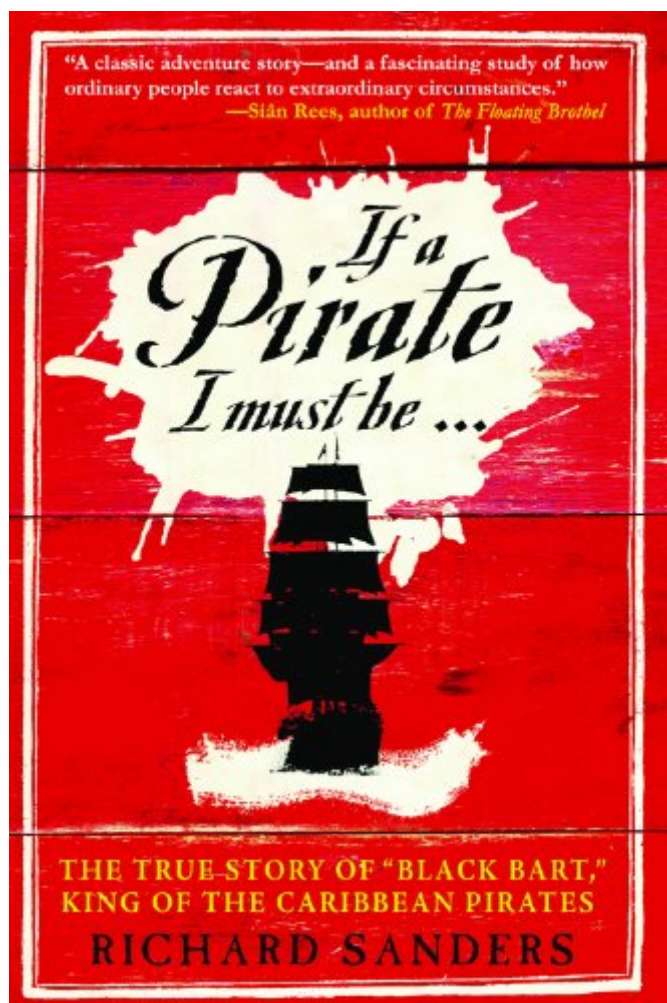


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# If A Pirate I Must Be: The True Story Of Black Bart, "King Of The Caribbean Pirates"



## Synopsis

In a page-turning tale brimming with adventure, author Richard Sanders tells of the remarkable exploits of Bartholomew Roberts (better known as Black Bart), the greatest of the Caribbean pirates. He drank tea instead of rum. He banned women and gambling on his ships. He never made his prisoners walk the plank, instead inviting them into his cabin for a friendly chat. And during the course of his extraordinary two-and-a-half-year career as a pirate captain, he captured four hundred prizes and brought trade in the eastern Caribbean to a standstill. In *If a Pirate I Must Be...*, Richard Sanders tells the larger-than-life story of Bartholomew Roberts, aka Black Bart. Born in a rural town, Roberts rose from third mate on a slave ship to pirate captain in a matter of months. Before long, his combination of audaciousness and cunning won him fame and fortune from the fisheries of Newfoundland to the slave ports of West Africa. Sanders brings to life a fascinating world of theater and ritual, where men (a third of whom were black) lived a close-knit, egalitarian life, democratically electing their officers and sharing their spoils. They were highly (if surreptitiously) popular with many merchants, with whom they struck incredibly lucrative deals. Yet with a fierce team of Royal Navy pirate hunters tracking his every move, Roberts's heyday would prove a brief one, and with his capture, the Golden Age of pirates would pass into the lore and legend of books and movies. Based on historical records, journals and letters from pirates under Roberts's command, and on writings by Roberts himself, *If a Pirate I Must Be...* is the true story of the greatest pirate ever to sail the Caribbean. Skyhorse Publishing, along with our Arcade, Good Books, Sports Publishing, and Yucca imprints, is proud to publish a broad range of biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs. Our list includes biographies on well-known historical figures like Benjamin Franklin, Nelson Mandela, and Alexander Graham Bell, as well as villains from history, such as Heinrich Himmler, John Wayne Gacy, and O. J. Simpson. We have also published survivor stories of World War II, memoirs about overcoming adversity, first-hand tales of adventure, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

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## Customer Reviews

Richard Sanders' *IF A PIRATE I MUST BE* follows in the wake of two other very readable histories of pirating in and around the 18th century: Stephan Talty's *EMPIRE OF BLUE WATER* and Colin Woodward's *THE REPUBLIC OF PIRATES*. All three draw on similar historical sources, and their bibliographies overlap somewhat. However, this is not to say that the books are duplicative, for each focuses on a different aspect of the topic or concentrates on a different time frame of the era. The authors also give different emphases to their primary sources, Sanders drawing heavily on Charles Johnson's *A GENERAL HISTORY OF THE ROBBERIES AND MURDERS OF THE MOST NOTORIOUS PIRATES*, published in 1724, while Talty frequently cites *BUCCANEERS OF AMERICA* by John Esquemeling, published in 1684. The three books are complementary rather than redundant, and, while any of them can be read independently of the others, taken together, they paint quite a detailed picture of piracy on the high seas from the late 17th to the early 19th centuries. Sanders' book concentrates on the rise and fall of a single member of these "gentlemen of fortune," (otherwise known as criminals, thieves, miscreants, and deserters), Roberts, whose original name may have been John and who later seems to have signed it Bartholomew, although "Black Bart" seems to be a posthumous sobriquet. By following the brief, three year, career of Roberts, we learn a great deal about mariners' practices of the era, including the fact that it was scarcely unusual for a person to move from service on a king's ship to that of a pirate. In truth, the act of involuntarily joining a ship's crew seems to have been more or less the same regardless of whether one was in government service or to have had a pirate for a captain.

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