

## ROUND ONE - The murder is announced

Round Instructions:

Before Round One begins, all the cast should have been circulating (in character) with the guests.

Ferdinand Broadside should act as the gracious host, meeting and greeting the guests. He should try and discuss current affairs with them (think of a few things that were current around 1718, such as the recent defeat of Louis IV by the Duke of Marlborough, the South Sea bubble that is the talk of the London stock exchange and the growing madness of King George). Ferdinand might also like to hint that he suspects there is treachery amongst the pirate fraternity and warns everyone to be on their guard should someone flash a cutlass or produce a pistol.

Jasper Grapeshot should work around the tables and the guests making easy pirate banter. You might also want to have him moving boxes (they can be empty) that appear to contain treasure or possibly barrels or jars of rum.

Grisalda Hispanola could see if any of the male guests are free to consider joining her crew and flirt with anyone who purports to captain his own ship.

Sapphire Jane should flirt and giggle with any man who takes her interest, keeping a disdainful distance from any woman who has looks or bearing to match her own.

Cuban Ruben should adopt a wary and humble demeanour initially, unsure if he is addressing a rival captain or a member of another ship's crew. Once he feels at ease with a new acquaintance, he readily embraces them as a friend and displays his ready wit and good humour.

If the guests meet in a separate room then allow one of the hotel staff to call them through for dinner – or get Ferdinand Broadside to do it.

Cuban Ruben respectfully lets the guests sit down and then quietly bows out of the room.

## ROUND ONE SCRIPT

MAKE SURE ALL THE GUESTS ARE SEATED BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

FERDINAND RISES, LOOKS AROUND HIM AND PREPARES TO ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE.

**Ferdinand:** Well, me hearty gentlemen...and ladies! What a pleasure it is to welcome ye all to this illustrious, dockside tavern.....

JASPER GLARES AT HIM, AS HE RISES TO HIS FEET.

**Jasper:** Have a care, Broadside!

**Ferdinand:** What? I wasn't even aware that you had been invited! I understood that this was to be a meeting for *gentlemen* and ladies. Did ye wish to say something, Grapeshot? Before I open the proceedings?

**Jasper:** Ye do not have the right!!

**Ferdinand:** My dear Grapeshot, there is business to attend to here.

JASPER DRAWS HIS SWORD AND POINTS IT MENACINGLY.

**Jasper:** If ye fancy yourself as the Pirate King, Broadside, we can settle the point right now, on the tip of my sword!

**Ferdinand:** Well, if ye handle a sword as roughly as y'do your tongue, I should be glad to oblige ye, ye drunken trinket peddler!

FERDINAND DRAWS HIS SWORD. GRISALDA RISES.

**Grisalda:** PUT AWAY YOUR SWORDS! Both of you! We meet here under parle.

**Jasper:** This man's a usurper! The host must open a meeting held under parle. That is Pirate Law.

**Ferdinand:** Damn your eyes, Grapeshot! The host would appear to be otherwise engaged. We are all here at the appointed time, are we not? Longpistol has summoned us and failed to bring himself here. I say he has forfeited his right!

**Jasper:** Blast ye, Broadside, he's just late, that's all!

RUBEN BURSTS IN. HE LOOKS AROUND, UNSURE OF WHOM TO ADDRESS.

**Ferdinand:** Well! At least his boson has seen fit to grace us with his presence. Well? Speak up for yourself, man! Where is he? Where is Captain Longpistol? CAN'T SEEM TO ALIGN THIS BIT – SORRY!

RUBEN IS MOMENTARILY LOST FOR WORDS.

**Ruben:** Er...er, he be dead, Sir.

**Jasper:** He's what?

**Ruben:** Dead, Sir.

JANE JUMPS TO HER FEET

**Jane:** But how? Where?

**Ruben:** I just went out to check the rum supplies in the cellar of the tavern and found 'im, wedged into a barrel!

**Ferdinand:** Well, me hearties, it might be a wee bit difficult for ole Longpistol to open the meeting now! What say ye that I just pick up from where I was before?

**Jane:** How can we continue the meeting with Longpistol dead?

**Jasper:** I say we takes a vote right now and decides who be hosting this meeting!

**Grisalda:** Would ye not say that it might be best to find out who killed Longpistol first?

**Ferdinand:** If Longpistol is dead, then dead he be, Grisalda. Them be the laws that govern us pirates in the Caribbee!

**Jasper:** Aye!

**Grisalda:** Have ye both forgotten that we all be here under parole? Any pirate who kills another pirate under meeting of parole must be subject to the most dire consequences. That is our code.

**Jane:** But who would kill Jake Longpistol?

**Ferdinand:** Who indeed? Someone who might benefit from his money?

**Jane:** I beg your pardon?! What *are* you suggesting? And this from someone who fancies making *himself* the most powerful pirate in the Caribbean!

**Ferdinand:** Who me?! Sapphire Jane! It could be *any* one of us here, so it could! (LAUGHS) We all be pirates!

FERDINAND DRAWS HIS SWORD AND POINTS TO VARIOUS GUESTS.

**Ferdinand:** Do *you* favour yourself as the Pirate King?  
Perhaps *you* think that Longpistol was top dog for long enough!

Or maybe ye be the rotten apple?  
Or are ye the turncoat? Or an agent of the King?

**Jasper:** Wait! There can be no parle! Unless Longpistol's ghost is going to tell us who it be that put him in the barrel, it's every man for himself now and in front of everyone here, I challenge ye, Broadside! To the death!

**Ferdinand:** Oh dear! Here we go again. Well, if that's the way ye want it.....

FERDINAND AND JASPER DRAW SWORDS AND MAKE READY TO FIGHT.

**Grisalda:** No! STOP! I have a better idea.

**Jasper:** Well, let's hear it then! Or maybe I'll settle with ye after I be done with Broadside!

GRISALDA DRAWS HER SWORD.

**Grisalda:** Who amongst us is strong enough to fill the boots of Beardface? I have two small ships. Ye, Jasper, have, to my knowledge, no more than three. And ye, Ferdinand have four. No one else here commands more than one ship, unless any man or woman wants to step forward and say otherwise! No? So, that leaves only three of us with more than one ship, and we all needs the support of another to be Pirate King.

**Ferdinand:** Aye, but what of Longpistol's ships and men? Who will now command them? His boson perhaps?

**Jasper:** The boson be under Pirate Bond to Longpistol!

**Ferdinand:** But that bond be broken since Longpistol fell into that barrel! What say you, Cuban Ruben?

**Ruben:** I be just the boson, Captain.

**Ferdinand:** Maybe Longpistol's men are behind you now. So you see, Grisalda my dear, it's not clear at all who might be the next Pirate King!

**Grisalda:** Aren't you forgetting someone, Ferdinand?

GRISALDA LOOKS AT JANE, WHO IN TURN LOOKS ROUND AT EVERYONE IN HORROR.

**Jane:** Me? You don't think I could command five ships and eight hundred men?

**Jasper:** Ye could've shack'd up with one of Longpistol's captains! He left ye alone enough times. I reckons that with your

support, one his captains might've decided to chance his arm!

**Ferdinand:** Aye, maybe. Maybe so. But another thought crosses my mind. Even with Longpistol out of the picture, I somehow don't see you and I working together very well, Jasper, do you? Which puts her in a rather strong position to play us off against each other, does it not?

FERDINAND POINTS HIS SWORD TOWARD JANE, WHO VISIBLY PULLS BACK.  
GRISALDA LAUGHS.

**Grisalda:** Look, we five be the most powerful people here and we knows our own crews, don't we? I say we go to the side room and work out how we can determine the new Pirate King. And then perhaps we can decide who it was who killed Longpistol!

**Ferdinand:** Good idea. [TO AUDIENCE] You lot! Eat and make merry, whilst we parle!

END OF ROUND ONE.

The guests should all now be served with their first course.

The cast should not re-enter the room until round two begins.