

# Pirates' Den

This play imagines a TV show 300 years ago, where 3 famous pirates sit in a row facing a prisoner who hope to strike a deal with one of the dreaded pirate 'dragons'.

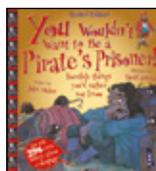
Parts:

- Narrator
- Edwin Teach (1680-1718) aka Blackbeard, the fearsome pirate
- Mary Read (1690-1721) aka Mark Read, an English pirate
- Bartholomew Roberts (1682-1722) aka John Roberts, a Welsh pirate
- Anne McCormack a prisoner, captured by pirates
- Jack Sparrowhawk a prisoner, captured by pirates

*The three 'pirate dragons' sit on deck, facing each nervous prisoner brought before them.*

- Narrator: Welcome to 'Pirate's Den', the show where desperate prisoners get just three minutes to pitch their ideas to three rich and powerful multi-murdering pirates willing to invest some influence – at a price. Let's meet this week's pirate dragons. Mr Edwin Teach doesn't so much breathe fire as shoots flames from fireworks in his beard – for he is better known as...
- Blackbeard: *(Evil laugh)* Blackbeard!
- Narrator: And can you remind us in a few words of your business credentials?
- Blackbeard: As well as my dirty great beard, I've got style. Basically, I've captured more treasure and sailors than I can remember. Oh yes, and I killed most of my prisoners for a bit of fun. I've got forty





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cannons on my ship called Queen Anne's Revenge. I took control of Charleston Port (South Carolina) so I own more than my fellow pirate dragons put together!

**Narrator:** Well, there's already hissing and rivalry in the den. Let's meet Mark Read, who looks like any other violent pirate but is, in fact, a woman.

**Mary:** Correct – but I can fight as well as any man and far better than most. I've killed more sailors than I can count and I adore treasure – especially if I've killed to get my hands on it. Do you like my gorgeous gold bracelets?

**Narrator:** I'm sure Mary can be friendly on her days off. But now we meet our third dragon pirate who comes from Wales - a Welsh Dragon Pirate of the seas.

**Bartholomew:** Correct. I'm Bartholomew Roberts. I'm the most successful pirate ever as I've captured 470 ships in my career. Beat that, you two – ha ha ha!

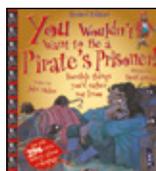
**Narrator:** The atmosphere in the den is already hotting up and that's even before we've started. The trouble with 18th century pirates is they'll pick a fight with anyone – especially themselves. Just remember, it only takes a lost pea to make a pirate IRATE. You may need to see that joke written down!

**Blackbeard:** Get a move on. I haven't got all day. I've got ships to rob and prisoners to torture – as well as anyone who does a stupid pirate voice.

**Mary:** Arrrrr, and I've got a ship waiting in the harrrrbour, me hearrrrties.

**Bartholomew:** And I need to sharrrrpen my cutlarrrrs, me hearrrrties.

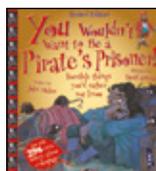




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- Blackbeard:** *(Jumps up, waving fists and a flintlock pistol)* If you annoy me I'll turn narrrrrrsty. Oops, now you've made me do it!
- Narrator:** Time to move on. First up in front of the pirate dragons is Anne, a young girl from Ireland who was taken prisoner when the ship she was on got attacked by pirates. She is asking for her life to be spared and fifty thousand pieces of eight for giving information leading to twenty per cent of the booty from her convoy. Just to remind you, a piece of eight is a Spanish dollar. (As early as 1600 one 'piece of eight' coin would have been worth the equivalent of a modern £50 note).
- Anne:** *(Enters nervously)* Hello pirate dragons, I'm Anne and I've been chained in the smelly hold of a pirate ship for weeks. I happen to know what one of the ships in our convoy was carrying and where it will be now. Although I've been clamped in the bilboes, starved, then kept in the dark, I haven't given any information away to my captors. But if any of you are prepared to give me fifty thousand pieces of eight and get me released, I'll lead you to twenty percent of the treasure.
- Blackbeard:** Hold on, Anne. What's to stop me just getting the information from you by torture or going back on my word and feeding you to the sharks?
- Anne:** Because we have to trust each other.
- Blackbeard:** Oooo, Anne. Rule one: Never trust a pirate. Rule two: Never trust ME. I never trust anyone. You're very young and you might not be worth trusting or saving. How can you be sure you know where the treasure is?
- Anne:** I'm not prepared to say – unless we make a deal.
- Mary:** I like you, Anne. This pirate business is a man's world and we





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need more girls like you around. You seem quite brave – does anything scare you?

Anne: Not really. Just awful pirate jokes.

Mary: Like what?

Anne: Like 'what did the pirate say when his wooden leg got stuck in the ice?'

Mary: I don't know - what did the pirate say when his wooden leg got stuck in the ice?

Anne: Shiver me timbers.

Mary: I see what you mean. That's terrible!

Bartholomew: Anne, I'm Captain Bartholomew Roberts. I'm rich. I feel I'm wasting my time talking to a little girl who might know where a bit of treasure is. Why should someone as important as me invest in someone like you?

Anne: Because I'm worth it.

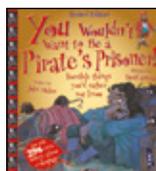
Bartholomew: Tell me... would you rather be punished with a cat-o'-none-tails or be told a bad pirate joke?

Anne: Neither – I just want to go free.

Bartholomew: Very well, I have no choice. Why did the pirate put a belt on a pumpkin?

Anne: That's easy. He wanted to be a squashbuckler. I know all the bad jokes. I've been tortured with them for the last week.

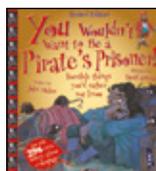




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- Bartholomew: Here's another. Why was the girl arrested for making a waxwork of Blackbeard?
- Anne: That's easy. It's illegal to make a pirate copy.
- Bartholomew: Hmmm, you've certainly done your research. What do you know about me?
- Anne: I know you always wear your velvet suit and a lacy shirt before a battle. I also know you're a wanted man with a price on your head.
- Blackbeard: Yeah – just a couple of bucks!
- Anne: That's right – a buck-an-ear! A buccaneer is a pirate adventurer who raids Spanish ships along the American coast – just like you.
- Bartholomew: That's not funny. You should be made to walk the plank. I'm out.
- Blackbeard: To be honest, Anne, I'm not interested in saving your life. I'm out.
- Mary: Anne - I'm going to make you an offer. I'll take all the treasure but share it with you – half each. I'll pay you nothing else but save your life if you come and work for me as a pirate. I know a part-time pirate called James Bonny who might marry you. You'd like him.
- Anne: Can I think about it?
- Mary: You can have as long as you want.
- Anne: *(She pauses for a millisecond)* I accept your offer! *(They shake hands and embrace)*





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Narrator: So our first pirate prisoner has struck a deal. Mary Read will get her released but it means Anne will become Anne Bonny and become a pirate herself. She and Mary Read could be remembered as two of the scariest pirates ever – who dress as men. The rest will be history! It's time to take a short break – with a pirate's sea shanty...

What shall we do with a pirate's prisoner?  
 What shall we do with a pirate's prisoner?  
 What shall we do with a pirate's prisoner?  
 Early in the morning.

Blackbeard: Lock him in the bilboes till he talks of treasure  
 Lock him in the bilboes till he talks of treasure  
 Lock him in the bilboes till he talks of treasure  
 Early in the morning.

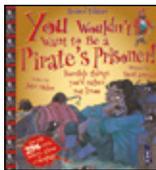
All: Weigh heigh and up she rises  
 Weigh heigh and up she rises  
 Weigh heigh and up she rises  
 Early in the morning.

Mary: Flog him fifty lashes from the quartermaster  
 Flog him fifty lashes from the quartermaster  
 Flog him fifty lashes from the quartermaster  
 Early in the morning.

All: Weigh heigh and up she rises  
 Weigh heigh and up she rises  
 Weigh heigh and up she rises  
 Early in the morning.

Bartholomew: Drag him underwater in a keelhaul torture  
 Drag him underwater in a keelhaul torture  
 Drag him underwater in a keelhaul torture





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Early in the morning.

All: Weigh heigh and up she rises  
Weigh heigh and up she rises  
Weigh heigh and up she rises  
Early in the morning.

Anne: Bung him in a barrel as you light the powder  
Bung him in a barrel as you light the powder  
Bung him in a barrel as you light the powder  
Early in the morning.

All: Weigh heigh and up she rises  
Weigh heigh and up she rises  
Weigh heigh and up she rises  
Early in the morning.

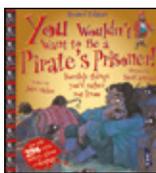
Jack (or  
Bartholomew's  
parrot): Burn him on the barbie till he tells his secrets  
Burn him on the barbie till he tells his secrets  
Burn him on the barbie till he tells his secrets  
Early in the morning.

All: Weigh heigh and up she rises  
Weigh heigh and up she rises  
Weigh heigh and up she rises  
Early in the morning.

What shall we do with a pirate's prisoner?  
What shall we do with a pirate's prisoner?  
What shall we do with a pirate's prisoner?  
Early in the morning - weigh heigh!

Narrator: There's nothing like a good sea shanty – and that was nothing like





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a good sea shanty! Next in the den is Jack Sparrowhawk. He has spent many years escaping from pirate ships but he's now a prisoner of Captain One-Eyed-Jake and needs to strike a deal with a pirate dragon so he can escape again.

Jack: (*Swaggers in*) Good day, my friends. You may know me. I'm known by many pirates of the Caribbean. I've been on many sea adventures but right now I'm a prisoner and I need a bit of your influence to get me off the hook.

Mary: Who's hook? Captain Hook?

Jack: No, no. Listen, I could be a great help to you guys. You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours.

Blackbeard: With a hook? Why have you got an itchy back?

Jack: I was flogged by One-Eyed-Jake with a cat-o'-nine-tails. The whip had scratchy fish hooks and musket balls on the end. Fifty lashes. Then salt and vinegar.

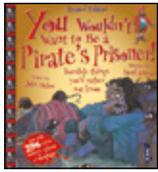
Bartholomew: Crisps?

Jack: No – scabs. Salt and vinegar was rubbed into them. Ouch. My back now itches like mad. Next I had water torture to make me tell secrets. I had ducking, towing, got stitched-up but I didn't say a word. Then I was keelhauled. That wasn't nice – getting dragged under the ship with barnacles on the bottom.

Mary: It's nasty having barnacles on your bottom.

Jack: Enough to say, I couldn't sit down for a week. So I want your help to get revenge. Then I'll tell you stuff. I know where there's an island with buried treasure. One-Eyed-Jake has got the map of where it is. I know how to get it. It's yours if you get me off





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his ship. You see, I'm a prisoner of a pirate captain with one eye called Jake.

Blackbeard: Really – so what's his other eye called?

Bartholomew: I don't find that funny. And I don't like you, Jack Sparrowhawk. For that reason, I'm out.

Mary: I'll tell you where I am on your bid to get even with One-Eyed-Jake. To me you don't seem real. You're more like a character from a book.

Jack: Me, Jack Sparrowhawk? Listen, I'm a pirate's prisoner. And believe me, you wouldn't want to be a pirate's prisoner. I could tell you horrible things you'd rather not know. Now that IS in a book! (*Holds up a copy of YWWTBAPP!*)

Mary: You just look too cool to be a pirate's prisoner. For that reason, I'm out.

Narrator: So now there's just one dragon pirate left. Will Blackbeard be prepared to make an offer or will Jack leave the den empty-handed – to return as a prisoner of One-Eyed-Jake?

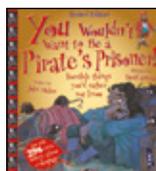
Blackbeard: Right – I'll tell you what I'll do. You get me the map to Treasure Island and I'll rescue you from One-Eyed-Jake's ship before blowing it up to smithereens. But.... and there's a big but...

Jack: You want me to join your pirate ship?

Blackbeard: No way. Once we get to the island, I will paint you with red paint from head to toe. Then I'll cover you in blue paint...

Jack: Oh no... I'm going to be marooned!





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- Blackbeard: That's my offer. Take it or leave it.
- Jack: I'll take it. It's a deal! *(They shake hands)*
- Narrator: That's amazing. Another prisoner leaves the den with an offer of help from a pirate dragon. Jack and Anne, you must both be delighted.
- Anne: I can't wait to start my new life as a real pirate of the high seas. Then I'll never have to be tortured by evil pirates again. I'll be one myself! Everyone will know my name: Anne Bonny.
- Jack: Yikes, I might have made a big mistake. Although I'll get off the pirate ship at last, I'll be marooned on a desert island. I might get eaten by cannibals or go completely mad. I'll have to eat creepy-crawlies or starve – or maybe die of the dreaded scurvy. Help!
- Narrator: Those are horrible things I'd rather not know. Which all goes to show **YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO BE A PIRATE'S PRISONER... EVER!**

