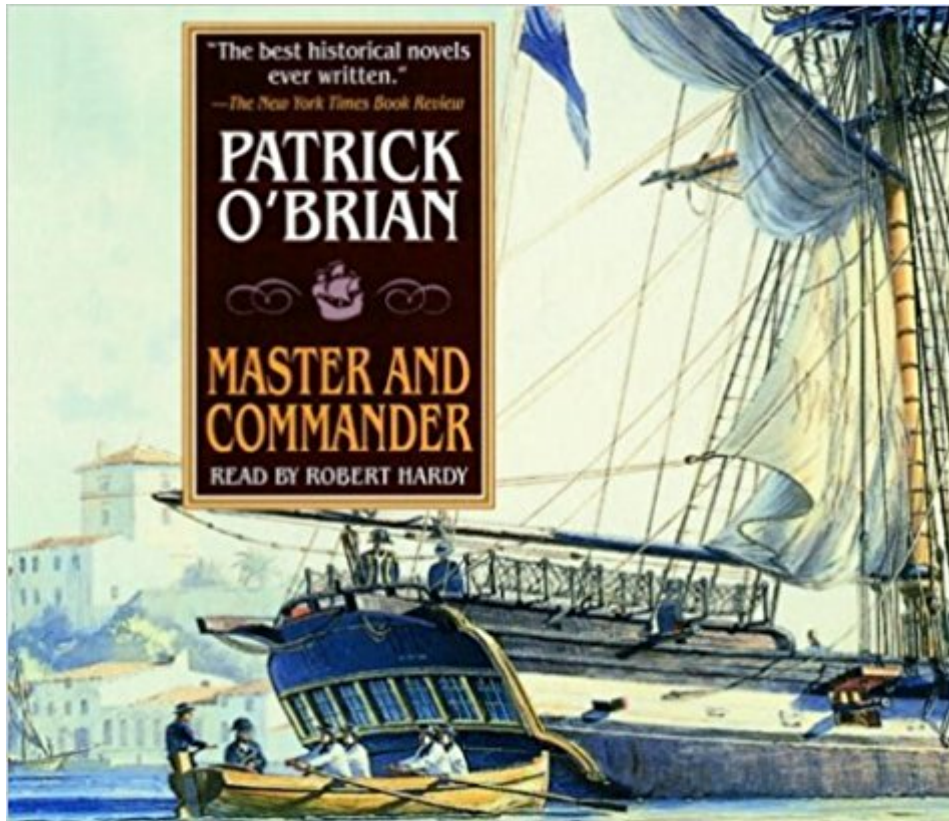




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Master And Commander (& Read By Robert Hardy)



Synopsis

The 1st installment in O'Brian's Aubrey/Maturin series "The best historical novels ever written..."-The New York Times Book Review This, the first in the splendid series of Jack Aubrey novels, establishes the friendship between Captain Aubrey, Royal Navy, and Stephen Maturin, ship's surgeon and intelligence agent, against the thrilling backdrop of the Napoleonic wars. Details of life aboard a man-of-war in Nelson's navy are faultlessly rendered: the conversational idiom of the officers in the ward room and the men on the lower deck, the food, the floggings, the mysteries of the wind and the rigging, and the road of broadsides as the great ships close in battle.

Book Information

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> [Authors, A-Z](#) > (O) > O'Brian, Patrick #3359 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Sea Adventures](#) #5147 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Sea Stories](#)

Customer Reviews

Since Patrick O'Brian launched his series of historical novels with *Master and Commander* in 1970, millions of readers have enjoyed the adventures of Captain Jack Aubrey and his friend, surgeon Stephen Maturin. O'Brian's prose, so immediate and yet so distinctly capturing the language and culture of the English navy in the first moments of the 19th century, rolls effortlessly off the tongue of actor Robert Hardy. Never for a second do we doubt that this is the way an English naval officer would have expressed himself in 1800, and that these are the sights, sounds, and emotions he encountered. As Aubrey sails his ship into battle, we don't need the sounds of cannon to share this moment with him; Hardy's voice is the ideal instrument. (Running time: 4.5 hours, three cassettes)
--Lou Schuler --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

These two selections represent a series of abridged audiobook versions of O'Brian's works narrated by Robert Hardy, that most blustery and unstudied of British actors. Hardy reads the stories cold, but here it works. He uses his voice to evoke everything from brutality to mannered drawing-room excesses to the physical threat of a storm at sea. The stories are superb depictions of life on a British man-of-war and incorporate O'Brian's exquisitely accurate historical detail (Testimonies, Audio Reviews, LJ 7/96). The friendship of protagonists Capt. Jack Aubrey and ship's surgeon Stephen Maturin plays out against an expanse of ocean, from India to the Atlantic, with a full complement of battles and adventures at sea for devotees of naval fiction. Highly recommended. ?Mark Pumphrey, Polk Cty. P.L., Columbus, NC Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

For my commentary on this book, I'll reference the tags that asks you to choose between for the plot, mood, pace, and characters. Patrick O'Brian's work, and 'Master and Commander' in particular, is not served well by these kinds of choices. There are surprising plot elements, and ones that are foreshadowed long in advance. There are parts of the book that are light-hearted and hopeful, and parts that are very dark. The pace is slow as a walk on the island of Mahon, and fast as the seconds on the deck of an enemy ship. In other words, O'Brian writes life. I can't give a better recommendation than that. Nailing him down as a sea-story guy or a history guy is a mistake. He writes friendships and hatred, hope and fear, and all the reasons and ways that we suffer and rejoice in little events and big. Read it.

This is the first volume in O'Brian's wonderful series about the life and career of Jack Aubrey and his friend and companion Stephen Maturin, a surgeon and spy, who joins him on his very first command, the Sophie. I only gave this first volume four stars because as others have mentioned it is a bit slow, in the beginning, as there are so many characters that need to be introduced, along with some background to give them context, and a lot of historical information necessary for the reader to understand the time and place in which series occurs. Once the stage is set and the action begins it's a fast paced runaway that you won't want to put down, so bear with the introduction and then get to the fun! It's Naval history, brought to life, by an author who's attention to detail and accuracy is unsurpassed by any and matched only by a very few. Blend that with his ability to pull you right into the story, until you will have trouble returning to reality when you put the book down, and you can't go wrong with O'Brian.

I love all of Patrick O'Brian's books and hope someday to own them all. The movie "Master and Commander: Far Side of the World," is a combination of two of his books. This one, of course, and the book "The Far Side of the World," which comes later in the series. They all follow Captain Jack Aubrey and his friend, Stephen Maturin on their adventures during and between the two Napoleonic Wars. The movie they made is my favorite movie of all time, and considering my collections of both books and movies, that is saying something. I only wish they had made more. The casting of that movie was brilliant. Russell Crowe WAS "Lucky" Jack Aubrey and Paul Bettany was perfect as his friend and physician, Stephen Maturin. I can easily recommend these books to anyone who loves the sea, the tall ships, and the men who sailed them as much as I always have. It must come from my genes. I come from a long line of sailors from Ireland on my father's side.

Patrick O'Brian in my opinion is simply one of the greatest novelists of all time. I put off reading his books for years because I assumed that he was a cheap knockoff of C.S. Forester (and there are plenty of knockoffs in that genre). However, I was amazed to find that POB is better than Forester and that is no mean compliment, as Forester is one of my all time favorite authors as well. POB's writing transcends the genre though, and his books can truly be spoken of as literary classics. The twenty finished books of this series provided me with some of the best and happiest reading times of my life, and are collectively among the favorites within my personal library of approximately 9k volumes.

One of the best books I've ever read. This was a "guy" book, an adventure tale with battle scenes and naval strategy, yet I (a girl) found much in it to absolutely love. I look forward to enjoying some of the others in the Aubrey Maturin series. It's an historical fiction novel, written in 1969. The setting is early 1800's seafaring, aboard an English naval sailing vessel. Life at that time and situation was unique--harder, different customs and knowledge, etc. The period dialog and humor could be quite salty but really immersed me. The book was perfect reading on Kindle, where I could highlight a historical reference and have it explained instantly, depending on proximity to wireless. Then there were the sea terms and references to parts of the ships. Again, Kindle to the rescue. Also, the reader is educated on sailing technique by experts (characters explaining to other characters.) The author really knows early 1800's without showing off. People are still only just people. This is still only a novel about characters, and Patrick O'Brian was skillful with his characters. From page one, we get to know these characters through conversations, through private diary entries, and through dialog between lesser characters. A great story, and well-written.

I have seen the movie Master and Commander several times and enjoy the story and characters, so knowing books are always better than their movies, I purchased the first Aubrey/Maturin book but didn't begin it for well over a year . Now i am on book 3 and cannot stop reading. I never imagined myself to be a fan of naval adventures and yet here i am, breathless and worthless. Supper isn't prepared but i always know what hemisphere we are in and what a bosun and a coxsun do. The characters are delightful. The storylines keep me hooked. Surely i will run upon a lousy book, but not thus far. Another series i thoroughly love is J. D. Davies' Matthew Quinton series. So join me in hoisting the mainsail and all those other peculiar things we do onboard. It's a lot of fun!!

What could I possibly add to the approbation of the thousand upon thousands who have devoured Patrick O'Brien's series? Upon hearing I had begun Master and Commander, my son(who is well down the book lined channel) cautioned me not to read too fast, or else they should be gone. And I fear he may have been oh too right, because, now that I've started, I am most certainly going to download Post Captain. Welcome to the world of sails and waves and music and companionship...

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