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Juvenile Nonfiction

A Thousand Years of Pirates
William Gilkerson
Tundra Books
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In juvenile and children's books, the image of the swashbuckling, adventurous pirate is rarely tempered by the more sobering history of piracy. William Gilkerson's newest book, *A Thousand Years of Pirates*, manages to preserve the historical reality of pirates while still maintaining the captivating image of pirates that so strongly interests people, especially children.

Gilkerson, a sailor, marine artist, and historian, chronicles the evolution of piracy beginning with the Vikings while also highlighting some of the more famous names in pirate history. Gilkerson shares anecdotes and biographic information about Francis Drake, Henry Morgan, and the "pirate queen of Ireland," Grace O'Malley. These exciting individuals are grounded in a greater historical narrative, one which explores some of the political and economic motivations behind piracy. This kind of context serves as a great balance to typical pop-culture representations of pirates.

At the same time, Gilkerson captures the adventure of the high seas in his illustrations. Gilkerson's work has been featured in numerous exhibitions, books, magazines, and films and the illustrations in *A Thousand Years of Pirates* are a testament to his devotion to authenticity. His depictions make the ships and seadogs come to life, creating a richer experience for the reader.

The book is also a great example of how history can be made interesting to young readers. Gilkerson doesn't gloss over the less glamorous aspects of pirate history and in doing so he creates an authentic piece of work that invites readers to learn more. He even includes a further reading section to encourage readers to continue to learn about the topic that so strongly interests them. The popularity of pirates will initially attract readers, but the combination of interesting stories and Gilkerson's illustrations will keep nine- to thirteen-year-olds reading the book till the very end, and hopefully beyond that.