

TEASER

1 **EXT. OCEAN - MORNING**

1

It's a hazy day with a thick marine layer settled over the ocean. It's calm, quiet. Until the peaceful silence is broken by the firing of CANNONS, and the WAR CRIES of sailors.

The dense fog is punctured by the bow of small SPANISH MERCHANT SHIP.

2 **EXT. MERCHANT SHIP DECK - MORNING**

2

The crew is rushing around the deck, which is being blasted apart piece by piece from the cannon fire.

Following along the merchant vessel, is THE PRIDE, the flagship of dreaded pirate JEAN LAFITTE.

3 **EXT. THE PRIDE - MORNING**

3

Captain Lafitte stands tall among his men. He's dressed to kill, with a coat and hat that seem more at home on the streets of Paris than at the helm of a Spanish galleon. He commands his men with composure and dignity as they pursue their fleeing prey.

He calls his gruff first mate MAURICO SANTOS to his side. Jean points out to Mauricio a narrow inlet running through a tall cliffside. He tells Mauricio that the merchant ship will flee that way.

Mauricio asks how Jean can be sure, and Jean replies that the inlet lets out into a wider bay, and if they make it there fast enough, they will be able to about-face and broadside The Pride as it enters through the narrow pass. Jean - "I know because it's what I would do."

Sure enough the Spanish ship turns hard, heading straight for the tight opening. Jean orders Mauricio to call off the pursuit and have the men stand down. Mauricio is shocked, and argues - "Captain, if we take them we'll have enough to buy our way anywhere. We can go home again."

The thought of returning home appeals to Jean, softens him. But he remains resolute. It's too dangerous, and he won't needlessly endanger his men.

Again Mauricio argues, this time appealing to his ego. After all "You are *the* Jean Lafitte. These men followed you into battle against the British navy.

ACT ONE7 **EXT. SHIP DECK - DAY**

7

YEARS LATER.

Jean stands on the deck of a merchant ship that cruises along a shore line. He looks sickly, emaciated. His once flawless hair and mustache have grown into a rugged beard and dirty locks. His face is sunburned and weathered. Yet he still carries himself like a man of stature. A determined look in his eye.

He approaches the boat's CAPTAIN, a heavysset older man, and shows him an inlet on the nearby shore. Jean - "There. You follow that inlet up, through the bayou. It'll save you a week."

The Captain replies that it's impossible, a ship of this size could never make its way through the bayou. But Jean replies that of course it's possible, you just need to know the land, and Jean knows it better than any man alive. The Captain laughs - "Who do you think you are, Jean Lafitte?"

Jean ignores him, tells him that he is desperate to reach New Orleans. When asked why, he replies that he has a "a surprise for an old friend".

The Captain replies "then you best start swimming boy". The crew laughs at Jean, but he is unfazed, determined. He removes his heavy coat and DIVES INTO THE WATER.

8 **EXT. BAYOU - NIGHT**

8

Jean trudges through the knee-high sludge of the bayou. He's been at it throughout the afternoon and it shows.

He sticks to the most solid sections of dirt, but comes to the edge of the "dry" land. The only way onward is through the deepest part of the swamp waters.

He jumps in, begins his swim across, but a glint of moonlight reflects off of something in the water nearby. He focuses on the reflection as he swims, comes to the realization that he is staring into the eyes of a MASSIVE ALLIGATOR.

He increases his pace, but the frantic motions only draw the attention of the prehistoric predator. The beast swims toward him, faster than you'd expect. Jean strokes hard, but the Gator easily gains on him.

Just feet from the shore now...but the gator is on him. At the last second, Jean dodges, and narrowly avoids the creatures razor sharp teeth.

The gator whips around, makes another approach and it looks like Jean is a goner...before he is plucked from the water and onto a small boat.

9 **EXT. SWAMP BOAT - NIGHT**

9

Jean thanks his two saviors - BERNARD (15) and RICHARD (19). Two creole boys who live in the swamps. He asks the boys if they'd be willing to take him the rest of the way into the city, but they refuse.

They say no one can navigate the bayous this late. Jean assures them he knows the way, but they laugh "The way you know is leading you straight into a gator's belly." Instead the boys offer Jean shelter and offer to take him in the morning.

10 **INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

10

Jean, Bernard and Richard sit around a table in cramped cabin on the bayou. The room is dimly lit, but the three men are enjoying themselves, sharing a meal and a drink as Jean recounts a tale from the Battle of New Orleans.

The boys are impressed, and Jean is careful not to give any information that might lead them to his true identity.

They're interrupted when another, older man enters. This is REMY, the boys' father. Jean watches Remy enter, and has a brief look of "Oh shit" recognition as Remy takes a seat at the table across from him.

Jean attempts to hide his face from Remy, tries to find an excuse to leave, but Remy insists on hospitality. He grabs Jean as he tries to leave the cabin, and gets his first good look at Jean's face.

Now Remy shares the "oh shit" recognition look. He forces Jean back into his chair. "Boys did I ever tell you about a man I once knew..." He tells the boys a cliff notes version of Jean's legendary exploits, before sharing that Jean had deceived one of his former crews and left them to fend for themselves. As a result, many were hanged.

He continues on, telling his vague understanding of Jean's death at the hands of Mauricio and comments that if Jean were alive, Mauricio would pay handsomely to have him captured.

The atmosphere in the room shifts at the telling of this story. It builds from friendly revelry to a creeping dread, punctuated by "Ain't that right Captain Lafitte?" Jean doesn't waste another second. He flips the table, bolts for the door.

11

EXT. BAYOU - NIGHT

11

Jean rushes through the bayou as the Swamp Folk take chase. Jean stays ahead of them leaping between sections of the driest land, while they trudge through the most direct routes.

Jean looks up at the stars, finds his navigational footing. Soon he comes to a UNIQUELY KNOTTED TREE. He walks carefully, counting paces aloud while he steps. 5 paces to the right, 9 to the left, 3 forward and so on until he reaches the base of the tree. He digs through tangled roots, until he hits solid wood -- a small chest -- which he pulls out and opens.

Inside he finds a pistol, complete with power and shot, along with a dagger. He pockets them all in a hurry, as the sounds of the Swamp folk behind him grow louder.

We see the swamp folk as they approach the Knotted Tree, chest open and discarded at its base...but no sight of Jean. Curious, Bernard steps toward the tree -- and is stopped dead in his tracks when a rusted BEAR TRAP snaps close around his shin.

Suddenly, a shot rings out and Richard drops. Remy looks up just in time to see Jean leaping out of a tree branch overhead, dagger drawn.

Remy and Jean fight, with Remy's cutlass giving him an obvious advantage and opening a large cut on Jean's shoulder. But Jean is quick, skilled, and eventually overcomes Remy, killing him. With Richard and Remy both dead his attention turns to Bernard, who is still wailing and fighting to escape the trap.

Jean approaches, informs Bernard that he can't let him live for fear that he would expose his existence to Mauricio. Bernard pleads for his life, swears to remain silent. Jean picks up Remy's cutlass, raises it...but he can't bring himself to kill the boy. He throws the weapon to Bernard and tells him he will have to free himself and escapes into the night.

12 **EXT. NEW ORLEANS CITY LIMITS - DAY**

12

Jean, exhausted and bloodied makes his way into the city. He limps into town nearby docks where a passerby approaches him, concerned. "Jesus mister, you're bleeding" - but Jean doesn't answer or even react. He stands frozen, eyes locked at something in the distance. The confused Passerby follows his gaze to a large STEAM ENGINE TRAIN chugging along in the distance.

"What, you've never seen a train before?" This snaps Jean out of his trance. "Oh...of course. Just, not here." We're not sure if he's telling the truth. "You must be new here." Jean shambles further into the city.

13 **EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREETS - DAY**

13

Jean walks through the streets, taking in sights both new and familiar. He takes notice of the VODOO PRACTITIONERS peddling voodoo dolls and Gris Gris bags on the street corners. He approaches a clothing vendor's stall, where he snags a dark, hooded cloak from a rack. He is spotted by the Merchant who yells after him "Thief! Stop!"

Jean takes off running when two nearby police officers take notice and pursue. Jean dips down one alleyway and another, and for a second it looks like he's home free...until he rounds a corner and smashes a FRESHLY PAINTED WALL. Jean reaches out toward the wall, seemingly in disbelief "No, no no! Damn."

The police are gaining and Jean is at a dead end. He's fucked...until he notices a second story balcony above him. He strips the cloak off and tosses it at the wrought iron balcony fence. The cloak snags on a sharp outcropping, and Jean jumps up, grabs the cloak and climbs to the second story. He tucks into the building just as the baffled police reach the dead end.

14 **EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREETS - LATER**

14

Jean is back on the streets. He rounds a final corner and finally hits pay dirt. A small brick building ahead of him with a sign reading "LAFITTE'S BLACKSMITH SHOP." He smiles, finally home...until a HAMMERED DRUNK SAILOR stumbles out of the front, vomiting in the street. Jean's smile sours and he enters the building, hood cloaking his face.

15

INT. LAFITTE'S BLACKSMITH SHOP - DAY

15

The small blacksmith shop turned bar has a handful of rough-looking patrons. This is a place where "overserved" isn't in the vocabulary.

PIERRE LAFITTE, 40's, tends bar. He serves one customer, and threatens another. He turns to grab a bottle, and when he turns back he finds himself face to face with the cloaked figure. Jean - "Pierre. We need to talk." Pierre looks like he's seen a ghost and, in a sense, he has.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

16

INT. LAFITTE'S BLACKSMITH SHOP BACK ROOM - DAY

16

Jean and Pierre sit at a table, with Pierre tending to Jean's wound. He scoops a smattering of SWAMP SLUDGE from the gash. Already, the cut is taking on a sickly hue. Pierre - "What, did you swim here?" Pierre jokes, but his laugh is cut short by Jean's look that pretty much tells him "Yeah. I did."

Pierre is happy to see his brother. He tells Jean that he had heard stories of his death years ago, to which Jean asks "The newspapers are notoriously unreliable. But tell me, were the eulogies beautiful?" He's joking, but becomes more serious when Pierre awkwardly avoids eye contact and informs Jean that there was not a single eulogy published. Jean is incensed at the insult "I saved this god forsaken town!" but Pierre calms his brother.

Pierre tells him he had always held out hope that Jean would return, but had nearly given up when Mauricio arrived back in town without him. The mere mention of his name shifts Jean's demeanor. He is now singly focuses on Mauricio, on revenge. He tells Pierre that he's spent years chasing Mauricio, waiting for his chance, and now, back in his home town he finally has his shot.

Pierre tells him that Mauricio is practically untouchable. He has seized control of all of Lafitte's former assets and crew. Jean says that there must be men still loyal to him. He names a list of men, but after each name Pierre simply replies "Dead." Jean finally says one name that gives a different response "Still living actually..." Off Jean's brief look of hope. "Scheduled to hang at dawn." Hope dashed.

Still determined, Jean decides "I'll do it myself" and asks where he can find Mauricio. Pierre tells him that he doesn't know. Mauricio is rich now and doesn't waste his time in places like the Blacksmith Shop. He spends his time hobnobbing with the elite. An idea strikes Jean -- "Louise. Louise would know."

The mention of her name elicits a surprisingly stern reaction from Pierre. He insists that she would be of no help, but Jean continues "I should go to her anyway, I can only imagine how lonely she's been all these years--"

Pierre snaps at this "No! Don't you drag her back into this! She is free of this life, free of you!" The words wound Jean deeply. "I imagine you'd like to be free of me as well?" And with that Jean dawns his cloak and leaves the room.

17 **EXT. CLAIBOURNE MANOR - NIGHT**

17

Jean approaches a large house in a quiet part of town. While the structure is impressive in size, it's clearly seen better days. Paint is peeling, wood is in need of repair and, conveniently for Jean, the rusted gate has several bars missing.

He slips through the gate's opening, around the side yard. Ducks into a shadow as a SERVANT passes by. He moves to the side of the house, stares at a section of wall, seemingly confused, before he uses his DAGGER to dig out a fresh section of paint, revealing an OLD DOOR FRAME. He opens the hidden door and enters.

18 **INT. LOUISE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

18

LOUISE CLAIBOURNE is resting in her room, reading by candlelight, when her door slowly creaks open. She looks over, sees nothing. "Hello?" She creeps over to the door to investigate -- but is grabbed from behind by a cloaked figure.

Jean holds Louise tight, his hand pressed to her mouth. He makes her swear not to scream, and she agrees. He lets her go, and lowers his hood. Louise struggles to recognize the man, which Jean takes offense to. When she does recognize him, it's not the warm greeting Jean was hoping for.

"Get out! Why would you come back here!" She demands how Jean got into the house. He replies that he came in through the old slave quarters entrance, but it wasn't as easy as he remembered. Louise tells him that she freed her slaves and covered the entrance to keep low-lives like Jean out.

Jean is taken aback and tries to explain himself and his disappearance. But Louise is having none of it. Louise knows Jean doesn't do anything unless there's a profit in it for him, and so she asks Jean what he really wants from her.

Jean relents and tells her that he is after Mauricio, and needs to know where to find him. He insists that Louise's father, the former governor, must have connections who may be able to help him. Louise informs Jean that her father has no more connections. His reputation is sullied and power stripped, partly because of his daughter's scandalous relationship with the notorious cutthroat.

Jean finally gives up trying to convince her, and instead vents about why he needs revenge ending with "he took everything from me. He took you from me." The true emotion finally breaks Louise's guard.

She tells Jean that Mauricio has been seen recently at the lavish parties thrown weekly by a relative newcomer to town - Jacquess Saint Germain. She gives Jean her invitation to the party. Jean, grateful, prepares to leave, but Louise stops him - "You'll never make it past the gate looking like that"

She shows him a trunk of old clothes, and pulls out some items that used to belong to Jean.

19 **EXT. JACQUES SAINT GERMAIN ESTATE - NIGHT** 19

The newest, nicest manor we've seen so far is in the throes of a party, and the party is banging. Dozens of New Orleanians fraternize on the grounds, drinks in hand.

20 **INT. JACQUES SAINT GERMAIN ESTATE BALLROOM - NIGHT** 20

Jean pushes open the large double doors with a swagger he hasn't had since his days as The Pirate King. He's dressed like he was in the teaser, a colorful, showy jacket and a wide-brimmed hat, adorned with a peacock feather. His frilly shirt pokes out of his sleeves and collar.

His confidence quickly fades as he enters and all eyes turn to him. Whispers and giggles abound. Jean observes the other guests and notices the NEW FASHION that has swept New Orleans. Every other man is in a dark suit, top hat and noticeably UNFRILLED SHIRTS.

Jean continues on, awkwardly stuffing his shirt's frills back into his sleeves and removing the peacock feather from his hat. He moves around the perimeter of the room, scanning for Mauricio. He notices an excited crowd gathered around a single man and decides to investigate.

Jean spots the center of attention, a tall, slender, pale man in an elaborate suit jacket. A man we will eventually come to know as JacquesS SAINT GERMAIN. Jacques regales his listeners with a story about IVAN THE TERRIBLE. The crowd is enraptured by the story, but Jean smells bullshit. He speaks up, interrupting Jacques and attempts to correct an aspect of his story that Jean took issue with.

Jacques is clearly annoyed, but handles the situation with grace. He doesn't come to an agreement with Jean and instead ends the talk with "I believe that is enough stories for one night" much to the dismay of the quickly dispersing crowd.

The sudden CRASH of a breaking bottle grabs Jeans attention from across the room. He looks to the source - and spots Mauricio, who has just broken a bottle of wine over the head of a fellow party guest.

Mauricio is flanked by two other rough looking types, who laugh and cheer their Captain on. Mauricio grabs the wrist of a nearby woman, clearly the partner of the assaulted man, and begins to drag her out of the ballroom.

Jean's blood boils. He quickly paces across the room in pursuit of Mauricio, his dagger slowly dropping from sleeve to hand. Jacques, standing nearby, notices the glint of the blade and Jean's determined expression. He looks intrigued.

Jean follows Mauricio, careful not to be noticed, waiting until they're far enough from the party to strike. Mauricio drags his unwilling guest down a long hallway and into a bedroom, slams the door behind him. This is it. This is Jean's chance.

He grips his dagger and steps for the door -- but stops when 3 armed men appear at the end of the hall ahead of him, with another 3 blocking his retreat. These dudes look like they mean business, but so does Jean. Jean drops his coat, eliciting laughs from his soon to be attackers when his frilly shirt is exposed in all its glory.

Pissed, Jean takes the fight to the men. With just his dagger and fighting skill he proves to be a formidable match. Jean drops one attacker with his dagger, grabs his sword and fights with a blade in each hand. He spins, using another as a human shield that is quickly pierced with a deadly blow. Jean manages to fling another man out of a window, much to the amusement of drunken guests outside.

As the fight wears on, however, Jean slows. Blood leaks through his shirt. His wound sustained on the bayou has reopened. He winces, grabs at his shoulder.

Jean begins sweating heavily. His vision blurs. One of his attackers takes advantage and smashes his sword's hilt down onto Jean's head, knocking him out cold.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE21 **INT. JACQUES' OFFICE - NIGHT**

21

Jean awakens, tied to a chair with a STRANGE MAN'S scruffy beard inches from his face. The Man - "Well, his head looks alright, but this cut here is looking pretty bad. If this infection progresses he'll lose the arm...or worse."

Jean, still coming to, struggles against his bonds, but no use.

The man/doctor steps away, revealing Jacques Saint Germain standing nearby. Jean recognizes him from their earlier exchange and believes that to be the reason for his imprisonment. Jean mocks his pettiness. Jacques ignores him, instead asking Jean who he was intending to murder in the hallway.

Jean realizes this wasn't about their argument at all. He tells Jacques that he was going to kill Mauricio Santos. Jacques asks why and Jean explains - "He took everything from me." The conviction behind the words paired with the pure rage in Jean's eyes at the mention of Mauricio's name tips off Jacques.

"so it is true. It's a pleasure to meet you misuser Lafitte." Jean tries to hide his surprise at being ID'd. "Jean Lafitte is dead." Jacques is amused by his defiance. He gestures to his guard - "bring him in."

The guard opens the door and in walks Bernard, the young swamp dweller who's life was spared by Jean. He is missing his right leg bellow the knee, no doubt an effect of the trap we last saw him in. He hobbles in clumsily on crutches.

Jacques asks Bernard to confirm Jean's identity. He does, causing Jean to once again struggle against his restraints and threaten the boy. Jacques demands that both men settle the feud, declaring them even. Bernard agrees, and Jean relents. Jacques sends Bernard off - "pay the boy and see him on his way."

Now it's just Jean and Jacques once more. Jean takes note of the strange, arcane artifacts in the room as Jacques pours his guest a glass of wine. He pours himself a glass from a separate, more ornate, almost ancient looking bottle. Jean notices the strange consistency of the wine as it pours out in thick clumps.

Unfazed, Jean tells Jacques to let him go, to let him have his shot at Mauricio and he will never see Jean's face again.

He gives his word. Jacques believes him, but can't have people committing murders in his home.

Jacques informs Jean that he too is no fan of Mauricio, but there is a time and place for vengeance, and this is neither. Instead he offers Jean a deal. Jacques has been running into problems with the rapidly growing "voodoo cult" lead by the "evil sorceress" Marie Laveau. Jean - "if you're as powerful as you say, why not kill her yourself?"

Jacques says he doesn't want her dead. In fact, he believes they would become powerful allies if only she would hear him out. But so far she has refused any meeting. To that end, he has assembled a crew of foreign mercenaries, out-of-towners who cannot be traced back to himself, to capture Marie.

With Jean's expert skills in navigation they would be able to sail through the bayou, to the lightly defended backside of Marie's plantation stronghold. Avoiding a straight fight against Marie's defenses and boosting their odds of success.

If Jean agrees to help, Jacques will allow him to keep the ship and its mercenary crew to aid in Jean's quest for vengeance against Mauricio. Jean accepts the deal. Jacques tells Jean to meet his men at the docks and returns his dagger. He advises Jean to "invest in something more substantial."

22 **EXT. JACQUES SAINT GERMAIN ESTATE - NIGHT** 22

Jean exits the estate, party still raging around him. He grips the gash on his shoulder that still leaks blood and puss through his shirt. He ducks down a dark alley, heading home.

23 **EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT** 23

Ahead of Jean a side door leading into the alley swings open, and a shadowy figure stumbles out. The door shuts, and Jean recognizes the figure to be Bernard, struggling on his crutches down the alley, away from Jean. Jean grips his dagger. Fuck the agreement, he won't let the betrayal stand.

He strides up behind the Bernard, but as he nears, Bernard stumbles hard, loses a crutch. He sways, and falls. Jean's humanity wins out. He casts aside his dagger and catches the falling boy. They fall to the ground together, where Jean is able to get a look at the front side of his former adversary.

Bernard's arms are cut from elbow to wrist. His neck split open.

His skin is ghostly pale, a terrified expression fixed on his face as he dies in Jean's arms. What the fuck. Jean looks up toward Jacquess office in horror/disgust before dashing off into the night.

24 **EXT. LAFITTE'S BLACKSMITH SHOP - NIGHT**

24

Pierre Lafitte is emptying a bucket of foul water (at least we hope it's water) in the dark back alley of the Blacksmith Shop. The sounds of rowdy drunks roaring in the bar behind him.

He turns back toward the bar -- but stops when he hears the sound of approaching horse. A CLOAKED FIGURE rides atop the animal.

Pierre - "You shouldn't be here."

The hood drops, revealing Louise. Pierre helps her dismount and they share a kiss and embrace before Pierre hurries her out of the alley and into the back office of the bar.

25 **INT. LAFITTE'S BLACKSMITH SHOP BACK ROOM - NIGHT**

25

Pierre and Louise look tense. It's clearly time to address the elephant in the room. Louise asks Pierre what Jean is doing back, and more importantly, what he knows of their relationship.

Pierre tells her he knows nothing, and insists it stay that way for the time being. Louise argues that being up front and honest is the way to go, but Pierre rebuts that Jean is frenzied, hell bent on revenge and not thinking clearly. In time he will calm and they can be honest with him.

Louise gets oddly quiet, before telling Pierre that Jean is bound to find out soon enough. Louise is pregnant. Oh shit. Pierre is hit with a mix of fear and excitement all at once. He embraces his wife, a nice moment interrupted by a familiar voice shouting from the bar - "Pierre! Pierre!" It's Jean. Pierre shoves Louise into a closet as the office door swings open!

Jean charges into the room, too focused on his own issues to notice Louise, partially hidden behind a rack of clothes. Jean asks Pierre where his guns are stored and Pierre points to a trunk on the far end of the room.

Jean tears through the trunk, pulls out a rifle, several flintlock pistols and a cutlass saber. In his hurry he stumbles. Sweating heavily, he clutches at his infected shoulder.

Pierre braces his brother, tells him to slow down and rest. Jean refuses. He explains his mission to kidnap Marie, and the prize he would earn if successful. Pierre tells him that Marie is powerful and not to be trifled with. After all, when you take on a voodoo queen you're not just risking your life, but your soul.

Jean replies that Mauricio may leave town at any moment. With a ship and crew of his own Jean can, and will, pursue him to the ends of the earth.

Pierre inspects Jean's wound, looking worse every time we see it. His pleas for his brother to rest fall on deaf ears. Jean hugs his Pierre, in case they never meet again, and heads off to the docks.

Once he is gone, Louise emerges from her hiding spot and Pierre, almost having forgotten she was there, apologizes for stuffing her away. She too scrambles for the exit - insisting she must leave. Pierre again apologizes, but Louise is already out the door, dashing to her horse. Pierre is left alone and confused.

26

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

26

Jean arrives at the dock, still sweating, looking woozy, but armed to the teeth. Only two ships are left at this particular dock. An impressive galleon, and a smaller schooner. He isn't sure which he is meant to board, until a large ROUGHNECK carrying a case of PISTOLS slams a shoulder into Jean, almost knocking him down.

The Roughneck boards the schooner and Jean knows that's his ship. He inspects it from the dock allowing a slight smile. It's not The Pride, but it's a start. And it will be his if he succeeds tonight.

27

EXT. SCHOONER DECK - NIGHT

27

Jean boards the ship. A crew of 12 men stand around a grizzled CAPTAIN MARCHAND. Jean approaches the captain, who surmises that Jean is the new navigator he was warned about.

Captain Marchand loudly boasts that he would rather take the plantation head on, man to man, gun to gun. His crew of cutthroat mercenaries cheer the thought of bloodshed. Marchand mockingly bows to Jean, "but I supposed we've been instructed to do it your way. The cowards way."

The men laugh. Jean's blood boils, but he keeps his cool, eyes on the prize.

Marchand tells the men that once they're past the gates they are free to do what they want to whomever they want, as long as the "voodoo witch" is taken alive." He dismisses the men to go about their preparations and pulls Jean aside.

He presents Jean with a map of their target location. A fortified plantation house with a tall brick wall and mounted CANNONS. He admits a frontal attack would be suicide. At least two dozen armed guards patrol the perimeter and grounds.

Jean inspects the map and lights up when he recognizes the location. "I know a way in, under the walls. A old route used by escaped slaves. It was well hidden then, and I doubt it's been discovered. I can guide us in, and if you give me 3 men, I can get in and grab the witch before we've been noticed. Her men will lay down their arms once I have her."

The plan makes sense, but Marchand is stressed. He looks at his men, several of whom are taking turns SMASHING EACH OTHERS FOREHEADS TOGETHER in some kind of prefight ritual. The Captain tells Jean he can't risk it. He promised his men blood and if they don't get it, then they will take it from him.

Jean tells Marchand to sack up, take charge of his men. A Captain orders and leads. But for all the bluster the Captain is a sniveling coward and refuses the advice. As soon as his back is turned to Jean he turns back on the fake pirate charm and readies his men for battle. He commands Jean to take the helm.

28

EXT. BAYOU - NIGHT

28

It's dark, silent night. The Mercenaries duck low on the deck. Marchand stands alongside Jean at the helm. Jean is in his element, effortlessly navigating the extremely tight, shallow waters of the bayou.

It doesn't seem possible a ship this size can make it though these waters, but Jean makes it work. Up ahead is an EXTREMELY NARROW PASS between two large masses of swamp land and twisted tree roots. Marchand warns Jean not to take the narrow route, instead points to a more open path just out of the way.

Jean ignores the man, totally in the zone. Marchand panics as they approach the pass, fights Jean for the control of the helm. Jean decks the man, dropping him. He continues on and the ship glides between the land masses with inches to spare.

He picks up the Captain, telling him about the sand bar hidden under the shallow waters of the other pathway.

They coast, silently approaching their destination. The LARGE PLANTATION HOUSE is lit up by torches and gas lamps. A large brick wall surrounds the building, with several cannon emplacements and armed guards on patrol.

The schooner remains hidden from the guards through a thicket of swamp trees and darkness. The schooner slows to a stop as Jean and Marchand scout the defenses. Marchand looks nervous, clearly not expecting that many men and guns to be defending the plantation. He turns to Jean - "that slave route, you're sure it's still open?" Jean can't be sure, but he says it's their best bet.

Marchand tells Jean he has 20 minutes to capture Marie. A second longer and his men will attack. Jean agrees and asks for a few men to join him. Marchand refuses, tells Jean he can't spare them and that the clock is ticking. Jean disembarks the schooner and heads through the swamp toward the plantation.

29

INT. JACQUES' OFFICE - NIGHT

29

Jacques stands by an open balcony window. He sips his strange wine, stares at the pale moon in a trance-like state.

There's a commotion coming from outside his office door, yells and the sounds of a fist fight. Jacques doesn't react, eyes remain locked on the moon.

Suddenly, one of Jacques' GUARDS is thrown through the office door, crashing them open. Mauricio enters behind him With a pistol drawn. He points it at Jacques' back, incensed. Still Jacques doesn't move.

"Is it true! Tell me!" Jacques finally turns to face Mauricio. Asks to what he refers. "does Jean Lafitte live?!"

Jacques confirms that he does. Mauricio is furious, demands to know why he wasn't told and Jacques informs him that he has a use for Jean. Learning that Jean is working for Jacques irritates Mauricio further.

Again he levels his pistol, but Jacques calmly explains that Jean's usefulness to him will expire tonight, and if he survives, Mauricio may do with him what he will. Mauricio, still heated, leaves the room and Jacques returns to his strange moon gazing.

END ACT THREE

38 **INT. MARIE LAVEAU'S MANOR SECOND STORY - NIGHT**

38

Jean is in position, ready to drop down on Marie...when the first cannons fire.

Fuck.

Marie instantly transforms from a simple woman reading a book, to a capable wartime leader. A dozen armed men rush to protect her. She orders half of them to the south wall, where their defenses are weakest, while the other half remain by her side.

Jean watches from the second story, glad that at least some of her guards were called off.

39 **EXT. SCHOONER DECK - NIGHT**

39

Captain Marchand orders another round of cannon fire. They've already knocked some holes in the perimeter wall, but it's not enough.

40 **EXT. PLANTATION WALL - NIGHT**

40

Marchand's Mercenary crew have reached the wall in their paddle boats. The first round of cannon fire has damaged the walls, but not broken them.

The Mercenaries toss grappling hooks over the brick structures and begin climbing. GUARDS from inside the walls open fire with their muskets and flintlock pistols.

The Mercenaries return the favor.

The battle rages.

41 **INT. MARIE LAVEAU'S MANOR - NIGHT**

41

Cannon blasts rock the manor. As the sounds of battle become increasingly chaotic, Marie demands that more of her guards join the fight against the intruders.

Jean watches from above. Soon, Marie is left guarded by four men. This is as good a shot as he's likely to get. He drops down, sword in hand, and takes on the four guards.

He dodges their blades and musket fire, and for a minute looks like he might pull it off. He manages to down two of the guards before his infected wound begins throbbing. He clutches his shoulder and stumbles, allowing a Guard to land a good shot or two on him.

Jean's sweating bad, his vision blurry, but still he manages to down another guard. Only one left. Jean attacks, but his movements are slower, sloppier. The guard strikes him with the butt of his musket and Jean drops to his knees. The guard levels the rifle at Jean, ready to fire -- but hesitates when Marie yells "No, stop!"

The guard looks confused for a moment before a STRAY CANNON BALL blasts through the manor and takes him out. Jean can't believe his luck. He gathers himself and confronts Marie, holds a knife to her throat and escorts her out of the room.

42 **EXT. SCHOONER DECK - NIGHT**

42

Captain Marchand watches as his men rush over the perimeter walls. Victory seems assured now. He orders another round of CANNON FIRE which successfully knocks down a large section of the wall.

But what he sees inside dashes his hopes. Inside the courtyard of the manor, his mercenaries are hopelessly outgunned and outmanned. They're dropping by the second. To make matters worse, the defending guards are wheeling three MASSIVE CANNONS through the courtyard, aiming them through the now crumbled wall, directly at the Schooner.

43 **INT. MARIE LAVEAU'S MANOR - NIGHT**

43

Jean stays tight to Marie's back, leading her through the manor toward the exit. Marie's men are shocked to see she's been captured, but Marie orders them to stand down.

Jean shoves Marie along and out into the courtyard.

44 **EXT. MARIE'S MANOR COURTYARD - NIGHT**

44

Jean and Marie emerge into the courtyard followed by several of Marie's men who dare not risk attacking and further endangering her.

Jean scans the bloody yard where the bulk of the fighting has occurred and clearly, it has not gone well for his team. Several mercenaries lay dead, and others are wounded and being finished off by the defenders.

And worse yet, Jean arrives just in time to watch the first CANNON SALVO blast the schooner.

The ship, Jean's prize, splinters. Jean watches helplessly as the wounded schooner attempts to flee, but without his expert guidance the ship runs aground.

Another round of cannon fire causes it to catch fire. The ammo stores ignite, causing a massive explosion that cripples the ship for good.

All hope is lost. Jean watches his future, his only shot at revenge burning in front of him. His knife lowers from Marie's neck. He again clutches his infected shoulder, stumbles and drops to his knees.

His vision fades to black.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE45 **INT. MARIES STUDY - NIGHT**

45

Jean's eyes flutter. He's sweating bad, barely with it. Clearly in the throes of a serious fever. He tries to take in his surroundings, realizes he's shirtless and tied down to a table at the center of a dark room lit by a large fireplace.

Strange artifacts adorn the walls. An ALTAR is stacked with lit candles, paintings and trinkets.

Marie stands over him, a large SNAKE wrapped around her neck. She begins a strange chant, that evolves into a song and dance.

We see from Jean's POV as the room seems to WARP. The flames dance in the fireplace, shadows seems to change shape forming THREATENING APPERATIONS.

Marie chews on a mysterious herb, spits it into a small tray where she combines it with several other strange materials.

She packs the mixture into Jean's wound. He SCREAMS, and when he looks at the wound he sees a FLAME rising up from it.

Marie continues the ritual, but the pain is overwhelming and Jean once again faints.

46 **INT. MARIES STUDY - DAY**

46

Jean once again awakens. His vision is clear and the fever seems to have broken. He looks to his shoulder, finding it cleanly wrapped and treated. A strange bag is wrapped around his neck on a string.

He investigates the bag for a moment before realizing that his hands are free. He is no longer secured to the table at all. He shoots to his feet in a hurry, looks for an escape route -- but stops in his tracks when he hears Marie's commanding voice.

She informs him that the bag wrapped around his neck is known as a GRIS-GRIS bag, and that he should keep it on, as it will help him heal and bring him good fortune.

Marie emerges from a an unseen part of the study, approaches Jean. Jean asks why she spared him, but Marie doesn't answer, continues her approach. She stops, face to face with the old pirate, reaches out and touches a SCAR on his chest. A remnant of the wound he received from Mauricio.

She tells Jean that a quest for revenge can be noble, or it can corrupt. Jean would not be the first man to lose everything in a futile search for satisfaction. Jean informs her that he has already lost everything, and revenge is all he has left.

Marie looks surprised - "Nothing? No family? No...long lost love?" Jean is confused. How does she know these things about him? How does she even know he seeks revenge?

She tells him that her powers allow her to know a great many things, but quickly changes the subject. She asks who sent him after her, and he replies that it would be unprofessional to give up his employer. She surprises him by naming Jacques and asking what he offered Jean.

Jean replies that the destroyed ship and dead crew were to be his, to which Marie replies that she is surprised that is all Jacques offered, considering he has so much more to share.

Jean is intrigued by that comment, but doesn't push. Instead, he asks what happens next. Is he a prisoner? Is this supposed to be an interrogation? Because in Jean's experience, torture is much more effective.

Marie tells him neither is true. He is free to go as he pleases. She also says that she sees Jean has a big role to play in the future of the city, and that he has a great choice to make. When Jean asks what choice, she tells him "The only choice. What kind of man you will become."

And with that she turns to leave the room, but stops short. She turns back to Jean tells him that she will meet with Jacques, but Jean must arrange the meeting. And with that, she exits.

Jean is standing at the center of the room, dumbstruck. He tries to absorb it all. His mission has been accomplished in a sense, and Marie's words weigh heavily on him. He heads for the door and steps out into the bright sunlight.

47

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREETS - DAY

47

The streets are alive on a crisp morning. Jean lifts the Gri-Gri bag from his chest, inspects it. He glances at the RED RISING SUN.

It's dawn.

The beginning of something new.

48

INT. MARIE'S MANOR - DAY

48

Marie steps out of the brightly sun-lit study and into a darker room. And with the change of setting comes a change in demeanor. The powerful, but kindly affectation she had with Jean slips, and only the power remains.

Louise steps forward from the shadows - "Is he ok?" Marie informs her that yes, Jean is alive and well. Louise cries tears of joy and thanks her. Marie tells her that it was a fair trade, Jean's life for the early warning about the attack. Louise thanks her again and prepares to leave.

Marie stops her before she does - "If he crosses me again, there will be no more mercy." Ice cold. Louise nods and leaves.

END ACT FIVE