



The Miracle of the Kent: A Tale of Courage, Faith, and Fire

Nicholas Tracy

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“A naturally gripping adventure tale.”—*Publishers Weekly*

“Powerful and intensely focused.”—*Booklist*

“Tracy’s satisfying narrative constitutes the first modern account. A finely detailed maritime history.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

In 1825, the *Kent*, an East Indiaman, set sail from England for India with a crew and nearly 600 men, women, and children on board. North of Spain, the ship was slammed by a ferocious gale, and while a sailor was inspecting the hold for damage, his lantern ignited a cask of spirits. A fire quickly erupted, and even with the desperate expedient of opening hatches and flooding the ship, the fire burned out of control. As night wore on, the ship became an inferno, with the flames moving toward stores of gunpowder. At this point, everyone on board knew that they would perish, and they began preparing for their ghastly deaths. Despite the raging tempest a sailor climbed one last time to the top of the *Kent*’s mainmast and—miraculously—a sail was sighted on the horizon. It was the *Cambria*, a small brig on its way to Mexico. The *Cambria* spied the burning *Kent* and through determination and dogged seamanship in towering seas, the little brig closed the doomed vessel. Launching their boats, the *Kent*’s and *Cambria*’s crews were able to transfer nearly all of the children, women, and men to the brig and pull away before the *Kent* exploded. Dangerously overloaded, the *Cambria* made the Cornish coast three days later.

In *The Miracle of the Kent: A Tale of Courage, Faith, and Fire*, award-winning historian Nicholas Tracy reconstructs this extraordinary tale through records left by the participants, revealing how those aboard the *Kent* faced their deaths, and their reactions to being offered a second chance. The story of the *Kent* is both a page-turning adventure and an inspirational homage to the capacity of the human spirit.

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