

# The Pirates

*The Pirates* (SVT, Sweden) is a fantasy reality series consisting of 10 episodes about 8 children: Filippa, Jonathan, Anahita, Hannah, Noel, Selma, and Filip (cf. screenshot 1). They arrive on the Pirate Coast of Drevet to help the people against Blackbeard and his pirates. When they arrive, they are greeted by Christopher who wants to head to the Sailor Chest Inn. To get there he splits the group to thirds sending them on separate paths to obtain weapons, food, and supplies (cf. screenshot 2). When two of the groups meet up they realize that Selma and Jonathan are missing (cf. screenshot 3). They are then attacked by pirates (cf. screenshot 4). When they arrive at the Sailor Chest Inn, they learn their friends have been captured (cf. screenshot 5) and that to find them they must seek answers from the seeress in the Knowledge Glade. As gift to the seeress they are given a golden bag (cf. screenshot 6) that is stolen by pirates. They decide to challenge Captain Jwé for gold to pay the seeress (cf. screenshot 7). Together they defeat Captain Jwé in a game. Then they head to the seeress and learn that Selma and Jonathan have been taken captive onto Blackbeard's ship and that it is up to them to save their friends (cf. screenshot 8).

*The Pirates* was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012 finalists in the 7-11 Non-Fiction category.

## International experts' opinions

International experts shared their opinions about *The Pirates* during the discussion sessions at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012. Experts felt that the program was something that children would find to be fun. They addressed issues about the program such as the authenticity of the challenges and whether the fantasy pirate world was adequate for the developmental stage of children of this age group.

"I think it's interesting to see the reaction of these children who are in the game because I think it's the age where they start not believing magic anymore. Still, you see on their face that sometimes they really look like 'oh' and as a viewer I had a lot of fun watching this and I love the realization and the special effects. I think that children are amused as well when they watch and connect. Even if it's not intellectual, it's just giving them fun, but I think children also need fun." (female expert, France)

"I think the kids would like *The Pirates* very much because in this age group they think like that." (female expert, Jordan)

"It seemed the most psychologically developmentally appropriate show I've ever seen in children's television. Because the drama wasn't based on some artificial stunt that the kids participated in, it was all based on getting them more and more involved in the story. There's this phenomenon with that age group of kids who are like 10, 11 years old, who tend to know what's real and what's not real but they're also not quite sure sometimes. The show played on the fact that they knew it couldn't be real, they knew this whole thing was fake and yet – and it was that and 'yet' sort of feeling and I thought that was brilliant." (male expert, USA)

"I loved that one. The children had this way of being into something that's really over something more than the life of the show." (female expert, Slovenia)



Ill. 1: Christopher greets the 8 children as they arrive on the island



Ill. 2: Filippa, Hannah, and Filip retrieve weapons



Ill. 3: Selma and Jonathan run into a pirate and are taken captive



Ill. 4: The group is attacked by pirates

Many experts felt the program was more appealing to children as opposed to the other programs. They felt that children would engage more with it because it aims to spark their interest. Other experts commented on the program's special effects and its lack of authenticity. They felt the challenges lacked difficulty. Others felt as if the play was forced, commenting on how adults seemed to take the active roles.

"In some ways it seemed more kid-friendly than a lot of the others. The kids would like *Pirates* more than they might like some of the other ones." (female expert, USA)



Ill. 5: The group learns about Selma and Jonathan's capture

"I've been watching *Pirates* and I don't personally like it because I think the children are just there, doing whatever. But I have children at the right age group and they love it." (female expert, Finland)

"I thought that it seemed kind of forced. There's this phenomenon called 'LARPing', which is live-action role-playing games, and it seemed like the kids were intruding in the adults' game. ... It wasn't kid-initiated or kid-guided. It was adult-guided." (female expert, USA)



Ill. 6: Noel accepts handling the gift to the seeress

"I felt a little bit cheated at some point. The challenges didn't feel real to me." (female expert, Germany)

Other experts commented on how this program was already season two of the series. They spoke about its immense popularity amongst children in Sweden.

"This is the second series about the pirates. So when they were looking for kids for the second series, about 2000 kids had applied. Immensely popular, actually." (female expert, Sweden)



Ill. 7: The kids rise Captain Jwé from his slumber

*Kathryn Tullis (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, USA)*



Ill. 8: The seeress sees Selma and Jonathan both have been kidnapped by Blackbeard

Screenshots from *The Pirates* © SVT, Sweden

Target Audience 7.76	Idea 7.22	Script 6.31	Realization 7.06
Average Score per Category by experts' voters at PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2012			