

MASTER AND COMMANDER
FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD

by

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Based on the Aubrey/Maturin novels

by

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THE OCEAN - DUSK

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 glides past and away from us, her name is visible, picked out in dull gold on the transom - *Surprise*.

ANOTHER ANGLE - DUSK

The ship, a silhouette - RUN CAPTION:

HMS Surprise

Armament: 28 guns

Crew: 197 souls.

Location: Coast of Brazil, November 1806

Mission: Intercept and destroy French Privateer, *Acheron*

CHARTS

Close on a beautifully drawn chart of the South American coastline.

Unseen hands place a second chart on top of the first, bringing the north-east coast of Brazil into view. Then another, each one enlarging the view of the preceding one.

On the final chart we can read navigational symbols and detailed information in fine copperplate script:

*6 fa. Shoals suddenly to half fa.
Rocks (exact position unknown).
Hidden reef.*

THE GREAT CABIN - DUSK

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, ear-ringed man of indeterminate age, refills the glass at his elbow.

JACK drinks. The glass catches the setting sun as it drops below the great casement windows.

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

BELOW DECKS - NIGHT

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

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

THE DOCTOR'S CABIN - NIGHT

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 for the 'young gentlemen', boys trained from an early age to become officers, four lads play at marbles.

PETER CALAMY (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 HOLLAM, aged 24. He's a sensitive-looking fellow, idly strumming a guitar, glancing up briefly as TOM PULLINGS passes.

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 BECKETT'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 100 or so off-duty men climb into their hammocks, slung close-packed from the immense beams.

The last lights are extinguished. Only PULLINGS' lamp remains, moving 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 walks aft to the quarterdeck where he joins the officer of the watch, 2nd Lieutenant MOWETT, a short tubular man in his early 20s.

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

QUARTERDECK - NIGHT

JACK climbs up a ladder and joins PULLINGS and MOWETT at the binnacle, by the ship's great wheel. The helmsman, BONDEN, gives JACK their current course.

JACK nods, then moves to the gunwale with PULLINGS, whom he addresses in a low voice.

JACK

We should raise Recife by daylight.

PULLINGS

(looking up at the sails)

If the wind holds.

JACK

Intelligence reports had her leaving Boston on the 12th, that should put us at least a week ahead.

PULLINGS

She'll be in for a surprise, Sir.

The pun on the name of their ship was unintentional, but JACK lets out a great 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 quarterdeck are more amused by JACK's unique sense of humour than by the feeble joke itself.

JACK (CONT'D)

(calls back)

Don't put her on the reef, Tom.

PULLINGS

I'll try not to, Sir.

WIDE ON THE SURPRISE - NIGHT

White coils of mist drift and eddy over the glassy sea, as the ship moves slowly through the night.

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 (TIMELAPSE)

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.

HOLLOM, the oldest of the midshipmen, whose watch it now is, appears at his shoulder.

HOLLOM

What is it, Vincent?

VINCENT

Don't know. Thought I heard a bell.

HOLLOM peers out into the fog, then turns.

HOLLOM

Could be a reef-marker... Mr. Calamy!

Midshipman CALAMY comes running forward.

HOLLOM (CONT'D)

The lead, if you please.

CALAMY takes the lead, scrambles into the chains at the bow of the ship and throws out the lead line.

HOLLOM takes up a telescope and searches through the eddies of fog.

TELESCOPE P.O.V.

Over HOLLOM's P.O.V. we can hear CALAMY sounding the depth.

CALAMY (O.S.)

Sixty fathoms, white sand!

The telescope pans. A dark shape in the distance. The mist parts a little. A ship. Coming straight toward them.

Close on HOLLOM as he turns to camera, screaming -

HOLLOM

Enemy on the larboard bow! Beat to
quarters!

JACK'S SLEEP CABIN

JACK instantly awake, piling out of his bed, still dressed.

BERTH-DECK - DAWN

A drum blazes as the off-duty watch tumble out of their hammocks and run to their battle stations.

COCKPIT, ORLOP DECK

Rows of wicked-looking instruments are hastily thrown on the operating table by PADEEN, MATURIN's servant - saws, retractors and knives glistening in the lamp-light.

DR. MATURIN hurries in blinking sleep out of his eyes as he ties on his black apron - behind him, HIGGINS, the assistant surgeon.

POWDER MAGAZINE

Little ADDISON and his team of powder-monkeys run with their boxes of gunpowder to the...

GUN-DECK

As MR. LAMB and his carpenters bash down cabin partitions, transforming the entire gun-deck into a single continuous space, from the bows to the Captain's Great Cabin in the stern.

As the crews swarm about their guns, grotesque shadows are thrown on the walls and ceiling by the numerous battle-lanterns arriving to illuminate the scene.

WEATHER-DECK

JACK and PULLINGS stride the length of the deck toward the bow where HOLLOM waits anxiously. They pass crews manning the carronades while others swing the ship's small boats out and over the side to be towed behind the ship.

FORECASTLE

JACK and PULLINGS join HOLLOM.

JACK

Where away?

HOLLOM points forward and a little to the left of the Surprise's bow.

HOLLOM

Not two miles distant, Sir.

JACK and PULLINGS stare through telescopes into the fog, which is beginning to lift. JACK lowers his telescope.

JACK

You're sure, Mr. Hollom?

Sidelong glances from the crew at HOLLOM. He's not regarded highly by the men and many doubt the accuracy of his report.

HOLLOM

Yes, Sir.

JACK

A man-of-war?

HOLLOM

I think so, Sir.

JACK

Goddamn it, man! You think so?

HOLLOM

It was only a moment, Sir. The fog parted, I thought I saw a shape...

With a sharp look at HOLLOM, JACK steps closer to the bow, and again lifts his telescope.

TELESCOPE P.O.V

A slow pan across the sea, past a darker patch of fog. What was that? The lens pans back toward the darker area to see a series of flashes.

CLOSE ON JACK

He turns and shouts to the crew -

JACK

Lie down! Everybody lie down!

His words are underscored by a series of distant explosions, followed by a deep rumble, then a tearing, howling sound.

ANGLE ON THE SKY

Chain shot and grape, bar and canister shriek through the air.
A blizzard of iron.

ON THE DECK

The crew hit the deck, the last to drop is BONDEN hanging
grimly to the wheel.

MIDSHIPMAN BLAKENEY

Close, as he tries to bury himself in the deck timbers.

HOLLOM

lies with his hands over his ears trying to block out the
sound.

LITTLE ADDISON

stands staring up at the sky, his mouth agape. Someone drags
him down to the deck.

QUARTERDECK

The broadside hits the bows and a cloud of splinters and metal
scythes the length of the deck at head height. This is rapidly
followed by billowing smoke from a small fire now burning on
the forecastle.

CALAMY is working at putting the fire out as JACK issues a
stream of orders.

JACK (CONT'D)

Run out the guns! Marines to the tops,
and get that wounded man below!

He pulls a gold watch from his pocket.

CLOSE ON WATCH

It's just gone 7.00 am.

QUARTERDECK

As red-coated marines led by Captain HOWARD climb into the
rigging JACK calls to his clerk -

JACK (CONT'D).

Mr. Watt. Note down the time for the
log.

An anxious TOM PULLINGS appears.

PULLINGS

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. Mr.
Pullings - bow-chasers to fire as she
bears.

P.O.V. ENEMY SHIP

She's crossing their bows, about a mile distant.

ON DECK

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

ON THE FORECASTLE

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

PULLINGS

Fire on the uproll.

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

PULLINGS

Fire!

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

The smoke clears, the gunners look on baffled as their balls
bounce harmlessly off the side of the enemy ship.

PULLINGS

Damn and blast you! See to your guns!
Fire high! Fire for the masts and
rigging!

As the enemy's murderous long guns run out again.

WIDE ON THE ENEMY SHIP

Her French ensign clearly visible as she swings broadside on
to the approaching Surprise - again her side lights up in a
series of red flashes.

IN THE COCKPIT

By the dim light of a battle-lantern STEPHEN struggles to hold a wounded man on the table, his feet slipping in pools of blood on the deck.

STEPHEN

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

Shards of timber implode, followed by a great spout of water knocking AWKWARD DAVIES sideways as he runs for the ladder with shot.

A second explosion, a second jet of water and DAVIES, finding his feet, starts yelling for the carpenter.

STAIRS

Follow DAVIES as he runs up to the gun-deck with an armload of shot past the powder-monkeys ADDISON and SWIFT, canisters of gun-powder slung over their shoulders, then he sees MR. LAMB, the carpenter.

DAVIES

Orlop deck!

as LAMB dives for the ladder.

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. HOLLON, the sole survivor, is backed against the bulkhead, cradling an injured arm.

CALAMY emerges from the smoke, meets DAVIES's horror-struck gaze and takes command.

CALAMY

Davies! Get those bodies overboard!

(to HOLLOM)

Mr. Hollom sir!

HOLLOM sits immobilised by fear. CALAMY grabs the poulterer, JEMMY DUCKS, who has been rescuing the ship's goat, Aspasia.

CALAMY (CONT'D)

Jemmy - leave the goat and take Mr.
Hollom below.

JEMMY DUCKS

Aye, sir!

The ship heels as she turns.

Midshipman BLAKENEY, Calamy's rival in the game of marbles, turns to see the dismounted gun rolling free. He throws a hammock net under it, stopping its roll before it crushes CALAMY against the bulkhead.

CALAMY 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!

HULL OF THE SURPRISE

In the great jagged hole on the gun-deck where the gun was destroyed, JACK stands framed, a wrathful soot-stained figure. He glances back at his men, hunched and ready, itching to fire.

JACK (bellows)

Steady... Wait for it!

WIDE ON THE BATTLE

to see the two ships about to pass abreast, the *Surprise* heading south as it were, the enemy ship, north.

The French vessel is clearly the bigger ship, and from both come the sounds of shouted orders and the thunder of drums. They will pass broadside to broadside, 500 yards apart.

GUN-DECK, SURPRISE

JACK watching the enemy, judging the moment.

JACK

...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, but again many of her balls have failed to penetrate the enemy timbers.

QUARTERDECK

A third full broadside from the Frenchman. The Surprise's wheel shattered. BONDEN thrown aside, MR. WATT jerked back to the taffrail, the mizzenmast hit.

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

Midshipman 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.

IN THE TOPS

A furious exchange of fire between CAPTAIN HOWARD's marines and the sharpshooters in the enemy's rigging.

QUARTERDECK

JACK emerges into bloody chaos: screams of the wounded all around, the enemy ship moving astern in mist and gun-smoke.

He wipes blood from his eye as he raises his telescope.

TELESCOPE P.O.V.

As the ship passes, her name is visible on the transom - Acheron.

QUARTERDECK

PULLINGS approaches.

PULLINGS

Sir, it's the rudder.

STERN OF THE SURPRISE

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

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?

DAVIES

No steerage.

NAGLE

We're fish in a barrel.

COCKPIT

STEPHEN, up to his armpits in blood, operating on a wounded man, looks up to see three more seriously injured men arriving.

He pauses, aware of some change.

STEPHEN

Why 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 ALLAN 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.

ALLAN
I'm sorry, Sir.

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

His face hardens, it's not over till it's over.

JACK
We'll tow her.

STERN OF THE SURPRISE

Sudden feverish activity, running and shouting as men scramble down into the boats. DAVIES settles himself beside NAGLE in the cutter, turning to look at the approaching Acheron.

His P.O.V.: puffs of smoke from its bow-chasers.

STERN OF SURPRISE

Gouts of water from the enemy gunfire rise 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, ALLAN and JACK as they shout their respective orders.

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

JACK
Stern-chasers to fire when she's in range!

MAINMAST/FOREMAST

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

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

THE GREAT CABIN

Two long brass nine-pounders set up through the open windows of the Captain's day cabin, open fire on the approaching Acheron.

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 abandon guns on the quarterdeck, not their main armament on the gun-deck.)

FORECASTLE

JACK races to the bows. Towlines strain as the three small boats pull the great ship toward the curtain of fog and cloud. He yells to the straining oarsmen -

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-bank.

WIDE

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

QUARTERDECK

JACK joins his officers looking back into the white-out, in the direction of the enemy.

JACK

Quiet now. No calls, no shouts. Mr.
Allan, signal the men in the boats to
head due east.

ALLAN hurries toward the bows, as behind them the fog is momentarily illuminated by flashes of gunfire from their 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)
Starboard haul. And stroke! Stroke!

One side stops rowing and the boat turns.

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 looks relieved as he reaches into his pocket for his watch - close on his hand, and in it a twisted gold case and a handful of glass and little wheels.

MASTS OF THE SURPRISE, (TIMELAPSE) - NIGHT

The tortured sounds of exhausted men rowing as skeins of mist drift away to reveal a dim, yellow moon. On the horizon the battered ship in silhouette, lines stretching ahead to her three small boats.

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, 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 the glow of the lamp, streaked with blood and deeply unconscious.

JACK

Who's this - Joe Plaice?

STEPHEN

(sotto)

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

Moving on to another barely recognisable 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.

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. They're exhausted but the adrenalin is still pumping and they talk animatedly as KILLICK serves coffee.

ALLAN

...Frigate? Ha! You ask me she's no more a frigate than I'm a Dutchman.

MOWETT is trying to staunch a persistent nosebleed.

MOWETT

It was an unfair match, no dishonour in it, no dishonour at all.

ALLAN

She was more like a ship of the line, a two-decker more'n a frigate.

MOWETT

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

PULLINGS

She had the weather-gauge and a clear advantage in firepower.

STEPHEN (puzzled)

The 'weather-gauge'?

JACK

Here, let me draw it on the cloth.

He takes a pen and is about to draw on the tablecloth -

KILLICK

Not on the cloth.

With the ship a ruin, KILLICK is worried about the fine linen tablecloth. His obsession with the Captain's things is well-known and JACK reluctantly tolerates his insubordination. He waves away KILLICK's proffered paper with a sigh.

JACK

It means she had the wind in her favour.

PULLINGS

And she had the longer guns which could hit us beyond our effective range.

JACK

The plain fact is we were soundly beaten.

A silence. JACK crosses to the stern windows, looks out to the growing dawn light.

MOWETT

She carried at least 40 guns to our 28, I counted the muzzle flashes.

ALLAN

And 18 pounders.

PULLINGS

More like 24 pounders, real smashers.

JACK still staring out the window, his back to the group.

ALLAN (a sigh)

Well, we can patch up our main and mizzen sails, the foresail is too far gone I'm afraid, so we'll bend our spare.

PULLINGS

Sir, Mr. Lamb is confident, with basic repairs, we can get home as we are... allowing for a stop in Jamaica.

ALLAN

I support that. At Port Royal we can haul her into dry-dock, and hopefully get her home without...

JACK (overlapping)

We're not going home.

An expectant hush. KILLICK, all ears, as he picks up the coffee cups and places them carefully on a silver tray.

JACK turns, meeting the eyes of his officers, as though challenging them to question this.

JACK

This mystery ship has taken a dozen of our merchantmen this past year, and none of our ships have so much as sighted her, let alone engaged her until now. Our orders are to sink, burn or take her a prize. She's heading for the Pacific to play havoc with our whaling fleet, and we're going after her.

ALLAN

But Sir, with respect, she could be half-way to Cape Horn by the time we're repaired and underway.

JACK smiles.

JACK

Then there's not a moment to lose.

OUTSIDE THE GREAT CABIN

KILLICK exits the cabin with the tray of coffee cups. As he passes them to his mate, BLACK BILL -

KILLICK (a whisper)
We're for the Horn.

THROUGHOUT THE SHIP - DAWN

Word passes like lightning from the wounded in the orlop, to the top of the masts, to the

FORECASTLE - DAWN

A few of the old 'Surprises', men who've sailed with JACK before.

DAVIES
It's a suicide mission if you ask me.

DOUDLE (nods)
She's a right phantom she is, comin' out of that fog, balls bouncing off her.

NAGLE
Captain is not called 'Lucky Jack' for no reason. Phantom or no she's a privateer. She'll be loaded with all the gems of Araby. Think of the prize-money.

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!

QUARTERDECK - DAY

Crewmen labour at the capstan.

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. Hollar, 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 - DAY

JACK dodges the falling rope, moving back, past CHOLLES 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 - DAY

JACK looks down to where PULLINGS and others have lifted the broken rudder from its hinges.

WIDE SHOT - DAY

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

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.

JACK

Damn this wind, Mr. Allan! The Acheron will be making a hundred and fifty miles a day in this.

ALLAN

Aye, but we are the faster vessel, Sir!

JACK smiles at this and bites into his sandwich.

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

THE SHIP - DAY

The ship's copper-plated keel is partly revealed as the men clamber and slip about on the steeply-sloping side erecting scaffolding. The tropical heat resounds with shouts, curses and hammering.

SIDE OF THE SHIP - DUSK

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 with his rasp.

UNDERWATER - DUSK

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 - DUSK

OLD SPONGE

(In Greek)

The smaller bit. No. That bit there.

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

Our P.O.V. descending into the sea as...

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 LAMB'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 DAVIES are nailing into place.

The hammering travels through the ship to...

THE SICK BERTH - NIGHT

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

He looks around, disorientated, panicked, and finds Calamy by his side.

BLAKENEY

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

You know old Joe, always telling scary stories.

BLAKENEY

But do they?

CALAMY shifts uncomfortably.

BLAKENEY (CONT'D)

Do they? Do they put the last stitch through your nose?

CALAMY

Come on, you'll be stitching me in mine first.

BLAKENEY (drifting)

Not through my nose. Promise.

CALAMY

I promise.

He fears BLAKENEY is dying.

SICK BAY, LATER - NIGHT

CALAMY 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.

THE COCKPIT - NIGHT

BLAKENEY is lowered onto the table, delirious. CALAMY holds his head and PADEEN, MATURIN's giant manservant, his legs, 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.

CALAMY places the leather gag between BLAKENEY's teeth as STEPHEN turns and grips BLAKENEY's shattered arm.

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

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.

SICK-BERTH - NIGHT

An exhausted CALAMY keeps vigil by BLAKENEY's cot. The boy wakes. Stares up at CALAMY.

CALAMY

I will be your right arm.

BLAKENEY smiles, then drifts back to sleep.

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.

A small crowd of crewmen pause in their work, watching the doctor with morbid fascination.

SLADE

Physician he is, not one of your common surgeons. Cured Prince Billy of the marthambles and the strong fives, wouldn't look at you for under ten guineas on land.

BONDEN

And he knows his birds and beasts, show him a beetle and he'll tell you what it's thinking.

SLADE (shouts)

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 he begins to screw in place over the cavity.

THE SURPRISE - DAY

A wind causes the ship to turn on its moorings, stirring impatiently, like a racehorse ready to be off as...

QUARTERDECK - DAY

...JACK jumps down from the mizzen ratlines.

JACK

Let us be off, Mr. Pullings!

PULLINGS

Weigh anchor! All hands to make sail.
Bear a hand there, Mr. Hollom!

ON DECK - DAY

The group around STEPHEN scatter. Barefoot men suddenly running to their stations, racing above and below, running out along the bowsprit, up the ratlines, along the yards.

QUARTERDECK - DAY

MOWETT

Up and down Sir, thick and dry for weighing.

WAIST OF THE SHIP - DAY

Men strain on the capstan bars.

BOWS - DAY

The anchor bursting up out of the sea.

MASTS OF THE SURPRISE - DAY

The shrouds darken with climbing figures, framed against the sun.

HOLLAR (O.S.)

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

QUARTERDECK - DAY

HOLLAR staring up as the sails unfurl and fill with wind.

HOLLAR

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

Men slide down ropes from high amongst the shrouds, then swing out and drop down to the deck like monkeys, pulling ropes and sails tight with the weight of their bodies.

WIDE SHOT - DAY

The 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.

QUARTERDECK - DUSK

JACK and STEPHEN stand at the stern of the ship, JACK looking upward at the billowing sails, STEPHEN staring backward into their wake, smoking a cigar.

STEPHEN

Does it strike you as odd that the
Acheron came across us so fortuitously?

JACK (shrugs)

Fortunes of war.

STEPHEN

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.

JACK (astonished)

You're saying there are traitors in the
Admiralty?

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. So do not let
defeat weigh too heavily upon you.

Absently feeding his cigar butt to Aspasia, the goat.

OUTSIDE THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

KILLICK prepares toasted cheese in his small serving-area.
From inside the cabin, the sound of a violin and a cello
tuning up. KILLICK glances irritably at the door and elbows
his mate, BLACK BILL.

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.

INSIDE THE GREAT CABIN

JACK and STEPHEN, both keen amateur musicians - JACK, violin,
STEPHEN cello, continue with their tuning.

JACK

How to get close enough to him without
getting blown out of the water, that's
the question. And we must fire two
broadships for every one of his, and no
mistake.

STEPHEN

Speaking of mistakes you must allow me
to insist that is not an 'A'.

JACK

Ain't it?

(He draws his bow again)
That better?

STEPHEN (nods)
What about a little Corelli? Or are you
in the mood for something more
aggressive?

JACK plays a short arpeggio and grins mischievously.

JACK
Why don't we improvise, like we did that
time off Crete, see where we get to?

STEPHEN
All right, you first.

Cello answers violin, as they hand it back and forth with an
infinity of variations, sometimes playing together, sometimes
separately, suddenly hitting it, the music soaring and
continuing over

A HIGH POINT OF VIEW, TIME LAPSE - DAY

The tiny ship on the vastness of the ocean. From its side,
cotton-wool puffs of smoke.

GUN-DECK - SAME TIME

A rippling broadside, the crews sweating over their guns.

JACK
And pitch 'em up! It's spars and rigging
we want!

MOWETT timing the gap between each broadside.

MOWETT
Three minutes ten, Sir.

JACK
Not good enough! We must fire three
broadside to her two. Again!

Turning to BLAKENEY, who though much recovered, still looks
pale and a little unsure of himself.

JACK (CONT'D)
Mr. Blakeney? Think you can supervise a
gun?

BLAKENEY
Oh. Yes. Sir.

JACK
'Spitfire', hop to it.

BLAKENEY takes command of the gun. To one side CALAMY is in charge of 'Beelzebub', on the other side HOLLOM is now directing 'Sudden Death'.

Once again the orders are given, and the crews, now competing with each other, go through the sequence: 'Out Tompions', 'Cast loose your guns', 'Cartridge. Ball. Prime. Run out your gun. Prime. Aim. Stand clear... Fire!!'

AND AGAIN - DUSK

As another broadside shakes the deck, 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.

MOWETT (O.S.)
Two minutes five, Sir.

PULLINGS
Again!

AND AGAIN - NIGHT

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.

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

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

THE OCEAN AT NIGHT

The black ship spouting tongues of flame, the water around the target barrels erupting in great spouts.

MOWETT (O.S.)
Two minutes dead.

THE GUNPOWDER ROOM

Boom! Another splendidly co-ordinated broadside resounds through the ship as the powder-monkeys come racing down through the dreadnought screens to the magazine and back with more cartridge.

For them too it's a race, little ADDISON just ahead of SWIFT, RYE hot on his heels.

STEPHEN'S CABIN - NIGHT

The sound of the guns is 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 - NIGHT

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

The concentrated fury of the men swabbing, ramming, heaving in, heaving out, firing at a raft this time.

And he stops the watch as the first gun fires.

MOWETT

One minute forty-nine, Sir!

His voice is drowned by the firing of the other guns in close succession entirely demolishing the raft, 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 victory.

JACK

Killick? Killick there.

KILLICK appears.

JACK

What do you have for us tonight?

KILLICK

Which it's, Soused Hoggs-Face.

JACK

Aah! My favourite.

MAIN DECK - NIGHT

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

Crew men and the recovering wounded 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 a ballad in an African dialect.

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 favourite among the crew. Cheering and cat-calls. Lanterns coming up from below. More dancing, insults in many languages, and a song.

GUN-CREWS

Boneparte Boneparte
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 GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

The singing mixes with the end of a lively dinner given by JACK for his officers, including a special guest, young BLAKENEY.

PULLINGS

With your permission, Sir, Mr. Mowett
has composed a short poem in honour of
our mission.

JACK

Let's hear it, Mr. Mowett.

Reactions around the table, glasses re-filled in anticipation.
MOWETT stands and declaims with a number of precise airy
gestures, like a conductor.

MOWETT

'The Acheron if I'm not mistaken
Shortly will be, sunken or taken
But, we must get close to do the deed
So a bold cunning scheme is what we need.
No matter how far she may run
The Surprise will blow her to kingdom-come'

ALL

(raising their glasses)

Aye! Capital! Well said! Hear him, hear
him! 'Sunken or taken'...

JACK

Gentlemen, - '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.)

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.

JACK (CONT'D)

At the same dinner he was telling us how someone had offered him a boat-cloak on a cold night and he said no, he was quite warm - his zeal for his king and country kept him warm.

STEPHEN looks sceptical.

JACK (CONT'D)

It sounds absurd, I know, and were it another man you would cry out, "Oh, what pitiful stuff" and dismiss it as mere enthusiasm, but with him you felt your heart glow.

MOWETT

(raising his glass)

To Lord Nelson.

ALL

Lord Nelson!

More wine is served. JACK smiles to himself, looks across at STEPHEN.

JACK

You see those two weevils, Doctor?

He points at a faint movement amongst the crumbs of a ship's biscuit.

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, STEPHEN poker-faced.

STEPHEN

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

More laughter.

MAIN DECK - NIGHT

The crew continue with their own celebration.

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

PLAICE

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

The men around him stare in amazement.

BONDEN

Doctor! Joe'said something. Joe spoke!

QUARTERDECK

The officers have appeared on deck with their coffee and Stephen raises a hand in acknowledgment.

IN THE RIGGING - NIGHT

CALAMY and a couple of other midshipmen are eating from a bag of "ship's 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 his mate's
cheek.

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

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 appreciated 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.

OCEAN - NIGHT

The Surprise sailing away from us, the chorus drifting across
the darkness.

THE GREAT CABIN - DAY

Fingers trace a course down the east 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, the name picked out in gold on the stern - Acheron.

CHOLES

It were Warley's idea, Sir.

WARLEY

I thought she were familiar like, then I remembered where I'd seen her - in Boston, during the Peace.

JACK

You saw her in Boston?

WARLEY (nods)

Yes, Sir. She's Yankee built. I seen them working on her, something right strange about her scantlings. Then I seen them balls bounce off her an' I got to thinking.

CHOLES

If you look here, Sir. One side opens up.

He pulls a side off the model, exposing its construction.

WARLEY

Choles here done it just like I seen her
- a third layer 'tween the outer and
inner ribbing - diagonal bracing, see?

JACK

Just like the U.S. Constitution - our 12
pounders couldn't penetrate except at
close range.

He passes the model to ALLAN.

JACK (CONT'D)

Killick. Killick, there.

KILLICK enters.

JACK (CONT'D)

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

KILLICK

(shaking his head)

Which I was saving for Saluting Day,
Sir.

JACK

Rouse it up, Killick, and a bottle for
Mr. Allan and me. Let us live whilst
we're alive!

KILLICK reluctantly ushers the two beaming young men out of
the cabin.

STEPHEN'S CABIN - NIGHT

STEPHEN is carefully dissecting a small squid, with reference
to a printed diagram.

BLAKENEY 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. It's 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

How did it learn to make itself change?

STEPHEN

That's a mystery - the struggle for
survival.

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 though studying its tiny occupants, TOM PULLINGS
by his side.

JACK

He's vulnerable here.

He taps the stern windows.

JACK (CONT'D)

Cross her stern, rake her with a
broadside through her length, that'd
even the odds... But how to get close
enough?... That's the trick.

JACK stands, crosses to the stern windows and looks out on
their wake.

JACK

(to himself)

*'But, we must get close to do the deed
So a bold cunning scheme is what we need.'*

He turns to find PULLINGS smiling at the recalled poem.

MAIN MAST - DAWN

The maintop captain, WARLEY, shouts to the deck -

WARLEY

Sail on the larboard bow!

GREAT CABIN/LADDER

JACK throwing on a heavy boat-cloak, running for the ladder, KILLICK behind him trying to get a scarf about JACK's neck and a cap on his head.

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, to join WARLEY and PULLINGS.

JACK

Where away?

PULLINGS

Hull down, two points off the larboard beam.

JACK takes the telescope.

TELESCOPE P.O.V.

Just the tips of masts, the hull below the horizon.

WARLEY (O.S.)

She's a frigate all right, but no way of knowing if she be the phantom.

Beyond the distant ship, a line of black clouds.

RIGGING - DAWN

JACK and PULLINGS slide to the deck on parallel back-stays, as careless as a couple of midshipmen.

QUARTERDECK - DAWN

JACK shouting -

JACK

Set studdingsails and top gallants. Then wet the sails and have the idlers placed along the rail.

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

JACK steps up on the gunwale, spying out the distant ship. BLAKENEY, nearby, rests his telescope on CALAMY's shoulder, focussing with his left hand.

BLAKENEY

Is it him, Sir?

JACK

Touch wood, Mr. Blakeney, touch wood. We have the weather-gauge at last, so the wind's in our favour. Ask Dr. Maturin to join us, he loves a good chase.

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

Those not working sit on a row along the windward gunwale, like the crew of an ocean racing yacht, to counterbalance the pull of the sails.

BLAKENEY runs up from below.

BLAKENEY

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

JACK

Tell him we may have our phantom on the horizon.

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!

JACK

Speed, Mr. Calamy?

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

CALAMY

Twelve knots, Sir!

THE SURPRISE - DAY

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

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.

DAVIES

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

He touches wood, just the same -

Ahead, the bank of storm clouds loom gunmetal grey.

GREAT CABIN - DAY

PULLINGS knocks and enters, with an anxious looking MR. LAMB, with whom he has been arguing a point.

PULLINGS

We can just see her topsails. She's made her turn westwards.

LAMB

I can't vouch for the mizzen Sir, not round Cape Horn.

JACK

I'll not lose her now. Set a course westwards.

Both men accept this and leave.

QUARTERDECK (TIMELAPSE) - 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.

JACK stares ahead to the darkening sky as they move across a switchback landscape of massive rolling waves.

JACK (CONT'D)

Better get below, Mr. Pullings!

PULLINGS

What, Sir?

JACK (a wild laugh)

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

OCEAN - DAY

Wide to see the two ships. It's like some great ocean race, with neither prepared to take in canvas despite the appalling conditions.

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?

DAVIES

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, 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 sends him
tumbling. 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 swinging 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, agonised, makes his decision.

JACK

Axes!

AWKWARD DAVIES 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 pouring down into the lower levels drenching the men and swamping the guns.

HOLLAR (yells below)

All hands to the pumps!

QUARTERDECK - DAY

JACK, NAGLE and AWKWARD DAVIES 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.

OUTSIDE THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

KILLICK and BLACK BILL.

KILLICK

He's been at it again.

BLACK BILL

Who's that then?

KILLICK

The Jonah.

BLACK BILL looks at him, 'What 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)

Warley was a casualty of war, as surely as if a French ball had taken him.

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

STEPHEN

I overheard the midshipmen discussing you one day - "He's a hero," said Blakeney, "like Nelson." Calamy disagreed - "A professional warrior," he preferred. Might not the professional have the cooler head? Discretion the better part of valour, and so on.

JACK

Go back home you mean?

STEPHEN

Don't you feel chasing this heavier,
faster ship, with its long guns, smacks
of pride 'which goeth before
destruction'?

JACK

It's not pride nor anything like it,
it's a question of duty.

STEPHEN

'Duty', aah... I believe I've heard it
well spoken of.

JACK

You can be as 'satiric' as you like, but
I have a duty to the officers and
foremast jacks who've brought the barkey
thus far - how do you think they'd feel
if I turned around and went home?

STEPHEN

They would obey you.

JACK

I'll not go home having failed. There
have been too many failures. I'll not be
one of them.

STEPHEN

Then it is pride.

JACK

Do you know what occupies me night and
day? How to take him when I catch up
with him. I nearly lost my ship once.
There won't be a second chance. If
that's pride, so be it. To me it's
simply my job.

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.

DISSOLVE TO -

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 further south.

MOWETT passes his telescope to STEPHEN MATURIN. As STEPHEN
studies some 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!*

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 appears with a lantern.

HOLLAR

Rise and shine! Show a leg there, tumble up, tumble up - sleepers awake!

As the previous watch arrive downstairs, 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 it's penguin stew.

PULLINGS comes in, with an unexpected smile on his 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 something special.

(shouts off)

Killick. Killick there.

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

KILLICK

Which I was just coming.

He lays it on the table.

JACK

Gentlemen, I give you... our destination.

He whips off the lid to reveal a strange glutinous mass, a pudding 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.

KILLICK touches the wooden table, expecting JACK to do the same. He doesn't.

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. The ship is utterly becalmed, wallowing in the swell, her sails hanging limp. A 'painted ship upon a painted ocean'.

JACK swims around the ship, 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. They look thin and exhausted and burnt dark-brown by the sun and wind.

FORECASTLE

NAGLE is with a small group tarring the ratlines as he looks back at HOLLOM, patrolling the gangway.

NAGLE indicates him with a tilt of the head.

NAGLE

...Like Killick says, his whole gun crew killed and him not a mark on him. Soon as he went up the mizzen mast Warley falls. And whose watch was it when we lost our wind?

HOLLOM 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

The 'doldrums'... the 'doldrums'... it's like a mood. I believe I could describe the whole human condition in your nautical terms - we must, 'clear the decks', in order to have 'plain sailing', but the wind has been 'sucked from our sails', and we have fallen into 'the doldrums' where we will 'sink or swim'.

JACK

Let's hope it doesn't get to that.

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. I hope the Acheron is 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?

STEPHEN

More than I can say.

JACK

Well, we'll take on food and water once we're there, and I promise during that time, several days at least, you can wander at will, catching bugs and beetles to your heart's delight. You will be the first naturalist to set foot on the islands I'll warrant.

STEPHEN (delighted)

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

I can't make it rain, damn it!

STEPHEN surprised by JACK's sudden display of concealed tension.

JACK (CONT'D)

Damn'd bad-luck is what it is.

He gets up, paces, pausing at the edge of the table to look down at the model of the Acheron.

JOLLY BOAT - DAY

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

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

HOLLOM

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.

HOLLOM 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. As BONDEN struggles to decipher it there's the sound of a musket shot and a seabird falls out of the sky.

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!

GUN-DECK - DAY

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

CALAMY

Blakeney...

WILLIAMSON

Rye...

CALAMY

Swift...

WILLIAMSON

Boyle...

CALAMY

(the final choice)

All right, come on Addison.

Little ADDISON joins CALAMY's side, trailing his too-large sword. WILLIAMSON tosses a coin.

CALAMY

Heads.

WILLIAMSON

It's tails. We attack.

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

WILLIAMSON's 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 pistol 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 HOLLOM and his men are now back on board. NAGLE is approaching from one end of the narrow gang-way, HOLLOM from the other. NAGLE pushes past, deliberately bumping HOLLOM, who stumbles, clutching for the gunwale.

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. HOLLLOM stands in front of him,
twisting his hat between his hands.

JACK
The man pushed past you without making
his obedience. And yet you said nothing.

HOLLLOM
No, Sir, I intended to but the right
words just didn't...

JACK
'The right words'? He failed to salute
you. It's deliberate insubordination.

HOLLLOM looks at the floor, mumbles -

HOLLLOM
They don't like me, Sir.

JACK
They what? Speak up, man!

HOLLLOM raises his head and looks at JACK, his eyes 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,
Sir, be friendly like, but they've taken
a set against me. Always whispering when
I go past, giving me looks. But, I'll
set that to rights, be tougher on them
from now on.

JACK

You can't make 'friends' with the foremast jacks, they'll despise you in the end, think you weak. Nor do you need be a tyrant. It's leadership they want, strength, respect.

HOLLOM

I'm very sorry, Sir.

JACK

You're what twenty-three, twenty-four?

HOLLOM

(smiling weakly)

Twenty-five next Friday.

JACK

You've failed to pass for lieutenant twice. You can't spend the rest of your life as a midshipman.

HOLLOM

I'll try harder, Sir.

KILLICK helps JACK on with his full-dress uniform.

JACK

Well, it's an unfortunate business, Hollom. Damned unfortunate.

KILLICK seems to agree as he places JACK's hat on his head. Then he turns and strides out of the cabin, HOLLOM following slowly after him.

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)

Mr. Nagle, You're an old man-of-war's man 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 HOLLAM, who looks 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.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP ON -

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.

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 on not being a flogging captain and this...

JACK

No, I am not a "flogging captain". I have not once rigged the grating on this voyage, not once in twelve thousand miles.

Tightening the new string.

JACK (CONT'D)

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

The note escalating as he turns.

JACK (CONT'D)

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

STEPHEN

I'm not a party to it on land.

JACK (CONT'D)

But what you fail to realise is that at sea, hard-work and firm discipline is what keeps our little wooden world together. Especially in these current circumstances.

STEPHEN

Circumstances largely of your own making.

This hits a raw nerve.

JACK

I invite you to my cabin as a friend, not to criticise or to comment on my command. The men on it 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.

He gets up to leave.

JACK (CONT'D)

Stay, please.

(beat)

What would you have me do?

STEPHEN (sits)

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

JACK

What? Stop their grog? I'd rather have them three sheets to the wind now and again, than have a mutiny on my hands.

STEPHEN (provocative)

I'm rather understanding of mutinies. Men pressed from their homes, their chosen occupations...

JACK (cuts in)

Stephen...

STEPHEN

...confined for months in a wooden prison, shouted at...

JACK (forcefully)

...Stephen!

STEPHEN

...never more than a few hours sleep.

JACK

Please do not talk of the service like that, it makes me so very low.

STEPHEN

Had I been at Spithead I should have readily joined the mutineers.

JACK

Now, you're talking like an Irishman.

STEPHEN

I am an Irishman.

It's an old dispute between them and JACK is really not in the mood for it.

JACK

I value our friendship, our music, our conversation but I can only afford one rebel on my ship. Men must be governed. Often not wisely I grant you, but there are hierarchies even in nature, as you've often said.

STEPHEN

That is the excuse of every tyrant in history. Of Nero. Of Bonaparte. We are not animals and I for one am opposed to authority, that egg of misery and oppression...

JACK (overlapping)

...You've come to the wrong shop for anarchy, brother!

They sit in brooding silence.

SCUTTLEBUTT - DUSK

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

A sense of someone moving up behind him. HOLLLOM turns abruptly. It's the marine sentry, moving in the shadows. He stares at HOLLLOM as he backs away toward the ladder and hurries 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, DAVIES adding another link in the tattooed chain about BECKETT's middle.

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

Careful, sir.

MIDSHIPMAN'S BERTH - DUSK

HOLLOM 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, Hollom?

HOLLOM 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 glares at BLAKENEY.

IN STEPHEN'S ROOM

A shot from the deck above.

STEPHEN looks up from his book "Di Consolazione Philosophae". Then the sound of bare feet approaching, followed by a knock at the door.

STEPHEN

Come.

JOE PLAICE knuckles his forehead, appears agitated.

PLAICE

Beg your pardon, your honour, but Mr. Howard just shot a sea-monster!

GANGWAY - DUSK

STEPHEN and PLAICE stride along to where the marine captain, HOWARD, peers down into the water with one of his men.

HOWARD

Doctor! The very man.

STEPHEN

What's this about a sea-monster?

HOWARD

I wished you'd seen the animal for yourself, Doctor. The crew never seen anything like it.

STEPHEN moves to the rail, looks out.

HOWARD

It was prodigious like a human, though bigger, might have been a sea-elephant, it had a calf with it - I didn't mean to hit the calf, I missed my mark.

STEPHEN

Mr. Howard, let me beg you, if the men can't eat it or I can't dissect it, please do not shoot every creature you see.

STEPHEN stares back down at the ripples spreading over the glassy sea.

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.

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.

JACK

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

PULLINGS

I have no idea, Sir.

MOWETT

You don't think it's the Acheron, Sir?

JACK

(untypically cutting)

The Acheron needs wind in order to move too, Mr. Mowett.

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

JACK

What do you make of it, Doctor?

STEPHEN

I'm sure I've never heard the like.

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

STEPHEN

Perhaps it's the mother of the creature Mr. Howard shot.

JACK

What creature?

STEPHEN

I didn't see it. A manatee? A sea-elephant possibly? But I've never known one with a cry like this.

A glance along at HOWARD on the gangway, as terrified as anyone.

JACK

Bosun. Fire off some flares.

WIDE ON THE SHIP - NIGHT

Three flares 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. Like everyone else, 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.

JACK 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!

(to MOWETT)

Tell the bosun those off-duty may sleep with their lamps on.

LOWER DECK - NIGHT

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

BLACK BILL

Duppies make that noise.

KILLICK (indicating BILL)

See. They know all about this in Africa.

DOUDLE

What's a duppie?

BLACK BILL

It's Warley, swallowed by a fish when he fell off the mast, and his spirit can't get out. He's a duppie now.

DAVIES

Captain don't even know what that noise be.

General nods of agreement.

DOUDLE

Doctor neither, and he knows everything.

KILLICK

Joe here's got the most experience in these matters, and new brains to boot, let's hear it from Joe.

All eyes on JOE PLAICE. He speaks from the shadows.

PLAICE

It's the Jonah causing it. That howling thing is a signal to the Phantom-Ship. He's calling it up, don't you see? Every time he's on watch the ship appears. You wait and see, the ghost-ship will appear any time tonight, and take us all straight to the hot-place.

Another shriek, closer now, seems to confirm JOE's bizarre theory.

MIDSHIPMEN'S BERTH - NIGHT

The boys sit together. None of them look at HOLLUM, who sits 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.

As JACK looks over his shoulder, his eye is caught by a picture in one of STEPHEN's books.

He picks it up.

Close on the picture - it's an engraving of a giant squid, its tentacles wrapped around a ship.

Back on JACK holding the picture up to STEPHEN.

JACK

You don't think...?

There is a knock on the cabin door.

BLAKENEY enters, agitated.

BLAKENEY (to STEPHEN)

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

MIDSHIPMEN'S BERTH

HOLLOM writhing in agony on the floor, STEPHEN trying to calm him, shouting for PADEEN.

STEPHEN'S CABIN - NIGHT

JACK gets up as STEPHEN enters, closing the door behind him.

STEPHEN

There's nothing physically wrong with him. He thinks he's been cursed by the men.

JACK

Sailors will abide a great deal, but not a Jonah. It's like a white crow - the others peck it to death.

STEPHEN

A 'Jonah'? My God, you believe it too.

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.

HOLLOM

Much better, thank you.

BLAKENEY

I think the creature is going away.

HOLLOM

I am sure of it.

He reaches down, picks up a 12 pound cannonball.

HOLLOM (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 HOLLOM'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 looks, then hands it back to KILLICK.

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
we ask for his.

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

JACK (CONT'D)

Amen.

CREW (mumble ashamedly)

Amen.

The men on deck 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 is
stirring the mainsail.

HOOR 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 moves through a tropical squall. Men rig a sail to
catch the water, others appear with barrels and tubs, anything
to catch the precious rain.

DISSOLVE TO -

THE SURPRISE - DAY

Sea birds swarming over a shoal of fish in the foreground as
the cry of the distant lookout carries 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!

MONTAGED 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 wimmun. 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 cormorant. But apparently flightless, by all that's Holy. Now that would be a discovery! Completely unknown.

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!

Recognising 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. Iguanas are land animals.

BLAKENEY

Not these ones.

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

STEPHEN (O.S.)

You are right! Two new species in as many minutes.

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 neighbouring islands.

IN THE LEE OF THE SHIP'S HULL (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

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.

JACK

And her course?

HOGG

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

JACK (rising)

Mr. Mowett, these men to 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 (overlap)
How can you dismiss, out of hand, the
bounty of nature? Knowledge that... that
will advance our ideas, help us to...

JACK (overlap)
All very well, but it doesn't apply in
this situation.

STEPHEN (overlap)
It might! How can we possibly know what
lies undiscovered on these islands, some
knowledge that may save life, that...

JACK (overlap)
...I, I have to save lives. I have to
somehow guide this ship, undetected,
under the nose of a 40 gun frigate. And
bring us out alive. That's my job. And
it's your job too.

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...

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 darned hobbies, sir!

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

He sets down the toasted cheese.

KILLICK (CONT'D)

I'll just leave the one plate then, if himself won't be joining.

JACK

Yes, Killick. Just the one.

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.

LOOKOUT - DAY

The lookout leaning out from the cross-trees.

DOUDLE (shouting)
On deck there. Object fine on the
starboard bow.

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 touched at Boston.

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

HOGG
Yes, and it's not been in the water more
than a week. There's 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 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.

DISSOLVE TO -

LADDER (TIMELAPSE) - DAY

A wild wind humming through the rigging as STEPHEN goes topside.

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 our 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 mesmerised 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, 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 turning to BONDEN)
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 (a whisper)

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. Be better on land, but I'll manage somehow.

JACK looks away from the alcoholic HIGGINS back to STEPHEN.

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 in JACK's direction as he retreats to 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 - they are maybe a hundred miles from the Galapagos, ahead, open sea until the Marquesas.

INT STEPHEN'S CABIN - DUSK

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, all he wants is quiet.

JEMMY DUCKS retreats, as 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 from the ratlines to the deck.

PULLINGS

It might be the Acheron. If we put on more sail we'd come up with her before nightfall.

JACK lowers the telescope, turns his back on PULLINGS, strangely abstracted.

PULLINGS (CONT'D)

(to his back)

Do you wish me to set the topgallants?

(no reply)

Sir?

A long silence. Then JACK walks away.

PULLINGS stares perplexed from JACK's retreating figure to the distant chase.

DISSOLVE TO -

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 colour in his face.

The sea is relatively 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)

Davies! 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 come 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.

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 because of Higgins.

(beat)

Can't have him poking around in your belly without a solid platform to work on.

He ducks as they enter -

THE HOSPITAL TENT - DAY

In the creamy light, they lay STEPHEN down on a 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, Higgins?

STEPHEN grabs JACK's sleeve.

STEPHEN

I do this with my own hand.

EXT. THE TENT - NIGHT

PADEEN stands, arms crossed at the closed tent-flap, keeping at bay a crowd of well-wishers, and the merely curious.

INT. THE TENT - NIGHT

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 CHOLLES have set up a large gilt-framed mirror.

Beside him, on a white tablecloth, some small scissors and scalpels.

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.

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

FADE 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

You have 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 (smiles)

They don't combine too well I find.

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

(impatient)

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 of what has been a huge and far-reaching decision.

STEPHEN

But how will it sit with the Admiralty? To have spent six months in a fruitless pursuit and then come home empty-handed?

JACK

"Empty-handed"? Not a bit of it. 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

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 great tortoise: *Testudo Aubreii*!

SURPRISE CAMP - DAWN

STEPHEN, BLAKENEY and PADEEN leave the camp on STEPHEN's 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 wonderful landscape lies before them, 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 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 think 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 move 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.

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.

THE ROCKY SLOPE

As STEPHEN continues toward the top, he glances above him.

Again the bird, moving higher, as if 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, then 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 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 - 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.

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.

COUNTRYSIDE - LAST LIGHT

PADEEN carrying STEPHEN 'piggy-back', BLAKENEY out ahead urging them on.

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 specimen-jar, and is examining it with his magnifying glass when JACK enters.

JACK

I forgot to ask you - did you see your bird?

STEPHEN's eye grossly enlarged through the lens.

STEPHEN

I did not. My greatest discovery was your phantom.

JACK

Indeed it was, I'm sorry...

STEPHEN

(waving the magnifying glass)
Not a bit of it. William and I made a unique discovery.

Handing JACK the jar and magnifying glass.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Tell him, Mr. Blakeney.

BLAKENEY (beaming)

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 a predator.

JACK looks up at STEPHEN.

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.

CROSSTREES - NIGHT

JACK, PULLINGS and the whaler HOGG scan the dark horizon.

HOGG

There, Sir. A mainmast toplight.

JACK has to use a telescope.

JACK

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, let him think he's seen us first.

SURPRISE - DAWN

First light reveals the results of an overnight transformation - from a naval warship to a shambolic-looking Portuguese whaler.

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 a 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.

QUARTERDECK - DAWN

A bemused STEPHEN looks about him as he approaches JACK.

STEPHEN

A nautical phasmid.

JACK (nods)

I showed the pictures in your book to Mr. Hollar, and he smoked it right away. Went against his training mind, but he set to with a will.

STEPHEN

Ordering people to be untidy and dirty must have been quite a challenge.

JACK

I intend to take a greater interest in the bounty of nature from now on.

STEPHEN

Indeed?

JACK

Yes, I had no idea a study of nature could advance the art of naval warfare.

STEPHEN smiles.

JACK (CONT'D)

I may join you on some future expedition.

STEPHEN

You would be most welcome.

JACK

Now to pull this predator in close, and spring the trap.

STEPHEN

Jack?

JACK looks at him.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

You are the predator.

BERTH DECK - DAWN

HOWARD and his marines change out of their smart uniforms, into the oldest most ragged clothes on board the ship, much to the amusement of the passing sailors..

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 round him relaying one another 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 (laughing)
It's all right. I know. You're to lead
the boarders from the forecastle.
Congratulations.

CALAMY
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 all.

BLAKENEY
(about to leave)
Then I'll see you at the forecastle,
'Lieutenant'.

CALAMY
That's not your station.

BLAKENEY looks from CALAMY to the others, who avoid his eye.

BLAKENEY
But naturally I'll board with you?

CALAMY
I'm sorry, Will, it's not to be.

BLAKENEY is devastated.

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 disorganised, 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*.

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)

Go to your station, Mr. Blakeney.

BLAKENEY begins to salute, doesn't, and retires, tears burning his eyes.

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 with a column of spray just off their bows.

JACK

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.

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 ball from the Acheron hits 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 adlib)

We're a long way from home. *(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 winnin!)* - 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 say it will be easy. She's twice the men we have and they'll sell their lives dearly. But every man here is worth three of Boney's privateers, and I know there's not a faint heart among you.

CALAMY pipes up -

CALAMY

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 is back at 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.

JACK studies the looming black vessel, then turns and crosses to BONDEN at the helm. BONDEN nods, lifting his hands from the wheel as 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*. STEPHEN appears beside him, casually smoking a cigar.

STEPHEN

Cigar, Jack?

JACK (smiles)

Thank you, no, but Killick is getting me a cup of coffee, if you'd like one.

Another shot pierces the mizzen foresail above them, but neither man flinches. KILLICK appears with two cups of coffee, and in his belt a brace of pistols.

KILLICK

I took the liberty, Doctor.

STEPHEN

Why thank you, Killick.

JACK steers one-handed as he sips his coffee.

JACK

Mr. Mowett?

MOWETT

Sir?

JACK

A poem might be in order.

Another shot through the sails.

MOWETT

A poem, Sir?

JACK

Yes, something appropriate.

MOWETT (a look of dismay)

Well...

*'Oh were it mine with sacred Maro's art,
To wake to sympathy the feeling heart,*

A ball goes howling past the ship, MOWETT winces.

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.)

*...they were only people of the merchant
service, of-course, Sir.*

P.O.V. ACHERON

She's now less than five hundred yards from their stern, and gaining.

QUARTERDECK

JACK turns back to MOWETT.

JACK

Alright Mr. Mowett. Strike the Portuguese colours and run up the Jack... Mr. Pullings. Canvas off the gun-ports, and run 'em out. Mr. Howard? Marines away aloft.

The British Jack rises to the masthead replacing the Portuguese colours, as PULLINGS descends to the gun-deck.

SHIP'S SIDE

The black muzzles appear with a low rumbling sound, as

QUARTERDECK

JACK, with a wink to MOWETT, spins the wheel hard to starboard.

THE SURPRISE

Wide, to see her swinging broadside on.

GUN-DECK

PULLINGS

Aim high! On the uproll... 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 Acheron.

P.O.V. 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

Now, look lively! A broadside as we pass her, then cut across her wake!

THE SURPRISE AND THE ACHERON

Wide, to see the *Surprise* turning toward the *Acheron*, so they will pass broadside to broadside.

As they pass, the *Surprise* is the first to fire, gun by gun, as the crews sight the target. They are no more than thirty yards apart.

QUARTERDECK/GUN-DECK, SURPRISE

Through a furious hail of musket fire, JACK runs to the gun-deck, shouts down to the gunner -

JACK

Mr. Horner! Every gun to concentrate on her mainmast!

Those yet to fire elevate their guns.

Now the *Acheron* replies, but their fire is badly aimed and does little damage.

PULLINGS

The mainmast! Fire for the mainmast as you sight her!

THE SURPRISE GUNS

Barking, leaping back one by one, great tongues of flame spitting from their barrels, dense clouds of smoke rising.

VIEW OF THE ACHERON

With an almighty splitting sound their mainmast falls, dragging yards and rigging with it, the whole mass falling over their side, obscuring many of their gun-ports.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE

Cheers from the crew.

JACK

Hard a 'starboard!

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

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 as the *Surprise* glides past.

QUARTERDECK

JACK climbs up on the gunwales, shouting to BONDEN -

JACK

Lay me alongside!

THE SURPRISE AND THE ACHERON

The bow of the *Surprise* lurches into the Acheron mid-ships, spars interlocking, the *Surprise* guns firing into her at point-blank range.

The crew throw grappling hooks.

QUARTERDECK

JACK

Boarders 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: youthful but terrifying, screaming and swinging their blades.

QUARTERDECK

An agonised BLAKENEY watches from where he stands beside STEPHEN. JOE PLAICE is close by with some of the older men, ready to ferry the wounded 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 HORNER in quick succession.

The attack momentarily falters, and the Acherons surge back at them.

JACK rallies his men and they charge again - the marine, TROLLOPE, and CHOLES are blown backwards by grapeshot.

LAMB, enraged, surges past CHOLES's body, swinging his axe to devastating effect, with HOLLAR by his side and JEMMY DUCKS protecting their rear, a pistol in each hand, firing from the hip.

JACK keeps pushing onwards, the centre of the 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 and missiles 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 DAVIES is foaming at the mouth as he swings a meat-cleaver right and left.

QUARTERDECK, ACHERON

A French officer notes the poorly defended *Surprise*, and leads a counter-attack over onto her quarterdeck.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE

BLAKENEY, dirk in hand, turns to face them, as does HOWARD and 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 shoots 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.

CALAMY fights his way to BLAKENEY who is down on his knees stabbing at the legs of the attackers.

WAIST, ACHERON

JACK, BONDEN and DAVIES 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 - fired by KILLICK's mate BLACK 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 move toward the stern, CALAMY struggling to protect BLAKENEY.

SIDE OF THE ACHERON

Some Acherons jump overboard to escape the furious attack. Others are thrown, 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.

Everywhere signs of the lethal blast through the ship's stern, bodies, guns upended, shattered timbers.

He makes his way through to the Great Cabin.

GREAT CABIN, 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 shattered windows. A couple of others raise their hands and start jabbering incoherently.

QUARTERDECK, ACHERON

It's all over for the Acherons as a French officer hauls down their colours.

A cheer from the Surprises - a few last shots fired. CALAMY and BLAKENEY cheering, BLAKENEY holding aloft the captured flag.

A dying Frenchman suddenly lunges at BLAKENEY with a sabre. CALAMY steps in front of him and takes the blow.

IN THE SICK-BERTH, ACHERON

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

Your captain? Where is your 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 (accent)

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.

CALAMY is dead.

Gently, JACK picks up the lifeless body and walks slowly back down the quarterdeck, the boy draped across his arms.

Friend and foe part silently in front of him as he crosses the gangway to...

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE

...then with BLAKENEY following, he goes below.

THE GREAT CABIN - DAY

JACK in wide shot, sitting alone on the bench running under the stern windows. His hunched posture and red tear-stained eyes give a glimpse of his familiar post-battle mood - a mix of grief and depression, the old question, "Was it worth the price?".

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP ON -

ACHERON AND SURPRISE - DAWN

The two ships 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.

DAVIES and PLAICE stitch the bodies into their hammocks, CALAMY the last body in the line. As the men approach -

BLAKENEY

I'll do it.

JOE passes him the needle and twine, then they leave him alone.

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.)
Sleepers awake!

...as BLAKENEY's hands stitch the canvas closed.

WIDE ON THE SURPRISE - DAWN

The small figures of the crew assembled on the quarterdeck.
JACK's voice drifting across the water.

JACK
Michael Alfred Choles...
John Henry Allan...
Joseph Nagle...
William Horner...
Stephen Wiston Boyle...
Peter Miles Calamy...
We therefore commit their bodies to the
deep, looking for the resurrection of
the body, when the sea shall give up her
dead...
Amen.

ALL
Amen.

The bodies in their weighted hammocks slide into the sea.

BOW OF THE SURPRISE - DAY

Wide on STEPHEN and BLAKENEY as they sit watching two dolphins surfing the bow-wave, STEPHEN pointing out various features of these magnificent creatures, doing his best to take the boy's mind off the loss of his friend.

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 coloured signal-flags run up to the mast-head.

QUARTERDECK, SURPRISE - DAY

JACK waves across at CAPTAIN PULLINGS as the Acheron makes a sharp turn away from the Surprise.

ABOUT THE SHIP - DUSK

Slowly the crew come back to life as old familiar habits and routines reassert themselves.

- Acting First Lieutenant MOWETT walks the quarterdeck composing a poem in memory of the battle.
- JOE PLAICE tells a story of witchcraft and haunted ships to a small attentive audience.
- While AWKWARD DAVIES works further on the tattoo about BECKETT's waist. The chain begun off BRAZIL now winds its way around most of his torso.
- BLAKENEY and JEMMY DUCKS are feeding the assorted creatures collected at the Galapagos, as...
- BONDEN reads his first book, 'Diseases of Seamen' by Stephen Maturin, his brow furrowed, his lips moving silently.
- While the powder-monkeys chase each other about the gun-deck to the annoyance of some.

OUTSIDE THE GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

KILLICK, wearing an ostentatious bandage about his head, is preparing toasted cheese with BLACK BILL. From inside drifts the sound of violin and cello tuning up.

KILLICK

Here we go again.

BLACK BILL

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!

INTERIOR, GREAT CABIN - NIGHT

STEPHEN plays a note on his cello as JACK pauses, gazing into space.

STEPHEN

Jack, you're gathering wool.

JACK (smiles)

Thinking about their captain. A great seaman, whatever you may say of him. The doctor said he was killed by our first broadside. I'd have liked to talk to him, face to face.

STEPHEN

Maybe you did.

JACK

What?

STEPHEN

While I was tending the prisoners they told me their doctor died of fever, two weeks ago. There was no doctor on that ship when we boarded it. And I doubt you will find one there now.

JACK goes very still. A silence broken only by the sound of water flowing gently past the hull.

He looks down at the captain's sword on the table, the thought of a possible final deception flooding through him.

STEPHEN

Shall we?

He starts to play, the deep booming sound of the cello filling the cabin with glorious sound as JACK slowly picks up his bow.

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.

FURTHER BACK

until we see the curve of the earth, and the planet spinning on its journey through space.
