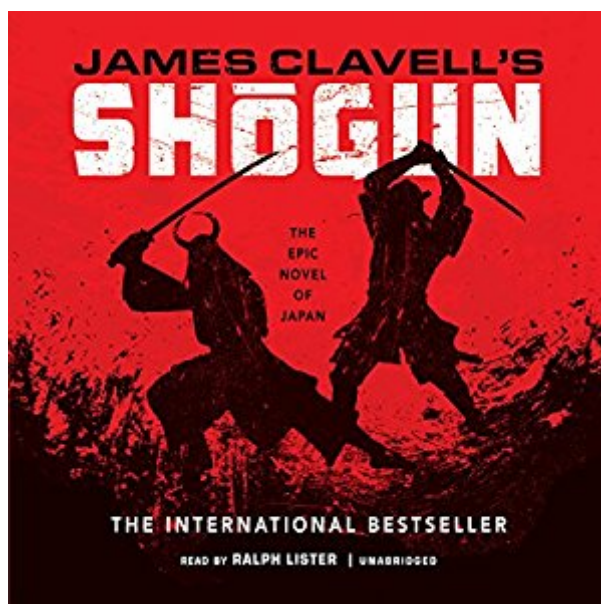


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Shogun: The Epic Novel Of Japan: The Asian Saga, Book 1



Synopsis

A bold English adventurer; an invincible Japanese warlord; a beautiful woman torn between two ways of life, two ways of love - all brought together in an extraordinary saga of a time and a place aflame with conflict, passion, ambition, lust, and the struggle for power. James Clavell's *Shōgun* is a modern classic, a masterpiece of historical fiction that will continue to endure for decades to come.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'Historical' fiction is something of a misnomer, as books placed in this category are almost always fiction first and 'historical' only in time and setting. *Shogun*, however, comes close to being a true example of this field, detailing the late 16th century exploration and exploitation of the Orient by the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, and English. As few Americans are aware of some of the atrocities and cruelties committed in the name of crown and religion during this period, some of the scenes depicted in this book may come as shock. But they provide an excellent background portrait of the European mind-set of those times, a palette that Clavell uses to contrast and define the extraordinarily different culture of the Japan of that time. And it is his portrait of the Japanese, his lovingly detailed characterizations of Toranaga, Mariko, Omi and their deeply intertwined interactions with the English pilot Blackthorne that defines and breathes life into this breathtakingly large and complex story of love, war, and political intrigue. And these characters are not static. Each grows and changes as events unfold, most especially Blackthorne himself, growing from a totally self-centered 'barbarian' of unclean habits to a person who can appreciate the beauty, intelligence,

and moral rectitude of others, who comes to care deeply for those around him, who comes to understand a philosophy of life totally different from that of his own culture. The reader will eventually take each of these characters into his heart, will live right along with them and their problems, cares, successes, and failures, until they are almost more real than the mundane world the reader inhabits. Is this book totally historically accurate? No, but it doesn't really need to be.

"Very few men are wise-most are sinners and great evil happens on earth in gods name. But not of god. This world is vale of tears and only a preparation for the everlasting peace."-James Clavell, page 1085, Shogun. For some reason this statement, made by Japanese christen monk perfectly sums up the awesome book that is shogun. I don't mean awesome in the sense of "dude, that was awesome", I mean it in the sense that this book is awe inspiring, mind blowing and devastatingly emotional and good. This is a book about a man named John Blackthorn, English pilot of the Dutch ship Erasmus who was washed ashore with what was left of his crew in the small Japanese village of Anjiro. His tale is amazing, for Blackthorn will become the man who brings Japan into the 17th century, introduces them to guns, and totally decimates the Portuguese Jesuit hold over Japan. None of this sounds good of course, but that's because this book isn't really about Blackthorn. I've always avoided Asian fiction and history, so I have no idea how accurate this book is. But, even if it's all total hoey, this book is amazing. It brings to life the Japan of flying cherry petals, green bamboo, samurai honor and wild mountain peaks. This is a book about honor and love and crossing cultural boundaries. It's a book about duty and karma and everything that is noble in life. Written in the style of Michener, only with more emotion, I can only say that this is one of the best books I have ever read. It's so good in fact, that I don't think I can ever read it again.

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