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Pirates!: The True and Remarkable Adventures of Minerva Sharpe and Nancy Kington, Female Pirates

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Rees, Celia. *Pirates!: the True and Remarkable Adventures of Minerva Sharpe and Nancy Kington, female pirates*. Bloomsbury USA, 2003. ISBN 1582348162. \$16.95. 340 pp.

Reviewer: Rachel Wadham

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Adventure stories; Historical fiction;

Subject: Pirates--Juvenile fiction; Slavery--Juvenile fiction; Blacks--Jamaica--Juvenile fiction;

Individuality--Juvenile fiction; Jamaica--History--Juvenile fiction; Adventure stories--Juvenile fiction; Sea stories--Juvenile fiction; Book--Reviews;

After the death of her father, Nancy Kington is forced from the arms of her first love into an arranged marriage with an evil Brazilian plantation owner. Nancy and a plantation slave, Minerva Sharpe, escape Jamaica and their fates, after an accidental murder, by becoming pirates. Sailing the high seas, Nancy and Minerva find freedom and many adventures in their new life as they confront the gender and race barriers of the eighteenth century. Even on the sea, they cannot escape their fates as Nancy must deal with the evil Brazilian and ultimately find her first true love.

Full of the high swashbuckling adventure that one would expect from a piratical story, *Pirates!* lives up to the exclamation point at the end of the title. The exciting plot is engaging and fun as varied plot twists and the sometimes striking accounts of violence portray these girls' adventures. Nancy and Minerva are bold and are engaging characters who, while maintaining their personality as girls from the 1700s, will appeal to modern readers. The themes of gender, rights of women, slavery, and class distinctions are all wonderfully intertwined so you never feel as if you are getting a moral with the story. This tale of the life of two women pirates is so filled with adventure, love, and mystery it is sure to appeal to a wide audience.