



Caribbee

Thomas Hoover

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Publishers Weekly

Barbados and Jamaica 1648. The lush and deadly Caribbean paradise, domain of rebels and slaveholders, of bawds and buccaneers. Colonists fight a wishful war for freedom against England.

CARIBBEE is the untold story of the first American revolution, as English colonists pen a Declaration of Defiance ("liberty" or "death") against Parliament and fight a full-scale war for freedom against an English fleet -- with cannon, militia, many lives lost -- over a century before 1776.

The powerful story line, based on actual events, also puts the reader in the midst of the first major English slave auction in the Americas, and the first slave revolt. We see how plantation slavery was introduced into the English colonies, setting a cruel model for North America a few decades later, and we experience what it was like to be a West African ripped from a rich culture and forced to slave in the fields of the New World. We also see the unleashed greed of the early Puritans, who burned unruly slaves alive, a far different truth from that presented in sanitized history books. Finally, we witness how slavery contributed to the failure of the first American revolution, as well as to the destruction of England's hope for a vast New World empire.

We also are present at the birth of the buccaneers, one-time cattle hunters who banded together to revenge a bloody Spanish attack on their home, and soon became the most feared marauders in the New World. The story is mythic in scope, with the main participants being classic American archetypes -- a retelling of the great American quest for freedom and honor. The major characters are based on real individuals, men and women who came West to the New World to seek fortune and personal dignity.

Reviews

“This action-crammed, historically factual novel . . . is a rousing read about the bad old marauding days, ably reserached by Hoover”

Publishers Weekly

“Meticulous . . . compelling.”

Kirkus Reviews

“It should establish Thomas Hoover in the front rank of writers of historical fiction.”

—MALCOLM BOSSE author of *THE WARLORD*

Tags: Slavery, slaves, Caribbean, sugar, buccaneers, pirates, Barbados, Jamaica, Spanish Gold, Spanish Empire, Port Royal, Barbados

Caribbee Details

Date : Published (first published 1985)

ISBN :

Author : Thomas Hoover

Format : Kindle Edition 452 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Literature, 17th Century, Fiction

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From Reader Review Caribbee for online ebook

Jack says

Historical Fiction about Barbados, Tortuga and Jamaica in the mid-1600's. The author pieced together a story based on real people and events. Interesting read with good characters and story line. Learned a little about the Caribbean islands history, slavery, Cromwell's Puritans, sugar cane industry and buccaneer history, all set in a tale that kept me interested.

Pretty good read!

Mike Nallo says

While I found this book to be at best, mildly interesting, my overall feeling is one of disappointment. This effort would have been better served had it been split into two separate books. This would have allowed for a more focused plot development. I found the numerous side stories to be a distraction, and felt they detracted from the overall focus of the book. This book had potential, which was never realized, due, in my opinion, to the reader never really being able to determine what the main storyline was supposed to be. The most interesting and informative portion of the book is the Afterword, where the Author outlined the figures from History who were the inspiration for the different characters within the fragmented, unfocused, and otherwise un-remarkable book.

Richard Sommery-Gade says

A true swashbuckling story derived from the true history of Hispaniola, Jamaica, Tortuga, basically all the Caribbean Islands of legend and the men & women of the 1600's to the 1700's in Charles II & Cromwell's rule of England. Before slavery had taken hold in the Americas, instigated by the Puritans & Roundheads of the time, while chastising the Roman Catholics for their Church policies, were in a lot of instances worse than the people they were at war with, which is so often the case.

This is a wonderful book giving a true colorful description of the times, morals, habits and accurate picture of life in their non air conditioned, sweaty, often filthy, disease ridden society, where the people the upper levels scorned were often a step ahead of the 'superior' ones who had enslaved them. The corruption, greed, desperation go beyond belief in this fascinating look into the reality of the famous Spanish Main. Some spelling errors are the only errors that I found marring this piece, so I give it a 4.9 on the 5.0 scale of excellence. Don't miss this one as I couldn't put it down once I started it.

LadyCalico says

Wow, did I love this amazing book! It truly was like a James Clavell or Leon Uris historical novel where a great deal of research has gone into the accurate historical background, and the fiction and fictional characters were created to fit into the history--rather than recreating history to fit the whims of the author's fiction. I know, because this book had me bouncing all over the internet reading maps and histories to delve

deeper into the stories. I should have been awarded three college credits for how much I learned before I was done and I now know more about the Puritan Reformation and Caribbean history than I will ever need to know again. It was a complex story that could have been written in two volumes, but wasn't, and even though it was a double-sized story, I was still heart-broken to finish it knowing how hard it would be to move on to lesser books, but, hey, give me a few years, and I'll be reading it again. I do have some criticisms--like wasn't the hero just a bit too noble and patient for a dissolute smuggler--but they are outweighed by the sheer enjoyment of the adventure, indeed, battles and adventure galore. This is a book for lovers of historical fiction who love history, rather than lovers of "historical fiction" who love bodice-rippers. It may be more of a "man's book" than chick lit, but that's okay with me; I like grit but not mush.

Chris Boden says

Very good.

Looking for similar sea stories.

English navy & on the spanish main.

Also expeditions in usa africa and the sea

Lyle Garford says

I would rate this 4.5 stars if that was possible. I quite enjoyed this work, as I love the Caribbean. Lots of great history built into this story.

Dava Stewart says

I read another book by Thomas Hoover several months ago, set in India, and quite enjoyed it. This one...a bit less. I was bored several times, and actually had to force myself to finish it. The majority of the story takes place on Barbados, and tracks the settlement of the island by the English up to the point the first slave ship arrives.

Throughout the first 3/4 of the book, the main character talks about and thinks about taking over Jamaica. The last few pages of the story are set on Jamaica. So there is a constant build up to not a lot of story. It felt unbalanced somehow.

With the genre "historical fiction" there is almost always some romance element, which is fine, and the same is true here. There are actually two romantic stories, and they are both just okay. The first, between the two main characters is expected and predictable, and the second is less explored, therefore less interesting.

Overall, this is a good story for people who are interested in historical fiction, particularly the period of English empire-building. It doesn't require much thought and probably won't stick with you for too long.

Maria says

This historical fiction book had some good points including strong and interesting female characters, alluring scenes of passion, and a unique historical perspective on the early days of the Caribbean Islands. However, I think the major failing of the author was his inability to focus the story on one particular set of main characters. This led to some good initial character development, but then lack of utilization of those characters consistently throughout the novel. In addition, there was something very unrealistic about the copious amounts of dialogue during the battle scenes. Overall an interesting read, but it took some coaxing to finish.

Kyle says

“Caribbee” is a loosely-based historical fiction novel covering a period in the mid 1600’s. The general plot does include other Caribbean islands, but is largely based on the island of Barbados. I use the term ‘loosely’based’ for two reasons. First, the author chose to portray events that took place in multiple locations involving numerous people over about a 10-year period. As such, a lot of history and action is pinned on the main characters, which seemed to make for an ambitious and somewhat unbelievable plot. Second, parts of the novel felt more like a romance story complete with steamy sex scenes.

I did some limited research on my own, and I thought the primary plot was greatly exaggerated in the novel compared to what actually took place on the island of Barbados. There were some elements of truth in the story, but it seemed the author was pretty liberal in adding in elements involving buccaneers, piracy, and a desire to speak out against the brutality and injustice of slavery. If you can distance yourself from what actually happened during this timeframe, you wind up with a pretty fun pirate story.

One phrase that particularly bugged me was some form of “... as sure as I’m a Christian”, which was typically uttered in conjunction with non-Christian ideals. I think the author was potentially trying to show the hypocrisy of the Protestants (Puritans) and Papists (Catholics), but even the pirates used some form of the phrase to describe their actions. I didn’t see any sense of Christian motivations and actions in the book, and perhaps that was the point the author was trying to make as people were motivated by greed, lust, and alcohol.

Overall, the book was an okay read for me because I like my historical fiction novels to more closely follow history and the frequent and somewhat graphic sex scenes made me feel like I was reading a romance novel.

S says

At first, I thought this had the potential to be quality historical fiction, but it just ended up reading like a wannabe historical romance. Blah.

Rob Godfrey says

I really enjoyed this book! I wanted to give it 4.5 out of 5.

A story that never drags with plenty of love, action, treachery and surprises to keep you engaged. The setting in the 17th century on Barbados at the start of the slave trade was intriguing and although I have little knowledge of those times, seems to ring true. The characters were a little stereotyped though (hero is an ace shot, heroine beautiful, etc).

Another doubt was about the quantity of rum that people drink. I'm no stranger to alcohol but surely they would have all fallen down inebriated before breakfast as they constantly seem to be guzzling the stuff? Enjoyable? definitely, totally believable? maybe not.

Lead me to get hold of another of his books Syndrome - will see how that goes.

Daniel Balkwill says

I thought this book took quite a long time to come to the boil but I persisted with it because I enjoyed another of his books 'The Moghul'. Not a bad effort by any means but not as good as some of his other works.

John says

I got a little history I did not know. It covers a few years around 1650 when the English took a deep-dive into slavery and slave trading in the Caribbean for the sake of white gold (sugar). It preceded and predestined same in Virginia. I learned about Barbados's brief fight for independence, Cromwell's failed plan to take over the area from the Spanish, Dutch traders, and buccaneer's efforts to confound them all. What a rollicking decade. It was a generally good read, but unfortunately you have to take in a bit of bodice ripping along the way. I would have given it 4 stars but every chapter seems to have a token "bodice-rip" in it (just for fun tried my new Kindle search function which says there were 26 "bodice" and 35 "breast" mentions); just got silly in parts. If you don't mind scanning by a few pages, it was worth the pennies Kindle charged.

Patricia says

The first American revolution didn't start in the New England, along the Atlantic coast or in Pennsylvania -- it started in Barbados. In the mid-seventeenth century a group of English settlers revolted against the rule of Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth. The fighting force was a mixed group: planters (slave owners) who feared losing their lucrative cane profits, English loyalists, Irish indentured servants who hated what Cromwell had done to Ireland, Dutch sea captains who traded in Barbados, and a few who longed for an independent, slave-free society.

Well researched story with beautiful descriptions of the island. The author wrote that the characters were based on a number of actual people -- some I admired, some I hoped would lose.

No graphic sex or violence

Kris says

--From Red Adept Reviews--

I downloaded Caribbee, by Thomas Hoover, as a free book from Amazon.com.

Overall: 3 3/4 Stars

Plot/Storyline: 4 1/2 Stars

The opening scene grabbed my attention; a good pirate raid will do that. But once the main story began, it took awhile for the pace to pick up again. After that point, the rising action was consistent: numerous buildups to intermediate climax points as the overall tension of the book consistently rose to the finale.

The plot of this novel weaves several threads together into a rich tapestry: romance and politics, greed and rebellion, civilization and lawlessness, desperation and faith. If I could book passage to the world that Mr. Hoover has described in this book, I would.

The Caribbean's image in Caribbee is portrayed intentionally as a pre-colonial-America, with dedicated—if flawed—people and their desire for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The message I took away after reading was one of both realism and hope, elements the world can always use more of.

Character Development: 4 Stars

The novel portrayed several opposing factions: loyalists, separatists, slaves, owners, traders and pirates. It's true that some of the characters were reduced in areas to a single driving emotion, but I feel that was a perfectly natural extension of the stress the plot was placing on them.

Numerous characters, including the main character Hugh Winston, suffered from a chronic inability to trust, and it wrenched the plot in new, tragic directions with frightfully enjoyable regularity. You know a book is written well when you can identify at least somewhat with every side, and it's hard to tell who the worst villain is.

Everyone received detail and background. Usually it was enough to make them unforgettable; occasionally, it was too much, irrelevant to the plot and distracting. One of the main characters came across as anachronistic, a feminist and civil rights activist three centuries early. Don't get me wrong, I thoroughly enjoyed reading about her. She just felt a little out of place: a romance character lost in a political history novel.

Writing Style: 3 1/2 Stars

Mr. Hoover has clearly done his research, and it shines through in his writing style. He takes his time, embroidering each scene, embedding it with careful details. His world took shape around me, and I was immersed in the past. This effect happily extended to dialogue as well. I enjoy reading period speech, and Mr. Hoover did not disappoint. He had a wonderful mix of British, African, Dutch and French speech patterns, and where appropriate he stirred together mixtures of several languages to reflect the melting pot that was the Caribbean at that point in history.

The other side of the thoroughness coin, however, revealed the unfortunate habit of including a plethora of details, to the effect of bogging down the story. One detailed explanation was repeated later in the novel. The slower pace sometimes felt like reading a history book, and during action scenes it became consciously frustrating. In another instance, what was supposed to be a big, end-of-book reveal to one of the characters as well as the reader ended up being easily predicted much earlier on, thanks to too many flashbacks, musings and hints.

Editing: 2 1/2 Stars

I have to include this section, because so much of what little was negative about this book occurs here. The ebook was plagued with errors, most notably a lack of spacing between scenes, making smooth transitions difficult. A find-and-replace error left all instances of “defiance” posted as Winston’s sailing ship “Defiance”, which added unintended hilarity. Typos and other mistakes cropped up often enough to be annoying: I stopped noting them halfway through due to sheer volume. With a simple read-through, this book’s readability could be vastly improved, and a lot of the reader’s confusion and distraction would be avoided.
