



ONE PIECE PILOT
„ROMANCE DAWN“

Written by

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Based on One Piece
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EXT. LOGUETOWN - POLESTAR ISLANDS - DAY

Seagulls soar FREE and HIGH in the sky over a VAST BLUE SEA. A scene of nature's tranquility. Then the sea meets the land as their flight takes them over the docks of a bustling city. This is LOGUETOWN, the TOWN OF BEGINNINGS. Moving inland, we're met with high buildings and cobblestone streets.

We leave our feathered friends to descend to the COBBLESTONE STREETS below. Loguetown has always been a bustling merchant city, but today the crowds are especially massive. All focused around the MAIN STREET through town. An energy of anticipation fills the air. What is it they're waiting for? A parade? Some sort of address?

We find a young BOY running parallel to the crowds, as fast as his legs will carry. He makes a sharp turn into --

EXT. ALLEYWAY - LOGUETOWN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The bright sunlight above barely filters down to the dark ALLEYWAY. The boy calls out to three other youngsters loitering on some wooden crates.

BOY

They're coming!

The three other boys exchange wide-eyed looks and smiles. None more excited than SMOKER (12), a WHITE-HAIRED boy in a green ARMY JACKET and BOOTS. He leaps off his crate and takes off running, leaving his friends in his dust. Whatever is coming, he wants to see it first. He makes a break for the alley exit back onto --

EXT. MAIN STREET - LOGUETOWN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Smoker elbows his way through the crowds. Decorum be damned. He won't be denied a prime view. He pushes to the front just in time to see the beginning of a PRECESSION. Two MARINES stride down the street, FLAGPOLES hoisted high in the air. On the first flag: 4 connected black circles in the form of a cross -- the insignia of the WORLD GOVERNMENT, ruling body of the world. On the other flag: the simple wing pattern of the MARINES, military sea force of the World Government.

As the precession continues, four more Marines, each carrying a POLEARM, form a perimeter around a single MAN. Head down, hands shackled, face obscured by thick, dirty black hair. Various reactions permeate the crowd. Some cheer, some boo, some yell profanity. But the prisoner takes it all in stride, marching on. This prisoner is the most infamous man in the entire world. His name is GOLD ROGER (53).

His epithet: **KING OF THE PIRATES**. (NOTE: this series will use an Eastern name structure of surname first, given name second.)

Smoker watches, mouth agape, as the precession continues right in front him. As Roger passes, he slightly shifts his head, as if to look directly at Smoker. And then, unnoticed by all but the boy, he SMILES. Smoker stands in disbelief. Gold Roger smiled at him!

And just like that, the precession moves on. But what Roger has to smile about is a mystery. For the camera moves on, pointing at the cavalcade's final destination. In the distance stands a large raised platform in the town center. An EXECUTION PLATFORM.

INT. MARINE HEADQUARTERS OFFICE - LOGUETOWN - DAY

Floor to ceiling windows line a PRISTINE MILITARY OFFICE. An imposing figure stands at those windows. The weight of the world on his broad shoulders.

This is **FLEET ADMIRAL KONG**, commander of the Marines. Do not let his older age fool you. The scars all over his TAN, MUSCULAR body illustrate the harsh battles this man has endured during his service. The many MEDALS that adorn his clothing are proof of his victories. But as we reveal his face, we do not find strength. We find unease.

SENGOKU (O.S.)
Fleet Admiral.

Kong does not turn as **ADMIRAL SENGOKU** (55), PROUD and brilliant TACTICIAN, enters and SALUTES.

SENGOKU (CONT'D)
The escort is proceeding through town. They've nearly reached the execution block. It's time.

Kong continues to stare out the window. His demeanor matching the dark clouds rolling in from the distance.

KONG
Where is Admiral Garp?

Sengoku balks at the question, annoyed.

SENGOKU
I don't know. Much as he needs one,
I am not that man's baby-sitter.
(then, catching himself)
All due respect. Sir.

Clearly there is a history of animosity between Sengoku and Garp. Kong finally turns to face his subordinate.

KONG

I need my two best men beside me
today. I fear the coming storm
brings with it a dark omen.

Sengoku can sense the anxiety in his commanding officer and friend. He will be his strength.

SENGOKU

Not for us. For Roger. For all
pirates. You and I know too well
how the plague of piracy has
poisoned our society.

Sengoku's words, like bile on his lips, rile him up.

SENGOKU (CONT'D)

"King of the Pirates." How he
revels in that title.

KONG

Then perhaps we shouldn't have
given it to him.

SENGOKU

Executing him will send a message
across the seas. Extinguishing the
flames of piracy and rebellion once
and for all. No more challenges to
our authority. No more incidents
like that at Marineford.

Kong grimaces. Whatever incident Sengoku refers to struck a nerve. His points are hitting home.

SENGOKU (CONT'D)

No more loss of life. You can
ensure all of that right now. This
will be the most important day in
the history of the world!

Kong meets Sengoku's gaze, resolve on his face.

KONG

Then let's go make history.

EXT. EXECUTION PLATFORM - LOGUETOWN - DAY

Roger and his convoy approach the execution platform. He looks up to see Kong, his face now a bastion of steel.

A glaring Sengoku stands beside him. There they stand face to face. Three of the most powerful men in the world.

KONG

This has been a long time coming,
Roger. But you had to know it would
end this way. Any last words?

He stoically looks to Kong, then holds up his shackled hands.

GOLD ROGER

(completely deadpan)

Yeah. Can you take these off?
They're starting to itch.

Sengoku steps to Roger, enraged.

SENGOKU

Even in chains you make jokes. Your
disrespect of the Marines and of
the World Government is exactly
what put you in this situation.

GOLD ROGER

Lighten up, Sengoku. It's not your
execution.

Sengoku seethes. Kong nods to the platform.

KONG

Take him.

Sengoku stares daggers as Roger is escorted away. Complete silence in the air save for the clomping of Roger's BOOTS and the shaking of his CHAINS as he makes his long, final walk to the

TOP OF THE EXECUTION PLATFORM --

High above the town square which is packed with onlookers. Every eye turned upwards. Front row seats to the event of the century. The storm clouds have joined the crowd to watch what unfolds. Finally Roger reaches his place at the center of the platform. He stares down at the throngs beneath him through his disheveled hair -- then unceremoniously plops down cross-legged on the spot.

The sky opens up and rain pours down as Kong steps forward to the front of the platform. He points to the flag of the Marines as he addresses the massive crowd gathered below him.

KONG (CONT'D)

Justice. That is what this flag
represents.

(MORE)

KONG (CONT'D)

A commitment made by the World Government, your World Government, to you. Its people. We ask only one thing of you in return. Trust. Trust in the divine wisdom of the Five Elders to govern. Trust in the Marines to protect you. Trust in our justice to be enacted upon those who disrespect and disobey the laws set forth to keep you all safe. Piracy is a direct rejection of that trust.

Now Kong motions to Roger, who keeps a stoic expression.

KONG (CONT'D)

Men like Gold Roger would rather lie to you, steal from you, kill you, than live next to you as a law-abiding member of our society. He would sell you falsehoods of anarchy and rebellion under the guise of adventure and fortune. In reality, he seeks what all weak men conspire to do --

He turns directly to Roger to drive this point home.

KONG (CONT'D)

Tear down those with real power to make themselves feel important.

DOWN BELOW --

Amongst the crowds, Smoker watches and listens, rapt. He's momentarily taken out of his stupor when a man in a DARK GREEN HOODED CLOAK brushes by him -- walking through the crowd away from the execution. Smoker looks back at him but CAN'T SEE HIS FACE as he walks away. The identity of this man is a mystery for another time.

BACK ON THE EXECUTION PLATFORM

Two Marines wielding POLEARMS take their place at either side of Roger. Kong's speech, and Roger's life, are coming to an end.

KONG (CONT'D)

Gold Roger. For crimes of piracy, thievery, conspiracy, and countless other acts against the World Government and the people it serves, I sentence you to death.

(MORE)

KONG (CONT'D)

Let today be a lesson to those
reckless enough to follow your
example.

The Marines raise their polearms, aimed right at Roger's
chest. Still, the Pirate King betrays no emotion. Until --

MAN (O.S.)

PIRATE KING!

Roger, Kong, and everyone else look to try and find the
source of this voice ringing out from the crowds below.

MAN (CONT'D)

Where is your treasure? Tell us
where you hid it!

Kong calls down to some of his soldiers.

KONG

Restrain that man!

A low chuckle behind him turns Kong's attention back to
Roger, who now has a giant GRIN on his face. He builds to
full on amused LAUGHTER. He speaks aloud to the crowd.

GOLD ROGER

You want to know where my treasure
is?

KONG

Silence, Roger.

GOLD ROGER

Wealth. Fame. Power. Knowledge. I
found everything that this world
has to offer. And I left it all in
one piece.

Annoyance giving way to anger, Kong tries to speak over
Roger. But this is a force he can no longer contain.

KONG

I said shut up, Roger!
Enough! Kill him at once!

GOLD ROGER (CONT'D)

Take to the seas! It is yours
to find! All you have to do
is --

SCHLICK! Roger's proclamation is cut short as the two
polearms pierce him through the chest and into his heart.
Blood drips from his wounds. His head hangs down. Gold Roger
is DEAD.

The crowd stands in silent shock. Only the sound of the rain falling can be heard. Until -- the entire gathering bursts into UPROARIOUS CHEERS.

But the crowd shouts not for the execution of a criminal, but in CELEBRATION of the INSPIRING final words of the fallen Pirate King. What should have been a somber, sobering moment has turned into JUBILATION.

And this reversal is not what Kong was hoping for. He shouts orders to his men, scrambling to regain control.

KONG (CONT'D)
Contain this before we have a riot
on our hands!

Marines begin to move through the crowds. Kong looks around in distress, meeting eyes with Sengoku, who is just as lost. Kong yells to the mob in desperation.

KONG (CONT'D)
Enough! There is no treasure! There
is no Pirate King! Gold Roger is
dead! This is the end of piracy!

All sound disappears. As we continue to watch Kong scream in futility we hear --

SHANKS (V.O.)
But it wasn't. Those words would
change the world forever. Men and
women all over set out to find that
great treasure. The fabled One
Piece.

CLOSE ON: Roger's face. But even as the life leaves his body, the SMILE never fades from his face.

SHANKS (V.O.)
To claim the mantle of King of the
Pirates for themselves.

Off ROGER'S SMILE we --

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. PARTYS BAR - WINDMILL VILLAGE - DAY

A nearly identical SMILE on the face of a strong and laid-back young pirate captain. Three SCARS run down the left side of his face over his eye. Atop his mop of RED HAIR sits a YELLOW STRAW HAT. This is SHANKS (27).

SHANKS

And thus an era of excitement and romance was born. And twelve years later, we call that time in which we still live --

Shanks is interrupted by the fired-up young boy with a bandage under his left eye whom he's been telling this story to. His name is MONKEY D. LUFFY (7).

LUFFY

The Great Pirate Era!

We get the feeling this isn't the first time Luffy has heard this story. But the excited look on his face tells us he loves it just as much every time he hears it. And Shanks loves telling it.

SHANKS

That's right.

Shanks and Luffy sit at barstools in the small town's only watering hole. The bar is unusually packed -- with PIRATES! But there's no destruction or disrespect here. This crew -- Shanks's crew, known as the RED-HAIR PIRATES -- laughs, drinks, and jokes with each other. It's a JOVIAL and FUN-LOVING atmosphere. More akin to a large group of friends hanging out than a debaucherous gang of marauders.

MAKINO (19), the ever pleasant, maternal BARTENDER smiles from behind the bar.

MAKINO

Are you ever going to tire of telling him that same story, Captain?

LUFFY

A man never tires of tales of adventure! Right, Shanks?

Shanks looks at Makino. uThere's your answer.u Luffy stands up on the bar, unable to contain the excitement coursing through his veins.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

And you go on all kinds of voyages of your own! Just like the Pirate King!

SHANKS

Something like that. I'd be lucky to be half the man Gold Roger was.

LUFFY

Well with me on your crew I know we can find the OnePiece.

SHANKS

We've been through this, Luffy. You can't even swim. My ship already has an anchor.

LUFFY

I'm not an anchor!

Shanks points to Luffy's t-shirt, which literally has a big anchor on it. Oops.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

But I've been training. My punches are as strong as pistols now!

SHANKS

(unconvinced)

Is that right?

Luffy PUNCHES the air as hard as he can, trying to prove his point. But Shanks is unimpressed.

A BIG, MEATY ARM -- whose hand is holding a big PIECE OF MEAT itself, wraps around Shanks's shoulders. LUCKY ROO (23), the heavy eating, heavy drinking COMBATANT of the group, lets out a hearty chuckle.

LUCKY ROO

Cut Luffy some slack, Captain. He just wants to prove his worth to you.

POW! The lit wick of a candle on the bar is blown out. Or, more accurately, SHOT out. Everyone's attention turns to YASOPP (35), the MARKSMAN of the crew. Smoking flintlock pistol in his hand. Dude's got skills.

YASOPP

Something we all had to do I might add.

SHANKS

You've got an opinion on this too, have you?

LUCKY ROO

Why wouldn't Luffy want to be a pirate? There's danger and mystery on every island --

YASOPP
The smell of gunpowder and the
salty sea air --

Lucky Roo points with his meat toward the MASSIVE MOUND of
TREASURE they recently hauled in.

LUCKY ROO
Treasure to buy whatever you want --

YASOPP
And most importantly

LUFFY
FREEDOM!

Luffy totally buys into the sales pitch. He looks at Shanks
through starry eyes, praying that the appeal took root.
Shanks sighs.

SHANKS
Well if Luffy's going to go with
us, someone's gonna have to stay
here and take his place. That gonna
be you, Yasopp?

Yasopp looks away, whistling as if he didn't hear the
question. Shanks turns to Lucky Roo.

SHANKS (CONT'D)
Lucky Roo?

Lucky Roo emphatically returns to his hunk of meat. Shanks
turns to address the rest of the crew.

SHANKS (CONT'D)
Anyone wanna give up his position
for Luffy?

Beat. Then the crew all turn back to their drinks and
merriment. Sorry Luffy!

LUFFY
Thanks a lot, traitors!

SHANKS
Now. Quit making such a fuss and
drink some milk.

Luffy plops down, throws serious side eye at Shanks but
drinks his milk. Shanks bursts into mocking laughter.

SHANKS (CONT'D)
See! Drinking milk. Dahahaha!

LUFFY

Shut up! Everyone loves milk! It's
delicious and good for your bones!

Luffy jumps down from his stool and walks across the room in
a huff.

CLOSE ON a MATCH as it's lit and held to a cigarette. **BENN
BECKMAN** (38), even-tempered vice-captain of the crew, sits at
a table near Luffy.

BENN BECKMAN

You should listen to the captain,
Luffy. He's led our crew all over
this world. He understands how
harsh and dangerous it is out
there. He won't willingly put you
in harms way. He may not be great
at expressing it, but he cares
about you.

LUFFY

No he doesn't! He just likes making
fun of me!

CAMERA WHIP-PANS TO FIND SHANKS talking to Lucky Roo and
others.

SHANKS

And then I said "See! You're just a
little kid!" Dahahaha!

The group erupts into laughter.

LUFFY

See!

Luffy storms away again, kicking the nearby treasure pile.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

Stupid Shanks. Stupid treasure.

A smaller chest tumbles to the ground. Opening it, he pulls
out a STRANGE LOOKING PURPLE FRUIT. He stares at it curiously
as he holds it in his hand.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

What's this?

He sniffs it. Then takes a BIG BITE.

BACK WITH SHANKS AT THE BAR -- as Yasopp joins him.

YASOPP

Being a bit hard on the kid, aren't you?

SHANKS

You just said why yourself. He's a kid. He's naive and impulsive. Jumps before looking.

YASOPP

Sounds familiar.

SHANKS

He doesn't know enough about our way of life to decide if he truly wants to be a part of it.

YASOPP

How's he gonna learn if he doesn't get the experience?

SHANKS

You have a son, Yasopp. I don't see him traveling with us.

Point made. However

YASOPP

He tried to catch a wild bull by the horns. He stabbed himself with a knife to prove how tough he is. He's not gonna stop.

SHANKS

(can't help but smile)

I know.

Their attention is turned to the sound of the tavern front doors being KICKED IN.

ANGLE ON a tall, tan-skinned man in a long BURGUNDY COAT standing in the doorway. This is HIGUMA (46), and he's flanked by a large group of BANDITS.

Daylight blooming behind them casts an intimidating shadow. The festivities quickly cease as everyone takes in these newcomers.

HIGUMA

Sounds like a party in here. Don't stop on our account.

Higuma enters the tavern, his lackeys in tow. Not an eye leaves them. He approaches the BAR, leaning right next to where Shanks sits.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)

My men here and I are...
merchandisers. Come down from the
mountains looking for a few drinks.

Makino puts on her best customer service manners.

MAKINO

I'm so sorry, sir. I'm afraid we're
all out of alcohol.

HIGUMA

That so?
(motioning to the pirates)
Well that don't look like water
they're all drinking.

SHANKS (O.S.)

That would be my fault, friend.

Higuma turns his gaze toward Shanks, as if he was no more than a fly buzzing in his ear. Shanks wears a tension-defusing smile.

SHANKS (CONT'D)

It seems in our overzealous
celebration, we've drunk the place
dry. Sorry about that. Maybe this
will make up for things.

Shanks proffers a BOTTLE of WINE to Higuma. He takes it by the neck, studying this peace offering -- then SMASHES it on the bar. Glass and booze fly all over Shanks. But even dripping wet he keeps his cool.

HIGUMA

The hell is this?

SHANKS

Well it was an invitation to join
us.

HIGUMA

What are we supposed to do with
just one bottle?

SHANKS

To be fair, it was a very expensive
bottle.

Guy's got jokes. Higuma looms over the still seated Shanks.

HIGUMA

That price don't matter to me.
There's only two numbers in this
world I give a damn about. The
first --

Higuma points to a bulletin board by the entrance to the tavern. Amongst various flyers is a WANTED POSTER with Higuma's face on it. The price on his head listed underneath: 8 million Beri (the currency in this world). Dead or alive. By order of the Marines.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)

Eight million. That's the bounty
I've got on my head. You know how
it got so high? Well that's the
second number. Fifty-six. That's
how many smartass punks I've put in
the ground. So if you're not
careful, you'll be number fifty-
seven.

Shanks takes a beat to process this information. Then he finally stands and faces Higuma. The bandits all snicker, itching for a fight. The pirates all watch, ready to see what move their captain will make. Luffy watches from the far side of the room, agape mouth full of that weird fruit he found. Finally --

SHANKS

The floor's all wet. Makino, do you
have a rag?

Completely ignoring Higuma, Shanks bends down and starts picking up shards of glass.

On Higuma as he SEETHES in the face of this disrespect.

MAKINO (O.S.)

No I can do that.

SHANKS (O.S.)

Oh it's not a problem.

SSHHK! Higuma draws the SABRE at his side and SLASHES HORIZONTALLY. Shanks just manages to fall backward on his ass, avoiding the attack as it SMASHES everything on the bar.

HIGUMA

There. Since you seem to like
cleaning so much.

The bandits ROAR with laughter. Higuma joins them as he sheathes his sword and they make their way to the exit. What little fun there was to be had is over.

As the bandits leave and the laughter trails, only shock and silence are left in their wake. Finally, Makino runs to check on Shanks.

MAKINO

Are you alright?

Shanks simply holds up one hand -- and then unsuccessfully tries to stifle a laugh. He BURSTS into LAUGHTER himself. Then the rest of the crew follow suit. They all laugh just as hard as they were before the whole altercation.

LUCKY ROO

He got you good huh, Captain.

YASOPP

Look at you!

Everyone laughs even harder. Except for Luffy. He looks around, INCREDULOUS at this reaction. Then, anger and confusion no longer in check

LUFFY

Why are you all laughing!?

Well they aren't anymore after that outburst.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

How could you let him insult you like that? You should have kicked his ass!

SHANKS

All he did was spill some alcohol on me. Nothing worth getting upset about.

LUFFY

A real pirate would have fought back. You're no pirate. You're not even a man!

SHANKS

Not everything needs to be solved with violence. A man doesn't just need to be strong and kick people's asses. He also needs to be good.

But Luffy still looks angry and defiant. The lesson clearly not sinking in. To Shanks' disappointment.

SHANKS (CONT'D)
 This is what I was talking about,
 Luffy. You're still just a kid.

And there's the stinger. Luffy stands stunned. The image of his idol has just been shattered.

LUFFY
 You're not who I thought you were.

Luffy turns to storm out of the tavern. But Shanks isn't done with this conversation. He grabs Luffy's wrist to keep him from leaving.

SHANKS
 Luffy, listen. I didn't mean to --

But Shanks notices that Luffy is halfway to the door -- but he's still holding onto his wrist. Huh? He goes wide-eyed.

SHANKS (CONT'D)
 What the

WIDEN TO REVEAL Luffy and Shanks are nowhere near one another. Luffy's arm has STRETCHED out over ten feet from where Shanks is! Spit-takes all around. Luffy freaks out more than anyone.

LUFFY
 My arm! What did you do to my arm!

Shanks lets go and SNAP! -- Luffy's arm SNAPS back to his body, the FORCE of which sends him tumbling head over heels. Shanks goes pale.

SHANKS
 Don't tell me...
 (to his crew)
 The chest

LUCKY ROO
 It's empty!

Lucky Roo holds the indeed empty chest Luffy had earlier.

LUCKY ROO (CONT'D)
 The Gum-Gum Fruit we just stole is gone!

SHANKS
 Luffy. Please tell me you didn't eat a weird looking purple fruit.

Seven year old that he is, Luffy tries to lie. Poorly.

LUFFY

No it was gross. Err -- it would have been gross if I'd eaten it. But I didn't.

Shanks grabs Luffy by his shoulders, trying not to kill him.

SHANKS

Do you have any idea what you've done? That was a Devil Fruit!

LUFFY

What's a Devil Fruit?

SHANKS

A very powerful, very valuable treasure of the sea. They bestow great powers on whoever eats them.

LUCKY ROO

That one was called the Gum-Gum Fruit. It turns your whole body to rubber.

Luffy looks down at his hands, clenches them into fists. Processing the information about the changes in his body.

LUFFY

My body is...rubber?

SHANKS

Each Devil Fruit is unique. Who knows what else it could have done to you.

LUFFY

Sounds cool!

SHANKS

No Luffy it's not cool! These new powers come with a price.

YASOPP

Legends say eating one of these fruits means you've made a pact with the Devil. And in return, the Mother Sea turns her back on you, taking away your ability to swim forever.

LUFFY

Well that's no big deal. I already couldn't swim.

SHANKS

You're not getting just how serious this is! Now you can't do anything in seawater. All your strength disappears when submerged.

BENN BECKMAN

What do we do about this, Captain?

Shanks is at a loss. But Luffy is still eternally optimistic.

LUFFY

With these new powers I'm strong enough to go with you on your journey now right?!

Luffy smiles wide, hoping his appeal will succeed.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. PARTYS BAR - WINDMILL VILLAGE - DAY - WEEKS LATER

Luffy, still in the tavern, but no trace of a smile. Now sporting a SCAR under his left eye where the bandage previously was. He's trying extra hard to look pissed and make sure everyone around knows it. But the only people around are Makino, who can't help but smile at this ongoing temper-tantrum, and WOOP SLAP, the curmudgeonly bespectacled MAYOR of the village. He sits at a table sipping coffee and reading the WORLD ECONOMIC JOURNAL newspaper. The front page headline of which reads: SUN PIRATES ATTACK AGAIN! BOUNTIES INCREASED FORTOP MEMBERS!

MAKINO

How long are you going to keep making that face?

LUFFY

What face? This is my face. This is what my face looks like.

MAKINO

Only the last couple of weeks since Captain Shanks left without you again.

LUFFY

Shanks? I don't even know who that is.

WOOP SLAP

About time you wised up. Your grandfather asked me to watch over you and he would never tolerate you cavorting with pirates. They've made port in my town for far too long. I hope they never come back.

LUFFY

Yeah what he said!

MAKINO

Whatever you say, Luffy. Now how about some lunch?

LUFFY

Meat. Put it on my treasure tab.

Makino laughs and turns to prepare Luffy some food. When she hears the doors open she speaks over her shoulder.

MAKINO

Welcome! Have a seat anywhere and I'll be right with you.

HIGUMA (O.S.)

Yeesh. I thought this dump was supposed to be popular.

Makino turns, goes white when she puts a face to that voice. REVERSE TO REVEAL Higuma and his bandits have returned.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)

Booze. As much as you got. I hear you have some rather expensive bottles.

The bandits all erupt in laughter as they take seats at tables. Makino can only stare. Woop Slap's grip on his newspaper tightens, almost crumpling it. Luffy's fuming at the fact they would show up here again. An anger he can't hold back, TEETH and FISTS clenched.

LUFFY

You're not welcome here.

HIGUMA

You say something, brat?

LUFFY

I said you're not welcome in here!

Woop Slap shakily speaks up.

WOOP SLAP

Luffy! Be quiet. We don't want any trouble.

Now Luffy's up, death-glaring at Higuma.

LUFFY

No! He shouldn't allowed in here. He attacked Shanks!

HIGUMA

Shanks? You mean that sorry excuse for a pirate?

LUFFY

SHUT UP! You're only talking crap cause Shanks isn't here. If he was he could take all of you and he'd only need one arm to do it!

MAKINO

Luffy...

LUFFY

Shanks is the greatest pirate in the world. You're nothing compared to him. So shut the hell up!

Higuma stares at Luffy. We've seen before how he takes insults.

HIGUMA

Those are some pretty big words, little man.

He gets up and walks to Luffy, TOWERING over him. But Luffy DEFIANTLY stands his ground, trying not to show any fear.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)

If you want to talk like a man --

He picks Luffy up by his SHIRT with one arm. Luffy STRUGGLES against it, feet hanging off the ground.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)

Then you'd better be prepared to back it up like a man.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PARTYS BAR - WINDMILL VILLAGE - DAY

Luffy hits the DIRT HARD, having been tossed out of the bar by Higuma. Makino runs out behind them.

MAKINO

Please! Stop!

But Higuma's out for blood. He BACKHANDS her away. Woop Slap kneels beside her.

HIGUMA

This is a matter between men.

Now Woop Slap tries an appeal.

WOOP SLAP

Please! He's just a hot-headed, smart-mouthed child. I'm the Mayor of this village. I'll give you anything you want. Alcohol. Money. Just please let himbe.

HIGUMA

At least you understand how the world works, old man. This one still has to learn his place.

He and his bandits form a CIRCLE around Luffy.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)

So. Anything else you've got to say?

Luffy gets to his feet. A scared and cornered animal. Flight option unavailable, he LASHES OUT at Higuma. Putting his uhard-trained PUNCHESn into practice.

Unfortunately for him, he's not as strong as he puts on. Higuma easily SIDE-STEPS his punch. The bandits all laugh at the futility of his situation. Higuma mocks him.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)

Whoa! Watch out now.

Luffy throws another punch. This time Higuma GRABS his fist -- and returns the favor with a PUNCH of his own, knocking Luffy back down to the ground. He circles Luffy like a lion, taunting his downed prey.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)

You need to learn to respect your betters.

Higuma punctuates each line with a kick to Luffy's body. Makino holds her cries back with her hand. Woop Slap turns away in disgust at the violence and at his own cowardice.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)
 You're weak. What right do you have to talk down to me? What right do you have to live? But I'm a generous soul. I'll help you.

Higuma brandishes his saber.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)
 I'll put you out of your misery to keep you from having to face your own inadequacies!

SHANKS (O.S.)
 So this is why no one came to the docks to welcome us back.

Everyone turns. BAM! Shanks has arrived! Calm and cool as always.

HIGUMA
 You...

Shanks looks down at Luffy in the dirt.

SHANKS
 Luffy. What happened? I thought your punches were as strong as pistols now.

LUFFY
 Shut up, Shanks!

HIGUMA
 So you're back. Doesn't matter. Not like you're gonna do anything.

SHANKS
 You can spill alcohol on me all you like and I'll laugh it off. But you hurt someone I care about? That's something I can't overlook.

Shanks walks toward Higuma and the bandits. The briefest tinge of panic washes over Higuma's face. He nods for one of his men to handle this. The BANDIT steps forward and pulls out a FLINTLOCK PISTOL, aiming it right at Shanks's head.

BANDIT
 One more step and you're dead.

Shanks sighs with disappointment.

SHANKS

Now you've done it. You've gone and put your life on the line.

BANDIT

The hell are you talking about? I'm the one with the gun to your head.

SHANKS

That's not a toy, you know. If you bring one out, you'd better be prepared to die.

BANG! The bandit is suddenly SHOT in the HEAD. He falls to the ground dead. REVEAL: LUCKY ROO with a PISTOL of his own. And of course a leg of MEAT in his other hand. And he's not alone.

WIDEN TO REVEAL -- BAM! -- he's FLANKED by the rest of the Red-Hair Pirates! Higuma tries to keep composure in the face of this ambush.

HIGUMA

Looks like someone grew a pair.

YASOPP

Cut the crap. You're not dealing with a bunch of saints here.

SHANKS

We're pirates.

HIGUMA

Don't just stand there, you idiots!

The bandits all draw their SWORDS, prepared for a full on showdown between crews. But only Benn Beckman ("BB"), cigarette in mouth, steps forward. He pulls out a FLINTLOCK RIFLE from the SASH around his waist. But instead of aiming it, he FLIPS the rifle in the air and catches it, holding the MUZZLE like a BAT. He points it at the bandits, like a batter calling a home run.

BENN BECKMAN

I should be more than enough for you lot.

YASOPP

Hey why's he get to have all the fun?

BENN BECKMAN

If you want even a small chance
you'd better bring a damn warship
or something.

HIGUMA

Kill them!

The bandits all charge. BB dodges the first swing, taking the cigarette from his mouth and SMOTHERING it in the bandit's FOREHEAD. BB blocks and strikes with ease, putting every bandit that comes his way down with a single blow.

Doesn't take Higuma long to realize this is a losing battle. Luffy watches the fight in amazement. Shanks and his crew are more badass than he ever imagined.

LUFFY

Holy crap -- hey!

His wonder is interrupted by Higuma pulling him up. He reaches into his pocket and procures a SMOKEBOMB, throwing it down and FSSH! -- clouding the area in THICK white SMOKE.

Once it finally clears, we find BB standing alone, not a single bead of sweat. The ground at his feet is littered with the bodies of defeated bandits.

As it continues to clear, Shanks looks around and notices Luffy is gone. He starts to uncharacteristically panic.

SHANKS

Luffy? Luffy!

I/E. DINGHY - EAST BLUE SEA - DAY

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

Luffy being thrown into a DINGHY. Higuma untying ROPES from a DOCK. Higuma KICKING the dock, launching the dinghy out to sea.

INT. DINGHY - EAST BLUE SEA - DAY

From the safety of his dinghy, Higuma looks back as Windmill Village starts to shrink in the distance. He sighs in relief at his successful escape.

LUFFY (O.S.)

You'll never get away.

Higuma looks down at Luffy lying on his back. Hatred in both their eyes.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

Shanks is gonna come after you.
There's nowhere you can run, you
coward.

HIGUMA

I've had it with that mouth.

Higuma KICKS Luffy out of the boat and into the sea. Luffy STRUGGLES to keep his head above water. He already couldn't swim and now his strength is being SAPPED due to the negative effect of his DEVIL FRUIT.

HIGUMA (CONT'D)

You can't even swim? I told you you
were too weak for this world.

As Higuma continues to laugh at his drowning victim, he doesn't notice something MASSIVE RISING out of the sea BEHIND him.

The water breaks and a giant EEL-LIKE CREATURE with RAZOR SHARP TEETH and RED EYES -- a SEA KING -- appears, towering over Higuma. The fearsome sea monster: the **LORD OF THE COAST!**

Higuma barely has any time to turn and scream before the Lord of the Coast (LotC) CHOMPS down with its mighty MAW, swallowing both Higuma and the boat in one gulp. Hunger never satiated, it then turns its GAZE upon the FLAILING Luffy. It sinks back into the water to surprise its prey.

Luffy looks around in terror. He can feel the LotC is still there, but he can't make out where exactly. He continues to cough and sputter as he struggles against the water, desperate to escape.

Suddenly the Lotc reemerges behind Luffy. It stands tall and then strikes down on top of him with a mighty splash -- but as the downpour settles we see the beast has come up empty. Confused, it looks around.

Shanks has arrived! He grabbed Luffy and moved out of the way just in time! We're close on Shanks as he grips Luffy protectively. But the LotC won't let his prey get away. As it prepares for another attack, Shanks LOCKS EYES with it. He STARES it down with INTENSITY, as if exerting some sort of POWER over it. Maintaining his cool, but with an air of DANGEROUSNESS we've not seen in him before.

SHANKS

Get the hell out of here.

A beat of the most EXTREME Mexican standoff -- and Shanks wins. The Lotc dives back down beneath the waves. Shanks is CRAZY STRONG. And now even more MYSTERIOUS. Shanks looks down at Luffy.

SHANKS (CONT'D)

Makino told me how you stood up for me. Thank you.

CLOSE ON Luffy as he CLUTCHES Shanks for dear life. He stares at something on Shanks we cannot yet see, tears streaming down his face.

LUFFY

It's all my fault.

Shanks pats his head with his right hand, smiling at his mortified friend.

SHANKS

I thought you were a man, Luffy?
Why are you crying?

LUFFY

Because... because...

WIDEN TO REVEAL Shanks is BLEEDING from his LEFT ARM, WHICH has been BITTEN OFF JUST BELOW THE SHOULDER by the LotC! He didn't come away from the encounter completely unscathed.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

Your arm!

Luffy cries even harder, burying his head in Shanks' chest. Shanks holds him close.

SHANKS

It's just an arm. A small price I would gladly pay to keep you safe.

As the two float in the middle of the sea, the sound of Luffy's cries begin to fade as

SHANKS (V.O.)

I'm so sorry, Luffy. I know I couldn't protect you from the cruelty of the sea forever. I just wanted to shield you from it for as long as possible.

CUT TO:

INT. PARTYS BAR - WINDMILL VILLAGE - DAY

Yasopp sits next to Lucky Roo, who's eating of course.

SHANKS (V.O.)
But there is a lesson in
everything.

Yasopp looks up, noticing something. He nudges Lucky Roo, motioning toward the door. Shanks appears, soaking wet, holding an equally drenched Luffy passed out in his arm.

SHANKS (V.O.)
When you have something you want to
achieve -- something you want to
protect -- you must put your life
on the line for it.

Makino and Woop Slap rush to them. Makino is preoccupied with Luffy's condition -- until she notices Shanks bleeding from his missing arm. She raises her hands to her mouth in horror. But Shanks simply shakes his head and smiles. He's fine. He hands Luffy to her. That's where her concern should lie.

SHANKS (V.O.)
I found that in you, Luffy.

Yasopp, still seated, makes eye contact with Shanks. Nothing said, but he grasps his captain is alright. An unspoken understanding between crewmen. Whatever transpired, they know Shanks is okay despite appearances.

SHANKS (V.O.)
And I know when you eventually set
out on your own adventure, you will
find yours as well.

OFF the SLEEPING Luffy, cradled in Makino's arms

FADE TO BLACK.

CHYRON: 10 Years Later.

Present Day. The Great Pirate Era rages on...

FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAINTOP SHRINE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

On a mountainous island somewhere in the East Blue, a small shrine sits nestled in the rocky embrace of the landscape.

INT. MOUNTAINTOP SHRINE - DAY

CLOSE ON: a STRONG hand as it strikes a MATCH lit. It moves over and lights a CANDLE. Then a SECOND. WIDEN TO REVEAL a GREEN HAired man, TALL and MUSCULAR, his back to us. He stands at an altar in an ornate, spiritually decorated shrine. THREE KATANAS rest in their SCABBARDS at his side. He lightly touches one, the only WHITE ONE.

REVEAL his face, eyes closed in silent prayer. This is RORONOA ZORO (19). A BOUNTY HUNTER. Without looking, he speaks to a presence he senses behind him.

ZORO

You can come out.

From behind a pillar, a VERY TALL man steps into the main chamber of the shrine. He wears a LONG BLACK COAT and ASCOT with a MOHAWK of RED SPIKES on his head. A large NUMBER 7 TATTOOED on his cheek. His real name is unknown. But he goes by MR. 7.

MR.7

People often visit shrines like this to light candles for those they've lost. To help guide their souls to peace. Who are yours for?

Zoro finally turns to face this mysterious newcomer.

ZORO

Someone I knew a long time ago.

MR.7

And the other?

But Zoro's not much for chit-chat.

ZORO

Who are you?

MR.7

You can call me Mr. 7. I represent an organization that is very interested in your particular set of skills. Pirate Hunter Roronoa Zoro. "The Demon."

Zoro doesn't answer. Only follows Mr. 7 with his eyes.

MR.7 (CONT'D)

You've made quite a name for yourself in the East Blue.

(MORE)

MR.7 (CONT'D)

How would you like to extend that infamy?

He hands Zoro a black BUSINESS CARD. There's no writing on it, only a JOLLY ROGER featuring a SKULL with PURPLE WINGS and two crossed RAPIERS. Zoro studies the symbol. Mr. 7 studies Zoro.

MR.7 (CONT'D)

I take it you've heard of Baroque Works.

ZORO

Nope.

Mr. 7 covers a balk and presses on with his pitch.

MR.7

We are a band of mercenaries and bounty hunters. But we're also much much more. You should know what an honor it is to be considered to join our ranks.

ZORO

There's someone I'm searching for. Could your organization help me find them?

MR.7

Our full network and resources would be at your disposal.

ZORO

Interesting. I could be convinced. On one condition.

MR.7

That being...?

Zoro flashes a DEVILISH, THREATENING GRIN.

ZORO

I get to be the boss.

The whole mood changes. Mr. 7 no longer speaks with his impish tone from earlier.

MR.7

Our leader has power and ambitions that you could not begin to fathom. I won't allow you to insult him.

ZORO

I've got power too. That's why you're here. I've also got ambitions of my own. And I'll see them through at any cost. So I don't give a shit about what your boss wants.

Mr. 7 steps back and UNSHEATHES the LONG SWORD at his side.

MR.7

To forfeit an invitation from Baroque Works is to forfeit your life.

ZORO

I was hoping you'd say that.

Zoro unwraps a BLACK BANDANA from around his ARM and ties it on his HEAD.

ZORO (CONT'D)

You asked me who the other candle was for.

Zoro draws one of his katana (NOT the white one) and strikes a FIGHTING STANCE.

ZORO (CONT'D)

It's for you.

Zoro charges at Mr. 7 with GREAT SPEED, throwing the assassin on his backfoot. But Mr. 7 brings up his long sword just in time to block Zoro's initial attack. Zoro flashes that same grin as the two men struggle for control.

Zoro overpowers the sword lock and goes on the offensive. He's all STRENGTH, his fighting technique one of brute force and ferocity. Zoro's got style to his attacks as well, flipping his sword behind his back to reposition his grip. And we can tell he's ENJOYING this. This is Zoro's happy place. The heat of combat.

Mr. 7's forced to play defense, constantly dodging and deflecting. He's being pushed back all over the tight space. He manages a small reprieve in the midst of the battle, switching his stance to try an offensive on his own. But Zoro's not intimidated.

ZORO (CONT'D)

If your boss is so smart, he would have sent better than a seven after me.

Mr. 7 glares. Enough of this. With a loud cry, he rushes at Zoro. Zoro charges as well. This is the classic anime sword fight finale we've hoped for! As the two combatants get closer, camera whip-pans to --

A NEARBY WALL where the SHADOWS of our fighters stand tall in the candlelight of the shrine. The two shadows SLASH through each other, pausing with their backs toward one another. Frozen. Waiting to see who will fall.

Then, in shadow play, the TOP HALF of Mr. 7's body slides off from the bottom. ZORO CUT THE MOTHERFUCKER CLEAN IN HALF. The candle lit for Mr. 7 BLOWS OUT.

Zoro stands triumphant. As he sheathes his katana, he notices a small SMEAR of BLOOD on his WHITE SCABBARD. He removes the bandana from his head and wipes off the blood. Clearly this sword has particular SIGNIFICANCE to him. He looks over his shoulder at the corpse of his felled opponent.

ZORO (CONT'D)

Alright. Time to go.

As Zoro walks toward his trophy, we PRE-LAP the sounds of CANNON FIRE HITTING A SHIP. MEN SCREAMING and WOOD SPLINTERING. AN ATTACK. The chaos taking us to --

INT. TRADING VESSEL - EAST BLUE SEA - DAY

A group of TRADE SAILORS huddle together against the back wall of a cramped STOREROOM below deck of their VESSEL. They're surrounded by CHESTS and BARRELS, important cargo. All eyes fixated on the ceiling. No one makes a sound. Some silently mouth prayers as the sounds of a SLAUGHTER above deck continues. The two RAPIERS held by a pair of the sailors won't be enough to fight back.

And then -- silence. Only the sounds of the SHIP CREAKING as it rocks back and forth on the open ocean waves. Until THUNK. THUNK. THUNK. HEAVY BOOTS move closer and closer to the door. Panic washes over the sailors, but still they struggle not to make a sound.

The door is SUDDENLY KICKED IN. Standing in the doorway is a woman of IMMENSE STATURE. TALL and WIDE and oozing POWER. The hat on her head tells us she's no ordinary woman. This is **"IRON MACE" ALVIDA (25)**, pirate captain and leader of this assault.

ALVIDA

Tell me someone here will put up more of a fight.

In an act of screaming desperation, one of the armed sailors stands and CHARGES at Alvida, sword held out in front of him to attack. Alvida grips her namesake weapon, a large SPIKED METAL CLUB, and SWINGS it one-handed like a BASEBALL BAT. The sailor goes flying back, body crumbling against the wall. Dead. Alvida shoulders her weapon.

ALVIDA (CONT'D)

You're lucky, you know. Some of you will survive past today. You will go home and tell others of the massacre that took place here. You will tell them that these seas are under the control of Iron Mace Alvida. As for the rest of you, well -- sorry.

She raises her mace club once again, swinging it down at camera and we --

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ALVIDA'S BASE - GOAT ISLAND - DAY

CLOSE ON a JOLLY ROGER wafting in the breeze. It features CROSSBONES and a SKULL in PROFILE with a large PINK HEART where the brain would be.

WIDEN TO REVEAL the flag sits atop one of a grouping of MAKESHIFT BUILDINGS on the beach of a small island that comprises the base of operations for the Alvida Pirates. Alvida looks pleased as she stands on the beach, overseeing her crewmen carry off the pillaged goods from the trade vessel attack.

Behind her we catch a glimpse of her ornate pink pirate ship, the MISS LOVE DUCK. One of her crew, HEPPOKO, speaks up as he rolls a barrel past her.

HEPPOKO

Hell of a haul, cap'n.

ALVIDA

All in service of building up my reputation.

HEPPOKO

How do ya want us to separate the share for Don Krieg's tribute?

Alvida scoffs. Confidence ever present.

ALVIDA

Krieg. Delusional old bastard. Soon I will be the most powerful pirate in the East Blue. And then I will move on to the Grand Line and find the One Piece. Krieg, and all other pirates, will pay tribute to me!

Heppoko stands with a confused smile on his face, unsure of what to make of his captain's proclamation.

HEPPOKO

So uh... you don't want to set anything aside?

ALVIDA

Wha no, you idiot! Put it all in the storeroom with the rest.

HEPPOKO

Ye -- yes, cap'n.

Alvida is a complete 180 from the kind of captain we saw earlier in Shanks. Now agitated, she looks around for another victim to yell at. Then she spots him nearby.

ALVIDA

Koby!

A scrawny, bespectacled boy with pink hair flinches with the fear of god at the calling of his name. KOBY (16) turns.

KOBY

Yes, Captain.

Alvida approaches Koby. It takes all he has not to pass out from fear. He is TERRIFIED of her.

ALVIDA

Who is the strongest pirate on these seas?

KOBY

You -- you are, Captain.

Koby is still uneasy despite this being a regular dialogue between them.

ALVIDA

And who is the most beautiful pirate on these seas?

KOBY

Also you, Captain.

ALVIDA

That's right. And the most beautiful pirate deserves the most beautiful ship. That's why you're going to clean the Miss Love Duck from bow to stern. Immediately and immaculately. If I find even one speck of dust on a rail...

She grips her mace to punctuate her threat. Koby swallows hard. With a salute

KOBY

Right away, Captain!

He rushes away to do Alvida's bidding, leaving her to revel in her tyranny.

INT. STOREHOUSE - GOAT ISLAND - DAY

Heppoko stands amongst the stored spoils with **PEPPOKO** and **POPPOKO**, fellow Alvida subordinates who also happen to be his brothers.

PEPPOKO

We've never pulled a haul this big before!

POPPOKO

Tonight we eat and drink like kings!

HEPPOKO

Why wait until tonight? There's so much here. Cap'n said we're not paying tribute to Don Krieg off this stash.

The others catch his drift.

PEPPOKO

Whoa really?

HEPPOKO

So if a little somethin' were to go missing...

POPPOKO

Cap'n wouldn't even notice.

They snicker at their ingenious plan. Heppoko picks up a CROWBAR. Peppoko and Poppoko roll a barrel over.

HEPPOKO

Let's have us a little private party, boys.

SLAM! The trio all turn their attention to the door closing. Koby stands like a deer in headlights. Busted.

HEPPOKO (CONT'D)

Koby. You little--

But Koby holds his hands up in desperate defense.

KOBY

I'm just here to get cleaning supplies. I didn't hear anything about your plan to steal booze from the captain, I promise!

He quickly covers his mouth. Heppoko walks over and picks Koby up by the shirt, pointing the crowbar at Koby's head. Top to bottom, no one on this crew respects the poor boy.

HEPPOKO

I'm gonna make sure you don't squeal.

KOBY

No wait! Please!

HEPPOKO

We can always find another weakling to clean our shit up after us. Ain't nobody gonna miss you.

Koby winces, prepared to meet his end. But then CRASH! -- the barrel between Peppoko and Poppoko bursts open! A lanky young man in a FAMILIAR STRAW HAT erupts from inside. It's Luffy! Ten years older than when last we saw him. He stretches and lets out a big yawn.

LUFFY

Man! What a nap! Little bumpy, but not bad.

He looks around at the room full of confused strangers.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

What are you guys doing here?

PEPPOKO

This is our hideout! What the hell are you doing here?

LUFFY

Oh this is your place?

He puts his hands on his stomach.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

Then you got anything here to eat?
I'm starving.

POPPOKO

I mean... yeah, but

HEPPOKO

Stop talking to the stowaway and
get rid of him!

LUFFY

Who? Me?

Peppoko and Poppoko shake off their bewilderment. Time to be brutes. They both go right for the kill. Luffy steps back and dodges. He's deceitfully NIMBLE.

Luffy sidesteps another punch then -- *WHACK!* -- throws one in retaliation straight to Poppoko's face, knocking him to the ground. Stunned looks all around. Luffy has come a long way in the last tenyears.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

If you guys don't wanna share your
food, you just have to say so.

CROWBAR in hand, Heppoko rushes to help his still standing brother. The two take WILD SWINGS at Luffy, who even despite being outnumbered is able to fend off the attacks. His movements are fluid, CAPOEIRA-esque.

Luffy hits Peppoko with a roundhouse kick to the face. Down. Heppoko takes one last gigantic swing -- but Luffy easily catches the crowbar. He rips it away from him and lands a quick and powerful blow right to Heppoko's gut. Breath escaping him, Heppoko slumps to the ground unconscious. Luffy looks around, unfazed by the fight he just easily won.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

Gotta be something to eat around
here.

The sound of sniveling draws Luffy's attention to Koby cowering in a corner. He raises his fist, ready to put down another opponent, but Koby hold his hands up.

KOBY

Wait wait wait! Don't kill me! I'm
not a pirate!

Luffy just stares at him for a beat. Blink blink.

LUFFY

Ok.

Then sets to searching through the wares in the storeroom.
Koby's flummoxed that such a simple explanation worked.

KOBY

Who... who are you?

Luffy looks up, smiling from ear to ear.

LUFFY

I'm Monkey D. Luffy. I'm a pirate.
Nice to meetcha!

Koby stands in disbelief at Luffy's earnestness.

KOBY

You know you probably shouldn't go
around telling people you're a
pirate...

LUFFY

Why not?

KOBY

It's a surefire way to get
arrested. What kind of a pirate
stows away in a barrel anyway?
Don't you have a crew or a boat of
your own?

LUFFY

I did have a boat but you see there
was this whirlpool, then there was
the --

ALVIDA (O.S.)

You lazy dogs! Where the hell are
ya?

Koby goes white. He looks around at the scene in a panic.

KOBY

Oh man oh man!

LUFFY

Who is that?

KOBY
You are right in the middle of Iron
Mace Alvida's territory!

LUFFY
Am I supposed to know who that is?

KOBY
If she finds us -- well there won't
be anything left of us to find once
she gets through.

LUFFY
I don't know what you're talking
about. I just need to get a boat
and get on my way.

ALVIDA (O.S.)
Koby!

Koby FREAKS. He grabs Luffy's arm to stop him from leaving.
Looking around, he spots a nearby toolbox and some wood
planks.

KOBY
You need a boat? Well grab that
wood and follow me. We have to get
out of here. Now.

Grabbing the toolbox, Koby makes for the back door. Luffy has
no clue what's going on, but with a final look to the front
door, he scoops up the wood and follows after Koby.

LUFFY
Hey wait up!

MARINE 1 (PRE-LAP)
Things are getting out of hand in
the East Blue.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHELLS TOWN - EAST BLUE SEA - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A seaside port town that sits in the shadow of an IMPOSING
Marine Headquarters.

EXT. MARKETPLACE - SHELLS TOWN - DAY

MARINE 1 and MARINE 2 walk on patrol through the seaside
MARKETPLACE.

MARINE 1

It used to be a peaceful sea. But we've a got growing number of major players causing trouble.

MARINE 2

Don Krieg has been a threat for some time. Absorbing smaller pirate groups under his own flag. Building his "pirate fleet." And those who aren't joining him are emboldened by his presence.

MARINE 1

You're talking about Arlong?

MARINE 2

Among others. But Captain Morgan has a plan.

ANGLE ON the Marine Headquarters high on the hill.

MARINE 2 (CONT'D)

He's the man who caught and executed the pirate Captain Kuro after all. If anyone can stop Don Krieg and clean up the East Blue, it's him.

BACK with the Marines. As Marine 2 looks up at the Headquarters, Marine 1 notices something up ahead. He nudges Marine 2 and draws his attention to a trail of BLOOD on the road leading from the docks. The trail looks as if someone got lost dragging something around.

They follow it around a corner to find it's source: a large bag being dragged by someone.

MARINE 1

You there! Stop!

They hurry to catch up to him. Marine 2 trains his rifle on the man as Marine 1 approaches and spins him around. It's Zoro!

ZORO

What do you want?

MARINE 1

Who are you and what's in that bag?

Zoro takes notice of the MARINE ATTIRE they're wearing.

ZORO
You're Marines. Where's the damn
base? I can't find it.

MARINE 2
You mean the giant structure at the
top of the hill that says uMarinesu
on it.

Zoro looks up, seriously not having noticed it before.

ZORO
Oh. There it is.

The Marines are momentarily flabbergasted. Who is this guy?
But they shake it off and get back to business.

MARINE 1
Now answer the question! What's in
the bag?

Zoro reaches in his pocket -- putting the Marines on guard
and pulls out the CARD Mr. 7 gave to him. He hands it to
Marine 1. And it's clear by the look on the Marine's face
that he knows the SYMBOL.

MARINE 1 (CONT'D)
Where did you get this?

ZORO
This guy gave it to me. He's an
assassin or something. I wasn't
really paying attention. Anyway,
figure he had to be worth
something.

Zoro reaches down and unzips the bag. We enter the BAG POV,
looking up at the Marines as they peer inside. We can't see
what they do, but the HORRIFIED looks on their faces tell us
it ain't pretty.

ZORO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Dead or alive, right? So I'd like
my money now.

The Marines look back up at Zoro, who is flashing his
trademark DEMONIC GRIN at them.

ZORO (CONT'D)
Which one of you's gonna take me
where I need to go?

EXT. WOODED BEACH - GOAT ISLAND - DAY

A peaceful TREE-LINED stretch of BEACH. But that peace is interrupted as Koby explodes out of the trees. He drops to his knees, completely out of breath. An unfazed Luffy not too far behind him. He Looks around, confused.

LUFFY

I thought you said you had a boat.

A sharp WHEEZE is all Koby can muster as he points Luffy's attention to a small TARP near the water. Luffy throws the tarp off to reveal a shitty, slapdash dinghy.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

This? Is it even seaworthy?

KOBY

It's not... finished yet. I've done the best I could with... salvaged and stolen materials.

Finally catching his breath, Koby looks more serious than we've seen him before.

KOBY (CONT'D)

I have to get away from here at any cost.

LUFFY

You want to leave your crew?

KOBY

I told you this isn't my crew! I'm not a pirate.

LUFFY

Who wouldn't want to be a pirate? You get to do whatever you want. It's the ultimate freedom --

KOBY

(interrupting)
Not for me. I don't have any freedom here. I'm a prisoner. Alvida captured me and forces me to do all the manual labor for her crew. Cleaning her ship, tending to her every need. Enduring her abuses.

A hearty laugh from Luffy switches Koby to defensive.

KOBY (CONT'D)
 What's so funny about that?

LUFFY
 If you hate it so much why didn't
 you just leave?

Koby looks down, embarrassed at his answer. He clenches his
 FISTS to help fight back TEARS.

KOBY
 You don't know Alvida. I belong to
 her. I could complete my boat. I
 could leave this island and never
 look back. But she would find me.
 And make my life even worse than it
 is. I'm just -- I'mnot...

LUFFY
 What's your name?

KOBY
 Koby.

LUFFY
 Well good for you, Koby.

That's not the response Koby was anticipating.

LUFFY (CONT'D)
 It's ok to be a coward today as
 long as you believe in yourself and
 work on getting stronger tomorrow.
 You have to be willing to learn,
 willing to die for your dream.

Koby stands in disbelief as Luffy's words (which sound
 reminiscent of Shanks) take root in his heart. Despite his
 aloofness, Luffy seems leaps and bounds ahead of Koby in
 EXPERIENCE.

KOBY
 Luffy do you have a dream like
 that?

Luffy removes his hat, staring longingly at it in his hand.
 Remembering the man he made a promise to long ago, the source
 of his inspiration.

LUFFY
 I'm gonna find the One Piece and
 become King of the Pirates.

Blink. Blink.

KOBY

Your dream is to the find One Piece!? Gold Roger's legendary treasure? Every pirate in the world is after that!

LUFFY

And I'm gonna beat em to it!

KOBY

How? You don't have a ship or a crew or a clue where it is!

LUFFY

If I let things like that stand in my way, it wouldn't be much of a dream worth chasing would it?

Once again Luffy's words have an impact on Koby.

KOBY

You're right. Then if you can find the One Piece, maybe I can become a Marine officer!

LUFFY

A Marine?

KOBY

Ever since I was a little boy I've wanted to be a Marine. To protect people who can't protect themselves. To uphold justice and punish evildoers like Alvida.

Luffy smiles, genuinely happy at Koby's newfound conviction. He gives an enthusiastic thumbs up.

LUFFY

You can do it. Go for it!

KOBY

No one has ever believed in me before.

Emotion wells up in Koby. But this moment of growth is quickly interrupted when Luffy notices something off-screen.

LUFFY

Get down!

He tackles Koby to the sand just as a SPIKED CLUB arcs overhead.

It SNAPS a tree in HALF as it boomerangs back -- and is CAUGHT by ALVIDA! She's found them! And she's flanked by a number of her crew.

ALVIDA

Just who are you going to punish,
Koby?

And just like that, Koby's courage EVAPORATES.

KOBY

Al -- Alvida!

ALVIDA

I have to admit. I didn't think you
had it in you.

Alvida shoulders her mace as she surveys the scene. Koby, the makeshift boat, the mysterious stranger.

ALVIDA (CONT'D)

Hiring a bounty hunter for the
growing price on my head and then
making your escape.

KOBY

What? No that's not --

But now Alvida turns her attention to Luffy.

ALVIDA

I saw the work you made of my men
in the storehouse. Roronoa Zoro.

Luffy stands and dusts himself off. He looks around for whoever Alvida's referring to.

LUFFY

Who?

ALVIDA

I'd heard the Pirate Hunter was
spotted in these waters recently.
Only natural you'd come after
someone as high profile as myself.
Never expected you to agree to work
for this nitwit though.

LUFFY

Lady I don't know what you're
talking about. My name is Luffy.

Alvida raises one eyebrow.

ALVIDA

You're not the swordsman Roronoa
Zoro?

LUFFY

No! I'm the pirate Monkey D. Luffy.

Alvida is unimpressed. Mace in hand, she swaggers toward Luffy. Itching to teach this newcomer a lesson.

ALVIDA

Never heard of you. How did some
scrawny-ass nobody like you take
out some of my men?

But before Alvida reaches Luffy, Koby steps in the way.

KOBY

Enough!

Everyone looks at Koby, surprised. He locks eyes with Luffy, emboldened for the first time in his life. Even in their short time together, Luffy has really inspired him.

KOBY (CONT'D)

No more insults. No more threats.
We're leaving. And there's nothing
you can do to stop us, you old sea
hag!

Alvida seethes, veins in her forehead throbbing over this monumental insult. Despite his strong words, Koby immediately regrets them.

ALVIDA

Old sea hag?

She raises her mace high, ready to strike down the terrified turncoat where he stands. Koby shuts his eyes, prepared to die for his dream.

ALVIDA (CONT'D)

I'll make you choke on your words,
you insolent little bastard!

She swings down with all her MIGHT and -- *WHAM!* -- connects -- with Luffy's head! He stepped in to take the blow for Koby! Putting his life on the line the way Shanks did for him. But he isn't FAZED by the attack. He SMILES from underneath his hat and Alvida's mace.

LUFFY

That won't work.

Koby opens his eyes, surprised to be alive.

KOBY

Luffy?

ALVIDA

How?

LUFFY

I ate the Gum-Gum Fruit. I'm a rubber person.

Alvida jumps back, putting distance between her and Luffy.

ALVIDA

A Devil Fruit user?

But she shakes off her astonishment. Can't let that faze her.

ALVIDA (CONT'D)

Whatever. I don't care what powers you have. They're nothing compared to mine. I'm not gonna let some no-name punk stand in my way.

Luffy smiles, strikes a fighting stance. Ready to throw down.

LUFFY

Funny. I was gonna say the same thing.

This time Luffy strikes first, punching at Alvida -- but she bats it away with her mace. Now she advances, swinging wildly, horizontally and vertically.

ALVIDA

Stand! Still!

Luffy has to work harder than his last skirmish to evade. His attacks can't get through hers. He back-handsprings into the air, creating some space by landing farther away.

LUFFY

No more messing around. Time to bust out my special attack.

He plants his feet and -- *RRRRCCHH!* stretches his right armway way waaaaaaay back.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

Gum-Gum...

Alvida can't afford to be shocked. She holds her mace up defensively.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

Pistol!

Luffy ROCKETS his arm forward with TREMENDOUS FORCE AND SPEED. Alvida braces herself, but Luffy's fist blows past Alvida's defense and PUNCHES her right in the FACE and off her FEET. She flies back, crashing hard to the ground. Knocked out cold.

Luffy's arm RETRACTS to normal with a satisfying SNAP! Koby's mouth is agape. As is everyone else's who just witnessed that smackdown. Iron Mace Alvida fell to a no-name upstart pirate! The smile fades from Luffy's face as he turns to Alvida's crew with all seriousness.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

Now give us a boat. Koby and I have dreams to chase.

The Alvida Pirates scramble away to fulfill the order. Koby can't believe it.

KOBY

Luffy! You mean it?

The smile back on Luffy's face as he turns to his new friend.

LUFFY

Of course! It's time for you to go. And if I'm gonna be King of the Pirates, I'd better start building my crew.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TAVERN - SHELLS TOWN - DAY

CLOSE ON a FLAGON of ale as it's SLAMMED down on a bar. REVEAL ZORO, visibly DRUNK, seated on a barstool. Wasting no time spending the MONEY he received for Mr. 7's BOUNTY. And showing no signs of slowing down.

ZORO

(slurring)

Another beer over here.

The proprietor **RIRIKA** comes over and grabs his glass, unbothered by his drunken growling.

RIRIKA

Another round coming up.

As he waits, Zoro's woozy eyes fall to the kitchen doorway. There, a little girl, RIKA, is peeking out with the apprehension of a child facing a monster in her closet. Her eyes glued to Zoro's swords leaning against the bar beside him. She looks up to find Zoro staring back at her. They lock eyes for a tense beat, then

ZORO

What are you looking at?

Startled out of her stupor, Rika scurries back into the kitchen. Ririka returns with Zoro's refill.

RIRIKA

Sorry. My daughter, Rika. She's a bit shy.

Zoro grumbles something incoherent and takes a loooong drink.

The tavern doors open and in walks HELMEPPO (20), the most pompous, entitled, overcompensating DOUCHEBAG with a BOWL CUT you've ever seen, flanked by two Marines. His GARISH PURPLE suit and JEWEL-ENCRUSTED SABER at his side scream "bad taste." Ririka stiffens, trying to put on a good face while anticipating a scene.

RIRIKA (CONT'D)

Welcome. Please have a seat anywhere you like.

Helmeppo strides through the tavern like he owns the place. Passing a few perfectly good and empty tables, he approaches one occupied by a dining couple.

HELMEPPO

You're sitting at my favorite table.

The BOYFRIEND weakly speaks up.

BOYFRIEND

There are plenty of others.

HELMEPPO

Maybe you weren't paying attention. She said I could sit anywhere I like. I'd like to sit here. So either move your asses, or my dogs here will move them for you.

And that's all they need to hear. Grabbing one another's hands, the couple does as commanded and gets the hell out of the tavern. Eternally pleased with himself, Helmeppo sits down and puts his feet up on the table.

HELMEPPO (CONT'D)

This place is a pig sty. Someone
clean this table up.

Zoro watches the whole situation out of the corner of his eye. From the kitchen, little Rika emerges with a rag to clean the table. Visibly shaking, Rika tries her best to avoid Helmeppo's piercing gaze as she gathers dishes. But in doing so, she accidentally knocks a glass onto Helmeppo's lap. He leaps to his feet in outrage.

HELMEPPO (CONT'D)

You stupid girl! Do you even know
how much this suit costs?

RIRIKA

I am so sorry! Rika, apologize.

The poor shaken girl tries, but can't choke out the words.

RIKA

Sor... sorr --

Her tearful eyes widen even further when -- SSHHK! -- she comes face to face with the blade of Helmeppo's drawn saber. No one else in the bar makes a move. Not even her mother. Helmeppo stares down his blade at his frightened victim.

HELMEPPO

You know who I am, don't you?

Rika can only manage a small nod.

HELMEPPO (CONT'D)

Then you know how badly you just
screwed up. Anyone who dares to
insult me will face --

WHAM! A flagon SMASHES Helmeppo right in his stupid face. He stumbles backward and grabs his head.

HELMEPPO (CONT'D)

Oww! What thehell!?

From between his fingers he looks around in an incredulous rage.

HELMEPPO (CONT'D)

Who threw that!? Who the hell has
the audacity to --

ZORO (O.S.)

Quit running your mouth.

Helmeppo's eyes finally land on Zoro who's now standing. Seemingly sober, definitely annoyed.

ZORO (CONT'D)

It's ruining my meal.

HELMEPPPO

You can't talk to me that way. No
one can talk to me that way. Get
him!

Helmeppo sics his two Marines on Zoro. They approach, intent on arresting him. Zoro picks up one of his scabbards (again, not the white one) and, without even drawing the sword, puts the Marines down easily with just a few well placed strikes. Not even a fight.

Just as quickly, Zoro is on Helmeppo. Now he draws the SWORD, holding it in Helmeppo's face just like he did to Rika.

ZORO

You shouldn't draw your weapon
unless you're prepared to use it.

Now Helmeppo's SWEATING. He stumbles backward and falls over, showing his true colors as he panics like the COWARD he is. His saber skids away from him. From the floor his eyes dart from Zoro to his sword to the other two swords leaning against the bar. Then he understands. He tries to regain composure and save face.

HELMEPPPO

You -- you're that bounty hunter.
"The Demon." Roronoa Zoro.

ZORO

That's right.

HELMEPPPO

Well -- well I'm Helmeppo.

ZORO

Never heard of you.

HELMEPPPO

Well I'm sure you've heard of my
father. Captain Morgan, highest
ranking military officer on this
island.

Whether that means anything to Zoro or not, his face remains STOIC. But Helmeppo's starting to get some swagger back in his power play dick swinging. He stands, but remains wary of Zoro's still unsheathed sword.

HELMEPPO (CONT'D)

He's the man who signs your bounty checks. And he won't appreciate the disrespect you've shown his favorite son. His power is my power. He'll have your head on a pike. He'll burn this whole tavern to the ground, patrons and all, just to get to you if I say the word.

That threat lands on Ririka as she cradles her shaken daughter. This is exactly what she was hoping to avoid. Rika looks to Zoro, visibly worried.

HELMEPPO (CONT'D)

And if he's in a pleasant mood, he'll make sure no Marine base on any island accepts a bounty from you again. Your sport, your livelihood, gone. Unless--

ZORO

I defeat you in battle.

HELMEPPO

No. What? No. I can't beat your strength, but I bet I can break your spirit. Crucified in the Marine base prison yard. No food, no water. For thirty days. Survive that, and we'll forget all about today. Should be no challenge at all for the great demon Roronoa Zoro.

Zoro stares at this weasel, weighing the consequences of taking his life right here and now. Which he could do in the blink of an eye. But instead he shoulders his sword and grins menacingly.

ZORO

Should be fun. Thirty days. Do your worst.

Challenge accepted. Off Helmeppo's smile. Checkmate.

LUFFY (PRE-LAP)

You sure you know what you're doing?

CUT TO:

INT. ROWBOAT - EAST BLUE SEA - DAY

Luffy sits at the BOW of the ROWBOAT acquired from Alvida's crew. He stuffs his face with DRIED MEAT pulled from a SACK beside him.

Behind him sits Koby, map in hands, trying to get his bearings.

KOBY

Any prospective Marine recruit knows how to handle a map. Just took me a second to get the right heading. We probably should have asked for a compass as well.

LUFFY

Where are we going again?

KOBY

Shells Town in the Yotsuba Island Region. More specifically, the 153rd Branch Marine Base.

LUFFY

That's great! The first step towards your dream!

The light on Koby's face at that fact quickly fades as a realization comes to mind.

KOBY

But that also means this is where we part ways.

Luffy whirls around. Mouth full of food.

LUFFY

What do you mean?

KOBY

I'm heading to an island overseen by the Marines. I assume that's the last place a pirate would want to be. I can drop you off at a different island on my way.

LUFFY

No way! I'm going with you. We're friends now.

KOBY

Can a pirate and a Marine really be friends?

LUFFY

I don't care what you are. As long as who you are is a good guy.

Koby smiles at Luffy's kind, earnest words.

KOBY

Luffy...

WIDEN to an OMNIPOTENT POV looking at Luffy and KOBY in their tiny boat. In the foreground we notice, just breaking the surface of the water, the SPINE of a familiar MONSTER descend beneath the waves.

LUFFY

I want to see you walk into that office and become a Marine.

BACK ON THE BOAT

LUFFY (CONT'D)

Besides. That Marine base sounds like the place to get info on that Zoro guy.

KOBY

What do you want with Roronoa Zoro?

LUFFY

He's a really strong swordsman, right? Sounds like the kind of guy the future King of the Pirates could use on his crew.

Koby is beside himself, trying to talk his friend out of a suicide mission.

KOBY

Roronoa Zoro is a pirate hunter! It's right there in his name. What makes you think he would join a pirate crew?

LUFFY

I'm not gonna ask him just yet. I wanna talk to him first, see what he's like.

KOBY

They call him a "demon" who's racked up a huge body count. He must be scary. And scary strong.

LUFFY

I'm sure he is. But it's not enough
to be strong. He has to be good.

Koby looks in awe at Luffy, a surprise at every turn. He's unlike any pirate he's ever heard of before. Luffy puts his RIGHT hand on his HAT and gives a big smile.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. DOCKS - WINDMILL VILLAGE - EVENING - FLASHBACK

Shanks stands in the exact same position as Luffy, same pose and smile on his face. Lit by the evening sun.

SHANKS

Thank you all for your hospitality.
You really made this place feel
like home. But it's time for us to
move on. Adventure awaits.

REVERSE TO REVEAL Mayor Woop Slap, Makino, and an apprehensive looking young Luffy stand before a gathering of townsfolk standing on the docks. It's a massive SEND-OFF. Yasopp, Benn Beckman, and the others can be seen loading supplies onto their ship in the background.

WOOP SLAP

Your presence here was a disgrace.
I'm glad you're finally leaving.

SHANKS

We're gonna miss you too, Mayor.
Makino, thank you for the food.
We'll savor it as long as we can.
With Lucky Roo that should be about
three hours.

LUCKY ROO (O.S.)

If you're lucky!

Makino giggles. If it wasn't clear she's SMITTEN with Shanks before, it certainly is now.

MAKINO

You're welcome. Please take care of
yourself, Captain.

And now Shanks looks down at his young friend. Smiles as WARMLY as he always does. Luffy looks to Shanks' missing arm, still GUILTY over the pain he's caused his mentor.

SHANKS

I'll miss you most of all, Luffy.

But Luffy can't answer. He just looks down at the ground. And Shanks understands.

SHANKS (CONT'D)

You really proved your bravery.
Perhaps you're ready. How would you
like to come out to sea with us?

Woop Slap looks APPALLED. Makino clasps her hands in excitement. This is what Luffy has always wanted!

LUFFY

No.

What!?! Everyone's SHOCKED. No one more than Shanks.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

I don't ever want to be a burden
for anyone.

Luffy finally meets Shanks' gaze. As he continues, he speaks not with petulance, but with CONVICTION and CONFIDENCE.

LUFFY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna become a pirate captain,
the kind that people can rely on.
I'm gonna gather my own crew. We're
gonna have adventures of our own
and become the greatest crew the
world's ever seen. Greater even
than you. I'm gonna find the One
Piece and become King of the
Pirates! And that's a promise!

Shanks maintains his smile in the face of this challenge, doing all he can to cover the PRIDE swelling up in his chest.

SHANKS

Greater even than us, huh? Well. In
that case...

He reaches up, removing his HAT. He places it firmly on Luffy's head.

SHANKS (CONT'D)

This hat is my most precious
treasure. It means the world to me.
I want you to have it. Now this
represents our promise.

Luffy, eyes OBSCURED by his large new hat, looks down again. But the tears streaming down his face can't be hidden.

SHANKS (CONT'D)

When you set out and we meet each other again on the seas, you can return it to me. After you become a great pirate of course.

A sniffle and a nod are all Luffy can manage. With their PACT made, Shanks offers these final words.

SHANKS (CONT'D)

Be good, Luffy.

And Luffy looks up one last time, placing his hand on his new hat and flashing that trademark smile.

LUFFY

Yeah!

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ROWBOAT - EAST BLUE SEA - DAY

Luffy, back where we left him, completely oblivious to the panicked Koby behind him. He grips the side of their tiny boat as it rocks in violent waves.

KOBY

Luffy! Wha -- what's happening?

They look over the side. Something MASSIVE is definitely circling beneath them.

KOBY (CONT'D)

What is that?

The LORD OF THE COAST suddenly rises from the sea.

KOBY (CONT'D)

A Sea King?!

LUFFY

You! I hoped I'd run into you again.

LotC ROARS, rows of jagged teeth on full display. Ready to consume the prey that eluded it so long ago. Koby falls back, paralyzed with fear. But Luffy doesn't flinch. He takes his stance, stretching his arm back like he did against Alvida.

LUFFY (CONT'D)
 I'm not the same little kid I was
 last time we met.

The Lord of the Coast STRIKES at the boat.

LUFFY (CONT'D)
 Gum-Gum Pistol!

Luffy launches his arm, arcing it, and CLOCKS the Lotc right in the face with a powerful blow! The mighty beast falls, unconscious, into the water with a GIANT SPLASH. Luffy's arm SNAPS back. Just the outcome he was expecting.

LUFFY (CONT'D)
 That's right! Nothing's gonna stand
 in my way!

CLOSE ON Luffy's face as he makes his PROCLAMATION to his fallen adversary and to the world!

LUFFY (CONT'D)
 I'm Monkey D. Luffy. I'm the man
 who's gonna be King of the Pirates!

EXT. MARINE BASE - CRUCIFIXION YARD - DAY

Heat waves ripple off the dry earth. We track across the dirt to a pair of BLACK BOOTS. A parched yet strong voice repeats...

ZORO
 Not today... nottoday...

As we move up the body we notice the torso and arms are tied to a WOODEN CRUCIFIX. We finally land on the face of Zoro, enduring his punishment. He's sweating bullets in the intense heat. But he wears that same defiant look on his face as he keeps repeating --

ZORO (CONT'D)
 Not today... not today...

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: ONE PIECE

THE END