

# THE BARBICAN AND THE HOE – AUDIO PLAY #3

## PIRATE OF PLYMOUTH - PART III

performed by Emma (Stella the Storyteller)

We are on the Hoe Promenade, 5 years ago.

STELLA has a small gathering listening to her story.

**STELLA:** Gather round, listen up -  
To the tale of Fiona the Ferocious, a brave and brash pirate who once  
Stayed here, played here, made her way here,  
Right here, about ten feet up from where we're standing,  
Was the bed which Fiona rented for the price of forty pennies,  
The bed which, it is assumed, she stored her riches below whilst she planned  
her biggest and most dangerous heist.  
We know this from two pieces of evidence -  
The first is the diary of one Georgia Ainsworth, the proprietor of the Pub, who  
wrote most of what I am about to relay to you.  
I will try to use her words wherever possible.  
The second is the guestbook, which is stored in a vacuum sealed box, in The  
Box Museum of Plymouth.  
A guestbook signed with a false name, but definitely Fiona's handwriting.  
I always make sure to be clear about both of these sources before beginning  
the story as so many of my audience come up afterwards to tell me that my  
tale is 'too tall',  
Or otherwise unbelievable.  
I hope that if any of you listening now find yourselves in that camp, you might  
take a visit to The Box Museum archives, where if you request 'The Guestbook  
of the Mermaid's Scale Inn', any member of staff will gladly oblige.  
With the disclaimers out of the way, let me set the scene.  
It's a wet and windy Tuesday evening, on the 12th March 1721.  
The Mermaid's Scale is the busiest it has been in months.  
You can barely fit a cat inside the establishment, let alone swinging one  
around.  
Speaking of, on this night, Georgia noted one particularly rowdy sailor swinging  
from a wall mounted lamp.  
She also notes that he got down pretty sharpish after she rested her pistol on  
the table.  
This is the night Fiona was checking out, and setting sail with her booty.  
There was a mighty high price on her head, £500 to whoever could track down  
and apprehend the pirate who stole the fortune of Count Luscombe.  
And trust me, £500 three hundred years ago was a fortune in itself!  
The thing was, no one had seen the pirate, so there was no way of knowing  
who it was.

Everyone in Plymouth became a suspect - there was a rumour floating around that the pirate had diced a guard into cubes, but there doesn't seem to be any proof to support it.

Needless to say, the Mermaid's Scale was abuzz with gossip, so when Fiona hired two men to carry her trunk down from her room because it was too heavy with the riches she'd gained from her daring robbery, she was really playing with fire. But nevertheless, she maintained her devil may care attitude by telling the men not to peek at her belongings, saying they were 'secret girly things that they wouldn't understand' before winking at Georgia and ordering a pint of ale.

No one can say what exactly happened upstairs, but there was a single gunshot and only one man returned to the bar, so we can make an educated guess.

This man was called Percy Mason, a blacksmith who Georgia seemed to know quite well. Percy pointed his smoking pistol at Fiona and demanded she put her hands up.

Fiona obliged, having no weapon of her own and took a step to the side. The rest of the pub's patrons huddled in corners to make way for her and hid behind tables to avoid the trajectory of a passing bullet.

Percy began a speech, accusing Fiona of being the elusive pirate, and that the trunk full of coins up the stairs proved it.

Fiona scolded Percy for breaking the peeking rule, and said that there was no way he could prove that the coins belonged to the Count. She claimed that she had won it in a card game, and began lowering her hands.

At this, Percy cocked the pistol and asked how she would have won the Count's famous ruby-eyed statue in a card game.

There was a pause, then Fiona whipped the hair from her eye whilst declaring : 'Clearly, the Count is bad at cards'.

She took a step toward Percy, and just before he was able to fire, Georgia cocked her own pistol from behind the bar and pointed it at him.

With Percy held at gunpoint, Fiona took the initiative to sprint up the stairs, fill her pockets with coins and escape through the window.

She was never seen again. It is assumed she assembled a crew and set off toward America.

Georgia's fate is also shrouded in mystery, as the story I have just told was from her diaries final page.

Thank you for being such an attentive audience, if you could spare a few quid, the hat is just there - hopefully if you're all generous enough, I'll accrue a fortune of my own.