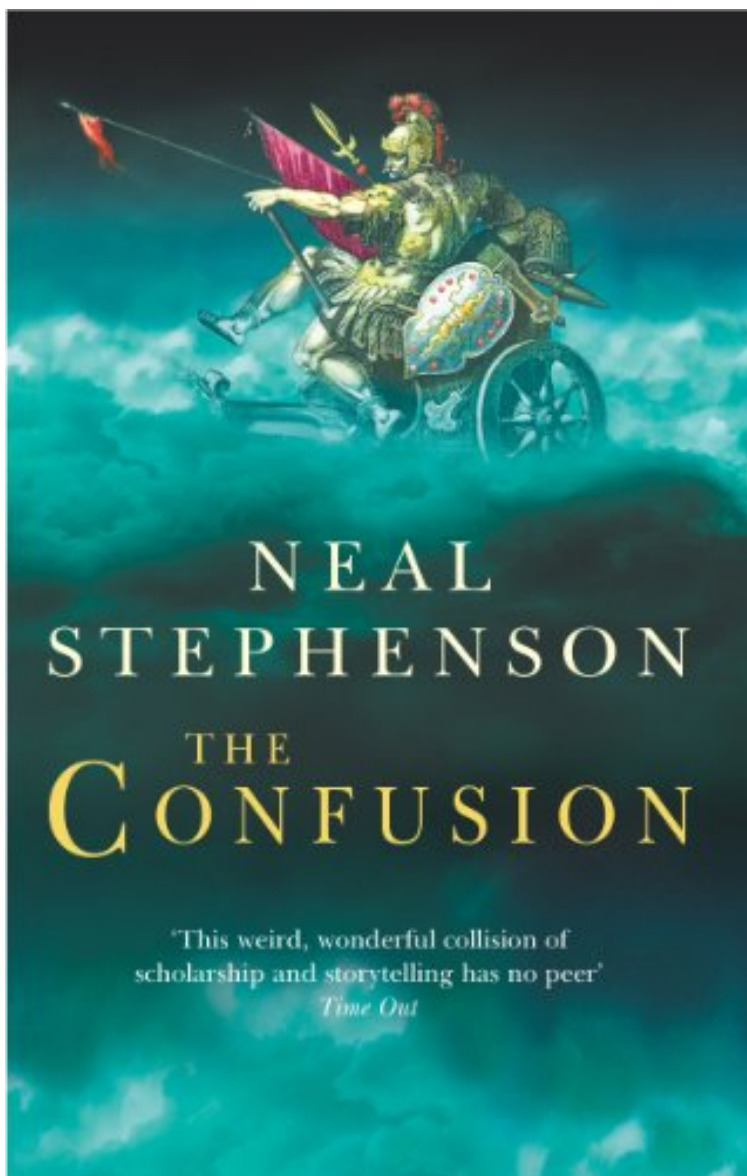


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The Confusion



*Par Neal Stephenson
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Par Neal Stephenson : The Confusion before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Confusion:

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Description : Description du produitIn the year 1689, a cabal of Barbary galley slaves -- including one Jack Shaftoe, a.k.a. King of the Vagabonds, a.k.a. Half-Cocked Jack, lately and miraculously cured of the pox -- devises a daring plan to win freedom and fortune. A great adventure ensues, rife with battles, chases, hairbreadth escapes, swashbuckling, bloodletting, and danger -- a perilous race for an enormous prize of silver ... nay, gold ... nay, legendary gold that will place the intrepid band at odds with the mighty and the mad, with alchemists, Jesuits, great navies, pirate queens, and vengeful despots across vast oceans and around the globe. Meanwhile, back in Europe ... The exquisite and resourceful Eliza, Countess de la Zeur, master of markets, pawn and confidante of enemy kings, onetime Turkish harem virgin, is stripped of her immense personal fortune by France's most dashing privateer. Penniless and at risk from those who desire either her or her head (or both), she is caught up in a web of international intrigue, even as she desperately

seeks the return of her most precious possession -- her child. While ... Newton and Leibniz continue to propound their grand theories as their infamous rivalry intensifies, stubborn alchemy does battle with the natural sciences, nobles are beheaded, dastardly plots are set in motion, coins are newly minted (or not) in enemy strongholds, father and sons reunite in faraway lands, priests rise from the dead ... and Daniel Waterhouse seeks passage to the Massachusetts colony in hopes of escaping the madness into which his world has descended.

Prsentation de l'diteurNeal Stephenson continues his extraordinary Baroque Cycle in this sequel to his bestselling Quicksilver, bringing to life a cast of unforgettable characters in a time of breathtaking genius and discovery. It is the late 1600s, on the high seas. A group of Barbary galley slaves plot as they ply the oars of a pirate ship, hatching a daring scheme to find an enormous cache of Spanish gold. Amazingly, they succeed - leaving some very unhappy men behind who vow to hunt down the vagabonds and bring them to justice, no matter the cost. Meanwhile, back in France, the beautiful Eliza - toast of Versailles and spy extraordinaire - attempts to return to London with her baby, a child whose paternity is shrouded in mystery. Making her way home, her ship is stopped by a French privateer and she is returned to the Sun King's court.

Thrown back into a web of international intrigue, Eliza must contend with all manner of characters, including buccaneers, poisoners, Jesuits, financial manipulators, and even a stray cryptographer or two...From Publishers WeeklyThe title of Stephenson's vast, splendid and absorbing sequel to Quicksilver (2003) suggests the state of mind that even devoted fans may face on occasion as they follow the glorious and exceedingly complex parallel stories of Jack Shaftoe, amiable criminal mastermind, and Eliza, Countess de la Zeur, courageous secret agent and former prisoner in a Turkish harem. In 1689, Jack recovers his memory in Algiers, evades galley slavery and joins a quest for the lost treasure of a Spanish pirate named Carlos Olancho Macho y Macho. This leads to adventures at sea worthy of Patrick O'Brian, and hairbreadth escapes from the jaws of the Inquisition. Meanwhile, Eliza is captured by the historical (and distinguished)

French privateer Jean Bart while trying to escape to England with her baby. She must then navigate the intrigues of the court of Louis XIV, which are less lethal than those of the Inquisition by a small margin, but still make for uneasy sleep for a friendless female spy. Her correspondence with such scientific minds as Wilhelm Leibniz helps propel the saga's chronicling of the roots of modern science at a respectable clip. Of course, one can't call anything about the Baroque Cycle "brisk," but the richness of detail and language lending verisimilitude t? the setting and depth to the characters should be reward enough for most readers.

Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.Booklist*Starred * This guy really likes to write long books. Cyptonomicon, his 1999 epic, was roughly the same length as the entire Lord of the Rings trilogy. Quicksilver (2003), the first volume of his Baroque Cycle, was well over 900 pages, and this second installment is in the same ballpark. It picks up the story in 1689. Jack Shaftoe, self-proclaimed king of the vagabonds, is a galley slave, but that's soon going to change: he and nine of his fellow slaves engineer an escape. Their plan, to steal a cache of Spanish silver, turns out better (and also worse) than they could have imagined. Meanwhile, Eliza, a notorious spy whom Jack once rescued from a Turkish harem, is trying to get to London with her newborn baby. Set during one of history's most exciting times, from 1600 to 1750, this series brilliantly captures the intellectual excitement and cultural revolution of the era. With real-life supporting characters such as Isaac Newton and Wilhelm Leibnitz, the series blends fact and fiction so cleverly that it is virtually impossible to separate one from the other. Stephenson is a graceful writer, never getting bogged down in detail, keeping the story moving, dazzling us with his technique. The concluding volume of the trilogy is scheduled to appear in October 2004, and it's fair to say anyone who reads this one will spend the intervening months waiting with breathless anticipation.

David PittCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved