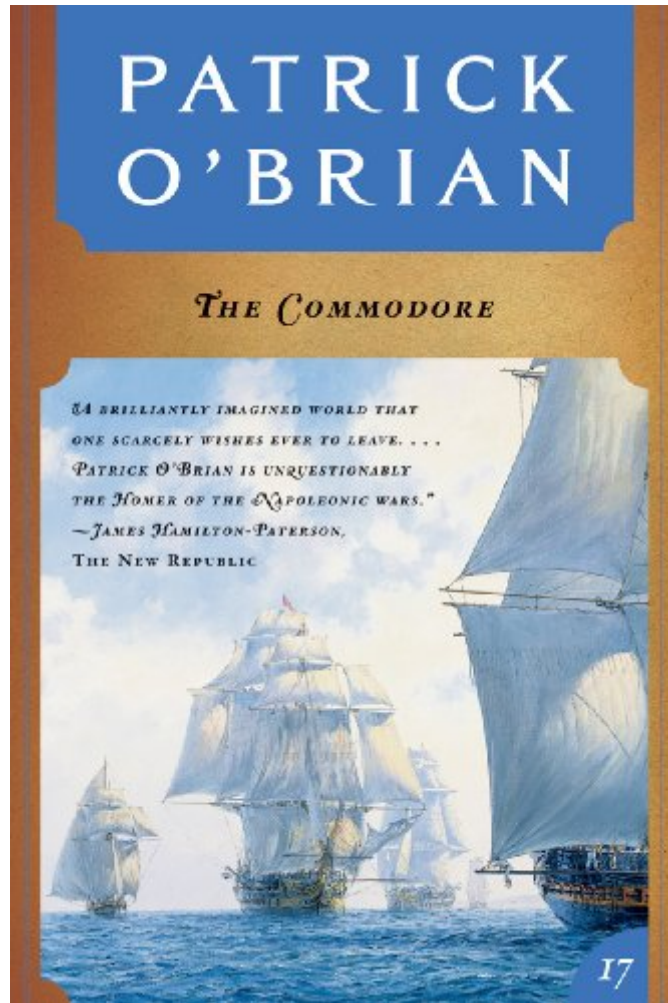


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The Commodore (Vol. Book 17) (Aubrey/Maturin Novels)



Synopsis

The seventeenth novel in the best-selling Aubrey/Maturin series of naval tales, which the New York Times Book Review has described as "the best historical novels ever written." Having survived a long and desperate adventure in the Great South Sea, Captain Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin return to England to very different circumstances. For Jack it is a happy homecoming, at least initially, but for Stephen it is disastrous: his little daughter appears to be autistic, incapable of speech or contact, while his wife, Diana, unable to bear this situation, has disappeared, her house being looked after by the widowed Clarissa Oakes. Much of *The Commodore* takes place on land, in sitting rooms and in drafty castles, but the roar of the great guns is never far from our hearing. Aubrey and Maturin are sent on a bizarre decoy mission to the fever-ridden lagoons of the Gulf of Guinea to suppress the slave trade. But their ultimate destination is Ireland, where the French are mounting an invasion that will test Aubrey's seamanship and Maturin's resourcefulness as a secret intelligence agent. The subtle interweaving of these disparate themes is an achievement of pure storytelling by one of our greatest living novelists.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After returning from years at sea, in the East Indies, Botany Bay, the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands,

the Peruvian coast and Cape Horn--during which Aubrey freed an old servant of Dr. Maturin from imprisonment and unwittingly took on a stowaway from Botany Bay, frustrated an attempt by a prototypical communist to set up an "ideal" government which would have been inimical to British interests in the Sandwich Islands, and a failed attempt by Dr. Maturin (a British intelligence agent) to free Peru from the Spanish influence--as well as encountering terminal storms, volcanic eruptions, encounters with icebergs, pirates and other enemy ships, in the last book (The Wine Dark Sea); our heroes, Dr. Stephen Maturin and Captain Jack Aubrey finally arrive back in England in this, the 17th book of the 20 book Aubrey/Maturin series. However, all is not well. Aubrey's wife, Sophie, suspects him of having an affair with the stowaway, Mrs. Oakes, although he is innocent. He, in turn, suspects her of having an affair with the local parson, who pursued her before their marriage. Stephen finds his wife, Diana, gone to parts unknown, and his girl child whom he has never seen, is suspected of being an idiot. Jack is given a new command, promoted to Commodore, and embarks on an effort to stop the slave trade out of Africa, as well as to frustrate a French squadron from interfering in Ireland. No one knows square-rigged ships as well as the late Patrick O'Brian, the author. His 19th century sea battles are often taken directly from British Admiralty records, but more than that his dialogues are replete with period expressions and turns of phrase that add greatly to his stories. What magnificent stories!

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