

CAPTAIN PETER BLOOD, Pirate and Physician

KEYS & SECRETS

Key of Unrequited Love: Arabella Bishop

It is madness, falling in desperate love with the prim niece of a Barbados plantation owner, but Arabella Bishop is worthy of your devotion. As headstrong as she is beautiful, Arabella knows you only as a dangerous villain.

You gain **1 XP** whenever Captain Blood has to make a decision that is influenced by Arabella.

You gain **2 XP** every time he attempts to win Arabella's affection.

You gain **5 XP** every time Blood puts himself in harm's way or makes a sacrifice for Arabella.

You gain **10 XP** by buying off the Key, abandoning Arabella and forswearing love forever.

Key of the Guardian: Young Ned Hagthorpe

As he lay dying on in your arms, you promised old Hagthorpe that you'd raise his child as a proper pirate. You've made Young Ned your Ship's Boy and have sworn to keep the lad safe, no matter what!

You gain **1 XP** every time Ned is present in a scene with Captain Blood.

You gain **2 XP** whenever Captain Blood has to make a decision that is influenced by Ned.

You gain **5 XP** every time Captain Blood rescues Ned from harm!

You gain **10 XP** by buying off the Key, severing your relationship with Ned.

Secret of the Hidden Pocket

If you ever need to, you can produce any number of small but useful items – a skeleton key, an oyster knife – regardless of how well you've been searched. To see if you've got something up your sleeve, spend two Instinct and make a successful Ability check appropriate to the item's use.

POOLS & ABILITIES

Instinct: 4

Default defensive Ability is React: Expert, +2

Persuasion: Competent, +1

Vigor: 3

Default defensive Ability is Endure: Mediocre, +0

Swordplay: Expert, +2

Reason: 3

Default defensive Ability is Resist: Competent, +1

Medicine: Competent, +1

Etiquette: Competent, +1

All other abilities are: Mediocre, +0

NED HAGTHORPE, Ship's Boy

KEYS & SECRETS

Key of the Imposter

She's bound and determined to follow in her father's piratical footsteps, and the fact that she's a woman isn't going to stop her. They call her Ned and that's good enough. Captain Blood must not find out!

You gain **1 XP** whenever Ned passes herself off as a boy.

You gain **2 XP** whenever she convinces others in spite of serious skepticism.

You gain **5 XP** when her story survives a deliberate attempt to reveal the shocking truth!

You gain **10 XP** by buying off the Key, confessing your true identity to Blood.

Key of Unrequited Love: Captain Blood

All right, it's true. You are madly, deeply, passionately in love with the man. What woman wouldn't be? He's a handsome pirate captain and a qualified physician! If only things were different...

You gain **1 XP** whenever Ned has to make a decision that is influenced by Captain Blood.

You gain **2 XP** every time she attempts to win Blood's affection.

You gain **5 XP** every time Ned puts herself in harm's way or makes a sacrifice for Captain Blood!

You gain **10 XP** by buying off the Key, abandoning Peter Blood and forswearing love forever.

Secret of Small Stature

As Shakespeare said, "though she be but little, she is fierce!" You gain a **free bonus die** any time Ned is avoiding an attack from someone larger than her, or any other situation in which her reduced size may help.

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Instinct: 4

Default defensive Ability is React: Competent, +1

Stealth: Competent, +1

Vigor: 3

Default defensive Ability is Endure: Expert, +2

Acrobatics: Expert, +2

Swordplay: Competent, +1

Reason: 3

Default defensive Ability is Resist: Mediocre, +0

Deceit: Competent, +1

All other abilities are: Mediocre, +0

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You gain **2 XP** every time she attempts to win Blood's affection.

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SOLAR SYSTEM 15 MINUTE DEMO: ARABELLA'S RESCUE

THE SET-UP

- ✓ Introduce yourself, shake hands, and hand out the two characters.
- ✓ Ask each player to describe who their character is and what they want – no player-to-player secrets. Explain that the goal of the demo is to accumulate as many experience points in ten minutes as possible, that hitting Keys is how you gain experience, and that they should help each other by playing to their partner's Keys whenever possible. Don't talk about game mechanics beyond this.

THE SITUATION

Arabella Bishop has been kidnapped by French pirates led by the evil Captain Levasseur. She's being held on the remote island of La Désirade, a leper colony near Guadeloupe. **She must be rescued! Go!**

SCENE ONE

Start the demo outside the crude building where she's being held. **Ned and Captain Blood have just been spotted by French pirates guarding the place!**

- ✓ There can be a fight, or a chase, or a ruse, or whatever. Praise their plan!
- ✓ Explain the die mechanic.
- ✓ Demonstrate basic Ability checks as they kick some pirate ass. This should be resolved in 1-2 rolls.
- ✓ The French Pirate Scum have no Pools, Swordplay at Competent, and all other Abilities at Mediocre.

SCENE TWO

We meet Arabella and the creepy Dr. Brinkman, who wears gloves and a high-collared cassock to disguise his leprosy. He's in league with Levasseur and is acting as Arabella's "chaperone". **Brinkman will try to persuade Arabella that Blood is a dangerous criminal, worse than the French, and that she should wait for her father to pay her ransom.** Note that his bonus die applies to Ned, too! Make Arabella insult Captain Blood and show her revulsion. It should explicitly be a contest between the players and Brinkman.

- ✓ Explain using Secrets.
- ✓ Demonstrate a social conflict, hitting Keys (if they have not already) and the use of Secrets. Again, 1-2 rolls. Keep it moving.
- ✓ Doctor Brinkman, the Dutch Leper has no Pools, Persuasion, Deceit, and React at Competent, all other Abilities at Mediocre.

Secret of the Specialty (Persuasion): Swaying Women

Brinkman enjoys a bonus die in any attempt to persuade a woman.

SCENE THREE

Levasseur really wants to kick Captain Blood's ass, so this whole set-up was an elaborate trap! The French pirate captain shows up with more goons for the big throw-down. He should menace Arabella and boast about his cutlass and definitely out Ned. Have a sneaky pirate climb the rafters to jump Captain Blood. If Arabella is on the player's side, she can mix it up by tripping somebody or something, giving the bad guy a penalty die.

- ✓ Explain using pools and gift/penalty dice. Hand each player a gift die and stress that they can give it to the Story Guide, too!
- ✓ Demonstrate using pools and maybe an acrobatic stunt to allow the Story Guide to assign a penalty die.

Captain Levasseur, French Buccaneer

POOLS

Instinct: 1
Vigor: 2
Reason: 1

ABILITIES

Swordplay (Vigor): Expert, +2
Acrobatics (Vigor): Competent, +1
Endure (Vigor): Competent, +1
React (Instinct): Expert, +2
Resist (Reason): Mediocre, +0
All other abilities: Mediocre, +0

Secret of the Signature Weapon: Parlementaire

Levasseur carries a fine Damascus steel cutlass named "Parlementaire." He enjoys a bonus die to any action taken with it, and any other character else attempting to use the weapon receives a penalty die.

WRAP-UP

Once they've triumphed or been crushed, praise them for their XP tally.

- ✓ Explain that XP is used to improve Pools and buy new Keys and Secrets. Show buy-off to illustrate that you are always rewarded for the things that interest you in play.
- ✓ If you have time, explain Bringing Down the Pain as a concept – an option for players to engage in a more granular conflict if they are unhappy with an outcome – but don't make it available for the demo.
- ✓ Even more time? Throw in a Pool refreshment scene. Maybe back in Jamaica, where Blood is a wanted fugitive of the English crown, or aboard Blood's 20-gun pirate sloop, the ... *Arabella*.
- ✓ Thank them for playing and point them to both *The Shadow of Yesterday* and the *Solar System* booklet.