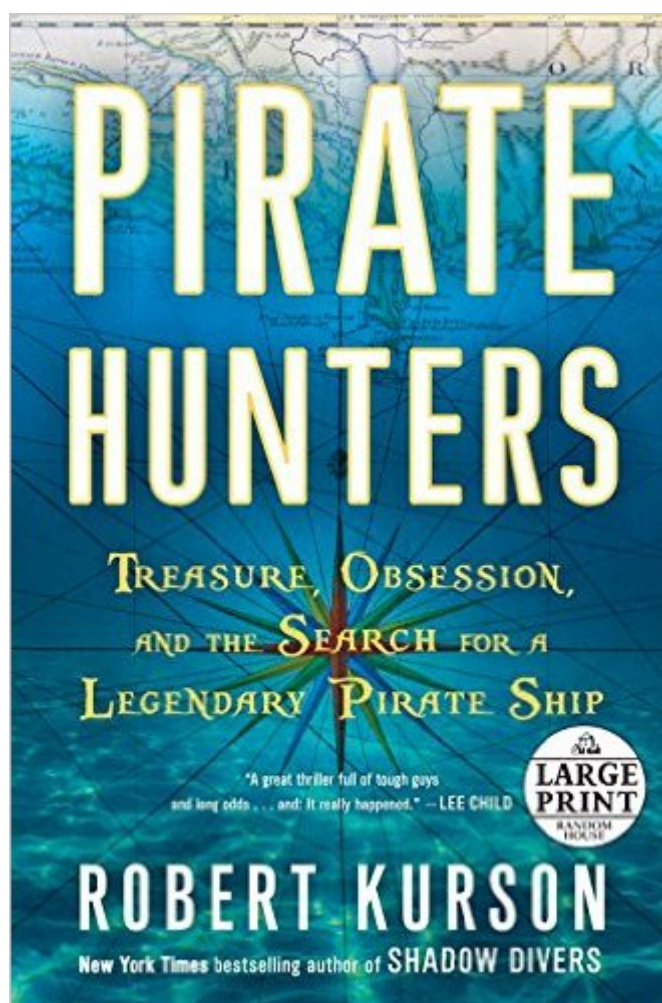


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Pirate Hunters: Treasure, Obsession, And The Search For A Legendary Pirate Ship (Random House Large Print)



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY CHICAGO TRIBUNE • A thrilling adventure of danger and deep-sea diving, historic mystery and suspense, by the author of *Shadow Divers* Finding and identifying a pirate ship is the hardest thing to do under the sea. But two men—John Chatterton and John Mattera—are willing to risk everything to find the *Golden Fleece*, the ship of the infamous pirate Joseph Bannister. At large during the Golden Age of Piracy in the seventeenth century, Bannister should have been immortalized in the lore of the sea—his exploits more notorious than Blackbeard's, more daring than Kidd's. But his story, and his ship, have been lost to time. If Chatterton and Mattera succeed, they will make history—it will be just the second time ever that a pirate ship has been discovered and positively identified. Soon, however, they realize that cutting-edge technology and a willingness to lose everything aren't enough to track down Bannister's ship. They must travel the globe in search of historic documents and accounts of the great pirate's exploits, face down dangerous rivals, battle the tides of nations and governments and experts. But it's only when they learn to think and act like pirates—like Bannister—that they become able to go where no pirate hunters have gone before. Fast-paced and filled with suspense, fascinating characters, history, and adventure, *Pirate Hunters* is an unputdownable story that goes deep to discover truths and souls long believed lost.

Praise for *Pirate Hunters* • "You won't want to put [it] down." • "Los Angeles Times • An exceptional adventure . . . Highly recommended to readers who delight in adventure, suspense, and the thrill of discovering history at their fingertips." • "Library Journal (starred review) • A terrific read . . . The book gallops along at a blistering pace, shifting us deftly between the seventeenth century and the present day." • "Diver • Nonfiction with the trademarks of a novel: the plots and subplots, the tension and suspense . . . [Kurson has] found gold." • "The Dallas Morning News • Rollicking . . . a fascinating [story] about the world of pirates, piracy, and priceless treasures." • "The Boston Globe • [Kurson's] narration is just as engrossing as the subject." • "The Christian Science Monitor • A wild ride [and an] extraordinary adventure . . . Kurson's own enthusiasm, combined with his copious research and an eye for detail, makes for one of the most mind-blowing pirate stories of recent memory, one that even the staunchest landlubber will have a hard time putting down." • "Publishers Weekly (starred review) • The two contemporary pirate-ship seekers of Mr. Kurson's narrative are as daring, intrepid, tough and talented as Blood and Sparrow—and Bannister. . . . As depicted by the author, they are real-life Hemingway heroes." • "The Wall Street Journal • [Kurson] takes his knowledge of the underwater world and applies it to the ^Golden

Age of Piracy™ . . . thrillingly detailing the highs and lows of chasing not just gold and silver but also history. • "Booklist" œA great thriller full of tough guys and long odds . . . and: It's all true. • "Lee Child" From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

PIRATE HUNTERS is more than just "the search for the lost treasure ship of a great buccaneer," it's history, biography, and psychology rolled into one page-turning tale. Ostensibly, this is the story of two treasure hunters, John Mattera and John Chatterton, who descend upon the Dominican Republic in search of the pirate Joseph Bannister's ship, THE GOLDEN FLEECE. In a battle against two British war ships, the GOLDEN FLEECE went down in 1687, where it has rested in peace ever since. Author Robert Kurson uses the natural story lines built by hunters racing other hunters for one of the most elusive of prizes, a genuine pirate wreck (records for pirate ships were not kept by pirates and their sympathizers, making finds all the more challenging). In addition to the history propelled by the mystery, the false starts necessary to reach an actual strike, and the underwater (and above) descriptions built for suspense, the author stops the narrative to explore the background of both treasure hunters -- Chatterton's as a medic who risked his life repeatedly in Vietnam, and Mattera's as a boy growing up as part of the New York crime families network in the 60s and 70s. Both are diverting tales, though the reader, appetite whetted, longs to get back to the Dominican and the hunt for a great pirate ship. Also leavening the narratives are historical accounts of Joseph Bannister, the British captain turned rogue (and how often does THAT happen?) who

took on his countrymen and fought them to a draw against incredible odds. For readers, the derring will do nicely and the reading is pitched once it comes to Bannister.

First off, I had very high hopes for this book after Shadow Divers. My honest belief here is that Pirate Hunters was written by John Mattera and only edited by Robert Kurson. More on this later. With all due respect, this book should have been condensed to a 12 page magazine article. As a certified nautical archaeologist having spent 20 years working overseas in several third world countries (including managing two projects for one of his "heroes" that Mattera claims he consulted with) it's absurd to believe that 4 guys working on off an inflatable for several years in the Dominican weren't shaken down every single day for money or arrested for stealing that country's cultural heritage, permit or not. We had permits in all the countries we worked in, but once word got out on the island that you were diving for a shipwreck, every government and local official assumed you were finding gold and they all wanted their share regardless of what your permit stated. No fuel, or supplies sold to you, no tanks re-filled, boat chained to the dock, cars vandalized. Hard to believe these guys weren't chased out of the country or thrown in jail. Several incidents in the book are not plausible. Examples: Mattera is researching John Bannister in the archives in Seville and requests help from the attendant. She asks Mattera if he is a treasure hunter, and he says yes. The book claims that she then goes out of her way to help Mattera, but reality is if you admit to being a treasure hunter in the archives they escort you out of the building. Spain now has a worldwide claim against all Spanish artifacts and shipwrecks recovered regardless of its location, and treasure hunters are viewed as thieves against the Spanish government.

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