

BLOOD ISLAND

TM
XPG



SWASHBUCKLING ADVENTURE



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Chapter One: Introduction



*There had been more fight in this French brig than Miles had expected. His own *Temperance* drifted away, flaming and listing to port. She would be lost to the sea within the hour. But at least the prize was won, even though the *Felice*'s officers were still holding out on the quarterdeck.*

*Miles disliked having his ship blown out from under him under any circumstances, and he had fond memories of the *Temperance*. He drew his rapier and charged into the melee. The *Felice*'s captain whirled to face this new enemy, but came to a sudden halt as the tip of Miles' blade dug into his chin. The other defenders hesitated, and suddenly the fight was over.*

"You've left me without a ship, Captain," Miles said, steely eyes locked on the Frenchman's. "So I am claiming yours. I can take your head as well, or leave it with you. Do you have a preference?"

Her duenna was on the verge of fainting, but she stood tall and proud on the blood-soaked deck, awaiting her fate with the dignity expected of a Spanish Duke's daughter.

"Don't be afraid," Miles told her in his careful Spanish. "You are under my protection and no harm will come to you in this company."

She only nodded, and the fire in her eyes made Miles feel suddenly foolish. She wasn't afraid of him at all. Perhaps he'd done her a favor by stealing her away from the colonial Governor to whom she'd been forcibly betrothed. As her dark eyes appraised him, the crew gathered up the rich cargo of wedding gifts and dowry. That was a good thing, Miles thought. It would blunt their disappointment when he announced that they weren't ransoming her after all.

*The *Felice* slid into a bay ringed by lush green forest. Miles swept the beach with his glass as the crew dropped anchor. Only one other ship had ever been here before, and its captain had left something behind when he departed. He'd made a chart as well, and that had been a mistake, for charts could fall into the wrong hands.*

The first mate spread the chart out on the rail and Miles checked it against the landmarks. "There's the rock outcrop," he said, "and the stream mouth."

The gold would be buried a quarter mile upstream from there, north by northeast, at the foot of a waterfall. Miles grinned and slapped the spyglass closed. "Ready a landing party."





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Derring-do Revisited

Bloode Island XPG is by no means a “sequel” to the original *Bloode Island 1PG* roleplaying game written by Todd Downing and published by Deep7 (www.deep7.com); the latter is not required to fully enjoy *Bloode Island XPG*, because everything needed to play this edition is contained within these pages. *Bloode Island XPG* is more detailed than the original game, initially released as a .PDF file and part of Deep7’s 1PG line of rules-lite roleplaying games. This version is powered by a new set of rule mechanics called XPG, the system behind Deep7 games such *Mean Streets: The RPG of Classic Film Noir* and *Red Dwarf: The Roleplaying Game*.

Bloode Island XPG is a game of swashbuckling derring-do, gaudy romanticism, and high crimes on the high seas. It takes place in a sort of historical pastiche assembled out of those parts of the age of exploration and the golden age of piracy that promise players the most fun. So don’t worry too much about historical details - like terrible food, tropical diseases, and

a typical career in piracy that lasted two or three years and ended in hanging. The game is predicated on the “cooler” parts of history, stiffened with a healthy dose of Robert Louis Stevenson and the Hollywood sword-and-sail epics of Errol Flynn, Tyrone Power, and Douglas Fairbanks.

Historical Adventure

Bloode Island XPG takes characters, events, and historical trends from some 300 years of actual Caribbean history and mixes them all together into a single setting, with a few things thrown in that you won’t find anywhere in the real world. This game does not actually ignore history, but when deciding between what is “accurate” and what is “cool,” the game invariably opts for the latter and never looks back. This was done with the implicit goal of making a setting that is fun to play around in, and offers plenty of opportunity for adventure. Consider it an “alternate Caribbean,” if you must.





Chapter Two: Character Generation



The “age of piracy” is filled with interesting characters ripe for exploitation in a role-playing game. Character creation in XPG does not require the use of dice; just a combination of Character Points and your own imagination. For those who need a little direction, Character Archetypes have been provided at the end of this chapter. Note, however, that Stats are not included with the archetypes, primarily so that players are not pigeon-holed into a particular character mindset. They are templates only, around which a character can be built.

Character Concepts

The first things to work on are the intangibles that make your character who he is. Is your character the younger son of an English nobleman out to strike a blow against the Spanish and make his fortune? An escaped prisoner who fled to find a new life in the Caribbean? A disgraced priest looking for redemption among the only people who'll have him?

You'll notice a common thread in these examples: They aren't run-of-the-mill people. The run-of-the-mill people are all back home, farming or running shops. The Caribbean in the age of piracy is an untamed frontier, and it isn't very safe. On the other hand, almost anything is possible.

Far more than numbers, your concept is the heart and skeleton of your character, so come up with something you really want to play. And don't censor yourself. Don't say, “no one would believe this.” One of the things that makes the golden age of piracy such a great role-playing game setting is that so many of its historical figures sound like role-playing game characters to begin with.



Skill Profile - The Basics

Once you've decided what type of character you want to play (sailor, bokor, buccaneer, etc.), take a look at the SKILL PROFILE section on the character sheet. You'll notice that characters are really just a group of numbers distributed among six statistics (or Stats, for short), and a host

of dependent Skills. Stats are the bold entries on the character sheet. Skills fall under the Stat most appropriate for their use within the game. Each Stat has a rating from 1 to 6 (the Stat Rating), while each skill has a rating of 0 or higher (known as the Skill Rating). When combined, they create the Target Number for determining successful skill use. See page 16 for more information on how to use skills.

The Stats listed below govern an area of raw talent or ability, attributes that every player character possesses. Start by distributing 20 points into the six Primary Stats, which are as follows:

AGILITY (AGL): This Stat represents the character's general physical prowess and gross motor function. It influences things like playing sports, dancing, or brawling.

DEXTERITY (DEX): Fine motor skill and hand-eye coordination. It covers things like repairing objects and firing a gun.

PERCEPTION (PER): General interactive ability, from the passive (Awareness, Empathy) to the active (Con, Social). A character with a high PERCEPTION knows his place in the world and in the psychological exchange between individuals.

STRENGTH (STR): Raw muscle. This Stat governs things like climbing and swimming and comes in handy when the character is in a fight for his life.

INTELLIGENCE (INT): Gray matter and raw brainpower, INTELLIGENCE is a blend of instinctive knowledge and book learning.

WILLPOWER (WIL): Mental and emotional stamina. This Stat helps PCs keep their Cool or Resist the effects of psychological tampering.

Derived Stats

Once you've used up your points for the Primary Stats, you'll need to determine your character's Derived Stats, which are listed at the bottom of the SKILL PROFILE section. These Stats are INITIATIVE, SHRUG, and SAVE.

INITIATIVE is the sum of the character's PERCEPTION and AGILITY. INITIATIVE is a value that determines how quickly your character responds to stimulus, or how fast he springs into action.





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SHRUG: The average of the character's STRENGTH and WILLPOWER, rounding up. It indicates the character's innate ability to ablate incoming damage.

SAVE: The sum of the character's STRENGTH and WILLPOWER. It dictates how tough and resilient the character is when faced with bodily harm. All of these concepts are detailed in **Chapter Three: Game Mechanics**.

Destiny

Every character gets 1 extra point to place in DESTINY. This represents a character's special lot in life and a type of karmic reserve. You may use a point of DESTINY at any time during the course of the game to re-roll a failed Skill Check or Wound Save. Of course, the second roll - no matter how much better or worse than the first - must be accepted. Once used, the spent DESTINY point returns at the start of the next game session.

Using a DESTINY point in a fundamentally evil or uncharacteristic manner will get it taken away permanently. However, using a DESTINY point in a way that is heroic or appropriate for the character concept may earn the player an additional DESTINY point. The GM should use discretion and refrain from handing out too many DESTINY points; they should be hard to win, yet easy to lose.

Skills

Now that you've placed points in your character's Primary and Derived Stats, it's time to decide what your character can do. Distribute 30 points into any combination of skills, using the following guidelines:

1. Place no more than 4 points into any individual skill.
2. If the skill requires you to choose a Category (such as Play Instrument: Flute or Pilot: Sloop) then select one

that fits your character concept and allocate points to the skill as normal. Each skill that requires a category is marked in the Skill List with an *.

Skills in *Bloode Island XPG* tend to be very generalized. Some, however, represent a group of skills that are similar in function yet distinct from each other and have Categories attached. For example, Seamanship covers the handling of small ships or serving as a crew member on a larger one. Play Instrument, on the other hand, doesn't allow the character to play anything he finds. Instead, a specific type of instrument must be chosen, thus Categorizing the skill.

A Skill/Category combination only allows the character to perform an action using that particular grouping. For instance, if you chose the Pilot: Sloop combo then the player can only pilot sloops. If you want the character to have the ability to operate another vessel, you must allocate points to another Category.

Skill Specialization

Many skills in *Bloode Island XPG* are general in scope (such as Search and Stealth), but some can be specialized further into a particular subset of a skill. Specialization is completely optional, and works like this:

1. Choose a Specialization for a particular skill and write it in parentheses next to the skill listing. For instance, Firearms (Flintlock Pistol).
2. Every Skill Check falling under the Specialization receives a +1 bonus to the base Target Number.
3. Every Skill Check falling under the skill but outside the Specialization suffers a -1 penalty to the base Target Number.

Specialization Example

James wants his character, Miles, to be adept at using and understanding the inner workings of flintlock pistols. He chooses the Specialization Pistols, writing it in next to his Firearms Skill, which is currently 3. With a DEXTERITY of 4 and a Firearms Skill of 3, his character's base Target Number would be 7. If he were to possess the Firearms Skill alone, Miles would have a basic understanding of how firearms work, yet he would apply the same strategies for firing a flintlock pistol as he would a blunderbuss, an entirely different weapon. However, since he's chosen to specialize in Pistols, Miles has a better understanding of the specific intricacies of firing a flintlock pistol and caring for it. So, for instance, every time he attempts to fire any type of firearm, Miles' Target Number is 6, but firing a flintlock pistol, his base Target Number increases to 8. Specialization is good for boosting a few key skills beyond their starting limits, but comes at a cost as other interests fall by the wayside.





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Skill Ratings

Each skill in *Bloode Island XPG* has been broken down into key areas of ability called the Skill Rating. The Skill Rating key is as follows:

- 1 - Terrible
- 2 - Incompetent
- 3 - Mediocre
- 4 - Average
- 5 - Expert
- 6 - Master
- 7+ - Legendary

Skill List

Please keep in mind that the optional Categories and Specializations listed with certain skills are only possible suggestions and not all-inclusive listings. Players and GMs are encouraged to devise their own Specializations and Categories. **A Category must be chosen for all skills marked with an *.**

Agility Skills

Agility Feat: This skill covers all feats of agility, including swinging from chandeliers, doing backflips across the deck of a ship, or leaping from mast to mast. This skill can also be used in conjunction with other skills to enhance tricky procedures, like leaping onto the back of a horse (Ride) or saving a carriage from careening out of control (Drive).

Brawling: Hands, feet, elbows, head, and other body parts can become dangerous weapons for those trained in the art of brawling. Note: Brawling attacks use raw STRENGTH for the damage of an attack. Fists and feet effectively have a Weapon Rating of 0, with a Damage Bonus equal to the attacker's STRENGTH (see page 17).

Dodge: This grants the character an ability to physically dodge an attack, whether it's from a melee

weapon, ranged weapon, a fist, etc. Awareness may grant someone the ability to spot an attack before it happens, but Dodge allows him to evade an incoming attack.

Drive: The ability to control teams of animals and handle coaches, wagons, and carts.

Fencing: The in-depth study of combat with blades, especially long swords. This specialized training is the mark of a gentleman and should be limited to upper-class character concepts. All other character types should use the Melee Weapon Skill.

Melee Weapon: This skill represents a character's ability to use hand-to-hand weapons, such as knives, clubs, and cutlasses. Optional Specializations include Club, Knife, Cutlass, Dagger, Boarding Axe, Boarding Pike. This is the hand-to-hand combat skill most characters will use, and does not include the use of long swords.

Missile Weapon: Aiming and launching distance weapons. Covers thrown objects like rocks and knives, as well as bows. Optional Specializations include Bows, Crossbows, Throwing Knives, Throwing Axes.

Ride: A character with the Ride skill has been trained in the art of riding horses or other beasts of burden. Ride checks should not be necessary for riding an animal under normal circumstances. Optional Specializations include: Horse, Pony, Camel.

Seamanship: Handling small boats (anything up to one mast) or serving as a crew member on a larger one. Includes sail handling, steering small boats, and a general ability to function in a nautical environment without getting hurt or causing accidents.

Stealth: This skill comprises two distinct abilities. First, it allows a character to move silently when trying to sneak past a guard or set an ambush. Second, a character can use Stealth to quietly follow a target through wilderness, rural, and urban areas. The ability

Alphabetical Listing of Skills

Agility Feat	Dodge	Language*	Resist
Awareness	Domestic Arts	Law	Ride
Bargain	Drive	Lore	Seamanship
Brawling	Education	Medicine	Seduction
Bureaucracy	Empathy	Melee Weapon	Sleight of Hand
Carousing	Endurance	Military Sciences	Social
Climbing	Fencing	Missile Weapon	Stealth
Command	Firearms	Mojo	Strength Feat
Con	Gambling	Natural Sciences	Swimming
Cool	Gunnery	Nautical Sciences	Theoretical Sciences
Craft*	Interrogation	Performance*	Thievery
Cultural Sciences	Intimidation	Play Instrument*	Wilderness Skills
Disguise	Jumping	Repair	





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ty to track a target is covered in Wilderness Skills (page 10).

Dexterity Skills

***Craft:** Training in traditional handicrafts that are either self-taught or acquired through an apprenticeship. Categories include Ceramics, Woodworking, Glassmaking, Leatherwork, Weaving.

Firearms: Ability to use black powder hand weapons, both pistols and longarms. Includes firing in combat, as well as loading, maintenance, etc. Optional Specializations include Pistol, Musket, Blunderbuss, Muskatoon.

***Play Instrument:** Includes the ability to play and care for a specific type of instrument. Categories include Stringed, Wind, Brass, Percussion. Specialties may also be taken for particular instruments.

Repair: This skill covers all types of repair, from holes in the sides of ships to holes in the soles of shoes. A very useful skill on a pirate ship where things have a tendency to get smashed by cannon fire on a regular basis.

Sleight of Hand: Palming objects, switching dice, entertaining the crew with magic tricks, and generally deceiving the eye with clever hand motions.

Thievery: This skill covers more subtle methods of theft such as lock picking, forgery, and picking pockets. Optional Specializations include those listed above, as well as Setting and Disarming Traps, Escape Artistry, Poison Delivery.

Perception Skills

Awareness: This represents the character's general knowledge of his surroundings and the ability to spot ambushes, detect hidden locations or objects, or discern a particular feeling about a place.

Bargain: The ability to make deals, from haggling over prices to negotiating a surrender.

Command: Use of natural charisma to inspire and lead others. The Command Skill also allows the PC to coordinate tactics for small groups of 10 people or less. In combat situations, a successful Command check bestows the PC's comrades with a +1 bonus to their Target Numbers on any combat-based Skill Checks.

Con: This skill represents the character's ability to lie or fast-talk his way in or out of any given situation.

Empathy: This skill gives a character the ability to discern when someone is being dishonest

with him. Empathy can also be used to determine a subject's general state of mind.

Gambling: Knowledge of the rules and strategies of games of chance, a crucial skill for pirates between jobs. Additionally, a successful Gambling check can tell the character whether a game has been rigged.

***Performance:** The skill is primarily used to impress people, not deceive them. Categories include Dancing, Acting, Singing, Public Speaking.

Seduction: The ability to put one's sex appeal to best use for romantic conquests or coercion.

Social: Knowing the rules of conduct in a particular social circle. This keeps the PC from making embarrassing or even dangerous mistakes. Optional Specializations include Nobility, Clergy, Streetwise, Military, Politics.

Strength Skills

Carousing: Characters with this skill can drink their skill rating in shots of hard liquor or pints of ale or wine before having to make a Resist check for drunkenness. Grog, the pirate drink of watered rum, counts as ale or wine for these purposes.

Climbing: The ability to clamber about in trees, walls, ladders, rigging, etc.

Endurance: Withstanding and maintaining strenuous activity, such as hard labor or swimming, or going without needs like sleep or water.

Jumping: This skill allows a character to jump greater distances than average characters, such as the distance between two tall buildings.

Strength Feat: The skill of using your raw strength to its fullest, such as breaking or lifting things, or overcoming the strength of an opponent in combat or arm wrestling. Strength Feat is used whenever the character wishes to achieve results above and beyond his normal abilities, and is given a -1 to -3 (or possibly higher) penalty by the GM, depending on how far above and beyond the task is.

Swimming: Staying afloat and maneuvering in water. Strangely enough, for what would seem an obvious aid to nautical survival, many sailors superstitiously refuse to learn to swim.

Intelligence Skills

Bureaucracy: This skill represents an individual's knowledge of business or political practices and how to best utilize the system to accomplish a goal. Bureaucracy is especially useful when red tape might hamper one's progress. Optional Specializations include: Business, Politics, Trade, Court.





Cultural Sciences: Humanities and liberal arts like history, literature, etc. Typically, only upper-class characters will have this skill, though there are exceptions. Optional Specializations include History, Literature, Anthropology, Archeology, Writing. Natives may have this skill as part of an oral tradition.

Disguise: This skill allows the character to pass himself off as someone else, using clothes, makeup, wigs, etc. When approaching someone while under disguise, keep in mind they may roll an Empathy or Disguise Skill Check to see through the deception if they suspect something. Often used with Con (and sometimes Performance).

Domestic Arts: Mundane household skills typical to a working class background. This is a very common and useful skill. Optional Specializations include Sewing, Cooking, Horticulture. Characters who attempt to cook wild game or dairy foods without the Cooking skill must make an Endurance check or suffer a -1 to all skill checks for the next 24 hours due to abdominal ailments.

Education: Basic knowledge of the world. With a score of 1, the PC knows a few things told to him over the years. At 2 he is literate. At 4 he has had at least some higher education, which gives him a +1 to Cultural Sciences and Natural Sciences checks. Natives can have Education as part of their tribal, oral tradition, but it will govern tribal issues, not the European angle.

Gunnery: Familiarity with cannon, mortars, and other large black powder projectile weapons. Covers aiming, loading, maintenance, and the workings of a gun crew.

***Language:** Ability to speak and understand a language other than the PC's native tongue. If the PC is literate (Education 2 or more) and has a skill of 2 or more in the language, he can read and write in that language as well. Categories include English, German, Spanish, Italian, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Carib, Arawak, Taino, Blackfoot, etc.

Law: Characters with this skill have been trained in the practice of legal procedures, such as courtroom activity, legalese, contracts, precedent, etc. Optional Specializations include Contracts, Courtroom, Trade. Prerequisite: Education 2 or higher.

Lore: Folklore, herbology, mythology, and legends passed down by oral tradition. For pirates in particular, this likely includes many rumors of lost treasures or paradisiacal islands. This skill is a prerequisite for the Mojo skill.

Medicine: This skill allows the character to apply proper care to someone who has been physically wounded. See **Damage**, page 18 for more details.

Military Sciences: Theory, strategy and tactics

of warfare. Useful when planning the assault on the governor's fortress, or figuring which tack is most beneficial for attacking the treasure fleet.

Natural Sciences: Scientific workings of the physical world. Optional specializations include Astronomy, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, Zoology. Prerequisite: Education 2 or higher.

Nautical Sciences: Naval theory and tactics. Usable when commanding or serving as an officer on a large ship (two or more masts). Involves knowing what orders to give to make the ship maneuver as you wish, etc. Often decisive in ship-to-ship battles.

Theoretical Sciences: The invisible counterpart to Natural Sciences. Optional Specializations include Philosophy, Astrology, Mathematics, Theology.

Wilderness Skills: Finding food, water, shelter, and the necessities of life in a particular wilderness environment. Optional Specializations include Sea/Coastal, Forest, Desert, Mountains.

Willpower Skills

Cool: The ability to keep one's wits under stress. It also denotes self-control, assurance, and mental stability in abundance.

Interrogation: Understanding various methods of obtaining information from an unwilling subject through deception, veiled threats, or lies. It does not govern the use of physical violence (perceived or otherwise).

Intimidation: Unlike Interrogation, this skill allows a character to obtain information through fear and/or physical violence. Sometimes roughing up an informant or prisoner is more effective than tricking him.

Mojo: This is a catchall term for the supernatural side of the world and describes a character's ability to wield magic (See Chapter Four, Mojo for additional information). Players are only required to place Character Points in this optional Skill if they wish to have their characters utilize magic. NOTE: Prerequisites for Mojo are the Lore Skill (see page 10) and the Occult Asset (see **Assets**, page 11).

Resist: Mental defense against the psychological effects of sleep deprivation, torture, fatigue and fear. All players should consider taking this skill for their characters, as Resist checks turn up quite frequently during play.

A Final Note On Skills

If, for some reason, you don't find a skill, category, or specialization listed here that you really want your character to have, by all means consult with the GM and write it in.





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Personality Traits

While the player makes up most of a character's psychology on the spot, there are a few quantifiable aspects to the character's personality that can serve as reminders to the player. While these secondary traits are mostly for fun, they also serve to balance out the character in a numerical manner. There are three categories in the Personality section of the Character Profile on the character sheet. These are Assets, Liabilities, and Behavior Tags.

Assets are benefits the character possesses. They can be purely psychological or material (which still act as a psychological benefit). Each Asset has a point cost associated with it, based on how beneficial it is to the character. Players must purchase Assets with Character Points during character creation.

Liabilities are aspects of the character that tend to hamper his progress in life. They can be internal factors or environmental in nature. Each Liability has a point benefit associated with it, based on how detrimental it is to the character. Taking Liabilities allows the player to buy Assets, or add points to the Skill Profile. Just remember that no skill can start higher than 4. Also remember that the character's personality must be role-played, so beware of creating an overly flawed, fundamentally unplayable, character.

Behavior Tags are little quirks the character displays, from cracking his knuckles to chain smoking. Each Behavior Tag is worth 1 point toward Assets or rounding out the Skill Profile. Again, players should use caution to make sure the character is playable.

Assets

Ambidextrous (-2): This allows the character to utilize both hands without any penalty. Typically, a character using a tool or weapon in his off-hand or fighting with two weapons will accrue a -2 penalty to his base Target Number.

Attractiveness (-2): Some individuals just exude physical beauty and hard-to-resist charisma. A character bestowed with this asset can add +1 to the base Target Number for all Empathy, Seduction, and Social checks.

Courage (-3): The character knows no fear. He passes any normal Resist check for fear or terror, unless boxcars are rolled (see **Critical Success and Failure**, page 16), in which case he'll most likely lose his cool.

Direction Sense (-1): Armed with this Asset, the character retains a clear memory of where he's been and how to get back without a map or complex directions. This prevents the character from becoming lost whether outside under the stars or inside a building.

Insight (-1): The character has a mind for solving problems of all sorts. The character should be privy to inside information regarding intricate problem solving at the GM's discretion.

Luck (-1 to -2): During the course of an adventure, the player can roll 1D6 and add it to the Target Number of any Skill Check. Of course, this does not guarantee success, but it can certainly promote success with a convincing wink. This Asset can be used either once (1 point) or twice (2 points) per game session.

Occult (-3): The character has an affinity toward, or prior experience with, the supernatural. It is recommended for native healers, priests and of course, voodoo bokors. Characters need not take the Mojo skill if they purchase this asset, but the asset is required in order to spend points in the Mojo skill.

Rational (-3): A character possessed with Rational thought has a better than average chance of stopping himself from making a dangerous, humiliating, or stupid mistake. Each time the character is about to be placed in danger due to the player's own thoughtlessness, the GM should warn the player of the potential outcome.

Assets, Liabilities and Behavior Tags List

Assets

Ambidextrous (-2)
Attractiveness (-2)
Courage (-3)
Direction Sense (-1)
Insight (-1)
Luck (-1 to -2)
Occult (-3)
Rational (-3)
Toughness (-1 to -3)
Wealth (-1 to -3)

Liabilities

Addiction (+1 to +3)
Age (special)
Bad Luck (+2)
Bloodlust (+1)
Compulsion (+1 to +3)
Cowardice (+1 to +3)
Enemy (+1 to +3)
Gullibility (+2)
Impulsiveness (+2)
Moral Restriction (+1 to +3)

Behavior Tags

Cynicism
Fidgeting
Nervous Tic
Pet Peeve
Ritual
Superstition





Toughness (-1 to -3): The character possesses a toughness and resilience to physical trauma. Each point spent on Toughness (up to 3, maximum) increases the character's SAVE by 1. This will help keep him conscious and upright when wounded.

Wealth (-1 to -3): The character with this Asset has a source of income in addition to any pitractical acquisitions, from well-to-do relatives to a successful plantation or business. Characters receive their base starting wealth times the Wealth asset level (1x, 2x, 3x) every year as an income, and begin the game with twice (-1), four times (-2), or six times (-3) their starting wealth (see **Starting Wealth**, page 13).

Liabilities

Addiction (+1 to +3): The character has a dependency ranging from mild (caffeine, chocolate) to severe (tobacco, alcohol). The degree of addiction purchased becomes the penalty to the Target Number of any Skill Checks attempted while without the chosen substance. Withdrawal occurs at different times for different addictions, so common sense and GM discretion is essential here.

Age (special): The character is past his prime. For every 10 years of actual chronological age beyond 30, the character must reduce any one Stat by 1 point. For every point taken from a Stat, the character gains 3 points to assign to Skills or toward purchasing Assets.

Bad Luck (+2): If it weren't for bad luck, the character would have no luck at all. Characters with this unfortunate Liability can have something go wrong during the course of the game, subject to the whim of the GM. Of course, it is considered bad form for a GM abuse this in a way that could result in PC death or permanent injury.

Bloodlust (+1): A character with this Liability is a merciless, cold-blooded killer who wants nothing more than to see his opponent dead. The character will never try to subdue an opponent nor spare his life under any circumstances.

Compulsion (+1 to +3): The character must engage in a certain behavior to function normally. The point benefit is directly proportionate to how invasive the behavior is. It can be a mild compulsion to smoke after every meal (+1), an obsession with material wealth (+2), or a compulsion to avoid sick people at any cost (+3).

Cowardice (+1 to +3): For whatever reason, the character has an aversion to confrontation and will avoid it if at all possible. Any time the character is exposed to a situation that could lead to physical harm, he must make a successful Cool check with a -1 to -3 modifier, depending on the level taken. If the

check is unsuccessful, the character suffers a -1 penalty to all Skill Checks until the threat of physical harm has passed.

Enemy (+1 to +3): At some point in the character's past he has acquired the enmity or rival, be it a politician, pirate king, slighted lover, etc. A minor enemy with minimal resources to hamper a character is worth 1 point. An enemy with moderate resources and the ability to harm the character is worth 2 points. An enemy or organization with considerable resources and the ability to kill the character is worth 3 points.

Gullibility (+2): The character believes what he's told by others, no matter how foolish such information may be. He's easily tricked into believing any initial impression or visual image. The character must make a successful Empathy check at a -2 penalty to determine if he's being duped, and is at -2 to any Empathy vs. Con opposed checks when trying to avoid being fooled.

Impulsiveness (+2): The character prefers action over talk and will frequently act first and think later. This can be especially dangerous during combat or while trying to avoid detection.

Moral Restriction (+1 to +3): The character has a prohibition on certain behavior. It can be as mild as "not drinking" (+1), to a more moderate "not causing harm to individuals" (+2), to the extreme "will not under any circumstances harm a living creature" (+3). If the character ever engages in the restricted behavior, he becomes flooded with self-doubt and uses the level of the restriction as a Target Number penalty for any Skill Checks until the situation is resolved and the restriction is back in place.

Behavior Tags

All Behavior Tags have a point bonus of +1 and should be role-played as much as possible at the gaming table.

Cynicism: No matter how good the circumstances, the cynical character will always be able to find the black cloud to the silver lining.

Fidgeting: The character is constantly moving some part of his body in a harmless, yet potentially distracting manner, from cracking knuckles, to hand wringing, to leg vibrating, or tapping his pencil.

Nervous Tic: This tag manifests itself whenever the character comes under stress (and sometimes for no apparent reason whatsoever). It is an unconscious, automatic muscle spasm in a visible part of the head or neck, like a twitchy eye.

Pet Peeve: Something small and insignificant really disturbs the character. It can be any one thing, from another character's Fidgeting, to someone else's Cynicism. More than one Pet Peeve may be taken.

Ritual: The character does something that has





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become a daily habit, and must be done in the proper order, with proper timing. Whatever the Ritual, the character will begin to get surly if it is ever postponed or interrupted.

Superstition: Whether it's an old one (crossing fingers, salt over the shoulder, not walking under a ladder) or an individual mandate (lucky ring, trusty weapon), the character will always go out of his way to adhere to the superstition. If he is unable to, the character begins to doubt his abilities and the GM can randomly make the player re-roll a successful Skill Check.

Starting Wealth

After you've determined who your character will be in a *Bloode Island XPG* campaign, you'll want some gear before heading out on the high seas. Keep in mind that your character is most likely adventuring in the frontier. Practically everything but food in the Caribbean has come all the way from Europe, so the availability of any given item is highly unpredictable and prices are extremely elastic. For the starting character, the player should keep things reasonable. For instance, some clothes, a pistol and cutlass, and a few personal effects are logical first choices. A chess-playing automaton is not, unless you've got a really good reason for it. In these cases the GM makes the call.

Wealth in the Caribbean is a mishmash of treasure, precious metals, and coins whose value comes from their gold or silver content instead of from the seal of some distant king. All manner of coins will be found, though the most common are two Spanish coins: the famous gold doubloon (gold piece) and silver Peso de Ocho (silver piece). Assume a silver piece is worth roughly \$25 in modern terms, and a doubloon, or gold piece, is more or less worth \$100. PCs should be able to spend a good night at a tavern on a single silver piece, while a handful of doubloons is a small fortune.

For those who prefer a more concrete aspect to starting wealth in the game, player characters may start with 1d6x10 silver pieces. The **Wealth** asset can be purchased if more starting wealth is desired (see page 12).

Finishing Touches

Many of the final details of your character will have been decided when you came up with your character concept. If you don't have them already, decide on a gender, age, and nationality for your character, along with things like hair and eye color, and perhaps a distinguishing scar.

Although it's entirely optional, you should begin to draft a personal history and background for your character, taking into consideration all of his skills, abili-

ties, and personality traits. Interesting and exciting characters have diverse backgrounds and intricate pasts, so feel free to "let your hair down" and have fun creating this aspect of your character. This is the one element that isn't determined solely by numbers, so feel free to express your creativity.

Character Improvement

Each game session in which a character participates will earn him some sort of experience. A good rule of thumb for a single session is roughly 10 Character Points. After the GM has awarded the base points, he may decide to award additional points to characters he feels overcame an obstacle, solved a problem, or achieved part of the character's personal goals. An additional 1-3 points are considered a good range, depending on the circumstances for which they are being awarded.

New skills (those not taken during character creation) may be learned at a cost of 10 points for a Skill Rating of 1. Existing skills may be improved using the following rules:

To improve a skill already possessed by the character he must spend an amount of character points equal to twice the current Skill Rating to raise it one level (i.e. raising a skill from 2 to 3 costs 4 points).

Raising Stats is also allowed in the game, but at a much higher cost: the current rating times 20 (i.e. raising a Stat from 4 to 5 would cost $4 \times 20 = 80$ points). In addition, Stats may not be raised more than 2 points beyond their starting value, and cannot exceed the Stat cap of 6.

Character Concept Ideas

This section deals with some of the possible character types that players have the option of portraying during a *Bloode Island XPG* campaign. They are only broad character templates, however, meant to give players an idea as to what type of character to play. Players are encouraged to develop their own character concepts.

Bokor



The witch doctors of the Caribbean are powerful men and women, who control equally powerful forces. As practitioners of the new Catholic/African tribal amalgam religion called voodoo, bokors can wield powerful mojo, commune with the dead, create charms and beguile unsus-





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pecting European interlopers. Bokors have strong Mojo (which means they also must have the Occult Asset and Lore), and will generally be familiar with Medicine.

Buccaneer

Named for the boucan, or smoking fire used to preserve meat, French and Spanish boucaniers (bastardized "buccaneer" in English) scraped a tough living out of the West Indies. The buccaneers were first hunters of wild pigs and cattle on the island of Hispaniola, but were driven off by the Spanish. They turned to piracy as a means of sustaining themselves. Buccaneers are said to be heavy drinking, cruel men and the best sharpshooters in the islands. They will have superior physical attributes, including a high STR, DEX and/or AGL. They are usually masters of firearms and are able to bring down a wild bull with a single musketball.

Clergy

Men of the cloth serve a variety of functions in 17th and 18th century society. At this time, the power of the Church is waning, largely acquiescing to the demands of the Crown. The church is no longer the powerful spiritual institution it once was. Clergymen often travel to the New World in the hopes of converting the heathen natives into God-fearing, civilized men and women or acting as chaplains aboard ship. Clergy may have a high Mojo, although they use it for the invocation of prayers.

Corsair

Corsairs are authorized by their governments to prey upon the shipping lanes of "heathen" countries. Some lead the fight against the Turks, being led by the Knights of St. John, while others fight for the glory of Mohammed along the Barbary Coast in the Mediterranean Sea. Most initially fight for religious ideals, but after awhile the rewards of piracy grow to greater appeal. The occasional corsair crew will find itself in the Caribbean, far away from the constant Catholic/Protestant/Muslim wars plaguing Europe and the Near East. Corsairs are usually trained fighting men, many of them from noble families with the ability to take the Fencing skill. They are also excellent sailors.

Craftsman

If pirates are said to spill blood in the course of their toil, then craftsman are the ones who pour it into their work by the gallon. These hardy, astute men are the engineers and builders who craft the mighty wooden ships that either ply the oceans with good intentions or set out to capture those that do. The craftsman can come from any walk of life. Many are natives

with a useful talent, while others are skilled artisans working aboard a pirate vessel. A craftsman will receive more shares of loot aboard a pirate ship than a regular sailor.

Doctor

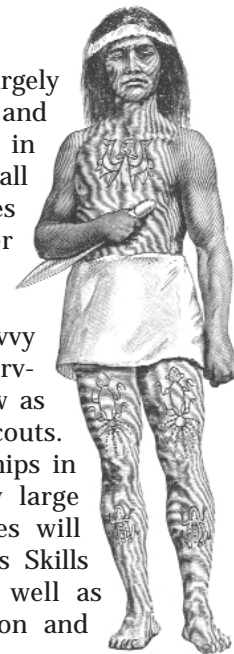
Those skilled in the arts of medicine are in high demand on board oceangoing vessels or as part of a New World community. Their skill in applying first aid and surgery is unmatched and is a valuable addition to any exploration team. A doctor will definitely be an educated person (Education 4 or more) with at least some amount of Natural Science and Medicine skill. Doctors typically receive more shares of loot aboard a pirate ship than a regular sailor.

Merchant

Traders ply the oceans in ships, purchasing rum, sugar or tobacco from Caribbean plantations and delivering them to waiting ports in France, Spain, Holland and England. While trading can be quite a lucrative business, it's equally dangerous, as many pirates lie in wait for a hapless merchant ship and its crew. Merchants are usually educated (at least literate), with strong skills of Empathy, Bargain and sometimes even Con.

Native

Although the Caribs have largely been decimated, and the Taino and South American Indians suffer in servitude to white masters, small pockets of indigenous tribes manage to eke out a meager existence intent on carrying out their customs and traditions. In fact, particularly savvy natives often "hire out" their services to explorers and ship crew as local guides, trackers, and scouts. Indeed, some notable pirate ships in the Caribbean are crewed by large numbers of Arawaks. Natives will usually have strong Wilderness Skills and Domestic Arts skills, as well as Missile Weapon, Melee Weapon and Brawling.



Noble

Nobles often visit the New World for much the same reasons as Settlers, to carve a niche-a new empire - for themselves in a largely untapped wilderness filled with wonder and opportunities. Some relocate to the Caribbean at the request of their king to claim land for the mother country, while others have less than savory reasons for traveling the Atlantic, like





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gold and silver. A noble character may choose to take the Wealth Asset, or may select a ne'er-do-well, disinherited rogue noble approach. Most nobles are very well-educated, and will have some Riding and/or Fencing skill.

Officer

Officers lead troops into battle, lead expeditions to unknown regions, and can hold a position of authority in a military unit, government or business organization. In terms of the age of piracy, the officer can be a licensed master, mate, chief engineer, assistant engineer or quartermaster. Officers of all kinds will have at least some rudimentary Education, as well as some Bureaucracy, Command and/or Military (or Nautical) Sciences. Officers on a pirate ship typically receive 1-1/2 to 2 shares of loot.

Old Salt

Whether he's an aging pirate or a retired naval officer, the Old Salt has seen his fair share of adventure and excitement. He may not be as effective with a cutlass as he once was, or shoot a musket with any degree of accuracy, but what he lacks in martial skills he makes up for with experience, knowledge, and skill - elements that could mean the difference between life and death on Bloode Island. Unless the player has something specific in mind or the GM deems otherwise, the Old Salt should take the Liability of Age.

Sailor

The workhorse of any seagoing vessel, sailors are valuable members of a ship's crew. They may also be enlisted men in a navy. Sailors usually have good STR, DEX & AGL, and a high level of Seamanship. They may also have a smattering of Education and may have picked up some Wilderness Skills. In addition, most sailors are handy in a fight, so don't neglect the Brawling, Melee Weapons and Firearms skills.

Scientist

These ingenious individuals are largely tasked with bringing Europe out of its current cottage industry and into an era of increased production and adaptability. Scientists are well educated, curious by nature, and often approach the world and tasks with a practical, secular viewpoint. Most Scientists have a high Education, and will have plenty of Natural and Theoretical Sciences.



Settler

These are the intrepid men and women who leave the relatively safe confines of their European homes in search of a new life and, in some cases, new riches that the Caribbean promises. They, too, are hardy souls with a lust for adventure and a desire to experience the New World, a place untouched by modern conveniences and contrivances.

Settlers will usually have decent Domestic Arts, Craft and Lore skills, and may have some Natural Sciences. Unless the GM has other ideas, Settlers can

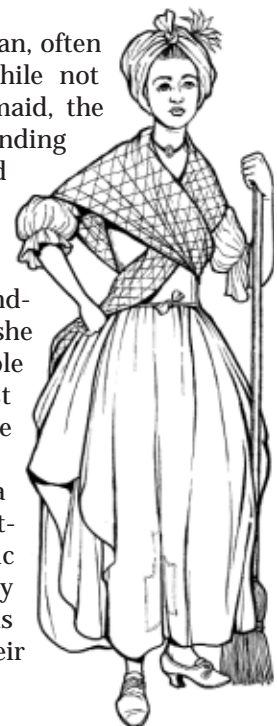
begin the game with a Royal grant of 2D6x10 acres of tropical island farm land.

Soldier

Soldiers are active, loyal, and militant followers of their respective nation's martial institutions and should be considered the workhorse of a nation's army. However, soldiers can also be mercenaries and men-at-arms, offering their combat skills to the highest bidder. Many such rag-tag bands of rogue soldiers (some acting under the guise of a Royal or Holy mandate, like the Spanish conquistadores) have done significant damage to the native cultures and ecosystems of the Caribbean. Soldiers will of course have decent STR, DEX & AGL, and should have decent fighting skills. Most will have at least Brawling and Firearms, and some will add Melee Weapons or Fencing (depending on background).

Trollop/Wench

The wench is a young woman, often of a rustic working class. While not necessarily a bar or scullery maid, the trollop does often end up finding work in taverns or inns situated in metropolitan centers like Port Defiance. The wench is a hardworking woman, used to the rigors of life. She's independent, often harsh with those she has no reason to trust, and able to cut down even the most swarthy pirate with a few choice words (or a hidden weapon). Wenches will usually have a high PER and decent skill ratings in Awareness, Domestic Arts, and Seduction, and many include Brawling, Firearms and/or Melee Weapons in their repertoire.





Chapter Three: Game Mechanics



This chapter covers how to determine whether a character in *Bloode Island XPG* succeeds at an attempted action, as well as covering other important elements, such as combat resolution, damage, and healing. In addition to this rulebook, you will only need a copy of the *Bloode Island XPG* character sheet (extra copies are available at www.deep7.com in the Freebies section), a pencil, and two standard six-sided dice (referred to as 2D6). The game's optional magic system is fully covered in **Chapter Four: Mojo**, page 22.

Stats and Skills

A character is made up of several standard characteristics called Stats (short for statistics). Stats are the bolded entries located under the Skill Profile on the character sheet. Under each Stat is a list of potential skills the character can have. A skill falls under the Stat most appropriate for its use within the game. Each Stat has a rating from 1 to 6 (the Stat Rating), while each skill has a rating of 0 or higher (known as the Skill Rating). When combined, they help determine whether using a skill succeeds or fails. Successful skill use is determined by making a Skill Check.

Making Skill Checks

To make a Skill Check, add the skill you want to use with the Stat it falls under. This is the base Target Number - the number you'll need to roll **equal to or less than** with 2D6 to successfully use the skill. On most Skill Checks, a simple success is satisfactory. In combat, the margin by which you make your roll becomes important. Obviously, the lower you roll, the higher your margin of success. A natural result of 2 (snake-eyes) is always a success, and a natural result of 12 (boxcars) is always a failure. Keep in mind, however, that modifiers may be added by the GM, thereby altering the required Target Number. For instance, hitting a fast moving target may require a -1 modifier. Trying to pick a lock while

under fire from maurauding pirates may require a -3 modifier. Trying to locate a lost pirate king's treasure with the help of a map might warrant a +1 modifier. Even if a Target Number rises above 12, it is still possible to fail miserably. Subsequently, even if it falls below 2, it is still possible to succeed.

Critical Success and Failure

If the result of a Skill Check is snake eyes (a natural 2), the character has had a critical success. Roll 1D6 and add the result to the margin of success for the Skill Check in question. This can really make a difference, especially in combat. If the player rolls a Skill Check and the result is boxcars (a natural 12), the character has had a critical failure: not only did the character fail, he failed spectacularly, tripping over his own feet, losing control of his mount or vehicle, etc. GMs should use discretion here. Having the character fumble with a weapon or lose his next action because he tripped and fell is usually warranted; accidental death or losing a limb are usually not.

Unskilled Checks

If a character has a Skill Rating of zero, he may still attempt to use the skill in question. The Target Number is simply the appropriate Stat Rating, plus the Skill Rating of 0. In this case, the character is relying on raw talent. Critical success

rules still apply.

Active and Passive Skill Checks

An Active Skill Check is anything the character does that takes time, concentration, or utilizes a physical skill. A Passive Skill Check is anything the GM mandates as a reaction to the character's environment, like Awareness, Endurance, Resist, etc.

Preparing A Skill Check

Players may choose to take extra rounds to prepare for a Skill Check. For each round the character prepares the action, he receives a +1 bonus to the





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Target Number, up to a maximum of +3. If the character is interrupted by taking damage or engages in any other Active Skill use, the preparation bonus is negated. Note that a player cannot prepare a Passive Skill Check, only Active Skills can be prepared.

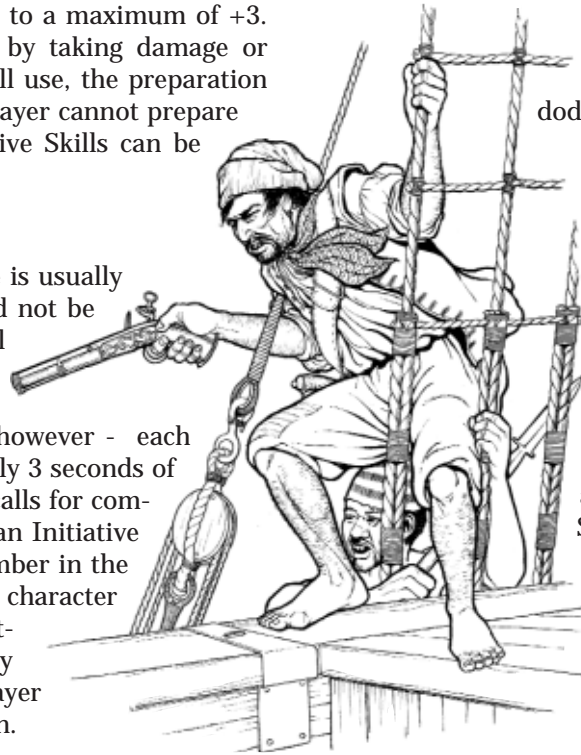
Running Combat

In *Bloode Island XPG*, time is usually a subjective element and should not be strictly adhered to under normal circumstances, unless a time element is imperative to the plot. Combat is another story, however - each combat round constitutes roughly 3 seconds of "in-game time." When the GM calls for combat rounds, each player makes an Initiative check. Roll 2D6 against the number in the box labeled INITIATIVE on the character sheet. The player with the greatest margin acts first and may perform one action, then the player with the next greatest, and so on.

Every player gets one action per round. Multiple actions are possible, with the following rules:

- The player must declare the total number of intended actions on his own turn during the first pass through the play order.
- For each subsequent action beyond the first, the character applies a -3 penalty to each Target Number. This penalty is cumulative, so a second action would be -3, a third would be -6, etc. This penalty is in addition to any Target Number modifiers due to off-hand or double weapon use (-2), environment (see page 18) or Wound Status (see page 19).

Once all players have resolved their first actions for the round, play returns to the first player, who may then resolve any secondary actions, continuing down the line once more. Play continues in this manner until all actions for the round have been resolved. An action consists of one of the following:



Performing a Passive Skill Check (i.e. Awareness and similar receptive skills) and parrying an attack are considered reactive, and do not cost an action.

- Making an Active Skill Check.
- Making an attack or dodging.
- Falling prone or rising from a prone position.
- Moving the character's AGILITY in meters.
- Drawing or readying a weapon.

Players who roll a critical failure against their INITIATIVE are required to have their characters perform actions last in the round. Subsequently, players who roll a critical success can allow their characters to perform actions first in the round (regardless of the margin of success). If more than one player critically succeeds against their INITIATIVE, their characters should go in order of highest margin of success to lowest, although their actions are considered simultaneous. If more than one player critically fails against their INITIATIVE they can "dice off" (roll 1D6, highest roll wins) to see in what order they go last.

Melee Combat

When characters engage in combat, the attacker rolls an appropriate combat-related Skill Check (AGILITY + Melee Weapon, DEXTERITY + Firearms, etc). Be sure to add the weapon accuracy (WA) of the weapon to the Target Number. The defending character then may make a defending Skill Check (AGILITY + Dodge, AGILITY + Melee or Fencing to parry) to avoid taking damage from a melee or ranged attack. The WA of an engaged weapon is also added to the Target Number when parrying. The character with the greatest margin of success is the winner, and has either landed the hit or avoided getting hit. If the defender is successful, the attack is completely negated, parried, or avoided, and no damage is done. Ties go to the defender. See **Damage**, page 18, to determine any damage done.

A player may always decline to take a declared action. Once an action is taken, however, its effects are binding unless a DESTINY point is spent (see Destiny, page 7).





For game purposes, parrying is considered passive and therefore does not cost an action. Ranged attacks can not be parried. A character can attempt to parry any number of attacks from visible opponents without penalty. However, there's always the danger of that trollop hitting the PC from behind with an iron pan; you can't parry (or dodge) what you can't see.

Ranged Combat

Shooting a firearm or other ranged weapon like a bow is treated like any other Skill Check, with possible modifiers for distance, size, and movement of the target. Although dodging an arrow or musket ball is unlikely, diving aside still lowers the likelihood of being hit, and thus opposed rolls are called for. Area effect weapons (explosives and the like) may not be dodged as a general rule, although if we follow cinematic precedent, hitting the deck will cut the weapon rating (WR) of the weapon in half (round up). If the ranged attack is successful, multiply the margin of success by the WR of the weapon. Ranged weapons do not receive the STRENGTH bonus that melee weapons do.

Keep in mind that black powder firearms take 5 rounds (approximately 15 seconds) to reload, and one round to fire.

Calling Shots

Unless otherwise declared, any successful attack will hit the torso (undoubtedly the largest target on the body). There are occasions, however, when you may want to aim for a much smaller target, like your opponent's weapon hand, for instance. The general range of modifiers for a called shot is as follows:

- 1 for the arms or legs
- 2 for the head, hands, or weapon

Targeting Modifiers

It's relatively easy to shoot a stationary target a few meters away, unless you're unskilled with a firearm or bow. To simulate the effects of outside influences (other than skill) that can hamper an effective ranged attack, GMs can utilize the following modifiers:

- 1 if the target is moving
- 2 if the target is moving quickly
- 3 if the target is behind cover

Note that if the target is an actual character it may be best to try to avoid the incoming fire by dodging, explained in the next section.

Dodging

A character may try to evade a specific incoming attack by diving aside or otherwise making himself a harder target to hit. See **Ranged Combat** for details. Dodging counts as an action, but doesn't need to be declared ahead of time. If a character decides to dodge, any subsequent actions or Skill Checks during the round are at the cumulative -3 penalty.

A *full dodge* is when the character attempts to avoid the entire troop of guardsmen shooting at him down the corridor or some similar thing. The PC accomplishes the maneuver by making a single Dodge (or Agility Feat) check and using the margin of success as the penalty for all enemy fire to hit the character that round. A character performing a full dodge may not perform any other Skill Checks during that round (including parries) and cannot declare additional actions.

Surprise

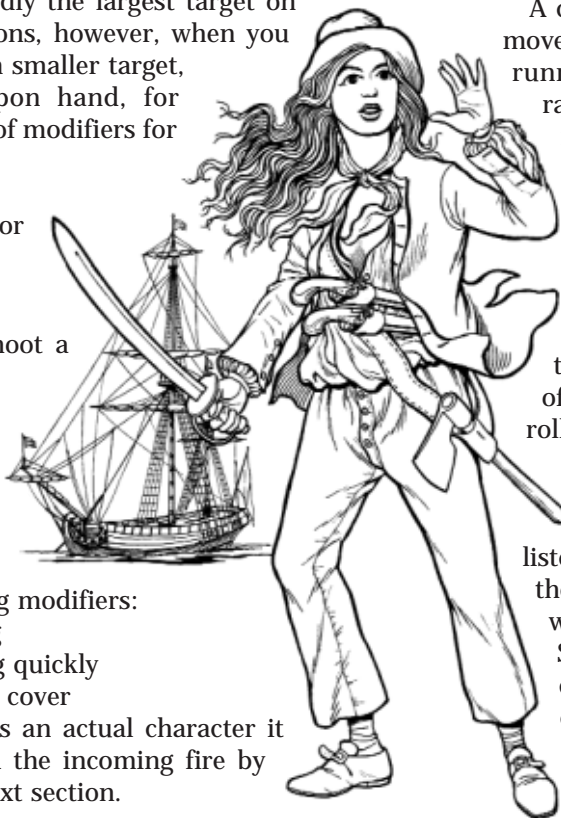
If a character succeeds in surprising another (opposed rolls: Stealth vs. Awareness), the sneaking party gets one free combat action before combat rounds officially begin. The surprised party gets no dodge, parry, or other defensive action, but may perform actions as usual once normal combat rounds begin.

Running Fire

A character performing a basic combat move (AGILITY in meters) may attempt running fire, snapping off a single ranged attack. The penalty for running fire is -1 to the combat skill's Target Number.

Damage

If the attacker is successful, subtract the defender's margin from the attacker's and multiply the result by the weapon rating (WR) of the weapon being used. No need to roll randomly; the damage is a direct result of the precision of the hit and the weapon being used. If the weapon has a damage bonus (DB) listed, add that to the damage result. If the weapon is a melee (non-ranged) weapon, add the attacker's STRENGTH to any damage. If the defender is wearing any protective clothing, subtract the armor value (AV) from the damage result. Finally, apply the remaining damage to the character's SHRUG.





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If the damage result is more than SHRUG, the character suffers 1 wound, and should mark the appropriate box in the Wound Status area of the character sheet. If the damage result is more than twice SHRUG, the character suffers 2 wounds, and so forth. See Wound Status for more information. Any damage done that is less than or equal to SHRUG is ignored.

Wound Status

Each level of damage taken is represented on the **Wound Status** chart, a gradually worsening representation of the character's physical state. If the character has taken 1 wound, he is at condition 1, or Scathed. If the character takes 2 wounds, he is at condition 2, or Light Wound. This Wound Status is cumulative, i.e. if the character is currently Scathed and takes another 2 wounds he's now at condition 3, or Moderate Wound. Wound levels are as follows:

1. **Scathed:** The character feels euphoric and slightly fatigued; however, there are no Wound Penalties at this level.
2. **Light Wound:** The character has some mild cuts, abrasions, and bruises. At this level, the character has a -1 Wound Penalty.
3. **Moderate Wound:** The character has broken bones, bleeding wounds, and may be in shock. At this level, the character has a -2 Wound Penalty.
4. **Grievous Wound:** Things are not going quite well at this point. The character has internal bleeding, shattered bones, and has gone into shock. At this point, the character will likely fall unconscious and has a -3 Wound Penalty.
5. **Incapacitated:** The character is so badly wounded that taking an action at this point is nearly impossible. He is in a dazed stupor and is fighting hard to remain conscious and cognizant of his surroundings. At this level, the character has a -4 Wound Penalty.
6. **Near Death:** The character is not only unconscious, but is in danger of dying. At this level, the character has a -5 Wound Penalty.
7. **Dead:** The character is clinically dead. If the character gets to this point, there are no Target Number penalties, because there is no

character left to perform any action. The dead may be reanimated with voodoo magicks, but the character is no longer the player's to control.

Saves

When a character has been wounded, the player must make a Wound Save. This is done by rolling 2D6 vs. the number indicated in the box labeled SAVE. As long as the player rolls a simple success, the character remains upright and kicking. If the SAVE is unsuccessful, the character falls unconscious from wound shock. He may continue to attempt making a SAVE roll as normal during his turn in the combat round, but the character simply cannot make any other Skill Checks or take any combat actions. When the player has rolled a successful SAVE, he revives and may act as normal (minus any wound penalties) in the next full combat round.

Wound Penalties

When a character has been wounded, he or she will suffer a Wound Penalty (the negative number in parentheses next to the wound level on the character sheet). This negative modifier is applied to any Skill Check as long as the character remains in his wounded state. This includes SAVE checks and INITIATIVE, as well as any physical or mental Skill Checks. Although a character may have a Target Number less than 2, the player may always attempt to roll a critical success.

Non-Lethal Damage

There are many times when attempting to knock out a character is preferable to killing him outright. To knock a character unconscious, the player must declare his intent to do so, and must be either unarmed or carrying a blunt instrument (club, chair leg, etc). The attack is made as normal, but instead of marking off wound damage, the defender must make a SAVE to keep from getting knocked out. Damage is figured as normal (see **Damage**, page 18), but instead of dealing wounds to the character, he simply makes a SAVE, minus the appropriate Wound Penalties. To be clear: the character is not actually wounded. He's been thumped on the head and, if the SAVE fails, will be dozing for 1D6 hours. When awakened, the character will function as Scathed for the amount of time spent unconscious.





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Stabilizing a Wounded Character

Any player may attempt to stabilize a wounded character by performing a Medicine check, modifying the skill's Target Number by the Wound Penalty for the appropriate wound level. In this case, the Wound Penalty is treated as a difficulty modifier and subtracted from the aiding character's Medicine Skill.

If the Medicine check is successful, the character is stabilized and will not worsen unless he is wounded again. If the check is unsuccessful, the character will remain just as wounded as before. If the check is a critical success, the character is not only stabilized, but improves by one level. If the check is a critical failure, the character automatically downgrades one level (and is not stabilized). Once a character has been stabilized, subsequent successful Medicine checks will upgrade the character's condition by one level each, but only at a maximum rate of one level per week.

If a character takes cumulative damage that puts him in Hurt Badly, his condition will degrade by one level for every 5 minutes of game time due to blood loss and internal trauma unless stabilized.

Ship-to-Ship Combat

Sooner or later, a prize won't simply surrender; a Spanish or Royal Navy pirate hunter will appear on the horizon; or the crew will just get bored and decide to go in with guns blazing and the red "no quarter" flag flying at the topmast. You can't be pirates without eventually getting into a major league ship-to-ship battle. The following combat rules are an abstract system intended to let GMs and players apply some structure to these encounters.

Ship Ratings

Ships have a variety of statistics that determine how well they handle in combat situations. These can be grouped into Active Stats and Damage Capacity. Active Stats include: **Speed (SPD)** - how fast the ship can move through the water; **Maneuver (MAN)** - how easy it is to control under various wind conditions; and **Guns (GUN)** - an abstract offensive potential.

Damage Capacity is broken down into three sub-categories: **HULL** - the actual body of the ship; **SAIL** - the sails, mast and rigging; and **CREW** - the actual men needed to make all this work.

The Damage Capacity stats act essentially as hit points, and will be reduced by battle damage. If a ship's HULL is reduced to zero, it begins to sink. A ship can float without sails or crew, but that's about all. The ship's effective MAN can never be higher than its SAIL, and its effective GUN can never be higher than the CREW. If SAIL ever falls below MAN, for example, the reduced SAIL score becomes the MAN score until the damage is repaired. The same principle is applied for GUN and CREW. With a SAIL of zero, the ship can't maneuver at all, but can only drift. With a CREW of zero, there are not enough men left in fighting trim to either maneuver the ship or fire the guns.

Battle Turns

Naval battles are fairly drawn out affairs in the age of sail. Each turn under these rules lasts two minutes. In other words, there is plenty of time for player characters, with their 3-second turns, to get things done in the midst of a battle. This system is intended to get players through battles that take place solely between ship's guns. When an enemy ship is boarded, simply move to the regular combat turns. If the player characters are up to something, (escaping from the enemy ship's brig and disabling her for example), it's probably best to ditch this system entirely and simply wing some description of what is going on between the ships while the players are enjoying their adventure.

Movement

The first part of a turn is devoted to moving the ships. The ship's commander makes a Nautical Sciences check (these rules assume that large ships will be duking it out over the waters, but if someone really wants to fight it out with rowboats, use Seamanship). The commander can add either the ship's SPD or its MAN to his target number, depending on what he wants to do. If both ships are intent on blowing the other out of the water, use MAN. But if one simply





Bloode Island



wants to get away from the other, use SPD. If the ships have been trading broadsides and one decides to break off and run, this will be obvious to the other. Thus, the commander can choose to switch tactics to pursue a fleeing enemy. The enemy doesn't get a free turn to run while the opponent vessel is still maneuvering.

In a chase, track the distance between ships in "rods" (a rod is an actual nautical unit of measure, but it's being used here as an abstract distance measurement). Both commanders make a Nautical Sciences Skill Check (adding in the SPD rating of their respective vessels to the Target Number) and the resulting margin of success is the number of rods the ship can move during that turn. In effect whoever gets the highest margin can either close the gap or increase it by the difference in margins. However, in some cases, actual distance covered may be important - for example, if the fleeing ship is running toward the protection of friendly shore batteries. In this case, the attacker would want to catch up to and disable her before she covered a given number of rods.

It's up to the GM to set the distance, in rods, for initial encounters. Assume that ships that have already been in battle vary their distance from 1 to 3 rods while maneuvering and start them randomly within that range. Cannons have a maximum range of 6 rods, but a ship can be seen, and thus followed, from as far away as 18 rods. If the pursuer manages to reduce the distance to zero rods, they have drawn directly alongside and can board if they wish.

If the ship commanders choose to maneuver on each other, they don't compare margins, but add the margin to their Target Numbers in the firing phase of the turn. This represents an abstract measure of the ship's ability to take advantage of prevailing wind conditions to gain the most beneficial firing angle and bring as many of its guns to bear as possible.

Firing

When firing the ship's cannons, the commander needs to tell his gun crews what kind of shot to load, depending on what kind of damage he wants to do to the enemy. Traditional cannonballs blast holes in the ship itself, doing HULL damage. However, there is also grapeshot, a cluster of small metal balls that spreads out when fired like a shotgun blast and is intended to sweep the decks of enemy sailors. Grapeshot applies its damage to the enemy's CREW

rating. There is also chain shot (sometimes referred to as "angel shot"), a ball cut in half with the halves connected by a length of chain. Chain shot is fired into the rigging to rip away ropes and sails, and make the ship harder to control.

Chain shot applies its damage to the enemy's SAIL rating.

The actual firing roll is made just like a standard Skill Check; 2D6 vs. the ship's GUN rating. The margin of success is taken in damage by the target ship directly to the appropriate rating.

ing.

Splitting Fire

A commander can choose to split the type of shot used among the ship's guns. He simply divides the total GUN rating into the different kinds of shot required. For instance, a ship with a GUN rating of 12 could be split by designating 7 round shot and 5 chain shot. The 7 is now the Target Number for the round shot guns, and the 5 is the Target Number for the chain shot guns. Of course, splitting fire decreases the efficiency and potential damage of volley weapons like cannon.

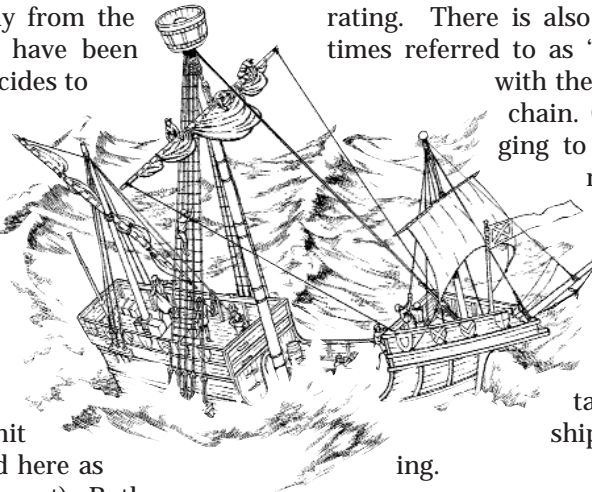
No Damage?

We should mention here that the chances of missing an 80-ft brigantine when you are at broadsides are pretty low. It is recommended that ships within 1 rod distance add +1 to any GUN Target Numbers when firing. It should also be mentioned that even if the firing roll fails, that does not mean the ship wasn't hit. It simply means no appreciable damage was done. Even firing fourteen pounders at near point-blank range? Certainly. Ships of the era are sturdily built of oak and other hardwoods, making them extremely resilient against hurtling projectiles. Besides, this is a cinematic game, and we want to move the story along, not get bogged down in cumbersome mechanics.

What about that 4-gun pinnace squaring off against the 22-gun war galleon? Unless the galleon's commander rolls a fumble, chances are the smaller ship will get sundered with cannon shot and be sunk with a single broadside, whereas the pinnace will be lucky to put a small dent in the sides of that giant hulk. The lesson here is twofold:

1. Don't rush into combat unless you are reasonably sure you can win.
2. Speed, stealth and strategy are a pirate's greatest ally.

All applicable ship Stats can be found in the **Appendix**, page 55.



Chapter Four: Mojo

Mojo is a catchall term for the supernatural side of the world. In the Caribbean this means what Europeans call voodoo. In a “realistic” campaign, ghosts, spirits, charms, and spells are nothing but superstition. On the other hand, sailors are notoriously superstitious, and this is a role-playing game, so you may choose to give them real power. Clergy can be gifted with similar powers. Keep in mind the Mojo system as presented here is pretty freeform and may not appeal to the more technically-minded, but is nonetheless appropriate for a lighter, more cinematic experience.

The Unexplained, Explained

If players opt to arm their characters with magical ability, the Lore skill, the Occult asset and the optional skill, Mojo, are needed. When used in conjunction with the WIL stat, the Mojo skill gives characters power over the supernatural forces of the world, allowing them to wield powerful magic. These are bought just like other assets and skills, although players do not receive any extra points to purchase them during character creation - the points come out of the base starting character points. Even if Mojo is real, only the most dedicated will forego other, safer walks of life to pursue it.

The basic mechanic for Mojo is the same as for other tasks in *Bloode Island XPG*. A character adds his Mojo to his WIL to result in a Target Number. He then rolls 2D6, trying for a result equal to or below the Target Number.

A character's Mojo skill also determines the types of things he can do:

- Mojo 1 or higher:** The character can create basic herbal medicines, powders, poultices and drugs.
- Mojo 2 or higher:** The character can create charms and read oracles.
- Mojo 3 or higher:** The character can “see” or sense spirits.
- Mojo 4 or higher:** The character can summon and control spirits.
- Mojo 5 or higher:** The character can commune with the loas to work serious spells.

While details and guidelines on the game's magic system are provided below, players and GMs can develop their own effects.

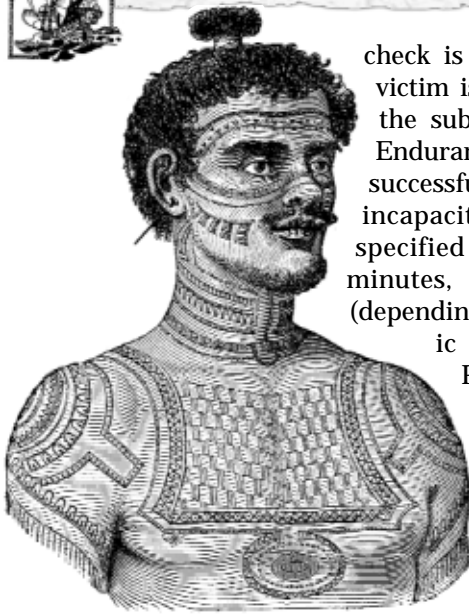
Medicines

Medicines are simple herbal remedies that can help or hinder anyone who uses them. They usually come in positive and negative varieties, such as healing salves and poisons, and are as effective as the modifier mandated by the GM.

For instance, a mild healing salve that would remove a single wound level in a day might come at a 0 modifier, while one that pushed the healing to one level in 12 hours might be at a -1, and one with an instant effect might be -3. GMs should let the players police themselves when designing medicines, and designate any “reasonable” design (one whose effects are well-balanced with requirements, ingredients or manufacture time) at a 0 modifier. Any effects that seem powerful in comparison to the requirements need an appropriate modifier, and the GM should feel free to put his foot down if something seems way out of bounds: “But I only want to make a simple Powder of Reanimate the Dead in five minutes with some gunpowder and baking soda...”

Poisons are subject to the same rules, and the GM has the same power of veto here. Poisons and drugs can either serve to incapacitate or cause wound damage. In the case of simple incapacitation, the victim would make an Endurance check. If the Endurance





check is successful, the victim is unaffected by the substance. If the Endurance check is not successful, the victim is incapacitated for the specified number of minutes, hours or days (depending on the specific medicine).

Poisons work in the same manner: the victim of the poison makes an Endurance check, and if the check is successful, the

poison has no effect. If the check is unsuccessful, the poison has full effect and the victim must make the appropriate SAVE to remain upright and conscious.

Drugs can be an effective way of gaining the upper hand, and Mojo workers have access to all sorts of natural psychedelic substances in the form of mushrooms, leaves, blossoms, cactii and tree barks, various animal secretions and other naturally occurring sources. Drug effects work on the same principle as other medicines (player/GM discretion), but the victim makes a Resist check instead of Endurance. If the check is successful, the victim wards off the effects of the drug. If the check is unsuccessful, the drug has full effect.

With all medicines, at GM's discretion, a victim who successfully resists the effects of a given substance through an Endurance or Resist check may be given a +1 to future checks against the same medicine. A character who gets a critical success resisting a medicine may be given immunity to the substance (again, at GM's discretion).

Charms

Charms are simple magic items that will work for anybody, whether those people have any Mojo or not. Of course, if a character does have some Mojo, he'll be much better at telling real charms from fake ones. Charms typically give the wearer a +1 bonus to a single skill. Some may be slightly more powerful, but these should have a specific number of uses before the power wanes and then fades. Simpler charms keep working forever.

To be effective, charms must be worn, but the PC can't wear more than three at once, or they will simply stop working. Additionally, charms aren't the sort of

thing that can be mass produced, so each should involve some ritual and/or uncommon supplies. For example, to create a charm allowing the PC a bonus to his Stealth Skill, the character must bury a rat's skull under a gravestone for a fortnight, then dig it up and soak it in a silver cup full of wine under the full moon. The creation of the charm should be based on the background of the character creating it, and players and GMs should use their creativity when fashioning charms.

A single success on a Mojo check means the character performed the ritual correctly and the charm works. GMs can impose modifiers to the Mojo check for those charms which may need an exacting ritual or are particularly powerful.

Sample Charms

Breathe Underwater Charm: +1 Swimming

Love Charm: +1 Seduction

Steady-Hand Charm: +1 Firearms

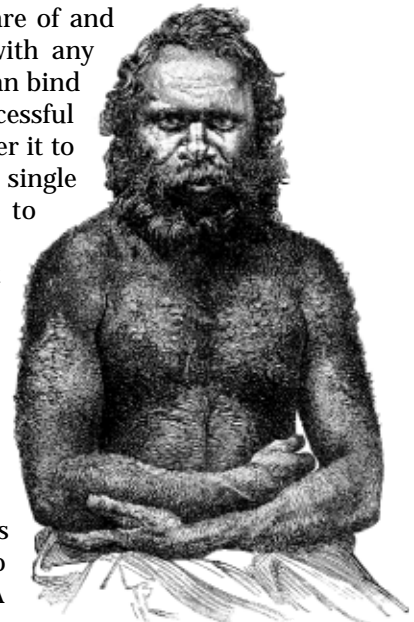
Good Luck Charm: Add one success to any Skill Check, then throw it away.

Oracles

A character with Mojo 2 or higher can use a deck of cards, bag of bones, etc. to divine one secret about a target (the first mate is plotting mutiny!), or predict one event in his future (he'll die by hanging). The character can read the oracles for a given target once per month, and will learn what the spirits want to tell him rather than the answer to a specific question. All future events are usually changeable, so anything revealed can change depending on circumstances.

Spirits

With a Mojo of 4 or more, the character is aware of and can communicate with any nearby spirits. He can bind a spirit with a successful Mojo check and order it to perform services. A single success is enough to control the spirit, but the player must keep track of the roll, since it may be important later (see below). Spirits don't have stat and skill scores - it's assumed that the PC simply summons a spirit that can do the task at hand. A





bound spirit can be kept around indefinitely. However, a character can never have more than three bound spirits working at once. The PC can release a spirit at any time.

If the PC comes across a spirit that is already bound to someone else, the character can try to wrest control of it from the original caster. Keep in mind, however, that other Mojo workers can do this to the PC's spirits as well. If the player rolls a better margin on a Mojo check than the original binder rolled, it's now the PC's spirit. This is why the player needs to keep track of the die roll when binding spirits.

Spirits are so plentiful that MOJO workers tend to use them as a general resource. If the PC needs to predict the weather in his vicinity over the next couple of days, there is sure to be some wind or water spirit that can help. Similarly any area will have earth spirits than can talk about the local geology or things that are buried. Pretty much any spirit can report on recent happenings in the area.

Ghosts are a unique type of spirit. If Captain McDuff of the doomed privateer Furious is the only one who knows where he hid his treasure, he's the only one that can tell you. Worse, many (though not all) ghosts haunt specific places that are important to them and can only be found there. Thus, while calling up a local spirit to tell you if there will be storms in the next couple days is a simple matter, contacting the ghost of Captain McDuff and getting him to tell you where to find his booty could well become an adventure in itself.

Spirits can have the following special abilities:

Attack: In order to attack an enemy, the spirit using the PCs WIL + Mojo combo as its combat ability. A successful hit from a spirit has WA 0 and WR 1.

Telekinesis: Spirits can move, carry, or throw objects up to the STR of the controlling PC times 10 in pounds. This could include knocking over an oil lamp, sliding the bolt on a door, throwing a stone, etc.

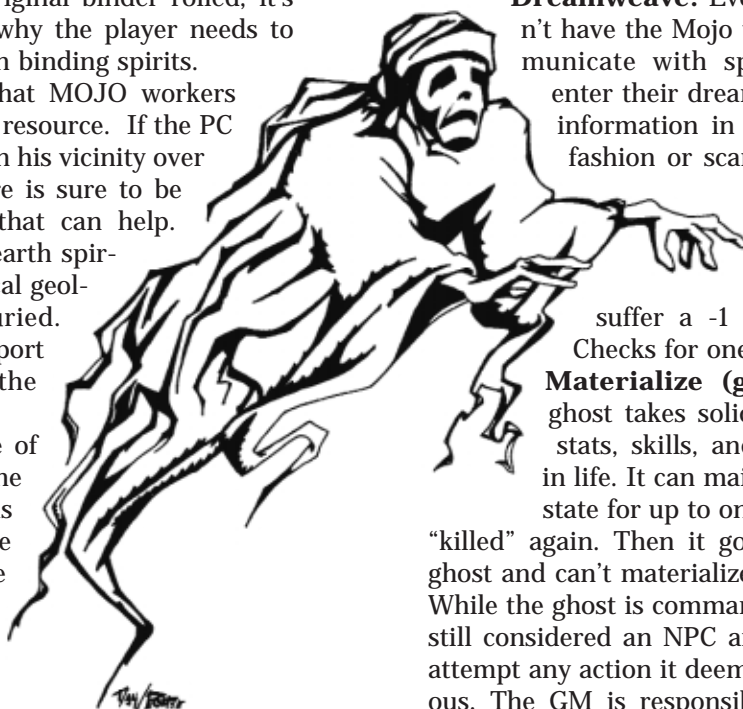
Clairvoyance: Aided with this ability, the PC can add one extra die to Skill Checks involving knowledge, translating languages the character doesn't speak, predicting the weather in

the area for the next two days, etc.

Incorporeal: Sprits can fly, pass through walls, etc. They also make great scouts and spies. Additionally, spirits can carry messages if the recipient also has the Mojo to communicate. This isn't instantaneous, but it shouldn't take a messenger spirit more than one hour to find someone anywhere.

Dreamweave: Even if someone doesn't have the Mojo to deliberately communicate with spirits, a spirit can enter their dreams, either to impart information in suitably dream-like fashion or scare the daylights out of them and keep them from getting any rest (in which case the target will suffer a -1 penalty to all Skill Checks for one day).

Materialize (ghosts only): The ghost takes solid form and has the stats, skills, and equipment it had in life. It can maintain this corporeal state for up to one hour, or until it is "killed" again. Then it goes back to being a ghost and can't materialize until the next day. While the ghost is commanded by the PC, it is still considered an NPC and likewise will not attempt any action it deems foolish or dangerous. The GM is responsible for determining the ghost's relevant abilities.



Spells

Spells are serious mojo which produce more powerful effects over greater ranges of time and distance. Those who know how to wield this mysterious power can send a curse down on an enemy that might strike him days later and hundreds of miles away; however, spells can be dangerous to work with. Spell effects come from the loas, the most volatile and vindictive entities of the spirit realm. Coincidentally, practitioners don't summon loas; they petition these otherworldly beings and hope they don't have a fondness for the intended victim.

Unwilling targets can make a Resist check to avoid being affected by the spell. Additionally, the caster must roll a greater margin of success than the target for the spell to take effect. An effigy, used in most spells if the target is not present, must include something connected to the target (a piece of clothing, lock of hair, etc.). A caster can end his own spells at any time.





Most spells that don't have an obvious duration built in (one battle, as long as you're concentrating, etc.) last until the next new moon. Spells have a difficulty modifier that are applied to a Mojo check and based loosely on how complex and powerful they are. These are listed in parentheses in the descriptions of example spells that follow. Players are encouraged to develop their own spells subject to the approval of the GM.

Evil Eye (-2): The caster inflicts a slow, wasting curse on the victim, either by making eye contact or using an effigy. The target feels weak and ill, suffering aches, cold sweats, nightmares, etc. All of his attributes are reduced by 2, he cannot heal any damage, and he marks off one wound level per week until the spell is lifted or he dies.

Fair Winds (-2): Allows the caster to subtly influence winds, currents, and weather in a localized area. This can change a ship's speed, as well as give the Commander a +1 bonus on all MAN checks.

Leader's Voice (-1): Grants the target +2 when using the Command Skill. (Use this -1 difficulty per +2 bonus as a model for other spells that boost or lower a target's skills).

Lift Curse (-1): Breaks a spell cast on the target by someone else, preventing further effect, yet not undoing anything that's already occurred. The caster must roll a greater margin of success than the curse being lifted for the spell to succeed. This spell can also be placed preemptively on a target. Until the next full moon, anyone trying to place a curse on the target must roll a greater margin of success than the

original Lift Curse spell roll. The victim still gets to make a Resist check, even if the curse gets through this protection.

Scrying (-1): Lets the caster see what is going on in a particular location, or converse with another willing Mojo worker, no matter how far away.

Spirit Shield (-2): Protects the target from miscellaneous dangers during battle (musket volleys, grapeshot, falling yardarms, etc.). Deliberate attempts to attack the character are not affected.

Zombie Curse (-3): Turns the target into the caster's slave. The victim can only follow very simple commands and cannot speak. Regardless of the victim's original stats and skills, all zombies are relatively the same. See the callout for zombie statistics. Zombies last until destroyed or magically restored, so a suitably evil Mojo worker could create an army of them to compensate for the fact that they're essentially harmless by themselves.

Zombies

In combat, zombies don't roll INITIATIVE; they act once - last in the round.

Should a zombie hit, it has a WR3. All weapons have a WR of 1 against a zombie (except something really not at all sporting, like a ship's cannon, which would render it into a haphazard pile of remains), and the zombie can continue to fight to its last wound level. Zombies killed (again) and still in relatively good shape can be resurrected multiple times with the Zombie Curse spell.

Zombies are essentially the walking dead; all but the smallest spark of life has been drained from them. In the case of a dead subject, a small spark of life is put back in to reanimate the corpse (often achieved through animal sacrifice). Zombies can be reanimated multiple times, so long as their bodies are relatively intact. Although the animation of individual body parts has occurred throughout the Caribbean, a zombie must at least have continuity between its head and torso in order to function properly, and at least one major limb in order to motivate and attack.

STR 5

All other Stats 1
No Skills.

Clerical Powers

If you are including voodoo in your historical pirate fantasy, you may also consider giving the clergy similar mystical powers on the flip side. The skill need not be called Mojo for a priest; you can call it Faith. However the way in which it is used, for game purposes, is the same. You can even alter the voodoo spells and abilities to put a European religious spin on them, turning them into prayers and wards.





Chapter five: A History of the New World



When Columbus brought news of the New World back to Europe, Spain quickly recognized its potential value and acted to protect its new discoveries from incursions by other European powers. At the time, Spain and Portugal were the two predominant naval powers in Europe. Within a few years, these two countries had divided the planet between themselves, with the blessings of the Pope. The Treaty of Tordesillas set a demarcation line from pole to pole, passing 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, off the western tip of Africa. Everything west of that line belonged to Spain, whose efforts to keep the Portuguese out of its new playground didn't entirely succeed. The New World was still being charted as the exact position of the line was debated, and the Brazilian coast was discovered to lie on the Portuguese side. Portugal established a long-term presence there, but focused most of its energies on Africa and Asia, and Spain laid the foundations of the region's future.

The Spanish concentrated primarily on the mainland empires of Mexico and South America, where there was gold and silver to be found. The Caribbean islands were seen mainly as stepping-stones on the way home, and strategic sites to protect the area's security.

The native population of the Caribbean consisted primarily of three tribes: the Arawak, whose relatively peaceful farming culture had spread through most of the islands; the Ciboney, cave-dwelling hunter-gatherers who had been displaced mostly to Cuba and Hispaniola by the time of Columbus; and the fierce Carib. The Arawak were terrified of the Carib who had driven them out of the Lesser Antilles and routinely raided them for slaves. Indeed it's from the Carib that we get the modern word "cannibal." Cannibalism seems to have served only a minor ritual function in Carib culture, but it was great for intimidating enemies.

Not even the Carib were a match for the Spaniards, however. Between superior European technology and infectious diseases, the Indians were quickly slaughtered. Those who didn't die in violent conflict or from previously unknown illnesses were soon worked to death under a brutal system of slavery. It took scarcely fifty years for the Spaniards to decimate the native population to the point that African slaves had to be imported to work plantations and mines. Remnants of the native population still exist,

but even these are mostly mixed with African and European blood. Very few pure Indians remain, and their cultures and languages have vanished almost entirely (see Indigenous Peoples, below).

Spanish domination of the New World lasted for little more than a century. While Spain grew complacent with its power and slowly rotted from the inside, leaner and hungrier European powers were rising to challenge the Spanish grip. The balance shifted with a quick one-two punch to Spanish power. First the Dutch gained their independence from Spain after a bitter war. Within just a few years came the crushing defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English. Along with ongoing harassment from the Dutch, the failure of the Armada broke the back of Spain's naval power and loosened its grip on the New World. Since then, England, France, and the Netherlands have steadily carved out pieces of the New World for themselves. What this means, in practical terms, is that anything you find in the new world is Spanish property unless someone has taken it away from them, in which case it is former Spanish property with all that that entails.

Indigenous Peoples

When Christopher Columbus landed at what is now called Mole St. Nicholas in Haiti on December 6, 1492, he irrevocably changed life for its indigenous people. Columbus did not discover a lost or unknown land. There was a flourishing civilization of natives.

The Arawak and the Taino

Arawak is a term used to describe a general group of people, and a common language that this group of natives share. Their society stretches from Venezuela through Central America and the Caribbean all the way to Florida. However, the particular group of Arawak-speaking people who live on the island of Hispaniola are known as the Taino.

The Arawak/Taino have a very gentle culture. It is characterized by a highly organized hierarchical, paternal society, with a lack of guile. Each group is a small kingdom and the leader is called a cacique. At the time of Columbus, there are five different kingdoms on the island of Hispaniola.

The Arawak/Taino practice polygamy; most men have two or three wives, but the caciques can have as many as 30. It is a great honor for a woman to be married to a cacique because not only does she enjoy a





materially superior lifestyle, but her children are held in high esteem.

Unfortunately, for the Arawak/Taino, they are not immune to European diseases, especially smallpox. In addition, the Spanish continually work them unmercifully in the mines and fields. They are expected to yield a certain quantity of gold per capita. Failing that, each adult of 14 years or older is required to submit 25 pounds of cotton. Those who are unable to produce the cotton are required to work for the Spanish. This has set the stage for a system of assigning the Arawak/Taino to Spanish settlers as slave labor.

The Carib

Prior to their effective demise at the hands of European settlers and conquerors, the Caribs were a native people inhabiting the Lesser Antilles, West Indies. They seem to have overrun these areas and driven out the Arawak about a century before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. The original name by which the Caribs were known, Galibi, was corrupted by the Spanish to Canibal, thus the origin of the English word cannibal. Extremely warlike and ferocious, they practiced cannibalism and took pride in scarification (ritual cutting of the skin) and fasting.

The Carib language was spoken only by the men, while the women (originally captured in raids on the Arawak tribes and taken as wives) spoke Arawak. Fishing, agriculture, and basket making were the chief domestic activities. In addition, the Caribs were expert navigators, crisscrossing a large portion of the Caribbean in their canoes. They were all but exterminated after European colonization began in the 17th century. A group remaining on St. Vincent mingled with black slaves who escaped from a shipwreck in 1675. This group was transferred in 1795 by the British to Roatán island off the coast of Honduras. They have gradually migrated north along the coast into Guatemala. Currently, a few Caribs survive on a reservation on the island of Dominica.

South American Natives

It is estimated that about 30 million natives live in South America and can be found in highly developed cultures at Chavín de Huántar and the Paracas peninsula in Peru. Three other Peruvian cultures include the Mochica, the Chimú, and the Nazca. In Bolivia, the Tiahuanaco also bear witness to yet another strong civilization. Since the area's Colonial Age, however, the native population has been used extensively as agricultural and industrial laborers, mostly without adequate

remuneration or political representation; often they are brutally exploited.

Sugar, Slaves, and Rum

The Spanish may have come to the New World in search of gold, but the real money in the islands is to be made in sugar cane. Sugar has proven one of the most addictive foods on Earth, and Europe's growing sweet tooth has made sugar perhaps the most successful cash crop ever discovered. The English and, to a lesser extent, the French and Dutch, have developed extensive sugar plantations on several of the islands, especially in the Lesser Antilles. Sugar is such a valuable commodity that many smaller islands have given over every possible scrap of arable land to its cultivation, forsaking even food production. Ships have to come to carry the sugar back to Europe anyway, and it's often more profitable to import food than to use up valuable cropland growing vegetables or grains.

The sugar plantations have made their owners fabulously wealthy. It hasn't been such a great deal for the workers, however. Sugar cultivation is very labor intensive, requiring large numbers of slaves. Also, between the harsh environment and the brutality of the plantation system, there's a steady demand for new slaves to replace the old; the life expectancy of a newly arrived slave on a Caribbean sugar plantation is measured in months.

In addition to crystalline sugar, rum distilling is a good way to, in effect, preserve sugar, and is a popular product in its own right. The islands produce huge amounts of rum, and it is literally a staple in the sailor's diet. Captains do not issue their sailors rum because they want a bunch of drunks operating their ships; they do it because rum provides needed calories and won't spoil during a long sea journey. Rum is actually food in the Caribbean. What does this mean to pirates? It means that many of the merchant ships found in the area will be carrying cargoes of sugar or rum back to Europe, or food, slaves, and European-made goods to the plantation islands.

Caribbean Power Blocs

To give players a better understanding of the national politics involved in *Bloode Island's* Caribbean, we've included a brief description of each major player in the constant battle for resources and wealth in the New World. Players should be aware that, although their desired country of origin may not be listed here, they are free to create characters of any nationality.





Spain

Even at Spain's peak there were vast areas of the Caribbean that she simply didn't have the time or manpower to worry about. Now Spain is especially vulnerable as the Spanish navy isn't what it used to be, and her enemies swarm around the Caribbean like angry bees. The Spanish insist all this activity is illegal, but there isn't much they can do about it. Spain's Crown has responded by narrowing its focus. It fights occasionally over one piece of land or another, but often doesn't bother going after struggling colonies in out of the way places. Mostly it protects its valuable mainland presence, with its gold and silver mines that still pour wealth into the Spanish treasury, and sends treasure fleets in protected convoys through what have become pirate-infested seas. Spanish ships are big and impressive looking, but outdated and slow. Spanish tactics have increasingly come to rely on massed naval power since they are usually outmatched in one-on-one actions.



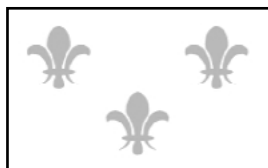
England

The English have become the primary thorn in the Spanish side, establishing extensive colonies among the islands, not to mention the North American mainland. The bulk of the islands of the Lesser Antilles are English, along with the Bahamas, and even the major island of Jamaica. The English presence has become so solid that Britain sends its own navy into the Caribbean to suppress pirates and smugglers because many English settlements and shipping routes have become as attractive to pirates as the Spanish. Indeed, the ruthlessly capable Royal Navy is the single greatest threat to a pirate's career and safety. Squadrons of Royal Navy frigates roam the sea on pirate hunting missions when there's no one else to fight. Very few pirates will stand and trade broadsides with the Royal Navy, making battles more a question of escape than victory. Even so, Spain continues to think of all Englishmen in the region as pirates.



France

France has a more limited colonial presence in the Caribbean, but individual Frenchmen are found everywhere. France does have colonies in the Lesser Antilles and Hispaniola, and has extensively explored the North American interior. There are a great many French pirates operating in the



Caribbean as well. French colonies in the Antilles tend to look a lot like the English ones: wealthy sugar plantations with an elite of nouveau riche planters running the show. Ship for ship, the French navy can be as good as - even better than - the British. However, the French place less overall emphasis on sea power, and the French Crown takes less of a direct interest in the Caribbean. France doesn't maintain a routine military presence in the region, but sends ships over from Europe on particular missions as they are needed. Thus, pirates are more likely to encounter solitary French warships. Incompetent officers who received their commissions due to their social rank captain some of these; however, some French commanders are among the most dangerous on any sea. You take your chances when engaging them.

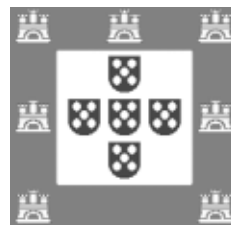
The Netherlands

The Dutch are more a commercial presence in the Caribbean than a colonial one. They have seized a few Spanish possessions in the region, but this was more to strike at the Spanish than for their own sake. The great majority of the Dutch colonial empire is in Asia; however, Dutch traders are at the heart of the slave trade, and Dutch pirates are beginning to weaken Portugal's control of its Brazilian colonies. More than any other country, the Dutch have embraced the concept of warfare as an economic activity. The Dutch West India Company was founded simultaneously as a for-profit company and to strike against Spanish and Portuguese commercial interests in the Caribbean. It has been spectacularly successful in the latter, although less successful as a profit-making venture. Dutch ships in the area are either military vessels seconded to the company by the Dutch general assembly, or company merchantmen, which are more likely than other merchant vessels to be armed and to put up a fight if bothered.



Portugal

The Portuguese have fallen even farther from their earlier height of power than the Spanish. Portugal came under Spanish rule for more than half a century and, while it has regained its independence, its rank among European powers is lost forever. Nearly every Portuguese holding is under steady pressure from the Dutch. This is especially true of the Brazilian coast, which is divided into 14 separate "capitanias" to be assigned to whomever the government





deems suitable; however, this has been a particularly slapdash system. Some capitánias have never been assigned, others have failed after a few years, and the functioning ones tend to squabble over resources and policy rather than supporting each other. Only the capitánias of São Vicente (renamed São Paulo) and Pernambuco had any success. This makes them individually quite vulnerable. Overall, Brazil is an agricultural region, exporting sugar, lumber, and other crops. Unlike most island colonies, Brazil's African slave population has thrived and grown, to the point that Brazil is now beginning to export slaves to other colonies. Portuguese naval vessels are seldom seen in the Caribbean. Their limited forces usually remain stationed in or near Brazil's port cities to defend against Dutch or French raiders.

Friends and Enemies in the Caribbean

The political dynamic of the Caribbean can be summed up as "everyone against the Spanish, or each other if the Spanish aren't handy." Politics in this period of history are far more fluid than in the modern world. Wars crop up with surprising speed. On the other hand, one never knows when a royal marriage or succession will suddenly unite two countries under one crown and last year's enemies will become this year's countrymen.

The most persistent truth in this mess is the great struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism. The Spanish are the most aggressive defenders of the Catholic faith. While the French are nominally Catholic, most French pirates in the Caribbean are Huguenots, Protestants fleeing bitter persecution back home. The Dutch and English are even worse, entire nations in rebellion against the church. The Spanish consider all of them nothing more than heretics, who deserve whatever punishment the faithful can mete out. Indeed, the attempted invasion of England by the Spanish Armada came after the Pope actually called a crusade against England. The modern idea of religious tolerance simply doesn't exist in this time period. People in Europe are still being hanged, tortured, or worse over matters of faith, and wars of religion can reach into the New World as well.

The English and French have been each other's favorite enemies for centuries, and still find time to fight on occasion. Even the English and Dutch, who supposedly have a military alliance against Spain, sometimes set that alliance aside long enough to fight a war over one issue or another. These wars quickly spill over into the islands. They give pirates a great opportunity to wipe clean their legal slates by becoming privateers for their Crown. This not only makes

what they're doing nice and legal, but often involves royal pardons for past acts of piracy. The wars also give settlers an excuse to get out the boats and raid their neighbors on the next island over. This is particularly common in the Lesser Antilles, where everybody has possessions and the islands are small and close together. A few smaller islands have changed flags no less than a dozen times.

Caribbean Geography

The Bahamas

A sprawling cluster of sandy reefs and mostly flat islands strewn across the northern reaches of the Caribbean, the Bahamas were largely ignored by the Spanish and are now sparsely occupied by British settlers. Those who came to emulate the agricultural success of other islands have been badly disappointed. The soil is poor for plantation farming and most of the colonies struggle to keep themselves functioning from season to season.

The islands are great for pirates and smugglers, however. The hardscrabble colonies are hardly a plum job for ambitious administrators. Bahamian colonial governors tend to be either grossly incompetent, or else crooked as snakes, since corruption is about the only way to make any money there. In addition, the waters are shallow and tricky. A pirate or smuggler who knows the shoals and currents like the back of his hand can often evade larger naval vessels that don't know the area as well and can't follow him into shallower water. A number of ships, including Spanish treasure galleons, have been lost in the treacherous waters even without piratical assistance. Looking for wrecks to salvage gives the locals something to do when piracy and smuggling do not fit the bill.

The islands also offer convenient access to both the North American mainland and the Greater Antilles, to the advantage of smugglers in particular.

The Greater Antilles

The Greater Antilles are the largest islands of the Caribbean, arranged in a roughly east-west arc. Because of their size, and the fact that they serve as a highway of islands straight toward the heart of Spanish America, these islands were the primary focus of development of the Caribbean, and are still the heart of Spanish power. Spain is far from unchallenged, however, even here.

Cuba

The largest island in the region, Cuba is also the core of Spain's island empire. The fortress city of Havana





has been recognized by the Spanish crown as the “key to the New World and rampart of the West Indies.” It is one of the only settlements in the region that has never been captured or sacked, although England, France, and the Dutch have all tried. One reason for their interest is that Havana is a rendezvous point for treasure ships from Mexico and South America before the great fleet sets sail for Spain. However, the best anyone has been able to do so far is blockade the harbor for short periods. The rest of the island is divided into a series of districts dotted with sugar and tobacco plantations, as well as cattle ranches.

Hispaniola

The first island extensively settled by the Spanish, Hispaniola (also called Santo Domingo and Haiti) later was eclipsed by Cuba to its west, which better suited most Spanish purposes in the area. The population dropped drastically as colonists moved on, economic activity slowed, and the island became a backwater in Spain’s empire. French pirates soon occupied Hispaniola’s western tip, and have become such a settled presence there that France now claims the western third of the island. Hispaniola is the most mountainous of the Greater Antilles, but lacks decent harbor facilities. Nonetheless, the impressive city of Santo Domingo remains the official administrative center of the Spanish Empire in the New World. The tiny island of Tortuga, off Hispaniola’s northwest coast, is also a notable pirate haunt.

Puerto Rico

The least important of the Greater Antilles and east of Hispaniola, Puerto Rico was settled by the Spanish. Having never achieved the success of other islands, it has largely gone to seed. The fortress city of San Juan receives some attention from Spain as the outer bulwark of its Caribbean empire; however, the rest of the island is left to its own devices. The islanders grow subsistence crops and raise cattle on the open range. They also conduct a thriving underground trade in meat, leather, and agricultural goods with other islands despite Spanish edicts forbidding this. They have begun “going native,” in effect, and the colonists of San Juan, who seldom venture outside their walls and the protection of their heavy cannon, have only contempt for the islanders. The feeling is mutual.

Jamaica

Jamaica, located south of Cuba, outside the main line of the Greater Antilles, is England’s largest Caribbean possession and a lost Eden for pirates. Like Puerto Rico, Jamaica was on its way to becoming a minor Spanish backwater when the English took it. Notably, the tiny English expeditionary force settled on Jamaica only after failing in its original goal of capturing Hispaniola. The English grip on Jamaica was precarious from the beginning, as England lacked a significant military presence in the Caribbean. However, there were plenty of pirates. The colonial administration, out of necessity, relied on these pirates

to keep the Spanish from retaking the island. During this period of the “buccaneers,” the capital of Port Royal was a paradise for pirates, acclaimed as “the wickedest city on Earth.” That first golden age came to an end as Jamaica prospered and its importance to the English grew. Now, wealthy sugar planters run the island. Spain has tacitly accepted England’s ownership of the island, and the Royal Navy protects it. There is no more need for Jamaica to beg the aid of pirates.

The writing was on the wall when an earthquake obliterated most of Port Royal. A new administrative capital was built at Kingston, but it’s a different place. Pirates still work out of Jamaica, but far less openly. The new governors are more likely to hunt pirates than depend on them for help. Pirates have to at least skirt the edge of legality now, relying on letters of marque, or taking the King’s pardon and settling on land. The Jamaican frontier is calming down and the pirates have started moving on, looking for more hospitable seas.

The Lesser Antilles

The Lesser Antilles are a chain of small islands scattered in a graceful arc that neatly connects the Greater Antilles to the coast of South America. The Spanish ignored these tiny islands, a decision that has come back to haunt them. Because of prevailing winds in the Caribbean, the islands are perfectly suited to raiding the Spanish Main. Pirate vessels riding these trade winds can swoop down with terrifying speed on coastal settlements. The same winds protect the islands, since approaching them from the west is a slow process of tacking against the wind, giving





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islanders plenty of time to prepare a reception. Despite this, the Lesser Antilles were only occasionally used as pirate bases, and that only early in their history. Today they are mostly agricultural colonies.

Notable islands in the Lesser Antilles include Barbados, an English stronghold of sugar plantations; Martinique, its French equivalent; and the Dutch outpost of Curacao. Other colonies include the Virgin Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua, Dominica and Grenada.

The Spanish Main

The Spanish Mainland, or Main, technically includes all of Central and South America, but the term is primarily applied to the coastal settlements along the northern edge of South America: Guatemala, Panama, Venezuela etc. These settlements are frequent targets of pirates, as well as privateers making war on Spain. In addition to ransoming cities back to the Spanish, several attempts have been made to intercept Spanish treasure before it ever gets to sea. The best known of these was Francis Drake's ambush of a mule train ferrying Peruvian silver to the port of Nombre de Dios in Panama. It took several attempts, but Drake finally succeeded in seizing some 15 tons of silver and £100,000 in gold coins. This legendary haul has made the treasure ports of the Spanish Main the ultimate prize for pirates who can assemble enough of a force to undertake a land-based assault.

High Crimes on the High Seas

The Caribbean offers plenty of ways for a brave and resourceful sailor with little regard for the law to make a living. Piracy is hardly a cut-and-dried affair. Even Royal Navy officers can expect to share in "prize money" from the sale of captured enemy ships and their cargoes. One reason piracy has thrived as it has is the large number of shades of gray involved.

Smuggling

Smuggling is rampant in the Caribbean. A primary reason is the practice of each colonial power of forbidding trade with other powers' colonies. Another is pirates, who can't simply sail into port with a captured ship and sell its cargo on the open market. Smuggling helps conceal the origin of such "difficult" cargoes, as

well as provide the only source of some necessary commodities.

As a way to make easy money, smuggling is in some ways preferable to piracy. It's generally not the Navy's top priority, and there is less violence and danger involved. Barriers to entry are also lower. All a smuggler needs to get into business is a ship large enough to carry worthwhile cargoes, but small enough to slip quickly ashore in shallow waters or up streams not navigable by larger ships.

Privateering

Nice work if you can get it, privateering is basically piracy made more or less legal. During wartime, governments will often issue "letters of marque and reprisal" to ship captains, authorizing them to prey on the enemy's merchant shipping. This provides additional naval power that costs nothing up front since privateers work on a "no prey, no pay" basis. It also disrupts the enemy's operations while freeing up warships to take on other warships instead of dealing with merchantmen. The enemy will generally consider this piracy, but there are usually a few controls in place. English privateers, for example, are expected to register captured prizes with the Admiralty court, with the government getting a share of the proceeds.

Of course, privateers are supposed to confine their attentions to the enemy's ships, which can be inconvenient. More than one attempt to send privateers after French, English, or Dutch shipping has backfired when the privateers realize Spanish ships offer better pickings. This typically leads to an embarrassing international incident. Whether the King listens politely to the Spanish ambassador's protests and sends him on his way, or appeases him by hanging the crew as pirates may well depend on how much loot they bring home and how generously they share it with the Crown.

Piracy

Taking merchant vessels for profit, dispensing with both the restrictions and protections of privateering, leaves you with outright piracy. Pirates can expect to be hanged in short order if caught, and so "turning pirate" essentially means turning your back on even the rudiments of Caribbean civilization and living a renegade life aboard ship or on various deserted islands and





pirate haunts.

In England at least, piracy falls under the jurisdiction of the Admiralty. Originally, captured pirates had to be returned to England for trial by the Admiralty courts. Recently however, the law has been amended to allow trial at Kingston, Jamaica (another sign that the glory days of Jamaican piracy are over). Convicted pirates are hanged on scaffolds set up on the beach below the high tide mark to emphasize the fact that piracy is a nautical crime punished under the jurisdiction of nautical authorities.

Of course, they have to catch you first...

The Pirating Life ("On the Account")

The typical pirate ship is a former merchant vessel that was either captured by pirates or seized by her crew during a mutiny, and a pirate is much more likely to have gotten his sea legs in the merchant service than in a navy. Nonetheless, in many ways, pirate ships function more like warships than merchants. One key difference is the size of the crew. A merchant ship is meant to turn a profit and each sailor not only has to be paid, but both he and the supplies he requires take up valuable cargo space. A typical 100-ton merchantman will have a crew of around a dozen. A pirate ship of the same size will typically have 80 or more, numbers more in line with a naval vessel.

There are very good reasons for this; one has to do with cannons. Merchant vessels are usually armed, but only lightly, with a handful of carriage-mounted guns and perhaps a couple smaller swivel

guns on the rails to discourage boarders.

Pirates are usually eager to add more guns to their ships. Guns and supplies can be taken from prizes, and cutting new gunports in the side is simple work for a skilled ship's carpenter.

However, a gun needs a crew of four to six men, so adding guns quickly multiplies the number of sailors required.

Perhaps the main reason for having a large crew, though, is that pirating ulti-

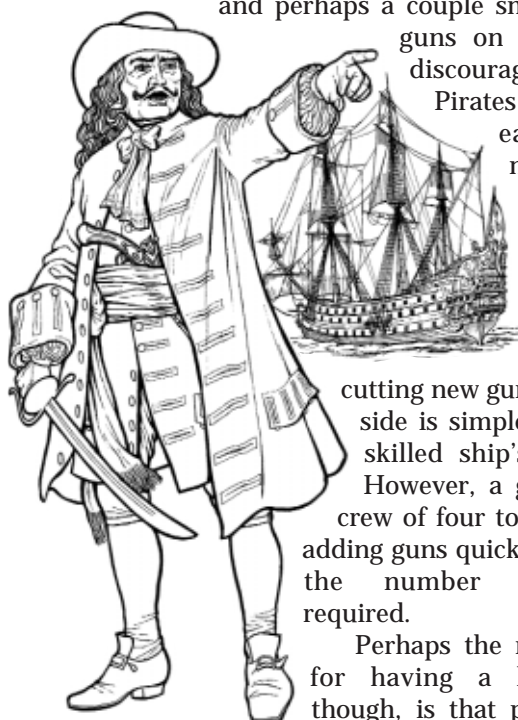
mately means boarding actions. Here, superior numbers probably decide the fight. Having plenty of pirates aboard makes it that much easier to overwhelm any resistance.

Though this is the main reason for a large crew, it also means that day to day life is actually relatively easy on a pirate ship, if only because there are so many hands around to take care of mundane tasks. Also, the captain doesn't drive his overworked crew to get from port to port as quickly as possible. Merchant captains are notorious for cruelty to their men and are widely despised - although they doubtless have their own side of the story to tell. Because of this, when pirates invite the crew of a captured vessel to join their company and turn pirate, it's not uncommon for several of them to take the offer. It may be an offer you can't refuse; pirates have been known to force crewmen to join them, especially those with valuable skills like surgeons or carpenters.

Once the new pirate has signed the articles each pirate crew drafts for themselves, they are considered part of the band. Pirate ships are seagoing laboratories of democracy. The captain is elected by the crew, and has absolute authority only in matters of battle or pursuit. Otherwise, he can be removed by the crew at any time and replaced. It's not unheard of for a deposed captain to resume his role as member of the crew and be chosen captain again as circumstances change. The captain is typically granted use of the ship's great cabin, but he'd best not consider it private property.

Another important figure aboard is the ship's quartermaster. In addition to handling supplies, the quartermaster resolves disputes among the crew, and acts as their representative and advocate to the captain. He typically leads boarding actions while the captain is occupied handling the ship, and is in charge of the prize and any booty taken from her.

The precise details of pirate society will vary from ship to ship, depending on the nature of the articles agreed to by her crew. These can get detailed at times. One ship takes along its own musicians to entertain the men, and the articles set a detailed schedule for their time off; however, most articles tend to be simple and to the point. They're intended to make sure everyone knows who gives the orders during a crisis, and to make sure the crew remains a cohesive community of men who trust each other instead of ending up at each others' throats to the detriment of all. For this reason, they often ban things like gambling for money. Some prohibit bringing a woman to sea - sailors are superstitious about this to begin with, plus it won't take long for the men to start fighting over her. On the other hand, there are quite a few female pirates, including some captains, so clearly exceptions are made for a





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woman who proves she can keep up with the men.

There may not be many rules in the average set of articles, but punishments for breaking them can be extreme. For the most part, the only punishments included in a ship's articles are execution and marooning, and these often amount to much the same thing. Marooning means kicking the offender off the ship, usually on some isolated scrap of land. Whether the marooned man is given any supplies or a gun to help him survive depends on the particular articles. Cheating one's fellow pirates out of treasure, for example, is a universally despised act, usually resulting in marooning.

Barring extreme cases like those, however, life can be fairly comfortable aboard, as long as you don't mind not seeing civilization for a while. Once you become known as a pirate, you have to avoid places where you might be arrested. Nearly everything you need has to be taken from captured vessels. A prize may be as important for its supplies and replacement parts as for any treasure it carries. Other supplies must be scavenged from the wild, meaning pirates make frequent stops to gather fresh water and perhaps hunt game to restock the galley.

Another major part of the pirate routine is careening the ship. This means finding some place with a suitable beach, grounding the ship, and heeling it over to the side so you can scrape the hull clean, replace rotten planks, etc. Particularly in warm, tropical waters, the hull will quickly accumulate seaweed, barnacles, and wood-boring parasites, which cause drag or structural damage and slow the ship down. Since speed is crucial, both for catching up with merchants and for outrunning warships, careening is important. It needs to be done every few months in the Caribbean, and it's something wise pirates don't put off. It does make you vulnerable, though. If trouble arises, a careened ship isn't good for much of anything. So pirates look for lonely, isolated places to hole up while careening their ships. These also make good places to stash treasure for an emergency.

Seizing and Plundering

As for the actual process of taking prizes, the sheer disparity in power between a well-equipped pirate and



a typical merchant ship, along with the fearsome reputation pirates encourage, often makes it a simple matter. Pirates usually just swoop down on their prey, flying the black flag and firing warning shots, and merchantmen very often surrender without a fight. The crew knows they're not only outgunned, but badly outnumbered. If running doesn't work, there's nothing to do but surrender and hope the pirates are in a good mood.

This doesn't always work, however. Some merchants, particularly Dutch West India Company ships, are more heavily armed and their crews more likely to offer resistance.

Sometimes you have to deal with navy patrols or other specialized situations. In these cases, there are some tricks of the trade and a good pirate captain always has a few up his sleeve.

Masquerading as a friendly, or at least harmless, ship is a favorite. Pirates often build a library of flags taken from different prizes and use them to lull potential prey into a false sense of security. One enterprising pirate captain made a fortune by anchoring off Martinique flying Dutch colors and giving the signals that would be given by a Dutch slaver fresh from the west African coast. By the time the islanders realized something was wrong, he'd taken no less than 14 French sloops that came out to him with plenty of money aboard to trade for slaves.

Another favorite trick for getting close to Spanish convoys is to conceal your speed by dragging things behind your ship. Ropes strung with barrels or pots will serve, as will mattresses or just about anything else you don't mind getting wet. The drag slows the ship, making it act more like a heavily loaded merchant. Then, once the enemy has underestimated you, you can cut the load free and surprise him with a sudden burst of speed.

However you do it, avoiding combat is generally a good idea. At best, you're reducing the value of your prize with every shot. At worst, you're risking your life for an unknown payoff; however, sometimes there's no choice but to fight. In these cases, the best advice is not to hold back. Once a pirate goes into combat, victory is the only outcome that doesn't end up in death, whether it be in Davy Jones' Locker, or at the end of a rope.





Chapter Six: Bloode Island Bestiary



What pirate tale would be complete without hair-raising accounts of man-eating sharks, poisonous snakes or ravenous crocodiles dwelling in the jungles, shallows and open seas? What follows is a folio of beasts common to *Bloode Island's* Caribbean. Although it is not a comprehensive, scholarly work, this collection will help GMs populate their adventures with terrors other than man. Note that animals are not saddled with the various stats and skills of player characters. Each is given four simple ratings: **Combat value** (COM), **Weapon Rating** (WR), **Shrug** and **Wounds**. In addition, an animal may have special abilities listed. Some animals have different COM values for land and water, the latter of which is listed in parentheses. Some animals' WR may have a bonus in parentheses, which is a damage bonus to every successful attack. Some animals may have a natural AV, which is listed in parentheses next to Shrug.

When attacking or defending against an animal, make a combat skill check as normal, against the creature's COM check. Damage is applied to the creature's Shrug, which functions like Shrug in humans. If damage is less than Shrug, no damage is done. If damage is equal to or greater than Shrug, 1 wound is taken. If damage is 2x Shrug, 2 wounds are taken. 3x Shrug, 3 wounds taken, etc. A wounded animal's ratings do not decline; once its Wounds are reduced to zero, it is dead.

GMs can use these stats as templates to make their own variant hazards.

Water Dwellers

Water is considered cover (-1 penalty to hit). Additionally, if a character is trying to fight a creature while in the water, he is at an additional -1 penalty.

Alligator/Crocodile

COM 6 (7 in water)

WR 4 (+4)

Shrug 5

Wounds 5

Special Abilities: Successful attack automatically entangles victim, who is dragged underwater. A successful Strength Feat skill check (or base STR check) vs. the animal's COM check is required to break free.

Barracuda

COM 8

WR 2 (+2)

Shrug 3

Wounds 2

Special Abilities: Can strike and fade, counts as both small and fast (-2 to hit).

Crab/Lobster

COM 5

WR 1 (+1)

Shrug 3

Wounds 2

Special Abilities: Pincers - successful attack does same damage each round until animal is removed or killed.



Dolphin/Porpoise

COM 8

WR 2 (+3)

Shrug 5

Wounds 4

Special Abilities: Natural sonar, intelligent, docile.

Eel

COM 7

WR 2 (+2)

Shrug 3

Wounds 3

Special Abilities: Hiding in reef dens provides a natural AV4 when attacked.

Fish (small)

COM 5

WR 1

Shrug 2

Wounds 1

Special Abilities: Smallest target (-2 to hit).



Fish (large)

COM 7

WR 1 (+3)

Shrug 3

Wounds 2

Special Abilities: Fast target (-1 to hit).





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Giant Oyster

COM 5

WR 3 (+4)

Shrug 6

Wounds 6

Special Abilities: Successful attack entangles target in heavy jaws. A successful Strength Feat skill check (or base STR check) vs. the animal's COM check is required to break free.

Jellyfish (large)

COM 6

WR 6

Shrug 4

Wounds 6

Special Abilities: Passive strike - drifts silently and waits for prey to swim into its tentacles. Powerful neurotoxin requires a successful Endurance check to avoid paralysis in addition to normal damage.

Octopus

COM 8

WR 1 (+4)

Shrug 3

Wounds 4

Special Abilities: Fast (-1 to hit, unless entangled). Successful attack entangles target. A successful Strength Feat skill check (or base STR check) vs. the animal's COM check is required to break free. Defensive ink cloud makes animal -4 to hit when escaping (-1 underwater, -1 fast, -2 ink).



Piranha (school)

COM 10

WR 2

Shrug N/A

Wounds N/A

Special Abilities: Piranha should be treated like an insect swarm, in that killing an individual will not affect the swarm as a whole. Only inhabit warm fresh waters like inland lakes and rivers.

Sea Turtle

COM 4 (7 in water)

WR 2 (+2)

Shrug 3 (+ AV3) = 6

Wounds 4

Special Abilities: Natural AV. Fast (-1 to hit in water). Damage comes from powerful bite.



Shark (small)

COM 9

WR 3 (+4)

Shrug 3 (+ AV2) = 5

Wounds 5

Special Abilities: Fast (-1 to hit). Attracted to unusual sound patterns and blood in the water. Feeding frenzy may bring 2D6x5 individuals.

Shark (large)

COM 10

WR 3 (+5)

Shrug 4 (+ AV2) = 6

Wounds 7

Special Abilities: Fast (-1 to hit). Attracted to unusual sound patterns and blood in the water. Feeding frenzy may bring 1D6x5 individuals.



Stingray

COM 7

WR 3 (+3)

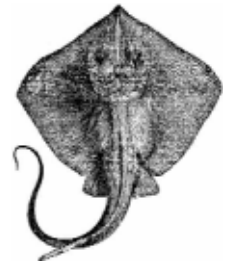
Shrug 3

Wounds 4

Special

Abilities:

Successful strike delivers poison barb to target (reflected in the +4 damage bonus). After successful strike, the target must make an Endurance check once every hour or downgrade 1 wound level, unless the barb and poison are neutralized or removed. Successful Lore, Wilderness Skills and Medicine checks and 1 hour required to create antidote.



Land Dwellers

Bat

COM 5

WR 1

Shrug 2

Wounds 2

Special Abilities: Flight, echolocation.

Jaguar/Panther

COM 7

WR 2 (+4)

Shrug 4

Wounds 5

Special Abilities: Stealthy (-2 penalty to human Awareness checks).





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Jungle Bird

COM 6
WR 1
Shrug 3
Wounds 2
Special Abilities: Flight.

Monkey

COM 8
WR 1 (+2)
Shrug 3
Wounds 4
Special Abilities: Intelligent, can be domesticated.



Parrot

COM 7
WR 2 (+1)
Shrug 3
Wounds 2
Special Abilities: Flight. Intelligent (can mimic human and animal sounds). Damage comes from powerful bite.

Seabird

COM 7
WR 1
Shrug 3
Wounds 2
Special Abilities: Flight. Swimming/diving.

Snake (constrictor)

COM 7
WR 2 (+3)
Shrug 3
Wounds 4
Special Abilities: Successful attack entangles target. Damage from first attack is applied each round until target is dead. A successful Strength Feat skill check (or base STR check) vs. the animal's COM check is required to break free.

Snake (poisonous)

COM 7
WR 1 (+5)
Shrug 3
Wounds 3
Special Abilities: Successful strike delivers venom to target (reflected in the +5 damage bonus). After successful strike, the target must make an Endurance check once every hour or downgrade 1 wound level, unless the poison is neutralized or removed. Successful Lore, Wilderness Skills and Medicine checks

and 1 hour required to create antidote.

Wild Cattle

COM 8
WR 2 (+5)
Shrug 4
Wounds 6
Special Abilities: Tough, tenacious. Damage comes from powerful kicks, trampling or goring.



Wild Goat

COM 6
WR 2 (+3)
Shrug 3
Wounds 4
Special Abilities: Agile, quick.

Wild Pig

COM 7
WR 2 (+4)
Shrug 3 (+ AV1) = 4
Wounds 5
Special Abilities:

Aggressive, tough.
Damage comes from bite or goring.



Legendary Creatures

El Diablo (giant octopus)

COM 11
WR 2 (+5)
Shrug 5
Wounds 7

Description: The creature known to many Spanish explorers as El Diablo resides in a lagoon cave, watching over a vast cache of gold and treasure. Since the lagoon is not accessible by ship, only small boats, diving bells or free diving have any chance of salvaging the hoard. With a tentacle-span of over 22 feet, El Diablo is known to attack small craft on the surface of the lagoon and pluck men from the shore to drag them below. Use standard octopus rules with the stats listed here.



El Draco Grande (giant anaconda)

COM 10
WR 2 (+4)
Shrug 4
Wounds 7





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Description: There is a legend among the natives and explorers of the inland Caribbean jungles of a giant anaconda the Spanish named El Draco Grande ("Great Dragon"). This 30-foot-long serpent lives in the trees and brackish waters of the lush, tropical jungle, using stealth and strength to ensnare its victims and crush them before devouring their bodies whole. El Draco Grande can guard the secret of an ancient temple or golden city, or can just be used to terrorize player characters. Use standard constrictor rules with the stats listed here.

Old Flathead (crocodile)

COM 7 (10 in water)

WR 4 (+6)

Shrug 6

Wounds 7

Description: He slides and twists through the coastal waters and steamy jungles of the Caribbean, terrorizing native villages and inland explorers. He bears the scars of a thousand attempts to either slay him or fend him off. His reported size tops 20 feet and 1.5 tons. Those few adventurous souls who have seen him and lived to tell the tale call him Old Flathead. He can guard coastal shipwrecks or lay in wait of prey in a small lagoon or saltwater inlet. Use standard Alligator/Crocodile rules with the stats listed here.



Although maritime lore is crammed with tales of mermaids and sea serpents, scientific discovery through the Baroque period put a great many of them to rest. The mysterious beasts most mariners encounter in *Bloode Island* are generally larger,

tougher and more intelligent versions of normal animals. Even so, sailors are a superstitious lot, and if a GM wishes, he can create original mythical creatures for player characters to encounter. Simply use the included animal listings as a template and go from there - be creative!

Other Pests

In addition, there are a variety of small, venomous creatures that, while they have no stats, have their own toxin rules. Whether such a creature attacks the player character is at the GM's discretion.

Fire Coral

Target must make Endurance check at -3 or take 1 wound level damage. If not removed, the coral will continue to grow, doing an additional wound level in damage per week (as well as negating the natural healing process).

Mosquito Swarm

Target must make Endurance check at -2 or take 1 wound level damage due to yellow fever. A successful Medicine check will treat the fever. If not attended, the victim must make another Endurance check at -2 or downgrade 1 wound level each day.

Scorpion

Target must make Endurance check at -2 or take 2 wound levels damage.

Tarantula

Target must make Endurance check at -2 or take 1 wound level damage.

Treefrog

Target must make Endurance check at -3 or take 2 wound levels damage.



Chapter Seven: A Pirate's Cove

Christopher Columbus' second voyage to the New World was a much greater undertaking than his first, with more than 70 ships fanning out across the Caribbean to explore and plant the Spanish flag. One of these ships, the *El Correo*, was lost in a storm off the Mexican coast. Three months later, two-dozen survivors from her crew reached Hispaniola in a cluster of small boats, and told of an epic journey of survival. Led by its sole remaining junior officer, a minor Spanish nobleman named Juan Romeo de Armas, the survivors took the ship's boats west after the sinking with what few supplies they could scavenge. Out of fresh water and at the brink of starvation, they made landfall on an island they named *Isla Sangre de Cristo* after de Armas' grateful exclamation on first seeing land. The survivors told of encountering friendly Taino

Indians, a subgroup of the Arawak. The Taino helped them hunt game to rebuild their strength and prepare to resume their voyage.

Although de Armas had only limited knowledge of navigation, he took several careful fixes and determined *Isla Sangre de Cristo* to be some four hundred miles due west of Jamaica, at the same latitude. When the men were ready, they left the island and headed due east, eventually reaching the safety of Hispaniola.

Admiral Columbus added *Isla Sangre de Cristo* to his charts, and headed home; however, de Armas's story was soon called into question. After Columbus failed to find the island on his third voyage, *Isla Sangre de Cristo* was marked as "doubtful" on Spanish charts. Figuring out one's latitude is a fairly simple matter with the right instruments, but fixing longitude





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is much trickier. Skilled navigators have sometimes placed newly discovered islands east or west of their true positions by 10 degrees or more. Given de Armas's limited experience, his claim that Isla Sangre de Cristo was at the same latitude as Jamaica, and the fact that he made no mention of having reached Jamaica on his way to

Hispaniola, the Spanish decided that he and his men had actually landed on Jamaica itself and simply miscalculated their longitude. This opinion grew more widespread when Columbus again failed to find Isla Sangre de Cristo on his fourth and final voyage, despite sailing precisely over its supposed location on his way to discovering the Cayman Islands.

For his part, de Armas insisted he had discovered another island among the Greater Antilles. He was deeply insulted by implications that he'd mistaken Jamaica for his new island, and became obsessed with proving he'd been right. He convinced the Crown to grant him Isla Sangre de Cristo if he could locate it and establish a Spanish presence there. Pouring his entire modest family fortune into his own expedition, he set out with two ships to reclaim the honor he felt had been taken from him. He never returned.

The Spanish ultimately expunged the island from their charts, despite occasional claims from other ships to have spotted land in the area. With the tragic story of de Armas, they saw Isla Sangre de Cristo as only a romantic, cursed legend of the New World.

They were wrong.

Many years later, English pirates were astonished to discover a large, uncharted island situated at a strategic position within quick striking distance of the Spanish Main and the primary sea lanes running between the Greater Antilles. It was an ideal base of operations for piracy. They realized that this must be the legendary Isla Sangre de Cristo. However, being English, they translated the name from the Spanish and, being pirates, they dropped the religious reference...naming it Bloode Island.

The truth is Juan Romeo de Armas wasn't a skilled navigator, but he wasn't nearly as bad as the Spanish assumed. And Columbus wasn't as good. De Armas did land on a real island, but it isn't quite where he thought it was, and Columbus wasn't quite where he thought he was when he proved that it didn't exist. Bloode Island lies at roughly 18 degrees north latitude, and 83 degrees west longitude. This puts it about 375 miles west of Jamaica, and slightly to its north. The



closest land is Grand Cayman Island, about 175 miles east, and slightly north. When Columbus discovered the Caymans on his final voyage, he approached from the south after passing over de Armas's reported position for Isla Sangre de Cristo. Thus, he was too far east to spot the actual island.

It has remained beyond the official attention of European colonial powers ever since. A few ships have seen the island, and rumors of a pirate haven circulate among the back alleys and taverns of the Caribbean. However, having proven that the island doesn't exist, authorities are loath to resurrect it. The occasional sighting is written off as navigational error, and rumors of the pirate island are considered merely sailors' tall tales. More recently, the pirates of Bloode Island have begun protecting their secret by capturing ships that occasionally stumble upon the island.

A Trip to the Pirate Haven

If your ship is one of those authorized to land at Bloode Island, it will approach from the southwest. Your sails will be spotted by lookouts and a heavily armed pirate vessel will soon intercept you. If you're a known friendly, you'll be welcomed home. Otherwise, you can be escorted in under guard to make your case, or you can put up a fight. The sound of cannon fire will quickly draw the rest of the pirate fleet, and your chances will be very poor indeed.

If you pass inspection and approach the island, you'll see the low mountains of the interior, swathed in deep green jungle. As you come closer, you'll see the lowlands, and the beaches of Crab Harbor, named for the pair of sandy outcrops that encircle the shallow harbor like outstretched claws. The harbor itself will be dotted with ships at anchor, and perhaps a few careened along the beach. There is no extensive network of docking facilities, although a few piers are under construction to make it easier to unload cargo. For the most part, ships simply anchor wherever they can find a spot and ferry passengers and goods back and forth by boat. Thus, the harbor is always an unnerving traffic jam of small boats darting every which way among the anchored ships. In any dispute between a rowboat or a single-masted skiff and a 100-ton pirate ship, though, the right of way is pretty clear. Boats will get out of your way as you approach, and those manned by entrepreneurs from the island will likely come alongside before you've reached anchor-





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age, looking to trade, sell you provisions, or offer ferrying services.

Beyond the cluster of ships and the swarm of boats lies the beach, and the town of Port Defiance. Despite a few halfhearted attempts to keep order, the beach is an explosion of color, noise, odd smells, and random debris. The town doesn't have nearly enough room to house its permanent residents, much less the transient crews of pirate ships enjoying some time in port between voyages. Thus, the vast majority of the population lives in tents scattered everywhere along the beach.

Beyond the edges of the tent city, the beach is also home to a bustling industrial zone. Fishermen run their boats up onto the beach, unload their cargoes, and repair nets and sails. Carpenters produce replacement parts for ships from the island's plentiful lumber. Meat is dried and smoked on wooden racks. Taino Indian craftsmen sell clothing and ornaments. The pirates bring in a steady stream of European trade goods captured from merchant ships. However, there's no telling what a prize's hold will offer up in advance, and you can't count on any particular item being available. Thus, the islanders must produce almost anything they want themselves, or do without. Practically every craft imaginable, with the local resources and skills drawn from three continents, is practiced somewhere on the cluttered beaches of Bloode Island.

It's entirely possible for a pirate to spend an entire layover on the island without ever going beyond the semi-organized riot of the beach. Those who do will reach the town of Port Defiance itself, a village in the European style, still mostly in the planning stages. A grid of streets has been laid out and marked off with

stakes and ropes, but only about four blocks in the dead center have actually been finished. Beyond this central core, only ramshackle wooden huts, or even tents, occupy most of the lots while more permanent construction is underway. Some lots have foundations laid out or are in the midst of building. This outer part of town always looks as though it's recovering from some terrible calamity. All greenery

has long since been trampled away from the streets and lots, and it gets horribly muddy when it rains. The entire place is encrusted with ladders, sun awnings made from old sails, and piles of building stone. Men mix mortar in the streets, clamber over improvised scaffolds, and haul rocks into the air with pulleys adapted from ships' rigging. If someone yells suddenly, it's wise to duck.

In the small part of town that has been completed, a cluster of two-story stone buildings serves as administrative center, commercial hub, and housing for a lucky few. Here you will find popular gathering places like the Skull and Cutlass tavern, run by retired pirate and friend to all, Colley Pearse. You may come across the island's chief fortifications designer, Giulio Rainaldi (black sheep of a famous family of Italian church architects), bemoaning the difficulty of getting pirates to do heavy construction work. In Port Defiance's largest building, jokingly referred to as the High Court of the Admiralty, you may even find "the Admiral" himself. This visionary founder of the pirate republic claims to be none other than the greatest pirate of them all, Sir Francis Drake.

At the dead center of the town is the central plaza, complete with a large fountain. The fountain's huge basin is the main water supply for the town, and is fed by a wooden aqueduct that runs between the buildings and snakes back into the jungle. Following it will eventually take you up into the rough, mountainous interior of Bloode Island. The interior is occupied by Taino Indians and Maroons (escaped African slaves), who have chosen to maintain their old way of life in the jungle rather than join the bustling European civilization on the coast.

Geography and History

Bloode Island is shaped like an elongated teardrop, some 25 miles from end to end and 11 miles wide at its widest point. The broadest portion is to the southwest, with a long tip gradually falling and narrowing away to reefs in the northeast. The northernmost portion of the island is mostly uninhabitable, with no fresh water and little usable topsoil. It consists primarily of sand dunes and grass. However, as the island widens, the land suddenly rises into steep, folded hills covered in lush jungle. The highest point on Bloode Island is only 600 feet above sea level, but the slopes are very steep and the jungle is very dense. Thus, the interior is a forbidding place, and it takes much longer than one might expect to penetrate to the central mountains.

The island offers very little in the way of decent anchorage. Crab Harbor is easily the best on the island, and even some of the larger pirate vessels have





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trouble with its shallow waters. Often, prizes will have to be guided in along the deepest channel in the center of the harbor or risk running aground. Larger ships also have to take up an outer position in the harbor and gain less of its protection. Thus, the island's pirates have developed a strong preference for faster, lighter ships.

The only other anchorage of any note is Cinnamon Cove, on the western coast. This is a tiny inlet suited only to small boats. A fishing village nearby, occupied mainly by Maroons and Indians, runs its boats out of Cinnamon Cove. The fishing fleet also provides a watch on the western and northern coasts to warn Port Defiance if someone should stumble across the island from that direction.

An Independent Haven

How did Bloode Island come to be an independent pirate haven in the middle of the Caribbean? Because the Spanish "misnamed" Isla Sangre de Cristo on their charts, it remained a last untouched bastion of Arawakan culture. The Indians heard about the Spanish from refugees fleeing other islands and knew to be wary of them. The coastal villagers who had rescued de Armas and his men gradually withdrew into the interior in case the Spanish came.

When Europeans arrived, it wasn't the Spanish but the Admiral and the crews of two pirate ships. Upon realizing he'd found an unknown island, the Admiral began laying the foundations for what would become the Republic of Bloode Island. The Indians hid in the jungle and nervously watched. The pirates faced a very different situation than the Spanish, however. The Admiral knew from reading de Armas that the Indians were there. He also knew he needed to conceal his base from the Spanish and other European colonial powers. That meant being as self-sufficient as possible and devoting all his resources to protecting the island from discovery. It wasn't the sort of thing he could do while also putting down the Indians the way the Spanish had done. His position was fragile enough that he needed the Indians' help or, at the very least, their consent to his presence.

The Admiral quickly sent a small diplomatic party



into the interior to contact and befriend the Taino. It helped that several of his men were escaped African slaves. A handful of Maroons had already made their way to Bloode Island and joined the Taino. The diplomatic party offered presents and trade goods and told the Indians they were also enemies of the Spanish. The Africans among the crew confirmed that these pirates didn't treat Africans the way the Taino had heard the Spanish did, which helped convince the Taino that the pirates might not treat them as the Spanish had either. It was particularly fortunate that one of the Admiral's closest advisors was Oba, an African mojo man with close ties to the spirit world. In much the same way

that African spirit religions fit into the plethora of Catholic saints to form Voodoo, the whole system also dovetailed nicely with the Arawakan hierarchy of spirits, called Zemis. Oba and the Taino mojo men talked shop and consulted the spirits, and a framework of mutual respect was worked out. Between the magic of the Africans and the Indians, and the guns and ships of the Europeans, it might be possible to build a new way of life that could survive in the face of Spanish colonialism. Both sets of spirits claimed the prospects were good.

Once this agreement was reached, the Admiral himself met with the Taino nobles and another deal was hammered out. By the time he left the island, the Admiral had what he needed, a vision that had gained the support of the natives and given him the allies he needed to survive with a minimal amount of outside support.

The Admiral then began spreading the word among trusted members of the pirate brotherhood. This was about the time things were starting to change in Jamaica. The early buccaneers weren't happy about the way things were shaping up there. The English were beginning to arrest pirates instead of relying on them for protection from the Spanish. But the quality of the pirates had changed as well. In the early days, the buccaneers had truly considered themselves "the brethren of the sea." Now, the prospect of easy riches was drawing a darker type of pirate, cutthroats and villains, the scum of Europe willing to do anything for





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money. Pirates couldn't even trust each other any more. There were stories of ships coming on other pirates in the midst of picking a prize and attacking her to claim her cargo for themselves. The golden age was winding down. Many of the Admiral's friends shared his dream of recreating the spirit of that time, and they needed a base. The Bloode Island fleet quickly grew.

And not all the new arrivals were pirates. The new world had long drawn visionaries who wanted to start afresh in a free land. Already that dream was starting to look elusive in a new world increasingly owned by the same powers that owned the old one. It was never easy to find your way to Bloode Island. It had to be hard enough that the authorities would dismiss the stories as idle tales told by drunken sailors between reports of mermaid sightings. Nonetheless, other citizens trickled into Bloode Island who had no interest in actual piracy. They built much of the land-based facilities and provided needed support like crafts and food.

Today, Bloode Island is still struggling, but seems to be winning its fight. Mostly Europeans and Africans occupy the town of Port Defiance. A few Indians have moved into the town or onto the beach and taken up the ways of the pirates, but most still live inland in traditional villages, as do some Maroons. All these are considered full citizens of the island republic. They hunt and farm, and trade food with the town for various finished goods, including European trade goods brought in by the pirates.

Political Organization

According to the Admiral, and the Articles of Port Defiance, the island is an independent nation, the Republic of Bloode Island. The Articles of Port Defiance, signed by all who wish to join the community as settlers or as members of a pirate crew, are modeled after the articles commonly used by individual ships. As such, the form of government they define is as close to outright anarchy as is practicable. "Admiral" is the title given to the leader of the Republic. At the moment this is Drake, "the Admiral." He heads a Council of Captains composed of all ship captains among the pirate fleet. Anyone who commands a pirate ship becomes a member of the Council.



This is a very fluid group since most ships' articles allow their crews to choose a new captain at will. In theory, the captains could similarly replace the Admiral with any of their number by a majority vote; however, no one can imagine actually doing this. The Admiral is a legend among the islanders, looked on with almost religious awe. Furthermore, the pirates seem perfectly happy to let him deal with the mundane issues of governance, supply, and protection since this leaves them free to pursue rich prizes. There is also a "Council of Quartermasters," who represent the island's residents, including the Maroon and Indian villages of the Interior.

For the most part, the Articles of Port Defiance are a typical set of ship's articles scaled up to a much larger organization. They include a ban on making attacks on other members of the island community or seizing a properly captured prize. They ban the occasional practice of forcing captured sailors to join your crew on the grounds that it's a bad idea to bring someone to Bloode Island who will escape at the first opportunity and tell authorities about the island. They also provide shares of booty to the Admiral, essentially a simple tax code, in exchange for the benefits of Bloode Island.

However, the Articles have had to be amended from time to time to deal with issues that would never crop up aboard ship. The biggest change has been a prohibition on any other agreement that gives anyone control over someone else. The Admiral had never imagined that pirates would put up with things like indentured servitude, and indeed they won't. However, the section was added to the Articles to prevent captains from turning prizes into additional votes in the Council. Some captains had begun giving captured ships to trusted followers, essentially elevating them to the Council of Captains, on the condition that they vote with their patron. This threatened to turn the Council into a battleground for competing power blocs, and the Articles were quickly amended to put a stop to it. The episode was a sobering one for the Admiral, a disquieting reminder that his people are pirates first and nation-builders last. Any structure he tries to create, they'll start to tear down. It doesn't bode well for the long-term future of the Republic.





Chapter Eight: Bloode Island Notables



Much like the history it is predicated on, *Bloode Island XPG* is filled with interesting people, from the so-called leaders of Port Defiance, to religious figures and unscrupulous pirate kings. Along with personal histories, the NPCs featured in this chapter contain detailed statistics.

Admiral Sir Francis Drake

Perhaps no other person among the colorful population of Bloode Island carries as much mystery as its leader. The pirates who enjoy the advantages of the pirate haven he created immensely respect him. But can he really be the Sir Francis Drake? The Drake who defeated the Spanish Armada, and who became the first captain to complete a circumnavigation of the globe? (Magellan's ships did it earlier, but Magellan himself died halfway through the journey). The Drake who stunned the Spanish by capturing and sacking the treasure port of Nombre de Dios and, when he found it mostly empty, crossed the Isthmus of Panama to raid a mule train full of Peruvian silver?

Drake's legend was enormous, but he supposedly died of fever during another expedition against Spanish Panama and was buried at sea. Even if this is not true, he would now be unbelievably ancient. The Admiral's age is uncertain, but old. Bloode Island hands swear he's the same man who was at the founding of Port Defiance. The Admiral claims he faked his death upon discovering Bloode Island, in order to drop out of sight. Publicly, the story is accepted out of respect for him, but a number of theories circulate behind the scenes.

The most common is that the Admiral is an impostor who simply appropriated Drake's name and legend. Others have suggested that he is a descendant of the original, and note that at least one of the historical Drake descendants was named Francis. However, it has been observed that the Admiral seems very knowledgeable about things few men should know, like the islands of the South Pacific. He looks like portraits of Drake and shares "El Draque's" famous chivalry, as well as his dislike for both the Catholic clergy and the Spanish. Some whisper that he really is Drake, and has managed to prolong his life long after it should have ended. They speculate that he has made a deal with the Loas, noting that the mojo man, Oba, is never far from the Admiral's side. Others believe that on one of his famous raids against the Spanish, he seized secret logs of Ponce de Leon's journeys and located the fabled fountain of youth. No one mentions



these dark musings around the Admiral, and he has not seen fit to volunteer information about his personal life.

Physical Description

Drake is a tall, slender man of uncertain age. He walks with a cane, but has been observed moving nimbly without it on some occasions. His long beard is salt and pepper gray, and he cuts his hair so short he appears nearly bald. The Admiral typically wears high boots and clothes meant to suggest a military uniform, although he wears no decorations or rank insignia. He carries a cutlass and pistol.

Drake will often be encountered in the streets of Port Defiance or on the beach. He makes a habit of interviewing sailors returned from cruises to maintain his knowledge of affairs off the island. He also seems to simply enjoy hearing their stories of adventures he can no longer participate in himself.

The Admiral's Vision

Most of Bloode Island's pirates live for the next prize, but the man who provided them with a safe base of operations has much more in mind than simple piracy. Whoever he truly is, Drake saw the early days





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of the buccaneers as they defended the English colony on Jamaica from the Spanish. Jamaica was a place where Europeans had violently swept away age-old traditions and left a blank slate. Common pirates came together there alongside farmers, craftsmen, and administrators. For a brief time they all worked together to build something in the new world, free of Europe's historical baggage. But that first golden age was brief indeed. Soon, the old world came to Jamaica, bringing with it all the things Drake and others like him had tried to leave behind: kings and privileged aristocracies, laws to protect the powerful, grinding poverty, ignorance, and vicious cruelty. Drake saw an opportunity fading as the new world was turned into just more of the old.

When he discovered lost Isla Sangre de Cristo, he found a chance to try again. Before the powers of the old world could finish drawing their faces on the blank slate of the new world, he would draw something bolder, something better. The Admiral swore to make a place that rewarded courage and daring, a place that would attract the kind of people who would share his vision

and bring the ability to build on it.

Drake knows Bloode Island can't remain hidden forever. By the time it is discovered, he hopes his new Republic will be strong enough to withstand the rage of the colonial powers. The pirate fleet is a good defense in the short term, but the Admiral knows he can't build a nation on a foundation of nothing but piracy. He has encouraged other immigrants, particularly those with skills like engineering, that can help him build the island's infrastructure. But it's been difficult to spread word of Bloode Island beyond the pirate grapevine without alerting authorities. So far, Bloode Island remains primarily a nest of pirates. While most of the islanders enjoy their pirate's paradise, Drake and a handful of companions face the greater challenge of taking Bloode Island beyond piracy to build a civilization that can endure once the new world is no longer a wild frontier. It's a daunting task, but it offers the ultimate prize for a man who claims the mantle of the greatest pirate the world has ever known. Admiral Sir Francis Drake has set his eye on hijacking the very future of the new world.

AGL 3

Dodge 2
Fencing 4
Seamanship 4

DEX 3

Firearms 3
Performance 2
(*Public Speaking 4*)

PER 4

Awareness 5
Bargain 4
Command 6
Social 4

STR 3

Endurance 4

INT 4

Bureaucracy 4
Education 3
Nautical Sciences 6

WIL 3

Cool 5
Resist 4

INIT 7

SAVE 6

SHRUG 8

Personality: Courage,
Direction Sense, Insight,
Impulsiveness

Oba, the Mojo Man

Oba is Drake's right hand, and just as mysterious a figure. Like the Admiral, his age is difficult to determine, and he operates within a shroud of mystery. It's unclear whether Oba is actually his name (the word means "king" in Yoruba). He doesn't claim any political authority, but does claim a close relationship with the spirits. Oba claims he was never enslaved as were other Africans brought to the Caribbean. He says the loas told him to leave behind the land and people he knew and speak of them no more. Only the loas themselves would come with him. They told him to go west until he reached the ocean, where a ship would be waiting to take him to his destination.

The ship was indeed there when he arrived at the coast. The trip was not an easy one, but the loas had told him he would be tested. When Oba arrived in the Caribbean, the slave ship was raided by pirates and its

human cargo taken off. Oba then passed from ship to ship among the pirates for some time, learning their languages and their ways. When he met Drake, Oba recognized a man who bore the mark of greatness, and Drake saw the same qualities in him. The two have been together since then. Oba's role is in effect Merlin to Drake's Arthur, although no one knows if he has ever been introduced to the English epic.

Oba provides advice and the protection and assistance of the loas, calms Drake's occasional outbursts of temper and provides wisdom when Drake needs it. His reputation actually does a great deal to cement Drake's power - very few of the superstitious seamen who populate Bloode Island would ever dare to cross a man with Oba's great supernatural power. Whether this power is real or imagined, it is a large part of the community's foundation.

Like Drake, Oba can often be found walking the





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streets or the beach on some unknowable task. It is not at all uncommon for him to buttonhole some sailor, after a long search for just the right man, and demand some inexplicable favor on behalf of the loas. The loas always repay these favors, and sometimes provide necessary tools. What they don't do is explain why in the world they want this particular thing done, and why it matters who does it. In short, Oba can be very frustrating to deal with, but no one doubts that he understands exactly what he's doing, or that it is every bit as important as he says it is.

Physical Description

Oba is an African man of indeterminate age, although he appears to be well into his later years.

AGL 3

Dodge 4
Melee Weapon 4

DEX 3

PER 4

Awareness 6
Bargain 4
Empathy 4

STR 2

Endurance 4

INT 3

Education 2
Language (English) 3
Lore 6
Medicine 4

WIL 5

Cool 5
Mojo 5
Resist 5

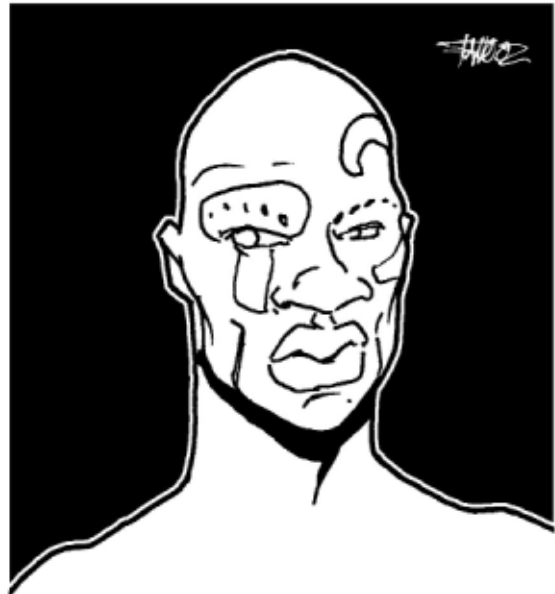
INIT 6

SAVE 5

SHRUG 9

Personality: Direction
Sense, Insight, Luck,
Rational

Spells: Fair Winds, Scrying,
Spirit Shield, Lift Curse,
Leader's Voice



He is of a slender build, has no visible hair, even eyebrows, and bears a variety of cryptic tattoos. He wears several charms on leather thongs around his neck and on phylacteries bound to his arms. Oba can be seen carrying a gnarled wooden staff with a cluster of green sprigs growing from it. He is also frequently seen speaking to "invisible" loas.

Giulio Rainaldi

For generations the Rainaldi family of northern Italy has devoted themselves to the mysteries of architecture and construction for the greater glory of God. As the Chief Architects of Popes, they have designed and built chapels, vaults, and cathedrals across Europe. The Rainaldi name has been associated with the most glorious sacred architecture for more than a century. That is until now.

Young Giulio Rainaldi was steeped in the family's architectural tradition, but where the rest of the family focused on the religious, Giulio was obsessed with the martial. Where his forefathers designed churches, he designed fortifications. By itself, this was perhaps disappointing to his family, but acceptable. Good military architects are in

AGL 3

Dodge 2
Fencing 2
Ride 3

DEX 2

Firearms 3

PER 4

Awareness 3
Con 5
Empathy 4
Seduction 5

STR 3

Carousing 3
Endurance 3

INT 5

Bureaucracy 4
Cultural Sciences 4

Education 3

Military Sciences 2
Theoretical Sciences 5

WIL 3

Cool 3
Resist 3

INIT 7

SAVE 6

SHRUG 6

Personality: Wealth,
Compulsion (women),
Enemy 2 (various slight-
ed patrons)





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demand and paid very well indeed. What ruined Giulio's hopes of carrying on the family name was his horrible temper and insufferable arrogance, as well as his talent for getting into outrageous trouble. His youth and adolescence were difficult enough. At age 9, Giulio was denounced as the child of the devil in a sermon by the Bishop of Cremona, never a good thing for a family so closely tied to the patronage of the Church. After he was expelled from the University of Padua because of a scandal involving both daughters of the dean of mathematics, Giulio's long-suffering father disowned him. He then undertook a brief career as an itinerant fortifications architect, but found himself ill-suited to the niceties of court life. He developed a habit of fleeing European capitals, unpaid, with his former patrons intent on jailing him.

Giulio eventually ended up in Martinique, designing harbor fortifications. Between his familiarity with the lower orders of society and a need to get off the island in a hurry, he fled Martinique on a pirate ship and ended up on Bloode Island. Here he finally found his niche. He attached himself to Drake and began designing both fortifications to protect Crab Harbor and the town of Port Defiance itself. Among the pirates of Bloode Island, Giulio's behavior seems a lit-

tle less extreme, and he has finally found a place where he fits in. The biggest challenge he faces now is getting the materials and manpower to actually complete his complicated designs. The Port Defiance drawn up in Rainaldi's plans would be perhaps the best defended town in the Caribbean. On the other hand, if they wanted to spend their time doing hard labor, Bloode Island's pirates could have stayed in Europe. The fact that everyone agrees Rainaldi is the single most blustering, foulmouthed, and blasphemous man on the island doesn't help. Unlike European courtiers, the pirates actually appreciate Giulio's eccentric personality. But that doesn't mean they want him screaming at them while they haul heavy stones around in the tropical sun.

Physical Description

Giulio Rainaldi is usually heard before he is seen, swearing loudly in a pastiche of European languages. He is a short, wiry man in his early 30s, with curly black hair and a prominent scar on one cheek (from a duel with a mistress' husband). Giulio wears expensive breeches and light cotton shirts. He is a handsome man, though he tends to look a bit rumpled in the island's heat.

Colly Pearse

Colly Pearse was a pirate who sailed with a crew out of Tortuga for several years until he lost a leg to a Spanish broadside. It's typical practice among navies to make cooks of disabled seamen, since this is one shipboard duty they can still handle. The tradition holds true among pirates as well, and Colly became his ship's cook. He turned out to be a natural. Colly soon retired from the sea, and started what has become the most popular inn and tavern on Bloode Island. Under the sign of the Skull and Cutlass, Colly serves up the best food on the island and offers the widest selection of imported liquor, as well as locally brewed hooch. The Skull and Cutlass is the only stone tavern yet built in Port Defiance. There are plenty of open air "barrel bars" on the beach, but if you want to live high after a successful cruise, the Skull and Cutlass is the place to go.

The Skull and Cutlass is also astonishingly lucrative. There's no gambling in the main room because the good furniture is

there and Colly doesn't want any fights. In the back, it's a different story. Along with the usual friendly pickup card games, Colly has a long-running dice game, along with a rotating set of card games run by local gamblers who give the house a cut. Between the gambling and the food and drink tabs, an enormous amount of money flows into the bar's coffers. If you're

AGL 3

Melee Weapon 2
(*Cutlass 4*)
Seamanship 4

DEX 3

Firearms 4

PER 4

Awareness 3
Bargain 4
Empathy 3
Social 2
(*Streetwise 4*)

STR 3

Carousing 3
Endurance 3

INT 3

Domestic Arts 4
(*Cooking 6*)
Gambling 3
Lore 4

WIL 4

Cool 3
Resist 2

INIT 7

SAVE 7

SHRUG 5

Personality: Age, Wealth,
Compulsion (dice
games)





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a member of a pirate crew with plans to sail, your credit is good with Colly. The island's pirates adore him even though he ends up owning shares in prizes they haven't even taken yet. This is actually how Colly keeps the bar supplied with the best selection of imported alcohol in the Caribbean. Usually, anything alcoholic aboard a prize would be the first thing to go, but the pirates know Colly has a standing policy of paying double the value of liquor against your tab, so a surprising proportion of captured alcohol makes it back to the Skull and Cutlass.

Colly runs the bar with the help of his wife Meg and a small staff, and has been phenomenally success-

ful. Indeed, since his bar is now the place where anybody who is anybody on Bloode Island goes to drink and get together, Colly has found himself elevated to the island's unofficial power structure. He knows everything that's happening on Bloode Island, who's planning what, and where all the treasure is buried. If you're planning something, he's a valuable resource. Of course, then he'll know what you're up to.

Physical Description

Colly Pearse is a tubby, red-haired old pirate with a peg leg and collection of tattoos. He is in his 40s, and stumps around his tavern with a stained apron over his shirt and breeches.

Captain Adam Sussex

Adam Sussex is a man absorbed by a quest. A former merchant captain, Sussex commanded a frigate owned by a London company transporting slaves between Africa and the Caribbean. The cruelty of the slave trade affected Sussex deeply. He stole his own ship, renaming it the *Liberator*, leading most of his crew into piracy. He preys solely on slavers, showing no mercy to their crews. He often ranges well out into the Atlantic to intercept slave ships and return their prisoners to Africa. He has also been known to raid outlying plantations in the Lesser Antilles to free slaves. Many of the people he frees end up on Bloode Island, while some have joined him in his quest.

His crew is almost entirely composed of former slaves now, as other pirates have come to realize that there isn't much money to be made in simply freeing slaves. His crew gradually filtered away to join other ships, leaving Sussex with

AGL 3

Brawling 3
Dodge 3
Fencing 3
Seamanship 4

DEX 3

Firearms 2

PER 3

Awareness 2
Command 5

STR 4

INT 4

Education 3
Nautical Sciences 5
Theoretical Sciences 3

WIL 3

Cool 3
Intimidation 4
Resist 2

INIT 6

SAVE 7

SHRUG 3

Personality: Compulsion (attacks any slavers), Impulsive, Moral Restriction (never own slaves)

only those men who shared his obsession with destroying slavery wherever it exists. Most of Bloode Island's pirates admire his single-minded dedication, but aren't willing to sacrifice all of their lives and hopes even for a noble cause. The other Captains manage to keep Sussex supplied with the provisions and replacement parts he needs to keep the *Liberator* in action; Sussex surely couldn't afford to do so without their help. And so he carries on his quixotic mission, both admired and pitied by the pirates around him.

Physical Description

Sussex is now in his middle 40s, a lean man with thinning, stringy gray hair and a burning stare. His skin is tanned as leather and stretched tightly over his bones, as if the fire in his soul is burning away his body. It's easy to understand why many of the Maroons say he is being ridden by a loa who uses him to change the world.





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Captain Black Jack MacReady

Commander of the 28-gun schooner *Stiletto*, Black Jack MacReady is one of the island's more notorious pirates, and a man not to be trifled with. A huge, fearsome Scotsman with a taste for liquor, MacReady has a well-earned reputation for ruthlessness and cruelty. MacReady has carefully cultivated this reputation to intimidate victims. Those who promptly and completely cooperate with MacReady are released unharmed, unless they do something else to irritate him, or just catch him in a bad mood. However MacReady brutally tortures those who don't immediately surrender, or who try to conceal valuables aboard ship.

MacReady argues that this makes all pirates safer. Clearly, the terror pirates like MacReady spread discourages merchantmen from resisting. However, other pirates point out that MacReady's atrocities outrage the public and lead to more pirate hunting and ultimately to more pirates being hung. The Admiral agrees with this latter group, but knows better than to try and force the issue on something so divisive among his people.

For his part, MacReady stays within the letter of the Articles of Port Defiance, but isn't above sabotag-

AGL 3

Dodge 4
Melee Weapon 4
Seamanship 4

DEX 3

Firearms 2

PER 3

Command 5
Con 4

STR 4

Carousing 5
Endurance 4

INT 4

Lore 4
Nautical Sciences 4

WIL 3

Cool 3
Intimidation 5
Resist 3

INIT 6

SAVE 8

SHRUG 4

Personality: Bloodlust,
Toughness 1, Enemy
(too many to mention)

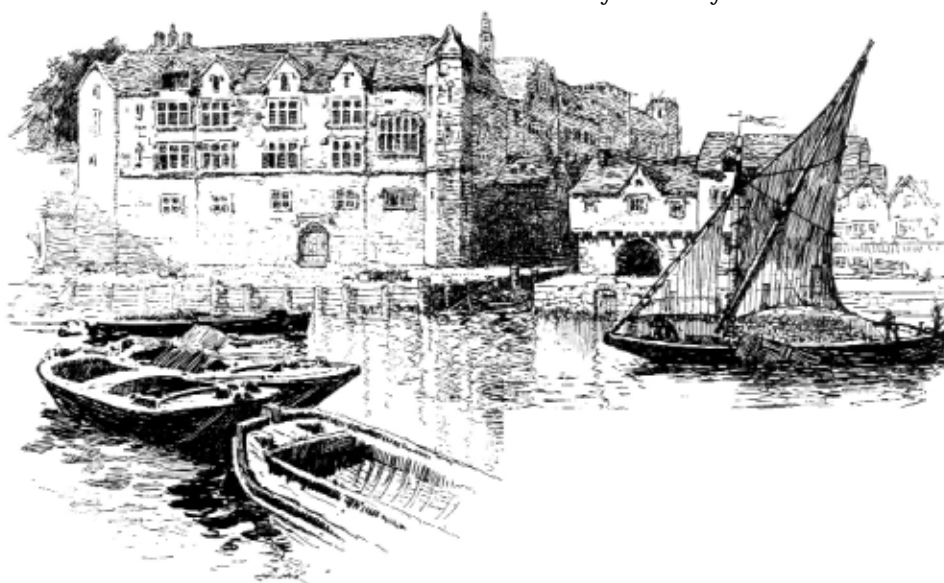


ing other captains to his own advantage. He is suspected of spreading disinformation to misdirect other captains away from valuable Spanish treasure ships, for example. Nevertheless, MacReady is one of the most successful captains on Bloode Island and owns one of the few completed stone mansions in the center of Port Defiance. He never has any difficulty attracting pirates to crew the *Stiletto* and follow his orders.

Physical Description

Black Jack MacReady is a tall, muscular man with long black hair and a carefully tended beard. He wears a red captain's coat with gold

buttons and epaulets. He is always armed to the teeth, with at least two blades, and usually a brace of pistols. A group of three or four huge, intimidating "bosuns" is never very far away.





Chapter Nine: NPC Stats



Listed below are several NPCs complete with Stats. GMs may use these generic NPCs as campaign filler, while players are free to use them as templates when designing their own characters for a Bloode Island campaign. All NPCs listed below are beginning level characters who have been built around 20 character points with the 30 point skill limit. For more "high-powered" NPCs, GMs are encouraged to increase skill packages by adding an additional 10-20 more points.

Barkeep/Inkeeper

AGL 3

Dodge 2
Melee Weapon 2
(Club 4)

DEX 3

PER 3

Awareness 3
Bargain 3
Social 2
(Streetwise 4)

STR 4

Carousing 4

INT 4

Domestic Arts 4
(Cook 6)

WIL 3

Cool 3
Resist 4

INIT 3

SAVE 7

SHRUG 4

Bokor

AGL 3

Dodge 3

DEX 3

PER 4

Awareness 4
Empathy 4

STR 3

INT 4

Lore 5
Medicine 4

WIL 4

Cool 2
Resist 3
Mojo 5

INIT 4

SAVE 7

SHRUG 4

Spells: Evil Eye, Lift
Curse, Zombie
Curse, Spirit
Shield

Personality:

Direction Sense,
Superstitious



City Official

AGL 3

Melee weapon 2

DEX 3

PER 4

Awareness 3
Empathy 3
Social 3

(Politics 5)

STR 3

INT 4

Bureaucracy 4
Cultural Sciences 3
Education 2
Law 4

WIL 3

Cool 2
Resist 3

INIT 4

SAVE 6

SHRUG 3

Law Officer

AGL 4

Dodge 3
Brawling 2
Melee Weapon 3

DEX 3

Firearms 3
(Flintlock 5)

PER 4

Awareness 3
Interrogation 4

STR 3

INT 3

Education 2
Law 3

WIL 3

Cool 3
Resist 4

INIT 4

SAVE 6

SHRUG 3

Personality:

Courage, Moral
Restriction
(uphold the law to
any extreme)





Bloode Island



Marine

AGL 4

Dodge 3
Melee Weapon 3
Seamanship 3

DEX 4

Firearms 3

PER 3

Awareness 3

STR 4

Endurance 2
Swimming 3

INT 2

Gunnery 3

Nautical Sciences 2

WIL 3

Cool 2
Resist 3

INIT 4

SAVE 7

SHRUG 4

Merchant

AGL 3

Dodge 2
Melee Weapon 2
Seamanship 3

DEX 3

Craft 3

PER 4

Awareness 2
Bargain 4
Con 2

STR 2

INT 4

Bureaucracy 3
(Trade 5)
Education 3

WIL 4

Cool 3
Resist 2

INIT 4

SAVE 6

SHRUG 3

Personality: Wealth,
Enemy (pirates)

Native

AGL 3

Dodge 2
Melee Weapon 3

DEX 3

PER 3

Awareness 4

STR 4

Swimming 4
Climb 4

INT 4

Lore 4
Medicine 2
Wilderness Skills 3

WIL 3

Cool 2
Resist 2

INIT 3

SAVE 7

SHRUG 4

Personality:

Direction Sense,
Superstitious



Noble

AGL 4

Dodge 3
Fencing 4
Ride 3

DEX 3

Play Instrument 2
(Plucked Strings 4)

PER 4

Awareness 3
Command 2
Social 3
(Court 5)

STR 3

INT 4

Bureaucracy 2

(Court 4)

Cultural Sciences 3
Education 2
Theoretical Sciences 2

WIL 2

Cool 2
Resist 2

INIT 4

SAVE 5

SHRUG 3

Personality: Addiction
(tobacco),
Compulsion (live
extravagant life), Pet
Peeve (bothered by
the lower class)

Pirate

AGL 4

Dodge 2
Brawling 2
Melee Weapon 2
(Cutlass 4)
Seamanship 3

DEX 4

Firearms 3

PER 3

Awareness 2

Gambling 3

STR 3

Carousing 2
Strength Feat 2

INT 3

Gunnery 3
Lore 2

WIL 3

Cool 3
Resist 2

Intimidation 2

INIT 4

SAVE 6

SHRUG 3

Personality: Bloodlust,
Impulsiveness





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Scientist/Inventor

AGL 3

Dodge 2

DEX 3

Repair 3

PER 4

Awareness 4

STR 2

INT 5

Cultural Sciences 4

Education 4

Natural Sciences 4

Theoretical

Sciences 4

WIL 3

Cool 3

Resist 2

INIT 4

SAVE 5

SHRUG 3

Personality: Insight,
Rational,
Fidgeting, Coward
(3)

Thief

AGL 3

Brawling 2

Dodge 3

Melee Weapon 2

DEX 4

Slight of Hand 3

Thievery 4

PER 4

Awareness 3

Con 3

Social 2

(Streetwise 4)

STR 3

INT 3

Disguise 3

WIL 3

Cool 2

Resist 3

INIT 4

SAVE 6

SHRUG 3

Personality: Enemy
(law officials),
Cynicism

Wench

AGL 4

Dodge 3

Melee Weapon 2

(Frying Pan 4)

DEX 3

PER 4

Awareness 4

Bargain 3

Seduction 2

STR 3

INT 3

Domestic Arts 5

Medicine 2

Lore 2

WIL 3

Cool 3

Resist 3

INIT 4

SAVE 6

SHRUG 3

Ship's Articles of the Buccaneer Felice, Miles Folke-Greville her Captain

I. Every member of the ship's company shall be granted an equal vote in affairs of the moment and decisions regarding her disposition. Only in matters of battle shall the Captain have authority to compel action.

II. Every member of the company shall have equal title to the ship's provisions, which he may enjoy at his pleasure unless scarcity makes it necessary, for the good of all, to vote a system of rationing.

III. Every member of the company shall be called fairly in turn aboard prizes to receive a fair division of booty. Each man shall receive one equal share, the quartermaster to determine extent of such shares from among that taken. Except the Captain and quartermaster to receive two shares; the master, boatswain and gunner one and one half shares; and other officers one and one quarter shares.

IV. If any man defraud the ship's company to the value of one pound in money, jewels or metal plate, he shall be removed from all benefit of the company and marooned where he is sure to encounter hardship. Such marooned man may take ashore no more than one bottle of water, his blade, and a gun with one half-dozen bullets and such powder as be neces-

sary to fire them. All else of his property to be delivered unto the ship's company to recompense their loss.

V. No person to game at cards or dice for money among their fellows or aboard the ship, lest this create quarrel and division among members of the company.

VI. Should members of the company come to quarrel and will not be resolved, none to strike another aboard ship, but such matters to be resolved ashore with sword or pistol at the pleasure of the quartermaster.

VII. Each member shall keep his own pistols and cutlass clean and well fit for service.

VIII. Should any man desert the ship or his quarters in battle, he shall be punished by death or marooning at the discretion of the Captain.

IX. No member of the company shall speak of breaking up their way of living until each has shared to the extent of one thousand pounds. Thereafter, if any member should lose a limb or become crippled in the company's service, he shall have eight hundred pounds out of the public stock, and for lesser hurts proportionately.





Chapter Ten: In Davy Jones' Locker



In which modern science shows the way to lost riches for brave men willing to cast off foolish superstition. But even without superstition, very real dangers still lurk beneath the waves, and in the greedy hearts of evil men.

In Media Res

The players are crewmembers aboard the pirate ship *Audacity*, operating out of Bloode Island. After a lengthy chase, the *Audacity* has run down a French merchant, the *St. Lucie*. The ship is unarmed, but hasn't surrendered despite several warning volleys, and the pirates have boarded her. To their surprise, they find the *St. Lucie* defended by a squad of a dozen French marines. The terrified crew isn't putting up a fight, but the marines have resolved to sell their lives dearly.

As the action opens, the marines have driven the first wave of boarders back with a surprise volley of musket fire. The party is in the second wave, and is immediately dropped into close quarters combat. The boarding is taking place amidships on the starboard side, and the marines are falling back to make their stand on the quarterdeck.

The marines are outnumbered and have already fired their guns, so they shouldn't be too much of a threat. They won't surrender though, since they expect no mercy from pirates. This scene is intended as a quick systems introduction, so don't let it drag. Let the players wade into the melee, try out the rules, and take out a few marines in the process. Describe their crewmates doing the same. Before this gets too familiar, the pirates overwhelm their opponents and the fight ends with the last couple of wounded marines captured.

One Man's Trash

Once the *St. Lucie* is subdued, the marines prove to have come from her French naval escort—the two ships were separated during a storm last night. The *St. Lucie* is not a merchant ship, but a research vessel funded by an eccentric French nobleman. She is supposedly here to search for traces of the sunken civilization of Atlantis.

That would explain the bitterly disappointing shortage of valuables aboard. Perhaps it also explains

the odd construction on the ship's fo'c'sle, presently being defended from a group of amused pirates by an elderly Frenchman. It's a wooden structure, a sort of six-sided cone with the top cut off and twice as tall as a man and nearly as wide. It's surrounded by an assortment of cables, chains, barrels, and lead weights. A crane stands ready to lift it.

Once the party calls off their crewmates, the old man will introduce himself as Charles Maupin, an inventor from Paris, and explain that the structure is his latest work, a diving bell. With it, he insists, men can go below the surface of the sea and remain there, without even getting wet, for an hour or more. Upset that the *St. Lucie* has no treasure to loot, the pirates want to dump the thing over the side and be done with it, but Maupin, desperate to save his invention, insists it's valuable. With it, they could salvage wrecked ships for their cannons, their gold and silver. There are great hordes of sunken treasure to be recovered.

The pirates don't like this idea at all. There are dark grumblings about angering the spirits with the unnatural bell, and the sea not giving up its wealth. Hopefully, the party is less superstitious and will take poor Maupin's side. The Captain also doesn't want to go into the salvage business, if only because he sees how jumpy the whole idea makes the men. But, if the players want to take the bell and equipment as their share of this disappointing haul, they're welcome to it. That way there'll be more to go around for the others.



Getting a Ship

The party now has its own eccentric inventor and a diving bell, and one party member knows just what to do with it. The *Queen Anne*, a pirate ship he once





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served on, went down fast in a storm in the Bahamas. She was in shallow water at the time, and her captain was carrying a chest of priceless gold artifacts originally taken from the South American Indians by the Spanish. He knows right where to find her, and Maupin promises his bell can do the job, if they can find a ship to get it out to the wreck.

This part of the adventure gives you a chance to introduce the players to the community of Bloode Island and take advantage of some social skills. Word of their salvage idea quickly gets around. Everybody with a ship either thinks the plan is insane, or wants a huge cut of the treasure.

In particular, they draw the attention of Black Jack MacReady, a pirate captain with an untrustworthy reputation the party's had bad dealings with in the past. He claims he might consider their idea, but wants half the take ("I can't get the treasure without that thing, and you can't get it without a ship, so it seems to me we're both bringing half what's needed.") MacReady asks plenty of questions about specific details that the party won't want to answer, and generally makes them nervous.

Again, the process of searching for a ship can be stretched out if the players are enjoying themselves, or cut short if they want to get on with the action. The party will eventually get in touch with Captain Daniel Crane, a well-respected captain who may even owe the party a favor for some past action. He has taken a Dutch merchantman and is waiting to ransom it back. The party can borrow the ship for a reasonable cut as long as it comes back in one piece. There are also plenty of sailors who will crew the ship for the usual share as long as they aren't expected to actually go underwater in Maupin's godforsaken invention.

The Wreck of the Queen Anne

Once the party reaches the site, they can locate the wreck and take soundings. The Queen Anne is lying in about 50 feet of water, well within the bell's range. With some work and good Seamanship rolls, they can position the ship so the bell will descend directly over the wreck. The bell holds up to six people. Maupin will stay to operate the air replenishment system. The party can send up to five other members down, but their crew is staying topside.

This part of the adventure should be an eerie, frightening experience. It's dark and cramped in the bell, and the characters will be at twice normal air pressure, with effects they've never before experienced. Compression heats the air, making the interior uncomfortably stuffy. The top is made of thick glass to let in light, but it's still murky and dark. The pressure hurts characters' eardrums. All these environmental

difficulties add up to a -1 difficulty modifier on anything they try to do inside the bell.

However, the thing actually seems to work. It remains stable as it descends, and eventually the party finds themselves hanging a few feet above the crumbling wreckage. Air replenishment works by weighted barrels sent down from the surface, which vent into the bell by means of waxed leather hoses. A stopcock at the top lets out spent air.

This will be dangerous work, though. The chest with the treasure is in the great cabin, at the rear of the ship. However, the Queen Anne settled by the stern and the huge windows that would let characters swim directly into the cabin are buried in the sandy bottom. Instead, they will have to work their way through an interior passage from a stairway on the main deck.

Again, this will be tricky. Assume characters can only hold their breaths for a number of turns equal to their WILLPOWER before they must return to the bell to breathe (to keep things simple, assume this is WIL rounds on site, not counting travel time to or from the bell). This will not be possible on the first trip because there are three obstructions of the path that will have to be cleared.

First, fallen rigging and sails block the stairway on deck, and must be cut away. Second, heavy deck timbers have fallen and blocked the passageway; characters will have to knock away enough rotting wood from the nearby bulkhead to get around them. Finally, the captain, hoping to save his ship and rescue his treasure, locked the cabin door when he left. This bulkhead is thicker than the others and the door has reinforcing iron bands. Characters will have to force the lock rather than simply batter it down.

Each of these tasks requires a successful Swim check (to find proper handholds and get leverage under water, etc.) Knives or hammers will prove useful as well, adding a +1 bonus to rolls if players thought to bring them from the surface. Characters can try these tasks as many times as they need to until successful, but after making (WIL) rolls, they must return to the bell to breathe.

Also, the ship is a hazardous place, full of ropes to get caught in, yardarms to be jarred loose from above, etc. If a character rolls a critical failure on one of these rolls, assume he has gotten himself stuck in shifting debris and needs to be rescued. Other players can make Swim checks to get him out, but each round the trapped character must make a Save check to avoid drowning. Underwater salvage is incredibly dangerous work, even for professionals.

Once the party has cleared a path to the great cabin, they can open the chest to discover gleaming artifacts. There are two ceremonial masks, two jaguar





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statues, three ornate headpieces, and two heavy armbands, all made of solid gold. Each of these must be carried back to the bell one piece at a time. A single Swim check is enough to get from the bell through the cleared path to the cabin and back with a piece of treasure. The other rules for failed rolls and getting trapped still apply.

Since some GMs will be playing with Mojo rules in place and others will prefer a more realistic game, we've provided two alternate finales depending on the tone you want. Only the most heartless GM would actually throw both of these at players...

Vengeance of the Deep - For games using Mojo

As the happy characters start hauling their treasure back to the bell, they begin sensing movement from deeper within the wreck. Silt begins raining down from overhead, and the fragile wooden hulk creaks and groans. Then one character, trying to make his way back to the bell with a piece of the treasure, feels a slimy, cold grip on his ankle! The fears of the superstitious pirates turn out to have been justified as the waterlogged corpses of the Queen Anne's drowned crew come to hideous unlife to protect the treasure they died for.

These are essentially underwater versions of zombies (see the Zombie stats on page 23). There's an effectively endless supply of them creeping over the sunken ship, squeezing between timbers and swimming among the tattered rigging. They aren't too dangerous as fighters, though. The risk is being overwhelmed by numbers of them thereby drowning one or more of the characters, or that the zombies will bring down huge chunks of debris as they claw their way heedlessly through the rotting hulk.

In addition to intruders, they'll assault the bell itself, forcing someone to defend it as their companions are trying to retrieve the treasure. The zombies will also try to climb inside the bell and attack anyone there, but simply defending the opening won't be enough. If the zombies are left alone outside a number of them could tip the bell enough to flood it and drown everyone inside. Someone may well have to go outside and fight them off.

When the characters have what they came for, or have had enough of this, they can signal to be brought up. They'll have to fight their way up, but the poor drowned sailors cannot emerge into the air and sunlight. Once the bell breaks the surface, the zombies will glumly sink back to the wreck of the Queen Anne to resume their sleep. The party will have a priceless haul of ancient gold, but also a few nightmares to remember as they sail over the deceptively calm surface of the Caribbean.

Honor Among Pirates - For realistic games

Once the happy characters have gotten the treasure back to the bell, they can jettison a set of floats, the signal to bring the bell back up. Unfortunately, they return to a different situation from the one they left. While the party was risking life and limb in the briny deep, their old enemy, Black Jack MacReady was seizing their ship.

MacReady will openly admit that he thought their plan was a bad one-going underwater in a strange machine is not something a God-fearing man does-taking treasure from somebody on the surface...well, that's pirating, isn't it?

MacReady isn't about to let the party go. He's broken the Bloode Island code by stealing from his fellows, and he can't let word of what he's done get back there. Any of the characters' crew unwilling to swear silence and allegiance to MacReady can walk the plank with them. The characters will have to fight for their lives, and they'll have to win the support of enough of their crew to even the odds. Perhaps it's time for an impassioned speech to stir the hearts of brave men to glory. A point blank broadside into MacReady's ship, lashed alongside, wouldn't be a bad idea either, if it can be arranged.

Assuming the battle turns against him, MacReady will fall back to his own ship with his men and flee. Clever GMs will make sure he gets away. MacReady can never return to Bloode Island after what he's done, and he'll nurse a bitter hatred for the crew that he blames for his downfall. He'll make a great campaign enemy.





Appendix A:

Costs and Equipment



When it comes to protecting oneself upon the high seas or while docked, pirates have literally become walking arsenals. In fact, many aspects of a pirate's life revolve around conflict, whether it be through the sheer act of piracy or just wandering the dark, narrow alleys of Port Defiance, so nothing quite beats a sharp cutlass and a muskatoon at your side. The prices listed are only a guideline, and not all items will be present at every port of call.

Armor

Armor is not a large factor in Bloode Island, mostly because it's heavy, hard to swim and maneuver in, and is only moderately effective against musket and cannon fire. Nonetheless, wearing certain materials will indeed offer a modicum of protection. The following materials are given an Armor Value (or AV) rating. If a character is wearing something with an AV, simply subtract the AV of the protective garment from incoming damage, then apply the rest to the character's SHRUG.

Leather	AV 1
Bone	AV 2
Steel (helmet or breastplate)	AV 5

Clothes

Baldric	2 sp
Brocade Silk Waistcoat	20 sp
Buckled Leather Shoes	5 sp
Cotton Jacket	10 sp
Cotton Trousers	15 sp
Cravat	5 sp
Hemp Shirt	1 sp
Knitted Stockings	2 sp
Leather Belt	3 sp
Leather Boots	10 sp
Leather Vest	5 sp
Linen Shirt	5 sp
Petticoat Britches	2 sp
Sailor Slops (trousers)	1 sp
Steel Breastplate	45 sp
Sash	5 sp
Silk Shirt	15 sp
Tri-corn hat	2 sp
Wool Waistcoat	10 sp

Food & Lodging	
Mug of ale, chunk of bread & bed (1 night)	1 sp
Ale, jug	1 sp

Bread, loaf	1 sp
Cheese, wheel	2 sp
Inn Room, per night	
Poor	1 sp
Good	5 sp
Excellent	10 sp
Meal	
Poor (bread & cheese)	1 sp
Good (bread, cheese & stew)	3 sp
Excellent (as above, plus fresh meat)	5 sp
Wine, common	1 sp
Wine, fine	50 sp

Gear

Backpack	5 sp
Bedroll	3 sp
Blanket, winter	2 sp
Candle	1 sp
Case, map	20 sp
Flask	5 sp
Flint & Steel	1 sp
Hammer	2 sp
Ink, vial	4 sp
Lantern	7 sp
Manacles	50 sp
Paper, sheet	4 sp
Pouch, belt	2 sp
Quills, per dozen	2 sp
Rope, hemp, 100ft	4 sp
Rope, silk, 50ft	5 sp
Sack, empty	1 sp
Sealing Wax	8 sp
Signet ring	20 sp
Spade	2 sp
Spyglass	50 sp
Torch	1 sp
Waterskin, leather	10 sp
Whetstone	1 sp





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Weapons

Weapon Accuracy (WA): Some weapons are better balanced than others. Add this number to the Target Number to hit with this weapon.

Weapon Rating (WR): This number is the minimum STR needed to wield it effectively (due to mass, weight and, in some cases, recoil) and serves as the damage rating. Characters with a STR less than the WR of the weapon may wield it at a penalty of -1 per point of difference.

Range: This number is the maximum distance in feet a firearm or similar ranged weapon can be fired effectively. Note: this does not necessarily mean a weapon cannot hit a target beyond the listed range, rather it represents the maximum range for a given weapon to be the most effective. If targeting beyond the maximum range, the player suffers an additional -1 penalty to hit, and the WR is halved (round down). For game purposes, a weapon exceeding twice its listed range is completely ineffective.

Damage Bonus (DB): Weapons with a damage bonus cause extra trauma by tearing or rending flesh in some way, either through additional mass, a razor-keen blade, barbs, poison, or what have you. Add the DB points listed to the total amount of damage.

Firearms

Blunderbuss

The Blunderbuss is much like the Musketoon in that it does particularly devastating damage at close range. It is perhaps a more popularly known name for the same kind of large shot rifle.

WA	WR	DB	RANGE	COST
+1D3/-1	4	0	100	50sp

WA bonus at half range or less, penalty after half range

Bow

Although shipboard archers were largely replaced with musketmen by the late 16th century, this ancient weapon is easy to make, inexpensive to purchase, nearly silent, more quickly loaded, and more reliable than most other ranged weapons. A variety of bows are still used by native tribes. The stats below reflect a baseline, and can be adjusted for variations in size or quality at the GM's discretion.

WA	WR	DB	RANGE	COST
0	3	+1	200	5 sp*

** Arrows can be purchased for 1sp ea.*

Flintlock Pistol

The pistol of choice for many pirates is the flintlock, which features a firing mechanism exactly like the musket and is more reliable than the earlier wheellock. A single shot is loaded via the muzzle.

WA	WR	DB	RANGE	COST
0	4	0	150	75 sp

Note: A discharged pistol can be turned and used as a club for melee purposes (use Belaying Pin stats, page 57).

Musket

This single-shot long-barreled weapon is one of the first attempts to provide small arms with longer range, although it is only slightly more accurate than the blunderbuss. The musket ball is smaller and designed to shoot straighter, but ultimately will not provide the type of damage that a blunderbuss or musketoon will cause at close range.

WA	WR	DB	RANGE	COST
0	4	+1	400	100 sp

Note: A discharged musket can be turned and used as a club for melee purposes (use Club stats, page 57).

Musketoon

The Musketoon has a brass barrel and standard flintlock firing mechanism. Additionally, this rifle is a single shot, loaded and packed from the mouth of the barrel.

WA	WR	DB	RANGE	COST
+1/-1	4	+2/0	200	85 sp

WA & DB bonus at half range or less, penalty after half range





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Multi-Barrel Musket

All multi-barrel firearms are custom made and need strict maintenance (a successful Firearms check every day for cleaning and checking). Each barrel must be loaded separately and uses the rules for a single-barreled musket. Each shot counts as a separate action. The advantage is of course that up to six shots can be preloaded before a fight.



WA	WR	DB	RANGE	COST
0	4*	+1	400	100 sp ea.

* Every 3 barrels (total) add +1 to the STR requirement to fire effectively. A three-barreled musket would require a STR of 5, and a six-barreled musket would require a STR of 6 to use without penalty (see WR explanation, page 56). This caveat only applies to long arms, not pistols (as pictured above).

Volley Gun

This seven-barreled monstrosity is packed with musket shot and used to clear a deck of enemy sailors. Time-consuming to load, it is devastating in close combat. It should be noted that all seven barrels discharge at once, in a conical hail of lead and the Devil's own brimstone.

WA	WR	DB	RANGE	COST
+1/-1	4/3	+2/0	100	85 sp

WA & DB bonus at half range or less, penalty after half range
WR4 is applied to everyone in a 5ft radius at less than half range,
WR3 to everyone in a 10ft radius at half to full range.

Throwing Blade

A wide variety of blades balanced for throwing exist throughout the Caribbean, from daggers to sickles to double-headed knives.

WA	WR	DB	RANGE	COST
0	1	1/2 STR +2	STRx10	10+ sp*

* Depending on size & quality

Melee Weapons

Belaying Pin

Essentially large, round bludgeons, belaying pins are typically used for securing coils of rope, and are found all over a typical ship. One of these pins can be handy as a quick, makeshift club.

WA	WR	DB	COST
0	3 Stun	+1	1 sp

Boarding Axe

Primarily used for cutting through rigging and wreckage during a siege, but could also be used as a close combat weapon.

WA	WR	DB	COST
0	3	+1	3 sp

Boarding Pike

Specialized weapon for stabbing through nets, shrouds and other rigging, or for repelling boarders. Unwieldy as a weapon in single combat.

WA	WR	DB	COST
-1	3	+1	1 sp

Chain

Useful for entangling as well as bludgeoning an enemy.

WA	WR	DB	COST
0	0/1	0/+1	2 sp per 10ft

WR & DB 0 for entanglement. Successful Melee Weapon check means opponent is entangled. Opponent may attempt to break entanglement by using Strength Feat or straight opposed STRENGTH check on his next action. If the chain is used as a weapon, WR1 and DB+1 is used.

Club

Arguably the oldest weapon known to mankind, clubs can be improvised from a variety of common materials (Bones, rocks, tree limbs, etc). The stats below refer to a well-made tribal war club or tomahawk using stone or steel as its primary weight. Variant/improvised clubs may have slightly different stats, depending on materials.

WA	WR	DB	COST
0	2*	+1	3 sp

* Clubs can do either wound or stun damage, depending on the player's declaration before striking.





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Cutlass

The cutlass is the hand-to-hand combat weapon used by most sailors in *Bloode Island*. It is well-suited for close, cramped fighting conditions aboard ships where longer stabbing swords are more difficult to wield. It also makes a useful tool for harvesting wood, slashing a path through thick jungle, or carving a side of wild pork for the boucan.

WA	WR	DB	COST
+1	2	+1	5 sp

Dagger

The dagger is a general classification for a small knife. Nearly every pirate carries one as it has more uses than just for combat. For instance, the dagger is used for eating as much as fighting. Additionally, this small weapon is considered a basic adornment of any pirate.

WA	WR	DB	COST
0	1	+1	3 sp

Dirk

The Dirk is a particular type of knife, typically smaller than a dagger, and carried by both pirates and marines/sailors. And much like the dagger, the dirk served not only as small arms, but also as cutlery and a way to cut through riggings and nets.

WA	WR	DB	COST
+1	1	0	2 sp

Foil

The lightest, most nimble of swords, foils are often reserved for duels between gentlemen. Although possessing a low WR, the foil is nonetheless able to bestow a deep puncture wound which is difficult to repair and often leads to a victim's slow, bleeding death.

WA	WR	DB	COST
+3	1	+2	40 sp

Gaff

A spear-like tool with a hook near the tip, used for retrieval of fish or flotsam from the water, and equally effective as a boarding weapon.

WA	WR	DB	COST
0	2	+2	3 sp

Pistol Dagger

Secured to the side of this long fighting blade is a single flintlock barrel, useful for turning a disabling

stab into a killing blow. The pistol barrel can be fired at a distance, but is much more effective when adding insult to injury.



WA	WR	DB	COST
0/+3*	1/3	+1/+1	80 sp

Note: Using this weapon counts as two separate actions. A Melee Weapon or Fencing check must be successful to engage the blade, and a Firearms check is then made at +3 to fire the pistol. If the Firearms check is unsuccessful, the pistol misfires (wet powder, ball jammed, etc). If fired at a distance (i.e. blade not engaged in the target's body), the WA of the pistol is 0.

Rapier

A longer, thinner, lighter blade than the cutlass, favored by gentlemen of breeding. Rapiers are finely balanced and extremely accurate, although long blade length can often pose problems in close quarters. Sometimes used with a dagger or other weapon (for parrying), although such "Florentine" fencing styles are becoming less popular in this enlightened age.

WA	WR	DB	COST
+2	2	+1	100 sp

Saber

Combining the weight of a cutlass with an approximation of a rapier's reach, sabers are becoming more common among military officers, for whom slashing from a mount is much more effective than trading thrusts and parries in single combat. Western sabers are not often encountered on the open seas, but there are plenty of eastern predecessors on the market, including the Mediterranean shamshir. More elegant than the cutlass, the saber can be utilized equally by a gentleman with the Fencing skill, as well as a common sailor with Melee Weapon.

WA	WR	DB	COST
0	3	+1	50 sp

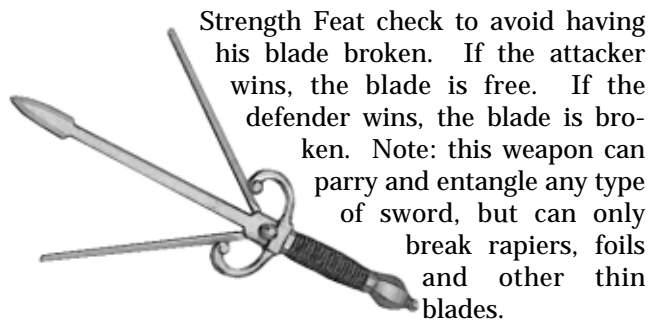
Sword-Breaker

A devious weapon originating in the Renaissance, the sword-breaker is a type of parrying dagger that usually includes a spring-loaded mechanism. When deployed, the dagger splits into three prongs, handy for catching an enemy's blade and, with skill, snapping it in two. Many variants of the sword-breaker exist (including those without tricky springs), but the basic function is the same. The defender catches the attacker's sword on a successful parry. The attacker may try to make a successful Fencing check vs. the defender's





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Strength Feat check to avoid having his blade broken. If the attacker wins, the blade is free. If the defender wins, the blade is broken. Note: this weapon can parry and entangle any type of sword, but can only break rapiers, foils and other thin blades.

WA	WR	DB	COST
+1	1	0	20 sp

Whip

Useful for entangling as well as striking an enemy with stinging blows.

WA	WR	DB	COST
+1	0/1	0/+1	5 sp

DB 0 & WR 0 for entanglement. Successful Melee Weapon check means opponent is entangled. Opponent may attempt to break entanglement by using Strength Feat or straight opposed STR check on his next action. If the whip is used to inflict damage, WR1 and DB+1 is used.

Miscellaneous

There are a number of bizarre yet ubiquitous items around that any innovative sea dog can use as weapons, and GM discretion is advised. For instance, a pirate's hook hand would warrant the stats of a dagger, while a peg leg would be akin to a belaying pin. A bottle or jug over the head would probably use the belaying pin stats, but have only a single use as it crashes to pieces. Use yer noggins, y'old salts!

A word of discretion when tweaking weapon stats: Keep in mind that an increase in WA will potentially cause an entire WR worth of damage, and should be used only to indicate very accurate, finely-tuned, well-balanced weapons. Adding to WR indicates the weapon is now more powerful (and has undergone some sort of increase in mass or kinetic force/recoil etc.), and multiplies the wielder's margin in damage. This is the meat and potatoes stat of all weapons. Be careful when adjusting WR, out of a sense of game balance (and keep in mind penalties for having a lower STR than the WR). Finally, an increase to DB indicates some form of extra damage that takes place upon delivery (spikes, barbs, serrations, toxins, etc.). It is the most common, and won't unbalance things too terribly much. As long as you consult with the GM and use common sense (and the existing weapons as a baseline), you should be fine.

Ships

Wooden ships were damp, dark, cheerless places, reeking with the stench of bilge water and rotten meat. They usually leaked, too, as the insides of a wooden ship are difficult to keep dry. As a consequence, pirates often suffered from illnesses brought on by damp conditions and no dry attire. In addition, pirate ships often carried twice as many men as their design specifications allowed. Men were packed in like sardines; one captain referred to the arrangement as "kenneling like hounds on the deck."

Wooden sailing ships were never clean. Pirates tried their best by washing down the decks with brandy (if there was plenty of it). Below decks, crewmembers would



"fumigate" by burning pitch or brimstone, but it was never enough. There were too many places for filth to accumulate and rodents to breed. As a result, a pirate crew would often lose half of its members to disease during a long voyage.

One of the biggest enemies to ships were teredo worms, which infested tropical waters and made their homes in the wood of a ship's hull. The worms have shells that remain after the critter has moved on and these shells, like barnacles, build up, robbing a ship of her speed and seaworthiness. To prevent this problem from occurring too frequently, ships were often coated with a mixture of tar, tallow, and sulfur two or three times a





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year. Also, a ship with such pests would have to be careened to regain her ever-so-important speed and agility.

Barque

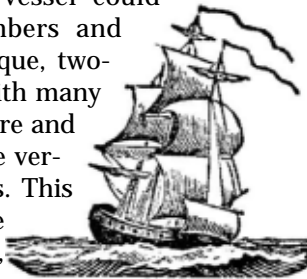
The largest fore-and-aft rigged ships, barques are a traditional design similar to many Mediterranean merchant and war craft. Many barques are built in the Caribbean, rather than in Europe. Barques are good ships for quiet seas, but all too easily come to grief in a rough ocean crossing. This means that few barques return from the Caribbean to Europe, as the North Atlantic west-to-east route is often stormy.

Barques are the slowest close-hauled sailers, and the least maneuverable. However, the advantages of the rig are so great that Barques still surpass all square-rigged ships in both departments. Furthermore, barques carry oars, allowing them to row straight into the wind. Due to large size and good handling, a pirate barque can be a formidable adversary.

SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
2	1	8	30	30	35

Brigantine

This 150-ton, 80-foot vessel could carry up to 100 crewmembers and mount 10 cannons. The unique, two-mast ship could be rigged with many combinations of square or fore and aft sails, which made it more versatile than many other ships. This is the clear choice for battle or combat rather than quick, hit-and-run piracy.



SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
1	1	10	45	35	100

Flute

The flute is an impressive 300-ton, 80-foot ship that is relatively inexpensive to build, as well as to man; it only requires one dozen seamen (but is often crewed with more). With a flat bottom, broad beams, and a round stern, this ship is the favored model for carrying cargo, primarily because of its capacity, which is about 150% that of similar ships. These specifications cause it to be common prey for pirates.

SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
0	1	8	50	35	20

Frigate

Also known as the "Man-O-War," the frigate is an impressive 360-ton, 110-foot ship. It carries up to 195 men, has three masts, and mounts 26 guns. Typically, the frigate is placed at the head of most major sea shipments or convoys. The sight of this heavily armed vessel often sends pirates away without a shot fired.

SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
0	1	26	80	50	195



Galleons

Galleons are the largest sailing vessels on the Spanish Main. Originally they were created because one large ship was cheaper to build than two smaller ones. However, large ships were much less maneuverable, which increased the chance of shipwreck, not to mention hindering them in battle. Galleons are slow to turn, and are especially poor sailers close-hauled. Still, the enormous carrying capacity and powerful armament makes the galleon a formidable opponent in battle. There are two sub-types of galleons, listed below:

Fast Galleon: The northern European powers refined the basic Galleon Design, revising the sail plan for more flexibility, then reducing the upperworks and hull shape for better seakeeping. The resulting ship was smaller than a Spanish galleon, but faster in light winds and considerably more maneuverable. However, it suffers the universal disadvantage of all galleons: poor speed when close-hauled. Still, its superior maneuverability and seakeeping showed when the English fast galleons and smaller craft defeated a Spanish fleet of conventional galleons.

SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
1	1	18	70	60	120

War Galleon: War Galleons are similar to mercantile types. They have less cargo capacity, but more guns and crewmen. The most important difference is that war galleons are crewed by soldiers and commanded by noble officers, making them brave and formidable opponents in battle.





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Only the most powerful warships can expect to engage a war galleon and succeed. The preferred Spanish tactic with these ships was to run alongside the opponent, fire one broadside at point-blank range, then board for hand-to-hand combat.

SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
0	0	22	80	55	200

Merchantman

Although all commercial ships in the late 17th and early 18th centuries were generally called "merchant ships" or "merchantmen", Mariners reserve such a term for this three-masted, square-rigged ship. The 180-ton, 80-foot vessel was intended to carry passengers and cargo. However, it can also be armed with up to 16 cannons. This ship sports finer lines and a little more sail power than the Dutch flute, and could make a trip from England to America in about four weeks.



SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
1	2	16	60	50	100

Naval Sloop

The naval sloop is a 113-ton, 65-foot fighting ship. Primarily used by the navies as a "pirate hunting ship," the naval sloop could carry a crew of 70. The ship is sharp-ended to allow for faster attacks and is fitted with 7 pairs of oars (put through the gunports) to allow for chase without wind. A well-trained crew can fire the 12 nine-pound cannons about twice every three minutes.

SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
2	1	12	55	50	70

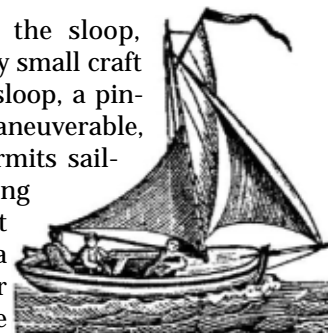
Naval Snow

The naval snow, a 90-ton, 60-foot ship, is distinguished by a fore and aft trysail. This was a preferred ship for the Royal Navy because it could manage well in a light quartering wind. The crew of up to 80 had at its disposal 8 six-pound guns that rested behind the canvas strung amidships over the open bulwarks. This was a common patrol ship when the Navy finally decided to deter pirates from their self-determined duty.

SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
2	0	8	50	45	80

Pinnace

Until the advent of the sloop, pinnaces were the primary small craft of the Caribbean. Like a sloop, a pinnace is very fast, very maneuverable, and with a draft that permits sailing in shoal waters. Sailing upwind (close-hauled) it is even faster than a sloop, and much faster when rowing into the



However, a pinnace is also much smaller than a sloop, with minuscule capacity for cargo and guns. Still, many a pirate raid was conducted in tiny pinnaces crammed with fighting men. Drake himself abandoned his merchantmen in favor of pinnaces when raiding on the Spanish Main.

SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
3	3	4	25	30	40

Schooner

Unique to the schooner is a very narrow hull and shallow draft. Pirates operating off the North American coast and Caribbean were partial to the schooner because, for a 100-ton ship loaded with 8 cannons, the ability to carry up to 75 crewmembers, and 4 swivel guns, it was still small enough to navigate the shoal waters and to hide in remote coves. The Schooner could also reach 11 knots in a good wind. In short, it was a small, quick, and sturdy workhorse for gentlemen of fortune.

SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
2	1	12	40	45	75

Sloop

Pirates and smugglers tend to favor this small, 100-ton vessel. It draws less than 8 feet of water and is quick and easy to maneuver. It is fast and easy to control, and carries up to 75 crewmembers and 14 cannons. The sloop was often the ship of choice for hunting brigands in the shallower channels and sounds.



SPD	MAN	GUN	HULL	SAIL	CREW
2	2	14	35	45	75





Pirate Glossary



Ahoy: A sailor's call to draw attention to something or someone.

Articles: Contract signed by pirates when joining a ship's crew. It stated the rules, as well as shares of profits. See sample, page 51.

Avast: Stop; halt.

Black Jack: A leather tankard made stiff with a coating of tar. Used by dockside pubs and taverns to serve wine and beer.

Ballast: Heavy materials at the bottom of a ship used to keep it upright.

Blow: Short, intense gale or storm.

Boatswain or Bosun: The Warrant Officer in charge of sails, rigging, anchors, and associated gear.

Booty: Term for treasure taken from plunder.

Boucan: French word for a grill used to smoke meat. The word buccaneer came from boucan. Smoking meat and selling it to passing ships was common from about 1620 to 1670 when the Spanish cracked down this illegal practice. Many took up pirating since their livelihood was over. These men at the time were known as Boucaniers.

Bow or fore: Front of ship; Forward.

Broadside: The simultaneous firing of all the guns on one side of a ship.

Bulkhead: A vertical partition inside of a ship.

Buccaneer: The Term originally applied to the hunters of wild oxen and pigs on the island of Hispaniola, but later it was used to describe the pirates and privateers who plundered the shipping and coastal towns in the West Indies and on the coasts of South and Central America in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Bumboo: A mixture of rum, water, sugar, and nutmeg. Favored among West Indians, as well as buccaneers and pirates.

Careen: To heel over a ship to clean the seaweed and barnacles from her bottom.

Castles: Raised sections of ships. They came from earlier times when archers would use the raised platforms to gain an advantage over their foes. Those ships had extremely high castles. Castles were either fore (forward) or aft (rear).

Cat-O'-Nine-Tails: A whip made from knotted ropes, used to punish crewmen. What was meant by being "flogged."

Cog: A ship developed to withstand pirate attacks. It had very high sides and a raised bow and stern.

Combing the Cat: The petty officer responsible for flogging would often have to run his fingers through the cords of the cat-o'-nine-tails to keep them from caking together with blood and sweat..

Colors: The flag flown by a vessel to show her nationality.

Commission: See Letter of Marque.

Corsairs: A Pirate or Privateer operating in the Mediterranean. The most famous corsairs were those based on the Barbary Coast of North Africa who were authorized by their governments to attack the merchant shipping of the Christian countries.

Cutlass: A short, curved, thick sword. The preferred weapon of many a buccaneer. Possibly a carry over weapon from the days of making boucan.

Davy Jones' Locker: According to sailor's lore, Davy Jones is an evil spirit in the sea. His locker was the ocean where he received dead sailors.

Dead Man's Chest: A true location now called Dead Chest Island in the Virgin Islands. Robert Louis Stevenson ran across the reference while reading *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies*, a travel book by Charles Kingsley. Stevenson used the phrase in his book *Treasure Island*, combining it with a little sea-ditty:

Fifteen men on the dead man's chest





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*Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest.*

Deck: The exposed area of the ship where the men did their work.

Dirk: A long thin knife. It was used for fighting in close quarters, as well as cutting rope.

Doubloon: A gold coin minted by Spain or Spanish colonies. Worth about seven weeks pay for an average sailor

Earrings and Eye patches: There is no proof that pirates wore either of these decorations. They seem to be the imagination of authors and film-makers to liven up their characters. At the height of the age of piracy, around 1700, earrings were no longer fashionable, and pirates like everyone else were in keeping with the fashions of their day. However, *Bloode Island* pirates can be as cinematic and over-the-top as you like.

Fathom: A measure of six feet, used to describe the depth of water.

Flibustier: French term for pirates during the golden age of piracy.

Freebooter: Another term for pirate.

Gibbet: A wooden frame from which dead pirates were hung, often in a metal cage especially fitted for the dead man. This was done as a warning to others who would think of taking up a career in piracy.

Grog: British naval seamen received a portion of liquor every day. In 1740, Admiral Edward Vernon ordered the rum to be diluted with water. Vernon's nickname was Old Grogram, and the beverage was given the name grog in their disdain for Vernon.

Grommet: A name British seamen gave to an apprentice sailor, or ship's boy. The word comes from the Spanish word grumete, which has the same meaning.

Jolly Roger: The Jolly Roger is a pirate's flag. It has a black or red background and a symbol (usually white) symbolizing death. The Jolly Roger came into use around 1700. Before then, pirates used the colors of their nationality or flew the Black

Jack, a plain black flag that meant no quarter would be given. Masters of psychological warfare, pirates flew flags with symbols of death, violence, or limited time featured prominently. The variations were unlimited.

Keel: Lowest lengthwise running timber of ship.

Keel-Haul: To tie a victim by hands and feet, and run him under the keel of the ship, bow to stern. Used as a punishment (and often fatal).

Land Ho!: Traditional calling when a sailor sights land.

Landlubber: Lubber is an old slang word for someone who is stupid and lazy. Sailors added land to it to describe someone stupid about the ways of life aboard a ship.

Larboard: The left side of the ship. Replaced with "port" in the mid-19th Century, most likely due to the difficulty of differentiating between "larboard" and "starboard" during foul weather or cannon fire.

Letters of Marque: A commission or license issued by the government authorizing seizure of enemy property. In Britain and her colonies, the letter was issued by the sovereign, the Lord High Admiral, or a colonial Governor.

Maroon: Pirates used marooning as an act of punishment. A transgressor of their codes would be stripped and left upon an isolated island with only a few supplies, if

any at all. Most transgressors preferred a quick death to marooning, for it could mean starvation or isolation for years, until rescue or death.

Mast: Upright wooden beams that support sails and rigging. The number of masts varied. Their names were, mainmast (largest mast centrally located), fore-mast (front of ship), aft-mast (rear of mainmast), mizzenmast (usually lateen-rigged, rear and sometimes front of ship, used to improve steering), bowsprit (extended out at an angle over the bow).

Mate: The word mate comes from the word meat, and originally meant people who shared food. Later it came to be known as a companion. Mate was also the title of an officer aboard naval and merchant ships. The mate oversaw the sailors, ensuring that





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The captain's orders were carried out. He also was responsible for stowing cargo and organizing the crew's work.

No Purchase, No Pay: A term that once meant "no prey, no pay." At the time, the English word purchase referred to any plunder, loot, or booty. A pirate sailing under this term (in the ship's articles) would receive a share of any plunder, but if none was taken, he'd get nothing.

Peg Leg (and other epithets for the disabled): A nickname given by pirates to those who had replaced a leg with a wooden prosthetic. The Spanish name is Pié de Palo, the Dutch is Houtebeen. Two of the best-known peg-legged pirates were Francois le Clerc and Cornelis Jol (and then there's the literary Long John Silver). The alleged French buccaneer Louis LeGolf came by the nickname *bornefesse* ("partial buttock") after losing a portion of his posterior to a cannonball. Pirates with hooks to replace missing hands are a bit more sketchy historically - many seem to have been recent inventions (see Peter Pan). Yet it's certainly not impossible, and *Bloode Island* is more cinematic/literary than historical.

Peso (Piece of Eight): The peso was the main coin in the Spanish-American colonies. It was slightly larger than the 19th-century U.S. silver dollar. It had a value of eight reales. Often, the coin would be cut into 8 sections, each one representing 1 reale. Hence the name piece of eight. The Spanish government minted an immense amount of these coins and they were widely circulated. The *Bloode Island* silver piece (sp) is 1 reale.

Picaroon: Term meaning both pirate and slaver.

Pontoon: An English prison hulk, or converted ship hull where captured pirates were held.

Privateer: An armed vessel or persons aboard, which are authorized by a commission or "letter of marque" from a government to capture the merchant vessels of an enemy nation.

Prize: A captured ship (or potentially-captured one). The word is derived from the Latin term *pretium*, meaning prize, value, reward, wages.

Quartermaster: The quartermaster had an almost equal amount of authority as the captain. He was elected and as such was the crew's voice. If a ship was captured, the quartermaster almost always took over the captured ship. He maintained order, settled arguments, and distributed supplies. The quartermaster was in charge of all booty gained and distributed it among the crew.

Scurvy: A disease resulting from a vitamin C deficiency characterized by weakness, anemia, and spongy gums. In the case of "scurvy dog" it meant low quality; dodgy; suspect.

Searover: A pirate or pirate's ship.

Starboard: Right side of ship. Originates from "steerboard", referring to a rudder-like steering oar, secured on the right side of ancient ships.

Stern or aft: Rear of ship.

Swab: A swab is a mop made from rope used to clean the deck. It is also an insult intended to show contempt for a crude, ignorant person.

Treasure Map: Once again this is a fictional device dreamed up by authors and Hollywood. Pirates did not usually bury their loot. The myth probably came about after Captain Kidd's capture as he was purported to have seized more booty than was found with him. The populace found that the burial rumor was a plausible explanation for the lack of treasure and the

burial theory has been with us ever since.

Vaporing: The pirate practice of psyching oneself up before attacking a prize. The crew gathers on deck, sometimes adorned with warpaint, clashing weapons, chanting and screaming threats at their prey. Often this tradition, when combined with a shot across the bow, is enough to make a prize strike her colors.

Walking the Plank: Another method of pirate violence with no historical evidence. Real pirate methods of execution and punishment were far more cruel than making a victim walk off a plank into the water, shark-infested or not.



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SHIP REGISTRY

Name _____
Port of Origin _____
Type _____
Length _____ Beam _____
Captain _____

SPD		SAIL	
MAN		GUNS	
HULL		CREW	

SPECIAL WEAPONRY or CARGO:

STANDARD CARGO:

HOSTAGES or SPECIAL PERSONS:



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