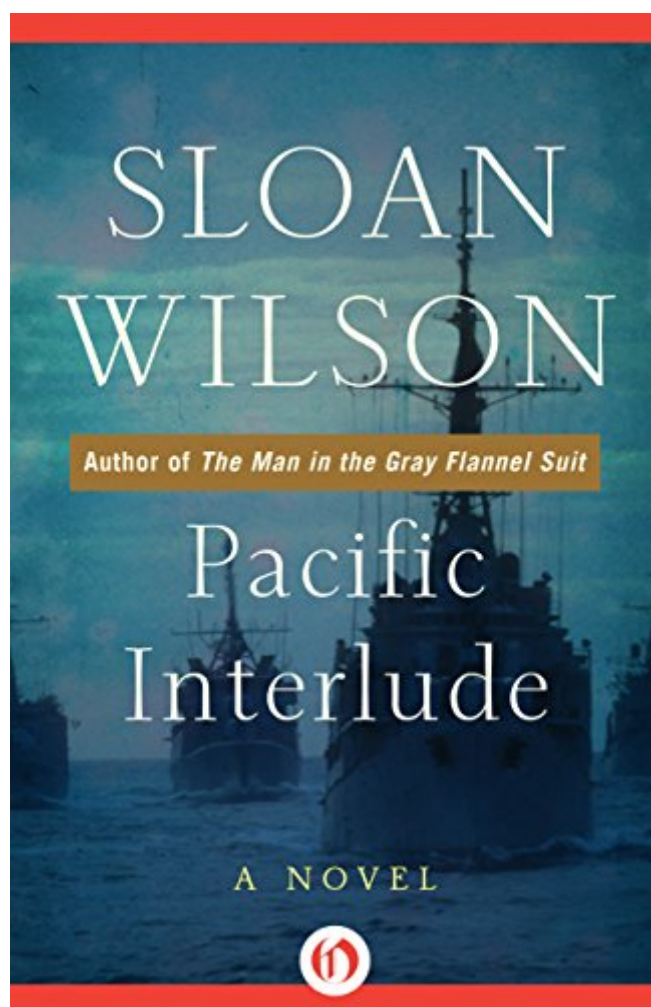


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Pacific Interlude: A Novel



Synopsis

During the last days of World War II, a young officer braves enemy fire and a maverick crew on the open waters and in the steamy ports of the South Pacific. Twenty-five-year-old Coast Guard lieutenant Sylvester Grant, a veteran of the Greenland Patrol, has just been given command of a small gas tanker, running shuttle and convoy duties for the US Army. Sally, his wife of three years, is eager for him to get back to Massachusetts and live a conventional suburban life selling insurance—but Syl longs for adventure and is bound to find it as the captain of a beat-up, unseaworthy vessel carrying extremely flammable cargo across dangerous stretches of the Pacific Ocean. As the Allies prepare to retake the Philippines, the only thing the sailors aboard the Y-18 want is for the war to be over. First, however, they must survive their mission to bring two hundred thousand gallons of high-octane aviation fuel to shore. From below-deck personality clashes to the terrifying possibility of an enemy attack, from combating illness and boredom to the constant stress of preventing an explosion that could blow their ship sky high, the crew of the Y-18 must learn to work together and trust their captain—otherwise, they might never make it home. Based on Sloan Wilson's own experiences, *Pacific Interlude* is a thrilling and realistic story of World War II and a moving portrait of a man looking toward the future while trying to survive a precarious present.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sloan Wilson will always be best known for *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, and that's a shame. Towards the end of his career he wrote two books, fiction yet clearly based on his own experiences, taking place during World War 2, which are his finest works. *Pacific Interlude* is the second one, and it is one of my favorite books. It tells the story of the latter part of the Pacific war seen from the unlikely location of a small gas tanker, and particularly the perspective of the young 24 year old captain who finds himself in command. The book manages to attain total credibility, giving the reader a true feeling of what it must have been like living aboard that tanker. The ups and downs, matters petty and great, tragic and comic, all are mixed in a completely believable way. The book gives an excellent feeling of time and place, and while reading the novel a reader can almost feel like a silent crewmember of the ship. Everything from fear of fire and explosions from the flammable cargo, to fear of enemy warplanes, to fear of each other, is captured at various points. Wilson builds an interesting crew of fellow officers, each with differing strengths -- and definitely weaknesses -- during their forced voyage together. What I think really puts this book into the top tier in addition to the fact that it is a natural adventure story is the portrayal of the captain, Sylvester Grant. He is always conscious of feeling that he must play the part of captain, though he is never exactly sure what that is. His adjustments, uncertainty, and, despite living in extremely crowded quarters, loneliness, is portrayed perfectly. The first and last parts of the book take place on land -- Brisbane, Australia and the Philippines, and add to our understanding of the personalities of the people involved.

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