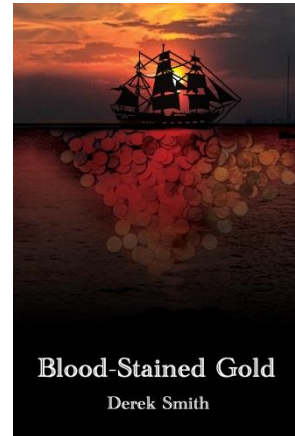


Blood-Stained Gold

Derek Smith



Derek Smith returns with an exciting third novel filled with secrets, ambition and adventure.

Jack's childhood on a country estate is overshadowed by the ambition of his father, who hopes that both his sons will follow in his footsteps and become foresters. But Jack, not wanting to be like his brother, dreams of adventure and the sea.

When he boards *The Severn Bore* to work as the ship's carpenter, he's totally unaware that what seems like an innocent mission from the Royal Navy is hiding a deep secret: the captain frequently resorts to piracy, plundering Spanish and French cargo ships for their gold. Amid a crew of brutal men with little conscience and morality, Jack finds himself and his life changed forever.

Derek Smith was born in a tiny thatched cottage on the edge of Salisbury Plain army ranges, the third son of a farm labourer. The village where he grew up was a self-contained, close-knit community, with few shops and a strong farming presence. Everybody knew each other, and Derek has fond childhood memories of sharing homemade penny ice lollies with his mates. His summer holidays were spent on the farms, riding on the corn wagons and catching rabbits as they bolted from the binder.

He attended a Church of England school with only three teachers: infant, junior and senior. He still remembers the advice of his headmaster: 'If you can read, write and add up, the world is your oyster.'

Derek does not write in hope of fame or fortune; the happiest times of his life were when his family had no material goods or money. His father always said that one gets more pleasure from sharing than from receiving, and so Derek hopes that his readers will simply enjoy his books. This is the third book he has had published; his previous books, also by the same publisher, are: *The Curse of Morton Farmhouse* and *Point the Finger of Blame*.

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