

ASTER / SMEE

SCENE FIVE

The Wasp – Captain's Cabin

Crammed in a doorway are ASTER, GREGGORS, and the SEAMEN.

Narrator Greggors: We shift our attention now to the other ship, barreling due south at a brisk twelve knots. That fine British frigate—

All: — *THE WASP* —

Narrator Aster: — where Molly's father, Lord Aster, has been ushered roughly below deck.

Greggors: Captain Scott's cabin, Your Lordship. Do go in.

GREGGORS pushes ASTER inside. The cabin is quite dark. A tattered Union Jack covers something large and unidentified.

Aster: Awfully cramped for a captain's quarters.

Greggors: No frills on a frigate, sir. Sánchez, pull the door to . . . There's a good fellow.

The SEAMEN crowd into the cabin.

Aster: Where's the Captain, Lieutenant?

Greggors: (*smiles modestly*) I'm no lieutenant. I told a lie.

Aster: Unthinkable — British never lie.

Greggors: Well, pirates do. Don't we, boys!

GREGGORS throws off his British naval hat, revealing his true identity: SMEE. The SEAMEN reveal themselves as PIRATES.

Aster: I demand to see Captain Scott!

Smee: Why didn't you say so? Presto Scotto!

SMEE lifts the Union Jack to reveal CAPTAIN SCOTT, trussed like a chicken with a gag in his mouth.

Aster: What? Robbie! (*to SMEE*) How dare you, sir? Release this man!

Instead, SMEE strips ASTER of His Lordship's coat.

Smee: I'll take the key to that treasure trunk o' yours.

Aster: You'll have to kill me first.

Smee: (*eyeing his two prisoners*) We were going to kill you second, but I'm flexible.

~~**Smee:** (*from off*) A-choo!
Immediate terror.~~

~~**Pirate Alf:** He's coming aft!~~

~~**Sánchez:** In a nasty mood!~~

~~**Pirate Boy:** A foul and nasty mood!~~

Aster: What are you playing at?

Smee: "Pirates," sir. The Wasp is now a pirate ship.

Aster: There've been no pirates in these parts for a hundred years!

Smee: We've been keeping a very low profile.

Aster: And you're the Captain, I suppose?

Smee: I, sir?

Aster: Aye, sir. You, sir.

Smee: No, sir. Not Smee, sir.

Aster: Smee, sir?

Smee: That's me, sir. But no Captain I, sir.

Aster: You lie, sir.

Smee: Oh no, sir. The devil himself's in charge hereabouts.

Aster: The devil, you say.

ASTER/SMEE CONT.

Smee: The Prince of Darkness. Our Satanic Supervisor. Foul and Nasty with the Cloven Hoof.

Aster: And how would one identify him in a crowd?

Smee: By his legendary cookie-duster, that's how!

Aster: Whiskers?

Smee: By his celebrated mouth-brow, that's how!

Aster: Well, does he have a name?

Smee: The pirate captain they call . . . BLACK STACHE! **END**

The PIRATES shriek and bemoan the hearing of this terrible name. And suddenly, there he stands - THE BLACK STACHE, carrying a bucket . . . into which he pukes and spits.

Stache: (*waving cordially to ASTER*) Hallo. (*The PIRATES shriek again and bemoan what might happen next. STACHE continues, winsomely.*) Oh, to be in England, now that April's there, But whoever's not in England gets to see my facial hair. (*to ASTER*) Now, you're likely wondering: can the fellow before you be entirely evil? Can no compassion un-crease this furrowed brow?

Smee: Brow.

Stache: Brow. Well, fret not, *mon frère* — I'm a romantic! There's a poet in these pirate veins, and so I plug into the muse. (*holds his hand out to SMEE for a manicure*) But what to do? Which style to use? Iambic? Box office poison. Haiku? Samurai-don't-think-so! (*suddenly vicious to SMEE*) Mind the cuticle, Smee! (*Eureka!*) Hoopah! Got it! (*a steely glare at ASTER*)

A pirate with scads of panache

Wants the key to the trunk with the cash.

Now, here's some advice,

Tho' I seem to be nice —

I'LL CUT YOU!!! Slit you up one side 'n' down the other so ye can watch yer own stomach flop around on the deck. (*holds a straight razor to ASTER's throat, but ASTER doesn't flinch*) I say, Smee — you did explain to my Lord that I'm a bloodthirsty outlaw?

Smee: Aye, Cap'n. But he still wouldn't give up the key!

Stache: We haven't got all night, Smee. People have paid for nannies and parking. Stand aside. I'll have to do it myself, or I'm not — I'm not — (*heartbroken*) WHAT AM I??

Pirates: BLACK STACHE!!

Stache: They refer, of course, to THIS! (*The PIRATES gasp!*) The trademark nose-brush of every man, woman and child in me family, dating right back to the amoeba. Yet, for us, the face foliage has been, oh, so much more than a lawn on the lip, sir. 'Tis what we are, and why we are it. And when everyone else got out of the pirate business, The Stache stuck it out, knowing one day my ship would come in. This is the day. This is the ship. (*menacingly*) Now, cough up that key, my Lord.

Aster: Not a chance, you thug.

STACHE throws a tantrum at this insult, then recovers.

Stache: (*to SMEE*) Why, is that my Lord's coat you're holding?

SMEE helps STACHE on with Aster's coat.

Smee: Looks to be about your size, Cap'n.

Stache: What the well-dressed "thug" is wearing this season.

Smee: So *comme it faut*, Cap'n. So very *comme it faut*.

STACHE surveys his reflection in a mirror. He's pleased with what he sees.