

Argh!

The Guide to Pirates



Avalon Games



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Argh!: The Guide to Pirates

by David Caffee

Contents

Argh!: The Guide to Pirates	1
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Pirate Stories.....	2
The Pirate Setting	2
Pirates as Villains	2
The Heroic Pirate	3
Between Right and Wrong.....	4
Treasure	4
Vengeance and Betrayal	5
The Pirate Haven	6
Plot Hooks and Random Encounters	7
The Bluff Skill	9
The Diplomacy Skill	9
The Intimidate skill	9
Useful Feats in a Pirate Campaign	10
New Skills	10
New Feats and Drawbacks.....	15
Chapter Three: Sample Villains	23
The Governor	23
The Captain.....	23
The Pirate Hunter	24
The Recluse.....	24
Cat Familiar.....	25
Appendix A: Pirate Adventure Seeds	26
The Villains plan to.....	26

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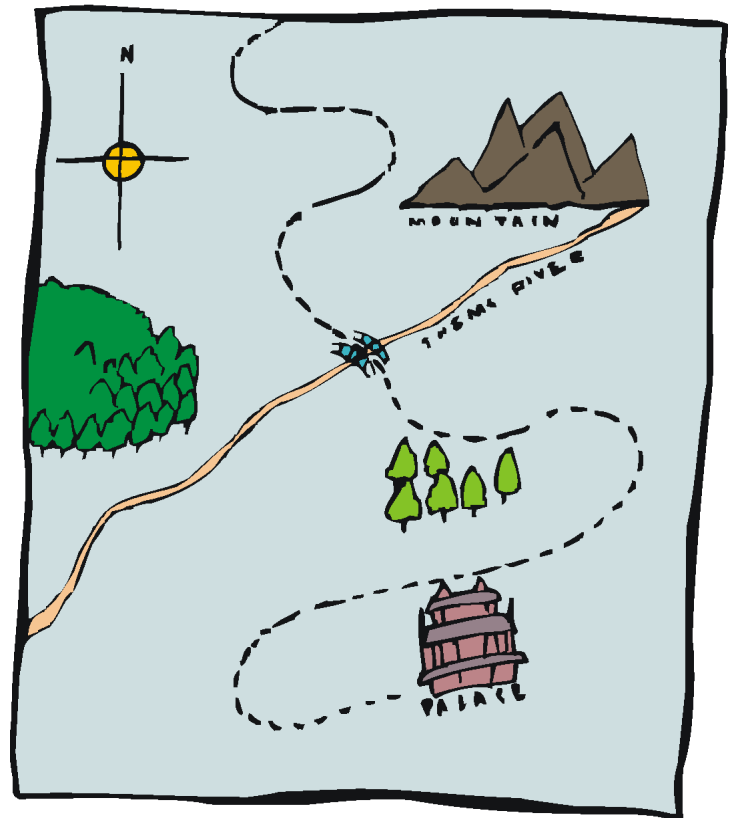
by David Caffee

Introduction

Argh! is a sourcebook for d20 that provides a GM with tools for creating campaigns in which pirates play a primary role. This book covers the various elements of an pirate themed campaign from the story structure to the skills and feats needed by seafaring raiders. This book also covers the pirate setting and the colorful and dangerous characters that inhabit such a place. Whether the characters are pirates themselves or pirates are used as the primary antagonists, a campaign on the high seas is sure to provide swashbuckling action and excitement for all.

Pirate adventures are epic tales of daring exploits and dastardly deeds. Battles at sea, buried treasure and damsels in distress are all part of the fun. Sword fights, double crosses, tense negotiations and heart stopping chases all come with the territory. Buccaneers and sea raiders have captured the imagination of story tellers throughout history.

This book serves as an aide for a GM who is looking to guide a group of characters through bloody seas in search of treasure and fame. Also included are tips for handling skills and feats in this campaign style as well as new skills and feats.



Chapter One: Pirate Stories

Pirate stories usually contain a number of similar elements. One common theme is adventure, which takes the form of dangerous voyages to exotic locations, heroic exploits and the hunt for lost riches. Another necessary element of a pirate campaign is lawlessness, banditry and questionable morality. Many of these stories include characters who are “innocents” who are inadvertently caught up in the dark world of piracy. Finally, a pirate story almost always features deception and abuse of trust. Even the best of pirates should be untrustworthy and self-serving, for there is no honor among thieves.

The Pirate Setting

There are many different times and places that are ideal for a pirate setting. The key ingredient is an open, lawless terrain where buccaneers can roam free and the only way to keep what's yours is to fight for it.

Historical: People have used the sea as a avenue for raiding and piracy since the dawn of civilization. However, for many, the word pirate instantly brings up images of the Caribbean Sea or the Spanish Main. The history of the real world is filled with the exploits of pirates, including infamous figures like Black Beard and Ann Bonnie. A GM attempting to flesh out a historical campaign is encouraged to do some research on the exact time and location that the adventure takes place. It is not necessary to name a specific year but a GM should have a decent grasp on the political and military forces at play as well as the laws and customs of the time.

Quasi-Historical: Role-playing is about fantasy and adventure. While history may provide a fine backdrop for a pirate campaign, many GM's will also add a touch of the supernatural to mix. Curses, ghosts, and sea monsters can add spice to a pirate campaign and keep the players on their toes. Lost cities, mysterious islands and magic rituals can make the setting seem a bit more exotic

than a purely historical campaign.

A GM getting ready to run a quasi-historical campaign should do a little research on the historical setting. However, unlike a historical campaign, the focus of this research should be on the superstitions and legends that were prevalent at the time. Old sea stories can provide a GM with a gold mine of magical elements to add to the campaign world, as can the religious rituals and mythology of native peoples.

Fantasy: History can be boring to some people. Players and GM's of this stripe may simply wish to add a bit of piracy to their favorite fantasy realm. A GM creating a fantasy campaign centered on pirates will need to focus his or her efforts on deciding how the existence of magic and fantasy monsters effects the activities of buccaneers and sea raiders.

Other: Piracy exists in the modern age just as it did centuries ago. It would be logical to assume that raiding and theft won't disappear in the future. A GM can find a multitude of settings that are appropriate for a pirate campaign, from the coasts of modern Africa to the farthest reaches of deep space.

Pirates as Villains

The most natural role for pirates to play in any adventure is that of the villains. Simply put, they are the worst of the worst. Pirates are known for raiding ships at sea, but they are associated with murder, rape and slavery. They press crews from captured ships and force them to serve as pirates. These conscripts can never return to their old lives as they will be branded as pirates, which usually means that they will be hung on sight.

Villainous pirates can be terrific adversaries. Pirates are highly mobile because they travel by ship. They can be hard to track because they know the location of pirate havens and out of the way hiding places. Pirates attack by surprise and

rarely leave anyone alive to tell the tale. These dastardly foes are not above using dirty tactics such as taking hostages. Best of all, pirate villains are despicable enough to raise the ire of the heroes fighting against them. Nothing is more important for a good villain than being easy to hate!

Villains in Action

There are a number of ways a GM could introduce pirates and raiders as the primary antagonists of a campaign. The obvious route is to make the characters as passengers or crewmen on a ship that is being attacked. There are a number of other ways a GM could introduce villainous pirates into an adventure, several ideas are detailed below;

- *One of the characters is seeking revenge on a pirate crew for some personal outrage.

- *The characters are attempting to rescue a ransomed friend or family member.

- *The characters are former members of the villain's crew who have been betrayed by their old captain.

- *The party is seeking a lost artifact that had been stolen by an infamous pirate.

- *One of the characters is the descendant of an infamous pirate. Legend holds that this character is the only one who can open the pirate's vault, which contains a fortune in stolen riches. A pirate crew learns of this tale and seeks to force this character to join them.

- *A privateer crew turns against their patron state and captures the ship that the heroes were serving on.

The Heroic Pirate

Everyone is familiar with the image of a pirate as a swashbuckling hero and loveable scoundrel. While a pirate may not be a law abiding citizen, he or she may still be honorable in his or her own fashion. There is no reason that a lawbreaker can't be a good person at heart and many heroic character find themselves conflicted when it comes to doing right and being selfish.

The pirate hero is good, but he can never be two good. Once a pirate, always a pirate. On the other hand, a pirate hero can never be that bad, either. This type of character is a thief, but not a murderer (at least, not unless he has to be). He may raid ships and ransom hostages, but he doesn't mistreat those in his custody (at least not that badly). The heroic pirate might spend every last coin he has on liquor, cards and scandalous women, but he tries not to break a promise to one of his friends.



Heroes in Action

Providing opportunities for lawless pirates to play the role of heroes can be a challenge for a GM. After awhile the players will surely get bored with raiding ships and looting towns. Several ideas for introducing pirates as heroes are listed below;

*The pirate heroes are trying to sell stolen armaments to rebels who are fighting against a cruel and bloody tyrant. A simple business deal turns complicated when the characters are attacked by the despot's forces. They get caught up in the rebels' struggle despite their better judgment.

*A brutal raider makes off with a host of well born hostages and then holes up in a secret haven. The only people who know the location of this pirate sanctuary happen to be other pirates. Desire for reward or hatred for this unscrupulous captain could motivate the characters to mount a rescue mission.

*The crew is smuggling rum into a busy harbor when they are trapped by a quarantine. A rash of unexplained deaths have been blamed on disease, while many people blame the characters for brining a curse to the town. The pirates discover that the deaths are actually due to poison. Solving the mystery and catching the villain may be the only way for the crew to escape with their lives.

*The heroic pirates are hired to defend a town from an invading army. They are issued letters of marques giving them legal rights to raid ships of the opposing flag.

seas. Many times a pirate campaign features both protagonists and antagonists that do not fit the standard definition of hero and villain. This type of adventure is not centered on a struggle between right and wrong, it is a conflict between two or more morally questionable factions.

Neither a Hero Nor Villain Be

A GM can construct any number of plots where neither side is pretending to serve the greater good. The primary objective of such an adventure usually involves a prize to be won or retaliation for a personal slight. Several ideas for a morally ambiguous campaign are listed below;

*Two pirate captains have obtained information about the location of a vast fortune. The race is on to see who can get to the treasure first.

*A mutiny rips a pirate crew apart. One half of the buccaneers side with the first mate, while the other half seeks to avenge their dead captain.

*A pirate queen offers to share both her fortune and her marriage bed with the buccaneer who offers her the most astonishing dowry. This news sparks off cutthroat completion between some of the most feared outlaws to ever sail the seas.

*A young boy holds the key to uncovering an ancient mystery. Rival pirate crews seek to manipulate the boy into joining their side.

Between Right and Wrong

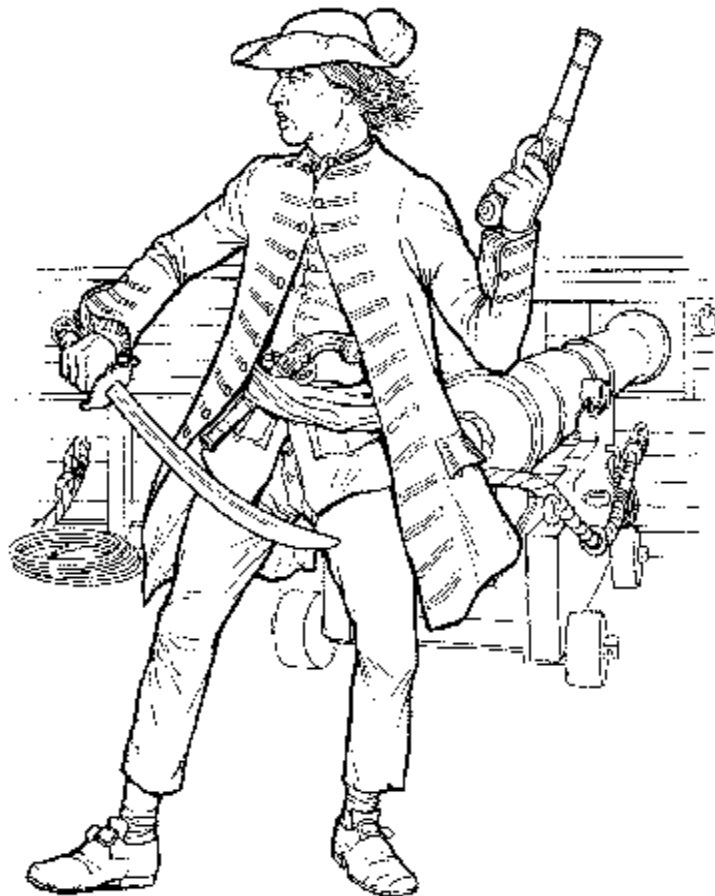
Morality is never about clear distinctions and black and white rules, especially on the lawless

Treasure

If it were not for the promise of stolen riches there just wouldn't be any pirates. Attacking ships and raiding towns is dangerous business. Pirates

are motivated by the hopes of a big payoff, a prize valuable enough to make the captain and crew wealthy. Loot and booty can take many forms, such as cargoes of ivory, timber or ambergris. Of course, people often associate treasure with gold, silver and precious gems. Family heirlooms and the personal assets of wealthy victims make a much more appealing treasure than a hold full of whale vomit.

One of the staples of pirate stories is the quest for buried treasure. A good pirate knows that stealing a treasure isn't enough, you have to live long enough to spend it. Keeping a valuable treasure safe can be a problem, one that is usually solved by hiding said treasure on an uninhabited island.



Twists on Buried Treasure

X doesn't always mark the spot and just digging on a beach can get boring after awhile. There are lots of ways that a GM can keep a treasure or important item out of easy reach. Several suggestions for protecting a pirate stash are listed below;

*A pirate ship ran ashore inside of cave. The tides keep the vessel and its prize under water and the ship is only visible when the waters reach their lowest ebb.

*An ancient temple was overrun by a pirate crew who used the primitive monument to stash their booty. The local tribes still consider this ground to be sacred and guard it fiercely.

*A battle raged between pirates and a pursuing navy. The pirates made a last ditch effort to keep their treasure safe, swallowing precious gems by the handful. The raiders died from the stomach trauma and were buried in unmarked graves outside of an abandoned fort.

*A renegade navy captain betrayed his flag and made off with the treasure he was supposed to be transporting back to his homeland. To keep this secret safe, the captain deliberately sank his own ship and escaped in a small boat. Coming ashore on an uninhabited island, the captain dug the heavy chest inland. He became lost and both he and his treasure sank to the bottom of a treacherous swamp.

Vengeance and Betrayal

Two themes that appear again and again in the tales of pirates are revenge and disloyalty. Pirate captains have no tolerance for treachery, even if they practice it themselves. A pirate story is often



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Battle Tiles, Avalon Games, is a fun, and exciting way to improve your gaming experience. Use these high quality map tiles to create new and challenging battle arenas for your miniature gaming, or use them to create maps for role playing games of all types.

Each square is set to a 1" to 5 foot scale, and each tile is created so you can interconnect them with other tiles to create massive settings for adventure and battle.

At a cost of less than fifty cents a page, and hundreds of possible combinations, you can't go wrong with Battle Tiles, so get started and have a battle to remember.

Avalon Clip Art

Avalon has tons of artwork, all ready for you to use. Great art for a great price is our goal, so grab a handful right away.

Character Portraits

Need a fast picture of what your character looks like. These professional, full color works will fit the bill.

Each set comes with 10 full color portraits of different fantasy characters, each suitable for use in all of the most popular role-playing games.

Sets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are all ready for download, so go get 'em.

Mini-Games

Avalon Games is happy to offer tons of little games, that we like to call Mini-Games, and with over 30 titles, you are sure to find one or more games that will blow your mind. Little, however, does not mean lame. No, these are great gaming gems, just in small bite sized forms. Fun, fast and cheap, they are a great way to get some gaming fun into a short block of time. Have a look, you might be surprised at what you find.

Worlds of Wonder

Worlds of Wonder is a fast, simple to play RPG system designed for use by advanced players who wish to create detailed characters without having to roll on endless charts and deal with endless rules.

After 30+ years of playing, running and designing games, be they RPG's or board games, we at Avalon have come to one conclusion. Its not the game's rules that make it enjoyable, but the people you play with. With that in mind, Worlds of Wonder takes the most important aspect of any RPG, the character creation, and tries to offer players, and their GM, the tools needed to make the time spent playing together well worth the time spent creating the characters.

Worlds of Wonder Expansions

Want more Worlds of Wonder? Try one of the many expansions for the system. More monsters, foes, magic, skill sets and gaming stuff to keep you occupied for weeks, months, hell maybe for a lifetime. Ever expanding, the WoW system is made for gaming fun, so don't wait, have an adventure and enter Worlds of Wonder.

Arcana

Arcana is generic world, designed for use with any Fantasy RPG System, and so the information presented here and in other Arcana expansions will of course be a bit vague as to stats, levels and powers. The intention is to give the GM and players a world rich in personality, history and depth, one where they can seek adventure, but use any RPG system they feel most conferrable with.

The basics of the game world are presented here in the core book, but as expansions are released, the complexity of the world will grow as more and more of its history, dangers and wonders are explored. When it is all said and done, Arcana will become a vast world of detailed and expansive depth, one where that you and your friends can full explore.

Game Geek

Avalon's Monthly game magazine, inside you will find tons of gaming goodness, free games, add on materials for many of Avalon's titles, and a monthly sections dedicated to S&G, Battle Axe and Arcana. Great game stuff each and every month.


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making loans that change lives.**



loans that
change lives

S & G Battle System

Avalon's premier game system the S&G battle system allows you to play skirmish level engagements, and do so with a fast, easy to learn system that also allows for endless expansions and genres. With S&G you can fight battles between fantasy based elves and orcs, or blast off into the cold hard future with space marines and aliens.



Warlord Grom

Strength 3


Speed 8 / 1

Movement 4

Adrenal 4

Will 4

Health




Weapons and Armor

Weapons	As mod	Damage mod	Notes
Scimitar	-1	+1	-
Dagger	+0	-1	-


Special Abilities

- Savage Blow (Attack, 3)**
Grom can make a single savage attack, often killing a foe outright with a single blow of his deadly scimitar. You must declare this ability is being used before Attack Dice are rolled. On a single attack, Grom may add +2 Attack Dice to his total for that attack. (With no limit to the number of dice that can be rolled)
- Command (Move, 2)**
Grom may use his loud demanding bellows to command other orcs near by. When this ability is used, Grom may activate any one orc character, who is within five squares. This activated character may perform one action. (Note that the character may still take their normal actions when their turn comes up.) Gram may perform this ability but once a turn.
- Shatter Shield (Attack, 1)**
Grom often shatters shields and weapons with his mighty blows. Declare this ability before the Attack Dice are rolled. If Grom scores a hit, instead of doing any damage, he may shatter, and thus destroy, a foe's readied weapon or shield (Your choice.) If the foe does not have a readied weapon or shield, then this ability has no effect.

Magical items gain a save. Roll 1D6, and on a roll of 6+, the item resists the effect. Per five points of the item's cost, over the first five points, adds an extra +1 to the die roll is gained.



Spirit Tiger







Wolf




Night Stalker




Lamia




Major Glory



Gyea



Kir



Sie

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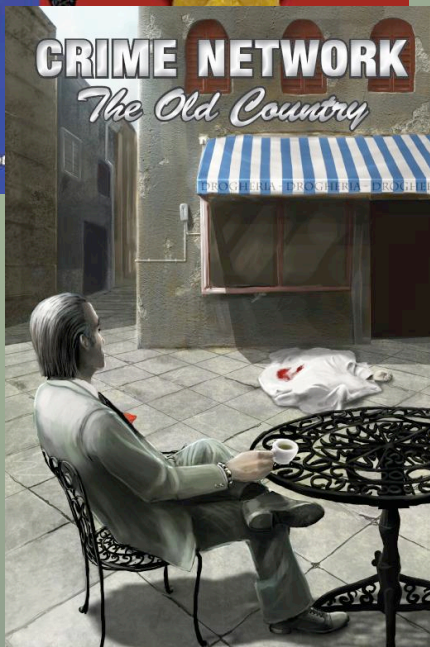


Endorsed by
Sol Bradman
Director of Training, Counter Terrorism Operations
Security Solutions International

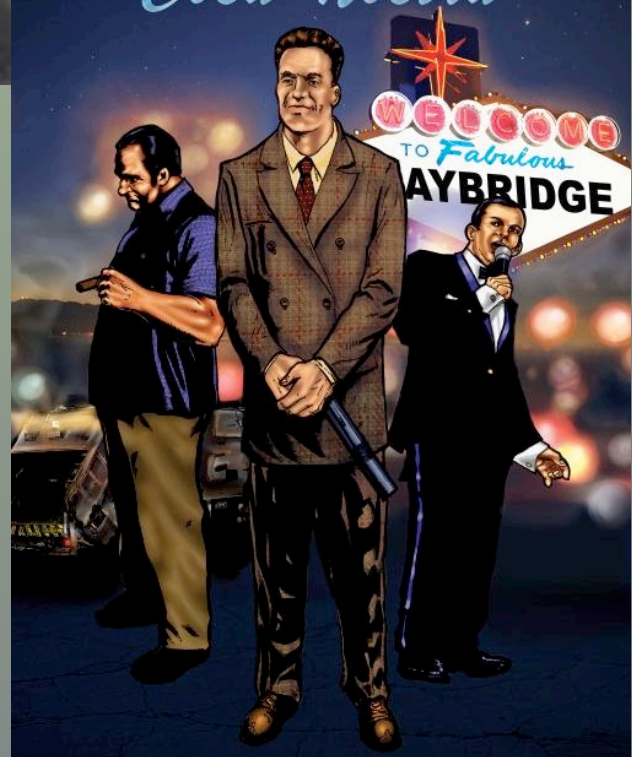
Operation Hydra Den *A Terror Network Game Module*



CRIME NETWORK *The Old Country*



CRIME NETWORK *Cosa Nostra*



Battle Axe is a simple to play tabletop system for skirmish level battles. Using cards instead of dice, you will find the game to be less luck based and much more tactical in nature. The rules and cards provide here will be enough to get you started, and new characters and rule expansions are on the way so you can continue to increase both the size and composition of your War Bands.

