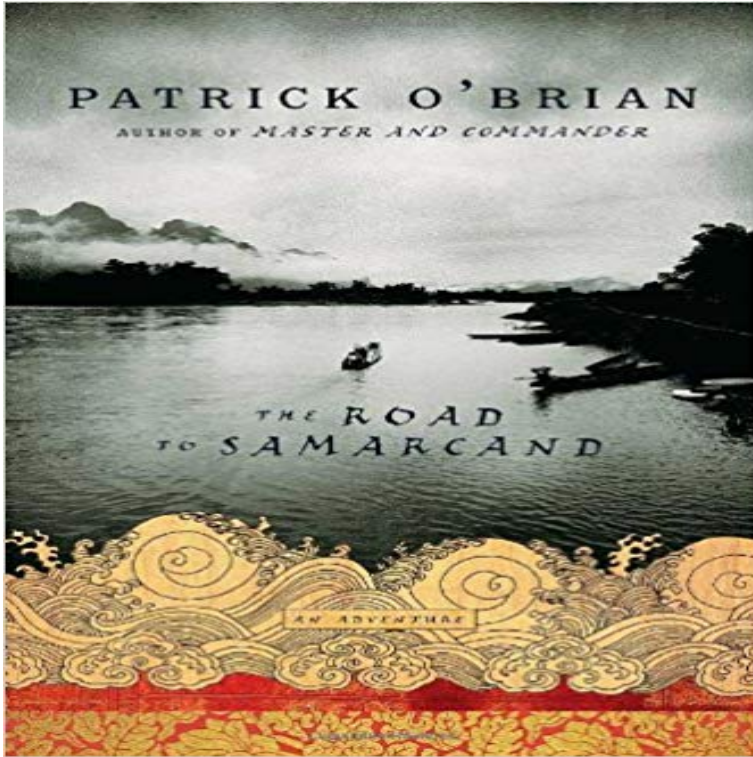


The Road to Samarcand: An Adventure



O'Brian's richly told adventure saga, with its muscular prose, supple dialogue and engaging characters, packs a nice old-school punch. --Publishers Weekly This story begins where Patrick O'Brian's devoted fans would want it to, with a sloop in the South China Sea barely surviving a killer typhoon. The time is the 1930s and the protagonist a teenaged American boy whose missionary parents have just died. In the company of his rough seafaring uncle and an elderly English cousin, an eminent archaeologist, Derrick sets off in search of ancient treasures in central Asia. Along the way they encounter a charismatic Chinese bandit and a host of bad characters, including Russian agents fomenting unrest. The narrative touches on surprising subjects: astronomy, oriental philosophy, the correct identification of ancient Han bronzes, and some very local cuisine. It ends in an ice-bound valley, with the party caught between hostile Red-Hat monks and the Great Silent Ones, the Tibetan designation for the yeti.

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