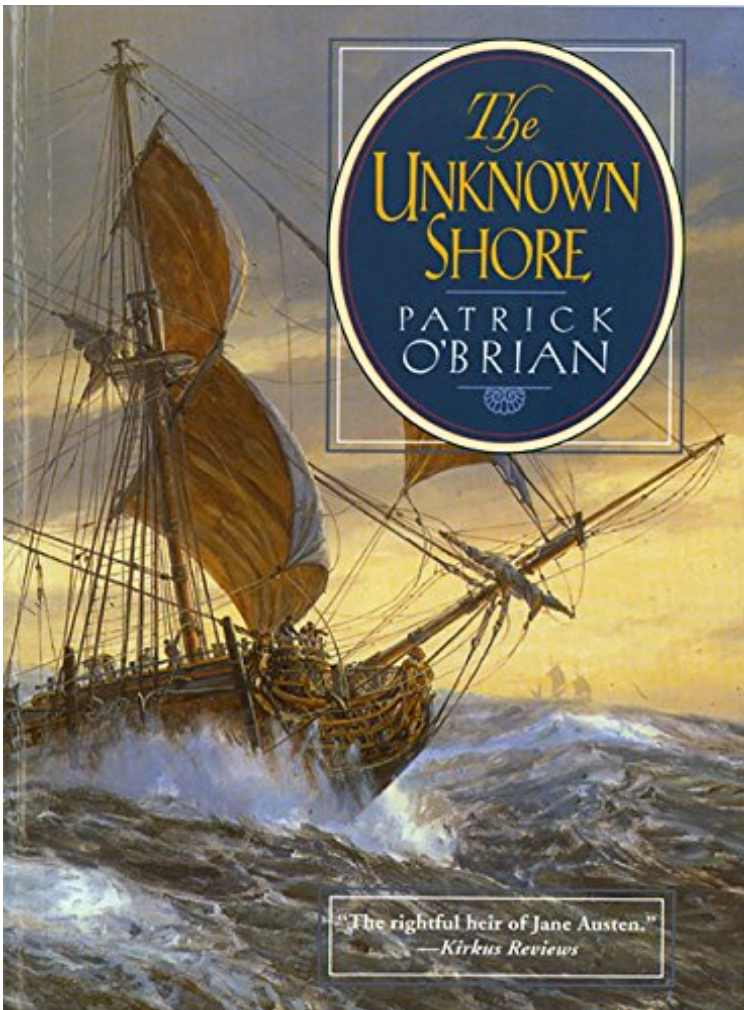


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The Unknown Shore



Par Patrick O'Brian
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAn immediate precursor to Patrick O'Brian's acclaimed Aubrey/Maturin series, displaying all the splendid prose and attention to detail that O'Brian's readers expect.Patrick O'Brian's first novel about the sea, The Golden Ocean, took inspiration from Commodore George Anson's fateful circumnavigation of the globe in 1740. In The Unknown Shore, O'Brian returns to this rich source and mines it brilliantly for another, quite different tale of exploration and adventure.The Wager was parted from Anson's squadron in the fierce storms off Cape Horn and struggled alone up the coast of Chile until she was driven against the rocks and sank. The survivors were soon involved in trouble of every kind. A surplus of rum, a disappearing stock of food, and a hard, detested captain soon drove them into drunkenness, mutiny, and bloodshed. After many months of privation, a handful of men made their way northward under the guidance of a band of Indians, at last finding safety in Valparaiso.This saga of survival is the background to the adventures of two young men aboard the Wager: midshipman Jack Byron and his friend Tobias Barrow, an alarmingly naive surgeon's mate. Patrick O'Brian's many devoted readers will take particular interest in

this story, as Jack and Toby form a kind of blueprint for Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin, the famed heroes of the great Aubrey/Maturin series to come. *The Unknown Shore*, a sort-of sequel to *The Golden Ocean*, is a fascinating blue-print for the Aubrey-Maturin series. We follow Jack Byron and Tobias Barrow, two unlikely neighbors and fast friends in whom we catch glimpses of the heroes of the epic series to come. They set off to sea in 1740 as part of Commodore Anson's fleet to circumnavigate the globe. Byron, a romantic, forceful lad, signs on as a midshipman; Barrow, a strangely educated, scientifically brilliant boy, is running away from his father and wins a commission as a surgeon's mate. Set up in the *Wager*, which is parted from Anson's squadron and sinks somewhere along the desolate coast of Chile, Byron and Barrow are left to struggle for survival by wits alone, facing mutiny, famine, indifferent natives and lingering infighting. A fully realized hint of the fictional magic to come. From Publishers Weekly

O'Brian's loyal following for the Aubrey/Maturin historical nautical adventure novels (*The Wine-Dark Sea*, etc.) has swelled from a cult to a legion of readers; thus there are many who will welcome this predecessor to that well-received series. Originally published in England in 1959 and based on British Commodore Anson's 1740 circumnavigation of the world (as was O'Brian's *The Golden Ocean*), this is the story of HMS *Wager*, a ship separated from Anson's squadron while sailing around Cape Horn. The *Wager* is shipwrecked off Patagonia, and the largest part of the narrative details the hardships of the diminishing band of survivors on that inhospitable shore. Daily shipboard routine, smoky 1740 London and the Indian community in Chile are all finely detailed.

What will set devotees of O'Brian's better-known books positively aquiver, though, are the two chief characters: Jack Byron, an enthusiastic midshipman with "gaudy" family connections, and his best boyhood friend, Tobias Barrow, an unworldly budding doctor and naturalist. Their later counterparts are, of course, Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin, and O'Brian loyalists will have a field day comparing the four characters. Though this novel isn't quite as polished or stylish as the author's later work, it's a most honorable ancestor.

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