

MASTER AND COMMANDER

by John Collee and Peter Weir

from the novels of Patrick O'Brien

THE OCEAN - DAWN.

From blackness a pattern slowly emerges - shimmering, abstract lines form into waves, cresting above steep-sided valleys of water, as the picture settles into a high, wide shot of the ocean and an adjacent coastline

In a corner of the screen, the last rays of sunlight touch a small, dark, shape causing it to glow in the gathering darkness.

A three-masted sailing vessel.

THE SHIP - DUSK

The figurehead and best-bower anchor crash into view as she passes close enough to touch: hawsers as thick as a man's trunk, massive black-painted timbers, muzzles of her great guns projecting from every gun-port.

As the ship moves away, RUN CAPTION:

HMS Surprise

Armament: 28 guns

Crew: 197 souls.

Location: North East Coast of Brazil., November 1806

Mission: Intercept and destroy French Privateer Acheron

CHARTS.

Close up in rosy light on several beautiful charts of the coastline.

Each one enlarges the view of the preceding one, until we are reading details, among the arcane navigational symbols, written in fine copperplate script:

16 fa. Shoals suddenly to half fa.

Rocks (exact position unknown).

Hidden reef

THE GREAT CABIN

Wide, to see a young man in shirtsleeves intently studying

the charts. CAPTAIN JACK AUBREY - a strong-faced man in his late twenties, thick blonde hair clubbed at the back

His servant, Killick, a pig-tailed and ear-ringed man of indeterminate age of indeterminate, refills the glass at Jack's elbow

Jack drinks. The glass catches the setting sun now dropping below the great casement windows.

Killick lights a lamp, places it next to his captain and retires.

BELOW DECKS

Another lamp illuminates 1st lieutenant TOM PULLINGS, his pleasant open face marred by a diagonal sabre scar from brow to chin.

He is making his a final tour of inspection before lights out.

His lantern passes:

THE DOCTORS CABIN

Where Dr STEPHEN MATURIN, a keen naturalist, sits at his desk surrounded by specimen jars, books and scientific instruments.

He is reading a lavishly illustrated volume of the natural wonders of the Brazilian jungle.

Tom Pullings glances in as he moves past the cabin door; but the doctor is too engrossed to notice him.

MIDSHIPMAN'S BERTH - NIGHT

In the quarters of the 'young gentlemen' - boys trained from an early age to become officers - four lads play at marbles

PETER CALAMAY (16) and LORD BLAKENEY (13) are hotly disputing a point, as their berth mates BOYLE (15) and Williamson (14) wait for the game to resume

The lamp moves on, illuminating a fifth midshipman, much older than the rest. This is HOLLUM, aged 23. He's a sensitive looking fellow, idly strumming his guitar,

glancing up briefly as Tom Pullings lamp passes by.

GUN DECK. NIGHT

By the galley stove at the forward end of the gun deck a few of the foremast hands enjoy a last smoke and a mug of grog.

One man, BECKETT, sits shirtless while another, AWKWARD DAVIES, brow furrowed with concentration, tattoos the first link of what will be a great chain round Becket's waist.

JOE PLAICE (45) the oldest man on board, stops in the middle of a story as Pullings passes, everyone knuckling their foreheads in deference to the officer

BETWEEN TWO GUNS. NIGHT

Boys no more than eight or nine years old play a game of Jacks with some sheep bones.

ADDISON, RYE and SWIFT are the powder monkeys who ferry powder from the hold to the guns during action

BERTH DECK. NIGHT

The bosun, MR HOLLAR orders lights out and the last of the off-duty watch climb into their hammocks, slung close-packed from the immense beams,

The last lights are extinguished. Only PULLINGS' lamp remains, moving towards us and up the ladder to....

WEATHER DECK. NIGHT

The uppermost or weather deck consists of two parallel gangways linking the forecastle (forward) to the quarterdeck (aft)

Pullings aft to the quarter-deck where he joins the officer of the watch, LIEUTENANT MOWETT, A short tubular man in his early 20's

The Silent figures of the new watch go to their stations. From somewhere a bell sounds the half hour

QUARTERDECK. NIGHT

Here in the raised stern platform of the ship Captain Jack has joined Pullings, Mowett and the helmsman Bonden, whom he addresses in a low voice:

JACK

....Naval intelligence had her weighing from Boston on the 12th. That puts us a good week ahead. I plan to hold on and off Recife til she shows up

PULLINGS

She'll be in for a Surprise

He didn't intend it as a joke but Jack, unexpectedly, lets out a hoot of laughter, shattering the tense, expectant silence.

JACK

In for a "Surprise". Now that's wit.
"In for a Surprise". 'Pon my word I shall have to tell the doctor

He leaves, still laughing. Those on the quarter-deck are more amused by Jack's sense of humour than by the weak pun itself

JACK (CONT'D)

(calls back)

Don't put her on the reef, Tom.

PULLINGS

I'll try not to sir

He crosses to the quartermaster, standing in the mizzen chains reading the lead

PULLINGS (CONT'D)

What's our depth, Mr. Watt?

WATT

A little over 80 fathoms, Sir, but the bow watch thought he heard surf.

PULLINGS

Arm the lead and go on casting every half a glass.

WIDE ON THE SURPRISE, NIGHT

The ship moving slowly through the moonless night, white coils of mist drifting and eddying over the glassy sea.

ON DECK - NIGHT

The lead is dropped from the bows.

Voices coming aft as each man lets go his coils of the deep sea line.

CREWMEN
Watch there! Watch!

LATER - NIGHT

The mist intensifies. Its shifting opaque walls create a claustrophobic mood on board, despite the regular sounding of the bell and the reassuring cries from all quarters.

WATCH CAPTAINS
- Lifebuoy all's well!
- Starboard gangway all's well!
- Starboard bow all's well!

Over this, the splash of the lead and the repeated cry of "watch there watch" coming aft.

IN THE GREAT CABIN, LATER - NIGHT

The chronometer ticks. The coffee-pot swings on its gimbals. JACK lies awake in his hanging cot. Finally he gives up trying to sleep.

JACK
Killick! Killick there! Strong coffee,
and light along my topcoat.

ON THE QUARTERDECK - NIGHT

JACK on deck again.

QUARTERMASTER
Six bells and all's well.

A hint of daylight to the east. The mist beginning to shift as an offshore breeze picks up.

LEAD-MAN

90 fathoms, white shelly sand.

CALAMY
Four knots, Sir.

BONDEN is still at the wheel.

BONDEN
I reckon she's lifting Sir, you can get
some sleep now.

JACK takes his advice and goes below again.

THE SHIP - TIME LAPSE

The sky a shade paler. A wind coming up.

ON THE STARBOARD GANGWAY - DAWN

The lookout, VINCENT, peers into the mist.

VINCENT
Starboard gangway ahoy.

HOLLLOM, the oldest of the midshipman, whose watch it now
is, appears at his shoulder.

HOLLLOM
What is it, Vincent?

VINCENT
Don't know. Thought I heard a bell.

HOLLLOM peers into the swirling mist, which seems to part in
the freshening breeze, layer on layer of gauze curtains
opening to reveal...

The monstrous silhouette of the Acheron coming straight at
them.

BCU on Hollom as he turns straight to camera

HOLLLOM
Enemy to Starboard!!

HOLLAR
Beat to quarters!!

ABOVE AND BELOW DECKS - DAWN

A deafening tattoo on the drums. Chaos below as men tumble from hammocks. A flurry of shouted instructions.

HOLLAR

Out or Down! All hands on deck!

ON THE QUARTER DECK

As the drum thunders, JACK races up half-dressed. He sees the lethal flash of the Acheron's first broadside and yells

-

JACK

Lie down! Everybody lie down!

A distant roar reaches them from the Acheron's guns, then a murderous blizzard of chain-shot and grape comes shrieking down the length of the Surprise.

Splinters rake the deck, great jagged lumps of sharp-edged wood smashing everything in their path.

The wounded scream. Two men fall from above in a tangle of shattered spars and rigging.

JACK leaps back up on his feet, yelling from the quarter deck

JACK (CONT'D)

Cast off the boats, marines to the tops, and run out those bloody guns!

HOWARD, the captain of marines, urges his men up the rigging

Boats splash astern on their painters

ON THE GUN-DECK

The carpenters bash down the cabin partitions, transforming the entire gun deck to a single continuous space.

The Gun crews come behind, casting loose each gun, and slamming it hard against the sills.

QUARTERDECK

Jack flips open his pocket watch

JACK
Note down the time Mr Mowett

GUN DECK

Number one's gun-port is jammed. Men are trying to batter it open with hand-spikes. Pullings straddles the gun

Pullings
Cast her loose!

They loosen the tackle which secures the gun.

PULLINGS (CONT'D)
With me: One! Two! Three!

They ram open the port using the gun itself as a battering ram as....

THE ARMS LOCKER

Crashes open. Marines seize muskets and race up the stairs.

IN THE COCKPIT

STEPHEN MATURIN arrives, the gentle naturalist transformed into a black apron-ed butcher, emptying out his bag of heavy surgical instruments, calling for his assistant

STEPHEN
Higgins!

An injured man arrives instead: a mass of bloody limbs crashing through the doors helped by HIGGINS and also PADEEN, Stephen Maturin's giant manservant.

Together they lift the injured man onto the operating table.

THE SURPRISE

The ship transforms itself for battle, boarding nets swung out on cranes as MOWETT and a party of men with axes hack loose a dangling spar.

ON THE QUARTER DECK

Jack is checking his watch again as Pullings runs up from

below

PULLINGS (O.S)
She's out of our range sir!!

Jack calls to his sailing master Allan

JACK
Closer Mr. Allan. You must lay me
alongside her at pistol-shot.

Allen takes the wheel, yelling orders aloft

Jack runs forwards, past another yelling casualty.

JACK (CONT'D)
Get this man below! Bow chasers to fire
as she bears!

ON DECK

PULLINGS is already racing up the larboard gangway, past men stacking hammocks as blast-protection.

ON THE FORECASTLE

Gun captains stand ready, the slow-match burning in the tubs.

JACK
Fire on the uproll. Fire high. Fire for
the masts.

The little drummer's huge eyes are fixed on JACK's face.
The ship rolls.

JACK (CONT'D)
Fire!

The drum-roll is all but drowned by the blast of the guns.

JACKS POV. One ball falls short, another skips across the water and bounces off the Acheron's hull

JACK (CONT'D)
Pitch 'em up. Fire for her masts and
rigging

Ahead the Acherons murderous long guns run out again.

IN THE TOPS

As the two ships swing closer, a furious exchange of fire breaks out between Captain HOWARD's marines and the sharpshooters in the Acheron's rigging

Then the Acheron fires her second broadside

IN THE COCKPIT

By the dim light of a battle-lantern PADEEN struggles to hold a wounded man on the table. STEPHEN is trying to get his forceps on a spouting artery, feet skidding on the bloody floor, his voice even and emotionless, despite the bloody mayhem

STEPHEN

Retractor. Hold him steady. More sand on the floor Mr Higgins.

Higgins reaches for the sand bucket and is thrown over by the awful jarring shock as the Acheron's third broadside hits home.

IN THE GREAT CABIN

The captain's crockery smashes to the deck. KILLICK, cursing freely, stows what he can.

IN THE ORLOP

Water rushes from a hole below the waterline. The tattooist of the previous night, AWKWARD DAVIES lifting cannon-balls, out of the shot-locker yells for the carpenter.

DAVIES

Mr lamb! Wood and lead! Wood and lead!

Follow Davies as he runs up to the gun-deck with an armload of shot past the powder monkeys Addison and Swift, cannisters of gun-powder slug over their shoulder

ON THE GUN-DECK

Davies arrives to find a gaping hole opposite where his own gun once stood. Its crew lie scattered, horribly wounded or dead.

The dismounted gun and twelve pound shot are rolling around dangerously. HOLLUM, the sole survivor is backed against the bulkhead, cradling an injured arm.

Young CALAMAY, the 16 year old we last saw playing marbles, emerges from the smoke, meets Davies horror-struck gaze and takes command.

CALAMAY

Davies! Get those bodies overboard! (to HOLLUM) Mr Hollum sir!

HOLLUM sits immobilized by fear. CALAMAY grabs the poulterer, FASTER DOUDLE who has been rescuing the ships goat, Aspasia

CALAMAY (CONT'D)

You - leave the goat and take that man below.

BLAKENEY

Aye Sir!

The ship heels as she turns

LORD BLAKENEY, Calamay's rival in the game of marbles, turns to see the dismounted gun rolling free.

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)

Look out!

He throws a hammock net under it, stopping its roll before it crushes CALAMAY against the bulkhead.

Calamay shoots him a brief look of gratitude and runs aft. BLAKENEY carries on shouting to the powder monkeys

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)

More shot! More cartridge!

Jack crosses through shot

HULL OF THE SURPRISE

In the great jagged hole where the gun was destroyed, JACK stands framed, a wrathful soot-stained figure, yelling to his gun crews as the Acheron finally comes within range

JACK
On my command! Wait for it...

Balls ping off the wood and metalwork around him but JACK ignores them. He can see the Acheron's fearsomely efficient crews loading their long guns once more.

He glances back at his own men, hunched and ready, itching to fire.

JACK (CONT'D)
(Bellows)
Wait...!

The Surprise completes its turn. Across the narrowing gap, the Acherons are on the point of firing again

JACK (CONT'D)
...wait for it. And fire!!

The great guns go off all together. The cannons leaping back between their crews. JACK snatches a powder monkey, ADDISON, out of the way of the lethal recoil.

Smoke clears to reveal holes in the enemy's foretopsail, a bowline hanging loose, a gaping hole in her gunwale, several men down on the quarter deck.

Maniacal cheering from the Surprises

On the enemy ship, the rival captain CAPTAIN PALMIER is clearly visible. He meets JACK's eye and shouts to his own crews -

PALMIER
...and Fire!

QUARTERDECK

A third full broadside from the Acheron at fifty yards range. Surprise's wheel shattered. BONDEN thrown aside, MR. WATT jerked back to the taffrail, the mainmast hit.

A rope sheers and JOE PLAICE is smacked on the skull by a swinging boom.

BLAKENEY, running up on deck, goes to help PLAICE and is struck down, by a flying splinter - a shocking wound to his

upper right arm.

COMPANIONWAY

JACK is half way up the ladder when he falls, scored across the forehead by a musket-ball.

Eyesight blurred. Hearing gone. He is dimly aware of small arms cracking above his head, and someone trying to lift him.

MOWETT

You must go below sir you must let me
help you below!

JACK puts a hand to his bleeding forehead and drags himself back up the ladder.

QUARTERDECK

He emerges into bloody chaos: screams of the wounded all around, MR. WATT dead, BONDEN vanished The Acheron vanishing astern in mist and gun-smoke.

STERN OF THE SURPRISE

JACK hobbles to the shattered taff-rail, sees BONDEN miraculously unscathed, climbing down onto the rudder

BONDEN

(shouts up)

Sir, rudder's shot away below the
waterline!

GUN DECK

A sudden dreadful silence. Spirals of drifting smoke. Blackened bleeding men, their guns pointing at nothing.

WOUNDED MAN

What's happening? Where is she?

NAGLE

We're fish in a barrel

COCKPIT

Stephen, up to his armpits on blood, operating on a wounded man, looks up to see three more seriously injured men

arriving.

He pauses, aware of some change.

STEPHEN
What are we not firing?

HIGH SHOT

The fog has rolled back, like a great curtain, to reveal the two frigates.

The badly damaged Surprise, drifting rudderless.

The Acheron, most of her sails intact, beginning her turn

QUARTERDECK

Jack is joined by Allen as the enemy vessel starts crossing their wake.

ALLAN
He's coming about, Sir.

MOWETT
Should I strike the colours?

His POV Jack, on the brink of awful defeat.

ALLEN
I'm sorry sir.

Jack looks from the wall of fog to the three little boats they are towing astern.

His face hardens, its not over till its over

JACK
Bring the boats for-ard. We'll tow her.

STERN OF THE SURPRISE

Sudden feverish activity, running and shouting as men scramble down into the boats. DAVIS settles himself beside NAGLE in the cutter, looking back at the approaching Acheron.

His POV: puffs of smoke from its bow-chasers.

STERN OF SURPRISE

Gouts of water from the enemy gunfire rises not fifty yards from them, acting as little needed encouragement for the boats to get clear of the stern and pull around towards the bows.

QUARTERDECK

Close on HOLLAR and ALLAN as they shout their respective orders.

ALLAN

Sail trimmers away, Warley, make what sail you can!

MAINMAST/FOREMAST

Men scramble up the ratlines, and through the shattered rigging.

WARLEY, captain of the maintop, directs his men about the mares nest of rigging, getting a tattered top-sail to fill with what little breeze there is.

QUARTERDECK

Through Pullings telescope: The enemy ship coming straight at them, her guns now getting the range of the Surprise.

PULLINGS

She's gaining on us.

JACK

Start the water, carronades over the side.

ANGLE ON THE QUARTERDECK

The crew furiously at work cutting the ropes securing the guns on the quarterdeck.

ANGLE ON THE STERN

Water spouts from the pumps, while at the same time the quarterdeck guns tumble into the ocean.

(NOTE: they only lose those guns on the quarterdeck, not

their main armament on the gun-deck.)

FORECASTLE

JACK moves into the bows. Towlines strain as the three small boats pull the great ship toward the curtain of fog and cloud.

JACK
Pull! Pull for your lives

ANGLE FROM THE BOATS

The men heave on their oars, faces bathed in sweat, the towlines taut behind them, dragging the Surprise toward the safety of the fog.

WIDE

to see the Surprise slipping into the cover of fog and cloud, only her top masts visible, before they too disappear.

QUARTERDECK

JACK joins his officers as they look back through the wall of fog, in the direction of the enemy.

JACK
Quiet now. No calls, no shouts. Mr.
Allan, signal the men in the boats to
turn North.

ALLAN moves toward the bows, as behind them the fog is momentarily illuminated by flashes of gunfire from the pursuer.

THE LEADING JOLLY BOAT

CALAMY, in the prow of the jolly-boat, sees ALLAN on the ship, signalling the turn to eastward.

CALAMY signals to BONDEN in the stern of the jolly-boat.

BONDEN
(urgent whisper)
Hard a'larboard.

One side stops rowing and the boat turns.

BONDEN (CONT'D)
Now stroke! Stroke!

THE SURPRISE

A low angle, the ship coming slowly toward us.

Beyond, the rowers strain at their oars, the great ship rearing out of the mist above them, as though carried on their backs.

QUARTERDECK OF THE SURPRISE

Somewhere astern and to the left JACK can hear shouting on the Acheron. Flashes of cannon fire, directed away from them.

PULLINGS
He's beating inshore.

JACK nods, visibly relieved.

MASTS OF THE SURPRISE - NIGHT

The tortured sounds of exhausted men rowing as skeins of mist drift away to reveal a dim, yellow moon.

BONDEN (O.S.)
Ship oars.

IN THE JOLLY BOAT - NIGHT

The rowers are barely able to remain upright in their seats, their hands raw and crabbed.

QUARTERDECK OF THE SURPRISE - NIGHT

Some of the wreckage has been cleared aside, the wounded moved below.

We can hear their moans, and the constant creaking of the bilge pumps.

JACK and his officers scan the moonlit sea through telescopes.

JACK's telescope POV: A long slow pan along the dark horizon.

ALLAN

I believe we've lost her, Sir.

JACK collapses his telescope.

STAIRWELL - NIGHT

JACK moves down a ladder past LAMB coming up from below. LAMB is soaking wet and exhausted.

LAMB

Three feet of water in the hold, Sir,
but the pumps are keeping it from
gaining.

JACK

Very good, Mr. Lamb.

The constant creaking and sloshing of the pumps becomes louder as he continues down past men handing up food and powder from the flooded levels below.

SICK-BAY

Stephen raises his lantern to reveal groaning bloodstained men close packed in the gloom.

JACK steps up quietly beside him and they make the rounds, passing men propped upright by their mates, pale with shock or tense with pain, some struggling to breathe, some barely alive.

JACK clasps hands, whispers encouragement.

A bandaged head swims into in the glow of the lamp, streaked with blood and deeply unconscious.

JACK

Who's this - Joe Plaice?

STEPHEN

A severe comminuted fracture of the
skull. I am not sure he will see out
the night.

Moving on to another barely recognizable face: the youngest midshipman, pale and sweaty, breathing hard from

the pain and the blood loss.

JACK
Mr. Blakeney?

BLAKENEY
Just a broken arm, Sir. Excuse me for
not standing.

JACK looks at STEPHEN, whose expression is grim, but he
says nothing.

THE GREAT CABIN - DAWN

Wan dawn light reflects off the ceiling onto Jack and his
officers as they sit around the chart-covered table,
despondent and battle weary.

Killick serves coffee.

ALLEN
...Frigate? Ha! She may carry the same
weight of metal but you ask me she's no
more a frigate than I'm a Dutchman.

Mowett is trying to staunch a persistent nosebleed

MOWETT
One does wonder what manner of a hull
she has. Our balls seemed to bounce
right off her.

PULLINGS
The men say she is the devils work.
They are calling her the phantom.

Jack looks at Pullings sharply, he knows the power of this
kind of superstition.

PULLINGS (CONT'D)
Though the truth of it is she had the
weather gage and a clear advantage in
firepower.

STEPHEN
But if she has
(quoting Mr Allen)
"the same weight of metal"
does that no imply that their guns are

equal to ours

JACK

No doctor. In modern scientific warfare mere weight of metal don't signify.

PULLINGS

She carries long eighteens, which means she can play at long bowls before we can beat up and touch her

Stephen seems none the wiser

JACK

Here, let me draw it on the cloth

KILLICK

Not on the cloth sir

Killick's insubordination is now so habitual that it raises no more than an irritated gesture from Jack, throwing down his pencil

JACK

Anyway, the sum of it is she had longer guns which could hit us beyond our effective range. So....

Passing a hand over his face

JACK (CONT'D)

It remains for us to patch up the barmy and limp back to Jamaica with news of our defeat, while the Acheron proceeds into the Pacific to lay waste our whaling fleet.

Scanning the faces. Pullings and Allen despondent. Stephen sceptical

JACK (CONT'D)

At least we have no shortage of work to do.

WAIST OF THE SHIP - NOON

The gratings are hauled aside and light floods down into the gun-deck.

GUN-DECK - DAY

Part of a huge tree-trunk - spare timber for repairs - is manhandled by a dozen crewmen.

HOLLAR

Heave. And heave. Handsomely now. One long pull. Belay!

LADDERS

A human chain of men pass cordage, canvas, tubs of nails up towards the light.

QUARTERDECK - DAY

Crewmen labour at the capstan, hauling up the timbers from below.

HOLLAR (O.S.)

Two six heave! Two six Heave!.

The huge log rises from below and hangs suspended from its gantry. JACK shouts down from the quarterdeck -

JACK

Have her placed along the gunwale for now, Mr. Hollom, and the guns moved to that side also.

ABOVE JACK'S HEAD

Men are hanging in the rigging, throwing down damaged sections of rope.

FASTER DOUDLE

All clear below!

QUARTERDECK

JACK dodges the falling rope, moving back, past CHOLES and his men who are cutting out damaged sections of the gunwale, with saws and adzes, prizing up decking and wrestling with the wrecked steering mechanism.

THE STERN

He looks down to where PULLINGS and others have lifted the

broken rudder from its hinges.

Pulling out to -

WIDE SHOT

The ship swarming with men, cutting splicing hammering and hauling. Every able bodied soul hard at work.

THE FORECASTLE. EVENING

Jack surveys the ship as four bells ring and the watch changes.

Stephen joins him, taking a break from the sick bay, smoking a cheroot and gazing out towards the distant coast

STEPHEN

I was wondering. Does it strike you as odd that the Acheron came across us so fortuitously.

JACK

(shrugs)
Fortunes of war.

STEPHEN

Hm. Unless she was alerted to our presence, and looking for us.

JACK

How could that be.

STEPHEN

Napoleon has his spies in the admiralty. There's no doubt of that. And there are some on our own side who would not be unhappy to see you fail.

(on jack's reaction)

Senior men of more modest accomplishments, envious of your early success.

JACK

(astonished)
What. You're saying there are traitors in Greenwich.

STEPHEN

I am saying do not imagine it was a lone privateer who defeated you. He is working for napoleon himself, with access to all that tyrant commands, overtly and covertly. You were beaten by an empire. So do not let defeat weigh too heavily.

Absently feeding his cigar butt to Aspasia, the goat

QUARTERDECK - DAY

An optimistic breeze has picked up, fluttering the tattered ensign.

The deck is now sloping at a forty-five degree angle. KILLICK hands a sandwich to ALLAN who passes it down to JACK.

To the uphill side, carpenters are erecting a scaffolding over the side of the ship.

THE SHIP - DAY

She is leaning over on her side, swarming with men, the tropical heat resounding with shouts and hammering.

SIDE OF THE SHIP - DAY

Carpenters, working inside the scaffolding are fitting new sections of wood into the holes low in her hull.

LAMB

Down. Down. Stop.

The new piece of wood is an almost perfect fit. MR. LAMB marks the places where it is jamming.

LAMB (CONT'D)

Up again.

Then he begins to work on it expertly with his rasp.

UNDERWATER - DAY

Among tropical fish, A diver, a Greek crewman, 'OLD SPONGE' (father of YOUNG SPONGE), a hammer at his belt, plugs a few smaller holes with hemp fibre, then surfaces to

THE SIDE OF THE CUTTER - DAY

OLD SPONGE

(In Greek)

The smaller bit. No. That bit there.

YOUNG SPONGE passes him a piece of lead and some nails. Old sponge dives again

Our POV descending into the sea as....

IN THE SICK BAY - NIGHT

BLAKENEY, with his splinted arm jerks awake from a nightmare, feverish and confused.

He looks around, disoriented, panicked, and finds Calamay by his side.

BLAKENEY

Calamay. Is it true about stitching your nose

CALAMY

What?

BLAKENEY

Joe Plaice told me when you die they sew you up in your hammock with the last stitch through your nose... to make sure you're dead.

CALAMY

Hey. You'll be stitching me in mine first.

BLAKENEY

(drifting off again)

Not through my nose. Promise.

CALAMY

I promise

He fears Blakeney is dying

SICK BAY. NIGHT

Calamay has fallen asleep by Blakeney's side. He wakes to

find Stephen examining Blakeney's wound.

CALAMY

Is it mending, sir?

STEPHEN

No. I'm afraid it will not do.

WAIST OF THE SHIP NIGHT

Others gather on the forecastle, splicing ropes as they smoke and a chat. Somewhere the plaintive whine of a mouth-organ.

NAGLE

(sits)

Blakeney for one. Simpson died in the last watch. That's twelve. And Joe Plaice is looking a bit old fashioned.

WARLEY

Thirty years at sea. Then killed by a block and tackle. Of all the rotten luck

KILLICK

Call it luck? To find us in the mist like that. Took our full broadside and sailed on by. That was a devil ship, mark my words. We're lucky any of us is alive still.

WAIST OF THE SHIP - NIGHT

Roaring flames, flying sparks, the clang of metal on metal.

A forge has been set up. Powder-monkeys sweat on the bellows. The ship's blacksmith is churning out iron bolts, pintles and gudgeons, which are snatched away by NAGLE with tongs and thrown into a bucket of water to cool.

A few yards away, wood chips fly from the MR. CHOLE'S adze as the ship's massive new stern post takes shape.

The new rudder is laid out flat, already cut to its final shape and being strengthened with great nails and iron bands which NEHEMIAH SLADE and AWKWARD DAVIS are nailing into place.

The hammering travels through the ship to

THE COCKPIT - NIGHT

BLAKENEY is lowered onto the table, delirious. CALAMY holds his head, PADEEN his which are lashed together.

BLAKENEY

No. Mamma. Mamma.

STEPHEN

It is the laudanum speaking. You will be a regular Nelson.

He tests the edge of his knife with his thumb. Stephen is an expert at amputations but it is a job he profoundly hates.

CALAMY places the leather gag between BLAKENEY's teeth. HIGGINS unwinds the bandages, grimacing at what he sees, then lies across BLAKENEY'S BODY to hold him steady.

STEPHEN turns and grips BLAKENEY shattered arm.

A sharp, grating noise as STEPHEN works out of shot, cutting off the arm through the shoulder joint.

Close on STEPHEN, lips compressed, utterly focussed.

He puts down the bloody knife and reaches for the spatula in the pail of hot tar.

BLAKENEY has not uttered a sound, though he is shaking uncontrollably and his face is wet with tears.

CALAMY has tears in his eyes also.

STEPHEN finishes his work, breathing hard. A gentle smile to BLAKENEY.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

There. I have never seen a braver patient.

MIZZEN TOPGALLANT - DAY

MOWETT stands in the cross-trees, making a final check on the lashings round the new mizzen top.

Below him the great work is nearing completion, men swarming like ants over every part of the hull.

MOWETT climbs down past FASTER DOUDLE who has one leg looped through the shrouds and is splicing a rope with both hands and his teeth.

Farther down, a patched sail is being furled up tight in its gaskets.

Beyond that, at the base of the main-mast a fascinated group of men have gathered to watch the Doctor trepanning JOE PLAICE.

BASE OF THE MAINMAST - DAY

STEPHEN's drill carves out a neat disc of bone to reveal a purplish mass which he starts spooning from the cavity.

SLADE

Is them his brains, Doctor?

STEPHEN

No, that is just blood. These are his brains.

Exposing them to view. Several of the crew move in for a closer look

The armourer hands STEPHEN a flattened coin, which STEPHEN begins to screw in place over the cavity.

JACK CABIN. MORNING

Jack is with Allen and Pullings discussing something over the charts as Killick clears up the breakfast things.

Mowett enters and salutes.

MOWETT

All hands present and sober sir. One foot in the well and the new mizzen quite sound. Plus a fine Westerly coming up to carry us to Jamaica.

JACK

We're not going to Jamaica.

MOWETT

We're not.

Looking to the others who have just received the news

JACK

She's only a week ahead of us and we have the faster ship. I plan to catch her before she reaches the horn and give her such a hiding as she'll never forget.

(rolling up the charts)

Set a course South Sou West Mr Pullings we have not a moment to lose

Killick backs out of the cabin with the a tray of dishes

OUTSIDE THE CAPTAINS CABIN

.... almost colliding with black Bill in his haste

KILLICK

We're not going home. He's going to chase her to the fuggin Horn!

ON DECK

The news spreads like wildfire. Instantly more arresting than even the doctors operation.

VOICES

...We're going south.

...Jamaica's quite exploded , he's not going home.

...We're going after the devil ship!

Then the bosun and his mates, moving among them, driving all hands to their stations

HOLLAR

Show a leg there! All hands to make sail. Bear a hand now!

WIDE ON THE SHIP

Stirring at her moorings like a racehorse wanting to be off as her shrouds darken with men.

QUARTERDECK - DAY

Jack and his officers resume their positions on deck

HOLLON

Up and down Sir, thick and dry for
weighing.

JACK

Weigh anchor!

WAIST OF THE SHIP - DAY

Men strain on the capstan bars.

BOWS - DAY

The anchor bursting up out of the sea.

GANWAY

The bosun yelling aloft

HOLLAR

Trice up. Lay out.
Sheet home!
Hoist away!

ALOFT

The practised crew working as one.

HOLLAR

Cheerly there in the foretop!
T'garnsl sheets!
Hands to the braces!

WIDE SHOT - DAY

The patched up ship spreading its wings. A sudden cracking
of canvas as she turns and runs directly downwind.

QUARTERDECK - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun has sunk lower. BONDEN, solid as the rock of
Gibraltar is back at the helm, the wind stronger and
directly behind.

JACK
Speed, Mr. Calamy

CALAMY heaves the log clear of the ship's side. The log line races out on its reel. CALAMY checks the run, pulls the pin.

CALAMY
Ten and a half knots, Sir.

JACK makes no comment but the news seems to please him.

CLOSE TO THE WATER - DUSK

The great hull powers past us.

MAIN DECK - NIGHT

The sky a great canopy of stars, the ship racing onwards through the warm night

Crew men and their injured mates have come up on deck. Now they sit around in groups, supping their grog. Someone produces a jaw-harp, someone else a drum.

A guitar is passed from hand to hand, stopping with BLACK BILL who sings ballad in his own strange African dialect, Some of the others know the chorus.

There's an effortless integration of race and rank, of age and nationality - bonds forged by battle and hardship.

OLD SPONGE gets up and dances a Greek dance: obviously a favorite among the crew. Cheering and cat-calls. Lanterns coming up from below. More dancing, insults in many languages, and a song.

GUN-CREWS
Bonaparte Bonaparte
That red-faced son of an old French
fart
Hey ho, stamp and go
Stamp and go, stamp and go
Hey ho, stamp and go

The excitement penetrates JOE PLAICE's stupor. Never having woken since the trepanning he suddenly opens his eyes and eyes and speaks.

PLAICE

"...And the righteous shall inherit the earth."

The men around him stop stare in amazement.

BONDEN

Doctor. Joe said something. He spoke!

QUARTERDECK

Stephen raises a hand in acknowledgement.

MAIN DECK

BONDEN

Say something else Joe.

PLAICE

Handy with that gasket!

Then he goes back to sleep again

IN THE RIGGING - NIGHT

CALAMY and a couple of other midshipmen are eating from a bag of "ships nuts", perched up in the rigging.

On seeing JACK, they break into their own song.

MIDSHIPMEN

Our captain was very good to us
He dipped his prick in phosphorus,
It shed a light all through the night,
And steered us through the Bosphorus.

QUARTERDECK

JACK pretends not to have heard, but he can't hide his smile. Beside him in a chair sits BLAKENEY, his empty jacket sleeve pinned to his front 'Nelson' style, laughing at Calamay's cheek.

From somewhere on the forecastle, WARLEY and his top men start singing in competition.

TOP-MEN

Farewell and adieu you fine Spanish

ladies Farewell and adieu to you ladies
of Spain...

The older midshipman, HOLLLOM joins in, his fine voice soaring effortlessly over the others, hijacking their roistering ballad and converting it to something much more poignant.

HOLLLOM
For we've received orders to sail for
Old England
Perhaps we shall never more see you
again

His singing is noticed by STEPHEN on the quarterdeck.

STEPHEN
What a wonderfully true voice Mr.
Hollom does possess.

IN THE WAIST - NIGHT

KILLICK and NAGLE are less than impressed with HOLLLOM and sing over him, led by ORRAGE the cook.

ORRAGE
Come all you thoughtless young men,
A warning take by me,
And never leave your happy homes
to sail the raging sea.

KILLICK
(muttering, sotto)
Not to sail the great south ocean any
road, in the middle of winter, chasing
a devil ship.

THE GREAT CABIN - DAY

Fingers trace a course down the West Coast of South America.

Another, more detailed chart is placed on top of the first.

ALLAN
This one's by Colnett, Sir. He
travelled with Captain Cook and carried
a pair of Arnott's chronometers.

JACK finds their position and marks it with pencil. A knock on the door.

KILLICK
Couple of the men to see you, Sir.

JACK
(without looking up)
Show them in.

The door opens to reveal CHOLES and WARLEY carrying something

JACK (CONT'D)
What's this?

A scale model of a ship, 15 inches long, perfect in every detail. Jack takes it, delighted

JACK (CONT'D)
My word it's The Acheron! You've caught her exactly!

CHOLES
Warley here did the rigging, Sir.

JACK
A fine job. A fine job

Turning the model in his hands, the men embarrassed but pleased.

CHOLES
If you look here sir. One side opens up. There's a third layer of timber between the outer and inner ribbing. Diagonal bracing. So the balls would bounce off it
I seen them repairing her in Boston during the peace.

JACK
Did you. Did you indeed.
(turning)
You see Mr Allen. The phantom made solid.

Allen admires it. Killick's expression is sceptical. He

prefers to stick with his own, supernatural, explanation of the Acheron's invulnerability.

JACK (CONT'D)

Killick, an extra ration of rum for these men, from my private store.

KILLICK

Which I was saving for saluting day, sir

JACK

Come on Killick. Let us live while we are alive.

SICK-BAY - NIGHT

STEPHEN works at his desk, surrounded by numerous sea-creatures preserved in jars. He is carefully dissecting a small squid, with reference to a printed diagram.

BLAKENEY, looking much recovered, sits to one side leafing through a natural history book, an illustrated index of exotic South American insects.

BLAKENEY

Sir, what's a "phasmid"?

STEPHEN

A type of insect

BLAKENEY

This one doesn't look like an insect.

His POV: It looks like a stick

STEPHEN

(leaning over to look)

That is the whole point. Its an insect which has disguised itself in order to survive.

He takes a probe he is using and turns some pages of the book with it.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Look, here is a moth disguised as a scorpion. And here... a beetle that has put on the colours of a poisonous fruit

to save itself from the birds.

Close on the illustration.

BLAKENEY

Buthow does the change occur - if
its father was a beetle say - to
something like that.

STEPHEN

One imagines that the struggle for
survival, if sufficiently intense, has
the power to change all of us,
indelibly.

BLAKENEY

Even men?

STEPHEN

Of course. Men especially.

THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

Close on an eye, peering through soft foreground shapes.

Wider to see JACK hunkered down to bring his gaze level
with the ship, as through studying its tiny occupants.

JACK

He's vulnerable here. We must get in
under her stern, rake her with a
broadside through her stern windows.
That should even the odds. Then board
her or sink her.

PULLINGS

Assuming we can catch her first.

JACK

He'll be hugging the coast, to take
advantage of the current. So at least
we are on the same highway.

OUTSIDE THE GREAT CABIN

Killick prepares toasted cheese in his small serving area.

He looks up, to See Stephen entering the cabin with some

sheet music

KILLICK

Here we go again, scrape scrape,
screech screech and never a tune you
could dance to, not if you were drunk
as Davey's sow.

THE GREAT CABIN

Stephen enters, takes up his cello.

JACK

Ah doctor, Tell Tom what you know about
Palmiere.

STEPHEN

(seating himself)

A republican. Active in the revolution.
Fled to America when the French
monarchy was restored, then offered a
letter of marque by Napoleon.

Tuning his cello

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

The more important question is what
does he know about you, jack

JACK

He knows he outguns us, though we can
improve on our timing.

A nod to Tom Pullings. Four bells ring above, Pulling
salutes and goes on duty

JACK (CONT'D)

...and he probably outmans us, by a
factor of two to one. He'll have seen
that too. But I doubt he knows we're
still in pursuit.

STEPHEN

He may guess. If you're reputation has
preceded you. I for one never once

entertained the notion we were headed
home for Jamaica

Jack smiles at this, picking up his fiddle and bow.

JACK

Well. You have known me much longer
than Captain Palmiere

STEPHEN

Shall we start with the Corelli.

JACK

Play me an air and we'll improvise.

Stephen launches jokingly, into a snatch of the french
national anthem: Allons enfants de la Patrie.

Jack picks it up and elaborates on it, transforming the
same few bars, with surprising virtuosity, into and
entirely different tune.

Stephen responds and so it hands back and forth, sometimes
harmonizing, sometimes going off at a solo tangent, the two
old friends smiling and nodding at each other as the melody
flows on, as infinitely mutable as the sea

GUN DECK. DAY

The ship sails on. Men stand along one side of the gun deck
as Jack selects a few experienced hands from among them

JACK

Nagle, Slade, Faster Doudle, Hobbs,
Pearce, Simms and Calamy.

Blakeney looks envious as his friend takes his place with
the men around number four gun.

JACK (CONT'D)

Time, Mr. Mowett.

Mowett unscrews the inkhorn in his buttonhole and checks
his watch: The second hand ticking around to the twelve.

MOWETT

Go.

The gun crew swings into action

CALAMAY

Cast loose your gun.

Nagle and his team cut the frapping which holds the gun steady against the roll of the ship.

CALAMAY (CONT'D)

Out Tompion... Sponge your gun... Load with cartridge.

SIMMS removes the wooden bung. Nehemiah Slade clears the barrel, then rams home the cloth bag of powder.

CALAMAY (CONT'D)

Run out your gun.

The men haul the great gun up hard against the port, painted with the gun's name "Sudden Death".

CALAMAY (CONT'D)

Prime!

Nagle stabs down with the priming iron. FAST DOUDLE pours in powder, tamping it into the nozzle.

DOUDLE

Primed, sir!

The men on the ropes strain against the roll of the ship as...

CALAMAY

Point your gun.

Hobbs levers with the hand spike, SIMMS whacks in the wedge. CALAMAY squints along the barrel.

CALAMAY (CONT'D)

Fire!

The slow match whips across and flares in the pan. The cannon roars out and recoils as everyone leaps back out of its way.

MOWETT

A minute twenty-five seconds.

JACK

Well then. If we are to beat the
Acheron, That is the figure to match

The crews move to their weapons. Blakeney, one armed,
obviously itching to be involved in this

JACK (CONT'D)

Mr. Blakeney, Think you can supervise a
gun?

BLAKENEY

Oh. Yes, Sir.

JACK

'Spitfire', hop to it.

He joins the crew of the gun. To one side CALAMY is in
charge of 'Beelzebub', on the other side HOLLUM is now
directing 'Sudden Death'.

AND AGAIN - DUSK

STEPHEN hauls his collecting net on board and empties out a
glistening array of sea creatures - shrimps, squid and
minnows, glinting like opals in the pink light, as another
broadside shakes the deck.

MOWETT (O.S.)

Two minutes five sir.

PULLINGS

Again

AND AGAIN - DAY

Men clap on to ropes and tackles with a vengeance. NAGLE is
driving his crew with his usual ferocity. The other gun-
captains, like HORNER, are sweating to stay apace.

It's a race. JACK's orders are just a formality, the
sequence having become so automatic now.

JACK

Out Tompions... Run out your guns...
Prime.

The concentrated fury of the men swabbing, ramming, heaving in, heaving out -

Seconds ticking away on MOWETT's stopwatch, barrels float on the sea a hundred yards out, as targets.

JACK (CONT.) (CONT'D)
As she bears, from forward aft. Point your guns... Fire!!

THE OCEAN AT NIGHT

The black ship spouting tongues of flame, as water erupts around a raft of barrels, set up as a target.

MOWETT (O.S.)
A minute forty-five

THE GUNPOWDER ROOM. DAY

Boom! Another broadside resounds through the ship as ADDISON, SWIFT and the other powder monkeys come racing down through the dreadnought screens to the magazine and back with more cartridge.

STEPHEN'S CABIN - EVENING

The sound of the guns are faint down here, at least when heard from STEPHEN's perspective - his ears are stuffed with wax.

He is surrounded by his specimen bottles, and he looks from his microscope to his ledger where he is documenting the array of aquatic life-forms. He removes his ear-plugs, but the noise of the guns is deafening and he hastily replaces them.

ON THE GUN-DECK - DUSK

MOWETT watches the second hand of his stopwatch, glancing up as he notes -

And he stops the watch as the first gun fires.

MOWETT
Just under one and a half minutes sir!

His voice is drowned by the firing of the other guns in

close succession entirely demolishing the target raft floating nearby.

The sound mixing with cheering and the frenzied hammering of the carpenter and his mates as the gun-deck partitions are cheerfully re-erected.

IN THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

The table is dragged back into place and settings laid for dinner.

JACK enters, his face flushed with success.

JACK
Killick? Killick there.

KILLICK enters.

JACK (CONT'D)
What do you have for us tonight?

KILLICK
Which it's, Soused Hoggs-Face.

JACK
Aha My favorite.

THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

A lively dinner - JACK sits surrounded by his officers and midshipmen, from the ship's master MR. ALLAN right down to young BLAKENEY.

Behind each chair stands a servant, mostly marines in their scarlet coats. They are big drinkers in the navy and the wine flows.

PULLINGS
Gentlemen, a toast - 'To wives and sweethearts'.

They raise their glasses -

ALL
'To wives and sweethearts'.

SOME (a murmur)
And may they never meet.

Amid the laughter -

MR. ALLAN (to JACK)
You knew Nelson, Sir?

JACK
Lord Nelson? Yes. I had the honour of
serving under him at the Nile.
(aside)
Mr. Mowett, the bottle stands by you,
sir.
(as the bottle moves on)
In fact I dined with him twice, and he
spoke to me on both occasions.

The table goes quiet. BLAKENEY is wide-eyed, though partly
from his strenuous efforts to appear sober.

JACK (CONT.) (CONT'D)
The first time he said to me - 'May I
trouble you for the salt, sir?' I have
always tried to say it as close as I
could to his way ever since - the
second time he said, referring to
battle, 'Never mind manoeuvres, always
go straight at 'em'.

General agreement - 'Hear him, hear him', etc.

EXT THE SURPRISE. NIGHT

A distant POV shot of the ship, lights blazing in her stern
cabin as she moves slowly but steadily downwind.

Over this, strangely, the foreground sound of creaking wood
and panting as...

INT GREAT CABIN. NIGHT

More wine is served. JACK taps his biscuit on the table, by
convention, to remove the weevils

JACK
You see those two weevils, Doctor?

STEPHEN
I do.

JACK

Which would you choose?

The table tenses with anticipation of one of the Captain's 'jokes'. STEPHEN concentrates.

STEPHEN

There is not a scrap of difference.
They are the same species of curculio.

JACK

But suppose you had to choose?

STEPHEN

Then I would choose the right-hand weevil, it has a perceptible advantage in both length and breadth.

JACK

There I have you. You are completely dished. Don't you know in the Navy you must always choose the lesser of two weevils?

He thunders with laughter, the rest joining in or shaking their heads in dismay, having heard it many times before.

STEPHEN

'He who would pun, would pick a pocket'.

More laughter.

EXT THE SURPRISE. NIGHT

Another POV shot, with the same creaking sounds, the same urgent breathing laid over.

The ship is much closer now. The sounds of merriment on board faintly audible. Figures of the officers silhouetted in the stern windows

VOICE

(sotto In French)

Faster. Before the moon gets up

IN THE GREAT CABIN. NIGHT

Pullings taps his glass for their attention

PULLINGS

I believe Mr. Mowett has written a
sonnet in appreciation of our esteemed
doctor.

The officers applaud. The first lieutenants poetic skills
are a source of some pride to them

MOWETT rises and declaims towards Stephen, with a number of
precise airy gestures, like a conductor -

MOWETT

In circumstances hazardous, you've
raised the barkey's Lazarus
(a nod to Blakeney)
Performing the Miraculous with scalpel
and hot tar,
Your physic so impresses us that
nothing now distresses us
We fear no storm nor Acheron from here
to here to Malabar
Glad you're aboard, dear Doctor, glad
you're aboard

Applause and congratulations. BLAKENEY slides dead drunk
under the table and is extricated without comment by two of
the servants.

Jack goes to the windows and opens them to let some air in

As he does so, the new-risen moon reveals dark shapes
approaching from upwind.

JACK

Good God.

PULLINGS

(comes to the window)
What is it sir.

JACK

Damned if he aint trying to board us!

Everyone runs to the windows.

Their POV: three longboats, crammed with armed men, pulling

downwind towards them, closing fast.

JACK (CONT'D)

All hands on deck. Stern chasers aft Mr
Pullings and load with grape.

Throwing open the cabin door

JACK (CONT'D)

Mr Howard!!

THE GREAT CABIN. NIGHT

Suddenly all is confusion. Carpenters banging down the walls, Killick trying to save the dinner service from being smashed as the table is manhandled aside

Gun crews hauling the great guns around to face aft

QUARTERDECK

Howard and his men are ranged along the stern, and climbing up in the mizzen ratlines, firing on the boats.

The privateers return fire, but already they have given up on the attack and are raising sails to take them out of range.

From below, in the great cabin, the sounds of Pullings shouting orders to the gun crews.

PULLINGS

Prime! Run out your guns! Fire

A flash of cannon-fire, smoke drifting back over the quarterdeck, grape shot dimpling the sea, but no obvious effect on the french boats now vanishing into the gloom to right and left.

Hollom by jack's side, full of apologies

HOLLOM

...the watch was doubled, sir, I can't
understand how they got so close...

Then a call from the lookout

LOOKOUT

Sail sir, abaft the larboard beam

JACK
(raising his telescope)
...they must have been watching from
some inlet, waited 'til we passed...

MOWETT
Shall I beat to quarters sir?

JACK
No. He has the wind behind him. It
would only be a repeat of last time. We
must try to outrun him. Make all sail
Mr Hollar.

The order passes forwards. Above, shouts and whistles, the
sound of bare feet running.

THE OCEAN, HIGH AND WIDE - TIME LAPSE

The two ships chasing downwind as night gives way to day.

QUARTERDECK

Jack checks through the telescope and sees the pursuing
ship breaking out her out topgallants.

JACK
Stunsails and royals, Mr. Mowett!...
Then wet the sails and have the idlers
placed along the rail.

MASTS OF THE SURPRISE. MORNING

A new set of sails bloom aloft.

WARLEY casts a wary eye at the repaired mizzen which seems
to be holding.

ON THE GANGWAY. DAY

The idlers: Those not working, seat themselves in a row
along the windward gunwale, like the crew of an ocean
racing yacht, to counterbalance the pull of the sails.

JOE PLAICE watches their pursuer and makes one of his
oracular utterances.

PLAICE

It's the devil at the wheel of that
there Phantom. And someone's called him
up from the hot place. Someone on this
here ship.

WIDE SHOT

The sun passing its zenith Still the chase continues

QUARTERDECK

It is evening now The Acheron seems to be closing

TELESCOPE POV: JACK pulls focus, bringing in the image of
the enemy captain looking straight at him, face indistinct,
a tall figure in a long black coat, which flaps in the
breeze.

Beside him, the Acherons gun crews are preparing her bow
chasers to fire

JACK

What is it with this man? Did I kill
some friend of his in battle?

STEPHEN (a rare smile)

He fights a lot like you, Jack. Maybe
he's a relation

JACK lowers his telescope.

PULLINGS

I fear she's closing, Sir

JACK checks his watch, squints at the sun which is
beginning to drop low beneath the bottom edge of mainsail.

JACK

Aye, but not fast enough, God willing.

LARBOARD GANGWAY. EVENING

JACK strides toward the foredeck where.....

FOREDECK

MR. LAMB and his men are assembling a strange contraption:

a pyramidal structure of spars lashed with rope, with nine sealed barrels, for flotation in its base and some pig iron secured under them to give the thing stability.

LAMB

We didn't want to make it any taller
Sir, on account of this wind.

JACK

Rig the lamps on her, but don't light
them till I say so.

There's a distant bang as he speaks followed, some seconds later, by a splash some hundred yards astern.

JACK (CONT'D)

Ranging shot. She's still not close
enough to hurt us.

(shouts)

Mr Mowett, beat to quarters.

As the drum beats on the quarterdeck, men rush to their stations.

STARBOARD GANGWAY

JACK strides back to the quarterdeck with CALAMY trotting at his heels, BLAKENEY behind him.

CALAMY

Excuse me Sir, but what are they
building?

JACK

What does it look like, Mr. Calamy?

CALAMY

A raft?

JACK

A raft, yes. Your first command.

CALAMY is somewhat taken aback by this, Blakeney envious

WIDE SHOT. DUSK

The sun dropping below the horizon, between the dark silhouette of the Surprise and that of the Acheron, still in relentless pursuit over the humpback landscape of the

sea.

QUARTERDECK - NIGHT

A flash in the darkness behind them. A cannon-ball whistles out of the night and falls short, soaking the men on the quarterdeck.

JACK
(shouts forward)
Lively now! Veer her astern.

STARBOARD GANGWAY - NIGHT

Men lean out from the rigging trying to hold the ungainly raft as she passes down the side of the ship. It's hair-raising work with the black water racing close below.

BONDEN
Easy there, Addison. One hand for yourself, one for the ship!

Another flash in the night behind them.

Then splintering shouts and cursings from somewhere aft, as a lucky ball shatters the rear windows of the great cabin.

QUARTERDECK

The raft has come astern and is being held just out of the water, trying to break free from the hands of the crewmen, who are holding her from the gunwale above and through gunports lower down.

JACK
Mr. Calamy.

CALAMY
Yes Sir.

JACK
I want you to go on the raft, and light each lantern the very moment the same one is put out on board.

CALAMY
Yes sir.

JACK

Then set her sail and come back on board

BLAKENEY
Can I go too, Sir?

JACK
You're needed on board, Mr. Blakeney.

BLAKENEY knows it's because of his arm, but he's glad for CALAMY, who now jumps up onto the gunwale, a lighted taper between his teeth.

JACK (CONT'D)
Wait. You will need a rope around your middle or we will never see your face again.

BONDEN ties a rope round CALAMY's waist and pulls it tight, then lowers him down onto the precarious structure of the raft.

STERN OF THE SURPRISE - NIGHT

The Acheron is still there, but only seen when the flashes from her guns light her up.

ON THE RAFT

CALAMY clings onto the fragile wooden frame, being rattled around like a canary in a birdcage as he tries to reach the lamps and ignite them.

WIDE SHOT

One by one the lights of the Surprise go out, port, starboard then stern, as one by one the lamps are lit on the raft.

Finally the ship is in darkness and the raft is illuminated - a convincing decoy at a distance.

QUARTERDECK

There's a splash and the rope securing CALAMY goes slack.

BLAKENEY peers anxiously over the taffrail. Then the line comes tight and CALAMY is dragged on board, gasping.

BONDEN
Hullo? We caught a fish.

JACK and PULLINGS are watching the raft as the wind and current take her.

JACK
Hard-a-larboard, Mr. Pullings. Set a course due east.

QUARTERDECK

Standing in darkness, JACK and his officers watch the distant lights of the Acheron, occasionally illuminated by cannon flashes.

Some distance from her, the lights of the raft fade until they are barely visible... and then are gone.

MOWETT
Do you think he has sunk her, or has he discovered the cheat?

JACK
We will see. Killick there. Light along some coffee and my topcoat.

QUARTERDECK - LATER THAT NIGHT

JACK sits in a chair wrapped in a boat-cloak. He rises at the bell, walks to the taffrail and searches their wake with his nightglass. Satisfied that the Acheron is not following, he returns to his chair.

QUARTERDECK - LATER AGAIN

JACK drinking coffee brought to him by KILLICK. He turns to the officer of the watch -

JACK
That's enough Easting. Set a course south, by sou-west.

THE RIGGING - DAWN

Follow JACK as he runs up the ratlines, over the futtock shrouds then up the topmast shrouds, finally arriving at

the very top of the mast.

JACK
What news?

PULLINGS
Give you joy, Sir.

JACK'S TELESCOPE P.O.V.

The tactic has worked, and the Acheron lies dead ahead.

JACK (O.S.)
Now we have her.

RIGGING - DAWN

JACK slides down to the quarterdeck, careless as a midshipman shouting:

QUARTERDECK - DAWN

JACK
Set studdingsails and top gallants.

MOWETT and HOLLAR bark out their orders. Men race to obey.

JACK steps up on the gunwale, looking forwards towards the distant black ship. BLAKENEY, nearby, rests his telescope on CALAMY's shoulder, focussing with his left hand.

JACK (CONT'D)
May I use your telescope
(As Blakeney gives it to him)
Ask Dr. Maturin to join us, he loves a good chase.

CALAMAY goes below.

Above, the topmen release more sail which is tightened by the men on deck hauling on cables.

JACK (CONT'D)
(squinting through the eyepiece)
I left mine with Mr Pullings, will you run up and get it, Mr Calamay.

Assuming it was Blakeney who went below.

BLAKENEY

I'll get it sir.

Jack turns, hesitates, on the point of questioning Blakeney's competence.

JACK

...Look lively then Mr Blakeney

Blakeney races up the ratlines, propelling himself upwards with a strange leaping technique he has perfected as CALAMAY runs up from below.

CALAMAY

The Doctor is dissecting a fish. He wants to know if your invitation was a command or a request?

JACK

Tell him we have our phantom on the horizon.

CALAMAY

Should we beat to quarters, Sir?

JACK

Not until we close the gap.

As he speaks the topgallants fill and the Ship heels over another couple of degrees.

At the same time there's a cry from above.

PULLINGS (O.S)

Man overboard!!

BLAKENEY

Falling through the sky, face white with terror, mouth open.

UNDERWATER

He slams through the mirrored surface and proceeds to sink like a stone, unable to swim, his one arm clutching upwards towards the dark hull of the ship as it passes overhead.

The breath has been knocked out of him. Bubbles erupting

from his mouth as he succumbs to the leaden weight of his waterlogged clothes

It's over.

Then another splash and a dark shape comes powering through shot.

It's JACK, lungs bursting, arms digging at the water as he claws down deeper into the darkening depths and manages somehow to snag BLAKENEY's hair.

ON THE SURFACE

JACK breaches like a whale from the surface of the sea, roaring direct to camera -

JACK

Lively with the jolly-boat, d'you hear?

The ship has turned into the wind. Jack is swimming one-handed, trying to will some life into BLAKENEY's blue-tinged face.

JACK (CONT'D)

Blakeney? Lord Blakeney!

But the boy does not respond.

ON THE CROSS TREES

Warley looks forwards to Acheron, her sails receding over the horizon, then down to the Jolly boat, as, with exasperating slowness, the men drag Jack and Blakeney aboard

QUARTERDECK - DUSK

BLAKENEY's lifeless body slithers over the side onto the deck. JACK follows, exhausted and dispirited, as the bosun pushes back the gawking crowd.

HOLLAR

Clear away now, you've all seen a dead man before. All hands to make sail

STEPHEN (O.S.)

Wait!

He comes up from below decks lighting himself a cheroot from a gun-taper.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Higgins, cut down to the galley for
some bellows

Then, of Blakeney:

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
String him up by his heels.

To the men it seems pointless, Blakeney is obviously dead. Jack, angered by the loss of time, snaps at them

JACK
Well you heard the Doctor, bear a hand
there! Davis! Clap onto the Burton
tackle.

The lifeless BLAKENEY swings upside down, water, froth and mucus pouring from his nose and mouth.

STEPHEN blows smoke out of his own mouth into the bellows, then shoves the nozzle between BLAKENEY's lips and pumps.

Nothing happens.

STEPHEN
Pinch his nose. Tight now.

Higgins pinches round the nozzle. Stephen repeats the process. A pause then, unexpectedly, BLAKENEY coughs. He splutters, then he finally draws breath.

STEPHEN hands someone the bellows.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
You may cut him down now, it's clear he
was born to be hanged.

Then he turns and walks away through the crew, most of whom look after him with something approaching awe.

Others think this kind of thing is un-natural.

GREAT CABIN . DAY

From above, the sound of ship making sail again as Jack dries himself and changes, assisted by Killick.

Pullings knocks and enters, with an anxious looking Mr Lamb, with whom he has been arguing a point.

PULLINGS

You can just see her topsails. She's made her turn Westwards

LAMB

I cant vouch for the mizzen sir, not round Cape Horn.

JACK

We'll keep a watch on it. Set our coast westwards Mr Pullings.

Both the officers accept this and leave.

Killick says nothing but his "assistance" with the towel and the clothes becomes more vigorous than it needs to be.

THE SURPRISE - DAY

Heeled over under a great press of sail, her copper showing as she clefts the waves.

WEATHER-DECK - DAY

Their speed is so great green seas are now sweeping the forecastle. A man falls and rolls into the scuppers.

MOWETT

Lifelines fore and aft!

CALAMY heaves the lead and reads the log line, then shouts to JACK -

CALAMY

Twelve knots, Sir!

FORECASTLE - DAY

Lined up along the starboard rails, the crew look back at their captain riding the ship like a charioteer, one eye aloft on the creaking topmost spar.

JEMMY DUCKS

We're cracking on.

NEHEMIAH SLADE

We'll be cracking off presently if he doesn't watch it.

DAVIS

No, he knows this ship. He knows what she can take.

PLAICE

Not with a Jonah on board he don't

Davies and Slade look at him. Its the first time the J word has been mentioned.

Ahead, beyond the Acheron, a bank of storm clouds loom gunmetal grey.

MIDSHIPMAN'S BERTH

Alone in the midshipmen's cabin, Blakeney lies in a hanging cot, looking miserable.

Stephen enters with a steaming mug

Stephen

Soup. Here Drink it down directly.

Blakeney, still chilled and clumsy, drinks with difficulty,

BLAKENEY

I feel so foolish. First my arm and then.....

Suddenly bursting into tears. All the tears he has saved up since the battle and the amputation. A flood of tears hiding his face from the embarrassment of it

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)

Its all my fault ... I'll never be...
I'll never make....

He breaks off, crying his heart out.

Stephens expression doesn't change. At first we take him for a cold fish who will simply walk away and let the child

cry.

Instead he begins to talk, in a perfectly dispassionate tone, as Blakeney's wrenching sobs continue under

STEPHEN

You know every voyage I have sailed with Captain Aubrey there is someone falls overboard. If we are under fire or the weather too severe, they are left to drown, but all other things being equal, Jack will fish them out again and think no worse of them. As it happens he regards you as a fine officer. Courageous in battle, stoical in defeat and not beyond redemption with your Latin and your Logarithms. So. If you do not spend all your nine lives on this voyage there is a strong danger you will make first Lieutenant.

Blakeney has stopped crying. Stephen gives him a nod and leaves.

QUARTERDECK - DAY

The wind has increased considerably, the deck sloping like the roof of a house, the masts bending like coach-whips.

PULLINGS and LAMB are looking up at the mizzenmast which is making ominous creaks and groans.

JACK

Mr Hollar, rig preventer backstays.
Warps and light hawsers to the
mastheads.

PULLINGS looks at JACK. His expression questioning the wisdom of this decision.

JACK stares ahead, the Acheron intermittently visible against the darkening sky as they pursue her over a switchback landscape of massive rolling waves.

JACK (CONT'D)

Better get below, Mr. Pullings!

PULLINGS

What?

JACK
Better get some food in you. Before it
turns nasty.

QUARTERDECK - LATER, DAY

They are running fast before a dangerous, following sea: a landscape of hills and valleys, the whole thing in terrifying motion.

The forecastle now vanishes in foam with every plunge, rising each time with water pouring over the waist and spouting from her scuppers.

KILLICK comes up with the coffee pot inside his jacket. JACK drinks from the spout, peering ahead into the murk. A wild unruly part of him is loving this:

Above him, more top-men struggle up the rigging, with the mast drawing crazy figure of eights on a rushing sky.

BELOW DECKS

The dog watch are wolfing their food, mugs and dinner plates sliding over the table. Crewmen walk up hill to the grog barrel, down their ration and head up top again.

FASTER DOUDLE
You reckon Captain will keep chasing
him 'round the Horn with every stitch
of canvas flying?

DAVIS
I reckon he'd chase him to the gates of
hell if he has to.

PLAICE (joining them)
And that's where we're all going if he
doesn't strike his topgallants.

ON DECK

The wind rising from yell to shriek. Waves blown flat by it, the ship travelling at a drunken sideways angle across a raging expanse of white foam.

Four men on the wheel, lashed to it, spluttering, with the

air around them full of water.

In the distance a tower of black rock on the rim of the sea, distant rollers breaking against it and surging up to a preposterous height.

JACK looks up at the great press of canvas as he paces the quarterdeck, the officers glancing from the sails back to JACK.

JACK
Strike the topgallants.

Men gratefully rush to the ratlines and begin climbing to the masts.

STEPHEN staggers up onto deck. JACK calls to him, pointing at the black rock.

JACK (CONT'D)
Cape Horn, Doctor!

STEPHEN stares across at the legendary Cape. He's struggling with his pocket-glass when a lurch of the ship knocks him flat. As men help him below, WARLEY, the maintop captain reports to the bosun.

HOLLAR (to WARLEY)
Help them with that mizzen topgallant!
You go too, Mr. Hollom!

HOLLOM looks desperate as he follows WARLEY up the ratlines of the mizzen.

MIZZEN TOPGALLANT MAST

WARLEY works frantically. He's out on the yardarm high above the raging sea. He shouts for HOLLOM to join him, but HOLLOM is still in the top, some twenty feet below, unable or unwilling to climb any higher.

THE SURPRISE - DAY

Wide to see the ship. Warley working on the swaying mizzen. The bow swings a couple of points further south.

QUARTERDECK - DAY

Wood and rope straining as they wrestle to turn. Then a

tremendous crack as the mizzen-topmast splits and flies backward into the sea, carrying WARLEY along with it.

BONDEN

Man overboard!

Sail and cordage falling over the men at the wheel. A loose block and tackle swinging murderously in the gale.

JACK fights free from the tangle of ropes as WARLEY vanishes in the foam. The mizzenmast is acting as a sea-anchor dragging the ship's head northwards toward the black rocks.

JACK grabs a speaking-trumpet as WARLEY briefly reappears.

JACK

Swim for the wreckage, man!

Then to PULLINGS.

JACK (CONT'D)

Reduce sail!

As crewmen scramble frantically into the rigging, JACK turns back to see WARLEY desperately swimming toward the trailing wreckage, his mates shouting encouragement over the howling wind.

With sails reduced the ship perceptibly slows, but the dragging wreckage is swinging the ship broadside on to the waves.

BONDEN

She's broaching!

PULLINGS runs to JACK, pointing to the trailing mass of ropes and mast.

PULLINGS

It's acting as a sea-anchor! We must cut it loose, Sir!

WARLEY still struggling to reach the wreckage but going under with each wave. JACK, agonized, makes his decision.

JACK

Axes!

AWKWARD DAVIS scrambles up the ladder with an axe, but loses his footing and falls sprawling over the quarterdeck.

JACK grabs the axe and attacks the ropes. He's joined by NAGLE. The pair of them work shoulder to shoulder, matching blow for blow, knocking chips off the railing in their urgency to cut free the dragging mast.

The prow keeps turning, wave after wave coming at right angles to the ship.

ON THE GUN-DECK - DAY

A hatch cover is torn off by the force of water. A sudden mighty deluge drenches the men, swamping the guns and pouring down into the lower levels.

HOLLAR (yells below)
All hands to the pumps!

QUARTERDECK - DAY

JACK, NAGLE and AWKWARD DAVIS keep hacking at the tangle of ropes.

Finally they succeed. The last of the ropes shears and whips away, the broken mizzen disappears aft and the ship swings southward, away from the rocks.

The wreckage is swept away by the next wave, leaving WARLEY struggling, his last chance of getting back to the ship gone.

Then another wave breaks over him and he is gone.

JACK lowers his head. Without looking at him the other men move away.

OUTSIDE THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

KILLICK and BILL.

KILLICK
He's been at it again.

BILL
Who's that then?

KILLICK
The Jonah.

THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

JACK sits at his desk. The model of the Acheron that WARLEY helped make sits accusingly in front of him.

Stephen enters quietly, lays a hand on his shoulder

STEPHEN
The deaths in actual battle are the easiest.
(beat)
For my own part - those who die under the knife or from some consequent infection: I have to remind myself that it is the enemy who killed them, and not me.
(beat)
You did not kill Warley. He was sacrificed to save the ship. A casualty of war, as surely as if a French ball had taken him.

JACK
I know. Thankyou.

Obviously the death still weighs on his conscience. Stephen pours him a glass on wine, and one for himself

STEPHEN
Blakeney is quite recovered, and exceedingly grateful. He regards you as a hero. Calamay and Williamson also - I believe they would follow you anywhere and most of the foremast jacks with them.

Jack nods. He needs this reassurance

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
....though therein lies the problem.

Jack looks up.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
The pacific is not like the Atlantic.

Many of its islands are still uncharted. A ship could vanish there. Ships do frequently vanish there. You're chances of finding the Acheron, let alone destroying her, so far from any friendly port are - what? You tell me.

JACK

(frown)

You're saying we should go home?

The idea comes as a total surprise to him.

JACK (CONT'D)

...after all we've been through

STEPHEN

No. Because of all we've been through. You have done enough - more than enough. To continue smacks of pride.

JACK

As for my orders, as for our duty?

STEPHEN

Duty. Ha! A four letter word, and the worst of them all in my opinion.

JACK

You're talking like an Irishman.

STEPHEN

I am an Irishman.

JACK

Well you can be as satiric as you like but I warrant you the admiralty...

STEPHEN

The admiralty is full of complacent old men who would not risk half of what you have risked, nor suffered half of what you have suffered. Your duty is to fight tyranny. Tyranny is Napoleon. And Napoleon is back there, in the Mediterranean, whatever their Lordships in Greenwich may tell you.

QUARTERDECK - DAY

An icy wind whips at the men working on the temporary mizzen mast.

JACK stands with PULLINGS, watching as the new yard flails around on its pulley, bashing dangerously against the mast.

The topmen's shouted commands are whipped away by the gale. JACK turns to PULLINGS.

JACK

We'll have to go further south, get around this bloody west wind.

PULLINGS

How far south?

JACK

As far as is necessary, Mr. Pullings. The sixtieth parallel if need be.

THE SHIP - DAY

Tacking southwards. The sun, a pale anaemic disc, gradually disappearing behind layers of cloud.

The wind is a constant shrill whistle through the rigging, a sound like some infernal drill which rises and falls but never ceases.

QUARTERDECK - DAWN

The sun rising in a clear sky which turns a sapphire blue. White ice-islands lie all around them, some a pure, rosy pink. Others bright ultramarine.

And still the wind howls driving them south ever further.

QUARTERDECK - DAY

MOWETT passes his telescope to STEPHEN MATURIN. As STEPHEN studies some fur-seals on an ice-beach, MOWETT launches into verse, shouting against the wind

MOWETT

Then we upon the globes last verge
shall go to view the ocean leaning on

the sky
from thence our rolling neighbours we
shall know
and on the hidden world securely pry.

STEPHEN
(shouts back)
Very good. Is it one of yours?

MOWETT
(regretfully)
No. Some other cove.

THE SHIP AT NIGHT

The ship scudding onwards, soundless at this distance, but for the chilling high pitched whistle of the wind.

An iceberg passes in foreground, fantastic shapes of ice, like a Gothic cathedral, sculpted by the elements.

BERTH DECK - NIGHT

Hanging stoves provide some feeble warmth. Men huddle close to them, their breath condensing, or lie shivering in their bunks, unable to sleep for the cold.

HOLLAR
Eight bells. Out or down.

The previous watch tumble downstairs, chilled to the bone, numb and dazed from the cold.

The next watch emerge from their hammocks and dress. No-one speaks.

THE GREAT CABIN - DAY

The officers take their places at dinner once again:
Penguin stew.

PULLINGS comes in, with an unfamiliar smile on his scarred face and whispers something to JACK.

JACK
Praise be. At last.

The others seem to know what's going on, all except STEPHEN

who looks baffled.

STEPHEN
Praise be for what?

JACK holds up his hand for silence. A series of creaks and groans from the ship. The coffee pot tilts on its gimbals.

JACK
We have made our turn northward,
Doctor. We are headed back toward the
sun.

The officers give a slightly ragged cheer.

JACK (CONT'D)
...in anticipation of which. I asked
Killick to prepare a special pudding.
(shouts off)
Killick there! Killick.

KILLICK comes in with his usual exasperated expression,
bearing a tray with a silver tureen lid on it.

KILLICK
Which I was just coming, Sir.

He lays it on the table.

JACK
Gentlemen, I give you... our
destination.

He whips off the lid to reveal a strange glutinous mass,
cut in the oddest of shapes. Everyone stands to get a
better look.

STEPHEN
The Galapagos Islands.

PULLINGS
'Pon my word so it is. Look: here's
Narborough, Chatham and Hood...

JACK
That's where the whalers are, ain't it?
So that's where the Acheron will be.

The mood is now taken over by the glee of recognition, as

the officers marvel over the pudding.

JACK (CONT'D)

Mr. Pullings, if you'll permit me, a slice of Albermale. For you Doctor, Redondo Rock.

There's a tiny man-of-war made of icing, between the islands. JACK picks it up in his spoon.

JACK (CONT'D)

And the Acheron for me.

STEPHEN takes his little island pudding, and after a brief inspection takes a mouthful of coastline.

DISSOLVE TO:

OPEN OCEAN, DOLDRUMS - DAY

Slow pan over a glassy expanse of water. Jack's head suddenly breaks the surface, close to camera

As he swims, he brings the Surprise into view: a "painted" ship upon a painted ocean", utterly becalmed.

JACK swims around the ship, regarding the hull, which currently presents a less than warlike picture with washing hanging from every part of the rigging.

He calls up to PULLINGS -

JACK

Best bowers chipped... Lot of rust on these forechains... black strake needs another coat.

QUARTERDECK

JACK comes aboard, takes a towel from KILLICK and looks about him. The men are holystoning the deck and polishing the brightwork.

FORECASTLE

NAGLE is with a small group polishing the bow chasers and looking back at HOLLUM who is patrolling the gangway supervising the cleaning.

NAGLE indicates him with a tilt of the head.

NAGLE

....Like Joe says, soon as he went up
the mizzen mast Warley falls. And who's
watch was it when we lost our wind?

HOLLON sees them looking at him.

THE SCUTTLEBUTT, SHIP'S WAIST - DAY

A marine sentry, TROLLOPE, stands guard by the ship's
water-barrel - the level is very low. STEPHEN ladles some
water into a phial.

TROLLOPE

One glass per man, sir, Captain's
orders.

STEPHEN straightening, irritated by the challenge.

STEPHEN

A mere thimbleful, Corporal, for
scientific purposes only.

STEPHEN'S CABIN - DAY

In the gloom of his cabin, STEPHEN angles the mirror of his
brass microscope toward the window, and places a slide
containing a droplet of water under the lens.

MAINMAST-TOP - DAY

JACK climbs into the top. He adjusts his telescope, studies
the horizon.

JACK'S TELESCOPE P.O.V.

He pans across the empty sea.

STEPHEN'S MICROSCOPE P.O.V.

An assortment of mobile, transparent micro-organisms
rotating wildly.

STEPHEN (O.S.)

My God, Padeen, a veritable zoo.

PADEEN takes a look, amazed then greatly amused.

THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

Charts are spread all over the table, STEPHEN pouring over them.

STEPHEN

Show me where these Doldrums lie?

JACK joins him.

JACK

Stephen. Will we never make a sailor of you? The doldrums is a condition, not a region. But you tend to strike 'em here
(pointing)
between the trades, and the sou'easterlies. At least Palmiere will be having it as bad as we are.

STEPHEN continues to pore over the charts, considering their current position, the tiny Galapagos Islands to the north and the vast emptiness to the west of them.

STEPHEN

Assuming he is heading for the Galapagos, and not some other point in all this vastness.

JACK

I'd have thought you'd be delighted to go there. They are said to be a naturalist's paradise.

STEPHEN

In truth, after a hundred and forty-two days at sea the merest lump of guano-stained rock would delight me, provided it did not sway under my feet.

JACK

Then I shall make you a solemn promise. When we raise the Galapagos you shall have a full week ashore. A week to wander at liberty, sketch and dissect and collect what you will. You will be the first proper naturalist to set foot

on the islands and I have no doubt the Royal society will strike you a medal. Now what would you say to that?

STEPHEN

I would like it of all things, provided the men have not mutinied and thrown us all overboard before we get there.

JACK

Mutiny? No. They are already counting their share of the prize money.

STEPHEN

Another week of this and they shall gladly give it up for a glass of clean water

Jack is becoming irritated with Stephen's carping

JACK

Well, we shall have rain presently, and if not we shall tow ourselves out of this.

JOLLY BOAT - DAY

Disgruntled, under-slept men, in boats towing the ship.

NAGLE and DAVIES look back darkly at HOLLLOM who sits in the stern.

HOLLLOM

Stroke. Stroke...

DAVIES (whispers)

I heard he were on the Fair Marion as foundered off Tresco. And he were on the Zephyrus what exploded at Trafalgar.

HOLLLOM has heard this, as DAVIES intended, but he looks away choosing to ignore them.

FIGHTING TOP - DAY

A view from above of men towing the ship. Over this an unpleasant scraping sound - chalk on slate.

BONDEN
M-a-s-t... mast

STEPHEN is writing words on a slate then offering them to BONDEN whom he is teaching to read.

BONDEN (CONT'D)
S-u-n... sun

STEPHEN nods and scratches another word on the board.

BONDEN (CONT'D)
F-i-s- aitch... fisaich... fissage.

As he struggles to decipher it there's the sound of a musket shot and a seabird falls wounded out of the sky, proceeding to flap and squawk pathetically on the surface of the water.

HOWARD, the captain of marines, reloads his smoking musket laughing aloud.

STEPHEN
Is that man completely mad?
(shouts down)
Mr. Howard, a petrel is not good
eating!

HOWARD looks up towards them, a broad smile on his red moon of a face.

HOWARD
Were you never a man for sporting,
Doctor? Why you could shoot all day in
these waters with two men loading!

The wounded bird continues to flounder in the water. For STEPHEN much of the pleasure has gone out of the day.

GUN-DECK - DAY

The midshipmen and powder-monkeys have assembled for weapons practise armed with (unloaded) muskets and cutlasses CALAMAY and WILLIAMSON divide the group into two teams, choosing sides as for school-yard football.

CALAMY
Blakeney...

WILLIAMSON
Reardon...

CALAMY
Swift...

WILLIAMSON
Boyle...

CALAMY
(the final choice)
All right, come on Addison.

Snotty Addison joins Calamay's side, trailing his too-large sword. Williamson tosses a coin.

CALAMAY
Heads

WILLIAMSON
Its tails. We attack

Calamay's side retire to a defensive position made of tar barrels at one end of the deck.

Then Williamsons team give a yell and charge at them

It's serious fighting. Heads are struck, fingers are rapped. BLAKENEY, trying gamely with his left arm but frustrated by his own ineptitude, goes down under the rush of attackers.

BLAKENEY
Ow ow ow!

WILLIAMSON
Yield.

CALAMY
Let go of him.

WILLIAMSON
Yield!!

CALAMY can't drag the bigger boy off. He whips a musket out of his belt and fires it at WILLIAMSON's head.

WILLIAMSON is blasted sideways, clutching his face and

yelling in pain. The other boys separate, horrified.

CALAMY

It's just powder. There wasn't a ball
in it, just powder.

He helps BLAKENEY to his feet.

CALAMY (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

BLAKENEY

No.

Angrily shaking free of him.

CALAMY

What's wrong? I saved you.

BLAKENEY

I didn't want to be saved.

ON DECK - DAY

Tar bubbling under the heat of the sun. Cannons fizzing and steaming as they are washed.

There's been a change of crews in the long-boats, and HOLLUM and his crew are now back on board. NAGLE approaches from one end of the gang-way, HOLLUM coming toward him. NAGLE pushes past, HOLLUM nearly stumbling.

QUARTERDECK - DAY

JACK sees this outrageous act of indiscipline and yells out
-

JACK

Master at arms! Take that man below and
clap him in irons. Mr. Pullings,
defaulters at six bells.

THE GREAT CABIN, DOLDRUMS - DAY

JACK stands behind his desk, brow like thunder. From outside the sounds of the muster. HOLLUM stands in front of him, twisting his hat between his hands.

JACK

....The man walked right past you without making his obeidience. And yet you said nothing.

HOLLLOM
Couldn't think of the words sir.

JACK
Words? He failed to salute you. Its deliberate insubordination, plain as day. So what is the problem?

HOLLLOM looks at the floor, mumbles -

HOLLLOM
They don't like me sir

JACK
They what?

HOLLLOM raises his head and looks at JACK, his eyes are shiny with tears and when he opens his mouth the words tumble out in a rush.

HOLLLOM
I've tried to get to know the men a bit, believe me I have, sir, but they seem to have taken a set against me. I don't know why. It seems that every time I set to sea.....

JACK
(cuts in)
Wait. Hollom. How old are you.

HOLLLOM
Twenty-five sir.

JACK
And you have failed your midshipman's exams three, four times? It is nothing to smile about. You cannot spend the rest of your life as a midshipmen. And you should damned well know by now that if is not your business to make friends with the foremast jacks. Eh? It matters not a whit if they like you. Try to make friends and they'll take it for weakness. Its leadership they want. You

understand that

HOLLOM

Yes sir.

Its a quality he obviously does not possess, in the slightest measure.

HOLLOM (CONT'D)

I'm very sorry, Sir.

QUARTERDECK, DOLDRUMS - DAY

The entire crew has been mustered. The uniformed officers line the quarterdeck as JACK reads from the Articles of War.

JACK

'Article Thirty-Six. All other crimes not capital, committed by any person or persons in the fleet... shall be punished according to the laws, and customs, of the sea.'

(then, to NAGLE)

You're an old man-of-war's man, Nagle, and yet you failed to salute an officer. You knew what you were doing. Have you anything to say in your defence?

NAGLE looks at the deck.

NAGLE

No, Sir.

JACK

Have his officers anything to say for him?

DAVIES and KILLICK scowl across the deck at HOLLOM, who continues to look wretched but says nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)

Seize him up.

NAGLE is spread-eagled to the grating, his hands tied.

HOLLAR

Seized up, Sir.

JACK

One dozen. Bosun's mate, do your duty.

The mate takes the leather cat-o-nine tails out of its red bag.

SICK-BERTH, DOLDRUMS - DAY

The door bursts open and NAGLE is lifted into the sick-berth by a two mates, STEPHEN following behind them.

They dump him on his back on the operating table. NAGLE cries out in agony.

STEPHEN

Face down! On his front!

The men turn NAGLE over. STEPHEN rolls up his sleeves and begins to apply a balm to NAGLE's bloody back. The dark expression on his face reminiscent of when he amputated BLAKENEY's arm.

THE GREAT CABIN - DUSK

JACK stands alone, tuning his fiddle. No matter how much he turns the peg the top string always sounds flat. He tunes some more and breaks it.

JACK

Red hell ...

QUARTERDECK - DUSK

JACK (O.S.)

...and bloody death!!

Every word is plainly audible to the men on watch, who pretend to hear nothing. No-one smiles.

THE GREAT CABIN - DUSK

JACK is fitting a new string. Widen to reveal STEPHEN sitting opposite with his cello.

STEPHEN

I was merely remarking that you have always prided yourself in not being a

flogging captain and this...

JACK

I am not a "flogging captain", Stephen.
I have not once rigged the grating on
this voyage, not once in three thousand
miles.

Tightening the new string.

JACK (CONT'D)

No ship carries a man rated spotless
Christian here so a captain has to do
what he can.

The note escalating as he turns.

JACK (CONT'D)

I don't deny its a hard service but
you will find a deal more brutality on
land

STEPHEN

I am not a party to it on land

JACK

We are not on land and what you don't
seem to realize is that in these
current circumstances, firm discipline
is what keeps this wooden world of ours
together.

STEPHEN

Circumstances largely of your own
making.

This hits a raw nerve.

JACK

I invite you to my cabin as a friend,
Stephen, not to criticize or to comment
on my command. The men on this ship are
my instruments and I will use them as
it suits me.

This goes against all that Stephen believes. He puts aside
his cello.

STEPHEN

I will leave you then. Until you are in
a more harmonious frame of mind.

JACK

Sit down doctor!

STEPHEN can't believe JACK would speak to him like this.

BERTH DECK

The men in their berths all hear it.

THE GREAT CABIN - DUSK

JACK draws back from the brink.

JACK

I'm sorry. Forgive me... Its the heat.

Stephen is still glaring at him.

JACK (CONT'D)

Stay, please.

(beat)

What would you have me do Stephen.

STEPHEN

(sits, angry)

You might tip the ships grog over the
side. Nagle was drunk when he insulted
Hollom. Did you know that?

JACK

Of course I knew that. I'd prefer them
three sheets to the wind as long as
they are happy.

STEPHEN

"Happy?"

(dry laugh)

Would you be happy, pressed from your
home and your chosen occupation,
confined for six months in this wooden
prison, butchered, shouted at, never
more than four hours sleep at a time.
How can they be happy when...

JACK
(cuts in)
Stephen.
(forcefully)
Stephen!
(beat)
Please do not talk of the service like
this it makes me so very low.

STEPHEN
Well so you should be. Had I been at
Spithead I should readily have joined
the mutineers. You imagine them
content? Ever? I say they are oppressed
and tyrannized.

Jack puts a hand to his forehead. Its an old dispute
between them and he is really not in the mood for it

JACK
Men must be governed. There are
hierarchies in nature as you are so
fond of telling me.....

STEPHEN
And men are no different from Animals?
That is the excuse of every tyrant in
history. Of Nero. Of Bonaparte. You do
not have to subjugate in order to rule.

JACK
Then how would you do it?

STEPHEN
With decency. Liberty.

JACK
Anarchy I call it. And you have come to
the wrong shop for that brother.

SCUTTLEBUTT - DUSK

Something disturbs the dark surface of the water as HOLLUM
dips the ladle and fills his cup.

A sense of someone standing close behind him makes him turn
sharply. There's no-one there, but it seems to his nervous
gaze that every one of the men on deck is casting him

accusing, threatening glances.

HOLLLOM makes his way below.

BERTH DECK - DUSK

To reach his quarters he is obliged to walk the length of the berth deck, past a man cleaning his pistol, another whittling with a knife.

No-one speaks as HOLLLOM runs the gauntlet of their stares. It now seems universally to be held that he is the author of all the ship's misfortune.

In the darkness he stumbles on someone's dunnage, almost trips but is caught before he falls. It's one of NAGLE's mates

NAGLE's MATE (ironic)
Careful, sir.

MIDSHIPMAN'S BERTH - DUSK

HOLLLOM comes in, wild-eyed and goes to his berth, breathing hard. CALAMY, BLAKENEY & BOYLE look up from a tense game of cards.

BLAKENEY
Are you all right, Mr. Hollom?

HOLLLOM shakes his head miserably, hyperventilating.

CALAMY
He's not sick. He's useless. He's just dodging work.

BLAKENEY (angrily)
How would you know? You're not the doctor.

CALAMY
The doctor knows it too

He leaves slamming the door.

IN STEPHEN'S ROOM

A shot on the deck above.

Stephen looks up from his book: *Di consolazione philosophae*, hears nothing and returns to his reading.

THE SURPRISE - NIGHT

Wide, on the troubled ship, small yellow patches of light visible from the gun-ports.

BELOW DECKS - NIGHT

The men are lying in their hammocks when, from somewhere outside, there comes an ungodly howling. It stops, then comes again, exactly human in its pitch, exactly like a man...

The crew look at one another. This is like no sound they've ever heard.

The howling stops then comes again, from another direction.

THE GREAT CABIN, EXTERIOR - NIGHT

KILLICK and BLACK BILLY listening.

KILLICK

What did I tell you? The ship's accursed.

QUARTERDECK - NIGHT

JACK comes up from below. He finds MOWETT and PULLINGS already on deck.

JACK

What is that abominable noise, for God's sake?

PULLINGS

I have no idea, Sir.

MOWETT

You don't think its Acheron, Sir?

JACK

(untypically cutting)
The Acheron needs wind in order to move , Mr. Mowett.

He looks about at the terrified faces of the crew as the wailing sound rises to a shriek, as STEPHEN joins the group of officers.

JACK (CONT'D)

What do you make of it, Doctor?

STEPHEN

I'm sure I have never heard the like.

The crew overhear this and pass it among themselves as another anguished howl fills the night.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Perhaps the mother of the creature Mr. Howard shot.

JACK

What creature?

STEPHEN

I didn't see it. A manatee? A sea-elephant possibly? Say he shot the calf and the cow dived with it.

A glance along at Howard, on the gangway, as terrified as anyone

JACK

Bosun. Fire off some flares.

LOWER DECK - NIGHT

Several crewmen huddle close together their faces lit by a battle-lantern.

BILL

Duppies make that noise.

KILLICK (indicating BILL)

See. They know all about this in Africa.

DOUDLE

What's a duppie.

BILL

It's Mister Warley, swallowed by a

fish, and his spirit can't get out.

PLAICE

It's Hollom calling up the Phantom-Ship. He's calling it up, don't you see? And it'll take us all straight to the hot-place.

A muffled boom outside seems to confirm JOE's bizarre theory.

WIDE ON THE SHIP - NIGHT

Flares: Three lights soar and burst with a ghostly glow, making a pool of blue light around the ship, the sound continuing to echo and re-echo from somewhere beyond

QUARTERDECK - NIGHT

The light illuminates the half-hour glass, its top-half empty of sand while the duty sergeant stands frozen to the spot. Jack rounds on him.

JACK

Sergeant, what the devil are you thinking of? Turn the glass and strike the bell.

Roused, the duty sergeant turns the glass and time resumes its flow.

Two bells are hesitantly rung and the crew regain the power of motion, their limbs still spastic with fear. And when the sound comes once more they all freeze.

JACK joins MOWETT at the taffrail. The thing is somewhere out there, whatever it is.

MOWETT

Perhaps some poor shipwreck?

He shouts, a slight nervous catch to his voice.

MOWETT (CONT'D)

Ahoy! Is anyone there?

Part of him knows it's crazy and of course there's no reply. The sound constantly shifting position, now in the water, now in the sky.

MOWETT turns to see a white face, frighteningly close to his own. It's PADEEN, mouth agape, face unnaturally white, staring into the gloom as though drawn to whatever horror lies out there.

JACK

Padeen. What are you doing on the quarterdeck?

He looks down at the press of men who have gathered at the bottom of the ladder, some with weapons.

JACK (CONT'D)

Below! All of you men below!

MIDSHIPMEN'S BERTH - NIGHT

The boys sit together. None of them look at HOLLUM, who lies pale and wretched in a corner of the room, clutching his stomach.

STEPHEN'S CABIN - NIGHT

As the howling continues, STEPHEN looks through a number of books on sea-creatures searching for a reference to what they're experiencing.

JACK stands behind him, looking over his shoulder. His eye is caught by a picture in one of STEPHEN's books.

He puts his hand on the page, to stop Stephen turning it

JACK

What is that?

STEPHEN is about to answer when there is a knock on the cabin door.

BLAKENEY

(to Stephen)

It's Mr. Hollom, sir, you better come quick.

MIDSHIPMEN'S BERTH

HOLLUM writhing in agony on the floor, STEPHEN trying to calm him.

STEPHEN

Padeen!

GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

STEPHEN and JACK confer.

STEPHEN

We spoke as I was bleeding him. He thinks he's been cursed by the men. Its possible there's nothing physically wrong with him.

JACK

Physically. No. There isn't

Avoiding Stephens eye for some reason

STEPHEN

If a man is named a "Jonah", what usually happens to him?

JACK

It's like a white crow - the others peck it to death. There's nothing to be done about it.

STEPHEN

Then you believe it too.

Jack meets his eye, but says nothing and Stephen sees clearly for the first time, the gulf that has opened between them

FORECASTLE, LATER - NIGHT

BLAKENEY stands near the bows peering out into the night. A figure approaches from behind and lays a hand in his shoulder.

BLAKENEY nearly jumps out of his skin.

BLAKENEY

Mr. Hollom! You gave me such a start. Are you better now?

HOLLOM's breathing does indeed seem easier.

HOLLLOM
Much better, thank you.

BLAKENEY
I think the creature is going away.

HOLLLOM
I am sure of it.

He reaches down, picks up a 12 pound cannonball.

HOLLLOM (CONT'D)
You've always been very kind to me.
Goodbye, Blakeney.

With a sudden movement he's on the gunwale, then he jumps over the side the cannonball in his arms.

BLAKENEY looks down with shock to see HOLLLOM's pale face receding from him into the depths. It's a moment before he gathers his wits to shout -

BLAKENEY
Man overboard!

QUARTERDECK - DAWN

The ship's company are mustered on deck. JACK stands at the sword rack lectern. KILLICK hands him a Bible open at the story of Jonah.

JACK hands back the book.

JACK
The fact is, not all of us are born to the sea. Nor do we become the men we once hoped we might be. But we are all God's creatures. If some of us thought ill of Mr. Hollom, or spoke ill of him, or failed him in respect of fellowship, then we ask your forgiveness, Lord. And his.

Close on the faces of the crew - KILLICK, HIGGINS, NAGLE, CALAMY and BLAKENEY.

JACK (CONT'D)
We are all of us rough fellows

sometimes and we will endeavour to be kinder.
Amen.

CREW

Amen.

They remain standing, heads bowed, observing a minute's silence, as the sky begins to pale, and the white disc of the sun appears above them.

FASTER DOUDLE is the first to look up, followed by others - the terrible sound has gone and a small puff of wind flings a few drops of rain against the mainsail.

HOUR GLASS

The sand runs out of the half-hour glass.

BONDEN

Strike eight bells.

QUARTERMASTER (to the marine sentry)

Turn the glass and strike the bell.

The glass is inverted. The bell tolls.

SURPRISE AT SEA - DAY

The ship takes off through a tropical squall. Men rig a sail to catch the water, others appear with barrels and tubs, anything to catch the precious rainfall.

QUARTERDECK - DUSK

STEPHEN has joined the officers, the rain has passed, the decks still wet, a stiff breeze filling the sails.

JACK

There you have the whole shooting match - fore and fore-topmast staysails, inner jib, outer jib, flying jib, spindle jib, and jib of jibs!

MOWETT (to STEPHEN)

Something to tell your grandchildren, sir.

STEPHEN

Were I to have any it would be the
first thing I would tell them, sure.

There's a separateness about Stephen . Since the Jonah
business and his treatment by Jack he's become noticeably
more ironic, more distant.

THE SHIP - ANOTHER DAY

Sea birds swarming over a shoal of fish in the foreground
and the cry of the distant lookout carried faintly across
the sea.

LOOKOUT (O.S.)

Land-ho!

GANGWAY - DAY

BLAKENEY runs along the gangway, past STEPHEN, en route to
the quarterdeck.

BLAKENEY

Give you joy, sir! We have raised the
Galapagos!

MONTAGE OF TELESCOPE VIEWS, GALAPAGOS - DAY

There's a primeval quality to the landscape, a feeling of a
world just born. The wild creatures that inhabit the lava
flows and coral beaches confirm this - the giant tortoises,
iguanas, sea-lions and penguins, a teeming profusion of
exotic animals and plants.

QUARTERDECK/FORECASTLE/TOPS - DAY

The ship fairly bristles with telescopes.

FORECASTLE

A small group of familiar faces share a pocket telescope.

NAGLE (looking)

Can't see any wimmun. Just lots of
ducks and lizards.

DOUDLE takes the telescope.

DOUDLE

Wot? There must be. T'ain't natural.

QUARTERDECK

STEPHEN and BLAKENEY side by side. From both their faces we sense their wonder at seeing these remarkable creatures for the first time.

STEPHEN
How extraordinary.

BLAKENEY
What, sir?

STEPHEN
Those birds!

He's looking at a group of unremarkable black seabirds waddling about on a rock, flapping short stumpy wings

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
A species of cormorants. But apparently flightless by all that's holy. I am sure that has never been documented.

BLAKENEY dwells briefly on the strange rock-climbing birds then drifts back to the iguanas.

BLAKENEY
The dragons don't seem to bother 'em.

STEPHEN
They are a type of iguana I should think, and therefore vegetarian.

His telescope remains focussed on the cormorants.

BLAKENEY is wholly absorbed in the iguanas.

BLAKENEY
Will you catch one?

STEPHEN
Yes. Most certainly. And if we can, some eggs.

BLAKENEY
I mean the great lizards.

STEPHEN

Oh!

He laughs, recognizing how superficially dull the birds are to BLAKENEY's untutored eye, by contrast with giant lizards.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I should think a pair of them. Then you can present one of their offspring to the king.

BLAKENEY

There's one going for a swim.

STEPHEN

No. Iguana are land animals.

BLAKENEY

Look. All Three of them

The prehistoric-looking creatures, as if suddenly awakened, have begun diving into the water.

STEPHEN (O.S.)

Holy mackerel you are right. Two new species in as many minutes. Dear boy, its the promised land!

He breaks off, suddenly aware of a shouted exchange between the lookout and the quarterdeck.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

What is all that confounded bellowing?

JACK

All hands about ship!

BLAKENEY dashes off and STEPHEN is elbowed out of the way by hands rushing to get at the sails.

NEHEMIAH SLADE

By your leave sir, by your leave.

HOLLAR (distant)

Helms a'lee - off tacks and sheets - mainsail haul!

As the ship turns a distant whaleboat appears with six men aboard, pulling out from one of the neighboring islands.

SIDE OF THE SURPRISE (TIME-LAPSE) - DAY

The whaleboat has come alongside.

Men swarm down the boarding nets and the whalers are helped aboard, hoarse and exhausted from rowing and shouting.

HOGG

God bless you. Thank you, shipmates.

QUARTERDECK - LATER, DAY

HOGG, the senior whaler, sits with his mates, relating his story to JACK and the officers.

HOGG

Hundred thousand pound of good whale oil they stole. Then the bastards...

HOLLAR

No swearing on the quarterdeck.

JACK

(waves Hollar away)

Go on.

HOGG

Then they burnt our bloody ship, bunch of fugging pirates.

He takes a pint mug of water, gulps it down, and passes it back to BLAKENEY for a refill.

JACK

Privateers. Was it the Acheron?

HOGG

Weren't close enough to see her name. We was coming back for fresh lines, hid in that inlet, yonder. Black-three master. Bit beamy and raised in the stern.

That's the Acheron

JACK

And her course?

HOGG

Maybe a point south of west. Following
the rest of the whaling fleet.

JACK (rising)

Mr. Mowett, these men will be entered
on the ship's books. Mr. Allan, lay a
course west sou'west.

As ALLAN hurries away shouting orders -

PULLINGS

Should we not take on fresh supplies,
Sir? Those tortoises...

JACK

(overlapping, impatient)

There's not a moment to lose, Mr.
Pullings.

He leaves the quarterdeck and goes below. STEPHEN
following.

IN THE GREAT CABIN

JACK has taken his jacket off and is already unfurling his
charts. STEPHEN hurries in.

STEPHEN

Have you forgotten your promise?

JACK

(not looking up)

Subject to the requirements of the
service, Stephen. I could not in all
conscience delay for the sake of an
iguano or a... giant peccary -
interesting no doubt, but of no
immediate application.

STEPHEN

For God's sake, Jack, there are
creatures, probably hundreds of
creatures which have never been seen by
anyone who knew what they were looking
at. If Joseph banks had happened on it
he would....

JACK

Banks paid for the *Endeavour*, he was a gentleman scholar pursuing his own agenda whereas...

STEPHEN

(overlapping)

But you accept that his discoveries were of great practical value?

JACK

Not to the Admiralty, Stephen. Not to Hogg and his like who are currently at the mercy of a thirty-two gun privateer.

STEPHEN

But Tom Pullings says our supplies are very low. Surely there's a need to.....

JACK

You'd tell me my job now?

STEPHEN swallows his indignation and tries for a compromise.

STEPHEN

...there's an *opportunity* to serve both our objectives As I understand it you mean to go round the end of this long island, then start your voyage. I could walk across it, be on the other side long before...

JACK shakes his head.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I would walk briskly, pausing only for important measurements and almost certainly making valuable discoveries - springs of fresh water, mineral ores, antiscorbutic vegetables...

JACK (interrupts)

If wind and tide had been against us I should have said yes. They are not and I am obliged to say no.

(with finality)

No.

STEPHEN is livid. Betrayed.

STEPHEN

I see. So after all this time in your service I must simply be content to form part of this belligerent expedition, hurry past inestimable wonders, bent solely on destruction...

JACK

...you forget yourself, sir.

STEPHEN

No Jack, You have forgotten your self. For my part I look upon a promise as binding...

JACK

...the promise was conditional.

STEPHEN

...and till now it never occurred to me

JACK (overlapping)

I command a King's ship, not a private yacht

STEPHEN

...that you were not of the same opinion.

JACK

.... and we have no time for your damned hobbies, sir!

"Hobbies". So that is JACK's honest view of STEPHEN's lifetime of work in science.

Stephen reacts by suddenly becoming icy and clinical.

STEPHEN

You have changed, you know that. It is something I have noticed in those accustomed to the long exercise of power.

JACK

Sir. Withdraw.

STEPHEN

The pity of it is, that you once despised it too. Or so I once imagined.

JACK

You should withdraw Stephen. Our friendship nearly began with a duel. I would not like it end with one.

STEPHEN

If you wish it, you will find me obliging, at the first opportunity.

STEPHEN bows slightly, then leaves.

QUARTERDECK - DUSK

STEPHEN stands alone at the taffrail watching as the islands recede in the distance.

News of the violent argument has spread and there is many a sympathetic glance, which further humiliates STEPHEN.

BLAKENEY approaches him carrying something carefully in the palm of his hand.

BLAKENEY

Sir, I found a curious beetle walking on the deck.

He opens his hand - close, on a very plain little brown beetle.

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)

I think it's a Galapagos Beetle, sir.

STEPHEN

I'm sure of it.

BLAKENEY

Were you to have walked all day on the island, you might never have come across it.

STEPHEN

That is more than likely, sure.

BLAKENEY passes it to STEPHEN.

BLAKENEY
You can have it.

STEPHEN
Thank you, Mr. Blakeney.

BLAKENEY hovers for a moment, unsure of further conversation. Then he retreats.

IN THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

JACK sits alone at the table. KILLICK enters with toasted cheese for two.

KILLICK
No music? That's a relief/shame

He sets down a single plate of toasted cheese.

KILLICK (CONT'D)
I collect that himself won't be joining.

JACK
Thank you, Killick

JACK cuts himself a portion, scowling at STEPHEN's cello which seems to watch him reproachfully as he eats.

STEPHEN'S CABIN - NIGHT

STEPHEN takes a dropper, carefully measures twenty drops of laudanum to a glass of water, and drinks.

LADDER - DAY

A wild wind humming through the rigging as STEPHEN goes topside, almost being flung off twice as he makes his way up the ladder.

FORECASTLE - DAY

He finds various hands making the boats secure.

PLAICE
Have you seen the bird, doctor?

STEPHEN

I have not - no bird these many days.
What kind of a bird?

PLAICE

A sort of albatross I believe, or
perhaps a prodigious great mew. He has
been following the ship since... there
he is, crossing the wake!

ON THE GANGWAY - DAY

STEPHEN runs along the gangway to get a clearer view,
checking himself when he sees JACK on the quarterdeck.

Their eyes meet. The quarterdeck is JACK's domain now, and
STEPHEN avoids it.

Then, behind JACK, the great bird suddenly appears.

It's huge, with at least a fourteen foot wing-span, and
flying very close to the ship, drifting and soaring on the
gusting wind, appearing and disappearing between the sails.

STEPHEN is mesmerized by it. He lets go of the rail,
leaning forward to get a better view.

At the same time across from STEPHEN on the opposite
gangway, toward the bow, HOWARD and two or three marines
open fire on the bird. The bird drops low, flying right by
STEPHEN.

Again a crackle of gunfire, but the bird is apparently
uninjured, and it banks away, skimming the surface of the
water.

STEPHEN sags to the deck. A shout. People running. Blood
spreading across the white of his shirt. HOWARD there by
his side.

HOWARD

My God, man! I'm so sorry. The bird
dropped low. I didn't see you there!

JACK is there, shouting -

JACK

Calamy! Get Higgins!

(then)
Padeen. Davies carry the Doctor below.

STEPHEN gets slowly up, hands reaching to help him, HOWARD in the background distraught, explaining to anyone who'll listen what happened.

STEPHEN
It's all right, I am quite capable of walking.

He tries to stand, crumples.

SICK-BERTH - DAY

HIGGINS presses clumsily around the wound as STEPHEN lies on the bed, his abdomen rigid, his breathing laboured. JACK watches from the door.

STEPHEN
You will just make it worse... by prodding, Mr. Higgins, it cannot be got at... except by opening me up.

A violent pitching of the ship makes it obvious how impossible this will be under sail.

As STEPHEN lapses into unconsciousness, HIGGINS looking alarmed, approaches JACK.

HIGGINS
The bullet took a piece of shirt in with it. Unless it is removed it will suppurate and fester.

JACK
Are you equal to the task?

HIGGINS
I'll need to read up on the Doctor's books, like. Study some pictures he has, get my bearings, but not at sea, sir, oh no! This is delicate work. I need firm ground beneath my feet.

OUTSIDE THE CABIN

JACK passes an anxious crowd of the ship's company: BLAKENEY, JOE PLAICE, KILLICK, and HOWARD.

JACK
You men get about your business.

There are dark looks toward JACK's back as he retreats toward his cabin.

THE GREAT CABIN - DAY

JACK throws a chart on the table.

With his protractor he marches out great strides west into the Pacific from the Galapagos Islands and marks the ship's position. He measures the sea-miles to the nearest island group - The Marquesas. It's a considerable distance.

LOOKOUT - DAY

The lookout leaning out from the cross-trees, having spotted something in the distance.

DOUDLE
On deck there. Object fine on the starboard bow. Which I believe it is a barrel.

THE SHIP LYING STATIONARY - DAY

A barrel is being lifted aboard from the skiff and passed up the side of the ship.

IN THE WAIST OF THE SHIP

JACK comes down, accompanied by ALLAN, the acknowledged expert in these matters.

Others gather round, including HOGG the whaler, inspecting the stencilled markings.

ALLAN
Martha's vineyard.

HOGG
No, this here's from Boston. I was married there once.

ALLAN
Any road, it's a Yankee barrel, what they call a Bedford Hog in New England.

MOWETT (to JACK)
The Acheron sailed from Boston.

JACK
I'm well aware of that, Mr. Mowett.

HOGG
Yes, and it's not been in the water
more than a week. Look: no sea chummer
on it, and the dowels is sound.

ON THE QUARTERDECK - DAY

JACK returns to his post.

JACK
Continue due west, Mr. Bonden.

TOM PULLINGS watches him. There has been a change amongst the officers and crew toward JACK, his relentless driving after the Acheron has reached the point of obsession, an obsession not shared by his exhausted, hungry men.

He is a lonely, haunted figure as he now steps up on the gunwale, one hand on the ratlines, scanning the empty sea, sensing his enemy is out there, just beyond the curve of the earth.

INT STEPHEN'S CABIN

Lying on his bed, in some pain. STEPHEN hears thudding feet, shouted orders.

In his weakened state, the sounds tend to merge. His pitching cabin keeps swimming out of focus.

There's a knock on the door and JEMMY DUCKS appears with a mug of soup and some biscuit.

JEMMY DUCKS
...sail on the horizon, sir. Hull down,
running west. It may be a couple of
days before we can catch her.

STEPHEN nods, feeling nauseous. All he wants is quiet.

JEMMY DUCKS retreats. STEPHEN swigs from a little bottle of laudanum, which for a moment brings peace, effectively

blocking out the noise from above.

A smile to Padeen, like a farewell, and he closes his eyes.

FORECASTLE - DUSK

JACK, telescope to his eye, studies the distant ship as
PULLINGS jumps down to the deck.

PULLINGS

I've had a look from the main-top, it
might well be the Acheron. If we put on
more sail we'd come up behind her
before nightfall.

JACK lowers the telescope, turns his back on Pullings,
strangely abstracted.

PULLINGS (to his back) (CONT'D)

Do you wish me to beat to quarters
(no reply)
...sir?

A long silence. Then Jack walks away

PULLINGS stares perplexed from JACK's retreating figure to
the distant Acheron.

The foremast jacks, their faces sharpened with anxiety,
watch as JACK passes.

INTERIOR STEPHEN'S CABIN - DAWN

Early morning light on the interior of the cabin. PADEEN is
asleep, holding a Bible, in the Doctor's chair.

STEPHEN himself lies motionless with his eyes closed and
his mouth open, no color in his face.

The weather seems calm. From outside the sound of the
bosun's orders, over rattling blocks and pulleys

HOLLAR (O.S.)

...Clap on now! Every rope an end...
Jolly boat away... Slowly, Jenks! You
grass-combing lubber!

MOWETT comes in, sees STEPHEN, and takes him for dead.

MOWETT
(shouts outside)
Davis! Slade!

Two big men come in behind him. PADEEN wakes, confused and pushes them away, moving protectively to the doctor's side.

The commotion disturbs STEPHEN. His eyes open. Like a dead man just came back to life.

MOWETT (CONT'D)
Doctor. You're still with us. Can we
move you onto a stretcher?

STEPHEN swallows uncomfortably and tries to make sense of things.

STEPHEN
Why?... Where are we?

A GALAPAGOS ISLAND - DAY

A giant iguana watches as a small procession trudges up the stony beach.

At its head, STEPHEN is carried in a litter up to where a tent has been set up above the high-water mark.

His P.O.V. As JACK appears in the blue sky above him.

STEPHEN
Tell me this wasn't on my account

JACK
(dead pan)
No. It was for the Higgins
(beat)
He's cack-handed enough at the best of
times. Can't have him poking around in
your belly without a solid platform to
work on.

He ducks as they enter -

THE HOSPITAL TENT

In the creamy light, they lay STEPHEN down on recently constructed wooden operating table.

HIGGINS squats on the ground, rummaging through various large sharp surgical instruments which he has emptied onto a piece of Hessian.

JACK

All set?

STEPHEN grabs JACK's sleeve.

STEPHEN

Not Higgins. Bring me Mr. Lamb.

THE TENT - NIGHT

Outside NAGLE is working at a makeshift forge.

JACK enters to see the inside layout of the tent much changed.

STEPHEN sits pale and sweaty, propped up on a series of chests, his back against a coil of rope. In front of him, suspended by pulleys, LAMB and CHOLES have set up a large gilt-framed mirror.

Beside him, on a white tablecloth, some small scissors and scalpels.

JACK

You look damnably feverish, are you sure you are up to this?

STEPHEN

There is some little fever, but not enough to cloud my mind to any degree. How is Nagle proceeding with my extractor?

NAGLE comes in holding the instrument in question: a long-nosed instrument with little jaws, made from a pair of scissors.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

(tries it)

Cleverly made - neat - charming. Let us begin.

PADEEN hovers in the background looking agitated and emotional.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Padeen, wait outside, let no-one in.

JACK
Is there anything I can do?

STEPHEN
You could hold my belly, pressing
firmly when I give the word. But have
you a head and a stomach for this kind
of thing?

JACK (smiles)
My dear Doctor, I have seen blood and
wounds since I was a little boy.

STEPHEN begins first with the knife, then the probe - the
grind of metal on living bone.

STEPHEN
You will have to raise the rib,
Higgins. Take a good grip with the
square retractor. Up. Harder, harder.
Snip the cartilage.

The metallic clash of instruments, perpetual swabbing.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Now, Jack, a steady downward pressure.
Good. Keep it so. Give me the davier.
Swab, Higgins. Press, Jack, press.

Deep in the sodden cavity, a glimpse of lead. The recently-
forged, long-nosed instrument searching, deeper and deeper.

JACK closes his eyes. STEPHEN draws in his breath, arches
his back, and it's done.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
There she is.

He pulls out the bullet and, with it, a fragment of his
shirt

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Is that all of it?

The bloody piece of shirt is handed to HIGGINS who matches

it to the hole in STEPHEN's old shirt.

HIGGINS

Aye, she'll patch up nicely, sir.

STEPHEN

Easy away, Jack. Handsomely with the retractor. Higgins, look to the Captain, while I swab.

HIGGINS helps JACK into a chair, pressing his head down between his knees. After a moment, and a few deep breaths, JACK looks up. STEPHEN smiles at him. A hint of surly triumph.

FADE TO BLACK, then UP ON:

STEPHEN'S TENT - DAY

Through a gap in the door of his tent STEPHEN can see the distant ship at anchor. Repairs are underway, guns being unloaded, stores and fresh water being ferried aboard.

BLAKENEY comes in, followed by PADEEN with a some numbered boxes hung round his neck.

STEPHEN

My goodness, what is this.

BLAKENEY starts rolling up the sides of the tent as PADEEN unloads his boxes, each with a beetle and a piece of vegetation in it.

BLAKENEY

Well sir, Padeen and I have been doing some collecting for you. The beetles each come with a specimen of plant they were found on. Ooops. Catch him, Padeen! There he goes.

He finishes rolling up the tent sides to reveal a collection of cages, with native wildfowl in them, being fed by the poulterer, JEMMY DUCKS.

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)

The birds were snared by Jemmy Ducks. Captain says we can keep them in the chicken coop.

Then, producing a notebook -

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)

And I made a few notes if you want to see them

STEPHEN flips the pages: *No 22. Large square black beetle with pincers. Found under rock. Eats earthworms.*

STEPHEN

I see the makings of a naturalist.

BLAKENEY is flattered but unsure.

BLAKENEY

Well sir, perhaps I could combine them, and be a kind of Fighting-Naturalist, like you?

Stephen starts to laugh, then stops because it hurts so much

STEPHEN

Is that what I am? You may find they don't combine too easily.

He levers himself into a sitting position.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Shall we take a tour of your aviary?

BLAKENEY looks doubtfully at the doctor's bandaged abdomen.

BLAKENEY

Should you really be up?

STEPHEN

(determinedly)

Yes. I should be. Padeen.

PADEEN puts the escaped beetle in his mouth for safe keeping and offers STEPHEN a hand. STEPHEN pulls himself painfully to his feet and starts buttoning his shirt.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

(To Blakeney)

How long does the Captain intend that we stay here, do you know?

ON THE BEACH - DAY

JACK is watching those of the crew not on duty play cricket on the shore, with a canvas ball and stumps made of driftwood.

JACK

Oh, a week perhaps. There is no great hurry.

STEPHEN

But surely, you must catch the Acheron before she leaves the Marquesas?

JACK

It may not have been her that we sighted.

(looks away)

No, I think we shall go home now, before peace breaks out with France, God forbid.

He's making light once more of what has been a huge and far-reaching decision.

STEPHEN

But how will it sit with your superiors, to have spent six months in a fruitless pursuit and come home empty-handed?

JACK

"Empty-handed"? What about these plants and animals which Blakeney has been collecting? The British museum will need an entire new wing for 'em.

STEPHEN regards him gravely, shaking his head.

STEPHEN

Jack. I fear you have burdened me with a debt I can never repay.

He is absolutely sincere about this, to JACK's great embarrassment.

JACK

Tosh. Name a shrub after me. Something

prickly and hard to eradicate.

STEPHEN

A shrub? I shall name a sea-going
dragon: Iguana Aubreii!

SURPRISE CAMP - DAWN

STEPHEN, BLAKENEY and PADEEN leave the camp on Stephens first day of exploration. They are armed with nets, baskets and a day's supply of food and water.

STEPHEN walks slightly stooped, leaning on a walking stick.

COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A strange and marvellous landscape with its organically shaped lava flows and alien looking flora and fauna.

Everywhere Stephen looks there are creatures unique to the islands.

He is in his element, collecting specimens which PADEEN carefully stores in the jars and baskets. BLAKENEY has his telescope trained on some distant humps.

BLAKENEY

Doctor, would you think it very
unscientific of me to ride on the back
of one of those tortoises.

STEPHEN

No, Mr. Blakeney. I would consider it
an experiment of absolutely vital
importance. But afterwards, I do desire
to find that flightless cormorant, if
such it is, while I can still most fast
enough to catch it.

A VALLEY - DAY

BLAKENEY gets astride a giant tortoise and burns his bottom on its scorching hot shell.

LAVA BEDS - DAY

STEPHEN with his telescope taking notes on bird-life.

LOW SCRUB - DAY

The huge, strangely balletic figure of PADEEN chasing after a butterfly in evening light.

A HEADLAND - DAY

Wide to see another aspect of the countryside - a hint of distant sea, a rocky headland rising from the plain.

The group is widely scattered. STEPHEN at the base of the headland, BLAKENEY half a mile further inland. PADEEN coming up slowly behind, laden with the fruits of their expedition.

BASE OF THE HEADLAND - DAY

STEPHEN rests a moment. Some stones rattle down from the hillside. He looks up to see a flash of black feathers near the crest - the cormorant he's looking for.

THE ROCKY SLOPE

As STEPHEN continues toward the top, he glances above him.

Again he sees the bird, moving higher then turning, as if the creature is leading him on.

STEPHEN gets down on all fours, crawling cautiously to the crest just above him.

TOP OF THE HEADLAND

A clearing. There is movement in the bushes.

STEPHEN slowly rises, climbs the few paces to the hilltop and enters a clearing.

He searches amongst the bushes. Nothing.

He turns and looks back down the hillside to see BLAKENEY and PADEEN far below. He sits to get his breath back.

STEPHEN'S P.O.V: On the ground between his feet, a beetle. He picks it up.

Close, on his hand. It is the same type of beetle BLAKENEY gave him aboard the Surprise.

Smiling at the coincidence Stephen raises the tiny creature

to his eye level.

His P.O.V. The beetle: The creature in sharp focus, behind it the sea, and on the sea, a black shape.

The focus shifts to the background. There's a ship at anchor in a bay.

It's the Acheron.

STEPHEN stares out at the ship, as the beetle flies away. They are weighing anchor.

Stephen smiles and shakes his head, his exploration of the island is over before it has begun. But he sits a moment longer, savoring the irony of his 'discovery'.

COUNTRYSIDE - DUSK

BLAKENEY urging STEPHEN to hurry as they make their way through the darkening landscape. All kinds of creatures are appearing around them, and every few yards STEPHEN pauses to examine something.

BLAKENEY
Sir, you must hurry!

STEPHEN
A moment! You're a worse tyrant than any ship's captain.

He's breathing hard, exhausted.

BLAKENEY
You must carry him, Padeen!

PADEEN looks at the collection of baskets he carries.

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)
Leave them! We must get back to the ship.

STEPHEN raises his hand in protest, but BLAKENEY is already divesting PADEEN of his load.

STEPHEN'S CABIN - NIGHT

STEPHEN gingerly lowers himself into his chair, gripping the table and BLAKENEY's good arm for support. Sighing, he

begins emptying his pockets of various small items collected during the day - some leaves, rocks and insects - and places them in ordered piles around his microscope.

ALL about them can be heard the urgent sounds of departure - the anchor rattling up, shouted orders and the drumming of bare feet on the deck above.

He holds up a stick in a bottle and is examining it with his magnifying glass when JACK enters.

JACK

I forgot to ask you - did you see your bird?

STEPHEN cocks an eye over his microscope.

STEPHEN

I did not. My greatest discovery was your phantom.

JACK

Indeed it was, I'm sorry...

STEPHEN

(holds up his hand)

Not a bit of it. James and I made a unique discovery.

Handing jack the bottle and the magnifying glass

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Tell him, Mr. Blakeney.

BLAKENEY

It's a rare phasmid, Sir.

JACK inspects the stick. It winks at him

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)

It's an insect disguised as a stick.

JACK stares at the creature.

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)

In order to confuse predators

BAY, GALAPAGOS - NIGHT

The Surprise alive with crewmen on the deck and in the rigging. Shouts and commands drift across the water as she turns and heads out from the bay.

QUARTERDECK - SAME TIME

JACK strides along the quarterdeck towards the fore-castle issuing a stream of orders -

JACK

Mr. Hollar, rouse up all the yellow paint we have. I want six men with brushes slung over the side.

(moving on)

Doudle!

DOUDLE

Yessir.

JACK hands him a piece of paper with a sketch on it.

JACK

Get your sail makers working on this. Sixty yards by five yards with an eyelet every seven feet.

DOUDLE

Aye, Sir.

He shouts to HOGG who, with a few men, is manhandling a large metal cauldron from the ballast to the gun-deck.

JACK

(to HOGG)

Have Nagle patch it up and light a fire in it.

(shouts)

Mr. Calamay!

CALAMAY

Aye, Sir.

JACK

Once we're underway, replace some of the sails with the oldest, most patched set we have.

CALAMAY

They'll be in the afterhold, Sir. I'll need some men to move all the clutter.

JACK

Good. Spread it around the foredeck. The more mess the better.

CUT TO -

THE SHIP - NIGHT

Powering through the darkness as -

SIDE OF THE SHIP - NIGHT

Men swing in harnesses above the racing water, painting out the Nelson chequer.

WAIST OF THE SHIP - NIGHT

NAGLE supervises the lighting of a fire in the great cauldron.

FORECASTLE - NIGHT

Men are coming up from below with old barrels and bits of rope.

FORETOP - NIGHT

LAMB and his men are hammering away, converting the fighting top into a wooden-sided crows nest.

GANGWAY - NIGHT

CALAMAY

Haul away!

Men under CALAMY's instructions haul on ropes, pulling up the old patched sails.

The sails lead us up to

CROSSTREES - NIGHT

JACK, PULLINGS and the whaler HOGG, all three of them dressed in informal clothes, scan the dark horizon.

HOGG
There, Sir. A mainmast toplight.

JACK has to use a telescope.

JACK
Just so. You've got good eyes, Hogg.

Shouts down to the helm -

JACK (CONT'D)
Mr. Bonden, set a course west-south-west.
(to PULLINGS)
We'll drop below the horizon and come up on the other side of him at dawn.
Let him think he's seen us first.

SURPRISE - DAWN

First light reveals the results of her overnight transformation, from a naval warship to a shambolic-looking Portuguese whaler

Small boats are being towed aft. The gunwales are painted an untidy ochre and the gun-ports hidden behind broad strips of canvas.

The sails are patched and ragged, the forecastle cluttered with barrels. Smoke billows from the cauldron amidships.

On deck and in the rigging, there's a quarter of the normal complement of men, all of them dressed in purser's slops.

A nautical phasmid

BERTH DECK

HOWARD and his marines change out of uniform, into the oldest most ragged clothes on board the ship. Others, already changed, are blackening their faces from a greasy pot.

GUN-DECK - DAWN

Men are checking the breechings of the great guns and chipping cannonballs to make them more perfectly spherical, more deadly.

The armourer is at his grindstone sending out showers of sparks, a group of seamen working relays at the crank, stacking newly honed cutlasses and boarding axes at their feet.

Another team check and load pistols by the score.

MIDSHIPMEN'S QUARTERS - DAWN

Alone, BLAKENEY awkwardly draws his dirk, left handed from its scabbard. It glints momentarily in the lamp light.

CALAMY enters, face aglow, abruptly trying to cover his joy when he sees Blakeney.

BLAKENEY

Its all right. I know. You're to lead the borders from the forecastle. Congratulations.

CALAMY

Thanks. Thank you.

BLAKENEY

You'll make lieutenant out of this.

The others come in

BOYLE

He already has. 'Acting' 3rd Lieutenant Peter Calamy.

Oohs and aahs from the other boys.

BLAKENEY

(about to leave)
Then I'll see you at the forecastle, Lieutenant.

CALAMY

I'm afraid you won't

BLAKENEY looks from CALAMY to the others, who avoid his eye.

BLAKENEY

But naturally I'll board with you?

CALAMY

I'm sorry, James, Its not to be.

Blakeney is devastated.

Snotty Addison races past the door in a state of high excitement.

ADDISON

She's seen us!

QUARTERDECK - DAWN

JACK raises his glass, focuses on the Acheron, plainly visible in the distance, with a line of signal flags running up her backstay.

MOWETT

She's asking us to heave to. Shall I give the order?

JACK

No, make a show of fleeing upwind, but panicky and disorganized, like a whaler might do.

(on HOGG's reaction)

No offence, Mr. Hogg.

WIDE ON THE SHIPS - DAY

A show of chaos on deck as the Surprise veers upwind, away from the Acheron. As she presents her stern we see her new name: Malacca, painted over the old.

QUARTERDECK OF THE SURPRISE - DAY

Through his telescope, JACK looks back at the Acheron in pursuit, a dark figure on her foredeck.

JACK

(to Mowett)

Run up Portuguese colours.

(then down to the gun-deck)

Load, Mr. Pullings. Triple shot 'em.

BLAKENEY comes onto the quarterdeck and salutes, looking flushed and angry.

BLAKENEY
May I speak with you, Sir.

JACK
No saluting, Mr. Blakeney, we're whalers here.

BLAKENEY
Mr. Calamy says I am not in the boarding party, I wanted to say -

JACK
(interrupts)
I know what you want to say and my answer is no. You will command a gun and then retire to defend the quarterdeck here with Dr. Maturin.

BLAKENEY
But sir -

JACK (cutting in)
Sir! To your station.

BLAKENEY begins to salute, doesn't, and retires, blinking back tears.

A moment later There's a flash of orange astern as the Acheron opens up with her bow-chasers. An 18 pound shot screams past the side of the Surprise to land within a column of spray just off their bows.

JACK (CONT'D)
Good shooting. Remind me to press her bow gunner, Mr. Pullings.

The second ball takes down some rigging.

JACK (CONT'D)
Start the water and throw some barrels overboard. I'll talk to the crew.

He goes below.

WAIST - DAY

Barrels go overboard and pumps spout streams of water over the side as JACK runs down to

THE GUN-DECK

The great majority of men are gathered here, more than a hundred of them crammed together with their muskets and sabres, listening to the odd thump from topsides as another two balls from the Acheron hit home.

CALAMY and his gang of young tykes are squashed in there somewhere, BOYLE, WILLIAMS, ADDISON and the rest, eyes shining with nervousness and wild anticipation, as JACK addresses his men, who shout encouragement, ad lib, in every pause

JACK

(plus the men ad lib)

We're a long way from home lads. *(Right you are captain!)* A long way from anywhere, *(Too true!)* But if Britain rules the waves she rules these waves too. *(Right she does!)* And the blow we shall deal for his majesty here will be felt just as keenly *(I'll say it will!)* Aye - and cheered just as loudly *(specially by the wimmin!)* - as any dealt at Trafalgar or Cape St Vincent.

The camera moves over the upturned faces Plaice, Nagle, Doudle, Killick, the midshipmen, the powder monkeys, the whole fellowship of the ship. And finally Stephen watching Jack doing what he does best: transmitting his own fearlessness into other men - the total warrior, the consummate leader.

JACK (CONT'D)

I don't propose it will be easy. *(Oh yes it will!)* She's twice the men we have and they'll sell their lives dearly. *(Just let us at them!)* But I know that every man here is worth three of Boney's privateers, *(Ten of em!)* And I know there's not one faint heart among us.

CALAMY pipes up -

CALAMAY

Three cheers for the Captain.

MEN (deafening)
Huzzah huzzah huzzah!

On CALAMY, cheering like a kid at a football match as....

QUARTERDECK - DAY

Another well placed shot from the Acheron smashes through the rigging, sending down a shower of rope and cordage.

JACK returns to his station by the wheel, the Acheron little more than a half a mile astern, the figure of the captain in his black coat clearly visible.

Stephen comes up on deck. A brace of pistols crossed in his belt

Jack crosses to BONDEN at the helm.

BONDEN hands over. JACK grips the curved timber decisively, taking the strain.

He feels the pulse of the ship through his fingers, looks up to the sails then back to the Acheron.

KILLICK appears, armed to the teeth, with a cup of coffee in each hand, one for Jack and one for Stephen.

KILLICK
I took the liberty, Doctor.

STEPHEN
Why thank you, Killick.

Normally slightly jealous of his own relationship with the captain it's the first time Killick has ever made a spontaneously generous gesture towards the doctor

JACK steers one-handed as he sips his coffee.

JACK
Mr. Mowett?

MOWETT
Sir?

JACK
A poem might be in order.

Another shot from the Acheron passes through the sails.

She's now less than five hundred yards from their stern,
and gaining.

MOWETT

A poem, Sir?

JACK

Yes, something appropriate.

MOWETT

'Oh were it mine with sacred Maro's
art,
To wake to sympathy the feeling heart,

Another ball goes howling past the ship.

MOWETT (CONT'D)

Then might I, with unrivalled strains,
deplore,
Th'impervious horrors of a leeward
shore.'

JACK smiles, nods.

MOWETT (CONT'D)

'Transfixed with terror at
th'approaching doom...'

His choice of poem suddenly seems embarrassingly defeatist.

MOWETT (CONT.) (CONT'D)

...they were only people of the
merchant service, of-course, Sir.

JACK

Alright Mr. Mowett. Lets show her our
true colours. Run out the guns Mr
Pullings. Marines aloft Mr Howard.

MASTHEAD

The British Jack rises to the masthead replacing the
Portuguese colours, as ..

SHIP'S SIDE

The black muzzles appear, carriages slamming hard against the sills.

QUARTERDECK

JACK winks to Tom Pullings and spins the wheel hard to starboard.

JACK
Clew up. Helms a-lee

DECK OF THE ACHRON

Shouted exchanges, sails being trimmed and men being beaten to their stations anger and consternation as....

Their POV: The transformed whaler swings broadside on.

QUARTERDECK

JACK drops his hand.

GUN-DECK

PULLINGS
Fire!

SURPRISE - VARIOUS ANGLES

The sound of a perfectly synchronised broadside splits the morning air as more than a hundredweight of metal is launched toward the oncoming Acheron.

ACHERON - DAY

The black ship shudders, holes appear in her sails, splinters and cordage tumble to the deck. Confused shouts can be heard across the deck, somewhere a drum beating.

SURPRISE QUARTERDECK - DAY

JACK hands the wheel back to BONDEN.

JACK
Lively now! A broadside as we pass her,
then cut across her wake!

Mowett takes out his stopwatch

THE SURPRISE AND THE ACHERON

Wide, to see the Surprise turning toward the Acheron, so they will pass broadside to broadside.

MOWETT'S STOPWATCH

As the two ships pass.

MOWETT

One minute

Another ten seconds pass, another five, another, ten. The gun crews working like Trojans.

JACK

Mr. ! Every gun to concentrate on her mainmast!

PULLINGS

At the mainmast. Aim your guns.

PULLINGS (CONT'D)

And Fire!

INT EXT GUNDECK THE SURPRISE

Her guns Leaping back one by one, great tongues of flame spitting from their barrels, dense clouds of smoke rising.

PULLINGS

Reload!!

QUARTERDECK OF THE SDURPRISE

Over the furious crackling of small-arms fire, Mowett shouts to jack

MOWETT

A minute twenty, sir

Their POV as the smoke clears to reveal...

THE ACHERON

With an almighty splitting sound her mainmast falls, dragging yards and rigging with it, the whole mass falling over their side, obscuring many of their gun-ports.

WEATHER-DECK, SURPRISE

Wild frenzied cheering from the crew, already swarming to gunwale ready for boarding.

JACK
(to Bonden)
Hard a'starboard!

Hollar yelling corresponding orders aloft

THE SURPRISE AND THE ACHERON

The Acheron wallows, brought to a standstill by the enormous dragging weight of their mainmast.

JACK manoeuvres his ship to cross their wake, past the exposed, vulnerable stern.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE

JACK drops his arm as they cross the Acheron's stern.

GUN-DECK, SURPRISE

PULLINGS
Fire as she bears!

In sequence the Surprise's gunners pound it into the Acheron's stern. Casement windows vanish in a cloud of wood and glass, exposing the Acheron's terrified gun-crews, now open to devastating fire from the Surprise.

QUARTERDECK

JACK climbs up on the gunwales, shouting to BONDEN -

JACK
Lay me alongside Mr Bonden!

THE SURPRISE AND THE ACHERON

The bow of the Surprise lurches into the Acheron's

midships, spars interlocking, the Surprise guns firing into her at point-blank range.

The crew throw grappling hooks.

QUARTERDECK

JACK
Borders away!

And he leaps to the enemy deck, a great tide of men following after him.

FORECASTLE

CALAMY leads his own children's crusade from the bows and forecastle. They might be young but they are nonetheless terrifying, screaming and swinging their blades.

QUARTERDECK

An agonized BLAKENEY watches where he stands beside STEPHEN at the wheel. JOE PLAICE is there with several other men, including PADEEN, and now they begin to take some wounded Surprises who have fallen in the attack, down below

ON THE ACHERON

As the Surprises pour onto the quarterdeck they face withering fire from the enemy. A dozen men go down, some of them fatally wounded. Among them are Doudle, Nagle, Boyle, Allan and Becket.

Jack keeps pushing onwards, the centre of a milling, swirling, hacking crowd, stabbing and pistolling each other with barely room to fall.

The Acherons are gradually forced back across their quarterdeck and down into the waist of the ship

WAIST OF THE ACHERON

JACK crosses swords with a man in front of him, as an enemy pikeman drives his blade into his left arm, tearing through the sleeve. BONDEN fires a pistol by his ear, deafening JACK and killing the pikeman.

To either side, privateers are trying to reach them, shouting, swearing in English, French and Spanish.

Bullets, missiles and flaming "stink pots" rain down from above killing friend and foe alike.

KILLICK is in the thick of it, a pistol in either hand, and from his lips a high-pitched blood-curdling scream.

AWKWARD DAVIS is also yelling incoherently, and foaming at the mouth as he swings a meat-cleaver right and left.

QUARTERDECK, ACHERON

A French officer notes the poorly defended Surprise - almost devoid of men now, and leads a counter-attack over onto her quarter-deck.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE

BLAKENEY, dirk in hand, turns to face them, as does HOWARD and a number of his men but they are gravely outnumbered.

FORECASTLE, ACHERON

CALAMY sees the danger and leads his gang back onto the Surprise, calling for others to follow.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE

STEPHEN, PADEEN and JOE PLAICE appear from below. STEPHEN picks up a pistol and with deadly accuracy drops a privateer lunging at CAPTAIN HOWARD. The man drops, a neat hole in his forehead. A moment's astonishment from HOWARD at the Doctor's surprising skill with a pistol

CALAMY fights his way to BLAKENEY who is down on his knees stabbing at the legs of the attackers.

WAIST, ACHERON

JACK, BONDEN and DAVIS are driving a wedge toward the stern, the defenders falling back in disarray.

QUARTERDECK OF THE ACHERON

PULLINGS and MOWETT fight side-by-side.

A swivel-gun mounted on the taff-rail is swung to face them

The gunner is about to fire when a perfectly-aimed musket ball hits him in the temple, fired by KILLICK's mate BILL.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE/ACHERON

CALAMY, BLAKENEY and their group force the counter-attack back onto the deck of the Acheron. The two boys fight as a team as they struggle toward the stern - BLAKENEY surprisingly effective despite his handicap.

SIDE OF THE ACHERON

Some Acherons jump overboard to escape the furious attack. Others are thrown into the sea, grasping at woodwork as they fall.

QUARTERDECK OF THE ACHERON

JEMMY DUCKS turns the swivel on a group of Acherons, the grapeshot blasting them up against the gunwale.

IN THE WATER

Oil burns. Men drown, others struggle to stay afloat, clinging to the mass of wreckage floating by the hull.

WAIST OF THE SHIP

Cheering from the Surprises, demands to surrender in many languages, some beg for mercy, others fight on.

BELOW DECKS

JACK moves alone, down to the berth deck. He smashes the chain off a locked-door, releasing a dozen or more prisoners who arm themselves and join in the fight.

Everywhere signs of the lethal blast through the ship's stern, bodies, guns upended, shattered timbers.

He makes his way through to the ward-room.

WARD-ROOM, ACHERON

Four privateers look up as JACK bursts in.

They have been looting the ship's valuables, two of them

are too drunk to be scared.

JACK

Where is your captain?

One man leaps out through the broken windows. A couple of others raise their hands and start jabbering their innocence.

MOWETT appears with several other Surprises.

MOWETT

He's been taken below, Sir.

BOWELS OF THE SHIP

Non-combatants line the corridors, some badly wounded, some merely petrified. They shrink into the shadows as JACK and his men clatter past.

QUARTERDECK, ACHERON

It's all but over for the Acherons - a French officer hauls down their colours

A cheer from the Surprises - a few last shots fired. CALAMY and BLAKENEY cheering, then a dying man lunges at BLAKENEY. CALAMY steps in front of him and takes the blow.

IN THE SICK-BERTH

A single light burns. From above the sound of cheering.

A doctor is working here, a callow-faced man, red-eyed from fatigue.

JACK enters, a fearsome sight, with his singed yellow hair and blood-stained cutlass.

JACK

Where is the captain?

The doctor points at a body on the operating table.

JACK approaches, looks down at the dead man. He's young, somewhere about JACK's age, fine featured, with his black coat draped over his body.

DOCTOR

He said I was to give you this.

Passing JACK the captain's sword.

QUARTERDECK, ACHERON

JACK picks his way through the dead and wounded to where BLAKENEY sits nursing CALAMY.

Calamay is dead

Gently, Jacks picks up the lifeless body and walks slowly back down the quarterdeck, the boy draped across his powerful arms like a sacrifice to some ancient god of war.

Friend and defeated foe part silently in front of him as he crosses the gangway to...

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE

With BLAKENEY following, he goes below.

FADE OUT, and then UP ON:

ACHERON AND SURPRISE - DAWN

The two ships temporarily repaired, anchored close together on the ocean.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE - DAWN

As eight bells are rung for the change of watch we see a row of canvas hammocks, each containing the body of a fallen crewman.

Two seamen, DAVIES and PLAICE stitch the bodies into their hammocks. Calamay is the last body in the line.

BLAKENEY

I'll do it.

As BLAKENEY sews up the hammock, HOLLAR's voice is heard distinctly from below.

HOLLAR (O.S.)

Rise and shine, show a leg there.
Tumble up! Tumble up!

In close-up: the peaceful face of CALAMY

HOLLAR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Sleepers awake!

....as BLAKENEY's hands stitch the canvas closed.

FADE TO BLACK, then up on

THE SURPRISE AND THE ACHERON - DAY

The two ships sail abreast - the Acheron, her shattered masts jury-rigged.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE - DAY

JACK stands with LIEUTENANT MOWETT and the signals midshipman, WILLIAMSON. They look across at the Acheron.

JACK
Signal... 'Parole prisoners
Valparaiso'... then 'Rendezvous
Portsmouth. God-speed, Captain
Pullings.

WILLIAMSON
You mean Lieutenant Pullings sir

JACK
No. Captain Pullings.

WILLIAMSON hurries to the signals locker, the signal book and JACK's message in his hand.

SIGNAL FLAGS, SURPRISE - DAY

The line of colored signal-flags run up to the mast-head.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE - DAY

JACK waves across at PULLINGS as the Acheron makes a sharp turn away from the Surprise.

BOW of the SURPRISE. DUSK

Stephen and Blakeney lean over the bowsprit watching a pair of dolphins riding the bow-wave

Stephen talks softly explaining the dolphins habits.

Blakeney watching and listening

ABOUT THE SHIP. DUSK

Men go about the tasks, holystoning the decks and trimming the sails, much as they did on every day before the battle.

OUTSIDE THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

KILLICK, wearing an ostentatious bandage about his head, is preparing toasted cheese with his mate BLACK BILLY. From inside drifts the sound of violin and cello tuning up.

KILLICK

Here we go again.

BILLY

Did you know the Doctor can make every sound a cat can make on that there cello?

KILLICK

I don't doubt it, mate, but he should stick to doctoring.

JACK (O.S.)

Killick. Killick, there!

KILLICK (projecting)

Which it will be ready when it's ready!

SURPRISE, EXTERIOR - NIGHT

Wide, to see the stern of the ship and a patch of surrounding water lit by the great stern lantern. Through the casement windows the two men can be seen playing.

Wider, to the vast dark sky and the heaving ocean all around, with the stern cabin, a tiny orange light, still faintly visible in the darkness.

THE EARTH FROM SPACE

The world turning.

Time passes, the century changes, and cities appear on the darkened globe. A million tiny cities studding the pacific and all the lands beyond.

A billion communities

A billion voyages.

THE END