

TALES OF THE BLOODY SAILS

Pirates often pick up new crewmen from the ships they defeat, but what about a ship that was lost long ago, with all hands aboard? We shall see . . .

PREPARING TO PLAY: When all are gathered to play, and the Players are prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, thus setting the stage for the adventure that is to follow.

It's a common day for a pirate—lounging on the beach and playing cards while the waves roar in the background. Still, there is an eerie feeling in the air. These shores are known to be haunted. It is only by the captain's charisma the men even set ashore here. But as the day goes on, and the light fails, and night unfurls her canvas, the men grow restless. They gather around their beachfires like the damned in Dante's Hell. No cards are to be unsheathed and no dice fall. The quiet of the night is a storm they wish to endure by reefing all sails and keeping their eyes fixed on the only light to be seen—the fire. And finally, after the night has done its worst, the campfire's reflection is raised on the horizon like a flag, and the men relax. Except . . . it is a flag, an ensign set aflame along with the blood-red sails of the vessel just beneath it. So the night ends in fury, claiming at least one ship, if not your own. One of them is able to whisper "The Bloody Sails . . . She is no less than a ghost ship. And now we're doomed to repeat all her mistakes . . ." Many of the men echo this legend.

Legends: The Bloody Sails is known in these parts and so some of the party's crew may have heard things about this ghost ship, giving them 1 roll on the following chart and no more.

Legends

Roll	Legend of the Bloody Sails
10-12	The Bloody Sails never actually sank
6-9	The main reason the Bloody Sails was so cursed is for its mistreatment of women
1-5	The crew of the Bloody Sails deserted in the night, fearful of ghosts

EVENTS AT SEA: The crew will immediately push to set sail, leaving these accursed waters, but once at sea, they will find they did not escape the ghost ship as they'd hoped. Indeed, several strange things will occur during the voyage, all of which the crew will attribute to having simply sighted the 'Bloody Sails'. Play these Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

1) Mutiny

Once at sea, the men confront the captain. Their fear has oiled the fires of rage, for they are one and all terrified at their fate, having set foot on haunted shores. They blame the captain and are now calling for his head!

If the captain is an NPC, any Player Character can stand for captain. His Experience Level is the chance he will be considered. Ultimately, at least one NPC, effectively a 'Pirate Captain', will also be considered. All contenders must fight it out, but using no weapons or any other equipment, to see who gets the command. If the current captain is already a Player Character, he can resign and live, or he can try to redeem himself by entering the same contest detailed above.

2) The ghost at the helm

As the day draws to a close, and a lazy sunset spills the blood of tomorrow across the heavens, you see a strange figure at the helm. Blinking, it vanishes, and the normal helmsman reappears, yet only for a moment. Between blinks, the man and his skeleton continually trade places, but finally all returns to normal.

The helmsman will know what happened and request to be relieved from duty. As he will claim, the ghost that was seen told him its fate: It was a laggart whose punishment was to man the helm for six days without rest, or be put to the sword—he tired out by the fourth night and, when the moon slept, he was washed overboard. Now, the party's vessel cannot avoid storms until someone completes the 6-day helming, requiring an Endurance Check each night at a cumulative -6 penalty.

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3) Unearthly fog

The ship has become mired in an accursed fog. You can't see even the end of the bowsprit. It's an eerie, quiet calm which has the whole crew on edge. The creaking of the ship alone may be enough to drive them over the edge.

Unless someone makes a Religion Skill Check, 1-12 crewmen will steal a longboat and desert the ship, preferring to take their chances on the open seas rather than be haunted by the Bloody Sails. It is a plan they will carry out at night, leaving the rest of the crew to discover the disappearance well into the morning. However, if a Player Character wants to stay up all night to watch the crew and can make an Endurance Check to do so, he shall be forced to join these deserters, or be attacked by their lot in their desperation to get away.

4) The scarlet wench

"I told you women are bad luck at sea!" says a man amidships. "They be the devil's lust! They'll draw all the demons of the deep to us..." This argument between the crew gets more heated by the moment, but you quickly realize that not one of the four men arguing are part of your crew! You've never seen any of them before in your life. Nor, apparently, has anyone else, judging by the expressions on their faces.

The 4 strange men are memories from the ill-fated Bloody Sails, ghosts, but incorporeal, and so they cannot be interacted with. But, after 1 Round, they will haul a sexy woman onto deck, bound in chains, clad all in red, and drawn up **through** the party's material deck. She will scream to be saved, and if someone has a weapon ready, they can try to break her chains with it, requiring a single hit of 10 Damage or more (no Attack Roll necessary). However, if not freed so quickly, one will have 3 Rounds to save her, but must now fight the four materializing ghosts to get a shot at her, with one chance allowed on the **Turn** immediately following when any one ghost is felled, which will cause the ghostly pirate collapse to the deck as mere bones alone (and possibly treasure). All of their statistics

are as B6, A6, E10, G11, W3, I4, C2, L1, DS 8, Survival 13, Attack at +5 using a longsword for Base Damage 10, Morale 8*, Movement Rate 140', and treasure +0*. If the scarlet wench is freed, she will smite the remaining ghosts and kiss both who saved her before dematerializing herself, which will grant them each +1 to their Charisma Scores.

5) Madman on deck!

Have each Player Character roll a single dice and add the result to their Luck Score. When reading aloud the following narrative, replace 'NAME' with that of the most unlucky one.

The mundane toil amidships is broken by one of the crew suddenly screaming bloody murder and flailing his arms wildly about. He begins to run fore and aft, hurling curses which make the very angels cringe. Finally he stops, turns to 'NAME', draws a sword, and attacks!

The mad Pirate Crewman believes the unlucky Character to be the reason they are all haunted, so he intends to kill him. All NPCs, dumbstruck by what they are witnessing, will not help either man.

6) The captain's trial

The dawn brings another fire to burn the hearts of your crew's courage—the Bloody Sails returns in lieu of the sunrise, her ragged, rotten planks sliding up alongside your vessel like the leprous lover of a nightmare. Then, her captain, dressed all in bloody crimson, challenges yours to a duel for the souls of all aboard.

The ghost will have the same statistics as the earthly captain. If the ghost wins, everyone aboard is lost. If the party's captain is an NPC, he will promote the Player Character with the best Defense Score to the captaincy. If the party's captain wins, they will get the ship of the Bloody Sails itself, a prize galleon, with treasure not with any crew.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: Having defeated the Bloody Sails, the party's captain will gain +24 to his Notoriety Score.