THE PATRIOTS
If there was a play that was written out of the questions raised by the fearful epoch of World War II through which we were passing, it was *The Patriots*. Hitler was rising, threatening the concept of democracy and so, on the other hand, was Stalin. There were some who felt that the coming struggle for world domination was between fascism and communism, and democracy was pushed aside as a vital world force.

In April 1934, during my visit to France with Lee Strasberg on the way to see the splendid production of *Men in White* in Budapest, I had occasion to lunch with several French playwrights who expressed the fear that apparently was very important in the French mind then: that, any day, clouds of German planes would be overhead bombing them. This fear was in the atmosphere everywhere in the world, and it raised the question being discussed by many in this country and in England as to the very survival of democracy. Thus, it occurs to me that the seeds of *The Patriots* were sown then in the days of *Men in White* and my first visit to France. There was a serious question as to whether our country or its principles would survive. I felt an impelling urgency to search for some answers to the doubts and questions raised. I knew, if only as a matter of blind faith, I had to find some concrete and specific answers for myself. I decided to write a play, searching for an answer.

I set out to write a play about democracy. I intended it to be a contemporary play; but in the searching for first principles, I found that a study of the American Revolution provided me with a more specific answer to the questions raised by the terror that was in the air. I answered my need to search for answers—not to rewrite history but to dramatize the significant meaning of events.
During this time, Robert Sherwood and Maxwell Anderson prevented a very serious takeover of the Dramatists Guild. Lillian Hellman had, in fact, proposed that the Dramatists Guild declare the war a “phony war,” that is, until the Nazis turned on the Soviet Union and attacked Russia. Then suddenly it became a holy war, and Lillian, along with the American Communists, was screaming for a second front. I was in the army, still wearing World War I puttees, and they wanted a second front; but it was coming.

So I was facing the challenge not only of being a soldier, but of simply trying to find a place to write The Patriots. There was no place on the army base, not even the attic of the barracks. I knew the apartment on 58th Street had no area in which I could work. Hearing me talk about this one day, Sherman Billingsley at the Stork Club, said, “Why don’t you come here when you come to the City from the army? This is very quiet in the late afternoon, no one, no how. Sit down at one of the tables and work here.” Well, believe it or not, a good part of The Patriots was written in sergeant’s uniform at the Stork Club.

Through Max Anderson’s good efforts, the Playwrights Company produced my play, but not without difficulty. After writing, but before production, I suffered a blow from which it took some time to recover. Elmer Rice had, without my awareness, voted and protested against the Playwrights Company doing my play. He claimed he was working on a play about Thomas Paine and therefore thought my play would be a conflict. The only difference was that, as I learned much later, Elmer had not written the play, and I, of course, had completed the full play. Nevertheless, the ayes prevailed and the Playwrights Company did The Patriots.

There were problems other than Elmer Rice, however. The first director we chose died before rehearsals began. The new director was bored and would leave rehearsals early. The dress rehearsals proved a disaster. We gave a special dress rehearsal performance for my battalion. The production was a near disaster: poor, stumbling direction, heavy, elaborate sets, and the in-terminable waits between scenes. Since that rehearsal was also a special performance for my army battalion, it was a double disaster for me. I wangled a two-week leave of absence. Working on the physical production day and night, I took on the direction, redesigned the set, threw half the production in the alley. Our wonderful angel, Rowland Stebbins (“Roley”), a great gentleman, a very important stockbroker as well as a patron of the arts (he had also backed and produced Marc Connelly’s Green Pastures), said, “That’s what theatre alleys are for—discarded scenery.”

Back in the army, a meeting of the whole battalion at the assembly hall was ordered. At the meeting, my name was called, “front and center.” An
officer summoned one of my fellow soldiers, who presented me with a special, beautifully illuminated manuscript on parchment, which one of our gifted soldiers had designed and drafted, congratulating me on the play and thanking me for the special performance, and signed by all the members of my battalion.

The support of the soldiers and officers of my battalion during The Patriots was very meaningful to me, as I hope, the issues the play addressed were meaningful for them at a difficult time. In fact, they were quite interested in the play. After the Pulitzer Prize was announced, and I didn't win it, came a terse communiqué from the commanding officer: “Explain your actions in not winning the Pulitzer Prize”!

Casting was very difficult. There seemed to be no good actors around at this point, and Elmer Rice, the one dissenting member of the Playwrights Company, urged me to put off the production of the play. My big triumph, though, was in finally persuading my wife, actress Madge Evans, to act in the play. We had had quite a battle before when I did The World We Make. Madge would have been wonderful in it, and it was the kind of thing she needed to do, but Madge had a will of iron, too, and she was determined not to be in any play of mine... ever. In The Patriots, however, she relented and accepted a part largely because it was not a major role, although she was absolutely splendid and beautiful in it. It wasn't very much of a part, certainly nothing comparable to what I would have liked to see her do, but she did it cheerfully and loved doing it. In a way, it was a godsend for her.

The old phrase “Break a leg” came true when the actor who was playing George Washington slipped on the ice and broke his leg following the opening night performance. He insisted he could play the role in a wheelchair. When we refused, he stuck his nose in the air and said, “Then you will just have to find somebody else.” Since we already had a very good understudy, that didn't frighten us; but we placated him with assurances he would heal more quickly this way and would be paid full salary during the convalescence. We inserted a plaque on the sidewalk reading, “George Washington slipped here.”

The play opened on January 29, 1943, to fine notices and did very well. The play was heartily received. Even John Mason Brown, my dedicated critical opponent, praised it and voted “aye” when it won the Critics Prize, a surprise and a very special award to me because the critics had formed the Critics Circle after some of them had been very rough on me for winning the Pulitzer Prize with Men in White.

After the play was successfully produced, Philip Barry one day approached me and said that all his life he had wanted to write a play about
Thomas Jefferson and couldn't do it, and complimented me on the play and the dramatic invention which had enabled me to make a play out of the Jefferson/Hamilton conflict. That dramatic invention was in the third act, and the play itself turned on it. It was a perfect example, I think, of a dramatic device in which historic invention was, in essence, truer than the fact. The fact is that, when Jefferson was running for president of the United States, he and Burr had been elected and the electoral process then called for the Congress of the United States to choose the president and the vice president. Aaron Burr, as Alexander Hamilton knew, was a sinister and Machiavellian figure. Hamilton had enough friends in the Congress to control the vote, so he had it in his power to ensure that the man of his choice would be selected as president. In order to keep many of his friends in office, Hamilton wanted to make a deal with Jefferson. Since he and Jefferson were not on speaking terms at that moment, all of this discussion took place between Jefferson and a friend and Hamilton and a friend. The two friends, thus, carried forward the discussion—all in a series of letters.

As I read the letters, I realized that here was a critical, dramatic situation that could be translated into drama only if the discussions in the letters were made a direct confrontation between the two men. This scene was the dramatic tour de force of the play, and yet, historically, it never took place—only in that series of correspondences with a third and fourth party. Actually, it was one of the most moving moments for me.

I was attacked later by the Hamilton Club for besmirching Hamilton: after all, I was only a "non-commissioned upstart" and Hamilton had been "an intrepid Major-General of the Army of the Revolution." That he had died several hundred years ago didn't seem to matter! But perhaps most important of all, the scene really gave Hamilton great stature. It pictured him as so colorful, an extraordinarily brilliant patriot, loyal to causes and principles that he finally never fully grasped. One thing I can affirm—there was hardly one word of dialogue in the scene between Hamilton and Jefferson that cannot be verified in their correspondence relating to that issue.

As with *Men in White* and *Dead End*, *The Patriots*’s influence went beyond that of a Broadway play. Two months after we opened, I received a request from the Chief Librarian of the Library of Congress, the distinguished poet Archibald MacLeish, to produce the play at the Library of Congress to open its celebration of the bicentennial of the birth of Thomas Jefferson, an honor that I gratefully accepted. Not only did *The Patriots* play the Library of Congress, but at the same time I was invited to sit in the President's Box at the inauguration of the Jefferson Memorial. I was particularly pleased because I had previously been invited by the sculptor Rudolph Evans (no relation to Madge) to be photographed with the sculpture while
it was being made and still in clay. Evans, knowing that I was a bit of a sculptor myself, gave me one of his tools and invited me to smooth out a deep gouge in the clay of the Jefferson foot. I not only smoothed it out—I left my thumbprint on it—but I was able to see its inauguration, in the company of President and Mrs. Roosevelt in their private family box!

S.K.
THE PATRIOTS

DEDICATION

To my friend and brother, Tom Evans, U.S.N., who, in this war-torn March 1943, gave his life to the flag which is the undying symbol of hope for all men.

Presented by The Playwrights Company in association with Rowland Stebbins at the National Theatre, New York, on January 29, 1943, with the following cast:

CAPTAIN Byron Russell
THOMAS JEFFERSON Raymond Edward Johnson
PATSY Madge Evans
MARTHA Frances Reid
JAMES MADISON Ross Matthew
ALEXANDER HAMILTON House Jameson
GEORGE WASHINGTON Cecil Humphreys
SERGEANT Victor Southwick
COLONEL HUMPHREYS Francis Compton
JACOB Thomas Dillon
NED George Mitchell
MAT Philip White
JAMES MONROE Judson Laire
MRS. HAMILTON Peg La Centra
HENRY KNOX Henry Mowbray
BUTLER Robert Lance
MR. FENNO Ronald Alexander
JUPITER Juano Hernandez
MRS. CONRAD Leslie Bingham
FRONTIERSMAN John Stephen

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THE PATRIOTS

THOMAS JEFFERSON

ANNE RANDOLPH

GEORGE WASHINGTON

LAFAYETTE

Billy Nevard

Hope Lange

Jack Lloyd

Sailors, voices of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, others

Staged by Shepard Traube

Setting by Howard Bay

Costumes by Rose Bogdanoff and Toni Ward

Lighting by Moe Hack

Musical arrangement by Stanley Bate

Scenes

PROLOGUE  The deck of a schooner—1790

ACT ONE  New York—1790

Scene 1: The presidential mansion

Scene 2: A smithy of an inn on the outskirts of New York

ACT TWO  Philadelphia—1791–1793

Scene 1: Hamilton’s home

Scene 2: Jefferson’s rooms

Scene 3: The same. A few days later

ACT THREE  Washington—1801

Scene 1: Jefferson’s rooms at Conrad’s boardinghouse

Scene 2: The Senate Chamber
PROLOGUE

1790. A section of the deck of a schooner. A star-lit night, wind in the sails, rushing water, the creak of tackle.

A middle-aged man and a girl lean on the ship’s rail and gaze out over the ocean: Jefferson and his daughter Patsy. He is tall and thin, his face too sensitive, a gentleness almost womanish written on it. He has dispensed with the wig of the period. His hair, ruffled by the winds, is reddish, streaked with gray. The girl is in her late teens, vibrant, lithe, handsome. Above them a helmsman, in shadow, steers the ship.

The captain approaches them.

Captain: Evening, sir.
Jefferson: Good evening, Captain.
Patsy: Are we nearing land, Captain?
Captain: If we hold to our course. Gittin’ impatient? Patsy laughs.
Jefferson: Tell me, does the voyage home always take forever?
Captain: Longer’n that, sometime. Looks at the sky. May blow up a bit, sir.
Better think a goin’ below. He salutes, goes off. Patsy and Jefferson stare out over the ocean.
Patsy: I wonder will the house be the way I remember it.
Jefferson: Not as large, perhaps. You were only a little lady when we left.
Patsy: How long ago that seems!
Jefferson: Doesn’t it?
Patsy: It’s odd. Now that we’re coming home again, all those years in Paris suddenly seem so unreal, don’t they, Papa?
Jefferson: Yes.
She sighs. Jefferson looks at her, smiles.
Patsy: Are we going to New York first?
Jefferson, shakes his head: Direct to Monticello.
Patsy: I thought you might want to see President Washington at once.
Jefferson: We’ll go home first and arrange your wedding.
Patsy: Won’t the president be waiting your answer?
Jefferson: Not particularly—no. Pause.
Patsy: Papa?
Jefferson: Yes, dear?
Patsy: I’ve been wondering.
Jefferson: What?
Patsy: Do you think we should put it off? My wedding?
Jefferson: Put it off?
Sidney Kingsley (in uniform) viewing the statue of Thomas Jefferson with sculptor Rudolph Evans. Courtesy of Sidney Kingsley.

PATSY: If you accept the president's offer, you'll have to live in New York. You'll be alone for the first time in your life. You'll be utterly miserable. I know you too well.

JEFFERSON: But I have no intention of accepting.

PATSY: You haven't?

JEFFERSON: He's given me the option of refusal. And I certainly mean to take advantage of it.
Patsy, vastly relieved: Why didn't you tell me?

Jefferson: It never occurred to me. Pause. You see, dearest, I discovered a long time ago that Nature didn't make me for public office. I accepted the French post only because—at the time—your mother's death had left me so blank. . . . I fancied a change of scene would . . . He breaks off.

Patsy: I know, Father. A long pause as they both stare into space. Strange out there.

Jefferson: Time and space seem to disappear.

Patsy: I wish she were waiting for us at home.

Jefferson: Your mother?

Patsy: Yes. I never think of Monticello without thinking of her. She used to love to tell me about your wedding night.

Jefferson: Did she?
PATSY: In the garden cottage, midst such a clutter of your drawings and your books and your inventions, you could hardly move about.

JEFFERSON, smiles: That's right.

PATSY: And how you lit a fire, and found half a bottle of wine a workman had left behind some books. And mother played the pianoforte and you your violin, and you sang old songs. The wind rises. JEFFERSON draws his cloak tighter.

JEFFERSON: It is blowing up a bit. Excuse me. He starts off.

PATSY: Where are you going?

JEFFERSON: I want to take a look at your sister.

PATSY: She's asleep, Father.

JEFFERSON: She'll have kicked off her blanket. She might catch a chill. We don't want her coming home with the sniffles. He goes off.

PATSY, calls after him: Father!

JEFFERSON, off: Yes?

PATSY: I'll go. You wait here.

JEFFERSON: All right, dear. Reenters.

PATSY: I'll be right back.

PATSY goes. JEFFERSON stares off toward the horizon. The hypnotic surge of the water... The moonlight fades until he and the ship become a single silhouette in the night. Soft music dimly heard... Slowly, dancing as if on the ocean, the exterior of an enchanting house materializes. Monticello! Snow is falling and has piled deep around it.

Laughter is heard offstage. TOM JEFFERSON, a young man, and MARTHA, a young woman, radiantly beautiful, appear, shaking the snow off their cloaks.

MARTHA: Was there ever such a wedding night? I declare, Tom Jefferson, those last few miles the horses fairly flew through the snow.

JEFFERSON, points to the house: There it is, Martha.

MARTHA turns, gasps.

MARTHA: Oh, Tom!

JEFFERSON: You like it?

MARTHA: I never dreamed it would... You really designed this, yourself?

JEFFERSON: For you, Martha. Takes her hand.

MARTHA: It's incredibly lovely.

JEFFERSON: Your hand is like ice. Come!

MARTHA: No! I want to stand here and look at it a minute more. Please!

JEFFERSON: It'll be ready for us to move into by April. Till then we'll use the garden cottage. Apologetically. It's only one room.

MARTHA, laughs: Like a couple of dormice. We won't stir till spring. Looks about, enchanted. Points offstage. Your Blue Ridge Mountains are out there?
JEFFERSON, nods: There's one peak, Martha, the sun tips with pure gold. And from here Nature spreads a magic carpet below—rocks, rivers, mountains, forests . . .

MARTHA: I can't wait for morning.

JEFFERSON: When stormy weather's brewing, you can look down into her workshop and see her fabricating clouds and hail and snow and lightning—at your feet.

MARTHA: Tom, dearest?

JEFFERSON: Yes, Martha?

MARTHA: I can't tell you what you've done for me.

JEFFERSON: What I've done for you?

MARTHA: Before I met you, circumstances and the intolerance of little men had begun to make me lose faith. The earth had begun to shrink. Living had become something quite unimportant. Then, the night we met, after the gay chatter, when you began to talk gravely, I suddenly fell in love, not only with you. I fell in love with the possibilities of the whole race of man. She stops short. He is gazing at her, laughing.

Now, what are you laughing at, Mr. Jefferson?

JEFFERSON: If I live to be a thousand and close my eyes—this is the way I'll see you, my love. With snow on your face and your eyes shining!

MARTHA: Oh, Tom, I'm only trying to say I'm happy.

JEFFERSON: Are you?

MARTHA: And I want to be bussed. He kisses her tenderly.

JEFFERSON: "When we dwell on the lips of the lass we adore, Not a pleasure in nature is missing. May his soul be in Heaven He deserved it, I'm sure, Who was first the inventor of kissing." She laughs. They embrace.

MARTHA: Will you love me so forever, Tom?

JEFFERSON: Forever and ever—and ever . . . She shivers. You shivered? You are cold. The light begins to fade.

MARTHA: A bit!

JEFFERSON: Come, Mrs. Jefferson. He sweeps her up in his arms. We'll light a fire that will warm you to the end of time! He carries her off. Suddenly the roar of a rising wind. Men's voices far off.

CAPTAIN'S Voice, offstage: Port quarter!

Monticello fades and vanishes. CAPTAIN enters, approaches the dreaming silhouette of Jefferson.

CAPTAIN: Runnin' into a patch of ugly weather. Better go below, sir. The sudden roar of wind. The wheel spins. Watch the helm, Higgins! Bring the wind on the port quarter!

Another vision appears in space. Young Jefferson, seated at a desk, a manuscript before him. As the voices are heard, he looks from one antagonist to another.

First Voice: Georgia votes nay.

Second Voice: This document is a mass of glittering generalities.

Third Voice: Carolina votes nay. I move to strike out the clause condemning the slave traffic. It has no place here. Georgia and Carolina object.

Fourth Voice: Motion to strike out clause condemning the slave traffic.

Hands! For? Jefferson looks about, dismayed, counting the votes.

Against? Jefferson raises his hand. Motion carried. You will please strike out that clause. Jefferson bitterly scratches out the offending clause.

George Read’s Voice: That second sentence. Don’t like it.

Jefferson: But this is the heart of it, man. Are we going to have to creep up on liberty, inch by inch?

Voice: Where does this lead? No wonder we’re driving all our men of property into the arms of the loyalists.

Jefferson: I was asked to write the declaration and I wrote it. I haven’t tried to be original. This is a simple expression of the American mind. Our people want this.

Read’s Voice: From a legalistic viewpoint...

Jefferson: The men who migrated to America, who built it with their sweat and blood, were laborers, not lawyers.

Read’s Voice: Plague on’t, boy! You want some precedent. Where can you show me anything like this in history?

Jefferson: Where in history do we see anything like this new world or the man of this new world? Where have we ever seen a land so marked by destiny to build a new free society based on the rights of man? Precedent?

Let’s make precedent! Better to set a good example than follow a bad one.

Read’s Voice: Are you aware, sir, of the consequences?

Jefferson, controls his emotion, rises, steps from behind the desk, appeals to the assembly: There is not a man in the whole empire who wished conciliation more than I. But, by the God that made me, I would have sooner ceased to exist than yield my freedom. And, in this, I know I speak for America. I am sorry to find a bloody campaign is decided on. But, since it is forced on us, we must drub the enemy and drub him soundly.

We must teach the sceptered tyrant we are not brutes to kiss the hand that scourges us. But this is not enough. We are now deciding everlastingly our future and the future of our innocent posterity. Our people have already
been fighting a year—for what? He picks up the document. For this. Let us give it to them—in writing—now. Now is the time to buttress the liberty we're fighting for. It can't be too strongly emphasized! Now, while men are bleeding and dying. Tomorrow they may grow tired and careless, and a new despot may find in the old laws an instrument to rob their liberty again. Now is the time to build a free society. Now! Not later.

READ'S VOICE: I'll debate this point all day.

JEFFERSON, fiercely: No member of this Congress is more eager than I to settle the business on hand and go home. My wife is ill and bearing me a child, and while I stay here she's doing all my work at home. I'm half mad with anxiety, but I'll stay on all summer, if necessary, to fight for this one sentence. Pause.

READ'S VOICE: Well—er—Read it again. Let's examine it again!

JEFFERSON, sits. Reads from the document, his voice rich with deep emotion: We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The Liberty Bell begins to peal. Young JEFFERSON's face is transfigured by an almost sacred light, which grows brighter, then fades and vanishes. Total darkness obscures even the shadowy ship and the dreaming silhouette of JEFFERSON. In the darkness the Liberty Bell peals louder and louder, then fades off—Soft, sweet, ghostly music . . . The image of MARTHA appears, smiling sadly. The dreamer on the ship becomes visible again. He reaches out his hand.

JEFFERSON, murmurs: Forgive me, Martha! It was such a price to ask of you. Forgive me! I wanted a happy world—for us; and, reaching for it, I lost you. The ghost of MARTHA smiles sadly and shakes her head. Oh, my darling, in every picture I ever painted of the future you were the foreground. Without you, there's no picture. There's . . .

PATSY'S VOICE, off: Father!

The ghost of MARTHA reaches out her hand, then fades and vanishes.

PATSY appears.

PATSY: Father! The light comes on slowly. The ship again. PATSY is at his side. Maria's all right, Father.

JEFFERSON: Hm?

PATSY: She's sound asleep—Maria.

JEFFERSON: Oh! Good. Did she kick off the blanket?

PATSY: Yes, but I tucked her in again. Tight.

JEFFERSON: Good.
PATSY: You were so deep in meditation. What were you thinking?
JEFFERSON: Oh—nothing, dear. Just thinking.

From above, the watch suddenly cries out, "Land ho!" The cry is repeated below. From above, "Two points to the starboard! Land ho!"

PATSY: Father! There it is! Do you see?
JEFFERSON: No. Where, Patsy? Where?
PATSY: That light! There!
JEFFERSON, peering off, his face working with emotion: Yes, yes, it's land!
   It's America, Patsy.
PATSY: We're home, again.

CURTAIN
New York, Spring 1790. The MacComb mansion on lower Broadway, the presidential residence. President Washington, tight-lipped and grave, is listening to scholarly, prematurely wizened James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, a short, handsome, young man of flashing personality and proud carriage. Colonel Humphreys, foppish and affected, stands by, his face a mirror reflecting Hamilton's lightning changes of mood.

Madison, vehemently: If Colonel Hamilton's treasury bill is reintroduced, Congress will kill it again.

Hamilton, dryly: Mr. Madison, I am tempted to seize your Congress by their separate heads and knock them together into a collective jelly.

Madison: What would that achieve?

Hamilton: Unity! Of some kind.

Madison: Yes, but what kind? That's the question.

Hamilton: You cry, "Speculation!" That's not the issue at all, and you know it.


Hamilton: You deny your South is afraid the North will profit a little more?

Madison: And will they? Will they?

Hamilton: That's beside the point. Yes, they will. What of it? He turns to Washington, pleading. The crying need of this infant government now is confidence in its financial policy.

Madison: Exactly. And is this the way to achieve it?

Hamilton: Question? Can the wise and learned congressman from Virginia propose any better plan?

Madison: Colonel Hamilton! Personalities are not the . . .

Washington: Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Thank you, Mr. Madison, for your views. Of course it is not in this office to interfere with the people's legislature.

Madison: Thank you!

Hamilton: But, Mr. President! You . . .

Washington: Congress must decide the merits of your bill.

Madison: Good day, Mr. President. Bows to Hamilton, who is almost bursting with fury. Colonel Hamilton.


Washington: Slow, Colonel. Slow but sure. That must be our political maxim.
Hamilton: I'm afraid I may have to resign.
Washington: Now, my boy!
Hamilton: I can't build a treasury out of thin air.
Washington: I know, my boy. I know. He hands Hamilton some papers.
Check these figures for me. He ruffles some other documents. These we'll go over this evening. Mrs. Washington is expecting you and your lady.
Hamilton: Mrs. Hamilton is confined to bed.
Washington: She is? Anything wrong?
Hamilton: On the contrary.
Washington: Another?
Hamilton: On the way.
Hamilton, laughs: Thank you, sir. I'll check these, now. Is there anything else?
Washington: No.
Hamilton turns to go. A Sergeant enters.
Sergeant: His Excellency's Ambassador to the Court of France, Mr. Jefferson!
Washington: Oh! Good! Show him in.
Sergeant: Yes, sir.
Sergeant exits. Hamilton wheels around.
Hamilton: Mr. Jefferson in New York?
Hamilton, suddenly very excited, to the president: Providence is with us. Mr. Jefferson could easily persuade the South to vote for my treasury bill.
I have never met him, so if you'd speak to him . . .
Washington: I can't do that.
Hamilton: Why not?
Washington, groans: Again? Must we go over the ground again, and again, and again, and again, and again?
Hamilton: It seems nothing but a catastrophe will make any impression.
Sweetly. But I am optimistic. I expect very shortly we will see a colossal catastrophe. He smiles ironically, bows, and goes. Colonel Humphreys follows. Washington stares after him, a shadow of a smile on his grim face. Jefferson enters.
Jefferson: General Washington!
Washington, rises: Mr. Jefferson! Welcome home. Let me look at you. The two men study each other. Six years!
Jefferson: Six. A long time.
Washington, sighs: Yes. How was Patsy's wedding?
Washington: Oh! You shouldn’t have. Goes to his desk, picks up a knife, slits the seals of the parcels and opens them.
Humphreys, entering: Jefferson, mon vieux!
Jefferson: David Humphreys! How are you?
Humphreys: Assez bien! Assez bien! Et notre charmante Paris? Comment va-t-elle?
Jefferson: Changed. Everybody in Paris now talks politics. And you know how the French love to talk.
Humphreys: Ha! Laughs—a high, affected cackle. Et la chère reine? Et le roi? How are they? Daintily pinches some snuff into his nostrils.
Jefferson: The king hunts one half the day, drinks the other half.
Humphreys, slyly: La! La!
Jefferson: The queen weeps, but sins on.
Humphreys: Ho, ho! Méchante...
Washington, opens his package, takes out some lily bulbs: By God! Lily bulbs!
Washington: And rice seed.
Jefferson: Italy!
Washington: Beautiful grain.
Jefferson: Look at the size!
Washington: Mm. Beautiful! Sit here! Moves a chair for him.
Jefferson: Thank you. Sits.
Washington, crosses to a cabinet, takes out decanter and glasses, pours wine: And you found Virginia?
Jefferson: Ah!
Washington: Mm!
Jefferson: Yes!
Washington: Crops?
Jefferson: Rye’s splendid. Wheat’s good. It’s going to be an excellent harvest.
Washington, sighs: So I hear.
Jefferson: Of course, my own lands are almost ruined.
Jefferson: Mine complained the rabbits always ate the outside row of cabbages.
Washington: Humph! What’d you tell him?
JEFFERSON: Told him to remove the outside row.
WASHINGTON, laughs: Good! He draws up a chair and sits close to JEFFERSON.
HUMPHREYS: Your Excellency, I believe you have an appointment. . . .
WASHINGTON, dismisses HUMPHREYS with a gesture: All right, Colonel Humphreys, later.
HUMPHREYS: Monsieur l'Ambassadeur! Your Excellency! He makes several exaggerated bows and backs off.
JEFFERSON, stares after HUMPHREYS, amused: Tell me, don't the little boys in the street run after him? WASHINGTON looks after HUMPHREYS, turns to JEFFERSON, nods gravely. JEFFERSON laughs. They raise their glasses.
WASHINGTON: The Republic! They drink. JEFFERSON sips the wine appreciatively, holds it up to examine the color. Recognize it? JEFFERSON nods. Excellent Madeira!
JEFFERSON: Patsy and I shopped all over Paris for it.
WASHINGTON: Mr. Adams is very pleased with the wines you sent him. But—er—He looks gravely at JEFFERSON. His daughter is disappointed in the purchase you made for her.
JEFFERSON: Mrs. Smith? Now, what did she . . . ? The Paris corset? WASHINGTON nods. It didn't fit?
WASHINGTON: No! He gestures with his hands, indicating the outlines of an ample bosom.
JEFFERSON: Oh, what a tragedy!
WASHINGTON: It's very pretty, too. Mrs. Adams showed it to Mrs. Washington. Pink ribbons. The ladies are heartbroken.
JEFFERSON: They mustn't despair. Tell Mrs. Smith to put it aside. After all, there are ebbs as well as flows in this world. When the mountain didn't go to Mohamet, Mohamet went to the mountain.
WASHINGTON, smiles, drains his glass, puts it on the sideboard: So Lafayette is trying to establish a republic in France?
JEFFERSON: Slowly, by constitutional reform. In my rooms in Paris he drew up the first bill of rights for France. The people are all looking to our experiment. It's a heart-warming thought that, in working out the pattern of our own happiness, we are inadvertently working for oppressed people everywhere. There's a great danger there, though. I toured France, incognito. Visited the peasants in their hovels. The poverty and ignorance! Appalling! If they should ever lose Lafayette . . . Shakes his head, finishes his drink.
WASHINGTON: Anarchy?
JEFFERSON: Yes.
WASHINGTON, sighs heavily: Yes.
JEFFERSON, *studying him*: Mr. President, you look tired.
WASHINGTON, *rising*: I'm not accustomed to this indoor life. I need activity.
JEFFERSON: Long walks. The best exercise.
WASHINGTON: It's not permitted. The dignity of the State forbids it, I'm told.

When we lived on Cherry Street, I couldn't go down the street without a parade. But I can tell you since we moved here to Broadway, it's a Godsend. Now, occasionally, I can steal out that door to the back yard, across the meadow, and down to the river.

WASHINGTON: What do you do down at the river?
WASHINGTON: Go fishing.
JEFFERSON: Ah!
WASHINGTON, *rises, fetches a dish of biscuits*: I've had two attacks of illness this year. I doubt if I'd survive a third. Oh, well, tomorrow or twenty years from now, we are all in the hands of a Good Providence. Try one of these biscuits.
JEFFERSON: Thank you.
WASHINGTON, *goes to his desk*: I'm organizing the ministers of the various departments into a cabinet to advise me. As our secretary of state, you're...

JEFFERSON: General Washington.
WASHINGTON: Mm?
JEFFERSON: In your letter you did give me the option of refusal.
WASHINGTON: You can't mean to refuse?
JEFFERSON: I must.
WASHINGTON: Why?
JEFFERSON: I've been away so long. I know none of the duties of this office. I may bungle it. I have forebodings.
WASHINGTON: We're all groping. This will be a government of accommodation.

JEFFERSON, *shakes his head*: I'm sorry. I want you to understand. Whatever spice of political ambition I may have had as a young man has long since evaporated. *He rises, places the half-nibbled biscuit on a dish.* I believe every man should serve his turn. I think I've done my share. Now I want to go home. I must complete my house. Twenty years it's waited. Patsy and her husband have come to stay with me at Monticello. The truth of the matter is, I've lived with my children so long, I've come to depend on their affection and comfort.

WASHINGTON: Tom, have you ever thought of marrying again?
JEFFERSON: No.
WASHINGTON: She was a wonderful woman, your Martha.
JEFFERSON: Yes. *Pause.* When I came home—she was in every room. *Pause.*
I've learned one thing. For me there's no peace anywhere else in the world but Monticello. You understand why I must refuse your offer?

_Humphreys enters._

_Humphreys:_ Excuse me, Sire.

_Washington:_ Yes, Humphreys?

_Humphreys:_ The theatre box and the guard of honor are arranged.

_Washington,_ dryly: Good.

_Humphreys:_ And I've discovered the ambassador of the sultan of Turkey is going to be present.

_Washington,_ with a notable lack of enthusiasm: Mm, mm.

_Humphreys:_ A suggestion, Excellency?

_Washington:_ Yes?

_Humphreys:_ Wouldn't it be advisable to return to six horses on the coach?

_Washington:_ I thought we compromised on four.

_Humphreys:_ When I was at the court of Louis . . .

_Washington,_ slowly, making a great effort to contain his impatience: Colonel Humphreys, I recognize the importance of these forms to the dignity of a state, particularly one so young as ours. Understand, I know nothing of these matters. I've never been to the courts of Europe. I'm just an old soldier. I leave the ceremonies in your hands. The impatience wears thin and he growls. But it seems to me four horses and that canary coach with the pink and gilt angels will be enough to impress even the ambassador of the sultan of Turkey.

_Humphreys:_ But, Sire . . .

_Washington:_ Four will do—that's final. He ruffles some papers, frowns.

On second thought, I won't be free to go to the theatre tonight. Cancel it!

_Humphreys:_ Sire, if I may . . .

_Washington,_ rises, thundering: Don't "sire" me! How many times must I tell you? By the Eternal! I am not a king! I am the elected head of our people. This is a republic. Can you get that through your skull? He controls himself. Wearily. All right! Go!

_Humphreys:_ Very well, Mr. President. He goes. _Washington_ sighs heavily.

_Washington:_ I was offered the crown.

_Jefferson:_ The crown!

_Washington:_ Twice. Pause. I don't want to be a king, Tom. _He crosses to the cabinet, takes up a pipe, fills it with tobacco from a jug._

_Jefferson:_ I know you don't, Mr. President.

_Washington:_ You've no idea. _He touches a taper to the flame of a burning candle._ Every eye is on this office. A number of our people suspect me. As God is my judge, I would rather live and die on my farm than be emperor of the world. _He lights his pipe, puffing angrily._

_Jefferson,_ pause: I know. And yet—since I've been back—particularly here
in New York—I find alarming yearnings. Our fashionable folk appear to
be looking wishfully for a king and a court of our own.
WASHINGTON: Yes. I suppose so. He sighs, exhales a huge puff of smoke,
extinguishes the taper. On the other hand, there is the equal danger of
anarchy. We came close to it while you were away! He puffs nervously at
his pipe. We walk between those two pitfalls. Our people don't take to
discipline. But, without it—we shall be lost. We've yet to see how large a
dose of freedom men can be trusted with. Tom, from the earliest days in
Virginia, you were close to them, you seemed always to understand them.
In this office I find myself far removed from direct contact with them. I
need your agency. I need their faith in you. This is the last great experiment
for promoting human happiness. I need the hand that wrote, "All men are
created equal." I can't let you go home yet! I need you here.

A long pause. JEFFERSON turns to the desk, pours back the rice seed he
has been fondling, turns to WASHINGTON.
JEFFERSON: It's for you to marshal us as you see fit.
WASHINGTON, goes to him, grips his shoulder: Good!
JEFFERSON: It's a great honor. I hope I can be worthy of it.

HUMPHREYS enters.
HUMPHREYS: Mr. President?
WASHINGTON: I don't wish to be disturbed. . . .
HUMPHREYS: His Excellency, the minister of the king of Spain is arrived to
pay his respects. It had already been arranged, sir. Just the courtesies!
WASHINGTON: All right. Sighs. Beckons to the reception room. I'll see him.
To JEFFERSON. You'll excuse me? It will be a few minutes. There are
some journals.
JEFFERSON, holds up his portfolio: I have my tariff reports to study.
WASHINGTON, escorted by HUMPHREYS, goes up corridor. HAMILTON
drifts into the room, some papers in his hand. The two men look at each
other.
HAMILTON: You're Jefferson?
JEFFERSON: Yes.
HAMILTON: I'm Hamilton.
JEFFERSON: The Hamilton?
HAMILTON, bows: Alexander.
JEFFERSON: Your servant.
HAMILTON: Yours.
JEFFERSON: I read your Federalist papers while I was in France. Brilliant!
You've given me a great deal of pleasure.
HAMILTON: Thank you. Hamilton looks at his papers, groans, shakes his
head, throws the papers on the president's desk.
JEFFERSON: Troubles?
HAMILTON, *groans again:* God! Yes. You have a pleasant voyage home?

JEFFERSON: It seemed forever.

HAMILTON, *smiles:* Of course. *He arranges papers on desk.* Have you accepted the secretary of state?

JEFFERSON: Yes.

HAMILTON: My congratulations. We must work in concert.

JEFFERSON: I'm such a stranger here, I shall lean on you.

HAMILTON: No, I'm afraid—it's—I who need your help. *Suddenly agitated, emotional.* Mr. Jefferson, it's enough to make any man who loves America want to cry. Forgive me! I really shouldn't burden you with this. It's a matter of my own department.

JEFFERSON: If I can be of any assistance . . .

HAMILTON: It's often been remarked that it's given to this country here to prove once and for all whether men can govern themselves by reason, or whether they must forever rely on the accident of tyranny. An interesting thought, Mr. Jefferson.

JEFFERSON: God, yes. We live in an era perhaps the most important in all history.

HAMILTON: An interesting thought! An awful thought! For, if it is true, then we dare not fail.

JEFFERSON: No.

HAMILTON: But we are failing. The machinery is already breaking down. *He snaps his fingers.* We haven't that much foreign credit. The paper money issued by the States is worthless. We are in financial chaos. *He paces to and fro.* The galling part is I have a remedy at hand. The solution is so simple. A nation's credit, like a merchant's, depends on paying its promissory notes in full. I propose to pay a hundred cents on the dollar for all the paper money issued by the States. Our credit would be restored instantaneously.

JEFFERSON, *worried:* Mr. Madison spoke to me very briefly of your bill last night. It seems there's been some speculation in this paper, and he fears . . .

HAMILTON: Madison! I loved that man. I thought so high of that man. I swear I wouldn't have taken this office—except I counted on his support. And now, he's turned against me.

JEFFERSON: Mr. Madison has a good opinion of your talents. But this speculation . . .

HAMILTON: I don't want his good opinion. I want his support. Will you use your influence?

JEFFERSON: You understand I've been away six years. I've gotten out of touch here. I'll need time to study the facts.
HAMILTON: There is no time.
JEFFERSON: Well, three or four weeks.
HAMILTON: Three or four . . . ? For God's sake, man, can't you understand what I'm trying to tell you? The North is about to secede!
JEFFERSON: Secede?
HAMILTON: Hasn't the president told you?
JEFFERSON: No.
HAMILTON: Unless my bill is passed, there is every prospect the Union will dissolve.
JEFFERSON: I'm aware there's a great deal of tension here, but . . .
HAMILTON: Walk in on a session of Congress tomorrow.
JEFFERSON: I see evils on both sides. A long pause. However, it seems to me—if the Union is at stake—reasonable men sitting about a table discussing this coolly should arrive at some compromise. He comes to a sudden decision. Have dinner with me tomorrow night?
HAMILTON: Delighted.
JEFFERSON: I'll invite a friend or two.
HAMILTON: Mr. Madison?
JEFFERSON: I can't promise anything. He's bitterly opposed to your plan.
HAMILTON: I have a way to sweeten the pill. The cost of living in New York has become so unreasonable there's talk of moving the capital.
JEFFERSON: Yes.
HAMILTON: It's already been promised temporarily to Philadelphia. Give me my bill and I can promise Madison the nation's capital will go to the South. Permanently. I was born in the West Indies—I have no local preference. However, for the sake of the Great Man, I'd like to see it go to Virginia.
JEFFERSON, pauses: Well, I'll bring you together, and sit at the table to see you don't shoot each other.
HAMILTON, laughs: Fair enough.
JEFFERSON, takes out his fan-shaped notebook, jots down the appointment: You see, Colonel Hamilton, we must never permit ourselves to despair of the republic.
HAMILTON: My dear Jefferson, if I haven't despaired of this republic till now, it's because of my nature, not my judgment. JEFFERSON laughs. Your address?
JEFFERSON: Twenty-three Maiden Lane.
HAMILTON: Twenty-three Maiden Lane. At seven?
JEFFERSON: Make it seven-thirty.
WASHINGTON enters.
WASHINGTON: You two gentlemen have met?
HAMiLTON: Yes. What impression did the Spanish ambassador leave with you?
WASHINGTON: Like all the rest. They regard us as a contemptuous joke.
HAMiLTON: Well... Looks at JEFFERSON, smiles. We shan't despair. Seven-thirty? He bows to WASHINGTON. Excellency. He goes.
JEFFERSON: Remarkable young man.
WASHINGTON: They call him the Little Lion.
JEFFERSON: Little Lion! I can see it. Picks up his portfolio. Shall I review my report on the French tariff situation?
WASHINGTON: Yes, yes, do.
JEFFERSON: Just before I left France, I had conversations with Monsieur Neckar on the matter of fishing rights. During the last year, some 23,000 francs... WASHINGTON heaves a huge sigh. JEFFERSON looks up. The president is staring out the window. Nice day out, isn't it?
WASHINGTON, distracted, turns: Hm? Oh, yes—yes.
JEFFERSON, grins: Have you a fishing pole for me?
WASHINGTON, looks at JEFFERSON, goes to a closet, takes out two fishing poles: How'd you know? Hands one to JEFFERSON. You don't mind, now?
JEFFERSON, laughs: I can't think of a better way to discuss the affairs of a republic.
WASHINGTON removes his jacket, takes an old one from the closet, calls gruffly.
WASHINGTON: Sergeant! JEFFERSON helps him on with the jacket. Sergeant!
Sergeant enters.
WASHINGTON: I'm not to be disturbed. By anyone. I'm in conference with my secretary of state.
Sergeant, knowingly: Yes, sir. Exits.
WASHINGTON, whispers to JEFFERSON: If Humphreys caught me in these clothes, I'd never hear the end. WASHINGTON removes his wig, sets it on a stand, claps on a disreputable, battered old hat, picks up his pole and some documents, opens the door, starts out, sees someone off, draws back, signaling JEFFERSON to wait. One of the servants.
JEFFERSON: Don't they approve of democracy?
WASHINGTON, looks at JEFFERSON, shakes his head sadly: No! He peers out again. The coast is clear, now. He signals JEFFERSON to follow him. Come! Stealthily, they exit.

CURTAIN
ACT ONE, Scene 2

Scene 2

The smithy of an inn in New York. Through the large open door, a glimpse of the courtyard of the inn. JACOB, the smith, is hammering out a horseshoe. MAT, his apprentice, is pumping the bellows. Burst of laughter and men’s voices from the inn courtyard. NED, the potboy, crosses doorway, clutching several foaming tankards.

JACOB: Pump her, Mat! *His hammer comes down with a clang.* MAT pumps the bellows. *The fire glows.* NED enters.

NED: Colonel Hamilton wants his horse saddled right off.

JACOB: He in a hurry? *Clang.*

NED: Yep.

JACOB: Leavin’ his party? So soon?

NED: Yep.

MAT: Why, they ain’t hardly started a-belchin’ yet.

JACOB: Fire’s gettin’ cold, Mat.

MAT: I’m a-pumpin’!

NED: Wants her saddled right off, he said.

MAT: We heard you.

NED, irritably: I’m only tellin’ yuh what . . .

MAT, sharply: Awright.

JACOB: Here! Kinda techy, you two, today. Ain’t you? Pause. *He looks at them both, shakes his head, hammers away at the horseshoe.*

NED, apologetically: Standin’ by, listenin’ to that Tory talk out there! Gets me mad.

JACOB: Git the saddle on, Mat!

MAT: Awright. *Fetches saddle.*

NED: Braggin’ about the millions they made in paper money! I keep thinkin’ of my sister.

MAT: And me! Don’t fergit me! Three hundred dollars—whish!—right out-a me pocket. *Laughter off. He spits.*

NED: Know what one was a-sayin’? “President” ain’t a good title for the head of the United States. Ain’t got enough distingay.

MAT: French words!

NED: ’At’s what he said. There are presidents of cricket clubs and fire companies, he said.

MAT: What the plague do they want? Royal Highness?

NED: Yep. That’s it.
Jacob looks up, a frown on his face.

Jacob: You mean that?

Ned: 'At's what they said.

Mat: Fer cripes sake! He goes. Just outside the door he greets newcomers—


Jefferson, to Madison: You tell my children they're to write me more often, will you, Jemmy?

Madison: I'll do that.

Jefferson: I want to hear about everything at Monticello from Patsy to Grizzle.

Monroe: Who's Grizzle?


Jacob: Afternoon, Mr. Jefferson!

Jefferson: How are you today, Jacob?

Jacob: Middlin'. I forged them fittin's you ordered. They're right over there on that tool bench.

Jefferson: Fine.

Monroe: Smith, my horse is limpin' on the off-front foot.

Jacob: Picked up a pebble?

Monroe: May have.

Jefferson: Looks to me as if she's sprung a shoe, James.

Monroe: Think so?

Jacob: Find out fer yuh in a minute.

Madison: Give my nag a good going-over too, will you, smith? I'm off on a long journey.

Jacob: Where to, Mr. Madison?

Madison: Home.

Jefferson, sits on a keg examining the fittings: Virginia.

Jacob: Oh! Nice weather.

Madison: Ideal.

Jefferson: The lilacs'll be in full bloom, and the golden willows and the almond trees.

Jacob: Not so early.


Jacob: That so?

A burst of laughter, offstage.

Madison: A festive board out there!

Jacob: Some a Colonel Hamilton's friends givin' him a party.

Monroe: Celebrating the passage of his bill, I suppose.

Jacob: Yep. He goes off.
MONROE, bitterly: Yes.
JEFFERSON: Now, James.
MONROE: Well, plague on it, Mr. Jefferson!
MADISON: I have to agree with Mr. Jefferson. *Ad necessitatus rei.*
MONROE: No matter how many fine Latin names you call it—"a pig is a pig."
MADISON: This was the lesser of two evils.
MONROE: You honestly think so?
MADISON, without conviction: I do. Yes.
MONROE: And you, Mr. Jefferson?
JEFFERSON, doubtfully: I don't know. I—hope so. I'm . . .

*Laughter offstage. MONROE growls in disgust.* JEFFERSON looks up at him, smiles wryly at MADISON, picks up the fittings JACOB has forged for him, examines them.
MONROE: You've seen the newspapers, of course?
JEFFERSON: Yes, I've seen them.
MAT, enters. To MADISON: Wants a feedin', your mare does. She's askin' for it.
MADISON: All right. Some oats, please. *Mat pours some oats in a bag.*
MAT: Senator Monroe?
MONROE, looks at his watch: Yes. It's her dinnertime.
MAT: Mr. Jefferson?
JEFFERSON, rises: I just fed my horse, Mat, thank you. A couple of carrots, though. So he doesn't feel neglected.
MAT, laughs: Got some in the kitchen. *Hands MADISON and MONROE bags of oats.* MADISON exits with bag of oats. MAT exits. JACOB enters, holding a horseshoe in his nippers.
JACOB: Sprung it, awright.
MONROE: Did, hm? Shoe her at once, will you, smith?
JACOB: Yes, sir.
*MONROE exits with bag of oats. JACOB puts the horseshoe in the furnace and proceeds to pump the bellows. JEFFERSON examines the metal fittings JACOB has forged for him.*
JEFFERSON: You've done an excellent job on these.
JACOB: They awright?
JEFFERSON: Good. You know your craft!
JACOB: Ought to. Twenty years a-doin' it. *JEFFERSON places some of the metal bits together.* Makin' another one of your inventions, are you?
JEFFERSON: A "convenience."
JACOB: What is it this time?
JEFFERSON, crosses to JACOB: A sort of closet on pulleys that will come up
from the kitchen to the dining room—carry the food hot and the wine
cold right in, without people running up and down stairs.

JACOB: Now, say, that's a purty good invention.
JEFFERSON: You think so?
JACOB: Told my wife about the collapsible buggy top you invented. Kinda
useful idea, she said. But this'll catch her fancy. What do you call this
here invention?

JEFFERSON, smiles: A “dumbwaiter.”
JACOB: Dumbwaiter? He puzzles it out. Oh, yeah! Gets it. Oh, yeah! Roars
with laughter. A dumbwaiter. Purty good. JACOB, chuckling, extracts a
horseshoe from the fire and begins to shape it on the anvil.

JEFFERSON: Jacob!
JACOB, intent on his work: Yes?
JEFFERSON: I need your advice.
JACOB: What about?
JEFFERSON: This money bill we've just passed.
JACOB: Oh! Looks up for a moment.
JEFFERSON: What do you think of it?
JACOB: Don't like it much.
JEFFERSON: You don't?
JACOB: Nope. Frowns, hammers the shoe.
JEFFERSON: Because of the speculators?
JACOB: Yep.
JEFFERSON: I see. Still, it's done the country considerable good?
JACOB: Mebbe.
JEFFERSON: What do your friends think of it, generally?
JACOB: Don't like it much.
JEFFERSON: I see.

Ned pokes in his head.

NED: Saddled yet? He's waitin'!

JACOB: Tell Mr. Jefferson, Ned. He's askin' about the money bill.
NED: A blood-suckin' swindle, Mr. Jefferson. He is suddenly all aflame.

Look at my sister! Her husband was killed at the battle of Saratoga. Left
her two little ones and some paper money they paid him. She's been savin'
that for years. Two months ago the speculators told her it would be years
more before she got anything on it, if ever. Got her to sell it for forty
dollars. Six hundred dollars' worth! 'N they got Jacob's savin's. Mat
enters.

JEFFERSON: They did?
JACOB: Nine hundred.

NED: From the Revolution. His pay.
ACT ONE, Scene 2

JACOB: That ain't what we fit the Revolution fer.
JEFFERSON, rises, restlessly: No.
MAT: I tell you it's gettin' time we . . . HAMILTON enters.
HAMILTON: Is my horse ready, Jacob? Mr. Jefferson! I thought I saw you in
the courtyard. I've some very good reports for you.
Ned exits.
JEFFERSON: Splendid.
JACOB: Mat?
MAT: She's ready. Exits.
JACOB: Your horse is ready, Colonel Hamilton.
HAMILTON: Thank you! Fine day, Jacob!
JACOB, grunts: Yep. Exits.
HAMILTON, to JEFFERSON: A little soured this morning, isn't he? Liver?
JEFFERSON, shakes his head: Speculators.
HAMILTON: Jacob? JEFFERSON nods. A shame.
JEFFERSON: And Mat. And the potboy.
HAMILTON: Why didn't they hold on to their paper?
JEFFERSON: Apparently they did. For almost seven years.
HAMILTON: Tch! Too bad. They should have had more faith in their gov-
ernment.
JEFFERSON: They had no way of knowing the bill was about to redeem that
paper. I'm very disturbed by this.
HAMILTON: You are?
JEFFERSON: Very. Apparently, a handful of speculators, many of them in high
places, have taken advantage of their knowledge of the bill to feather their
own nests.
HAMILTON: Oh, now! Don't paint it worse than it is.
JEFFERSON: There's a good deal of bitter talk.
HAMILTON: Idle gossip!
JEFFERSON: Hardly.
HAMILTON: The treasury can't ask every man who submits a paper note how
he came by it. At least in this way these people received something.
JEFFERSON: There must have been a means to avert this speculation.
HAMILTON: Look here—I don't quite understand your attitude. Burst of
laughter, offstage. If we want to develop this country we've got to create
great personal fortunes. Those men out there are building manufactories
and industry. They're building America!
JEFFERSON: Good. Let's encourage them! But not at the expense of the
people!
HAMILTON: You and Madison! The people whisper—you tremble. MONROE
and MADISON enter, stand silently listening.
THE PATRIOTS

JEFFERSON: That's as it should be, isn't it?
HAMILTON: I am determined this country's happiness shall be established on a firm basis. I think its only hope now lies in a moneyed aristocracy to protect it from the indiscretions of the people.
JEFFERSON: I see. And this bill is to lay the foundation for such an aristocracy?
HAMILTON: Exactly.
JEFFERSON: I wasn't aware of that. You said nothing of that to me. I must be quite honest with you. I regret that I have been made a party to your bill.
HAMILTON: Made? Made, you say? You've been in politics twenty-one years. Don't play the innocent with me! Are you dissatisfied with your bargain? Is that it?
JEFFERSON: Bargain?
HAMILTON: The capital of the nation is going to your state—not mine.
JEFFERSON: Oh, for God's sake!
HAMILTON: Frankly, these alarms smell of hypocrisy. One minute you say you know nothing of Treasury matters; the next you set yourself up as an authority.
MONROE: What do you propose, Colonel? Shall we scrap the Constitution at once?
HAMILTON, turns, sees MONROE and MADISON, murmurs, in disgust: The Constitution!
JEFFERSON: You supported it.
HAMILTON, flaring: I had no choice. I couldn't stand by and see the country go down in convulsions and anarchy. Pause. He controls himself. I must confess it's my opinion this government won't last five years. However, since we've undertaken this experiment, I'm for giving it a fair trial. But, be certain of this: while it lasts it will be an aristocratic republic. If any man wants a democracy, let him proceed to the confines of some other government. Good day, gentlemen. He goes.
JEFFERSON, to MONROE: My apologies. I was wrong. To MADISON. Forgive me, Jemmy. I shouldn't have asked you to compromise.
MADISON: Tom, we can't escape it. He's trying to administer the Constitution into something it was never intended to be.
MONROE: I have a statement from a man who swears that Hamilton gave him money out of the public treasury to speculate with.
JEFFERSON: That I don't believe.
MONROE: There are also some letters in Hamilton's hand.
JEFFERSON: Don't believe it! He's personally honest. I'll vouch for that.
MONROE: Will you at least confront him with these letters? Ask him to explain them?
ACT ONE, Scene 2

JEFFERSON: I can't.
MONROE: Why not?
JEFFERSON: Oh, for God's sake, James!
MONROE: You fight fire with fire.
JEFFERSON: I'm no salamander. Fire's not my element.
MONROE: His bill has made the fortunes of half the prominent men in the Federalist Party. It's a ring he's put through their nose. And it's clear enough, God knows, where he intends to lead them. You can't allow that. You've got to fight him. You've got to wrest the leadership of the Federalist Party away from him!

JEFFERSON, a surge of revulsion: If there's one thing makes me sick to death—it's the whole spirit of party politics. James, if the only way I could enter heaven was on the back of a political party, I'd rather burn in purgatory.

Jacob appears in the doorway, adjusting saddle.

JACOB: Your horse is ready, Mr. Jefferson.
JEFFERSON, looks at him, pauses: Oh, thank you, Jacob.
JACOB: Ready your horses, gentlemen?
MADISON: Yes, please.
Jacob exits.

JEFFERSON, staring after Jacob, his voice harsh and lifeless: You're wrong about the letters, James. For the rest, his bill has values. But it's hurt our people. Through it, he's created a corrupt squadron. Naturally, if he does try to pervert the Constitution, I shall oppose him. But I must do it in my own way. I'm not a brawler; I'm not a politician. Crosses to Madison. Say howdya to all my neighbors for me. Madison nods. The matter I spoke to you of . . . ? Hands a paper to Madison.

MADISON, nods: I'll tend to this first thing on my arrival.
JEFFERSON: Thanks, Jemmy.
MADISON: I know how important it is to you.
MONROE, looking after him: Blast it! This isn't the Jefferson we knew.
MADISON: No.
MONROE: The country's red-hot. It's being shaped, now. What does it need to wake him again?
MADISON: The tears Christ wept before the tomb of Lazarus.
MONROE: You talk of Tom as if he were dead.
MADISON, holds up the paper Jefferson gave him: He asked me to order a new stone for Martha's grave. Unfolds paper. Do you understand Greek?
MONROE: No. Translate it!
MADISON, translates: Roughly...

"If in the shades below,
The fires of friends and lovers cease to glow,
Yet mine, mine alone
Will burn on through death, itself."

MONROE: After nine years?
MADISON: After nine years!

Jacob and Mat enter, go to hearth.

JACOB: Horses ready!
MONROE: Thank you, Jacob.

NED enters. MADISON and MONROE exit.

NED, raging as he tears off his apron: I'll be damned if I'll serve on them any more! Know what they're saying now? Dukes and lords we oughta have!

MAT: Dukes and lords?
NED: Ay! The blood-suckin' swindlers!
JACOB: Pump her, Mat! Pump her!
MAT: What do they want to do? Make serfs outa us?
NED: Is that what we fought Lexington and Bunker Hill for? Is this the freedom my brother and my sister's husband died for? Where's your god-damn revolution now?

JACOB, between his teeth, grimly: Pump her, Mat! Come on, pump her!

MAT pumps. The forge glows, highlighting the taut and angry faces. JACOB hammers the hot iron with mighty, ringing blows.

CURTAIN
ACT TWO
Scene 1

_Hamilton’s home. Candlelight. Hamilton, Humphreys, and Knox are having coffee. Mrs. Hamilton is pouring coffee. Hamilton is opening a package of cigars._

_Mrs. Hamilton, seated on sofa: When I think of Louis and Marie in jail! Humphreys: I haven’t slept a wink since the palace fell. Dreadful! Did you read Fenno’s piece in the Gazette today? Mrs. Hamilton: I never miss Fenno. Brilliant, wasn’t it? Humphreys: Un chef-d’oeuvre! Mrs. Hamilton: Veritable! Knox: The situation seems to be growing worse, too. What do you think, Alec, of this French Republic? Hamilton: Dangerous. Highly dangerous. I’m particularly disturbed by the effect it may have on some of our inflammables. He places the cigars on a tray._

_Humphreys: You certainly lashed Mr. Jefferson on that score! Ma foi! Gave it to him. But proper! Mrs. Hamilton, to Knox: Sugar? Knox: Please. Mrs. Hamilton: Mr. Jefferson isn’t really one of these filthy Democrats? Hamilton: I’m afraid so, my dear. Mrs. Hamilton: Does he really believe every man is as good as every other man? Hamilton: Even better. They laugh. Humphreys applauds._

_Mrs. Hamilton: Cream? Knox: Please. Hamilton: And our people seem so convinced of it. They can’t wait to cut each other’s throats. Offers cigars to Knox. Try one of these. Knox: Yes. You saw it so clearly during the war. In the army. Hamilton: Army? He offers cigars to Humphreys. Colonel Humphreys? Humphreys, takes a cigar, examines it apprehensively: So this is one of these new “cigars”? Hamilton, crosses to table, sets down cigars, lights a taper: From the Spanish Islands. . . Army? It was no army, it was a mob. Only one man held it together. He holds the lighted taper to Knox’s cigar._

Humphreys, puffing away: Mm! Good! Good!
Hamilton, to Knox: I hope you like them, Henry. I've ordered a packet for you.
Knox: Why, thank you, Alec.
Hamilton: Not at all. Selects and lights a cigar for himself.
Knox: Yes. The Chief made an army out of a rabble, all right. There's no doubt of that.
Hamilton: Ah! But to accomplish it, even he had to resort to the gallows and the lash. As with an army, so with a nation. You need one strong man.
Knox: The Chief's getting old, though.
Hamilton: Exactly. Sometimes I lay awake nights wondering how we can ever hold this country together when he's gone.
Knox: Personally, I think it's his character alone that does it. I wouldn't give a penny for the Constitution without him.
Hamilton, sits: Well, it's real value is as a stepping-stone. Purring over his cigar. Wonderful flavor?
Knox: Mm!
Humphreys, wryly: A bit strongish. They laugh. He disposes of his cigar in tray beside chair. I agree with Alec. A monarchy would have been our best salvation.
Mrs. Hamilton: Only today I was talking to some of the ladies of our court on this subject. You go out in the streets. It's frightening. We're all agreed, the time is ripening for us to have a real king.
Butler, entering: Senator Monroe is calling, sir.
Butler: Yes, sir. Butler exits.
Humphreys, rises: Now, there's a country bumpkin! James Monroe. Pas d'élegance!
Knox: He's a good soldier! Fought in almost every important battle of the war.
Hamilton: The soul of a clerk, though. I can't abide that.
Humphreys: He was, you know. He was a clerk in Jefferson's law office ten years ago.
Hamilton: Still is, as far as I'm concerned. They laugh. I'll wager ten to one he's here on some errand for Mr. Jefferson! Mark! You'll see!
Butler enters.
Butler: Colonel Monroe.
Monroe, enters, bows: Gentlemen! Colonel Hamilton.
Knox rises, bows briefly, and sits again.
Hamilton: Colonel Monroe. This is an unexpected pleasure. You've met my lady.
ACT TWO, Scene 1

MONROE: Mrs. Hamilton. He bows. I was reluctant to intrude on you in your home.

HAMILTON, crosses to pick up tray of cigars: Quite all right.

MONROE: However, I've been trying to make an appointment with you at your office for several weeks.

HAMILTON, crosses to MONROE, offers him cigars: My office has been so busy... The new taxes. Cigar?

MONROE: No, thanks.

HAMILTON: From the Spanish Islands.

MONROE: No, thanks. I should like to speak with you alone, if I may.

MRS. HAMILTON: My dear, it sounds ominous.

KNOX, rises: Well—er...

HUMPHREYS: I have an engagement with my wig-maker.

HAMILTON, restrains them: No. Stay, gentlemen. Pray. To MONROE. What's on your mind?

MONROE, grimly: I said alone.

HAMILTON, curbs his annoyance, smiles: I'm sorry. I've had an exhausting day. I refuse to discuss business now. I'll see you at my office. Tomorrow at four-thirty, if you wish.

MONROE: I'm seeing the president at four.

HAMILTON: Next week, perhaps.

MONROE: I'm seeing him on a matter that concerns you.

HAMILTON: Me? Indeed! Well, I wish you luck. You're sure you won't have one of these cigars—to smoke on the way?

MONROE: No, thanks.

HAMILTON: You'll excuse us, I'm sure. To BUTLER, who is waiting at the door. Chandler!

BUTLER, steps forward: Yes, sir.

MONROE: Very well. I have some papers I intend to submit to the president. I wanted to give you a chance to explain.

HAMILTON: Give me a chance to...? I don't like your tone. I don't like it at all.

MONROE: I think you should be informed. There have been charges leveled against you.

HAMILTON: What charges?

MONROE: Of appropriating Treasury funds.

HAMILTON: What? Moves toward MONROE. You dare to come into my house and accuse me of...?

MONROE: I'm not accusing you. I'm inquiring into the facts.

HAMILTON: General Knox, will you act as my second?

KNOX: Your servant.
HAMILTON: Sir, you will name your friend to this gentleman. They can arrange weapons, time, and place. Good night.
MONROE: I'll be very happy to oblige you.
HAMILTON, to Servant: Show him out.
MONROE, takes some letters out of his pocket: But I must first demand you explain these letters. . .
HAMILTON, raging—moves down, facing MONROE: Any man who dares call me thief . . .
MONROE: To Mr. Reynolds.
HAMILTON, stops short: Reynolds?
MONROE: Yes.
HAMILTON: I see. May I . . .? He puts out his hand. MONROE gives him one of the letters. He glances at it, returns it.
MONROE: Is that your writing?
HAMILTON: It is. This puts the matter on a different footing. I have no objection to a fair inquiry. And I think you are entitled to a frank answer.
KNOX: We'll go, Alec. Knox starts to go, Hamilton restrains him.
HAMILTON: I want you as a witness to this.
KNOX: Of course.
HAMILTON, to MONROE: If you will be at my office tomorrow evening, I . . .
MONROE, stubbornly: I'm seeing the president at four.
HAMILTON: In the morning, then. It happens, fortunately, I can supply you with all the letters and documents in this instance.
MONROE: Mr. Reynolds charges you gave him money from the public treasuries to speculate with in your behalf.
HAMILTON: Where is Mr. Reynolds now?
MONROE: I've no idea.
HAMILTON: He's in jail. Subornation of perjury in a fraud case. You take the word of such a character?
MONROE: Did you give him this money?
HAMILTON: I did. But it was my own.
MONROE: And why did you give money to such a character? A long pause.
HAMILTON: He was blackmailing me.
MRS. HAMILTON: Alec!
MONROE: What for?
HAMILTON: A personal matter which has nothing to do with the Treasury. I'll prove that to your full satisfaction.
MONROE: Under any circumstances, I shall ask for an accounting to Congress.
HAMILTON: As a senator, that is your privilege. And I shall oblige you. I will invite all America to look into the window of my breast and judge the
purity of my political motives. Not one penny of the public funds have I
ever touched. I would sooner pluck out my eye by the roots.

MONROE remains stonily unmoved. HAMILTON's smile becomes cynical.

MONROE: At your office. Tomorrow at ten.

HAMILTON: Ten will do.

MONROE: If it's as you say, the matter will, of course, be kept confidential.

HAMILTON, ironically: Yes, I'm sure it will. MONROE bows, turns to go. Tell
him for me, Colonel Monroe, it would have been more manly, at least, to
have come here, himself.

MONROE: Who are you referring to?

HAMILTON: Who sent you, Colonel Monroe?

MONROE: No one sent me, Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON: No one?

MONROE: No one!

MONROE goes.

HUMPHREYS: Quelle folie!

HAMILTON: Henry! Humphreys! Will you gentlemen . . . ?

KNOX: Of course, Alec. We were just leaving. If there's anything we can do?

Anything at all, call on us. All your friends will be at your disposal.

HAMILTON: Thank you. It's not as serious as that, believe me.

HUMPHREYS: Ridiculous, of course. A bagatelle! When I was at the court,
there was such an incident . . .

KNOX: Come, Humphreys!

HUMPHREYS: Hm? Oh, yes, yes! Bows. Your servant, my lady. To HAMIL-
TON. Votre cher ami, Colonel.

KNOX, bows: Mrs. Hamilton! Alec! They go.

HAMILTON: Betsy, I tried to spare you this.

MRS. HAMILTON, rises: We'll go to Father. He'll help you, darling. I know
he will. You mustn't worry.

HAMILTON: It's not a question of money. Good God, Betsy, do you think I'm
an embezzler?

MRS. HAMILTON: I only know you're in trouble and I want to help you.

HAMILTON: Thank you, my dear. Thank you. He kisses her. You've been a
wonderful wife, Betsy. Far better than I deserve.

MRS. HAMILTON: What was this man blackmailing you for? What have you
done, Alec?

HAMILTON: I've been very foolish, Betsy.

MRS. HAMILTON: Please, Alec. Tell me!

HAMILTON: When I wooed you, do you remember I said I wanted a wife
who would love God but hate a saint?

MRS. HAMILTON: Don't jest with me now, Alec.
Hamilton: I'm not.

Mrs. Hamilton: What was this man blackmailing you for?

Hamilton: Philandering with his wife.

Mrs. Hamilton: Oh! I see. Turns away—sits, controlling herself. Who is she? Do I know her?

Hamilton: No. It was a game they were playing together. She and her husband. He suddenly appeared one night, claimed I'd ruined his life, and threatened to inform you, unless I gave him a thousand dollars. He's been bleeding me dry ever since. Now, he's gotten himself in jail, and wants me to use my influence to release him. I refused. This is his revenge. Contritely. Forgive me, dearest. I would do anything... He sits beside her.

Mrs. Hamilton: Let's not discuss that, Alec. The question is, what shall we do now to clear you?

Hamilton: My accounts will do that, Betsy. Congress will clear me.

Mrs. Hamilton: Oh! Pause. Good, then. She turns to Hamilton. Why didn't you tell me this before?

Hamilton: I didn't want to hurt you.

Mrs. Hamilton, suddenly rises, moves away: Then I wish to Heaven you hadn't told me at all.

Hamilton, rises: I'm forced to it, Betsy. Jefferson obviously wants to destroy my position as leader of the party. As long as these letters in his hands go unexplained—by insinuation, he could undermine belief in my honesty. I must be prepared to publish the facts, if necessary. He goes to her, takes her arm. Betsy...

Mrs. Hamilton, drawing arm away: Please, Alec!

Hamilton: You understand, don't you?

Mrs. Hamilton: Oh, yes.

Hamilton: Believe me, I love you.

Mrs. Hamilton, her indignation explodes with an icy blast: And slept with a harlot! Don't insult me, Alec! You never loved me.

Hamilton, gently: Why did I marry you?

Mrs. Hamilton: Was it because my father was General Schuyler?

Hamilton, flaring: And I the illegitimate son of a Scotch peddler? I married you for your wealth and your position! Is that what you believe?

Mrs. Hamilton, wearily: I don't know what to believe.

Butler enters.

Butler: Excuse me, sir. Mr. Fenno calling on you, sir.

Hamilton: Tell him to go away!

Mrs. Hamilton: Show him in, Chandler. The Butler hesitates. Show him in!

Butler: Yes, Ma'am. Exits.
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HAMILTON: Betsy, I want to talk this out with you.

MRS. HAMILTON, presses her fingers to her temples: I don't care to discuss this any more.

HAMILTON, takes her by shoulders: Listen to me, Betsy! You must listen... MRS. HAMILTON: Alec, please! She draws away from him. I don't care to hear any more, now. I'm—tired. As she turns and goes, her handkerchief falls to the floor. He stares after her a moment, sees the handkerchief, picks it up.

BUTLER: Mr. Fenno.

ENTER MR. FENNO, a dandified gentleman; at the moment, however, he is in a lather of perspiration.

FENNO: My dear Alec. I had to rush here and tell you. We have just received some shocking news. I—Fm trembling so, I can hardly talk.

The BUTLER exits.

HAMILTON, turning to FENNO, wearily: What is it, Fenno?

FENNO: The king and queen of France have been executed.

HAMILTON: They've...?

FENNO: Guillotined.

HAMILTON: Monstrous!

FENNO, sinks into a chair, mops his forehead with his kerchief: The mobs in France are utterly out of hand. Burning, looting, killing. A bloodbath! Unbelievable, isn't it? Simply unbelievable!

HAMILTON: I was afraid of this.

FENNO: Worse. I've heard ugly rumors here. I passed a house yesterday, and I heard a group of men down in the cellar, singing "Ça Ira"! Rufus King told me he'd heard open threats against us. Even against General Washington.

HAMILTON: I've no doubt of it.

FENNO: I fear this is going to spread like the smallpox.

HAMILTON: Yes. And who've we to thank? Jefferson! Jefferson!

FENNO: Oh, no, I don't think he would dare... HAMILTON, pacing furiously: I tell you, yes! The man's a lunatic. He's been encouraging our people to all sorts of wild illusions. Bill of rights! Freedom! Liberty! License! Anarchy! This is the fruit of his disordered imagination. That man will stop at nothing to achieve chaos. But there'll be no more of him here! I promise you. I will see to it. Looks at BETSY'S handkerchief, smooths it, a note of savage heartbreak in his voice. There's no longer any room in this country—in this world, for both me and that—fanatic!

CURTAIN
ACT TWO

Scene 2

The wild strains of “Ça Ira.” As the music fades away, the harsh, discordant voices of a crowd chanting it are heard.


A room in a house rented by Jefferson. A mist hangs outside the window. Under the window, on the table, a row of potted plants. On a large table in the center of the room, books and papers piled high; a vise, some tools, a machine in process of construction. A kettle of water on a Franklin stove. The noise of the crowd in the street faintly heard.

Jefferson enters, hat in hand. He goes to the window, looks out. The sound of the crowd fades. He strikes flint and tinder and lights an oil lamp. Its light only serves to reveal the cheerlessness of the room. He extracts a journal from his pocket, sits, studying it, frowning.

Jupiter, his body servant, enters. A Negro with a good, intelligent face.

Jupiter: Evenin’, Mister Tom!

Jefferson: Good evening, Jupiter.

Jupiter, goes about lighting the lamps: You come in so quiet. Didn’t hardly hear you. We have a busy day, Mister Tom?

Jefferson: Mm, hm.

Jupiter: Supper’s ready soon as you say.

Jefferson: I’m not very hungry, Jupiter.

Jupiter: But yuh got to tuck sumpin’ in yuh.

Jefferson: Later, perhaps. With an exclamation of disgust, Jefferson rises, throws the newspaper on the chair. Jupiter looks up, surprised at this unusual outburst. Jefferson walks over to the potted plants, examines them. Jupiter picks up the newspaper, looks at it quizzically, places it on the table. Jefferson examines the potted plants, nips off a few dead leaves.

Jupiter wheedles: Good supper. We got basted puddin’ an’ chicken.

Jefferson, shakes his head: Thanks. Picks up a little watering pot near by and waters the plants.

Jupiter: You just come fum one a dem cabinet meetin’s?

Jefferson, nods, smiles: Yes!

Jupiter: Mm, mm! Nods knowingly. Funny weather outside. Sticky! That yell faint hanging all over Philadelphia. I heard today ten white folk died o’ the fever.

Jefferson: More than that.

Jupiter: Don’t like it none. Turns to go. Jefferson notices Jupiter’s hand is roughly bandaged with a blood-stained handkerchief.
JEFFERSON: What's happened to your hand?
JUPITER: Oh, it's nothin'.
JEFFERSON: Let me look at it! Come here. He removes the bandage. A nasty gash. Sit over here! JUPITER sits. JEFFERSON goes to the stove, pours some water into a cup, selects a bottle of wine and cruet of oil from the cupboard. How did you do that, Jupiter?
JUPITER: When I do my marketin' this afternoon, Mister Tom.
JEFFERSON sets the cup, the wine and the oil on the table, opens a drawer, and takes out some cloth. He opens JUPITER's hand, examines it.
JEFFERSON: This is going to sting a bit. Tears cloth into strips.
JUPITER: That's all right, Mister Tom.
JEFFERSON, dips the cloth in the water and starts to clean the wound. He soaks the cloth with wine, dabs the wound. JUPITER winces: Hurt you? JUPITER stoically shakes his head. How did you do this?
JUPITER: Down outside Bainbridge Market. Just as I came out.
JEFFERSON: Yes?
JUPITER: Three men was talkin'. "Mr. Jefferson's a devil," they say. Colonel Hamilton tell dem you gonna bring the French Revolution here. Murder everybody. I don't like that. I told them that ain't true. "Ain't you Jefferson's nigger?" they say. They say they was gonna kill me. One of 'em tried to hit me on the head with a stick. I put my hand up. The stick had a nail in it.
JEFFERSON: Oh, Jupiter! Haven't you learned yet?
JUPITER: They talk bad about you. What I'm gonna do?
JEFFERSON: When an angry bull stands in your path, what do you do?
JUPITER: What I do?
JEFFERSON: A man of sense doesn't dispute the road with such an animal.
He walks around it. He smiles. JUPITER laughs and nods.
JUPITER: Yeah, I guess so.
JEFFERSON: What happened then, Jupiter?
JUPITER: Then a crowd came down the street, yellin'! Dey's a lot a crowds in de street, Mister Tom.
JEFFERSON: I know.
JEFFERSON, bandages the hand: Hurt? Too tight?
JUPITER, shakes his head: Dey talkin' bad about President Washington.
JEFFERSON: Washington?
JUPITER: Yes, Mister Tom. JEFFERSON frowns as he bandages the hand. Dat get me all mixed up. I know he fight for liberty. I remind me you tell me General Washington try to free my people.
JEFFERSON: That's right. He did.
JUPITER: I remind me, how you try, Mister Tom. I like to see my little Sarah free some day. An' I remind me how you say we gotta some day open all that land in the Northwest and ain't gonna be no slaves there. An' how we gotta git my people education, an' we gotta git 'em land, an' tools.

JEFFERSON: Some day, Jupiter. It's written in the book of fate. Your people will be free.

JUPITER: Mister Tom. Dat crowd. Git me mixed up. Git me all mixed up. I don' like it. Dey jus' gonna make trouble.

JEFFERSON: I'm afraid you're right, Jupiter. You see, the men who beat you—they're monarchists. They want a king here. The others—the crowd—they're mixed up. It's what's happening in France now. It's gone wild. Finishes bandaging JUPITER's hand. How's that feel?

JUPITER: Fine, Mister Tom. He tries his hand. Fine.

JEFFERSON: Don't use that hand for a while.

JUPITER: No, Mister Tom.

The bell tinkles.

JEFFERSON: The door-pull!

JUPITER goes to answer it. JEFFERSON picks up the wine, returns it to cupboard.

JUPITER, appears in the doorway, excited and laughing: Mister Tom! Looka here! Look who's here.

PATSY enters.

PATSY: Father!

JEFFERSON: Patsy? Darling.

They rush to each other and embrace.

PATSY: Oh, Father. It's so good to see you.

JEFFERSON: My dearest. What in the world . . . ?

PATSY: I wanted to surprise you.

JEFFERSON: It's a wonderful surprise. Jupiter, kill the fatted calf! Two for supper.

JUPITER: It's chicken.

They laugh.

JEFFERSON: Kill it, anyway.

JUPITER, laughs: He got his appetite back! Looka his face. You shore good medicine, Mrs. Patsy.

JEFFERSON: Where's your trunk?

PATSY: The coachman left it outside.

JUPITER: I get it right away. Starts off.

JEFFERSON: I'll fetch it, Jupiter. Your hand is . . .

JUPITER, holds up his good hand: That's all right, Mister Tom. I kin manage.

PATSY, goes to JUPITER: Your wife sends you her love, Jupiter. And Sarah.
JUPITER, stops and turns: Dey all right?
PATSY, nods: I've brought you some presents they made for you.
JUPITER: Thanks, Mrs. Patsy! It's sure good to have you here, Mrs. Patsy! He exits.

JEFFERSON: How's little Jeff, and my sweet Anne, and Maria? And Mr. Randolph? Here! Give me your cloak.
JEFFERSON takes her cloak, places it on a chair.
PATSY: Jeff has two new teeth.
JEFFERSON: Two? Wonderful!
PATSY: He's beginning to talk. Anne's growing so. You'd hardly recognize her.
JEFFERSON: Does she still remember me, Patsy?
PATSY: Of course. She's always playing that game you taught her—I love my love with an A. She's forever chattering about you. “Where's Grandpapa? When's Grandpapa coming home? What presents is Grandpapa going to bring me?”
JEFFERSON, chuckles: Mm, hm!
PATSY: Maria sends love, squeezes, and kisses. We both adored the hats and veils.
JEFFERSON: Did they fit?
PATSY: Perfectly. And the cloaks were beautiful.
JEFFERSON: The style was all right?
PATSY: Oh, yes.
JEFFERSON: And how's your good husband?
PATSY: Mr. Randolph's well, working hard. Doing the best he can with the overseer. . . . Is it always so close in Philadelphia?
JEFFERSON: This is very bad weather. A contagious fever's broken out here.
PATSY, looks about: So this is where you live?
JEFFERSON: Do you like my quarters?
PATSY: A little gloomy, isn't it?
JEFFERSON, laughs: You must be exhausted. A glass of sherry?
PATSY: I'd love it. JEFFERSON crosses to wine cabinet. Father! Coming here—the coach had to stop. There was such a crowd of people up the street.
JEFFERSON: The French ambassador's been haranguing them lately. There have been some disorders. This epidemic of fever here seems to bring a moral contagion with it. He selects several bottles, holds them up. Dry or sweet?
PATSY: Dry, please. She toys with a mechanical device on the table. What's this? Another "convenience" of yours?
JEFFERSON: That's a copying machine. Very handy. It makes duplicate copies of letters. I'll show you how it works.
PATSY, laughs: Oh, Father. You and your inventions! Sometimes I . . . Her
eye is caught by the journal on the table. She stops laughing, frowns, picks
it up, reads it. Her face sets in anger.

JEFFERSON, pouring sherry: Has Maria learned to baste a pudding yet? In
her last letter she said Aunt Eppes was teaching her . . .
PATSY: Father!

JEFFERSON: Hm? Turns, sees her with the newspaper. Oh! You don't want
to read that! Crosses to take it from her.
PATSY: Oh, my God!

JEFFERSON: Now don't get upset, dear!
PATSY: What sort of a newspaper is this?

JEFFERSON: The “court” journal. The snobs nibble it for breakfast. Here,
drink your sherry.
PATSY: I'd heard what they were doing to you here, but this is worse than I
could have possibly imagined.

JEFFERSON: It's very flattering. Especially that bit about the harem! A harem!
At my age! Pretty good. . . .
PATSY: I don't see any humor in it! You'll answer these charges?

JEFFERSON: Answer one lie, they print twenty new ones.
PATSY: Then what are you going to do?

JEFFERSON: Let's ignore it, dear, hm?
PATSY: Who wrote it? Who's Pacificus?

JEFFERSON: I don't know. It's a pseudonym.
PATSY, pauses. She looks at him, almost in tears; finally, very bitterly: You
must enjoy being the secretary of state very much to put up with such
abuse.

JEFFERSON: It's my job, dear.
PATSY: Job? Rises, walks to the window, agitated. Father?
JEFFERSON: Yes, dear?
PATSY: Don't you think you've sacrificed enough?

JEFFERSON: I haven't sacrificed anything.
PATSY: You haven't?

JEFFERSON: No. Pause.
PATSY: A few weeks ago I found a pamphlet Mother had written during the
Revolution to the Women of Virginia on the necessity for them— Bitterly.
—to make sacrifices to help win the war. I remember Mother so ill she
could hardly walk, doing ten men's work at home. I remember, after she
died, sitting on the cold floor outside your door, listening to you sob till I
thought you, too, must die. I remember hearing you cry out you'd sacri-
ficed her to the Revolution.

JEFFERSON, sinks into a chair: Patsy . . .
ACT TWO, Scene 2

PATSY: The morning and afternoon of your life you sacrificed. Wasn't that enough?
JEFFERSON: Patsy, dear! Please!
PATSY: No. If you won't think of yourself, what of us? A child of twelve and a baby of four, torn from our home, from all we loved, taken to a foreign land, seeing you only on occasion, longing always for home and security and . . . Why? For what? Is there no end . . . ?
JEFFERSON: Patsy, I beg of you!
PATSY: Don't you owe anything to yourself? Don't you owe anything to us?
I tell you, Father, everything at home is going to pieces. If you don't come back soon, there'll be nothing left. Nothing!
JEFFERSON, rises, in agony: Patsy! Will you, for God's sake, stop!
PATSY, crosses to him, overcome with remorse: Father! Oh, Father, I didn't mean to . . .
JEFFERSON, takes her in his arms: I know. I know.
PATSY: Forgive me.
JEFFERSON: Of course.
PATSY: I've been so confused and unhappy. I had to come and talk it out with you.
JEFFERSON: Of course you did. I should have been very hurt if you hadn't.
PATSY: It's the business of running Monticello and the farms. We try! Lord knows we try! But Mr. Randolph has no talent for it. And his failure makes him irritable. And I worry so. I'm afraid you may lose everything you own.
JEFFERSON: I see, my dear. I see. He strokes her hair. I haven't been altogether insensible to this. It's weighed on me very heavily, the trouble I put your good husband to.
PATSY: I shouldn't have said anything. I know what your work here means to you.
JEFFERSON, a sudden surge of bitterness: I have never loathed anything as much in my life. You've no idea, Patsy, of the rank and malignant hatreds here. Politics destroys the happiness of every being in this city! I'm surrounded here by hate and lies. Lately I've seen men who once called themselves my friends go so far as to cross the street to avoid tipping their hats to me.
PATSY: You, of all people! Why?
JEFFERSON: There are a gang of king-jobbers here who are bent on changing our principle of government—by force, if necessary. Since Mr. Madison and Mr. Monroe have left, I'm alone against them. I can't contend with them, Patsy.
PATSY: What of the president?
JEFFERSON: Only his strength and his stubborn purity oppose them. But he's old, and he's sick. Sits. I work from morning till night. They undo everything. This isn't spending one's life here. It's getting rid of it.

PATSY: Oh, my poor father! PATSY goes to him, kneels at his feet. He draws out a locket hanging around his neck.

JEFFERSON: Do you know, dear, my only pleasure? For an hour or so every evening I sit and dream of Monticello. I find myself more and more turning to the past and to those I loved first. Your mother... He opens the locket, studies it. She was a beautiful person, Patsy. She loved you all so dearly. Closes the locket. You're right, Patsy. If I hadn't neglected my duties at home during the war, she would have been alive today. It's true. I sacrificed your mother to the Revolution. And now I'm doing the same to you. Darling, your happiness is more important to me than my life. And, like a fool, I've been jeopardizing it. For the privilege of being— Rises, picks up the newspaper. —called in the public prints “lecher, liar, thief, hypocrite!” He throws down the newspaper. But no more! You mustn't worry, dearest. Everything's going to be all right. I promise you. I'm tending to my own from now on. Grim-faced, he takes down a portable writing-desk from the mantelpiece, sits, places it on his lap, opens it, extracts paper and pen, and begins to write furiously. Patsy!

PATSY: Yes.

JEFFERSON: Will you ring for Jupiter? The bellpull's there. Patsy pulls the cord. A tinkle is heard, offstage. I have a job for you tomorrow.

PATSY: Good. What is it?

JEFFERSON, as he writes: I want you to help me select what furniture and articles suit Monticello, and pack and ship them to Richmond.

PATSY: To Richmond?

JEFFERSON: I'll be busy here the next few weeks, but we'd better get them off at once while the shipping lanes are still seaworthy. He sands the letter, blows it, reads it a moment.

JUPITER enters.

JUPITER: Yes, Mister Tom?

JEFFERSON: You know where the president's home is?

JUPITER: Yes.

JEFFERSON: Please deliver this letter there at once.

JUPITER: After supper?

JEFFERSON, rises: No, now, Jupiter.

JUPITER: My supper's gonna get spoiled.

JEFFERSON: At once, Jupiter. To PATSY. We're going home, together. To stay, Patsy. I'm resigning. He places the open portable desk on the table.

JUPITER: You goin' home, Mister Tom?
ACT TWO, Scene 3

Patsy: Yes, Jupiter.
   *Jupiter stares at Jefferson.*
Jupiter: Mister Tom goin' home . . . ?
Patsy: Oh! I'm so happy, Father, I . . . The faint noise of a crowd outside.
   *Patsy breaks off, listens. The noise grows.*
Jefferson: The crowd again. He crosses to the window and looks out. This is good fuel for the Federalists!
   *The chanting of the mob suddenly becomes loud and ominous.*
Patsy: What are they chanting?
Jefferson: I can't make it out.
   *The chanted words: "Down with . . ." become distinguishable.*
Patsy: Down with—who?
Jefferson, as the last word becomes clearly "Washington": Washington? Wash—! *He and Patsy look at each other. A moment of shocked silence.*
   *He's all that stands between them and their enemies. Pause. Patsy! When all our names are sponged from the records, his will burn brighter, wherever men fight for freedom.*
   *Irritably, to Jupiter who is standing there as if rooted to the spot.*
Jupiter: All right, Jupiter. Run along! What are you waiting for?
Jupiter goes. Patsy looks at Jefferson questioningly. No, darling. It isn't going to make any difference. If our people won't deserve their liberty, no one can save it for them. I'm going home. He picks up the portable desk, slams it shut, and places it back on the mantel.

CURTAIN

ACT TWO
Scene 3

The same, a few days later. Most of the furnishings are now gone, leaving noticeably naked areas in the room. There are several bundles of books, etc., on the floor. Patsy is wrapping pictures and the more fragile articles in several layers of cloth, and packing them carefully in a barrel. Jefferson, sitting at his desk, is writing furiously, disposing rapidly of a great mass of documents piled before him. Clouds of smoke hang over the room, fed by several braziers.

Jupiter enters, his face sick with apprehension. He picks up a bundle of books, starts to take them out. The ominous rumbling of a cart is heard outside. Patsy, Jefferson, and Jupiter straighten up, listening.

Jupiter: De death cart! He goes to the window. It's piled full, Mister Tom. . . . He crosses to the braziers. Dis yellow fever everywhere! White
folks droppin' like flies, Mister Tom! He pours some nitre into the braziers. Fresh ribbons of smoke spiral up.

JEFFERSON, to PATSY: You hear that?

   PATSY stubbornly continues her wrapping.

JUPITER: I never seen nuttin' like dis.

JEFFERSON: Jupiter! Take Mrs. Randolph at once to Germantown.

PATSY: I shan't go.

   The door-pull tinkles. JUPITER goes to answer it.

JEFFERSON: Patsy! I'll pick you up there in a few days, and then we'll go on home together.

PATSY: I shan't leave you here alone.

JEFFERSON: I have work to finish.

PATSY: Then I'll stay, too.

JEFFERSON: You're a stubborn child.

PATSY: I come by it honestly.

Enter JUPITER and HAMILTON.

JUPITER: Mister Tom, you have a visitor.

JEFFERSON, rises: Colonel Hamilton.

HAMILTON: Has the president arrived yet? JUPITER exits.


   PATSY curtsies.
   HAMILTON bows.

HAMILTON: There's a fellow lying on the sidewalk, dead of the plague. JEFFERSON goes to the window. Not a pleasant sight. I sent my driver to fetch the death cart.

JEFFERSON: A bad business!

HAMILTON: Getting worse by the minute. Looks about. You moving?

JEFFERSON: Yes. You'll have to pardon our appearance. Sits, picks up his pen. Excuse me! I... Indicates his work.

HAMILTON: Quite all right. Please! Don't let me disturb you.

JEFFERSON goes back to his writing.

JEFFERSON: The president should have left the city immediately.

HAMILTON: You may be sure I ordered him out. The great man's a stubborn warrior, though. Can't budge him. Never could.

JEFFERSON concentrates on his writing.

HAMILTON glances at several magazines on a table near his chair, selects one with great surprise, glances toward JEFFERSON with uplifted brows, then, smiling mischievously: The Gazette?
JEFFERSON looks up from his work, searches HAMILTON with a cold glance, murmurs drily.
JEFFERSON: Yes.
HAMILTON: I notice an article referring to you. Have you read it?
JEFFERSON, stops writing, looks up: There is a pause. He goes back to his writing.
HAMILTON, smiles, enjoying the game immensely: Well phrased.
JEFFERSON: Brilliantly. And thoroughly untrue, Colonel Hamilton. Thoroughly.
HAMILTON: Oh, come now, Mr. Jefferson—you do well with the ladies?
JEFFERSON, writes on: So I see in the Gazette.
HAMILTON: When I read this article I . . .
JEFFERSON: Read it? It's commonly supposed, Mr. Hamilton, that you wrote it.
HAMILTON: It's written by some person called— Peers at journal mockingly.
—Pa—ci—fi—cus.
JEFFERSON, savoring the irony, smiles wryly: Pacificus. Peaceful! A proper pen name. Colonel Hamilton, almost since our first cabinet meeting—you and I have been thrown at each other like cocks in a pit. The cockfight is over. “Peaceful” will soon have the cabinet to himself.
HAMILTON: How is that?
JEFFERSON: Hasn't the president informed you?
HAMILTON: No.
JEFFERSON: I've resigned.
HAMILTON: Oh! I'm sorry to hear that.
JEFFERSON: I'm not. I'm very happy, Colonel.
HAMILTON, rises, moves to window: In that event, I rejoice with you.
JEFFERSON: Colonel Hamilton, you're going to your home in the country, now, to wait out the plague?
HAMILTON: Yes.
JEFFERSON: I, too, will be gone in a few days. We may never see each other again. Crosses to mantel, places portable writing-desk on it.
HAMILTON: Quite probably we won't.
JEFFERSON: I should like to ask you as man to man, without rancor or warmth— He picks up the newspaper. —is this fitting to the dignity of a minister of state?
HAMILTON, bitterly: Was it fitting the dignity of your high office to send your henchmen prying into my private life?
JEFFERSON: I never did that.
HAMILTON: You thought I would keep silent, did you? You thought sooner than risk my personal happiness I'd let you call me thief? Well! You see
what you've done? Congress has cleared my public name, and I'm all the stronger for it! I didn't run away! However, in your case, I think it wise for you to go home and sit on your mountain-top. The philosophic experiment is over. Your Democracy is finished.

JEFFERSON: You really think that?

HAMILTON: I know it. I knew it six years ago. The bellpull tinkles. My God, aren't the omens clear enough, even to a Utopian? What do you think of your people now? Your fellow dreamer, Lafayette, in irons, rotting in a German jail, his only refuge from the very ones he sought to free. At that, he's lucky. If he hadn't escaped in time, even now his head would be lying in the basket, his blood flowing in the gutters, running into a river of the noblest blood of France—for your drunken swine, the people, to swill in. I tell you—it nauseates me to the very heart. And now, the same rioting mobs here, and next, the same terror!

JUPITER, enters: General Washington.

WASHINGTON, enters: Gentlemen! He is getting very old. His face is tired and bewildered, but a bulwark of grim, stubborn determination. JUPITER exits.

JEFFERSON: Mr. President. Moves to WASHINGTON; takes his hat and stick.

HAMILTON: No asafoetida pad? Produces a spare pad and hands it to the president. In these times, Mr. President, we can't afford to lose you. I beg of you!

WASHINGTON: Very well. Accepts pad. Thank you! Sits down heavily, silent for a moment, as he broods, all the while tapping the arm of the chair as if it were a drum. The death cart outside rumbles by. More than two thousand dead already. This plague is worse than a hundred batteries of cannon. Sighs, taps.

HAMILTON: You should have left the city immediately, sir.

WASHINGTON: I think I almost prefer to be in my grave than in the present situation. Taps, sighs heavily. A long pause. What does it mean? Silence; taps. Incredible. Aren't men fit to be free? Is that the answer? Have you spoken to the French minister?

JEFFERSON: Yes. One can't reason with him. He's a lunatic! I've demanded his recall.

WASHINGTON: They're all lunatics. Lafayette fleeing for his life? Lafayette? And here now, mobs rioting! What does this mean? Pause. We must do what we can to help Lafayette.

JEFFERSON: I've already despatched a letter to Ambassador Morris, urging him to make every solicitation in his power.

WASHINGTON: I don't know if it'll help. I doubt it. WASHINGTON nervously picks up the Gazette, glances quickly at JEFFERSON. To HAMILTON, with
a touch of sternness. Do you mind waiting below? I should like to talk with you.

HAMILTON, glances a bit guiltily at JEFFERSON, then smiles ironically: I'll wait in your carriage. WASHINGTON nods. Your servant, Mr. Jefferson.

JEFFERSON: Mr. Hamilton.

WASHINGTON goes.

WASHINGTON: I shall have to speak to him again. He's very difficult. He's always been that way, though. Once, during the war, when he was my aide, he kept me waiting two hours. When I rebuked him, he resigned. Sulked like a little boy. Softens, with evident love of HAMILTON. Finally I gave him what he wanted—a command in the field. He was a very good soldier. Led his troops in the first assault on Yorktown. He's an invaluable man. Why can't you two work together?

JEFFERSON: Our principles are as separate as the poles.

WASHINGTON: Coalesce them!

JEFFERSON: It can't be done.

WASHINGTON: Let me be the mediator.

JEFFERSON: You've tried before.

WASHINGTON: Let me try again.

JEFFERSON: It's no use. Believe me. Neither of us could honestly sacrifice his belief to the other.

WASHINGTON, sighs, taps: Well, I'm ordered back home. Any messages to Albemarle County?

JEFFERSON, sits next to WASHINGTON: My best regards to Mr. Madison. And you might look at my new threshing machine. If it interests you, the millwright's in Richmond now. He'd be very happy for any new commissions. You get eight bushels of wheat an hour out of two horses.

WASHINGTON: Hm! I'll certainly examine it.

JEFFERSON: Tell Madison next spring we'll be planting our gardens together.

WASHINGTON: No, Tom. I'm afraid you won't.

JEFFERSON: Why not?

WASHINGTON, rises. Takes out a paper, lays it on desk: Your resignation. I can't accept it.

JEFFERSON, rises: I'm sorry, Mr. President. You'll have to.

WASHINGTON: Where can I find anyone to replace you?

JEFFERSON: I don't flatter myself on that score. I've failed.

WASHINGTON: Let me be the judge of that.

JEFFERSON: I've spent twenty-four years in public life. I'm worn down with labors that I know are as fruitless to you as they are vexatious to me. My personal affairs have been abandoned too long. They are in utter chaos. I must turn to them and my family.
WASHINGTON: And the good esteem of your fellow men?

JEFFERSON, *moves away*: There was a time when that was of higher value to me than anything in the world. Now I prefer tranquility. Here, for everything I hate, you ask me to give up everything I love. I'm sorry, no! I want a little peace in my lifetime.

WASHINGTON: I know. I know. I'm sick, Tom, and I'm getting old, and I catch myself dreaming of the Potomac and Mount Vernon. *He almost shouts*. Don't you think I hate this, too? Don't you think I yearn for the peace of my own farm? Don't you think all this—all this... *Controls himself*. There is a long silence. *He murmurs*. Peace in our life? Where...? *His memories turn back as he searches for the phrase*. Oh, yes... Paine wrote it. Was it in *The Crisis*? "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink..." *JEFFERSON sinks into a chair; unwittingly, the president has dealt him a stunning blow*. How that brings back the picture! As if it were yesterday. My men starved, naked, bleeding. I read Paine's essay. You know, it lent me new strength. I had it read to my men through trumpets. Nailed it on trees for them to read. It helped them. Gave them sore-needed courage. Do you remember the passage on the Tory innkeeper who was opposed to the war because—*He finds the phrase he's been searching for*.—that's it—"He wanted peace in his lifetime"? And Paine looked down at the innkeeper's children crawling on the floor and thought, "Were this Tory a man, he would say: If there must be conflict with tyranny, let it come in my time. Let there be peace and freedom in my children's time."

Yes. That's the answer, I suppose. The only answer. *Suddenly, desperately, he grips JEFFERSON'S arm*. Tom! The fabric is crumbling. Our Republic is dying. We must bolster it, somehow—some way. *Fiercely, a grim, stubborn warrior fighting a ghost*. He pounds the table. It must have a chance. It will, I say. It will, it will, it will! I'll defend its right to a chance with the last drop of my blood. *The fierceness vanishes. Again he becomes a tired, sick, old man*. You'll stay on a few days more? Till I find someone else?

JEFFERSON: Yes.

WASHINGTON: Good! You see, I'm like a man about to be hanged. Even a few days' reprieve makes me rejoice. *Sighs heavily, starts to go, turns*. I wouldn't stay here. Take your papers, go to the country. You can work there. *Bows. Mr. Jefferson."

JEFFERSON, *rises*: Mr. President.

WASHINGTON goes. Outside, the death cart rumbles by. *JEFFERSON, torn and tortured, drops back into his chair. JUPITER enters, pours more nitre into the braziers. PATSY enters, holding up a music box.*

PATSY: Father! Look! I found this little music box inside. May I... Father! You're not ill?
ACT TWO, Scene 3

JEFFERSON: No, Patsy.
PATSY: You look so pale. Are you sure, Papa?
JEFFERSON: Yes, dear.
PATSY: Can I get you something? A drink of water?
JEFFERSON: No, dear. I'm all right. Pause. JUPITER exits.
PATSY: May I take this home to Anne?
JEFFERSON: Yes, dear.

She turns a knob. The music box plays a tinkling melody.
PATSY: Anne will love it. Can't you just see her face?
JEFFERSON: Mm. Pause.
PATSY: Did the president accept your resignation?
JEFFERSON: Yes.
PATSY: I spoke to him in the hallway. He looks so old, doesn't he? JEFFERSON nods. PATSY shuts off the music box. Oh, Father, please! Please don't torment yourself so!

JEFFERSON, rising: He’s a dying man, Patsy. He’s dying. And, when he’s gone, they’ll take the reins. And that’ll be the end, Patsy. That’ll be the end of the Republic.
PATSY: Perhaps we weren’t ready for it, Father.
JEFFERSON, moves about, restlessly: If not here and now, where, then? Where will men ever have such a chance again? This was my dream, Patsy!

Paces about the room. These fermentations are a healthy sign. Our people are groping. They’re jealous of their rights? Good! They want a larger share in their government. Most of them today haven’t even the privilege of voting. It would take so little education to make them understand these disorders are not to their advantage. That’s where we’ve failed them, Patsy. It’s not enough to create the form of a Republic. We must make it work. We must see that our people get the right to vote. We must educate them to use it and be worthy of it. We must give them free schools, and universities, and a liberal press. Only an enlightened people can really be free. Till now, the genius of the common people has been buried in the rubbish heap. We must rescue that! I’m convinced of it! We must make war on ignorance and poverty. We must go into the streets and the squares and the smithies. . . .

JUPITER, entering: Mister Tom.

HAMILTON appears in the doorway.
HAMILTON: I beg your pardon. I didn’t mean to . . .

JEFFERSON faces HAMILTON. JUPITER exits.

JEFFERSON: It’s quite all right. Come in!

HAMILTON: The president asked me to speak to you. He’s greatly distressed.

JEFFERSON: Yes, I know he is.

HAMILTON: He asked me to make an effort to coalesce our differences.

There’s no reason why we shouldn’t.

JEFFERSON: You think we can?

HAMILTON: If you will only stop regarding the Constitution as something handed down from Mount Sinai.

JEFFERSON: I see.

HAMILTON: If we’re to work together, you’ll . . .

JEFFERSON: We’re not!

HAMILTON: Oh!

JEFFERSON: We are natural enemies.

HAMILTON: Well, I offered peace.

JEFFERSON: The wolves offered the sheep peace.

HAMILTON: You don’t flatter me!

JEFFERSON: It is not an American art.

HAMILTON: I am an American by choice, not by accident.

JEFFERSON: Yet you bring here a lie bred out of the vices and crimes of the old world.

HAMILTON: Lie?

JEFFERSON: The lie that the masses of men are born with saddles on their backs, and a chosen few booted and spurred to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God.

HAMILTON: It’s laughable! You, born to wealth and land and slaves, drizzling about the common people!

JEFFERSON: Search your own birth, Mr. Hamilton, and you’ll . . .

HAMILTON: Don’t say it! Trembling with rage. I must warn you.

JEFFERSON: Say what? That you as a boy were poor? That you came to this country and it gave you honor and wealth? I believe every boy in this land must have that opportunity.

HAMILTON: Why do you think I want the country strong?

JEFFERSON: It can only be strong if its people govern it.

HAMILTON: You think the peasants on my farm can make it strong?

JEFFERSON: There are no peasants in America.

HAMILTON: Words! What do I care for them! Call them yeomen! Call them what you will! Men cannot rule themselves.

JEFFERSON: Can they then rule others? Have we found angels in the forms of kings and dictators to rule them?
ACT TWO, Scene 3

HAMILTON: I've made my last gesture. Go! Run back to your hill! From here on, I promise you, you will never again dare raise your head in this party.

JEFFERSON: I hate party. But if that's the only way I can fight you—then I'll create another party. I'll create a people's party.

HAMILTON: Now it comes out. You want two parties! You want blood to flow! At heart you, too, are a Jacobin murderer.

JEFFERSON: That's another lie you believe because you wish to believe it. It gives you the excuse you need to draw your sword! I'm sick to death of your silencing every liberal tongue by calling "Jacobin murderer."

HAMILTON: Well, aren't you? Confess it!

JEFFERSON: Go on! Wave the raw head and the bloody bones! Invent your scares and plots! We were asleep after the first labors, and you tangled us and tied us, but we have only to awake and rise and snap off your Lilliputian cords.

HAMILTON: Very well. Let it be a fight, then. But make it a good one. And, when you stir up the mobs, remember—we who really own America are quite prepared to take it back for ourselves, from your great beast, "The People."

JEFFERSON: And I tell you, when once our people have the government securely in their hands, they will be strong as a giant. They will sooner allow the heart to be torn out of their bodies than their freedom to be wrested from them by a Caesar!

HAMILTON, bows: Good day, Mr. Jefferson.

JEFFERSON: Good day, Colonel Hamilton. HAMILTON exits.

JEFFERSON turns to PATSY: Patsy, this is a fight that may take the rest of my life. . . .

PATSY: Yes.

JEFFERSON: But I have to! I hate it, but I have to, Patsy. I want Anne and Jeff and their children to grow up in a free republic. I have to, Patsy.

PATSY: Of course you do. Rises. Crosses to JEFFERSON. Of course you do, Father. She takes his hand impulsively, kisses it.

CURTAIN
ACT THREE
Scene 1

The new city of Washington, 1801. JEFFERSON'S rooms in Conrad's Boarding House.

JEFFERSON seated at his desk, writing. His grandchildren, a little boy and a girl, playing on the floor at his feet. PATSY seated, crocheting. Outside, in the hallway, the excited babble of many voices. JUPITER is placing a tray on the desk. Prominently set on the mantel is a marble bust of Washington.

A knock at the door. PATSY starts up. JUPITER turns to the door.

PATSY: I'll take it, Jupiter. She hurries to the door, opens it. A MESSENGER hands her a message. A crowd of boarders surrounds him, asking questions.

MESSENGER: Twenty-seventh ballot just come up.

PATSY: Thank you. The crowd assails her with questions. In a minute. She hands the message to her father. JEFFERSON reads it, while she waits anxiously. JEFFERSON crumples it, throws it away, smiles, shakes his head.

JEFFERSON: The same.

PATSY: Oh, dear! She goes to the door. No. I'm sorry. Congress is still deadlocked.

The crowd in the hallway becomes persistent.

FIRST MAN: We heard Mr. Burr lost a vote to your father.

PATSY: That's not true, as far as I know.

MESSENGER, shakes his head: No. I told them. To others. I told you. He goes.

SECOND MAN: We elected Mr. Jefferson to be president. What's Congress fiddling around for, anyway? What are they up to, Mrs. Randolph?

THIRD MAN: Is it true the Feds are going to try and just make one of their own men president?

PATSY: I can't say.

Suddenly, a high-pitched voice is heard, and a little lady comes pushing through the crowd. She is MRS. CONRAD, the proprietress of the boardinghouse.

MRS. CONRAD: In the parlor, please! All my boarders. Downstairs! In the parlor! You'll get the returns there as soon as you will up here. Now, stop a pesting Mr. Jefferson! Give a man a little privacy, will you? Downstairs in the parlor! She enters, apologetically, in a whisper. Everybody's so worked up, you know.

PATSY: It's all in the family.
ACT THREE, Scene 1

MRS. CONRAD: Well, I can't have the other boarders disturbing your father at a time like this.

PATSY: Thank you.

A husky voice is heard singing “Outa my way.” “One side!” The boarders are tumbled aside. A man in frontier outfit, armed to the teeth, appears in door.

FRONTIERSMAN: Tom Jefferson here?

PATSY: What is it?

FRONTIERSMAN: Message from Governor Monroe of Virginia.

JEFFERSON: Here!

FRONTIERSMAN: You're Tom Jefferson?

JEFFERSON: Yes.

FRONTIERSMAN, hands him message: Governor Monroe said to deliver it to you personal.

JEFFERSON: Thank you! Opens it. Reads it. Sit down.

FRONTIERSMAN: Don't mind astandin'. Rid my horse hard all a way from Richmond. She's got a mean jog. Governor's waitin' on your answer.

JEFFERSON: No answer, yet.

FRONTIERSMAN: Nothing settled yet on the election?

JEFFERSON: No. You'd better stand by.

FRONTIERSMAN: Yep.

JEFFERSON: Mrs. Conrad, will you see this gentleman gets something warm to eat? Jupiter, will you saddle a fresh horse?

JUPITER: Yes, Mr. Tom. Exits.

MRS. CONRAD: I'll tend to it right away, Mr. Jefferson. Goes to door, calls. Nathan!

Voice, offstage: Yes, Mrs. Conrad.

MRS. CONRAD: Fix up some vittles right off!

PATSY: Perhaps you'd like a drink?

FRONTIERSMAN: Why, thank you, ma'am. Now that's a Christian thought. Patsy smiles, fetches brandy bottle. Mrs. CONRAD returns.

JEFF: Gramp! Play with me.

PATSY, pouring drink: Jeff, Grandpapa's busy.

JEFF: Come on, Gramp. . . .

JEFFERSON: Later, Jeff. I've a new game to teach you.

JEFF: A new one?

JEFFERSON: A good one.

JEFF: Is it like riding a horse to market?

ANNE: Oh, goody, Grandpapa! Shall I get the broom?

PATSY, hands the drink to the FRONTIERSMAN: Children! Go inside.
JEFFERSON: No, no. They don't disturb me. I want them here.

*Patsy beckons the children away from the desk, seats them in the corner by her side.*

FRONTIERSMAN, tosses down the drink: Hm! That washes the dust down!

A knock at the door. PATSY hurries to it. MADISON is there. Crowded behind him in the hall is the group of boarders. They are asking him questions. MADISON is saying, “That's the latest balloting. I've just come from the Capitol.”

MADISON, enters, worn, breathless, almost crumbling with fatigue: I've just come from the House of Representatives. I had to push my way here. The streets are jammed with people. I've never seen so many human beings.

JEFFERSON, rising: Jemmy, you look like a dead one.

MADISON, sits and groans: I am. The twenty-seventh ballot came up.

JEFFERSON: We just got the message.

MADISON: You should see Congress! What a spectacle! They fall asleep in their chairs, on their feet. Red-eyed, haggard!

JEFFERSON: Mr. Nicholson's fever any better?

MADISON: Worse. He's resting in a committee room. He has about enough strength to sign his ballot.

JEFFERSON: Who's attending him?

MADISON: His wife's by his side, giving him medicine and water.

JEFFERSON: He should be removed to a hospital.

MADISON: He won't budge. Insists he'll vote for you till he dies. I doubt whether he'll survive another night. **JEFFERSON shakes his head.** Tom, there's an ugly rumor going around. The crowds are getting angry.

JEFFERSON: Yes, I know. May be more than a rumor, I'm afraid. He hands MADISON a communication.

MADISON: Gad! How's this going to end?

MRS. CONRAD: I been talkin' to my husband, Mrs. Randolph, and we both decided the whole way of votin' now just ain't right.

MADISON: Agreed. Agreed.

MRS. CONRAD: Take my husband. He wanted your father for president, Mr. Burr for vice-president. Well, he should be allowed to put that down on the ballot instead of just the two names and lettin' Congress decide. Stands to reason, don't it? See what happens? We beat the Federalists, and then the old Congress, most of 'em Feds themselves, don't know who to pick. Deadlocked six days now. They might like as not go on being deadlocked four years, and we'll have no president at all. Now, I say, it's deliberate. Everybody's sayin' that!

JEFFERSON: They are?
MRS. CONRAD: Stand to reason. She nods vigorously and scurries off, having said her piece.

MADISON: We should have foreseen this difficulty. We certainly bungled the electoral system.

FRONTIERSMAN: Constitution's gotta be changed so a man can put down who he wants for president.

JEFFERSON: Well, it can be amended. That's the great virtue of the Constitution. It can grow.

MADISON: If we ever have the chance to amend it. I'm worried sick by this, Tom.

A young man, LAFAYETTE, appears in the doorway.

LAFAYETTE: Does Monsieur Jefferson live here?

MRS. CONRAD, appears: In the parlor! Down in the parlor!

PATSY: It's all right, Mrs. Conrad.

MRS. CONRAD: Oh, excuse me. I thought he was one a my boarders. She goes.

LAFAYETTE: Monsieur Jefferson?

JEFFERSON: Yes, young man.

LAFAYETTE: You do not remember me? Twelve years ago. Paris?

JEFFERSON: You're . . . ? Of course, you're Lafayette's boy.

LAFAYETTE, nods: Your servant.

JEFFERSON: I was expecting you. I'd heard you were in America. You remember Patsy? To PATSY: George Washington Lafayette.

PATSY: Of course.

LAFAYETTE bows and PATSY curtsies.

LAFAYETTE: She has not changed one little bit. Only more beautiful, if possible.

PATSY, laughs: He's Lafayette's son, all right.

JEFFERSON: He has the gift. And these are my grandchildren.

PATSY, proudly: My daughter, Miss Anne Randolph.

ANNE, curtsies: Monsieur Lafayette.

LAFAYETTE, bows: Miss Randolph.


The little boy makes a deep bow. LAFAYETTE smiles at JEFFERSON, who beams.

JEFFERSON: My friend, Mr. Madison.

LAFAYETTE: The father of your immortal Constitution? Bows. My veneration!

MADISON, drily: Immortal? It's running a high fever now. The next few days,
the next few hours, may tell whether it’s going to live at all, or die in hemorrhage. To JEFFERSON. Tom! I'm as nervous as a cat. I haven't slept a wink in three nights.

JEFFERSON: Lie down inside.

MADISON: No, no.

JEFFERSON: Go on! Patsy, make up the bed for Jemmy.

MADISON: No! I couldn't. Please! Just let me sit here. Sits.

JEFFERSON, moves chair for LAFAYETTE: We're passing through a terrible storm here.

LAFAYETTE, sits: I am sorry to come in the midst of all this, but as soon as I arrive I hurry to you.

JEFFERSON, to LAFAYETTE: Tell me! How is your father?

LAFAYETTE: He is out of prison now.

JEFFERSON: I'd heard. I haven't written him because things here, too, have been so bad these last years, my letter would never have reached him. Pause. How does he look?

LAFAYETTE: Six years in prison.

JEFFERSON: They didn't break his spirit?

LAFAYETTE: That they will never break.

JEFFERSON: No.

LAFAYETTE: He asked me to explain he dare not write. Bonaparte watches him. He is only free on—a string.

JEFFERSON, sighs: I had hoped, at first, Bonaparte would value the real glory of a Washington as compared to that of a Caesar. He glances at bust of Washington.

LAFAYETTE, follows his glance: When we heard he died, my father wept like a child. Pause.

JEFFERSON: A great man fell that day. America now must walk alone.

LAFAYETTE: Here—forgive me. This isn't the America I expected. This is like when Bonaparte came to us.

JEFFERSON: There is an ominous note in this dissension. You've sensed it. Our own little Bonaparte may step in with his comrades at arms and force salvation on us in his way.

LAFAYETTE, rises: That must not be. This is the message my father asked me to deliver. Tell Jefferson, he says to me, tell him the eyes of all suffering humanity are looking to America. It is their last hope on earth.

A knock at the door. JEFFERSON opens the door. A COURIER stands there.

COURIER: Mr. Jefferson?

JEFFERSON: Yes?

COURIER: Message!

JEFFERSON: Thank you!
ACT THREE, Scene 1

Courier goes. Jefferson takes message, opens it, reads it, becomes grave.

Madison, rises: What is it, Tom?
Jefferson: A group of the Federalists are meeting tonight.
Madison: To set aside the election?

Frontiersman: Like hell they will! Nobody's gonna take my Republic from me.
Jefferson, to the Frontiersman: That's right, my friend. He crosses to his desk, picks up the letter he has been writing, folds it. I'm afraid there's no time for that meal now. Will you see if your horse is ready?
Jefferson, seals letter. To Patsy: I think you had better plan on going home.
Patsy: Very well, Father.
Jefferson: I don't know how long this will keep up. I don't know how it will end.

Frontiersman returns.

Frontiersman: Horse is saddled and out front.
Jefferson, hands letter to him: To Governor Monroe, with my compliments.

Frontiersman: Yes, sir.
Jefferson: Give your horse the spur!
Frontiersman: Ride him like the wind, Mr. Jefferson. No fear! He goes.
Patsy: When do you want us to leave?
Patsy: So soon?
Jefferson: Please.
Patsy: There's going to be serious trouble?
Jefferson: I don't know, Patsy.
Patsy: General Hamilton? Again? Is there no end to that man's malevolence?

Lafayette: Hamilton? He looks about at a loss. But, during the war, he was my father's friend, too. My father often speaks of him.
Patsy: People changed here after the war, Monsieur Lafayette. The real revolution has been fought in the last six years.

Madison: And our people have won, Monsieur Lafayette. Through the ballot they've taken the government into their own hands. But now the Federalists intend to drag everything down with them, rather than admit defeat.

There is a knock at the door.
Patsy: They've turned President Adams completely against my father—one of his oldest friends!
LAFAYETTE: This shocks me. I cannot believe it.
PATSY: Do you know why he didn't write your father all these years? He
couldn't! They opened his mail! They twisted phrases he used in his letters,
and printed them against him.

_The knock is repeated._

JEFFERSON: These are things, Patsy, that are best forgotten.
PATSY: Father, there are men in the streets with guns. They're expecting
Hamilton and his troops. They say there'll be shooting.

_The doors open._ HAMILTON stands there. _A long, stunned silence._

HAMILTON: Mr. Jefferson.

JEFFERSON: General Hamilton.
PATSY: You dare . . . !

JEFFERSON: Pat! Go inside, please.
PATSY: Yes, Father. Come, children! _She steers the children off._


HAMILTON: Lafayette? You're his son?

LAFAYETTE: Yes.

HAMILTON: Of course. I knew your father well. He was my friend.

LAFAYETTE: He often speaks of you. He was yours.

MADISON, _picks up his hat and starts to leave:_ Gentlemen!

LAFAYETTE: I go with you, if I may.

MADISON: Come along.

JEFFERSON: You'll dine with us? _Lafayette nods._ JEFFERSON looks at his
_watch._ In twenty-three minutes.

LAFAYETTE: Twenty-three.

JEFFERSON: On the dot. Mrs. Conrad runs her boardinghouse along demo-
cratic lines. The early birds get the choice cuts.

_Lafayette smiles, turns to Hamilton, bows._

LAFAYETTE: Monsieur Hamilton.

_Hamilton bows. Lafayette goes._ JEFFERSON and HAMILTON survey
each other.

JEFFERSON: What can I do for you, General Hamilton?

HAMILTON: Nothing! But I can do something for you. I'm not going to
equivocate, Mr. Jefferson. My sentiments toward you are unchanged. I
still despise you and everything you represent.

JEFFERSON, _moves to desk._ Indicates a chair: Chair, General?

HAMILTON: Is that understood?

JEFFERSON: I think pretty widely. _Points to chair._ Chair?

HAMILTON, _sits:_ Thank you. _Pause._ They survey each other. You've grown
leaner.

JEFFERSON: And you stouter.

HAMILTON: Not at all. It's this waistcoat. . . . A few pounds, perhaps. _Pause._
Hamilton glances out the window. So this is your city of Washington. A
mud hole!
Jefferson: A few trees and some sidewalks and it will do.
Hamilton: The first day we met this was born.
Jefferson: Yes.
Hamilton: You remember?
Jefferson: Oh, yes.
Hamilton: The presidential mansion appears not bad.
Jefferson: Not bad.
Hamilton: Large enough.
Jefferson: Large enough for two emperors and a rajah.
Hamilton: Who's it to be—Aaron Burr or you?
Jefferson: Congress will decide.
Hamilton, rises: I have some friends in that body. I can influence this deci-
sion for or against you, I believe.
Jefferson: I'm certain of that.
Hamilton: Certain? I'm not. You'd be astonished, Mr. Jefferson, at the
number of gentlemen who, no matter what I counsel, would vote for
the devil himself in preference to you.
Jefferson: Yes. That's quite probable.
Hamilton: Not that I approve of it. I don't. I deplore it. In the matter of the
public good, men must consult their reason, not their passions. I believe I
can swing Congress over to you, if you accede to certain conditions.
Jefferson: I see.
Hamilton, moves to desk: One: I want your solemn assurance that you will
continue all my friends in the offices they now fill. Two: I want . . .
Jefferson, smiles, shakes his head: I'm sorry.
Hamilton: You refuse?
Jefferson: This time, no bargains. I appreciate your motives . . .
Hamilton, in a rage, shouting: Bargains? What puny channels your mind
runs in!
Jefferson: No need to shout, General.
Hamilton, pacing furiously: I'll raise the roof if I please.
Jefferson, nods toward the next room: My grandchildren . . .
Hamilton: Excuse me.
Jefferson: This is like old times, General.
Hamilton: Do you realize how dangerous this situation has become?
Jefferson: Yes.
Hamilton: I came here to compromise. I hoped to avert the more drastic
alternative. But the years have made you even more pigheaded, if possible.
I might have spared myself this trouble.
Jefferson: I couldn't enter the presidency with my hands tied.
HAMILTON: Don't concern yourself. You won't enter it at all! My friends are meeting tonight. You oblige them to act to set aside this election altogether and choose their own man.

JEFFERSON, grimly: They would be smashing the Constitution.

HAMILTON: Stretching it!

JEFFERSON, rises: Smashing it, I say. HAMILTON shrugs his shoulders, turns to go. Have you seen the crowds about the Capitol Building?

HAMILTON: A pistol-shot and they’d disperse.

JEFFERSON: Don't deceive yourself! Our people will not be "put aside."

_Hands him a letter._ From Maryland. Fifteen hundred men met last night. Resolved: If anyone dares usurp the presidency, they will come here in a body and assassinate him. _He picks up several letters._ From Governor McKean of Pennsylvania . . . From Governor Monroe of Virginia. Their militia are ready to march at a moment's notice. If you put aside this election tonight, tomorrow morning there will be blood in the streets.

HAMILTON: I am an old soldier, Mr. Jefferson. If you give us no alternative . . .

JEFFERSON: But you have an alternative. End this deadlock at once! Use your influence with your friends. I shall use mine. Make Aaron Burr president.

HAMILTON: Aren't you being whimsical?

JEFFERSON: No. I should honestly prefer that.

HAMILTON: So you want Aaron Burr to be president?

JEFFERSON: He's a superior man, energetic, sharp, believes in our people.

HAMILTON: God! You're gullible! I know the man. He despises your Democracy more than I. Yet he has chimed in with all its absurdities. Why? Because he is cunning, and audacious, and absolutely without morality—possessed of only one principle, to get power by any means and keep it by all.

JEFFERSON: That's an opinion.

HAMILTON: That's a fact. He has said it to me to my face. A dozen times.

JEFFERSON: He has sworn the contrary to me.

HAMILTON: Burr has been bankrupt for years. Yet he spent vast sums of money on this campaign. Where do they come from?

JEFFERSON: I don't know.

HAMILTON: What do you think has been the sole topic of conversation at his dinner table? To whom are the toasts drunk? Can you guess?

JEFFERSON: No.

HAMILTON: The man who supplies his funds, the man with whose agents he is in daily conference.

JEFFERSON: What man?

HAMILTON: Bonaparte.
JEFFERSON: Bonaparte? I can hardly . . .
HAMILTON, extracts some documents from his pocket and places them on the desk: Proofs, if you wish them. Burr is the Cataline of America. He'll dare anything. You may as well think to bind a giant by cobwebs as his ambition by promises. Once president, he'd destroy all our institutions. Usurp for himself complete and permanent power. Make himself dictator.
JEFFERSON: I know you have no faith in them, but do you think the American people would stand idly by?
HAMILTON: No, I have no faith in them. But they'd fight. I grant you that. There'd be bloody civil war! And that's all Bonaparte would need. He would swoop down on us—Slams his fist on the desk.—Like that! Long pause. JEFFERSON picks up the "proofs," studies them. Now you know my motive. I'm afraid, I'm profoundly afraid for the happiness of this country. HAMILTON examines the bust of Washington. Cerracchi?
JEFFERSON, looks up from the "proofs": Yes.
HAMILTON: Excellent! I've commissioned him to sculpt one of the Great Man for me. JEFFERSON looks up, sighs. Well? JEFFERSON lays down the papers. He is tired and confused. You've been duped, my friend.
JEFFERSON, smiles feebly: I suspected only you.
HAMILTON: Of what?
JEFFERSON: Planning to be our Bonaparte.
HAMILTON: When Washington died, I could have. Why didn't I?
JEFFERSON: Why?
HAMILTON: Burr asked me that question. Contemptuously. This may be difficult for you, but try to grasp it. I happen to love this country, too. I have fought for it in field and council. Above every small, selfish, personal desire, I want to see it peaceful and prosperous and strong. Triumphant. Well? Will you meet my terms? Pause.
JEFFERSON, miserably: I can't.
HAMILTON, moves to desk: My conscience is clear. I know how to proceed.
JEFFERSON: If you do this, it can only lead to the very thing you condemn.
HAMILTON, reaches for papers: Perhaps. Perhaps that is the only hope for us in a world of Bonapartes and Burrs.
JEFFERSON: Then what will we have gained?
HAMILTON: Good day, Mr. Jefferson. Goes to the door.
JEFFERSON, rising: I warn you, there will be bloodshed tomorrow.
HAMILTON: Oh, no, there won't. You see, I'm counting on you. You will prevent it.
JEFFERSON, with sudden newborn fierceness: You're wrong, my friend.
HAMILTON, pauses, turns: You'd condone it?
JEFFERSON, crosses to HAMILTON: I'd be part of it.
HAMILTON: You?
JEFFERSON, growls: I.
HAMILTON, returns, looks at him, surprised: You really mean it.
JEFFERSON: By the God that made me, I mean it. I'd open my veins and yours in a second.
HAMILTON: You amaze me.
JEFFERSON: Why? Isn't the blood of patriots and tyrants the natural manure for liberty?
HAMILTON: You've become a tough old man.
JEFFERSON: Who made me tough?
HAMILTON, laughs ironically: Then I haven't lived in vain.
JEFFERSON: That's right. HAMILTON is staring at JEFFERSON. Listen to me, Hamilton!
HAMILTON: This is a strange... 
JEFFERSON: Listen to me! I know you love this country. But you have never understood it. You're afraid of Bonaparte? Well, there's no need to be. Bonaparte will die and his tyrannies will die, and we will be living, and we will be free. You're afraid of Burr? If Burr tries any quixotic adventures, he will smash himself against the rocks of our people. You see, this is the mistake you have always made. You have never properly estimated the character of the American people. You still don't understand them. At this moment. There is a long silence.
HAMILTON: I confess it. I don't. Sits.
JEFFERSON, standing over him. Gently: This is not the way, Hamilton. Believe me. If you really love this country, this isn't the way. Our people who fought the revolution from a pure love of liberty, who made every sacrifice and met every danger, did not expend their blood and substance to change this master for that. His voice grows strong. But to take their freedom in their own hands, so that never again would the corrupt will of one man oppress them. You'll not make these people hold their breath at the caprice, or submit to the rods and the hatchet, of a dictator. You cannot fix fear in their hearts, or make fear their principle of government. I know them. I place my faith in them. I have no fears for their ultimate victory.
HAMILTON, wavering: I wish I had such faith. Shakes his head. I don't know. I frankly don't know. I find myself lost here. Day by day, I am becoming more foreign to this land.
JEFFERSON: Yet you helped build it.
HAMILTON: There is a tide here that sweeps men to the fashioning of some strange destiny, even against their will. I never believed in this—and yet, as you say, I helped build it. Every inch of it. Pause. He rises. And still, I must admit it has worked better than I thought. If it could survive—if...
JEFFERSON: It can. And it will. This tide is irresistible. You cannot hold it back. This is the rising flood of man's long-lost freedom. Try as you will, you cannot stop it. You may deflect it for a moment. But in the end you will lose. Try the old way of tyranny and usurpation, and you must lose. Bonapartes may retard the epoch of man's deliverance, they may bathe the world in rivers of blood yet to flow, and still, still, in the end, they will fall back exhausted in their own blood, leaving mankind to liberty and self-government. No, General Hamilton, this way you lose. Believe me. He crosses to his desk, crisp and final. I shall not compromise, General Hamilton. You do whatever you choose. I cannot compromise on this.

HAMILTON, holds out his hand. It is shaky: Since the fever took me, I can't hit the side of a barn with a pistol. Burr is cool as a snake, and one of the best shots in America. I've fought him for five years now. If I cross him in this—he will challenge me. I have no doubt of that. I am a dead man, already. But at least you are honest. I shall urge my friends to break the deadlock. You will be president. Your victory is complete.

JEFFERSON: There is no personal victory in this for me. I didn't want this for myself. I still don't. If it will give you any satisfaction, my own affairs have been neglected so long . . . In another office, with time to mend them, I might have saved myself from bankruptcy. As president, I am certain to lose everything I possess, including Monticello, where my wife and four of my children lie. Where all the dreams of my youth lie. No matter! I thank you—for a glorious misery.

HAMILTON bows, goes. JEFFERSON turns, stares at the statue of Washington.

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

Scene 2

The interior of the Senate Chamber.

JEFFERSON, hand raised, is taking the oath of office from CHIEF JUDGE MARSHALL.

JEFFERSON: I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

JUSTICE MARSHALL waves JEFFERSON to assembled audience. Nervously, hesitantly, JEFFERSON steps forward to the audience, looks about. His glance rests on PATSY, standing proudly with ANNE and JEFF. PATSY smiles and
nods. JEFFERSON faintly smiles. He turns to the audience, begins to speak in a voice hesitant and uncertain.

JEFFERSON: Friends and fellow citizens: Called upon to undertake the duties of the first executive of our country, I will avail myself of the presence of that portion of my fellow citizens which is here assembled to express my grateful thanks for the favor with which they have been pleased to look upon me. A rising nation spread over a wide and fruitful land, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye—when I contemplate these transcendent objects and see the honor, the happiness and the hopes of this beloved country committed to the issue of this day, I—I shrink before the magnitude of the undertaking. Utterly, indeed, should I despair if not for the presence of many whom I see here. To you, then, I look for that guidance and support which may enable us to steer with safety the vessel in which we are all embarked amid the conflicting elements of a troubled world.

This is the sum of good government. Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, a jealous care of the right of election, absolute acquiescence to the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of republics, from which is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and parent of despotism... Freedom of religion, freedom of press, freedom of person, and trial by juries impartially selected. These form the bright constellation which has gone before us and which has guided us in an age of revolution and reformation. The wisdom of our sages and the blood of our heroes have attained them for us. They are the creed of our political faith, the touchstone of our public servants. Should we wander from them in moments of error or alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain this road which alone leads to peace, liberty and safety. During the present throes and convulsions of the ancient world, during these agonizing spasms of blood and slaughter abroad, it was not strange that the agitation of the billows should reach even this distant and peaceful shore. That this should be more felt and feared by some than by others. I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republic cannot be strong, that this government is not strong enough. But would the honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government which has so far kept us free and firm, on the theoretic fear that it may possibly want energy to preserve itself? I trust not. I believe this, on the contrary, the only government where every man would fly to the standard and meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. I believe this the strongest government on earth. I believe, indeed, I know, this government is the world's best hope...

CURTAIN