

PIRATES

By Kristi Thielen

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CHARACTERS

ANNE BONNEY
LUCINDA MUTTON
MERILEE BOTTLE
RIC RAC
PEGLEG PATTY
CAPTIAN KIDD
ALOYSIUS GOBBLE
WHATNOT
HARDSCRABBLE
CRANBERRIES
SIR REGINALD WINSTON FORK or
LADY REGAN WILHOMINA FORK

TIME

In a storybook time when pirates ruled the seas.

PLACE

A deserted island, somewhere in the Caribbean.

SET

The set may be as simple or complex as the director desires; the only requirement is a treasure chest which is “discovered” during the final scene. The chest must have a large false lock and should be filled with the usual pirate chest array of “emeralds, rubies, sapphires” (mentioned in the script) plus an ornate “silver” tray, candlesticks and a “solid toothpick.” Other items can be added to make the chest eye-catching.

If the treasure chest is on throughout the play it can be disguised with drops to look like a sand dune or a hillock or whatever. In one production of “PIRATES!” the role of “dancing pirate girl” was added for a child actor who was a strong dancer but wanted no lines. She performed a short dance between each scene, shifting the covered pirate chest to a new position onstage. This “*dancing pirate girl*” was the lead in the pirate dance performed by the female pirate band.

MUSIC

Music may be performed during the scene shifts and is called for during the crossovers and the dance. Any sea chanty or “pirate” folk tune that is in the public domain may be used.

PROPS

Sword	Anne
1/3 rd of treasure map	Anne
Knapsack (with banana inside)	Anne
Spyglass	Anne
“Clue #3” on paper or leaf	Anne
Small notebook	Ric Rac
Small bottle of “allergy medicine” (empty)	Ric Rac
“Clue #1” on piece of wood	Ric Rac
Crutch	Pegleg Patty
Sword	Kidd
Knapsack	Kidd
1/3 rd of treasure map	Kidd
“Clue #2” on paper or coconut	Kidd
Account book	Aloysius
Pencil	Aloysius
Misc. “bills”	Aloysius
Knapsack or large bag, containing:	Sir Fork
1/3 of map	
Two portraits	
Handkerchiefs	
Royal proclamation	
Canteen	Sir Fork
Umbrella	Sir Fork
Eyeglasses	Sir Fork
Large-handled fishing net	Sir Fork
Banana peel	Sir Fork
Overdue bill	Sir Fork

COSTUMES

Costumes may be as simple or complex as the director desires. They should be as colorful and fanciful as possible.

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SCENE 1

ANNE BONNEY enters, treasure map in hand. She is followed by her faithful girlhood pal, LUCINDA MUTTON, and the less-than-enthusiastic MERILEE BOTTLE.

ANNE: Land ho! I've found it! The Banana Island. Home to the Treasure of the Lavender Lady. I've found it! I'm here!

MERILEE: It's not much for scenery, is it? Unless you like banana trees. Which I don't.

ANNE: Land ho! (*swings her sword over her head and narrowly misses LUCINDA*)

LUCINDA: Hey! Careful with that thing, Annie.

ANNE: Sorry, Lucinda. I always get carried away on these treasure hunts. All that sea air, I guess.

LUCINDA: And as for "land ho!" that's what you say from a ship at sea, when you spot land far off. It isn't what you say when you've actually arrived.

ANNE: You're right. What do you say when you've traveled a long way to a deserted island and you've finally arrived?

MERILEE: (*sourly*) "When do we leave?"

ANNE AND LUCINDA: Merilee!

LUCINDA: Never mind. The important thing is we're here. You've done it, Annie girl, and I'm proud of you. Five months at sea!

ANNE: Five months!

LUCINDA: Raging storms nearly every day!

ANNE: Raging storms!

LUCINDA: Nothing to eat but seaweed, sawdust . . . and those little fish in the funny cans.

MERILEE: Sardines

ANNE: But it was worth it! (*SHE unfurls her treasure map; LUCINDA and MERILEE join her to examine it.*) I am finally going to get my hands on the Treasure of the Lavender Lady. And here's my ticket to the booty!

MERILEE: I've never seen a map cut into such a strange shape. Too bad the mapmaker didn't have a better pair of scissors.

LUCINDA: You're sure this is a map of the Banana Island? And the Treasure of the Lavender Lady?

ANNE: Lucinda Mutton! How long have we known each other?

LUCINDA: Since we were little girls together. At the School for H.M.G.

ANNE: Have I ever steered you wrong?

LUCINDA: Once around the coast of Spain.

ANNE: Well, we all make mistakes. You've got to trust me.

LUCINDA: Oh, I trust you, Annie girl. It's mapmakers with wild imaginations who worry me. But if you think this map is completely accurate –

ANNE: -it was a special gift to me, years ago, from two very experienced pirates.

LUCINDA: Good enough for me. You'll find your treasure, Annie Bonney, and become a famous woman for doing it!

ANNE: That's right – I would become famous, wouldn't I? They might even build a statue to honor me. *(SHE strikes a dramatic pose.)* Or even give me a parade! *(Lost in thought at the possibility of future celebrity, ANNE buries her head in the treasure map.)*

LUCINDA: *(to MERILEE)* As for you: cheer up! I told Annie I thought you should come along on this trip because it would do you good to get away from the office, and that weird family of yours. It's high time you saw a real ship, where real pirates look for real treasure. Stop being such a grouch.

MERILEE: I'm not a grouch. It's just that some people were born for travel on the high seas, hair-raising adventure and death-defying thrills. I am not one of those people.

ANNE: *(still in a trance)* The Treasure of the Lavender Lady, missing all these years. Who knows what might be in it? Diamonds . . . rubies . . . and emeralds . . . *(Her pleasant dreams are interrupted by the entrance of RIC RAC, crew scientist . . . and oddball.)*

RIC RAC: Spiders! Lizards! Centipedes!

ANNE: What? Where?

LUCINDA: It's only Ric Rac. I think she's been exploring the island.

RIC RAC: Annie! You have no idea what an amazing place we've come to. *(to LUCINDA)* Hello, Lucinda. *(to ANNE, as SHE consults her notebook)* The biological diversity is remarkable! I've discovered five new species of beetle, just in the last ten minutes. *(to MERILEE)* How are you, Merilee? *(to ANNE)* And I'm going to write a paper on the social habits of the horned-back centipede, then send it to the Royal Scientific Society. This could be my ticket to a membership in the Academy of Biology. *(to LUCINDA, holding out a pencil)* You don't happen to have a pencil sharpener, do you?

LUCINDA: Silly me. I never thought to pack it.

RIC RAC: Never mind. I can always use the saliva of the blue-throated lily bug. It makes a particularly attractive green ink for writing.

PIRATES! - Page 6

MERILEE: I could have lived my entire life, quite happily, without learning that.

RIC RAC: Annie?

ANNE: (*focused on her treasure map*) Hmmmmm?

RIC RAC: Did I tell you about the man-eating moths?

ANNE: (*on another track*) Ric Rac, you've got a good scientific mind . . .

RIC RAC: Well, I should think so.

ANNE: Judging from what you've seen on the island, would you say it's been inhabited at all in the last twenty years?

RIC RAC: People living here? There's no sign of it.

MERILEE: Maybe the moths got them.

RIC RAC: (*taking the treasure map*) Is this it? Your treasure map?

ANNE: The very one.

LUCINDA: Annie's convinced the Treasure of the Lavender Lady is buried right here on this island.

ANNE: And if no one's been here since the time the treasure was buried, that means no one else knows about it. Or no one has a map. And my chances of finding it are all the better.

RIC RAC: It's a strange-looking map. Are you sure a part of it isn't missing?

ANNE: There's nothing missing. You wouldn't know a genuine treasure map if it jumped up and bit you. (*SHE grabs the map back*) So there!

LUCINDA: Don't take offense, Annie. Ric Rac isn't your typical pirate –

MERILEE: - she isn't your typical anything.

RIC RAC: I've been pirating nearly as long as you, Annie Bonney, and I serve an important function on these trips. Every pirate ship needs a resident scientist.

ANNE: Well . . . there's nothing wrong with this map.

LUCINDA: Of course there isn't.

RIC RAC: If you say so. Getting back to *my* business . . . you might be interested to know that while I was on the east side of the island, observing an unusual species of philandering philodendron, an enormous purple parrot swooped down from the sky. I turned to Pegleg Patty, and I said –

LUCINDA: Pegleg!

ANNE: Patty!

MERILEE: (*with disgust*) Where is she *this* time?

RIC RAC: You know, I'm not sure. She was with me not three minutes ago. Swinging her crutch and singing the fourteenth verse of "Barnacle Bill, the Sailor."

LUCINDA: No one loves being a pirate more than Pegleg Patty.

ANNE: I just hope we can keep her off the grape soda. You know how she gets after a nip or two.

PIRATES! - Page 7

(In response to this, we hear a raucous voice off-stage, singing and drawing closer all the time. It is PEGLEG PATTY, louder than usual – which is loud enough to begin with.)

PEGLEG PATTY: *(from off-stage)* “My bonnie lies over the ocean; my bonnie lies over the sea! My bonnie lies over the ocean; *(and now, PEGLEG enters the stage, leaning heavily on her wooden crutch)* Please bring back my bonnie to me!” *(SHE slaps ANNE BONNEY on the back)* Ha, ha, ha! That one’s for you, Annie.

ANNE: Thank you so much.

PEGLEG PATTY: Don’t mention it. Hullo, there, mateys! How’s the treasure huntin’?

ANNE: *(warily)* This morning, there were fourteen bottles of grape soda on board.

PEGLEG PATTY: An’ twelve and a half of them are still right there where they were this mornin’. I saw to that.

ANNE: How very kind of you.

PEGLEG PATTY: Don’t mention it. *(singing)* My bonnie lies over the ocean –

LUCINDA: *(quickly; to quiet PEGLEG)* – maybe it’s time we started looking for the Treasure of the Lavender Lady.

PEGLEG PATTY: Capital idea, matey! Got a map?

ANNE: It’s right here, Pegleg.

RIC RAC: I think the south end of the island’s a good place to start. Less vegetation to hack through over there.

LUCINDA: I’m ready when everyone else is.

ANNE: We’re off then.

(PEGLEG PATTY sings as SHE exits; LUCINDA, trying to be tolerant of the caterwauling, is right behind her. RIC RAC exits next, too absorbed in her notes to take notice of the noise. ANNE begins to leave, but is stopped by MERILEE, who has purposely hung back to have a private word with her.)

MERILEE: Annie?

ANNE: Yes, Merilee?

MERILEE: She isn’t going to be with us the entire trip, is she?

ANNE: She drives me bats, too; but I’m afraid she’s right. It is useful to have a scientist around. Even a half-baked one.

MERILEE: I don’t mean Ric Rac. I mean the other one. Pegleg Patty.

ANNE: Pegleg? She’s harmless. Can’t sing for sour apples and gets a little too thirsty at times. There’s nothing really wrong with her.

MERILEE: Nothing wrong? What about her name? “Pegleg Patty.”
She doesn’t need that crutch! She has two perfectly fine, normal legs. Everyone can see that!

ANNE: Merilee, I know that Patty really doesn’t have a pegleg. And you know she doesn’t really have a pegleg. But if Patty likes to think she has one—who are we to destroy her fun?

MERILEE: *(a beat, then)* I could be back home right now, wearing a green eyeshade and balancing account books.

ANNE: *(misunderstanding)* I know. So aren’t you glad you came?

(Before MERILEE can respond, an exuberant RIC RAC pops back out on-stage)

RIC RAC: There’s a bat-eared mishmash lizard, right up this very path!
(SHE exits)

ANNE: Land ho! *(SHE swings her sword as SHE exits; MERILEE BOTTLE follows.)*

SCENE 2

CAPTAIN KIDD enters, treasure map in hand. HE is in high spirits – a direct contrast to his companion, ALOYSIUS GOBBLE, a worried fellow who is nervously riffling through papers, as HE enters.

KIDD: The Banana Island! We’re here at last! Let me tell you, Aloysius, I’ve waited years for this moment. The Treasure of the Lavender Lady will be mine. All mine!

ALOYSIUS: And not a moment too soon. You need money! You’re three weeks behind on payroll for every man on this ship. And everyone is itching to get paid. Especially Cranberries. *(HE pauses to check his notes; KIDD, considering the remark about CRANBERRIES, begins to laugh.)* There’s nothing funny about financial ruin, Kidd; believe me.

KIDD: Oh, it wasn’t that. It’s the idea of Cranberries – “itching to get paid.”

ALOYSIUS: *(unsure of the humor)* Oh. *(and now HE understands)* Oh! I made a joke didn’t I? I said something witty! I think I’ll write that down.

KIDD: You might as well. It may never happen again.

ALOYSIUS: *(writing)* Cranberries . . . itching . . . yes. Now, getting back to money matters. You’re five weeks behind on payment for all those supplies we bought in Barbados. And then there’s that outstanding bill for lodging that we owe in Saint Pierre, for our last sea voyage. What a miserable mess that turned out to be.

KIDD: All in the past, Aloysius; all in the past. (*HE unfolds his treasure map to examine it.*) Once I've got this treasure there'll be money to burn. And here's how I'm going to find it.

ALOYSIUS: I've never understood the treasure map business. All these squiggles and funny signs. And you have to guess what they mean. Why can't a pirate just write a simple note like this: "I put the treasure under a rock next to the lilac bush. Have at it!"

KIDD: Because treasure maps are a tradition. You can't go fooling around with tradition. This map was given to me by my own mother and father, not long before they died.

ALOYSIUS: Why didn't you just ask them exactly where the treasure was?

KIDD: Because I didn't do much talking when I was a baby. Did you?

ALOYSIUS: Sorry, captain; I didn't realize you were a . . . baby orphan.

KIDD: Well, I'm an orphan who'll soon be very rich! (*HE looks about for other crew members*) Where is everyone? What kind of pirate crew is this, anyway? They're never here when I need them. (*calling to off-stage*) Cranberries! Cranberries!

ALOYSIUS: Hardscrabble! Whatnot!

KIDD: Cranberries? Where are you?

ALOYSIUS: Whatnot! Hardscrabble! What- (*WHATNOT enters; running directly into ALOYSIUS*) -not. OUCH!

WHATNOT: Yup, that's me. But my middle name is "Hershel," not "ouch."

KIDD: Your name will be mud if you don't shape up. Where have you been?

WHATNOT: Exploring the island with Hardscrabble. He's marking off land for some development deal he wants to make.

ALOYSIUS: Marking off land?

KIDD: Development deal?

(*HARDSCRABBLE enters*)

HARDSCRABBLE: You heard right, my friends! See me today and get in on the ground floor of the Hardscrabble Community of the Isles. Luxurious condominiums for the vacationer with style and taste.

WHATNOT: Sounds good, doesn't it?

KIDD: I have no idea what he's talking about.

WHATNOT: Neither do I, but it sure sounds good.

HARDSCRABBLE: I'm talking about real estate! Folks will pay a pretty penny for a weekend home by the sea and if there's one thing the Banana Island has, it's plenty of sea.

KIDD: I see.

PIRATES! - Page 10

HARDSCRABBLE: Picture this little island just covered with tennis courts, patios, shopping centers, parking lots!

WHATNOT: Double-car garages!

HARDSCRABBLE: We can even plant palm trees to give it that “sea island” look!

KIDD: It is a sea island!

ALOYSIUS: It has palm trees!

HARDSCRABBLE: It won’t by the time I’m through building.

WHATNOT: Isn’t it great? Boy, Hardscrabble sure can come up with the ideas. I’ve already got five dollars into this deal and I’m gonna put up more when I get my share of the treasure. What about you, Aloysius?

ALOYSIUS: Well, now, let me think. Five dollars . . .

KIDD: Hold it right there! We don’t even have the treasure. And that’s what we’re here for. Or am I the only one who remembers that?

WHATNOT: Aw, gee, captain; don’t get all sore at us. It’s just that Hardscrabble had this idea and since I’ve never had one, the whole thing seemed kind of . . . exciting.

KIDD: Let’s all try to get excited about this treasure map, shall we? (*HE unfolds the map and they gather around him.*) Now as I see it, we must be right about – (*HE points*) here. And the treasure is right about –

(They ALL hold their breath with anticipation.)

anywhere.

(They ALL exhale, disappointed)

Which is why I hired all of you to help me look for it. Not to scout for real estate. To look for the treasure. Let’s see if we can all keep that straight.

ALOYSIUS: Certainly.

WHATNOT: Right.

HARDSCRABBLE: You got it.

KIDD: Good. Now, does anyone have any ideas about where we start?

ALOYSIUS, WHATNOT, and HARDSCRABBLE: Nope.

KIDD: Alright. I propose we divide up the island for the purpose of our search. Each man is responsible for his own specific area. (*pointing to a spot on the map*) Aloysius and I will start looking for clues around these big rocks here.

(CRANBERRIES enters, and wanders over to them, without speaking. HE is sniffing, scratching – decidedly glum. The OTHERS are not immediately aware of his presence.)

ALOYSIUS: An excellent suggestion. Whatnot?

WHATNOT: I could scout this place where those coconut trees are standing. *(HE thinks about this; brightens)* Hardscrabble says I've got a head like a coconut, anyway!

HARDSCRABBLE: I'll take the shoreline area where we spotted those parrots.

CRANBERRIES: *(forlorn)* I'll take anyplace where there's no poison ivy.

ALOYSIUS: *(turning to notice CRANBERRIES for the first time)*
Cranberries! Captain Kidd and I were talking about you and your –

(CRANBERRIES begins to scratch with particular fury)

Never mind. Where have you been?

CRANBERRIES: Looking for my allergy medicine. *(HE sneezes; wipes his eyes)* I put it on that shelf above my bunk on the ship. Anybody seen it?

WHATNOT: Was it in a little blue bottle?

CRANBERRIES: Yes.

WHATNOT: With a gold band around the top . . . and a drawing of a peacock in a crown?

CRANBERRIES: That's it!

WHATNOT: No wonder it tasted so awful.

CRANBERRIES: You ate it? You ate my allergy medicine? You! You!!

(CRANBERRIES grabs WHATNOT and a scuffle ensues. WHATNOT desperately tries to get away from CRANBERRIES who swings wildly, if unsuccessfully, at his crew mate. The OTHERS ad lib sounds of onlookers at a prize fight. KIDD tries to referee.)

WHATNOT: *(over the top of the fight)* Hey! Hey! Now, now . . . just a minute here . . . just a minute. I didn't eat all of it.

(The fight action stops, while CRANBERRIES considers this.)

I used some of it to plug that hole in my bunkbed.

(This really sets CRANBERRIES off; the fight begins again. CRANBERRIES chases WHATNOT off-stage, screaming as HE does. WHATNOT ad libs pleas for help; KIDD can be heard above the din calling for both crew members to stop. When the two are gone and the

noise subsides, KIDD heaves a sigh and slaps the map into ALOYSIUS's hands.)

KIDD: How far behind on payroll am I?

ALOYSIUS: Five weeks.

KIDD: Good. That's just what they deserve. *(HE turns to look at HARDSCRABLE)* Well, what are you waiting for? Start looking for that treasure!

HARDSCRABLE: Whatever you say captain!

(HARDSCRABLE exits)

KIDD: My one chance to find the Treasure of the Lavender Lady and I'm surrounded by a crew of nitwits and nincompoops! All of them! Thank goodness I'm a decent pirate!

(HE takes only a few steps to exit before ALOYSIUS calls to him)

ALOYSIUS: Captain?

KIDD: Now what?

ALOYSIUS: You forgot the treasure map.

KIDD: *(As HE grabs it, flustered)* I knew that. Don't you think I knew that?!

(KIDD exits. ALOYSIUS, clutching his many papers, follows KIDD out.)

SCENE 3

Enter SIR REGINALD WINSTON FORK or LADY REGAN WILHOMING, depending on gender, loaded down with scrolls of paper, a knapsack, a canteen, an umbrella and other strange odds and ends. Large reading glasses are set up on top of his head. SIR REGINALD is lost, out of breath and out of sorts. Which is to say, it's a very typical day for him or her.

FORK: Oh, my goodness. Oh, my goodness! Oh, my. I just . . . can't go another step. I have to . . . rest. *(HE drops everything with a crash and sits; taking out a handkerchief to wipe his face.)* It's the heat, that's what it is. All this heat, everywhere, everyday! I told them not to send me on this mission because I can't take the heat. But would they listen to me? Ha! I should have told them off good and proper. Yes! *(HE stands and begins to pace about as HE conjures up an imaginary conversation with his superiors.)* I should have said, "Look here; I'm not just anyone. I'm Sir Reginald Winston

Fork and I've been in service to this government for thirty years now, with never a single day off, never a mistake made, never a question asked. But if there's one thing I can't take, it's heat. So with all due respect, I think you'd better find someone else for this Banana Island job. And let me tell you, Your Majesty – *(HE stops abruptly, realizing how improper this behavior would have been.)* Oh, dear. If I'd said that to the *king* – well, it's a good thing I didn't. *(sits again)* I suppose tomorrow it could turn cloudy and cold and rainy. That's something to look forward to. In the meantime, I'd best get to work. I hope I still have all I need. *(rummages through his knapsack, holding up items as HE talks about them)* Let's see. Oh, yes. Here it is. Proclamation. *(HE holds up a parchment scroll)* Pictures. *(holds up two framed portraits, and studies them closely)* I suspect neither one of these is a very good likeness. And where is that map? *(HE returns items to the knapsack; rummages around for the map)* Where in heaven's name . . . Ah! Got it! Now. Hmmmm. I can't read this thing. I can't even see it. Where are my glasses? **SOMEONE TOOK MY GLASSES!** **SOMEONE** – *(HE realizes they are on top of his head)* Oh! *(puts on glasses and looks at map)* Well! The Banana Island. That's where I am and there it is, right in the middle of all this . . . blue stuff. The ocean, that is. Yes! *(folds map and returns it to the knapsack)* I guess I'd better get started. The sooner I finish the job, the sooner I can get out of this place. Although if you ask me, they should have begun this assignment ten years ago, before all this pirating began. Because pirates have this annoying habit of sailing off to hot deserted islands. *(Stands; gathers possessions, begins to exit, stops)* And I hate heat! *(HE exits)*

SCENE 4

PEGLEG PATTY is heard from off-stage, singing as loudly as before. As **SHE** nears the end of her song, **MERILEE**, **LUCINDA** and **ANNE** enter. They bear the signs of having done a good deal of **trudging about**, but their spirits are still good.

MERILEE: I didn't think it was possible for a person to sing this long.

Where does she get the energy?

ANNE: Oh, she can go on and on for hours if you let her.

LUCINDA: All day and all night!

ANNE: If you let her!

LUCINDA: Usually, we don't let her.

MERILEE: How can she be stopped?

ANNE AND LUCINDA: Food

(ANNE turns to rummage in her belongings. PEGLEG PATTY enters, still singing)

PEGLEG PATTY: “My bonnie lies over the ocean; my bonnie lies over the sea –”

ANNE: *(quickly handing her a banana)* Banana, Pegleg?

PEGLEG PATTY: Say now! Doesn't that look good. Thanks, Annie girl. *(sits and begins to eat)*

LUCINDA: Well, so far things don't look too promising, Annie. You really think we'll find some clue that shows we're on the right track?

ANNE: That's generally the way it's done. I remember years ago, where I was searching on the Tuna Fish Isles for the Treasure of the Poisoned Pearls. We combed the island for hours, then where we turned over a rock – there was the first clue.

MERILEE: And what was it?

ANNE: A message. It said, “Look in the old clock by the stairs.”

MERILEE: And did you?

ANNE: I would have. Except for the fact that there wasn't a single set of stairs on the island.

LUCINDA: Not to mention clocks.

PEGLEG PATTY: But you've got to admit – it was a mighty fine clue!

ANNE: Those were the days, weren't they, Pegleg?

PEGLEG PATTY: The best, Annie girl; the best!

MERILEE: Good grief!

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