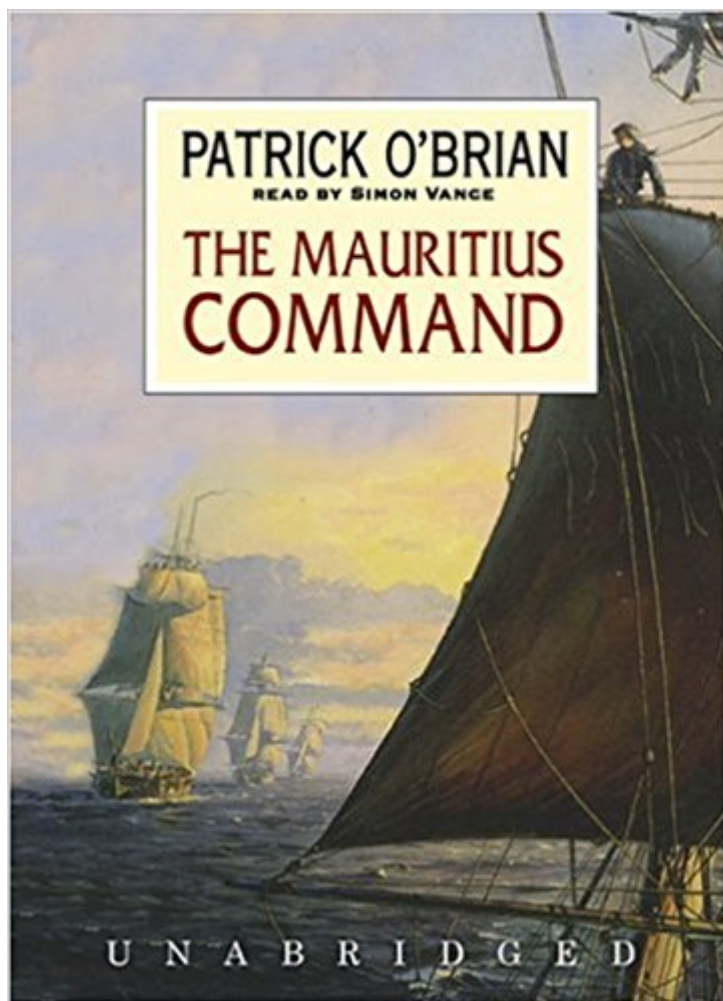


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The Mauritius Command (Aubrey-Maturin Series, Book 4)



Synopsis

[Read by Simon Vance] Patrick O'Brian's fourth action-packed installment in the 'Aubrey-Maturin' series, as with the rest, demonstrates historical fiction at its best. Captain Jack Aubrey is ashore on half pay without a command, until Stephen Maturin arrives with secret orders for Aubrey to take a frigate to the Cape of Good Hope under a commodore's pennant. Once there he is to mount an expedition against the French-held islands of Mauritius and La Réunion. But the difficulties of carrying out his orders are compounded by two of his own captains - Lord Clonfert, a pleasure-seeking dilettante, and Captain Corbett, whose severity pushes his crew to the verge of mutiny.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sounding every bit the proper English gentleman, narrator Tim Pigott-Smith gives a delightfully entertaining, yet appropriately restrained performance in this rollicking addition to the popular Aubrey/Maturin series. Blending historical fact with fiction, author Patrick O'Brian has crafted another captivating saga based on obscure events in maritime history. "The frigates never reached the Antilles. Nothing was heard of them until they hit Mauritius, where they upset the balance of powers in those waters entirely. The news of their presence reached England a very short while ago." In less competent hands, efforts of this nature might well sink under the weight of pedantic prose and mind-numbing minutiae, but O'Brian's impressive writing and the considerable vocal

talents of Pigott-Smith help keep this adventure, and the long-lived series itself, riding high in the water. (Running time: 5 hours, 3 cassettes) --George Laney --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This initiates the reissue (see H.M.S. Surprise above) of O'Brian's long-out-of-print novels, set in Napoleonic-era England, about the unlikely pair, Captain Jack Aubrey and Dr. Stephen Maturin. Aubrey is a strapping blond man of action; Maturin, his ship's surgeon and occasional intelligence agent to the king, is diminutive and somber. Aubrey is without a ship, uncomfortably surrounded by wife, babies and mother-in-law, when Maturin comes to visit. The good doctor has engineered a new mission for his friend, and they set off to take two small islands off the coast of Madagascar, thereby making the Indian Ocean safe for English commerce. O'Brian is a graceful writer, and the book is full of wonderful period details, such as the use of a sail to create a wading pool for non-swimmers in Aubrey's crew. Unfortunately, with Aubrey as commodore, too much of the action is seen from afar, as when batteries are taken on one of the islands. The book's peculiar narrative structure builds repeatedly towards anticipated climaxes that never happen. However, aficionados of C. S. Forester and Alexander Kent will delight in the almost excessive period nautical jargon. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

My introduction to Patrick O'Brian's books was the movie *Master & Commander, Far Side of the World*; it's one of my favorite movies, seen it multiple times, and I've always been sad that they never made the planned sequel. I always knew that the movie was taken from several of Mr. O'Brian's books and I intended, some day, to read a few of them. So a few months ago I bought the first book; *Master & Commander* thinking that I would give it a try and if I liked it I would eventually work my way through the rest of them...I am just finishing this book, book number 4 in the series and I've read them straight through, finish one and immediately start the next. There are twenty books in all in the Aubrey/Maturin series and a book twenty-one that consists of the first three chapters only because Mr. O'Brian passed away whilst writing it. And while there are twenty complete books it's really just one very long book because each book passes seamlessly into the next, which may explain why I've ripped through the first four all in a row! I think I may stop for a bit after this one because I don't think I can read all twenty in a row and I'm not sure I'd want to because the experience would end much too soon. That being said, I am aware of the luxury of having that option, I can't imagine how frustrating it must have been for O'Brian fans back in the

70's and 80's having to wait for him to write the next volume! In case you haven't caught on yet I am a very big fan of these books! I admit that it does take a while to become accustomed to Mr. O'Brian's writing style, it is very different. And the language, nautical terms also are an acquired taste but, once you've acquired that taste these books are incredible. They are without a doubt some of the very best historical fiction I've ever read. And as far as nautical historical fiction goes, in my opinion the only other writer in Mr. O'Brian's league is C.S. Forester. I have read some nautical historical fiction by contemporary writers, there are several plying their trade today, and they're pretty good, enjoyable and very readable, but none are in the same league as Mr. O'Brian. If you're a fan of the Russell Crowe movie, or of nautical fiction, or historical fiction of any kind I highly recommend giving the Aubrey/Maturin series a try. Just be ready to put aside any other books you were planning to read for a while because once you start reading these books it is very difficult to stop.

I've been reading through the Aubrey/Maturin series and this is by far my favorite thus far. One of the most engaging and action packed stories thus far and based very much on historical events. Truly an enjoyable read and I'm sure if you've read the preceding books I don't have to encourage you much to pick this one up.

I'd happily give every Aubrey-Maturin novel five stars, but I've got to differentiate somehow. This one is interesting, because the first three novels, while having relatively independent story arcs, share a strong consistency of style, characterization, and timing. The Mauritius Command seems a bit of an experiment for O'Brian. No longer do we have the so very youthful, deeply flawed but energetically driven Aubrey and Maturin. There seems to me some inconsistency in timeline, age, etc. in the cursory-to-the-point-of-irrelevance intro in which we see the Aubrey the semi-retired and ineffective family man whose wife is ready to get him out of the house. The rest of the story is in fairly classic style, but a little too focused on reenacting the historical details of an extensive and well-documented naval campaign to the detriment of the highly charged, personal stories like the relationship triangle that led to the dramatic duel in "HMS Surprise." So, the book is a bit of an oddball when compared to the strong flow of narrative and style in the novels before and after, as if O'Brian just didn't quite know where he was going, but picked it up again in Vol. 5. Don't get me wrong though, it is good, and not to be missed.

There may be a bit more skulduggery on the part of officialdom than is quite pleasant in this

episode of the Aubrey/Maturin opus; however, it ends well. More would give away the fun for the new reader, so the I will leave it. Highly recommend, of course.

Without a doubt the best of the first 4 books. If all you know about Aubrey and Maturin you learned from watching Master and Commander you'd find that those confident and skillful characters came from this book instead of the book the movie is named for. This book has conflict, strategy, humor, disaster, triumph, uncertainty, confidence, ambition, deference, command, subordination and they are all in the exactly perfect places. I am an O'Brian fan I suggest you read this and all his other books in this series. You won't be disappointed.

I must admit, after reading the first 4 books, I am in love with this author and his characters. I cannot read them one after the other, but I intersperse them with other more modern tales of intrigue, spy vs spy, or other action thrillers. I was first introduced to book 2 Post Captain as it was required reading for my son's AP English & Comp class. Having seen the Master and Commander movie years ago helped me put a face on the main characters, especially Aubrey. After reading No 2 I went back and began them in order. Aubrey is little more than a sailer and a leader of men, preferably in war, while Dr. Maturin is a complete study, almost the conscience of the fleet. His motives for helping the English are not quite plausible, Catalan independence and all, but he seems to hate Napoleon B and what he has done to the French Revolution, more than he dislikes the British, so operates as an intelligence agent for Whitehall, while at the same time making sure the reader understands his complete hatred for slavery and capital punishment, but cannot seem to get that across to the thick head of Lucky Jack Aubrey. Even with Maturin's feelings toward slavery, he nevertheless tried to purchase a young girl of 10 or so, who was his guide around Bombay, in order to protect her from a certain future of prostitution. These things were beyond his control though, and he eventually ended up paying for her funeral. You might think these books are simply naval war stories, but they are much more and draw the reader into surprising situations around virtually every corner.

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