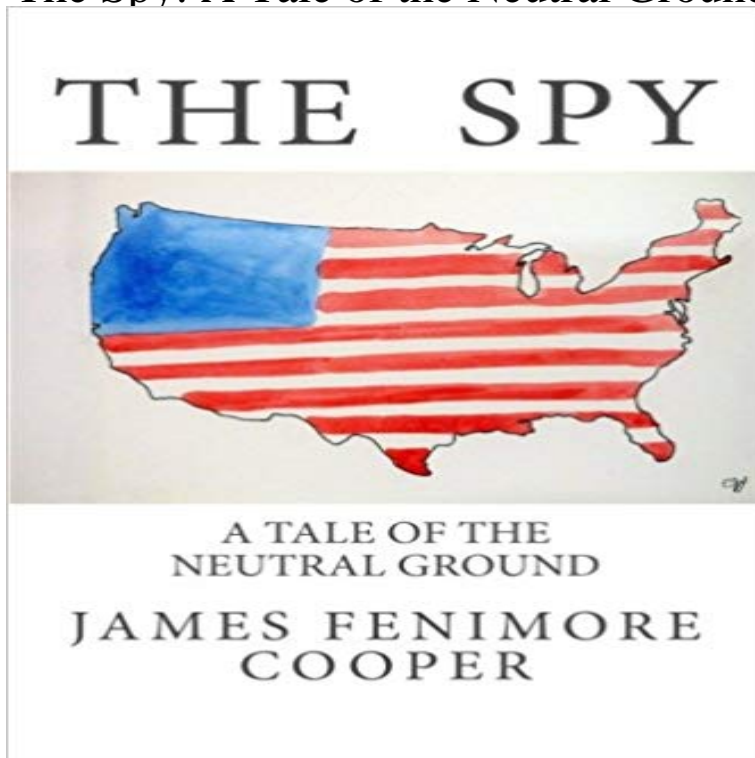


The Spy: A Tale of the Neutral Ground



It is, doubtless, one of the most powerful historical tales ever written, and is regarded by many, as the best work of Mr. Cooper. -The Literary World, Volume 9, July, 1851

Set in upstate New York on a comfortable estate, the law-abiding family of Mr. Wharton suddenly finds the Revolutionary War at its door. They are an American family with friendly British ties, but they have kept their dual loyalties from affecting their peaceful life, until a secret visit from Whartons own son, Henry, changes everything. Henry is a British officer and has crossed behind American lines in disguise. When American troops arrive unexpectedly, Henry is discovered and arrested as a spy. Adding grief to the familys pain is the connection to Henrys captor, the noble Major Dunwoodie. He is Henrys sisters fiance and Henrys own childhood friend; and they must all remain at the Whartons until Dunwoodie can escort Henry to Washington for his trial. The plans for departing are delayed when British forces enter the vicinity and a battle breaks out within sight. When the British are defeated, Dunwoodie quarters captured Colonel Wellmere in the Wharton home. Now quarantined with prisoners and quartered American officers, the Whartons wait for their beloved Henry to be taken away and tried. Little does any of them know that the real spy still roams free and plies his trade within their midst. As the war enters the family sitting room, the family members become divided. While eldest daughter Sarah swoons for British Colonel Wellmere, young Francis affirms her love for Dunwoodie and sees the war through his eyes. The familys once acceptable loyalties now conflict and finally threaten to break them apart. But when Henry escapes his capture and is helped by the real British spy, Francis must decide for herself and her family how important are their patriotic ties. Will she betray her brother to the Americans or will

she let him go to the British, and risk the honor and career of the American officer she loves? A story of love and intrigue, war and sacrifice, THE SPY touches the heart of early America and brings the fervor of the revolution into modern times. James Fenimore Cooper wrote The Spy in 1821 intending the novel to preserve both the memory and the meaning of the American Revolution. Inspired by accusations of bribery and corruption leveled at the men who captured Major Andre (Benedict Arnolds co-conspirator executed for espionage in 1780), the novel centers on Harry Birch, a common man wrongly suspected by well-born Patriots of being a spy for the British. Even Washington, who supports Birch, misreads the man, and when Washington offers him payment for information vital to the Patriots cause, Birch scorns the money and asserts that his actions were motivated not by financial reward, but by his devotion to the fight for independence. A historical adventure tale reminiscent of Sir Walter Scotts Waverley novels, The Spy is also a parable of the American experience, a reminder that the nations survival, like its Revolution, depends on judging people by their actions, not their class or reputations.

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