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☆☆☆☆☆ “A film-like approach with plot and characters that come alive off the pages!”
~*T.I.P.S. (Teens Investigating Paranormal Situations)*

81 Minute Books Presents

Young Pirates: The Red Raven

Written by Ron Knight

“Morning sun in disguise, blinded by clouds and misty eyes.” ~ *Daisy ‘Fierce’ Clayden*

Part 1

Based on a true story that was hidden in pirate legend...

Until now.

When the hunter green ship appeared from the late afternoon fog on the Atlantic Ocean, it caught them by surprise.

The ship’s name was Serpent’s Curse and captained by Stroud ‘Cold Heart’ Ralston. Their flag was recognizable throughout the world. Black in color with a bloody skull of a green serpent.

As they approached, Captain of the Shadow Storm, Roman ‘Journey’ Fulton kept an eye on them. There was something strange about how the Serpent’s Curse appeared from the fog and closed in at a quick pace.

Maybe they needed help? These waters were filled with a mixture of pirates, British war ships and Spaniards.

Roman kept his crew out to sea for over a month and they were anxious to return home. They would divide their bounty of jewels, coins and rare coats they stole from a merchant ship headed to Carolina.

Roman’s first-mate, Corin ‘Wild’ Newbury stood close to his captain. “Something isn’t right about this.”

Taking in a deep breath of the sea air, Roman gave a nod of agreement. “Aye.” He looked toward the horizon, watching as the sun dipped. “When they reach us, it will be completely dark.”

Corin narrowed his tired eyes. “Perhaps that was their plan.”

“Perhaps,” Roman groaned. “I’ve known Stroud since we were kids.”

Corin looked at his captain. “Friendship on land is much different than the sea.”

The Serpent’s Curse eased next to Shadow Storm. Captain Stroud boarded the Storm and approached Captain Roman.

Stroud was average in size, but received his name ‘Cold Heart’ because mercy had never been in his soul. As a teenager he once defended Roman from a group of British teens who worked for the governor of New Providence.

When the British teens attacked Roman, Stroud appeared from nowhere with a club, striking the first teen in the skull, then in quick fashion bashed the others before they knew what happened.

Stroud wasn't finished.

He could have easily let them scamper away, but Stroud continued swinging his club with madness until the bodies were unrecognizable.

The governor sentenced Stroud to be beaten to death by four British guards. The night before Stroud was scheduled to be killed, a poisonous snake crawled into each of the four guards' beds and killed them.

A second death sentence was scheduled for Stroud in which he would dance with Jack Ketch. (Be hanged.)

Two hours later, the official hangman of New Providence was killed; also by a poisonous snake.

The governor ordered other soldiers to kill Stroud, but all of them were terrified of the young man. So the governor decided to let Stroud live and receive forty lashes instead.

This time the punishment was carried out, although, Stroud never screamed or even flinched.

His name, 'Cold Heart,' stuck ever since.

Roman patted Stroud on the shoulder. "You look how I feel. How long have you been at sea?"

"Forty-six days," Stroud said, eyeing the crew of the Shadow Storm.

Roman: "Are you in need of our aid? Food perhaps? We can ration what we have remaining."

Stroud stepped forward, just inches from Roman. "Governor Woodes Rogers has sent word to England. He wants to rid New Providence of pirates."

Roman shook his head. "There's over a thousand pirates that live there, not counting our families and two hundred residents. Governor Rogers and his Mary Men won't stand a chance."

Stroud: "Three British war ships are headed to New Providence. They're attacking pirate ships on the way and will eventually kill every private at sea and land."

Roman envisioned his wife and twenty-year-old son in New Providence. He had to reach them before the British war ships arrived. "What are you going to do? Fight? Or run?"

Stroud: "I don't run." His eyes shifted to First Mate Corin, eyes moving to the rest of the crew, then looking straight to Roman. "I've made a deal with England to receive full pardon."

"Full pardon?" Roman asked. "Deal? How? You've been at sea and haven't had a chance to speak with Governor Rogers."

Suddenly three war ships appeared as lanterns lit the night air, exposing the British flags.

Roman understood what happened. Stroud was surrounded by the war ships. He had two choices. Fight and lose, or become a pirate hunter.

In order to gain the trust of the British, Stroud had to seek out and destroy the nearest pirate ship, showing his loyalty to Britain.

Roman noticed a club in Stroud's hand; the color of green swamp.

The crew of the Serpent Curse quickly boarded the ship with weapons raised.

Stroud formed a grin. "Don't worry. I'll make sure to take care of your lovely wife." He then smiled. "In fact, I'll take care of her many times, just after I kill your son."

Roman drew his cutlass but it wasn't in time. Stroud swung the green club and connected on Roman's temple, blinding him with flashing stars of pain.

In quick fashion the crew of the Serpent Curse killed every member of the Shadow Storm.

To be continued...

You have completed 9 minutes of this book.

This 81 Minute Book is available at the Middle Room Haunted Store.

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