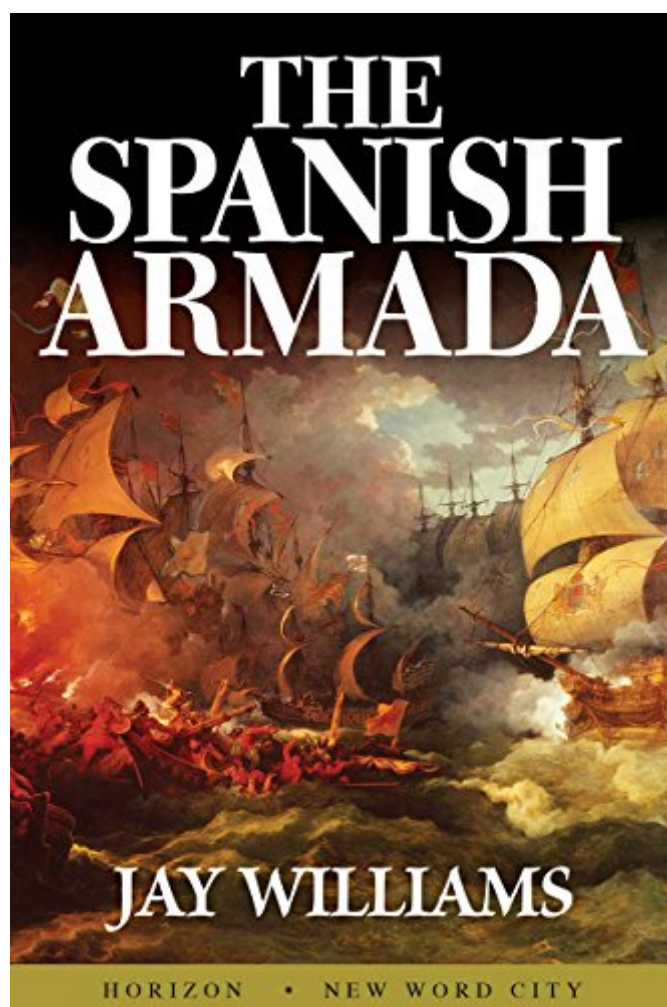


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# The Spanish Armada



## Synopsis

In the summer of 1588, a great body of ships sailed from Spain on a Crusade: to restore England to Catholicism. The ensuing events brought a Spanish word, armada, into the English language and created a host of legends. Intrepid English sea dogs in tiny ships, it was said, had bravely faced down towering Spanish galleons. Finally, a storm sent by a vengeful God wrecked most of that proud fleet on its way home. Award-winning author Jay Williams sheds new light on the traditional picture. Although the English were superior sailors, the two fleets were evenly matched. Moreover, the battle emerges as the high point of a four-year cold war between England and Spain. Only when set in the context of a Europe bitterly divided between Catholics and Protestants can the contest be fully understood. The personalities of Queen Elizabeth I of England and King Philip II of Spain and their commanders - especially Francis Drake - are also key to this dramatic story.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book does a good job telling the dramatic story of the Spanish Armada and correcting the myths surrounding it. I have stood on the greens of Plymouth Hoe in England where Drake was said

have played a game of bowls before going out to lead the tiny English navy to victory against the much larger Spanish fleet. But the author points out that this famous English legend was not quite accurate -- in fact, there was a rough parity in the sizes of the fleets. Spain had more bulky galleons, but England actually had more total ships in the water. This book is fast-paced -- full of interesting facts and details but still easy to read. It began with a chapter of historical background that at first seemed like a digression: the "sorrowful voyage" in 1567-8 of an English fleet led by captains Hawkins and Drake to capture slaves in Africa and sell them (illegally) to the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean. But bad weather and unfortunate events lead to "miseries and troublesome affairs": shipwrecks, death, and torture at the hands of the Spanish Inquisition. Only a handful of the 400 or so sailors that had started out returned safely to England. In fact, these voyages were central to the premature start of conflict between tiny England and the wealthy Spanish Empire. The author gives readers helpful background on the religious and political disputes in Europe in the late 16th Century without getting into excessive detail. The battles of the Armada were in reality the high point in a forty-year-long cold war between England and Spain. Only when set in the context of a Europe bitterly divided between the Catholic and Protestant faiths can the contest be fully understood.

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