



## The Complete Aubrey/Maturin Novels (5 Volumes)

*Patrick O'Brian*

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## The Complete Aubrey/Maturin Novels (5 Volumes) Patrick O'Brian

Patrick O'Brian's twenty-one-volume Aubrey/Maturin series has delighted generations of devoted fans, inspired a blockbuster film, and sold millions of copies in twenty-four languages.

These five omnibus volumes, beautifully produced and boxed, contain 7,000 pages of what has often been described as a single, continuous narrative. They are a perfect tribute for such a literary achievement, and a perfect gift for the O'Brian enthusiast.

## The Complete Aubrey/Maturin Novels (5 Volumes) Details

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Author : Patrick O'Brian

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## **From Reader Review The Complete Aubrey/Maturin Novels (5 Volumes) for online ebook**

### **Leah Barnes says**

Now it may be difficult to explain why a nautical series filled with references almost impossible to understand for us modern folks could be one of the best series ever written... but it is. Patrick O'Brian is so exceptional that I was convinced he was a classical author until I looked him up and discovered that his last book was written in the '90s. the 1990's! His characters will captivate you. His plot line will enthrall you. And you'll learn more about the English Navy during the Napoleonic era than you ever thought possible.

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### **Nathan Douglas says**

Words fail. I've never enjoyed a series, nor two characters, not their supporting players as much as I've enjoyed these ones; the journeys, joys, pains, failures, victories, and utter zest for life of Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin will stay with me for the rest of my life, and only grow upon countless revisits. A masterpiece.

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### **Roger W. says**

One of the great reads of my life was the first slow acquiring and reading of the 20 volumes in the Aubrey-Maturin series. Soon after I had finished them for the first time I began reading them again: I didn't want to finish reading these books. In the meantime too I had bought a companion volume *A Sea of Words*, which helped explain a lot of nautical and medical jargon, together with *Harbors and High Seas* which details the myriad locations, real and invented, where the books take place. As I sit writing this I can look up to my right at the twenty dog-eared books up there on my shelf and feel a wish again to immerse myself in that extended tale of life in those long-vanished 'wooden worlds'.

Stories of ships and the sea have always fascinated me; some years ago too I read the Hornblower novels. These O'Brian books seemed right up my alley, having first learned about them from the DVD of the Peter Weir film adaptation of elements in the stories. When I started reading the first one I was captivated by the wealth of detail, the characters, the humor, the variety of subjects and references, the language, and again and again by that amazing detail with such a ring of authenticity to it that one really feels drawn into the world of 1805.

One of the essays added at the backs of the books likens the art of the historical fiction writer to that of science fiction: both have to use all their skill to create a believable world which no one living has really ever seen. No living person has actually had the experience of living in one of the Royal Navy's ships of the early 1800s, living in that society and in that time. But Mr. O'Brian's work makes it a living, breathing and totally believable world.

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### **Cole Schoolland says**

This series could not be **HIGHER RECOMMENDED**. Everyone out there owes it to themselves to read this series of books. The characters will become your very real friends as you experience their adventures with them. You will laugh out loud and you will cry. I was absolutely heartbroken when I reached the end of the series. Patrick O'Brian was, without a doubt, one of the most brilliant, beautiful, and eloquent writers of the 20th Century.

Note: be sure and buy the glossary of nautical terms or a companion book to use to get you along.

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## **Darwin8u says**

### **Volume 1:**

1. Master and Commander - June 29, 2016
2. Post Captain - July 16, 2016
3. H.M.S. Surprise - August 16, 2016
4. The Mauritius Command - December 19, 2016

### Volume 2:

5. Desolation Island - February 13, 2017
6. The Fortune of War - February 16, 2017
7. The Surgeon's Mate - March 5, 2017
8. The Ionian Mission - March 14, 2017

### **Volume 3:**

9. Treason's Harbour - April 18, 2017
10. The Far Side of the World - May 2, 2017
11. The Reverse of the Medal - May 10, 2017
12. The Letter of Marque - May 23, 2017

### **Volume 4:**

13. The Thirteen-Gun Salute - July 26, 2017
14. The Nutmeg of Consolation - September 28, 2017
15. The Truelove - October 18, 2017
16. The Wine-Dark Sea - October 26, 2017

### **Volume 5:**

17. The Commodore - November 15, 2017
  18. The Yellow Admiral - November 28, 2017
  19. The Hundred Days
  20. Blue at the Mizzen
  21. 21 (Unfinished Novel)
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## **Andrew Hill says**

O'Brian's Aubrey-Maturin novels gave me one of the best reading experiences of my life. That said, he has a high barrier to entry, to use an industrial metaphor.

O'Brian's novels inhabit the world they describe. He uses the language that people used at the time. Many readers will be put off by the nautical terms (including descriptions of maneuvers in sailing and names for parts of the ship), the period-accurate language (in dialogue), and the abundance of period-specific references to everything from food, to music, to medicine, to politics, to English law, and so on. There is an excellent glossary for the series called "A Sea of Words", but I don't actually think that it's a good idea to use it when you begin reading O'Brian, though I would recommend reading the introductory essays, including pieces on the Royal Navy (explaining promotion, etc.), medicine during the period, etc.

Some readers love O'Brian for his obsession with historical accuracy. What makes me love his work is not so much the novel vocabulary but the way in which he invokes an entire, past world, and the lives of his two heroes. Over the course of the 20, complete Aubrey-Maturin novels (he was at work on a 21st when he passed away, but the end of the 20th in my opinion is the perfect ending for the series), O'Brian's heroes travel throughout the world of the early 19th century. Their adventures include the Napoleonic wars on the continent, the intricacies of espionage between the French and the allied nations, the war with the new American nation, the whaling trade, the slave trade, piracy in the East Indies, the British Raj in India, the penal colony in Australia, the explosion of natural history on the heels of the enlightenment, the Irish problem, and so on.

All of this is animated by a deep and growing friendship between Jack Aubrey, an English officer in the Royal Navy, and Stephen Maturin, an Irish gentleman who is also a doctor, a spy, and a natural historian. The novels don't just recreate the world of the time, they tell the stories of these men's lives. When they meet at the beginning of "Master and Commander", they are young, unmarried, and inimical to each other. Their love of music brings them together, and sets them on course for an abiding friendship that will see them through personal triumphs and tragedies. By the end of the series, the men are older, and their lives are transformed. Their family lives occupy an increasing portion of the novels as the series progresses.

Never have I felt that I "know" a fictional character more than I felt it with Aubrey and Maturin. When the series ended, I felt genuine sorrow. It's a strange thing, but true, like bidding goodbye to a close friend, knowing I should never see him again.

These are great, great books. They are so rewarding. But to begin, I recommend reading O'Brian's short novel, "The Golden Ocean", unconnected to the Aubrey-Maturin series, written before he began those books. Get "Sea of Words" and read the introductory essays. Then read "Master and Commander", the first of the Aubrey-Maturin novels. As you read it, when you encounter unfamiliar words, don't get hung up. Let them wash over you, like starting to learn a foreign language through immersion. "Sea of Words" has some useful diagrams of ships with the parts labeled. Those may prove helpful, but it won't be long before you know the difference between shrouds and stays, and you won't even stop to think about it. And some things you may never understand. You really don't have to know exactly what's involved in "boxhauling" to understand that it is difficult, awkward, and involves sailing a ship backwards. Many adults are impatient with reading books that require them to use context to understand the language. But it's something children do all the time. Once you embrace that expectation, you'll get right into the flow of O'Brian's books.

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## **Hugh says**

The first ten books or so are superb, but after that repetition and boredom set in. O'Brian uses the same plot

devices over and over (the most notable are the financial disasters that beset Aubrey and Maturin after they are enriched on one of their voyages--Aubrey must have been fleeced by predatory businessmen/wicked government agencies at least half a dozen times in the course of the books).

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### **Graham Caylor says**

These books are amazing. A fearless writer who takes his characters in completely unexpected directions. Funny, heartfelt, exciting, and unpredictable, these books might very well be my favorites of all time. I have read the series uncountable times, and basically am always reading them. Whenever I run out of something to read, or don't feel like any of the books I am currently reading, I flip open the bookmark in whatever volume I happen to be at and pick up right where I left off. If you have never read these before, you are in for a treat.

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### **Paul Spencer says**

It would almost be worth completely erasing my memory banks in order to read these 20 wonderful volumes for the first time all over again (and maybe go see *The Godfather* again while I'm at it).

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### **Murray says**

I have not yet completed this series but I am close enough to the end to confirm it is five stars all the way. It is amazing (hence the 5 stars) that O'Brian manages so many books with the same two central characters without repeating situations, and with a huge variety of settings and events. You do not have to be a fan of action writing to appreciate these novels. Certainly the sea battles (and land ones for that matter) often form a climax in the book, but it is the building of tension and the unfolding of character that works so well for me. They are quintessentially historical novels with detail that extends far beyond the nautical. The descriptions of the Far East later in the series provides sociological and zoological information and description that is really engaging.

When Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin meet it is at a concert. One (Stephen I suspect) kicks the other out of annoyance and this forms the start of a relationship that deepens into a friendship based on mutual respect. The fact that Maturin is of Irish descent, raised in Catalonia and employed by the British Secret Service, provides interesting plot development, as does the fact he is a natural scientist of note and member of the Royal Society, as well as a doctor and surgeon.

For any who read this far and have not yet embarked on the series, you have a great treat in store, especially if your interests encompass meals served in the early 19th century on board his majesty's navy; O'Brian provides extraordinary details that has led some fans to form dinner clubs just to try out dishes like 'figgy pudding'.

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### **Phil says**

Dear Abby used to say that length didnt matter but this twenty-book series is long enough to make you stay in love forever. The first couple of times you devote a portion of your life to this series you cant believe how

much you missed on previous voyages into this fascinating world. When you're reading these books you become frustrated that you have to do things in your 'real life' other than read. You can go live in these books.

And what a world it is! The story centers on two main characters; Jack Aubrey, the good-spirited naval officer whose career we follow from lowly lieutenant to his final promotion to admiral. Aboard ship he is the Master and Commander, the unquechable hero who navigates through impossible seas and turns the tables on his enemies by using craft and through sheer guts. On land he is a hopeless idiot, a trusting victim for every con man and conniving woman. He is hated by the powers that be, who try to frustrate him at every turn. The other main character is Steven Maturin, the bastard son of Catalonian aristocracy and a savant; medicine, languages, natural philosophy, he is counted among the wise. He is also a spy with connections everywhere, his intrigues add a very astonishing level to the book and also counteract the messes that befall Aubrey with regularity. He is an enthusiastic cocaine user and a sometime opium addict. But as incomparable as he is on land when he sets sail he is an almost hopeless lubber, unable to climb up a gangway without incident. The interplay between the two opposite characters and the subordinate cast of dozens of others create a wonderful alternative universe and a true pleasure to read. Patrick O'Brain writes with a rare style and an ironic humor that make every page a pleasure. He pokes fun at the naval culture of the times (Aubrey's opinion of Homer's Odyssey? "Hanging about in port is what it amounts to!") and a couple of the books have a sub-theme of a poetry competition among two of the officers that is funny and very human. In fact I think I'll go start re-reading these books now!

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### **Jess Trebanna says**

Patrick O'Brian -- a master of his craft!!! I cannot say enough about this man. He researched his subject matter so completely that I have to admit I've never read someone whose voice is more authentic. Yes, these are novels, but the historical detail is unswervingly correct and integrated so smoothly that by the third or fourth book you feel as though you could set the fore t'gallant stays'l yourself. If you know what I'm talking about, you would enjoy O'Brian beyond your wildest dreams. If you have no clue what I'm talking about, for heaven's sake go to your library and ask for an O'Brian book! And if you're still not convinced, let me add this: O'Brian is hilarious. Really. I've never laughed so hard. In fact, I'm smiling right now just thinking about it. :)

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### **Nick Stengel says**

What can I say about this magnum opus, that took about 6 months to get through. Capital! The prose is so amazingly fluid, the nuances and historical facts are amazing in their level of detail and ability to both set the scene and add to the plot. I will quibble with O'Brian's annoying tendency to spend pages talking about petrels and boobies while major plot points are glossed over or mentioned in passing. So am I saying that the books should have been longer? Yes. Yes I am, forgive me.

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### **Gerry Hine says**

The Complete Aubrey/Maturin Novels, 21 stories, Volume One, Master and Commander, Post Captain,

H.M.S. Surprise, The Mauritius Command. Volume Two, Desolation Island, The Fortune of War, The Surgeon's Mate, The Ionian Mission. Volume Three, Treason Harbor, The Far Side of the World, The Reverse of the Medal, The Letter of Marque. Volume Four, The Thirteen Gun Salute, The Nutmeg of Consolation, The Truelove, The Wine Dark Sea. Volume Five, The Commodore, The Yellow Admiral, The Hundred Days, Blue at the Mizzen, The Final Unfinished Voyage of Jack Aubrey.

Starting with, Master and Commander copyright 1970 by Patrick O'Brian. Giles Curtis-Raleigh, Executors. First Published by William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. and finishing with book 21 The Final Unfinished Voyage of Jack Aubrey copyright 2004 By the Estate of Patrick O'Brian. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110 ISBN 0-393-06011-X (for the set of five volumes)

A wonderful collection of twenty one stories that can stand alone or be read as a naval history (accurate in historic context but fictional in character) of the British empire during the hey day of the Empire. Starting with the British Naval viewpoint of the Napoleonic wars the reader is introduced to Jack Aubrey a new first Lieutenant. Details of life aboard a Man-of-War in Nelson's navy are faultlessly rendered. From the wardroom to the men on the lower deck, the food, the floggings, and the mysteries of the wind and the rigging, discover the history of a first world power. By the end of the last story, you the reader, will have traveled to every major port of the world, experienced the intrigue of military espionage and watched countries jockey for position on the world stage. With a flowing narration, illumination of description, and the sense of a first person point of view you will become totally immersed in the world of the late seventeenth century.

The different stories in the series chronicle historic markers pertinent to the sense of history of both England and the United States, and allow a perspective seldom seen in a U.S. history book. These novels can also be used to illuminate the brutality of corporal punishment, the rule of law and a code of honor and justice. With precise and accurate pictures of a Man-of-War included inside each volume fly page, it is possible to recreate an accurate model in the classroom by ambitious students.

One of the most enjoyable parts of the book is the description of the many ports and countries that Mr. Aubrey visits. Having visited many of the same ports of call bordering the Mediterranean Sea myself, it was like reliving part of my own history and, in fact, brought back many memories I had forgotten. I highly recommend this series of stories for any literature, history, and social studies teacher to include into their classroom studies when dealing with the particular era covered by the set of novels.

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## **Lindsay Hedges says**

20 complete books in all, with a partial 21st unfinished due to the author's death.

Wonderfully written providing an insight into every day life in the late 18th century/early 19th century British navy. Not only do you get details of how the ships were sailed but also the living conditions, the food, the punishments, the medications and surgeries.

There is intrigue, suspense, romance, danger; everything one can expect from Patrick O'Brian. There is also insight into the intellectual thinkings of the time, the introspections of both Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin two totally different men. O'Brian does them both justice throughout the series as we see more and more of them, what drives them, how they think, their views of women and family and how they survive



both the elements and each other. There is great introspection by both men and we get a sense of their age and the cusp they are on - the beginnings of the industrial revolution, Darwin's evolutionary theory, the importance of the secret service and the advances in both medicine and the navy.

O'Brian uses actual ships' logs, officers' journals and correspondence to fictionalize real events. The characters are addictive, the history fascinating, and every novel leaves you wanting more.

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### **Ted Canaday says**

6980 pages of pure joy - culturally & linguistically immersive historical literature, set on the sea of the Napoleonic Wars. Ah, so captivating, I sincerely miss plunging from one book to the next now that they're complete. Yes, this was an adventure my Mom started me on, buying one of the first books as a present based on a review she read. The language, the leadership, the relations, the sea, rich with characters one learns to love. I'll look back with fondness on my 21 weeks of sailing with O'Brian across his inspired imagination.

First reading 2006

Re-read in

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### **Kimberley says**

Sometimes, if you're an avid enough reader, you'll pick up a book on a whim and a character will walk into your life and change it forever. Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin were two such characters for me. I did not see the film *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* when it came out, but it starred Russell Crowe, a personal favorite, so I did eventually get around to watching it. I thoroughly enjoyed the movie, and became aware that it was based on a series of books--a rather long series of books, in fact, set in the British Navy during the Napoleonic Era. I had seen the *Horatio Hornblower* miniseries and tried to read some of the books to not much avail--a bit too swashbuckling and boyish for my adult literary tastes, so I wasn't overeager to attempt another what I assumed to be similar set of stories. But I bought the DVD of the film, and it came with a tie-in paperback copy of *Master and Commander*, so I thought, "What's the harm?"

The book began with a detailed sketch of a three-masted square-rigged ship, with all sails and masts numbered and identified. I knew at that point that this was going to be a different sort of read. My sense of accurately-done historical fiction was decidedly intrigued. If this Mr. O'Brian already cared enough to give me a reference diagram, then maybe we were going to get something done here besides sail about with our swords drawn in some kind of adolescent naval fantasy camp.

And indeed, we did not even start out on a boat at all. I met Jack and Stephen in the Governor's House on Port Mahon, where they were seated next to one another listening to a concert, Jack tapping out the beat of the music on his knee and occasionally humming along, and Stephen absolutely loathing him for all of it. They could not be more different, these two. And yet, at this moment begins a relationship that will last over the course of 21 books and a friendship that will change both of their lives and mine.

There aren't two better written, more completely realized, more thoroughly human characters in all historical fiction, in my opinion. Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin could easily be based on real people down to their

most maddening quirks. They never act out of character. They never do something that makes you think their creator has taken leave of his senses. Oh, there are plenty of instances during the course of your time with them when you are thoroughly disgusted with one or the both of them. Jack can be a giant infant and a great bumbling booby, and Stephen can hold a grudge long past the point of any reasonable use to anyone including himself. Both of them are entirely too obsessed with whatever they might hold to be a "point of honor" whenever they think it suits them to be so. There are times I wanted to slap some sense into them, and there were a few points when I had to put the book down and essentially break up with Jack for a few days because I was so furious about something he had done. But I always came back. You cannot stay mad. You grow to love both of them in a way it's nearly impossible to do with most fictional characters (and a fair deal of real people). They are impeccable in their realness, and in their devotion to each other you become devoted to both.

As for the rest of everything else that is not my longstanding love affair with Jack and Stephen, it is also impeccable. O'Brian's initial gift of the ship diagram was just the first sign of a tireless desire to get absolutely everything right about the British Navy of the early 19th century. Everything is explained to and through poor Stephen, a hopeless landgoer who wouldn't know a jib from a foresail before he climbs aboard a ship for the first time. As he falls and scrapes and trips his way along each new discovery, he, and we, are introduced to each term of jargon until we feel like old hands. Soon Stephen and the reader know our way around the ship well enough to tell our time by bells, to remember which side is port, and just who belongs on the quarterdeck. We learn about the massive and bulky ships of the line, the sleek and coveted frigates, and the exact differences between snows, pinks, brigs, sloops, what gets to be called a man of war, and what constitutes a ship by courtesy or a ship outright.

Varied crew members are introduced, and many stick around or leave and then return, and become characters in their own right as we watch them advance, like the competent and well-liked Tom Pullings, the poetic and affable William Mowett, the highly-valued and powerful coxswain Barret Bonden, and the exceedingly shrewish but loyal steward Preserved Killick. There are also many land-based characters that become regular faces, as Jack and Stephen develop relationships in England and in various ports. All are painted with the same deftly realistic brush, and all serve to set off the main characters in all their various lights.

I can't say enough about these books. Some of them are obviously slower than others. Not all of them are fully seagoing, not all of them are purely land-based. There is intrigue and romance and mayhem and warfare and all sorts of adventures to be had with these two, and I wouldn't have any of them with anyone else. If I could spend any amount of time with any literary characters, it would be anywhere and anything with Lucky Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin, hands down. They are messes to be sure, and certainly imperfect creatures, but they are truly some of the best people I have ever had the pleasure to meet in any form.

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## **DoctorM says**

Here's the way it works. If ever you're depressed or glum or listless, pull down one of the Aubrey/Maturin novels. Start anywhere. Dive in. A glass of port is a perfect accompaniment, but the books alone will always leave you thrilled and amused and better off. Always.

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## **Brad says**

I took up a writing about reading challenge recently, and I ran into a question asking, "What is your favourite series?" I'd have thought this was an easy topic to write about. How many good series can there be? Turns out quite a few.

My first thought was to pick one of the many excellent fantasy series (Lord of the Rings, Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, Earthsea Cycle, etc.), or one of the lesser but entertaining series in the same genre (Dragonlance, Narnia, Conan, etc.). But then I remembered that *The Three Musketeers* was part one of a five part series. Which made me remember that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, shorts and novels, constitute a pretty serious series. Which made me remember my beloved Hardy Boys and Encyclopedia Brown books from my childhood. And this path into mysteries reminded me that I love Henning Mankell's Wallander books, and Steig Larsson's Millennium books, and Caleb Carr's Kreizler books.

And that's before I even considered the looser, less confined series, like China Miéville's Bas-Lag books, Iain M. Banks' Culture novels and Ursula K. LeGuin's Hainish Cycle. Myriad choices.

Yet with all this choice, and all these series that I love (and more than a few that I've left unmentioned), there really is only one choice for me -- Patrick O'Brian's Aubrey/Maturin books -- so it turns out to be an easy question after all.

O'Brian wrote twenty books in the series, and died in the middle stages of his twenty-first. Twenty books about two men: Captain Jack Aubrey, the big, brash, reluctantly bellicose Captain of many ships (but most often the HMS Surprise), and his best friend, Dr. Stephen Maturin, the half-Irish/half-Catalan natural philosopher with a talent for espionage and a dangerous temper. We get to know their characters in ways and depths that I've never experienced anywhere else, and O'Brian never strikes a false note. Not once. Everything his men do are exactly what these men would do and when they would do it and how and why. We get to know all the people they love, all the people they hate, all the things they believe in, but most of all we get to see two men love each other over decades. Two men for whom the most important person in the world is the other.

We see Jack save Stephen from torture at the hands of the French, and carry his best friend with the delicacy of a father carrying a newborn, fighting back his sorrow because he must remain a Captain in charge. We see Stephen buy Jack a ship when Jack's been ignominiously drummed out of the service, and somehow he manages to give the gift without wounding his friend's pride.

I came to this series quite late, just before my twins were born eight years ago, and already I am back to book five in my reread (though much slower this time than last). Meanwhile, I am listening to the original book, *Master and Commander*, with my son whenever we get a chance to sneak into my office, all wood panelled and candle-lit (like a small cabin on the Surprise herself), and lose ourselves in the earliest meetings of Aubrey and Maturin. I've even passed these books onto my non-reading father (despite our longstanding problems), and even he has become a fan (no surprise, really, considering his nautical background).

For sheer comfort there is no series like Aubrey/Maturin. I love spending time with them. I love the action when it comes; I love the women they love; I love the intrigue and political machinations and way the wind and the sea make them the most themselves. More authors need to dedicate themselves to characters the way O'Brian dedicated himself to his men (not to plots and tales, but to the characters themselves). The literary world would be a much richer place.

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## **Jeannette Barnes says**

Deeply enjoyed all of these; my late Bob rejoiced when I turned him on to these fine seagoing novels which bring the British Navy of the Napoleonic Wars so vividly to life. Robert and I read and re-read this series over and over again--I've read 'em four times all the way through, just me, with delight. His bent was just a lil bit tad more technical in the matter of exact methods of sailing, weaponry, strategies of war. I am STILL gobsmacked by the depth, the quality, the sweet complexities of plot and the admirable characterizations on gorgeous-spread display. AND, for sauce, the language is unbeatable. These are simply marvelously well-constructed, meticulously researched, and told with a verve and swash that will pull you clean out to deep blue seas.

You don't have to read 'em down in order, but the most fun may be to begin at the beginning, and go right along with our heroes, their ladies, and their infinitely varied adventures. Book 1 (which was kinda lumped in with chunks of 2 in the movies, and even Russell Crowe couldn't really do that as well as the novels do) is Master and Commander.

Fair winds and prosperous voyages!

Jeannette

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