



The Frozen Pirate

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The Frozen Pirate is the story of Paul Rodney, a sailor who narrowly escapes death by shipwreck and exposure in the Straits of Magellan. Surmounting that peril, he faces another: Embedded in the Antarctic ice is an ancient vessel, filled with what seem to be frozen, contorted corpses. But the ship is a pirate ship, and the corpses aren't dead. When one of them revives, Rodney must fend off (and cooperate with, if he hopes to survive) one of the most bloodthirsty and black-hearted scoundrels ever to sail the seven seas!

The Frozen Pirate Details

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From Reader Review The Frozen Pirate for online ebook

Jay Daze says

Yup, a popsicle pirate. Unfortunately, this former best-seller hasn't weathered time as well as the pirate does (at first). Seaman Paul Rodney isn't a very interesting character (passive and priggish) and the book didn't really hold my interest. It takes ten or eleven chapters to get to the pirate and these are not chapters filled with exciting events. When we finally do get a defrosted pirate he's almost as boring as Rodney. The secret of a pirate book is to delight in the depravity of these rascals of the sea -- author William Clark Russel will have none of that. As for the resolution, well all I can say is freezer-burn isn't much of a plot device. The rest of the book is Rodney working out, in excessive detail how to get his booty home. For a pirate book there is a distressing lack of fun here.

I listened to this as a free download from Librivox (Well, I did skim listen some of the middle chapters.) There are multiple readers, but once I got past the first two chapters the volunteer narrators get better and it is read quite competently mostly by Barbara Derksen, though I think her French accent sort of drifts over into Russian -- all part of the charm of having regular people read.

Alex Long says

A good read, and a slight leap of faith!

Very enjoyable, a master writer and an amazing tale! With but a simple leap of faith you will find a great story and a book to remember!

Katie says

It takes a little bit to get into. It's a harder read just based on the fact that it is considered a classic and was written in the 1800s. If you don't mind reading something from that era, and you really enjoy ships it might be a good read for you.

This book can be found at gutenberg.com (free)

Robert Birnie says

Overall a pretty good book. Its not really a pirate book, its a ship wreck book. And the part about the frozen pirate was a little far fetched but the rest of the book was interesting. If you are looking for a fast paced pirate book then this isn't it though.

Also, you can get this book free from Project Gutenberg.

Jim Puskas says

One of the best "sailors' yarns" I've yet to encounter. It's a far-fetched tale requiring a generous suspension of disbelief -- but of course that's the way of sailors' yarns. Besides the high adventure, Russell's accounts of ocean storms, in this case the most notoriously hostile of locales around Cape Horn and south toward Antarctica, are remarkable in themselves.

Though almost forgotten nowadays, Russell was a prolific writer, publishing over 80 books from 1865 until his death in 1911. Born in New York City of English parents, Russell was educated in the UK. At age 13 he left school and joined the British merchant navy. At the age of 21 he quit the merchant service. The privations of his eight years as a sailor had gravely damaged his health, and he was never completely healthy again for the rest of his life. However, the positive legacy from his service was a wealth of material on which he based a successful career as a novelist.

The Frozen Pirate was published in 1887; my copy is of unknown vintage, probably a later edition printed sometime before 1915. I would be interested to learn whether any other Goodreads readers have encountered this or any of Russell's other numerous works.

Libromaniac says

Shipwrecked seamen conduct early experiment in cryogenics.

Kaj Samuelsson says

A very intense and well written book. Thanks to my GR friend Debbie for finding this one. The descriptions of the shipwreck and being stranded on the ice were great and really kept my interest. However, the last few pages of the book seemed a bit rushed and I would have liked some more detailed descriptions, but overall it is a book well worth reading.

Carl R. says

William Clark Russell is pretty much an unknown writer nowadays, but he did have a rather hearty career in the late nineteenth/early 20th century with stories of the high seas derived from his time in the merchant marine. The Frozen Pirate has nothing to do with the Merchant Marine directly, but at least to this landlubber's eye, there's plenty of seagoing savvy in the accounts of navigation techniques, knowledge of how things are south of the Cape of Good Hope, and the way hostile seas treat even the most skilled of sailors. I thank my friend and partner, Dan, for putting me on to Russell.

True to its title, the book, in the words of its hero/narrator, Paul Rodney, tells the story of a shipwrecked sailor (1802) who comes upon the remains of a pirate galleon marooned on an ice flow for a half-century. He finds more than one frozen pirate, but only one that truly matters. Russell's treatment of that one may

constitute the first literary appearance of the notion of cryogenic suspension and put Russell right up there with Jules Verne and H.G. Wells.

Rather than go into detail on that one, I'll just say that the details of how Rodney manages to put the galleon into service and what happens once he's able to sail away make for an original and suspenseful read. It ain't Moby Dick, but I've read nothing quite like it anywhere. Plus it's full of all kinds of wonderful 19th century terminology. The cold wind is "shrewd;" the characters light their way with "lanthorns;" Rodney "[gulps] down a bolus of conscience."

I will say I found the ending anti-climatic and weak in circumstance and detail. Nevertheless, after all the fun I had getting there, I wasn't too disappointed.

Wanda Woemmel rohlfig says

Loved this book. Very interesting but do wish the story went on to tell what happened after they returned home. The smuggling et all. Ya know?

Maryrod58 says

1800's writing style a bit hard to get into, but well worth the read. A fascinating story that kept me wondering 'what next?'

the gift says

concept of 'freezer burn' not yet known, but otherwise fun adventure, good images, good action, little science and less plausibility but then this is truly adventure fiction of the era...

Alli says

Loved the story.

Debbie Zapata says

Imagine this: you are the second mate on a sailing ship, leaving Callao in Peru to head south around Cape Horn and over to the Cape Of Good Hope at the bottom tip of Africa. Your ship is riding on ballast, which means there is no cargo in the hold. And not very long after you set sail (in the first chapter, as a matter of fact) you are caught in a hurricane.

But though the first rage of the storm was terrible enough, its fierceness did not come to its height till about one o'clock in the middle watch. Long before then the sea had grown mountainous, and the dance of our eggshell of a brig upon it was sickening and affrighting. The heads of the Andean peaks of black water looked tall enough to brush the lowering soot of the heavens with the blue and yellow phosphoric fires which sparkled ghastly amid the bursting froth. Bodies of foam flew like the flashings of pale sheet-lightning through our rigging and over us, and a dreadful roaring of mighty surges in mad career, and battling as they ran, rose out of the sea to deepen yet the thunderous bellowing of the hurricane on high.

You are swept off course, and you don't really know where you are, other than much further south than you should be. And you also know that *The cold was beyond language severe*. THEN you hit an iceberg and end up the only one left on the ship, which is taking on water and sinks just as you get yourself into the 15 foot boat and that boat into the ocean.

What will happen next?! What will you do?!

Our narrator Paul Rodney tells what he did, where he ended up, what and who he found there and what happened next. I thought it was a very exciting story. I doubt that some of the events could have happened the way they were explained, but I am not going to judge the book in a scientific way. It was entertaining and exciting, and the author made me feel the cold. Be sure to have a warm fuzzy blanket nearby if you read this.

Note: I would have gone to four stars, but this 1887 publication had the attitude of its day towards the black sailors depicted. Even though this was not constantly apparent, when it did show up it was annoying and distracting.

Julia says

The ultimate shipwreck victim! Nothing like being totally alone near the South Pole after your ship is sunk by an iceberg, then managing to find a land mass that, oops, is just another HUGE iceberg. You find a dead-frozen pirate, and then find his ship, iced in a ravine on the ice island, just in time to see your own little boat float away. It's kind of spooky climbing through the ancient pirate ship, especially as you have to step over the old, cold pirates. But it's almost worth it when you find awesome stashes of delicious frozen food and wine, plenty of coal to keep you warm and defrost your dinner, and chests full of stolen treasure. What you didn't count on was defrosting one of the nasty dead pirates along the way, who thinks YOU'RE the crazy one for telling him the year is a half century later than when he fell asleep in the ice. Lots of crazy fun to see where this story takes you. I listened to this as a free download from Librivox.org. The readers are all volunteers, and I love to hear their various personalities come through.

Deusprimus says

Delightful story, with an implausible premise, but great fun.
