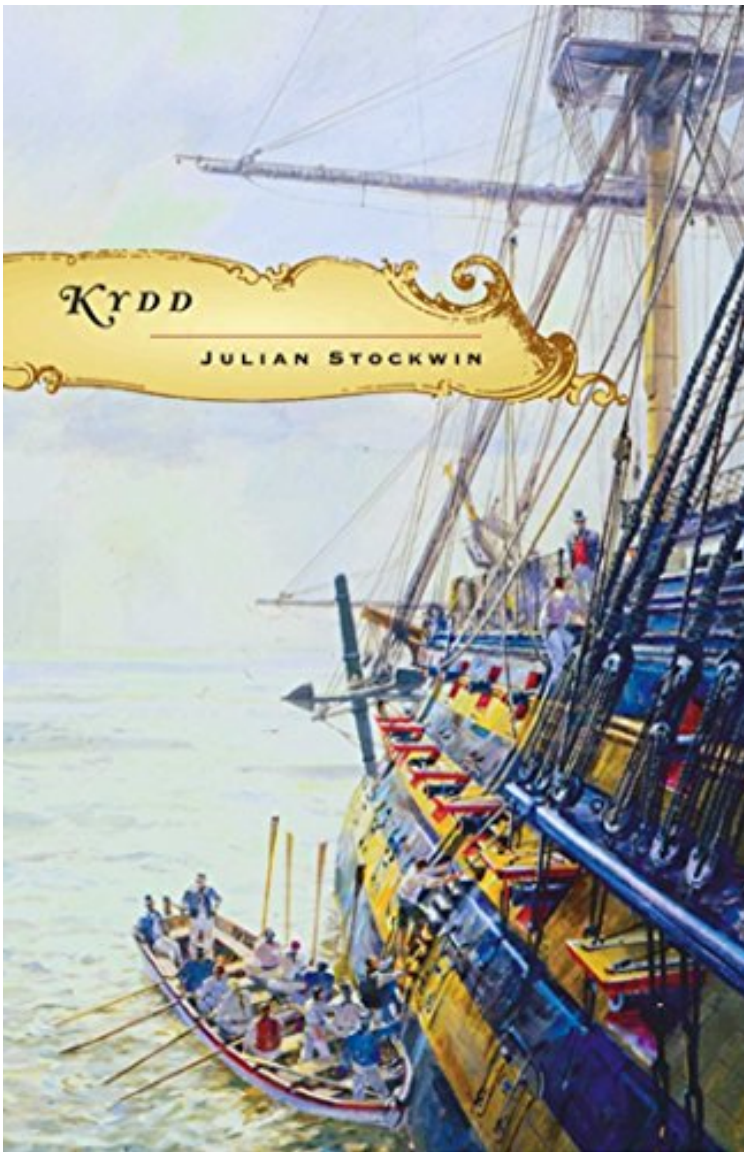


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# Kydd: A Novel



*Par Julian Stockwin*  
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**Description :** Description du produit It is 1793. Europe is ablaze with war. The British prime minister is under pressure to intimidate the French, and dispatches a Navy squadron to appear off the French coast. To man the ships, ordinary citizens must be press-ganged. Thomas Paine Kydd, a young wig-maker from Guildford, is seized and taken across country to be part of the crew of the ninety-eight-gun line-of-battle ship Duke William. The ship sails immediately and Kydd has to learn the harsh realities of shipboard life fast. Despite all he goes through, amid the dangers of tempest and battle, he comes to admire the skills and courage of his fellow seamen, taking up the challenge himself to become a true sailor and defender of Britain at war. Kydd launches a masterly new writing talent and a thrilling new series. Based on dramatic real events, it is classic storytelling at its best, rich with action, exceptional characters, and a page-turning narrative.

Prsentation de l'diteurIt is 1793. Europe is ablaze with war. The British prime minister is under pressure to intimidate the French, and dispatches a Navy squadron to appear off the French coast. To man the ships, ordinary citizens must be press-ganged. Thomas Paine Kydd, a young wig-maker from Guildford, is seized and taken across country to be part of the crew of the ninety-eight-gun line-of-battle ship Duke William. The ship sails immediately and Kydd has to learn the harsh realities of shipboard life fast. Despite all he goes through, amid the dangers of tempest and battle, he comes to admire the skills and courage of his fellow seamen, taking up the challenge himself to become a true sailor and defender of Britain at war. Kydd launches a masterly new writing talent and a thrilling new series. Based on dramatic real events, it is classic storytelling at its best, rich with action, exceptional characters, and a page-turning narrative..co.ukFrom C.S. Forester onwards, the tale of high adventure on the sea has produced some splendidly vivid writing; in fact, as genres go, there have probably been more consistently impressive creations in this field than in all historical fiction. With such a legacy looming behind him, a new author has to be able to present something special in order to make any kind of mark. With Kydd, Julian Stockwin quickly signals that he is an innovative and accomplished fresh talent in the field, with a complex and richly drawn hero (always so necessary in the naval tale) at the centre of an intelligently structured narrative.Thomas Paine Kydd is press-ganged in Guildford, and is wrenched from his safe profession of wig making to join the crew of the 98-gun line-of-battle ship Duke William. We have been treated to the horrors of the below-deck life of the common seaman before, but Stockwin renders these scenes as exuberantly as any of his predecessors. He is also particularly good at delineating the changing character of his hero, as Kydd comes to admire the skills of the seamen and (of course) becomes a true sailor himself. Although, at times, the book has the feel of the setting up of a new series, it's none the worse for that. Stockwin can command your attention with ease when his writing has such unyielding power as: The boatswain's mate advanced, taking the cat-o-nine-tails from the bag. He took a position a full eight feet away to one side, and drew the long deadly lashes through his fingers, experimentally sweeping back to ensure that there was enough clear space to swing it. Kydd stared across the few yards of empty deck at the man's pale, helpless body. At the instant it flew downward the drumbeats stopped, so the sickening smack of the blow came loud and clear. Donnelly did not cry out, but his gasp was high and choked. The nine tails not only left long bruised weals, but at every point where they landed, blood began to seep. --Barry ForshawFrom Publishers WeeklyThomas Paine Kydd. Arrr, matey, there's a name to hang a man for sure. In this delightful first installment in a new series in the tradition of Patrick O'Brian, Kydd is a bright lad pressed into the service of his majesty (Farmer George, the Madness himself) on the ship-of-the-line Duke William. It's 1793, and England is on the brink of war with the French. In what seems almost a day-by-day account, we follow Kydd from his nightmarish introduction to naval life to his promotion to ordinary seaman. Befriended first by Joe Bowyer, a simple, honest sailor who teaches him the ropes, Kydd later makes the acquaintance of Nicholas Renzi, a cultivated-looking man with a secret. Camaraderie, grog and pride in their work is all the sailors have to ease the hardship of life on board ship. It's a rough life, and Stockwin skillfully makes readers share the pain and tedium of it, but this is more than a historical adventure tale: it is the story of the education of a young man. Stockwin, who joined the Royal Navy at 15 and retired a lieutenant commander, knows his ships and his men as well as his historical era. Kydd, a strong, ordinary sort with a mind of his own, is a convincing character and so are his shipmates. The jargon comes thick and fast, so much so that the book would have benefited from a glossary a ship's diagram would have come in handy, too. But the skim of the story and the depth of the characterizations will ease readers past any obscure terms. Agent, Stuart Krichevsky. (June)Forecast: Less literary than O'Brian, more atmospheric than Hornblower and more realistic than Lamdin, this promising series will need a bit of a push at first, but should pick up steam in the long run. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.