

PLAYS FOR
New Audiences

A Division of Children's Theatre Company

Pirates!

by Charles Way

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Characters

Jim

Captain Freely

Captain Mc Govern

Sneep

Harry

2 sharks.

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

Cast Size 5.

Act 1

Scene 1: Treasure lost

Scene 2: Kidnapped

Scene 3: On the, 'Horizon'

Scene 4: The Captain's cabin

Scene 5: Battle Stations

Act 2

Scene 1: A sea battle

Scene 2: Boy overboard

Scene 3: An English man of war

Scene 4: Storm at sea

Scene 5: Treasure found

Act one, scene one: Treasure Lost

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

Sneep Harry? Harry? Harry!

[Enter Harry]

Harry Yes Sneep.

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

Harry Rock and sand. Sand and rock.

Sneep You'd best tell the Captain.

Harry She won't be happy .

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

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

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

Harry I say -I'll dig till sundown.

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

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

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

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

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

Harry Some kind of thief.

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

Harry Sneep.

Sneep Which is nothing like a mole.

Harry Sneep.

Sneep In a hole

Harry SNEEP!

Sneep WHAT?

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

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

Sneep Still there?

Harry Aye -out of nowhere.

[Sneep looks back quickly.]

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

Harry But we found the chest.

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

Harry Why not? We’ll be rich-rich.

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

Harry What kind o' curse?

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

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

Sneep That's fine Harry —

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

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

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

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

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

Harry Captain, Captain this way.

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

Sneep See, what I have found you. Ha!

CF Ha! Ha!

Sneep Ha! Ha! Ha!

Harry Ha! Ha! Ha! OH?

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

CF Did you open it?

Sneep Me? On my life I never did.

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

CF Yes, and here are the words of it.

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

[Sneep empties his pockets rapidly]

Harry Sneep!

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

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

Sneep Scarf round me head-

CF Patch on yer eye-

Sneep Pirate.

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

Harry Pickle his eye?

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

S+H Aye, Aye Cap'n.

CF Now then, I wonder-who is Jim?

S+H Jim?

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

Harry Never heard of no Jim Watts.

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

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

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

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

H+S Ha, ha!

Harry We can open it then?

CF Yes Harry.

Harry You do it Sneep.

CF Allow me.

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

CF Sneep?

Sneep On my life-

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

CF What have you done with my TREASURE?

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

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

Sneep There's a ship-out to sea.

CF Fetch the vinegar Harry.

Sneep But Captain-

[A boom of a cannon shot makes them duck]

Sneep Told you.

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

CF HMS Vengeance.

Harry They've sent out a landing craft.

Sneep And Captain McGovern is in it.

Harry He'll hang us all for sure.

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

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

Sneep What about you and Harry?

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

Sneep Harry?

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

CF Go, go, go.

[Exit Sneep]

Harry They're running up the beach captain.

CF How many?

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

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

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

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

C M Drop your cutlass-drop it!

[Harry drops his cutlass]

CM Are you injured Sailor?

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

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

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

CM Kill him.

Harry She's in the box!

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

Sneep Aye Cap'n.

[Exit sailor Sneep and pirate Harry.]

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

[Silence-he draws his sword]

Captain Freely?

[Silence]

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

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

Captain Freely!

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

CAPTAIN FREELY?!

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

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

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

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

CM Obey the rules sailor-rule number one.

Sneep Never question the Captain, Captain.

Cm Then do as I command.

Sneep Yes Captain. I mean Aye Captain.

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

Sneep Thank you Captain-and-[Exit]

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

Act one, Scene two: Kidnapped

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

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

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

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

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

Jim And I'm not hungry anyway.

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

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

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

And I never want her to write to me again.

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

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

Jim Dad?

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

[Jim turns and gasps]

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

[Jim nods]

Is your name-Jim Watts?

[Jim nods]

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

Jim My bedroom.

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

Jim Who are you? What are you?

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

Jim A-a pirate.

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

Jim Treasure?

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

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

Dad Jim-you okay?

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

Dad Jim?

CF Answer him-nice and easy.

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

Jim Yes.

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

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

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

Jim I can't open the door.

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

Jim I can't.

Dad Why not?

Jim Because-

CF Careful.

Jim There's a pirate in my bedroom.

[CF puts her blade to his throat]

Dad I see- a pirate?

Jim A very bad one.

[CF shakes her head]

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

CF *[Mouths]* Run me through.

Jim Run me through-if you come in.

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

Jim It's a woman.

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

Jim Yes. I'm sorry-

[Phone rings off]

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

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

Jim Yes.

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

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

CF Brush yer teeth? What on earth for?

Jim To be clean.

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

Jim Hidden what?

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

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

CF Oh? Who with?

Jim W-W-W with me.

CF *[Grabs him]*With you?

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

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

Jim Dad! Dad!

[CF grabs him again, covering his mouth.]

CM Let the boy go.

CF Boy's mine captain!

CM Our troubles are nothing to do with him.

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

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

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

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

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

Jim Get in?

CF In the chest-now.

Jim What for?

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

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

CF Don't cross me Captain.

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

Jim Sir?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PURCHASE PERUSAL FOR FULL SCRIPT