

*The
Buccaneer*



NEMARIS

J. D. Delzer

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Please visit www.BuccaneerOfNemaris.com and explore the world of Gaia.

For Gail



We found the islands hospitable...

... our Prison was a paradise.

Cpt. Terrance K. Scyhathen,

CS Nemaris

January 15th, 1583

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Prologue

The word 'buccaneer' was originally used to describe a person who made preserved meat—often beef jerky or dried pork. When the Caribbean Sea was first inhabited by the Spanish in the 1600's, French seamen and English traders often tried to take claim of the Spanish Main. During these trips, they would leave animals on the islands to help sustain them upon 'island hopping' stops along the way.

These buccaneers often had their animals slaughtered by the Spanish for attempting to claim lands granted by the Pope to the nation of Spain. So, in search of other forms of food or payment, these buccaneers were mercenaries, often by hire, to attack the Spanish ships. They were also known as 'privateers', or even outright 'pirates.' Captain Morgan, for example, was one of these mercenaries who sometimes worked for the United Kingdom. He also was one of the few buccaneers who successfully attacked Portobello, a major port on the Spanish Main.

Morgan, like many buccaneers of the era, was a ruthless fighter and tactician. But he was also a gentleman. And yes, he was a violent person; but he carried himself with honor and civility.

I am not certain if he enjoyed rum or not, but apparently a rum maker in Puerto Rico thought so.

This is just one example of what a buccaneer is. While many dictionaries and encyclopedias will state that a buccaneer is no different than a pirate, I beg to differ. For there were many times where a gentleman, civil and just, would resort to actions becoming of a lesser man to accomplish a goal that which must be done. George Washington was a diplomat first and a general second; and only resorted to fighting the Revolutionary War when diplomacy with the United Kingdom failed.

Let's discuss what a pirate is. A pirate is first and foremost, a thief. He prefers the open seas to the back alleys, and seeks out two things: wealth and supplies or technology to gain that wealth. They did not always seek the adventure, but the prize. A pirate crew had nothing to lose and everything to gain. And they'd slash, cut, drown, or shoot any who would dare stand in their way.

The pirate went in search of treasure, but did not have the resources to simply call together a few friends and sail on a six-week excursion in hopes of finding a few gold bars. He would find himself a crew of men who shared his passion, and then steal a galley and command it as their own. After finding another ship, they would attack it - head on with full strength, as the men had nothing to lose- and they would claim whatever they could find... usually ship stores, lantern oil, grain supplies, that sort of thing. Surprise and fear were their greatest weapons. Almost never would they find gold and riches... unless a treasure galleon was en route to Spain or elsewhere.

Treasure maps were never used, and burying it ashore was unheard of. Treasure, when found, was divided up at once. A system of collective trust was used aboard ship, but if you got killed in your sleep, your treasure was gone. And that would be that.

Pirate guilds, much like thieves' guilds, were simply larger organizations of pirates who

teamed up to stage larger raids. In this novel, one such group is named the Ranthath Cult. It formed in much the same way as the privateers did; trade was in high spirits, and those who did not have other means of livelihood fell back to the old patterns of taking what belonged to others. The Centra Sea, a region open to the currents of the seas but not unlike the Caribbean, was also ripe with this trade.

In the world of the Centra Sea, however, there were men who were honest, honorable and moral who also sailed the seas. They sought adventure and stability, and the goal of what lay beyond the next wave as much as the next hill. Did they fight? Sure, to defend what they had found; but not because they coveted the next fortune. They took care of their own. They held up their own. And they kept their own.

These were the buccaneers of the Centra Sea. They too, would often enlist the merchants of the shores and the many nations, hoping to capitalize on cargo and grain exchanges to better the world around them and maintain their daily adventures.

In this world, there was a man named Terrance K. Scyhathen who did that and more. He had a passion for sailing, and received commission from the King of Xavier in hopes of charting the world with his own pen. Later he would achieve this with his own boat, sailing by his own rules. He traveled north to Kynniayck, a large and well developed continent. He discovered this region to be already well established and known to the world, and there was very little left for him to discover. Scyhathen next sailed east to Eastrell, a continent much like our world's Asian nations, and opened trade across the Eastrell Sea with the nations of the east. Third he sailed west, to Qui-Kinneas and the land of the endless deserts.

Finally, Scyhathen aspired to complete the compass rose and head south to the frozen continent of Phrynn and its hidden nations... but Scyhathen failed in this endeavor, only to be shipwrecked upon lost islands.

Scyhathen did not seek treasure. He was funded by the nation of Xavier and the port of Elna City, and earned that funding because of his talent as both a diplomat and his skill as a swordsman. He would become probably the best known buccaneer in the world... because any treasure he was given, was often returned to its owner without question. Scyhathen had neither want nor use of such artifacts, and refused most offers.

The islands which claimed Scyhathen's legacy now bear the name of his galleon. These fabled and feared islands were home to another buccaneer of sorts, one that did his dueling differently- not with swords, but magic. Hoping to relieve those who chose the way of the pirate instead of the way of the buccaneer, this wizard brought them to his islands and entertained them, and placed their treasure in with his own while punishing the roguish lifestyle. Once satisfied, he would return that treasure to its worthy owners....

But that's another story that's waiting to be told.

In summary, I define a buccaneer as a sailor who may be in service to another nation to strip another ship of its belongings; or a sailor who acts in honor and grace rather than anger and greed, which is, of course, the goal of this novel. In this story, I take it a step further- the three ship captains in the book represent three different views of the core idea that is greed. One captain is the buccaneer; the gentleman, the traveler, the journeyman. Another is the villain; the heartless, the thief, the kidnapper. And finally, the third seeks revenge, through brutality and remorseless death... revenge for his fate and his toils in life. He lives with fear in

his heart and greed in his soul.

Many pirates used guns and cannons as fire. Swordplay is, and always has been, a romantic form of combat. Although there is gunpowder in the world of the Centra Sea, it is considered a magical substance. The material is produced in the far east and the desert nations, but considered too dangerous for regular use even in those societies. Only until the 1790s is gunpowder prevalent enough in Cimmordia and Dieteria to exist in the world.

But for the purposes of this story and its sequels, gunpowder is not considered or used. Magic is a much more apparent theme, as wizardry and the fantastic are far more common. Merfolk thrive in the seas, although they are reclusive and hidden as they may in fact be in our own time. Centaurs exist in the lost forests of Tallebeck, while unicorns protect several forests in other regions. Dwarves are nearly extinct, only living in a small region of Kynniayck. Wizards are common, but choose to limit their exposure to the world, vowing never to change or alter any part of reality, and opting to reside in a secretive land known only to them... even though their past societies remain on the face of the landscape like ruins.

Elves, goblins, orcs and the darkest demons of the underworld do not populate these lands. Fairies? Maybe. Genies? Most definitely. Other creatures, friendly or otherwise, may make an occasional cameo. But encounters are few and far between, so stories of these creatures are legendary even in a world as this.

And to many of Gaia's citizens, stories are just as valuable as fresh water and the most treasured jewels. This is the time of the Centra, and these are the stories of the Buccaneer of Nemaris.

Scyhathen charted many ports and touched many people... and everyone has a story to tell of their encounter with the great captain.

Enjoy these stories, and pass them along as the treasures that they are. For what are stories if they are kept hidden and forgotten?

THE LANDS OF THE CENTRA

Two continents, each with its own stories and adventures to tell. To the east lies the continent of Crellan, home to regal Cimmordia, cosmopolitan Dieteria and agricultural Xavier. The western continent of Tabia holds industrial Tallebeck, the arid dunes of Qui-Kinneas and the uncharted lands of the King's Forest and the Faate Mountains.

The era is one of exploration and expanding commerce, when tales of adventure and grandeur can buy a weary traveler a cot and a warm cup of stew, for magical beasts and fantastic castles are not the stuff of dreams but part of the fabric of reality.

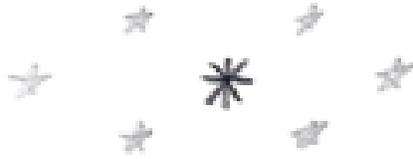
It is here, upon the lands of Crellan and Tabia, where the Buccaneer of Nemariss first left his home port on a journey of exploration and understanding. His efforts transformed a few dots on a chart to represent more than simply distance and time, but a chance for people of different lands to know one another.

This is the time of the Buccaneer of Nemariss... a time when most anything can happen.

For news about future projects by the author regarding the
world of Gaia and its citizens,
please visit the author's website.

While there, enjoy all there is to explore!

www.BuccaneerOfNemaris.com



It was a time of adventure, pirates and magical mysteries. At the southern reaches of the Centra Sea lay islands rumored to be full of vast riches and demonic ills. Mystical and beautiful as these islands were, they remained isolated and untouched, due to the tales of horrible evils and fantastic creatures said to dwell both upon and beneath their shores. The Nemaris Islands were named after the vessel commanded by Captain Terrence K. Scyhathen, a sailor who attempted to discover the island chain's many secrets. Scyhathen became famous throughout the world of Gaia for his legendary exploits, but his legacy was defined by his last expedition. It was then he met his greatest foe, a terrible pirate known simply as Epoth.

Encountered during Scyhathen's charting of the Nemaris Islands, the evil entity Epoth attacked by means of terror and secrecy. As the days passed and the attacks increased, the good captain and crew struggled to survive as Epoth's shadowy form filled the men with a dark, all-encompassing fear.

It was said Scyhathen solved his battles with words, seldom needing nor employing his famous longsword in battle. Yet according to his last writings, Scyhathen thought it a wonder that he and Epoth had never crossed swords, and he regretted never meeting his opponent face to face.

Captain Scyhathen's fate is a mystery, for he never returned from this final journey. Some suspected the dastardly Ranthath Cult, a well-known clan of pirates, had claimed the islands for use as a hidden base. Others claimed Scyhathen had simply become part of the Centra Sea's most taboo legend. The wreck of the Nemaris remains lost, believed to be entombed at the bottom of the Centra Sea, and with it all evidence of her crew.

Many years after Scyhathen disappeared, a clue finally materialized when a map of the Nemaris Islands surfaced in the nation of Dieteria. Few could decipher the map's many secrets, and stories of the final fate of the Nemaris began to emerge again.

Old rumors of fantastic demons and terrors again discouraged all but the hardest of treasure hunters; the very thought of the Nemaris Islands would incur dread. Eventually, the islands faded into obscurity, and the chain's existence was accepted as nothing more than fantasy. For this reason, all sanctioned expeditions to the mysterious isles were cancelled... but that did not stop those who coveted the vast riches purported to be hidden within their depths.

The legend of the Nemaris Islands would remain forgotten until young Thomas DeLeuit made an unexpected find some forty years after the famous captain's fateful expedition. Although he had visions of cruising the seven seas in search of fame and fortune, Thomas lived modestly with his mother in Harper's Bay. Life in the small port town had always been peaceful and uneventful...

Shortly after a discovery in his father's study, Thomas's world would change forever.



A New Cabin Boy

It was as calm and picturesque a morning as there could ever be. The sound of gentle waves upon the beach blended with the scent of fresh baked bread from the DeLeuit's home in Harper's Bay.

The mid-morning sun was full in the sky, and the breeze gently ruffled the unkempt, light brown hair of the fourteen year-old boy who always came to Diamond Falls to pass the time between tasks. Soft sand lay beneath his feet as the sun beamed down on his jerkin and vest. Thomas was near the beach carving into a rock and watching a ship sail by when he heard his mother's call. Their modest house, once a tavern on the northern edge of town, had a grand view of the ocean. Years ago, a sailing ship in the distance meant business that night, but now, there was other work to be done.

"Thomas!"

“Coming, Mother!” Thomas quickly jumped to his feet and ran to the house.

Inside, his mother was wrapping a half dozen loaves of bread in a large basket. They had just come out of the oven, and the wonderful aroma of grains and yeast filled the house.

“Yes, mother?”

“Bring this to Captain Janes. His crew is waiting for it at the docks.”

Marianne DeLeuit wasn’t a stern woman. Her love was sometimes difficult to see, but Thomas knew that he was everything to her. Caring for her son alone meant requiring him to bring deliveries to the docks and attend to other tasks—nothing interesting, let alone dangerous. Thomas was often amazed he got away at all because of her tight watch on him. But no matter how hard she pushed him, she showed her love for her son that much more.

“Of course, mother.” Thomas carried the basket onto the path leading to the docks.

“And hurry, dear! The captain got cold bread last time!”

“I will!” Heeding his mother’s words, Thomas ran south as quickly as he could for about a quarter-mile towards the port.

Although Thomas often dreamed of other places, Harper’s Bay had always been his home. He never thought of the city as a destination, but a rest stop for Dieteria’s merchant sailors to the ports of Cimmordia. Originally founded by bards and poets, the city began as a small camp until shipping traffic began to increase near the rocky shoals along the coastline. Several lighthouses would be built, and much to the shagrin of the city’s founders, a port soon

followed. A market for artisan bakers and spices from the local woods came next, and before long Harper's Bay was a full fledged city.

Well aware that the bread was starting to cool, Thomas stopped before reaching the docks when Bobby Lewis halted him in his tracks. Of the families in Harper's Bay, Bobby was one of the handful of boys Thomas's age, but that wasn't the only reason they were the best of friends.

"Hey Tommy, where you going this time?"

Bobby Lewis also had an unusual family. He lived with the town elder, Master Harrion, who had taken Bobby in when the boy was left on his doorstep as an infant. Bobby respected his elder, and took heed of his teachings. In fact, with his elder's expert assistance, Bobby had learned how to decode the languages of the Centra Sea and its nearby nations, including texts written in regards to the Nemark Islands.

"Making deliveries for mother." Thomas stopped for a moment.

"Are you free after dinner tonight?" Bobby's tone was nonchalant. "I wonder if you would chance a look at some of my maps with me."

"Elder Harrion's maps? Does he let you look at them now?" Thomas knew maps were a treasured resource.

"Not exactly, but he will be at the town meeting tonight, and we will be free to take a gander!"

“I look forward to it! But I must go for now.” Thomas hastened back to his chore.

“Just meet me before the church bell sounds eight, okay?”

“Right, see you then!”

Thomas continued on, knowing that his delivery might get cold from the breeze that flowed off the sea.

“Until then!” Bobby waved after him.

Thomas rushed past the sprawling Mermaid’s Rest Tavern and the stone façade of the town hall to arrive at the docks. Spotting Captain Christopher Janes’ blue and black flag among the bobbing masts, he made his way to the *Valiant*. First mate Seriam Ward greeted the boy as he scampered up the gangplank with the breadbasket.

“Hey Tommy, got the bread there?”

Thomas handed Mr. Ward the basket. “Fresh bread here, sir.”

“Hmm! Got it here warm yet! Here’s something for your mother- there’s a bit extra for being so prompt.” Ward passed him a handful of coins.

Thomas pocketed the money. “Thank you, sir.”

“Tommy! Is that you?” Captain Janes called from the deck.

Captain Christopher Janes had been on the ocean all of his life, having joined a merchant's galleon when he was six. He earned the right to captain a ship at the ripe age of thirty-eight, and had been in command of the *Valiant* ever since. In addition to stops on either side of the Centra Sea, he visited Harper's Bay at least once a month. Sometimes he would visit Mrs. DeLeuit's homestead for dinner. The two were old friends, and always shared conversations about the ports he'd last visited. Every time his crew docked, they'd purchase a basket of bread. Janes had taken a shine to young Thomas; he saw much in the boy that he'd once seen in himself.

"Hello Captain Janes!"

Captain Janes shook Thomas's hand firmly. "Ahoy there, boy! You keeping to your mother?"

Thomas nodded. "Yes sir, all the time."

"Would ye mind taking me to her? Need to ask her something."

"Sure can sir. Follow me." Thomas took point and they headed up the hill.

"You're a good boy, Tommy. You're too much like me, but a good boy." He took Thomas's hand as they walked north to the DeLeuit homestead.

Captain Janes appeared at the upper half of the open Dutch door at the back of the house. "Excuse me madam, may I come in?"

“Oh!” Mrs. DeLeuit looked up from her sewing. “Good day, Captain. Yes, of course you may! Please, come and rest your legs.”

Following behind the captain, Thomas emptied the coins into his mother’s hands.

“Here’s the money from Mr. Ward, mother.”

She placed the currency inside an apron pocket. “Yes, thank you dear. How are you today, captain?”

“Quite well, thank you. I do hope I am not intruding.” Janes sat himself at the kitchen table.

“Nonsense, you are always welcome here. Where have your adventures brought you safe from today?” Marianne asked.

“A distant port known as Derrisburg. I’m sure I’ve spoken of it before. It’s a tad larger than this one, but there be one thing that port doesn’t have.”

“What is that, sir?” Thomas asked.

“Why, the both of you, of course.” Janes patted the boy on the shoulder.

Mrs. DeLeuit smiled at the pleasant gesture. “Go on, Thomas, get the captain some ale.”

“Come now, Marianne, you know me. I’m not the drinking sort. Although I do admire your tea- nobody else makes it like you do.” Janes’s expression was hopeful.

"Oh yes, of course... I always forget." She laughed. "I'm so used to the days we ran a tavern here, you know that."

"Yes, and those were good times."

"We have a jug of tea cooling in the cellar, sir." Thomas headed to the stairs to fetch it.

"Marianne, have I ever mentioned you have a wonderful boy?"

"I am certain you have, Christopher, but it is always appreciated." Marianne finished the cuff she was hemming and set her sewing aside. "Yes, he is a hard working young man. Just like his father."

"Indeed... a shame I never was able to meet him..." Janes looked down at his calloused hands a moment before returning his gaze to her. "Forgive me, Marianne, but I come with a bit of a predicament. Fallon, the cabin boy who's been with us since we last journeyed from the north, has come to a tad bit of trouble, I'm afraid. We had to leave him at Derrisburg because of a mysterious illness."

Marianne gave a concerned look that only a mother could make. "The poor boy...is he in good care?"

"Yes, and the doctor has high hopes for his recovery." He glanced at his hands again then smiled. "But, in the meantime, we'll need a replacement, and you and I both know that young Thomas is well trained in the arts of sailing and can handle himself with a sword quite well."

“He has followed your training to the letter, Chris.”

A beaming smile crossed the captain’s face. “He’s got the blood of a buccaneer, Marianne. If he were to come with us, I could further his skills... provided he did a few chores for us around the ship, earn his keep if you will.”

Marianne regained her motherly concerns, suddenly worried she might lose her son. “You are suggesting he live as you do?”

Thomas returned from the cellar. “Here is your tea, sir. It should be cold- the cellar is usually quite cool.” He gave the captain a mug filled with the draught.

Janes accepted the tea with a smile. “Thank you, Tommy. It’s greatly appreciated.”

“Mother, shall I begin dinner?”

“It is nearly finished, Thomas. You may go about your business for awhile- but do not stray too far, hear?”

“As you wish, mother.” Thomas headed outside, unaware of the tension between his mother and guest.

“Of course, I’d pay the boy well,” Janes continued. “A fair day's pay for a cabin boy, provided he earn it- three Dictares a week.”

“That seems reasonable, and the income would certainly be welcome... but I’m not sure.” Marianne turned from Janes a moment, reaching for a poker by the hearth.

“I seem to recall your telling me that Thomas's father was a cabin boy in his youth, yes?”

Marianne nodded, her attention on the cooking fire. "Yes, but Gregory never spoke about that time. I have often wondered what Thomas could have learned from him."

"He's a good boy, Marianne."

Marianne looked back at him with a critical gleam in her eyes. "True, he is. And a hard worker... this is sudden, though. Let me think about it, captain. I'll give you an answer tonight." Turning away, she set aside the poker and stirred the stew.

"Yes, I agree it is sudden to thrust this upon you, but I've thought it over for some time now, and I believe he's ready." Janes spoke with conviction.

"I know... and he does need a path in life, but..." Marianne began.

"If you refuse I shan't think any less of you." His voice softened. "I understand how important he is to you."

"Tell me, would you care to stay for dinner tonight?" Marianne asked, changing the subject.

"I'd be delighted!" After all, the captain had been craving the cooking since he arrived, and he could not refuse.

Although Thomas didn't usually wander too far when dinnertime came near, he would occasionally travel just to the north to the Diamond River to listen to a serene waterfall at the delta. Of all the places in town, Thomas decided, this place had always been his favorite.

It was a warm April day, and with wildflowers beginning to bloom among the rocks along the river, everything was in a state of beauty. Thomas looked out to sea, where a schooner was sailing by from Harper's Bay to the distant capitol of Dieteria in the north. He did not know the name of the city, but longed to visit such a place; even if only for a day. Thomas knew the castle was always there, as Harper's Bay was governed by it, but his mother would never allow him to travel so far away.

Thomas would often sit by the waterfall to collect his thoughts and dream that someone would come to take him to see the world, but he was convinced that such a thing would probably never happen.

Thomas enjoyed the falls not only for their peaceful beauty but also because they held a special secret—it was a place of visions. When he was very young, Thomas had been drawn to the falls on a foggy day. As soon as he'd arrived, the fog dissipated and a ship appeared beyond the point to the south. A few moments later, the ship vanished, but then he heard a voice.

“Thomas... be good to your mother, and I shall be good to you....”

This experience remained somewhat of a mystery until a later vision proved that the voice was indeed his father's. The second vision was of a horrible shipwreck on an island west of Cimmordia Castle. The voice cried out his father's name, a voice that often reminded Thomas of fear itself. It was unclear if his father was speaking from beyond the grave, but Thomas knew that his father was trying to tell him something....

Now there was no fog or mystery, and Thomas relaxed blissfully as the afternoon wore on. The scene was indeed amazing, as the skies were crystal blue, the wind was calm, and the rhythm of the gentle waves was very soothing. Thomas slowly began to drift asleep when suddenly the skies grew grey.

He opened his eyes. "A storm?"

The winds increased. Clouds rapidly blocked out the sunlight, and the ocean groaned as its waves grew wild. Lightning struck as a deep voice began to shudder inside of Thomas's mind...

...You shall feel my wrath, my creator...

"Thomas!!!"

Thomas was started as his mother's voice brought him swiftly back to reality. All was as it had been before... as if he had dreamed it all. But violent waves broke the ocean's surface several yards from shore. There was a shadow in the sea, and Thomas stood up to investigate when....

"Thomas! Come home for dinner!"

This is not the full extent of chapter one, but this preview ends here.
The adventure continues in the full text of *The Buccaneer of Nemarís*.
Thank you for reading this preview.