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Sharpe's Trafalgar: Richard Sharpe & the Battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1805 (Richard Sharpe's Adventure Series #4)

By Bernard Cornwell



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From *New York Times* bestselling author Bernard Cornwell, now available in paperback—bestselling historical novelist Bernard Cornwell brings life to one of the most spectacular naval battles in history with **SHARPE'S TRAFALGAR**.

"The greatest writer of historical adventures today."
—*Washington Post*

Critically acclaimed, perennial *New York Times* bestselling author Bernard Cornwell (*Agincourt*, *The Fort*, the Saxon Tales) makes real history come alive in his breathtaking historical fiction. Praised as "the direct heir to Patrick O'Brian" (*Agincourt*, *The Fort*), Cornwell has brilliantly captured the fury, chaos, and excitement of battle as few writers have ever done—perhaps most vividly in his phenomenally popular novels following the illustrious military career of British Army officer Richard Sharpe during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Chronicling Sharpe's involvement in the famous Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, *Sharpe's Trafalgar* finds the young ensign captive on a French warship and in gravest peril on the eve of the one of the most spectacular naval confrontations in history. Perhaps the *San Francisco Chronicle* said it best: "If only all history lessons could be as vibrant."



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

For military-history buffs, Bernard Cornwell's Sharpe novels are the literary equivalent of potato chips: you can't read just one. And in this case, why would you want to? Blending meticulous research and old-fashioned entertainment, the series follows the roguish adventurer Richard Sharpe as he swashbuckles his way through the Napoleonic Wars. In *Sharpe's Trafalgar*, the author ventures into Patrick O'Brian's maritime territory. Anchors aweigh, lads, and bring on the detailed descriptions of the ship's guns and their firing mechanisms!

In the beginning of the book, our hero sets sail for England after five months of service in India. The plot revolves around a disguised diplomat, a marauding French warship, and an improbable love affair with a comely English aristocrat. But make no mistake, the real draw here is combat. The battle scenes crackle with energy, and we can practically feel the chop of the waves and smell the reek of gunpowder. (We can also smell 600 unwashed men in close quarters with rats, sewage, and bilge rot, but that's another matter entirely.) The last hundred pages fly by at a furious clip, cannons pounding and cutlasses hacking, as Cornwell re-creates the naval battle of Trafalgar.

These days, of course, we know that war is bloody and brutal, not honorable or fair. We like even our most appealing warriors to have some passing acquaintance with their dark side, and Sharpe does take a decidedly antiheroic stance on the experience of hand-to-hand combat:

He was ashamed when he remembered the joy of it, but there was a joy there. It was the happiness of being released to the slaughter, of having every bond of civilization removed. It was also what Richard Sharpe was good at. It was why he wore an officer's sash instead of a private's belt, because in almost every battle the moment came when the disciplined ranks dissolved and a man simply had to claw and scratch and kill like a beast.

Beast or no beast, Sharpe is far more interesting and complex than the musket-wielding action figure he might first appear. And it's nearly impossible not to take some pleasure at his bloody exploits. *Sharpe's Trafalgar* is a superb example of the ripping good yarn--it confirms our secret conviction that war may be hell, but it's actually pretty exciting too. --*Mary Park*

From Publishers Weekly

Nobody describes bloody battle scenes better than Cornwell, and even he outdoes himself with this riveting novel about the epic naval battle off Spain's Cape Trafalgar in 1805. This is the 17th volume in his popular Napoleonic War series about Richard Sharpe, a brutish yet admirable soldier in the British army. Here Cornwell jumps back chronologically in Sharpe's glorious career to 1805, when Sharpe is promoted from the ranks for saving Lord Arthur Wellesley's life in India. Loaded down with looted jewels, the bastard son of a London whore heads back to England to a posting with the famous 95th Rifle Regiment. His battlefield promotion to junior officer rank makes common soldiers wary, and gentlemen officers scornful, and Sharpe decidedly uncomfortable in a role he does not yet know how to play. But he certainly knows how to fight. As usual, there is not only plenty of action but romance and intrigue as well. Sailing aboard a large East India Company merchant ship, Sharpe encounters a wealthy married woman whose charms he cannot resist, a pompous English lord he cannot stand and a host of treacherous fellow passengers. Unusual circumstances, betrayal and some bad luck next find him aboard a British ship-of-the-line in pursuit of a French warship in

the Atlantic. Beyond the murky horizon lies an unexpected rendezvous at Trafalgar, where Lord Nelson and the British fleet wait to meet the combined French and Spanish fleets. The naval battle occupies the last hundred pages and is stunning for its ferocity, detail, historical accuracy and suspense. Cornwell's fans will love Sharpe at sea in this latest installment in a first-rate series. (May)Forecast: Cornwell's books are major bestsellers in the U.K. Sharpe's Trafalgar hit the top of the charts and HarperCollins is pushing for similar success in the U.S. An eight-city author tour, national advertising and a 25-city national radio campaign will help, but word of mouth generated by satisfied readers should be even more effective.

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From Library Journal

Here's something special: the novel about the Battle of Trafalgar that C.S. Forester never wrote for his naval hero, Horatio Hornblower. However, instead of putting Hornblower in the history-changing battle, Forester acolyte Cornwell uses his own hero, soldier Richard Sharpe. It's 1805, and Sharpe now a commissioned officer is on his way home from India when some reasonably plausible events put him aboard a British ship of the line, which happens to reach the coast of Spain just as Admiral Nelson is preparing to attack France and Spain's combined fleets. The ensuing naval action is as fine as anything Forester ever wrote, and Hornblower himself would have been proud of Sharpe's conduct. It's all rollicking great fun, with generous dollops of real military history thrown in. William Gaminara's energetic reading helps to make this a can't-miss acquisition for general collections. R. Kent Rasmussen, Thousand Oaks, CA

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Richard Gary:

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