

How To Be a Pirate

Hiccup forced himself to open his eyes. If he was ever going to be a pirate he would have to get used to this sort of thing. He made himself peer over the edge and into the coffin.

There, in a state of green and yellow decay, lay the corpse of Grimbeard the Ghastly. It wasn't so bad really. The face was all slimy and drippy, but it wasn't crawling with maggots or anything disgusting. Rather peaceful really, lying so still...

And then Hiccup was sure he saw one of the paper-white fingers twitch slightly.

He blinked and stared hard at it.

Nothing for a second.

And then... there it was again, a definite quivering...

"The c-c-corpse!" stuttered Hiccup, "it's m-m-moving!"

"Nonsense, boy!" snapped Gobber the Belch. "How can he possibly move? He's DEAD, isn't he?" And he gave the corpse a prod with one fat forefinger.

The corpse of Grimbeard the Ghastly snapped straight upright, propelled by some appalling force from within it, yellow eyes popping, dribbly green face contorted in a ghastly grimace.

"Aaaaaargh," gurgled the corpse of Grimbeard the Ghastly, straight into the face of Gobber the Belch.

by Cressida Cowell