

BLOOD SEA

THE CRIMSON ABYSS



A SCARRED LANDS SOURCEBOOK
FOR 5E ROLEPLAYING

BLOOD SEA

THE CRIMSON ABYSS



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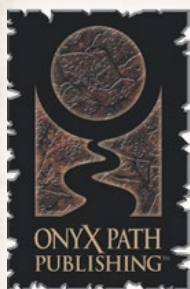
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Chapter One: A Pirate's Life

Danger is found not only below the waters but also sailing upon them. Adventure, too, takes voyage under the flags of pirates and privateers. Few locales in the Scarred Lands can boast more cutthroats and scurvy dogs than the Blood Sea. Herein is background on these foolhardy adventurers who ply a most risky trade.

Pirate Life

Many reasons exist why a person might choose the life of a pirate, but most revolve around three elements: wealth, freedom, and adventure. Above all else is the promise of treasure. A successful pirate can amass a breathtaking amount of riches in their lifetime. Average folk may find themselves drawn to piracy out of desperation: A fisherman may be forced into smuggling and piracy if their catch has become tainted, an enlisted seaman in a country's navy may find themselves out of work in wake of a seaborne

monsoon, a soldier may seek to escape the endless Calastian campaigns, or a Redeemed may find themselves exiled from their village due to unwarranted suspicion. Any of these is enough reason for a person with the right knowledge and opportunity to become a pirate.

One also gains freedom in being a pirate. On land, an individual is beholden to the laws and rulers of their homelands, which may prove historically oppressive or unfair. Piracy promises many a better life, the chance to leave country behind and become independent.

Many crews choose their captains, preferring to have a say in their own futures.

Finally, some seek to escape the drudgery of an ordinary life by taking up piracy. Youth who grew up in small villages raised on tales of adventure may find themselves at port. Bards seeking inspiration for new ballads take to the waters, and thrill seekers yearn for the ultimate risk by roaming the Blood Sea.

Life at Sea

Despite the romantic view of piracy, life aboard a ship is rarely exciting or even pleasurable. Most often, day-to-day life is laborious and lacking. The common pirate wears one outfit, perhaps a jacket or canvas coat over tunic and breeches, until it is rags. Rarely are shoes worn aboard a ship. Caps and scarves keep the sun from beating down on head and neck. Finer clothes are saved for going into port to carouse and spend shares of loot.

As for all sailors, a pirate's day involves more routine maintenance of the ship than sighting prey or hoarding treasure. Pirate ships are often overcrowded, and those without the benefit of magic stink from refuse, dank wood, and generally poor hygiene. Disease is always a risk under such conditions, especially should the food become rotten or infested with vermin. When the lookout finally spots another ship's sail or land, all aboard become rapt with attention. Another ship means escape from the boredom of sailing; land means fresh provisions and the chance to spend some coin or explore an unknown shore.

Sometimes a pirate crew is hired out by parties that wish to avoid more honest channels. The ship might smuggle arms to a beleaguered nation, carry a hold of questionable cargo, or be the only crew brave (or greedy) enough to venture into uncharted territories.

Life on Land

After successful plundering, a pirate crew needs to return to a safe port. On occasion the ship must be refitted, the rigging mended, and the hull scraped of barnacles, especially in the Blood Sea, where letting such a task wait can be deadly. Fresh water and foodstuffs need to be either found or purchased. However, pirates long at sea mostly look forward coming ashore to spend their loot and carouse. Taverns, brothels, and gambling dens flourish with activity when a crew lands at port. Local port merchants can expect to profit on the sudden wealth a pirate crew can bring, and often raise their prices for the occasion; locals are wise to avoid such establishments until the feisty sailors leave.

As the industry of piracy booms, settlements specially catered to their trade have sprung up across the Blood Sea. Tucked away on remote islands and archipelagos, these ports thrive off the gold brought them by crews who wish to avoid the laws of large coastal settlements.

Bloodport

Perhaps the most infamous of pirate port locales is the settlement of Bloodport, located at the base of a semi-dormant volcano in the Heartsblood Archipelago. Every sailor worth

Pirate Code of Honor

Each pirate crew operates under a Code of Honor composed of articles specific to their own company. Knowledge of the code by an outsider may impress a pirate (allowing characters to roll with advantage on Persuasion checks). Below are examples of common articles you might consider when building your own code:

The Articles of Piracy

Article 1: Every crewmember shall obey command; the captain shall have one full share and a half in all prizes. The first mate, quartermaster, and boatswain shall each have one and a quarter share.

Article 2: If any crewmember shall offer to run away or keep any secret from the crew, they shall be marooned with one bottle of water and one small blade.

Article 3: If any crewmember shall steal anything in the crew, or food, to the value of a gold coin, he shall be marooned or hung.

Article 4: If a crewmember strikes another, while these articles are in force, they shall receive Manawe's Law, 30 stripes on the bare back.

Article 5: If a crewmember does not keep their arms clean, fit for an engagement, or neglects their business, they shall be cut off from their share, and suffer such other punishment as the captain and crew thinks fit.

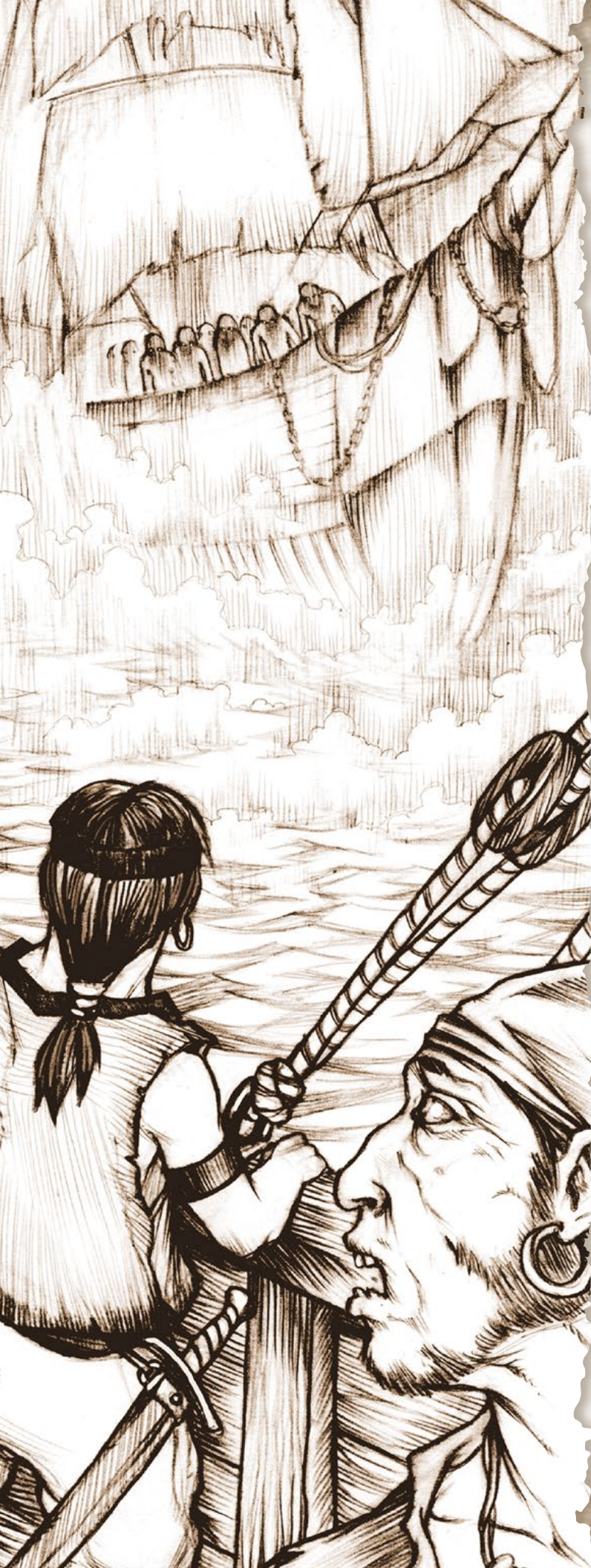
their salt carries a story of drunken debauchery from an evening spent at Bloodport.

The town offers safety from authorities as well as access to markets where anything can be bought and sold.

Settlements like Bloodport serve as the beginning to many adventures upon the Blood Sea, as well as journey's end.

The Rich Rewards

The wealth that can be gained through piracy is staggering and can be counted not only in pieces of precious metal, but in jewelry and precious stones, though frequently the booty from looted merchant ships might be fine linens and clothes, rare spices, dyes, foodstuffs, liquor, art objects, and even alchemical equipment. Because the type of goods a ship might carry varies widely by merchant house and country of origin, many pirates are picky when deciding whether or not to attack a vessel, as they figure out if the booty is worth the risk and damage of battle. A good captain quickly becomes familiar with their prey and establishes a network of informants to keep tabs on what a targeted ship might bear.



Only a desperate pirate crew, long at sea without any success, dares to attack the first ship that comes within spyglass view.

The crew, of course, yearns for its fair share of the plunder. Most pirate codes say loot is divided by shares, with certain high-ranking positions (captain, mate, helmsman) earning additional shares. Treasure that cannot be easily split among the crew, such as luxury items or jewels, is taken by trusted individuals to be sold at port.

Pirates and Their ilk

Not all pirates who prey on passing ships are the same. Some are sailing brigands, while others ply their trade for king and country. A few crave only the thrill of battle and bloodshed, while others seek to enslave the defeated. A few of the more prevalent sorts of pirate are detailed below.

Privateers

Not all pirates are outlaws. A privateer is a pirate who by commission (often a document called a letter of marque) from a kingdom is authorized to seize or destroy the merchant vessels of another nation. In the Scarred Lands, Calastia issues the most commissions to privateers, though nearly every sizable nation or city-state has one or two privateer ships working for it. The rationale is to weaken the enemy by interrupting shipping routes.

This “legitimized” piracy is not without its risks, as any privateer captured by an enemy nation could be charged and prosecuted for piracy. However, the gains are also significant. While the sponsoring government is entitled to the lion’s share of any plunder, the privateer and their crew are better equipped than most pirates and are still given a share in the loot. Privateers are often charged with tracking down and defeating unaligned pirate vessels. Because of this, anyone sailing under a letter of marque suffers disadvantage on Persuasion checks while interacting with other pirates and those who base their livelihood on their trade. Privateers are rarely a welcome sight in popular port towns.

Searovers

While most pirates seek wealth and adventure on the open seas, a small few take more delight in chasing ships like prey intent on slaughter. The treasures they seek are the cries of pain and fear as they strike down any who stand in their sights, be they merchant vessels, ships of war from other nations, or even other pirate crews. These lot are referred to as “searovers” and are universally despised. The surest way to insult a respectful pirate or privateer is to accuse them of being a “rover.” It is not uncommon to find titanspawn races aboard these vessels such as bugbears, sutak, and other general outcasts. These odd bands are bound by a love of bloodshed and rarely mutiny unless the captain proves themselves too weak to keep them in hand.

In port towns, searovers are tolerated. Most merchants care little for them; traders rarely expect any goods of value from their hulls, while tavern owners worry that the tempers of rovers pose a risk to their establishments.

Slavers

Certain pirates specialize in taking ships not for their cargoes but for their crews. These slavers are cruel and oppressive sailors, viewing life as a commodity counted in gold. They tend to be lawful evil in alignment and have most of their dealings with nations of similar sentiment. They are total opportunists and prey on any vessel, as well as raiding small coastal villages and ports under cover of darkness.

Slavers frequent port far less often than their pirate kin, and usually only when hiding from enemies. A fair number of nobles and governments have high bounties out on the heads of infamous slavers, and privateers who specialize in bringing slavers to justice are some of the most lauded.

Officers and Crew

Though every pirate aboard ship must pull their weight, they indeed have roles to play and positions of note, otherwise bedlam and mutiny would reign. In this section, the most commonly encountered crew ranks are detailed along with suggestions for mechanical advantages.

Captain

Most landlubbers would be surprised to know pirate crews tend to operate as a democracy. Captains are often elected, and each crewmember is required to sign articles of conduct. The captain's authority can be questioned and, if circumstances are dire, ended by a simple majority of the crew. A good captain is aggressive but not foolhardy, relying on strength of will tempered by attention to the crew's needs to guide even the unruliest of sailors.

Mutinies occasionally occur, usually when the crew feels betrayed by their captain. When this happens, the crew elects a new leader from their number. Deposed captains may be marooned or set adrift. Some pirate captains, however, rule over a ship like victorious tyrants. These are often searovers or other pirates of evil alignment.

Consider the following mechanical advantages when creating an NPC captain:

Additional Proficiencies: In addition to the normal proficiencies granted by the Sailor Background, the captain also possesses proficiency in the Persuasion skill.

Leadership (Recharges after a short or long rest): For one minute, the captain can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll, provided it can hear and understand the

captain. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the captain is incapacitated.

Player Character Advancement

A player character may be promoted to the rank of captain over the course of the game. To receive the above advantages, a character must be voted in by a simple crew majority; the Game Master has final say over when this condition is fulfilled. Upon promotion, treat the character as having immediately gained a feat that confers the benefits of this rank.

First Mate

The first mate serves as second in command to the captain, often being given the tasks that require a trusted presence but also personal risk. These tasks often take the first mate off the ship, be it to the shore or at the head of a raiding party boarding a targeted vessel. The first mate is usually the crew member who has served the longest under the captain; they are not elected, but rather chosen directly by the captain.

Consider the following mechanical advantages when creating an NPC first mate:

Additional Proficiencies: In addition to the normal proficiencies granted by the Sailor Background, the first mate also possesses proficiency in the Persuasion skill.

Pack Tactics: The first mate has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the first mate's allies is within five feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Player Character Advancement

A player character may be promoted to the rank of first mate over the course of the game. To receive the above advantages, a character must be granted this rank by a captain; the Game Master has final say over when this condition is fulfilled. Upon promotion, treat the character as having immediately gained a feat that confers the benefits of this rank.

Quartermaster

Some of the larger pirate crews have an individual serving as the elected quartermaster. In some cases, this individual may even be considered the captain's equal. The quartermaster oversees the routine tasks aboard ship, including the distribution of food and equipment to the crew. Should the pirates capture a ship and choose to keep it, the quartermaster usually assumes the role of captain on that vessel.

Between the captain and the quartermaster, the rules of conduct are enforced. These range from how shares of loot are divided to addressing unacceptable behavior such as drinking on watch or concealing loot from the rest of the crew. The quartermaster also takes a role in settling grievances between crewmembers. Should a rule be breached, little room can be left for pity. The cat o' nine tails might be brought out

for lashes, a crewman could be tied to the mast for several days without food or water, or, in more severe punishments, they might be strung up from the spar or pushed overboard. Serious crimes are tried by a jury of the entire crew with the quartermaster acting as judge.

For crews who sail upon the Blood Sea, the quartermaster is invaluable. Much of the sea life fished directly from the waters is tainted, and well-stocked supplies are the difference between life and painful death by disease.

Consider the following mechanical advantages when creating an NPC quartermaster:

Additional Proficiencies: In addition to the normal proficiencies granted by the Sailor Background, a quartermaster also possesses proficiency in the Insight skill.

Cunning Action: On each of her turns, the quartermaster can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Player Character Advancement

A player character may be promoted to the rank of quartermaster over the course of the game. To receive the above advantages, a character must be granted this rank by a captain; the Game Master has final say over when this condition is fulfilled. Upon promotion, treat the character as having immediately gained a feat that confers the benefits of this rank.

Boatswain

The boatswain oversees the maintenance of a ship. Reporting to the captain, they supervise all deck activities, from dropping anchor to hauling sails, as well as repairs. They may have a carpenter or two under their command.

The Blood Sea is home to some of the most severe weather in all the Scarred Lands; Vicious rain, heat-fueled storms, hurricanes, and squalls constantly batter vessels, making the services of a skilled boatswain indispensable.

Consider the following mechanical advantages when creating an NPC boatswain:

Additional Proficiencies: In addition to the normal proficiencies granted by the Sailor Background, the boatswain also has proficiency with Carpenter's Tools.

Player Character Advancement

A player character may be promoted to the rank of boatswain over the course of the game. To receive the above advantages, a character must be granted this rank by a captain; the Game Master has final say over when this condition is fulfilled. Upon promotion, treat the character as having immediately gained a feat that confers the benefits of this rank.

Mate

A large ship often has more than a single mate. Mates function as apprentices to the other positions while managing the sails, yards, and mooring of the ship.

The rank of mate does not grant any mechanical advantages, however those who possess this rank are considered first in matters of promotion to the other higher ranks.

Spellcaster

In a world filled with magic, having a spellcaster as part of the crew can give a ship a huge advantage in both combat and day-to-day survival. It is not uncommon to find a sorcerer, a druid, or potentially even a cleric aboard a well-outfitted crew.

The rank of spellcaster does not grant any mechanical advantages due to the huge variety of functions they may serve aboard a ship.

Other Positions

There are many additional roles that may be present in a pirate crew. A large vessel might have any of the following NPCs aboard: a ship surgeon to tend the injured (with proficiency in the Medicine skill), an artillerist to oversee weapons of war (with proficiency in Tinker's Tools), a cartographer for aiding navigation (with proficiency in Navigator's Tools), or possibly a cook to man the ship's galley (with proficiency in Cook's Utensils).

Player Character Advancement

A player character may be hired by a ship captain to fulfill any of these positions. To qualify for hiring, a character is required to have the appropriate skill proficiency.



Chapter Two: Character Classes on the Sea

A campaign centered on the adventurers as pirates or privateers can be richly exciting and challenging. Life sailing the oceans has a romance about it that never fades. The sea beckons many but rewards few — especially if that sea is the Blood Sea.

Character Classes

If the players are beginning the campaign with new characters, the GM and players should take into account the effects of character class as featured below. These guidelines can help the party build characters who play to their class strengths or go against type, whichever enriches the campaign.

Barbarian

It is not uncommon to find barbarians among pirate crews. Many searovers are barbarians, though few ever develop

the talents necessary to rise in rank and secure one of the higher positions aboard a large ship. Still, the barbarians' Constitution and brutal prowess are well suited to the demands of sailing life.

Suggested Roles: The Strength and Constitution of a barbarian would be well suited to any of the labors a mate performs daily. A well-trusted barbarian would also make a fine choice as a first mate to serve as the captain's representative in combat.

Bards

A bard aboard any sailing vessel can be a phenomenal crewmember. The wide array of skills a bard possess can help decipher maps, call upon legendary lore, or inspire a crew. Their skills at gathering information and carousing while in port can secure information about which ships to target or islands to scour for treasure. Days and nights aboard a ship

can be monotonous, and a talented performer can almost certainly secure the gratitude of a bored crew through song or showmanship.

Also, the magic of the bard is less offensive to the prejudice that many superstitious sailors harbor against arcane magic. A bard's ability to use performance to affect those around them can not only inspire courage but also overcome the tedium of laborious days at sea.

Suggested Roles: It is not unheard of for a well-loved bard to rise to the ranks of captain, though the discipline and commitment required to maintain the post may prove difficult for them over time. A bard is easily at home as a crew's resident spellcaster or perhaps even serving in some diplomatic capacity aboard a privateer vessel.

Clerics

With the harsh life at sea, the constant threat of blood fever, and danger of frequent skirmishes, a cleric is welcomed among pirates. Of course, the question of how welcome depends on alignment and which god is served.

The most common cleric found aboard any ship worships the demigoddess Manawe (see p. 23), though any cleric who reveres nature or the sea can easily find their way into a pirate crew. A cleric who reveres order or life may be hired

personnel on board a privateer ship. And of course, a cleric that prizes destruction or chaos would feel right at home with searovers.

Suggested Roles: Clerics most often fulfill the role of spellcaster in a pirate crew. On larger vessels, they could hold the position of ship medic. An agenda-driven cleric may also be interested in influencing the captain's actions by achieving the rank of first mate.

Druids

Though most druids of the Scarred Lands tie themselves to Denev, who rules over the earth, some feel the need to leave their shores and explore the watery reaches of the ocean. No one can deny the usefulness of their magic aboard a wooden ship – with one spell a druid can repair a breach in the hull, destroy an enemy vessel's mast, calm or raise the waters, and negotiate with hostile marine life.

Druids have a variety of motivations to sail the ocean surface, whether exploring newly forming volcanoes beneath the surface of the water to being interested in the magical practices of aquatic races. Druids with darker intentions may also align themselves with titan cults, hoping to find secrets upon the seas that will restore their fallen idols. One such type of druid cult is known as the Circle of the Beastmaker,



and they seek to use the blood infused in the sea to gain dominion over creation itself.

Suggested Roles: Druids rarely occupy a traditional role in a pirate crew, but they are valued as spellcasters. They may also serve as a guide to a crew intent on exploring a remote set of islands or a rarely traversed region of the Blood Sea.

Fighters

Fighters usually make up a healthy portion of any crew. Any pirate that intends to survive their profession requires at least some combat training. Taking an enemy ship, fighting natural assailants from the sea or land, and even quelling inter-crew disputes requires the talents of an able-bodied fighter. Specialized fighters like marines in service of a large countries like Calastia are common among privateer crews.

Suggested Roles: A skilled fighter can easily fit into most roles in a crew. Fighters can be daring captains, trusted first mates, wise quartermasters, skilled boatswains, or eager mates.

Monks

Monks are a rare sight aboard a pirate vessel but select individuals may take up the life of a sailor for a time. These individuals have chosen to attune themselves spiritually to the natural rhythms of the sea. A monk may take to the water searching for something, be it enlightenment, contemplation, or the fulfilment of a holy quest. Monks trained in the way of the four elements are the most commonly drawn to the sea.

An order of monks known as Waveriders originally hailed from the city-state of Rahoch, a prosperous sea port of Ghelspad. These monks have chosen to forsake monastery and temple, instead viewing the sea as their home and proving ground.

Suggested Roles: A monk's physical abilities allow them to be an extremely useful crew member aboard any vessel. Patience and wisdom combine to make monks an excellent choice for a quartermaster. Their ability to move quickly and efficiently makes them well suited to the physical demands of being a mate or simple crewmember.

Paladins

Paladins may seem ill-suited at first for pirate campaigns. Heavy armor, mounted combat, and strict principles all prove detrimental at sea. However, some of the most dedicated ship guardians and pirate-hunters are paladins who have adapted to oceanic life. Their immunity to disease offers them an edge, and their ability to heal is well respected. Their Charisma makes them exceptional leaders, particularly among the more regimented privateer crews.

Suggested Roles: A paladin's conviction and Charisma can absolutely lead to the rank of captain among a crew. Their adhesion to principle and practice also makes them a fine choice for a quartermaster.

Rangers

The many skills of the ranger class make it an excellent choice for both pirate and privateer. A ranger trained to survive on the sea is a valued source of guidance and safety to a crew. Sailors hailing from peoples that dwell on isolated islands also make good candidates for this class. Their knack for being scouts and foraging can help secure supplies. Ranger pirates often choose the evil aquatic races as their favored enemies, while notorious searovers may opt for their own kind.

Often rangers from the tribal communities tucked upon the hundreds of islands dotting the Blood Sea will choose to join up with a passing pirate vessel.

Suggested Roles: A ranger's experience and expertise make them a likely candidate for a first mate. They can also easily adapt to the role of navigator.

Rogues

Success on the sea, which requires a skilled tongue as well as arm, and the ability to know your prey and seek its weakness, all demand great skill. The rogue's ability to master several skills and tools makes them highly valued crew members on any ship. The ability to access networks of thieves, fences, and spies is also an indispensable resource for privateer and pirate alike. As such, it is a rare ship without a rogue or two on the crew.

Suggested Roles: A proficient rogue can occupy any position aboard a ship. The most infamous pirate captains have been rogues, though their wide skill sets also perfectly suit the roles of the first mate, the quartermaster, and even the boatswain. The majority of any standard crew belongs to the rogue class.

Sorcerers

The powerful presence that sorcerers possess can either work to their advantage or cause dissent and betrayal among a ship's crew. Sailors are among the most superstitious of professions, and many may show ill will toward a sorcerer in their midst.

On rare occasions, the arcane rhythms of the Blood Sea may awaken sorcerous powers in an individual, giving rise to what is known as a "sea witch."

The folk known as illtrawlers who fish the Blood Sea for remnants of the defeated titan Kadum also develop sorcerous powers by resigning themselves to the toxic corruption of the sea.

Suggested Roles: A sorcerer's magic gifts make them a natural fit as a crew's resident spellcaster. However, it is not unheard of for a crew to rally behind a powerful individual to captain them, especially if the sorcerer draws their power from the chaos of the sky above or the waters below.

Warlocks

Warlocks are not an uncommon sight in a pirate crew. The missions and motivations of warlocks vary as widely as do their patrons, causing no single specific reason for a warlock to take to the seas. Useful magic is generally accepted and, if a warlock is bonded to a patron of the sea, a crew may even look upon them with favor.

The goddess Manawe has been known to form pacts with those she deems worthy of her gifts, and those warlocks are known across the Scarred Lands by the name “seaborn.”

Suggested Roles: A warlock’s talents may not be as obvious as the other arcane classes, allowing them to function in most roles aboard a ship. A warlock in possession of a sea-leaning pact may even find a crew willing to follow them as either a captain or a first mate.

Wizards

The learning and prestige of wizards are often at odds with pirate life, which is why they tend to belong to Privateer crews if they adventure at sea. Crews are often prejudiced against wizards for their inferior physical strength and formal education. Aboard ship, low-level wizards are expected to perform the same labors as the rest so they must work hard to prove themselves. Experienced specialist wizards may find their focused talents in demand for specific combat or raiding missions.

Suggested Roles: A wizard’s intellect and influence can make them well suited to the role of quartermaster, but they may encounter difficulty earning the trust of the crew to which they attend. In most cases, a wizard is on board a ship as a hired spellcaster or information specialist.

Adventures on the Blood Sea

The Blood Sea is massive, as is the potential for adventures upon its crimson waves. The following suggestions are included to aid GMs in crafting seaborne adventures in the Scarred Lands.

Low-Level Adventures

In beginning campaigns with low-level characters, the more realistic elements of sea life serve as a constant threat — the risk of starvation, foul conditions aboard cramped ships, and threat of virulent disease are as dangerous as any monster from the depths. This adds a bit of desperation to the campaign and motivates the characters to seek greater fortunes and better their lives.

Unlike adventures set on land, the player characters are rarely on their own while at sea. They are usually part of a larger crew, with a captain. This offers the opportunity to explore the dynamics of the crew as the GM wishes to present them. The stories at this level can focus on the crew as a

surrogate family, or as a small-but-intense political structure filled with intrigue. Antagonists at this level include weak sea monsters, the local watch in city ports, drunk warriors who start barroom brawls, and the like.

Privateer: If starting a privateer campaign, it is possible that the characters are not immediately commissioned by a government. Early adventures may focus on the party as they tackle threats to a coastal town or island village.

As they reach 3rd or 4th level they may be called into the office of a local satrap or mayor and offered a letter of marque. Courtly intrigue may be introduced, as powerful NPC allies and antagonists take an interest in the crew’s activity.

Pirate: The important thing to consider while designing a pirate campaign is questioning what motivated the characters to seek a life of piracy. Keep in mind what best serves to bond the party together as a crew.

Quick raids on small vessels provide a challenge at this point. The threat of enemy NPCs, such as merchant lords or rival pirate captains, should be introduced as background elements, serving as nebulous, lurking threats for the party to consider before acting. The danger of raiding the wrong ship — and earning a powerful enemy — hangs over the crew as they seek easy targets.

Medium-Level Adventures

By this stage in their careers, the party is less bothered by many of the hardships at sea; food and water can be conjured, repairs made by magic, and the PCs are without a doubt harder than most sailors. Though the adventurers have advanced in skill and power, the antagonists at this stage have likewise grown stronger.

Privateer: The characters can now be slowly drawn into some of the political machinations surrounding their hire. They could be dragged into petty conflicts between nobles or called into service in war. Perhaps they are sent out after a powerful pirate captain or to rescue hostages held in Bloodport. Naval encounters and battles should be more dangerous with stronger opposition.

Pirate: At this point, the characters may be considering electing one of their own as captain or quartermaster, giving them more authority over the crew with whom they sail. The rulers of nations and merchant houses begin to take notice of the characters and may send forces out to stop them. Threats that were introduced in the background at lower levels now engage the party through proxies and subordinates.

High-Level Adventures

At this level of campaign, the realistic elements of sailing are typically beneath the party’s concern. It is likely that one of the player characters holds the rank of captain aboard ship, and the party may have several vessels under their command. Antagonists hold vast power and do not hesitate to use it.

Privateer: The characters may hold rank in their nation's navy, with all the benefits and responsibilities that entails. They are the premier defense against pirates, enemy ships, and invasions from the deep. Their position entangles them directly in the political intrigue of their homeland, and some members of the party may be actively engineering their own political maneuvers and power grabs. The characters may even venture underwater to face the perils of the depths.

Pirate: As authorities on their ship(s), the characters may have to reckon with the will of their crew. Loot and plunder are only satisfying at a princely sum: ransoming nobles, recovering a secret weapon, or stealing some recent plunder from a rival captain. When adventuring inland, more exotic finds such as lost temples or strange crypts guarded by fearsome beasts are appropriate.

Class Options

This section presents new class options for characters who brave the Blood Sea.

Druid Circle: Circle of the Beastmaker

It is said the first beastmaker to unlock the secrets of the blood of Kadum heard it directly from the Father of Monsters himself. He claims the Mountainshaker charged him with the task of continuing his work — that of creating more titanspawn.

Using the blood from the seas where Kadum lies imprisoned, the druid started the work of unlocking the secrets of the blood. Beastmakers can be recognized by their eyes — dark pupils in the center of swirling pools of blood. They slip through society when need be with carefully drawn hoods, so as not to be recognized in hostile territory. To be a beastmaker is to be drawn into the lure of the titan's power. Many have gone mad or died for the power the blood contains.

Only the most skilled can use the blood, and woe be unto those who foolishly try to master it.

Blood Frenzy

When you choose this circle at 2nd level, you gain the ability to heat your blood to the boiling point, entering a murderous frenzy and gaining monstrous strength and durability. While in this state, you lose all sense of self-preservation, caring only to rip enemies asunder.

On your turn you can enter a frenzy as a bonus action.

While frenzied you gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws
- You have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage

Your frenzy lasts for one minute. It ends early if you are knocked unconscious. You may enter a frenzy a number of times per long rest equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum one).



Poison Blood

When you choose this circle at 2nd level, your blood is thoroughly infused with the blood of the titan Kadum. You become immune to the poisoned condition and gain resistance to poison damage.

Twisted Summoning

Starting at 6th level, when you enter frenzy, you may cast the spell *conjure animals* without the need for spell components. This does not expend a spell slot. You do not need to maintain concentration on this spell while your frenzy lasts, but when the frenzy ends you must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution check in order to assume concentration on the spell. If this check fails, the spell ends.

Imbue Creature

At 10th level, you gain the ability to spontaneously transform animals summoned when using the *conjure animals* spell. Summoned creatures may gain one of the following special traits for the duration of the spell:

Fangs: The summoned animal(s) sprout fangs. These grant the creature an extra attack when they take the attack action. This bite attack deals 1d4 + Strength modifier piercing damage.

Seaworthy: The creature gains the ability to breathe water as if it were air and gains a swim speed equal to its movement speed.

Flight: The creature gains a flight speed equal to its movement speed.

Natural Armor: The creature(s) gains a +1 to AC from natural armor.

Magic Resistance: The creature has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magic effects.

Maker Mastery

At 14th level, your ability to spontaneously transform the animals you summon using the *conjure animals* spell grows more powerful. Creatures you summon may now gain two special traits for the duration of the spell. In addition, when you cast *conjure animals*, you grow claws and fangs for the duration of the spell. These are natural weapons with which you are proficient. Your bite attack deals 1d4 + Strength modifier piercing damage and your claw attack deals 1d6 + Strength modifier slashing damage.

Sorcerous Origin: Illtrawler

Lurking where the waters of the Blood Sea lap the coastlines and shores are the illtrawlers, miscreants who turn their backs on the trappings of civilization to throw out their nets and lines and haul in clots of Kadum's blood. Illtrawlers consume the gobs of Kadum's gore called cruor, a process which begins to transform them.

Trawling

Anyone can attempt to trawl or net the coagulated lumps of Kadum's gore from the waters of the Blood Sea. To succeed, they must spend at least one hour and make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. Illtrawlers are more skilled in this and have advantage on the roll. If successful, the character brings in 1d4 clots that he may choose to store or devour. Cruor does not last long after being taken from the water. A clot loses its potency in one week's time.

As they master their craft, hauling in more and more of the titan's gore, an illtrawler becomes more tainted, even animalistic. While some of these villains seek dominion over their territory, many of them develop an almost single-minded existence: Every waking hour is spent fishing for bloody gobbets or devouring their catch raw and eventually falling into fitful sleeps dreaming of the titan.

Bloody Constitution

At 1st level your cruor addiction begins to grant you special powers. Your hit-point maximum increases by 10 and you gain an additional two hit points with every level. You also gain resistance to poison damage due to the toxic nature of your consumption.

Blood Mutant

Starting at 1st level, you partake in cruor on a regular basis, and doing so makes you less appealing to others. You have disadvantage on all Charisma checks when interacting with non-titanspawn.

Bestial Visage

At 6th level, you begin to physically transform as a symptom of consumption. Over a period of days, your features and digits come to resemble those of a coastal or sea predator (perhaps an otter or seal, or maybe an albatross or heron). You gain a bite attack and are considered proficient with this natural weapon. This attack deals (1d4 + Strength modifier) piercing damage. You also gain a swim speed equal to your movement speed.

Bad Blood

When you reach 14th level in this class, you can use your blood taint to harm others; you learn the *contagion* spell, which doesn't count against your number of sorcerer spells known. In addition, you can cast it by spending 2 sorcery points or by expending a spell slot.

Crimson Avatar

Starting at 18th level, you can spend 6 sorcery points to unlock your blood's full potential.

You exude a poisonous aura to a distance of 30 ft. Each hostile creature that starts its turn in this aura must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the aura ends.

The aura persists for one minute or until you lose concentration. It ends early if you are incapacitated, if you die, or if you dismiss it as a bonus action.

Sorcerous Origin: Sea Witch

Master of wind and wave, the sea witch is an invaluable crewmember for any ship that travels the blood-soaked seas of the Scarred Lands. These spellcasters have long been known for their dedication to protecting their ship and crew at any cost. They are trained not only to command the elements of the sea, but also to summon and control its beasts.

Sea witches draw on an innate connection to the waters of Scarn. Arcane knowledge is irrelevant for the sea witch, only extensive time spent at sea awakens the sea witch to the power that sings within the motion of the waves and the silence of the deeps.

Sea witches tend to rapidly rise to positions of power on any ship on which they find themselves. In fact, a ship without a sea witch as part of its crew is at a severe disadvantage, especially on some of the Scarred Lands' more dangerous waterways. Fleets led by sea witches often control key trade routes. This control gives them a near monopoly on certain commodities, such as jade or rare spices. As a result, sea witches gain reputations as master merchants, as well as effective spellcasters. Sea witches can be of any alignment and religious background. Older sea witches might retire to isolated islands, which they guard fiercely, though it is far more common for them to go down with their ship.

Bond with Vessel

Starting at 1st level, when casting any spell with a personal range, you can target the vessel to which you are bound.

To bond to a ship or boat, you must perform a ritual that requires one day for every 25 feet (or less) of length of the ship. You must be in contact with the target ship for the duration of the ritual. You may eat or drink during the bonding but may not engage in combat, other spellcasting, or even animated conversation. You may be bonded to only one vessel at a time but may change the bond by performing the ritual for another ship.

Expanded Spell List

When choosing your spells known, these spells are added to the sorcerer spell list for you.

SPELL LEVEL	SPELLS
Cantrip	<i>resistance</i>
1st Level	<i>create or destroy water</i>
2nd Level	<i>acid arrow</i>
3rd Level	<i>call lightning</i>
4th Level	<i>control water</i>
5th Level	<i>scrying</i>
6th Level	<i>wind walk</i>
7th Level	<i>mirage arcane</i>
8th Level	<i>control weather</i>
9th Level	<i>storm of vengeance</i>

Aquatic Wild Shape

Starting at 6th level, you can use your action to magically assume the shape of an aquatic beast that you have seen before. You can use this feature twice. You regain expended uses when you finish a short rest or long rest.

Your sorcerer level determines the beasts you can transform into, as shown in the below table.

BEAST SHAPES

6th Level	Max CR ½
10th Level	Max CR 1

You can stay in a beast shape for a number of hours equal to half your sorcerer level (rounded down). You then revert to your normal form unless you expend another use of this feature. You can revert to your normal form earlier by using a bonus action on your turn. You automatically revert if you fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or die.

While you are transformed, the following rules apply:

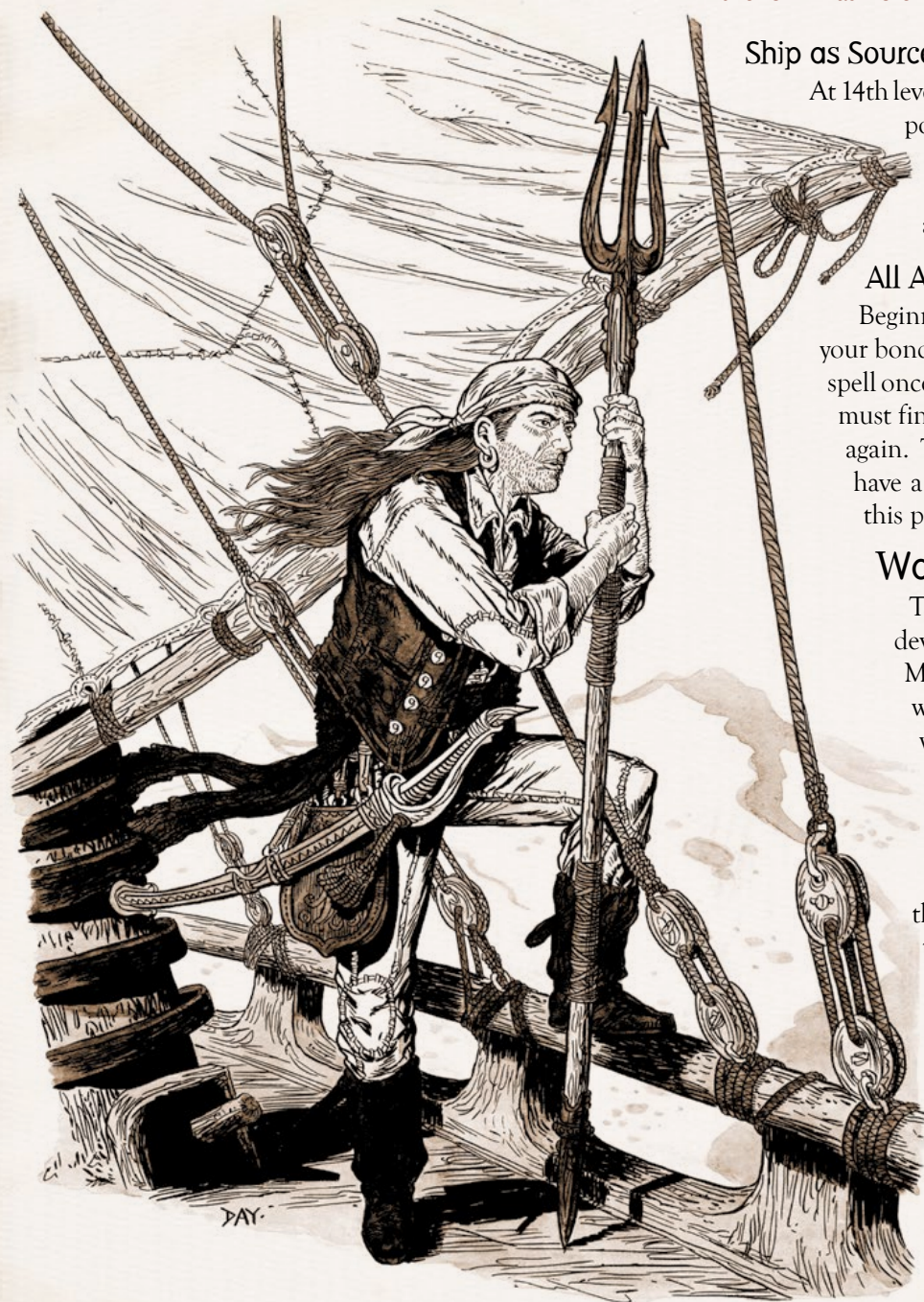
- Your character's statistics are replaced by the statistics of the beast, but you retain your alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. You also retain all of your skill and saving-throw proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the creature. If the creature has the same proficiency as you and the bonus in its stat block is higher than yours, use the creature's bonus instead of yours. If the creature has any legendary or lair actions, you can't use them.
- When you transform, you assume the beast's hit points and hit dice. When you revert to your normal form, you return to the number of hp you had before you transformed. However, if you revert as a result of dropping to 0 hit points, any excess damage carries over to your normal form. For example, if you take 10 damage in animal form and have only 1 hit point left, you revert and take 9 damage. As long as the excess

damage doesn't reduce your normal form to 0 hp, you aren't knocked unconscious.

- You can't cast spells, and your ability to speak or take any action that requires hands is limited to the capabilities of your beast form. Transforming doesn't break your concentration on a spell you've already cast, however, or prevent you from taking actions that are part of a spell, such as *call lightning*, that you've already cast.
- You retain the benefit of any features from your class, race, or other source and can use them if the new form is physically

capable of doing so. However, you can't use any of your special senses, such as darkvision, unless your new form also has that sense.

- You choose whether your equipment falls to the ground in your space, merges into your new form, or is worn by it. Worn equipment functions as normal, but the GM decides whether it is practical for the new form to wear a piece of equipment, based on the creature's shape and size. Your equipment doesn't change size or shape to match the new form, and any equipment that the new form can't wear must either fall to the ground or merge with it. Equipment that merges with the form has no effect until you leave the form.



Ship as Source

At 14th level, you may reduce the cost of sorcery points required to create a spell slot. While casting on the deck of your bonded ship all spell slot level costs are reduced by 1 sorcery point.

All Aboard

Beginning at 18th level, you can return to your bonded ship as per the *teleportation circle* spell once without expending a spell slot. You must finish a long rest before you can do so again. The bonded ship is considered to have a permanent teleportation circle for this purpose.

Warlock Patron: Seaborn

The first seaborn were merfolk who devoted their lives to the service of Manawe. As people from the surface world began exploring the goddess' watery realm using their wooden ships, the merfolk spread the faith of the Mother of Oceans to sailors and explorers.

Seaborn remain rare to most of the Scarred Lands, as they concern themselves with the world's seas rather than the masses of land. They involve themselves in politics only when it affects the waters: naval wars and blockades, magical and unnatural accidents and incidents (such as the Blood Monsoon), and the thwarting of piracy. A seaborn is blessed by Manawe with abilities that allow them to act both above and below the waves. Like the goddess,

these individuals understand that many sea beasts serve roles in the proper cycles of the seas. It is the aberrations created by foul magic and titan's blood that anger them and have no deserving place in the oceans.

Expanded Spell List

Your patron is the goddess Manawe, Mother of Oceans. Manawe empowers her chosen with powers to defend the seas.

SPELL LEVEL SPELLS

1st Level	<i>fog cloud, thunderwave</i>
2nd Level	<i>gust of wind, locate animals or plants</i>
3rd Level	<i>call lightning, sleet storm</i>
4th Level	<i>control water, freedom of movement</i>
5th Level	<i>commune with nature, conjure elemental</i>

Transformation

Starting at 1st level, you are transformed by your pact. You gain a swim speed equal to your land speed and gain the ability to breathe air as if it was water.

Voice of the Waters

At 6th level, you can cast *speak with animals* at will. You also learn the Aquan Language. You gain advantage on Persuasion checks when dealing with aquatic races.

Manawe

Titles: Mother of Oceans

Manawe is a demigoddess widely worshipped by the good and neutral aquatic races. Merfolk, kua-toa, and sailors of the Blood Sea all pay homage to her.

Manawe herself embodies the capricious of the ocean; one moment she can be generous and ensure bountiful catch, the next malevolent and drown those who dare cross her waters. The goddess may extend powers to those worshippers who seek to fight unnatural corruption in her oceans.

Ocean's Blessing

At 10th level, you gain further benefits from the goddess' protection. You receive a +1 bonus to armor class through natural armor, which stacks with any light or medium armor you wear. In addition, you gain resistance to cold damage.

Elemental Guardian

At 14th level, Manawe offers the seaborne the protection of a water elemental. You may cast the *conjure elemental* spell once per long rest to summon a water elemental. This spell does not use a spell slot and does not require components.



Chapter Three: Notorious Pirates

The pirates of the Blood Sea are the most vicious and dangerous of their ilk anywhere. This section covers some of the more notorious pirate crews your adventurers might encounter.

Empire of the Sea

Formal Name: Empire of the Sea

Base of Operations: The settlement of Resolution on the island of Roh Ahnon serves as the home port of the Empire. Resolution is protected by a wooden palisade and shelters more than 300 men, women and children, though rarely half that number are present at any one time.

Area of Influence: The Empire has claims to territory of the Toe Islands, the coastlands around the city of Mithril, the Northern Perimeter, and south past Hedrad. The Empire's ships also frequently visit the Heartsblood Archipelago, often to trade with Bloodport.

Leader: "Empress" Kariosa Nephantaros

Dominant Population: Human

Primary Alignment: Most of the Empire pirates are chaotic neutral in alignment. A few crewmembers are neutral evil, but none holds any position of real power.

Signs and Symbols: The Empire flies a flag with a white dagger dripping a single drop of red blood on a black background.

Vessels: The Empire currently possesses a fleet of 10 ships. Half of these are single-masted cutters, fast and shallow-bottomed, holding crews of 30-50 individuals. The cutters usually prowl the mainland's coast, traveling as far south as Hedrad. The other ships are larger vessels, including one three-masted frigate named the *Telling Scar*, that Nephantaros personally captains. The *Scar* is impressively armed with more than a dozen heavy ballista and a small catapult to throw alchemist's fire.

Allies: The Empire has no real allies. Rival merchant houses to Asuras tried to extend relations with Nephantaros, but such attempts are always fruitless.

Enemies: House Asuras, bounty hunters, rival pirates

The impressive pirate fleet known as the Empire of the Sea has recently risen to infamy under the leadership of the “Empress” Kariosa Nephantaros. Many pirate vessels have rallied behind the Empire’s flag and scour the seas with brutal efficiency.

The Empire rose from humble origins. Once known as the Blood Shark band and led by the bastard son of a petty Calastian noble, a year of poor spoils under the drunken leadership of their captain led to the crew functioning on the verge of mutiny for several months. When the band mistakenly waylaid a simple passenger ship, the captain took out his frustration by attacking a woman aboard, Kariosa Nephantaros. She quickly dispatched him with a concealed dagger. The crew was thankful they had been released from such a dismal captain and were impressed with Kariosa’s skill. They welcomed her to their crew and in a matter of months she was elected captain.

Nephantaros renamed the band the Empire of the Sea and set about plundering the surrounding territories. She proceeded to train her crew with a near-military zeal. Early dissenters were marooned on dangerous, uncharted islands, a method that soon evolved into a traditional test for new recruits. Should someone survive the hazards of the wild, they are welcomed into the Empire.

Nephantaros detests those who use their wealth to oppress others, and so targets only the grandest vessels of merchant fleets aiming to deprive haughty nobles of their luxuries. She has a particular fondness for targeting the vessels of House Asuras. Some among the crew are troubled by this tendency, fearing the repercussions of targeting such a powerful foe. Nephantaros is rumored to have massive caches of pilfered treasures buried across the islands of the Blood Sea.

One of the main reasons for the Empire’s success is Nephantaros’ talent for inspiring her crew. Even though the Empire is now a fleet of ships, each sailing under its own captain, every one of the pirates respects the authority and judgment of the “Empress of the Sea.” After almost a decade of successful campaigns against the merchant houses, her crew has enjoyed much wealth.

Notable Personages

Kariosa Nephantaros (*human assassin, CN*)

Nephantaros is the self-crowned Empress of Pirates. She is a single-minded woman, constantly reminded of her mission by the livid scar that mars one side of her face — a mark that was forced on her when she was a young girl working in a noblemen’s court. When lost in thought or facing a difficult decision, Nephantaros can be observed lightly stroking the

length of her scar. She has refused any magical or alchemical treatments for the mark.

Brene Sarl (*human druid, CN*)

One of Nephantaros’ most trusted captains is Brene Sarl. Brene hails from a small fishing village along the Celestial Shelf and for years kept his arcane talents a secret for fear of being labeled a titanspawn. Brene joined the Empire when they rescued his ship from a blood zombie attack. He was instantly smitten by the distant-but-beautiful Empress and worked to rise in the ranks to be close to her. He knows about her past, though, and has not dared express his feelings.

The Splintered Skull

Formal Name: The Splintered Skill

Base of Operations: When not out raiding, the Splintered Skull rests in a small cove on the western side of Algos. This area is rumored to be cursed by the other pirates who use the island, and so their base remains undisturbed.

Area of Influence: These rovers prowl the coasts of eastern Ghelspad, especially along the Northern Perimeter and the Cordrada Corridor. Til-Tal has recently grown bored with these targets and has considered sending the Skulls out to slaughter villages farther south.

Leader: Til-Tal

Dominant Population: Orc

Primary Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Signs and Symbols: A human skull cleaved in twain by an axe blade with the two halves facing outward on a field of black.

Vessels: The Splintered Skull sails an unnamed sloop with a single mast and a blood-red sail. The crew is roughly 20 strong, smaller than most pirate bands, but what they lack in numbers they make up for in brute strength. Most of the crew is made up of half- and full-blooded orcs. The sloop is perfect for traveling along the coast and outrunning larger ships. Though they lack a ballista, the rovers have ready access to stores of javelins.

Allies: The Splintered Skull has no need of allies. They seek neither wealth nor power; their treasure is carnage. Because of this, most other pirate bands avoid them.

Enemies: Due to their chaotic nature, most pirate crews avoid the Skulls if at all possible.

Long ago, a tortured creature sought the isolation of the mist shrouded island of Algos. There, Til-Tal, as he came to call himself, suffered the constant wracking pain in silence, growing bitterer as the years passed. In time, pirates intruded upon the island. Under the cover of night, Til-Tal crept out of his caverns and observed the newcomers. They were a motley

lot, thieves and rogues who sought to hide among the many coves that made up the island's shore. These brutal visitors brought prisoners to ransom and torment. Til-Tal watched, his attention drawn to the spectacle of blood before him. Intrigued, the creature decided to stay his hand and didn't destroy the sailors. The pirates returned to the island several times before Til-Tal decided to act. Under an assumed guise as a wild-haired barbarian, Til-Tal approached the leader of the searovers, an orc named Krid, and claimed to be sent by the god Vangal to foster their thirst for mayhem. Til-Tal killed three of Krid's crew before the orcs were impressed enough to listen.

Now, under the direction of Til-Tal, the Splintered Skull raids passing ships and small fishing communities. They leave few alive, but make sure at least one victim survives to spread the news of their crimes. So far, the rovers have no clue they are being manipulated by Til-Tal, or to what end the grotesque mage twists their fate.

Notable Personages

Til-Tal (*elf archmage, NE*)

Til-Tal is a very old creature who suffers perpetual misery and torment. He has realized that the only relief he can find is through distraction, and so he entertains himself with the searovers. In his disguise, the

sundered

mage appears as a six-foot-four human dressed in bloody rags, with wild, shaggy red hair and beard.

Captain Krid (*orc gladiator, CE*)

The crew of the Splintered Skull is led by Captain Krid, a savage orc who proudly never washes away any of the gore of battle. Krid rose to chieftain of a tribe from the Plains of Lede but was defeated in combat by a rival tribe. The orc fled to the coast, where he briefly fell in with a sea hag on the North Shore who taught him seamanship. Eventually, he tired of her plotting and murdered her. Soon he gathered together other orcs who shared his penchant for violence, viewing piracy as a new means to a bloody end.

Cerdenal's Lot (The Night Takers)

Formal Name: The Night Takers

Base of Operations: Cerdenal's crew maintains two homes, one a deep cover on the southern reaches of Algos and the other in Bloodport.

Area of Influence: The Night Takers steal only from deep-water vessels, so their range covers much of the Blood Sea between Ghelspad and Termana.

Leader: Cerdenal

Dominant Population: Varied

Primary Alignment: Most of Cerdenal's crew are chaotic neutral; he avoids hiring evil-minded pirates, wishing to minimize direct violence whenever possible.

Signs and Symbols: The symbol of the Night Takers is an anchor, often with a closed eye hovering above it. Most of the crew have the mark tattooed on their upper arms as a sign of allegiance. The *Fugue* runs no flags whatsoever.

Vessels: The Night Takers sail a large galleon, the *Fugue*, that could easily fit three times the number of crewmen currently aboard (a little more than 25). Cerdenal claims to have taken the ship himself from a sleeping captain and set the old crew adrift in life boats without ever disturbing their sleep. The ship is fitted with several skiffs that can be lowered and used to sneak up on larger ships.

Allies: Cerdenal has many friends in Bloodport,



including Captain Trask of the Meet of Dogs. His raids are something of a mystery and thus many in the pirate town seek to know more of him by offering gifts and favors. Even more impressive (but not widely known), Cerdenal has made a pact with one of the faerie folk. It is whispered that the mage promised the fey great feasting on the dreams of sailors in return for aid. Whether this has already occurred or will happen in the future remains to be seen.

Enemies: Bounty hunters, every coastal government on the Blood Sea.

One of the newest pirate bands to occupy the Blood Sea, Cerdenal's Lot is a small crew that specializes in surreptitiously stealing goods from ships in the dark rather than engaging in battle, a tactic that has given them their moniker.

They are led by a man named Cerdenal, a quiet, unassuming soul who has some talent for both magic and thievery. Cerdenal claims that he was marooned for several years on the Drifting Isle, a highly mysterious island of legend. This tale is bolstered by the otherworldly air he possesses.

Cerdenal assembled his band in Bloodport, seeking green sailors, and promising large shares of loot with minimal risk. At first some were doubters, but from the first midnight raids on anchored vessels, not a drop of the crew's blood has been spilled and they have continued to return to port loaded with treasure.

Due to their reputation for low-risk, high-reward raids, many seek out the Night Takers eager to join their crew. Cerdenal politely rebuffs most who approach him, as he fears that a large crew may become unwieldy and violence might erupt on one of their raids.

Notable Personages

Cerdenal (*human mage, TN*)

Cerdenal rarely talks about his past. He appears to be in his late 40s, with dark black hair graying at the temples and a thick, bushy mustache. He dresses in simple, nondescript clothing and often stares into space as if daydreaming. He fights only to defend himself.

League of Hydros

Formal Name: League of Hydros

Base of Operations: The League is based out of the southern end of Thalien. Because of its unique ships, the members do not lair in coves or shallows but on a cliffside that offers protection from attack.

Area of Influence: They have begun to expand their range of piracy deeper and deeper to the waters southwest of Thalien.

Leader: Hyd Rostenth

Dominant Population: Varied

Primary Alignment: Most League pirates are neutral but there are a few evil members among them.

Signs and Symbols: The League's vessels are easily spotted by looking up. Their flags are quite extraordinary and sometimes shift colors and shapes depending on the powers contained within.

Vessels: The League's ships are long, slender vessels of strange design. The ships seem best suited to oars but have only long enchanted pennants, almost like long flags that catch the wind. The League has a total of five flying vessels, the largest being the *Sea Drake*. The pirates are armed with heavy crossbows and rain down bolts on targets below. For large prey, they open a hatch on the ship's bottom and drop casks of oil. Some of the pennants also convey other powers, such as invisibility, to the ship. Wizards and other arcanists have offered large rewards for one of these pennants, but nothing has been forthcoming.

Allies: The League has had little dealings with others outside Bloodport. This also has kept the mystery behind them and their ships. When members visit Bloodport, it is to trade and sell and not to carouse with non-Leaguers.

Enemies: Merchant ships carrying arcane goods are targeted without any apparent pattern. The League has not revealed their true intentions, so all well-established merchants braving the Blood Sea watch the skies in fear.

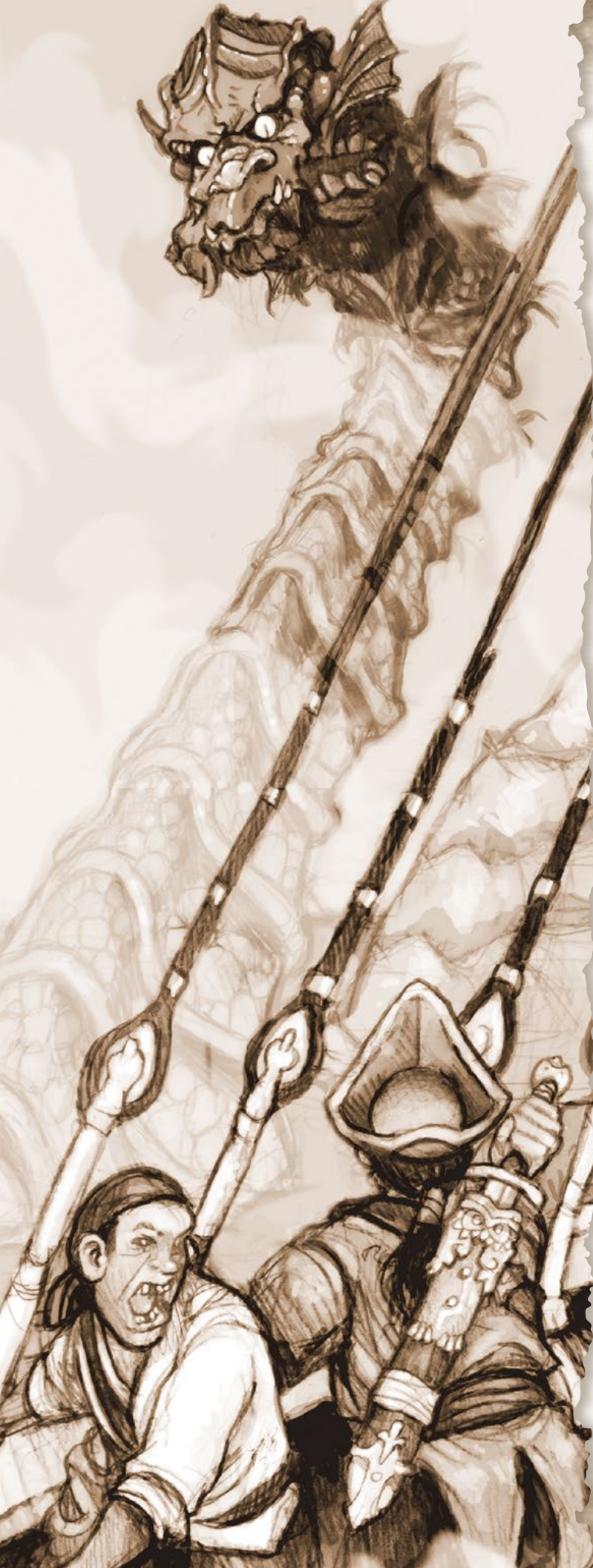
The League of Hydros is a mysterious band of pirates with enchanted ships that fly rather than sail the waters. Catching sight of their longboats casting shadows over the waves spells certain doom. The power behind this mysterious fleet of skyships remains a mystery.

Diviners have been able to discern only that who or whatever is the source of the flying ships is a most potent wielder of arcane energies. While these pirates do plunder gold, jewels, and other riches, they seem especially keen on attacking vessels bearing any forms of magic treasures.

Notable Personages

Hyd Rostenth, Master of the League
(*human cult fanatic, CE*)

Hyd Rostenth is the source of this new threat. Nearly every magical society and cabal of wizards know him as a man who is utterly ruthless in his efforts to return the dark titan Mesos to the world. He is wanted in Darakeene and Vesh, and Queen Geleeda of Calastia has also offered a bounty for his capture. After securing his magical pennant artifacts, he gathered a league of ambitious pirates and offered them use of his new ships. In return, the captains turn over whatever magical treasures they loot to him. He hoards the artifacts, hoping to gain enough power to one day resurrect the titan Mesos.



The Crimson Tide

Formal Name: The Tide

Base of Operations: Thesk holes up on a small, unnamed island on the edge of the Heartsblood Archipelago that is often not shown on charts. This island is little more than a rocky outcropping. The *Tide* prowls the entire Blood Sea for prey.

Area of Influence: Thesk stays within the boundaries of the Blood Sea. Rumors say the *Crimson Tide* cannot sail on pure sea water. This has caused some vessels to race for the edge of the Blood Sea when sighting the Tide in the hopes of escaping with both cargo and their lives intact.

Leader: Captain Erlick “Bloody Yardarm” Thesk

Dominant Population: Varied, though no half-orcs are permitted in the crew.

Primary Alignment: Thoroughly evil. Thesk himself is chaotic evil and his crew varies from lawful to chaotic, but all are evil.

Signs and Symbols: Thesk never flies a flag, preferring to adorn his ship with victims. All his crew are expected to drink the tainted waters of the Blood Sea regularly, which leaves its mark on them in such disfigurements as fingers permanently stained crimson, formation of bloody cysts on the skin, and uneven musculature.

Vessels: Thesk’s ship, the *Crimson Tide*, is an old naval vessel brought to the surface through a pact with an unknown fiend; it supposedly cannot be sunk by mortal means. The *Tide* can hold well over 70 men, all of them cutthroats and scalawags, and is armed with a stern ballista and a fore catapult that can hurl vats of alchemist’s fire or flaming pitch. Hanging from both masts is a variety of lines with nooses and metal hooks from which Thesk shows off his grisly work.

Allies: Other rogues who aspire to be Blood Sea pirates often seek out Thesk as a mentor of sorts. Such an apprenticeship is foolhardy, as Thesk’s tests of loyalty are deadly.

Enemies: Virtually all civilized folk, but the *Crimson Tide* enjoys exceptional animosity from the Japhinian Dynasty.

The twisted man known as Captain Erlick “Bloody Yardarm” Thesk was not always the most infamous pirate stalking the Blood Sea. In his youth, he was merely a thug working for the Japhinian Dynasts in the city of Quelsk. He botched an extortion job and was punished by being sold into slavery as an oarsman. Thesk organized an uprising while aboard ship and slew the crew; his fellow slaves elected him captain of the vessel. He sought revenge against his former employers and since then, Thesk’s notoriety has grown by leaps and bounds. He is the quintessential searover: bloodthirsty, eager for treasure and skilled at the helm as well as the blade.

Notable Personages

Captain Erlick “Bloody Yardarm” Thesk (human berserker, CE)

Thesk is an intimidating sight. His large build is covered in scars that are glimpsed underneath leather armor. His teeth are filed sharp. His nose is pierced with a fishhook. Thesk began his career wanting nothing more than revenge, plunder, and the thrill of the hunt. Having exhausted those pleasures, he now grows bored with easy victories against fat merchant vessels and is considering attacking other pirates. He has not forgotten the indignities he suffered at the hands of the Japhinian Dynasty. If he turns his attention to other pirates, he will likely begin with Dynast ships. Such conflict would doubtlessly increase bloodshed in the region and make sailing the Blood Sea even more dangerous.

Grimline (sea hag, CE)

Grimline serves as the *Tide*’s boatswain. Even hunched over, she towers above her shipmates. Her appearance betrays her fiendish heritage. She is a gangly crone with spiraling horns and crimson-colored hair that’s always damp and stringy. Her face, one side of which is scaled, is said to have sunk a thousand ships. Thesk trusts the hag like no other of his crew. Grimline was aboard the ancient ship that rose from the depths to become the Crimson Tide.

Japhinian Dynasts

Formal Name: The Japhinian Dynasty

Base of Operations: The Fortune

Area of Influence: The Toe Islands, Plains of Lede

Leader: Dumidian Fenn, Patriarch of the Japhinian Dynasts

Dominant Population: Half-orc, orc, human

Primary Alignment: Neutral evil, lawful evil. Most have a code of ethics that rewards familial piety (loyalty to family and father, both blood and Patriarch) above all else.

Signs and Symbols: An old rune used by the ancient dynasty. Beneath the rune is often a secondary mark that each sea captain adds. Some examples of these secondary markings include a skull, a curved sword, or a drop of blood.

Vessels: 18 cutters, the *Fortune* (a refitted yacht)

Allies: Scattered orc tribes, independent sorcerers and wizards, paying clients.

Enemies: Merchant houses, the Church of Manawe.

The half-orcs of the Japhinian Dynasty comprise a criminal organization that threatens trade and prosperity well past the shores

of Ghelspad. Most of the Dynasts are rogues and warriors who work both aboard ship and in urban settings. At the top of the organization is the Patriarch, who oversees all the “family” dealings and protects his “children,” resorting to violence when necessary.

The Dynasts operate on two fronts: seaborne and land based. Those at sea are traditional pirates, raiding merchant ships. These pirates operate their own vessels or sign on with other crews and influence their activities to better distract privateers and other naval authorities from the activities of the Dynasty. Many an inexperienced sea captain has discovered too late the sea witch he believed he hired was, in truth, a Japhinian spy. The Dynasty prefers to keep its nautical operations focused on the major trading lanes. The family rarely attacks small vessels unless they have uncovered a special cargo worth the effort. Instead, their contacts leak information about what each ship holds and so their attacks are coordinated, sometimes including two or more Dynast ships.

On land, the Dynasts run a complicated network of fences, launderers, and extortionists. They sell the goods their brethren have stolen at sea to unsuspecting merchants and consumers. The Dynasty holds influence in every major port through a network of spies, plants, and bribed officials. The leaders of the Dynasty do not have a headquarters other than the Patriarch’s ship, and the organization lacks any central supply source. Instead, each pirate vessel hides its identity through petty magic and slips in at dark to small ports with sympathetic traders and rogues. They purchase and steal new supplies and set sail soon after.

Notable Personages

Dumidian Fenn, Patriarch of the Japhinian Dynasts (half-orc veteran, NE)

Fenn commands attention wherever he goes. His wide girth has led many to believe he is a devotee of Gaurak, but Fenn’s allegiance is only to himself and the Dynasts. He considers the powers of gods and titans to be like the elements: useful tools in acquiring personal gain, ones that should be used only by those smart enough to avoid drowning in them.

Fenn is in his 70s, having inherited his position many years ago when his uncle was slain trying to use a slarecian device discovered in a shipwreck’s remains. Fenn is far more cautious than his predecessor. Any who wish to meet the Patriarch face to face must brave the dangers of the Blood Sea to do so. Once in his company, guests find Fenn most hospitable. Rumor has it that Telos Asuras has graced Fenn’s villa twice, two equal worshippers of avarice enjoying conversation and mocking the whimsies of youth. But beneath the congenial exterior is a temper that is fearful to see. Woe to any who anger the Patriarch, for his reach is longer than most and few can outrun his wrath.

When not at his villa in the Toe Islands, Fenn can be found sailing on the *Fortune*, a refitted and well-armed yacht from Shelzar that is pulled on gold chains by two charmed, Blood-Sea-mutated dire sharks.

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Charduni War Hulk

1 square = 10 feet

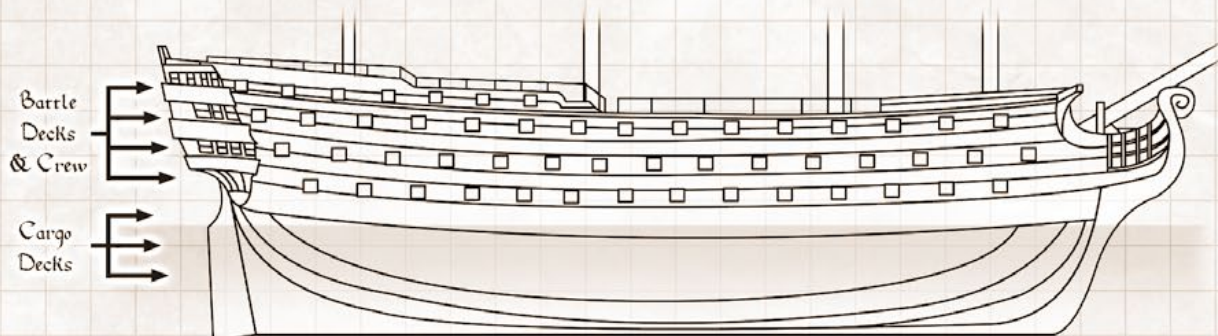
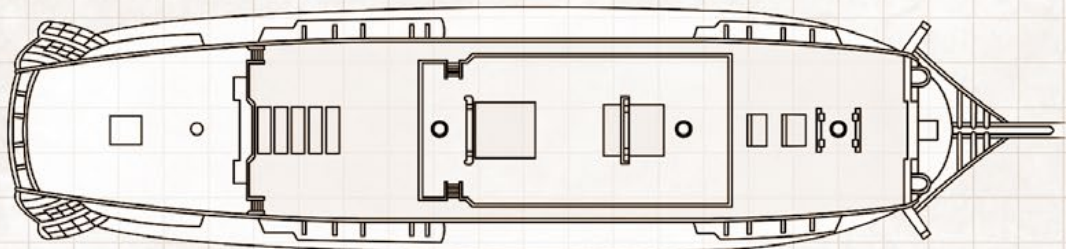
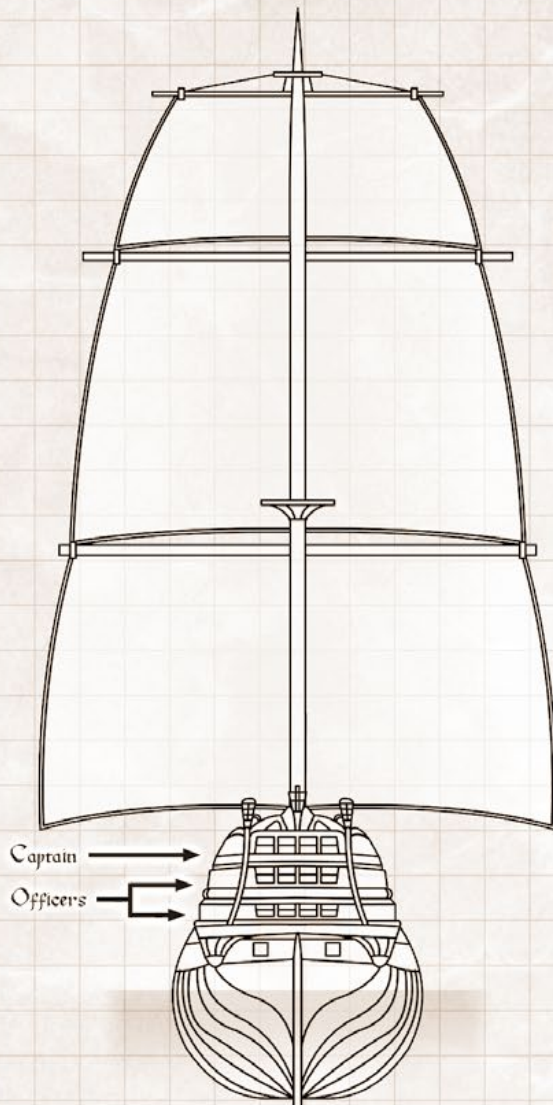
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Speed: 13 knots

Crew: 250

Passengers: 50

Cargo: 120 tons

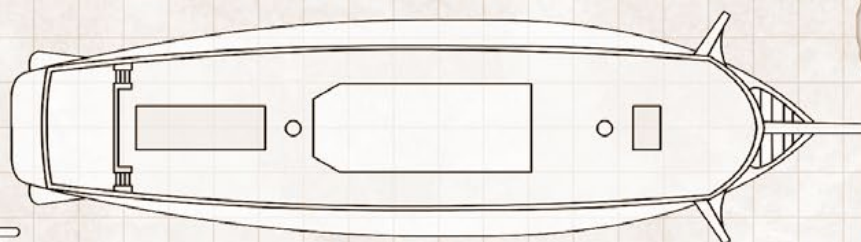




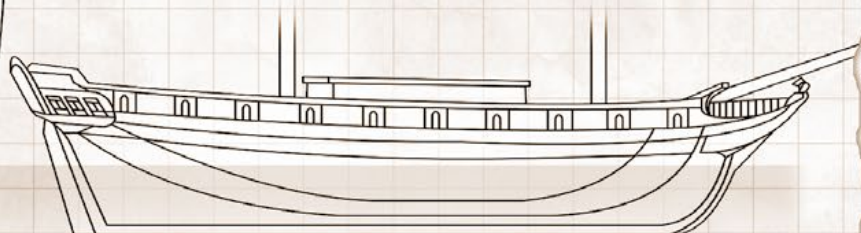
Draft: 2.5 fathoms ~ Speed: 12 Knots

Crew: 120 ~ Passengers: 50

Cargo: 100 tons



Coastal Trader

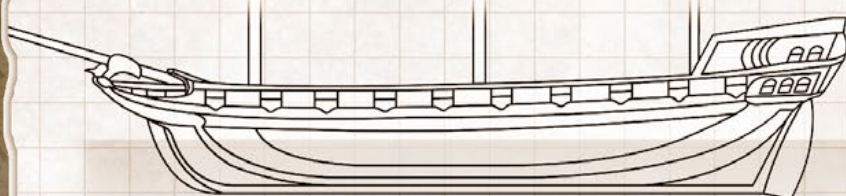
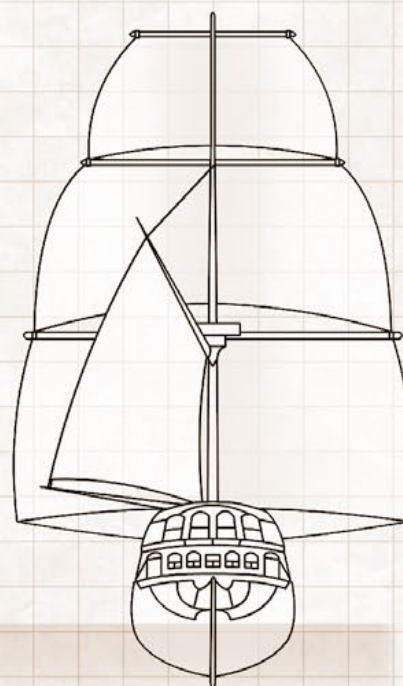
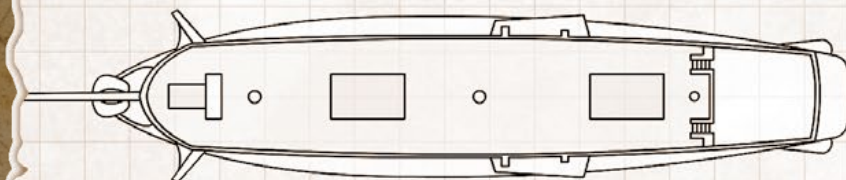


Hedradan Pirate Hunter

Draft: 2 fathoms ~ Speed: 13 Knots

Crew: 70 ~ Passengers: 20

Cargo: 80 tons



1 square = 10 feet

Blood Sea Galleon

1 square $\approx$ 10 feet

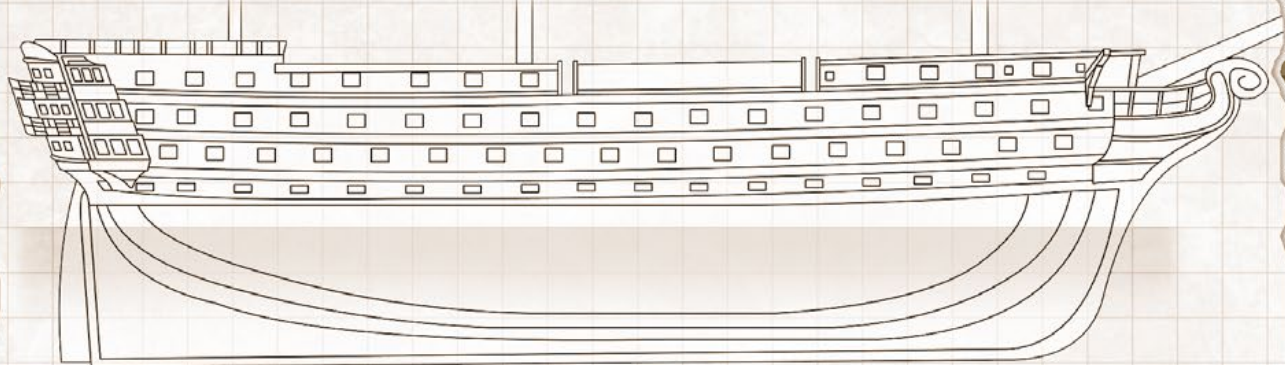
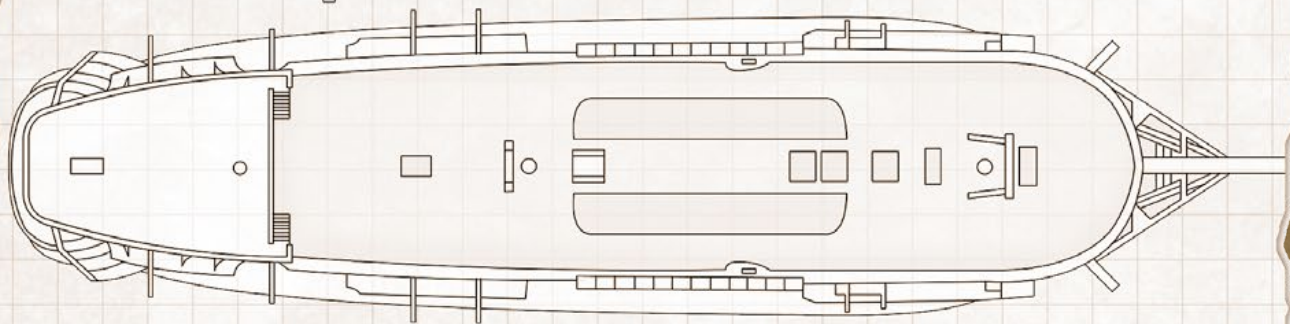
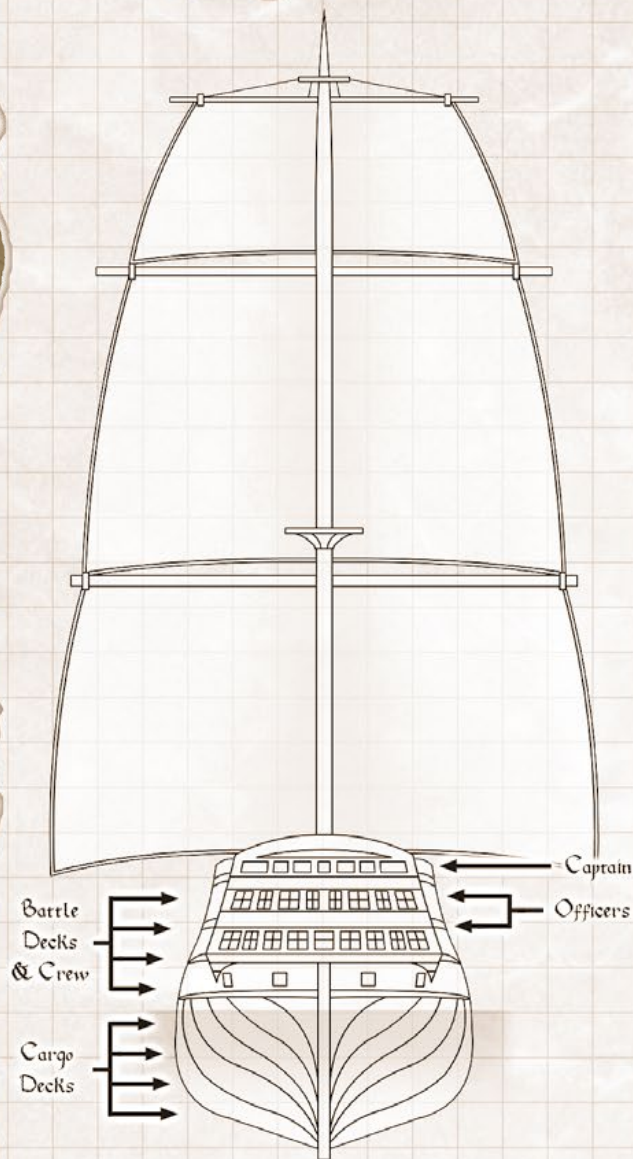
Draft: 5 fathoms

Speed: 12 Knors

Crew: 200

Passengers: 60

Cargo: 400 tons



BLOOD SEA

THE CRIMSON ABYSS

WAVES OF SCARLET

In the darkest depths of the ocean floor, off the Eastern coast of Ghel-spada, lies the bound titan Kadum. He bleeds endlessly from the hole in his chest where his heart was plucked out. This blood — the blood of the Mountainshaker, the blood of the Father of Monsters — corrupts everything that it touches.

WELCOME TO THE BLOOD SEA

This sourcebook contains information for campaigns set in and around the Blood Sea. Guidelines for playing characters of each class as pirates or privateers are presented, including new class archetypes who draw power from the crimson depths. Pirate organizations are introduced for characters to join or oppose, and additional rules allow players to assume roles on a ship's crew.

SL011

