powder,

passion

and plunder

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Powder, Passion and Plunder

A pirate source book for the SotC SRD

UKG PUBLISHING

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INTRODUCTION: THE WOLVES OF THE SEA

On the face of it, there should be nothing romantic about pirates. They take hard-earned money and goods away by force – typically accompanied by torture, murder and rape. And yet there is still something attractive about a life of adventure, freedom and lived without responsibility.

SotC is a OGL role-playing game written by Evil Hat Productions and based on their FATE system. This supplement contains additional rules to tailor SotC to the pirate genre. The SRD for SotC can be found at http://www.faterpg.com/dl/sotc-srd.html. If you don't want to use this game, the information will be useful for any tabletop campaign.

As well as the rules, this book also contains a history of piracy (both in reality and in fiction) and looks at the enduring appeal of these "wolves of the sea" and what we find attractive about characters like Long John Silver and Captain Jack Sparrow that are as magnificent as they are malevolent. This book should allow you, the GM, to create games that tap into these tropes to provide a more enjoyable experience for your players and yourself.

POWDER

The typical Hollywood image of pirates and piracy is from the so-called "golden age of piracy", in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. This is a period where black powder cannon and sailing ships were the height of naval technology. Sea travel was risky enough even without the threat of piracy – navigation was still an art and weather forecasting was barely even a
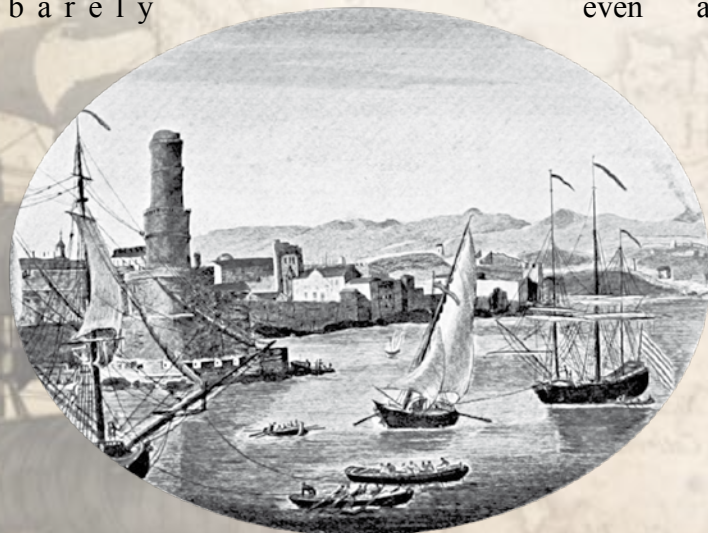
concept. And as for the medical sciences...

Nostalgia can make anything look romantic. As anyone who has travelled in both will tell you, there's just something about a sailing ship that diesel power just can't match. If you're ability to travel is dependent on how they interact, you feel more in touch with the wind and the sea and the sun – with nature in general. The randomness and unpredictability of this period's technology only adds the adventure; it's the characters rather than the players that have to cope with the danger.

PASSION

"Freebooter" is a synonym for pirate and it's this freedom that that makes them such attractive figures. Our mundane lives are filled with responsibilities and governed by codes of behaviour, not all of which we have chosen. Pirates have no such restrictions. Unless pressed or forced into signing articles (see page 13), they have chosen to live a life outside of the law and all conventional standards of morality. Their only rules are the ones they've decided for themselves (frequently democratically!).

Piracy was a dangerous profession – even more so than, say, soldiering. While we are often figuratively encouraged to live each day as if it was our last, pirates literally did this. Let's have no ambiguity – pirates are killers. But this passion for life – and passion for freedom – is part of what make pirates such attractive figures.

PLUNDER

Piracy is an incredibly high-risk profession and only occurs when the rewards are commensurate with this risk. Gold, jewels and other precious items come to mind when one thinks of plunder. However, these are not the only things worth stealing. Kidnapping crew and passengers for ransom continues to be popular (see modern piracy on page 11). Almost by definition, outlaws will find it difficult to simply buy mundane items, so food, water, clothing, rope and sailcloth could all be stolen (Bartholomew Roberts is said to have once relieved a ship's crew of their hats, claiming that his own men had thrown theirs overboard while drunk, though it's more likely that the ship had nothing worth taking and he wanted to save face and build his reputation).

The treasure map where "X marks the spot" is a staple

of pirate fiction, but very rarely (if ever) occurred in reality. However, valuable goods were hidden as part of smuggling operations and at least some pirates were smugglers before or after the more violent stage of their careers.

Pirates have an apparently contradictory reputation for being both hoarders and spendthrifts. As a rule, when they had money and they could spend it freely, they did so. There are many stories of pirates trying to live honest lives after receiving a pardon, but then having to revert back to a life of crime after having spent all of their loot. First and foremost, pirates are criminals. This means that they are wanted men and thus unable to find places where they spend their ill-gotten gains – many pirates were identified after been too free with their money. To reduce theft and quarrels, many sets of articles (see page 13) contained clauses saying that the plunder would only be divided once the crew decided to break up and go their separate ways. These factors combined meant that a pirate would spend money if he had it, but, most of the time, didn't have it to spend (the implications of this are explored on page 25).

Whats in a word?

According to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, maritime piracy consists of any criminal acts of violence, detention, rape, or depredation committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or aircraft that is directed outside the jurisdiction of any State (in international waters, for example). The English word "pirate" comes from that Latin *pirata* and the Greek πειρατής (*peiratēs*). Both these words mean "bandit" or "brigand"; a pirate is, effectively, a thief who operates on the High Seas, usually as part of an organised group.

A privateer is a licensed pirate. A person or warship would receive a "letter of marque" from a country's government to attack shipping belonging to a rival government (contrast with a "freebooter" or "buccaneer" who has no such licence). Privateers were a common part of naval warfare from the 16th to the 19th century and many famous pirates were privateers for at least part of their career.

Almost any hero is a villain in someone else's eyes and the boundaries between merchant, explorer, naval captain and pirate can sometimes be very fuzzy. Many of the figures we'll be describing later in this book spent their lives crossing and re-crossing these lines.

A History of Piracy

The Ancient World

The earliest known reference to piracy is from the 13th century BC (the "Sea Peoples" who operated in the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas), but it's reasonable to assume that it began shortly after goods began to be traded by sea.

Most of the nations on the Mediterranean Sea had a reputation for piracy at one time or another: the Illyrians, the Tyrrhenians, the Phoencians, the Greeks and the Romans, for example. In one famous incident, a young Gaius Julius Caesar was captured by Cilician pirates and held for ransom. The future Dictator and Consul of Rome felt he was worth more than the pirates were demanding and had them raise it from twenty talents of gold to fifty. This was duly paid and Julius was released. He then promptly raised a fleet, pursued and captured the pirates, recovered the ransom and put his former captors to death.

The Middle Ages

The most widely known and widely operating pirates in the Middle Ages were the Vikings – Scandinavian freebooters who operated from about 780 to 1066 (that end date is deliberate; most scholars mark the conquest of Britain by Duke William – a descendant of Vikings – as the point they finally "went legit"). They raided coasts, rivers and even inland cities all over Western Europe, the coastal regions of North Africa and Italy and even made it as far as the Baltic, the Black Sea and Persia.

Meanwhile, Arab and Muslim pirates were common in the Mediterranean Sea, establishing pirate havens on the coasts of southern France and northern Italy towards the end of the 9th century, even going as far as sacking Rome and damaging the Vatican in 846. The Barbary corsairs operated from the coast of North Africa from the around the time of the Crusades right the way through to the early 19th century. Hayreddin Barbarrosa (*Redbeard*) is the most famous of these privateers and arguably the most successful pirate of all time. Born Hizir, son of Yakup, one of four brothers who all began their careers as seaman, Hizir rose to the position of Fleet Admiral of the Ottoman Empire before retiring as an incredibly rich and powerful man.

The Far East

The *Wokou* or *wako* were pirates who raided the coastlines of China and Korea from the 13th Century through to the early part of the 17th century. Originally, they were mostly Japanese soldiers, merchants, smugglers and *ronin* (masterless samurai), but in the later centuries many originated from China.

There were two main phases of *wako* activity; the first began in the 13th Century and extended to the second half of the 14th century. Japan had no strong central government at this time. This lack of political stability led to civil unrest and famine; Korea (richer, more stable) was only a short distance away across the Sea of Japan. The Koreans made diplomatic protests against these raids, and the Japanese government did attempt to limit trade and restrict piracy, but it was only the Mongol invasions of Japan that (temporarily) curtailed pirate activity. Higher military preparedness in Korea and the mobilisation of former *wako* by the Japanese reduced the opportunity. During the second Mongol invasion in particular, the invading fleet was attacked by groups of samurai who swam out from shore or manoeuvred small boats up against the Mongol ships – all standard wako tactics.

Once the Mongol threat had passed, and emboldened by lack of resistance, nearly 200 raids on Korea were made between 1375 and 1385 alone. Bands of several thousand pirates would penetrate deep into the Korean peninsula and Gaeseong, the capital, was repeatedly looted.

The Chinese Qing and Ming dynasties placed an economic embargo on Japan and forbade Chinese citizens from travelling overseas. This meant that the only way to trade in Chinese goods was through pirate activity. Chinese merchants and smugglers began to use the *wako* to assist and cover their professions.

This first major phase of *wako* activity began to wane after 1419 when the Japanese pirates and their allies suffered two major reverses. Firstly a large pirate fleet (over thirty ships) was ambushed and defeated off of Wanghaiguo by a Chinese provincial military commander. Secondly and more seriously, King Taejong of Korea declared war against the pirate stronghold of Tsushima and sacked the island.

The second phase of significant *wako* activity began in around 1550 and lasted into the 1580s. The Ming dynasty continued to restrict Chinese trade, but had lost their grip on their populace and there was widespread civil unrest. Many Chinese traders, fishermen and even

farmers decided to turn their hand to piracy. While the pirate bands of the sixteenth century were still known as *wako*, many were Chinese or Korean rather than Japanese, using their local knowledge to make successful raiding expeditions. Piracy and international trade became interconnected, with *wako* smuggling goods into and out of China and raiding their rivals.

One of the most successful *wako* of this period was the Chinese merchant Wang Zhi. Having expanded his fleet of merchant vessels in anticipation of the relaxation of the ban on overseas trade, he faced ruin in 1551 when it was tightened instead. Wang began organising attacks on the establishment – treasuries, tax offices and granaries. In 1553 he assembled a fleet of several hundred ships to raid the coast of Zhejiang before establishing large fortified camps that were used to bases for larger raids deep into mainland China. He was finally defeated by the lure of a pardon before being betrayed and executed.

Wako activity began slowly to decline in when the Ming government lifted its ban on foreign trade in 1567. Many pirate lords became legitimate *daimyo* (clan chieftains) during the reunification of Japan under Hideyoshi. Increased civil authority and legitimate army and navy forces made piracy more difficult. Hideyoshi used the experience and ferocity of these former *wako* during his invasion of Korea in 1592. Any remaining *wako* activity was ended forever in 1639 by the *Sakoku* (Closed Country) Edict. In an echo of the embargo placed by the Qing and Ming dynasties foreign ships were permitted to land (other than some very limited trade with China and Korea) and Japanese citizens were forbidden to sail overseas on pain of death on their return. The day of the *wako* had passed.

Even a casual student of the more esoteric side of Japanese history will have noticed that this second

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phase of *wako* activity overlaps the period that that *shinobi* of Iga and Kogo were most active. Certain infiltration and boarding techniques used by the *wako* (such as breathing tubes, the boring of holes in the hull of ships and the *kusari kagi* grappling iron) are more than reminiscent of these most famous of assassins. So, yes, I am claiming that there were almost certainly ninja pirates and pirate ninja.

The Golden Age

Despite all this precedent, when people think of pirates, they think of the Caribbean during the latter half of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th. The Caribbean had been a centre of European trade and colonisation ever since Columbus' discovery of the New World in 1492. The Spanish were the first colonial power in the area, becoming the wealthiest state in Christendom due to their colonies in what are now Mexico and Bolivia and the mineral and agricultural resources they were able to exploit. However, they were unable or unwilling to support a sufficient naval presence to control the vast area of ocean that they claimed. Whenever war broke out between the Great Powers of Europe, the result was always widespread piracy and privateering in the Caribbean.

In the early seventeenth century, the demographics of the Caribbean changed. The colonies of England and France expanded, while the growth and productivity of the Spanish settlements stabilised. While the Spanish government had strict laws that their colonies were only allowed to trade with merchants, the smaller towns welcomed Dutch, France and English smugglers.

The end of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) triggered the beginning of the so-called "golden age". Spain's colonies were neglected and their garrisons understaffed due to the need for resources and men in Europe to fight the war. Privateers were used extensively by all sides during the war and peace resulted in large numbers of unemployed sailors and a lack of honest work. While there was nominal peace in Europe, there was extensive privateering in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

Captain Henry Morgan (yes, as in the rum) is the most famous and successful of these privateers, with a long and successful career against the Spanish and rose to become governor of Jamaica. In 1671 he lead an expedition to sack Panama City. This violated a peace treaty between England and Spain – making it an act of piracy rather than privateering – and ended his career. Morgan was arrested and stood trial in England.
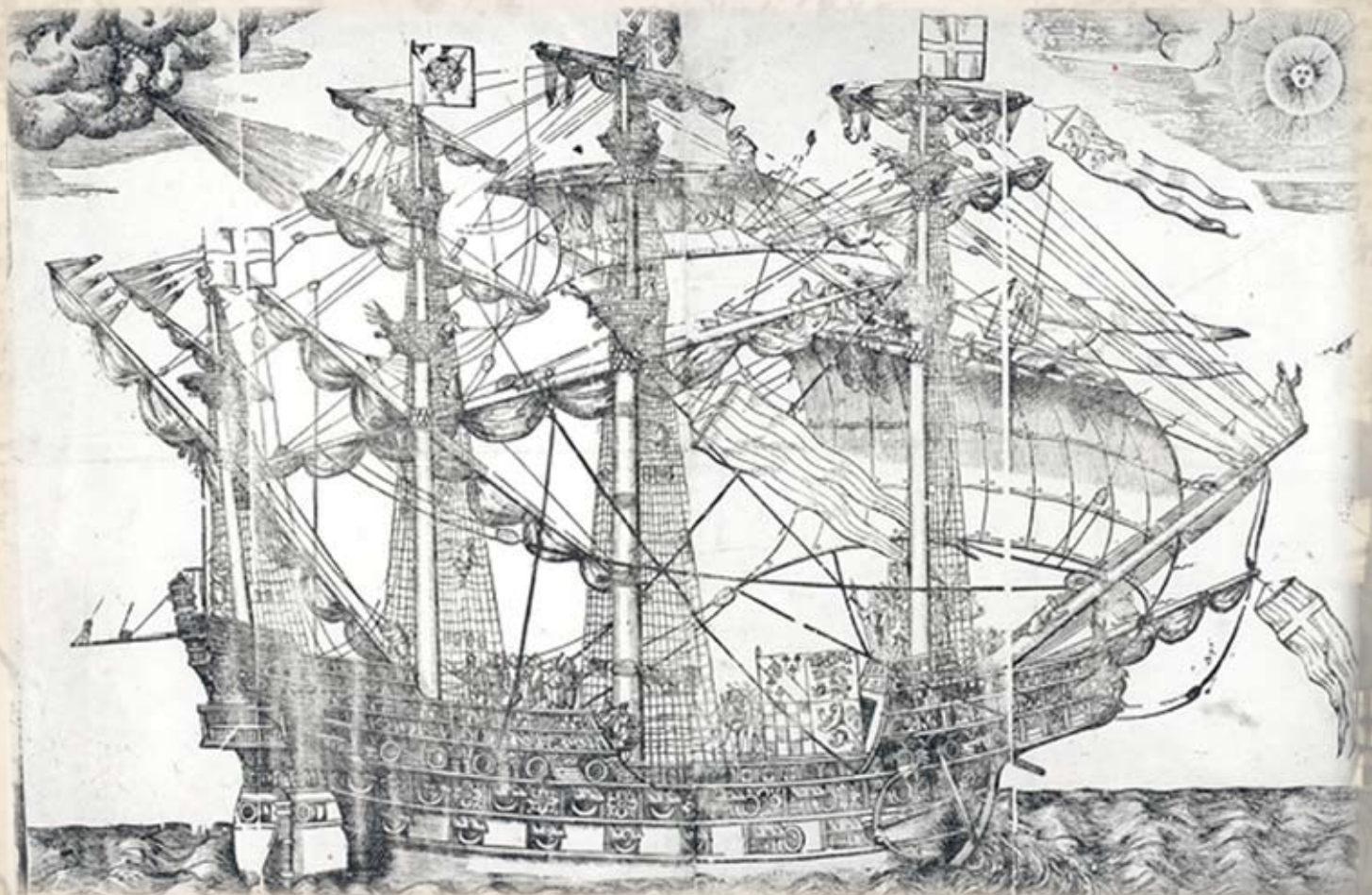
Improbably claiming that he had no knowledge of the treaty, Morgan was exonerated and knighted before returning as a hero to Port Royal (then the capital of the Jamaican colony). Retirement did not suit the Captain. He was dismissed from the Jamaican Council due to drunkenness and died in 1688, possibly from liver failure. His death marked the beginning of the end of Port Royal's reputation as a pirate haven. An earthquake in 1692 devastated the town and, by the 1700s the Royal Navy was maintaining a permanent naval base. The pirates of the Caribbean had to find a new home.

The Bahamian island of New Providence was close to the major American and Caribbean trade routes and the town of Nassau had a good natural harbour that was difficult for large warships to enter. The local governors were also susceptible to bribery. Many famous pirates used Nassau as a base; Henry Jennings, Edward Teach, Charles Vane, Jack Rackam and Benjamin Hornigold among them. It has finally broken up in July 1718 by a fleet of three British warships under the newly appointed governor of Nassau, Woodes Rogers. Many of the pirates fled, but Rogers gave Hornigold a pardon and charged him with hunting down his former brethren.

Many of the pirates ejected from New Providence found a new home on the island of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. It was close to the profitable trade routes between India, the Middle East and Europe and no European power was willing to conquer the local natives. Several pirate crews used it as a base, including Christopher Condent and Edward England. Once again, a permanent Royal Naval presence in the Indian Ocean made piracy an even more risky business than usual and, by the 1720s, many former pirates chose to settle permanently on the island rather than return home.

Famous Pirates of the Golden Age

This section looks at the life and legend of some of the major pirates from the Golden Age, hopefully giving some flavour and some inspiration for your own characters and plots.

Edward Teach (Blackbeard)

I'm sure you've heard this name. Born in Bristol, Edward Teach (or possibly Thatch or Tache – accounts differ) served with Jamaican-based privateers during the 1701-1714 War of Spanish Succession. After the war, he made his way to New Providence (see above), where the pirate Benjamin Hornigold signed Teach as a crewman. As an experienced privateer, Teach had no

difficulty turning his hand to piracy. Hornigold soon gave him the command of a captured slaver. Teach renamed her the *Queen Anne's Revenge* and set out on his own.

Teach quickly gained a bloodthirsty reputation, even by the standards of his time and the nickname "Blackbeard". Johnson's biography of him (see page 15) undoubtedly exaggerates, but one eyewitness described him as "a tall, spare man with a very black beard that he wore very long". Johnson mentions him wearing a sling or harness containing three brace (pairs) of pistols. Given the unreliable nature of firearms during this period, this is probably accurate.

When Governor Woodes Rogers arrived in New Providence (see above), a new haven had to be found. Teach sailed for the Carolina's. In January 1718, he established a base on Ocracoke Island, near Bath Towne, North Carolina. He pillaged passing ships and sold them in the nearby town, bribing Charles Eden, the local Governor, to ensure immunity from prosecution. He added more ships to his fleet; by May 1718 he commanded over 400 men, enough to blockade

Charleston, South Carolina. He then returned to Bath Towne, but lost the *Queen Anne's Revenge* when it ran aground on a sandbar.

Teach sold much of his plunder, using it to buy a house and another pardon from Governor Eden who rigged the local Admiralty courts so Teach was recognised as the legitimate owner of the vessels captured during his cruise. Scared that Bath Towne would become another New Providence; the Governor of the neighbouring colony of Virginia – Alexander Spotswood – took action. The waters around Teach's base at Ocracoke were too shallow for naval vessels, so Spotswood hired two sloops (the *Ranger* and the *Jane*). They were staffed with Royal Navy crews under the command of a Lieutenant Maynard.

At dawn on Friday 22nd November, Maynard and his men attacked Teach's base at Ocracoke inlet. Most of Teach's crew were away at Bathe Town, so they were badly outnumbered. Teach attempted to flee in a sloop called the *Adventure*, damaging the *Ranger* so severely that it took no further part in the battle. The *Jane* countered by shooting away part of the *Adventure*'s rigging. Maynard hid most of his men in the hold of the *Jane*, tricking Teach into thinking that the vessel was under-manned and an easy target. Teach attempted to board, at which point the navy crew swarmed onto the deck. Maynard and Teach fought face-to-face, Teach disarming Maynard before Teach overpowered and killed by the crew of the *Jane*. Teachs decapitated corpse was thrown overboard and his head suspended from the bowsprit of the *Jane* (to enable the reward to be collected and as a warning).

Jack Rackham, Anne Bonny and Mary Reade

"Calico Jack" Rackham was an incompetent captain and barely more than a nuisance as a pirate. His notoriety is due to two of his crew, the most famous female pirates.

Little is known of Rackham's origins. He first appears in 1718, serving with Charles Vane when Vane escaped from New Providence Island after the arrival of Governor Woodes Rogers. He'd been elected quartermaster by the spring of 1719, became Vane's deputy and then deposed him as captain after a quarrel among the crew. Vane was given a sloop, staffed with the men who remained loyal to him, and continued his career.

After little success as a pirate (according to some accounts he lost his ships to a Jamaican-based patrol

while most of the crew were ashore), he returned to Nassau and obtained a pardon from Governor Rogers as part of a general amnesty for pirates. Rackham failed to adapt to life on shore; in August 1719, he stole a ship and resumed piracy.

During 1720, he cruised between Bermuda and Hispaniola, capturing several ships and profitable cargoes. He then sailed around Cuba, preying mostly on local fisherman before heading for Jamaica. During November 1920, Rackham and his crew were surprised while at anchor by a sloop belonging to the governor of Jamaica. According to court testimony, Rackham's crew were too drunk to offer an effective defence apart from two women – Anne Bonny and Mary Reade. All were captured and taken to Port Royal where Rackham and nearly all of his crew were hanged.

The lives of Anne Bonny and Mary Reade are obscured by their legend. Women pirates – indeed any woman who lived outside the roles of housewife and mother – were exceptional (because of this, male pronouns have been used throughout this book when referring to pirates). In addition, both women had apparently lived as men for many years. Reade was probably born around 1690 and had been raised by her mother as a boy in order to fulfil the requirements of a will. Disguised as a man, Mary fought during the

War of Spanish Succession before falling in love with and marrying a Flemish soldier. They brought and ran an inn together in the Netherlands. When her husband died, Mary once again disguised herself as a man and joined the army before quitting and taking passage on a ship headed for the West Indies.

Reade's ship was taken by pirates. She joined them, took a pardon in 1718 or 1719 before becoming a privateer and then a pirate once again when the crew mutinied. She joined Rackham's crew in 1720.

The early years of Anne Bonny's life are equally obscure. She was probably born in Ireland between 1697 and 1705, the illegitimate daughter of William Cormac, an attorney, and a maidservant named Peg. When the affair became public, Cormac moved to Charleston, South Carolina, where he ran a large plantation and continued his legal career.

According to this version of the story, Anne was disowned by her father when she married a small-time pirate named John Bonny. What is known is that Anne and John Bonny arrived in Nassau sometime between 1714 and 1718 and that John became an informant for Governor Woodes Rogers after his arrival in Nassau in July 1718.

Anne began an affair with Jack Rackham after Jack received his pardon. When John discovered their liaison, he had Anne dragged before the governor and demanded that she be flogged for adultery. Rackham offered to buy John off with a "divorce-by-purchase", but Anne refused to be "brought and sold like cattle". Instead, Anne and Jack fled (voiding Jack's pardon), stealing a ship and returning to piracy.

While at sea, Anne took a liking to a handsome young sailor who turned out to be Mary Reade. Jealous of their friendship, Rackham threatened to cut Reade's throat, forcing them to reveal Reade's secret. Rackham decided to break seafaring tradition by allowing them both to remain with the crew; Bonny and Reade would wear men's clothes during an attack and women's clothes at other times.

As has been said before, when the crew was taken, only Anne and Mary are recorded as having given any effective resistance. Reportedly, Anne's last words to Rackham were that "... *if he had fought like a Man, he need not have been hang'd like a Dog.*" Both women were sentenced to death, but their sentences were commuted when they were found to be pregnant. Mary died in a Jamaican prison (probably from complications relating to her pregnancy). Anne's fate was unknown until quite recently when it was discovered that her

father secured her release from jail and brought her back to South Carolina. She gave birth to Rackham's child, married again and died, a respectable woman, at the age of eighty.

William Kidd

Kidd made only a single voyage as a pirate and took only one significant prize, but became famous because of his the notoriety of his fate and being one of the few pirates documented as having buried his treasure. Already a successful privateer, in 1695 he sailed to England in the hope of gaining a profitable contract. The Earl of Bellamont (newly appointed governor of New York and Massachusetts) and other influential politicians agreed to back him, providing him with a purpose-built vessel (the 34-gun *Adventure Galley*), a contract and a Letter of Marque against the French and against pirates. Kidd sailed to New York in 1696 and signed on a crew of old privateering hands before sailing to Madagascar and the Indian Ocean in 1697. Finding few "legitimate" targets, it was there that he turned to piracy. After attacking a number of their vessels and taking at least one, the East India company

Before surrendering to Bellamont, Kidd buried a cache of treasure on Long Island, New York. Bellamont recovered most of this and it was sent to London as evidence. Legends and rumours quickly spread that this wasn't the only place that he'd buried treasure: Oak Island (Nova Scotia), Charles Island (Milford, Connecticut), Grand Manan (the Bay of Fundy) and even Takarajima (an island off the coast of Japan whose name literally translates as "Treasure Island") are all locations that have been associated with Kidd's treasure. None has yet been found, but the legend continues to influence pirates in film and literature (see page 15).

Bartholomew Roberts

"Black Bart" was born in South Wales and named John Roberts. In June 1719 he was serving as the third mate on a slave ship called the *Princess* when it was captured by the pirate Howell Davis. Roberts is said to have been a reluctant pirate, but, despite this, he was elected captain six weeks later (Davis having been killed in a skirmish) – this was probably due to his skill at navigation and outspoken and opinionated demeanour. At some point around this time, he changed this first name to Bartholomew – possibly after the buccaneer Bartholomew Sharp. His first flag showed him and a skeletal Death holding an hourglass.

After taking a few prizes off the coast of West Africa, the crew took a vote (not unusual) on whether their next voyage was to be to Brazil or the East Indies. The vote was for Brazil and the ship crossed the Atlantic and spent nine weeks off the Brazilian coast before encountering a Portuguese treasure fleet waiting an escort to Lisbon. He took the richest and most well armed-vessels; plunder that included over 40,000 gold coins and a cross set with diamonds, designed for the King of Portugal.

Bartholomew suffered a reverse of fortune a few weeks later. On sighting a small, fast brigantine, Roberts took forty men and a small sloop to chase it, leaving one Walter Kennedy in charge of his flagship, the *Rover*. When they returned eight days later, Kennedy had left with the *Rover* and what remained of the loot. Roberts and his crew renamed their sloop the *Fortune* and agreed on new articles (see page 13) which they swore on a Bible to uphold.

By February 1720, Roberts was a hunted man. The inhabitants of the Caribbean islands of Barbados and Martinique had separately equipped two well-armed ships in an attempt to end piracy in the islands. Roberts

forced the government to declare Kidd a pirate. Any pardon became politically impossible and his backers could no longer support him.

Despite this Kidd sailed for Boston, hoping to make a deal with Governor Bellamont. Instead he was arrested and sent to London for trail. His backers managed to avoid a scandal by "losing" important documents that might have offered some defence. Kidd was found guilty and was hanged on May 23, 1701. His body was gibbeted – left to hang in an iron cage – over the River Thames at Tilbury Point as a warning to future pirates

had a new flag made in response: a drawing of himself standing on two skulls, one labelled ABH (A Barbadian's Head) and on labelled AMH (A Martiniquian's Head).

Roberts sailed north to Newfoundland capturing ships along the way. His reputation was such that in June 1720 the was able to force the town of Trepassey to surrender simply by sailing in with black flags flying and trumpets playing. This lack of resistance angered him and he burnt all the ships in the harbour when they left. He captured around ten French vessels during July, transferring his command to one of this prizes which he renamed *Good Fortune*. By September he was back in the West Indies where he refitted the *Good Fortune*, renaming it the *Royal Fortune* (the first of many ships that would be given this name by Roberts). During this time he also caught the Governor of Martinique who he hung from the yardarm of the *Royal Fortune*.

By the spring of 1721, Robert's activities had brought trade in the West Indies to a standstill. Deprived of prizes, Roberts took the *Royal Fortune* across the Atlantic to West Africa. By late April, Roberts was at the Cape Verde islands where the leaky *Royal Fortune* was abandoned and his command transferred to the recently captured *Sea King* (which was renamed *Royal Fortune*). During 1721 he cruised off the coasts of the countries that are now known as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria, capturing several slave ships and their escorts, one of which, a frigate named *Onslow* became the last *Royal Fortune*. A Royal naval force was dispatched to hunt down the pirates.

On the 5th February 1722, HMS *Swallow*, under Captain Chaloner Ogle, came across Robert's fleet off of Cape Lopez. At this time, it consisted of three ships: the *Royal Fortune*, the *Ranger* and the *Little Ranger*. Ogle lured away the *Ranger* by imitating a merchant ship. Once out of sight of the other pirates,

the *Swallow* opened her gun-ports and – eventually – took the *Ranger*. On the 10th February, the *Swallow* returned to Cape Lopez, finding the *Royal Fortune* still there. On the 9th, Roberts had taken the *Neptune* and his men were still celebrating. In addition, the lookouts apparently thought that the approaching ship was the returning *Ranger*. As he usually did before battle, Roberts dressed in his finest clothes. One contemporary account describes him as:

a gallant figure ... being dressed in a rich crimson damask waistcoat and breeches, a red feather in his hat, a gold chain round his neck, with a diamond cross hanging to it, a sword in his hand, and two pairs of pistols slung over his shoulders

Roberts attempted to escape, but had to pass the *Swallow* in order to do so. The *Swallow* delivered two board-sides, the second of which killed Roberts. His body was thrown overboard before Ogle could capture the vessel – fulfilling the wish of the last of the Golden Age pirates that he be buried at sea.

Modern Piracy

The modern-age piracy off the coast of Somali grew from a now-familiar set of roots: lawlessness (a protracted civil war) and deprivation (the collapse of the local fishing industry due to pollution and over-fishing by foreign factory ships).

Somalian piracy is mostly for ransom, either of cargo or crew. Modern sea freight is too difficult to convert into other forms of wealth without the sort of infrastructure that Somalia simply does not have. A cargo of limousines is worthless in a country without proper roads, but is worth a fortune to Mercedes-Benz. Weapons shipments are a different matter and have been targeted.

Pirates have always taken advantage of the latest technology available and this modern incarnation is no exception. Raids are co-ordinated using GPS systems, ransoms are authenticated using currency counting machines and investors can even buy and sell shares in upcoming attacks through a stock exchange. The raids themselves are carried out by small boats operating from a larger "mothership" (often a converted fishing trawler). Coming alongside their target, they issue threats backed up by automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades. In almost all of the attacks, the hijackers have not harmed their hostages – even going so far as to hire caterers to provide them with Western food.

Powder, Passion and Plunder

Piracy off the coast of Somalia began to rise in the 1990s and appears to be on the wane as this book is being written. The most vulnerable sea routes are now avoided, ships travel in convoys for protection while off the coast of Africa and the navies of the developed world are now properly protecting the interests of their respective countries. While this particular wretched hive of scum and villainy may have been suppressed, piracy can emerge anywhere where the conditions are right.

Life at Sea

We'll begin with a few nautical terms. The front of the ship is known as the bow; the rear the stern. If you are standing on board a ship and facing the bow, the left-hand side of the ship is known as port; the right-hand side is starboard. The sails on a sailing ship are suspended from the mast(s) using the rigging and the ship is steered with a rudder, connected (usually by chains) to the ship's wheel.

Most pirates stole their ships or obtained them through mutiny; the initial vessel was often abandoned when something more suitable was captured. During the

Golden Age, the smallest vessel practical for piracy was the single masted sloop or cutter. These could carry a proportionally huge "spread" of sail, making them very fast and manoeuvrable. The largest sloops could carry up to seventy-five men and sixteen guns. The schooner is a two-masted variant on the sloop.

The brigantine was larger vessel, two masted, around eighty feet long and capable of carrying over a hundred men. Its sails could be arranged in a variety of combinations to take advantage of different wind conditions (technically, the foremast carried a square-rigged sail while the main mast had a fore-and-aft rigged mainsail and a square-rigged topsail). While fast and manoeuvrable, the disadvantage of these smaller vessels is that they could only carry a limited amount of supplies. Either the captain would have to put into port often or they would have to take the needful from their prizes.

A true ocean-going ship would have three, square-rigged masts (think of the typical Hollywood depiction of a sailing ship). The more successful pirates (Teach, Vane, Roberts) preferred ships of this type. Teach's *Queen Anne's Revenge* was an ex-slaver, converted to carry forty guns. This made her the equal of any naval frigate while still being fast enough to escape from a larger warship. A normal merchant ship would carry less than sixteen guns (and would rarely have the crew to operate all of them).

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the life of a seaman was nothing if not gruelling. Constant dampness and discomfort, poor conditions and danger ever-present. Food was often rotten or vermin-infested and insufficient; drinking water usually foul. If the sea or the stores didn't kill you, then disease might – over half of all deaths at sea were due to illness (scurvy, typhus, tuberculosis, dysentery, smallpox and sexually transmitted diseases). The close-quarters below-decks were ideal for the transmission of disease and each new port was a reservoir of potential new infections. But unlike merchant or naval crews, pirates or privateers had the possibility of making up from the dreadful life with a huge financial reward.

Pirate Crews

According to court records, the overwhelming majority of Golden Age pirates were veteran seamen, having gained their experience on board merchant vessels, warships or privateers. Most were either English or from the American or Caribbean colonies –

period were replaced later in the period by canvas trousers cut a few inches above the ankle – both were sometimes waterproofed with a thin layer of tar. Shoes were often only worn when the sailor was ashore, sometimes with grey woollen stockings. Neck-scarves were common. Headgear was vital to protect against the Caribbean, African or Indian sun; a knotted scarf, tricorne hat or a woollen cap.

However, fabric and clothing were commonly part of the cargo of a captured vessel, so a pirate could be wearing anything: velvet jackets, taffeta breeches, silk shirts, scarves and stockings, finely detailed felt tricornes and lots of jewellery. Many pirate captains fancied themselves as gentlemen – this meant breeches, waistcoat and a long outer coat, all made from the finest fabrics available (take Bartholomew Roberts, for example, see page 10).

Articles

By the Golden Age of Piracy (see page 6), pirate crews had begun operating under a set of rules which became known as "the articles of agreement", "the pirate's code" or simply "articles". While the details varied from captain to captain – sometimes even from voyage to voyage – they all included a code of behaviour, the share of the plunder that each crewman would receive and compensation for the injured.

After they had been agreed, each crewman would sign or make his mark on the articles, which would be then posted in a prominent place (such as the door to the captain's cabin). While most crew would sign willingly, some captives with valuable skills (such as navigation or carpentry) were forced.

Few complete sets of articles have survived. If a crew felt that they at the point of capture or surrender they would attempt to burn the articles or throw them overboard, to prevent them being used as evidence at trial. Many pirates were hung because their mark was found on a set of articles.

One set that has survived – typical of the kind – are those set down by a Captain John Phillips of the *Revenge*. A copy (with my annotations *in italics*) can be found below – you might like to use it as a guide:

though there were a large percentage of black men of African descent (piracy being a welcome alternative to slavery).

The captain was usually elected into office (in stark contrast to the near-absolute power granted in law to sea captains) and governed according to set of articles (see below) that were mutually agreed. The quartermaster was (usually) the only other elected officer – he was the captain's second-in-command and represented the interests of the crew. The other officers were appointed – either by the captain or jointly with the quartermaster. The sailing master (or master) was responsible for navigation (and was frequently the only literate man on board). The boatswain was in charge of maintaining the ship, sails, rigging and tackle. The gunner supervised the ship's armament, the gun crews and all communal small arms. Larger vessels might have a sail-maker, a carpenter and – occasionally – a surgeon.

First and foremost, pirates were seamen and their default mode of dress was the same as other seamen of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Short jackets of a heavy blue or grey cloth (known as "fearnoughts") were worn under heavy canvas coats in foul weather. Shirts were linen, either plain or checked (usually white and blue). Occasionally a waistcoat of blue or red was worn. The knee britches of the early

Every Man Shall obey civil Command; the Captain shall have one full Share and a half of all Prizes; the Master, Carpenter, Boatswain and Gunner shall have one Share and quarter. *(and the rest of the crew would receive one share*

POWDER, PASSION AND PLUNDER

of any plunder. This is a significantly more equitable division than would be made on board a privateer or naval vessel)

If any Man shall offer to run away, or keep any Secret from the Company, he shall be marooned *(set ashore at a remote place)* with one Bottle of Powder, one Bottle of Water, one small Arm, and Shot.

If any Man shall steal any Thing in the Company, or game, to the Value of a Piece of Eight, he shall be marooned or shot.

If any time we shall meet another Marooner that Man shall sign his Articles without the Consent of our Company, shall suffer such Punishment as the Captain and Company shall think fit.

That Man that shall strike another whilst these Articles are in force, shall receive Moses's Law (that is, 40 Stripes lacking one) on the bare Back.

That Man that shall snap his Arms *(discharge a flintlock weapon, even if unloaded)*, or smoke Tobacco in the Hold, without a Cap to his Pipe, or carry a Candle lighted without a Lanthorn, shall suffer the same Punishment as in the former Article. *(fire was a huge risk on board a wooden boat carrying large quantities of explosive gunpowder)*

That Man shall not keep his Arms clean, fit for an Engagement, or neglect his Business, shall be cut off from his Share, and suffer such other Punishment as the Captain and the Company shall think fit.

If any Man shall lose a Joint in time of an Engagement, shall have 400 Pieces of Eight; if a Limb, 800. (*much better pension than offered by the Navy*)

If at any time you meet with a prudent Woman *(respectable – i.e. not a prostitute)*, that Man that offers to meddle with her, without her Consent, shall suffer present Death. *(for two reasons, this rule was as much a matter of discipline and practicality as it was of decency. Firstly, if a woman was considered to be part of the plunder under the article I, how would she be shared? Men fight over women in the best of circumstances and a breakdown a in crew's sense of fraternity would be fatal for morale. Secondly, while the master of a merchant vessel would have purchased insurance for his cargo*

– and be able to write it off if it was taken by pirates – no such insurance is available for the "virtue" of his wife or daughter. Men are much more likely to fight to the death in defence of their loved ones than in defence of their property)

PIRATE FLAGS

Intimidation was a major weapon in the pirate's armoury and the flag was a tool for creating fear and dread in their enemies. If they could "persuade" a merchantman to heave to and surrender without a fight then the pirates could obtain the ship and cargo without any risk to themselves. The imagery was typically associated with a particular pirate captain (and, thus, his reputation). The iconic skull-and-crossbones, for example, belonged to Edward England. The term "Jolly Roger", however, is probably from the French term for the red privateering flag "*jolie rouge*" and was applied to any privateering or pirating flag, no matter what the design.

SEA BATTLES

The goal of a pirate captain was to force his opponent to surrender so that the ship could be plundered. If the ship or captain had a fearsome reputation then merchants would often surrender without a fight.

The position of the two forces relative to the prevailing wind was of vital importance. The upwind ship had the advantage can could dictate the terms of the engagement – especially if they could get between the wind and the downwind ship, depriving the opponent of their means of propulsion.

During the Golden Age, even the smallest merchant vessels carried artillery pieces (known as "guns"

hereafter because "cannon" properly refers to a particularly type and size of gun). Each gun was mounted on a four-wheeled carriage to absorb the recoil and allow the gun to be pulled back into the ship for reloading. The tools need to clean and operate the gun ("wormer", "rammer", "sponge" and a ladle for the powder) were stored on the carriage.

A typical gun, such as those mounted on a sloop, schooner or merchantman would be a "4-pdr." (pronounced "four-pounder"), capable of launching a four pound round shot around 1,000 yards. More substantial armament was carried by larger vessels. When captured, Bartholomew Robert's *Royal Fortune* was recorded as carrying four 12-pdrs., twenty 8-pdrs. and a number of 6- and 4-pdrs.

Black-powder cannon are inherently inaccurate, particularly when mounted on a platform as unstable as a tall ship. A ship would generally mount their main guns in two batteries – one facing to port and one to starboard – and the men would be trained to fire all the gun's in battery in one, simultaneous broadside. The weakest areas on a vessel's hull were the bow and the stern. If a ship managed to discharge a broadside into these locations it was said to "rake" the other vessel. The damage could be devastating as the shot would pass down the whole length of the ship. In addition, a "stern rake" attacked a larger target than a "bow rake" and was likely to damage the rudder and disrupt the ship's ability to steer. In terms of the SotC combat system, damage to rudder or rigging can be represented by consequences and a manoeuvre can put a ship into a position for a rake or stern rake (a fragile aspect that can be tagged to modify a Guns check).

Round shot was used to attack the hull of an opponent, but pirates generally preferred not to damage their prize. Chain shot (two hemisphere's linked together with a chain) or barshot (two balls joined with a bar) were fired at the rigging, cutting down sails, damaging masts and reducing the enemy's ability to escape. Grape or canister shot (musket balls and scrap iron, sometimes packed in a canister) was used at close range to disable the enemy crew.

If intimidation and cannon-fire weren't enough to force surrender, then the pirates would have to board their target. They would need to manoeuvre alongside and (often) deliver a final broadside. Grappling irons would be either be thrown or fired across the gap between the two ships and used to haul the ships together. Despite what Hollywood would tell you, the preferred method was to grapple stern-to-stern, to provide the largest
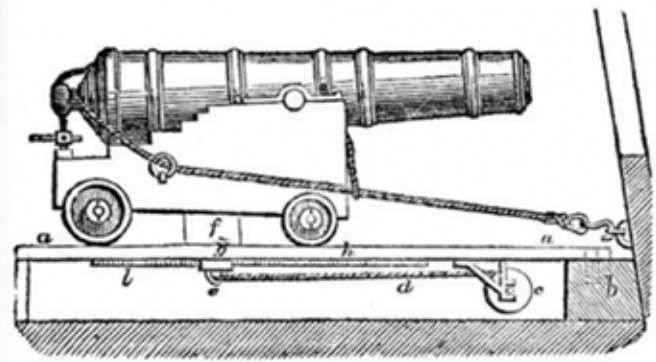
possible area to fight while preventing the ship's rigging becoming entangled. If available, grenades, thunderflashes and smoke bombs would be thrown onto the opponent's deck. The pirates would then swing or jump aboard and a fierce mêlée would begin.

While full-size military muskets were carried and used (especially on ex-privateering vessels), pistols and blunderbuss's were more compact and (thus) versatile. Teach is said to have carried six pistols in a custom-made harness as well as a sword and a knife. Pistols were often tied to a belt to avoid them being lost overboard – one recovered from the wreck of Samuel Bellamy's ship was wrapped in a long length of red silk ribbon. The cutlass was the preferred hand-to-hand weapon – a heavy weapon, cheap to manufacture and a stage in the evolution of the sword from the earlier broadsword to the later heavy cavalry blades. The smallsword was favoured by naval, ex-naval and some merchant captains, but the lighter blade would have been more suited to duelling. Every seaman would have carried a knife and other weapons included six-foot boarding pikes, ship's axes and a type of curved hunting sword known as a hanger.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES FACT AND FICTION

In preparing this text, I used two major sources. The first is Captain Ben Johnson's 1724 book, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pyrates*. The author's name is almost certainly a pseudonym – possibly for Daniel Defoe. The text is now public domain and widely available, but if you can a version one that includes the original engravings, do so. As a near-contemporary account of the Golden Age of Piracy, its language is very evocative and content

surprisingly accurate (particularly in the first volume).

My other significant source was *Pirates 1660-1730* by Angus Konstam and available from Osprey Publishing (ISBN: 9781855327061). It's a much more modern and scholarly work than Johnson's, aimed at wargamers, modellers and re-enactors. As such it's very accessible and I thoroughly recommend it. For the detail on the *wako* of Japan, I relied on another book from Osprey, *Pirate of the Far East 811-1639* by Stephen Turnbull (ISBN: 9781846031748).

The legends surrounding Captain Kidd (see page 9), influenced both Edgar Allan Poe's *The Gold-Bug* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. The "traditional" cliché of a pirate accent is based on Robert Newton's West Country accent in his performance as Long John Silver in the 1950 film of *Treasure Island*.

Do I need to mention the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films? The Brethren Court is based in part on the real-life pirates of Tortuga (as are the Brethren of the Coast in the sample campaign background – see page 30).

YOUR PIRATE CAMPAIGN

The typical approach to designing a campaign is to string together a series of linked sessions with a plot (in SotC, you can and should use the PCs aspects for inspiration and to tie their motivations to this plot). There is an alternative, known as the sandbox campaign, which can work very well with pirate campaigns. It's a bit more work, but the results can be more rewarding because the players feel that they have more control over their character's destinies – as opposed to being "pulled along by the plot train".

A sandbox campaign is, effectively, a detailed campaign world, usually with a time-line of planned events with which the characters can influence and interact. For example, assume that the PCs begin (as is traditional) in a bar in a pirate haven such as Nassau. In a plot-based campaign, you would plant a set of rumours or have an event happen that would lead the PCs towards the first event of the plot. In a sandbox campaign they might hear a rumour that a Spanish treasure fleet is being prepared and that Blackbeard is planning a raid on Port Royal. Now it's entirely up to the PCs what they decide to do. They can intercept the treasure fleet, tip off the Navy about Blackbeard's plans, join forces with Blackbeard (and suggest the fleet might be an easier target) or do something completely different like raid fishing boats off of Cuba or hunt for Captain Kidd's treasure. It's entirely up to them. The

simplicity of the SotC SRD makes it easier to come up with encounters on the fly if the players decide to take the campaign in an unexpected direction.

But one thing that does need to be fixed is level of technology. Steampunk devices would be slightly incongruous in a golden-age campaign, but players who've picked the Weird or Mad Science stunt for their characters will expect to be able to use them. Follow their lead.

ALTERNATIVE PIRATE CAMPAIGN SETTINGS

When people think about the pirates, their minds usually default to the so-called "golden age" (see page 6), but – as we've shown – this isn't the only historical period where they were active. History and historical fiction aren't the only sources of inspiration for piratical campaigns, so here are two ideas for alternative settings.

SPACE PIRATES

As any GM knows, there are three sure-fire ways to improve any campaign: 1) setting it in space, 2) adding dinosaurs, 3) more ninja. Pirate ninja are historically accurate (see page 5), no matter how large, a plesiosaur would make an impractical alternative for a ship, but space pirates are a staple of science fiction.

Space is big – really, really, really big. While this makes it easier for a pirate ship to hide, it does make it more difficult to locate a quarry and get within range without being detected. The technology of the campaign must take these difficulties into account (an ex-navy privateer ship might have stealth capabilities and superior sensors). Alternatively, you can take a space opera approach and hand-wave these difficulties away. Incidentally, raiding a stationary object such as a space station or a small colony would be much easier than intercepting a spaceship.

Space is dangerous – much more so than the high seas. On the other side of the bulkhead is a deadly vacuum that is either perilously cold or filled with lethal radiation depending on whether or not you are in direct sunlight. The threat of death would be enough to make many captains surrender or a pirate crew might find it easier to cripple a ship to the point where the majority of the crew are dead and then pick over the wreck at their leisure.

Fictional space pirates include the Boskone from E. E. "Doc" Smith's *Lensman* series, the *Star Trek's* Orion's,

and the Dark Eldar of the *Warhammer 40,000* universe. If you want further ideas for a space pirate campaign, Limitless Horizons is a sci-fi supplement for the SotC SRD and also available from UKG Publishing.

Air Pirates

Zeppelin and other dirigibles are a common part of steampunk and pulp campaigns, allowing large amounts of cargo to be shifted by air. Where there is trade, there are bandits and pirates.

Air or sky pirates would use smaller and more manoeuvrable craft to threaten a cargo- and passenger-carrying dirigible (given the simulated period, the pirates are likely to use bi-planes or other propeller-driven aircraft). Boarding a zeppelin in mid-air is difficult, but not impossible (and is very dramatic). It's more realistic for them to force it to land in some remote area so it can be properly plundered, but who wants realistic? Let your imagination run riot: a pirate haven suspended above the clouds by a thousand gas-bags; buccaneers using gliders and parasails to descend on their unsuspecting prey. If you want further ideas for a steampunk campaign, Brass, Blood and Steam is a steampunk supplement for the SotC SRD and also available from UKG Publishing.

Rules

This is the meat of this book, a series of optional additions to the SotC SRD that allow the GM to customise it to an pirate campaign.

Stunt Aspects

As it sounds, a stunt aspect adds an aspect to a stunt. For example: the player of a pirate captain may add the stunt aspect "Bloodthirsty Thugs" to their Minions stunt. This would be written on their character sheet as "Minions (Bloodthirsty Thugs)". When this stunt is in use that can be tagged or compelled as normal. For example, the Minions can be compelled to run amok during a raid rather than stick to the plan or the player of the character can tag the Bloodthirsty part of the aspect to do extra damage during a boarding action. Certain new stunts (see the New and Modified Stunts section on page 26) have optional or obligatory stunt aspects. Existing stunts (either from the SotC SRD or another source) can have stunt aspects added to them with the GM's approval.

Optional Character Generation Process

The standard character generation process in the SotC SRD is tied pretty strongly to the default setting and doesn't seem very appropriate for a pirate campaign. If you don't want to use Fast Character Creation, here are some guidelines

Character ideas

Some of the character ideas in SotC can be used without modification ("Academic", "Explorer", "Jungle Lord", "Man of Mystery") or can easily be given a piratical flavour (the "Plucky Reporter" becomes an entertainer or writer and the "Two-fisted Pilot" has a ship instead of a plane). The "Science Hero" and "Gadget Guy" character types are probably inappropriate in most pirate campaigns as science and technology are less emphasised. Here are a few other ideas for characters in a pirate campaign.

Governor

The governor is an officer appointed by his government. While the title might vary, he (and in this period the character will be a "he") is normally in charge of a port town or island. Due to the remoteness of his post he will be the supreme legal and political authority in the area. He has to maintain order, uphold the law and protect his country's interests within his territory.

What are you doing: Serving your monarch and protecting this outpost of civilisation.

Honest Seaman

The life of a mariner has enough danger without looking for adventure and excitement; most seafarers want to keep on the right side of the law. Younger sailors and those on their first voyage might still hold romantic notions about piracy, but circumstances and their older and more experienced comrades will try to rob them of their dreams. Older sailors will pepper their speech with anecdotes and accumulated wisdom and are likely to be very superstitious.

What are you doing: Trying to stay alive and earn a living.

Navy Officer

Any empire thrives on trade. These trade routes need defending and this is the role of the navy officer. Traditionally, naval officers are men of honour, but

this honour can bring the officer into conflict with his heart or even his duty if a superior officer is less than ethical.

What are you doing: Your duty and maintaining your honour.

Pirate

No God, no law and no country. Bound by nothing but his word, the pirate can be a romantic figure. Some used to be honest seamen or even navy officers that found themselves on the wrong side of the law – either due to a deliberate decision or by circumstance (perhaps their ship was taken they were given the choice of signing articles or walking the plank). Pirates spend money as quickly as they gain it, but a sufficiently large score (a Spanish treasure galleon or a buried horde) will allow them to leave this life behind. Many don't think this far ahead – each day could be their last and they live accordingly.

what are you doing: Looking out for yourself and that one, last, big prize that will allow you to retire in comfort.

Self-rescuing princess

During the golden age of piracy, there were very few acceptable roles for women within society, particularly those from the middle- or upper-classes. The self-rescuing princess is a young woman, born into and used to privilege, but who wants more out of life than being a dutiful wife and mother (and why not?). Strong-willed and more than a little spoilt, she will have romantic ideas of the freedom offered by the life of a pirate that will be tarnished – if not completely shattered – by the events of the campaign. In traditional pirate stories, this type of character will find herself in a situation where she needs rescuing by the leading man, but more modern depictions have her as a competent and self-assured character in her own right (think of Keira Knightly in *Pirates of the Caribbean*).

What are you doing: Finding out who you are and fighting to maintain that identity

Phases

These phases replace the character generation phases found in the SotC SRD. They're completely optional and are intended to get you thinking about your character in terms of aspects. In each phase you should select between one and four aspects, for the usual total of ten.

Phase one origin

In this phase you decide where your character came from and the events of their youth from around birth to just before they're considered an adult by their society. In this phase you choose one or two aspects related to their family, place of birth, a childhood friend or a significant event from this time.

Where the character grew up and who they grew up with will influence the character's attitude towards religion, social class, and other cultures. Are they cosmopolitan or xenophobic; a Luddite or superstitious? These attitudes might be important enough to reflect as part of an aspect. If the place of origin is famous or an important trading hub then this can become part of an aspect.

Phase two background

This phase covers your character's teenage years and early adulthood (if they are an adult). If your character completed an apprenticeship, went to university or undertook professional training then an aspect could reflect this. A first love is always significant and some friendships – or enemies – made at this time can last a lifetime. At this point your character be starting on their initial career – professional relationships and adversaries can be a source of aspects.

While we're on the subject of relationships – has this character ever been in love. Have they been married? How did it work out? Do they have children? What's happened to them?

Phase three uniqueness

All SotC characters are exceptional in some way. In this phase you decide how this unique nature is reflected in their aspects. An aspect should be linked to your character's Superb skill, customising or clarifying its use. In addition aspects can be related to their Great skills to one or more stunts (particularly if they are in a chain of pre-requisites).

Is there something else that makes them special? Are they the heir to a politically important family or the head of a guild; famous or infamous for something they didn't actually do, but legend has blown out of all proportion?
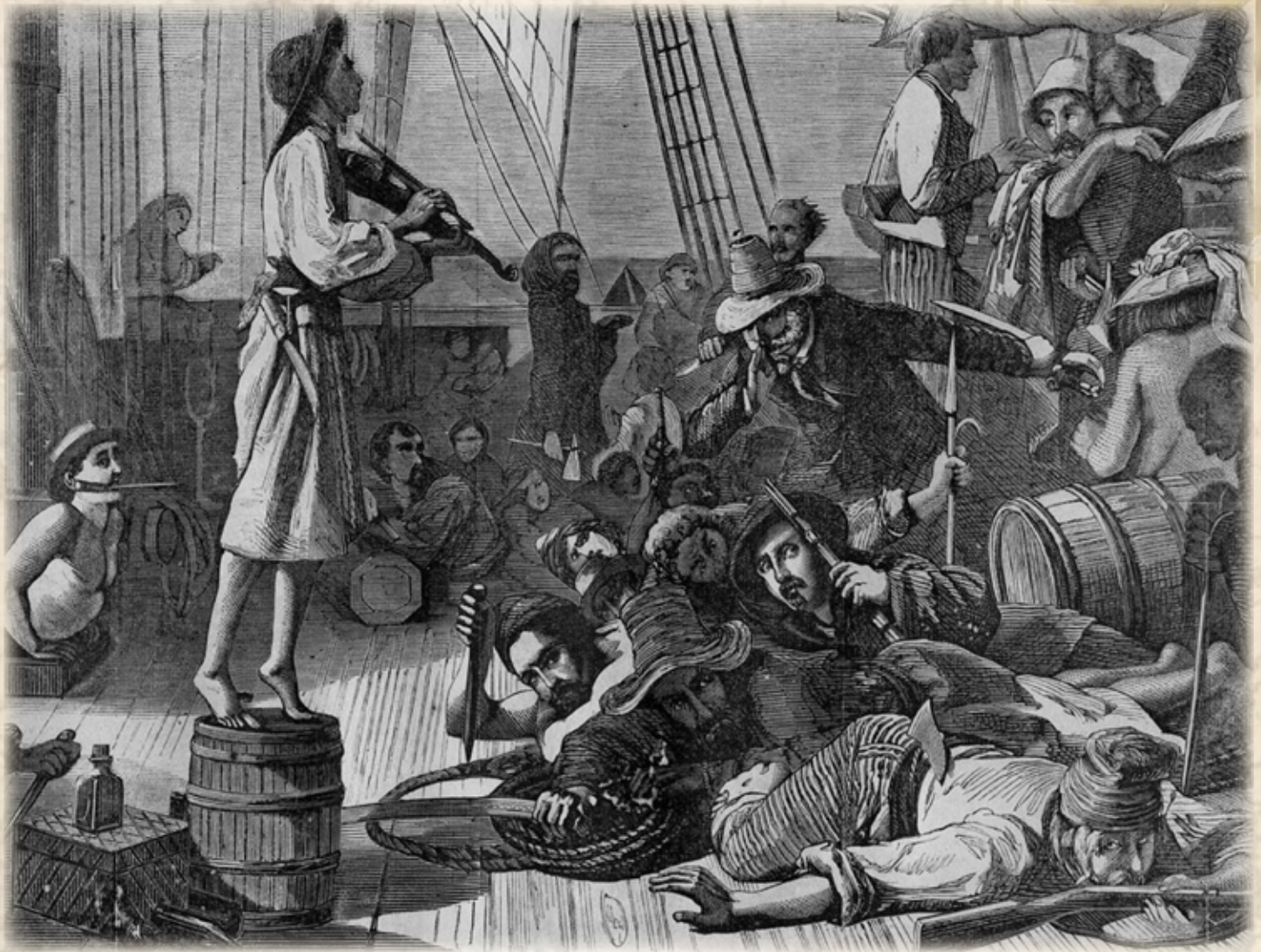
Phase four   motivation

This is the phase where you tie your character to the rest of the party or into the campaign. The GM might have a list of allied or protagonist organisations – if your character has an aspect that relates to one of these organisations it will be easier to relate the character to the GM's concept of the plot.

What does the character want? Money? Power? Fame? A successful career? To find or rescue their true love? The character's drives and goals should be reflected in their aspects.

Do the characters already know each other? Are they acquaintances, friends, professional rivals or even enemies? What is it that will get each character in the party to the first location of the first adventure of the campaign?

Phase five   rounding out the character

If you're still stuck for that last aspect, think about their hobbies, passions, pet peeves or prejudices. If completely clueless, Risus[1] clichés are practically identical to SotC aspects and the Risus Companion has many ways of generating that last #@!% cliché including the "Megaversal Omnigroovy Background Machine", "The Random Bad Thing That Just Happened To My Character Table" and, of course, "The Last #@!% Cliché Table". If you're *still* stuck, then just leave a gap and add it in play.

New and Modified Skills

Drive

Most pirate campaigns do not include self-propelled vehicles. When the PCs want to (e.g.) steal the Governor's coach, the animal handling aspects of Survival should be used to control the horses.

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1 Risus™ is S. John Ross' trademark for his Anything RPG. It (and the excellent, but completely optional, Risus Companion) can be found at http://risus.cumberlandgames.com/

Powder, Passion and Plunder

Engineering

In pirate campaigns, the standard of technology is generally lower than in the default setting of SotC. Because of this, the GM should ensure that the use of this skill fits in with his or her conception of the campaign world. The easiest way to do this is to restrict the Engineering stunts that a character can take – removing the Grease Monkey chain and keeping a close eye on Devices if they want a realistic level of technology (see sections 6.12.1 and 6.12.2 of the SotC SRD). However, the Demolitions stunt is highly appropriate and a new stunt (Shipwright – see page 28) replaces Grease Monkey when dealing with sea vehicles. Steampunk or Victorian technology is possible, but requires the Weird Science stunt as a pre-requisite. Engineering can also be used instead of Drive or Pilot when driving or piloting experimental vehicles.

Guns

In campaigns set in the Golden Age of Piracy, firearms are restricted to flint-locks and black-powder cannon. These are both unreliable (particularly in wet conditions), take a long time to reload and have a shorter range than the firearms available during the period covered by the SotC SRD.

Damp powder is less likely to produce an explosion. If it does explode, the explosion is likely to be weaker than normal or might take place after a spluttering misfire. Any aspects on a particular scene that represent rain, high seas or damp conditions can and should be tagged when defending against attacks using Guns. A

particularly bad result can indicate a misfire.

Flint-lock pistols can only be fired at targets in an adjacent zone; muskets have an additional zone of range, but receive a +2 penalty when firing at targets two zones away. The Long Shot stunt (see section 6.15.1 of the SotC SRD) has been modified for use in pirate campaigns (see page 27). Firearms with rifled barrels to improve accuracy at range do exist in the golden age of piracy, but are sufficiently rare to be considered to be Devices with the Extended Range improvement (see page 26).

Flint-lock weapons take a whole exchange to reload. Reloading must be a primary action during this exchange and none of the Ammunition stunts (Fast Reload, One Shot Left, Rain of Lead – see section 6.15.2 of the SotC SRD) apply to black powder weapons. The Guns skill cannot be used to make block actions due to the low rate of fire. A minion or companion can be tasked with reloading for a character, but they won't add their bonus in an exchange where they are reloading. Players may try to get around these restrictions by preparing or carrying lots of weapons, but they are heavy and expensive items. A Leadership check can be used to add an aspect to a scene that represents preparing and placing weapons in appropriate places (see the section on Leadership, below). If a PC tries to carry more than two pistols and/or a single rifle, feel free to give them a temporary aspect of Encumbered (Blackbeard's custom-made harness – see page 7 – could constitute a Device).

Intimidation

Holding someone at gun- or sword-point is a common trope in fictional depictions of pirates. This is a use of the Intimidation skill to perform a block action, where a character attempting to get past the block rolls Resolve to overcome the block. A character using Intimidation to make a block action must brandish a weapon and must be in range of the character or characters being blocked. Apply penalties to the Intimidation check if a PC attempts to block more than one character simultaneously. Character's can also make an Intimidation attempt in place of a normal physical attack. Intimidation is rolled as the attack, Resolve as the defence and the damage is taken against the Composure stress track

Leadership

For a character with aspects that represent military

training, this skill also covers strategy and tactics. This is used in an almost identical manner to casing (see section 5.6.1 of the SotC SRD). When performing reconnaissance or planning an upcoming conflict, the player can declare minor details or attempt to place aspects on the target(s). The player then makes a roll against a difficulty determined by the GM. If they succeed then the fact is true and an aspect has been added to the relevant scene, location or character(s). As always, the first +2 is free and subsequent tagging costs a fate point.

Strategy and tactics doesn't have to be restricted to military matters. A lawyer can use Leadership in the same way when planning a court case or a corporate takeover.

MYSTERIES

Voodoo and other pagan cults are a common trope of pirate fiction. Divination and communicating with the spirit world is covered by the standard use of the skill and the stunts in the SotC SRD. If a PC or NPC wants to lay a curse or blessing, see below. If your campaign needs more detailed rules for magic, Thousand-Faced Heroes, an epic fantasy supplement for the SotC is also available from UKG Publishing.

Blessings and Curses

Blessing and curses are types of Mysteries manoeuvre. As normal, they add a temporary aspect to another character that can be tagged for bonuses, re-rolls or compels (as usual, the first tag is free). Blessings and curses are usually fragile aspects unless spin is generated on the roll. If spin is generated, the sticky blessings and curses usually last only for a single scene (but the person laying the curse or blessing gets to decide which scene that is).

PILOT

Most pirate campaigns don't feature air vehicles, but airships, gliders and even heavier-than-air vehicles aren't completely alien to the genre. If these vehicles are common, then the Pilot skill can be used as normal. If not, then use the Engineering skill by default, though (for example) a hang glider could be piloted using the Athletics skill if the device had been created using an appropriate Alternate Usage improvement (see section 7.8 of the SotC SRD).

RESOURCES

Almost by definition, pirates collect plunder (see page 25 for thoughts on this subject). The abstract wealth system of SotC SRD is not designed to cover the PCs sacking a Spanish treasure ship and suddenly becoming very wealthy (on the other hand, systems that expect the GM to keep track of every gold piece can have a balance problem if the party has a sudden windfall, so it's swings and roundabouts). Here are some thoughts on how to handle hordes of treasure.

Firstly, everyone will want a share – the fair distribution of plunder is written into every set of articles that have been discovered. That treasure chest full of doubloons will look very empty after it's been split between Minions, Companions and crew. Secondly, if your campaign features advancement then a new aspect or stunt can reflect the character's new found wealth or an existing aspect can be modified. Thirdly, a temporary aspect such as "Pouchful Of Gold" can be added to the character that can be tagged or compelled as normal – this aspect can be fragile for small increases in wealth or sticky for large amounts, but when the money is gone, so is the aspect (see section 4.3.5 of the SotC SRD for details on temporary aspects).

SAIL

This new skill is effectively a combination of Drive and Pilot, but for sail boats and ships, rather than ground or air vehicles. Most of the guidelines for Drive and Pilot (including chases) apply to Sail. As well as being used to manoeuvre a boat or sailing ship, Sail is also used to navigate the vessel. New Sail stunts begin on page 26 – most are modified versions of Drive or Pilot stunts. The Sail skill also plays a vital part of ship-to-ship combat (see page 22).

SCIENCE

The Science skill stays much the same, but it will be limited and guided by the level of technology in the campaign. Using "Science!" as a declaration action (see section 5.25.3 of the SotC SRD) will generally only be appropriate in a pulpy pirate campaign. The Theory In Practice and Scientific Invention might fit, but Weird Science and Mad Science would be more appropriate in a steampunk pirate campaign (see page 17 and you'll probably want a copy of "Brass, Blood and Steam", also from UKG Publishing).

Powder, Passion and Plunder

Ship-to-Ship Combat

Ship statistics

In Powder, Plunder and Passion, ships have the following statistics:

A Size rating that will range from Mediocre for a rowing boat to Superb for a ship of the line

A Health stress track that depends on the vessel's Size. A rowing boat with a Mediocre (0) size won't have a any stress track (so any damage will inflict a consequence). A frigate with a Good (3) size will have a Health stress track of ☐☐☐, while a first-rate ship of the line with a Superb (5) Size will have a Health stress track of ☐☐☐☐☐

A Composure stress track that represents the morale and health of the crew. The size of this stress track depends on the vessel's Size (larger vessels require more crew and are thus more resilient to minor stresses).

 frigate with a Good (3) size will have a Composure stress of ☐☐☐, while a first-rate ship of the line with a Superb (5) Size will have a Composure stress track of ☐☐☐☐☐

A Resolve skill rating that represents the quality of the crew. Better than Mediocre Resolve will increase the ship's Composure stress track, as detailed in section 5.23 of the SotC SRD

A Sail skill rating that represents the ship's speed, manoeuvrability and general seaworthiness. This rating is modified by the Sail skill of the ship's captain (or the officer of the watch if the captain is unavailable or incapacitated)

A Guns skill rating that represents the number and size of the cannon mounted on the ship. Only ship-mounted weapons (or batteries of cannon on the shore) can damage something the size of a ship. Ship-mounted cannon have an effective range of two zones and can be used at targets three zones away at a -2 penalty. If a character with the Gunner stunt (see page 26) is in charge of a ship's guns, their Guns skill complements the Gun skill of the ship

Sample vessels can be found on page 39.

Framing the scene

Ship-to-ship battles usually happen in the open sea. In this case it's often easier to keep track of the relative positions of the ships (how many zones are between them), particularly if there are only two or three ships involved in the conflict.

If the battle takes place close to shore then the scene should be divided into zones as usual (see section 4.3.1 of the SotC SRD).

Establish Groups

In fiction as well as in reality, most pirate actions usually involved no more one or two ships on each side. In this style of conflict, each ship should be treated as a separate group.

However, huge, climatic sea battles are also an important part of the genre and treating each ship separately during a fleet action would be complex and boring. In large battles, only the flagships and the ship that the PCs are on (if it's not the flagship) should be detailed and the rest of the ships treated as minions. If one of these minions is taken out, it doesn't necessarily mean that they've been sunk, just that they will be taking no further part in the battle. Rather they might have fallen behind due to damage or be locked in combat with another minion ship.

Establish Initiative

Faster and more manoeuvrable ships have an advantage in ship-to-ship combat. The order of actions is determined at that start of a conflict, with ships acting from highest to lowest Sail skill (complemented by the Sail of the captain or officer of the watch). Ties in initiative are resolved in favour of ships with a higher Resolve. Actions taken by the crew in ship-to-ship combat happen at the same time as their ship.
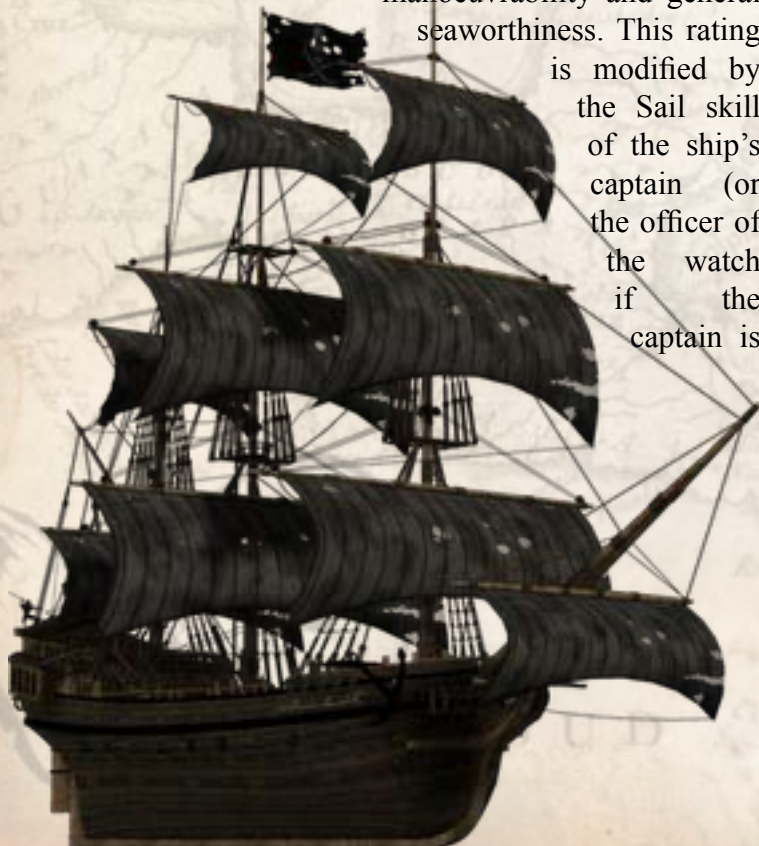
A ship can attempt to improve their place in the initiative order by making a manoeuvre targeting the ship they are attempting to out-sail. If this ship wins a opposed sail roll, they are re-inserted into the initiative order above the ship they defeated in this contest.

Taking Action

In almost all RPGs the PCs are at the centre of the action. During sea battles in Powder, Passion and Plunder it would be usual for the PCs to have some sort of command position. Each round a PC will be expected to be either at the ship's wheel or on the bridge in overall command of the vessel. This PC's Sail skill will complement the skill of the ship (see page 22) and the player of this PC will make the Sail checks for the vessel.

A PC with the Gunner stunt (see page 26) can take command of the gun deck. Their Guns skill will complement the skill of the ship as described in the description of the stunt and the player of this PC will make the Gun checks for the vessel. Other players can have their characters attempt manoeuvres, but it can be difficult keeping everyone involved during a prolonged sea battle. If, as a GM, you have a large party you might want to consider getting them into a boarding action as soon as possible.

Actions taken during a sea battle include: movement, attacks, manoeuvres, damage control, boarding, intimidation, rallying or ramming.

Movement

If the scene is divided into zones (as in section 4.3.1 of the SotC SRD) then each ship can typically move one zone per exchange. If the PC in overall command of a ship makes a Sail manoeuvre (deploying a spinnaker, catching the wind, etc.) then that ship may move an additional zone.

If the battle is in open sea and based on the relative positions of the ships then each exchange each commander must decide whether they are going to maintain position, attempt to close with another ship or attempt to increase the distance between them.

- If the commanders of both ships wish to maintain their distance then that distance is maintained

If the commanders both want to close, then the distance between them is reduced by one or two zones (or even more if one or both commanders make a Sail manoeuvre)

If one commander wants to maintain the distance

between the ships and another wants to extend or reduce the range, the commanders make an opposed Sail check. If the commander who wants to change the distance between the two ships wins then they may extend or reduce the range by one zone

If one commander wants to maintain the distance between the ships and another wants to reduce it, then the commanders make an opposed Sail check. If one commander gains spin on this check then they may modify the distance between the ships by one zone. Chases between evenly matched ships often lasted for days or even weeks (roll once per day in an extended chase) and required feats of seamanship and navigation (manoeuvres) to resolve.

This describes the situation if there are only two ships (or groups of ships) involved in the conflict. If there are three or more then things get more complex. You can adapt the guidelines above for triples rather than pairs, but you're probably better off winging it or dividing the scene into zones.

Attacks

As described on page 22, only weapons like black-powder cannon (or occasionally rockets) can damage another ship. A ship can make a single attack per turn with each of its batteries. Almost universally, ships in this period had one battery of guns mounted on each side of the ship, delivering a broadside. This means that a ship will be unable to fire upon a target they are approaching at speed unless they make a manoeuvre or the ship has an improvement such as Bow Chasers (guns mounted on the bow of the ship).

Attacks are made by rolling the Guns of the attacking ship. The defending ship rolls its Endurance. Stress is generally taken against the Health stress track, but an attacker can opt to direct their fire against the crew by using canister shot or the like. In this case stress is taken against the ship's Composure stress track (the attacker must decide the type of attack before they roll Guns). Consequences, concessions and being taken out are treated as section 4.3.5 of the SotC SRD. The section on sea battles, beginning on page 14, has some ideas that can be used for consequences.

Manoeuvres

Manoeuvres are treated as in section 4.3.5 of the SotC SRD. Sail or Guns will be the typical skills used to resolve manoeuvres though Leadership or even Engineering are also options.

Powder, Passion and Plunder

Sail manoeuvres allow the captain's to place their ship in an advantageous position allowing them to rake their opponents ship (a fragile aspect used to give a bonus to the next Guns check), catch their wind (a sticky aspect allowing bonuses to Sail checks) or deliver two broadsides in a single exchange by sailing between two ships (separate Guns checks would be made for each target). Guns manoeuvres usually target specific areas of the ship (masts, sails, wheel, rudder), adding a sticky aspect that can be tagged when making Sail checks against that vessel.

Damage control

Damage control is medical attention for ships and should be treated in a similar way. Use the rules for medical attention in section 8.3.24 of the SotC SRD, with Engineering instead of Science.

Boarding

If two ships are in the same zone or are about to enter the same zone, the players of any characters on either of the ships can declare a boarding action (boarding actions that don't involve the PCs are best handled "off-screen").

During a boarding action, the ship-to-ship conflict effectively "paused" and becomes a character to character conflict handled using the standard rules in section 4.3 of the SotC SRD. If a ship's captain doesn't wish to be bordered or wishes to disengage, then their player rolls an opposed Sail check (using the Sail of the ships involved, complemented by the captain's skill as usual). Scene-altering manoeuvres such as Grappling Irons or Entangled Rigging can be tagged to improve the outcome for the captain who wishes to maintain the boarding action. If both parties wish to disengage then switch back to ship-to-ship conflict for the next exchange.

The ship's guns will still be in play. At the end of each exchange of the boarding action roll Guns against Endurance for each ship, as described in the section on attacks above.

Even if a gang-plank has been laid, crossing between the ships will usually require some sort of Athletics check.

Any boarding action is a chaotic scene; aspects such as Shifting Deck or Smoke, Shrapnel And Splinters should be standard, plus any aspects that represent the weather or sea conditions.

Intimidation

This may sound strange, but many pirates had reputations so fearsome that their prizes would surrender without a fight. To represent this, a character may attempt to intimidate the crew of another vessel – this is typically accompanied by hoisting the Jolly Roger (or similar flag – see page 14). The character's Intimidation is rolled as an attack, defended by the ship's Resolve. Damage is taken against the Composure stress track. A character's first Intimidation check is free – subsequent checks in the same conflict will usually require a manoeuvre or tagging/invoking an aspect.

Rallying

A character can attempt to improve the morale of the ship's crew with inspiration speech or actions. Rallying is similar to damage control but applies to the ship's Composure stress track rather than its Health stress track. Use the rules for medical attention in section 8.3.24 of the SotC SRD, with Leadership instead of Science (if the character has the Sea Dog stunt – see page 27 – then they may use Sail to rally their crew).

Ramming

This is a desperate action, as likely to inflict as much damage on your own vessel as that of your opponent. To attempt a ram, your ship has to move into the same zone as your target and then win an opposed Sail check. If the ram is successful, both the ramming and the rammed ship take damage.

The ramming ship rolls an attack equal to the sum of the ship's Size and Endurance. Any shifts on the opposed Sail check are added to this attack; if the ramming ship has an improvement such as a ram then this should be treated as an aspect and can be tagged for free. The rammed ship defends using its Endurance.

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The rammed ship also rolls an attack equal to the sum of the ship's Size and Endurance, which the ramming ship defends using its Endurance.

Damage from a ram is taken against both the Health and Composure stress tracks. If both ships are attempting a ram, roll an opposed Sail check as normal. The winner of this check should be treated as the ramming ship; the loser as the rammed.

Ramming is often used as a prelude to a boarding action (see above). The ships are generally left entangled. To free a ship, the PCs will need to accumulate successes on Engineering or Sail checks equal to the damage taken.

Example: the *Africa*, a Navy frigate with Good Size and Good Endurance is rammed by the *Ruination* a sloop with Fair Size and Good Endurance. The *Ruination* generated two shifts on the opposed Sail check and has a ram. Good Size (+3) plus Good Endurance (+3) equals Fantastic (+6) so the *Africa* rolls an Fantastic attack. The *Ruination's* Fair Size (+2) is added to its Good Endurance (+3) plus the two shifts from the opposed Sail check to produce an Epic (+7) attack. In addition, the ram means that the player of the *Ruination's* captain can re-roll the attack or add two to the final result (as normal for tagging an aspect; see section 1.8 of the SotC SRD).

Running aground can be treated in a similar way to being rammed. The GM picks the level of attack and the difficulty of the Sail check to avoid the hazard. If damage is taken, need to accumulate successes on Engineering or Sail checks equal to the damage taken before they are re-floated.

Gadgets and Gizmos

State of the Art

The level of technology in during the golden age of piracy is much, much lower than in the period covered by the SotC SRD. The following is in the same format as section 7.l of the SotC SRD

Day to day

These items have been around long enough that no one even bats an eye at them anymore. If expensive or fancy, a particular item might draw notice, but the simple existence of these items is common and well known.

Steel	Safety Matches
Black powder cannon	Dip-pens and inkwells
Sextant	Wooden-hulled ships
Pocket-watches	Pendulum clocks
Flintlock pistols and rifles	Magnetic compass
Amputation	Cotton

Modern marvels

Cutting-edge technologies, these items are topics of conversation and will draw attention, particularly in remote areas.

Successful abdominal surgery	Firearms with rifled barrels
Accurate charts	

Soon to come

These items have not yet been discovered in this historical period, but the basic principles exist and it would only take a breakthrough by a genius. Scientist characters might be building the prototypes for science heroes to use.

Percussion-lock weapons	Breech-loading cannon
Anaesthetics	Ironclad ships
Accurate and portable timepieces	Accurate navigation techniques
Antiseptics	Submersible vessels
Steam power	

Dollars and Cents

Coined money was in short supply in the Caribbean and during the "golden age". The nearest mints were an ocean away and colonists didn't bring much cash with them. Coins of all nations circulated freely, but in small amounts – each merchant had to be his own *bureau de change*. We usually recommend producing your own version of the table in the Dollars and Cents section of the SotC SRD when designing a detailed campaign world, but, frankly, I'd just wing it. A typical pirate would spend money as freely as he stole it and a bad storm or unwise navigation could cause an entirely party to lose everything apart from the clothes they stood up in.

Ships

See page 14 on sea battles for the meaning of these statistics. Endurance and Composure would vary from vessel to vessel depending on construction, maintenance and morale (PC activities can improve these two ratings, while a long, hard voyage will reduce both Endurance and Composure). Cost is the Resources rating needed

to purchase one of items outright. These ships are described in more detail on page 14 and following.

Name	Size	Sail	Guns	Cost
Dingy/row boat	Mediocre	Good	None	Good
Sloop/cutter	Average	Great	Mediocre-Fair	Great
Schooner	Fair	Fair-Good	Fair-Good	Superb
Brigantine	Good	Fair-Good	Fair-Good	Superb
Merchant ship	Great	Average-Fair	Fair-Good	Fantastic
Privateer/Naval Frigate	Great	Average-Fair	Good-Great	Fantastic
Warship	Superb	Average	Great or better	Legendary

Travel and Communications

The major limiting factor in pre-modern civilisations was the communication links. A message can take weeks or months to travel by sea, particularly if a response is needed. A governor or navy captain will act as the representative of his government and will generally be authorised to negotiate on his monarch's behalf.

Improving Things

The rules as detailed in the SotC SRD stand, with a few exceptions:

The Speculative Science and Unbelievable improvements are usually inappropriate; the Futurization improvement covers experimental technology that is beyond what is available to the general population in this campaign.

An Independent or Conscious gadget has a single skill, at Mediocre level – this can be improved by the Upgrade or Craftsmanship improvements. Speculative Science or Unbelievable would usually be pre-requisites

New Improvements

The following improvement can be added to any gadget or artefact in a pirate campaign, subject, as always, to the GM's approval:

Extended Range: A weapon (usually a firearm) with this improvement can be used effectively at a greater distance than usual. A flintlock pistol can be used at targets up to two zones away (instead of one); musket or rifle can be used without penalty at targets up to two zones away without penalty and with a -2 penalty at a range of three zones

New and modified stunts

The following stunts are appropriate for any pirate campaign, at the GM's discretion.

Letter of Marque (Contacting)

Requires Master and Commander (see page 27)

You have been duly authorised by one government to conduct acts of piracy against vessels belonging to another, rival government. This gives you certain latitude with officials of the government that issued the letter, represented by a +1 bonus to appropriate Leadership, Rapport, Contacting and Resources rolls. However, there is a corresponding -1 penalty to Leadership, Rapport, Contacting and Resources rolls when interacting with officials of the government that your letter authorises you to raid.

Gunner (Guns)

The character is an expert with black power artillery pieces, allowing him or her to take effective command of a gun deck or a detachment of artillery. In ship-to-ship combat they can use their Guns skill to complement

the ship's skill (see page 22) and can apply manoeuvres using the Guns skill.

Long Shot (Guns)

This description replaces the one in section 6.15.1 of the SotC SRD when applied to black powder weapons. You can use pistols up to two zones away (instead of one); muskets can be used a targets two zones away without penalty and with a -2 penalty at a range of three zones.

If you are using a pistol with the Extended Range improvement (see page 26), you can target people or objects three zones away, but with a -2 penalty. A rifle with this improvement has a range of three zones without penalty and you can target people or objects four zones away with a -2 penalty.

Black Flag (Intimidation)

Requires Master and Commander (see page 27)

You sail under a unique flag (the design of which might reflect one or more aspects). That flag has gained a (deserved or undeserved) reputation for bloodthirsty deeds, so much so that merchant ships have been known to surrender the moment it's hoisted. You have the choice of:

Gaining a +2 bonus on Intimidation checks against crew of a single opposing vessel (see page 24)

Intimidating every opposing vessel that can see the flag (again according to the rules on page 22). A single Intimidation roll is made and each ship defends separately

This stunt can be combined with any bonuses from Big Name or Big Reputation (see section 6.7.2 of the SotC SRD)

Military Mind (Leadership)

You have had extensive training in military strategy and tactics. You gain +2 to Leadership checks during reconnaissance or while planning an attack (as described on page 22).

Military Genius (Leadership)

Requires Military Mind and one other Leadership stunt

When performing reconnaissance or planning an

attack (as described on page 22) a player normally only reveals or declares one aspect about the location or opponents, in advance. With this stunt, however, if the character gains spin on his roll, he may reveal or declare one or more additional aspects (one additional aspect at 3 shifts, two at 5 shifts, or three at 7 or more shifts). Further, regardless of spin, if the player is using the declare method with this stunt, he may save off from making his declarations until he's already in the middle of making the combat – in essence, retroactively introducing elements he'd "already planned for". Only one such retroactive declaration may be made per scene, but (except for truly epic battles), a combat rarely lasts only one scene.

Alternately, the character may trade in one of his "retroactive" aspect picks in order to declare up to three non-aspect-based lesser details about the scene. This may be done in addition to making an aspect pick for the scene.

Requisition (Leadership)

Requires an aspect representing a senior position in government, the armed forces or a multi-national corporation or conspiracy

Your position in your organisation is such that you can "borrow" large and/or valuable pieces of equipment or other resources. You can substitute your Leadership for Resources attempting obtaining equipment that could potentially be requisitioned through this organisation.

Sea Dog (Sail)

While on-board a ship, when commanding sailors or when using it in any nautical situations, your character may use their Sail skill instead of Leadership.

Master and Commander (Sail)

Your character owns and commands a sailing vessel (this includes a crew, but unless you also have the Minions stunt they have no additional in-game effect). When sailing this ship they receive a +1 bonus to Sail checks. In addition, the ship has a little something extra. Once per session you may spend a fate point and declare that it has some extra device (grappling hooks, a quick-deploying spinnaker for a speed boost, a ram or the like) – for guidelines see the Universal Gadget stunt in the SotC SRD. A stunt aspect (see page 20) can be used to describe the class, type and nature of this ship.

Powder, Passion and Plunder

Legendary Ship (Sail)

Requires: Master and Commander.

Your character owns and commands a one-of-a-kind ship. For starters, your once-a-session gadget, as described above, can have any kind of improvement.

Secondly, the ship has three additional built-in improvements you may select. These improvements must be defined in advance of a session (only at the beginning or end), but you needn't pick all of them at the time you take this stunt. Once they're picked, they're set until modified by a shipwright.

The ship is instantly recognizable as something unusual, unless you spend one of your improvements on making sure that it looks just like any other vessel of its base type. Regardless, once people learn of its nature, there's almost certain to be attempts to steal it or otherwise learn its secrets. You'd be well advised to take an aspect tied to your character's ship, so you can get fate points when this happens! A stunt aspect (see page 20) can be used to describe the class, type and nature of this ship.

Shipwright (Sail)

When it comes to ships and boats, your character knows them inside and out. Whenever working on a ship, you may use your Sail skill instead of Engineering.

Seamanship (Sail)

When attempting a sailing manoeuvre in a chase or in ship-to-ship combat, you may treat the difficulty as if it were one lower. The difficulty of the manoeuvre is not affected, however, for any ships that might be chasing you.

One Hand On The Wheel (Sail)

Sailing while performing some other action normally results in a -1 penalty. With this stunt, you don't suffer that penalty, regardless of whether you are rolling Sail (sailing is your primary action, and the supplemental action is something minor), or rolling some other skill (you're taking some other primary action, but keeping the ship on a steady heading isn't all that challenging, allowing sailing to be the supplemental action). Furthermore, if Sail would be a secondary skill that restricts or modifies a primary skill, but your Sail skill

is lower than the primary skill you're using, your Sail skill has no negative effect.

Legendary Seaman (Sail)

Requires Seamanship

No matter how crazy you sail, you always seem to pull it off. You can make near-impossible turns or manoeuvre in very shallow water without suffering any sort of increased difficulty due to environment, unless it is in fact physically impossible for your ship to sail through (e.g.) a reef. In many ways this functions like the Seamanship stunt, but instead of lowering many difficulties by one, it potentially lowers these specific difficulties quite significantly.

Flawless Navigation (Sail)

Unless bizarre circumstances are afoot (such as a curse by a god of the sea), the character can never be lost at sea. If something strange is happening, the difficulties to her Sail rolls are never reduced by more than two.

Lashed To The Wheel (Sail)

The character never faces increased difficulties due to environmental factors (darkness, weather) when sailing. This does not protect his ship from taking damage from the environment; instead the character's skill remains unreduced.

Quick Pick Stunt Packages

Governor

You are in charge of significant section of the campaign area, either *de facto* or having been appointed by your government

> **Core Stunts**: Big Man In Politics, Big Name In Politics (section 6.7.2 of the SotC SRD)
> **Other Stunts**: Any Leadership, Contacting, Resources, Rapport or Intimidation stunt

Navy Officer

You're an senior officer of your country's navy – perhaps with your own independent command (if you have the Master And Commander stunt)
Core Stunts: Military Mind
Other Stunts: Military Genius (see page 27),

Requisition (see page 27), Gunner (see page 26), Minions (section 6.18.1 of the SotC SRD), Lieutenant (section 6.18.1 of the SotC SRD), Reinforcements (section 6.18.1 of the SotC SRD), any Sailing stunt (see page 26 and following)

Pirate Captain

You might have your own ship or you might be "temporarily inconvenienced due to circumstances". Either way you're more than capable of motivating and controlling a ship-load of scurvy scum.

Core Stunts: Sea Dog (page 27)

Other Stunts: Minions (section 6.18.1 of the SotC SRD), Lieutenant (section 6.18.1 of the SotC SRD), Reinforcements (section 6.18.1 of the SotC SRD), any Sailing stunt, Letter of Marque (see page 26), Gunner (see page 26)

Introduction

This background fictionalises the historical Golden Age of piracy, in places both compressing and extending history for dramatic effect. The year is 1700. The Royal Navy have established a base in Port Royal. The Spanish are expanding their influence and the Brethren of the Coast have taken advantage of the tension between the British and Spanish Navies to increase their activities. It's a good time to be a pirate.

LITHOGRAPHED EDITION
WEST INDIA ISLANDS
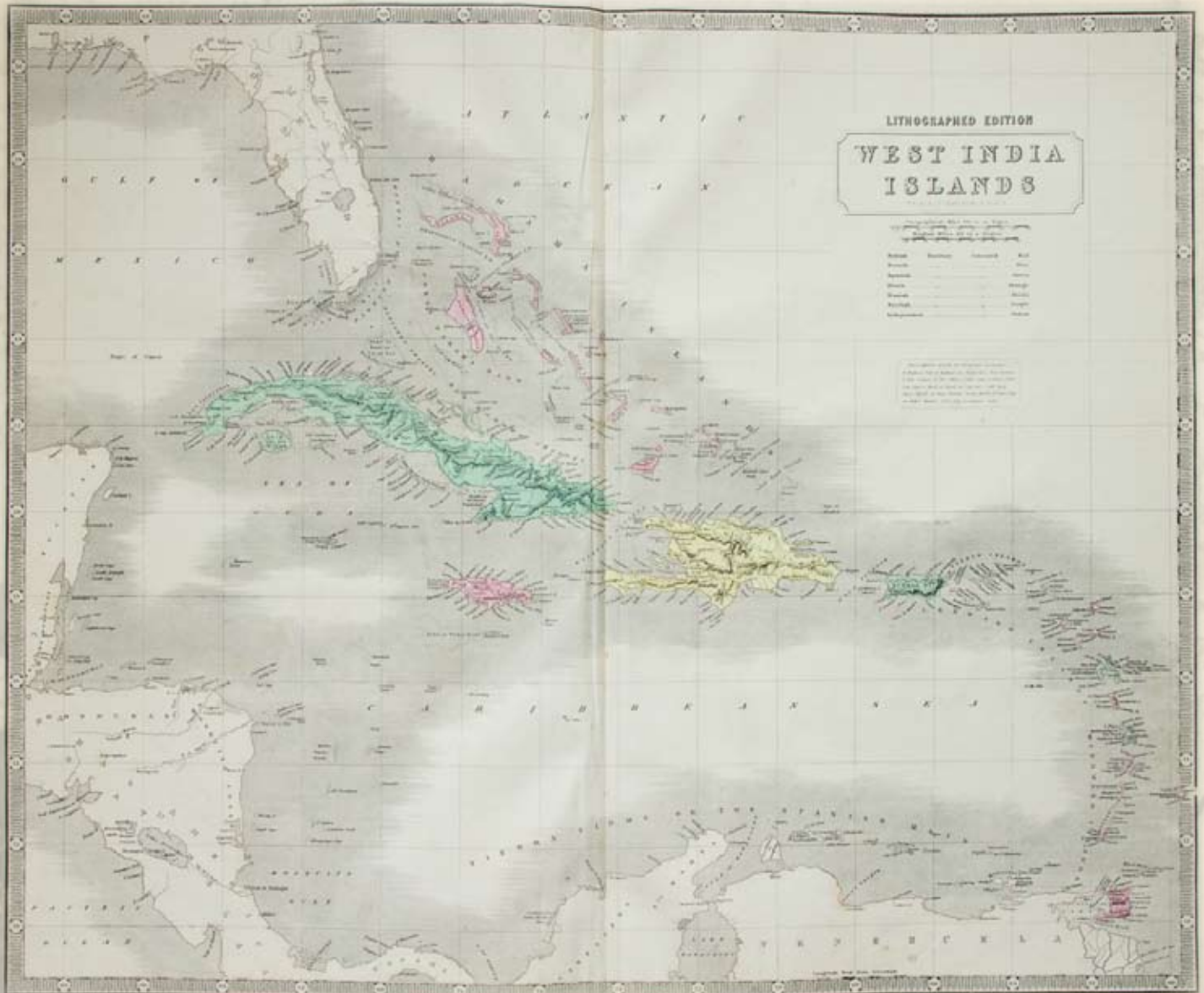
Powder, Passion and Plunder

The Caribbean

Major Locations

Port Royal

The the major port of the British colony on Jamaica and is recovering from the devastating 1692 earthquake. It's no longer the pirate and privateering haven it was in Morgan's day. The Royal Navy has a regular presence in the port and is building a permanent base. For British PCs with legitimate occupations, Port Royal is a home-away-from-home and becoming the centre of British authority in the Caribbean.

Nassau

If you're looking for a wretched hive of scum and villainy, then you'll find one on the island of New Providence in the Bahamas. George Phenney, the governor of Nassau will turn a blind eye to any amount of thievery as long as he gets his cut and can be bribed to ignore almost any other crime. He stays in his villa overlooking the town while the Brethren (see below) run the docks, the taverns and the brothels in the town below.

Tortuga

This is a French colony off the coast of Haiti, attempting to stay neutral in the conflict between Britain and Spain. The original Brethren were formed here sixty years ago, but dissolved when Roberts was killed and Morgan took a pardon and retired. The then governor stabilised the town by importing over a thousand women who had been sentenced to transportation for prostitution. Today, the colony exports rum, sugar and tobacco and is a staging post for those merchants who want (for some reason) to avoid Port Royal. Governor D'Ogeron is a harsh, but fair man, under orders from the King to keep the colony (and thus France) out of any conflict between Britain and Spain.

Power Groups

British

Britannia is just beginning to rule the waves, with the Royal Navy expanding its presence in the region and beginning to become the dominant power. Their only rivals are the Spanish and the Brethren. These tensions will eventually result in the War of Spanish Succession and the cleansing of the pirate haven of Nassau under Governor Woodes Rogers, but both these events are over a decade away.

The British (correctly) see the Caribbean and the American colonies as the beginnings of an empire and this empire will require reliable, well-guarded trade routes. As such, they are concentrating their attentions of the Brethren and it's only a matter of time before open conflict will break out between Nassau and Port Royal.

Spanish

Spain has squandered much of the wealth earned from its colonies. The yield from the gold and silver mines in South America is beginning to fall and its colonies have concentrated on mining and growing cash crops rather than becoming self-sustaining (in contrast to the self-sufficient French and British colonies). Once it could afford to lose the odd treasure-ship to piracy or privateering, now it cannot. Worse, its navy is over-extended and the Spanish Court hasn't yet realised that British control over the Caribbean will cut off their trade routes. The Spaniards still believe that they are the dominant world naval power and haven't yet realised that British now have the edge due to superior technology, training and discipline.

French

The French colony on Tortuga has reached its natural limit – if it grows much further then the land on the island would be insufficient to support the population. There is talk of forming another, larger colony on Haiti itself, but, so far, it's only talk. The French government is still supporting the colony financially, but is wondering why it isn't seeing the returns that the Spanish court see from their colonies.

The Brethren

In 1640 a fleet of ships under the pirate-turned-privateer-turned-pirate Henry Morgan sailed into Tortuga to meet a similar fleet belonging to Bartholomew Roberts. During an epic party lasting five days and nights, Morgan and Roberts cemented a firm friendship. Morgan's men were among the first pirates to sail under articles (see page 13), a practice that Roberts quickly adopted. A common code emerged and those pirates that followed it began to refer to each

other as brothers or "brethren". Roberts was killed off of Madagascar and Morgan accepted a pardon, but their code and their example lived on. The Brethren don't have leaders as such, but Edward "Blackbeard" Teach, Charles Vane and Ben Hornigold, successful pirates based in Nassau, all operate under the code (nominally in the case of Vane). It would work best if you use the articles on page 13) as a basis for the Brethren's code, and let your players use declarations to add additional clauses[2].

Morgans Treasure A Sample Adventure

Introduction

This adventure is can be used as a one-shot or as campaign starter. It features most of the classic tropes of pirate fiction without (hopefully) lapsing into cliché and covers the new rules from this book.

The adventure begins *in media res*, with the PCs imprisoned in Fort Charles, Port Royal, after a successful raid by the combined crews of Charles Vane, Edward Teach and Ben Hornigold. It might be best if the players are told of this during character generation (so they can tailor their characters accordingly), but here are some suggestions for why haven't been released by the Brethren:

- Navy officers, sailors, soldiers and government officials have either surrendered or been captured by the Brethren and have been slung into jail awaiting their warped ideas of justice

Pirates or similar criminals should have an aspect representing having one or more of the Brethren as enemies

A genuinely honest seaman or other civilians could have been involved in the failed defence of Port Royal or have otherwise offended the Brethren

"Self-rescuing princesses" (see page 18) or similar could be disguised as men and fall under the previous categories. Alternatively (and this might be more interesting), they could have violently and successfully resisted the unwelcome attentions of the some of the Brethren. One of the Brethren captains or other officer interrupted them and the would-be rapists were immediately executed for this breach of the Code.

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2 If you or they need additional inspiration, google Schlock Mercenary's "Seven Habits of Highly Successful Pirates"

However, the high-spirited PC promptly insulted the captain and has been slung into the jail to cool her temper. You can (carefully) act out this scene or just outline the details

Plot Outline

As stated above, act one begins with the characters in the same or adjacent jail cells in the bowels of Port Royal after a raid by the joint forces of the Brethren. During the night, one of their cell-mates dies of malaria; during his delirium he reveals the location of a treasure map that will lead its possessor to the lost treasure of Captain Morgan. The rest of this act deals with the PCs escape, locating this map in Morgan's mausoleum (which sank beneath the sea in the 1692 earthquake) and the theft of one of the Brethren's ships or the recovery of their own.

The map is incomplete. It gives the general location (somewhere on the island of New Providence), but the remaining half is hidden in the binding of a church bible in the chapel of Fort de Rocher on Tortuga. In act two, the PCs make their way to Tortuga, hire a crew for their stolen ship (if necessary), sneak into Fort de Rocher and locate the missing piece of the map.

In act three, the PCs sail to New Providence, evading the Brethren's ships, and locate the treasure in a sea cave. On their exit from the cave, they are ambushed by the Brethren.

If the PCs escape, the adventure will end there. If, however, they are captured, in act four, the PCs will have to either, escape from the Brethren, rescue their comrades and/or recover their treasure.

Act one: Port Royal

In this act the PCs learn about Morgan's treasure, escape from Port Royal, locate the first part of the map and steal a ship.

Scene one: In the dungeons

The dungeons of Fort Charles are unfinished stone blocks roughly mortared together, the floor stone flags over packed earth. Iron-barred windows look out over a sheer drop into the bay. The cell doors are wooden with a iron grating so that the warden can survey the room. The only furnishings are a straw pallets, a jug of water and a chamber pot. Any PCs presenting as women will be in one cell, officers and gentlemen in another, with the remaining PCs (and, perhaps, any minions or

companions) in a third cell. Also in this third cell is an NPC, Old Harry, an elderly petty thief with a severe fever (believing him to be infectious, the Brethren left him here when they freed the other prisoners).

The cells line one side of the corridor that leads to a guard post, a small room with a table, some chairs and three, more than tipsy, Typical Brethren (see page 39) who've been assigned as guards. The PCs will probably want to escape as soon as possible, but you'll need to ensure that they've extracted enough information point them in the direction of the plot.

A Fair Science check will diagnose that Old Harry is suffering from malaria. There's nothing to be done except to keep him cool and hope that the fever will break soon. The only medicine that the guards will provide is grog. If a PC is a doctor, they *might* send for his medical bag on a sufficiently good Rapport or Intimidation roll.

Old Harry will lapse into delirium. Believing any suitable cell mate is his late captain, he will begin raving that "*I never told 'em, Captain, I never told 'em – they begged and they weedled and they threatened, but I never told 'em*". A Great Contacting or Superb Academics or Leadership check will reveal that Old Harry once served as Henry Morgan's first mate and received a pardon at the same time as his captain – if Contacting is used to gain this information, the PC will also know that Old Harry brought a pub with his share of the booty, drank the profits and had been thrown into jail for being unable to pay his debts. Appropriate Rapport, Intimidation or Empathy checks (modified for the delirium, but remember that the PCs need the information), will reveal the following, interspersed with delirious ramblings:

- Captain Morgan hid much of the treasure he looted during the sacking of Panama

it was hidden in a sea cave

a map was made of the hiding place, but Harry won't say what happened to the map

When it's dramatically appropriate, Harry will seize the person questioning him by shoulders and gasp "*he took it with him! He took it with him!*" before expiring. Searching the body won't find anything apart from lice and fleas. A Fair Contacting or Academics roll will reveal that Morgan was buried in a mausoleum in Palisadoes Cemetery. The cemetery sank beneath the sea in the 1692 earthquake, but the graves are still visible at low tide.

Most players will spot the flashing-neon "adventure over here" sign, but others will need to link the hunt
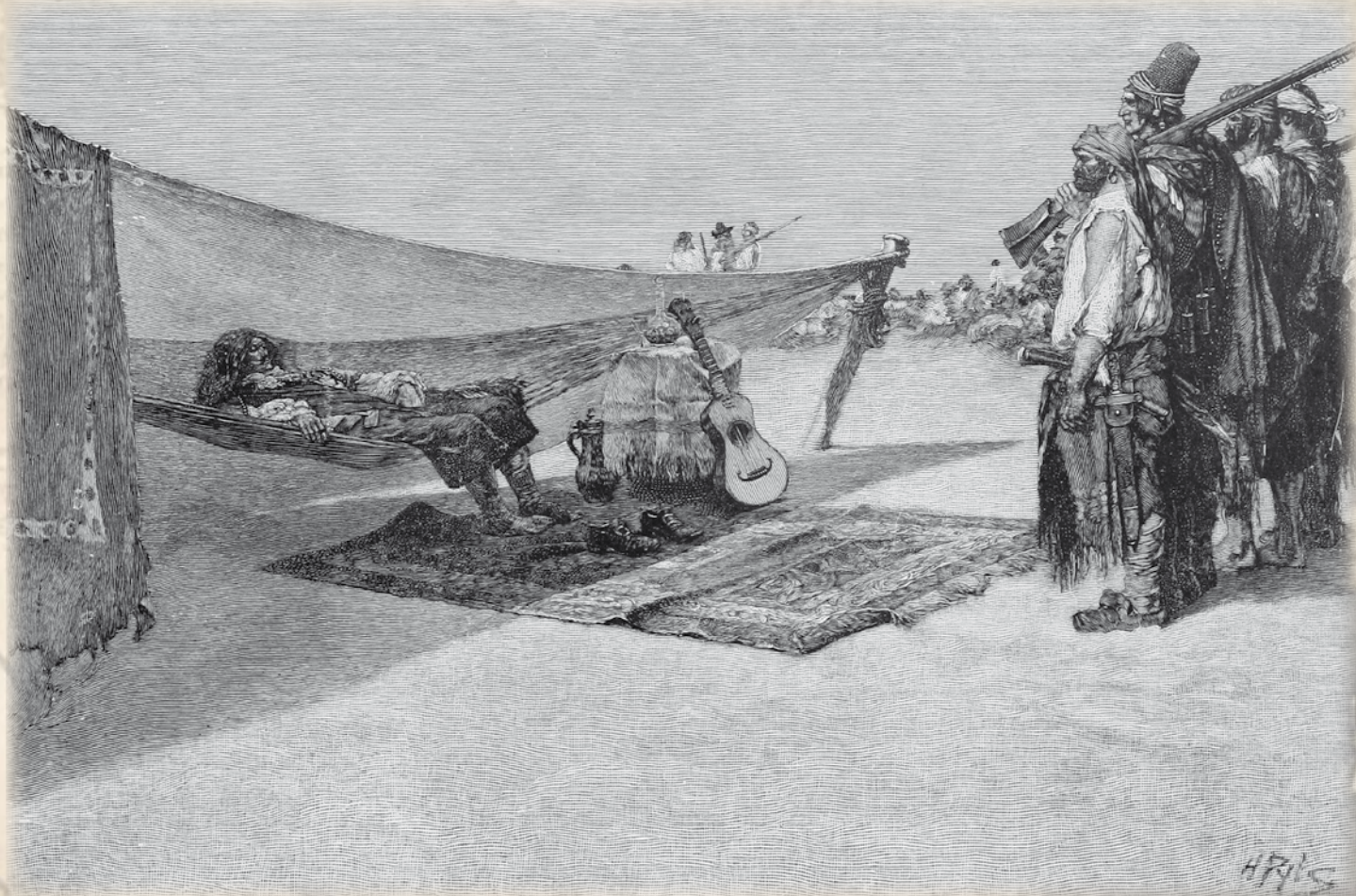
for Morgan's treasure to their character's motivation. If their senses of greed or adventure can't be compelled, then you (and the other players) may have to get creative. If a PC is the governor (or other politician) or a naval officer and the other characters are on the wrong side of the law then a deal could be cut. In return for a pardon and a share of the treasure, the pirates will assist the authorities in restoring government to Port Royal.

First the characters need to get out of their cells. Burglary combined with Stealth is an obvious solution, but male characters were thoroughly searched before being imprisoned (female characters less so). Hatpin Maestro's won't need their tools, but others would have needed to defeat the guards in a Sleight Of Hand versus Alertness contest to smuggle in any equipment. If they aren't disguised as men, female characters can invoke an aspect representing their femininity for free. An alternative is to get the guards to open the door. It wouldn't be hard to trick or intimidate them by defeating them in social combat. They will offer the concession of opening the door or setting them free if the PCs inflict a moderate consequence.

Once they are out of the cells you can improvise the rest of their escape. Any appropriately-skilled PCs should be given the opportunity to show off their Stealth, Burglary or Athletics skills as they sneak out of the fort and into Port Royal. All the pirates are carousing and celebrating their victory so there's no real guard.

Scene two: Palisadoes Cemetery

The natural harbour that makes Port Royal such a good port is protected by a narrow strip of land known as a tombolo (other famous tombolos are Chesil Beach in the UK and Chappaquiddick Island in Massachusetts). This particular tombolo is known as Palisadoes; until the 1692 earthquake Port Royal's cemetery was on Palisadoes. Any resident of Port Royal knows that the graves and mausoleums sank under the waves during the earthquake and that some can be seen at low tide (an Average Sail or Contacting check or a Fair Academics check will reveal that, today, low tide is just after dawn).

The best way for the PCs to get to the sunken cemetery is to sneak through the town and steal or "borrow" a rowing boat. Improvise the scene depending on the PCs plan – Stealth and Deceit checks are likely. Some PCs might also want to locate or check the safety of contacts or loved ones.

If the PCs want to catch the tide, dawn should be breaking as they row across the harbour to Palisadoes. Unless they are inordinately clumsy they won't be challenged. Rowing boats aren't unusual, even at this hour, any pirates are sleeping off their carousing and any townsfolk that haven't already left the town will be preparing to flee while the pirates are asleep. You might want to ask for a couple of Sail checks (perhaps modified by Athletics), but these will mostly be for show. Locating the cemetery shouldn't be hard – if a PC has sharp eyesight of has managed to recover a telescope, they just need to look for the tops of the gravestones or mausoleums.

Few people buried in Palisadoes were rich enough or famous enough to be have a mausoleum – the PCs can see the roofs of three protruding above the waves at low tide. A Good Contacting or Academics roll will be enough to find its exact location (if the PCs ask around about Morgan and his last resting place during this scene, make a note of who they ask – it will be important in act three). If they don't know which tomb they are looking for, inscriptions will be on or over the door and it will be the second tomb they investigate.

Swimming is an exercise of Athletics, modified by Endurance if the character is also trying to hold their breath. A PC Engineer may rig up a device to assist (a snorkel, or primitive air pump, for example) in which case, the Athletics check is also modified by the Engineering of the PC that has created the device. A Universal Gadget can be given the Futurization and Upgrade (Athletics: swimming or underwater swimming) improvements and give a +2 to these Athletics checks.

To obtain the map from Morgan's tomb, the PCs will need to complete the following tasks:

- Enter the mausoleum, either by forcing the partially ajar doors further open, or by breaking through the stone roof
- Breaking through the (already damaged) roof requires a Superb Might check (modified by Engineering if tools are used) or a Superb Engineering modified by Might check – up to two additional people can pitch in (see section 8.3.18 of the SotC SRD). If someone suggests using explosives, point out that the harbour is full of sleeping pirates and they *will* wake up if someone starts using demolitions

The lock and the hinges on the heavy wooden door have rusted solid, but the wood has begun to rot due to the exposure to the water. The door is entirely underwater. Forcing the door requires a Great Might

check (again, modified by Engineering if tools are used) or a Great Engineering modified by Might check – up to one additional person can pitch in (see section 8.3.18 of the SotC SRD). Any skill checks will be limited by Athletics (due to being underwater), and by Endurance (unless the PCs have rigged up some way to breath). Due to the muffling effect of the water, demolitions are an option. The PCs can use an appropriate Gadget or make a Great Engineering check in the fort armoury or the Port Royal apothecary's shop to create an explosive charge that will function underwater (such a check will take an hour)

Once the mausoleum has been breached, the PCs will need to make Fair Athletics check (perhaps modified by Endurance – see above), to swim through the gap and reach the coffin itself. Unfortunately, the coffin is now home to a moray eel (see page 39) that will attack the first PC to approach. All skill checks made underwater will be limited by Athletics. Unless the PCs have some way to breath, skill checks will also be limited by Endurance, and each PC must mark off a level of Health stress at the start of each exchange they spend underwater

The lid of the stone coffin shifted during the earthquake (which is how the moray gained entrance), but it will need another Might modified by Engineering or Engineering modified by Might check to remove – this time the target is only Good. As before, the skill checks are limited by Athletics and by Endurance is the PCs don't have some way to breath. Henry Morgan had been laid to rest in his finest clothes, with sword and pistol by his side (all of which have been corroded, or ruined by the sea – Henry himself has been reduced to a skeleton by hungry fish). One skeletal hand is across his chest, a lead scroll case clutched in his fingers. To increase the tension, roll some dice and make a note of the result when a PC extracts it from Morgan's corpse. They'll be expecting a scare, but nothing will happen

Scene three: Examining the map

The scroll-case has been wrapped in sheet lead to seal it against damage – a sharp knife will be needed to extract the scroll. Fortunately, the sealing worked; the parchment is in good condition and the ink only slightly faded with age. On one side is a map of an island – anyone who makes a Fair Sail or Academics check will recognise it as the island of New Providence. The port of Nassau is marked, but no other locations. The following is written on the reverse: *It's never easy, is it shipmates? You know the island, but not the cave. The other half is sewn into the binding of the chapel Bible in Fort de Rocher*. A Fair Contacting or Academics check will reveal that Fort de Rocher is a fortification on Tortuga.

Scene four: Stealing a ship

Unless the PCs took a long time getting the map, it's now a couple of hours after dawn and they can see the beginnings of activity on shore. The PCs need transport. Any Master And Commander (see page 27) will want to recover their ship, otherwise they'll need to steal one of the many pirate or merchant ships in Port Royal's harbour. Even with Minions, the PCs don't have the numbers to sail anything larger than a small sloop or a cutter (see page 14). A likely option is *The Speedy Retribution*, a ship anchored at the edge of the harbour. If a PC has an aspect related to one of the Brethren captains, it will be part of his fleet – otherwise it's part of Charles Vane's flotilla. Statistics for *The Speedy Retribution* can be found on page 39).

Whether the target is *The Speedy Retribution* or a ship belonging to a PC, it's currently in the hands of the Brethren. Characters with Burglary or Leadership skills can come up with a plan using the casing rules in section 5.6.1 of the SotC SRD and/or the new rules on page 20. The ship is moored off-shore so the PCs will have to either swim (Athletics), row quietly (Sail limited by Stealth), approach openly, but in disguise (Stealth) or come up with another plan. Once on board, they'll need to overpower the handful of pirates on board as quietly as possible. PCs with high Stealth and related stunts will shine here, but it's possible that PCs with a high enough Deceit or Intimidation can take over the ship without a fight. If necessary use the statistics for Typical Brethren on page 39), adding the Minions and Reinforcements stunts if the PCs really mess things up.

Once they have the ship, the next step is escape. If they used stealth or trickery then they should be able to "slip their cable", cutting the ropes that anchor the ship and be under way before anyone on shore notices that they're gone. If there was gunfire then they will have woken the whole harbour. The PCs will be chased by the *Swiftsure* a cutter with the same stats as *The Speedy Retribution* but with Fair Guns. If there's a pitched battle then the other Brethren ships will catch up, so play this as a chase scene according to the rules in section 8.3.8 of the SotC SRD, with Sail replacing Drive.

Once the PCs have made their escape, then they

should set sails for Tortuga. It will take around a week to get there – success on a Good Sail check can reduce this to a few days.

ACT TWO: TORTUGA

In this act, the PCs arrive in Tortuga. Depending on their social status, they may be invited to stay with the Governor in Fort De Roche. If not, they must break into the fort. Either way, they must sneak in to the chapel in the fort and locate the map, before escaping. Tortuga is a neutral port, so the PCs have the opportunity to and resupply their ship and hire additional crew members.

SCENE ONE: ARRIVAL

As described on page 30, Tortuga is a French colony and the original home of the Brethren. Under Governor D'Ogeron and his predecessor, De Roche, it has become a thriving colony. its main port is Cayona; Fort De Roche (the governor's residence) is on a hill overlooking the entrance to its harbour. Cayona is a typical small port town. Wharfs and jetties line the beach and there's a recently-completed sea wall protecting a tight cluster of wooden warehouses, taverns, shops and residences.

The last thing that D'Ogeron wants is for Tortuga to revert to a pirate haven. The port authorities are under strict orders to report any suspicious ships and – if necessary – deny them mooring. An under-crewed ship, with no cargo and (perhaps) battle-damage is practically the definition of suspicious. If they lie, then they'll need to beat the harbourmaster's Fair Empathy, but the truth (that Port Royal has been raided and they've managed to escape) will be a better option. They'll be taken through the bustling port and up the hill to Fort De Roche and interviewed by Governor D'Ogeron (see page 40 for statistics). He's a good-looking man, knowledgeable and intelligent. He wants to know all the information that PCs have on the nature of the fleet, numbers, the commanders needing it and will ask pointed and pertinent questions. He knows nothing of the map or Morgan's treasure and would think of both as part of the fiction that's already accumulating around the late pirate. Not everyone will agree with him, however, and if the PCs wave the map around or ask too many questions then someone may attempt to steal it (improvise the scene depending on where the PCs stay or what they do while they are in Tortuga).

Anyone identifying themselves as a naval officer, a government official or a member of the aristocracy will

be treated as honoured guests[3]. Given the restricted nature of high society in the Caribbean it's likely that PCs of high social status will have met D'Ogeron or at least know him by reputation. D'Ogeron will assume that any PCs of lesser social status are servants unless informed otherwise. The PCs will be offered rooms appropriate with their status. D'Ogeron will go out of his way to be charming to any aristocratic female characters, laying the groundwork for seduction. He will attempt to get reads on any PCs he finds interesting.

There are opportunities here to invoke or compel any appropriate aspects. Any pirates wanted by the French will be identified and arrested unless they are disguised (their companions will have to do some pretty fast talking if they don't want to share the same fate). As Britain and France are at currently at peace, D'Ogeron will treat any war heroes with the respect earned by worthy adversaries (however, if you want to throw in a sub-plot, his sub-ordinates might not be so forgiving).

France is a Catholic country at this time, while Great Britain (apart from Ireland) is Protestant. While it would be expected for a Catholic to visit the Fort's (Catholic) chapel in order to pray and take confession it would be unheard of for a Protestant. A player of an English character shouldn't be able to suddenly declare that their character is a Catholic – they'd need to have already declared it as part of an aspect or have a free, undeclared aspect. Faking Catholicism is an exercise of Deceit limited by Academics – stunts such as Walk The Walk or Mimicry will remove this limit. The chapel is the domain of Father Pierre (see page 40) and he is a naturally trusting man.

If none of the PCs are of sufficient status to be invited

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3 France and Great Britain are most definitely not allies and have been at war in recent years. A peace treaty currently exists between the two countries and both recognise the Brethren are a common enemy

to stay in the Fort, they can find lodgings in the port or an stay on board ship. If their ship is under-crewed (and if they are using the *Speedy Retribution* then it will be), then Tortuga is a good place to find shipmates. However, they will need to be paid or given the promise of it (perhaps you can have the PCs produce and sign a set of articles – see page 13). Represent this by having the PC captain or his representative make a Good Rapport, Leadership or Deceit check (using Resources is also a possibility if the player can figure out a way for their PC to get access to their resources). Success will raise the *Retribution*'s Resolve from Good to Great (spin will raise it to Superb).

Optional scene two: Dinner

> If, at any point during the adventure, the PCs want to improve their ship, then the rules are similar to improving the crew. A successful Endurance check with a difficulty equal to the current rating will improve Endurance by one level, or two if spin is gained.
>
> The *Speedy Retribution*'s Sail is as good as possible for its class, but the PCs can use a Great Engineering check to add as sticky aspect such as Quick-Deploying Spinnaker. If they manage to get hold of some more cannon (a Superb Resources check – though they might be able to take them from a prize such as the *Swiftsure* or somehow convince D'Ogeron to lend them – a Superb Rapport check), then they can make an Average Engineering check to raise its Guns to Fair (if spin is gained on this roll then they can also add a sticky aspect such as Prepared Broadsides). Each Engineering check to improve the *Retribution* will require a few days work, though the time can be reduced as detailed in section 8.2 of the SotC SRD.

Upper-class PCs will be invited to dinner with the Count, his senior officers and administrators, their wives (the Countess D'Ogeron refused to make the journey to Tortuga) and Father Pierre. Conversation will be light, guarded and polite, the food good and the wine even better. The Count will continue any attempt at seduction over dinner – treat this as an social conflict, D'Ogeron "attacking" with Rapport and the object of his affections defending with Empathy or Resolve. The player of the female PC can attempt a counter-seduction with Rapport or Deceit. A minor consequence would be Besotted; a medium consequence would be Infatuated (D'Ogeron will not push things further as he's looking for entertainment, not a long-term relationship). A PC

can offer a concession by rudely rejecting D'Ogeron's advances or making some other social faux pas that will place a sticky aspect on the PC's reputation. PCs not involved in any seducing can attempt reads or attempt to find out about (e.g.) the history of the fort or the colony (gaining bonuses to attempts to case the location). If necessary, the statistics for Typical French Officer and Typical French Bureaucrat are on page 40.

Optional scene three: Breaking into Fort Roche

If D'Ogeron didn't invite the PCs to stay in the fort then they will need to break in. The fort is on a hill overlooking the harbour, surrounded on two sides by sea cliffs. The outer compound is defended with an earthworks topped with a wooden palisade. The barracks and storerooms in the compound are constructed from wood. The central fort is formed form crenulated stone wall with cannon emplacements. A gatehouse leads to a courtyard; across the courtyard is the main keep. The keep backs against the cliffs.

The cliffs and the walls all require a Good Athletics to climb; the palisade requires a Fair Athletics. The guards are all Typical French Soldiers (see page 40).

Scene four: Inside the castle

There are no patrols inside the keep. Unless the PCs are inordinately unlucky, they will be able to creep around at night with little fear of being disturbed (but have them make Stealth checks for appearances sake). There will only be two people that can give them trouble: the Count D'Ogeron and Father Pierre.

If the Count attempted to seduce one of the PCs then he will meet that PC while she is sneaking through the halls of the castle. He will assume that she has agreed to the assignation that he has hinted at and will be confused if he is rebuffed. Comedy should ensue.

Father Pierre sleeps in a small room next to the chapel. Invoke his Light Sleeper aspect while the PCs are searching the chapel. Subduing him without raising the alarm shouldn't be difficult – he's only here to add colour to the story.

The chapel bible is in plain sight on a lectern. If the PCs are unwilling to utterly desecrate this beautifully illuminated artefact, a Fair Investigation check will show that the thread binding one edge of the inside of the front cover is less faded than the rest of the stitching. The other half of the map has been slid between the

thin wooden board used to keep the cover rigid and the embossed, tooled and gilded leather used to cover the board.

During the historical period that this adventure is set, even the most irreligious character will have some qualms about stealing from a chapel and assaulting a priest. You should compel any appropriate aspects. The chapel windows look out over the cliffs and could provide a means of escape if the alarm is raised.

This half of the map is a detailed map of a cove, including soundings, approaches and a compass rose showing it's on the southern coast. The traditional "X" on the shoreline is next to a note that reads: *Sea Cave Ten Yards From The High-Water Mark. Hanging Rock Above The Spot.* As the PCs know that it's on the island of New Providence, it shouldn't be too hard to find the exact location. Another note from Morgan is on the back: *It's never easy, is it shipmates? You know the cave, but not the island. I took the other other half with me – Henry Morgan.*

Depending on how easy or hard they've had things during this act, the escape from Tortuga could be as simple as walking down to the docks and sailing away or as difficult as a running battle followed by a chase scene.

If the PCs leave Tortuga in daylight, they should see the *Swiftsure* (or another Brethren ship) in the distance, heading for Tortuga (if they've had an easy time in Tortuga, throw in another chase scene). Otherwise, have them encounter *Swiftsure* on the way to New Providence. It's important that the players know that the Brethren are still hunting them, otherwise then end of act three will come out of nowhere.

Act three: New Providence

In this act, the PCs journey to the pirate haven of New Providence, possibly stopping off for supplies at Nassau, its main port. Then they locate the cove on Morgan's map before exploring the cave and digging for the treasure. However, the Brethren have managed to locate them and are waiting for them as they exit the cave.

Scene one: The Journey

The journey from Tortuga to New Providence will take a few weeks; a Good Sail check can reduce this to a week. If the PCs haven't encountered the *Swiftsure* in the previous act, then a chase or sea battle involving her

should happen. If not, an encounter with a merchant ship could provide some drama as the PCs debate whether or not the party should become pirates.

Optional scene two: Nassau

Why do they want to go to Nassau, into the belly of the beast, the headquarters of their pursuers, Brethren of the Coast? If the PCs need supplies or a place to repair their ship there are numerous small islands on the way. A local guide would be useful, but finding someone trustworthy will be night impossible (Superb Contacting check, made secretly – if the PC fails then the guide will blab or betray them at the first opportunity unless they're cut in on the deal in some way).

But still, players are players and never do quite what you would expect. Some of the Brethren vessels – laden with plunder – will have already returned to Nassau (any nemesis of the PCs will not be among them). If they've stolen a ship from the Brethren, it <u>will</u> be recognised, as will any Legendary Ship (see page 28) or ship that's named in an aspect. While raiding the headquarters of the Brethren is the stuff of legend, it's also the stuff of suicide. Sneaking in in some way (rowing boat? Anchoring in a remote cove and approaching overland?) might be possible.

Scene three: Finding the Cove

It will take a few days and a Fair Sail check to find the right cove. Additional successes will reduce the time taken (see 8.2.1 of the SotC SRD). The PCs might encounter the odd fishing boat on their search and should see one of the Brethren ships in the distance (hunting for them, perhaps?).

The cove is steep-sided. A small stream runs out of the cave and across the small, sandy beach into the sea.

Powder, Passion and Plunder

Scene four: Inside the cave

Once they've found the cove, the large cave mouth is obvious. The problems begin once the PCs are inside the cave. The massive stalactite marking the spot (the *hanging rock* described in the map) has fallen from the ceiling. A few hours and a Superb Might modified by Engineering, Engineering or Engineering modified by Might check will be needed to move it. A large wooden sea-trunk is buried three feet down, it will take another few hours and a Good Endurance modified by Might check to dig it out. A quicker alternative would be to lever the lid off and scoop the contents into alternative containers (as usual, all these time scales can be modified according to section 8.2.1 of the SotC SRD). The stream has carved out a channel to one side of the cave and is little more than a trickle.

'Tis a goodly horde, as the late Captain would say. Mostly gold doubloons and pieces-of-eight, but with several strings of pearls and some large, uncut, diamonds in a leather pouch (the diamonds look like hard pebbles and it will take a Good Academics check to identify their value). The real prize is a large gold cross on a golden chain, decorated with rubies and diamonds.

Scene five: Ambush!

The Brethren arrive just as the PCs begin searching through the horde. Whether the PCs notice in time to do anything constructive, depends on what sort of guard they've left on their ship and the instructions they have left with the crew.

If the players didn't mention keeping a look-out or leaving a guard on the ship then any crew will have decided to get drunk on the rum supply. The PCs will exit the cave to find themselves surrounded by the Brethren and their crew taken hostage. Compel any relevant aspects if it looks like any of the players are going to start protesting.

If one of the players has explicitly mentioned that they are keeping a lookout while the rest of the party is digging for the treasure then they will spot the Brethren ship sailing into the cove. If any of the PCs has an aspect relating to one of Teach, Vane or Hornigold (or another Brethren captain) or have crossed them at any point during the adventure, then the ship will be their flagship (compel any aspect – they'll need the fate points). The PC keeping watch should make a Terrible Alertness check – each shift represents an additional round that the PCs can act before the Brethren get within range.

If the PCs left their crew on guard, the PC acting as captain should make a Mediocre Leadership check to see how good a look-out is being kept. Again, each shift represents an additional round that the PCs can act before the Brethren get within range.

Teach's flagship is the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, Vane's is the *Ranger* and Hornigold's is the *Antigua*. All have the statistic of Brethren Flagship on page 40. A straight fight is not an option (the PCs are massively out-gunned), but if the PCs have managed to buy themselves some time by keeping a good lookout, they can quickly row to their ship and attempt an escape. Run a sea battle according to the rules beginning on page 22, paying special attention to the section on movement (page 23).

Climbing the sea cliffs under the guns of the Brethren would be terrifically dangerous. In terms of the rules in section 8.3.4 of the SotC SRD, it's a long climb with "external dangers" (the Brethren shooting at them), making it a Fantastic Athletics check restricted by Endurance. Let the players know the difficulty, show them at the relevant section of the SRD if they complain and point out that the Brethren will enjoy using them as target practice during the climb.

The last possibility of escape is deeper into the cave, following the stream. It twists and turns and at one point the PCs will disturb a colony of bats, but, after a couple of hundred metres, the PCs reach the bottom of a large sink hole. The stream forms a waterfall down the side of the fern-linked pothole. It's only a short climb to the surface, but the surface is slippery – making it a Good Athletics check. The first character up can carry a rope – an Average Engineering, Athletics or Sail (representing knot-tying ability) and apply the Catch This Rope aspect to this scene. The PCs are welcome to try hauling the whole chest up the cliff, but the Brethren will be close on their tail by this stage. If you're feeling particularly mean – and the PCs have already removed the choice items – the wood is rotten and the handles are rusty. Having the chest shatter as it's being pulled up the waterfall, the coins showering into the pool just as the Brethren burst out of the tunnel would be a very dramatic image for the climax of a game.

Optional act four: Captured

If the PCs are captured, this act will cover their escape and (hopefully) the recovery of at least some of their plunder.

Scene one: First, The Gloating

The ambush at the end of the last act can seem a little contrived and the players may feel a little aggrieved at having their character's treasure taken off of them. If prepared and run correctly, this scene should go some way to calming them down. During the previous acts, you should have been keeping a note of anyone that they've questioned or contacted about the map or the treasure or anyone who might have seen it any been able to communicate with the Brethren.

Once the characters are captured and disarmed, they will be rowed out to the flagship – in chains if necessary (the treasure chest will be in a separate long boat). The PCs will be ushered into the captain's cabin where the quartermaster can supervise the chest while the captain delivers a gloat.

The PCs escape from the fort, immediately followed by the desecration of Morgan's tomb made him suspicious, especially after they heard Old Harry's deathbed confession. Everyone knew that Harry would boast about serving with Morgan and would hint at a treasure map when he was particularly drunk. Then the PCs ship was reported in Tortuga, Morgan's old stronghold and then again on the way to New Providence. Why would they risk recapture unless it was to find Morgan's treasure? Throw in any details of where the PCs might have been indiscreet and all of the Brethren are searching the coast of New Providence for the PCs and their ship. It just happened to be their captor's lucky day.

The captain now plans to travel to a remote island where the horde can be distributed and a vote taken on the crews' next act (the captain thinks they will break up – he plans to buy a pardon before the Royal Navy turns its full attention to New Providence). A pirate court will also be held to decide what to do with the PCs.

Scene two: Escape (or rescue)

The PCs will be locked in the ship's brig (any female PCs who aren't in disguise will be offered a private cabin if they give their word that they won't attempt to escape – if they break their word, the PC will gain a new aspect of Brethren Oath-breaker). The PCs will have been searched – they'll need to win a Sleight Of Hand contest versus the Mediocre Alertness of a Typical Brethren to smuggle any equipment in. Female characters can invoke an aspect representing their femininity for free as they won't be searched as closely

(unless they are in disguise, of course).

Escaping from the brig won't be difficult, especially for a Hatpin Maestro or someone who has managed to conceal their tools (Fair Burglary check). The problem is going to be getting off the ship. Luckily there will be a distraction – a Royal Navy frigate will engage the flagship just after dawn. A clever and resourceful group of PCs will take advantage of this – figuring out a way to sabotage the flagship, disrupt the crew or assist their attackers (use the stats for Typical Brethren below, adding minions and reinforcements stunts and include the captain as an "end boss"). Even if they can't the navy frigate will shoot away one of the masts before boarding. They'll be rescued, but (unless they manage to take the ship), they won't be the heroes.

Character Descriptions

Typical Brethren

Aspects: Bloodthirsty Thug, Yo-ho-ho And A Bottle Of Rum, A Life On The Ocean Wave, Bad Hygiene And Worse Attitude, Pieces Of Eight, Keep To The Code
Stunts: None
Skills: Endurance (+3), Fists (+2), Weapons (+2), Guns (+1), Sail (+1), Resolve (+1)
Stress: Health ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐
Composure ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐

Moray Eel

Aspects: Ambush Predator, Never Let Go, Slippery Little Beggar, Get Out Of My Territory!, Born Swimmer
Stunts: Natural Weapons (Sharp, Pointy Teeth – use Fists), Brawler, Dirty Fighter
Skills: Fists (+3), Athletics (+2), Stealth (+2), Alertness (+1), Resolve (+1), Endurance (+1)
Stress: Health ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐
Composure ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐

The Speedy Retribution

Size: Average
Sail: Great
Guns: Average
Endurance: Good
Resolve: Good
Stress: Health ☐☐☐
Composure ☐☐☐

Powder, Passion and Plunder

Governor François, Count D'Ogeron

Aspects : Are We Not French?, Leader Of Men – Lover Of Women, Friends In High Places, This Is My Town, Firm But Fair, My Wife Doesn't Understand Me, Free Thinker, Smooth And Slippery – But Never Oily

Stunts : Big Man In Politics, Talk The Talk, Big Name In Politics, Ladies Man

Skills: Resources (+4), Leadership (+3), Rapport (+3), Academics (+2), Empathy (+2), Resolve (+2), Athletics (+1), Art (+1), Deceit (+1), Weapons (+1)

Stress:
Health ☐☐☐☐☐
Composure ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐

Typical French Soldier

Aspects : Outrageous Accent, Not Paid Enough For This, What Did I Do To Get Posted Here? Bad Hygiene And Worse Attitude, Safety In Numbers, Are We Not French?

Stunts : None

Skills: Endurance (+3), Fists (+2), Guns (+2), Fists (+1), Leadership (+1), Resolve (+1)

Stress:
Health ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐
Composure ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐

Typical French Officer

Aspects : Outrageous Accent, What Did I Do To Get Posted Here?, Minor Nobility, What's The French For Greased Weasel?, Would Die For France – But We're Not In France, Are We Not French?

Stunts : Minions, Reinforcements

Skills: Intimidation (+3), Resources (+2), Weapons(+2), Leadership (+1), Guns (+1), Academics (+1)

Stress:
Health ☐☐☐☐☐
Composure ☐☐☐☐☐

Typical French Bureaucrat

Aspects : Outrageous Accent, Out Of Favour At Court, Minor Nobility, What's The French For Greased Weasel?, Someone Else Can Die For My Honour, Cheese-eating Surrender Monkey

Stunts : None

Skills: Deceit (+3), Contacting (+2), Resources (+2), Resolve (+1), Leadership (+1), Empathy (+1)

Stress:
Health ☐☐☐☐☐
Composure ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐

Father Pierre

Aspects : Kindly Unworldly Priest, Converting The Poor Benighted Heathen, Poverty Chastity Obedience, All Are Welcome In God's House, The Seal Of The Confessional, Light Sleeper

Stunts : None

Skills: Academics (+3), Rapport (+2), Resolve (+2), Empathy (+1), Contacting (+1), Alertness (+1)

Stress:
Health ☐☐☐☐☐
Composure ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐

Brethren Flagship

Size: Great
Sail: Fair
Guns: Great
Endurance: Good
Resolve: Good
Stress:
Health ☐☐☐☐☐
Composure ☐☐☐☐☐

Edward Teach

Aspects : I'm Blackbeard, Guns – Lots of Guns, Bloodthirsty Thug, Yo-ho-ho And A Bottle Of Rum, Bad Hygiene And Worse Attitude, The Code Is The Code, Brethren Captain, Bristol-born Ex-privateer, Was Hornigold's Apprentice, Queen Anne's Revenge

Stunts : Minions, Reinforcements, Master And Commander, Black Flag, Scary, Aura of Menace, Aura of Fear, Last Leg

Skills: Endurance (+5), Guns (+4), Intimidation (+4), Athletics (+3), Weapons (+3), Fists (+3) Leadership (+2), Sail (+2), Gambling (+2), Might (+2), Contacting (+1), Resources (+1), Resolve (+1), Engineering (+1), Deceit (+1)

Stress:
Health ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Composure ☐☐☐☐☐

Charles Vane

Aspects : Vane – Charles Vane, Brethren Captain, They're More Like Guidelines, "Gentleman" Pirate, Womanising Dandy, Cruel And Remorseless, Perhaps Too Cautious, Thorn In The Side Of Englishman And Spaniard, Born Seaman, Not Trusted By His Men

Stunts : Minions, Reinforcements, Master and Commander, Big Man In Piracy, Big Name In Piracy, Big Reputation In Piracy, Sea Dog, Seamanship

Skills: Sail (+5), Contacting (+4), Weapons (+4),

Endurance (+3), Guns (+3), Deceit (+3), Resources (+2), Athletics (+2), Rapport (+2), Alertness (+2), Academics (+1), Resolve (+1), Gambling (+1), Might (+1), Fists (+1)

Stress: Health ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
        Composure ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Skills: Weapons (+5), Sail (+4), Rapport (+4), Endurance (+3), Resolve (+3), Guns (+3), Resources (+2), Contacting (+2), Athletics (+2), Fists (+2), Might (+1), Academics (+1), Empathy (+1), Sleight Of Hand (+1), Survival (+1)

Stress: Health ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
        Composure ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Benjamin Hornigold

Aspects : Old-School Pirate, The Code Is The Code, Brethren Captain, A True Gentleman, Scrupulous, Expert Swordsman, Hunted By The Spanish, Longs To Be A Loyal Englishman, A Life On The Ocean Wave, I Taught Blackbeard Everything He Knows

Stunts : Minions, Reinforcements, Master and Commander, Big Man In Piracy, Sea Dog, Flawless Parry, Riposte, International

Powder, Passion and Plunder

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