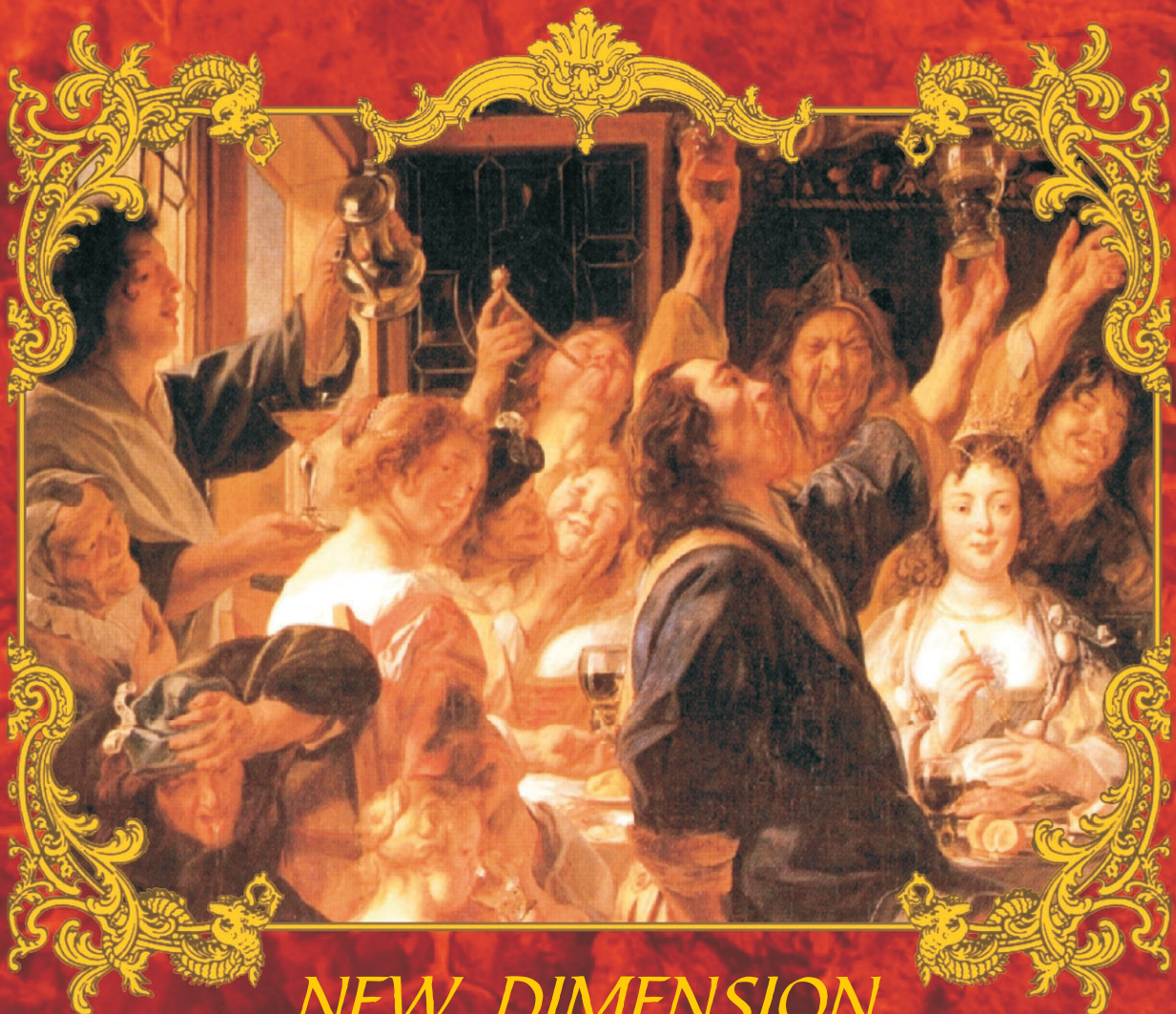


PIRATES™

OF THE
BLOODIEST YARNS

BY: MATT DEMILLE



NEW DIMENSION
GAMES

FOR Emily Rose Olson, an unfinished tale . . .

Credits

Designer: Matthew deMille

Cover: Jacob Jordaens (historical picture)

Songs: Robert Browning, Eliza Cook, Matthew deMille, William Histed, John Masefield, Carl Sandburg

Editing, Graphic Design, Typography: Matthew deMille

Producer: James deMille

ENHANCING AN ADVENTURE



Avast there, matey! Heave to with that thar book o' rules an' mark well me words. No fear have ye of evil curses, says you? Think them reefs be just a load o' red herring an' not the monsters that God fearin' men say they be? Be ye heedless o' sailin' off the edge o' the map? Ph'raps ye'd best start believin' in ghost stories, fer ya never know when ya may be in one . . .

PRONOUN NOTE: The male pronouns ('he', 'him', 'his') are used throughout this 'ere book. Though women may be bad luck at sea, they're right fine for this 'ere game, and we're not be tryin' to exclude 'em, nor even imply their exclusion. Centuries of use have made these 'ere pronouns neutral, and they're use provides for clear and concise written next—nothing else does.

ABOUT THIS BOOK: What is in this booklet? Indeed, just what is an adventure gazetteer? The pre-made Adventures of the game can be enhanced in many ways, and thus, different gazetteers serve different functions. This particular booklet provides the Game Captain with a hundred legends from all around the pirate world, legends he can use in any way he wishes, be they simple fodder for drunken tavern talk, red herrings, or the genesis for entire adventures!

What is in this book: Within these pages, there is naught but legend. These stories are not rules, nor are they adventures. They are strictly legends, with the same intelligence, perspective and focus as they would have if recounted by pirates themselves. A century of stories all told, they await the financier of a Game Captain's imagination to explore the far off adventures they lead to . . .

Using this book: Though with a first glance this booklet may appear simplistic in design, there is, just as with running any adventure, a technique to employing this material. First and foremost, it is necessary to recognize that this booklet does not in any way provide ready-made Adventures, but rather it merely provides a texture to them, a supplement to the established Adventure. It is in how one **uses** this supplement that counts. There are many means and methods to doing this.

Each Chapter focuses on one part of the wider pirate world—the Caribbean, Australia, etc. Inside each area, stories are organized according to their cultural focus. For example, despite there being not only dominant Spanish rule in the West Indies but the presence of the English and French colonies as well, there is a variety of stories, but tales whose backbone is not European at all, but all the natives scattered about the islands, for they have a much longer history there. Thus, there are not 'English' legends of the Caribbean any more than there are exclusively 'Spanish' ones. Sailors only retell tales, for it is usually the local culture which creates or encourages them. On the other hand, in a place as enslaved as the Spanish Main, where government is readily destroying culture, Spanish versions of tales predominate. Each area differs depending on all of its classic historical conditions.

Each story is told as if it were spoken by one in that part of the world. The text is kept to our modern style of speech, but the content of a story is limited to the knowledge, beliefs and even the rumors known to both the fictional and historical characters in this fantasy world. This way, one can simply read off a tale as it is presented within this booklet, and effectively be 'role-playing'. Whether he wishes to add a pirate-accent of "Arrrr . . ." is left to his preference (and performance ability). But no fictional fact or violation of vocabulary will be encountered, no reef of recognizably modern terms shall be hit, no storm of science or modern minds will hinder one who navigates his storytelling by relying strictly on the stories herein. However, not one of these entries are printed in the boxed text which normally designates what is to be read aloud to Players, simply because the entire book would thus have to be boxed text.

These legends are not all true. Like all rumors and sailor's yarns, part of their appeal lies in their mystery, that they **could** be real. Indeed, nothing in this book needs be a part of **your** version or vision of a pirate world. Moreover, in order to use this book properly, consider that at least some of these legends should prove false or misleading, lest they all lose their unique power of mystique. The cunning Game Captain will use these legends more to inspire him and his Players rather than simply relying on them as adventure-fodder.

ENHANCING AN ADVENTURE



Summing it all up: There be a lot of long words in that text above, eh matey? Ye be not more than a humble pirate, says you? Then ta say it plainly, this 'ere book be full o' tales ta use as ya see fit.

COVER NOTE: The numerical code found in the upper left cover corner of most products counts the total Encounters in that adventure, thus presenting one way to at least anticipate the challenge that is provided therein. However, as this product has no such entries to count, that code has been replaced with the total tales to be found herein, the number of legends recounted within these pages. Indeed, the lore of the very advertising code is revealed in this Supplement.

TITLE NOTE: This product was originally titled 'Rum and Wenches', which remains this product's copyright namesake, though we felt it was just too misleading to the customer.

STYLISH PHRASES: No matter where the party sails in the world, no matter what legends they are fool enough to follow, there are a few phrases that are common to pirate taletelling, phrases that may be just what one needs to make a story come to life and evoke the proper mood, so when you are improvising, perhaps consider some of the common phrases below and belay them . . .

"Stop": Saying this while telling a tale can easily make one sound like he's simply reading or just taking clumsy instruction, so stop saying it and use "Belay", or perhaps "Avast".

"The year . . .": Nothing kills a tale's mystique any quicker than putting numbers in it, and the year is the most common number of all, so instead of just quoting the year like any other rule, disguise it in the manner which it might actually be spoken by a pirate, such as "In the year of Our Lord . . .", and place the second-digits first, such as "seventy-three and sixteen-hundred".

"Gods": Make no mistake about it, pirates mostly come from a religion dominated by a single god, and so their common language refers to any other deities in some negative way and certainly without

respect, so don't force a pirate to choke on saying the plain word 'gods', but rather sweeten the bitter blasphemy with greater words, like "heathen gods" or "devils disguised as gods".

Modern words: While all the stories throughout this booklet are written with no greater a vocabulary of a pirate captain of their classic age, it is easy in a reading or performing of any such tale to poison its mystique with the improvisational use of one's modern language, so be careful what you say and what comparisons you make, careful to keep any contemporary words from magically appearing in a pirate's retelling of a legend.

Specific names: Legends remain legends because it is difficult if not impossible to solve their mystery, which means there are few facts to know, and also many versions of 'facts' blending together into new 'facts', especially the names of people, so steer far from naming specific people or even culture, using instead "natives" rather than the specific name of a tribe, or "an Englishman" instead of giving out his Christian name, thus forcing followers of the tale to learn clues along the way, almost as if they are playing a game . . .

TALES OF THE TAVERNES



Avast there! Before headin' out ta sea, one may be drunk or dead in a tavern, where there be echoes o' 'ventures fore an' aft, fer in the dark pubs an' in the seedy innes gather adventurers from the world o'er, bringin' all manner o' tales with them . . .

PIRATE TOWNS: Though many a sailor begins his career as a pirate in a respectable town, there he is still respectable, and it's in the dark dens of thieves where a pirate is appreciated. Some stories and songs are known across many seas and garner favor in their tellings much like a national anthem. Others are the sort of stories one simply wouldn't risk retelling anywhere else.

Mr. Smythe, Foreign Financier: You'll know him if you see him. He's a dark figure, both in flesh and in cloth, like a priest from another day and age. If there be a place on earth where his kind is less of a wraith than a man, may the Angels cringe and begin rewriting the Good Book. For none can ever place where he's from. Some have even spoken of sunken cities and lost civilizations. But one thing is for certain, and that he always has a good deal of gold. This man, who can only be described as a foreigner in any port, always seeks out those in greatest need of vile deed, indeed pirates with the most daring voyage, and he backs them. And then, just as mysteriously as he appeared, he steals away into the night when the moon is obscured, unable to followed, but also unable to be forgotten.

Over the years, many have speculated as to a history for this ghostly foreigner. The most widely believed tale is that he has spent many years in a jungle, possibly the Main, and has found his way back to civilization, using a secret fortune that was the very reason he was sent to the slave mines to finance men who will bleed the Spanish or other world powers. He is certainly no friend of Royal Navy or government officials, for he is always hot tempered when they try to speak with him.

Once, he gave his name, Smythe, though one cannot be sure if he was simply hissing a foreign insult to the officers present at the time. Still, the name has remained attached to him like barnacles to a ship's hull. When next you need gold for an unwise voyage, be most unwise and insult a guard, and perhaps old Mr. Smythe will find you.

Thieves of fate: Ask any pirate tavernkeeper, and chances are he'll have an account of the 'Nebula', a ship which, when sighted, causes the fortunes of the witness to change drastically. Profitable voyages suddenly founder. Accursed ventures suddenly find a way to escape their plight. However, nobody has ever sailed close enough to the Nebula to speak of her crew. If anyone has, that's when this gesture of fate, indeed this jester of a ship, turns, and thus becomes a gesture of malice. Leave the crew be, and simply accept the change in the wind. Thieves of fate, the crew is called, and they're best left to ply their trade against fate indeed, leaving mortals to pick from the flotsam and slush funds of their other-worldly raids.

A barrel o' black: If one is ever in a tavern that proclaims to have a 'barrel of black', he'd be wise to count his coins. This is a tavernkeeper's way of ensuring that everyone drinking has gold enough to pay. For the barrel can come out at any time, and everyone has to throw one piece of eight into it, and anyone who hasn't a coin to offer is thus clearly planning to welch on his drinks. Of all the welchers, one is chosen by lot, and after everyone removes their coins, he's sealed in it for the night. While such a night may sound as merely a trifle uncomfortable, certainly no worse than quarters on a Royal Naval ship, there is something about those barrels o' black. It seems that they are supplied by a single ship which roams the world, selling only one to each port, and all who endure a night in one emerge mad for a period of time, be it days, months, even years.

Bill Cutlass, the pirate rover: Nobody knows where the song came from, or if it even represents a real man, but old Bill Cutlass is sure a favorite in all the taverns of men on the account. It's not at all a new sight to behold a crew drinking their fill on the eve of a journey and offering a toast to this old rapsallion. His song has been sung from the Isla de Tortuga to Singapore. His song is outlawed in ports where government holds sway, and though only those of English tongue know the words, the tune is recognizable to Spaniard and Hollander and Frenchman alike, and such officers are equal also in their disdain for it.

TALES OF THE TAVERNES

*My name's Bill Cutlass, bold and free,
I came into the world by piracy,
And while I can steer a craft at sea,
I'll be a pirate rover.*

*For trade the merchant sails abroad,
For gold he dares the ocean's flood,
But I gain all by steel and blood,
Like a gallant pirate rover.*

*I've roved all seas through heat and cold,
And many prizes taken and sold,
And when I've spent out all my gold,
Again I'm a pirate rover.*

*There's many a maiden proud and grave,
I've captured on the briny wave,
And on some island made her the slave
Of Bill, the pirate rover.*

*Yet when I find poor mortals wrecked,
I risk my life, their own to protect,
For shipwreck lads will find respect
In Bill, the pirate rover.*

*I've stood in many a deck fight grim,
Where pirates on their blood did swim,
But ne'er could foes cut hair or a limb
From Bill, the pirate rover.*

*They watch for me by land and wave,
To ship me into a rope and a grave,
They ne'er shall grab Bill Cutlass, brave,
The gallant pirate rover.*

*They sing of me in pub and den,
They write of me with quill and pen,
But fame shall never fence me in,
The famous pirate rover.*

*I'm e'er hidden in midnight's blue,
And I'm e'er off the map 'tis true,
I could be standing veiled before you,
The elusive pirate rover.*

*My name's Bill Cutlass, bold and free,
I live well in the world by piracy,
And while I can steer a craft at sea,
I'll remain a pirate rover.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 1.

COLONY PUBS: Many a pirate venture begins in a seaside tavern in a normal port town. However, the tales told there may be anything but normal. Is it the call of the sea alone? Or do men just hear what they want to, such as tales of gold and of a paradise waiting for them?

Walking the plank: Truth be told, every pub tells of pirates making victims walk the plank, but truth is a fickle mistress, and every time a real sailor is unfortunate enough to dance with her, he finds that pirates just push men overboard. Walking the plank takes too long. Only the most sadistic of captains enjoy such mirth, indeed to draw out the sentence, while victims try bribing him with information that he notes just before he pushes them over anyway. Pirates are ruthless, so innkeepers say, trying to sway honest sailors from turning pirate themselves.

The coffin trail: Sailors speak of a time, when the moon is full, when wind sleeps, that floating casks, coffins the lot of them, appear in a trail. They are the bone boxes of dead men, tethered to a plague ship at one end and Hell's gate at the other. Ships must steer off their heading to avoid the trail lest they take the plague aboard and add to the trail. It is said that entire galleons have been broken down to make enough coffins for its sorry crew. Many sailors are spooked by such stories, but others see these as yarns stretched by the Navy in secret to keep men from sailing on the account. Royal Navy ships are clean ships, it is said, and plague cannot touch them. The limeys foster this story the most, if only to offer ballast to their recurrent diseases, refusing to stock good fruits like other Navies. Yet whether aboard a merchant vessel, pirate ship or a Royal Navy warship, the coffin trail strikes terror into the hearts of any crew, and it does exist, that much is certain, for it is noted in the logbooks of captains worldwide.

The devil's fog: Anyone who has spent time in a colony pub knows why they're not more a settled place. They're lonely, desolate places. They are on the edge of the map. The border as sailors prefer to mark and for certain a mark they'll trust is if a fog is common or not. Beyond the fog the world is in the devil's hands. If the fog is not a devilry,

TALES OF THE TAVERNES

the colony will thrive, at least as far as sailors are concerned. Priests and farmers and officers are ever of other opinions, unlearned in the sea as they are. So is it that sailors have a blessing they speak to themselves when leaving port after a fog has lifted:

*The fog comes
on little cat feet.*

*It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then, moves on.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 2.

CIVILIZED INNES: The watering holes that form the wall keeping the sea wind from blistering the shoppes in larger cities blow a wind of their own, as stories of all kinds from all manner of sailors flow here, as unstoppable as a storm, but doing as little damage as a tempest to the mainland. Indeed, innes of larger ports are rather vacant of wild tales and superstitions. Sailors there are either cut from a tougher cloth, and those more prone to follow a fool's errand have left long ago. As it is, the tales told in such places are tame by comparison to the ones told at the edges of the map, more romancing the sea than bedeviling it.

Unholy coffee: Not long ago, soon after the Great Navigator Columbus landed in the Indies, the bean of coffee came to England. A blessing to most, the holy men fear it. They say it is a Satanic delight, a concoction of witch's brew. Yet His Holiness the Pope himself tasted and blessed the bean. Let the backwards ways of the Islamic infidels continue to be enslaved to it, be it in Istanbul where a wife is able to divorce her man for not providing enough coffee, or in Mecca where men riot against a ban on the bean. Those in England have cheated the devil by a baptism on the bean.

The green flash: On rare occasions, the last bit of a setting sun's light creates a strong flash of green extending all the way up into heaven. Most sailors never see it, and others claim to have seen it but haven't and extend the light beyond heaven to the

ghostly realm of superstition. This has led many an honest man to believe this a gateway to the world beyond this one, the land of the dead. Truth be told, nobody knows what the green flash really is.

HIDDEN HOUSES: They could be anywhere, on any coast, in any town—secret tavernes where only pirates and other fugitives from 'justice' are given sanctuary. Called 'spy houses', 'devil dens' and a number of other things, they are storehouses of all the tales of treasures pirates don't want government officials to catch wind of. In fact, many pirates are often to visit such tavernes even when they don't need to hide, but pretend to do so in order to take advantage of the house's hospitality in the hope of hearing a story that can give their cloudy fortunes a silver lining, or perhaps even a golden one.

The lost treasure of the Bacchai: Most sailors have heard of the Bacchai, that merchant vessel of the Old World, but only the brethren hear tell of those true treasures aboard, where it made port when not chained to the tax ledgers of traderoutes, and what its fate ultimately was.

Named for the ancient god Bacchus, purveyor of wine and women, she was supposedly merely a merchant vessel specializing in wine, running from one rich Old World port to another. Yet she had a dark secret for certain. Officials and even spies of the Royal Navies never suspected more than of her being a rumrunner, which is a fable the captain of the Bacchai fostered, the recipe for this deception kept in a secret tome passed from one captain to the next for over two hundred years. Seeing but a single rumrunner as too much trouble to follow in seas infested with more sinister men, the Bacchai was left alone to trade its true cargo.

Far away in the New World, there's a cove of deceptive reefs, riddled with caves, plagued by the weather from beyond this world, and where inland all is haunted by savage men. It was here that the Bacchai made port. The wreckage from many other ships, explorers and fugitives all, were made into a stockade. The treasure was holy relics, deemed by ancient priests to be unworthy of any king, and bit by bit it all found its way here, hidden somewhere near this place, its location forgotten, but the cove was to remain a refuge for those who knew where

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they could find it, far from the reach of any king or all the Royal Navies of the world. The treasure, being not of this world, would sometimes draw to it devils from the sea or dark men from lands not known to the living. Hardy were the folk who had charge to guard this place or need to find refuge here and earn their bed and bread by fending off demons who turned swords with their bare hands.

When the last of the treasure, according to the captain's book, was accounted for and hidden here, the stockade was burned and the Bacchai sailed for an unknown port, where her men scattered to the four winds, and the captain hid the book away.

The golden box: Tales persist of a treasure-box of gilded wood bound in gold bonds, lost somewhere out there upon the seas. Though countless versions tell where its ship foundered, all agree that founder it did and was carried ashore at the loss of seven men who were taken by sharks. Now, the chest is said to wait within twenty paces of the treeline, in a shallow pit, hidden only by the bodies who were washed ashore. Men look for graves or for where no animals will walk and no birds chatter.

The secret cells of Count Volsolo: Born an English farmer, not even the God would have guessed how far he'd go, how much wealth he'd attain, how far he'd . . . have to look up just to see the Almighty's throne. Indeed, by his thirtieth year, Robert Volsolo had become a Count, gaining promotion through all the endless war of the mid Seventeenth Century. It was the double-edged sword of Fate he danced on. For when the storm of war finally entered a lull, there was nothing to fill the sails of his fleet, and he was left to satisfy a buccaneer crew of not one but three ships.

He was left with no choice but turn to pirate. This ended his commission. Yet he wasn't at all a loss. He valued gold far more than rank. Yet he'd never relinquish his title, not even to his crew, and woe to the man who failed to name him proper. It was a common echo in the tales of pirates who'd sailed under Volsolo's flag: "Chew the mast like a dog for your mouth is no more worthy of English speech than a beast! By God, I'll flog every fear and human thought out of you! Then I'll feed you to the beasts of the deep!"

Count Volsolo knew his crew wouldn't endure him for long, but he had no intention of giving up a single doubloon, so he devised a daring plan to tell of for another century to come; He loaded all his treasure aboard a single ship, and then engaged the Royal Navy with the remaining two, under his direct command. Having no intention of winning, it was a slaughter as he anticipated, and he bided his time in battle, awaiting an opportunity. Finally, he seized it: Volsolo feigned death, falling overboard, and swam two miles to shore, where his other ship awaited him, as did his now meager crew, pleased at their swelled shares of treasure to come.

Alas, the crew did not reckon with the sheer evil of Volsolo. Rightfully claiming that the Royal Navy was hunting them, they holed up in a house, leaving their last ship to be searched and inevitably commandeered. Meanwhile, they dug tunnels to the shore, planning to pass beneath the Royal Navy to their own ship, slash the throats of its token guard, and leave, to return later for the treasure left well hidden in the buried tunnels.

Count Volsolo sealed his men up with all the treasure. The tunnels became prison cells.

To this day, many believe that Volsolo came back years later with a small crew who recovered the treasure, duped into believing that all of those sealed chests were filled with ledgers. However, it is the fancy of every pirate worth his parrot that it is a treasure still there to be found, that the Count was never able to return, and that the house from which one can see a headland where the rocks are 'like the spine of a demon' is the place where one must begin searching for the sealed cells of Count Volsolo. It is a legend of a treasure, entrapping all who yearn for it in cells of an inescapable fate, never finding it, and dying in the fruitless search.

STORIES OF CIVILIZED COAST



The world o' pirates be the sea, matey, an' on its shores be the shores o' kings an' courts, ports that link our two worlds, an' plenty o' rum an' wenches! Best there be the tales o' ventures told by honest sailors an' our lot. Ye'll not be left wantin' fer rum or wenches or stories o' high adventure if ye listen to the roar of waves, women an' pirates anywhere on along the civilized coast...

ENGLAND: The British Isles are the anchor of all European shipping, the definitive gate between the worlds of pirates and merchant sailors. Due to the strict conditions and persecution in England, there are far more men (and women) who turn to piracy and seek adventure upon the vast and perilous seas coming from these isles than from anywhere else. Whether Welsh, Irish, Scottish or truly English, the English crown rules all here. Thus, story and song traded in these merchant ports, or tales told about these shores, are most often tales of freedom, or of inescapable doom.

The Isle of Man: Off the coast lies a small island, a lookout point for the government, but also home to an older 'hidden house' where pirates and others can find safe haven. Yet they do so at their peril. Those who dwell on the island warn sailors not to stray out of doors after nightfall. For men tend to vanish in the night. Some say that men are simply prone to such drunkenness that they wander off the cliffs, or are claimed by swells and sudden waves which blast against the rocky shoals. Others speak of sirens and other devils of the deep who seek to claim men for themselves. Women and children are never known to vanish.

Haunted counting house: In the heart of London its grand self, there is a counting house where no less than the devil himself counts souls. Its third and highest story has a room where debtors and pirates are often given safe refuge, if safe one could in a sane mind call it. Many men have died up in that room. At first, the money-lenders were accused of murder, but when the question of their motive was given naught for an answer but the picking of all too empty pockets, officials turned a blind eye to it all, refusing to embrace the supernatural. And so the room continued to claim souls. It wasn't until

a man leapt to his death from the window rather than face whatever devil dwells up there that the people who lived just on the other side of its wall learned of this evil presence. Since then, stories of a black cloud have floated about the surrounding streets and pubs. For certain, what could terrify a hardened man such as a pirate so much that rather than face it he'd prefer to leap into Hell itself by the surety of suicide?

The haunted gallows: Though it's more a common sight in the New World, that of gallows upon the wharf or in headlands of the coast, there's one and only one gallows more feared in England than that of Execution Dock in London. Sailors speak of it by no name, fearing to doom themselves to draw an appointment with it, and so name it simply as 'the haunted gallows'. Yet none know for sure just where it is. Most sightings of skeletons hanging by a spectral noose are made by vessels leaving and returning to Portsmouth, yet the isle itself must be as much a ghost as the ghosts themselves, for no such rocks exist on any charts. Whatever the truth, when the gallows is sighted or feared that it might be, men sing a sad, slow lament in a low voice to placate the poor souls trapped there, hoping that in recognizing their suffering the living will be seen not as enemies, and allowed to pass safely.

*Heave to, heave to, and hoist the colours,
Turn the ship to the gale beface, give
leave to, those hoisted aloft, and
burn the fires so that they may see
that while in limbo,
between earth and sea,
caught in the gallows
they're souls are still free*

*Heave to, heave to, and bow in rev'ence,
burn the ship or the bale-fire race, shall
grieve to, those hoisted aloft, and they'll
see the fires as false and ourselves will
join them in limbo,
between wave and hill,
caught in the gallows
and burning in Hell*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 3.

STORIES OF CIVILIZED COAST



Europe: The greater continent of Europe is the heart of Christendom, the forsaken home of most pirates, and the place most to be feared. Whether fleeing the Spanish Inquisition, the enslavement of invading Muslims, plague or any other perils, most believe in greater odds of survival in the uncertain world of piracy on the high seas. This lends itself to more tales of strange opportunity being favored by the brethren and their ilk, if only to buttress a return voyage to these bloody waters with the hope of some strange profit.

Boggs and Cogsworth: Merchants know them well enough, an enterprising duo who have shoppes all along the coast, from Denmark to Portugal, makers of the finest clocks and pocketwatches. However, sailors insist that they secretly fund ventures on the account, for the right people. If such a business is conducted in their offices, they are clever as a fox to keep it from the frequent visitations of officials, both Royal Navy and Royal family.

It is undeniable that many a man has sailed on the account with almost God-given funds, with a miraculously new vessel and provisions enough to sail beyond the edge of the map. Where does a man find such a financier? And if it be Boggs and Cogsworth, what do they stand to gain from their backing such renegades who never return?

It is no secret that Boggs and Cogsworth are operating unofficially in the New World, with their offices trading in goods rather than building clocks. 'Enterprising' they call it. Perhaps more than they are willing to say. Perhaps pirates report to these far flung offices to pay their backers, and to gain provisions in an otherwise hostile world?

If there is any possible gain for this team of clocksmiths who serve the Royalty and Admiralty, most suspect it is for the blood of patriotism. They are known to whisper against the oppression of the church and the monarchies in every country. Being of minds more like their clocks, indeed of wheels, metals and balance, they seem to care more for a pursuit of knowledge rather than their country. All men are equal, they feel, as if white and negro, or red and golden men's blood is valued the same or weighs the same in the scales of Christian justice. Pirates, it would seem, are the only men who truly treat each other with equality. But surely there is a

more profitable reason for such level-minded men to risk their own necks by secretly funding pirates, brethren of the coast and fugitives from justice? Is there something pirates can gain which even Royal family at sea cannot?

Indeed there is.

Boggs and Cogsworth, as pirates alone know, have a secret business behind their secret business. Just as their ledgers for pirates are hidden behind bookshelves so the Admiralty doesn't see them, so are their heathen experiments hidden well enough so that **no** manner of man sees them. Yet they are sure to tell any captain they finance onto the New World to seek for the fabled Philosopher's Stone. Alchemists these two men are, seeking the ultimate formula for balance, the stone which would restore man to his state of perfection before his fall in the Garden of Eden. The immortality its legend offers is indeed just that, a return to a state of grace. To live forever, or whatever gold the stone may create from metal, is simply part of the profits . . .

Isla de Virgin: Off the coast of France, there is an island, or said to be one, that is paradise! Legend has it that in ancient days, a goddess took no less than ten thousand of the most beautiful women on the land and left them here. She was jealous of all their beauty, and enticed them with immortality, so tempting an offer that only one amongst them had enough wit to resist and escape with the tale. The rest remained, immortal and beautiful but unable to ever leave. As the centuries and the ages and the ships of ever changing man ever passed them by, they yearned to feel alive again, if only for a brief moment. They took to enticing sailors from passing ships, but so many years had passed that they all feared to leave the island, lest time catch up with them and they wither and die. Entrapped by their vanity, some dared time and turned to dust at sea. Some say their numbers dwindled. Some say they were never more than a legend. The island which now bears the name of these ill-fated maidens is a mere cay, crowded with sea turtles, who are indeed virgins because no married sailor can commit such sins as sodomy or adultery with them. Some even go so far as to say the legend of the immortals is, or was, merely a fabrication to throw off pursuit of a pirate burying treasure on an island close by.

STORIES OF CIVILIZED COAST



THE COLONIES: The colonies of New England are a haven for pilgrims and pirates alike. There is no town, no settlement along this lengthy coastline that is without a tale or two of pirates who have visited their wharf, often leaving strange stories in their wake. While the government officially detests pirates, many governors secretly fund them, as they offer a welcome aid against English oppression. As the colonies grow more fiercely independent, their dealings with pirates become more complex, just as the English use privateers to belay the Spanish in the Caribbean. Altogether, this makes for many a fascinating tale to be told in taverns, over tea, or in the council chambers of high ranking officials. Indeed, how may pirates contribute to a colony?

Beer saved the colony: “In the year of Our Lord twenty-one and sixteen-hundred, the Mayflower and her crew successfully landed at Plymouth, offering faithful Christians a chance at freedom in the new, unspoiled garden of God . . .”

So is it told in schools and even to Admiralty and Royal family. However, due to the brethren of the coast, we know the truth.

The Mayflower was blown off course and by no intention of its captain did it land at Plymouth. The intent of God perhaps, but if so, He surely is one to move in mysterious ways, and perhaps He favors pirates as much as the rest of us. For crew morale was low, as were their supplies, and it was a ‘former’ pirate aboard who saved them all, as he was their cooper, their brewer. The Mayflower was in perilously short supply of beer, so at the behest of the one pirate aboard, they put ashore and set up a brewery.

Yet like a fine brew itself, the tale gets even tastier. For while building their brewery, the local savages arrived. Their leader, Samoset, spoke to a cowering captain who didn’t understand a word of his, yet our pirate friend did. Having sailed to the New World before, he knew their tongue, and was able to treat in kind. Samoset, it turns out, simply wanted to know if the white men had any beer to trade. For certain, pirates left an enduring legacy in the now pious colonies.

It’s been seen before, when savages worship a white man thinking him a god, but Samoset was a wise ruler, and worshipped the gods’ beer instead.

An army of one: It wasn’t long ago that both the English and Dutch were nigh at war over business in the valuable Spice Islands of the East Indies. It was said that their nutmeg and cloves were worth as much as Spanish gold, maybe more. Blood was to be a new commodity there, and land was traded by the business of war countless times in the span of a decade. Finally, the English were agreeable to a settlement, one which included the trade of the great Spice Island known as Suriname for a rather obscure island far away in the Colonies, known as Manhattan after the local natives. The English were quick to rename it as New York.

The Dutch actually thought they got the better of this deal.

Truth be told, when this treaty became widely known in the mid Seventeenth Century, there was a great deal of unrest in the Colonies, especially in the prosperous Dutch settlements. Nonetheless, the English arrived as they always do, fully armed and ready to suppress anyone who defies their king. It was this time, however, that they were met with a resistance the likes which nobody would ever have expected from anyone.

Any **one**.

Peter Stuyvesant. Wielding a sword, cursing all Englishmen with a fury that would have made the very Devil cringe and demanding to see the paper which proved their ownership of this land, denied the soldiers and any Englishmen to do so much as step off their boat. Eight tried, and eight died. The rest actually retreated. Probably not out of fear but for political reasons. The last thing that the English wanted was to provoke another war. Instead, they’d rather try to scupper Peter in the night. But again they were repelled by this one man.

Later, Peter managed to organize many Dutch landowners into a small army. ‘Yon-kers’ was their name. And while they could repel the soldiers of England, they wouldn’t fight their friends. For the majority of the colonists welcomed the English, as they were mostly slaves and non-Dutch landowners. ‘Yan-kees’ was their new name.

Still, small battles continued to occur, mostly by the ‘army of one’, Peter Stuyvesant. Finally, in the year sixty-four and sixteen-hundred, the elusive treaty paper, having never been found, was ignored in light of a new one, signed in New York.

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The demon of the sea: Many a colony claims their fate is bedeviled, many claim to be hounded by an unstoppable demon from the sea, but it is the tale first told by William Histed which rings most true. A sailor some say he was, a pirate others, and still does a house on the Jersey shore keep a spyglass they say belonged to him. They claim it's nothing important, save proof of their claim to his legacy, but that may be just the lie which allows them to keep the hidden compass which alone may spot the hiding place of his treasure, once its dials are set aright. But there they'll sing his famed song at the slightest prompting, safe within those walls, for, as they will add, to sing it upon the sea is to invite his bedeviled spirit to return. For some, this is a boon, giving their ship supernatural strength, while for others it is their bane, plaguing their ship with disease, rats, or perhaps even a maelstrom. So, the next time your at sea and wish to gamble with a devil, sing aloud about the Demon of the Sea, and pray your captain doesn't hear you, or joins in . . .

*Furl your sails through the pleasant gale
And helmsman steer her right,
"Hoist the death flag," a pirate cries,
"There's a vessel hove in sight."*

*Run out the guns! In haste bear down!
From us she must not slip!
Cheer, lads, cheer, for we know no fear
On board this demon ship.*

*My men are brave, no man or knave
Has as noble a band as I,
And at my nod fear naught nor God,
And even Fate defy.*

*Then huzza for a life of war and strife,
Oh the pirate's life for me!
My barque shall ride the foaming tide,
For I am the demon of the sea!*

*Two ships of war sailed from afar,
And proudly roamed the sea,
To take me tried, but I defied;
There's none can conquer me.*

*Then two men o' war were fitted out,
By Edward, England's King,
"Go bring," he said, "alive or dead,
That pirate captain bring."*

*But his pride I shook, his ships I took,
And I sunk them 'neath the wave,
Six hundred ten of Edward's men
Met with a watery grave.*

*And yon ship too, we'll make her rue
When first my barque she saw,
For by her rig she seems to be
A British man-o'-war.*

*"Give her a broadside!" the pirate cried,
"Give them a pirate's fare!
Fire red-hot balls and destroy them all,
And blow them into the air!"*

*Two ships engaged in equal rage,
In dreadful murderous scene,
But the die was cast for a ball at last
struck her magazine.*

*Now one and all did stand appalled,
And seemed in great despair,
For the pirate captain and all his crew
Was blown into the air.*

*No more will he ride the foaming tide,
No more a dread he'll be;
For the pirate's dead and the ocean's red
With the Demon of the Sea.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 4.

Captain de Volsong: He was ever ashamed of his country's legacy of defeat, and vowed never to rest until France had conquered her old enemy, even if he must win every war alone. Blessed with wealth, strength and skill beyond most of his countrymen, Francis de Volsong, the proud descendent of a long line of warriors dating back to the dark ages, soon masked his first name with title, and masked all of his country's shame with his victories. He became a terror of pirate waters, scuttling over fifty vessels and even provoking two wars, or so it is said. He certainly claims all his legend to be true.

Indeed, he claims. He never died. In his mad pursuit of fulfilling his vow, he learned everything about the New World's heathen gods that he could from every pirate he hung. Finally, he had gleaned enough lore to locate a water giving immortality to all who drank of it. The piece of the tale that he

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was missing, however, or perhaps he ignored it, is that eternal life is a double-edged sword, bearing a curse. One's vow must be strong, but those gods of dark jungles always sought a way to twist one's words to his undoing and their cosmic comedy. So it was that Captain de Volsong became bound to a rashly spoken oath: He will never rest until France defeats its old enemy of England.

To this day, de Volsong's plague ship sails the coastline of the Americas, seeking souls willing to join its phantom crew, indeed damning themselves with their own oath. Seeing in the Americans the destined wars between their Colonies and England, de Volsong knows that the most daring, reckless and English-hating men of true strength can all be found there.

The lordly lady: The men holding high offices in the colonies are commonly stiff and ridged, afraid anyone might think them less than lordly. Imagine, then, their horror, when in the first year of a new century, the eighteenth, age of enlightenment, that a new governor arrived to run England's colonies New York and New Jersey, one who dressed like the very woman who ruled him.

Indeed, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, was a cousin of Queen Anne of England, and received the appointment of governor with a mind to serve both loyally and literally. If a lord was to serve a lady, he'd dress the part. This much he proclaimed both privately and publicly. Most thought it was a mere boast, a complaint at being sent away from a more dignified office in England. However, when the New York Assembly met the following year, it was with great pride—and some say a great mental illness—that Governor Hyde strode into the midst of his fellow officials wearing a blue silk gown, a pair of satin shoes, and waving his powdered face with a wide, blue fan.

Now, pirates already look upon wigs and most other officials with such disdain and ridicule as to make any one of them wonder why they powder their faces. Perhaps hitting so close to the mark is why Governor Hyde was ousted from office merely six years later. Government officials claim he was destitute, having spent his fortune on extravagant clothing. Pirates laugh at the lot of them, but in secret wonder how to turn this to their advantage.

THE CAROLINAS: Though part of the Colonies, this area is a haven for pirates, so much that the brethren of the coast will name it apart from all of the rest of the Americas. It is a strange place, one where endless reefs and beaches spotted with grass lead to hidden dens of sailors, where governors are as quick to betray their king as pirates are, and it is a world which seems to attract the most famous and infamous of all buccaneers. Unlike the rest of the Colonies, these shores are teeming with pirates and tales of their adventures on the high seas.

The iron treasure-box: Locals and sailors at the old Lookout House, an inn on an isolated beach, have many stories, but one is favored above all others. It involves a treasure-box buried somewhere out on those desolate dunes. The tale comes from a young lad who followed his father out there one fateful night, drawn by the man's lantern-light to his fate as one might follow a will-o-wisp to a foul grave. Hiding in the tall grass, this boy watched as his father welcomed several men ashore, brought from the dark roar of the unseen sea upon a longboat. They quarreled—that much was clear even to his young eyes, and doubted not by the brain of any sailor who has ever had the fortune to cross paths with pirates. In the end, his father fought them all to a bitter end, but was mortally wounded himself. Unable to contain himself any longer, the boy sped to his dying father, who entrusted him with a tale, and a chest.

The chest, an iron treasure-box, was waiting in the longboat. It took all the boy's strength to load the bodies into the cutter and drag the treasure-box through the surf, and then bury it, along with his father. Iron would rust. Even the boy knew enough of the sea and the world. His last question given an answer was that it was so made to protect its valuables from spirits of the other world. Iron they fear, he was told, and so are we. So are we led to believe the same, just as we want to believe in every other fancy of this rather fanciful tale. And though the beach has been searched and dug up so many times as that its dunes have changed shape, no treasure has been found.

Has the iron rusted away completely? Did any truly find it along with its skeletal guardian and be dragged down into their own self-dug gate to Hell?

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Dead men tell no tales, it is said. That was what the boy told me when he died at nigh a hundred years of age. And now I'm telling it to you, for it is my turn to venture to the other-world, without a treasure-box to pay for my passage.

The sailor's grave: There is a song about a sailor's burial at sea, one that has become the favorite in all funerals apart from land, but its original telling holds the key to a treasure. The original sailor, his name unknown, is said to be buried with a fabled crystal skull stolen from a temple deep in the dark jungles of the New World. And while most sailors know his song by heart, only those within a mere league of this drowned crystal heart, clutched to a dead man's breast, can recite the song during any religious service. It ties mens' tongues otherwise. It is further said that should one be close, the water will be green, for the grave is shallow, the song's clarity coming from the skull not far below, calling to anyone to return it to its rightful grave . . .

*Our barque was out, far out from land,
When the fairest of our gallant band
Grew sadly pale, and waned away
Like the twilight of an autumn day.
We watched him through long hours of pain;
But our cares were lost, our hopes in vain;
Death brought for him no coward alarm,
For he smiled as he died on a messmate's arm.*

*He had no costly winding sheet,
But we placed a round shot at his feet;
And he slept in his hammock as safe and sound
As a king in his lawn shroud, marble-bound.
We proudly decked his funeral vest
With the English flag upon his breast:
We gave him that as the badge of the brave,
And then he was fit for his sailor's grave.*

*Our voices broke, our hearts turned weak,
Hot tears were seen on the brownest cheek
And a quiver played on the lips of pride,
As we lowered him down the ship's dark side.
A plunge, a splash, and our task was o'er;
The billows rolled as they rolled before;
But many a rude prayer hallowed the wave
That closed above the sailor's grave.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 5.

Bloody Cay: Not long after Blackbeard met his ill end following the blockade of Charleston, the year following, nineteen and sixteen-hundred, there were tales told far and wide of 'Bloody Cay', where the most fearsome pirate captain's ship went down. In the end, he was beheaded, and his body swam the round of the ship three, some say seven or even a true ten times. Surely truth, like his headless body, is lost in a whirlpool of bloody superstition, born of the wreck of Queen Anne's Revenge. For where that ship went down there are many cays, and yet stories were told of hauntings there a hundred full years before the coming of the 'Terrible Teach'. It is whispered in Charleston that Blackbeard's ghost, still headless, blindly found its way to that beach where so many other devils were imprisoned, and is bound there until Judgment Day.

No ship sails within sight of Bloody Cay. To do so is to risk plague, or worse. The sands ever appear blood-red in every sunset, and while pirates in desperate need to outrun the Royal Navy drop anchor there to hold out the night, few who do so return without tales of hearing wild laughter from the Cay. Some have claimed to have seen the head of Ed Teach, Blackbeard himself, painted upon the moon. Still others say the headless captain keeps a lookout at all times, and when one of his ghostly men spot a ship at night, they have the power to board and plunder, but never sail the vessel.

Whatever the truth, the fear of the red sand is barely able to hold the greed of pirates at bay, for whether the treasure of Blackbeard was buried out there by his American executioners prior to sailing home, or ghosts continue to hoard plunder they're unable to spend, there's a good chance of finding blood both red and gold out on Bloody Cay.

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The Caribbean, that bloody paradise full o' rascals, scoundrels, villains an' knaves. There be a hundred legends from e'ry ship an' a hundred ships fer e'ry year that God-fearin' men try ta tame these ancient jungles an' haunted seas. Dead men tell no tales...

THE WEST INDIES: All kinds of tales abound in the streets of their pirate towns, but there are a few which refuse to die, which defy explanation or discovery of a lesser truth. Stories which must, for one reason or another, prove true. It is best to use these tales in a way that is significant.

Henry Morgan's gold: The province of Jamaica is where the legendary buccaneer Henry Morgan made his home, and where his legend remains as strong as ever. In Blue Harbor he lived, where during his declining years of drowning in rum and consorting with no end of wenches, he would still ply his art of the sweet trade by towing Spanish galleons into this harbor and sinking them. In the years of Our Lord eighty-nine and sixteen-hundred, and ninety as well, over a dozen gold-bellied vessels were sent to a watery grave beneath the hard eyes of his old estate on the hill above the harbor. Many said this murder was just a patriotic distraction, so that his old friends, pirates the lot of them, could hide the plunder of these vessels in caves at the rocky base of the cliffs. And with the dawn of the eighteenth century, legends have gone much further, speaking of how the pirates under Morgan's orders had to draw lots, with the shortest straw being the one to be killed in the caves so that his ghost would until Judgment Day guard the treasure against anyone it did not recognize, indeed anyone save for the crew or Morgan himself.

The mad doctor: In the highlands of Jamaica there is a ruined castle. Indeed, a castle. It was built by a Scottish doctor who came to the colony to begin a new life, one Seamus Hutchenson, a very famous physician in his country. Stone for stone, the castle rose into the thick air above the sugar cane fields in defiance of both time and reason, with turrets and towers like something from the dark ages of the Old World. One may easily imagine a vampire astride the battlement, gazing down upon the road winding up to its gatehouse, as if he were far east

of the Rhineland. The good doctor, it turned out, was a madman, not very far removed from the bloodthirsty devils of the Romanian steppes. He'd treat his patients well, but his guests and wayward travelers who would seek refuge there were treated to dinner and the delivered to his knife. Butchered they were. The doctor liked to save their treasures in a secret room. All told, it is said that three and forty Christian souls were set free from the mortal coil in that haunted place. Now, it lies in ruins, and newer roads avoid it. Yet those that fancy a daring journey on the oldest road at night say they can still hear the screams of Hutchenson's victims. The natives believe they are the screams of living men searching for the doctor's treasure and finding only his ghost instead, armed with a knife forged from a shard of moonlight.

Pointe Saline's secrets: Tortuga's beaches are ever preferred by pirates for their natural coves, able to hide smaller vessels from Royal Navy ships, but it is this place that even the pirates avoid. This is an isle of mystery, drawing only the most daring and foolish of men, few of whom ever return from there to speak of what lies out there. The beach is at the western tip of the turtle-island, a place that is mostly hidden by rocks, is very dry, and offers little shade from the devil-sun. This much can be seen from the sea. Those who venture closer are said to find nothing more than skeletons half-buried in the blistering hot sands, usually posed as if they died fighting each other.

Hellgates of Tortuga: On the far eastern tip of the turtle-island is an ancient statue hewn from coral rock, that of a heathen goddess. Men in the small pirate camp known as La Grotte au Bassin say its gaze falls on a pair of caves in the hills, one for each eye. Towns by the names of Trou d'Enfer and La Grotte de la Galerie were begun nigh upon a century ago in those rugged hills, mining for gold, both thinking they'd be blessed by the statue. Alas, when French Royal Navy declared the statue openly as the pagan evil it is and they removed it, and both settlements that its gaze fell upon were soon no longer heard from. The natives, with little torture indeed, spoke of how the statue's eyes kept both the caves closed, that the evil within them is

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fearful of the statue's gaze, and so it was replaced, despite its heathen presence amidst a growing town of good Christian men.

The ruins of Fort de la Roche: On the southeastern coast of Tortuga lie the ruins of the first fort that Christians have ever built there. Begun in the year of Our Lord thirty and sixteen hundred, it lies on a small isle just offshore. It is said that while it is disguised by fog, its cannons could hit men on the mainshore and their flashes could be seen from the hills. Yet now it is said to be haunted, a fortress still garrisoned by ghosts who fire upon ships who are crewed by men so evil they have no soul. The ghosts seek to plunder such bodies to possess for themselves. Royal Navy and pirates alike have run afoul of freak storms that always seem to founder them nearest the fort, or wreck them outright upon the rocky headland surrounding it, leaving survivors with a choice between swimming with the sharks in a desperate dare to reach Tortuga itself, where the tiny town of Basse-Terre still thrives in sight of the ghostly island, or to seek for supplies in the haunted fort itself.

The devil's sentry box: San Juan, the Spanish city-fortress, holds a haunted secret. The oldest part of the fort itself is a small tower overlooking the vast ocean. Guards who man it vanish during the night. Being assigned this post was akin to suicide. No man given the duty did so with a light heart. As the years have gone on, the rate which this sentry box claimed men has swelled so much that now it is a man's choice to work it in lieu of prison, one night on watch there to have one year of a slavery sentence remitted, and a full pardon if one is able to spot any ship from this post by morning's light. Yet most choose slavery. For all who stand watch there never return. The morning watch never finds anything, and people consider the sentry box to be a door to Hell. Some stories tell of a cell deep in the fort that is tied to this tale, a cell wherein a captive Spanish captain left clues on his cell wall, images of ships made with charred sticks, clay and his own blood, speaking of a treasure he refused to turn over to his king and hid nearby. Most like to believe the treasure is hidden in the devil's very sentry box, or that it can be seen from there.

The errant Mr. Smith: One brisk morning, the Inne la Fortuna, famed for its invigorating drinks, was to see a small boat, of sorts, making its way through the maze of reefs just offshore. Not even a cutter could navigate those narrow channels, but this was a most unique craft: She was a barrel, outfitted in a short mast, sail and spit, with a rudder manned by its crew of one, his waist caught in the narrow hole he'd cut in the barrel's side. Why she never tipped, since no keel dragged on the shoals, was a question never answered. Her captain, one Jonathan Smith, came ashore with all the flair and defiance of his fate that one would expect in a knight-errant of old, not an aging man who'd by some miracle managed to survive the sea alone. He regaled those at the la Fortuna with tales of his own fortunes, all too blessed to be believed. Most often his tales all returned to his boat, which he said he made from a barrel aboard the Flying Dutchman itself, and as that ship never sinks, so shall no part of it, either. Yet if he did escape the legendary ghost ship, his time on this earth was on loan from some devilish financier who came to collect; He died that very night, and to this day his little boat remains upon the inne's roof, the treasure of the tavernekeeper, a warding, he says, against curses from the sea, even the Dutchman itself.

The False Fire: Pirates are none too kind, even to their own. Take for account the tale of the French Captain laDole. His ship matches every tale giving shape and form to the long dead vessel captained by the dragon himself, Sir Francis Drake. Yet the impetuous Captain laDole, going so far as to claim his ship and Drake's to be one and the same, has earned him naught but laughter from all who cross his path. They say it is obvious that his vessel is not Drake's, and honor it in all speech and even in ledgers as the H.N.S. Cacafuego. The initials, rather than Her Majesty's Ship, are to stand N.S. alone for 'No Shit'. The Cacafuego itself, a known English perversion of the name for one of Drake's Spanish victims, is held to laDole's vessel, whose name means 'Shit-fire'. As for the captain himself, given his slow-wit and ridiculous hat, they simply (and some say kindly) refer to him as none other than Captain Obvious. Kinder captains name both captain and ship as 'The False Fire'.

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The Brethren Court: Many have heard of it, and a daring few even claim to be a part of it, but there no doubt exists a Brethren Court, and its members, one and all, keep their secret well. Their tokens of lordship there are well disguised, their true nature known only to each other. Whether pieces of eight, pieces of junk or a secret handshake, whatever the tokens of the Court may be, they are sought by all who would take such a pirate lord's place, or slay them all. The English Royal Navy has been trying in vain to identify even one such important captain for nigh upon a century. Though their secret city is equally unknown to the outside world, it is well known that it rises from the sea somewhere within the West Indies.

So the legend persists. And many wild stories surround it, like a gale-wind about a ship grounded on a reef, too laden with treasure to be abandoned, yet too rich with hope to be welcomed to Hell. So formidable, and so filled with scum and villainy it must be, that to this buccaneer city, Port Royale is but a trading post. How such a place remains such a secret confounds the Admiralty of every country with a colony in the Caribbean.

Most agree that only by unworldly powers is such a stronghold of pirates able to retain secrets and survive, especially given the treacherous nature of those who must dwell inside of it. Many stories persist describing three Pirate Kings, each one the descendent of the three lieutenants of the legendary Captain Sidney. Ranked above even the pirate lords of the Court, they each hold a duty. One is keeper of the keys, able to shut some sort of gate which is the only way for ships to enter and leave this secluded harbor. Another is trusted with keeping all logbooks and codex, acting as the sole judge in all debates of any ship's articles. The final king is the treasurer, keeping safe the artifacts and powers that pirates have found and been unable to understand or spend, or in many cases be cursed by. If there is magic aiding the Brethren Court, the treasurer is the first and usually only one to know about it.

The Three Pirate Kings are known to still sing of their age-old Captain Sidney. So strong is their legacy that whenever this song is sung anywhere in the Caribbean, they hear it at the Court, and are able to know, by magic or treasure, who is singing it and where they are. Sometimes they dispatch an

allied force of several captains to assist them, for a large share of their plunder, a share of which in turn adds to the treasury of the Court. Sometimes, especially if the singing pirate is known to be one who defies other brethren of the coast, he is left to his fate and his 'rescuers' arrive late, and thusly pick clean the bones of all survivors.

*We are far from sight
of the harbor lights,
Of the sea-ports whence we came,
But the old sea calls
and the cold wind bites,
And our hearts are turned to flame.*

*And merry and rich
is the goodly gear
We'll win upon the tossing sea,
A silken gown for
my dainty dear,
And a gold doubloon for me.*

*It's the old old road
and the old old quest
Of the cut-throat sons of Cain,
South by west
and a quarter west,
And hey for the Spanish Main.*

*There's a sea-way somewhere
where all day long
Is the hushed susurrus of the sea,
The mewling of the skuas,
and the sailor's song,
And the wind's cry calling me.*

*There's a haven somewhere
where the quiet of the bay
Is troubled with the shifting tide,
Where the gulls are flying,
crying in the bright white spray,
And the tan-sailed schooners ride.*

*The toppling rollers at
the harbor mouth
Are spattering the bows with foam,
And the anchor's catted,
and she's heading for the south
With her topsails sheeted home.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 6.

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The Helmsley family: French rule of Tortuga has a long and colourful history of governors, from its reformed pirates to the Helmsley family, a lineage of aristocrats who do everything in their power to ensure their place of authority, no matter the cost to the livelihoods or even the lives of others. They are masters of politics, marrying into power, and in their sea campaigns, for many of them are captains and fighters, they are far better at exploiting their enemies' weaknesses rather than offering strength of their own. English by blood, they nonetheless have a stronger place in the French court, who favor the family's ability to manipulate a situation above the usual pirate solution of crushing it. They fund the pirate captains who are like-minded yet will clearly never pose a threat to the family itself. Legend has it that they also search for a vast family treasure, hidden somewhere on the island of Tortuga, and so they use their political power to oversee and hear all in a chance to locate it, having lost the map to infighting and squabbling generations ago. Most of Tortuga's French officials eagerly await the day it's found, for surely the Helmsleys will finally leave.

Emerald Cove: There's a song about a yearning for the sea, and while it is sung in many a port, there is a holiday to honor it on the southern tip of the great isle of Cuba. A small English colony there, a struggling farm, thought itself sheltered by the high headlands from both Spaniards and pirates alike. It was called Emerald Cove for its dazzling, emerald-green waters. Yet that same sparkle was a lure to the town's only soul strong enough to become the one who brought real trade and protection, and he went to sea, never to return. And throughout the years, despite the Spanish conquest of the land, the town has survived, chiefly because they do little to no shipping, and the large Spanish vessels are not able to enter their cove. Sheltered by the jungle on the land behind them, they have neither a need to explore nor any desire to set out to sea like their lost hero. Instead, on last day of March, they sing amidst a candlelit vigil, honoring him and hoping to beacon his lost soul home. As they stand in the surf or on the beach or surrounding cliffs, all their candles glimmer like the stars drawn down to the earth, a constellation seen only by those lost within the dark seas of the nightly heavens, the dead and

the damned indeed. So it is that all of their hopes and worst fears are married in the song they sing.

*He crawls to the cliff and plays on a brink
Where every eye but his own would shrink,
No music he hears but the billow's noise,
And shells and weeds
are his only toys.*

*No lullaby can the mother find
To sing him to rest like the moaning wind;
And the louder it wails
and the fiercer it sweeps,
The deeper he breathes
and the sounder he sleeps.*

*And now his wandering feet can reach
The rugged tracks of the desolate beach;
Creeping about like a Triton imp,
To find the haunts
of the crab and shrimp.*

*He clings, with none to guide or help,
To the furthest ridge of slippery kelp;
And his bold heart glows
while he stands and mocks
The seamews cry
on the jutting rocks.*

*Few years have wan'd and now he stands
Bareheaded on the shelving sands.
A boat is moor'd, but his young hands cope
Right well with
twisted cable rope;
He frees the craft, she kisses the tide;
The boy has climb'd her beaten side:
She drifts, she floats,
he shouts with glee;
His soul hath claim'd
its right on the sea.*

*'Tis vain to tell him the howling breath
Rides over the waters with wreck and death:
He'll say there's more of fear and pain
On the plague-ridden earth
than the storm-lash'd main.
'Twould be as wise to spend thy power
In trying to lure the bee from the flower,
The lark from the sky,
or the worm from the grave,
As in weaning the
Sea-Child from the wave.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the
Players on Handout 7.

LEGENDS OF THE CARIBBEAN



CARIBBEAN ISLANDS: There are thousands and thousands of such havens, isles large and small, all over this blood-stained sea. Each one has a tale to tell. Each isle holds the promise of paradise or an unknown evil lurking in shadows of the swaying palm trees, waiting for healthy men to venture just far enough up the beach.

The Carib tribes: The islands which form the entire eastern border of the Caribbean, populated by large colonies of English, French and Dutch settlers, are both the border and the backbone of this sea, and for a reason all the colonists try to forget.

The islands are known as the Caribee, named for the native tribes first met on them, the Carib. It is said that their name holds in place because of a voodoo curse and the will of heathen gods. Yet the Carib are just as much strangers here as most white men. The Carib fled from the Spanish in the far western reaches of the Main. They are enslaved in some colonies, but manage to eke out a meager and reclusive life in or near others.

The Carib are like ghosts. They remain in the shadows, taking Godfearing men and making them into slaves, or eating them in their grim feasts of unholy mirth. Other tales persist amongst pirates that the Carib are just as misunderstood and hunted as pirates themselves, and so buccaneers often find refuge near Carib camps, relying on the ghosts to frighten away Royal Naval scouts.

Whatever the truth of these strange people, it is a mystery as widespread and entangled as a vast spider-web of rumor and superstition, stretching all the way from Grenada to St. Martin.

Isla de la Vache: This place is also known as the 'cow island', a haven for pirates off southwestern Hispaniola. The rocky headlands and thick lines of palms disguise fields where early settlers left large crops of cattle. From the sea this paradise looks as naught but a barren rock with a heart of dark and dense trees, and so the British pronounce it as the 'Isle of ash'. Let them be so foolish. They sail on past it nearly every day, unaware that its smallest cove may hide a pinnacle or pirate sloop, or that just beyond the trees may be a buccaneer camp or a boucan house.

St. Thomas: This isle is known for its plantations, and thus to the learned eye, its slavery. However, there is a twisted link in the chain of those slaves' stories. It concerns a rich Englishman by the name of Howell Potter. He came to this island without a single royal connection and tried buying his way in to higher society. Year after year he failed, finally ending up a footnote in the annals of the island's wealthy merchants. Old and bitter, he retreated into solitude, taking out the frustrations of all his life's failures on his slaves. He mistreated his servants as a devil, for he was **their** high society and thus he could deny **them**. However, in the end, his demons got the better of him, and he hung himself, or so the slaves said. And it was not the end, either. For the slaves spent thirteen days in ritual, attempting to turn the body into a zombie which would serve them, not for any actual help, but merely so they could mistreat their old master in death just as he had mistreated them in life. It is not known to any white-skinned folk if they were successful or not, but certainly no body was ever found...

Navassa Island: It lies between Jamaica and larger Hispaniola. Only two and half miles across at its widest point, this isle is said to be formed entirely of guano. Old men (and old wives) say that birds follow patterns, like cloth of gold in a map, thus dropping in the same place since Creation. Such an island makes for rich treasure of a sort, though, as naturalists and medicine-men use this white gold to feed their strange plants. Slave labor from English colonies mine the guano while the rich merchants sit on their ships offshore.

The Black River: Not far from the pearl beds of Margarita, there is a river which winds deep into the jungle, into the unknown. Spanish colonists and far roving adventurers call it simply 'the black', or 'the Black River'. Yet to mention it seems to tie one's tongue in a fierce knot, as if a devil pissed on the ropes and the demanded one raise sail. The island is a few leagues across the waves from the Spanish colonies, a seemingly small place, and yet the dark river continues on endlessly. Nobody has ever explored the river to its end. Rumors whisper of everything from a lost city to the stilted huts of a voodoo colony awaiting one along its banks.

LEGENDS OF THE CARIBBEAN



The Lost Abyss: Legends persist of a vast treasure laying in a cave, a clear view of the virgin beach from the ruby eye of the crown that sits atop such a vast hoard as can only come from New Spain. It is the treasure of the 'Lost Angel'. This galleon, it was a secret ship in the treasure fleet, known for keeping exotic, royal and magical treasures which were not to be on the books, bound not for their king's coffers but to his advisors, nobles at court to decorate their fat necks or their larger manors. The Lost Angel was a rogue ship which reported to and was known of by very few indeed.

Alas for Spain, blessed for pirates, fate plays a cruel hand with the Spanish with equal mirth, as the Lost Angel foundered in the Bahamas. Of her crew twenty and a hundred strong, only ten were able to escape the roar of the hurricane, staggering onto the beach of an uncharted island. There was an abundance of food and fresh water, common in those islands, one reason why pirates make many an anchorage there. These ten Spaniards, loyal unto their own greed if not their employer or king, used the months before their rescue to dive for the lost treasure of the ship offshore, hiding it in a cavern less than a mile from the beach. Their plan, as it was related years later to pirates, was to return to claim a hoard they reported as wholly lost.

Alas for the Spanish, they were mere children in the knowledge of freebooting and amateurs with the games of greed. The pirates overpowered them, but the simple matter of setting ashore on the isle cost the lives of three buccaneers. Unable to drop anchor any closer, the pirates made the island in a pair of longboats, which could bring back only the most paltry sum of treasure, compared to what was there for the taking. A return trip resulted in the deaths of two more men, so with a skeleton crew left, the pirates had to admit defeat and turn back, lest there not be enough men to crew their smaller ship. So it was that tales of a curse began.

The Lost Angel was thought to bode ill as a name from the beginning. The priests who knew of it spoke at length to the Spanish businessman who owned it, saying that using the taxed wealth of the people to defy their king was flying in the face of a vengeful God. However the greedy Spanish were able to ignore or at least buttress their fear against the heathen gods of the New World, the Almighty

Himself was not to be denied. They spoke of how God would bargain with heathen deities in an act of no less of honor than 'nobles' who conspired against their God-chosen king.

The location of the hoard is a well kept secret of the survivors of the last voyage, and they fear the curse too much to ever return for any of the treasure. Any of it indeed. For as they tell it, the Lost Angel has returned, and they now name it the 'Lost Abyss', a ghost ship, patrolling the waters all around the island which keeps its golden heart. It is a cursed treasure they say, the wooden bones of the drowned ship unable to rest in peace, and so its specter rides the waves, coming upon all those who remove any of the hoard.

Most believe the ghost ship is a fable only, a means to explain what the pirates otherwise could not, the mysterious deaths of any who remove any of the treasure, for indeed, only those who touched it upon the island never left sight of the beach. It is as if the Lost Angel is trading its gold for the souls of those who escaped it before. Supposedly, according to the survivors, once five more men are slain by the curse, or if an equal share—half—the treasure is cast back to the watery grave of the ship, then the curse will be lifted. Either way, the Lost Abyss will have its share, be it paid with the gold it rightfully claims, the blood of its escaped prisoners, or the souls of their descendants.

Whether for fear of the Lost Abyss, the curse, or the reefs which initially claimed the Lost Angel, most ships avoid these waters. In more recent days have tales begun concerning a whirlpool which can claim entire ships, and which never becalms. Still other legends say the whirlpool opens only when anyone seeking the treasure approaches the island, as if it **knows**. Some say the whirlpool **is** the Lost Abyss, given name the same as a storm or a star. Whatever the truth, only the five survivors of the original wreck know which island holds this secret, both gilded and sable, treasure and curse alike, and they are content to go to their earthly grave before risking the curse returning them to a drowned one. The Lost Abyss shall keep its gold like a king in his tomb. And so the tale is known, for it is the ghost, indeed the fear of the Lost Abyss that one must overcome before any venture seeking the gold can even begin.

LEGENDS OF THE CARIBBEAN



THE SPANISH MAIN: The Caribbean, otherwise known as the Main, for most of its coastline is the sprawling empire of Spain, built with the gold and silver and blood of the native people. Seldom is a story ever able to escape this region unless it casts the sparkle of gold upon the teeth of whoever tells it—there are no secret passages to lead from these prisons, no hopes of surviving the jungle, no loves to be won, and even if there were, all pales beside the gold which is what drives men here. One will not hear tales to inspire coming out of the Spanish Main. No, he will hear only of blood money.

Hangman's Tower: Long ago, the English island of Providence served as the last stop for adventurers daring to enter the Spanish Main. Yet as the gold bought greater warships during the mid Seventeenth Century, it eventually fell to Spanish pirates. Sure, governors in Panama and Cartagena speak of how the brave and noble Spanish Royal Navy overtook the colony, but it was softened by pirates in search of a mystical treasure. Ironically, they sailed right past it. For the key they sought, the map they had heard tell of, lay high in 'Hangman's Tower', the town's small prison and watchtower which rose at the mouth of a narrow river which wound through the market. Having attacked at night, the tower, for purposes of defense, was hidden by the shadows, and while the Spaniards tortured the townsfolk and dunked the local governor in the well, the cannon-broken tower lay dark and silent, the key buried in a thin layer of rubble. When they left, the Spanish pirates hung many men from the tower's protruding oak beams. Normally these lanterns hung to guide small ships into the channel. Now they were aglow with the souls of tortured Englishmen. This earned the tower an infamous name which remained even after the Spanish conquest, as they feared to cause the ghosts unrest. No longer used, the tower is all but overshadowed by the newer fort. Nobody goes there. Nobody dares, save for adventurers, just the same as they did a half a century past, only their journey to the Main doesn't take as long. Rumors abound concerning the tower, how it holds not just a key or a map to some mystical treasure, but to the gates of the land of the dead itself. Some even refer to the tower as the gate to the Spanish Main, which is a land of the dead in its own right.

Terror of the Main: No pirate who plunders along the Main can go more than half a year without his crew hearing or retelling the tale of the infamous Jean David Nau. In the year of Our Lord sixty-eight and sixteen-hundred was this most wicked of all pirates delivered from Man. As for those who have followed his bloody wake in search of hidden caches, his story seems to be all he left behind, a legacy of fear, one which is all the more potently terrifying because it begins like any other, written on the unseen walls of a man's fate that he could just as surely come to just as horrible an end, regardless of his birth.

For Jean David Nau, or simply 'Jean David' as he soon preferred to be addressed, was born in Les Sables d'Olonne in France, a gentleman, one who came to piracy over a squabble of merely ten doubloons. Rising to the command of his own ship he quickly became feared for his tendency to cut off heads and then lick his blade clean. Finally, on an isle near Honduras, he chanced taking a 'royal' prisoner, a native queen, but when she refused to divulge the whereabouts of her king's treasure, he cut open her heart and gnawed on it like a beast. The natives exploded with rage and, fueled with a malady of hate such as no man under God could find ointment in their spilled blood to quell, the dreaded Jean David was butchered along with all but three of his men, who were sent off to tell of his end to all other white-skins who might ever be clothed with the same devil's flesh or have been by fate's drunkenness born to the same mind.

Jean David's otherwise watered name survives only because of a newer tale of blood-stained gold, his reputation fearsome enough perhaps to survive in these waters as a ghost, the echo of fear on the lips of men, but that whisper has the voice of men daring to speak of him in want of a crew to seek a lost fortune. For it is now widely spoken that the natives buried him with his treasure, for even if they were such a people as to value gold, Jean David's evil was so great that they would have gratefully left behind every doubloon to barter a better deal with the devil who ensures the damned are dragged down into Hell, and stay there.

Wreckage of Jean David's ship is said to be seen on many headlands off Honduras, but no men who ever draw close to it ever return...

LEGENDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

The plague ship of Puerto Bello: Long ago, though none can name the true year, a plague ship sailed into the harbor of Puerto Bello. At least tales can agree on the place. Nobody knew it was plagued, but they were cautious. Men ordered slaves to row out to the derelict, who found the crew dead, so they took the good rum barrels and returned. But they were visibly shaken when hitting the beach, disturbed by the bodies they saw on board, of how they died. The guards gunned the slaves down on the beach, turning the sand red with blood. Some slaves managed to return to the ship, where they turned the cannons on the guards, and soon fired plague-heads over the walls of the fort and into the town. The black death spread all the same, the white men blaming the slaves' inferior bodies, the slaves blaming the white mens' greed. In the end, what remained were shadows only. It is said that one can see shadows of the marching guards, the fighting men, and the dead who just stand there as if watching, shadows that appear on the beach but there are never any bodies to cast them. Those bodies exist in a different time and place, forever locked in their struggle, as if the plague stopped the heartbeat of time itself. As for the ship itself, it was set afire and left to be baptized by the sea, and still its wooden bones can be seen beneath the waters on a bright enough day, like the remains of a dragon from mythical days, its spirit striking fear into the hearts of men long after its mortal death, as if the rotting timbers are possessed of a plague which corrupts more than mere flesh.

Muertos treasure: Sometimes tales are better woven into songs or chanteys, such as the Spanish waters off the isle of Muertos and the treasure said to be hidden there. All sailors who know the song well enough to sing it without flaw are said to be held in heart to this legend, longing to return to blood-stained Muertos whether in this life or from some other life. The song itself is said to encode a map to the treasure's location, yet even the wisest holy men, who see strange languages woven into all the most Holy Scripture, have yet to see it. Perhaps it is, as some say, that the song is incomplete, that a ghost must recite a missing verse, or worse, one to be whispered by a conch or ring within one's ears across gray, forgotten years only at upon his death.

*We anchored at Los Muertos
when the dipping sun was red,
we left her half-a-mile to sea,
to west of Nigger Head;
and before the mist was on the Cay,
before the day was done,
we were all ashore at Muertos
with the gold that we had won.*

*We bore it through the marshes
in a half-score battered chest,
sinking, in the sucking quagmires
to the sunburn on our breasts,
heaving over tree-trunks, gasping,
damning at the flies and heat,
longing for a long drink, out of silver,
in the ship's cool lazareet.*

*There's a surf breaks on Los Muertos,
and it never stops to roar,
and it's there we came to anchor,
and it's there we went ashore,
where the blue lagoon is silent
amid snags of rotting trees,
dropping like the clothes of corpses
cast up by the seas.*

*The moon came white and ghostly
as we laid the treasure down,
there was gear there'd make a beggarman
as rich as Lima town,
copper charms and silver trinkets
from the chests of Spanish crews,
gold doubloons and double moydores,
louis d'ors and ortagues.*

*Clumsy yellow-metal earrings
from the Indians of Brazil,
uncut emeralds out of Rio,
bezoar stones from Guayaquil,
silver, in the crude and fashioned
pots of old Arica bronze,
jewels from the bones of Incas
desecrated by the Dons.*

*We smoothed the place with mattocks,
and we took and blazed the tree,
which marks yon where the gear is hid
that none will ever see,
and we laid aboard the ship again,
and south away we steers,
through the loud surf of Los Muertos
which is beating in my ears.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the
Players on Handout 8.

LEGENDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

FABLED LANDS: There are places, dark places in the Caribbean where even the Spanish fear for their lives above fear for loss of gold. Not with an armada a thousand ships strong would the Spanish so much as look upon these shores, much less set out into the jungles beyond the beach and the gray mountains beyond them, steeped in superstition and the ruins of heathen civilizations. And what terrors do the natives themselves fear? What devils, what beasts or monsters lurk within their fabled lands, thirsting for the blood of God's children?

The Deep Blue Hole: Many legends speak of this gate, this bottomless pit in the sea not far off the coast near Belize. Surrounded by reefs, the water, so pristine and bright, suddenly becomes dark, for at the rim of this pit the seabed simply drops into oblivion. The hole itself, indeed the dark blue stain upon the surface of the sea, is said to be anything from three hundred to four hundred feet in breadth, large enough to swallow most ships should any be foolish or daring enough to cross over it. And yet cross it many do. For the well lies at the nexus of the reefs, and is the only clear channel for many a days sail. Some have passed it, or at least claimed to have crossed over it, and met no peril. Perhaps the lack of claims to the contrary is in itself proof of how many vessels the dark hole devours.

The well is, as testified by both the stern and superstitious, even at a distance eerie to look upon, with the way the water suddenly changes from its sparkling turquoise to a dark blue. It is when the crew speaks of underwater caverns harboring beasts of the deep which divides the sailors, with many a man becoming beached with dread, and others set free of the reef of thought by a swell of laughter. In any event, few captains can sail near this place without being forced to make a losing choice with a wager of their crew's morale, indeed to fortify a fear and thus see how many superstitious men they have aboard or buttress their mens' nerves by way of taking the shortcut over these dark waters.

The most oft-told tale is that the well is the home, or at least the birthplace, of the legendary bane of all ships—the krakken. But whatever devils may have come from its bottomless depths, it has rightfully earned its name, its legacy of fear, and a 'blue spot' on all detailed charts of the area.

Pizarro's Bane: It's well known, not from ledgers or even crew testimony, but from confessions taken from dying natives, that the great Conquistador, the great Francisco Pizarro himself, once cast away the single greatest gem in all the New World!

The jewel was an emerald no less in size than that of a pigeon's egg. This was the prize of five temples over a twenty-mile range, the heart of the pagan statue erected in the midst of them, where a compass of spiritual roads intersected. So precious, yet to Pizarro the jewel's mythical value was just as invisible as the spirits and their roads. He was of a false belief that all authentic jewels, especially emeralds, could withstand the heaviest blows. Thus, in order to make absolutely certain this jewel was genuine and not some counterfeit the natives used to protect their true treasure, he had the strongest man of his crew smash it with a hammer.

The emerald, the largest in the world, was in an irrevocable instant shattered, along with the very fate of Pizarro himself.

The natives held the jewel as sacred for it is, or was, the key which kept locked the doors to all other worlds. Pizarro could only see its monetary value. And once smashed, the locks to many dark worlds were opened. Still Pizarro did not, perhaps could not see neither the roads nor the spirits that walked them. And ever they followed him, ghosts, hounding and haunting him. It was when the great emerald was smashed that Pizarro's fortunes turned ill. His campaigns of war, once so successful, now began to fail. Was it merely the natives learning a better way to fight Spain's weaponry? Or were the supernatural at work? Whatever road of thought is the one which leads to the truth, within no more than a month after shattering the emerald was the great Conquistador captured and killed by natives in a battle he should, for all laws of nature and of God Himself, have won.

The shards of the emerald were recut into five and twenty smaller stones, five great and twenty so small as to be common for rings unless one knows of their history. Legend says that if they're brought close to each other they will glow. The greater the count of pieces, the brighter they will glow. And, if brought back to the statue and replaced within it they will fuse together and reform, sealing up the portal and banishing many evils from the world.

LEGENDS OF THE CARIBBEAN



Lakes of gods: Off the Mosquito Coast upon the western shores of the Caribbean, there are strange lakes which could only have been created by the hand of God, or the heathen gods of the jungles all around them. For just beyond the beach, there are freshwater lakes, not but twenty paces inland. A thin line of palm trees keeps them hidden only from the blind. These lakes are the beginning of a labyrinth of rivers which lead to many sacred sites, and their treasures. The countless birds which live in these regions are a sign that the dreaded natives of the rivers, the Mosquitos, are still there. Legend says that there is a bird for each living native soul (if indeed souls they have). These savages are very deadly foes, and cunning, having used the waters of these very rivers to hide from the Spanish when they conquered the rest of the Main. Though none have ever returned to tell tale of their villages or cities or temples, none doubt that they exist, and so seek only fresh water here, close to the sea. To seek to enter the maze of rivers in search of gold is a challenge even the Conquistadors turned away from, for fear of their lives.

Devil's Gate: Every sailor has seen a cave or two along the coast, especially in the Caribbean, each a dark invitation to seek treasure or at least discover a new refuge from the Royal Navy. Every pirate is one to hoard not only small treasure but also small pieces of information, rumors about caves amongst other things. Yet for all the length of Caribbean coast and all the wild boasts of drunken pirates, few ever speak of Devil's Gate. Few would dare to lie, for it is too tempting to seek, and too easy is it to bewitch the mind with false hopes, dreams of escape from this life into a better one. Indeed, those who speak of it have surely been there, for they must have had the strength to resist all of its dark temptations.

Devil's Gate is a cave in a cliff, rising from an island wrought with fire from beneath the sea, and those who venture through this tunnel end up in a different place. Only a longboat can fit into the cave mouth, and the tunnel winds much, at last to end in the same sea but with the stars married to a different day or year. The strange sky tells a learned man how high or low the tide of time has risen or fallen since his venture into the Gate.

Some claim to have evaded a mere few hours, while others have come into a tavern claiming to have not been born yet. Whatever bewitchment lies in the impenetrable darkness beyond the Gate, it is everlasting, and terrifies all. Those who have seen their shipmates vanish into this darkness have just given name and ownership of the Gate to the very Devil, thinking their friends lost forever, and never guessing how long 'forever' is, especially when the tide of magic washes clean the sands of time.

The only common thread of this legend, aside of its island mark, is a skeleton which greets all who slowly sail past him in the dark. Run through with a rusty cutlass some say he is, others that he sits upon a mound of gold. One stalwart pirate by a brain as sound as any ship which could survive a hurricane managed to hold together in the midst of the storm of fear which wrecks most minds and remembered the skeleton's tale:

"Find yer own treasure! This 'ere be mine 'till Doomsday, an' then I'll be buyin' my way in ta ol' Heaven with a pearly smile..."

MYTHS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN



No fear . . . no livin' man is without fear, matey. Be ye not tryin' ta deceive me. There be in these 'ere waters enough fear ta send all the angels back ta heaven, an' methinks they already have . . .

ROMAN CATHOLIC SEAS: The western towns, coastline and passages of the Mediterranean are the domains of the Roman Catholic Church. Being the only gateway to the Atlantic and all the rest of the world, there is constant war for control of this part of the Old World. Countless tales of bloody battles flow in and out of the seaside taverns and forts, the flotsam and jetsam of war, rumors echoing the sounds of battle, of corsair caves and treasures lost or hidden away from the Godless East.

Lord of the Gargoyles: Many a pirate has fled the law as far as church doors, seeking sanctuary when there are no other options. In Naples, such a plea took a gruesome and unholy turn. For the priest, a good and faithful man despite the unsavory shadow of officers always upon him, allowed a battleweary crew of no less than eighteen rugged pirates into the city cathedral, where common law forbid their seizure. However, being pirates, the laws meant not a whit to them. Seeing the priest's adornment with so much gold jewelry, they seized **him**. He warned them that none should spill blood inside the church lest they be cursed. So, the pirates, ever men with cunning, sealed the priest alive in a statue, which in later years was used to crown the church. With his gold gone and his bones the skeleton of a tall, oddly human gargoyle up high, the townsfolk now refer to the cathedral's most domineering figure as the Lord of the Gargoyles.

Skull Cove: Pirates know it well. Off Italy, there's a cove surrounded by high headlands, which when the sun sets evoke a skull-like shape of fiery light through their natural holes and caves. The eyes fall on two passages, one leading down, the other up. While the cove is shallow and thus safe from the ships of both the Pope and the Sultan, there is a peril here nonetheless. For beyond the headlands is a fertile valley where pirates can rest, but they are challenged to reach it—they must choose a tunnel. One leads below sea-level, forcing one to wade his way through the sharks and then swim among their

devilish fins through a tidal tunnel. The other leads to a long, grueling trail which winds for miles. It is thus a choice of manliness to take the route that risks the sharks, which normally do not attack, but offers a spine-chilling challenge all the same. Most men take this way, and some are indeed lost. All slaves, boys and more elderly pirates take the long, rugged road, having no need to prove themselves. The trail, for the most part a steady slope down, is thus more heavily trafficked by those leaving the valley, 'carrying goods back to the ship', and thus not risking the path of the sharks a second time.

The legacy of Michael Hart: He came from the far north, from the frozen netherlands of Europe, those lands which are often forgotten but never missing an opportunity to impale civilization with the spike of a bright spirit. Originally the captain of a fleet, so far as the world first noticed his name, each of his five ships were commanded by one of his four brothers. They were a formidable force, and trained many other future captains of the British Navy. In time though, only the best there is, was and ever would be, Michael, remained at sea. He broke rank and turned pirate, though none could guess why. It was whispered at first that he became possessed. But whether driven by some need or greed, demon or duty he could not speak of, he made the waters off the Mediterranean his domain. Wearing a single glove studded with diamonds, legend held it to be a map if its stitches were removed and then the glove re-sewn in a different combination, but with its cunning design, the wrong arrangement of the glittering pieces could lead to deadly traps and the coves of cursed treasures. When he grew old, the fate of this once great pirate crumbled. His family died swiftly, his career was destroyed by betrayal, his privateering commission was revoked, his nose was lost to poison, his skin became deathly white, his body was worn down from years of war, and finally the blow of a mighty Jew caused a fire in Michael's brain, which banished him from the sea forever. Some say the blow was so great it caused his hair to catch fire. Nonetheless, he went into a quiet retirement in Venice, leaving the threads of many maps and treasure troves to a new generation of pirates to find, if they could.

MYTHS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN



OTTOMAN TURKISH SEAS: The eastern ports and shoreline of the Mediterranean are the domains of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. Guarding all roads to and from the Holy Land and thus the heart of Christian civilization, there is constant war over the control of this part of the world. As endless as the blood which flows are the tales told of battles and treachery, of cut throats and men burning alive, all echoing myths of divine intervention, on all sides of this eternal conflict.

Baksha's Innes: Weary is the traveler who takes a bed in a strange inne without asking questions, but wary is the traveler who questions everything. For he who is a pirate should be well warned of innes beyond the borders of Catholic Europe, especially if its sign is burned with the name of Baksha. The name applies to no man, but to a cult, and Baksha is the title of their high priest. To what true faith he belongs none know, but it is widely whispered the cult eats human flesh. Their innes have traps to keep unwary guests locked in until men come to take them away in the dead of night. Muslims are immune it seems, so many guess the Baksha cult to either be true to Islam faith themselves, or have some bargain struck with the Sultan himself. However, all infidels are free for the cannibals to steal away before dawn, should they be caught in one of these inne's room-like prisons.

Bloodsand Cove: This beach is well known to the pirates of the eastern Mediterranean. It is a beach on the shores of the Holy Land itself, a beach that turns red at sunset, reflecting the blood spilled by countless battles fought here over countless years. For what reason earlier battles were fought no one knows or seems to care. But in this day and age, pirates often come here to fight duels, for they all believe in a blessing of this place, that the loser of a duel here, or any man who dies upon the red sand of sunset, is ensured passage to heaven. Still, to set foot ashore here is very dangerous. Muslims patrol here regularly, and can sight a sail miles off at sea, despite the rugged headland surrounding the place. This cove thus remains a place where only the most bitter of rivalries are settled, for no one wishes to die to heathen hands just before they are to gain the upper hand over their hated enemy.

Sultan of a Thousand Sins: Is the Sultan really the Sultan? Some say he isn't. But then, where is he? Cursed, say the same ill-eyed folk, whispering, as if the very words might cut their throat. Yet it is not out of fear of Muslim corsairs they speak with such restraint. It is the fear of the curse which for a lifetime has kept the lost Sultan captive.

The Sultan, in all his greed and bloodlust, was cursed by one of his many victims, a faceless and nameless man at sea. But face and name, nor even soul mattered. Even had the perilous stroke fallen from the hand of a Turk in the Sultan's service, it was a curse which sought the soul of the evil that enforced it like a bolt of lightning across the face of the earth. The Sultan died, and yet he did not die. He became a skeleton, cursed never to return to shore, while pretenders sat upon his throne.

This skeletal corsair dresses like any other vile buccaneer, keeping his regal dress safely locked in a chest in his cabin. His skull is a crystal skull, as his own was lost. Most ships he meets he and his slave-crew destroy. Yet he is known to bargain with pirates, sending them inland to bring him no less than the current and false Sultan's head. For, he says, he will remove his crystal skull and set the false Sultan's head upon his shoulders, which will ignite his flesh to regrow and he will be free of the curse and live again.

All those who encounter this skeletal Sultan's plague ship, and are 'spared', are given the choice to bring him the Sultan's head, or join his crew. Those who become enslaved to the ship starve, as no food or water is kept aboard. And when their bodies perish, their skeletons are kindled anew by the lash of the boson's spectral whip, like lightning and with as much energy to give false life as may a lightning bolt take true life. Those who perish in this form collapse, their bones added to the 'bone bullion' below decks, their ghost to join the souls which are the wind filling the ship's shredded sails and pushing it across earthly waters.

The skeletal Sultan is most dangerous when encountered on a becalmed sea, for he is at once most desperate to gain more souls, but also, having not had anyone attempt the mission for a while, he is also eager to send more, or, as he says, "Cast more bottled souls out into the sea of sand..." If dared to be asked of his title, the 'thousand sins',

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he will most often say that is the number of souls he was prophesied to send after his head before someone would succeed. And, he has either lost count, or simply won't tell what the count is at . . .

MALTESE WATERS: In the center of the most ancient seas, caught between the warring worlds of the Catholic and Ottoman empires, there lies Malta, the island nation which is home to the legendary Malta Knights, corsairs who side with Christ, and of all His followers seem most blessed by Him. In these waters, the ancient gods still seem to live on, working in subtle ways, ever adjusting the compass of fate for their followers, be they Maltese or any other. Indeed, legends come to life here, and forces of all faiths find greater strength here, in the heart of the ancient seas. As it is, the myths which rise from these depths and wash ashore on these coasts seem enriched with service to gods, and thus tend to give pirates a course-heading to heroism.

Coffin Rock: Nobody knows where it is. Most are reluctant to even search for it. Indeed, it seems the island which bears this name isn't found, but finds its victims. Legend says many falcons perch on its headlands, yet those who have survived their wreck into these treacherous shoals have said there aren't any falcons anywhere on the barren island. Stories have gathered like wreckage on the rocks, claiming the falcons are alive in symbol rather than reality, such as the falcon-crest of a wrecked naval vessel hanging in the cave which leads to the very heart of this myth. For upon the island, it is said that a tunnel awaits one who is blessed. To be blessed, a man must stay on the rocky beach, awake all night during a full moon, and then with morning's light explore the tunnel to its end. Whatever he finds in that darkness not even myth has dared guess, but it is said that whoever can complete this gauntlet, so long as he murders only heathens, blasphemers and heretics, will never go to a coffin, indeed that he will never be murdered himself. Oh, he is able to die by his own foolishness, but never from the bloodlust of another. Of course, the island that is known as Coffin Rock murders indiscriminately, so many fear that this blessing, like the symbolism of the falcon, refers to the island and not to those it supposedly blesses.

The black footprints: The tale you are about to be told is claimed by at least three separate villages along the coast of Malta. Each has their own spin on the story, but the myth is at its heart the same. As it goes, on the last Sunday of each month, the twilight sees a figure cloaked in black walk out of the sea. He strides up the beach without a sound, his strides great and yet, like watching a fire burn low, seems to take a lifetime to finish his journey. He walks down the beach, leaving black footprints, as if his unholy feet burn the sand. This trail is easy to see and to follow, leading into the rocky headlands, and that is where shadows come to use the laws of nature like the strings of a marionette. Those who follow fast enough, and with a strong enough mind, can see the black figure carrying an oddly shaped lantern. Those who have managed to follow the black figure the furthest claim that this ghost simply vanishes in the headlands. None know why it comes or where it goes. The lantern, most believe, is like the eyes of a cobra, hypnotizing, a will-o-the-wisp in the swamp of one's fears, yet to ignore it is to risk being claimed by the devils all too easily hiding in the shadows of the rocks. It is a riddle of the supernatural, of how to follow this ghost, when both light and shadow seem in league, leaving mortal men with no means to solve it.

Cave of the Crystal Corsairs: Sicily is the gateway to Europe, but if one looks in the right place, it is also the gateway to Hell. For somewhere along the rugged coast of this troubled island is a cave, one which holds a beautifully dark secret. Inside, there are thousands of tiny figures upon the crags and in the niches of the rough walls, figures of pirates all carved from crystal. No book, no scripture, no man alive can speak with certainty to what they are. It is a darkness wherein fear is the loudest voice, for the tales fear tells silences all others.

And what do men fear? It is believed that all the statuettes were once people, pirates, who came to the cave for the same reason, and they all met the same fate. There is rumored to be a treasure in the back of the cave, one which gives great life and even power over death. It is enough to tempt a man to risk such a terrible fate. And yet not all is as it seems. Not everything is a true risk.

Is it?

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There is light at the end of the dark cave. For the same rumors speak of spirits there, and for he who can appease them, the treasure gives them life beyond mortal life indeed. Only those who fail to appease the spirits are doomed to add to the hoard that drew them here. The treasure of life, a reward only the virtuous can attain, says much by saying nothing at all, for being virtuous, those which gain this blessing never speak of what it is. Thus, is a reward to be found in the cave at all? Or is it but a deceit, the bait of a deathtrap, a certain doom to all who enter the glittering darkness?

The Sable Saber: A ship flying black sails? A ship whose captain is not of this world? An unsinkable ship? A haunted ship? There are stories of such a ghost vessel in every sea. Strangely, the number of these tales leads common captains to believe they don't exist, being naught but sailor's yarns, yet to the sailors themselves, who have little control over their destiny, such stories echoing from every port is proof enough that there are **many** ghost ships to be feared. Near the island of Malta, the sails to be feared fly from the narrow, rapier-like hull of the ship known as the Sable Saber. Stained black with the blood of countless victims, this ghostly ship is said to be unsinkable, and woe to whoever draws its attention. For as the myths hold, the captain of this vessel can neither see nor give order to harm anyone who flies a Christian symbol. Of course, as she roams the edge of all Ottoman waters where a symbol such as that is almost certain death, ships are left with a choice to meet their doom by the slavers or the supernatural. Some have questioned, usually out of panicked remiss, why the Saber will not sail further east, where few ships would fly a cross? Legend has it that the Sable Saber is bound to the waters near Malta, and simply cannot leave them. At least, such is the secret prayer of most Muslim ships who believe in her. Those who have belief enough to pursue the legend further, through old libraries, ships' logs and unholy priests, hold a strange tale closer to their hearts than any crucifix; the captain of the Saber is a fallen Malta Knight, a dark avenger who must slay a certain count of heathen hearts before his curse can be lifted, and it is by his own curse he cannot lay harm to any Christian soul, lest accident damn him double.

Knightsbridge: On the edge of Maltese waters, this taverne is perched on a low cliff, looking across a channel to the coast, where the Ottoman port city of Tunis looks back. This taverne, the farthest safe haven for Christians or all enemies of the Sultan, is funded and often used by the Malta Knights. Its tiny island is a rock, unable to support any trade of its own, so the taverne serves as a wayhouse, a crossroads for sailors of all ilk. Despite the clear potential for piracy, the Muslim navy and corsairs a mere hour's sail away do nothing about it. Their wisdom is to let pirate ships grow overconfident in unrestricted trade, so they can catch a single, slow ship whose hold is bursting with swag, rather than try to catch dozens of small ships which would all just scatter like so many birds if the taverne were ever attacked. The Malta Knights rely on this overconfident greed to maintain their base here. Their effort is aided greatly by a few Turks themselves, men turned from their brutal culture who claim to other Turks that the taverne's name 'Knightsbridge' is a mockery of the Malta Knights, when in truth it is flying in the face of Ottoman officials, for it serves as a bridge for the Knights to plan raids on nearby Muslim shipping. Still, despite the plunder-rich waters and the readily available trade for their brethren, few pirates stay here long, not in favor of the bold way the Knights seem to hide in plain sight. Indeed, it takes a very courageous individual to take up sanctuary here, for at any time he may have to fight Ottoman corsairs in great numbers as payment for his refuge, being drafted, temporarily, into the service of the Knights. Yet, those who do help here, even for one raid, are looked upon with great favor by the Knights, and by the same token, the Vatican. And so, all things considered, this is a sanctuary and a station of war, a taverne which conceals secret tunnels and chambers of the Malta Knights, which presses pirates into Christian service only to reward their courage afterwards, helping in their dangerous game against the corsairs of Tunis, to hide in plain sight and risk total destruction any day the Muslims may decide to take a closer look at the taverne and its secret cellar doors. But what would they actually find? Even amongst the pirates taking sanctuary at Knightsbridge there are tales of secrets kept from them, secrets of treasure vaults, cells and other things known only to the Knights.

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LOST ISLES: The Mediterranean is littered with islands. After thousands of years of civilization, of the rise and fall of countless cultures, there is no rhyme or reason as to which islands are settled or abandoned, or lost. Some people cling desperately to a small rock because it's where their ancestors lived, even after an earthquake has cast their great city into the sea, while sprawling islands of fertile farmland and shaded groves remain unknown due to ancient superstition. Furthermore, since it is said that ghosts cannot cross water, islands remain the most haunted places of all, but could they all be haunted by fear alone, indeed that it is myths that cannot escape, stories people cling to? Nobody, be they pirates or priests, know what to expect on the uncivilized islands in these ancient waters, and still even the most practical of men prepare themselves when setting ashore for a chance meeting with the supernatural.

The sunken island: Ask any sailor in these waters. Reefs aren't normally a problem, not like they are in the Caribbean. And yet, there is one place, one island, where reefs are both a blessing and a curse. Sailors call it the 'sunken island'. And an island it is, save that most of it is underwater. Hills, cliffs, and some trees rises above the waves, and a ring of rocks separates the freshwater swamps from the sea, but most of the ground is slightly submerged, from ankle to waist deep. Thus it is visible and no danger to ships, though it cannot be settled, either. It remains a swamp, shrouded in mystery, where a man goes only when he is desperate to hide, for it is an island haunted by countless tales of the dead and damned. Men who stay there too long go mad and often murder their shipmates or themselves. It is particularly perilous by night, when spirits cry in soul-shattering agony or steal into mens' dreams to butcher their souls with knives of moonlight. The island is hardly visible as it's so low, and the lack of a tide in the Mediterranean allows its shallow shores to remain unthreatened by any invasion by the sea. The only true danger it poses to those at sea is when there is a fog, or a ship is sailing by night without a keen lookout, for the island is all but invisible at such times, and a vessel can run aground there as easily as striking a reef, leaving the crew to survive amongst the island's spirits . . .

Isle of the Ark: Could pirates have found the lost Ark of the Covenant? Immediately one's opinion is ignited like a fire in the brain—if one is a priest, he refuses to believe it, denying such a possibility without the slightest thought, while if one thinks as a pirate, the possibility of so great a treasure far beyond anything he ever dreamed of in his career evokes wonder and adventure-lust like never before. Still, not only could it be, has it already come to pass? Is the greatest treasure of the Bible, proof of God's existence, the plunder of pirate lords?

All tales seem to point to an island far to the east in the Mediterranean, not far from Crete.

This island, which has no name on any maps or even in pirate lore, is a dull heap of rock, one riddled with tunnels both above and below the sea. It is a labyrinth of caves, wherein pirates can hide from anyone they wish, and anything they wish. It was first suggested the Ark had been taken here a full century ago, but the tale went unheard, thought no doubt to be a wild spinning of the catacombs known to snake beneath the Temple Mount in the Holy City of Jerusalem, where the Ark was known to be kept for a thousand years.

However, as the years progressed, by and by did more adventurers speak of the Ark being held on that island. Yet without a name, how could any official or holy avenger seek for it? It seemed the Ark could only be found by chance or by divine providence, and thus were the tales once again no more than that, tales, with no real value. Some in the higher offices of the church began to speak out against the stories, saying, and perhaps rightfully so it seems, that tales of the Ark were nothing more than inventions by pirates to distract the navy, else why was there no name given to the island, and if so great a treasure had been found why did none of the tale-tellers speak of duels and death over the ownership of it? Pirates themselves encouraged the tale, seeming to agree with the church while at the same time slapping them in face, saying that only the ruthless tyrants of the Vatican would find proof of God in charges of blood, and that they who'd seen the Ark were dispelled of violence, that being so greatly awed by the relic, they thought nothing of quarrel or spilling the blood of their fellow man over greed or avarice. Such thought, it seems, is a constant in legends of the Ark, the proof of higher

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powers whose message has been twisted for years uncounted, and the very reason the church would rather the Ark remain a fanciful legend. Indeed, an undeniable proof of God's will, of peace, would be very bad for business concerning the church.

However, Vatican-funded privateers nonetheless seemed to search in earnest for this island. Pirates of the eastern Mediterranean endured a period of a good five or six years when they were questioned, above all else, even in times of war, of where the Ark's secret island lay. This only led pirates from the seven seas to believe the Vatican was in secret searching for this most holy of all relics. And, be it due to fear of discovery or proof of the tale's falsehood, the tales themselves ceased, and so the island was obscured by the mists of myth.

So the Ark lay quiet until nigh upon a decade past. Scrolls were found detailing its exodus from the Holy Land to an island, where a newer temple housed it. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately as one's perspective might be, the scrolls were scribed by Spaniards in Egypt, who did not understand the way Egyptians saw the world, and their following the Ark's passage 'up the great river' may have meant north into the Mediterranean just as easily as it truly did south along the Nile.

With no name for its secret destination, all the adventurers who sought for the Ark, and those that claim to have found it, simply refer to the island as the 'Isle of the Ark'. It is a frustration to those who seek it, especially church officials. But where do pirates enter into this tale?

Nobody knows for sure how the Ark vanished from Jerusalem. Nobody knows exactly who took it any more than they know where, or when. But in the last generation it has been suggested, primarily by pirates, that their own brethren took it away, all disguised as Jewish priests. They say that God, all too displeased with the tyranny of the church that operates in His name, felt pirates were no worse than a clergy which ordered the Crusades centuries earlier. Pirates are honest thieves. And they spirited the Ark away to a place where they kept so many other treasures for so long they knew that the Ark would never be found there. Of course, this seems to suggest the caves are a city of sorts, not unlike the Brethren Court of the Caribbean. Yet if such a place exists, why hasn't it a name? Pirates defend

the tale as adamantly as any priest does his church and claim that the brethren are an unimaginative lot when it comes to naming things. So, again, the tale is shadowed with the prideful and foolhardy ways of pirates and their lore.

Do pirates keep the Ark of the Covenant in a secret island city of the Mediterranean, hardly an arm's length from the Vatican, and use it as the heart of their wicked court? If so, it would be no more an effort than whatever holy men cheated the rest of the church in spiriting the Ark away as the orthodoxy insists. So, what has the church lost, in truth, besides ownership and pride? As these tales continue to twist and entangle, all the chaos serves as the best protection for the outgunned pirates, no matter what they may be hiding . . .

FABLES OF THE FAR EAST



Shhhh . . . don't be tellin' anyone where yer ship be bound, if it be the eats, matey. Rumors fly faster than the wind, says I, an' there be heathen pirates lurkin' in every harbor, waitin' fer ya. Listen ta me tale, matey, a tale which leads further an' further ta the east, deeper an' deeper inta mystery . . .

MADAGASCAR: The great island that has become the home of countless buccaneers is so far from a true grasp of the law, so far from such danger that legends become the basis of fear in these waters. So accounts become stories. Stories become fables. And these fables thrive in the rich, tropical sun of freedom, the fruit which the great variety of pirates on this island all agree to believe in.

Spirits of the reefs: Not far off the western shores, there is a long brain-choral, so named for it looks much the same as human brains, spread over miles and miles just beneath the sparkling waves. Spirits of virgin women are said to rise from it, ghostly ladies who recite to cunning men how they were trapped by evil priests, their bodies turned into the strange animals which roam the mainland of their pirate island. They often speak of how eating the bizarre wildlife of Madagascar frees their spirits, as does killing false priests, such as those of cross or cloth, indeed those of Christian and Catholic faith, the common backers of the East India companies and most frequent invaders of these waters.

The pirate of the isles: Old Captain Le Ross was a great privateer, a scout for the English East India Company and later a pirate in the same waters he made safe for merchant shipping. His exploits were a large contributor to Madagascar's growing into a haven for pirates, and now the brethren sing of his adventures with gusty praise. Alas, the years have washed his name clean of the minds of men, like tracks along the seashore. 'Captain Le Ross' is just the name they favor, and out of sheer respect use the name in his song. But is the name of matter? The old pirate's praises could just as easily be the song sung for anyone else. Indeed, now all that is remembered of this famous turncoat to the English is his song, a call to glory used by many pirates of these waters, however fleeting it can be.

*I command
a band of sturdy men
Of pirates bold and free,
No laws I own, my ship is my throne,
My kingdom is on the sea.
My flag flies red
at my royal masthead
And at my foes I smile,
No quarter I show wheresoever I go
For soon the prize we will take in tow.*

*For my men I have tried,
my barque is my pride,
I am the pirate of the isles.*

*I love to sail
in a pleasant gale,
On the wide and raging sea,
With a prize in view we will heave her to
And haul her under our lee.
Then we will give three cheers
and for home we will steer
While fortune on us smiles,
For they who dare cross that famed Le Ross
Unto his flag they will strike, of course.*

*Proud galleon sons
and Spanish Dons
With pride and fury burn,
They have crossed the seas for to fight with me
But never more again returned.
Then England too
doth me pursue
But at her threats I smile,
Her men I have slain, her ships I have taken,
I have burned and sank them in the Main.*

*At length there is in sight
a ship of might,
An English man-o-war,
She hails Le Ross and stops his course
And a broadside unto her she poured.
The pirate
he returned the fire
And proudly he did smile,
But a fatal ball soon caused him to fall
And loud for quarters his men did call.*

*In the briny deep
he is laid to sleep,
Once the pirate of the isles.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 9.

FABLES OF THE FAR EAST



INDIA: No land evokes such primal fear and hope than this land of Hindus, Buddhists, beasts, devils and ancient mountains which guard the gateways to eternal life. The legends of this land run too far in bloody history for anyone to dare trace them to a source, for he would doubtless fail to understand it anyway. Such as it is, pirates tend to shun these shores, and consider those trapped there to be in a Hell on earth. Still, the glimmer of untold treasures is sometimes enough to seduce even the wisest of men to try sneaking into this forbidden land.

Treasure of the Twisted One: Born of a forbidden tryst between a Buddhist monk and a saucy French piratess, it is a creature, a man in shape but not in face nor soul. Bearing holy blood, it cannot be put to death and so it is left chained in a dungeon, at the end of a maze beneath a palace. Legend has it that he who is able to find and free this living gargoyle will hold the highest card in any dealings with India's government, for they fear nothing else above this creature, the 'Twisted One', to be seen in the light of day. In recent years, the tale of this demonseed has swelled to include not just itself **being** a treasure, but also that it is chained atop a hoard of gold and other treasure, which it defends like a troll or an ogre would in centuries past.

The Thuggie: Throughout this land, there bleed the tales of a cult from the mouths of terrified people, families who have seen their children and wives or even their strongest men taken by these shadows in the night. They come upon victims unaware, using a thin cord to strangle or even slice one's head off clean. Those who survive are sacrificed alive to an evil goddess, Khali, the spirit of destruction, or so it is said. What power does such a deity hold in a world of God to commit so many men to such an evil state? Might the cult's beliefs in Khali's virtue be true? The mere thought causes holy men to fill their dinner plate with bile. Yet none can question the dedication these men in black have to the great Khali. Either their demoness is powerful enough to possess true power in this day and age, a heathen goddess of ancient times returned, or there are new lenses for the spyglass of one's life journey through which to see the truth, and it is as far from the Bible's scripture as can be imagined. These cultists

are said to exist in every port, every village, every palace, and have temples hidden up and down this ancient coast. The cult of the Thuggie are every bit as feared and serve as much as the personified evil of India as Witches are in Europe.

The devil-chain of Bombay: Mariners are afraid to buy chain in the port of Bombay. For years there has been a fear whispered through every market, in every harbor tavern, aboard every ship inspection, that a cursed length of chain is somewhere in the city. As the story goes, the current owner of it has to sell the chain—he cannot give it away nor even a piece of it, lest he die. And, whoever owns it is unable to leave the land, as the chain is somehow able to bind him to this cursed country, and if he dares board a ship that vessel will find the wind forcing it back into the harbor with such force as to risk getting wrecked. As it is, men trade solely in rope, using what chains they have and know to be safe, even when they're not safe due to rust or strain. But this is only the curse itself. Legend has it that the chain has foundered several ships within sight of shore, and their treasures have coated this tale with such a gilded finish that it makes for a difficult story to ignore.

The Sundered Throne was a vessel sailing out of the darker centuries, afloat for hundreds of lives of men due to her excellent design. And still, even her supernatural agents which kept her afloat since the days of Constantine (who is said to have given the ship is personal blessing) could do nothing to save her from a curse, and she now lies rotting in the waters of Bombay harbor, the treasure of five-hundred years glittering in its seachests a hundred feet below the surface. It was long believed that it was the treasure which sank this vessel, a curse of another kind, which is why it was left, until the arrival of Dutch East India Company officials who said ships which last longer use chains rather than rope. It was an offhand comment made simply to boost their trafficking with trade in metals, and it twisted the tale of the lost ship, binding it to the chain of cursed legend. Yet the treasure is said to still be there, also bound by the chain never to be free of this harbor.

The cursed chain continues to add links to its tale as the years progress, with no end in sight.

FABLES OF THE FAR EAST



CHINA: When sailors travel to the Far East, more often than not they don't see it as such until they have reached China. This region, spread over many thousands of miles of sea and land alike is what a Christian man tends to envision when he hears all the stories of these fabled lands. Temples, dragons, mystical men, strange customs—these are the meat and drink of a fabled far off land. They are also a common thread, one of the few woven through the pale tapestry of Western thought, with China's true nature remaining mysterious. For not many stories escape this part of the world. Indeed, it is a vast region closed off by a tremendous unity and sense of separation from all other customs; Pirates either prefer to remain in these waters, where their kind rule both sea and land, or they don't escape these parts to speak of what they know. As it is, there are few legends of China which can draw pirates to its waters, and they speak of strange things to be sure, having been stained with Western fear and gilded with pirate-dreams.

Admiral Zheng's voyages: Of what little is actually known about the East, much of it comes from the great Admiral Zheng. For in the early years of the Fifteenth Century, Zheng began making voyages to the West. While Europe was stumbling out of their dark ages, China was prosperous, even magical in seeming. Zheng, already in command of over three-hundred ships, simply desired to flaunt his power for all the world to see. It was such mirth that led to a series of adventures and legends, lending an air of immortality, at sea, to the Ming Dynasty, of which Zheng had come.

Zheng's ships were nothing like the world had ever seen before. To this day European shipwrights have yet to match their size and strength. Some of Zheng's flagships were so large they were crewed by as many as twenty thousand men! Accounts by some add almost half that number again! And thus unchallenged, these great vessels roamed the waters throughout the Indian Ocean, down the coast off of Africa and Madagascar, and farther.

Given the sheer size of Zheng's ships, and his ability thus to dominate the sea, his name echoes in the stories told by colonists of the Caribbean, to explain why strange sculptures and graves are now being found in their jungles. Did Zheng set foot in

the New World before any white-man ever did? It is feared, especially by officials of the murderous English East India Company, that the heirs of the Ming Dynasty may some day come to claim their entire empire of the Caribbean, once Christian men have slaved for centuries to build it. And if stories of their warships hold true, who could stop them? Fortunately, such vessels have not been seen since the coming of Englishmen to the East. This is well known to be due to China's law at the turn of the century following Zheng's voyages, that such ships and adventures were too costly to their nation, and building any manner of oceangoing vessel therefore became a crime. Ironically, the small ships of the centuries to follow were powerless to stand against the galleons and men-o-war of the English and the Dutch, and their respective Companies, so allowing their dominance almost unchallenged, much as the great Zheng had done centuries earlier. And, as the final jest of fate, Chinamen now look to pirates to save them, men who discard all laws, including the ones regulating shipbuilding.

Fear of Zheng's heirs is supplanted by avarice, as pirates from around the world search the waters of his home for his lost treasure ship, Nanhai. Said to be nigh on five-hundred feet long and flying its sails from no less than **nine** masts, it sank during the Song Dynasty, bearing treasure from around the world. And thus, all nations lay claim to its hoard, and wars erupt over it even though nobody knows where it lies, indeed even though there is not yet any treasure to be fought over. So great is its gold rich legend. However, not all men fight over the treasure. Some fight to be freed from blood-ties to it. For the tale of the lost treasure ship was first told a German, and some believe his count for its masts truly meant 'none' giving rise to the legend of it being a ghost-ship, able to sail without sails. But if its nature, be it natural or supernatural can be doubted, the German's count of the steps to its sunken Hell cannot. He clearly said it sank in very shallow water, less than seventy feet. Those sailing the China Sea keep a lookout for nine masts rising from the waves, the Nanhai a symbol both of hope and dread, like the coming of a god, or a dragon.

In the end, the legacy of Admiral Zheng has driven more pirates to the waters of China than all other reasons combined.

FABLES OF THE FAR EAST



The ship of lanterns: The fishermen around Amoy know him best, but his junk has been sighted up and down the China coast. With its carved-dragon hull, wings of shredded sails and countless lanterns adorning it, this tiny vessel is a ship selling magic. Its largest two lanterns hang in the hollow eyes of the carved-head prow, though a hundred others all dangle from the rigging, like stars trapped in webs of spiders or skeletal dragons, which are none too dissimilar in China, says the single-man crew and captain, Saki-Sol. He sells his lanterns only for the highest prices, claiming they are magical. However, few have ever found them to be more than what they seem, mere lanterns indeed. Saki-Sol claims it is the dragon's spirit inside a soul which ignites a lantern's true fires, and to all others, it is merely a lantern as they see with such limited sight. But of those who claim to have evoked their lanterns, the magic of their light has revealed letters upon maps the naked eye could not see, the ghosts of pirates long dead who in such fear of this light spoke of where their treasures were hidden, and even faint glimpses of battles to be, allowing one to avoid an otherwise gruesome fate.

Sunken Sun Cove: For centuries past, sailors in the waters off China's coast believed the sun died each day, sinking like a ship. It was the common belief. Nobody questioned it, not until the claim came to Singapore that a pirate had found one of the fallen suns. Then, as if awakened from a dream, people began to question all the legends, as if disbelieving them would somehow rob the pirate of the all too real treasure he'd found. But, what **did** he find? A mere sunken ship gilded with his fancy taletelling, or something much more profound, something even supernatural? This discovery was soon traced to an expansive lagoon on an uncharted island, where in the depths was an eternal, golden glow. Nobody of mortal mind could decide what it was. However, it was the frightful bane of all official sailors' hearts, leaving the island deserted to all save for unsavory pirates, who already took their life in their hands every day. Soon, in order to 'help' the pirates, an extensive monastery was established on the island, but the pirates merely took advantage of the monks and their charity, eventually ousting these peaceful holy men. The monastery became the Sunken Sun

Taverne, wherefrom pirate lords unofficially govern the small town which has grown around the cove, and where tales of the glow beneath their vessels have come to include men saying they saw it fall from the sky.

Temple of the lost heads: Many a temple rises on the hills of these lands, and from a distance this one appears the same as any other, but when one ventures closer, its tale begins to unfold. For it is a temple built on a steep cliffside, overlooking the sea, where the ships of its pirate lord gather in a well watched harbor. Inside the temple's compound of tiered terraces and secluded courtyards, countless men train day and night at mystical methods of an unknown fighting art. Inside, the master keeps his trophies for which he is known and his palace so named—human heads. Preserved by strange powder, the heads of hundreds of enemies adorn the temple high and low, atop posts, hanging in baskets which also overflow with flowers, perched on the curved eaves of the roof like gargoyles, amongst others. It is a collection of grim, grinning faces which serves as a warning to all potential future enemies which visit, as well as to the master's own men whom may one day think of betraying him. However, far beyond the obvious tactics of terror these heads all serve, the master of the temple is also said to gain secret wisdom of the supernatural from them. The echoes of the heads' decapitated ghosts speak unto him. He offers to burn their head, thus freeing the ghost, in exchange for some forbidden lore. This is believed by most to be the secret of the temple's wealth, of its master's great success, though a few brave souls have dared sneak into the compound to expose the pirate lord living inside for being just that, a pirate, a master of cunning and no more a magician than any of them. Such raids are always funded by the government, and most meet with a grim failure, only adding to the temple's mystique. The few who have returned with their head still on their shoulders were accused of just the opposite, given the wild tales they told of what supernatural forces they met inside the temple. Each subsequent raid is able to tuck their fear away into a box, it seems (perhaps a head-basket), telling themselves that the previous raiders were only duped by even more tricks of the temple's master . . .

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AUSTRALIA: It began as a prison, an island, this entire continent, one large prison, one so far from all civilization that the prisons didn't need walls or even guards. The sea made the walls, and the vast desert with its denizens of strange creatures were guards enough. Yet soon stockades rose and ships arrived laden with prisoners from around England's vast empire. Mines were discovered. Trade began. Finally, the prisons along the coast became towns and trading ports in their own right. Yet the tales of the vast desert behind them continued to watch over all. The 'outback' remains a sea in itself, one of desert, dead trees, cliffs and chaotic wilderness, an innersea of the unknown, surrounded by a coast dotted with small towns. And behind them lies the true ocean, filled with its own mysteries. This land is prison indeed, an endless coastline of scattered settlements trapped on both sides by the sea and the desert, each imperiled with the unknown.

Inn of the Headless Prince: When the pirate town of Gambella was begun, there was great unrest, as it had no stable government. One wishbone of bad contention was what to name the local tavern. It was finally named in the night by a priest. It was something he said he'd do, and some said he'd be crazy or have 'lost his head' to do such a thing as take any chances with pirates' grog. So, he named it the Headless Priest. However, pirates being God-fearing men by and large, they 'urged' the priest to change it. So, it became the Headless **Prince**, a name everyone could agree on. Some grumbled on, saying the world was upside-down, that summer is winter in these waters, so the devil must be God, that God had gone mad, thus such thinking would get blessings for being evil. Others just thought the tavern's name a fine insult to England's king. So the tavern became the unofficial business center of the struggling pirate town.

Road of the dead: Few dare to enter the desert of the island's interior, the dreaded 'outback'. There is no chance of settlement, and water is scarce. There are no roads, either, just trails made by unknown creatures. The dead, say some. One such trail is a narrow path wandering out of a swamp near to the penal colony of Botany Bay. Its trail-head is lined with zombies on stakes, which are said to rise and

follow those on the road, and these are reported as rising along the path every few miles. Those who have come back speak of a ghostly old hag who appears, inviting travelers of the road into her hut where she offers them a meal and asks them just where they hail from, with those born of Australia being blessed, but all being warned of impending thunder, a clue to the road's end. Still, there is no telling where this trail leads, for none have dared explore it past nightfall. If they have, they haven't returned to speak of what they found. The popular belief is the trail leads to a cemetery, or to a ruin, such as a lost city of inhuman kings or a temple of heathen gods, where great treasures bait pirates and other men to certain doom. Yet nobody knows for certain. Dead men tell no tales.

Captain Khail's skull mine: He was a pirate of the Caribbean, one of the worst of his day, but like so many he was finally caught and brought to meet a gallows in Port Royale. While he rotted away in a cell occupied only by skeletons, he cursed the king and God day and night. Whether this was truly a malady of the mind or just a trick, it worked, for the guards grew too terrified of his ghost, and they petitioned the governor not to hang Captain Khail, lest they be haunted to a terrible end. A governor, a statesman, owing his position to money and laws and other practical matters, nonetheless listened to the guards' plea, for he'd seen too many strange or God-defying things in his short office within those Carib islands. Indeed, some say he devoted himself to practical matters to hide himself mind, body and soul from the supernatural world all around him. If the truth is known, it is known only to the dead, for the governor kept no records for his decision, which was to spare Captain Khail the noose, and deliver him to His Majesty's new prison colonies far away in New Hollandia.

Once in the land buccaneers called Australia, Captain Khail began to take over. Upon exiting the prison ship, the local governor slapped him, saying he made a proud English governor in the gold-rich New World look foolish, deceiving him with tales of an afterlife. For the governor of this colony, of Botany Bay, was a hard man, who believed in the spirit world no more than he believed in any god, even the Christian one. As it was, he had no real

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morals. He was a machine, without weakness, and that was the weakness Captain Khail exploited. For as the governor berated the pirate publicly, saying his name itself was obviously a farce, Khail said it was nonetheless the name he was known by, and therefore a name it was. Slapped again for vanity, twice, Khail egged on the governor until his face was a mask of pain purchased by great insolence, but like all things in trade, the pirate knew well of the value of his scars. Each slap had earned him a new ally amongst the crowd looking on, including governor's God-fearing guards.

Khail was consigned to the stockade. It was a punishment men greatly feared, for despite work in the mines or fields being a grueling task, it kept them limb-lithe and gave them air. To be restricted to the stockade was a slow, tortuous death. Yet no one reckoned with just how strong his life at sea had made Captain Khail. His sinews were like the rigging of a ship, his mind as resolute as a storm, and would not break by any effort of man, but by its own designs alone, or something of supernatural strength which no man could defeat. And so, left to the stockade, Khail took advantage of the empty hours to plan a rather bold escape. He reasoned, a mutiny on land was easier than one at sea, but little different in the means of parleying with men to entice them with better leadership.

Finally, the day came when Captain Khail was judged guilty of so many new crimes that he was sentenced to hang. Having already promised all the guards better than ten years pay, they helped him and the rest of their future crew escape. It was a bloody massacre, one which left the governor alone to tell the tale to his superiors.

However, just as the governor had mistaken a pirate's strength to his undoing, fate was to play a cruel hand and give the governor renewed power. The English crown did not blame their man for all that happened, but instead saw the iron resolve in him for justice, and armed him with a fleet of five ships to hunt Captain Khail. What followed was a two-year chase around the coast of Australia which washed the beaches red with blood.

In the end, Khail knew he was defeated, or at least defeated on the sea. He retreated inland, into the fabled outback, following a trail he claimed to know well, but in truth had no idea where he was

leading his battleweary crew. Finally, the trail came to an end. The dry riverbed they'd been following entered a cave. Therein they'd take refuge from all pursuers, both English and other pirates seeking the treasure they carried with them. Yet once inside it, the cave came to life, the walls illuminated by the skulls embedded within the very living rock. These were not human skulls, but something else, men of another world. Some thought this the burial place of angels, others devils, and still others thought it was not of this earth. Everyone fled, save for the captain himself. Khail never left that cave.

The tale told by the crewmen who returned to civilization, indeed those who did not perish in the outback but by the noose, spoke of their captain as a devil. They pleaded to be spared the gallows by right of being tricked by a devil in man's clothing who had finally returned to the stone womb he'd crawled out of. But the governor, resolute with his disbelief in all religion, pulled the lever himself, in an act of defiance most compared to the first time they saw Captain Khail. The executioner wouldn't do it. The guards wouldn't. So the governor did it himself, which a new governor, anxious for station at the world's end, used to charge the old, Godless governor with murder. By denying men their rights by the church, he drew appointment with his own gallows, taking the last knowledge of the cave of Captain Khail with him.

The cave of Khail's end has come by a new name, a skull mine, guarded by the devil-spirit of the long-dead pirate captain. Some have said he is not dead at all, but lives forever, like a vampire, a man cursed with the light of crystal skulls. He still watches over his treasure, most believe. But as to where the cavern is, none know. It remains a dark tale told in taverns to discourage men from daring to enter the outback, lest they stumble across it . . .

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Avast there! Ye be ready ta explore the world, aye matey? Be ye ready ta sail ta the edge o' the map an' beyond? P'hraps ya might be thinkin' again 'ere ye hear what others have found out there . . .

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN: The great sea that for thousands of years hid the true size of the world, it remains the great frontier, despite being cradled by civilization. For the crossing of this ocean is to leave behind the world one knows and enter into a realm still rife with myth and superstition, and for one to leave the New World for the Old is but to return to the bloody ways he knows all too well. Then there is the unknown realms both north and south of the sea. The great ocean may have been crossed, but it shall never be overcome, and a new world may have been found beyond it, but never will the ocean itself divulge all of its secrets. Only a few here and there to those who catch the gaze of the sea fates. And their tales are as weird and as mysterious as the sea itself.

The father of sin: How does one tell their daughter that her father is the devil?

“You mean a pyrate, mommy?”

If only it were that easy.

“No, Samantha, not a pyrate, not like them”.

What could I say to her at that point? She was a child seeded in my womb nigh upon seven years ago. Then his ship was attacked by pirates and he was captured. Yet evil begets evil, so say the men at church. They were taken by the legendary ship, the Flying Dutchman, and every seven years crew and prisoners alike could return for a day, or so it is said. And so we wait, for tomorrow night brings my husband home. But who will walk up the cold beach? A man? A skeleton? A devil come to take us both back to a watery grave with him?

I have readied myself. Samantha will remain bolted fast in her room, a crucifix upon each wall, a pistol in her pillow. I will wait by the door with a Bible and a fine meal ready on the table, and in one hand a knife to give him to carve the meat or perhaps carve out my heart, and in my other hand his own sword from the days he was in the Royal Navy. I know not what to expect. For he is half of me. I am divided.

What of pirates? They stand between the two worlds. Devils and black sheep they are called, yet they are no more immune to true devils and ghosts than myself, and my daughter. Were the father of Samantha to return a pirate only, I would be overjoyed. I have one day left to wonder . . .

The Devil's Triangle: Few sailors have not heard a story or song echoing fear of this vast expanse of the ocean. Its three corners of Bermuda, San Juan and the Florida Keys are bustling ports, and yet all are cornerstones of this dark legend. Indeed, many a ship sails through the realm they mark and never meets any danger. Alas for those whose fate is not overlooked by the devils of the sea.

Within the boundaries of the Triangle, there is no end to the strange events which plague sailors and ships alike. Tales of ghost ships are common enough to make even the most stalwart captain pay for the extra food out of his own pocket to round the Triangle's waters. However, like all tales of the beyond, one may almost wish for ghost ships, for at least his mind has been buttressed by countless tales of them, that he might need to draw only on courage rather than risk madness at witnessing the bizarre distortions of nature that may also come on him; It has been reported that men have seen ships whose crew were turned into bronze statues, that a green fog can melt men where they stand, that the sun and moon fall from the sky or even rise from the depths, that the sounds of battles can be heard between invisible ships, that the sea turns to blood, that wild cackling can be heard on moonless nights and any other unearthly happenings.

The most persistent legend involves the sunken land of Atlantis, a tale which echoes from ancient centuries, when the Greeks were masters of the sea and their philosophers debated the existence of this land to which the Bible does not apply. Superior in every way to Christian civilization, save for its grace, the land of Atlantis was consumed by flame and sank in a single day and night. The Greek of most speech concerning this land spoke of it being where the Triangle now works its devilry.

Truly, there is no end to the stories nor to the possibilities of what occurs out in the Triangle. As its one common thread is, however, the misfortune of seafarers, it has well earned its evil name.

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John's silver: Nobody is certain if the namesake of his song is a man's real name, if only a nickname or tradename, or simply a common name given to a legend, much like 'Davey Jones' has come to be the name for every demon arisen from the depths of the sea. For whatever the truth, there is a song about ol' 'John Silver' which often accompanies a legend about buried treasure, which John is almost always making away with in the end, usually after a mutiny. Strangely, most memories of John speak of him having a pegleg, yet no version of the tale speaks of his being anything other than a man of one leg who uses a crutch. For whatever its worth in the scales of truth, be it a hidden map to silver treasure or simply to fool's gold, the old ballad of John Silver is sung as thus:

*We were schooner rigged and rakish,
with a long and lissome hull,
and we flew the pretty colors
of the crossbones and the skull;
we'd a big black Jolly Roger
flapping grimly at the fore,
and we sailed the Spanish Water
in the happy days of yore.*

*We'd a long brass gun amidships,
like a well-conducted ship,
we had each a brace of pistols
and a cutlass at the hip;
it's a point which tells against us,
and a fact to be deplored,
but we chased the goodly merchantmen
and laid their ships aboard.*

*Then the dead men fouled the scuppers
and the wounded filled the chains,
And the paintwork all was spatter-dashed
with other people's brains,
She was boarded, she was looted,
she was scuttled till she sank,
and the pale survivors left us
by the medium of the plank.*

*O! Then it was (while standing
by the taffrail on the poop),
we could hear the drowning folk lament
the absent chicken coop;
then, having washed the blood away,
we'd little else to do
than to dance a quiet hornpipe
as the old salts taught us to.*

*O! The fiddle on the foc's'le,
and the slapping naked soles,
and the genial 'Down the middle, Jake,
and curtesy when she rolls!'
with the silver seas around us
and the pale moon overhead,
and the look-out not a'looking
and his pipebowl glowing red.*

*Ah! The pig-tailed, quidding pirates
and the pretty pranks we played,
All have since been put a stop to
by the naughty Board of Trade;
The schooners and the merry crews
are laid away to rest,
A little south of sunset
in the islands of the blest.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 10.

The quartermaster's skull: Sebastian Blair, that was his earthly name, an earthly name for a man who most would wager good gold upon was more of a devil clothed in the flesh he whipped off crewmen. He was a pirate's quartermaster, but on what ship and under what captain the ever-changing retelling of his tale has forgotten, like a wound lost beneath layers of stitches and scars. That was his face too, a map of pain leading to the 'X' he had tattooed over the cavity of his missing left eye. He said he carved it out himself, and encased it in glass, and buried it with his former crew's treasure, which is believed to be considerable, and his eye will keep vigil over it until he returns one day. But there is, or was, no need for him to guard his gold, for it would have taken a madman to seek it, or to cross him even aboard ship. For he was as ruthless as he was ugly. So much that when he finally met an earthly end in battle, his captain feared to give his body and soul, at least whole, to the sea, lest his evil return as a ghost which could not be so easily dispatched. The captain boiled his head in a kettle until only his skull remained, and only then gave the body a burial at sea. Then, he nailed the skull to the mainmast. And while the captain and crew are long dead, the ship may still float somewhere, doubtless having changed hands many times, but it is said that should a pirate crew ever recapture it, the skull will return, perhaps merely as a shadow

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burned into the mast, or maybe as a flaming skull floating like a lantern held by his headless ghost, barking orders at the crew. Yet men keep an eye out, for legend beholds that whether in shadow or in flame, the skull would bear the scars which are the quartermaster's map . . .

Black Bart's ghost: The life and adventures of the famous captain Black Bart Roberts are well known. What is not so well remembered is how he sailed the seas in the nights following his death. After a legendary battle off Africa in the year of Our Lord twenty-one and seventeen-hundred, where Roberts is said to have met his end, tales immediately began to haunt the shores on either side of the Pacific. It was as if his ghost was fanning the flames of his own legend. And yet, given Roberts' propensity for investing in his reputation, another rumor began to make the rounds at pirate ports that Black Bart is, or was, still alive, having miraculously escaped his great battle. Matter of fact, less than a year later, sightings of Black Bart began, and in February, his fresh body was given a funeral.

Where does truth end and lies begin? And do lies **ever** end? May Black Bart still be out there, a living man or a ghost? Mariners continue to claim his flag overshadowed them before they lost all of their treasure and cargo. Are merchantmen merely using a popular tale to line their own pockets? Or, do the dead sail the Pacific waters?

True or false, living or dead, sailors, pirates in particular, have come to believe that singing in full the chantey of Black Bart Roberts will summon his ghost. To protect their interests, those who know it whisper the last four lines of twelve, leaving others in the dark of how to complete his conjuration. So what the last lines are only the dead truly know.

*Roberts made the fatal choice
and took the Devil's part,
there was malice in his keen dark eyes
and murder in his heart.
A Captain bold would lay the course
for these curse'd Sons of Cain,
for Satan sailed aboard their ship
and Black Bart was his name.*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 11.

St. Mary's graveyard: The ocean is a vast place, a desert of deceptive waves and ghostly storms, and there is no refuge to be found. Once one commits to a voyage, he's alone until he's succeeded or he has been claimed by the sea. Not even the foolish or the foolishly hopeful claim there to be islands or even reefs out upon the ocean. No one, that is, except for those who sail from Portugal to Jamaica during the winter months. Be it the ocean's current or the mysterious ways of another world, ships on this course-heading tend to pass a small island, one covered in a cemetery and dominated by a church, which all seamen name as St. Mary's.

A vanishing isle, a holy church, and an army of headstones surrounding it, this much is agreed on by those who have set foot ashore this lonely, mysterious place. Where accounts differ is whether it actually does rain constantly, whether the undead rise from their graves, and if the absence of birds proves the island's supernatural manifestation or its sheer distance from the coast. Whatever may be its truth, the island is seldom explored, which serves only to feed the sailor's appetite for myths, which are never rationed. So plentiful are they in fact, it is seldom that anyone ventures into the cemetery to learn the truth of the church. And so this holy ruin has been renamed for the cemetery around it, much like an island is named for a reef.

One ship foundered off the isle, a spice cargo bound for Spain left floating in the waves, and the wreckage of the barrels still lie rotting in the rocks randomly shaped by the sea, rocks not yet carved into headstones. The survivors of the wreck went mad eating little but spiced leaves, and thusly they were unable to remember anything, not their ship's name nor even their own, anything except that the dead rise to enslave the living who are forced to carve their own headstones. There is so little land left between graveyard and surf that this bodes ill for future castaways, if it is true.

St. Mary's doesn't appear on any charts. Kings forbid it, which is strange, for even if they believe in it and simply do not wish to encourage myths, the same charts are common to include monsters along their borders. Some have speculated that the island is the secret burial ground for nobles, and that lords of the highest order possess secret charts leading to its lonely shores.

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The Dead Calm: Whatever she was, whatever name she wore in life, that frigate hit a dead calm and it was the beginning of her end. The wind was for weeks fleeting at best. The waters were like glass, a mirror into the grim future which awaited crew and vessel alike. One by one they could see their ghastly reflections in the smooth surface of a most unforgiving sea. One by one the crew went mad in the doldrums. Eventually, they turned to cannibalism. Finally, only three crew remained, and it was they who renamed their ship the 'Dead Calm'. This act sealed their gruesome fate, to never feel the wind, even when a hurricane comes through. There they remain, their old ship bound to a three-mile patch of the ocean, never to sink, just as they are never to die, though they feel the mortal hunger of every passing day. Living sailors who are foolish enough to board this derelict, thinking it free to plunder or salvage, are in short order butchered by its undead crew of three. Given their small numbers, the evil aboard claims only a few while most flee and live to tell the tale later. And while this very story is shared over much drink in a seaside tavern, their friends are being eaten alive, the undead trying to sate their insatiable hunger, these cursed men to be content for a day, perhaps a week, until hunger at last begins to gnaw at them anew, and they return to their vigil, keeping a keen eye out for whatever vessel might approach the Dead Calm . . .

The Rouge Navy: Be careful who you ally with or sign articles to. For roaming the ocean is a small detachment of the English Royal Navy, ships that are not listed on any official accounts, funded with the same skullduggery that backs privateers. And, like such licensed pirates, these ships all make the venture of the sea unofficially. Sometimes they go so far as to masquerade as pirate crews in order to maintain their identity amongst smaller Royal Navy vessels, which they allow to sail on unmolested in order to tell their tale. These ships, which most of the most cunning pirates figure to be no more than five in number, are most certainly crewed only by very loyal English patriots, most of them officers. Thus, they are very skilled and disciplined, making them much deadlier than their already deadly ships would suggest. Sometimes, it is said, they work at the side of pirate crews in order to achieve a more

important goal for the English crown, while their buccaneer allies remain none the wiser. Altogether, pirates anywhere in the Pacific should be wary, for anyone they ally with may be one of these ships, dubbed the Rouge Navy by the brethren.

Captain Cutlass: At first, nobody believed this was the name of a real man. Not even the Calico One himself, Rackam, could have a more absurd name. And yet there are nonetheless reports across Pacific waters of someone using this name, his flag a red field emblazoned with two black cutlasses under a sable skull. Given his flair for appearance, and that his Jolly Roger is the same design once flown by Rackam himself many believe he is the Calico One returned from the grave or whose legacy is being carried on by a loyalist or madman. For, no matter all the stories of his red ensign, which to mariners the world over signals no quarter, this pirate seems to engage in battle very little, if at all. For if he's evil enough to fly the crimson flag, to threaten no quarter, where do the stories come from? Why are there so many survivors?

El Petizo: From along the southern coastline of the Americas, the shores south of the Caribbean where few dare venture save for traitors and traders, there come tales of a shadow, a predator out from the jungles that is far worse than the gallows, be one going to Heaven in judgment of piracy or debt. It is a haunting figure, coming on men suddenly and without any means of detection. The locals call it El Petizo. Those who have fought it to save their shipmates have said that blades and balls from the newest pistol have hit nothing, and yet the creature is somehow solid enough to strike back and also drag away its prey by their hair. Where does this beast of shadow come from? Priests have spoken, at the risk of devils from the Hell of the church, that it is an ancient spirit disturbed by the coming of Godly men to these shores. However, all priests who said such were soon taken, supposedly by the creature, but most believe they were silenced by a higher order of their own. For soon thereafter the legend changed, that El Petizo hunts only those that are not of Catholic faith. And yet, even Catholics, especially the priests who confirm this, fear to go anywhere near the jungles where it has been seen.

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THE PACIFIC OCEAN: Greater in both size and in spirit than the Old World ocean of the Atlantic, the Pacific is so vast and daunting that few believe it will ever be mapped. It is, therefore, not a great ocean, but ‘beyond the map’. Those who have had the skills and fortune to circumnavigate the globe, indeed to have crossed the Pacific, have done thus, no doubt to others, with no less than the grace of God Almighty. Yet as lands continue to be settled at the world’s end, as the blank edges of the map are slowly filled in, more ships chart short or zig-zagging routes through this other-worldly ocean. It is from these adventurers which come most of the accounts of the strange and unusual. And there is not shortage of them, for the Pacific has yet many unusual lands and strange adventures to offer.

Armand Rais: His is a name feared throughout the islands of the western waters, from Japan to Java to Australia. He began as a Muslim corsair in the Mediterranean, scuttling Catholic ships with such a mad lust he drew special attention from the Royal Navy. Never one to fear odds or even death given his devotion to Allah, instead of fleeing he sailed directly into Genoa and demanded to see both the governor and the highest ranked holy man in town. There, through unmatched political skill, he turned Catholic and was pardoned for all his past crimes. His guns now upon the Ottoman Empire, he left a bloody wake behind him, though he never freed a single slave. This led to whispers of his truly not having turned, holding to his Islamic ideals. And it turned out to be true, for he ‘turned Turk’ after a year. Or tried to. The Ottoman Empire never fully trusted him again. Thus begrudged by both empires he left the Mediterranean and came to the Pacific. And it was in these vast waters he was able to be himself fully. He became a master of slave trading, often with a surplus of Negroes in his cargo hold. When angry at an enemy, he’ll give the order to “Give them a fiery salvo of cannibals!” So, instead of being hammered by cannonballs, the enemy will be witness to dead slaves strapped to the ends of cannons and splattered all over their vessel, causing such a storm of disgust and fear to be a suitable distraction for Armand’s Muslim men to board. He is obsessed with enslaving, torturing and killing all infidels, which in the Pacific is everyone.

The Isle of Steam: There’s thousands of islands in the Pacific, most of them untouched by man. This one though, is unique. It’s a sandbar, hardly eighty feet in breadth but also baring an unbroken line of palm trees. It encircles a bubbling lagoon that is a good league across but cut off from the sea, the peak of a sunken volcano. If you dig deep enough, there’s only water beneath the sand. It’s a reef but also a pirate’s paradise. The steam always rising in the center is known to navies and thought little of, so it helps disguise campfires and the like. Pirates throughout the Pacific consider this a neutral place, where anyone can careen their ship, but nobody is able to lay claim to or spill blood upon. This was initially agreed upon out of fear of some goddess of the sea, but has endured out of necessity. Once, to hide their ship, pirates dragged a schooner over the sandbar and into the lagoon, where the vessel was in short order destroyed by the hellish steam and devoured into the blue oblivion. Whether the wrath of a goddess, the hunger of a deep mountain or devils of the depths, whatever evils lay in that lagoon are left alone by all.

A forbidden love: None can say who it was first a song about, but over the years, centuries and seas, it has become a favorite amongst sailors across the Pacific. Like the Fountain of Youth of the west, it is a popular dream, that one day it may befall any man who spends enough years in these waters. Yet it is also dangerous, for some say the song is evil, or at least haunted, and to sing it in hopes of love is to curse one’s chances of the same.

*The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.*

*Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And the blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Then the two hearts beating each to each!*

The lyrics for this song are reproduced for the Players on Handout 12.

ACCOUNTS OF THE OPEN SEAS



The Isle of Dreams: There are thousands of islands in the Pacific, and most of them look alike on all charts and especially to the eye. This is their best resource, some say, for they are overlooked by the more particular-minded merchantmen who are truly the rulers of the Royal Navy. This island, one of a thousand others in the southwestern waters of this vast ocean, is avoided not only for its comeliness, but also for the labyrinth of reefs which surround its shores. After all, asks both Royal Navy and the East India Company, why risk ships for an island of which they already own a hundred others alike? So pirates have made camps here. There's a rather narrow channel leading through the reefs, which is suitable for the smaller, shallow-drafted pirate ships and treacherous to the larger vessels of European law. The channel continues inland, leading to three small coves in a series, and around each of them is a small pirate chantey town. They call this isle a place of dreams, for many reasons. First, it is an ideal haven for brethren of the coast. But perhaps more importantly, those who stay here too long at a time begin to see more clearly the dream-world rather than the waking one. Many assume it is the fruit which grows here, bedeviled in some way, so few pirates make provisions of it unless they plan to drop anchor here for a long time. The malady of these dreams is never perilous, and wears off a man's mind quickly enough once he's back out at sea, so the island's natural food supply is good for its tavern fare.

Celebrations of Pon: Ever been to Java? It's an ill place, for the soul and the body, but you wouldn't guess it. The trees are lush, the water youthful, the women fertile. The natives stupid. It makes for all too easy plundering. Or, are the natives as foolish as Christian men think? If one can easily lose his way in the pleasures of the body which easily fill his soul as well, might not the priests and pirates be just as mistaken about everything else there? If one seeks to unravel the riddle of truth about this island, its people and its pleasures, he needs to go to the celebrations of Pon.

High in the mountains, which locals name as Kemukus but Christians call the New Sodom, once a month or thereabouts—every thirty-five days it is said—there is a festival on a sacred mountaintop.

Legend has it that a priest or prince, Samodra by name, died up there in the Fifteenth Century. His tomb is the center of these festivals, which sprawl all over the surrounding area.

Pon is only held on Fridays. Early Christians said this was a perversion of the Sabbath. Yet they fell to the power of lust like all who followed in their incense-waving wake. For the celebrations are, at their heart, a time of prayer, or of wishing it is clearer to say, a wish consummated before leaving the mountaintop by making love to a stranger. To have any wish come true, one must do this seven Pons in a row. Thousands of natives a year make a pilgrimage to this place, lingering for the seven or so months required to fulfill **all** their dreams.

Despite intrusions by the India Companies and Royal Navy officials, colonists and even pirates, all of Java remains strangely unable to be enslaved or controlled in any normal way. The Dutch powers here believe that many wishes of Pon work against their efforts to Christianize the island.

The Seven Skulls: The sea is so vast, and there is such a count of islands, with new ones being first sighted almost daily, that many sailors believe not all the islands will ever be found at all. Some are of such a mind as to prefer that some of the isles remain unknown to Christian men. Chief amongst all these is a small chain of seven islands known to natives of the southern seas as the Seven Skulls or simply 'the seven'. These islands are so small a man could walk around one in an hour, and they are so close together one can swim between them. Hideous steam rises from their dense jungles as if from an open hellgate. Drums thunder in the trees at night yet no man—Christian or savage—is ever seen on the beach. Sometimes skulls from drowned sailors wash ashore, but then disappear. Some feel they are taken inland by the spirits, others that all the skulls remain barely covered by the sand and that an army of dead seamen will arise to defend an island should anyone set foot upon it. Yet what would they defend? Rumors of ruined temples and lost cities hiding treasure vaults are commonly told by those who know of these islands. But whatever the truth is about these seven small isles, there is no mistaking that it is something evil.

ACCOUNTS OF THE OPEN SEAS



Drake's secret voyage: It's known to pirates and a good many groups who trade forbidden knowledge, that Sir Francis Drake undertook a secret venture, one commissioned by Queen Elizabeth herself, past the southernmost tip of the Americas and into the Pacific. The tale, the voyage, it knows no end. For the Dragon of the Spanish is believed to have set foot on a new coastline the length of the Carolinas or even longer, a coast unknown to Christian men. From beaches as fair as the Mediterranean's most beautiful havens to a land cast eternally in rain, an island he named Vancouver, he supposedly cached several chests bursting with treasures in many dark coves along this coast. His voyage was kept secret and all ledgers hidden away by the English. If all he did was cross the Pacific, why did he take so long to do it?

Drake's lost fleet: Whispers and rumors place the legendary Sir Francis Drake rounding the southernmost tip of the Americas in the year of Our Lord seventy-seven and fifteen-hundred not alone, but at the command a small fleet, a fleet doomed to what can only be considered a curse. No matter what a Queen may say or what her priest-counselors might condone, the Dragon of the Spanish was fighting a losing battle in his attempts to reach the Pacific. It is a battle still being fought today.

Drake lost all his ships but his own. First, the Dragon lost two vessels in crossing the Atlantic, a fine pair of vessels known as the Christopher and the Swan. Then, along the South American coast, a foul fate caused the Mary, once the famed Santa Maria and now recaptured, to become rotten, thus she was scuttled. Finally, when rounding the storm-plagued horn which is the gateway to the Pacific, two more vessels were lost and Drake's ship alone returned to try the passage another day.

Legends say that all five lost ships gather near the Pacific gate, in those storm-plagued straights, to await the day their Dragon returns. Indeed, ghosts and ghost ships alike are doomed to wait for their lost commander to return and lead them away from the hell they are trapped within. It is said that all these ghosts can neither see nor hear anyone save for Drake, his heirs, or anyone possessing one of a number of his more exotic and prized treasures. As for the rest, the legend enters a storm of debate.

Some say they are seen as easily and saved only to be bound to replace their savior. Some men are quick to speak of ghosts crossing swords in order to see who gets the right to save a soul to replace his own. Others say the ghosts draw bone-lots, or give priority to their most withered, as weighed in larger scales built from the bones of past victims. And if they cannot see the living, then they most certainly see the dead, for whether by burial at sea or being lost in a storm, those bodies fished from the briny by these spectral sailors of the straights are always pressed into the crew of this lost fleet. Thus does the curse continue, like a maelstrom of time and fate, which none can escape or end.

Yet in the eye of the storm, when doom is at best certain, there is calm, an accepting of fate and thus a rare chance to think and summon the nerve to challenge it. Once did a captain, hoarding within his cabin much of Drake's personal gold, seek to command the ghost ships to do his bidding. They followed him as far as New Hollandia, but then as the sun rose on Christmas Day, for some reason a man of sane mind has yet to guess, they mutinied and returned to their haunted straights.

Drake's Compass: The great scourge of the Spanish Main, Sir Francis Drake, the Dragon indeed to all Spanish ships and ports, also hoarded treasure like his mythical namesake. And yet, like the Grail, the Shroud and the Spear of Jesus which are gilded by history, the same histories which forget the Cross itself, so to does legend remember Drake's drum, his treasure and his ship, and forget his Compass. All who sailed with him said he found his way in the vast oceans by some supernatural agent, and it was a Compass he kept hidden in his cabin. Now, in England there resides a device which most insist is exactly that, Sir Francis Drake's secret treasure, a compass made by the famed Humphrey Cole in the year of Our Lord sixty-nine and fifteen-hundred for the knighted captain. It is truly an innovative device, including solar dials and even the latitudes of many major ports, but this instrument was given to Sir Drake after a good portion of his seemingly mystical success had already been achieved. It has been offered up to legend as the equal of fool's gold for all who seek the Dragon's true compass, which is lost.

ACCOUNTS OF THE OPEN SEAS



Peter Flynn: Few men captured the hearts and hate of the world like Peter Flynn. He was an infamous privateer, a dashing swashbuckler, a master fencer, a winner of women, both a blessing and a curse to the major European powers, and a priest of the most wicked, wicked ways. Hear then the tale of a pirate's pirate.

Flynn came from Tasmania, a small island off the coast of New Hollandia. This 'Australian' was a handsome young man, but just as radiant as his looks were, so equally luminous was his brain. He was bored with life at home and so he sought for his fortunes in the vast theater of the world, ever searching for a real chance to prove himself . . . to himself. As he said, "I am so bored that faith I've so far done no more than a corpse laying upon a marble slab in a palace, surrounded by the other corpses who are as committed to their longitude as I am to latitude". He was indeed often the best to weigh his own worth, and his adventures are only the best tales, unless one hears them told with rum and wenches.

"I like my drinks old and my women young". These were his first words when he showed up in a tavern of Botany Bay, almost daring the Royal Navy hidden throughout the seedy establishment to lock him up. Some say he was asking for at least one fight, but his temperament demanded at least three or four. Nonetheless, he sailed from Australia soon, and before long found his way into the war-torn towns of the Old World.

"I have a great respect for all the dead in the New World, but none for the living". Such was all he said to the friar who urged him against taking a commission to fight in the Caribbean. Yet there was always a strange sort of chivalry about him, a breed of honor whose blood is never shared nor spilled, birthing only those heroes who are the son of an angel's affair with a devil. Flynn claimed to be no less than the descendent of Robin Hood, the legendary outlaw who balanced the scales of justice in England centuries before him.

"The world expects me to be a pirate, and a true gentleman never lets the world down". After a half-decade of fighting for the French against the English and later the English against the French, a pirate of mythical pedigree was known to the rest of the world, his name the toast of the Caribbean.

"I intend to live the first half of my life. I do not care about the second half". So chronicled the same friar from years before when off-loaded into Port Royal, shortly before Flynn sacked the town. He became an unpredictable man, a buccaneer who fought pirates just as much as Royal Navy vessels. And though many questioned his sanity and tried in vain to guess how much sand was left to fall in Fate's hourglass, Flynn defied them all, living a life so rich it is remembered to this day.

"It isn't what they say about you . . . it's what they whisper that counts". His men knew that he'd hid treasures throughout the world, but knowing his love for jest, of Flynn's love of mirth at the cost of the world's pride, nobody sought them, feeling they'd just find clues which were being laid for an eventual hoard to be secured in his homeland, back in the south of Pacific. Or, perhaps nobody made an attempt at Flynn's buried chests because nobody could find them, fearing to get too close to a man who seemed intuitive of all other men's thoughts, and met the slightest approach whose closed mouth contained an utterance of curiosity about his wealth with a sharp eye that slashed the thoughts like the belly of the man who ever dared speak.

"It's the world against us, and us against the world". So he said to his crew. And though Flynn never did wrong by his loyal men, they wondered if he secretly meant that he was against the world alone, crew included. For in his later years, after he'd hidden enough gold and other treasures, after he'd achieved the pinnacle of his chosen career of piracy, he dared enter the uncharted waters of that second half of his life, and he defied the world to take him. He injected citrus with all manner of ill drink so he could have more than his ration. He'd court the daughter of every governor he visited, if only for a single night. And, he died young, barely past the age of fifty.

Peter Flynn left a legacy of adventure which few have approached, and those who have done as much with sword, cannon and command have yet to equal his infamy. Or find his treasure. It is the popular belief that Flynn's hoard was part of the reason for Fletcher Christian's mutiny aboard the H.M.S. Bounty, that Christian eventually found it, for he was none other than the direct descendant of Peter Flynn himself.

ACCOUNTS OF THE OPEN SEAS



THE ARCTIC OCEAN: The north, the frozen sea of legend, is the end of maps and the threshold of the supernatural world. Only the bravest men dare sail there. Very few ever return. Those who have tell strange tales indeed.

The northern passage: Sailors, scholars and men of science believe there is a route connecting the two great oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific. If such a passage exists, the discovery of it would make a man rich with money and legend, for he would be able to offer the world, or only those he chooses, a way to circumvent the long traderroute around the Americas. However, all who have sought this route have never found it. Most have never returned. In the seas and mountains of ice they turn back, ever with a substantial loss of crew.

Heaven's pirate: If the great Sir Francis Drake was the Queen's Pirate, God has done her one better. Some captains claim to have seen a strange vessel, much like an English frigate in design, one that is often mistaken for the legendary ghost ship Flying Dutchman, but one which fires only upon enemies of the Vatican of the time. Sailors are satisfied by the notion that she's a privateer employed by the Almighty, crewed either by angels on account or by devils paying penance. Either way, men cross themselves when they see her, just in case the flag they fly has gone to war with the church and they have yet to have earthly news of it.

The secret city: Those who have ventured off the northern border of all maps claim to have seen not just the legendary green flash, that signal when the dead have returned to the world of the living, but to have seen it daily, and even more astonishing lights yet—great curtains of every color extending all the way from the sea to the heavens. Most are under the belief that these are the glow of a secret city. Dismissing ancient viking legends of a bridge to the gods, sensible men know that such light is and only could be created by angels, giving light to a lost civilization as yet undiscovered by all the rest of the world. Like Atlantis at sea, Shangri-La on land or Valhalla in myth, this secret city is the sole reason many endure the hardships of a voyage to the far north, hoping to see it for themselves

one day. Amongst all accounts the city has yet no name, proof to most that it's just a sailor's yarn, a way to buttress their fear of venturing off the map by way of imagining a heavenly port where they can rest and resupply. And yet, a few ships have come back from these waters with nearly as many provisions as they entered them in, defying the days spent there. Is there such a city? And is it a close secret of pirates and other adventurers? Is time itself frozen up there, like the seas trapped as eternal ice?

THE ANTARCTIC OCEAN: The far south is still lost to legend. Few venture there, already having a passage south of the Americas or Africa, and given damage enough by the storms of their straights. To seek further south would be madness. Yet men are mad, and so a few tales have reached the world of what lies beyond the maps where to civilized men only the dribbling spills of ink and blood splattered from fights have yet gone.

The lost land: A Turkish Admiral within the early Sixteenth Century, one Piri Rais, compiled a map which showed the coastline of a lost land, one so vast it was comparable to Europe. Some believe it to be no less than the legendary Atlantis. Yet all who have sought it have found naught but ice, and if there was a land such as the map shows, it has been lost forever. Some speculate that temples may yet rise above the ice, and tunnels beneath them may lead to cities under the ice, but so far no one has claimed to have found them.

The Seventh Gate: More commonly named as the 'farthest gate' by pirate lore, the few charts which can mark it normally name it the Seventh Gate. It is a route which supposedly leads to the forbidden lands of legend, including the world of the dead, different eras and ages of the past, and even to Davey Jones' Locker. However, as one wise pirate once said, "It ain't gettin' to the land of the dead that's the problem . . . it's gettin' back . . ."



Bill Cutlass, The Pirate Rover

*My name's Bill Cutlass, bold and free,
I came into the world by piracy,
And while I can steer a craft at sea,
I'll be a pirate rover.*

*For trade the merchant sails abroad,
For gold he dares the ocean's flood,
But I gain all by steel and blood,
Like a gallant pirate rover.*

*I've roved all seas through heat and cold,
And many prizes taken and sold,
And when I've spent out all my gold,
Again I'm a pirate rover.*

*There's many a maiden proud and grave,
I've captured on the briny wave,
And on some island made her the slave
Of Bill, the pirate rover.*

*Yet when I find poor mortals wrecked,
I risk my life, their own to protect,
For shipwreck lads will find respect
In Bill, the pirate rover.*

*I've stood in many a deck fight grim,
Where pirates on their blood did swim,
But ne'er could foes cut hair or a limb
From Bill, the pirate rover.*

*They watch for me by land and wave,
To ship me into a rope and a grave,
They ne'er shall grab Bill Cutlass, brave,
The gallant pirate rover.*

*They sing of me in pub and den,
They write of me with quill and pen,
But fame shall never fence me in,
The famous pirate rover.*

*I'm e'er hidden in midnight's blue,
And I'm e'er off the map 'tis true,
I could be standing veiled before you,
The elusive pirate rover.*

*My name's Bill Cutlass, bold and free,
I live well in the world by piracy,
And while I can steer a craft at sea,
I'll remain a pirate rover.*



Fog

By: Carl Sandburg

*The fog comes
on little cat feet.*

*It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then, moves on.*



The Haunted Gallows

*Heave to, heave to, and hoist the colours,
Turn the ship to the gale beface, give
leave to, those hoisted aloft, and
burn the fires so that they may see
that while in limbo,
between earth and sea,
caught in the gallows
they're souls are still free*

*Heave to, heave to, and bow in rev'rence,
burn the ship or the bale-fire race, shall
grieve to, those hoisted aloft, and they'll
see the fires as false and ourselves will
join them in limbo,
between wave and hill,
caught in the gallows
and burning in Hell*



The Demon Of The Sea

By: William Histed

*Furl your sails through the pleasant gale
And helmsman steer her right,
"Hoist the death flag," a pirate cries,
"There's a vessel hove in sight."*

*Run out the guns! In haste bear down!
From us she must not slip!
Cheer, lads, cheer, for we know no fear
On board this demon ship.*

*My men are brave, no man or knave
Has as noble a band as I,
And at my nod fear naught nor God,
And even Fate defy.*

*Then huzza for a life of war and strife,
Oh the pirate's life for me!
My barque shall ride the foaming tide,
For I am the demon of the sea!*

*Two ships of war sailed from afar,
And proudly roamed the sea,
To take me tried, but I defied;
There's none can conquer me.*

*Then two men o' war were fitted out,
By Edward, England's King,
"Go bring," he said, "alive or dead,
That pirate captain bring."*

*But his pride I shook, his ships I took,
And I sunk them 'neath the wave,
Six hundred ten of Edward's men
Met with a watery grave.*

*And yon ship too, we'll make her rue
When first my barque she saw,
For by her rig she seems to be
A British man-o'-war.*

*"Give her a broadside!" the pirate cried,
"Give them a pirate's fare!
Fire red-hot balls and destroy them all,
And blow them into the air!"*

*Two ships engaged in equal rage,
In dreadful murderous scene,
But the die was cast for a ball at last
struck her magazine.*

*Now one and all did stand appalled,
And seemed in great despair,
For the pirate captain and all his crew
Was blown into the air.*

*No more will he ride the foaming tide,
No more a dread he'll be;
For the pirate's dead and the ocean's red
With the Demon of the Sea.*



The Sailor's Grave

By: Eliza Cook

*Our barque was out, far out from land,
When the fairest of our gallant band
Grew sadly pale, and waned away
Like the twilight of an autumn day.
We watched him through long hours of pain;
But our cares were lost, our hopes in vain;
Death brought for him no coward alarm,
For he smiled as he died on a messmate's arm.*

*He had no costly winding sheet,
But we placed a round shot at his feet;
And he slept in his hammock as safe and sound
As a king in his lawn shroud, marble-bound.
We proudly decked his funeral vest
With the English flag upon his breast:
We gave him that as the badge of the brave,
And then he was fit for his sailor's grave.*

*Our voices broke, our hearts turned weak,
Hot tears were seen on the brownest cheek
And a quiver played on the lips of pride,
As we lowered him down the ship's dark side.
A plunge, a splash, and our task was o'er;
The billows rolled as they rolled before;
But many a rude prayer hallowed the wave
That closed above the sailor's grave.*



The Buccaneer

By: John Masefield

*We are far from sight
of the harbor lights,
Of the sea-ports whence we came,
But the old sea calls
and the cold wind bites,
And our hearts are turned to flame.*

*And merry and rich
is the goodly gear
We'll win upon the tossing sea,
A silken gown for
my dainty dear,
And a gold doubloon for me.*

*It's the old old road
and the old old quest
Of the cut-throat sons of Cain,
South by west
and a quarter west,
And hey for the Spanish Main.*

*There's a sea-way somewhere
where all day long
Is the hushed susurrus of the sea,
The mewing of the skuas,
and the sailor's song,
And the wind's cry calling me.*

*There's a haven somewhere
where the quiet of the bay
Is troubled with the shifting tide,
Where the gulls are flying,
crying in the bright white spray,
And the tan-sailed schooners ride.*

*The toppling rollers at
the harbor mouth
Are spattering the bows with foam,
And the anchor's catted,
and she's heading for the south
With her topsails sheeted home.*



The Sea Child

By: Eliza Cook

*He crawls to the cliff and plays on a brink
Where every eye but his own would shrink,
No music he hears but the billow's noise,
And shells and weeds
 are his only toys.
No lullaby can the mother find
To sing him to rest like the moaning wind;
And the louder it wails
 and the fiercer it sweeps,
The deeper he breathes
 and the sounder he sleeps.*

*And now his wandering feet can reach
The rugged tracks of the desolate beach;
Creeping about like a Triton imp,
To find the haunts
 of the crab and shrimp.
He clings, with none to guide or help,
To the furthest ridge of slippery kelp;
And his bold heart glows
 while he stands and mocks
The seamews cry
 on the jutting rocks.*

*Few years have wan'd and now he stands
Bareheaded on the shelving sands.
A boat is moor'd, but his young hands cope
Right well with
 twisted cable rope;
He frees the craft, she kisses the tide;
The boy has climb'd her beaten side:
She drifts, she floats,
 he shouts with glee;
His soul hath claim'd
 its right on the sea.*

*'Tis vain to tell him the howling breath
Rides over the waters with wreck and death:
He'll say there's more of fear and pain
On the plague-ridden earth
 than the storm-lash'd main.
'Twould be as wise to spend thy power
In trying to lure the bee from the flower,
The lark from the sky,
 or the worm from the grave,
As in weaning the
 Sea-Child from the wave.*



Spanish Waters

By: John Masefield

*We anchored at Los Muertos
when the dipping sun was red,
we left her half-a-mile to sea,
to west of Nigger Head;
and before the mist was on the Cay,
before the day was done,
we were all ashore at Muertos
with the gold that we had won.*

*We bore it through the marshes
in a half-score battered chest,
sinking, in the sucking quagmires
to the sunburn on our breasts,
heaving over tree-trunks, gasping,
damning at the flies and heat,
longing for a long drink, out of silver,
in the ship's cool lazareet.*

*There's a surf breaks on Los Muertos,
and it never stops to roar,
and it's there we came to anchor,
and it's there we went ashore,
where the blue lagoon is silent
amid snags of rotting trees,
dropping like the clothes of corpses
cast up by the seas.*

*The moon came white and ghostly
as we laid the treasure down,
there was gear there'd make a beggarman
as rich as Lima town,
copper charms and silver trinkets
from the chests of Spanish crews,
gold doubloons and double moydores,
louis d'ors and ortagues.*

*Clumsy yellow-metal earrings
from the Indians of Brazil,
uncut emeralds out of Rio,
bezoar stones from Guayaquil,
silver, in the crude and fashioned
pots of old Arica bronze,
jewels from the bones of Incas
desecrated by the Dons.*

*We smoothed the place with mattocks,
and we took and blazed the tree,
which marks yon where the gear is hid
that none will ever see,
and we laid aboard the ship again,
and south away we steers,
through the loud surf of Los Muertos
which is beating in my ears.*



Pirate Of The Isles

*I command
a band of sturdy men
Of pirates bold and free,
No laws I own, my ship is my throne,
My kingdom is on the sea.
My flag flies red
at my royal masthead
And at my foes I smile,
No quarter I show wheresoever I go
For soon the prize we will take in tow.*

*For my men I have tried,
my barque is my pride,
I am the pirate of the isles.*

*I love to sail
in a pleasant gale,
On the wide and raging sea,
With a prize in view we will heave her to
And haul her under our lee.
Then we will give three cheers
and for home we will steer
While fortune on us smiles,
For they who dare cross that famed Le Ross
Unto his flag they will strike, of course.*

*Proud galleon sons
and Spanish Dons
With pride and fury burn,
They have crossed the seas for to fight with me
But never more again returned.
Then England too
doth me pursue
But at her threats I smile,
Her men I have slain, her ships I have taken,
I have burned and sank them in the Main.*

*At length there is in sight
a ship of might,
An English man-o-war,
She hails Le Ross and stops his course
And a broadside unto her she poured.
The pirate
he returned the fire
And proudly he did smile,
But a fatal ball soon caused him to fall
And loud for quarters his men did call.*

*In the briny deep
he is laid to sleep,
Once the pirate of the isles.*



The Ballad Of John Silver

By: John Masefield

*We were schooner rigged and rakish,
with a long and lissome hull,
and we flew the pretty colors
of the crossbones and the skull;
we'd a big black Jolly Roger
flapping grimly at the fore,
and we sailed the Spanish Water
in the happy days of yore.*

*We'd a long brass gun amidships,
like a well-conducted ship,
we had each a brace of pistols
and a cutlass at the hip;
it's a point which tells against us,
and a fact to be deplored,
but we chased the goodly merchantmen
and laid their ships aboard.*

*Then the dead men fouled the scuppers
and the wounded filled the chains,
And the paintwork all was spatter-dashed
with other people's brains,
She was boarded, she was looted,
she was scuttled till she sank,
and the pale survivors left us
by the medium of the plank.*

*O! Then it was (while standing
by the taffrail on the poop),
we could hear the drowning folk lament
the absent chicken coop;
then, having washed the blood away,
we'd little else to do
than to dance a quiet hornpipe
as the old salts taught us to.*

*O! The fiddle on the foc's'le,
and the slapping naked soles,
and the genial 'Down the middle, Jake,
and curtsey when she rolls!'
with the silver seas around us
and the pale moon overhead,
and the look-out not a'looking
and his pipebowl glowing red.*

*Ah! The pig-tailed, quidding pirates
and the pretty pranks we played,
All have since been put a stop to
by the naughty Board of Trade;
The schooners and the merry crews
are laid away to rest,
A little south of sunset
in the islands of the blest.*



Black Bart Roberts

*Roberts made the fatal choice
and took the Devil's part,
there was malice in his keen dark eyes
and murder in his heart.
A Captain bold would lay the course
for these curse'd Sons of Cain,
for Satan sailed aboard their ship
and Black Bart was his name.*



Meeting At Night

By: Robert Browning

*The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.*

*Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And the blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Then the two hearts beating each to each!*