

CAPTAIN BLOOD, ISSUE ONE

by

MATTHEW SHEPHERD

THIRD DRAFT

SLG PUBLISHING, 2008

GENERAL NOTES

Translations:

One of the interesting things about the book is how international it is. The comic can't get into this at length, but the context of the novel has a lot to do with the European wars of the late 1600s, and as an outlaw, Captain Blood moves through the English, Spanish, French and Dutch circles.

All four languages make appearances in the book, and Blood's ability to speak all four is important to the plot at certain points. The fact that he is fluent in English and Spanish, and capable of handling French and Dutch, is a minor note in the catalogue of things that makes him impressive, but it's still impressive.

Also, much is made of the fact that Don Diego deceives Blood's crew by feigning that he speaks only Spanish, but in fact understands their English just fine. This happens in the second issue, but needs to be set up in the first.

So, first of all, we need to figure out how to establish whether people are speaking English, French, Spanish or Dutch. This can be done with certain fonts, or by using the old comics standby of sticking all non-English speech in triangle brackets like <so>, but the triangle brackets won't help us tell the French from the Spanish from the Dutch. At the moment, I think different (but still very legible) fonts are the way to go. Word balloon shapes might be another option. At any rate, it IS important, and I'll be putting (translated) tags in word balloons where it's important.

First-issue (translated) text is all "Spanish."

Race (and cast):

One important deviation that I want to make from the book is to include black people among the escaped slaves, and among the pirates. This isn't implausible -- there IS a tradition of black piracy in and around Jamaica, largely escaped slaves who took to the lives of seafaring free men in the only way they could. Santini's novel basically tosses off the word "negro" a dozen times, then they never come up again, but I'd like to think that it's because he wrote the book around 1908. There were black pirates, and woman pirates -- the Brotherhood of the Coast was founded on what people today would probably call libertarian principles, so it was a natural place for iconoclasts and free-thinkers to wind up. I've streamlined Blood's crew-cast by combining two plot-minor characters, Hagthorpe and Dyke, into one character -- Dyke -- and Dyke is now black; his character is

essentially the same as the novel. Smart, sailing experience, a natural choice for Blood when he's choosing slaves to escape with.

I'm not going to get into racial breakdowns in the comic at all, but it would be good to see some black faces in among the crew other than Dyke's. No big deal, nothing special about it, just -- there were black pirates back then, and Santini gave them kind of short shrift in the book, and it doesn't take anything away from Captain Blood the novel to have this little push towards accuracy.

Sexuality:

Okay. First of all -- this is NOT going to be an overt thing in the comic. Subtle at most, meaningful glances, etc., but Blood is at least bisexual, and it's pretty obvious when you read the book that he and Pitt have something going on beyond just being good pals. This is augmented by the fact that pirates -- again, as societal outcasts and free thinkers -- were very open about allowing people to be themselves in terms of orientation. That, and in the novel, Blood only has a single love interest, and the adjective used to describe her, again and again and again, is "boyish." Her boyish laugh, her boyish figure, her boyish ways. I don't think the author could have gotten away with a novel about a bisexual pirate back in 1908, but he and Pitt are amaaaazingly close, and the only woman he expresses a sort of distant affection for in the book is always described as being attractive because she's a lot like a boy. It doesn't take a genius to do the math here.

Again, this isn't a major theme. This isn't "The Adventures of Gay Captain Blood, the Gay Pirate Who is Gay." But the fact that he and Pitt have a relationship that extends beyond being good friends isn't necessarily something to shy away from, either. Subtly.

Wardrobe:

We'll get into this in the page-by-page too, but Peter Blood is seriously all about style. The book talks as much about his outfits as it does about his swordplay -- he's always dressed to the nines, immaculately groomed, etc. This actually is a character point at the two-thirds mark of the book, after he's getting disillusioned with piracy... he starts letting stubble grow, and doesn't dress immaculately, and that's how everyone knows he's cracking up. Forget the whole raggedy eyepatch-and-stained-pantaloons thing (well, don't -- there'll be plenty of that with Cahusac, Lavasseur, and the other pirates). But Blood needs to be impeccable whenever possible.

And this will sound weird, but hats are going to be a key. Especially since this is B&W: there are lots of skirmishes in the book between Blood and English soldiers, Spanish sailors, Spanish soldiers, French pirates, etc. Keeping who is with who straight is going to be a challenge, so hats might be a good way of working through it. Just a thought.

On with the show!

ISSUE ONE, PAGE ONE

PAGE DETAILS: First page of the series, and it's all about Blood. Peter Blood, that is. Without getting too deep into the novel's description of him -- tallish, dark brown hair, blue eyes, fine features, thin lips -- the key thing to Blood is confidence. Peter Blood never really loses, because it never really occurs to Peter Blood that he CAN lose. Setbacks, yes, moments of peril, sure, but Peter Blood is supremely confident in himself and his abilities. A doctor, a soldier, a sailor, a man of letters: this is like a Buckaroo Banzai of the late 1600s. Were this story happening now he would be a combination of Batman and James Bond (yet strangely fumbling around Arabella Bishop). And that confidence is supremely important, because we are introducing him in very humbling circumstances.

PANEL ONE:

Full-page splash. We're in Jamaica, in the brutal slave-driven sugarcane plantations of the 1600s. We see Peter Blood, his hands shackled behind his back -- dressed in a simple white shirt and slacks, and possibly a wide-brimmed hat (authenticity says yes; dramatic license says no), being prodded forward with some other slaves, both black and white, by a squat, ferocious boar of a man -- Kent, the slave overseer and #2 to Blood's "owner," the evil Colonel Bishop. Blood bruised, but still dignified. He is the least mistreated of all his fellow slaves (and we will see why soon enough). This caption sequence will be repeated on the first page of every issue in the series -- it's a quick update on where we're at, a super-brief recap of the series to date, and a nice hyped-up way of getting into the melodrama of a good pirate yarn.

CAPTION (1)

This, then, is Peter Blood:

CAPTION (2)

By profession a doctor.

CAPTION (3)
By experience a soldier.

CAPTION (4)
By misfortune: a slave!

ISSUE ONE, PAGE TWO

PAGE DETAILS: A shift from the blazing heat of the Jamaican sun to the darkness of a rude shack. Medical facilities for sailors in Jamaica in the 1600s were practically non-existent, so Blood isn't entering anything resembling a hospital (especially since he's going to be treating the Spanish prisoners, not the British ones). So while he is acting in a capacity as a doctor, fresh water and somewhat clean rags are about the best he has to work with throughout the upcoming "doctoring" scenes.

PANEL ONE:

Blood is shoved by Kent into a darkened room. The room is filled with cots; men in Spanish uniforms, some grievously injured, are on the cots. Kent (the overseer, "herding" Blood) speaks to Blood's back.

KENT
Here are the prisoners, "doctor"...

PANEL TWO

As Blood staggers, Kent leans over and grunts into his ear.

KENT
You didn't think you'd be treating
OUR men, did you, Blood? You speak
some Spanish.

BLOOD
I spent two years in a Spanish
PRISON after fighting alongside the
French in the Netherlands.

PANEL THREE

Kent gives Blood a shove onto the ground, towards the darkest, dingiest part of the room where the wounded men are.

BLOOD
That encourages a certain FLUENCY--

BLOOD (2)

--OOFF!

KENT

Here you are, then. Spaniards fool
enough to get on the wrong side of
British iron scarce deserve even a
SLAVE's care.

PANEL FOUR

Blood kneels up as Kent looms over him from behind. Kent is
undoing Blood's shackles, but we can't see that.

BLOOD

You're the very soul of COURTESY,
Overseer Kent.

KENT

Tend to the Spaniards, slave.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE THREE

PAGE DETAILS: Another page in the gloom of the "hospital."
If there's a trait of Blood's to sell on this page, it is
diligence: he bears no love for the Spanish, nor for Kent,
but he is a doctor and will treat these men regardless.

PANEL ONE

A Spanish sailor, leg shredded with lacerations, looks up at
Blood.

SPANISH SAILOR ONE

(translated)

You... are helping us?

BLOOD

(translated)

All I'm fit for, apparently.

PANEL TWO

The Spanish sailor grabs Blood's arm.

SPANISH SAILOR ONE

(translated)

But you would TREAT a wounded
enemy?

PANEL THREE

Blood pulls his arm away.

PANEL FOUR

Blood bends to his task, face intent and serious.

BLOOD
(translated)
I bear no love for the Spanish.

BLOOD (2)
(translated)
I am a DOCTOR. You are wounded.
That is all.

PANEL FIVE

The Spaniard lifts himself up to bring himself closer to Blood's face.

SPANISH SAILOR ONE
A doctor that speaks fluent SPANISH
-- a SLAVE here in Jamaica?

BLOOD
Not by my choosing.

PANEL SIX

Close on Blood's face as he reflects on his past.

BLOOD
In fact, I am here because I did
NOT make a choice.

BLOOD
Given TWO curs named James to
choose from... I chose NEITHER.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE FOUR

PAGE DETAILS: Flashback time. We're going to be compacting the first 50 or so (and, oddly, the 50 most boring) pages of the book into a few pages of comic, so if you have a better layout idea, feel free to retool this.

PANEL ONE

Blood on his balcony, tending his geraniums. Below him, the rabble march -- hoes and rakes; improvised weapons.

BLOOD
(caption)
I spent my youth soldiering. Tiring
of that, I trained and settled as a
(MORE)

BLOOD (cont'd)
 doctor in a small English town -- a
 town seized by the madness of
 James, Duke of MONMOUTH. He was
 vying for the throne against James,
 Duke of YORK.

PANEL TWO

Closer on Blood: tending to his flowers, lips tight,
 disapproving.

BLOOD
 (caption)
 I would have none of it. I am no
 COWARD, but I had no interest in
 Monmouth and his desperate claims
 to royalty.

BLOOD
 (speech)
 Quo, quo, scelesti, ruitis?

PANEL THREE

Blood is looking further down now, past his flowers over the
 edge of the balcony, down at his front door where Jeremy
 Pitt is hammering away.

BLOOD
 (caption)
 My military days behind me, I was a
 man of medicine, not of war -- a
 HEALER, not a slayer.

PITT
 (off-panel, from below)
 Blood! Doctor PETER BLOOD!

PANEL FOUR

We're still focused on Blood -- as we will be for the
 duration of the flashback, as this is his story told
 personally -- and now looking over his shoulder as he looks
 down to the street at young Jeremy Pitt, who is shouting up
 at him, hands cupped over his mouth. Pitt is a decade
 younger than Blood; while Blood is good-looking in an
 aristocratic and composed way, Pitt is a brash and handsome
 young man, rough-and-tumble but roguishly appealing. It's a
 kind of George Clooney/Brad Pitt dynamic between the two of
 them -- the smooth unflappable adult and the energetic
 younger man. At the moment, however, he's in a state of near
 panic. He is bloodied from battle, one sleeve torn.

BLOOD

Young PITT! Shouldn't you be at sea, navigating some--

PITT

No time, Doctor Blood! It's Lord GILDOY! He lies sore wounded, and sent me to fetch you!

PANEL FIVE

Blood and Pitt on a horses, riding. Blood has a medical bag stowed on his saddle behind him.

PITT

Why will you not FIGHT, sir? For Right, for Liberty, for Religion?

BLOOD

I have soldiered and sailed with the Dutch and the French, young Pitt.

PANEL SIX

Blood and Pitt riding up to a small farm in the countryside. Pitt points ahead at a ramshackle building near a barn.

BLOOD

I have seen ENOUGH war, at land and sea. And have little faith in Monmouth--

PITT

Here, Blood! At this farmstead.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE FIVE

PAGE DETAILS: Introducing Lord Gildoy -- who is on balance pretty forgettable -- and Commander Hobart, who may become an antagonist if the series moves past the novel into an ongoing.

PANEL ONE

Wounded Lord Gildoy on a shabby bed in a shabby room. He is definitely wounded -- blood soaks his tunic, his sleeves are slashed to ribbons, and there is a big crude bandage on his head. The owner of the farm is there, as are his wife and daughter, all terrified.

GILDOY
Blood... you came...

PANEL TWO

Blood leans over Gildoy, tending to his wounds. Pitt, anxious, waits by the door.

BLOOD
I am bound by Hippocratic oath,
sir. And you have been a GENEROUS
patron in the past.

GILDOY
The battle, Blood. A rout.

PANEL THREE

Gildoy seizes Blood's arm. His life is over, one way or the other, and he knows it.

GILDOY
James of York's forces BROKE us...
and Kirke's DRAGOONS march on us
even now..

PANEL FOUR

Blood is still tending to Gildoy's wounds.

BLOOD
What's to fear? This is a Christian
country, and even York's men would
not make war upon the wounded.

HOBART
(off)
Is that so, TRAITOR?

PANEL FIVE

Captain Hobart is in the doorway; two of his dragoons (jack-booted, lobster-coated York soldiers, essentially) have Pitt in their clutches. Hobart himself is a nasty piece of work; angry-faced, beetle-browed. I kind of see him as a Dan Hedaya type.

HOBART
No nonconformist will know MERCY
when Captain HOBART captures them!

BLOOD

(off)

But this man is wounded --

HOBART (2)

Am I to be TENDER to the lives of
rebels? You shall HANG from the
gallows on the Weston road!

ISSUE ONE, PAGE SIX

PAGE DETAILS: Nothing fancy, just moving this flashback
forward.

PANEL ONE

Blood and Pitt are being marched by Hobart and his dragoons
down the road; both in chains. Obvious bruises and fresh
tears on their clothing -- they have been beaten in the
interim.

BLOOD

(caption)

Lord Gildoy's status saved us from
immediate hanging -- but what
awaited us was no better.

PANEL TWO

Behind the prisoners, the farm is ablaze.

BLOOD

(caption)

Gildoy was taken, the farm
destroyed. The brute HOBART also
took the farmer, and... the
screams, the screams of the women
as I marched away...

PANEL THREE

Blood's face: suppressed rage. A switch has been thrown in
his head -- whatever crimes Blood commits in the future,
he's lost any loyalty to the crown (and humanity in general)
as of this moment.

BLOOD

(caption)

That day confirmed my suspicion
that man is the VILEST work of God
-- and only a FOOL would be a
healer of a species best
exterminated.

PANEL FOUR

Blood and Pitt -- slightly less filthy but still less than presentable -- in shackles in a courtroom.

BLOOD

(caption)

Court did little to CHANGE that opinion.

JEFFREYS

(off)

Good GOD, what a generation of VIPERS we live in!

PANEL FIVE

Judge Jeffreys, a pallid reed of a man, ridiculous in his powdered wig; he is dying of cancer but does not yet know it.

BLOOD

(caption)

A CROOKED court, with a CANCEROUS judge -- blood-crazed Jeffreys, notorious for hanging all with a whiff of Monmouth sympathies. Even on death's door, he was determined to kill as many as he could before succumbing.

JEFFREYS

You KNEW -- koff -- you knew what side Lord Gildoy fought on, and STILL you chose to succor him?

PANEL SIX

Blood answers calmly and precisely.

BLOOD

My business, my lord, was with his WOUNDS, not his politics.

JEFFREYS

You -- koff -- you DARE?!?

ISSUE ONE, PAGE SEVEN

PANEL ONE

Jeffreys is leaning forward, wild-eyed, a bit crazed.

JEFFREYS

Do you LAUGH, sirrah, with the rope
around your neck? On the very --
koff -- threshold of eternity?

PANEL TWO

Blood has had it. He's losing his temper a touch too,
allowing his arrogance to show.

BLOOD

I am a PHYSICIAN, your lordship,
and I would not exchange the noose
you fling around my neck for the
STONE you carry in your body.

PANEL THREE

Jeffreys is pale, his eyes hollow -- he knows he has
something wrong with him, and Blood is delivering his death
sentence.

BLOOD

(off)

My doom is a light pleasantry
compared to which the GREAT JUDGE
has prepared for you!

JEFFREYS

The GALLOWS for you, then! THE
GALLOWS FOR YOU!

PANEL FOUR

Blood and Pitt in a cell with other desperate men.

BLOOD

(caption)

And so I was sentenced to hang. But
that, too, did NOT go as planned.

JEFFREYS

(off)

On your feet, slaves!

PANEL FIVE

Jeffreys is standing behind a guard on the other side of the bars, looking smug.

PITT
(off)
Slaves?

JEFFREYS
His Majesty has commanded that we provide eleven hundred REBELS -- koff -- for work on PLANTATIONS in our SOUTHERN territories.

PANEL SIX

Jeffreys leers, enjoying the bad news.

JEFFREYS
This is NOT mercy.

JEFFREYS (2)
This is a living death; a horror far WORSE -- koff -- than the gallows. Your traitorous lives are OVER. You shall soon envy the dead.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE EIGHT

PANEL ONE

Blood in the hold of a ship, in chains, with Pitt. Here's where we see (but don't meet, not really) the rest of Blood's principal crew. WOLVERSTONE is a hulking giant of a man, with an eyepatch and shaggy beard. He's a brute. OGLE is short, stout, and looks keenly intelligent. DYKE is a thin black man with a slightly agitated expression.

BLOOD
(caption)
The sea voyage to Jamaica was tortuous. My fellow convicts included a HANDFUL of soliders and sailors -- among them a giant named Wolverstone, the former ship's gunner Ogle and an ex-quartermaster named Dyke. Mainly, though, we were peasants and laborers. Conditions were MISERABLE, illness rife.

PANEL TWO

Blood, Pitt, Wolverstone, Ogle, Dyke, Dyke and others lined up on shore, in chains, looking pathetic.

BLOOD
 (caption)
 We were sold like cattle to the
 plantation owners. I fetched the
 princely sum of TEN DOLLARS.

PANEL THREE

Back to reality... Blood is finishing tying a bandage, continuing to speak to the sailor.

BLOOD
 (translated)
 And thus I came to Bridgetown,
 Jamaica. Free in spirit but not in
 FLESH, the "property" of the
 LOATHSOME colonel of this island, a
 monster named...

BISHOP
 (off)
 BLOOD! What are you DOING there?

ISSUE ONE, PAGE NINE

PAGE DETAILS: Meeting Colonel Bishop; not a major character in issues two and three, but back with a vengeance in issues four and five. Also in the ongoing (if that happens). Bishop is more Blood's antithesis: he's huge, fat, slovenly, crude and brutal. Physically imposing (almost as much as Wolverstone) but more bulk and savagery than muscle. High-school football steroid freak at 50, all aggression and frustration.

PANEL ONE

Bishop looms over Blood, who is turning to face him. Bishop is as described, hands on hips.

BLOOD
 Colonel Bishop. I am setting a
 broken leg.

BISHOP
 I can see that, fool. Who gave you
 leave to set SPANISH legs, and to
 jabber with them meanwhile?

PANEL TWO

Bishop is raising a meaty fist to threaten Blood. Blood is unflinching.

BLOOD
Your own OVERSEER, Colonel.

BISHOP
Do NOT take that tone with me,
Blood -- lest I REMIND you of your
station with the LASH.

PANEL THREE

Blood raises a peaceful hand.

BLOOD
But if you beat me, who will treat
the governor's GOUT? The doddering
sycophants who call themselves
doctors here? The governor knows
I'm the only COMPETENT physician on
this island.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE TEN

PAGE DETAILS: Another page, another major character -- this time we introduce Arabella Bishop, Colonel Bishop's daughter and Blood's love interest (mostly from afar) for the entire series. She's -- well, the chief adjective used to describe her in the series is "boyish," so make of THAT what you will. I figure kind of a Winona Ryder vibe. She's attracted to Blood, despite the age difference (figure she's about 17 or so, and he's in his late 30s (hey, I didn't write it)) and he to her. Neither, of course, can act on this.

PANEL ONE

Bishop reluctantly relents. Blood is smug.

BISHOP
You abuse your TALENTS, slave. One
day the governor will see things MY
way.

BLOOD
Not while gout inflames him, sir. I
may be your SLAVE, but we both
serve at HIS pleasure.

PANEL TWO

Bishop keeps trying to bully as Blood side-steps him.

BISHOP
The governor won't be governor
FOREVER, Blood.

BLOOD
But for today, sir, he is.

PANEL THREE

Short panel: Blood is leaving the building.

BLOOD
Owned by ONE fool and beholden to a
GREATER one... Peter Blood, what
have you --

PANEL FOUR

Blood comes up short, almost running into Arabella, who is
carrying a basket of fruit for the prisoners.

BLOOD
Arabella -- ah -- Miss Bishop.

ARABELLA
Hello, Mister Blood.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE ELEVEN

PANEL ONE

Blood gestures at Arabella's basket.

BLOOD
You have the wrong BUILDING,
methinks --

ARABELLA
This is for the SPANIARDS, Mister
Blood. The English sailors are
fawned over enough.

PANEL TWO

Arabella and Blood draw a little closer to each other.

BLOOD
You may incur your uncle's
displeasure. Had the Colonel his
way, I should never have dressed
Spanish wounds.

ARABELLA

And you assume I must be of my
uncle's mind on all matters?

PANEL THREE

Arabella backs Blood down a little.

ARABELLA

I am neither inhumane, nor a
COWARD. I'll thank you to REMEMBER
that.

BLOOD

Aye. I should speak in a manner
befitting your PROPERTY, after all.

PANEL FOUR

Blood raises his hands -- the shackles are off his wrists,
but you can still see where they have been chafing him.
Arabella looks slightly shamed.

ARABELLA

If I had not convinced my uncle
to... PURCHASE you... you would
have found yourself in worse hands.

BLOOD

My good fortune, then, to be
shackled by your family. Rather
than a less... generous one.

PANEL FIVE

Pulling back to frame the two. There are soldiers walking by
them, and we can see by contrast how shabby and unarmed
Blood is. His mind is all he has, a slave and prisoner in a
military colony.

ARABELLA

Must you always be rallying, Mister
Blood? Must you always mock?

BLOOD

Miss Arabella, sometimes a man must
laugh at himself or go MAD. I do
not mock you.

PANEL SIX

Back in close. Arabella draws closer. This could be a
prelude to a kiss, but Blood is pulling back slightly.

ARABELLA
And why could you not, Mister
Blood? What am I to you?

BLOOD
The neice of my owner.

ARABELLA (2)
That is an evasion, sir. Answer me
true --

OGLE
(off)
BLOOD! COME QUICKLY!

ISSUE ONE, PAGE TWELVE

PAGE DETAILS: Ogle, who we have seen previously on the ship. He's short, a bit rotund, but very very sharp. I have Bob Hoskins in mind for some reason -- a pleasant-enough looking guy, but capable of nastiness (have you seen Danny the Dog? I think it was released as Unleashed in the States).

PANEL ONE

Blood tears his eyes from Arabella to look at Ogle, who is sweaty and panicked. Clearly, Ogle has come to seek Blood not only because Blood is a doctor, but because the other men look up to him.

OGLE
It's Pitt, sir! He talked back to
Kent, and Kent -- he's gone MAD,
Blood! He's beating Pitt to DEATH!

PANEL TWO

Blood is rushing with Ogle up the path.

BLOOD
Damn Kent's eyes! Why PITT? Why
NOW?

OGLE
All respect sir, but why NOT Pitt?
I know you two are friends, but
Kent's as likely to attack him as
anyone.

BLOOD (2)
I NEED Pitt, Ogle.

PANEL THREE

Blood is furious; you can see the gears in his head turning as he and Ogle rush to the plantation.

BLOOD

Pitt's more than a friend. He's a NAVIGATOR, the only one among ALL the slaves.

PANEL FOUR

Blood and Ogle come upon a series of crude huts: the slave quarters.

BLOOD

He is ESSENTIAL to any DREAM of escape. We --

PITT

(from hut)

AAAAAIIIIIGGHHHH!

PANEL FIVE

Blood bursts into the hut. Pitt is chained to the wall; Kent is beating him with a leather strap.

KENT

CUR! Show fangs to your master, will you?

BLOOD

KENT! You FOOL! You'll KILL him!

ISSUE ONE, PAGE THIRTEEN

PANEL ONE

Finally some action -- Blood hits Kent, hard, knocking him back.

BLOOD

STOP!

PANEL TWO

Kent is getting to his feet, clutching his beatin' strap. He's full of bloodlust -- a mad dog.

KENT

Hungry for a taste, Blood? I'll oblige ye --

BLOOD
WILL you, brute?

PANEL THREE

Kent lunges at Blood, but Blood side-steps him easily.

BLOOD
Come, then!
PANEL FOUR

As Kent turns, Blood punches him in the face with a right.

BLOOD
How will you FIGHT --

PANEL FIVE

Blood punches again with the left, taking Kent down.

BLOOD
-- a man who is not BOUND?

PANEL SIX

Blood stands over a prone Kent.

BLOOD
Nothing to say NOW, overseer?
"Master"?

PANEL SEVEN

Blood holds a dipper of water to Pitt's lips.

PITT
Dyke fell and couldn't get up...
Kent began to BEAT him, so I
spoke... I spoke up...

BLOOD
Easy, friend. Drink this.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE FOURTEEN

PANEL ONE

Bishop bursts into the hut, holding a whip.

BISHOP
SCOUNDREL! Now I have you!

PANEL TWO

Blood stands between Bishop and Pitt instinctively, shielding his friend from the wrathful fat bastard.

BISHOP
(off)
Assaulting Kent -- at last,
something even the GOVERNOR can't
overlook!

PANEL THREE

Bishop unfurls his whip, grinning nastily.

BISHOP
There won't be a square inch of
skin left on your back...

PANEL FOUR

Bishop looks off-panel, startled as an explosion rings out from the port. It should be a big baboom, something spectacular.

SF/X
BABOOOM!

BISHOP
What in God's NAME--

PANEL FIVE

A man in regimental uniform sticks his head into the hut (which I imagine is getting quite crowded at this point).

SOLDIER
COLONEL! THE SPANISH ARE ATTACKING
THE HARBOUR!

PANEL SIX

Bishop shoves a chubby finger in Blood's face. Blood is unmoved.

BISHOP
I'll be back for you.

BLOOD
Will you now?

PANEL SEVEN

Bishop is helping a staggering Kent from the tent.

BISHOP
On your FEET, Kent! To the fort!
The Spaniards are here!

ISSUE ONE, PAGE FIFTEEN

PANEL ONE

Blood starts to untie Pitt.

BLOOD
Jeremy, I need you. This may be our
chance, but we NEED a navigator.

PANEL TWO

Pitt collapses in Blood's arms.

PITT
Nnnngh...

BLOOD
BLAST it! Ogle! OGLE!

PANEL THREE

Ogle has entered the hut; Blood is grasping him by the
shoulders.

BLOOD
Gather the strongest of us.
ESPECIALLY anyone with sailing or
soldiering in their past -- Dyke,
Wolverstone.

OGLE
But Blood --

PANEL FOUR

Ogle gestures off-panel (vaguely in the direction of the
bay) in frustration.

OGLE

-- we're under attack! The Spanish ship has us by SURPRISE! Outgunned! God, man, the English might LOSE!

PANEL FIVE

Blood looks out toward the harbour.

BLOOD

Not might, Ogle, WILL.

BLOOD (2)

I'm COUNTING on it.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE SIXTEEN

PANEL ONE

Blood, Ogle, Wolverstone and Dyke, as well as some other slaves (black and white) are gathered by some bushes, looking out at the bay. Pitt is with them, unconscious and on a stretcher.

OGLE

Bishop has withdrawn to the fort.

BLOOD

Bungler. He was totally UNPREPARED. Easily overwhelmed. The Spanish just sailed in and took Bridgetown.

PANEL TWO

Wolverstone is getting up, but Blood has a hand on his shoulder.

WOLVERSTONE

We need to get down there and SHOW those Spanish dogs --

BLOOD

And if we win? Back to SLAVERY? Our triumphant return to chains?

PANEL THREE

BLOOD

They make too much MONEY off our backs to free us, Wolverstone. No -- this is OUR opportunity. Not Bishop's.

PANEL FOUR

OGLE

What do you have in mind?

BLOOD

We wait until DARK. The English soldiers are trapped in the fort. We'll allow the overconfident Spanish RUN of the town.

PANEL FIVE

BLOOD

Then we do the last thing anyone would EVER expect from slaves.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE EIGHTEEN

PANEL ONE

The Spanish run riot on the shore and up into the town.

SPANISH SAILOR TWO

(translated)

DON DIEGO! Bridgetown is OURS!

SPANISH SAILOR THREE

(translated)

The English are trapped in their fort! We are VICTORIOUS!

PANEL TWO

Don Diego (an elegant Spanish captain in his early forties) and his son, Don Esteban (late teens), are on the shore, looking with pride at their accomplishments.

DON DIEGO

(translated)

English DOGS! They took our sister ship by fortune... we take their town by FORCE!

DON ESTEBAN

(translated)

You have DONE it again, Father!

PANEL THREE

We can see Blood and crew watching from the bushes nearby.

BLOOD
That's their captain, Don Diego. He
seems to have his son with him.

BLOOD (2)
Excellent.

PANEL FOUR

Ogle looks disturbed.

OGLE
We've secured some skiffs. But
escaping in mere skiffs in this
confusion, without Pitt --

BLOOD
Ogle, you are an excellent gunner.
But you are no schemer.

PANEL FIVE

Blood grins.

BLOOD
Skiffs are no way to escape from
slavery.

BLOOD (2)
We are leaving with heads held
HIGH. Who's with me?

PANEL SIX

Blood's head turns off-panel as he hears a scream.

BLOOD
Board the skiffs. Stay quiet, stay
low. Load Pitt into the second one.
I will --

MARY TRAILL
(scream, off)
HELP! OH GOD, HELP ME!

BLOOD
-- I will return momentarily.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE NINETEEN

PANEL ONE

Mary Traill, an attractive woman in her early twenties (but not easily confused with Arabella), is running through the darkened streets, being pursued by two Spanish sailors.

MARY TRAILL
Please! Somebody! HELP!

SPANISH SAILOR ONE
(translated)
Your soldiers are pinned in the
FORT, my beauty --

SPANISH SAILOR TWO
(translated)
-- who will save you now?

PANEL TWO

From nowhere, Blood grabs one of the sailors from behind.

BLOOD
(translated)
I hope you're in a fit state...

PANEL THREE

Blood snaps the sailor's neck.

BLOOD
(translated)
...to meet your maker.

SPANISH SAILOR TWO
(off, translated)
What?!?

PANEL FOUR

The Spanish sailor turns as Blood picks up the dead sailor's sword.

SPANISH SAILOR ONE
Perro inglés!

BLOOD
Aye --

PANEL FIVE

As the Spanish soldier swings wildly, Blood runs him through with his sword. Right in the heart! Yow!

BLOOD
-- perro VIVO.

PANEL SIX

Blood grasps the fleeing girl by the arm.

BLOOD
What is your name, girl?

MARY TRAILL
Mary -- Mary Trail--

BLOOD
Get yourself to the Bishop estate.
You should be SAFE there. Give
Arabella Bishop my farewell.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE TWENTY

PAGE DETAILS AND A NOTE ABOUT THIS SHIP: This ship, currently Spanish, will become Blood's flagship for the rest of the series. And Blood is going to get in a LOT of sea battles, mainly against, well, other ships (and in one case a fort). In my opinion, as somebody without a huge interest in sailing ships of the pirate era, they all look... kind of the same.

So it's in our interest to make something ICONIC for this ship and stick to it. Perhaps a figurehead: a really awesome and unconventional figurehead, like a blindfolded woman brandishing a sword. This will be something that comes back again and again and again in sea battles, just so we have a shortcut to see which ship is Blood's.

PANEL ONE

Aboard the Spanish ship: two Spanish soldiers are standing lazy watch, looking at the party on shore. The figurehead mentioned above looms out from beyond them, keeping guard against the mysterious darkness.

SPANISH SAILOR ONE
(translated)
What did I do to deserve this duty?

SPANISH SAILOR TWO
(translated)
Drunk on cannon detail like me, you fool.

PANEL TWO

The Spanish sailors aren't paying attention as Wolverstone and Blood creep up behind them...

SPANISH SAILOR ONE

(translated)

So our comrades plunder the shore,
English trapped in their stinking
fort, while we guard against what?
Mermaids?

SPANISH SAILOR TWO

(translated)

At least Don Diego didn't flog us.

PANEL THREE

The Spanish sailor turns to see his comrade missing as Wolverstone looms behind him.

SPANISH SAILOR TWO

(translated)

You see, Hernando? Things could be
worse.

SPANISH SAILOR TWO (2)

(translated)

Hernando?

PANEL FOUR

Blood and his men hold quick counsel, standing over two dead bodies on the deck.

DYKE

There were four men belowdecks,
guarding the hold. Dead now.

BLOOD

Excellent. Ogle, take some men and
prepare the GUNS. Wolverstone,
Dyke, prepare to SAIL. We make for
Curaco, a Spanish port, and from
there back to Europe.

PANEL FIVE

OGLE

But Pitt is still unconscious. We
have no navigator.

BLOOD

Ah, but we do. He just doesn't KNOW
it yet.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE TWENTY-ONE

PANEL ONE

Don Diego, Don Estaban, and a few other crewmen are rowing back to the boat in a skiff. Their ship is laden with treasure, the two are cheering.

DON DIEGO

(translated)

Good MORNING, men! Witness another
TRIUMPH for Don Diego de Espinosa y
Valdez!

PANEL TWO

Diego is clambering up onto the ship from a ladder, surrounded by Spanish sailors -- from our vantage point, we can't see the Spanish sailors' faces (and neither can Don Diego, really).

DON DIEGO

(translated)

The English were sore UNREADY for
Spanish steel -- may they think
twice before attacking a Spanish...

PANEL THREE

Don Diego, Don Estaban and a few other Spanish crew members (who will appear mid-issue-two) are being seized by the "Spanish" sailors, who are Blood's men in Spanish sailor garb.

DON DIEGO

(translated)

...ship?

PANEL FOUR

Dyke is informing Blood, who is at the helm of the ship. Blood is shouting below to Ogle.

DYKE

Diego and Estaban have been taken!
They came in first, as you
expected!

BLOOD
 OGLE! Fire on the other skiffs!
 NOW, man! NOW!

PANEL FIVE

Cannon fire is hammering the living SHIT out of the nine other skiffs still in the water.

SPANISH SAILOR ONE
 (translated)
 Our ship -- FIRING on us?

SPANISH SAILOR TWO
 (translated)
 Don DIEGO! What are -- AAAAHHH!

ISSUE ONE, PAGE TWENTY-TWO

PANEL ONE

Wolverstone is consulting with Blood, who is looking through a spyglass.

WOLVERSTONE
 Diego is unconscious and the other skiffs are sunk. The ship is ours.

BLOOD
 And Bishop and Kent are exiting the fort. Wondering who saved them, no doubt.

PANEL TWO

Blood grins.

BLOOD
 Tell Ogle to fire on the fort. Aim high. I want Bishop alive.

BLOOD (2)
 I want him to REMEMBER this.

PANEL THREE

Bishop and Kent on the shore, looking out at the Spanish ship.

BISHOP
 Who-- who took the ship, Kent? Who could possibly have --

PANEL FOUR

A thunderous explosion bowls Bishop and Kent over.

KENT
DAMNATION!

PANEL FIVE

Bishop scrambles to his knees, holding a spyglass to his eye.

BISHOP
They fire on US?!? Who -- who
would--

PANEL SIX

Rounded ("spyglass-o-vision") panel, showing Blood and Wolverstone at the helm of the Spanish ship. Blood is waving.

BISHOP
(off)
BLOOD? Peter BLOOD?

ISSUE ONE, PAGE TWENTY-THREE

PANEL ONE

Bishop is trying to bark orders. A harried soldier is responding to him.

BISHOP
Ready a ship! We need to take him!
We need to CAPTURE him!

SOLDIER
Can't, sir! The Spanish scuttled
our ships last night!

PANEL TWO

Another explosion knocks Bishop et al. off their feet.

PANEL THREE

Bishop, covered in filth, blood on his face, is getting to his hands and knees.

BISHOP

Blood. I will kill you for this. If it's the last thing I do, I SWEAR it.

PANEL FOUR

Ogle, Dyke, Wolverstone and Blood confer.

OGLE

I can't believe it. I just can't.

BLOOD

It was your sharp gunning saved us, Mister Ogle. And it's away we are now, to FRIENDLIER shores.

PANEL FIVE

DYKE

We still don't have a NAVIGATOR, Blood. Pitt is unconscious.

BLOOD

Dyke. You worry too much.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE TWENTY-FOUR

PANEL ONE

Tight close-up of Don Diego's face as his eyes open a bleary crack. One eye is black.

DON DIEGO

Nnngghh...

PANEL TWO

Don Diego is tied to a bed; a reasonably luxurious one (we're in his quarters). His eyes are open wide now, he's very surprised.

DON DIEGO

(translated)

What... you.

DON DIEGO (2)

(translated)

You're wearing my clothes.

BLOOD
(off, translated)
No, good sir. I'm wearing MY
clothes.

PANEL THREE

Don Diego's eyes narrow.

DON DIEGO
(translated)
I am Don Diego, captain of this
vessel. Who are you?

BLOOD
(off, translated)
Correction: you are Don Diego,
NAVIGATOR of this vessel.

PANEL FOUR

Big shot of Captain (CAPTAIN!) Blood. He's decked out in a Spanish captain's outfit; black with silver highlights, stylin' like a madman. This is no Long John Silver shabby guy with big pants and an eyepatch. Captain Blood is SHARP.

CAPTAIN BLOOD
You may address me...

CAPTAIN BLOOD (2)
...as CAPTAIN BLOOD.