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Juvenile Fiction

Pirate Treasure: Traveling Trunk Adventure No 1
Benjamin Flinders
Flinders Press
978-0-9843955-0-7
(August 31, 2010)

Pirate Treasure is the first book of a series that features two brothers, Ethan and Dallin. The youngsters, ages eight and eleven, live in an apartment in which their room is decorated like a jungle. Their father, a businessman who travels a lot, brings home a new jungle-themed present after each of his trips. That is, until he breaks the tradition by bringing home a treasure chest, one that supposedly belonged to a dread pirate captain.

The boys discover that the trunk has strange powers. While hiding in the chest, they are transported back in time to a ship called the Hades, which is owned by a merchant-turned-pirate named Bartelmy. The pirates, thinking that Ethan and Dallin are stowaways, prepare to throw them overboard, but when captain Bartelmy grabs Dallin's wrist to force the boys off the plank, Dallin's watch alarm sounds. Convinced that the children are magicians, the pirates make friends with them.

As the story progresses through various adventures, the children and the pirates learn from each other. Since the crew had just become pirates the night before the boys arrived, they really don't know much about how to do it right. Ethan and Dallin help the pirates become better people, both morally and emotionally, while simultaneously growing more mature themselves: they learn to help and care about others rather than to only think of themselves.

Author Benjamin Flinders has worked as an editor, tutored high school students, and most recently has written four children's books in the *Traveling Trunk Adventure* series. Artist Nicolaus Serr has illustrated kitchenware, ceramics, movies, and now these books. His forty-five black and white drawings illustrate key aspects of the story. His deft use of shading creates a near-photographic effect which further bridges the gap between the reader's imagination and the author's inspiration.

This book should prove fascinating for most six- to ten-year-olds, particularly boys. Older readers may find the plot a bit too predictable, but children should find it interesting. The

language and content are very appropriate for the age group as well. As in Mary Pope Osborne's classic *The Magic Tree House* stories, young readers will learn a bit about history as well as some important moral lessons. Parents and children alike should appreciate the work.

Joey A. Kane