



Win, Lose or Die

John Gardner

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This novel marks James Bond's return to the navy. His mission is to serve on the Royal Navy's major aircraft carrier HMS as minder to British, American and Russian admirals who are on board for a NATO exercise. Gardner also wrote "Licence to Kill", "Ice Breaker" and "The Quiet Dogs".

Win, Lose or Die Details

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Author : John Gardner

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From Reader Review Win, Lose or Die for online ebook

John Yelverton says

This book borders on the preposterous on quite a number of occasions, but if your ability to suspend disbelief is high, you should still be able to enjoy it. I was not too keen on the "real life" characters being injected into the book though.

Audrey says

I've never read a James Bond book before this. I've always only seen the movie version. I am aware that this genre are usually the one's read by male readers. There seems to be a lot of detailed description in the book. In the movie, you'll only glimpse a certain frame for a few seconds but the book tells it differently, descriptively so you'll know what James Bond is actually seeing and doing. It's a good read. Definitely not the James Bond we see in the movie with Daniel Craig in it. I see Sean Connery version of James Bond movie era in this book.

"You're just like all those pipe dreamers, Clover. There'll never be a fair, free and open society in this world. You see, people get in the way. Ideals are for idealists, and all idealists fall from grace. No ideal works, simply because human beings cannot cope with it. The man said it all - Power tends to corrupt; and all absolute power corrupts absolutely." James Bond hostaged by Wren Clover Pennington.

Bob Wolniak says

Late 90's thriller that started off a little cliched and pedestrian but really picked upped steam, with appearances by Margaret Thatcher, George H W and Gorby himself. Fun seeing bond as detective and Navy pilot, with strong female characters.

David says

Nowhere near as fun to read as anything by Fleming.

Eric Keegan says

One of Gardner's Misfires

Starts off relatively strong, but fizzles out the minute Bond's feet strike naval life aboard Invincible. Plot meanders all over the place, very little action, poor pacing. It boggles my mind how the writer of For Special Services, No Deals Mr Bond, and Goldeneye wrote such a humdrum thriller like this.

Noah Oanh says

I am not really like it even It is my first book for Bond series.

Tim Collins says

Worst of the Gardner Bond books.

E.R. Yatscoff says

What can you say, I mean James Bond. He gets things done with a few beauties along the way. Plenty of action. Tech junkies will like this although it is likely obsolete because the book is 1989 vintage. John Gardner does a fine job taking over from Ian Fleming. I like the fact that they send Bond to flight school for Harrier training. Got this novel in a condo in Mexico. Hey, check out my thrillers.

Kost As says

Γου?ν, Λουζ ορ Ντ?η απ? τον κ. Τζον Γκ?ρντνερ!

Εντ?ξει, περ?μενα τα χειρ?τερα ?πειτα απ? την αν?γνωση ορισμ?νων αξιολογ?σεων εδ?, στο Γκουντρηντς, αλλ? τελικ? μου φ?νηκε ακριβ?ς ?πως τα περισσ?τερα βιβλ?α του κ. Γκ?ρντνερ με ?ρωα το Τζ?ημς Μποντ! Ευχ?ριστα στην αν?γνωση, αλλ? αρκετ? αδι?φορα, τ?σο που αν καθυστερο?σα λ?γο ακ?μη την αξιολ?γησ? μου, θα ?πρεπε να διαβ?σω ξαν? απ? την αρχ? το βιβλ?, ο?τε να θυμηθ? περ? τ?νος πρ?κειται...

Το βιβλ?ο ?χει ρυθμ?, ?χει πλοκ?, ?χει ανατροπ?, απλ? η ιστορ?α ξεφε?γει και εισ?ρχεται θριαμβευτικ? στη σφαιρ?α του σουρρε?λ! Δε θα σταθ? στο ?τι ο Μποντ, Τζ?ημς Μποντ, ο οπο?ος ε?ναι κατ?σκοπος στις Βρετανικ?ς Μυστικ?ς Υπηρεσ?ες ξαφνικ? γνωρ?ζει π?ς να πιλοτ?ρει ?να μαχητικ? αεροσκ?φος Χ?ρριερ... ? μ?λλον ξ?ρεις κ?τι;; Θα σταθ?! Θα σταθ? και θα παρασταθ?! ?σο γαμ?τος και να ε?ναι ο ?ρω?ς μας, κ. Γκ?ρντνερ, ??????σο και να ε?ναι, δε γ?νεται μ?σα σε δι?στημα ολ?γων εβδομ?δων να πιλοτ?ρει το Χ?ρριερ καλ?τερα απ? τους ιπτ?μενους της Βρετανικ?ς Αεροπορ?ας και πολ? περισσ?τερο σπ?ιλερ-σπ?ιλερ-σπ?ιλερ (view spoiler) Ρε μεγ?λε, ο?τε ο ?ρωας του Ντ?ηβιντ Γκ?μπμπινς, ο Τζακ Χ?ουαρντ, δεν τα κ?νει αυτ?!

Θα ?παιρνε και τ?ταρτο αστερ?κι αν δεν επρ?κειτο για βιβλ?ο με ?ρωα το Τζ?ημς, αλλ? αντ' αυτο? ο ?ρω?ς μας ?ταν ο Ρ?τσαρντ Τσ?μπερλαιν, ξ?ρω γω, Κομμ?ντερ οβ δε Ρ?γιαλ Ν?ιβυ οβ Χερ Μ?τζεστυ, οπ?τε θα μπορο?σαμε να καταπιο?με το χ?πι πιο ε?κολα!

Αυτ?! Και εις ?λλα με υγ?α!

David says

Like all the Bond books, I have read this one several times. This rereading I found simultaneously more and less satisfying than previous ones. Between readings I had seen a number of negative reviews of this installment in Gardner's continuation of the 007 series. While I do tend to agree that the presence of Margaret Thatcher, George H.W. Bush, and Mikhail Gorbachev seems to be a little bit forced, I also find that the characters of Pennington and Deeley work quite well. Similarly, Baradj in the guise of an idealistic terrorist who is really just out to make his own fortune is a good touch, and probably honest. The Bond books are never going to be entirely satisfying as works of literature. But I found them fun to read for more than 40 years so ...

Ira Livingston says

I don't know what to think of Gardner's Bond. It seems when he is good, the books are awesome, but when he falls short they really tend to fall apart.

This is the second modern Terrorist organization he tackles, Scorpius being the first, which is fantastic. This one even brings us into the modern era with Prime Minister Maggie Thatcher, President George H.W. Bush, and Russian Leader Gorbachev, with a reference to President Reagan.

But the story seems far fetched and obscene in places like mentioned in the other reviews on this book. I was really disappointed, and am about to head into another film adaptation that I didn't like in the theater... License to Kill, great concept but really fell short in my opinion.

Here is my over all ranking of the series so far.... You can see each individual review on the titles' page. I'm reading them in publication order if you were wondering, but the ranking below is how I liked the titles against others in the series.

Overall rating of book series:

- 1 - Casino Royale / On Her Majesty's Secret Service
- 2 - Goldfinger
- 3 - For Special Services / Scorpius
- 4 - From Russia with Love / License Renewed
- 5 - Live and Let Die
- 6 - Diamonds are Forever / Dr. No / Icebreaker
- 7 - Nobody Lives Forever
- 8 - Moonraker
- 9 - Colonel Sun
- 10 - Thunderball / No Deals, Mr. Bond
- 11 - James Bond, The Spy Who Loved Me (Wood)
- 12 - You Only Live Twice
- 13 - For Your Eyes Only / Octopussy & The Living Daylights
- 14 - The Man with the Golden Gun
- 15 - The Spy Who Loved Me

- 16 - Win, Lose or Die
 - 17 - James Bond and Moonraker (Wood)
 - 18 - Role of Honor
-

Bob Garrett says

WIN, LOSE OR DIE is John Gardner's eighth James Bond novel, and...I'll admit that a certain fatigue is setting in – not necessarily on Gardner's part, but on mine. Gardner doesn't write Bond novels so much as he writes mystery novels with James Bond in them, and all the mysteries and plot twists are beginning to wear me out. Now, with each new-to-me installment, I mostly just try to guess which of Bond's love interests will prove to be a villain (I guessed right this time!).

That said, WIN, LOSE OR DIE does include a novel treat for Bond fans: We see Bond back in the Navy and promoted to Captain. M learns of a plot against a United Kingdom aircraft carrier with visiting U.K., American and Soviet dignitaries, and thus, Bond comes aboard as a naval officer, charged with protecting said dignitaries. It was an interesting idea, and I largely enjoyed the execution.

The book had other high points. One of Bond's relationships seemed a little more meaningful than usual and was well handled. Gardner seems to have done some research on contemporary naval technology, which adds authenticity to the proceedings. The climax is fairly well staged, and there are cameos by some distinguished political figures (no spoilers here).

Ultimately, however, WIN, LOSE OR DIE sinks due to a bland villain with a stupid, stupid STOOPID scheme. Bond himself explains why the villain won't get what he wants, even if his plans are successful. I'm sorry, Mr. Gardner, but...pointing out the stupid logic in the story doesn't make it "okay." I can buy, perhaps, that the main villain might be delusional enough to go through with such a plan, but then, I'd also have to buy that he can convince an army of followers to do likewise.

So far, I'd say that ROLE OF HONOUR, NOBODY LIVES FOREVER and NO DEALS, MR. BOND are Gardner's three best Bond novels. These were his fourth, fifth and sixth ones, and I'm beginning to wonder if he peaked there. I have six more left to read, so I'm really hoping that things get better.

Jerome says

This could be a good book but Gardner was not really a good writer, well for this book. He could have made the story more interesting but he did not. Some of the parts are not really interesting and very strange. Take for example, the part about two of the organisation members having a talk together, how could they not possibly not know that the British Secret service had been bugging them when they have the ability to start their operation "WIN" and "LOSE"?

However, although it gets off to a slow start, I would have to say that (so far) "Win, Lose or Die" is arguably a highlight of the Gardner books. It is also the only one that I feel could actually work as a Bond film. The characters are a bit more respectable than most of Gardner's creations, especially his usual cookie-cutter villains. The book also carries some of the wonderful, sinister, almost supernatural imagery that Fleming was

so fond of, portraying Bond and the other characters as players in a strange spiritual plane that seems to stretch beyond Earthly bonds.

Now, if only Gardner could have learned to do away with all those...one-liners he has Bond spout after he does something. This is supposed to be Fleming's Bond, not Roger Moore's. Furthermore, the book continues to slip with the horrid scenes in which Bond interacts with M and Bill Tanner. In Fleming's books, M was a man of few words, and when he said something, it was to the point and deadly serious. Unfortunately, Gardner again sinks to the level of having Bond and M trade barbs, if you will. Fleming's Bond would NEVER smart off to his boss the way Gardner's does.

However, once you get past the tepid first third of the novel, the narrative really picks up. This book actually has enough high points to outweigh the low points. The section where Bond is used as bait at the Italian villa is almost up to Fleming's speed. And the climax aboard the hijacked carrier is absolutely spellbinding.

Steve Mitchell says

This is John Gardner's ninth addition to the James Bond series – if you include the novelisation of Licence to Kill – and sees the hero promoted to captain. A new terrorist organisation, BAST, has appeared and following a daring, but ultimately unsuccessful attack upon a super tanker in the Persian Gulf the world's intelligence agencies are awake to the threat that they pose. When M receives information that the failed super tanker raid was a dry run for a real attack upon HMS Invincible Bond is returned to active service within the Royal Navy so he will be in position should BAST try to cause any trouble.

HMS Invincible is due to take part in a NATO exercise during which a top secret meeting between Mrs Thatcher, President Bush and President Gorbachev to speed up the thawing of relations as the Cold War draws to a close and Bond is placed in charge of the security for the duration of their visit.

This is not a bad story, although the ease that BAST are able to gather top secret information to plan the mission and then place their terrorists aboard one of the Royal Navy's capital ships is ludicrous even by the standards of Bond stories. Even with that flaw, this could still have been so much better had Gardner not persisted in constantly having people appear as double- and even triple-agents; it has happened so many times the novelty has well and truly worn off by now and he should have stopped a couple of books ago.

Joe says

Came back to the series out of a misplaced sense of nostalgia. My bad.
