



## Under Enemy Colors

*Sean Thomas Russell*

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**In the tradition of Jack Aubrey and Horatio Hornblower comes a new hero of the high seas-- Charles Hayden, lieutenant of the *Themis*.**

Around the time of the French Revolution, Charles Saunders Hayden is one of Britain's most able naval officers, an ambitious young lieutenant born to an English father and a French mother. But despite his abilities and his unshakable loyalty to Britain, Hayden's career is damned by his "mixed" heritage and lack of connections... which is how he finds himself assigned to the *Themis*, a frigate under the command of Captain Josiah Hart-- an officer reviled by his crew for both his brutality toward his men and his faint-heartedness in battle.

As the *Themis* takes to sea in search of French warships, Hayden immediately senses the unrest of the crew. Even by the rough standards of seafaring, the *Themis* is a cruel and desperate place. Men have died under mysterious circumstances, and warring factions among the sailors put the ship at risk, just as the French press their attack. Caught between his superior and a crew pushed toward mutiny, Hayden finds himself in the middle of a revolution at sea, torn between honor and duty, as the magnificent British navy engages the French in a centuries-old struggle for power.

## Under Enemy Colors Details

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Author : Sean Thomas Russell

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## From Reader Review Under Enemy Colors for online ebook

### David Hull says

Brilliant! While all the seafaring, nautical terms and lore might normally be off-putting to an inveterate 'land-lubber' like myself, the story, characters, action, and intrigue make these nautical references all the more attractive. Apart from being a simply great read it offers much good counsel in terms of management and leadership skills. I'm looking forward to Russell's next novel - 'A Battle Won', already on my bookshelf!

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### Estelle says

3.5 stars

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### Erik says

A decade after the passing of Patrick O'Brian, the preeminent Napoleonic-era British naval novelists and successor of C. S. Forester, naval fiction lovers have to scour this slowly growing genre for the next great thing. For my part I have found Julian Stockwin's Thomas Kydd series to fit the bill. But as my fellow Kydd-fans and I have to wait about a year or so between until the next book in the series comes out – a lifetime, if you ask me – I believe I have found another nascent series that looks promising.

Under Enemy Colors is the first book by Russell that focuses its lens on Charles Hayden -- a half-English, half-French officer in His Majesty's Royal Navy – who is assigned first lieutenant to the HMS Themis as a last ditch effort to save his career from the growing anti-French sentiment in England. (Hayden being the son of a Frenchwoman and all.) The catch? Hayden is placed under orders to report back secretly to a high-ranking Naval Secretary about the growing unrest aboard the Themis. What unfolds is a tale of tyranny and madness on the part of Captain Hart, as well as simmering mutinous sentiment on behalf of a growing number of its crew. And, as these things go, our hero is caught in the balance.

Russell's strength as a writer lay not just in his ability to create an original tale – without borrowing too liberally from his literary predecessors (Forester, O'Brian, and Stockwin) – but also in ability to pace his plot in a page-turning manner. His narrative never simmers, but rather ends in a glorious and satisfying finish. Hayden is neither a patsy, nor a wooden hero; but rather a fully-developed character who stands tall against Lieutenant Hornblower, Captain Aubrey, or Lieutenant Kydd.

Just after turning the last page, I promptly went to Russell's website – this in and of itself being the highest complement to a writer that I can imagine – and found that he has promised a second Hayden novel sometime in 2009. And I confess that I am counting down the days, and will bug him by email if there's no word on its release come summer.

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### Jane says

My first nautical novel since my reading Hornblower novels and Bounty Trilogy of years past. This one engaged my interest all through. The hero, Charles Hayden, of mixed parentage [French mother, English father] is assigned as first lieutenant to the *Themis*, under the tyrannical and "shy" [read cowardly] Captain Hart. I conceived Hart as sort of a mixture of Bligh and Queeg, but with his own peculiarities. The men are mutinous. Charles must contend with his captain and crew. There's much action between the French and the English; England is trying to keep the revolutionary ideas from spreading to England. As well as the captain's ill treatment of the crew, Tom Paine's "seditious" pamphlets are the sources of discontent onboard ship, although the bad feeling had begun before Hayden had entered the story: with a murder, a miscarriage of justice, and a severe beating.

Hayden proves his resourcefulness and mettle in taking a French prize, but back in England along with mutineers of the *Themis* faces court martial--Hayden for alleged dereliction of duty and disobeying captain's orders. The book was well done and delivered just the right amount of excitement. The court martial section was outstanding. I felt there was overemphasis on how Hayden's mixed background had hampered him in advancement. I would have liked a glossary of nautical terms, for us landlubbers. This is the first novel in a promising series.

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### **Johnny says**

Is *Under Enemy Colors* predictable? Yes! Does the protagonist bear significant resemblance to Ramage, Bolitho, Hornblower, Aubrey, and every other hero with a series of adventures in the Age of Fighting Sail? Yes!

However, I prefer the writing style to that of O'Brian and place it right up there with my personal favorite, Alexander Kent's Bolitho novels. Russell's protagonist is, as you may have already guessed, another officer in the Royal Navy who has great courage and competence but little influence. So, as in so many of the novels in this genre, you would expect our hero to chafe under the reins of less competent and creative officers. In this, you would not be wrong.

Yet, the spice that Russell adds is the nationality of this courageous protagonist, one Charles Saunders Hayden. Hayden, as his name sounds, is an English citizen, but his mother is French. This half-French nationality is an even bigger drag on his career than the typical Napoleonic Era naval officer than merely having little or no influence, it creates a suspicion among his fellow officers that Hayden might be something of a fifth-columnist among the jack tars.

Now, imagine the further complications to be considered when he serves under a cowardly and incompetent captain on a near-mutinous vessel. Add in the extra ingredient of a captain who blames Hayden for everything that goes wrong aboard his ship--even when Hayden worked tirelessly to solve problems before they occurred. There, you have a hero to whom everyone who has ever had a pointy-haired (as in Dilbert) boss can relate. Now, you have a lovely broth of conflict, suspicion and suspense to pour over the usual amount of exciting boarding actions and smoking broadsides.

The novel logs 500 pages and I devoured it ravenously until the wee hours (although I chose the MP3 CD cover as the picture for my review, I read the hardbound copy). I don't think I've done this since my earliest days with Alexander Kent's Bolitho novels (one of which I found in paperback on a trip to London and read bleary-eyed on the return flight rather than getting much-needed sleep). The next novel in the series isn't due until next year, but I can assure you that I await it with increasing anticipation.

While attempting to avoid spoilers, I must note that it was fascinating to observe Thomas Paine's pamphlets like "Common Sense" being portrayed as seditious literature. Obviously, after the American War of Independence and the French Revolution, the English would have had to consider those tracts as dangerous revolutionary propaganda. What was even more fascinating was when one of the characters described the reactionary Edmond Burke as a dangerous "revolutionary." I loved it. Coming from that character, it had just the right period flavor. I heartily commend this book to anyone who has ever longed to order his crew to reef the topsails.

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### **David Eppenstein says**

This is the first entry of this author's Charles Hayden series. Unfortunately for me, I didn't discover this series until the third entry and then read the fourth before getting my hands on the first and second in the series. This book obviously sets the stage for the later volumes and is by far the most engaging of these books. It is a bit of "Mutiny on the Bounty" combined with "The Caine Mutiny". We have a tyrannical cowardly captain and a noble executive officer, an unhappy and abused crew, a mutiny, and a courts martial. I should also add there is the budding of a romance as a bit of a respite from all the rougher side to such yarns. I am now a confirmed S. Thomas Russell follower and I will soon be reading my copy of the second in this enjoyable series.

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### **Sarah says**

28/1 - I really enjoyed this seafaring novel and look forward to its promised sequel. I felt like I was reading *Master and Commander*, although Dad said, after reading it too, that *Master and Commander* has even more detailed information about sailing the ship and the different ropes and decks, etc. I was surprised by how young he made Lieutenant Charles Hayden as I wouldn't have thought a man would've been made Master and Commander of his own ship till he was at least 30. I thought the romance between Henrietta and Charles was a little clumsy, but not bad for a man.

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### **Dawn says**

Of all the naval fiction I have read so far this is by far my favorite book.

Charles Hayden is the product of a English father and a French mother. This is a reoccurring theme throughout the book as Hayden struggles to come to terms with a war that pits him against his beloved childhood home in France. The fact that he speaks flawless French does come in handy in many of the situations he finds himself.

Given the job of being second in command to a tyrannical, cowardly captain, he must find a way to do his duty and avoid losing his career.

The romantic story plays a very small part in the book, much to my relief and there were some great characters from captains to pressed men. There are maybe a few too many convenient situations but the story is action packed and engaging.

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## Oswego Public Library District says

Fans of C.S. Forester and Patrick O'Brian will enjoy this riotous maritime adventure. Faced with inept leadership, a mutinous crew, and the cannons of the French navy, the young, ripe, half-English, half-French Lieutenant Charles Hayden has much to endure.

Hayden is an attractive, competent, dark, moody naval hero. Sean Thomas Russell also adds a new flavor into the mix with his low social status and the fact that he has a French mother. From the lowest pressed man to the captain, Russell paints each character with the same attention and care without allowing the racing plot to suffer or the history to lose its energy. It was intriguing to observe that at this time *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine was considered seditious, revolutionary literature.

Overall, *Under Enemy Colors* is a fast-paced, historically rich story with authentic, well-developed characters. Set during the French Revolution, Hayden begins his career with a tyrannical, cowardly captain and a seething crew. Events unfold in such a way to ensure a climactic confrontation, and Russell does well to highlight Hayden's courage and resourcefulness. This is an account of duty and honor at its finest. -AD

Click here to place a hold on *Under Enemy Colors* .

For more Lieutenant Hayden adventures, check out the next book in the series: *A Battle Won* .

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## Luca Cozzi says

Ambientato durante le guerre napoleoniche di fine '700, narra la storia di un ufficiale della Marina reale britannica. Bella e coinvolgente avventura sui mari, molto ben scritto anche se eccede, a mio parere, nell'uso di termini tecnici o in gergo marinaresco, assolutamente sconosciuti ai più.

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## Jim says

Sean Thomas Russell was born in Toronto, Canada and now resides on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Mr. Russell successfully has joined the ranks of writers of naval fiction. He joins many of my favorite writers in this genre such as C.S. Forester, Alexander Kent and Dudley Pope. His first novel UNDER ENEMY COLORS (ISBN 978-0425223628, trade paperback, \$17.00) was published in 2007 and has recently been released as a trade paperback. The book is nearly 500 pages long. In the series, there are two more books recently or soon to be published. I have ordered book 2 in the series.

The time is the early 1790s during the early stages of the French Revolution. In this book, we meet Lt. Charles Hayden (R.N.) son of an English father (deceased) and a French mother (now married to a wealthy American merchant in Boston). He has fond memories of his time spent in France as a child. He also has a memory of a horrific incident when he was caught up in Revolutionary riot in Paris shortly before the time of this book. By most standards Lt. Hayden is a rising star in the Navy. As the story opens, he is without a ship.

The First Secretary of the British Admiralty summons Hayden to his office. He is offered a position as First Lieutenant on a 32-gun frigate. But it is more than that. He is to report on the activities of the ship's captain who has lots of friends in high places and a reputation for shunning combat. Not what he was hoping for and marginally better than a poke in the eye.

If you want action, there is plenty of that. If you want people to cheer for and against, there are plenty. If you want to know about this time in history, there is plenty of that. And there is a budding romance with a lovely young woman.

My advice: Go! Buy! Read!

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### **Ubiquitousbastard says**

I am not a voracious consumer of naval fiction, I will admit that immediately. I know the basic facts of ships, like the location of the bow, stern, bilge...etc. Yeah, so this went just a bit over my head at parts. Luckily, I am not quite so bad with the time period and the ranks in the British navy, so I wasn't always lost. And, at times, Russell did make an effort to explain the more intricate words and phrases, so that was appreciated.

The plot itself was absolutely nothing new. Bad captain, mutinous crew, uninspired romance between individuals of different classes...seen it all, and I don't even read, as I said, much naval fiction. However, the writing style itself was very readable, and the pacing was not at all bad. Also, despite the commonplace plot, the characters themselves were interesting if not wholly original. I would say that they were well-written tropes, and the key to that part is the well-written.

For me, this was a book I could easily spend time reading, but did not utterly impress me in any manner. It was sufficiently good for me to take a look at the next book in the series and see if maybe my opinion might change.

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### **James says**

This is a book that I have been after for a while, and when I got it for Christmas I ripped into it with a fervour. And boy did it entertain, an easy a **Five Stars** as I have ever given.

The plot line was amazingly done. There were parts where I wondered where it was all going, with there seeming to be a few individuals plots thrown in there, but the way that it was all brought together was brilliant. It gave me endless entertainment, grabbing me from the start and not letting go - I swear, this book made me the most unsociable ass on Christmas day because I had my head stuck in it all day. And there was nothing I could do otherwise, this book was just that compelling.

Where this book really succeeded was the characters though. This is what turned a well thought out plot line into a potential favourite series. They were all so real and tangible, I loved getting to know them and following them through their trials and tribulations. They managed to avoid the pitfall of historical dramas - where the author transplants a modern man type with modern sensibilities into a world where such a person would not exist - and at the same time manage to make the characters identifiable with the reader. A skill not

many authors manage with this type of genre.

These characters were so... fine, that I found myself emotionally invested in them in ways that only a few authors can make me; I wanted them to do well, I felt every set back, every pain, every triumph. I felt everything. And that was amazing. Which, when coupled with an amazing plot line like this, brings the book to the level of 'excellence'. Thank you Sean Thomas Russell for providing me with such an enjoyable story with such wonderful characters.

And then you have the writing style. Wow. Very few writers ever manage to become part of the elite where the writing stands out. Normally writing is either bad or unnoticeable, with only a few writers managing excellent. Russell manages this. Now, I will admit, there is a chance that I am biased seeing how much I loved this book and that as a result I have written this with rose-tinted glasses. Who knows? Maybe I have, but I think not. Amazingly well written.

So, should you read this? If you have read this far and you don't know the answer then you probably shouldn't be reading anything more than a picture book. But, in short, yes. Yes you should.

Have Fun Reading.

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### **Reni says**

This is no Patrick O'Brian, that's for sure. But hey, it doesn't have to be. Under Enemy Colours covers a whole different niche of the Age of Sail novel: It is more like a combination of an adventure novel and a crime novel, rather than straight historic fiction. Whereas your average volume of the Aubreyad might almost better be called a social novel, Under Enemy Colours sets its whole focus on telling a fast paced story with as many exciting episodes as possible.

The book is very honest and upfront about bending history and fact to suit the fiction, which will not be to everyone's taste. But since this history bending is used to tell a rather compelling tale I was easily persuaded to overlook details that had been intentionally changed (this ship has no purser!), and even outright but small mistakes (wrong uniforms!).

With all this focus on plot characterisation suffers somewhat. There's some lazy stereotyping going on where the antagonists are concerned. Landry is allowed a deeper characterisation and some ambiguity about halfway through the novel, but Hart represents pretty much the worst clichés about bad navy captains rolled into one. The antagonists are also described as being far less physically attractive than the heroes, which is a tired cliché in and of itself.

Well, at least the heroes are sympathetic and active enough to earn that title and for you to be rooting for them. It is therefore easy to become invested enough in their well-being enough for the book to reveal itself to be something of a page turner – even though you will be rolling your eyes at the villains from time to time.

I was particularly happy with Hayden's favourite middy: Lord Wickham. It is delightful to read how the boy uses himself and his own social status as a boon to protect the hero from the antagonist's scheming. The way he keeps inserting himself into the plot sure eventually turns into something of a running joke, but the thought alone of how much consternation his actions would cause the villain had me grinning every time. Perhaps he is a bit too talented and enterprising to be entirely believable, but he's so proactive and

sympathetic you are easily lead to overlook the almost unnatural quality of his goodness.

Meanwhile Hayden himself is your standard attractive, dark and somewhat moody AoS hero: braver and more competent than his superiors, but at first hampered by his low social status. Oh, and he has mismatched eyes, for some bonus mysteriousness, like a Husky, ffs! But at least the author tries something new with him by giving him a French mother, which explains his lack of promotion and interest at least somewhat more creatively than good old corruption and nepotism on part of the administration. Plus, Hayden's ancestry and happy French childhood provide a fine source of inner conflict that will hopefully be expanded upon in future instalments, and is a welcome change to the angst derived from the melancholic self-doubt of a Hornblower or Bolitho.

But in the end, the struggle of the gifted underdog with his hidden depths vs. his less skilled but socially more acceptable antagonist is nothing we haven't read about a couple of dozen times before. If this series truly wishes to stand-out, like the true classics of the genre, it will have to get a tad more creative.

Sympathetic characters and an exciting plot certainly make for a good novel, but not an outstanding one.

Perhaps the book also reaches a bit too deep into the salt encrusted chest of Age of Sail tropes: I've already mentioned the hero being more seaman-like than his antagonistic superior. In addition both the main antagonists behave cowardly and dishonourable. Well, we also have the sailing-master who immediately takes a shine to the hero, and a philosophic, educated seaman who is extremely loyal to his ship but sympathises with the ideals of the French revolution nonetheless. Also, a French signal book is captured. And finally, someone is flogged for something he didn't do, driving the crew to the edge of mutiny. Oh, and there eventually is a mutiny, by the way! And a court martial. Though, in the book's defence, for once it is not the hero who gets court-martialled, but basically everyone except the hero, which was quite refreshing.

As for tropes that you do not only primarily find in AoS novels, but that should certainly better not have found their way into this book: It appears like the French soldiers all learned how to shoot at the Galactic Imperial Stromtrooper Marksmanship academy. In one part of the book they hunt three of our main characters over fields and beaches for hours, shooting at them, but all they manage is lightly graze one of them. While our heroes in turn drop the soldiers like flies.

But then, the book also employs a couple of tropes I actually enjoy very much, personally, so I guess it does even out a bit. I like that the French are the enemy but not the villain of this book. They are removed from the actual conflict at the heart of the plot, they're more of an underlying threat, no more deliberately adversarial than any of the forces of nature that result in hostile winds and seas to plague the hero.

And then there's Hayden's sea-daddy who reminded me of Hornblower's Captain Pellew so much I immediately fell in love with the character the first time he appeared. I love that type of character so much that I could easily ignore his magical abilities to appear just at the right moment, more than once, for him to help the hero out of some tight spot.

Truly, the book does rely a bit too much on coincidences, like Hertle and Bourne showing up at the right moment each *more than once* to save our hero from having to endure further indignity at the hands of Hart. These incidents almost make it look like there are no other British ships around at all. Or how about the fact that among Hayden's prisoners there was one of a persecuted minority only too happy to betray his countrymen for the English ... and yet the French captain had trusted that guy with the signal book despite his disaffection?

Another thing that I didn't really buy is the romance. It didn't really connect for me with the other parts of

the book. Plus, I'm not an expert on courtship in the late 18th century, but the courtship and conversation between our hero and his lady didn't read right to me. It was too uncomplicated. But that might just be the Jane Austen I've read speaking. This might be because the novel as a whole does not try to emulate the period like a Patrick O'Brian does. It is more modernised, the language certainly is. This is not a bad thing. I'm usually for modernising the language of historic fiction, but I usually feel that way about settings in which to write historically accurate would have meant to write a book in a different language (i. e. Old French or Middle English).

Well, we'll see whether this will continue to bother me in the second book of the series.

Now, a lot of this sounds rather negative, but the novel is written in such a readable fashion, and fast paced -- one interesting scenes right after the other -- that you hardly think about its shortcomings while reading.

In summary, all things considered this appears to be a very promising series, and it is a comparatively new one, too! (This first novel is from 2007!). It's more of a *Lord Ramage* than an *Aubrey-Maturin*, albeit with better characterisation! Which is alright with me, because I was just getting tired of sailing with Ramage.

I'd rate this book something between three and four stars, but will happily round up to four. This instalment certainly makes me want to check out the sequels.

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### **Justin Yan says**

This book provided me a bit of insight on the French revolution and the situation in the British Royal Navy. Basically a navy lieutenant is looking for a position as a captain or lieutenant. He finds himself on a little ship with Captain Hart, otherwise known as "Faint Heart" in the middle of battle. The book was slightly complicated for me to understand as I am only 12, but it was a very classical read with English writing and not the usual American fictional writing I am used to. If you are older and are seeking a good wartime novel this is the right book for you if you are up to the challenge of adapting to this type of literature.

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### **Tim The Enchanter says**

#### **My #6 favorite read of 2013**

#### **A superb 5 Stars**

A riotous high seas adventure filled with mutiny, inept leaders, cannons, court marshals and one entertaining half French, half English hero.

Many times during the reading of this book I stopped and said to myself "this is a superb!" I wasn't kidding myself. It really was. Personally, well written historical fiction is the best and most entertaining type of novel. Under Enemy Colors had all of the things that I look for in good HF.

The setting and characters felt authentic. Having no real knowledge of the life of a British Navyman in the 1700's, I am no expert on authenticity. That said, the characters interactions with each other and the tiered society came off as authentic. The reader has the sense they have been transported back in time and to a earlier society. Unless the reader has special knowledge of some distant period of time, authenticity will be subjective. S. Thomas Russell brings us on a voyage filled with characters and settings that are believable and seem to fit with their surroundings.

The characters are well developed and interesting and the story is sharp and interesting. We follow the journey of First Lieutenant Charles Hayden whose career in His Majesty's Navy is floundering. He is offered the devil's deal to sail on the Ship of one Captain Hart who is well placed in society but inept at his post. He is offered the post on the requirement the report secretly to the admiralty of the events on the ship while being offered nothing in return. We follow along on a campaign with Charles Hayden and he fights off both mutiny and his inept captain.

Having read very few novels revolving around the British Navy, I have no real basis of comparison. I have heard it compared to the Horatio Hornblower novels and Bernard Cornwell novels. I cannot speak to the truth of these comparison but I give it my highest recommendation.

As a final note, the book uses many nautical reference any constant reference to areas of the ship. I have little to no knowledge of sailing and nautical terms but I was not lost or confused while reading the book. To me, it gave an added sense of realism.

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### **Dave says**

It takes some nerve, I think, to start a book off by describing a dark and stormy night. It may take even more to make the hero an English navy lieutenant in the Napoleonic Wars who has a French mother, a polyglot girlfriend who appears in an interminable dinner date in chapter 3 and who disappears until page 400, who has one eye blue and one eye whatever, and who gets by on 2 hours sleep a week. Russell takes the Forrester-O'Brian tradition and accentuates the pulp aspect. Highly readable, I'll give him that, but unsurprising at every turn.

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### **Chuckell says**

You could certainly compare this book to the work of Patrick O'Brian--but why bother? Sailors, cannonballs--but other than that? O'Brian's world is filled with richly imagined, deeply believable characters sailing oceans of majesty and terror and the profoundest beauty. This fellow Russell's sailors are lifeless wooden mannequins and the sea they sail upon is a place where dreary things happen but never anything unpredictable.

In the acknowledgments section--to be found at the rear of the book, a port I now wish I'd never set sail for--the author is careful to say of himself "I'm a novelist, not a historian," and I'd have to say he gives himself

rather too much credit by claiming to be either. The man's idea of period detail is to carefully refer to each female character by her full name and title--" . . . she was accompanied by her cousin, the entrancing and bewitching Miss Henrietta Carthew . . ." etc. etc. Oh, it's sheer agony to read.

This brings me to the following question: Why is it apparently so difficult to write merely good fiction? I didn't--couldn't possibly--expect this book to be anywhere near as good as O'Brian. I would have been utterly satisfied to be merely entertained. But no--a tedious, none-too-bright hero slogs through some predictable adventures while pitting himself against an absurdly, cartoonishly evil, craven enemy. I guess writing talent is just not evenly distributed--some people get a lot, most get none at all.

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### **Jason says**

Russell wrote a realistic story of a naval career, believable and full of action. Though the book contains many themes, they seem somewhat forced. I enjoyed reading it as a lighter text.

#### Pros

- Very detailed descriptions
- Realistic accounts of naval life from an officer's perspective
- Many interesting elements
- A wide cast of characters and a fast pace made the plot flow well

#### Cons

- In emulating the speech of old Englishmen, Russell applied it to the narration, and this distracted me, especially when he dropped verbs and created sentence fragments
- Drops the plot line of Hayden's parentage and France - not tied up at the end
- Wickham disappeared at the end, demoted from being Hayden's sidekick
- Hayden is pretty much a Gary Stu - eye color
- The plot felt predictable, especially the romance sections

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### **AndrewP says**

Another book dealing with the Royal navy at the time of the Napoleonic Wars. My personal favorite genre of all historical books, but then perhaps that is because I am a Brit :)

Without giving anything away this is the story of 1st Lt. Hayden, who is assigned a position to keep an eye on a problematic and somewhat un-courageous Captain. Said Captain has a lot of influence with the upper class and members of the admiralty, so that puts the hero between a rock and a hard place.

This is a good story from newcomer S. Thomas Russell and I enjoyed it quite a bit. Enough action and intrigue to satisfy most people I think. Well worth the read if you are into this type of novel.

Also of note is that I listened to this on Audio, read by the great Simon Vance. As I expected, he did a wonderful job giving all the main characters distinct accents and personalities. Never having heard of S. Thomas Russell, one of my main reasons for picking this up was that I saw the narrator was Simon Vance.

