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How Dark the Night: A Novel

William C. Hammond

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How Dark the Night: A Novel William C. Hammond
William Hammond's award winning series carries on the tradition of Patrick O'Brian and C.S. Forester. It is the only nautical fiction series that offers the American perspective during the Age of Fighting Sail. *How Dark the Night* continues the seafaring adventures of the Cutler family by picking up the action where the fourth volume, *A Call to Arms*, ends in 1805. The years leading up to the War of 1812 were devastating ones for the young republic. The life-and-death struggle between Great Britain and France caught the United States in a web of financial and political chaos as President Jefferson and Secretary of State Madison labored to keep the unprepared United States out of the conflict without compromising the nation's honor. On the home front, Jefferson's embargo threatened the livelihood of the Cutlers and other New England shipping families as merchant ships rotted on their moorings and sailors sat on the beach, penniless. Far worse for the Cutler family is a grave illness that threatens the life of its most beloved member.

Like previous books in the series, the action in *How Dark the Night* is brought to life by such colorful historical figures as the infamous pirate Jean Lafitte, Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith, Robert Fulton and his prototype for a submarine, Captain Stephen Decatur, Captain Salusbury Pryce Humphreys RN, and Commodore James Barron. Historical events include the decline of slavery in the West Indies, the stark political differences between the Federalists in New England and the "War Hawk" Republicans in the South and West led by Henry Clay and John Calhoun, as well as the abuses at sea perpetrated by the Royal Navy against America. Such abominations reach a war footing after the so-called "affair" between the USS *Chesapeake* and HMS *Leopard*?as related from the British point of view through the eyes of Seth Cutler, a midshipman serving in Leopard.

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