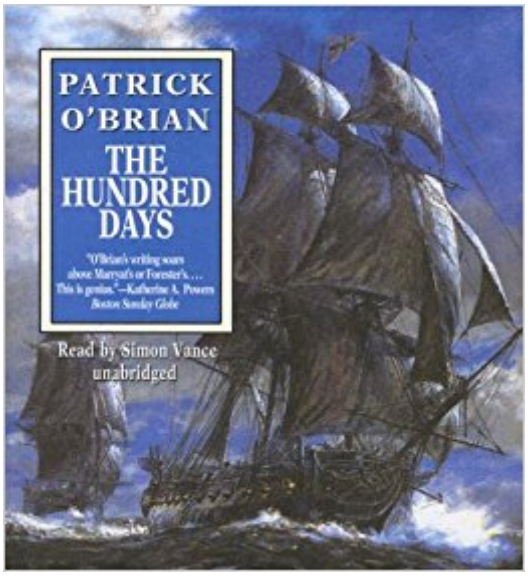
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The Hundred Days: Aubrey-Maturin Series Book 19



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Synopsis

When Napoleon escapes from Elba, the fate of Europe hinges on a desperate mission: Stephen Maturin must ferret out the French dictator's secret link to the powers of Islam, and Jack Aubrey must destroy it. Napoleon, like a vengeful phoenix, pursues his enemies across Europe. If he can corner the British and Prussians before their Russian and Austrian allies arrive, his genius will lead the French armies to triumph at Waterloo. In the Balkans, a horde of Muslim mercenaries is gathering in support of Napoleon, but they will not move without a shipment of gold ingots, which is on its way via camel caravan to the coast of North Africa. It is this gold that Aubrey and Maturin must intercept at all costs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The year is 1815, and Europe's most unpopular (not to mention tiniest) empire-builder has escaped from Elba. In The Hundred Days, it's up to Jack Aubrey--and surgeon-cum-spymaster Stephen Maturin--to stop Napoleon in his tracks. How? For starters, Aubrey and his squadron have been dispatched to the Adriatic coast, to keep Bonapartist shipbuilders from beefing up the French navy. Meanwhile, one Sheik Ibn Hazm is fomenting an Islamic uprising against the Allies. The only way to halt this maneuver is to intercept the sheik's shipment of gold--because in the Napoleonic era, as in our own, even the most ardent of mercenaries requires a salary. The Hundred Days is the 19th (and, we are told, the penultimate) installment of O'Brian's epic. Like many of its predecessors, it features a fairly swashbuckling plot, complete with cannon fire, exotic disguises, and Aubrey's

suspenseful, slow-motion pursuit of an Algerian xebek. Yet it never turns into a mere exercise in Hornblowerism. Partly this is due to O'Brian's delicate touch with character--the relationship between extroverted Aubrey and introverted Maturin has deepened with each book, and even Aubrey's reunion with his childhood companion Queenie Keith is full of novelistic nuance: "They sat smiling at one another. An odd pair: handsome creatures both, but they might have been of the same sex or neither." Nor does the author focus too exclusively on his dynamic duo. Indeed, The Hundred Days is very much a chronicle of a floating community, which Maturin describes as "his own village, his own ship's company, that complex entity so much more easily sensed than described: part of his natural habitat." Finally, O'Brian shows his usual expertise in balancing the great events with the most minuscule ones. Other authors have written about battles at sea, and still others have recorded the rapid rise and fall of Napoleon's fortunes after his escape from confinement. But who else would give equal time--and an equal charge of delight--to Maturin's discovery of an anomalous nuthatch? --James Marcus --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The Aubrey-Maturin series (The Commodore, etc.) nears the two dozen mark the way it began, with colorful historical background, smooth plotting, marvelous characters and great style. The title refers to Napoleon's escape from Elba and brief return to power. Capt. Jack Aubrey must stop a Moorish galley, loaded with gold for Napoleon's mercenaries, from making its delivery. The action takes us into two seas and one ocean and continues nearly nonstop until the climax in the Atlantic. We're quickly reacquainted with the two heroes: handsome sea dog Jack Aubrey, by now a national hero, and Dr. Stephen Maturin, Basque-Irish ship's doctor, naturalist, English spy and hopelessly incompetent seaman. Nothing stays the same, alas: Jack has gained weight almost to obesity, and Stephen is desolated by the death of his dashing, beautiful wife?but they're still the best of friends, each often knowing what the other is thinking. The prose moves between the maritime sublime and the Austenish bon mot ("a man generally disliked is hardly apt to lavish good food and wine on those who despise him, and Ward's dinners were execrable"). There are some favorite old characters, notably Aubrey's steward, Preserved Killick: "ill-faced, ill-tempered, meagre, atrabilious, shrewish" and thoroughly amusing. Chief among entertaining newcomers is Dr. Amos Jacob, a Cainite Jew ("they derive their descent from the Kenites, who themselves have Abel's brother Cain as their common ancestor"), who comes from a family of jewel merchants and has an encyclopedic grasp of Hebrew, Arabic and Turkish languages (and politics). Jacob is as expert as Stephen at spying and even more of a landlubber. O'Brian continues to unroll a splendid Turkish rug of a saga,

and if it seems unlikely that the sedentary Stephen would hunt lions in the Atlas mountains (with the Dey of Algiers!), O'Brian brings off even this narrative feat with aplomb. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If you like historical novels, this series is almost impossible to beat. O'Brien is meticulous in his research about the Napoleanic Wars, and shipboard life in the British Navy during that period around the turn of the 19th. Century. Plus his descriptions of naval battles and ship maneuvers are rich in detail and description. All are based upon records of actual battles as described in Captains' Logs and crew memorirs at the U.K. National Naval Archives. His character development is incomparable, and their respective personal interests in music, natural history, science (astral navigation for one) add a depth to the texture of the series that prevent them from becoming monotonous. I have the entire series, and I enjoy rereading them every three years or so. That's unusual. I hardly ever reread fictional works. It's impossible for me to rate his work with less than 5 Stars, both as a series and each book ax a standalone read. A personal all time favorite!

Spoiler alert....don't read my review if you haven't already read the book!Having said that, this book was the "least necessary" of the series so far. I have not yet read 20 or 21. There are some really interesting opportunities for character development and action...all glossed over. The losses of Diana and Bonden are almost ignored. Some reviewers chalk this up to O'Brian's stoic way of handling death...maybe true...but as a reader it seemed incomplete. Nature, Diana, Ireland and Medicine drive Steven (in that order, I think). Suddenly Diana is gone with about a paragraph devoted to her. So many opportunities for his reflections and sense of loss. It's certainly there...if you dig...but just barely. Same with Bonden. In a flash he's gone...with one sentence devoted to him later on.As for the plot...opportunities wasted. The struggle to bring the Surprise home after the storm and collision? Perhaps some better descriptions of the ship yard burnings? How 'bout some detail on the deal Steven cut to initiate the shipyard burnings. Instead we get a trip the see the Dey...which is meaningless since they seem to be killed every two weeks. I love the series...but this seemed a bit like filler. It's not difficult reading...but in the end you ask yourself "why was I here?".

Great book in the Aubrey series, very enjoyable.

Once again a mastery of early British Naval tradition by Patrick O'Brian. The descriptions and technical astuteness brings the reader directly onto the quarterdeck of the Surprise. If you are a fan

of this series you will continue to find the same level of intense action with subtle undertones of Dr. Maturin’s growing affections.

I just finished the series, actually. Not going to write a review on every last one, so this will have to cover them all. I am glad I stumbled onto these. The lot of them carried me through the winter nights this year. While I didn’t get much else done, no regrets. Very richly written, very detailed, great characters, great stories. You can’t help but keep rolling from one novel to the next. I’m sure there were places where O’Brian wore a bit thin, maybe too much time spent on minor details, but they were brief periods, at worst. If you are a fan of the Genre (And obviously there are many, judging from the selection), you have to read through this series. Either this, or the Hornblower books, are what all the others should be judged by.

There is little to be said, other than ’Of the thousands of authors, read over the last - almost 80 years I honour him with his farsight, intuition, and total mastery of grammar and English. You Irish must be as proud as I to have the honour of reading his words.’

THE HUNDRED DAYS is the 20th in O’Brian’s Aubrey-Maturin series. New readers are likely to be disappointed, as character development in earlier novels is essential to appreciating the main characters. Fans of the series are likely to be moderately disappointed. Very little new character development takes place, and oddly, there is little reference to earlier characters and events. The introduction of a new character (a female) surgeon’s assistant, presents much potential, which is not realized. The plot thesis also has much potential which never materializes. As always, O’Brian brilliantly describes the day-to-day life of sailors. THE HUNDRED DAYS is even richer in such details that the earlier novels in the series. Unfortunately, in THE HUNDRED DAYS the ancient "HMS Surprise" journeys nowhere, and our beloved characters are too old and set in their ways to be interesting.UPDATE: Having re-read the entire series a couple of times in the 15 years since writing the review above, my opinion has changed. The novel is a nearly perfect fit in the series. It is deep and rich, and rings true. The novel reveals much about how the personalities of the main characters change as they age (as, in fact, they do through the entire series).However, I have chosen to leave my original review intact, because I still expect new readers (who have not read the preceding novels of the series, in order) to be disappointed, and for first-readers (who have read the series up to this point), especially young readers, to be moderately disappointed by the death of Diana and by the departure from seagoing action and adventure. This is not a novel to read on its

own. But as part of the series, it is a great novel, fully equal to any other in the series---which is very high praise.

Thank you. it was the missing edition to my collection.

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