

Throughout history, on the world's oceans, **robbers**<sup>1</sup> have had a special name throughout the ages: pirates. Piracy began soon after **mariners**<sup>2</sup> first sailed the world's waters, and pirates have threatened shipping ever since. In the days of sailing ships, these **dangerous**<sup>3</sup> criminals piloted the fastest **vessels**<sup>4</sup>. They swooped on defenceless ships and stole their valuable cargo. Some pirate gangs sank the ship and killed the crew to **hide**<sup>5</sup> their crimes. The most infamous pirates **attacked**<sup>6</sup> ships in the Caribbean three centuries ago. Story writers and film makers have glamorized their **exciting**<sup>7</sup> lives in tales and legends, but overlooked their **savagery**<sup>8</sup> and greed.

One of the most **infamous**<sup>9</sup> pirates of all time was Blackbeard. Otherwise known as Edward Teach, Blackbeard was the terror of North American waters until his violent death in 1718. Though his career as a pirate lasted only two years, his reputation was such that he often **scared**<sup>10</sup> merchant crews into submission without firing a single shot. According to legend, he left a wealth of buried treasure, but it remains **undiscovered**<sup>11</sup> to this day. In all likelihood, the **myth**<sup>12</sup> of Blackbeard's lost treasure is just that, a myth. In reality pirates **rarely**<sup>13</sup> buried their treasure, as their plundered loot comprised of cocoa and sugar - which needed to be sold on quickly - much more often than it **comprised**<sup>14</sup> of gold or jewels.

In the high days of piracy, women were **banned**<sup>15</sup> from sailing as members of the crew, often on pain of death. It was an old sailing tradition; sea captains wanted their crew to sail the ship and fight rather than **quarrel**<sup>16</sup> over women. However, throughout history, some women have rebelled against their exclusion from this world. Mary Read and Anne Bonny were both famous female pirates who served under the pirate captain Calico Jack Rackham. They wore men's clothes and **disguised**<sup>17</sup> their true identities from most of the rest of the crew. They were universally respected for their fighting skill, and in their final battle fought more **bravely**<sup>18</sup> than the men. But despite their efforts, Calico Jack's ship was **captured**<sup>19</sup> off the coast of Jamaica in 1720, and the crew members were convicted of piracy and sentenced to hang in what is now Spanish Town. Calico Jack was hanged, but both women escaped the gallows on the grounds that they were pregnant. Read died in prison of a fever before her baby was born, but Bonny's fate is **unknown**<sup>20</sup>. One theory is that her father helped her escape from her Jamaican prison and run away to America, after which she gave birth to her child and went on to marry a local man named Joseph Burleigh. She died a respectable woman at the age of eighty. However, there is also speculation that she returned to her first husband, Jack Bonny, in Ireland, or even that she resumed her life as a pirate under a new identity...

conceal	thrilling	legend	notorious	prohibited
masked	seized	bandits	terrified	valiantly
violated	seldom	sailors	wrangle	brutality
consisted	hazardous	unexposed	obscure	ships