

# *Walk the Plank*

**by Meryl McQueen**

## CHARACTERS

Annabelle Gracie May Lavelle                      auto mechanic by day, swashbuckling pirate by night

Byron Chrysler Gray                                accountant by day, lonely bachelor by night

Parrot

Pirates (5)

Rita the receptionist

Mechanics (4)

Joseph Jacob 'Ironjaw' Gavin Sinclair (non-speaking part)

Insurance adjusters (non-speaking part)

Death (non-speaking part)

## SONGS

Annabelle

*Walk the Plank*

*Under the Hood*

*Bird Brain Brawl*

Byron

*Subaru Blues*

*Number Crunch*

Annabelle & Byron

*An Ingot for Your Thoughts*

*Test Drive*

*It Always Starts Like Down the Hatch*

*Training Wheels*

*Nest Egg*

Parrot

*Parrot's Lament*

*Parrot's Lament* (reprise)

Pirates

*The Dread Captain Annabelle*

*Here He Comes A-Limpin'*

## SCENE 1

First scene—she’s crawling in her window in her pirate’s outfit, sword by her side, definitely a buccaneer and not a wench! Annabelle sings.

### *Walk the Plank*

**You’d think a pirate’s life for sure,  
The loot, the flags, the open sea  
To boot, the swags, perfect for me,**

**But no**

**Routine is tired and strife’s allure,  
Is moot, time drags, oh, yessirree,  
Shooting crime lags, and suddenly**

**You wake up every morning  
Take my warning,  
The ‘grr’ the ‘argh’ the ‘mate ahoy’  
No thrill of stolen cargo, no joy,  
You might as well just walk the plank  
Or rob a bank  
More fun any day.**

**Ocean theft sounds like a charm,  
All black skulls and bloody fighting,  
Filling hulls with gold inciting war**

**But no**

**Now I am left aground, unarmed,  
Constant lulls, the odd ship sighting,  
Interest dulls, boredom is biting,**

**You wake up every morning,  
Take my warning,  
A buccaneer is only worth her weight in  
Gold veneer and alloy plating,  
You might as well just walk the plank  
Or rob a bank  
More fun any day.**

She flops into bed, fully clothed, and pulls the pillow over her head with a groan. Flip scene, the alarm clock rings and she jumps into her mechanic’s jumpsuit (embroidered with ‘Annabelle’ on

the front left pocket) and runs out the door with a grin.

SCENE 2: He's in his car, on his way to work. He is dressed in a cheap suit, horn-rimmed glasses and lank hair. His lunch is in a brown bag on the passenger seat. Byron sings.

*Subaru Blues*

Woke up with sunrise  
To the same old day  
No new tomorrows  
Just the same old way

Brushing and flossing  
Toast and juice, okay  
Stop at the crossing  
Never lose my way

I've got the daily grind, out-of-my-mind  
Subaru blues.

Pack lunch, a sandwich  
Always PB&J,  
Banana, apple,  
My fruit RDA

Drive in the right lane  
There's a toll to pay  
In sun and in rain  
No, I never stray

I've got the daily grind, out-of-my-mind  
Subaru blues.

And when I get there  
To the office today  
My cube awaiting  
It's where I will stay

Set down my briefcase  
Clean out the mail in-tray  
Start with the spreadsheets  
That's how accountants play

I've got the daily, grind out-of-my-mind Subaru blues.

I've got the daily, grind out-of-my-mind Subaru blues.



SCENE 3—Annabelle strides into Bob’s Auto, slinging her tool belt in one hand and whistling cheerfully. She waves to Rita the receptionist as she walks into the back.

ANNABELLE: Good morning, Rita.

RITA: Good morning, Annabelle.

In the shop, Annabelle’s greetings continue to three or four other mechanics working on cars.

ANNABELLE: Good morning Peter, Juan, Alan, Dave.

IN CHORUS: Good morning, Annabelle.

She goes straight to a convertible and gets started, singing as she works. Annabelle sings.

### *Under the Hood*

**First a wrench, then a hammer,  
Jack ’em up, slam her down**

**Never late, in by eight,  
It’s the sweetest of sounds**

**Now under the hood, where I could just be  
Some may mind dust in the air,  
At the shop where the tools make the rules for me,  
And the grease and the grime are my fare.**

**Torn brakes new, clean transmission,  
Worn cranks too, they’re my mission**

**Each piece fits, it’s a puzzle  
Teach me this, otherwise I’ll  
Drown**

**Under the hood, it’s all good to me,  
Every day find my way back  
To the shop where we fix it by six or it’s free  
With the boss there to keep us on track.**

**Under the hood, I could feel free,  
No way I’d need to sail back  
To the ship where my voice leaves no choice in decree  
And I’m the boss in regalia black.**

As she finishes singing, the squeal of brakes out in the streets ends in a crash. Annabelle rushes outside to the street.

SCENE 4: Byron still humming the last bars of ‘Subaru Blues,’ doesn’t see the light change and swerves to avoid oncoming traffic, crashing into a light pole. Other drivers yell and scream, at him, but no one stops. He gets out with a terrified look on his face, examining the heavy damage to his car. A police car pulls up and a cop takes out his ticket pad. Byron already has his license and registration ready to hand over.

BYRON: Byron Chrysler Gray. I didn’t see the light change, it was still green, I—

The cop squints at the papers.

COP: Chrysler?

He grins.

COP: But how come you driving a beat-up Japanese car, with a name like that?

Byron heaves a long sigh and shakes his head. He’s heard that one a time or two before. The cop turns away to right the ticket, and Byron inspects his car. Byron sings.

### *Number Crunch*

**Deductible!  
Uninterruptable fact, I’ve  
Blown my insurance, third time this year.**

**Incorruptible,  
That my luck will crack, I’ve  
Grown quite used to the nerves and fear.**

**When they come to inspect it  
And they crawl around  
When they sum, I expect it’ll  
Make me cry and frown.**

**Irretrievable  
Unbelievable fact, I’ve  
Crashed my old clunker, third time this year.**

**Wholly conceivable,  
That my luck will crack, I’m  
Cashed out to zero, all that’s left is fear.**



A car of insurance adjusters (car labelled 'Right-of-Way Insurance') pulls up. Four people get out, dressed in fancy gray suits, all holding clipboards. They circle Byron like sharks, grinning and chattering to each other and into their mobile phones.

**Feeling numb won't protect me  
I know what I'll hear  
When I'm glum, they'll direct me  
To sign here and here**

**Unejectable  
Undetectable fact, I've  
Blown the account, third time this year**

**Unrejectable  
Nothing left intact, I'm  
Thrown to the ground, all that's left is fear.**

**When they've crunched all the numbers,  
And they've left for lunch,  
I'll be lost, I'll be lonely  
No, it's not a hunch.**

**While the numbers are crunching  
And the bill's sky high  
I'll be checking my check book  
With a long, sad sigh.**

As he finishes, Annabelle crosses the street. She wipes her hands on an oily rag and parts the insurance adjuster circle with ease, coming to stand directly in front of Byron. The insurance adjusters disappear.

Annabelle (jerking her thumb over her shoulder at the 'Bob's Auto' sign): Looks like you're in luck.

Byron stares at her in confusion. Annabelle shrugs at the car behind him.

ANNABELLE: Sometimes looks worse than it is. Don't panic. Follow me.

He does.

SCENE 5: Annabelle leads Byron past Rita, who raises her eyebrows as they pass. His car, hood up, is already in a bay in the shop.

ANNABELLE: Gotta start with a full body integrity test.

Byron blushes, tugging at his tie to loosen it and biting his nails while Annabelle inspects the car.

ANNABELLE: Looks like there's some accordioning in the front panel, but I'm more concerned about that nasty transmission fluid leak. Front axle's out of alignment—no surprise, you hit that light pole pretty hard.

She leans deep into the car's engine compartment, wrench in hand, then pops her head out.

ANNABELLE: You okay? Sure you didn't bang your head?

BYRON: No. Yes.

He coughs and shakes his head.

BYRON: Fine.

Annabelle smiles broadly at him.

ANNABELLE: You gonna stand there all day? This could take awhile. Why don't you come back in an hour, I can give you an estimate then?

BYRON: I'll wait in the...the...

He stutters.

ANNABELLE: Waiting room? Suit yourself.

Byron steps carefully through the shop and into the waiting room. There is a glass partition between the shop and the waiting area. Byron tries to pour himself a cup of water from a cooler, but the tap twists in his hand and sprays his shirt. He tries to wipe off the water with his hand, but his hand is covered in oil from where he leaned on something in the shop. He gives up, sitting down facing the glass partition and pretending to read a magazine. Every few moments he glances up, trying to catch a glimpse of his favorite new mechanic.

Annabelle surreptitiously watches Byron too, a look of gentle amusement and genuine concern on her face. They only catch each other's eyes on the last line. Both sing.

### *An Ingot for Your Thoughts*

**ANNABELLE:**       **Can you spare a moment for me?**  
                          **I could swear you were sent to me**

I don't dare believe it's coincidental  
That your fender got bent all  
Out of shape right out there.

**BYRON:** Can you spare a side glance for me?  
I could swear, not by chance for me  
I declare we've got non-accidental  
Collision that went all  
Out to set up this pair.

**TOGETHER:** An ingot for your thoughts  
If they're swirling with delight  
At the mere angelic sight of me.

An ingot for your thoughts,  
If they're whirling sunshine bright,  
At the sheer unfettered light of me.

**ANNABELLE:** Can you catch the hint that I dropped?  
Can you spare a moment for me?

**BYRON:** Can you match the way my heart stopped?  
Can you spare a side glance for me?

**TOGETHER:** An ingot for your thoughts  
If they're twirling in dark flight  
At the soft and lovely sight of me.

An ingot for your thoughts,  
If they're unfurling in stark fright  
At the lofty, wafty light of me.

I can feel the breath in my chest,  
I can feel that death would be best,

If I never know your thoughts of me.

SCENE 6: Set up their first date (maybe a waltz—a sidling, non touching, paying up the bill over the counter waltz)

Annabelle steps through to the waiting room. Byron's briefcase, which he has been clutching in his lap, clatters to the floor and papers spill everywhere as he stands to greet her. They both stoop to pick up the papers, not speaking. When the mess is cleared, Annabelle takes a step away.

ANNABELLE: Estimate's ready. Should take three or four days to get her running again—longer if you want her beautiful.

BYRON: Mm...no, she's fine, I mean, it, the car, it's...fine.

Annabelle pulls a sheaf of papers from her front pocket.

ANNABELLE: All I need then is a signature. Unless there's anything...

BYRON (nodding desperately): Else?

Annabelle raises her eyebrow.

ANNABELLE: Anything at all?

Byron almost strangles himself by twisting his tie. He looks everywhere but at Annabelle, finally giving up. He takes the paper.

BYRON: Guess I should read the fine print. You never know.

He sits down hard, clutching the bill with both hands and adjusting his glasses to read through.

### *Test Drive*

**BYRON:**                   **Treasure's buried beneath where,  
We're both lonely and alike,**

Annabelle gets herself a drink and sits down next to him, pointing out the important bits.

**ANNABELLE:**       **Treasure's buried beneath there,  
I can see what he's like.**

**BYRON:**                   **Measure down underneath where,  
Life stretches, we've always known.**

**ANNABELLE:**       **Measure down underneath there,  
Count the days all alone.**

**TOGETHER:**           **Take me out for a test drive,**

Take me out on the town,  
Make me feel that I'm alive,  
Don't forsake me, don't let me down.

**BYRON:** Leisure time is a rare thing,  
Is this chance too good to be true?

**ANNABELLE:** Leisure time is a rare thing,  
But I can spend some with you,

**BYRON:** Displeasure certain to follow,  
I'm a klutz, I'm a nerd

**ANNABELLE:** Displeasure certain to follow,  
And yet, I'm strangely stirred

**TOGETHER:** Take me out for a test drive,  
Take me out on the town,  
Make me feel that I'm alive,  
Don't forsake me, don't let me down.

BYRON: So, it's a...

ANNABELLE: Date. Time, place. Let's just see how it goes.

They sing a final chorus as he wanders out.

**TOGETHER:** Take me out for a test drive,  
Take me out on the town,  
Make me feel that I'm alive,  
Don't forsake me, don't let me down.

SCENE 7: The scene is Annabelle and Byron walking in a park. Not hand-in-hand, but close at the shoulder. There's a bridge and a moment, and as they're about to kiss, Annabelle catches sight of pirates behind trees and under picnic tables. She is distracted and furious. Byron, who doesn't see the pirates, thinks it's because she doesn't like him after all. Kidnapped on their first date!

*It Always Starts Like This*

**ANNABELLE:**      **It always starts like this**

**BYRON:**            **(I knew it)**

**ANNABELLE:**      **Just before the first real kiss**

**BYRON:**            **(I can't do it)**

**ANNABELLE:**      **They've followed me for years**

**BYRON:**            **(No, I'll get through it)**

**ANNABELLE:**      **There will be fighting, there'll be tears**

**BYRON:**            **(Almost like a coup it)**

**ANNABELLE:**      **If he cries right now I'll scream**

**BYRON:**            **(Means I'm worth her while to do it)**

**ANNABELLE:**      **Maybe he'll think it's all a dream**

**BYRON:**            **(No, it can't be true)**

**ANNABELLE:**      **But my life is complicated**  
**Day and night are unrelated**  
**Piracy so over-rated**  
**My dates inevitably start like this.**

And now she's looking everywhere but at him, at the pirates sneaking up on them.

**BYRON:**            **It always starts like this**

**ANNABELLE:**      **(I knew it)**

**BYRON:**            **With the girls I swing and miss**

**ANNABELLE:**      **(Ah, screw it)**

**BYRON:** Maybe this one's who I need

**ANNABELLE:** (They'll rue it)

**BYRON:** I can follow, she can lead

**ANNABELLE:** (He'll prob'ly sue)

**BYRON:** Does she like me how I am?

**ANNABELLE:** (Will he take treasure in lieu it)

**BYRON:** A sort of stand-right-by-you man

**ANNABELLE:** (Would be easier that's true)

**BYRON:** But my life is complicated  
Solitude unabated  
Single life so over-rated  
My dates inevitably start like this.

**(TOGETHER)** Their choruses

And then the pirates sneak up and attack, hauling them off.

SCENE 8: Captured, in the hold. Annabelle and Byron are tied up on the ground. Five pirates are playing cards. Byron is shaking.

BYRON: What happens now? What do they want with us? And is it just me, or do they look like pira—?

ANNABELLE: Shhh. Wait. Watch. We need a distraction.

The pirates at the table start arguing loudly, their words indistinct. One of them slams his fist, scattering gold pieces everywhere. Annabelle laughs and nods.

ANNABELLE: Knew it wouldn't take long.

As she sings, she pulls a locket from around her neck with her teeth, opens the locket, and retrieves a tiny dagger, which she uses to start sawing at the ropes that hold her hands. Byron stares incoherently at his date. Annabelle sings.

### *Bird Brain Brawl*

**One-eyed Jack, fist of aces  
Stabbed in the back, trading places  
There is gonna be a bird brain brawl.**

**Hold the queens, cover faces,  
What this means, hide the traces  
Of a seated cheaters' bird brain brawl**

**Starts out slow, on a simmer  
Rumbles low, there's a glimmer,  
It's a one-day, fun-day bird brain brawl.**

**Peg Leg Larry,  
Cross-eyed Harry,  
Blackheart Lou,  
Oscar too.**

**Don't you know it,  
Self-styled poet,  
But he's just a rhyming thug.**

**Last is Chester,  
Watch that gesture,  
Man has got a killer hug.**

**Game's a breeze, five-card poker,  
Play with ease, hold the joker**



**It's a Sunday morning bird brain brawl.**

**When the mates abandon honor  
Sealed their fates, game's a goner,  
No denying it's a bird brain brawl.**

**One-eyed Jack, fist of aces  
Stabbed in the back, trading places  
There is gonna be a bird brain brawl.**

**Hold the queens, cover faces,  
What this means, hide the traces  
Of a seated cheaters' bird brain brawl**

All hell has broken loose in the card game, pirates throwing punches and furniture splintering everywhere. Annabelle releases Byron and pulls him down a narrow corridor.

BYRON (out of breath): How did you—? When did you—?

ANNABELLE (sternly): Later. Now, we run.

The sound of angry pirates follows them as they flee. They finally hole up in an alcove with a hatch below. Annabelle puts her fingers to Byron's lips.

ANNABELLE: Not yet.

She whistles with two fingers in her mouth.

BYRON (jumping): I thought you said that we needed to be quiet—

ANNABELLE: You. Quiet. I need a bird.

A parrot flaps noisily around the corner. Annabelle catches it easily, holding its beak shut with one hand. Her voice is low and nasty when she speaks to the bird.

ANNABELLE: Nice to see the old trick still works. Thought I'd be the captain, eh, looking for a bottle of port or a scroll of parchment?

The bird blinks very fast, but can't say anything.

ANNABELLE: Do you know who I am?

Byron, terrified of this new side of his potential girlfriend, shakes his head violently and starts to stammer.

BYRON: N-n-n-n-no.

His voice ends in squeak as Annabelle gives him an icy look.

ANNABELLE: The bird, Byron. Pirates use parrots as servants. Butlers, you know?

The bird twists its beak out of Annabelle's grip and shakes its feathers indignantly.

PARROT (British accent): I'll have you know that I am Captain Sinclair's personal valet. He relies completely on my attention to detail and my absolute discretion.

This is all too much for Byron. He starts muttering to himself. Annabelle sets the bird down gently.

ANNABELLE: Well, for the next ten minutes, consider your master and commander relieved of duty.

She looks at the hatch, which is sealed securely with a padlock and chain.

ANNABELLE: Wrench. Hammer. Lock pick if you can find one, but a butter knife will do.

The bird cocks its head. Annabelle scowls and shoos it out the door with both hands.

ANNABELLE: Now, bring me those tools, or it's a bird's-eye view of Hades for you, pal.

Byron raises his hand. Annabelle stares at him. Her voice returns to normal.

ANNABELLE: You don't need my permission, Byron.

BYRON (his hand still up in the air, hesitantly): You seem like you know what you're doing and all, so don't take this the wrong way, I mean, I don't have much experience with pirate birds or anything, but what if he tells them we're here?

ANNABELLE (rolling her eyes and shrugging sadly): Never going to happen. You don't know who I am yet. Will soon enough.

The parrot returns, tools in tow.

SCENE 9: About to jump ship

*Parrot's Lament*

**Please take me with you  
Pretty please take me with you  
You won't regret it for a minute  
Life is better with me in it  
Please take this bird along.**

**Please take me with you  
Pretty please take me with you  
I'm a perfect pet, full of panache,  
And if you leave me here I face the lash!  
Please take this bird along.**

**Please take me with you,  
Pretty 'Pirate-Polly-Wanna-Cracker' please take me with you,  
There's no future here, let's face it,  
Traitor birds will be erased if only,  
Please take this bird along.**

**Please take me with you  
Pretty please take me with you,  
I'll be defeathered, I'll be oiled,  
I'll be roasted, I'll be broiled, so  
Please take this bird a--SQUAWK!!!**

Annabelle grabs him, shushes him, and stuffs him in her vest.

SCENE 10: *Down the Hatch* Their escape

*Down the Hatch*

**ANNABELLE:** You're thinking 'damsel in distress'  
Well, I'm one less,  
So no need to try to impress me.

**Down the hatch**  
**I'll pick the latch**  
**And you can jump in**

**Down the hatch**  
**There's a catch**  
**I hope you swim**

Byron looks into the expanse of water below in a panic, shaking his head. Annabelle finds a coil of rope in a chest in the corner of the alcove and ties it around both their waists.

**ANNABELLE:** You think the hero's just a guy,  
Well, that's a lie,  
And no, you won't die with me.

**Down the hatch**  
**Pass the ratch-**  
**-et, this'll do fine**

**Down the hatch**  
**Then I'll attach**  
**This nylon rope line**

**BYRON:** I thought at least you'd need my help  
But all that I could do was yelp,  
Don't let me drown in the kelp please

**Down the hatch**  
**My heart is satu-**  
**-rated, newfound bliss**

**Down the hatch**  
**I might just snatch**  
**A cold wet embrace or a kiss.**

**A man should be so bold and brave,**  
**Though cowardice is all I gave,**  
**And yet you still bother to save me.**

**Down the hatch  
The perfect match  
She's just the thing**

**Down the hatch  
I can't detach  
I'll need a ring**

## **INSTRUMENTAL**

**ANNABELLE:       Stick with me, I'll save your life  
                          With deadly sharks this water's rife**

He gets down on 1 knee behind her, and she turns around right at the end of their last line. They sing the last line together.

**ANNABELLE:       But don't you dare ask me to be your wife  
BYRON:             And now I'm asking you to be my wife**

They stare at each other momentarily in embarrassed horror, then jump through the hatch.

A horde of pirates come skidding around the corner and stare at the empty space where their prisoners had been.

SCENE 11: On the baddies' ship, they're singing how scared they are of her, when their captain comes over and they have to change their tune (literally). Pirates sing.

*The Dread Captain Annabelle*

**Captain Annabelle Gracie May Lavelle**  
**No southern belle**  
**Name rhymes with hell**

**Holy terror**  
**No room for error**  
**She's the scariest one in the book**

**No peg leg**  
**No brandy keg**  
**Her reputation we fear more than a hook**

**And it's heigh-ho, buckle your swash**  
**If you lie low, all the muck'll wash off**  
**But the Dread Captain Annabelle is on her way**

**Swab the deck daily**  
**Don't dare to fail she**  
**Won't like that, not one bit, not at all**

**It's 'yes, sir,'**  
**Salute her**  
**Know what's good for you, or you'll take a fall.**

**And it's heigh-ho, buckle your swash**  
**If you lie low, all the muck'll wash off**  
**But the Dread Captain Annabelle is on her way**

**Captain Annabelle Gracie May Lavelle**  
**She's no hard sell**  
**She's your death knell**

**Captain Annabelle Gracie May Lavelle**  
**No southern belle**  
**Name rhymes with—**

INTERRRUPTED! Sinclair comes around the corner.

ALL THE PIRATES TOGETHER, SEEING SINCLAIR: Aw, hell!

SCENE 12: Continuous

*Here He Comes A-Limpin'*

Here he comes a-limpin'  
Don't he look the part?  
Hide the inner wimp in  
An outfit, it's a start

Leather vest, on his chest  
Attire is where it's at.

Hoop in ear, practiced leer,  
Feather in his hat.

Here he comes a-limpin'  
Don't he look the part?  
Hide the inner wimp in  
An outfit, it's a start

One-eyed squint, gaze of flint,  
A pirate looks like that?

Grizzled face, just in case  
We mistook him for a rat.

Here he comes a-limpin'  
Don't he sound the part?  
Hide the inner wimp in  
The lingo, it's a start.

Heigh, ahoy, tally, oi,  
That's just how it goes

Heave me mate, his overstat-  
-ed growls are on the nose.

Here he comes a-limpin'  
Don't he sound the part?  
Hide the inner wimp in  
The lingo, it's a start.

Every bargain, thick with jargon,  
Amuses all our foes.

Every word, we've ever heard

**From him reaches new lows.**

INTERVAL SPOKEN:

Sinclair        Raving like a talking pirate crazy guy all over the ship, ‘har har,’ ‘salty dog,’ etc.

Pirate one:    Joseph Jacob ‘Ironjaw’ Gavin Sinclair

Pirate two:    Calls himself Sinclair the Sinker

Pirate three:   Truly he’s not much a thinker

**We call him Gavvy in the lavvy  
Call him Jack behind his back,  
Watch him there, he’s unaware  
How much respect we lack.**

**Here he comes a-limpin’  
Don’t he look (and sound) the part?  
Hide the inner wimp in  
An outfit (or a lingo), it’s a start**

**We all know it’s affectation, no one in the pirate nation really looks or sounds or smells like that.**



SCENE 13: Sitting over a cup of coffee in the darkened waiting room of the auto shop.

BYRON: Look, about before, with the bended knee and all, I—

Annabelle shakes her head and twists in her seat. Byron stammers on.

BYRON: I panicked. I saw my life flashing. Well, not flashing. Pulsing. Slowly, monotonously, endlessly—

He shakes himself.

BYRON: Won't happen again, Scout's honor. A moment of insanity.

Annabelle reaches for another packet of sugar, empties it into her cup and stirs it with her finger. She doesn't say anything. Still seated, Byron puts down his cup, rubs sweaty palms on his knees and rocks between the heels and the balls of his feet. He looks around.

BYRON: Why do you have keys to this place?

Annabelle stares at him.

ANNABELLE: We've just spent the last six hours kidnapped by pirates, and that's your question?

Glumly, Byron leans forward and rests his chin in his hands. Annabelle reaches as if to pat him on the shoulder, but pulls back.

ANNABELLE (gently): All I meant was—

BYRON (staring at the floor): The why of the where seemed like a safe place to start.

He looks up.

BYRON: Easier by far than the other things I want to know, like who and how and what the—?

ANNABELLE (sighing): Pirate.

She salutes tiredly.

ANNABELLE: Captain Annabelle Gracie May Lavelle, at your service. Family business.

BYRON (making small talk): Do you enjoy being, a, an, I mean—?

ANNABELLE (emptying another packet of sugar into her coffee): Not one of the words I'd use.

BYRON (very quietly): Pirate?

Annabelle looks at him incredulously and lets out a barking laugh.

ANNABELLE: 'Enjoy.'

Byron gives a decisive nod, looking around the waiting room.

BYRON: Why don't you quit?

ANNABELLE (tonelessly): Destiny. It's a whole 'born to be a child of the Shanghai-ed channels of the sea' thing. No biggie.

BYRON (pointing through the glass to the shop floor): And all this?

Annabelle's face brightens, and she turns to face Byron. Their hands are almost touching.

ANNABELLE: Smell of engine oil, grease in my hair. Would've been nice to have something like this of my own, some day.

As she turns away, Byron leans in for a deep whiff.

ANNABELLE: And you, Mr. Numbers Man? Carry a briefcase to pre-school, mirror shine on your shoes, pencil in your pocket? The irresistible siren song of accounting in your measured heart?

She is teasing, but he looks away, distant.

He gets up for a coffee refill, gesturing to offer her more.

ANNABELLE: Sugar quota for the week in here, thanks.

Byron sits down again, further away from Annabelle. He crosses his legs, tapping nervously.

BYRON: So, you've...uh...killed a lot of people in the business, then? Pirates, privateers, buccaneers, brigands, bandits, maritime rogues?

Annabelle looks shocked at the suggestion and leans toward him indignantly.

ANNABELLE: Threatened. Threatened to kill. And invented a few casualties along the way—you know, cousins of cousins, friends of friends. Doesn't hurt the image to have a tall tale or two.

BYRON: So there's no actual murder? A little swordplay, strictly bloodless, with hijinx and thievery and late-night rendezvous on deck?

ANNABELLE: Sometimes. Why?

BYRON: Twelve years, seven months, sixteen days down. Thirty-eight years to go. Always thought there should be something else.

Pause.

BYRON: And this is definitely something else.

He rubs his hands together, warming to the idea.

BYRON: Teach me all you know, and I'll do the swashbuckling for you. Or, you know, sometimes. We could trade off. Tuesdays. I could definitely do Tuesdays.

Annabelle shakes her head, laughing.

ANNABELLE: You don't know the first thing about—

BYRON: Then you'll teach me.

He takes her hand.

BYRON: From the beginning. And we'll take it slow.

Annabelle scrunches up her face, holding his hands tightly in hers.

ANNABELLE (biting her lip): It's no use. They expect—

She looks him up and down.

ANNABELLE: —me.

Byron shrugs with a smile.

BYRON: Call it strategy, if it makes you feel better. Element of surprise.

### *Training Wheels*

**ANNABELLE:**        **I don't like this. Bad idea.  
I won't do this. Bad idea.**

**BYRON:**            **I'm excited. Great idea.  
I can do this. Great idea.**

**BYRON:**            **I don't get it all, not yet, but I'll get through it fine.**

**ANNABELLE:**      **I don't bet, I shouldn't let him walk this thin red line.**

**BYRON:**            **I won't fail, I'll soon regale her with my skill and daring,**

**ANNABELLE:**      **I won't bail, I won't grow pale at his lack of flair**

**BYRON:** I'm in training, can't explain I want to make her proud.

**ANNABELLE:** I'm just feigning, while he strains, great, now we've got a crowd.

**BYRON:** I can prove to her, the moves are not that hard to do.

**ANNABELLE:** I can prove to him, the moves are much too hard to do.

This is where she gets all martial artsy and he manages somehow to stay on his feet.

**ANNABELLE:** Training wheels, he needs training wheels.

**BYRON:** Training wheels, take off my training wheels.

**ANNABELLE:** Training wheels, he needs training wheels.

**BYRON:** Training wheels, take off my training wheels.

They get whirling dervishy and he keeps accidentally not getting maimed.

**ANNABELLE:** (looking almost impressed) Not bad. Ready to kick it up a notch?

Byron, huffing and puffing, nods, then almost collapses hands on knees when she turns around.

**ANNABELLE:** I'm excited. Great idea.  
I can do this. Great idea.

**BYRON:** I don't like this. Bad idea.  
I won't do this. Bad idea.

**ANNABELLE:** I don't underestimate, the speedy rate at which he's learning,

**BYRON:** I don't want to hesitate, but wait, my lungs are burning,

**ANNABELLE:** I won't slow another throw, he's catching on so fast

**BYRON:** If I don't forgo another blow I'll end up in a cast

**ANNABELLE:** I'm delighted, quite right, he's a hero, who knew?

**BYRON:** I'm right, I shouldn't bite off more than I can chew

**ANNABELLE:** In the crows nest, pirate no less, he'd be okay

**BYRON:** I might be obsessed, but need to rest for a week and a day.

**BYRON:** Training wheels, I need training wheels.

**ANNABELLE:**       **Training wheels, he's done with training wheels.**

**BYRON:**           **Training wheels, give me my training wheels.**

**ANNABELLE:**       **Training wheels, take off his training wheels.**

ANNABELLE: How about every night of the week, and twice on Sundays?

BYRON: Might need to start off slow.

ANNABELLE: Not instead of. With.

BYRON: It's no use. I'm no use.

ANNABELLE: But you were fantastic—the kicks, the blocks.

BYRON (hanging his head): Luck. Sheer, blind, stupid luck.

She pauses, looking disappointed. Then furrows her brow.

ANNABELLE: That's your life in a crunchy nutshell, then? Generally lucky, are you?

He turns slowly.

BYRON: Not...generally.

ANNABELLE: And if you never saw it coming, neither will they.

SCENE 14: Parrot flies into the shop, then out again, trying to make up his mind about something. He finally puffs up his chest and lands on Annabelle's shoulder, making Byron jump. She swats the bird.

ANNABELLE: Told you not to do that.

The parrot nudges her ear.

PARROT: Terribly sorry to interrupt. Thought of something. Something important.

Annabelle tries to shrug him off.

ANNABELLE: Told you to lay off the fermented birdseed. We're busy.

She turns to continue instructing Byron in the fine art of pirating.

PARROT: Not interested then, are you?

ANNABELLE: Not remotely.

PARROT (slyly): Don't know what I'll do with all that treasure myself. Buy a rainforest, most like.

Byron whips his head around, narrowly missing the hilt of Annabelle's outstretched sword.

BYRON: Treasure?

The parrot holds up his leg. A compartment is attached.

PARROT: When you whistled the other day, I was on my way to Captain Sinclair's quarters. He paid good money to a China merchant in the Bay for what's wrapped around my leg.

Annabelle snorts.

ANNABELLE: Not interested in ceramics, bird. Buzz off.

PARROT: Not China dinner plates, madam. China tectonic plates, as in, the merchant in question is rich enough to buy and sell half of Asia before breakfast. Has all the treasure he can stomach, and then some.

He holds up his leg again.

PARROT: This map was a bargain even for old Stinker Sinclair, and now we've got it free.

Overexcited, Byron grabs Annabelle's arm and fumbles a kiss.

BYRON: A map? A treasure map?

Annabelle puts both hands on her hips and exhales loudly.

ANNABELLE: You have got to be kidding.

BYRON: Buy a lot of life with treasure.

She shakes her head.

BYRON: Buy a whole new life.

She shakes her head, less doubtfully.

ANNABELLE: You mean we could—?

BYRON (dreamily, his hands outstretched): A & B Motors: The Best Deal to Fix Your Wheels. Let one of the cardsharks take over the pirating for awhile, once we get rid of Sinclair.

Annabelle frowns, thinking hard.

ANNABELLE: Oscar's always going on about how he has leadership potential. His sonnets are enough to bring enemies to their needs. Or there's always Chester, if I go brawn over half a brain.

She pulls out a notepad and scribbles furiously for a few moments, ending with a flourish and a smile.

ANNABELLE: That sounds suspiciously like a plan, Mr. Gray.

BYRON: You said it, I'm ready. Let's go after that treasure, and show Sinclair just how lucky an accountant in polyester suit and a wind-up car can be.

They sing this song in the car.

### *Nest Egg*

**BYRON:** We're going on a treasure hunt.

**ANNABELLE:** You've got that map back to front.

**BYRON:** There'll be danger there'll be baddies, I'll take a stand I have my pride,

**ANNABELLE:** I've rearranged my day I'm mad he's taken all the planning in his stride

**BYRON:** She will see how tough I am, I'm not a jerk

**ANNABELLE:** Can't he see how hard it is to make this work?

BYRON: Thank you. I know how hard it is to include me in this part of your life.  
She melts.

**TOGETHER:** If we're lucky, at the end of this skull and bones rainbow,  
A box of golden treasure waiting to be found  
We've been stuck without a friend, and for too long we've lain low,  
With that nest egg turn our lives around.

**ANNABELLE:** We're going on a treasure hunt.

**BYRON:** I'll show her that I'm not a runt.

**ANNABELLE:** Hope his fortune holds with me here, need a partner not a victim or  
we're screwed.

**BYRON:** Nope, a sure win, told her I'm here, fight that pirate, we'll evict him, yes  
it's true.

**TOGETHER:** If we're lucky, at the end of this skull and bones rainbow,  
A box of golden treasure waiting to be found  
We've been stuck without a friend, and for too long we've lain low,  
With that nest egg turn our lives around.

**BRIDGE :** We're the best together,  
And a nest egg would be better.  
Follow the map to the letter.

**TOGETHER:** If we're lucky, at the end of this skull and bones rainbow,  
A box of golden treasure waiting to be found  
We've been stuck without a friend, and for too long we've lain low,  
With that nest egg turn our lives around.



SCENE 15: There has to be a fight and a chase and a treasure and an all's well that ends well here, and then...

MUSICAL MEDLEY: Annabelle and Byron singing 'It always starts like this,' the pirates singing 'Dread Captain Annabelle,'

The car pulls into a park. Annabelle, Byron and the parrot jump out. Annabelle carries a shovel. Hand-in-hand, they dash around, following the map. Pirates hide behind the trees, not wanting to engage.

Annabelle and Byron find the treasure, (dig dig dig) and as they're about to get away with it, Captain Sinclair arrives.

Fight ensues.

Parrot is killed helping them get away, the bird flies in the face of Captain Sinclair.

SCENE 16: parrot's funeral, talking to DEATH. Annabelle and Byron are clasped around one another, Kleenex in hand. Sinclair appears from somewhere and leers at the camera, then swoops over his cape and BLACKOUT.

*Parrot's Lament reprise*

**Please don't take me with you,  
Pretty please don't take me with you  
You'll regret it every minute,  
Hell will be hell with me in it,  
Please leave this bird alone.**

**Please don't take me with you,  
Pretty please don't take me with you**

Fade on the last line. Zoom out.

THE END!!!