PIRATES™

YE OLDE CORE RULES

BY: MATT DEMILLE

ROLE-PLAYING GAME RULEBOOK

NEW DIMENSION GAMES

For Disney and Meier,
great Captains . . .

Pirate Adventures

Gazetteers

G1) The Spanish Main
G2) The Barbary Coast
G3) The Seven Seas
G4) Hellish Havens
G5) The Bloodiest Yarns
G6) Endless Enemies
G7) Untold Tales
G8) Legendary Wars
G9) New Worlds

Caribbean Adventures

C1) The Forbidden Gold
C2) The Fabled Treasures
C3) Blood and War
C4) Love and Duty
C5) The Lost Treasures
C6) Drake's Inferno

Mediterranean Adventures

M1) The Lost Kingdom
M2) New Crusades
M3) Holy Wars

Open Seas Adventures

O1) The Devil's Fleet
O2) Master's Voyage

Novelettes

N1) Treasure Island
N2) Captain Blood
N3) Howard Pyle
N4) The Sea Hawk

PIRATES RULEBOOK

Credits

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Producer: James deMille
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Avast there!

Ohhh . . . It's fifteen men
on the dead man's chest
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Ohhh . . . Drink and the devil
had done for the rest
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Foreword

Avast there! Ye've come seekin' adventure with salty old pirates eh? Well, ye've sure set yer course for the right waters. For this 'ere game isn't fer any a' them lubbers who think we pirates be dead. Ye've got yerself a pirate's heart, I know it. The call a' the sea is strong and ye've answered at last yer true calling. Whatever the rest a' the world may think of us, you know and I know that there's grand adventure ahead. So keep a sharp eye open matey, and read on.

Ahh, but what will you be a' readin? This 'ere game be the bounty of all gamers, fer just as sure as there's gold in the glint of me eye so do I know the rugged lot o' gamers well! Some claim to be heroes but they be only out fer gold. Some wear the mask of a wiser man but they only be proven how well they can kill their enemies. Ahh, there be pirate blood in us all, I says. Truth to tell. And this 'ere game be the new world we've all been seekin' all this time, where the captain wants us to fly our true colors, to kill our mateys if they need killin', to set our course fer gold for that's what we all be seekin', and to cut any throats we need to ta get it!

Yes mateys, we've all been shackled by the laws a' the old gaming world too long. And when them laws don't please us no more they just make more o' them 'stead a' fixen 'em! Or some new king takes the throne, a' promisen new fortunes but only gives us more a' what we got before. The old gaming world ain't no place for a self-respectin' pirate. Now this 'ere game is weighin' anchor and takin' us all to a better place, a new world that we can plunder as we please with precious few rulelubbers and dim-witted governors a' holden us back.

So, are ye ready fer the voyage? Here be the fleet, my friend; three books like three ships ta start just as ol' Columbus did his blessed self. This 'ere flotilla be stocked full a' rules, Players' Characters and Captains' treasures. Together, that is with you a' joinin' our crew, we should strike fear into the hearts a' all them bloomin' blowers that already be a plunderin' the world. So if ye be ready, let's start this journey together…

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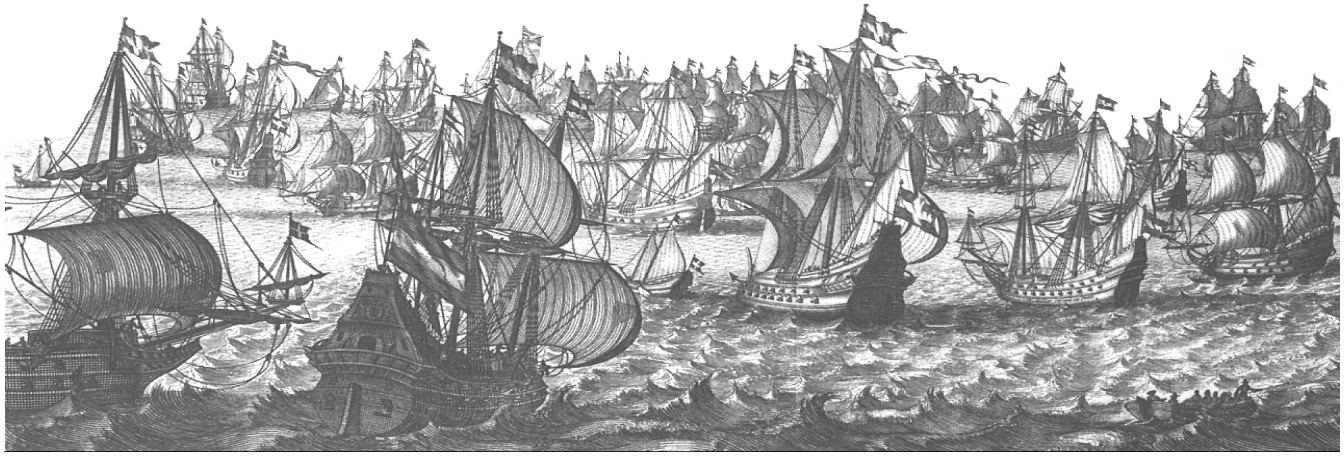

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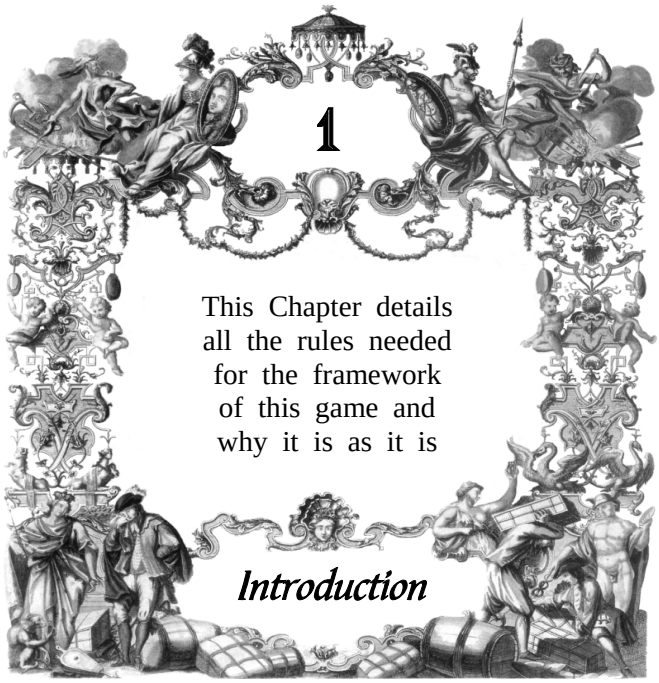
CHAPTER ONE

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES FOR TALES ARE TOLD BY THOSE WHO SEIZE THE TREASURE OF LIFE



THE INTRIGUE: Crimson horizons, lush tropical jungles steeped in mystery and magic, galleons filled with gold, fencing duels, broadside battles, digging up buried treasure, swinging from ship-to-ship, running your friends through, card games by lantern light below decks, exploring booby-trapped pirate caves, bewitched treasures, bar brawls, piecing together old maps, forcing enemies to walk the plank, and the tranquil blue waters of the Caribbean—exciting, isn't it?

Ever since pirates sailed off over the horizon, leaving tales of their daring exploits behind, they have been prominent in popular culture and the romances, their villainy all but forgotten in the light of their premise of adventure, their charisma, and the romantic lure of their brutal paradise. Such adventures have called to the hearts of all free-spirited folks for centuries—there's something magical about piracy, something that calls to us as surely as the sea calls out to the sailor.

We have all come to love pirates in the movies, children's stories, plays, video games and amusement parks. We have actively sought every possible means of re-living those great adventures of history and romance. And now, this role-playing game offers us a unique opportunity to **become** those pirates and truly live the adventure!

INSPIRATION: Each and every role-playing game is based upon some sort of literature, printed or unprinted, published or unpublished, filmed, or dreamed. Each fantasy and fantasy game is inspired somehow, somewhere, by someone. As for Pirates, many different forms of literature and entertainment inspired me to write this game.

These fantasies, be they books, games or films, have had in part, great or small, a hand in developing this book and indeed all the rules of the game itself. So in addition to tribute are these inspirations mentioned in order to provide for the newcomer to the pirate world perhaps 'suggested reading', or 'suggested playing or viewing'.

These sources of inspiration are detailed in their order of influence, indeed as much as they gave me not only expose to the pirate genre, but how much their particular ideas served as a basis for my own—what I saw, what I favored, and what I would include in this game.

Pirates of the Caribbean: That classic ride at ***Disneyland*** forms some of my earliest memories. First vanishing into the darkness beneath the talking skull and crossbones, to sailing through the misty waters between the galleon and the fort, the haunting words of the pirates echoed in my mind for over a decade, until I at last returned to the park, old enough to understand what was going on. Already involved in role-playing games, even before I stepped off the boat, my thoughts were racing: "What a perfect adventure for a role-playing game!" And so, each time I return to the happiest place on earth, the first thing that I do is run straight for the ***Pirates of the Caribbean***! I demand a front seat and sing along to "Yo-ho!" as I drift through the flooded caves. I can never get enough of that ride! And each time I've sailed the Caribbean waters beneath ***New Orleans Square***, I'm reminded of just how much the pirate genre has to offer the role-playing game world. Too many rides I suppose, and it got into my blood. Ahh, a pirate's life for me!

Curse of the Black Pearl: Of course when I heard that a movie was finally being made of the classic ***Disneyland*** ride, I knew in my (black) heart that it would be pure magic! Indeed, it was meant to be.

Just as I felt that a certain trilogy of fantasy films would justify the more serious-minded way I wrote my own fantasy game setting, so did I know that the (first) ***Pirates of the Caribbean*** film would establish the dark, brutal world of piracy in all its whimsical fun with a fanciful marriage of history and horror. It wasn't a film I was expecting nor could I know what to expect, except that it would renew my own self as well, being far ahead of my own ideas. I wasn't let down. The film was all I could have wanted and much more, simultaneously justifying my own blending of fact and fiction for pirates, of sailors and the supernatural, while ever showing me the best proportions for how to tell such tales myself. This movie encouraged a greater horror element in my work, improved the pacing, and balanced all such factors in a genre that is normally left marooned on an island of history.

Sid Meier's Pirates!: Back in the mid-eighties a classic computer game was developed. This really introduced me to the real world of pirates. A timeless game that has blessedly been re-made for newer game systems since, this game I played so often that I'd wear out the disk and have to replace it. The adventure was endless! The unique approach to how this game was set up made it truly one of the first (and best) computer role-playing games. However, compared to table role-playing games, it was still limited, and there were many things that I wanted to do in that game that were not options. And so, when I decided to write a Pirates role-playing game, all my memories of sailing ***Sid Meier***'s Caribbean returned to me, and just as tirelessly as I played his game did I write the original rules of this one.

Captain Blood: The classic movie and the book it was based upon are among my favorites of the genre. Indeed, how could a game about pirates be written without recognizing author ***Rafael Sabatini***, who in one foreword to this novel was accurately described as writing the quintessential pirate story? Similarly, could anybody ever best in swords or in style that legendary swashbuckler (and indeed real-life rascal) ***Errol Flynn***, who personified Blood on film? Countless screenings of his pirate films took place during the writing of this game.

Cutthroat Island: The big-budget pirate movie made in the mid-nineties that may have been disliked by most and cut the throat of its studio, but I enjoyed it. Its most powerful score, breathtaking scenery, spectacular climax-battle and surprisingly accurate depiction of countless aspects of the pirate world make this film just too good to be forgotten. A wonderfully whimsical and carefree romp through the pirate world, this film is my favorite way of having a voyage into the Caribbean without going back to ***Disneyland***.

Captain Hook: That classic villain and arch-enemy of Peter Pan is my favorite pirate character of all time! Just watching a few seconds of him on screen gets my blood pumping and my creative juices flowing. Especially ***Disney***'s depiction of the captain, with his ***Errol Flynn*** looks and over-the-top personality, a delightfully sinister and unforgettable villain, he is a role-model for me whenever I sit down to compose more adventures and characters for this game.

Lego pirates: I grew up building ***Legos***. I love them. Always will. And so, already into the pirate genre from my affore listed inspirations, I was delighted when ***Lego*** developed their pirate toy line. I've attended game conventions where they have ***Lego*** pirate ship battles. And to this day I still have the original ship in my writing room, assembled more than ten years ago and never going to go down! Just glancing at that ship makes me smile and think about pirates and all their adventures . . .

Ron-Paul Laffite: A friend I met in 2002, at first on business terms, but who quickly became a great friend of both myself and my parents, as this real-life incarnation of pirate fantasy is physically their age, and will ensure that they, like he, retain the ageless soul of every young lad and lass who enjoys pirate stories. His house and yard with such decor as to rival ***Disneyland's*** best, this member of the ***Seattle Seafair Pirates*** is their heart and soul as well, says I. A spittin' image of Henry Morgan, collector of pirate memorabilia, and the most fun and free-spirited person I've ever met, he opened my eyes to just how much fun piracy can be!

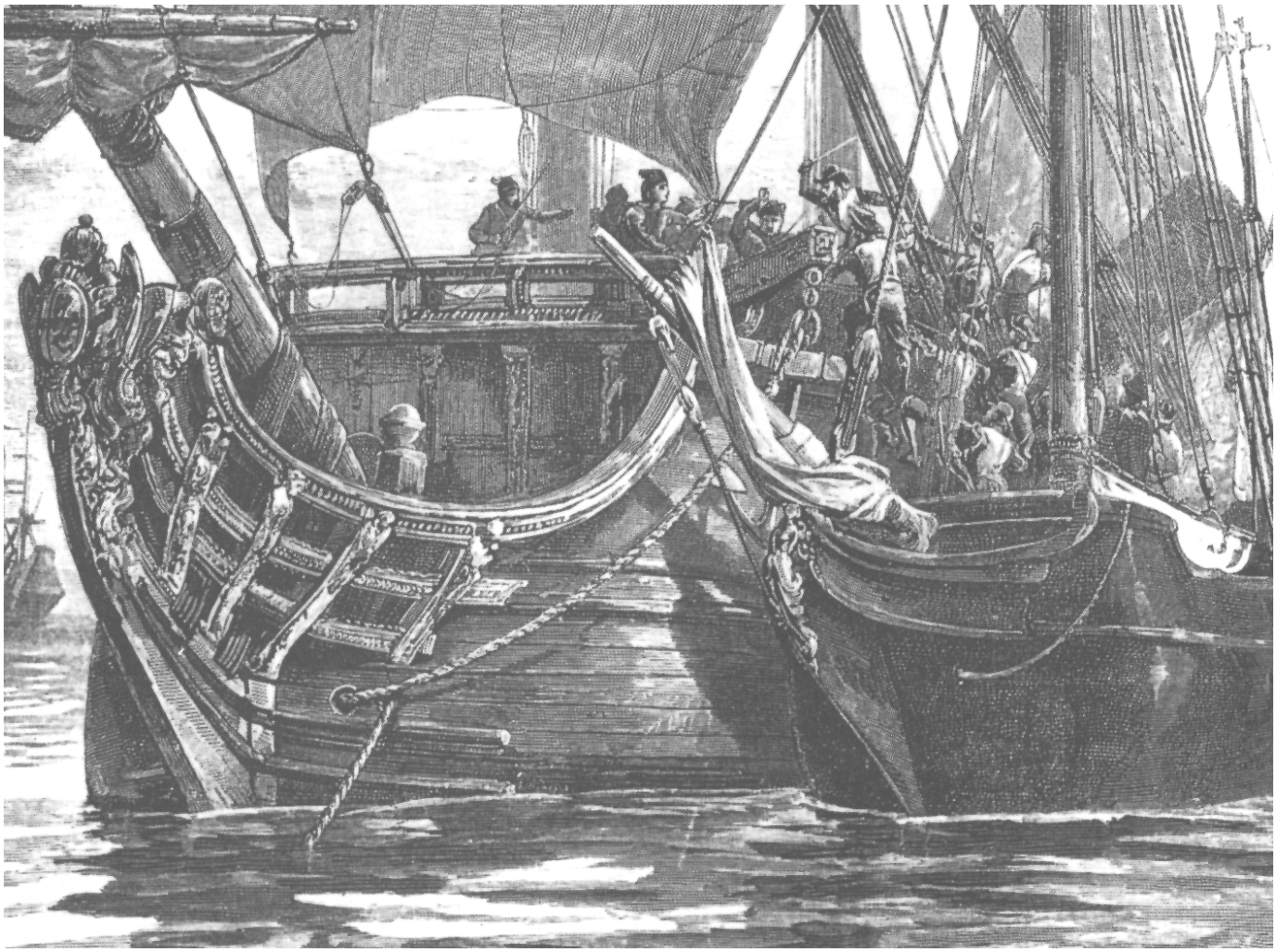
CHAPTER ONE

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES FOR TALES ARE TOLD BY THOSE WHO SEIZE THE TREASURE OF LIFE

PRONOUN NOTE: The male pronouns ('he', 'him', 'his') are used throughout this 'ere book. Though women may be bad luck at sea, they're right fine for this 'ere game, and we're not be tryin' to exclude 'em, nor even imply their exclusion. Centuries of use have made these 'ere pronouns neutral, and they're use provides for clear and concise written next—nothing else does.

ABOUT THIS BOOK: Within these pages are all the numbers, statistics and rule procedures that are universal to Pirates, the basics around which all Characters and their stories of high adventure are built. The rules in this book dictate the game's proportions, but it is the imagination of all the players who make it complete. Indeed, the numbers balance the events of the adventure, keeping things fair as a game, but ever leaving the fancies, fears, dreams and desires of the participants to explain why the numbers of the dice fall where they do. A rule system can only account for so much. As it is, these rules are streamlined, keeping within themselves a careful balance of maintaining enough detail while at the same time not being too cumbersome—if one cannot keep all the rules at a comfortable level of consideration, there are simply too many rules.

ABOUT THIS GAME: What is a role-playing game anyway? That will be described in detail later. For now, the question is "What makes a role-playing game?" And the answer to that is many rulebooks, and many supplemental materials, especially dice and clean paper. Once you have the materials to play, then all you need is your imagination.



Required materials: When sitting down to play, it is essential that you have the following:

12-sided dice
Rule Book, Player's Book and Captain's Book
Blank paper and writing utensils

Suggested accessories: Aside of the above, the following is a list of suggested playing aids.

Pre-designed adventure material
Ship and Character Record Sheets
Calculator
Secluded game room

GOLDEN RULES: In the free world of role-playing games, there are countless 'ifs', 'buts' and uncertainties, which can often cause confusion. But Pirates is a sanctuary from stress, from confusion and chaos, and for that reason, misunderstandings about the game and the rules that apply to them are explained below *for all . . .*

Good rolls: Given the complex nature of RPG rules, various systems are devised for various rolling purposes. This often leaves Players wondering if it is better to roll high or low. In Pirates, a golden rule is that 'higher is always better for whomever is rolling'.

Extreme rolls: Given the many modifiers applicable to dice rolls, Players are often given false hope or unfair denials about whether their extremely high or low rolls count. In Pirates, a golden rule is that 'the roll of 1 always fails and the maximum number to be rolled always succeeds', despite all modifiers to the dice.

Overlooked rules: One rule that must be considered now and not later is that no other rules can be either—if a rule is overlooked, the proportions of the consequences must be accepted and players must imagine however they can the 'why'. For once a ruling is made, the game cannot be reversed in order to correct any oversight. The better way to play an RPG is to move along at a casual pace, so that rules are not overlooked in the first place.

For Players . . .

Acceptance: In such a diverse universe as a role-playing game, so vivid in play and so heavily reliant on discretion with rules, very often do times arise when rules and 'what is fair' are in debate, simply because an RPG does not try to recreate reality, but is only a drama play, and more often than not, when there is unrest with the rules, it is because people expect more of them than they should. It is better to simply accept what happens, and remember, the dice are impartial, and things could have gone either way. If every detail about 'reality' were to be argued in a role-playing adventure, the very vivid nature of the game could allow anyone to argue until the ends of time, and thus, the game would go nowhere. Use your skill, hope for the best, and accept wherever things happen to end up. That's all any of us can do.

Enthusiasm: Role-playing is not just a game, but a shared fantasy, and thus, far more than any mere 'game', Players are encouraged to show enthusiasm, to 'go the extra mile' so-to-speak in order to make the fantasy better. What the fantasy the game offers is precious and personal, but relies on the actions of others to create it. When Players show a lack of interest, it's devastating to the private fantasies ongoing in the thoughts and dreams of others present. Role-playing games are physically very passive, so it takes extra effort on the part of the Players to bring things to life, indeed to not let their passive 'activity' drag down their thoughts as well. And everyone contributes to the game differently—it is not so much 'what' someone does to add to the fantasy, but that they do something at all. So, for the common good of your game group, put forth your own creative enthusiasm to help enrich the fantasy of the role-playing adventure.

Responsibility: The rules in this Book have been set aside for the Players because they so closely concern their Characters, and little else. Thusly, if a rule is within these pages, it is the responsibility of the Players, and not the Game Captain, to remember it, calculate it, and consider it during game play.

For Captains . . .

Be fair!: This is the most important rule of all. For in a fantasy world so desperately clinging to the proportions of mere game rules, surrounded by the hopes and dreams of imaginative players, the Game Captain truly wields ultimate power. Indeed, the Game Captain must remain neutral, for regardless of his own preferences and visions for the fantasy, his will and the reality for the Players' Characters is all but inseparable—only the dignity to remain fair keeps them apart, to live and die by the rules, the Game Captain to make fair decisions based not on his own fancies but what makes the best story for all involved. In a game that relies so heavily on discretion, where rules and rolls are easily replaced by the mere judgment or mood of a man, a Game Captain's power is easily abused. This must not be. That is one rule that the Game Captain cannot defy.

Keep secrets: This is the Captain's Book, and so nobody else has a right to look at it. Though inevitably, through time, Players will try their hand at being Game Captain, sneak a peak at these pages, or simply through trial and error come to these secrets, and eventually every statistic will be known to them. But then, any game, no matter fun, is traded in time, and people move on. But the Game Captain should, in order to preserve the excitement of adventure for his Players, do whatever he can to prevent prying eyes into his book, indeed, to sustain the element of surprise and surprises yet to come as long as he may.

Responsibility: The rules in this book have been set aside for the Game Captain because they so closely concern the secrets he reveals to the Players and their Characters as they merit them. Thusly, if a rule is within these pages, it is the responsibility of the Game Captain, and not the Players, to remember it, calculate it, and consider it during game play.

ABBREVIATIONS: Throughout these rules many terms are abbreviated. Their abbreviations are summarized below. These abbreviations apply throughout all Pirate gamebooks.

Table 1: Abbreviations

Game term	Abbreviation
Role-playing game	RPG
Game Captain (Game Master)	GM
Player Character	PC
Non Player Character	NPC
Brawn (Ability Score)	B
Agility (Ability Score)	A
Endurance (Ability Score)	E
Girth (Ability Score)	G
Wits (Ability Score)	W
Intuition (Ability Score)	I
Charisma (Ability Score)	C
Luck (Ability Score)	L
Defense Score	DS
Damage	DMG
Movement Rate	MOVE
Hull Points	HP
Morale	M
Experience Points	XP
Notoriety Points	NP
Creation Points	CP

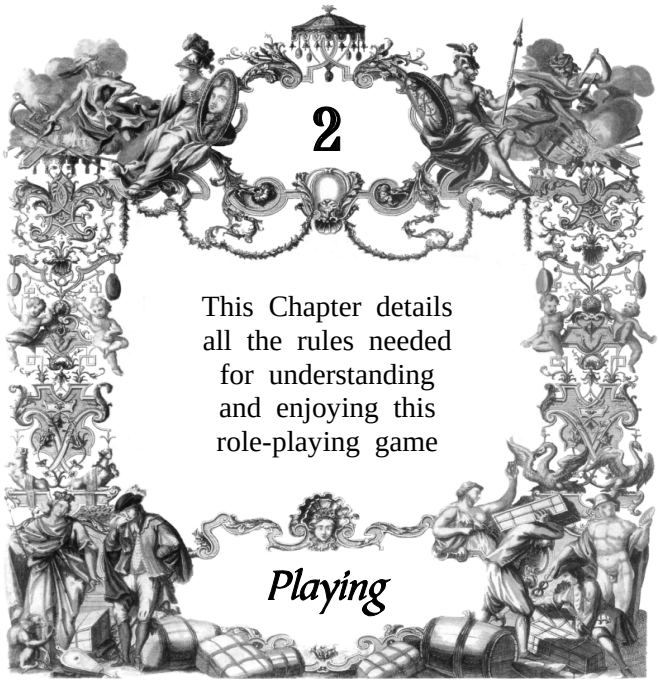
Pirates

Book 1

The Rule Book

CHAPTER TWO

A PIRATE'S LIFE IS ONE OF FREEDOM AND FORTUNE EARNED BY DANCING WITH THE DEVIL



ROLE-PLAYING: A role-playing game is like a stage play, unrehearsed, and with no audience. Role-playing games are far more sophisticated than classic board and card games, because the entire adventure takes place in the collective imagination of all who participate. Thus, it is more than just a game, it's a group storytelling session, a marriage of romantic fantasy, classic games and improvisational theater shared by all. Indeed, it is an experience. Before any rules are explained, it shall be told just how to have that experience.

To play is the thing: A role-playing game requires no gameboard, for all its action takes place inside the players' imaginations. Each player is like an actor, playing the role of a fictitious character, just like on the stage, in an ongoing performance that is both interactive and unrehearsed. The 'rules' of the game only impose realistic, fair proportions of uncertain things such as battles. And while much of the game revolves around numbers, the dice and the rules, the true game is the interaction between the players; the psychology, the narrative, the dialogue, and most of all the performances, be they dramatic, suspenseful, comedic or inspirational. Indeed, as one famous, fictional character once said, "The Play is the thing."

Role-playing games, because of the proportions of its basic rules alone involves a great deal of time, commitment, and intelligence, but more than that, its need for drama demands mature players who can overcome 'stage fright', are willing to put forth a great amount of themselves, and have a versatile enough mind to play effectively in all this game's varying situations. Indeed, a 'good move' in a role-playing game is not necessarily the best tactic, for the rules already account for the wisdom and cunning of the characters, but the 'best moves' are those that are memorable ones, for indeed, the only true treasure that the Players can take with them is the experience of playing—the thrill, the memories, the excitement—the fun!

As the time-honored proverb goes, "You get out of it what you put into it". Indeed, the more enthusiastically an RPG is played, the more vivid becomes the story each of the players is participating in. Thusly, unlike other games where the players compete against each other, a role-playing game encourages all its participants to work together, their individual additions working to create a common, self-perpetuating story.

Winning and losing: One thing that must be made very clear is that role-playing games have no definitive end where someone can be declared a 'winner'. Instead, a role-playing game goes on indefinitely. An adventure can end, but the same characters simply go on to another adventure. Even a character's death is not the end, for a Player can just make up a new character, to rejoin the game at the next opportunity the Game Captain provides.

Role-playing games can have a wide range of outcomes as well, which are mostly shades of gray. For example, the Characters may escape from an Admiral's frigate, but will have failed to steal his gold. Some would argue that they 'failed', while others would say that escaping the brig of a pirate-hating Admiral is a victory in itself.

In a role-playing game, nobody definitively 'wins' or 'loses'. Instead, such labels can only be applied to the experience of the game itself. As in life, one 'wins' if he enjoys himself. It's that simple. On the other hand, if someone was a 'poor sport', or indeed 'tried to win' in any conventional manner, he may be considered the ultimate loser.

The participants: At the beginning of the game, one player must be decided upon to become the 'Game Captain'. This player becomes unlike any of the others, for it is he that becomes responsible for creating the atmosphere and story around the rest of the Players. Thusly, the one who is chosen to be the Game Captain should be qualified for this role beyond question. While there can be any amount of Players, of varying ability, the Game Captain is alone, and needs to be a 'cut above the rest' so-to-speak, for the game is only as good as the Game Captain makes it (or allows it to be). Listed below, in their order of importance, are the qualifications of he whom **should** be Captain.

Table 2: Passage Of Captaincy

Priority	The player is the . . .
1	Fairest with the rules
2	Most devoted to the game
3	One with the greatest imagination
4	Most able with time to prepare
5	Most learned in pirate history and lore
6	Best storyteller
7	Most experienced role-player

As for the other Players, they are all going to fall into the same capacity as each other, that of a 'Player'. While the Game Captain is also a player in this game, the term 'Player' is reserved for the others. For these 'Players' will assume fictitious roles to play, indeed to participate in the adventure that the Game Captain creates for them.

Each 'Player' will create a 'Character', a persona he will adopt while playing the game, much like an actor adopts a role on stage. This character, this 'alter ego' if you will, **is** a player in the fantasy story, a part the Player indeed plays with all the imagination and wits he has. Through his Character, a Player will experience the trials, pleasures, terrors and rewards of the interactive story that is the role-playing game.

The group of Players hence becomes a group of Characters, all operating in the same story, as if they were all on stage together, with the Game Captain as their director, watching them, calling for changes in scenery, and even offering advice from time to time.

Thus, unlike other games, everybody works together, in every sense, to create an exciting and dramatic (and hopefully enlightening) story, where the only competitors are to be found in the chance of the dice.

Game reality: The game world and its adventures may just appear as a lot of paper and ink, to us, but to the people actually in that world, it is much more real. Indeed, it **is** real.

So must the players themselves believe. They must place themselves in that 'game reality' if they are to have any enjoyment at all—one can read about a pirate's ghost, but if the person cannot imagine it, indeed feel that cold breath, smell the salty air about him, it's not going to ever be anything more than mere words.

As we players sit around the game table, scoffing, laughing and eating, the characters in the game's reality are having a harrowing adventure indeed! We must join them, at least in our imagination, if we are to share that experience.

Moreover, game reality defines the **difference** between players and fantasy characters. Truly, because a Player may know something, his Character may not. Remember that in a role-playing game, 'to play is the thing', not 'to win'. Keeping focus on game reality is the only way to keep the game balanced, fair and fun.

CHAPTER TWO

A PIRATE'S LIFE IS ONE OF FREEDOM AND FORTUNE EARNED BY DANCING WITH THE DEVIL

THE BASICS: Role-playing games are extremely advanced and complex as far as tabletop games are concerned, therefore the basics of game structure are (re)explained below.

Attitude: It is important to remember that this is a game about pirates, and has been designed and balanced accordingly—even experienced role-players should be more ruthless, flamboyant and cunning than ever—a pirate's attitude will serve one best!

Rounds, Turns and time: Unlike most conventional table games, a role-playing game does not revolve around set turns and rounds. Instead, the one who is the Game Captain simply narrates the adventure at his own pace, and whenever he is not (speaking) the Players can speak as they will, their initiative and their volume proportional to how active their own Character is. However, there are moments when time is critical, such as in battle, and at those times, the game is indeed organized into Rounds and Turns. One 'Round' is one sweep around the game table, wherein each Player gets one 'Turn'. Note that Rounds and Turns reflect events, not necessarily measurable lengths of time.

The dice: It is important to remember that this is a **role**-playing game, not a **roll**-playing game. The dice are indeed heavily involved, but they have limited uses, and not the most important ones at that. The dice are overshadowed by the interactive story that a role-playing game is.

The dice are used in many ways, and those unfamiliar with a role-playing game may find these methods confusing at first, so each of the various uses of the (ten-sided) dice are explained.

A single roll calls for one dice to be rolled. Many modifiers may be applied to such a roll.

A total roll is when a number of dice are rolled and simply added together. For example, a range of 3-36 would call for a single dice to be rolled three times, and its rolls added together. Similarly, some rolls may call for odd ranges, for example 1-4. Know that all such ranges given within these rules are attainable by the dice provided. Furthering the above example, one could roll a single dice and counting 1-3 as '1', 4-6 as '2', 7-9 as '3', and 10-12 as '4'.

GAME CAMPAIGNS: Role-playing games can be played in two ways. The first is a simple 'one-shot adventure'. However, in a role-playing game, Characters can live on to have **many** adventures. When the same Character has more than one adventure, the game becomes a 'Campaign'.

The same Character(s) having multiple adventures is the basic skeleton of a Campaign. A Campaign can have many, many adventures, and added to them various levels and depth of story the Game Captain may develop for the Player Characters, turning the game from a simple, serial adventure, into the legacy of the Characters' lives.

Campaigns become self-perpetuating. For as the same Characters continue to have adventures, accomplish feats, find treasures and make sacrifices, questions, relationships, and trials will create themselves. So much story detail comes out of nowhere. But that is the beauty of role-playing.

The goal of a Campaign: Be the Campaign simple or complex, short or carried out over years, a successful Campaign is one that focuses on the Player Characters, gives them a chance to develop, indeed gives them a stage and a story within which to develop, and to triumph. Indeed, if a Campaign helps shape Characters to be as memorable as real people, it is a triumph in itself.

Time range: So much of role-playing games, and especially their storytelling aspect rely on discretion, of rules, and of budgeting time. It is so easy to want to act out every little detail of a Character's life. But like any good story, a certain pace must be established in order to keep the game interesting. As this is a game and not a novel, establishing that pace is done numerically.

Provided on Table 3 is the Experience Level a Character should have achieved after an approximate amount of playing time. This is based on how difficult the game is (and XP is to acquire), how much time between rolls and rules is filled in with storytelling, and altogether how fast (or slow) someone should come closer to Final Level in order to appreciate it.

If the game is noticeably distant from the proportions of Table 3, then it is not properly paced, and should either slow down a little, adding a little more story depth, or pick up its pace and not be so bogged down in detail.

Table 3: Campaign Level Ranges

Experience Level	Total hours of play
1	5
2	10
3	20
4	30
5	50
6	70
7	100
8	200
9	300

Ending a Campaign: As a rule, a Campaign ends when the entire party is destroyed, or retires. But so long as one Character carries on the story, the Campaign goes on. Moreover, so long as one Player wishes to keep going in a Campaign, the Campaign will continue, unless the Game Captain himself decides to end it.

When a Campaign ends, and everyone makes new Characters, at the Game Captain's option alone the world may 'reset', as though the last Campaign never took place.

In any event, when a Campaign ends, so are **all** things attributed to it, including Player Characters, Non Player Characters, and all things they have achieved or changed in the world—the Players will have the stories, the memories, the fun, but the game begins anew.

ADVENTURE POINTS: As Pirates is a game whose theme and genre is so widely misunderstood and unknown, each Game Captain will eventually settle into one mood or another but thereafter find it difficult to keep his crew of Players on that decided course, and so in order to help him, the incentive of 'Adventure Points' comes into play.

Adventure Points are awards that are outside the normal rules of play, enhancing all others. One can only earn these Points for role-playing within the chosen theme of his Captain's pirate game. So, depending on the Game Captain, one could earn Points for being a deep, romantic role-player or being a rowdy ruffian, playing serious or silly.

Ask yourself, is it always the strongest, largest, and most menacing characters who are left alive at the end of a good tale of high adventure? Strategy, good moves and knowing the rules can only perpetuate one's survival (and story) so long. Nor should merely the lucky enjoy themselves while good performances are lost to chance.

Adventure Points help bind the game together, indeed, offering the assurance that the more one role-plays (in this role-playing game), the better off he will be, until such a point comes when luck is surpassed, and memorizing the rules almost seems insignificant, and in some ways they will be. After all, quite often, once the arguing is over, they're more like 'guidelines' than actual rules.

Adventure Points are a special point system awarded periodically throughout play in direct proportion to how much one offers to the game in terms of performance, storytelling, and imagination, indeed enhancing the chosen theme. These Points have a great influence on rolls and rules alike.

Earning Adventure Points: Adventure Points are only awarded at the end of an Adventure, and then only by the Game Captain's judgment. For as they are not necessary for any rule or aspect of play, the Captain is under no obligation to award them to anybody. Indeed, he should **only** award them in accordance to how much he felt that each Player helped his chosen theme of piracy and style of game, be it serious, silly, historical, hysterical, factual or fantastic. Each individual Player can receive up to a maximum of 3 Adventure Points at the conclusion of any single Adventure (a good 20-30 Encounters or about 8 total hours of playing time). Table 4 provides **suggested** awards.

Table 4: Earning Adventure Points

Points	Contribution
3	Died in fitting fashion
2	Added scenes that enhanced the theme
2	Played in costume
1	Never argued with the Game Captain
1	Described dice rolls in fitting fashion
1	Never broke character

Dying in fitting fashion not only helps one endure the loss of a Character (for it's going to happen eventually and probably often), but it also helps others brace themselves for the same loss. For when one dies, if he at least manages to go out a such a way as to remind the Players why they are playing a pirates game, indeed in a way befitting the theme, everyone will have more fun. If a fitting end was at least partially the design of the Player, such as starting a suicidal fight (in a reckless game) or getting shot for pulling down the captain's pants (in a comical one), he should be awarded 3 Adventure Points.

Adding scenes is normally the task of the Game Captain, the storyteller, the one at the helm of this game, who decides on what course to take towards having fun. However, he doesn't know the depth of each Player's greed for how they believe the game should feel and play out, and so when they aid him, offering simple scenes that enhance the chosen theme of their Captain, it adds a great deal to the adventure. Simple scenes such as talking by the fireside about the lost treasure to be found on a distant island, romancing the governor's daughter (in a serious game) or making her carry her own luggage through the muddy streets (in a comical one)—such little details give greater life to the Characters that are at the heart of the story. Any Player whose contributions of simple scenes that enhanced the game's theme by evoking sweat, laughter, or whatever the case may be should be rewarded with 2 Adventure Points.

Playing in costume adds a great deal of atmosphere for others, but more than that, **being** in costume truly enhances one's overall performance, as they feel more like their Character. So, for both the direct and indirect enhancement of the game, those who play in a costume befitting the theme should be rewarded with 2 Adventure Points.

Never arguing with the Game Captain will not only improve one's chances of gaining additional Adventure Points on other counts, but may also be seen as acceptance of game's chosen theme. It is so easy to stray from, that if one makes it to the end of an Adventure without getting into a heated debate, he has done well. Normal, calm debate is always acceptable, as Game Captains can be in error and should be corrected, so long as things remain civil. But if one can avoid 'the argument', he should be rewarded with an Adventure Point.

Describing dice rolls adds a great deal of colour and excitement to the game. While the random nature of dice disallows for truly structured story, at the same time it helps **create** storylines. But the details they add to an existing story aren't recognized unless people make an effort with them. If a Player's performance is memorable for the colourful descriptions he adds to dice rolls, indeed explaining why they fell as they did, he should be rewarded with an Adventure Point.

Never breaking character is wonderful in a role-playing game. Players have to overcome a good amount of strange-fright in order to create a memorable character, and when someone defies the theme of the game it can make that persona look rather naked. And while there is little that can be done to keep insubordinate crew in line, their Game Captain can always tip the scales of points (and plunder) in the favor of those who help tell the tale along with him. Indeed, those who do not break character should be rewarded with an Adventure Point.

Using Adventure Points: Just how do Adventure Points affect the game? Indeed, just how do these Points ensure that the performer succeeds where the one who knows the rules best does not? How can luck itself be surpassed in a game of dice? Adventure Points are, at a Player's option, applied to various aspects of the game, including the modification of dice rolls, thus taking luck out of the equation and replacing it with earned favor. Favoritism, yes, but proven to have been earned.

Modifying dice rolls is a favored use of Adventure Points. After a dice falls, a Player may apply Adventure Points to it to change its result one way or the other. One can modify any roll he himself or the Game Captain rolls—one cannot alter the rolls of another Player. When a roll is changed, it is changed by 1 on the dice for every 1 Adventure Point spent. Note that this changes the dice **roll**, not add a bonus, therefore, no matter how many Adventure Points are spent, a dice cannot be pushed beyond its natural range, neither below '1' or above '12'. Also note that in the case of Critical rolls for both attacks, a Critical 'Hit' must be lowered to a miss entirely or else it will remain Critical (the reverse is true with a Critical failure). And, Adventure Points must be applied to the **last dice** rolled—once a new dice falls, any previous roll can never be altered by any amount of Adventure Points (or any amount of whining or arguing about it).

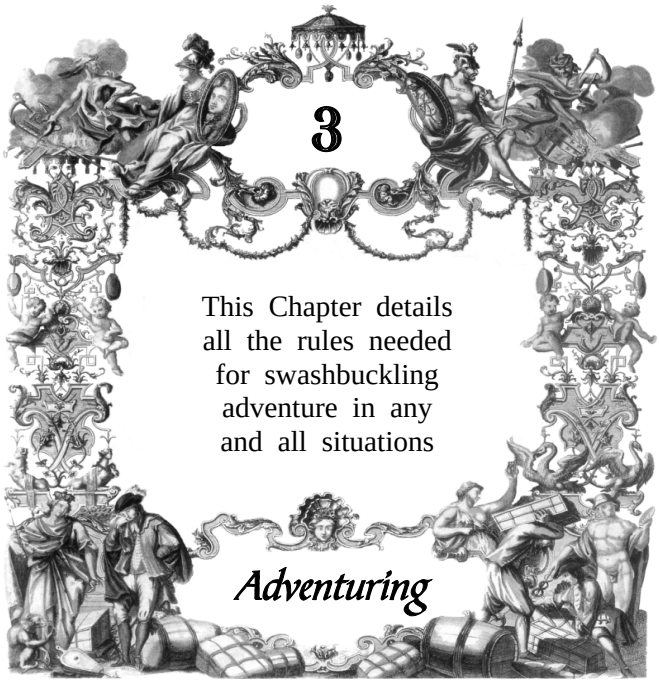
Saving one's life is a use of Adventure Points one might refer to as 'hero power'. For even as Players are sitting around a table imagining their Characters' adventures, the Characters themselves, in the Game Reality, are dealing with far more trying and involving challenges than mere rules and rolls. Indeed, the Characters are far more aware of the world in which they are adventuring, and may not do something as oversighted as a Player may think is best by tacticals alone. If a Player's Character dies, he can immediately spend 3 Adventure Points to have somehow avoided his fate. However, these points must be spent at that very moment—once any other Turn is taken, the opportune moment has passed. An alternative is to spend 2 Adventure Points in advance, so that the next time one makes a **decision** that will certainly doom his Character, the Character himself will have the presence of mind **not** to make that choice. In this case, the situation must be life or death, nothing less. For example, choosing to attack a Spanish galleon in a longboat is, even though grim, still an uncertain prospect. But if there is a cursed treasure chest that withers a hundred years of youth off anyone who touches its contents, that would indeed merit this ruling. In any such instance, the Game Captain informs the Player outright that his choice would have been perilous. The 2 Adventure Points, long spent, have now served their purpose to save the Character's life. Note that once Adventure Points are so invested they may not be 'refunded'.

Acquiring greater Characters is the ultimate use of Adventure Points. Where often only the 'toughest' Characters survive to the end, in Pirates, the toughest can also be the toughest Players, who have earned their strength, not with lucky rolls or even Experience Points, but doing justice to having great Characters by knowing the pirate world, by adding to the theme that brings people to a life of piracy as opposed to other, more sober games, indeed by earning Adventure Points and using them to create Characters dice alone cannot. For when a Character dies or is retired with no chance of returning to action, indeed when that Character Sheet is given up, any amount of one's current Adventure Points can be traded in one-to-one for Creation Points.

Only Player Characters: It is important to note that only Player Characters can earn and use these Adventure Points. They are the protagonists in the story, and as powerful as any NPCs may be statistically, they are not 'the story'. NPCs can only benefit from what Adventure Points that the Players choose to spend on their behalf (if any). Moreover, these Points are awarded to the **Player**, not his Character, and thus even if one dies, he can use his saved Points with his other Characters.

Chapter Three

History is written in the blood of the weak so whet your blade with a grand tale



Ability Checks: A pirate's adventure is filled with unexpected challenges, indeed, challenges too numerous and diverse for any system of rules to account for individually. That is why most challenges are dealt with by a single rule, that of 'Ability Checks', a simple and fair way to account for all the unpredictable events that may arise within an adventure.

When to make Ability Checks: An Ability Check is made whenever a Character wishes to attempt something whose outcome is uncertain, has at least some measure of difficulty, and is not dealt with by any other rule. For example, opening a door would not require an Ability Check, as it is a simple task that anyone can do. Running somebody through with a sword would not require an Ability Check either, as combat is dealt with in great detail in the next Chapter. However, forcing open a stuck door or leaping between rooftops while trying to slash somebody with that sword would indeed require Ability Checks.

How to make Ability Checks: To make an Ability Check one needs but make a simple dice roll. The Game Captain will decide which of a Character's Ability Scores most closely applies to the task at hand. For example catching a falling body would utilize one's Brawn Score, while hearing somebody sneaking up on him would utilize one's Intuition Score. Then, the Player of the Character needs to roll a single dice, standing a chance in 12 equal to his Ability Score of success. It is easiest to see this chance as needing a total of '13' or more from one's Ability Score and a single dice roll.

A Game Captain can freely apply modifiers to any Ability Check to account for varying factors. For example, swinging between ships may be a normal Agility Check, but if it were attempted during a hurricane, he may feel that a -2 or even a -4 penalty should be applied to the roll, and may do so. Note that no penalty nor any bonus will change the Experience Point award for any Ability Check.

Provided below on Table 5 are sample Ability Checks and suggested modifiers for them, should modifiers be an option that the Game Captain uses.

Table 5: Common Ability Checks

Accomplishment	Ability	Modifier
Stack dead bodies	Brawn	+1
Force open a stuck door	Brawn	+0
Force open a sealed door	Brawn	-2
Swing between ships	Agility	+2
Change ships in a storm	Agility	-2
Walk a tightrope	Agility	-3
Make a floor 'slippery'	Endurance	+0
Eat spoiled food safely	Endurance	-2
Win a 'beauty' contest	Girth	+1
Feign death for 1 Round	Girth	+0
Recount a full speech	Wits	+1
Read weathered writing	Wits	+0
Memorize a single page	Wits	-2
Hear a PC call for help	Intuition	+3
Hear an NPC call for aid	Intuition	+1
Eavesdrop on tavern talk	Intuition	+0
Notice a trap just in time	Intuition	-2
Awaken when threatened	Intuition	-3
Woo a lovely lady	Charisma	+1
Tell a convincing lie	Charisma	+0
Pass for a gentleman	Charisma	-2
Fall onto something soft	Luck	+1
Your cell left unlocked	Luck	+0
Name mistaken by guards	Luck	-1

Combined Ability Checks: Sometimes Characters will combine their efforts in an Ability Check. When this is done, the highest Score is used for the Ability Check, with the total number of additional Ability Points adding to the roll.

Table 6: Combined Ability Checks

Help	Ability Check bonus
20+	+4
14-19	+3
8-13	+2
1-7	+1

MOVEMENT: There are many tight and desperate places in a pirate's adventure where one's swift movement will become very important. Movement is not **always** considered, though. For example, one's movement is not important for walking around town. However, if one were fleeing the Governor's guards, then his movement would need a fine rule indeed! Thus is one's Movement Rate determined and set. However, this is only a base score, for there are many different situations to which this score will be applied:

Running: If ever one wishes to run as fast as he can, he can in a single Turn run a distance equal to his Movement Rate. If he wishes to go faster, he may make an Endurance Check. If this Check is successful, he will gain a bonus distance equal to his Girth Score multiplied by 5'. If this Check fails however, the Character becomes winded, and does not move **at all** that Round!

Swimming: All pirates are assumed to know how to swim. What comes into question is just how fast and far they can swim. When swimming, one must make an Endurance Check each Round. Success indicates that the Character can move up to a distance of 40', with +5' for each Skill Level he has with swimming, and -5' for every 30 Weight he is carrying (rounded down). Failure indicates that the Character is exhausted and went under, and can re-attempt his Endurance Check each Round thereafter, but if he runs out of breath before he does so, he will drown. How long one can hold their breath is indicated on Table 53.

Climbing: Characters are always climbing up and around things. Whenever they attempt to climb something difficult, such as a cliff or a wall, they must make an Agility Check. Success indicates that the Character can climb up to 10' that Round, with +5' for each Skill Level he has with climbing, and -5' for every 50 Weight he is carrying (rounded down). Failure indicates that the Character is exhausted or slips, and falls . . .

Falling: Characters have a marvelous (and to the Game Captain vastly amusing) tendency to fall off of things. Whenever a Character slips and falls, he will suffer when he hits as if he were struck in combat, the Base Damage 1 point for every 10' fallen (rounded up). One will suffer no Damage if they land in something soft, such as water, a wagon full of feathers, etc.

Hiding: You're a coward! You don't get to roll for something like this! You can't hide, matey, at least not behind them dice! If the situation is that bad, at least try to do something with it, such as a Stealth Check . . .

Stealth: Often are Characters sneaking about. If someone wants to tiptoe, sneak through the shadows, creep up behind someone or otherwise practice the art of stealth, he may. The Player rolls a single dice. If the result is 8 or greater, the Character managed to creep along for 1 Round without attracting attention. Several factors can influence this roll, as explained below.

Distractions of all kinds, such as bar brawls, a whore or a war serve to distract those who may be watching one sneaking about, granting them a bonus of +1 to their roll.

Darkness and shadows helps conceal someone, granting them a bonus of +2 to their roll.

Background noise helps conceal someone's footsteps and breathing, offering them a bonus of +2 to their roll.

Strong light such as sunlight or chandeliers makes it hard to hide in shadows, offering up a penalty of -1 to this roll.

Silence makes one heard and noticed all too easily. If the scene is silent, such as in a house at night or on a deserted street, one suffers a penalty of -3 to his roll.

Searching: Searching comes into play quite often, and in a wide variety of circumstances—a Character may search a cave for cryptic writing, a group may search a room for a hidden map, one may even search a town for a specific person's residence.

Searching Checks: Whenever someone wishes to search for something, he simply describes to the Game Captain where he's looking. If something is indeed hidden there, he will find it. However, this can be quite time consuming. So instead of trial and error, a Player may opt to make a 'Searching Check'. This is a secretive roll made by the Game Captain which summarizes all a Character's efforts for searching a single area, room, or person.

The Game Captain will roll a single dice, not disclosing its result to anyone. If the result is 10 or higher, the Character will have found any and all secrets in his sought area. The Game Captain will so inform the Player. However, if the roll was too low, or there was nothing to be found in the first place, the Player will simply be informed that he finds nothing, leaving the mystery to him.

Many factors apply to a Searching Check, including any bonus from having a high Intuition Score (see Table 56). However, the best way to search for anything is as a group. If multiple Characters combine their efforts for a single roll, they gain a bonus according to their numbers, as shown on Table 7.

Table 7: Group Searching

Searching party	Bonus
10+	+3
5-9	+2
2-4	+1
1	+0

Searching again: Once a Searching Check has been made by a Character, he may not make another Searching Check for that area or individual—he is convinced that there is nothing there. The Player can of course still rely on his own intuition, making guesses and asking questions of the Game Captain. For if there is indeed something to be found, specific questions will always find it (there is something to be said for skill and savvy).

OVERLAND JOURNEYS: A pirate's life can be painful and brutal. Some aspects of the adventure are far from pleasant, one of which is forcing one's way through a steaming jungle or rugged mountain pass. Pirates prefer the sea and the sure feeling of a strong ship beneath them, but when they must travel overland, they do so rather well.

Traveling: Whenever a party sets out inland, their speed will be measured in leagues traveled each day, just as if they were aboard a ship. A person travels at a base speed of 3 leagues a day, modified by many factors.

Roads make for clear, unobstructed travel, increasing one's daily movement by +2.

The terrain greatly affects one's speed; clear hills or beaches grant +1 leagues each day, while rugged terrain such as jungles, swamps and ocean headlands penalize this speed by -2.

Burdens slow one down, their total carried Weight divided by 40 (rounded down) the number of leagues reduced from their speed.

Wounds tax one's strength and slow them down. If one is wounded at all, his daily speed will be reduced by -2.

Table 8: Traveling

Roll	The day's travel
11-12	Clear weather; gain 1-3 leagues
5-10	No occurrences
3-4	Foul weather; lose 1-4 leagues
2	Lost; lose 1-12 leagues
1	Disease; poison level 1 to each person

Hunting, foraging and starving: Pirates have a tendency to become separated from their ship, and are forced to wander through steaming jungles and highlands for days, weeks, even years at a time! When lost or marooned, one's immediate and most important concern is food and water. Sometimes, but not always, the lands and seas provide bounty for the desperate adventurer.

Each day a group may attempt to forage or hunt for food and water. A roll is made on a single dice. If the result is 8 or greater, the party (no matter how large or small) has found enough food and water to last them for a day. If successful, this roll may be made again, and again, and so food may be gathered and kept. However, once this roll fails, it cannot be attempted again for 1-12 days.

Coasts provide bounties of fish, turtles and other sealife, increasing this roll by +2.

Swamps and mountains provide foul and even poisonous bounty, penalizing this roll by -3.

Each day a Character goes without food he suffers a loss of -1 to one of his Ability Scores, but each day without water is a -1 to all of them! If ever any Score reaches 0, he dies. Once he finds sustenance, he regains all his points.

Sleepless nights: Sometimes a Character will need to stay awake all night, perhaps even for days at a time. Some Characters can naturally go a day or even two without sleep (see Table 53). However, for anyone to push beyond their limits, they need to roll a 6 on the D12, this roll penalized by -2 for every extra day without sleep.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORY IS WRITTEN IN THE BLOOD OF THE WEAK SO WHET YOUR BLADE WITH A GRAND TALE

DIRTY DEEDS: Ahh, a pirate's life! There's a little evil in all of us, and pirates have all the fun with their fiendish and foul deeds! The more common occasions that call out to the scoundrel in us are explained below.

Lockpicking: Locks are found on chests, doors, cabinets and more. Well, if one doesn't have the keys, he can always attempt to pick the lock. This calls for a single roll of the dice. If the result is 12, the Character managed to pick the lock. This roll is increased by several factors.

Lockpicks are the tools of this trade, and thus add +4 to one's roll.

Skill with picking locks will add +1 for each Skill Level one has.

Pilfering: Whenever a Character attempts to pick someone's pocket or in some similar act take something, he must make a 'Pilfering Check'. This is a roll on a single dice. If the result is 10 or greater, the Character was successful. If one is Skilled in Pilfering, his Skill Level is the bonus to his roll. If the roll fails however, he stumbled, slipped, or was somehow caught in the act, allowing his intended target and any NPCs who wish to get involved (such as the guards) the chance to roll for Initiative before the thief can gain any distance.

However, what kind of wealth floats around in the pirate world? Indeed, when one makes a successful Pilfering Check, just how much gold or jewels or other wealth will he get? This is normally up to the Game Captain's own discretion, and should be merely 1-3 gold, at best. However, Players can steal his authority as well, and **choose** what they intend to pilfer, that is if they have the presence of mind to select their target with care and cunning, indeed declaring before their roll what their objective is, gaining a bonus to their roll if they limit their success to specific booty.

Going for a purse adds +1 to one's roll and guarantees him 1-12 gold if successful.

Going for jewelry is more difficult, penalizing one's roll by -3, though success will grant one a prize worth 10-100 gold. Moreover, if this roll for the value of what one pilfered was '11' or '12', he still took a value of 100, but gets a bonus roll, thus allowing him to roll again in like manner, up to a maximum number of bonus rolls equal to his Pilfering Skill Level.

Going for larger objects such as a pistol or a spyglass will penalize one's Check, indeed by -1 for every 5 Weight they have (rounded up).

Disguise: Sometimes Characters will try to disguise themselves and skulk about town, or the taverne, or even their own ship. In any event, when one is in disguise, normally he may pass without being noticed or cared too much about. However, if he ever passes close to someone who may recognize him (for who or what he is), they may make an Intuition Check to see through the deception. And, there are some people a Character will wish to avoid more than others:

Foreigners can spot someone of a different country easily. If someone is not of the Nationality he is masquerading as, others gain a bonus of +1 to notice him. This bonus will be negated however if the disguised Character can speak the native language at Skill Level 2.

Guards are trained to spot scoundrels, and so gain a bonus of +2 to their Intuition Checks.

Crew members notice their mates (and former mates) well, and gain a bonus of +1 (if former mate) or +3 (if current mate) to notice the Character in disguise.

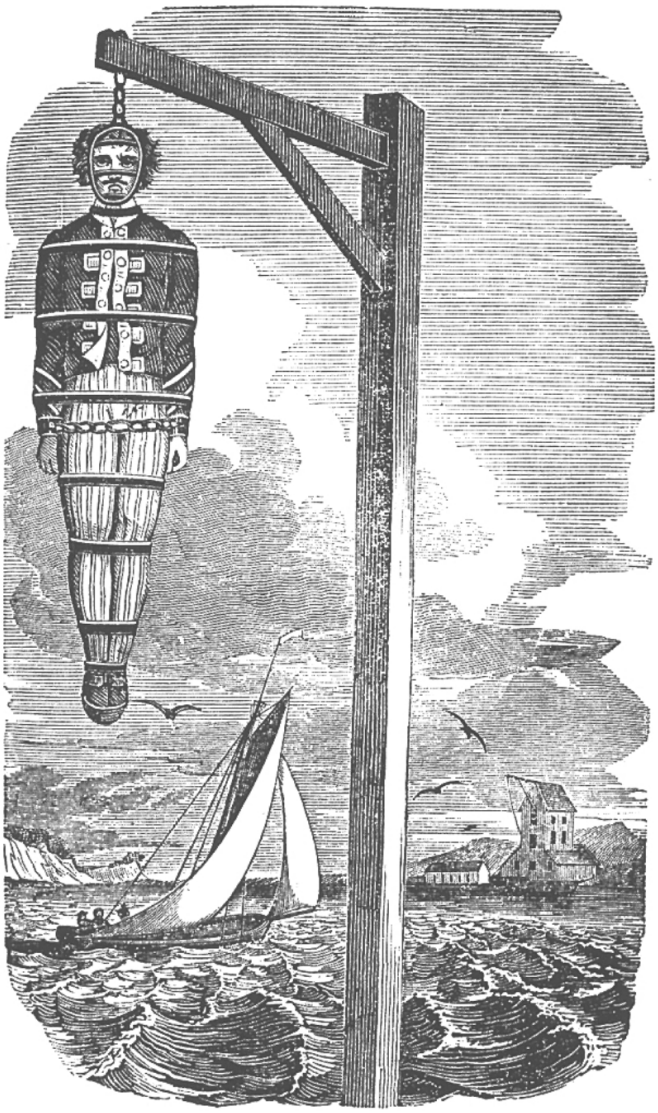
Torture: Torture can happen to anyone. Just make sure it doesn't happen to **you**! For in the pirate world there are countless cruel devices and cunning instruments to apply pain . . . slowly—or suddenly! Whenever torture is employed, the Game Captain will select a number from 1-12, or simply roll it, to determine the magnitude of the torture. This one number will determine many things, including the chance in 12 that the victim will give in and divulge whatever information is demanded, the Base Damage he will suffer if he does not, and the Notoriety Points earned by the Character who is commanding the torture. There are many factors that may aid someone's roll to resist torture.

Love can give someone tremendous strength of will, for if the information one is withholding protects a loved one, he will gain +3 to his rolls to resist even the most terrible torture.

Patriotism can give someone strength, for if the information one is withholding is essential to his king, he will gain +2 with his rolls to resist any and all torture.

Fears are a quick key to open the doors to another's mind, and if a Character has a Fear of his own and it is employed in torture, he will suffer a penalty of -1 to resist.

Selfishness can make someone give into torture rather easily, for indeed, if the Character is an NPC, and the information being bled out of him would hinder another (including a PC) but not necessarily himself, he will 'suffer' a penalty of -2 to his roll to resist the torture.



POISONS: Pssst! Poisons be the blood o' the pirate world! No tale of gold, betrayal, bounty and backstabbing tastes quite right without a little poison to spice things up.

Making poison: While anybody can use poison, only those Skilled with poison can make it. The ingredients can be anything, as is the time involved in mixing it. However, when used, only then will a poison be known to be effective or not—the Skill Level of he who made the poison is its chance in 6 of being effective.

Using poison: To apply poison, the intended victim must either be unaware—asleep, unconscious, the poison put into his drink, etc. If someone attempts to outright poison someone, he must either make a successful Attack Roll (such as with an envenomed blade), or a successful Stealth Check (such as to dribble the poison on his plate). In any event, once a poison is applied, the victim will lose 1 Ability Point per Skill Level of the poison's creator at regular time intervals, rolled when the poison is contracted on Table 9. If ever any Ability Score reaches 0, the Character will die.

Table 9: Poisons

Roll	Poison's speed
11-12	Every week
9-10	Every day
4-8	Every 1-12 hours
2-3	Every hour
1	Every Turn

Curing poison: Poison may be cured in a number of ways. Firstly, one Skilled in medicine may cure it, standing a chance in 6 equal to his Skill Level, penalized equally by the Skill Level of the poison itself. There are other cures as well, including antidotes made by the poison's maker, potions made by mystics, and other remedies that may arise during the pirate's adventures. In any event, when poison is neutralized, one instantly regains 1 point to each Ability Score, and will regain one additional point every 1-12 hours (re-rolled at each interval).

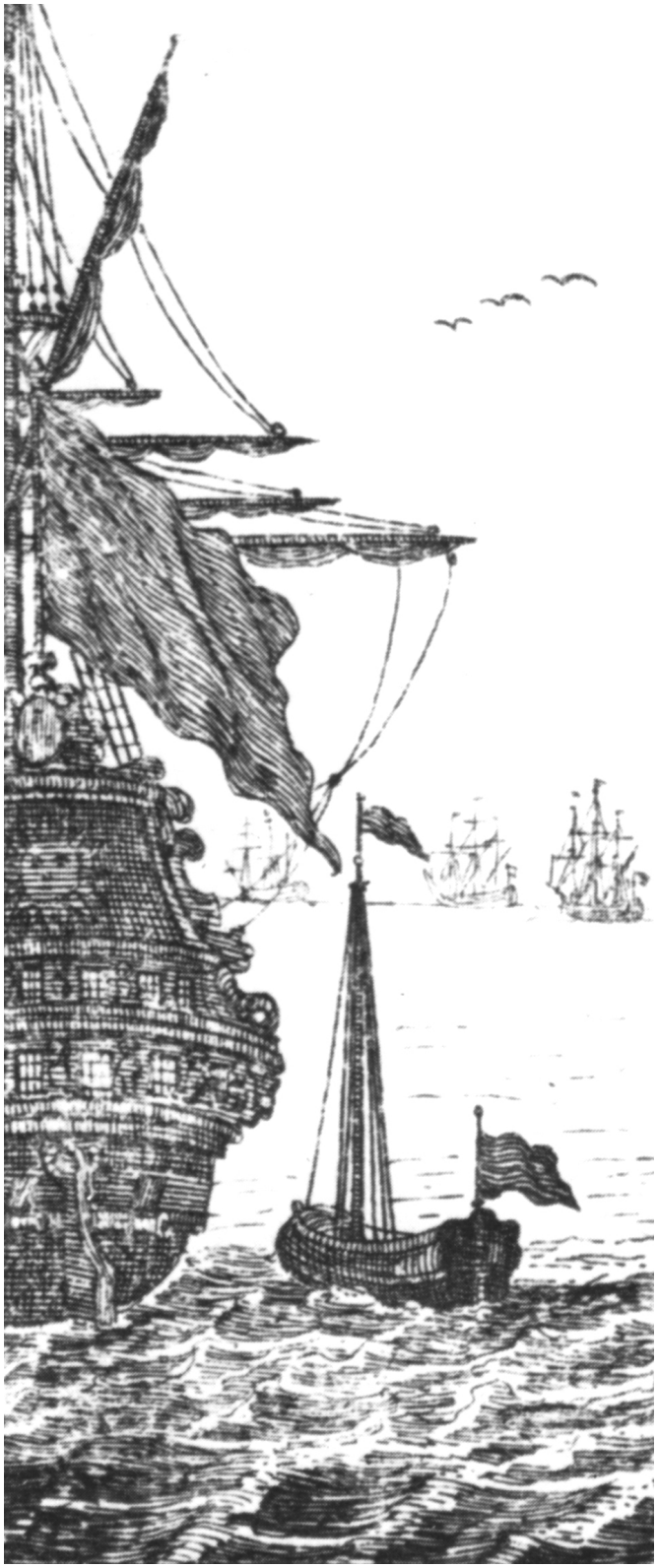
GAMES: Pirates love their games and their gambling. Whenever there's gold, treasure or pride at stake, the rule for gambling is that however much gold one risks in the game, multiplied by the number of players, is however much he stands to win. As a rule though, no NPC will risk more than 1-12 gold in a single day, unless an adventure's storyline and Encounters specifically state otherwise.

Card games: In the game of poker (and other card games) pirates are always eager to risk their hard won gold. Whenever cards are played, the game is summarized by a dice roll. Each participant rolls a single dice. The Character with the highest total wins. If rolls are tied for the highest, those Characters re-roll against each other.

Arm wrestling: The tough competition of arm wrestling is a classic game among pirates. When two pirates compete, they each roll a single dice, adding the result to their Brawn Score. The Character with the higher total wins. If the results are tied, they are re-rolled.

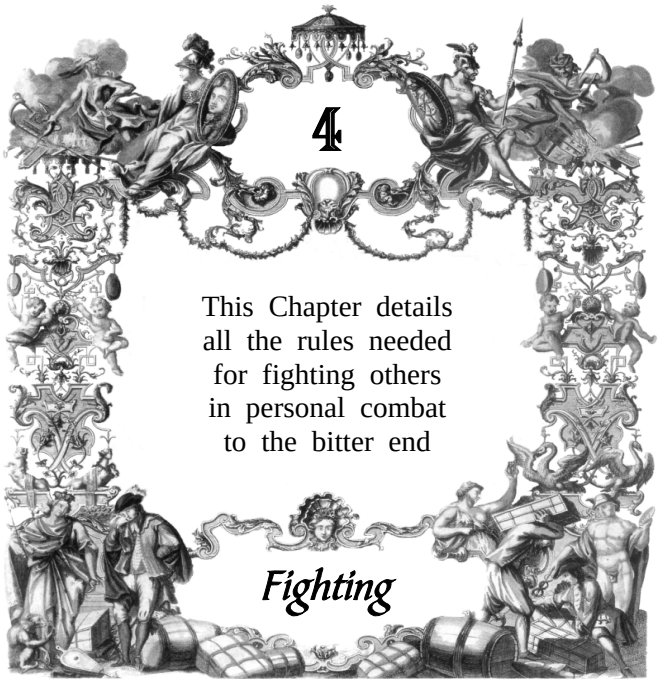
Pirates poker: In this dangerous game, one places his hand on the table and spreads his fingers wide, then he jabs repeatedly between his fingers with a dagger. The faster he goes, and the closer to his hand he comes, the better he plays. To play this, one rolls a single dice and adds the result to his Agility Score. If the total is 16 or greater, he wins. If not, he hits himself, suffering a normal wound (of -1).

Drinking contests: Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum! One of the greatest spoils is that of drink. Even moreso, since water spoils easily on a ship, alcohol is more commonly used for every meal. And when pirates aren't on duty, they're usually quite intoxicated. And, the more competitive ones, or those who just pride themselves on holding more liquor, hold contests to see who can outdrink their mates. To win such a contest, each person needs to roll a single dice, adding the result to his Girth Score. The one with the highest total wins, while all others fall unconscious.



CHAPTER FOUR

IT'S UNWISE TO CROSS BLADES WITH A PIRATE BUT THAT'S THE WAY TO BECOME A GOOD ONE



FIGHTING BASICS: In spite of the great naval battles that make the pirate genre what it is, most combat in this game will take place on a smaller scale, involving the Player Characters against a few adversaries, hand-to-hand, or sword-to-sword. The Player Characters will have to fight quite often. Whenever a sword is drawn, a punch is thrown, or a pistol is cocked, these rules for fighting are called upon.

Initiative: Personal combat—that is amongst people rather than ships—is divided into Rounds. Each Round, each Character receives one Turn. At the beginning of a battle (and sometimes during one), Characters must be defined as to which 'side' they are on, and each side makes an 'Initiative Roll'. The side with the highest roll gets to take Turns that Round, while all others can only trust to their scores and luck to survive until the next Initiative.

This roll favors the Player Characters in two ways: They gain the benefit of any tied result, as well as a bonus to their roll equal to the highest Experience Level amongst them.

If hasty Players from the same side throw multiple dice for Initiative, the Game Captain is to count the first one that hits the table, or the lowest result of them all (at his discretion).

Defense Score: Everyone, both Player Characters and NPCs alike, all have a 'Defense Score'. When attacking, this is the total that any attacker needs to achieve on his dice roll to hit someone.

Attack Rolls: The most common method of fighting is simply to attack. When one does, he makes an 'Attack Roll'. This is the roll of a single dice. If the total equals or exceeds the target's Defense Score, the attack was successful, and Damage is applied. Modifiers to Attack Rolls are many, including:

Defense Score will offer a bonus if it is high enough, according to Table 60, as one is good (or lucky) enough to maneuver himself into better positions to attack from.

Proficiency with the weapon one is using will offer him a bonus equal to his Skill Level.

Leadership will grant one a bonus assuming that his leader is present, whether he actually gives instructions to others or simply inspires them all, either way his Skill Level offering a bonus to all under his command according to Table 72.

Adverse conditions such as fighting in water, being blinded or using one's odd hand will affect anyone's roll when such situations apply, as explained later in this Chapter.

BLOOD AND DEATH: There is always a limit to how much pain one can take, how much blood they can lose, and just how much punishment they can endure, but just what one's own limit is, well, no living man knows . . .

Wounds: Whenever anyone is hit by a successful Attack Roll, the attacker will roll a single dice and add the result to the weapon's Base Damage, including any bonus' from Brawn. Likewise, the victim will roll a single dice and add the result to the total of his Girth Score and 'Guard' factor of armor. If a victim's total is less than his attacker's, he has been killed by the blow. If the victim's total equals or exceeds that of his attacker, he is wounded, and so he will still suffer a cumulative penalty to all such rolls to avoid dying in the future until healed, based on the nature of the wound he received. There are three general types of wounds, each listed and explained below.

Bruises inflicted by blunt weapons, fists and feet inflict a penalty of -1.

Cuts and slashes and scrapes from swords and other blades inflict a penalty of -2.

Gunshot wounds and burns from explosives and fire inflict a penalty of -3.

Healing: All wounds will remain until healed. And, wounds heal very slowly; the total of one's penalty from wounds is the full number of days he must remain at complete rest in order to heal enough to take 1 point off that total. Thus, the greater one's wounds, the longer he must wait to heal each such point, healing faster as his wounds close up.

Slow death: Pirate weapons are often crude and a good deal of the time they do not kill their targets outright, but suffer one a slow death over time, as wounds fester and poison him. When one 'dies', if his Endurance Score is equal to or higher than his total penalty from all his wounds at that time, he may not die at that moment, but rather the Player will roll below on Table 10 to determine just how long it takes for things to go dark. This roll is aided by one's bonus from having a high Girth Score. Note that this roll is only made for Player Characters and key NPCs—normal crew who go down in battle are only red shirts, after all.

Table 10: Slow Death

Roll	The Character dies . . .
12	Another day; gains 10-120 Experience
10-11	Some other time; it's just a flesh wound
9	After 1-6 Rounds if his killer is not dead
7-8	When he fails a now daily Luck Check
5-6	As soon as the battle is finished
2-4	Instantly
1	In a horrific way that leaves no body

Certain death: There are times when rules and rolls fly in the face of common sense regarding if one lives or dies, and in such instances, common sense should prevail. For if anyone—Player Character or NPC alike—should be in a situation that spells certain death, the Game Captain should rule that all rolls and their modifiers are void, and that the Character's only hope is to make a Saving Throw, indeed if there is even any Saving Throw for it.

CRITICAL ATTACKS: The natural extremes on any and all Attack Rolls of '12' and '1' always evoke great excitement or great concern, and for good reason, as they result in 'Critical Attacks', as explained below.

Critical Hits: Whenever a natural '12' is rolled on an Attack Roll, the attack succeeded despite all penalties to the roll, and indeed was so successful as to merit a 'Critical Hit'. The attacker must then roll on Table 11 to determine the result of the hit. If this roll results in an implausible effect, use the next **highest** result on that chart until a plausible result is found.

Table 11: General Critical Hits

Roll	Critical result
12	Death!
11	All of the target's armor is destroyed
10	Target knocked off nearest height
9	Arm lost
8	Hand lost
7	Leg lost
6	Foot lost
5	Eye lost
3-4	Target stunned; attacker receives free Turn
1-2	Penalty from wound is doubled

Critical Misses: Whenever a natural '1' is rolled on an Attack Roll, the attack failed despite all bonus' to the roll, and indeed was so disastrous as to merit a 'Critical Miss'. The attacker must then roll on Table 12 to determine the result of the miss. If this roll results in an implausible effect, use the next **lowest** result on thar chart until a plausible result is found.

Table 12: General Critical Misses

Roll	Critical result
12	Fall over; next Turn getting back to feet
11	Runs out of gunshot (guns only)
10	Attacker falls off nearest height
9	Compromising position; enemy gets a Turn
8	Weapon lost (flung, disarmed, etc.)
7	Weapon breaks or explodes
6	Hits own self
4-5	Hits friend or ally
1-3	Defender's choice!

Expanded Critical Hits: The Critical Hit results provided on Table 11 are generic and thus suitable for all conditions and situations. Of course, pirates and role-players alike have a habit of taking a fight into the most unusual of locations and situations. To this end, alternate versions of the Critical Hit Table are provided.

Table 13: Critical Hits Aboard Ship

Roll	Critical result
12	Gruesome death; 1-6 enemies surrender
11	Cannon fire; kills enemy plus 1-6 more
10	Stray shot hits the enemy captain!
9	Sets enemy ship afire; 3-36 Hull Points
8	Sets enemy ship afire; 1-12 Hull Points
7	Leg or arm lost; attacker's choice
6	Eye, hand or foot lost; attacker's choice
4-5	Chased up high into the rigging
1-3	Knocked overboard; 1-3 Rounds to return

Table 14: Critical Hits Up High

Roll	Critical result
12	Death!
11	Arm, leg or eye lost; attacker's choice
10	Penalty from wound is doubled
6-9	Falls to hard surface; 1-6 Base Damage
4-5	Drops his weapon to places far below
1-3	Falls to water; 1-6 Rounds to return

Table 15: Critical Hits In Caverns

Roll	Critical result
12	Horrifying death; +3 to next Initiative
11	Death!
9-10	Arm, leg or eye lost; attacker's choice
6-8	Hand or foot lost; attacker's choice
4-5	Target trips; attacker gets +3 to next attack
1-3	Breaks enemy's weapon

Table 16: Critical Hits In Water

Roll	Critical result
12	Death!
11	Catches current; can flee without any roll
10	Hit and go under; +4 to next Initiative
6-9	Penalty from wound is doubled
4-5	Water stings wound; increase penalty by 1
1-3	Blood attracts 1-12 sharks (at sea only)

Expanded Critical Misses: The Critical Miss results provided on Table 12 are generic and thus suitable for all conditions and situations. Of course, pirates and role-players alike have a habit of taking a fight into the most unusual of locations and situations. To this end, alternate versions of the Critical Miss Table are provided.

Table 17: Critical Misses Aboard Ship

Roll	Critical result
12	Chased up into the rigging
11	Runs out of gunshot (guns only)
10	Falls overboard; 1-4 Rounds to return
9	Cornered; enemy gets free Turn
8	Weapon breaks or explodes
7	Caught in anchor chain and it's dropped!
6	Hits powder kegs; kill 1-6 fellow crewmen
4-5	Hits own self
1-3	Hits friend or ally

Table 18: Critical Misses Up High

Roll	Critical result
12	Drops weapon to places far below
11	Runs out of gunshot (guns only)
10	Agility Check or fall to your death
6-9	Falls into water; 1-6 Rounds to return
4-5	Falls to hard surface; 1-6 Base Damage
1-3	Hits friend or ally

Table 19: Critical Misses In Caverns

Roll	Critical result
12	Trips; -3 to next attack
11	Runs out of gunshot (guns only)
10	Causes cave-in; 1-6 random people buried
6-9	Ricochet (guns only); hits random target
4-5	Hits own self
1-3	Hits friend or ally

Table 20: Critical Misses In Water

Roll	Critical result
12	Blood attracts 1-12 sharks (at sea only)
11	Exhausted; Endurance Check or drown
10	Hits friend or ally
6-9	Weapon lost (powder wet for guns)
4-5	Caught on bottom; underwater 1-6 Rounds
1-3	Hits own self

CROSSING SWORDS

IT'S UNWISE TO CROSS BLADES WITH A PIRATE BUT THAT'S THE WAY TO BECOME A GOOD ONE

FIGHTING TACTICS: Pirates are willing to take the fight anywhere, and win any way they can. Now, the countless ways a battle can go are as complex as the rigging on a Spanish galleon, but since this is an abstract game, details and tactics thereby are in the rules kept to a minimum. Still, there are some reasonable factors to consider for all the kinds of one-on-one fighting.

Changing weapons: It does not take a Turn for a man to switch weapons in battle. However, it does take one Turn to re-load a single firearm (double-barreled pistols still count as only one firearm).

Ferocity: Pirates are especially infamous for their frenzied attacks, brutal tactics and sheer ferocity when forced to seize their treasure rather than have the cowardly give it up without contest. Indeed, sheer intimidation is all that can keep many crews together. As it is, one may choose to fight more on the offensive rather than the natural defensive, a worthwhile gamble for those whose aggression is greater than their fear.

A Player may voluntarily lower his Character's Defense Score in order to gain a bonus to his Attack Rolls. This is, in essence, one throwing caution to the wind and blazing ahead recklessly. For every 1 Defense Score lost, a Character will gain +1 to all of his Attack Rolls. However, such changes remain in place for the duration of the fight, and cannot be changed one way or the other until then. Furthermore, the Attack bonus is reduced by 1 each time the ferocious Character is wounded (though the loss to Defense Score **remains**), as he is not pacing himself well enough and is getting exhausted.

In addition, one who has already committed himself to such bloodlust may, in the heat of battle, take this even further, increasing his Attack bonus (and subsequently lowering his Defense Score) by 1 more each time he lands a Critical Hit. However, the reverse of this will also hold, that he shall lose 1 to his Attack bonus (but **not** gain anything to his Defense Score) with each Critical Miss.

If for any reason one's frenzied Attack bonus is reduced to zero, the Character collapses, unconscious and exhausted.

Multiple attacks: It is always good strategy to have multiple weapons. If one is skilled enough, he can use two weapons at the same time—one in either hand. Of course, one can always attack with his hands alone if he wishes. In any event, two attacks carry certain advantages and disadvantages.

If one attempts two attacks (his second being from his other hand), he must declare so before rolling his first Attack Roll. That first roll will suffer a -4 penalty. Only if this attack hits will he have disabled his opponent enough to attempt a second attack with his other hand.

In any event, the Attack Roll made with one's odd hand suffers a -2 penalty (though one who is ambidextrous does not suffer this penalty).

Dueling: Fine is the art of fencing or dueling in any form, with a calm, cool and collected fighter patiently controlling the chaos while waiting for the opportune moment to strike. If both a Character and his opponent are using melee weapons, he can choose at any time to begin dueling rather than merely hacking and slashing. This forfeits his Turn to his opponent who can attack at once, but if that attack fails to hit, the Character gets his Turn after all, beginning a back-and-forth duel that does not return to Initiative until somebody lands a blow. In addition, each Round that the duel returns to the one who chose to begin it, a cumulative +1 bonus builds for each combatant's Attack Rolls. Once a hit is landed, whether it kills one's opponent or not, both such bonus' are negated.

Throwing pistols: Usually, pirates begin a boarding party (and other fights) by drawing pistols, firing them, then throwing them as blunt projectiles and then quickly drawing new ones, thus never taking the time to re-load. Because this is done so often, the Game Captain may rule that Characters may fire pistols on one Round, and then for the next Round throw the pistol as a blunt object (for 0 Base Damage) but in that same Round be able to draw a new weapon, be it a pistol, cutlass, or anything else. This oft-practiced pirate attack does not require any special rolling, but at the same time does not allow one to attempt any other tactics, such as attempting multiple attacks.

Disarming: If one wants to disarm his opponent, he must take one Turn in combat to do so, standing a chance in 6 equal to his Skill with the weapon he himself is using for success. If his opponent is skilled with that same weapon, it equally penalizes one's chances. For example, Salty Smee, who wields a longsword at +3 would stand a 3 in 6 (or 6 in 12) chance of disarming his Spanish opponent from his cutlass. However, if that Spaniard was Skilled with a longsword at +1, then Salty Smee would only stand a 2 in 6 (or 4 in 12) chance of success.

Lunging: A daring move which is normally tried here and there in the normal, abstract Attack Roll, one may wish to use this maneuver more often than is wise by the rules of engagement. For if one does, he can lunge forward with a rapier (only), gaining a +2 bonus to his Attack Roll. But should he miss, he will grant his opponent a free Turn to do as he will.

Grenades: Such weapons are almost common amongst pirates. However, while their inclusion would certainly blow up countless enemies, they would also do grave damage to the 50% fictional and 'cinematic' aspect of the game. This is all too clear after watching the 'oil flask' bombs that commonly ruin the romance of medieval fantasy adventure games. But of course, a Game Captain can allow his crew of Players to have such weapons if he likes. The 'grenades' used by pirates are small iron balls filled with about 5 ounces of gunpowder, inset with a hollow wooden fuse and sealed with wax. In game terms, such an item has a base chance of 6 in being found (or made), costs 15 gold, and weighs 10. One can throw such a one-use weapon up to 10' for every Brawn Point he has, but he still must make a normal Attack Roll. If the grenade hits its target the por sod will suffer 1-12 Damage. And, even if it misses up to a margin of 3, he will still suffer 1-6 Damage. Anything less means he will have escaped entirely.

Fighting in water: Quite often are pirates battling in water, either in a flooded cave, a sinking ship, or in the shallow water (and spilled rum) just off the pier. In any event, all Attack Rolls made within the water suffer a penalty of -2. If one is Skilled at swimming, his Skill Level is the bonus to this roll, thus +2 swimming canceling the initial penalty, a +3 offering a +1 to attack.

Blind fighting: There will be times when combatants cannot see one another, such as fighting in a suddenly darkened room, a cave, or even fighting blindfolded! Whenever one is deprived of sight, both his Defense Score and his Attack Rolls suffer a penalty of -3.

Fortitude: At any time a Player or Game Captain can choose to forgo the required rolls for Girth when the Character(s) they are playing happen to be struck, allowing not only for a faster combat round by eliminating a roll, but providing them with a basis for better strategy as well. For when one does this, he makes one such roll to last him for the duration of the battle, counting against every blow that is landed against him thereafter, though normal penalties for wounds still apply. If one rolls well, it may be a sign that he's in good health these days, etc. Similarly, if one rolls low, perhaps he shouldn't have had all that rum the previous evening . . .

Fleeing: Discretion is the better part of valor, indeed! Instead of attacking, one may use their Turn in battle to attempt to flee the carnage. One stands a chance in 12 equal to his Defense Score of fleeing from the battle up to a distance equal to his Modified Movement Rate. However, if one is outnumbered, his chance to escape is penalized by -4, as is his distance penalized by a random loss of 10'-120'. And, should one's attempt to flee fail, one enemy will get a free Turn to attack him!

PURCHASES: Money is for spending! And there are all kinds of goods, weapons and services that Characters will need or desire. However, before one rushes out to spend their gold, a few rules about purchases need to be made clear.

Gold: Different types of coins are worth different amounts in different lands, according to the king and country that covets them. Most coins in the pirate world are silver, and some are gold, but they are all simply called 'gold' in game terms.

However, if one wishes to be specific about them, they may indeed, with different types of coins increasing the Availability of items both in ports and aboard ships that fly their same flag, but also lowering Availability where a different flag flies, according to Table 21. The first modifier listed is for the country's own, the second modifier for all other ships and harbors, as they tend to reject foreign coins.

Another thing to consider about gold is how much it burdens the person (or the ship) that keeps it. For no matter their crest or king, every 100 coins (rounded down) has 1 Weight. Gold of any kind aboard ship, be it in coins, ingots or bullion will also take up 1 space in the cargo hold for every 1000 gold value kept there.

Table 21: Coin Values

Type of coin	Nation	Domestic	Foreign
Crowns	Britain	+3	-2
Daalders	Holland	+2	-2
Doubloons	Spain	+2	-0
Ducats	Holland	+1	-0
Guineas	Britain	+2	-1
Louis d'ors	France	+2	-3
Nine deniers	France	+0	-1
Pieces of eight	Spain	+3	+1

Availability: Everything and anything that can be purchased has a chance of 'Availability', ranging from 1-12. This chance must be rolled whenever one seeks to purchase an item. This roll is aided by the Level of the town in which one is seeking goods. If the Check fails, the item is not available to that Character nor anyone else until after 1-12 days have passed (and new goods have arrived).

Selling: Very few things are ever bought new in the pirate world, as that requires commissioned work and high prices. Indeed, many things are traded outright, with gold value as a measurement. To this end, if anything is sold in town, it will run for the same price as listed throughout the following pages.

Bartering: If someone wishes to barter for a lower price on a purchase (or even raise the price of what he's selling), he may attempt to do so by rolling on Table 22. Note that one may only barter for an item once, regardless of the outcome. If this results in an item no longer being up for sale, it is the same as if a roll for Availability failed.

Table 22: Bartering

Roll	Price change
12	Better by 10-60%
11	Better by 10%
10	Better by 10%
8-9	Better by 5%
5-7	No change
3-4	Price 20% worse
2	Price 40% worse
1	No longer interested in purchase

Services: There are all kinds of services available in towns and cities. Table 23 below lists the more common services that remain available to pirates and other outcasts in most settlements. Note that these prices are not fixed, as prices and the quality of services changes everywhere one goes.

Table 23: Services

Service	Cost of service
Appraisal	1 gold per gem or jewelry piece
Bank	10% of treasure being kept
Carriage	2 gold for 5 leagues of distance
Doctor	10 gold per Damage treated
Guide	3 gold per day (includes food)
Inn room	1 gold per person (includes food)
Marriage	10-100* gold
Porter	10 gold per week (includes food)
Proper burial	10-60 gold
Tailor	5 gold per set of clothes
Translator	10 gold per page
Whore	1-12 gold per person per night

* - Rolls of '11' and '12' indicate that the marriage is favored by the church for whatever reason and thus is performed free of charge.

RANDOM SITUATIONS: Provided below are charts for offering quick answers to all kinds of questions in town, and the maximum statistical changes that such situations can make towards the game, barring the exceptions of prepared adventure material. Note that all of these charts are optional to use, for they expand on rules detailed elsewhere in this book. Indeed they are a gamble, offering better rewards but also greater risks. A Player can choose to use these charts while others prefer to stay with the more simplified rules. NPCs will not use these charts, as they are of little consequence and thus demand little attention to detail.

Pilfering: "We're in town, there's fools everywhere and I'm going to get some easy money." This is a common way for pirates to spend their time in town. So, if someone goes out looking for a target that is possible to pilfer without having to resort to fighting, Table 24 below will reveal what he finds, plus the modifier to his Pilfering Check. If one doesn't like this target, he cannot get such a prime prize for another 1-3 hours. Note that as the result of '12' offers additional rolls, if a '12' is rolled again it continues to add to the group.

Table 24: Picking Pockets

Roll	Unaware NPC	Modifier
12	Group; 3 rolls on this chart*	+4
11	Unguarded nobleman	+3
10	Gentleman	+3
9	Drunkard	+2
8	Merchant or porter	+2
7	Priest or Clergyman	+1
6	Whore	+1
5	Laborer	+0
4	Tradesman	+0
3	Town guard or officer	-1
2	Sailor or another pirate	-2
1	Someone picks his own pocket	NA

Whores: "I'm going to go and get myself some action of another kind." Historical, true to form, and what happens in most games whether they say it or not. So, if someone wants to have a whore, a good question is how good is she (or he)? And, truly, how does this affect one's Character? Indeed, will it turn out to be a whore, or horror? One roll on Table 25 can determine that. Of course, it costs 1-12 gold per 'chance' (this is the same roll).

Table 25: Playing With Prostitutes

Roll	Prostitute's quality
12	Perfection; 1-12 Experience Points!
10-11	Fiery lass; +1 Endurance for the next day
7-9	Typical streetwalker
5-6	Saucy wench; effective wound of 1-3
4	Diseased streetwalker; loss of -1 Girth
2-3	Fertile flame; Character spawns a child
1	Opposite gender in disguise!

Crew: "We're going to let the crew have fun in town to raise their Morale." The normal expense of 1-12 gold for each crewman to spend a day in port and thus raise Morale by +1 can be increased in excitement, profit, and risk alike with one roll on Table 26. And indeed, one such roll may be made by the Player of the crew's captain for each separate day that his men are let loose in the streets. Whatever is rolled on the dice determines not only how they spend their time, but also the amount of gold spent doing it, and the Modifier to their Morale which may be more or less than the standard of +1.

Table 26: Parties In Port

Roll	The crew spends their time . . .	Morale
12	Doing everything imaginable	+2
11	Gambling	+2
10	Settling old scores	+2
9	Singing pirate songs—yo-ho!	+1
8	Drinking up, me hearties—yo-ho!	+1
7	Searching their souls at church	+1
6	Wenching	+1
5	Winning bar brawls	+1
4	Telling stories	+0
3	Lounging around	+0
2	Losing bar brawls	-1
1	In prison for petty pirate crimes	-1

SHOPPES AND MERCHANTILES: In towns and villages, Characters can visit many merchants, shoppes and stores to purchase all manner of equipment. All significant goods are detailed throughout the following pages.

Backpack: A backpack will reduce one's carried Weight by 10, but only one can be worn.

Blunderbuss: This is a heavy, cumbersome rifle, its barrel widening towards its end. A powerful rifle indeed, but without the range of the musket. Such a gun has 1 shot and then requires a separate Turn in order to re-load.

Boarding axe: This is a short handled, crude axe designed to sever boarding ropes, but is equally useful for severing the limbs of those who come across on them.

Book: This is a small book with a non-specific number of pages, useful as a personal journal or as an adventure log.

Buckler: A small, round shield designed for duels, its small size effectively very large at a distance but quite cumbersome at close range, its 'Guard' thus not counting against anyone whose Attack bonus exceeds the shield wearer's own.

Candle: A single candle lasts anywhere from 1-12 hours. If one wishes to acquire larger candles, he may simply lump costs and Encumbrance together.

Canteen: A canteen will hold approximately a week's worth of water. However full a canteen is does not affect its Encumbrance.

Captain's coat (or hat): This is a lavishly designed coat (or big hat) that signifies nobility or great leadership. Such a coat (or hat) will increase a captain's Charisma Score by 1 while he wears it (to a maximum of 12).

Chain: A length of chain is better used as a weapon, perhaps with some deadly device on its end for grappling, choking, bashing, whipping, ripping, tearing or gouging.

Cloak: A full cloak is useful for thwarting blows from both stabbing and slashing atacks, granting a bonus of +1 to one's Girth roll when enduring a blow from any bladed weapon, but at the same time penalizing his Agility Checks by -1.

Club: A 'club' can be anything, from a belaying pin to a legbone.

Compass: Compass' come in various sizes and shapes, though this never changes their statistics, always offering a +1 bonus to Navigation Checks.

Cutlass: The cutlass has a short, wide blade and a thick, firm handleguard. Of all swords, the cutlass hits the hardest, cuts the deepest, and is by far the most intimidating.

Dagger: A dagger is a short blade no more than a foot in length.

Explosives: A Character can set a fuse as long as he wishes (measured in Rounds it will take to reach the keg). When this explodes, it will blast everyone in the area for an automatic hit of 5-16 Damage, at a radius of 50'-160' equivalent to the damage. Multiple kegs that are set together will increase the total Damage, but not the blast radius.

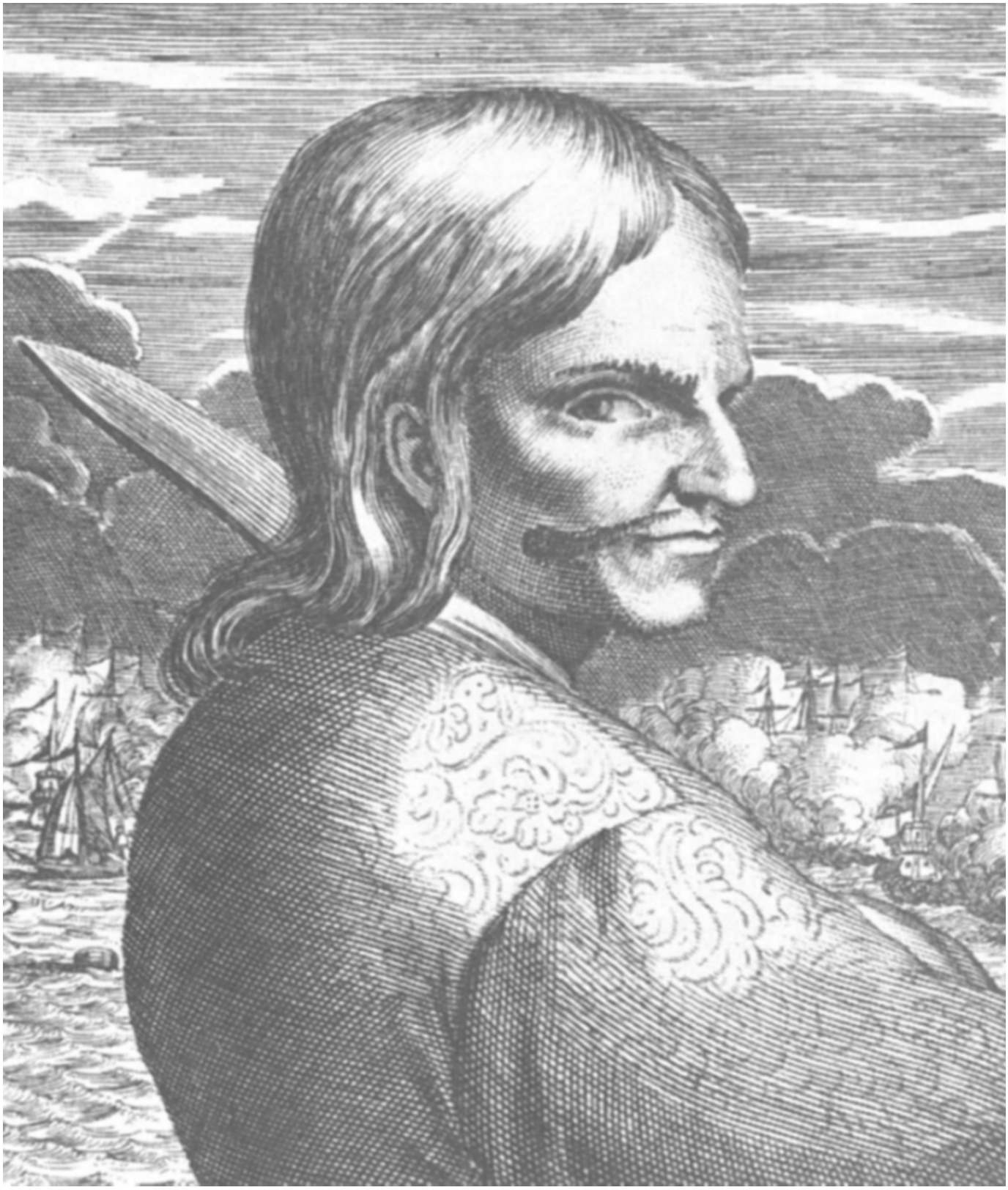
Eye patch: If ever a Character loses an eye, he may cover it up, though the penalty to both one's Intuition and Charisma remain.

Table 27: Clothing

Clothing	Found	Cost
Captain's coat (or hat)	11	10
Cloak	5	8
Eye-patch	12	2
False arm	3	12
False eye	1	15
False teeth	2	30
Fencing gloves	8	2
Hook	10	6
New clothes	12	3
Pegleg	10	4
Secret cache	1	6
Uniform	2	10

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GOLDEN BLOOD OF PIRACY ALL FLOWS BACK TO THE BOTTOMLESS HEART OF CIVILIZATION



False arm: A wooden arm, enabling the Character to replace a lost arm. However, it's still not as effective, restoring 1 Point Brawn lost thereby.

False eye: A single eye glass orb that fits in an empty eye-socket. While this does not restore one's vision, it will restore 1 Charisma lost thereby.

False teeth: False teeth can be taken out just as easily as clothing can be taken off. These teeth (usually those of another person) can restore the loss of 2 Charisma for comeliness (from Table 61).

Fencing gloves: These thick gloves are good for grabbing rapiers and other slashing weapons and diverting them, thus increasing one's Defense Score by +1 against all bladed attacks, but at the same time penalizing his Agility Checks by -1.

Gunshot: This is a collection of small, metal pellets or balls used to load pistols, muskets, and blunderbuss rifles. This is a non-specific amount of gunshot, which will only run out if one rolls the result of '11' on Table 12, 17, 18 or 19.

Helmet: Normally worn in addition to Spanish armor, a helmet will grant a bonus of +1 to one's Charisma Checks when dealing with the Spanish. A helmet lower one's Defense Score by -2 unless he is used to it by Coasta Guarda training (and thus Character Class).

Hook: If a Character loses a hand, he may replace it with a hook or similar device. Such a tool will restore 1 Brawn Point lost thereby.

Hourglass: An hourglass is a pair of twin glass cups connected by a thin tube and contained within a wooden or metal frame. When tipped up-side-down, the sand runs steadily through the neck, requiring exactly one hour to change ends.

Lantern: A lantern requires oil, but so long as one has oil, a lantern will burn indefinitely, providing adequate light for a radius of 50'.

Lock: A lock and key. If specified, a Character can acquire multiple keys at no additional cost.

Table 28: Equipment

Item	Found	Cost	Weight
Backpack	10	3	3
Book	11	4	2
Candle	12	1	2
Canteen	12	3	10
Compass	11	10	1
Explosives	6	40	30
Hourglass	9	8	10
Lantern	12	4	6
Lock	12	5	4
Lockpicks	3	5	2
Oil flask	11	2	10
Parchment (5 sheets)	11	1	1
Pen and ink	11	1	3
Pocketwatch	4	20	1
Rations (10 days)	12	1	20
Rope (10')	12	2	2
Rum (1 bottle)	12	2	10
Sack	12	1	4
Scroll case	8	2	1
Spyglass	10	25	7
Tinder box	12	3	1
Torch	12	1	4

Lockpicks: This is a set of cunning tools, which adds +4 to one's Lockpicking Checks. However, if the roll is a natural '1', the lockpicks break.

Longsword: A nice medium between the cutlass and the rapier, longswords come in a wide variety of lengths and designs for weight, strength and balance, from the thrusting 'spadroon' to the more elegant 'saber', they all none-the-less have a fine heft, are light enough to swing readily, and heavy enough to cut deeply—these swords add a bonus of +1 to each and every Attack Roll.

Machete: Though it can be used as a weapon the same as any sword, a machete is primarily used for cutting one's way through the jungle. If the first in line uses a machete, a traveling party will gain +1 to their daily speed (in a jungle)

Musket: This long, thin rifle possesses great range and accuracy, though it inflicts less damage than its cousin, the blunderbuss. Such a gun has 1 shot and then requires 2 separate Turns to re-load.

New clothes: Characters' clothes are often being burned, shredded or lost, and need replacing.

Oil flask: Oil is required to fuel a lantern. However, it also makes a wonderful, short-range explosive, inflicting a base Damage of 4 points!

Parchment: Five sheets of paper, used for making notes (especially for the Players' benefit).

Pegleg: If one loses a leg, he may replace it with a wooden or 'peg' leg. This will restore 1 Agility Point lost thereby.

Pen and ink: This small package includes a long, feathered quill and a small vial of ink. This ink will last indefinitely.

Pike: A pike is a long, wooden pole tipped with a blade or other device.

Pistol: The flint-lock is the standard pistol in the world. An additional 10 gold to the cost will make it a double-barreled pistol, though this reduces a pistol's chance of being available by -2. Such a gun has 1 shot (per barrel) and then it requires a separate Turn in order to re-load (each one).

Pocketwatch: Far less cumbersome and longer lasting than an hourglass, a pocketwatch is favored for keeping track of time. However, watches do stop after some time—unless a Player specifically states that his Character winds his watch that day, if he checks it, there is a 1 in 12 chance that it has stopped some time ago.

Rapier: The most refined and elegant of swords, the rapier is a sleek, stabbing weapon used most often for honorable duels and fencing. Evolving from the medieval broadsword, all the power is in the point of the blade, which has a very long reach indeed—these swords add a bonus of +1 to all Attack Rolls made against a target who is also using a sword or any other melee weapon.

Rations: Whenever one travels inland, he should take good store of food with him. One purchase of rations will last one man approximately ten days.

Table 29: Weapons

Weapon	Found	Cost	Weight	Damage
Blunderbuss	8	18	14	9
Boarding axe	12	3	10	5
Chain	12	1	12	2
Club	12	1	8	1
Cutlass	10	10	10	7
Dagger	12	2	5	3
Gunshot	12	1	5	NA
Longsword	8	8	9	5
Machete	5	4	7	4
Musket	6	25	12	7
Pike	7	2	8	4
Pistol	9	20	5	6
Rapier	10	6	6	3

Rope: Rope is sold in lengths of 10'. Rope can support up to 200 weight easily. After that, every additional 50 Encumbrance is the cumulative 1 in 12 chance that the rope breaks.

Rum: Rum hardens the nerves and warms the spirit. Each bottle will negate -1 penalty worth of wounds for 1-12 hours.

Sack: If carried, a sack will reduce one's carried Weight by 20, but takes a free hand to carry.

Scroll case: This is a small tube, usually made out of wood or ivory. They are water tight, fire proof, and can safely hold up to 5 pieces of paper.

Secret cache: This is an article of clothing, such as a hollow shoe or pegleg, containing a small, secret compartment for keeping valuables safe. These can hold up to 5 gold or jewels, or a single piece of parchment. The weight of all things hidden in such a cache remains. The total number of caches one has on him past the first is the cumulative chance in 12 that all of them can be easily spotted. For example, 4 caches would have a 6 in 12 chance.

Spanish plate: This heavy suit of smooth armor makes for the best protection possible against pistol shots and swords. This armor does not include its matching helmet. This armor vest will lower one's Defense Score by -4 unless he is used to it by Coasta Guarda training (and thus Character Class).

Table 30: Armor

Armor	Found	Cost	Guard	Weight
Buckler	1	10	1	30
Helmet	3	12	1	10
Spanish plate	1	90	4	45
Thick clothing	9	7	1	15
Wooden armor	2	15	2	20

Spyglass: A spyglass allows clear sight of objects miles away. A spyglass will add +1 to Navigation Checks, and +3 to Intuition Checks made for seeing things far away.

Thick clothing: A person may wrap himself tight in coats, leather, belts and breeches, becoming well cushioned against most blows. Thick clothing will lower one's Defense Score by -1 unless he is not a he, but a woman indeed.

Tinder box: Flint, steel, various powder and other instruments are sold together in a small box, a 'tinder box' as it were.

Torch: A torch will burn for approximately an hour. In that time, a torch will provide adequate light for a 30' radius.

Uniform: The perfect copy of a single type of uniform known in that town. If one wishes to buy a foreign uniform, it will cost an additional 1-12 gold and take an equal number of days to make.

Wooden armor: Small patches of wood and leather making a crude but effective guard against blades. Wooden armor will lower one's Defense Score by -2 if he is male and -3 if female.

LIVESTOCK: Animals of various sorts are available in most towns and hamlets. Table 31 displays the more common animals purchased by pirates, their 'Intelligence', their Movement Rate, and the carrying capacity (in Weight).

Table 31: Livestock

Animal	Cost	Found	Int.	Move	Carry
Burrow	20	10	2	100'	35
Horse	70	9	3	300'	40
Monkey	20	3	7	70'	3
Mule	30	10	2	80'	40
Parrot	10	5	6	150'	1
Snake	30	8	1	20'	0

Beasts of burden: The carrying capacity given for each animal is how much Weight it can carry before it slows down. Each time that capacity is equaled again, the animal slows down 20'.

Food: Animals need to eat just as people do. Any animal with a Capacity of 30 or more requires food and water in equal shares as that of a person.

Training animals: If an animal is trained for certain tricks, it requires the difference of the animal's Intelligence and 10 in weeks to learn the trick. Table 32 displays the more common tricks of an animal, and the minimum Intelligence required.

Table 32: Training Animals

Trick	Intelligence	Cost
Very basic speech	5	120
Dance	7	100
Pilfer/retrieve items	7	80
Play dead	4	50
Attack	1	40
Respond to own name	3	10

AT THE WHARFS: At the docks, the spits and sandbars, the jungle ends and forests of masts and sails rise up into the winds. Among the docks and even the beach seamen may make inquiries about vessels to be bought and sold, where to repair them, and who to see to provision them.

Purchasing ships: When a Character or party has enough gold, they may purchase a ship of their own! Table 33 lists the average prices for all types of ships throughout the pirate world.

Table 33: Purchasing Ships

Ship	Found	Cost
Schooner	10	1500
Naval sloop	7	2500
Navy snow	6	2800
Sloop	9	3200
Dutch fluyt	5	4000
Barque	10	6000
Brigantine	9	7000
Mariner	5	10000
Merchantman	4	12000
Frigate	3	22000
Man-o-war	2	24000
Galleon	1	30000

Provisioning ships: At the wharfs alone supplies for ships may be bought and sold. Table 34 displays the common provisions for ships and their average prices. The 'size' of an item represents how much space it takes in the hold of any ship.

Table 34: Provisions

Provision	Found	Cost	Size
Anchor	11	30	50
Cannon (1 gun)	6	80	50
Cannonballs (1 salvo)	7	6	5
Charts	10	500	0
Flag (same as town)	10	30	10
Flag (foreign)	8	80	10
Flag (pirate)	6	100	10
Food (10 days, 1 man)	12	1	1
Longboat	12	75	350
Mast (replacement)	4	500	0
Oars (full ship)	5	100	100
Spare sails	11	200	300
Weapons*	10	600	200

* - Used for boarding parties and attacking towns. If an individual Character seeks a specific weapon, he must roll for its Availability as normal.

Repairing ships: If not sunk to the bottom of the briny, a ship may pull into a friendly port and get repaired. The cost of repairing a ship is equal to 10 gold per Hull Point of damage. Hull Points are repaired at the random rate of 1-12 each day.

Selling ships: The condition of any vessel weighs heavily if one tries to sell it. Normally, nobody will buy a ship until it is fully repaired. However, if stressed circumstances demand that a ship be sold, every Hull Point worth of damage will lower the cost listed on Table 33 by 30 gold.

Modifying ships: At extensive expense, a ship may be modified to become stronger or have greater capacity for guns or cargo. Any ship can be modified a number of times up to its Value, plus one more for every Skill Level of shipwright one has. Note that if a skilled shipwright has already modified a ship, one cannot modify it further unless he has a higher Skill Level, and then only by the difference.

Normally, there are no people in any harbor or port—not even the shipwrights themselves—who will modify ships, for they either tend to believe that their tried and true designs are the best, or they simply cannot figure out how they can be improved upon. In any event, only one with the Shipwright Skill can produce such changes, and he must oversee their daily work. Indeed, if there is nobody amongst a pirate crew to plan such changes, they cannot be done by the townsfolk.

The various prices and required time for any and all possible modifications to ships are provided below on Table 35.

Table 35: Modifying Ships

Modification	Price	Building time
Additional cannon mount	500	10 days
10 more crew capacity	1000	20 days
More sail; +1 to speed	2000	30 days
Extra 100 cargo space	3000	40 days
Armor; +10 Hull Points	1000	50 days

Scrapping ships: Sometimes ships will become too badly damaged to be worth repairing, and yet sail into port barely afloat. Ships can be sold as scrap, at one tenth their normal cost. For example, a war-ravaged barque could still be sold for 600 gold.

Goods from ships: There are all kinds of goods carried aboard ships and traded in town. As a rule, each ton of 'goods' is the same as far as the space it takes up in a ship's cargo hold, that of 100, and their base value, that of 100-1200 gold. Table 36 displays the modifier to the dice roll to determine that value whenever one tries to buy or sell these more commonly traded (and plundered) goods, as well as how long it will take for that price to change (and thus be re-rolled).

Table 36: Trading Goods

Price	Nature of the goods	Time
+5	Medicine	1 month
+4	Tobacco	1-3 weeks
+4	Tea	1-3 weeks
+3	Rare plants	1-12 weeks
+3	Sugar or flour	3 months
+2	Clothing, cotton or silk	1-6 weeks
+2	Books	1-4 weeks
+2	Glass	1 month
+1	Rare animals	1-12 weeks
+1	Spices	2 weeks
+0	Rum, ale, beer or brandy	1 week
+0	Hides	1 month

Goods aboard ship: Normally, goods sit quiet in the cargo hold of a ship, but there will be times when greedy pirates will try to store more of them elsewhere (usually because the hold is full). They may argue that the goods are individually small items and so can be stuffed into every nook and cranny. However, no such strategies will work, for in order for any goods to be of any value to merchants, they must be preserved from the rigors of the sea, and thus kept in those cumbersome barrels and crates that fit **only** in a ship's hold.

Food aboard ship: Given the vast amounts of food (and water) used in sailing, it is easy for this to become a mathematical nightmare. However, a simple formula that is tried and true helps one's voyage through these rules remain smooth and swift. Quite simply, total up all the days worth of food purchased, usually ranging into the thousands, and then each day at sea deduct the total amount of crewmen from it.

NAMING SHIPS: Ships must have a name. The Players should collaborate on this choice and take a long time with it, for it is a group decision that will either make them proud or make them cringe. Just like their Characters, they should try to come up with one that compliments the game and is fun to hear passed around the table.

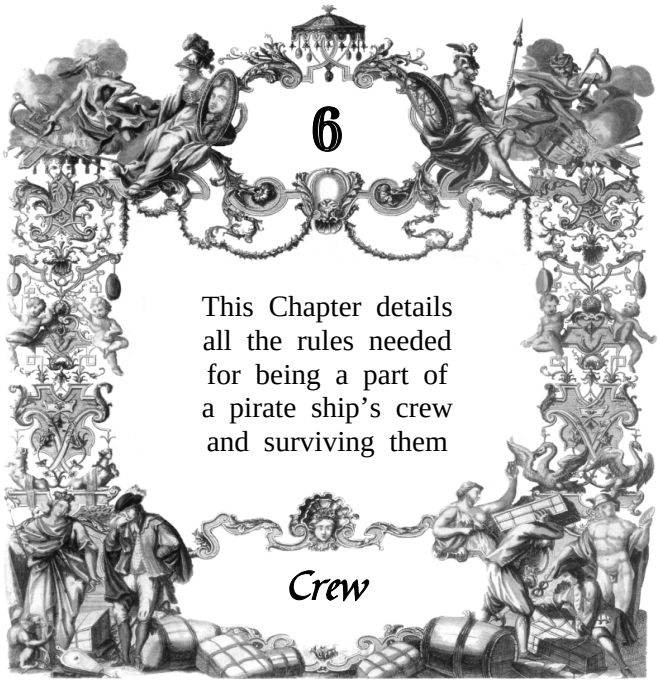
Ships taken by pirates can be named anything, really. Proven names are ones that either express the crew's goals, or reflect the era. For a ship is a pirate's home, church and future all in one. And, just as the ship is the whole of each man's world, its name is a summary of the entire crew's world.

In order to help the group choose their ship's name, a list of examples has been provided below, names from history, literature, stage, screen, and the playtesting of this game itself.

Black Pearl
Bristol Packet
Cacafuego
Cinco Llagas
Dark Lady
Dauntless
Defyance
Discovery
Golden Dragon
Goldrunner
Hispaniola
Interceptor
Kudo Jahmakka
Lady Elizabeth
Morning Star
Nemesis
Nightingale
Old Testament
Pride of Devon
Reaper
Revenge
Royal Fortune
Queen Anne's Revenge
Wicked Wench

CHAPTER SIX

THE PIRATE CREW IS A SMALL COUNTRY WITH A KING AND A GOVERNMENT UNTO THEMSELVES



THE CAPTAIN AND THE CREW: This game sails into the often uncharted waters of combining a conventional party of Player Characters with vast amounts of NPC crewmen. But whether the Player Characters are merely members of the crew or the captain and his officers, the rules for life aboard a ship are the same.

The captain: Every ship has a captain. This captain will either be a full-fledged NPC (complete with Character Record Sheet) or a Player Character indeed! Depending on this critical issue, the game will play differently.

If no Player Character is captain, adventure storylines will run normally, with the ship's cargo, course and crew counted for the Players by the Game Captain, and their decisions and destination chosen by the NPC captain. However, if a Player Character assumes the captaincy, all of the ship's statistics become his responsibility, including food, setting course, maintaining morale, etc.

More importantly, it must be clarified that there is a difference between the Player and his Character who is the captain. Simply put, they are two separate people, though this line is easily crossed by both captain and crew alike. For instance, the Player of a Character captain may begin to command the other Players, which he cannot do. Likewise, the other Players may tend to rely upon the Player of their Characters' captain for decisions, which are not his responsibility. The game suffers when this line between Player and Character is blurred, so be careful to maintain it, for the game is best when the Players all offer suggestions to the Player of the Character captain, and those suggestions simply become that particular Character's decision, to the benefit of all.

Playing the crew: All hands aboard a ship save for the Player Characters themselves will, in terms of storytelling and attention to detail, serve only as 'cannon fodder'. Indeed, all of the 'red shirts' are treated merely as numbers—they do not have Character Record Sheets, nor do they even need names (first or last). The crew is played simply as one large group, wherein the Player Characters interact according to their immediate situation or station (as crewmen themselves or as officers).

Crew Levels: All NPCs that make up the crew are counted both by their sheer numbers, and by their own Experience Levels. This matters most in the chaos of battle and boarding parties, which are explained in the next Chapter. However, when crewmen are considered for shares of treasure, they are, unless specified otherwise, counted according to their Level, indeed their value to the crew.

Crewmen: While crewmen are mostly considered and calculated according to their Level, occasions may arise when common sense will demand an answer to a number of questions, such as what a particular Ability Score might be, or what Skills they may have. Rather than roll up statistics for hundreds of crewmen, NPCs are simply determined at the moment of need what statistics they have, by rolling on Table 37. For example, the PCs go ashore in a longboat with 6 extra men. Cannibals are hiding in the trees, and everybody needs to make an Intuition Check to notice them in time. So, what are the Intuition Scores of the NPCs who are with the Player Characters at that time? A roll here can decide that easily enough. Furthermore, a different roll can determine their Defense Scores, or their Skill with those longswords . . .

Table 37: Crewmen

Roll	Level	Ability	Skill	Defense
12	6	9	4	10
11	6	8	3	9
10	5	7	2	8
9	5	6	2	8
8	4	5	2	7
7	4	4	1	7
6	3	4	1	6
5	3	3	1	6
4	2	3	1	5
3	2	2	0	5
2	1	2	0	4
1	1	1	0	4

Crew contributions: Table 37 above is tempting to use for determining what various Skills the crew members have for contributing to a ship's common functions, such as navigation or medicine. Alas, this only adds up to overly complex notes and endless rolls for the Game Captain, as crewmen are ever changing, by choice or by death. One can simply roll once on Table 37 for the entire crew for each Skill, this roll gaining a bonus of +1 for every 20 Levels of crew aboard (rounded up). This whole can be re-rolled when new crew are gained.

Acquiring crew members: If a Player Character is captain of a ship, he faces the constant challenge of acquiring new crew members (of pirates willing to die for him) as old ones die, desert, or simply scatter to the winds after dividing up the treasure.

Generally, new crew cannot be gained unless plunder is divided (nobody wants lesser shares). To gain new crew before dividing plunder lowers the entire crew's Morale by -1 for each new person (not Level) who signs aboard.

When crew are sought, the captain's name is what matters: his Notoriety Level, +1, is the mount of Levels he can gain from a town, but he cannot roll more times than a town's Level.

What Levels are acquired are free for the ship's captain to decide. For example, if he has 20 men to choose from, he may select to have ten 2nd Level men, or perhaps ten 1st Level men along with two 5th Level men. The only limitation in this choice is a single roll on Table 37 to determine the highest Experience Level available of them all.

Morale: Morale is extremely important! Morale is a constantly changing score that is the captain's duty to keep track of. Table 57 displays the Morale a crew has when first assembled, by the captain's Charisma Score. That score rises and falls like the waves, by many factors, each described below. But no matter what happens, no Morale can exceed 60.

Dividing up the ship's plunder always re-sets Morale according to the captain's Charisma Score.

Plundering a town brings out the best in pirates' spirits, and they aren't soon to forget it, raising the Morale by a bonus equal to the Level of the town multiplied by 2.

Capturing a ship always boosts the crew's spirits, increasing Morale by a bonus equal to the Value of the captured ship.

A day in port will help raise the spirits of the crew, as they get to squander their hard won gold, increasing Morale by +1. However, each day in port for each man costs the ship 1-12 gold.

Sheer time elapsed will wear upon a crew, who ever wish to divide the plunder, each passing month thus costing 1-12 Morale.

Going without food makes a crew angry and eventually mortally afraid, and each successive day lowers Morale by a progressive -1, thus, the third day in a row without food would lose -3 to their Morale, totaling a loss of -6 thus far.

Sailing through storms strikes fear into a crew, and hatred for the captain unless driven by great need, reducing Morale by -2 each day.

Making less speed than is at least favorable, indeed less than 5 leagues a day, will cause the crew to grow wary, anxious, and bloodthirsty, reducing Morale by -3 for that day.

Losing a battle will cause great despair and lack of trust in the competency of the captain, reducing Morale by -10.

Table 38: Crew Morale

Morale	Crew status	Rolls
50-60	Jolly	+2
30-49	Happy	+1
20-29	Pleased	+0
10-19	Wary	-1
5-9	Unhappy	-2
1-4	Angry	-3
0	Mutiny!	NA

Mutiny: If ever a crew's Morale reaches 0, they will mutiny. When this occurs, the first order of business will be to dispose of the captain and all men who are loyal to him. This is usually done by setting them adrift in a longboat with meager supplies, but pirate crews are also known to simply maroon them or kill them outright. Next, pirates will elect a new captain, and their Morale will be determined by his Charisma Score.

When mutiny occurs, for the sake of the game's story, Player Characters (not loyal to the previous captain) will always be nominated for the new captaincy.

If it is a Player Character being deposed however, he may duel the Character (PC or NPC) who would take over, and if victorious, gain newfound respect from the crew as a sudden bonus to Morale equal to his own Charisma Score, thus raising himself above the level of mutiny.

Dividing up the plunder: When the ship's plunder is counted and divided, each crewman receives one share for each Level he has. The captain and each of his officers (Player Characters) will receive two shares per Level unless specified otherwise in the ship's articles of agreement.

ARTICLES: Most pirate ships have a written agreement drawn up that applies to the entire crew, including the captain. These 'articles of agreement' are made known when one signs on, and are usually sworn over a Bible, a skull or an axe. Such articles are far and above more democratic, fair and appealing than any treatment by any Royal Navy. These agreements are so widespread and standard that they are almost always the same, though some differences occur. Whenever a new captain is appointed, new articles are written, or at least the old ones are updated.

If the new captain is a Player Character, he can decide upon the articles by his own initiative, preferably using those explained below as a guideline. If the new captain is an NPC, the Game Captain chooses what articles are used on his ship.

In any event, each article carries with it a modifier to the crew's initial Morale, as displayed on Table 39.

Table 39: Articles Of Agreement

Article included	Morale
Division	+8
Compensation	+6
Separation	+4
Punishment	+2
Chivalry	+2
Cowardice	+2
Marooning	+0

Chivalry: This provision is favored by crews made up of more civilized men, stating that should any of them molest a youth or a woman (or a man) against their will, they shall receive punishment as if they had violated any other article.

Compensation: One of the most favored and fair practices amongst pirates, this provision entitles a man to compensation for lost limbs and other wounds when treasure is divided, though this compensation is made before the rest of the plunder is divided into shares.

A right arm or hand is worth 600 gold, though this may only be received once, if one loses his right hand first and his right arm later.

A left arm or hand is worth 500 gold, though this may only be received once, if one loses his left hand first and his left arm later.

A right leg or foot is worth 500 gold, though this may only be received once, if one loses his right foot first and his right leg later.

A left leg or foot is worth 400 gold, though this may only be received once, if one loses his left foot first and his left leg later.

Cowardice: This provision clearly states that the pirate crew is bound together in a brotherhood, to share alike in life and death, struggle, and fortune. Consequently, if someone hides in battle or refuses to fight, he has disbanded from the rest of the crew, and can suffer a variety of punishments, depending on how severe his treachery.

Taking ships involves boarding parties that need every available man, and not taking part in such a fight will earn a man countless lashes while tied to the mast, effectively wounding him for an injury penalty of 1-6.

Taking towns involves sheer numbers, and not taking part in a landing raid can earn a man enough lashes to permanently lower a random Ability Score by -1. Roll one dice, with Brawn as 1, Agility as 2, and so on down, with the results of 9-12 being the Player's choice.

Inland adventures are almost exclusively designed for Player Characters, and should one refuse to participate, he can, at the option of the other Player Characters alone, lose his claim to any share of whatever treasure is found on that particular expedition.

Division: While it remains the decision of the captain alone as to **when** the ship's plunder is to be divided up, this provision in the ship's articles specifies exactly how much each man receives, in accordance to their participation. The total treasure is counted according to its gold value, to then be divided in various stages of agreement, explained below in the order they are to take place.

First and foremost, all money necessary to fit, rig and provision the ship is deducted and put to its proper use.

Second, any 'compensation' is given to those who have suffered the loss of limbs and wounds otherwise specified in the articles.

Finally, the treasure is divided up amongst the crew. Total the Levels of the crew, doubling the Levels for all officers (which indeed includes the captain). Then divide the remaining treasure by this factor, the result being the total 'shares' to be given out. For each crewman will receive 1 share per his Level (thus officers receive 2 per Level due to their doubled factor). The captain keeps the ship as his own property.

Once treasure is divided up, if each man's share is at least equal to his Level multiplied by 100, the crew's Morale will re-set at this point. If not, those who were paid less than they feel they deserved shall be free to go their separate ways when they next put into port.

Marooning: This is a provision that can override the normal clause of punishment, for indeed it is far worse than the quick and merciful death of hanging. Indeed, if anyone amongst the crew violates any other article, they stand a chance in 6

equal to the normal Morale modifier of the article violated of being marooned! If they are not marooned, the criminal is simply punished normally (which usually means being put to death). Being marooned involves a slow death, a torture for both the Character and his Player alike. For the person is left alone on a deserted island with only the clothes he wears, a Bible, a full canteen, and a pistol with **one** load (intended to be reserved for the ultimate conclusion of suicide). If it is a Player Character who is marooned, that Player cannot play nor generate a new Character until the other Player Characters (and thus the game) return to him. If he chooses to kill himself, he suffers a loss of 1-6 Creation Points when making his new Character.

Punishment: This is a standard provision in articles, that if anyone amongst the crew violates any other article, they shall, at the behest of the crew, be put to death. The manner of execution varies from ship to ship—hung from the yardarm, keel-hauled, drawn-and-quartered, but the end result is always the same—inescapable death!

Separation: This provision concerns pirate crews that have possession of multiple ships, and who gets shares of treasure captured while they are apart. For if a crew or partnership involves two or more ships, if they should be separated, they are to settle matters as soon as they are reunited (to minimize the chances of anything being hidden away). There are several ways this can be accomplished, but must be decided when crews unite or when ships divide.

Division of Fifths means that any ships that claimed a prize in the absence of the other divide amongst themselves three-fifths that take, while the absent ships get to divide the remaining two-fifths.

Division by Captain means that any treasure gained while the ships were separated is to be divided into a number of shares equal to the Levels of the respective captains.

Division by Claim means that any plunder acquired while ships were separated is not to be divided at all, the spoils going to whomever fought to win it, and that is all. However, whenever this occurs, it lowers the other crew's Morale by -5.

DETAILS: The pirate's life is an exciting mixture of fact and fiction. When role-playing such a character, a lot of details are easily overlooked. Provided below are simple guidelines to help both Players and Game Captains alike have a better understanding of what the pirate crew is like. However, keep in mind that these are storytelling aids, nothing more.

Dress: Pirates dress in what they can get—wearing the blood-stained coats of Royal navy is both mocking them but also because they are of good weave. Shoes are constantly stolen from the dead. For the most part, clothing is light due to the heat of prime pirate waters, and going barefoot is better for having to swim so often and avoid footrot. Altogether, the motley look of a pirate crew is a fashion statement of scavenging and sheer necessity. Those pirates who dress more formally do so at great expense and for particular reasons.

Officers: Pirate crews had many officers, much like any naval vessel, though they were deposed and replaced far more often. For the sake of more opportunity for Player Characters, if the captain of the ship is an NPC, he should select the Player Characters his officers, usually the ones with the highest Experience Levels. If Levels are tied for highest, the tie is broken either by a fight between them, or simply totaling their Ability Points to see who is the 'better man'. The various types of officers are explained below in the order of their priority, both in terms of election and authority.

Quartermaster is one who elected and operates much in the same manner as the captain, and has almost as much power, though his duties are different. The quartermaster is very much the 'strong man of the ship', overseeing all hands from the quarterdeck (where the wheel is). He usually leads the crew into battle, settles any and all disputes, administers punishment when necessary, divides up the plunder, and speaks on the crew's behalf when they dislike their captain's decision.

Cooper is the one who is the most skilled at making, sealing and storing barrels and other containers, which is essential for food and water, entitling him to an officer's status but unfortunately not to an officer's share of treasure.

Sailmaster is the one person aboard ship who is in charge of navigation and sailwork, and thus must have the highest Navigation Skill Level (aside from the captain) to maintain his place.

Boatswain is the one person aboard ship who sees to the vessel's maintenance, and thus must have the highest Shipwright Skill Level (aside from the captain) to maintain his place.

Gunner is the one person aboard ship who is in charge of commanding the cannons, and thus must have the highest Gunnery Skill Level (aside from the captain) to maintain his place.

Surgeon is the one person aboard ship who sees to the wounded and the curing of disease, and thus must have the highest Medicine Skill Level (aside from the captain) to maintain his place.

Trial: Most offenses and differences between pirate crews are decided by trial on deck, with all the crew present, usually presided over by the quarter-master or some other officer.

Food and drink: One cannot exaggerate how bad the food is aboard a pirate ship. Hardtack and swill are the daily rations. Hot food is rare, and lucky crews may get a piece of cheese on Sunday. No joking! This is why pirates live it up when they plunder a ship or town. Also, their excessive drinking of rum is not a tale of sheer debauchery, but that rum is safer to drink than the ill water stored aboard any ship.

Sleeping conditions: Ships are usually smaller than one may think, especially for pirate crews who rely on speed and being able to harbor in shallow coves, away from larger naval vessels. This makes for cramped quarters. Usually, only the captain has a cabin, and it is small and tight with no wasted space. Most of the crew, pirates or otherwise, sleep where they work—on deck or below, or with the pigs, or even in the rigging.

Religion: Most pirates find a greater evil in world politics than any religious text ever spoke of. Indeed, given the persecution of the various churches in Europe, pirates find far greater freedom and understanding amongst one another as far as religion is concerned that it quickly beomes a non-issue amongst them. Pirate crews are often comprised of several major religions all tightly packed together, and they encourage and support one another—because they have to in order to survive—and the irony is that they became that much stronger for it.

Music: Pirates are fond of music, both for revelry and for battle. They often have a small band aboard to play at whiles, and even to use dramatic music and drums to intimidate their enemies during a confrontation. Such men are sometimes treated with the same respect (and even a share of treasure division) as the officers themselves.

Honor among thieves: There isn't any! Just as we know how quickly gamers will stab one another in the back, so are pirates equal opportunists. Life aboard a pirate ship is tough—you can count on one another when things are tight (as one another must in order to survive), but everyone is always watching their own back.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PIRATE CREW IS A SMALL COUNTRY WITH A KING AND A GOVERNMENT UNTO THEMSELVES

Married men: Most pirates look very favorably upon marriage. Indeed, so great is their respect for married men (and women) that such prisoners are usually spared, provided that they can prove their troth. Those that are taken prisoner are treated with greater respect than normal captives, and even protected by many a ship's articles of agreement, in that mistreating or molesting them is viewed in the same regard as violating women and children. Wives of pirates often stay on land while their husbands roam the seas for months at a time. Few pirates or sailors or any kind take their wives aboard ship, given the superstitious nature of sailors that women are bad luck at sea.

Gambling and games: Generally, gambling is not at all allowed aboard pirate vessels, as the loss of gold and other wealth quickly leads to dissension, disputes and low morale, and thus, as there is no gambling, there is for pirates no point for games at all (and no time for them anyway). However, pirates will often practice and tutor each other in the ways of games and gambling for taking money from others when in port. But even then, such 'training' must be overseen by the quartermaster.

FLAGS: Aye, ya seen 'em before, but know ye their tale? The flag o' death that flies in blood-red skies ain't no governor's jeweled jacket nor some spoiled pretty-lady's petticoat! The ol' Jolly Roger has a meanin', and a mean one, say I . . .

Designing flags: The classic pirate flag, black with a white skull or some other easily recognizable symbol of death, is meant to let victims know that their end is at hand. Players are most likely going to wish to design a pirate flag of their own. Some guidelines towards making better (or at least more historically accurate) flags are provided below.

The name is important. While each pirate captain tends to have his own flag, they are all recognizable by the single name of 'Jolly Roger'. From an evolution of French words, the 'joli rouge' meant 'pretty red' (as in blood) and soon 'jolly rogue' referred to pirates who were doing well. Hence, it is considered dishonorable or unlucky among pirate brethren to make any such flag until one's career is prospering.

Symbols that are easily recognizable from a distance are often used by flag makers, especially amongst pirate crews. There are a few commonly used symbols among pirate flags. While the skull and crossbones clearly represents death, game players may wish to be a little more creative with their flags, such as using an hourglass (representing that a victim's time is running out), the captain's weapon of choice (warning the enemy captain exactly how he shall be killed should he resist), or even drink (toasting to the devil himself).

Red flags are as frightening as flags can be for other vessels. For while a black flag threatens death to those who did not surrender, a red flag means death to whoever sees it, whether they surrender or not! Such flags are rare, however, as pirates themselves needed to spare their strength for when the navy comes looking for them . . .

Royal Navy flags: Many are the privateers, pirate ships flying the flag of European Royal Navy, their colorful banners merely masking the same greed and bloodlust that is openly displayed on the Jolly Roger of countless pirate ships. But deceitful are the privateers, as much to their 'lords' as to their prey, for they will often have their own Jolly Roger ready to fly if the need arises, telling who they are exactly and thus what their intentions are to those foolish enough to resist, while the main flags of Europe's licensed pirates, indistinguishable from the main navy vessels, change with the times.

English flags remain white with a red cross, derived from the classic crests of Knighthood and the Christian Cross, though the classic 'Union Jack' sometimes fills the upper left corner.

French flags are either solid blue or a field of white, either way decorated with a gathering of their Royal rymbol the Fluer de Lys, leaves, the crown itself, or a combination thereof.

Dutch flags are, for the most part, a simple design of three even, horizontal stripes, the top one solid red, the middle one white, and the bottom one a lush or dark green.

Spanish flags remain the same for centuries, a four-square field of two red boxes and two white ones, each square bearing the gilded symbol of a lion, a single crown or three crowns, depending on the lineage of the king at the time.

CHAPTER SIX

Infamous flags: The Jolly Roger indeed is a warning that the end is near, and it is a wiser thing to surrender at the sight of such a flag than to even consider doing battle. And for those who don't surrender, well, they just made this flag more terrifying still. Some of the more infamous flags are explained throughout the following pages.

Barthalamel Roberts: A seaman who became the greatest pirate of his day, this captain began his career in 1720. According to history, 'He could not plead want of employment, nor incapacity of getting his bread in an honest way, but frankly own'd, it was to get rid of disagreeable superiority of some masters he was acquainted with—and the love of novelty and change'.

Edward England: Once the British Royal Navy drove him from the haven of the Caribbean in 1718, this captain made himself a scourge of the African waters. His unusual kindness towards prisoners, however, proved to be his undoing—he was deposed for freeing a captured merchant and he died a beggar on Madagascar. His flag, the classic 'skull and crossbones', became his true and most enduring legacy, beyond even his very name.

Emanual Wynne: The flag of this pirate is the most famous of flags depicting the popular hourglass to inform a victim that their time was running out. However, like it does for all pirates, Wynne's own time ran out eventually. This flag solidified the use of the hourglass in flag folklore and history alike, though it came about at the end of the pirate era, after countless such flags were flown. It is often remarked that the flag of Wynne, more than anything else, told pirates themselves that their own end—the end of the era of pirates altogether—was drawing near . . .

Henry Every: Amongst the most famous of all pirates, this captain captured such treasure that his exploits made him a hero to every unemployed seaman, renegade and vermin in both England and in the Colonies (both in the Caribbean and elsewhere). In the eyes of the poor, history says that he 'raised himself to the dignity of a king, and was likely to be the founder of a new monarchy', though history best remembers his flag.

Jack Rackham: His true name of 'John' Rackam is forgotten for the more colorful title he gave himself and history approved of so fashionably. For this pirate often wore bright cotton clothing to match his flair for the flamboyant. He was in his career voted into Charles Vane's captaincy, and went on to raid, pillage and plunder the West Indies until his capture in 1720—a humiliating end indeed. For his romance with the woman pirate Anne Bonny is how his honor died, cowering with his men while she and one other woman fought alone, and so history has chosen to remember his style above all else, and his flag best of all.

Stede Bonnet: Retired from the army, Stede Bonnet was rather heavy-set though well manicured—he even wore a gentleman's powdered wig. 'Dandy' is a word that describes him well. Ed Teach, the infamous 'Blackbeard' thought as much, as he burst into laughter upon first seeing this foppish, former farmer of a pirate in 1718, shortly before the terrible Teach took Bonnet's ship and burned his flag for pity that it evoked fear only in the hearts of men. To Blackbeard and other pirates, sea-thieves were either lesser or greater than men, for they seized their own destiny.

Thomas Tew: A man of modest reputation from the Americas, this pirate spent as much time inland as he did at sea, wining and dining politicians and men of import, until in 1692 be turned his ship towards Bermuda. There he found the gateway to the Caribbean which he would mercilessly plunder, an aggressive attitude that his flag displayed well. Though he left the New World only a few years later, pirate lore tells of his death in the Old World, where God caught up with him.