



In the 1790s the U.S. struggled to remain neutral in a war between Britain and France that would not end until the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815. In 1797 three French officials requested bribes from American diplomats to end the undeclared "Quasi War" during which the French navy had captured more than 300 American merchant ships. In this British satire of Franco-American relations after what became known as the XYZ Affair, a group of Frenchmen flatter "Madame Amerique" with promises of the wealth that their friendship can provide, while John Bull looks on from his stronghold atop "Shakespeare's cliff."