

CAPTAIN BLOOD, ISSUE FOUR

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SECOND DRAFT

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ISSUE NOTES

It's 1688. Just FYI.

The first three pages will be an "overview" of what's about to come, because it's going to be a touch complicated -- instead of the usual Blood vs. Others ship battle, we're introducing a third party, the English, and it will get a bit hectic around pages 6-8.

We're starting on familiar turf, Blood and the Arabella, moving to Don Miguel for Page Two, and then jumping to the new characters and new ship on Page Three. We've leaped forward in time from Issue Three, again by several months, and the Arabella has been at sea for those months as well. Blood is still jaunty and full of verve, but inside getting a bit tired of the pirate lifestyle. Less attention to detail with his clothes.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE ONE

PAGE ONE, PANEL ONE

Blood is standing by the helm of the Arabella with Pitt. The sun is shining. Gorgeous day.

CAPTION

This, then is Peter Blood:

CAPTION (2):

Buccaneer...Adventurer...PIRATE!

CAPTION (3)

Bound for an encounter that NONE could predict!

BLOOD

Fah! NOW the hurricane lifts, Pitt!
After we have been separated from
the rest of our fleet!

PITT

The Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos
will rejoin us at Tortuga, Captain.
They'll be the fates of many
Spaniards to come.

PANEL TWO

A more distant shot of the Arabella, in fine sailing form. It's obvious that it's been some time since issue #3, and the ship has been repaired and restored to its former glory.

PITT'S JOURNAL

(from ship)

1688. After being separated from our sister vessels by a squall, Blood was sailing back to Tortuga to refit and have d'Ogeron convert our spoils into currency.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE TWO

PAGE DETAILS: As noted above, a shift to the Spanish ship Milagrosa, captained by Don Miguel. It is accompanied by its sister Spanish warship, the Hidalgo. Don Miguel looks ROUGH after our last meeting. He's haggard, unshaven, and has a lunatic gleam in his eye. Blood's decisive victory at Maracaybo has unhinged him. He's dangerous AND pathetic, like a rabid dog in the late stages -- we need to feel a bit bad for the poor bastard, who, after all, was just trying to be a good Spaniard, and would have gone down in history as a great captain had he not run head-first into the Buckaroo Banzai of the 17th Century.

The Milagrosa is bigger and better-armed than the Arabella. Not to a ridiculous degree, but it needs to be clear when the two meet that the Milagrosa has a much greater natural advantage. Same for the Hidalgo.

PANEL ONE

Don Miguel is standing next to his helmsman, his face a spasm of rage. He's in full-blown villain mode, twisted by hate, fist clenched.

CAPTION

(Pitt's journal)

Don Miguel's ship, the Milagrosa, meanwhile sought US with its fellow warship the Hidalgo.

DON MIGUEL

SAIL ON, helmsman! We shall sink every English vessel we come across until we find Blood himself!

DON MIGUEL (2)

And then -- Blood DIES! For now, his countrymen pay for his crimes!

PANEL TWO

The helmsman pulls away from Don Miguel.

HELMSMAN

But Captain, we are at PEACE with
the English. We may hunt pirates,
but not English vessels. Our treaty

--

DON MIGUEL

TREATY?

PANEL THREE

Don Miguel smacks the helmsman across the face. He has
clearly lost his shit but serious.

DON MIGUEL

BLOOD honors no TREATIES! And
neither shall I!

PANEL FOUR

Don Miguel helps the helmsman back to his feet.

DON MIGUEL

The first English vessel we
encounter...

DON MIGUEL (2)

...shall REGRET it.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE THREE

PAGE DETAILS: And here we're on to new material: Lord Julian
and (gasp!) Arabella Bishop! Arabella we've already met back
in Issue One: winsome, Winona-esque, "boylike" according to
the novel, gorgeous. Lord Julian Wade is kind of like a
taller Orlando Bloom; blond, chiseled, kind of pretty-boy
vapid, and doting on Arabella. Hugh Laurie from the old
Jeeves & Wooster series wouldn't be a bad model.

PANEL ONE

Lord Julian and Arabella are by the wheel of the ship, with
a helmsman who is steadfastly trying to ignore them.

CAPTION

(Pitt's journal)

And Fate would draw the Milagrosa
to the Royal Mary, fresh from
England by way of Bridgetown.

LORD JULIAN

I am pleased that we could provide you with transport for your return from England to Jamaica, Miss Bishop. Particularly now that your UNCLE is the region's deputy governor.

ARABELLA

Speak no longer of my uncle, Lord Julian. He was appointed as a brute, to BE a brute.

PANEL TWO

Close on Arabella's face, concerned for the fate of Peter Blood.

ARABELLA

Promoted thanks to an agreement between Spanish, French and British to expunge all PIRATES from these seas.

PANEL THREE

Lord Julian brandishes a sheaf of papers.

LORD JULIAN

Not ALL, Miss Bishop. War is in the wind, and the Royal Navy has sent me to find a most capable buccaneer named Peter Blood. Lord Sunderland has sent me to exchange an offer of clemency for his renunciation of piracy and enlistment.

ARABELLA

You do not know Peter Blood.

PANEL FOUR

Lord Julian is puzzled by Arabella's confident assertion.

LORD JULIAN

Apparently, he is a man of such skill that the Crown is willing to OVERLOOK his past indiscretions if he will enlist. Do you... KNOW this Captain Blood?

ARABELLA

Oh, yes. Once I thought him a most
unfortunate man.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE FOUR

PANEL ONE

Arabella sets her jaw sternly.

ARABELLA

Now that he has given himself to
lawlessness, I find my sympathies
much reduced.

LORD JULIAN

Aye, well, even that may be behind
him soon.

PANEL TWO

Lord Julian gestures towards the open sea, presumably in the
direction of Tortuga.

LORD JULIAN

Your uncle will harass the pirates
to the point where Captain Blood
will sign with me.

PANEL THREE

LORD JULIAN

But sheltered in Tortuga, under the
protection of his father-in-law
d'Ogeron --

ARABELLA

His FATHER-IN-LAW?

PANEL FOUR

Lord Julian is oblivious to Arabella's feelings for Blood.
Oblivious in general, really.

LORD JULIAN

Something I heard in port. Blood
apparently fought and killed a man
named Lavasseur, some love rival,
for the hand of Madeleine d'Ogeron.

ARABELLA

I... did not know of this.

PANEL FIVE

The Captain runs up to Lord Julian in a panic.

LORD JULIAN

Oh, yes! Apparently he slaughtered
the whole crew with his bare hands.
And then he PURCHASED her for
twenty thousand pieces of eight!
This fellow Cahusac told me --

ROYAL MARY CAPTAIN

Lord Wade! Ship sighted!

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE FIVE

PANEL ONE

Lord Julian cocks an eyebrow. He's (again!) a bit oblivious.

LORD JULIAN

Why the concern, Captain? It's not
as though we have --

ROYAL MARY CAPTAIN

The MILAGROSA, sir. 'Tis Don
Miguel! He's been on the rampage
against the English since Blood
showed him up at Maracaybo.

PANEL TWO

The Captain is at the rail, staring out at the nearing
Milagrosa. The Hidalga is by the Milagrosa, equally
imposing.

ROYAL MARY CAPTAIN

Battle stations, men! We can come
through this! We can--

PANEL THREE

A shattering explosion blows the Captain into the air, quite
dead.

PANEL FOUR

A terrified Arabella stands by an ashen and shocked Lord
Julian, who is shoving her belowdecks.

LORD JULIAN
 Back, Arabella! Their first shot
 has hit our magazine -- ignited our
 entire store of gunpowder! We're
 shattered! Defenseless!

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE SIX

PANEL ONE

The Milagrosa nears the now-shattered hulk of the Royal Mary.

PANEL TWO

Close on Don Miguel: sneering, savage.

DON MIGUEL
 Prepare to board. We'll see how
 Blood's countrymen comport
 themselves.

PANEL THREE

Don Miguel, in the lead of a party of Spanish soldier-pirates (discipline's been a bit lax since Don Miguel went ape-crazy), on the deck of the Royal Mary.

DON MIGUEL
 HEAR ME, English scum! Your ship,
 she is sinking! Your lives belong
 to DON MIGUEL!

PANEL FOUR

Lord Julian begins to unsheathe his sword, but Arabella is holding him, staying his arms.

LORD JULIAN
 Spanish SCUM...

ARABELLA
 Lord Wade! No! He'll kill you!

PANEL FIVE

Don Miguel, up in Julian's face.

DON MIGUEL
 LORD Wade, eh? Don't be a fool,
 your Lordship, or you'll meet a
 fool's end. Come aboard my ship
 before yours founders.

PANEL SIX

A sudden change of decorum for Miguel -- sweeping now, his hat off, a display of the dignity and grace he once knew.

DON MIGUEL

If you please.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE SEVEN

PANEL ONE

Don Julian, in a fit of frustration, is stalking a room (well-appointed, but still his cage) with Arabella standing nearby, pissed at him but taking no overt action.

CAPTION

(Pitt's journal)

Don Miguel took the few valuables on the vessel, and the most valuable thing of all -- two hostages. The sailors of the Royal Mary were left to the lifeboats and the sea.

LORD JULIAN

DAMN me! I should have resisted! I should have stood firm!

PANEL TWO

Arabella tries to comfort the fevered Julian.

ARABELLA

Julian -- you would have been killed. There has been enough pointless death today.

VOICE

(off-panel)

Lord Wade! Miss Bishop! Don Miguel requests your presence!

PANEL THREE

A reluctant (truculent, childish) Lord Julian and Arabella present themselves on deck to a cocky, half-mad Don Miguel.

LORD JULIAN

You requested our presence?

DON MIGUEL
 Your sarcasm is not appreciated,
 Senor. Now watch what happens...

PANEL FOUR

A shot -- Don Miguel's POV -- of the ship Arabella, quite alone, upon the seas.

DON MIGUEL
 (off)
 ...to any English vessels that
 cross our path.

PANEL FIVE

Insert shot of Arabella, looking frightened.

ARABELLA
 B-but... that lone vessel can't
 possibly stand up to two Spanish
 warships...

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE EIGHT

PANEL ONE

Captain Blood, spyglass to eye, surveying the distance from a dramatic shot by the now-familiar figurehead.

CAPTION
 (Arabella)
 ...can it?

BLOOD
 So what have we here? Old friends
 come a'calling, Wolverstone.

PANEL TWO

Captain Blood springs into action!

BLOOD
 Battle stations, Wolverstone!
 Steady at the helm, Mister Pitt!
 Guns ready, Mister Ogle!

PANEL THREE

Dyke steps up to Blood, some worry on his face. Blood is, as usual, jocular and perhaps a bit mad.

DYKE

I'm sure you've noticed, Captain,
but there ARE two ships, both
better armed than we are...

BLOOD

Noted, Mr. Dyke. But they've been
at sea longer. They're heavier, and
probably laden with barnacles.

PANEL FOUR

Blood gives him a wink.

BLOOD

Which makes them SLOWER. And the
wind is with us.

PANEL FIVE

Blood barks orders up at the men on the riggings.

BLOOD

Full sail! We need all our speed!
Straight BETWEEN them, Mr. Pitt!

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE NINE

PANEL ONE

Don Miguel stands with his hand on the shoulder of a gunner
on the deck of the Milagrosa.

DON MIGUEL

The ship APPROACHES? Get our
prisoners below and secure them.
This captain is a madman, or a
fool, or...

PANEL TWO

Insert shot of Don Miguel as realization dawns. Hate on his
face.

DON MIGUEL

...BLOOD.

PANEL THREE

Miguel points out towards sea.

DON MIGUEL
Prepare all guns! Alert the
Hidalga! That ship MUST BE
DESTROYED!

PANEL FOUR

Cannons fire!

PANEL FIVE

Sailors aboard the Hidalga man her cannons.

HIDALGA CAPTAIN
HIDALGA! FIRE!

PANEL SIX

Cannons fire!

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE TEN

PANEL ONE

A few cannonballs hit the Arabella, but most splash into the
water shy of the ship.

PANEL TWO

Blood, looking through a spyglass, grins.

PITT
Minor damage, Captain. A foremast,
and some small hits to the hull.

BLOOD
Too EARLY, Don Miguel. Too EAGER.
Steady, Mr. Ogle. Steady...

PANEL THREE

Blood shouts back, sweeping a hand down.

BLOOD
FIRE!

PANEL FOUR

Cannons fire! But different cannons than the Page Nine
cannons!

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE ELEVEN

PANEL ONE

A shattering volley smashes into the hull of the Milagrosa!

PANEL TWO

Don Miguel, practically frothing at the mouth.

DON MIGUEL
Prepare to fire! He is coming
straight AT us! Right BETWEEN the
Milagrosa...

PANEL THREE

Don Miguel's face turns ashen as he realizes what Blood is
up to.

DON MIGUEL
...and the Hidalga.

PANEL FOUR

Don Miguel runs across the deck.

DON MIGUEL
The Hidalga MUST NOT fire! If they
shoot as Blood nears, they'll also
hit--

PANEL FIVE

Don Miguel is thrown backwards as a cannonball blows the
deck near him to smithereens.

DON MIGUEL
NO!

PANEL SIX

Don Miguel struggles to his knees, grimacing.

DON MIGUEL
Damn that Blood! Hold our cannons!
We can't risk hitting the Hidalga!

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE TWELVE

PANEL ONE

Pitt is shouting back from the helm of the Arabella.

PITT
We've taken more hits! But we're
BETWEEN 'em, sir!

PANEL TWO

Blood grins, raising both hands as though conducting an orchestra.

BLOOD
ALL GUNS, MISTER OGLE!

PANEL THREE

The cannons on one side of the Arabella, blasting out of the Milagrosa.

PANEL FOUR

The cannons on the other side, blowing crap out of the Hidalga.

PANEL FIVE

Don Miguel at the rail of his ship, amid plumes of smoke, raising his fist.

DON MIGUEL
DAMN YOU, BLOOD! DAMN YOU TO HELL!

PANEL SIX

Blood grins at Wolverstone.

BLOOD
And NOW, old friend, we board.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE THIRTEEN

PANEL ONE

Blood, on board the Milagrosa, bows deeply to Don Miguel (who is being held).

BLOOD

We meet again, Don Miguel. Although your much-desired meeting may not be exactly as you PICTURED it.

PANEL TWO

Two men are lowering lifeboats into the sea off the Milagrosa, next to gaping holes in the hull.

BLOOD

(caption)

Take some of the boats before we SCUTTLE these ships. Sail back to Hispaniola, yonder. Do not hunt me again.

PANEL THREE

Blood gets up close to Don Miguel; a bit fierce, a bit scary.

BLOOD

I think I am UNLUCKY to you.

PANEL FOUR

Blood turns, surveying the deck.

BLOOD

Send him on his way, Wolverstone. I will--

LORD JULIAN

(off, angry)

WHAT?!?

PANEL FIVE

Blood's POV: Julian is storming up from belowdecks.

LORD JULIAN

You don't mean that you'll let that Spanish scoundrel go FREE?

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE FOURTEEN

PANEL ONE

Lord Julian marches up to Blood; the two men are about the same height, but Lord Julian is a pale reed compared to Blood's assured presence.

BLOOD
 Ah, so Don Miguel had prisoners.
 And you are...

LORD JULIAN
 Lord Julian Wade! I was taken
 prisoner, along with...

PANEL TWO

Blood, looking over Julian's shoulder, suddenly goes
 slack-jawed and pale (well, this is a b&w comic, so just
 slack-jawed, I guess).

BLOOD
 Miss Bishop.

PANEL THREE

Blood walks past Lord Julian as though he's not even there.

LORD JULIAN
 You KNOW her?

BLOOD
 Miss Bishop, how wonderful to--

PANEL FOUR

Arabella snubs Captain Blood, turning her back to him.

BLOOD
 --ah.

ARABELLA
 I do not number thieves and pirates
 among my acquaintance, CAPTAIN
 Blood. You're as mad a dog as Don
 Miguel.

PANEL FIVE

Blood has his face in his hand -- ashamed and upset at
 Arabella's snapping at him, and a bit appalled at Lord
 Julian's upper-class-twittiness. Lord Julian steps up behind
 Blood.

LORD JULIAN
 YOU'RE Captain BLOOD?

BLOOD
 Who were you supposing?

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE FIFTEEN

PANEL ONE

Lord Julian's demeanour changes from threatening to friendly.

LORD JULIAN
But you're the very man I've been
sent to find!

BLOOD
Not now.

LORD JULIAN (2)
I have been sent by Lord Sunderland
to--

BLOOD (2)
NOT NOW.

PANEL TWO

Larger panel with Blood being all Emo, looking out over the ocean, his mood dark.

BLOOD
"Thieves and pirates."

BLOOD (2)
Hm.

PANEL THREE

Arabella is talking to Pitt at Blood's helm.

PITT
Miss Arabella. Welcome aboard
the... welcome aboard.

ARABELLA
Is it true what they say about
Captain Blood? That he murdered the
pirate Lavasseur?

PANEL FOUR

Pitt can't meet Arabella's eyes.

PITT
Killed fairly, yes. But Lavasseur--

ARABELLA
Over a woman?

PANEL FIVE

Arabella storms off.

PITT
To RESCUE her, Miss Bishop--

ARABELLA
THANK you, Mr. Pitt.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE SIXTEEN

PANEL ONE

In Blood's study: oak table, navigation maps on the table, books on a shelf and instruments scattered around. Lord Julian is trying to show Blood the contracts he has. Blood isn't even looking at them.

LORD JULIAN
...and amnesty. Do you see?

BLOOD
You are my guest aboard this ship,
Lord Julian.

PANEL TWO

Blood swats the contracts out of Julian's hand, and the papers go flying.

BLOOD
So I'll not be showing you how I
FEEL of bribes, or your Lord
Sunderland, or your king James
Stuart.

PANEL THREE

Blood snarls at Lord Julian.

BLOOD
But if you think I would abandon
and betray my men, for your
PARDON... a pardon for a crime I
did NOT commit, for which I was
ENSLAVED--

PANEL FOUR

Blood turns on his heel and stalks away from Lord Julian.

BLOOD

No, Lord Julian. I will not sully
my hands with your contracts, THIEF
and PIRATE though I might be.

PANEL FIVE

Lord Julian glares at Blood, half-sneering.

LORD JULIAN

Then what AWAITS, Blood? Will you
become another salt-crusted madman
like Don Miguel? What FUTURE do you
see in this?

BLOOD

I care naught for the future.

LORD JULIAN (2)

Evidently.

ISSUE ONE, PAGE SEVENTEEN

PANEL ONE

Blood gets grabbed on the shoulder by Wolverstone, who looks
annngry.

WOLVERSTONE

Captain! Pitt tells me we sail for
Jamaica, damaged though we are.

BLOOD

Aye, Mr. Wolverstone. We are
escorting Miss Bishop. Close enough
for her to make shore safely in a
sloop.

PANEL TWO

WOLVERSTONE

BISHOP has entire FLEET dedicated
to destroying us. JUST US. He's out
there hunting, and we're sailing
right into his jaws. We could book
her safe passage from Tortuga.

BLOOD

We're taking Miss Bishop HOME, Mr.
Wolverstone.

PANEL FOUR

Blood leaves Wolverstone; Wolverstone has his fists clenched.

BLOOD
Your Captain has spoken.

PANEL FIVE

Wolverstone and Ogle confer.

WOLVERSTONE
He's been RASH before, Ogle, but
always with PURPOSE.

OGLE
Women on a ship, Mr. Wolverstone.

PANEL SIX

Ogle looks concerned; grouchy.

OGLE
Bad luck.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE EIGHTEEN

PANEL ONE

Dawn. Blood is at the helm, next to Pitt. The sun is rising; there are some seagulls above the ship.

PITT
Three days, Captain. We should make
Jamaica later this morning.

BLOOD
Excellent, Mister Pitt. Prepare a
skiff for Miss Bishop and her
odious companion.

PANEL TWO

Lord Julian is approaching Blood again.

LORD JULIAN
Captain Blood. Could I ask you once
more to reconsider?

BLOOD
You'll be home soon, Lord Julian.
Be thankful for that. I'll be
pleased to have you and your
contracts off my ship.

WOLVERSTONE
(off)
SHIPS! ENGLISH SHIPS!

PANEL THREE

Three white sails stand out with the bulk of Jamaica lurking
in the background.

BLOOD
(off)
To be expected, I suppose.

PANEL FOUR

Wolverstone practically explodes at Blood.

WOLVERSTONE
Of COURSE 'tis to be expected!
Bishop has FOUND us! We must run!

BLOOD
No good.

PANEL FIVE

Blood is looking off in the middle distance. He looks
haggard, tired.

BLOOD
We've been four months at sea.
Wounded from our clash with Don
Miguel. We're too slow to run.

WOLVERSTONE
We fight, then.

PANEL SIX

BLOOD
No. We would lose.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE NINETEEN

PANEL ONE

WOLVERSTONE

We RUN or we FIGHT, Blood! There
are NO OTHER CHOICES!

OGLE

(off)

There is one.

PANEL TWO

Blood and Wolverstone both turn to look at Ogle, who has
come up from belowdecks.

OGLE

We ransom the lady. Colonel Bishop
won't dare raise a gun to us with
her on board.

BLOOD

Your place is belowdecks, Mr. Ogle.

OGLE (2)

My place is aboard a SHIP, Cap'm.

PANEL THREE

Close on Ogle. The old man's got steel.

OGLE

Not in a cell, or on a plantation,
or hanging from a noose. I'll not
surrender to the likes of Bishop.

PANEL FOUR

BLOOD

We're low on munitions and slowed
by damage. Outgunned and outmanned.

WOLVERSTONE

Then WHY, BLOOD?!?

PANEL FIVE

Wolverstone, in a fit of incandescent rage, gestures towards
the approaching ships, towards the bulk of Jamaica.

WOLVERSTONE
Why did you BRING us here?

PANEL SIX

Blood is overcome with a fit of uncertainty.

BLOOD
I miscalculated... I didn't think
Bishop would have patrols this far
out, this early.

WOLVERSTONE
That is NOT an answer!

BLOOD
I-- wanted to show--

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE TWENTY

PANEL ONE

Arabella comes up on deck with Lord Julian.

ARABELLA
Captain Blood! What -- are those
BRITISH ships?

LORD JULIAN
Jamaica! He brought us to Jamaica!

PANEL TWO

Ogle gestures at Arabella.

OGLE
THERE! SHE'S the reason,
Wolverstone! And SHE'S our bill of
passage!

WOLVERSTONE
We FIGHT, Ogle! We fight like MEN,
not ransom like -- like LAVASSEUR!

PANEL THREE

Blood shouts at both of them.

BLOOD
ENOUGH! I am your CAPTAIN!

OGLE
 You have taken leave of your
 SENSES!

PANEL FOUR

Small insert shot of the English ships, plumes of smoke and
 cannon fire sounds.

SF/X
 Baboom!

PANEL FIVE

Cannonballs splash just shy of the Arabella!

OGLE
 They have our range! ALL HANDS TO
 GUNS! Take her about, Mr. Pitt!

PANEL SIX

Pitt at the wheel, angry.

PITT
 I do not take ORDERS from you, Mr.
 Ogle.

PANEL SEVEN

Ogle, shouting up the ship.

OGLE
 You WILL, by God, or we're...

BLOOD
 (off)
 Mister Ogle.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE TWENTY-ONE

PANEL ONE

Blood, hand on the hilt of his sword (but still not drawn),
 full of calm fury.

BLOOD
 Is this mutiny, then?

OGLE
 Will you force it to be, Blood?

PANEL TWO

Blood looks over at Wolverstone. Wolverstone looks conflicted.

BLOOD
Wolverstone?

WOLVERSTONE
We should NOT have come here,
Captain.

PANEL THREE

The men are thrown to the side as cannonballs strike the ship.

SF/X
WHABOOM!

PANEL FOUR

Ogle struggles to his feet next to Blood, both men glaring at each other.

OGLE
I will not die like this, Captain.

BLOOD
Nor shall you, Mr. Ogle.

PANEL FIVE

Close on Blood's face as he makes the most abhorrent decision of his life.

BLOOD
But there's another way.

BLOOD (2)
RUN UP THE WHITE FLAG!

PANEL SIX

Wolverstone seizes Blood in a fit of rage.

WOLVERSTONE
I will NEVER surrender to that--

BLOOD
WOLVERSTONE! Trust me.

PANEL SIX

Blood looks Wolverstone in his big one-eyed scary face.

BLOOD
One last time.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE TWENTY-TWO

PANEL ONE

Blood approaches Lord Julian.

BLOOD
Your infernal contract. Get it.

LORD JULIAN
But you said--

BLOOD (2)
I KNOW what I SAID!

PANEL TWO

Blood grasps Julian by the shoulder.

BLOOD
But THIS is my crew, do you understand? If I sign on to the Crown, it is WITH this crew. Their pardon as it is mine.

LORD JULIAN
I-- I don't have the AUTHORITY--

BLOOD (2)
Yes you do.

PANEL THREE

Blood addresses the crew -- Wolverstone and Ogle front and centre.

BLOOD
I have led you to the maw, gentlemen, and I apologize. The only way out is odious, and if any of you want to leave, you're free to go.

BLOOD (2)
Without restraint or capture. I guarantee it.

PANEL FOUR

Lord Julian arrives with the documents.

BLOOD

If you put your name to these papers, you'll be with the Royal Navy. Your past forgotten.

PANEL FIVE

Wolverstone steps forward.

WOLVERSTONE

My past is my own, Captain, STAINED though it may be. I'll be going.

OGLE

And me with him.

PANEL SIX

Blood shakes Wolverstone's hand.

BLOOD

God be with you, my friend.

WOLVERSTONE

Him or his brother, to be sure.

ISSUE FOUR, PAGE TWENTY-THREE

PANEL ONE

Colonel Bishop (remember him?), actually Governor Bishop now, is staring through a spyglass.

BISHOP

I don't believe it.

FIRST MATE

Don't believe what, sir?

PANEL TWO

Bishop tears the spyglass from his eye. He's even fatter and more terrifying than previous, if that's possible.

BISHOP

The fop has Blood signing the charter. Blood's gone and joined the damned Royal Navy.

FIRST MATE

But -- can he DO that?

PANEL THREE

Bishop snarls, staring through the telescope again.

BISHOP

And the others are signing too.
Damnation!

BISHOP (2)

Receive them aboard another ship. I
must think on this.

PANEL FOUR

Blood is helping Arabella onto a skiff.

ARABELLA

Your choice delivered me from
horrible danger. It was a fine
thing you did.

BLOOD

Was it? I now serve a King I
detest.

ARABELLA (2)

You serve England. The country is
all, sir, the sovereign naught.

BLOOD (2)

Hm.

PANEL FIVE

Blood gives Arabella an exhausted grin.

BLOOD

This honourable service I now
pursue... might it be enough to
redeem a pirate and a thief?

ARABELLA

Perhaps. I -- oh.

BLOOD (2)

What is it?

PANEL SIX

Close on Arabella.

ARABELLA

I was brought aboard, and in the
confusion, the Milagrosa sinking,
I...

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PANEL ONE

Aboard the skiff, Arabella looks up to see her name writ large on the side of Blood's ship, the masthead proud beside it.

ARABELLA

I never noticed the name of your ship before.

PANEL TWO

Blood smiles.

BLOOD

Aye. Well. Wolverstone's ship now.

BLOOD (2)

Let's go greet your uncle, brothers in arms that the two of us now are.

PANEL THREE

The First Mate has his head inside Bishop's cabin door.

FIRST MATE

They're aboard our lead vessel, sir. The articles signed. Blood's a Captain of the Royal Navy now.

PANEL FOUR

Bishop glowers from the darkness, a bottle of wine in one muttoney hand.

BISHOP

Damn his eyes.

FIRST MATE

Have you thought on't, sir? Have your a plan?

PANEL FIVE

Bishop gazes at his near-empty bottle, surly.

BISHOP

Aye. We welcome the Captain to the navy, and get him to port, where my word is law.

PANEL SIX

Bishop grins, as evil as anything.

BISHOP
And then we hang him anyway.

END OF ISSUE FOUR