

SETTING: *Various locations in the life of Jesse McCall including his bedroom, the family living room, his classroom at school and the playground. Every one of these areas should, with a little imagination, be able to be transformed into either the deck of a pirate ship or perhaps a desert island which holds buried treasure. The set should be minimal; two benches placed on top of each other, with a ladder at each end from the top bench to the floor, make up the bunk beds in Jesse's bedroom – as well as the deck of the pirate ship. These two benches can also be rearranged to make seats in a classroom, playground apparatus, etc.*

AT RISE: *JESSE MCCALL, dressed in what any nine-year-old would imagine a pirate to wear, enters at a run. He pulls a treasure map out of his belt and studies it reverently. Dream Music begins. He holds it aloft.*

JESSE

Yo-ho-ho! A pirate's life for me!

(Suddenly we hear the sounds of a great battle between dueling pirate ships. The roar of cannon followed by the shouts of men. JESSE tucks the map back in his belt and pulls out a wooden sword.)

Ahoy, me hardies! We're under attack! All hands on deck!

(MR. JONES, BRAUNY BART and LA PUGH enter at a run and take their various stations. LA PUGH climbs the ladder and stands on the top bunk, "steering" the ship.)

All hands on deck! Make ready for battle!

(MR. JONES pulls out his spy-glass and peers through it.)

Mr. Jones! What kind of ship is it?

MR. JONES

A seven-rigger, Cap'n. Comin' fast off a starboard. Uh-oh...

(MR. JONES pulls the spyglass down and looks at JESSE.)

MR. JONES (cont.)

She's flyin' the Jolly Roger, Cap'n.

JESSE

A seven-rigger flying the skull-and-crossbones. Only one man sails such a ship...

MR. JONES

Never say it, Cap'n!

JESSE

The most feared pirate of them all...

MR. JONES

No, Cap'n – no!

JESSE

The Terrible One-Eyed Jack!

*(The men gasp in horror at hearing the name. A boom of the cannon.
The men sway as if the ship was hit.)*

MR. JONES

Do we make a run for it, Cap'n, or stay and give 'em a fight?

JESSE

Captain Jesse McCall never runs from a battle! We stay and fight! Are you with me, men?!

ALL

Aye, aye, Cap'n!

JESSE

All right, then! La Pugh! Hellum aport and hard alee!

LA PUGH

(Turning the wheel)
Aye, aye, Cap'n!

MR. JONES

(Looking through his spyglass)
They're comin' up hard and fast!

JESSE

Brawny Bart – is that cannon ready?

BRAWNY BART

Primed and loaded to the gills, sir!

JESSE

It's time we showed that old buccaneer a lesson or two.

MR. JONES

(Still peering through the spyglass)

They're in range, Cap'n.

JESSE

Brawny Bart, on my signal.... Ready... aim... FIRE!

(BRAWNY BART fires the cannon! We hear a loud BOOM!)

MR. JONES

A direct hit!

(The men cheer!)

Wait!

(He pulls down his spyglass.)

That didn't stop 'em! They're headin' right for us!

JESSE

Gentleman, draw your weapons! Prepare to be boarded!

(The men all draw their swords. We hear the shouting of angry pirates drawing closer, getting louder and louder.)

Steady, lads, steady... All right – *after them!*

(With a roar, Jesse's Crew rushes off with swords drawn. We hear the clanking of swords. JESSE watches, yelling encouragement.)

That's it, me hardies! Take no prisoners!

(ONE-EYED JACK enters behind JESSE.)

ONE-EYED JACK

Jesse McCall!

JESSE

One-Eyed Jack.

ONE-EYED JACK

It's a long time I've been lookin' for you. You stole me treasure map.

(JESSE pulls the map from his belt.)

JESSE

This treasure map belongs to me!

ONE-EYED JACK

I want it back.

JESSE

You'll have to kill me first.

ONE-EYED JACK

Then prepare to die!

(He draws his sword. JESSE draws his sword as well and the two come together and fight. First ONE-EYED JACK has the upper hand, then JESSE. ONE-EYED JACK grabs the treasure map from JESSE and tries to run off with it. JESSE crosses in front of him, blocking his exit.)

JESSE

Not so fast, bucko!

(He battles ONE-EYED JACK and knocks his sword away. He places his own sword point against One-Eyed Jack's chest.)

JANET (O.S.)

Jesse? Jesse, are you ready for bed yet?

JESSE

(Calling off)

Just a minute, Mom!

(JESSE turns back to ONE-EYED JACK.)

Prepare to die.

(He pulls the sword back.)

ONE-EYED JACK

Wait! Don't kill me! I can help you find the treasure.

JESSE

I don't need your help.

ONE-EYED JACK

Aye, you do, for you're no match for Red Legs Ricky.

(Behind them, in his own light, RED LEGS RICKY appears.)

JESSE

Red Legs Ricky? The Outlaw Pirate?

(RED LEGS RICKY waves his sword menacingly.)

RED LEGS RICKY

Arrrggghhh!

JESSE

Red Legs Ricky knows about the treasure?

ONE-EYED JACK

Aye, and wants it all for himself.

JESSE

Red Legs Ricky is the bloodthirstiest pirate of all!

RED LEGS RICKY

(Calling off)

Avast, me hardy!

(SOCRATES enter opposite. SOCRATES has a hook for a hand.)

ONE-EYED JACK

And his crew the most vicious bunch of murderin' scoundrels to be found on the high seas!

RED LEGS RICKY

Let's find that treasure, matey! And death to those who get in our way!

RED LEGS RICKY/SOCRATES

Arrrggghhh!

(RED LEGS RICKY and SOCRATES exit.)

ONE-EYED JACK

It'll take the both of us workin' together to stop him. Whaddya say, matey – are you in?

JESSE

I'm in!

ONE-EYED JACK

Then it's time to swear the blood oath of loyalty. Raise your right hand.

(JESSE raises his right hand.)

Do you solemnly swear to remain a loyal and true pirate and never forsake your good mate One-Eyed Jack – no matter what distractions there may be – under pain of death?

JESSE

I do.

(ONE-EYED JACK spits in his hand and holds it out. JESSE spits in his hand and they shake.)

One-Eyed Jack, what's a "distraction"?

ONE-EYED JACK

Oh, you know – the usual. Toys, video games... girls.

JESSE

Girls?! I *hate* girls!

ONE-EYED JACK

You say that now but one day some sweet lass will blink her long eyelashes at you and then you'll forget all about your old friend One-Eyed Jack and his buried treasure...

JESSE

No way! I just swore a blood oath of loyalty.

(JANET enters behind his back.)

If I betray you, I'll have to pay with my life.

JANET

Jesse, who are you talking to? And why aren't you in bed yet?

JESSE

Mom, I'd like you to meet One-Eyed Jack, the most feared pirate ever to sail the Seven Seas!

JANET

Who?

JESSE

Me and One-Eyed Jack are gonna work together to find the buried treasure but we have to hurry before Red Legs Ricky finds it first.

JANET

Now you listen to me, Jesse McCall. You were supposed to be in bed an hour ago. Tomorrow's your first day at your new school and you need plenty of rest.

JESSE

What for?

JANET

So you can do well in your studies. So you can make new friends...

JESSE

I don't want to make any friends.

JANET

Jesse!

JESSE

What's the point, Mom? Just as soon as I learn everyone's name, Dad'll get transferred and we'll have to move again. I might as well stay home and go pirating with One-Eyed Jack. He's the only friend I need.

JANET

Son, this *one-eyed* person you keep talking about – he doesn't really exist. He's just *imaginary*...

ONE-EYED JACK

Imaginary?!

(ONE-EYED JACK pulls his sword.)

Take it back, wench, or I'll...

JESSE

(Staying his hand)
One-Eyed Jack, please! She's my *mom*.

(To JANET)

Mom, you need to take it back.

JANET

Enough of this nonsense. Get in bed and go to sleep this minute.

JESSE

(Climbing onto the top bunk)
Fine. But One-Eyed Jack has to spend the night because we're a team now.

(He turns to ONE-EYED JACK.)

Is the bottom bunk okay, One-Eyed Jack?

ONE-EYED JACK

It would be an honor.

(JANET tucks JESSE in.)

JANET

Goodnight, Jesse.

JESSE

Night, Mom.

(She starts to exit as ONE-EYED JACK climbs into the lower bunk.)

Aren't you gonna say goodnight to One-Eyed Jack?

(JANET turns off the light and exits the bedroom.)

Guess not.

HENRY (O.S.)

Honey? I'm home!

(HENRY enters downstage right, carrying a briefcase. JANET crosses to him.)

HENRY

Where's Jesse? Is he in bed already?

JANET

I just tucked him in. He starts school tomorrow, Henry.

(She starts to help him off with his suit jacket)

HENRY

Sorry I'm late. You know how it is. My first day at a new facility.

JANET

(Pulls back in horror)

Oh no! Get it off, get it off!

HENRY

What's the matter?

JANET

(Pointing)

There's a spider crawling up your jacket!

HENRY

Honey, it's just a thread – see?

(He pulls it off and holds it up.)

JANET

Guess I'm jumpy after all those years of living with the wolf spiders in Florida, the black widows in California, those awful tarantulas in Texas...

HENRY

(Taking her in his arms)

Well, maybe we finally found a place without spiders.

JANET

But for how long? Don't you ever get tired of moving around, Henry?

HENRY

Why do you ask? Is something wrong?

JANET

Jesse. He doesn't want to go to school tomorrow. He says his only friend is One-Eyed Jack.

HENRY

Who?

JANET

His imaginary friend. A *pirate*, of all things. Henry, you need to spend more time with him.

HENRY

As soon as I get settled in at work...

JANET

I want Jesse to have *real* friends! He needs *real* friends!

HENRY

I *know* – and he'll have them. But for now, go along with it. Trust me, Janet. An imaginary friend is better than no friend at all.

(HENRY puts his arm around JANET and they exit. The soft glow of moonlight washes over Jesse's room. ONE-EYED JACK is snoring loudly. JESSE is sitting up in bed, studying the map.)

JESSE

One-Eyed Jack...? One-Eyed Jack, are you asleep...?

(ONE-EYED JACK continues to snore.)

ONE-EYED JACK!

(ONE-EYED JACK wakes with a snort, springs out of bed and pulls his sword.)

ONE-EYED JACK

Who's out there?!

JESSE

It's me.

ONE-EYED JACK

Oh. Jesse. What is it, lad?

JESSE

What kind of treasure are we looking for?