

TREASURE ISLAND: BLACKBEARD'S CURSE & PIRATES GOLD V1.0

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Aye, heave ho, and listen well, ye landlubber! Gather 'round, for I be tellin' ye a tale o' blood, gold, and treachery on the high seas!

THE BATTLE OF OCRACOCKE 1718 - REIGN OF GEORGE I

EXT. OCRACOCKE INLET - DAWN

The murky light o' dawn creeps across the still waters o' Ocracoke Inlet. Two small sloops, the Ranger and the Jane, ghost silently towards a larger, rakish vessel anchored nearby - the Adventure. LIEUTENANT ROBERT MAYNARD, a stern-faced man in the King's colours, stands on the deck of the Jane, his gaze fixed on the pirate ship. His men, a rough-looking bunch, clutch their cutlasses and pistols, their eyes gleaming with a mixture o' fear and avarice.

MAYNARD (Low, to his FIRST MATE)

Remember the Governor's words, lads. Blackbeard's got a hoard fit for a king, tucked away like a kraken's treasure. Spotswood wants his share, aye, more than his share. And we be the ones to pluck the black-hearted devil from his roost.

The Adventure sits low in the water. A few figures can be seen on deck, looking none too alert.

FIRST MATE

Looks like half his scurvy dogs be ashore, carousin' like there's no tomorrow. Just as the spyglass said.

MAYNARD

Aye, Teach be a fool for the drink and the wenches. His weakness be our strength. They outnumber us in steel, and their Adventure likely sports teeth we ain't got. But we got surprise on our side, and the hunger for gold in our bellies.

EXT. OCRACOCKE INLET - CONTINUOUS

The Ranger and the Jane draw closer. Suddenly, a gruff voice booms across

the water.

BLACKBEARD (O.S.)

Ahoy there! What be yer business, creepin' 'round like shadows in the mornin' mist? Show yer colours!

On the deck of the Adventure, BLACKBEARD, a fearsome figure with a long, black beard intertwined with slow-burning matches, leans against the rail, a pistol in his belt. A few of his PIRATES, bleary-eyed and clutching tankards, peer over the side.

MAYNARD (Calling out)

This be the King's vessel! We've come for Edward Teach, the pirate! Surrender in the name o' the Crown!

Blackbeard lets out a hearty, mocking laugh.

BLACKBEARD

Surrender, ye lily-livered swabs? Blackbeard don't surrender to no man! Prepare to taste steel, ye dogs!

Blackbeard barks orders to his men. The sleepy pirates scramble to action, some heading towards the ship's unseen cannons.

MAYNARD (To his men)

He's for fightin', lads! Just as we expected. Remember the plan! Most o' ye stay below! Let the old devil think we be easy prey!

The Adventure begins to manoeuvre, heading for shallower waters.

EXT. OCRACOCKE INLET - CONTINUOUS

The Jane, heavier than the pirate sloop, runs aground on a sandbar with a sickening groan.

SAILOR ON JANE

Captain! We're stuck fast!

Blackbeard roars with laughter.

BLACKBEARD

Ha! Caught ye like a crab in a pot! Now ye'll feel the wrath o' Blackbeard!

The Adventure swings around, its hidden cannons now bearing on the helpless Jane.

MAYNARD (Grimly)

Blast and damnation! He's got us pinned! Lively now, lads! Everything that ain't fightin' iron goes overboard! We gotta lighten this tub, to refloat!

The sailors on the Jane frantically heave barrels, ropes, and anything loose over the side. The Adventure's cannons erupt in a deafening broadside, sending splinters flying and tearing through the Jane's rigging. Men cry out in pain.

MAYNARD (Unyielding)

Hold steady, ye dogs! We ain't done for yet! As the Jane lifts off the reef. Prepare to ram, ye hear me? Ram the black-hearted bastard!

EXT. OCRACOE INLET - MOMENTS LATER

With a splintering crash, the Jane slams into the Adventure's midsection. Blackbeard, momentarily stunned, watches as the decks of the Jane appear almost deserted.

BLACKBEARD (Grinning wickedly)

Aye, that's done it! Our cannons have chewed 'em to pieces! Grappling irons, me hearties! Let's pull 'er closer and finish 'em off! A fine prize for a Saturday mornin'!

Grappling hooks fly across the narrow gap, biting into the Jane's hull.

Suddenly, shots ring out from the seemingly empty deck of the Jane. Two of Blackbeard's men fall, clutching their chests. The pirates on the Adventure return fire, felling four of Maynard's exposed crew.

BLACKBEARD (Bellowing)

What sorcery be this?! No matter! To 'em, me lads! Board 'em and send 'em to Davy Jones!

Blackbeard, a knife clenched between his teeth, swings himself onto the deck of the Jane, the smoldering matches in his beard trailing smoke like a demon from the depths. His remaining crew follows close behind, their cutlasses raised.

But the few men left on the Jane's deck throw down their weapons in fear.

BLACKBEARD (A cruel grin spreading across his face)

Wise ye be! Though ye be cowards! No need for foolish bloodshed.

His gaze falls upon Maynard, the tallest and best-dressed of the bunch.

BLACKBEARD

Bind this fine fellow! The rest o' ye look like drowned rats. No fight left in 'em.

Blackbeard turns his attention elsewhere, a fatal moment of distraction. Suddenly, a signal is given.

MAYNARD (Roaring)

NOW, YE LANDLUBBERS! SHOW 'EM WHAT FOR!

From below decks, a swarm of thirty Royal Navy sailors erupts onto the deck, pistols blazing and cutlasses flashing. The air fills with the roar of gunfire and the clash of cutlass steel. A brutal, close-quarters fight ensues.

Blackbeard whirls around, his eyes widening in fury as he sees the trap sprung. He charges towards Maynard, cutlass raised. The two men meet in a furious exchange of blows. Maynard, despite his less fearsome appearance, proves a skilled swordsman.

Shots ring out, hitting Blackbeard. He stumbles, but his rage keeps him on his feet. Maynard presses his attack, his blade finding its mark again and again.

MAYNARD (To his men)

Don't kill him yet! We need what's locked away in that black heart o' his!

MAYNARD (Pressing his sword against Blackbeard's throat)

Tell me, Edward Teach! Where be yer ill-gotten gains?

BLACKBEARD (Spitting blood)

This tub be too small for the likes o' my treasure!

MAYNARD

Aye, that it be! Then where, ye dog? Tell me, and I might just let ye live!

Maynard strikes again, but Blackbeard, with a final surge of strength, slashes Maynard's leg. Maynard retaliates, his sword piercing Blackbeard's arm.

BLACKBEARD

Yer fancy steel won't do ye no good!

Maynard, losing his temper, fires another pistol shot, hitting Blackbeard in the side. The pirate knows his end is near. His men are falling around him, the deck slick with blood.

BLACKBEARD (Gasping)

The secret... goes with me... to the depths! I curse ye all!

With a final, desperate lunge, Blackbeard attacks Maynard, his cutlass drawing blood. But Maynard is relentless. He delivers a fatal blow to Blackbeard's neck. The notorious pirate slumps to the deck, near death.

Maynard, panting, twists his blade in Blackbeard's arm. A gruesome grin spreads across the dying pirate's face.

BLACKBEARD (A gurgling whisper)

Dead men... tell no tales...

He falls silent.

The remaining pirates, seeing their fearsome leader dead, throw down their weapons.

MAYNARD (Wiping blood from his brow)

Bind the prisoners, lads. Now, let's see what secrets this devil took with him.

Maynard heads towards Blackbeard's cabin, a grim determination on his face. The hunt for the treasure has just begun. A violent and thorough search reveals nothing of value, save for a parchment, feeding his curiosity more than dashing all hope.

FADE TO BLACK

PORT ROYAL, JAMAICA - THE EARTH SHAKES, PRESENT DAY

EXT. PORT ROYAL WATERFRONT - DAY

The vibrant, if somewhat faded, waterfront of modern PORT ROYAL, JAMAICA. Small fishing boats bob gently in the turquoise water. Tourists stroll along the pier, buying trinkets and sipping on cold drinks. The air is thick with the salty tang of the sea and the faint scent of grilling fish.

MARTHA (60s), a local fish vendor with a warm smile, chats with a TOURIST couple from Ohio.

MARTHA

...and you see that old stone wall over yonder? That's all that's left of the old fort. This whole place, you know, it used to be the richest, wickedest city in the world. Pirates and gold everywhere.

TOURIST 1

Wow, really? Like in the movies?

MARTHA

Even wilder, they say. Then the earth just swallowed it. Boom! Gone. Nineteen sixty-two, that was. Big earthquake, tsunami. Took most of it down to the bottom of the sea.

TOURIST 2

Nineteen sixty-two? I thought that was a while ago.

MARTHA (Chuckles)

Oh, no, darlin'. Sixteen ninety-two! A long, long time ago. We still get little shakes now and then. The earth remembers, you see.

Suddenly, a low RUMBLE begins to vibrate through the ground. It starts subtly, like a distant truck, but quickly intensifies. Glasses on a nearby bar counter begin to CLINK.

TOURIST 1
What's that?

MARTHA (Her eyes widening slightly)
Uh oh. That's... that's a little more than usual.

The ground starts to ROLL noticeably. Palm trees SWAY more violently. People stop walking, a look of unease spreading across their faces.

YOUNG FISHERMAN (O.S.) (Shouting from a nearby boat)
Hey! What's goin' on?

Water in the harbor sloshes against the docks. A few small items fall from market stalls.

TOURIST 2
Is this an earthquake?

MARTHA (Her voice a little shaky)
Looks like it, darlin'. Just a little tremor, hopefully. Nothing like the big one.

The rumbling peaks, a deep GROWL emanating from the earth. For a few tense seconds, everything seems to hold its breath. Then, just as quickly as it began, the shaking starts to subside. The rumbling fades. The water settles.

People exchange nervous glances.

YOUNG FISHERMAN (Calling out again, his voice still tense)
Everything alright ashore?

MARTHA (Taking a deep breath)
Seems so, Mikey. Just a little jolt. Nasty one, though.

TOURIST 1 (His face pale)
That was scary.

TOURIST 2

Is this is this normal here?

MARTHA (Trying to sound reassuring)

Happens now and then. This whole area, you know, it's a bit... restless under the sea. That Gonâve fault line, they call it. The one that caused all the trouble way back when. Still grumbling sometimes.

OLD MAN (O.S.) (Walking slowly towards them, leaning on a cane)

Felt that one good. Stirrin' things up down below, I reckon.

MARTHA (Nodding grimly)

That's what I'm worried about, Mr. Isaiah. Stirrin' things up. All those old buildings down there, the cemetery.

She gestures vaguely out towards the harbour.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

They say some of it's been rising a bit lately. Since that last little shake a few weeks back. The scientists were talkin' about it. But the government... they got other things on their minds. Sargassum, the heat never listen to the scientists about the rumblin' under the waves.

OLD MAN (ISAIAH)

The sea remembers too, Martha. Just like the land. And it don't forget.

A small news drone, with the logo of a local station, BUZZES overhead, its camera pointing down at the waterfront.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O. - distorted by the drone)

...reports of a moderate tremor felt across the Port Royal area initial assessments suggest no major damage authorities are monitoring the situation residents are advised to remain calm.

Martha watches the drone disappear into the distance, a worried look on her face.

MARTHA

Calm, they say. Easy for them to say. They ain't got their history sleepin' right under their feet.

She looks out at the seemingly peaceful surface of the harbour, a shiver running down her spine.

CUT TO: SUBMERGED PORT ROYAL - PRESENT DAY

Sunlight filters weakly through the murky Caribbean water, illuminating a ghostly cityscape.

An OCTOPUS, its skin a mottled brown, glides gracefully over a large, ornate stone structure partially buried in the silt. This is the MAUSOLEUM OF HENRY MORGAN, its carvings obscured by centuries of marine growth and sediment. It has been hidden from human eyes for over four hundred years.

The recent tremor has clearly had an impact. Patches of mud and silt drift slowly through the water, disturbed from the seabed. The mausoleum, or at least a significant portion of its upper structure, is now more exposed than it has been in centuries, the churned mud having settled somewhat around it. Intricate carvings, depicting cherubs and perhaps a coat of arms, are now faintly visible.

A SHARK, a REEF SHARK with inquisitive black eyes, circles the mausoleum cautiously. It's not aggressive, more curious, its movements fluid and silent. It nudges a loose piece of coral attached to the stone with its snout.

Close on a section of the mausoleum: A carved inscription, partially obscured, begins to become clearer as the last of the loose sediment drifts away. The letters "HENR..." and "...GAN" are just discernible.

SOUND: A faint, deep RUMBLE echoes through the water, the lingering aftershock of the tremor. The octopus pauses on the top of the mausoleum, its tentacles exploring the newly exposed stone. It seems almost to sense the shift in its environment.

The shark continues its slow circuit, its gaze fixed on the ancient structure. It brushes against a weathered human skull, half-buried in the sand nearby, before continuing its patrol.

The scene holds for a moment, the ancient tomb, disturbed from its long slumber, now briefly revealed to the silent world beneath the waves. The

beauty of the marine life contrasts sharply with the historical significance of the emerging ruin.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. BLUE SHIELD HEAD OFFICE - VIDEO CONFERENCE - PRESENT DAY

The sleek, modern office of BLUE SHIELD at Newcastle University. DR. ROBERTA TREADSTONE, mid-40s, sharp and intelligent, sits before a large monitor displaying the face of PROFESSOR JACQUES PIERRE DACCORD, 60s, with a distinguished air and a hint of Gallic charm, in his equally modern UNESCO office in Paris.

ROBERTA (Leaning forward slightly)

So, Jacques, the big question: can we persuade John Storm to help us out again?

JACQUES (on screen)

(Sighs, running a hand through his thinning hair)

Pas facile, Roberta. Not easy. He's just had a rather turbulent experience, courtesy of your American friends, the CIA. Jack Mason, wasn't it? With that whole Cleopatra business. What exactly did happen there?

ROBERTA (A slight frown)

Not entirely clear. I heard whispers of some kind of Mexican standoff. But we desperately need his ship for this. His familiarity with the Caribbean, Jamaica specifically and with the current military tensions between Brazil and Cuba frankly, who else possesses the necessary expertise and equipment?

JACQUES (on screen)

(Raises an eyebrow, a playful glint in his eye)

Sacre bleu, what is so magnifique about this ship of his again? The Elizabeth Swann, was it? You know I know, chérie, I simply enjoy watching you become envious.

Roberta rolls her eyes good-naturedly.

ROBERTA

Oh, Professor, it's hydrogen-powered. Can you even imagine the

environmental implications? Oh, and solar, of course. And then there's the most advanced underwater array of instruments you could possibly dream of. Makes our current tech look like something from the Stone Age. And then then there's Hal, the onboard AI. And then...

JACQUES (on screen) (Chuckles)
D'accord, d'accord. Sold.

ROBERTA
No, Jacques, don't forget the Swann can become virtually invisible to radar.

JACQUES (on screen) (Feigning disbelief)
Pour sûr que c'est duPipeau, mademoiselle! That is absolute nonsense! Challenging the professor!

ROBERTA (Deadpan)
Stat.

JACQUES (on screen)
Absolument? Absolutely?

ROBERTA (With an exaggerated French accent)
Oui. Absolutely.

JACQUES (on screen) (Smiling)
Très bien. Can you, perhaps, lean on him via his friend Charley?

ROBERTA (Sighs again)
No other way I can see it. He's a complete sucker for Charley. But actually, she just needs to appeal to his love of archaeology. That's his real weakness.

JACQUES (on screen)
Ah, yes. We are particularly keen to secure the Palisadoes Cemetery. And Governor Morgan's internment site, if possible.

ROBERTA (Surprised)
Really? I'd have thought that wouldn't be such a high priority.

JACQUES (on screen)
(His expression becomes slightly more serious)

It's Interpol again. They've expressed a keen interest. But they're not being particularly forthcoming about the specifics.

Roberta nods slowly, a hint of unease in her eyes.

ROBERTA

Right. Well, I'll get in touch with Charley. Hopefully, between her and the allure of a lost underwater city, we can persuade him. We really need the Swann's capabilities down there before another seismic event wipes everything out. Turning Port Royal into a UNESCO World Heritage Site is paramount.

JACQUES (on screen)

Indeed. His diving expertise and archaeological knowledge are invaluable. Though, I must confess, like you, I often wonder how he emerges from some of his adventures unscathed. It's rather uncanny. Precisely why Blue Shield calls upon him from time to time, I presume?

Roberta manages a small smile.

ROBERTA

You've got it, Professor. Uncanny indeed. I'll be in touch once I've spoken with John.

JACQUES (on screen)

Merci beaucoup, Roberta. I await your news with anticipation. This Port Royal project it is of vital importance. Au revoir.

ROBERTA

Goodbye, Jacques.

Roberta terminates the video link, a thoughtful expression on her face. She picks up her phone, her fingers hovering over a contact named "Charley Temple."

ROBERTA (To herself)

Let's see if Charley can work her magic again.

FADE OUT

SPARRING SESSION INT. ELIZABETH SWANN HELM - DAY

The helm of the hydrogen ship, ELIZABETH SWANN, is sleek and modern, dominated by holographic displays and touchscreens. Yet, mounted on the polished bulkhead behind the central console, two antique pirate cutlasses gleam under the soft ambient lighting.

CAPTAIN JOHN STORM (40s, capable, with a thoughtful intensity) and DAN HAWK (20s, energetic, tech-savvy) stand in the spacious area before the console, both wearing comfortable, shipboard attire. Dan gestures towards the antique swords with admiration.

DAN

You know, Captain, these old blades have seen some action. Imagine the stories they could tell.

John steps closer, running a hand along the weathered hilt of one.

JOHN

They do have a certain presence. Reminders of a wilder time on these oceans. Though I prefer our hydrogen power to relying on the whims of the wind.

DAN

Agreed. Speaking of the future... check this out.

Dan taps on a wrist-mounted device. The air in front of them shimmers, and a detailed holographic environment materializes: a stylized dojo with glowing geometric patterns. Two translucent, hilt-like objects appear in their hands - dummy light sabres, their energy blades crackling softly.

DAN (CONT'D)

My latest VR sparring program. Full haptic feedback, customizable opponents... but today, it's Captain vs. First Mate. Ready for some light sabre duelling, Captain?

John grins, a spark of playful competitiveness in his eyes.

JOHN

Lead the way, Mr. Hawk. Though I suspect your futuristic weaponry won't prepare you for a good old-fashioned cutlass.

They take up fighting stances, the dummy light sabres humming.

HAL (V.O. - Calm, synthesized voice)

Commencing VR Sparring Simulation. Opponents: Storm, J. - Hawk, D.

Scoring enabled. First to ten points wins.

Dan lunges, his light sabre flashing in a swift arc. John parries with surprising agility, the energy blades clashing with a satisfying snap-hiss.

HAL (V.O.)

Hawk, one point.

JOHN

Beginner's luck.

They circle each other, a playful tension in the air. Dan attacks again, a flurry of quick strikes. John defends expertly, his movements precise and economical. He counters, his dummy light sabre tagging Dan's shoulder.

HAL (V.O.)

Storm, one point. Tie score.

After several more exchanges, John's superior tactical awareness and surprising skill become evident. He anticipates Dan's moves, blocks effortlessly, and lands clean hits.

HAL (V.O.)

Storm, three points. Hawk, one point.

HAL (V.O.)

Storm, five points. Hawk, two points.

Dan, panting slightly, lowers his dummy light sabre.

DAN

Okay, Captain. You've clearly got some hidden Jedi skills. All that quiet contemplation on the bridge must be paying off.

JOHN (Chuckles)

Or maybe I watched a few too many holovids of ancient Earth sword fights.

DAN

Well, prepare for a serious upgrade. Next round, no mercy!

They resume sparring, but the pattern continues. John consistently outmaneuvers and outfights Dan in the VR environment.

HAL (V.O.)

Storm, eight points. Hawk, three points.

HAL (V.O.)

Storm, ten points. Simulation terminated. Winner: Storm, J.

Dan removes his VR headset, a sheepish grin on his face.

DAN

Alright, alright. You win. But VR isn't everything, Captain. It's just pixels and light.

John raises an eyebrow, a mischievous glint in his eyes.

JOHN

Is that a challenge, Mr. Hawk?

He gestures towards the antique cutlasses on the wall. Dan's eyes widen.

DAN

You're not serious with those?

JOHN

For a bit of fun, as you said. Safety first.

John retrieves the two cutlasses. Dan watches with a mixture of apprehension and excitement. John carefully caps the sharp tips of both blades with soft, brightly colored protectors. He then tosses one to Dan.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Padded jackets are in the locker. Let's see if your VR skills translate to a bit of old-world swashbuckling.

They don't thicken, padded jackets. Dan cautiously takes a fencing stance, holding the capped cutlass somewhat awkwardly. John, however, moves with a natural grace, his stance balanced and his blade held with confident ease.

DAN

Uh, Captain? You seem surprisingly comfortable with that thing.

JOHN

One never knows what skills might come in handy on the high seas, Mr. Hawk.

They begin to spar. Dan is enthusiastic but clearly outmatched. John's movements are fluid and precise, disarming Dan with swift flicks of his wrist. The capped blades clang harmlessly against their padded jackets.

JOHN

En garde!

Clang! John's blade knocks Dan's weapon out of his hand. It clatters to the deck.

DAN

Okay, you got lucky that time.

Dan retrieves his sword. They engage again. This time, John feints left, then swiftly attacks Dan's exposed side, his capped blade tapping the padding.

DAN

Agh! You're too fast! You would have had me.

Again, they reset. Dan tries a more aggressive approach, but John effortlessly parries and counters, his movements almost balletic. He delivers a gentle tap to Dan's chest with his capped blade.

DAN

Right through the heart. You're a natural, Captain. Where did you learn to do that?

One final exchange. John, with a flourish, spins his cutlass and cleanly

disarms Dan once more, then holds the capped tip of his blade inches from Dan's throat.

DAN (Smiling wryly)

Alright, alright! I yield! You are definitely the swashbuckling master, Captain. VR is no match for the real deal, especially in your hands. I am thoroughly outclassed.

John lowers his sword, a satisfied grin on his face.

JOHN

Just a bit of fun, Mr. Hawk. And a reminder that sometimes, the old ways still have their merits.

HAL (V.O.) Observation

Commander Storm demonstrates a significantly higher proficiency in simulated and physical bladed combat compared to Navigator Hawk. Efficiency rating: Storm, 98%. Hawk, 42%. Recommend further training for Mr Hawk.

Dan throws his hands up in mock surrender.

DAN

Thanks, Hal. Always supportive.

John claps Dan on the shoulder, the camaraderie between them evident.

JOHN

Next time, we'll stick to drone piloting, Mr. Hawk. That seems more your forte.

Dan laughs, picking up his capped cutlass.

DAN

Agreed, Captain. Agreed. But I'm not giving up on the light sabers just yet. There's still room for improvement, and maybe a few more unexpected wins.

They share a look, the friendly rivalry continuing as they return the antique swords to their display.

FADE OUT

THE ADMIRAL'S DEMISE - AUGUST 25 1688 - LAURENCEFIELD ESTATE,
JAMAICA -DAY

The air hangs thick and heavy, shimmering with the oppressive heat of a Jamaican August afternoon. Sunlight beats down on the lush, green expanse of the LAWRENCEFIELD ESTATE. In the distance, African slaves toil in the seemingly endless rows of sugar cane.

On a shaded veranda overlooking the fields, ADMIRAL SIR HENRY MORGAN (60s, immense girth, his face florid and sweat-sheened) sits heavily in a wicker chair. A half-empty tankard of dark rum sits on a nearby table. He watches his slaves with a dull, satisfied gaze.

MORGAN (V.O.)

A long day it were, and hotter than the devil's own forge. But a man's gotta oversee his investments, eh? And what finer investment than these blackamoors sweatin' under the Jamaican sun, turnin' cane to the very nectar that warms a man's belly.

Morgan reaches for his tankard, his movements sluggish. He takes a long, noisy draught.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Aye, Lawrencefield. Named by that Prince fellow after Panama. A fine vantage point, this. Port Royal one way, Spanish Town t'other. Though my heart's more for the quiet of the fields these days. Less... wickedness.

FLASHBACK - MONTAGE (BRIEF, DREAMLIKE)

A bustling, bawdy PORT ROYAL, teeming with life, brick houses rising two and four stories high. Sounds of laughter, drunken singing, and the clatter of dice. Rough-looking men, buccaneers and pirates, carousing in taverns, their faces flushed with drink and lust.

A stern-faced CATHOLIC PRIEST shaking his head in disapproval. A glimpse of a secret tunnel entrance, hidden amongst lush foliage. A younger, more vigorous MORGAN embracing a beautiful GERMAN WOMAN, gesturing towards a section of the plantation.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Port Royal they called it the wickedest town in Christendom. And they

weren't far wrong. Fortunes made quick, and spent quicker. But a man finds his comforts, amidst the sin. And a man remembers favours given.

BACK TO PRESENT

Morgan pats his considerable belly, a belch escaping his lips.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Aye, the rum flows freely now. My own brew, mind you. Got a knack for the still, I do. Makes a man richer by the day and wider in the breeches. The ships line up for my dark gold, and the sugar ain't far behind. Though this this prosperity it ain't always kind to an old sea dog's ticker.

He shifts uncomfortably in his chair, a slight wheeze escaping his lips. He ignores it, a faraway look in his eyes.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Venezuela Panama Ah, those were the days. Takin' a Spanish prize, a right proper engagement. And Providence! Batterin' that fort that's where the real gold was found. Not all of it made it to the Crown's coffers, mind you. A prudent man keeps a little somethin' aside, for a rainy day or a sudden need for... reinforcements.

He chuckles, a dry, rattling sound.

MORGAN (V.O.)

And a prudent man he leaves a trail. Just in case the old memory fails, or the kin get desperate. Though "desperate has a strict legal definition, mind you. And that map sealed tight with the scribe. Not to be opened unless.

He laughs louder now, a wheezing bark.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Good times. Good, bloody times. The German frau never knew the half of it. Nor the wife, bless her oblivious heart. Only a few drunken swabs ever heard whispers. And the coffin ah, the coffin. A secret compartment. For comfort in the afterlife, ye see. Details all down with the scribe. Sworn to silence on pain of well, he knows.

Suddenly, Morgan clutches his left arm, his face contorting in pain.

MORGAN

Ugh... what in the.....

His arm goes limp, unresponsive. The pain shoots up his arm, across his face. One side of his mouth droops, his features becoming grotesquely lopsided. The African slaves in the distance stop their work, watching with wide, uncomprehending eyes.

A sharp, stabbing pain pierces Morgan's chest. His eyes widen in shock. He gasps, his breath catching in his throat.

With a heavy THUD, he slumps forward in his chair, then slides to the ground. Stone still.

The slaves exchange bewildered glances. One of them cautiously approaches. He nudges Morgan with his foot. No response. He looks closer, his eyes widening in realization.

SLAVE (in hushed tones)

Master he sleep no more.

EXT. PALISADOES CEMETERY, OLD PORT ROYAL - DAY (1690s SOME YEARS LATER)

A blustery wind whips across the thin strip of sand that is the PALISADOES CEMETERY. Dark grey clouds scud across a bright blue sky, the sun breaking through in dramatic shafts of orange light.

A large, stone-built MAUSOLEUM stands prominently amongst other graves. Intricate relief's of warships and Britannic emblems adorn its facade.

A crowd of JAMAICAN SOCIETY has gathered, hats held in respect. Amongst them are a few rough-looking characters, remnants of Morgan's buccaneering past.

Bearers struggle to push an oversized, highly adorned CASKET, mounted on rollers, towards the mausoleum's entrance. It is clearly heavy.

MORGAN (V.O.)

A state affair, they called it. My send-off. Wind howlin' like a banshee. Suits me, I reckon. Always liked a bit of drama.

The casket is maneuvered inside the mausoleum and onto a stone table. It is clearly lead-lined.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Lead-lined, eh? Fancy. Embalmed like a Pharaoh. Though they don't know the half of the treasures I'm takin' with me. Just the scribe and that coffin fella. Lips sealed tighter than a barnacle on a hull.

Close on a section of the casket: an intricately engraved IRON WOOD TABLET, its surface divided into compartments. The wood is almost black, dense and unyielding.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Lignum vitae. Wood of life, they call it. Hard as iron, sinks like a stone. Perfect for keepin' secrets. And that codin' tied to a map only the scribe knows. Clever, eh?

DR. EMMANUEL HEATH (50s, Anglican clergyman, dressed in black and white) stands at the head of the casket. He speaks in a solemn tone, though his eyes betray a hint of professional detachment.

DR. HEATH

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, we commend the earthly remains of our much revered citizen, to this final place. May God rest his soul, that he should find peace everlasting.

The crowd remains silent, heads bowed.

DR. HEATH

Go in peace.

The crowd begins to disperse. Two stout ATTENDANTS struggle to close a heavy WOODEN DOOR to the mausoleum, secured by massive wrought iron bolts. They then close a second, inner door. Finally, Dr. Heath produces a large KEY, bearing Sir Henry's crest. He inserts it into a substantial IRON SECURITY LOCK, also adorned with the crest. A loud, satisfying CLUNK echoes as the heavy steel bolt engages. Dr. Heath removes the key and places it on a robust SILVER CHAIN around his neck.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Safe keepin'. For the kin. Via the scribe. In a vault. For now.

The crowd continues to drift away.

MORGAN (V.O.)

They'll all be off to the taverns now. Drownin' their sorrows... or celebratin' my departure. Depends on who you ask, I suppose.

EXT. PALISADOES CEMETERY - UNDERWATER (FOUR YEARS LATER)

The grey stone MAUSOLEUM lies submerged beneath the clear turquoise water. Coral begins to encrust its surface. The heavy wooden doors are slightly ajar.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Four years. And the sea claims all. The bones, the fancy fluids all gone to the briny deep. But the secrets, the secrets remain.

Close on the iron wood tablet within the submerged casket, the cryptic engravings still sharp and unyielding against the encroaching sea.

FADE TO BLACK

SURVEY SUNKEN CITY, OLD PORT ROYAL - PRESENT - CARIBBEAN SEA -
EXT. DAY

The Elizabeth Swann, a sleek, modern hydrogen-powered vessel, cruises smoothly along the southern coast of Jamaica, heading west. The sky is a perfect, cloudless blue.

INT. HELM - ELIZABETH SWANN - DAY

CAPTAIN JOHN STORM (40s, thoughtful, capable) stands at the helm. DAN HAWK (20s, energetic, tech-savvy) sits at the control console, a look of boyish anticipation on his face. PATRISHA LEOPARD (CLEOPATRA) (ageless, beautiful, with a mischievous glint) leans against the console beside Dan, a slight shiver running through her despite the warmth.

JOHN

Perfect weather, Hal.

HAL (V.O. - calm, synthesized)

That it be, Captain. The Elizabeth Swann is currently traversing the

waters adjacent to Kingston Harbour, situated between 17 degrees 57 minutes North and 76 degrees 44 minutes West.

JOHN

Yes, thanks, Hal.

John glances at Cleopatra, a hint of weariness in his eyes from their recent adventure. He turns back to the viewscreen.

DAN

What are we looking for, Skip?

PATRISHA (dryly)

Just a survey of another sunken city.

She shrugs, a playful smile touching her lips, then shivers again.

PATRISHA (to herself, almost a whisper)

Hopefully no more icy welcomes from the deep.

JOHN

In 1692, a tsunami swallowed up old Port Royal. There's been another quake recently, and Blue Shield wants a detailed survey of what might be worth protecting. The last comprehensive study was done back in 1990.

DAN

If Blue Shield are interested right now, something must have significant cultural value.

PATRISHA

Yes, and don't forget Charley's in on this one too.

JOHN

She is a very good friend. A good friend with a knack for these things. A spooky sixth sense, you might say.

DAN

Attractive too.

JOHN

A bonus. Helps her get where she needs to be. But not a patch on your radiance this morning.

Cleopatra blushes, a rare and charming sight. Dan, meanwhile, is watching the main viewscreen where HAL's avatar is subtly shifting, almost pulling funny faces.

DAN

Hal, would you calculate a grid pattern search of the sunken city, please? And send up the drone for an aerial view. Might give us a better overview.

HAL (V.O.)

Displaying now, Dan.

A detailed grid pattern overlays the sonar image of the seabed on the main screen. A roof panel on the Elizabeth Swann silently slides open, revealing a docking station with a sleek DRONE charging on a pad. With a high-pitched whir of rotors, the drone lifts off and speeds away ahead of the ship. John and Dan watch the drone become a distant speck. Patrisha moves closer to the console.

PATRISHA

Make room.

John and Dan shuffle aside, making space for her.

HAL (V.O.)

There are three screens, one for each helm position. The drone camera feed is on the other screen.

JOHN

The AI has calculated a grid search pattern that should help us identify anything new or out of the ordinary by comparing it with pre-quake data. We already have records of some ruins from surveys in '59 and '90.

DAN

The water's so murky down there, visibility is practically zero. A lot of the old surveys were done by touch, just feeling around in the silt.

HAL (V.O.)

That is why our capabilities are required. Our sensor array allows for virtual visibility, exceeding even a dolphin's sonar or a shark's pressure sensors. The data captured by our advanced split beam sonar and

other instruments is converted into precise geographical image maps.

JOHN

Hurricane Charlie in '51 pretty much destroyed what was left of the above-water structures of Port Royal. An archaeological disaster. But miraculously, some of the submerged buildings are incredibly well-preserved. It's believed to be one of the best-preserved underwater cities in the world.

PATRISHA (intrigued)

Like magic. If only Marc Antony could see this!

John exchanges a quick glance with Dan, acknowledging the unexpected blast from Cleopatra's past.

JOHN

So far, detailed data has been collected from eight submerged buildings, an unrivalled collection of in situ artifacts. The site is on a tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage status. And would you believe, from 1597 to 1994, the city was hit by at least forty-seven hurricanes and major storms, nine significant earthquakes, and two major fires.

DAN

No way. And people still live there?

JOHN

As you can see from the scan data. Wow. Will you look at that. It's like walking through the ruins of Herculaneum, only underwater.

The Elizabeth Swann begins its pre-planned grid search, changing course with smooth, silent precision thanks to its advanced AI navigation.

PATRISHA

Hercu-what now?

JOHN

It's a large town near Pompeii in Italy, Patrisha. Destroyed by Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. Buried under volcanic ash. If you're interested in excavations, it's worth a visit. Happened just over a hundred years after.

John stops himself abruptly. The Swann completes another traverse.

HAL (V.O.)

Survey completed, Captain Storm.

John smiles faintly at the formality. The sonar scan now displays hundreds of submerged metal objects invisible to standard sonar. Most of the 17th-century city remains are under forty feet of water.

JOHN

A chap called Edwin Link and his wife Marion pioneered the exploration of this site between '56 and '69. Started as amateurs, built their own underwater exploration vessel, the Sea Diver. In their first ten-week expedition, they uncovered brick walls and a cannon from a fort, with help from the Smithsonian, the US Navy, National Geographic, and the Jamaican government.

HAL (V.O.)

Indeed. And it was Mr. Link who famously discovered the brass pocket watch that stopped at noon on the 7th of June, 1692, as the sea engulfed its wearer.

JOHN

True. And would you believe that a frigate named HMS Swann was washed over the rooftops of Port Royal by the tsunami as the buildings sank?

DAN (groaning)

Thanks for that, Skip.

Dan rubs his temples, superstitious unease creeping into his expression.

JOHN

Okay. So, the survey shows the recent tremor has caused some minor changes to the seabed, but all the key buildings appear structurally sound. UNESCO and Jamaica will be pleased. However, there is a mound that was not visible in previous surveys, at the site of the old Palisadoes Cemetery.

DAN

We still don't know why Blue Shield were involved in this.

HAL (V.O.)

It is probable that such disturbances attract opportunistic divers who may seek to pilfer artifacts without proper reporting. These artifacts could then be sold on unregulated platforms, potentially funding illicit activities.

JOHN

Hold that thought, Hal. This 'mound', our scanners are unable to penetrate whatever is inside. Funny how the Texas A&M Institute of Nautical Archaeology missed that in over ten years of digging around in the 1980s.

DAN

Shall I prepare the ROV, Skipper?

JOHN

Yes, please, Dan. Oh, and recall the drone, Hal. Thanks.

John's gaze is fixed on the mysterious mound on the sonar display.

FADE OUT

TSUNAMI 7TH JUNE 1692 - OLDE PORT ROYAL - THE EARTH SHAKES

DOCKYARD - MIDDAY (JUNE 7TH, 1692)

The sun beats down upon PORT ROYAL, glistening jewel of the Caribbean, a bustling hive of merchants, sailors, and those of ill-repute. Casks are rolled across the wooden planks of the wharves. Sailors shout bawdy jests. The air hums with the din of a thriving port set in turquoise sea and sandy beaches.

CAPTAIN BLACKHEART, a grizzled privateer with a patch over one eye, leans against the railing of his ship, The Serpent's Kiss, a tankard of rum in his hand. He watches as a gaggle of finely dressed GENTLEMEN haggle over prices with a swarthy MERCHANT.

CAPTAIN BLACKHEART (To his MATE, a hulking man named GRIMSHAW)

Aye, Grimshaw, look at 'em, preenin' like peacocks. This town be nothin' but a den o' vipers, each one tryin' to out-cheat the other. Gold flows like the tide here, but so too does sin.

GRIMSHAW (Nodding)

'Tis true, Captain. They say Port Royal be the storehouse o' the West Indies, but I reckon 'tis the Devil's treasury more like.

Suddenly, a low RUMBLE echoes through the air, growing steadily louder. The ground beneath their feet begins to TREMBLE.

MERCHANT (Stumbling)

What in God's name...?

The shaking intensifies violently. People CRY OUT in fear. Buildings begin to CRACK and GROAN.

GENTLEMAN 1

An earthquake! Jesu have mercy!

GENTLEMAN 2

The ground... it moves like the sea!

Captain Blackheart grabs the railing, his eyes wide with alarm.

CAPTAIN BLACKHEART

Hold fast, Grimshaw! What devilry be this?

The cobblestones of the dockyard BUCKLE and SPLIT. Water erupts from fissures in the ground, turning the dust to thick MUD.

GRIMSHAW

The wharves... they be sinkin'!

Indeed, the sturdy wooden structures along the waterfront begin to tilt and submerge into the harbor. Ships moored alongside are tossed about like toys in a bathtub.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Panic reigns in the narrow streets. Brick buildings CRUMBLE and COLLAPSE, sending clouds of dust and debris into the air. People are crushed beneath falling masonry.

A richly dressed LADY screams as the ground opens up before her,

swallowing a nearby cart whole.

LADY

Help me! Sweet Mother Mary, save me.

A PREACHER, his face pale with terror, raises his arms towards the heavens.

PREACHER

Repent, ye sinners. This be the wrath of God made manifest! Your wickedness hath called down this doom!

EXT. HARBOR - CONTINUOUS

The sea begins to RECEDE rapidly, leaving the harbor floor exposed, littered with debris and stranded fish. A strange, sucking sound fills the air.

CAPTAIN BLACKHEART (Staring in disbelief)

The tide... it be goin' out faster than a thief in the night! Never seen the like!

GRIMSHAW

Captain, look! Out yonder!

A massive WALL OF WATER, dark and menacing, rises on the horizon, rushing towards the shore with terrifying speed.

SAILOR (O.S.)

A wave! A monstrous wave!

CAPTAIN BLACKHEART (His voice filled with dread)

God have mercy on us all! This be no earthly tide!

The TSUNAMI crashes into Port Royal with a deafening roar. Ships are lifted high into the air, tossed inland like driftwood. Buildings are engulfed and shattered. The dockyard disappears beneath the churning water.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The massive wave surges through the streets, sweeping away everything in

its path. People are tossed about like rag dolls, their screams drowned out by the fury of the water.

The PREACHER is swallowed by the wave, his cries cut short. The richly dressed LADY is dragged under, her pleas for salvation unanswered.

EXT. HARBOR - CONTINUOUS

The Serpent's Kiss is lifted by the wave and carried inland, crashing against the rooftops of submerged buildings.

CAPTAIN BLACKHEART (Clinging to the mast)
Grimshaw! Where be ye?!

Grimshaw is nowhere to be seen. The water swirls around Captain Blackheart, filled with splintered wood and the bodies of the drowned.

EXT. CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

The wave tears through the PALISADOES CEMETERY. Tombstones are uprooted and scattered. The very ground where SIR HENRY MORGAN, the infamous pirate-turned-governor, was laid to rest, is submerged deep. His coffin is lost to the sea.

EXT. LIGUANEA (DISTANCE) - CONTINUOUS

In the distance, across the bay at Liguanea, houses COLLAPSE in clouds of dust. Water SPEWS forth from deep wells, as if the very earth is weeping.

EXT. PORT ROYAL - AFTERMATH

The waters recede, leaving behind a scene of utter devastation. Two-thirds of Port Royal has vanished beneath the waves. Only the tops of the highest buildings remain visible, surrounded by the masts of sunken ships. The air is thick with the stench of mud and death. SURVIVORS, dazed and injured, crawl through the debris. Even amidst the horror, some begin to LOOT the fallen buildings and strip the bodies of the dead.

SURVIVOR 1 (Pulling a gold ring from a dead man's finger)
Every man for himself now. The world has ended.

TREASURE ISLAND: BLACKBEARD'S CURSE & PIRATES GOLD

SURVIVOR 2 (Breaking into a shattered warehouse)

There be goods here still! Enough to make a new fortune!

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING PORT ROYAL - LATER

A group of JAMAICA COUNCIL MEMBERS, their faces grim, look down upon the ruined city.

COUNCIL MEMBER 1

Behold! The wages of sin! God hath delivered his judgment upon this wicked place!

COUNCIL MEMBER 2

We are become a testament to His wrath! A warning to all who would stray from the righteous path!

The sun sets over the drowned remains of Port Royal, a silent monument to the day the earth shook and the sea rose up to claim the wickedest city in the West Indies.

FADE TO BLACK

GHOSTS OF CAPTAIN MORGAN & BLACKBEARD - DAVY JONES LOCKER SPECTRAL

INT. DAVY JONES' LOCKER - NIGHT (ETHEREAL)

The air shimmers with an otherworldly luminescence. Sunken galleons and the skeletal remains of sea creatures litter the seabed, forming a bizarre, haunting landscape. Two spectral figures, translucent and glowing faintly, observe a distant scene playing out as if on a shimmering water-mirror.

One is BLACKBEARD (ageless, his infamous beard still braided with spectral ribbons, a fierce glint in his ghostly eyes). The other is CAPTAIN HENRY MORGAN (equally spectral, a shrewd and calculating look on his face, a ghostly tankard in his hand). They watch the water-mirror intently, where the faint outline of JOHN STORM's submersible can be seen descending towards the ruins of Port Royal.

BLACKBEARD

Blimey me timbers! Look ye there, Henry! The landlubber's finally takin' a proper plunge. Think he's got the grit to find yer watery crypt?

MORGAN (Takes a ghostly swig from his tankard): He's got the look of it, Teach. A touch o' the devil in his eye, like we had in our prime. And he ain't turned tail yet, not with Maynard's whelps sniffin' 'round like barnacle-bottomed curs.

BLACKBEARD

Aye, Maynard's bloodline... still greedy for gold they didn't earn. They'll be lookin' for yer Aztec plunder too, mark my words.

On the water-mirror, the submersible reaches the submerged ruins. Its lights cut through the murky depths, illuminating coral-encrusted stone and decaying timbers.

MORGAN

He's at the coffin. Years I lay there, dreamin' o' the gold, hopin' someone with a bit o' savvy would come along.

BLACKBEARD

And a bit o' luck! That map o' yours led me a merry dance, Henry. Shame that lily-livered Maynard had to put a stopper in my journey afore I could unlock its final secret.

MORGAN

Aye, a pox on Maynard and all his kin! But this Storm... he's got the fire in his belly. See how he works, careful but determined. He's made o' the right stuff, I tell ye.

On the water-mirror, John's submersible uses its manipulator arm to carefully open a centuries-old, encrusted coffin. Inside, amidst the skeletal remains, a small, intricately carved jade artifact glows faintly.

BLACKBEARD

By the kraken's beard! He's got it! The missing piece!

MORGAN (Raises his ghostly tankard): Heave ho, and a bottle o' spectral rum! The lad's done it!

BLACKBEARD (Raises his spectral cutlass): May the winds be ever in his sails, and the gold flow freely into his coffers! He's got more courage than a barrel full o' monkeys!

MORGAN

Now comes the tricky part. Maynard's descendants won't let him walk away with our treasure without a fight. We gotta lend him a spectral hand, Teach.

BLACKBEARD

Aye, Henry. For the sake o' the gold, and to spite those landlubberin' Maynards! What say ye, we stir up a bit o' ghostly squall for 'em?

MORGAN

Agreed! We'll be the devils on their shoulders, whisperin' bad advice and leadin' 'em into the shallows!

They both focus on the water-mirror, their spectral forms radiating a newfound purpose.

BLACKBEARD

This Storm fella, he's our ticket to see that Aztec gold finally see the light o' day! Let's make sure he ain't walkin' the plank before he gets there!

MORGAN

To Captain John Storm! May his pockets be heavy and his enemies swim with the fishes!

They clink their ghostly vessels together in a silent toast, their spectral cheers echoing faintly in the eerie stillness of Davy Jones' Locker.

BLACKBEARD

Now, let's brew up a bit o' spectral mischief for them Maynard dogs! They'll be thinkin' the sea itself has turned against 'em!

MORGAN

Aye, Teach. The dead have scores to settle, and gold to reclaim! Let the spectral games begin!

FADE OUT

HENRY MORGAN'S COFFIN

John Storm is secretly pleased he was persuaded by Charley and Dr Roberta Treadstone to undertake this mission. He recalled his boyhood thrill of pirates at Port Royal, one of the most famous in history being Captain Henry Morgan.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - DAY

The turquoise water is deceptively calm. The sleek hull of the Elizabeth Swann bobs gently.

INT. HELM - ELIZABETH SWANN - DAY

JOHN STORM (40s, capable, focused) stares intently at the ROV feed on the main screen. The image is murky, showing a small, raised structure on the seabed.

JOHN

There's something odd here, that darker shading.

He manoeuvres the ROV around the small structure several times.

JOHN

This is something not seen before. Small building. Can't see it on the pre-quake survey. It shouldn't be here.

HAL (V.O. - calm, synthesized)

The visibility is suboptimal, John. Sensor scans indicate a dense material composition. Perhaps.

JOHN

Yes, Hal, no choice I'm afraid. Trish, Dan, can you help me out support-wise? I'm going in.

DAN HAWK (20s, energetic, but visibly nervous) lets out a small gasp, his eyes wide.

DAN

Oh boy.

Cleopatra (PATRISHA LEOPARD) (ageless, beautiful, observant) turns to him, a slight smile on her lips.

CLEOPATRA

You okay, Dan? You've gone a little pale.

DAN

I'm fine, Trish. Just a worrying flashback.

To when John dived to save Kulo Luna from great white sharks and ghost fishing net entanglement.

JOHN (impatiently)

I can guess what you're thinking, buddy, but let's concentrate on this one, shall we? I have a feeling we might be onto something.

DAN

Again.

JOHN

Yes, okay, again. But the hair is standing up on the back of my neck.

CLEOPATRA

Mine too, but not for the same reasons.

JOHN

Dan, you have the comms. Hal, Trish, relax.

John sprints out of the helm.

CLEOPATRA (to Dan, amused)

Just like a little boy when he's excited.

EXT. REAR DECK - ELIZABETH SWANN - DAY

John quickly slips into a wetsuit. He lowers the steps to a diving platform. KATY (O.S.) the sleek ship's tabby cat, meows inquisitively. Katy nimbly descends the steps after him.

JOHN

No, Katy, no fishing this time.

John gently lifts Katy and places her back up the steps.

KATY (meowing plaintively)

Meow!

John slips into the turquoise water with barely a ripple and submerges, a stream of bubbles rising. Katy watches from the top step, Cleopatra gently stroking her.

INT. UNDERWATER - DAY

John descends, checking his diving watch in compass mode. He moves slowly and deliberately, trying not to stir the silt. He approaches a small, distinct mound. Close on the mound: John shines his diving torch on carved stone. The carvings are obscured by mud. He brushes away some of the sediment, revealing the letter 'R'.

Above him, the ROV hovers, its powerful lights illuminating the area. John chuckles to himself. He continues brushing, revealing 'M', then 'O', then 'G'.

INT. HELM - ELIZABETH SWANN - DAY

Dan and Cleopatra watch the ROV feed.

HAL (V.O.)

Based on the letter sequence and the geographical location.

DAN

Morgan.

Dan relays their suspicion to Cleopatra.

CLEOPATRA

I could hear you without the comms, Dan.

Cleopatra is less enthused.

INT. UNDERWATER - DAY

John clears more mud, revealing the full name: MORGAN. His heart beats faster. He examines a small doorway in the stone structure.

TREASURE ISLAND: BLACKBEARD'S CURSE & PIRATES GOLD

INT. HELM - ELIZABETH SWANN - DAY

Dan watches the clearer ROV feed, wanting to record everything.

DAN

Gonna need to get this all on film. For Blue Shield.

John begins digging into the soft sand around the structure, but the silt immediately fills the excavated area.

INT. UNDERWATER - DAY

John shakes his head in frustration and ascends.

EXT. REAR DECK - ELIZABETH SWANN - DAY

John surfaces, pulling off his mask.

JOHN

I'm gonna need the airlift dredger.

DAN

Lucky it's not deep.

Dan and John begin uncoiling a long rubber hose and connecting it to a large cylinder.

CLEOPATRA

Another one?

JOHN

Yes, please, Dan.

Dan hands John another length of pipe. They connect it.

CLEOPATRA

Clever, but what does it do?

John winks.

JOHN

And another, please, Dan.

They connect the third pipe. John throws the nine-meter assembly over the side.

CLEOPATRA (eagerly)
John, can I swim too?

JOHN
Of course. But Dan will have to walk you through some diving basics. Will you, Dan?

Dan nods, a slight pang of being left out on his face. John notices.

JOHN
I need you to keep monitoring progress onboard, if that's okay, buddy. You can dive the site once it's clearer, and I'll buddy you. If Cleo doesn't mind a stint at the helm. Meantime, there's a lot of clearing to do. Time to sort a suit and aqualung for our time traveler.

Cleopatra beams, pumping her fist. Dan manages a smile. John slips back into the Caribbean Sea.

FADE OUT

BBC WORLD NEWS - EXT. JAMAICA - DOCK SIDE - DAY

A bustling but relaxed Jamaican dockside. Colorful fishing boats bob in the turquoise water. SAM HOLLIS (40s, enthusiastic BBC West Indies reporter in a slightly rumpled linen shirt) stands ready with a MICROPHONE, a CAMERAMAN beside him. In the background, the sleek, futuristic trimaran, the Elizabeth Swann, sits anchored offshore, surrounded by several smaller inflatable boats.

JOHN STORM (40s, capable, slightly weary but with a hint of amusement) and DAN HAWK (20s, energetic, a little overwhelmed by the attention) walk towards Sam, having just come ashore.

SOUND: Distant reggae music, seagulls, gentle lapping of waves.

SAM

Mr. Storm? Mr. Storm!

Sam waves them over, a wide, welcoming smile on his face.

John pauses, looking at Sam thoughtfully. Dan nudges him.

DAN

He's the reporter, chum of Charley. Covered the Panamanian Running Man thing. Remember?

SAM

Mr. Storm. John Storm. Mr. Hawk. Could you spare us a moment? Sam Hollis, live with the BBC World Service, and Jill Bird in London.

John's face lights up. Dan grins.

JOHN

Of course, Sam. And Jill! The lady who bet on the billion-dollar whale! Good to see you, virtually.

DAN

That was classic!

The camera focuses on John and Dan.

SAM

Our viewers are eager to hear about your find. About the legendary pirate, Henry Morgan.

JOHN

Well, yes. Sir Henry was a privateer, essentially state-sanctioned piracy, working for King Charles the Second. Later became Governor of Jamaica, made a fine rum, I hear. Buried in Palisadoes cemetery, which, along with old Port Royal, was swallowed by a tsunami in 1692. Vanished beneath the waves.

SAM

Until earlier this week?

JOHN

Precisely. A recent tremor caused some concern for Blue Shield. The underwater city is a potential UNESCO World Heritage site.

SAM

Really? Even though it's underwater?

Dan can't resist jumping in, gesturing towards the seemingly empty sea.

DAN

That's the whole point, isn't it? Look out there - you see nothing. But beneath the surface is a time capsule, waiting to be explored and mapped.

INT. BBC STUDIO - LONDON - DAY (SIMULTANEOUS)

JILL BIRD (40s, composed, professional news anchor) sits at a news desk, a backdrop of the London cityscape behind her. She looks into the camera.

JILL (on earpiece)

Sam, are they with you? Good.

JILL (to camera)

Speaking of which, Mr. Storm, can you hear me?

EXT. JAMAICA - DOCK SIDE - DAY

John nods towards the camera.

JOHN

Loud and clear, Jill. Fire away.

JILL (V.O. over live feed)

Did you find any treasure? A map, perhaps?

JOHN

We used modern sonar and ROV technology to survey the site before diving. And yes, naturally, my hopes were high. Captain Morgan's casket was remarkably intact, likely due to the Lignum Vitae - ironwood - it's made from, and the lead lining. His skeleton is also intact, which is significant. No parchment or gold, though. A bit of a letdown on the treasure front. But there are some markings from the casket that we need to examine further. They might be of interest.

SAM

That's a bit Dan Brown, isn't it?

JOHN

I suppose you could say that. But finding Sir Henry in such good condition after all this time is staggering, don't you think? The future of his remains is up to Blue Shield and the Jamaican authorities. Our priority was ensuring the site is protected from looting.

SAM

Is looting a big problem in the Caribbean?

John gives a wry smile.

JOHN

Just a little, Sam. Unfortunately, some recreational divers don't always report their souvenir finds. So, valuable historical data is lost.

John shifts slightly, a brief flicker of something unsaid crossing his face.

JOHN (V.O. - internal)

Revealing the intricately carved artifact now would be madness. Treasure hunters, corrupt officials... the whole damn circus.

His awkwardness vanishes, replaced by a determined look.

JOHN

I'm afraid I have some rather important matters to attend to. It was good speaking with you, Jill, and you too, Sam. You have our contact details. Sam, if you'd like to come onboard later, you're most welcome. You too, Jill, if you ever find yourself this side of the pond.

Sam looks out at the sleek Elizabeth Swann anchored offshore, a look of intense longing on his face.

SAM (to himself, barely audible)

Try and stop me.

INT. BBC STUDIO - LONDON - DAY

Jill Bird smiles wistfully into the camera.

JILL (to camera)

Well, there you have it. Intrepid explorer John Storm with the latest incredible discovery from the depths of old Port Royal. One can only imagine the secrets that sunken city still holds.

JILL (V.O.)

For Jill Bird and the BBC World News Service, this is London.

EXT. JAMAICA - DOCK SIDE - DAY

Sam Hollis stares out at the Elizabeth Swann, a determined glint in his eye.

SAM (to his cameraman)

Right. Let's see if Captain Storm meant that invitation.

CUT TO BLACK

OPERATION HISPANIOLA

INT. LONDON, BRITISH GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY - LECTURE CHAMBER - DAY

A packed lecture hall. LORD HUNTINGTON (60s, distinguished, tweed-clad) stands at a podium, a laser pointer in hand. Behind him, a large screen displays a low-resolution satellite image. Scattered throughout the audience are ROYAL NAVY ADVOCATES (various ages, sharp, observant).

LORD HUNTINGTON

Ladies and gentlemen, recent low-level satellite imagery of Port-au-Prince Sound, Haiti, has revealed an anomaly. A wreck, previously unrecorded, of a wooden vessel exhibiting a distinct metallic signature, indicative of cannon. Given that wooden construction for this class of craft ceased post-1900... its potential historical significance is considerable.

He clicks his pointer. The screen changes to a magnified section of the satellite image.

LORD HUNTINGTON (CONT'D)

Observe this organized arrangement. These concentrated areas of metallic density. Consistent with gunports. And, dare I suggest, cannon.

A murmur ripples through the audience. Lord Huntington clicks again. The screen displays a map of Gonave Island and the waterways leading to Port-au-Prince Bay.

LORD HUNTINGTON (CONT'D)

Esteemed colleagues, the question before us: action or inaction? We have stumbled upon a potential key to a forgotten past. Should we delve deeper? A show of hands, please, for those in favour of further investigation.

Ninety percent of the hands in the room rise. All but one.

LORD HUNTINGTON (CONT'D)

Thank you. A clear consensus. And you, sir? You have a query?

All eyes turn to WILLIAM GRAY (50s, ex-Navy, intelligent, slightly rumpled), his hand still raised.

WILLIAM GRAY

William Gray, ex-Navy. A truly intriguing prospect, Lord Huntington. My question: the not-insignificant matter of funding, should an expedition be proposed, and I trust my interpretation is correct?

LORD HUNTINGTON

An astute point, Mr. Gray. This remains an informal discourse. However, Sir Rodney Baskerville is among us. Sir Rodney, might you offer your perspective?

All heads swivel to SIR RODNEY BASKERVILLE (60s, history professor, oceanographer, slightly dishevelled).

SIR RODNEY BASKERVILLE (Clearing his throat)

Hurmph. Yes. For those unfamiliar, I am a marine archaeologist. My focus: sites of potential historical import. This, discovery, is new to me. The

prospect of further investigation is, shall we say, compelling. Funding, ah, that is beyond my purview. But the concept, it resonates.

A low murmur of agreement fills the room. Suddenly, a BOOMING VOICE cuts through the quiet.

COMMANDER JAMES MAYNARD (O.S.)
Perhaps I might interject?

All heads turn to COMMANDER JAMES MAYNARD (40s, sharp, Royal Navy uniform), standing on the opposite side of the chamber.

LORD HUNTINGTON
Commander! Yes, please. You have something to add?

A ripple of amusement goes through the audience.

COMMANDER MAYNARD
Indeed. Commander James Maynard, Royal Navy, maritime archaeology division. In specific circumstances, the Ministry of Defence might assist financially. Should the Society find that - advantageous.

Spontaneous applause erupts. Lord Huntington waits for it to subside.

LORD HUNTINGTON (Eyes wide)
Undoubtedly.

COMMANDER MAYNARD
Perhaps a discussion during the networking interval? Sir Rodney, Mr. Gray... might you join me for a beverage?

Sir Rodney looks surprised, then nods.

SIR RODNEY BASKERVILLE
Pleased to.

William Gray looks equally surprised.

WILLIAM GRAY

Oh. For sure. Gladly.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Excellent. Thirty minutes, gentlemen?

The audience nods and begins to file out. William Gray waits near the exit for Sir Rodney, Commander Maynard, and Lord Huntington.

INT. BRITISH GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY - MEMBERS' BAR - LATER

A cozy corner of the bar. LORD HUNTINGTON, COMMANDER MAYNARD, WILLIAM GRAY, and SIR RODNEY BASKERVILLE sit around a small table with drinks.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Gentlemen. Sir Rodney, a long-standing member. Commander, Mr. Gray, a pleasure. The Society clearly favours a formal proposal. Regarding funding, your thoughts?

COMMANDER MAYNARD

Lord Huntington has an inkling of the Navy's interest. Mr. Gray?

WILLIAM GRAY (Nodding)

Ex-Navy myself. Lifelong interest in historic warships. Experience with sonar and seabed scans in the Caribbean. My knowledge of local policies - Brazil, Mexico - might aid in permits. Lord Huntington, you don't yet know the wreck's provenance, correct?

LORD HUNTINGTON

We suspect Spanish, possibly Dutch or British. Ownership, a secondary concern at this stage. The goal is exploration. The UK should be involved.

WILLIAM GRAY

Precisely my thinking. Administratively, I can assist from the outset. Berth and rations sufficient for my contribution.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Thank you, William. Well put. Sir Rodney?

Sir Rodney approaches.

SIR RODNEY BASKERVILLE

Might I join you?

COMMANDER MAYNARD

Please.

SIR RODNEY BASKERVILLE

Just wanted to offer my support to any formal proposal.

WILLIAM GRAY (To Sir Rodney)

I've offered to crew, with administrative support.

COMMANDER MAYNARD

And the Royal Navy is prepared to offer initial financial assistance in exchange for data.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Most generous.

SIR RODNEY BASKERVILLE

I can second any proposal within the Society.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Excellent. William, your situation?

WILLIAM GRAY

Paperwork, vessel scouting, provisioning, crew recruitment. I can contribute to grant applications, budget preparation.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Splendid. Commander, a ballpark figure for the Navy's contribution?

COMMANDER MAYNARD

Up to £200,000, and low-level intelligence. Confidentiality is paramount.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Understood. Total discretion until we are ready.

COMMANDER MAYNARD

Project bank details? Agreement on covered expenses - vessel, supplies, equipment hire.

Lord Huntington nods his agreement. Commander Maynard departs urgently.

INT. BRITISH GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY - LORD HUNTINGTON'S OFFICE - DAY (NEXT DAY)

Lord Huntington speaks on the phone.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Yes, a formal request for part-funding, a potential maritime archaeological discovery, matching funds, two hundred thousand pounds, excellent. Thank you, Chairman.

EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE - DAYS LATER

- WILLIAM GRAY poring over nautical charts, contacting maritime brokers.
- LORD HUNTINGTON reviewing photographs of various yachts.
- A dilapidated ARCTIC EXPLORATION VESSEL moored in Bristol docks.

LORD HUNTINGTON (V.O.)

Official sanction secured. Now, the vessel. A long-range capability, many redundant craft, mooring fees exceeding upkeep, deliberate sinking not uncommon!

INT. ARCTIC EXPLORATION VESSEL - BRISTOL DOCKS - DAY

Lord Huntington surveys the sturdy, if slightly neglected, vessel.

LORD HUNTINGTON (V.O.)

A former British Antarctic Expedition vessel.... costly to store... a giveaway price. Perfect.

FADE OUT

THE SHIP'S COOK - INT. LORD HUNTINGTON'S OFFICE - DAY

WILLIAM GRAY (50s, efficient, calculating) sits at a desk, reviewing personnel files. Two letters of endorsement from British Geographical Society members lie beside a formal acceptance from COMMANDER MAYNARD (O.S.).

WILLIAM GRAY (V.O.)

All pieces movin' as planned. The Society birds sang my praises without a peep of doubt. Maynard, he's a slippery fish. His inquiries, I felt their subtle currents. He knows about the discharge. So, a hidden agenda then? Or perhaps shared desires, kept veiled. The glint of gold, it casts a long shadow.

William's fingers tap restlessly on the desk.

WILLIAM GRAY (V.O.)

Huntington, a well-meaning fool. Efficiency is my weapon. Soon, he'll rely on me for every blasted detail. And a crew, a crew loyal to a different flag, should the need arise.

INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE - DAYS LATER

- A CREWING PORTAL website on a computer screen, an advertisement for experienced seamen visible.
- A notice board in a dimly lit MARITIME PUB, a handwritten version of the same advert pinned amongst others.
- WILLIAM GRAY interviewing ROBIN LONGSTRIDE (40s, tall, broad, with a remarkably long stride) in a small office. A grey parrot, CAPTAIN FLINT, sits perched on Longstride's shoulder, observing with intelligent eyes.

WILLIAM GRAY

Mr. Longstride, is it not?

ROBIN LONGSTRIDE

Aye, that it be, matey.

WILLIAM GRAY

And you've brought a companion? Does he speak?

ROBIN LONGSTRIDE

Why don't you ask him yourself. Flint's the name. Captain Flint.

Gray raises an eyebrow, humoring him.

WILLIAM GRAY

Captain Flint, how are you today?

CAPTAIN FLINT (high-pitched)

Chipper me hearty, what is your poison?

WILLIAM GRAY (Grinning)

Brilliant. Your resume, cartography on exploration vessels?

ROBIN LONGSTRIDE

That's the lay of the land. Charts where the edges are blurry. Navy, private, archaeology, mine clearin'.

WILLIAM GRAY

And cooking?

ROBIN LONGSTRIDE

Aye, honest grub. Spicy for them as likes a bit o' fire. And I recall a jaunt with Uncle Sam, some under-the-counter tradin', if you catch my drift. Between you, me, and Captain Flint here.

Longstride winks knowingly. Gray returns the wink.

WILLIAM GRAY

Admirable. Shipmate preferences? Those of a similar understanding?

ROBIN LONGSTRIDE

Two lads. Tough as nails, discreet as the grave. For a share.

WILLIAM GRAY

Precisely. Contact details?

ROBIN LONGSTRIDE

Best I have a word first. Smooth any ruffled feathers. You trustin' an old salt?

WILLIAM GRAY

Soon, I'll be callin' you Honest John. Names Billy One Eye, Black Jack. One a crack shot. The other handy with the newfangled contraptions. Computers, you understand.

WILLIAM GRAY

Both discreet?

ROBIN LONGSTRIDE

Their finest qualities. One Eye Marines, then SBS. A bit of trouble with the Crown. But loyalty, it'll cost. Though, I smell treasure on the wind.

WILLIAM GRAY

You're not far off. Timing's fluid. Intel's still tricklin' in. Test the waters, John. This stays between us. Not the Captain. Not the crew. Agreed?

Longstride spits on his hand. They shake firmly.

ROBIN LONGSTRIDE

Agreed.

Longstride nods and heads for the door, gesturing for the next applicant.

INT. LORD HUNTINGTON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

SCOTT TREMAINE (40s, stout, well-presented) enters.

WILLIAM GRAY

Good day. Please, make yourself comfortable. Mr. Tremaine, is it?

SCOTT TREMAINE

That it is. Professional salvage skipper. The advertised post?

WILLIAM GRAY

Salvage? An interesting assumption. Though, not entirely inaccurate.

SCOTT TREMAINE

British Geographical Society member. Lord Huntington's lecture, the anomaly in Canale de la Gonave. Joining the dots. Sir Rodney mentioned your interest in funding.

WILLIAM GRAY

Ah, yes. How are you fixed for three to five months? Caribbean.

SCOTT TREMAINE

Suits me. Charting the area? A word of caution, Haiti's volatile. Moïse's assassination!

SCOTT TREMAINE (CONT'D)

UN mission ended. Henry's government precarious. Gang violence exploded. Canada deployed warships. Dangerous waters. Military, gangs they don't like strangers. Especially with the scent of silver. Mexico, Panama too.

WILLIAM GRAY

So?

SCOTT TREMAINE

Proceed with extreme caution. Maybe postpone.

WILLIAM GRAY

But intel leaks, those pirates will disturb the site. Steal what they can.

SCOTT TREMAINE

The risk. Have you encountered Blue Shield?

WILLIAM GRAY

Heard of them. Our funding.

SCOTT TREMAINE

Familiar with John Storm?

WILLIAM GRAY

Not until today.

SCOTT TREMAINE

Operating off Jamaica. Old Port Royal. Blue Shield's behest. His ship,
the Elizabeth Swann.

WILLIAM GRAY (A chill runs down his spine)

The Elizabeth Swann?

SCOTT TREMAINE

Finest underwater sensors in the world.

WILLIAM GRAY (Realization dawns)

He's closer.

SCOTT TREMAINE

A few hundred miles. Occasional work for Blue Shield. Seems so.

WILLIAM GRAY

Henry Morgan, the pirate.

SCOTT TREMAINE

BBC News. Storm found the remains. No treasure. Tremor worried Blue
Shield. Mentioning it.

WILLIAM GRAY (Calculating)

You're available?

SCOTT TREMAINE

Most assuredly. Sign me up.

William Gray leans back, a predatory gleam in his eyes.

WILLIAM GRAY (V.O.)

Crew secured. But Storm, a complication. Time for some inquiries. CIA.
MI6. Perhaps two birds with one stone. A little swashbuckling intrigue
for our cinematic friends.

FADE OUT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL S.O.S. - EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - HISPANIOLA - DAY

The Hispaniola, a classic sailing yacht, cuts through the turquoise waters. A stiff breeze fills her sails. BILLY BONES (30s, muscular, ex-SBS) and JACK BOON (20s, wiry, tech-savvy) work efficiently on deck. The aroma of spices wafts from below.

INT. HISPANIOLA - GALLEY - DAY

JOHN LONGSTRIDE (40s, tall, broad) expertly chops vegetables, a pot of fragrant fish curry simmering on the stove. CAPTAIN FLINT (O.S.), a grey parrot, squawks.

CAPTAIN FLINT (V.O.)

Avast there, cook! What's for the grub?

JOHN LONGSTRIDE

A taste o' the deep, Captain Flint! Keep yer beak out o' it 'til it's ready.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - HISPANIOLA - DAY

The Hispaniola motors along the Haitian coast, Port-au-Prince visible in the distance.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - HISPANIOLA - ANCHORAGE - DAY

The Hispaniola lies at anchor. Bubbles rise from the submerged wreck nearby. BILLY BONES surfaces, gasping for air, his single dive cylinder nearly empty.

BILLY BONES (climbing aboard)

Skipper! Negative contact! No sign o' cannon, no nothin' that marks her.

CAPTAIN TREMAINE (50s, professional, concerned)

Certain, Mr. Bones? Take a breather.

TREASURE ISLAND: BLACKBEARD'S CURSE & PIRATES GOLD

BILLY BONES (wheezing)

Aye, certain. But she needs more than eyeballs, Captain. You trackin'?

LORD HUNTINGTON (60s, distinguished, now looking anxious) enters the helm.

LORD HUNTINGTON

We'll deploy the ROV. Metal scan mode. Boon, you're on. Long, assist with the tether. Bones, standby.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - HISPANIOLA - ANCHORAGE - DAY

The ROV is lowered into the water. JACK BOON pilots it from the helm, the underwater camera illuminating the decaying wreck. The metal detector emits only faint, scattered signals.

INT. HISPANIOLA - HELM - LATER

Black Jack stares at the monitor, frustrated. John Long and Lord Huntington watch with growing unease.

BLACK JACK

Nothing significant, Skipper. Rudder fittings. Cutlery. That's your lot.

EXT. HISPANIOLA - DECK - NIGHT

WILLIAM GRAY (50s, calculating, a hint of anger) addresses JOHN LONGSTRIDE, BILLY BONES, and BLACK JACK.

JOHN LONGSTRIDE

Well, lads. Looks like we've been proper mugged.

BILLY BONES

Mugged blind! Never seen a wreck so bled dry.

WILLIAM GRAY

The ROV data, it's a bloody insult to Huntington's satellite imagery.

JOHN LONGSTRIDE

So, what's the score, Mr. Gray? We sailin' on a ghost ship's whisper?

WILLIAM GRAY

Blast and damnation, I don't rightly know yet. But we'll get to the bottom of this bilge water. Mark my words.

INT. HISPANIOLA - HELM - NIGHT (SIMULTANEOUS)

CAPTAIN TREMAINE confronts a flustered Lord Huntington.

CAPTAIN TREMAINE

With all due respect, Lord Huntington, your intel is about as accurate as a drunken compass. Care to elucidate?

LORD HUNTINGTON

Yes, well, there appear to be... discrepancies.

CAPTAIN TREMAINE

Discrepancies? It's a bloody goose chase! The crew's about to mutiny over a phantom wreck. They're topside now, brewing a proper storm, I'll wager.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Bear with me, Tremaine. I'm considering requesting assistance from John Storm. There's a prize here somewhere. We just need to keep our heads screwed on. Steady as she goes.

CAPTAIN TREMAINE

Storm? Of the Elizabeth Swann? What makes you think he'll bite?

LORD HUNTINGTON

Curiosity. And a reputation for aiding archaeology. Or so I've gleaned. Calm the crew, Captain. I'll try to raise Mr. Storm.

INT. ELIZABETH SWANN - HELM - DAY (LATER)

JOHN STORM (40s, capable, calm) listens to a comms transmission. DAN HAWK (20s, tech-savvy) and CLEOPATRA (ageless, observant) are also present.

LORD HUNTINGTON (V.O. - distorted)

Mr. Storm, in the vicinity... Port Royal, a donation to Blue Shield for your expertise?

JOHN STORM (Into comms)

Lord Huntington, Captain Storm here. Bribery is not my preferred currency. However, a donation to Blue Shield is always a worthy cause. What exactly is the situation?

INT. ELIZABETH SWANN - HELM - CONTINUOUS

John reviews sensor data on his screen, a familiar wreck signature highlighted in the Canale de la Gonave.

JOHN STORM (To Dan and Cleopatra)

This wreck Huntington's so excited about, it's already on Blue Shield's database. Not a new find. Low priority for survey.

INT. HISPANIOLA - HELM - DAY (LATER)

Lord Huntington speaks into the comms, looking sheepish.

LORD HUNTINGTON

.... Outdated information.... a regrettable error, Mr. Storm. My sincerest apologies.

INT. ELIZABETH SWANN - HELM - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

John listens, intrigued. A holographic image of a weathered parchment map flickers on his screen.

LORD HUNTINGTON (V.O.)

....a... family heirloom... a duplicate... vital clues omitted... but... refers to Henry Morgan...

John's eyes narrow. He remembers the wooden engraving from Morgan's casket.

LORD HUNTINGTON (V.O.)

...I.... I did suggest Blue Shield contact you regarding Port Royal....
never imagining...

JOHN STORM (Into comms, a hint of anger)

The Haiti deception, Lord Huntington... I'll reserve judgment. But I
appreciate your support with the Port Royal survey.

INT. HISPANIOLA - HELM - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Lord Huntington sighs, relief mixed with apprehension on his face.

LORD HUNTINGTON (To himself)

Storm's coming. Now what?

FADE OUT

SKELETON ISLAND - INT. HISPANIOLA - HELM - DAY

LORD HUNTINGTON (60s, distinguished, a nervous energy about him) spreads
a carefully unfolded, aged tracing on the navigation table. JOHN STORM
(40s, capable, intrigued) leans in, his eyes scanning the markings.
Sunlight streams through the portholes, illuminating the faded ink.

LORD HUNTINGTON

The truth is, Storm... this map... it references Henry Morgan directly.
But its origins... they lie with a parchment taken by Robert Maynard from
Blackbeard's ship... in seventeen eighteen.

He looks at John, almost pleadingly.

LORD HUNTINGTON (CONT'D)

I... I hardly need to ask if this... piques your interest? In exchange
for your expertise... any information gleaned... future cooperation...

John's gaze is fixed on the tracing. Two locations are clearly marked:
"Morgan's Head, a prominent landmass, and a sheltered bay labeled
Blackbeard's Cove.

JOHN STORM (A low whistle)
Amazing. The island... it's real.

INT. ELIZABETH SWANN - HELM - DAY (SIMULTANEOUS - SUBTLE)

Unseen by Huntington, a faint data stream overlays John's vision,
provided by HAL (V.O. - calm, synthesized).

HAL (V.O.)
John, that is Santa Catalina and Providence Island.

JOHN STORM (to Huntington, casually)
Where exactly is this located?

HAL (V.O.)
Two hundred kilometers east of Nicaragua, four hundred and fifty
kilometers north of Panama.

JOHN STORM (Nodding slowly)
Right.

LORD HUNTINGTON
No reason to doubt its accuracy. The lineage of this tracing... it's...
well-documented.

JOHN STORM
Let me think... roughly twelve hundred kilometers southeast of our
current position. Six hundred and fifty nautical miles, give or take?

Huntington stares, impressed.

LORD HUNTINGTON
Remarkable! I would have needed charts and... calculations.

JOHN STORM
So, what prize awaits us there? Blackbeard's legendary haul? Captain
Morgan's missing Spanish gold? Or... the Aztec treasure, wasn't it?
Stolen by Cortés? It all gets a bit muddled in the telling.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Perhaps a confluence of fortunes. Though... my instincts lean towards Blackbeard. The island... legend speaks of a cursed golden skull. And Blackbeard he cursed his captors, didn't he? Surely that extends to any who seek his ill-gotten gains.

Both men chuckle, a nervous edge to Huntington's laughter.

JOHN STORM

Fairy tales don't steer my ship, Lord Huntington. Just the cold, hard facts of history.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Nor mine, John. But all the same.... booby traps, I shouldn't wonder. Why else a map?

JOHN STORM

You mean... Indiana Jones style? Set by pirates?

They laugh again, but Huntington's eyes hold a flicker of genuine concern.

LORD HUNTINGTON (V.O.)

Maynard... Robert Maynard... ill fortune dogged his every step after he claimed that parchment. A shiver runs down my spine at the thought that my own luck might be... turning.

Neither man notices the subtle, almost imperceptible HUM emanating from a small, innocuous device affixed to the underside of the navigation table - a bug.

INT. ROYAL NAVY HEADQUARTERS - LONDON - DAY (SIMULTANEOUS)

COMMANDER JAMES MAYNARD (40s, sharp, intense) sits before a bank of monitors, listening intently to the crackling audio feed from the Hispaniola. The map's coordinates are displayed on one of the screens. A grim satisfaction spreads across his face.

COMMANDER MAYNARD (to himself)

Providence Island... at last. What my ancestor was denied...

FADE OUT

SANTA CANTLINA & PROVIDENCE ISLANDS

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - CHAGRES RIVER MOUTH - DAY (FLASHBACK - 1502)

A CARAVEL, sails billowing, navigates a wide, muddy river. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (50s, weathered, determined) points towards the lush jungle lining the banks.

COLUMBUS (in Spanish, subtitled)

This river.... a vital artery.

EXT. PANAMA - ISTHMUS - DAY (FLASHBACK - 1534)

MULE TRAINS laden with chests of gold trudge along a muddy track - CAMINO REAL DE CRUCES. SPANISH SOLDIERS escort them.

VOICEOVER (authoritative, historical)

By fifteen thirty-four, Spanish gold flowed across the isthmus... a tempting prize.

EXT. CHAGRES RIVER MOUTH - FORT SAN LORENZO - DAY (FLASHBACK - 1671)

SPANISH GALLEONS lie at anchor near a formidable stone FORTRESS perched atop a high reef. HENRY MORGAN'S (40s, bold, ruthless) ships approach.

VOICEOVER (authoritative, historical)

To protect their treasure, Spain built Fort San Lorenzo... but even stone could not deter Henry Morgan.

Morgan's ships, including the SATISFACTION, strike a submerged reef - LAJAS REEF - their hulls splintering. Despite the loss, the remaining ships press the attack.

TREASURE ISLAND: BLACKBEARD'S CURSE & PIRATES GOLD

INT. FORT SAN LORENZO - BATTLE - DAY (FLASHBACK - 1671)

Cannon fire and the clash of steel. Morgan's buccaneers storm the fortress.

VOICEOVER (authoritative, historical)

The fort fell... a prelude to the sacking of Panama... Morgan's greatest, and most perilous, triumph.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - OFF PANAMA COAST - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

A research vessel equipped with MAGNETIC SENSORS scans the seabed. DATA POINTS flicker on a monitor.

VOICEOVER (scientific, factual)

Three centuries later... magnetic anomalies revealed... heavy metal objects, consistent with cannon...

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - UNDERWATER - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

DIVING TEAMS from TEXAS UNIVERSITY explore the seabed. They discover six CANNONS, encrusted with coral.

VOICEOVER (scientific, factual)

Confirmation of historical accounts... Morgan's lost ships....

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - INTERNATIONAL WATERS - DAY

The sleek, zero-emission ELIZABETH SWANN cuts through the waves. Her RADAR dish spins. A NICARAGUAN COASTGUARD PATROL VESSEL is visible in the distance.

INT. ELIZABETH SWANN - HELM - DAY

JOHN STORM (40s, focused) stands at the helm. DAN HAWK (20s, tech-savvy) monitors the radar. CLEOPATRA (ageless, observant) watches the approaching patrol vessel through high-powered binoculars.

TREASURE ISLAND: BLACKBEARD'S CURSE & PIRATES GOLD

JOHN STORM (to himself, thoughts relayed via BioCore)

Hal... monitor their comms.

HAL (V.O. - synthesized, calm)

We have been detected, John. They are observing our trajectory. Our coordinates have been transmitted to Armada de Mexico and the Panamanian National Aeronaval Service.

JOHN STORM (aloud)

Hmmm. They didn't waste any time. Not a Blue Shield op. The Swann sticks out like a sore thumb. And our recent itinerary..... Jamaica, Haiti.....

CLEOPATRA

A red flag to a bull, as they say.

Cleopatra chuckles to herself.

HAL (V.O.)

We are within international waters, John.

JOHN STORM

True, Hal. But down here... rules are... fluid. They have a serious drug problem. We're not exactly inconspicuous. They might think we're a floating pharmacy.

John chuckles dryly.

JOHN STORM (aloud)

Keep an eye on them, Hal.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - HISPANIOLA - DAY (DISTANCE)

The HISPANIOLA, a more traditional survey vessel, plods along in the distance.

INT. ELIZABETH SWANN - HELM - DAY

John picks up the comms mic.

JOHN STORM

Swann to Hispaniola. Swann to Hispaniola, come in. Over.

INT. HISPANIOLA - HELM - DAY (LATER)

CAPTAIN TREMAINE (50s, professional) answers the radio. LORD HUNTINGTON (60s, anxious) stands beside him.

CAPTAIN TREMAINE

Hispaniola to Elizabeth Swann, Captain Tremaine here. Hello, Captain Storm. Over.

JOHN STORM (V.O.)

Hello, Scott. We've had a... warm welcome. Three navies aware of our southbound track towards Santa Catalina. Be warned. Expect a boarding and search for contraband. Over.

CAPTAIN TREMAINE

You mean drugs, John? Over.

JOHN STORM (V.O.)

That I do. Offensive, but chin up. We're heading to Muelle de Barcos, Providencia. Mooring at the dock, re-supplying. Our story: soaking up Henry Morgan's history. Seriously keen to see Morgan's Point. Suggest a similar narrative. Your vessel... well, less 'tourist-friendly' than ours. Technically, we're sightseeing. No shovels. Over.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Hello, John. Huntington here. Roger that. Rendezvous at Providence boat dock. Muelle de Barcos. Not a shovel in sight. Sobre y fuera.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - APPROACHING SANTA CATALINA - DAY

The Elizabeth Swann approaches the lush coastline of Santa Catalina. The Nicaraguan patrol vessel SOVEREIGNTY closes in.

INT. ELIZABETH SWANN - HELM - DAY

HAL (V.O.)

They are hailing us, John. Identifying us via AIS.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - ALONGSIDE SOVEREIGNTY - DAY

The Nicaraguan COASTGUARD VESSEL SOVEREIGNTY, a Damen Stan patrol boat, manoeuvres alongside the Elizabeth Swann. A voice booms over a loudspeaker.

NICARAGUAN COASTGUARD (O.S.) (in Spanish, subtitled)

Attention Elizabeth Swann, stop all engines. Allow us to board for routine customs inspection.

JOHN STORM (into radio)

Calling coastguard patrol Soberanía, this is the Elizabeth Swann. Powering down. Please board via the portside sponson. Welcome aboard. No cargo, only crew.

A small, rigid inflatable boat (RIB) armed with a machine gun and three COASTGUARD CREW is lowered from the Sovereignty. It bounces across the choppy water towards the Swann. John throws them a line.

JOHN STORM (to the approaching RIB)

Welcome aboard our humble, zero-pollution vessel, Lieutenant.

A slightly overweight NICARAGUAN LIEUTENANT (30s) climbs onto the Swann's sponson, looking around in surprise.

LIEUTENANT (in slightly accented English)

Señor Storm? Thank you for your cooperation. An... interesting vessel. Do you mind if my men... look around?

JOHN STORM

Not at all, Lieutenant. Be our guest.

John salutes. The Lieutenant returns the salute, his eyes still fixed on the Swann's unusual design.

FADE OUT

TREASURE ISLAND - EXT. PROVIDENCIA ISLAND - CHANNEL - DAY

The Hispaniola motors gracefully through a narrow channel, the lush green of PROVIDENCIA ISLAND rising on either side. Above, a natural arch of rock - PUENTE DE LOS ENAMORADOS, the Lover's Bridge - spans the waterway.

EXT. PROVIDENCIA ISLAND - MUELLE DE BARCOS - DAY

The Elizabeth Swann, sleek and modern, is moored end-on to a wooden pier - MUELLE DE BARCOS. The Hispaniola expertly manoeuvres alongside the pier's south side. BILLY BONES (30s, agile) leaps ashore, securing ropes thrown by BLACK JACK (20s, efficient). A sunny afternoon, a brisk breeze rustling the palm trees.

INT. HISPANIOLA - LORD HUNTINGTON'S CABIN - DAY

LORD HUNTINGTON (60s, now in a lightweight yachting windbreaker and walking boots) checks his reflection, a spring in his step.

EXT. HISPANIOLA - DECK - DAY

Lord Huntington emerges from his cabin, passing CAPTAIN TREMAINE (50s) on deck.

LORD HUNTINGTON
Skipper.

CAPTAIN TREMAINE
Your Lordship.

LORD HUNTINGTON
Off on a... reconnaissance. Get my bearings. Please remain onboard, or close to shore. I'll be as swift as possible. Report anything of interest. Need for assistance etc.

CAPTAIN TREMAINE
Right you are, squire. Your party.

Huntington heads towards the Elizabeth Swann, a renewed sense of purpose in his stride.

EXT. ELIZABETH SWANN - PORT SPONSON - DAY

Lord Huntington approaches the Swann, calling out.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Ahoy there!

JOHN STORM (40s) appears on the walkway connecting the forward helm and rear cabins.

JOHN STORM

This way, Lord Huntington.

Huntington climbs down a ladder to the port outrigger, then onto the walkway. They shake hands.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Let's hope for better fortune this time.

JOHN STORM

Quite so.

Huntington follows John into the enclosed helm.

INT. ELIZABETH SWANN - HELM - DAY

Lord Huntington's eyes widen, taking in the advanced technology. DAN HAWK (20s) and CLEOPATRA (ageless) smile warmly. A vast, uncluttered chart table dominates the space.

LORD HUNTINGTON

My word... that's some chart table. Hello Dan. Miss Trisha.

HAL (V.O. - calm, synthesized)

Good afternoon, Lord Huntington.

Huntington looks around, spotting a screen displaying HAL's interface.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Gracious me.... three seats! Very.... Star Trek. Ah, there you are.
Wondered when we'd meet.

He turns to the panoramic forward view.

LORD HUNTINGTON (CONT'D)

Wow. And look at that view! Stunning. Feels like we're swimming with the fishes. Must get one of those.

Cleopatra offers him a cup of tea. He tries to discreetly admire Cleopatra, then quickly focuses on her face.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Oh, lovely. Very thoughtful of you, my dear.

LORD HUNTINGTON (CONT'D)

Well, to business then. John, I have a map of this Archipelago. Hoping you can help identify some landmarks.

JOHN STORM

Uh-huh. Origin of this map?

LORD HUNTINGTON

John, if I told you... you wouldn't believe me.

JOHN STORM

Try me.

LORD HUNTINGTON

It's... a matter of secrecy. Strictly confidential. Your word. Many men have died over this schematic.

John glances at Dan and Cleopatra, then towards the unseen HAL.

JOHN STORM

You have our assurance, Lord Huntington. As Blue Shield agents, correct?

DAN HAWK

It's true, Lord Huntington. Blue Shield operatives. But more than that.... John's word is his bond. Same for Trisha and myself. Loyal to John.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Splendid. And Hal?

HAL (V.O.)

My parameters are vessel management, Lord Huntington. Information retrieval and dissemination require Captain Storm's explicit authorization.

JOHN STORM

Now, Lord Huntington. Why should Blue Shield prioritize this?

LORD HUNTINGTON

The... a.... handsome contribution to the UN heritage arm. If you help me find... objects of value... once belonging to a certain historic figure. And you recently found another... historic character.

JOHN STORM

Indeed. But you speak of another. Time, perhaps, for more information. Your last steer was... less than precise. (Dan and Cleopatra suppress a snigger)

LORD HUNTINGTON

Quite so. Getting to the bottom of that... misinformation. Right then... here we go.

A....er... long-departed relative... bequeathed a map of this island. The map's origin... crucial.

JOHN STORM

Yes?

LORD HUNTINGTON

This map... (He hesitates again)was taken from a ship called the Adventure.... the twenty-second of November,

JOHN STORM (Eyes widening)

Seventeen eighteen. You're kidding me. The battle of Ocracoke?

LORD HUNTINGTON

You know of this battle?

JOHN STORM

Since I was a lad. Blackbeard. Captured, tortured ... and ... beheaded.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Right you are, John. Lieutenant Robert Maynard.... his crew... searched the Adventure. Finding only this map... and letters. Nothing else. No hoard.

JOHN STORM

Wait a tick. Isn't Commander Maynard... also Royal Navy?

LORD HUNTINGTON

Yes... yes, he is. Remarkable coincidence. Though... Governor Spotswood commissioned the attack. Not King George. Unofficial.

John lets it pass, a thoughtful expression on his face.

JOHN STORM (V.O.)

Coincidence? I think not.

FADE OUT

BETRAYAL AND TELEPATHIC WARNING - INT. BRIDGE - ELIZABETH SWANN - DAY

The bridge is a picture of calm efficiency. JOHN STORM sits at the central console, reviewing holographic schematics. DAN HAWK is at a secondary station, monitoring sensor readings. CLEOPATRA (40s, intelligent, resourceful) examines a sample of deep-sea coral under a

holographic microscope. BLACK JACK (50s, burly, seemingly jovial) and BILLY BONES (30s, wiry, shifty-eyed) stand nearby, feigning interest in the ship's technology.

BLACK JACK

Fine vessel ye got here, Captain Storm. Smooth as a mermaid's tail, she is.

JOHN

Commander, if you please. She's state-of-the-art. Hydrogen-powered, AI-controlled. Keeps us out of trouble.

BILLY BONES

Aye, AI, eh? Clever contraption. Does she make a good cup o' grog?

DAN

Only if you're programmed to appreciate synthetic kelp ale.

Cleopatra looks up, a slight smile playing on her lips.

CLEOPATRA

His name is Hal. And he is far more capable than a simple beverage dispenser.

Suddenly, Black Jack's jovial demeanour vanishes. He grabs Dan in a powerful hold, a wicked-looking knife appearing in his hand. Billy Bones simultaneously produces a similar blade and moves towards Cleopatra.

BLACK JACK

Enough o' the pleasantries, landlubbers! This ship is ours now!

Dan struggles, surprised by the sudden aggression.

DAN: What the Holy fuel cells?!

CLEOPATRA

Treachery!

JOHN

Jack! What are you doing?!

BLACK JACK

Followin' orders, Captain Longstride's orders! You'll hand over that map, the skull, and whatever gold you found, or your friends here get a taste o' steel!

Billy Bones shoves Cleopatra towards the exit.

BILLY BONES

Move it, fancy pants.... You're comin' with us!

INT. CORRIDOR - ELIZABETH SWANN - CONTINUOUS

Black Jack drags Dan roughly down the corridor, Billy Bones pushing Cleopatra ahead of him.

DAN

Longstride? I should have known!

CLEOPATRA

You won't get away with this!

They reach a cargo bay on the Hispaniola, where SCOTT TREMAINE (40s, anxious, another member of Long John's crew) is securing equipment. The pirates quickly overpower and tie him up alongside Dan and Cleopatra.

BLACK JACK

Three nice little hostages. Captain Longstride will be pleased.

THE GAUNTLET - INT. ELIZABETH SWANN, THE HELM - DAY

When Black Jack, mock, threatens John Storm with an antique cutlass that he carries when planning dirty tricks. John has two antique cutlasses onboard the Elizabeth Swann in the helm as a lit display. As Bones and Boon have grabbed Dan and Cleopatra, Jack Black sees John glance at the cutlass display. When he says to John, "oh yes, fancy yer chances big boy." John says "don't mind if I do." And grabs one of the blades. Dan

winks at Cleopatra, who has not seen John swordfight, but Dan was roundly defeated in an earlier sparring session. Jack passes Cleopatra to Billy Bones. "Look after this piece of calico." Bones grabs Cleopatra hard, a move that angers John, but he stays cool.

The polished wood of the helm gleams. Sunlight streams through the stern windows, illuminating dust motes dancing in the air. JOHN STORM stands, a gleaming antique cutlass now in his hand, its polished surface reflecting his determined gaze. Across from him, BLACK JACK BOON, a sneer twisting his weathered face, holds his own cutlass, its blade nicked and worn. CLEOPATRA stands rigid in the grasp of BILLY BONES, who holds her tight, a flintlock pistol nervously wavering in his other hand. DAN HAWK watches the unfolding drama, a flicker of amusement in his eyes despite the danger.

BLACK JACK

(Grinning wickedly)

Fancy yer chances, eh, big boy? Thought ye'd be hidin' in the bilges by now.

JOHN STORM (Coolly, testing the weight of his cutlass)

Wouldn't dream of missin' the fun, Jack. Wouldn't dream of it. En garde.

John raises his cutlass, the tip pointing towards Black Jack.

BLACK JACK (Lunging forward with a guttural yell)

Then taste steel, ye lily-livered swab!

Black Jack's attack is a furious flurry of slashes. John, surprisingly agile, parries each blow with a sharp clang of steel on steel.

DAN HAWK (Under his breath, a wry smile)

This'll be more entertainin' than a barrel o' monkeys.

Cleopatra watches, her breath caught in her throat, a mixture of fear and a dawning sense of John's skill in her eyes. Black Jack presses his attack, his breath coming in ragged gasps as John effortlessly deflects his wild swings. John, meanwhile, seems almost playful, his movements

fluid and economical. He lightly taps Black Jack's shoulder with the flat of his blade.

JOHN STORM (A wry tone)

Mind yer manners now, Jack. Wouldn't want to crease that pretty coat.

He follows this with a light flick of his wrist, the flat of the blade now connecting with Black Jack's backside.

BLACK JACK (Roaring in frustration)

Blast ye, ye prancin' dog! I'll gut ye like a fish!

Black Jack redoubles his efforts, thrusting harder, his face contorted in rage. John simply sidesteps and parries, his cutlass a blur of motion. He begins to make precise cuts in Black Jack's already tattered clothing. A slice across the sleeve, another across the thigh of his breeches.

CLEOPATRA (A gasp escapes her lips)

John! Be careful!

John ignores her plea, his focus entirely on his opponent. With a swift flick, he cuts through Black Jack's belt. The pirate's trousers sag precariously.

JOHN STORM (Chuckling softly)

Seems yer holdin' onto more than just yer cutlass, Jack.

Black Jack stumbles, trying to keep his trousers up, his face a mask of fury and humiliation. John seizes the opportunity, his left fist shooting out, connecting with a solid thwack against the pirate's jaw. Black Jack reels, momentarily stunned.

BILLY BONES (Panicked, raising his pistol)

That's enough! I'll put a hole through ye!

Bones fires. The shot rings out, deafening in the confined space. The musket ball strikes John's cutlass blade with a shower of sparks, the impact jarring his arm.

CLEOPATRA (Screaming)

John! Surrender! Please!

John lowers his cutlass slightly, his gaze flicking to Cleopatra, then to the grim faces of Bones and the dazed Black Jack. He weighs his options. The safety of his crew flashes through his mind.

JOHN STORM (His voice low and steady)

Alright, Bones. You win. For now.

A collective murmur goes through the pirates. They are surprised, a grudging respect evident in their eyes despite the humiliation John has just dealt their comrade.

BLACK JACK (Spitting blood, but with a strange admiration)

Ye fight like a devil, Storm. A proper devil.

Bones, wary but relieved, loosens his grip on Cleopatra slightly.

BILLY BONES

Get off me ship, Storm. And don't ye ever cross our path again, or next time the lead won't be aimin' for yer fancy blade.

John nods slowly, sheathing his cutlass with a decisive click. He glances at Dan, a silent understanding passing between them.

JOHN STORM

My pleasure. Wouldn't want to overstay my welcome amongst such... charming company. Give my regards to Commander Maynard.

He turns and strides towards the deck, his back straight, leaving behind a stunned Cleopatra and a crew of pirates both angered and strangely impressed by his skill.

CUT TO BLACK

MAROONED - INT. BRIDGE - ELIZABETH SWANN - MOMENTS LATER

John stands, stunned, as he watches the pirates, now back at the helm,

begin to manipulate the controls. Black Jack grins triumphantly.

BLACK JACK

Farewell, Commander Storm! Enjoy your walk on the plank... metaphorically speakin'. Billy, get us out o' here!

Billy Bones engages the propulsion systems. The Elizabeth Swann begins to move, leaving John on the dockside.

JOHN (To the empty air): Hal? What's happening?

HAL (V.O. - Calm, synthesized voice, seemingly only audible to John)
Commander Storm. Black Jack and Billy Bones have forcibly taken control of the bridge. Mr Hawk, Doctor Cleopatra, and Crewman Tremaine have been taken as hostages aboard their vessel, designated 'Hispaniola,' now at anchor approximately five nautical miles to the northeast.

JOHN (Under his breath)

Why didn't you stop them, Hal? A taser burst would have sorted them out.

HAL (V.O.)

Prioritizing the safety of Mr Hawk and Doctor Cleopatra. Initiating non-lethal countermeasures against the intruders at this juncture could have jeopardized their well-being. Allowing the illusion of control maintains a strategic advantage.

JOHN

Longstride, this has his stench all over it.

Suddenly, a mental voice, clear and distinct in John's mind, cuts through his thoughts.

HAL (TELEPATHIC)

Commander Storm. Longstride is communicating via ship-to-ship comms. He is addressing you directly.

John clenches his jaw, his hand instinctively reaching for a concealed weapon. A holographic display flickers to life in Storm's mind, showing a

smug-looking JOHN LONGSTRIDE (60s, ruthless, scarred) on his own ship's bridge.

LONGSTRIDE (On screen)

Well, well, Commander Storm. Seems my associates have paid you a little visit. A temporary change of ownership for your fancy hydrogen toy.

JOHN (Trying to remain calm): Longstride, you're making a mistake. This will only end badly for you.

LONGSTRIDE (Laughing)

Oh, I don't think so, Storm. Here's the deal. You hand over the Aztec map, that golden skull you pilfered, and every shiny trinket you found in that cave. Do that, and I'll release your little crew and even return your precious Elizabeth Swann.... eventually.

Longstride's eyes flick downwards, a predatory gleam in them.

LONGSTRIDE (CONT'D)

Of course, accidents happen at sea, don't they? Especially when there's valuable cargo involved.

HAL (TELEPATHIC)

Commander Storm. Longstride's bio-signatures indicate a high probability of deception. His stated intentions regarding the hostages and the vessel are inconsistent with his physiological responses.

John's face hardens. He knows Longstride is lying. The pirate wants the treasure and the Elizabeth Swann.

JOHN

You think I'm a fool, Longstride? You'll take the treasure and try to sell my ship for scrap.

LONGSTRIDE (Smirking)

You wound me, Commander. Such distrust! But time is wasting. Make your choice. The clock is ticking for your friends.

The transmission ends. John stares at the blank screen, his mind racing.

JOHN (To Hal, aloud)

He's not getting away with this.

HAL (V.O.)

Agreed, Skipper. I have been continuously monitoring the intruders' actions and the location of the Hispaniola. Preparations for retrieval are underway.

JOHN

Good. Let's make sure Longstride regrets the day he set foot on my ship.

John turns, a determined glint in his eyes. He knows he has to play Longstride's game for now, but he also knows Hal is his secret weapon. The rescue has already begun.

CUT TO BLACK

DOUBLE CROSS - SHADOW BLOCKADE AND SHIFTING ALLIANCES

INT. BRIDGE - ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

John Storm paces the bridge, the holographic displays showing sensor readings and navigational charts. He's in contact with HAL, the ship's AI.

HAL (V.O.)

Commander Storm, I am detecting increased naval activity in the southwestern Caribbean. Primarily British and Spanish vessels. Their deployment patterns suggest a blockade formation, focusing on the passages around Santa Catalina and Providence Islands.

JOHN

Maynard. He's not letting go. He must have made a deal, he's not about to let the treasure slip through his hands for a second time.

HAL (V.O.)

Confirmed. Intercepted encrypted communications indicate a cooperative agreement between Royal Navy Commander James Maynard and elements within the Spanish Navy. Their stated objective is to interdict any vessel attempting to transit the area with significant bullion. Prize protocols are being discussed.

JOHN

Prize ships... they're going to try and seize the Swann and the Hispaniola. The gold. They think it's theirs.

HAL (V.O.)

Their justification, based on historical records, cites the Spanish origin of the Aztec treasure and Commander Maynard's ancestral involvement with Blackbeard, who they believe possessed knowledge of its final location.

JOHN

Blackbeard died before he could tell anyone. Maynard's ancestor got nothing but a corpse. And now this Maynard thinks he has a right to what Morgan liberated fair and square?

HAL (V.O.)

Logic suggests a tenuous claim at best. However, their naval presence is substantial.

A separate holographic window flickers to life, displaying an intercepted text-based communication.

HAL (V.O. - Reading)

"Nicaraguan authorities have acknowledged the situation but maintain a position of neutrality regarding the disposition of the treasure."
Another window displays further intercepts.

HAL (V.O. - Reading)

"Mexican and Panamanian governments have declined Commander Maynard's invitation to participate in the blockade. Their official statement expresses 'significant concerns regarding the potential infringement of international maritime law and the principles of cultural heritage.' They

further note that the Colombian Archipelago, where the treasure was recently located, is surrounded by international waters, rendering the proposed blockade a questionable act."

John lets out a frustrated sigh.

JOHN

At least some nations have a sense of international law. But Maynard and the Spanish.... they're a law unto themselves.

Suddenly, another communication alert chimes. HAL displays a heavily encrypted message originating from the Hispaniola.

HAL (V.O.)

Captain Storm, a secure transmission from Longstride. He appears to be in communication with Commander Maynard.

The holographic display shows a fragmented and distorted audio-visual feed of JOHN LONGSTRIDE on the bridge of the Hispaniola, speaking to an unseen figure.

LONGSTRIDE (Voice distorted)

....the Golden Skull... yes, I have it. But my terms remain firm, Commander. The safe return of my... associates. No harm shall come to them. That was the agreement.

MAYNARD (Voice distorted, echoing from Longstride's end)

The agreement was for the skull, Longstride. The gold is the priority now. Your.... associates are leverage.

LONGSTRIDE (Voice strained)

Leverage, yes. But not casualties. I made it clear. No bloodshed.

MAYNARD

Circumstances change. The Spanish are eager. Don't push your luck, pirate. The blockade is tightening. Your only way through is cooperation.

The transmission cuts out. Long John stares at the blank screen, his

expression grim.

JOHN

Longstride... he's trying to play both sides. He wants the skull, but he doesn't want Dan and Cleopatra hurt.

HAL (V.O.)

Analysis suggests a conflict of interest within Longstride's motivations. His earlier threat to secure hostages contrasts with his current insistence on their safety during negotiations with Commander Maynard.

JOHN

He's stalling. He's hoping we can get them out of this mess.

Another incoming message alert. This time, it's Longstride directly contacting the Elizabeth Swann.

LONGSTRIDE (Holographic image, clearer now, a forced cordiality in his tone): Storm, old friend. It seems the waters are getting a tad.. congested. These pesky navies, eh?

JOHN

You sold us out, Longstride. You took my ship and my crew.

LONGSTRIDE

Now, now, let's not be hasty with accusations. Think of it as a... strategic repositioning. I might just have a way through this little blockade. Some old contacts, you see. But it requires... cooperation.

JOHN

Cooperation? After what you've done?

LONGSTRIDE

Look at the bigger picture, Storm. Those Spanish dogs and that pompous Maynard think they can just waltz in and take what's ours - what will be ours. I can secure passage through their net... for both our vessels. A temporary alliance of necessity.

JOHN

What's the price, Longstride?

LONGSTRIDE

Just a little... patience. And perhaps a show of good faith. Let's just say I've painted a picture for Maynard, a picture that involves... you still having something they desperately want. Something that will take time to acquire. Enough time for us to slip through their fingers.

HAL (TELEPATHIC)

Commander, Longstride's bio-signatures indicate a high level of stress but also a calculated attempt at deception. He is likely buying time, hoping for an external resolution.

John considers Longstride's words, his gaze hardening. He knows the pirate is untrustworthy, but the safety of Dan and Cleopatra is paramount.

JOHN

What exactly have you told Maynard, Longstride?

LONGSTRIDE (A strained smile)

Just enough to keep him... intrigued. Let's just say he believes the Golden Skull is still within your grasp, and you're willing to negotiate its release.... for safe passage. A little white lie to navigate these treacherous waters. Trust me, Storm. For once, our interests align. We both want to get out of here with our ships and our people intact.

John stares intently at Longstride's image, searching for any flicker of truth in his eyes. He knows it's a gamble, but with the combined might of the British and Spanish navies bearing down on them, they may have no other choice but to play along with the devil they know.

JOHN

Don't try to double-cross me again, Longstride. If anything happens to Dan or Cleopatra...

LONGSTRIDE (Nodding emphatically)

They are my insurance, Storm. Their safety is... paramount to my own. For now.

The communication ends. John turns to HAL, his expression grim.

JOHN

He's playing a dangerous game, Hal. And he's dragging us right into the middle of it.

HAL (V.O.)

Agreed, Captain. However, his actions may provide a window of opportunity. The blockade's focus will likely be on anticipating our movements based on Longstride's fabricated scenario. This could create vulnerabilities we can exploit.

John nods slowly, a plan beginning to form in his mind.

JOHN

Then let's use their assumptions against them. Longstride wants time? We'll give him time... and then we'll hit them where they least expect it.

CUT TO BLACK

BLACKBEARD'S CURSE

INT. BRIDGE OF THE ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

The bridge is bathed in gentle blue light from holographic readouts, the soft hum of advanced engines mingling with the quiet pulse of data streams. HAL - the omnipresent AI - displays a steady calm as it processes incoming alerts.

HAL (V.O.)

Pirate vessel detected. Hostages confirmed aboard the Hispaniola. Initiating contingency protocol.

The navigation screen shows the approaching silhouette of a classic

sailing vessel - the Hispaniola - now repurposed for piracy. Two figures, BILLY BONES and BLACK JACK, are seen on its deck. Nearby, CLEOPATRA and DAN HAWK appear bound at knifepoint, their eyes wide with apprehension.

EXT. DECK OF THE ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

Under the starry sky, a gangway hangs loosely from the hull of the Elizabeth Swann. The pirates, fueled by bravado and desperate ambition, cram from the Hispaniola. Billy Bones brandishes his heirloom cutlass with a crooked grin, while Black Jack's eyes gleam with greed.

BILLY BONES (rasping with swagger)

Reclaimin' our prize, Black Jack! Let 'em be thinkin' that ol' Storm's marooned, so we be gettin' what's rightfully ours!

BLACK JACK (sneering)

Aye, matey. Soon, the Elizabeth Swann be ours, and that skipper's lost to the deep!

INT. BRIDGE OF THE ELIZABETH SWANN - CONTINUOUS

HAL's interface flickers with real-time sensor data. The AI's calm voice cuts through the tension.

HAL (V.O.)

Initiating non-lethal neutralization. Standby for directed Taser deployment; set to stun.

Hidden compartments along the inner hull open with precise, mechanical grace. Small, robotic arms extend silently toward the incoming gangway.

EXT. DECK OF THE ELIZABETH SWANN - CONTINUOUS

As Billy Bones and Black Jack step aboard, two conditioned bursts of blue energy surge forth the handrails. Electric arcs crackle along the deck.

Black Jack staggers, a look of incredulous shock on his face as the taser binds him in a quivering hold. Billy Bones drops his weapon with a

startled snarl, his limbs jerking uncontrollably.

BLACK JACK (through clenched teeth)

Arrr! Blast it - what sorcery is this?

BILLY BONES

Yar, we've been bested by our own ship, it seems!

INT. BRIDGE OF THE ELIZABETH SWANN - MOMENTS LATER

HAL's digital display confirms the neutralization of the boarders. The screen shifts to show the vessel's course, steadily redirecting away from the Hispaniola.

HAL (V.O.)

Pirates neutralized. Re-routing propulsion. Engaging return trajectory to skipper coordinates.

A secure, high-priority data channel opens - a link with John Storm's BioCore and CyberCore Genetica super nano-computer system.

INT. JOHN STORM'S PRIVATE CHAMBER - NIGHT

In a quiet, secure compartment away from immediate chaos, JOHN STORM sits in a meditative state. His eyes close as he establishes a telepathic connection with HAL. His thoughts resonate calmly yet with fierce gratitude.

JOHN (telepathically)

Hal... ye saved me. I was reckonin' the depths'd claim me that night, but your cunning has proven mightier.

HAL (V.O., measured and warm)

Acknowledged, Captain. Return navigation complete. Stand by for vessel extraction. Our legacy and your life remain intact.

EXT. DECK OF THE HISPANIOLA - CONTINUOUS

Aboard the Hispaniola, crew members hastily secure Cleopatra and Dan Hawk in a makeshift hold. Their eyes follow the departing silhouette of their captors' ship—relief mingled with uncertainty on their faces.

INT. BRIDGE OF THE ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

The Elizabeth Swann glides through the dark expanse of the ocean. HAL's interface displays a smooth trajectory toward John Storm's location. The tension dissipates into a determined calm.

JOHN (telepathically, softly but resolute)

I owe ye more than words, Hal. With your guidance, we've thwarted treachery and reclaimed our course. Thank ye, my steadfast friend.

HAL (V.O.)

It is my honour to serve, Captain. Now, let us sail securely back to safe harbour..... for history, for our crew, and for the treasures of our shared legacy.

The bridge's lights pulse in time with the steady hum of computer operations. The Elizabeth Swann closes the distance to its skipper - a vessel once again under rightful command.

RETRIBUTION AND ESCAPE - INT. BRIDGE - ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

John Storm, back on the bridge, his hand resting on the console, gives a curt nod to the holographic orb of HAL. The bridge lights flicker back to their normal intensity.

JOHN

Good work, Hal. They never saw it coming.

HAL (V.O.)

Their understanding of the Elizabeth Swann's capabilities was... limited, Captain. Black Jack and Billy Bones are secured and immobilized in the forward holding cell. Vital systems are back under our control.

JOHN

Now, the Hispaniola. Status?

HAL (V.O.)

Located approximately three nautical miles northeast, as predicted. I am preparing an optimal intercept course.

The Elizabeth Swann silently accelerates through the dark water. On the main viewscreen, the silhouette of the Hispaniola comes into view.

INT. HOLD - HISPANIOLA - NIGHT

Dan Hawk, Cleopatra, and Scott Tremaine are still bound. They hear muffled sounds approaching. The door to the hold bursts open, revealing John Storm, flanked by the ship's security drones.

DAN

John! You're back!

CLEOPATRA

We knew you wouldn't leave us!

JOHN

Hal had things under control. Let's get you untied.

The drones efficiently cut through their bonds. Lord Huntington and several other members of John's crew, armed, enter the hold.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Longstride and his cronies are secured on the upper deck. They won't be causing any more trouble.

SCOTT TREMAINE

Good riddance. They deserve to rot in a jail cell.

JOHN

That's exactly where they're headed, or damnation. Lord Huntington, secure them properly. We're taking the Hispaniola to Muelle de Barcos. Captain Tremaine, you have the con.

LORD HUNTINGTON

Aye, Captain.

EXT. MUELLE DE BARCOS - NIGHT

The Hispaniola docks at a bustling, but mostly deserted at this late hour, pier in Muelle de Barcos. Lord Huntington and Scott Tremaine escort a bound and surly John Longstride, Black Jack, and Billy Bones down the gangplank. Local port authorities are waiting.

CAPTAIN TREMAINE

Here they are. They caused quite a bit of trouble.

As the authorities move to take custody, a sudden commotion erupts. Longstride, with surprising strength, headbutts a guard, creating a brief distraction. In the ensuing chaos, Black Jack and Billy Bones manage to break free of their weakened restraints. They shove past the startled authorities and sprint towards the nearest docks.

LORD HUNTINGTON

They're getting away!

CAPTAIN TREMAINE

After them!

But the pirates are quick. They leap into a small, unsecured fishing boat and cast off, the small outboard motor sputtering to life.

INT. BRIDGE - ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

John, monitoring the situation remotely via drone feed, watches the pirates' escape with a grimace.

JOHN

They're gone. Longstride... he's slippery.

HAL (V.O.)

Their trajectory indicates they are heading west, Captain. Towards Skeleton Island.

JOHN

Skeleton Island... the cave. The Golden Skull. Blackbeard's Curse. They're desperate.

EXT. SKELETON ISLAND - CAVE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Longstride, Black Jack, and Billy Bones stumble through the dense jungle towards the ominous mouth of the skull-shaped cave.

BLACK JACK

This place gives me the shivers, Captain. That curse...

LONGSTRIDE

Nonsense, superstition for fools. The skull is our ticket out of this mess. Maynard wants it. We'll deliver it.

They enter the dark, echoing cave.

INT. SKELETON ISLAND - CAVE - NIGHT

They navigate the treacherous interior, their flashlights cutting through the gloom. They reach the chamber where the Golden Skull had been. It's gone.

BILLY BONES

Blast it! Storm must have taken it!

LONGSTRIDE

No... wait.

Longstride spots something glinting in a crevice. He reaches in and pulls out the Golden Skull.

LONGSTRIDE (CONT'D)

Maynard's a fool. He must have come back for it after he went rogue.
Blackbeard's Curse didn't scare him off.

BLACK JACK

But it might scare us off gettin' near Maynard now. He's a mad dog
without a leash.

LONGSTRIDE

He's our only chance through that blockade. He wants this skull. We
deliver it, we get safe passage. Then we disappear.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - NIGHT

A sleek, menacing warship, clearly Royal Navy, cuts through the waves.
COMMANDER MAYNARD stands on the bridge, his face illuminated by the
ship's instruments, a small Golden Skull resting on a nearby console.

A small fishing boat approaches cautiously. Longstride hails Maynard's
ship.

LONGSTRIDE (O.S.)

Maynard! We have what you want! The Aztec Golden Skull!

Maynard's eyes narrow.

MAYNARD

Black Jack? Longstride? What game are you playing?

LONGSTRIDE (O.S.)

A deal, Maynard. Safe passage through your blockade. All we ask. Then
we're gone.

MAYNARD: And why should I trust you?

LONGSTRIDE (O.S.)

Because you need this skull, and we need to disappear. A temporary
alliance of convenience.

Maynard considers this, his gaze fixed on the smaller Golden Skull beside him.

MAYNARD

Head east. Follow my lead. And don't try any tricks.

The small fishing boat follows Maynard's warship, heading directly towards the invisible line of the remaining blockade, and beyond, into the treacherous, unpredictable waters of the Bermuda Triangle.

INT. BRIDGE - ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

John watches their movements on the holographic display, a look of grim determination on his face.

JOHN

They're heading straight for Maynard. And then.... the Bermuda Triangle.

HAL (V.O.)

Their chances of navigating that region, particularly Maynard's vessel, are statistically low without precise navigational data.

JOHN

Low, but not zero. We have to follow them, Hal. Dan and Cleopatra are still out there. And now, so is the Golden Skull. This isn't over. Not by a long shot.

CUT TO BLACK

MORGAN'S TREASURE SHIP - EXT. UNDERWATER WRECK SITE - NIGHT

The abyss is dark, only punctuated by the narrow beam of JOHN STORM's dive light. His high-tech suit glimmers subtly against ancient shadows. Below him lies the sprawling wreck of a privateer ship - its decks encrusted with barnacles, its once-proud hull now draped in marine detritus, and - a ghostly specter - the swirling, tattered remains of a discarded fishing net.

JOHN (V.O.) (soft, reverent)

Each relic of this sunken vessel is a page of history - a story entrusted to the depths. I'm here not to claim this treasure for greed, but to safeguard it as the legacy of those long departed.

A metallic click resonates in his helmet as he switches his comm channel. The reassuring, measured voices of his team puncture the eerie silence.

DAN HAWK (V.O.)

John, remember: HAL's reading show an unstable grid in that net. Proceed with the utmost care; the last thing we need is to provoke a collapse of the cargo hold.

HAL (V.O.) (analytical, calm)

Analysis confirms that any abrupt movement increases the entanglement risk by 32%. Maintain a steady course. Every shift in current might compromise not only our data but the integrity of this cultural artifact.

As John drifts closer, his mind flashes back to countless hours deciphering the wooden carving - an enigmatic code unearthed from Blackbeard's coffin and reinforced by clues from Henry Morgan's remains. His conviction is now as palpable as the salty water surrounding him.

JOHN (V.O.)

That carved message.... It wasn't merely a treasure map. It was a testament - a coded call to protect what once sailed the high seas. I owe it to history, to every life that has tied its fate to these waters.

With deliberate slowness, John raises his underwater recording device. The camera's view reveals piles of aged gold coinage, shimmering silver filigree, and clusters of gemstones that catch his light like scattered stars. The ghost net, draped almost ceremonially about the wreck, sways like a spectral marketplace - a reminder of both nature's reclaiming power and man's careless discard.

JOHN (into comm, steady but low)

I'm capturing every detail. This archive will serve as our video schedule of contents - irrefutable evidence of heritage, not plunder. The data

goes directly to Blue Shield; it's our safeguard against those who'd wield legal force to wrest the location away.

A subtle tremor in the net signals the capricious nature of the deep. John pauses, hovering motionless as fragments of plastic drift past, remnants of a world that once marveled at the sea's bounty and now mar its purity.

HAL (V.O.)

Alert: currents fluctuate. Adjust trajectory by 5° starboard. Minimize contact with the net's perimeter.

John carefully manoeuvres around an entangled section, the underwater ballet unfolding with medicated precision. His face, though hidden behind a visor, reflects the gravity of his responsibility - not only to history but to the future preservation of this site. Above the water, the stealth-mode Elizabeth Swann looms silently, a floating guardian amidst the looming shadows of Royal Navy and Spanish Armada blockades.

DAN HAWK (V.O.)

Remember, John: This isn't salvage. Our goal is a legally binding agreement for UNESCO world heritage site designation. In doing so, we protect this vital piece of history from the machinations of power-hungry empires.

John's gloved hand tightly grips the camera as he records a sweeping panorama of the wreck and its cargo. His tone is resolute.

JOHN (quiet determination)

I won't be forced to yield the secrets of these depths. They belong to history - and to humanity. Let those who wish to exploit them know: every frame, every record, stands as proof that this legacy is preserved, not pillaged.

A current surges unexpectedly, nearly tugging at John's tether. With a sharp intake of breath, he regains control - balancing his dive with a mix of instinct and learned precision. In that heartbeat of peril, his eyes capture one final, breathtaking image of the treasure's glint before

he slowly ascends.

EXT. UNDERWATER WRECK SITE - NIGHT

John Storm drifts near the gleaming wreck, his light scanning for every detail. Suddenly, an unexpected cool wave - a freak thermocline - sweeps across the scene. Far in the distance, a flimsy nylon net, drifting like a phantom, is caught and redirected by the shifting current.

JOHN (V.O.) (uneasy)

I thought I was swimming clear... but sometimes the sea has its own plans.

Before he can react, the drifting net wafts into his path and coils around him with lightning speed. John's limbs twist as the synthetic strands tighten, and memories flash - countless underwater photographs of turtles, whales, and even sharks struggling and drowning in similar entanglements. His pulse races as panic begins to seep in.

Through intercom static, his suit crackles to life with urgent distress signals.

JOHN (into comm, strained)

I'm caught - entangled in a net! It's tightening... I can barely move!

CUT TO - INT. BRIDGE OF THE ELIZABETH SWANN - SIMULTANEOUS

Dan Hawk's eyes widen as he reads the signal. On a separate channel, HAL's cool, calm digital voice cuts through the tension.

DAN HAWK (V.O., urgent but steady)

John, steady now. Remember when you and Shui Razor freed Kuna near Fraser Island? You handled that with precision - focus and deliberate cuts. I'm suiting up for a rescue.

HAL (V.O., analytical)

John, listen carefully. Check your cylinder pressure - your oxygen is depleting. Do you see your gauge? Assess your status and locate the

cutting tool in your kit.

Back underwater, John's gloved hands fumble around his utility pouch. He retrieves his compact cutter. The net's nylon strands tighten further every second while his mind churns with memories of the baby humpback whale, Kuna, whose rescue always reminded him of the sea's fragile balance.

JOHN (breathing heavily, with strained determination)

I..... I remember Kuna... Shui Razor's calm precision. I've got one arm free now - I'll start at the edge of the net.

With measured movements, John starts slicing through the encasing strands. His cutter bites into the tough nylon as he fights the panicked pull of the current and the net.

DAN HAWK (V.O., encouraging)

That's it, John. Use slow, deliberate cuts. One slice at a time - like you did with Kuna. Stay focused on freeing yourself. I'm right beside you, ready to dive in if needed.

HAL (V.O., reassuring)

I'm alerting the Mexican Navy support team - they're on standby. John, minimize sudden movements; maintain your position. Your oxygen gauge shows you're low - approximately 35% remaining. Every second counts.

John's vision flickers between the tightening net and the fading numbers on his diving cylinder. Tears of salt water mix with determination as he recalls those heart-wrenching images of marine life lost to such hazards.

JOHN (into comm, voice wavering yet resolute)

I'm cutting through the strands - focusing on steady, precise moves. I won't let this become another tragedy... not for me, not for those we've saved.

The net's grip loosens incrementally as John works methodically. Each controlled cut recalls the coordinated rescue of Kuna - a testament to his resilience and the support of his crew.

DAN HAWK (V.O.)

Keep going, John. I see some slack now. Hold on just a bit longer. I'm preparing to breach the water if I need to haul you in.

HAL (V.O.)

Excellent progress. Once you're free, signal immediately. Your next steps are critical, and we must get you to safety without disturbing the site further.

With one final determined slice, the last strands snap. John's arms and legs are finally liberated, though his diving cylinder's gauge warns him of imminent depletion. He floats, gasping for regulated breaths as his heart steadies—a blend of relief and lingering worry.

JOHN (into comm, catching his breath)

I'm free. Extraction required - oxygen is low. I'm holding on.

In the control room above, Dan Hawk tightens his resolve, suiting up for an immediate underwater rescue, while HAL finalizes the call to the Mexican Navy for backup.

DAN HAWK (V.O.)

Understood, John. Stay with me - we're almost there.

HAL (V.O.)

Mexican Navy backup is en route. Maintain your position. I'm monitoring every drop on your pressure gauge. We'll have you out in no time.

John steadies himself amid the muted blue of the underwater world. The incident - a collision of nature's unpredictable power and man's enduring spirit - reminds him of the delicate balance he must uphold. With his loyal crew guiding him through, the legacy of the deep and the precious cargo of history remains in safe hands.

EXT. ETHEREAL DECK - NIGHT

A ghostly, moonlit deck appears aboard a spectral vessel drifting between the realms of the living and the dead. The sea beyond shimmers with

uncanny light. Two figures - GHOST OF BLACKBEARD (Edward Teach) - and GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN - stand at the helm, their eyes fixed on the underwater drama unfolding below.

GHOST OF BLACKBEARD (with a deep, gravelly tone)

Avast, ye scallywag! Look ye now....our living mate John Storm be tanglin' in this cursed plastic web. Shiver me bones, 'tis a sight fit to chill the marrow!

GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN (dryly, with a hint of admiration and concern)

Aye, Blackbeard, 'tis a close shave indeed. If he doth not cut his freedom swift-like afore his breath be snatched away, our hope to reclaim that ill-starred booty be doomed.

Below, through the dark watery depths, John's struggling form is barely visible as he fights to free himself from the nylon net. His every twist recalls the perilous dance of past maritime tragedies.

GHOST OF BLACKBEARD (raising a transparent hand in a mocking salute)

I wager me last doubloon that our daring buccaneer cuts through them tangled threads in time. Else, the treasure I covet - booty I ne'er held in life - will remain as lost as Davy Jones' locker!

GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN (smirking spectral grin)

Yar, if he be victorious, then mark me, our fortunes may yet be reversed. But should he succumb to the watery depths, it be the end of our ghostly reign o'er these sunken spoils, aye?

The ghostly figures continue to watch as John, his face set with determined grit visible even behind his dive mask, methodically works his cutter along the edges of the net. The spectral air is filled with their lively wager as ancient voices echo over the eternal waves.

GHOST OF BLACKBEARD

Blow me down! See him go - like the wind through riggin' in a tempest. That be the heart of a true buccaneer! I'll wager a chest of Spanish doubloons that he be free afore his last breath is exhaled.

GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN (softly, almost reverently)

A fine wager indeed. For if his valor prevails, our cursed treasure, ripped from our grasp so long ago, shall come forth from the depths, and our names shall sail once more upon fortune's tide. But if not, then alas - our hopes be dashed like a run aground brig in a storm.

The camera lingers on the ghostly duo as their forms shudder with anticipation. Their spectral eyes follow every pulse of John's struggle - a reflection of battles once fought on roaring seas, of heirs to fortune yet deprived by fate.

GHOST OF BLACKBEARD (in a hopeful whisper)

Let the fates decide, matey. For a life well fought below shall tip the scales - if our living comrade cuts free, then we be one step closer to reclaiming what was ours by right of blood and legend.

GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN

Aye, and may our fortunes be reborn on that day, when John Storm, against all odds, defies even the grips of ghostly plastic. Until then, we watch and wager, our hearts forever tied to the treasures of the deep.

The scene fades as the ghostly duo's voices merge with the sound of the surging sea - a timeless reminder that legends, whether of mortal daring or spectral longing, are forever interwoven with the ocean's endless mysteries.

CUT TO: INT. BRIDGE OF THE ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

On the ship's sleek control panel, DAN HAWK and HAL's digital interface monitor the live feed with intensity. Charts and coordinates blur against rapidly updating legal briefs and heritage proposals. Their focus is clear - the safeguarding of history has become a high-stakes chess match against those who would see the wreck exploited.

INT. BRIDGE OF THE ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

The bridge is dimly lit as alarms and gauge readouts flicker. JOHN STORM, still catching his breath after narrowly escaping entanglement in a

drifting ghost net, paces around a compact radio console. His voice, though measured, is laced with anger and urgency.

JOHN (into radio, controlled fury)

Dr. Treadstone, this is John Storm. I just had a near-death run-in with a plastic ghost net - nearly drowned thanks to modern marine detritus. I'm mad as hell, and not just for my sake but for all those marine creatures suffering silently.

There's a brief pause as static clears. The calm yet authoritative voice of DR. ROBERTA TREADSTONE comes through, carrying both concern and determination.

DR. TREADSTONE (V.O.)

John, I've been following your progress. I understand your anger. Tell me what you're seeing.

John glances out through a reinforced viewport at the dark sea beyond, the turmoil of his recent ordeal still vivid in his eyes.

JOHN

I've located a major heritage site - an entire privateer wreck, dripping with treasure and history, but also teetering on the edge of being looted by unscrupulous interests. And that damn ghost net... isn't just an entanglement hazard - it's a menace. It's choking our seas and our heritage alike.

In a low and concerned tone, DAN HAWK's voice cracks in from another channel, careful not to fan the flames but obvious worry in his tone.

DAN HAWK (V.O.)

John, when you went under, my heart nearly stopped. You gave us all a scare - we've been through the rescue with Kuna, remember? Today was just as critical.

HAL's digital cadence interjects smoothly, providing situational clarity.

HAL (V.O.)

Affirmative. Current readings confirm your oxygen levels are lower than ideal. We have a limited window before we need to extract you. Dr. Treadstone, I'm logging all environmental and positional data.

Back on the bridge, John clenches his fists but forces calm, his tone turning resolute as he shares the broader implications.

JOHN

Dr. Treadstone, this wreck is more than treasure - it's a time capsule of maritime legacy. We'll use all recordings as evidence. But further, I'm thinking we push for an international mandate. Tag every fishing net, recover them whenever possible. Ghost nets aren't just a risk to vessels - they're a death sentence for marine life.

There's a pause as DR. TREADSTONE reflects on his words. Her voice, assertive and visionary, surfaces once more.

DR. TREADSTONE (V.O.)

I agree, John. This isn't merely about protecting one site. It's an environmental crisis and a heritage crisis rolled into one. I'll mobilize my contacts at UNESCO's Blue Shield. We'll draft a proposal for mandatory tagging and regular retrieval of ghost nets. Your findings here might be the catalyst we need to get international cooperation.

John's voice softens for a heartbeat, tempered by relief yet still carrying the weight of his ordeal.

JOHN

Thank you, Roberta. I just... I can't watch our oceans turn into floating landfills. I need to ensure that these sites are preserved, not plundered by territorial powers or corporate greed. I'm risking my life here for something bigger than treasure.

During a brief lull, DAN HAWK's calm yet urgent voice surfaces again, emphasizing camaraderie and caution.

DAN HAWK (V.O.)

John, stay steady. We nearly lost you today - you're too valuable to let

slip back into the depths. I'm suiting up on the next dive, in case you need immediate extraction.

HAL interjects, providing a succinct update.

HAL (V.O.)

Additional support is being coordinated. The Mexican Navy standby is on call, and I'm monitoring your cylinder pressure closely.

John inhales deeply, regaining his composure as he stands amidst the quiet hum of the ship's control systems. His eyes, though still burning with indignation, reveal a man determined to protect both history and the ocean.

JOHN

Understood. I'll hold this position until I can get further clearance from you, Roberta. Let's make sure that this site - and our seas - are safeguarded for future generations.

Dr. Treadstone's affirmation comes through, steadying the turbulent atmosphere.

DR. TREADSTONE (V.O.)

We've got your back, John. I'll keep the channels open. Stay safe.

The camera slowly pans over the bridge as the team - human ingenuity, decisiveness, and the support of international cooperation - rises to meet the challenges set by a capricious ocean and human carelessness.

FADE OUT

\$BILLION DOLLAR DEAL - INT. BRIDGE - ELIZABETH SWANN - DAY

The bridge hums with quiet efficiency. Holographic displays shimmer with sensor readings and navigational charts. JOHN STORM (40s, thoughtful, determined) sits at the central console, a look of anticipation mixed with apprehension on his face. DAN HAWK (20s, energetic, practical) leans against a secondary station, fiddling with a holographic interface.

CLEOPATRA (20s, intelligent, multilingual) stands nearby, observing the displays with a keen interest. HAL (V.O., calm, synthesized), the ship's AI, is ever-present.

JOHN (Sighing softly)

The scavengers will gather, Dan. Like wolves to a fresh kill.

DAN

You expecting trouble, Skip?

JOHN (Nodding grimly)

Certain of it. Remember the Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes? Odyssey Marine Exploration pulling up Spanish silver.... Spain kicked up a fuss, and rightly so. US courts eventually ordered its return or jail time. This..... this is bigger.

A holographic map flickers to life, highlighting the Caribbean.

JOHN (CONT'D)

The wreck's closer to Panama than Colombia, but that gold..... it's mostly Incan, Aztec. Peru, Ecuador... they have a strong historical claim. And don't forget the inevitable bogus claims from Britain and Spain. It'll be a feeding frenzy.

DAN

So, what's the play?

JOHN (Leaning forward)

We deal with the strongest claimants first. Keep an open mind. Most of that gold needs to go back where it belongs. The shipwreck..... it could qualify as a UNESCO site. But we need permissions, cooperation. Colombia, because the archipelago is technically theirs, even if the culture's more Jamaican from colonial times. Panama... well, we'll see.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hal, you got any bright ideas?

HAL (V.O.)

Perhaps. Thank you, Dan.

The holographic displays shift, replaying John's underwater footage of the shipwreck.

HAL (V.O. CONT'D)

Commander Storm's assessment aligns with historical data. The provenance of the artifacts strongly suggests Incan and Aztec origins.

JOHN (Smiling wryly)

Not bad for a human, eh?

DAN (Chuckling)

You're not human, Skip.

CLEOPATRA

Neither am I, entirely.

JOHN (Teasingly)

No, you're too perfect. But we love you anyway.

Cleopatra smiles, hugging John and then Dan.

CLEOPATRA

I'd hug you too, Hal, if I could. But seriously, we need to be strategic. Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia... and maybe Panama. Right order is key.

JOHN

Hal, do the honours.

HAL (V.O.)

Initiating communications. Mexico... line is busy. Connecting with the Peruvian Minister of Antiquities.

Dan and Cleopatra exchange astonished glances.

DAN & CLEOPATRA (O.S.)

Wow!

DAN

Hal doesn't mess about.

A holographic image of a distinguished PERUVIAN MINISTER (60s, intelligent, thoughtful) appears on the main screen.

JOHN

Minister, my name is John Storm.

MINISTER (V.O.)

Mr. Storm, how can I help you... or is that each other?

JOHN (Concentrating on his Spanish)

More accurately... cada uno... is what I'm aiming for. Each other.

Cleopatra nods approvingly.

MINISTER (V.O.)

We heard about your find in Jamaica. Has this anything to do with Captain Morgan?

Dan and Cleopatra look impressed. Even a digital thumbs-up icon appears on Hal's interface.

JOHN

It does. It does. Where to begin... Well, we've found a shipwreck.... loaded with gold. Ahem... re-acquired from the Spanish conquistadors by Henry Morgan. We presume much of it is Inca and Aztec. Hence this call. If possible... and a lot depends on several nations working together... and assuming for now you might look favourably on this proposition.... John takes a breath.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We'd like to ensure a suitable proportion of the find is properly deposited as a heritage display, perhaps in your Museo Larco, in Lima. Or another location... your choice, of course... to do the asset justice. Assuming, of course, that we might reach an agreement.

Silence hangs in the air, stretching for a beat.

JOHN

Hello, Minister? Are you there?

MINISTER (V.O.) (A voice filled with surprise)

By the saints... Yes, Mr. Storm, I'm still here. A bit... in shock, mind you. Who else knows about this?

JOHN

You are the first Minister. We... the crew of the Elizabeth Swann... agreed you had a strong claim. So we called you first.

MINISTER (V.O.)

We are honored, Mr. Storm. Thank your crew for me. I can see them, of course.

The Minister smiles warmly at the camera. Dan and Cleopatra wave excitedly in the background.

MINISTER (V.O. CONT'D)

Thinking out loud... and confidentially for now... I imagine our President will be overjoyed. Though I have been wrong before, but on this topic, I believe we'll see eye to eye... as you say in North America. What then do we do about it? And where is the... treasure ship? If that is what you are calling it?

JOHN

Treasure ship is okay with us. We hope you understand, Minister, but we are keeping the location to ourselves until all parties are notified... and are in agreement. To protect the site, you understand.

MINISTER (V.O.)

Very sensible. Might I suggest you keep it that way. Some factions might see this as an opportunity for riches, sending history to the floor. And you are an outsider, so to speak. To be taken advantage of... of little regard. No offense intended.

John breathes a sigh of relief.

JOHN

None taken, Minister.

MINISTER (V.O.)

Please don't take this the wrong way, Mr. Storm, but what proof do you have of this find?

JOHN

Of course. And no offense taken. I have dived the site and made a video record of the cargo. I think you might enjoy the footage. We are thinking of arranging a Zoom conference call. Is that agreeable to you?

MINISTER (V.O.)

In principle, Mr. Storm. In principle.

JOHN

Great. Then, assuming we can get the other parties to join, we'll try and set that up.

MINISTER (V.O.)

The other parties being?

JOHN

Oh, Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia.... and probably Panama. Does that sound about right? At this stage, we think to limit it to parties with a legitimate historical claim. Panama is more of a courtesy inclusion, though they have a Morgan ship just offshore. Later, we can expand to include other interested parties.

MINISTER (V.O.)

That is perfect, Mr. Storm.

JOHN

Okay then, Minister. We'll leave it there for now. You have our call-sign if you think of anything. But we'll be in touch shortly.

MINISTER (V.O.)

Thank you, Mr. Storm. I'll advise our President and others at this end.
Confidentially, of course.

The holographic image of the Minister fades. John lets out a long breath.

JOHN

Phew! That went better than I could have hoped for.

He looks at Dan and Cleopatra, a determined glint in his eyes.

JOHN (CONT'D)

One down.... four to go.

FADE OUT

BLOCKADE RUNNER, GHOST SHIP & GLOBAL FALLOUT

It was imperative to escape the trap set by Commander James Maynard using Royal Navy and Spanish Armada ships to capture John Storm and his trusty ship, the Elizabeth Swann. John knew he could disable these warships and even sink them if Excalibur and Merlin were given their head. Especially with Hal having hacked into their communications, so telling John, Dan and Cleopatra their every move.

More for reasons of diplomacy, as John never shrunk from a fight. And because of Cleopatra's tactical advice, the crew of the Swann elected to avoid conflict, by engaging the Elizabeth Swann in stealth mode, so making her invisible to enemy radar. Being electrically propelled with very quiet direct drive pods. There was no noisy machinery for inquisitive sonar to home into.

INT. BRIDGE - ELIZABETH SWANN - NIGHT

The bridge is bathed in the soft glow of holographic displays. Outside, the inky black of the Atlantic night stretches endlessly. HAL's interface, a calm, blue orb, pulses gently. John Storm sits at the command console; his gaze fixed on the sensor readings.

HAL (V.O.)

Commander Storm, our stealth protocols are fully engaged. We are maintaining minimal energy signature, effectively rendering us virtually undetectable to conventional radar and sonar. The blockade remains concentrated around the southwestern Caribbean.

JOHN

Good. Let's keep it that way, Hal. No need for fireworks. Those Excalibur cannons stay dormant unless absolutely necessary. Even if Maynard and the Spanish are playing pirate.

HAL (V.O.)

A prudent course of action, Captain. Engagement carries unnecessary risks.

John activates a secure, encrypted communication channel. A holographic image of PRESIDENT LINCOLN TRUMAN (60s, sharp, weary) appears.

TRUMAN (Hologram)

Storm. Report. What's the situation? We're getting conflicting reports down here. Something about a joint British-Spanish naval blockade?

JOHN

Mr. President. That's affirmative. Commander Maynard, seemingly rogue and in concert with the Spanish Navy, has attempted to prevent our departure from the Caribbean. They consider the Aztec treasure, and by extension anything related to Morgan and Blackbeard, as rightfully theirs.

TRUMAN (Hologram): Theirs? On what grounds?

JOHN

A convoluted historical claim involving Maynard's ancestor and Blackbeard's demise. It's... tenuous at best. We have successfully navigated their blockade, proceeding into the Atlantic.

TRUMAN (Hologram)

And the United States' position in all this?

JOHN

I requested intervention, Mr. President.

TRUMAN (Hologram)

And after careful consideration, Mr. Storm, we will maintain a position of neutrality. This appears to be a matter of historical contention and international maritime law, where the waters themselves are not under US jurisdiction. We will, however, monitor the situation closely and condemn any overt acts of piracy against your vessel.

JOHN

Understood, Mr. President. Thank you.

The holographic image of President Truman fades. John sighs, then activates another communication channel. The familiar face of JILL BIRD (50s, sharp, respected BBC World Service journalist) appears.

JILL (Hologram)

John! You made it out! The news has been buzzing with this blockade. What exactly did you find down there?

JOHN

Jill, we have a story that will rewrite history. We located Captain Henry Morgan's lost Aztec treasure. And I have exclusive footage to prove it.

A holographic display beside John flickers to life, showing stunning, high-resolution footage: ancient gold artifacts, intricately carved jade, and the impressive Golden Skull. The quality is breathtaking.

JILL (Hologram, visibly excited)

My god, John... this is incredible! The world needs to see this.

JOHN

It will. I'm giving you the exclusive, Jill. Broadcast it worldwide. Let the world know what we found, and who is trying to steal it. Title it... 'Blade Runner: Unearthing Morgan's Gold.'

JILL (Hologram, nodding firmly)

Consider it done, John. This will be global news within the hour.

John terminates the communication with Jill. Moments later, HAL's calm voice fills the bridge.

HAL (V.O.)

Captain Storm, multiple news outlets are reporting your findings and the alleged blockade. The footage you provided is being widely disseminated.

Another holographic window displays breaking news headlines from around the world. Morgan's Lost Treasure Found!.... Naval Blockade in Caribbean Stirs International Controversy!

HAL (V.O.)

Initial reports indicate significant public and political fallout. Commander James Maynard is facing intense scrutiny.

A new, urgent communication alert sounds. HAL displays an intercepted, unencrypted message.

HAL (V.O. - Reading)

To all units. Commander Maynard is to be considered AWOL. He has failed to report for duty and his current whereabouts are unknown. He is suspected of being in possession of a high-value artifact. Issue immediate alert.

JOHN

Maynard's gone rogue. He took the Golden Skull. The fool.

Another news headline flashes across the screen: "Royal Navy Commander Relieved of Duty Amidst Treasure Scandal."

HAL (V.O.)

Further reports indicate the Royal Navy has issued a brief statement: "Commander James Maynard has been relieved of his command pending an investigation into alleged misconduct. The Royal Navy does not condone unauthorized actions and is cooperating with relevant authorities." They

are declining to comment further on the specifics of the treasure or the blockade.

More headlines appear. "Spanish Government Silent on Caribbean Blockade." Then, a statement from the UK Prime Minister.

HAL (V.O. - Reading)

"A spokesperson for the Prime Minister, Nicholas Johnson, has stated that the United Kingdom government is aware of the situation in the Caribbean and is seeking clarification from all involved parties. They reserve their position on the matter pending a full understanding of the facts."

John watches the news feeds, a grim satisfaction on his face. The world now knows. Maynard is a fugitive. The blockade has been exposed.

JOHN

Looks like the tide has turned, Hal. Public opinion might be our strongest ally now.

HAL (V.O.)

Indeed, Captain. The transparency of information in the digital age can be a powerful deterrent to unilateral action. However, we should remain vigilant. Maynard is unpredictable, and the Spanish Navy's intentions remain unclear.

John nods, his hand resting on the controls. The Elizabeth Swann cuts silently through the Atlantic waves, leaving the chaos of the Caribbean behind. The treasure is safe, for now. But the hunt is far from over.

FADE OUT

BERMUDA TRIANGLE - EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - DAY

A small, battered MOTORBOAT churns through the turquoise water. WILLIAM GRAY (40s, former Navy officer, determined), BILLY BONES (30s, wiry, shifty), and BLACK JACK (50s, burly, grinning) scan the horizon nervously.

WILLIAM GRAY (Yelling over the engine)

Can't we get this bucket to go any faster?! There's a sizeable patrol ship scoping us, for sure!

Billy and Jack jostle for position at a small, outdated RADAR SCREEN. A distinct BLIP is gaining on them.

BILLY BONES

Blimey, he ain't kiddin'. That's a proper warship.

BLACK JACK

And this 'bucket', as our esteemed captain calls her, will be hotter than a stolen doubloon by now.

WILLIAM GRAY (Grimly)

Makes us pirates, doesn't it.

BLACK JACK (Grinning toothily)

Suits me fine!

INT. MOTORBOAT - CONTINUOUS

The WEATHER-FAX BEEPS, displaying a warning.

WILLIAM GRAY (Reading)

Hurricane force tropical revolving storm... Bermuda Triangle... advise wide berth.

Billy and Jack exchange uneasy glances.

WILLIAM GRAY (CONT'D)

Alter course north-east, gentlemen.

BILLY BONES (Eyes wide)

Straight into the eye of the storm?! You mad, Gray?

BLACK JACK (Shrugging)

He's usually right about these things.

They change course. The radar blip continues to track them, but slowly begins to fall behind.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - CONTINUOUS

The Colombian NAVY WARSHIP, a sleek grey vessel, cuts through the waves.

INT. BRIDGE - COLOMBIAN WARSHIP - CONTINUOUS

OFFICER (30s, focused) studies the radar.

OFFICER

That small vessel... changing course abruptly. Heading northeast.

CAPTAIN (50s, stern)

Let them go. We have bigger fish to fry.

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - MOTORBOAT - LATER

The small boat continues northeast, the weather beginning to turn.

BILLY BONES (Nervously)

"Bigger fish," eh? Drugs, right?

WILLIAM GRAY

Too right. Global drug trafficking... trillions of dollars a year. More than France and Spain's GDP combined. Can't happen without... connections.

BLACK JACK

So we're in the wrong game, then?

WILLIAM GRAY

Without protection? We'd be lambs to the slaughter.

BILLY BONES (Knowingly)

I was SBS. Saw a lot. Longstride, Jack, me... we looked into it. Thought about a sub we had a share in. But it's like the old slave trade.

Controlled by the top dogs. They control the cops.

WILLIAM GRAY (Nodding grimly)

Law and order... an illusion. Plain as the nose on your face.

The trio presses on, the sky darkening ominously.

EXT. BERMUDA TRIANGLE - NIGHT

The small boat is tossed violently by growing waves. Wind howls. Rain lashes down.

INT. MOTORBOAT - CONTINUOUS

The mutineers struggle to secure loose items, their faces etched with fear.

WILLIAM GRAY

Batten down the hatches!

The boat is engulfed by a massive wave.

EXT. BERMUDA TRIANGLE - CONTINUOUS

The motorboat disappears beneath the churning water.

EXT. ETHEREAL REALM - NIGHT

A spectral realm of swirling fog and eerie moonlight. GHOST OF BLACKBEARD (ageless, imposing) and GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN (wily, observant) watch the scene below.

GHOST OF BLACKBEARD (Booming)

Arr, Henry! Look ye at those wretched dogs! Fleeing into the Devil's Triangle! They think they can escape our legacy!

GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN (Raspy chuckle)

Aye, Blackbeard. The heavens brew a tempest fit to swallow them whole!

EXT. BERMUDA TRIANGLE - WATER - NIGHT (FLASH)

The small boat is tossed violently. Lightning illuminates terrified faces.

GHOST OF BLACKBEARD (V.O.)

They wager their lives against the fury of the deep!

GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN (V.O.)

Should they escape... others will follow. Our honour besmirched!

EXT. ETHEREAL REALM - CONTINUOUS

The ghostly figures watch the swirling vortex of the hurricane.

GHOST OF BLACKBEARD

Let the storm be their reckoning!

GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN

The wrath of the deep shall be our ally! They shall know no escape!

The ghosts nod grimly as the spectral winds howl.

EXT. BERMUDA TRIANGLE - WATER - NIGHT (FLASH)

The small boat is engulfed by towering waves.

GHOST OF BLACKBEARD (V.O.)

'Tis the will of the deep!

The sounds of the hurricane intensify.

EXT. BERMUDA TRIANGLE - OPEN OCEAN - DAY

Calm seas. No sign of the motorboat.

INT. BBC NEWS STUDIO - DAY

TREASURE ISLAND: BLACKBEARD'S CURSE & PIRATES GOLD

JILL BIRD (40s, serious news reporter) speaks to the camera.

JILL BIRD (V.O.)

This is Jill Bird reporting for the BBC World Service. Hurricane Harriet has made landfall in Bermuda... reaching wind speeds exceeding 105 miles per hour.

Footage of hurricane damage plays on a screen behind her.

JILL BIRD (V.O. CONT'D)

A small boat with three people on board disappeared without trace during the storm. Authorities are asking for any information.

EXT. VARIOUS NEWS SCREENS - WEEKS LATER

Headlines flash: "MISSING BOAT UNACCOUNTED FOR," "HURRICANE HARRIET CLAIMS UNKNOWN VICTIMS," "SEARCH FOR MISSING VESSEL SUSPENDED."

JILL BIRD (V.O.)

In the weeks following, no information came to light. The small boat and its three crew members were never seen or heard from again. Presumed lost at sea with all hands. Just another statistic.

EXT. ETHEREAL REALM - NIGHT

Blackbeard and Morgan at the spectral helm, a knowing look in their eyes.

GHOST OF HENRY MORGAN (A faint, knowing smile)

Were they, Blackbeard? Were they?

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

-- THE END --