



Treasured Chest

Zrinka Jelic

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The last thing Captain Sirena expected to find on a desolate island was...him!

When Carmen Ventura takes up her post as commander of the Strega, she becomes the new Captain Sirena, the legendary pirate most people think is just a myth created to scare children. Her first quest is to search for the “treasured chest” hidden by her predecessor. But before she can even begin the hunt, she runs into Marko Lucin, captain of the Levant and Carmen’s most insane adventure yet.

How can the most beautiful woman he’s ever seen be a bloody pirate?

Never one to pass up an adventure, especially where pretty women are concerned, Marko finds his ultimate challenge in Carmen. Not only does he fall for her courage, spunk, and intelligence, but the lady pirate can also help him get what he wants—the famous treasure everyone whispers about. His only problem—how long can he play the charming captain before she discovers his true intentions?

Treasured Chest Details

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From Reader Review *Treasured Chest* for online ebook

Steven Drachman says

Pirate Carmen is surprised when she is tapped to replace Sirena as captain of the legendary *Strega*, an all-woman pirate ship that most people in the 18th century have heard of but believe doesn't really exist. *Treasured Chest* follows the new Sirena's journey from shipmate to pirate captain, her discovery of true love, her search for the original Sirena's lost treasure, and one fateful final battle.

I really enjoyed this. I love pirate stories, and I was intrigued years ago when I read in *Islands Magazine* about history's real-life female pirates. The author has done a great job of either historical research or world-building – there is a real sense of time and place here, and the characters really lived and breathed for me. The writing is generally competent and sometimes more than that, and the physical locations are at times vivid and beautifully described.

There were a few flaws, though. Sirena's true love – a man named Marko whom the *Strega* rescues from a deserted isle – is at first so entirely unappealing that their relationship seems forced and unbelievable on its own terms. I would have hoped a tough pirate like Sirena could have staved off a cad like this, and I kept hoping she would surprise us and toss him overboard. But Sirena seems to find him so enticing that I think the reader was supposed to, as well. (Later on in the book a good and genuine chemistry develops, however, saving the narrative.) In my humble opinion, the two sex scenes are awkwardly done. And the conclusion of the book is a bit of a let-down after the high adventure that has come before.

I mention these flaws only because I think the book could have been so much more than it is. Still, it's an enjoyable, well-paced adventure, and I liked it.

Lisa Marie Gabriel says

Avast ye lubbers (or should that be lovers maybe?) Here's a tale for ye, spun in the best traditions of the sea to set the pulses racing and the timbers shivering indeed. This is a bold tale of red blooded love, high passion, treason, bloodshed and piracy on the high seas and at its head Serena, Lady of the Pirates and lately Cap'n of the *Strega*. A crew of women escape from their past into a life of hardship at sea, piracy and strictly no men until... Ah! But ye landlubbers must read it for yourselves for I'll not spoil it by revealing details of the treasure.

Zrinka Jelic spins an exciting tale complete with dashing hero in the style of Errol Flynn and heroine who, under her sea going clothes, proves as skilled in the arts of love as she is in the use of sword and cutlass. The leader of a crew of corsairs on their final mission, she has much to learn, many hardships to bear and a future to dream of.

I liked this tale a great deal; it has the smell of the sea about it (and everyone knows I love boats). There is much blood but also a strong element of love. Both are explicitly told but not too graphic for the modern romance reader. Proofreading is not perfect, but that will not detract from the yarn Jelic spins for us.

Asher Tensei says

This book had no problem starting up. I was engulfed into the story from the teaser in the beginning and the pace was kept swift and interesting for the rest of the book. It's historical fiction, but I'm sure anyone modern can get into after. After all, this isn't normally my genre.

I won't give spoilers, but this book was very descriptive, I actually felt as if I were there on the ship dodging cannon fire myself! The conflict is set up early with the demise of the Captain, and that's all I'll say. It took me a while to get used to the pirate lingo, but hey, who doesn't love pirates? I was willing to learn it all while I was reading. I could tell the world she set the novel in was well researched. From the description in the clothes and the nasty attitude portrayed by these women in the novel, you'd swear she was pirate herself.

If you love pirates, this is easily an installment to add to your collection. I'm sure Johnny Deep would appreciate it!

A. Bookzilla. says

Not only did I read a historical novel, I read a pirate book - both of which aren't really my thing. It's the language - when I read saucy wench, bosom and ravish and it's not said in a joking manner, I still can't take it seriously.

The reason I picked this book to read is because of the setting. The whole thing happens along the Adriatic coast - one of my favorite places in the world where I spend a good part of summer every year, and I have to admit the author did it justice! She really captured the very essence of being on the Adriatic sea, the feeling of the cities, the temperamental weather, etc. Obviously, she's from Croatia so she's familiar with the setting, but still.

Not to mention it was really cool when she would mention a place and I would be like "been there!" (Just an FYI - Ragusa is actually Dubrovnik :D, if you need an image to put in your head. *Every location in this book is a real place!*)

(It's the gorgeous Blue Cave! You can rent this little boat thingie and they take you there and it's really a magical place.)

More locations:

(view spoiler)

I have never read a pirate book, but something tells me this is different than most. The pirates are all women (pirettes?), and it's them that do most of the saving.

Carmen a.k.a Captain Sirena (the name goes well with the whole myth story) is a good, strong, female character that's been through a lot. I quite liked Carmen because she has this air of authority about her that makes me see why she was the one chosen to be the next captain of the ship. She's not a virginal, helpless, naive heroine - she's got a past, a dirty mouth and she's tough and fearless. There's also a sweet, tender side to her.

But she's also mesmerized, captivated, etc, etc, by Marko and she pretty much transforms into a lovesick puppy when it comes to him. I hoped she wouldn't.

Marko is a good hero in the context of this story. At first he's completely baffled that she won't succumb to his "seductive skills" which are apparently legendary, but he admires her for it, too, and it just makes him want her more. I liked his determination and I guess he was patient about it although the whole courting happens in a couple of days, so, not really.

That being said, the author sort of tells you to like him. I don't like being told what to think when reading a book. I wasn't in love with him from the very beginning, it took me a while to get there.

Both these characters are smart and capable and could hold their own against each other. I really, really liked this.

If you are looking for insta-love, this is your story. Marko sees Carmen and decides he wants to spend the rest of his life with her. I didn't think they had great chemistry... but it could be just me. I felt their whole romance was based on superficial things, mostly appearances, especially on Marko's side.

I wasn't that interested in the romance, I wanted to know how everything else would play out. Don't get me wrong, I *was* happy for the two of them in the end, it's just that I found everything else more interesting.

I liked the way it was written, it suits the story. There's a bit of a mystery in there but I felt the reveal fell short because it didn't do much for the story.

The characters felt realistic to me, and I loved the women of Strega, there was this sense of girl-power about the whole thing.

I liked the second half of the book a lot. It's got some good action, and you finally see the chemistry between Carmen and Marko develop nicely.

It wasn't really a smutty book - which (I'm ashamed to admit) I expected it to be. There are two mildly graphic sex scenes, and I didn't like them. The way she set it up for them to have sex was also a bit cliché.

"Unh, yeah, let's get out of these drenched clothes so we don't die."

Yeah, that's why (cue eyebrow wiggle).

But overall, I liked this book for what it is. It's fast paced, there isn't a lot of drama, and it's ultimately a happy read. I'd give it a 3.5.

Christoph Fischer says

"Treasured Chest" by Zrinka Jelic is a romance novel set on a Pirate ship run by women.

What captivated me from the beginning was the detailed description of the pirate ship, the competent, obviously well researched and authentic-feeling setting that gave the story a sense of authority. This made it

easy for me to continue reading what I was led to believe would be an easy read, but combined with the strength of the writing and Jelic's skilled use of language however the setting inspired confidence in what was yet to unfold, the story.

When the Captain of this all female Crew dies Carmen becomes the new leader, although she is still often referred to as Sirena, the name of the late Captain. While one part of the plot involves the hunt for the title, the Treasured Chest of said Captain, there are male enemies to fight and then there is the captivated Captain Marko, for whom Carmen eventually falls.

The love story was superbly done. I had feared another "taming of the shrew" or some other artificial obstacle in the way of love, to be overcome - something that in many a romance book is just a tedious diversion tactic to stretch the romance to a happy ending at the end of the book.

Much to my relief the two main characters are incredibly realistic and 'normal' in their developing love, likeable and believable. The romance does not develop until some time into the book and is then slightly distracted by the hunt, fight scenes and some other sub plots that keep the suspense and thrills coming.

I rarely recommend romance novels but this one is almost historical fiction with its knowledge of sailing, ships, pirate life and the descriptions of the Adriatic coasts.

It is a pleasure to have such well developed and not too stereotypical characters. The same must be said for the love and action scenes, I found them much more believable and enjoyable than I would have expected. This book deserves a place at the top of its league given the quality of style, writing and story. If you think that romance writing has to be flat you will have to read this to convince yourself otherwise. This is a very pleasant and entertaining book.

R.A. Sears says

Firstly, I've read my fair share of "romance" novels, filled with steam and smut and relationships that happen WAY too fast. Thankfully, this was definitely NOT one of those books! Filled to the brim with historical facts that made the world so real you could practically smell the salt in the air and feel the wet sea breeze on your face, this was truly a treat to read.

I've never actually read a pirate story that was done this well. Clearly, the author's done her research, and it shows in this captivating tale of adventure and love on the high seas. I felt that Carmen was not only a believable heroine, but also a likeable one. In most romance novels, the female lead is weak, helpless, and needing to be rescued by the "alpha male" love interest. Carmen is a strong lead, able to fend for herself, and actually does more than her fair share of protecting Marko - the male lead.

The characters' histories unfold in a way that makes you love them even more by the time things are wrapped up neatly in the end. The action scenes are top-notch, and the love scenes are steamy without feeling flat or overdone. And to top it all off, even though Carmen and Marko go through hell, everyone gets their happy ending.

Len says

Treasured Chest by Zrinka Jelic is a historical romance book! At first, it did take me awhile to get into it, but once I got past the first chapter of the book I was hooked. This is the first time I have read a book about a woman, who is a pirate and became a Captain of a ship with a crew of women on it. It is very interesting and it made me want to read more of the book.

Carmen Ventura is a young beautiful woman with long black curly hair and grey eyes. She had joined the Strega ship under the command of Captain Sirena, the legendary pirate. Most people think that she was a myth created to scare the children. Carmen was appointed to be the new Captain Sirena, when the original Captain Sirena passed away. Carmen is a strong woman who knows how to fight and can handle anything that comes her way. Her first mission is to go find a “treasure chest” that the original Captain Sirena had hidden some where.

On her way to Ragusa, Captain Sirena met Marko Lucin who was stranded on an island. He was the Captain of a ship that was recently attacked. She took him on board the Strega as a guest. Marko Lucin is a young handsome man and he is also looking for this treasure chest that he has heard about. Their adventures on the high seas have just begun.

Through out the whole story, Captain Sirena and Marko Lucin have been through a lot together and they have a love/hate attraction for each other. As I was reading, I can picture all the scenes from the book in my mind. I felt like I was also on the Strega with them. I have enjoyed reading and seeing the journey of Captain Sirena and Marko Lucin from their eyes.

Zrinka Jelic has done an amazing job writing Treasured Chest. Her writing shows that she has done her research. She described and explained what it was really like back then during the pirate time. Treasure Chest has lots of adventure, love and tragedy in it. The characters Carmen Ventura/Captain Sirena and Marko Lucin are awesome. She did a great job bringing them together and showing us their love for each other.

Debbie Christiana says

What's not to love about story that has a pirate ship named The Strega, with a captain and crew of women, considered by many to be a myth - especially when a handsome captain loses his ship, and he and his crew must come aboard?

I really enjoyed this book. Captain Sirena is a strong, vibrant woman and does what need to be done while not losing her feminine allure. Captain Marko Lucin is a man without a ship and without the normal male ego problems of fighting side by side with women.

It was a historical tale with exciting sword fights, sinking ships, prisoners taken captive and plenty of romance that sizzled, just the way I like it. There were unexpected twists, one of my favorite being the hidden treasure. In a clever turn, it's not the typical treasure, but still very valuable in its own right.

I'm a paranormal girl and Bonded By Crimson, by Ms. Jelic was a favorite of mine. I've mentioned before the author's talent for descriptive writing and she didn't disappoint with Treasured Chest. I felt I was at sea and in the middle of all action. I could hear the ship creaking in the night.

It's a fun, swashbuckling tale that I highly recommend.

Marise Ghorayeb says

I don't read much romance and I don't think I have ever read a pirate story. As such, I honestly did not expect to like this when I started. It took exactly one chapter for me to change my mind.

First of all, the thing I have most against romance is that I typically find the love triangles and cat and mouse games somewhat boring. But mix a heavy dose of lust and romance with pirate battles, treasure, mystery, death and danger and it's a different story entirely. I loved this.

I was drawn to Carmen (Sirena) right from the prologue. Her character and her back story are well thought out and interesting. Best of all, she's a very strong woman on the outside, but we also get a glimpse of her internal doubts.

Marko is also a well developed character by the end, but I thought the book's greatest weakness was the fact that he wasn't a complete character to me until about half way through the book. Although by the end I was completely endeared to him as well as to Marta (a supporting character).

Pirate battles, romance, lust, and treasure chests aside, I think what made this book so great was the unexpected. Of course you start a book titled "Treasured Chest" expecting treasure and maybe a battle or two; but the treasure is far from a typical pirate treasure and there was more mystery to be unraveled at every turn of this story. Nor did the plot travel along expected paths but rather took twists and turns towards an ending I would have never guessed at.

All in all I think this was an excellent read and I am very grateful to the author for offering me a free copy for my honest review.

Cassandra Ulrich says

Of Pirates and Unexpected Treasure.

"Treasured Chest" by Zrinka Jelic is a story about female pirates of the Strega on a mission to help the poor folk downtrodden by nobility. It reminded me of Robin Hood on the seas, but the strong yet feminine touch was refreshing.

With the previous Captain Sirena's passing in the first chapter, Carmen Ventura was named as the new captain to take her place. With notorious stories spread about the existence of the Strega, the new Captain Sirena must keep their existence a myth to the ones they continued to attack on the high seas. One thing plagued Carmen. The previous captain asked her to find and protect her special treasure with only a little key in her possession.

Meanwhile, Marko Lucin, captain of the Levant, is attacked and captured by a mean seaman named Gaspar who is after a map in Marko's possession. During a raid by the fabled women of the Strega, Marko escaped and became marooned on an island with the map. He started a fire to lure Sirena and her ship to shore. He'd been drawn to her beauty as he stayed hidden during the scuffle between her crew and Gaspar's men before she sank Gaspar's ship.

Before long, Sirena rescued Marko only to discover a strong attraction to this man. It seemed as though she recognized him, but how and why eluded her until much later. Would she dare let a man possess her heart? Not if she could help it, but with the map he revealed to her and the chemistry brewing between them, she'd help him find his treasure before she sent him on his way. Perhaps, he'd inadvertently help her find the

treasure she sought.

The journey with Sirena and Marko and the fights scenes kept me riveted to the story. The female crew worked together as a well-oiled machine under Marta's, the quartermaster's, raspy commands. Due to the steamy love scenes, I recommend this story to adults who love swashbuckling adventure in Mediterranean seas.

K.A. Krisko says

Well, this was a fun read, and quite well done. The author's obviously familiar with the setting in the Adriatic Sea or has done her research quite well, and this is reflected in the authentic place names and descriptions. There's good use of sea-faring terms without overwhelming the reader with technicalities. The plot moves along at a steady pace; there's swashbuckling action and romantic interludes, mystery and family crises. The characters were well-drawn, with distinct personalities and back-stories, revealed slowly throughout the book (my favorite turned out to be Marta, the quartermaster). The situations are believable and I ended with a strong vision in my head of many characters and all the settings. If you like pirates and sea-faring adventures, you can't go wrong with this one (and the romance is actual romance, with fairly brief sexual scenes - this isn't erotica).

My only real gripe, and the reason I couldn't quite come up with five stars, is the frequent odd wording. I found myself brought to a stop a number of times. Don't get me wrong; this actually didn't affect my understanding. It was generally pretty obvious what the author meant, there were just some strange uses of terms (and a few obvious mistakes). At first I thought it might be a purposeful attempt to present a historic feel, but there are some anachronisms (kid says "Wow!") so I really don't think so. There aren't a lot of typos, but there is one in the very first couple of paragraphs ("Our children huger..." undoubtedly meant to say "hunger") which gave me the impression that maybe it hadn't been carefully proofed.

Overall, this is a well-crafted and nicely-paced pirate/adventure/mystery/romance, and I think there are many, many readers who enjoy each of those categories who will like this book. Gird your sword and take a stab at it!

Nana Prah says

There is nothing I love more in a story than a strong heroine and this book gave me one in pirate Carmen Ventura (Captain Sirena). I had never heard of a female pirate until this book. It turns out that becoming a pirate on an all female ship was not a decision she made by choice but by dire circumstance. She is an honest to goodness, shiver me timbres, fight like a man, and cuss like a sailor pirate.

As if things aren't complicated enough for her as a pirate, she is made the captain of the Strega. To complicate matters even more she rescues Captain Marko Lucin (who is not a pirate) from a deserted island and takes him onto her ship. The attraction between them is strong and immediate. I loved their romance. It was a sweet and passionate love affair.

I enjoyed reading this book. I didn't want to put it down (darn work and sleep). It wasn't what I would consider a fast paced book, but the story was so interesting and I was so vested in the lives of the characters that I needed to see what happened next. The action scenes alone had my heart racing wondering who was

going to get sliced and who would survive.

I couldn't believe (and yet I was impressed that Zrinka wrote it in) what Captain Sirena had to go through at one point in the book. I'm not going to spoil it for you, but I'll tell you that the situation is intense.

If you are a lover of action, romance, mystery, and great writing then Treasured Chest is for you.

Blacky *Romance Addict* says

I am a very big fan of pirate movies, but I haven't read many pirate books, sadly :(I really looked forward to this one, and it really was a fun read, especially because it's set in the Adriatic Sea <3 It is rather light, romantic, with female pirates and a search for treasure :)

The story

After the death of the infamous pirate Captain Sirena, Carmen takes her place, and her name, in order keep the legend alive :)

The pirate ship Strega and the crew, all females, are pretty much like a pirate Robin Hood band, stealing riches and giving them to the poor :)

Marko is a captain of the merchant ship Levant, he gets kidnapped by a pirate set on revenge to Sirena.

Eventually Carmen appears and saves Marko, ultimately bringing him on her ship and going into the search for Sirena's famous treasure :)

The writing style is very good, it totally worked for me, and I loved all the old expressions and ship terms and all :D

The story - I loved the beginning and the whole treasure search, the battles and raids and all :) the action was great :D

BUT! At about the time Sirena gets (view spoiler), and to the end, the rest of the book was dull. I guess I wanted more action and for something to happen! As it was, it was mostly just various characters talking about, with one action scene when she gets (view spoiler).

In my opinion, the treasure was found too soon in the story, at about (view spoiler)%, and that was what kept me interested and eager in the first place.

The characters were good, even the supporting ones :) i'll tlk more about the MCs in their own section. Oh btw, I could've done without the part with Marko's fiancée. Too long and I really wasn't interested in anything about it :D Sorry :D

Marko & Sirena

Sirena is a widow forced to take the life of a pirate. Now Captain of her own ship, she tries to earn the loyalty of the women, and keep the promise made to the former Captain, finding the chest that can be opened with the key Sirena gave her.

Marko is engaged and it is to be a convenience marriage, one he doesn't want. He gets captured by pirates who tell him that Sirena is his mother, and they plan to get good money for him.

Marko also had a treasure map that can't be deciphered, well, until he and Sirena get their heads together and try to find the famous treasure.

Since this is a historical, I can more easily believe the insta-love here, and I was pretty much OK with it :) Marko sees a beautiful pirate who saves his life, and they work together to find the treasure, in the meantime falling in love :D

My only objection was Sirena, and how she lacked the hmmm how to say it, firmness of character. She is pirate, has been one for many years, but she lets Marko do pretty much what he wants with her while he's at her ship, he even sleeps in the Captain's quarters, while there is a rule to kill any man that came on board. I just couldn't believe it. And she cries very often. I kinda wanted her tougher :D but oh well :D

So my conclusion is 3,5 stars :) I loved the beginning, but the ending was a bit dull, so it's in the middle :)))

A nice romance with a twist of female pirates in it, if you like this sort of plot then you might like the book also :)

This book was provided by the author, thank you

S.R. Howen says

"Treasured Chest" by Zrinka Jelic took me by surprise. Pirates are all the rage, Disney has them, prime time TV has them, and they have always held a certain place in every young boy's heart—and many young girls as well. This book takes it to the next level. Here and there we hear about a fabled woman pirate. This book gives us not only female pirates, but a female Captain as well.

The descriptions and settings draw you in and hold your attention. You feel as if you are standing on the deck of the Strega, the ship that Captain Sirena (Carmen) now commands. The author did their research, and it shows, but doesn't hit you over the head with too much info. I'm not sure what genre I would put this book into, simply calling it a action adventure story would not do it justice. It has romance, adventure, and history all rolled into one.

The story takes our Captain on a search for treasure, what would a pirate story be without the hunt for a treasure of some sort? Standing in her way is Captain Marko, he also wants the treasure Carmen seeks. In true romance fashion, they start out at odds and have to overcome many obstacles, together, to find the real treasure.

Entertaining, and well written, this story will keep you up reading past bedtime, and going in search of another book by this author.

Randy Massey says

This is an extremely well written story that keeps you on the edge of your seat of expectations! It grabs you right from the get go and keeps you "involved" throughout the total story. The characters come to life in amazing ways. Unique was the heroine, a female pirate, and the love story that was beautifully developed, too. The author's in depth research shines through over and over again. Was not able to put it down until I was finished with it. Very much so looking forward to more works written by this author.

Randy Massey
