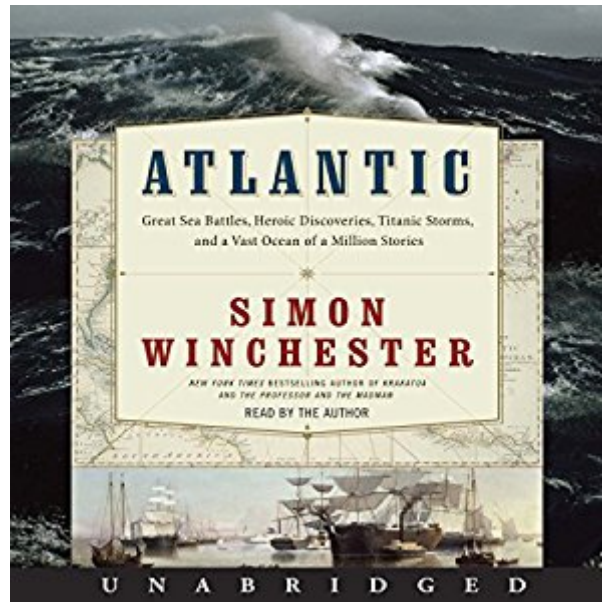


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# Atlantic: Great Sea Battles, Heroic Discoveries, Titanic Storms, and A Vast Ocean Of A Million Stories



## Synopsis

From best-selling author Simon Winchester comes the immense and thrilling story of the world's most mysterious and breathtaking natural wonder: the Atlantic Ocean. *Atlantic* is a biography of a tremendous space that has been central to the ambitions of explorers, scientists, and warriors, and continues to affect profoundly our character, attitudes, and dreams. Spanning the ocean's story, from its geological origins to the age of exploration, from World War II battles to today's struggles with pollution and over-fishing, Winchester's narrative is epic, intimate, and awe inspiring. Until a thousand years ago, few humans ventured into the Atlantic or imagined traversing its vast infinity. But once the first daring mariners successfully navigated to its far shores - whether they were Vikings, the Irish, the Basques, John Cabot, or Christopher Columbus in the north, or the Portuguese and the Spanish in the south - the Atlantic swiftly evolved in the world's growing consciousness of itself as an enclosed body of water. Soon it became the fulcrum of Western civilization. More than a mere history, *Atlantic* is an unforgettable journey of unprecedented scope by one of the most gifted writers in the English language.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have enjoyed a number of Winchester's books, but this was not one of them. He is at his best when he is detailing a story that is not well-known and surprising. That was what drove the success of his previous work. In this book, he takes on an enormous subject and ends up with a catalog of his research interspersed with totally unsupported assertions and some rather dull writing about his

travels. The structural problem with the book is that Winchester has chosen a cumbersome thematic structure to organize his writing: the seven stages of man listed in the "All the world's a stage..." speech from *As You Like It*. While this may have seemed like a clever way to tackle a sprawling subject like the Atlantic, the structure overwhelms any insight Winchester may or may not have had about the Atlantic. Seeking to fill this outline, Winchester stuffs everything into it that either (a) features the words "sea" or "Atlantic" or (b) happens to have taken place in or near the Atlantic. The result is a combination of the obvious (jet travel ended regular ocean liner service) or the downright tautological (in a section on "cities," Winchester writes brief descriptions of New York, Cape Town, St. Helena, none of which have any connection to each other and all of which essentially boil down to the pointless statement "these are Atlantic cities because they are on the Atlantic ocean.") Unsupported assertions abound. Apparently, musical instruments were not powerful enough before the 18th century to tackle the sea as a subject (whatever that may mean in the context of music). The "paramount" issue in the story of the Pilgrims is the Atlantic. What? How do you back that up?

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