect the smallest, weakest,
 most pathetic creatures on Earth.

Fermin finds his place back on the wheel and pushes with tenacity, to little effect.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT

A beautiful lightning storm creeps across the southeastern horizon in backdrop to the majestic treasure ships sailing under a half moon.

EXT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - HELM - NIGHT

Huge waves rock the ship. The wind whines against the creaking hull.

Don Antonio looks out at the approaching massive storm. He calls over the din to Toro.

DON ANTONIO
 Hail the *patache*!

Toro runs through a series of flag signals on the poop deck.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - NIGHT

Zaleme sees Toro's signal and shouts to Mendez...

ZALEME

Sail forward!

In the rigging above, Ludolf moves carefully toward the boom of the main mast. He sees Fermin coiling a line below.

LUDOLF

Gonzo!

Fermin looks up.

Ludolf motions for Fermin to climb up.

Fermin shakes his head... No way.

Ludolf shakes a closed fist at Fermin... Do it or else.

Fermin reluctantly scales the ropes of the shroud.

Once he's quite high, they maneuver the lines to fill the appropriate sail and give speed to the ship.

Ludolf climbs down and motions for Fermin to follow.

Fermin, afraid to move, reaches for the crow's nest and climbs on. Clings to the mast, eyes tightly shut in fear.

Furious when he realizes Fermin is not with him on deck, Ludolf goes to Xander and points upward.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT

The eye of a massive hurricane looks down on the southern half of Florida. In its 150-mph winds, the infinite ocean tosses the 11 ships like miniscule flotsam.

One by one the lanterns on each stern are doused by waves until only Don Antonio's ship has a flicker.

With a loud crash, a crushing wave smashes the lantern glass while pushing the vessel toward shore.

EXT. MANUEL'S SHIP - HELM - NIGHT

Under a barrage of sideways rain and hail, Josefa kisses her rosary huddled with Mico near Manuel who struggles with his crew to keep the ship aright.

Nearly ramming into Manuel's hull, Zaleme tries to shout over the wind and rain from *la Holandesa*, but Manuel can't hear.

Zaleme gives a poignant salute to Manuel as he steers for the ships to the south.

Manuel watches the ship as it passes. He spots Fermin in the crow's nest. Shocked, he crosses himself.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - CROW'S NEST - NIGHT

In total despair, Fermin hugs the mast, helpless as he sees Manuel get swept off his feet by a taut line attached to a boom that smashes a longboat being prepped for launch.

The storm carries their ships apart as Manuel regains his footing and valiantly goes to the aid of those trapped.

EXT. DON ANTONIO'S FLAGSHIP - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

With shredded sails the vessel drifts at the wind's mercy.

Amidst the chaos, Don Antonio shouts to any who can hear...

DON ANTONIO
Dispatch the chests! We are too
heavy for the reef!

Toro rushes down the hatch to the

GUN DECK

past the tightly lashed cannons down to the

LOWER DECK

where chests and barrels serve as a double layer of ballast.

Toro recruits every man in sight to form an assembly line. With super-human strength, he heaves one square chest at a time up the line from man to man back to the

UPPER DECK

where the chests are dumped overboard. All the while

BELOWDECKS

the water rises until it reaches Toro's knees. He's steadfast until the hull turns to its side, at the mercy of the waves.

At nearly 90° several chests fall from their stacks, crashing open to reveal silver coins in most. Gold coins in others. A mix of gems in others.

A rush of sea water floods the deck in a violent torrent, sweeping Toro off his feet and into the murky depths.

The side of the ship, now at the bottom, rips open to reveal the reef

UNDERWATER

The loose treasures pour from the cracked hull to blanket the seabed below.

EXT. PEDRO'S SHIP - NIGHT

La Holandesa approaches. Pedro shouts through a trumpet to Zaleme, but a wind gust rips it from his hand, smashing him in the face. Undaunted, he shouts through cupped hands...

PEDRO

What is our course?

Zaleme uses his trumpet and points northeast.

ZALEME

San Augustin! Stay offshore!

Pedro nods his understanding.

CRACK! Pedro's main mast falls with all its riggings.

A rigger falls to his death against the rail. Others are crushed. Others tossed into the churning sea.

EXT. *LA HOLANDESA* - CROW'S NEST - NIGHT

Fermin hears the chaos. He looks down to see Pedro.

FERMIN

Pedro! Up here!

Fermin realizes he can't be heard.

He watches Pedro help passengers to the departing longboats.

Suddenly, Pedro's heavy ship lurches violently to a halt as it's snagged by a reef.

All aboard are tossed like dice across the decks. Many roll into the water; others get caught in ropes.

Fermin searches for Pedro. He can't find him anywhere as his own ship takes him farther away.

He sees a fire flare up on Pedro's main deck when--

KABOOM! Powder kegs near Pedro's gunports explode, sending fireballs into the stormy night sky.

FERMIN

PEDRO! PEDRO!

Fermin forces himself to climb the slippery ropes down toward the deck. But halfway down he freezes, shocked to see...

Bernardo and Mendez are bound by ropes to the mast, gagged, helpless as they watch...

Xander and his men corner Zaleme on the quarterdeck.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - QUARTERDECK - NIGHT

Xander brandishes a machete at Zaleme. Shouts over the storm.

XANDER POPA

We must beach the ship. We're not going to Saint Augustine to face your gallows.

Xander lunges at Zaleme who evades the blade.

ZALEME

You fool! The reef's dragon teeth will eat us alive!

When Xander cannot get the upper hand, Ludolf grabs Zaleme by surprise from behind.

Xander stabs Zaleme in the heart.

Zaleme falls to the deck, dead.

Xander turns to his men.

XANDER POPA

Where is that red-feathered albatross?

Remembering, he looks up, sneers when he spots Fermin.

Fermin shakes his head in disbelief of what he's witnessed.

Xander heads up the shroud.

Fermin tries to climb up but his pelican trinket gets tangled in the line, nearly choking him. He fumbles with it until its wing breaks off and its body drops to the waves below.

Xander's eyes go wild when he sees the chain's glimmer of gold. He grabs Fermin's leg, pulls him down and yanks the chain as Fermin slips down the ropes past him.

Ludolf and the others are there to catch Fermin.

In one smooth motion they heave Fermin over the side.

LUDOLF

Take a deep breath, Judas Hair.

Ludolf smacks his hands clean and spits where Fermin went in.

He turns to face the crew to find the dog rushing right at him. Ludolf sidesteps at the last moment.

The dog leaps high into the air and disappears over the rail.

LUDOLF

Good riddance to you both!

EXT. FLORIDA'S EAST COASTLINE - DAY

A drizzly, gray morning reveals the extent of devastation.

Hundreds of bodies litter the endless miles of Florida's razor-straight eastern coastline.

Every few miles, masts or hulls protrude offshore, ensnared in the reef's dragon-like teeth.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Face up, Fermin half-awakes under the hovering shadow of a large, fierce native.

Fermin's eyes lose focus, and he's out...

He tries again to gain consciousness. The native morphs into Dona Maria. She smiles at him. Reaches to touch his face.

"Mama?" he mutters, and is out again, until...

Shirt and shoes gone, Fermin fully awakes to the drenched, whining dog licking his face.

Aside from several long-healed scars across his chest, fresh cuts, bruises and gashes cover Fermin head to toe.

Disoriented, Fermin can barely sit up at first. Nothing but the sound of water - ocean waves and drizzle.

He stands. Looks around.

Bodies everywhere. No signs of life.

Fermin goes up the beach, but the dog barks and runs south.

Fermin turns and follows.

EXT. BEACH - SOUTHERN BERM - DAY

The dog stops and barks at a refuse heap tall as a palm tree.

Fermin catches up and notices bones - animal...and human - in the pile.

FERMIN

Cannibals.

Trembling, Fermin draws the marquis' knife from his belt.

The dog investigates, disappears behind the mountain of bones, then barks, frantic.

When he hears a faint moan, Fermin takes a tentative glance.

Tangled in charred ropes and seaweed is Pedro, mangled and barely recognizable from burns, breaks and contusions. His lower leg is shredded, the broken bone exposed.

FERMIN

Pedro!

Fermin rushes to his side.

Pedro is too out of it to acknowledge him.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Seagulls and vultures peck at the dead under the hot sun.

The sun roasts Fermin as he trudges north, ready to pass out from thirst and despair.

The dog drags a makeshift litter with delirious Pedro aboard.

Pedro's leg is ironically splinted by two human femurs.

Fermin falters, then collapses at the surf's edge. Even the lapping water can't revive him.

He hears vague voices and sees several feet run toward him before all goes black.

INT. LA HOLANDESA - OFFICER'S CABIN - DAY

Fermin slowly awakens as Julia forces him to drink water.

JULIA

Wake up. Senor Gonzalez...

Fermin sputters the water. He manages to sit up. Swoons. The room is pitched at a slight angle.

FERMIN
I feel seasick.

JULIA
Nonsense. You're just thirsty.

She lets him drink the water under his own power.

He scans his surroundings.

FERMIN
Is this *la Holandesa*? How did--

The door to the cabin swings open. Xander pokes his head in.

Fermin recoils when Xander's eyes find him.

XANDER POPA
Get out here.

JULIA
Papa, he's only just come to.

XANDER POPA
He looks able enough--

The dog's frenetic howl draws Fermin's attention.

Out on deck, behind Xander, Ludolf wrestles the dog whose protests turn into vicious snarls.

Beyond them all, the ocean serves as a backdrop.

Confused, Fermin stands on shaky feet and starts for the door. He stops short, fearful to get too close to Xander.

FERMIN
What are you doing to the dog?

XANDER POPA
We must corral the animals, unless
you want to starve.

Xander steps away from the open door to go help Ludolf.

Perplexed, Fermin steps to the door, awed by what he sees.

FERMIN
How is this possible?

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - DECK - DAY

Fermin steps out to fully take it in...

To his right, down the beach, about 30 Spanish survivors make camp. They are half naked, bedraggled men, women and children from all classes and stations.

Up the beach, the unscathed Dutchmen bury naked dead in mass graves along the berm. Clothes and belongings piled nearby.

The ship's aft staterooms rest on shore, butted up against the berm. The main deck faces the water like a stage, splintered off midships.

JULIA (O.S.)

The reef took the hull. We rode the deck ashore. It was a terrifying--

FERMIN

Miracle.

Julia steps out next to him and hands him a shirt.

JULIA

Ludolf pulled this off a dead lad.

Fermin studies her. She's completely intact, without a mark.

XANDER POPA

GONZO! Get this horse of a dog under control!

Xander tries to push the dog from the deck to the sand as Ludolf drags the dog by the rope.

Fermin stays put, scans the survivors.

FERMIN

Where's my brother?

JULIA

You have a brother?

Xander rushes Fermin and backhands him in the face, smashing Fermin into the door jamb.

XANDER POPA

Follow orders, or I'll tie you like a dog as well.

JULIA

Pappje!

XANDER POPA

Stay out of this! Go check if that Spaniard is dead yet. I want my cabin back.

Julia obediently retreats to the captain's cabin next door.

Xander grabs Fermin by the back of his neck and shoves him toward Ludolf and the dog.

The dog breaks from Ludolf and growls protectively in front of Fermin, who is stunned and bleeding from the mouth.

Ludolf, disgusted, shakes his head.

LUDOLF

Just the weak and the small, Gonzo.

Fermin, shaken, kneels next to the dog for mutual protection.

INT. LA HOLANDESA - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

Pedro lies unconscious on the bed under a thin blanket, his heavy, wet clothes discarded in a pile. His leg is wrapped in a new, less macabre wood splint.

Fermin sits in a bedside chair, the dog at his feet.

FERMIN

Pedro, I don't know what to do--

Muffled voices outside draw Fermin's attention.

He gets up, moves to the door. With his ear against the door, the voices grow clearer.

They speak in Dutch (subtitled).

LUDOLF (O.S.)

The scout said they found Lima's wreck to the south. Both of Ubilla's flagships to the north. General Ubilla is dead.

XANDER POPA (O.S.)

And Echeverz?

LUDOLF (O.S.)

His capitana sank a mile north.

Distraught, Fermin backs away from the door.

XANDER POPA (O.S.)

What of Zaleme's officers?

LUDOLF (O.S.)

Probably drowned.

The door swings open. The dog sits up, alert.

Ludolf looks in.

LUDOLF
(in English re: Pedro)
Still breathing?

Fermin nods, to Ludolf's disappointment.

LUDOLF
Let me know when he dies.

Ludolf moves to close the door--

FERMIN
What's become of General Echeverz?

LUDOLF
(shrugs)
Probably waiting in hell for this
one to join him.

The door slams back shut.

XANDER POPA (O.S.)
(Dutch, subtitled)
If he doesn't die by morning, I'll
take care of him and that becursed
cabin boy myself.

In a panic, Fermin searches the cabin, then remembers... He looks under the bed. Spots something.

He sprawls himself out and slips under, reaches far back. Pulls out a flat box. Opens it, elated at what he sees.

Fermin withdraws a flintlock pocket *pistola* from the chest. He finds a powder horn and ammunition pouch.

Fermin opens the *pistola*'s mechanism, but can't figure out how to load it. He fumbles with it, frantic.

FERMIN
Pedro, wake up! They're going to
kill us. Please...open your eyes.
How do you load this stupid thing?

XANDER POPA (O.S.)
It's a muzzle loader.

Fermin looks up.

Xander fills the doorway.

XANDER POPA
Want me to show you?

Fermin stands, points the pistola at Xander. His hand shakes.

FERMIN
I figured it out.

Xander sees the powdery mess on Fermin's hands.

XANDER POPA
Pull that trigger and you'll lose a
finger. Maybe your hand.

FERMIN
You'll lose much more if you try to
harm me or my brother.

Xander steps in.

XANDER POPA
Brother?

Fermin cocks the pistola.

XANDER POPA
You seem to forget I've given up my
cabin for Don--your brother.

FERMIN
You seem to forget these cabins are
no longer yours to give up.

Infuriated, Xander appears ready to charge.

LUDOLF (O.S.)
Pappje...

Ludolf steps in the doorway behind Xander.

LUDOLF
(Dutch, subtitled)
Let them have the ship. There's
nothing here.
(leans in)
The men are eager to find treasure.

Xander reconsiders. He opens the painting and tears the
hidden map away. Crumples it up and sneers as he leaves...

XANDER POPA
(in English)
This pile of splinters is all
yours, Judas Hair.

Ludolf follows Xander out. In Dutch (subtitled):

XANDER POPA (O.S.)
We go south... Where's Julia?

LUDOLF (O.S.)
Praying over the dead.

XANDER POPA (O.S.)
That girl is getting soft.

Trembling, Fermin lowers the pistola and looks in his other hand. The ball still in it.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA CAMP - DAY

Julia, frantic, runs through the camp.

JULIA
Pappje? Ludolf?

Those with strength to do so look up and shrug.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

Fermin and the dog sit by unconscious Pedro. Fermin dabs water over Pedro's burns.

The door opens and Julia rushes to the open painting. Emotions swirl as she stares at the remnants of the map.

JULIA
They'll come back for me.

FERMIN
Um...until they return, will you still help my brother?

JULIA
Don Pedro is your brother?

Julia examines Pedro's wounds. Concern clouds her face.

Fermin's eyes tear up as the gravity of it all hits him.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - DAY

Fermin, forlorn, looks out at the makeshift camp.

He hears a man bellowing orders and seeks out the source. The obese wealthy man, with a severe case of gout, sits by the berm under the canopy of his broken sedan chair.

A very young African boy fans him sideways with a palm frond.

WEALTHY MAN

Was I not clear, boy? Up and down!

The child cowers in fear as the man waves his cane at him.

A sturdy NOBLE WOMAN in torn clothing goes to the boy's aid.

NOBLE WOMAN

Who put you in charge?

Fermin watches her comfort the boy and lead him away.

Fermin steps back to grasp the situation. He looks back at the captain's cabin, then back to the bedraggled camp.

He musters his courage. Shouts to all through cupped hands.

FERMIN

This camp is under the authority of
Don Pedro de Echeverz...

A few look up. Most are too tired to bother.

FERMIN

...*el capitan* of *la Rosario*,
almiranta of the galleons.

The noble woman leads the child toward him.

NOBLE WOMAN

Where is this *capitan*?

FERMIN

He's...recovering from his wounds.
We must work together--

NOBLE WOMAN

Ha! Easy for you to say up there
with your high and mighty shelter
from this wretched heat and these
blood-sucking mosquitos. You don't
even have to suffer the sand fleas!

FERMIN

(considers a moment)

You're right. You should move out
of the sun to the officer's cabin.

NOBLE WOMAN

Now you mock us?

She turns to lead the boy away--

FERMIN

I'm serious! All the women and
children... You must have shelter.

She stops and turns back to Fermin. Tears in her eyes.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - DAY

Several men set up the captain's table with chairs and bulky
items already removed from the cabins.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

Julia wrings water from a cloth. She goes to sit by Pedro on
the only remaining chair in the otherwise empty cabin.

He's pale and unmoving.

Panicked, she lays her head on his chest to listen. Finally,
she sees his chest rise.

Relieved, she breaks into tears, crying on his chest.

I/E. OFFICER'S CABIN - DAY

The noble woman leads a parade of weary women and children
into the cramped quarters under Fermin's supervision.

WEALTHY MAN (O.S.)

And who'll bring me my water now?

Fermin looks out at the man, still sitting under his canopy.

FERMIN

(to himself)

If only there was water to bring.

An OLD MAN passing Fermin hears and nods.

OLD MAN

Water everywhere, yet a desert.

Fermin nods...then realizes...

FERMIN

How deep would we have to dig?

OLD MAN

If we had shovels, you could dig
casimbas as tall and wide as a man.

Fermin looks to the graves where palm fronds lie scattered.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA CAMP - BERM - DAY

Under beating sun rays, Fermin supervises a team of weary men who dig 6-ft holes using wide palm-frond stems as shovels.

A DIGGER stands to wipe his brow. Shakes his head. Looks up.

DIGGER

It's hopeless, *senor*. We--

The digger looks down inside the hole where he stands.

Fermin tries to see as the man bends to dig with his hands.

The digger stands and lifts his cupped hands to his lips. He drinks and makes an indiscernable face...

DIGGER

Sabe dulce el agua! Is good! *AGUA!!*

Those in hearing erupt in cheers.

Fermin hands a tin to the digger who goes down and comes up with it full.

Fermin takes a sip. Smiles. He runs across the sand to the...

WRECKAGE DECK

The old man sits in the shade of the table.

Fermin hands him the cup but the old man lacks the strength to take it, so Fermin puts the rim to his lips and he drinks.

OLD MAN

Your father would be proud.

The old man smiles, then slumps. Dead.

Fermin devolves into a bundle of emotions.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA CAMP - MASS GRAVES - DUSK

Fermin stands over a fresh mound. Crosses himself.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - DUSK

While survivors prepare for a long night, Fermin hesitantly follows the dog up to the roof of the cabins for a view.

In all directions...nothing but water, sand and endless jungle. The sound of crickets rises. Drowns out everything.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DUSK

Julia sleeps, her head still on Pedro's chest.

The crickets grow louder and she startles awake. Aware of the position she's in, she sits up.

She looks at Pedro, who is looking at her with intense eyes.

PEDRO

Am I in earth, heaven or hell?

Flustered, Julia backs away.

JULIA

More like Purgatory.

Pedro's eyes blink closed. He's out again.

Disarmed, Julia stares at him.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - QUARTERDECK - DAY

Curled up with the dog, Fermin awakes to a shout.

SURVIVOR (O.S.)

Rider!

Fermin stumbles to his feet and looks around.

A SCOUT on horseback trots up the beach, packed with supplies in several large sacks.

All the survivors stir. They rush to greet the scout as Julia steps out of the captain's cabin.

Fermin watches all the people point up at Fermin and make a path for the rider to get closer.

SCOUT

(puzzled)

You are in charge?

Fermin looks around and realizes...he is. He nods.

The scout dismounts and unties two burlap sacks, which some of the healthier men take up to the decks.

SCOUT

It's all Senor Lima can spare right now. Ration it wisely.

FERMIN

Gracias... Have you seen a group of Dutchmen?

The scout scowls as he hands Fermin a musket and ammunition.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

The half-empty supply sacks rest against a corner wall.

While Fermin applies a cool cloth to Pedro's fevered head, Julia paces and chews on a piece of jerky.

JULIA

That scout has it all wrong.

FERMIN

They were there just one day before twenty bags of silver, a box of weapons and a longboat disappeared. And now they're missing too.

JULIA

No... My father was trying to help recover victuals, that's all.

FERMIN

(mumbles to Pedro)
And I thought you were in a dream world.

JULIA

My brother and father are no saints, but they're not--

Fermin stands, enraged.

FERMIN

They're murderers, senorita. I saw them kill a man, then they threw me overboard to my certain death!

JULIA

(disbelieving)
Yet here you stand.

FERMIN

And so do you. Where they left you, without even an *adios* or an *adieu*.

That hits her like a shot to the gut.

EXT. SURF - DAY

Makeshift trident in hand, Fermin stands hip-deep in water ready to fish. Before diving in, he looks around. Nothing visible for miles in any direction--

The dog barks and draws his attention to a ruckus on shore.

Fermin runs back to the beach.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA CAMP - DAY

Fermin throws his shirt on and rushes to where survivors gather around the distressed wealthy man.

WEALTHY MAN

I saw them! Savages!! Right there!

He points to the thick treeline of the nearby berm.

Fermin sees a glint of something. He goes and picks up a shiny clam shell. He turns it over to reveal a crude native painting of a galleon.

NOBLE WOMAN

If those wicked Dutchmen don't kill us, the savage devils will.

Survivors cross themselves and kiss their rosaries. The men help Wealthy Man move his litter closer to the wreckage.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA CAMP - NIGHT

Fires burn and men hover close as mosquitos swarm the misty camp. Wealthy Man is especially miserable.

A man on the quarterdeck keeps watch, musket in hand.

INT. OFFICER'S CABIN - NIGHT

The women and children huddle in the darkness, terrified, murmuring prayers. A chair is wedged under the doorknob.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Julia holds a lamp above Pedro's leg. His foot is black.

Behind her Fermin paces, absently rubbing his chest.

He stops to check the door's lock. It's secure.

He unsheathes the marquis' knife. Holds it up as if whispering to the marquis himself...

FERMIN

I don't want to fight anyone.

Outside, the crickets suddenly go silent.

Fermin holds his breath, knife at the ready.

Julia trades the lamp for the pistola.

A commotion bursts through the silence outside.

The door shakes with a violent pounding.

DON ANTONIO (O.S.)

Pedro! Are you there?

The doorknob rattles. More pounding.

DON ANTONIO (O.S.)

Open this door at once!

FERMIN

(astonished)

Father?

The rattling stops. Silence.

DON ANTONIO (O.S.)

Fermin? Is that you?

More pounding. More urgent. He speaks to someone outside...

DON ANTONIO (O.S.)

Help me break this door down.

FERMIN

No! Wait...

Fermin unlocks the door and swings it open.

Unkempt hair. No shoes. His cross-emblazened coat torn and tattered... Don Antonio stands in the misty doorway backlit by campfires, appearing more like a ghost than a man.

He falters a moment at the sight of Fermin, then grabs him, squeezing him in a tight embrace.

DON ANTONIO

How is it you're here? They told me
Pedro was--

He pulls away when he spots Pedro in the bed. He pushes past Fermin to Pedro's side.

DON ANTONIO

Pedro! My son.

(over his shoulder)

MEDICO! VEN AQUI, RAPIDO!

(accusatory)

Why is he in this condition?

Fermin opens his mouth to explain--

A PHYSICIAN with a sizeable bag pushes past Fermin and goes to work examining Pedro.

Don Antonio stands, hovers, waits.

The physician looks up at him, solemn. He whispers out of Fermin's hearing to Don Antonio whose face drops.

DON ANTONIO

But...he's a military man. There must be another way--

PHYSICIAN

There is no time to waste. He may die even if we do this... He will certainly die if we don't.

Don Antonio agonizes for a moment. He finally nods to the physician who wastes no time setting up...

Horrified, Fermin watches the physician pull what appear to be sharp torture devices from his bag. Including a saw.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

The survivors loiter in clusters, mumbling their concern.

Julia sits on the rail with Fermin.

A SCREAM of agony from within the officer's cabin rings out.

Julia grabs Fermin's arm to comfort him.

Another scream from the cabin makes them both flinch.

Haggard, Don Antonio steps out. He looks at Fermin.

DON ANTONIO

The physician can only stay until daybreak. Go in. Be ready to help.

Fermin nods and heads for the cabin. Hesitates at the door.

FERMIN

Father, I'm sorry. I--

DON ANTONIO
Toro was... The waves took him.

FERMIN
Toro's...? He can't be--

DON ANTONIO
You could have died too. Do you
have any idea how thoughtless you--

Don Antonio takes a deep breath to calm himself.

DON ANTONIO
We'll speak in the morning.

Fermin nods and slinks into the cabin.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

Julia holds a tin to Pedro's lips. He's barely conscious.
She looks down to his bandaged leg, amputated below the knee.
From outside, Fermin's angry voice rings out.

FERMIN (O.S.)
What does it matter? I'm here now.
Pedro would be dead if I weren't!

DON ANTONIO (O.S.)
What if your ship had gone missing
like Manuel's? I'd have never known
your fate!

FERMIN (O.S.)
But you do know!

Their voices grow distant.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Fermin storms away from the wreck, followed by Don Antonio.

FERMIN
I can't please you whether I'm dead
or alive...

Some survivors look on while others pretend not to.

FERMIN
From now on, as far as you're
concerned, I am dead.

Fermin walks off. Whistles for the dog who bounds toward him.

DON ANTONIO

And now you run away. As always! No sense of duty or purpose... You forget this is not about you. It's about the king's treasure!

Don Antonio turns, goes back up to the deck to the cabin...

FERMIN

You speak of duty and treasure even now? With two sons missing, one dead, another dying--

Don Antonio slams the door from inside the cabin.

FERMIN

Your precious treasure is on the ocean floor... I HOPE IT STAYS THERE THROUGH ALL ETERNITY!

Fermin turns away. Hears a rustle in the foliage nearby. He looks... Sees something? Not sure.

An eerie sound - a dove cooing? It sounds almost human.

The dog whines as if scared.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA CAMP - NIGHT

Two musicians play a mellow tune. Survivors sing along around a bonfire.

Julia sits on a hammock. Alone. Melancholy.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - SAME

Pedro sleeps with the alert, protective dog next to him.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - SAME

A man guards with the musket from above.

Fermin steps out on deck. He spots Don Antonio's coat on the rail. He retrieves it and looks out into the darkness--

The king's letter falls from the inside pocket.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Don Antonio, in his torn shirt, stands facing the water. He turns down the flame in the lamp he carries. Surveys the black waters as the somber music sounds in the distance.

DON ANTONIO
 Where are you, Manuel? My angel
 Mico? Toro, my *gamberro*.

He looks skyward through tearful eyes.

DON ANTONIO
 My sweet Maria, watch over our
 boys...

He turns and walks the shoreline. Not another soul in sight.

His lamp is a tiny dot against the huge ocean.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Fermin sits next to Pedro. Turns up the lamp light.

He hesitates a moment, then goes for it... He opens the
 letter. Reads...

KING PHILIP V (V.O.)
 (thick French accent)
 Don Antonio, my faithful warrior,
 on this, the eve of my wedding, I
 place in your hands not only my
 future happiness, but the future of
 Spain--

Fermin looks up at the king's ominous portrait.

He scans the letter and resumes in the middle of the page.

KING PHILIP V (V.O.)
 ...Your quick return to Madrid will
 earn you great accolade and praise
 from my lips, and great reward from
 my coffers...

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Don Antonio sits on the sand facing the water.

KING PHILIP V (V.O.)
 But should you fail in your
 mission, the penalty will be swift
 and severe...

A light on the water draws Don Antonio's attention. It's a
 small rowboat with a makeshift sail carrying several men.

Don Antonio stands, picks up the lantern. Signals the rowers.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Fermin's face fills with dread as he reads on...

KING PHILIP V (V.O.)
No punishment is beyond my reach or
my inclination should my treasure
fail to arrive before winter.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The boat emerges from the darkness. Bernardo is at the helm.

Don Antonio lifts the lantern to his own face to ID himself.

The boat's five able-bodied men hop out to pull it ashore.

The look on Bernardo's face is grim as he approaches. Without a word, he hands a bulky message to Don Antonio.

Don Antonio warily accepts and unfolds the message with shaking hands. From it, something drops into his palm.

It is Manuel's ruby necklace.

KING PHILIP V (V.O.)
And for such a failure, death is
the penalty of my choosing.

Don Antonio skims the page with increasing angst until...

Devastated, he drops the lantern and falls to his knees.

DON ANTONIO
NOOO!!!

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Fermin drops the letter and can only mouth "No!"

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - DAY

Despondent, Don Antonio slumps in a chair at the captain's table. He stares at the ruby heart in his hand.

Bernardo stands, waiting.

BERNARDO
Sir? Should I--

Don Antonio waves him off with a "go away" gesture.

Bernardo steps away and up to the

QUARTERDECK

where Fermin looks northeast through a spyglass.

BERNARDO

Don Fermin, I'm afraid your
father... He is not himself.

FERMIN

She can't be too far from shore.
I'll need about ten men.

BERNARDO

All due respect, Don Fermin--

Fermin lowers the spyglass and gives him a stern look,
reminiscent of Don Antonio.

FERMIN

Respect my words. Not my title. I
need men. Do you swim?

EXT. NORTHERN BEACH - DAY

Bernardo, his men and a few men from camp drag the rowboat
filled with ropes and other gear, trying to keep up with
Fermin who walks with determination, the dog at his side.

BERNARDO

I owe my life to Senor Mendez. I
was only good for holding onto the
flotsam he found for us.

Fermin stops and removes his shirt, his back to the men.

FERMIN

If you can't swim, run the lines.
All who can swim, follow me.

He steps toward the water and looks back.

No one has moved.

Heedless of his scars, Fermin turns and goes to them, irked.

FERMIN

I know I'm not my father. And I'm
young. But we must recover the
king's treasure! You must--

BERNARDO

Don Fermin. None of us can swim.

Emotion fills Fermin's eyes with the memory of Mico.

MICO (V.O.)
*El capitan de mar goes on the
 water, not in it.*

EXT. SURF - ROWBOAT - DAY

About 300 yards offshore, Bernardo and a couple other men secure the end of a rope to the oarlock.

Fermin, tied to the rope's other end in the water, dives.

I/E. UNDERWATER - DAY

Fermin swims down into the murky water to the bottom. He searches the bottom. No sign of wreckage when--

The rope around him jolts him upward...fast.

EXT. SURFACE - DAY

Fermin pops out of the water about to ask why when he sees a shark fin headed for him.

Bernardo and the others pull him into the boat fast. Bernardo points to a circle of fins a few yards away.

BERNARDO
 So many fresh carcasses to feed on.
 We should wait another day. Or two.

They start to row back when--

FERMIN
 Wait. Have we any hooks?

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

Pedro sits propped up. His heavy eyes watch Julia as she pours water into a tin cup.

She sits next to him and hands him the tin, but he seems too weak. So she puts the cup's rim to his mouth.

Pedro takes a long drink with his eyes glued on her.

From his perspective, light from the cabin windows forms an angelic halo around her.

Julia takes the cup from him and stands to put it away--

Pedro grabs her hand so that she faces him.

PEDRO
Gracias, Hulia la Hooper.

JULIA

It's Yulia. Besides, my brother is the hooper. I'm a cooper.

She turns away, but his grip tightens.

PEDRO

That which we call a rose...

Impressed, Julia puts the cup down and sits.

PEDRO & JULIA

...by any other name would smell as sweet.

He lifts her hand to his lips with a soft kiss.

PEDRO

My mother left me with a love for Shakespeare.

Agitated, Julia pulls her hand away.

JULIA

My mother simply...left me.

She stands and turns her back. Busies herself. Tidies up.

JULIA

Pappje could never find a cooper who did things his way. I wanted to prove I could. And I did.

Julia turns to Pedro to see that he's fallen asleep sitting up. She sighs and goes to move him to a reclined position.

The door opens. Don Antonio, a broken man, steps inside.

DON ANTONIO

Get out.

Julia turns to Don Antonio, offended. But when she sees how distraught he is, she immediately backs off. Runs out.

Don Antonio goes to Pedro. Breaks down in despair over him.

Fermin arrives at the door, a small shark fin in his hand.

FERMIN

Father! We haven't found the ship yet, but caught some food--

He drops the fin when he sees his father sobbing over Pedro.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - BEACH - DAWN

Fermin sits on the sand, head down in defeat.

A ray of sunlight beams over the horizon.

Fermin looks up. More rays spread across the glassy water...

He stands. He sees something...or does he? Fermin runs up the shore, eyes fixed.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - QUARTERDECK - SAME

Bernardo, on lookout with the dog tied nearby, watches Fermin run off, concerned.

EXT. NORTHERN BEACH - DAY

His eyes still fixed on a spot offshore, Fermin pulls his shirt off, grabs a coil of rope, puts it over his shoulder and ties a small powder keg's ring to the rope's end.

He runs for the water and dives in. Swims a straight line through the waveless water, towing the keg behind.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Fermin swims until he almost reaches a floating pelican.

He watches it fly off, then dives where it had been.

The keg drifts to the spot. Ripples gradually dissipate. The surface smooths over until...

Finally, the keg bobs. Bobs some more--

Fermin breaks the surface with his fist followed by his whole body and a huge gasp. He shouts, triumphant, to the ocean:

FERMIN
I FOUND HER!

I/E. UNDERWATER - DAY

The rope from the barrel stretches down 20 feet to where it's tied to the figurehead's searching hand.

The figurehead lies on her right side, still attached to the hulking warship whose hull is torn open over the reef.

Broken chests of spilled treasure litter the sea floor.

EXT. SHORELINE - DAY

Fermin swims toward shore where a blurry image of movement forms. He stops swimming for a better look.

Three natives rummage through the gear on the beach.

Suddenly, the sound of barking. The dog charges them.

One panicked native takes out his bow and shoots an arrow.

The dog squeals and howls in pain.

Fermin swims as fast as he can as the natives run off.

EXT. NORTHERN BEACH (FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE) - DAY

Fermin runs from the surf to the dog who lies in a heap, whining. An arrow protrudes through the dog's hind leg.

Bernardo catches up, out of breath.

BERNARDO

You're both too fast for me.

Relieved the dog's alive, Fermin breaks the arrow, removes it and wraps his discarded shirt around the wound.

He beams up at Bernardo. Points out to the keg buoy.

FERMIN

I found Father's ship!

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - DAY

Survivors crowd around the injured dog, coddling and ministering. Capitana enjoys the attention.

Fermin, animated with excitement, relays all to Don Antonio.

FERMIN

I marked it with a *boyar*. There's treasure everywhere!

Don Antonio eyes the distracted survivors.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

Don Antonio closes the door behind Fermin.

DON ANTONIO

Never speak of treasure in the open like that...

His reprimand turns to pride.

DON ANTONIO
You've done well, Fermin.

The compliment emboldens Fermin.

FERMIN
It won't be easy. It's over four fathoms down, but I have an idea how we can use the capstan to--

DON ANTONIO
"We" won't do anything, *hijo mio*.

Still pumped on adrenaline, Fermin doesn't understand.

DON ANTONIO
You've done more than I could ask, but those Indians could have killed you. And when word of your find reaches greedy ears, it will be too unsafe for you here.

FERMIN
But the Dutchmen are probably already out of *la Florida* by now.

DON ANTONIO
It's not just the Dutch. The treasure we carry can drive good men to villainy.

Fermin's shoulders sag in disappointment.

DON ANTONIO
Word came this morning from the admiral in the northern camp. He's ordered all women, children, elderly and infirmed to be transported to *San Agustin*.

FERMIN
I'm not a child. I can help--

DON ANTONIO
You're more needed elsewhere. Pedro will need you in *San Agustin*. Once we're well defended, perhaps you can return. But until then--

Crushed, Fermin's hand goes impulsively to his scarred chest.

FERMIN

Why are you forever sending me
away?

Don Antonio grabs Fermin's wrist, pulls his hand away from
his chest.

DON ANTONIO

I almost lost you once. I'll not
lose you again.

Don Antonio tries to pull Fermin in for a hug, but Fermin
wrests from his grasp and shuffles out, leaving Don Antonio
alone with the harsh painting of the king staring at him.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Fermin hugs his goodbye to the dog who's tied to the
wreckage. He then mopes his way to the waiting boat.

Pedro, somewhat alert, sits in the hull, propped up next to
Julia, their backs to the bow.

Fermin takes his place facing them, surprised to see Pedro
reach for Julia's hand when she touches his shoulder.

Behind them, from the bow, Bernardo eyes her with suspicion.

Some of the surviving men remaining behind shove the boat off
to help the rowers gain momentum across the breakers.

Don Antonio watches, stoic as ever while the dog whimpers.

SERIES OF SHOTS - ROWBOAT'S VIEW OF STORM'S AFTERMATH

-- A scout on horseback waves as he races down the beach.

-- Hundreds of survivors wave from their makeshift villages
of flimsy shelters.

-- Men stand in the surf fishing.

-- Exhausted men dive offshore where masts protrude.

-- Elderly and injured people wait on shore to board a storm-
battered longboat.

-- Women and children, flanked by men for protection, trek on
foot up the soft sand beach.

-- An endless row of graves in the sand shows the human toll.

EXT. ROWBOAT - DAY

Hot and weary, Fermin fans himself with the dried shark fin, then fans Pedro, who lies with fever in the hull.

Sensing something, Julia turns to find Bernardo's angry, accusing eyes upon her. He leans in for only her to hear.

BERNARDO

Your father will be brought to justice. And I'll see to it you hang with him when I prove that you've aided him. Woman or no.

Her gaze moves out to sea. Anger and fear welling.

EXT. ST. AUGUSTINE - SAN MARCOS FORTRESS - DAY

To the cadence of beating drums that echo throughout the region, weary survivors migrate from the shore through a drawbridge entrance to an inner courtyard.

Curious townspeople of every race, age and status watch from all around and some above along the ramparts and parapets.

Over the drawbridge, GOVERNOR CORCOLES proclaims to all:

GOVERNOR CORCOLES

Good people of Spain and beyond,
we, the people of *San Agustin*,
mourn with you your losses...

His voice reverberates in the entrance tunnel below him where nuns and clergy rush in and out of side barracks.

INT. FORTRESS - BARRACKS - DAY

Pedro lies in a bunk under a high window at the end of a row.

Fermin and Julia sit out of the way of busy nuns tending the wounded while they listen to the governor.

GOVERNOR CORCOLES (O.S.)

As governor, I've ordered the royal treasurer to open the warehouse containing maize and corn meal to help survivors both here and at the wreck sites along the *Barra de Ayz*.

A nun briefly checks on Pedro with a shake of her head.

GOVERNOR CORCOLES (O.S.)

The good people of *San Agustin* have all surrendered any seaworthy

(MORE)

GOVERNOR CORCOLES (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 vessels to ensure both safe passage
 along the intercoastal as well as
 to prevent any temptations for
 pillaging the wrecks, which I
 assure will be prosecuted with
 extreme haste and severity.

Overcome, Julia runs out of the room.

SURVIVOR IN CROWD (O.S.)
 What of Indians, governor? Aren't
 they hostile?

GOVERNOR CORCOLES (O.S.)
 We live peacefully here among the
 Yamassee and Guale, but there is
 concern over the Ayz to the south.
 They are...volatile.

A murmur arises throughout the fortress.

INT. *LA HOLANDESA* CAMP - OFFICER'S CABIN - NIGHT

Wealthy Man snores on the bunk. Others sleep on the floor.

EXT. *LA HOLANDESA* - DECKS - NIGHT

One man stands guard on the quarterdeck with the sole musket.

The dog whines at the closed door of the captain's cabin.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Wide awake in the darkness, Don Antonio ignores the whines
 until he hears paw scratching.

DON ANTONIO
 Go away before I turn you into
 dinner.

The whining and scratching grow more incessant.

Annoyed, Don Antonio stands and whips the door open.

DON ANTONIO
 Even if you did save my sons...

The dog looks up with big puppy eyes.

EXT. *LA HOLANDESA* - MAIN DECK - CONTINUOUS

Don Antonio steps out past the dog and looks around the
 serene, eerie camp.

A noise draws his attention to the woods. Another noise in another direction.

His hand goes to the pistola at his belt... Silence.

He looks up at the guard who shrugs that he sees nothing.

Don Antonio pulls the dog inside, then closes the door.

INT. FORTRESS - BARRACKS - NIGHT

Under a beam of moonlight from the high window, Julia sits alone with Pedro, holding his hand.

His eyes tightly shut, he endures a wave of pain.

Julia lets him squeeze her hand until the pain subsides.

JULIA
I'm here, Don Pedro.

His eyes flutter open. He smiles. Reaches for her face.

PEDRO
Gracias. Before death comes to grin
on me, there's something I must...

He pulls her in and surprises her with a kiss on the lips.

JULIA
I won't let you die. I promise.

He props himself on his elbow and kisses her again. Longer. More deeply. She returns the kiss this time.

PEDRO
A ministering angel my lady be.

They smile at each other.

Fermin stands in the aisle between bunks. He saw everything.

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Fermin kneels on the empty bed across from Pedro, etching a detail of Pedro's warship into the soft shell-stone wall where Pedro can have a good view of it.

Pedro winces as he awakens with pain.

PEDRO
Julia?

Fermin rushes to Pedro's side.

FERMIN

She went to get our food ration.

Pedro pushes himself up to sit, stronger, but still in pain.

PEDRO

The greatest evil is physical pain.
 (re: wall etching)
 What are you drawing?

FERMIN

You don't recognize *la Rosario*?

PEDRO

It's good. Your knowledge of
 riggings could be improved.
 (another surge of pain)
 What else? What's in there?

He points to Fermin's new sketchbook on the opposite bed.

Fermin retrieves the book and sits by Pedro, distracted.

FERMIN

Do you plan to marry her?

PEDRO

My only plans are for today. Maybe
 tomorrow...if it comes.

Fermin looks at him, horrified by his cavalier attitude.

Pedro swipes the book from him and flips through it.

PEDRO

I see you are thinking of tomorrow.
 You hope to impress the king with
 these, no? Maybe he'll introduce
 you to the artist who painted his
 portrait on *la Holandesa*?

Pedro slows through the last few pages: pelican drawings. He
 stops on the last page. Stares at it. Grows emotional.

It's the Pelican in Her Piety.

PEDRO

Fermin, before I die...

Fermin tries to object--

PEDRO

I must say this. Manuel always
 wanted to, but he waited too long.

A covered body is carted off by two clergymen in the b.g.

PEDRO
Papa needs you.

FERMIN
No. He sent me here to be with you.

PEDRO
Yes. But he needs you...here.

Pedro points to Fermin's heart, which sends Fermin into a spiral of emotions, as if he's seen a ghost.

FERMIN
Manuel speaks through you.

PEDRO
I pray he does...

EXT. FORTRESS - COURTYARD - STAIRCASE - SAME

Julia carries a plate of cornmeal down stone steps outside the barracks window when Pedro's voice stops her cold.

PEDRO (O.S.)
You imagine Papa hates you, no?

INT. BARRACKS - SAME

Fermin rubs his chest as he scowls at Pedro.

FERMIN
Imagine? Are these scars not real?

PEDRO
No more real than the scars left by your words.

EXT. STAIRCASE - SAME

Julia, emotional, leans back against the wall, listening.

PEDRO (O.S.)
Since the day Mama was taken from us, the two of you have been more like enemies than *familia*.

The words speak to Julia.

INT. BARRACKS - SAME

Pedro watches Fermin's eyes well with tears.

FERMIN

I know, but... Why do I never feel
that I belong? Why can't the rest
of you just...forgive me? Then
maybe I could forgive Father.

PEDRO

Forgive...him?

As Fermin rubs his chest, a revelation washes over Pedro.

EXT. STAIRCASE - SAME

Julia holds her breath.

PEDRO (O.S.)

You need Papa, and I assure you, he
needs you. Especially now.

Julia, emotional, drops the cornmeal and runs down the steps.

INT. BARRACKS - SAME

Fermin's tears flow, breaking Pedro's heart.

FERMIN

But...he hates me. Ever since...

PEDRO

Since Mama fell from the rock?

FERMIN

She was looking for me. It was my
fault. And when Papa found her, he
knew it. He became *furioso*.

Fermin opens his shirt to the scars on his chest.

FERMIN

He whipped me.
(lowers his head, sobs)
And I deserved it.

Pedro grips Fermin's arm. Makes him look at him.

PEDRO

No, Ferminito. Papa never beat you.

FERMIN

(confused...angry)
He did. I remember it...

QUICK FLASHBACK - EXT. SEASHORE - DAY

Dona Maria's body lies broken in the surf below the cliff.
 Young Fermin runs to her. He kneels and tries to wake her.
 The water around her turns red with her blood.

PEDRO (V.O.)
 You did that yourself.

Fermin takes the sharp oyster shells and cuts his own chest.

PEDRO (V.O.)
 You always loved the pelican story.
 You made her tell it over and over.

Fermin tries to feed his dead mother his blood.

FORWARD TO:

Don Antonio appears, horrified at the sight of Fermin covered in blood.

DON ANTONIO
 What have you done?

BACK TO SCENE

Fermin crumples into a sobbing heap by the bed.

FERMIN
 She wouldn't come back to life.

Pedro rubs Fermin's head.

FERMIN
 How did I remember it so wrong?

PEDRO
 It wasn't your fault. You were too young...

Fermin pulls away to look up at him.

FERMIN
 Why did he let me blame him? I thought... I thought he hated me.

Fermin sits up.

FERMIN
 I have to go to him... But you--

PEDRO

Julia's here. Go to Papa, it'll
give me strength. You must go.

Conflicted, Fermin finally nods.

EXT. FORTRESS - COURTYARD - STAIRCASE - DAY

Fermin runs up the stairs, not noticing the dropped plate.

He sees Bernardo at a food line and runs to him.

FERMIN

Senor Bernardo! You must take me
back to my father!

SILVER MASTER (PRE-LAP)

Senor Bernardo is otherwise
engaged, young man.

EXT. ST. AUGUSTINE - TOWN CENTER - DAY

Fermin - now in a fresh oversized shirt, clean trousers and
tricorn hat - waits with Bernardo while...

A wigged SILVER MASTER closes up a shop and walks the
cobblestone streets with his gilded cane.

SILVER MASTER

The governor commissioned me to
take account at the wrecks, and
Senor Bernardo is to lead us--

BERNARDO

Could the boy not come as far as
Admiral Salmon's camp, senor?

SILVER MASTER

And give up room in my canoe?--

FERMIN

It's my father's greatest desire
that I become a silver master like
you. And he wants me to apprentice
with only the best...

Fermin stops and sticks his hand out.

FERMIN

Fermin de Echeverz y Gonzalez, at
your service.

SILVER MASTER

(stops)

Did you say Echeverz?

Fermin smiles.

EXT. INTERCOASTAL RIVER - DAY

A plumed party of 8 dignitaries ride in two canoes near the left shoreline of the expansive waterway, each with a NATIVE HELMSMAN and two native paddlers, all in Spanish clothing.

Bernardo and another officer serve as military escorts.

Fermin rides in the silver master's canoe with Bernardo.

SILVER MASTER

Why do you think you'd make a good silver master?

FERMIN

Um...I never really thought about it. I'm good with numbers...and I have very neat handwriting.

SILVER MASTER

That's a start. Did you do any accounting for your father in Portobelo?

Fermin thinks a moment and realizes...

FERMIN

I never really did...anything for my father in Portobelo.

He turns a regretful gaze off toward the surrounding jungle.

A shadow catches his eye. He scans the trees...

Behind them, Fermin clearly sees a large war-painted native step from the treeline.

The native helmsman sees him too and points, frantic.

NATIVE HELMSMAN

AYZ!

The other natives in the party look around in a panic. They paddle faster.

Bernardo and the other militiaman raise their muskets.

The helmsman in the other boat runs to the back of the boat, nearly tipping it, and uses his oar to punt them faster.

Fermin sees more shadows running parallel.

FERMIN
They're cutting us off!

NATIVE HELMSMAN
They will eat us!

SILVER MASTER
What do you mean?

NATIVE HELMSMAN
Canibalis!

An especially menacing, large AYZ TRIBAL CHIEF stands in the water up to his knees, and blocks Fermin's canoe.

Bernardo aims his musket at the chief.

TRIBAL CHIEF
Datiao!

The helmsman dives from his perch so that Fermin's boat glides right toward the tribal chief.

Fermin looks at the huge chief with more curiosity than fear.

The frightened silver master turns to the paddlers.

SILVER MASTER
What did he say?

The helmsman runs through the water to the other canoe.

NATIVE HELMSMAN
Only the Devil knows their evil
tongue--

FERMIN
Datiao?

The tribal chief nods as he catches the boat's bow.

FERMIN
Uara...kassequa?

Again, the chief nods.

Fermin turns in time to see the silver master draw his sword.

FERMIN
Ua! No! Put down your weapons!

FERMIN
 (to Bernardo)
 They are friends.
 (turns back to chief)
Guaitiao? Han?

The chief nods but keeps wary eyes on the Spaniards.

FERMIN
 I know their language, or some of
 it. It's spoken by the natives
 where I live.

Finally, the men lower their weapons and the chief smiles.

TRIBAL CHIEF
 (Arawakan, subtitled)
 You are a young braveheart. You
 must be the shark boy?

SILVER MASTER
 What did he say?

Fermin wonders how to translate.

FERMIN
 Um...he called me shark boy.

SILVER MASTER
 You sure you speak their language?

The chief rattles off a string of fast words while gesturing
 down the river and making faces at the silver master.

FERMIN
 (to silver master)
 Yes...?

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - DAY

The dog is leashed to a table leg at Don Antonio's feet.

XANDER POPA (O.S.)
 I can't wait to slaughter that dog.

Xander paces before Don Antonio at the table where the musket
 and pistola lie empty of their ammo next to them.

XANDER POPA
 This jerky tastes like leather.

The rest of the healthy surviving men from Fermin's camp sit at the rails under the watchful eyes of armed Dutchmen.

Ludolf emerges from the captain's cabin.

LUDOLF

No charts or drawings. I think he's telling the truth.

Xander glares at Don Antonio.

XANDER POPA

Perhaps you haven't started diving yet, but you certainly know where you wrecked your own ship.

(Dutch, subtitled)

Come, lads. Let's go fishing.

Xander kicks the leg of Don Antonio's chair.

Don Antonio, hands bound, stands and faces Xander.

Xander, unflinching, shoves Don Antonio to lead the way.

XANDER POPA

Leave that mongrel here. If the heat doesn't turn his flesh rotten, we'll eat him when we return.

EXT. INTERCOASTAL RIVER - CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Drums, dancing, fire show... A tribe of Ayz natives roast a carved-up baby manatee for the silver master's plumed party.

Fermin is mesmerized by pretty girls who dance before them.

Next to Fermin, Bernardo is both captivated and suspicious.

BERNARDO

You're sure they won't eat us?

Fermin shakes his head as he rips a fatty, tough piece of meat with his teeth and answers with a full mouth...

FERMIN

They want us away as much as we wish to leave *la Florida*.

Somewhat assured and equally ravenous, Bernardo eats.

FERMIN

The chief promises to help us hunt, and he'll provide men to dive my
(MORE)

FERMIN (CONT'D)
 father's wreck until we find enough
 treasure to take to *Espana*.

BERNARDO
 It seems too good to be true.

FERMIN
 As long as we don't settle here,
 he's our friend.

A YOUNG BUCK runs from the darkness straight to the chief and brings the music to a halt. He speaks in a frenzy with lots of hand signs and points to Fermin.

Fermin gets up and goes to the chief. Fermin listens for a time, then turns, distressed, to all.

FERMIN
 "White-headed monsters" have
 besieged my father's camp!

Bernardo gives a questioning look.

FERMIN
 The Dutchmen!

EXT. SALMON'S TENT - DAY

The formidable, aging ADMIRAL SALMON shakes his head at Fermin, the natives and Bernardo.

ADMIRAL SALMON
 I can't spare any men until we
 receive more supplies and arms.

Salmon regards the tribal chief and the young buck with seeming anthropological interest.

ADMIRAL SALMON
 But we'll be happy to put the
 savages to work on the wrecks
 immediately.

FERMIN
 Did you not hear me? The Dutchmen
 will kill my father.

ADMIRAL SALMON
 Let's pray not.

FERMIN
 Pray?
 (frustrated)
 And they'll steal the treasure.

ADMIRAL SALMON

Then they'll be hanged, and we'll
have our treasure back.

FERMIN

Only if you catch them, and by
then, they'll have slit my father's
throat!

YOUNG BUCK

(Arawakan, subtitled)
Is chief from enemy tribe?

Fermin glares at Admiral Salmon.

FERMIN

Whose side are you on, admiral? Why
do you not hasten to assemble a
rescue party for your highest-
ranking officer?

Salmon gives his full attention to Fermin.

ADMIRAL SALMON

Have you looked around, son? We are
great in number, but small in
strength. These men are exhausted.

FERMIN

So you'll just let these villains
take the king's treasury and murder
my father...because they're tired?

ADMIRAL SALMON

There are many harsh realities in
this wilderness, son. However...

Salmon looks over the natives again.

ADMIRAL SALMON

If you can use your language skills
to convince the Ayz to dive our
wrecks, our men will have time to
rest and renew their strength.

FERMIN

They've already agreed to dive my
father's capitana.

ADMIRAL SALMON

Perfect. Merely a change in
coordinates.

FERMIN

And you'll send a rescue party?
Tonight?

ADMIRAL SALMON

These men need days, not hours, to
renew their strength.

FERMIN

You can't be serious--

ADMIRAL SALMON

Of course, by then we may have
received reinforcements from
Havana. Divers, equipment,
victuals, medicine. And, pray, many
armed men. You must be patient.

Fermin is beside himself.

FERMIN

Patience will get my father killed.

Fermin stares at the admiral with disbelief. He guffaws and
looks off. Spots something by Salmon's tent.

FERMIN

Alright, admiral.

Salmon nods, satisfied and goes back inside his tent where a
speaking trumpet stands on end by the entrance flap.

FERMIN

I'll use my language skills.

EXT. SALMON'S CAMP - NIGHT

Men sit in clusters around fires, eating their rations,
fighting off mosquitos.

Fermin steps through the camp with the trumpet in hand.

He searches for a spot until he sees...

A mast with its crow's nest sticks straight up from the sand
as a lookout post, though unoccupied at the moment.

Fermin looks up...hesitates, then runs up the rope ladder.

EXT. CROW'S NEST - NIGHT

Frightened, Fermin clings to the mast high above the camp.

He takes a deep breath and moves to the edge...feels the mast tilt. He grabs a secure line and steps to the edge.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Bernardo and his senior officer Mendez eat with several men around a fire. Among them is Francisco, Don Antonio's chief pilot, and other familiar faces from Don Antonio's fleet.

A muted sound captures their attention. A hush befalls the camp as it grows clearer.

FERMIN (O.S.)
...and I know you are men of honor.

EXT. CROW'S NEST - NIGHT

Fermin looks down upon the myriad faces who watch him address them through the trumpet.

FERMIN
I would never ask a soldier to disobey orders, but sometimes you have to follow your heart in order to do your duty.

Fermin spots Bernardo, Mendez and Francisco. He aims his trumpet down toward them.

FERMIN
General Echeverz and innocent survivors are under siege.

Murmurs flourish.

FERMIN
Mutinous, murdering, thieving cutthroats have overtaken them six leagues to the south.

MAN IN CAMP (O.S.)
Six leagues is a full day's march...on solid ground.

OTHER MAN IN CAMP (O.S.)
The heat alone will kill us.

FERMIN
With longboats we'll be there by morning. With firearms and ammunition. They are only fifteen...

Admiral Salmon marches to the mast and addresses the camp.

ADMIRAL SALMON

Any man who disobeys my orders will
be fined five hundred ducados and
receive twelve lashes.

(to Fermin)

Stop this nonsense...or I'll have
you put in chains.

Fermin lowers the trumpet. Looks at Don Antonio's men.

FERMIN

He's my father. Your commander. How
can you abandon him?

ADMIRAL SALMON

NOT - ONE - MORE - WORD!

Fermin relents and steps to the first foothold.

He stops. Aims the trumpet toward his father's men.

FERMIN

While other ships lost their crews,
Don Antonio managed to lay his ship
on her side so that you could
escape Neptune's wrath!

More murmurs as Fermin descends. He safely lands by two
waiting guards who march him away to a mix of accolades,
taunts and "boos."

EXT. SALMON'S TENT - NIGHT

Fermin sits chained to a tree by a bulky iron on his ankle.

The camp appears to be asleep, save a few guards on the
perimeters and up in the crow's nest.

A guard in a chair facing Fermin nods off.

JULIA (O.S.)

(whispers)

Don Fermin!

The guard wakes with a snort, looks around. Nods back off.

Julia, dressed in men's clothes, steps out of the berm. She
carries an adz (hoe-shaped axe).

Before Fermin can process anything, she raises the adz, ready
to strike the ankle iron.

Fermin moves his foot and motions "No!"

He looks at the guard...still asleep. With some effort, Fermin maneuvers the iron off his ankle.

FERMIN

I was waiting for the right moment.

EXT. SALMON'S CAMP - BRUSH - NIGHT

Safely hidden with a view of three horses tethered nearby, Julia and Fermin watch a large group of men argue by a fire.

FERMIN

I suppose you're here to help your father and brother steal treasure.

JULIA

I came...to stop my father. Now we can help each other.

FERMIN

How?

JULIA

I must talk with Pappje. Promise that if...when he and Ludolf surrender, you and your father will beg lenience for them.

Fermin considers a moment. Nods. Then realizes--

FERMIN

If we're both here, who is caring for Pedro?

INT. FORTRESS - BARRACKS - NIGHT

At Pedro's bedside, the haggard physician finishes "letting" Pedro's blood into a bowl while behind him...

A priest and two homely nuns administer last rites in Latin.

SOLDIERS noisily carry seven INJURED MEN in on litters.

SOLDIER (O.S.)

Physician! You're needed.

Racked with pain and delirium, Pedro screams out.

The nuns look at the amputated leg.

PHYSICIAN

Sometimes what is not there hurts more than if it were.

The physician goes to tend to the new arrivals.

One nun takes Pedro's hand to comfort him.

PEDRO

Yulia.

The nuns look at each other.

The physician examines the agonized sunburnt, dehydrated men.

PHYSICIAN

What's happened?

SOLDIER

They drifted many days before the sea landed them a hundred miles north.

INJURED MAN

Por favor, you must tend to Senor Echeverz first. We would not be alive if not for him.

PHYSICIAN

Echeverz? But he's been here--

SOLDIER

I think he means that one...

The physician sees Toro struggle to stand from his litter.

TORO

(re: priest)

Get that deathmonger away from my brother!

The physician goes to calm Toro who fights to get to Pedro.

The soldier butts in and helps Toro to Pedro's bunk.

The priest and nuns step back as Toro falls to his knees beside Pedro's bed. He takes Pedro's hand.

TORO

I tried to come sooner. You weren't planning to go without saying goodbye to your favorite brother?

Finally, Pedro squeezes Toro's hand and his eyes slit open.

Toro flashes his toothless grin behind sunburnt lips.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

A full moon over the ocean reveals two silhouettes...

Julia and Fermin charge down the beach on horseback.

Fermin holds on for dear life like a novice while Julia rides like an expert.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - NIGHT

A tent, a longboat, a mule and several barrels are flanked by two campfires.

Under armed guard, Don Antonio and the other captives dig to create 8-foot mounds of sand like fortress walls protecting all directions except the water.

Xander and Ludolf, well armed, sit on barrels and look out to the crashing sea with a sense of anticipation.

XANDER POPA

Pray for a calm morning. I want
that longboat full of treasure when
we reach the Biminis tomorrow.

LUDOLF

How will we get Julia from Saint
Augustine?

Xander gives him a chilling shrug of indifference.

EXT. BEACH - BERM LINE - NIGHT

Julia leads Fermin on foot toward a dim glow of firelight.

JULIA

They may only be fifteen, but they
fight as fifty.

They can now see the mound of sand surrounding the camp.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - OUTER PERIMETER - NIGHT

A bored sentry with a musket leans against the mound--

Behind him, Julia strikes him with the blunt edge of her adz.

The sentry falls unconscious.

JULIA

Mijn apologie, Cornelius.

Julia motions to Fermin who comes out of the berm.

JULIA

Whatever happens to me, once your
father is free...you must both run.

Fermin nods.

Julia picks up the sentry's musket, walks to the edge of the mound and disappears around it.

Fermin hears voices followed by shouts. He puts his hand on the hilt of the marquis' knife hidden under his shirt.

XANDER POPA (O.S.)
COME SHOW YOURSELF!

Fermin is frozen with fear.

XANDER POPA (O.S.)
SHOW YOURSELF NOW OR GENERAL
ECHEVERZ DIES.

Fermin peers over the mound, dismayed at what he sees.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - NIGHT

Julia stands by Ludolf who aims the sentry's musket at Don Antonio, whose shoulder bleeds from a gunshot wound.

The other Dutchmen train their weapons on the ten survivors, including Wealthy Man.

Xander steps up to the mound and points the smoking pistola in Fermin's face. He smiles... Pulls the trigger--

Nothing happens.

Fermin sighs relieved as Xander laughs and reloads.

XANDER POPA
Come join *la fiesta*, Don Fermin.

Fermin climbs over and slides down the mound.

XANDER POPA
I hear you're quite the swimmer.

Xander motions for him to join Don Antonio.

XANDER POPA
Rest up. You've much to do in the
morning.

Angry eyes fixed on Julia, Fermin goes to Don Antonio.

Julia hides her face, ashamed.

Xander aims the reloaded pistola at Don Antonio and Fermin.

XANDER POPA
(to Ludolf)
Go get Cornelius and place a guard.
(to Julia)
You've done well. Go and sleep.

Julia slinks to the tent, avoiding Fermin's angry glare.

EXT. LA HOLANDESA - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

Frantic, the dog drags the table to the splintered deck's edge until it tips over and gets stuck on a railing, wedged in such a way that the line starts to choke the dog.

Torches and indiscernible male voices approach from the brush, sending the dog into a greater panic...

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - NIGHT

Don Antonio dozes where he sits, Fermin huddled at his side.

Fermin awakens with a start, which wakens Don Antonio. They look each other in the eye. Possibly for the first time.

FERMIN
I'm sorry...for everything, Papa.

Tears well in Don Antonio's eyes. He pulls Fermin close.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - DAY

Ludolf drags the loaded longboat toward the glassy water.

Xander yanks Fermin awake by his collar and rips him from Don Antonio's arms. Tows him toward the boat.

Startled, then enraged, Don Antonio stands and rushes Xander only to be tripped up by Ludolf.

Don Antonio tumbles and rolls next to a sleeping Dutchman.

Wincing, he clutches his wounded shoulder while he grabs the sleeping man's sword and stands in challenge to Ludolf.

DON ANTONIO
Release my son, or I'll dispatch
yours.

Xander turns, Fermin in his grasp, to see Ludolf draw on and attack Don Antonio, who proves to be a superior swordsman.

The sleeping camp of survivors and Dutchmen arises to watch.

Julia exits the tent, distraught at the unfolding duel.

Ludolf remains on the defensive until he tries to employ the same circular maneuver Pedro had once disarmed Xander with.

Don Antonio sees it coming, evades, cuts Ludolf's arm.

Ludolf charges and punches Don Antonio's bullet wound.

In agony, Don Antonio retaliates with sword blow after blow until Ludolf is disarmed and falls back on his butt.

Don Antonio holds him at sword point. Orders Xander...

DON ANTONIO

Let him go. NOW!

Xander wavers...still holding Fermin.

Ludolf whips a handful of dry sand at Don Antonio's face.

Blinded, Don Antonio founders.

DON ANTONIO

Fermin...RUN!

Fermin wrestles free from Xander and RUNS...TO Don Antonio.

With a dozen pistols aimed at them, Don Antonio drops the sword and clings to Fermin.

XANDER POPA

Just a spoiled nobleman who's never
known the pain of want. You think
yourself better. Born to good
fortune, you accepted your lot.

(to his men)

The better man doesn't accept his
fate. HE TAKES IT.

Xander raises the broken gold wing on its chain to cheers.

EXT. OFFSHORE - DAY

Xander and Ludolf row Fermin to where he points. The small
keg floats just under the surface. Ludolf drops anchor.

XANDER POPA

(to Fermin)

Remove your shirt.

Fermin feels for the knife still hidden at his belt.

FERMIN

I...I'd rather keep it on.

Impatient, Xander tosses Fermin a mess of chain and rope.

XANDER POPA

Tie this around your mangled chest.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - DAY

Don Antonio sits, helpless, under armed guard. He watches through sand-scratched eyes the boat out on the water.

Julia emerges from the tent with cloth strips and water. She goes to Don Antonio to clean and dress his gunshot wound while he uses the water to clean sand from his eyes.

JULIA

I'm sorry.

DON ANTONIO

You tried to stop them. Gracias.

Don Antonio acknowledges a bruise on the side of her face.

JULIA

I should've known. Pappje never lets anything...or anyone stop him.

A moment of mutual sympathy before she steps away.

Don Antonio stands to watch the boat on the water.

A Dutchman guarding him cocks his pistol.

Don Antonio ignores him and steps closer to watch.

EXT. OFFSHORE - DAY

Fermin stands in the boat, tied in a medieval tangle of chain and rope with no hope of escape.

XANDER POPA

You know what to do?

Fermin, terrified, holds up a rope tied to a hook and nods.

I/E. UNDERWATER - DAY

Fermin splashes into the water and sinks fast, weighted by the chains.

He swims for the first upright treasure chest he sees. It has a broken latch, so he opens it quickly to see that it's filled to the brim with shimmering coins.

He threads the hook through the rings on both ends, then hooks it to the line in a triangle shape to secure it.

He tugs twice on the line attached to him. Nothing happens.

He looks up. Sees Xander and Ludolf looking down.

He turns to the line attached to the box and tugs twice. It immediately goes taut and the chest rises in the water.

Fermin grabs one of the rings before it's too late and rides up with the chest.

EXT. SURFACE - DAY

The chest reaches the side of the boat where Ludolf and Xander try to pull it up, but it's too heavy.

Xander sees Fermin hanging on the chest. He raises the loose chain to strike, but Fermin releases to disappear underwater.

XANDER POPA
(Dutch, subtitled)
Let's get this aboard and go finish
off those Spaniards--

Xander plunges headfirst into the water when the boat tilts.

From the other side of the boat, Fermin tries to rock Ludolf overboard as well.

Unwilling to let go of the chest, Ludolf kicks at Fermin until he lets loose and goes below the surface.

I/E. UNDERWATER - DAY

Fermin tries to grab the anchor line when--

Xander yanks Fermin down.

Fermin struggles to reach his knife as he sinks fast.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - DAY

Don Antonio watches with concern.

DON ANTONIO
Bring me a spyglass.

A Dutchman guarding him just laughs.

DON ANTONIO
They're drowning my son!

Don Antonio charges the laughing guard but is met with five more armed Dutchmen, all with weapons drawn.

I/E. UNDERWATER - DAY

Fermin sinks while Xander grapples to reach the anchor line.

Fermin frees his knife and frantically cuts away at the ropes that bind the chains around his torso.

The moment he's free of them he heads upward, but just before he breaks the surface he's pulled back down by Xander who climbs up Fermin to reach the surface first.

EXT. SURFACE - CONTINUOUS

Xander gasps for breath and flops around disoriented.

Fermin comes up seconds later a few feet away.

XANDER POPA
SCHIET HEM!

Ludolf holds the chest and scrambles for his pistol. Got it!

Fermin dives down just as Ludolf SHOOTS.

Unsure if Fermin is hit, Xander screams at Ludolf.

XANDER POPA
GEEF ME DE TRIDENT!

Ludolf kicks a trident with barbed prongs overboard.

Xander grabs it and lunges for Fermin...

All goes silent. A foreboding cloud of blood rises to the surface.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - DAY

The Dutchmen herd Don Antonio and the survivors together.

I/E. UNDERWATER - DAY

Fermin, bullet wound to the arm, swims for the line that secures the keg. He pulls himself one-handed in a spiral down the rope, his eyes on the Dona Maria figurehead below.

Xander gives chase. Tries to jab Fermin with the trident.

Fermin stops and looks up to see Xander in a sudden panic, his foot twisted in the keg's line.

Frustrated, Xander heaves the trident at Fermin. Misses.

Fermin lets go of the rope. He swims slowly up toward frantic Xander, who's running out of air. Fermin clutches his knife.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - DAY

Hands raised in a line before the armed Dutchmen, Don Antonio and the survivors await their fate--

OFFICER MENDEZ (O.S.)
Drop your weapons!

All look to the northern mound...

Scores of men from Salmon's camp, led by Mendez, Bernardo and Francisco, point their few firearms at the Dutchmen.

DON ANTONIO
(to survivors)
GET DOWN!

Don Antonio and the survivors dive to the ground.

All at once, every man with a firearm pulls the trigger.

Men on both sides drop dead, Francisco among them. His body rolls down the mound to Don Antonio.

Survivors toss firearms and draw swords, knives and machetes.

Sad yet grateful, Don Antonio closes Francisco's eyes and takes his sword from its scabbard.

He and Mendez charge with a roar, and the clash begins.

EXT. OFFSHORE - DAY

The roar of battle draws Ludolf's attention to shore...

Not just one army of men from the north, but also another army of Spaniards from the south, led by the barking dog.

If that's not enough, the entire berm is lined with natives, cutting off any hope of escape for the outnumbered Dutchmen.

In his shock, Ludolf's grip on the line slips and it breaks free, burning his hands until he fully lets go.

The treasure chest overturns, dumping all its contents.

LUDOLF

NO!

I/E. UNDERWATER - DAY

Glittering coins cascade through sun beams on and around...

Xander's lifeless body, his foot knotted in the rope attached to the figurehead.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - DAY

Despite the odds, the Dutchmen fight with raw vengeance.

Don Antonio fights with vigor reminiscent of Pedro, cutting through men like a sawmill.

Wealthy Man uses his cane to poke, trip and hammer Dutchmen.

EXT. SURFACE - DAY

Ludolf rows backward out to sea, his tearful eyes glued to where the Dutchmen finally throw down arms and surrender.

Julia stands at the water's edge, arms stretched out to him.

Don Antonio rushes to her side, searching for Fermin.

A shadow overtakes Ludolf's boat. The bow strikes something.

Ludolf looks up to see the marquis looking down at him from the rail of his colorful ship.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

We've caught a sea monster!

Solorzano looks over the rail and grins.

Ludolf drops the oars in utter defeat.

Nearby, the keg pops out of the water. No Fermin.

EXT. MARQUIS' SHIP - DECK - DAY

Solorzano and his militia lead Ludolf belowdecks.

The marquis searches the water. Smiles. Shouts to the helm:

MARQUIS DE TORRES

Come 'round. I must cast a line for a spirited minnow.

Below, Fermin reaches up and clings to the keg by one arm.

EXT. FLAGSHIP WRECK SITE - DAY

Solorzano oversees the building of shelters in the orderly and well supplied camp. Now thinner, Wealthy Man helps.

Treasure chests are stacked with armed guards on all sides.

Toro and several natives work the spars of a capstan posted near the water's edge, using it to heave a large chest through the surf toward the beach.

EXT. MARQUIS' SHIP - DAY

From a launch boat, the marquis waves to Don Antonio and Fermin on deck. The dog is with the Marquis.

MARQUIS DE TORRES

I promise to keep good care of your dog while you are in Madrid. She's prettier than my wife, no?

FERMIN

She?

MARQUIS DE TORRES

You didn't know? *¡Puf!* You have much to learn about women! But that is an adventure for another day.

(to Don Antonio)

Godspeed with the king's portion. Convey my assurances...we will not stop salvaging until we've found the queen's jewels!

(bows respectfully)

Godspeed to your *familia*.

Don Antonio draws Fermin close to his side.

Ashore, Toro leaps to the top of the capstan and waves.

TORO

My regards to the virgin queen!

Don Antonio scowls as the ship fires a departing salvo.

EXT. ST. AUGUSTINE - FORTRESS - DAY

Drums roll out an ominous executioner's cadence.

Atop the rampart, a gallows wheel looms like a Maypole over the courtyard where a crowd watches the surviving Dutchmen, who stand atop barrels, nooses around their necks.

Among them, Ludolf is stoic, despite his trembling.

The priest paces before the condemned, crossing himself.
In the crowd, Julia's eyes are fixed on Ludolf.
The drums stop. Ropes are pulled. Barrels fall. Feet drop.
Julia lunges forward in grief-stricken protest.
A hand grabs Julia's wrist and pulls her back. She fights to
be let free for a moment, then turns...
Pedro stands, weak, aided by a cane, next to her.
She throws her arms around him. They steady each other.

EXT. MADRID - PALACE SQUARE - DAY

A large Christmas nativity adorns the center of the square.
Snowflakes dot Fermin's red hair as he and Don Antonio
oversee the offload of 145 royal chests from a caravan.

DON ANTONIO
Before we go in...

Don Antonio hands Manuel's necklace with the ruby to Fermin.

DON ANTONIO
He'd have wanted you to have it.

Militiamen drop a chest and Don Antonio runs to reprimand.
Fermin studies the necklace, then looks around to see
clusters of beggars huddle against the cold.
He looks up at the lavish palace facade, leafed in gold, then
reaches into his shirt and pulls out a necklace with the
natives' primitive painting of a galleon on a clam shell.
Fermin contemplates the two necklaces.
He looks to the nativity and spies a beggar woman with young
children huddled behind it.
Fermin steps over to them, kisses the ruby, then places it in
the woman's arthritic hand and walks away.
The woman opens her hand. Looks at the ruby. Her eyes go big.

INT. PALACE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Don Antonio walks, head held high, dignified, confident.
Fermin follows, awed by the gaudy opulence around them.

Behind them, the militiamen carry the chests in a train.

Halfway down the very long red carpet, Don Antonio halts the procession to face Fermin.

DON ANTONIO

Whatever happens today, I support
any path you choose in life.

In the blurred b.g., the king stands from his throne.

Those carrying the chests look at each other, nervous.

FERMIN

Papa...the path you take, I take.

Proud, Don Antonio resumes the parade, Fermin at his side.

The intimidating figure of the king comes into focus.

FERMIN

...Even if that path leads to an
irritated king.

They finally come to a halt before the throne.

In a ridiculously oversized wig the marquis would envy,
handsome KING PHILIP V (30s, French) squints at the pair. He
approaches. Circles. Like a lion going in for the kill--

Philip grabs Don Antonio by the shoulders and...gives him a
European kiss on both cheeks.

Ready to soil his noble pants, Fermin suffers the same fate.

KING PHILIP V

Joyeux Noel, Don Antonio. And to
your son...Fernando?

Don Antonio opens his mouth to correct him--

KING PHILIP V

I've been so worried about you. The
very day my grandfather--

(FYI aside to Fermin)

--King Louis of France--

(to Don Antonio)

--passed from this life, that
dreadful Capitaine d'Aire arrived,
accusing you of detaining him!...

As the king prattles on, drifting in and out of his native
French, his red-haired queen slowly approaches.

Philip turns to her, smiles and presents her.

KING PHILIP V
My lovely queen. Elisabetta.

Don Antonio and Fermin's jaws drop as she steps forward to reveal a very pregnant belly.

KING PHILIP V
Voila.

FADE TO EPILOGUE:

EXT. FLORIDA COAST - NIGHT

Against the pre-dawn sky, a fleet of British ships anchor near Solorzano's salvage camp.

To the sound of war drums, an army of 300 diverse pirates march up the beach, led by Henry Jennings.

Solorzano, carrying a white flag, approaches with a mere 50 or so Spanish, native and African men behind him.

HENRY JENNINGS
Feliz Navidad, old friend. I've
come for the...
(Spanish, subtitled)
...mountain of wealth.

300 pirate weapons are drawn simultaneously.

Solorzano's face turns as white as his flag.

SCROLLING TEXT OVER BLACK:

"By spring 1716, the entire Caribbean was overrun by the Golden Age of Piracy.

"Three hundred years later, millions of dollars in unclaimed treasure lie on the ocean floor along Florida's 'Treasure Coast.'

"The Queen's Jewels have never been found."

FADE OUT.