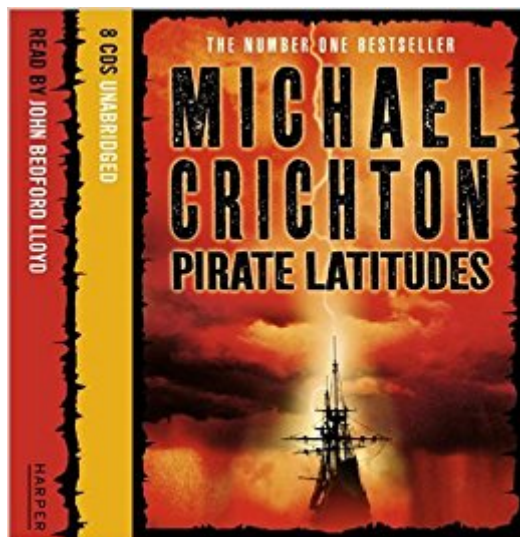


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Pirate Latitudes



Synopsis

From one of the best-loved authors of all time comes an irresistible adventure of swashbuckling pirates in the New World, a classic story of treasure and betrayal. *The Caribbean, 1665*. A remote colony of the English Crown, the island of Jamaica holds out against the vast supremacy of the Spanish empire. Port Royal, its capital, is a cutthroat town of taverns, grog shops, and bawdy houses. In this steamy climate there's a living to be made, a living that can end swiftly by disease -- or by dagger. For Captain Charles Hunter, gold in Spanish hands is gold for the taking, and the law of the land rests with those ruthless enough to make it. Word in port is that the galleon *El Trinidad*, fresh from New Spain, is awaiting repairs in a nearby harbor. Heavily fortified, the impregnable harbor is guarded by the bloodthirsty *Cazalla*, a favorite commander of the Spanish king himself. With backing from a powerful ally, Hunter assembles a crew of ruffians to infiltrate the enemy outpost and commandeer *El Trinidad*, along with its fortune in Spanish gold. The raid is as perilous as the bloodiest tales of island legend, and Hunter will lose more than one man before he even sets foot on foreign shores, where dense jungle and the firepower of Spanish infantry stand between him and the treasure. *Pirate Latitudes* is Michael Crichton at his best: a rollicking adventure tale pulsing with relentless action, crackling atmosphere, and heart-pounding suspense. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review Crichton, who died in 2008, was known primarily for such high-tech thrillers as

Jurassic Park and The Andromeda Strain. This new novel, found in manuscript form among his papers, will come as a bit of a surprise to many of his fans. It is, of all things, a pirate novel. Set in 1665, it tells the story of Captain Charles Hunter, a privateer who's hired by the governor of Jamaica's Port Royal to steal a Spanish galleon and its cargo of gold treasure.

Don't expect to see Jack Sparrow in this story of pirates of the Caribbean, though: Crichton doesn't play his pirates for laughs. And this is no typical pirate adventure, either:

it's actually a caper novel posing as a high-seas adventure. All the key caper-novel elements are here: the target, the mastermind, the plan, the motley crew, the ruthless villain, the gadgets, the twist, and the turncoat. Crichton keeps us in a constant state of suspense, never revealing quite what his hero, Captain Hunter, has up his sleeve, and the novel ends most unexpectedly. Pirate fans will love the book for its flashy characters and historical authenticity.

Crime fans will enjoy the caper-novel structure and the way the author keeps them on their toes. If this really is Crichton's final book, it's a splendid send-off: something new, different, and daring. --David Pitt --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

"Pirates Latitudes has the loot: Gore, sex, action. A lusty, rollicking 17th century adventure. History as entertainment. Crichton has done his homework." (Bob Minzesheimer, USA Today) "Unabashed fun." (Cameron Martin, New York Times) "Offers unexpected turns and plenty of yo ho ho's." (Richard Eisenberg, People (3 out of 4 stars)) "It's not an ironic pirate novel. It's not a pirate novel with a secret gimmick. It's simply an entertaining tale filled with crafty privateers, despicable villains, treasure hoards, double crosses and a sea monster. Go figure." (Michael Berry, San Francisco Chronicle) "The plot sucks you in like the giant kraken monster that nearly sinks our hero's galleon." (Benjamin Svetkey, Entertainment Weekly) --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

This book was the last by the late Michael Crichton. I loved his books. He was a great writer and his stories always intrigued me. Not so with this book. The story revolves around a pirate (of sorts) named Charles Hunter in the 17th century. Hunter puts together a group to attack an island guarded by the Spanish which contains treasure. The book is essentially three parts. The first sets up the cast of characters. The second is the attack followed by the third section which is revenge. Overall this story was just okay. The characters are not deep. The typical Crichton attention to detail is lacking. I've heard he did not complete this book and it shows. Unlike say Jurassic Park, this book is

just average.

This book is not typical Crichton novel, (BUT RATHER CORNWELL), we do not see technological gadgets, which are so common in other writer's novels, no also common happy end, but also is not tragic still. We see the main character (the Captain) who is allowed to act as a real pirate by Queen's patent as long as Spain is the target. He is brutal, but he has his own set of rules, his team of sailors will get their share of Spanish gold if they will survive their risky raid. It's interesting that Governor of Jamaica and in captain of the British ship have one thing in common - they know that if they will not be tough and cruel, England will loose not only Jamaica, but all other islands in the area. Interesting when new Governor's assistant who wants to follow strict rules and formal regulations can destroy all what the Jamaican Governor was able to achieve there. Suddenly this bleak character, who didn't understand that Elizabeth would like to crash Spain, as long as there no prove to her intentions, so formally she doesn't wish to provoke Spain, but wants to prevail in this part of the world or at least to weaken strong Spanish influence. Read this book and you'll see who will take over Jamaica! A lot of unexpected turns and a great end!

Characters are wonderful. Story is fast-paced and interesting. Not as dark as some of his other stories (just don't read the epilogue if you don't want any darkness). Not much death for Crichton. Sort of a shorter, easier read than his usual stuff. Definitely would suggest!

"Pirate Latitudes" by Michael Crichton is a nonstop adventure of privateers on the Spanish Main in the 1600s. The hero, Harvard grad Charles Hunter, puts together an assortment of three score men to capture Spanish gold, destroy the evil bad guys, and inadvertently rescue a high born English woman. Nothing goes quite to plan and ingenuity saves the day, and the hangman's rope. A romp in the Caribbean.

I think the only pirate cliché missed was the skull and crossbones (Jolly Roger) flag. The author was a skilled writer. I didn't care for the explicitness but otherwise it was a decent pirate tale. I surmise it too fantastical to be true that most of these adventures could have happened this way but as with any good story, some must have been based in truth, left to the judgment of the reader's imagination.

M. Crichton turns the short footnote history of a pirate into a wonderful tale, with echoes of

"historical truthiness." A competent portrayal of the pirate's life, with the heavy thumbs of the then superpowers (England & Spain) firmly set on the scale. The gritty, dirty, bawdy--and often very short--lives everyone lived, from the governor to the simplest scullery maid, ring with authenticity. The hero--Haaavaaad educated, no less--brings a fast and lively tongue to the page; his sword equally quick in administering his form of justice. The women ? Everyman's silent hope. The men ? None of that drunken monkey pirate stuff in this book. Greed, honed to a fine edge, crumbling loyalties, fastidious self-righteousness: all duly rewarded in a satisfying manner. After reading his fast moving novels, one wonders what additional & incredible tales Mr. Crichton might have spun had not his life been as short as many of his characters. Surely he is missed by more readers every day and somewhere his muse weeps in frustration: no worthy head to anoint.

Michael Crichton died in 2008. How then, you may ask, was a new novel just published under his name? As seems to be the case with many very successful, newly deceased writers, his publishers mysteriously discovered heretofore undiscovered work. In an effort to squeeze every last dime out of the Crichton franchise, this relatively insubstantial work was therefore recently released under his name. Now, I'm not saying that Michael Crichton didn't pen this novel. In fact, I suspect that some semblance of this story was perhaps found among his belongings. Whereupon his publishers took what they found and assigned it to an in-house hack with the instructions "flesh this out until you get to 300 pages". Well, in truth, they could only get to 225-250 pages, but by increasing line spacing and margins, and breaking up the story into short, 4-5 page chapters, enough white space was created to extend the book to its still short length; easily readable in two sittings. The novel centers upon 17th century Caribbean relations between the dominant Spanish empire and the much weaker English possessions, most particularly Port Royal, Jamaica. An English privateer's daring raid upon a well guarded Spanish treasure ship and the subsequent conflict which ensues make up the heart of the story. This is not a bad book, and is in truth moderately entertaining (certainly deserving of more than the one star that many reviewers feel compelled to award), but it is very short and quite a simple work. While Crichton has penned a few stinkers in his time, even they were well researched and written, having substantially more depth than I found in this novel. Again, I strongly suspect that what they found in Mr. Crichton's effects was an outline, not nearly "a manuscript" or the finished work that was presented here.

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