



Master and Commander: 20 Volume Set

Patrick O'Brian

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Comprising:

Master & Commander;
Post Captain;
H.M.S. 'Surprise';
The Mauritius Command;
Desolation Island;
The Fortune of War;
The Surgeon's Mate;
The Ionian Mission;
Treason's Harbour;
The Far Side of the World;
The Reverse of the Medal;
The Letter of Marque;
The Thirteen-Gun Salute;
The Nutmeg of Consolation;
The Truelove/Clarissa Oakes;
The Wine-Dark Sea;
The Commodore;
The Yellow Admiral;
The Hundred Days;
Blue at the Mizzen.

Master and Commander: 20 Volume Set Details

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Author : Patrick O'Brian

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From Reader Review Master and Commander: 20 Volume Set for online ebook

Angels21k says

This series is so well researched but that fact is an embellishment, not a 'I have researched and you will read/wonder at the work I've done.'

The world is full of well written, colourful characters. You live the history, cheer at victories, mourn at losses and laugh at the humour. (I may never look at a bear in the same way.

It is also the first time I felt sea-sick whilst sitting in my own home/

Spies, battles. love, misunderstandings and friendship.

Love it.

RH Walters says

The ultimate bromance. I loved this entire series for its impeccable history, lovable characters, humor, tragedy and sharp sense of human nature and dynamics. A vivid portrait of the state of science and natural history, society and sea life during the Napoleonic wars. Each book has a picture of a ship with all the parts listed in the front. Admittedly did not understand everything about the sea battles. Could not put them down and was moved to chills/laughter/tears at several intervals throughout. Bracing! Salty! Awesome!

Scott says

Now that the series has been completely read (save for the handwritten, untyped portion of his last unfinished book: "21"), I can safely say that while I am saddened that more adventures of Maturin and Aubrey are not forthcoming, that they never ended. It is satisfying to know that life goes on for these best of friends, that Aubrey's blue flag has been raised at last, and Maturin's Love inexorably comes around to the prospect of marriage. The friendship and adventure in this historical fiction series is Shakespearean in the sense that the enjoyment of language bursts free from every line. Either read this or go get on a frigate to experience it!

Penelope says

Warning: Spoilers BIGTIME!

UPDATE 2/4/2011 I am now on "The Wine Dark Sea", number 16, and only have six books left in this 21 book series, and I am already starting to grieve.

Most recently learned that the male platypus has a "venomous spur" that is highly toxic and can be deadly. Two new characters, Sarah and Emily, two 5/6 year old black islanders, the only survivors of a hideous smallpox epidemic brought to their island by a whaling ship, have added an interesting element to the ship's

company. They are adored by the crew and now speak English in the rough style of the men, calling each other "incompetent booby" when mad at each other. They dress up and stand at attention during the muster, and are absolutely resolute that they will not be put off the ship into anyone's care. They are cared for by "Jamie Ducks", the sailor who has the job of tending to the poultry. He has seven children at home so Captain Aubrey thought he'd know what he's doing.

These are wonderful books, and the audio books are amazing done by Patrick Tull. And they are astounding in their historical integrity and technical accuracy. The U.S.S. Constitution figures in one book, their triumph over the Java described.

UPDATE 1/12/2011 I'm on the 13th book, and it's the best historical fiction I have ever had the benefit of reading. Amazing! And, incredibly true to real naval records and historical account. Thus, remarkably educational as well as fiercely entertaining.

It took some concentration and some online research on sailing vessels and terms from the time to be able to read these fluidly, but now I can't rip myself away. I say, you may in fact notice a hint of this influence in the writing of this review (I mean to do so, I assert here)...

I am currently involved in just the third volume of this remarkable series of tales that so seamlessly blends history and fiction. Be so good as to check back with me in a month's time, plus a fortnight perhaps, because I predict with the utmost certainty that I will venture to use every free minute I find myself fortunate to have at my disposal, sailing against Bonaparte on whatever sloop, frigate, or other Man-O-War or immersed in whatever action on land, that interwoven destinities of the Captiain Jack Aubrey and the fascinating Dr. Maturin (ship's physician and avid naturalist) unite to bring me to. For now, damn the new First Lord for depriving the captains of the prizes, congratulations, Sophia, darling, (and stuff it Mrs. Williams!), and oh Stephen, my heart breaks for you but I know Jack will tow you along to foreign banks teeming with fascinating wildlife...and to JA, Lord Nelson would applaud, he would surely applaud-and sir, may you keep your sword, uninterrupted, in your journey!

Back to the 1800's! Ahoy! Penny

Larry says

When I say I'm 'currently reading' the series, it's true, but then --- it's always true, for when I finish I begin again. I'm currently on my 17th lap through the books. I have never looked up anything Patrick O'Brian has written about in this series and found it untrue. And of course the writing is outstanding. Imagine as an author to have 6,500 pgs. for character development!!

Julia Lundman says

I am halfway through the series, book ten. So far I love these books. They are fascinating to read, although I must admit I sift through the battles. I realize a lot of people reading these books will be interested in the technical aspects of the battles between ships, however I am not so much. As a passive reader of the series, what I find most interesting is the weaving character narrative between Jack and Steven, and their surrounding shipmates and families on shore. So far very entertaining, with the exception of book nine, which was mostly, well...battles...

Justwinter says

No nautical fiction collection is complete without O'Brian's works. I plowed through every book in this series a few summer's ago. They were a small slice of heaven. They will absolutely not appeal to those unwilling to commit to long, detailed reads, nor will they particularly appeal to people who have no interest in the sea.

If, however, you enjoy Austin and well-crafted writing, are willing to commit to a series that develops characters slowly, over many books--you will cherish these.

I found the first book nearly impossible to stick with. I didn't like the main characters. But what I discovered by book 3, was that O'Brian was slowly unfolding and introducing his readers to Captain Aubrey and Dr. Maturin--a writer in no rush to hit his readers with too much information, too quickly; much charm to be found for those willing and able to enjoy the ride.

Vince Donovan says

I will quote my wife here: "I don't care about England, I don't want to know anything about their navy, and I certainly don't give a shit about English naval battles in the 19th century. But once I got started on these books I couldn't stop."

And I will quote myself, speaking to a friend: "I was just thinking, hey, I haven't heard from those two guys in a while. The big loud sailor and his naturalist friend. Then I realized the reason why I hadn't heard from them: they are characters in a book. They are fictional. They are not real, however much I want them to be."

Actually volume 1, Master and Commander, is the least compelling. While all the books are about the 19th century British Royal Navy and its various battles, Master and Commander puts them at the center of the story, rather than Jack and Stephen, the main (and incredibly compelling) characters. It is an enjoyable book (and much fun to re-read) but its over-emphasis on naval vocabulary and warfare has stopped many readers from moving on to subsequent volumes.

Volume 2, Post Captain, is my favorite in the series. Here O'Brian mates his extensive knowledge of 19th century English life with a Jane Austen-like suite of characters and dilemmas. Most of the action takes place on shore, where the personalities of Jack and Stephen really shine in all their quirky splendor, but we get a thumping good battle at the end, right when we're ready for it.

After this point, I dare you to stop. Everyone has their story of O'Brian addiction. One friend, sick with pneumonia, left his bed and staggered five blocks to Booksmith when he heard a new volume was out. He passed out on the way home. Another friend realized she'd missed her bus stop because she was reading so deeply, and then decided it didn't matter and rode the bus to the end of the line, arriving two hours late to work.

O'Brian's skills as a writer are almost too numerous to mention. He has invented a world of characters who are far more fun to be with than most real people. His knowledge of naval technology and natural history is

profound, so you actually learn quite a bit in every volume. After volume two his skills of plotting and pace reach a near perfect pitch, so each volume reaches a thoroughly compelling emotional crisis (which is not always a naval battle) and comes to a satisfying ending.

My second favorite is Volume 5, Desolation Island, for sheer masterful storytelling. This volume has one of the most satisfying endings I've ever read, one of those where you carefully shut the book and close your eyes and smile. Yet Jack and Stephen and the whole crew of the Leopard are left still shipwrecked on a deserted island down in the Southern Ocean! This is genius at work.

Volume 10 is the only semi-clunker. It feels a little formulaic. But O'Brian kicks back into form with Volume 11 and it doesn't let up until the end.

Go on, pop for the whole set. I dare you, but don't blame me when you are late for work.

Michaux Dempster says

This is my third time through the series, and I am just as addicted as ever. The world that O'Brien has depicted, that of the British Navy during the Napoleonic wars, is just so detailed and fascinating, and the characters make me want to be a better person--more brave and strong and uncomplaining, with a better sense of humor. I don't know of another work of historical fiction that combines such a wealth of historical detail with such lovable characters and seemingly endless plot lines. Wish there were twenty more.

Adam Barr says

Picked up the first of these from a side table at a Marrshfield, Mass. B&B and never put them down, through 20 volumes. Peerless historical fiction, one great novel spread over 20 books, one man composed of the personalities of two most different yet devoted of friends. Yes, like its time, the Aubrey-Maturin Series is very male, and peopled with a great deal of testosterone-washed personages. But the women characters, few though they be, stand in well-drawn relief to the dominant maleness. And being a man meant something different in 1801...as we see again and again in the cordial, sometimes sparky, relations between the brash and brawny Captain Jack Aubrey (described in one review as a natural sea captain but "a perfect ass ashore") and the cerebral, introverted (yet skilled with a sabre) Dr. Steven Maturin.

The characters of whichever gender are so well developed, so textured, that there is interest here for everyone, whether you care about naval matters, England, the Napoleonic wars or anything more of the marvelous framework of these books. You will learn and enjoy more about history here than ever in any class or lecture -- for all love (you'll soon understand), read these without delay. There's not a moment to lose. (See last parentheses.)

Sue says

These books were my absolute favorites of all time (so far!). When I first read the first in the series, Master and Commander, I really enjoyed getting to know the main characters, Captain Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin. I had already seen the movie with Russell Crowe and this book explained how they met. The sea

battles were really good, even though I usually skim through that sort of thing. I started book #two suspecting I would get bored, that it would just be a bunch of sea battles, but I was so wrong! These books are about life in the times of Napoleon, in particular life at sea. By the time I was through the fifth or sixth book I was beginning to understand the more technical shipping terms of the day, I was really appreciating the ethics of the people of that era, and thoroughly enjoying O'Brien's writing style, which is superb. As you read the series, one can really appreciate his sense of timing and his wit, which is oh so subtle and all the more precious when you "get the joke." I especially enjoy O'Brien's result-oriented style. I will be reading along when suddenly, I have to re-read the paragraph...what just happened? His writing is FULL of surprises, fun and in a very subtle way, sex appeal. I am now a huge fan of Tall Ships and Sailing Ships, and recently went on a sail, more fully appreciating the life of a sailor. Highly recommend this read for anyone!!!

Nicola Griffith says

The first book, *Master and Commander*, is essentially the opening chapter of a 20-volume novel set against the naval engagements of the Napoleonic wars. Jane Austen on a boat. Although the quality dims over the last five volumes, the first fifteen are faultless. I marvel at, to quote A.S. Byatt, O'Brian's 'prodigal specificity', his humane touch, his humor and subtlety, the perfect balance of exuberance and restraint, his unerring eye for the exact word, the comic detail, and his ability to delineate changes in the friendship between two men with the same authority as volatile politics in South America or a brutal cutlass fight. I was utterly swept away by these books, and returned delighted and increased. Patrick O'Brian

Nicholas Duffew says

Phenomenal. I'm rarely envious of others' abilities but I wish I could write like O'Brian. When reading these books, you feel like are there, standing on the quarter-deck alongside Aubrey and Maturin with the sea heaving beneath your feet.

Although the series is fiction, many of the stories are based on real events and the books present a complete look at early 19th century British Naval life. If you're not a sailor, you might find some of the technical descriptions inaccessible, but that shouldn't detract from the power of the narrative. And the narrative is powerful. In *Desolation Island*, for example, the description of the *Waakzaamheid*'s relentless pursuit of HMS *Leopard* is stunning and is some of the best fiction I've ever read, enough said (those who've read *Desolation Island* will understand what I'm talking about but I don't want to spoil it for those who haven't).

Once you start reading, you won't want to stop. And when you're forced to because there are no more books, don't be surprised if you finish reading the last page of the last book and head straight back to page one of the first book, if for no other reason than to avoid withdrawal symptoms.

Not much else comes close to O'Brian and I highly recommend this series.

Barbara says

One of my top three authors. Loved all the books in the Aubrey-Maturin series. You can't help but fall in the love with the characters--not only captain Jack Aubrey and doctor/intelligence agent Stephen Maturin, but

the wide cast of shipmates, families and friends. O'Brian is not only a great writer but captures the time in a way that is both accurate and fascinating.

Michael T says

If you can make it through the first 3/4 of the first book Master and Commander to the 1st tall ship battle, you will read all 20 books. Spectacular details on tall ships, international Napoleonic war, early medicine, food and spies. You will definitely start drinking port and saying things like "Sir, the bottle stands before you" to get someone pouring their glass and passing it on.
