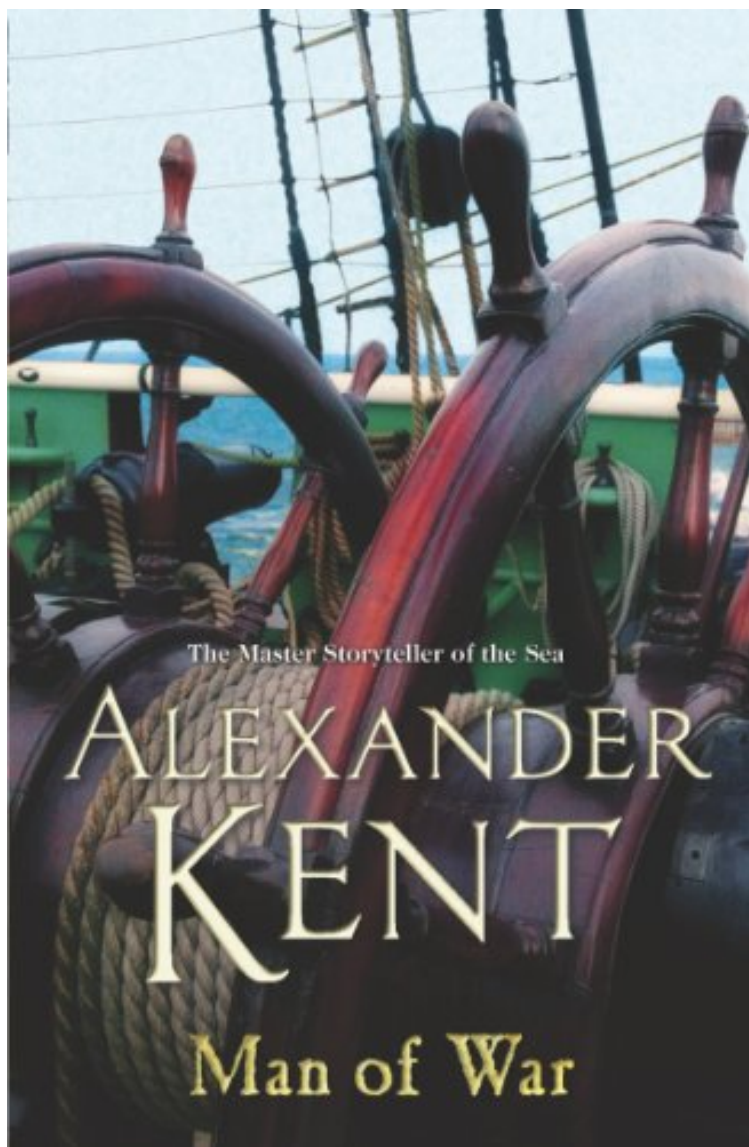


[FREE] File size: 59.Mb

# Man Of War: A Richard Bolitho Adventure



*Par Alexander Kent*  
*audiobook / \*ebooks / Download PDF /*  
*ePub / DOC*

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #150029 dans eBooksPubli le: 2010-05-14Sorti le: 2010-05-31Format: Ebook Kindle

[FREE] Man Of War: A Richard Bolitho Adventure

**Par Alexander Kent : Man Of War: A Richard Bolitho Adventure** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Man Of War: A Richard Bolitho Adventure:

 [Download](#)

 [Read Online](#)

**Description :** Description du produitIn 1817, Adam Bolitho, nephew of the famed Admiral Richard Bolitho, is sent to Antigua where every harbor and estuary is filled with ghostly ships, superfluous in the aftermath of war. Adam captains the 74-gun Athena, commissioned to hunt a quarry that flies no colors, offers no quarter, and traffics in human life. Man of War brims with authentic descriptions of ships under sail and life on the high seas. In this story of a young man haunted by the ghosts of his past, Kent shows once again that he is a master at the top of his game.

Prsentation de l'diteurThis is Douglas Reeman writing under his pseudonym Alexander Kent with another thrilling Bolitho adventure!Antigua 1817Every harbour and estuary is filled with ghostly ships, the famous and the legendary now redundant in the aftermath of the war. In this uneasy peace, Adam Bolitho is

fortunate to be offered the seventy-four gun Athena, and as flag captain to Vice-Admiral Sir Graham Bethune once more follows his destiny to the Caribbean. But in these haunted waters where Richard Bolitho and his 'band of brothers' once fought a familiar enemy, the quarry is now a renegade foe who flies no colours and offers no quarter, and whose traffic in human life is sanctioned by flawed treaties and men of influence. And here, and when Athena's guns speak, a day of terrible retribution will dawn for the innocent and the damned. Extrait 1

New Horizon Eight bells had chimed out from the forecabin and the lower deck was cleared while the ship moved steadily, purposefully some would say, toward the widening span of land, which seemed to reach out on either bow. The moment every sailor carried in his thoughts. The landfall. This landfall. Home. The sails, already reduced to topsails and jibs, were hardly filling, the tough canvas still shedding moisture like rain from the final, overnight approach. Hills and cliffs, at first in shadow and then opening up to the watery sunshine. Landmarks, familiar to some of the older hands, the names of others called down by the masthead lookouts while the land gained shape and colour, dark green in some places, but the brown of winter still clinging elsewhere. For it was early March, 1817, and the air was as keen as a knife. Eight days out of Gibraltar, a fair passage when set against the adverse winds which had challenged every mile as they had skirted the Bay of Biscay, up and around the well-remembered names of Ushant and Brest, the enemy coast for so long. It was still hard to believe that those days had changed. As had the life of every man aboard this graceful, slow-moving frigate, His Britannic Majesty's ship Unrivalled of forty-six guns, and a complement of two hundred and fifty sailors and Royal Marines. Or so it had been when they had left this same port of Plymouth. Now there was a sense of contained excitement, and uncertainty. There were boys who had become men while the ship had been away. They would find a different life waiting upon their return. And the older ones, like Joshua Cristie, the sailing master, and Stranace the gunner, would be thinking of the many ships which had been paid off, hulked, or even sold to those same enemies from the past. For this was all they had. They knew no other life. The long masthead pendant lifted and held in a sudden flurry of wind. Partridge, the burly boatswain, as rotund as his namesake, called, 'Lee braces there! Stand by, lads!' But even he, whose thick voice had contested the heaviest gales and crashing broadsides, seemed unwilling to break the silence. There were now only shipboard noises, the creak of spars and rigging, the occasional thud of the tiller head, their constant companions over the months, the years since Unrivalled's keel had first tasted salt water; that, too, right here in Plymouth. And nobody alive this day would be more aware of the challenge which might now be confronting him. Captain Adam Bolitho stood by the quarterdeck rail and watched the land edging out in a slow and final embrace. Buildings, even a church, were taking shape, and he saw a fishing lugger on a converging tack, a man climbing into the rigging to wave as the frigate's shadow passed over him. How many hundreds of times had he stood in this place? As many hours as he had walked the deck, or been called from his cot for some emergency or other. Like the last time in Biscay, when a seaman had been lost overboard. It was nothing new. A familiar face, a cry in the night, then oblivion. Perhaps he, too, had been thinking of going home. Or leaving the ship. It only took a second; a ship had no forgiveness for carelessness or that one treacherous lapse of attention. He shook himself and gripped the scabbard of the old sword beneath his coat, something else he did without noticing it. He glanced along his command, the neat batteries of eighteen-pounders, each muzzle exactly in line with the gangway above it. The decks clean and uncluttered, each unwanted piece of cordage flaked down, while sheets and braces were loosened in readiness. The scars of that last savage battle at Algiers, a lifetime ago or so it felt sometimes, had been carefully repaired, painted or tarred, hidden except to the eye of the true sailor.

A block squeaked and without turning his head he knew that the signals party had hoisted Unrivalled's number. Not that many people would need telling. It was only then that you remembered. Roger Cousens had been the signals midshipman. Keen, caring, likeable. Another missing face. He felt the northwesterly wind on his cheek, like a cold hand. A voice said quietly, 'Guardboat, sir.' No excitement. More like two men exchanging a casual remark in a country lane. Adam Bolitho took a telescope from another midshipman, his eyes passing over familiar figures and groups which were like part of himself. The helmsmen, three in case of any last second's trick by the wind or tide; the master, one hand on a chart but his eyes on the land. A squad of marines paraded, ready if needed to support the afterguard at the mizzen braces. The first lieutenant; a boatswain's mate; and two marine drummer boys who seemed to have grown since they had last seen Plymouth. He steadied the glass and saw the guardboat, oars tossed, quite motionless at this distance. His jaw tightened. It was what his uncle had called marking the chart for us. It was time. Not too soon, and never too late. He said, 'Hands wear ship, Mr Galbraith!' He could almost feel the first lieutenant's eyes. Surprise? Acceptance? The danger was past. Formality had taken over. 'Lee braces there!

Hands wear ship!' 'Tops'l sheets!' Seamen strained back on braces and halliards. A boatswain's mate pushed two extra hands to add their strength as Unrivalled continued toward her allotted anchorage. 'Helm a-lee!' The slightest hesitation, and the big double wheel began to swing over, helmsmen moving like a single body. Adam Bolitho shaded his eyes as the sunlight lanced between the shrouds and flapping canvas, as the ship, his ship, turned steadily into the wind. He saw his coxswain watching across the busy deck, waiting to call away the gig, ready for the unexpected. 'Let go!' The great anchor dropped from the cathead, spray bursting up and over the beautiful figurehead. After all the miles, the pain and the triumph, for better or worse, Unrivalled had come home. Lieutenant Leigh Galbraith looked aloft to make certain that the excitement of returning to England had not allowed slackness to mar the sail drill. Each sail was neatly furled, the masthead pendant curling in the offshore wind, the ensign streaming above the taffrail, bright against the land, hoisted to replace a well-worn and ragged one before the dawn had broken. Marine sentries were posted to prevent unlawful visitors, traders, even some of the local whores, coming aboard when they realized that Unrivalled's company had had little to spend their pay on over the past months. And there was talk of slave bounty, and prize money, too. He watched the guardboat approaching, an officer standing in the sternsheets shading his eyes. Their first contact with authority since leaving the Rock. Unrivalled would probably be invaded now by riggers and carpenters, some of whom might have helped to build her more than two years ago. He shivered again. But it was not the bite of the March wind. He had seen the ranks of laid-up ships, large and small, as Unrivalled had tacked slowly toward the anchorage. Proud ships, famous names. Some had already been here when they had last left Plymouth for the Mediterranean and Algiers, eight months ago. Who would be next? He confronted it, as a senior officer might examine a subordinate's chances. His record was good. He had taken part in every action at Algiers and before. Captain Bolitho had already recommended him for a command of his own, had put it in writing to the Flag Officer here in Plymouth before they had sailed. Suppose there was nothing? He might remain first lieutenant for yet another commission, until he was passed over altogether. He dismissed it angrily. He had a ship, and a fine one, more than many could claim. He walked to the entry port and touched his hat as the officer of the guard clambered aboard. The visitor glanced around the upper deck and said, 'Heard all about it, your part at Algiers! Lord Exmouth was full of praise in the Gazette!' He handed Galbraith a thick, sealed envelope. 'For the captain.' He inclined his head toward the shore. 'From the admiral.' He looked over at some of the bustling seamen, disappointed perhaps that there were no wounded on view, no shot holes in the freshly painted black and white hull. 'Another boat is coming out to collect the despatches, and any mail you have to go.' He reached for the guard ropes and added with a grin, 'Welcome home, by the way!' Galbraith saw him over the side, and the oars were thrashing at the water almost before he had taken his seat. Galbraith made his way aft, ducking without thought beneath the overhanging poop. Past the wardroom, empty but for a messman; every one else would be on deck, sharing it. The marine at the cabin door stamped his foot and bawled, 'First lieutenant, sir!' It was something you never got used to, he thought. Every Royal Marine seemed to act as if he were on a parade ground, and not within the close confines of a ship. The screen door opened and young Napier, the captain's servant, in his best blue coat, stood before him. Galbraith took it all in at a glance. The great cabin which he had come to know so well, where they had talked, and shared their thoughts as much as any captain and first lieutenant could; and it was rare in many cases he had known. Times of anxiety and doubt. And of pride. Some clothing was scattered across the stern bench, the captain's patched and faded seagoing gear, while his best frock coat hung swaying from the skylight. Bolitho glanced at Galbraith and smiled. 'Is my gig called away?' Then, half turned, 'Here, David, help me with this sleeve - a few more minutes won't matter. The admiral will know we are anchored.' Galbraith hesitated, and held out...*Revue de presse*"Shipwreck, survival... a spirited battle... a splendid yarn" (Times)"One of our foremost writers of naval fiction" (Sunday Times)