

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]
2nd Edition



PIRATES  OF THE
FALLEN STARS 

Sample File



PIRATES OF THE FALLEN STARS

by Curtis M. Scott

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In Which the Reader Meets A Former Pirate

"Arr, yer all alike, you adventurers. You gambles on the turn of a sword or the toss of a spell; some of yers fight fer king and country, ithers of yer think of nuthin' but whar the gold fer yer next ale's a-comin' from. And you got the gall to sit here in my inn and tell me pirates is different from yerselves? HA! There's them what's heroes, and there's them what's villains. Hang around Alaghon long enough, and you'll meet 'em all, I promise yer that.

"I met plenty of 'em durin' my time on the sea. Not that I was one, mind ya, but I was in the wrong place at the right time more than once in my life. There was the time I was stowed away on the *Dragon's Claw*, and she was boarded by a crew of cutlass-swingin' madmen; and the captain was a woman! Can you believe that? A flame-haired vixen, with eyes like cornflowers and a ruby at her throat the size of a hummin'bird! All the crew jumped ship rather'n be kilt by the pirates, and I was the only one left; a striplin' of seventeen winters, no more, cowerin' in the hold behind a pile of furs. The captain found me down there, and 'offered' me passage on her ship. Well, I ask ya, what would you do? 'Course, I went with her. Showed her a thing or two, too, I did, like how to play chess . . .

"What do ya want ta know? Pirate secrets? What their coves are, and where? How this got the name 'Sea of Fallen Stars?' I c'n tell yer that, and more. I c'n tell yer how they live out there, in the Pirate Isles; how they pick their captains, even how you c'n join up if

ya want. 'Course, things is different in Dragon Reach than they are in Turmish. If yer plannin' to travel around here much, you'll be wantin' to know who likes pirates and who don't, so you'll know whose side yer on.

"I kin even tell yer about some of the most famou—er, notorious pirates on the Inner Sea. I kin tell about their ships, their crews, what makes the captains do what they do, yep, I kin tell yer all about the life o' piracy."

Jomo "the Cutlass" Shanbaeren,
retired pirate turned tavern-owner

You are about to discover how to create pirate PCs, rules for building ships, and rules for simulating naval battles. New uses of magic on the sea are here, too. There is even an introductory adventure your pirate PCs (and your non-pirate PCs) can experience to show them life on the Inner Sea.

Pirates of the Fallen Stars presumes that you're using the AD&D® 2nd Edition game rules for Weapon Proficiencies and Non-Weapon Proficiencies. Many of the rules presented in this book depend on use of the proficiencies. If you haven't been using them so far in your campaign, we highly recommend that you familiarize yourself with them and introduce them into your playing.

Here's a special note for those of you who are using this book with your first edition AD&D game instead of the new second edition: This supplement occasionally mentions chapters and headings from the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The citations are for the second edition, not the first; you'll need to locate the relevant sections in your own books.

In Which We Explore the Piratical Mentality and Lifestyle; and Wherein Are A History of Pirates of the Fallen Stars And A List of Known Organizations

What is Piracy?

In simple terms, piracy is the act of unlawfully robbing a vessel on the high seas, or the act of making a similar attack upon coastal holdings made from the sea. Within this broad definition, however, there are several sub-groups.

Pirates rob ships at sea for personal profit. Many of the pirates of the Inner Sea, including most of the most infamous pirates, fit this mold well. Such "true" pirates are unwelcome in any civilized land, and can move their ill-gotten gains only through thieves' guilds or unscrupulous intermediaries, as they cannot openly sell their booty in port.

Pirate attacks can take various forms. Some pirates steal only cargo, freeing the ship and its crew to travel on safely. Some sink the ship, offering membership to those able-bodied sailors who will accept it, and killing the rest (or freeing them at the nearest neutral or friendly port). Others murder all aboard, so that the crime goes forever unreported.

Privateers, such as the Cormyrean Freesails, raid on the high seas at the behest of one government, generally against pirates or targets owned by another government. Privateers are "legal" when within their own home waters, but are outlaw in those countries who suffer their depredations. Many countries of the Inner Sea, particularly along the Dragon and Easting Reaches, employ privateers.

Privateers raid economic targets during time of peace (often with no more than silent approval of their governments), but in war they act as a supplementary navy, engaging both economic and military targets.

Privateers typically possess a document or other sign that they are servants of their government. These documents, called letters of marque, provides privateers with legitimacy within their homelands' waters.

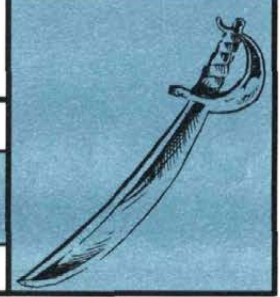
Both privateers and pirates rely heavily on seamanship and navigation to locate their targets. They often wait along sea lanes for days or even weeks at a time before locating a victim who is sufficiently close (and sufficiently slow) to catch.

Raiders, on the other hand, attack coastal villages and cities. Their raids depend upon their ability to flee to sea before significant opposition can be raised, hauling away as much treasure as they can seize. They typically rely on strong warriors aboard, rather than naval prowess, as once they have raided their only goal is to flee to safety. Raiders rarely carry letters of marque, as their targets are usually economic gain rather than military victory.

Smugglers deal in goods which are either heavily taxed or forbidden. Rather than dealing in violence, smugglers use stealth to avoid military patrols and deliver their valued contraband to its purchasers.

Most smugglers maintain legitimate shipping businesses. It helps when you need work done on your ship if you have a legal reason for owning it. Also, much smuggling is done as part of legitimate trading journeys, as some ships have false holds or secret compartments where contraband can be concealed from the customs officials.

Some countries classify smuggling as a form of piracy. The legal justification for this is that smuggling represents theft of money from the government, and thus the smugglers are thieves. In fact, however, the real problem is that many smugglers are also pirates, as it helps to solve the problems of fencing their goods.



Where Is It Practiced?

The incidence of piracy depends upon how much plunder is available. The sealanes of the northern Inner Sea, particularly those running from the Lake of Dragons (Suzail, Tezilr and Westgate) to Procampur, and from Procampur to Thesk, are commonly considered pirate-infested. (Many of these pirates are actually unacknowledged privateers, quietly fighting the economic wars which frequently arise among the city-states of the Inner Sea.) Not surprisingly, both of these sea lanes are within the reach of the fleets of the Pirate Isles.

There are other active pirate areas. Raiders either in the employ of Thay or seeking Thay's approval frequently attack the coastal cities of Aglarond. The Zulkirs of Thay occasionally send raids across the Alamber Sea into Murghom, Threskel, and Chessenta, seeking some of the an-

cient magics of these lost lands. Even so, the majority of the pirate activity is still in the north.

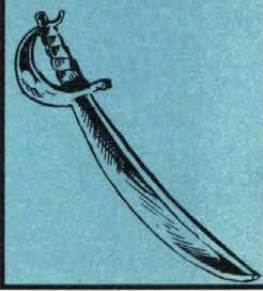
The pirates themselves come from every nation of the Inner Sea, and quite a few others that have no shore there. Almost all the pirates are human, although there are considerable numbers of half-orcs, orcs, and ogres. Elves and half-elves are rare, but most are spellcasters, as their ability to wear armor while spellcasting (thus being less vulnerable during archery attacks) is highly valued aboard.

Life Aboard

The life of a pirate is not an easy one. The trials of piracy test not only their swordsmanship, but their seamanship and endurance as well.

A typical pirate ship carries twice as many crew as does a merchant ship of similar size. This is primarily because the





pirate ship carries no cargo, but instead is designed to deliver a viciously overwhelming force to a target.

As a result, shipboard conditions tend to be crowded and unhealthy. The food tends to be of poor quality, often consisting of hard bread, pickled fish, and water or rum. True dry rations are too expensive for most pirate captains, particularly when feeding 30-40 men, so the quality of the food that is bought is low, and pirate crews must frequently return to port (every week or so) to take on new supplies or begin to suffer deprivation.

A typical watch consists of 16 hours of labor, interrupted only by a meager mid-day meal, followed by a nominal 8 hours of sleep. Ships at sea require constant maintenance to avoid decay and loss.

The traditional positions available aboard a sailing vessel of any kind include:

Captain: The captain is the overall leader for the ship. His orders are to be obeyed absolutely; disobeying the Captain is mutiny, which most pirate captains punish by swift and immediate death. Captains may be seamen themselves, or they may count on their first mate (see below) to provide this knowledge, maintaining their position through prowess as a warrior or charisma. The idea of an "owner-aboard," a captain who leads by virtue of owning the ship, does not exist in pirate groups where such distinctions as legal ownership are considered insignificant.

First Mate: The first mate is responsible for carrying out the captain's wishes. When the captain is asleep or otherwise unavailable, the first mate is in charge of the ship. While not all captains are excellent seamen, there are few first mates who do not know nearly everything about being aboard ship.

Pilot/Helmsman: Often also the first mate, the pilot is responsible for steering

the ship. Pilots are also give the orders which control the speed of the oars (for a galley) or the set of the sail (for a sailing ship).

Navigator: While the pilot's job is to steer the ship, the navigator's job is to pick the route the pilot will follow to reach the destination. Navigators should have the Navigation proficiency, and may also require special equipment such as a sextant and compass. Often, the captain is also the navigator. This reduces the chance of a mutiny at sea, as the crew is unlikely to mutiny if they cannot find their way home.

Quartermaster: The quartermaster cares for the ship's tiller, compasses, lamps, and flags. Unlike the land military, the quartermaster aboard ship is not responsible for food or other supplies. These are the responsibility of the mess steward and the boatswain.

Mess Steward (Cook): The mess steward is responsible for preparing meals, buying food, and otherwise ensuring that everyone aboard gets enough to eat and drink. As mentioned above, "enough" may not be very much, particularly on a longer voyage.

Boatswain (Bosun): The boatswain is responsible for the rigging of the ship, including the sails, oars, anchors, and ship's boats. The boatswain often has several helpers, particularly on a large ship. These are referred to as "bosun's mates."

Master Armorer: The master armorer and his men maintain and man the ship's weapons (typically ballistae and catapults), and he is responsible for providing all warriors aboard (on a pirate ship, the entire crew) with melee and missile weapons.

Lookout: The lookout occupies a position on the ship with as unrestricted a field of view as possible. On ships with a crow's nest (a seat on top of the mast), a single lookout can have a clear view completely around the ship. On larger ships, or on