

HOME READING

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Patrick O'Brian

**MASTER  
&  
COMMANDER**

# I. APPRAISAL

The story begins in Port Mahon in year 1800. Jack Aubrey is made captain of the *Sophie* just after he first met Stephen Maturin. At first they don't like each other but their mutual love of music brings them together. Despite their very different natures they do have more than a little in common: both are broke, both are out of work, and both are in need of an opportunity. Aubrey induces Maturin to ship as his surgeon.

At first assigned the lowly duty of convoying merchant ships, the *Sophie* sails east from Minorca with a dozen merchant ships to Cagliari, a fortified seaport on the southern coast of Sardinia. From Cagliari she escorts another convoy of merchant ships north to Leghorn (Livorno), a major Tuscan seaport, which is neutral and open to ships of all nations. In the Genoa roads, Aubrey gets his break when Lord Keith, Admiral of the Blue and commander in chief in the Mediterranean, orders the *Sophie* to cruise the French and Spanish coasts down to Cape Nao to menace their commercial ports and vessels. In short order Aubrey takes full advantage of this command and makes his overachieving ship an infamous nuisance to the enemy.

Spanish merchants convince their government to send the ship *Cacafuego* after Aubrey. But he fools the bigger ship by pretending to be a Danish brig with a plague-ridden crew. The deception is so successful that the smaller ship might have seized the opportunity to attack her predator, but the captain refuses to take this perhaps morally unfair advantage.

Following a return to Port Mahon and an errand to Sir Sydney Smith's squadron off Alexandria, Egypt, the *Sophie* sails back to Minorca and then is allowed another cruise. She sails to Barcelona, Spain, once again playing cat and mouse with the merchant vessels on the busy Spanish coast. Early one morning the *Sophie* sails past the mouth of the Llobregat River, which flows southeast from the Pyrenees Mountains and enters the sea three miles south of Barcelona, when she again meets the *Cacafuego*.

Following an all-too-brief refit in Port Mahon, the *Sophie* is ordered away again, this time for Malta, to be refitted more fully, and then, regrettably, to Gibraltar with the mail. In his anger at having the *Sophie's* cruise cut short and for other abuses from Admiral Harte at Port Mahon, Aubrey gives this assignment a rather liberal interpretation. A nighttime shore attack against three Spanish coasting vessels off the coast of Spain results in an encounter with a formidable French squadron - including the ships *Formidable*, *Indomptable*, *Desaix*, and *Muiron* - under Rear Admiral Linois.

At the conclusion of Master and Commander, Aubrey witnesses two great battles from different sides of Bay Algeciras. In the first - when an English squadron under the nonfictional Admiral James Saumarez sails into the bay and attacks the French squadron and batteries - Aubrey views the encounter from a somewhat disadvantageous point of view on the west side of the bay - that is to say, in Algeciras. With Maturin, Aubrey watches the second action, which occurs in the Strait of Gibraltar, from the eastern side of the bay, high atop the Rock of Gibraltar.

## II. MAIN CHARACTERS

### **JACK AUBREY**

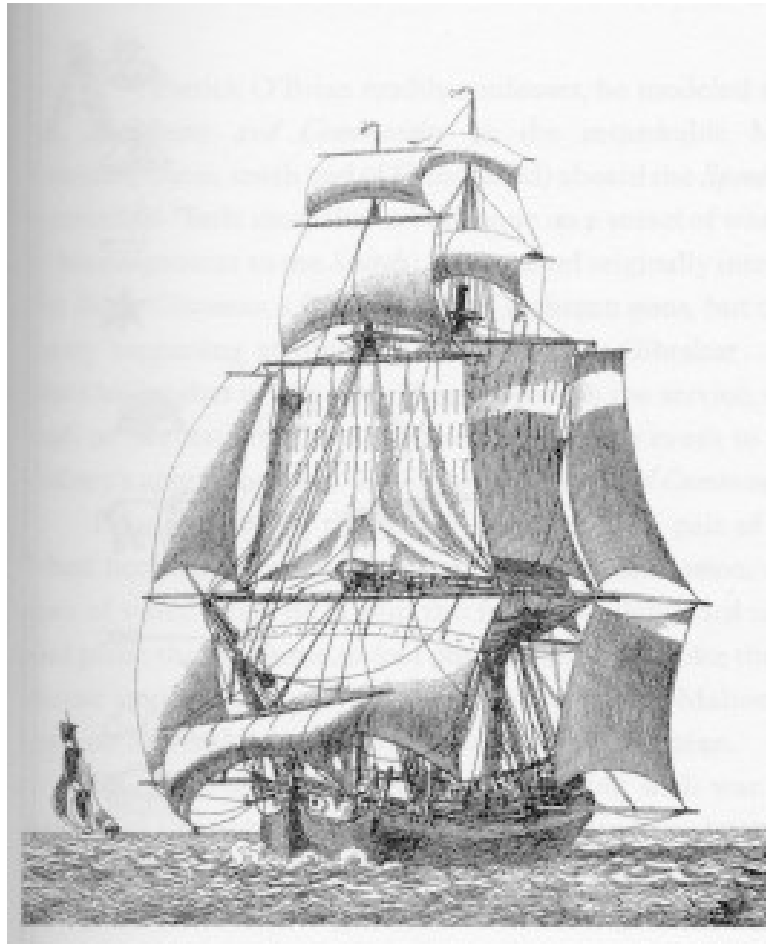
He was appointed to be the master and commander of the sloop *Sophie*. Before he set sail he met Stephen Maturin and they became great friends. Jack invited Stephen to be ship's surgeon and so Stephen joined the crew.

Jack is middle-aged tall man with bright blue eyes. He has great interest in music and he plays fiddle from time to time. He is very ambitious and impatient of any restraint.

### **STEPHEN MATURIN**

Stephen is small and white-faced Irishman. He had been a member of the *United Irishmen*, a secret society, calling for the emancipation of Presbyterians, dissenters and Catholics. But their rising had been put down and many had been betrayed and killed.

Stephen is a middle-sized spare man about forty years old. He has a hooked nose, grey eyes and a large mole near his mouth. He shares Jack's passion for music - he plays 'cello. He became surgeon on sloop *Sophie* after he met Jack.



### III. EXTRACT WITH EXPLANATION

The Spanish bowman was about to hook on when Stephen, speaking a Scandinavian but instantly comprehensible Spanish, called out, "Have you a surgeon that understands the plague aboard your ship?"

The bowman lowered his hook. The officer said, "Why?"

"Some of our men were taken poorly at Algiers, and we are afraid. We cannot tell what it is."

"Back water," said the Spanish officer to his man. "Where did you say you had touched?"

"Algiers, Alger, Argel: it was there the men went ashore. Pray what is the plague like? Swellings? Buboos? Will you come and look at them? Pray, sir, take this rope."

"Back water," said the officer again. "And they went ashore at Algiers?"

"Yes. Will you send your surgeon?"

"No. Poor people, God and His Mother preserve you."

"May we come for medicines? Pray let me come into your boat."

"No," said the officer, crossing himself. "No, no. Keep off, or we shall fire into you. Keep out to sea - the sea will cure them. God be with you,

poor people. And a happy voyage to you.” He could be seen ordering the bowman to throw the boathook into the sea, and the launch pulled back fast to the bright-red xebec.

They were within very easy hailing distance now, and a voice from the frigate called out some words in Danish; Pram replied; and then a tall thin figure on the quarter-deck, obviously the captain, asked, had they seen an English sloop-of-war, a brig?

“No,” they said; and as the vessels began to draw away from one another Jack whispered, “Ask her name.”

“*Cacafuego*,” came the answer over the widening lane of sea. “A happy voyage.”

“A happy voyage to you.”

This is how they fooled their enemies, the ship *Cacafuego*, which was persuading them. They painted *Sophie* and changed her appearance so she couldn't be recognised. When *Cacafuego* approached they were pretending to be a Danish brig with plague-ridden crew. Xebec left them without any suspicion.

## IV. NEW WORDS

No .	WORD	PHRASE	EXPLANATION	TRANSLATION
1	HIPPED	“You are looking very hipped...”	sad	potrt
2	TO CURTSEY	She curtseyed and smiled.	bending the knees; gesture of respect	prikloniti se
3	WIG	He was wearing a wig, a gizzled wig...	head-covering of false hair	lasulja
4	TEDIOUS	...during this tedious work...	lengthy	dolgotrajen

5	TANNED	His face was deeply tanned...	sunburnt	ogorel
6	SASH	...English houses with sash windows...	frame (of a window)	okvir
7	TO PAD	...as they paded by...	to walk	pešaciti
8	LARK	...it was enough to make any man's heart rise like a lark...	kind of a small songbird	škrjanec
9	TO CRANE	Jack craned with one foot on the parapet...	to hesitate	omahovati
10	PARAPET	Jack craned with one foot on the parapet...	fence	ograja
11	TO ASTONISH	"You astonish me."	to surprise	presenetiti
12	DEPRECATING	...spreading his hands in a deprecating gesture.	disapproval, disapprobative	neodobrovajoc , odklonilen
13	CLERK	"...if you have no one else in mind for your clerk..."	officer in charge of records	uradnik
14	BRIG	"I had been told the brig was stripped."	two-masted ship with square sails	vrsta dvojambornice
15	PURSER	...he is well enough for a purser.	officer responsible for a ship's accounts and stores	ladijski ekonom
16	COMMISSION	...he would not have to pick up his commission,...	authority	pooblastilo
17	TO RATTLE	...the waterman rattled his boathook.	to make short, sharp sounds	rožljati
18	BOSUN	...calss of the bosun and his mates...	boatswain; senior seaman who controls the work of of other seamen	poveljnik palube
19	DUNNAGE	...send a boat for my chest and dunnage.	cargo, shipment	ladijski tovor
20	TO POSE	There you pose me.	to confuse	zbegati
21	SANGUINE	...his advisers had	fiery	ognjevit

		been altogether too sanguine.		
22	ACERBITY	...he said with a touch of acerbity.	bitterness	trpkost
23	BLUNDER	...what a sad blunder.	mistake	zmota
24	DOUBLOONS	Doubloons, they lie in a soft leather sacks...	Spanish gold coin (not in use anymore)	španski zlatnik
25	BANTERING	He had spoken in a bantering tone...	teasing (but in a good way)	šaljiv
26	TO STRAIN	...never strain at gnats of that kind. (=biti dlakocepski)	to hold tightly, squeeze	pritiskati
27	GNATS	...never strain at gnats of that kind. (=biti dlakocepski)	small two-winged fly that stings	mušica
28	CANDOUR	But you speak to me in such candour...	quality of saying freely what one thinks	iskrenost
29	TRIFLE	...we must not let trifles stand in the way...	thing of little value or importance	malenkost
30	WARRANT	A warrant from the Navy Office you must have...	commission, authority	pooblastilo
31	DELIBERATELY	"No," said Stephen deliberately.	carefully, cautious, with consideration	pazljivo, premišljeno
32	ACUITY	...his face had an almost forbidding acuity.	sharpness	ostrina
33	WHARF	Any sign of life on the wharf?	port	pristanišče
34	TO RIG	We must rig a tube!	prepare, supply	opremiti
35	TUBE	We must rig a tube!	long hollow cylinder of metal	cev
36	DRAFT	A draft for us?	plan, outline	nacrt
37	TO CRAM	Can I cram him aboard?	to ship, to load	vkrcati
38	TO TROLL	...he will troll you out.	to seduce	zvabiti
39	TO ANOINT	...I forgot to anoint them.	apply oil or ointment to	namazati
40	TO SLING	...half of the men had the whole of the available space	to hang	obesiti

		to sling their hammocks.		
41	HAMMOCK	...half of the men had the whole of the available space to sling their hammocks.	hanging bed of canvas	viseca mreža
42	TALLYMAN	How is the tallyman?	merchant	trgovec
43	DIRK	Where is your dirk?	dagger	bodalo
44	INANITION	He is dying of inanition...	exhaustion	izcrpanost
45	HARE LIP	He has a hare lip.	divided upper lip	ajcja ustnica
46	CROW	...he was tired of being a white crow...	large, black bird with harsh cry	vrana
47	LOBLOLLY BOY	...he shall be my loblolly boy...	boy who helps ship's surgeon	pomočnik ladijskega zdravnika
48	REMORA	A remora!	kind of a fish that sticks on other, bigger fish	vrsta ribe, ki se prilepi na druge, večje ribe
49	VEXATION	And he was too much of a philosopher to feel much vexation...	unpleasantness	neprijetnost
50	TO VEER	...the wind veered...	to turn	obracati se
51	ODIOUS	...an odious man...	obnoxious	zoprn
52	HAZE	...the thinning haze unveiled five vessels...	fog, mist	meglina
53	OBLIGED	...I am much obliged to you...	grateful, thankful	biti hvaležen
54	TO PLY	She is always plying up and down the coast...	to sail	pluti
55	SPURT	...he said with the spurt of pride.	sudden burst	nenaden izbruh
56	GRUNT	...he heard the grunt...	grumbling, growling	godrnjanje
57	PERTINACIOUSLY	The grey-haired captain fired on pertinaciously...	persistently, steadily	vztrajno
58	ASP	...and what did I see? My asp drained!	kind of a snake	gad
59	DRAINED	...and what did I	dried	posušen



		see? My asp drained!		
60	EMETIC	Must he not have an emetic?	medicine causing a person to vomit	blijuvalo
61	VULTURE	A bearded vulture!	kind of a bird	jastreb
62	HULL	Then it will certainly protect our hull.	body of a ship	ladijski trup
63	PORTLY	Besides, I am not portly.	stout, round and fat	zajeten
64	REPROACH	They all looked at Stephen with some reproach...	reprehension	ocitek
65	GENTEEL	The captain has an uncommon genteel figgar.	polite, well-mannered	uglajen
66	TO CRINKLE	His face crinkled up...	to wrinkle	gubati se
67	FORT	The fort was very close.	stronghold	utrdba
68	TO SPIKE	Spike up those guns!	to fix	pritrditi
69	HIDEOUSLY	His face was hideously seared and bruised...	disgustfully	ostudno
70	SEARED	His face was hideously seared and bruised...	burnt	osmojen
71	BRIUSED	His face was hideously seared and bruised...	beaten	potolcen
72	LEE	...and under Sophie's lee lay three prizes...	shelter	zavetrje
73	PRIZE	...and under Sophie's lee lay three prizes...	plunder	vojni plen
74	BALD	Pretty bald, ain't it?	poor	boren, reven
75	CRAYFISH	...avoid the rocks where the crayfish live.	lobster	jastog
76	MUTINY	Mutinies always happen...	rebellion, revolt	upor
77	LAX	...where the discipline is too lax...	bad	slab
78	CASK	...the casks are full...	barrel	sod
79	SCUT	...he saw white	rabbit's tail	zajcji repek

		scuts bobbing away...		
80	TO BOB	...he saw white scuts bobbing away...	to leap, to hop	poskakovati
81	NIBBLING	...he could hear their quick nibbling in the thyme...	tiny biting	grizljanje
82	THYME	...he could hear their quick nibbling in the thyme...	kind of a plant with aromatic leaves	timijan
83	TO PURGE	I spend half my time purging them...	to clean	cistiti
84	SULLEN	...who was quite sullen at times...	dull, in a bad mood	mrk, cemeran
85	TO DART	He darted into his cabin.	to haste	planiti
86	OWL	...there might be owles.	kind of a night-flying bird	sova
87	RAMBLING	...this rambling about on a hostile shore.	roaming, roving	potepanje
88	FATIGUE	...Jack was shattered with with fatigue...	tiredness	utrujenost
89	FRITTERED	It was not frittered away...	wasted	zapravljn
90	WENCH	...he loved a wench...	young girl, prostitute	razuzdanka
91	COPIOUS	You were in a very copious flow of spirits...	plentiful	obiln, ploden
92	ERRAND	We are to run an errand to Sir Sidney Smith's squadron...	appointment, business	opravek
93	SQUADRON	We are to run an errand to Sir Sidney Smith's squadron...	group of four ships with special task or appointment	eskadra; skupina ladij s posebo nalogo
94	RENCOUNTER	Rencounters are most uncommon in England.	fight	dvoboj
95	EVASIVE	...but they give evasive answers...	ambiguous	dvoumen
96	NEAT	A quart of of neat rum?	pure	nerazredcen
97	TO RUMMAGE	Rummage her cabin...	to search	preiskati
98	FATIGUING	A fatiguing day.	tiresome	utrudljiv

99	ANTINOMIAN	You are antinomian.	amazing	osupljiv
10 0	SHABBY	...and his shabby dress..	worn out	oguljen