

Young times

The scourge of the seas

If you thought piracy was a thing of the past, think again. Seaborne robbers have seized a supertanker carrying \$100m of oil. Who are the 21st-century pirates, asks **Chloe Lambert**

When we hear the word pirate, most of us imagine parrots, peglegs and eye patches. We think of real-life characters such as Blackbeard sailing the high seas of the 18th century, and fictional ones such as Captain Hook.

But pirates have never gone away. They are still one of the biggest threats on the ocean and worldwide losses are estimated to run into billions of dollars every year.

There were more than 200 seaborne robberies last year, many off the Indian Ocean coast of Somalia, the most dangerous seas in the world for pirate activity.

Forget galleons with crow's nests, today's pirates use mobile phones and speedboats to attack an oil vessel. Armed with guns, they hijack the ship and steer it towards Somali territory because the country has no navy to

protect ships there. Shipping companies have no choice but to pay a ransom for the return of their cargo and crew.

Piracy is a tempting career for many young Somali men as a way to make huge amounts of money. When a Danish cargo ship, the *Danica White*, was seized in June 2007, the pirates reportedly collected \$1.5 million for her return.

On Saturday, pirates seized the *Sirius Star*, a Saudi oil tanker carrying two million barrels of crude oil, off the coast of Kenya. Yesterday the ship was heading for the Somali coast, so the pirates can begin talks with the owners. Worth \$100 million (£67 million), the *Sirius Star* is the biggest seizure ever taken at sea, blowing Blackbeard and his bandit friends right out of the water.



▲ Pirates stand on board the upper deck of the MV Faina, a Ukrainian ship seized in September. The crew can be seen on the lower deck. The vessel continues to be held off the coast of Somalia



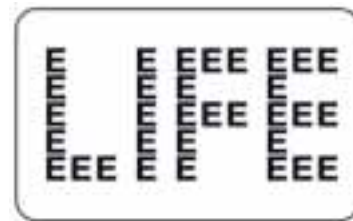
► A pirate stands guard on land to prevent any rescue attempts on a ship held to ransom

▼ The *Sirius Star*, taken by Somali pirates on Saturday



daily dingbat

Which word or phrase is this? Say what you see.



Yesterday's answer Weak link

Yesterday's film High School Musical

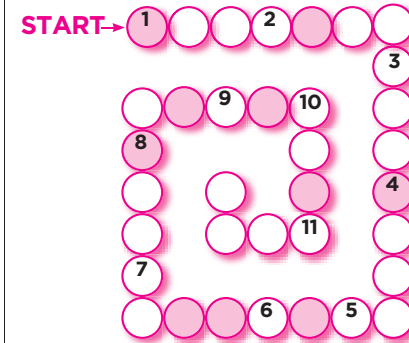
puzzle of the day

spiral

Write the answer to each clue in the spiral, but be careful — the last letter of one is the first letter of the next! Then write out the letters in the pink circles in order below the grid to find a television character.

CLUES

- 1 Cod, trout etc (4)
- 2 Small mountains (5)
- 3 Sharp-tasting (4)
- 4 Football with a scrum (5)
- 5 Opposite of "no" (3)
- 6 Well-dressed (5)
- 7 Small city (4)
- 8 Bird's home (4)
- 9 Noisy style of dancing (3)
- 10 Bicycle tyre inflator (4)
- 11 Swimming baths (4)



Yesterday's answers: 1. Dragon 2. Goblin 3. Mermaid 4. Vampire 5. Unicorn 6. Leprechaun

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Image: Sandro Botticelli, *Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Christ Child*, circa 1485. National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh. ArtFunded 1999. The Art Fund, Registered charity 209174



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