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Autore	O'Brian Patrick <1914-2000>
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Sommario/riassunto	<p>Entrusted with a secret mission, the perils of the South China Sea await. In the fight against the French, a treaty with the Sultan of Pulo Prabang, a piratical Malay state, may prove decisive. Captain Jack Aubrey and ship's surgeon Stephen Maturin, along with a hand-picked crew, must survive the dangers of the high forties and convey a diplomatic envoy to ensure this key alliance, but dangers, both natural and man-made, will dog their every move. When echoes of the past return, no one is safe. 'If Jane Austen had written rousing sea yarns, she would have produced something very close to the prose of Patrick O'Brian.' Time 'Written with the most engaging enthusiasm that can't fail to give pleasure to anybody who enjoys historical adventure flavoured with more than a dash of realism.' Sunday Times</p>