

Original Intentions

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Abstract: *Original Intentions* is about slavery and freedom and the friendship of George Washington and his neighbor, George Mason. Both men owned slaves, both fought for freedom from Great Britain, one signed the US Constitution, the other refused, one set his slaves free, while the other felt enslaved. An intelligent but stubborn old man must be disloyal to his long time (and famous) friend to prevent the future prospects of his children and grandchildren from obstruction and/or enslavement.

Original Intentions

2016

FIELD A CANNON BEING COVERED BY SNOW: DAY

As the credits roll.

An abandoned 18th century American CANNON sits in an empty tobacco field (The cannon was used to rid the area of Indians). It begins to snow harder; rather like a blizzard. The area expands to include a river bank where a small cluster of people (several adults and children) stand. A small rowboat is being held by a man on the bank.

POTOMAC RIVER: DAY

The small cluster of 18th century people include a YOUNG BLACK WOMAN (Nan Gate) holding a WHITE BABY in her arms while a BLACK MAN (Hercules) has the hand of a young BLACK GIRL (Charlotte), about 3 years old. A 5 year old WHITE BOY (brother to George Mason) is wandering the shore looking for rocks while a WHITE MAN (Mr. Mason) and WOMAN (Mrs. Mason) stand between a 9 year old WHITE BOY (George Mason). Mrs. Mason holds a small BUNDLE in her hand. An older BLACK MAN (Ishmael) holds the tiny skiff. All are dressed for the weather.

MRS MASON

Let's hope this works.

NAN GATE

(About the bundle in Mrs.
Mason's hand.)

That Indian mixture fixed up
Georgie last time he come down with
the fever, I s'pect it will do the
same for that girl child.

HERCULES

Winds picking up.

MASON (9 YEAR OLD)

Papa can I go?

MR. MASON

(Irritated)

Mother?

MRS MASON

No Georgie. Maybe next time.

She hands her husband the small bundle of Indian medicine. A gust of snow and wind blows against the small group.

(CONTINUED)

ISHMAEL

Seems like the Lord is against us
on this one.

HERCULES

Child might survive anyways sir.

MR. MASON

And if she doesn't will any of us
forgive ourselves? (To Ishmael)
Forgive me Ishmael for you are a
fine rower but the weather says I
must chose the strongest. Hercules?

HERCULES

I'll row.

He lets go of the little girl's hand.

MR. MASON

(To the 9 year old)

You are in charge now. Take care
of the families.

Mr. Mason looks to Ishmael. Ishmael nods (Ishmael knows he
is in charge). The two other men climb into the boat.

The skiff is shoved out into the angry river. It drifts
until Hercules takes control and with swift strokes the boat
skims towards the far shore. The cannon continues to be
covered by snow.

ROW BOAT: DAY

Both men are covered in snow. In Mr. Mason's gloved hands
he holds the POWHATAN SACK filled with medicine for the
baby. The weight of the men, especially Hercules, causes
the little craft to barely stay above the water-line. We
can see that the river is angry and swirling, some water
spills over the sideboards melting the snow on the bottom of
the boat.

HERCULES

The waves!

MR. MASON

Row! I'll scoop.

Mr. Mason rips off his gloves and starts flinging water out
of the bottom of the boat.

POTOMAC RIVER: DAY

The small group of adults on the shore look on in alarm.

ROW BOAT: DAY

Mr. Mason's hands become red with the cold.

MR. MASON

Forgive me Hercules; it was a
fool's errand.

HERCULES

(muttering)

We die, Fairfax child die, child
die either way.

Hercules pulls hard on the oars, the little skiff shoots forward.

THE SHORE: DAY

9 year old George Mason is pointing towards the row boat while his brother skips rocks.

MASON

Mama! Mama, mama...!

ROW BOAT: DAY

Hercules pulls off his gloves. Water flings out from both men's cold cupped hands. The boat continues to take on water. Water is swirling on the bottom of the boat, it catches the sack which has been forgotten. The small bundles floats and swirls. The boat is sinking.

THE SHORE: DAY

Mrs. Mason looks out over the river. She is clearly frightened.

MRS MASON

Nan! Get those children up to the
house!

NAN GATE

Charlotte!

The black woman reaches for the hand of the 3 year old.

ROW BOAT: DAY

The 2 men continue to fling water with their hands.

HERCULES
Forgive me Mr. Mason!

MR. MASON
Whatever for?

HERCULES
Too heavy!

MR. MASON
No... It is completely my fault.

THE SHORE: DAY

Ishmael is helpless, he's standing in the river but he can do nothing.

MRS MASON
Ishmael! Out of the river! You will move the beds into the main house and the cows into yours, were its warmer!

Mrs. Mason stands firmly on the bank of the river, she is the one giving the orders now.

MRS MASON
I'm not wasting fuel on two houses. Georgie take your brother's hand. Follow Nan Gate.

Young Mason looks at his mother.

MASON
What about Papa? What about Hercules?

His mother can't answer him. Nan Gate, her face stricken, is still holding the baby in one arm, she turns to go and we can see that she still holds the hand of the 3 year old girl while the 5 year old boy leaves the river and darts after her. Ishmael leans down to speak with young George.

ISHMAEL
Your father was the kindest, noblest, the best of men... Hercules, well he was the strongest.

Ishmael and the 9 year old Mason look out over the river towards the boat.

POTOMAC RIVER: DAY

The men have vanished. The last of the rowboat is breaking up and sinking.

THE SHORE: DAY

Mrs. Mason, now in a daze, seems as lost as the skiff.

MRS MASON

Ishmael?

ISHMAEL

Still with you ma'am...

FIELD COVERED IN SNOW: DAY

Nan Gate is out front with the children as she heads up the bank towards 3 pathetic (house, slave quarters, and barn)early 18th century buildings. Ishmael (the only adult male) is next with young Mason. They pass the cannon which is barely visible now and completely covered in snow.

POTOMAC RIVER: DAY

Mrs. Mason is standing on the bank, still scanning the river, waiting, hoping, praying for a miracle. Her eyelashes have flakes of snow clinging to them. Her cheeks are red, her lips almost purple.

End of Prologue

40 YEARS LATER

GUNSTON HALL: EVENING

It is the same field only now the elegant and grand GUNSTON HALL (Gunston means a gun-stone or cannon ball) has taken over the land where the cannon and small buildings once stood. A line of CHERRY TREES are in full bloom while the Potomac can be seen drifting quietly in the background. The MOON is rising.

GUNSTON HALL FRONT DOOR: EVENING

We see the FIST and sleeve of a 1760s British soldier as he brings it up and starts POUNDING on the door of Gunston Hall.

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: EVENING

MASON is standing near a BED in his STUDY on the first floor. He lights a candle that sputters and smokes. The room includes a BOOKCASE, a DESK, a GUN CASE, etc. The POUNDING continues loud and obnoxious.

SOLDIER'S VOICES

Open up!

JAMES, a mulatto slave about 17 years old, ENTERS with a lighted CANDLE, which smokes and sputters.

MASON

My shoes....? (He locates them)

JAMES

Five British coats; saw them through the window upstairs.

SOLDIER'S VOICE

By orders of his Majesty the King let us in!

There is more POUNDING. WILLIAM, Mason's 19 year old son, ENTERS.

MASON

Quickly, quietly, you know the routine. (To James) Put yourself with the wine. Move.

James, with a nod towards William, EXITS taking the candle with him. (Mason is storing lead under the cellar.) Mason lights another candle and gives it to William as his daughter NANCY enters, she is carrying a musket.

WILLIAM

I'll send Breechy.

MASON

No, don't trust him in the dark. Send your brother Thomson. Don't argue. Go!

(His feelings bruised) William acknowledges Nancy and EXITS. More POUNDING.

(CONTINUED)

SOLDIER'S VOICE

Open up! Open up now! By decree
of King George the Third open up!

NANCY

The silver is in the false wall
along with mama's jewelry box.

MASON

My girl. What would I do without
you?

NANCY

(The musket)

This will be with the brooms. If
we need it.

Nancy exits. Mason slowly puts on his shoes. The POUNDING
continues.

SOLDIER'S VOICE

Wake up! We order you to let us
in!

MASON

(Muttering) Yes, yes...

William ENTERS again.

WILLIAM

He's gone out the window; down the
roof...

Mason nods to William...

GUNSTON HALL FOYER: NIGHT

...and then slowly pads to the front door with his
candle. William is behind him. Mason opens the door. 4
BRITISH SOLDIERS ENTER and a CUSTOMS OFFICIAL. They have
LANTERNS.

CUSTOMS OFFICIAL

Your lordship, by command of his
Royal Highness, this property has
been selected to be searched for
contraband.

He shows Mason his "WRITS OF ASSISTANCE" which give him the
power to do this.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

We contest this treatment!(A soldier brandishes a MUSKET in Williams face.)

MASON

William!

WILLIAM

Get that out of my face!

William moves the musket from his face.

MASON

I'm sure you gentlemen will allow time for a man's family to leave the premises and be spared this humiliation. I assure you they can pack a few things and be gone in under an hour.

CUSTOMS OFFICIAL

I must regretfully decline your request. However, if you wish, you may gather your family into one room until we have completed our mission.

MASON

(To William.) The kitchen. Don't argue...

William EXITS.

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: NIGHT

The 1st soldier looks at the bed.

MASON

The gout, it keeps me from climbing the stairs.

The customs official gives a signal and the 4 soldiers ransack Mason's study. The 1st soldier picks up a vial from the night stand near the bed.

MASON

Peppermint, for my stomach.

The soldiers continue to search while the customs official notices the fine workmanship of the house. The soldiers find nothing. They look to the customs official for orders.

(CONTINUED)

CUSTOMS OFFICIAL

Begin counter-clockwise. (To one soldier) The main. (Another soldier) You the upper. (1st soldier) Stay here. (The last soldier) You with me.

All EXIT except the 1st soldier and Mason.

MASON

Chilly isn't it? (He puts on a wool dress COAT) The wind just whistles through the house. I haven't enough lead for my windows you see, I can't buy it and, God knows how the devil will make you pay if you try and smuggle any.

We hear a CRASHING sound.

1ST SOLDIER

I do admire your choice of the gun stone, sir.

MASON

Do you? Before I was born my father constructed a cannon made from wood. He fashioned quite a few gun stones from lead, good English lead mind you, imported.

1ST SOLDIER

Kill Indians?

MASON

Cleared the land of them. All that you see is due to the lead in that cannon. Have you a herald my boy?

1ST SOLDIER

Ah no sir, no airs here, but if I could I'd have the chevron sir. I like the way it looks.

We hear BOOTS SCUFFLING. A small GASP. Another CRASH and the SOUND of a SAUCER SPINNING on a wooden floor.

1ST SOLDIER

Still have the cannon sir?

MASON

No, winter of '35 my mother ordered it destroyed, needed the wood for

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MASON (cont'd)
fuel, used the remaining lead for
the windows.

There is a loud THUD and then the customs official and the other soldiers ENTER. They carry BLANKETS, and SACKS of carrots, tobacco, venison, TWO BARRELS of WINE, etc. The 1st Soldier is handed one of the barrels. William ENTERS. Mason's small CHILDREN peek from behind their brother. Mason gives them a stern look and they disappear back down the hallway to the kitchen.

MASON
Are you to steal from me too?

CUSTOMS OFFICIAL
We are obliged for the provisions.
The King thanks you. I apologize
for this inconvenience sir, but
many of you have been breaking the
law. We are happy that it appears
you have not. This will be duly
reported to his Majesty. Men!

The British head for the front door. The last to leave is the 1st soldier. He nods his head in respect to Mason. They EXIT.

MASON
Where's James?

WILLIAM
Still in the cellar I imagine.

MASON
They missed the musket.

William pulls a MUSKET from under the bed. James ENTERS with the smoking candle.

JAMES
Overheard them say they'd pick up a
few chickens on the way out.

MASON
But they never found the lead in
the cellar. They didn't even
bother me about the gun cabinet.

WILLIAM
(to James) I'll be outside.

William EXITS (taking the musket with him). Mason bends at the waist as if he is in pain.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

Hand me that.

James hands Mason his peppermint. Mason pours some into a glass.

MASON

How's Nancy?

JAMES

Fine.

MASON

Nan Gate? (He drinks it)

JAMES

Fine.

MASON

Betsy? How's Betsy?

JAMES

Fine everybody's fine. Nan gave Betsy some warm milk, Sally is helping Nan sweep up the mess, John-John and Mary went back to bed, Tommy is eating again, Nancy is cleaning up your room, George is outside and you just saw Bill walk out to join him. That leaves Thomson. Hope he outruns those red coats.

MASON

And Ishmael?

JAMES

Down at the quarters.

MASON

Blow out that candle will you? Enough smoke in here...

JAMES

...to cure a ham... (muttering) I know, I know... (James blows out the candle).

TOBACCO FIELDS: MORNING

The early morning sun illuminates Mason's 200 or so SLAVES who are out early, plowing, hoeing and planting. The fields are vast and the elegant Gunston Hall with its cherry trees and its deer park stand as a testament to their power to make money.

GUNSTON HALL FOYER: MORNING

It is early morning. Shot of the elegant hallway with its pineapple(a symbol of welcome). All is quiet. We hear WASHINGTON before we see him.

WASHINGTON

Out of my way! Let me
through! Where is he??!

Washington has ENTERED Gunston from the side door or kitchen. He is storming down the hallway looking for Mason and is followed by James who is frantically trying to stop him and/or introduce him.

WASHINGTON

Mr. Mason? Mason?

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: MORNING

Mason has quickly gotten out of his bed but is now slowly and calmly putting on his wool dress coat. James squeezes through the door just ahead of Washington.

JAMES

Sir Washington, sir!

MASON

Thank you James.

WASHINGTON

Good God! May Providence have
mercy on us!

MASON

Good morning.

WASHINGTON

Have you seen her?!

MASON

Seen who?

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON

It's practically outside my front door!

MASON

What is?

WASHINGTON

Is this to be our lot? Sitting around like simpering fools begging not to be starved off the face of the earth? Taxed to death? Searched to death? Occupied? I'd sooner die!

MASON

Did Thomson make it?

WASHINGTON

They have a damn war ship pointing half her guns at me!

ROOF OF MOUNT VERNON: MORNING

From over the roof of Mount Vernon (*its famous cupola and its lawns clearly visible*) we see the Potomac River and the British Man-O-War, Elizabeth, as she sits anchored. Her sails are currently down. As we move down the quarterdeck towards the bow we can see that her cannons are at the ready and pointed directly at the house. Her signal flags are all out.

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: MORNING

MASON

They only mean to frighten you.

WASHINGTON

And they're doing a damn fine job of it!

MASON

We might as well be as black as our slaves for that is what the king is turning us into!

Mason realizes James is still in the room.

MASON

Fetch my tea, bring two cups.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES
(Wounded)
Sir.

James EXITS.

MASON
Did the British bother you?

WASHINGTON
What? Their damn ship yes,
soldiers, no. Your Thomson did.

MASON
(Relieved)
Oh good.

WASHINGTON
The women were thoroughly enjoying
themselves fussing over him this
morning. That boy can eat.

MASON
The Britons will not risk our
fields, our labor or us. They are
too invested in our economy.

WASHINGTON
(Unimpressed)
Mason if the British military is
drained of their resources, cut off
from comfort and families, if they
suffer, and we outlast them, we may
have a chance to control our own
country.

MASON
I have received word there is a new
governor coming to Virginia. A man
of good breeding, a family man, a
man of reason, Lord Dunmore.

WASHINGTON
Lord Dunmore?

MASON
Let me write. Invite him to meet
with us upon his arrival. Paper is
harmless and letters,
persuasive. We are not rebels but
honorable Englishmen.

Washington looks unconvinced.

WASHINGTON

Only if you blend both boldness and reason into that letter of yours.

Mason nods in agreement and only then does the General sit down. A cup is quickly filled with tea for him by James.

GUNSTON HALL FOYER: DAY

Mason has the LETTER in his hand (he will give the letter to the minister of Pohick church who will take it to Alexandria and see that it crosses the Atlantic on a merchant ship) and is on his way to the kitchen when he stops because he hears Nan Gate (from the prologue). She is quite old but still spry and is clearly speaking to William.

NAN GATE

Bill, why do you keep tempting the Devil?

Mason carefully pushes the door open a bit more.

GUNSTON HALL LITTLE PARLOR: DAY

Nan Gate, in church clothes, stands in front of William.

WILLIAM

You can't order me to church.

He is working on the HANDLE of an old flat SAW. He is chewing tobacco and spits occasionally into a SPITTOON. James is cleaning the small area, starting a fire, emptying the spittoon, sweeping, etc.

WILLIAM

I am a man. I will do as I please.

NAN GATE

That rebel streak will be the ruin of you.

JAMES

(Complaining)

Billy go to church, or your father will complain to me about it all the way there and all the way home.

NAN GATE

Death can come at any moment. You think on that, boy.

Nan Gate bustles out of the room.

GUNSTON HALL FOYER: DAY

She runs into Mason. Mason quickly puts a finger to his lips in a gesture of quiet. Nan Gate acknowledges Mason with a smile and leaves him to his business.

GUNSTON HALL LITTLE PARLOR: DAY

Mason peeks into the room. William continues to lay on the floor.

WILLIAM

You don't want to go anymore than I do.

James ignores William and continues to dust a TABLE that has a BIBLE on it.

WILLIAM

You would much rather do something fun. Like gamble.

James reacts with interest.

WILLIAM

I knew it! Here's the bet. The first time I do it, it's going to be right on Grand Ann's old bed. How much do you care to wager?

JAMES

You shouldn't bet on a thing like that.

WILLIAM

Why not?

JAMES

Ruins it.

WILLIAM

You don't think I have the guts?
(With total confidence) I'm good with girls. They want me. Badly.

Mason can no longer stand it. He enters the room.

MASON

It's time for church.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

Father!

MASON

Let's go.

WILLIAM

I must change my clothes and, and Jay hasn't told Martin the new harrows are finished and taken to the field, have you?

James is scared and speechless. He picks up the BIBLE from the table.

MASON

(To James)

I asked you this...

WILLIAM

I will see that he accomplishes this task and then I'll bring him to church.

MASON

(Doubtful)

And you will drive the carriage home?

JAMES

Yes sir.

Mason takes the Bible from James and exits.

GUNSTON HALL FOYER: DAY

He lingers outside the door. Mason waits and then reacts to;

GUNSTON HALL LITTLE PARLOR: DAY

JAMES

You make me look bad.

WILLIAM

That was the point.

William spits into the spittoon James has just cleaned.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

Keep chewin you gonna rot your
face. No girl ever gonna kiss a
face with no jaw.

WILLIAM

Oh you care.

JAMES

Stop your sassin.

WILLIAM

You care about me... (he holds up
his arms) Come here.

JAMES

That sassin gonna turn to spittle
when your teeth fall out and your
head falls off.

WILLIAM

(He mimes kissing) Come on Jay-Bird
a big fat one...

JAMES

Get off...

WILLIAM

...right here, before my jaw rots.
I'll even wipe my teeth.

JAMES

Your breath smells...

WILLIAM

(Quietly) Wait...

William takes from under his coat a small FLASK of RUM and
pops the top. He hands the rum to James (who is clearly
pleased by this gesture). James takes a quick and furtive
swig.

William takes his own swig of rum, swallows, moves the
tobacco out of the inside of his cheek and spits into the
spittoon.

GUNSTON HALL FOYER: DAY

Mason shakes his head and hurries down the hallway and out
the door. The letter is clearly in his hand.

POHICK CHURCH YARD: DAY

Carriages, horses, and mules are tied to the trees and a low fence that surrounds the church. A group of SLAVES stand outside listening and singing along with the WHITES who are inside the church.

POHICK LAKE-BOAT: DAY

JACKY CUSTIS is in the middle of the small skiff. His hands are on the oars as he lazily rows. William (in shirt sleeves) is in the stern and James (in an elegant but hand-me-down jacket) is in the bow.

WILLIAM

You still getting some?

JACKY

Of course.

WILLIAM

You are such a slave.

JACKY

Happily.

WILLIAM

(To James)

His wife.

JAMES

I know.

JACKY

You know nothing of the sort and you are not to think of it. Why is he here?

POHICK CHURCH YARD: DAY

The service has ended. Mason and Washington have come out of Pohick Church and stand among the other parishioners.

MASON

The letter is with Pastor Meyer, he'll see it makes it to Alexandria and then to England.

POHICK LAKE-BOAT: DAY

A ROCK under the water is seen as the bow of the small skiff hits it. The sound of SPLINTERING WOOD is heard and the impact tears a nice hole in the boat.

JACKY

Oh dear...

WILLIAM

(Laughing)

Damn it Jack! You're the only one I know who could hit Bishop's rock.

JAMES

Scoop! Scoop!

JACKY

(Laughing, to William)

Let's not tell Mr. Pemberton.

JAMES

Give me your jacket!

JACKY

Why do you allow him to speak to me that way?

JAMES

Your jacket!

JACKY

Use yours.

JAMES

It came from Paris.

JACKY

Mine from England.

James glares at Billy.

WILLIAM

I'd give you my shirt but it wouldn't do you any good. (He laughs)

James hesitates. The skiff is sinking. He angrily removes his precious jacket, hesitates once more and then stuffs it into the hole.

(CONTINUED)

JACKY

Now scoop out the water. If I get wet Eleanor will be positively livid.

James is clearly livid.

JACKY

Hurry...

James is so mad he can barely breath.

JACKY

Why do you stand there? Billy why do you have so little control over this one? I have never liked him. Make him work.

William gives James a shrug like look. James boldly reaches down and pulls out his jacket, unplugging the hole.

WILLIAM

(With total glee and abandonment)

Bail!

Billy cascades backwards out of the boat. Jacky begins yelling at James.

JACKY

You horrid mule! How dare you! Bill! Billy!

POHICK CHURCH YARD: DAY

Mason and Washington hear the commotion from the lake. They take off towards a row of trees and Pohick Lake.

POHICK LAKE SHORE: DAY

Mason and Washington watch as Jacky frets and sputters.

JACKY

Mother will be very mad if I catch cold.

Jack stands up in the boat. William splashes him with water and Jack hesitates but finally dives in. James stands teetering ankle deep in water as the other 2 swim in the lake.

POHICK LAKE-BOAT: DAY

JAMES

You're both gonna blame this on me
ain't you?

JACKY

That's what you're for.

James cannon balls into the lake. He lunges at Jacky holding his head under the water.

POHICK LAKE SHORE: DAY

Mason is both angry and genuinely concerned for their safety. Washington stands, trying to pretend to be serious, but he is having a difficult time suppressing a grin.

William is laughing but becomes concerned until James finally allows a sputtering Jack up.

Washington (his stature is very apparent here, he is tall, confident and amused) laughs, notices Mason's distress and covers his mouth with a cough.

MASON

Swim! Swim!

The 3 young men begin to swim towards shore. Jacky is complaining the whole way.

JACKY

I'm sure to catch consumption, run
a fever, Eleanor is sure to scold
me...

As they reach the shore.

MASON

(Yelling)

You will pay Mr. Pemberton for his
boat, you will apologize to Pastor
Meyer and you will walk home for I
will not have that in my carriage!

Washington is clearly laughing now. There is the faint sound of MUSIC from the church piano.

FAIRFAX MANSION GREAT ROOM: EVENING

Piano MUSIC is heard. The new ENGLISH GOVERNOR (Lord Dunmore) and his WIFE and teenage DAUGHTER wear fine clothes from France. His daughter is playing the PIANO. OFFICERS from the NAVY and ARMY are also present in their BRITISH UNIFORMS.

Among the guests are Mason and Washington. Mason's 3 oldest children are also there, GEORGE, Nancy and William. MARTHA WASHINGTON and Jacky CUSTIS might also be present.

ALL AMERICANS (both male and female) are in plain HOMESPUN clothes. Nancy is conversing with a young man in homespun. William is trying not to itch while eying the ladies. He wears a frilly silk scarf around his neck and is uncomfortable wearing such homely attire. His older brother George watches sternly over his siblings and the proceedings. There might also be an INDIAN ENVOY or two mingling among the guests. BLACK SLAVES in fine clothes with white gloves (like English servants) pass through the crowd with silver platters.

William passes his father and Mason stops him. Mason removes from William's pocket the flask of rum. Frowning Mason returns the flask to William who puts it back into his pocket. Washington catches William's eye and nods with pleasure.

William is pleased by this attention, nods in return. William relaxes and begins to thoroughly enjoy himself by looking at the ladies and drinking more wine. William winks at Lord Dunmore's teenage daughter at the piano. She, in turn, gives him a frown. The governor notices this exchange. He joins Mason and Washington.

GOVERNOR

(Uncomfortably to Mason) Why so dull this evening?

MASON

Why did you dismember the Assembly, Governor?

GOVERNOR

(Taken aback by Mason's bluntness) Why the nubbles?

WASHINGTON

(With feigned bluster) I myself find this display of simplicity refreshing and wholesome.

(CONTINUED)

GOVERNOR

Down right Daniel Boone-ish I'd say. (A few soldiers sidle up to hear) Why I expect Mr. Franklin to enter any moment in his coonskin cap. (The soldiers laugh)

SOLDIER

(Low and to the Governor) Wool or wolves...?

MASON

(Overhearing the comment) Sir, we are honest good people, we wish to obey the Common Law but...

GOVERNOR

We are here to uphold the law. Do you think I am stupid? I understand your American woollies.

MASON

Sir, our sheep are from Britain. Our wool is English. (Forging ahead) A reasonable man such as yourself knows the price for tobacco has fallen to a third of what it once was...

SOLDIER

His lordship can't control...

George Mason (Mason's son) joins the group. He forcefully stands over a few of the soldiers.

MASON

...Stop your taxes, allow trial by jury, here, among our own, while housing troops in our homes brings about assaults on our citizens, why just 8 months ago Matthew Healy, a fine...

GOVERNOR

Killed an officer, was tried and hung accordingly!

The piano has STOPPED playing. All of the Americans are listening now. The soldiers have grouped together, many have gotten their muskets ready. The slaves and the Governor's family are up against a wall and look ready to flee. The Indians are keeping a low profile by hiding behind the piano, the food-laden TABLE and the high back

(CONTINUED)

CHAIRS, hoping things will blow over. William and Nancy join George their brother.

MASON

(Not giving up) His Majesty forbids us to use paper money; he demands payment from us for his troops, all of this without our permission...

GOVERNOR

Let me be plain. If you wage war with us, your loyalty will be annulled, all connections with his realm, his crown, his protection, will be over. Where will you be then? Starving in your woollies that's where...

WASHINGTON

(Threatening) We are quite capable of taking care of ourselves.

GOVERNOR

His Majesty is very clear on these matters, obey and all will be well. Homespun. You all look about as honest and wholesome as a bunch of weasels. Caesar had his Brutus, Charles the 1st his Cromwell, and George the third...?!

WASHINGTON

Everyone out!

NANCY

Father?!

WASHINGTON

Clear the room!

MASON

(To his son George) Go! Take Nancy out of here!

As the Americans flee the governor is yelling at them.

GOVERNOR

Further you will be cursed throughout the ages, for to defy the king, the best of men, your most gracious loving sovereign, is to defy God!

There is a bit of a jam at the door but the American's are leaving. Washington helps Mrs. Washington. Mason follows his children.

FAIRFAX MANSION TURN AROUND: EVENING

Mason and Washington huddle together outside of the mansion. Mason has lit a thin REED of tobacco (cigar/cigarette like) and smokes it. He is trying to calm down. He holds it out and Washington takes it and together they share a smoke. In the background Mason's grown children make their way onto a DOCK (with several small BOATS tied to it) and gingerly climb into a small skiff. They wait for Mason to join them.

WASHINGTON

That went well.

MASON

I feel certain that our majesty has the moral scruples of the devil. To allow such a person to have complete control over our lives is a measure, I feel certain, God does not intend.

Mason shows Washington the small BOX of cigars.

MASON

They were for Lord Dunmore.

WASHINGTON

How about I hand them out to our American officers?

Mason hands Washington the box. Washington tucks the box into an inside pocket and takes a drag from the cigar. He smiles and hands the cigar to Mason.

MASON

My dear friend when we are both hung for this and you and I meet the other in heaven remind me to ask Providence to explain to me the merit of kings.

WASHINGTON

Mason, we are not going to hang, we are going to win.

On the circular driveway the last of the Americans are riding away on HORSES, MULES and in CARRIAGES.

POHICK CHURCH YARD: DAY

Mason exits Pohick Church. There are already PARISHIONERS outside. The people mingle. Everyone is anxious looking. Mason approaches William who was speaking with a parishioner.

MASON

What have you heard? Anything? Did they fish out the tea from Boston Harbor?

WILLIAM

(Shaking his head)

The red coats are marching. People are afraid.

MASON

Where's James?

WILLIAM

Off looking for my horse, Hazel. I simply have no control over the females in my life.

William give a nod to Jacky as he passes with his wife, ELEANOR. BETSY Mason (age 8) clings to Mason's pant leg. Mason bends down.

MASON

Betsy my dear, I love you more than life itself, all will be well. Go now with your sister.

NANCY

Come.

Nancy Mason holds out her hand and Betsy runs across the yard and grabs it. The two head towards the Mason CARRIAGE. George Mason (eldest boy) is holding open the carriage door. Mason begins to round up his other children who are playing in the yard. Mason spies Jacky helping his wife into a fancy carriage. She furrows her brow as Jacky slinks away to hang out with William.

MASON

Jack! Where's your step-father?

JACKY

No idea.

ROAD IN FAIRFAX COUNTY: DAY

James is leading a HORSE(Hazel)down the road toward Pohick Church and is suddenly passed by a galloping HORSE. On top is Washington. Another HORSE speeds by. Washington's black servant WILLIS is riding behind the general. James is startled, knows something important is up and begins to trot with Hazel towards Pohick Church.

POHICK CHURCH YARD: DAY

Washington on his horse flies into the yard of the church and stops short of Mason. He holds up a pamphlet or newspaper.

WASHINGTON

Mason!(To everyone) They've burned the courthouse in Concord! We lost eight but they lost over seventy!

There are WHOOPS of joy and fear.

MASON

It's started.

WASHINGTON

Willis! (Willis jumps off his horse and begins to hand out orders to all the young men) All men will report to the Virginia Militia in Alexandria at once.

MASON

Wash...

WASHINGTON

(To William)

Are you ready?

WILLIAM

Yes sir!

WASHINGTON

Saddle up!

MASON

Wash...?

WASHINGTON

(To George Mason, Mason's eldest)

You?

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE MASON V

Of course.

MASON

Wash!

WASHINGTON

(To Mason)

Raise money, lots of it. (He hands Mason the newspaper) I must go. I will travel to Pennsylvania. I will send word as soon as I have it. (To everyone) Keep your eyes open, your doors locked and your muskets loaded! Away! Willis away!

His horse rears as Washington, in full command, turns the animal northward to Philadelphia.

James trots into the clearing as Washington storms past him with Willis close behind. Jacky is devastated, he was not given orders, nor was he acknowledged. James is downcast as he too was not even considered. William takes hold of Hazel and with the swing up onto her back he becomes a soldier. George Mason also climbs onto a horse. With a nod towards their father the 2 brothers ride swiftly away. As Mason watches he places a hand across his heart and chest. He suddenly doesn't feel well. He fights this awful feeling, this knowledge that he may never see his beloved sons again. He swallows hard. Nancy is in tears.

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: WINTER DAY

The Mason females sit sewing in a great circle in one of the rooms on the main floor. The women are making BLANKETS, HATS, GLOVES, and UNIFORMS with pants, shirts, jackets and large COATS. This is the picture of domesticity. Nancy is now married and she is present with her new BABY. Nan Gate is dignified (but has aged since we last saw her). She still manages to contribute (teaching sewing techniques, sorting buttons and thread, etc.) to the making of the soldier's uniforms. Many of Mason's younger children are about, they read, or play. CLOTH, WOOL THREAD and BUTTONS (in sorted piles) lay about. The NEEDLES and SHEARS are kept up and away from the small children. All the able females are working including many of the older Mason girls.

Mason is pacing and is clearly agitated. James tends to the fire, trying to stay out of his way.

(CONTINUED)

NAN GATE

Nancy, honey is that another tear
in your dress, under your arm,
there.

Nancy raises her right arm to reveal that the sleeve is
coming apart. Mason is clearly upset by this.

NANCY

I've mended it over and over.

NAN GATE

Not much left to it.

NANCY

I'll patch it later.

NAN GATE

Might need to bring out those
homespun.

Nancy groans. Mason paces.

NANCY

Father sit down.

MASON

Where?! (he has a point, there is
little space in the crowded room)

He bumps into a table, he then accidentally steps on one of
the children. The child begins to cry.

MASON

Can't these children play
elsewhere?

NAN GATE

You ordered no fire in the other
rooms.

MASON

To save fuel.

NAN GATE

Can't you go elsewhere?

MASON

If it wasn't for me you all would
be cold and starving!

(CONTINUED)

NAN GATE

(Indignant)

Mr. Mason, I thank you for this chair, this house and this fire. Without you it would not burn so brightly or so warmly. But sir, you and I know this plantation was built by the efforts of many. May you never forget the contribution of your mother.

NANCY

James, please tea, for everyone. Father, why don't you check on the repairs to the smokehouse?

MASON

The repairs were finished yesterday!(the baby begins to fuss)

NANCY

Find something to do.(she attends to her baby)

A frustrated Mason paces, stops himself, and stares out the window. As the baby's cries subside, James, Mason and many of the women clearly hear the SOUND of HOOVES and a horse SNORTS. James sets down the tea pot and walks out of the room.

GUNSTON HALL FOYER: DAY

James walks down the foyer with Mason close behind. He OPENS the door. William is outside on horseback. He looks bone tired, haggard and thin; his uniform is tattered. He has not shaved in awhile. He grins slightly and totters a bit.

GUNSTON HALL DOORWAY: DAY

William has been gone for five years. Mason is relieved to see his son is still alive. James remains distant and dignified but is clearly relieved to see William.

WILLIAM

May I come in?

Behind the two men are Nancy (holding her baby)and Nan Gate; both women are joyful.

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: NIGHT

William sits beside a fire in Gunston Hall. The ladies and children are long gone. There are stacks of clothes and blankets for the army in the room. William has changed, he seems older, wiser sort of, and is home for a brief two week stay at Gunston Hall. James throws a log on the fire while Mason sips on a glass of wine.

JAMES

Where's Hazel?

WILLIAM

(Pained)

The only female who ever understood me is dead. Two years back. Shot out from under me. Had to leave her in the field. Any news about George?

MASON

Your brother is in Southern France. His health prevented him from serving. While there he will do some business for me.

This doesn't sit well with William who has been risking his life while his brother is safely in Europe. Mason changes the subject.

MASON

How is the general?

WILLIAM

Still alive.

MASON

His health is good, yes?

WILLIAM

He is a murderer father. I suggest you rethink your alliance with him.

MASON

That is war speaking.

WILLIAM

But father! Men are expected to live on squirrels, sleep on the ground, march with foot rot, die from sickness then from battle. These are landless men who hope to own land one day, men who have put their trust in us.

(CONTINUED)

MASON
(Fretting)
More landowners mean more slaves.

WILLIAM
Stop thinking only of yourself.
Virginian ways are not the ways of
everyone.

MASON
If the general did wrong he had his
reasons.

WILLIAM
Washington is a monster, a man of
no conscience!

MASON
Tell me then, tell me... William?

William is surprised at his father's quiet openness,
something he hasn't experienced since he was a child. He
looks at James and Mason.

WILLIAM
It started with Pillar...

AMERICAN CAMP TENT: DAY

William is standing inside a 18th century tent. Washington
sits at a makeshift table. A map is spread out before him.

WASHINGTON
Lieutenant, you will overtake and
arrest the mutineers. Hand pick
fifteen of your best men. Now
then...

William follows Washington's finger as he speaks.

WASHINGTON
You will take your men up, over and
through the forest following this
course. I expect you to catch them
quickly.

WILLIAM
I wonder sir, if following the
river wouldn't be a better option?

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON

(Irritated)

That would take too much time. Take them into custody and return quickly.

WILLIAM

Yes sir.

WASHINGTON

Grab some sickles and any other provisions you deem necessary.

WILLIAM

Sir.

William exits the tent.

FOREST: DAY

William and his MEN fight, slash and SICKLE their way through the forest. It is muddy, hilly, and dense with underbrush. William checks his COMPASS and the men resume hacking out a path. When they have a trail they lead their HORSES through it.

PRIMITIVE ROAD: DAY

William and his men(having gotten through the forest)walk on a primitive road.

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: NIGHT

WILLIAM

We were fairly beat up by the time we caught them.

FOREST CLEARING: DAY

Within the clearing are the MUTINEERS and a British SPY.

FOREST: DAY

William silently signals to his men to surround the clearing, keeping to the woods and to remain quiet until he gives the order to arrest. The men stick to the woods and wait for William's signal.

FOREST CLEARING: DAY

The mutineers consist of Pillar, MACK, STEPHAN, and their followers (about 4 other SOLDIERS). The mutineers are holding the spy.

PILLAR
What's your name?

JITTERS
Jitters.

The mutineers all laugh.

MACK
Jitter-Jitter...

Jitters bravely holds up a piece of parchment.

JITTERS
I offer you the protection of his
majesty.

STEPHAN
Lies!

MACK
Really?

Mack takes the writ from Jitters and studies it.

JITTERS
Can't you read?

Pillar takes the writ and puts on his glasses.

JITTERS
It'll bring you food and warmth and
money...

PILLAR
...and slavery.

JITTERS
No...

PILLAR
Mack tighten that up. Stephan help
him.

Mack and Stephan hold Jitters tighter.

(CONTINUED)

JITTERS

Let go! I'm an honest man I am!,
putting an end to this bloody war I
am! Your cause is lost.

PILLAR

I hate slavery, I hate the crown
and I hate you.

JITTERS

How can you say that. I am here to
help. Look at you. Look at all of
you.

The spy has a point. The bedraggled Americans are thin and
haggard looking.

PILLAR

Men what say you? Shall we hang
this little Jitter-bug?

MACK

Aye.

MUTINEERS

Aye.

PILLAR

Aye.

William witnesses the mutineers turning down the British
spy.

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: NIGHT

WILLIAM

The Mutineers had every reason to
accept that offer.

FOREST CLEARING: DAY

Pillar's men hold the small man.

PILLAR

Get his coat.

Stephan gets Jitters' red British COAT from the little man's
KNAPSACK. Pillar grabs a ROPE. Jitters begins squirming,
speaking to the men holding him.

(CONTINUED)

JITTERS

I offer you honesty! I'm on your side! I want the war over!

The mutineers put Jitters' coat on him as William raises his hand (to hold his troops) and enters the small clearing. A few of the mutineers release the spy and train their weapons on William.

PILLAR

Lieutenant Mason.

WILLIAM

You are all under arrest. I am, however, not without sympathy. But the taking of horses and the shooting of an officer cannot be tolerated. Lieutenant Blake had to be sent to hospital and his leg amputated.

Some of the mutineers laugh (Blake was hated) but Pillar gives them a look that silences them.

PILLAR

Why don't you join us? Trenton is not more than a weeks journey. We could use your educated ways, your connections.

WILLIAM

I will see to it personally that you be given every leniency that is within reason, and every provision, every comfort that is within my power to give and when the war is over, land that is your due.

PILLAR

You sound just like his lordship mister General George Washington. He's been saying the same thing for years... Hang the spy.

JITTERS

No!

PILLAR

Now.

JITTERS

Please!

(CONTINUED)

William raises his arms and his troops emerge from the forest and completely surround the mutineers. Pillar's men stand down.

WILLIAM

I order the spy be brought back,
punished and confined.

PILLAR

(To all the troops)
The spy will take food from your
mouth. A blanket from your back.

WILLIAM

I am your commander.

PILLAR

They have burned your houses. They
have raped your women.

WILLIAM

Do as I say.

PILLAR

He'll be exchanged in a prisoner
swap. Treatment in the hulks makes
us gangrene, weak from scurvy, most
of our friends have died after
being exchanged for one such as
this. I say make the British rat
pay!

WILLIAM

Arrest them all!

PILLAR

I order we hang the little shit.

WILLIAM

No!

William's forces hesitate.

WILLIAM

Seize hold of the spy!

William's soldiers refuse. William realizes he has lost control. He panics a little by whining.

WILLIAM

You have given an oath to obey me.
(He regroups a little.) I will tell
the General of your mercy, your

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM (cont'd)
honor and your bravery if you allow
the little man to live.

They refuse. Pillar smiles. William is now in a dilemma.
He's having a meltdown.

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: NIGHT

WILLIAM
I should have told them to kill me
first, but my knees, they wobbled,
they buckled. They would have
killed me father. Pillar was the
leader not me.

FOREST CLEARING: DAY

William, completely outranked, turns away from the mutineers
and his men. The spy begins to scream.

JITTERS
I am good! A good sort of chap. I'm
a likable fellow! Don't! Don't!

The men put the noose around Jitters' neck.

JITTERS
God will punish you! You should
listen to your commander! May you
choke on your bloody freedda...!

The men hang Jitters. Sickened, William looks away.

PILLAR
I believe he meant to say,
freedom.

A few men snicker. Pillar hands his musket to William.
Grimly and silently the mutineers hand over their weapons to
the American soldiers as the body of the spy hangs overhead.

AMERICAN CAMP TENT: DAY

Washington listens carefully to William's argument. He also
reads a transcript of the events in William's handwriting
that is on the table before him.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

Sir, all the Americans, the mutineers, my soldiers, all, acted with great courage. They rejected the British offer and hung the spy. I feel it is my duty to tell you I think the mutineers should be punished but, also pardoned.

WASHINGTON

Well done. That will be all.

William salutes and exits.

AMERICAN CAMP WILLIAM'S TENT: DAY

William is inside his tent sharpening a knife when he hears:

WASHINGTON VO

Present! Aim!

AMERICAN CAMP: DAY

WASHINGTON

Fire!

William rushes outside (the knife still in his hand) to witness Pillar, Stephan, and Mack (all in blindfold) being shot (firing squad style) by the other unnamed mutineers. Washington has ordered his entire army to be present for this event. SOLDIERS stand watching.

The surviving mutineers having shot Pillar, Stephan and Mack are blubbing and grief stricken. One of them throws his musket into the mud. Another goes down on his knees and weeps. William is in shock. Many of the other soldiers (on lookers) are also in shock.

WASHINGTON

Bring these to the morgue.

Washington turns and heads back to his tent. A small detail of SOLDIERS bring out makeshift STRETCHERS and begin lifting the bodies onto them.

GUNSTON HALL: MORNING

William is on a HORSE. It is loaded with provisions for his ride southward. Nan Gate hands him a SATCHEL of hardtack and venison. His sister Nancy looks up at him.

NANCY

Lighthouse Harry is a lucky man.

William smiles gently at his sister. Mason shakes his hand. He knows he may never see his son again. James hangs back. He is waiting for some kind of acknowledgment from William. William finally gives a nod to James. James nods back. William slowly rides out.

GUNSTON HALL FOYER: MORNING

Gunston Hall is quiet; there are a few simple Christmas decorations adorning the foyer. Washington storms into the hall, by way of the kitchen, flinging doors open looking for Mason.

WASHINGTON

Mason! Good God! For the love of freedom which room is it this time?

Mason's younger children come out of their upstairs bedrooms and stare down at the general from the staircase.

WASHINGTON

Where's your father!

MASON VO

I'm here! Second to the right.

WASHINGTON

The doors in this place.

GUNSTON HALL LITTLE PARLOR: MORNING

Washington storms into the room. Mason sits with his youngest son, Tom. They have been chatting and sharing a pot of tea.

MASON

Merry Christmas.

WASHINGTON

How dare you.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

Tom, go ask Nan Gate for two bowls
of hot toddy and some of the
general's favorite spice cake. Go
on.

The boy slides off of his father's lap and runs out.
Washington is storming around the room.

WASHINGTON

Win the war for us! You do it! Go
on be the big general! We're too
busy, too cautious, too lily
liver'd! Heaven forbid we get our
feet soiled, a tear in our clothes,
or our hands bloodied!

MASON

Careful, you'll run into something.

WASHINGTON

...tell me you didn't steal it.

MASON

I didn't steal it.

WASHINGTON

Did you? Good God Mason!

MASON

What are you on about?

WASHINGTON

Money! Of course I'm on about
money!

MASON

Must I remind you I have two sons
in this war? Do you really think I
would steal money, money which puts
guns in their hands, boots on their
feet, and food in their stomachs?

WASHINGTON

Where is it then?!

MASON

I sent your money to the assembly.

WASHINGTON

The Assembly?!

(CONTINUED)

MASON

I'm sorry it takes more time but then all is accounted for.

WASHINGTON

Those tight fisted bastards, they haggle over every detail, look for every advantage, and then pocket the remainder. I have begged you to send it to me direct!

MASON

I have never received such an order.

WASHINGTON

Mason my army is without provision, and forage, except what is taken by impress; without clothing, and shortly shall be, in a manner, without men!

MASON

Mr. Jefferson assured me he'd send more as soon as they come out of hospital. Mr. Franklin sent me word, he is making progress with France.

WASHINGTON

(Finally encouraged)

All the more reason to keep the army together.

James enters with the hot toddy and spice cake.

MASON

I will secure provisions myself without consulting the assembly. Furthermore, I will see that it reaches your army.

WASHINGTON

How soon?

MASON

Before spring.

Washington reaches for the cake.

WASHINGTON

I'm getting too old for this.

Mason smiles as he sips from his cup.

ALEXANDRIA ALLEY: DAY

James is holding a musket. He is standing in an alley in Alexandria behind a tavern waiting with 2 flat bed CARTS laden with lumber and other provisions. They are both covered with thick canvas SAILS. 2 HORSES(1 each)are harnessed to the carts.

Mason pops out of the tavern's backdoor. He is followed by a shifty looking FELLOW (American spy) who nods quickly at Mason and then disappears down the alley and into the street.

MASON

There's been a mis-communication. Apparently there is no one to take this second load.

JAMES

But the general sir?

MASON

I suppose I can hire.

JAMES

The load will end up with thieves, Indians or worse, red coats.

MASON

Baker's farm is about a day's walk.

JAMES

We can do it.

MASON

You have chores. I have gout.

JAMES

I have your medicine. Mr. Mason, are we not men?

MASON

(Grinning)

Wait here.

Mason walks towards the street and out of the alley. James waits but is impatient. He ties the second cart and horse to the back of the front cart and horse. He fidgets with the musket. He endures the frown of a white WOMAN who tosses dirty water from an upper window into the alley.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

James!

Mason(at the end of the alley)signals for James to lead the horses. James takes hold of the harness of the front horse and leads both carts and both horses. They pass out into the street.

GARAGE/HANGER: DAY

James leads the horses and carts into a shop or hanger. Inside, LABORERS take the canvases off to reveal the provisions inside of the lumber. The laborers then begin to add Chinese Chippendale TRIM to the top of the carts. Meanwhile Mason takes the musket from James and hands him a pistol.

MASON

If anyone asks, I have recently purchased the Baker's farm and we are traveling to make repairs before the family moves in.

James is excited and grins. Mason too is happy. Once the trim has been put on top, the canvas sails are again secured over each of the carts.

ROAD: DAY

Mason and James have been traveling most of the day. James is out front with his pistol leading the front horse while Mason brings up the rear with his musket. Doubt has crept in.

JAMES

Shouldn't we be there by now?

MASON

I hope it wasn't some other Baker's farm.

JAMES

That shifty fellow, hope he wasn't telling us any lies.

Mason takes out his chronometer and takes a quick read. They continue walking. They round a hill and finally see the deserted Baker's farm in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

There she is.

They near the dilapidated farm.

MASON

Now you see what happens when the price of tobacco falls and the crown squeezes you with taxes.

Suddenly an American SCOUT emerges from behind a tree or some hiding place. He moves quickly and raises a hand to stop them. James points his pistol at him.

SCOUT

The general is expecting you.

James lowers the gun as the scout points to the abandoned tobacco field beyond.

SCOUT

This a way.

FIELD: DAY

Slowly the horses and heavy carts make their way across the fallow field. A row of trees indicates the property line to the west. The scout leads one horse (Mason and James follow behind with the second) along the west line until he comes to a pile of rotting stumps, rocks and bushes. This is debris from when the field was cleared.

The scout signals James to help him remove several of the stumps. These are large but because they are rotten they are relatively light. The two younger men get to work. James with gusto. Mason watches but then helps with a few of the smaller branches and stumps. What is quietly conveyed here is James is an equal to the two other men. The scout and Mason are grateful for James' help and show it.

Once the stumps and debris are removed a path like road is revealed leading into the forest and heading west-northwest. Mason and James pause for a moment to reflect. The choice here is do we follow or not? Who is this scout?

PATH LIKE ROAD: DAY

The carts have been pulled onto the hidden road. James and the scout are putting back the last of the stumps and for good measure throw on a few dead bushes. The scout takes hold of the lead horse and cart and silently Mason, James

and the second horse and cart follow the scout down the unknown dirt road.

PATH LIKE ROAD: MORNING

It's morning. They have camped. The men shake off dozing sleep, they harness the horses to their carts, (the horses were loose and eating grass). They head out and continue to head north on the road. They eat hardtack as they walk through the woods; all three have their muskets and pistols out.

PATH LIKE ROAD: AFTERNOON

It is late afternoon as they slowly make their way down the unknown road. A fork appears. The scout is confused.

SCOUT

In all honesty sir, I don't remember this.

FORK: AFTERNOON

Mason takes a look at both paths. He inspects and measures the ground.

MASON

Let's use reason my good men.

SCOUT

Only been on this road once and that was going the other way.

MASON

James?

JAMES

Left looks less traveled.

Mason checks his chronometer.

MASON

Both head north. As James has pointed out the right is more trampled and according to this it heads north-northwest. Let's go the right.

The scout and James have their doubts but choose to put their faith in the old man.

(CONTINUED)

SCOUT

I hope you are correct sir.

The small company lead the horses and carts onto the right fork. (It's actually loop.)

VALLEY FORGE: EVENING

Relief. Mason, James and the scout enter Valley Forge. Mason and James are shocked by the poor conditions, the uneducated men, and the whirl wind of activity. They pass through the busy camp.

The horses have been unhitched from the carts and the carts are propped up using sticks of wood. The scout is leading the horses away (to water, feed and care for), leaving Mason and James to fend for themselves. This makes them both uncomfortable.

THE HUT: EVENING

There seems to be a great deal of commotion going on outside one of the larger huts. Mason and James watch as an American soldier TINKER (in complete rags) is standing in front of the hut and only allowing certain men to go in and turning others away.

TINKER

Not enough holes in your coat. Go away. Come back when you are properly attired.

They watch as the soldier leaves. Another soldier named BANKS tries to get in.

TINKER

Hold there Mr. Banks.

BANKS

Schmidt said I was entitled.

TINKER

Did he? This is my party too and I say you got to have only one pant leg. You clearly have two.

BANKS

Liquors in there.

A third soldier, PORTER, approaches Tinker.

(CONTINUED)

TINKER

Sorry but you are much too pretty.
Ah, now see here... Porter, now
there's an American. No coat and
look, a shirt of string, mere
threads.

PORTER

It's all I've got.

TINKER

It's perfection. Go right in.

PORTER

Why thank you Tinker. You're a
real gentleman you are.

Porter enters the hut. Banks tries to.

TINKER

Not you mate.

BANKS

Ass for brains! Let me in!

TINKER

Go home, put on your other pair,
there's sure to be a rip or two.

A fourth soldier (STANLEY) approaches.

STANLEY

Is this the place?

TINKER

Aye it is. Let's have a look. Nice
hole. A torn pocket. Delightful
stockings.

STANLEY

Do you really think so?

TINKER

Oh yes. Is that blood there?

STANLEY

Aye, it bleeds from time to time.

TINKER

Stanley, why didn't you say so?

(CONTINUED)

STANLEY

Ah it ain't all that bad.

TINKER

Two draughts for ya man! Show em your foot! Say Tinker said two draughts!

STANLEY

I will, most kind of you mate.

Stanley disappears into the hut.

TINKER

Bleeding feet! Did you see em? Get thee back to thy tent to fetch thy rags man. In this house our nakedness is next to Godliness.

BANKS

I got a hole.

TINKER

Really?

BANKS

Right here.

TINKER

That's not much of one, I can barely get my little finger through it, no you've got to be a rag man, torn, dirty, dishy, and well, take a long look, for I am a most fine example.

BANKS

I'll take off my coat.

TINKER

Not enough.

BANKS

My vest?

TINKER

Have you a hat?

BANKS

How about I remove my boots?

(CONTINUED)

TINKER

Hum. It's not really fair you know.

Bank's threatens him with his fists.

TINKER

Okay, okay, it's a deal. (Banks begins removing his boots) You robbed those off a pair of dead ones didn't you?

BANKS

You lose em' and the other gentleman won't be the only one bleeding.

TINKER

Bugger...

Banks shoves Tinker out of the way and enters the hut in his bare feet. Mason and James approach Tinker.

TINKER

What have we here? Sorry sir, I don't mean no disrespect, but this is a place for common sorts such as myself.

MASON

Is General Washington inside?

TINKER

Aye, that he is sir. Not a rag on him though, I really should not have let him in. You are also a very fine piece of work sir.

The SOUND of THUNDER is heard.

TINKER

Hah, will you look at that it's started to rain.

A low RUMBLE is heard.

MASON

May we go in? The general is expecting us. Actually that's not quite true. I must see him. It's important. Please.

(CONTINUED)

TINKER

I shouldn't, but aye, and fast,
it's going to be a soaker.

MASON

Thank you.

Mason and James begin to enter the hut as it begins to rain. Tinker stops James (who is dressed in fine traveling clothes) from entering.

TINKER

Not him. I won't have my party
completely ruined.

THUNDER continues to SOUND. Mason carefully removes his overcoat and covers James with it. Mason waits until James covers his head with the hood. Inside the hut the SOUND of men SINGING or CHANTING can be heard.

MASON

Stand up under the eve. I won't be
long.

James nods. Mason enters the hut.

INSIDE THE HUT: NIGHT

HOOTING and LAUGHTER (and muted thunder) is heard as Mason enters the hut. The singing is over for now. Mason is followed by Tinker. Inside soldiers were playing at backgammon or cards but have stopped to listen to Washington. There are wooden BOWLS of nuts and cigars, CASKETS of rum and beer. The general is finishing up a story...

WASHINGTON

...damn dog ate a whole
ham!...pulled it into a corner.
Wouldn't let any of us near him,
his fangs barred. While we starved
he ate the whole thing in front of
us. But the best part was Mrs.
Washington. She flew into a temper!
Started complaining about hair,
mud, fleas, bad breath and flatus!

The hut erupts with laughter and hoots.

WASHINGTON

Vulcan, best damn dog I ever had.
When he had the scent of a fox he

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON (cont'd)
ran both heart and soul to the
passionate end. God I loved that
dog! He was banned from the house
after that. Damn woman I couldn't
talk her out of it.

Tinker points at Mason.

WASHINGTON
(Both pleased and dismayed)
Oh Lord. Are my eyes deceived or is
that Mr. Mason?

MASON
I apologize for interrupting.

WASHINGTON
Another bowl here! Men this is Mr.
George Mason, a gentleman of the
highest order. The owner of Gunston
Hall. (There are murmurs as the men
recognize the name of the mansion.)

Mason is handed a bowl of rum from a ragged SOLDIER.

MASON
(To the room)
Your victory has brought you French
munitions. Two flat beds worth.

WASHINGTON
They liked that did they?

MASON
Two more, I trust are on their way
towards Commander Gates.

WASHINGTON
(Grinning at Mason)
Jersy, June bug...

2 SOLDIERS rise from a card game.

JERSY
Sir.

WASHINGTON
Unload it in my quarters.

JUNE BUG

Yes sir.

MASON

Be careful!

JERSY

Sir?

MASON

It's under Chinese Chippendale trim. For my music room.

The 2 SOLDIERS exit.

MASON

They will be careful won't they?

WASHINGTON

You finagled this, didn't you?

MASON

Mr. Franklin had a hand in it. But your victory was the major cause.

WASHINGTON

(To the room)

Men, Mr. Mason here, won the Sharp-Shooter in 1756. Brought down a black bear he did.

MASON

Only after he'd chased me twice around my field.

The hut again erupts with laughter.

PORTER

Tinker's been chased by a bear. Tell 'em.

TINKER

Tried to bite my bum she did. Climbed a tree. Good thing too. My breeches are scratched enough, much more and I'll be afraid to sit down for fear I won't be covered when I stand up.

WASHINGTON

We found him up there hanging, his belt buckle tangled in a branch.

(CONTINUED)

TINKER
I lost my hat.

WASHINGTON
Didn't I promise you another?

TINKER
Aye, next month.

WASHINGTON
And you shall have it. Next month.

STANLEY
Aye, next month.

TINKER
I am forever looking forward to it
sir.

Again, there is laughter.

PORTER
Tell gentleman Mason about the farm
sir.

WASHINGTON
Freeman's?

PORTER
Saratoga.

WASHINGTON
Stanley?

STANLEY
Had to find our way through thick
forest, way up north, near Canada.
Went in first I did, a spy I was,
me and Johnny Plumley, reported all
the doings to the General here.

INSIDE THE HUT: NIGHT

WASHINGTON
Tell Mr. Mason about the Iroquois.

STANLEY
Sensing a battle the Indians, they
lit bonfires they did...

BATTLE OF SARATOGA: NIGHT

Several BONFIRES are seen. The IROQUOIS Indians (in full war paint) are dancing around them. War CRIES can be heard.

PORTER VO
Donned war paint...

STANLEY VO
Danced naked...

PORTER VO
Middle of the night...

STANLEY VO
Poor British lads...

Young frightened BRITISH SOLDIERS are seen scurry around looking for a place to hide.

PORTER VO
Scared the beejeebees out of the new recruits.

STANLEY VO
We watched as they ran around holding themselves against pee'n.

INSIDE THE HUT: NIGHT

PORTER
Aye, it was a sight to behold sir.
It softened em' right up and we went in.

BATTLE OF SARATOGA: NIGHT

The battlefield is covered with the AMERICANS and BRITISH fighting. The Iroquois remain on the outskirts watching, ready to join if needed. Washington is directing the American battle. A bullet takes off his hat. Another grazes his sleeve. The third hits his boot buckle. Washington's HORSE rears up. His army kills red coat after red coat until the British retreat. The Iroquois then kill many of the retreating British.

INSIDE THE HUT: NIGHT

PORTER

The British suffered 1,000 casualties or more, we lost less than 500.

WASHINGTON

That night put a warmth around our hearts, just like this rum, aye men?

The men agree.

STANLEY

One of those who died sir, was Johnny Plumley. Had his left arm and half of his shoulder blown away. He was the best sort of lad sir, the finest of men, I haven't told his wife yet, it won't be easy.

WASHINGTON

Another cup for Stan and all around!

Stanley is handed another cup of rum by the ragged soldier. He also tries to fill Mason's but Mason puts his hand over it. Washington raises his bowl of rum as do all the men.

WASHINGTON

To Johnny P.! Quick finger, strong stomach, dirty wit! He was a damn fine soldier!

The men drink from their bowls and Mason tries to fit in by tasting his.

TINKER

Mister Mason, sir, I'll have you know the general's lost many a hat, horses have been shot from under him, his sleeve has a hole in it and his boot buckle is broken but not one inch of his hide has ever been touched. Not even a scratch.

WASHINGTON

Not sure if that's wisdom or folly...

(CONTINUED)

TINKER

Providence sir is keeping him alive
sir.

Embarrassed by his own lack of military prowess, Mason sips
at his rum bowl awkwardly.

MASON

I've no doubt.

WASHINGTON

Any news?

MASON

I have it on good authority that
France may soon cross the Atlantic
and join our struggle.

The men react positively.

WASHINGTON

If the French join, it will end
decisively and quickly.

MASON

Once the British are gone, then
what?

WASHINGTON

My men will be free, they will be
paid for their service, own land,
raise families.

THUNDER is heard outside.

MASON

General, James my servant is
outside.

WASHINGTON

Porter a cot in the main for Mr.
Mason's servant. See that the spare
is ready for Mr. Mason. Re-bank the
fire.

PORTER

Yes sir.

Porter EXITS.

WASHINGTON

(Grinning)

Chinese Chippendale trim?

(CONTINUED)

MASON

(Defending himself)

I bought it at cost. It was quite helpful in hiding the army's provisions.

TINKER

Oh and I believe it was for a high toned Chinese music room.

Tinker fills Mason's bowl with a little more rum.

TINKER

Hey laddies, let's show the gentleman how music gets done in the low-lands of America.

The men are merry as one of them picks up a frayed bow and his beat-up old fiddle and begins to play. The men sing or chant. A few dance. Washington is amused but Mason is embarrassed.

MOUNT VERNON: DAY

It's Jack's funeral. A fancy wooden casket sits on a flat bed cart drawn by a horse. The Pohick minister stands nearby. The families of Custis and Washington have gathered at Mt Vernon. Martha Washington, her GRANDCHILDREN, Jacky's widow and other NEIGHBORS are in the background, including many of the Washington & Custis SLAVES. Mrs. Washington is clearly grief stricken. General Washington is not present. The Mason family is in attendance including William and Nancy.

William wears his uniform and is clearly depressed, suicidal and is drinking heavily. James (he drove the family's carriage) is keeping his distance. Mason takes from William his flask and this time puts it into his own pocket.

MASON

You have suffered immensely. I do not doubt this, but your dear sister has suffered more. Look at her.

Nancy's face is tear stained but stoic. (She has recently lost her husband to the war and her brother George to consumption, she was also friends with Martha Custis who died before her brother, and lastly she lost her child a year ago to whooping cough.)

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

He could not take leave of his precious cause to even attend the funeral.

MASON

Alright. I agree. Jack did not deserve to die like a common soldier from camp fever.

WILLIAM

It's his fault you know, he never paid any attention to him.

MASON

Alright.

An EMISSARY approaches Mason.

WILLIAM

He forced Jack to do things he wasn't comfortable with.

EMISSARY

Mr. Mason? (He salutes William) I have a letter from General Washington.

MASON

What is it? (The emissary hands him a letter).

EMISSARY

I can confirm its contents. The French Navy, with the general's guidance, has been successful in repelling the British at both Chesapeake and Yorktown, Virginia.

(Battle of Chesapeake Sept/1781; Siege of Yorktown Oct/1781; John Parke Custis died Nov/1781.) Mason looks at William.

MASON

William.

WILLIAM

I agree.(to the emissary) Thank you.

The emissary nods and grins, he leaves the two of them alone.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

Oh. Oh my. Could this be
over? Could we be free?

William nods and stands a little taller as Mason and him watch the funeral procession take Jack's casket to be buried.

GUNSTON HALL GRAVE SITES: DAY

The Mason family grave sites. Mason has put flowers on his mother, his wife and deceased children's grave sites (including George Mason V and Nancy's child).

Outside of the enclosed graveyard is Ishmael, Nan Gate and Charlotte's graves. Mason hands James some of the flowers in his hand and together they gently add flowers to Ishmael's grave, Nan Gate Hercules grave and also to the much older grave site of her daughter, Charlotte Hercules.

Mason then snaps off a branch or two of cherry blossoms from the tree (planted in Charlotte's memory) over Charlotte's grave. He places it carefully next to the other flowers. Together James and Mason stare at the graves of their loved ones.

They are interrupted by William. He carries a brand new sword case and a letter.

JAMES

What do you have there?

WILLIAM

From the general. The war is over.

Mason takes the letter. He reads.

MASON

The Treaty of Paris is in effect.
And Washington has given you a
sword, what a great honor my son.

WILLIAM

Honor my ass. I hate him!

MASON

He is telling you how much he
appreciates your service. You will
thank him at once.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

You have not seen what I have seen!

MASON

What's done is done, and it was done for a great cause.

William throws the sword case at James.

WILLIAM

You take it. You've wanted it. You always wanted it!

William glares at Mason and James and then strides away. James quietly hands the case to Mason and silently leaves. Mason watches James disappear from view and then looks at the case, the cherry tree and the graves. He is full of a complicated mixture of emotions. Grief on the one hand and relief on the other, love his children and is both worried and hopeful for the future.

SHIP CAPTAIN'S OFFICE: DAY

Mason has dragged William with him to Alexandria for more news and to do business. Several RUN-AWAY SLAVE notices are tacked to the wall of the office along with FOR SALE signs of items and slaves. Mason proceeds to confiscate any and all bottles of booze that William has on his person. William is left moping and looking listlessly out of the window across a small inlet. His mood is one of depression and restlessness.

The CAPTAIN enters.

CAPTAIN

Mr. Mason.

MASON

Captain Tate.

CAPTAIN

Good to see you.

MASON

The war is over but I'm afraid the books are off. Merchant, shorted me 1 hogshead, I said no problem, just make it up with your next run, he brought it all right, charged me for it. I didn't notice the error until he'd left.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN

The war is over, so I'll give you 2 hogshead and I'll square it up with your merchant. How's that?

MASON

Thank you.

During this exchange William has been brooding and looking out of the window. Outside across the small inlet a brand new flag POLE, put up the day before, has been greased, the HALYARDS cut and the CLEATS knocked off by a small group of BRITISH SOLDIERS who are laughing as they paddle in a small row-BOAT out to a British Merchant FRIGATE that sits in the harbor.

A small group of AMERICANS with their new American FLAG (including the portly WOMAN who has sewn the flag) are unable to put it up and fly it. The British soldiers are taunting them from their small skiff. William cannot hear them but he is clearly outraged by their behavior. William bolts out of the captain's office.

MASON

William? (to the Captain) Excuse me.

Mason crosses to the window and watches as William runs to the small jut of land across the inlet to join the Americans.

FLAGPOLE: DAY

The British taunt from their small skiff.

1ST BRITISH SOLDIER

Come on kiddies...

2ND BRITISH SOLDIER

Can't mount the pole, heh?

1ST BRITISH SOLDIER

Married a frog did you?

2ND BRITISH SOLDIER

Their asses are slippery.

1ST BRITISH SOLDIER

As are your hands!

(CONTINUED)

2ND BRITISH SOLDIER
Slippery with the blood of your
English brothers!

William joins the Americans. He yells back at the British.

WILLIAM
Keep it up! We'll put some holes in
that boat!

A BLACKSMITH American arrives with an iron-mongers BOX.
Inside is all that they need. William ties the halyards
around his waist, he stuffs the American flag in his pocket,
he shoves several cleats in his mouth and picks up a hammer.
William begins to climb the pole driving in the cleats as he
goes up. The British are enraged by this.

1ST BRITISH SOLDIER
May you break your leg.

2ND BRITISH SOLDIER
Damage your jewels!

1ST BRITISH SOLDIER
Never have brats!

2ND BRITISH SOLDIER
They'd just starve anyway!

1ST BRITISH SOLDIER
Freedom!?

2ND BRITISH SOLDIER
You're now free to die by
starvation!

1ST BRITISH SOLDIER
Or by your own rotten discontent
with everything!

The Americans express themselves by turning around and
sticking out their backsides. The British respond by firing
their weapons.

BLACKSMITH
Couldn't hit the side of a barn!

The British continue to fire their MUSKETS at the Americans.
One bullet hits the pole.

SHIP CAPTAIN'S OFFICE: DAY

The captain has joined Mason at the window.

MASON
William! Excuse me.

He runs out of the office.

FLAGPOLE: DAY

Mason runs toward the flagpole as William continues to shimmy up the pole. William drives in several cleats and then steps up. His hands, clothes, face and hair become soaked with black grease. A fellow AMERICAN climbs up to hand William more cleats and nails. The fellow gets shot in the hand with a bullet. He quickly wraps his hand in a dirty HANDKERCHIEF and continues to help William. The muskets continue to fire. A few Americans begin to return fire as fast as they can load and shoot.

WILLIAM
Aim for the boat!

MASON
William come down! Come down at once! William!

William reaches the top as a bullet hits the pole in front of his face.

MASON
William!

William secures the halyards, his footing, the flag... The American flag unfurls as...

WILLIAM
Fucking red coats! We won!

The Americans below are ecstatic. They CHEER. More townspeople join in. Somewhere a church BELL begins to ring (like a liberty bell).

The British soldiers are now far out in the bay almost to the frigate. Their muskets are out of range. They are angry the American flag is flying. They are still yelling but no American can make out their words.

Back on shore Mason is proud of William and it shows.

End of Act One

GUNSTON HALL 1787: LATE SPRING DAY

Outside of Gunston Hall James is busy hitching up two HORSES to a new fancy CARRIAGE. The carriage is loaded with provisions for the long trip to Pennsylvania. Mason is also working. He carries a TOOLBOX and MUSKETS.

MASON

Has Martin the schedule for planting?

JAMES

Gave it to him this morning.

MASON

The carrots need thinning. Tell Felcy. And the honeysuckle needs to be staked up. Is the fertilizing complete?

JAMES

Done last week.

MASON

Worst time to hold a convention.

JAMES

Little Em dropped a pot this morning while making candles. Hot wax splattered up and down her arm and face. Miss Nancy wanted to know if she could send for the doctor.

MASON

Can't Easter do something?

JAMES

She's done what she can but it's severe.

MASON

I knew the moment I laid eyes on the runt she would drain precious resources, no strength to her. Yes, yes, but once she is of health tell Martin to sell her. I have no need for runts. (pause) If no one wants her, tell Martin to give her to Mrs. Troyer. You know her to be a kind woman, and heaven knows she can always use an extra pair of hands with all those children.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES
How's the gout sir?

MASON
Fine, why do you ask?

JAMES
Swallows flew low this morning
means rain, your gout generally
flares when it rains.

MASON
I should bring extra peppermint.
Fetch more in the kitchen.

James begins to go fetch it but bumps into William who carries Mason's BOX of ointments, peppermints and wraps.

WILLIAM
It's all here. No need to fetch.

MASON
Why aren't you in your riding
clothes? We will leave promptly.

WILLIAM
I am heading to the Militia
tomorrow. I have decided to remain
a soldier.

MASON
Your brother and Jack died not from
the war but from a fragile
constitution. You have a much
stronger one but its not
guaranteed. You will go to
Philadelphia and you will learn the
wisdom of reason over war.

WILLIAM
I am not a statesman. I am a
soldier.

MASON
You are a farmer.

JAMES
Billy. Pennsylvania. It'll be an
adventure.

MASON
We need you. What if the carriage
gets stuck, or the wheel comes off,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MASON (cont'd)
or we have to build a temporary
bridge to cross a stream?

WILLIAM
This is my life! I won't go!

William stalks off. It begins to lightly rain as Mason turns to James.

MASON
Get his things! He's going! Even
if we have to shackle him to the
roof!(yelling at William) You're
going!

William turns and glares back at his father. He continues to walk away.

PHILADELPHIA STREET: DAY

It's dusty and hot. The city is large in comparison to the quiet rural life of Gunston Hall and Alexandria. There is a hustle and bustle about the PEOPLE and the street. The Mason carriage sits outside of a tavern called the INDIAN QUEEN.

William, in a foul mood, flings open the door and jumps out of the fancy carriage. He is sweaty and mad.

THE INDIAN QUEEN: DAY

Mason watches William from a window inside The Indian Queen.

William joins his father. He is disheveled and thoroughly sour as he leans on the tavern's counter.

MRS. HOUSE (owner of the Indian Queen)is checking them in. James stands to the side, he has 3 CRATES of wine.

MASON
Mrs. House may I store these in
your cellar? You may keep one as
payment.

MRS HOUSE
Mr. Mason that's too much.

MASON
Nonsense. It's yours.

(CONTINUED)

MRS HOUSE

Your rooms are upstairs. (Looking at James) He's welcome to the stable.

MASON

Very good.

MRS HOUSE

Leroy. Show em' the cellar.

A wage earning black MAN (he is sweeping and cleaning the tavern) shows James where the cellar door is. Mason overhears him tell James;

LEROY

It's cooler in the stable.

James acknowledges the man's kindness. He heads for the cellar with the wine. Mason and William climb the stairs followed by Leroy who carries their luggage.

INDIAN QUEEN ROOM: DAY

It is very hot. A sweating Mason flings open curtains and then the bedroom window. He hears the YELLING of the name "Washington" over and over again. He looks down and sees a lone MERCHANT peddles his WARES. He has prints, locket, coins, silverware, plates, and bric-a-brac, all carry the image of Washington.

MERCHANT

Washington for sale! Washington! I have plates! Lovely plates! I have pictures! A pence will get you a locket. Two pence a coin... and this... (he holds up a teapot) ah now, wouldn't that look nice in your parlor?

Below the TOWNSPEOPLE are mingling around the man and his commodities are being snapped up. Mason is alarmed and dismayed.

MERCHANT

Washington for sale! Washington!

Suddenly CHURCH BELLS begin to CLANG.

MERCHANT

Oh my lordship sir!

(CONTINUED)

From above in his room Mason watches as the merchant bows and the CROWD spreads apart to allow the general to pass in front of The Indian Queen. Washington (in his old, but clean and mended uniform) is all smiles and waving his hand, he epitomizes control, coolness and charm. He shakes hands. He kisses babies. He receives hugs from young WOMEN. He is flanked by a few of his SLAVES. There are gasps, laughter, hand clapping, a WOMAN faints, etc. Mason walks briskly out of the room and down the stairs.

The church bells are still ringing.

PHILADELPHIA STREET: DAY

Mason walks out into the street. William, GOUVERNEUR MORRIS (who has one leg and a peg for the other) and ALEXANDER HAMILTON are now with Washington. Both Morris and Hamilton are decked out in very fine clothes. William (still disheveled) is uncomfortably hanging about.

WASHINGTON

Mason! You came!

MASON

It seems the Heavenly Host did too in spite of the fact it's only a Wednesday. I wonder, will they ring those church bells again tomorrow? and the day after, and the one after that until the day of rest?, when it be proper.

WASHINGTON

(Grinning)

Mr. Mason let me introduce some very fine men. Mr. Gouverneur Morris.

MORRIS

How very grand to meet you.

Mason suspiciously eyes Morris.

WASHINGTON

Mr. Morris was the treasurer of the Continental Congress.

MASON

Ah the one I sent money to.

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON

And this is Alexander Hamilton. The captain might as well have been my right arm, he was indispensable to our cause.

MORRIS

(To Hamilton)

He's thinking what a couple of fops.

MASON

This is my son, William.

MORRIS

Mason did you say, what country are you from?

WASHINGTON

Virginia.

MORRIS

Ah a virgin...

WASHINGTON

Mr. Mason is my neighbor. Mind your manners.

MORRIS

(To William)

Mind your manners. One fop, two fops, three fops, four, I am such a bad boy let's kick me ever more. (Morris kicks himself with his wooden peg.) Oh!, I believe that was in the direction of the Indian Queen. Ham let's go rum it, what do you say?

WILLIAM

What happened to your leg?

MASON

William! Mr. Morris will find us uncivilized.

MORRIS

I don't mind satisfying a young man's curiosity. You see, I was being entertained by a beautiful, enticing, and all together thoroughly demanding woman in her boudoir, when her dull husband came

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MORRIS (cont'd)
 home unexpectedly. Well, I had but two choices, I could either shoot the poor bastard and be stuck with his wife or I could throw myself off the balcony. I chose the latter.

WILLIAM
 Good choice. (Morris and William share a moment of recognition)

MORRIS
 Let's go. General?

WASHINGTON
 Perhaps later.

MORRIS
 Suit yourself, we'll be there all night. (to William) I hope we meet again young man. Ta Ta!

WILLIAM
 Ta...

HAMILTON
 Sir.

Hamilton nods to both older men but does not acknowledge William. He follows Morris as they cross the street and enter The Indian Queen.

WASHINGTON
 He's harmless, don't let him bother you. Lieutenant Mason, it's good to see you.

WILLIAM
 Sir.

Washington feels the icy retort and so to change the course of things he turns around to show off his uniform.

WASHINGTON
 What do you think? The silk scarf is from France and the new buttons are from Scotland, Mrs. Washington sewed them on herself.

MASON
 Very fine.

He then remembers.

(CONTINUED)

MASON
We received the sword.

He looks to William to say something.

WILLIAM
(Reluctantly)
Thank you, sir.

WASHINGTON
I am appreciative of your service.

Mason glares at William.

WILLIAM
(Sighing)
It was a great honor, sir.

WASHINGTON
(Giving up)
I'm staying over on Market Street,
have to meet with several delegates
before tomorrow.

MASON
Of course.

WASHINGTON
Good bye then.

Washington nods to both and then continues to walk down the road with his slaves and his adoring fans. The church bells are still ringing.

Alone with William, Mason says:

MASON
He never even mentioned Jacky.

Father and son look at one another.

STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA: MORNING

The weather is already hot. Mason is bewildered. The TOWNSPEOPLE are out and about busy with their errands and/or work. There are HORSES, BUGGY'S, CARRIAGES, MULES, STRAY DOGS, CHILDREN RUNNING, BLACKSMITHS, MERCHANTS, WOMEN SHOPPING. Mason is totally lost. The town is so large and he has never had to navigate such a complicated city. He can't find the State House. He is panicking slightly. He doesn't want to be late. He asks a PASSERBY.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

Excuse me. Where is the State House?

The woman is startled by the question, frightened, she hurries away. Mason is perplexed and hurt.

MASON

It was a simple question.

Mason wipes his forehead. He looks around and finds a spot of shade and takes out a MAP from his coat pocket. He unfolds it and stares at the complicated layout. He then slowly turns it around until it's right side up.

MASON

(Muttering to himself)

Water street must be by water.
Where's the river?

He locates the Delaware River on the map. He then searches and locates Water Street.

MASON

If I turn left and follow Water Street one, two, three, about five of these short roads, then I should come to Chestnut and then...

He looks up.

MASON

Where is the Delaware?

He looks around, he gets up and moves until he can see the river. Mason then gathers his things and begins to walk towards an alley. Beyond the alley is the Delaware River. While he walks he keeps a sharp look out for Water Street.

MASON

Water street... Water street...

THE STATE HOUSE: DAY

Mason walks in late during a brief recess. He is embarrassed. His clothes stick to him and he mops his brow with a handkerchief.

DELEGATES from the various states mingle around the room (getting out QUILLS, INK, PARCHMENT, BOOKS, pouring water from glass PITCHERS, ETC). They are not limited to but include WILLIAM PATTERSON, N.J., ROGER SHERMAN, Conn., JOHN

(CONTINUED)

DICKINSON, Del., JOHN RUTLEDGE, S.C., CHARLES PINCKNEY, S.C., WILLIAM FEW, Georgia, and JAMES MADISON, Virginia. Washington, Morris and Hamilton are also present. The weather is hot and getting hotter.

Mason sits down next to BENJAMIN FRANKLIN who pours him a cup of water from a glass pitcher.

MASON

You must be Dr. Franklin. What a pleasure sir, I'm Mr. Mason.

FRANKLIN

Mason! It's good to meet you at last.

MASON

(Loudly)

May we open a window or two?

Washington bangs on the podium and is clearly irritated.

WASHINGTON

Overruled. (to Mason) It's been decided due to secrecy all windows are to remain shut. (to the room) Gentlemen! Let us reconvene. I believe Mr. Patterson from New Jersey was the last to speak.

PATTERSON

(He waits until the room is quiet)

I do not believe our constituents sent us here to abolish the Confederacy. I say why raise a new foundation when only the roof needs repair?

MADISON

Because the foundation is crumbling sir. The tendency of the states is toward anarchy rather than tyranny, to disobedience rather than abuse.

PATTERSON

(Angry)

I will never accede to a plan that will lay ten states at the mercy of Virginia, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania!

(CONTINUED)

MADISON
(Explaining carefully)
Proportional representation will
strengthen the smaller states.

PATTERSON
I say it will destroy them!

The Delegates are not convinced by either man. They are
confused. They mutter among themselves.

MASON
(To Franklin)
What's this?

FRANKLIN
Power. Who has it and who doesn't.

MADISON
(Trying again)
Let's unite ourselves under
majority rule and proportional
representation. In other words, one
country. In this way all will be
equal and just and certainly better
than any European system.

RUTLEDGE
Proportional representation?

MADISON
Not of states, but of people.

DICKINSON
How are the people of Delaware to
compete with the people of
Virginia? Her size is one
sixteenth.

MADISON
There will be no state boundaries.
Delaware will become one with all
the rest.

DICKINSON
I will not agree to a plan which
destroys my state, or treats it as
if it does not exist.

PATTERSON
The Confederacy worked quite well
in my opinion, and will serve us
well in the future. If Great

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PATTERSON (cont'd)
Britain couldn't destroy us, I
don't see why we should allow this,
little man, to do it.

MADISON
(Lightly and with precision)
Sir, are you not from the fair
state of New Jersey?

PATTERSON
(Defiant)
Yes and proud of it.

MADISON
And you are a lawyer. I understand
you also went to Princeton.

PATTERSON
I did.

MADISON
Then you know as well as I do that
a compact between parties is in
effect and binding as long as both
parties comply with the agreement.

PATTERSON
(Uncomfortable)
All good lawyers know that.

MADISON
I'm sure you would agree the
Confederacy is a compact between
our several states.

PATTERSON
Of course, but...

MADISON
(with anger and confidence)
Did not New Jersey refuse to pass a
law complying with the requisitions
of Congress? Was not that body
reduced to pleading with your state
for funds to house, cloth, and feed
our troops during the
war. Furthermore your state has
entered into treaties and conflicts
with the Indians in clear violation
of Congress! The Confederacy is
annulled. Not by an act of anyone
here, but by your own state!

The House is in an uproar. The men are arguing with each other. Some are mad at Madison, others are sticking up for him. Patterson is clearly humiliated. Washington is banging on the podium.

WASHINGTON
Order! Order!

PATTERSON
(Mustering courage)
I think the entire plan is too novel, too complex. Will a gentleman from Georgia be a judge of a law which is to operate in New Hampshire? Think on that gentlemen!

The delegates continue to argue.

MASON
(To Franklin)
Who is that man?

FRANKLIN
Mr. James Madison.

The men quiet down and;

SHERMAN
I would like some time to read this new idea, this Virginia Plan. I suggest copies be made and distributed.

FEW
I second it.

WASHINGTON
Copies will be made. Dr. Franklin?
(Franklin nods) We will reconvene tomorrow. (He bangs on the podium)

The delegates begin to gather up their things. Washington speaks to a delegate or two and then joins Mason and Franklin.

WASHINGTON
Isn't this fun?

FRANKLIN
I have not been so entertained in years. I hope you both will join me for dinner.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

I would be honored.

WASHINGTON

Delighted. Thank you Ben.

FRANKLIN

Come then... Come...

The three men make their way to the door.

Roger Sherman hurries past them and as he does he scowls at Mason with hatred. Mason is startled and shocked.

MASON

How have I offended? Please sir...

Sherman doesn't stop. He is out the door. Mason looks at Franklin (who shrugs) and then at Washington.

WASHINGTON

You own slaves. Mr. Sherman is from Connecticut.

Franklin remains neutral as the 3 men step out of the State House.

STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA: NIGHT

After dinner the 3 men walk through the streets of Philadelphia. They are mostly empty now. Street LAMPS light the dark road. Storefronts and houses line the way.

FRANKLIN

Church Street is two blocks up. The church will be to your left.

MASON

Thank you. I will attend services this Sunday. Now, tell me gentlemen, what is this Virginia Plan?

WASHINGTON

It's a list.

FRANKLIN

It's why we are taking you down this street. (Franklin nods towards a townhouse.) Look up.

(CONTINUED)

Mason looks up to see James Madison, in an upper story WINDOW, bent over a DESK with a quill PEN. A small CANDLE lights his face and the desk. He is writing. The quill flits back and forth.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Madison is transcribing the entire convention. I have given the young man ten ink wells and twenty quills and I suspect he will need more before the summer is out.

WASHINGTON

Apparently Mr Jefferson sent him crates of books from France on various forms of government. Mr. Madison didn't find them to be of much worth and swore that he would right that wrong.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Madison drew up the Virginia Plan. He is out to make us one big happy country.

Franklin pulls out from inside his coat pocket a folded sheet of parchment (it has 15 resolutions) and gives Mason the copy.

FRANKLIN

He may be little but Mr. Madison is brilliant. Finished Princeton in 2 not 4 years.

WASHINGTON

I've been told he has the maximum of brain on the minimum of body.

MASON

He's a Virginian you say?

WASHINGTON

Yes.

MASON

(He gloats a little.)
I have been affirmed. I knew Virginia produces the best minds.

FRANKLIN'S HOUSE: NIGHT

Mason and Washington sit outside in 2 CHAIRS in the courtyard under a mulberry TREE. A slight breeze rustles the leaves. A LAMP with three wicks is on the TABLE. Mason is examining it. Franklin enters with a DOCTOR close on his heels.

DOCTOR
Really sir, you should be in bed.

FRANKLIN
I have guests.

DOCTOR
But what if you should faint?

The doctor is trying to measure Franklin's breathing, his temperature, his steadiness, etc.

FRANKLIN
Being fat and low to the ground I'm sure to bounce. Stop fussing, you are worst than my granddaughter.

Washington stands and Franklin takes his chair.

WASHINGTON
We will watch out for him and call you if needed.

DOCTOR
He should be in bed.

FRANKLIN
It's like an oven in there.

MASON
Much like the State House.

FRANKLIN
Ha! That man from New Jersey certainly roasted himself. The Confederacy is black and charred and as good as...
(Washington is frowning at him) Oh, oh, oh, yes, yes, mustn't spill the beans, in front of the doctor.

Franklin tries to hold back his mirth, in doing so he strains his back. The doctor jumps to his aid.

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON

Ben...

DOCTOR

I'll go and bring you a cushion.
You mustn't tax yourself sir.
Gentlemen.

FRANKLIN

And bring a fan also, and could you
dear man, bring a chair for the
general?

The doctor, miffed, exits.

MASON

This lamp?

FRANKLIN

Ah you like my latest invention. It
uses whale oil. I have found that a
burner with two wicks gives more
light than two lamps and one with
three is nearly equal to four. It
gives better light than any candle
and there is no smoke.

MASON

No smoke you say? (scene 1 included
a smoking candle.)

WASHINGTON

(Warning)

The doctor returns.

The good doctor ENTERS with a CHAIR, and a CUSHION, he
removes three FANS from the seat, and hands one to each man.

FRANKLIN

A fan may be used for three things,
to cool the heat or kindle it. I
must be sure to bring one to the
State House tomorrow.

MASON

What's the third?

FRANKLIN

It makes an excellent weapon!

Franklin laughs wickedly and raises his arm and pretends to
beat someone up.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR

I, uh, must be on my way.

FRANKLIN

Laughter is the cure for all woes
doctor.

DOCTOR

You are over exerting yourself sir.
Gentlemen.

The doctor leaves.

FRANKLIN

Oh good. I wanted to show you my
saw. Come, come...

Mason and Washington follow Franklin around to the side yard of the house. There a CIRCULAR SAW of the 1780's is set up. (William was working on a handle for an old flat saw in act one.)

FRANKLIN

It's German.

WASHINGTON

Ingenious!

MASON

How many men does it take to cut
wood?

FRANKLIN

Several, but it's fast.

WASHINGTON

Amazing. (To Mason) Think how
quickly you could cut wood for a
barn.

FRANKLIN

Boston will soon lead the world in
shipbuilding. Mark my word.

Mason realizes that Virginia has no innovation, no inventions; no industry. It is completely dependent on slave labor. For the first time this knowledge really hits home.

MASON

(To Washington)

We have nothing like this in
Virginia.

(CONTINUED)

Washington, on the other hand, has known this for some time. He is nonplussed and is pleased with Franklin's inventions. He points at the saw.

WASHINGTON

(Grinning)

I'm getting one of those for Mount Vernon.

FRANKLIN

(Delighted)

Come, I must show you my two headed snake in a jar. Mr. Madison said it reminded him of the country. You know north and south. Ha! Come. Come!

Franklin is satisfied he has proved the north has a few brains too. Franklin leads them back to the Mulberry tree.

The 3 men stare at a two headed SNAKE in a JAR.

FRANKLIN

What did I tell you. North and South.

Franklin and Washington laugh. Mason looks worried.

THE STATE HOUSE: DAY

It's hot. The young Alexander Hamilton is speaking while the other delegates sweat, itch and fan themselves. Mason(his copy of the Virginia Plan is before him)again sits next to Franklin. Franklin listens for awhile and then disgusted, pretends to nod off.

HAMILTON

I am obliged to declare myself unfriendly to either plan. What is this great controversy? The Virginia Plan is not such a large departure from the Articles of Confederation. What is it really, but pork still, with a little change of the sauce? In my private opinion I have no scruple in declaring that the British government is the best in the world. I doubt much whether anything short of it will do in America...

(CONTINUED)

Madison is slightly shaking his head as he writes it all down using his shorthand note taking technique. Hamilton continues to drone on.

HAMILTON - VO

I say, let the executive be elected for life. Let him have absolute veto on all legislation. Let the senate have sole power for declaring war. Let the assembly be elected by the people for the term of three years...

Mason speaks over Hamilton's speech.

MASON

(Quietly to Franklin)

Sir?

FRANKLIN

(With closed eyes)

I don't want him to see my sour puss.

MASON

I agree, the staleness, even backwardness of the youngsters remarks.

FRANKLIN

(Opening one eye)

What did we fight a war for?

HAMILTON

In this way the government will be stable and vigorous. It will protect the few from the many and it will be safe from foreign invasion.

The delegates are subdued in their reaction.

Hamilton strides over and sits down next to Morris. Morris nods his approval to Hamilton.

INDIAN QUEEN: NIGHT

The Indian Queen is decked out in 4th of July decorations, FLAGS, PINWHEELS, an AMERICAN FLAG CANDLE LOG, etc. Mason frowns as he see that Morris and Hamilton are at the bar in the dining room. He then meets James at the cellar door. James has just climbed the stairs and hands Mason a BOTTLE of the wine from Gunston Hall.

(CONTINUED)

MASON
Ah its still cool.

JAMES
Yes sir.

MASON
Where's William?

JAMES
Out sir.

MASON
Out where?

JAMES
Out...

MASON
I haven't seen him in, three days.

JAMES
Bill's been involved of late...

MASON
A woman?

JAMES
Women. Gambling. Drink.

MASON
Where?

JAMES
Out front, out back, down the
street, up the street, you name
it... He's been to cock fights, dog
fights, cat fights, dancing,
drinking and doings, with ladies...
Sir, Bill wants to move to New York
and become a lawyer.

Mason spies William (dressed in the latest fashion and slightly flushed) in the dining room near the bar handing money BILLS to Gouverneur Morris.

MASON
Thank you.

Mason leaves James and makes his way towards the dining room but William sees him coming and with barely a wave in his father's direction he backs out of the room. Mason begins to go after him but Washington (whom he did not see) boisterously asks Mason;

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON

Ho! Mr. Mason come join us.

It is the 4th of July and Washington, Hamilton and Morris are celebrating. Mason wants to follow William but also does not want to be rude.

MASON

Of course. Gentlemen, I would be honored.

WASHINGTON

Is that persimmon wine? Mr. Mason makes the best persimmon wine in the country.

Mason had not planned on sharing his wine but...

MASON

Of course, please have a glass.

Mason pours Washington a glass of his wine.

WASHINGTON

And its cool. It reminds me of home. How refreshing.

Mason offers wine to the other two. Hamilton and Morris decline. They already have rum.

MASON

(Undaunted)

Captain, I found your speech of interest but not exactly relevant. Have you not read Locke?

HAMILTON

Sir, a country must be based on power and conquest or it will not last. A monarchy will insure this. Surely you can appreciate the need for a military force strong enough to protect our boundaries from foreign invasion. Our friends and enemies alike will be back. They will be back soon.

MASON

You may be right but...

HAMILTON

Further, if we are to have real security, we must take possession

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HAMILTON (cont'd)
of Florida and Louisiana, and while
we're at it, I think we ought to
take a squint at South America.

MASON
The military is but one tool, to
serve but one aspect of a nation.

Washington silently nods his head in agreement.

HAMILTON
I am willing to go along with the
experiment for awhile. But it is a
shilly shally thing of mere milk
and water which will not last and
is only good as a step towards
something better.

MASON
We must not be ruled by fear.

HAMILTON
You want Democracy don't you?
Democracy is too much like a woman.
It can shift between a kick and a
kiss like a storm to sunlight in
Saint Croix.

MASON
My children deserve a future
without tyranny.

HAMILTON
I grew up along time ago Mr. Mason.
I had neither the luxury nor the
time for a childhood.

MASON
(To Morris)
What was that between my son and
yourself?

HAMILTON
Your Billy has been all around
town.

MASON
Leave my son alone.

MORRIS
Surely a wager will help this
evening for I am in need of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MORRIS (cont'd)
something sweeter than this
conversation. Oh! Across the
room...

Two finely dressed women sit at a table eating dinner.

HAMILTON
Ah sweet and tart...

MORRIS
Oh my, I feel myself
rising... General, how much do you
want to bet that pretty little
thing in the corner will fall to
me, this evening, within the hour?

WASHINGTON
How confident are you?

MORRIS
Extremely.

HAMILTON
My friend, you can't expect the
General to verify such a thing.

WASHINGTON
Mr. Hamilton makes a fine point,
besides how do I know she isn't a
professional?

MORRIS
Upon my honor she isn't. Ham back
me up; have you ever seen her
before?

HAMILTON
I do not believe she is a whore
sir. But what is the General to do?
Follow you home, watch through the
window?

MORRIS
Just a kiss then. One shilling for
the cheek, a dollar for the mouth.
Here, tonight, within an hour.

WASHINGTON
Half an hour...

(CONTINUED)

MORRIS

I'll do it. We must shake hands.

Washington and Morris shake hands.

MORRIS

I hope your pockets are full of dollars for I expect more than one kiss.

WASHINGTON

And yours too. If you come up empty it will cost you five.

MORRIS

Three.

WASHINGTON

Five.

MORRIS

You will pay.

Morris stands up.

HAMILTON

Good hunting...

Morris grandly crosses the room with his peg stamping the floor.

WASHINGTON

(To Hamilton)

I bet he knows them both. (to Mason) Look at that peg, doesn't slow him down a bit...

MASON

Why he flirts with danger which might result in the loss of his other leg, or some other body part, I will never know.

Washington and Hamilton grin at Mason comment.

HAMILTON

I must beg pardon for him sir, he lied. His wooden appendage?, no woman was the cause, he was thrown from a carriage, it landed on him, crushed his foot and ankle.

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON

(Watching Morris)

He's deciding on his offense.
Making sure he has his flanks
covered.

HAMILTON

Wishing he had more intelligence.
Oh my God he's wringing his hands.
Not a good sign.

WASHINGTON

(to Mason)

It's just some fun.

HAMILTON

I'll warn you sir, he also has a
scar on his right arm. No harlot
was saved from a burning brothel,
the story he likes to tell, it was
a pot of boiling oats thrown across
the kitchen at him, his own father
did it. Oh damn, he's making a
complete ass of himself.

The 3 watch as Morris has cornered the lady, she is
frightened of him and her friend looks ready to scream for
help.

MASON

I must find William.

HAMILTON

I'd check the brothels.

WASHINGTON

I'm sure he's in his room.

Washington glares at Hamilton, who laughs. Mason leaves the
dining room. He is quite upset with Washington but mostly
he's upset with himself for being so naive.

He looks back as the lady rises from her chair and Morris
kisses her on the cheek. She then smiles at the General and
Hamilton and begins to kiss Morris on the cheek only he
turns his face at the last moment and kisses her on the
mouth.

Washington and Hamilton react. Mason is disgusted.

INDIAN QUEEN ROOM: NIGHT

Mason is at the window in his room at the Indian Queen. Fireworks are CRACKLING and POPPING outside his window. The room lightens and darkens as the fireworks flare and then ease. He mutters.

MASON

I've heard crude talk all my
life... Alexandria is full of it...
The slave quarters are full of
it...

Mason hears a woman's LAUGHTER in the hallway. He crosses to the door, opens it a crack and sticks his nose out.

INDIAN QUEEN HALLWAY: NIGHT

A woman's SKIRTS are seen rounding a corner and disappearing from Mason's view.

William is tip-toeing down the narrow hall. His tailored clothes are a bit ruffled, his hair is askew; he burps and looks up to see his father's face. William stops.

Mason sternly nods his head and William does the same.

INDIAN QUEEN ROOM: NIGHT

Mason, cross but also relieved, closes his door and breathes a little easier. The fireworks continue to blaze and light up his room. They crackle and pop.

Below in the street Mason hears 3 MEN(Cincinnati Solders)stumbling down the street close to the tavern. Mason looks out of his window but cannot see them. They are loud, drunk and are half CHANTING and half SINGING.

MEN CHANTING

He saved us from oppression, from
tyranny and abuse. He lifted us to
freedom, to dignity, to truth.

We owe him our devotion,our spirits
and our lives. He is the first in
all the world, a brother, a friend,
a guide!

Long live Washington! God damn the
king! Long live Washington! God
damn the king!

(CONTINUED)

They come into Mason view. The 1st man carries a large JUG of rum.

1ST MAN

Stop!

3RD MAN

I'm out of breath!

1ST MAN

Another round!

2ND MAN

No, I'm a muddle tomorrow as it is.

3RD MAN

Aye, let's to bed.

1ST MAN

But its the fourth of July!

3RD MAN

Its the fifth.

The men all crack up.

1ST MAN

Where's your cup?

2ND MAN

No... (He puts his hand over his cup)

1ST MAN

Your cup? Where's your cup. (he searches for it) I said man where-is-your-cup?

2ND MAN

(giving up)

Another round!

The men laugh gleefully as 2nd man holds out his cup to be filled. 1st man fills his cup and 3rd man's cup.

1ST MAN

Sing it!

MEN CHANTING

Long live Washington! God damn the king! Long live Washington! God damn the king!

(CONTINUED)

1ST MAN
(Yelling)
God damn it!

They all crack up with drunken laughter and continue to stumble down the road.

MEN CHANTING
Long live Washington! God damn the
king...

Mason watches them from his window above until they drift out of sight. The fireworks pop and crackle.

THE STATE HOUSE: DAY

All the members are present. It is still very hot. Madison has his right wrist bandaged due to the fatigue from keeping notes. He is taking notes with his left hand. Mason is standing.

MASON
To guard against a king, let us not vest the position in a single person. Instead, let us consider three executives. Each will serve as checks on each other. One from the northern states, one from the central, and a third from the south.

SNICKERING is heard from a delegate.

WASHINGTON
Order! (He bangs on the podium)

MASON
It has been the hatred of the oppressions of monarchy which carried the people through the late Revolution. They will never consent to that which they fought a war to be rid of.

The delegation mutter loudly among themselves.

WASHINGTON
Order! Order!

He bangs on the podium.

WATER CLOSET: DAY

A line of delegates has formed outside in the yard near the State House in order to use the 3 water closets that stand in a row for that purpose. Dr. Franklin emerges from one of the privies and passes by Morris and Mason who have landed beside each other. Behind them is Madison, Dickinson, Washington and Patterson and several other delegates. Morris tries to give Washington his spot but the general declines. Morris waits until Franklin has passed and then says to Mason;

MORRIS

What a horrible stench. I think its coming from that three headed monster you proposed.

MASON

Perhaps its coming from you...

The doors of 2 water closets open simultaneously and the smell is almost overwhelming. The line gasps, waves it arms, holds it noses, etc.

MORRIS

My God!

MASON

You are the one stinking things up.

MORRIS

No. It's coming from those.

MASON

Not from where I stand.

MORRIS

My dear virgin... Power should be vested in one man and he should have absolute veto, otherwise his stinking enemies will sink him into oblivion.

MASON

Cripple... Then I will propose direct election by the people as a check to an absolute veto.

Madison can't help but overhear.

MORRIS

How would we monitor accuracy, count proxies? It would take years.

(CONTINUED)

MADISON

Gentlemen? Excuse me. Why not a proper proportion of the senate and the house, one or two thirds, be required to overrule his veto power?

MORRIS

Three fourths would be a better check, the executive should fear an excess of laws, not a deficiency of them. In any case, mathematically, the difference is trivial.

MASON

Little knowledge of arithmetic is necessary to understand that three fourths is greater than two thirds.

A door opens again. The men pause to fan their noses, cough, etc.

MORRIS

The torture I endure just to relieve myself.

Mason searches for a handkerchief to hold over his nose.

MADISON

Another means is to limit his years of service.

MASON

(From under the handkerchief)
Quite right, I say two years.

DICKINSON

Five.

PATTERSON

At least ten.

MORRIS

I say fifteen.

MADISON

Why not twenty? Such is the medium life of a prince.

Madison smiles broadly. The other four men can't help but smile, even Morris. Mason then scowls at Morris. Washington however, looks tired.

THE STATE HOUSE: DAY

Sun slants into the room. It is late afternoon. Mason, exhausted but determined, is standing.

MASON

Much havoc can be wrought in four years. Therefore, I move that we implement a means for impeachment.

MORRIS

If the term of the executive is four years, he will be out of office and that will serve as his impeachment.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Morris history argues for impeachment. Without it, what recourse have we but to shoot the poor man, in which he is not only deprived of his life, but of the chance of vindicating his character.

Light laughter is heard.

MORRIS

Sir. The requirements of the executive will weed out any questionable person. To then call into account this man's honor, to discredit his reputation, to question his purity of motives or his rectitude of conduct, seems highly unnecessary.

A few delegates loudly agree but many disagree.

MASON

He is a servant to the people and is enlisted at their consent!

WASHINGTON

(He pounds the podium)
Order. Order!

The delegates quiet down.

WASHINGTON

It is half past five, and I cannot state for certain the condition of your stomachs, but mine is rumbling

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON (cont'd)
like a brigade of horses. I suggest
we adjourn for the day.

There is a sigh of relief from many of the delegates. They start packing up.

WASHINGTON
But before we do, I hope you will
humor me, for I'd like to tell you
a brief story.

The men stop putting away their things. They look to Washington.

WASHINGTON
As a young soldier, I put powder
into my musket and tapped the paper
down, distracted for a moment, I
forgot about the first and put in a
second charge. Before I fired I was
warned, first from a private, then
from a fellow officer. I did not
want to believe I'd been so stupid,
so I believed neither. When I
fired, the kickback sent me into
the dirt. The entire line went into
a fit of laughter at my expense. I
had a mouth full of mud, a cut on
my lower lip, and my bell had been
rung. I had to lie there until I
could catch my breath again. The
man who will become president, like
all men, will be fallible, his
power and his actions must be
checked; so he doesn't do anything
foolish. But he will also need
friends and allies, people to
assist him when he's down, to right
him when he's wrong, and to aid him
when he might be bleeding.
Gentlemen.

Washington walks out with Morris on his heels. Mason realizes he has hurt the feelings of his dear friend. Mason also realizes he has won the debate. Most of the men slap Mason on the back as they leave. Madison gives him a nod of recognition and respect. Franklin beams.

THE INDIAN QUEEN: EVENING

It's still very warm. Mason eats alone in the dining room. He drinks wine and looks at the Philadelphia Evening Chronicle. His conscience is bothering him as well as his stomach. Mrs House pours him some water from a pitcher. Mason sweats a bit as he wonders if he could have phrased things better. He acknowledges that Morris makes him mad to the point that he forgets his manners.

THE INDIAN QUEEN STAIRWELL: EVENING

Mason is about to begin his climb to the upper floor. Madison, with his right hand bandaged, is holding a basket (take-out) sees him.

MADISON

Mr. Mason?

MASON

Mr. Madison? Come for dinner I see.

MADISON

Do you have a moment sir?

MASON

For you? Of course.

MADISON

Please join me in proportional representation. The country must be united.

MASON

I can't do that.

MADISON

The states bicker over everything. They sign treaties with foreign entities.

MASON

Laws will curb those tendencies.

MADISON

If they can be passed and enforced.

MASON

How is one military force expected to be in Massachusetts one day to put down a Shays rebellion and then in Georgia the next to put down a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MASON (cont'd)
 slave revolt? In order for your
 plan to work we must imagine them
 capable of growing wings. Reason
 must prevail.

He begins to climb the stairs but is stopped by;

MADISON
 Shall a state as tiny as Delaware
 have the same power as Virginia?
 Think on that Mr. Mason.

Madison stares up at Mason. He then turns and exits. Mason
 watches him leave.

THE STATE HOUSE: DAY

The weather is still hot. It is late in the day. The
 delegate's remove silk SCARVES from around their necks and
 use them to wipe their foreheads. Some of the men show up
 without their WIGS on or remove them during the debates,
 mopping their necks with them. Madison (his right hand's
 wrapping is larger than last time continues to take notes
 with his left.) asserts the need for proportional
 representation in both houses.

FEW
 Are you proposing a country with no
 states?

MADISON
 Yes. No. Not right away.

MASON
 This convention cannot be expected
 to make a faultless system. I
 prefer to trust posterity to amend
 the defects rather than push the
 experiment too far.

The delegates murmur agreement.

WASHINGTON
 Order. Order.

Franklin gathers himself up and stands.

FRANKLIN
 Since we are at a complete
 standstill, I propose a committee
 be assigned to come up with a way
 forward.

(CONTINUED)

FEW

I second it.

Washington pounds the gavel. Madison is not happy but the other delegates are. They want to get out of the baking State House but then... Washington holds up a fistful of PARCHMENT.

WASHINGTON

This transgression will not be tolerated! I found this outside, under a tree, left for all the public to see!

Washington slams the documents down on the seat of his chair(with the carved sun). He walks out. An unknown delegate is searching his empty satchel. He jumps up, embarrassed, to the podium, picks them up, folds them and stuffs them into his BAG. He scurries out of the room.

Madison bumps into Mason accidentally on their way out of the State House. He is clearly angry with his fellow Virginian and shows it.

THE INDIAN QUEEN: EVENING

Mason is in the dining room again, but this time he is surrounded by several other delegates. All other customers have been barred from the room. It's still quite warm and the delegates drink cold BEER and eat cold SANDWICHES. Mary House brings in more PITCHERS. The delegates haggle over the Great Compromise. Parchment is everywhere. Mason has a quill pen and is taking notes. He is intensely involved.

THE STATE HOUSE STAIRS: DAY

It is still hot. Outside several Southern delegates have their SLAVES with them. The slaves carry satchels, water JUGS, etc. Morris and Hamilton stand outside on the State House steps. They watch as Mason makes his way towards them. They snicker as he climbs the stairs and passes by.

HAMILTON

He's creating a monster with more than a dozen heads...

MORRIS

God knows how many arms and feet...

(CONTINUED)

HAMILTON

Fifty two... Each with a will of
its own.

MORRIS

Why hang on to Virginia, when it is
us, who will inherit this country,
not you?

Mason stunned, pauses briefly.

HAMILTON

We should have ambushed him the
very first day.

MORRIS

Threw him down in a cellar, let him
out sometime next fall.

HAMILTON

Or not let him out at all...

Mason is shook up by the threats but regains his composure
and walks stiffly through the door.

THE STATE HOUSE: DAY

THE GREAT COMPROMISE. Inside the State House the delegates
fan themselves and drink lemonade and water. Washington is
at his podium. Madison (looking tired) continues taking
notes with his left hand, his right is still bandaged. Mason
stands and addresses the convention.

MASON

I propose there be an equality of
votes in the Senate, and
proportional representation in the
House... The lower, voted in by the
majority of people, the population,
but the upper, the Senate, the
states will control, each having an
equal vote.

Most delegates react favorable.

FRANKLIN

When a broad table is to be made,
and the edges of the planks do not
fit, the artist takes a little from
both, and makes a good joint. It is
a fair compromise.

There are a few who are glum, most notably Madison, Morris and Hamilton. The rest of the delegation are relieved.

INDIAN QUEEN ROOM: EVENING

William and James are with Mason in his room at the Indian Queen. The windows have been opened to allow the heat of the day to escape. James has a BOTTLE of wine in his right hand which he places on the top of the DRESSER. Mason is in a really good mood. He is gloating and teasing William as he opens the bottle and pours himself a GLASS of wine.

MASON

I hear you have been flitting about to dinners and teas, with the lacy ladies and the tête-à-tête. Soon you will be wearing blue and pink, with that perfumed snuff stuck up your nose, and little bows in your hair.

WILLIAM

Blue and pink of course, but never a bow...

William looks at James who grins.

MASON

I begin to grow heartily tired of the etiquette and nonsense so fashionable in this city. Give me Virginia in spirit and soul. Oil and water are not more contrary in their nature than north and south.

WILLIAM

Speaking of the north. When this is over I plan to travel to New York. I will enter law school and pay for it with my own funds.

MASON

You will do no such thing.

WILLIAM

I am not asking for your permission!

MASON

I was going to wait but...

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

You don't think I have the brains
to become a lawyer do you?

Mason looks at William curiously.

WILLIAM

What?

MASON

Your maternal grandmother has left
you not one but two plantations.

William is surprised. Mason is glad to see he has
effectively stopped William and that his son seems pleased
with this change in events.

WILLIAM

Two you say?

MASON

Yes.

WILLIAM

Two. I must think on this...

William pours himself some of his father's wine.

WILLIAM

I have not fully decided yet
father. I will be in my room.

William gives a slight nod to James and leaves.

James is quiet as he puts out Mason's clothes for the
morning and a vial of peppermint in case of an attack of
gout. Mason notices a DRAWING of a SHIP on the top of the
dresser. He takes a coin out of his pocket and points out
the window.

MASON

You see the apothecary, there
between the maker of hats and the
general store? Run on over and buy
me some mercuris, you may buy
yourself some licorice. Come right
back. Pick up a news pamphlet. Keep
your eyes open for pick-pockets,
and don't doddle. I'm going out.
Just leave the items on the
dresser.

James takes the coin and silently leaves. Mason hardly notices because he is giddy with energy, he feels younger than he has in years. He is certain he has William finally under control.

STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA: NIGHT

Mason takes a walk to get out some of his energy. He is happy because the world is going in the right direction and because he seems to be a bit of a hero. Mason deliberately passes by Madison's rooming house. He looks up.

Madison is in his usual place, lit by a single candle, transcribing his notes for the day using his bandaged right hand.

A STORE ON MARKET STREET: DAY

It is again a hot summer day. Mason is inside the store. He is buying souvenirs for his children. He stands at the counter and speaks to the SHOP KEEPER.

MASON

What have you in the way of belt buckles? I need five, no four. I now have four sons.

SHOP KEEPER

These just came in. Brass, well made...

The shop keeper points at BUCKLES in a CABINET.

MASON

Ah those are nice, better make that five, one for each of them and one for myself. Now, my notes.

Mason takes the Virginia Plan from his pocket. On the back he has made his own list.

MASON

Nancy wished for a teapot.

The shopkeeper grabs the most expensive TEAPOT he has and puts it on the counter in front of Mason.

MASON

Yes, that will do nicely thank you. Sarah, hairpins?

(CONTINUED)

SHOP KEEPER

Ten for one pence.

MASON

Better have that locket too.

The shop keeper grins as he places an expensive LOCKET beside the HAIRPINS, the teapot and the buckles.

MASON

Perfect. Rosa? Rosa wanted lace, she said red, but I think pink will do.

SHOP KEEPER

Have red, we're out of pink.

MASON

Creamed colored then, two yards. And finally Betsy, age 19 now, a dress pattern, and fabric, it should be a good fabric but not too expensive, any notions it might need, and silk thread to make it up.

SHOP KEEPER

I'll have my wife pick it out.
(yelling) Customer!

MASON

Excellent. There now.

Mason searches his person for his money pouch. He checks his vest pocket, his pant pockets, his shirt; he can't find it.

MASON

Would you put that order under the name of Mason, M-A-S-O-N. I will return, I have other business and don't wish to carry it.

SHOP KEEPER

Certainly.

MASON

Thank you.

A flustered Mason stumbles out of the shop.

THE STATE HOUSE: DAY

It is still very hot. The house is full of delegates. A few of the Southern delegates have their SLAVES waiting on them, fetching water, handing out snuff, quills, ink, parchment, etc. Mason arrives just in time to hear Madison state that;

MADISON

If the northern states will agree,
I propose that 3 out of 5 adult
male slaves be counted as part of
the population of each southern
state.

A few grumbles are heard from the northern delegation. Madison looks at Mason. He then continues;

MADISON

If the north agrees to the three
fifths rule than I feel those
states with slaves must end their
trade with Africa.

Rumbling is heard.

MASON

Must I remind the you that Maryland
and Virginia have already
prohibited the importation of
slaves. All this will be in vain if
South Carolina and Georgia be at
liberty to import.

MADISON

Surely the gentlemen from the deep
south can appreciate the irony of a
Constitution based on self-rule
being used to ensure the practice
of enslavement?

The delegation continues to argue among themselves.

Rutledge(SC), Few(Georgia), and Pinckney(SC) sit together. A short horse WHIP is among the satchels, quills, and parchment lying on their table. They put their heads together. Morris is watching and listening to them. Through the rumbling we hear;

RUTLEDGE

What does he care? Slaves multiply
fast in Virginia.

(CONTINUED)

FEW

The sickly rice swamps of Georgia
decimate our slave numbers.

PINCKNEY

I quite agree, foreign supplies are
necessary.

RUTLEDGE

How else are we to bring in our
crops?

Morris glares at the southern delegates. He rises.

MORRIS

It seems to me...

He looks directly at Few and then Pinckney.

MORRIS

That an inhabitant of Georgia and
South Carolina who go to the coast
of Africa, and in defiance of the
most sacred laws of humanity, tear
away his fellow creatures from
their dearest connections, ship
them as cargo across an entire
ocean and then damns them to the
most cruel bondage, shall have more
votes in a government instituted
for the protection of the rights of
mankind than those who do not, is
an abomination in the highest
degree!

Pinckney shouts back.

PINCKNEY

We provide the commodities that you
shipping states profit in!

The division between the north and south delegates
intensifies.

FEW

In all ages one half of mankind
have been slaves of the other half.

Washington bangs his gavel. The delegates continue to mutter
and argue with one another. Washington continues banging
with his gavel. The slaves in the State House are trying
hard to keep a low profile.

(CONTINUED)

SHERMAN

Please lets not call them slaves,
they are people.

Mason, disgusted with Morris, excuses himself and makes his way to the doors of the State House. He must avoid a slave or two on his way out.

THE STATE HOUSE STAIRS: DAY

Mason, in an angry fluster and talking to himself, exits the State House. He is headed to the water closets but instead bumps into William who is waiting on the front steps.

WILLIAM

James is missing.

MASON

What?

WILLIAM

His things are not in the stable. I haven't seen him since last night.

Mason puts it together and realizes;

MASON

He took my money.

WILLIAM

I have a few ideas. You are not to worry. I will find him.

William skips down the steps and is gone. Mason feels betrayed and at the same time he is fearful for James safety.

THE INDIAN QUEEN: EVENING

It is still quite warm.

Mason no longer has James to fetch his wine and must do it himself. He is hot, upset, tired of being tired and tired of being hot. However he is also resigned. He knows that if he is to have a bit of relief from the day's stress and heat he must have a glass or two of his wine.

He goes to the cellar door(at least it will be cooler down there)and begins to descend. His knees hurt. He's about to groan when he hears the JANGLE of keys and men SPEAKING. He stops.

THE INDIAN QUEEN CELLAR:

A LANTERN dimly lights the cellar. There are RACKS upon racks of wine below. This is a place generally reserved for card playing and for the storing of wine. The 3 southern delegates, Rutledge, Few and Pinckney, are below seated around a card table. Morris is jangling the KEYS as he prepares to open a locked wine rack. Mason can clearly hear Morris.

MORRIS

My my my, if it isn't our southern neighbors. Planning a coup de etat'? Scheming to set fire to the State House, hum? Or are you just plotting a way to skewer old Mr. Mason?

RUTLEDGE

What brings you down here?

MORRIS

Oh God is it true, am I really down to your level?

FEW

What do you want?

MORRIS

Wine. I came for the wine.

RUTLEDGE

Ruddy, stubborn; looking to get drunk... He's clearly a jackass.

The southerners laugh. Morris unlocks the rack and grabs a BOTTLE.

MORRIS

And one for my room...

He takes out ANOTHER bottle, bangs it down on the table in front of the delegates and then opens the first one.

MORRIS

Have any of you a clean glass? No? Oh well then...

He drinks directly from the bottle.

PINCKNEY

Get out!

(CONTINUED)

MORRIS

Oh I will, most anxious to. But I thought, you see, I believe I might have a solution to our little impasse'.

RUTLEDGE

We have nothing to say to rat piss like you.

Pinckney and Few laugh.

MORRIS

Fine, don't say a word just listen. If you are willing to pay a tax on your importation in slaves, perhaps the 3/5th rule won't be so difficult for us northerners to swallow.

FEW

A tax?

MORRIS

Slave revolts cost money, why should we pay for them?

RUTLEDGE

Would this be an equal tax with other imports?

MORRIS

I believe we can manage that. But now let's leverage the bargain just a wee bit more, to make sure your Negroes are protected from nay-sayers in the north like Franklin and his Quaker friends.

PINCKNEY

What else?

MORRIS

Navigational acts will pass by simple majority, no longer requiring a two thirds vote.

Mason is outraged by this but he remains silent.

FEW

You'll let us keep the trade indefinitely?

(CONTINUED)

MORRIS

That is not entirely up to me.

PINCKNEY

Unrestricted importation...

MORRIS

You'll lose Virginia.

RUTLEDGE

He's right.

FEW

Cap it then.

RUTLEDGE

1800?

PINCKNEY

Twelve more years.

FEW

Is that enough time to build up our stock?

RUTLEDGE

I'm not sure this is fair. The northern states will control the seas. All trade will be entirely in their hands.

MORRIS

It is anyway gentlemen. We build more ships than you ever will. Besides we are all in this together, right? You retain your labor, we retain the seas. Everyone is happy.

RUTLEDGE

We have our 3/5th rule?

MORRIS

You have my word.

PINCKNEY

We haven't lost a damn thing as I see it.

MORRIS

Do you have a glass?

GLASSES are found, Morris fills each of their glasses from his bottle. He toasts the men.

(CONTINUED)

MORRIS

To the south...

RUTLEDGE

To the north...

MORRIS

To the Union...

The sound of CLINKING glasses is heard as a sweaty and stricken Mason is still standing motionless on the upper steps. He quietly turns and heads back up without his wine.

INDIAN QUEEN ROOM: NIGHT

James stands with his head down. Mason enters the room as William is speaking.

JAMES

My father died in a boat trying to save a white child.

WILLIAM

No he didn't. Nan Gate lied. We all lied.

JAMES

My father was Hercules.

WILLIAM

No he wasn't...

JAMES

(Looking at Mason)

Mr. Mason?

Mason is stunned, he does not want James to know that he had a hand in the death of his mother, Charlotte. Mason sold her and the trader killed her.

WILLIAM

Who was it that brought you candy and oranges at Christmas, every Christmas?

JAMES

Mr. Eilbeck.

WILLIAM

It's why father had you drive us to his funeral, remember?

(CONTINUED)

MASON

That was Nan Gate, your
grandmother's idea...

WILLIAM

Uncle Richard didn't want you
raised down in the slave quarters
on the Eilbeck plantation, and my
father didn't want your mama, who
was ornery as a hornet.

MASON

No she wasn't...

WILLIAM

You know that scar on Ishmael's
neck? Charlotte.

MASON

That's enough. James my good...,
James, Hercules was your
grandfather. Your mother was indeed
Charlotte. Nan Gate's only child.
Ishmael and I planted the cherry
tree over her grave.

JAMES

Nan told me mother was a lady...
That meant she was white!

MASON

She was black... and a lady...

WILLIAM

Cousin, I have given this great
thought. More thought than you
know. Perhaps, if it okay, you can
come live with me at the Eilbeck's.
Your father's place.

James realizes he is truly part of the Mason family. He
looks at Mason expectantly.

MASON

I pledged to not one but four
mothers to protect you. My own,
William's, your's and Nan Gate,
your grandmother. Four mothers. A
burden I alone have bore. If you
go, it will be your choice not
mine.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM
Come on Jay bird, come with me.

JAMES
(Painfully, quietly)
But... I...

MASON
What is it?

James shakes his head.

WILLIAM
Jay Jay?

MASON
You haven't stolen more money, have you?

JAMES
No sir!

WILLIAM
Then? What?

JAMES
(Breathlessly)
I want to live on a ship and be free...

WILLIAM
A ship?

There is a painful and uncomfortable silence between the 3 men. William breaks it.

WILLIAM
How long have you known about the Eilbeck plantations father?

MASON
Since Jack's funeral. I tried to convince your grandmother to leave one of the plantations to Thomson, but she wanted you to have both.

William is pleased that he is special.

MASON
I would like to speak with James alone.

William nods to James.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM
Think on what I've said.

He exits.

MASON
Where's my money?

James indicates the top of the dresser.

JAMES
It's there. At least most of it.

As Mason counts his money he speaks;

MASON
You are a half-blood, a mulatto, a
slave. This is a fact I cannot
change. If the world were different
I would let you go but it isn't.
You would soon be, like your
mother, dead. If you chose it, you
will be safe at the Eilbeck
plantations. James you can find
yourself a wife, have children...

JAMES
Like Ishmael, I will not bring any
child of mine into this world. On
that, you will have no control!

James is livid and strides out. Mason's guilt prevents him
from stopping him.

MASON
Control? When have I had any
control...?

Mason takes a swig of his wine. He feels utterly exhausted
and reaches for his peppermint.

STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA: MORNING

Mason is outside taking a short walk in the cooler air
before heading to the State House.

He sees Washington and Morris returning from an early
fishing trip down by the bay. The 2 men carry RODS and
Morris has a BASKET with a fish or two.

Mason is livid. Why is Washington hanging out with such an
evil man?

(CONTINUED)

MASON
Slavery lover!

Washington is mystified. Morris is surprised and fearful but masks it with amusement.

WASHINGTON
What did you say?

MASON
The northern states will monopolize our trade; there is no check against their greed.

Mason glares at Morris and then turns his attention back to Washington.

MASON
When you are back at Mount Vernon and a foreign vessel offers to take your tobacco across the Atlantic, at a lower price than a vessel from Boston, your own laws will forbid it!

MORRIS
Come. He must be suffering from the heat.

Washington shakes his head and walks towards Market Street with Morris.

WASHINGTON
Let's go...

Mason glares after the two men.

THE STATE HOUSE: DAY

As usual it is very hot. The delegation is all present. There has just been a vote on the 2nd COMPROMISE. Mason is yelling to the packed room.

MASON
I would sooner cut off my right hand than put it to the Constitution as it now stands!

Mason turns to the southern delegates (Pinckney, Rutledge and Few) who have just voted for the Second Compromise.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

In order to keep your slaves you have effectively forged yourself chains and allowed him (Mason points at Morris) to put them on!

Rutledge ignores Mason.

RUTLEDGE

I move to strike out 1800 as the year limiting the importation of slaves and to insert the year 1808.

The delegates erupt. Washington begins to pound his gavel to bring order to the convention. Over Washington's gavel Madison says;

MADISON

Twenty years will provide all the mischief one can comprehend in the importation of slaves, to say nothing about what it will do to the American character.

WASHINGTON

Order. Order I say. Order!

The house calms down some. Mason gathers himself up for one last push to stall the convention so that the 2nd Compromise can be over-turned.

MASON

I must insist on a list to protect the people's rights.

There is an audible groan from most of the delegates. They are hot and exhausted. It is late August and all want to leave and head home to their farms and livelihoods. However, Madison (exhausted and with both hands and wrists now bandaged) agrees with Mason.

MADISON

A Bill of Rights is essential to freedom.

FRANKLIN

Gentlemen. We are exhausted. The state constitutions are not annulled by this contract. Let us sign and go home.

(CONTINUED)

RUTLEDGE

Yes, we must ready our farms and families for the harvest and winter. I say no.

DICKINSON

I second it.

WASHINGTON

I move to allow Mr. Morris to write up the final draft of the United States Constitution.

DICKINSON

I second that too.

WASHINGTON

Good. Tomorrow we sign. (He bangs the gavel)

Mason is upset. Madison is exhausted. The two remain seated as the State House empties. Franklin pats Mason's shoulder with his hand as he passes by.

FRANKLIN'S HOUSE: NIGHT

It's still quite warm. Mason sits with Benjamin Franklin under the Mulberry tree at Franklin's home. They drink a bottle of Mason's wine and fan themselves.

FRANKLIN

If my health were better I wouldn't mind living another eighty years to see how it all turns out.

MASON

My father would be about your age if he'd lived. Strange... To think on that.

FRANKLIN

Think what we have lived through. After us, all must be dull.

MASON

Perhaps. But to view through the calm sedate medium of reason, how the principles we are creating, may have upon the happiness or misery of millions yet unborn, is an object, of such magnitude, as absorbs, and in a manner suspends,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MASON (cont'd)
the operations of human
understanding.

Franklin tips his wine glass in Mason direction.

FRANKLIN
To the millions yet unborn...

MASON
Here... Here...

The two men toast to future generations.

THE STATE HOUSE: DAY

It is now early September. The State House doors are wide open. The weather has made a dramatic shift. It's softly raining outside and cool.

Mason is standing in the wings in protest. He refuses to sign the document.

Gouverneur Morris signs while Madison(both wrists and hands are fully bandaged)and the other delegates(including Hamilton)line up behind him. Franklin looks in Mason's direction and then tells the line of men.

FRANKLIN
Gentlemen, I have often in the
course of this convention looked at
that behind the president
(Washington's CHAIR) without being
able to tell whether it was rising
or setting. I now have the
happiness to know it is a rising
and not a setting sun.

Mason walks out of the State House. Washington can't believe it, he shakes his head in disbelief.

End of Act Two

GUNSTON HALL FRONT DOOR: MORNING

We see the fist and sleeve of George Washington as it pounds the front door of Gunston Hall. No one answers. He repeats his pounding of the door. No one answers.

GUNSTON HALL SIDE YARD: MORNING

Washington is in a huff as he walks briskly around the house.

GUNSTON HALL FOYER: MORNING

All is quiet. The house is empty of children. A small sprig of cherry blossoms are in a vase in the kitchen. Suddenly Washington bursts through the side door and is once more storming through Gunston Hall.

WASHINGTON

Where is he? I'll be damn if he
dies before I've had my say! Mason!

Nancy, now in her mid 30's, sticks her head out of the 1st floor Palladian room. She gives Washington a look that silences him and indicates Mason is in the room that she is in.

GUNSTON HALL PALLADIAN ROOM: DAY

Mason lies in bed. He is gravely ill. Nancy hovers close by. Washington enters the room.

NANCY

(To Mason)

I will leave you.

She kisses her father's forehead and then points a finger at Washington.

NANCY

Do not rile him.

Nancy exits. There is an uncomfortable silence as Washington paces around the room. He is measuring Mason's illness, Mason's anger and his wiliness to speak.

MASON

Sit. You're liable to run into
something and break it.

Washington stops pacing, he sits down in Nancy's chair which is close to Mason's bed.

MASON

So you're president.

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON

No one else wanted the job.

MASON

I heard Franklin died.

WASHINGTON

We could not expect him to last forever. However much we wanted it to be so.

MASON

You'll be alright.

WASHINGTON

The country is a mess.

MASON

Then why do you surround yourself with mediocrity? That man Morris was, is, and will continue to be an outrage.

WASHINGTON

I did not ride all the way here to speak about Mr. Morris. I came because... I wanted to say... I was grateful... Providence provided me with a good neighbor.

Mason begins to cough. Washington waits patiently until Mason regains himself.

WASHINGTON

Like you I have been surrounded by men who would pickpocket a grandmother for her snuff. Peevish, worthless, mean, narrow; querulous men. But I have also been surrounded by men who had the temerity to go into battle without bullets, that had that 'leap of faith' to put orders before self, men who sacrificed it all. Unity is what matters to an army and unity is what matters to the country... Do you think I enjoyed shooting those mutineers?

MASON

No...

(CONTINUED)

WASHINGTON

I have done all that I have done because the experiment needs reason, yes, but it also needs a 'leap of faith' and the blessing of providence. How will future generations construe our intentions? Did we make the right choices? The right compromises? Will they have the intellect, the reason, the 'leap of faith' goodness to make this imperfect union more perfect? I have my doubts... I have many doubts...

MASON

Good. Don't let them bankrupt us. Our way of life, that of the south, is in jeopardy.

WASHINGTON

Would an end to slavery really be so bad?

MASON

Our slaves would butcher us and you know it.

WASHINGTON

I think we should set them free.

MASON

Economic suicide! That's what you're proposing! We didn't bring them here. You and I fought to free ourselves from those who did. It's now about survival. Our sweat, our skills built this country. My slaves, for one, have benefited. Second, they are thriving. And third, a few have endured great sorrow with me. Our bones are buried in sacred ground, even our blood has intermingled. The Mason's have owned slaves for eighty years and by God they will own them for another eighty. We will survive!

Washington, slightly defeated, looks out the window.

GUNSTON HALL FIELDS AND BEYOND - DAY

A view of Gunston Hall with its fields of slaves planting tobacco gives way to that of Mount Vernon. The view continues to roll northward to the 82 cleared acres of land and the beginning construction of the White House in what is now Washington DC. The Potomac flows. Civil war looms.

Text: George Mason died in 1792. George Washington served 8 years (1789-97) as the United State's first president. His will (upon his death in 1799) set all the Washington slaves free.

End of Screenplay