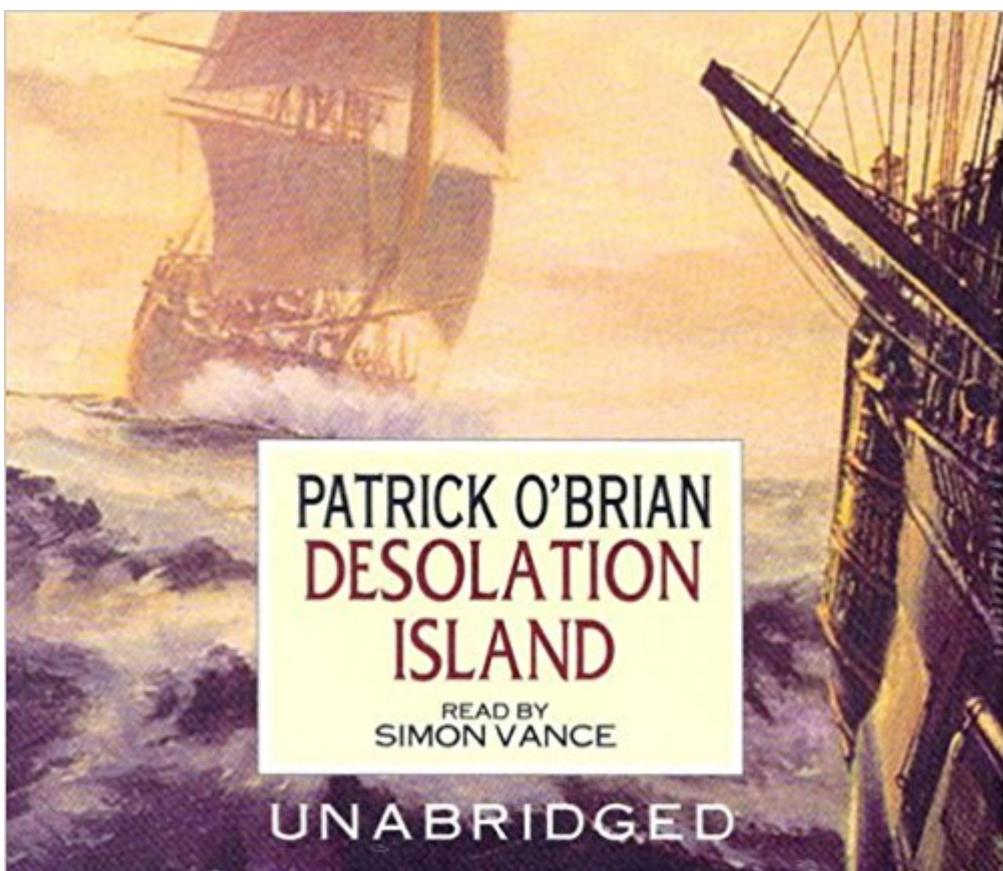


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Desolation Island (Aubrey-Maturin Series, Book 5)



Synopsis

[Read by Simon Vance] Desolation Island is Patrick O'Brian's fifth 'Aubrey-Maturin' novel and it marks a turning point in this highly entertaining historical adventure series. Whereas the previous four novels could be read as stand-alones, only loosely connected in regard to plot, Desolation Island begins a story arc that continues on through the series. Captain Jack Aubrey has been getting into trouble during his time ashore, his trusting nature causing him problems in both business and cards. His friend, surgeon Stephen Maturin, is having a little trouble of his own. Commissioned to rescue Governor Bligh of Bounty fame, Captain Aubrey Maturin sails the Leopard to Australia with a hold full of convicts. Among them is a beautiful and dangerous spy - and a treacherous disease that decimates the crew. With a Dutch man-of-war to windward, the undermanned, outgunned Leopard sails for her life into the freezing waters of the Antarctic, where, in mountainous seas, the Dutchman closes in.

Book Information

Series: Aubrey-Maturin (Book 5)

Audio CD

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Customer Reviews

"Good history, fascinating erudition, espionage, romance, fever in the hold, a wreck in lost latitudes, and an action at sea that for sheer descriptive power can match anything in sea-fiction." --Guardian
"The best thing afloat since Horatio Hornblower." --Observer "[Patrick O'Brian has] the power of bringing near to the reader . . . savagery and tenderness, beauty and mystery and boldness and dignity." --Eudora Welty"Patrick O'Brian presents the lost arcana of that hard-pressed, cruel, courageous world with an immediacy that makes its workings both comprehensible and fascinating.

But in the end it is the serious exploration of human character that gives the books their greatest power: the fretful play of mood that can irrationally darken the edges of the brightest triumph - and that can feed a trickle of merriment into the midst of terror and tragedy.” --New York Times Book Review ”O’Brian’s sheer brilliance as a writer constantly dazzles, and his power over the reader is unique. No writer alive can move one as O’Brian can; no one can make you laugh so loud with hilarity, whiten your knuckles with unbearable tension, or choke with emotion. He is the master.” -- Irish Times ”The best historical novels ever written.” --New York Times Book Review ”Few, very few, books have made my heart thud with excitement. H.M.S. Surprise managed it . . . Patrick O’Brian’s erudition is phenomenal, as is his capacity for creating another completely believable world. He convinces with his total accuracy even in tiny details.” --Irish Press ”O’Brian is astonishingly good.” --Times (London) ”They’re funny, they’re exciting, they’re informative. There are legions of us who gladly ship out time and time again under Captain Aubrey.” --New Yorker” . . . full of the energy that comes from a writer having struck a vein... Patrick O’Brian is unquestionably the Homer of the Napoleonic wars.” --James Hamilton-Paterson ”You are in for the treat of your lives. Thank God for Patrick O’Brian: his genius illuminates the literature of the English language, and lightens the lives of those who read him.” --Irish Times ”Few, very few, books have made my heart thump with excitement. H.M.S. Surprise managed it. [O’Brian’s] erudition is phenomenal, as is his capacity for creating another completely believable world. I might have given a better idea of this book if I had simply written 600 times the word ‘superb’.” --Irish Times ”As sinewy, and virile as its predecessors, this is a copper-bottomed investment for the numerous fans of Jack Aubrey . . . we sail breathlessly through perilous seas to the Far East. Vivid and authentic as is Mr O’Brian’s mastery of period and life at sea, it is in his creation of characters that he excels.” Daily Telegraph ”It has been said that this series is some of the finest historical fiction of our time . . . Aubrey and Maturin have been described as better than Holmes and Watson, the equal of Quixote and Panza . . . All this is true. And the marvel is, it hardly says enough.” --Los Angeles Times ”Earphones Awards winner [audiobook narrator] Simon Vance juggles multiple characters, accents, and dramatic and comedic scenes with aplomb . . . Vance’s warm, welcoming voice captures colorful characters, entertaining relationships . . . Readers in search of a handful of excellent companions with whom to spend many enjoyable hours will be hail and well met.” --AudioFilemagazine audiobook review

PATRICK O’BRIAN (1914-2000) was born Richard Patrick Russ in England. During the Second World War, he and his wife were involved in British secret-service activities. After the war, he changed his name to Patrick O’Brian and began his career as a novelist, biographer, and translator.

He is the author of the acclaimed 'Aubrey-Maturin' tales and the biographer of Joseph Banks and Picasso. In 1995 he was the first recipient of the Heywood Hill Prize for a lifetime's contribution to literature. In the same year he was awarded the CBE. In 1997 he received an honorary doctorate of letters from Trinity College, Dublin.

No better book about war at sea and the terrible dangers facing sailors in the age of sailing ships has been written. In this fifth book in Patrick O'Brian's Aubrey / Maturin novels, the threats and dangers are extreme and the actions are most exciting. I have read "Desolation Island" at least ten times, and have been thrilled and saddened and excited and gratified with each reading.

I really enjoyed this even though I am used to the Patrick Tull version of these stories. This was very good and it was over before I knew it! I will listen to it over and over.

If you like the Aubrey/Maturin Series you will not be disappointed.

fits well in series

This time the plot involves more than sea, battle, and the natural world. The ship has taken on prisoners consigned to Australia. This feature adds pathos, indignation, and other emotional factors to the usual naval war between Britain and France.

When I want to get away for a break, I can become completely immersed in this absolutely wonderful series. I will NEVER give these books away. If you would like to become a little more knowledgeable about the sailing world there is plenty here .. I who know nothing of sailing now know a few of the terms. I was so happy to have the Russell Crowe movie made .. but it was just too short for me (it was a merging of several of the books). The Series is NOT too short .. you can have days and days upon the sea, with intrigue and love (just a tiny bit .. after all, these are Men of the late 1700's! What a Great Romp)

I assume that people interested in audio versions of O'Brian's novels have already read the books. So, listening to a read version is a supplementary pleasure that can follow a great read. My rating here has nothing to do with the literary quality of the work in question. The whole Aubrey-Maturin series is superb. But if you want to listen to them I recommend that you stay away from any read

by Simon Vance. He is unable to sufficiently differentiate the characters, with their diverse accents from around the world. For example, Maturin grew up in Ireland, and should therefore have a bit of an Irish accent. Vance can't do it, and offers stuffy readings that makes Jack sound like a bombastic jerk, and Stephen like a mincing prig. And in his hands, Diana sounds like a silly simpering ninny. An actor, not just a reader is required. I highly recommend Patrick Tull, who recorded the entire series with consistent success and enthusiasm, as well as John Lee, who unfortunately only recorded the first 6 volumes.

For anyone who loves to listen the O'brian's novels read with eloquence and great vocal characterization, go for Patrick O'Tull's version. Seriously, he is much better than Simon's insipid performance.

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