



STRIKE THE COLOURS

A Skull & Crossbones Story
October 5th - 8th 2026

A GAME BY ORCHID LARP
IN ASSOCIATION WITH SAILING₄ADVENTURE



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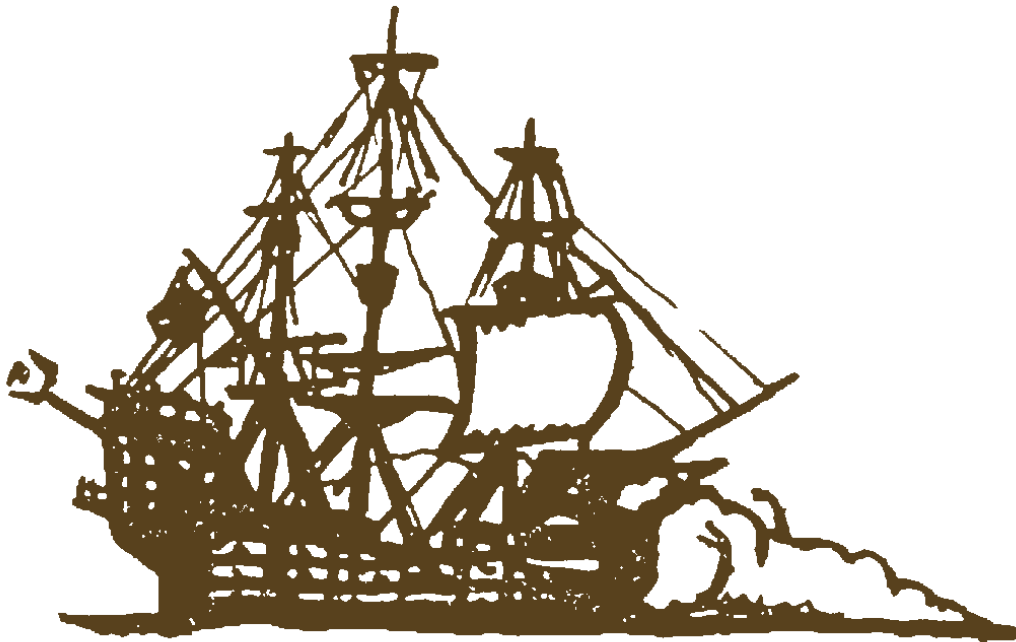
“Nothing is so inimical to piracy as peace and good government; and nothing so encouraging to it as prolonged jealousies and strife between peoples.”¹

1725

The Golden Age of Piracy is all but over. Peace in Europe and the powers of Spain, England and France have ousted the pirate threat from the Caribbean. One ship flees to its former home in the Baltic Sea. Their future looks bleak, for this is centuries since the time of the Likedeelers whose names have faded into legend.

Now predators have become prey and crewmate turns against crewmate in a struggle to make it out alive. How far are you willing to go to protect your way of life and all that you hold dear? What will win between loyalty to your crew, the call of treasure or the temptation of freedom? What meaning does life have for you if piracy is no longer possible?

Strike the Colours is a Nordic-inspired larp played on a real sailing ship on the Baltic Sea. Prepare to experience deadly adventure, explore the kinship of swashbucklers, sing shanties with salty seadogs and brace yourself for the tides of change.



¹ David K. Bjork. “Piracy in the Baltic, 1375-1398.” *Speculum* 18, no. 1 (1943): 39.



Chapter 1: Practical Information

Date: Monday 5 October – Thursday 8 October 2026

Price: 500 Euros

Location: Baltic Sea, Germany & Denmark on the traditional sailing ship Pippilotta

Starting & Ending Port: Kappeln, Germany (Am Südhafen 4, 24376 Kappeln (Schlei))

Language: English

Age limit: 18+

Participants: 28, plus organisers & off-game ship crew

Closest airport: Hamburg (Germany)

Organised by Orchid Larp in association with Sailing4Adventure

Contact information:

Website: <https://www.orchidlarp.com/strike-the-colours-2>

Email: orchidlarp@gmail.com

Discord: <https://discord.gg/3vMP48yDEg> (Participation on the Discord is not mandatory, but highly encourage to help develop character relations and group dynamics.)

Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/skullcrossboneslarp/>

Important information will be sent by email. Our main community is in the Discord (for this run specifically) but you may also like to join the Facebook group (for Skull & Crossbones in general, including past runs).

Closer to the event we will also circulate a phone number for the organisers for any last-minute emergencies.

There will be an audio version of this Player's Guide available via the website above.

You will receive a prewritten character from the organisers with relations, goals, background and ties to the plot, which will be supplemented by player-created background details. (See Characters, p. 24)

Please note that this game runs from Monday to Thursday!

Players should arrive at the ship in Kappeln between 12:00 noon and 14:00 on Monday October 5th and check in with the organisers on the ship. (We cannot guarantee access

to the ship before 12:00 noon as we will still be setting up before the game – please be patient and maybe explore the town until it is time?) Please bring your own lunch or plan to buy something in Kappeln.

If you cannot arrive before 14:00, please contact the organisers. Significantly late arrivals may not be able to board the ship until a later point as we will likely already be underway.

We will begin with mandatory briefings and workshops from approximately 15:00 on Monday October 5th and game time-in at approximately 20:00 on the same day. The game will end on the evening of Wednesday October 7th. We aim to return to Kappeln on Thursday October 8th at 15:00 latest.

Payment Deadlines and Installments

The planned payment deadlines are as follows:

Deposit (50€) or Full Payment (500€) - within a week of receiving a spot
1st Installment (225€) - May 1st
2nd Installment (225€) - July 1st

Should you require smaller instalments or have other issues with the payment, please reach out to us and we will do our best to find a solution.

However, if you are able to pay the full cost in one go, you would save us a lot of admin work and avoid us having to chase you down when the next deadline is up. So we appreciate you for doing that, if it is possible.

Cancellations and Refunds

Hopefully no-one will have to drop out, however, we know that unplanned things happen. We'd like to make this process as easy as possible for you, without putting the event at risk.

Until July 31st, you can request a full refund minus the 50€ deposit.

We will no longer be able to give refunds as of the 1st of August unless we find a replacement player. We will be maintaining a waiting list, so if you need to sell your ticket on, please contact the organisers to do so. Since the game will function best with a full cast of characters, we will consider giving spots away for a reduced price or even free closer to the event.

A few disclaimers

We are a group of private volunteers running a private event. This means that it is also at our own risk, if things do not go according to plan (e.g. financially). Therefore, we ask you to view this as a community project and assume some responsibility as well.

We will do our best to ensure a positive event for everyone, but ultimately, you are responsible for your own health and wellbeing.

We are very much at the mercy of the wind and the weather and all plans are subject to change.

In the unlikely chance that this event faces severe weather or other disruptions outside of our control, we have several options for reformatting or rescheduling the event, or worst case, cancelling. In this case, we cannot guarantee a full refund, although we will

do our very best. We will not be able to offer refunds on any travel expenses for players (e.g. flights, trains) so if you are worried, we recommend taking out your own travel insurance. In general, we also recommend making sure your own health insurance is up to date and that it also covers accidents during travel.

Since this is a private event, we retain the right to deny access to the event for any reason we find sufficient such as a breach in the Code of Conduct. In that case, the player will be informed as soon as possible.

There will be a flagging process in which the organisers can be informed about anyone potentially posing a risk to their co-players. In those cases, we will investigate and make an informed decision about how to move forward in each individual instance.

Code of Conduct

We want to be able to play on difficult themes while ensuring everyone's comfort and safety. **Therefore we do not accept discriminatory or unsafe behaviour out of game.** This includes racism, sexism, LGBTQ+-phobia, ableism or any sort of discrimination based on religious beliefs, age, physical appearance or, really, anything about a player.

We have rules and safety mechanics in place during the game. These can be found in this document and will be discussed at the workshops before the larp. **We expect every player to follow these rules at all times.**

However, people make mistakes. Sometimes we get carried away during a larp and don't think things through. Sometimes we misunderstand each other. We will also make mistakes. We want to approach each other with the **assumption of good intentions** and talk about things when things go wrong.

While you are welcome to bring alcohol for yourself, and you may drink whilst the ship is docked, we expect you to not get drunk. If we suspect you are drunk, we will ask you to sit out of the game until you sober up. **Absolutely no alcohol of any kind may be consumed while the ship is underway.**

It should go without saying that any form of out-of-game harassment and violence are absolutely not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

We operate on the basis of **enthusiastic consent** for interactions of any kind in- and out-of-game between participants (this means both players and crew), especially so for anything physical and/or sexual or romantic. An enthusiastic yes means yes, no means no, and maybe means no.

Not following this code of conduct will have consequences and can lead to someone being asked to leave the event. We all want to have fun together and leave the tears for the drama in-game. Please note that in very serious (and, we hope, incredibly unlikely) instances requiring your removal from the game you may have to find your own transportation back.

Getting to Kappeln

Kappeln is a town in Northern Germany on the banks of the Schlei, and a small distance away from the Baltic Sea. It is the home harbour of the Pippilotta, the ship on which we will be sailing. The Pippilotta should be easy to spot – just look for the large three-masted ship with a green and black hull.

The address:

Am Südhafen 4

24376 Kappeln (Schlei)

Germany

The GPS coordinates are 54.657912, 9.934951 or MW5P+46 Kappeln

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The location is accessible by public transport, although it can be a bit of an adventure. Süderbrarup is the closest station, around 10km or 10min by car. From there, take Bus 1624 to Kappeln ZOB (Central bus station), but if you don't want to wait for that you can also take a taxi (around 25€). From the central bus station, you can easily walk to the harbour (Hafen) or take Bus 3010 (just 1 stop).

Eckernförde is an alternative, around 30km away. From there, take Bus 3020 direction ZOB, Kappeln (Schlei) and get off at Hafen, Kappeln (Schlei).

DRIVING

You can also of course drive to the location using the address above. If you are driving, please consider offering a lift to other participants – we will provide channels for this via the Discord Server and possibly also the Facebook group.

You might find parking next to the ship, but if not, there is free parking within walking distance. Please be aware that the red parking area is paid parking. The free parking is the green one slightly further away.



Accessibility

The Pippilotta is a working ship with steep staircases to access the main game areas and sleeping areas. It is not suitable for participants with significant mobility issues. The work of sailing the ship is physically-demanding, but not everyone needs to be involved all the time.

There will be physical fighting using simulated weapons (swords, firearms and cannons). Joining in with the fighting is opt-in, but you will not be able to avoid seeing it completely.

We will be far away from medical facilities and pharmacies so you will need to bring any required medication with you. Harbours will usually have power, but if you have any medical devices that require power (e.g. CPAP machine) please inform the organisers before the game.

The play area is both below decks and on the deck of the ship. We are at the mercy of the weather conditions so it might be cold or rainy. We will also use some locations on land which might require a bit of walking to get to. (This will vary depending on which ports we visit.)

We plan to use special effects including lights, sounds (in particular, simulated cannonfire and cap weapons), smoke and scents. If you have any specific issues with any of these, please get in touch with the organisers. We cannot guarantee that you will not encounter any of these but we can warn you when they will be present.

We will provide an audio version of the Design Document (link on p. 4). Audio versions of character sheets will be available upon request.

If you have any further accessibility questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the organisers.

Food and drink

There will be 3 meals per day, with snacks also available, beginning with dinner on Monday and ending with lunch on Thursday. (Please arrange for your own lunch on Saturday!)

Please tell us in advance of any specific dietary requirements using the Practical Form which will be sent prior to the game.

You may of course bring your own snacks and there will always be access to water, tea and coffee.

Space on the ship is too limited for a full kitchen crew, so food preparation is a chore shared by the participants and directed by the ship's cook/s.

The Pippilotta

The Pippilotta was originally built in 1933 as a deep-sea fishing vessel and is now a 3-mast gaff schooner. Total length 43.5m, 7.1m wide, and a 3m draught. Today she operates as a training vessel teaching people how to operate traditional sailing ships, as well as being the setting for numerous larps from time-to-time!

In-game she will be known as the *Maelstrom*, the ship of Captain Kogge.

ACCOMMODATION

Sleeping quarters are shared cabins of 2-10 people with bunk beds. You will need to bring your own pillow and sleeping bag or blanket and bedsheet. Additional blankets and small cushions are available. Storage space in the cabins is limited, so please bring a squishy bag and pack as lightly as possible. The cabins are playable spaces – it's up to you all to decide if you are in-game in there or not. Sleeping will be off-game.

In the player accommodation area you will find:

- One 10 bed cabin
- One 8 bed cabin
- One 6 bed cabin
- Two 2 bed cabins

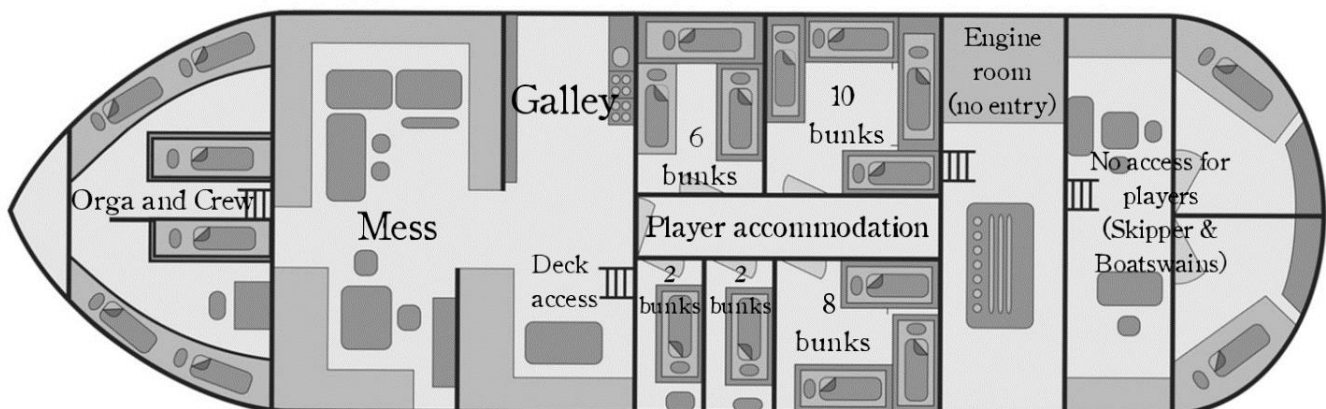
TOILETS AND SHOWERS

The ship has two non-gendered toilets on board. Since they are ship toilets, however, they are a little more sensitive than a regular toilet on land. One toilet is more temperamental and is for liquids waste only, the other is for any waste. For both toilets, you will need to avoid flushing toilet paper – there will be bins provided for this that will be emptied regularly.

We will be using the public showers in the harbours that we sail to - the organisers will communicate their location and how to operate them once the ship arrives. Most harbours should have available bathroom facilities since the game takes place during the sailing season, but there is nonetheless a small chance that they may be unexpectedly closed.

You can find out more about the Pippilotta on the website (in German):

www.pippilotta-segeln.de



Luggage and Packing List

Space in the cabins is limited and there is no way to hide your luggage. Therefore we recommend bringing something to cover modern-looking bags (e.g. cloth cover) and packing as lightly as possible. Please avoid suitcases or other rigid bags as we cannot guarantee that they will fit in the luggage storage! Best is to use some kind of squishable or soft bag e.g. a duffel bag from an army or camping shop.

Additionally, we will lend you a small (50x40cm) cream-coloured in-game bag to "hide" personal items of your character that may be searched and/or "stolen". Please leave it in an obvious and accessible position during the game, such as on your bed. If you have any personal items of your character or plot-relevant items you want to "hide" (e.g. incriminating letters, items your character has "stolen" in-game), this is the place to put them. You may only search in these bags, not in any personal luggage. Some characters may also receive props in this bag that suit their positions on the ship (e.g. compass, bosun's whistle, backstory relevant items etc.) Please return these items, and any items that you may have "stolen" at the end of the game. If something should be missing from any other bag, please inform an organiser immediately.

WHAT TO BRING FOR IN-GAME

Piratical costume. Something that fits your character and the weather. Ideally many layers and possibly a waterproof outer layer. Warm is more important than watertight, though.

A light source without open flame. We will provide some, but you may wish to have a personal LED candle or lantern.

Pen & paper, notebook or similar. These can be used as a diary aboard or to take notes in character. Maybe you just want to take tabs on card game scores?

Piratical weaponry. If you have them, bring your piratical larp-safe weapons or blackpowder weapons! (See Chapter 2 for more details)

Cup. We will have some modern ones available to use, but we encourage you to bring your own piratical-looking cups for your beverages!

In-character props. If you own a compass, telescope or epic pirate hat, bring it!

Shanties and songbooks. There will be singing and if you would like to start a shanty-off, you'd better give your shipmates something to read from!

WHAT TO BRING: OFF-GAME/GENERAL

Warm Underwear. Don't bother with period stuff, go for high tech if you can. This will make any costume better or at least more comfortable.

Pillow, sleeping bag, bed cover. Bring a nice cover or blanket to make it more atmospheric, especially during daytime. The ship has some blankets and some cushions, but we recommend that you bring your own.

Toiletries. Whatever you usually need for cleanliness. We also recommend sunscreen and lip balm since we'll be outside and it might be sunny.

Towel, flip-flops and wash bag. Showers are in the harbours, so we recommend some kind of bag to transport your stuff and flip-flops are always nice to have.

Personal ID or passport. This is required! We are crossing borders between Denmark and Germany.

Personal Medication. Whatever you need for your personal health. Don't forget to pack enough, we might not come into a harbour with a pharmacy for some days.

Watch or some kind of time-keeping device. Not required, but nice to have.

Ear plugs. Depending on the cabin you are sleeping in and your mates in that cabin, this might save you from sleepless nights.

Sea-sickness medication. If you think you might need it! Ginger in any form is also helpful.

Off-games clothes. For the workshops and the afterparty.

Powerboards or powerbanks. Power outlets are very limited on the ship and we might only have limited times with power. If some of you can bring a powerboard with multiple outlets, there is a better chance of everyone being able to keep their devices charged.

Crew & Participants

On board the ship, there will be a number of different people with different roles and functions.

Players

That's you! Everybody playing in the game - from stowaways to the Pirate Captain.

Kitchen Crew

We will have some lovely helpers in the kitchen in charge of feeding us all. Whether they play or not, they are always in charge in the galley. Feel free to help them out, even if it's not your turn!

Organisers and NPCs

We the organisers and a few other volunteers will be the NPCs (non-player characters) representing a variety of different supporting roles for the plot. Whenever one of us is wearing a different costume, please assume we are playing a different character (if in doubt, just ask if you "know" us).

Additionally, if you need guidance with character, plot, or just someone to talk to off-game, you can come and find one of the organisers.

Out-of-character crew (Skipper and Boatswains)

While you are playing the role of sailors, the "real" crew are there to make sure that everything runs smoothly and safely! The off-game captain will be referred to as the Skipper to not cause confusion with our in-game pirate Captain. The Skipper is responsible for overseeing sailing, navigation and safety. A number of Boatswains will also be on hand to direct and teach you the ropes. The word of the Skipper and Boatswains is law aboard the ship, especially when matters of safety are concerned. There are at least three people with the required licenses aboard and they will teach the necessary sailing skills.

Photographer

In addition, there will be a photographer to document the game. You can ask them to attend if you plan a dramatic scene, or talk to them if you'd prefer not to be photographed. Please be polite and mindful that they might have other tasks to do and that they need breaks too.

The Experience

ABOUT SAILING

On a sailing ship, you have all the world to explore, yet space is very limited. This makes for a very special experience indeed. Consider this an event in an area the size of a tennis court. Cabins are quite small, corridors and bulkheads narrow, staircases steep. It's an environment of unique beauty and unique challenges.

Sailing is part of the game and we would encourage you to get involved! As a participant, you are not just a passenger, but part of the crew of the ship. The boatswains are here to help you learn the basics. Teamwork is essential to complete a lot of tasks like raising the sails or rowing ashore. Please be mindful of your fellow players – it's more fun if everyone gets a go and we all work together!

On a ship, we are at the mercy of the winds and the tides, just like the sailors we're playing would have been. Sometimes that will be exciting, sometimes this can be boring or even frustrating. There will be exciting action-packed moments alongside times where not a lot happens. Plans may have to change unexpectedly. That is all part of the experience. Sometimes you may not be sure what to do, or do the wrong thing. That's ok. We are not professional sailors. You can always ask for help - the real life crew of the ship is there to help you! It won't break the larp and is also part of the experience.

Being on the ship can be surprisingly physically demanding, with the sometimes-strenuous tasks of sailing, not to mention that the weather can be colder and windier than you'd expect. Take care of yourself: make sure that you're warm enough and that you eat and drink enough. And don't forget to sit back and enjoy the view sometimes! You might see porpoises, seals or eider ducks (maybe the odd mermaid if you're *very* lucky). And there is nothing like feeling the wind in your face and hearing the crash of waves against the bow as you explore the Baltic Sea.

If you are feeling worried about seasickness, here are some tips from a friendly neighbourhood seasickness-prone organiser:

- Bring seasickness medication (you can get pills or chewing gum) and take it before you think you need it (as soon as the ship starts moving is a good time!).
- Bring snacks (candied ginger or salty crunchy snacks are the best) and keep nibbling away on them.
- Have water in a portable form that works in-game (e.g. flask).
- Get plenty of sleep, keep well-hydrated (both easier said than done at a larp, we know!) and avoid being hungover.
- Avoid going belowdecks once the ship starts moving.
- Look at the horizon and try to enjoy the amazing view of the sea!
- Find something active to do – haul on a rope, steer the ship or sing a sea shanty!
- Most important tip of all: be prepared and keep all your anti-seasickness items on you! Pack an in-game bag or wear a coat with big pockets.

And if you do need to be sick, don't worry! There's a whole sea to do it in! But best to pick the correct side. Look at whichever side the sail is on (or whichever side the smokers are on) and then go for that side. And please make sure that you leave the ship clean after you.

CREWS AND CHORES

On the ship, there are a number of tasks that we need your assistance with:

- Hoisting sails
- Steering the ship
- Navigation
- Preparing food for each meal
- Washing the dishes after each meal
- Cleaning the toilets
- Sweeping the deck and the mess

To divide these tasks fairly, we will split the participants into chore groups. In the Practical Form which will be circulated before the game, we will ask you to state your preference about how much sailing action you would like to participate in, as this will form the basis for the group organisation. (Since you can't simultaneously help hoist sails and cut vegetables for lunch.) It's ok to be very keen, but it's also ok to take a back seat and just observe the sailing. And you can always spontaneously join in if more hands are needed!

You can help with steering the ship or learning navigation whenever you like by talking to the off-game boatswains – there might also be some characters organising shifts for this in-game.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Our schedule will be responsive to the wind and weather. We usually won't know that far in advance where we will be sailing too, and we won't know exactly when we'll arrive. (It's just part of the fun of ship larps!)

Around dinner time, we will have a short off-game break (approx. 30 minutes). When we return to play, it will be after a short time jump – the new in-game time and location will be communicated during the off-game break.

We expect that a typical day will look something like this:

Time	Tasks
7:00	Breakfast preparation starts. Game starts.
7:30-8:30	Breakfast for all.
Approx. 8:30-9:30	Set sail. Some groups will be asked to help hoist sails. Breakfast dishes.
9:30-	Sailing. You can help with steering, navigation and hoisting the sails as needed. Or, just enjoy the view! There will be some organiser-planned scenes, but this is mainly time for you to enjoy being on the sea! Lunch preparations happen some time here – please ask the Galley for specifics
13:00	Lunch for all.
14:00	Lunch dishes.
16:00-18:00	Ship arrives at the day's destination. There will be some organiser-planned scenes on the land location throughout the evening.
18:00	Dinner preparation starts.
19:00	Dinner for all.
Approx. 20:00	Off-game break

STRIKE THE COLOURS

A Skull & Crossbones Story

Player's Guide

20:00/ 20:30	Dinner dishes
20:30-	General play (usually on a land location as well as the ship)
2:00	Game pauses for the night. Get some sleep! (You can of course go to bed earlier than this!)



Chapter 2: Game Design

Themes

- The price of gold and glory
- Difficult choices
- Loyalty and betrayal
- Fighting against authority or learning to accept it
- Finding freedom on your own terms
- The cost of survival in a world that is no longer welcoming to you and your kind
- The truth behind legends
- Doomsday/End of an era
- Found family
- Plus a lot of swashbuckling! Yarr harr me hearties!!!

Expectations

What to expect

- A dramatic story set at the end of the Golden Age of Piracy (1725)
- Setting and lore inspired by the real life history of 14th-15th C. Baltic Sea piracy
- A game on a real sailing ship involving plenty of actual sailing!
- A mixture of historical and supernatural elements
- An emotionally dark game with some moments of lightness
- Workshops on game rules, safety mechanics and relations
- A game that can be physically intense due to the setting on a ship
- Cooperation and teamwork to make sure off-game chores are completed
- To be photographed during the game
 - Please speak to the photographer if you would not like to be photographed, but we cannot guarantee this
- Online pre-game socialising, hype and calibration on Discord (optional)

What NOT to expect

- Play to win
- A happy ending (we mean it)

- A predominantly silly or light-hearted game based uncritically on pirate clichés
- Play on historical sexism, racism and bigotry
- Play on sexual harassment, sexual abuse or suicide
- Certainty around locations and timings until the actual day

What we expect from you

- That you have read our Code of Conduct and agree to it
- That you will read (or listen to) this Player's Guide before the larp
- That you will play collaboratively and uplift your fellow players
- Contribution to off-game chores such as food prep, cleaning and sailing
- That you take responsibility for your own fun – know your own limits and look after yourself!

Play philosophy

We're assuming that if you've found your way here, you have some idea of what larp is, and particularly what Nordic-inspired larp is. If not, never fear, this section is for you! We can also recommend reading more about Nordic larp and what exactly this means on nordiclarp.org

Our play is guided by several main principles, but above all, by **collaboration**: this game is a story that is created in real-time by you the players with assistance from us the organisers. We are all collectively responsible for making this story as dramatic, emotional, impactful and fulfilling as we can. You are not only limited by what you can represent or portray – in the world of Nordic-inspired larp, we can explore characters and abilities beyond our own experiences and capabilities. So, no need to worry if your character is a salty sea dog but you don't know your port from your starboard, or if you're meant to be a great fighter but you've never swung a sword before. That's what our play philosophies and our game mechanics are here to support – your character can do things even if you can't portray them.

We all come from a wide variety of places, cultures, levels of larping experience and different play cultures. In this game, we would like everyone to follow a few key play philosophies:

- **Play to Lift:** we work together to tell these stories by celebrating the strengths of each character and helping our co-players to tell the kinds of stories they'd like for their character. Play up your fellow players, know when to step aside and let others have a moment in the spotlight. Celebrate the rousing speech by the Second Mate even though the player dropped their notecards part-way through. Treat those in authority like they have earned it. And trust your co-players to lift you in turn when your character has abilities beyond your own.
- **Play for Drama:** often what makes the best stories is not when our characters win every fight or make good choices, but when they fail. In-game we encourage you to let questions such as "what would be the most dramatic choice?" or "what choice would create most play for myself and others?" to guide your play decisions. Playing for drama doesn't always mean taking centre-stage in theatrical scenes, but can also involve subtle play like hushed "secret" conversations with co-conspirators or a fight in a dark alleyway that only a few

witness. Together we can help your character to have the worst day of their life!
:)

- **“Yes and -” and Bullshitting:** we the organisers have created a world for you to run wild in, but it truly comes to life when you fill in the gaps by improvising and building on the improvisation of your co-players.
- **Stay in character:** If someone interacts with you, give them some sort of reaction. If you need to calibrate something with another player we have mechanics for doing so. Otherwise, you should stay in character during “time-in” (start of breakfast-2am).

Safety

Off-game Injuries

If you really get hurt for any reason, let someone know right away. We will have people there who can take care of you, or in the worst case arrange for your safe transport to land and a hospital. Remember, safety always comes first!

Physical contact and “Yes means Yes”

Larp culture, just like culture in itself, can vary a lot in what is assumed as normal or even acceptable when it comes to physical contact. Participants come from many different backgrounds and larp cultures, which have different baselines of normal and acceptable physical contact. Do not assume that your co-players have the same comfort levels as you do. If you want to engage in a scene where physical contact is an option, try to negotiate beforehand if your counterpart feels the same way using the Safety Mechanics outlined below. If in doubt, a good rule of thumb is the “80:20” rule – initiate physical contact to 80% and allow the other person to complete the remaining 20%.

Alcohol

Absolutely no alcohol may be consumed whilst the ship is underway: while sailing you are technically operating a vehicle. You may consume alcohol in the evenings after the ship has docked. However, we expect you not to get drunk. If we deem you too drunk to safely participate in the game we will send you to bed or remove you from the game. And don't forget that being hungover is a high risk factor for seasickness!

Smoking

Smoking is only permitted in certain areas on the deck of the ship – we will point these out during the workshops. Please use the ashtrays provided!

Game Mechanics

Safety Mechanics

“CUT” AND TAP-OUT

To stop the game, say **“Cut”** clearly. If your co-player says “Cut”, immediately stop the scene, orient yourself and take a step back if safe to do so. “Cut” can be used for any reason (e.g. off-game safety or emotional safety) and does not need to be explained. Before continuing the game again, make sure that any danger has been removed and that everyone is ok. Discuss with your co-players off-game how/if you wish to continue the scene that was occurring. If somebody chooses to leave, that is their decision and should be respected. We know it can be tempting to follow someone immediately to check that they’re okay, but we ask that you give the person some space before checking in.

You can also **tap out** as an alternative form of cut, especially if you cannot speak for any reason or are in close physical contact. Tap multiple times either on your co-player or on a nearby surface to communicate that you need the scene to stop.

OK CHECK-IN

To check in about the well-being of a fellow player without pausing the game, you can make an **“OK” hand sign** (pinched thumb and index finger, rest of fingers open) to ask the question “Are you OK?”. Your co-player can reply with either:

- Thumbs up: “Yes I am OK, please continue”
- Level hand: “I’m unsure”. Treat this as a thumbs down.
- Thumbs down: “I am not OK” This could be physical or emotional and doesn’t necessarily have anything to do with the game.

If you receive a thumbs down, look after your co-player. Ask if they need to talk or lie down, if they’d like company or prefer to be left alone. If needed, you can find an organiser to help out or go to an off-game space. Please also accept that they might not want to be helped.

“REALLY REALLY”

This allows you to quickly communicate important off-game information without interrupting the game. For example, you could say “Be careful – these stairs are really really slippery.” Or perhaps an NPC will tell you “You really really cannot go in this room right now”, signalling that the room is definitely off-bounds and not just closed to hide exciting in-game secrets. You can also use “really really” for quick calibration or to ask for consent. For example, “Do you really really want me to punch you right now?” or “Is it really really ok if I kiss you?”

Off-game mechanics

IN-GAME/OFF-GAME TRANSITIONS

We will play a short piece of music to signal the transition into and out of game. This will happen at breakfast and at the start and end of the off-game break in the evening. There will be no specific signal at the end of the day – just go to bed whenever you feel ready. (We love you, please get some sleep!)

OFF-GAME SIGNAL: HELD UP CROSSED FINGERS

To signal that you are not currently in the game, cross your fingers and hold them up. Depending on context, you may hold your fingers up subtly, but visibly, to someone who you need to discuss out of character boundaries with or it may be held above your head to indicate you are not in character and you should be ignored. This mechanic can be used to silently leave a scene or to quickly communicate off-game about something. It should not however be used to stand around and watch a scene or to get out of in-game trouble, unless you are off-game uncomfortable with the consequences. You might be more familiar with the 'Lookdown' mechanic but we've found that being able to see clearly is important on the ship, and it can be easily confused with e.g. shielding your eyes from the sun.

NAME TAGS AND PRONOUN MARKERS

During the game, all players will be wearing name tags and pronoun buttons. Any player can play any gender in this game and use any pronouns as they wish. We will provide name tags and pronoun buttons (she/her, he/him and they/them) at check-in when you arrive on the ship. Please wear them in-game! Later there will also be pronoun buttons to signal your off-game pronouns.

Please respect peoples' pronouns, both in-game and off-game. If in doubt, better to ask than assume!

BROWN ROBES

If you see someone wearing a brown robe, they are not visible in-game. Sometimes this will be a member of the crew portraying supernatural effects: the brown-robed figure is not actually there, but what they do is something that your characters can perceive (for example, whispers & other sounds, floating objects, etc.). Sometimes, members of the crew also need to set up a scene elsewhere or move props. For this we will wear a brown robe to signal that we are not really present – please just ignore us!

Gameplay mechanics and Game Rules**FIGHTS AND COMPETITIONS**

To quickly calibrate before fights or competitions of any kind, we will be using a simple mechanic to decide who will win. That way, we're placing more importance on the overall narrative than which player is physically stronger or more skilled.

Similar to playing "Paper, Scissors, Rock"², you and your opponent will simultaneously tap your fist on your open hand twice and then on the third count, hold up a certain number of fingers to each other (1-5). The number of fingers indicates how much you would like your character to succeed in the contest. Whichever opponent has the highest number will win the encounter, which you can then play out to your heart's content. Holding up the same number results in a draw in the fight or competition.

We would like to encourage you to use this mechanic to create interesting stories where not always the expected victor emerges. Please limit your use of 5 fingers.

You can use this for any type of competition e.g. a duel, arm wrestling etc. For fights with more combatants, see guidance below.

² Or "Scissors, Paper, Rock" or "Rock, Paper, Scissors". I've thought about this too much that I no longer know the correct order. What is truth? What is reality?

Bonus mechanic and top tip: *you can use the phrase “Everyone knows the rules to [insert game name here]” to signal that there are no rules and everyone is just collectively bullshitting. Highly recommended for very silly card games! You might also hear this referred to as “Cuke Rules”, after a previous Orchid Larp game.*

INTIMACY

In order to portray intimacy or sex, you can use the following mechanic. This is the baseline. If you want to add more physical aspects to it and everyone involved consents, you are free to do so. Please leave your clothes on though.

Portraying affection: to show non-sexual intimacy between your characters such as kissing/making-out, two players stand facing each other with their hands raised in front of their heads, palms touching. You can look into each other's eyes and breathe together. If you feel comfortable, you could also put your foreheads together or similar.

Portraying in-game sex: should the characters want to take the next step, go find a private (but not too private) spot. The sex mechanic works similarly to the affection mechanic, but instead of facing each other one person will be in front, holding their hands backwards next to their head while the other stands behind them and places their palms on them. This way you can portray certain power dynamics in the relationship too. The person standing in the back is the more dominant part (or simply the top).

No sexual violence: since we are not playing on sexual violence, it is important that both characters (and of course both players) consent to the intimacy before using these mechanics.

MUTINY

We know, we know, it's a pirate cliché! You may mutiny if you have justifiable cause, however, pirate ships run on fear and reputation, a lot of which is tied to the name of the ship's Captain. You'll have to work a lot harder to take prizes if there isn't a famous name connected to the ship anymore.

Importantly, please remember that our Captain is a player too and may not appreciate having their preparation undermined without a good reason! Also be aware that the role comes with off-game responsibilities, such as briefings with the organisers and prepared speeches. So, if you would like to mutiny, you must discuss this in advance with both the organisers and the player of the Captain and be willing to take on these additional responsibilities.

You as a pirate crew also have the ability to **call for a vote** to ensure that your voice is heard. Sometimes just a threat of mutiny is as effective as mutiny itself.

INJURY, IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH

This game uses the **Victim Rule**. This means that in any kind of conflict, it is always the victim who determines the outcome. For example, if you are shot, it is up to you to decide if that shot is fatal, if it is merely an injury, or if it misses entirely. You choose if and when your character dies. This also means that you cannot kill other characters unless the players specifically opt-in for this.

However, weapons are still dangerous and intimidating to your character. If someone threatens you with a weapon, be sure to still play it up – treat weapons in-game as you would in real life. Your brain knows that larp weapons are just made of foam and that you can choose not to die in-game, but you should still treat the risk of injury or death as a serious threat.

If you **imprison or arrest someone** in-game, you are responsible for taking care of them. This means you are in charge of their safety (both in- and off-game) and for their entertainment. Please don't just leave them!

Character death will be possible in this game. HOWEVER, there are only so many places a pirate ship can recruit from and we as organisers will not have a stash of back-up characters, so we recommend that you wait until later in the game. We will have things that you can do (NPCing or helping us with crew duties), but usually only after we have made port for the day.

Suicide is not an option in this game, but your character may choose to sacrifice themselves for others.

BOFFER WEAPONS AND GUNS

Yes, you can bring larp-safe boffer weapons to the game. In fact, we encourage it! Please show them to the organisers in advance of the game for a basic inspection to ensure that they are safe to use in combat.

You can also bring cap (toy/percussion) pistols. Ideally, any "blackpowder" weapon should make some kind of noise when fired (e.g. cap guns with plastic rings or strips) but we will all also 'play up' weapons that cannot go "Bang!".

DO NOT bring any weapons that fire projectiles (e.g. NERF guns or bows) as this is a pollution and safety risk.

Your weapons don't have to be historically-accurate, as long as they look sufficiently piratical. If in doubt, you can ask an organiser.

We hope to also have a small supply of weapons (swords and pistols) that we can lend out.

In larger scenes of combat that cannot practically use the fight mechanic above, **possession of a weapon** and then the **rule of numbers** controls the fight. This allows for escalation of scenes.

This means:

- One melee weapon dominates one or more unarmed combatants.
- A gun dominates one or more melee weapons.
- A second weapon of the same or a higher category trumps the first.
- When equipment is equal, the more numerous side is dominant.

This allows for dramatic scenes where, for example, a single person with a pistol can control a room full of unarmed people.

OUTNUMBER MECHANIC: "RESPECT THE FLAG"

The story we want to tell with this larp sometimes requires a larger number of NPCs than the number of crew we can physically fit on the ship. To help with this we will be using this simple mechanic: **if a flag of some kind is present, you are outnumbered.** If you try to fight the group with the flag, there is no hope of victory for you. (We are not saying that you can't fight them, just that you can't win.) For example, if a small group of NPCs are flying the Danish flag, they are representing a much larger group of people who outnumber the player characters. As another example, if you come across another pirate crew and they are flying a Jolly Roger, they also outnumber the player characters.

Where possible, the flags will also be supported by atmospheric coloured lighting and, if possible, smoke bombs. (Blue lighting and smoke will represent the Danish navy and red lighting and smoke will represent pirates.)

I sense you rules lawyers having clever thoughts right now - this mechanic only works for NPCs with flags - the Maelstrom flag doesn't count. Please don't break the game!

LOOKOUT MECHANIC

As the Maelstrom sails the Baltic Sea, there should usually be someone on the lookout position - someone needs to warn the crew about mermaids, selkies, or heavily-laden merchant ships ready for plundering!

We will set up a lookout station near the stern of the ship (near the steering wheel) with a telescope and a bag. Anyone can use this at any time they feel like it, or maybe the captain or first mate would like to devise a watch schedule – this is up to you and whatever you feel would enhance your game.

To act as lookout, look around through the telescope for a bit and see what you can see. Then draw a card from the bag. The card will have a prompt for anything game-relevant that your character might have spotted. Once you've read the card, place it in the discard bag. You might want to excitedly announce what you've seen to others.

The kind of things that you can spot will evolve throughout the day depending on the mood of the game. The cards use a simple traffic-light system: green represents lower stakes, orange for growing tension and red for being under threat.

CANNON BATTLES

For larger and longer-range battles, our pirate ship will be equipped with cannons! These will simulate historical cannons without the use of pyrotechnics or projectiles. During these battles, any crew not involved in operating the cannons can also make use of their own personal ranged weapons. (Or just yell insults at the opposing side if you left your pistol at home.)

A cannon battle will have an obvious cue - usually a lookout card will spot a sail on the horizon.

The lookout station at the stern of the ship (one of the organiser team) will announce the enemy ship's movements. A member of the organiser team will be in the Navi keeping track of damage to the enemy ship and to the Maelstrom.

The Captain or one of the Maelstrom's leadership figures will give the command "to battle stations!" There are 5 stations in total - 2 cannons and 3 masts (Fore, Main and Mizzen).

The battle stations are as follows:

- The Captain, Mate and Quartermaster are in charge of the battle overall. They direct the fighting of the cannons and the small arms and keep up crew morale. They have an overview of the battle situation and can move between stations as needed. (Information will be relayed from the organisers, particularly from the lookout station and the masts.)
- Cannon crews. Each cannon will have 4 dedicated cannon crew. 3 to operate the cannon itself and 1 powdermonkey to fetch and deliver ammunition. Each cannon will be overseen by the Gunner or the Gunner's Mate who will be in charge of overall cannon tactics and making sure the correct procedures are followed.
- The surgeon and surgeon's assistant will help injured crew members. They move around as needed.
- The carpenter and carpenter's mate will repair damage to the ship. They move around as needed.
- The Master at Arms will oversee the use of small arms. (e.g. pistols) They can distribute weapons from the ship's armoury to crew members who need weapons.

- At least 2 people should be stationed at each of the three masts to report on damage and on the situation on the enemy ship.
- Several runners will be needed to relay information to the whole ship.
- Anyone not assigned to a specific station can fire generally at the enemy with small arms, under the command of the Master at Arms. They should be ready to step in to replace injured members of the cannon crews or mast station crew.

Cannon Crews in More Detail

1. The Gunner and Gunner's Mate are in charge of the cannon tactics and directing the fire.
2. The powdermonkey brings a cannon ball and a black powder sachet from the powder magazine.
3. One of the cannon crew loads the cannon ball and black powder sachet into the barrel of the cannon.
4. Take a moment to sight and aim the cannon. The Gunner and Gunner's Mate can help with the aiming.
5. When the Gunner or Gunner's Mate (or whoever is in charge of the cannon) is satisfied with the aim of the cannon, they can give the order to "Fire!"
6. Using the mallet or just your hand (gently!) whack the button on the back of the cannon. (There will be a BOOM!)
7. One of the cannon crew draws a card from the bag and announces the result. e.g. hit, misfire etc. The cannon crew should react accordingly. Rotate this crew member to make sure that any injuries are distributed equally. This crew member can also pre-draw the card while the cannon is being loaded.
8. Another member of the cannon crew should report the result to the organiser in the Navi.
9. Using the swabber, clean out the barrel of the cannon. Suspend your disbelief for a moment and remove the "used" cannon ball and black powder.
10. The powdermonkey or a member of the cannon crew takes the "used" cannon ball to the discard pile and runs to fetch more ammunition.

Take your time! This is a stylised representation of a very involved and very dangerous process. Historically it would take many many minutes to fire a single shot and if you rushed or skipped any steps, there was a risk of the cannon misfiring, overheating, getting dismounted or exploding. Lots of haste, not much speed! :) And please be gentle with the props, especially the buttons.

Mast Stations

At the mast stations, you are in charge of monitoring the damage to the Maelstrom. You will hear one of the organiser team shout "Incoming!" accompanied by the sound effect of an incoming cannon ball.

When you hear this, draw a card from the bag at the mast station. E.g. miss, injury, damage to hull, damage to sails. Announce this result and then place the card back in the bag. And don't forget to react appropriately to the prompt! Make sure to share around who draws the card from the bag to distribute any injuries equally amongst the mast station crew and bystanders. Someone from the mast station then reports the damage to the organiser member in the Navi.

Fighting with small arms

Fire your pistol with great gusto! Listen closely for the positioning of the ship from the lookout and runners then fire in that direction. Don't forget that blackpowder weapons take a long time to load and prepare – take your time and make it dramatic!

You will receive some tokens (at the check-in with your in-character bag) which will determine whether the outcome of your shot is “good” or “bad”. The exact interpretation of these prompts is up to you – a “good” outcome maybe means that your pistol fires successfully, or that you hit an enemy. A “bad” outcome could mean a miss, a misfire, damage to your pistol that needs fixing, that you receive a minor injury or that you receive a major injury.

Surgeons

There will be some injuries during the battle that you will need to patch up! You should receive some basic medical supplies to help with this in your in-character bag during check-in.

Carpenters

When the ship takes damage, it is your responsibility to fix it! We will represent the damage with scenography elements. You might also be called on to help fix the cannons if they take damage.

Characters

Pirates are from everywhere! For as long as there has been seafaring, there have been people who have thought “ooh, I'll take that!” We'd like to celebrate this aspect of history and also encourage people to research their own pasts.

We will provide pre-written characters with a pirate nickname, a backstory, relations and plenty of juicy details to fill your game with. Some of the characters will have specific roles or responsibilities on the ship, such as Master Gunner, Lorekeeper, Carpenter, or Shanty Master. Characters have either been sailing with Captain Kogge for a while and are part of the **Old Guard**, or have joined the *Maelstrom* more recently and are **New Crew**.

Some characters have a general specified age ('older' or 'younger'), but most are written to be played as any age. All characters are over the age of 18.

Likewise, some characters will have a specified gender, but most have been left for you to decide. You may play a character of any gender identity and gender presentation, regardless of your own off-game identity. Please respect both in- and off-game pronouns.

We will cast roles based on your responses to a casting form, which will be circulated after sign-up is completed.

But you will also have a role in your character creation! We would like you to fill in the gaps of your character's birthplace, age and give them a full name. You can be as detailed as you like with it. Take the opportunity to do some research – were there any famous pirates or outlaws from wherever you come from?

Your character may have travelled widely, but they are from wherever you are from. Your history is their history.

If you'd like any assistance researching your personal history, one of the organisers will happily go full History Nerd for you.

AWARENESS

The wider world of Strike the Colours is based on the historical early 18th century, which was a world of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of discrimination. However, these themes will not be directly present in the game. The *Maelstrom* exists as a bastion of equal opportunities, free from this discrimination, where everyone can count on receiving an equal share of the treasure, just like the Likedeelers before them. Everyone on the ship has earned their place there, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or cultural background. Historical pirate ships offered a haven for women and escaped enslaved peoples. On board, crews functioned almost democratically. However, make no mistake, pirate ships were not morally unquestionable or perfect.

Disabilities were a common fact of life on a fighting ship and we would like to acknowledge the importance of a setting in which disabled people were very much welcomed. We don't wish to forbid anyone from playing on these elements, but we also do not wish anyone to use them as a gimmick or a joke. If you would like to play on any acquired disabilities that you do not have lived experience of, we would strongly encourage you to think about **why** you would like to play on these elements first.

Do not play on any congenital disabilities (i.e. conditions that you are born with) that you do not have lived experience of.

As per the Code of Conduct above, we will not tolerate any off-game bigotry or discrimination.

Additionally, please be aware that many common stereotypes of pirates from pop culture feed into cultural appropriation and ableism. We believe that there are many stories that we can tell together that do not need to include these elements.

This stance has informed our approach to the character writing as described above. Mistakes can happen but we'd like to assume best intentions and learn together to do better.

AI Disclaimer

This larp is a labour of love that has been carefully handcrafted by us. No AI has been used to create, assist or edit any of the written material for this game. Additionally, no AI imagery has been used: artwork and photos have been commissioned or created by talented artists who have been compensated for their work.



Chapter 3: Game Setting and Lore

“the sailors, the rootless, restless, stateless freebooters[...]brawlers and vandals, ruffians and half-criminals, drunkards and debauchers, with a girl in every port, whose Danish is so mixed up with words from every continent that not even their own mothers can understand them when they come home, with their arms and chests as tattooed as a deck of cards - hearts, diamonds, spades, clubs”³

Well done! You made it through all the technical information – now the really juicy stuff!

THE GOLDEN AGE OF PIRACY

Our game is set right at the end of the Golden Age of Piracy, which lasted from c.1650-1720s. Privateer crews (pirates with a license) who had taken advantage of the riches of wealthy merchant ships did not want their fun ruined by the end of the conflict between the dominant European powers and decided to continue their thievery, just without legal backing.

Piracy happened wherever there was shipping traffic, but nowhere has it had a greater hold on the public imagination than in the Caribbean, thanks to it providing the setting for multiple stories such as the tv show *Black Sails*, the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, *Treasure Island* (muppets optional but encouraged⁴) and many others. Many names of the most famous pirates from this era will be familiar to you – Blackbeard, Captain Kidd, Black Bellamy and Anne Bonny. Pirates thrived in their own “Republic” on New Providence island. This “Republic” - Nassau - was sacked in 1719 and many pirates fled the Caribbean or were executed by the authorities. Our game is set in 1725, right at the end of the Golden Age and one year after the publication of *A General History of the Pyrates* which turned the events and personalities of the era from history into legend.

³ Carsten Jensen. *We, The Drowned*. London: Penguin Random House, 2011, pp. 262-3.

⁴ Not for the game please, just in general. :)

BALTIC SEA PIRACY

Further back in time, in the 14th and 15th centuries, political tensions in the Baltic Sea between Denmark and the Duchy of Mecklenburg saw the dominant powers using piracy to weaken their enemies and attack their ships and supplies. But pirates are hard to bend to your will and soon the *Vitalienbrüder* (Victual Brothers) and later *Likedeelers* (Equal-sharers) were plundering from friend and foe alike, grinding trade to a halt. The most famous of these pirates include Klaus Störtebeker, Gödeke Michels and Magister Wigbold.

In 1400 or 1401, or so the story goes, Störtebeker was captured thanks to treachery from inside his own crew. A traitor melted lead into the rudder chains of the ship, rendering it defenceless against the ships of the Hanseatic League and Störtebeker and his crew were brought in irons to Hamburg.

The legend says that Störtebeker made a deal with his executioner: every member of his crew that he could walk past after he was beheaded should be freed. The executioner saw no reason to deny Störtebeker's strange request and he was beheaded. But the headless corpse rose and made eleven paces past his crewmembers, before being tripped by the executioner. Despite the agreement, all of the pirates were executed.

The islands and reefs of the Baltic Sea offered many places for a cunning pirate to hide from the prying eyes and cannons of the authorities, and legend says that the most persistent are still out there. Störtebeker was executed more than 300 years ago, but his name is still spoken with reverence and some say his ghost still sails the seven seas.

You can hear more about Störtebeker in this song by the band Mary Read which is the theme song of this game and the Skull & Crossbones games which came before it: <https://maryreadband.com/album/1037501/stortebeker> (Also available on most music streaming services.)

THE MAELSTROM

The *Maelstrom* is a ship belonging to the infamous Captain Kogge and sailed by a ragtag crew of miscreants. The *Maelstrom* originally plundered the Baltic Sea before her captain decided to set sail for more tempting prey and warmer weather in the Caribbean. But now things are looking dire: to stay would mean certain death.

After the crew was ambushed and many of them executed, Captain Kogge has taken on a shipful of other escapees and set sail for their old hunting grounds.

Some of your characters have sailed with Kogge for many years. Others have never set foot on a ship before and have joined the crew out of desperation. Throughout the weeks of travel back to the Baltic, you all have arranged yourselves into a semblance of a functional crew.

The life of a pirate is usually a short one, but through a combination of skill and luck, Captain Kogge still sails the seas and continues to outwit the authorities. Tales of Kogge's exploits and adventures precede them. But will Kogge's luck continue?

COMBINING HISTORY AND LEGEND

Our game combines the draw of the Golden Age with the real pirate history of the actual locations we will be sailing in. This means that for most of the game, the off-game locations will be the same as the in-game locations.

The legends of Störtebeker and the Likedeelers serve as both inspiration and warning to the crew of the *Maelstrom*. The Baltic Sea may host many ships of the Danish Navy, but not so long ago, it was also filled with rich prizes ready for the taking.

The world we play in is not unlike our own, where the supernatural and magic is mostly dismissed as superstition. Of course, as a crew of superstitious sailors, you all have a story of mermaids or the Kraken or the Klabautermann that you will wager your grog ration is true. In this world, there are stories of curses, whispers of dark powers, magics that helped Störtebeker and the Likedeelers achieve what they did, elude capture for as long as they did and maybe even escape death.

Some supernatural elements will be introduced by the organisers into the game. This is a game of many paths, however, and you will be able to choose how closely you engage with these elements.

MOOD: PIRATE DOOMSDAY

The general emotional setting of the game is tense and low. There will be moments of hope and joy: after all, you've been able to escape a place of certain death. (And maybe a little silliness – this is an Orchid Larp game and we have a reputation to uphold.) Expect an emotional rollercoaster. But now things are changing – some will leave the ship, some might stay but will be unable to continue their lives as before. There is no guarantee of treasure here in the Baltic Sea. The Navy is a strong presence. It is the end of an era for everyone aboard the *Maelstrom*. **Difficult choices will have to be made.**

Basic sailor knowledge

BASIC SHIP STUFF

Your character may be a salty sea-dog or a hopeless landlubber, but there is a minimum amount of ship knowledge that will help everyone communicate easily and keep things running smoothly. We've provided both English and German terms here - expect to hear a mixture of both.⁵

Bow/Bug: the front of the ship

Stern/Heck: the back of the ship

Amidships/Mittschiffs: the middle of the ship

Port/Backbord: the left side of the ship (when you are facing the bow), represented by the colour red. (You can remember this since both “port” and “left” have four letters, or with the handy phrase “There is no red port left in the bottle.”)

Starboard/Steuerbord: the right side of the ship (when you are facing the bow), represented by the colour green

The *Pippilotta* has three masts - the names might be familiar to you from the names of the chore groups. From bow to stern (front to back) they are:

Foremast/Schonermast,

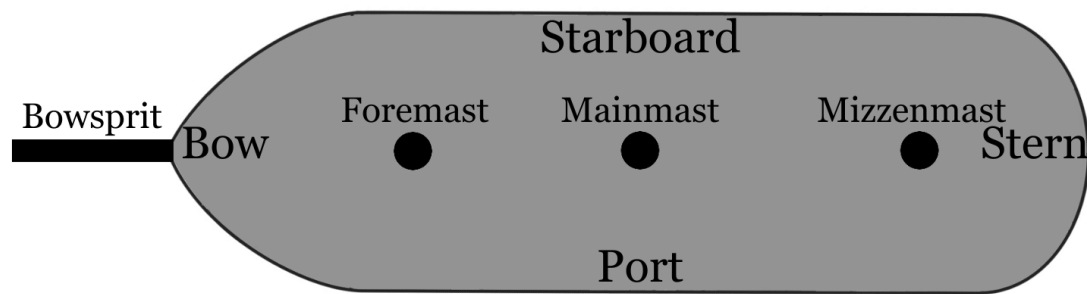
Mainmast/Großmast and

Mizzenmast/Besanmast.

The spar (bit of wood with sails attached to it) sticking out of the front of the ship is called the Bowsprit (Bugspriet or Klüver).

⁵ If you are also a nerd who revels in terminology like me and wants MORE!, I can recommend this very extensive Wikipedia list of nautical terms:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_nautical_terms_\(A%E2%80%93L\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_nautical_terms_(A%E2%80%93L))



THE COLOURS

The flag flown to show the allegiance of the ship (e.g. England, France, Spain) is known as the **colours**.

Sometimes as a *ruse de guerre* (trick of war), ships would fly **false colours** and pretend to owe allegiance to powers that they did not. This would enable them to sail close to their enemies before revealing their true identity.

Supposedly, pirates flew two different flags when they were attacking other ships.

A **black** flag indicated that they would show mercy if the ship surrendered its valuable cargo without a fight.

A **red** flag indicated that no mercy would be given.

More image-savvy pirates devised individual heraldry of a sort and made their own emblems – like high-stakes high-seas marketing. You might recognise the most famous of these - the skull and crossbones used by Black Bellamy, amongst others. According to legends, even just the sight of a known pirate flag was enough to make their victims surrender.

These colours are known as the **Jolly Roger**. The Jolly Roger of the *Maelstrom* features a gun-shot skull above a red whirlpool. Legends of Captain Kogge say it represents one of the earliest enemies they defeated in battle and the whirlpool of blood from the fray.

In battle, the Captain of a ship might give the order to **hoist the colours** – to display the flag and publically show the ship's allegiance – or to **strike the colours** – to lower the flag to indicate surrender. (Name of larp mentioned, roll credits!)

Credits

This Player's Guide is a pastiche of documents connected to multiple great and wonderful games that have gone before it.

Primarily, the content is based on the Skull & Crossbones 2020 Player's Guide by Steve Deutsch and David Pusch. We are heavily indebted to the work of Sailing4Adventure on previous iterations of this game and we are so thankful for your trust in letting us bring it back!

Elements have also been taken from Player's Guides of previous Orchid Larp games, particularly, Camp Risem Moor, Northcott Gala 2 and Expedition Asphodel

It has also been heavily inspired by A Midsummer Disco by Poltergeist Larp (particularly the Doomsday theming and the 'Expectations' section)

The small amount not accounted for by these wonderful documents has been written by Alana Bennett. Blame them for the history infodump in Chapter 3. Proofreading and editing by Mila Fae Müller.

Strike the Colours: A Skull & Crossbones Story was written and designed by Mila Fae Müller, Alana Bennett and Andrew Russell, with assistance from Steve Deutsch and Mischa Geiser.

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