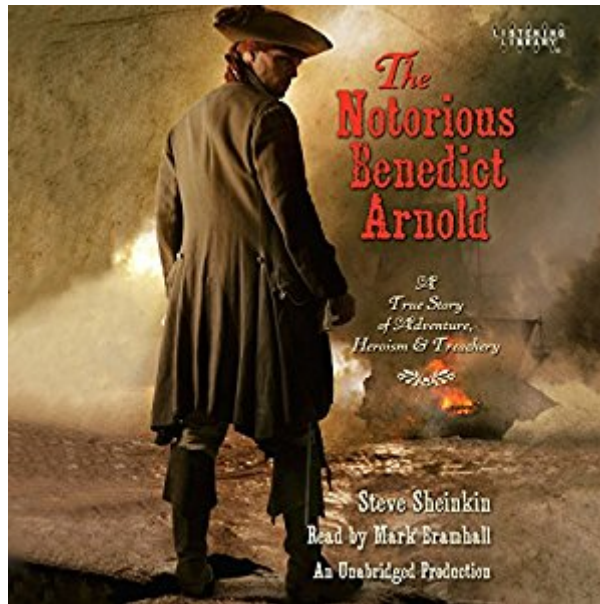


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The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story Of Adventure, Heroism & Treachery



Synopsis

On a bitter cold day in January 1741, Benedict Arnold was born. Little did anyone know that he would grow up to become the most infamous villain in American history. But first, he would be one of the country's greatest war heroes. Fearless in the line of fire, a genius at strategy and motivating his men, General Arnold was America's first action hero. But his thirst for recognition would ultimately be his undoing. Hopeless at political maneuvers, prone to outbursts of ego and temper, Arnold saw his fame slowly slipping away. And so, he came up with a plan that would guarantee his place in history.... Packed with gripping first-person accounts, astonishing battle scenes, and shocking betrayals, this accessible biography proves that there's more than one side to every good story.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Steve Sheinkin's "The Notorious Benedict Arnold" is a work which causes consternation to historians and excitement for readers. It is a dismay for professionals because the story lay there for two hundred years, mentioned in history classes and accepted unquestionably as the ultimate betrayal of the American Revolution. It's thrilling for readers because of the way Sheinkin peels away the layers that made up the individual who embodied the classic Greek tragedy, giving us a front row seat for Arnold's the spectacular rise to heroism and stunning fall to treachery and infamy. What makes Sheinkin's work astonishing is that he presents a modern man with all the strengths and frailties. The writer strictly adheres to the rules of historical research whereby he only

uses documentation written or carved in stone, yet he comes away with a complex individual without the hate which enveloped Benedict Arnold for two centuries, allowing the reader to wrestle with the enigma of this character. And Sheinkin does this with the page-turner style which has become his trademark way of reaching young readers. As much as other Revolutionary general, Benedict Arnold contributed to the success of the United States' young army. France was hell-bent on undermining England's hegemony in the world, but hesitant to commit resources to the ragtag colonial army. George Washington, the able former British officer, was losing every battle against the professional English army and their paid Hessian mercenaries. While Benjamin Franklin was biting his nails in Paris and hoping for some victory to convince his host to allocate funds and support to the Colonies, Washington carried out a kind of partisan warfare, moving his men after each defeat and attacking the cumbersome enemy chasing them.

Good nonfiction for young adult readers is harder to come by than good fiction. Like cavalry over the hill, then, rides *The Notorious Benedict Arnold*, a book whose ending we know before we start -- but will the kids? I suppose it depends on the curriculum, when they get American history, and to what extent. But even for veterans like me, the book offers details either forgotten or never known. Benedict Arnold couldn't get out of his own personality's way. His father of the same name, a drunken disgrace, lit the fire of ambition and shame in his son at a young age. Conveniently enough, the Revolutionary War would provide the backdrop Benedict needed to show his mettle. And mettle he showed, at Saratoga and in Quebec, where he came this close to making Canada our 14th colony. During actions at Quebec and Saratoga, Arnold was dealt serious injuries from gunfire. And though he lost a lot of blood, he sadly did not lose his life, missing two golden opportunities to go down among the Giants of the Revolution like Lafayette, Von Steuben, Ethan Allen, and Washington. Instead, he would outlive his heroic chances and allow his sullen, jealous, angry temperament a chance to win notoriety for quite another reputation, one driven by money and relentless ambition. The lesser star (and fall guy) of the book is concurrent story of Major John André. He played spy to Arnold's traitor, and their tango ended badly for him. Author Sheinkin tells us that André was one of those singularly handsome men who charmed women and men alike with his personality and intelligence. Unfortunately, this intelligence would forsake him in a few key seconds that would seal his fate. After meeting Arnold behind enemy lines near West Point, he was fleeing south toward the British-held city of New York.

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