

# THE US Review of Books



## *Demon Pirate (Bilge Rat - Pirate Adventurer Series, Book Three)*

by Kevin Charles Smith  
Journey Publications, LLC

book review by Kat Kennedy

*"Consequently, I have agonizingly realized that providing even a modicum of mercy to sworn enemies can come at an exceedingly high price."*

By the third book of the author's series, Smith's protagonist, William Echo Eden, has weathered the tragic childhood of the first book, *Remarkable Rascal*, and the perilous adolescence of the second, *Black Tarantula*. This third chronicle finds Eden in adulthood, and though he has made it to manhood, the journey has not left him unscathed. He has lost much but refuses to lose his friend, Captain Adams. The beginning of this adventure finds Eden plotting the Captain's rescue from "ruthless pirates." What follows is an ingenious plot with a touch of dark humor and a cast of characters as crusty as their names.

Smith's scholarship and attention to detail are evident and propel readers into the midst of the strange and cruel world of piracy. From the saucy pirate song at the book's beginning to the implied promise of more high seas adventures to come at novel's end, the author captivates readers with this pirate tale and the unique lore and language of the ruffians of the high seas. It is no surprise that Smith has a knack for well-chosen words placed at just the right position in his descriptive passages. For 25 years until retirement, he made his living writing copy for the Kellogg Company. Anyone who has ever perused the side and back panels of their morning corn flakes from this brand has read his work. Though the author feels his copywriting efforts afforded him little preparation for the task of novel writing, there is no doubt the skill of condensing concepts into succinct copy gives him a useful perspective on effective word choice. Blend this skill with Smith's love and fascination with pirate lore which he has nurtured through the years, and you have the perfect recipe for creating a protagonist that embodies all the adventurous characteristics of the ultimate rebel.

The pirate, both historical and fictional, has grabbed the attention of children and adults alike for centuries, and Smith's offering to the fictional realm is no different. The best aspect of his creation is his adherence to historical accuracy. He doesn't glamorize the life of piracy but presents it as it would have been—harsh and cruel. Written for young adult and older readers, these adventures depict the life of the orphaned William in 1700's London as dangerous and as perilous as it would have been. His involvement in the world of pirates gives readers a historical perspective rarely found in novels about pirates. There is no glamorization of the illicit lifestyle or the dangers one faces when

encountering these outlaws. Smith's dedication to bringing the historical truths of piracy to young readers is commendable, and he is one of the best at presenting fantastic adventures that keep readers turning the pages well past midnight.

Though his book is part of a series, Smith has deftly created a piece that easily stands alone. His inclusion of references at the novel's end is a helpful tool when reading it as a standalone selection. The list of characters, the glossary, and, of course, the map are not just helpful tools; they are also fun additions which give readers the ability to fully embrace the archaic language of pirates. It is evident with each chapter that Smith's work is a labor of love. Readers may become so fully emerged in this fast-paced read with its rich language and descriptive narrative that they taste the salty air and feel the ocean's gentle waves. Whether one is a lover of pirate lore, a history buff, or simply a fan of great adventure stories, this novel is sure to please.

RECOMMENDED by the US Review

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