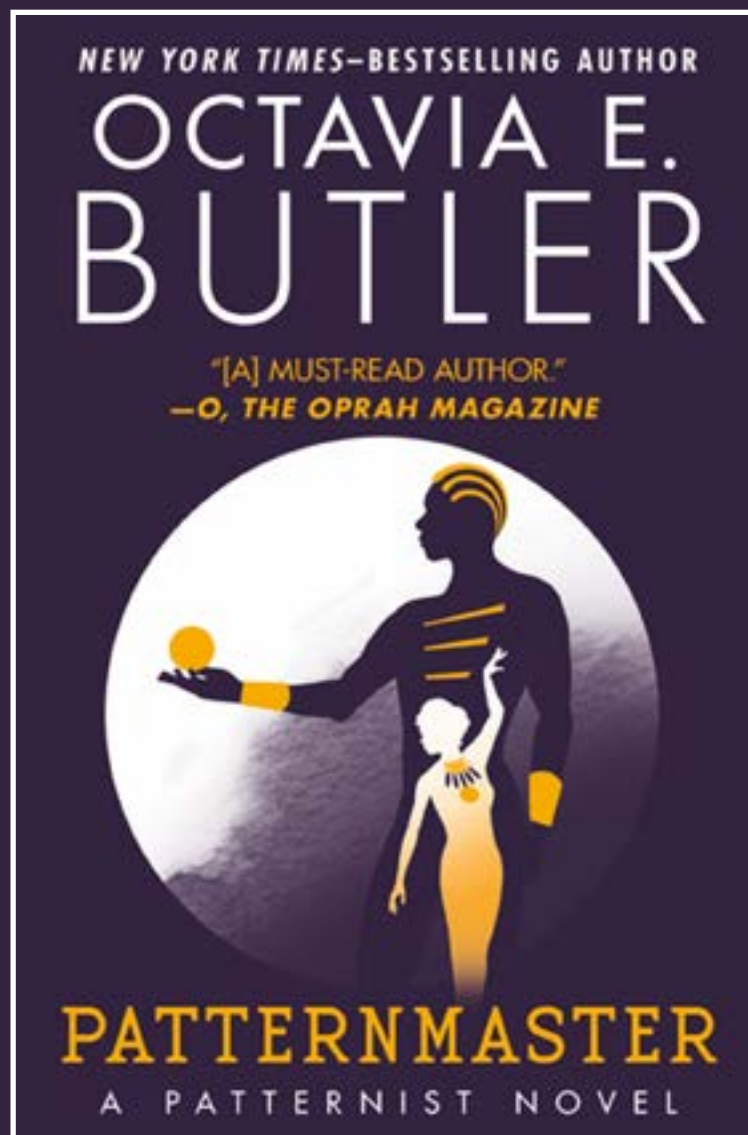


Octavia E. Butler's *Patternmaster*

“A long leash is still a leash.”

WHAT IS IT?

Octavia E. Butler's 1976 debut novel, originally published by Doubleday.



WHAT'S THE SYNOPSIS?

In the world of *Patternmaster*, society is divided into castes. The highest in the hierarchy are the Patternists, humans with psionic abilities. They have a long-running feud with the feral Clayarks, and view power-less humans as slaves.

Teray, whose mother was murdered by Clayarks, may inherit the role of Patternmaster, the powerful psychic who leads the Patternists. Still, he must grapple with issues of control and freedom to take up his father's mantle.

WHAT KIND OF RECEPTION DID *PATTERNMASTER* RECEIVE?

- A *Publishers Weekly* review from June of 1976 wrote, “The author carefully spells out the ground of her unique world, and the ensuing story of live, chase and combat is consistently attention-holding.”
- A May review in *Kirkus Reviews* called *Patternmaster* “fine, old-fashioned [science fiction].”



IS IT PART OF A SERIES?

Yes! Although *Patternmaster* was the first book published in the Patternmaster series (also referred to as the Seed to Harvest series), it is the final book in the chronology of the series.

The reading order for the series is *Wild Seed* (1980), *Mind of My Mind* (1977), *Clay's Ark* (1984), *Survivor* (1978), and *Patternmaster* (1976).

WHAT ARE SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT *PATTERNMASTER*?

- In a [2003 interview with Museum of Pop Culture](#), Butler revealed that *Patternmaster* was partially inspired by her attempts as a child to write a sci-fi story better than the movie *Devil Girl from Mars*.
- Butler worked numerous jobs while writing *Patternmaster*. According to Butler's friend, fellow writer [Vonda N. McIntyre](#), “she would get up early in the morning—two or three o'clock—and write before going to work.”
- The 1978 novel in the series, *Survivor*, is out of print at Butler's request. Butler said of her third book, “when I was young, a lot of people wrote about going to another world and finding either little green men or little brown men, and they were always less in some way. They were a little sly, or a little like “the natives” in a very bad, old movie. And I thought, “No way. Apart from all these human beings populating the galaxy, this is really offensive garbage.” People ask me why I don't like *Survivor*, my third novel. And it's because it feels a little bit like that.”

WHAT ARE ITS ADAPTATIONS?

Although there are no adaptations specifically for *Patternmaster* in development, *Wild Seed*—the first book in the series' order—is being [adapted into an Amazon series](#) by Viola Davis' production company, JuVee Productions. Nnedi Okorafor and Wanuri Kahiu are co-writing the show.