THE PORTHOLES

"PILOT"

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COLD OPEN

EXT. BEACH - STAGE - DAY

SUPER: SAVE THE TURTLES FESTIVAL - KEY WEST, FL

THE PORTHOLES are performing fast rock music on a giant stage. They are in front of a newly-built sea turtle habitat. They hit the final note and the crowd cheers.

MAYOR SHULTZ (50s) walks on stage and grabs a mic.

MAYOR SCHULTZ
Today, we are officially housing Riley, the last Ridley sea turtle on earth, in her own state-of-the-art habitat. Built with a little extra room, because guess who's pregnant!? Let's stock this thing with some food for this momma!

The crowd roars. Armed guards escort Riley in her Pope-mobile type thing for a turtle, and she's placed in the enclosure.

MAYOR SCHULTZ (CONT'D)
If you would do the honors, Sonny?

SONNY HICKS (32), attractive frontman, and charismatic chaos machine, pulls a rope and a giant cage full of crabs is slowly lowered into the enclosure. Riley begins eating, but starts to twitch. Her face puffs up and her eyes swell shut. The crowd screams in horror as Riley goes into anaphylactic shock. It's on the screens. Her sounds of agony blasted through the concert speakers.

Panicked, Sonny lets go of the rope. The cage falls and breaks the glass of the enclosure. Crabs crawl everywhere and into the crowd. RAY HICKS (35), Sonny's shorter, older, plain-looking, artist-type brother and bass player, also panics.

A MALE BIOLOGIST (40s) walks across the stage like a disoriented shellshocked soldier at the beach at Normandy. He carries crabs, sobbing.

MALE BIOLOGIST
Shellfish. She's allergic to shellfish...

Sonny checks his jacket. He pulls out an EpiPen, and runs over to Riley. He passes a member of security who is overtaken by a swarm of crabs and falls onto the fireworks display controls. It shorts out and sparks.

They misfire at random heights. The habitat is suddenly set ablaze. Sonny finally reaches Riley, raises the EpiPen and jabs Riley in the shell repeatedly, the EpiPen breaks on the hard shell. ELLIE RIGBY (34), a fiercely-talented guitar player who plays with a focused no-nonsense energy, sees Sonny's idiotic move of jabbing the turtle in the shell and screams. The crowd is in full panic. Some with injuries and crabs hanging from them.

A woman sits on the ground rocking and crying amidst the discordant cacophony of disaster unfolding around her. With slightly more time between each jab, Sonny desperately attempts to puncture the shell with the now bent and damaged EpiPen needle. He is out of breath.

SONNY
It's too thick!!! The damn shell is so healthy and thick!!! It's too th-

FREEZE FRAME. Theme song starts. A newspaper with "CANCELLED" over their picture spins into frame. Headlines read: "EXTINCT!" "Millions in Damage and Crab-Related Injuries."

MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE

A montage of the band's history, their meteoric rise and spectacular fall. Sold out arenas. Winning Grammys. Etc.

SONNY (V.O.)
(singing)
WE WERE ON TOP OF THE WORLD / WE WERE HAVING A BALL. / UNTIL WE HAD A LITTLE OOPSIE AND THEN WE LOST IT ALL. / TOP TO BOTTOM, NOW THE ONLY JOB WE CAN GET / IS A RESIDENCY AS THE BAND ON A SHITTY CRUISE SHIP. / ELLIE HAS BEEN MARRIED TO EVERY GUY IN THE BAND / BECAUSE SHE'S A FEMALE CHARACTER WRITTEN BY A MAN.

A teen boy plays drums. A sign reads: "Orphanage Talent Show Today." **No one** in attendance.

SONNY (V.O.)
"AND THEN SHE MARRIED THE DRUMMER / BUT HE DIED IN A CRASH / SO WE ADOPTED AN ORPHAN THAT WAS REALLY REALLY GOOD AT DRUMS.

THE PORTHOLES (V.O.)
"WE'RE THE PORTHOLES"

END MAIN TITLES SEQUENCE.

ACT ONE

INT. CRUISE SHIP - MAIN THEATER - NIGHT

SUPER: 1 YEAR LATER

The intro song continues and seamlessly transitions to The Portholes performing the end of it aboard a cruise ship, The S.S. Second Chances. The stage is in poor repair. They hit the final note and a sparse crowd has a lackluster reaction to their performance. Ray and Ellie see Sonny is visibly intoxicated. He trips and falls over an amplifier.

RAY
Goddammit. Shaggy! LIGHT!

SHAGGY (20s), a stage tech, adjusts a knob on the console. An old, rickety spotlight in the rafters creaks and shakes as it pans, hammering Sonny with intense light. He stumbles to the mic, picks up a t-shirt cannon and makes mouth-gun noises.

ELLIE
The show is over, dumbass.

SONNY
Man... I always thought rock bottom would be like way more fun. Let me have this.

RAY
We *all* love the shirt shooter, but at this range you'll kill someone.

SONNY
They're like 100% cotton. Don't be a 100% little bitch. This is the only part of this job I don't hate.

LEVI HOBBES (17), young, Black, drummer and literal new kid with a naive enthusiasm for life that is yet to be absolutely destroyed by experience, is on the world's greatest field trip, just completely missing the cynical vibe from his much older new bandmates and adopted guardians.

LEVI
I like this job.

SONNY
Don't worry, buddy, we're not going anywhere.

ELLIE
Because we can't.

Ray looks down at his phone with an app open called "Industry Poison Checker." He swipes to refresh the Portholes page and a fart sound and flush notification confirm they are still industry poison.

RAY
We could do *Dancing with the Cancelled Stars*. Oh! Or we could go on tour with my high-concept stage show!

SONNY
A performance so ironic that the audience doesn't even know? That's not high concept. That's just dumb.

CHARLES MOON (59), a well-dressed, very hip older Korean man, cruise ship owner, and real life patron saint of lost causes, enters. Lurking at his side, his wife, LYNN MOON (64), dressed impeccably, she's a WASPY white woman that carries herself with an elegant, yet predatory grace. Her razor sharp gaze is on The Portholes, sizing them up.

CHARLES
Come on. That show was incredible! You guys were great!

LYNN
I think what my husband means to say is you've seen better days.

She pats back some peeling wallpaper and it falls right back.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Although so has this stage, I suppose. I particularly liked the part when you played half the show *sitting down.*

SONNY
Levi started it!

Levi sits at the drums, confused.

CHARLES
Hey, I believe in you. Attendance will bounce back. Until then, you will always have a place aboard my...

Lynn clears her throat.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Our ship.

SONNY
Awww thanks, Chuck!

LEVI
I thought you said it was Cuck?

Sonny pushes Levi's head away quickly to silence him. As Charles begins to speak, Lynn gets a phone call, and holds up a finger dismissing Charles and walks away. Sonny points the t-shirt cannon at Charles. He speaks like a western cowboy at a duel.

SONNY
Now you wouldn't let your wife talk you into firing us now would ya, *partner*.

CHARLES
She just wants you to *want* this stage and respect it as much as she does. But as long as *I'm around*, you guys will always have a j--

The stage light creaks and then falls violently on Charles. He hits the floor with a thud. The band is looking at his motionless body in total shock. ECU of Lynn. A smile creeps onto her face.

A beat. Then as the band is still frozen in shock, the t-shirt cannon fires. A t-shirt hits Charles' body extremely gently.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. S.S. SECOND CHANCES - ESTABLISHING - DAYS LATER

INT. LYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

The Portholes stand in front of Lynn's desk.

LYNN
Charles...

She pulls a golden, corded rope and an opulent curtain opens, revealing Charles, comatose in a bed.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Is in a coma.

The band GASPS.

LYNN (CONT'D)
I've asked you into my office for two reasons. First, to inform you that the investigation has concluded and found you clear of any wrongdoing.

Ellie and Sonny fist bump.

LYNN (CONT'D)
So unless you do actually commit manslaughter, I cannot terminate your ludicrous contract without selling the ship to pay the financial penalty.

RAY
You're calling it your office already?

She exhales in frustration and walks towards the wall. She walks by and taps a framed picture of her performing to an enthusiastic crowd titled "Maiden Voyage 1968."

LYNN
Things were so much better then. The ship was buzzing with opulence and good old traditional values. Charles was a star maker. Oh he knew raw talent when he saw it. Back then, he'd only let you grace that stage if you deserved it. If you respected it. But he's been losing his touch for years.

She continues to walk by framed photos that depict ideas and acts getting progressively worse. Starting with a young Lynn performing and ending with things like a skating rink, ferris wheel bathrooms, and a reverse buffet. She stops and shudders at a photo of a ribbon cutting ceremony at the first "Taco Tuesday." She stops where Sonny is standing where the next picture would be.

LYNN (CONT'D)
And now... *you*. Which is the second reason I've asked you here. With my dear husband unfortunately incapacitated, I do have the sudden opportunity to get this floating halfway house back to resembling a functioning for-profit business.

She holds up their contract.

LYNN (CONT'D)
There's nothing on your list of demands you call a rider that is actually in your contract. For example, Moon Cruise Lines paying Raymond's Mensa Foundation dues.

The band hammers Ray with judgmental glares.

RAY
What? If I pay them, it makes me feel dumb.

Lynn crosses out items on the rider as she dismisses them.

LYNN
Gone! Your personal mixologist? Gone! You can order your drinks at the bar like everyone else.

A mixologist in the corner stands in front of a drink cart. He points at himself as to say "who me?" and then acknowledges and pushes the squeaky cart out of the office and leaves. The band hangs their heads.

LYNN (CONT'D)
A two-man security detail for Sonny's guitar? Gone!

It is Sonny's turn for the judgmental glares.

SONNY
Dad is coming back one day, *Ray*. He's gonna want that guitar back.

Ray and Ellie shake their heads in doubt. Lynn positions herself in front of Ellie.

LYNN
As for you, my initial instincts were to institute a dress code to protect our guests from your whole loose-woman-with-even-looser-morals... *vibe*.

She looks Ellie over like a seamstress disapproving a design.

LYNN (CONT'D)
But some pennies simply can't be shined, so I'll just reassign you to playing somewhere that your trashy "sleeves optional" look is more appropriate. So, you'll be playing by the pool for lunch until further notice.

ELLIE
Ha! I don't think our Grammys are water proof.

Sonny thinks.

SONNY
They're not, remember?

Lynn squares off to Ellie and pinches her lowered tank top strap, slides it back up her shoulder and lifts her chin in a power move akin to straightening a man's tie. Ellie is hurt but covers it up. Levi's phone camera shutter sound breaks the tension as he takes a selfie in front of Charles's comatose body. He is genuinely sad. We see the post captioned: "My guy Charles AFK rn. I hope he wakes up rested soon." Everyone is staring at him.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Sorry. He's adopted.

Levi's head lowers and Ellie scowls at Sonny. Lynn jots down a note. Sonny remorsefully attempts to backtrack.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Tag me in that... buddyyy.

Ray rolls his eyes and returns his attention to Lynn.

RAY
This is an assault on our creative identity. What makes you think we won't just quit.

LYNN
Oh be my guest. But what exactly would you do? Tell me. Is *Hot Topic* hiring seasonal employees right now?

They physically feel this burn. Ellie sighs.

ELLIE
That's fair.

LYNN
And the best part! You can start today! At noon. Here's your list of approved songs.

She hands Ellie a stack of papers.

ELLIE
Wait... now you're trying to tell us which of our own songs we can play?

Ray knows that's not what this means.

RAY
No...

Sonny catches on.

SONNY
NO.

Ellie looks down at the list. The band crowds around her. She runs her hand down the first page revealing song names such as "Brown Eyed Girl," "Brick House," and "Sweet Caroline." She goes pale and shudders with absolute terror. Then, quietly and defeated...

ELLIE
Covers.

The whole band reels in remorse as Lynn laughs.

THE PORTHOLES
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

The view zooms out the window and reveals the entire ship seemingly shaken by their cries. Birds suddenly fly off the ledges and the sound of their shouting slowly blends and then is overtaken by the ships horn.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. S.S. SECOND CHANCES GANGWAY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A banner hangs above the entrance ramp, reading: “WELCOME C.H.A.D. CRYPTO HOLDING ALPHA DOGS CONVENTION.”

An endless line of loud, very basic bros enter the ship, taking selfies, checking out the logos on each other’s backwards caps like dogs sniffing asses, projecting ultimate masculinity, and mansplaining crypto to everyone around. A man dunks himself in an ice plunge tub and cries while other men exclaim how masculine he looks.

INT. THE MERMAID’S COIN PURSE CREW BAR - DAY

A stocky bartender, JENNY (26), serves drinks. Sonny, Ray, and Levi enter and sit at the bar, dejected.

JENNY
You guys must be that band? What can I get ya?

SONNY
Just a beer. But it’s gonna need some help today. Raymond. Give me an edible.

He holds out his hand.

RAY
I don’t have any.

SONNY
Well, Jenny, I’m Sonny, the *singer*. This is my brother Ray. A *liar*.

RAY
I also play bass.

SONNY
Oh and can I get some crayons or something? For Levi here?

Ray rolls his eyes. Jenny hands Levi some crayons and a menu.

LEVI
I’m seventeen.

Ellie bursts through the door angrily with a stack of papers.

JENNY
And who's *that*?

RAY
My ex wife.

SONNY
My ex wife.

There is a guitar STING.

ELLIE
Stop introducing me like that!

She walks over with the set list, and we see Sonny and Ray are holding guitars and were the source of the sting.

RAY
Sorry.

SONNY
Sorry.

ELLIE
Look at this. These songs say alpha bro conference to you?

Sonny takes the setlist.

SONNY
Oof. Ya I don't think Chappell Roan is their jam, and the rest of this is like the setlist for a dry mormon wedding.

RAY
The music we make has demonstrably contributed to mainstream culture. It has value. *This* is insulting.

SONNY
Ah, come on. You could get creative! At least it's good music I guess. And btw, basic white dudes with fragile masculinity *is* mainstream culture right now.

Ellie cheers and snaps her fingers in approval.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Shut up.

ELLIE
We either make these songs our own as best we can, or play them note for note like a prom band. It's a choice of necessity, not preference, man.

RAY
Shit. Okay. I don't know. What's the dumb straight white guy red-pilled version of the "Pink Pony Club" in West Hollywood?

JENNY
Oh! A Jersey Mike's! In the Valley.

EXT. POOLSIDE STAGE - DAY

The Portholes are playing a song about Jersey Mike's to the tune of "Pink Pony Club." It is killing. The bros love it.

SONNY
A BIG TOASTED SUB
THERES A NEW LOCATION UP IN
NORTH HOLLYWOOD
I'M GONNA KEEP ON MUNCHING ON MY
BIG TOASTED SUB, BIG TOASTED SUB

They end the song and the crowd chants "MIKE'S WAY." Lynn is watching in the back. She sees them celebrating. A ship photographer takes their picture with enthusiastic new fans. She stiffens her arms to her sides, pivots, and leaves.

INT. LYNN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Lynn bursts into her office, irate. She sits at her desk and puts her face in her hands. She notices a note she wrote earlier. She pulls up the ship employee records on The Portholes, scans quickly through Ellie and Ray and then pauses on Levi. We see his age "17." She scrolls and sees "ADOPTED PARENT: SONNY HICKS." A smile creeps onto her face.

EXT. STARBOARD SIDE DECK BY THE FERRIS WHEEL - SHORTLY AFTER

The Portholes lounge in deck chairs, each with a drink in their hand. Sonny is smoking a cigar.

SONNY
Man. Not too shabby. Was that almost kinda *fun*?

He leans back with his arms behind his head. A PASSENGER (50s), his shirt reads "She got half my stuff, but none of my BTC" shouts from across the deck. He clearly has to pee.

PASSENGER
Is there a bathroom around here?

Ray points at the ferris wheel, the passenger looks. Each gondola on the ferris wheel is a stall. As they come around, they are currently all labeled “OCCUPIED.” One is labeled “OUT OF ORDER.” He then recognizes the band and approaches.

PASSENGER (CONT’D)
Hey you’re that band!

RAY
Yes, our name was The Portholes before we worked on a ship and no we didn’t know it was allergic.

PASSENGER
Huh? No. My son’s a huge fan. I booked this cruise so he could see you. Made his *life*. I’d like to see his mom top *that*.

ELLIE
Okay.

PASSENGER
I’d really love to get him something better than his mom or her simp, *Greg,* could ever get him. Any chance I could buy him one of your guitars or something?

RAY
Would you ask a *doctor* for his guitars, man?

PASSENGER
No. Yeah. Of course not. Oh. I get it *dude*. Rock on, right.

He heads off quickly, but yells back as he walks away.

PASSENGER (CONT’D)
Oh. Maybe give him a shoutout at your next show?

Ray yells back

RAY
Sure! What’s his name?

PASSENGER
Brayden!

They speak just to each other, out of Passenger’s earshot.

THE PORTHOLES
Gross.

RAY
How much you think you could get for dad's guitar though?

SONNY
Psh. Never. Come on.

LEVI
Oh! Check it out. I'm blowing up.

He proudly displays his phone screen showing a video from his perspective at the drums during the show. It is rapidly gaining likes with the hearts number spinning out of control.

SONNY
Oh my God, take that down right now.

LEVI
But you said that I could post about positive things.

RAY
You adopted him. You gotta explain.

SONNY
Oh come on, it could have been any of us. I drew the short straw. It was just so you could legally come with us. Not so you could post videos of us playing dumb novelty shit by a pool.

Levi is visibly hurt. The passenger doing the pee dance, yells from the wheel.

PASSENGER
Is this the only bathroom on this deck?!

SONNY
YEAH!
(to Levi)
Oh. Unless that's what you want? I don't know. I mean I don't mind faking it if- I MEAN not that I'd be faking it, I just mean, I'm not really your-

Jenny arrives with another round.

JENNY
Here you go!

She puts the drink tray down and hands Ray an envelope.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Also, Lynn asked me to give you this. She's remodeling the VIP quarters so this is the key to your new room.

The passenger is almost doubled over and yells to them again. Jenny hands Ray an envelope.

PASSENGER
Is there like a code or something?

THE PORTHOLES
JUST GO OFF THE FUCKING SIDE!!!

Ray opens the envelope and pulls out a key.

RAY
Wait. Why is there only one?

Jenny awkwardly grits her teeth and taps her index fingers together like she doesn't want to tell them. The passenger is tackled by security while peeing off the side. The thud of the tackle and sounds of him struggling cut seamlessly into...

INT. EXTREMELY TINY CREW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

There is heavy breathing and palpable frustration. They are struggling to fit into vertical bunks like the astronauts have on the space station. They settle. There is a beat of silent somber acceptance of their fate.

RAY
Remember when Sonny complained to the manager at London House because room service wouldn't bring us pizza rolls? Look at us now.

SONNY
People give you what you *accept*, not what you *expect*. Remember that, Levi.

Sonny measures the space in his bunk with his hands.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Man... Can you imagine boning in here?

ELLIE
For the love of god! *please*, pick one thing. *Just one damn thing*, Sonny. And for once! *Take it seriously*. Take a break from your perpetual state of self-destruction that outshines every single real accomplishment the rest of us manage to achieve and just be a goddamned adult for five fucking minutes.

SONNY
Okay. I'd like to counter with "Fuck you, Ellie." And for everyone else, doth the lady speak for *all* of you?

They all poke their head out.

EVERYONE
Yes.

SONNY
Oh good! So this must be what you guys talk about in all those secret weekly meetings you have without me?

LEVI
You mean *band practice*?

SONNY
Oh. That thing where we sit around for two hours and listen to Ray cry about how his "genius" ideas are unappreciated? Pass.

RAY
Okay, I'll try to just accept it when I create something real and have to stand there behind you when you roll in hammered and get all the credit.

SONNY
Oh I'm the only one that drinks too much?

ELLIE
You ordered a Bloody Mary from the hostess before we were seated for breakfast this morning.

Sonny was going to open a beer but doesn't.

LEVI
Is this what it's like when parents get divorced?

They all look up and feel the weight of his statement. A beat, then the faucet breaks open and starts spraying everywhere.

INT. LYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

Lynn sits at Charles's bedside watching a video of herself performing on the ship in the 70s. She is singing her signature song "Maybe it's Me." A cheesy love song about hoping a man picks her. It is good, but bland. The video depicts Lynn in a big prop bird cage singing the big finale. She pauses the video and puts her hands on Charles's hand.

LYNN
You saw the promise in me when no one else did. And what did I do... But still you stand by me even after all these years of taking you for granted. Please just give me some kind of sign. What do I do?

She looks up and sees the poster for her first stage show on the ship: "The Songbird of the Seas, Lynn Moon." She is flooded with inspiration.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Oh Charles! Of course. Who better to bring the main stage back to its former glory than me? I was just too humble to see it before. Thank you. Message received, my dear husband.

Charles begins to stir awake from his coma. She is shocked but snaps out of it, and raises a syringe labeled "MORPHINE."

LYNN (CONT'D)
(singing)
Ah ah ah. Right back to a coma for youuuuuuu.

She jabs Charles with the syringe and his eyes roll back as he drifts back to sleep.

EXT. TO THE MOON MIXER AT OUTDOOR CLUB - SUNSET

Sonny stands at a cocktail table. Jenny is behind serving drinks bros. Levi approaches Sonny's table.

LEVI
She said to tell you she's not done cooling off yet, and she can get her own damn drinks.

SONNY
Ah *women*, huh? Well we tried. Just one for me then, buddy. Thanks.

Levi walks off towards the bar as Ray enters.

RAY
Uh, did you guys see that?

He points to someone hanging a poster for a show. It reads "Lynn Moon's Triumphant Return to the Stage Tomorrow Night!"

ELLIE
Oh hell no.

It is revealed that Ellie was standing at the same table as Sonny the whole time, just off frame. Jenny arrives with Sonny's drink.

JENNY
Sonny, I told you, you can't have Levi carry your drinks.

SONNY
It's okay, I'm his legal guardian.

LEVI
The forms actually say parent.

Sonny does a spit-take. Lynn enters proudly.

LYNN
Put out that cigarette, Raymond. This isn't the back room of a Staples.

Ray immediately extinguishes the butt of his cigarette. Lynn yells to the custodian pasting up the sign.

LYNN (CONT'D)
It's a little crooked, Juan!

ELLIE
His name is José, and you made *yourself* the new main stage act?

LYNN
My hands were tied! If I had a better option, of course I would reconsider. But there just isn't another act in this hemisphere that can match my level of talent while bringing back the traditional values this ship started with.

LEVI
You make me for real uncomfortable.

LYNN
And after a wonderful trip down memory lane in the old prop room I even found something for you!

She snaps her fingers and an employee wheels out a rack with four very tacky white and blue costume sailor uniforms with super short shorts, and cute matching hats.

LYNN (CONT'D)
I think I will enact that dress code after all!

She pinches the sleeve of one of the sailor uniforms and rubs it between her fingers.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Isn't it funny how things come back in style?

Ellie is beyond frustrated. She restrains herself. Barely. A beat. Lynn waits then comments as she walks away.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Yes. Seen not heard, good girl.

Ray puts his hand on Ellie's shoulder.

ELLIE
She has to go. There's only one thing left to do.

SONNY
Seduce her.

ELLIE
No.

LEVI
What happened to that lady that made her like this?

ELLIE
That's actually a great question.

Sonny grabs a sailor costume off the rack and quickly exits. Ellie tries to stop him.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Sonny! Wait! What are you doing?!

She stops herself as she realizes Sonny's idiotic plan will be the perfect distraction.

INT. CAPTAIN'S LOUNGE & CREW OFFICER BAR - EVENING

An opulent room. Very classy, Lynn's favorite spot on the ship for sure. Lynn is sitting at the bar with a glass of wine. Sonny enters and stands beside her. He is dressed in the sailor costume.

SONNY
Is this seat... taken?

Lynn is surprised, thinks for a beat, then smiles.

LYNN
This club is for ship officers only.

He points to his fake costume insignia and then salutes her.

LYNN (CONT'D)
At ease, sailor.

She smiles suggestively. He signals "two" to the bartender.

EXT. LIDO DECK BAR - NIGHT

Ellie sits at the bar surrounded by red-pilled single men, each thinking they are really knocking it out of the park with her.

ELLIE
Yeah, my ex boyfriend could probably do it, but he was like, really mechanical... and masculine.

BRO 1
PSH, I'll do you one better. I could pick that lock and get you physically in her office right now.

Ellie smiles suggestively. She signals "two" to the bartender.

INT. LYNN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

It is dark. The doorknob jiggles, clicks, then turns. Ellie and Bro 1 enter sneakily. Bro 1 notices Charles's machine is beeping, sees his hospital bed and reacts.

ELLIE
It's fine. He's in a coma.

Ellie goes behind Lynn's desk and opens her laptop. The video file "Lynn Moon Maiden Voyage performance_VHSTransfer.mp4" is still open from earlier. She clicks play and immediately turns it down a few clicks because it's super loud. She sees Lynn's exactly average performance. She laughs to herself like she just checked a closet for monsters and of course there was nothing there. The performance ends and then the footage cuts to Lynn in her dressing room. We can hear Charles behind the camera. They are flirting and sweet to each other.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Awww. Lynn used to be a human.

BRO 1
Who the fuck is Lynn?

Suddenly, a rat scurries across the dark room and he shrieks.

INT. CAPTAIN'S LOUNGE & CREW OFFICER BAR - EVENING

Sonny is now completely wasted and hugging Lynn's legs and crying as she still sits at the bar unamused.

SONNY
I never knew my father either! Do I just tell Levi that? Huh? I didn't ask for thiiiiiis!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LYNN'S DRESSING ROOM - 1968 (ON VIDEO)

Grainy, handheld footage. The mood is no longer flirty. A YOUNGER LYNN (20s) is packing a bag furiously. CHARLES (20s) is behind the camera, his hand sometimes reaching into frame.

LYNN
Sounds to me like you're agreeing with "them"! Well I'm sorry, but my market value far exceeds that of a lowly cruise ship performer, Charles.

CHARLES
I can't keep holding your place every time you take these chances. I have to keep this ship afloat, and you're tying my hands, Lynn.

LYNN
You think I need this trash barge to fall back on? I'm going out there and I'm going to keep showing them how valuable I am until they notice. And if no one ever does, at least I'll know that it's the world that's wrong. Not me.

INT. LYNN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ellie shakes her head, relieved, as the video finishes. She shuts the laptop and pats Charles on the chest.

ELLIE
I don't know what you see in her, Charles...

Above his bed she notices a tiny ornate box with a keyhole. She takes it down and sees it's engraved "Dare to Dream."

ELLIE (CONT'D) BRO 1
Gross. Gayyyy.

She looks at him disapprovingly, then behind him sees a shelf with a few drawers. She checks each one. In the third drawer, she sees a small brass key and it fits. A little drawer pops open and inside is an old folded telegram from Capital Records, as well as many old letters and mementos.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Woah. It's like a shrine to Lynn's failures in here. Shitty poems...
(MORE)

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Rejection letters from record labels... this one says it wasn't even a talent decision, just that they couldn't honor her demands. And oof... looks like Charles gave her a job at the gift shop when she came back.

BRO 1
Seems to me like if she just realized what she had right in front of her instead of blaming the world for her failures, she could just be happy.

Ellie's eyes go wide and she signals him to continue as he is dangerously close to self awareness and putting it together.

BRO 1 (CONT'D)
Like... maybe it's her, you know?

He starts to realize.

ELLIE
You got this man, keep going.

BRO 1
She's just demanding outrageous treatment she incorrectly feels like she was born entitled to, and then acts like a victim when people reject her. Which is...

ELLIE
Which iiiis...

BRO 1
NO. No. No. I'm different.

ELLIE
How?!

BRO 1
Because I'm a man.

INT. THE MERMAID'S COIN PURSE CREW BAR - NEXT DAY

Sonny and Ray are sitting at the bar. Levi sits next to Sonny coloring masterfully with the kids menu and crayons. Sonny, wearing shades, is visibly hungover as fuck.

SONNY
No. I blacked out and woke up in a booth at the reverse buffet.

INT. CAPTAIN'S LOUNGE & CREW OFFICER BAR - FLASHBACK

Sonny flashes back to quick cuts of him crashing out absolutely wasted and spilling his true feelings.

SONNY
If we have sex, make me pee before I pass out okay?

Lynn rolls her eyes.

LYNN
Security!

INT. THE MERMAID'S COIN PURSE CREW BAR - BACK TO SCENE

SONNY
She's an impenetrable fortress.

RAY
She's tearing us apart. We should just play along. It'll be easier.

Ellie dramatically swoops into the bar and Ray and Sonny pick up their guitars to do the sting but she stops them.

ELLIE
NO. Listen. Mutiny. We gotta put this fuckin' shitbird back in the cage.

Sonny covers Levi's ears and shields him as he gives Ellie a look.

RAY
Uh. No. That's like a real prison crime.

JENNY
Well, you'd have most of the crew on your side, I can tell you that.

She places a check on the bar in front of Sonny and Ray.

ELLIE
What the fuck is that?

Jenny taps her fingers together uncomfortably as she doesn't want to tell them.

JENNY
Lynn came by this morning and said you have to pay for your own drinks now. I had to close your tab.

The Portholes absolutely explode with rage.

ELLIE
FUCKING WHAT?!

SONNY
NO! NO! NO!

RAY
MUTINY!

They all begin chanting, flipping tables, smashing glasses, and then charge out of the room together.

THE PORTHOLES
MUTINY! MUTINY! MUTINY!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BACKSTAGE MAIN THEATER - DAY

Shaggy is trying to deal with Lynn's props that she wants restored in time for the show later that night. The Portholes enter all out of breath.

SONNY
Mutiny. In or out. Right now.

SHAGGY
Are you kidding? She's been riding my ass trying to get six months of production work done in an afternoon. What's the plan?

Ellie leans on a big prop bird cage and looks at it.

ELLIE
Putting her in her *place*. This thing have a lock?

SHAGGY
Gimme 15 minutes.

SERIES OF SHOTS - PUTTING THE MUTINY TEAM TOGETHER

A. Security office - Two security officers are putting up a sign that reads "SLEEVES REQUIRED ZONE." They smile as Ellie and Sonny shake their hands, then rip of their own sleeves and take down the sign.

B. Maintenance area - Lynn is harassing a custodian named José, tearing off his name tag. She throws a new one at his feet. He is defeated and puts it on. The name tag says "Matt." He hangs his head in defeat until Sonny and Ellie pop in and share their plan. He enthusiastically shakes their hands in agreement.

C. Various locations - The cadence of handshakes and crew members increases as we see the reach of their plan going into all areas of the ship and its crew.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ellie stands at a whiteboard as the rest of the band sits around. She holds up her phone, which is playing Lynn's subpar performance.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
This is the person we're up against. Look at her. She's like a loser that became the principal of the high school she was a loser at. Now she's projecting all her failures onto us, blaming the world instead of looking within just like these incel apes that are onboard right now. We can do this. Better than her. On that stage. In front of her.

RAY
Oh great, another corny rework that no matter how masterfully done will go unappreciated. No thanks.

ELLIE
Geez. What is this band practice?

Sonny and Ellie fist bump.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Ray, you have four hours to arrange a version of this into something that pulls her apart and shames her.

RAY
What if the bros think it's about them?

ELLIE
Think about that.

A huge lightbulb goes off for him.

SONNY
Oh no.

He pieces it together as he's saying it, ramping up speed.

RAY
Play her own songs. *For her*. Essentially playing to an audience of one sincerely, *as an ironic performance* for another audience... simultaneously.

SONNY
Goddammit.

RAY
Oh man. ELLIE!

ELLIE
You're welcome. We'll need all hands. We'll meet on *our* stage tonight. Everyone got it?

LEVI
Ya.

RAY
Ya.

Sonny is sleeping with his sunglasses on sitting up. Ellie bangs her fist on the table and wakes him up. He shouts.

INT. MAIN STAGE - LATER

The audience is seated. It's a packed house. The Portholes are sneaking around in the wings in dark coveralls, watching Lynn begin to sing. Levi is visibly nervous.

LEVI
I don't know, man. Is all of this even legal?

SONNY
Levi... Just ch-

Ellie looks at Sonny and lifts her brow. He realizes and kneels to address Levi quietly.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Look at me. I know this is scary. But you know what's worse? Letting someone tell you who you are, what you're worth... or charge you for drinks.

He puts a hand on Levi's shoulder.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Look. Whatever happens. I'll always have your back, buddy. Forever. Promise.

Levi smiles as he is about to speak. Ellie gives the signal.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Shhhh. Shut up. Shut the fuck up. Pay attention. It's go time.

Lynn steps into the cage for the big finale. Shaggy hits a button and the door locks with an audible click. Lynn tries to open it back up and starts to panic. The audience laughs.

It's humiliating. The cage lifts into the air above center stage. Josè/Matt nods and flips a big switch. The lights go dark. It's pitch black. A spotlight illuminates Sonny at the piano. He begins to play Lynn's "Maybe it's Me."

SONNY (CONT'D)
Give it up for Lynn Moon! Probably one of the most genuine and beautiful women I've ever met.

He sings Lynn's signature song.

SONNY (CONT'D)
I'VE WAITED SO LONG FOR YOU TO SEE
ALL THE THINGS THAT WE COULD BE
TELL ME WHY YOU CAN'T COME THROUGH
MAYBE IT'S ME... BUT THEN AGAIN...

LEVI
1! 2! 3! 4!

The lights come back up. The Portholes are on stage. It is lit like a major modern tour event, albeit haphazardly. They are in their sailor suits. They begin to play the song in a much faster, high energy style.

THE PORTHOLES
MAYBE IT'S YOU!

The audience erupts with applause. Lynn is trapped.

LYNN
What is this? Get me down!

SONNY
HEY SHITBIRD LOCKED IN A CAGE/
BLAMING THE SYSTEM FOR ALL OF YOUR
RAGE/ THE WHOLE WORLD SUCKS, HOW
COULD THAT BE TRUE/ READ THE
FUCKING ROOM, LADY, MAYBE IT'S YOU.

They continue the song. The band is having a blast, but Ray's face shows true expression. He is in his mind deep in the throws of creating high concept art. Lynn yells to Shaggy.

LYNN
If you don't get me down and end this right now, you'll be sharing a cell with these idiots!

He pulls a lever and the cage swings quickly to the other side of the stage, over the crowd, and then hits the wall and smacks a few bricks away as it begins to spin. Lynn struggles to balance and braces herself as she pulls out a radio.

LYNN (CONT'D)
All security to the theater immediately! Security to the sta-

Two security guards look at each other, nod, and turn their radios to "off." She sees employees giving each other high fives, and the audience loving the show. She taps her microphone but it has been cutoff. The two very large screens flanking the stage show Lynn yelling and pleading. But her raw voice can't be heard over the sound of the band.

ELLIE
Good girl.

Ellie smiles at her, then rips a gnarly guitar solo. The crowd loses their damn minds.

THE PORTHOLES
HEY SHITBIRD, MAYBE IT'S YOU.

They finish. The crowd goes wild. They take a bow. Ray grabs the t-shirt cannon and shares a smile with Sonny. He teases both sides of the stage with where he'll shoot it. Shaggy starts panning the old rickety spotlight through the crowd to amp them up. It creaks and falls right next to Sonny.

SONNY
Woah!

The crowd falls silent. Sonny is about to speak to regain the momentum. He is cutoff. The t-shirt cannon fires and immediately knocks Sonny unconscious. There is a beat of shock and then Ray talks sheepishly into the mic.

RAY
Uh... That one... was for Brayden... You da man, Brayden.

In the otherwise completely silent theater, a solitary "woo" from presumably Brayden is the only sound.

INT. SHIP MEDICAL BAY - NIGHT

Sonny is in a hospital bed with a huge welt on his chest. Lynn closes the blinds.

LYNN.
I hope you had fun. Your little stunt has most likely put me within my means to terminate your contract. False imprisonment, mutiny, destruction of property that will take months to repair.

Sonny exhales, but it hurts his chest and he winces.

LYNN. (CONT'D)
Oh. And endangering a minor. Child Protective Services will be meeting us at the next American port in a week. Quit before then and I'll tell them it was a mixup, and you walk off this ship for good. If you don't... well I suppose only one of you will be walking off.

She walks to the door.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Never forget that you are on my ship. In my world.

Sonny silently stares at the ceiling. Lynn's footsteps echo and fade as she walks out and down the hall.

EXT. S.S. SECOND CHANCES - ESTABLISHING - MORNING

EXT. CAFE ON STARBOARD DECK - MORNING

Ray, Ellie, and Levi are sitting at breakfast. Sonny enters, holding a bloody mary. He's lightly bandaged but mostly fine.

ELLIE
Ay, there he is! Did you see this? People couldn't tell if we were serious or not. They loved it.

She shows viral posts from the show. Ray beams with pride.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
It felt *different*. Right?

LEVI
It was the most connection I've ever felt... musician wise.

Ellie grabs his hand.

SONNY
Well, we should quit before she retaliates. We proved our point. Let's get off in Nassau.

ELLIE
And Levi... goes back to the orphanage?

Levi sinks in his chair a bit. They all think about this.

LEVI
Or we could stay?

They look at Sonny with hope. He fakes a smile.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS ON THE SHIP

Tender music up and under.

INT. THE MERMAID'S COIN PURSE CREW BAR - DAY

Sonny watches from the bar as Ellie teaches Levi darts. She rubs his head and Levi is happy. Jenny comes over and jokingly gives him crayons and then they laugh and hug.

INT. MAUI JIM'S BUSINESS CENTER AND TIKI BAR - DAY

Grass-covered cubicles line the walls. A tiki mask has the WiFi password carved into it. Sonny is at a computer on a website for a business called "Nassau Stagecraft." He copies the number into his phone and dials. He lifts a wooden tiki cup and sips from a straw while it dials.

EXT. LIDO DECK - SUNSET

Sonny looks at his phone. There is a dialog box reading "BTC payment received." Then Sonny hands his father's guitar case to Brayden's dad. Sonny can't let it go as Brayden's dad tugs at it. Eventually, Sonny reluctantly releases his grip.

INT. MAIN STAGE ABOARD THE S.S. SECOND CHANCES - LATER

Lynn is at first arguing with construction crew but then is elated and the construction worker points at Sonny. She looks and realizes. She nods and thinks.

INT. FIRST BAR ON THE SHIP GANGWAY BAR - DAY

They are docked in Miami. Sonny is nervously waiting and watching the gangway from the bar. A man and a woman from a car marked CPS make their way to the gangway and Lynn is there to greet them. She talks to them for a moment. They shrug, shake hands, and leave. Jenny brings Sonny a beer.

JENNY
Lynn just told me to tell you your tab is opened back up, but she will shut it right back down if things get out of line. She said you'd know what that meant.

Sonny smiles and gives Lynn, who is now looking up at him, a thumbs up. She acknowledges and abruptly turns and leaves.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Is everything alright?

SONNY
We'll see.

INT. MAIN STAGE - NIGHT

The band is on stage, the crowd is cheering. Sonny removes the price tag from a new guitar and walks onstage.

RAY
Woah. Where is Dad's guitar?

SONNY
Eh, the salty sea air isn't great for it, you know? I'll just store it for a while.

He smiles and then steps up to the mic.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Good evening. We're The Portholes.

The band starts playing. He takes a breath and sings.

SONNY (CONT'D)
WE WERE ON TOP OF THE WORLD...

They begin the intro song. Brayden hugs his dad with the guitar case next to him and his dad gives Sonny the metal horns. It's really lame when he does it. Their performance continues over the credits...

FADE TO BLACK.