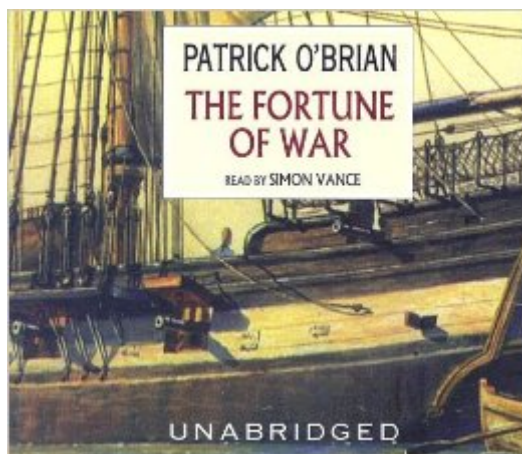


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The Fortune Of War (Aubrey-Maturin Series, Book 6)



Synopsis

[Read by Simon Vance] The Fortune of War is the sixth novel in Patrick O'Brian's 'Aubrey-Maturin' series featuring O'Brian's much loved characters: Captain Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin. After nearly losing the Leopard to the ocean, Captain Jack Aubrey, RN, and his diminished crew sail into harbor in the Dutch East Indies. There Aubrey finds himself appointed to the command of the fastest and best-armed frigate in the Royal Navy, but not before some forceful arguing with Admiral Drury. Aubrey and his friend Stephen Maturin take passage for England in a dispatch vessel, but the War of 1812 breaks out while they are en route. Bloody actions precipitate them both into new and unexpected scenes where Stephen's past activities as a secret agent return on him with a vengeance.

Book Information

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Audio CD

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (127 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

The Aubrey/Maturin series seems to get even better with each installment. The Fortune of War begins with Lucky Jack bringing his ship into port after the events of Desolation Island and reaches a thunderous conclusion with historical battle between the Chesapeake and the Shannon. In between O'Brian provides the reader with naval disasters, naval battles, cloak and dagger, tense escapes and even a cricket game! All this is set against the backdrop of the opening months of the War of 1812. The reader lives through unexpected reverses at sea and unanticipated successes on land in what is a tragic and senseless war. In The Fortune of War Aubrey and Maturin spend much of their time in the United States where Louisa Wogan and Diana Villiers of early books reside. The

reader gets an excellent feel for the period and place. Interestingly, in what appears to be a nod to modern readers, O'Brian cites the low taxes in the USA. Also, many modern readers might be surprised to read how unpopular "Mr. Madison's War" was at the time. Ironically what was a nasty, vicious war on the Canada/US border was a gentleman's war at sea. Officers were paroled and free to roam the streets in an enemy city. Ships' captains could write courteous letters to enemy captains inviting them out to engage in bloody naval conflicts. Perhaps the greatest irony was that the two societies with the freest men were engaging in a wasteful conflict while a tyrant was running roughshod over Europe. Perhaps the most interesting perspectives for the naval buff are O'Brian's explanations of initial American successes at sea and their affect on British morale. According to O'Brian American frigates (the largest class they had available) outgunned their RN counterparts.

The previous volume ended with the orchestrated escape of Mrs. Wogan and Michael Herapath from Desolation Island in an American whaler, and the reader knew that "the horrible old LEOPARD" was about to forge on, too, having managed to replace her destroyed rudder. This volume begins in late 1812, with the LEOPARD limping into harbor in the East Indies, with only a sentence or two given to the fate of Gov. William Bligh in Australia -- which didn't strike me as quite fair. The historical Bligh is a very interesting personality. However. The LEOPARD is good now only as a transport, and Jack Aubrey has been told of a nice frigate awaiting his command on his return to England, so he and Dr. Maturin and their followers take homebound passage with an old acquaintance of Jack's. It's a lovely voyage as far as the mid-Atlantic, but then events catch up with them, and they find themselves in a small boat struggling to reach the coast of Brazil. They're rescued by the JAVA -- which is then taken by the CONSTITUTION, the third British frigate to fall to the small U.S. Navy in a very short time. Very depressing for our heroes, but O'Brian doesn't hesitate to laud the abilities of the American seamen and commanders. Maturin and the wounded Jack end up as prisoners of war in Boston, where Stephen Maturin's intelligence activities against Napoleonic France come back to haunt him, and where he joins up again with Diana Villiers, Herapath (father and son), and Louisa Wogan. The focus is more on Maturin in this book than in most of the others (so far), and he shows himself to be quite cold-blooded when necessary in pursuit of his covert objectives.

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