

Plays for Young Audiences

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2400 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404

(612) 872-5108 ■ Fax (612) 874-8119 ■ www.playsforyoungaudiences.org

Pirates!

By
Charles Way

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Characters

Jim

Captain Freely

Captain Mc Govern

Sneep

Harry

2 sharks.

Note: Sneep and Harry can either be played by two men, or two women, or one of each.

Cast Size 5.

Act 1

Scene 1: Treasure lost

Scene 2: Kidnapped

Scene 3: On the, 'Horizon'

Scene 4: The Captain's cabin

Scene 5: Battle Stations

Act 2

Scene 1: A sea battle

Scene 2: Boy overboard

Scene 3: An English man of war

Scene 4: Storm at sea

Scene 5: Treasure found

Act one, scene one: Treasure Lost

[Enter Sneep wearing an eye patch and carrying a spade]

Sneep Harry? Harry? Harry!

[Enter Harry]

Harry Yes Sneep.

Sneep Don't do that-sneaking up –like-like some kind of thief. Found anything?

Harry Rock and sand. Sand and rock.

Sneep You'd best tell the Captain.

Harry She won't be happy .

Sneep What are we to do? We've dug up every inch of this rotten little sandbank, and it's not here.

Harry Perhaps-*you'd* best tell the captain then.

Sneep I will too-cos *I'm* not scared of her. An' at times like this I think I'd make a better Captain than her. What say you to that?

Harry I say -I'll dig till sundown.

Sneep That's your trouble Harry-too loyal for your own good.

Harry And you- too cunning for yours! [He digs furiously- and Sneep grabs the spade from him but he continues with his bare hands]

Sneep Give it up Harry. It's a waste of honest sweat. This treasure don't even exist, cept in wild tales and even wilder dreams. We've dug up an 'undred islands just like this one and be no richer for it. I'm a pirate Harry and I need to match the seeking with the finding. And I don't like digging, neither—

[As he speaks a treasure chest large enough to hold two people, magically appears behind them]

--dig, dig , digging all day long –like we was moles underground. I like to be at sea Harry; the wind in me hair, salt on me tongue, sailing the big blue, a cutlass between me teeth and a pirate yell in me throat. And most of all I like capturing other people’s ships, taking things that don’t belong to me-like-like-

Harry Some kind of thief.

Sneep Exactly-stealing an’ robbing an’ nicking-cos I’m a pirate, a dyed in the wool, scarf round me head, patch on me eye-PIRATE!

Harry Sneep.

Sneep Which is nothing like a mole.

Harry Sneep.

Sneep In a hole

Harry SNEEP!

Sneep WHAT?

Harry It’s there-the treasure chest-it’s there.

[Sneep looks slowly around, sees the chest and then looks slowly back to Harry.]

Sneep Still there?

Harry Aye -out of nowhere.

[Sneep looks back quickly.]

Sneep I don’t like this, not one bit of it.

Harry But we found the chest.

Sneep No Harry-it found us, and that’s too odd for my liking. Don’t touch it!

Harry Why not? We’ll be rich-rich.

Sneep Or dead-dead. That chest is no common thing. It’s cursed. See the words there.

Harry What kind o' curse?

Sneep How would I know? I can't read anymore than you can think. Go find the Captain.

Harry I'm right glad I've got you to look after me Sneep.

Sneep That's fine Harry —

Harry No I mean it-where would this dull Harry be without his clever Sneep-dead I say-dead.

Sneep Don't get sentimental on me Harry-just go-go.

[Exit Harry. Sneep watches him leave and then utters a dark greedy sound. He hugs the chest. Music. He opens it and it is full of gold.]

Sneep Ha, ha,ha,ha,ha,aaaaah.

[Sneep writhes in ecstasy then starts to shove gold coins into his pockets. He hears Harry and Captain Freely approaching and closes the lid.]

Harry Captain, Captain this way.

[Enter Captain Freely. She is a dashing pirate, very clearly a woman, but dressed as a man]

Sneep See, what I have found you. Ha!

CF Ha! Ha!

Sneep Ha! Ha! Ha!

Harry Ha! Ha! Ha! OH?

[The Captain has a sword at Sneep's throat.]

CF Did you open it?

Sneep Me? On my life I never did.

Harry Be careful Captain. Sneep says the chest is cursed-cursed.

CF Yes, and here are the words of it.

'If you be a liar and have opened this lid
You will perish here, for what- you- did.
Empty your pockets on the count of three,
Or die without hope-um-most painfully.'
One , two--

[Sneep empties his pockets rapidly]

Harry Sneep!

Sneep I didn't mean nothing by it-It was the gold captain-the gold made me do
it- and I was powerless to resist.

CF I know Sneep, I know, and that's because you are a proper, dyed in the
wool-

Sneep Scarf round me head-

CF Patch on yer eye-

Sneep Pirate.

CF [Grabs Sneep] But steal from me again and I shall pluck out yer other eye
and pickle it!

Harry Pickle his eye?

CF IN VINEGAR! I will not be stolen from-you understand ,the both of ya?

S+H Aye, Aye Cap'n.

CF Now then, I wonder-who is Jim?

S+H Jim?

CF That's what it says right here. [Reads] 'Master Jim Watts'.

Harry Never heard of no Jim Watts.

Sneep You mean , that's what it says –in addition to- dying most painfully on the count of three?

CF Of course Sneep, though oddly-those particular words seem to be vanishing before my very eyes , though there is another rhyme. [She reads to herself.]Of sorts.

Harry Vanishing words? Tis true then-the chest is cursed-CURSED!

CF Don't overdo the cursing Harry. Well-Jim Watts-whoever you be-prepare to be robbed by PIRATES.

H+S Ha, ha!

Harry We can open it then?

CF Yes Harry.

Harry You do it Sneep.

CF Allow me.

[Music. Captain Freely opens the lid. Music stops. The Gold has vanished]

CF Sneep?

Sneep On my life-

Harry Don't pickle his eye captain –I beg you.

CF What have you done with my TREASURE?

Sneep Nothing-I just-had a peek-it was there and now-now-its-its- Look Captain-Look.

CF Think I'll fall for that old trick do ya Sneep?

Sneep There's a ship-out to sea.

CF Fetch the vinegar Harry.

Sneep But Captain-

[A boom of a cannon shot makes them duck]

Sneep Told you.

Harry There Cap'n-an English man o'war.

CF HMS Vengeance.

Harry They've sent out a landing craft.

Sneep And Captain McGovern is in it.

Harry He'll hang us all for sure.

Sneep We should run then-RUN! Cap'n?

CF Aye Sneep-you run –run back to the ship, set sail and save it from the English navy.

Sneep What about you and Harry?

CF We'll hold them back as long as we can, so that you can escape with your life and save the ship. We'll join you-on' The Horizon'-when we can.

Sneep Harry?

Harry Don't get sentimental on me-Sneep-not now.

CF Go, go, go.

[Exit Sneep]

Harry They're running up the beach captain.

CF How many?

Harry About ten-or thirty---and they're waving their weapons and yelling something terrible. *[He turns to see Captain Freely getting into the chest.]*
Captain?

CF Fight em off Harry-as long as you can. That's my boy.

Harry Aye, Aye- Captain-long as I can.

[She closes the lid and Sneep enters, not Sneep the pirate but Sneep the English sailor wearing a short blue regulation jacket. He attacks Harry and they fight. Sneep the English sailor gets wounded in the eye and yells out in agony- Harry is about to run him through when Captain Mc Govern enters and puts a sword to his chest. Captain Mc Govern wears a 'long tailed blue'-a coat denoting his rank.]

C M Drop your cutlass-drop it!

[Harry drops his cutlass]

CM Are you injured Sailor?

Sneep Got me in the eye Cap'n -but I'll survive.

CM *[To Harry]* Where is Captain Freely? Where is she?

Harry I will never betray my Captain-never-never-never.

CM Kill him.

Harry She's in the box!

CM Take him back to the ship and place him in irons.

Sneep Aye Cap'n.

[Exit sailor Sneep and pirate Harry.]

CM So Captain Freely-It would appear your legendary treasure chest really does exist. 'Enter this chest, if you dare. In the dark find treasure rare.' Signed, 'Master Jim Watts'. Unfortunately it does not appear to belong to you Captain Freely. I trust you can hear me?

[Silence-he draws his sword]

Captain Freely?

[Silence]

Will you come out-with your hands raised or shall this chest be your coffin? I shall count to three-one -two-three.

[He puts his sword into the chest, as in a magicians trick. He does this three times, then cautiously raises the lid. It's empty. He puts his head inside]

Captain Freely!

[His voice echoes deeply as if the box is a huge cavern.]

CAPTAIN FREELY?!

[He looks about him then gets into the chest. Enter Sailor Sneep-he stops short when he sees Captain McGovern standing in the chest.]

Sneep Excuse me Sir-Captain. The Pirate ship, 'The Horizon' is escaping out to sea.

CM Then go after them-and be swift about it.

Sneep Aye Cap'n—and shall we -will you - I mean –be joining us?

CM Obey the rules sailor-rule number one.

Sneep Never question the Captain, Captain.

Cm Then do as I command.

Sneep Yes Captain. I mean Aye Captain.

CM And tell the surgeon to give you a patch for that eye.

Sneep Thank you Captain-and-[Exit]

[They salute each other and Sailor Sneep exits. With as much dignity as he can now muster, Captain McGovern closes the lid of the chest. Music]

Act one, Scene two: Kidnapped

[The walls of a room {present day} now close in around the chest and thus we are transported to the bedroom of Jim Watts, an eight year old boy whose obsession with all things piratical is reflected in it. On the floor appear two 'toy' ships although they are in fact excellent replicas, model ships-that appear to be sailing across the bedroom floor. These ships, one a small pirate sloop and the other an English man of war, are Jim's prize possessions. Jim enters in his pyjamas. He is clearly upset and before closing the bedroom door he shouts downstairs--]

Jim I hate you-and her. I hate everybody-and I'm not going tomorrow- I don't care if I promised.

[He shuts his door. He sits on the side of his bed and fumes-then he gets up again and opens the door and shouts—]

Jim They are stupid and ugly and mean and nasty and you can't make me see them-not if I don't want to. And I don't want to-ever-

[He shuts his door sits on the side of the bed then gets up opens the door and shouts--]

Jim And I'm not hungry anyway.

[Jim lies down between the two ships and makes battles sounds, imagining that he is hit by musket fire. Eventually he stops and burrows his head in his hands. He gets up and opens the door, but now his tone is softer.]

Jim Why do they have to come at all? Stupid ugly twins-Why can't she just come here- alone? That's what I agreed to, that's what she agreed to and now she's gone and broken it. She breaks everything. [Silence]I know you can hear me. You can tell her I don't want to see her. I'm locking the door now -and I won't open it- not for you or her -I hate you-both!

[He locks the door. And then sits on the bed-where there is special box. He takes a bunch of letters from it and throws them down on the floor.]

And I never want her to write to me again.

[Jim returns to his ships. Behind him Captain Freely opens the chest lid and sees him. She looks around and then silently gets out of it-and draws her sword.]

CF Don't move-don't make a sound or you'll be deader than a dead man.

Jim Dad?

CF If its death you want laddy-this blade is willing to oblige. If its life you're after-turn around-slowly.

[Jim turns and gasps]

CF And don't start squealing-you hear me? Now answer my questions straight and true-understand?

[Jim nods]

Is your name-Jim Watts?

[Jim nods]

Pleased to meet ee Jim. What place is this? Answer me!

Jim My bedroom.

CF How very strange. Very strange indeed.*[She picks up a telescope and examines it.]* Yours?

Jim Who are you? What are you?

CF *[She pockets the telescope]* What do I look like? Eh?

Jim A-a pirate.

CF Aye-a very bad one-that is to say a very good-bad one. Now then Jim lets to the core of the apple, to the very pips of it. Where's my treasure?

Jim Treasure?

CF There it was you see- and suddenly-it was gone-and where's it gone hey Jim? Where? Here perhaps-in your-*bedroom*.

[Suddenly the door handle moves. We don't see Dad only hear his voice]

Dad Jim-you okay?

CF If he comes in-you'll be the first to fall.

Dad Jim?

CF Answer him-nice and easy.

Dad We can talk all this through you know-Jim are you listening?

Jim Yes.

Dad And you shouldn't lock the door –I told you before-it's dangerous.

Jim I'm okay-I'm just-playing.

Dad What's the point of having rules if you don't obey them? Will you open the door?

Jim I can't open the door.

Dad Jim-this is not funny. Open the door. On the count of three-one, two-

Jim I can't.

Dad Why not?

Jim Because-

CF Careful.

Jim There's a pirate in my bedroom.

[CF puts her blade to his throat]

Dad I see- a pirate?

Jim A very bad one.

[CF shakes her head]

 A very good-bad one.-and she'll --

CF *[Mouths]* Run me through.

Jim Run me through-if you come in.

Dad Okay Jim-okay. Well *[Pause]* 'Jim lad'-I suggest-you disarm this pirate - and you run him through.

Jim It's a woman.

Dad *[Sighs]* Whatever-just run the pirate through-if that's what you need to do- and then we'll sort things out-about tomorrow. But I won't have you talking to me like you did just now. You understand me Jim?

Jim Yes. I'm sorry-

[Phone rings off]

Dad That'll be your mother-I'll tell her you'll stick to the arrangements-yes?

[Captain Freely senses he is about to say 'no' and mouths 'YES'.]

Jim Yes.

Dad That's better-Don't forget to brush your teeth.

[They listen to Dad's footsteps fade –and the phone stops as he answers]

CF Brush yer teeth? What on earth for?

Jim To be clean.

CF What a very odd idea. Now then, where have you hidden it?

Jim Hidden what?

CF Me Doubloons, me pieces of eight-the gold boy-the gold. Everything that was in that chest.

Jim I don't know what you're talking about, or how you got into my house-but I do know that you are in serious trouble.

CF Oh? Who with?

Jim W-W-W with me.

CF [Grabs him]With you?

Jim And my dad, and the police, anyone in a uniform.

[With a yell Captain McGovern now leaps from the chest. Jim yells too and tries to escape the savage sword fight that now takes place in his bedroom. He tries to open the door –but it is locked of course.]

Jim Dad! Dad!

[CF grabs him again, covering his mouth.]

CM Let the boy go.

CF Boy's mine captain!

CM Our troubles are nothing to do with him.

CF Then what's his name doing-carved on my chest?

CM You see lad, what kind of person we have here-all she cares about is her precious gold- gold that never belonged to her in the first place.

CF You have no idea Captain McGovern, what I care about-or what kind of person I am.

CM The kind who takes children hostage- threatening their lives, just to save her own skin .

CF Seeing as you care so much for children Captain-perhaps you should lower your sword and step away from the chest. [To Jim] Get in.

Jim Get in?

CF In the chest-now.

Jim What for?

CF For to see what we shall see lad-before I lose my temper-big time!

CM Do as she says. Her threats are real enough- she has no feelings that you or I would recognise as human-or womanly.

CF Don't cross me Captain.

CM Cross you? I will see you hang Captain Freely-for the pirate you are.

Jim Sir?

CF Shut up-and put yer head down. Down!

CM Don't worry lad-I will follow you both to the ends of the world if I have to.

CF [Looks at the room] I think you've already done so Captain, and whatever this world is-it ain't ours.

[She closes the lid. Silence. He approaches the chest opens it-with his sword raised but they have gone. He looks around the strange room-and at the ships. On them he sees and examines two small figurines-a pirate and a naval Captain. Bemused he replaces them. He sees among the letters a striking one with a red royal seal upon it. He breaks the seal and reads it swiftly with a grim countenance.]

CM 'In this the year of our Lord 1718-I the one Sovereign King of England do hereby grant all pirates- A free and open Pardon. Lay down your weapons, give up the ways of piracy- and the King's forgiveness will be thine-forever.'

No, no I'll not have it. There'll be no forgiveness for you Captain Freely. I will see you hanging from the yard arm of my ship before that day dawns.

[He puts the Letter in his jacket and then approaches the chest-and he gets in Music. He closes the lid and as it closes the lights fade and the walls of the bedroom vanish in the same way that they appeared.]

Act one, Scene three: On 'The Horizon'.

[Sneep the pirate drags a wet looking Harry on to the deck of the pirate ship. Of the two miniature ships only the pirate one remains.]

Sneep Harry, Harry.

[Sneep slaps Harry, and then pumps his chest. Harry coughs and regains consciousness.]

Sneep Harry-sweet pirate. I thought for a terrible moment the sea had stolen you and that I was all alone in the world. From this day forth I will never let anything-or anyone come between us. It's you and me against the world- Oh Harry!

[He hugs Harry]

Sneep But tell me, how did you escape the English navy?

Harry They were going to give me fifty lashes Sneep-fifty lashes across me back.

Sneep Certain death.

Harry That's what I reckoned, so I played dumb-like I was really, really stupid.

Sneep -----Difficult.

Harry And when they thought I had no thought to escape I made a run and jump for it, straight into the sea. They fired muskets at me Sneep.

Sneep The devils.

Harry But I dived down and down into the deep cold darkness. I thought I was a dead one- next thing I knew, I saw a light above me-and then I was staring up at your face-like an angel you seemed Sneep-an angel.

Sneep Oh Harry.

[They embrace]

Harry Where's the captain?

Sneep Harry-you're looking at him.

Harry Hey?

Sneep Captain Freely's gone. We'll never see her again.

Harry Gone?

Sneep Forever.

Harry Captain Freely-gone-forever?

Sneep Don't douse yer cheeks on her behalf Harry. She'd shed no tears over you .A heart of stone that one. So I have taken command of the ship. Captain Sneep-Sounds good don't it!

Harry *[Unsure]* Yes.

[As Sneep talks, the treasure chest once again appears behind him.]

Sneep I'm going to be the most infamous pirate captain that ever flew the black flag. Captain Kidd they'll say? Black Bart, Flynn ,Silver-Sparrow? They were all nothing when compared to Captain Sneep of 'The Horizon'. And you know what it means, don't you Harry?

Harry *[Nods]* No.

Sneep It means that you are second-in command. Think of it my friend-you've always dreamed of coming second.

Harry Yes-yes-but if the captain got in the chest-what if she comes out again?

Sneep Hey?

Harry The chest you see-it's there-here-again.

[Sneep looks slowly round, sees it and then looks back at Harry.]

Sneep Still there?

Harry Out of nowhere.

[Sneep draws his sword and turns on the chest]

Harry Don't go no closer Sneep-that chest can swallow a pirate whole.

[Sneep approaches-music as he opens the lid.]

Sneep It's empty-I am Captain still.

[Jim leaps up from inside the chest]

Jim Agh!

H+S Agh!

Harry It's alright Sneep-it's just a boy.

Sneep A boy?

Harry A boy-wearing-something strange.

Sneep Who are ya? What are you doing in there? Get out-out.

[Jim gets out of the chest]

Sneep Shall I run him through Harry?

Harry What for?

Sneep For giving me a fright- jumping up like that-all strange and unsuspected.

Harry I tell you Sneep-that chest is cursed -cursed-cursed.

[Captain Freely calmly arises from the chest.]

CF Don't overdo the cursing Harry.

Harry It's Captain Freely. It's Captain Freely.

CF Sneep! Take yer filthy mits off the boy or I'll have your kidneys for supper. Go nicely with a pickled eye.

Harry You see who it is?

Sneep Yes-Harry.

CF What's the trouble Sneep, ain't ya pleased to see me?

Harry He thought you dead and gone and made himself captain in your place.

Sneep Thank you-Harry.

CF Ha ,ha Praise be the chest has brought us home Jim. Home to my very own ship, and my very own, scheming, back stabbing, treacherous little gang of pirates.

[She tweaks their cheeks]

H+S Ow!

Sneep Who's he?

Harry And what's he wearing?

CF This my boys-is the key to our future happiness-as in 'wealth'-one rather frightened Jim Watts.

S+H Oh?

CF Wearing something called-Jim Jams-[PJ's]so he tells me.

Jim Where am I?

CF You're at sea lad.

Jim You stay away from me.

Harry OOOOH.

Jim I order you I command you, to take me home. NOW.

Sneep Got some edges on him this one Cap'n.

Harry In his 'Jim Jams'. [PJ's]

Jim I'm not frightened of you. I'm not frightened at all. I'm -I'm-I'm

[He starts to breathe rapidly as if about to have a panic attack]

CF Relax Jim. These lads will do you no harm. Give yourself a moment here- to find your sea legs. Breathe deeply, slowly. That's good salt air, clean and fresh as any Monday. And that rocking motion-why that be the big blue-the great giver and taker itself-the sea.

Jim No-it's not true, it's not true.

H+S 'It's not true, it's not true.'

CF You mind yer tongues- unless you want to see em on a plate next to yer eyes and kidneys. *[She gives Jim back his 'spyglass' telescope-she took from his room.]* He's in a strange place with strange people, and must be made welcome.

Jim No, no you don't understand. I must get home.

CF Home? A pirate ship is all the home a boy could ever dream of.

Jim But I can't be here. Wherever here is-I can't. Because-- I have to meet my mother-tomorrow-I made a promise.

[Harry laughs]

Jim Why's he laughing?

CF Harry is a happy sort Jim-he means no harm.

[Harry laughs]

CF Why he laughs is a mystery-even to himself-but he's brave enough and will laugh like a hound in the face of death.

[Harry laughs]

Jim Well stop it, I don't like it. I don't like any of you at all-and I never will.

[silence]

CF But we'll not take offence at that, will we lads.

Sneep Course not Cap'n, no offence at all.

CF This is Sneep.

Jim Sneep?

CF *[In Jim's ear]* Mean , greedy and vicious -never believe a word he says.

Sneep Pleased to meet ee Jim-I'll be looking after your safety-

CF And Harry-you have met.

Harry Handsome Harry-is me full name.

[Harry shakes hands with Jim]

CF *[In Jim's ear]* Loyal, kind, trusting and completely stupid.

Harry Welcome aboard-

CF+H+S The Horizon!

Sneep Captain! Sail Ahoy.

CF Spy glass. Jim? SPYGLASS

[Jim gives her his telescope. The replica English naval ship enters.]

Sneep What is she captain?

CF HMS Vengeance.

Sneep Again?

CF Presumably without her Captain.

Harry How do ee presume that?

CF Because the chest is here- not there.

Harry *[Bemused]* Oh right.

Jim But what do you want with me-how — why am I here?

CF You my boy, are here for the sole purpose of having an adventure, with me on the open sea. The second sole purpose is to unravel the secrets of this chest and help us find our treasure.

Sneep What shall we do Cap'n?

CF Tis nearly night, dim our lights and if favour fortunes us we'll be out of sight by morning.-if not—

Harry We'll have a great big battle. Hey Jim!

CF Don't scare the lad Harry.

Harry He ain't frightened Cap'n-he said so three times.

CF Yes-be as watchful as you are stupid Harry and stand guard over this chest, if Captain McGovern pokes his head out, cut it off and shut the lid.

Harry Aye Captain.

CF Jim-come to my cabin-Sneep-take the first watch. As in now!

Sneep Aye Cap'n-- *[Aside to CF]* but tell me that when you have discovered the secret of that chest-I won't have to share my gold with no boy-in Jim Jams.[PJ's]

CF *[Draws a knife on Sneep]* Get aloft Sneep and be happy about it. What do I not hear you singing-are you not a happy crew?

S+H Oh this is a jolly life we lead, upon the seven seas,
Searching for a pot of gold wherever it may be.
As we sail we sing along, we sing most happily,
Cos we are free to spend our days, searching endlessly.
Yoh-Hoh-Hoh-Hoh-searching endlessly.

{And } we'll down our grog and spend our tin

{And } freely go on a freshening wind

Yoh-Hoh-Hoh-Hoh-searching endlessly.

{And} we'll wake all night and sleep all day

There ain't no rules that we obey-

Yoh-Hoh-Hoh-Hoh-searching endlessly.

Cos that's the way we love to live

A lot of take and not much give

Yoh-Hoh-Hoh Searching endlessly.

Act one Scene four: The Captain's cabin.

[Harry and Sneep remain visible during this scene. Harry guarding the chest, and Sneep above, on watch.]

CF So Jim-last but not least-I am Captain Freely. This ere's my ship-'The Horizon' and this is my cabin-cosy hey?

[Jim grabs a knife]

Jim You take me home –now-I mean it..

CF That’s a sharp blade Jim, but you’re welcome to have it.

Jim Have it?

CF Yours-a gift.

Jim But I’m not allowed knives.

CF Not allowed?

Jim Of course not, they’re dangerous.

CF I should hope so too-and if you cut yourself it’s your own fault.

[Silence-he lowers the knife. He examines the Cabin]

Jim What year is this?

CF Year?

Jim What’s the date?

CF Not sure-exactly. Does it matter?

Jim Yes!

CF Well then-it’s the year of our lord-- seventeen eighteen.

Jim 1718?

CF And in 1718-Jim Jams [PJ’s] are not in fashion.

Jim 1718. I know that date.

CF You can’t go around dressed like that, not if you want to be one of us.

Jim But I’m not one of you, I’m Jim watts, and I’m —

CF A touch confused. Tis only natural. But I say-live for the moment Jim. Go with the wind. You are here-so-you might as well enjoy yourself. I stole these from a Spanish gentlemen, hence the fancy buckle- try em on, lest you want Harry to laugh at you all day.

[Jim begins to dress as a pirate]

And to keep the sun off your head, a wide brimmed hat, with a feather in it. Now don't that make you feel better. And of course every pirate must have one of these.

Jim A real cutlass?

CF To defend oneself if attacked. *[Grins]* When.

[Jim thrusts the weapon forward]

CF No, no, it's a slashing, hacking weapon-very good when the fighting gets up close, and nasty.

[Jim slashes and hacks the air]

CF There you go, now all you have to do is learn-the pirate yell.

Jim The pirate yell.

CF Yes, because we like to avoid real fighting if we can—it tends to hurt. So we simply try to terrify folk into dropping their weapons and giving us their money. But you have to yell like you mean it, or they won't believe you-so-

[Captain Freely does the pirate yell]

Now you try.

[Jim yells]

Together.

[They both yell]

Excellent.

[Captain Freely starts to lay the table-instinctively Jim sits up. He is given food]

Freely Now yer one of the crew-- so let's get down to pirate business .The chest. How did you come to *own it*-so to speak?

Jim I don't know-it just—

CF Appeared?

Jim In my bedroom.

CF When-if you don't mind me asking?

Jim I think-Mum and Dad bought it together-before—and they gave it to me, for toys and things.

CF About four years ago perhaps?

Jim Yes, perhaps.

CF Which is the same amount of time-I've been missing it-as it chances.

Jim That chest-is my only way home-isn't it?

CF *[Shrugs]* You've only just arrived Jim, why talk of leaving? We need time, don't we, to get to know each other. You like me well enough I hope. Cos I like you Jim, indeed I do. Why not stay a while-have some fun?

Jim I told you-I have to be home-by eleven o'clock tomorrow morning-I made a promise.

CF What's a promise to a pirate? We make em and we break em.

Jim But I haven't seen her-

CF Who?

Jim My mother.

CF You haven't seen yer mother?

Jim For four years.

[Silence]

CF And why is that Jim?

Jim She -left.

CF What, an' never came back?

Jim She travelled a lot- but she wrote all the time- I've got hundreds of letters- from faraway lands-and places like that. Hundreds.

CF Can you read then?

Jim Of course-I've read some of them so often I know them by heart.

CF Very nice. Very impressive.

[Jim slashes the air with his cutlass]

Jim And tomorrow I have to see her-and her children.

CF Her children-did you say?

Jim Twins-by another man. I've never met them. I don't want to meet them.

[Jim slashes the air more aggressively.]

CF Want to slice em all up Hey Jim, into little bits.

Jim A million tiny bits Captain, bits so small, no one can see them-or come to their rescue-ever.

CF There's a picture.

[Jim sits.]

CF Tired yourself out Jim? Have some grog.

Jim Grog?

CF Rum. You know-Rum-help you sleep.

Jim I'm eight years old Captain-I can't drink alcohol.

CF Oh? Still-you sit there and rest a bit.

[She gives him a blanket. As she does so Sneep and Harry start to hum the tune of the song above-and it becomes a kind of lullaby.]

Jim I am tired captain, tired right through- to the very core of me-to the very pips.

CF You learn swiftly Jim-very swift indeed.

Jim [*Dreamily*] Tell me Captain-about the chest.

CF Oh-there's a bedtime yarn if ever I told one.

[*The Captain lights an oil lamp-by which light she will tell the story, through which she drinks grog.*]

That chest Jim, has special qualities, as we have both discovered. I first heard of it from an ancient mariner who spoke of a 'magic' treasure chest . If you find it you have to empty it, quick as you can and then shut the lid-you open the lid again –and lo and behold the chest is full of gold 'again'. Imagine that. That kind of treasure chest-you only have to find once-obviously. Now I had that chest for four years, and we were never poor in those days cos the chest kept refilling itself. But then-one dark day- I lost it in a grim and bloody sea battle, with a certain Captain James McGovern-whom you have met, in passing. I had a different ship then-but he sank it-and the chest went floating away. It was awful to see it floating off Jim-awful-my treasure-my future. However, I escaped from the Captain , and have been searching for that treasure chest ever since-until yesterday, as it chances, when it washed up on *Fortune isle*.

Jim [*Sleepily*] Fortune isle.

CF Aye Jim-and here's the mystery-when we opened that chest-the second time-the gold had disappeared completely. Gone. And there was something else- the chest had your name upon it-and some other mysterious words.

'Enter this chest, if you dare. In the dark find treasure rare.' So that's what I did Jim-I got in the chest- but I didn't find my gold-did I? I found--

[*Jim snores-*]

CF Aye Jim-you sleep-tomorrow will be a long day.

[Captain Freely takes another swig of grog and falls instantly to sleep, as do the other pirates. Jim's sleep is fitful and the sound of the sea, the creaking of the boat, lends the action a dream like atmosphere, in which we hear now the music of 'The Chest' . Slowly the chest fades from view . Sneep the pirate becomes once again, Sneep the sailor-wearing his blue naval coat-and an eye patch-but on the other eye. He takes up an identical sleeping position on the other side of the stage, which now becomes the deck of, 'The Vengeance' . Darkness falls .]

Act one Scene five: Battle Stations.

[Lights rise. Dawn. The chest now appears on the deck of 'The Vengeance' and from it emerges Captain McGovern. As he does so the dream like atmosphere fades.]

CM Get up you lazy heathen-up-up-up.

Sneep Cap'n?

CM Asleep on the watch hey sailor!

Sneep Captain Mc Govern!

CM That's twenty lashes .

Sneep Where have you been Captain?-And how did you get on board?

CM Rule number one.

Sneep Never question the Captain , Captain.

CM Where's the prisoner?

Sneep The prisoner?

CM The pirate we captured on Fortune Isle.

Sneep He escaped.

CM Forty lashes! How did he escape?

Sneep He made a run and jump for it-straight overboard. Whether he was brave or completely stupid I cannot say-but he escaped.

CM Any sign of another sail?

Sneep No Captain, an' I have watched the waves-all night -like a hawk.

[Captain McGovern, takes out his own spyglass and scours the sea-until he sees-in the distance as it were-the replica pirate ship.]

CM Like a hawk you say?

Sneep Aye Cap'n-like a hawk-and a buzzard-and an eagle- and other birds-of that nature-with keen eyesight.

[He hands Sneep the spyglass-who looks. Silence]

Sneep Captain-

CM Aye sailor.

Sneep I must report -there is Pirate ship half a mile off the larboard bow.

CM Yes indeed-Sailor-a pirate ship. There- just there!

Sneep Fifty lashes should do it captain.

CM Fifty? -I should lash you from here to kingdom come for the danger you have put us in.

Sneep Aye Cap'n-I will not do so again.

CM Obey the rules. If you can't obey the rules sailor-you might as well be a pirate! {He looks through the spyglass} You're lucky, It appears they are asleep-upon that pirate ship. Perhaps we may surprise her yet. Prepare for battle.

Sneep PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

CM Quietly---

Sneep QUIETLY!

[On board the 'Horizon' the shouting wakes Jim with a start.]

Jim Captain-Captain-wake up-wake up.

CF What is it lad?

Jim The English navy-there-look.

CF Jim lad-you have saved our skins this day-and no mistake. Harry, wake up Harry!

Harry *[Stretches]* Morning Cap'n.

CF BATTLE STATIONS.

Harry BATTLE STATIONS.

CF All hands to quarters-

CM And clear for action.

Harry Aye Cap'n.

Sneep Aye Cap'n.

CF+CM BATTLE STATIONS!

End of Act one.