



A Pirate's Pleasure (Cameron Family Book 2)

By Heather Graham

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She was his deffiant captive.

With her flame gold-hair and azure eyes, Skye Kinsdale was a prize beyond compare. Betrothed to a lord she'd never met, she set sail for America sworn to reject him on sight until the infamous pirate Silver Hawk seized her ship and banished all other men from her life. Burning with rage and passion, she was determined to destroy the arrogant buccaneer, to be free at any cost...

He Was Her Keeper...And Her Slave

The black prince of the seas, he was feared by pirate and privateer alike. Silver Hawk vowed he would have the vixen, make her crave his savage embrace. She was his—by law of the sea. The man who commanded a Caribbean kingdom swore he would teach his wild temptress to love, to surrender to the lawless thrill of...**A Pirates Pleasure.**

From the Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

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A Pirates Pleasure

About the Author

New York Times and *USA Today* bestselling author Heather Graham has written over one hundred novels and novellas including category, romantic suspense, historical romance, and paranormal. Married since high school graduation and the mother of five, her greatest love in life remains her family, but she also believes her career has been an incredible gift. Romance Writers of America presented Heather with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2003.

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Chapter One

July 9, 1718

The Atlantic

"The Jolly Roger! 'Tis the Jolly Roger, the death's-head, the skull and crossbones, bearing down upon us!"

Skye Kinsdale reached the helm in time to hear the lookout's panicked words. She came, teetering and floundering, just as a streak of lightning lit up the heavens, sizzling through the sky and the sea. It illuminated the ship that had been following the Silver Messenger like a ghostly echo through the night. Already the crew fought to trim the sails against the storms that plagued the Atlantic; now, new terror was offered as the phantom ship displayed her true colors, those of the bleached white bones against the black of eternal night, rouge's colors, a pirate's colors.

"Captain! She waves the Jolly Roger!" the lookout repeated.

"The skull and crossbones!" Skye said in dismay, now standing by Captain Holmby's side. The beleaguered lookout, high atop the crow's nest, stared down upon her. He was Davy O'Day of County Cork, recently hired onto the Silver Messenger, her father's ship.

Davey looked down upon Skye, and his fear for himself lessened as his heart took flight with the sight of her

fiery gold hair, her fine, delicate, and intelligent features, and her eyes of fierce and compelling aquamarine. Her cape whipped around her feminine form, and the wind that tore upon it seemed to make tendrils of her beautiful hair dance upon the very air. In danger, in fear, in laughter, she seemed to shimmer and sizzle with vibrance and life, perhaps a very part of the storm and tempest.

He had adored her since she had first stepped foot aboard the ship, smiling and laughing, always a lady, and always with her keen interest about everything and everyone around her. He was in love with her, as much in love as a scrap of an Irish boy could be, and he vowed in those moments that he would die gladly to save her. Pirates! Mother of God!

Captain Holmby was impatiently staring up at him. Davey found his tongue again, wondering if the captain had comprehended his words.

"Sir! The Jolly Roger! The flag she waves is the Jolly Roger. 'Tis a pirate vessel! We're under attack!"

"I know that, boy! Mr. Gleason!" The captain called out to his first mate. "My glass, sir!"

Skye watched with a curious mixture of dread and excitement as the captain's first officer came forward and handed the spyglass to the captain. The weather was more than rough that morn, with the ship pitching and swaying upon the whitecaps that rode the Atlantic. The scent of a storm was strong upon the air, for the heavens were darkened by a curious gray and the day was cool, growing cold, and the wind was fierce and salt-laden.

It was a day to fear storms and the wrath of God, but no man sailed the seas these days without some fear of the bloody pirates laying waste to unwary vessels upon the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Indeed, there were great bounties being offered for the likes of Blackbeard and Anne Bonny, One-Eyed Jack and the Silver Hawk.

It was not the proper weather for a pirate attack. The rogues, Captain Holmby had assured her just last night, did not like to attack when they might receive more harassment from King Neptune than from any guns at sea. Nay, Captain Holmby had said, they would have safe sailing, even though the winds might blow and tempest rage, and their journey across the Atlantic would soon be at an end. She would be delivered to her father in Williamsburg, and soon enough, her lucky beau would be blessed with his glorious bride. The last had been accompanied by a wink, and since the captain had proven to be such a sweet and delightful old man, Skye had smiled sweetly in return.

Whether or not she would be a bride was another matter altogether. Her father had decreed that she would marry a man she had never set eyes upon, and though she knew the arrangement was customary and proper, she was not about to accept it. Perhaps the Camerons had built the finest plantation in all of Tidewater, Virginia, and perhaps Lord Cameron was a great gentleman, but Skye was determined that she would not be an object to be bartered and sold and possessed, no matter what. No, she'd never had any intention of arriving in Virginia to be a bride. She'd had every intention of escaping marriage someday.

This, however, had not been the way!

There would be a way, of course, a legitimate way. She was all that her father had, just as her father was all that she had. Since her mother had been killed when she was a child, she had clung to him, and he to her. She had always known his very mind and had been able to wheedle from him anything she wanted.

Until six months ago when he had come to her school in London to tell her that she was coming home. She had been so thrilled. Then he had told her that she was coming home to marry and she had been stunned. She had been careful at first, soft-spoken and respectful. Then she had wheedled, and then she had grown furious. He was being so stubborn. Some silly betrothal had been agreed upon before she could even walk, and since she was supposed to marry Lord Petroc Cameron, her father had no intention of seeing reason. She had talked and cried and stamped her feet, and none of it had done her a bit of good. Lord Theodore Kinsdale had hugged her fiercely and told her he'd be awaiting her at their home in Williamsburg when her term at Mrs. Poindexter's School for Refined Ladies was done, and that was that. She was eager to leave Mrs. Poindexter's, so she determined that she would continue her fight in the New World. She would get out of it!

Yes, because a pirate ship was coming straight at them.

Suddenly, from out of the bleak gray sky and sea came a startling flash of color, of fire, of gold and sizzling red against the day.

The pirate vessel was firing upon them.

"One-Eyed Jack!" the captain stormed. He raised his glass to point across the sea. "He means to ram and grapple us! Mr. Gleason! All hands on deck! Call the men to their battle stations!"

The missile did not strike the ship, but water blew nearby them, as if sent to the surface by a great whale, spewing forth foam.

"Is it One-Eyed Jack?" Skye asked, cold fear lacing her insides despite her best efforts at courage. She had heard tales about the man. He kept hostages only if the fancy struck him. He slew good men as he swatted flies. And women . . .

She did not dare think. Her fear would steal her will to reason, and to fight.

"Aye, 'tis One-Eyed Jack!" the captain said. "See the flag, milady. Even his skull lacks the eyehole." He patted her hand absently. "Bring her about! Call the gunners to their stations, Mr. Gleason." Captain Holmby's blue eyes fell upon Skye. "Lady Kinsdale, I shall have you escorted to your quarters," he told her.

"But, sir—"

"Ah, nay, lady, you must stay in my cabin—less danger in case of fire—" He stopped speaking abruptly and swallowed hard with a certain guilt. "I did not mean—"

"I am not a child, Captain," Skye said. Nor would she sit meekly and be slain if the heathens came aboard. She knew how to fight well, and she would do so.

"Boy, come down!" the captain called to Davey, atop the crow's nest. "Take Lady Kinsdale to my cabin."

"Aye, aye, sir!" the lad replied, and quickly shimmied down.

"Don't be afraid, my lady! We will prevail."

"I am not afraid of the danger, Captain, but of the cabin—" Skye began, but she had lost his attention. He gave his orders to his first officer, who then boomed them out to the crew over the sound of the coming storm and

the waves, and over the sounds of the fire that now began, cannon to vie with the thunder.

"Come, me dear lady!" Davey encouraged her, grasping her hand. He began to run over the hull. They dodged grim-faced sailors and the rigging and they came to the door of the captain's cabin. It was an elegant place, finely set with a huge oak desk, damask draperies, and a deep-set bunk surrounded by bookshelves hewn into the very body of the vessel. The elegant china tea service reserved for the captain's use still sat atop his desk. Presumably he had been at tea when the call had come that the weather worsened and an unidentified ship approached.

"May God be with you, lady!" Davey cried to her. "I will lock you in, milady, and—"

"No!" she protested in a sharp scream. Then she smiled apologetically. She would be all right as long as there was light, as long as the door was not locked. "Please, Davey, I would not be trapped. Do not lock me in.

"No, milady, if that is your wish."

"Thank you. Go on now, and God be with you!" she said quickly, for already he was pulling the door shut behind him. Skye picked up her skirts and ran behind him, placing her hands upon the door and leaning against it. She could hear the footsteps pounding over the deck; she could hear the captain's first officer raging out his orders. She screamed suddenly, thrown back with such vengeance that she fell hard against the desk. She heard the fine china rattle and fall. A ball, she surmised, had struck the ship somewhere.

She heard a man scream, scream with such pain and agony that she could feel his anguish deep inside. Then she felt a deep and terrible shuddering within the ship.

The pirate vessel was upon them. She could hear grappling hooks being tossed and thrown, catching and sinking into the wood of the hull like the giant fangs of some evil monster. Aye, a monster it was.

Rubbing her shoulder where she had struck the deck, she carefully rose. The skirt to her new gold-threaded gown had caught and torn upon the carved foot of the desk and she wrenched at it with all speed. Smoke was seeping into the cabin no...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Susan Gagnon:

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