

# Life on a Pirate Ship

---

Life onboard a Pirate ship was very different to  
life on land!

What do you think life on a Pirate ship was like?

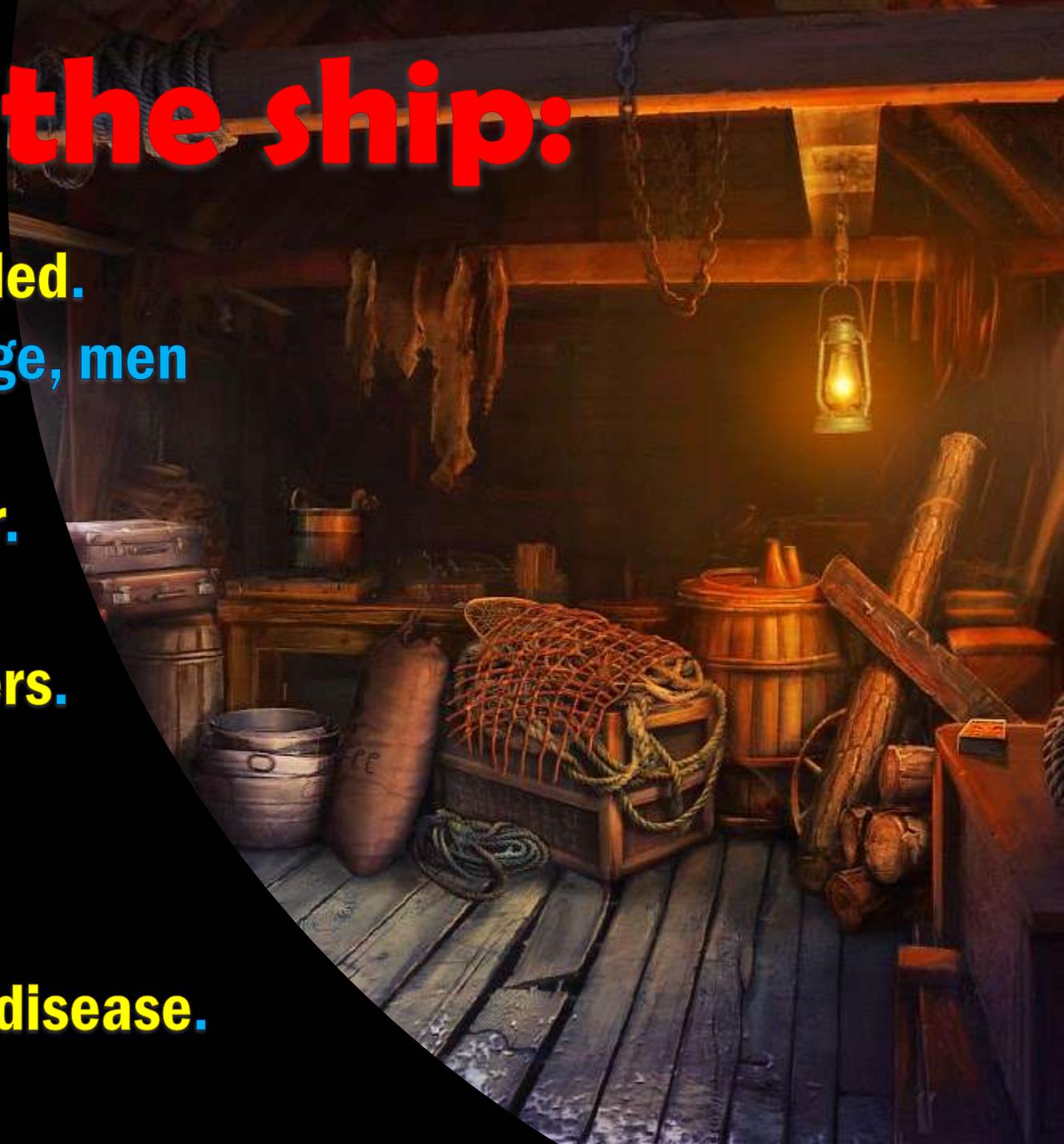
**Source: TES**

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/life-on-a-pirate-ship-11838195>



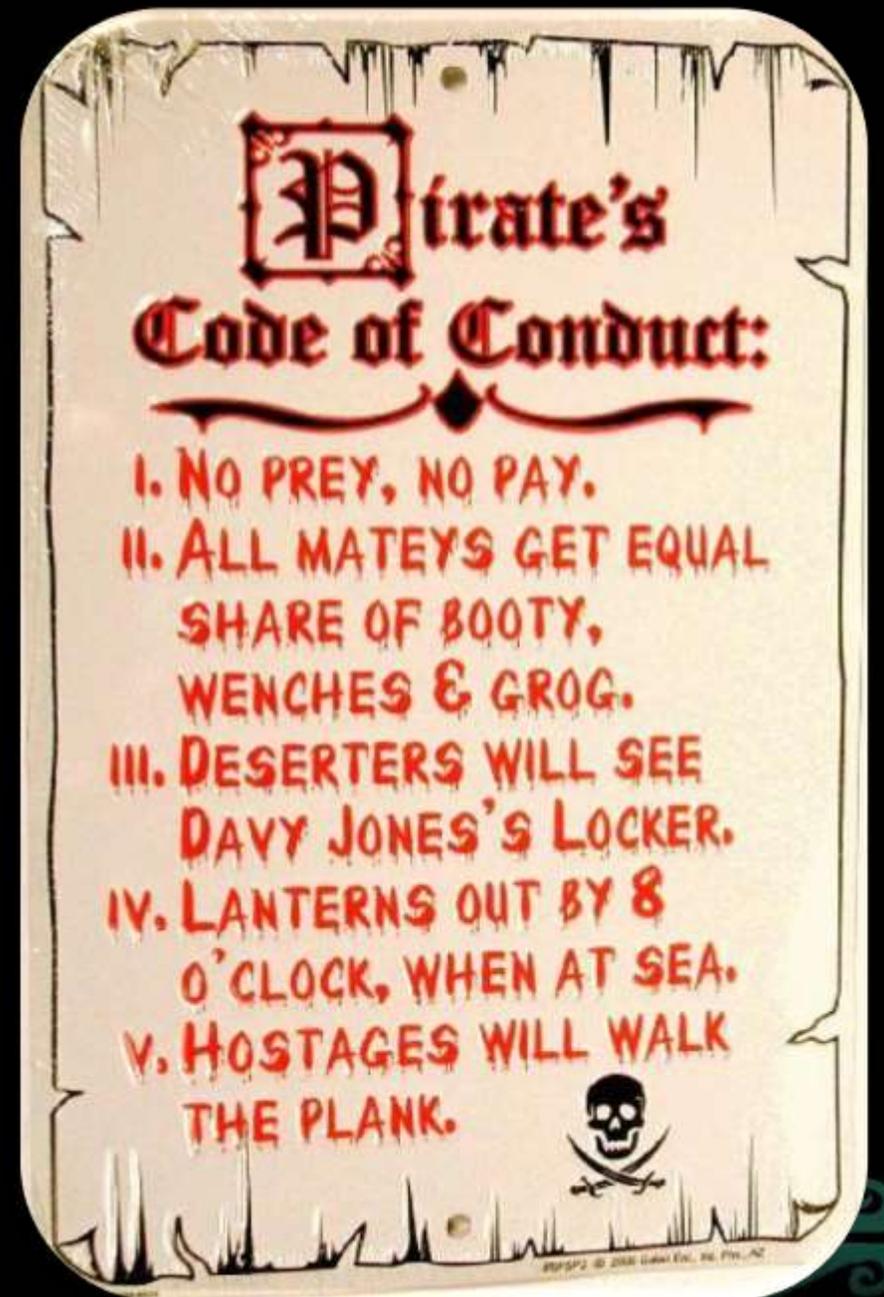
# Conditions on the ship:

- Pirate ships were **small & overcrowded**.
- Every bit of room was used for storage, men or treasure.
- Pirates slept in **bunks** or on the **floor**.
- Everyone lived in the same space.
- Only the **Captain** had his own **quarters**.
- **No showers** or baths onboard.
- **Soap** pretty much **didn't exist**.
- Ships usually **smelt very bad!**
- **Bad hygiene** meant lots of **illness & disease**.



# Pirate Code:

- Pirate's had to follow a **“code”** on board a ship.
- The code was a **set of rules** written by the ship's **Captain**.
- Sometimes called the **“Captain's articles”**.
- If you broke the rules you were **punished**.
- Punishments included:
  - ✓ Being **cast adrift** on a boat;
  - ✓ Being **shot** for stealing;
  - ✓ Getting **39 lashes** for fighting onboard.
- The **cat-o'-nine tails** was used for punishment.
- It was a whip with **9 parts** with blades on the end.



# Hobbies onboard:

- Pirates spent most of their time at sea **bored.**
- Only a few men worked when the weather was good.
- Some of the hobbies pirates had were:
  - ✓ Playing **card games;**
  - ✓ Playing **music on flutes & violins;**
  - ✓ Carving **model ships out of wood;**
  - ✓ Telling **pirate adventure stories;**
  - ✓ **Singing & dancing.**

Hello kiddos! My name is **Captain Jack Sparrow**, although you already know that. Now I get bored a lot while sailing, as do the other scurvy dogs on board!

What hobbies and things do you think we do to keep ourselves busy?



# Pirate Food:

- Pirates didn't have the best food.
- Didn't have a lot of food while sailing.
- A lot of the food grew **mould** or **rot** at sea.
- Daily meal usually consisted of:
  - ✓ **Sea biscuit** - rock hard biscuit;
  - ✓ **Salted meat**;
  - ✓ **Sauerkraut**;
  - ✓ **Bone soup**;
  - ✓ **Bucket of rum.**
- When they landed at a port they would have **large parties with lots of food!**



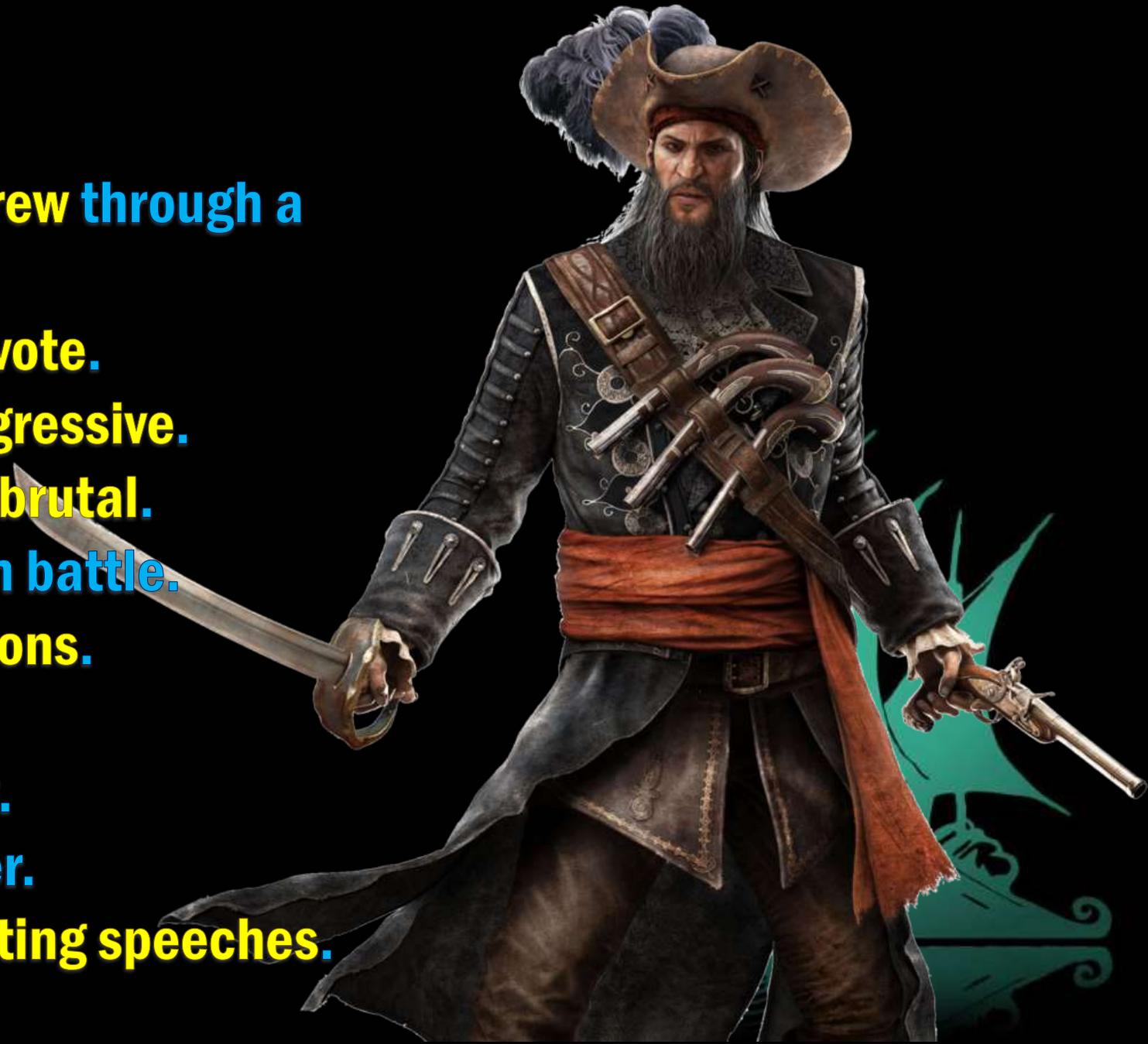
# Members of the Crew:

- Not everyone onboard a pirate ship had the same jobs.
- There were **different jobs & roles.**
- The main jobs onboard the ship were:
  - ✓ **Captain;**
  - ✓ **Quartermaster;**
  - ✓ **Helmsman;**
  - ✓ **Boatswain;**
  - ✓ **Carpenter & surgeon;**
  - ✓ **Master gunner;**
  - ✓ **Cabin Boy**
  - ✓ **Rigger.**



# Captain:

- Captains were selected by the crew through a **vote**.
- Could be replaced by a **majority vote**.
- Some **voted out** for being **too aggressive**.
- Others abandoned for being **too brutal**.
- Expected to be **bold & decisive in battle**.
- Made the most **important decisions**.
- Should be **skilled navigators**.
- Had to have a **strong personality**.
- Needed to hold the crew together.
- Most were good at giving **motivating speeches**.



# Quartermaster:

- Was the Captain's **second-in-command**.
- Was an **equal** to the Captain.
- Often became captains of other ships in the fleet.
- Was **in charge** of the **crew** & the Captain when **not in battle**.
- Captain retained all authority during battle.
- **Maintained order** on the ship.
- **Settled arguments** among crew.
- Shared out the **food** & any **treasure**.
- Received an **extra share** of treasure.
- Could **punish** minor offences.



# Helmsman:

- In charge of **navigating** the ship.
- The person who actually **sailed the ship**.
- Directed the **course** the ship took.
- Looked after the **maps**.
- Cleaned & kept the **instruments** used for navigation.
- Had to be a **skilled navigator**.
- Hard job as the charts & maps were often incorrect.
- Required them to be **educated**.
- Many were **forced to join pirates**.



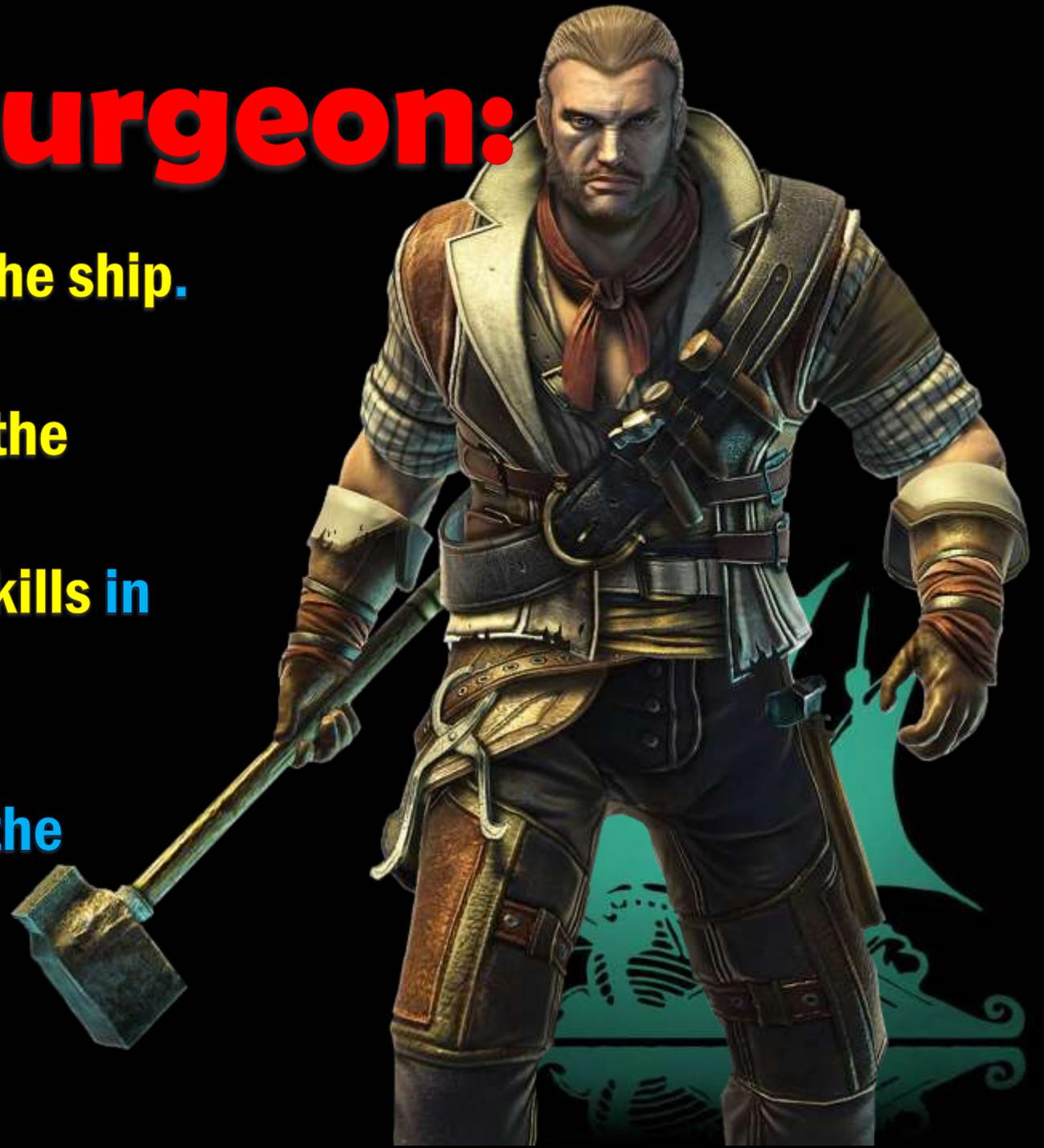
# Boatswain:

- Junior officers of the ship.
- **Supervised** all activities on the ship.
- Could have **several duties** depending on ship size.
- Responsible for **inspecting the ship, sails & rigging** every morning.
- In charge of the **ships deck**.
- Ordered when to drop **anchor & handling the sails**.
- Reported to the **Captain or Quartermaster**.



# Carpenter & Surgeon:

- Carpenter responsible for **mending the ship**.
- Took orders from the **boatswain**.
- Sometimes the carpenter served as the **surgeon**.
- First choice since they had **tools & skills in "cutting"**.
- Often carried out **amputations**.
- Used same tools they used to mend the ship.
- Most injuries went **untreated with medicine**.



# Master Gunner:

- Responsible for the ships **guns & ammo.**
- Gave orders to the gunners when Captain wasn't around.
- Sifted the **gunpowder** to keep it **dry.**
- Kept the **cannons** free from **rust.**
- Kept all **weapons** in **good condition.**
- Usually the **most experienced** gunner on the crew.
- Took years of practice.
- Had to ensure the **gunner crew** worked **together** during battles.



# Cabin Boy:

- A young boy who worked on the ship as a servant.
- Many were kidnapped children.
- Some were runaways looking for an escape.
- Helped the cook in the ship's kitchen.
- Carried food to the crew.
- Took messages between crew members on the ship.
- Ran errands for the Captain.
- Did any jobs for the crew.



# Rigger:

- Riggers were in charge of the **ships rigging**.
- **Rigging** - ropes, chains & cables that support the ship's mast & sail.
- Rolled up & released the **sails**.
- One of the **most dangerous jobs**.
- Danger of **slipping** or **falling** from ropes.
- Head to be **brave men**.
- Didn't receive any extra share of treasure despite their dangerous job.



# Dangerous life:

- Pirates led a **dangerous life**.
- They were often close to death in battles.
- The **British Navy** spent years chasing them.
- Many pirates were put on **trial** for their crimes.
- Most of these pirates were found **guilty** & were killed.
- The “Golden Age” of pirates ended with most of the **famous pirates** being captured & killed.

