I S L E O F P R I D E

Written by

Buster & Eugene La Haye

Lahayebros@gmail.com

OVER BLACK:

Sounds of HEAVY RAIN. The ROAR of OCEAN WAVES.

We sense MOVEMENT in the frame, barely discernible. A flickering pattern, streaming down. It's rain.

BOOM!

The FLASH of CANNON FIRE briefly illuminates the side of a TALL SHIP, way off in the distance, roiling amid a massive swell, before --

We return to TOTAL DARKNESS.

We hear the *WHHISH* of the cannonball, the CRUNCH of splintering wood.

BOOM! Another CANNON goes off, on the opposite side of the screen. It reveals a SECOND SHIP, larger than the first, firing at its opponent.

Again it goes PITCH BLACK, as the CRUNCH OF WOOD signals the ball colliding with its target.

More sounds of roaring waves...

CRACK! A flash of LIGHTNING reveals the whole tableau:

TWO SHIPS BATTLING AMID A TERRIBLE STORM.

... hidden by rain and spray. Acute viewers may spot a UNION JACK waving from the bigger of the two ships.

BOOM!

BOOM!

More cannon fire.

AN ENORMOUS WAVE rears up, plunging the entire frame underwater. The sound is completely muffled. This lasts three or four seconds, before --

The wave sinks back down. WIND AND RAIN come roaring back with a vengeance.

There's another CRACK of lightning: the smaller of the two ships is badly damaged. Main mast gone. Sails torn.

It is sinking below the surface, to be lost forever...

FADE TO BLACK.

AVERY (V.O.)
No information regarding the whereabouts of His Majesty's Ship, the *Expectation*, or the pirate craft *Sea Maiden*, was received for three weeks following the storm. It was assumed both ships went down with all hands, somewhere northeast of Hispaniola. That was two months ago. July fifth, the year of our Lord 1717... Ah! Set it down there, Mr. Gillis, that'll do.

FADE UP ON:

A TRAY OF TEA

being placed on a desk by a manservant named MR. GILLIS (60s, eager to please).

WE ARE IN:

INT. NAVY OFFICE - DAY

An airy, well-furnished room, somewhere in the heart of London. Delicious morning light spills through the window, backlighting the steam as it rises from the teapot. Sounds of CITY LIFE carry up from the street, just loud enough to create a sense of place.

Seated behind the desk are THREE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY. From left to right, they are:

-- COMMODORE OLIVER LANDRAKE (late 50s): The presiding officer. Formal and dependable, but without much imagination.

-- CAPTAIN EDMUND WORBOLY (40s-50s): Some 300 pounds, and proud of it. Arrogant and lazy.

-- CAPTAIN WINSTON AVERY (late 70s): the one who was speaking. Wrinkled as a walnut. A tiny pair of glasses perched on his nose. His manner is soft and patient. The only one there with any real wisdom.

Avery lifts the teapot.

AVERY
I'll be mother, shall I?

WORBOLY
Aren't you always?

MR. GILLIS
I have the day’s mail, sir. Shall I hold it or would you like it now?

COMMODORE LANDRAKE
I’ll take it now, thank you, Gillis. That’ll be all.

Gillis hands a stack of letters to Landrake and retires with a bow. Landrake rifles through the mail.

COMMODORE LANDRAKE (CONT'D)
Dispatches, dispatches... Request for more aid.

WORBOLY
(buttering a crumpet)
Always the same thing.

LANDRAKE
Hello? What do we have here?

Landrake turns over a SMALL PACKAGE.

COMMODORE LANDRAKE
It’s addressed to someone in the enlisted quarters. Must’ve been delivered by mistake.

WORBOLY
Open it up. Maybe there are candied nuts inside.

AVERY
Edmund, please. At your age...

WORBOLY
It’s a joke, you old thorn. Can’t you take a joke?

COMMODORE LANDRAKE
I’ll make sure it’s delivered to the proper address.

He sets the box aside.

COMMODORE LANDRAKE (CONT'D)
Very well. What’s the first item on the day’s agenda?

AVERY
(reading off the report)
Private Daniel Barrett of the HMS *Expectation.* I was just getting to him before the tea arrived.

COMMODORE LANDRAKE
Ah, yes. The ship caught in a storm.

AVERY
Apparently this young lad was one of two survivors picked up off an island three weeks after the ship went down. He's here to give us a personal account of his experience. It's all covered in a report filed by the captain who rescued him.

Avery hands the report to Worboly, who passes it to Landrake without even a glance.

WORBOLY
If we already have the written report, why the devil do we need to see him ourselves?
(sotto)
Bloody navy always being bloody redundant... Bloody hell. You'd think it was official policy to waste everyone's time.

COMMODORE LANDRAKE
It says there are "discrepancies" in the report the admiralty would like straightened out.

WORBOLY
What sort of discrepancies?

COMMODORE LANDRAKE
Something concerning an item found in his possession on the island. I'm sure we'll get to it in due corse.

WORBOLY
You wait and see. We won't learn a damn thing, I tell you. Not a damn thing.

AVERY
Personally, I prefer hearing from the enlisted men in person.
(MORE)

AVERY (CONT'D)
A written statement doesn't capture the little nuances of a story. And those can make all the difference when trying to understand someone's actions.

WORBOLY
To hell with nuance. Stick to cold hard facts, is what I say. Plain speaking and plain dealing. Isn't that right, Commodore?

COMMODORE LANDRAKE
I think you both make excellent points. Shall we bring him in?

Landrake rings a bell. Gillis reappears.

COMMODORE LANDRAKE (CONT'D)
Is there a Private Barrett waiting in the corridor?

MR. GILLIS
Yes sir. He's been here half an hour.

COMMODORE LANDRAKE
(impressed)
Really? Admit him directly, Gillis. Thank you.
(Gillis departs)
What do we know about this Private Barrett?

AVERY
By all accounts, a model soldier.

INSERT: *PRIVATE BARRETT (early 20s) following Gillis down a corridor. He looks very spiffy in his classic red uniform and shiny black boots, a tricorn hat tucked under his arm.*

AVERY (V.O.)
The youngest son of a tailor from Whitechapel. Joined the marines at seventeen. Described by his commanding officers as hardworking, loyal, and clever. Takes his duties seriously. Always obeys orders promptly and with fervor. In short, an ideal man for His Majesty's navy.

Private Barrett arrives before them.

MR. GILLIS
Here he is, sir.

BARRETT
(saluting)
Private Daniel James Barrett reporting.

LANDRAKE
At ease, private. I'm Commodore Oliver Landrake. This is Captain Worboly and Captain Avery.

AVERY
It's a pleasure to meet you, son.

BARRETT
Likewise, sir.
(to Worboly)
Sir.

Worboly grunts.

LANDRAKE
We understand you had a bit of an adventure. Spent some time trapped on an island. We're eager to hear more about it.

BARRETT
Yes, sir. With respect, I already provided a full account of my experience a month ago, upon my return to London.

LANDRAKE
Yes, we've read your report. It's very thorough. But we'd like to hear it from you directly. You know how the navy is. Always crossing its 'T's and dotting its 'I's.

BARRETT
Of course, sir.

LANDRAKE
You can begin with the circumstances of the shipwreck.

WORBOLY
And mind you, no wandering. Plain speaking and plain dealing. That's what we want.

Worboly shoots Avery a look. Avery doesn't take the bait.

BARRETT
Yes, sir.
(clears his throat)
For two weeks the HMS *Expectation* had been pursuing the pirate vessel the *Sea Maiden*, in hopes of capturing her Captain, Marcombe Van Llewyn. He had eluded us for thirteen days before we finally caught up with him off the coast of an unknown island...
(darkly)
Right as we were struck by a terrible storm.

SMASH INSERT: *the two ships from the beginning, battling it out as the violent waves crash down on all sides*.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
The sea was black as pitch. Waves as high as a mountain. Not one of us wasn't soaked to the marrow. We were taking on water fast. The first lieutenant, Mackendrick, advised the captain to break off the engagement and save the ship. But the captain dismissed these concerns as cowardice. "A light gale." That's what he called it.

A cloud crosses over the window, darkening Barrett's face.

AVERY
Did you agree with the Captain in this matter?

BARRETT
Yes, sir. I did. My sympathies lay entirely on his side. He was appointed by the admiralty, which was established by the king. And the king is England. As I saw it, every man aboard the pirate ship was an affront to the safety and sanctity of his empire, and it was our sacred duty to hunt down and hang every one of them.

AVERY
I see. Continue.

BARRETT
The damage sustained in the battle proved too great for either party.
(MORE)

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Both ships foundered. I was knocked overboard in the chaos. When I surfaced, the *Expectation* was gone. I remembered there was an island to the north-east. So I tried to swim in what I thought was the right direction. My arms felt like lead from fighting the swell. Every time I opened my mouth to breathe, salt water filled my lungs. I could feel it tearing up my throat. I must have been unconscious half the time, carried by the tide. By some miracle I reached the shore, and immediately passed out.
(beat)
I slept for twelve hours.

EXT. ISLAND - BEACH - DAY

Waves THUNDER against the sand. Barrett lies unconscious on the beach. Hair disheveled, face caked with sand. His once spotless red uniform is now stained and tattered.

The surf rises up around him... then sinks away. It rises again... Barrett stirs.

Suddenly -- he COUGHS, sputtering up water.

He hoists himself up on his elbows and looks around, getting his bearings.

The beach extends in both directions. Dense jungle foliage lines the island interior -- mysterious and forbidding.

LANDRAKE (V.O.)
What was the first thing you did upon waking up?

Barrett rises to his knees. He remembers something and frantically digs through his pockets -- left, right, jacket, pulling up his shirt, until -- his hand closes on AN ITEM tucked under his coat.

He pulls it out: a tiny TIN CASE. About 2 x 4 inches. Faded lettering is stamped on the top. Hard to make out.

Barrett opens the tin and checks the contents. We don't see what's inside, but whatever it is must be important. Barrett closes his eyes, and presses the tin to his chest.

RESUME LONDON OFFICE - DAY

Barrett hesitates... then answers the question.

BARRETT
(an evasion)
I fell on my knees and thanked God for my delivery.

Landrake nods his approval.

EXT. ISLAND - BEACH - DAY

Barrett prostrates himself, hands clasped together. He mutters a silent prayer.

He rises and looks down the beach. FLOATING WRECKAGE has appeared.

BARRETT (V.O.)
By the time I awoke, wreckage was already washing ashore.

MOMENTS LATER

Barrett kicks through smashed lanterns, ropes, pieces of a yardarm.

He picks up a SET OF HANDCUFFS, the keys still in them. He tries them out. They work.

Barrett pries a lid off a keg. It contains GUN POWDER. He runs his fingers through it. Still dry.

Barrett opens another keg. Biscuits. Soaked in water. He nibbles one. Spits it out. Disgusting.

Something BRIGHT RED catches his eye. Barrett pulls it out from beneath a plank. It’s a UNION JACK.

CUT TO:

A MAKESHIFT FLAGPOLE

Stabbed into the sand. The flag rustles in the wind.

Barrett sits beside it, trying to polish his boots. To his right is a pile of items he’s collected. Torn canvas sails, barrels, bits of wood, a cracked hourglass, about eight bottles of rum.

Barrett spits on his boot, rubs it in. He glances up and freezes.

A body is lying facedown in the surf.

BARRETT (V.O.)
After a few hours, the bodies started coming in.

Barrett stands and approaches the corpse. It's a NAVY OFFICER, still in his blue uniform.

Barrett turns him over. His face is waxy and pale.

BARRETT
Lieutenant Mackendrick...

Barrett's gaze falls to a PISTOL, tucked in Mackendrick's belt. Barrett pulls it free, tucks it in his own belt. He also takes a sword.

Barrett grabs the body by the arms and drags it up.

BARRETT (V.O.)
More came. After an hour there were over a dozen.

LATER

A ROW OF CORPSES line the beach, all in resting positions, arms folded over their chests. There are pirates and soldiers. Red coats, officers. Young cabin boys. Old timers.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Some of them I knew. They were colleagues. Friends. Private Wiggins, from Claypool. James Alister, a midshipmen who just celebrated his twentieth birthday.

Barrett finishes folding a midshipman's arms.

BARRETT (V.O.)
I recognized some of the pirates as well. Hammer and Nails. Two brothers. Bony Pete -- Van Llewyn's first mate. What their mothers called them I don't rightly know. But there was one man who topped them all. The pirate king himself.
(MORE)

BARRETT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Captain Marcombe Van Llewyn, in the flesh.

CUT TO:

VAN LLEWYN'S BODY

Pulled straight from the sea. A wild-looking, bearded man with a hungry smirk. His eyes are wide open.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Afeared by school children and royal admirals alike, even in death his very face was enough to chill your heart. There was a fire in his eyes that made him look more alive than half the men in London. It was as if the Devil himself wanted nothing to do with him, and sent his soul a-tip-toeing back to be trapped in his body till kingdom come.

Suddenly -- *Van Llewyn's eyes snap towards Barrett*.

Barrett SCREAMS and stumbles back.

He looks back at the corpse. Van Llewyn's eyes are again staring forward. Barrett swallows. It was his imagination.

He goes through Van Llewyn's pockets.

BARRETT (V.O.)
He had on him about twenty pounds in coins and bankers notes, a compass, and his own private bible.

Barrett removes a POCKET BIBLE. He peels through its soggy wet pages. Some sections are underlined and annotated.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Having lost my own, I borrowed his.

Barrett puts the bible aside.

He removes a GOLD-PLATED FLINTLOCK PISTOL from Van Llewyn's belt with trembling hands.

BARRETT (V.O.)
He also had on him his infamous gold pistol, which rumor has it, he employed in the murder of one hundred-and-forty men, women, and children.
(MORE)

BARRETT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I heard he christened it Susanne, and never slept anywhere without it under his pillow.

Barrett turns the pistol over. The name *Susanne* is etched onto the hilt.

BARRETT (V.O.)
My stomach turned just to touch the ugly thing.

Barrett hurls it with all his might. It lands in the water.

He removes a spyglass from Van Llewyn's jacket. The lens is cracked. He looks through it.

BARRETT (V.O.)
None of the bodies showed any sign of life. Except one.

SPYGLASS POV: we PAN across the water and settle on a BODY, bumping up against some rocks.

Barrett lowers the glass and runs forward.

MOMENTS LATER

Barrett drags the body ashore. It's a 3RD LIEUTENANT in navy blue (30s). Barrett stumbles and falls. He looks down and discovers FRESH BLOOD on his hands.

An idea hits him. He tears open the man's shirt, presses an ear to his chest.

Thud-DUD... thud-DUD... thud-DUD...

BARRETT
Good god...!
(shaking the body)
Wake up, sir! Can you hear me?

Nothing.

Barrett lifts up the man's head. There's a deep gash in the crown. His black hair is matted with BLOOD.

Barrett carries the body up the beach.

BARRETT (V.O.)
The man was 3rd Lieutenant Downey Winthrop. I had seen him in passing, but never had the privilege of speaking to him.
(MORE)

BARRETT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He appeared to have been struck in the head during the battle. I did my best to wash his head clean, and bind the wound.

Barrett empties a water keg over the man’s scalp.

He tears a strip of cloth from one of the bodies and knots it around the patient’s skull.

BARRETT (V.O.)
The man still didn’t wake. But he didn’t die either.

Barrett holds a pocket mirror under the man’s nose. His breath fogs the glass.

BARRETT (V.O.)
There was nothing more I could do, except pray that he lived.

EXT. BEACH - MAGIC HOUR

Barrett rips a chunk of stale bread with his teeth.

BARRETT (V.O.)
For supper I ate the hardtack that washed ashore and a meager supply of nuts and berries found in the trees.

Barrett plops a berry in his mouth. He pauses. His hands are stained with berry juice. He tries to wipe them clean.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Fortunately I still had my flint and steel, which I employed in lighting a fire.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

A bonfire CRACKLES in the sand. Barrett rests beside it. The unconscious lieutenant lies nearby.

Barrett stares at an open LOCKET containing a faded portrait of a YOUNG WOMAN with strawberry blond hair.

BARRETT (V.O.)
So passed my first day on the island.

FADE OUT.

RESUME LONDON OFFICE

AVERY
That night must've been especially difficult for you.

BARRETT
Yes, sir. Very much so.

Worboly blows his nose loudly. He stuffs his handkerchief back in his pocket. The others make a point of ignoring this.

LANDRAKE
(checking the report)
When did you first become aware of another person on the island?

BARRETT
The following day. Just before noon.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett has taken apart a pistol and is polishing the pieces. Five more pistols lie on a strip of canvas on the sand.

BARRETT (V.O.)
I spent the early morning cleaning and testing the weaponry found among the bodies. Once polished and dried, six of them still worked.

Barrett pours powder into the reassembled pistol, aims it at the water. BANG!! A flock of birds erupts from the trees.

EXT. DIFFERENT BEACH - DAY

Barrett descends from a crop of rocks onto another stretch of sand. He has a pistol and sword tucked in his belt.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Afterwords I endeavored to complete a circuit of the island. Rocky cliffs prevented this, but I was able to reach the nearby beaches. That's where I saw my first clue...

Barrett strolls along. He stops short. Before him lies --

FOOTPRINTS.

A trail of them. Barefoot. Leading down from the trees, stopping at the water, then back up to the trees again.

BARRETT (V.O.)
At first I thought it was my own footprints. That somehow I had doubled back.

Barrett plants a print in the sand right next to the one he found. It's much smaller.

In a flash, Barrett draws his pistol and cutlass.

His eyes dart over the impenetrable wall of trees. Something RUSTLES in the bushes.

BARRETT
Ahoy there!

The bush rustles again. Barrett cocks the pistol, approaches the trees.

He reaches out, and rips the bush aside -- ! *SOMETHING small scurries away.* An ARMADILLO.

Barrett breathes a sigh of relief, holsters his pistol. His gaze falls on a creeper vine, hanging from a tree.

CUT TO:

BARRETT SETTING UP A SNARE TRAP:

BARRETT (V.O.)
I had spent summers as a boy in the country with my uncle. He taught me to set snares and other traps.

Barrett stands back to admire his handy-work.

BARRETT (V.O.)
These rude mechanisms, I hoped, would furnish me with food in the coming days.

EXT. CLIFFTOP - DAY

CLOSE ON hands digging up soft earth. Barrett is widening a hole in an open area, overlooking the sea.

BARRETT (V.O.)
I decided to bury the bodies that washed ashore on higher ground, where they would be at peace.

LATER

Barrett lowers a corpse, still wrapped in a canvas sail, into the ground. He reads from Van Llewyn’s bible.

BARRETT
Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

Barrett brushes dirt over the body. He etches a name in a rock, plants it in the ground.

EXT. BEACH BASECAMP - DAY

Barrett returns down a rocky path to the beach. He stops, spotting something.

A MAN is rummaging through one of the corpses. He’s in tattered civilian clothes.

BARRETT
HEY!!

Barrett draws his gun.

The man looks up. They lock eyes... He dives into the trees. BANG!! Barrett fires his pistol.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Come back!

Barrett draws his saber, races after him.

EXT. JUNGLE - CONTINUOUS

Barrett presses through the low hanging vines.

He stops at a small clearing. There is no sign of the man.

BARRETT
Confound it.

EXT. BEACH BASECAMP - DAY

Barrett looks down at Van Llewyn’s corpse -- the body the man was rummaging through.

He kneels and wraps it back up.

EXT. BEACH BASECAMP - NIGHT

The fire CRACKLES. Barrett sits, pistol in hand, his eyes glued to the dark tree line.

A bird SQUAWKS in the darkness.

Barrett snaps around, pistol raised. But it’s nothing.

EXT. JUNGLE - SAME TIME

Just within the trees, the outline of THE STRANGER is visible, seated on the ground. Watching Barrett.

BEACH - NIGHT

Barrett’s eyes start to droop. His head lolls onto his chest.

He snaps awake. Rubs his eyes and blinks furiously to clear his head.

His head starts to droop again.

JUNGLE

The pirate sits up. He lowers a branch to get a better view. Barrett is asleep.

BEACH

The pirate creeps forward, eyes glinting in the dark.

He kneels beside Barrett...

His bony hands reach toward Barrett’s neck...

Barrett opens his eyes. He sees the pirate kneeling over him, hands outstretched.

BARRETT
Devil take you!

Barrett raises his gun. The pirate lunges for it. BANG!!

The shot flies high. Smoke fills the air. Barrett kicks the pirate back, grabbing up his sword.

The pirate runs for the trees. Barrett jumps to his feet.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
STAND AND FIGHT, YOU WASTREL!

The man has already disappeared.

BARRETT (V.O.)
I knew I couldn’t stay awake each night... Sooner or later, I’d fall asleep again. So I made a plan.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett uses a makeshift shovel to dig a hole in the sand.

ANGLE ON: the pirate, watching from the trees, his face in shadow. Munching some fruit.

He spits out a pit and stomps off.

Barrett hears the noise and looks up... He returns to digging.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Barrett cranes his neck to look at a BUNCH OF COCONUTS hanging from a tree. He shakes the tree.

The coconuts stay put.

He kicks it in anger and turns away. KA-THUD!! A half-dozen coconuts falls on his head.

Barrett adds them to a bag, made from a washed-up blanket.

EXT. BEACH BASECAMP - DAY

Barrett carries the loaded blanket back to camp. He turns it upside down, spilling three dozen coconuts onto the beach.

Barrett collapses down. He mops his sweaty brow, drinks from a water skin.

Barrett removes the METAL TIN from beneath his shirt. He opens it.

It’s full of MEDICINE TABLETS. Barrett counts them.

BARRETT
... Six... seven... eight... nine.

He picks one out, pops it in his mouth. He takes a swig of water to wash it down.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Waves crash against the moonlit beach.

There's a MOUND beside the fire where Barrett is sleeping.

The pirate creeps out of the jungle like before.

He kneels over Barrett, drawing a DAGGER from his shirt.

He reaches out and grasps the blanket. He whips it aside, and freezes: beneath is *a pile of COCONUTS*, laid out in the shape of a man.

Barrett leaps out of the sand, and grabs him, placing the blade of a bayonet against the stranger's throat.

BARRETT
Move and you're a dead man.

The pirate SCOWLS and drops his dagger in the sand.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

CLOSE ON: iron shackles, clamped over the pirate's wrists. They contort as the pirate wrestles against them. We TILT UP to the man's face. He's a rum soaked scalawag if ever there was one. Late 30s, missing teeth, gold earring, beard. His name is BENJAMIN CUTTER.

Barrett sits across from him, cutting jungle creepers to make a rope. Cutter continues to strain against the chains.

BARRETT
Those irons are strong enough to hold a bull steer, so give it a rest.

CUTTER
Aye, I'll give it a rest. You just unlock these cuffs and I'll be out of your hair.

Barrett ignores him.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Got a name, lad?

BARRETT
None of your business.

CUTTER
Wait. Don’t tell me, I can guess. Is it Shithead?
(no answer)
No? Not Shithead? ... What about... Peabrain?

Barrett exhales through his nose.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Not Peabrain neither? You sure? You seem like a Peabrain to me. Oh, I know! Fuckfa --

BARRETT
It’s Barrett, all right? Private Daniel Barrett from Whitechapel. Now will you shut up?

CUTTER
Pleased to meet you, Private Barrett. My name is Benjamin.

BARRETT
I don’t care.

CUTTER
Little Benny. That’s what my old granny used to call me. Good little Benjamin Cutter.

Barrett looks up.

BARRETT
Cutter? As in *Cutpurse* Cutter? The notorious pickpocket?

CUTTER
(lighting up)
You’ve heard of me?

BARRETT
Every schoolboy in the British Empire’s heard the name Cutpurse Cutter. They say you would snatch fifty coin purses in a single day.

CUTTER
Only in my off days.

BARRETT
You’re abominable.

CUTTER
Don’t you worry, private. I never took from anyone who couldn’t afford to lose it.

Cutter leans back against a tree, closing his eyes. Barrett keeps working on his rope.

Cutter starts WHISTLING. Barrett tries to ignore it.

Then he starts SINGING.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Here’s to the whores of Sailortown,
The white, the black, the yellow and brown.
Walk in and lay your money down,
and thump the night away.

Cutter pauses, hoping for a reaction. He pushes on.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
There’s Betty from Port Adelaide.
The prettiest whore I ever laid.
She had tits as big as the Sunday duff,
No time with her was ever enough.
(beat)
There’s a sing-song gal out in Hong Kong.
Takes every inch of my whopping --

BARRETT
Is that necessary?

Cutter flashes a toothy grins.

CUTTER
You know what your problem is, Private?

BARRETT
I’m lenient with prisoners.

CUTTER
Pride. That’s your problem. Enough pride to fill a washtub. You have your rules and your orders and your fancy boots, and you think it makes you a nicer class of person than me. But it don’t.

BARRETT
Duly noted. Now shut up.

CUTTER
You’re from Whitechappel, you said?
(Barrett ignores him)
Ratty place. Not a lot of sterling to be found there. I’m guessing you could use a few extra pennies in your purse.
(beat)
Tell you what. If you let me go, I can make you richer than the finest lords of Europe.

Barrett laughs.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Whattaya say, matey? Wanna be a rich man?

BARRETT
You don’t have a farthing on you. How are *you* gonna make me rich?

CUTTER
I have my ways.

BARRETT
Not interested.

CUTTER
You know, I bet a handsome lad like you has a pretty lass waiting for him back home. Maybe even a fiancée?
(beat)
With flaxen hair?

Barrett looks up.

BARRETT
How did you know that?

CUTTER
Eyed that ring of golden hair on your finger. Guessing that wasn’t a gift from your mother.

Barrett covers a ring with his hand.

BARRETT
Her name’s Kitty. She’s living with her parents in Putney. We’re saving up to buy a place of our own.

CUTTER
A worthy aim, to be sure. You have my blessing.

Barrett shoots him an annoyed look. Cutter's hands inch toward a ROCK, half-buried in the sand.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Let me tell you... all it takes is one perfect gemstone, a single bonny emerald or sapphire, and you can buy pretty Kat that pretty house the day you get back to England. You let me go right now, I'll see you get a *hundred* gemstones.

BARRETT
I don't need help from you. In fact, I don't know why I'm listening to you at all. You're my prisoner. The next time you speak I'm gonna --

Cutter lunges at him with the rock.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
God damn --!

Barrett grabs Cutter's wrist as Cutter tackles him into the sand. They struggle.

Barrett rolls on top of Cutter and forces the rock out of his hand, but Cutter kicks him away.

Cutter runs for the pile of weapons by the campfire.

Barrett tackles him, right as he grabs a dagger. They roll across the sand and land in the surf. The dagger flies out of Cutter's hand.

Cutter gets behind Barrett and wraps his shackles around Barrett's throat. He tugs, cutting off Barrett's oxygen.

The waves crash up around them.

Barrett grabs a handful of mucky sand, throws it in Cutter's eyes.

Cutter loosens his grip. Barrett elbows him in the stomach and throws him off.

Barrett grabs Cutter's dropped knife and pins him down, holding the blade under Cutter's chin.

Cutter raises his hands in surrender.

CUTTER
Alright, Private. You win.

CUT TO:

CUTTER TIED TO A TREE

He has a gag in his mouth.

Barrett wraps the pistols and swords in a length of sail fabric. He buries this in the sand.

BARRETT
Not so easy to get at now.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett roasts an armadillo over a spit. He removes it from the fire and sets it down on a bed of fern leaves.

He slices off a portion, chews it. Cutter watches him with hungry eyes. His stomach GROWLS.

Barrett shrugs. Good enough.

He cuts off another slice.

BARRETT
I’m gonna untie you so you can eat. Are you gonna conduct yourself respectably, or will I have to shoot you?

Cutter says something INAUDIBLE through the gag.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Good.

Barrett picks up his pistol to be safe. He approaches Cutter and undoes the cords.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Hands in the air.
(Cutter slowly raises his shackled hands)
Easy now. Any sudden movements, I pull this trigger.

Cutter lowers himself onto the sand. Barrett sits across from him, pistol raised.

He pushes the fern with the meat forward.

Cutter reaches for it, eagerly.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Hold it!
(he freezes)
Grace first.

CUTTER
You’re shitting me?

BARRETT
Do you want to eat or not?

Cutter growls. He shuts his eyes, clasps his hands.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
You say it.

CUTTER
Father in the sky above, we thank you for our daily grub. We’ll savor all the meat and spinach, and shit it out when we’re finished.

Cutter opens one eye to see if Barrett goes for it.

BARRETT
Good enough.

Cutter digs in. He chews... then swallows, and takes another ravenous bite.

CUTTER
Burnt.

BARRETT
Excuse me?

CUTTER
Meat’s burnt.
(keeps chewing)
No flavor neither.

BARRETT
Is that right?

CUTTER
You should’ve turned the spit more. Made sure it cooked the meat even.

Barrett looks at the meat. It resembles a piece of charcoal.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
There’s seasoning on the island. Pimento. Cumin bushes. Pepper.

BARRETT
What the hell do you know about it, Cutpurse?

CUTTER
Just because I steal doesn’t mean I eat garbage. Saw a lemon tree, too. That could add some zest. Put a little on as you’re cooking it, let it seep into the meat. You’d think you’d died and gone to heaven.

BARRETT
Be thankful I’m letting you eat at all.

CUTTER
Anything to drink?

Barrett tosses him a water skin.

BARRETT
Where I’m from people say please and thank you.

CUTTER
You’re welcome.

Cutter drinks from the canteen -- and spits it out.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
What the hell is this?

BARRETT
Water.

CUTTER
It’s poison! Where’s the rum?

BARRETT
I’m not giving you rum.

CUTTER
This tastes like dirt.

BARRETT
No rum!

Cutter throws the canteen away.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Fine. Don’t drink it.

Barrett stands to retrieve it.

CUTTER
Oh, go to the devil, you heap of cow’s dung.

BARRETT
(turning back)
What did you call me?

CUTTER
A dungheap.

BARRETT
That’s rich, coming from you, you... you ill-mannered philistine!

The pirate laughs.

CUTTER
A five year old schoolgirl can do better than that.

BARRETT
You’re... table slops! You make *sewage rats* gag. You’re calling *me* a dungheap? You’re the royal emperor of stench! Your breath belongs in a surgeon’s book of maladies!

CUTTER
Now we’re getting somewhere.

BARRETT
I’ve met stray dogs with better hygiene than you. The last time you took a bath, the Americas hadn’t been discovered yet.

CUTTER
Keep talking, you sniveling turnip. Your head’s so far up your own ass, it’ll take a spade to get it out.

BARRETT
Next time you meet a tramp, why don’t you ask him to teach you some manners!

Cutter rises to his feet.

CUTTER
Oh yeah? It’s a wonder your head doesn’t catch fire, its so full of hot air.

BARRETT
Go to hell, you ill-bred reprobate.

CUTTER
You’re a self-satisfied fopdoodle! A puffed up popinjay who’s been playing dress-up so long, you think your shit smells like roses. You’re a pill! A boring, dull-brained nothing-man, who’s idea of good tuck is gruel and white bread.

BARRETT
When I want advice from someone like you, I’ll ask a four year old in a dunce cap. The reason you steal is because you don’t have enough brains to fill a thimble!

CUTTER
Makes me twice as smart as you!

BARRETT
You’re the one in handcuffs!

CUTTER
Beats being another toady for his Royal Pomposity. Hell, you’d probably wipe the king’s ass, and then say thank you, if you got the chance. Future brown-nosers will carve your face in effigy.

BARRETT
At least I can spell *effigy*.

CUTTER
Why don’t you find a deep well and throw yourself in it?

CUTTER (CONT'D)
You're a whiff of vapid vanity. A fart among men. If they hang me it'll be a blessing to never see your annoying face again.

Scrawny, sallow-faced, pig-headed, lickspittle, conceited, fancy-pants, vexing, whiny, narrow-minded, unfeeling, stone hearted, bootlicking, banal, friendless, indigent, lifeless, obnoxious bibble-babble!

BARRETT
Quintessence of phlegm!

Blister on the heel of society.

I hope you choke, you boorish, untaught, unhelpful, inconsiderate, yellow-toothed, shit-smelling, backwards thinking, self-centered, greedy, lazy, double-dealing, desperate, rum-soaked, butt-faced, snot-brained scalawag!

They're both red in the face, their noses half a foot apart.

Barrett drops back down, in a huff.

He grabs Cutter's slice of meat and stuffs it whole in his mouth, his eyes locked on Cutter...

He chews... then gags, coughing it up. He spits it out.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
GOD DAMN IT!!!

Barrett grabs the spit with the armadillo and hurls it into the ocean.

CUTTER
It wasn't *that* bad.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A foggy morning. Cutter is tied to the tree, asleep.

BAM! Another dead armadillo drops in his lap, waking him up. Barrett is standing over him.

BARRETT
Alright, monsier chef. You cook the meat this time.

Cutter grins.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Cutter rummages through a shrub, his hands still in chains. Barrett stands by, holding a rope tied around Cutter's waist.

CUTTER
Cumin... cumin... Here it is.
(holding it up)
Smell that? Fresh!

BARRETT
Get that out of my face.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Cutter turns a spit over the fire, roasting cuts of meat. Barrett watches, fingering the pistol in his belt.

CUTTER
Gotta get that smokey flavor. Add a few herbs... Add the lemon...

Cutter squeezes a lemon slice over the meat. The juice sizzles as it lands.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Aye, now we’re getting somewhere!

Barrett turns away and removes the metal tin from his pocket. He sneaks another tablet into his mouth.

Cutter sees this but says nothing.

LATER

They both sit in the sand, eating the hunks of meat with greasy fingers. It looks delicious. Rich and savory.

BARRETT
Oh lord... that’s the best thing I’ve tasted in years.

CUTTER
Told you we could make some decent fare.
(beat)
What say we wash it down with a spot of rum?

BARRETT
Sorry, Cutter. Water it is.

He passes him the water skin.

CUTTER
Can’t blame a man for trying.

BARRETT
Where’d you learn to cook?

CUTTER
My great uncle mostly. Name of Chelsie Cutter. He worked an inn outside of Dover, and never once did his guests go hungry.
(remembering)
He cooked everything. Potage of mutton, with sage and strawberries. Lamb pie, baked in wine and sugar. An almond tart that’ll make you wobbly in the knees.

BARRETT
Stop it. You’re killing me.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Stars twinkle up above. Barrett and Cutter are both asleep. Cutter is still tied to the tree. He rustles, uneasy.

CUTTER
(in his sleep)
No... don’t do it... Get away, you bastards!

Barrett opens his eyes.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Stop it! ... Cassandra, look at me! Cassandra!

BARRETT
Cutpurse?

CUTTER
Leave her alone, god damn it!... Stop!... Stop, I tell you...!

Barrett gets up. He cuts the rope tying Cutter loose. Cutter collapses into his arms. Barrett shakes him awake.

BARRETT
Cutpurse, wake up!

Cutter opens his eyes, confused. Still in a daze.

CUTTER
What...?

BARRETT
You were having a nightmare.

CUTTER
(still sleepy)
Oh. ...

Okay ...

Send the bill to Myron, thanks.

Cutter slumps back over, already fast asleep.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Cutter cleans a fish, while Barrett watches him.

BARRETT
Who’s Cassandra?

The fish slips in Cutter’s hand.

CUTTER
Who?

BARRETT
You said her name last night. In your sleep. You kept saying “Stop it. Leave her alone.”

CUTTER
I don’t remember that.

BARRETT
You were upset. I had to wake you up.

CUTTER
Musta been dreaming. People say all kinds of batty shit when they’re dreaming.

He goes back to prepping the fish. Then he stops.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
What was in that tin?

BARRETT
What tin?

CUTTER
The one in your shirt. I saw you take it out the other day.

BARRETT
Tell me about Cassandra, and I'll tell you.

Cutter smirks, shakes his head.

CUTTER
Sorry, Private.

Barrett nods. So be it. He looks out at the sea.

BARRETT (V.O.)
The next three days passed without incident.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett checks the pulse of the unconscious lieutenant.

BARRETT (V.O.)
I continued to note the condition of the lieutenant. But there was no improvement.

Cutter watches him.

CUTTER
Might as well bury him. He ain't gonna wake.

BARRETT
Are you a surgeon as well as a pickpocket, Mr. Cutpurse?

CUTTER
Just saying what we're both thinking.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Cutter prepares another meal.

BARRETT (V.O.)
I got the food, and Cutpurse did the cooking. And always we kept an eye on the horizon for passing ships.

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

An early gray morning. Cutter is still asleep.

Barrett pulls out his tin. He opens it. There are only five tablets left. He takes one, brings it to his mouth, then hesitates...

Instead he returns it to the tin.

FADE OUT.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett reads from Van Llewyn's bible. Cutter sits nearby, lifting handfuls of sand and watching the grains fall through his fingers.

CUTTER
That the captain's bible?

BARRETT
It belonged to Van Llewyn, yes.

Barrett turns the page. He reads something and chuckles.

CUTTER
What's so funny?

BARRETT
Nothing. Just a remark Van Llewyn wrote about Sodom and Gomorrah.

Barrett shows Cutter a passage of the book. Van Llewyn has scribbled ***"Doesn't sound much diferent from parlyment."***

Cutter doesn't react... then he snorts.

CUTTER
I get it. Very funny.

Barrett takes the book back, suspicious.

BARRETT
I guess Van Llewyn really had it in for Quakers.

CUTTER
You bet. Couldn't stand the sight of them.

BARRETT
That's odd, because this comment's about parliament.
(beat)
You don't know how to read, do you Cutpurse?

CUTTER
Course I can! I can read. Know my letters and everything. A-B-D-G...
(to himself)
I can read.

BARRETT
Show me. Write your name in the sand.

Barrett leads Cutter toward the water, where the sand is compact. Cutter kneels and writes something out.

CUT3R

Cutter straitens up.

CUTTER
See? Told you I knew my letters.

BARRETT
That says *cuter*. As in *more cute*. And the E is backwards.

CUTTER
Says who?

BARRETT
Here.

Barrett writes Cutter's full name in the sand.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Benjamin Cutter. Now *you* do it.

CUTTER
What's the point? You're gonna hang me either way.

BARRETT
Then what do you have to lose?

Cutter copies his name.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
There you go. And here's mine.
(writing)
Dan*iel* Bar*rett*. Your turn.

CUTTER
(as he writes)
B... A... R...

BARRETT
Two Rs.

CUTTER
Two Rs... E... Double T. Barrett.
There. Happy now?

Cutter stomps back up the beach. Barrett follows.

BARRETT
Still doesn't mean you can read.
There's a lot more to letters than
just your name.

CUTTER
Who needs to read anyway? Candy ass
skill for rich folk who don't know
how to use their hands.

Barrett freezes. He stands unnaturally still.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Oh. I didn't mean you. Feel free to
read as much as you like.
(no answer)
Private?

Suddenly -- Barrett collapses in the sand. *He convulses in violent SPASMS*. His arms and legs shake. Drool spills out of his mouth.

Cutter is frozen in shock... Then he sprints for the trees.

Barrett makes a wretched GASPING sound. Cutter stops halfway to the jungle... He turns around.

He looks from Barrett...

To the trees...

Then back to Barrett... Gears turn in his head. He's wrestling with a decision.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
God damn it.

Cutter runs back to Barrett's side.

He digs the metal tin out of Barrett's pocket, removes a tablet. He forces it down Barrett's throat, and cups his hand over Barrett's mouth. Barrett swallows.

Gradually, Barrett's spasms abate. His breathing settles.

He shuts his eyes, relieved.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
You still with us, private?

BARRETT
I'll be alright.
(beat)
Thank you.

LATER

Barrett hands Cutter a bottle. Cutter sniffs it.

CUTTER
Rum?

BARRETT
Yeah.

Cutter toasts him and drinks. A long drink.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
I've had this affliction since I was a boy.

CUTTER
Does it hurt?

BARRETT
No. I don't even know when it's happening. It's like my mind goes vacant. But it can kill me if I choke.
(beat)
The pills are valporic acid tablets. They help keep the fits down. Most of them went down with my trunk on the ship. That tin is all that's left until I get to London.

CUTTER
Didn't think the navy took people with a condition like that.

BARRETT
They don't. If anyone found out, I would probably be discharged. Kitty's the only one who knows.

CUTTER
Well, here's to Kitty.

He finishes off the bottle.

BARRETT
Go easy on that. We only have eight bottles.

CUTTER
There's about a hundred more on the *Sea Maiden*.
(beat)
If you're willing to swim for it.

He hurls the bottle. It plops in the water and bobs like a cork. Barrett is thinking.

BARRETT
There's something I can't figure out.
(beat)
Why did Van Llewyn turn north-east?

CUTTER
What?

BARRETT
We'd been chasing him for two weeks. He had the weather on his side. He could have made it through the windward passage and slipped away. He was free. Instead he turned north-east, against the wind, giving us the advantage. Why?

CUTTER
He must've misread the conditions.

BARRETT
Not Van Llewyn. He knew the sea better than a swordfish. He wouldn't turn this way unless he had a reason.
(beat)
But what? The only port for a thousand miles is London. And he didn't have a chance of making it that far.

Barrett thinks to himself. Cutter watches him.

Then a lightbulb goes off.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
We didn't catch Van Llewyn off some random island. This was his *destination,* wasn't it*?*

CUTTER
What are you talking about?

BARRETT
There must be something hidden on this island! Something worth risking getting caught to retrieve.

CUTTER
You mean -- ?

BARRETT
Plunder. Gold or jewels.

Cutter laughs.

CUTTER
That's a fancy tale you're spinning, private.

BARRETT
That's why you told me you could make me rich. You know where it's buried, don't you?
(Cutter chuckles)
Don't shake your head at me. You know it's true. Why else would he come all this way? To *this* island?
(leans in)
What is it? Spanish doubloons? Pearls from Tahiti? Did he ransom a governor's daughter?

Cutter exhales.

CUTTER
If I tell you, will you let me go?

BARRETT
It might help sway a jury.

CUTTER
Piss on that! Bunch of slop-fed truffle swine. They'd just as soon see me hang for the sake of a good show. Might as well shoot me now.

BARRETT
You already saved my life. You tell me about the loot, with the right judge you might get off scot-free. Complete pardon. Not even a slap on the wrist.

CUTTER
You think so?

BARRETT
It could only help.

Cutter fights the urge to give in.

CUTTER
Dammit.
(beat)
But I want your solemn vow you'll tell the judge I helped you.

BARRETT
I swear on my honor as an Englishman.

CUTTER
Sod off. That don't mean shit to me.

BARRETT
It's the greatest oath there is.

CUTTER
Try again.

Barrett hesitates. Then, with meaning --

BARRETT
I swear on the life of my wife-to-be, Katherine O'Malley, you will get a fair trial.

Cutter locks eyes with Barrett. He offers his hand. Barrett shakes it.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Good. Tell me everything.

CUTTER
It was from a merchant ship. The *Venerable Lady.* British port of call. Three thousand gold coins. Captain didn't even have to fire a shot. Just raised the pirate colors, and they handed it right over. That's how much he scared them.

BARRETT
The *Venerable Lady*! I remember that.
(MORE)

BARRETT (CONT'D)
It made the papers back in London. Must've been seven or eight years ago.

CUTTER
Ten, come March.

BARRETT
And where's it buried?

CUTTER
Damned if I know.

BARRETT
Come on, Cutter. We shook hands.

CUTTER
The Captain never breathed a word, I swear! He wouldn't trust his own mother with that information.

BARRETT
But this is a big island! I could search for years and never find a single piece.
(Cutter shrugs)
I think you know more. You just won't tell me.

CUTTER
Think whatever you want.

Barrett rubs his chin.

BARRETT
Captain Van Llewyn would have needed a map... And he would have kept such a map on his person.
(beat)
That's why you were looking through his clothes. You were looking for his map.

CUTTER
Maybe.

BARRETT
Then we're *both* out of luck. I searched Van Llewyn's pockets and there weren't any charts. Just his flintlock, some coins, and an old bible, which I bet he never even --

Barrett freezes. He pulls the bible out, stares at it.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
It’s the bible, isn’t it?! Why else would he keep it on him?

CUTTER
Aren’t you a clever lad?

Barrett flips through it.

BARRETT
That night I woke up and saw you kneeling over me... you weren’t trying to kill me... You were after this book. There must be a clue in here somewhere.

RESUME LONDON OFFICE

Landrake and Avery listen attentively. Worboly is cleaning his fingernails.

BARRETT
I asked Cutter how the bible could be used as a map. He insisted he had no idea. He said Captain Van Llewyn took the secret of the book to his grave.

LANDRAKE
And did you believe him this time?

BARRETT
Yes, sir. I did. Nevertheless, I resolved to decipher the puzzle of the bible, and find the treasure in the King’s name.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Barrett examines the bible by the light of the fire. A BLANK PAGE has been marked with strange LINES and CIRCLES. Parts of it almost look like a map. He turns a page.

DISSOLVE TO:

MATCH SHOT - DAY

The fire is now smoldering ash. Barrett hasn’t moved.

Cutter yawns and opens his eyes.

CUTTER
How long have you been up?

BARRETT
I never went to sleep.

CUTTER
You belong in a madhouse, you know that?

Cutter rubs his eyes.

BARRETT
I think I figured it out.
(showing him a page)
Look at this. Van Llewyn' circled this passage from Matthew. "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Then he's underlined random letters on the next three pages. No other comments or highlights. Just these letters.

CUTTER
Do they say anything?

BARRETT
No. Complete gibberish. Might as well be Ancient Greek. But then I remembered -- Van Llewyn used coded messages to communicate with his confederates back in the day. That's how he worked his escape when he was being held at Warwick Castle, ten years ago.

CUTTER
Blimey, I heard about that! Slipped out from under the nose of fifty guards!

BARRETT
Navy couldn't figure out how he planned it with his crew. Until they captured his quartermaster two years later, who revealed they used messages disguised using a keyword substitution cypher.

CUTTER
What the flying fart is that?

Barrett rips a page out of the bible, starts copying down letters.

BARRETT
A substitution cypher is simple. Letters are moved in one direction along the alphabet. A becomes B, B becomes C, and so on. A *keyword* substitution cypher is the same, except the letters in the keyword are removed from the alphabet and put first. It becomes impossible to solve if you don't have the keyword.

CUTTER
Well, I don't have no keyword, so you can shove that fine theory back up your hairy arse.

BARRETT
I bet a hundred gold doubloons we can figure it out. Let's try his name. Van Llewyn.

Barrett writes down the letters. Cutter looks over his shoulder.

CUTTER
What's it say?

BARRETT
Fingu Gnank Birt...
(crosses it out)
That's not it. How about his Christian name. Marcombe. That would be... Breft aofs...

CUTTER
So much for your fancy letters.

Cutter stands and pees into the remains of the fire. Barrett shoots him an annoyed look.

BARRETT
How about the name of his ship...

CUTTER
Sea Maiden.

BARRETT
(scratching out new letters)
Then D becomes M... S becomes X... that can't be it. Did he have any children?

CUTTER
Damned if I know.

BARRETT
Come on, Cutter. Think!

CUTTER
Heard he had a bastard lad hiding in the Carolinas. Sent him three quid every year on Christmas. Name of... George... no, Josh. That's it. Joshua.

BARRETT
Joshua...
(tries it out)
Confound it. That's no good either. What about Joshua's mother?

CUTTER
Some harlot he knocked up. Kids, lovers, sisters, brothers... Christ's sake, this is Van Llewyn we're talking about. He didn't give two shits about any of these people. It has be something he actually cared about.

BARRETT
Fine. What *did* he care about?

Cutter shrugs and sits back down.

CUTTER
Killing people.

BARRETT
That's it?

CUTTER
Long as I've known him.

BARRETT
... *The pistol*.
(looking at Cutter)
He had a gold plated pistol with a name engraved on it!

CUTTER
Aye! That he did! ... What was it...? Sarah or Susie or something...

BARRETT
Dammit, why did I throw it away?!
(he thinks)
Susanne?

CUTTER
Susanne! That be it! The cleft-toed captain would kiss the name every time he fired a shot.

Barrett grabs the bible, starts writing.

BARRETT
Let's try it. S-U-S-A-N-N-E. That'll mean... A becomes N...

CUTTER
Face it, Private. You ain't gonna crack that code. That treasure ain't meant for the likes of you.

BARRETT
I got it!

CUTTER
Son of a bitch.

BARRETT
"Follow the stream until you reach a big stump. Go west up a hill. Stop when you reach the clearing by the cliff. A friend will be waiting under the tree marked with an x. He will point the way."

Barrett looks up from the book. A WIND blows over the beach, rustling their hair.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
"Follow the stream..." There's a stream half a mile north.

CUTTER
(licks his lips)
I can almost taste those gold doubloons.

Barrett says nothing.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
I bet you can too. I bet you're wondering if there's any way you can walk off with even a tiny piece of that golden prize, or if good ol' King George will get the whole pie.
(scooting closer)
Listen, friend. The London brass never has to know this treasure was even here. We can split it up. Go our separate ways. We'll both live like Chinese emperors.

BARRETT
That treasure isn't mine. I'd be no better than a thief.

CUTTER
That's your pride talking, Private. You think those English merchants earned it for themselves?
(he spits)
They made it off the backs of slaves. Mined it from land they got by killing Indians. All money is black as soot. Ain't a single farthing in this whole rotten world that wasn't begot by evil loins. So why should we be the better men?

BARRETT
There's enough disorder in the world without me adding to it. It was an English merchant vessel that held the treasure. Therefore the English government gets to decide its fate. And I'm going to deliver it for them.

Barrett slams the book shut.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Finish your breakfast, Cutpurse. We're going on a little field expedition.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

QUICK CUTS: Barrett pulling on his boots, arming himself with a pistol and sword, tucking the bible in his jacket. Grabbing a shovel.

He checks the pulse of the sleeping lieutenant.

CUTTER
Gonna leave Sleeping Beauty here?

BARRETT
We won't be gone more than two days. He can last that long.

CUTTER
And if he doesn't, that's fine too.

Barrett turns to face the wall of jungle foliage. Barrett takes hold of a rope tied around Cutter's wrists.

BARRETT
Prisoners first.

Cutter steps forward. They disappear into the shadowy trees.

BEGIN MONTAGE -- FOLLOWING THE MAP

-- Barrett and Cutter hike through the trees.

BARRETT (V.O.)
We followed Van Llewyn's directions to the T.

-- Cutter stumbles over a thick root. Barrett helps him up.

-- The pair wade through a stream, ankle deep.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Three miles up the creek, around crooks and bends. Bushes with thorns the size of nails. Rocks so sharp they could cut you.

-- Barrett hacks away at thick underbrush with his sword.

-- They admire a tree stump, about four feet wide. Barrett checks a compass.

BARRETT (V.O.)
I found myself remembering the book of Joshua, and the words spoken by God. "Therefore arise, and go forth unto the unknown land."

-- They climb a rising slope.

BARRETT (V.O.)
“Be strong and of good courage. For every place the sole of your foot shall tread upon, I will bless with my light. And always shall I walk beside you, for never shall one walk alone, who seeks to know the hidden world before him.”

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Barrett leads Cutter through the forest.

BARRETT
D-O-G.

CUTTER
Dog.

BARRETT
Good. What about... P-I-R-A-T-E.

CUTTER
P-I-R... Pirat-ee?

BARRETT
Pirate.

CUTTER
Why is there an E at the end?

BARRETT
There just is.

CUTTER
But why?

BARRETT
I don’t know why. New word. E-N-G --

He stops. They’ve reached a clearing on a clifftop, overlooking the sea.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
This is it.

CUTTER
There’s nothing here.

BARRETT
The book said turn west until you reach the cliff.
(MORE)

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Here's the cliff, and that way's west. Look for a tree marked with a cross.

They separate, examining each of the trees.

CUTTER
There it is! A mark on a tree.

Barrett runs to Cutter's side. Cutter points to an **X**, five inches across, ten feet up the tree.

BARRETT
I didn't think it'd be so high.

CUTTER
The tree kept growing.

Barrett swings the shovels down, into the dirt.

BARRETT
Alright, Cutpurse. You're up.

Cutter rolls his eyes and takes the shovel. He stomps on it, heaving a lump of dirt aside.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE DIRT PILE, AN HOUR LATER

At least two feet high. It's struck by another clump of dirt. Barrett sits against a tree, gun in hand.

Cutter pauses.

CUTTER
I think we got something.

BARRETT
(sitting up)
What is it?

CUTTER
See for yourself.

Cutter hoists up a MUMMIFIED SKELETON. Skin stretched tight across the bones. He's dressed in pirate garb, a sword tucked in his belt.

BARRETT
Mother of Saint George! ... I guess we found Van Llewyn's friend.

CUTTER
Let’s hoist him out.

Cutter and Barrett drag the body out of the pit.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
What did the good book say?

BARRETT
“There’s a friend waiting under the tree marked with an X. He will point the way.”

CUTTER
Let’s search him.

They go through his pockets. Cutter finds a gold coin.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
I’m keeping this, if you don’t mind.

BARRETT
By all means. It’ll take more than that to bribe the hangman.

CUTTER
Prick.

BARRETT
Oaf.
(finding something)
Aha! A key. This must be to open the chest.

Barrett pockets the key and keeps looking. He unfolds a piece of paper.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Travel documents. This fellow’s name was Heinrick Muller.

CUTTER
Magpie Muller? The arms runner? He used to pal around with the Captain ten years ago. Everyone said he was hung by you lot.

BARRETT
Born in Germany, 1679. Second son of a farmer. And what’s this...?

He pulls out another paper -- a half completed map, with a big red X over a blank section of the page.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
It’s a map of some sort. But it’s incomplete. There must be another section which --
(remembering)
I’ve got it!

Barrett digs out the bible, flips to the page with the strange markings.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
See this page? I couldn’t figure out what it meant. But if you line it up with the map...

Barrett tears the page free and holds it up to the sun with the map. The random marks fill in the gaps in the map, completing the chart.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
You get a map of the island. And look, there’s an X by a pool! That must be where the treasure is.

Cutter’s eyes drop to the SWORD, tucked in the belt of the mummified skeleton. He shifts toward it.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Now where are we...? That’s the river, which means we have to be here. There’s a path going north, not far from here.

He tucks the map in his waistband.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
(turning around)
We’ll rest for twenty minutes and then --

Cutter lunges at him with the sword.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Dammit!

Barrett stumbles back, drawing his pistol. Cutter knocks it out of his hand. BANG! The pistol discharges as it hits the ground. The shot BLOWS APART a tree branch.

Barrett draws his sword and a boarding axe. He and Cutter circle each other like sharks, swords ready. Cutter is still in handcuffs.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
You can kiss that royal pardon goodbye.

CUTTER
Keep your fancy paper. It was a long shot anyway.

BARRETT
You’re still in chains, Cutpurse. You don’t stand a chance.

CUTTER
Two bits says you’re wrong.

Cutter lunges. Barrett parries. They fight.

Cutter is clearly better, even in chains. He’s pure aggression. Driving the battle with every swing and thrust. Barrett can barely keep up, blocking each move with the axe or sword or both.

Barrett swings his sword into a tree. It gets lodged tight.

Cutter cleaves down on him. Barrett dives out of the way, rolls back onto his feet. He’s just got the axe now.

Cutter lands a cut on Barrett’s leg.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
You made me do that, Private. Now gimme the key to these shackles, and I’ll let you live.

BARRETT
Like hell.

They keep fighting.

Cutter disarms Barrett, sending the axe straight up into the air. He catches it and swings at Barrett, who ducks.

Barrett lunges for the sword stuck in the tree. With one mighty kick, he gets it loose.

Barrett grabs it and pivots, right as Cutter attacks. Cutter disarms hims once again, and kicks the sword away. He drives Barrett back against the tree. There’s nowhere left to go.

Cutter raises the axe, about to strike.

CUTTER
Au revoir, matey.

Barrett winces as -- *WHACK!* The boarding axe comes down.

Barrett opens his eyes. Cutter has pinned Barrett's shirt to the tree.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Told you I didn't want to kill you. That's twice you owe me, Private.

Cutter digs through Barrett's pockets.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Where is it?

BARRETT
What?

CUTTER
The key, dammit! I want these damn things off.

BARRETT
I left it back at the camp.

CUTTER
That's a bald faced lie.

Cutter presses his sword against Barrett's throat.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
I'll give you one more chance, and then I'll search your corpse.

BARRETT
Go ahead. If you were gonna kill me you'd've done it already.

Cutter pauses... then jerks the blade away.

CUTTER
Dammit.
(keeps searching him)
Always have to make things difficult. Twat. Aha! Here we go.

Cutter removes a key from Barrett's pocket. He tries it in the shackles. It's no good.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
What the hell? This thing doesn't fit!

BARRETT
Wrong key, clever cogs. That's the one to the chest.

Cutter pockets it with a scowl and keeps searching.

He pulls out Barrett's tin case, checks the seams of Barrett's breaches. Something METAL clatters to the ground. It's another key.

CUTTER
I *knew* you still had it.

He unlocks his shackles.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Thank Christ. These bloody things were chafing like a diseased whore. Hands behind the tree, if you please.

Barrett does as instructed. Cutter clamps the cuffs over his wrists, tightens them with the key.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
There we go. Nice and comfortable.

He tosses the key. It lands in the bushes, ten feet away.

Cutter yanks the axe out of the tree trunk, tucks it in his belt. He takes Barrett's compass.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
I'll take this.
(stuffs the map in his shirt)
And this as well.

Cutter retrieves the sword from the ground.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
The treasure is mine now.
(beat)
Oh, yes. These are yours. Don't want you having another fit.

Cutter slides the metal tin back in Barrett's shirt.

BARRETT
What if I starve?

CUTTER
I'll be back as soon as I've found the loot.

Cutter grabs the shovel and trots off.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Don’t look so glum, private. It’s still a beautiful day... for now!

He laughs and disappears. Barrett looks up.

DARK CLOUDS are forming overhead.

INT. LONDON OFFICE - DAY

Rain lashes the window outside the London office. Wax is piling up beneath the candles.

Avery helps himself to more tea.

WORBOLY
Am I to understand, private, that you had this man *in chains*, and somehow, through sheer clumsiness or ineptitude, you allowed him to acquire a weapon, disarm you, chain you up, and rob you of both the map and the key to the chest. Is that right?

BARRETT
That’s correct, sir.

WORBOLY
Disgraceful. Bloody outrageous. An embarrassment to the uniform.

Worboly BURPS loudly.

AVERY
He isn’t the first man to lose a fight to one of Van Llewyn’s crew.

WORBOLY
Yes, but to Cutpurse Cutter of all people... The man’s not exactly Robin Hood with a blade.

BARRETT
(pointed)
Are you, sir?

Worboly’s eye bulge out of their sockets.

WORBOLY
(flustered)
You cheeky...! I'd have you know, at your age I could've cut through a dozen Cutpurse Cutters like they were roast beef.
(to Avery)
Lord almighty. I thought you said this boy knew his place.

Avery smiles patiently.

LANDRAKE
I'm sure he didn't mean anything by it.
(beat)
What's more concerning is the carelessness you displayed on the island. Allowing Cutpurse to accompany you in search of the treasure, letting him acquire a sword, letting your guard down...

BARRETT
Yes, sir. I admit my eagerness to find the treasure may have overwhelmed my judgement.

LANDRAKE
Anyway, you may proceed with your account.

BARRETT
I was determined to rectify the situation.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Barrett struggles against the handcuffs. He tries to squeeze his hand out.

BARRETT (V.O.)
I had seen the map, so I knew where Cutpurse was headed. If I could only get free, I could head him off and set a trap.

He gives up on the handcuffs.

BARRETT
Damn.

His gaze lands on *the key* -- lying in the bushes, less than ten feet away.

He stretches his leg, trying to reach it with his boot. It's four feet too short.

BOOM! There's a clap of THUNDER up above. Light rain starts to fall. It goes PITTER-PATTER on the jungle leaves.

EXT. JUNGLE - SAME TIME

LARGE DROPS hit the map. Cutter looks up from the parchment.

Then the floodgates burst. A heavy deluge pours down hard.

CUTTER
Bollocks!

He stuffs the map in his pants and runs for cover.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Barrett is soaked to the bone. He pulls against the chain, trying to squeeze his slippery hand out of the wet metal. There's a ***C-C-CR-CRAAACK*** from above.

He looks up and rolls aside, as -- SMASH!! A PALM FERN crashes to the ground.

Barrett looks from the fern to the key, doing some math.

He grips the branch between his feet and angles it toward the key.

Barrett thrust it forward.

The end of the branch lands just short of the key. He grips it again, thrusts it forward once more.

It lands on the key.

Barrett pulls the fern with his feet. One of the strands hooks on the key, drawing it towards him.

BARRETT
Just a little further...

The key is close enough to clutch with his feet.

Barrett gets a hold of it and pulls it close. He takes it in his hand and inserts it in the manacles. They CLANK open.

Barrett scrambles up and sprints into the trees.

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

Barrett arrives at the camp. He kneels beside the sleeping lieutenant and checks his pulse.

Satisfied, Barrett drags the lieutenant further up the beach. He pulls some ripped canvas out of his pile and throws it over the lieutenant, tucking him in.

BARRETT
Apologies, sir. This is the best I can do right now.

Barrett digs up the PACKAGE OF WEAPONS. He grabs two pistols, a powder horn, a compass, and a sword.

Then he sprints into the jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE - VARIOUS - DAY

Cutter tramps through the trees and rain.

He slips on the mud and slides down a wet slope, CRASHING through bushes and roots. At last he slides to a stop.

CUTTER
Son of a mangy cur!

He wipes muck off his face, climbs to his feet.

The bible is lying open face down. He picks it up, gently pulls the map free. It’s covered in mucky slime. Practically unreadable.

The soggy page falls apart in his hand.

He scowls and crumples up the remains.

Cutter pulls a COMPASS from his pocket. The needle swings north. He stumbles forward in that direction.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Barrett checks a compass of his own. He presses on, hacking away at the branches.

EXT. WATERFALL CLEARING - DAY

Raindrops splatter the surface of a small pool, at the base of a roaring waterfall.

There's MOVEMENT in the trees.

Cutter appears, out of breath.

He wipes the water from of his eyes, scours the ground. His gaze lands on a ROCK with *MVL* carved into it.

CUTTER
The Captain's mark! It's here!

Cutter stabs his shovel into the wet earth and heaves.

He digs until his shovel hits something solid. THUD. He pauses, then stabs again. THUD.

Cutter resumes digging at double speed. He throws the shovel down and digs with his hands, scooping away mounds of wet dirt to reveal -- *a WOODEN CHEST*.

Cutter grabs it by the handles and heaves it out of the hole. He kneels down, trembling with excitement.

Cutter extracts the key from his pocket. He inserts it in the keyhole.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
It's mine! Van Llewyn's treasure is all mine!

BANG!! A bullet smashes into the wooden chest, inches from Cutter's hand.

Cutter whips around.

Barrett marches out of the trees, pistol raised.

BARRETT
Hands aloft, Cutpurse!

Cutter dives away. BANG! Barrett fires another shot, as Cutter darts for the trees.

Cutter takes cover behind a tree trunk.

CUTTER
Curse you, Barrett. You couldn't have waited five more minutes?

BARRETT
Apologies. Next time I'll time it better.

Barrett pulls out the powder horn, reloads his pistol.

CUTTER
How the devil did you get free?

BARRETT
Why don't you come on out? I'll show you.

CUTTER
No, thank you. Happy right here.

Barrett crouches by the chest, reloads his second pistol.

Cutter glances around and spots his SWORD -- lying in the mud beside the chest.

Barrett sees what Cutter's looking at.

He stomps on Cutter's sword, breaking it in two, and throws the pieces in the pool.

BARRETT
If you're looking for your sword, it's in the water.

CUTTER
Hyaah!

Cutter leaps between trees, hurling his boarding axe. It lands in the chest. THUNK!

BANG! Barrett immediately fires back. He reloads.

BARRETT
Thanks for returning the axe, Cutpurse. I could use it.

CUTTER
Bastard.

BARRETT
You're out of weapons. Why don't you just surrender? Make it easy for both of us.

Cutter doesn't answer.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
We can find some shelter, get out of this rain.
(advancing slowly)
You can go back to calling me insults, and I can go back to ignoring them.

Still no answer. Just the PATTER of rain on the leaves.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Cutpurse?

Barrett draws his sword, one hand still on his pistol. He jumps around the tree, weapons raised.

Cutter is gone.

Barrett spins around, scanning his surroundings.

Dozens of trees. Cutter could be behind any one of them.

Barrett brushes aside a clump of leaves, points the pistol. Cutter isn't there either.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Where the devil did you go?

Barrett returns to the clearing. He looks down at the treasure. Then at the sword in his hand. Then up at the trees.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Zounds, he's going for the weapons!

Barrett starts to run, as we

CUT TO:

THE PACKAGE OF WEAPONS, SITTING ON THE BEACH

Cutter dashes out of the trees and slides onto the ground.

He whips aside the canvas and snatches up a pistol. He loads it with powder, glances up at the trees. Then he stops.

Something is wrong:

The blankets where the lieutenant was sleeping are empty.

WHAM!! SOMEONE hits Cutter over the head and forces him to the ground, pressing a heavy boot into his back.

The lieutenant has woken up and is pointing a pistol at Cutter.

LIEUTENANT
Don’t you move, you treasonous filth.

Barrett emerges from the trees and stops.

BARRETT
Good lord! You’re awake!

LIEUTENANT
I’ve remanded this wretch into custody, no thanks to you. See that he’s tied up.

Cutter grins at Barrett.

CUTTER
Right back where we started, eh, friend?

RESUME LONDON OFFICE

BARRETT
In the blink of an eye the organization of authority on the island had changed. I was no longer the ranking officer. My actions were now subject to the lieutenant’s direction and scrutiny.

AVERY
And how did you feel about this change in circumstances?

BARRETT
Relief, sir. With two people, the prisoner had no chance of another escape.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The rain has stopped. Barrett finishes tying Cutter to the tree. Cutter’s hands are back in handcuffs.

BARRETT
That should be sufficient.

LIEUTENANT
Address officers by their station, Private.

BARRETT
Yes, Lieutenant. Apologies.

LIEUTENANT
So long as I'm alive, all formalities will be maintained. Discipline is the key to survival, and I will not tolerate any lapses in ceremony. Is that understood?

BARRETT
Perfectly, Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT
Very well. Where is everyone?

BARRETT
Sir?

LIEUTENANT
The other survivors.

BARRETT
There are none, sir. They all died.

LIEUTENANT
All of them?

BARRETT
Yes, sir. I buried the bodies that washed ashore atop the cliff. I can show you their graves, if you'd like.

LIEUTENANT
That won't be necessary. Do you have a name, Private?

BARRETT
Daniel Barrett, sir. Of Whitechapel. And yourself, sir?

The lieutenant puffs up his chest.

LIEUTENANT
You are addressing Downey Winthrop, Third Lieutenant.

CUTTER
Ooh. *Third* Lieutenant. Very nice.

WINTHROP
(to Barrett)
Excuse me.

Winthrop crosses to Cutter. WHAP!! He slaps him across the face, splitting his lip.

LIEUTENANT WINTHROP
I will not permit any displays of cheek while I am presiding. Is that understood?

CUTTER
Absolutely, boss.

WHAM! Winthrop hits him again.

LIEUTENANT WINTHROP
Address me by my station.

Cutter hesitates, then submits.

CUTTER
Aye, Lieutenant. Understood.

LIEUTENANT WINTHROP
You got off easy. Any further exhibitions will result in more severe punishment.
(facing Barrett)
You were explaining the circumstances of your survival.

Cutter shoots Barrett a look behind Winthrop's back.

RESUME LONDON OFFICE

BARRETT
I gave Lieutenant Winthrop an account of what transpired while he was asleep, and of my search for Van Llewyn's treasure. He had me retrieve the chest from the jungle, where I left it.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett drags the heavy trunk out of the woods.

WINTHROP
Took you long enough.

There are fresh bruises on Cutter's face.

WINTHROP (CONT'D)
Don't mind him, Private. He just needed some extra instruction in proper manners. You've been lenient with him.

BARRETT
Yes, sir.

WINTHROP
Well? Don't just stand there. Open it up.

Barrett inserts the key and opens the lid. Inside is --

TREASURE!! Gold doubloons, jewel encrusted goblets, pearl necklaces.

Cutter cranes his neck to get a better look.

WINTHROP (CONT'D)
Lord almighty. The Crown will certainly appreciate this.

BARRETT
Amen to that, sir.

Barrett reaches forward to touch it, but Winthrop slams the lid shut.

He removes the key and attaches it to a KEY RING, alongside the key to the shackles. He puts this in his breast pocket.

WINTHROP
I'll keep this.

RESUME LONDON OFFICE

LANDRAKE
Did either you or the lieutenant make any attempt to catalogue the contents of the chest?

BARRETT
No, sir. We believed its contents were the property of his majesty's government, and were therefore not ours to count.

LANDRAKE
And you’re sure the Lieutenant put the key in his pocket?

BARRETT
Yes, sir. I saw that with my own eyes.

LANDRAKE
Very well, proceed.

BARRETT
The lieutenant believed a vessel would soon be along to deliver us from our situation.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Winthrop cleans his pistol as he addresses Barrett.

WINTHROP
This island lies on the most direct route from London to Jamaica. A passing ship is inevitable. We will maintain a constant lookout to ensure we don’t miss it, and will have a signal fire on the beach ready to burn as soon as a ship is spotted. I don’t expect we’ll be here more than a few weeks.

BARRETT
Very good, sir.

WINTHROP
If a merchant or navy vessel finds us first, we’ll escort Cutpurse to London, where he’ll hang for his crimes. If his fellow pirates are first to spot us, we’ll shoot him ourselves and fight the others off as best we can.

Cutter mutters something about “his lucky stars”.

WINTHROP (CONT'D)
Did you have something to add, Cutpurse?

CUTTER
No, Lieutenant.

WINTHROP
I think you did. Don’t be shy, go ahead and say it.

Cutter is silent.

WINTHROP (CONT'D)
Very well. I believe a further lesson in etiquette is required.

Winthrop grabs a switch off the ground and approaches Cutter.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Winthrop sleeps while Barrett sits on watch. Cutter is still tied to the tree, SHINY CUTS on his face.

CUTTER
Pssst, Private.

Barrett doesn’t look at him.

BARRETT
I’m not allowed to communicate with you, Cutter.

CUTTER
That lieutenant is a real sweetheart, isn’t he? Really understands the meaning of hospitality.

BARRETT
He’s just doing what’s expected of him.

Cutter glances at the Lieutenant.

CUTTER
You can’t let him send me to the gallows tree, Barrett. It ain’t right. You swore you’d help me, remember?

BARRETT
That was before you attacked me and chained me up.

CUTTER
I could be free right now if I hadn’t helped you. While you were rolling on the ground, I could’ve taken to the trees and let you die. Instead I got you those pills. I saved your life.

BARRETT
That doesn't change anything.

CUTTER
You owe me.

BARRETT
You're a treacherous pirate who broke the law. This is the consequence of your own choices.

Cutter is quiet.

CUTTER
Is that what you think? It was all my own choices? Tell me, when my father died of consumption before I turned nine, was that my choice, too?
(Barrett avoids his eye)
Or what about when his creditors came a-looking for his outstanding payment? A hundred quid he owed them. Did I have a choice in that? ... When I fled to the new world with my eight year old sister, I'm sure you would have handled it differently.

Beat.

BARRETT
You had a sister?

CUTTER
Aye. Cassandra's her name. You heard me calling her in my sleep.

BARRETT
What happened?

CUTTER
The creditors paid men to find us. These men beat her in front of me. They kept beating her until I promised to get them the money. So I stole purses. Aye, I made my choice. And I'd make it again.

BARRETT
Why didn't you tell a constabulary? Or one of the king's soldiers? Someone would've helped.
(Cutter laughs)
You could've done *something*.

Cutter fixes him with a twisted grin.

CUTTER
It was the king’s soldiers who did the beating.

Color drains from Barrett’s face.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
That’s the England you’re so proud of.
(beat)
Tell me, private. What choices would you have made?

BARRETT
I’m sorry, Cutpurse. But there’s nothing I can do. If I helped you escape, they’d know it was me. My career would be over. Kitty would leave me. I can’t throw that away.

CUTTER
Yeah, I thought as much. Guess I’m on my own then.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett drops an armadillo at Winthrop’s feet.

WINTHROP
Well done, soldier!

CUT TO:

THE ARMADILLO ON A SPIT

Barrett turns it over the fire.

WINTHROP
We’ll take turns hunting and checking the traps. That way someone will always be watching the prisoner. Preparing meals is unseemly for a lieutenant, so that’ll fall on you. I trust you have no problem playing the servant, given our predicament.

BARRETT
No, sir. Oh Christ, not again!

The armadillo has caught fire.

MOMENTS LATER

Barrett and Winthrop nibble the burnt chucks of meat.

WINTHROP
Not terrible. Certainly better than anything I could do.

BARRETT
Thank you, sir.

Winthrop senses a detachment.

WINTHROP
Something on your mind, Private?

BARRETT
I'm uneasy about the impending execution of the prisoner.

WINTHROP
Is that so?

BARRETT
He saved my life, Lieutenant. I was choking and he could've let me die. Instead he helped me.

WINTHROP
Has he been talking to you?

BARRETT
Yes, sir.

WINTHROP
The man is not your friend, Barrett. Remember that. He's trying to get in your head. Everything he does is a calculation to make you lower your guard, and it almost worked. He wasn't saving you. He was *using* you. He needed you to find the treasure, and so he'd have something to trade if the navy found you first. I'd have done the same thing in his position. Sure, he might pretend to open up, act like he's your brother. But it's a lie. The first chance he gets, he'll shoot you through the heart. You understand?

BARRETT
Aye, sir.

WINTHROP
Good. Don't forget it. Remember, doubt gets people killed.

Winthrop continues eating. Barrett glances at Cutter, who has a sly glint in his eye.

BARRETT (V.O.)
In the days that followed, the lieutenant established a strict routine. He woke me promptly every morning.

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

Winthrop kicks Barrett awake.

WINTHROP
Rise and shine, Private.

BARRETT (V.O.)
We began the day with exercise, to clear our minds. Then we inspected and cleaned our weapons.

Barrett and Winthrop clean their pistols.

BARRETT (V.O.)
We had assembled a pyre of driftwood, to be lit in the event a ship appeared. We checked its condition every morning.

Barrett inspects the pyre.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Next came breakfast. Dried meat left over from the previous day, and berries and nuts from our store.

EXT. CLIFFTOP - DAY

Barrett stands atop the cliff, scanning the horizon with a spyglass.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Every hour one of us would ascend the nearby hill to look for passing ships.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Barrett checks a trap. It's empty.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Afterwords, I retrieved any animals caught in the traps.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett returns, carrying an armadillo.

WINTHROP
Took you long enough. I'm famished.

BARRETT
Sorry, sir. The traps were empty. I had to wait for something to come along.
(re: Cutter)
Has he said anything, sir?

WINTHROP
Not a peep. I think we've stamped the fight out of him.

Barrett starts skinning the meat.

LATER

Barrett places a tiny portion of food in front of Cutter.

He unties Cutter from the tree, while Winthrop stands watch, pistol primed. Cutter scoffs at the meal.

CUTTER
Wow. A real feast this time.

Winthrop growls and fingers his switch.

BARRETT (V.O.)
The Lieutenant never lost an opportunity to discipline the prisoner.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett washes blood off Winthrop's jacket in the surf.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Sometimes blood would get on his uniform. I was always made to clean it off as best I could.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Barrett stands watch under a full moon. Winthrop opens his eyes, looks over Barrett and Cutter, and returns to sleep.

EXT. BEACH - MAGIC HOUR

Winthrop reclines, watching the setting sun.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Days turned to weeks, and still no ship appeared. But nothing could shake the Lieutenant’s confidence that our deliverance was near at hand. The only question was what flag our rescuer would fly. Would they be British, French, Spanish, merchant, navy... or another pirate?

EXT. CLIFFTOP - DAY

Barrett finishes hiking to the top of the cliff.

BARRETT (V.O.)
And then, after two weeks, he got an answer.

Barrett stops in his tracks, squinting at the horizon. Something WHITE sparkles in the distance.

He pulls out the spyglass, looks through the cracked lens.

SPYGLASS POV: the sails of a triple-masted ship are visible.

BARRETT
SAIL HO!!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett comes sprinting down the beach, waving his arms. Winthrop and Cutter sit up.

BARRETT
Sail ho!
(reaching them)
Lieutenant, there are white sails on the horizon. North east. You can see them from the cliff.

Winthrop grabs the spyglass and tears past him.

EXT. CLIFFTOP - MOMENTS LATER

POV: The ship has grown larger in the distance.

WINTHROP
Could you make out their colors?

BARRETT
No, sir.

A flag flaps in the wind, becoming visible.

WINTHROP
Union Jack. They’re British! Go! Light the pyre!

Barrett races down the slope.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett reaches the pyre, draws the flint and steel.

CUTTER
What is it? What did you see?

BARRETT
British navy. I’m getting off this rock.

Cutter blanches. Barrett strikes the flint rock, sending sparks onto the dried wood. It catches. The fire spreads to the whole pyre.

EXT. CLIFFTOP - DAY

Smoke rises over the island from the bonfire. Winthrop looks up at it from the cliff.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Winthrop runs down the beach.

WINTHROP
They've spotted us! They're changing course. They should land in about three hours. Let's move the camp, so we can receive them on the north beach.

BARRETT
Aye, Lieutenant.

Winthrop begins untying Cutter from the tree.

WINTHROP
We'll take the prisoner first and come back for the treasure.

BARRETT
There should be a path through the trees that'll take us --

Barrett stops speaking, suddenly rigid.

WINTHROP
Private? What's wrong?

CUTTER
Oh, Christ.

Barrett collapses into the sand, twitching violently.

WINTHROP
Good lord, what's the matter with you?!

CUTTER
Pills! Get him his pills. In his coat pocket!

Winthrop kneels at Barrett's side, leaving Cutter's ropes half-untied.

He digs through Barrett's pockets and pulls out the tin. He opens it up. There are two pills left.

Winthrop forces a tablet down Barrett's throat, covers his mouth, making him swallow.

Barrett's shaking subsides. His body relaxes. His breathing slows down.

BARRETT
Thank you, Lieutenant.

WINTHROP
Heavens. Are you alright, private?

BARRETT
Yes, sir. I think so.
(seeing something)
NO!!

WHAM! Cutter smashes Winthrop’s head with a rock.

He grabs Winthrop’s pistol and sprints for the trees.

Barrett draws his own pistol. BANG!!

Cutter staggers but keeps running. He disappears into the jungle, his hands still in shackles.

Barrett turns to Winthrop.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Are you okay, sir?

WINTHROP
(clutching his head)
Fine! Fine! After him!

Barrett grabs a fresh gun, runs into the trees.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Barrett crashes through the foliage, following the sounds of Cutter running ahead of him.

He pauses to inspect blood on the leaves. Winthrop arrives behind him him.

BARRETT
Blood, sir! He’s wounded.

Barrett keeps running.

EXT. CLEARING -- CLIFFTOP - DAY

Cutter emerges from the trees, bleeding from his right arm. He is in the clearing by the cliff, where they dug up the skeleton.

Cutter sets the gun down and grabs a stone. He tries to smash apart the iron chains.

Barrett burst through the trees, pistol raised.

Cutter whips around.

BARRETT
Hands aloft, Cutpurse!

Winthrop can be heard, fighting through the thick vegetation.

BARRETT (CONT'D)
Over here, Lieutenant! I've got him cornered!

Winthrop emerges from the trees, sword in hand.

His eyes dart from Cutter, his arm soaked in blood, to the pistol -- sitting on the ground, in arm's reach from Cutter.

WINTHROP
Shoot him now, Private. Before he goes for that flintlock.

CUTTER
I saved your life, friend. You owe me.

WINTHROP
Don't listen to him, son.

Barrett doesn't move, pistol still raised.

BARRETT
He's still in chains, sir. He's unarmed.

WINTHROP
Doesn't matter. Kill him now, before he kills you.

CUTTER
I didn't kill you before, I won't do it now.

WINTHROP
He's lying! As soon as you blink, he'll shoot you dead with that pistol.

CUTTER
That ain't true.

WINTHROP
Now, Private!

Barrett lowers his gun. Cutter grins. *He snatches up the pistol.*

BANG!! Barrett shoots first.

Cutter stumbles back. He topples off the cliff.

Barrett and Winthrop run to the edge and look down. Cutter hits the water with a SPLASH and disappears below.

Neither of them take their eyes off the water.

Moments later, Cutter's body bobs to the surface, facedown.

WINTHROP (CONT'D)
I told you he couldn't be trusted.

BARRETT
Yes, sir.

Beat.

WINTHROP
Let's go. The launch will be here in an hour.

Winthrop marches off. Barrett takes one last look at the body floating below...

EXT. BEACH - DAY

They emerge from the trees, onto the beach.

WINTHROP
Finally. That jungle's a bloody maze. Where's the chest? Ah, here it is. You take that end.

They grab the chest and heave.

BARRETT (V.O.)
The ship we had spotted was the *HMS Monmouth*. We explained our situation to her captain, and he agreed to provide us passage to London.

RESUME LONDON OFFICE

The officers listen to the end of Barrett's story.

BARRETT
Upon our arrival, the captain delivered his record of our story to the office of the admiral and that was the end of it.

Landrake clears his throat. He looks at Avery.

LANDRAKE
Yes, that all agrees with your written account. We just have a few more questions. At any point was Benjamin Cutter left alone with both the treasure and the key to the chest?

BARRETT
No, sir. Never.

LANDRAKE
And is there any chance he could have survived the fall?

BARRETT
Nary a bit. The Lieutenant will attest to that. Cutpurse was shot in the chest. He fell seventy feet and his hands were bound. It would take a miracle for him to survive.

AVERY
Yes, Lieutenant Winthrop said as much in his own report.

Landrake sighs, disappointed.

LANDRAKE
The reason for this line of questioning is an issue regarding the recovered gold. After your return, the bean counters dug up the manifest from the *Venerable Lady*, ten years ago. It seems an entire third of the treasure's contents are missing. About one thousand doubloons worth of gold and jewels.

Barrett's eyes go wide.

BARRETT
That's impossible, sir. Are they absolutely sure?

LANDRAKE
I'm afraid so. Think back to your time on the island.
(MORE)

LANDRAKE (CONT'D)
Are you positive there's nothing more you can tell us which might suggest what happened to that missing portion?

PUSH IN on Barrett, trying to remember.

WINTHROP (V.O.)
You understand me, private? ...

EXT. BEACH - DAY - FLASHBACK

Winthrop is talking to Barrett on the beach.

WINTHROP
The first chance he gets, that pirate will shoot you in the heart.

BARRETT
Aye, sir.

WINTHROP
Good. Don't forget it. Remember, doubt gets people killed.

Winthrop keeps eating his armadillo. Barrett looks at Cutter, who meets his eye.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Barrett sits, thinking. Winthrop is snoring. Cutter watches him.

CUTTER
What you puzzlin' over, Private?

No answer.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
Barrett?

Barrett doesn't even turn his head. Cutter's VOICE from earlier echoes in his head.

CUTTER (V.O.)
It was the king's soldiers who did the beating... That's the England you're so proud of.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

THE BEACH - DAWN

Barrett hasn't moved. At last he looks up. A decision has been made.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Barrett draws the bible from his pocket, tears out a page. He uses a nub of charcoal to write out a message.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Winthrop stands watch as Barrett unties Cutter from the tree so he can eat.

Barrett discreetly presses the paper into Cutter's palm. Cutter's eyes flicker, but he says nothing.

Winthrop hasn't noticed.

WINTHROP
Eat your food and be quick about it, wastrel. I'm watching you.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Barrett is sleeping. Winthrop sits on watch, facing the sea, mechanically sharpening a dagger.

Cutter quietly unfolds the note, examines it in the moonlight.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Cutpurse. Do as I say and I will save you from the hangman.

Cutter's breathing quickens. He looks up at Winthrop, who yawns, then back at the note.

BARRETT (V.O.)
I can't act until a ship arrives, but when one does, we have to be ready.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett and Winthrop clean their pistols the next morning. Barrett glances at Cutter, who gives him a knowing look.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Step one. I will fill my pistols with powder but no shot, so they produce only a large bang when discharged.

Barrett loads powder into the gun. He picks up a bullet and pretends to drop it down the barrel, but secretly keeps it.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett stirs a pot of stew.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Step two. I will get the keys to your chains from the lieutenant.

Barrett carries the stew to Winthrop. He trips, spilling the food over Winthrop’s uniform.

WINTHROP
Dammit, Private! Now you have to clean this again.

LATER

Barrett soaks the uniform in water. He glances at Winthrop, and quietly removes the key ring from the breast pocket.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Step three. On one of my foraging missions, I will make arrangements at the clearing where we dug up the skeleton.

EXT. CLEARING - CLIFFTOP - DAY

QUICK SHOTS: Barrett digs a hole with his hands. He buries something, ties a rock to the mummified skeleton.

BARRETT (V.O.)
When the time comes, run straight to that clearing.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett returns with the armadillo.

WINTHROP
Took you long enough. I’m famished.

BARRETT
Sorry, sir. The traps were empty.

MOMENTS LATER

Barrett smoothly places a knife into Cutter's hand as he unties him to let him eat. Cutter slides it up his shirt sleeve before Winthrop sees it.

BARRETT (V.O.)
Don't act until I give the signal.

EXT. CLIFFTOP - DAY

SPYGLASS POV: the white sail is visible on the horizon.

Winthrop lowers the glass.

WINTHROP
Union Jack. They're British! Go!
Light the pyre!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Barrett runs to the camp.

CUTTER
What is it? What's happening.

BARRETT
British Navy. It's time. You know
what you're supposed to do?

CUTTER
To the letter.

BARRETT
Don't mess it up.

He kindles a spark. The pyre goes up in flames.

EXT. CLIFFTOP - DAY

Winthrop sees the smoke signal and runs down the slope.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Winthrop reaches the camp.

WINTHROP
They've spotted us! They're changing course. They should land in about three hours. Let's move the camp, so we can receive them on the north beach.

BARRETT
Aye, Lieutenant.

Winthrop begins untying Cutter from the tree.

WINTHROP
We'll take the prisoner first and come back for the treasure.

BARRETT
There should be a path through the trees that'll take us --

Barrett stops speaking, suddenly rigid.

BARRETT (V.O.)
When I fake one of my fits, that's the sign to act.

WINTHROP
Private? What's wrong?

Barrett collapses into the sand, twitching violently.

WINTHROP (CONT'D)
Good lord, what's the matter with you?!

CUTTER
Pills! Get him his pills. In his coat pocket!

Winthrop kneels at Barrett's side, leaving Cutter's ropes half-untied.

Cutter slides the knife out of his shirt pocket, saws through the remaining ropes.

Winthrop forces a pill into Barrett's mouth. Barrett's shaking subsides. His body relaxes.

WINTHROP
Jesus. Are you alright, private?

BARRETT
Yes, sir. I think so.
(seeing Cutter)
NO!!

WHAM! Cutter smashes Winthrop's head with a rock.

He grabs Winthrop's pistol, and sprints for the trees.

Barrett draws his own pistol. BANG!!

Cutter keeps running. He disappears into the jungle, his hands still in shackles.

EXT. JUNGLE - CONTINUOUS

Cutter pauses to check his arm. Not a scratch.

We hear MOVEMENT in the distance -- Barrett smashing through branches. Cutter keeps running.

EXT. CLEARING - CLIFFTOP - DAY

Cutter reaches the clearing, tucks the gun in his belt. A WOODEN CROSS has been stabbed in the earth.

Cutter throws the cross aside, starts digging. He uncovers a PACKAGE, wrapped in fabric.

Cutter opens it up. Inside is the KEY to the chains, and a pile of BERRIES.

He pockets the keys, crushes the berries in his hand. The juice drips over his fingers, turning them red.

He rips the sleeve of his shirt, smears the juice over his arm. It looks like he's been shot.

EXT. JUNGLE - SAME

Barrett pauses as he runs through the trees. He pulls some berries from his pocket, smears them over a tree branch.

He tosses the berries aside, right before Winthrop appears behind him.

BARRETT
Blood, sir! He's wounded.

Barrett keeps running.

EXT. CLEARING - CLIFFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Cutter tosses the berries away as well.

He examines the mummified skeleton, checks the ROPE tying its leg to a HEAVY ROCK. It’s secure.

Cutter picks up the skeleton, tosses it over the cliff.

It hits the water with a SPLASH. The rock drags it below the surface.

There’s movement in the trees. Cutter spins around.

Barrett is there.

CUTTER
Is he coming?

BARRETT
Any second now.

CUTTER
How’s his head?

BARRETT
Barely a cut. You were perfect. Remember, you got both keys. The short one unlocks your shackles.

Cutter looks over the cliff at the swirling sea below.

CUTTER
It’s a long drop. You sure I’ll make it?

BARRETT
No.

CUTTER
How unsure?

BARRETT
I give it one in four.

CUTTER
I’ll take those odds.

Barrett offers him his hand. Cutter shakes it.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
You’re a good lad, Private. God be with you.

They hear movement nearby.

BARRETT
That's him.
(calling)
Over here, Lieutenant! I've got him cornered.

Barrett backs away and Cutter throws his pistol down, right as Winthrop emerges from the trees, sword drawn.

Winthrop's eyes go from Cutter, with his arm soaked in blood, to the pistol, sitting on the rock.

WINTHROP
Shoot him now, Private. Before he goes for that flintlock.

CUTTER
I saved your life, friend. You owe me.

WINTHROP
Don't listen to him, son.

Barrett doesn't move, pistol still raised.

BARRETT
He's still in chains, sir. He's unarmed.

WINTHROP
Doesn't matter. Kill him now, before he kills you.

CUTTER
I didn't kill you before, I won't do it now.

WINTHROP
He's lying! As soon as you blink, he'll shoot you dead with that pistol.

CUTTER
That ain't true.

WINTHROP
Now, Private!

Barrett lowers the gun. Cutter snatches up the pistol.

BANG!! Barrett shoots first.

Cutter stumbles back. He topples off the cliff.

Barrett and Winthrop run to the edge and look down. Cutter hits the water with a SPLASH.

They wait. A body surfaces below, face down. Amid the waves and foamy surf, it could be Cutter... or it could be the mummified corpse. It’s hard to tell.

WINTHROP (CONT'D)
I told you he couldn’t be trusted.

BARRETT
Yes, sir.

WINTHROP
Let’s go. The launch will be here in an hour.

Winthrop marches off. Barrett takes one last look at the body floating below, unsure. *Did Cutter make it*?

EXT. BEACH - DAY

They emerge from the trees, onto the beach.

WINTHROP
Finally. That jungle’s a bloody maze. Where’d I put the key to the chest?
(bending over)
Ah. Here it is.

The key ring is lying in the sand, beside the chest. Winthrop pockets it. Barrett freezes, considering how it got there.

LANDRAKE (V.O.)
Private Barrett?

RESUME LONDON OFFICE

Commodore Landrake is staring at Barrett, expectantly.

LANDRAKE
Is there anything else you can remember?

BARRETT
Sorry, sir. I told you everything.

Landrake sighs, disappointed.

WORBOLY
What did I say? Bloody useless. That's another morning wasted.

LANDRAKE
Very well. Captain Van Llewyn must've taken part of the treasure before he buried it.
(to Avery)
Do either of you have anything else you'd like to ask?

WORBOLY
Yes. When's lunch?

AVERY
I do have one question. You said Cutpurse struck the lieutenant while you were recovering from your fit. If I remember correctly, Cutpurse was still tied to the tree. Can you explain how he got free?

BARRETT
The lieutenant had already started untying him. The ropes must have been loose enough for Cutpurse to pull them apart himself.

AVERY
I see. Your collapse was rather fortunate timing for Mr. Cutter then, wasn't it?

Avery stares at Barrett, a pensive smile on his lips. *I know you're hiding something.*

Barrett returns his gaze, unflinching.

BARRETT
Actually, sir, since Cutter was killed an hour later, for him there was nothing fortunate about it.

WORBOLY
What does it matter? He got shot either way. It all amounts to the same thing in the end.

Landrake clears his throat.

LANDRAKE
There's still the matter of this condition you mentioned.
(MORE)

LANDRAKE (CONT'D)
Of course, this should’ve been brought to the attention of your superiors the moment you enlisted.

AVERY
If I may, Commodore... the lad seems to have it mostly under control, provided he takes his caplets. Given his otherwise exemplary performance in service of his country, perhaps a special dispensation can be made.

LANDRAKE
Yes, I think you’re right. After all, you did play a valuable role in retrieving the treasure. I’ll have a written exemption provided that says as much.

BARRETT
Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.
(to Avery, with meaning)
Thank you.

LANDRAKE
I believe that’s all. You’re free to go now, Private.

Barrett salutes and marches to the door.

LANDRAKE (CONT'D)
Oh, wait. One more thing.
(Barrett stops)
This was delivered here by mistake. It’s intended for the enlisted men. Could you drop it off on your way back?

BARRETT
Yes, sir. Happy to.

Barrett takes the package that arrived with the mail.

LANDRAKE
Thank you, private. That’ll be all.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Barrett steps out into the corridor. He looks down at the package. The address is written in a shaky, unpracticed hand.

KITTY B.
ENLISTMENT QUART3RS
LONDON

CLOSE ON: the “E” in quarters. It’s backwards.

Barrett’s eyes narrow, recognizing the penmanship. He glances around. The hallway is empty.

Barrett tears open the package. Out slides -- a single green JEWEL, as big as a tangerine.

It lands heavy in his hand. Light dances off its surface.

The WORDS OF CUTPURSE echo in his head...

CUTTER (V.O.)
All it takes is one perfect gemstone, and you can buy that pretty house for pretty Kat.

Barrett smiles.

BARRETT
Thank you, Cutpurse.

He flips the emerald in the air, catches it, and tucks it in his breast pocket.

Barrett walks down the corridor, practically skipping.

He WHISTLES the bridge of “Whores of Sailortown”, as we

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END