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Rebels and Redcoats: The American Revolutionary War

Hugh Bicheno, Richard Holmes

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This is the story of a vicious struggle between brothers, friends and families which forged a new nation. Using the most up-to-date scholarship, vivid eye-witness accounts and original documents, this book tells the history of the passionate, violent and bloody events of the 1770s. The book argues against the commonheld view that the war of independence was the American people's struggle for liberty against an oppressive colonial power. The truth is far more interesting. Many Americans were loyal to the Crown throughout the war. Men and women often chose sides not because they wanted freedom, but because they wanted their neighbour's land. This book explores intriguing paradoxes through personal stories of women such as Jane McCrea, whose fiance was a British officer but whose brother was a rebel soldier. There are stories representing every interest group: Redcoats, loyalists, rebels, neutrals, French soldiers, Indian warriors, slaves, landed gentry and sharecropper. The text explains how the real victors of the War of Independence were the French, not the Americans, how the British Army could have continued the land war, and how intervention by the French Navy was decisive in the British defeat. Slave uprisings supported the British against the rebels, because of their brutal treatment by the colonists and many Native American tribes remained loyal to the British, while both loyalists and rebels betrayed the tribes who had supported them. When the conflict began very few believed the 13 colonies would gain independence - in Britain and in America. There were many mutinies in the rebel army including one in New Jersey which had to be put down by a large force sent by a man whose name has become synonymous with the conflict - General Washington.

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