



Ramage & the Freebooters

Dudley Pope

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The lieutenant is summoned by the Admiralty and given command of the brig, Triton. But like the rest of the Navy, Triton's crew has mutinied. Sympathizing with some of their complaints, Ramage also knows that if he fails to deliver three sealed dispatches to admirals off Brest and Cadiz, and in the Caribbean, he will become a convenient scapegoat.

Ramage & the Freebooters Details

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Author : Dudley Pope

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From Reader Review Ramage & the Freebooters for online ebook

Omcn says

I am really enjoying this series.

Jon Box says

Great stories of Lt Ramage 'finding a way' of dealing with mutiny across the fleet and catching pirates/privateers . . .

Chris Hudson says

Good fun read. I enjoyed the plot of the first two books more but this one still makes you look forward to the next.

Arlomisty says

Great book in the Lord Ramage saga... book three! Ramage hunts down (by the Kings order) privateers who are plundering the Kings shipping lanes!

Carol says

This book begins with the mutiny at Spithead (<http://www.historytoday.com/alex-bark...>), then proceeds to the Windward Islands. On the way there they encounter a slave ship, an excellent description is given. The story is exciting!

Reni says

Another fun, quick read. Sure, if you look for depth in your Age of Sail fiction, you should rather look to O'Brian or Forester. But if you're looking for a more swashbuckling approach to high adventure on the seas during the Napoleonic Wars, Ramage will deliver.

This time I wasn't quite as taken with the plot as with the first two novels, this one not featuring as many action sequences and therefore appearing a bit more slow paced. However, this is not to mean that *Ramage & the Freebooters* was by any means boring, or too long for its content. In fact, there is a lot going on, from

suppressing a mutiny to a bit of spywork to fighting privateers while being trapped in lagoon and outnumbered (though we're never exactly told whether they're actually privateers or pirates, the book just switches from calling them freebooters to privateers at one point. What with killing civilians who have surrendered they're certainly not of the nice kind either way. None of them appear as actual characters however, which is a shame. It could have made the plot even more interesting.)

The Villain/Hero divide in general in this book is very black & white. All the villains are extremely cruel people so you don't feel sorry for them when they are killed by our heroes. And those antagonists that are pretty and a bit sympathetic had of course been forced into committing crimes by the proper villains. On a related note, I could have done without the romance aspect. (view spoiler) Once again, Ramage being too popular with too many characters for no good reason spoils this series a bit. It would certainly be more enjoyable without the hero worship.

One other character I had a problem with is the doctor. His alcoholism seemed just to exist so Ramage had something to brood about during the voyage to Barbados. Once he is magically cured the character disappears for the rest of the book. This is no way to treat a serious topic like alcoholism and I could understand if some readers felt a bit offended.

Compared to other classic Age of Sail fiction I was positively surprised at the treatment of the character of Maxton. The other, Christian characters, take his religious views seriously and he is never made fun of because of what they could have derided as superstitions.

Oh, and the throwing knife actually came in handy in one scene! Yes, I'm just as shocked as you are!

And while Ramage's speech impediment does seem to have disappeared in dialogue, at least it is referenced by other characters. Seriously, Pope. Please, don't get rid of that one. It's what makes him at least a bit charming!

The actual naval actions are once again a delight to read. Even though Pope, in this volume, bends history a little more than usual in this series to fit the plot. The mutiny of the Triton is not at all historically accurate (the mutiny didn't extend to the smaller vessels, as the men did not intend to cripple the fleet), and it's more than a little bit weird that a mutining brig would accept to have half its crew exchanged and accept new officers on board, even if they don't intend to follow their orders. However, that portion of the book is still an enjoyable read, so I'm not going to complain about it too much. It's just that I expected better from Pope, not to fall back onto such tricks to make his narrative more exciting.

George Conger says

Series improves with each book -- better than 1 & 2

Murat says

I liked the series very much and will read all the books I can put my hands on. Also I am glad that Ramage does not get a promotion at the end of every book

ExtremeBibliophile says

My first time reading this author and although I can't say I have the same feeling of enchantment and enthrallment that I have when reading Patrick O'Brian and C.S. Forester, this is a pretty good effort. Ramage is presented not as some kind of demigod seagoing superhero but more of a flawed anti-hero in the mode of Horatio Hornblower. Pope has an excellent command of naval terminology as well as the details of early 19th-century history. A refreshing change of pace after reading a Borgia novel!

Alfred Lord tennyson says

these are good fun

Eric_W says

Well, OK, I'm sorry. I apologize to Dudley Pope. I had said some rather unkind things about one of his Ramage novels, based on an audiotape. To be fair I read another, Ramage and the Freebooters, and it's really quite entertaining.

As with the C.S. Forester, Alexander Kent, and O'Brian series, this one is also set at sea during the Napoleonic War. Lieutenant Ramage, son of the disgraced admiral, is under a cloud himself for having performed some rather unorthodox maneuvers during the Battle of St. Vincent. These maneuvers were much to the delight of Sir Jervis and Lord Nelson, but to the consternation and dismay of the more traditional officers, who actually believe in following orders to the letter.

Believing he is to be reprimanded, Ramage appears before Admiral Spencer, only to be given command of a small brig - ten guns the Triton. There's a catch, however. The brig is tied up at Spithead, and this is the year 1797. You will remember that was the year the British sailors mutinied at Spithead. Ramage's task is to find a crew and sail to the Caribbean to carry word of the mutiny to the rest of the British fleet command so they can take appropriate action. A tricky task. Should he succeed, the glory will go to the Board; should he fail, he becomes a convenient scapegoat.

The mutineers' demands were really quite reasonable. Aside from a request for slightly higher pay --they were paid much less than sailors in the merchant service-- they asked for leave when in port (always denied for fear of desertion) and that a pound be considered 16 ounces. Normally, it was the custom of the purser, who had to account for everything, to receipt for 16 ounces, but supply the men with only 14 ounces, arguing the difference was spoilage or wastage. He usually pocketed the difference himself.

Another scam was to charge off all sorts of expenses to dead sailors, leaving little for the widow, but making himself wealthy. Pursers were not popular. Once Ramage arrives in the West Indies, he is assigned another tricky task. Schooners have been disappearing with regularity, and the Navy has been unable to discover what has happened to them. Clearly they have been taken by privateers, yet a search of the entire region reveals no inlets or bays where they could be hiding and transshipping the cargoes. Pope has crafted a page-turning yardbracing mystery.

Peter says

The first of the Ramage books - all of which are exciting and well written. The Ramage series ranks 3rd with me behind Hornblower and Bolitho for age of sail excitement. Ramage is just a little too good and nothing is impossible..

Brad says

Much slower than the previous two books.

Jean says

This is book number three in the Ramage series. This series of historical novels are based on the British Admiralty records of the Napoleonic era.

Lt. Ramage is given command of the brig HMS Triton with orders to deliver a warning to the three offshore fleets that the fleet in Homeport has mutinied. Ramage's first job is to get the Triton underway but surprise the crew has also mutinied along with those of the homeport fleet. After delivering the message to the three fleets Ramage is to report to the Caribbean for further orders. As usual Ramage uses creative tactics to overcome his problems.

The book is well written with lots of sea action. Pope does not shy away from describing the harsh realities of life at sea during the Napoleonic wars. Pope explains how the poor treatment of sailors led to the great mutiny of the Home Fleet. The author also goes into detail about the slave trade. The book is full of action and is an exciting fun read that is based on historical fact. I read this as an audiobook downloaded from Audible. Steven Crossley narrated the book.

Jim says

This is the best of Dudley Pope's novels yet in the Lord Ramage series. Pope's writing brings the reader right into the story - one can actually feel oneself in the action at sea, approaching Barbados after a cruise across the Atlantic and in the midst of fighting with pirates. This is a rollicking tale of sailing ships in the late 1790's.

Lieutenant Ramage is assigned to a new brig - HMS Triton - at Spithead. Meanwhile the great mutiny of the British navy has already started at Spithead - the common sailors refusing to set sail, forcing their officers off the ship and insisting that conditions aboard naval ships be improved, that pay and leave be increased. Ramage is assigned to take news of the mutiny to the British admirals blockading the French coast as well as to the British admiral in command in the Caribbean. But half of Triton's crew is in mutiny, while the other half is part of Ramage's old crew from his former ship, HMS Kathleen, which was lost in the Battle of Cape

St. Vincent.

Ramage's first task is to get Triton underway in spite of the mutinous crew. He then sets sail for the rendezvous point along the French coast where he delivers his messages to the admirals. Then it is off to the Caribbean. En route, he comes across a demented slave ship - a Blackbirder.

Once he reports to the Admiral in Barbados, he is tasked with finding and defeating pirates who have been taking trading schooners in the islands - a task that two past captains failed to accomplish just a short while previous.

This is great naval fiction. I recommend it highly.
