



Rebel

Bernard Cornwell

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When Richmond landowner Washington Faulconer snatches young Nate Starbuck from the grip of a Yankee-hating mob, Nate is both grateful and awed by his idealistic rescuer. To repay his generosity, he enlists in the Faulconer legion to fight against his home, the North, and against his abolitionist father. When the regiment joins up, ready to march into the ferocious battle at Buff Run, the men are prepared to start a war . . . but they aren't ready for how they—and the nation—will be forever changed by the oaths they have sworn for their beloved South.

Rebel Details

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From Reader Review Rebel for online ebook

Gpitchard says

I've gotten more interested in Civil War books, both fiction and non-fiction. This fictional book tells of Nathaniel Starbuck, a son of a northern, radical (emphasis on radical) abolitionist preacher, who flees Yale Divinity School, comes south, and ends up in the Confederate forces being led by a friend's wealthy father.

I thought the day-to-day issues of preparing for war and the variety of folks involved in war prep (some realistically honorable, some opportunistic, etc.) , absurdities, etc.) made for imaginative reading, but didn't think the action scenes were very powerful.

I also find the idea of Nate, a northerner, signing up with the Confederates an odd likelihood. He dislikes his parents and most of his family but the reason why he would have signed on to the South's cause was never persuasive to me.

Colin Mitchell says

This is the first in the series of Nathan Starbuck novels set during the American Civil War. Nate, a Boston man has run away from Yale University seminary, rebelling against his father the Reverend Elial Starbuck a hell fire and damnation, Calvinist minister, to chase a young actress. His fortunes find him in Richmond at the time of secession. Nate is initially befriended by a wealthy landowner who turns out something like the evil sergeant of the Sharpe novels and indeed there are a number of similarities

The battle at Manassas is described in chilling reminder of the horrors of war as the two armies collide in breath taking action, leaving Nate promoted but still with Washington Faulconer as an enemy.

Eric_W says

Rebel is the first in the Nathaniel Starbuck series. Cornwell is best known for the Richard Sharpe series, but he has also written novels about Stonehenge and the Arthurian legend (all on my must-read list). The Starbuck series follows Nate Starbuck, son of Elial Joseph Starbuck, a radical abolitionist preacher, to the South, where he enlists in the Faulconer Legion, more from antagonism toward his father than from any allegiance to states' rights or slavery.

Nate, while at Yale Seminary, had become enamored of a lithe (lithe, always lithe) young actress, who cons him into helping her rob the owner of the theater where she is performing. They flee together to Virginia just as Fort Sumter falls. She is met at the station by her lover and dumps Nate who, recognized as a Yankee, is about to be tarred and feathered by a mob, when he is summarily rescued by Washington Faulconer, an incredibly wealthy Virginia scion. Faulconer's money was all made in the stock market and railroads, so his manumission of household slaves hardly represented much commitment to any particular position on the slavery issue. He takes Nate on first as his secretary, then as a lieutenant in his new legion. Elial is incensed at his son's betrayal of abolitionist values.

Elial is the classic zealot who insists one can recognize a Southerner on sight because of their ape-like

features stemming from poor breeding, hence their addiction to slavery. Elial glories in the destruction and blood of the battlefield and hands out biblical tracts to dying men, ignoring their pleas for water. Thaddeus Bird, Faulconer's brother-in-law, is one of the funniest characters, and he nails Faulconer's braggadocio and arrogance. He recognizes Nate's valuable qualities. "He can think, Adam, and that's a distressingly rare talent among young men. Most of you believe that it is sufficient to merely agree with the prevailing sentiment, which is of course what dogs and churchgoers do. Starbuck has a mind. . . and he's endowed with a talent for cruelty."

Another favorite quote of mine attributed to his famous general grandfather is: "War is much like making love to a woman, an activity full of delights, but none of them predictable, and the best of them capable of inflicting grievous injury on a man." Vignettes of famous people abound. The image of Nathaniel Banks, the Union general at Second Manassas, filled with self-importance, who wanted nothing better than to run for president, preening himself in front of his sycophants until he realizes things are not going so well against Stonewall is a minor classic. Belvidere Delaney, the Southern attorney who presciently realizes the North will win the war and who volunteers to spy for the north is another wonderfully drawn character. Another great character is the foul-mouthed swear-you-under-the-table Nathan Evans, a Confederate colonel. For example: "Faulconer doesn't have men, boy, he has white-livered fairies, Milksops, Mudsills, Black-assed, shadbellied, shit-faced, pussy-hearted trash. . . [and:] Boston, a shit hole. A piss hole. A city of puking crap, Christ, but I hate Boston. A city of Black-assed Republican trash. A city of interfering, hymn-singing, lickbelly women who are no damned good for anything." Let's see Tony Soprano top that!

Cornwell must have done considerable research. One scene has all the qualities of verisimilitude and too delightful not to quote. A surgeon has just amputated a Northern soldier's leg and the patient won't come up from under the chloroform haze despite the ammonia spirits the assistant is waving under his nose. " 'Give me the chloroform,' the doctor ordered, then took a scalpel to the patient's torn trousers and cut back the tattered, bloody cloth to reveal the man's genitals. 'Behold a miracle,' the doctor announced and poured a trickle of chloroform onto the unconscious man's testicles. The man seemed to go into instant spasm and tried to sit up. 'Frozen balls,' the doctor said happily, 'known in the profession as the Lazarus effect.' " The book culminates with the Battle of Manassas, during which Starbuck discovers his true vocation, that of a soldier. The battle scenes, while horribly realistic, are less interesting than the characters surrounding Nate. Nate, having met the "elephant" realizes that even though terrified, it appeals to him. He learned that "war was a gigantic game of chance, a huge gamble, a denial of all predestination and prudence." The adventures continue in the second volume, entitled *Copperhead*.

Ed [Redacted] says

This is the first Cornwell book I have read. I am told I should start with the Sharpe series but I fell into this one so there you have it. I was immediately drawn in by the story. Nate Starbuck (I thought about coffee constantly during this book) is a yankee who hates his crazy, abolitionist preacher father. He steals money and flees to Virginia with his floozy girlfriend who immediately takes the money and leaves Nate. As it happens, Nate lands in Richmond just after the fall of Ft Sumter (For those of you non US types, this is more or less the opening battle of the US Civil War) To say the least, this is not the greatest time to be a Bostonian in Virginia. Nate is saved from a date with some hot tar by respected landowner Washington Faulconer, the father of his college friend. Faulconer, it seems, is forming up a "legion" to defend his beloved Virginia from the coming Yankee apocalypse. Nate joins the legion and is commissioned a lieutenant.

At this point, we enter the middle third of the book which was a plodding, boring slog where you could see

characters being slotted into the tracks they were going to take for the rest of the series. Only Cornwell's sterling reputation caused me to continue.

After surviving the middle third of the book, I was rewarded by the first battle of Mannassas. Cornwell really shone in his battle scenes. They were exciting, fairly realistically grim and made the book well worth reading.

Without the boring middle, this would be a 4.5 to 5 star book. as it is it gets a solid 3.5, recommended with reservations.

Rithun Regi says

A spirit of a rebel fighting to understand his own purpose in a battlefield is the essence of this book. The American Civil war is much more than slavery for the men who fought on both sides. While peace might be complex war is made much more simpler by the from fighting spirit displayed by the commoners.

Javir11 says

7,5 sobre 10

Como novela histórica creo que tiene todos los ingredientes para gustar. Un periodo interesante de la historia como trasfondo, personajes buenos, sobre todo el protagonista, acción y una trama bastante interesante.

Además está escrita por Bernard Cornwell, que para algunos será una merma, pero para mí es un añadido, ya que es uno de los escritores que más me entretiene.

El pero de esta novela y que le ha hecho perder una estrella, pues que para mi gusto le sobran páginas, sobre todo en su zona central, que llegado el caso se torna algo pesada y un centenar de páginas menos le podría haber aportado más fluidez a ese tramo.

Os dejo en enlace a mi blog por si queréis darle un vistazo a la reseña más completa que dejé allí.

<https://fantasiascifiymuchomas.blogspot.com/2014/07/rebelde-bernard-cornwell.html>

Vagner Stefanello says

Review in Portuguese from Desbravando Livros:

Só pra variar um pouquinho, mais uma resenha do autor Bernard Cornwell aqui no blog. Esse é o 21º (!) livro do autor que eu desbravo e simplesmente não consigo parar. Minha meta é ler todos os livros do mestre até morrer, então tenho um bom tempo e muitas histórias ótimas pela frente.

A bola da vez foi Rebelde, primeiro livro d'As Crônicas de Starbuck, lançado no finalzinho de 2014 aqui no Brasil pelo Grupo Editorial Record. Logo no primeiro capítulos somos apresentados a Nathaniel Starbuck, o

protagonista dessa história sangrenta que dividiu os Estados Unidos em dois.

Em 1861, quando vários estados escravagistas do Sul declararam secessão e formaram os "Estados Confederados da América", ou "Confederação", fazendo oposição aos demais estados, que ficaram conhecidos como "União" ou "Norte", ninguém imaginaria que o conflito ficaria conhecido como um dos mais sangrentos da História. A Guerra de Secesão, como foi chamada, durou quatro anos, até 1865, e deixou mais de 600 mil mortos em seu rastro. É no meio desse fuzilamento que **Nathaniel Starbuck** se encontra e teremos a história narrada pelo seu ponto de vista, em terceira pessoa.

O estopim de tudo foi a tomada do Forte Sumter em abril de 1861, na Carolina do Sul, pelas forças armadas da Confederação. O que parecia apenas uma crise no início do governo do então presidente republicano Abraham Lincoln acabava de se transformar em uma temida guerra civil.

Após ter largado os estudos para seguir uma jovem e ver essa mesma o abandonar, Nathaniel, um nortista nascido em Boston, filho do famoso reverendo Elial Starbuck, chega até a cidade de Richmond, na Virgínia (estado sulista), à procura de Adam, seu amigo de infância e filho do coronel Washington Faulconer. Ao chegar em Richmond, é rapidamente identificado como um nortista e encerrado pelos civis, só sendo poupado quando o próprio Washington aparece.

Nesse primeiro capítulo já podemos ter uma amostra do clima de tensão existente entre os estados americanos. Uma mistura perigosa de xenofobia e ódio crescentes, muito próxima de explodir.

"Como poderia haver uma guerra nessa terra boa? Esses eram os Estados Unidos da América, o apogeu da luta do homem por um governo perfeito e uma sociedade temente a Deus, e os únicos inimigos jamais vistos nessa terra feliz foram os ingleses e os índios, e esses dois inimigos, graças à providência divina e à força americana, haviam sido derrotados."

Voltando ao que interessa, descobrimos que o coronel Washington Faulconer está montando uma legião para lutar na guerra, e Starbuck acaba sendo inevitavelmente recrutado para a mesma, onde começa a trabalhar para o dono da Faulconer Court House, condado da Virgínia.

É só a partir daí que a história começa a andar num ritmo mais rápido, com personagens novos sendo apresentados, como Anna Faulconer, filha do coronel, e Ethan Ridley, seu prometido. Sally e Thomas Truslow, outros dois personagens, também terão papéis importantes na vida de Nathaniel. Preste atenção neles. Outros também poderia ser mencionados, mas farei isso mais adiante.

Ao contrário dos outros personagens principais de Bernard Cornwell, como Uhtred, Derfel e Richard Sharpe, **Nathaniel Starbuck não é um daqueles protagonistas que começamos a gostar desde as primeiras páginas**. Remoído pelo seu passado e atormentado por pesadelos, Starbuck tem receio em cometer pecados que possam afrontar o seu Deus, e isso é algo bem recorrente em todos os capítulos desse primeiro livro da série, onde ele deixa de tomar certas atitudes que lhe parecem corretas num primeiro momento por causa do seu temor religioso e uma possível punição divina.

Sem contar que ele, como nortista lutando pelo Sul, estará enfrentando pessoas do seu "país".

A trama toda vai se construindo de uma maneira regular e sem pressa, chegando ao seu **ápice na Batalha de Manassas**, próxima ao riacho Bull Run, onde os exércitos Confederados e da União se encontrarão para um primeiro embate sangrento. Torcemos por alguns personagens e aguardamos ansiosamente pela morte de outros, um misto de empatia e até mesmo admiração por aqueles que fizeram parte de um momento

histórico, não só para a formação de um país, mas para o mundo.

É possível sentir o cheiro da pólvora que fica no ar após os tiros de canhão e disparos das pistolas, a agonia de soldados feridos tentando se agarrar ao último resquício de vida. Bernard Cornwell é um mestre em fazer isso e aqui também podemos perceber a sua habilidade em narrar batalhas, mesmo que eu, pessoalmente, prefira a boa e velha luta de guerreiros com espadas e escudos.

"Se você cresce no campo, vive ouvindo falar do circo. Todas as maravilhas do circo. Os shows de aberrações e os números com animais, incluindo o elefante, e todas as crianças ficam perguntando o que é o elefante, mas você não consegue explicar, até que um dia leva seus filhos e eles veem. A primeira batalha de um homem é assim. Igual a ver o elefante. Alguns homens mijam na calça, alguns correm feito o diabo, alguns fazem o inimigo fugir."

Confesso até que, num primeiro momento, nem me interessava muito pela Guerra de Secessão, visto que na escola é um assunto debatido muito rapidamente e sem o aprofundamento necessário, mas agora, com outra visão, quero entender mais sobre como essa guerra afetou toda a nação norte-americana. Afinal, temos a oportunidade de ler um período desses na escrita de B. Cornwell.

Rebelde foi uma leitura bem aguardável, mas **guardarei a 5ª estrelinha para os próximos livros**, que pretendo desbravar no próximo ano. Traidor ainda precisa ser comprado e os seguintes lançados aqui no Brasil, mas quem sabe eu não parto para a leitura deles em inglês mesmo? Só o tempo dirá!

Honza Prchal says

If you like Civil War history or historical fiction, if you like Bernard Cornwell, but have a hard time with his brutality (I suspect he was abused as a child), OR if you like Pilgrim's Progress in reverse like Breaking Bad or C.S. Lewis' autobiographical lesser work A Pilgrim's Regress, you'll really like this book.

It takes a lot to get me to sympathize with an anti-hero violating commandment after commandment, and pitying himself for doing so, and siding with the rebellious South against his native North besides, this despite his nearly being tarred and feathered or lynched in the opening scene, but I sympathize with Nathaniel Starbuck here.

The history, down to the land-use of different regions of Virginia, is spot on.

I highly recommend this book.

Eric says

As usual, Benard Cornwell writes a well crafted historic-based fictional story. He takes us into the mind of Nate Starbuck (and other characters) at the onset of the Civil War. The opening scene has Nate in Virginia being abused by Southerners who think Nate is a Northern spy (although any non-southerner is enough to harass). Nate abandons his Yale's religious studies to follow a beautiful woman who ends up dumping him as they travel through Virginia on the way to New Orleans. As Washington Faulkner points out later, Nate is not the first young man to be entranced by a beautiful woman. Washington Faulkner is the father of one of Nate's friends (Adam) from Yale and saves Nate from being tarred and feathered. There is one scene here where Faulkner asks Nate: "Starbuck, do you want some coffee?" (I had to smile at that, intentional or not).

Nate's father is a hell-fire minister in the North who has notoriety condemning slavery. Throughout the story Nate's rebellion against his father's strict rules drives his decision-making on his involvement in the Civil War (and other personal matters).

The Civil War wasn't supposed to be a prolonged conflict. A decisive battle would put an end to it in short order. This was a sentiment shared by the North and South. Much of the "battle talk" was over romanticized so most young men were eager to go to war to preserve the South's way of life (and impress the young ladies on their bravery). Consequently, the initial battle at Bull Run (Manassas) was disorganized and poorly managed in terms of military efficiency. The troops soon learn the true reality of the butchery and insanity of battle.

I enjoyed the book and the detailed accounts were vivid. In fact, the details toward the end seemed to detract from the story somewhat if you are not avid history buff (and I'm not). Interesting and entertaining nonetheless.

Zena Ryder says

I liked this alright, but not nearly as much as the Sharpe series. There wasn't enough of the historical context, and the story was mostly about a handful of fictional characters and their interactions. And I simply didn't like the main character, Nathaniel Starbuck, all that much. It seemed as though Cornwell was trying to create a character with more psychological depth, but he's just not as good at that as he is at the swashbuckling Sharpe stories. Too often, Cornwell needed to provide explicit psychological explanations of Starbuck's behaviour — which was somewhat annoying.

Nate says

No idea what was up with this one. On paper the math is right; Cornwell + My Burgeoning Interest in the ACW = Me Enjoying This Book. Somewhere along the line though, I got really, really bored. The writing is good. The details are great, as usual. The characters...no one expects super-memorable and haunting characters from this man but they were very watery. The protagonist was lame...his "tortured past" was that he had pre-marital sex or something, I don't know. It was not good. Plus this book was like five hundred pages! That was perfectly awesome for his Arthur books, but Arthur books these are not. Just pages and pages of lame business schemes and complex romantic relationships involving faceless, boring and unlikable people. Even Cornwell's reliably awesome action scenes were not up to par in this one...there was one bit of excitement amidst the toil and it was literally when the protagonist rides with a Confederate gang that lightly burns a bridge trestle. That's right, not demolishes...lightly burns. The fire is soon put out and so was my interest in this book. I'm sure Cornwell wrote the living hell out of Bull Run. But I have no interest in a book that consists of 450 bloated pages of nothing and 50 pages of gripping battle scene.

Michael J. Fox says

It's become something of a cliche to hear people say 'I really related to character X or Y' when they talk about books, it's almost as bad as 'I couldn't put it down' (honestly? We're you orbiting the Earth or does physics hate you?) and 'It was a real page-turner' (most books involve turning pages, unless it's on a Kindle

or something equally as swanky, doesn't make it special).

HOWEVER. From almost the first page I felt the story of Nathaniel Starbuck was like what my life would have been like in 1862 America. I could entirely relate to the upbringing of being forced into an unwanted fancy education, being surrounded by values that while you might not necessarily disagree with you just don't seem to be as hardcore in as everyone around you, being monumentally bad with women and having that one in your life who breaks your heart... I could go on, but I'd begin listing and this would drift into the territory of spoilers.

So yeah, I feel like the main character is me. But what else makes this book so great? There's vivid characters, great description of the scenery blah blah (so good, that I actually wanted to fly over to America a few times to see the places for myself). This book has everything you'd want from a book, in that sense it's almost perfect to a fault. What truly makes this book great is the fact that it's so gritty. So many books try to make heroic characters, and either fail miserably and end up creating some kind of superhero-esque character that becomes boring to read about as it removes all sense of danger; or they end up glorifying the conflict they are set in. 'Rebel', and the following three books, do neither, in fact they do the very opposite.

The battle scenes are well paced and provide enough action to tell the story of what happened without getting too bogged down. The book itself is very well paced and is a good example of what juxtaposition (if Michael Bay is reading this, look it up in a dictionary and then beat yourself to death with said dictionary) looks like. There's nothing bad I can really say about these four books except that there aren't more, and that it's sad the story hasn't been seen through to the end.

10/10, it was such a page turner that I couldn't put it down.

Graham says

Cornwell's REBEL starts off with an excellent, humiliating and very painful enactment of the whole classic tar-and-feather punishment meted out by Americans in the 19th century, and it's enlightening to find out just what this process entails. It's this kind of minute detail that distinguishes Cornwell's wide-ranging research from other contemporary efforts. For example, later in the story we learn what a 'ganderpull' means, and Cornwell pulls no punches in his in-your-face description of it. Sure, we probably would have been better off without knowing, but it's all here and adds an extra layer onto the narrative.

The main thrust of this novel is a character-driven story about Starbuck, the son of a Northern preacher who, through a series of misadventures, ends up fighting for the Southern cause. As this is the first book in a series, Cornwell uses an extraordinary amount of padding and background information to shape his world, as well as introducing the dozen-or-so characters that provide the main focus of the story.

As such, this is a slow-moving book that is surprisingly lacking in verve, although Cornwell's prose is as tough and witty as ever. It does make for an interesting story, but it also means that this is a book hard to get into, which takes forever to get moving – right until the last pages in fact.

The only action, so to speak, is in the last quarter, telling as it does the battle of Bull Run, the first of the war. Here, Cornwell is up to his elbows in astonishingly gruesome bloodshed and realistic, down-to-earth relating of man's heroism and cowardice, and the feel of taking part in a military operation. It's fantastic stuff, but it's a shame that it takes nearly all of the book to get this far.

As for the hero, Starbuck is from the outset the direct opposite of Sharpe, a rather whiny, by-the-book character who finally grows into a real hero – but again, that happens right at the end of the story, so you

have to put up with his less-than-impressive characteristics right until then. At least he only had to do it once...

Carol says

Primeiro Cornwell e adorei!

Elisabeth says

I was entertained by the story, however it didn't really start to pick up until Bull Run, during the last 1/3 of the book. Felt like the character development was pretty good in everyone except Starbuck, the main protagonist. I felt like he was pretty one dimensional, again until near the end. He constantly seems to be distracted by remotely attractive women, to the point of complete oblivion, which seemed a little far fetched--are there no remotely attractive women in 19th century Boston? Also, I found the entire premise of him joining the Confederate rebellion simply to spite his uber-religious father and family also a little far fetched, especially considering that he doesn't really believe in one of the main reasons for states' rights, the right to own slaves. I almost agree with the people who feel that it isn't his fight and he should just go home. Still, I was drawn in enough to want to continue the series.
