

SPIRITS OF THE SEAS

A young woman helps her twin brother pass through to the afterlife
after his untimely death.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - THE HALBERD - NIGHT

CAPTAIN THARP, a mountain of a man with battle scars all over his body, scribes a journal in a lamp lit room. A faint sliver of moonlight glistens through a window on the back wall behind Tharp at his desk.

The Halberd is an old ship and, like its captain, has seen its fair share of battles. Patch work dots the inside of the ship. It CREAKS as it bobs across the rough sea.

CREAK. The noises of the ship bring a calm over Tharp. CREAK. The sounds of the waves and the wood make a strangely pleasant melody. CREEAAKK.

Tharp knows when the sounds aren't his ship's.

His writing slows. CREAK. That's the ship. He listens intently around him. CREEAAKK. Someone is there.

His free hand creeps down his side to a blade strapped around his leg.

Scanning the room, his eyes find nothing amongst the shadows, until... THERE! A pale face in the corner of the room comes into view. The captain jumps up from his chair.

CAPTAIN THARP

Who goes there?

CREEAAKK. The face in the corner didn't move, a second person? Before Tharp processes his next move, a knife pricks into his back, breaking only just the top layer of his skin.

GRETCHEN

Don't move. Drop the blade.

THUD. The blade daggars into the floor board. GRETCHEN, a young adult woman, rotates around Captain Tharp into his view. The pale face in the corner of the room moves closer.

Tharp's eyes widen in awe.

CAPTAIN THARP

It's been a while since I've seen a sea spirit.

GREGORY comes into view, a young adult man with a blueish hue surrounding him. He hovers through the air, his right leg goes straight through the furniture in the room; his left leg is missing.

GREGORY
Not many people get to meet those
who murdered them.

CAPTAIN THARP
What?

Gretchen scrapes the chair back into position.

GRETCHEN
Sit.

Tharp towers over the woman, but he does as she says.

CAPTAIN THARP
It's impressive that you boarded my
ship without myself or any of my
crew noticing.

Now that both Gretchen and Gregory are in the light, Tharp notices how similar the two look.

CAPTAIN THARP (CONT'D)
Ah, so that's why you are helping
this spirit. You two related?
Twins?

GREGORY
We were related.

Gretchen pulls out a roll of rope and ties the captain down to his chair. She takes a few steps back.

CAPTAIN THARP
You mentioned I killed you. Now
don't take this the wrong way, but
I don't think I've ever seen you
before.

Gregory charges forward, phasing through the captain and his chair.

GREGORY
You have the gall to sit there and
say that! I wish I could put my
hands around your throat.

Gregory phases out the captain's chest and places his hands around the captain's throat, mimicking a choking grasp. Gretchen looks concerned at her brother.

GREGORY (CONT'D)
 Four months ago, on the Eastern
 Sea? Do you just take the lives of
 so many you start to forget?

The captain does not respond. He tries to recall the day in question.

GREGORY (CONT'D)
 Well!

GRETCHEN
 Let him think, Greg.

CAPTAIN THARP
 I'm, I'm sorry kid. I don't mean
 any disrespect, I just don't
 recognize you.

Gregory seems more insulated from Tharp's forgetfulness than Tharp killing him. He floats within a few inches of the captain.

GREGORY
 Let me jog your memory.

INT. PIRATE SHIP - NIGHT

BOOM. Gregory, now without the blue hue, spazzes out of bed. BOOM. He gets his bearings. The crew up on deck yell out commands. BOOM. The sounds of a symphony of cannons fill the area. Then, an orchestra of a barrage.

Cannon balls fly through the sleeping quarters on the ship, one nearly striking Gregory. The ball misses him, but the explosion lodges wood splinters into his skin.

CREW MATE
 ALL HANDS ON DECK!

Gregory runs across the living quarters to get to the deck, but the staircase leading up is demolished. A flurry of cannon balls burst through the ship again. Most of the crew up top goes silent.

GREGORY
 Hey is anyone up there.

The ship slowly starts sinking. Another round of cannon balls bursts through the wooden ship, this time one of them strikes Gregory in the leg, taking it clean off. He collapses to the floor.

Water starts to flood in the ship. Pain paralyzes Gregory; he can't move as the ship continues to sink. The water rises to engulf him into the sea.

As Gregory goes down with the ship, the moonlight beams through one of the holes in the ship. He squints his eyes to see through the cannon hole. All he can see is two words glide by, "The Halberd."

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - THE HALBERD - NIGHT

The room remains silent. Gregory's face borders on anger and tears.

GREGORY

I had so much left to give.

Gregory points to Captain Tharp.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

Gretch, do what he did to me.
Avenge me and everyone on my ship.

Captain Tharp looks up at Gretchen with regret.

CAPTAIN THARP

You don't know the full story.

Gretchen approaches the captain, knife fully drawn.

CAPTAIN THARP (CONT'D)

(feverishly)

Look just give me a second to
explain. I think, I think I
remember that night.

Gretchen inches closer, looking the captain dead in the eyes. She sees something in them, remorse.

She sheathes her knife.

GRETCHEN

What happened that night?

Captain Tharp gulps and sighs in relief.

CAPTAIN THARP

We were attacked that night, and if
I were your brother I'd be angry
too, but it didn't happen like
that.

GREGORY

Don't try to weasel your way out of this.

Gretchen fires back at her brother.

GRETCHEN

We heard your side of the story.
Let's hear his?

Both Gregory and Tharp look surprised by what Gretchen has to say. Quickly seizing this moment to defend himself, Captain Tharp tells his side of the tale.

EXT. THE HALBERD - NIGHT

HALBERD CREWMATE

Sir! We've got a ship gaining on us. Portside.

Captain Tharp runs to the stern of the ship and pulls out his mini telescope. In the distance is a smaller ship with a handful of crew members on the top deck.

CAPTAIN THARP

Have they tried to make contact with us?

HALBERD CREWMATE

No sir.

CAPTAIN THARP

We'll be ready, but let's hope they just pass by.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - THE HALBERD - NIGHT

GREGORY

LIAR!

GRETCHEN

Let him finish.

Gretchen's tone cuts through Gregory's ethereal body. His eyes contort with confusion. She looks back at the captain.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Continue.

EXT. THE HALBERD - NIGHT

The pirate ship slowly floats closer to The Halberd; a fog of uncertainty flows over the crew. The other ship is a bit smaller than The Halberd, but it doesn't have as many patched holes or repaired hulls.

CAPTAIN THARP

Ready the canons.

The crew of The Halberd hustles into action like a well oiled machine; they've been here before. Just another minute before the ships are parallel with one another.

A crew member brings Captain Tharp his coat and captain's hat. He stands against the portside railing of his ship, alone, ready to talk or ready to fight.

The crew of The Halberd take cover behind boxes and barrels on the top deck. The cannons are ready.

The ship pulls next to The Halberd, slowing down to match its speed.

ENEMY CAPTAIN

You know, it is pretty dangerous to be out on the seas this late.

Captain Tharp barely hears his words; he examines the ship to get as much information as he can. Few repairs. Smaller crew. Looking down at the lower decks, he notices there are less cannons. This is an inexperienced group.

ENEMY CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Especially with a ship that is on it's last leg.

CAPTAIN THARP

Thank you for your concern. We are actually set to dock in the next hour or two, so we will be home soon.

ENEMY CAPTAIN

A lot can happen in an hour. For a bit of coin, me and my crew would be happy to escort you back safely.

A battle is inevitable. Tharp taps his left hand on his coat, a signal. The crew members in hiding pick it up and whisper down to the men below deck.

CAPTAIN THARP

A kind offer, but it is probably
best if we both just go our
separate ways.

The enemy captain snickers with glee, like he was hoping for
this result. He turns to his crew.

ENEMY CAPTAIN

Looks like we have an unprotected
ship in the open seas. FIRE!

Captain Tharp drops to the deck. The enemy ships fires three
shots, aiming for the captain. The left side railing gets
blasted in half, but the enemy cannons were aimed a bit high,
missing the captain. Some of the upper cabins are struck as
well.

The Halberd responds with a barrage of cannon fire aimed
strategically at the enemies weapons. Direct hit. Cannons and
chunks of the enemy ship launch into the air.

BOOM.

More cannon fire; the enemy has no way to fire back.

BOOM.

Their ship is nearly cut in half.

CAPTAIN THARP

Halt!

Captain Tharp rises up from his defensive position, mostly
unscathed; a few splinters cut his face. The enemy ship sinks
into the sea.

CAPTAIN THARP (CONT'D)

That's enough. Leave the ship be.
We need to asses our damages and
focus on getting back to port.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - THE HALBERD - NIGHT

CAPTAIN THARP

That was that. We kept our course
and sailed home later that morning.

Gretchen looks over to Gregory who looks defeated. He remains
silent.

CAPTAIN THARP (CONT'D)
 Look if you wanna kill me then get
 it over with, but leave the rest of
 my crew outta this. We were just
 protecting ourselves. The sea is a
 dangerous place.

Gretchen looks over at the big, burly captain, now brought to
 tears.

GRETCHEN
 I'm not going to kill you.

Gregory snaps out of his disillusion to shift his anger at
 his sister. He flies six inches from her face.

GREGORY
 What... You are supposed to help me
 move on! Not help the man who
 killed me.

GRETCHEN
 Spirits are tethered to the land of
 the living mainly due to a strong
 emotion connection.

CAPTAIN THARP
 (cutting her off)
 If killing me is the only way to
 help you brother move on, so be it.

The twins are both shocked by the captain's announcement.

CAPTAIN THARP (CONT'D)
 I'm an old captain, I've lived a
 good life. Sooner or later I
 expected that life to catch up to
 me. I ain't got any regrets
 protecting myself and my crew like
 that, but maybe we could've looked
 for survivors. Maybe we could've
 done better.

GRETCHEN
 If killing you is what would help
 my brother pass on, I'd probably do
 it.

She turns to her brother

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
 But is revenge really what is
 keeping you here?

He is taken aback by the question.

GREGORY

I had so much left to do. We had a better life waiting for us.

GRETCHEN

Is it Tharp's fault we had a hard life?

GREGORY

What?

GRETCHEN

Why were you on a pirate ship?

GREGORY

I was just working, trying to earn us some coin. I didn't think it was a raiding ship.

EXT. SHANTYTOWN - DAY

Gretchen sizzles on the side of a wooden walkway between haphazardly put together buildings. She is covered in dirt and sweat.

Gregory runs down the planks, looking happier than usual. There is a sack of fish in one of his hands.

GREGORY

Alright I got good news sis.

Gretchen lunges for the food before responding, snatching a fish out of Gregory's sack.

GRETCHEN

Is it that you have more of this?

Gregory sits down next to his sister as she inhales the food.

GREGORY

Well, maybe. See I got a job helping one of the crews down at the docks. Pays well.

GRETCHEN

I wish you'd stop taking on sketchy jobs like that.

GREGORY

Hey, if it puts food on our plate?

Gretchen pulls out a small bag of coins and plops it next to Gregory and his sack of fish.

GRETCHEN

Here is my earnings from the bar this week. It's enough for food and it comes without the danger.

GREGORY

Yeah, but not enough to get us out of this shithole. The longer we stay here, the longer we are gonna be stuck here.

She pulls out another small sack.

GRETCHEN

This is what I could swipe off some creepy old drunks. A savings fund.

The twins share a laugh. Gregory takes out a piece of fish from his bag and munches on it.

GREGORY

I think things are looking up for us. If this pay's as good as they say we can finally move up in this damn town.

Gretchen doesn't buy into his optimism.

GRETCHEN

Yeah, we'll see.

Gregory turns from jovial to stern.

GREGORY

Hey. I'm getting us both out of here. I can promise you that.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - THE HALBERD - NIGHT

Gregory looks down at his hands, reflecting on everything he has done and even what he hasn't. Gretchen gets in close, trying to embrace him as much she can.

GREGORY

I had so much left to do. You were right, the jobs were too dangerous.

GRETCHEN

It's a cruel world out there;
didn't give us any favors. We did
the best we could.

GREGORY

I didn't know it was a raiding
ship.

GRETCHEN

Hey, it's okay. You were trying to
get us out of that shitty town.

GREGORY

But at the end of the day, you
still don't have money; you're
still stuck in slums. Only
difference is now you have to do it
alone.

GRETCHEN

I should've said thank you more,
should've pulled more of my own
weight so you didn't have to. Don't
put this all on yourself.

GREGORY

I'm sorry we didn't get out.

GRETCHEN

Well. You kinda did.

The twins share a laugh, even the captain giggles. Gregory
starts to glow a bit brighter.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Thank you, you made the slums feel
like home.

The faint blue aura around Gregory lights up, brightening
intensely. His body starts to hover more. He gives his sister
a smile before finally moving on.

A burst of light causes the captain and Gretchen to both try
and shield their eyes.

Gretchen rises up sniffing and walks over to the tied up
captain. She cuts him free.

CAPTAIN THARP

Why come all this way with him if
you knew what was keeping his soul
here?

GRETCHEN

Well, I didn't know for sure. But,
if you had really killed him, I
would've killed you.

She makes her way to the door, glancing back where her
brother just was.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Felt like I owed it to 'em to see
this through. He would have for me.

CAPTAIN THARP

Sneaking on my ship and helping a
spirit pass along; it's pretty
impressive.

GRETCHEN

Mhm, thanks.

CAPTAIN THARP

If you ever find yourself needing
some coin, I could always use
another crew member.

GRETCHEN

Thanks, but I'd rather stay on land
for now.

Gretchen leaves the captain's room.