



Phelantar's Guide
to
The Wandering Moon
for
The 13th Age Roleplaying Game



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Overview

The Wandering Moon is a legendary ship which has been sailing for more than one hundred years under a dozen different captains. In that time it's been the ship of pirates, of smugglers, of privateers, if (somewhat) honest tradesmen, and more. Every sailor in every port has heard of The Wandering Moon and it's the subject of many a tale told with a round of ale.

The Wandering Moon is infamous, more than anything, by its tendency to be present or involved in some spectacular events. When the gnome submersible Mako went rogue and attacked ports and ships all along the coast, The Wandering Moon was a part of the fleet that eventually destroyed it. The Wandering Moon was the ship that the infamous orc pirate Bloodfang began his career on before moving to other opportunities. The Wandering Moon was the only ship to survive and escape when the demonic warship Hellspite briefly caused terror on the seas. Nobody is quite sure whether The Wandering Moon is tremendously lucky or tremendously unlucky, but everybody is sure that things get a lot more interesting when it's around.

The Wandering Moon is currently owned captained by Dame Lucca d'Sylvis, a noblewoman and wizard in her mid-30's. Under her leadership, The Wandering Moon has developed something of a reputation as a ship of adventure. Adventurers needing swift transportation to someplace dangerous are not just welcomed, but encouraged, to hire the ship. Captain d'Syvis dabbles in smuggling and privateering, both freelance and for hire, as well. She seems to do this as much for the excitement as the money, which means that her crew is well paid, well motivated, and only retains those sailors and marines with the most exceptional skill.



The Ship

The Wandering Moon is a full-rigged (or frigate-style) ship whose keel was laid down almost 120 years ago. Records of the exact details of the ship's creation were lost in an archives fire a few decades later, so no information remains as to who commissioned the ship or who built it. Given the ship's unusual reputation, many people suspect that there was something done to it as it was being built, but with no records there is no real way to be sure one way or another. One persistent rumor is that the ship was commissioned by a wizard who intended to use the ship as an ocean-going laboratory and that the keel is inscribed with some sort of ritual spell that alters the ship's fate to bring it to the important points in history. Another often-repeated tale says that the ship was made from wood from a grove of sentient trees and the trees themselves still have some sort of influence over the ship and her crew.

Whatever the truth may be of her origin, The Wandering Moon does not outwardly appear to be unusual. As a full-rigged ship she has three masts, each of them square-rigged. The ship was constructed largely from oak and pine, though over the years other woods and materials have been used for repairs and reinforcement. The Wandering Moon is designed first and foremost as a cargo ship and displaces more than 4,000 tons when fully loaded. Originally, she carried little space for passengers, but over the years several captains have expanded the available space for cabins and living space and the ship now has roughly 35-40% of its space devoted to the transportation of people as opposed to cargo.

Over the many years of sailing, The Wandering Moon has carried a wide variety of armaments and there are spaces around the deck which seem to have been designed to support heavier weapons such as catapults and ballistae. The rails have mounting points for smaller weapons such as scorpion-style bolt throwers or defensive pavises for crossbowmen or bowmen. At least one captain has attempted to improve the firepower of the ship to levels on par with a warship, but these changes have rarely outlasted the captain. The Wandering Moon just isn't big enough, fast enough, or agile enough to serve as more than a makeshift combat vessel. Instead, these armaments are primarily oriented towards defending from predators such as dragon turtles or sahuagin as well as the never-ending threat of pirates and privateers.

In spite of her age, The Wandering Moon is in good shape. Regardless of what situations she's seen or the eccentricity of some of her captains, she's been well-cared for over the years. After those few periods of neglect or heavy damage, captains have subsequently brought her back up to good condition. Captain d'Syvis, the current owner and operator, claims that the old ship is as good as new or better under her command and it's hard to argue the point.

Notable Captains

As mentioned, the current captain is **Dame Lucca d'Syvis** and she has been both owner and captain for almost seven years. Originally, her purchase of The Wandering Moon from the previous captain (a solid, but relatively interesting sort who was retiring) was seen as a young noble spending her parents money on a whim. The Wandering Moon is infamous and it seemed like there was no other reason for an educated young woman, and a wizard at that, to own such a vessel beyond the notoriety. To the surprise of almost everybody, Dame d'Syvis spent several months studying astronomy, navigation, and sailing in general before taking personal command of the ship. Between the superstitions some sailors have around a female captain and the infamy of the ship itself, things were rough for some time. However, Captain d'Syvis proved to be a remarkably quick learner and talented captain in her own right and after the first year, The Wandering Moon became a place for talented sailors and marines to earn a generous, but hard won, payday.

Despite her talents, Captain d'Syvis is known as a risk-taker and freely admits that she sails as much for the excitement and danger as for the money. She loves hiring adventurers, because she knows they'll lead her into the most interesting of situations. She enjoys hunting down pirates, finding the thrill of combat to suit her immensely. The captain is also not above smuggling on occasion for the joy of tricking port officials. Captain d'Syvis is now the subject of many a ballad, tavern song, and youthful book of adventure about her dashing good looks and spirit of adventure. More than a few young girl, noble and otherwise, looks up to the captain and aspires to follow in her footsteps.

However, Captain d'Syvis is not the first unusual or celebrated captain of The Wandering Moon. Indeed, just as the ship itself is known far and wide for the uncommon situations it ends up a part of, the captains the ship attracts end up being rather uncommon themselves. The long running debate is whether the strange captains are the reason that the ship ends up in unusual circumstances or whether the unusual circumstances the ship finds itself in selects for the strange captains. The debate will likely continue on long past the day where The Wandering Moon herself rests at the bottom of the ocean and no creature has a living memory of the ship.

Two captains before d'Syvis was **Captain Wraithbane**, a necromancer famous for crewing The Wandering Moon with the undead instead of living sailors. Despite this seemingly sinister situation, Captain Wraithbane was a surprisingly honest and friendly sort. He carried cargo and passengers, with not a hint of piracy or smuggling to be found. In fact, under his command, The Wandering Moon was one of the safest and most reliable ships to sail the seas. No pirate or corsair wanted to tangle with a ship full of zombies, ghouls, and ghosts, while the undead crew were more efficient and less crude than living sailors might have been. The body odor was not terribly different in comparison, but this was a small gripe in exchange for such security.

The one real disturbing thing about Captain Wrathbane's tenure on The Wandering Moon was his decision to take partial payment in corpses on occasion. The sea could rot a zombie or other undead creature quite quickly and the crew had to be replaced fairly regularly, especially in the warmer months. The bodies had to be legally obtained and the Captain was more than willing to ferry cargo or a passenger if they would agree to sign over their corpse upon their death. Somehow, Captain Wraithbane would always collect, even if the person died hundreds of miles inland or the efforts were made to prevent the body from being taken, such as burning it.

Another interesting captain in the long history of The Wandering Moon is **Black Barny**, a long time smuggler who seemed to have an almost supernatural ability to get himself (and his ship) into amazing trouble and back out again with a profit. Black Barny took over when mutineers killed the previous captain and for the next decade, he managed to keep control of the thugs, psychopaths, and murderers that made up his crew. He did quite well for himself, showing a natural talent for dodging patrols, making deals with inland thieves guilds, and finding hidden harbors in which to make deals and offload cargo.

Perhaps his most famous undertaking was smuggling an entire hold full of staggeringly dangerous creatures like basilisks, manticores, and oozes past a customs fleet that had heard of the shipment and was actively searching for him. The Wandering Moon made it to the delivery point without having even been seen en route. Of course, this undertaking was also ultimately the downfall of Black Barny. The deadly cargo he delivered eventually killed dozens of people and caused untold property destruction. The reward for his head was enough for every sailor in every port or ship to want to get a piece of the action. Black Barny was hounded for weeks until it was finally cornered by three Imperial cutters who then boarded and captured The Wandering Moon. Black Barny was hung days later, his body hung for thirteen weeks as a warning to others. The Wandering Moon was sold and the proceeds distributed to the crews of the cutters who captured her.

The man who bought The Wandering Moon in the aftermath of Black Barny's demise was, rather unusually, one of the men who had captured her. **Captain Kordan Silldam** lead the Imperial cutters who had pursued Black Barny, but was grievously wounded in the boarding action. Knowing that he was unfit for military service with his wounds and his increasing age, he retired with a generous pension which he immediately invested in purchasing the (once-again infamous) ship. Playing on the ship's reputation, Captain Silldam turned The Wandering Moon into a trap for pirates and monsters.

With the help of illusion spells from a wizard hired on to the crew and a hold full of marines, mercenaries, and adventurers, The Wandering Moon would bait enemies into closing for an attack before counterattacking. By killing rampaging monsters and capturing pirate ships and their crews, Captain Silldam functionally continued his naval career as a freelancer. A profitable freelancer at that, since even with the costs of keeping such a large and well armed crew he was able to retire comfortably after just a few years.

Another one of the unusual captains that The Wandering Moon has had over her long time on the seas was **Captain Katerina Brandywine**, often referred to as “Wild Kat”, though apparently never to her face by anybody who valued keeping their body intact. Captain Brandywine started off her career as an honest trader, but something happened to her after a few years on The Wandering Moon and she snapped. Many people speculate that her family was killed while she was away from land, others guess that some of her cargo drove her insane, but nobody ever found out the truth. Whatever the case may be, Captain Brandywine became one of the most notorious pirates to have ever sailed and The Wandering Moon was ever the flagship of her growing flotilla of ships.

For almost a decade, Captain Brandywine was the terror of the seas. No ship or fleet was safe from her amazingly violent attacks and even heavily armed Navy vessels were sunk or captured during her reign as Queen of Pirates. Her downfall was just as mysterious as her decision to become a pirate. Rumors at the time suggested that some of her subordinate captains were planning to revolt against her leadership and strike on their own, hinting that Captain Brandywine possibly died in the fighting. Few of the other explanations have any grounding in reality. The only thing known for sure is that many of the pirate ships she lead were never seen again and The Wandering Moon was found adrift near an island chain. Most of the crew, including Captain Brandywine, was missing and those few crew members who were found on the ship were dead.

One final captain that The Wandering Moon has seen was only known as as **Captain Haven**. Unbeknownst to anybody at the time, Captain Haven was the leader of a secretive cult which worshipped dark and forbidden gods. Everything he did, from the cargos he took to the ports he stopped at to the passengers that were ritually sacrificed while at sea, was devoted to his worship of those dark divinities. Captain Haven was otherwise a very friendly and personable sort. He was scrupulously honest and efficient when it came to delivering his cargo on time. He even kept his crew (and fellow cultists) under control to the point where even the Imperial Navy was interested in having them teach some of his techniques.

Captain Haven never got the chance, however. Despite his friendly personality and competence in hiding his blood-soaked allegiances, Haven left a few too many survivors and clues behind. One night, while in port, some of those survivors attacked Haven and his crew with the help of several adventurers and mercenaries. The fighting was bloody, but eventually Haven and a few of his crew were captured. Authorities were outraged at this brazen attack on an upstanding independent trader... until they searched his cabin and the secret part of the hold. There, they discovered disturbing evidence of his murderous actions and his forbidden stash of religious lore. The arguments as to who got to hang Captain Haven for his crimes were cut short as Haven and his surviving crew were brutally and torturously ripped apart by mysterious attackers while waiting in the port's dungeons.

The Crew

These crew are “captain agnostic”. They aren’t necessarily associated with any of the captains listed earlier, but can be used with any of them or even your own homebrew captain. Even Wraithbane, the necromancer captain, might have had a living crewmember or two.

Harpoon - A Dwarf-Forged sailor who finds that only out on the sea does he feel really alive and more than a mindless construct.

Garin Steelshield - This dwarf heard a prophecy that he would die if he ever spent more than 48 hours on land again. He’s not a very good sailor, but he’s a very inspired fighter.

Brother Jacob - A priest of the god/goddess of the sea, Brother Jacob gets seasick rather easily, but is still considered a good luck charm to have while at sea.

Kara Mitsu - A gladiator past her prime, this human woman decided she wasn’t done with an exciting life and signed on to The Wandering Moon to see new places and fight new people.

Alphonse Yukar - Scion of a wealthy merchant. He is accused of multiple murders and signed on to get away from his pursuers. Maintains his innocence, but is a little too good with a knife to be completely convincing.

Richard Shepard - A former wizard’s apprentice who lost his opportunity to continue his education and have a better life when his master was eaten by something he summoned.

Dranlir Windsong - A druid who feels the call of the sea more than that of the forest or the hills, she loves to shapeshift and go fishing or swimming alongside the ship.

Hollow Elizabeth - A dark sorceress of some fame, she loves the ship so much that after being a frequent passenger, she’s become a part of the crew. Nobody, not even the captain, is quite sure why she loves the ship as much as she does.

Matthias Novin - A thug, brute, and an alcoholic. A talented sailor and experienced brawler, which is the only reason someone hasn’t killed him after a violent drunken binge. From the scars on his neck, chest, and arms, it’s not from lack of trying through.

Reesea - A mysterious woman in blue who showed up on deck one day in port and spoke to the captain in private. She’s now officially part of the crew, though nobody seems to know what she does for the ship. She speaks confusing phrases in soft, soothing tones.

Genevive the Mad - A gnomish inventor who created a non-magical way to fly using hot air, alchemically treated wood, and leather wings. Joined the crew to fund her further inventions, acting as a scout for hostile vessels as well as gathering weather information from high up in the air.

Levin and Baran Keggon - A pair of twins who once served in the Imperial Navy together. Have a habit of finishing each others sentences and generally acting somewhat creepy. However, they (understandably) work really well together, which makes them valuable doing time consuming ship tasks.

Hadran Blackswallow - An old mercenary whose idea of a comfortable retirement is to join a sailing crew to fish all day and occasionally beat up some pirates. Likes to tell all sorts of improbable stories about his youth.

Kaz Smithson - A navigating savant, this man can wind his way through the most difficult seas or the most dangerous weather, but is otherwise almost childlike in personality and ability to deal with the world outside of the ship.

Videl Marth - The son of a farmer who really hated the idea of spending his entire life tending crops and farm animals, he ran off and signed on with the first ship that didn't look like a death trap.

Clay Campbell - A former slave, captured when he was a teenager. Spent more than a decade on board the slaver vessel before being rescued. With his chances as a normal life gone, he signed on with The Wandering Moon since the sea is all he really knew anymore.

Marcus Siris - A former adventurer who found that actually adventuring was more risk and frequently less reward than he was interested in. Joined the crew as a way to scratch his desire to see new places and people without as many of those things attempting to kill him.

Jadce Greensnake - A half-elf entertainer brought on board to help keep crew morale up with songs, stories, and jokes for a few voyages before moving on for a while. Something of an outsider to the crew, but welcome aboard nonetheless.

William Tomlinson - A thespian of some repute, he signed on with the crew for a voyage to research a role he was expecting to play. Surprising everybody, including himself, he found sailing far more interesting and fun than theatre ever was. His crewmates tend to appreciate his lingering desire to entertain, as well.

Plot Hooks

Innocent Smuggler - The captain has some small and valuable items that he doesn't want getting noticed by tax agents at the port and plants them among the party's possessions with the intent of sending a crew member to steal them later. Unfortunately, the buyer finds this an opportunity to avoid paying the captain for the goods, so sends his goons after the party to take possession, prompting the captain to do the same.

Paying Another's Debt - The captain has fallen into debt to some unsavory characters and has made an equally unsavory deal. The captain takes on a full load of passengers, including the party, and will be "attacked" by slavers who take the passengers to fulfil the captain's debt. The party must fight off the slavers without much help from the crew (and maybe the active resistance of the crew).

Trapped With A Killer - The adventurers have been hired to find a brutal serial killer who is suspected to have joined the crew of The Wandering Moon. Because they don't know what he looks like, they must board the ship as passengers and ferret out the killer, even as other passengers and crew start going missing.

Through A Fog Door - While on an uneventful voyage, The Wandering Moon has sailed into a fog bank and come through the other side on another plane of existence. The party has to help the captain and crew find a way back to their own ocean before the dangerous denizens of this plan find them and do something terrifying.

Bait with Bite - Someone, or something, has been giving away the times and routes of cargo ships passing through a narrow strait and those ships have been attacked by monsters like sahuagin. The Wandering Moon, with the characters and mercenaries on board, is playing the role of bait to slaughter the monsters and hopefully find out the source of the leak.

The Price of Generosity - The Wandering Moon is sailing when they notice another vessel in distress. The other ship is sinking slowly and will be completely submerged in just a few hours. The problem is the ship is actually full of pirates and they attempt to capture The Wandering Moon within hours of being rescued.

Lost Island - Rumors have been circling for generations about an island that wanders the seas containing magical treasures and wealth lost for centuries. The captain of The Wandering Moon has come across a map, a credible map, that might help finally locate the island. Unfortunately, others have heard about the map too and the captain has had to hire the party to keep the ship and crew safe until they complete their expedition.

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