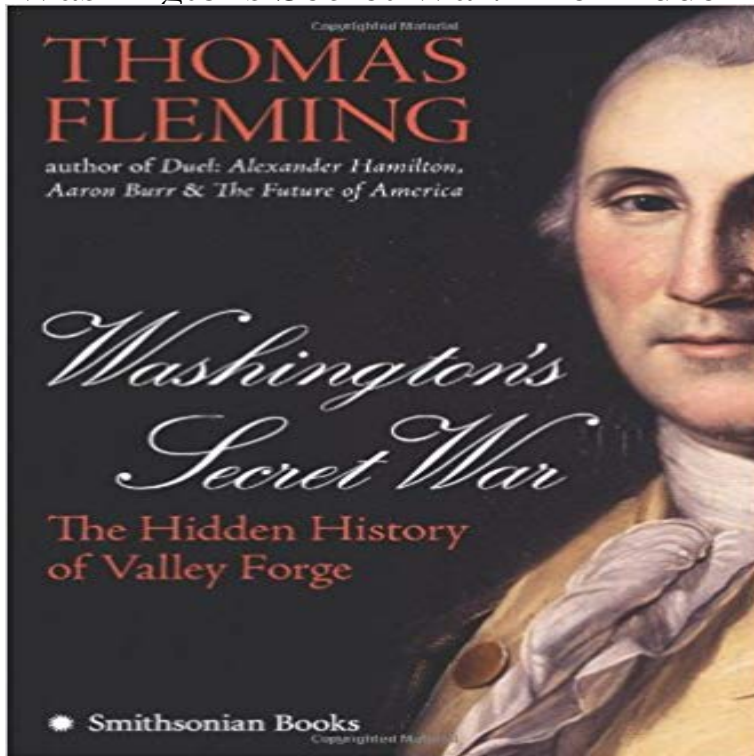


Washingtons Secret War: The Hidden History of Valley Forge



Congress does not trust me. I cannot continue thus, George Washington confided to Congressman Francis Dana of Massachusetts on his first visit to Valley Forge. Though Congressman Dana assured the general that a majority in Congress still had faith in him, he was nonetheless stunned by Washingtons apparent defeatism. George Washingtons threat to resign during the fateful winter at Valley Forge is just one of the many revelations awaiting the reader in Thomas Flemings startling new book. Prize-winning author of *Liberty The American Revolution and 1776: Year of Illusions*, Thomas Fleming has returned to the American Revolution, demolishing long-accepted fictions of Valley Forge and cutting through layers of myth to reveal a hitherto unknown side of George Washington. The defining moments of the Revolutionary War did not occur on the battlefield or at the diplomatic table, claims Fleming, but at Valley Forge. Fleming transports his readers to December 1777. While the British army lives in luxury in conquered Philadelphia, Washingtons troops huddle in the barracks of Valley Forge, fending off starvation and disease even as threats of mutiny swirl through the regiments. Though his army stands on the edge of collapse, Washington must wage a secondary war, this one against the slander of his reputation as a general and a patriot. Readers watch as Washington strategizes not only against the British army, but against the ambitions of General Horatio Gates, the victor in the battle of Saratoga. Gates has attracted a coterie of ambitious generals who are devising ways to humiliate and embarrass Washington into resignation. Using diaries and letters, Fleming creates an unforgettable portrait of an embattled Washington. Far from the long-suffering stoic of historical myth, Washington responds to attacks from Gates and his allies with the dexterity of a master

politician. He parries the thrusts of his covert enemies and, when necessary, strikes back with ferocity and guile. While many histories portray Washington as a man who transcended politics, Flemings Washington is an exceedingly complex man, a man whose political maneuvering allowed him to retain his command, even as he simultaneously struggled to prevent the Continental Army from dissolving into mutiny at Valley Forge. Written with his customary flair and eye for human detail and drama, Thomas Flemings gripping narrative develops with the authority of a major historian and the skills of a master storyteller. Washingtons Secret War is not only a revisionist view of the American ordeal at Valley Forge--it calls for a new assessment of the man too often simplified into an unreal American legend. This is narrative history at its best and most vital.

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