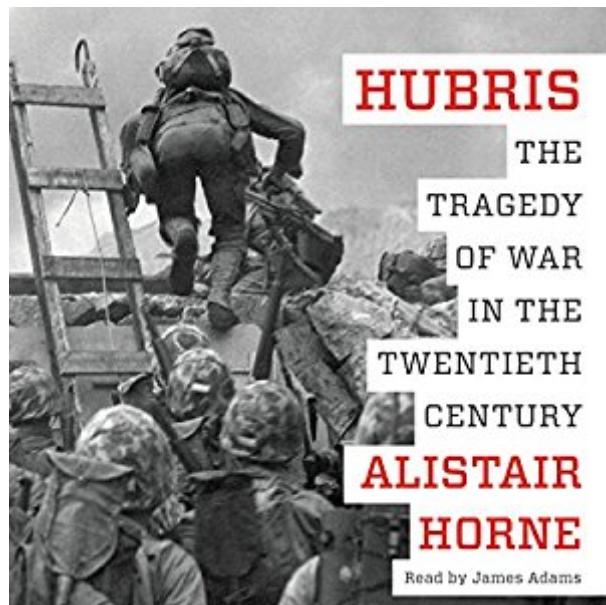


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# Hubris: The Tragedy Of War In The Twentieth Century



## Synopsis

Sir Alistair Horne has been a close observer of war and history for more than 50 years, and in this wise and masterly work he revisits six battles of the past century and examines the strategies, leadership, preparation, and geopolitical goals of aggressors and defenders to reveal the one trait that links them all: hubris. In Greek tragedy, hubris is excessive human pride that challenges the gods and ultimately leads to total destruction of the offender. From the 1905 Battle of Tsushima in the Russo-Japanese War to Hitler's 1941 bid to capture Moscow to MacArthur's disastrous advance in Korea to the French downfall at Dien Bien Phu, Horne shows how each of these battles was won or lost due to excessive hubris on one side or the other. In a sweeping narrative written with his trademark erudition and wit, Horne provides a meticulously detailed analysis of the ground maneuvers employed by the opposing armies in each battle. He also explores the strategic and psychological mind-sets of the military leaders involved to demonstrate how devastating combinations of human ambition and arrogance led to overreach. Making clear the danger of hubris in warfare, his insights hold resonant lessons for civilian and military leaders navigating today's complex global landscape. A dramatic, colorful, stylishly written history, *Hubris* is a much-needed reflection on war from a master of his field.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Fascinating and with the touch of a master storyteller's hand, if there's one history I will recommend this Christmas season, it will be Alistair Horne's *Hubris: the Tragedy of War in the Twentieth Century*. Interesting and accessible, Horne's approach is a narrative that doesn't merely tell a story, but also examines hubris in the tides of battle. It is well researched, cites relevant sources and

histories, and is persuasive, not to mention thoroughly engaging to read. Beginning with the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 and ending with the last battle of the First Indochina War (the second being our Vietnam War), Dien Bien Phu, all of the battles that Horne examines fall roughly in the first half of the twentieth century, and with the exception of the Battle of the Straights of Tsushima, the final of the Russo-Japanese War, are all closely grouped around a period extending from 1939 to 1954. I'm sure there are plenty of histories that include each of the battles, but it was fascinating to view them through the lens of a nation or leader acting on hubris and taking his force beyond their capabilities. In Tsushima, we see the last battle between battleships, the last time a battleship was sunk by force of cannons. With its fleet in the Pacific scattered by the Japanese, Russia sent its Baltic Fleet around the Horn of Africa, across the Indian Ocean, and north to bolster defenses on the Korean peninsula. With building drama and suspense, Horne tells the story of the opposing admirals, each with dramatically different personalities and management styles. Here are the vivid colors of a final engagement equal in decisiveness to the English and French meeting at Trafalgar under Lord Nelson.

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