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The Reb And The Redcoats (Living History Library)



Synopsis

In an interesting turnabout, the Revolutionary War is seen through the eyes of a British family to whom an American prisoner of war has been entrusted. Technically the young prisoner is in Uncle Lawrence's custody, but the children soon forge a forbidden friendship with him after he nearly dies in an attempted escape. He becomes the Reb and they, his Redcoats. But when they learn of some events leading to his coming to Europe, even Uncle Lawrence, embittered by the unjust death of a friend in America, thaws toward him-but this doesn't stop the Reb from scheming to escape. Constance Savery deftly weaves themes of trust and forgiveness into an interesting plot with likeable characters.

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Customer Reviews

I first read this book when I was 10 years old, and I loved it, checking it out of the school library at every opportunity. After leaving that school at age 12 I never saw the book again, and over the past 32 years I have periodically searched for it. I realized if I did find the book it may very well turn out to be not the enchanting read I remembered so fondly. Little did I know! "The Reb and the Redcoats" is very well-written, with an engrossing perspective on the American Revolution. A young American rebel is a POW in a household (in England) whose head is a Redcoat recovering from wounds suffered in the war. Through their interactions we come to appreciate the humanity of the people who make up both sides of an issue. If there is a fault with this book, it is only that the heroic nature and adventures of the Reb seem a bit beyond the grasp of a 15-year-old boy. Still, if Hollywood

would only age him a few years, they could make a very compelling film of this tale.

I picked this book up for my children a few years ago and read it aloud to them. I found I could hardly put it down and we finished it in a day or two. My children insisted that my husband next read it to them. He couldn't put it down either - in fact he stayed up late the first night to finish it for himself! This unusual story of the American Revolution from the perspective of a British family playing "host" to a young American prisoner of war is filled with timeless themes of patriotism and forgiveness. It is very accessible to younger readers, but "meaty" enough to be enjoyed by older children and adults as well.

We really enjoyed this book by an already favorite author. While not as action packed as her 'Enemy Brothers' (highly recommended!), we found this book very entertaining, and an excellent look at the American Revolution from the British side. The whole storyline begins with the arrival of a 'captured' American doll in a British household. Enthralled by the toy's lifelike clay features, the eldest daughter of the family adopts it into her family of English dolls. But what about the Face in the Window? Why is it so familiar? The plot thickens when the children must move with their mother to Uncle Laurence's house, where he has been given unwilling custody of a Rebel prisoner. The children want terribly to meet 'The Reb', but their uncle is adamant. How can they learn to know him...and win the prize Uncle Laurence offers to anyone who can discover his name? And what happened to their jolly young uncle in the war to change him so completely? The story is entertaining and believable; the children are cute without being 'too cute' and no sassy or modern behavior. The treatment of the Rebel as a prisoner is dealt with frankly, but not with a harshness that would bother young or sensitive children. Although the author writes from an obviously British point of view, both sides are given a generous impartiality. Well done!

I think that this is a great book for children and maybe adults as well. It is about an American prisoner in England. This book shows how people saw the American Revolution in England. It is also a book that shows how much work it was to keep a prisoner like this one. This is a super book.

In an interesting turnabout, the Revolutionary War is seen through the eyes of a British family to whom an American prisoner of war has been entrusted. Technically the young prisoner is in Uncle Laurence's custody, but the children soon forge a forbidden friendship with him after he nearly dies in an attempted escape. He becomes the Reb and they, his Redcoats. But when they learn of some

events leading to his coming to Europe, even Uncle Laurence, embittered by the unjust death of a friend in America, thaws toward him-but this doesn't stop the Reb from scheming to escape. Constance Savery deftly weaves themes of trust and forgiveness into an interesting plot with likeable characters.

I stumbled across a brief description of this book and was interested enough to order a copy. I am very glad that I did. The perspective of the book - it was written by a British author and is about an American prisoner of war in England during the American Revolution - is very unusual; I can't think of any other books like it. Most books for children set during that period take place in America, and even sympathetic British characters appear in the role of invaders and at least temporary conquerors (the example that springs to mind is Ann Finlayson's REBECCA'S WAR, which I recommend). The war itself is usually very central to those books, whereas in this one, while it has an effect on the British family because their father is away fighting it, their uncle was wounded in it, and so on, it is far away and pretty much peripheral. I appreciated the fact that the author did not try to make one side evil personified. In fact she seemed more sympathetic to the American cause than to the British. The characters were well-drawn, and if the Reb is a tad too spectacularly competent and wise for a fifteen-year-old, he's still very believable, and the children are refreshingly childlike and not smart-alecky. On the strength of this book I also ordered Savery's ENEMY BROTHERS, which if anything is even better than this one. EMERALDS FOR THE KING is also well worth reading, if you can find a copy.

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