



On the Oceans of Eternity

S.M. Stirling

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Ten years ago, the twentieth century and the Bronze Age were tossed together by a mysterious Event. In the decade since, the Republic of Nantucket has worked hard to create a new future for itself, using the technological know-how retained from modern times to explore and improve conditions for the inhabitants of the past. Some of these peoples have become allies. Some have turned instead to the renegade Coast Guard officer William Walker. And for ten years, the two sides have tested each other, feinting and parrying, to decide who will be the ones to lead this brave new world into the future. The final battle lines have now been drawn. And only one side can emerge the victor.

On the Oceans of Eternity Details

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From Reader Review On the Oceans of Eternity for online ebook

Kat Hooper says

On the Oceans of Eternity is the final novel in S.M. Stirling's NANTUCKET series. In the first novel, Island in the Sea of Time, which I really enjoyed, a strange electrical storm caused the entire island of Nantucket to be transported back in time to 1300 B.C. It was entertaining to watch the island's citizens make this discovery and deal with the resulting personal, cultural, economic and political changes. Then, one of the citizens, William Walker, decided to use his modern knowledge and technology to attempt to establish himself as emperor in this "new" world. He left the island to search for people he could rule.

The second book, Against the Tide of Years, felt very much like a middle book. We watched the islanders trying to usher in an industrial revolution, but most of the plot ... Read More:
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Melissa Yael Winston says

Die, Deus ex machina, die!

I was looking forward to the conclusion of the trilogy where I knew the good guys would win.

With about 100 pages to go, I got worried. There were too many loose ends to be tied up to my satisfaction. With 20 pages to go, I was ready to throw the book across the room. It just seemed like the author got lazy and the end and threw in a cheap ending to get himself off the hook. Ugh!

Thomas says

Whatever it's faults, this series is EPIC and slavish to the minutest detail of war, sailing, and tactics. I will never forget Marian Alston and Swindapa, the fightin'est lesbian couple known to modern literature! I'd even go so far as to say Marian is on of the top ten characters in any Fantasy/SciFi I've ever read...I can smell her sweat as I write this!

This third book was really good, though the side-stories were a bit much sometimes. (The California side story almost seemed like filler, as it could have been eliminated entirely with no effect on the greater whole...But yet, I loved the California side-story...almost wanted it to be hived off and set as it's own novella perhaps)

You absolutely CANNOT read this without reading the two prior books, that would be awful. Stirling really forces you to have to read the previous books due to the complexity of the tale.

RANT: This book is FULL of spelling errors...I mean CHOCK full...that's a peeve of mine and obviously an editor/spellchecker was sleeping on the job.

RANT: The photo of Stirling inside the back cover is NOT flattering, he looks like a COSPLAY geek who is holding collectible Naruto/Pokemon cards just out of frame and running late for his SCA meeting which he has to take the bus to..

Overall, this series was AWESOME, sucked me in and I read all three in two weeks time. I really feel like I have experienced the lives and culture shock of the Nantucketers, and the whole painful process of starting from scratch.

I am somewhat relieved to be done so I can once again read other books...I couldn't stop these ones.

Matt says

This was a pretty good ending to this series. I honestly saw the ending coming quite a long way off so that was a bit of a disappointment, but that is ok. What I liked about this book (and the series) was the melding of historical figures (Odysseus was in this novel) and modern technology. You also really get a feel for what humans have learned (not just tech wise) in the last 3500 years (for those reading this that are asking what I mean I say read the series). My only real criticism of the book was that it was slow at times. I also felt that the ending wasn't really the ending that I wanted from the series, but perhaps it was a more true-to-life. I also felt that the Feather River valley story line (which was my favorite of the book) was not developed enough and the ending seemed a bit like Stirling didn't know how to end it and still have the characters go back to Nantucket (I'm really trying to not give any spoiler away). Anyway, my point is that the final ending in Feather Valley seemed a bit forced and could have been written better. All in all, I really liked this novel and will continue with the extended series so that I can (hopefully, at least) find out what the mysterious Event was all about!

Strona po stronie says

[the scenes with Odysseus and Ian Arnstein (hide spoiler)]

CV Rick says

Well I finished the series. I deserve a certificate of completion.

Cookie cutter characters - all good and talented or all evil and relentless. Myopic viewpoint in love with modern innovation by rejecting modern sensibilities. Annoying internal speeches. But the plot was fast and engaging.

I wonder if Stirling believes that people speak in hackneyed similes? I wonder if he knows that good people can be bad - or bad at things. I wonder if he's met a bad person who does good.

Bleh.

It's worth 3 stars because of the idea and the plot. Barely.

ilaanya says

Oh my, does Stirling love details. Seriously, I'm not going to learn how to captain a ship by reading your book. I know starboard and port. I really don't need to know anything else. I don't even know half the words you are using. Because it couldn't hold my attention, it was hard to get through this book even though the author's other series, *Dies the Fire*, is one of my favorites.

Ozymandias says

The series started off so well! But the author clearly has nothing to say after his initial burst of enthusiasm. Let me ask you: what is it that you enjoy about time travel stories? Or alternate histories for that matter? Is it the detailed description of different cultures and the clash of civilizations that comes from bringing modern values into contact with ancient ones? Is it the change and adaptation necessary to transform modern technology into more primitive (but still superior) tech using the equipment of the time? Is it the chance to see famous historical figures at work? Or is it just an excuse to have repetitive and generic battle sequences that don't really lead anywhere or feature characters we know and care about?

If you selected any but the last you're likely to be disappointed with this novel. While previous novels had at least a bit of cultural studies and technological ingenuity, this one consists entirely of battles. These battles could be inserted interchangeably with any sort of colonial war, which makes me wonder what the point of the setting was. All of them are told through the sort of fog of war approach in vogue nowadays, although at least in the ones with Marion the goals and tactics are clear enough. Most of the others are told through characters we've never met and don't bother to care about. In fact, they're so inconsequential that we never even find out what happens to most of them. Even POV characters.

I suppose the idea is that after all the buildup in the previous books this one is supposed to be a cathartic epic finale. The three problems with that are: 1. The previous book suffered from many of the same problems and thus gave us no real buildup. 2. The conclusion, when it comes, is abrupt and makes the "epic" battles given earlier irrelevant since it would have happened with or without them. 3. The battle scenes are just really damned boring. What these problems mean is that you could just skip from the end of the last book to the end of this one without really missing anything in terms of plot. Seriously. Only Marion's chapters (taking on Tarhuntassa) have any sort of impact. The other battlegrounds are: the siege of Troy (drags endlessly and could have been finished in the last book), some raiding around central Anatolia (resolves nothing and goes nowhere), a war of liberation in California (entirely unconnected to anything else going on), and a battle at Megido (thrown in at the last minute but resolved in a single chapter). Why go through all of this when none of it actually resolves anything?

And of course, then there comes the epic conclusion. Or rather the complete lack thereof. All the momentum, stress, and buildup is discarded in a couple of paragraphs as the war suddenly ends and everything gets resolved with an astonishing lack of fuss and complete absence of buildup. I was so taken aback by the ending that I assumed it was less serious than it seemed at first. Because nobody could be stupid enough to kill off their entire cohort of villains in one go with no sort of buildup or sense of payoff, right? It's a depressingly anticlimactic conclusion, made all the worse by the fact that the boring and endless battle scenes turn out to have been completely pointless. None of that has any effect on the main plot. God, what a useless waste.

And by this point I'm just fed up by how simple everything has become. People just adapt way too quick. Stirling is quick to counteract the preconception that our ancestors were just stupid primitives who were just too dumb and superstition-ridden to pose any threat to us. Instead, he constantly repeats the idea that the ancients were just as smart as us and lacked only our knowledge and experience, but this rapidly becomes a farcical parody of its own. The cultures of the time bat barely an eyelash at all the modern ideas that they encounter and quickly become proficient in at least some of the modern arts of war. Even a glance at preindustrial civilizations coming into contact with modern ones shows that this is simply ridiculous. Change is hard, and takes place over the course of many generations. I don't give a damn how ruthless and clever you are. And none of those civilizations were as undeveloped as the ones seen here.

So yeah, I've soured on this series somewhat. It took an interesting idea (a whole town of modern men transposed into ancient times) and ran with it to create an alternate history of sorts in the late bronze age. I like the depictions of ancient cultures, but somehow the author lost track of this focus and put all his time into developing generic battle scenes that could be put into any other setting with no real loss of integrity. What started off so well has ended as just a wet mess. And a distressingly simplistic one for all his attempts to imply complexity. Everyone realizes they could just get along if they tried and all live happily ever after. Aww (*quiet retching noises*).

Hank says

After the third large-ish book this was kind of like an old friend. The story was thought provoking as I went about my day(s), I kept thinking, "could I make that from scratch if I had to?" Usually my answer was no way. The sheer amount of research and knowledge Stirling had to accumulate to write this book is impressive. From metalurgy to sailing to farming to antique weapons. Unfortunately he probably did a bit too much research, I enjoyed a huge amount of the details but there is a tipping point...do I really want to hear about every possible type of sail even if he manufactures situations where they are important? Do I really need to know what hard tack is made out of...3 times?

Regardless of the tedium at times this was an awe inspiring book in my head. I think I read the part of seeing millions of buffalo several times. I frequently looked up where all of the individual nations were and I lost myself in a time with primitive technology. The characters came to life for me and I revelled in every success and lamented every loss. A bit too much war but it was a decent engine for the story.

It left me wanting more, which is always a good thing. The length and the just barely too many details docked it a star for me.

Craig says

OK. So I'm done now. It was painful to finish the series, but hey, I'm addicted to reading.

Stirling does not cover himself with glory in this series. There are some interesting characters, and the basic story is quite good, but the pacing is awful, there are stretches of description and inner-monologues that are interminable, and the sheer number of characters Stirling is trying to do justice to is unmanageable.

Considering this is the guy who wrote The General series, he's ALREADY dealt with the whole primitive culture affected by advanced technology theme, and done it MUCH better than he does it here.

There were times, as I was reading this book and the second in the series (not so much the first, probably because there were fewer characters and sub-plots) that I was nearly overcome with resentment, and I skimmed whole sections as I could not force myself to focus on pages and pages descriptions for the least-important and most minor locales. This reads like an overly-ambitious and poorly-edited first book. Clearly we have an author here who editors are shy to confront, and so the book sinks to lows of masturbatory detail and a SLEW of emotionally unaccessible characters.

In the end, I was disappointed with the experience, and just glad to finish the ordeal.

YouKneeK says

This is the final book in the Nantucket trilogy, a series that begins with the island of Nantucket being thrown back in time from 1988 A.D. to 1250 B.C.

I've had mixed feelings about the trilogy. It was a fun premise, and there was a lot to like about the story. I particularly enjoyed the encounters with ancient cultures and watching the characters figure out how to survive and accomplish their goals with limited modern materials and resources. On the other hand, there were a *lot* of battles, to an extent that they felt tedious and repetitive to me.

The third book was no different in terms of my reaction. I really liked some parts, but there were other parts that made my eyes glaze over. I thought the more interesting parts were earlier in the book, and things got more tedious toward the end. I was reasonably satisfied with the ending itself, although there were some cliché aspects to it.

So... I enjoyed the series at times and was annoyed by it at other times. I'm glad I read it, but I'm definitely ready to move on to new things.

Kat Heatherington says

i could cry for the wasted potential of this series. such good ideas. such a strong beginning. such a stupid useless pointless plot. war war war, nothing but war, only war. it degrades the characters. it has no purpose; there's so much *else* he could have done with the time travel. this is probably the worst Stirling book i've ever read.

jammastere says

So I will just start with if you haven't read the first two books you will be totally lost if you try to pick this one up. You **HAVE** to start with book #1. That is the way the series was written.

I loved the series overall. It is a great mix between time travel and alternate history and fantasy all rolled into one series. If you want a summary of the book read the jacket flap:) I will say that if you are the kind of person who wants everything simple or all story threads wrapped up at the end of a series or you want an HEA, this is **NOT** the series for you. I found myself wondering about some of the characters and what the "world" would look like in another 10 years. I love that everything isn't wrapped up in a nice little bow. I enjoy my own game of "what if" after reading the last page.

Mr. Stirling deals very much with shades of gray in this series. There are some seriously twisted individuals who are very bad, but you also see what some of them are like with their children. There are several different perspectives on different types of slavery dealt with in the series. We are also shown how different rulers choose to rule their people and begs the questions if all types of monarchy's are bad.

I think this is a great series. This is written for adults with adult themes running throughout the book. There is some pretty disturbing extreme BDSM, raping/pillaging scenes, and torture scenes scattered throughout the series.

The Emberverser series deals with the rest of the world that was left in the late-20th century with significant changes to the laws of physics. I can't recommend both series enough for fans of fantasy and urban fantasy.

Joel Judge says

I had very mixed feelings about this book. At first I was really annoyed with the none to subtle rehash of the film Zulu. I cannot for the life of me comprehend what the author was thinking by simply rehashing scenes from a 1964 film. Enjoyed the film but did not enjoy having it plagiarised in print.

From then on the book improved marginally. I liked the premise of the series, but thought its execution was flawed. The world building was weak and not enough time was devoted to fleshing out the main characters. I did enjoy how the conflict between the main antagonists was developing but felt victory came all too swiftly and easily. There was a reasonable build up to a fairly anticlimactic conclusion.

The series promised much but in the end it failed to deliver.

Fanona says

an opportunity to recreate history falls back to the same-o patriarchal testosterone driven militaristic based societies. sad that options for peace & human unity weren't imagined & created.

almost impossible to follow the way it's organized & marked especially on audio. too much war. i liked the ship scenes.

great in parts. good audio reader. frustrated with the way the scenes & timeline are organized
