

Background

The Sailors of the HMS Surprise

A thirty foot wave crests and breaks across the bow of the HMS Surprise. Her deck is awash with the frothing, green Atlantic. A sailor throws a bight of line around a belay pin and hangs on for dear life. The gale screams through the shrouds, tearing at the top men who scramble to reef canvas. The Surprise heaves and groans as it is battered relentlessly by the cold, cruel sea. It is the courage and strength of an orchestrated brotherhood that holds this ship together.

This book is a vessel holding the voices and faces of the background cast of Master and Commander. This is more than a visual record of a ship's crew. You have in your hands slices of time in which a man looks out to you alone, and he tries to communicate. Take a minute with him. He is more than just a thread in a tapestry; he is a tapestry himself.

The following collection of portraits and submissions of text were gathered in hallways, hotel rooms, and against pockmarked walls on the set over a period of five and a half months. The unedited writings consist of poems, essays, short stories, drawings, and collage that are juxtaposed next to the portraits of the authors. This stunning group of men from all over the world gave their voices to this project and in so doing, gave you a window into the soul of the crew of the HMS Surprise. This book is dedicated to the strength of bond among warriors of the sea, and to the brotherhood of Surprisers.