

The Hundred Days Study Guide

The Hundred Days by Patrick O'Brian

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Plot Summary

It is after the Napoleonic Wars and Napoleon has been confined to Elba. At the opening of The Hundred Days, Napoleon has escaped from Elba and made his way to Paris to be received enthusiastically by over 600,000 French. Many of the King's armies flock to Napoleon's side as he prepares for another attempt at the domination of Europe. Troops from a number of allied countries march to join up and stop Napoleon before he is able to regain his former strength.

On a second front, thousands of Muslim mercenaries gather to assist Napoleon's efforts by thwarting the Russians and Austrians from joining other forces bent on stopping Napoleon. The Muslim forces support Napoleon because of his alleged conversion to Islam while Napoleon was on campaign in Egypt. However, because the Muslim forces are mercenaries, they are unwilling to move against the Russians and Austrians without a guarantee of payment. Sheik Ibn Hazm has agreed to finance the use of the Muslim mercenaries by Napoleon and has authorized a shipment of gold ingots as a sign of his good faith.

Meanwhile, Commodore Jack Aubrey and his close friend, Doctor Stephen Maturin are tasked with the mission of halting the shipment of the gold and/or intercepting the gold so it does not reach the Muslim mercenaries. Additionally, the small fleet which Aubrey commands is tasked with finding and destroying shipbuilding facilities that have gone into high gear to re-build Napoleon's navy. Aubrey is aboard his flagship, Pomone, and commands several other vessels, most of which have little wartime experience. Doctor Maturin's wife, Donna, has been recently killed in a carriage accident and Maturin is still suffering the effects of his grief. His young daughter is being cared for by Sophie Aubrey, Jack's wife, and by the widow Oakes, whose deceased husband served under Aubrey for many years.

In order to try to keep the gold out of the hands of the mercenaries, Maturin and Amos Jacob, a British agent and expert on the area, ride into the Atlas to find the new Dey and request his cooperation in not allowing the gold to pass through his kingdom. The Dey, who is an ardent opponent of Napoleon, readily agrees. Unfortunately, the Dey is assassinated and the Vizier, who is a Napoleon sympathizer, makes arrangements for the gold to be brought by a corsair galley through the Straits of Gibraltar. After rejoining Aubrey, the squadron makes it way back to their home base in order to stop the galley from delivering its goods. Surprise is successful and receives not only much praise, but a goodly sum of prize monies.

When Aubrey and his group return to their home port, they learn that Napoleon is defeated at Waterloo and the war has effectively ended. Aubrey is sent to survey and chart Cape Horn and the Straits of Magellan.



Chapter One

Chapter One Summary

The Hundred Days is about the hundred days when Napoleon has escaped and attempts to reignite his quest for world domination. Aubrey and his squadron are tasked with halting the building and outfitting of ships in the Adriatic region who seek to aid Napoleon. A second, very important task is the halting of a shipment of gold intended for the payment of Muslim mercenaries who are tasked with the responsibility of preventing the Russian and Austrian armies from uniting against Napoleon. Aubrey, along with his close friend Maturin, are eminently successful in all their assignments and end the hundred days to both acclaim and increased wealth due to the capture of the gold intended for the mercenaries' pay.

There has been a quick rearmament of the British navy and army in 1815 following the escape of Napoleon Bonaparte from Elba. Unemployed and half-employed men await the return of Commodore Aubrey's squadron from Madeira. Two sailors awaiting the squadron's return speak of the deaths of men they know or know of and of the death of Stephen Maturin's wife, who dies in a carriage accident. Though the Surprise sails with this group, Aubrey is aboard the flagship, Pomone. Aubrey and Maturin come ashore. Aubrey meets up with "Queenie" and her husband, Admiral Lord Viscount Keith, and they talk about the rousing reception Napoleon receives at his entry into Paris and the situation of the various armies gathering to invade France and confront Napoleon's 300,000 plus army.

Lord Admiral Keith and Aubrey talk about how Napoleon must be getting monies from somewhere, probably the Turks, since Napoleon reportedly becomes Muslim earlier in his life as a conqueror while in Egypt. Aubrey is given his orders, which are to protect the Constantinople trade, protect and blockade the Straits of Gibraltar, and find and stop the building and arming of new fighting vessels for the French in the Adriatic ports. Aubrey is directed to capture or destroy any vessel that proclaims for Napoleon. Maturin meets with Mr. Dee and Mr. Kent, two intelligence agents who brief him on the evolving situation of the land armies that are gathering to stop Napoleon. Essentially, morale is low and there is much in-fighting among the various factions. The Russians are the most difficult because they are entirely reluctant to engage in another war so soon after Napoleon's last push for world domination. Most of the Allies mistrust the others and Napoleon intends to drive a wedge further between the forces. Another disturbing situation is that Muslim mercenaries are gathering in support of Napoleon but are not willing to go into battle without seeing two months pay in hard cash/gold. Supposedly the necessary gold has been promised and is to be shipped out of Algiers. Mr. Dee gives a brief accounting of the banking/monetary systems of the Muslim world to explain why the money must be coming from a private source, most likely Ibn Hazm of Azgar. Mr. Dee asks Dr. Maturin to go to Algiers and meet a Spanish Jew, Mr. Amos Jacob, who is an expert in both the spoken and written languages of the Muslim community. Dr. Maturin and Mr. Jacob are to intercede with the Dey to block any gold from leaving the



Muslim community. However, Mr. Dee insists that a disruption of shipping and ship building in the Adriatic ports is the number one priority. If they are successful in that endeavor, the gold may never be shipped.

While Dr. Maturin is meeting with his compatriots, Commodore Aubrey is meeting with his ships' captains to determine assignments. Aubrey decides to shift his flag ship to the Surprise. Aubrey goes to speak with Maturin and finds him conversing with Dr. Glover about various matters, one being the recent death of Governor Wood and the state of his marriage over the years with Mrs. Wood and the Governor's alleged impotence with its possible causes. Aubrey interrupts the two doctors' conversation to ask if Maturin wants any errand run by Mr. Reade when Reade takes Ringle to England on a courier mission.

The next day is a flurry of activity as Aubrey prepares his fleet for embarkation and for shifting his flag to Surprise. In the midst of it all, Aubrey has to attend a court martial of the Pomone's second in command. Maturin goes to shore to meet with Dr. Amos Jacob and discuss the situation about the Muslims and the gold. Dr. Jacob comes on board with Maturin and meets Aubrey. Aubrey informs Maturin that the charges have been reduced to "gross indecency" and the officers have been discharged and sent ashore in disgrace.

Chapter One Analysis

The two sailors who are watching the movements of ships in the harbor at the opening of *The Hundred Days* could be likened to the chorus in Greek drama. They serve as a means for informing readers of the major players' life circumstances in *The Hundred Days*. This technique makes for a more interesting way of letting the reader know what has passed since the ending of the last book in the series, *The Yellow Admiral*. One of the most notable happenings is the death of Stephen Maturin's wife in a carriage accident. Maturin is still recovering from hearing of the incident and is perhaps slightly less sharp than usual. The irony of Mrs. Maturin's death is that so many "modern" novels use an automobile accident as a means of forwarding a plotline; in *The Hundred Years*, a carriage accident is the 18th century parallel to the modern car accident.

Much of *The Hundred Days* and other books in this series are replete with descriptions of the details of life at sea. There is no reason a reader needs to understand all the technicalities of sailing, but if s/he is interested, a good nautical dictionary would serve the reader well. Much of the technical aspects is understandable just by context, though.

The understated British "reserve" in mannerism is quite evident in how Mr. Dee and Mr. Kent act towards Maturin, with whom they meet to apprise him of the situation concerning Napoleon and the Muslim world. Though neither Dee nor Kent says anything directly about the death of Maturin's wife, it is obvious they are aware of her death and they offer condolences in an unstated, subtle way—a gentle squeeze of the shoulder and a slight nod of the head.



Another thing to note in *The Hundred Years* is the fact that O'Brien uses real historical events around which to write his Aubrey-Maturin novels. In the case of *The Hundred Days*, the plot is built upon the hundred days time that the real, historic Napoleon Bonaparte escapes from Elba and attempts to gain the throne of France and commence his efforts at European domination. As with the nautical terminology, it is not necessary to know any of the historical facts around which the story is written, but some research into those facts would add complexity and another dimension to the storyline.

Note the parallels to the economics of the latter part of the first decade of the 21st century when Mr. Dee states that "gold is at such a very shocking premium, and credit is virtually dead" (p. 20). Sound familiar? It will be interesting to notice other examples of the fact that "some things never change."

Another interesting conversation occurs between Dr. Glover and Dr. Maturin about the possible causes of the now-deceased Governor Wood's impotence. Again, this conversation is one that might occur between two medical doctors in the 21st century, and the cause of impotence is often as much a mystery today as then. O'Brien often interjects these types of situations into the text and gives an almost "modern" feel to the discussion, though the terminology and beliefs behind such problems are often humorous.

A second thing to note about the conversation between Dr. Glover and Dr. Maturin is the fact that a "usual and genuine source of grief" (p. 27) for a newly-widowed woman is that she is often thrown into economic insecurity unless her husband has the foresight and the concern to arrange for her financial well-being after his passing. This, too, is often the case in our modern world, particularly if a woman with young children is left in poor financial circumstances with the untimely passing of a husband. Fortunately in the modern world, there are more options for a woman and more help is available; yet, the trauma is still present of one being suddenly knocked off a higher economic rung on the ladder.

Readers who are unfamiliar with the military may find some of the vocabulary and actions of the officers and sailors a bit mystifying. Again, most of the actions are understandable in context, though present and former military members will likely relate to the aspects of the book having to do with life in the military, particularly a sea-going service.

One situation that takes place both then and in the modern military is the process of a court martial, which is quite similar to a civilian criminal trial with a few differences. The court martial which takes place at the end of chapter one may seem outrageous to the modern reader considering the penalty for a guilty verdict is death—the crime is sodomy, i.e., in this case a male having sex with another male. Yet, though the death penalty may seem severe and unreasonable for such an act, it was only in 2003 that the Supreme Court ruled that anti-sodomy laws violated personal liberty rights and effectively invalidated the few states anti-sodomy laws which still were in force. Again, O'Brien seems to be saying that "some things never change," especially considering the reaction of many of the sailors who are contemptuous of the officer charged. Fortunately



for that officer, Aubrey repeats a statement by Maturin rendering a guilty verdict of a lesser crime and the officer is only dismissed from the Navy. This scene is also germane to the fact that the United States and some other countries are trying to formulate a policy about homosexuals serving in the military. It will be interesting to see if the "modern" military can overcome the prejudice towards homosexuals.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Surprise and Pomone go out to sea to practice gunnery. The crew on the Pomone are for the most part quite inexperienced and though they try to give a good showing, they are quite outclassed by the Surprise. Pomone is already reeling from the loss of her Captain, who is laid up with a broken leg and one of her officers who is dismissed from the service under the charges of sodomy, though he is found guilty of the lesser charge of undesirable conduct. Additionally, the Pomone is understaffed, the remedy hopefully coming shortly by the impressment of crew off some merchant vessels. The other vessels in the squadron are in various degrees of readiness, but none as bad off as the Pomone.

Aubrey arrives back in his quarters aboard Surprise to find Dr. Maturin with his musical score spread over the desk and Aubrey's paperwork heaped into incomprehensible stacks. Aubrey has found Maturin a loblolly-boy, who in this case turns out to be a middle-aged woman, Poll Skeeping, who is quite experienced in assisting in the treatment of wounds and other medical problems. Though Maturin is hesitant about a woman working for him on board the ship, he agrees to interview her upon Aubrey's recommendation since he had previously been her shipmate. Maturin agrees to have Poll as his assistant and shows her the sick bay. They start right in making "blue ointment" together while Poll relates to Maturin how she had come to accept employment aboard various ships.

Dr. Maturin arranges for Dr. Amos Jacob to come on board and has Killick arrange for a boy to serve Jacob. Dr. Jacob is to eat in the gunroom, which Dr. Maturin rarely does. Dr. Jacob eats that evening with the officers in the gunroom and is well received. During the next several days, the squadron carries out drills and readies for whatever they may encounter on their assignments. Dr. Maturin carries out a dissection of a hand that he had acquired and also works on his musical composing. As Maturin finishes his composition, a sailor comes to announce that the Ringle is back from courier duty. Reade of the Ringle brings word that Pomone's boats had been attacked by Moors. Aubrey and Reade travel to the Flag vessel, The Royal Sovereign, to confer with Lord Keith, who agrees with Aubrey that the squadron must set sail immediately to find the Indiamen and escort them to safety.

The squadron gets underway with little problems excepting the Dover, which grazes the stonework and slightly damages her mainchains. As the squadron continues smooth sailing, Dr. Maturin continues his dissection of the hand. When the squadron approaches the height of Laraish, Aubrey sends Ringle out to reconnoiter and count the number of corsairs in the harbor. Ringle signals finding no corsairs in the harbor, and Aubrey realizes that the corsairs are lying in wait for the Indiamen to leave the harbor and planning to assault them at that point. The squadron rounds the point to find the Indiamen under attack by a score of corsairs and smallcraft filled with Moors waiting to



board any disabled merchant vessel. Surprise signals the ships in the squadron to attack at will and rushes to engage what looks to be the commanding vessel of the Moors.

After a successful engagement and the fleeing of the Moors, Aubrey meets with the merchant vessel leaders and asks for a few men to fill out some of the shortages on Pomone and other vessels. Aubrey informs them of the outbreak of a new war against Napoleon to justify his request. Aubrey leaves Dover as an escort for the merchant vessels. Captain Pomfret consults with Dr. Maturin and describes his extreme distress at sinking a vessel with Christian slaves chained to the rowing seats. Dr. Maturin tries to console Pomfret and offers him a sleeping potion and says that when Pomfret awakes, he must heal himself.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Aubrey demonstrates his leadership skills in his talk with Captain Pomfret on the Pomone. He tells Pomfret to keep his crew very busy practicing and have high expectations, but to praise them as much as possible. This is obviously how Aubrey handles the men under his command and it is obvious in both the competence Aubrey's men possess as seamen and the loyalty Aubrey's men give him as their commander. A demonstration of the soundness of Aubrey's advice about praising competence is shown when Aubrey praises the performance of the crew of the Briseis to the captain, but renders the praise in a loud enough voice that some of the crew hears it and responds with looks of pride.

Along with many of the British officers' seemingly natural reserve is also a politeness that is almost ludicrous at times. When Aubrey comes into his cabin and finds his papers in disorderly stacks, put there by Stephen Maturin when Maturin makes room on Aubrey's desk for his composition materials, Maturin apologizes for moving the papers and says he hopes he has not inconvenienced Aubrey. Aubrey disavows any inconvenience, but Maturin can tell Aubrey is not sincere. Both men strive to reassure the other, but both men know the exchange is insincere. And this is between two men who have sailed together and have been close friends for years.

The topic of women aboard ship arises in Chapter 2. Aubrey suggests that Maturin interview a woman, Poll Skeeping, with the thought of hiring her as Maturin's "loblolly-boy," which is a person who serves as the ship's surgeon's assistant. Maturin is amazed that Aubrey would consider having a woman on board a ship, saying that they are considered "[T]he invariable cause of trouble, quarrelling, ill-luck. Wholly out of place in any ship..." (p. 39). Aubrey defends the judicial use of women aboard a ship and offers several examples, one of which is Poll, with whom he had been on another ship when he was younger. This brings up two themes that run throughout *The Hundred Days*, and indeed, the entire series: One is the role and life of women in the early 19th century and the second is the tendency for sailors to be superstitious during this same period (and other eras also).



Because O'Brian endeavors to stay historically accurate, even to the use of 19th century colloquial English, his treatment of women in his series may make some readers think he is a sexist. As readers have to keep reminding themselves, what a person writes is not necessarily what s/he believes. The fact is that women in the early 19th century were not seen as the equal to men and they were not liberated even in European and North American societies, much less in Muslim cultures. The meaning of liberated in this sense is that in many (perhaps most) countries, women did not have the full legal rights as men and often went from being the "property" of their fathers to being the "property" of their husbands. It is useful for a reader to understand the status of women in order to understand fully any book that is written about the early 19th century that includes female characters. Thus, keep in mind that women were truly "second-class citizens" when mention is made of a woman in *The Hundred Years*.

A second theme that is present in every one of the Aubrey-Maturin series books is that of the superstitious nature of sailors. It is perhaps a bit of a stereotype, yet the stereotype is based upon some degree of authenticity. Perhaps because when sailing in those days (and to a lesser extent today), the vessel is tiny compared to the vast ocean where the vessel is subject to the forces of nature over which no person has any control. There was not the sophisticated equipment to predict and avoid weather and to find shoals and other dangerous obstacles; thus, for a sailor, luck seemed to play a part in whether or not s/he (mostly he) survived. Any change of routine or anything that happens out of the ordinary right before a bad storm or other problem, the sailor was likely to blame on the change. As *The Hundred Years* unfolds, notice the theme of superstition and what are some things that trigger "bad luck" in the sailors' minds.

The term "Indiamen" that occurs in chapter 2 refers to any number of merchant ships that were owned and operated by East Indian merchant companies, which were British-owned merchant companies.

Another rather ironic incident is when Aubrey thinks to himself that Maturin is not a very observant man. The irony lies in the fact that Maturin could practically tell you how many feathers a particular bird has, but he has never observed that there have been women aboard ships. Later in the story when Maturin and Jacob ride to meet Dey Pasha, the men see a few vultures circling the area and Maturin is able to pick out the three different species of which the group is comprised. Again, Maturin is like so many people in this day in that one tends to notice what is important to one's interests.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Maturin and some of the more seriously wounded sailors are taken ashore at Gibraltar so that the wounded can be treated on stable earth. When Maturin arrives back to Surprise, Aubrey requests his presence. Aubrey tells Maturin that Captain Pomfret of the Pomone had been cleaning his pistols and one was loaded; he has shot and killed himself. A new captain, John Vaux, has already been assigned and the squadron has been ordered out to sea immediately since the Admiral of the fleet is quite concerned about the attitude of the Balkan Muslims. Thus, Aubrey and his ships head for Mahon for further outfitting and setting in of supplies and to gather intelligence. Some of the crew gather around the "smoke" stove and discuss the death of Captain Pomfret, which one sailor, "Old Groan," believes is a suicide rather than an accident and that it is a bad start to their mission. Killick counters the argument saying that Maturin has both a "Hand of Glory" and a unicorn's horn that are strong wards against evil.

At Mahon, Aubrey and Maturin go ashore to pay their respects to the Spanish sovereignty and Admiral Fanshawe. Maturin goes with the Admiral's secretary to meet with Mr. Colvin, who briefs Maturin on the situation with the Muslims. Maturin meets with a Mr. Dee, who tells him that the banks that are sympathetic to the forces opposed to Napoleon are calling in the loans to shipyards in the Adriatic ports. The purpose of this is to stop paying wages to the workers who are building ships for Napoleon. Mr. Dee says that the workers may burn the partially-completed ships in retribution for not receiving their wages. The British do not want wholesale burning because some of the ships will choose to support the present French King, though wholesale burning would eliminate the chance of prize vessels going to aid Napoleon.

Maturin visits Mr. Wright to ask his assistance in determining what might be the function of the narwhal horn Maturin possesses. Mr. Wright agrees to come to dinner that evening on board the Surprise to examine the horn. At dinner, the officers, Maturin, and Wright speak of various matters until Aubrey offers to play a fugue for Mr. Wright, who requests that he be allowed to examine the narwhal horn while listening. Killick brings in the horn, whereupon, the young serving boy gets sick and falls into Killick who drops the horn that then breaks. Mr. Wright offers to fix the horn as good as new and they all settle in for the music. Mr. Wright starts to think about the purpose of the horn.

After Aubrey's squadron saves the Indiamen's convoy from a group of corsairs, Aubrey meets with the leaders on board. When the leaders express their gratitude, Aubrey asks them to supply him with some men to fill in the holes in his complement of vessels. The narrator mentions that the Indiamen know that Aubrey could "impress" the men, but it would be good for men to volunteer and receive a bounty. The action called "impressment" is a legal action by naval captains during times of war. Impressment means they can take a certain number of men off a non-military vessel or from towns for involuntary military service.



Chapter 3 Analysis

After Captain Pomfret's talk with Maturin at the end of chapter 2, most readers must suspect that the troubled man's "accident" is indeed a suicide, as one sailor suggests. Pomfret, either out of consideration for his men or family (or both), manages to make his death look accidental. The question as to whether Pomfret's death is suicide or accident is never clearly stated, and this is one technique which O'Brian performs quite well as a writer—innuendo. O'Brian is going to make the reader work for her/his enjoyment and one of the ways is that the reader must pay careful attention to small scenes or details that may foreshadow another future event. Such is probably the case with Pomfret's death. Not only is Pomfret's probable suicide foreshadowed at the end of chapter 2, but the reader must draw her/his own conclusion about the event and the cause/effect of the event. This ambiguity engages the reader and makes the reader be more than just a compiler of information—the reader must think.

Pomfret, in being a conscientious officer, most likely wanted to save his crew from another scandal, which had already demoralized the men considerably. The Pomone's fine showing in the defense of the Indiamen had gone a long way to making up for a first officer being dismissed for indecent behavior; were it to be obvious that Pomfret committed suicide, the new-found respect would be lost again. From this consideration, one can deduce that the Navy and the British had lost a fine gentleman.

Again, the superstitious nature of many sailors is seen when Joshua Simmons (aka "Old Groan") talks about the squadron being unlucky and proceeds to list the ways, one of which is the self-murder of Pomfret. Note that Simmons calls the suicide "self-murder," which is a common term for suicide in those days. Other sailors protest that it could not be self-murder since Pomfret is buried in the church graveyard, which would not allow a suicide. Thus, most of the sailors are comforted by the thought that the church accepts Pomfret's body for burial. This discussion about Pomfret leads into a discussion about the ways in which the squadron is blessed with luck, one being Maturin's "Hand of Glory," which is the hand of a convicted and executed murderer, the possession of which supposedly is "lucky."

Maturin's discussion with Colvin demonstrates how people then, as now, have a tendency to mistrust those who are quite different from themselves. This is demonstrated by Colvin's statements about the Carbonari and the narrator's statement that Catholics had been raised to believe Freemasons invited the Devil to their meetings. Colvin and Maturin discuss strategy that will assist the defeat of Napoleon. It is interesting that Maturin, in addition to being a doctor, is also a covert agent for the crown. This is another somewhat ironical aspect of the O'Brian series; who would have assigned such two diverse occupations to one man? O'Brian may not have intended any innuendo in doing so, but many readers may find it to be a bit of an emotional conflict.

The scene with the narwhal horn breaking is one of a number of episodes in *The Hundred Years* that provide some comic relief from the talk of war and death. That the

breaking of the horn is considered just one more sign that the ship is cursed is humorous to the "modern," enlightened reader.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Aubrey's squadron leaves Mahon, with Pomone being full of disgruntled sailors and a green Captain and second lieutenant. After watching the initial poor seamanship of the Pomone, Aubrey begins to doubt that Pomone will be of help in a battle, though her heavy guns would be much needed. The rest of the ships, particularly the Surprise, sail under an aura of gloom due to the loss of the narwhal horn and its supposed attendant luck. The bad luck of the broken horn is compounded when it is discovered that someone has substituted water for the preserving spirits in which the hand of glory soaks. When this is discovered, Maturin pins the hand to a board in order to dry it out, but Naseby, the Marine commander's dog eats the hand. Maturin tells Hobden that Maturin must either perform surgery or give the dog something to make it vomit in order to recover the hand. Hobden becomes irate and curses the doctor, at which time the doctor challenges Hobden to a duel. Harding reports these developments to Aubrey, who calls in Hobden to insist that Hobden either apologize or leave the ship at Malta. As Jacob and Maturin are discussing a sect of Jews called "Cainites," Hobden comes in with a written apology as well as his dog and hands both over to Maturin, who reassures Hobden that the dog will be fine. Maturin gives an emetic to Naseby who vomits up the bones of the hand, which Maturin bleaches and wires together. The crew of the Surprise is greatly comforted to see the hand and a long line forms for the sailors to file past the hand, oftentimes repeatedly, to assure themselves of the continued good fortune of Surprise.

The next day, two sails are sighted in the fog; one that seems to be a frigate runs up a white parley flag while at the same time turning to have the advantage of the wind. Aubrey, not trusting the parley flag, begins to maneuver the squadron to be at the advantage in relation to the unknown vessels. Maturin awakes to the sound of guns roaring a salute to a vessel and is asked to come on deck in his dress uniform. As Maturin comes on deck, he spies a Captain's boat rowing from a frigate flying the Bourbon colours. Stephen learns the French Captain is Christy-Palliere, whom both Maturin and Aubrey knew from previous encounters. Aubrey takes Christy-Palliere to his quarters for a lunch repast and to learn what news he could of the situation with the French vessels in the area. After lunch, Aubrey, with Maturin and Christy-Palliere observing, holds "divisions," a formal inspection of all personnel and areas of the ship. Following divisions, a brief Sunday service is held, mainly consisting of singing a hymn and Aubrey reading the Articles of War.

Aubrey and Christy-Palliere talk at length alone and then the French captain leaves, at which time Aubrey asks Maturin to hear what Christy-Palliere has to say. Christy-Palliere tells of the great confusion in Paris, the suspicions cast upon each other and the cool reception he had received when last in Paris. Admiral Lafarge, who may secretly be a Bonaparte sympathizer sends Christy-Palliere back to his ship with a mild remonstrance. Christy-Palliere explains the situation in the Adriatic by pointing out



various factions and where they are located on the charts. A piece of disturbing news that Christy-Palliere delivers is that the Mussulmans are preparing to send a large mercenary force north to prevent the joining of the Russian and Austrian armies. Upon hearing this news, Maturin asks that Ringle carry Jacob to gather more intelligence from his contacts in Kutali as to whether the brotherhoods' messages have been sent and if so, if they can be intercepted.

In the meantime, Mr. Whewell returns from his reconnoitering of Ragusa Vecchio to report on the armament and vessels in the area; there is one French frigate flying Napoleon's colours and 2 Algerian vessels, both mounting 12 pounders.

Chapter 4 Analysis

The broken narwhal horn has not only cast the Surprise's crew into despondency, but once the story becomes known to the Ringle and Pomone, they, too, believe the end of the world has come. This demonstrates the depth of superstition among sailors of that era. When Naseby eats the "hand of glory," it is a wonder that mass desertions and/or suicides do not take place since the second guardian of luck is now gone. Modern readers may think it a bit harsh that Maturin is willing to cut open the dog in order to retrieve the hand's bones, but to the crew, it seems a reasonable way to alter their luck. Once the hand is wired back together, the reaction of the crew is testament to how strongly they put their faith in luck, though as the narrator points out, "No one was foolish enough to mention luck."

The white flag which the French frigate hoists is a fairly well-known communication of the desire to either surrender or parlay. That any ship would hoist a white flag and then attack is considered a grave breach of honor, although obviously, since Aubrey is cautious and even cynical about the flag, more than a few ships must have used the action as subterfuge.

When Mr. Harding, Aubrey's first lieutenant, mentions that the Pomone is falling far astern, all who hear the statement are displeased because they see it as a criticism of their commander. Aubrey, though, again demonstrates his confidence in his own leadership when he admits that he had not been paying close attention and thanks Mr. Harding for the "heads up." This exchange is indicative of the absolute power and authority a captain has on his (in those days always it was "his") ship, and for someone to question the actions of the captain is unusual unless asked for an opinion.

Bells is a system of letting sailors know when the watches change and chronological time. Since all of O'Brian's Aubrey-Maturin series marks events onboard by the bells, it is useful and interesting for a reader to research the system of bells aboard a ship, which is pretty similar today as it was then.

When Captain Christy-Palliere comes aboard, the formal, exceedingly polite exchange among Aubrey, Maturin, Harding and Christy-Palliere is an example of the prescribed behavior expected of "gentlemen."



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Aubrey tells Captain Vaux about the situation at Ragusa Vecchio. They decide to drop a marine contingent south of Ragusa Vecchio to take out the two shore batteries that could conceivably rain down shot upon the squadron as they close with the French frigate and her two Algerian accomplices. After landing the marines for their assignment, Surprise and Pomone sail into the harbor, where Aubrey hails the French Captain and asks him the name of his ship. The two captains call back and forth briefly, Aubrey insisting that the French ship hoist the colours of the French king and the captain refusing to the sounds of his crew yelling cheers to Napoleon. Aubrey immediately goes on the offensive though it is unclear who actually fires the first shot. One Algerian ship goes up in flames and then minutes later, it is obvious the Marines have silenced the shore batteries. Surprise manages to ignite the powder room of the French frigate (the Ardent) and a great explosion results in the vessel's stern sinking it rather rapidly while the bow settles slowly into the water. Aubrey gives Vaux the task of picking up the French survivors and the British marines; landing the prisoners at the new Ragusa Vecchio up the coast and then following the Surprise quickly to Spalato.

On the way to Spalato, Maturin spends much time aloft with his assigned "bodyguard," John Daniel, who is there to make sure Maturin does not fall. Maturin and Daniel discuss many topics, including Daniel's fascination with numbers, particularly primes. While aloft, they spot Ringle approaching and Maturin goes to greet Jacob and learn the news, the most important being that the Brotherhood's messengers left three days earlier. Further, Jacob says that the Sheikh of Azgar is providing the gold for the Muslim mercenaries, and two representatives from the Brotherhood ride to ask the Dey to transport the money. Jacob set in motion a meeting between the heads of the Carbonari and Maturin.

Aubrey sends Maturin to greet the French captain and suggest an exchange of cannon salutes with all vessels then embarking for Malta. The French captain, Delalande, agrees to Aubrey's proposal. Maturin then goes ashore with Jacob to speak with the heads of the Carbonari. When Maturin returns, he barely gets to sleep when the cannon salutes commence. After the end of the salutes, Aubrey consults with Maturin and together they decide that Pomone is to go on to Malta with the French frigate and Surprise will sail for Algiers and check various ship yards along the way for vessels under construction.

As Surprise is sailing for Algiers, the evidence of the success of the banks' actions in recalling notes shows up in the distance as a shipyard's half-finished corvette is in flames, set by disgruntled workers who have not been paid in three weeks. Maturin later climbs the ropes without Daniel, whose collarbone is broken during the cannon salutes, and takes Aubrey's telescope aloft to watch the fires along the coast, more evidence of the successful strategy of British intelligence. After dining, Aubrey mentions that he



cannot find his telescope and Maturin goes aloft to retrieve it from where Maturin had left it. Aubrey climbs aloft and finds Maturin clutching the telescope and both men climb down with Maturin apologizing for his borrowing of the precious glass. Every night along the coast, fires are evident and Aubrey, though lamenting the loss of prize money, is happy for the time and lives the sabotage saves.

Chapter 5 Analysis

The brief anecdote about the marines and their more relaxed attire is quite revealing in how very rigid the military service is; the Marine officers ask Aubrey's permission for the marines who are going ashore to be able to just wear trousers rather than the breeches and gaiters and to be able to remove their hose. The officers ask this of Aubrey because it is so hot. The fact that Aubrey calls this request a "remarkable instance of humanity" (p. 123) reveals how seldom such a thing would be asked. A reader may see this dressing down the uniform as a very minor thing and that perhaps Aubrey is over-exaggerating how remarkable the request is. It is remarkable because the British were very formal and strict disciplinarians and to indulge in not dressing in full uniform just because the men would be hot is a novel idea. During this era, there were not uniforms for various climates such as the United States military has now; one uniform served a soldier/sailor in all climates. The fact that the British Isles tend towards chill and dampness resulted in a fairly heavy uniform. Unfortunately, when marines had action in more hot and humid climates, most likely it resulted in a considerable number of heat stroke cases.

The port named Ragusa Vecchio is a fictional place, actually one of the few that O'Brian mentions. Most of the places are historically real; many still exist today with the same name; others with different names.

As the French frigate is defeated, Aubrey orders boats to be lowered and survivors from the French vessel to be rescued. This demonstrates the honor and compassion that Aubrey has for a defeated enemy, who is honorable in fighting. Sailors, in general, seem to empathize with other sailors, as if this will contrast to the Muslim corsair later who in their efforts to escape Surprise, intentionally throw men overboard where they are ravaged by sharks.

Supposedly, the reason the Muslims are willing to fight for Napoleon is due to his conversion to Islam while he was on campaign in Egypt. Most historians seem to think that though Napoleon was fascinated with Islam, he never actually embraced the religion as his own. Of course, this is a work of fiction, so O'Brian, though trying to be historically accurate in some respects, of course, is certainly allowed to alter facts to create his story.

As Surprise sails along the Adriatic coast, bonfires are seen in various shipyards. It is interesting that the tactic the British intelligence engages in is something that could very well happen in "modern" times—essentially economic warfare. When the banks recall

their loans, the shipbuilders cannot pay the workers, who in turn become angry and destroy the fruits of their unpaid labor.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

A levanter (Easterly wind) arises and the Surprise battens down for the blow. Daniel falls during a roll of the ship and possibly re-breaks his collarbone. Maturin is concerned with sounds from the young man's lungs. The Surprise makes good time and arrives west of Pantellaria several days ahead of the original estimate. The Captain of the port at Pantellaria has no knowledge of any vessels passing recently and doubts many will come for several days since the wind is calm after the levanter. The winds finally pick up again and the Surprise continues sailing as Mr. Daniel seems to be recovering. Maturin or someone else sits with Mr. Daniel at all times, which is how Maturin learns much about the young man's background. Maturin is called in to examine Captain Hobden, who Mr. Jacob believes has fallen in a fit; the man is merely drunk and he is carried to his quarters to sleep it off. Mr. Daniel instructs Maturin on how prize money is divided among a ship's crew.

At Algiers, Jacob and Maturin go ashore to meet with the British consulate, Sir Peter Clifford and give him some dispatches and ask permission for the Surprise to salute the fort. Permission is granted and they are told that the Fort would return the salute. Sir Peter is in bed with a case of sciatica, which Jacob treats. Sir Peter informs Jacob and Maturin that the Dey was assassinated and Sir Peter has no influence with the new Dey, Omar Pasha. Sir Peter tells Maturin that the Russians and Austrians are still moving slowly and separated both by much terrain and distrust. The new Dey is hunting Atlas lions, which Maturin finds odd since the man has just gained power. Sir Peter thinks the new Dey is gathering intelligence in addition to hunting. After more discussion, Maturin concludes that he and Jacob should go into the Atlas to meet at first with the Vizier and then hopefully with the new Dey himself. The consul, Maturin and Jacob plan the foray into the Atlas in search of the Dey and his assistance in keeping the gold away from the Napoleonic Muslims.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Much of chapter 6 is taken up with descriptions of sea travel. For the reader who enjoys the Aubrey-Maturin series for the flavor of sea travel and the challenge of both understanding the sailing techniques and the geography of their travel, this chapter will be definitely satisfying. The day to day activities of the ship contribute little to the story, but do offer insight into the life of the early 19th century sailors, particularly that of John Daniel, the master's mate, who has to remain quiet in the infirmary and thus tells his life story to Maturin.

Another snippet of information the reader may find enlightening is when Daniel explains the system of how prize money is divided. Most of the Aubrey-Maturin books include some prize money distribution; thus, it is interesting to learn how it is distributed. Many



readers may think it a bit unfair that the highest flag officer of the fleet (Admiral Barmouth by the end of the book) receives 1/3 of the captain's share, when he does not risk his life for the bonus.

Poor Killick is still suffering the wrath of his fellow crew members who hold him responsible for the narwhal horn breaking. Killick is shoved about when he is aggressive himself to Seaman Green. Only later in the story will Killick regain his honor when the horn is returned better than new.

The vultures circling in the area near the Dey's palace when Maturin and Jacob go ashore can be taken in a symbolic sense in that the Dey's position is tenuous and human vultures continually circle the "throne" ready for the death of the latest Dey. Though the book takes place within a few weeks, three different Deys come and go.

Much of the talk between Maturin and other agents and consulates may be confusing to the readers, though everything revealed sets the stage for the brief spurts of action throughout the storyline; thus, it is helpful to read carefully to understand the complex relationships among the various factions, both those who are fighting against each other and the internal rivalries within the various camps.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Chapter 7 opens with Stephen and Jacob and their guide and helpers riding horses with camels carrying their supplies into the Atlas in search of the Dey. Jacob demonstrates his intimate knowledge of the culture of the Arabs by behaving in all the proper ways with his hosts at the Oasis. The guide is very proud of his country and works hard to find ways to astonish a well-traveled Maturin. Jacob suggests to Maturin that Jacob pretend to be Maturin's dragoman. The men finally approach the Dey's hunting lodge, which Jacob had visited as a boy.

Maturin is welcomed into the presence of the Vizier and they exchange pleasantries and Maturin gives him the gift of the blue stone, with which the Vizier is suitably impressed. Maturin then informs the Vizier of the purpose of his visit and his desire to meet with the Dey. Maturin speaks of the Muslim brotherhood which is working to prevent the Austrians and Russians from meeting and the fact that they are hiring Muslim mercenaries to help effect the continued separateness of the two armies. The Dey pretends great surprise at Maturin thinking the Dey would have any hand in helping Napoleon resume his conquest of the world. The Vizier emphasizes how very much the Dey hates Napoleon. The Vizier offers to have Maturin to go to the Dey for reassurance that the Dey will not have anything to do with helping Napoleon.

The Vizier offers Maturin a massage from his best masseuse and then an opportunity to do some target practicing on some doves the Vizier keeps for that purpose. The next morning, as Maturin and Jacob and their guide, Ibrahim, travel to where the Dey is hunting, the guide points out various flora and fauna to Maturin. Maturin is fascinated by the vultures that swoop down to pick the bones of the latest men the Dey has had impaled. Ibrahim points out a leopard and then a flock of flamingos. Later, Ibrahim shows Maturin a pool where lions come to water.

Maturin and Jacob meet with Omar Pasha, the Dey, and he is quite amiable and open. Maturin notices some rifles and the Dey proudly shows them to him. When Maturin relays the message from his government, Dey responds by calling Bonaparte a "son of a dog." The Dey acts insulted that the British would even think for a moment that Pasha would help Bonaparte. Pasha strongly asserts that Bonaparte must and will be defeated. The Dey changes the topic quickly and invites Maturin to hunt lions with him that evening, and Maturin accepts the invitation. The Dey explains to Maturin how they will hunt the lions and how they will prepare. The Dey hands Maturin a rifle and suggests he shoot some practice rounds. The Dey draws the longer straw and thus wins the chance to fire first at the lions.

The next morning, Jacob and Maturin take turns firing the rifle and Maturin pronounces the rifle as the best firearm he has ever shot. At lunch, the Dey relates the story of Sir Smith and the siege of Acre. As the sun is setting, Maturin and the Dey head for the



cave where they will lie in wait for the lion which Day has been observing for days. The two men squat in the cave and silently wait for hours until the Day quietly indicates that the lion has arrived for its evening drink and kill. As the lion is trotting away with its kill, a boar, the Dey rises up and shoots the lion twice. The lion's mate, rushes towards the men and Maturin regretfully shoots her as she leaps towards them. Back at camp, the Dey offers his thanks several times for Maturin's timely shot in saving their lives from the lioness. The Dey reassures Maturin that her cubs will be fed so that they will not perish after the death of their sire and dam. The Dey also reassures Maturin that no gold will be allowed to pass on its way to pay the Muslim mercenaries.

The next morning, on the way back to the Vizier, Maturin and Jacob exchange opinions about the Dey, his politics, and the likely conflict between the Dey and the Vizier. They also discuss the harshness of punishment by various cultures for such things as sodomy or thievery and the culture of suspicion and mistrust by so many humans. A sirocco (warm wind) arises. Soon visibility is almost gone and fine sand is blowing relentlessly. They finally make the Oasis where the Vizier is and settle in to sleep for the rest of the short night. In the morning, Maturin meets briefly with the Vizier and relates his satisfaction of his meeting with the Dey. It is obvious the Vizier is not pleased with Maturin's visit with the Dey, but the Vizier is not openly hostile. The rifle with which Maturin had shot the lioness had been secreted by someone in Maturin's pack, but someone else removes it at the Oasis while Maturin is sleeping. Maturin decides not to mention the theft.

Chapter 7 Analysis

At the opening of chapter 7, Maturin demonstrates both his flexibility and his thorough knowledge of the natural world when he comments upon the terrain, flora and fauna of the area through which he and Jacob are riding with their Muslim guide, Ibrahim. Another aspect of human nature revealed in this first part of the chapter is how people tend to gain their own self esteem from association with their country, their religion, or anything else that is important to them. Their guide is put off at first because Maturin does not seem impressed by the guide's country, unlike so many other visitors. Maturin finally comes upon several animals and plants that he does not see often or recognize and exclaims over them, which greatly pleases Ibrahim. Whether this is a deliberate effort of Maturin's to soothe Ibrahim's ruffled feathers or not is not clear, but it works regardless.

Jacob is definitely a precursor to the diplomats of the modern world, who intimately understands the culture to which they are assigned. The big difference between Jacob and many of today's diplomats is that Jacob gains his knowledge of the culture through assimilation since he is living in the culture; whereas, most of today's diplomats learn about a culture from school. The term "dragoman" in an Arabic culture is one who serves as a guide or interpreter. Jacob suggests that he pretend to be Maturin's dragoman so that Maturin can meet with the Vizier alone, which may help Maturin come to an understanding with the Vizier.



Note the way Maturin has been well-schooled on the cultural niceties of this area. Maturin, having been an intelligence agent for many years, understands the necessity of not offending someone of a different culture and traditions. Most likely, O'Brian has researched the times and the culture in order to give a sense of authenticity to the interaction between Maturin and the Vizier and later the Dey.

The fact of the Dey impaling trespassers, which the Vizier mentions, will come up later in the story in a rather ironic context in that the Dey Pasha is killed, some say because he is too liberal with this cruel death sentence.

When Maturin asks about whether lionesses come down to the river in the evening when the male lions gather to roar at each other, Jacob seems a little appalled at the question, and Ibrahim shakes his head in disapproval. This could be taken as a metaphor for the relationship between men and women in Arabic culture; the men (lions) venture out and the women (lionesses) stay home. The two do not mix in public.

It is perhaps a little ironic that Maturin finds guns so fascinating when his profession is that of a doctor who has healed numerous gunshot wounds. The fact that Maturin regrets killing the lioness but not the lion's death is interesting in that perhaps, in a way, he thinks in terms of protecting the female of the species. That the Dey later promises to feed the lioness's cubs may show his awareness of the need for balance in the environment.

The incident with the rifle wherein the Dey surreptitiously slips the rifle with which Maturin shoots the lioness into his belongings, is an interesting small subplot within the entire story. Maturin finds the rifle in his belongings as he is preparing to sleep when he arrives at the oasis where the Vizier is headquartered. The next morning, Maturin finds the rifle missing. Later, readers will learn that the Vizier returns the rifle with an apology, though not claiming responsibility for its disappearance. Maturin speculates that the Vizier removes the rifle because he knows the Dey would regret giving it to Maturin. A second reason, which becomes apparent later is that perhaps the Vizier does not want such a gift to be known as it would then demonstrate the great favor Maturin finds with the Dey. When the new Dey is not the one to whom the Vizier is close, the Vizier returns the rifle. Maturin speculates that he returns the rifle because the Vizier now needs to be in the favor of the British. It is interesting how something such as a rifle passing from hand to hand can have such complex political implications.

The obvious fact that the Vizier is going behind the Dey's back as far as the gold and the mercenaries are concerned suggests one of two things: either the Vizier is more powerful than the Dey, or the Dey is trusting the wrong man. It is evident later that both of these cases are correct. The Vizier does prove to have stronger connections than the Dey, and the Dey trusting the Vizier may have helped hasten the Dey's death.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

At the opening to chapter 8, Jacob and Maturin arrive back in Algiers and part ways, Maturin wanting to meet with Sir Peter immediately and Jacob making the necessary goodbyes with their guide. Maturin fills in Sir Peter on his conversations with the Vizier and the Dey. Maturin tells of his saving the Dey's life and the Dey's vehement assurance that no gold would pass through his domain. Maturin tells Sir Peter of the letter that a fellow Cainite had shown Jacob from the Vizier to Sheikh Ibn Hazim telling him how to transport the gold for the mercenaries' pay. Sir Peter tells Maturin about the circumstances that takes the Ringle away and about the fact that Pasha is probably even now dead by assassination, with the Vizier probably having a hand in the murder. The Vizier and Pasha despised each other and the Vizier is a secret admirer of Bonaparte.

A new Dey is proclaimed—Ali Bey—which is a bit of a surprise to Jacob and Maturin since he is known to be opposed to Bonaparte. That afternoon, the new Dey is proclaimed and Maturin and Jacob accompany Sir Peter to recognize the new Dey on behalf of the King of England. Maturin learns that because of flooding conditions, the Russians are delayed and therefore, so are the Muslim mercenaries. This gives Maturin a week to find and stop the gold shipment.

Maturin and Jacob are walking through the market the next day and Maturin, by himself for a moment, spies two Irish children, twins, for sale at the slave market. Maturin buys them, feeds them, has them cleaned and clothed and takes them to the consulate. Maturin had hoped to leave them at the consulate as "distressed British subjects," but Sir Peter's wife informs Maturin that Sir Peter cannot abide children, so Maturin takes them to the church to be kept safe until he can arrange passage home for the two children.

Jacob learns that Ibn Hazim's caravan carrying the gold will take at least ten days to reach Azgar and then the port of Arzila. Maturin receives the hunting rifle that had been removed from his bags at the Oasis with a letter of apology from the Vizier, who is not as politically strong since his friend, Mustafa, is not elected the new Dey.

Maturin spots the Ringle entering the harbor and arranges for a merchant corsair to take them out to meet the Ringle, which is having difficulty entering the harbor in the still-recalcitrant wind. The meeting of the two ships takes place and Maturin, Jacob and the two Irish children are taken aboard the Ringle. Reade, Ringle's captain, tells of the rescue of the British ship, Lion, where the Surprise is injured by an accidental collision with a Dutch vessel. The three English vessels, Surprise, Ringle, and Lion, limp into Mahon where Surprise is being repaired while Ringle makes a beeline for Algiers to retrieve Jacob and Maturin. The Ringle meets up with Surprise in Mahon and the two doctors and children transfer to the Surprise.



Maturin sends the children off to be cared for by Poll while he meets with Aubrey to tell him news of the gold shipment. Aubrey reassures Maturin that the winds that have been difficult for the Surprise would prove equally difficult for the galley transporting the gold. Later, Maturin and Aubrey greet the Admiral who comes aboard for dinner and planning. Mr. Wright also comes aboard with two men who are carrying a case with the repaired narwhal horn and once again Killick is back in favor with the men. Admiral Fanshawe confers with Maturin about his experiences in Algiers whereupon the Admiral expresses regret at the death of Pasha. Maturin learns that Lord Barmouth has taken over for Lord Keith. Maturin is dismayed to hear that Lord Keith is so soon gone since he thought Lord Keith would do all in his power to give Surprise the necessary ships to stop the gold shipment. Admiral Fanshawe assures Maturin that Lord Keith's replacement, Lord Barmouth, will do his utmost to help Aubrey's squadron stop the shipment of gold.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Twice now, winds have altered plans for either the fleet or Maturin. The levanter that blows out of the east when the squadron is sailing for Pantellaria hastens the trip and then the sirocco sends Ringle out of the bay on a rescue effort near Algiers so that Maturin cannot board the vessel and hasten to tell Aubrey about his trip to see the Dey and about the fact that the gold will be leaving by galley soon. When Ringle has completed the rescue of the ship, the sirocco blowing from land out to sea keeps Ringle from regaining the harbor. Back in that era, the ships were much more at the mercy of the weather than today, and often the weather was the deciding factor in a naval battle or strategy; thus, the weather could be considered an antagonist in *The Hundred Days*.

Ironically, people and their view of "medicine" is in some ways very similar to how people view medicine today. Near the beginning of chapter 8, when Maturin asks Lady Clifford how her husband is faring since being given some pills for his sciatica, Lady Clifford says he is much better and that she is taking two of the pills every day also. This is so like many people today who trade pills with family and friends for real or imagined illnesses. Lady Clifford must assume that if the pills help her husband so much, it couldn't hurt to take them herself.

When Lady Clifford asks Maturin if they noticed two squadrons of soldiers riding in the direction of the Dey, this is a foreshadowing of what will happen to Dey Pasha. Later, as Maturin is talking with Sir Peter, the consulate explains that the two squadrons of soldiers were on a mission to assassinate the Dey. Sir Peter implies that it is because the Dey had impaled too many youths.

Jacob has proven his value time and time again; this time he learns that the armies on land have been delayed because of floods, which greatly cheers Maturin because it gives him some breathing room for getting out to Surprise and stopping the gold shipment.

Slavery is a common practice in the middle eastern countries and many other countries in this time. Indeed, it is 1815, and the British only abolished the slave trade just eight



years earlier in 1807, and it isn't until 1833 that slavery itself is abolished by the British. Therefore, though Maturin does not approve of the slave trade, he does not show any great surprise at seeing slave sales in the market. When Maturin shows interest in two Irish child slaves, the merchant who is selling the children is described as "cheerful" (p. 217). It seems rather paradoxical that anyone can be described as "cheerful" who is standing in the marketplace engaged in slave trading. It is telling that the slaver offers to include the female girl if Maturin buys the male child; the slaver assumes that the only value is in the male.

The rifle which is removed from Maturin's pack in chapter 7 has been returned to him with a note of apology—notice that the Vizier is now in a position of supplication; whereas, at Maturin's last meeting, the Vizier came from a position of power.

Killick is now back in the good graces of the rest of the crew since the narwhal horn is returned better than its original.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

A gentle breeze keeps the ships moving at a snail's pace. The two twins take to the ship with joy and abandon, climbing the topsails and rigging like monkeys while Poll complains she is unable to teach the lass any decorum. Maturin has sailcloth britches made for both the children to satisfy decency and lets them run free. The Hamadryad is spotted and the captain, Dundas, is invited to dinner, along with Ringle's captain, Mr. Reade. Maturin speaks with Captain Dundas about Lord and Lady Keith and how they enjoy their new home. Captain Dundas takes his leave and then Maturin questions Aubrey as to why the Surprise is going so slowly. Aubrey tells Maturin that he does not want to lie in wait for several days for the Muslim galley with the gold too near where he plans to intercept the galley, nor does he want to lie in wait in the harbor and risk being reassigned by Lord Barmouth. Aubrey is mistaken in that Lord Barmouth is not in Mahon, but rather is exercising his fleet in the same area in which Surprise is lying to. Lord Barmouth's fleet is soon sighted and after Surprise watches a morning of maneuvers, a signal orders Aubrey to attend to Lord Barmouth aboard the flag vessel.

Lord Barmouth questions Aubrey as to why the Surprise and other squadron vessels are in the area. Aubrey explains his previous orders from Lord Keith. Lord Barmouth orders Aubrey to strike his broad pennant since he no longer has enough vessels to warrant command of a squadron; additionally, Lord Barmouth orders Aubrey to follow the fleet to port and to render a report of the squadron's activities. When Maturin returns from a visit to the fleet's flag vessel to speak with their politico, he reassures Aubrey that Surprise will still be the one going after the galley with the gold.

While waiting in port, Surprise resupplies, especially her munitions and medical supplies. Maturin arranges with Lady Keith to put the twin children with her gardener and then to arrange transport to Ireland. Jacob goes to question various sources and learns that the galley to carry the gold to the mercenaries is loaded and armed and presently in Tangier. The galley's captain intends to sail through the straits of Gibraltar at the new moon, so it will be completely dark. The galley will make for Durazzo where the captain will deliver the gold. The captain of the galley has hired two decoys to confuse any would-be attackers. Maturin relates all that Jacob has learned to Aubrey, who finalizes his plans for stopping the gold shipment.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Notice again the different attitude Poll has to the female child versus the male. Poll complains she is unable to keep the young girl from running wild with no decorum. She has no such concern for the young boy. The britches do much to mollify Poll, but many readers probably greatly sympathize with the young girl, whose days of wild abandon



will be ended when she returns to her home and takes on the mantle of what is expected of a female.

Politics is as intricately involved in the decisions and policies in the British navy then as it is in the modern military. Aubrey does not want to return to home port and have to report to Lord Barmouth because Aubrey is concerned that Barmouth will assign the capture of the corsair carrying the gold to someone else. Aubrey fears this not because Barmouth would think Aubrey incapable of pulling off the action but because of a personal, vague animosity that Barmouth feels towards Aubrey. The animosity is a result of Aubrey transferring Barmouth's son off Aubrey's ship because the young man is incompetent. This negative attitude of Barmouth towards Aubrey is reflected in the fact that Barmouth has Aubrey strike his command flag since all the vessels in his squadron are elsewhere. The only reason, at this point, that Maturin reassures Aubrey about the Surprise going after the gold is because Maturin and Barmouth's politico are friends and Barmouth greatly respects his politico, who believes Aubrey is the person to pull off the caper successfully.

Notice that when Maturin sends the two children off to be cleaned up and fed by Poll, he mentions that they do not speak English, only Irish. In this era, all Irish people speak English, but just less than two hundred years ago, that is not the case. In fact, in the early part of the 21st century, most native Irish speak their native language as a second language rather than the first one they learn, which is often English.

When Maturin relates his trip to meet the Dey and the subsequent assassination of Dey Pasha to Admiral Fanshawe, the Admiral feels sorry for the Dey's death but notes philosophically that assassination is the risk any Dey must assume. One must wonder why power is so important that the risk of assassination is not a deterrent to assuming rule. Perhaps it is human nature to believe it will not happen to you.

The conversation between Aubrey and Captain Dundas foreshadows a change in the relationship between Lord Barmouth and Aubrey. Captain Dundas talks of how Barmouth has remarried and in chapter 10, Aubrey learns that Barmouth's new wife is a childhood companion of Aubrey's. Lord Barmouth's attitude seems to change when his wife tells him of how she and Aubrey grew up together.

Dr. Jacob could in some ways be considered the "hero" in *The Hundred Years*. Several times, his connections and knowledge have made it possible for Aubrey and/or Maturin to complete an important mission. Jacob's latest contribution at the end of chapter 9 is possibly his greatest—learning that Murad Reis will make a run for it in his corsair during the dark of the night with the new moon to get the gold to Algiers.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Aubrey visits Lord Barmouth on the flag vessel and finds Barmouth to have a totally changed attitude towards Aubrey because Lord Barmouth learns that Barmouth's wife and Lord Keith's wife had both been close, childhood friends of Aubrey. Probably because of Lord Barmouth's discovery of Aubrey's connections, he is agreeable to Surprise and Ringle setting forth to halt the gold shipment. In the early evening after Aubrey's meeting with Lord Barmouth, Surprise and Ringle get underway and Aubrey has a meeting with his officers and Reade on the quarterdeck. Aubrey directs the Ringle to one side and a ship's boat to the other side of the harbor entrance. Whoever sees the corsair first is to signal her position.

Aubrey's group find the corsair, signals and Surprise closes in for a volley across the corsair's broadside. A lucky hit by the corsair kills Bonden and another midshipman and takes out one gun. When Murad Reis, the corsair's captain, realizes he cannot outgun his attackers, he does what is most reasonable, he begins the attempt to outrun them. At morning's light, the corsair is located pretty much where Aubrey expected.

For several days, Surprise chases the corsair until a becalming and the corsair ships her oars and begins pulling away from Surprise. Not too long after, though, the wind picks up again. Surprise observes the corsair throwing manacled rowers overboard to lighten the load. The sea becomes bloody from the sharks' feeding frenzy, and the British men loathe those on the corsair who would do such a thing. Surprise follows the corsair into a natural harbor area on an unnamed island. Maturin and Aubrey go ashore and Maturin points out the phenomenon of there being no life on the island. Maturin suspects some sort of poisonous fumes flowing from the rock fissures. The corsair sits in an alcove whose water is too shallow for the Surprise to approach.

One of the crewmen who had been with Captain Hood when he took Diamond Rock suggests that 24-pounder guns could be hoisted up the cliff sides in a similar fashion as what Hood did at Diamond Rock. Maturin and many of the other sailors are astonished at the climbing prowess of McLeod. The men set in place a pulley system to get several cannons on the cliff tops. After a couple practice volleys, the corsairs understand their situation and bring out the captain, tied and force him to kneel in the bow. While many of the sailors keep repeating the phrase, "Our sins on his head," one of the corsairs beheads the captain. They bring some British captives on deck and one yells out to the British on top of the cliff. After negotiating the surrender, the Moors' captives and the Moors are brought on board, plus the chests of gold.

As the Surprise and her consorts sail towards their intended port, they notice fires all along the coast and wonder at the meaning. When they arrive at their harbor, Aubrey asks what the commotion entails, and he is told that Napoleon is defeated at a battle near Waterloo. When Aubrey meets with Lord Barmouth, the Lord tells Aubrey that Ali



Bey, the new Dey, is insisting that the galley is his ship and all its contents belong to him. The British do not want to upset the balance of power and thus the ship and contents must be turned over to the Dey. However, Jacob arrives with the news that Ali Bey has been assassinated and the new Dey does not claim the gold but does request the galley as a sign of his power.

Aubrey is sent to survey Cape Horn and the Straits of Magellan. The crew receives their prize money and one lone woman is waving her handkerchief vigorously at Aubrey's departure.

Chapter 10 Analysis

This final, fairly-short chapter is almost wholly concerned with the capture of the corsair which is on its way to deliver gold to the Muslim mercenaries.

Aubrey learns that Barmouth's wife is the former Isobel Carrington, a connection which seems enough to melt the ice between the two men; in fact, Lord Barmouth invites Aubrey and Maturin to a dinner when Surprise returns from her mission.

A task is often not as simple as it seems, and this is no exception. As the corsair is becalmed, it starts rowing and throwing out weight, mainly in the form of Christian slaves. The waters are so infested with sharks, the slaves have no chance of rescue. Considering this abhorrent action by Murad Reis, the corsair's captain, it is quite honorable that the Surprise does not do the same to the crew when the corsair is captured.

When Dr. Jacob is asked to translate Aubrey's words to the crew of the corsair, Jacob declines saying it will compromise his position. This means that he does not want his face to be shown as then it will be known, or at least suspected, that he is an agent for the British crown.

Surprise crew members carry the chests of gold below deck with much glee and anticipation. This gold will likely be considered "prize money" and each member of the crew will receive a portion of the spoils. Later, this almost does not happen because the new Dey, Mustafa, asks for the galley and money back, claiming it was stolen from him. Fortunately for the crews of the British ships, Mustafa is murdered and the new Dey, Ali Bey relinquishes claim on the gold, though he does request both a loan and the galley back.

Four Deys have come (and three gone) in the course of these brief weeks of The Hundred Years. Obviously, being a Dey is fairly high on the list of hazardous occupations.

Aubrey's concern for his men and their families is evident when he spends time during the passing out of the prize money trying to convince his men to send a goodly portion of their share of the prize money home. Aubrey, though, is only partially successful.

As with most of the O'Brian series, all ends well on a good note and Aubrey and Maturin sail off into the sunset to enjoy civilian maritime pursuits.



Characters

Commodore Jack Aubrey

Jack Aubrey is one of two principle protagonists of *The Hundred Days* and shares the spotlight with his good friend and confidant Stephen Maturin. Aubrey is a larger-than-life character with charisma and dash. He is an unchallenged master in his element of the sea; a legendary captain, a masterful navigator, and a superb tactician. Although he is intelligent, he relies on experience, insight, and a nearly infallible instinct to carry him through the various perils he encounters. His vast nautical experience is unquestionably one of his strongest assets. Aubrey wears his graying blonde hair in a long queue and dresses as a traditional ship's captain. Aubrey is very athletic, possessed of an almost super-human vigor, great strength, and an incredible constitution. He is also particularly fond of food and drink, and Maturin often cautions him against becoming overly corpulent; his weight fluctuates wildly and he often suffers from digestive ailments. Aubrey is handsome and fairly useful, though his good-looks are marred by a variety of scars and combat-related wounds. Aubrey is usually quite useless on land though on military occasions he proves useful enough, as illustrated in his successful defense of the castaway island settlement. Aubrey begins the current novel as a Commodore Admiral in the Royal Navy with many years of service to his credit. His lucky ability to capture prizes at sea has secured him financially and his lovely wife Sophie holds down the family estate and raises their children.

Stephen Maturin

Maturin is one of two principle protagonists of the novel and shares the spotlight with his good friend and confidant Jack Aubrey. Maturin is a quiet man who much prefers the closeness of a study to the attention of others; his personal expertise lies in the area of medicine, and he is also a natural scientist of some repute; for example, van Buren has read Maturin's work. He is an unchallenged master in his element of medicine and biological science, and his medical opinions are surprisingly modern and always correct. Although possessed of great financial means, he cares nothing for the finer things in life and champions political causes that are obviously doomed simply because they are philosophically correct. Maturin, in addition to being a physician and scientist, is a pro bono agent for the secret intelligence network of England. From time to time, Maturin's relationship with the intelligence service is complicated, especially since he has become entangled and identified in the past. Maturin is a small, squat man who in many respects is the antithesis of Aubrey. He is much given to introspection, subtle interpretations, and Byzantine analysis of the current situation. He is nearly entirely mental, with little interest in physical activities, though capable enough in combat when the time comes, as demonstrated in his duel with Captain Lowe. Although he is possessed of a nearly preternatural constitution, Maturin is not notably dexterous or strong, though his physique is rarely a handicap to his desires. Although he can be over-confident of his abilities, he is nearly always correct in his analysis of situations



and people. Like Aubrey, Maturin derives great pleasure from music and is a capable, if not gifted, musician. At the opening to *The Hundred Days*, word has only been recently received of the death of Maturin's wife, Donna, in a carriage accident. He is still very much grieving her death.

Poll Skeeping

Poll Skeeping is a matronly, middle-aged woman who is hired on as Dr. Maturin's "loblolly-boy," meaning his assistant in the treatment of ill or wounded men and in maintaining the supplies and state of readiness of the medical ward. Poll is described as "kind, cheerful, and conscientious." She is sober and very tender with the wounded. Though Maturin is at first hesitant about accepting her as his assistant, he comes to appreciate and rely upon her efficient and conscientious work ethic.

Preserved Killick

Preserved Killick is Aubrey's steward and has been a faithful servant for many years and on many occasions. Killick is keenly aware that his personal fortunes are inextricably linked to Aubrey's success and ensures that Aubrey is always presented in the most favorable circumstances attainable. Beyond professional interest, however, Killick is a loyal friend and defender of Aubrey and goes to great lengths to provide hot coffee, good food, plentiful drink, fresh fruit, clean clothing, and other amenities under often-difficult circumstances. Killick also serves Dr. Maturin and is more of a "nursemaid" for Maturin than Aubrey, often having to make sure Maturin goes about in a presentable fashion. Killick often serves as a sort of comic relief within the narrative; his presumptuous and rude lines delivered in a whiny nasal tone set Aubrey's teeth on edge.

Sir Joseph Blaine

Sir Joseph Blaine is the head of the Naval Intelligence office. As such he is quite knowledgeable about virtually any topic tangential to politics, the military in general, and the Royal Navy in particular. Sir Joseph is a thoroughly patriotic and entirely reliable man, not given to histrionics or political trends. He instead is completely focused on pursuing goals which further the interests of England. He shares a close friendship with Maturin; aside from both being involved in secret intelligence work, both men are avid naturalists and scientists. Sir Joseph also admires Maturin's dedication to the work and not the remuneration. Though Sir Joseph does not appear in person in the novel, his influence is seen in the assignment Maturin carries out.

John Daniel

A man whom Aubrey knew from the previous war with Napoleon and whom Aubrey encounters in Mahon, John Daniel is the son of a bookseller and has a fair education,



but the book business slumped badly, so Daniel enlisted in the Navy to gain the bounty offered at the time and once served with Aubrey. At his first assignment, Daniel is hired to help the purser but ends up spending most of his time with the master whereupon he learns navigation and piloting. After the first Napoleonic war, Daniel tries his hand at privateering, but does poorly and is robbed and left penniless at Mahon. Aubrey encounters him and hires him on as a master for Surprise.

Captain Pomfret

A newly-assigned captain to the vessel Pomone, Pomfret is conscientious, efficient and willing to learn from Aubrey about the finer points of leadership. Unfortunately, in the first engagement between the Pomone and a galley which employed slave labor, Pomfret is horrified as he watches slaves sink with their ships because they are chained to their benches. Pomfret cannot escape the horror of those scenes and kills himself, making it look like an accident.

Captain Christy-Palliere

Captain Christy-Palliere is the French captain of the frigate, Caroline, who knows both Aubrey and Maturin from previous times, once when the two men had been captives of Christy-Palliere in 1801 and then again when they had been his guests after the first defeat of Napoleon. Christy-Palliere declares immediately for the current king of France against Napoleon and encounters Aubrey in the Adriatic area. The French captain offers what intelligence he has of the situation in the Adriatic and then attends a ceremony called "divisions" aboard the Surprise and finally takes his leave, heading for Mahon.

Captain Ward

The commander of the British vessel, Dover, he is described as "rude, domineering and inefficient" (p. 46). Captain Ward is wealthy and mean and parsimonious, as evidenced in his dinners, which were odious. Aubrey manages to send Ward and the Dover off on an escort mission, thus he appears only briefly in the first couple chapters.

Captain William Reade

A longtime sailor with Aubrey, he loses an arm, but is quite competent with a prosthesis hook. He is the Captain of the Ringle and is competent and reliable. Aubrey relies upon him and the Ringle for several missions, which contributes to the success of the entire squadron.



Dey Omar Pasha

An illiterate Muslim leader, who is elected to the position of Dey when the current Dey is assassinated. Dey Pasha is a soldier through and through and is honorable, though severe. He has a tendency to deal with trespassers on his hunting grounds by having them impaled onto stakes in the ground to die slowly in great agony. Dey Pasha meets with Maturin while the Dey is out hunting lions and assures Maturin of his undying enmity to Napoleon and his admiration of the British. The Dey takes Maturin out to hunt lions and Maturin ends up saving the Dey's life by shooting an attacking lioness. The Dey demonstrates his gratitude by secreting one of his two favorite hunting rifles in Maturin's packs as they are leaving. The Dey's fall from grace is evident when the rifle is removed by the Vizier's men. Ironically, the rifle later represents the Vizier's fall from grace as it is returned to Maturin with a note of apology. Day Pasha is assassinated after only a brief time serving as the Dey.

The Vizier to the Dey

The Vizier to the Dey is the Dey's administrator, who handles all of the Dey's appointments, tax collecting, and administrative matters. The Vizier and the Dey Pasha have opposite opinions of Napoleon Bonaparte, with the Vizier being sympathetic to Napoleon's cause. The Vizier views Dey Omar Pasha as an illiterate brute, while on the other hand, Dey Pasha sees the Vizier as effeminate and not much of a "real" man.

Admiral Lord Barmouth

Admiral Lord Barmouth is the Admiral who replaces Admiral Lord Keith. He is a competent sailor and the hero of several naval engagements. His family name is Richardson and Aubrey serves under him as master's mate. Though they do not have a poor relationship, Aubrey disagrees with Richardson several times to the point that when Richardson receives a promotion, he does not invite Aubrey to move to the larger vessel with him. Aubrey later accepts Richardson's son, Arklow, who turns out not to be competent as a sailor or leader. Aubrey gets rid of him tactfully, but Arklow later is the Captain of a crew who mutinies with good cause. Arklow is never given a ship again. This situation with Arklow causes a greater rift in the professional relationship between Aubrey and Lord Barmouth.

Lord Keith and Queenie Keith

Aubrey's immediate supervisor as the book opens, Lord Keith is on the verge of retiring and does so near the end of the book. His wife Queenie is a close childhood friend of Aubrey's.



Isobel Carrington Richardson

Isobel Carrington Richardson is the wife of Lord Barmouth, who arrives at Mahon in chapter 10 and who informs her husband of her close connection with Jack Aubrey as they grow up together. Her friendship with Aubrey reverses Lord Barmouth's attitude towards Aubrey.

Kevin and Mona Fitzpatrick

Kevin and Mona Fitzpatrick are two young children from Ireland who are twins captured by the Moors and sold as slaves. Maturin spies them in the market and purchases their freedom and then arranges for passage for them back to their home in Ireland.

Barret Bonden

Barret Bonden is the coxswain of the Surprise who is killed during the last battle against the galley carrying the chests of gold.



Objects/Places

Surprise

Surprise is a private man-of-war, owned by Stephen Maturin and then Jack Aubrey. She is French-built and has previously been known as L'Unité, Retaliation, and Retribution. Her figure-head is a gilded woman with an ample bosom and a look of surprise on her face. She displaces about six hundred tons, has a crew of about two hundred men, and carries a main armament of twelve-pounder long guns. Her crew is composed of unusually able seamen, many of whom have served under Jack Aubrey for years.

Ringle

Captained by William Reade, the Ringle is fast and has the ability to move in more shallow waters than the Surprise or the flagship, Pomone. Ringle does several scouting missions and a courier mission for Aubrey.

Port Mahon

Port Mahon is where the fleet headed by Admiral Lord Keith is headquartered. Admiral Fanshawe is the admiral in charge of the Port at Mahon.

Gibraltar and the Straits of Gibraltar

Gibraltar and the Straits of Gibraltar are a port in the Mediterranean and a narrow strip of water which connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea.

Adriatic Sea Coastline

The area in which Aubrey is assigned to patrol and find and sabotage any French vessels who have declared for Bonaparte is along the Adriatic Sea Coastline.

Dover

Dover is a ship in Commodore Aubrey's squadron captained by a coarse and hard man, Captain Ward. Aubrey assigns the Dover to protection duty for a convoy of Indiamen vessels, thus getting the ship and its obnoxious captain away from Aubrey.

HMS Royal Sovereign

Lord Keith's Mediterranean Fleet flagship is HMS Royal Sovereign.



HMS Implacable

HMS Implacable is Lord Barmouth's Mediterranean Fleet flagship.

Ardent

A French frigate, Ardent is captained by Captain Charles de La Tour. Aubrey requests that they declare themselves for the King of France, but the Captain refuses and the British sink the vessel.

Caroline

His Most Christian Majesty's frigate, the Caroline is captained by Captain Christy-Palliere, a former acquaintance of both Aubrey and Maturin. When Aubrey learns that Captain Christy-Palliere has declared for the King, he naturally leaves the Caroline unharmed.

HMS Pomone

HMS Pomone is an "unlucky" ship whose first officer is court martialed for sodomy and removed from the service. Her second captain, Pomfret, commits suicide.

Chests of Gold

Gold that is on its way to pay Muslim mercenaries who are to meet and delay the Russian army is carried in chests.

Hunting Rifle

Maturin kills a lioness with a hunting rifle, saving the Dey's life who then gives the rifle to Maturin.

Hand of Glory

A hand which is cut off from a murderer after he hangs for his crime, Maturin has the "Hand of Glory" in solution aboard the Surprise. The dog, Naseby, eats the hand and Maturin gives the dog an emetic to force it to vomit the hand. Maturin wires the bones of the hand together and the crew is relieved that their "lucky charm" is back together.



Narwhal Horn

The horn of a narwhal, a type of whale, is viewed by the crew of the Surprise the horn as another lucky charm. The crewmen are angry at Killick when the horn is broken due to Killick's carelessness. The horn is eventually repaired and returned to Surprise and the crew welcomes Killick back to their good graces.

Blue Stone

Maturin presents a blue stone to the Vizier in order to earn his cooperation.

Lion and Lioness

Maturin and the Dey Pasha hunt a lion, which the Dey kills. The lion's mate, the lioness, attacks the two men and Maturin reluctantly kills her.



Themes

War

The first war against Napoleon has ended and Napoleon is exiled to the Island of Elba, from which he escapes and makes a triumphant entry into Paris where he gathers supporters. For the next hundred days, Napoleon seeks to re-conquer Europe. Most of O'Brian's Aubrey-Maturin books deal with the first Napoleonic wars. This book, deals with the hundred days of Napoleon's attempt at a comeback. Though war is an horrific topic, due to Aubrey's amazing talents at strategy and seamanship, much of the time he is able to defeat the enemy with minimal bloodshed. Though the idea of war is woven throughout the novel, very little of the book is actually taken up with battles. Instead of defeating a French fleet, Aubrey's mission is to keep the French from gaining a fleet to challenge the British navy. Through encouraging sabotage at shipyards, challenging vessels that declare for Napoleon and stopping a galley laden with gold to pay Muslim mercenaries bent on assisting Napoleon, Aubrey and his squadron of ships do their part to keep Napoleon from spreading death and destruction once again throughout Europe.

Some of the worse aspects of war, especially the impact on civilians, is not obvious in *The Hundred Days*. Probably the most horrific aspect of war that the reader encounters in *The Hundred Days* is when the corsair carrying the gold to pay Muslim mercenaries begins to throw slaves overboard in order to lighten the ship and to stretch the supply of food and water. A second aspect is when Aubrey's squadron encounters a number of Moorish ships attacking an Indiaman convoy and the British sink several of the corsairs that have Christian slaves chained to their rowing positions. The slaves are unable to get loose and thus literally go down with the ship. This situation so horrifies one British captain, Pomfret, that the man later commits suicide.

There is nothing glorious about war; when Aubrey is asked if he believes the sabotage of shipyards and the burning of partially-built vessels is dishonorable compared to honorable face-to-face combat, Aubrey replies that if burning the ships keeps his men safe, he's all for it.

Superstition

Sailors have stereotypically been labeled as superstitious and O'Brian plays this stereotype up to offer comic relief to *The Hundred Days*. One example of the superstitious nature of sailors is when Maturin brings on board a narwhal horn. The crew of the *Surprise* associates this horn with good luck. One evening, when Maturin invites Professor James Wright on board for dinner and to offer his opinion as to the function of the horn, Preserved Killick is asked to bring the horn in its case to the officers' mess. Rather than bringing the horn in the case, Killick removes it from the case to be the one to present the horn to Maturin. Unfortunately, the cabin boy has finished off too many bottles of liquor and falls into Killick when throwing up. Killick



drops the horn and it breaks in two. The crew holds Killick responsible and shun him for much of the rest of the story. It is only when Professor Wright returns the horn in better-than-original condition that the crew welcomes Killick back into their good graces.

A second example of the superstitious nature of the sailors is in the case of Maturin's "hand of glory." Maturin has the pickled hand of a murderer which was cut off his arm after the man's death by hanging. Someone has been substituting Maturin's alcoholic preservative for water and the hand begins to deteriorate, so Maturin pins it out to dry. Bonden's dog, Naseby, comes upon the hand and eats it. Bonden refuses to allow Maturin to either make the dog vomit or cut the dog open to retrieve the hand. Finally, after calling Maturin a bastard and forced to apologize by Aubrey, Maturin causes the dog to vomit. After Maturin recovers the bones of the hand, he wires them together and presents the hand to the crew. The crew forms a line to walk by the "lucky" hand and view it. Many of them file past the hand repeated times just to absorb all the "luck."

One other example of what the sailors see as "bad" luck is that the captain of the Pomone, Captain Pomfret commits suicide. Though officially, it is deemed an accident, one of the old sailors expresses his opinion that it was suicide and that it will bring bad luck.

Why do sailors have a reputation for being superstitious? Perhaps it's because they are not in control of factors that can mean life and death, factors such as the weather or encountering pirates, or the ship breaking up on reefs or shoals. Since there are factors over which they have no control, trying to stack the deck in their favor (by bringing luck) may help them to psychologically feel safe when in a small sailing vessel. Most readers have probably heard some variant on the saying, "Oh God the sea is so great and my boat is so small." Perhaps superstition psychologically shrinks the sea and enlarges the boat.

Politics

In the broadest sense, politics is then as now a part of every human culture. As long as humans strive to control, conquer, or spread their own views of religion and social behavior, politics will be used in these endeavors. There are several types of political manipulation going on in *The Hundred Days*.

One type of politics is that which determines the assignments and advancement of the men in the British navy. Some of the criteria for promotion both then and now in military services is determined by performance. An officer or enlisted man (or in today's military woman) who performs poorly will either be kept at a lower rank indefinitely or forced out of the service. Such is the case with one man mentioned in *The Hundred Days*, Arklow Richardson, the son of the present Lord Barmouth. Though he may have initially received a commission as an officer due to his father's political influence, no amount of that same influence could save him from the fate earned by a truly incompetent officer. This brings up another means of promotion, one which is not performance based, that of promotion through political connections. Captain Vaux, who assumes command of



the vessel HMS Pomone after Pomfret's death is determined to perform well that it not be said that his family's wealth and connections is what gained him a Captain's post at a young age. In fact, Vaux is willing to spend his own money on gunpowder and ammo in order for his crew to practice to perfection so to demonstrate his competence.

A second type of politics is seen in how the British intelligence community manipulates access to money in order to effect a political goal. The British political powers pressure banks to recall their loans to shipyards that are building vessels to re-establish a strong French fleet for Napoleon. The banks recall their loans and the shipyards cannot pay the carpenters and other workers. When the workers are not paid, they retaliate by burning the vessels upon which they have been working. The British intelligence community also exerts influence through Maturin's visit with the Dey, who is the Regent for Algiers under the Ottoman Empire. Maturin meets with the Dey to request that the Dey refuse to allow the gold for the mercenary pay to travel through his land. This, too, is a successful political manipulation, but ultimately is of no use because the Dey (Pasha) is assassinated, which illustrates a third political arena in *The Hundred Days*, that which happens within the Muslim community of Algiers.

The Dey is elected by a group of chiefs. The election has all the political maneuvers that we associate with modern-day politics, and it is not always the best person for the job elected, but the one who will grant boons to those doing the electing. Dey Pasha is assassinated ostensibly because he has impaled one to many Muslim young men. Whether the impaling is the main reason or not is questionable. He may have been murdered because he is greatly opposed to Napoleon and some of those in power support Napoleon. Pasha being assassinated is why Aubrey has to take the problem of the gold out of a political solution and into a military solution, i.e., stopping the shipment that is to go by sea.



Style

Style

Point of View

The Hundred Days is written in the third person omniscient point of view. This point of view is effective for The Hundred Days because there are several plots playing out at the same time with a fairly large number of characters, so first person would limit the information too much and would probably result in the reader being confused about the intricacies of the plot. The narrator is impersonal and reliable and reveals both the concrete details of the story and the emotions of the characters. For example, readers are told by the narrator that "Captain Vaux was of a wealthy, open-handed family and he dreaded having the appearance of one who owed his early promotion to his connexions (sic)" (Chapter 4, p. 93). Were this not a third person omniscient point of view, the readers would have no way of knowing Captain Vaux's feelings about taking command of the Pomone and thus why the Captain orders incessant practice with the guns. The third person omniscient point of view is also the best one for revealing to the reader the intricate and complex political situation existent in The Hundred Days.

Another reason the third person point of view works well is because there is so much description of shipboard life, of the flora and fauna of the various settings and of the characters themselves. Were the descriptions rendered in an unreliable first person, for example, the reader would not know if the descriptions are accurate or colored by the narrator's own prejudices.

Setting

The setting takes place on or around the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas. Many of the places mentioned in The Hundred Days are real places, and many still exist today. Though most of the setting takes place on the sea, chapter 7 takes place almost completely on land when Maturin and Jacob go to meet with the Vizier and the Dey. O'Brian attempts to be somewhat historically accurate, and some of his characters and battles are loosely based upon real people and situations.

The Hundred Days opens just as Napoleon has escaped from the island of Elba and made his way to Paris to a rousing welcome in the year 1815. The primary means of travel on the sea is by sail, with some ships also equipped with rowers for when the wind is calm. Surprise spends its time mostly in the Adriatic coastal areas (the sea to the East of Italy), but she also sails to Gibraltar and points in the Mediterranean Sea. The Straits of Gibraltar connect the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, and in this book is controlled by the British. Some of the other settings are Algiers, a region in the Atlas Mountains, an unnamed fictional island in the Adriatic Sea, and Port Mahon on the Balearic island of Minorca.



Language and Meaning

O'Brian writes his Aubrey-Maturin series as if he were an author of the era in which the novel is set, and *The Hundred Days* is no exception. That being said, his language is more formal than one set in the early 21st century. The "gentlemen" of the novel, such as Aubrey, Maturin, Lord Keith and Lord Barmouth, along with Lady Keith and Lady Barmouth tend to use fairly advanced vocabulary and formal syntax. The narrator uses vocabulary that would stretch the minds of high school students, although most of the vocabulary are words a high school student should learn if she does not already know them. Some of the seamen and lower-class people speak a more informal language, even some that might be labeled a dialect, though nothing that would be too difficult to understand. Spelling is British English, so American readers will note some differences, such as the word harbour versus harbor (American English). These small spelling differences do not interfere with comprehension.

Two other things should be noted about the language: There is much technical jargon related to ships and sailing. Most average readers will not know all the words unless s/he is a sailor or has read many of the previous Aubrey-Maturin books and learned the words either through context or researched their meaning. Most of the words' meanings can be found with some research, though one may have to dig unless one can find a sailing reference book that addresses ships of that era. The second jargon that may be slightly challenging is the language specific to the military of that era. For example, when the French captain, Christy-Palliere, who commands the Royalist vessel, *Caroline*, is aboard *Surprise*, Aubrey invites him to view "Divisions," a formal inspection of the ship's various sections.

In addition to all the various words a reader might encounter in the above-mentioned situations, one may also encounter some words having to do with the natural world, particularly birds, which are discussed by Maturin a few times.

Dialogue seems to comprise roughly one-fourth of the text with much detailed description taking up probably fifty percent. The other quarter of the text is also description, but is narration about the various battles and other action that takes place. The descriptive passages are densely-worded with perhaps one or two important points buried within the entire passage; therefore, the reader must pay attention in order to not miss a point that explains the action or plot.

Structure

The Hundred Days is divided into ten, unnamed chapters, each one running from 25-35 pages. The entire book consists of about 280 pages, with no forward or afterword. There is no material written about the author, which is the author's preference. Additionally, there is a single page just before chapter 1 that pictures an early 19th century sailing vessel with a numbered list corresponding to numbers on the picture. The list enumerates the most common parts of the vessel.



There is one major plot and several subplots in *The Hundred Days*. The subplots help move the main plot along, that being the need to stop the escaped Napoleon from re-establishing rule in France and commencing his conquest of Europe a second time. Aubrey's part in stopping Napoleon is commanding his squadron as they sail up and down the Adriatic coast searching for vessels that have declared for Napoleon and eliminating or capturing them. Additionally, he is to help effect the sabotage of new vessels being built in any way he can. A subplot of the book is the trip Maturin takes over land to meet with the Dey of Algiers to pressure him to forgo assisting Napoleon by forbidding the movement of money across his lands.

The book is somewhat of a slow read in that the language is formal and somewhat archaic and there are many complex descriptions. Even the action of the book, for example, the battles, are slow reading because of the syntax and vocabulary used to describe the battles/action.

Quotes

"Six hundred thousand people cheered Napoleon when he entered Paris....There is the Devil to pay and no tar hot." (Chapter 1, p. 11)

"...a very important point is that eventually one or another of these ships might protect or even carry the treasure." (Chapter 1, p. 19)

"...it was suggested that with your knowledge of these parts and of the ...Turkish officials governing them...that you might bring pressure to bear...[to] cause this conspiracy to fail." (Chapter 1, p. 23)

"But above all, keep your people hard at it...yet do not blackguard them. Praise if ever you can; you will find it answer wonderfully." (Chapter 2, p. 38)

"You are speaking of women, brother? You who have always abominated so much as the smell of a skirt aboard a ship. The invariable cause of trouble, quarrelling, ill-luck. Wholly out of place in any ship, above a man-of-war. I have never seen a woman aboard a man-of-war." (Chapter 2, p. 39)

"Did you ever know a bad omen to be wrong, Mr. Somers?" (Chapter 2, p. 46)

"My trouble is this: Pomone, under my orders, beat one Moorish galley to pieces by gunfire and deliberately rode down two others...so that they sank within the minute. And I perpetually see those scores of men, Christian slaves chained to their oars, looking up in horror, looking up perhaps for mercy; and I sailed on to destroy another. Is it right?...I cannot sleep...." (Chapter 2, p. 63)

"Well, this is a fine beginning — an unlucky squadron if ever there was one. Those bloody Indiamen never gave so much as a brass farthing between us, though we saved their lives and fortunes; and now there is this wicked self-murder in Pomone." (Chapter 3, p. 67)

"Yet the sufferings of the Surprise, though severe and often commented upon, were not to be compared to those of the Pomone, a huddled-together ship's company with a captain who had never commanded a post ship before, a disgruntled first lieutenant and a new second lieutenant — he was now officer of the watch — who did not know a single man aboard and whose orders were often confused, often misunderstood and sometimes shouted down by exasperated, frightened bosun's mates, far too busy with their starters: and all this in an unhandy, heavily-pitching frigate with far too much sail set forward, pressing down her forefoot." (Chapter 4, p. 92)

"...the Sheikh of Azgar has promised the sum required for the mercenaries: the news came more than a week ago. The Russians and Austrians are still dawdling — there is said to be suspicion, ill-will, on both sides. Zeal among the Moslem Bonapartists



reached a feverish point when a pilgrim...reported seeing the gold being weighed out..." (Chapter 5, p. 132)

"...secrecy was the rarest commodity aboard a ship." (Chapter 5, p. 136)

"...tell me succinctly about naval prize-money....I have heard of it for ever, but I have never retained the principles." (Chapter 6, p. 162)

"...my influence with the Dey no longer exists. He was strangled by the janissaries, and some days later they elected their current Agha, Omar Pasha, as the new Dey." (Chapter 6, p. 170)

"'In that case,' said Stephen, 'it seems to me that Dr Jacob and I should make our way into the Atlas with the utmost dispatch, if not to the Dey himself...'" (Chapter 6, p. 171)

"The Vizier gazed at him [Maturin] with a wondering benevolence. 'Surely, my dear sir,' he said at last, 'a man of your egregious perspicacity cannot believe these wild tales?'" (Chapter 7, p. 182)

"'That is perfectly typical of your black vulture: greedy, precipitate, grasping,' cried Stephen. 'And stupid.'" (Chapter 7, p. 186)

"...later this evening ...a new Dey will be proclaimed, Omar Pasha having by then been strangled by the executioners...strangled as his predecessor was strangled. He impaled one youth too many... an error in his calculations that I had not reckoned upon." (Chapter 8, p. 211)

"This was the kind of sailing that Stephen liked: with a gentle breeze a little north of east the Surprise, with her tender under her lee, made a steady four and a half knots under all plain sail or a trifle less, with a pitch and roll that he scarcely noticed." (Chapter 9, p. 237)

"Stephen looked attentively at his friend....'You are low in your spirits, brother.' 'Indeed I am....I am very much afraid that we are going to be baulked of our galley — pipped on the post — done brown.' 'Be easy in your mind, my dear,' said Stephen...." (Chapter 9, p. 249)

"...'Napoleon is beat, sir. There was a great battle at Waterloo in the Low Countries, and the Allies won.'" (Chapter 10, p. 275)



Topics for Discussion

Compare/contrast the political situation at the opening of the book to that at the end of the book.

Discuss the main character, Jack Aubrey. What are his strengths? His weaknesses? How do his strengths contribute to his success as a British naval officer? How would you rate his leadership skills? What about him would be difficult to be around?

Discuss the main character, Stephen Maturin. What are his strengths? His weaknesses? How do his strengths contribute to his success as a British naval surgeon? How would you rate his medical skills (considering the era in which he is practicing)? What about him would be difficult to be around? What would you find interesting about the man?

Why is the British intelligence community concerned about a gold shipment? Discuss the political situation concerning the shipment.

Discuss Omar Pasha. Is he a good man? Explain. He is a good ruler? In what ways? Do you think he is fair in how he treats his people? Why or why not? Does he deserve assassination?

Discuss the various weather situations and how they inform the plot. Could the way O'Brian uses the weather be considered narrative contrivance? Why or why not?

Discuss the theme of superstition that is woven throughout the book. Is it rational? Why do you think the sailors put so much stock in the "hand of glory" and the narwhal horn? What are the possible causes of the sailors' superstitions?

Discuss how women are treated in the book. Why is Maturin so surprised when Aubrey suggests Maturin hire a loblolly boy who happens to be a woman? What are the superstitions related to women on board a ship? Why do few women sail with the Navy?

Discuss the theme of slavery as it occurs in the book.