

PIRATE QUEEN, "PILOT", TEASER

EXT. WALL OUTSIDE GALWAY, IRELAND - DAY

WILLIAM MARTYN (40s), the imperious Irish mayor, follows armed guards who shove their way impatiently through a crowd gathered outside the stone wall that protects the city of Galway from enemy intruders.

He reaches a platform beside a GALLOWS, where TWO BRUISED, BLOODIED MEN (20s) and ONE CHILD (12-14) stand defiantly, ropes loose around their necks, wrists bound behind their backs. MARTYN'S OFFICERS (moreso thugs) taunt the prisoners, waving their axes and swords menacingly.

Martyn steps forward and holds his hand up. The crowd SILENCES.

MARTYN

May the Almighty forgive our
lateness.

The crowd seems dubious as to his piety. He presses on.

MARTYN (CONT'D)

These knaves are charged with
rebellion and conspiracy against
Her Majesty's lawful government.

A CACOPHONY OF SHOUTS arise at Martyn from the crowd, some for mercy, some disgruntled, some vowing revenge, but he raises an arm.

MARTYN (CONT'D)

SILENCE! The crime being punished
by death, upon my authority this
5th day of May, in the year of our
lord 1568.

CHRISTOPHER, (40s) lunges forward from the crowd, enraged.

CHRISTOPHER

Sidney pardoned these lads - my
boy's up there!

Quick cut to his SON, no more than 12 or 13.

MARTYN

Sidney didn't see the evidence.

CHRISTOPHER

What evidence that? Drunken men
cursing your name at O'Toole's? Tis
a normal Sunday, you great ass.

The crowd ROARS its assent.

MARTYN
(patronizing)
Your name, sir?

CHRISTOPHER
Christopher O'Shaughnessy. Late of
Dublin. My wife hails from --

MARTYN'S GUARDS, off a NOD from Martyn, restrain Christopher and drag him up to the gallows. Four more guards raise axes at the crowd, threatening any other dissenters.

MARTYN
Is your wife here, sir?

Christopher is still struggling against the guards. We see a lovely young woman, his wife, look up from beneath her hood. She can't bear to watch what happens next.

CHRISTOPHER
(pushing against the
guards)
No, she's in Kerry.

He spits. MARTYN NODS and the guards kick the platform beneath the men and boys' feet, sending them to their deaths.

As they expire, some in the crowd cross themselves. Some, jaded at a too-familiar scene, turn to leave. Others hurl themselves towards the platform, trying to save their friends, sons and husbands.

EXT. GALWAY - CONTINUOUS

At the rear of the crowd, in a CARRIAGE, watches SIR HENRY SIDNEY (30s), Queen Elizabeth I's Administrator of Western Ireland. He's a bit sickened at the scene. His IRISH AIDE, SHAUN, tries to explain.

SHAUN
Martyn's mightier than Her Majesty here, sir. His family have ruled these parts since before King Henry's time.

SIDNEY
Those men were pardoned.

SHAUN
Aye. Martyn thought they'd likely plot a revolt.

SIDNEY

No doubt prompted by a fortnight in his jails.

SHAUN

Shall I arrange for you to speak with him?

SIDNEY

He'll be at the reception later.

EXT. GALWAY - CONTINUOUS

Martyn descends, surrounded by guards, leaving four broken bodies, and smirks as he puts on his gloves. He's spotted new quarry.

OWEN O'MALLEY (16), fresh-faced and pale after the violent start to the day, spots Martyn and plots a hasty retreat. TWO GUARDS block his escape, and he turns to face Martyn, taking all the time in the world.

MARTYN

What have we here? Young Master O'Malley?

He pokes at O'Malley's cloak, revealing the young man's sheathed dagger.

MARTYN (CONT'D)

I see Mummy lent you a big sword for your journey here.

OWEN

I broke my journey from Dublin here. My ship sails north on the hour.

MARTYN

(scoffs, to an aide)
'He sails'!

Martyn looks long and hard at Owen. Enough to rattle him.

MARTYN (CONT'D)

Mind the fool who leaps to their kin's defense on the gallows. Just keep that in mind when your mother's time comes. Stand in the back, or I'll fit ya with a noose, too. (beat)
Run along.

Martyn brushes past Owen and triumphantly exits, a cloud of guards in his wake. At the rear of the detail, a young guard whispers to his companion.

GUARD
Who's 'is mother?

GUARD 2
Grace O'Malley.

The guard swallows hard. Not good news for a fighter.

EXT. CLEW BAY - A SMALL CREW SHIP POV - DAY

We're in a small ship drawing alongside a larger merchant vessel. A crew of sea dogs - tough-looking men - check for their daggers, swords and clubs.

EXT. CLEW BAY - MERCHANT VESSEL POV - CONTINUOUS

Grappling hooks CLANG over the rails. A sleepy crew runs towards the boarding party, but they're outnumbered and inexperienced.

SWORDS CLASH and the men begin to fight. The vessel's captain, O'DONNELL, comes above deck.

O'DONNELL
Your demands?

No one is listening. Too busy fighting.

O'DONNELL (CONT'D)
Where is she?

Still ignored. O'Donnell draws his sword and advances, swinging.

O'DONNELL (CONT'D)
Tell that wretched woman to get up
here so we can come to terms!

We see a woman's arm and hand reach over the rail and a lithe figure in men's trousers and jacket swing aboard. She lands standing with her sword pointed at O'Donnell. She is GRACE O'MALLEY (mid/late 30s - early 40s). As they speak, their crews continue swordfighting.

GRACE
Greetings, master. I hoped you'd
not make this a hard day.

O'DONNELL
Out with it.

GRACE

Out with what? There's no need to be uncivilized.

O'DONNELL

Call off your men.

GRACE

Forgive me.

She smiles benevolently, lowers her sword, really pissing off O'Donnell, and raises an arm imperiously. Her men cut off their attack, and O'Donnell's do the same, glad for the rest.

O'DONNELL

How were the Aran Islands?

GRACE

I'm flattered you follow my whereabouts.

O'DONNELL

Flattery has nothing to do with it. We are on an urgent mission -

GRACE

Sir. You have no idea what you're doing, do you?

O'DONNELL

(to his crew)
See to the ship's stores.

GRACE

That'd be a mistake.

O'DONNELL

I'm no use to you dead and we've no cargo of importance.

GRACE

Yet your mission is "urgent"?

O'DONNELL

State your terms.

GRACE

One fifth.

O'DONNELL

That's absurd.

Grace reaches out and pulls his well-made, tailored coat askew.

GRACE

And how dy'a come to this, then? Or
your cargo. Or your ship and crew.
The price is now one third of it.

O'DONNELL

Don't be ridiculous.

GRACE

I know who you are, where you sail
from and who sent you.

O'DONNELL

You're quite informed.

GRACE

Your uncle told you I was away. I
pay my spies well. Unlike him.

O'DONNELL

You don't know my uncle.

GRACE

I'll warn you once.

ONE OF O'DONNELL'S MEN has been creeping towards Grace as she's speaking with O'Donnell. He's about to pull his dagger when Grace's tall Spanish crewman, ESTEBAN GARCIA (30s), strikes him with a sword from behind. O'Donnell's man falls, cut, and one of Grace's other crewmen picks him up and hurls him overboard.

O'DONNELL

That was uncalled for.

GRACE

I couldn't agree more.

Grace raises her arms-length, hooked, short sword, called a "falchion".

With that, both crews resume fighting. Esteban and Grace's others incapacitate or kill most of O'Donnell's crew.

Grace dodges and darts, quick and light on her feet, and corners O'Donnell.

GRACE (CONT'D)

This is your last chance,
O'Donnell. Pay me. Pay me or die.

O'DONNELL

I'll not die at the hands of a
woman.

Quickly, Grace strikes him in his heart and his gut, and O'Donnell does just that.

GRACE

(loudly)

Any man who joins my crew will be spared. Anyone else can join your captain. Decide.

TWO MEN drop their swords and kneel by the rail. She nods at them. No one else is left standing.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Esteban! Clear this deck and bring our prize home.

Her men cheer. Today they'll be paid well.

INT. ENGLISH ADMINISTRATOR'S HOUSE - DAY

SIDNEY is hosting Galway's newly lorded and ladied chieftains and Gaelic nobility. MARTYN sidles up.

MARTYN

Fine gathering, sir. (drinks) Is this the vintage served at Her Majesty's coronation?

SIDNEY

The same. The Queen assured me a comfortable post here.

MARTYN

If there is anything we might do to improve it, send word.

SIDNEY

You could pay Galway's taxes to Her Majesty, for a start.

MARTYN

I'm sure the wind blows at Her Majesty's command, but our fortunes are at the mercies of other forces.

SIDNEY

Such as Grace O'Malley? Martyn, tis a mystery how you tolerate Celtic women.

MARTYN

Your loss. I'd welcome O'Malley's fall.

SIDNEY

She must submit to the crown's authority.

MARTYN

Many of her enemies already have. I hung three resisters this morning.

SIDNEY

Men I pardoned yesterday.

MARTYN

An oversight I corrected.

SIDNEY

Hardly. Martyn, I've come to be somewhat fond of your people. I'd hoped not to rule with such an iron hand.

MARTYN

Tis the only one that works here.

SIDNEY

No. If there's a deal to be struck, I shall.

MARTYN

Sidney, she's the key to all the shipping lanes and profits here. Without O'Malley, we could trade at will. She's what's holding up your taxes, my friend.

SIDNEY

I have been directed to produce the wench but not sent soldiers to persuade her. Were I to go, I'd be killed. You have ships and men at your disposal, do you not?

MARTYN

I must protect my interests.

SIDNEY

When you're next "protecting your interests", then, your men will pay a call on O'Malley.

MARTYN

For a cut of the profits.

SIDNEY

(snorts)

You're drunk.

MARTYN

Before me, my father and his father ruled here. Without my help, you'll have moldy empty coffers and gangs of rioting thugs.

SIDNEY

Your lands are a part of Her Majesty's realm. After Grace O'Malley yields, the rest of the chieftains will follow.

Martyn raises his glass, acknowledging a crony across the room. Impatiently, he breaks from Sidney.

MARTYN

Good chattin with ya, Sidney.

Sidney sighs and reaches into his jacket. He TOSSES A POUCH OF COINS at Martyn.

SIDNEY

I'll be sending men with your party, Martyn.

MARTYN

She'll surrender or die.

Martyn tosses the pouch a bit, enjoying the surge of power. Sidney looks queasy at the exchange and goes to find a young woman he noticed earlier.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. ENGLISH ADMINISTRATOR SIDNEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Martyn is pouring another dram of brandy as OWEN O'MALLEY (18-19) comes looking for a drink. Martyn fills a second and gestures to the young man.

MARTYN

Owen, have some a this. You looked a bit faint at this morning's hanging.

Owen warily puts his hand on his dagger.

MARTYN (CONT'D)

How's your mother, Owen?

OWEN

Why do ya ask, Martyn? Plannin' another hanging?

MARTYN

Owen, Owen. Your mother has far greater problems to deal with than me.

OWEN

Is that so?

MARTYN

Our English friend doesn't appreciate that we handle our own problems.

OWEN

Oh? I've heard Sidney can be reasoned with. Not as quick to the noose, ya see.

MARTYN

You're a great fool to come here and say that.

OWEN

(scoffs)

Aye, I see you're gonna kill me, too.

MARTYN

That depends.

OWEN

What the hell does that mean?

MARTYN

Sidney wants your mother taken care of now. Any chance she'd take on the Queen for Galway?

OWEN

For you, ya mean? (howls) Martyn, you've lost your mind in that bottle.

MARTYN

Owen, is your mother in Rockfleet?

OWEN

(scoffs)

Martyn, you want 'ir? Go find 'ir. I'm riding east tomorrow.

Owen stalks off; Martyn smirks. He wanted to scare Owen, and he looks to have succeeded.

AN AIDE, HONOR, comes over to Martyn.

HONOR

We should have him followed.

MARTYN

He's not goin ta Rockfleet. And I've better bait there.

EXT. GRACE'S SHIP, "MOYTURA", DECK - DAY

Toward's the ship's bow, Grace keeps watch alongside Esteban. THOMAS FITZGERALD (20s) and PATRICK CONROY (20s) are nearby doing chores. AN UNKNOWN SHIP sails ahead towards the bay.

GRACE

Esteban.

ESTEBAN

Trouble?

GRACE

Quite brazen to sail into our territory without a care.

ESTEBAN

You've done it to the Butlers. Many times.

GRACE

Aye. (Nods forward.) That ship sailed from the south. We've no enemies alive there.

ESTEBAN

Martyn?

GRACE

(scoffs)

The seasick fool? He wouldn't dare.

THOMAS

Should we send the *birlinn* ahead?

Thomas gestures to the small, rowboat-sized boarding vessel they're towing.

GRACE

You are too eager.

ESTEBAN

Looks to hold around fifty men.

PATRICK

We're not afraid o' fightin them.
Rather do it here than onshore.

GRACE

True. Untie the *birlinn*, we'll
catch 'em in the shallows. Patrick,
more speed.

EXT. APPROACH TO CLEW BAY - CONTINUOUS

NIALL O'FLAHERTY (30s) is at the head of the unknown ship Grace is eyeing, with a crew of 15 men and 1 young woman, MAEVE MCSWEENEY (16).

NIALL

The *Moytura* continues to gain on us.

MAEVE

Won't she fire?

NIALL

No cannon onboard. She'll likely
send a *berlinn* and climb up.

There's a loud SHOT off the bow.

NIALL (CONT'D)

(good-natured)

Then again...

MAEVE

Look at the smoke!

NIALL

Aye. Hard a'port. Decky, the flag?

EXT. APPROACH TO CLEW BAY - CONTINUOUS

Grace squints and motions to Esteban.

GRACE

Something familiar about that ship's bearing.

ESTEBAN

A friend?

THOMAS

Shall we put off?

GRACE

We'll have them soon enough.

ESTEBAN

Aha! They've turned to port!

GRACE

So they have. Is that...?

ESTEBAN

Niall O'Flaherty.

Grace grins.

EXT. CLEW BAY SHORE - DAY

Niall and his men are stretching their legs on the beach after a long, cramped voyage. Grace's crew has put down anchor; she rows in and drags a barrel ashore.

GRACE

You bastard.

NIALL

Not much of a greeting. I come bearing gifts.

The two old friends embrace. Grace shivers and wipes her feet with an old wool cloak.

ESTEBAN

Back from the dead, I see.

Esteban snorts slightly and heads off.

NIALL
(to Esteban, over his
shoulder)
Sorry to disappoint you. (turns
back) Grace, I bring you a new ship
and crew.

Maeve is lurking, hoping for an introduction to Grace.

MAEVE
Captain.

GRACE
I don't recall asking for a ship's
girl.

NIALL
Maeve, bring those barrels ashore.

Maeve stalks off, determined, not bowed.

NIALL (CONT'D)
She fought off two men in Dublin
who were besting me. Gave time to
grab me knife.

GRACE
(incredulous)
She rescued you?

NIALL
Aye. She's eager.

GRACE
She's thin. Niall, we cannot take
strays.

NIALL
Giver a chance, yah?

Maeve walks past, nods at Niall and Grace.

MAEVE (O.C.)
Barrels offloaded.

GRACE
(to Niall)
Show me she can fight.

NIALL
I'm your ship's quartermaster,
then.

GRACE

After you disappeared for a year,
Niall? You'll be stayin' awhile,
will ya?

NIALL

I know my place now.

GRACE

Do you? Esteban has learned much.
And I've never had to question his
loyalty.

NIALL

Grace. Upon the ghost of Black Oak,
I serve the O'Malleys.

GRACE

So you heard about my father.

NIALL

Aye. In his sleep?

GRACE

Perhaps the selkies came for him.
He swore he'd find one for you,
remember?

NIALL

That was a long time ago.

She stops them - holds Niall's arm a moment.

GRACE

Show me you reached accord with
Esteban. Lead the men.

NIALL

What of Maeve?

GRACE

Remains to be seen. Send'er to
Louisa for a new kit. Burn those
rags.

Grace heads up the beach towards her four-story dwelling,
Rockfleet Tower, whose entrance is in a marsh twenty yards
offshore. At high tide, the water laps up to the door.

Niall catches up to Maeve, who's lugging a sack of grain up
the beach.

NIALL

Mind you not drown the wheat. For tonight, you'll stay with my sister Louisa.

MAEVE

I will remain onboard ship.

NIALL

There are raiding parties and these lands aren't yours.

MAEVE

I know my own mind, sir.

NIALL

You, I trust. Grace's enemies, I cannot. Besides, you need to fix your kit.

Maeve shrugs, wipes her face with her ragged sleeve and heads towards Louisa's cottage, atop a small rise offshore.

EXT. CLEW BAY SHORE - CONTINUOUS

Niall finds Grace, who stopped to supervise the unloading of their score into piles, the men bickering over some of it.

NIALL

Where is Esteban? This is your ship master's job.

GRACE

Is that so, quartermaster? (winks)

NIALL

Drop ya pillage and feed! Back aboard by dark!

The men stop arguing - and study Niall after he turns back to Grace. Niall then gives them a glare over his shoulder, and they hop to.

ONE OF THE MEN approaches Rockfleet and takes a post at the door, axe slung over his shoulder, with a share of ale.

NIALL (CONT'D)

Grace! A guard at Rockfleet?

GRACE

Between the Butlers, the MacMahons and Martyn's bribed assassins, we've no peace. Killed their spies on the beach and the woods.

(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)

Poured boiling oil on them from
Rockfleet's ceiling last month.

NIALL

And where was the dashing young Mr.
De Lacy?

GRACE

Hugh does not stay with me in
Rockfleet anymore.

NIALL

Thrown to the dogs, eh? Who is
there in his place?

GRACE

No one. At present.

NIALL

Wasn't this castle Richard
Bourke's?

GRACE

I've been here since we married. I
dismissed him last fall.

NIALL

"Dismissed?"

GRACE

As within my rights. According to
our laws, it was a trial marriage.
He failed.

NIALL

You mean, *he* tried.

GRACE

We needed the lookout, Niall. Tis
safer. He has some...redeeming
qualities. But we fight.
Constantly.

NIALL

Richard's around, then?

GRACE

He comes and goes. Got some
milkmaids and clan widows to tend
to him. In that way, neither of us
tried.

NIALL

He's gone, then.

GRACE

Not entirely. (beat) Speak to Esteban. He will rail. But he loves to fight, not to lead. You must reclaim your position honorably or I'll intervene. I shan't like that.

NIALL

He can see to the ship.

GRACE

A Spanish bos'n to sound the ship and assist your young friend Maeve.

NIALL

Could be worse.

Niall turns and walks away.

GRACE

Niall? You're really back?

NIALL

Aye. I must go to Louisa. I've not seen her since we lost Ronan.

GRACE

Do you both good.

Grace nods and heads up to her tower.

EXT. ROCKFLEET TOWER - NIGHT

Pitch black landscape except lights from a few low-slung peat-made dwellings and cottages - no more than 4 or 5.

INT. ROCKFLEET TOWER, GRACE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Grace is crouched in her bed. She blows out a candle and hears a rustle. As she reaches for the dagger kept beneath her pillows, a hand clasps over her mouth and an arm pins her down from behind. She struggles for a moment, then seems to recognize her captor. Smiling, she elbows RICHARD BOURKE (mid 30s) to free herself, and climbs astride him.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. ROCKFLEET TOWER, GRACE'S ROOM - DAY

A ROOSTER CROWS as Grace and Richard dress.

RICHARD

I came last month, you were away.

GRACE

I was in Donegal. Hunting. And checking on the MacMahons.

RICHARD

What do you care for them?

GRACE

Good hunters study their prey.
Makes an easier kill.

RICHARD

That's Black Oak talking.

GRACE

He kept Gerald MacMahon's father at bay for 50 years.

RICHARD

And where were you in February?

GRACE

You've a watchful eye, Richard Bourke.

RICHARD

As you said, makes the kill easier.

GRACE

You're not getting Rockfleet back.

RICHARD

I saw Hugh on my way here. I trust I didn't take his place here last night.

GRACE

Hardly. He cares for Rockfleet when we sail.

RICHARD

A job I could easily do.

Grace goes to Richard and helps him fasten his sleeve.

GRACE

Niall is back. He brought a girl with him.

RICHARD

A girl? Since when?

GRACE

(Pointedly)

She wants to sail with us.

RICHARD

And you fret about a successor!

GRACE

She's too young.

RICHARD

How old were you in your first raid? You need more men, Grace. You know the English want Rockfleet.

GRACE

You're obsessed with the English, Richard.

RICHARD

And you haven't taken them seriously enough.

This earns an eyeroll from Grace.

GRACE

The English have no power to speak of. Unlike the Spanish.

RICHARD

Grace, you've enemies - Martyn, MacMahon, the Queen --

GRACE

If Elizabeth wants *my* land, she should send an emissary directly to me.

RICHARD

Yah have a death wish, eh?

GRACE

First I'm refused a widow's inheritance after Donal's murder. Then I have to plot to be chieftain. Now the English refuse my freedom? It's intolerable.

RICHARD

Our laws did give you this tower.

GRACE

Aye. (hesitates) You know, Richard -
it's really not the same without
you in it.

RICHARD

The English do not see your power.
If you and I do not surrender,
they'll come for us.

GRACE

(scoffs)
Then let them come!

RICHARD

As soon as the English can, they'll
kill you, your sons, probably me
and take Rockfleet. (beat) So none
of this will matter.

GRACE

If this is your news, you should
have stayed away.

INT. LOUISA'S COTTAGE, CLEW BAY DWELLING - DAY

Maeve practices drawing a sword. LOUISA O'FLAHERTY (mid 30s)
enters; Maeve drops the weapon.

LOUISA

(picks up sword)
That's no way to hold it.

MAEVE

I'm learning.

Louisa turns Maeve around, measuring boy's clothes against
her.

LOUISA

Shirt, trousers, undergarments.

As the women talk, Maeve puts on the boy's outfit, shedding
her larger, wet and ragged version.

MAEVE

Kind of you.

LOUISA

Good they'll get use.

MAEVE
Whose are they?

LOUISA
(beat)
They were my son's.

MAEVE
I'm sorry.

LOUISA
Ronan was with Grace's crew last winter. Got into a fight off Galway. Niall turned and Ronan was stabbed. Niall fled. No one's seen him til today.

MAEVE
My God.

LOUISA
God rest his soul. Ronan was a good son. Worshiped Niall. He'd helped raise 'em.

MAEVE
I met Niall in Dublin. I recognized the Black Oak mark on his arm. Looked troubled.

LOUISA
They know of Black Oak in Dublin?

MAEVE
I did. I'm a MacSweeney.

LOUISA
You know your father's history with Black Oak.

MAEVE
Aye. But Niall tells me he passed last year.

LOUISA
So he did. Grace was the son he never had. She's taken his enemies, his fleet, and she'd send you away if she knew.

MAEVE
Niall is her brother?

LOUISA

Something like. She was married to our brother Donal. When Donal was killed, Grace couldn't inherit. Her son could, but he was a child. Donal's men forced her out.

MAEVE

So she became a pirate.

LOUISA

Black Oak's men knew and loved her. She'd sailed with'em since she was knee-high.

Grace knocks and enters.

GRACE

They call it piracy because they say we're stealing English goods.

Maeve smoothes her shorn hair beneath a cap.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Maeve, run along and eat before those jackals devour it all.

Maeve obliges. The women exit the hut, Maeve trotting ahead towards Esteban.

EXT. CLEW BAY SHORE - CONTINUOUS

Grace and Louisa watch Maeve stride away.

LOUISA

She could be you.

GRACE

Twenty years ago. She's seen less.

LOUISA

You made your way.

GRACE

Yes. Black Oak grieved my sailing when it didn't serve 'im. I'd rather not.

LOUISA

(snorts)

Liar! You love every bit. You are better at it than Donal, God rest his soul.

GRACE

Donal never took to the water. He never had to. Your father's lands were vast.

LOUISA

Not as vast as the seas.

GRACE

Dreamy fairy nonsense.

Grace winces and rubs her neck.

LOUISA

How long will ya fight?

GRACE

Until my sons can.

LOUISA

That may not be much longer.

GRACE

Aye, but I've something in common with my father. My first son is not able. Or interested. And the English will keep coming. Elizabeth fears we'll ally with Spain.

LOUISA

What are the English like?

GRACE

Strange. Silly clothes. Tire easily. They don't know what they're fighting for, Louisa. They think us animals. But they're well-armed.

EXT. "MOYTURA" DECK - DAY

SWORDS CLASH AND CLANG as some men cheer for Esteban, some for Maeve, who's practicing with the master swordsman.

ESTEBAN

Parry. Thrust.

He's inching forward, she back, trying to corner her.

MAEVE

I. Am.

Maeve ducks around Esteban, swinging wildly with her sword, catching Thomas, a bystander, with the tip.

THOMAS
Watch it! Esteban, control the
runt!

Esteban reaches around Maeve, drops his sword, and pulls a dagger which he holds to her throat.

MAEVE
(panting)
Sorry!

ESTEBAN
Right idea. Wrong time.

MAEVE
When?

ESTEBAN
You will not overpower man. You
will move like cat, see?

He jumps and thrusts his dagger to illustrate a darting combat style.

MAEVE
I'm not sure how.

ESTEBAN
Too hard for most men. Not you. You
must be quick. With your hands,
your feet.

MAEVE
There's no room!

ESTEBAN
(tugs on a rigging rope
for emphasis)
Then climb.

MAEVE
I hate heights.

ESTEBAN
So we must make you fall in love
with them. Thomas?

Esteban gestures for the young sailor to show Maeve how to climb the rigging.

THOMAS
I'm too heavy!

ESTEBAN

(to Maeve)

Thomas will watch below. Untangle the top lines. See? (Points up.)

MAEVE

Don't I need to have a sword before

-

Esteban slaps Maeve's face - lightly - but it shocks her.

ESTEBAN

I give orders. You follow.

Maeve turns and springs up the mast. Thomas chuckles. Esteban silences him with a glare.

INT. GALWAY PUB - NIGHT

Irish men, shabbily dressed, sit with goblets, cups and ladles of beer in the dim, ancient pub. Martyn enters, holding a bottle of wine under his coat. He spots GERALD MACMAHON (30s) by himself in a corner.

A DRUNKEN MAN (20s) stumbles into Martyn, who grabs the drunk by his raggedy clothes, pulls him close and hurls him to the floor. THE DRUNK'S BUDDY (20s) pulls a knife and raises his arm to stab Martyn. A MARTYN ALLY strips the knife from behind, and Martyn stabs the drunk's buddy, his attacker. As the body falls to the floor, Martyn continues through the fracas.

MacMahon is a tough, street smart chieftain, not to be trifled with. Martyn gets to the table, wiping his bloody knife on his pants. MacMahon nods in greeting.

MARTYN

MacMahon. How soon do you sail?

GERALD

(drains glass)

My gout is back. If the weather holds, Kieran sails in the next few days.

MARTYN

Your brother? If he succeeds, I will double your earnings on the trip. If not, I'd make for the country. I'll give you a half hour start.

GERALD

(laughs)

You think I drink here because I have no money?

MARTYN

We have the same interest.

GERALD

(snorts)

You're payin me to kill the wench. Don't care why. I've had my eye on Rockfleet since your father was mayor.

MARTYN

Gerald. You know the deal Sidney's offering.

GERALD

He's a lyin fool.

MARTYN

You'll be Lord MacMahon.

The men burst out laughing.

GERALD

(hoots)

"Lord MacMahon". The English can try to invade. I'll piss on them.

MARTYN

They are coming, Gerald.

GERALD

You're listening to the Queen's slag now?

MARTYN

Claim her lands. Bring the tolls. We'll buy time from the English.

GERALD

My cut is 10?

MARTYN

We agreed to 5.

GERALD

You stabbed one of my men, Martyn.
10.

Martyn rises and tosses a pouch of coins at Gerald as he departs.

MARTYN

5, Gerald. 5, and no one else dies today.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. "MOYTURA" DECK - DAY

Grace is checking on Maeve and the rigging.

GRACE

Not uncommon they tangle in this wind. We must make ready to sail as soon as possible.

MAEVE

When will that be?

GRACE

You're eager.

MAEVE

Niall said there's a living here.

GRACE

We collect payment from passing ships. After my share, Niall divides the spoils.

MAEVE

He told me. When are we paid?

GRACE

When there is a ship that passes. If none, we hunt. Fish. Gather food. Watch for invaders.

MAEVE

Invaders?

GRACE

Our clan is most powerful. So others attack. They seldom win. But they've struck near my heart.

MAEVE

On land?

GRACE

Better odds at sea.

MAEVE

If there is an attack -

Esteban has come over, with a short sword for Maeve.

ESTEBAN

Stay out of sight.

MAEVE

I'm ready.

GRACE

You're ready when Esteban says
you're ready.

Esteban shakes his head, "no". Maeve withdraws and goes back
to practicing her knots.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Who does she avenge?

ESTEBAN

The English killed her family.

GRACE

She must live for something.
Killing isn't enough.

ESTEBAN

For now it is. She'll learn.

GRACE

Where is the new cannon?

ESTEBAN

Ask your new ship's master?

GRACE

He spoke to you.

ESTEBAN

He ran away. The men won't obey a
coward.

GRACE

He's returned, Esteban. He is no
traitor. He was sick with grief. As
was I.

ESTEBAN

I'm to look after our weapons,
then?

GRACE

You are.

ESTEBAN

I will. And sound the ship.

GRACE

The cannon, Esteban.

Esteban nods towards the ship's stern and goes to inspect it.

INT. ROCKFLEET TOWER, ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Richard arrives, deer slung over his shoulder. He nods to the guard at the door, enters, and hurls the dead animal to the floor. Heads up the narrow twisted staircase to Grace's room.

INT. GRACE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GRACE

You'd best not step that heavy when you're hunting.

RICHARD

There's a dead deer downstairs.

GRACE

If that's an invitation, I'll not be tendin' it.

RICHARD

Niall's back, I thought twas high time for a feast.

GRACE

(pensively)

Twice in 2 weeks, Richard?

RICHARD

You're disappointed.

GRACE

It's a bit strange. I see more of you now than when we were married.

RICHARD

Does my lady complain?

GRACE

You brought food. You may stay.

RICHARD

Thank you, highness.

GRACE

I sail tomorrow anyway. Tuesdays see traffic.

RICHARD

Keep watch to the south.

GRACE

Oh?

RICHARD

Martyn's on the move again. He's sending the MacMahons after you.

GRACE

What a fool. MacMahon is all the way north.

RICHARD

No. He's plotting in Galway. Sailing with hired men to kill you and burn your ships.

GRACE

I shouldn't worry. He's been quiet for months.

RICHARD

Still, you should plan a strong defense. Ask Niall to round up the men.

GRACE

(a bit flirty)
You're so concerned, Richard.

RICHARD

If I had to lose this castle, could only be to you. I've no intention of seeing a MacMahon here.

Grace comes over to Richard and pulls him close.

GRACE

Richard. I need some rest. We sail tomorrow.

RICHARD

Would you send Hugh away too?

GRACE

What's this? Hugh's not been here for months.

RICHARD

I also heard he's coming home.

GRACE

Clearly I should hire your spies.

RICHARD

He's a child. He's barely older than your son.

GRACE

He's beautiful. No scars.
Unspoiled.

RICHARD

Oh, he's been plenty spoiled by
now. (beat) Do you dress him too?
Play mother?

GRACE

Get out! Take your flystrewn
carcass. Mind I don't pour oil on
yir head.

Richard takes one look and sees she means business. He storms out. She falls backward on the bed, thinking.

INT. GALWAY PUB - NIGHT

MacMahon gingerly approaches the bar. His brother KIERAN (20s) is at the rail alone.

KIERAN

Final orders? We sail in the morn.

GERALD

You said that three days ago.

KIERAN

There was weather.

GERALD

Doesn't stop O'Malley.

KIERAN

You know that witch reads clouds.
Besides, she'll be dead in a day.

GERALD

Aye. (claps Kieran on the back)
Brother, thanks for sailin' for me.
The gout is dreadful. But I want
the wench dead.

KIERAN

Now Sidney's sending men?

GERALD

He insisted. Captain Howe'll survey
the area for the English. Not
likely to fight.

KIERAN

Course not. We're to pull 'er from
Rockfleet?

GERALD

Aye. Pull her to Achill. We'll hold
'ir for ransom.

KIERAN

We must be off.

He gestures towards the door, and follows the English sailors
out.

GERALD

Godspeed.

EXT. "MOYTURA" DECK - DAY

Maeve is stirring lumpy oats in a cauldron below deck. Niall
arrives with a bowl.

NIALL

Is there bread today?

MAEVE

Aye. We will sail soon, and no more
'a this.

NIALL

We'll still eat bits of bread. Go
ashore. Catch fish.

MAEVE

I don't know how to cook them.

NIALL

Didn't your mother teach you?

MAEVE

We had a cook. I learned
needlework.

NIALL

Perhaps you can mend our trousers.

MAEVE

Needlework. Not mending.

NIALL

Would you rather be sewing?

MAEVE

I'd rather be sailing.

NIALL

Maeve, the whole crew cooks. You can't do much else.

MAEVE

Not for lack of trying. I don't know what I did to the oats.

NIALL

(tastes)

You burned them.

He sees her hands - they're red from work. He puts the bowl down and ties cloth around them.

NIALL (CONT'D)

Wear this as they harden, yah?

Maeve looks after him, a bit perplexed as Niall climbs up to the main deck.

INT. ROCKFLEET TOWER, GRACE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Grace is drinking wine and watching the sky out the window. There's a QUIET KNOCK at the door. Grace reaches for her dagger.

GRACE

Richard?

HUGH (O.S.)

Is Richard in there?

GRACE

(eyeroll, sheaths dagger)

What are you doing here?

HUGH

I was cold.

Grace opens the door to let Hugh in.

HUGH (CONT'D)

Your favorite hawk is back on Achill.

GRACE

How did you get in here?

HUGH

Don't change the subject.

GRACE

Have you gotten in tha wine?

HUGH
I looked for you on the ship and
Niall said you were here.

GRACE
Niall sent you?

Hugh is slowly approaching Grace, who's smiling and receptive despite herself. He reaches her and begins kissing her.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I must speak to him tomorrow.

HUGH
I'll leave then. But it's been too
long.

GRACE
You must leave in the morning. And
hope Richard doesn't see you.

HUGH
I don't care. Let 'im watch.

GRACE
Hugh?

HUGH
Hmm?

GRACE
Stop talking.

They fall into bed.

EXT. "MOYTURA" DECK - NIGHT

Maeve is lying on her back, studying the stars. Can't sleep. There's a rustle, and we see Thomas creeping towards her with a knife. He covers her mouth with his hand and tries to quiet her.

THOMAS
Time for your most important duty.

Maeve BITES him and he SLAPS her. She knees and elbows him, scrambles to stand, and YELLS.

MAEVE
You stupid ass!

THOMAS
You smiled o'er the wretched oats.
I know what that means.

MAEVE

I meant nothing of any sort.

THOMAS

Oh yes you did.

MAEVE

Try me. Jump overboard and find a sheep.

Thomas tries to pin her against the side of the boat. Maeve struggles and screams. After a moment, she appears to yield, and smiles. As he nuzzles her neck, she grabs his dagger and stabs him in the leg, then his side.

Turning, she looks ferocious. With all her strength, she hurls him overboard.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Swim.

Niall, Patrick, and Esteban are in their pallets below decks, awake, listening. Niall smiles softly, puts his dagger back under his pillow, and closes his eyes to rest.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. "MOYTURA" DECK - DAY

Maeve is fixing breakfast. Grace enters. The water is choppy today, but Grace notices Maeve remains steady.

GRACE

Niall said you were down here.

MAEVE

Almost ready.

Grace notes Maeve's bruised neck; she reaches out and touches it. Maeve recoils.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

My fault, right?

GRACE

Thomas got what he deserved.

MAEVE

I did not want to kill him.

GRACE

Others may try what he did.

MAEVE

I will kill them too.

GRACE

Good.

Maeve is shaking her head - her bravado is cracking. Grace turns her around. Maeve wipes at her face and won't look at Grace.

GRACE (CONT'D)

If you feel as much as we do, you will feel others' deaths, even by your own hand.

MAEVE

Will your crew take turns visiting me each night?

GRACE

Thomas was new. The others follow my lead. They find a willing lass and pay or charm their way in.

MAEVE

I cried out, and no one tried to stop him.

GRACE

(quietly, so as not to be heard)

You want to learn to fight? How else will you learn?

FLASHBACK - EXT. CLEW BAY, BLACK OAK'S SHIP - NIGHT

A teenaged Grace is on deck when EDWARD (17) grabs her; his left hand covers her mouth, and his right hand fumbles for her skirts. She starts kicking, stomping, biting and clawing. He almost tears her dress off. She screams.

INT. CLEW BAY, BLACK OAK'S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Below decks, a TEENAGED NIALL hears her, grabs his dagger and runs to find Grace. At the ladder, an arm reaches out and stops him. It is BLACK OAK O'MALLEY, Grace's father. His sword is ready. They watch.

EXT. CLEW BAY, BLACK OAK'S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Grace kicks over a bucket of slimy bilge water, and Edward loses his footing. She grabs his sword and holds it to his throat. Panting, she sees her father. Black Oak nods.

GRACE

(to Edward)

Jump. Or die. Your choice.

He laughs and swats at the sword. As Black Oak runs forward, Grace reaches behind her, grabs her dagger, and plunges it into Edward's heart.

EXT. "MOYTURA" DECK - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

GRACE

My father taught me the same lesson. I'm alive. No man has touched me without invitation since. We are the only women on ship. Knaves are everywhere. And Niall will not always be there to stop them.

MAEVE

Will they try again?

GRACE

You've awhile. Thomas' broken body
is on the rocks below till the
sharks get 'im. A warning.

MAEVE

I've never killed a man.

GRACE

Until now. What came before doesn't
matter. You did what you must.

Grace starts to head upstairs.

GRACE (CONT'D, O.S.) (CONT'D)

Try not to kill a crewman every
day, hmm? We'll still need some men
to fight.

Maeve grins to herself.

EXT. CLARE ISLAND CLIFFS - DAY

Grace and Niall are atop the cliffs overlooking Clew Bay.
They're appraising the clouds, studying the wind.

GRACE

Whitecaps. Hard sail from the
south.

NIALL

Are they really coming so soon?

GRACE

Usually ambushes are a surprise.

NIALL

You saw Maeve?

GRACE

You were right to leave that brazen-
faced cur on board with her last
night.

NIALL

Esteban and I were ready to
intervene if he'd gotten further. I
knew the arse wouldn't let her
alone.

GRACE

I doubt the rest will bother.

NIALL

You killed all five men who tried. Black Oak enjoyed goading the tortured wretches with that. Soon they lost interest.

GRACE

Esteban can train her today. The others are gathering supplies to sail, she won't have an audience. Have you spoken with Esteban?

NIALL

The Spaniard's as eloquent as ever.

GRACE

Why do you feud?

NIALL

He resents your father's fondness for me.

GRACE

Louisa may know of that, not I.

NIALL

I'm grateful for Esteban's swords.

GRACE

You should be. He's saved your life and mine enough with them. He's loyal.

NIALL

I'm not?

GRACE

I never said that. Ronan's death was a blow.

NIALL

I couldn't face Louisa.

GRACE

She understood. So did I. Why did you run, Niall?

NIALL

Grace, Esteban, even Ronan, chose to join Black Oak. I was born to. I doubted my place.

GRACE

I rely on you most.

NIALL
More than Hugh? Richard?

GRACE
Friends are dearer to me than
husbands, blood or no.

NIALL
As sisters are to me.

GRACE
I've stood here many times waiting
for clouds and ships to pass. Eager
to fight. Not now. Some dread is
coming.

NIALL
From the east. You would not know
Dublin. New lords flouncing about
as at court. Their clansmen dead or
in rags. Forests cut to shrubs for
English ships.

GRACE
Her Majesty is her father's
daughter.

NIALL
She is even more desperate. She's
cornered by the Spanish.

GRACE
I know how she feels. She seeks to
protect, not conquer. We're pawns
and a treasure chest. If I can make
her see reason, she will not come
further.

NIALL
Wait, what's this?

Grace looks out to the bay and sees a small ship sailing out
at sea, not coming into the bay. Two red flags are raised.

NIALL (CONT'D)
Two ships approach.

The red flags are lowered and a black cloth rises.

GRACE
Tonight.

EXT. ACHILL COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Hugh creeps low to the ground, bow at the ready, stalking a deer in a clearing ahead. He's downwind and concentrating on the large buck.

EXT. ACHILL COUNTRYSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Just as quietly THREE MEN approach Hugh from behind. They signal to each other, and one raises his dagger and kills Hugh before he ever knows what hit him. Hugh falls to the ground; the men turn him over.

DECLAN

Fuck me.

OLCAN

Who's this?

BUTLER

I dunno.

DECLAN

Tisn't Owen O'Malley.

BUTLER

Poor bastard's his twin from the back.

OLCAN

Gerald said kill Grace's son.

DECLAN

And this idn't him?

OLCAN

Fuck if I know.

BUTLER

Get down!

Butler pulls the men lower and nods his head behind them. In the distance, we can see a dark figure on a horse approaching quickly.

OLCAN

Get down, my arse! Get to the bog!

The three assassins run off, leaving Hugh's body, Declan's dagger still stuck in his chest.

EXT. CLEW BAY - GRACE'S CREW SHIP - NIGHT

Patrick is leading the crew as they sail out of the bay to the north, leaving an empty decoy galley bobbing in the choppy waters for MacMahon's men to find.

PATRICK

Look smart! Hoist the sail! Pull hard!

The crew pull ropes and sit down at their oars to row the small ship out, weapons their feet as they pull, pull, pull with their might against a strong current. Soon, they're a barely visible smudge in the inky black.

EXT. MACMAHON SHIP SEABHAC, CLEW BAY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

CAPTAIN KIERAN MACMAHON (20s), Gerald's brother, leads the large ship into the bay. His first mate, O'BRIEN, is itching for action.

KIERAN

Drop anchor! Now we wait the striapach* (whore) out.

O'BRIEN

Shall we storm Rockfleet, Kieran?

KIERAN

What, and get hot oil poured on our heads? I told those English arses to go at it. (Chuckles). And tomorrow we'll lure 'er out.

DOWD

Where are her men?

O'BRIEN

Fucking that wench?

KIERAN

O'Brien, who gives a shit, you're not taking her tonight.

O'BRIEN

Finish 'er, Kieran. I say light the guns!

Their taunts fill the night.

EXT. MACMAHON SHIP "FABHCUN", CLEW BAY - CONTINUOUS

A few English sailors sent to keep an eye on the MacMahons, led by CAPTAIN PHILIP HOWE (20s), hear the vicious yells.

Howe's men HENRY, WILLIAM and JAMES (early 20s) keep order on the deck; all are dressed in England's finest wool uniforms. Good for warmth; bad for keeping out wet sea spray as the ship chops up and down the rough Clew Bay waters.

WILLIAM

Why must the Irish make war over everything?

HOWE

Yours is not to ask why, William. Our mission is to gain the O'Malleys loyalty to Her Majesty.

JAMES

Sir, are we to take her at Rockfleet?

HOWE

Aye. I'd hoped her guard wouldn't hear our approach.

HENRY

(nodding towards the rowdy Irish sailing ahead of them)
However would they do that?

HOWE

MacMahon assured me they've experience with her. Four story tower, waters to the base, keep to the opening of the bay until high tide.

JAMES

Orders, sir?

HOWE

You and Henry go onshore and scout ahead.

WILLIAM

What of resistance?

HOWE

Resistance? I'm sure the MacMahons will manage that.

From the English POV, we see MacMahon's crew readying long knives, clubs and axes.

JAMES

Of course, sir.

EXT. CLEW BAY SHORE - CONTINUOUS

James and Henry row silently to shore; there is some moonlight, not much, but a soft candlelight glowing from a small window in the top story of Rockfleet tower.

HENRY
 (speaking quietly)
 I'm rowing towards the light,
 James. Swords ready?

JAMES
 Swords ready. Howe is a fool. If we
 see one twitch or footprint on the
 sand, Henry, we make for the ship.

HENRY
 Yes, sir.

INT. ROCKFLEET TOWER, GRACE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Louisa is pacing back and forth, bearing a single dagger. Her son ROBERT (13) sits in the corner, holding another. She's Grace's bait for the trap. She hears a loud HOWL as one of the GUARD DOGS races down the stairs towards Rockfleet's entrance.

Louisa goes to her window and peers out. She can't see anything, but knows it's not a friend lurking in the dark.

LOUISA
 (as GRACE, out the window)
 A pot of oil on your head unless ye
 announce yourself!

JAMES
 (clearing throat)
 Sir Philip Howe requests your
 presence on Her Majesty's behalf.

LOUISA
 Her Majesty has come here?

HENRY
 Sir Henry Sidney sends us.

LOUISA
 Give 'im my regards, then!

James pulls Henry back several feet as we hear a SPLAT-SPLOSH - "Grace" just emptied a chamber pot out her window.

JAMES

(O.C., trotting back to
shore and their rowboat)

That was your only chance, ma'am.

They reach the shoreline, but their rowboat is gone. No footprints. Scared, the two men head downshore, away from Rockfleet, looking around for the forces they assume are waiting in the brush. The moon reflects off their steel.

A TWIG snaps. Henry YELLS.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. CLEW BAY SHORE - NIGHT

Three figures creep through the shadows towards Rockfleet. They cover the open beach quickly; with no spyglasses, their enemies can't see them through the fog.

NIALL
(whispers)
Through the marsh!

Niall leads the way, Maeve and Esteban are close behind. Just then, a sword tip touches Esteban's shoulder. It's Grace.

GRACE
I couldn't wait. Where are they,
Niall?

NIALL
Twenty men, most passed out on the
ship nearest Rockfleet. In no shape
to fight.

GRACE
We'll make them.

MAEVE
I've got just the thing.

Maeve points to the rowboat she snuck and stole from the English when they weren't looking.

Niall grins at Grace, who signals. The trio silently row alongside the MacMahon's smaller ship, the Fabhcun. They check swords, axes and daggers. Grace nods, and Maeve throws a GRAPPLING HOOK up and over the side. Grace gestures for Maeve to stay put before she, Niall and Esteban climb swiftly up the rope.

EXT. "FABHCUN", CLEW BAY - NIGHT

Grace, Esteban and Niall spring onto the deck in quick succession, swords ready.

INTERCUT TO: EXT. COUNTRYSIDE NEAR CLEW BAY - CONTINUOUS

RICHARD AND THREE FIGHTERS sneak up on Hugh's murderers, sleeping under their cloaks.

CUT TO:

INT. "FABHCUN" BELOW DECK, CLEW BAY - NIGHT

THREE ENGLISH SAILORS, PHILIP, DAVID, AND JOHN, dozing in hammocks, rise to the sound of CLASHING SWORDS.

JOHN

Shite! We're boarded!

CUT TO:

EXT. "SEABHAC" SHIP DECK - NIGHT

Maeve swings over the side of the ship, pulling the grappling hook rope behind her. She sees the steps leading to decks below. Quickly, she pours bilge water down the steps and shoves barrels in front of them. She throws the grappling rope over to the Fabhcun and swings over, dropping the rope and springing up the mast as Esteban taught her.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE NEAR CLEW BAY - CONTINUOUS

Richard Bourke and three other fighters draw their swords and pull coverings off the men.

RICHARD

Up, bastards.

DECLAN

Richard Bourke. We've no quarrel with you.

RICHARD

Shut up, MacMahon scum.

OLCAN

(hand on dagger)

What's this? Grace's trash is back?

RICHARD

You killed a boy today.

BUTLER

Aye. You should be thanking us. You'll have her all to yourself now.

RICHARD

Fools.

The men erupt into fights with their daggers and swords.

CUT TO:

EXT. "FABHCUN" DECK, CLEW BAY - CONTINUOUS

Grace and Niall, swords blazing, are holding off TWO ENGLISH SAILORS. THREE ARE DEAD on deck.

Esteban is scrambling to set up the cannon to fire directly at the "Seabhac". Captain Howe sneaks up behind Grace and is about to stab her when --

CRASH!

Maeve JUMPS ONTO HOWE from the rigging where she'd climbed and hid. She grabs Howe's sword, stabs him, slashes his sword hand clean off, whips around and meets John, who's come from below deck. John is shocked, but quickly recovers; they parry until Esteban stabs him, from behind, and the KNIFE EMERGES out of John's chest.

GRACE

(to Maeve)

Who taught you how to fly?

ESTEBAN

Guilty!

Esteban engages Philip and David who came from below deck - Grace comes at them from behind with two falchions, stabs them, and forces them overboard to their deaths.

GRACE

(to Esteban)

Secure?

ESTEBAN

(to Maeve)

Unfurl the sail!

MAEVE

Which rope?

NIALL

Behind you!

Maeve pulls a rope and the sails rise. Grace wipes her brow, spits off the side of the ship.

GRACE

May the devil tear into these men.

Esteban whistles at Maeve, and she smoothly TOSSES HIM A FALCHION which he uses to stab a twitching sailor.

ESTEBAN

Now?

Grace nods, and Esteban lights the cannon pointed at the "Seabhac" ahead of them. It FIRES, exploding below deck and killing most remaining crew.

On cue, an O'MALLEY SHIP sails up in the darkness and SIX MEN use ropes and GRAPPLING HOOKS to swing on and up to the deck of the smoking "Fabhcun". They'll handle the remaining sailors.

Grace looks at Niall.

GRACE
Not bad for an O'Flaherty.

NIALL
I'll tell Louisa you said so.

ESTEBAN
What's next, Captain?

Grace just smiles.

EXT. "FABHCUN", CLEW BAY - CONTINUOUS

A short sailor, GEOFFREY (teens), grabs Howe's hand, his finger still bearing a crested ring, a grisly souvenir of battle. He wraps it in Howe's scarf, finds a piece of Maeve's rope and slips off the back of the ship and into the small boat Grace and her crew had used to sneak up to his vessel. He rows off into the night, Howe's hand at his feet.

INT. ROCKFLEET TOWER, GRACE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Grace is tying a rope to her bedpost that runs out a small window and all the way down Rockfleet's south wall to the galley where Esteban, Niall and a few other crew sleep. Richard enters.

RICHARD
Niall told me the MacMahons came.

GRACE
Aye. Kieran - not Gerald. The English paid them and sent men to help. They'll be back.

RICHARD
Grace. Hugh's dead.

GRACE
That can't be.

RICHARD
You should sit.

GRACE

How do you know this?

Richard grabs a bottle of wine and sits next to Grace, who's collapsed onto her bed, stunned.

GRACE (CONT'D)

How, Richard?

RICHARD

I saw his body myself. On Achill.

GRACE

A lie.

Richard hands Grace a small leather pouch with her initials.

RICHARD

This was in his jacket.

Grace begins to sob.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Grace, the MacMahons did it.

GRACE

Hugh went hunting on Achill day before yesterday.

Grace breaks down again.

RICHARD

I knew he still loved you.

GRACE

Dammit, Richard. Can you account for all of your time lately?

Richard gruffly clears his throat and drinks some wine.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You say the MacMahons murdered him?

RICHARD

My cousins and I were riding yesterday when we saw four men huddling over another man. By the time we got to him, Hugh was dead. We followed his killers and waited for dark.

GRACE

MacMahon murdered him?

RICHARD

Declan.

GRACE

What did they do to him?

RICHARD

Don't do this, Grace.

GRACE

Richard.

RICHARD

A single dagger. Quick. Hugh was taken by surprise.

GRACE

Poor boy. (Grabs her sword.) What of the scum who did this?

INT. LOUISA'S COTTAGE, CLEW BAY DWELLING - NIGHT

Maeve is cleaning her daggers. Louisa is mending her linen shirt which was torn during the fighting.

LOUISA

You jumped down from the sail?

MAEVE

I did. Niall told me Grace did that once when she was my age.

LOUISA

I forgot that. Black Oak loved that story.

MAEVE

I want to stay, Louisa.

LOUISA

If you can't sail with her, you'll stay here.

MAEVE

I don't have anywhere else to go.

LOUISA

Gracious!

MAEVE

I meant..thank you.

Bemused, they smile and tend silently to their tasks.

INT. ROCKFLEET TOWER, GRACE'S ROOM - NIGHT

GRACE

Where have you left these gifts for me? We must make an example of them.

RICHARD

My men and I took them. We buried Hugh near your father.

Grace stares at Richard, horrified, then infuriated.

GRACE

Feis ort! (Fuck off!)

She comes at Richard with a fist; he catches and pulls her close.

GRACE (CONT'D)

He was an innocent, Richard. He never raised arms against the MacMahons or the English.

RICHARD

His father is allied with Martyn. They trade everywhere with the crown's blessing.

GRACE

This makes no sense.

RICHARD

The bastards who did it are dead.

GRACE

I want to see him myself!

RICHARD

You don't.

GRACE

You are not my husband anymore. Don't command me.

RICHARD

Not by our law, but by all others you are my wife. I killed them for you.

GRACE

Why?

RICHARD

Grace - why? It was something I could do for you. You don't allow much.

GRACE

I didn't allow this.

RICHARD

Some things aren't yours to decide. The boy hardly deserved to get stabbed in a field. And he did withdraw once we were married.

Grace just glares at Richard.

GRACE

Was Gerald there?

RICHARD

He wasn't among them.

GRACE

Gerald knew of my - fondness for Hugh. He came upon us in the forest. A few years back. Hugh's first summer here. We thought no one was about.

Richard's face hardens and he pulls back.

GRACE (CONT'D)

All to say, he knew Hugh's importance. And Gerald must die for this. He attacked someone under my protection. It could have been one of my sons.

RICHARD

Rather fine bait, Grace.

Richard rises and checks his cloak.

GRACE

Just where do you think you're going?

RICHARD

To the door. I'll stand guard. Tomorrow, I sail for Galway.

GRACE

Do not take this further, Richard.
I will finish him, his sons, his
brothers and anyone else with that
wretched name. Not you. Me.

Grace grabs her swords and dagger, shoves Richard aside, and leaves in a blind fury. After a beat, Richard slugs some wine and sits. Takes off his boots. Sighs. Sinks to sleep.

INT. ENGLISH ADMINISTRATOR SIDNEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Howe's young sailor, Geoffrey, hurries into Sidney's office, weary, muddied, bloodied. Sidney is sitting with Martyn, a few merchants, and TWO AIDES; the men are all taken aback.

MARTYN

What's this?

GEOFFREY

We raided the O'Malley's.

SIDNEY

She's defeated already!

GEOFFREY

Sir.

Geoffrey puts the flag, with Howe's hand, blood and soot marks, onto Sidney's table.

SIDNEY

Delivery from Captain Howe?

GEOFFREY

Aye. But not what you asked for.

He exits. Without asking, Martyn reaches for the bloody package opens it and loses his temper.

MARTYN

MACMAHON!!

Martyn slams his hand on the table and storms out. Sidney sips some brandy and mulls over his missing taxes.

FADE TO BLACK.

END ACT FIVE