

The Year of Liberty: The Great Irish Rebellion of 1789

By Thomas Pakenham

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This classic account of the great Irish rebellion of 1798 remains the only full-scale history of that tragic event. As relevant today as it was when first published in 1969, THE YEAR OF LIBERTY is now reissued with the addition of a chronology and a glossary of terms. In May 1798 a hundred thousand peasants rose against the British government in Ireland. By the time the revolt had been put down four months later, thirty thousand dead were literally rotting in heaps in a smoking and desolate countryside. Yet it was not a schoolroom story of the heroic oppressed rising against the brutal oppressor, but the result of a complex, tragic, often absurd and sometimes heroic interplay between different groups of people. A tough and arrogant oligarchy of country gentlemen, mainly Protestant and mainly British in origin, lived off a Catholic peasantry. Meanwhile, idealistic merchants and hot-headed young lawyers dreamed and plotted for an Irish Republic on the French model. From a mass of sources including confidential government reports, contemporary newspapers, poems, broadsheets and letters, the author pieces together a story at once complex, tragic, absurd and heroic.

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