



Benedict Arnold: A Drama of the American Revolution in Five Acts
by **Robert Zubrin**

Robert Zubrin continues to demonstrate his amazing literary range, from the science based “The Case for Mars,” the fictional extension of scientific exploration in “First Landing,” and even political satire in “The Holy Land.” Now seeking to add playwright to his list of accomplishments, Zubrin reveals the historic episode of Benedict Arnold’s betrayal of his friends and his nation for what it truly was - a decisive moment in American history and a clear exposition of the virtues of America’s founding leaders.

“Benedict Arnold: A Drama of the American Revolution in Five Acts,” early demonstrates what is often glossed over, which is that Benedict Arnold was an amazing and heroic leader of men during the American Revolution. His intervention at the battle of Saratoga is historically accurate and shows the invaluable contribution of this tragic figure to America’s revolutionary success. Yet Benedict Arnold was as weak in character as he was strong in military leadership.

And it is in drawing that distinction between Arnold’s weak character to his decisive military leadership that we find the power of Zubrin’s playwriting. For it is the contrast between Benedict Arnold and the man he would betray, George Washington, which powerfully delineates the failings of Arnold the man from Washington’s, and America’s, most magnificent moment.

Zubrin’s choice of a play to explore this American moment was excellent. With overtones of Shakespeare’s “Othello,” Major John Andre, to the British a hero, is shown for the careless manipulator that he was. Andre’s exploiting of Peggy Shippen at every turn for his own benefit and advancement led to one of the play’s finest moments as Andre meets his end at the order of General Washington, a man whose greatness Andre underestimated to his doom.

As we approach the nation’s Birthday on July 4th, the tragic betrayal of Benedict Arnold should, through Zubrin’s play, become a mainstay production of our American celebration. America has always been served in her hours of need by men of great character, and never is this more clearly shown than when viewed through the lives of the

pretenders, men who, though with great skill and ability, fail the nation for lack of character and virtue.

May “Benedict Arnold” forever be a reminder that it is through the depths of the souls of our great men, not in their great feats alone, that our nation has flourished.