The Revenge of The Red Pirate

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The movie had been running about 10 minutes, a work typical of the time, with Burt Lancaster playing 'The Red Pirate', and already I was deeply involved, as any kid would be. Since Frank and I had sat down, the cinema had filled up – mostly with kids, and some family groups. I became aware of a slight pressure on my knee, and looking down saw the hand of the man sitting next to me. I pushed it off, and he made no attempt to stop me. A little later he spoke and I gave a sideways glance at him, but he was turned the other way – to a little girl sitting on his right. The woman sat next to her answered the man and I breathed a sigh of relief – they were a family.

It happened again. I know now I should have shouted at the top of my voice, but I had no idea what he was trying to do and yet I felt strangely embarrassed. I again pushed his hand away, and shuffled in my seat towards my friend. I tried to engage myself in the movie, but was too unsettled, and every time the man's arm moved it was all I could do to stop jumping up from my seat.

I was now watching the space between him and me, rather than The Red Pirate and felt thoroughly miserable. The hand started it's journey again, but this time Frank whispered in my ear: "Change places with me." I said nothing but got up and we swapped seats.
Despite feeling enormous relief, I was now worrying what was going to happen to my friend, who although older than me, was certainly no match for a grown man.

Slowly, my anxiety subsided, and I managed to re-engage myself in the movie. The current fight seemed to be reaching a finale – that inevitable moment in space and time when the chief 'goody' has fought his way to the chief 'baddie', and everything is to be won or lost in their final personal battle, mano a mano. Back and forth they moved across the deck of the ship, dabbing and thrusting with their cutlasses. Suddenly the 'baddie' faltered and The Red Pirate ran his cutlass straight through the baddies chest. There was a blood-curdling scream and the baddie fell to the deck dead, but strangely the screaming went on and on, very loud, and never stopping.

Almost hypnotised, I turned and looked across Frank to the see the man's face contorted in agony and that dreadful rattling scream issuing from his mouth. I looked down to the seat between him and Frank – the bone handle of a knife was protruding from the back of the man's hand, where it had been driven right through and into the arm of the seat. Blood was spurting fiercely on each side of the hilt, and pouring in a stream onto the floor.

I glanced at Frank. He was sat perfectly still, calmly watching the man's terrible agony, and then he slowly got up and said quietly to me: "Come on, let's get out of here."

At the box-office, Frank went up to the window and said to the ticket clerk: "Call the police and an ambulance, The Red Pirate has stabbed a pervert in the picture-hall."
Then we left.