

"FULLER'S FOLLY"

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FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN STREET BOAT DOCK - DAY

SUPER: DAVENPORT, IA, 10-14-1865

A SMALL CROWD OF PEOPLE gathers in this downtown space on the banks of the Mississippi River as an auction wraps up on this Saturday morning.

Across from the customers, THE AUCTIONEER (a man in his 40s) addresses them.

AUCTIONEER

We thank you kindly for attending
this sale of the inventory of the
Hartman Line.

Cheers ring out from the buyers.

In the back of the crowd, ALPHONSE WILLIAM "A.W." SMITH (40, conniving, White) eyeballs ANGIE FULLER (30, self-reliant, Black) and best buddy JOSEPHINE HUNT (44, studious, Black).

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

And now...for our final item up for
bids...

The auctioneer points to a 152-foot-long, three-deck eyesore of a steamboat...a grounded vessel.

The boat's paddlewheel needs two or three new boards.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

Gentlemen...and ladies...feast your
eyes upon the "Aura Lea."

Most of the customers gasp.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

This was once the pride of the
Hartman Line.

A.W. flashes a megawatt smile.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

But three years ago today, this
steamship was rammed by a schooner
traveling in the same direction.
Right here in this spot.

Josephine and Angie nod at each other.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
All it needs is a hull repair.

 ANGIE
Well, I'll be a...

 AUCTIONEER
But in the right set of hands, this
passenger ship can rule the waves
once again.

A.W. adds a strong nod to his smile.

In the middle of the crowd, customers JULIUS HULL (30,
oafish) and HUBERT CONKLIN (35, aggressive) gaze at the boat,
then at each other.

 JULIUS
Hubert...I don't know.

 HUBERT
Yeah. Maybe she can rule a puddle.

Those around the two skeptical customers laugh.

 AUCTIONEER
The "Aura Lea" is open for bids.

Buyers perk up.

 AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
Who'll take a thousand?

Angie raises her hand...and A.W. bristles.

 A.W.
You cain't bid on that!

 ANGIE
Oh, yeah? Watch me!

 JOSEPHINE
 (points to A.W.)
Yeah! Watch her!

 AUCTIONEER
Who'll take a thousand fifty?

A.W. throws his hand up.

Angie follows suit.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
Who'll take eleven hundred?

Angie and A.W. raise their hands again...and the former gains incredulous looks from observing customers.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

The group's now half its earlier size.

Angie, A.W., and Josephine now stand out front.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
Now...who'll take fifteen hundred
for the "Aura Lea?"

A.W. throws his hand upward.

Angie does, too.

A.W.
Lady, you ain't gonna win!

ANGIE
I got fifteen hundred dollars that
say I'm gonna win.

A.W. catches Josephine's emphatic nod.

AUCTIONEER
Who's got fifteen fifty?

Angie's hand shoots up.

As he watches Angie, A.W. looks mortified.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
Anyone else?

Nobody else responds.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
Going once...going twice...going
three times...

Josephine and Angie hug each other in joyful hope.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
Sold! To the...the...the...

The two women break their embrace...Angie, arms raised in triumph, jogs toward the auctioneer.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
 Lady on the run!

Josephine's the only person in applause when the auctioneer and Angie meet.

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

Everybody else stands in openmouthed shock.

 AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
 Con...gratulations...uh...ma'am.

 ANGIE
 Thank you, sir!

Angie extracts the money from her purse and hands the dough to the auctioneer.

 AUCTIONEER
 (accepts the cash)
 I...just...hope you know what
 you're doing.

 ANGIE
 Just watch me.

The auctioneer counts out the fifteen hundred fifty bucks.

A.W. grits his teeth.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Josephine watches Angie unlock the door to the steamship's boiler room.

 JOSEPHINE
 First thing we should do, Angie, is
 change the boat's name.

 ANGIE
 Huh?
 (pushes door open)
 Both sides durin' the war liked
 "Aura Lea."

 JOSEPHINE
 That's true...but it's a minstrel
 song, too.

Angie shakes her head "yes."

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
And you know you and I don't need
the reminders minstrel songs bring.

Both women saunter into the:

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER ROOM - DAY

Angie and Josephine examine the boat's three boilers.

JOSEPHINE
I'm surprised to find a boiler room
on this ship.

ANGIE
Yeah.

JOSEPHINE
Most steamboats, the boilers are
out in the open.

A grin fills Angie's face.

ANGIE
Josephine...me and you need to
check every room on this ship.
Every nook and cranny.

JOSEPHINE
Don't worry. We will.

Josephine dredges a pencil and a few pieces of paper from her
purse. She looks for a suitable writing surface.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
Everything we find, I'm gonna write
it down.

Angie watches her buddy scribble away.

ANGIE
Good...a pencil?

JOSEPHINE
I tried putting a pen in my
purse...but the ink spilled.

Josephine's pal goes back to checking the boilers.

ANGIE
At least the boilers look good.

JOSEPHINE

It's a wonder they survived the schooner...aren't you gonna write anything down?

ANGIE

Ain't got to.

Angie points to her own forehead.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Got me a photographic memory.

Josephine's nod is slow.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Angie and Josephine oh-so-carefully examine the paddlewheel...and the latter gives the former a glum look.

ANGIE

Josie...it'll be all right. We'll find a way.

JOSEPHINE

Tell me how.

ANGIE

Remember how we tore outa the plantation when they announced that Lincoln freed us...and the owner didn't wanna let us go?

Josephine's glum look becomes a smile.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A.W. and WOODROW SHIRES (50s, a textbook flunky) saunter toward the boat dock. The two men watch the two women examine the "Aura Lea."

WOODROW

A.W., that shoulda been your boat.

A.W.

I know, Woodrow. I just didn't have enough money.

WOODROW

(pointing to A.W.)

You know them crows don't know nothin' 'bout boatin'.

A.W.
I wouldn't say that.

Woodrow and A.W. stop in their tracks.

A.W. (CONT'D)
Before I walked away from the
auction, I heard them two talk
about how they spent the last two
years servin' on a steamboat.

A.W. catches Woodrow's incredulous look.

A.W. (CONT'D)
Food.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Josephine and Angie case out the cargo area.

ANGIE
At least it's plenty of space for
cargo and stuff.

When the older woman walks over a wooden plank that loosens,
she backs off.

The younger woman shakes her head up and down.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER DECK - DAY

Angie and Josephine reach the steamer's middle deck.

ANGIE
If you don't wanna keep the "Aura
Lea" name on this boat, what would
you like to call it?

JOSEPHINE
You first.

Angie looks puzzled...for a few seconds.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" PASSENGER CABIN - DAY

The two ex-slaves test the bed in this modestly-furnished
room...Josephine first, then Angie.

JOSEPHINE
At least the schooner crashing into
this boat didn't affect the beds.

ANGIE
You betcha.

Josephine gravitates to a small desk.

JOSEPHINE
Now...if another steamboat had run
into this one...

ANGIE
(jumps off bed)
Don't even mention it.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" GALLEY - DAY

Angie and Josephine waste no time in inspecting the stove.
Both women eyeball each other in satisfaction.

ANGIE
No coal left in the stove.

JOSEPHINE
As long as they didn't use it for
the boilers when the ship went
down.

The twosome check the kitchen shelves...and find them clean
of items.

ANGIE
At least we ain't gotta worry 'bout
no three-year-old cans of beans.

Josephine grins with a nod.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
I'd hate to think 'bout the taste.

JOSEPHINE
Or the aftereffects.

The two buddies break out in laughter.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

Now Josephine and Angie stroll into the largest space on the
boat's boiler deck...one whose bar stands parallel to a wall
rather than in midroom.

JOSEPHINE
Truly hard to believe that nobody
on this ship died in the collision.

ANGIE
But then the whole crew of the
schooner died.

JOSEPHINE
Good thing it wasn't a two-
steamboat collision.

The two best buddies go to a window apiece. Each woman
fondles a curtain.

ANGIE
We gotta stop talkin' 'bout death.

Josephine shakes her head "yes."

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Let's talk 'bout life.

JOSEPHINE
You first.

Angie and Josephine resume their stroll.

ANGIE
Okay...Josie, think of all the
lives we can fit into this space.

JOSEPHINE
I agree, Angie.

ANGIE
'Specially durin' eatin' time.

The twosome reach the other end of the saloon. They notice a
pre-1860 upright piano whose fallboard sits closed.

Josephine opens the lid to expose the keys.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
That's funny...all the pianners
I've seen in the past were square.

JOSEPHINE
True...these uprights are more
popular in Europe.

Josephine tests a few keys...and finds a rather tinny sound.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
But I understand Ford's Theater's
got one.

Angie's nod is slow.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
That's what the family that owned
us found out when they visited
Washington, DC.

ANGIE
God...rest...his...soul...

Josephine closes the piano's lid.

She and Angie hug.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" HURRICANE DECK - DAY

Josephine observes as Angie unlocks the door to the:

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Both women saunter inside.

Each woman puts a hand on the rudder...until:

JOSEPHINE
Angie...you go first. Your life's
savings paid for this boat.

Angie shrugs before she places both her hands on the rudder
and pretends to steer the ship.

ANGIE
Actually...this boat took almost
all my life's savin's.

JOSEPHINE
Surely you jest.

ANGIE
I got me ten dollars left.

JOSEPHINE
Well...turn me into a pillar of
salt.

Angie lets go of the rudder and gestures Josephine into
handling it.

ANGIE
Now...let's see what kinda pilot
you are.

JOSEPHINE

My pleasure.

And Josephine pretends to steer the steamboat.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Now the two pals check out the hull...and find a gaping hole in it, adjacent to the paddlewheel.

ANGIE

It's gonna take a lot more than a hull repair.

BANG! BANG! Gunshots fill the air.

Angie and Josephine (both in a crouch) amble up the stairs as the gunshots CONTINUE.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

The former slaves hurry inside this glass tower; Angie shuts the door, crouches on the floor, and gestures Josephine into a crouch.

They gaze at each other.

ANGIE

Don't they know it's October
fourteenth, 1865...not December
thirty-first, 1862?

BANG! BANG! More shooting.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Josephine and Angie (both in nightgowns or pajamas) rise out of the bed they share.

ANGIE

Josie...it's Monday.

Josephine grabs a small calendar from an adjacent table.

JOSEPHINE

(with a nod)
That it is.

ANGIE

I'm ready to do this.

Angie hugs her buddy.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
I'm more than ready to do this. How
'bout you?

JOSEPHINE
(completes the embrace)
Angie...I'm ready, too.

The hug becomes a handshake.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Angie and Josephine (now in long dresses) saunter down Main.

The latter pulls her list(s) from her purse.

JOSEPHINE
Since you bought the boat
itself...the least I can do is pay
for the provisions.

ANGIE
Okay.

Josephine hands the document(s) to Angie, who studies it all.

JOSEPHINE
You put your life's savings...well,
most of it...into that steamboat.

Angie shakes her head "yes."

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
Now it's my turn to follow suit.

ANGIE
Well...thank you kindly.

Now Angie returns the paperwork to Josephine.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
I know...you got fourteen years on
me.

A FEW PEOPLE stroll down the street. They stare at the duo.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
That means you got more of a life's
savin's than me.

JOSEPHINE
I just thought of something I
neglected to put on the list.

Angie's mouth flies open.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
After what we went through the last
two days, we'll need this.

ANGIE
We will?

JOSEPHINE
We will...we'll need firearms.

Angie blows an imaginary bubble as A FEW MORE FOLKS walk by.

ANGIE
So much for nooks and crannies.

JOSEPHINE
Angie, we're gonna need to protect
those nooks and crannies of ours.

Josephine's pal looks back at the other pedestrians.

ANGIE
I just hope they didn't hear you
talkin' 'bout no firearms.

JOSEPHINE
As long as they don't know the man
who lost out on that boat, we're
okay.

ANGIE
Good point.

The two ex-slaves stroll on.

EXT. LUMBER YARD - DAY

Angie and Josephine stroll into an area that brims with two-
by-fours. The twosome cause EMPLOYEES to stare in shock.

One worker, SPURGEON LOOMIS (30s, eager), runs toward the
company building...only to return to his own work when
company owner MILTON RENWICK (30s, hotheaded) strides out.

Milton sizes Josephine and Angie up.

MILTON
Whatcha two doin' here?

ANGIE
We wanna be customers.

Milton looks skeptical.

JOSEPHINE

You see, sir, Angie bought a steamboat at the auction at the Main Street dock the other day.

ANGIE

And Josie's helpin' me fix it up.

MILTON

That piece of crap that got wrecked three years ago?

ANGIE

It's the "Aura Lea." But we're gonna change its name and put it back out in the water.

Spurgeon catches a slight peek at the conversation.

JOSEPHINE

And after we get it repaired, we'll start booking passengers.

MILTON

Whaddya you two girls know about boatin'?

ANGIE

We served on a steamboat the last coupla years.

The two pals watch Milton's angry gesture.

JOSEPHINE

Food.

MILTON

You're in over your heads!

Milton bounds his way toward the building.

MILTON (CONT'D)

You're wastin' your time!

Angie and Josephine look at each other...and shake their heads sideways.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

In a slower walk than before, Josephine and Angie head toward a smaller building...whose front features an ample display of fruits and vegetables.

JOSEPHINE

I've read all kinds of books about boating and travel...only because our old master collected 'em.

ANGIE

And you used some of 'em to learn me how to read.

The older woman holds the front door for the younger one.

JOSEPHINE

If anybody's wasting time, it's the guy at that lumber yard.

ANGIE

(going into the store)
And he's turnin' his back on a sale, too.

INT. GROCERY STORE SALESFLOOR - DAY

Angie and Josephine saunter inside a decently-stocked space...and draw nervous stares from A FEW CUSTOMERS.

WALLACE KELLY (51, quiet; native of Ireland) strolls over to the two former slaves.

WALLACE

Top o' the morning...
(checking his watch)
I mean afternoon.

ANGIE

Good afternoon to you, too, Mr. Kelly.

WALLACE

Now...what can I get the both o' you?

JOSEPHINE

We want to buy provisions for our newly-purchased steamboat.

ANGIE

The "Aura Lea." It's docked at the
Main Street dock.

Josephine hands a grocery list to Wallace.

JOSEPHINE

We'll change the boat's name as
soon as possible.

Wallace accepts the list...but slumps to the floor in shock!

INT. "DAILY DAVENPORT DEMOCRAT" OFFICE - DAY

Josephine and Angie attempt to converse with the newspaper's
editor-publisher, EMIL KREUTZER (40s, smug).

EMIL

(pointing to Josephine)
So...you're Angie Fuller.

JOSEPHINE

No...I'm Josephine Hunt.

ANGIE

I'm Angie Fuller.

EMIL

So...you two bought a steamboat the
Saturday after Columbus Day.

ANGIE

Actually...I was the one that had
the money for the boat.

JOSEPHINE

And I'm paying for everything else
the boat needs.

Emil gravitates to a printing press.

EMIL

You two realize that running a
ship's no job for a lady.

Angie and Josephine follow Emil to the printing press.

EMIL (CONT'D)

Especially one your color.

ANGIE

Mr. Kreutzer...Josephine and I served on a steamboat for two years. Two solid years.

EMIL

Sure you did.

JOSEPHINE

We did...food.

Emil examines type.

EMIL

That's not the same as being a pilot...let alone a captain.

ANGIE

But once in a while, we'd watch the captain and the pilot at work.

JOSEPHINE

And Angie and I have read plenty of books on boating and travel.

EMIL

But that's not the same as actually running a steamship.

JOSEPHINE

(pointing to Emil)

We realize that! All we're trying to do is promote our steamboat.

The two women watch Emil fumble some more type.

ANGIE

Mr. Kreutzer...think what this'll mean...to the City of Davenport...

JOSEPHINE

A major port along the Mississippi in a free state.

He scrambles to set the type back in place...then looks up at the twosome.

EMIL

You know what?

Angie and Josephine catch Emil's angry look.

EMIL (CONT'D)
This is folly! Complete,
unmistakable folly!

JOSEPHINE
We don't think so.

The two former food servers storm out of the office.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Josephine looks fit to be tied...Angie's face shows a smile.

ANGIE
We got a new name for our boat.

The two women stroll on.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
At least we got somethin' from the
"Daily Davenport Democrat" office.

JOSEPHINE
An earful.

ANGIE
Josie...don't you 'member readin'
'bout Robert Fulton?

JOSEPHINE
How can I ever forget?

ANGIE
They kept tellin' him his
"Clermont" was a bad idea.

Josephine's is a slow nod.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Matter of fact, they nicknamed it
"Fulton's Folly."

JOSEPHINE
And they were dead wrong.

ANGIE
And we're goin' through the same
kinda you-know-what with our boat.

SOME PEDESTRIANS walk in the opposite direction from Angie
and Josephine.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
All the businessmen we met...sayin'
it ain't right for us to do this.

JOSEPHINE
Especially Emil Kreutzer.

ANGIE
'Specially him.

On the other side of the street, ANOTHER PEDESTRIAN gives the two BFFs an angry gesture.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
And that's why we oughta change the
"Aura Lea's" name to "Fuller's
Folly."

A smile creeps onto Josephine's face.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
I still wanna show 'em how dead
wrong they are.

JOSEPHINE
Angie...we both deserve to have the
last laugh.

Josephine extends her hand to Angie.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
Put 'er here.

And the two buddies shake hands.

EXT. MAIN STREET BOAT DOCK - DAY

Woodrow and A.W. case out the boat the latter lost out on.

A.W.
There it is, Woodrow...in all its
splendor.

Woodrow's grin becomes a laugh.

A.W. yanks a cigar from his shirt pocket.

WOODROW
If you're doin' what I think you're
'bout to do, don't do it.

A.W.
WHAT?

WOODROW
You still want this boat, don'tcha?

A.W. stares at his stogie...then the boat...then Woodrow.

WOODROW (CONT'D)
Then don't set that thing on fire.

A.W.
Uh...okay.

A.W. stuffs the cigar back into his shirt pocket.

WOODROW
See, A.W., here's the trick.

Woodrow catches A.W.'s eager look.

WOODROW (CONT'D)
We gotta torture them two crows.

A.W. shakes his head "yes."

WOODROW (CONT'D)
That way, they'll wanna give up the
"Aura Lea."

Woodrow takes out a pistol and fires a bullet...which hits the steamboat a few feet away from the hull's gaping hole.

A.W.
You wanna fire closer to the hole?
Maybe make the hole bigger?

The two men smile at each other.

INT. SCOTT COUNTY COURTHOUSE LOBBY - DAY

Angie and Josephine stroll inside a palace-like space where A CLERK (a man in his 40s) behind a counter wraps up business with A CUSTOMER (a man in his 20s).

The customer departs; the two women rush to the counter...only to receive the clerk's evil eye.

CLERK
Uh...can I help you?

ANGIE
I bought a steamboat at the auction
at the Main Street dock last Satur--

CLERK

Yeah...and Robert E. Lee didn't
surrender at Appomattox.

JOSEPHINE

She actually did. I was there.

Angie pulls the bill of sale from her purse and hands the
document to the clerk.

CLERK

(to Angie)

What in the world do you need with
a steamboat?

ANGIE

Josephine and I wanna get into the
steamboat business.

JOSEPHINE

We want to book passengers...people
who share our love of travel.

The clerk chuckles.

ANGIE

What I wanna do is register the
boat...and then me and Josie wanna
apply for pilot's licenses.

JOSEPHINE

And that's the truth.

He hands the bill of sale back to Angie.

ANGIE

(accepts paperwork)

Just in case one of us get sick,
the other can take over.

CLERK

You sure you two know what you're
doing?

ANGIE

Josephine and I spent the last two
years servin' on a steamboat.

JOSEPHINE

Food.

CLERK

What steamboat was that?

ANGIE
The "Moselle Two."

Josephine goes into her purse...and pulls out a diary.

JOSEPHINE
Here...it's all in here.

She hands the clerk the diary.

CLERK
(skims through pages)
You...can...read...and write?

JOSEPHINE
You bet your life.

ANGIE
Both of us.

CLERK
And you're still alive to tell
about it?

ANGIE
You bet your britches.

The clerk snickers...Josephine busts out in laughter.

CLERK
Okay...you've both taken care of
the minimum requirement of seven-
hundred-and-twenty days of sea time
on near-coastal waters.

Angie and Josephine breathe relief.

CLERK (CONT'D)
(wags finger at Josephine)
But don't you know we call a ship a
"she," not an "it?"

Josephine shakes her head "no."

JOSEPHINE
Sir...if a ship is really a "she,"
where's the uterus?

The clerk's mouth flies open as he hands the diary back to Josephine.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Angie and Josephine walk toward the hull...whose gaping hole is now a lot bigger than before.

JOSEPHINE

Angie...at least they didn't try to
burn our boat--

The two pals watch PENELOPE SUE "PENNY" PENNYPACKER (32, cool, slick) crawl out of the boat through the hole.

ANGIE

Wait a doggone minute...how'd you
get in here?

PENNY

It wasn't easy.

As Penny wipes dirt and sawdust from her dress, MIRIAM SEARAGE (28, confrontational; tall) negotiates her way out of the vessel through the gaping hole.

Josephine, Angie, and Penny try to help Miriam to her feet...but she waves the threesome off.

MIRIAM

I'm fine.

Miriam brushes sawdust and dirt from her own dress.

JOSEPHINE

What were you two doing in our
boat?

Penny and Miriam eyeball each other for a few seconds.

ANGIE

Did y'all make this hole bigger
than it was already?

Miriam and Penny grin at each other...then shake their heads sideways at Angie and Josephine.

JOSEPHINE

All right...what were you two doing
in our boat?

ANGIE

C'mon...maybe we can help you two.

Penny and her pal stare at the ground.

MIRIAM

Your boat?

ANGIE

Yep. I bought it last Saturday.

JOSEPHINE

And I'm paying for everything the boat needs.

Miriam snickers.

ANGIE

It's the truth!

Penny watches Miriam's snicker become a hearty laugh.

JOSEPHINE

Angie and I are dead serious.

The laughter stops.

Angie steps closer to Miriam and Penny.

ANGIE

Y'all workin' for this A.W. Smith?

PENNY

A.W. who?

JOSEPHINE

A.W.'s in the steamboat business. He runs a line out of St. Louis.

ANGIE

And he lost out on this here boat y'all crawled out of.

MIRIAM

(wags finger at Angie)

Well, if you must know...we're tryin' to get away from a coupla men.

PENNY

And we thought this steamboat would make a great hiding place.

Angie's is a slow nod.

PENNY (CONT'D)

A steamboat seemed like the last place those two fellas would expect to find us.

Miriam points to Penny, yet eyes Josephine and Angie.

MIRIAM

It was her idea.

ANGIE

(extends hand to Penny)
My name's Angie Fuller.

PENNY

Penny Pennypacker.

Penny and Angie shake hands...a sight that angers Miriam.

ANGIE

(to Miriam)
Don't worry. She ain't gonna break out in a rash.

JOSEPHINE

Penny, my name is Josephine Hunt.

Josephine shakes hands with Penny.

MIRIAM

Miriam Searage.

At last, Miriam engages in handshakes with Angie and Josephine...both of whom wince from Miriam's strong grip.

JOSEPHINE

It's...nice to meet you two.

Angie shakes her head up and down.

PENNY

It's nice to meet you, too, Angie and Josephine.

MIRIAM

So, Angie and Josephine, tell me...why a steamboat?

ANGIE

Well, Miriam, I just love to travel...and I love to keep busy.

JOSEPHINE

Same here.
 (gazes at hole in hull)
 Let me add...I love a challenge.

PENNY

That's good enough for me.

Miriam gives a slow, slow nod.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER DECK - DAY

Angie, Josephine, Miriam, and Penny stroll the middle deck.

JOSEPHINE

Penny and Miriam...do you know
 anything about steamboats?

The four women stop in their tracks.

Penny and Miriam gaze at each other before they turn to
 Josephine and Angie.

MIRIAM

Not much.

PENNY

But we can learn!

Angie beams.

MIRIAM

Let's face it: Penny and I are in
 the world's oldest profession.

Josephine grits her teeth.

PENNY

But Miriam and I don't wanna stay
 in it.

ANGIE

Now that's the spirit!

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Hubert and Julius saunter down the street; both men scan back
 and forth.

JULIUS

If we ever get our hands on them
 two ladies...I know what I'm--

HUBERT
Julius...put a sock in it.

JULIUS
Good idea!

And Julius bangs his fists together.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

The two former slaves and the two hookers relax in chairs lined up along one side of the room.

MIRIAM
So...when're we gonna take off?

ANGIE
Soon as we get it fixed.

JOSEPHINE
But we need supplies...a whole boatload of supplies.

PENNY
Uh...huh...

ANGIE
Josie and I got the money for supplies...mostly, it's Josie's money that's payin' for that...

Miriam jumps out of her chair to bend her knees.

JOSEPHINE
But Angie and I can't get the local merchants on our side.

ANGIE
'Specially that Renwick's Lumber Company. If they cain't sell to us, we cain't fix this boat.

Penny and Josephine nod in understanding.

MIRIAM
Well, ain't nobody ever seen a lady captain no steamboat.

PENNY
But there's a first time for everything, Miriam.

Penny, Josephine, and Angie rise from their own seats.

Angie gestures her colleagues into a huddle.

ANGIE

If all four of us work together, we
can get this done.

The four women link arms.

JOSEPHINE

They're throwing away a great
opportunity to showcase this major
port along the Mississippi.

ANGIE

And a city like this deserves its
own steamer company.

PENNY

You're right, Angie.

Miriam doesn't look convinced...but Penny's dirty look
changes Miriam's mind.

ANGIE

So...let's all four of us go to
Renwick's together first thing in
the mornin'.

Josephine and Penny AD LIB their agreement.

PENNY

Miriam...I've seen you with a team
of horses.

MIRIAM

Thought you'd never ask!

Angie, Penny, Miriam, and Josephine cheer themselves hoarse.

EXT. LUMBER YARD - DAY

It looks more like a hayride...but Miriam guides a team of
horses into the lumber yard.

Penny, Josephine, and Angie sit in the wagon...and try their
best to hide once Miriam brings the horses to a halt.

Spurgeon comes out of the building and eyeballs Miriam, who
jumps out of her seat to approach him.

SPURGEON

What can I do for you?

MIRIAM
I wanna see both you and Milton.

SPURGEON
Huh?

MIRIAM
You and Mr. Renwick.

Spurgeon's mouth flies open.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Milton and Spurgeon stand face to face with Miriam and Penny.
Behind them, other employees move lumber around.

PENNY
We're here, sirs, because we need
material to repair a boat.

MILTON
What kinda boat?

MIRIAM
The steamboat that's aground at the
Main Street boat dock.

MILTON
You're kidding.

PENNY
We're not kidding.

MILTON
You're in over your heads!

In the wagon, Angie and Josephine try to sneak a peek...

MILTON (CONT'D)
Just like them two coons--

SPURGEON
(to Milton)
Boss--

...only to grit their teeth.

MILTON
Spurgeon, shut up!

Milton points at Penny and Miriam.

MILTON (CONT'D)

You two are wastin' your time--

PENNY

All Miriam and I know is: If we don't get that steamboat fixed--

MILTON

What in Hell do you know 'bout runnin' a steamboat--

Miriam and Penny move in on Milton.

PENNY

We're learning, Mr. Renwick!

MILTON

You two floozies got one minute to get outa here--

MIRIAM

(wags finger at Milton)

How'd you like one of your former customers to come back and burn this place down to the ground?

Spurgeon watches Milton seethe.

Josephine and Angie crawl out of the wagon...in smiles.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Angie, Josephine, Penny, and Miriam stand between the grounded steamboat and piles upon piles of boards...to say nothing of buckets of paint and buckets of glue.

ANGIE

Hey, thanks, Miriam. You shore told that Milton Renwick off.

MIRIAM

That illegitimate son-of-a...he had it comin'.

Penny grabs a tape measure to determine the width and length of the hole in the hull.

JOSEPHINE

(to Miriam)

Who's that former customer you said threatened to come back and burn Renwick's down?

MIRIAM

One of my first Johns, Josephine.

JOSEPHINE

What happened to him?

MIRIAM

His name was Chester...he wanted to build a chicken coop in the back of his house on the edge of town.

Now Penny returns to the group to AD LIB her findings to Josephine...who grabs a board from a pile.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Milton laughed Chester outa the lumber yard.

Josephine and Miriam place the board on a sawhorse. Penny comes over and measures the length to cut...and Angie marks the line with a pencil.

PENNY

Angie...it'd be an honor and a pleasure if you'd do the honors.

ANGIE

Well...in that case...

Angie lifts a saw off the ground...

MIRIAM

All Chester wanted to do was settle down...grow his own crops...

...and cuts the board to the desired length.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Anyway, Chester got so mad he moved up the river to Dubuque.

ANGIE

What's he doin' now?

Josephine takes the newly-cut board to the hull.

MIRIAM

He couldn't get farmin' outa his mind...so now he works in a livery stable downtown.

Next, Josephine slaps glue to the back of the board before she applies the board to the hull.

Success!

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

The four women cut additional boards into the shape of paddlewheel slats.

Angie and Co. paint the new slats the same color as the paddlewheel's existing boards.

Josephine and Miriam secure the new paddlewheel boards in place; Angie and Penny use screws (or nails) to fasten the new boards to the paddlewheel.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A.W. and Woodrow sneak a peek at the reconstruction work...and cringe.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - NIGHT

Penny, Miriam, Josephine, and Angie eat dinner at a table in the middle of the saloon.

The foursome notice the paint spots on their dresses.

ANGIE

We got a lot done.

Angie receives skeptical looks from Miriam and Josephine.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

I know...we gotta long way to go.

PENNY

(through bites)

And we'll get there.

MIRIAM

As long as we ain't doin' it in these dresses no more.

Miriam's cohorts nod in agreement.

JOSEPHINE

Why don't we all go to Hess and Stern bright and early tomorrow and pick up something more appropriate to the task?

A smile fills Miriam's face.

PENNY
Josephine...they sell men's clothes
there, don't they?

JOSEPHINE
Yes, they do...and their clothes
handle paint better.

The two hookers and two ex-slaves click their cups.

EXT. HESS AND STERN - DAY

Penny, Angie, Josephine, and Miriam stroll into a small
building not far from the Main Street boat dock.

INT. HESS AND STERN SALESFLOOR - DAY

The women's arrival stuns store co-owner ANGUS HESS (50s).

ANGUS
You four ladies sure you've got the
right gender?

JOSEPHINE
We certainly are.

ANGUS
But this is a men's clothier.

ANGIE
We know that.

The store's other co-owner, BYRON STERN (50s), hurries over
to the group.

BYRON
Angus...what're they doing here?

PENNY
We're working on the steamboat
grounded at the boat dock not too
far from here.

Byron and Angus eye each other in loud laughter.

Miriam strides over to the co-owners.

MIRIAM
We are! And we need clothes that'll
stand up better than dresses.

Byron's and Angus' laughter stops.

ANOTHER CUSTOMER (a man in his 30s) strolls in. His mouth flies open when he sees the four women.

ANGUS
Byron...why don'tcha see about that man over there?

BYRON
All right.

Byron walks over to the new buyer.

ANGIE
(to Angus)
I bought the "Aura Lea" at an auction last week.

JOSEPHINE
And we're helping her put it back together...so that it'll sail the Mississippi once again.

Angus sizes up the four women.

ANGUS
Strange.

PENNY
What's strange is...nobody's touched that boat for three years.

ANGIE
The three years since a schooner ran into the steamboat and turned it into an eyesore.

Josephine nods.

MIRIAM
(pointing to Angus)
So...you feel comfortable havin' an eyesore at the Main Street dock?

Dead silence...for a few seconds.

ANGUS
Follow me, ladies.

Angus leads Angie, Josephine, Miriam, and Penny to another spot on the salesfloor.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Miriam, Josephine, Angie, and Penny (all now in hats and overalls or jeans) repaint the steamboat's newly-repaired, newly-fortified hull.

The four women (all now on ladders) paint over the "AURA LEA" name...then climb off their ladders to inspect it all.

It's all good.

Result: Jubilation from the foursome.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Woodrow and A.W. continue to spy on the quartet...but now, Hubert and Julius saunter to a spot behind the two men.

Julius and Hubert observe the women's repair work...then eyeball one another.

JULIUS

Hubert...them two White ladies look awful familiar.

HUBERT

Ladies?

JULIUS

That's right. Take a look.

HUBERT

(grabbing Julius)

Look here, Julius: Would ladies be fixin' up a steamboat?

A.W. and Woodrow turn around to see Hubert and Julius.

WOODROW

Yes!

A.W.

They would!

Julius and his buddy look floored.

EXT. BURTIS HOUSE - NIGHT

This is a four-story hotel in Davenport's downtown.

INT. BURTIS HOUSE PARLOR - NIGHT

Hubert follows a distraught Julius into a space that tries its best to be a saloon.

SEVERAL MEN in ritzy chairs nurse drinks while CLETUS RAY TONER (50, mild-mannered) coaxes treacly music out of a square piano.

Julius and Hubert head straight for the bar...where they plopp themselves onto a stool each.

THE BARTENDER (a man in his 20s) looks up from the glass he cleans and notices the two pals across the bar from him.

BARTENDER

What can I get you two gents?

JULIUS

Please...please...get us our two lovers back.

Hubert elbows his cohort...and almost falls off the stool.

BARTENDER

No, no, no! To drink!

HUBERT

Give us the strongest whiskey you've got.

The bartender's mouth flies open...for a few seconds.

BARTENDER

Two strong ones coming up.

Julius and Hubert watch the bartender pour the parlor's strongest whiskey into two shot glasses.

Hubert goes for one of the shot glasses...but Julius stares him out of it.

JULIUS

Wait a minute, Hubert!

Julius reaches behind him for his wallet...but grimaces when he finds it's gone.

HUBERT

Here, Julius. I got us.

Hubert puts some coins on the counter.

While the bartender snaps the coins up and sticks them into a cash drawer, Cletus Ray's song ends...and gets him applause.

Cletus Ray looks up from the keys to his audience.

CLETUS RAY
Thanks, folks!

Some folks tip their hats to the pianist.

CLETUS RAY (CONT'D)
Whatcha wanna hear next?

TWO CUSTOMERS rise from their chairs in the back of the Burtis House parlor.

CUSTOMER #1
Something fast!

CUSTOMER #2
Yeah! So we can dance!

CLETUS RAY
You got it!

Cletus Ray pounds out a lively number...Hubert and Julius down their drinks.

JULIUS
That short girl stole my wallet.

HUBERT
You mean Miriam?

The two customers in back dance.

The bartender refills Julius' and Hubert's glasses...

JULIUS
Nope. Miriam's the tall one.

...and the two men drink that whiskey down.

HUBERT
Well...who's the short one?

Julius looks lost.

The parlor door opens...Cletus Ray's daughter TAMARA LEA "TAMMY" TONER (18, down-to-Earth, sweet) peeks in longing.

She watches Cletus Ray play...then the two dancing men.

TAMMY
That's it.

Hubert watches Tammy close the door and walk away.

HUBERT
(to Julius)
Wasn't her, was it?

Julius' lost look continues.

JULIUS
I don't know...but all I know is:
Them two White ladies we saw was
workin' on that steamboat.

The bartender eyeballs Hubert and Julius.

JULIUS (CONT'D)
And they look awful familiar.

BARTENDER
How 'bout another?

JULIUS
And another.

HUBERT
And another.

The twosome push their shot glasses toward the bartender.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Angie, Josephine, Miriam, and Penny (all back on ladders)
paint the name "FULLER'S FOLLY" onto the steamboat.

The foursome step off the ladders, then move back to inspect
their handiwork.

PENNY
We did it!

ANGIE
Yes, we did!

Cheers...hugs...jubilation!

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A.W. and Woodrow observe the celebration...only to cringe.

A.W.
 Woody, you're right...we gotta get
 us that boat.

Woodrow shakes his head up and down.

A.W. (CONT'D)
 Just gotta figure out how.

WOODROW
 Let's put our heads together.

Woodrow pulls A.W. close...

WOODROW (CONT'D)
 Let's think of some ways we can
 torture them two crows outa that
 steamboat of theirs.

...and the two men stroll in the opposite direction.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Josephine and Angie cram for their pilot's exams.

JOSEPHINE
 Angie...how do you feel about
 letting me be the pilot and you
 being the captain?

Angie looks up from her book(s)...

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
 After all, you're the one who
 bought the boat itself...and you're
 better at hospitality than I am.

...and stares in space a few seconds.

ANGIE
 I see your point.

Josephine looks up and flashes a smile.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
 You'd make a much better pilot than
 I would.

JOSEPHINE
 And you're smarter than me, Ang.

ANGIE
 Well...I try my best.

JOSEPHINE

That's why our ship's better off
with you being the captain than me
being the captain.

ANGIE

Well...thank you.

JOSEPHINE

And we...all four of us...just got
through painting your last name on
this boat.

The two former food servers point at each other in
goodnatured laughter.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

Miriam sits at a table. With several books in front of her,
she studies as if she's got no tomorrow.

Penny jogs over to a seat across from Miriam.

PENNY

Well, I'll be a...aren't you the
scholarly one.

MIRIAM

I ain't no scholar, Penny...but I
gotta try if I'm gonna be a
licensed engineer.

Miriam's best buddy leafs through the pages of one book.

PENNY

This is one of Josephine's books.
From the plantation.

MIRIAM

No wonder she couldn't wait to get
outa there...before the owners
asked for them books back.

Penny peeks at Miriam's written notes.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Miriam, Penny, Josephine, and Angie stand at the bow.

The foursome wear heavier clothing due to the nip in the air.

PENNY

It's Halloween...and tonight's gonna be a good night for a cruise.

ANGIE

I wish we could.

MIRIAM

Well, then, Angie, why don't we?

ANGIE

We ain't heard from the Steamboat Inspection Service yet.

JOSEPHINE

Angie's got yet to be an official captain...and I'm not officially a pilot yet. And Miriam...you still need your engineer's license.

PENNY

Can't forget about the Steamboat Act of 1852.

MIRIAM

Anything can happen between now and then. Them clowns could burn this boat down or somethin'.

Josephine pulls a string or two to let the stages down.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

They could climb on them planks Josephine's lowerin' and take axes and have themselves a--

JOSEPHINE

At least the stages work, Miriam.

Angie gathers her colleagues into a huddle.

ANGIE

Here, everybody. Let's link arms.

The four women link arms.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Miriam...Penny...Josie...I'm itchin' to get this boat out on the Mississippi, too. Just like you.

MIRIAM

You can say that again.

ANGIE

But we gotta do this right.

ZENAS FOWLEY (39, understanding, Black) and wife JUDITH DENSON FOWLEY (39, a real spitfire, Black) stroll the stages and reach "Fuller's Folly."

JOSEPHINE

We'll need some more personnel, for example. We'll need a fireman--

Judith taps on Josephine's shoulder...Zenas bearhugs Angie.

And the huddle breaks up.

ANGIE

Zenas!

ZENAS

Angie Fuller...so nice to see you again.

JOSEPHINE

Judith, you ol' devil, you!

JUDITH

Devil, you say?

Angie and Zenas hug...Josephine and Judith embrace...Penny and Miriam follow suit.

ANGIE

It's nice to see you again, too. We ain't seen you since we were all on the plantation in Louisiana.

All three pairs break their embraces.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

What brings you and Judith here?

ZENAS

Me and Judith heard you got yourself a steamboat.

JUDITH

Like you always wanted.

ANGIE

Yep...bought it on the fourteenth of this month at an auction. Right here on this dock.

JOSEPHINE
 Angie and I are putting a crew
 together.

Miriam and Penny raise their hands.

Now the five women encircle the lone man in the group.

JUDITH
 (grabs Zenas' hand)
 And me and Zenas want in on it.

ZENAS
 Angie...Josephine...me and Judith
 wanna be part of your crew.

Angie's nod is oh-so-slow.

JUDITH
 Zenas tole me you always wanted to
 see the world and keep doin' new
 thangs...and run a boat full of
 passengers and stuff.

ANGIE
 Judith, you're tellin' the truth.

ZENAS
 You got a mate yet, Ang?

ANGIE
 Well...not yet.

Penny extends a hand to Judith and Zenas.

PENNY
 Greetings, Judith and Zenas. I'm
 Penny...and I'm gonna run the
 casino.

Zenas and his wife shake hands with Penny while Miriam moves
 closer to the threesome.

MIRIAM
 And I'm Miriam. I'm gonna be in the
 boiler room...once we set sail.
 Gonna be an engineer.

Judith and her husband join Miriam in their own handshake.

ZENAS
 Penny...Miriam...nice to meet you.

JUDITH
 The...boiler...room?
 (points to Miriam)
 You got guts!

Miriam's all smiles.

ZENAS
 You're gonna have to have somebody
 to carry freight to and fro.

JUDITH
 And y'all gonna need security.

Some heads nod.

JOSEPHINE
 Angie...Zenas and Judith make a
 whole lot of sense.

ZENAS
 And you'll never make no pay if you
 just wait on passengers.

Angie eyeballs Judith...then Zenas...then Josephine.

ANGIE
 Mr. and Mrs. Fowley...welcome to
 the "Fuller's Folly" crew!

Zenas, Judith, and Angie shake hands as Penny, Miriam, and Josephine cheer.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
 Just curious...which one of you's
 gonna handle security?

Judith raises her hand...a surprise to Miriam.

ZENAS
 Don't worry. Put a gun in her hands
 and she's a deadeye.

JUDITH
 Yeah...I can handle a musket, a
 rifle, a pistol, and...

The six crewmembers watch Tammy trudge the stages on her way to the steamboat. Angie meets her at the bow.

ANGIE
 Hey there! What can we do for you?

TAMMY
 Hope you don't mind my asking,
 but...is there a piano aboard?

Angie's eyes light up.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

Angie, Josephine, Judith, Miriam, Penny, and Zenas crowd
 around Tammy, who sits at that pre-1860 upright piano.

TAMMY
 I've never seen a piano like this
 before in my life.

JOSEPHINE
 It's an upright. They're more
 popular in Europe than over here.

Tammy raises the fallboard, exposes the keys, and...gazes at
 them in awe.

MIRIAM
 Kid...let's hear whatcha got.

TAMMY
 My pleasure.

Tammy plays a familiar-yet-powerful classical piece.

Miriam grits her teeth...

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

...but comes away all smiles when Tammy's music changes to
 total razzmatazz.

Tammy bows as her audience applauds.

ANGIE
 (extends hand to Tammy)
 How'd you like to be our ship's
 pianist, uh--

TAMMY
 Tamara Lea Toner...but everybody
 calls me Tammy.

It's handshakes for Angie and Tammy.

TAMMY (CONT'D)
 My pa plays at the Burtis House.

JUDITH
He play like that?

A smiling Tammy shakes her head "no."

TAMMY
He doesn't like classical music.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

It's the first Saturday in February 1866...when a bundled-up crowd of PEOPLE gathers around the former "Aura Lea."

On deck: Angie, Josephine, Miriam, Penny, Judith, and Zenas...to say nothing of Tammy, who wears an Abraham Lincoln-style suit complete with a stovepipe hat.

The seven greet GILBERT and BESSIE YELVINGTON (both 30s).

GILBERT
Bessie and I remember what happened with the "Sultana" last April.

BESSIE
Over eleven hundred people died on that ship...and we'd like to be ready just in case that happens on this ship.

Josephine and Angie nod.

In the crowd around the boat: Spurgeon (suitcase in tow) and a livid Milton...as well as JOHN L. DAVIES (53) and BENJAMIN GREB (50, clipboard in hands).

JOHN
I never thought I'd see this...after three years and a hundred and twelve days, that ship in front of us will sail again.

A.W. and Woodrow stand near the steamboat's stages. The twosome open a canvas bag...and let a black cat aboard before scurrying off.

BENJAMIN
As long as they played their cards right, Mayor Davies.

John nods at Benjamin...who receives Milton's icy stare.

MILTON
If you ask me, them girls're
wastin' their time!

SPURGEON
Shove it, Milton Renwick!
(picks up suitcase)
I'm gonna join that crew up there!

Benjamin, John, and Milton watch Spurgeon board the boat.

MILTON
SPURGEON LOOMIS, YOU'RE MAKIN' A
DAMN MISTAKE!

Spurgeon shakes his free fist at Milton.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Cletus Ray (with his suitcase) comes aboard "Fuller's Folly" while Zenas, Tammy, Penny, Miriam, Judith, Josephine, and Angie brief crew newcomers Spurgeon, Gilbert, and Bessie.

ANGIE
Gilbert, thanks for offerin' to be
the ship's doctor.

JOSEPHINE
And Bessie, thank you for offering
your services as a nurse.

GILBERT
(hugging Bessie)
The least my wife and I can do.

MIRIAM
Spurgeon...welcome aboard. But what
brings you here?

SPURGEON
I wanna be the ship's fireman.

Crewmembers shake hands while down below, an antsy Emil huddles with wife ELIZABETH KREUTZER (40s, sassy).

EMIL
Elizabeth, didn't I tell you? This
is utter, complete folly!

ELIZABETH
You're wrong, Emil!

Elizabeth hefts her suitcase off the ground...

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 Living with your know-it-all
 attitude is utter, complete folly!

...and storms her way aboard.

SAME SCENE - STILL LATER

In front of a smaller crowd, Angie, Bessie, Elizabeth, Gilbert, Josephine, Judith, Miriam, Penny, Spurgeon, Tammy, and Zenas eyeball the spectators.

ANGIE
 Ladies and gentlemen...y'all ready
 to make it official?

EMIL
 Wrap it up! It's too cold outside!

Penny produces a whiskey bottle. She hands it to Angie, who walks the planks to reach the bow.

ANGIE
 (raises bottle)
 I christen thee--

A frantic Benjamin waves his clipboard as he sprints toward the bow.

BENJAMIN
 HOLD IT! WAIT! HOLD UP!

And the crowd groans.

Angie sets the bottle aside.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
 (to the spectators)
 My name is Benjamin Greb...I'm an
 inspector with the Steamboat
 Inspection Service of the United
 States Treasury Department.

Emil storms toward John.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
 As part of my job, I'm here to
 inspect "Fuller's Folly," the
 former "Aura Lea," to insure the
 steamboat's seaworthiness.

The audience grumbling grows.

EMIL
 (wags finger at John)
 As mayor of this city, John, you
 shouldn't have allowed this--

JOHN
 Let him do his job!

Emil stares in anger at John.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Josephine and Angie follow Benjamin as he checks out the repair work on the hull.

The man from the SIS inspects the paddlewheel.

He steps over the questionable wooden plank...and finds it no longer questionable.

Benjamin scribbles notes...Josephine does, too.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER ROOM - DAY

Benjamin goes over the three boilers.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" PASSENGER CABIN - DAY

The inspector walks into this room...and startles Cletus Ray, who wrestles a clean shirt on.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

Benjamin chuckles when he notices the roulette wheel...and a now-fully-stocked bar.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" GALLEY - DAY

He finds stocked shelves...and breathes relief.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

The remaining ten crewmembers try like the Dickens to calm the crowd down...to no avail.

John strikes out in his own effort, too.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Angie, Benjamin, and Josephine crowd inside the glass tower.

The lone man checks the rudder for play. When he looks satisfied, the two women hug each other.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Elizabeth reaches for the prone bottle...only to earn dirty looks from her new colleagues.

END MONTAGE

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

On deck, Benjamin stands alongside Angie and her crew...while the crowd remains agitated.

BENJAMIN

Ladies and gentlemen...before this steamboat can launch...I have three important announcements.

EMIL

WRAP IT UP! WE'RE NOT GETTING ANY WARMER OUT HERE!

Benjamin gestures the crowd into silence...then:

BENJAMIN

Miss Angela Fuller...please step forward.

Angie strolls over to Benjamin's side.

He lifts an envelope from his suit pocket and hands the document to her.

She opens the envelope...and pulls out a license.

ANGIE

Mr. Greb...is this real?

BENJAMIN

It's real...you're now officially a licensed steamboat pilot.

Applause breaks out when Angie holds up her pilot's license for all to see.

ANGIE

(shakes Benjamin's hand)
Thank you...thank you so much.

BENJAMIN
Miss Josephine Hunt...please step
forward.

Josephine strides her way to Benjamin, who pulls out a second envelope and hands it to her.

After Josephine opens the envelope, she removes a license from it...and holds the license up for everybody to see.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Congratulations...you've passed the
test. You're now a licensed
steamboat pilot.

JOSEPHINE
Thank you...this means so much.

Benjamin and Josephine shake hands before a cheering crowd.

BENJAMIN
And Miss Miriam Searage...please
step forward.

Miriam bounds her way to a spot next to Benjamin. He yanks out a third envelope, then hands it to her.

She tears the envelope open, grabs a license from it, and waves the document in the air in jubilation.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Congratulations...after passing the
test, you're now licensed to be a
steamboat engineer.

Miriam's handshake with Benjamin results in more applause...and in Benjamin wincing from Miriam's big grip.

John wags a finger at Emil.

JOHN
History in the making.

EMIL
Okay, Mayor Davies...but why did it
have to be them?

JOHN
Nobody else wanted to.

Emil shrugs on his way to the jubilant throng.

EXT. BOAT DOCK, MUSCATINE, IA - NIGHT

"Fuller's Folly" sails along in its return to the water.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - NIGHT

Angie watches Josephine control the boat.

The captain turns her attention to the same view as the pilot: All that land alongside the Mississippi River.

ANGIE

This is it, Josie.

Josephine shakes her head "yes."

ANGIE (CONT'D)

This is better than forty acres and
a mule...much better.

That magnificent view brings smiles to the twosome's faces.

JOSEPHINE

Angie...tell me what else you see.

ANGIE

Are you thinkin' what I'm thinkin'?

JOSEPHINE

I'd better be.

ANGIE

Freedom!

Josephine's next nod is off-the-charts enthusiastic.

JOSEPHINE

Thank you for doing all this.

ANGIE

Thank you.

Angie reaches out to hug Josephine...

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Actually...it took every last one
of us crewmembers.

...but Josephine frees a hand to press the flesh with Angie.

EXT. BOAT DOCK, KEOKUK, IA - DAY

A FAMILY OF FOUR stands outside with luggage in tow as the "Folly" lands.

The steamer's stages come down...the family saunters up to the boat...Angie (now in a captain's hat) comes out to greet the foursome...but the quartet back off the planks.

ANGIE

You don't know what you're missin'!

The clan's PARENTS give Angie angry gestures.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

Tammy (back in her suit and stovepipe hat) pounds out a lively number on the ol' upright, whose hammers now stand exposed and show off the piano's "birdcage" action.

At the bar, bartender Elizabeth pours Cletus Ray a drink.

ELIZABETH

Well, Mr. Toner, how's it feel to be the very first paying passenger on this steamboat since its refurbishment?

CLETUS RAY

I wish it felt good.
(takes a sip)
I came on here hoping I could find my daughter.

Elizabeth feigns a blank look.

CLETUS RAY (CONT'D)

She took off last Halloween.

Cletus Ray takes another sip.

ELIZABETH

Four months ago.

CLETUS RAY

I mean...it ain't enough that Tammy's ma...my wife Clementine...died of cholera.

ELIZABETH

Oh, dear...

CLETUS RAY

It was three years ago...she ate
some green apples.

(finishes his drink)

And she washed it down with whiskey
and chased it down with milk.

ELIZABETH

Where'd the milk come from?

Cletus Ray shrugs.

Penny, Gilbert, and Bessie sit at a table near the roulette
wheel.

PENNY

(shuffling cards)

Dr. Yelvington...

GILBERT

It's all right, Penny...feel free
to call me Gilbert.

A stunned Penny fumbles her playing cards...

BESSIE

And feel free to call me Bessie.

...then recovers them so she can resume shuffling.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Considering there are now two
Elizabeths on our crew.

PENNY

Anyway...I was wondering if you
both played cards.

GILBERT

(shakes his head "no")

Sorry.

BESSIE

Gilbert and I play cards the same
way Stephen A. Douglas debated
Abraham Lincoln.

Penny's eyes light up.

Tammy brings her number to an end...and tips her hat to the
applauding audience.

A stunned Cletus Ray breaks off his applause.

CLETUS RAY

Tammy?

Tammy jumps off the piano stool.

TAMMY

Pa?

EXT. BOAT DOCK, QUINCY, IL - DAY

Zenas and SIX ROUSTABOUTS (men in their 20s-30s; four White, two Black) wrestle barrels of beer onto "Fuller's Folly."

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

The rousters breathe relief when they bring that final barrel onto the steamboat.

ZENAS

Well, that's it...our very first load. Congratulations!

The six roustabouts stand there in shock.

ZENAS (CONT'D)

It's okay! You done earned it!

One...two...all seven men cheer.

ZENAS (CONT'D)

Let's go eat.

As the seven men saunter out of the cold, rousters HEINRICH (30s, White; native of Germany), MAJOR (20s, Black), and PADRAIG (20s, White; from Ireland) eyeball each other.

HEINRICH

Iss this our mate?

MAJOR

I'm goin' along with it. How 'bout you, Padraig?

PADRAIG

Huh?

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" EMPLOYEE AREA - DAY

Zenas and his six roustabouts sit down to lunch...right down to plates, cups, and silverware.

Everybody chows down when Padraig pushes his plate aside...and wipes tears from his eyes.

MAJOR
 (to Padraig)
 Food okay?

Padraig shakes his head "yes."

HEINRICH
 Iss the top of the line.

PADRAIG
 That's it, Heinrich...that's it...

Padraig continues to wipe his wet eyes.

PADRAIG (CONT'D)
 I bean on a lotta boats
 roustin'...and this is the first
 boat I bean on where they din't
 treat us rousters like cattle.

MAJOR
 Or slaves.

Zenas eyes Padraig, Major, and Heinrich.

ZENAS
 Major, you're truthin'.

Several heads nod.

ZENAS (CONT'D)
 You and I used to be slaves.

HEINRICH
 (taking a bite)
 Understood.

ZENAS
 And on top of that...the very
 captain of this boat and the pilot
 both used to be slaves, too.

PADRAIG
 Damn!

ZENAS
 Everybody deserves dignity...no
 matter what they look like.

Several rousters AD LIB their agreement with Zenas.

MAJOR
That's the truth, Zenas...and I
hope we don't have to taste slavery
ever again.

ZENAS
Tell it!

The six roustabouts and Zenas click their cups...and cheer
themselves hoarse.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - NIGHT

Cletus Ray and Tammy sit across from each other at a table in
the middle of the saloon.

CLETUS RAY
Tammy...why'd you do it? Why'd you
run off?

TAMMY
I...I just wanted to show that I
can play a piano, too.

Cletus Ray's nod is slow.

TAMMY (CONT'D)
When I was little, I wanted you to
teach me...but you wouldn't.

Angie walks into the saloon...

TAMMY (CONT'D)
So I stayed after school and
diddled around on the piano there.

...and takes a seat at Tammy's and Cletus Ray's table.

CLETUS RAY
That's why you kept coming home
late, huh?

TAMMY
That's the truth.

Angie nods.

TAMMY (CONT'D)
And then you'd tell Ma all those
exciting stories about your playing
at the Burtis House.

CLETUS RAY

You were listening all that time?

TAMMY

Yeah! And I knew, right then and there, that I wanted to play piano in a saloon...just like you.

ANGIE

Well, Mr. Toner...you really cain't blame her for takin' after you.

TAMMY

It's just like Ma said: "Nobody minds when a son takes after his father...but everybody screams when a daughter takes after her father."

Cletus Ray blows an imaginary bubble.

ANGIE

Not me, Tammy. You ain't heard no screamin' from me.

The Two Toners hold hands.

TAMMY

I just wanted a place that'd let people hear me play...and Angie was nice enough to let me play here.

Cletus Ray turns to Angie...Elizabeth comes to the table.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

Angie...thanks a bunch.

ANGIE

You're very welcome.

TAMMY

Pa...I'm sorry I ran off.

CLETUS RAY

And I'm sorry I didn't listen to you in the first place.

Smiles form all over the table.

CLETUS RAY (CONT'D)

Elizabeth, if it's all right with the captain...why don't you let me be the bartender here and you can wait tables and cook and stuff?

ELIZABETH

You wanna join the crew, Cletus?

TAMMY

Pa and I will be together that way.

All eyes turn to Angie.

CLETUS RAY

And besides...my daughter plays the piano a lot better than I do.

ANGIE

Cletus Ray Toner...welcome to the "Fuller's Folly" crew!

Elizabeth and Tammy applaud...then the Toners hug each other.

Tammy goes back to the piano while her dad steps behind the bar. Angie follows him.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Did I tell you 'bout the first time I tried to run away from the plantation back in Louisiana?

Cletus Ray's smile widens.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER LEVEE, ST. LOUIS, MO - DAY

Angie's steamboat stops alongside a few other ships at this busy levee.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Zenas and his roustabouts, now twelve strong (SIX NEWCOMERS work alongside Padraig, Major, and Heinrich), tote barrels onto the ship when Julius and Hubert, in their own rouster clothes, sneak aboard...and get right to work.

Major, Heinrich, and Padraig notice Hubert and Julius.

MAJOR

You must be two of the new guys.

JULIUS

We are?

Heinrich moves a barrel into place, then places his arms around Julius and Hubert.

HEINRICH

Zee that big man over there?

HUBERT

Who?

Padraig points toward Zenas, who works with a few other men.

PADRAIG

The man called Zenas.

HUBERT

Uh...we gotta take a leak.

Hubert breaks away from Heinrich, drags Julius away from Heinrich's grip, and...the two sneaks run toward the first door they see.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER ROOM - DAY

Miriam and an impressed Spurgeon check the three small valves at the back of a boiler.

MIRIAM

See, Spurgeon, you always wanna open the bottom cock first.

SPURGEON

Okay...

MIRIAM

If you see steam comin' out when you open the bottom cock, then the boiler's runnin' dangerously low on water. Try it.

Spurgeon opens the bottom valve...scalding hot water emerges.

Miriam watches Spurgeon hold his nose with one hand and shut the valve off with his other hand.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Ain't nothin' left to say...'cept it's Mississippi River water.

SPURGEON

You can say that again, Miriam.

MIRIAM

Now...open the middle cock.

Spurgeon does so...when the boiler-room door crashes open.

Hubert crashes in...Julius tumbles in right behind him.

JULIUS
 (to Miriam)
 YOU STOLE MY MONEY!

HUBERT
 I thought this was the privy room.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

A small line of TRAVELERS files onto the steamer; at the bow, Angie greets each incoming passenger.

At the front: ISAAC and REBEKAH TORNELL (both 40s)...and their four children: JACOB (15), PHOEBE (14), ESAU (12), and MELISSA (11).

ANGIE
 Welcome to "Fuller's Folly." Glad y'all came aboard.

Isaac turns to Rebekah.

ISAAC
 How come there's a lady captain?

REBEKAH
 Same reason Betsy Ross sewed the Stars and Stripes, Isaac.

The sextet file toward the boiler deck. Along the way:

MELISSA
 Are we gonna sink?

JACOB
 Bite your tongue, Missy!

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

It's lunch time!

The place is half full of PASSENGERS...people who chow down to Tammy's piano playing.

Penny and Cletus Ray team up as food servers...Elizabeth sneaks a peek from outside the galley.

Toward the front, Angie and Judith look impressed as they eat Elizabeth's offerings.

JUDITH
 We lucky we ain't in the Deep South yet.

ANGIE
We'll cross the bridge when we get
there, Judith.

At a middle table, LORELEI PARK (39, efficient, Asian) fights through a steak.

An adjacent table finds Bessie and Gilbert dining.

Lorelei sets her utensils aside and rises from her seat. Gilbert and Bessie jump out of their own chairs.

GILBERT
(to Lorelei)
Ma'am...is everything all right?

LORELEI
I must see the cook.

BESSIE
Truth be told...she's busy.

Judith and Angie watch the conversation...

LORELEI
Then let me see the captain.

GILBERT
She's over there.

...and rush over to Lorelei's, Gilbert's, and Bessie's side.

Angie offers her hand to Lorelei.

ANGIE
Is everything all right?

LORELEI
I'd like to offer my services as a
cook here on your steamboat.

The two women grasp hands.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" GALLEY - DAY

Lorelei and Angie stroll into the galley.

ANGIE
Elizabeth...we gotcha some help.

Elizabeth looks up from the pots and pans on the stove.

ELIZABETH
Are you pulling my toes?

ANGIE
Elizabeth Kreutzer...wantcha to
meet Lorelei Park.

Lorelei watches Elizabeth's mouth fly open.

LORELEI
Don't worry. I've spent the last
ten years working in restaurants
from the East to the Midwest.

The two cooks shake hands...

LORELEI (CONT'D)
I boarded this ship because I tired
of my fiance telling me I love
cooking more than he.

ELIZABETH
And I boarded this ship because I
got tired of my husband's big
mouth.

...only to turn it into a hug.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER ROOM - DAY

Spurgeon casts one eye on the valves and the other on Julius,
who helps Hubert stand erect.

The two intruders lunge after Miriam...

JULIUS
Fork it over!

...who grabs a shovel.

She thrusts the shovel at Hubert and Julius. Both back up.

MIRIAM
I ain't got your damn money!

Spurgeon bearhugs Hubert.

Julius slaps at the shovel...despite Miriam's iron grip.

JULIUS
Where's your partner?

MIRIAM
Look, Julius, I ain't tellin'!

JULIUS
She's on this ship someplace!

Hubert fights to elbow himself out of Spurgeon's grip.

SPURGEON
(to Hubert)
What's you guys' problem?

HUBERT
Are you deaf?

MIRIAM
(still thrusts shovel)
Spurgeon, them two guys stole me
and Penny's money.

Now Hubert spins around...and punches Spurgeon in the face.

Spurgeon lands a fist in Hubert's face.

Miriam clouts Hubert with the shovel. He falls to the floor.

Julius reaches into his shirt pocket...

JULIUS
One of you two's gonna fork it--
...and yanks out...a nail file!

JULIUS (CONT'D)
Damn it! I left my switchblade in
my suit pocket!

Julius takes furious swipes at Miriam, who swings away with the shovel.

Next move for Spurgeon: He grabs Julius.

Hubert returns to his feet...and grabs Spurgeon.

Josephine and Judith sprint into the boiler room.

JOSEPHINE
No wonder we're not moving!

Judith and Josephine pair up to pry Hubert off Spurgeon.

Miriam drops the shovel.

She and Spurgeon pin Julius to the wall.

Josephine and Judith follow suit with Hubert.

Julius lets go of the nail file.

JUDITH

(to Hubert)

You and your buddy got some talkin'
to do!

MIRIAM

(to Julius)

And y'all better tell the truth!

Hubert and Julius strain to break free...to no avail.

JOSEPHINE

(to Hubert)

You two men had better have a good
explanation for breaking in here.

Judith turns to Josephine.

JUDITH

We lucky we in Missouri.

SPURGEON

Huh?

JUDITH

See, Josephine...if this was
Tennessee, we couldn't get away
with doin' this.

Julius grunts.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Even with the Union Army stayin' in
Memphis and protectin' our freedom.

Josephine nods in understanding.

HUBERT

I gotta take a leak!

Judith and Josephine tighten their grip on Hubert.

EXT. BOAT DOCK, CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO - DAY

"Fuller's Folly" sails past the dock.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Angie sits in a plush chair while Josephine steers the boat.

ANGIE
Josie...you okay?

JOSEPHINE
Yeah.
(glancing at Angie)
We've both been through worse.

ANGIE
Yeah...much worse.

JOSEPHINE
At least we were able to put Hubert
and Julius off the boat back there
at Cape Girardeau.

Josephine stretches her arms before she regains her grip on the rudder.

ANGIE
They were pimpin' Miriam and Penny.

JOSEPHINE
And Penny and Miriam were trying to
sail to Nashville so they could
become registered hookers.

Angie eyeballs the land, then returns her gaze to Josephine.

ANGIE
Wow...never heard of that before.

JOSEPHINE
Very interesting, all right. If I
remember right, Nashville's the
first city in America where ladies
of the evening must register.

ANGIE
(rising from seat)
But, anyway...Julius and Hubert
stole Miriam's and Penny's
loot...Miriam and Penny got it back
from them...

JOSEPHINE
And the two men were gonna kill the
two women.

Now Angie stands next to Josephine.

ANGIE

And that's why them two women hid
out in our boat.

JOSEPHINE

Miriam said the money she and Penny
were gonna use in Nashville went to
help repair this steamboat.

Josephine snaps her fingers.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Actually...most of it did. Penny
took the rest of the money so that
the casino on here could have some
house money.

Angie drapes an arm around her fellow former food server.

ANGIE

Hey...I'm glad Penny and Miriam bet
on "Fuller's Folly."

JOSEPHINE

I'm glad they did, too.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Gilbert and Bessie check up on Esau and Phoebe. Rebekah,
Isaac, Melissa, and Jacob look on.

Rebekah holds the black cat from the boat's relaunching.

GILBERT

Now, Esau and Phoebe...you two keep
taking that elixir as directed. And
you'll feel all right.

ESAU

Don't you worry at all, Dr.
Yelvington. We will.

PHOEBE

That's right. We will.

Gilbert hands the bottle of elixir to Isaac.

ISAAC

(accepts bottle)
Thank you.

BESSIE
It's our pleasure, Mr. Tornell.

Rebekah holds out the cat for all to see.

REBEKAH
Gilbert...Bessie...I found
this...this animal roaming around
the middle deck.

MELISSA
(eyeing the Yelvingtons)
Are we gonna sink...or drown?

GILBERT
I hope not, Melissa.

Melissa scowls.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
Chances are very good we won't.

BESSIE
We do know this: This steamship is
in the very best of hands.

That scowl changes to a smile.

Isaac gains an I-told-you-so look from Rebekah.

ISAAC
Doesn't a black cat mean bad luck?

GILBERT
Only if you believe in
superstition.

BESSIE
After all...every cat has to be
some color.

JACOB
(with a nod)
Yeah...just like every person.

All remaining family eyes turn to Jacob.

ISAAC
So, Doc...do you and Bessie believe
in superstition?

The Two Yelvingtons eye each other, then Isaac.

BESSIE
 Did the Confederate soldiers wear
 purple uniforms?

And the office convulses in laughter.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - NIGHT

Cletus Ray stands behind the bar, where he pours drinks and watches Tammy (back in her suit and stovepipe hat) pound out a spirited number on the piano.

An ecstatic Penny supervises the roulette wheel, where gamblers OLIVER and RICHARD (both late 20s) stand at the corresponding table in an effort to win.

PENNY
 All right! Place your bets!

Richard and Oliver do just that.

PENNY (CONT'D)
 Congratulations to you for being
 the first two gamblers on here.

The two gamblers eyeball each other, then give Penny a smartypants look each.

PENNY (CONT'D)
 Since the boat was refurbished and
 renamed, of course.

RICHARD
 Me and Oliver was on here before.

OLIVER
 Yeah...when this was the "Aura
 Lea." Three years ago last fall.

RICHARD
 We was on it, right here at this
 table, when a schooner ran into
 this here boat.

OLIVER
 And Richard and I are still, to
 this day, tryin' to figure out what
 was in that schooner that wrecked
 this boat.

Oliver and Richard win...Penny pays up.

PENNY
 Congratulations again...for not
 only surviving the wreck, but also
 winning tonight.

RICHARD
 Thank you, Penny.

Richard walks away from the roulette setup...

OLIVER
 Hey, Richard! Where you goin'?

...and struts his way to the bar.

RICHARD
 (to Oliver)
 If you win at roulette, you oughta
 walk away!

Oliver waves Richard off before turning to Penny.

PENNY
 Now, Oliver...would you like to
 place another bet?

OLIVER
 You kiddin'? I wanna play
 blackjack!

At the bar, Richard watches Oliver and Penny move over to the
 blackjack table.

CLETUS RAY
 What'll you have?

RICHARD
 Gimme your best whiskey!

CLETUS RAY
 Coming right up!

Cletus Ray pours whiskey into a shot glass...but Richard
 grabs the whiskey bottle and drinks right out of it!

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Captain Angie stands next to Josephine, who pilots the
 steamboat toward the next sizable city down Big Muddy.

JOSEPHINE
 As long as we're ready for
 anything...that's what matters.

Angie saunters over to a trunk in one corner of the glass house. She unlocks the trunk and opens it.

She eyes a pair of revolvers tucked away inside the trunk.

ANGIE

I shore hope we don't need 'em.

JOSEPHINE

At least the guns are there just in case we need to defend ourselves.

Now Angie closes and locks the trunk.

ANGIE

And our boat...and everyone aboard.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER LEVEE, MEMPHIS, TN - DAY

"Fuller's Folly" pulls into a levee bustling with activity. The boat lines up behind three other steamships.

All four vessels shed SOME PASSENGERS.

EXT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" MAIN DECK - DAY

A.W. strolls off this steamer...one a bit longer and wider than "Folly."

He recognizes "Folly..." and steps toward it.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

A concerned Angie strolls toward the bow when A.W. watches A PASSENGER amble down the stages.

Now A.W. climbs the "Folly" stages to approach Angie.

A.W.

Congratulations!

Angie still looks suspicious.

A.W. (CONT'D)

You made it this far!

A.W. steps closer to Angie...who holds him off.

ANGIE

Wait a minute, Mr. Smith.

A.W.

I just wanna talk.

ANGIE
 Fine...but before you do
 that...empty your pockets of
 anything that can burn a boat down.

Angie watches A.W. shrug.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
 I'm unarmed.

A.W.
 Oh, all right.

A.W. empties his pockets of a cigar...and a book of matches.

ANGIE
 Toss 'em in the river.

A flummoxed A.W. tries his best to throw the two items aside.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
 Now we're even.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

Tables and chairs are lined up so that Angie, Bessie, Cletus Ray, Elizabeth, Gilbert, Josephine, Judith, Lorelei, Miriam, Penny, Spurgeon, Tammy, and Zenas sit across from Heinrich, Major, Padraig, and their nine fellow roustabouts.

Padraig, Heinrich, and Major look impressed by the saloon and all its trappings.

ANGIE
 Thank y'all for comin' today.

Several heads nod.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
 I just got through talkin' with
 A.W. Smith.

Penny and Miriam grimace.

Josephine blows an imaginary bubble.

LORELEI
 He runs the Smith Line out of St.
 Louis, Missouri.

JOSEPHINE
 That he does, Lorelei.

ANGIE

(points to Lorelei)

Not only that...last October, when this boat was up for auction in Davenport, Iowa, he came real close to havin' the winnin' bid.

JUDITH

Good thang he didn't win.

Some crewmembers AD LIB their agreement with Judith.

ANGIE

Anyway...A.W. has challenged us to a race to get grain down from here in Memphis to Nyalins.

Several mouths fly open.

GILBERT

Aren't steamboat races dangerous?

ANGIE

Yes, they are, Gilbert.

JOSEPHINE

They were even more dangerous before the wreck of the "Henry Clay" forced the government to put meaningful safety standards on steamboats.

TAMMY

Angie...did you accept the challenge from A.W.?

Dead silence...for a few seconds.

ANGIE

I did.

Miriam and Judith bang their fists on the table.

SPURGEON

Just remember: You're...we're dealin' with a snake.

Josephine and Angie shake their heads "yes."

LORELEI

I rode one of his boats last year. I'll never do that again...the food's totally awful.

LORELEI (CONT'D)

And they wouldn't let me offer my services as a cook.

SPURGEON

Back in Davenport, I saw him and another guy load a black cat aboard before we took off.

Several crewmembers groan.

PENNY

He must've thought putting a black cat on board would doom us.

MIRIAM

He was wrong...damn wrong.

Miriam's remark ignites the crew.

BESSIE

We don't believe in superstition.

HEINRICH

Vee don't?

BESSIE

That's right, Heinrich! We don't!

ZENAS

(standing up)

And we're stronger than any superstition out there! Right?

FULL CREW

RIGHT!

Crewmembers cheer themselves hoarse.

ANGIE

Folks, the whole thing is: If we win, we get to keep the boat.

ELIZABETH

We're gonna win!

Zenas sits back down.

ANGIE

But...if we lose...this boat becomes his.

Some personnel look chagrined.

PADRAIG

What's gonna happen to us if we
don't win?

Another round of silence.

ANGIE

He told me...we're on our own.
Individually and collectively.

MAJOR

No, y'all! We're gonna win!

CLETUS RAY

Major's right! We're gonna win it!

Cheers kick back in.

ELIZABETH

That's right! This is our chance to
make that newspaperman husband of
mine eat crow!

MIRIAM

And them merchants back there that
didn't wanna help us oughta eat
some crow, too!

ANGIE

Let's make it official! Let's enter
that race...and win it!

Applause...more cheers...jubilation!

PADRAIG

Name me one other steamboat where
us rousters and the mate and the
rest o' the crew know each other's
first names!

The jubilation grows stronger.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Zenas and the boat's roustabouts load sacks and sacks of
grain onto the main deck.

EXT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" MAIN DECK - DAY

THE ROUSTABOUTS on "Jinks" bring sacks and sacks of grain
aboard...but without the zeal of the "Folly" group.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Josephine holds the rudder with her left hand and uses her right hand to hold Angie's left hand.

Angie takes deep breaths...her best buddy notices.

ANGIE

I'm just waitin' 'til they let us
cross the startin' line.

Josephine nods in understanding.

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

A.W. reclines in a plush chair in this ritzy-looking glass house, where a totally-confident Woodrow holds the rudder.

WOODROW

Putty in our hands.

A.W.

As long as we run our race.

Woodrow turns around and cringes at A.W.

WOODROW

Looka here, Alphonse! Them coons
don't know nothin' 'bout boatin'.

A.W.

How'd they get here, Woody?

EXT. BEALE STREET LANDING - DAY

A SIZABLE CROWD (one made up just about equally of Blacks and Whites) assembles as "Fuller's Folly" and the "Captain Jinks" line up.

Nervous anticipation fills the air...especially with the presence of SOME UNION ARMY SOLDIERS (all Black).

ONE SPECTATOR who eyes "Folly" pulls out a gun...only to back down once ANOTHER OBSERVER shoots a dirty look.

AN OFFICIAL checks his watch...and finds it's 2:59 PM.

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Woodrow watches the seconds tick away on his timepiece.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

A patient Josephine watches for the official's start.

She and Angie shake hands.

EXT. BEALE STREET LANDING - DAY

It's 3:00 PM...the official waves a giant flag.

With a full head of steam each, the two steamboats pull out!

Cheers ring out as each vessel fires its cannon.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Angie lets out a sigh of relief...a big smile fills Josephine's face.

ANGIE

At least nobody's shot at us.

JOSEPHINE

Yet.

Josephine's BFF shakes her head up and down.

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Thus far, the two steamers sail neck and neck.

Woodrow doesn't look pleased.

WOODROW

A.W., you wanna take the wheel?

A.W.

I can't.

WOODROW

WHAT?

A.W.

I've got somethin' else I wanna do.

The "Jinks" pilot stares daggers at his boss...and comes close to hitting the "Folly."

A.W. (CONT'D)

Straighten it up!

Woodrow refocuses on the water in front of him. He straightens the "Jinks" back up.

WOODROW
Alphonse William Smith...this
better be damn good!

A.W.
What good's us winnin' "Fuller's
Folly" if you're gonna wreck it?

A sly grin invades Woodrow's face.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER ROOM - DAY

Miriam and Spurgeon shovel coal into a boiler.

SPURGEON
Hey, Miriam...how'd you get all
that steamboat know-how?

MIRIAM
Well...I've been listenin' to
Josephine...and readin' her books
about boatin'.

Spurgeon (shovel still in hand) examines the valves at the
rear of the boiler.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
And I once did a John who worked on
a steamboat. He was a roustabout.

Miriam (she carries her shovel) moves to the back of the
boiler and watches Spurgeon open the bottom valve.

Boiling hot water emerges...Spurgeon holds his nose as he
sets his shovel down to close the valve with his free hand.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
He died on the "Sultana" last year.

Miriam opens the middle valve...and lets boiling water out.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
A boiler blew up...killed somethin'
like eleven hundred people...nope,
twelve hundred people.

Spurgeon nods in disbelief.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
And that's why we gotta be careful
with these here boilers.

SPURGEON
You didn't hold your nose!

A gleeful Miriam nods.

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" BOILER ROOM - DAY

This ship's BOILER ROOM CREW incinerates chairs and tables for an edge on "Fuller's Folly."

Result: A.W. looks pleased.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - NIGHT

Dinner time on Angie's ship!

This time, Tammy, Judith, Gilbert, Bessie, and Angie eat alongside Richard, Rebekah, Phoebe, Oliver, Melissa, Jacob, Isaac, and Esau.

Cletus Ray and Penny look after the diners.

ISAAC
Let me tell you...the food on here
is great!

ANGIE
Well, thank you, Isaac!

Oliver nods at Angie, then points to himself and Richard.

OLIVER
We dined splendidly.

RICHARD
(through his bites)
Our compliments to the chef.

CLETUS RAY
I'll be glad to tell 'em.

PENNY
Both of 'em.

Several passenger mouths fly open as Penny and Cletus Ray depart for the galley.

REBEKAH
So...I found out this steamboat's
racing another steamboat.

Esau's, Jacob's, and Phoebe's eyes light up.

GILBERT

Yes, Rebekah. You heard that right.

TAMMY

We're racing...our boat's racing a ship from St. Louis.

BESSIE

Some ship called "Captain Jinks."

MELISSA

Are we gonna lose?

JACOB

Bite your tongue, Missy!

MELISSA

No, Jacob! I'd rather bite this great food!

Melissa forks some food into her mouth.

ANGIE

Don't worry, Melissa. We ain't gonna lose.

Angie and Melissa smile at each other.

JUDITH

We better not lose!

Judith's tablemates cheer.

REBEKAH

Yeah...I'd hate to see "Fuller's Folly" lose.

A few heads nod.

REBEKAH (CONT'D)

This ship's run better than a lot of the steamers our family's been on. A lot better.

TAMMY

I like how everybody on here is treated like the human beings they really are. Everybody...period.

RICHARD

Yeah! It wasn't run like that when it was the "Aura Lea."

Oliver stares hard at Richard.

OLIVER
It?

RICHARD
Yep...it.

OLIVER
No, Richard. A boat's a "she."

PHOEBE
I don't get it.

ESAU
Me, too.

OLIVER
A boat's a "she." I hope you
young'uns don't forget it.

Most of the guests go back to eating...then:

BESSIE
Oliver...if a ship's a "she" and
not an "it," where's the vagina?

One...two...three...nine eaters crack up in laughs.

EXT. BOAT DOCK, GREENVILLE, MS - DAY

Friday...when the "Captain Jinks" enjoys a slight lead over
"Fuller's Folly."

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

A.W. (he's seated) and Woodrow sport smug looks.

A.W.
We got rid of half the tables and
chairs in the Grand Cabin.

WOODROW
Now that's the A.W. I know!

A.W.
That's enough fuel to get us down
to Vicksburg.

WOODROW
At least!

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER ROOM - DAY

Spurgeon and Miriam greet boiler-room newcomers LUTHER BANKS (25, Black) and MAYBELLE ALLEN (35, Black).

MIRIAM
Luther...Maybelle...thank you for
joinin' our crew.

MAYBELLE
Thank you, Miss Mir--

MIRIAM
It's okay. Just call me Miriam.

Luther breathes relief...

SPURGEON
We're all equals on this boat.

...then shakes his head "yes."

LUTHER
Me and Maybelle are so damn glad to
get outa Memphis.

MAYBELLE
That place's gettin' ready to
explode any minute.

Spurgeon shakes hands with Maybelle and Luther...Miriam exchanges handshakes with Luther and Maybelle...Luther grimaces from Miriam's heavy grip.

Maybelle doesn't.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

An impressed Miriam watches Luther check the top valve on a boiler.

He opens the valve...and not enough water comes out to suit either crewmember.

LUTHER
Think this'll get us to Vicksburg?

MIRIAM
It better.

Maybelle and Spurgeon hurry over to their colleagues.

SPURGEON

Miriam...we hate to tell you
this...but...

MAYBELLE

We're almost outa coal.

Miriam gathers Luther, Maybelle, and Spurgeon into a huddle.

EXT. BOAT DOCK, MAYERSVILLE, MS - DAY

"Captain Jinks" continues its slight lead on "Fuller's
Folly..." until A.W.'s steamboat hits a tangle of reeds.

While the "Jinks" crew works to untangle the St. Louis-based
vessel, Angie's boat from Davenport inches into the lead.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER DECK - DAY

The four youngest Tornells watch "Folly" solidify its lead.

PHOEBE

See, Melissa?

JACOB

(hugging Melissa)

The captain was right.

MELISSA

But the finish line's down in New
Orleans.

ESAU

Louisiana.

MELISSA

And we're still in Mississippi.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Josephine raises a fist in jubilation...Angie hugs her.

ANGIE

As long as we keep this lead and
fill up in Vicksburg...

JOSEPHINE

Miriam told me we've barely got
enough coal to get us there.

Angie nods.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)
 And we don't have a guarantee
 they'll let us fuel up there.

ANGIE
 We'll figure somethin' out.

Josephine catches a slight glimpse of Angie, who taps her own forehead in confidence.

EXT. BOAT DOCK, VICKSBURG, MS - DAY

Still out in front, "Fuller's Folly" pulls into the dock alongside two other steamers: The "Magnolia" and the "Sarah."

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Angie and Josephine emerge from the stairs to the bow.

Both women crouch down the stages, then eyeball the "Sarah" and the "Magnolia."

ANGIE
 If it wasn't for the "Sarah" bein'
 docked here, we wouldn't stand a
 single solitary chance.

Josephine crosses her fingers.

Miriam and Elizabeth (in crouches all their own) follow Josephine and Angie.

ELIZABETH
 I hope they remember this is
 Saturday, February seventeenth,
 1866...AD, not BC.

EXT. "SARAH" MAIN DECK - DAY

Josephine reaches the "Sarah's" bow first; right behind her, Angie, Miriam, and Elizabeth file onto the steamer.

The four women watch this ship's ROUSTABOUTS move machinery around...when THE "SARAH'S" MATE (a man in his 40s) approaches the four "Folly" crewmembers.

He pulls a revolver from his holster.

"SARAH" MATE
 Git offa mah boat!

ANGIE
 We came in peace!

THE CAPTAIN (a man in his 50s) approaches the mate...then eyes Miriam, Josephine, Elizabeth, and Angie.

"SARAH" CAPTAIN
What y'all doin' on here?

This captain yanks out a pistol...and points it at the women.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

Padraig, Major, Heinrich, and their nine fellow rousters sit alongside Angie, Josephine, Luther, Maybelle, Miriam, Spurgeon, Cletus Ray, Penny, Tammy, Elizabeth, Lorelei, Bessie, Gilbert, Judith, and Zenas.

The saloon's settings wow Maybelle and Luther.

Judith seethes.

ZENAS
Judith, honey...I know you wanted to get on that "Sarah" and help Angie and Josie and Miriam and Elizabeth...but...

JUDITH
You damn right, Zenas!

ZENAS
But we'd all be dead by now.

Tammy eyeballs Judith.

TAMMY
By you staying aboard and keeping a watch on the rest of the crew and the passengers, you helped keep all of us alive.

Applause rings out around a stunned Judith.

CLETUS RAY
(to those around him)
That's my daughter.

It's Tammy's turn to join Club Stunned.

CLETUS RAY (CONT'D)
Not only does she play the piano better than me...she's smarter than I am.

TAMMY

Oh, Pa...

HEINRICH

Understood, Cletus Ray...but ve're
stuck in Wicksburg, Mississippi
with no fuel for the boat.

GILBERT

And as we speak, the "Captain
Jinks" has retaken the lead.

All eyes turn to Gilbert.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

One of our passengers told me.

Angie rises from her seat. She scans the room.

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" BOILER ROOM - DAY

The boiler crew throws additional chairs and more tables into
the boiler.

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" GRAND CABIN - DAY

This is the "Jinks'" version of the saloon aboard "Folly."

A MARRIED COUPLE (both 50s) stroll into the room...a space
now devoid of furniture.

HUSBAND

Honey...where're we gonna sit?

WIFE

On the floor.

A rat scurries across the room.

Result: The couple eyeball each other in suspicion.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

Angie continues to look across the saloon.

ANGIE

Anybody got any ideas?

Total silence...for a few moments.

Lorelei raises her hand...Angie points to her.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Whatcha got, Lorelei?

LORELEI
Butter smokes at three hundred and
fifty degrees Fahrenheit.

Mouths fly open all over the place.

LUTHER
Uh...okay.

JOSEPHINE
I read where almost eight years
ago, a ship called the "Grey Eagle"
used butter as a fuel for the ship.

PADRAIG
That captain musta bean a good
chef.

MIRIAM
Or a terrible one.

JOSEPHINE
The "Grey Eagle" was involved in a
race, too...and they used grease to
fuel the ship, too.

LORELEI
By the way, Josephine, grease
smokes at three hundred and seventy
degrees Fahrenheit.

Staffers hear A KNOCK on the door.

MAJOR
Ain't we in a meetin'?

Penny runs to open the door...

PENNY
Come on in, everybody!

...and ushers Rebekah, Isaac, Esau, Jacob, Melissa, and
Phoebe into the room.

Last family member to enter closes the door.

All six Tornells find seats where they can.

ANGIE

Don't worry. We'll be right with
y'all soon as possible.

ISAAC

It's perfectly fine.

ANGIE

Usin' butter and grease sounds like
a good idea...sounds like you like
it, too, Josie.

Josephine nods while Penny sits back down.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

But how 'bout the folks in the
boiler room?

Spurgeon, Miriam, Maybelle, and Luther gaze at each other.

SPURGEON

Let's do it!

Spurgeon covers his mouth when he sees Miriam's dirty look.

MAYBELLE

Miriam, what've we got to lose?

BESSIE

Come on! It's worth a try!

ELIZABETH

Take a chance, Miriam!

MIRIAM

Oh, all right, y'all!

Miriam's decree triggers cheers all over the saloon.

ANGIE

Now...what can we do for you six
Tornells?

REBEKAH

(rises from seat)

Angie...we heard that you,
Josephine, Miriam, and Elizabeth
were nearly killed on the "Sarah."

MIRIAM

You got that right, Mrs. Tornell.

ISAAC

And because of that, we've devised
a little plan to enable you to
reach New Orleans alive and safe.

JOSEPHINE

I'm all ears.

JUDITH

Me, too!

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Angie sits in that plush chair as Josephine pilots the
steamboat...with both women in Mardi Gras costumes and
corresponding masks!

JOSEPHINE

Steering this boat in this outfit
takes some getting used to...but
I'm glad the Tornell family thought
this up.

ANGIE

At least when we get to Nyalins,
we'll blend right in.

The twosome gaze at the Mighty Mississippi...and find
"Fuller's Folly" gaining on the "Captain Jinks."

JOSEPHINE

Even if Mardi Gras was over two
weeks ago.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER ROOM - DAY

Maybelle, Luther, Spurgeon, and Miriam (none in costumes)
pour barrels of butter into the boilers.

SPURGEON

I wonder what kinda stove this
would make.

LUTHER

Spurgeon, I don't even wanna think
about that.

MIRIAM

We're lucky a third boat pulled up
and had all these barrels of butter
and grease and stuff.

MAYBELLE
Northern or Southern?

MIRIAM
Couldn't really tell.

A sly grin invades Miriam's face.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Me and Angie and Josie and Zenas
and Elizabeth were too busy tryin'
to get them barrels offa that boat
and onto ours.

Maybelle nods in understanding.

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Woodrow still pilots this steamship; he grits his teeth when
he realizes "Fuller's Folly" continues to gain ground.

A.W. approaches him.

A.W.
Ain't no more furniture left in the
Grand Cabin.

WOODROW
That'll at least get us all the way
down to Baton Rouge.

A.W.
And we can refuel there.

WOODROW
Coal...or furniture?

Both men take in that Big Muddy view before Woodrow casts a
sideways glance at A.W.

WOODROW (CONT'D)
You sure you don't wanna be the
pilot awhile?

A.W.
I can't.

WOODROW
You gonna start that again?

A.W.
Woodrow...I've got somethin' else I
wanna try.

Woodrow exhales as he refocuses on the water...only to groan when "Jinks" runs into a sandbur.

EXT. BOAT DOCK, NATCHEZ, MS - DAY

"Fuller's Folly" pulls in.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Zenas and his crew of roustabouts dump mailbags.

ZENAS

Guys, we're closin' in.

Some rousters look confused.

ZENAS (CONT'D)

With us dumpin' these mailbags,
that oughta lighten the load.

MAJOR

Now if that "Jinks" could stay
stuck on that sandbur a long
time...

PADRAIG

Like about twenty-four hours.

HEINRICH

Better yet: Twenty-four days.

Laughter replaces confusion among those roustabouts.

EXT. BATON ROUGE CITY DOCK, BATON ROUGE, LA - DAY

Sunday...that "Captain Jinks" lead continues to shrink as
A.W.'s steamer sails into this now not-too-busy dock.

A.W. himself climbs onto the bow...

EXT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" MAIN DECK - DAY

...and addresses five of the boat's roustabouts.

A.W.

(points to each rouster)

Out! Out! Out! Out! Out!

The five men stand there in shock.

A.W. (CONT'D)

I said you're out!

"JINKS" ROUSTABOUT #1
 Captain, what did we do?

A.W.
 We don't need y'all no more!

"JINKS" ROUSTABOUT #2
 But...

A.W.
 We're tryin' to lighten the load so
 we can win the race!

"JINKS" ROUSTABOUT #3
 (to those around him)
 It ain't fair!

A.W. and THE BOAT'S MATE grab the five men and escort them
 off the steamer...to the indignation of the other rousters.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" GALLEY - DAY

In a break from cooking, Lorelei and Elizabeth brandish a
 coffee mug apiece.

ELIZABETH
 Lorelei...thank you so darn much
 for coming aboard.

LORELEI
 My pleasure...and I thank you for
 the opportunity to serve.

The two women sip away.

ELIZABETH
 Not only did you help make me a
 better cook...you've helped make
 this a better steamboat.

Lorelei's all smiles.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 If you hadn't thought of butter and
 grease and their smoke points, we
 wouldn't be heading for New
 Orleans.

Elizabeth raises her mug...

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 You saved us.

...and Lorelei follows suit.

LORELEI
Thanks...but I thought this was a
total crew effort.

Both cooks click their mugs, then set them down.

LORELEI (CONT'D)
Let's win this race first.

Elizabeth and Lorelei hug away.

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Woodrow looks upon the water in anticipation of victory on
this Monday morning.

A glum A.W. gazes the other way...and sees "Folly" gaining.

WOODROW
We're three hours from the big
jewel...and "Fuller's Folly."

A.W.
Yeah...

WOODROW
This is whatcha wanted! 'Member?

A.W.
(eyeballing Woodrow)
Can you say "mutiny?"

WOODROW
I could...but I don't wanna.

Captain A.W. turns his attention back to the rival steamer.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" SALOON - DAY

Oliver, Penny, and Richard try to work with poker newbies
Isaac and Rebekah.

REBEKAH
(tries to shuffle cards)
Bear with me, everybody...I've
never done this before.

PENNY
Take all the time you need.

RICHARD
Yeah, 'Bekah. You doin' fine.

ISAAC
I've never seen playing cards
before in my life.

Rebekah manages to slide five cards to each player.

OLIVER
This is your chance, Isaac.

Speaking of player...Esau, Jacob, Melissa, and Phoebe crowd
around pianist Tammy, who wallops out a folksy barnburner.

The children applaud at the tune's end.

PHOEBE
Tammy, I love your playing.

TAMMY
Thanks, Phoebe.
(takes a bow)
Would any of you like to learn to
play the piano?

Rebekah's and Isaac's progeny eye each other...when Judith
(in her Mardi Gras costume and mask to match) sprints into
the place.

JUDITH
Everybody! C'mout to the deck!

MELISSA
Somebody die?

Crew and passengers empty the saloon and...

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER DECK - DAY

...find "Captain Jinks" stuck short of the finish line at:

EXT. CANAL STREET BOAT DOCK, NEW ORLEANS, LA - DAY

A SIZABLE CROWD of spectators watches "Fuller's Folly" glide
past its rival boat...all the way across the finish line!

Out in front, Benjamin joins in the crowd applause.

INT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

Josephine grips the rudder with one hand and turns her other
hand into a jubilant fist. A standing Angie watches.

Angie's pal brings the boat to a halt...the two ecstatic women hug each other and bounce up and down.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" BOILER DECK - DAY

Esau, Isaac, Jacob, Melissa, Oliver, Phoebe, Rebekah, and Richard hug Cletus Ray, Elizabeth, Judith, Lorelei, Penny, and Tammy in a wild, wild celebration.

Judith rips her mask off.

Gilbert and Bessie come out, too. Elizabeth spots them.

ELIZABETH

I can't wait to wire Emil! When he reads the telegram, he'll have egg on his face!

BESSIE

And he won't be alone!

GILBERT

(to Elizabeth)

Will it be raw or cooked?

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Luther, Maybelle, Miriam, and Spurgeon burst out of the boiler room and seek out Zenas and his twelve roustabouts.

LUTHER

WE DID IT!

HEINRICH

Yes, vee did!

Miriam and Maybelle lift a surprised Zenas off his feet.

Major shakes hands with a weeping, equally-jubilant Padraig. The two men morph that handshake into a warm hug.

Everywhere else on the deck: More hugs...cheers...jubilation!

INT. "CAPTAIN JINKS" OBSERVATION TOWER - DAY

With the sun about to set, Woodrow grabs a rifle to aim it at "Folly..." but A.W. grabs Woodrow's arms from behind.

A.W.

Drop it!

Woodrow continues to grip the weapon as he tries to move around the glass house...A.W. hangs onto his ship's pilot.

A.W. (CONT'D)
I said drop it!

Woodrow flings the rifle to the floor.

EXT. "FULLER'S FOLLY" MAIN DECK - DAY

Angie, Benjamin, Josephine, and Miriam stand across from the rest of the "Folly" crew and the boat's passengers.

Spurgeon now holds a baby kitten in each hand.

Josephine and Angie continue to wear Mardi Gras masks.

BENJAMIN
I heard that a grain shipment contract was at stake...and that was the reason for the race.

ANGIE
Yep. That's right.

BENJAMIN
Congratulations to you.

Miriam, Angie, and Josephine shake Benjamin's hand.

Benjamin lifts an unusual trophy off the deck...

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
As a symbol of victory...please accept this "Silver Antlers" award.

...when A.W. and Woodrow walk the stages to climb aboard.

Angie accepts the trophy from Benjamin.

ANGIE
Thank you so very much, Mr. Greb.

BENJAMIN
How did you do it? How did you come together to pull this off?

Miriam and Angie turn to Josephine.

JOSEPHINE
It was a total crew effort...all of us contributed. Every last one of us pitched in...because we believe in treating people like people.

Angie gives Josephine the trophy.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

We believe in empathy.

MIRIAM

Male, female, Black, White...any color. If you can do it, you shouldn't let nobody stop you.

BENJAMIN

With that in mind, Angie and Josephine...why don't you take your masks off?

Josephine hands the trophy to Miriam; the former and Angie hesitate before the two ex-slaves rip their masks off.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Nobody's here to shoot at you. They've been kicked off the dock.

The losing captain and losing pilot step closer.

A.W.

He's right.

WOODROW

You won fair and square.

Angie gestures Woodrow and A.W. into joining the throng.

A.W.

Mr. Greb's right...we ain't armed.

WOODROW

Yeah. A.W. saw to it.

Miriam sizes A.W. and Woodrow up...then shakes the two men's hands (and sees both men wince from her heavy grip).

A.W.

Congratulations...you earned it.

MIRIAM

Y'all looked like you were gonna beat us. How'd y'all get stuck?

A.W.

Doctor pump broke on us.

Woodrow and A.W. recover from Miriam's grip before they do handshakes with Josephine and Angie.

WOODROW
Thank you kindly for gettin' us
back on dry land.

JOSEPHINE
Woodrow, it was the least we could
do to help.

ANGIE
We didn't wanna see y'all stranded.

WOODROW
One thing's for sure: Y'all know a
lot more 'bout boatin' than we do.

JOSEPHINE
It's very kind of you to say that.

A.W.
We weren't very kind to you after
you outbid me for this boat:
Shootin' at you...puttin' a black
cat aboard...

Spurgeon worms his way to A.W.

ANGIE
A.W., we been through worse.

SPURGEON
Speakin' of cat...the cat you put
aboard our boat gave birth.

Woodrow and A.W. eyeball each other...then the baby
kittens...then Spurgeon.

JOSEPHINE
Perhaps you two can take these
kittens off our hands.

MIRIAM
Just look at it as a consolation
prize.

Some people around Miriam titter.

A.W.
Aw...what the hell?

Spurgeon hands one kitten to A.W. while Woodrow takes the
other baby feline from Spurgeon.

The two men from the "Jinks" eye their furry prizes...then manage to shrug at each other.

FREEZE FRAME on the resulting goodnatured applause.

FADE OUT.

THE END