Brilliant Solution

Introduction

p. 1, Question – What historical events precipitated (caused) the writing of this book?

p. 1 – “THE GENESIS OF THIS BOOK lies in two national crises…”

Question: What were those crises?

p. 4, ¶ 2, sentence 1 – “FOR A HISTORIAN, the need to put our current events in historical perspective is an occupational hazard.”

Question: What is meant by that quote?

p. 4, ¶ 2, line 13 – “What political crises had the founding fathers face, and how did they react to them?” [through the end of that paragraph].

Note: This is what the author is stating as the premise (or goal) of this book.

p. 5, ¶ 1, line 1 – “it takes a conscious act of imagination to see America through the eyes of its founding fathers…”

Note: This step is essential to understanding the Constitution.

p. 5, ¶ 1, line 3 – “These men inhabited a world alien to modern Americans, a world in which the United States was a fragile, uncertain experiment, a newcomer and to some degree a beggar at the gates of power and prestige among nations.”

p. 5, ¶ 1, line 7 – “In 1787 our treasury was empty.” [through the end of that ¶ on the next page]

Note: These are the many problems that made the abandonment of the Articles of Confederation necessary.

p. 6, ¶ 2, line 1 – “Looking back, we might argue that the founding fathers’ dire predictions and sense of impending doom were exaggerated.”

p. 8, ¶ 2, line 1 – “The members of the Constitutional Convention would be amused to read these histories.”

p. 8, ¶ 2, line 4 – “For the only people not certain of the choices to be made at the convention, and even less certain of the longevity and effectiveness of the government they would eventually produce, were the founders themselves.”

Note: The founders were very unsure about the potential outcome.
p. 9, ¶ 1, line 1 – “Madison’s remarkable record of the debates in the convention reveal, on virtually every page, a collective anxiety about what they were doing and a near-paranoid fear of conspiracies springing up around them– and among them.”

p. 9, ¶ 2, line 7 – “When they were done, they submitted their handiwork to the citizens for ratification rather than attempting to impose it through assassination or military force.”

Note: Rarely can democratic political reforms be imposed by an external force. The notable exceptions to this premise are Germany and Japan following World War II. One reason for the success of these two endeavors was the long-term national and or cultural identity of these peoples.

p. 10, ¶ 2, line 1 – “I can only imagine the bewilderment and bemusement the convention delegates would feel if the were somehow magically transported to America in the twenty-first century.”

p. 10, ¶ 2, line 7 – “What would the think of the hybrid of universal suffrage and their older mechanism of an electoral college?”