

BENEDICT ARNOLD: HOW THE TRAITOR WAS UNMASKED

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Traitor

George Washington was looking forward to spending a nice evening with his good friend Benedict Arnold and his wife, Peggy. Not only was Arnold a good friend of Washington, but he was his military comrade as well. Washington had placed Arnold in command of the fort at West Point. Little did he know, that Arnold was a traitor? This was well hidden from Washington. He approached the Robinson house where the Arnolds lived thinking that the Arnolds themselves would meet him at the door with open arms. Instead Arnold's aide, David Salisbury Franks, met him at the door embarrassed that Arnold himself was not there. Franks explained to Washington that Arnold had left earlier for West Point telling him that he wanted to prepare a suitable welcome for Washington. After eating breakfast, Washington left Alexander Hamilton at the house while he went forward to West Point. When he arrived he was greeted with another disappointment. General Arnold was not there. Colonel John Lamb who was the resident commandant of the fortress greeted him. Lamb had not been notified of Washington's upcoming visit. Washington felt that this was very strange, but went on to do his inspection of the fortress. He found it in very bad shape.

After his inspection of the fortress, Washington headed back to the Arnold's house and arrived by 3:30. Dinner was to be at 4:00. When he got there Alexander Hamilton told him that Arnold had never returned and Peggy was still in bed. Washington then went to the chambers that were assigned to him so that he could get ready for dinner. While he was getting ready, Hamilton came into the room with a handful of very incriminating documents.

It turns out that Benedict Arnold was giving information to the British about West Point and information on the 3,086 patriots at the fortress. Prior to this day, Major General John Andre of the British army was captured in civilian clothes carrying maps of West Point in his boots while trying to get back to the Vulture ship. This was same ship that Arnold escaped on. Washington was slow in advising a plan that would protect West Point because he was not

functioning properly from the emotional shock of Arnold turning traitor. Nothing happened to the fortress because Arnold's plans were interrupted by the capture of Andre. Now Washington had to make an example of Andre so as to keep this sort of thing from happening again. Despite pleas from the British to spare Andre's life, Washington decided that he did not want the American leaders to think that this was something that would be treated lightly for fear that it might happen again. Washington told the British that if they would hand over Arnold, he in turn would set forth the immediate release of Andre. This did not happen so Andre was hanged while teary-eyed soldiers stood and watched. Andre was a very brave and charming man who was sort of misled by Arnold. As for Peggy, Arnold's wife, she had Washington fooled into thinking she was a very sick and innocent woman. Washington had a thing about beauty and innocence being tied together in some sort of way. Peggy was eventually run out of her father's house in Philadelphia and sent to London where her sickness miraculously disappeared.

I think that Washington shouldn't have let his personal feelings for someone he thought was a friend get in the way of his leading a country. Also, I would hope that he took his blinders off to his ridiculous idea that a woman's beauty makes her automatically innocent. Just because someone is pretty doesn't mean they are innocent. Pretty is as pretty does. I don't like the thought of anybody being hanged, but I do, however, think that he made the right choice when it came to Andre even if it was a tremendously sad situation. He was the leader of this great country, which may not have turned out as great as it did, had he been easy on those who were traitors. Also, Washington had people against him to begin with when it came to Benedict Arnold. They thought he was picking favorites by letting him command West Point. Because of this, was it Washington's fault that Arnold became a traitor? Some looked at Washington as being guilty by association.