

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE

PLAYER'S GUIDE

Campaign Concept

"A fate like that can kiss my ass. I believe in one thing. A better tomorrow."

The characters, due to some combination of love of the sea and inability to get along in polite society, are making their way through life performing as some combination of dockside criminals, pirates, privateers, mercenaries, and explorers along the eastern edge of the Arcadian Ocean. But despite the brutality of that life, its freedom allows for a certain understanding of righteousness that the "civilized lands" of the devil-worshipping Chelaxians, militantly atheistic Rahadouvians, and shadow-haunted Nidalese cannot grasp.

Sourcebooks/Rules

The following sources are acceptable to use when building your characters.

- The Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook, including official errata
- The Swashbuckler and Shaman basic classes from the Tome of Secrets by Adamant Entertainment
- Dueling feats and rules from Art of the Duel by Sinister Adventures
- Equipment from the Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting (except firearms, for which there are alternate rules)
- Custom rules in this document and the firearms rules document
- Varisia: Cradle of Legends from Rise of the Runelords
- Welcome to Riddleport from the Second Darkness Companion
- Feel free and refer to the Pathfinder wiki at pathfinder.wikia.com for more information on Golarion setting elements.
- Additional rules are in the works for action points, stunts, and chases.

Character Generation

Ability Scores

Stats should be generated either:

1. using Pathfinder point buy with 20 points to spend
2. rolling 4d6, drop lowest, reroll 1's, in front of the DM (one shot, no fallback to point buy. OK to reroll if max < 14 or if the sum of the modifiers is < +1)

Races

All standard PFRPG races are acceptable, and all the human subraces from the Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting. Since PCs can be from anywhere, any of them are fine, though specifically ethnicities of Varisia (Chelaxian, Shoanti, and Varisian), Ulfen, and Bonuwat Mwangi are common on the high seas and dwarves and gnomes are uncommon.

Classes

Any class from the allowed sources is fine. I will be gating access to prestige classes, but the ones from the PFRPG and the Shackles Pirate from the Campaign Setting, as well as other published Pathfinder prestige classes, will be available.

Traits

Each PC gets two traits, no more than one from each category. The full list of standard Pathfinder traits is acceptable. In addition the following traits are available:

Baller (Combat): from a youth spent playing games, you are pretty good at lobbing something where you want it to go. Whenever throwing a splash weapon or attempting other kinds of indirect fire throwing attacks, you gain a +1 trait bonus to the attack roll.

Bounding (Combat): You are skilled at shooting and then taking cover, even when on the move (or spending your move action to reload). After firing a missile weapon, you can spend a swift action to take cover or partial cover, if such is available wherever you've ended your movement.

Cabin Man (Campaign): You have spent significant time in your childhood aboard waterborne vessels. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Profession: Sailor checks, and Profession: Sailor is always a class skill for you.

Connected (Social) – in town, you know who to ask and how to ask them. You gain a +1 trait bonus to the Gather Information use of Diplomacy and Knowledge: Local checks, and Knowledge: Local is always a class skill for you.

Derobement (Combat): Your weapon work is exceptionally wary and you keep your blade out of contact with your opponent's as much as you can. You gain a +1 trait bonus to your CMD to resist disarms, binds, and sunders.

Freestyle Runner (Campaign): You are remarkably nimble and can move fast in difficult terrain. You gain a +1 trait bonus to Acrobatics checks and Acrobatics is always a class skill for you.

Good Soil (Faith) – Your faith makes you fertile ground for the works of the gods. Whenever you have a divine healing spell cast on you, or are healed by a channel energy or lay on hands, you heal one extra hit point per die of healing.

Man From Azlant (Campaign): You have spent a lot of time in the water. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Swim checks, and Swim is always a class skill for you.

Rigging Monkey (Campaign): You are at home above the deck of a ship. You gain a +1 trait bonus to Climb checks, and Climb is always a class skill for you.

Also, you can treat the normal Pathfinder social trait “Poverty-stricken” as a campaign trait called “Sea Dog” if you want (Survival bonus).

Feats

Gunslinger

You are so skilled with firearms that you can fire one without letting down your guard.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4, **Weapon Focus** (any firearm), proficiency with any firearm.

Benefit: When you attack with a firearm, you do not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Normal: Attacking with any kind of ranged weapon in a threatened square provokes attacks of opportunity.

Berserker's Cry

Your cry of bloodthirsty fury inspires those around you to greater acts of violence.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Ulfen from the Linnorm Kings.

Benefit: Once per day, as a move action, you may unleash a powerful, bloodthirsty scream of battle lust and fury. Allies within 60 feet who can hear your berserker's cry (including yourself) are heartened and gain a +1 morale bonus on damage rolls made with melee attacks for a number of rounds equal to half your character level + your Charisma bonus. If you have the ability to rage, you may unleash a berserker's cry as part of the free action to enter a rage (instead of as a separate move action).

A creature may be under the effect of only one berserker's cry at a time.

Special: You may gain this feat multiple times. Every time you take this feat, you may unleash a berserker's cry one additional time per day.

Totem Spirit

You are closely and mystically tied to your tribe's sacred totem.

Prerequisite: Member of a Shoanti tribe.

Benefit: The benefit granted by this feat depends on which Shoanti tribe you belong to:

Lyrune-Quah (Moon Clan): You gain a +1 bonus on Will saves and a +2 bonus on Listen checks.

Shadde-Quah (Axe Clan): If you have the rage ability, it lasts for one additional round. You also gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks.

Shriikirri-Quah (Hawk Clan): You gain a +2 bonus on Initiative checks and a +2 bonus on Ride checks.

Shundar-Quah (Spire Clan): You gain a +1 bonus on Fortitude saves and a +2 bonus on Spot checks.

Sklar-Quah (Sun Clan): You gain a +1 bonus on Reflex saves and a +2 bonus on Tumble checks.

Skoan-Quah (Skull Clan): You gain a +2 bonus on weapon damage against undead and a +2 bonus on Heal checks.

Tamiir-Quah (Wind Clan): Your base land speed increases by 5 feet. You also gain a +2 bonus on Jump checks.

Varisian Tattoo

You bear intricate tattoos which inspire and empower your natural magical ability. These tattoos mark you as a worker of the ancient traditions of Varisian magic. A Varisian tattoo typically consists of a long string of characters in Thassilonian, the language found on the ancient monuments of the land. Most are quite complex, running the entire length of an arm or leg.

Prerequisite: Spell Focus in matching school, Varisian

Benefit: Select a school of magic other than divination in which you have Spell Focus—you cast spells from this school at +1 caster level. Additionally, you can cast a single cantrip as a spell-like ability a number of times per day equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1/day, caster level equals Hit Dice, save DC is Charisma-based). The spell-like ability gained (and its Varisian name) are as follows:

Abjuration (avidais): resistance.

Conjuration (idolis): acid splash.

Enchantment (carnasia): daze.

Evocation (ragario): dancing lights.

Illusion (vangloris): ghost sound.

Necromancy (voratalo): touch of fatigue.

Transmutation (avaria): mage hand.

Ruincaster

You possess a deep, mystical connection to the various ruins scattered around the Mwangi Expanse.

Prerequisites: Wis 15, ability to cast spells, Mwangi

Benefit: When you are standing upon or within a Mwangi ruin that covers at least 500 square feet, you may tap into the latent spiritual energies still held by the stones of that place to grant improve your own spellcasting abilities.

Mwangi ruins possess varying degrees of power described by a power level, typically 1 to 5. As a move action, you may tap into a ruin's spiritual energies for 1 round with a DC 10 Concentration check. Failure leaves you fatigued (or exhausted, if already fatigued; or unconscious, if already exhausted). The DC increases by 5 for each power level beyond 1. You may tap the spiritual energies of a ruin in one of three ways.

Harm: Whenever you cast a spell that deals hit point damage, the spell deals additional damage equal to the ruin's power level.

Increase: The DC to resist a spell you cast increases by the ruin's power level.

Penetrate: A spell you cast that must penetrate spell resistance gains a bonus on your caster level check equal to the ruin's power level.

Rapid Reload

In addition to the normal benefits, Rapid Reload allows reload time of a personal firearm to be reduced to one full round action.

Skills

The usual Pathfinder skills are available. Here's some notes as to skills that will be particularly appropriate.

Profession: Sailor - anything you may do as crew on a ship will be governed by this - in this campaign, having this skill at some level is strongly recommended. In naval combat, this is the usual thing to roll for ship maneuvering.

Swim - to not die in the water. Probably a mandatory skill for this campaign unless you like drowning - besides the ship, there's watery pirate caves and all that.

Survival - to not get lost, survive at sea (well, usually requiring islands to get food/water), etc.

Climb - to get up in the rigging, if you want to. And to climb back into a ship if you get tossed into the water.

Acrobatics - used for lots of shipboard combat to keep footing, boarding actions, chases, etc.

Profession: Siege Engineer - use to shoot cannon.

Craft: Gunsmith - used to maintain firearms and cast ammunition.

Knowledge: Geography - for true navigators to plot courses. Survival can help you to simply not get lost in coastal travel; but this skill helps you set a course to somewhere out in open water.

Knowledge: Nobility and Royalty – also for identifying flags and other distinguishing features of ships and people.

Knowledge: Nature – helps to identify natural dangers, wildlife patterns, etc.

THE LOST COAST AND THE FEVER SEA

The western shore where Avistan meets the Arcadian Ocean starts with the Steaming Sea bordering the Lands of the Linnorm Kings in the farthest north, then moves down to the Varisian Gulf where lie Riddleport and Magnimar and past Conqueror's Bay where Korvosa and its holdings sit. It borders the twisted shadow nation of Nidal, a Chelish vassal state, and then reaches the Hellmouth, where the devil-worshipping and decadent empire of Cheliox perches on the southwestern tip of Avistan. Cheliox is the only proper nation of Avistan that borders the Arcadian Ocean; the rest of the so-called Lost Coast stretching a thousand miles to the north is harsh frontier land, with outposts of civilization interspersed with outposts of pirates, savage tribes, humanoids, and worse. The one exception is the bizarre utopia of Hermea, an island sitting well out into the ocean due east of Nidal.

The Chelish-controlled Arch of Aroden, a massive arch spanning the entire strait that connects Avistan to Garund, allows access to the Inner Sea to the east. On the Inner Sea lie Cheliox, Andoran, Absalom, Katapesh, Osirion, and the rest of the "civilized world".

The southern continent, Garund, is anchored in the North by the godless nation of Rahadoun. The additional thousand miles of coast south of the Arch used to be a combination of growing states beginning to make inroads into the uncivilized Mwangi Expanse until the death of the god Aroden and subsequent worldwide upheavals. This caused a permanent hurricane called the Eye of Abednego to form off the western coast of Garund. As a result of the Eye, two formerly semi-civilized countries there, Lirgen and Yamasa, have become a swampy mess that's now called simply the Sodden Lands. South of that in the Fever Sea is the pirate kingdom of the Shackles, and then more south still is Sargava, which was the southernmost Chelish holding at the Empire's height but recently decided to pay the pirates of the Shackles to liberate them from that declining nation. It's a mostly Mwangi colony with a small Chelish ruling caste. East of the coastline along the majority of the Fever Sea is the darkest Mwangi, mostly unknown and unexplored, but rich in resources, treasure, danger, and death.

Across the Arcadian Ocean, a thousand miles to the west of the Arch of Aroden, is the sunken spires of Azlant. The bravest pirate captains and Pathfinder explorers sail to this jagged place in search of ancient treasures.

Another three thousand miles past that is a new, rich continent called Arcadia, inhabited by savage skraelings. The Chelish and the Andorans have little colonies there and rich but occasional trade comes back to the "real world" from there. It's said that the Linnorm Kings have a holding there called Valenhall where the Kings travel across the sea to die.

Trade Routes

There's a lot of trade stretching from Sargava up to Rahadom and Cheliox and then north to Varisia (called the "Varisian Run" by Inner Sea merchants). Some trade ships are independent, some Chelish, some Rahadouvian, and some are Aspis Consortium sponsored. Traffic pleasing to Cheliox also goes through the Arch to and from the Inner Sea. This includes slave galleys that take Mwangi natives (and anyone else they can catch) to Rahadom, Cheliox, and the eastern nations.

The Varisian Gulf is heavily trafficked internally, and also has outbound routes to the Linnorm Kings, Nidal, Hermea, and Cheliox.

Major ports include Kalsgard and Bildt in the Linnorm Kings, Roderic's Cove, and Magnimar in Varisia, Nisroch in Nidal, Promise in Hermea, Kintargo in Cheliox, Botosani and Azir in Rahadom, and Bloodcove in Sargava. Extremely daring merchants cross the Arcadian Ocean to Arcadia, or seek out Mediogalti Island, rumored home of the Red Mantis assassin group. Activity along the Sodden Lands and much of the Mwangi qualifies more as exploration and looting than traditional commerce, though it still generates ships full of valuables sailing the seas.

Cheliox is both the largest nation of the Inner Sea and the gateway to the near and distant states that border the Arcadian Ocean. Its size results in a ravenous hunger for goods and slaves and its location supplies the rest of the Inner Sea with all manner of products flowing eastward from beyond the world's largest ocean. Cheliox is both a boon and a calamity for the other trading nations that ply the waters from the Arch of Aroden to the Isle of Jameray. Its size and thirst for material goods as well as its

massive exports of gems, ores, fine cloth, tapestries, gilded luxuries, and glassworks keep the western end of the Inner Sea flowing with material wealth and profit. Its unapologetic support of dozens of privateer fleets—with reputations for capturing and enslaving ship crews and coastal villages, as well as harassing and sinking non-Chelish merchants sailing through the Arch of Aroden—causes headaches and near conflicts with its neighbors.

Neighboring states underestimate godless Rahadom—the nation that expelled religion and forbids its countrymen to beholden themselves to any god—in its sheer will and force of merchant power. Rahadom borders both the Arcadian Ocean and the Inner Sea, and in order to ship goods even between its own ports, Rahadom merchants must pass through the Arch of Aroden. All major trade routes in the Inner Sea eventually spill out of the Arch and into the vast Arcadian Ocean. With the Arch narrowing the Inner Sea to fewer than a few dozen miles, and with Cheliox controlling both sides of the Arch, Rahadom became desperate to maintain its own sea lanes. In response to Chelish blockades and the occasional Cheliox-backed privateers, Rahadom conscripted native merchant ships into a massive merchant marine fleet capable of protecting itself from attack.

Under Rahadom law, merchant marines can only remain conscripted during a time of war, but thanks to a loophole wherein pirate attacks on shipping lanes are considered an act of war, the Rahadom merchant marine fleet has become a traditional wing of the nation's military, all but replacing its navy despite focusing solely on protecting the shipment of Rahadom's goods. Some of the independent merchant fleets of the Inner Sea unload their goods in Manaket, transferring them to armed Rahadom merchant vessels, then traveling overland to Azir where they meet their protected cargo and load them onto new ships bound for Sargava or Varisia, just to avoid Chelaxian entanglements near the Arch of Aroden.

On the Inner Sea, there are well known routes called the “North Tack” and the “South Tack” which stretch from the Arch to the Obari Ocean. (The South Tack even extends through the Arch to Azir.) Though heavy with trade, these routes are policed heavily as the nations of the Inner Sea can bring overwhelming force to bear on nearby problems.

Ships

Galleys (rowed ships) are used widely in the Inner Sea, but not so much on the Arcadian Ocean except for the Linnorm Kings, and there they are often the hybrid rowed/sailed longships of the Ulfen. They are still useful in certain situations as coastal raiding and privateering vessels (they're faster in the sprint when there's not a good wind) and Cheliar and Rahadoum have galleys along their coasts that stay in sight of land and venture up rivers. The Rahadouvians have never shown a knack for designing blue sea ships and so use rowed vessels even when they probably should not.

Cogs (single mast) of around 100 tons are still common merchant ships, and in times of war are fitted with temporary wooden castles. The state of the art in naval technology is the carrack (3-4 mast, usually square rigged) and the caravel (2-3 mast, usually lateen rigged). Carracks have larger displacement, from 300 tons on up, and are better for long haul shipping. Caravels are faster and more maneuverable but have less carrying capacity. Needless to say, pirates prefer caravels for their operation.

There are a very small number of ships which could be considered early galleons designed for the ocean crossing to Arcadia. The Linnorm Kings use knarrs for the same purpose.

Many variations of these ship types exist, based on nationality, need, and dint of historical tradition.

Naval Weaponry

Many ships do not carry any integral armaments, instead relying on flight or the archery and melee power of their crew in any action. Crossbows, shortbows, slings, cutlasses, pikes, and clubs are common shipboard weapons. Armor is almost never worn by blue sea crews, though raiders and ships of war on a mission to take a ship or settlement sometimes take that risk.

Catapults and trebuchets are often seen on the galleys of the Inner Sea, but the rigged ships more common on the Arcadian Ocean cannot safely fire such weapons. Ballistae are fairly popular especially in the far north where large sea serpents are an ever-present threat.

Ships that can afford a mage or priest, especially one with weather powers, try to get one – naturally, this is a case where demand outstrips supply. Most ships do not have a spellcaster, or make do with a low level adept whose basic powers (like purify food and drink) can still make a big difference in survivability on a voyage.

Gunpowder is known in Golarion. Guns are very expensive and only a few places, mainly the country of Alkenstar, makes modern wheellock handguns, though the larger countries can make cannon. Long arms actually came into and went out of vogue on the continent; only massive bombards are really in much use there. However, firearms and cannon are pretty popular on ships. Though powder can get wet, it stores better for longer at sea than bows. And magic can pack more of a punch, but you can't usually get a bunch of scroungy lowlifes to operate a fireball wand. Due to the expense and risk of fire magic blowing you up, ships don't usually have a huge amount of gunpowder but do have decent stores kept well amidships.

Many ships don't have any firearms. Some have swivel guns for repelling boarders and pirates. Only more major ships have cannon. Because cannon are expensive they are valuable prizes to pirates (or unscrupulous navies), so you don't often see ships with just one or two cannon – they either have a bunch or don't bother. There are some exceptions – ships that want to put the fear of the gods into unruly native ports will sometimes invest in one cannon for the shock and awe factor. Of course, even the Chelish can't put more than about 20 cannon on a ship.

Cannon come in various sizes; nine pounders are the largest that can be mounted as chase guns but larger ones can be mounted broadside. Ships with combat in mind have a gun deck with gunports enabling them to carry larger guns such as culverins; many other ships simply have cannon on their top deck and make do with demi-culverins. The largest sailing ships can carry some demi-cannons, and war galleys of the Inner Sea sometimes mount a huge basilisk to the fore. Four to five guns is considered a well armed normal ship; an average warship might have 4-5 culverins and as many demiculverins.

Small arms are used among pirates (that can afford it or get them as loot) and Chelish naval forces.

Piracy

Pirates are of course considered criminals in most civilized lands. Luckily, there are many uncivilized lands lining the Arcadian Ocean. Riddleport is openly pirate friendly, as are the Shackles in the south, as well as other "hidden" pirate cities/bases. In these places pirates usually are treated like visiting rock stars that bring big infusions into the local economy. Usually one becomes a pirate because of a lack of good career options ashore (often with a pressing reason to leave the region quickly) or because they're a skilled sailor that got taken as part of a pirate raid.

Pirates take ships, sure, but also raid coastal settlements for provisions, loot, slaves, whatever. (In fact, if you stick to raiding, say, Mwangi towns, the Chelish don't really regard you as a pirate...) Pirate lands and organizations are pretty smart and make sure enough trade gets through to make it attractive - both Riddleport and the Shackles control "legit" non-pirate trading cities as well.

There are three different grades of pirate. The first is just local raiders - fierce tribesmen of different stripes (Ulfen in Linnorm, goblins and other humanoids in Varisia, Mwangi farther south) that operate out of canoes and whatnot, largely preying on river travel and ships at anchor along the coast. No one but merchants call these guys pirates, they're more like paddling bandits.

The second is pirates that operate in a small region. There are some pirates of note that just operate in the Varisian Gulf, for example. These tend to be either small one or two ship groups, or more civilized folks running raids out of their cities for political or other reasons. Even the parts of the Lost Coast and Fever Sea allegedly held by large nations like Chelias and Rahadoum are really inhabited by a variety of petty rulers, all of which have their own agenda and often resort to supplementing the difficulty of eking out a life with farming, fishing, and trade with opportunistic strikes on ships of traditional enemies.

The third are the true pirates that range widely across the open ocean in search of prey. Usually pirates of the Inner Sea are called corsairs. Pirates based in the Fever Sea are often called buccaneers.

There are many privateers in the service of the Chelish who attempt to take on pirates and merchants of anyone who's on the outs with the Chelish - the Andorans, Rahadoum, the Sargavans, et cetera. Rahadoum and some of the smaller countries and city states grant (or, in some cases, simply sell) letters of marque against the Chelish; ships utilizing these are usually called freebooters.

The Chelish navy is probably the most significant threat to pirates in the region. Their ships are well-armed, staffed with disciplined troops, and sometimes have diabolic help.

There are unmarked ships of the Gray Corsairs out of Andoren that come all the way out to the Arcadian Ocean simply to fight slavery wherever it is practiced; they take on Shackles pirates and Aspis alike. These forces are generally considered nutbars by the rest of the populace along the coast.

The navy of Rahadoum, though not as formidable as that of Cheliox, also hunts pirates in the region.

Settlements up and down the coast are targets for pirates; only the most notoriously heavily defended (Hermes, Nidal, Ilizmagorti) are generally safe from reavers.

Prominent pirate holdings include:

Halgrim in the Land of the Linnorm Kings, ruled by the infamous White Estrid, who herself led a fleet of 15 longships in a raid against the Nidalese port at Nisroch 4 years ago, slipped through a Chelaxian blockade at the Arch of Aroden, and put in triumphantly at Absolom with her plunder.

Riddleport in Varisia - detailed separately.

The pirate kingdom of the Shackles in the Fever Sea has a number of cities, protected from reprisal by the Eye of Abednego. Port Peril is the largest. This region is the single largest concentration of pirates in the known world.

The overlord of the Shackles is the Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist, captain of the man-o'-war Filthy Lucre, flagship of the Shackles fleet. He heads a council of pirate lords, each of whom commands his own fleet of ships and rules one of the Shackles's numerous islands, ports, or anchorages. While Bonefist is king by virtue of his possession of Port Peril and command of the strongest fleet in the Shackles, in reality he reigns at the sufferance of the council's most powerful lords.

Tessa Fairwind, Mistress of Quent and captain of the sloop-of-war Luck of the Draw, is a popular figure throughout the Shackles. Rumor has it that Lady Tessa is next in line for the Hurricane Crown, either by acclaim or by force. The mysterious druid-captain known as the Master of the Gales rules Drenchport and commands the xebec Kraken, accompanied by his giant squid companion.

Avimar Sorrinash, cruel captain of the brig Blood Moon, is lord of Ollo. When the Blood Moon returns fresh from a successful foray on the high seas, Sorrinash and his werewolf crew often roam Shark Island in orgiastic hunts of celebratory destruction. The disgraced Chelish admiral Arronax Endymion is of lesser importance, but still a force to be reckoned with on the council. He leads a squadron of Chelish mutineers called the Devils' Own from his flagship, the imperial frigate Tyrannous.

Ilizmagorti, aka the Scum Tide City, lies on the Isle of Mediogalti and its position is not known to all. Besides being a pirate haven, the town is known to be controlled by the Red Mantis so its streets are remarkably low on casual violence. Mediogalti itself has many crypts and caverns popular as ports with pirates.