

## Scene 9 – The Age of Exploration

**(Captain James Cook and some of his crew have just landed on an island they believe they have just discovered.)**

**Father Time:** The renaissance also saw major improvements in shipbuilding, navigation and instrument making, enabling Europeans to explore the four corners of the globe.

**Bruce:** Corners of the globe? How can a globe have corners?

**Father Time:** It is a figure of speech.

**Bruce:** It'd be more of a cube if it had corners.

**Father Time:** It's not meant to be taken literally.

**Bruce:** And a cube has eight corners, anyway, so it still doesn't make sense. You should have said Europeans explored the eight corners of the cube.

**Father Time: (Sighs)** The renaissance also saw major improvements in shipbuilding, navigation and instrument making, enabling Europeans to explore the eight corners of the cube. Satisfied?

**Bruce:** Not really. The world isn't a cube, is it? **(Mysteriously)** Or is it?

**Father Time:** Here we see Captain James Cook on the first of his three voyages. He and his crew have landed on an unknown island.

**Captain Cook: (Planting a Union Flag\* into the ground.)** I hereby claim this land in the name of His Majesty King George the Third.

**Aneas Aitken:** Three cheers for Captain Cook. He's done it again! Hip-hip!

**Crew:** Hurray!

**Aitken:** Hip-hip!

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\* The Union Flag used at the time was similar to today's, but without the diagonal red stripes, which were added in 1801.

**Crew:** Hurray!

**Aitken:** Hip-hip!

**Crew:** Hurray!

**Aitken:** And one for luck...

**Sidney Parkinson:** Hurray!

**Aitken: (Crossly)** I haven't hip-hipped yet. Hip-hip!

**Crew:** Hurray!

**Cook:** Thank you men. Yes, I've done it again, haven't I? Another dominion to add to our Royal Majesty's ever-expanding empire.

**Aitken:** You really are a marvel Captain.

**Cook:** Yes, I think I am.

**Alexander Weir:** What are you going to call this land, Captain?

**Cook:** Good question Mr Weir. I think this one I shall call Cookland. Yes?

**(Most of the crew look at their feet and shuffle uncomfortably. Aitken looks delighted.)**

**Robert Taylor: (Muttering)** Makes a change.

**Cook:** What's that Mr Taylor?

**Taylor:** Nothing Captain.

**Aitken:** That's a wonderful choice of name, if I may say so Captain!

**Cook:** It is rather, isn't it?

**Aitken:** And it will look so good on the map, along with the nineteen other islands you named 'Cookland'.

**Cook:** I think it will indeed look splendid.

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**Weir:** Will it not be a little confusing Captain?

**Cook:** I beg your pardon?

**Weir:** Don't get me wrong; I like 'Cookland' as a name as much as the next man, but won't it be a bit confusing for other navigators?

**Cook:** I don't see why Mr Weir.

**Weir:** Well if the captain of a ship asks for a course to be plotted to Cookland, the navigator's going to have to ask which one.

**Cook:** And?

**Weir:** And when he gets the answer: 'The Cookland 12 miles to the north of Cookland and 30 miles to the east of Cookland' it's all going to get a bit confusing.

**Cook:** Nonsense!

**Weir:** It's not nonsense, Captain. It's going to be blooming awkward.

**Aitken:** If the Captain wants to call the island 'Cookland' he can call the island 'Cookland'. If you ever achieve the rank of captain you'll have the same privilege.

**Sidney: (Nervously)** Can we get back on the ship now?

**Cook:** But we haven't explored the island yet, Mr Parkinson.

**Sidney:** I know, but there might be...

**Cook:** Cannibals, Mr Parkinson?

**Sidney:** Yes, sir.

**Cook:** Were there cannibals on the last island, Mr Parkinson?

**Sidney:** No, sir.

**Cook:** You have worried about there being cannibals on every island we have visited, Mr Parkinson. Have we yet met a cannibal, Mr Parkinson?

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**Sidney:** Well...there was that one three islands ago.

**Cook:** I don't recall any cannibals on Cookland. Do you Mr Aitken?

**Aitken:** Which Cookland was that, Captain?

**Cook:** Um – number seventeen I believe.

**Aitken:** A cannibal on Cookland number seventeen? I don't think so, Captain.

**Sidney:** You must remember! He was holding a hairy skull scooping out the brain. He even offered you some!

**Taylor:** That was a coconut you fool.

**Sidney:** No – I'm sure it was a cannibal.

**Taylor:** Not the man, the thing he was eating.

**Sidney:** Oh...looked like a shrunken head.

**Cook:** All this talk of cannibalism is making me peckish. Mr Aitken!

**Aitken:** Yes Captain?

**Cook:** What say you to a spot of lunch, after which we can make a start on exploring the interior of this tropical paradise?

**Aitken:** A wonderful plan, Captain.

**Cook:** Mr Taylor, Mr Weir! Go and fetch some wood for a fire.

**(Taylor and Weir exit.)**

**Cook:** Mr Aitken, can I just take this moment to say what a terrific honour it must be for you to serve under me.

**Aitken:** Indeed it is, sir.

**Sidney:** What's for lunch?

**Aitken:** Pâté de foie gras to start followed by roast swan with a truffle sauce and seasonal vegetables. For dessert a selection of tropical fruits gathered during our expedition...

**Sidney:** Yum!

**Aitken:** ...for the Captain. For you it's a ship's biscuit.

**Sidney:** Oh.

**(Taylor and Weir return.)**

**Taylor:** We couldn't find much in the way of firewood, but we did find this.

**(They hold up a sign that reads 'Welcome to the Isle of Wight'.)**

**Song: Geography**

**Bruce:** I preferred him in the cartoon when he got eaten by that crocodile.

**Father Time:** Who?

**Bruce:** Captain Hook.

**Father Time:** It was Captain Cook you imbecile.

**Bruce:** So what did he do, apart from discovering the Isle of Wight?

**Father Time:** He didn't discover the Isle of Wight. Nor did he name twenty islands 'Cookland'. He *was* the first European to sail to the east coast of Australia; he circumnavigated the globe; he was amongst the first to cross the Antarctic circle. He also discovered Hawaii, where he was eventually killed by the natives.

**Bruce:** Did they eat him?

**Father Time:** I don't think so, no.