

The Raft

C.J. Cronin
(Episode 1)

Running time (with commercials) 1 hour 30 mins

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cjcronin1@gmail.com

FADE IN.

EXT. THE LOUVRE, PARIS -- DAY

Through a series of dissolves establish the building and the area, before...

INT. THE LOUVRE, GALLERY -- DAY

...penetrating the building, and exploring the corridors, the various works of art, until eventually discovering a woman. ELIZABETH RIVERS sits alone before Géricault's giant painting, 'The Raft of the 'Medusa'. Elizabeth's scrutiny of the painting is intense.

Over a PA, first in French, then English, comes an announcement that the centre is closing. People leave. As if coming from a trance, Elizabeth blinks thoughtfully, realizing she has to go.

INT. THE LOUVRE, MEZZANINE LEVEL -- DAY

Same locale and time: Looking down on Elizabeth, the shoulder of a man's suit intrudes into frame. He watches her slowly get up and walk toward the exit. A GUARD watches her impatiently.

The man watching from above is MARCEL SAVIGNY, one of the curators of the gallery. He watches Elizabeth with mild interest.

INT. FRENCH HOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

Elizabeth's unmade bed is in the background as she sips coffee. She gazes through her open hotel balcony door at Paris.

EXT. PARISIAN STREET -- MORNING

A wired bundle of newspapers are thrown to the ground. Marcel, hurrying by, frowns admonishingly at the tough DELIVERY MAN who threw the bundle his way. Given the man's daunting prowess Marcel continues on.

EXT. THE LOUVRE -- MORNING

A CROWD of people wait to go inside, Elizabeth among them. A GUARD appears inside and unlocks the doors.

INT. LOUVRE, MEZZANINE LEVEL -- MORNING

Marcel arrives along the hall. He carries a briefcase and his overcoat. He notices Elizabeth sitting in front of the same painting. He slows, interested, and comes to a complete halt. He

considers her. Ahead, a GUARD opens a door for him. He therefore moves on.

Elizabeth continues her consideration of the painting.

INT. OFFICES/THE LOUVRE -- DAY

Marcel comes from his office carrying a sheet of paper and his jacket. He hands a SECRETARY the paper.

MARCEL

Pouvez-vous numériser cela et aller déjeuner, s'il vous plaît.

SECRETARY

Oui.

Marcel nods and walks down a hall, pulling on his jacket.

INT. THE LOUVRE, MEZZANINE LEVEL -- DAY

Marcel comes through the doorway he entered earlier. He slows and stops as he sees:

Elizabeth still sits before the painting.

Intrigued, Marcel exits frame.

INT. THE LOUVRE, GALLERY -- DAY

Elizabeth, sitting, is a quite attractive woman in her 40's. Marcel, approaching from behind, has not yet seen her face.

Marcel walks into frame nearby. He is about to speak but decides instead to look for common ground, and so studies the painting. Without looking her way he comments.

MARCEL

Vous savez, un de mes ancêtres lointains était l'un des survivants de ce radeau.

He turns to find Elizabeth staring at him, concentrating hard. After a moment...

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry, I read French, but I don't speak it so well.

MARCEL

Oh, excuse me. I was saying that one of my distant relatives was a survivor on that raft.

ELIZABETH

My.

MARCEL

Yes. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Marcel Savigny. I am one of the curators here.

ELIZABETH

Savigny...Wasn't he the...

MARCEL

The ship's surgeon, yes...In fact, it was this painting that led to my interest in art and ultimately becoming a curator. My father used to bring me here as a boy, to show me something of my ancestry. Like you, I would come alone and stare at this painting for many hours.

ELIZABETH

You've been watching me then?

MARCEL

Yes.

Elizabeth grins at his candor. Marcel grins back. She looks at the painting.

ELIZABETH

Which one is your ancestor?

MARCEL

The tallest of course.

Elizabeth grins.

MARCEL

And may I be so rude as to inquire about your interest in the painting?

EXT. CAFE -- DAY

They are seated. A wine bottle is on the table.

ELIZABETH

Well I have this uncle. His hobby is genealogy. Apparently, we are descended from Charlotte Picard.

MARCEL

Ah!

A WAITER arrives with two wine glasses, places them and leaves.

MARCEL

Charlotte-Adélaïde Picard. Quite the heroine.

ELIZABETH

So I believe. But there's a piece of the puzzle missing. We have every ancestor going back except for Charlotte's husband. There's no record of who he was.

MARCEL

Monsieur Dard.

ELIZABETH

No. Well, yes, she married Richard Dard, but he was not the father of my ancestor.

MARCEL

Ah? Interesting. So the records go back to Senegal?

ELIZABETH

No, the colonial records came back here after independence. Her daughter's birth certificate merely states 'father unknown'.

MARCEL

Well...these things happen.

ELIZABETH

Tell me about it.

MARCEL

So please, what is it you find so fascinating in Géricault's painting?

INT. MARCEL'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

A book of lithographs of various scenes from the sinking of 'The Medusa' (including a diagram of the raft) is being held by a female hand. As she speaks Elizabeth turns the page.

ELIZABETH (OS)

I just wonder what it would be like.

They sit on a fat chaise longue together, drinking wine, the book on Elizabeth's lap. There is a fire.

ELIZABETH

I don't think we fear sudden death, but I think we all have a primordial fear of pain, protracted pain I mean. I just find it so...so difficult to imagine, the suffering, the anguish, the depth of feeling.

MARCEL

You have read much about it?

ELIZABETH

Well, strangely there's few books on it. I've read bits here and there, you know, Two forty passengers, one sixty crew, one thirty-five to one sixty dead, like they were all just things, not people.

She is looking at a lithograph of Géricault's painting "The Raft of the 'Medusa'" (the same painting in the gallery).

MARCEL

Well fortunately for you, you are talking to the world's foremost authority on the wreck of 'The Medusa'. Would you mind if I tied you to a chair before we start?

Elizabeth grins, not quite understanding.

MARCEL

It's my pet subject.

ELIZABETH

Oh. (chuckles) No, but you can top up my glass.

As Marcel does so.

ELIZABETH

How many women have you seduced with 'The Medusa'?

MARCEL

I am seducing you?

INT. MARCEL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Elizabeth has a glow of perspiration on her skin as she clutches a sheet to her and rests back, out of breath.

ELIZABETH

Oui.

Marcel is in bed beside her, puffing.

MARCEL

Yes?

ELIZABETH

You're seducing me.

MARCEL

No...I will seduce, I am seducing, I have seduced...How did I do?

ELIZABETH

Oh, 'bout a seven.

MARCEL

Ah, good. A high mark yet room for improvement. We have something to look forward to.

Elizabeth grins and takes a moment, strongly attracted to him, but holding herself in reserve.

ELIZABETH

Well now let's see if your bedtime story is as good.

MARCEL

Ah, yes. Where should I begin?

ELIZABETH

Um...start with Charlotte.

MARCEL

Yes, of course. Lie back, please.

ELIZABETH

Oh, so soon?

MARCEL

Please, I'm an old man, don't even joke.

Elizabeth grins and lies back.

MARCEL

Close your eyes.

She does so.

MARCEL

Now imagine a sea of red poppies covering
a long, beautiful field.

INTERCUT:

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

A sea of red poppies in a field.

MARCEL (VO)

From this peaceful place, a terrible story
is to begin. France, under Bonaparte had
been conquered and Louis the eighteenth
restored to the throne. Although it
doesn't make much sense, as part of the
settlement your country gave my country
back one of our old colonies. Senegal. So
a squadron of four ships was to be sent.
It carried a garrison of soldiers,
administrators, and ninety thousand francs
in coin.

Elizabeth opens her eyes.

MARCEL (OS)

No no, imagine the poppies.

Elizabeth closes her eyes again.

The poppies again, closer.

MARCEL (VO)

Now, a young woman's hand comes down and
gathers a single flower.

A young woman's perfect hand enters frame and gathers a flower. She twirls it slowly in her hand.

Looking up into her face, she is somewhere between 18 and 22, pretty, slight. She studies the flower's beauty.

M. PICARD (OS)

Charlotte! Come on now! We're leaving!

Charlotte looks at her father. At some distance her large family is getting up from a lunch break, where they have been sitting on a blanket. There are two wagons loaded with their luggage.

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

The PICARDS get onto the wagons, along with DRIVERS 1 & 2. The children are CAROLINE (15), LAURA (6) ALPHONSE (5) CHARLES (4) GUSTAV (a baby). M. PICARD is in his late forties, while MRS. PICARD is half his age. This is his second marriage, and ALPHONSE is his nephew.

Charlotte enters frame and looks away down the road.

LAURA

Is that where we're going, papa?

M. PICARD

Rochefort. Yes.

In the distance there is a town at the mouth of a river, and the masts of sailing ships are visible.

M. PICARD

Come, Charlotte. Hop up.

Charlotte climbs onto the wagon. DRIVERS 1 & 2 hit up the horses.

EXT. DOCKS -- DAY

The PICARDS alight from their wagon beside the four vessels - the frigate, 'Medusa', the corvette, 'Echo', the transport 'Loire', and the brig 'Argus'. M. Picard gets down from the wagon. Unlike the children he is not delighted. He runs an inspector's eye over the ship before him.

MARCEL (VO)

Monsieur Picard was a former plantation owner in Senegal. This time he was being sent as a public notary. It seems he was a very opinionated man who seldom took a backward step.

BACK TO:

Elizabeth opens her eyes and frowns slightly at Marcel.

ELIZABETH

How do you know that?

MARCEL

I just do, and you shall see...But it's important to know something else.

ELIZABETH

Mmm?

MARCEL

The relationship between the officers on the flagship, 'Medusa'. The expedition commander was...

INTERCUT:

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

MARCEL (VO)

...Captain Hugues Duroy de Chaumareys.
Viscount de Chaumareys.

DE CHAUMAREYS (53) barks orders and struts about in a dandified manner. While the ship is being made ready, SOLDIERS march along the dock and halt. Dismissed, they then walk up the gangplank.

MARCEL (VO)

When Napoleon was in power Chaumareys fought with the Royalists and the English against France. He was nothing but a customs officer and he had not been to sea in twenty-five years. Immediately after Napoleon's banishment, though, he sought an audience with the new King's brother, and so was given his position by decree, even though he had never Captained a single vessel, let alone a squadron.

ESPIAUX
 (walking by)
 Late in the season for West Africa, sir.

CHAUMAREYS
 Nonsense, we'll be fine. I know the
 weather. It will hold.

Moving with LT. ESPIAUX (29) until he reaches LT. REYNAUD (33).
 While this is happening:

MARCEL (VO)
 Lt. Espiaux was young and strong and
 brave. I believe he was also handsome.
 Like Lt. Reynaud, the second in command,
 he fought with Napoleon's navy against the
 Royalists and so regarded their Captain as
 little more than a former traitor.

ESPIAUX (confidentially)
 The only thing missing is the feather up
 his arse.

Lt. Reynaud has trouble containing his amusement and walks away.
 He passes SUB-LT LAPEYRÈRE.

LAPEYRÈRE
 Excuse me, sir.

Reynaud, unable to stop laughing, waves him away and continues
 on. Lapeyrère approaches ENSIGN MAUDET.

LAPEYRÈRE
 Maudet.

Maudet turns.

LAPEYRÈRE
 Have the manifests been brought up?

MAUDET
 I don't know, sir.

LAPEYRÈRE
 Check, please.

Maudet does his bidding.

MARCEL (VO)

Of Sub-Lt. Lapeyrère and Ensign Maudet, little is known, except they were competent junior officers. But then, we must also consider the Captains of the other three ships:

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN -- NIGHT

The characters appear as they are nominated, standing round the Captain's chart table. de Chaumareys is in the center and speaking while they look at a map. The captains DE VÉNANCOURT (42) DES TOUCHES (33), DE PARNAJON (32) look on.

MARCEL (VO)

There was Captain de Vénancourt, an experienced seaman and veteran of the revolutionary wars. There was Lieutenant des Touches, also a veteran of the war, and in the Navy since he was ten years old. And there was Lieutenant de Parnajon, a very skillful sailor, and ultimately, the man who rescued the survivors from the raft.

CHAUMAREYS

...Then we are to proceed sousou west ensuring we miss the Aguin Bank. From there one hundred leagues due south, and a dogleg into St. Louis. And I must remind each of you to stay in contact with me. It is not the flagship's task to play follow-the-leader, but your job to follow me.

TOUCHES

Sir, the Medusa is a fast vessel. I doubt when you lay up full canvas I could stay with her.

CHAUMAREYS

Very well, I shall not deploy all, but I do expect you to maximize your vessel's speed. As everyone so tediously reminds me it is late in the season and we should not tarry.

VÉNANCOURT

What are standing orders should a storm or otherwise part us, sir?

CHAUMAREYS (arrogant)
Well I should think that's obvious, man,
make straight for St. Louis.

de Vénancourt looks him up and down, his temper roused.

CHAUMAREYS
Good, then we sail on the tide. Be ready.
Dismissed. (Waving them flippantly away).
Partir! Partir!

His Officers leave.

EXT. DOCKS -- DAY

De Vénancourt, des Touches, de Parnajon, walk back to their ships.

PARNAJON
So what do you think of our leader,
Gicquel?

TOUCHES (trying to be diplomatic)
Well, I think he's, ah...

VÉNANCOURT
He's a buggering dandy.

EXT. MEDUSA/DOCKSIDE -- DAY

GOVERNOR SCHMALTZ, MRS. SCHMALTZ, their daughter, GERTRUDA (18) and secretary, GRIFFON DU BELLAY walk imperiously up the gangplank. Around the same age as Chaumareys, Schmaltz dominates him in stature as he steps aboard. While Chaumareys is fawning over Schmaltz and the ladies, his courtesy is not being returned. Chaumareys shows them to their cabin.

MARCEL (VO)
And last, and by no means least, was Schmaltz. He was for some reason a Colonel, though there is no record of how he rose to such rank, and he was of German origin. Again, appointed by decree, he was to be the new Governor of Senegal.

INT. CABIN -- DAY

Schmaltz, followed by Chaumareys, enters the cabin. The Ladies and Secretary wait outside. Schmaltz looks around disapprovingly.

CHAUMAREYS

I trust you will be comfortable here, Colonel. Or should I address you as Governor?

SCHMALTZ (ignoring the question)

No. No. This won't do.

CHAUMAREYS

I, I assure you this is...

SCHMALTZ

You can't even swing a cat! No, no, we require more room.

CHAUMAREYS (shocked)

Ah, but you must understand we have many hundreds of passengers...

SCHMALTZ (impatient)

Yes, and I am to be their governor. Therefore it is hardly fitting they see me and my family living no better than one of your officers.

CHAUMAREYS

I, I'll see what I can do.

He bows and leaves. Schmaltz snorts with disgust.

EXT. DOCKS/MEDUSA -- DAY

RICHEFORT (54) comes up the gangplank.

MARCEL (VO)

But I forget one person. Monsieur Richefort. He was to be the harbor master in St. Louis. He had just spent ten years in an English prison, and that alone should have alerted Captain de Chaumareys that his claim of a thorough knowledge of African waters was gross exaggeration.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN -- NIGHT

Chaumareys and Richefort dine, drinking wine by candlelight. They're quite drunk and becoming pompous, and are getting on very well.

RICHEFORT

Oh, yes, Cape Verde, the Canary islands, in fact the whole West Coast of Africa is second nature to me now.

CHAUMAREYS

Well I can't tell you how much that comforts me, sir. Glad to have you aboard.

They join glasses.

CHAUMAREYS

My officers have all fine records, but not one I think knows that region. (Confidentially) Bonapartists.

Richefort gasps and pulls a sympathetic face.

CHAUMAREYS

Yes. Thank God civilization has been restored. The King.

They join glasses.

CHAUMAREYS

Please, feel free to come to the quarterdeck at all times.

RICHEFORT

Oh, thank you. You are as kind as you are generous.

CHAUMAREYS

Not at all.

MARCEL (VO)

Are you asleep?

INT. MARCEL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Elizabeth opens her eyes, rolls her head.

ELIZABETH

No. Though your voice is so relaxing. Tell me about the journey. Everything. I want to know everything.

Elizabeth has rolled her head back, a contented grin on her lips. She closes her eyes.

MARCEL

Picture four ships of the Royal French navy under sail on the high seas.

EXT. OCEAN, AERIAL -- DAY

Below is the squadron of four ships under full sail in the open ocean. It is a magnificent sight.

MARCEL (VO)

They're fairly close, no more than a kilometer apart.

EXT. OCEAN -- DAY

Sweeping in front of the Medusa, the positioning of the Argus, the Loire, and the Echo are further revealed. The Loire trails considerably.

EXT. MEDUSA. ALL DECKS -- DAY

There are HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE on deck. Included among them are CORRÉARD and his ENGINEERS, midshipman COUDIEN, the PICARD FAMILY (the children running around the deck and playing with other CHILDREN), there are the EXPEDITIONERS (whose job is to explore central Senegal) and SAVIGNY the surgeon. There are the SOLDIERS grouped in their various ranks i.e. officers, warrant officers, and other ranks. There are only a half dozen WOMEN other than the Picards among the gathering - mainly officer's wives. One woman is a CANTEEN LADY. She and her SERGEANT HUSBAND served with Napoleon's army as canteen workers. She is to be the only woman who will be on the raft. With a ship's crew of 160, many of the SAILORS work in among the passengers, scaling rope ladders, trimming sails, etc.. Some soldiers, stripped to their underwear, wash each other jovially with seawater.

Charlotte strolls aft, not far from the Soldiers. A group of Soldiers notice her. They are tough and untrustworthy looking men, comprised of Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, blacks, and Asians. One of the Asians is a cruel-looking giant of a man.

EXT. MEDUSA. QUARTER DECK/MAIN DECK AFT -- DAY

Charlotte has reached the end of the main deck as it meets the quarter deck. She leans against the ship's outer rail, her back to the men, unaware of how they are viewing her.

SOLDIER 1

Now there's an arse I'd stick my bayonet in.

Soldiers laugh.

On the quarter deck Espiaux comes forward and looks down. He sees the Soldiers leering at Charlotte.

Charlotte looks out to sea,

ESPIAUX (OS)

Your first time at sea, mademoiselle?

She turns. He is surprised by her beauty and comes down.

CHARLOTTE

Yes. I was a bit scared at first but now I see it was silly of me.

ESPIAUX

Oh, don't feel that way. I was the same. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Lieutenant Jean Espiaux.

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte Picard.

ESPIAUX

Ah, yes, the Picard family. I saw you on the list.

CHARLOTTE

Are you second in command?

ESPIAUX

No, third. (Indicating) Lt. Reynaud is number one.

CHARLOTTE (smiling)

Number one. So they call you number two?

ESPIAUX (smiling)

Sometimes. Mademoiselle, I approach you to give you warning. Without looking around, you will see when you leave that there are many soldiers staring at you. I feel it my duty to inform you of their nature. These men are mainly criminals taken from the jails and pressed into His Majesty's service.

CHARLOTTE

I see.

ESPIAUX

There is not the slightest danger under these conditions, but I would warn you against coming near them unescorted in future.

CHARLOTTE

Of course. Thank you for your concern, Lt. Espiaux.

He bows and goes back to the quarter deck. Charlotte adjusts a shawl and momentarily watches Espiaux climbing the stairs, attracted to him. She turns and her eyes fall on the bared shoulder of one of the Soldiers. It bears a badly scarred brand burnt into his skin, marking him as a prisoner. Charlotte is a little shocked.

SOLDIER

What's wrong? Didn't you know they brand us like cattle?

Charlotte moves on. The Soldiers laugh.

EXT. MAIN DECK AFT -- DAY

Governor Schmaltz comes up from his cabin and looks around imperiously. No one seems to notice him at first, but as he strolls about some of the passengers give him deferential nods. Finally Schmaltz leans back and looks up at the sails. He does a double-take and becomes annoyed.

The top sails are furled.

He immediately mounts the stairs to the quarter deck.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Chaumareys laughs with Richefort as Schmaltz approaches.

CHAUMAREYS

Ah, good morning, Excellency. I trust...

SCHMALTZ

A word de Chaumareys.

He has moved toward the very stern. Chaumareys has no choice but to follow.

CHAUMAREYS (bowing to Richefort)

Excuse me.

EXT. REAR QUARTER DECK -- DAY

As they speak the distant Loire lags in the background.

SCHMALTZ

You are aware you have no canvas atop?

CHAUMAREYS

But of course.

SCHMALTZ

You have an explanation? There's a strong wind at our back, calm seas, a clear day. You realize it is imperative we reach Senegal before the storm season?

CHAUMAREYS

But Excellency, my orders are to keep the squadron together. As you see the Loire...

SCHMALTZ

And your standing orders are that if separated you should all meet in St. Louis. So...separate.

CHAUMAREYS

But...

SCHMALTZ

What is your current heading?

CHAUMAREYS

One eight five degrees.

SCHMALTZ

One eight...?! And might I ask what numskull came up with that heading?!

CHAUMAREYS

The Minister of Marine.

SCHMALTZ

May I speak to you in private...with your charts.

He begins to walk away but sees Chaumareys has not yet moved.

SCHMALTZ

Now!

He storms on.

Chaumareys passes Richefort and nods courteously. Richefort, about to take snuff, nods back, disinterested. He snorts the snuff.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN -- DAY

Schmaltz spreads a chart on the map table.

SCHMALTZ

Show me your course.

Chaumareys' finger follows a line well out into the Atlantic Ocean.

CHAUMAREYS

One eight five.

SCHMALTZ

And when do you correct to St. Louis?

CHAUMAREYS

Around here, after we clear the Aguin Bank.

SCHMALTZ

Oh, the Aguin Bank is nothing. It's a sandbar. Many sandbars. It comes, it goes, it is not chartered correctly by the Hydrographie Francais by their own admission. Is your chronometer accurate?

CHAUMAREYS

But of course.

SCHMALTZ

Good. Then you will have no trouble following a new course. The shortest distance atwix two points. There is your line. Due south from here and on to Madiera, Porto Santo, the Canaries.

CHAUMAREYS

But, Excellency, due south will miss those marks.

SCHMALTZ

But aren't you missing something?

Chaumareys looks at him blankly.

SCHMALTZ

Something obvious.

Schmaltz rolls his eyes at the man's slowness and stabs Gibraltar.

SCHMALTZ

We're still in the Gibraltar current but going with it. Traverse it and there is your drift.

CHAUMAREYS

Ah, I see. But, our emergence from the Canaries...we'll be too near the Aguin Bank. We'd have to go almost due west.

SCHMALTZ

Look, you just sail in a south westerly direction and take soundings. It's simple. If the water gets too shallow, head more west, if it gets deep, head more south.

CHAUMAREYS

And you're sure this works?

SCHMALTZ

Are you questioning me?!

CHAUMAREYS

No, of course not, but there is the matter of disobeying orders.

Schmaltz moves closer to him, dominating him with his size and lowering his voice to a conspiratorial tone.

SCHMALTZ

It can be just as easily argued the lateness of the season was the greater threat. Do a good job, Captain, bring us to St. Louis quickly, and I will look favorably on you for high posting either in Senegal or France. I have many influential friends.

Chaumareys looks hard at him, making us wonder if the bribe will work.

EXT. REAR QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Chaumareys strides to Reynaud.

CHAUMAREYS

Lieutenant, come about due south and throw all canvas on.

Reynaud looks stunned. Espiaux, standing nearby, also frowns.

REYNAUD

Excuse me, sir. Has there been a change in the overall course?

CHAUMAREYS

Yes. Port five degrees, number one...

Richefort on the main deck below listens.

CHAUMAREYS

...or do we have other questions before we obey.

REYNAUD

No, sir.

Reynaud looks at Espiaux and nods, and Espiaux moves forward.

REYNAUD

(To Helmsman) Steer port five degrees, due south.

HELMSMAN

Port five degrees, sir.

ESPIAUX (shouting)
Stand by to hoist sail!! All canvas out,
Monsieur Coudien!

A call comes back from Ensign Coudien on the main deck.

COUDIEN
Standby to hoist sail! All canvas out!

Richefort comes onto the quarter deck and stands by Chaumareys, expressing their solidarity.

EXT. ALL DECKS/MASTS -- DAY

Sailors take to the rope ladders and climb to release the top sails, much to the interest of the Passengers.

EXT. UPPER MAST/ DECK -- DAY

SAILOR 2 is shuffling along the beam of a sail when he loses his grip. He grabs a rope, it pays out, arresting his fall. The rope he grabbed whips through a heavy wooden pulley. SAILOR 3, holding the rope on deck is pulled off his feet. The pulley comes loose.

FX: Swinging with the heavy wooden pulley, down toward the deck. Ensign Coudien is the unwitting target.

The pulley slams into Coudien's thigh, knocking him off his feet and breaking his leg.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Espiaux comes forward, alarmed and concerned.

ESPIAUX
Secure that tackle! You there, fetch
Surgeon Savigny! Now!

INTERCUT:

EXT. MAIN DECK -- DAY

SAILOR 4 goes to do his bidding.

SAVIGNY
I am here!

He presses through the Crowd and looks at Coudien's leg.

SAVIGNY

It's a bad break. (To Sailor 4) Get a
stretcher.

Sailor 4 departs. To Coudien, who is writhing in agony:

SAVIGNY

Don't worry, son. We'll set that for you.

CHAUMAREYS

Who is it?

ESPIAUX

Ensign Coudien, sir.

Chaumareys nods, then gives an aside to Richefort.

CHAUMAREYS

Bonapartist.

Richefort nods, as if it is typical of that breed.

Sailors 4 and 5 have Coudien on a stretcher, and accompanied by
Savigny he is taken below decks.

EXT. QUARTER DECK. THE ECHO -- DAY

2ND LT. DEVILLE

Sir.

Vénancourt looks round and Deville redirects his eyes to the
distant Medusa. Vénancourt frowns and crosses to the rail. He
stares in disbelief.

VÉNANCOURT

They're headed away.

DEVILLE

She's bearing all canvas, sir.

VÉNANCOURT

I do have eyes, number one.

He looks back to the Loire then back to the Medusa.

VÉNANCOURT

The Medusa may look clumsy but she lips
like a yacht below water. She'll outrun
the Loire in no time.

DEVILLE

So what do we do?

Vénancourt considers for a moment.

VÉNANCOURT

We attempt to follow orders, number one, even if our 'commander' does not. Try to stay with her.

DEVILLE

Aye, sir.

EXT. QUARTER DECK. THE LOIRE -- DAY

Lt. Des Touches looks at the distant Medusa through a telescope. It is now a very distant sail. He lowers the telescope.

2ND LT. HARSE

Will we stay this course, sir?

Touches considers

TOUCHES

No...No, come back to one eight five.

He looks at the Medusa again, shakes his head resentfully, then looks at the sky.

TOUCHES

Secure all hatches, number one. There's a squall brewing.

HARSE

Aye, sir.

EXT. MEDUSA. PASSENGER DECK -- DAY

Close on a compass held in M. Picard's hand. He frowns as he looks up at the ocean.

There is another man, Corréard, chief of the engineers, doing exactly the same not far away. M. Picard notices and crosses to him.

M. PICARD

What do you have?

CORRÉARD

I'd swear due south. We're nowhere near
the Aguin Bank, are we?

M. PICARD

(partly amused)

I sincerely hope not!

They exchange a look of concern.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Lt. Reynaud looks worriedly out over the stern. He crosses to
Chaumareys.

REYNAUD

Sir. Beg to report the Loire is now out of
sight and the Argus is falling back.

CHAUMAREYS (dismissive)

Yes, yes.

He waves him away. Reynaud takes exception.

REYNAUD

Sir, I believe a storm may also lie ahead.
Shall I order secure hatches?

CHAUMAREYS

A storm? You are surely prescient,
Monsieur Reynaud. Let's not upset the
passengers until we have proof of your
inestimable powers. I'll be below.

He leaves.

Reynaud and Espiaux exchange a tense look. Finally Espiaux comes
to a decision. He turns to Ensign Maudet.

ESPIAUX

Monsieur Maudet.

MAUDET

Sir?

ESPIAUX

Take four men. Without alarming
passengers, secure all hatches and make
ready rough seas.

Maudet looks at Reynaud, who says nothing. Maudet begins to obey the order but is stopped by...

ESPIAUX

And, ensign...sheet the topsails.

Maudet looks more tensely at Reynaud and again Reynaud says nothing. Maudet leaves. Espiaux looks at Reynaud.

ESPIAUX

Go below, Joseph. No need for us both to be blamed.

Reynaud nods and goes below.

EXT. MEDUSA MASTS -- DAY

Sailors scale the masts and secure the topsails.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN -- DAY

Chaumareys sits at his dining table, a goblet of wine in his hand. There is a knock at the door. Chaumareys hides the bottle.

CHAUMAREYS

Come.

The door opens and LEON, a 12 y.o. cabin boy, holds it while Richefort enters.

CHAUMAREYS

Ah, my dear Monsieur Richefort. At last a friendly face.

RICHEFORT

Why, Captain, you jest, I'm sure. I would think no one could dislike such a gentleman.

CHAUMAREYS

Oh, untrue, but thank you.

He recovers the wine bottle and holds it up.

Richefort nods and takes his place at the table.

CHAUMAREYS

I am surrounded like Bonaparte at Waterloo.

RICHEFORT

I trust you're being ironical.

CHAUMAREYS

Ha, yes, just so. No, his Excellency the governor would have me lay on full canvas. And my officers...I feel their republican lances every time I turn my back.

RICHEFORT

I noticed too we have changed course.

CHAUMAREYS

You noticed?

RICHEFORT

Mmm, by the sun I reckon five degrees.

CHAUMAREYS

Ah, your eye is deadly keen.

RICHEFORT

Oh, when you have my depth of experience you notice by the drop in speed if a gull has pooped on the poop deck.

They laugh, overly genteel. Richefort becomes melodramatically serious.

RICHEFORT

But sometimes, when I'm long at sea, I've felt I am more my vessel than I am myself. Have you felt that way, Captain?

CHAUMAREYS

What? God, no. No, something I admit only to you and trust you will keep my confidence, the sea and I are not happy bedfellows. I've forgotten how much I'd forgotten in twenty-five years.

RICHEFORT

Oh the opposite with me, my years in that English prison saw me revise again and again every moment of every venture I had, and there were hundreds. Oh, sir, would I could fill your shoes to relieve your burden. A trip like this to me is nothing but banal routine.

Chaumareys takes Richefort to the chart table.

CHAUMAREYS

Then answer me this. Governor Schmaltz says on our current heading we will strike the Canaries because of the Gibraltar current.

RICHEFORT

Mmm, true, but you should monitor closely and adjust accordingly.

CHAUMAREYS

But then he advises we head souwest, and I don't believe this will ensure we clear the Aguin Bank.

RICHEFORT

Mmm. Yes, you're correct. If it was me, though, on leaving the Canaries I would continue South.

CHAUMAREYS

South?!

RICHEFORT

Yes. Then you strike Africa, and down here you may get your final fix. Cape Blanco. When you sight the cape, you simply turn west and sound your depths as you probe occasionally south.

CHAUMAREYS

That is essentially what the governor said.

RICHEFORT

Yes, but this method is surer, because your final fix places you more precisely.

CHAUMAREYS

Oh...this comforts me greatly.

RICHEFORT

Tell you what, allow me use of your sextant and I'll double check your readings. Between you and I we could surely not go wrong. Could we?

They both laugh, overly genteel.

EXT. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

A violent storm lashes the Medusa.

INTERCUT:

EXT. QUARTER DECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

Espiaux, Maudet, and the HELMSMAN are the only men on deck.

INT. PASSENGER LEVEL. PICARD QUARTERS -- NIGHT

The Picards try to sleep in the cramped and hot conditions. The Baby cries and the Children whimper with fear as M. & Mme. Picard try to comfort them.

Charlotte, lying beside her sister, Caroline, is scared. She looks at the low ceiling above her, listening to the ships creaks and groans as it slams into breaker upon breaker. Finally it is too much for her and she sits up. With the noise and heaving deck, no one notices her leave.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

Chaumareys, very drunk, snores.

EXT. QUARTER DECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

Espiaux holds a lantern high at one side of the stern rail, waiting on a return signal from the Echo. Eventually a distant lamplight bobbing at great distance can be seen. Espiaux crosses to the other side, searching for the Argus.

INTERCUT:

INT. MEDUSA. PASSENGER LEVEL STAIRS -- NIGHT

Charlotte comes to steep stairs/ladder and looks up. Water occasionally streams down through the hatch which is slightly open. She is relieved. Charlotte climbs the ladder.

Espiaux, still waiting, finally sees a faint signal from the Argus. Satisfied, he returns the lantern to its waterproof box.

INTERCUT:

EXT. MAIN DECK -- NIGHT

Charlotte is on the deserted deck. Although getting wet she is experiencing utter relief that she can now breathe fresh air.

Espiaux secures the lamp in the box when in a flash of lighting he sees Charlotte on the lower deck. She walks toward him.

ESPIAUX

Charlotte!

She looks up and sees him. As she does a giant wave broadsides the ship and she is swept off her feet. Espiaux desperately looks for her but it is as though she disappeared. Espiaux jumps down to the deck and rushes to the far rail.

EXT. SHIP'S OUTER RAIL/MAIN DECK -- NIGHT

Espiaux leans over the rail. He suddenly finds Charlotte, hanging on desperately to a rail. He grabs her arm and loops his other arm round the rail.

ESPIAUX

I've got you!

As he tries to pull her back in he is himself hit with a wave and thrown over the rail.

Together they struggle desperately and manage to get back on deck. Another wave hits them, pinning them. As it clears Espiaux loops his arm round her, stands, and hurries to the open hatch.

Maudet at the forward quarter deck rail sees they are alright.

INT. MEDUSA. PASSENGER LEVEL STAIRS -- NIGHT

Espiaux, holding Charlotte, descends the ladder. Halfway down the ship pitches and he loses his grip. They fall the rest of the way to the lower deck.

They remain prone, regaining their breath after such a near death experience.

Looking over Espiaux's chest, Charlotte raises her head and looks at him. He rolls his head and looks at her. Lightning flashes. They are panting together, staring into the other's eyes. Suddenly they kiss. It is hard kissing, raw passion. He rolls onto her then she on him, kissing violently.

Suddenly she brings herself to stop, her hand covering his chin and lips. Between flashes of lightning she looks deeply into his eyes, then leaves quickly. Espiaux raises to his elbows and stares into the darkness after her.

EXT. MEDUSA -- MORNING

The Medusa is again under full sail in good conditions.

EXT. BOW -- MORNING

FX: Much to the delight of the PASSENGERS, DOLPHINS ride the bow wave, occasionally leaping from the water.

EXT. QUARTER DECK AFT -- MORNING

Sailor 1 reels in a knotted length of rope. Chaumareys sees Schmaltz on the deck below. He is standing with Mme. Schmaltz and their daughter, Gertruda. Chaumareys hurries down.

SAILOR 1

Twelve knots, sir.

CHAUMAREYS

(looking at Schmaltz)

Very good! Excellent! She glides like a falcon on the wing, Excellency.

Gertruda leaves in a huff, disliking Chaumareys.

SCHMALTZ

Yes, at last good progress, Captain. Did we lose much ground in the storm?

CHAUMAREYS (confused)

Storm? Oh, Mr. Richefort is taking a reading now.

Richefort is at the front of the quarter deck, taking a reading with the sextant.

EXT. MAIN DECK AFT -- MORNING

Espiaux comes from below and mounts the stairs to the quarter deck. He slows, stops and turns, searching.

At the other end of the ship, Charlotte stands with Schmaltz's daughter, Gertruda. Charlotte stares toward him. They exchange a long look before Espiaux continues up the stairs. Gertruda notices their attraction.

EXT. QUARTER DECK FORWARD -- MORNING

Espiaux comes on deck and notices Richefort using the sextant. He crosses to him.

ESPIAUX

Excuse me, sir, what are you doing with that?

RICHEFORT

(not heeding him)

Well at a guess...I'd say I was taking a reading.

ESPIAUX

Kindly hand it to me, sir.

RICHEFORT

(not heeding him)

No.

Espiaux puts his hand to his sword.

ESPIAUX

Sir, I warn you, I shall take it by force if need be.

RICHEFORT

I suggest you check with the Captain before you go around stabbing people, Lieutenant.

Espiaux sees Chaumareys talking to the M. & Mme. Schmaltz. He crosses down to them.

EXT. QUARTER DECK AFT -- MORNING

CHAUMAREYS

...but of course, with such a beautiful family...

ESPIAUX

Sir, are you aware that one of the passengers is handling the ship's sextant?

CHAUMAREYS

Excuse me.

He turns to Espiaux and withdraws him a short distance.

How dare you interrupt me so rudely.

ESPIAUX

Sir, may I respectfully remind you that regulations strictly forbid...

CHAUMAREYS

Regulations?! You dare quote me regulations?!

ESPIAUX

Yes, sir, I do. That is my duty, according to regulations.

CHAUMAREYS

Understand this, Espiaux, this is my ship, and I'll run it as I see fit. If I want to have Madame Schmaltz steer the thing, Monsieur Richefort check the readings, or the governor trim the sails that is my prerogative. Now take your place by the wheel and halter your tongue.

Espiaux looks past him to the open ocean, then back at him.

ESPIAUX

It is also my duty, sir, to report the Argus, like the Loire, is now out of sight. Shall I order sail brought in, sir?

CHAUMAREYS (exploding)

You are impertinent, sir! You are confined to quarters for the next twenty-four hours, then you will do back to back officer of the watch! Dismissed!

ESPIAUX

But, sir, who will take my duty?

CHAUMAREYS

You push me, sir! I shall appoint Monsieur Richefort as pilot, and henceforth you and any officer on deck will address him as 'sir' and take any order he devices as if he were me! Is that understood?!

Long pause. Espiaux stares at him in shocked disdain. He finally walks away without saluting. Schmaltz comes forward and slaps Chaumareys on the shoulder.

SCHMALTZ

Good to see a man strong on discipline, Captain. You are a man after my own heart.

CHAUMAREYS

Oh, thank you.

MRS. SCHMALTZ
Can I really steer ze boat?

Chaumareys and Schmaltz chuckle...but she was not joking.

EXT. MAIN DECK, FORWARD -- DAY

GERTRUDA
I saw you looking at that officer. You like him?

CHARLOTTE
Yes...I do.

GERTRUDA
You should be careful. You know he is engaged to Isabelle Fichure, Admiral Fichure's daughter?

CHARLOTTE
No. No, I did not.

GERTRUDA (laughs)
Oh, men, they are so cunning. But all the same. No honor.

Charlotte is hurt, but tries not to show it.

INT. ESPIAUX & REYNAUD'S CABIN -- DAY

Reynaud, on his bunk, reads a book. Espiaux enters. He takes off his sword, jacket and boots.

REYNAUD
What are you doing?

ESPIAUX
Confined to quarters for the next twenty-four hours.

REYNAUD
What? What for?

ESPIAUX
Because I objected to Mr. Richefort taking readings with our sextant.

REYNAUD
What? Why would a passenger be doing that?

ESPIAUX

Apparently the Captain said he could.

REYNAUD

So there's no officer of the watch? I better go up.

ESPIAUX

No need. Monsieur Richefort is now in charge. We are to address him as 'sir' and take any order he conceives as though from the Captain's own lips.

REYNAUD

You're joking?

Espiaux lies on his bed.

ESPIAUX

Wish I was, Joseph. I swear, this man will kill us all.

EXT. OFF THE CANARY ISLANDS -- DAY

AERIAL: The spectacular 10,000 foot volcano, the confusion of huge volcanic rocks by the sea, the Medusa under sail coming along the coast.

SUPER: The Canary Islands.

EXT. OFF ST. CROIX -- DAY

The Medusa is anchored and a boat is being lowered.

EXT. MAIN DECK -- DAY

Charlotte sits on a hatch cover. Unlike the other Passengers crowding the rails, happily gazing at St. Croix, she is despondent.

Espiaux approaches. Charlotte suddenly sees him. She stands and grins. They are entranced by each other.

ESPIAUX

Good morning, Mademoiselle Picard.

CHARLOTTE

Good morning, Lieutenant. I've not seen you on deck of late.

ESPIAUX

No, I've had...other duties.

They fall silent.

M. Picard, by the rail, turns and notices them. He watches.

CHARLOTTE (barely able to be so forward)
I've...I've missed seeing you, up there,
on the bridge. Is that what it's called?

ESPIAUX

Yes...Oh and I, so much you...I mean...

M. Picard appears beside Charlotte.

M. PICARD

Good morning.

ESPIAUX

Yes. Good morning, sir.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, papa, this is Lieutenant Espiaux.

ESPIAUX

Honored, Monsieur Picard.

They shake hands.

M. PICARD

Good...I see you like my daughter.

CHARLOTTE

Papa...

ESPIAUX

Yes, I do.

M. PICARD

Good. Then I can shamelessly use her as
leverage to get honest answers from you.
(Nods toward St. Croix) Is this the reason
we've come due south?

ESPIAUX

No, sir, we are stopping at St. Croix for
supplies.

M. PICARD

We have supplies on board to feed an entire colony.

ESPIAUX (uncomfortable)

Sir, we are stopping for some fresh fruit and vegetables.

M. Picard waits for more. Espiaux eventually delivers:

ESPIAUX

For Madame Schmaltz's table.

M. PICARD

Ah...privileges of rank. And that ponce, Richefort, why is he up there shouting orders?

ESPIAUX

I am not at liberty to say, sir, in fact, I have already said too much.

He nods and begins to leave.

M. PICARD

Wait. What will be our heading out of here?

ESPIAUX

Again, I am embarrassed to say I do not know.

M. PICARD

Sir, I have a wife, baby, and several children under my care. I would not see them die a slow death on the Aguin Bank.

ESPIAUX

I assure you, if it is within my power to avoid such an unlikely calamity, I will sacrifice myself in your cause.

M. Picard nods his thanks. Espiaux nods back, then nods to Charlotte. He leaves. M. Picard puts his arm around her and squeezes.

M. PICARD

You should marry that one.

He grins, kisses her forehead, and goes back to the rail. Charlotte watches Espiaux walking away.

EXT. ARGUS QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Lt. Parnajon takes a fix on their position. He jots some figures down. He jumps down from the quarter deck and hurries into his cabin.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN, ARGUS -- DAY

Parnajon consults his charts and draws a bearing. His pencil line intersects an area marked 'Aguin Bank'. He takes a protractor and marks a new course, WSW. Ensign Lemaigre enters and waits.

PARNAJON

West souwest will do us fine, Alex.

LEMAIGRE

You mean sousou west, surely.

PARNAJON

Not at all. If we don't bear almost west we could well still find the Aguin Bank.

Lemaigre inspects the map.

LEMAIGRE

Huh. Then with a good wind we could meet the Medusa and Echo here, or come close.

PARNAJON

If they go hard west.

LEMAIGRE

Well of course they will. They must.

Parnajon's expression indicates he is not sure anymore of anything.

EXT. QUARTER DECK. ECHO -- DAY

Vénancourt watches the distant Medusa as she hugs a more distant coastline. Lt. Deville, appears beside him.

DEVILLE

What possesses him to hug Africa that way?

VÉNANCOURT

Fear. He's behaving as he is; a little boy lost in the woods. He wants landmarks to show him the way home. Whoever is in charge of that vessel, is no sailor.

EXT. MEDUSA. ALL DECKS -- DAY

Richefort barks orders. Megalomania has surfaced.

RICHEFORT

Stand by to come about. You there! Look lively! Tie off that line!

INTERCUT:

EXT. ROCK OUTCROP -- DAY

Before us an outcrop of rock barely breaks the surface of the water. The Medusa speeds toward it.

RICHEFORT

Hold!

The Sailors hold ropes, standing by. Passengers and Crew wait. M. Picard, near the bow, sees the reef looming and becomes alarmed.

RICHEFORT

Hold!

Tension builds. Espiaux rushes to Chaumareys.

ESPIAUX

Sir! Order him to come about!

CHAUMAREYS

Mind your business, monsieur, and watch a real sailor at work.

REYNAUD

Sir, as first officer I protest!

CHAUMAREYS

Noted.

He moves Reynaud aside with the back of his hand.

CHAUMAREYS

My view, man, my view.

RICHEFORT

Hold!

SAILOR 2

(holding a rope)

This old fool's going to gut us.

The Medusa now looks certain to run aground.

RICHEFORT

Come about!

SAILORS work frantically resetting the sails as the helm is spun furiously. The Medusa misses the reef by the barest of margins. M. Picard, at the bow, sees that the miss was very near indeed. Outraged, he quickly makes his way to the quarter deck.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

CHAUMAREYS

(to his officers)

I think that is lesson enough for today, gentleman.

He begins to leave the quarter deck. As he does so:

CHAUMAREYS

That cape, Monsieur Richefort, would that be Cape Barbas?

RICHEFORT

Indeed it is, Captain. The end of the Gulf of Saint Cyprian.

CHAUMAREYS

Splendid. Do you know your way to Cape Blanco from here?

RICHEFORT

Ha ha, blindfolded I think!

M. Picard arrives below the quarter deck as Chaumareys comes down to the main deck level. His fury is directed at Richefort.

M. PICARD

What in God's name are you playing at you blasted idiot?!

For a moment everyone is stunned.

M. PICARD

We were meters from total disaster! Do you think our lives so paltry you can use them to show off your wares?!

RICHEFORT

I assure you, sir, I had everything under control.

M. PICARD

Exactly! What in the name of all suffering Jesus are you doing in control?!

CHAUMAREYS

Sir! I advise you to keep your voice down. Monsieur Richefort enjoys my fullest confidence.

M. PICARD

Then you're as big a fool as he!

Chaumareys signals TWO SAILORS to restrain M. Picard.

CHAUMAREYS

You will keep your voice down, sir, and your opinions to yourself, or I will have you slapped in irons for inciting fear and rebellion!

M. Picard shakes the Sailors off and stomps away. Chaumareys looks at the group of Soldiers nearby.

CHAUMAREYS

You soldiers, there, make sure he does not approach the quarter deck again.

Soldier 1 spits at the deck and glares at him. Chaumareys stiffens, but in the face of such belligerent men thinks better of making an issue of it. He huffs and goes down to his cabin.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Espiaux approaches Maudet.

ESPIAUX (quietly)

Bring up the landmarks book.

Maudet nods and goes to fetch it.

EXT. MAIN DECK -- DAY

M. Picard is talking confidentially to Corréard, and his men, BREDIF, and DECHASTELUZ.

M. PICARD

I am not one for drama on the high seas, gentlemen, but we must be prepared to intervene in some manner.

BREDIF

But what can we do? We're utterly powerless.

M. PICARD

We have our voices, do we not? We can speak up and make our feelings known. He can't slap us all in irons.

DECHASTELUZ

Can't he? There's as much room below decks as here. If he wrecks this tub I don't want to be chained to it. Besides, it's hot up here, down there is an oven.

CORRÉARD

Oh we're not wrecked or anything like it. Perhaps we should content ourselves with letters to the Minister of Marine.

BREDIF

Yes, you're right I think.

M. PICARD

I do not conspire, gentlemen, my only aim is to avoid tragedy and if speaking out now will serve that purpose then speak out now I shall. I only ask for your support if I lead.

CORRÉARD (nodding, unconvinced)

Mmm...Mmm.

M. Picard sees they are not strong allies.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Esiaux studies the landmarks book (illustrations of mountains and headlands visible from the sea). He finds an illustration

marked Cape Barbas, and checks it against the nearby headland. He becomes alarmed.

ECU: His finger is beside the headland north of Cape Barbas and it moves seaward, revealing the word 'REEF'.

ESPIAUX (urgent)

Stand by to come about! Stand by to come about!

RICHEFORT

What are you doing?

ESPIAUX (to Helmsman)

Standby hard rudder starboard!

RICHEFORT

Do not obey, I am in charge here!

Espiaux slaps the landmarks book hard against Richefort's chest.

ESPIAUX

Look at it, you fool! That is not Cape Barbas! Come about! Come about!

Sailors adjust the sails while the wheel is spun hard.

EXT. SEA/MEDUSA -- DAY

The Medusa turns hard away from the land.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS -- DAY

Chaumareys feels the ship lurch violently. He stands and hurries for the door.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Reynaud, Espiaux, and Richefort are arguing at the top of their voices about the headland, slapping the book and gesturing at the headland. Chaumareys arrives on deck.

CHAUMAREYS

What's going on. Silence! Silence!
Silence!!

They fall silent.

CHAUMAREYS

Who ordered the tack?

ESPIAUX

I did, sir.

CHAUMAREYS

On whose authority?

ESPIAUX

My own. That is not Cape Barbas! There is Cape Barbas! This fool would have us charge a reef at full clip!

CHAUMAREYS

Silence! You...insolent, disloyal...

ESPIAUX

I am disloyal?!

CHAUMAREYS

Know this! Just as we serve his Majesty the King, here I am his representative, and here I am king! You will obey me and you will obey Monsieur Richefort because I have appointed him as your superior! It is his abilities I have the greater faith in, not yours! Now get you off my deck!

Espiaux looks at Reynaud.

ESPIAUX

You are second in command, Joseph. Together we are entitled to challenge.

Reynaud realizes the severity of the suggestion. His nerve fails him. He looks down.

CHAUMAREYS

Are you suggesting mutiny, sir?

ESPIAUX

No. I am suggesting insanity.

He leaves the deck. Schmaltz comes up the ladder but has to give way to Espiaux coming down. He approaches Chaumareys.

SCHMALTZ

In all my days I have never seen such disrespectful officers nor such a gallant Captain.

RICHEFORT

Here, here.

Chaumareys bows.

SCHMALTZ

If I were you I'd bring charges against that man.

CHAUMAREYS

(realizing he might incriminate himself)
May-be...may-be.

Reynaud watches them, ashamed.

INT. MIDSHIPMAN'S CABIN -- DAY

In the heat Savigny is about to set Coudien's leg, having sedated him with rum. Espiaux is going by in the passageway.

SAVIGNY

Oh, Lieutenant. Help here, please.

Espiaux enters.

SAVIGNY

Just hold his arms. Put the leather in his mouth. He's very drunk, should not feel too much...Ready?

Espiaux nods. Savigny stretches the leg and suddenly twists it. SFX: A crunching sound. Coudien screams and passes out. Savigny nods at Espiaux.

SAVIGNY

Good. Thank you.

Espiaux begins to leave, but hesitates. Savigny is applying splints and bandages to the leg.

ESPIAUX

Dr. Savigny...

SAVIGNY

Please, Henry.

ESPIAUX

What do you think of the Captain. His stability, I mean.

SAVIGNY

He is fine to me.

He sees Espiaux is disappointed.

SAVIGNY

Bad judgment is not imbalance, Jean. Don't worry, despite his incompetence I'm sure we will reach Saint Louis unscathed.

Espiaux nods and is about to leave.

SAVIGNY

I heard some yelling. Are you restricted to quarters again?

Espiaux suddenly realizes he doesn't have to go to his cabin.

ESPIAUX

Actually, I don't know what I am.

INT. PASSENGER BERTHS. PASSENGER DECK -- DAY

Bent over, Espiaux makes his way through the crowded passenger berths until he comes to the Picard family's.

INT. PICARD FAMILY BERTH -- DAY

Espiaux arrives outside. Mme. Picard folds clothes. Charlotte fans the Baby on the floor beside her, while Caroline lies alongside with Laura plaiting her hair.

ESPIAUX

Hello, there.

Charlotte is surprised and a little embarrassed. She is in her undergarments and so holds the Baby to her.

LAURA

Hello. My name's Laura.

ESPIAUX

I'm pleased to meet you, Laura.

CHARLOTTE

Hello.

ESPIAUX

Hello.

CHARLOTTE

Oh. Lieutenatn Espiaux, this is my stepmother, Madame Picard, and my sister, Caroline.

ESPIAUX

Enchanted, ladies.

Mme. Picard and Caroline nod.

LAURA

I'm hot.

ESPIAUX

Yes, it is hot. Unfortunately it will likely get hotter. Perhaps I might persuade you ladies to join me on deck for air.

MME. PICARD

How very thoughtful, Lieutenant Espiaux. Unfortunately I have chores, but Charlotte, why don't you take Gustav up for some air.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, of course.

CAROLINE

I would like some air, Mama.

Mme. Picard quickly places a handful of washing before her.

MME. PICARD

Fold these, dear.

EXT. MEDUSA. MAIN DECK -- DAY

Espiaux walks with Charlotte and the Baby.

ESPIAUX

A baby suits you.

CHARLOTTE

Is that a compliment?

ESPIAUX

I think of you as wifely and motherly, so I would think it the highest compliment.

CHARLOTTE

Sir, you embarrass me with your candor.

ESPIAUX

Oh. Yes, sorry. That was not my intention or my meaning. But in truth I'm glad you took it that way... Charlotte, I would be frank with you, if you would allow it.

CHARLOTTE

Is there urgency?

ESPIAUX

Yes. Somewhat.

CHARLOTTE

Then, I will hear you.

ESPIAUX

Thank you...Charlotte, you fill my thoughts both day and night, so much so I find it difficult to even work.

CHARLOTTE

I know that same obsession.

ESPIAUX

It is so with you?

CHARLOTTE

Like illness, in my stomach, day in, day out. But I know it is no illness. I make excuses, the heat, the vessel's pitch, for in truth I was earlier ill that way. But in my mind and heart I know it is not those.

ESPIAUX

I'm grateful you dare speak that way. It confirms my belief in you.

They lock eyes for a long moment.

CHARLOTTE

You said there was urgency.

ESPIAUX

Yes. It is not something that will please you, but I beg you to listen with an open mind. I am engaged to Admiral Fichure's daughter.

CHARLOTTE

I see.

ESPIAUX

I doubt you do. I'm telling you this to prevent someone else informing you beforehand, for I do not want to curb your thoughts against me in the belief I am spoken for. Since the other night I...I have had no desire or thought for any Admiral's daughter, no desire for marriage if that marriage would forsake you.

CHARLOTTE

How do you know I am not spoken for?

ESPIAUX

I asked your father.

Charlotte grins.

CHARLOTTE

You're both thorough and efficient.

ESPIAUX

No, just struck down. You see, I would dishonor us both to court you whilst betrothed. But two months hence when this ship returns to France, I would seek your trust and indulgence to allow me severance of that engagement.

CHARLOTTE

To what end, sir?

ESPIAUX

I will then ask leave to visit you in Senegal. If you would allow it.

CHARLOTTE

You would do all that?

Espiaux nods.

CHARLOTTE

You should know a girl's heart is a delicate device and I would not wish to see another's broken so that mine can beat stronger. How could you end such an affair without causing a pain that I know in her place I could not bear?

ESPIAUX

(nodding agreement)

It's worse. Families and career are involved. But just as my good sense saw me pursue that union for all right and sensible concerns, so my logic tells me I would do the greater harm to all by playing out what I now know is only farce.

CHARLOTTE

I...I believe you are sincere, and you have no reason otherwise.

ESPIAUX

Don't I?

CHARLOTTE

Do you?

ESPIAUX

I have a bet with the soldiers I can bed you before this journey's out.

CHARLOTTE

Oh!

Charlotte slaps his chest and laughs.

CHARLOTTE

And here I thought you a gentleman.

Ensign Maudet appears beside them.

MAUDET

Excuse me, sir. The Captain would have all officers immediately to his cabin.

Espiaux nods grimly and Maudet leaves. Espiaux touches the Baby's cheek with the back of his hand and looks deeply into Charlotte's eyes. With that he leaves.

M. Picard, fishing by the ship's rail, has been watching their meeting. He is thoughtful about the matter, considering.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN. MEDUSA -- DAY

Espiaux and Maudet enter to find Schmaltz, Chaumareys, Lapeyrère, Richefort and Reynaud waiting.

CHAUMAREYS

Now that you are all here, gentlemen, I want you to know I have not called this meeting to discipline anyone, but rather to extend the hand of reconciliation. Monsieur Richefort has proposed we talk openly to clear the air. As you know the most dangerous part of our journey lies before us, the uncharted waters of the Aguin Bank. Therefore, it is in our interest to work collectively. My rhyme is not without reason. Monsieur Richefort is a virtual native of these waters while none of us present have any experience of the region. Hence my faith in his abilities. Our plan is to sight Cape Blanco, then turn west souwest. We shall sail twenty-two leagues, sounding as we go, and then we shall steer soueast, directly to St. Louis.

After a moment...

ESPIAUX

Sir, would it not be prudent to take a fix upon the midday sun, today, which is just as reliable as any landmark, and steer west souwest from here. Surely that would put the Aguin Bank beyond doubt.

RICHEFORT

Oh, I dispute that. Nothing is truer than a fix on land.

ESPIAUX

Given you sight the right land.

REYNAUD

Lieutenant Espiaux is right. What difference that we are further to the north when we turn. Twenty-two leagues is twenty-two leagues, and we are nowhere near the bank.

RICHEFORT

Oh, where do they train these boys? Too far to the north and you will change the angle of descent to Saint Louis. That's basic navigation.

ESPIAUX

So is hugging the coast.

REYNAUD

Then sail twenty-four leagues, twenty-six, before you turn.

CHAUMAREYS

No, that science is inexact. The good Governor has impressed our need for haste, and I agree. The Echo still paces us. Our sailing is inept.

ESPIAUX

Inept? We have twice the load, twice the passengers and barely a third more canvas. Furthermore, you rejoice at losing our fleet when specifically ordered to stay with it.

CHAUMAREYS

Oh, I warn you, sir, don't take advantage of my goodwill here. Do not mistake tolerance for weakness.

ESPIAUX

Sir, you shame us by even entertaining these men. (Indicating Richefort) If he is a native of these waters, have him show his papers, then at least you will have removed doubt that he is nothing but a braggart!

Richefort's hand goes to his sword.

RICHEFORT

Ho!

Schmaltz steps between them.

SCHMALTZ

Gentleman, gentlemen, do you listen to yourselves? It matters not who makes the decision, but that it is the right decision. What is the Aguin Bank? A sandbar blown from the Sahara. It is not chartered and cannot be chartered because it is nothing but a drift of sand. So, as long as we know where we are, we take soundings, stay on course, and there can be no harm. I for one agree with our Captain. I would rather a seasoned hand at the helm for this. Now let's settle this and let's present a united front to passengers and crew.

CHAUMAREYS

Here, here,

RICHEFORT

Here, here.

Espiaux, Reynaud, Lapeyrère and Maudet appear sullen.

EXT. QUARTERDECK. MEDUSA -- SUNSET

Reynaud leans on the rear rail, watching the sunset. Espiaux appears beside him.

REYNAUD

You are going to ask me why I did not back you. Relieving a Captain of his command, Jean...

He shakes his head.

REYNAUD

I've been at sea for twenty-three years now. Royalists, huh. This should have been my command. I've seen worse than him.

Espiaux nods and watches the sunset too. After a moment...

ESPIAUX

Have you really seen worse than him?

REYNAUD

No.

They smile.

ESPIAUX

I checked the charts. Cape Blanco should appear on my watch.

Reynaud waits for more. He looks at Espiaux.

ESPIAUX

It could appear sooner than it should.

Reynaud realizes what he is saying.

REYNAUD

And we turn hard west that much sooner.

ESPIAUX

(nods)

So by the time the Captain comes on we can be headed west souwest and no one the wiser.

Reynaud is thoughtful.

REYNAUD

You could be keel-hauled for that.

ESPIAUX

Better one man than four hundred, Joseph.

Reynaud nods.

EXT. QUARTER DECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

It is a bright, moonlit night. Espiaux is on duty. He checks his pocket clock.

ESPIAUX

Standby to come about! (To Helmsman) Ready for new heading hard west, Mr. Renouf.

HELMSMAN

Hard west, sir.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN -- NIGHT

Chaumareys sleeps, snoring. He rolls over and snores some more.

BACK TO:

ESPIAUX

Come about!...Make it gentle.

The Helmsman nods. The sails are altered while the wheel is spun.

EXT. MEDUSA/SEA -- NIGHT

The MEDUSA is turning almost at right angles to the land.

EXT. ECHO. QUARTER DECK -- NIGHT

2nd Lt. Deville watches the Medusa turning. He leaves the quarter deck.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN. ECHO -- NIGHT

Vénancourt sleeps. Deville enters and places his hand on him. Vénancourt looks round.

DEVILLE

Sir, the Medusa has altered course. Hard West.

Vénancourt sits up.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- NIGHT

Espiaux leans on the forward rail.

ESPIAUX

Mr. Tourmaine!

Midshipman TOURMAINE comes along the main deck toward him.

TOURMAINE

Sir?!

ESPIAUX

I want soundings every half-hour! We heave to every two hours for accurate measurement! Cast your first line now!

TOURMAINE

Aye, sir.

He goes forward.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN. ECHO -- NIGHT

By lamplight, Vénancourt and Deville examine a map.

VÉNANCOURT

What's our position?

DEVILLE

I would estimate here, sir.

Vénancourt frowns, thoughtful. He shakes his head, not understanding.

VÉNANCOURT

Why would he track all the way down the Africa coast then without anything to fix on turn hard west?

Deville shakes his head.

VÉNANCOURT

Well I suppose we should be thankful he has turned. At last some sense. You're sure it's hard west?

DEVILLE

Near as I can tell, sir.

VÉNANCOURT

Good.

He slaps Deville's shoulder.

VÉNANCOURT

Now I can sleep as a mariner should, rocked safely in his cradle.

Vénancourt begins to go back to bed.

VÉNANCOURT

Cross her path to the south before you straighten.

DEVILLE

Sir...Sir?

Vénancourt's head goes back.

DEVILLE

Why stay south of her?

VÉNANCOURT

Because if he's stupid enough to turn south again, which he is, then I want it to be on record I tried to warn him before abandonment.

DEVILLE

Yes, sir.

Vénancourt goes back to bed, yawning and stretching.

EXT. FOREDECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

MIDSHIPMAN DENESSE stands alongside SAILOR 4 as he pulls up a weighted rope, knotted at double arm lengths.

SAILOR 4

Five hundred twenty feet, sir.

DENESSE (calling back)

Five hundred twenty feet!

EXT. MIDSHIPS, MAIN DECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

TOURMAINE (calling back)

Five hundred twenty feet.

EXT. QUARTER DECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

Espiaux notes the call and checks his pocket clock. It is 3 a.m..

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREDECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

Faint signs of dawn are on the horizon. Sailor 4 pulls up the rope. He turns to Denesse.

SAILOR 4

Four ninety feet, sir.

DENESSE (calling back)

Four ninety feet!

EXT. QUARTER DECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

Espiaux stands at a different position on the deck.

TOURMAINE (OS)
Four ninety feet!

Reynaud is just coming on duty.

REYNAUD
(referring to the call)
That's good.

ESPIAUX
(nodding)
Haven't been below four-fifty all night.

REYNAUD
Excellent.

ESPIAUX
You have the helm.

He leaves.

As he is leaving relief Helmsman 1 also comes on deck. Reynaud watches them change their shift. When the previous Helmsman (Renouf) leaves the deck, Reynaud approaches the helm.

REYNAUD
What's your heading there?

HELMSMAN 1
(checking the compass before him)
Hard west, sir.

REYNAUD
Oh, we've drifted off. It's been West sou west all night.

HELMSMAN 1
Oh. Yes, sir.

He turns the wheel slightly, changing the heading.

Reynaud is pleased the deception is complete.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- NIGHT

Vénancourt arrives on deck beside Deveer.

VÉNANCOURT
How's the patient?

DEVEER

Just altered course slightly south, sir.

Vénancourt frowns and sighs, irritated. He checks the Medusa with a telescope.

VÉNANCOURT

Well I obviously should have stayed in my cot. What's he doing? Why doesn't he just stay west, put the matter beyond doubt. Alright, go with her for now. Better sound on the half-hour, just to be safe.

DEVEER

Aye, sir. Stand by to sound!

EXT. FOREDECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

Savigny helps Ensign Coudien to sit down. Coudien is not well and in a lot of pain.

SAVIGNY

Better?

COUDIEN

Thank you, doctor. The air is good.

DENESSE (OS)

Four hundred ten feet!

Savigny looks at Denesse.

TOURMAINE (OS)

Four hundred ten feet!

Savigny looks back toward midships. He is not sure what is going on.

EXT. QUARTER DECK, ECHO -- NIGHT

Vénancourt and Deveer are by the wheel.

MIDSHIPMAN 2 (OS)

Four hundred feet!

VÉNANCOURT

Well any fool can see the bottom is rising. Lay on full sail, Monsieur Deveer. Bring us alongside the Medusa, and prepare signals, please.

DEVEER
(departing)

Aye, sir.

EXT. MAIN DECK. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

Savigny walks the main deck. He sees the Echo not far off to the south, pacing them. It signals with a powder charge and lanterns. Savigny looks back at his own quarter deck.

EXT. QUARTER DECK/MAIN DECK AFT. MEDUSA -- NIGHT

Savigny crosses to the quarter deck. He sees Reynaud is merely watching the Echo.

SAVIGNY
Excuse me, sir, do you not see her signal?

REYNAUD
Yes.

SAVIGNY
Should we not respond?

REYNAUD
Our Captain is happier they are left behind, Savigny.

Savigny looks perplexed.

EXT. ECHO. QUARTER DECK -- NIGHT

VÉNANCOURT
(looking worriedly at the Medusa)
What was the last sounding?

DEVEER
Three ninety feet, sir.

Vénancourt comes to a reluctant decision.

VÉNANCOURT
Go back to hard west. Maybe they'll follow us out.

DEVEER
And if not?

VÉNANCOURT

Then I hope their gamble pays off before they run out of room. Either way, we go west.

EXT. FOREDECK. MEDUSA -- PREDAWN

Savigny is back with Coudien. Before him the Echo cuts across the path of the Medusa. Still unsure of what is happening, he looks back toward the quarter deck, then back at the Echo. The Echo is now on the northern side of the Medusa. Savigny shakes his head. worried.

EXT. QUARTER DECK. MEDUSA -- DAWN

Some Passengers are on deck. Corréard, on the main deck, fishes just below the quarter deck. Reynaud leans on the forward rail.

REYNAUD

Any luck, Monsieur Corréard?

CORRÉARD

Me? Ha, couldn't catch a cold in a blizzard.

Reynaud grins. It drains away as Chaumareys comes on deck.

CHAUMAREYS

Number one.

REYNAUD

Sir.

CHAUMAREYS (to Helmsman 1)

Your heading?

HELMSMAN 1

West souwest, sir.

CHAUMAREYS

Been on that all night?

HELMSMAN 1

Yes, sir.

CHAUMAREYS

Good.

He looks around.

CHAUMAREYS

The Echo not about?

REYNAUD

No, sir, we outpaced her through the night.

CHAUMAREYS

Excellent! And we fixed on Cape Blanco before we turned?

REYNAUD

Aye, sir. In fact, if you see that distant white on the horizon you can sight it even now.

Chaumareys looks.

CHAUMAREYS

Ah, yes...yes.

Corréard is also looking. He frowns.

CHAUMAREYS

Hand me the sextant.

Reynaud does so and while Chaumareys takes a reading from the stern rail, Reynaud wanders forward. His attention is aroused by Corréard hissing. He crosses to the rail.

CORRÉARD (confidential)

I would not have you look a fool, sir, but I was raised in the Alps. He's not fixing on a headland. That's a cloud.

REYNAUD

Then I am not the one who looks foolish, am I, Monsieur Corréard?

Reynaud grins and walks away, leaving Corréard perplexed.

As Chaumareys takes a fix on the cloud he is humming contentedly.

INT. ESPIAUX'S & REYNAUD'S CABIN -- DAY

Reynaud enters. Espiaux is asleep in his bunk. Espiaux stirs as he hears Reynaud undressing.

ESPIAUX

Oh. Are we saved?

REYNAUD

We are. Richefort has the watch. Not even he can destroy us now.

ESPIAUX

Oh. (He rolls over) Good.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Chaumareys and Richefort talk quietly.

MIDSHIPMAN RAN (OS)

Five hundred feet!

MAUDET

Sounding is five hundred feet, sir.

RICHEFORT

Ah, deep water. I believe it is time to swing for home, Captain.

CHAUMAREYS

Oh, so soon?

RICHEFORT

You heard. Five hundred feet. We're well past the bank now. Well past.

MAUDET

Begging your pardon, sir, but I doubt we have yet covered twenty-two leagues.

RICHEFORT

Only an estimate, ensign, stand by to come around, if you will.

MAUDET

May I recommend, sir, we maintain our westerly heading until midday. If we then take a fix from the sun...

CHAUMAREYS

Don't be impertinent, Maudet. Monsieur Richefort is a right and able seaman. Now stand by to come around.

MAUDET (reluctant)
Aye, sir.

CHAUMAREYS (to Richefort)
I do apologize.

RICHEFORT
Of course.

MAUDET
Stand by to come about!

MIDSHIPMAN RAN (OS)
Stand by to come about!

MAUDET (to Richefort)
Our heading, sir?

RICHEFORT
Sousou east, tight and hard.

Maudet hesitates. He looks at Chaumareys, who glares at him.

MAUDET
Aye, sir. (To Helmsman) Steer sousou east.

The Helmsman does not answer, but they exchange a tense look.

RICHEFORT
Come about.

MAUDET
Come about!

EXT. MEDUSA, ALL DECKS -- DAY

MIDSHIPMAN RAN
Come about!

SAILORS work hard at the ropes as the heading is changed.

INT. ESPIAUX'S & REYNAUD'S CABIN -- DAY

A beam of sunlight through a small hatch changes direction dramatically, but Espiaux and Reynaud sleep on.

EXT. MAIN DECK -- DAY

SAILOR 5 is about to climb the ropes.

SAILOR 5
 (pointing)
 Look along there, Jacques.

SAILOR 6 (Jacques)
 Aye.

Mme. Picard, nursing the Baby as he cries, looks to where the sailor is pointing. The water ahead is colored a muddy brown, distinct from the blue-green they are now in.

SAILOR 5
 These fools are running us straight
 at the bank.

SAILOR 6 nods grimly.

They ascend the ropes.

Mme. Picard frowns and studies the water carefully.

INT. PICARD QUARTERS, PASSENGER DECK -- DAY

M. Picard dresses the young Children, Mme. Picard appears outside. He notices her worried look.

M. PICARD
 What?

MRS. PICARD
 I think you should come above.

M. Picard, Charlotte and Caroline look at her tensely.

EXT. MAIN DECK -- DAY

M. Picard hangs over the side of the ship, held by Bredif and Corréard, while the Engineers and certain Passengers look on. He signals he wants to come back in, and everyone lends a hand. Mme. Picard and Charlotte look on anxiously. M. Picard has a walking stick in his hand and wrapped on that walking stick is a long length of whip-like seaweed.

M. PICARD (puffing)

There...That...That is Zostera. A seaweed that only grows in shallows, gentlemen, no where else. I tell you, as you can plainly see by the water's color, we are headed for the Aguin Bank. The time has come to add your voices to mine.

CANTEEN LADY

But they know what they're doing, surely. They wouldn't put us on the bank.

M. PICARD

You served on the canteen with Napoleon?

CANTEEN LADY

Yes, my husband and I on many a campaign.

M. PICARD

And yet you still believe officers always know what they're doing?

The Canteen Lady's expression reveals she cannot disagree with his logic.

EXT. QUARTER DECK/ MAIN DECK AFT -- DAY

An Angry Mob, led by M. Picard, approaches the quarter deck.

CHAUMAREYS

(quietly to Maudet)

Call the guard.

M. PICARD

Captain! Captain!

CHAUMAREYS

What is the meaning of this?

M. PICARD

Captain you must turn immediately westward. We are about to ground on the Aguin Bank!

CHAUMAREYS

Oh? And are you somehow possessed of greater navigational skills than those on this bridge?

M. PICARD

(shaking the seaweed at him)

This is all the proof I need, you fool!
This grows only in the shallows!

Chaumareys and Richefort laugh genteelly. Five of the SHIP'S GUARD arrive and block the stairs to the quarter deck.

CHAUMAREYS

Now that is quite enough. Go about your business or I will have the guard disperse you.

MIDSHIPMAN RAN (OS)

Two hundred feet!

M. PICARD

You hear? Two hundred feet!

RICHEFORT

Sir, we draw barely more than twelve. I hardly think we are in danger at two hundred. But if it will ease your mind I will steer sousou west awhile.

CORRÉARD

Picard is right, it was three hundred feet not half an hour back!

M. PICARD

Captain, please. I have twice sailed past the bank and once eight years ago was stuck fast on it. I know these signs and this is all I saw when we ran aground.

CHAUMAREYS

I'm sorry, I agree with Monsieur Richefort, and he is already leaning over to placate your fears, so disperse, please, or I will have the guard enforce my word. Now go on, be off.

The Mob begins to fall away, grumbling. M. Picard comes forward.

M. PICARD (to Richefort)

I at least have been on the bank, sir! I doubt you have even sailed this latitude!

He walks away.

Charlotte watches at a distance.

EXT. MAIN DECK -- DAY

Charlotte approaches the cabin boy, Leon.

CHARLOTTE

Boy. Will you take this to Lieutenant
Espiaux, please.

She hands him a note.

LEON

On my life, miss, I'd be lashed if I broke
his slumber.

She hands him a gold coin.

CHARLOTTE

Then bite back the pain with this.

Leon is impressed.

INT. ESPIAUX'S & REYNAUD'S CABIN -- DAY

Leon enters. Reluctantly he shakes Espiaux.

ESPIAUX

What?

LEON

A lady had me give you this, sir.

Espiaux reads the note. He sits up suddenly and checks his
pocket watch. He gets up and shakes Reynaud.

ESPIAUX

To arms!

REYNAUD

What?!

ESPIAUX

We're headed south and it's just gone
twelve.

REYNAUD

What?!

EXT. QUARTER DECK/MAIN DECK AFT -- DAY

On the main deck, Maudet has a chart spread on a chicken coup and is working on the ships position with compasses, pencil and ruler. The sextant lies on the map.

MIDSHIPMAN RAN (OS)
One hundred fifty feet!

Maudet looks up, alarmed. He hurriedly goes back to work.

Espiaux, followed by Reynaud, rushes from below. They mount the quarter deck.

EXT. QUARTER DECK -- DAY

Espiaux crosses to Chaumareys and Richefort.

ESPIAUX
Sir! It is far too soon to be headed south!

CHAUMAREYS
Stand down, Espiaux! Maudet has the duty.

ESPIAUX
Sir, I beg of you, look at the water.

RICHEFORT
River run off.

ESPIAUX
River...what?!

RICHEFORT
Yes. Methinks the Gambia, Captain, or the Senegal, depending on the tide.

CHAUMAREYS
There. Satisfied? Now stand down, Espiaux. It's river runoff.

ESPIAUX
Sir, did you not hear the call? One hundred and fifty feet!

Maudet comes running toward them.

MAUDET

Sir! Sir! I took our fix from the midday sun. We are on the edge of the Aguin Bank. Sir, we are about to ground.

CHAUMAREYS

Enough! My God am I cursed with such a crew?!

REYNAUD

Monsieur Maudet, have soundings done continuously.

MAUDET

Aye, sir.

CHAUMAREYS

Belay that order. (To Reynaud) How dare you come on my deck and issue orders! You are hysterical. All of you. Stand down I say or I will have you in irons!

Maudet crosses to the forward rail.

MAUDET

Continuous soundings, Mr. Ran!

MR. RAN

(amidships)

Continuous soundings, sir!

CHAUMAREYS (shocked)

Maudet. Of all people, you.

MAUDET

Sir, I beg of you. I checked my figuring. We are headed for the bank.

CHAUMAREYS

Well I never expected this of you, Maudet. A young man with a good future. Master sergeant, arrest Maudet.

The Sergeant of the ship's guard steps forward beside Maudet. Chaumareys addresses those nearby below, gathering.

CHAUMAREYS

Nothing to be alarmed at. Nothing to be alarmed at.

M. PICARD

Your own officers have no faith,
Chaumareys! Listen to them before it is
too late!

Richefort comes forward.

RICHEFORT

My dear, sir, we know our business. I have
twice passed the Aguin Bank; I have sailed
upon the Red Sea, and you see I am not yet
drowned.

MIDSHIPMAN RAN (OS)

Ninety-six feet!

All go quiet and look toward the bow.

CHAUMAREYS

Perhaps we...

Chaumareys approaches the Helmsmen.

CHAUMAREYS

Put her...Put her a bit out to sea, a tad.

HELMSMAN

A tad, sir?

CHAUMAREYS

A tad, yes, a tad! Five degrees.

EXT. FOREDECK DECK/BOW -- DAY

The Canteen Lady and her Husband are toward the bow, along with
other Passengers and the Sailors doing the soundings.

CANTEEN LADY

(pointing)

Look! It's sand!

MIDSHIPMAN TOURMAINE

Thirty-six feet!

EXT. QUARTER DECK/MAIN DECK AFT -- DAY

MIDSHIPMAN RAN (OS)

Thirty-six feet!

M. PICARD

Thirty-six feet! Do you hear?! Thirty-six feet!

M. Picard and the Passengers behind him attempt to storm the quarter deck but are held back by the Guard.

ESPIAUX

Swing hard west!

HELMSMAN

The sails, sir!

Espiaux grabs the wheel and spins it hard.

ESPIAUX

Come about! Come about!

EXT. MAIN DECK/SAILS -- DAY

Sailors scramble up rope ladders while others heave on ropes.

EXT. UNDERWATER -- DAY

The ship's hull comes toward a sandbank and strikes it.

INTERCUT:

EXT. QUARTER DECK/MAIN DECK -- DAY

Everyone is jolted off their feet.

INTERCUT:

EXT. ROPES/SAILS -- DAY

A Sailor scrambling up the ropes is flung into the water.

UNDERWATER the hull clears the sandbank and moves on.

Everyone gets to their feet.

The hull approaches another sandbank. It strikes.

Everyone is thrown off their feet again.

This time the hull sticks fast.

EXT. QUARTER DECK/MAIN DECK -- DAY

Everyone gets slowly to their feet. They are silent. They look up at the sails. They are still billowing, flapping in the silence.

RICHEFORT

My God, what was that?

M. Picard comes slowly up onto the quarter deck, this time unopposed. Richefort is still on his knees. M. Picard hauls him by the collar to his feet.

M. PICARD

My God, indeed! For there he walks upon
the water!

He points. Richefort looks. The Sailor who fell into the water is some eighty yards back, standing in thigh deep water.

M. Picard hurls Richefort back to the deck, and shakes his head malevolently at Chaumareys.

END OF PART 1