

Treason's Harbour Study Guide

Treason's Harbour by Patrick O'Brian

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Plot Summary

TREASON'S HARBOUR is the ninth novel in a series about the British Navy. Captain Jack Aubrey led a cast of characters through multiple voyages in a background of treason. Aubrey was the seasoned captain of two ships, his favorite of which was the Surprise. Aubrey took the Surprise on nearly every one of his missions. He had acquired an experienced and loyal crew during his years at sea. These hard working men were an asset to his ships. A doctor by the name of Stephen Maturin often accompanied Captain Aubrey on his voyages. Dr. Maturin was a good friend of Aubrey's as well as a naval surgeon and undercover British intelligence officer.

At the beginning of the novel the Surprise was docked in Malta. The year was circa 1800 and Britain was at war with Napoleon's French empire. The Surprise was being repaired from its recent skirmish at sea. Aubrey and Maturin passed time together at the hotel and ale houses of the nearest city, Valletta. The crew also experienced a prolonged period of rest during the repairs. During this period of relative calm it came to Maturin's attention that a Navy wife, Mrs. Laura Fielding, was both a language tutor and an accomplished musician. Maturin enjoyed classical music so Mrs. Fielding invited Maturin to a small concert at her home. That evening Laura was unable to play well. She confessed to Dr. Maturin that she had been approached by French spies who asked her to gain Maturin's confidence and provide them with strategic information. She is coerced into cooperation because her husband has been a prisoner of war for quite some time, and she was assured that her cooperation equated with his continued safety. Dr. Maturin agreed to make it appear as though he was romantically involved with Laura in an effort to keep her and her husband safe, although he was still very much in love with his own wife. Aubrey and Maturin sailed away many times, always returning in between voyages to check on Mrs. Fielding. On one of their voyages it was discovered that her husband was indeed alive. Mr. Fielding escaped, was taken aboard by a friendly ship, and was on his way home to Laura.

Maturin knew that Mr. Fielding's return would mean that the French spies no longer had leverage over Laura, and that they may try to kill her, so when in port he checked on her often. At one such visit he finds that her guardian dog, Ponto, had unexpectedly died, and her maid had left hastily. After witnessing French spies inside her home, Maturin moved her to safety aboard the Surprise. British agents were left to locate and attend to the group of French spies residing in Malta. The book closes with Aubrey sailing out to sea and Mrs. Fielding's imminent reunion with her husband.



Chapter One

Chapter One Summary

TREASON'S HARBOUR opens as a group of British Navy officers gather off duty in the port city of Valletta. Great Britain and its allies were at war against Napoleon's French government and its territories. Much of the war was waged at sea; on land, espionage was a concern. The country of Malta was experiencing excellent weather, and the scenery was magnificent, yet the officers had difficulty enjoying the scenery. They were accustomed to life on the sea, but the war had left many ships damaged. As the ships were dragged onto land for repairs, the officers were similarly forced into unemployment. They were wasting time and money, in the local ale houses. Fortunately, Malta was a friendly harbor for British soldiers and Navy officers forced to stay awhile.

Captain Aubrey was a captain of the British Navy. He had not just one, but two damaged ships, and both took longer than he would have liked to repair. The way to gain promotion through the ranks of the Navy was through cunning strategies resulting in successful battles waged and conquests abroad. Lounging in the port did nothing for Post Captain Jack Aubrey's career nor for those of his crew. Aubrey was enjoying the company of two of his friends. Dr. Stephen Maturin was the surgeon employed on Aubrey's ship, the *Surprise*. One of Aubrey's apprentices, Mr. Pullings, had recently been promoted to junior commander of his own ship and was wearing his new uniform. Although Aubrey himself wished for a promotion, the three men had served in the Navy together for quite some time and all rejoiced in Pullings' good fortune.

As the three men chatted they were observed by another trio of men residing in a tower overlooking the courtyard. The men were observing Maturin, whom they suspected of acting as an undercover intelligence agent for Britain. The first man, Lesueur, was a French agent. He informed his associates about his suspicions with regards to Maturin. Lesueur also discussed another agent, Mrs. Laura Fielding, whom he had directed to befriend Dr. Maturin. Mrs. Fielding's husband had been captured by French hostiles. Lesueur leveraged this information and manipulated Mrs. Fielding into working as an agent for the French government. It was hoped she would seduce Dr. Maturin and transfer valuable information to the French. Mrs. Fielding was a language tutor as well as a musician and was well known due to her professional reputation. Since her husband's capture, she was always escorted by her rather large dog, Ponto. One evening when Mrs. Fielding was out unaccompanied, Ponto fell down a well. Captain Aubrey discovered Ponto and helped him to the surface, thus receiving great affection from Ponto and cementing a genuine friendship with Laura Fielding.

Chapter One Analysis

Chapter one introduces Captain Jack Aubrey. He is one of the three main characters in this particular book. In general, he plays a large role in the entire O'Brian series. The



reader learns that Jack Aubrey is a competent sailor. He has been a Navy captain for many years and has been in charge of two ships, the Surprise and the Worcester, during that time. Promotions within the Navy are based mostly on experience and loyalty, but luck and good timing are factors as well. Aubrey was a frustrated Captain. He had been loyal to his country and served it well. Unfortunately, some of his missions had been deemed failures for reasons outside his control; therefore, when his esteemed midshipman, Pullings, was promoted, Aubrey had mixed feelings. Pullings had served on Aubrey's crew for many years and was a worthy candidate. Aubrey was fond of him and wished him no ill will, yet Jack was jealous of his promotion. Aubrey managed to put aside his pettiness and congratulate him on his accomplishment. His sincerity, although somewhat contaminated, demonstrated Aubrey's depth of character.

Chapter one also introduces the other two characters of importance, Dr. Maturin and Mrs. Laura Fielding. At this point, it is revealed that espionage was a problem for the British forces. They were aware that their missions were being thwarted but were unsure of how or why. A surgeon aboard Aubrey's ship, Dr. Maturin, had been recruited as a British intelligence officer. During their missions he not only cared for the crew but attempted to analyze the politics of each port as well. He was always on the lookout for French spies. In the port of Valletta, where the Surprise was being repaired, Maturin learned that a British Navy wife has been approached by such a man. Both Laura Fielding and Dr. Maturin experienced a sense of conflict. Laura was conflicted because she wished to be loyal to her country, but it seemed that the only way to keep her husband safe was to act as a traitor. Dr. Maturin felt conflicted because he was attracted to Laura initially, although both he and she were married to other people. In addition, he did not want to use her as a pawn, yet she was a valuable source of information with regards to the movement of the French agent, Lesueur.



Chapter Two

Chapter Two Summary

Ponto greeted Captain Aubrey excitedly every time they met in the market and followed him dutifully following his rescue. On one such occasion, Captain Aubrey was near the shop of a glass merchant, whose wares were shattered by Ponto's tail wagging. This new found loyalty caused citizens to gossip about the nature of Captain Aubrey and Mrs. Fields' friendship. Before long the officers and local workers all assumed that the two were having an affair.

Captain Aubrey requested that his crew report to the shipyard for inspection. Many of his best men were being hired by other captains with more imminent voyages while his ships sat in disrepair. He feared he might have no crew left at all by the time the ships were ready to sail. Those that appeared for roll call were not very impressive. Although none were completely drunk, many showed the affects of alcohol consumption. Out of boredom they had taken to gambling, and most had bet and lost their uniforms. Lack of exercise and hearty meals had also taken their toll on the physical appearance of crew members. Aubrey ordered them all into rowboats and directed them out to the islands and back, thinking the physical labor would be good for their bodies. Meanwhile, he traveled over land to meet his old captain, Admiral Hartley. Hartley had retired into obscurity, living at the end of a long, dry, dirt road. He didn't receive many visitors and was not expecting Aubrey. After reminiscing for a while, Aubrey returned to town.

Aubrey and Maturin shared an appreciation for music. Aubrey went to St. Simon's Church to listen to the music and found Dr. Maturin enjoying the same performance. Secretly, Dr. Maturin had also gone to church to repent of lusting after Mrs. Fielding, a woman who, although she seemed to be spending unchaste time with his friend, was married nonetheless. Also present was Andrew Wray, who professed a love for the music but had an alternative motive. Wray was meeting with Agent Lesueur to discuss business. Lesueur wanted Wray to feed Aubrey misleading information with regard to the path the war was taking. He hoped that doing so might tip the outcome in favor of the French. Lesueur warned Wray that if Mrs. Fielding could not gain Maturin's confidence, he must be prepared to make eliminations. Wray responds in the affirmative, stating that he is an idealist and would do whatever was necessary to ensure the success of the French mission. Wray also extracted payment from Lesueur for his services to the government.

Chapter Two Analysis

Ponto's excitement at the sight of Captain Aubrey led the citizens and crew to make presumptions. They assumed that Ponto's attachment stemmed from the two spending time together. They even went so far as to assume an improper relationship, which was considered uncivilized and capable of destroying one's social status. Captain Aubrey's



crew, who had always been loyal, were therefore whispering behind his back. Some were jealous of the supposed relationship; others wished him luck, but others were inclined to report back to the perspective spouses. Aubrey was also concerned that some of his crew were being hired away by other captains during his ship's repairs. He had amassed a group of men who worked well together and he disliked having that relationship altered. Although the crew feared Aubrey was having an affair with Mrs. Fielding, it was Dr. Maturin who came closer to that status. Mrs. Fielding and Dr. Maturin were both highly educated and had much in common. Before long, rumors about Maturin and Laura began circulating as well. Despite his dislike of the rumors, Maturin maintained his act to catch Lesueur. This becomes especially important when the reader learns that Lesueur is working with Mr. Wray, a British government official.



Chapter Three

Chapter Three Summary

Captain Aubrey was disappointed to find that Admiral Hartley had declined so severely in such a short time. Aubrey's mood was greatly improved upon his return to his lodgings at Searle's hotel. He learned that the Admiralty Court had ruled in favor of his previous conquest. This meant that a portion of the riches contained on the vessel he captured during his last voyage were his to keep by law. He forwarded a large sum to his wife, kept what was necessary to live on during the duration of his time in Malta, and used the rest to pay for the repairs to his ships. Aubrey's elated mood led him to the point of misbehavior. He attempted to move physically closer to Mrs. Fielding, but she countered his advances by asking him to help her write a letter to her husband. The effect was to return their proximity to a more professional distance. Aubrey was disappointed but not surprised by her morality, and they parted on friendly terms.

Dr. Maturin located Captain Aubrey and Mrs. Fielding and shared with them the news of his most recent purchase. He ordered a state of the art diving bell and it just arrived upon a ship called the Dromedary. Dr. Maturin intended to use the diving bell to explore the oceans and bays wherever his travels allowed. As a scientist he was interested in discovering and cataloging as many species as he could locate. The diving bell was a large piece of equipment, and Aubrey and Maturin argued over where it ought to be placed. Aubrey argued that it was too large for any naval vessel and that it shouldn't be brought aboard, while Maturin argued for the advancement of science. He hoped to have some time when his services as a surgeon were not needed. In the end Aubrey agreed with the diving bell's transport provided that it be taken apart for safe and compact storage during times of travel.

Maturin's colleague, Dr. Graham was also interested in the pursuit of science. He enjoyed searching for new organisms with Maturin. Like Maturin, Graham was both a surgeon and an intelligence officer. Graham asks Maturin about an enemy officer named Andre Lesueur whom he believes is visiting Malta. This intrusion of French spies makes the doctors uneasy. They worry that secrecy can not be obtained on the island and that their maneuvers will be predicted and thwarted by French forces.

Dr. Maturin accompanied Mrs. Fielding's piano piece playing his cello. They were both accomplished musicians, but for some reason Laura's playing was not as enjoyable as usual. Following the party the doctor asked what was troubling her. Although she was supposed to be seducing him, Laura was unable to accomplish her task and instead admitted her awful predicament to Dr. Maturin. Maturin promised to cooperate. He would give her unimportant or otherwise misleading information to placate Lesueur without harming British interests.



Chapter Three Analysis

During chapter three Captain Aubrey's mood improved substantially. With the repairs to his ships well underway and the court ruling in favor of his latest acquisition, Aubrey had reason to believe his luck was changing. Being separated physically from his wife for such long periods of time was challenging, and he entertained the idea of seducing Mrs. Fielding. After all, his crew already expected it of him. Laura made her position clear and he was gently rebuked.

As Aubrey prepared to set sail again, Dr. Maturin expressed his excitement over his newest piece of equipment, a Haley diving bell. Aubrey doubted they'd have much leisure time and disapproved of the amount of space its transport would require. They reached a compromise. Maturin's diving bell was to be dismantled, brought aboard and stored in pieces out of the way, only to be reassembled if time allowed. The argument is one of the few times that Aubrey and Maturin disagree throughout the entire book. Captain Aubrey was a thoughtful and precise Captain. He was concerned with anything that might hamper the success of his mission. Despite his professional concern, he valued Maturin's presence and the two respectfully come to an agreement.



Chapter Four

Chapter Four Summary

Although Jack would have preferred himself to be Mrs. Fielding's suitor, he appreciated Dr. Martuin's friendship so much that he did not hold his apparent affair with Laura against him. Aubrey helped Dr. Maturin arrive promptly for his business meeting in the morning and then set off for the docks. Aubrey checked first on his ship, Surprise, and then he checked his crew. Although diminished in number, many of his crew reported for roll count, and those that remained were fiercely loyal to him.

Next Aubrey met with the Admiral who delivered a mix of news. The first piece of information was that one of his ships, the Worcester, was being retired from service. Aubrey had long ago resigned himself to this possibility so did not offer a response. The second and more promising bit of information came from their discussion of the Surprise. Its repairs were coming along nicely and if he had a larger crew he could sail her within two weeks. The Commander had other plans for Aubrey, however. He was instructed to take his current, albeit small, crew aboard the Dromedary, bound for the Mediterranean. At Mubara they were to disembark and travel overland, across the desert. Finally, they were to board a waiting boat, sail up the Gulf of Suez, and intercept a ship reportedly carrying a vast treasure. Aubrey was pleased to set sail and expressed his gratitude to the Commander-in-Chief.

Chapter Four Analysis

A glimpse into Captain Aubrey's character occurs again in the fourth chapter. Although he misses the companionship of a woman, he does not hold the "affair" against Dr. Maturin. Much like the situation with Mr. Pullings, Aubrey is able to be genuinely happy for his friends even when he is feeling poorly about his own prospects. His melancholy mood continued as he was informed that his ship, the Worcester, was slated for retirement. Fortunately, the condition of the Surprise had improved and that buoyed Aubrey's spirits. The Admiral gave Aubrey orders to take his crew aboard an unfamiliar ship on a mission. Although it was not his own ship, being engaged in action was restorative to Aubrey's temperament and that of his crew.



Chapter Five

Chapter Five Summary

Captain Aubrey and his crew sailed upon the Dromedary to their destination. They were accompanied by Dr Maturin, a clergyman named Mr. Martin, and a middle eastern interpreter named Mr. Hairabedian. The Dromedary encountered good weather and arrived earlier than expected. Unfortunately, the Dromedary's arrival coincided with Ramadan, and since the majority of Mubara's inhabitants were Muslims, they were fasting in seclusion and there was no one to welcome Captain Aubrey and his crew. They dismounted and entered the town where they met the leader known as an Effendi. Through Mr. Hairabedian's interpretation services, Aubrey learned the the Effendi would be pleased to provide them with transport and supplies in a few days once Ramadan had concluded. Aubrey was unwilling to wait however, and he requested only camels that were immediately available. The men marched and the camels carried their possessions and supplies. They walked through the evenings and early mornings and rested midday to escape the desert's heat. The temperatures were more tolerable in this manner, but the nocturnal animals were abundant and spooked some of the men who mistook them for evil spirits.

Chapter Five Analysis

Chapter five includes many excellent examples of descriptive prose. A cultural theme can also be examined here. Aubrey and his crew exit the Dromedary and discover that the inhabitants' culture is quite dissimilar from their own. Dress, religion, lodgings, and language were all very different. The cultural expectations were so different that Captain Aubrey believed his crew was being treated rudely. The natives' perceived lack of courtesy was due entirely to religious practice and was not at all a reflection on Captain Aubrey or his crew's reception. Captain Aubrey was determined to not lose valuable time on his mission. He he left almost immediately after arriving on dry land and did not wait for the village to complete their religious practices. His impatience could be interpreted as rude and could be a source of insult as well. The desert was rough terrain and its unfamiliar nature frightened the men.



Chapter Six

Chapter Six Summary

After Captain Aubrey and his men crossed the desert they were met with a refreshing view of the Suez and boarded a waiting vessel called the Niobe. Once aboard, Aubrey took the time to write a long letter to his wife, Sophie. He recounted their interesting march across the desert and looked forward to the rest of their journey. Aubrey's luck ceased once he and his men boarded the Niobe. The seasonal winds were not in their favor and the boat seemed to make no progress up the Gulf of Suez. The men were exposed to daily temperatures of one hundred and twenty-five degrees and no breeze for reprieve. Conditions were intolerable to everyone except Dr. Maturin and Mr. Martin, who went exploring off the side of the ship in Dr. Maturin's underwater diving bell. They spent days in this manner well the rest of the crew wished for a change in the weather.

Finally, an air pattern known as an Egyptian Wind blew in and the Niobe began its trip. Squalls followed and visibility was poor. The wind was not only hot but also contained sand that pelleted the ship and crew. The change in weather made navigating the Niobe difficult, but as they rounded Egypt the squalls abated and Aubrey learned to use the Egyptian Wind in such a way that the Niobe was again underway. The Egyptian winds were followed by two or three days of relative calm. During the calm Mr. Hairabedian jumped into the sea for a swim and was consumed by sharks. The men's moods were dampened by their slow progress and Hairabedian's violent death was difficult to forget.

It took seventeen days more to reach their destination. With every passing day Aubrey knew their chances of intercepting the treasure ship decreased. He was fairly surprised when they did encounter a galley ship matching the treasure ship's description. Captain Aubrey ordered a chase and the two sailed roughly parallel. Neither had a clear advantage. The galley ship attempted to trap the Niobe, to which Aubrey responded by firing the cannons. The galley sunk to the bottom but was visible beneath just ten fathoms of crystal clear water. Aubrey figured that although the treasure would have been appreciated, his true mission was to stop the galley from reaching Mubara. Despite having sunk the galley and losing the treasure, he did stop the galley and its crew from reaching its destination. Following these events, the crew was disappointed at their inability to share in the treasure. Maturin and Martin decided to try to retrieve some of the treasure by using the diving bell. The sunken chests were full of lead and were inscribed "whoever reads this is a fool."

Chapter Six Analysis

Chapter six is a long chapter devoted to travel aboard a ship called the Niobe. Although the plot of TREASON'S HARBOUR can be best summarized by assessing the interrelationships of individuals, those characters spend so much time at sea that it is fitting to explore what their travel experiences are like. The trip across the desert was



exceedingly hot for the men. Once aboard the Niobe one could assume that an ocean breeze of some sort would exist, but the book informs the reader no such reprieve is found. There was no wind in the early portion of their voyage, and when wind did arrive it included pellets of abrasive sand. Not only was the weather harsh, but the seas were a source of pain as well. For sea faring men the water was generally a source of freedom and happiness. Dr. Maturin and Mr. Martin enjoyed exploring the ocean in the diving bell, but the crew did not share in their joy. Following Mr. Hairabedian's mauling by sharks, the sea lost its friendliness and seemed sinister. This sense of foreboding climaxes when the crew discovers that the ship they sunk was only meant to lure them inland to be fooled by the French. Also, the premeditation required by the French to prepare and inscribe the fake treasure indicated the presence of a British intelligence leak .



Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven Summary

The Niobe moved slowly along the Suez during its return route. The crew's spirits were low as a result of being tricked with regards to the treasure. Furthermore, their water supply was very low and required rationing. The crew all experienced awful sunburns, and there was little that Dr. Maturin could do to make them more comfortable. The crew sailed into a port to get refreshment and begin the long, overland journey home again. The desert sand was soft under their feet, and their legs had become accustomed to the roll of the boat, so marching did not come easily to the men. Only Dr. Maturin reveled in the adventure. He was pleased to observe many varieties of birds, snakes, and lizards. On the second day of their desert march the shifting sand gave way to a more granular surface and walking became easier.

While setting up camp for some much deserved rest, the men were surrounded by a large, organized group of men on horseback. The riders stole their herd of camels and everything they were carrying, including Dr. Maturin's diving bell and specimens. No one was harmed, but the incident left the men with no supplies for the rest of their journey. The men drank as much as they could when they came upon a well and marched by night to avoid dehydration. By the time they reached the fort that was their destination, the crew was a haggard bunch. The fort appeared empty and Captain Aubrey worried about what had happened to its inhabitants since he last saw them. Upon further investigation, however, he found that their ship bound for home, the Dromedary, had been moved and was safely resting in the bay. The men were thankful to board the ship where wine, food, and friends awaited. The voyage home was uneventful and Aubrey passed it by writing his official Navy report .

Chapter Seven Analysis

The engraving on the fake treasure was a source of damaged pride for Aubrey and his crew. Captain Aubrey was pleased that his crew had emerged unharmed; however, the men were sorely disappointed about the lost opportunity. They had relished the thought of treasure collecting. Their anguish was made worse by the hot and difficult walk across the desert. In a final insult, the crew was surrounded by horseback riders who stole all their possessions as well as their camels. Although the journey was horrible, its challenges made the homecoming seem better. Because the Surprise was not yet ready for sailing, Aubrey and his crew had originally sailed aboard the Dromedary with its crew. The mingling of the two crews was not entirely peaceful on the first leg of the voyage. However, having been so physically challenged made the Surprise's crew genuinely thankful to see the Dromedary and its men. The reunion was happier than either crew might have anticipated previously. While the men were becoming reacquainted, Captain Aubrey began the task of writing his official report. This was not a

task that he embraced as he feared that another failed mission might end his career, or, at the very least, cease any further advancement.



Chapter Eight

Chapter Eight Summary

Captain Aubrey went directly to the Commander-in-Chief upon his return to Malta. He brought with him his official report for the purpose of record keeping, but since the Admiral was immediately available, much of the report was given through conversation. The Admiral was still hoping for the return of treasure and was disappointed. The biggest disappointment came in the realization that either their information was mistaken or, more likely, someone was guilty of treason. It appeared that their intentions had been leaked and the target adjusted accordingly, hence not just an empty ship, but the fake treasure and its engraved message.

Promotions were assigned on the basis of experience and success, and Aubrey was concerned that the failed mission would negatively impact his career trajectory. The Admiral seemed to blame not Aubrey, but their intelligence, for the mission's result. Rather than being relieved of duties or demoted, Jack was given another assignment. He was told that his ship, the *Surprise*, was being sold out of the service, but before its retirement the Admiral wanted Aubrey to take it up the Adriatic Sea for a mission. Captain Aubrey was saddened to hear of the *Surprise's* demise, but eager to sail on her again. He was comforted by the First Secretary's earlier promise that he would eventually captain a larger ship, the *Blackwater*.

While Captain Aubrey was reviewing his voyage with the Admiral, Dr. Maturin was visiting patients at the hospital. After taking care of his professional responsibilities he paid a visit to Mrs. Fielding. He inquired as to how she had been faring in his absence. She admitted that the French officers were still expecting her to gather information from him. Dr. Maturin suspected that Mr. Fielding was dead and that the letters coming from him were forged. He also suspected that if news of Mr. Fielding's death became public, Mrs. Fielding would be expendable to the French. At present he had the unique opportunity of feeding false information to the enemy through her while simultaneously protecting her from harm. She was still the devoted wife of Mr. Fielding, but Dr. Maturin's affection for her was growing and he was beginning to feel very protective of her. It was decided that they should appear to spend another night together for the benefit of the French agent, Lesueur.

One morning Aubrey hand delivered Dr. Maturin's mail. They had both received letters from their wives, and Aubrey chided Dr. Maturin's that he hoped letters from Diana would make him feel guilty for his behavior with Mrs. Fielding. Also among his correspondence was a letter from the chief of naval intelligence, Sir Blaine. Sir Blaine questioned Mr. Wray's experience with counter-intelligence and Dr. Maturin reflected upon his opinion of Wray. Wray offered the idea that Hairabedian might be the spy, but the doctor believed it was the man named Lesueur who had repeatedly approached Mrs. Fielding. Wray was sorely disappointed when he lost a game of cards against Dr. Maturin and became indebted to him. Wray did not have available cash to give to the



doctor and instead promised political favors. Wray agreed to speak in favor of Captain Aubrey with regards to his promotion aboard the Blackwater ship and to request a sea-going command for Captain Pullings.

Chapter Eight Analysis

Chapter eight is dedicated largely to Dr. Maturin. As Aubrey recounted their voyage aboard the Dromedary, the Admiral became aware of the existence of a leak in the government. At this point Dr. Maturin's intelligence efforts became a necessity. Immediately after arriving in Valletta Dr. Maturin excused himself to check on patients at the hospital. He spent very little time on his clinical business, however, and rushed to locate Mrs. Fielding. After spending the night with her for her own protection, he returned to the dock and received a scolding from Aubrey. Aubrey inquired as to his guilty conscience. Dr. Maturin knows that he and Laura have done nothing unfaithful, but since he can not disclose this fact without exposing his covert operation he says nothing. Contrary to Aubrey's expectations, it was another letter that brought discomfort to Dr. Maturin. The Chief of Naval Intelligence wrote to him about Mr. Wray. Nothing overt was mentioned, but it was the omission of typical information that caused Dr. Maturin to pay attention. He wondered what it was that Sir Joseph Blaine wanted him to deduce but that he couldn't write in ink. This altered Maturin's perspective and made him reevaluate the behavior of each of his colleagues. Wray's suggestion of Hairabedian as a spy was merely Wray trying to divert attention from his activities with Lesueur. A close look at Maturin and Wray's card game reveals some foreshadowing in that Maturin outplays Wray in cards, and perhaps this is indicative of their future interactions.



Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine Summary

With its repairs completed, Captain Aubrey sets course for Santa Maura aboard the Surprise. Dr. Maturin accompanied him again in a cabin specially equipped for his scientific pursuits. They were traveling through a treacherous part of the sea near Ithaca, often described as a treacherous area. Aubrey was unconcerned however, and steered his way through the weather. Also on board for the trip was a man named Major Pollock. At dinner one evening Pollock happened to describe how proud his brother was of his new ship, the Blackwater. Aubrey was surprised at this news, having expecting himself to receive the honor, but he said nothing to that effect and even offered a congratulatory toast to the new captain.

Following the news that his appointment on the Blackwater was not to occur, and fearing the demise of his career and disbanding of his crew, Captain Aubrey decided to begin preparations for two of his midshipmen's training. Mr. Honey and Mr. Maitland had served with him over six years, yet both still had many years left in the service. Aubrey wanted to be sure their chances of finding new employment would be favorable. He personally tutored them daily during the voyage to Santa Maura and encouraged them to take their lieutenant's exam as soon as the ship returned to Malta.

Captain Aubrey and the Surprise were greeted favorably by their Turkish hosts. Aubrey had been in the port before and was remembered fondly. Another friendly ship, the Nymphe, was also in the harbor and led by Harry Cotton. The Nymphe had rescued Mr. Fielding from the enemy which came as a surprise to Dr. Maturin who had assumed him to be deceased. Mr. Fielding had sustained some injuries and was brought to Dr. Maturin for care. Fielding recounted his ordeal to Dr. Maturin who was truly very interested in his well being. Dr. Maturin relayed to him Laura's concern for her husband and informed him of her nights spent playing piano and tutoring in Valletta. Unfortunately, someone aboard the crew passed along the idea that Captain Aubrey had been Mrs. Fielding's lover on account of Ponto's attachment to him. This information understandably upset Mr. Fielding, and although his passage home would have been faster aboard the Surprise, he declined to travel with them on account of Captain Aubrey's supposed affair with Laura. Dr. Maturin and Aubrey agreed that this was disappointing but that they must quickly return to Malta before news of Mr. Fielding's escape spread and harm could befall Mrs. Fielding.

Chapter Nine Analysis

Yet another example of Aubrey's charisma can be found in chapter nine. Aubrey learned that his final hope, to captain a ship called the Blackwater, would not occur. That post had instead been given to another captain. The reader might expect Aubrey to be crushed. He has been passed over multiple times for promotion and seems to be



deserving of honor. While he is undoubtedly dejected, he rallies for the benefit of those around him. He offers a hearty congratulations and well wishes for the Blackwater's new crew. To ensure that two of his best men are not also overlooked, he personally instructs them on the finer points of navigation in preparation for their lieutenant's exams. He was determined to offer his assistance to them while he still maintained influence.

While traveling, Aubrey encountered a second British ship which happened to have Mr. Fielding aboard. Aubrey is a gentleman and offers to take him to Mrs. Fielding immediately. Mr. Fielding declines Aubrey's offer. Although Mr. Fielding is polite in his response, it is clear that he has been exposed to the inaccurate rumors circulating about his wife's activities.



Chapter Ten

Chapter Ten Summary

The Surprise was accompanied on this portion of its journey by another ship of the British navy, the Dryad. To the delight of Dr. Maturin, they were both escorted by a pod of dolphins. The two ships were traveling together because the Adriatic and Ionian Seas were known to harbor pirates and traveling together made the journey safer. The Dryad was not as agile as the Surprise, and the Surprise had to slow down accordingly. The slow pace provided Dr. Maturin with time to think about how best to handle the situation in Malta. He knew that once news of Mr. Fielding's safe return was public, Laura would be at risk and the French agents would either take decisive action or flee. Aubrey decided that as soon as he reached shore he would reveal his knowledge and inform both the Admiral and Mr. Wray of his arrangement with Mrs. Fielding. If she could make an appointment with Lesueur and then seek safety, British officers could intercept Lesueur and his accomplices without jeopardizing Laura's safety. This plan would have to happen quickly, though, before the boat carrying Mr. Fielding arrived in Malta. Concurrently, Captain Aubrey turned his thoughts to the unfortunate retirement of his ships.

The Surprise and the Dryad crossed paths with a large navy ship, the Edinburgh. The Edinburgh looked to be in good standing, but its captain, Heneage Dundas, complained of having lost a French privateer he had been chasing all afternoon. After a friendly exchange the Edinburgh sailed on. That night the breezes were strong and in the early hours of the morning Aubrey was awakened by the news that a ship had been sighted. It was the privateer that Edinburgh had lost. The Surprise chased the French ship for a while, then the Dryad seemed to cut it off near the mainland. The French vessel appeared to be trapped between the Surprise and the Dryad, which was favorable for the British, but then the French ship attacked the Dryad. With the help of the Surprise, the Dryad made it to safety, although it was somewhat damaged. The Surprise claimed the privateer as war booty and sailed beside it to bring it home.

The Dryad returned to port before the Surprise, and when Dr. Maturin learned this, his immediate concern was for Mrs. Fielding and their undercover operation. Although it was late, the Doctor implored Mr. Mowett to take him into Valletta at once. Dr. Maturin tried to locate Mr. Wray in the city to request his advice but learned Mr. Wray was in Sicily. The doctor was unsure of whom to trust and his superiors were unavailable to help him. He made his way to Mrs. Fielding's quarters. The courtyard had a new flowerbed but otherwise seemed unchanged. A single light was left on but Laura was not home. It was raining and the doctor used a hidden key to let himself in and wait for Mrs. Fielding. While sitting in the darkness of her home he heard a clicking sound and hid. Someone was picking the lock. Two men entered the room. One was tall and the other short, and they were conversing in French. They were discussing how they had expected her to be home, but that if she did not return soon they would have to send two reliable men in their place. When the men moved into the light of their lantern, Dr.



Maturin recognized both men. One was Lesueur, whom he had expected. The other was Boulay, a man of Sir Hildebrand's administration. They discussed who was appropriate to send to kill her and also discussed business matters, but nothing of interest to Dr. Maturin. Eventually the two left, and not long after Mrs. Fielding came home. She was pleasantly surprised to see Dr. Maturin. She informed him that Ponto had died and been buried in the garden and her maid, Giovanna, had taken leave. Dr. Maturin explained to her that her husband had been found and was returning, but he also told her of the danger she was in. For her safety, Dr. Maturin brought her aboard the Surprise where no one would think to look for her.

While Dr. Maturin was endeavoring to locate Mrs. Fielding, Captain Aubrey reported to his ranking officer. The Admiral already left port, but he left instructions for Aubrey with a man by the name of Fellowes. His next expedition would carry him to Mascara aboard the Surprise where he was instructed to seek out and protect a Mr. Consul Eliot. After this excursion he was ordered to sail to Gibraltar. When Aubrey returned to the Surprise with his new orders he was surprised to find Mrs. Fielding resting in his cabin. Dr. Maturin's decision to bring Laura aboard heightened the crew's belief that Aubrey and she were having an affair. The crew became detached from Aubrey who lamented that it was all so unnecessary as the affair they perceived was non-existent.

The Surprise sailed parallel with the Pollux, another of the British Navy's ships. The sailing was smooth and the crew enjoyed the company of Mrs. Fielding, who provided language and astronomy lessons to anyone interested in learning. Captain Aubrey had always ordered his men to clean the ship every day and their living quarters every night, but with Mrs. Fielding on board he was less strict and the men appreciated their new found freedom. Music was enjoyed every night and the crew was merry. The Surprise headed in towards Zambara Bay. The Pollux followed at a much slower speed and the Surprise took this time to restock on water and clean the decks.

Despite its promise to lag behind on the mission, the Pollux continued to, albeit slowly, progress into the bay. In addition, a Man of War displaying Turkish colors entered the bay, thus further crowding the area. As it approached, the Turkish flag came down and was replaced by the French flag. Simultaneously, the man of war opened fire on the Pollux. The Pollux returned fire and the Surprise turned around to come to Pollux's aid, but there was distance between them. The Pollux's mast split in two and it was severely damaged, but it continued to fire at its transgressor. The Surprise was speeding towards the Pollux to help when a wall of smoke arose and Captain Aubrey knew that the Pollux had ignited in flames. Aubrey then turned his efforts to escaping the bay and the dangerous man of war ship residing in it. Aubrey maneuvered the Surprise through a small channel, and to the surprise of his crew, they escaped unscathed. It appeared that the French government had been expecting them. The Surprise laid its path to Gibraltar, with Captain Aubrey, Dr. Maturin, and Mrs. Fielding safely aboard, each awaiting their return to their prospective spouses on shore.



Chapter Ten Analysis

Dr. Maturin is aware that Mr. Fielding's return will mean that Lesueur and his associates will no longer have leverage over Laura. As a result they may attempt to kill her, so when in port he checked on her often. At one such visit he found that her guardian dog, Ponto, had unexpectedly died, and that her maid left hastily under the pretense of visiting family. After witnessing French spies inside her home, Maturin moved her to safety aboard the Surprise. When the Surprise left dock the next day, Mrs. Fielding was still below decks. The presence of a female made all the men a little more gentle. It seemed as though Aubrey and Maturin would sail away safely as Mrs. Fielding's protectors, but towards the end of their voyage the Surprise was caught in a battle. The French ship that engaged them was disguised as a friendly Turkish vessel. This incident reinforced Maturin's conviction that someone from his own country's government was sabotaging his mission and possibly the war itself. He hoped officials back in Valletta were uncovering Lesueur's identity and ending his service to the French. This ending lacks resolution for all the characters. The author uses this tactic on purpose. All his novels, when taken together, tell a saga and this ending is therefore the beginning of the next book.



Characters

Captain Jack Aubrey

Captain Jack Aubrey is the seasoned captain of two ships, the Surprise and the Worcester. Both were eventually retired from the Navy, but despite its condition and age, Aubrey's favorite sailing vessel was always the Surprise. Aubrey sailed all over the Mediterranean Sea in the Surprise and conducted many strategic operations for the Navy. Despite Aubrey's many voyages and his loyalty to the crown, further promotion in the Navy continued to allude him. This was a constant source of frustration for Aubrey.

Captain Aubrey was married to a woman named Sophie, but they lived apart because his profession required it. Although he longed for a woman's companionship, he was largely faithful to her. Included in the text of the novel is a multi-page letter he wrote to Sophie from his cabin. Upon receiving his pay, Aubrey immediately remits a large sum to her which indicates that he is a good provider. Captain Aubrey is middle aged and enjoys music and the company of his friends. He is a frequent visitor to church and the opera. He reserved modest living quarters at the local hotel of Malta, Searle's. Aubrey also frequented ale houses with his friends Dr. Maturin and Mr. Pullings. Although he found amusement on land, his preferred place to be was on the open ocean.

Dr. Stephen Maturin

Dr. Stephen Maturin was trained as a naval surgeon. He sailed along with Captain Aubrey on his missions to provide care for the crew as required. When the crew were not in need of his services Dr, Maturin amused himself by obtaining local wildlife specimens for observation. He cataloged each one and amassed an expansive collection. He was also employed as a British intelligence officer, although this position was clandestine. Dr. Maturin's heritage is a mixture of Irish and Spanish, and he could pass for additional nationalities as well. He was rather bookish and unassuming in appearance, but once engaged in conversation his intelligence was unmistakable. Dr. Maturin is married to a woman named Diana. Due to the demands of life at sea their relationship was carried out across long distances. He was loyal to her and loved her, contrary to popular belief. In order to keep his disguise and fool the French, Dr. Maturin faked an affair with Mrs. Fielding. Dr. Maturin enjoyed music and played the cello well.

Mrs. Laura Fielding

Mrs. Laura Fielding is a British citizen and the wife of Mr. Fielding, a British Navy officer. Their home was abroad in the city of Valletta on the island of Malta. Mr. Fielding was being held by the French as a prisoner of war. Due to her husband's absence she lived with a large dog, Ponto, who protected her fiercely, and her maid, Giovanna. Mrs. Fielding was a young wife. She was regarded as very pretty by the sailors and locals. She was known to be virtuous and intelligent. Mrs. Fielding was an accomplished



musician and was fluent in Italian. She passed time in the lonely evenings by gathering with friends and playing her piano. In addition to her husband's stipend she earned extra money by offering foreign language classes to British citizens stationed in Malta or just passing through.

The French agent Lesueur took advantage of Laura's love for her husband. Knowing she would do nearly anything to bring him home safely, Lesueur convinces her to seduce Dr. Maturin and work as an informant for the French government. Laura makes an attempt to do so but is overcome with remorse. She admitted the truth to Dr. Maturin who then publicly acted as though they were having an affair to appease Lesueur and protect Laura from retribution. Laura retained her virtue, although it was a common belief that she and Maturin were romantically involved. Laura looks forward to her husband's safe return to her.

Thomas Pullings

Thomas Pullings was a member of Captain Aubrey's crew. He had served as Aubrey's midshipman, master's mate and finally as his first lieutenant. Pullings had recently been promoted to captain status and was now the most junior commander of the British Navy. He was awarded this honor after surviving a gruesome battle aboard Aubrey's ship, the *Surprise*. Captain Aubrey was genuinely happy for his friend's promotion, but was reminded that he had been denied a similar promotion of status. Therefore he attempted to celebrate with Pullings, but had difficulty doing so. Pullings' promotion also meant that Captain Aubrey would require a new first lieutenant.

Mr. Andrew Wray

Mr. Andrew Wray held the title of Acting Second Secretary in the British Navy. Prior to this position Mr. Wray worked for the treasury and is well respected there. He was not a man of the sea, but this temporary job required no knowledge of shipping. His purpose was to discover the source of corruption in the British government. Multiple missions had been surprisingly unsuccessful and the British government suspected treason. It was unknown to his superiors, but it was Mr. Wray who is leaking information. He is helping the French agent Lesueur and providing the French with information to prepare for each of Britain's attacks.

Mr. Hairabedian

Mr. Hairabedian was the interpreter sent on the *Dromedary* to help Captain Aubrey communicate with other languages, specifically Turkish. Mr. Hairabedian may have been an excellent interpreter and came with recommendations, but he was eccentric. At one point Captain Aubrey had to stop sailing because Hairabedian jumped off the deck to take a swim. Before he could climb aboard he was mauled by sharks and died.



Andre Lesueur

Andre Lesueur was an intelligence officer. He was employed by the French government and working covertly in Malta. It is Lesueur who approached Mrs. Fielding and invented a story about her husband's health to manipulate her into cooperating with the French. Lesueur was a rather small man and unimpressive looking. He has a pale complexion and walks with stooped shoulders. One character estimated that he appeared to be about forty-five years old.

Mr. Fielding

Mr. Fielding was a British citizen and prisoner of war. He had been imprisoned in a French prison named Bitche and managed to escape along with two other inmates. The return trip through the mountains on foot was challenging and both of his peers eventually died. Mr. Fielding was the only one to complete the journey. His trip culminated on the coast of the Adriatic Sea where he was found by the British ship, the Nymph. Mr. Fielding's wife, Laura, cooperated with French operatives and faked an affair with Dr. Maturin in an effort to ensure her husband's safety.

Admiral Hartley

Admiral Hartley had been the captain under which Jack Aubrey served until he was also promoted to captain status. Captain Aubrey had fond memories of Admiral Hartley. Aubrey visited with Hartley but was saddened to see how his health had declined since their last meeting.

Sir Francis Ives

Sir Francis Ives was the Commander-in-Chief for the British navy. Captain Aubrey's missions were a result of orders from Ives.

Sir Joseph Blaine

The Chief of Naval Intelligence for Britain was Sir Joseph Blaine. He provided Dr. Maturin with his directions with regards to intelligence operations.

Willilam Mowett

Following Mr. Pullings promotion, Mr. William Mowett became first lieutenant aboard Captain Aubrey's ship, the Surprise.



Objects/Places

Halley Diving Bell

Dr. Maturin purchased the Halley Diving Bell and brought it along with him on many of Captain Aubrey's voyages. The bell was large enough to comfortably accommodate two people. Provided that an additional person was above the surface of the water flushing in fresh air, those below had enough oxygen to explore the ocean for depths up to ten fathoms.

Chelengk

A chelengk is a decorative Turkish hat often embellished extravagantly. During his travels Captain Aubrey obtained a chelengk covered in diamonds. The chelengk made an impression when he entered Turkish villages. Additionally, he hoped to bring its diamonds home to his wife but it was unfortunately lost in the desert.

The Surprise

The Surprise was the name of Captain Aubrey's favorite ship under his command.

The Worcester

The Worcester was the second ship under Captain Aubrey's command.

Malta

Malta is the country in which much of the novel is set. The opening scene occurs in Malta.

Valletta

Valletta is the city in Malta where the Surprise and the Worcester are docked. It is also the city where Mrs. Fielding resides.

British Forces

Although none of the action in this novel occurs on British soil, it is the war between Britain and France that determines the characters' activity. Captain Aubrey, his crew, Dr. Maturin, Mr. Martin, and Mr. and Mrs. Fielding are all British citizens.



French Forces

Although none of the action in this novel occurs on French soil, it is the war between Britain and France that determines the characters' activity. Lesueur is a French spy, and Mr. Wray is an accomplice to the French forces.

The Dromedary

The Dromedary is the British ship that Captain Aubrey and his crew sail upon to reach the desert for their overland excursion.

Desert

Captain Aubrey and his crew marched across an unnamed desert on a mission. It was a challenging experience.

Mediterranean Sea

Circa 1800 the Mediterranean Sea encompassed the Adriatic and Ionian Seas and was attached to the Red Sea via the Suez. It was in these waters that Captain Aubrey and his crew sailed.

The Niobe

The Niobe was the ship that Captain Aubrey and his crew boarded after their march across the desert. They utilized it for their mission, then returned to port, marched across the desert in reverse direction and boarded the Dromedary (this time bound for home).

The Nymphe

The Nymphe was a ship of the British Navy. It carried Mr. Fielding home following his escape from the French.

The Blackwater

Captain Aubrey was promised the post of captain on the Blackwater following the retirement of his own ships, but that promotion never transpired.

Piano

Mrs. Fielding was an accomplished musician. She played the piano and taught foreign language classes.



Themes

Loyalty

Loyalty is a dominating theme in Patrick O'Brian's novel, *TREASON'S HARBOUR*. All three main characters provide examples of loyalty. Captain Aubrey is a loyal Navy Captain and frustrated by his lack of promotion to the Navy's upper ranks but he continues to try his best. He is always eager to set sail into battle again, knowing that each voyage is another chance to prove himself. Despite his frustration he remained loyal to those around him. When his first lieutenant was promoted to captain Aubrey rejoiced with him. Aubrey even personally trained two of his crew whom he deemed worthy of lieutenant rank. Aubrey wanted to see them have rewarding careers, and, assuming that he may never receive his promotion, Aubrey encouraged them to make their own professional progress. Captain Aubrey's career required him to be separated from his wife, Sophie, for long stretches of time. He sent home his salary and continued to provide for her. Aubrey's close friend, Dr. Stephen Maturin, was in a similar predicament. As a naval surgeon he was also away from his wife, Diana, for long periods of time, yet he remained loyal to her. At one point in the novel Mrs. Fielding attempted to seduce Dr. Maturin but he remained loyal to his marriage with Diana. He was also secretly an intelligence officer for Britain which further supports his sense of loyalty. Lastly, Mrs. Fielding exhibited loyalty. Although she did attempt to seduce Dr. Maturin, her reasons were altruistic. Laura Fielding's husband, Mr. Fielding, was being held as a prisoner of war. She was coerced into cooperating with the French who promised her husband's safety in return for her services. She was unable to be disloyal to her marriage and her country, however, and Dr. Maturin was not easily seduced so the two only became friends.

Treason

Treason is an integral theme in this piece of literature. It is so vital that it is listed in the title, *TREASON'S HARBOUR*. At the time of the novel, Britain and France were at war and the major characters could be found on the Mediterranean island of Malta. Malta was an ally to Britain, and British officials, troops, and citizens expected to be welcomed. On the surface the city seemed to be a safe place; however, it became clear to the Navy that its attacks were being thwarted. They began to feel as though the French were prepared for their arrival. Such an occurrence indicated the presence of spies or, worse, a traitor among the British government. Both turned out to be present. Mr. Wray, the British Navy's Acting Second Secretary, was aiding the French. He met secretly with a French spy on the island, Andre Lesueur, and provided him with relevant and damaging information with regards to Britain's plans. In response, Britain placed trusted intelligence officers, including Dr. Stephen Maturin, in Malta. Lesueur attempted to coerce a British citizen named Mrs. Fielding into helping the French government. Fortunately she was aided by a British intelligence officer who was suspicious of



Lesueur 's activities. Ultimately, Mrs. Fielding was not guilty of treason, although she came perilously close to it.

Culture

Multiple examples of culture were exhibited in TREASON'S HARBOUR. The country of Malta was said to be cosmopolitan. As a friendly port city, Valletta received visitors of many cultures, many of whom are British officials and their families. The English practiced Christianity and led privileged lives and had homes, maids, and musical instruments. Their children had tutors for their education. Turkish visitors were also welcomed. The Turkish visitors practiced Islam. As Muslims they celebrated different holidays from their Christian friends and had different rituals surrounding meals as well. At one point the Turks were celebrating Ramadan when the British officers wanted to begin the march across the desert. Although allies, the Turks were unable to work during this special holiday which required its believers to quiet and fasting. The two cultures were friendly and had mutual respect. The main character, British Captain Jack Aubrey, ordered his crew to create cushions from his ship's extra sail cloth. Aubrey entertained his Turkish friends on the floor as was their custom. The two shared in the hookah pipe and offered reciprocal good will.

Style

Point of View

Patrick O'Brian's novel, *TREASON'S HARBOUR*, is the ninth novel in a series. Like all its counterparts, it is a work of fiction. The author was careful to be geographically correct. Most of the events occur around ports near the Mediterranean Sea. By cross-referencing a map it is easy to follow the characters' travels. The author's accuracy is important to note and makes his books believable. This has the added effect of transporting the reader back in time to the British and French empires as they existed circa 1800.

TREASON'S HARBOUR is written from the third person point of view. Events are described as having occurred to the characters, both in the present and occasionally through a character's retelling of an event from the past. The pronouns he, she, it, and they are used often. The pronoun I is seldom used, but the reader can find it utilized during the characters' conversations.

Setting

The year was circa 1800 and Britain was at war with the French empire. At the beginning of the novel Captain Aubrey's favorite ship, the *Surprise*, was at rest on land in the city of Valletta. Valletta was located on the Mediterranean island of Malta. While the boat was being repaired its captain and crew passed time together at the local hotel and ale houses. They reported the weather to be enjoyable and the scenery to be beautiful. The city was a commercial port. It bustled with business and attracted a cosmopolitan crowd. One of the main characters, Mrs. Laura Fielding, resided in Malta. Her home boasted a lovely patio where she hosted musical evenings. The patio had a central lemon tree from which her guests enjoyed fresh lemonade. Malta was a British ally, so British agencies were welcome. The other two main characters, Captain Aubrey and Dr. Maturin, both British citizens, repeatedly returned to the friendly port in between their missions for the British Navy. When not in Malta the crew was generally out to sea. Captain Aubrey commanded large ships for the Navy. The ships were referred to by the number of cannons they carried; for example, the *Worcester* was a seventy-four gun ship. The boats were expansive and could have upwards of twenty different sails. Each sail required designated sailors. Captain Aubrey and his crew sailed through the Adriatic and Ionian seas as well as traversed a desert on foot. They also visit Suez, Zambra, Santa Maura, and Mubara. Although the action in the novel results from the war between Britain and France, none of the characters actually visited Britain or France during this book.



Language and Meaning

TREASON'S HARBOUR was not a particularly challenging book as far as language is concerned. The language used is straight-forward or was at least meaning easily discernible by context. It did include abundant nautical terminology such as aft, starboard, cabin, etc., which may pose a problem for a reader not accustomed to the sea. The ships on which the characters sailed were exceedingly large. Even for someone accustomed to sailing, such enormous vessels have their own set of terms. Each sailor was assigned a particular sail to attend to, and a ship could have twenty or more sails. The sailors were defined by their association to a sail. For example, a sailor could be a midshipman or a topsailor. The author included a diagram for reference. A reader would not lose any understanding of events by not continuously cross-referencing the diagram. Instead, when one comes across such a title, one might want to try processing it the same way one would the job descriptions of captain, merchant, or janitor. As is exemplified by the title, all words ending in "or" are spelled with the alternative "our". The title, TREASON'S HARBOUR, is a reflection of how the port city, Valletta, is infiltrated with enemy spies and possibly even British citizens guilty of treason.

Structure

Patrick O'Brian's novel, TREASON'S HARBOUR, is a work of fiction. In its paperback 1992 edition, published by Norton Publishers, it is three hundred and thirty-four pages long. The book is divided into ten chapters of uneven length. On average each chapter was approximately thirty pages long. It does not include a prologue, epilogue, or author's note. TREASON'S HARBOUR is the ninth book in a series of twenty similar books. The book can be read entirely by itself or with its counterparts. It ends after a battle but does not truly come to a resolution. The characters are sailing towards Gibraltar, but the reader doesn't learn whether or not they arrive safely. It makes sense to assume that a true resolution would only be found at the end of the final book in the series.



Quotes

"Yet, on the other hand, all these gentlemen were captains without ships, a mumchance, melancholy class in general and even more so at this time, when the long, long war seemed to be working up to its climax, when competition was even stronger than before, and when distinction and worthwhile appointments, to say nothing of prize-money and promotion, depended on having a sea-going command." Chapter one, page 7

"He is a naval surgeon, and a very clever one, they say; but he is also an intelligence agent." Chapter one, page 16

"Mrs. Fielding was well placed for the gathering of intelligence: not only was she very widely received, but to eke out her minute income she gave Italian lessons to officers' wives and daughters and sometimes to officers themselves, and this brought her acquainted with a good many pieces of more or less confidential information, each in itself trifling enough, but each helping to build up a valuable picture of the situation." Chapter one, page 17

"Malta was a gossiping place, and the news of Captain Aubrey's liaison with Mrs. Fielding soon spread through Valletta and even beyond, to the outlying villas where the more settled service people lived." Chapter two, page 39

"Then it is clear that Sir Blaine has not been open with you." Chapter two, page 61

"But a deep sadness remained, not easily driven away by company or even by music; a sadness accompanied by a determination to live hearty while yet he could." Chapter three, page 63

"I have the impression that the French are as well installed here in Malta as we were in Toulon in 1803: no movement of ships or troops or munitions but we knew within four and twenty hours." Chapter three, page 75

"On the other hand, I shall be interested to hear what he has to say about Graham's Andre Lesueur." Chapter four, page 97

"Otherwise nothing but an infinity of sand, pale sand, the Desert of Sin." Chapter four, page 142

"Now that this somewhat remote and hypothetical scheme had more nearly become a possibility, he longed for its success with his whole being." Chapter five, page 153

"As he moved across the deck the gale thrust him from behind, almost as strong as it had ever been, and almost as hot and unbreathable as the noonday blast." Chapter six, page 184



"The sherbet came, frosted with the cold, and having drunk a voluptuous pint Stephen said 'Well, now, it appears that our intelligence was right about the galley's cargo but mistaken about its time of departure.'" Chapter seven, page 214

"Jack Aubrey came aboard the Commander-in-Chief ten minutes after the Dromedary picked up her moorings, his official letter in hand." Chapter eight, page 227

"As Wray had predicted, he and Maturin met again aboard the flagship, where it was agreed that Hairabedian was certainly a French agent and that for obvious reasons his friends or colleagues in Valletta had arranged for the stealing of his papers." Chapter eight, page 254

"It was indeed a very heavy blow, and when Jack woke in the morning and the recollection came flooding into his mind, the brilliant day darkened." Chapter nine, page 263

"By way of comfort he observed that the life of the service was one of continual separation, one in which ships' companies continually broke up." Chapter ten, page 292



Topics for Discussion

Describe the significance of Ponto with regards to Mrs. Fielding.

Trace a minimum of two of the Surprise's journeys.

Describe Dr. Maturin's character.

Explain Captain Aubrey's attachment to his ships.

Describe life in the British Navy from both the perspective of a captain and a midshipman.

Outline the politics of the time that underscore events in the novel.

Describe Mrs. Fielding's relationship with the following people: Aubrey, Maturin, Mr. Fielding, and Lesueur.

Would you consider Captain Aubrey to be a loyal man? Why or why not?