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Steel



Synopsis

A mysterious broken sword transports a modern teen through time to the deck of a pirate ship. Stranded in the past, and surrounded by strangers, she is forced to sign on as crew. But a pirate's life is bloody and brief, and as she learns about the dark magic that brought her there, she forms a desperate scheme to get home—one that risks everything in a duel to the death with a villainous pirate captain!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

(Review originally published at ReadBreatheRelax.com) When I first read the description and saw the word "pirates," I was all in. I was really looking forward to reading *Steel* because I haven't read a really great and fully satisfying pirate fantasy book since Misty Massey's *Mad Kestrel*. For some reason, sailing + pirates + magic = a rarity. Other than Robin Hobb's *Liveship Trader* series (*Ship of Magic* (The *Liveship Traders*, Book 1), I haven't seen many books that really fit this description. My elevated expectations may be the reason why I ended up feeling a little disappointed with *Steel*. The book starts off with Jill vacationing with her family in Jamaica. She's just lost a fencing tournament and is pretty bummed about life. She's annoyed with her family and hung up about losing the fencing match by mere seconds. After being bucked off a rocking boat (with a broken rapier that she found on the beach in tow), she's transported 300 years back in time when pirates dominated the open water. This is where the story gets a little dicey. Jill gets picked up by Marjory Cooper, a legendary pirate queen, and is forced to become a deckhand on her ship. Jill's experiences on the ship are recounted in such a dry, clinical way- bare descriptions about the ship, the crew and how

hard life has become for her. I didn't get any feel for who Jill was as a person.

I wasn't sure what exactly I was expecting when I started *Steel*, but I don't think it was this. Let me start by saying the cover is stunning breathtaking and while everyone knows not to judge a book by its cover, we all do it. Including me. *Steel* is a very appropriate summer read. It has the Bahamas, pirates, adventure at sea, and a decent female lead. I was fascinated by how much I learned about piracy and sword fighting/fencing while reading. Carrie Vaughn doesn't glamorize pirate life: it's smelly, sweaty, and a lot of hard work for a few days of action. I have to commend her for not trying to make this tale a sweeping romance with a lot of flowery scenery, which it could have easily been. She has clearly done her homework on fencing, using the terminology frequently, but not so much as to confuse the reader. I appreciate that. Unfortunately, the book had its drawbacks. Several times Vaughn used a single sentence to sum up what she should have described over several pages. Instead of explaining the ways the sails were hoisted or how the dynamics of the ship worked when the crew was setting sail, she would sum it up with one sentence. This happened several times. It was almost like being told a story from an actual person: When telling a story, a person won't go into the heavy details, but I want these details when I'm reading a book. Another 50 pages of fleshing out these scenes would have gone a long way, in my opinion. I also felt like Jill was a weak heroine. She tried to be strong, but I just could not connect with her. I couldn't find that spark that would make me adore her. She was pretty, but bland. Please don't get me wrong: *Steel* is a fun book that I did enjoy. I just feel like it is more appropriate for the younger YA readers.

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