



Gather the Shadowmen (The Lords of the Ocean)

Mark M. McMillin

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Here is a true story based on the amazing adventures of Captain Luke Ryan - Irish swashbuckler, American patriot, mariner extraordinaire and Benjamin Franklin's most dangerous privateer... It is an epic story about war, heroism, love, intrigue and betrayal spanning a period from the American Revolution, to the French Revolution, and through the rise of Napoleon. The year is 1778 and as the brutal war between the American Colonies and Great Britain drags on, a 25 year old Irishman named Luke Ryan is the master of the fastest ship on the water, the Black Prince, and runs a very profitable smuggling trade between Dunkirk and Dublin. He and his men are indifferent to the war until one day the British seize his ship and throw his men into Dublin's Black Dog. Ryan is ruined but concocts a bold plan to break his men out of jail and to retake his ship and when his plan succeeds, the Irishmen, now fugitives and with prices on their heads, set sail for France to offer their services to an American named Benjamin Franklin... The story is told in three books: Gather the Shadowmen (The Lords of the Ocean), Prince of the Atlantic and Napoleon's Gold (which can be read in or out of sequence).

Gather the Shadowmen (The Lords of the Ocean) Details

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Author : Mark M. McMillin

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From Reader Review Gather the Shadowmen (The Lords of the Ocean) for online ebook

Barry says

A well done historical novel about Luke Ryan who goes from British officer to Irish smuggler to American privateer. Ryan was an actual person sailing as a privateer during the War of Independence from England.

J.G. Follansbee says

This review also appears on Joe Follansbee's blog.

Benjamin Franklin may have single-handedly saved the U.S. from destruction in the Revolutionary War by persuading France to join America in an alliance against the British. But in the years leading up to his triumph, he had an arsenal of diplomatic tools in his kit, including letters of marque. Few Americans today know that the great American statesman commissioned a number of Irishmen as privateers, essentially self-employed mercenaries, to harass British shipping near their island home.

Luke Ryan was one of these legal pirates, and the historical figure is the main protagonist in a series of three novels by Mark M. McMillin. The first book, *Gather the Shadowmen: The Lords of the Ocean*, tells the story of a young British naval lieutenant, Irish by birth, who is despised by his English captain, but loved by his shipmates, many of whom have known him since childhood. After Ryan captures a French warship while his captain cowers in his cabin, Ryan is sent home in command of the Frenchman with a prize crew. He learns that his superior plans to take credit for the capture, along with the prize money, which would've made Ryan rich. Instead, Ryan returns the ship to the captured French sailors and becomes a smuggler. He and his Irish compatriots, sick of English arrogance and duplicity, become the Shadowmen, and they begin a life that will eventually bring them into Franklin's sphere.

Ryan was born in Rush, northeast of Dublin, in 1750, the son of an Irish soldier in a French regiment. Growing up among local landowners, Ryan developed connections that eventually led him into the maritime trades. Much of Ryan's early personal history is murky, and author McMillin uses the uncertainty to create a character who is intelligent, dashing, and a born leader, as well as opportunistic and shrewd. As the son of a soldier who grew up among Englishmen, McMillin's Ryan finds it easy to move between the worlds of dominator and dominated, upper class and poorer class.

McMillin, who has a background in law and military history, weaves a believable, often exciting narrative with a large cast of secondary characters, a few of whom are based on real people. Some of the scenes, particularly with Ryan's lover, Shannon O'Keefe, the ambitious daughter of a merchant who stakes Ryan's smuggling ventures, seem lifted from a Masterpiece Theatre costume drama. But *Gather the Shadowmen* succeeds in setting up the second and third novels in the series, *Prince of the Atlantic* and *Napoleon's Gold*. The core of the American connection is Franklin's plan to exchange U.S. prisoners of war for British seamen captured by Ryan and other privateers. McMillin illuminates a shady chapter in America's war for independence while offering a character who could easily star in a dozen high-seas tales.

Henk-Jan van der Klis says

Gather the Shadowmen (The Lords of the Ocean) is the first book in a trilogy telling a story based upon the true exploits of Captain Luke Ryan, Irish swashbuckler and American patriot - Benjamin Franklin's most dangerous privateer. Mark McMillin has done his utmost to bring this naval history and adventures in smuggling to life. Captain Luke Ryan is a Lieutenant on a British frigate in the North Atlantic who helps capture a French ship. He escorts it back to England. He and the French captain become friends. Their secret plan: get rid of the French vessel and enter smuggling. Together with Irish lads they will be known as The Shadowmen, dedicated to their master and trade. Adventures on sea bring them to British jail, a break-out, regaining the ship and a flee to France. Benjamin Franklin is asked to assign them as privateers. Along the way, Ryan falls in love with a partner's daughter in his smuggling trade.

Placed during the American Revolution, the author succeeded in getting the nautical terms well and keeping the book accessible. Of course readers are left with a cliff hanger, challenging them to read part II and III as well, Prince of the Atlantic and Napoleon's Gold.
