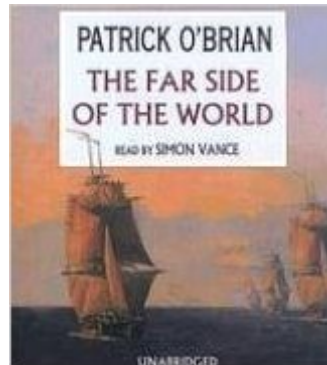




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Far Side Of The World (Aubrey Maturin, No. 9)



Synopsis

[Read by Simon Vance] **This exciting historical novel of adventure is the inspiration for the film "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" - starring Russell Crowe. The War of 1812 continues, and Captain Jack Aubrey sets course for Cape Horn on a mission after his own heart: intercepting a powerful American frigate outward bound to play havoc with the British whaling trade. Stephen Maturin has orders of his own in the world of secret intelligence, as talk of treason and infiltration by the French becomes more than just rumor. Disaster in various guises awaits them in the Great South Sea and in the far reaches of the Pacific: typhoons, castaways, shipwrecks, murder, and criminal insanity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Captain Jack Aubrey sets sail for Cape Horn, determined to intercept an American frigate before it can wreak havoc on the British whaling trade. As always, he is accompanied by intelligence operative Stephen Maturin, and as always, Aubrey has no idea of what his companion is up to. Another impeccably written adventure, by the end of which you should be able to identify a mizzen topsail in your sleep. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

"Like Aubrey and Maturin playing Mozart duets beneath a Pacific Moon, [O'Brian] works elegant variations on the tradition of the seafaring adventure story." --New York Times Book Review"Taken together, the novels are a brilliant achievement. They display staggering erudition on almost all

aspects of eighteenth-century life, with impeccable period detail. In addition, O'Brian has a gift for the comic." --Times Literary Supplement "O'Brian is not that hard a taste to acquire . . . but he is very tough to shake." --Boston Globe "O'Brian is better than anybody at historical fiction." --Denver Post "Another impeccably written adventure, by the end of which you should be able to identify a mizzen topsail in your sleep." --.com Review

This is the Master and Commander book with the same title as the movie but it is a very different story. I've now sailed with Jack and Stephen for 10 books and have gotten to know them pretty well. Life at sea has been a hard life. We've had storms and a broken bowsprit, but nothing really amazing in this journey to the far side of the world. M&C books have a variety of sailing conditions, trips to islands, battles at sea and amazing discovery of rare species. The movie version of this had 3 sea battles. The book has a lesser battle on an island. Even a lucky captain like Jack Aubrey could not survive 3 major sea battles in every book. He already has scars and lost much of an ear.

Patrick O'Brian's characters get bigger and bigger. They are very funny. The stories are written so cleverly that you feel empathy with each person, despite opposing points of view. The detail is fascinating. I do not have much knowledge of the British Navy, but I know much more now. As much as the author loves the life, he is able to portray its tremendous abuses with clarity. I look forward to each novel and the resolution to some of the ongoing problems each of the major players. Spies, love affairs...or not, battles, the money chase, corruption, miraculous medical recoveries, addiction. This series is a fantastic read.

I started reading Patrick O'Brian's Aubrey - Maturin books in the mid 80's at the suggestion of one of my brothers. At that time there were only ten books in the series and, as I was traveling a lot in my job, I quickly went through those ten. When I expressed disappointment to my brother at having reached the end of the series he told me to start over from the beginning and that it would be as if I had never read the books. I was skeptical as I have found only a few books truly enjoyable the second time but I decided to give the O'Brian series a second read. I do not know what magic O'Brian used in writing but what my brother had said was true. It was as if I had only a passing knowledge of the books when I started reading the series again. Although I do read other novels and other authors I quickly yearn O'Brian and for what The Times Book Review has hailed as the "best historical novels ever written". I have read the entire series multiple times and every time found each of the books fresh and exciting. So here is the note of caution that I tell my friends: read O'Brian at

your own risk, as he can spoil you for other authors.

Somewhere I happened on a few reviews on Master and Commander (1st in the series). They were so full of praise for the book I just had to get it. I eagerly searched for the book as it was not easily available back then & was excited to find it. I was initially quite disappointed & I put it down after a few attempts. At some point I came back to it. I found that you didn't really need to understand all the jargon about sailing & some of the archaic words from that time period were pretty easy to figure out (disapprobation for disapproval). I quickly read through all the ones in print at the time, wishing the next one would be printed soon & bought Sea of Words & Harbors and High Seas, which other authors had written to better understand the books. I didn't buy Lobscouce and Spotted Dick (a cookbook a mother daughter team had written to describe the food of the time). I did see some of these authors at an all day series of lectures the Smithsonian had with over a thousand people in a hotel. Initially it was to be held in the Baird auditorium but they had no lecture rooms large enough to accommodate the crowd. Ken Ringle spoke about the writing, the US Surgeon General spoke about the medicine of this time period, etc. We were served the food of the time prepared by the authors of the cookbook. It is the best series of books on friendship ever written.

I've written review after review of O'Brian's Aubrey/Maturin novels. It doesn't change as these are very far reaching in every facet of satisfaction one can get from a novel. These are historical fiction about some of the very most engaging characters of the era in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars. They give a sense of that age and what we have gained and lost from a world not that very long ago.

It is well written and in the O'Brian style of telling such a good tale this book excels. It is just unfortunate that as with the last book there is little happening and what does happen is for no apparent reason. The book didn't seem to advance the Aubrey/Maturin story in the least. It is as Aubrey said in the last book, "a parenthesis". Essentially every vignette was unsatisfying in its conclusion. The sheer story telling was in and of itself quite good within each of the vignettes but with them leading to nothing satisfying the reader is left wanting. You could safely skip this book and miss nothing since every future reference will be explained in enough detail to eliminate any concern over context. I am indifferent about the book overall and will say read it if you wish.

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