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Cast of Characters

The Brightest Light requires a minimum of 7 men and 2 women to play 23 characters. About 20 named characters appear briefly. There are a few scenes where all available are used as a “crowd,” usually with individual speaking parts. At a minimum, 4 males and 2 females need to be cast for the ensemble.

AARON BURR (1756-1836), light-hearted and bright. Many things he says may read seriously, but are said lightly or ironically, until about Scene 17 when he perceives Alex to be a real personal threat. Goes from ages 20-48 in the play.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON (1755/7-1804), serious. Believes he is bright and good and right. Ideally, should be approximately same height and build as Aaron. Ages 18-48.

ROBERT TROUP (1757-1832), affable contemporary of Burr and Hamilton and dear friend to them both. Ages 18-48.

Other Characters/Ensemble

Male

REV. KNOX, middle-aged minister (native of Scotland)

MISTER CRUGER, Dutch merchant class

SHIP'S COMMANDER, American, from NYC or Boston

JUDGE, lower court judge, New Yorker

JOHN ADAMS (1735-1826), from Massachusetts, age 50-60

GEORGE WASHINGTON (1732-99), from Virginia, 65-ish

DR. C. D. COOPER, upperclass New Yorker

MR. REYNOLDS, lower-class New Yorker, 40s

ORATORS, men at Hamilton's funeral in NYC

JAMES MONROE, from Virginia, 40

OLIVER WOLCOTT, from Connecticut, 60s

NATHANIEL HAZARD, NYC merchant, 50s

Female

RACHEL, Hamilton's working-class Brit mother

THEODOSIA BURR, Burr's wife

HANNAH, tittering maid, from Philadelphia

ELIZA HAMILTON, Hamilton's long-suffering wife (NY)

MARIA REYNOLDS, lower-class Philadelphian, 40s

Production Notes

The scenes are not so much separate and distinct, but rather flowing one into another from 1774 to 1804. Many scenes take place in a pub or office or on a city street. Minimal set pieces are anticipated; best would be if the change of place could be indicated with a prop or costume change or slide on back wall. Some method of distancing is needed for the cameo characters that are memories. A bare multi-platformed thrust stage would work well.

An act break can fall after Scene 10. Total running time: about 2 hours.

Author's Notes

Some things we assume today might be confusing in a cursory reading. These include:

1) The capital city of the U.S. moved: it was located first in New York City, 1789, then a year later it moved to Philadelphia and remained there until “The Federal City” was finally ready in 1800. The new capital was not popularly referred to as “Washington” for some time.

2) Lawyers usually were individual practitioners who banded together on particular cases, depending on the need of each other's expertise. The principals in this play—Burr, Hamilton, and Troup—were all lawyers in New York City. There were numerous cases where they were either partners or adversaries. For a few years Troup was a judge in NYC. All three were involved in the lengthy LeGuen case for which Burr and Hamilton were partners.

3) The thread of dueling runs throughout *The Brightest Light* as constantly as it did in the lives of the people portrayed. In 1804, men still followed the centuries-old “code of honor,” and dueling was essentially a commonplace event. Many wanted dueling abolished and most states had laws that forbid it, but these laws were rarely enforced. Burr was, in fact, one of the first American duelists ever to be criminally charged. Slander laws, only recently written, were considered ineffective compared to the quick resolution available “on the field.”

4) Individuals were not nominated for a specific office (i.e. President or VP) in the first four presidential elections. The law was changed after Burr tied Jefferson in 1800.

5) Hamilton's reputation today was not what his contemporaries thought of him.

His eulogist (a longtime friend) sums it up best:

“I am asked to pronounce a funeral oration [for Alexander Hamilton]... He was indiscreet, vain, and opinionated; these things must be told, or the character will be incomplete, and yet they must be told in such manner as not to destroy the interest. He was in principle opposed to republican and attached to monarchical government, and then his opinions were generally known and have been

long and loudly proclaimed. His share in forming our Constitution must be mentioned, and his unfavorable opinion of it cannot therefore be concealed. The most important part of his life was his administration of the finances. The system he proposed was in one respect radically wrong; moreover, it has been the subject of some just and much unjust criticism. Many are still hostile to it, though on improper ground... All this must be reconciled. Something must be said to excite public pity for his family, which he has left in indigent circumstances...a family of seven young children.” (From Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris, July 11-14th, 1804)

6) Several factors conspired after the duel to reshape the public images of these two men:

- Immediately following Hamilton’s death, his associates made a concerted effort to improve their friend’s reputation in hopes of encouraging generous gifts to a fund for the widow and family.
- Burr’s political opponents (mainly Jefferson and Clinton) quickly realized that they too would reap benefits from a lionization of Hamilton, as it would have an adverse effect on Burr’s reputation. They added their voices on Hamilton’s behalf, and he became a somewhat instant hero.
- Furthering the myth, Hamilton’s widow would not allow the official biography of him to be written until thirty years after his death. In the interim, the stories about Hamilton grew more and more laudatory while those about Burr became more vicious (particularly after standing trial three times for treason in 1807 while Jefferson was still President).
- Lastly, little written record from Burr’s own hand survives today, while much of Hamilton’s does. In reconstructing their lives and times, biographers have been given very little from Burr that might counter Hamilton’s views of the events they share; i.e., the paper trail does not present a balanced picture.

7) Accents for these characters could be more British than contemporary American voices. Hamilton, in particular, a first-generation immigrant from the British West Indies, might have more of a Brit accent. In crowd scenes and cameos, choices could be made for Dutch, Scottish, French, German, or various accents. Burr has the

longest lineage in America, and might for dramatic purposes have the most American-sounding accent.

8) Robert Troup was a close friend of both Burr and Hamilton. A one-page account of his life can be found in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

Additional resources are listed at the end of the script.

THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT

by Diana Howie

The age of individualism is on the rise, the old code of gentlemen fading—and America is born.

“The body politic, like the human body, begins to die from its birth, and bears in itself the causes of its destruction.” —Rousseau

“I often feel a mortification, which it would be impolitic to express, that sets my passions at variance with my reason.” —Alexander Hamilton, 1783

Scene 1

(New York City. The CRIERS in the first few lines exist in a compression of some six months, Dec. 1773–July 1774; they repeat their phrase as they pass from block to block, bringing immediate news to residents. They could start as off-stage voices in a darkened theater, heard between snippets of military music, gun shots, people shouting in response: “What” “Did you hear that?” “Meeting?” “What kind of meeting?” By the fifth cry, people are coming into the streets.)

CRIER ONE. Tea dumped in Boston harbor!

CRIER TWO. Boycott British goods!

CRIER ONE. Continental meeting planned! New York delegates to go to Philadelphia!

CRIER TWO. Tea Party could happen here!

CRIER ONE. Rally in the Park! Rally in the Park!

(July 6, 1774. Crowd noises such as whistles and shouts are heard as people make their way to a nighttime rally in the park. Someone is passing out fliers. Torches could be carried.)

VOICES IN THE CROWD. “Come on” “To the Park!” “Hurry” “They’re talking about doing it here” “Throwing out the tea?? hell! they’ll make us pay for it!” “Give ’em hell!” “Boston’s wrong.”

YANK. They ain’t!

VOICES IN THE CROWD. “Someone’s talking already!” “Where? who’s talking? where??”

TROUP. *(To HAMILTON:)* You should speak.

HAMILTON. Me?

TROUP. Yes!

VOICES IN THE CROWD. *(Urging both HAMILTON and YANK:)* “Get on up there!” “Speak up” “Come on” “Don’t keep us waiting”

YANK. *(Jumping up on a box:)* So we don’t have tea to throw, we got cotton! Tax on that is just as bad! Toss it over! Throw it in the sea! Make ’em wish they never said haypenny, much less thruppance—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, jumping up on another box:)* The argument is not over three pence. It is not over tea or cotton—

YANK ON BOX. *(Interrupts:)* Who’s he??

TROUP. A real debater. From the college.

YANK ON BOX. Which side’s he on?

HAMILTON. Yours!

WOMAN IN CROWD. Scrawny little fellow.

HAMILTON. The issue is whether the inhabitants of Great Britain—

YANK ON BOX. *(Interrupts:)* Where the hell’s that accent from?

TROUP. Christiansted.

TORY. The West Indies? Who needs ya’ here?

HAMILTON. I live in New York!

VOICE IN CROWD. Mighty young.

(TROUP pushes YANK off box and keeps others from getting up.)

TROUP. Just let him talk!

HAMILTON. The argument is not over three pence. It is not over tea or cotton—

YANK. Oh no?

HAMILTON. No! the issue is whether the inhabitants of Great Britain have the right to dispose of the lives of the inhabitants of America.

WOMAN IN CROWD. Oh my God...

HAMILTON. Can one country take away the rights of another?

TROUP and WOMAN. No!

HAMILTON. Can one man take away the rights of another man?

CROWD. No!

HAMILTON. That's right! Because the sacred rights of man are written... *(Finds this analogy as he speaks:)* they are written as with, a sunbeam!

VOICES IN CROWD. *(Immediate reactions:)* "Clever" "The Devil take him." "Very clever." "We need men like him." "Yank!" "Tory!" "Redcoat!" "Macaroni!" "To hell with you!"

(A fight breaks out between YANK and TORY. TROUP pulls HAMILTON off box.)

TROUP. Come on! Could be trouble here!

(Gunshots. Crowd scatters.)

Scene 2

(Continuous from end of previous scene. HAMILTON and TROUP running on the street.)

HAMILTON. *(Passes prostitutes.)* Robert, slow down!

1st PROSTITUTE. Hmm, young ones...

HAMILTON. *(To TROUP:)* I've gone far enough—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* No! we need to get you off the street!

2nd PROSTITUTE. And so very nice-looking...

HAMILTON. But these women are—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Those women are available any old night.

HAMILTON. I'm always studying at night—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Come on in here!

(TROUP pulls HAMILTON inside a tavern where the women cannot enter. TROUP takes a mug from the table and lifts it.)

TROUP. Bravo! Bravo! Again and again and again!

(A BAR BOY passes with a tray, and HAMILTON seizes all the mugs he can hold.)

BAR BOY. But sir—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, raising the mugs to TROUP:)* The Rebellion!

TROUP. Shhh! *(Whispers, looking around corners:)* Might be redcoats here—

HAMILTON. I think this is the best dream I've ever—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* No, it's real! All of it! And back there you were—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I really said those things? Out loud?

TROUP. They loved you!

HAMILTON. *(He's never had this much adulation.)* If only Reverend Knox could have heard me...

TROUP. *(Raising a mug:)* To Reverend Knox! For all his good counsel to my good friend!

HAMILTON. He was best person I ever met on that island.

(A figure appears. KNOX and subsequent figures are memories which run through HAMILTON's mind as he speaks of his childhood. TROUP hears only HAMILTON, not the figures.)

KNOX. Oh, Alex, you must not dwell so on your own particular predicament all the time. Study. Learn what the world needs, and you will be sought out for the bright good lad you are.

HAMILTON. I could read whatever I wanted to from his library.

KNOX. Put Caesar down, Alex. Here, look over here, my own teacher's father, the Most Reverend Jonathan Edwards, a great American, I have laid his books out for you. Follow in the footsteps of the great moral leaders, and my faith in you will be justified.

HAMILTON. I always knew his door was open for whatever I wanted to talk about.

KNOX. Yes, I agree, you have not been treated well, but society has its rules and until they are changed, they must be followed. You might be the one to bring about those changes. Practice your writing. Go further into mathematics, you are good at that. Work. Work very hard, and make me proud I took you on. Let your good name shine back on me...like a sunbeam.

HAMILTON. I want to show him I was worth every minute he spent with me. *(As if raising a toast to himself:)* I want to be the brightest light in this world, and they will be forced to read about me all the way back there in Saint Croix.

TROUP. And to the lady who brought that bright light into the world. To your mother, may she rest in peace!

HAMILTON. *(A very quick response:)* She will never be that lucky.

RACHEL. *(Again, a person not heard by TROUP.)* Elicks, no! Don't ever wish a person ill!

(TROUP is stunned by his friend's reaction, and HAMILTON sees this.)

HAMILTON. I had to start all over when she died.

RACHEL. Oh Elicks, everything will turn out all right, you'll see.

HAMILTON. I...

TROUP. You don't ever have to explain—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* No, I want to! A fever went through the island, and I, my mother and I, we both caught it. She died. She was still lying there beside me when some men came in—

PACKER ONE. *(Interrupts:)* We collect everything from this room. Bring that chest in here, porcelain can go inside it. Careful now, put

those linens 'round it. There's a few silver spoons hanging over there. Clothes too, she won't need 'em!

(A nasty scene of banging and yelling.)

HAMILTON. There's all this legal business when someone dies, accounting for property...all that.

PACKER TWO. The boy's still in the bed...

PACKER ONE. Leave it.

HAMILTON. I watched these men put everything we owned into one room, and then they sealed it shut.

PACKER ONE. Sorry son. Mind you, don't break the King's Seal.

HAMILTON. They closed down the store.

PACKER TWO. Court orders.

TROUP. But wasn't your father—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Gone. Everything got locked up. All the doors nailed tight. The estate had to be decided in court.

(HAMILTON starting to have a very hard time getting this story out, but TROUP senses this and waits patiently. It's a story TROUP has wanted to hear.)

PACKER THREE. Pity to close it, you know, some good times been had in that back room.

PACKER ONE. Pity too the boy's still 'ere. That bed of hers would've made a fine bonfire.

PACKER THREE. A kind of memorial—

PACKER ONE. *(Interrupts:)* To all those good times!

(PACKERS have good laugh all around.)

PACKER TWO. She'll be missed, no doubt about that—

HAMILTON. I could do nothing but watch. I still had the fever myself.

PACKER ONE. You're on the mend, boy, you'll do all right. Your mother's taught you how to survive on your own!

(PACKERS leave laughing.)

HAMILTON. We ran that store together. Just a little place, but...

RACHEL. You're always such a help to me, Elicks, such a help with all my customers, and the store—

JUDGE. *(Raps his gavel:)* Quiet! I will have quiet in this court! *(Waits a beat, then speaks, as if Alex is standing in front of him.)* The store was yours you say? Do you have it in writing, boy? No. Put it down on paper next time. Remember that, boy. Best way to protect your interests.

TROUP. But?

HAMILTON. The laws worked against me.

JUDGE. *(Raps his gavel.)* The court has reached its decision. The estate of Rachel Faucett, also known some time as Rachel Levine, and some time as Rachel Hamilton, her estate, the entire property thereof, hereby passes to the decedent's only lawful heir, her only lawful son, Peter Levine.

TROUP. What can you do?

HAMILTON. *(So very mad, striking out:)* Everything I owned was taken away from me.

RACHEL. Elicks, try to control that temper...

HAMILTON. Everything! The store! All of it. Gone.

VOICES OF A CROWD. *(Interrupts—all the taunts Hamilton heard as a child:)* "Obscene" "Little Elicks, will you look at him standing so tall, who does he think he is?" "That's Rachel Faucett's little bastard child" "How many are there??" "Your mother had a bastard, your mother had a bastard".

(Mean laughter from ALL.)

HAMILTON. The Judge decided my property should go to an older brother.

RACHEL. Always remember Elicks, you are a Christian—

HAMILTON. I didn't deserve that! I had been more than fair with the men of that town.

TROUP. Reverend Knox came to your rescue?

HAMILTON. (*“No”*;) I got a job.

MISTER CRUGER. (*Counting coins.*) So you kept the ledger? (*He’s impressed.*) And these inventory records? (*Even more impressed.*) And waited on the customers? Re-stocked the shelves? Deliveries too? My, you did it all, didn’t you.

HAMILTON. I had learned quite a bit working with my mother.

MISTER CRUGER. (*Looks at him hard.*) Oh yes, I remember you now. You’re one of Rachel’s— (*A pleasant memory.*) Yes, yes, I knew her too. A good service you did us, lad, keeping watch by the door while... (*Indulges a second in that good remembrance.*) How old are you now, boy?

HAMILTON. I had worked for years by then.

MISTER CRUGER. Fourteen? Well, son, you’re old enough to do this job. We trade in all sorts of commodities here, not just flour and eggs. The next ship brings in a fresh cargo of slaves from Africa. I’ll need someone to inventory the cargo, and prepare the list for auction. Your handwriting is neat enough for that.

HAMILTON. I could write a good hand. And do figures quickly.

MISTER CRUGER. (*Playing with coins during this whole conversation.*) Each one must be oiled, slick and handsome, and combed. We want to get good prices, so diseases must be covered up. Of course, you may find in your inspections there may be some who did not survive the voyage. You will have to dispose of them. Any of this bother you? Ham?

HAMILTON. To say honestly, I—

MISTER CRUGER. (*Interrupts.*) My boy, you are not fourteen, you are eleven, are you not?

(No response.)

How many offers you think you’re going to get in this town?

(No response.)

Do you want the job?

HAMILTON. For only eleven years old, I had a lot to offer an employer.

TROUP. Eleven? I was still knocking hoops down the street!

MISTER CRUGER. Do you want the job??

HAMILTON. Yes.

MISTER CRUGER. Thatta boy! Seize the opportunity that comes along, whatever it is.

HAMILTON. I had learned a lot.

MISTER CRUGER. Lest you be seized for the workhouse, huh? like these poor Africans, huh boy, huh?

TROUP. Where was this job?

HAMILTON. I got work at the harbor. Reverend Knox arrived there a couple years later.

TROUP. And your father...

(HAMILTON indicates "don't ask.")

My father wasn't around much either. A sailor is rarely—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Your father was a Commander!

TROUP. That's right, yes, which tells you he liked to travel a damned sight more than I do.

HAMILTON. I spent hours out on deck, standing with the Commander.

TROUP. Long trip.

HAMILTON. Fifteen hundred miles.

SHIP COMMANDER. *(A figure with spyglass, in Hamilton's memory.)* Ah ha! Land ahead! Take a look for yourself. Saint Croix is behind you, son. You've made the trip across the sea! Now you know just how far we Americans are from civilization. Everyone's got a chance for a fresh start here. You can do anything you like! Anything at all.

TROUP. (*Looking at broadside someone just passed to him:*) There's another rally at Bowling Green tomorrow. You could give that same speech—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I wouldn't have opened my mouth tonight if you hadn't pushed me up there—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) You'd said it all before.

HAMILTON. I did, at the college, but...I'd go if you'd swear to stand by me like you did tonight.

TROUP. You're smart, Alex, you don't need me.

HAMILTON. Swear! Swear on—

(Hands him the broadside back, pointing out the back of it:)

—something sacred.

TROUP. Maybe you do need help... This old song makes fun of us!

HAMILTON. It's got all new words.

ENSEMBLE. (*Sings to Yankee Doodle tune while TROUP reads:*)

“When Congress picked George Washington
They gave him power and breeches,
To meet old Britain's warlike sons
And make some rebel speeches.
Our patriot brave, George Washington
From fervor he grew thinner
So Congress with new patriot zeal
Fed him a Yankee dinner.”

HAMILTON. Look at it! (*Pointing out what was printed on the paper:*)
They call it “The Song of The Rebellion.”

TROUP. (*Dismissive of the song, raises his mug.*) I'll swear to you on my father's memory.

HAMILTON. To the memory of Commander Troup, of...the ship, Robert...

TROUP. His last ship was...uh...the privateer, The Sturdy Beggar.

HAMILTON. To Commander Troup! Dear to his son, who is now dear to me.

TROUP. You should write down what you said in the Park tonight, so when you are famous there will be a record—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* You're making fun of me.

TROUP. No, not at all, I—

HAMILTON. Sign up with me if there's a war!

TROUP. Now I never said I'd—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I mean when there's a war!

TROUP. *(Definitely not interested:)* Oh no, I don't think I would want to—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* We can make our names on the battlefield! Our reputations would be secure forever!

TROUP. You would risk your neck just to be written up in the Saint Croix newspapers?

HAMILTON. I only meant—

TROUP. I am not that interested in my reputation.

HAMILTON. You already have one, you are a Commander's son.

TROUP. *(A joke to him.)* Of The Sturdy Beggar?! Perhaps if the ship had a better name... *(Finishes the drink in his mug and then holds onto the mug.)* Now here's something I will do, I will take this as a souvenir of your first public speech.

HAMILTON. *(Picks a mug they hadn't used off the table.)* Take a new one.

TROUP. *(Holds tight to the one he toasted with.)* This is the one I raised to you.

(Lights on another noisy rally taking place. MEN vie for attention. HAMILTON is immediately attracted to participate.)

1st MAN AT RALLY. Give us liberty or give us death!

2nd MAN AT RALLY. Don't tread on me!

1st MAN AT RALLY. No taxation without representation!

HAMILTON. Conquer or die!

RECRUITING OFFICER. *(Stepping forward:)* General Washington needs brave, healthy, able-bodied, and well-disposed young men for the defense of the liberties and independence of the United States against the hostile designs of foreign enemies. If any of you out there feel you meet this requirement, step forward.

(Looks for volunteers, spots some, signals to them to follow him. Exits.)

WOMAN AT RALLY. God save the United States!

(Lights fade as CRIERS pass, repeating their "headlines.")

1st CRIER. Brits land in New York Harbor! Ten ships! Twenty frigates!

2nd CRIER. It's signed! It's signed! The Declaration of Independence of these colonies from Great Britain has been signed!

Scene 3

(New York City, July 1776. In front of Richmond Hill, an imposing house, now the Headquarters for Gen. Washington. TROUP is waiting out front as BURR is coming to the house.)

BURR. Sir. *(Salutes.)* Aaron Burr, Aide-de-camp for General Putnam reporting to General Woodhull's Aide, Robert Troup, Esquire.

(Pulls a letter from his mailbag.)

Inquire?

(BURR teases him by keeping it out of TROUP's reach.)

Require.

(TROUP gets it finally.)

Acquire.

TROUP. Major Burr, now that I finally have the message secure in hand, be you so kind as to wait for a reply?

BURR. Waiting is the spécialité of General Washington's army.

(Starts singing as soon as TROUP turns away. To tune of Yankee Doodle.)

“Lieutenant Troup, I wait for you,
At Richmond Hill, I’m here for you.
At least we’re both still in New York,
When you’re not on Long Island.

(TROUP laughs, which spurs BURR on.)

The perfect courier, Lieutenant Troup,
He’s always anxious to get away—”

TROUP. *(Interrupts at some point:)* Don’t, Aaron, don’t—it’s not a day for amusements.

(At the same time HAMILTON arrives, not expecting to see TROUP.)

HAMILTON. Robert?

TROUP. Alex! We were worried about you!

BURR. *(Still singing:)*

“An aide-de-camp until he dies,
Thank God New York is handy.”

TROUP. *(To BURR:)* Stop! We’re losing our city, and my friend here is being threatened with the brig.

BURR. “When shall we three then meet again/
When the hurlyburly’s done/—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, distraught, to TROUP:)* I am still waiting for the report. I was told I would be sentenced as soon as it was written.

TROUP. Washington must have heard by now that the cannons were to blame.

HAMILTON. I am afraid it will say I did not train my men adequately—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Impossible! you were drilling them for weeks! *(To BURR, trying not to exclude him:)* Fort George, Aaron, Fort George was under Alex’s command during yesterday’s attack. *(To*

HAMILTON:) General Woodhull told me that the cannons back-fired at every fort.

HAMILTON. The guns are a hundred years old!

BURR. By your leave, the report on yesterday's incident at Fort George concludes there were unusual losses, considering the absence of enemy fire.

HAMILTON. I beg your pardon?

BURR. The appropriateness of the officer's behavior was the entire focus of the report. *(To TROUP:)* You're right, it's not funny, Robert. Your friend needs you.

TROUP. *(Stopping BURR from leaving:)* You've seen the report?? You can advise him on this better than I can.

BURR. "The deed is done, what will come will come."

TROUP. Now Aaron...Alex is an old college mate of mine. *(A belated introduction:)* Alex Hamilton, New York Artillery. Alex, Aaron Burr—

HAMILTON. Aaron Burr? *(Recognizing the name:)* I am honored—
(Senses a salute is required.) Sir!

BURR. You must have studied my grandfather's books in school.

HAMILTON. I beg your pardon?

TROUP. *(To HAMILTON:)* Jonathan Edwards.

HAMILTON. No, I—

BURR. *(Interrupts, to TROUP:)* Had to read my father's interminable sermons.

HAMILTON. No, I mean, yes! of course I've read them, I've read both these men! In fact I studied with one of Reverend Burr's protégés, the Reverend Hugh Knox? Perhaps you met him when he was in Princeton—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* There are more pressing subjects, Alex.

HAMILTON. *(To BURR:)* I was thinking of your valor with the army in Quebec. Your reputation, your heroism, sir, precedes you.

BURR. Oh that.

HAMILTON. I pray each morning for such an opportunity to come my way.

BURR. It was a lucky chance—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, so anxious to exonerate himself:)* I thought my chance had come when we heard the Brits would try to take the Hudson. I was positioned well at Fort George. My orders were to fire if I saw their ships sail up the river. I saw the ships, and Fort George fired!

BURR. But your cannonballs hit your own men—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* The guns backfired on them!

BURR. And yet they reloaded and fired again. Six dead and four wounded because they had not your order to stop firing—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I was following my orders! Can you convince Washington to see me? To hear my side of the story?

BURR. Our esteemed Commander does not want to see me.

HAMILTON. But you know him!

TROUP. *(To BURR:)* You could give Alex some advice on approaching the man...

(Long beat. Alex is at fault, but Troup's a good friend.)

BURR. Don't worry.

TROUP. Oh...you can do better than that.

BURR. Getting in to actually see the General will be your biggest obstacle. Our Commander specializes in focusing on only one thing at a time, and already today negotiations with the British have captured his total attention. Yours is a very small item compared to the possibility of stopping a war. *(Turning again to leave.)*

TROUP. *(Bringing him back:)* Aaron...

BURR. *(Again, a hesitant beat, then to HAMILTON:)* You really shouldn't give this any more thought, but, since Robert insists... *(Getting back to his beginning-of-scene playfulness.)* Should our Com-

mander manage to get to a second item on his agenda today, and should it be you, remember, he is a surveyor by trade. The question then becomes, what is the best way to impress a surveyor? And the answer is, look sharp, respond briefly and precisely, and take care to speak distinctly. Do not try to plumb the depths of the matter, but stay right on the surface. He should be well distracted from the substance of your report—

TROUP. *(Interrupts at some point, laughing:)* Stop it!

BURR. And a snappy appearance may take his mind off the report altogether. Washington is mad for uniforms.

(BURR fingers HAMILTON's coat, as if dirty.)

You have something else you might wear? Captain? *(To TROUP, taking his leave:)* Lieutenant.

TROUP and HAMILTON. Major.

(BURR leaves. HAMILTON stunned, TROUP still laughing.)

TROUP. We shouldn't have pressed him.

HAMILTON. He knows Washington.

TROUP. And he was right the first time, "Don't worry.". Washington will need every man he can get if we really have to fight for our independence.

HAMILTON. The Major saw my report.

TROUP. Aaron hears everything, he used to work here at Headquarters—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* You think I should have gone against my orders?

TROUP. The cannons weren't hitting any ships, were they?

HAMILTON. They might have, once they got warmed up.

(Beat—knows he was wrong.)

What should I do?

TROUP. Wait here. If Washington can negotiate an end to the fighting, it may all blow over and—

(HAMILTON *turns to leave.*)

Where are you going?

HAMILTON. I know a tailor who can sell me a coat today.

TROUP. Aaron was kidding!

HAMILTON. I will borrow the money from a friend.

(TROUP *sniggers.*)

I have another friend with money.

(TROUP *can't help smiling.*)

TROUP. Honest! Aaron was just pulling your leg—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) My command is at stake! maybe even my life—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) It has nothing to do with you—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I am the officer in the report!

TROUP. Aaron can't resist taking a jab at the General. Aaron's, well, he's quick, and the General is...Aaron says he's too slow and deliberate to even think of waging a war. They did not get on at all. Washington transferred him out before two weeks even passed—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) But to be on Washington's staff!—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) Aaron will do all right wherever he is.

HAMILTON. Made his name already—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) Born with a name!

HAMILTON. But Major! already!

TROUP. And graduated college, and even tried his hand at the seminary, and he's no older than you and me—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I will be back.

TROUP. (*Going after him:*) Alex, come inside with me. Maybe we'll run into someone who can—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I should change.

TROUP. You should stay with me.

(They walk away together. ATTACHE comes forward, perhaps with a drumroll, and TROUP turns back to listen.)

MILITARY ATTACHE. *(As if reading an official announcement to assembled troops:)* Be apprised that Lieutenant Robert Troup was captured by the British on August 27th, Seventeen Seventy-Six. Letters may be addressed to him now in care of the prison ship, The Mentor.

(TROUP's voice, as we see BURR reading a letter.)

TROUP. Dear Aaron, Don't ever complain to me again about fighting on the ice in Quebec. At least it was clean. This "ship" is filthy—there were cows on board, right before we came on. There's nothing to eat but something we think was bread, that is, before the worms got to it. Some of the men are cooking the rats. There's plenty of them. Thank you for your letter, any diversion at all to keep my mind off food. There is talk of a prisoner exchange. Hopefully before I die of starvation. Lawyers you say...you think we'd make good lawyers? I agree with you it's good to have a plan, should we ever win this war. It's something to look forward to, and I don't have any better ideas. But Princeton is so far away. Can't we find a qualified tutor within riding distance of New York City?

BURR. *(Excited, after reading Troup's letter:)* Oh you dreamer! The Brits won't be leaving New York anytime soon. But you've given me the perfect excuse to find a place close to Missus Theodosia Prevost.

TROUP. *(Responding in another letter:)* Haverstraw? How did you ever think of that? Well, it's a little better. Just one river to cross to get to my favorite haunts. Now all we have to do is get out of this rag tag Army!

Scene 4

(Four years later: Winter, 1780. An attic garret. TROUP is reading, but BURR fell asleep reading. When he starts snoring, TROUP shakes him.)

TROUP. Wake up! You need to finish.

(BURR wakes with a start, hitting his sword which is propped up nearby. Inspired by its clanking, he grabs the sword and stands up to practice. His early lines are a bit of spontaneous verse while he “cuts the air.” TROUP tries to keep reading.)

BURR. “From the winter, the books/
And the lawyer Smith/
Dear sword deliver me.”

TROUP. Is the Colonel practicing for yet another season at Valley Forge—

BURR. *(Interrupts:)* “A rain-soaked tent for a bed/
A rock for his weary head/—”

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Or the first meeting of the Haverstraw Limerick Society?

BURR. *(With a thrust:)* Et là! *(Picking up Troup’s sword and holding it out to him:)* Loser re-enlists?

TROUP. If we are taking a break, I need to work on this letter to Alex.

BURR. “The snow has fallen and melted/
And fallen again/
Since you’ve been writing/
That sad little letter.”

TROUP. This is the second letter!

BURR. “Hello Dear Friend, how’s by you/
I know it can’t be very good/
Since you’re still in the Army.”

TROUP. I must persuade him to back off from...a possible challenge.

BURR. Alexander Hamilton, The Man-Of-Desperate-Fortune? Or is there another one now—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Does everyone know?

BURR. It’s all the talk.

TROUP. I can't seem to get through to him that a gentleman does not challenge a minister.

(Hands BURR Alex's latest letter.)

VOICE OF HAMILTON. "My dearest Robert. I thank you for the concern voiced in your letter, but I must do everything in my power to stop this heinous lie from spreading 'round the country, even if it means fighting the Reverend Doctor Gordon himself. I cannot live at the caprice of others."

BURR. You will think of something.

TROUP. What else is there? Everyone knows it isn't done, yet he is threatening to do it, I am at a loss for words, I—

BURR. *(Interrupts:)* A new perspective might be helpful.

TROUP. Do you take nothing seriously?!

BURR. Do you need to post your letter tonight? Is he that desperate?

TROUP. No.

BURR. Sport with me then.

TROUP. Alex used to be such a stickler for following rules.

BURR. With this war, the rules are being broken all around us.

TROUP. *(Looking at the letter again:)* But pursuing a challenge with a minister? A minister! What is Alex thinking??

BURR. A little exercise may be just what you and I both need. *(Urging again with his sword:)* You could pretend to be Alex, and I will be the minister.

TROUP. We will wake up everyone in the house.

BURR. But your friend's reasoning might occur to you if you put yourself in his place.

TROUP. As if they were dueling?

BURR. You are Alex, and I am that slanderous, rumor-mongering, preachy—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) I don't see your tip.

BURR. I don't see your sword. (*Takes stance.*) En garde!

TROUP. I have no time for this!

BURR. But we are working on your letter to Alex.

TROUP. (*A prayer, as if to God above:*) Let me win, so this foolhardy youth will go back to the real battle and leave me alone.

BURR. That's my role, the minister!

TROUP. Yes, agreed. You are, then, The Reverend Doctor— (*Has to look at letter again.*) William Gordon. I hear he's about fifty years old.

BURR. (*As MINISTER:*) Fifty! Alex will kill me for sure.

(They commence fencing. BURR pretends he is a doddering incompetent. TROUP is not very aggressive.)

BURR. Come on, Robert. Alex has more swagger than that.

TROUP. (*As Hamilton, finally portrays his friend:*) I say Reverend, as good a swordsman as you should have served the patriot cause.

BURR. (*As Minister:*) "They also serve who only stand and wait."

TROUP. (*As Hamilton:*) And what exactly, Reverend, are you waiting for?

BURR. (*As Minister:*) The French! They will come! And they will save us! I've had my congregation praying for that knock-kneed Commander of yours for some five years, and that's done no good, so I've turned my prayers to the French Army—

TROUP. (*As Hamilton, interrupts:*) Talk like that could earn you yet another challenge!

BURR. (*As Minister:*) What? Is praying not allowed anymore either?

TROUP. (*As Hamilton:*) You insulted our Commander.

BURR. (*As Minister:*) Mister Hamilton—

TROUP. (*As Hamilton, interrupts:*) Colonel. I am Colonel Hamilton.

BURR. (*As Minister:*) Yes. Tell me, Colonel, do you not remember that the rules we agree to live by are what holds a society together?

TROUP. (*As Hamilton, meeting BURR's sword:*) I am following the rules, sir! I challenge you, else I must accept that what you say about me is true!

BURR. (*As Minister:*) Yes, I see, but is there not also a rule for me? Are ministers not exempt from a challenge?

TROUP. (*As Hamilton:*) I have heard your gossip about me from all quarters, over and over again, repeated in the pubs, in the streets—

BURR (*As Minister, interrupts:*) What was it I said, dear man, that has bothered you so?

TROUP. (*As Hamilton:*) Sir! I will not repeat it!

(*BURR thrusts and TROUP falls.*)

BURR. Et là!

TROUP. Enough already!

(*BURR stays up, active, ready for more.*)

You know what's really bothering Alex...

BURR. (*Interrupts:*) Being stuck at Headquarters.

TROUP. Exactly! He's not out there fighting.

BURR. Yes! There he is, chained to the desk, drafting our Commander's dinner menus, love letters—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) And everyone else's promotion.

BURR. That's it! you found it! The reason you were looking for and your response. Alex is a victim of desperate fortune. Reputations are made out on the battlefield, and he is stuck inside. He is forced to watch on the sidelines while everyone else achieves their glory.

TROUP. And my response is...?

BURR. “Dear Alex, Reconsider this challenge in light of your current position where everything looks worse than it is. Write immediately to the Reverend, describing the dreariness of your situation, being tethered to Washington, and all that. Assume that is what the good Reverend meant by desperate fortune, and offer your apology.”

TROUP. Now you know that is not what the Reverend meant.

BURR. All Alex has to do is offer an apology.

TROUP. No gentleman can refuse an apology...

BURR. The good Reverend Doctor Gordon will be most gracious, I am sure.

TROUP. I'll sleep on it...if I ever get to sleep. *(Turning back to the books:)* There is no apology in the world that would satisfy the good Lawyer Smith if we don't know... *(Reading title of book in hand:)* The Procedure of Practice, by tomorrow.

BURR. You don't think he'd cancel—

TROUP. *(Interrupts, teasing:)* Our Sunday off? Indeed he would. As quick as you could say, "Oh, Miss The-o-dees-sha, how pretty you look—"

BURR. *(Interrupts:)* Theo-doe-sha.

TROUP. Miss Theodosia Provoke.

BURR. Theodosia Prevost! *(Snaps to attention.)* You mock a good lady, sir! En garde!

TROUP. Good? She is the wife of a British colonel, our enemy!

BURR. We know not, sir, if that man is even still alive, but whatever his state, I have claimed the lady as a spoil of war.

TROUP. *(Standing to meet him again:)* She has claimed you, sir, as a prisoner of love!

(Lights dim on TROUP and BURR, sparring and laughing. Scene changes to city street in front of pub.)

CRIER. Cornwallis surrenders to the American forces at Yorktown!

MICHAEL. *(Owner at pub door.)* Huh! Might not be long before the war is over and the boys can come back to town.

CRIER. Hostilities between the United States of America and the King of Great Britain are over!

MICHAEL. Yep! They'll be back soon.

CRIER. Peace signed! General Washington begins triumphant journey to New York.

MICHAEL. I should give the General a party, right here. He always liked my rum punch...

(TROUP and BURR walking in the same city street.)

TROUP. It's exciting to be in a real city again!

BURR. With your Golden Hill tavern over here, and your Michael Little's pub over there—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* And the harbor! Look at it! There are more ships than ever! And behind us, all those new stores opening up!

BURR. Let's hope these people need lawyers.

TROUP. For all this business? There will never be enough lawyers to take care—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, in a hurry, on his way to catch a coach:)* Robert! I've been looking all over for you! I'm off to Philadelphia again, another meeting on this constitution business. Drop in to see the wife while I'm gone, if you have time.

BURR. Now there's a trusting friend.

HAMILTON. *(To TROUP:)* I know you can keep her from imagining what I might be doing so far from home.

TROUP. But you should stay here. There's money to be made, right now—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I've been pressed to come explain my ideas on finance again.

BURR. Are they paying for your trip?

HAMILTON. I have a very generous father-in-law.

BURR. Lucky man.

HAMILTON. For once, I have something Aaron doesn't!

BURR. I envy you the ready access to cash...

TROUP. *(Finishing BURR's thought:)* But not old man Schuyler!

(BURR and TROUP share a chuckle, then to HAMILTON:)

They are right to want your help. Nobody is better than you at getting money. (*Pushing him off:*) Don't let the coach leave without you. Safe journey.

BURR. (*To HAMILTON:*) Good luck!

TROUP. I will send a note to Eliza. Today! (*To BURR:*) If you hear her father's in town...

BURR. I'll warn you.

Scene 5

(*Four years later, September 1787, NYC. HAMILTON is talking to TROUP at a table in tavern. Three MEN nearby; two are playing a card or board game. Owner, MICHAEL, serving and picking up.*)

FIRST MAN. (*Making the winning play:*) Gotcha!

SECOND MAN. 'Nother round?

FIRST MAN. Nothing better to do.

(*BURR peeks in, spots who he's looking for, HAMILTON, and comes in, waving an envelope and improvising a Yankee Doodle on the way. ALL stop what they're doing to listen to the song.*)

BURR. "The Tories want old Schuyler's son, in-law,
They won't have any other,
He'll do their bidding,
Get their land back,
Oh he's their favorite lawyer.
Alexander, you're our boy
Alexander handy
Take our money,
And our girls,
And never sneer behind thee."

MEN. (*Joining in, singing:*)
"And never sneer behind thee."

(*They applaud BURR.*)

TROUP. *(To MICHAEL, who serves TROUP a plate of food:)* Thanks. *(To BURR:)* You should write that one down for me.

BURR. Catch it on the wing, my saving friend, for it will be a different verse tomorrow. *(Dangling the letter above HAMILTON:)* And for your welcome home this time, Alex, a note for you, from yet another Tory who wants his Staten Island farm back. Tomorrow will be soon enough. And all that tea they brewed in Boston Harbor? He says that was his too.

TROUP. Those traitors think you will do anything for—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I have the decency to speak kindly to a former enemy.

BURR. *(Rubs fingers for money.)* “Persuasion hangs upon his lips.”

HAMILTON. *(Grabbing the letter from BURR:)* I have more mouths to feed than the two of you combined.

BURR. *(To TROUP:)* And it keeps him from borrowing more from you.

TROUP. *(To HAMILTON:)* Well, there’s plenty of business here, of all kinds, if you would only stay at home.

HAMILTON. Each time, I think, this will be the last trip, but—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* This time you actually came back with something to vote on!

BURR. *(To HAMILTON:)* The Eaton case is tomorrow.

TROUP. That’s right, we square off at twelve o’clock.

BURR. *(To HAMILTON:)* Robert’s up against us, and loaded for bear. We’ll need to review it if you still want to help me out.

(HAMILTON gets up to go with BURR.)

TROUP. I won’t lend either of you any more money if you make me eat alone.

HAMILTON. *(To BURR:)* Five minutes? *(BURR acquiesces, then to TROUP:)* How about Van Kirk and Pauly, where are we on that one?

BURR. We petitioned to present that the first week of November.

HAMILTON. *(To TROUP:)* I thought you were going up against me!

TROUP. Aaron knows bankruptcy, so I asked him to join me—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* But I'm already at a disadvantage from being away so much.

TROUP. You enjoy every minute of it! Why not tell us now *(Indicating tell the MEN too:)* what you were telling me earlier, what happened in Philadelphia this time, and what you need us to do—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I haven't found the right approach yet.

TROUP. *(To BURR:)* He's forming a kind of coalition. *(To HAMILTON:)* A political group, you might say. Is that right?

HAMILTON. The Federalist Party.

TROUP. To get this new Constitution approved.

BURR. *(To HAMILTON:)* Word is you don't like this new Constitution one bit.

HAMILTON. It is not my idea, no indeed, but it will join us together better than what we've got now, and then it can always be changed later.

(MEN react, as if they heard him wrong. To EVERYONE:)

Additions...amendments...I'm sure we can work something out.

FIRST MAN. Politics!

SECOND MAN. Forget it!

THIRD MAN. *(Signaling with mug in hand, to MICHAEL:)* Another one.

BURR. Stop by the house later, and we'll review the Eaton case.

(BURR heads out.)

TROUP. *(To HAMILTON, urging him to catch BURR:)* He just needs to hear a few more details.

HAMILTON. *(Goes after BURR.)* You are exactly the type we need.

BURR. And what type, exactly, is that?

HAMILTON. We need people with a name and a position—

BURR. *(To the MEN, as if to cover for HAMILTON's faux pas:)* Life. Liberty. Equality—that's all any of us need.

HAMILTON. And money!

MICHAEL. *(Trying to collect for THIRD MAN's drink:)* That's for sure.

TROUP. Do sit down, boys, there's a lot of cabbage on this plate.

BURR. Theo expects me for dinner.

HAMILTON. I can find better excuses than that.

BURR. You have to!

TROUP. Theo won't mind just a few minutes more. After all, Alex hasn't even been home yet—Alex, oh Alex, are you in for a surprise.

(MEN get interested again.)

HAMILTON. Not another mouth to feed.

(MEN elbow one another.)

BURR. “Honey is sweet but the bee does sting!”

(MEN laugh.)

HAMILTON. You should have seen the honey on the market in Philadelphia.

TROUP. Is that why you borrowed from me!?

HAMILTON. Father Schuyler pitches in a little too. *(To the MEN:)* What's the use of marrying well if the wife's family won't come through?

(Bigger laugh from MEN.)

TROUP. Shhhh!

HAMILTON. *(Directly to the MEN:)* Pretty faces are common enough, but those with good connections are hard to find.

MICHAEL. That's the God's truth, son, the God's truth.

TROUP. (*Trying to pull HAMILTON out of this comedy mode:*) Why don't you tell us about the Federalist Party.

SECOND MAN. Let's hear the surprise!

TROUP. (*To HAMILTON:*) Your little Philip called me Daddy, and Eliza didn't know whether to laugh or—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) He's talking?

TROUP. To whoever he can find, saying anything and everything—

BURR. (*Interrupts:*) A natural-born, already-recruited... (*Has to remember the word.*) Federalist!

HAMILTON. This is no joke, Aaron!

TROUP. We are listening.

HAMILTON. The most important thing for all the states is to pay off the war debt. It must be paid off, or we will be fighting again.

TROUP. That's right.

THIRD MAN. I'm tired of all that. Four years since the peace and still—

FIRST MAN. (*Interrupts:*) Yeah! They need to make good on the soldiers' notes now!

TROUP. They are part of the debt.

SECOND MAN. Them should come first.

THIRD MAN. They won't.

HAMILTON. (*To BURR:*) The basic question is, where are we going to find the money to pay anyone? The states are no good at collecting it—

BURR. (*Interrupts:*) Taxes? that's what the new Constitution—?

SECOND MAN. (*Interrupts:*) Taxes?? Not again!

TROUP. (*To HAMILTON:*) You spent all that time at this last meeting and this is what—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, while starting to pick up mugs from around the table:)* I have other ideas than taxes.

TROUP. He's good with money.

BURR. Thank God someone is.

HAMILTON. I say we get the money from those with cash to spare! Passing the hat to everyone doesn't seem to do the trick, but in the new government, we will make available financial opportunities for private investors. A national bank, public works, bonds, new industries, we'd run it like a business!

(MEN turn away again, the subject is beyond them.)

TROUP. *(Interrupts, to BURR who's trying to leave:)* Just one minute more, we can always send a message to Theo.

HAMILTON. Watch this! *(He takes one mug and places it on the table.)* I ask you, would you invest your money with just one state? The Bank of Rhode Island for instance, when you could invest in *(He adds more mugs, building something:)* The Bank of All These States Combined?

BURR. Who are all these people with money to spare?

HAMILTON. *(As if watching his dream come true before him:)* The bank of these united states, *(Pyramid is complete)* there is something all the Father Schuylers can feel confident to invest in, and then the new government can use that money to start paying off the war debts.

TROUP. Looks good.

BURR. Investments are the reason for a national government?

HAMILTON. Say Yes! to the Constitution—It Will Pay You Back with Interest.

TROUP. *(To HAMILTON:)* That's not a bad Party slogan.

FIRST MAN. You understand any of that?

THIRD MAN. Them with money will get more.

BURR. *(To HAMILTON:)* You mean, the government offers to make money...

HAMILTON. Yes!

BURR. For those who already have money...

HAMILTON. That's how investments work.

BURR. People need a better reason for a change in government than the financial gain of a few men.

HAMILTON. Finance is not easily understood by the...multitude.

FIRST MAN. What's he talking about now??

TROUP. Not so loud...

SECOND MAN. Got to pay the soldiers off first!

BURR. *(To the MEN as well as HAMILTON:)* Whatever happened to "all for one and one for all," and those songs from—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* What will bring us together is each individual's self-interest and ambition!

(HAMILTON hits the mugs, and they all fall.)

SECOND MAN. There's trouble! Move!

(MEN leave quickly.)

MICHAEL. Dear God!

BURR. *(To HAMILTON:)* You could stand a good adviser.

HAMILTON. I am looking for men who will follow.

BURR. But only the rich need apply?

HAMILTON. *(Standing as if challenged:)* I am speaking of gentlemen, Aaron. Did I not say "men of good will"? I meant to.

BURR. *(Meeting him, face to face:)* Indeed, but more than gentlemen have a say here.

TROUP. *(To HAMILTON, who remains staring at BURR:)* All you want is to get the new Constitution approved, so a more effective government can be set up?

HAMILTON. Yes.

TROUP. Is all this other in it? The investments? All that?

HAMILTON. No.

TROUP. So why should we even talk about it now?

HAMILTON. To catch the interest of the people, you need a reason that benefits them.

BURR. “Hang together or we’ll all hang separately”?

TROUP. “A lasting peace.”

BURR. “The common good.”

HAMILTON. *(Finally relaxes his stance.)* You ought to be joining us.

BURR. Robert’s pitching in strong enough for the two of us.

TROUP. We’ll think of something better for next time.

BURR. A catchy tune! That will sell most anything. *(Improvising to Botany Bay tune:)*

“Come all you men of liberty,
And join our happy throng.
As Federalists we tell you,
We all must get along.
Oh vote the Constitution in,
It’s not so bad, you’ll see.
For it will keep our nation afloat,
That’s what Alex says to me.”

HAMILTON. *(To BURR:)* Join us.

BURR. My debts, too, are pressing. I need to work.

TROUP. *(To HAMILTON:)* He owes me even more money than you do.

HAMILTON. I seem to recall a property settlement we’ve got coming up—

BURR. McGuire’s on the docket for next week, if you are still in town.

TROUP. See you in court.

BURR. Tomorrow.

(HAMILTON and BURR walk off together to BURR's home.)

BURR. About all you will need to know to question the witnesses is that our client Mister Eaton is a good-natured chap, a cartman—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I know all about him.

BURR. He delivers everywhere.

Scene 6

(Continuous from previous scene. HAMILTON and BURR walk into BURR's home office.)

BURR. During a street check, Mister Eaton was stopped by the City Inspector for, and I quote, “carrying wool—”

THEODOSIA. *(Calling from off-stage:)* Aaron.

BURR. We're in here. *(Continuing, to HAMILTON:)* Mister Eaton was taking a load of lamb's wool from the harbor to a warehouse—

THEODOSIA. *(Interrupts, at the door:)* Ah, Alex. Will you eat with us? *(To BURR:)* The meats are on the table.

BURR. He's just in from Philadelphia.

HAMILTON. I only stopped for a moment.

BURR. The baby started talking while he was away.

THEODOSIA. *(To HAMILTON:)* Oh my! Go to them! I can't believe you are even standing here with us. Go!

HAMILTON. I have to pick up papers for court tomorrow.

THEODOSIA. Oh, take a day off and enjoy that little one.

HAMILTON. I need to let people know I'm back and ready for work.

THEODOSIA. Well, hurry up, Aaron! Alex needs to be home.

(Leaves.)

BURR. What happened is, the Inspector seized the wool. He claimed Eaton had no receipt to prove that the import tariff had

been paid. He took away Eaton's license on the spot. Eaton's reputation is ruined. He can't get work.

HAMILTON. I think our little cartman missed the Inspector's point...

BURR. Our client showed the Inspector the Customs Release which implied—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Aaron, I must be going.

BURR. He actually had proof, just not the usual proof.

(HAMILTON starts looking through books in BURR's office.)

HAMILTON. The Inspector only wanted...

(Indicates Inspector had his hand out for a bribe.)

BURR. Eaton may not be a gentleman, but honesty is everything in that business. To make matters worse, the Inspector ruined the goods. He put the wool in custody, in a shed with a leaky roof, and now the stench of it is awful. The owner is demanding that Eaton pay him for the wool as well as damages for the loss of a sale.

HAMILTON. You have taken this case pro bono?

BURR. He's a cartman, Alex! With no prospects for work tomorrow or the next day!

HAMILTON. I will need these books for tomorrow.

BURR. The pertinent papers are here, *(BURR hands HAMILTON a portfolio)* marked and ready for the witnesses. If you find the time to look at those, that's all you'll need to know.

HAMILTON. The arguments are in order?

BURR. Your questions begin on the third page.

(HAMILTON looks quickly through it, and gives portfolio back.)

Take it. My notes are here—*(Indicating another portfolio.)*

HAMILTON. Thank you.

(Grabs BURR's portfolio and heads for the door.)

BURR. Sir?

HAMILTON. I will present the opening and the summation. You handle the witnesses.

BURR. We get nothing if we lose.

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I must get home or Eliza will have cause for suspicion. I assume this goes before Judge Brock?

BURR. You want to take the lead on this?

HAMILTON. I need to be as visible as possible no matter how small the case—

BURR. *(Interrupts:)* But Eaton can't afford to lose—

(HAMILTON leaves as THEODOSIA coming in another way.)

THEODOSIA. Is Alex with you still?

BURR. No, Theo. No.

Scene 7

(The next day. A courtroom. TROUP is standing, papers in hand, facing JUDGE and INSPECTOR. BURR and HAMILTON sit together. Two COURTROOM WATCHERS will speak out over the action.)

TROUP. Your Honor, the defense is through with the witness.

(Sits back down, while BURR gets up.)

BURR. Your Honor. *(To INSPECTOR:)* Sir. The Court has heard your account as the City's Inspector, and I have only one question to put to you. You did say, that our client did show you this Customs Release for the wool?

INSPECTOR. Yes.

BURR. You did recognize the signature as valid?

INSPECTOR. Yes.

BURR. Deny for me then, that, although the law requires a cartman to carry with him all pertinent documents, allowances have been made when reasonable proof is at hand.

(HAMILTON *getting annoyed, tries to get BURR's attention.*)

The natural laws of man as well as the Preamble to the Statutes of the State of New York

(HAMILTON *clearly agitated.*)

demand that fairness always takes precedence over the letter of the law.

HAMILTON. (*Jumps up, to BURR.:*) Sir!

JUDGE. Out of order, Mister Hamilton. (*To BURR.:*) Continue.

BURR. Your action, Inspector, appears to have been motivated by personal interest rather than civic practice, and in so doing you have nearly destroyed a man's life. I charge that it is you who should be on trial.

(*COURTROOM WATCHERS applaud, INSPECTOR cowed, HAMILTON trying to contain his anger.*)

I thank you. Your Honor.

JUDGE. Thank you, Inspector, you may take your seat.

(*BURR takes his seat as HAMILTON rises.*)

HAMILTON. Your Honor. We have heard, this morning, the testimony—

(*He keeps talking while the two COURTROOM WATCHERS make their comments. JUDGE should be prepared to cut off HAMILTON whenever COURTROOM WATCHERS get to the point that they are openly laughing and decorum is lost.*)

FIRST COURTROOM WATCHER. What is this then?

HAMILTON. Of the two parties, and it only remains, to summarize,

SECOND COURTROOM WATCHER. I thought Burr just did it.

HAMILTON. To summarize the law as it applies to their case.

SECOND COURTROOM WATCHER. Is he kidding?

HAMILTON. Under the laws, the very regulations,

FIRST COURTROOM WATCHER. *(To HAMILTON:)* This case is finished.

HAMILTON. Of the City of New York, Customs,

SECOND COURTROOM WATCHER. I didn't even know he was back in town.

HAMILTON. That is, a Customs official,

FIRST COURTROOM WATCHER. He obviously just woke up!

(COURTROOM WATCHERS tittering, HAMILTON getting flustered.)

HAMILTON. Is required to take into account all papers, each and every one,

FIRST COURTROOM WATCHER. *(To HAMILTON:)* Oh sit down, will you?!

HAMILTON. Presented at the time of final clearance of the goods at hand,

SECOND COURTROOM WATCHER. *(Shouts out:)* Go on back to Philadelphia!

HAMILTON. A parcel, whatever that parcel may contain.

(COURTROOM WATCHERS laughing out loud.)

JUDGE. *(Pounds gavel to quiet his courtroom.)* Mister Hamilton, do you have anything of substance to add to your colleague's summation?

HAMILTON. Your Honor, I believe everything pertinent must have already been said.

(JUDGE raps gavel. ALL OTHERS quiet and standing.)

JUDGE. Decision for Mister Eaton.

(COURTROOM WATCHERS cheer.)

Next.

HAMILTON. *(To BURR:)* I suppose you think that was very funny.

TROUP. *(To HAMILTON:)* What are you talking about?

HAMILTON. Aaron grabbed the summary!

TROUP. No one noticed.

HAMILTON. I beg your pardon—

TROUP. *(Interrupts.)* You did win. Send me the bill, boys, and I'll be sure Eaton gets paid. Moving money through the City can be slower than—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, to BURR:)* You made me look like a fool up there!

JUDGE. *(Raps gavel again.)* I said, Next!

TROUP. Gentlemen, gentlemen. Michael runs out of chowder by one o'clock—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, to TROUP:)* We had agreed yesterday that I would lead on this case.

BURR. No—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, to BURR:)* I told you I would. You were either for me or against me this morning, which was it?

BURR. Our client had my total attention.

TROUP. *(To HAMILTON:)* Let's go eat before—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I will thank you, Robert, not to stand up for a man who makes me the butt of his joke.

(Exits.)

TROUP. Too many irons in the fire, what with this Constitution business, and the Federalists.

BURR. Yes.

(Indicates they should leave too, and they start walking)

“When the hour is nigh upon me/
Let me in a tavern die/
With a tankard beside me/—”

TROUP. *(Quick to finish the ditty:)* And a steak and kidney pie!
(Coming up to pub entrance:) Venison today.

MAN GOING IN PUB. Rarebit tomorrow.

MAN COMING OUT. I thought it was a leg of lamb today.

TROUP. Lamb on Wednesdays.

BURR. You love this place!

TROUP. And dinner invitations at private homes, which are never as frequent as I might wish.

BURR. We cannot depend on Theo being well.

TROUP. I understand.

BURR. *(At the door of the pub:)* Can you excuse me one more time?

TROUP. Go on home to her. There will be someone in there whose arm needs twisting for the new Constitution. New York is going to be one of the hardest states to win over.

BURR. Too many of that “multitude” living right under our noses!

(BURR leaves. TROUP goes in pub. Lights fade.)

Scene 8

(Street, NYC, spring and early summer 1788.)

CRIER. The Constitution passes! Nine states approve the new government of the United States of America. Four states may still join in.

CRIER. Tenth state, Virginia, approves Constitution and joins the United States.

CRIER. Federalist Party plans celebration parade on Broad Way.

CRIER. New York State still undecided on Constitution. City may secede.

(July 23rd, 1788. The noisy start of a parade. A band plays “Hail Columbia,” and CROWD gathers with whistles and cheers. A thirteen-gun cannon salute starts the parade.)

TROUP. The float is coming! Here it comes!

THIRD PARADE WATCHER. Where? Where is it??

FIRST PARADE WATCHER. There!

SECOND PARADE WATCHER. *(Counting the horses pulling a float:)*

One, two, three, four...

THIRD PARADE WATCHER. Ten horses!

SECOND PARADE WATCHER. Ten horses to pull it!

TROUP. A thirty-two gun frigate! That's what it is all right!

FIRST PARADE WATCHER. Would you look at them sails! As big as a regular frigate they are.

(Another cannon fires from the ship—everyone reacts.)

TROUP. That crew looks like real sailors!

THIRD PARADE WATCHER. Must be a couple dozen of 'em riding up there.

TROUP. And there's the commodore!

SECOND PARADE WATCHER. Oh Daddy, I like the waves! Look, they're on the other side too! Up and down, up and down...

THIRD PARADE WATCHER. Me, I always want to see the lady on the bow.

FIRST PARADE WATCHER. You best go somewheres else then, mister. This is Hamilton's parade, it is. See. Look there at the figger-head on this boat.

SECOND PARADE WATCHER. Is that Washington, Daddy? is that General Washington on the front of the boat?

TROUP. That's Alexander Hamilton!

ALL AT PARADE. Behold the Federal ship of fame, The Hamilton! We call her name.

FIRST PARADE WATCHER. Hamilton for President!

(A lot of clapping and cheers at that statement. THEODOSIA and BURR are a little away from the crowd.)

THEODOSIA. Now don't you wish you had helped out with the vote?

BURR. This parade is a threat.

THEODOSIA. It's a celebration!

BURR. Do you see Alex standing on that float?

THEODOSIA. No...

BURR. Why isn't he here?

TROUP. *(Coming up to them:)* Theo! It's so good to see you out.

THEODOSIA. I thought you'd be with the Hamiltons.

TROUP. Eliza's up front with the four little ones.

THEODOSIA. Here comes another ship, look! Is that Alex up there?

SECOND PARADE WATCHER. One two three, only four horses on that one, Daddy.

THIRD PARADE WATCHER. Carpenters made the first one, little girl. They had supplies on hand, so didn't cost them so much to make a big one. This one? It's...it's the sailmakers what put this'n together!

TROUP. Alex is still in Poughkeepsie. That figure really looks like him, though, doesn't it.

FIRST PARADE WATCHER. I'm waiting for the brewers' float.

THIRD PARADE WATCHER. Free ale! Would they be that good to us??

THEODOSIA. Alex is missing this??

TROUP. The convention's still meeting. They haven't voted yet.

THEODOSIA. Why didn't they wait to hold the parade until he was back home to see it?

BURR. You tell her, Robert, this parade is a threat.

TROUP. It seems all New York is proud of him!

SECOND PARADE WATCHER. Daddy, Daddy, that man up there ain't got no clothes on!

FIRST PARADE WATCHER. Look over there, honey, see the Indian, see him? See all those furs in his hands...

THIRD PARADE WATCHER. That's one big barrel of ale, that is.

SECOND PARADE WATCHER. But Daddy, that man's—

(Interrupted by FIRST PARADE WATCHER leading this one away.)

BURR. *(To TROUP:)* You're going to miss this excitement if the new government doesn't stay here.

TROUP. If.

BURR. If we are even a part of it.

TROUP. This parade will swing those votes.

THEODOSIA. Someone just said if Washington agreed to be President, he'd get Alex again to help him on finances. The Treasury? I think that's what I heard...

BURR. No one else wants it!

TROUP. No one else understands it!

FIRST, SECOND, THIRD PARADE WATCHERS. *(Heard from off stage, as if parade is that big:)* The Federal Ship of Fame, the Hamilton we call her name

TROUP. *(To THEO:)* It is a shame Alex isn't here today!

THEODOSIA. You helped too.

BURR. Yes, Robert, where's your float?

TROUP. It's been exciting, but Alex has really made a study of government. He should go further.

BURR. All the way to Philadelphia!

TROUP. They'll put the capital right here in New York City.

BURR. Philadelphia's only two days away on the new Flying Machine.

THEODOSIA. My back would never survive that fast a coach.

TROUP. Nor mine.

(Parade has passed. Cries and whistles have died down. They start walking away.)

See you at the fireworks tonight? And dinner! It will be a feast! you can smell the meat already.

(The following occur in a compression of time, April 1789–June 1790.)

CRIER. George Washington inaugurated on Wall Street. Long live George Washington, First President of The United States!

CRIER. Congress approves assumption of war debts. National government to pay state debts.

CRIER. New capital, The Federal City, to be built in Southern States. Government moving to Philadelphia until new capital ready.

Scene 9

(Less than a year later, Philadelphia, January 1791. Large office of Secretary of the Treasury. HAMILTON pacing with letter in hand. TROUP steps into the doorway and is almost overwhelmed by the size of it. HAMILTON spots him.)

HAMILTON. Robert! I thought I'd never see you in Philadelphia!

TROUP. This is some office.

(TROUP will take to studying every detail, the map, flag, desk, view, ceiling, etc.)

HAMILTON. I've said my good-byes to it already.

TROUP. They're giving you another one?

HAMILTON. I'll be back home in New York sooner than we thought.

TROUP. No one's sick, are they? Is Eliza—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) There's no reason for me to stay! I will never get another bill through the Senate without Schuyler here. My whole financial plan is dead.

TROUP. How's he taking that election?

HAMILTON. I don't know anyone who likes to lose.

TROUP. But they still have one more session before he's out for good—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) He won't come back all the way from Albany for just one time.

TROUP. You'll be fine. Are all the offices this fancy—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) Schuyler's the one that got the debt assumption passed.

TROUP. He couldn't even tell you how it works.

HAMILTON. He was on my side—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) What you really need here is a new map. What if the Brits saw—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I need help in the Senate, now! The Bank is coming up for a vote and—

TROUP. (*Interrupts, still focused on the map:*) We're still British colonies in your office and—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I can think of worse possibilities. You might as well tell me what he is up to this time.

TROUP. I haven't even seen Eliza to talk to, much less your father-in-law—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I am talking about the replacement.

TROUP. A new map has been printed—?

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I am asking you about the new Senator, the Honorable Mister Burr.

(TROUP laughs on hearing title.)

I see nothing funny at all.

TROUP. People say he entered the race on a dare.

HAMILTON. I'm going to lose my bank for one of Aaron's games??

TROUP. If the bank isn't approved, it will be because the Senators don't understand why we need one—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, more to himself than TROUP:)* I could have stopped him if only I knew he was running. I could have written to the legislators, I could have written to the papers, but—

TROUP. Alex! People wanted Aaron.

HAMILTON. Schuyler is well-respected, well-to-do, serious—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* And stodgy!

(TROUP spots the flag and holds it out.)

Don't you wonder what's going to happen to this when Vermont and Kentucky join in?

HAMILTON. Nothing's going to happen!

TROUP. More stripes? More stars?

HAMILTON. *(Going back to letter in his hand:)* No other states will join the union until we can promise financial security. Senator Burr is a real snag in that dream of ours.

TROUP. We need to find someone else like your father-in-law to assist you.

HAMILTON. Read this letter.

TROUP. Hazard? What's he up to these days?

HAMILTON. Paying attention to Aaron.

(TROUP reads as we hear HAZARD, a man from NYC.)

NATHANIEL HAZARD. If elected, Burr will probably have as great an influence as any man. Colonel Burr has an address not resistible by common clay. He has penetration, fire, incessant perseverance, animated execution, a truly great man.

TROUP. He says that about you too.

HAMILTON. But I am serious! Aaron is just playing with whatever toy comes his way.

TROUP. You need to get down to McHenry's Tavern more often and see how serious the other Senators are—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Aaron ran against my champion.

TROUP. Washington is your greatest champion!

HAMILTON. Aaron knows what this means to me.

TROUP. Just because he won doesn't mean he won't vote for your bank.

HAMILTON. He is not a Federalist.

TROUP. Washington isn't either.

HAMILTON. *(Prepares to write:)* I would like to know why Aaron did it. He's not been that interested in government—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* He's like Washington, people pushed it on him.

HAMILTON. Washington! *(Prepares to write:)* I cannot sit back and watch our friend's prediction come true. I am going to—

TROUP. *(Interrupts, grabbing quills away from HAMILTON:)* Alex. Look at your office! Doesn't it tell you what people think? You are the only one who knows how to get us out of debt, and Congress can hardly wait to hear your next—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Jefferson is still giving me trouble. There's another one who didn't want to be here and—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* You just have to keep explaining your ideas.

HAMILTON. Even His Excellency—

TROUP. *(Interrupts—a constant correction he has to make:)* The President! You must call him President Washington.

HAMILTON. Even he has questions about a national bank.

TROUP. Why are we even talking? Why are you not—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I cannot even convince my champion that a national bank is legal in the first place.

TROUP. (*Gives him the quills back:*) Put the arguments on paper right now.

HAMILTON. I have told him everything already! I answer his questions in the morning, and then at noon Jefferson has him over for dinner and too much wine, and back he trots with a hundred more questions the next day.

TROUP. (*Forcing a quill on him:*) Answer them. Washington knows who is the financial genius here.

HAMILTON. I should send you to speak for me.

TROUP. (*Laughs, pulls a stack of papers from his satchel.*) The Federalist Party is all I am capable of helping you with. Here's the draft of the Party letters we talked about. I made a few changes, a word here and there, and here's the list of new members. Your office is grand, but I don't know how you and Eliza can stand being away from home so long. I am sure Theo won't come with Aaron, and they have only the one child to move.

HAMILTON. I've always been able to find diversions wherever I am.

TROUP. Yes. You need to try harder not to be so obvious.

HAMILTON. If you are talking about Angelica, she's gone. Her husband had business in London.

TROUP. I'm sure Eliza misses her sister's company...

HAMILTON. We both do.

TROUP. Yes.

HAMILTON. And now her father won't be visiting either.

TROUP. Does Eliza know about you and, uh...

HAMILTON. Angelica and my wife have always been very close and affectionate sisters, and that still seems to be the case.

TROUP. Good. Well, I'm off on the afternoon coach. Cheer up, Alex, in the end you always get what you want.

HAMILTON. You think so?

TROUP. You should have been in New York for that parade three years ago. You would have no question at all about your popularity.

HAMILTON. I still hear the children talking about it.

TROUP. Little Alex and James, they were too small, but Phillip and your little Angelica, they were just old enough to understand that all that fuss was for you. They heard the shouts, "Hamilton For President." Don't think I've ever seen a bigger parade.

(HAMILTON wishes like hell he had been there.)

There will be another one for you to see, one of these days. Give Eliza my regards. Any messages you want me to carry to New York?

HAMILTON. My congratulations, naturally, to Aaron.

(Beat, taking up paper and pen.)

I'm going to pass on Hazard's warning.

TROUP. What warning?

HAMILTON. Aaron will try to take over.

TROUP. Who knows what Aaron will do?

HAMILTON. Exactly my point!

TROUP. We know nothing. All the more reason to keep this topic amongst ourselves.

(TROUP leaves.)

HAMILTON. My friend, I intend to broaden our circle. I'll start with your new list. *(Filling in name on envelope:)* Gerald Dickinson, Esquire. *(Reads over the form letter he is about to put inside envelope:)* My dear sir. I send my heartiest welcome to you as a new Federalist and I look forward to a time when we might meet, but I write you now on a most pressing matter. You may have heard by now of the election of Colonel Burr to the U.S. Senate. As we know not what he stands for, it is an event that should alarm us all.

(ELIZA interviewing HANNAH, two years later, early 1793.)

ELIZA HAMILTON. We've been through several servants already in the two years we've been here, I just want you to understand—

(HANNAH titters, interrupting ELIZA.)

Did I say something funny?

HANNAH. No ma'am.

ELIZA HAMILTON. Do you know any of the other women who have worked for us? Here, in Philadelphia?

HANNAH. I don't get out much, ma'am.

ELIZA HAMILTON. Well. My husband is quite busy, and, I, of course, have the little ones to take care of, but I do take the children back home with some frequency, you know how grandparents can be, and I do need someone here when I'm gone, to take care of The Secretary.

HANNAH. A secretary there is? Here? Too?

ELIZA HAMILTON. Mister Hamilton. The Secretary of the Treasury. For the United States. The government of the United States of America?

HANNAH. Ah—

(Total gibberish to her, interrupted by CRIER.)

CRIER. President Washington wins second term.

CRIER. Washington to serve another four years!

HANNAH. Now him, Missus, him I've heard of.

Scene 10

(A month or so later, 1793, HAMILTON's office at home. The maid HANNAH is with him. A knock at the door goes unanswered. TROUP, just off a long bumpy coach ride, finally bursts in, interrupting HANNAH and HAMILTON in a playful moment.)

HAMILTON. Why, Robert, I— I thought you were coming tomorrow. I certainly am delighted to, uh, see—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Is it too late for supper?

HAMILTON. I think you must have left New York in quite a hurry not to send word—

TROUP. *(Interrupts, snapping a paper down:)* Caught the fastest coach I could find as soon as that hit the streets.

HAMILTON. Hannah...

HANNAH. Yes sir?

HAMILTON. See what you can find to satisfy Mister Troup.

HANNAH. Yes sir!

(HAMILTON watches HANNAH appreciatively as she exits, then goes to his desk which is loaded with several separate stacks of papers.)

HAMILTON. I needed an extra day with you. I have been piling up the correspondence for you. These, are the Party concerns that need your signature. These, I thought you would like to read. These we need to talk about. *(Picking up one letter:)* You will be interested in the letter I am mailing tomorrow—

TROUP. *(Interrupts, indicating the newspaper he brought:)* This I would have liked to have seen before you sent it out.

HAMILTON. I cannot get everything to you—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Try!

HAMILTON. Sometimes I don't think you understand what all I have to do here.

TROUP. That, that nonsense, you didn't have to do.

(TROUP holds the newspaper out to him, and HAMILTON finally takes it, and starts to read. TROUP is bone-weary, but also furious.)

HAMILTON. *(Reading newspaper:)* "It should be obvious to any observer by now that Mister Thomas Jefferson is nothing more than an intellectual voluptuary—"

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* That's it!

HAMILTON. "Who loves France more than his own country."
(Mouthing "vo-lup-tu-ar-y".) Letter perfect, it is exactly as I—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Has he sent word to you yet?

HAMILTON. *(Laughs:)* It is no worse than the lies he puts out on me.

TROUP. I watch out for you.

HAMILTON. Not on everything you haven't. *(Indicates his letter again.)*

TROUP. What is this? *(Looks for a second at it, then drops it.)* Aaron? What possible concern with Aaron could be more important at this moment than keeping Tom from challenging you and—

(HANNAH knocks, interrupting.)

HAMILTON. Open.

HANNAH. Supper sir.

(Comes in with soup, quieting TROUP for the moment. As she serves them, HAMILTON's attention clearly on HANNAH.)

HAMILTON. We were very lucky to find Hannah, weren't we, dear.

HANNAH. You embarrass me, sir.

HAMILTON. You'll like her soup.

TROUP. You missed one fine party at the Burrs' last week. Theodosia served up her turtle soup, lobster pie, chicken and oyster stew—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I do regret not being able to accompany my wife on her every little trip back to New York.

(HANNAH giggles.)

TROUP. Well, when you do you will not recognize Richmond Hill. Aaron had that old mansion totally repainted, wallpapered, landscaped, even dammed up that little creek to form a—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Don't say anything more or Hannah will want to leave us for something better.

HANNAH. Oh no sir.

HAMILTON. I imagine Aaron had to take another loan from you to finance all these embellishments.

TROUP. He is trying very hard to keep Theo happy and healthy. He even offered to resign from the Senate so he could be at home more.

HAMILTON. *(To HANNAH:)* Be sure a bed is prepared, Hannah...

(Beat.)

For Mister Troup.

(HANNAH giggles again and exits.)

HAMILTON. How much did he borrow?

TROUP. You two run about even on my books.

(Beat.)

What was that you gave me about him?

HAMILTON. *(Handing it to him again:)* A letter from Wolcott. I had it copied for our mutual friends.

OLIVER WOLCOTT. *(A worrywart, from Connecticut.)* Mr. Burr will give us much trouble. He has an unequalled talent of attaching men to his views and forming combinations of which he is the centre. I shall not be surprised if Mr. Burr is found in a few years as leader of the popular party in the northern states.

TROUP. I don't see what trouble—?

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Our Party. Aaron will take over the Federalist Party!

TROUP. He didn't seem that interested in us running for Governor—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Governor? We—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) He wasn't even interested in Vice-President last year—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I can't believe this!

TROUP. His reluctance might have something to do with Theo, but—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) Why go to Aaron? why—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) We were looking for someone other than Adams.

HAMILTON. Well, I—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) And we couldn't put you up. Not with Congress threatening you with an investigation—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I wouldn't even consider Vice Presi—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) Why you're jealous! There's Aaron, pursued by both parties, living in a mansion in New York while you're cramped into a few rooms in this feverish city—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) Aaron has been voting against me in the Senate!

TROUP. He's not the only one.

HAMILTON. I met Washington at that house, the start of the war, headquarters was Richmond Hill—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) A fortuitous meeting, but that's not why I'm here tonight—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts, continuing his own thought:*) And now there are just the three of them, living in that huge place—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) What in God's name are you talking about!? You are why I put myself on that miserable coach, and I did not come down here just because of this voluptuary business either.

HAMILTON. Hell, Robert, why are you here??

TROUP. Word is you've been meddling directly in the affairs of State.

HAMILTON. I can't believe this!

(Beat.)

Jefferson has his fingers in my department, you haven't heard that?

TROUP. We hear you have been talking directly to the British Ambassador—

(TROUP drives home his argument, not wanting to even hear HAMILTON's responses.)

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I do have many foreign friends who dine with me—

TROUP. We hear you have been leaking restricted information.

HAMILTON. One sees so many people here in Phila—

TROUP. You are not the Secretary of State!

HAMILTON. I could negotiate better than—

TROUP. You could be charged with treason!

HAMILTON. Treason?!

(Beat. He finally gets the importance of what TROUP is saying.)

After all I've done for this country?

TROUP. Treason. And after the trial, it wouldn't even matter if you were proclaimed innocent. Once you are on trial, your name is ruined forever. It would be the end of everything we've worked for these six years!

HAMILTON. I try to do the very best—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* And I don't want to see you fail! Not now, not when you are so close to... *(Words fail him. He has invested so much in his friend's dream.)*

HAMILTON. The old General will take care of me.

(Beat.)

He needs me. And I need you. I mean to follow your advice.

(Beat.)

I will follow your advice.

TROUP. Will you? Truly?

HAMILTON. Yes!

TROUP. You need to apologize to Jefferson, before his Second comes knocking on the door with correspondence.

HAMILTON. I hear you.

(TROUP offers a pen.)

Yes. Yes, I'll do it. He'll get it tonight, but first, *(Indicating the several stacks of papers he showed TROUP earlier:)* I put these aside for you.

(TROUP finally spies on top of one of the stacks a small booklet.)

I thought you'd never find that.

TROUP. Washington's inauguration speech?

HAMILTON. I had the President sign that one for you.

TROUP. Did you sign it too?

HAMILTON. I could... *(Almost takes it to sign, then doesn't.)* No, I can't take a chance on the General ever seeing that. I'll get you a copy of the second one, too, and after that, the next one—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* With any luck, and no more investigations of your department, it will be yours.

HAMILTON. You can help me write it.

HANNAH. *(At door:)* Your bed, Mister Troup. The linens are warm.

(TROUP, collecting his things, finds the Wolcott letter among them, and throws it on HAMILTON's desk)

TROUP. Forget what Wolcott says. You've got enough real worries.

(TROUP exits.)

HANNAH. *(To HAMILTON:)* I'll be right back, sir.

(HANNAH exits.)

HAMILTON. Time enough to finish one more letter. *(Reading over what he had written earlier:)* "My dear John. From my experiences here at the capitol with our illustrious Senators and the farmer Jef-

person, I am learning quickly how to protect myself before trouble strikes in this political world. For this reason, I pass on to you a copy of a letter regarding Aaron Burr. It sounds a warning to which I can only add these, my own personal observations: Burr is unprincipled, both as a public and private man. He is determined to be the head of the popular party, and to climb ‘per fas aut nefas’—*(Stops, crosses out the Latin and substitutes English phrase.)* To climb by hook or crook to the highest honors of the state, and as much higher as circumstances will permit. Burr is one of the worst sort—a friend to no one—*(Stops, crosses out “no one.”)* a friend to nothing but as it suits his interests and ambition. *(Adds the following ending to finish his letter:)* In a word, if we have an embryo Caesar, ’tis Burr. I for one do not want him in my *(Stops, crosses out “my.”)* in our Party.”

End of Act I

Scene 11

(4 years later, NYC pub, late June 1797. BURR has just given HAMILTON the letter he was writing at the end of last scene. HAMILTON studying it intently.)

BURR. What made you do it?

HAMILTON. I write so many things...

BURR. Yes. Never could get through even one of your papers on finance.

HAMILTON. I bet you did better than most of the Senators.

BURR. At least I could read!

(Beat—would prefer not to have to drag this out of HAMILTON:)

You did write this letter?

HAMILTON. It is my hand... January, ninety-three...I was still in Philadelphia...weren't you?

BURR. Probably here in New York.

HAMILTON. Theo, she...?

BURR. She died the next year. May.

HAMILTON. I knew you were in Philadelphia when she...

BURR. Yes, the Senate was in session, and I was there. The letter, Alex.

HAMILTON. Indeed, I do seem to have written this without regard for your reputation, and it does seem to indicate a lapse in judgment...I had so many things pressing on me back then...all that business with Jefferson...

(Beat. With each reason HAMILTON hopes BURR will say "that's all right, I understand," but BURR says nothing.)

And the Senate... Well, you were there...

(Beat.)

The Congress investigating me...

(Beat.)

And Adams! I had to give the Presidency to Adams!

BURR. No, that just happened this year, Alex.

HAMILTON. That's right, I forgot, you were on the ballot too. Well, I had to put up with him as a Vice President for way too long.

(Beat.)

And, of course, always some emergency with one of the children...or Eliza...

(Beat.)

I was under more pressure than I realized.

(Stops. Gone about as far as he would like to.)

BURR. And...?

HAMILTON. I think we're certainly doing better now. All that's behind me. I'm working with this one and that in Adams' cabinet, they're listening to me as long as he isn't around. Schuyler's back in the Senate, another baby's on the way, and—

BURR. *(Interrupts:)* The letter, Alex, why did you write it?

HAMILTON. I honestly don't remember, it was years ago!

(Beat.)

I guess I just...I, I trust you will accept my apology.

BURR. A gentleman must. If sincerely offered.

HAMILTON. I do mean it, of course. Never again...partner. *(Raises his glass.)* To our new case?

BURR. To the new baby first! you are a lucky man, Alex. And then, yes, of course, to our new client, LeGuen.

HAMILTON. LeGuen! The fees from this case alone should pay our bills for years.

BURR. To years of prosperity!

HAMILTON. I figure if we can count on that income until the next election, I'll have enough to settle my debts and...

BURR. And?

HAMILTON. And then I will be able to devote myself without distraction to leading the nation.

BURR. That's only four years from now! This case may drag on longer than that—

HAMILTON. *(In his dream, oblivious to BURR:)* I will be in The Office of the President in the new Federal City of America.

BURR. Unless, of course, Adams wins a second term.

HAMILTON. He'll be just a bad memory in four years.

JOHN ADAMS. *(A memory, Massachusetts accent.)* Bear with me, Abigail. We'll be in Philadelphia for just a bit longer. We must have patience—they are working on the new capital. The mosquitoes are bad here, yes I know, Abigail, all of this is not my choice either, but there is one blessing on my Presidency for you. That swaggering, sword-waving, speculating West Indian is going back to New York. Thank you, Lord, for getting Hamilton out of my hair!

(TROUP comes just inside the pub.)

TROUP. *(Waves to them from the door.)* Gentlemen!

HAMILTON. *(To BURR:)* Wait long enough, and dinner is free.

TROUP. I heard that! *(To BURR:)* It will be the fourth one he's palmed off me in four days, but then you're not much better, just home more.

BURR. How meanly the judge treats his friends!

TROUP. If the two of you paid more attention to your lucrative profession, you could be treating me.

BURR. *(Getting up:)* And risk the charge of bribery? Sir!

TROUP. Neither of you have cases before me.

HAMILTON. I just filed for LeGuen.

TROUP. By the time that one comes to trial, I will have retired off the bench.

BURR. (*Trying to take his leave.*) You won't have to pay for me today.

TROUP. Another pretty lady trying to snare you with a meal?

BURR. (*To HAMILTON.*) Stingy and jealous to boot!

TROUP. Don't chase off my only company!

HAMILTON. I have things to discuss with you.

TROUP. (*To BURR who is almost out the door.*) My love to your daughter.

BURR. (*Remembers a paper, which he hands to TROUP.*) And she remembered you, with a new Yankee Doodle she found for your collection.

(BURR leaves.)

TROUP. (*Opening it.*) Want to bet I have this one already? (*Reads it.*)

“When the Fed-er-al-ist came to Philly
What do you think he found there?
A Senate Chamber,
A Cabinet,
And a filly with such long blonde hair.”

No, I don't have this one.

(Reads the rest.)

“Alexander keep it up,
Alexander handy.
Mind your money
But leave some time
For Maria to see her dandy.”

(HAMILTON says nothing.)

That's kind. Not to call Angelica by name.

(HAMILTON still very quiet.)

Have you seen this before?

HAMILTON. It's a small part of a bigger slander. Read this.

(Hands TROUP a pamphlet.)

I'll need a Second.

TROUP. Don't even think of it, Alex! No! *(Puts pamphlet down.)* Just tell me what happened.

HAMILTON. I am accused in here, again, of profiting from public funds, only this time the author claims to have "absolute proof of my involvement."

TROUP. But Congress investigated all that, and besides, what does money have to do with Angelica—?

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* It is Maria. Maria Reynolds. Her husband is a financial trader.

REYNOLDS. *(Reading a note while holding onto MARIA:)* "Seven tonight?" *(Twisting MARIA's arm:)* Who were you writing this to, my love?

(A squeal from MARIA.)

Tell me, Maria... It could earn us more than pocket change.

(Another squeal.)

You can find someone else to entertain you. You always do.

MARIA. Hamilton.

REYNOLDS. *(Howls with laughter.)* Oh! You did well there.

(Beat.)

I think I'll write him too!

HAMILTON. There are some letters between myself and her husband, and the subject is money. You could read them and think that profiteering was the topic, but blackmail is what it really was.

TROUP. Blackmail? who are these people?!

HAMILTON. *(To the BOY at the bar:)* Bring the Judge a whiskey.

TROUP. Just tell me the story straight.

HAMILTON. I had a bit of a fling when we were living in Philadelphia.

TROUP. Yes, Angelica.

HAMILTON. You obviously do not know this woman.

TROUP. The maid who served us?

HAMILTON. (*“No”*;) The particular woman is not the problem, it is the husband and his letters!

(TROUP downs the whiskey, and sends BOY off for another.)

It all started when Mister Reynolds got himself arrested, and was looking for a way to get out of jail.

(REYNOLDS behind bars. Two CONGRESSMEN and JIM MONROE come up to him.)

REYNOLDS. Thank you for coming, uh, Senators, Congressmen? Your, your honor-ships—

JIM MONROE. (*Interrupts*;) You asked us here for some purpose?

REYNOLDS. Oh, yes sir, Mister Monroe, and I will make it worth your while, if you could, uh, promise some consideration toward my situation here. That is, of course, if you find my information useful.

(Hands each one a letter. They will read, show them to one another, whisper among themselves.)

FIRST CONGRESSMAN. From Hamilton?

REYNOLDS. The Secretary of the Treasury, the Fed-er-royale Hammy, that’s who sent ’em all right. That’s what he paid me, you see the sum right there. You can imagine what it was for.

SECOND CONGRESSMAN. Blackmail?

REYNOLDS. Blackmail! Oh, please, sir, I’m an honest man. Shares, that’s what I was selling. Hammy couldn’t purchase the public funds himself, of course, him being such a high official in the government. I, you see, I was his agent.

(Beat.)

’Course at the time, I didn’t know who he was, his job I mean. I’ve bought for all sorts of people, don’t you doubt that, and they’ll

vouch for me. So, there it is, you have the proof before you. In his own hand. Take it, take them all, but don't forget who give 'em to you.

TROUP. You did have the affair, though, with this woman, his wife—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Yes!

TROUP. Angelica wasn't enough—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I am not talking about my sister-in-law!

(Beat—a bit of a stand-off.)

TROUP. This couple, they are pursuing you still?

HAMILTON. *(“No”:)* Aaron handled their divorce years ago.

TROUP. Does the whole world know about these two? Does Eliza—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* The problem lies with the three Congressmen. One of them was Jefferson's old crony, Jim Monroe, and—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* You were supposed to be telling me everything.

HAMILTON. I thought the subject would never surface again.

TROUP. Your wife is in no condition to hear all this—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* These three men asked to see me about the charges Reynolds was making. Of course, I met with them. I told them fully about my little dalliance, and I showed them more letters, the ones I had in my possession that Mister Reynolds had sent to me, and some love letters from his wife as well.

FIRST CONGRESSMAN. A nasty business, Alex.

SECOND CONGRESSMAN. Your last affair with a married woman, I dare say.

FIRST CONGRESSMAN. Except for family...

(Sniggers from ALL are barely suppressed.)

JIM MONROE. *(To HAMILTON:)* Mum's the word.

(The three MEN take their leave.)

HAMILTON. From the letters I had, they could clearly see it was a matter of blackmail over the affair, and not profiteering.

TROUP. *(Picks up pamphlet HAMILTON gave him earlier. Looks through it.)* Damn.

HAMILTON. It's not signed. I think it started with Jim Monroe, he's Jefferson's man after all, I bet he whispered about the letters Reynolds had, and that's why this charge is surfacing again—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Forget about it.

HAMILTON. I have to clear my name.

TROUP. But you don't know who to go after!

HAMILTON. I won't be able to run in the next election if I don't clear my name now. Adams? Could Adams have started this?

(Picks up pamphlet, thumbs it as if looking for clues.)

TROUP. You can't challenge the President, Alex! You can't challenge any gentleman without proof!

HAMILTON. I can't ignore it.

TROUP. The quieter you are, the sooner this will go away. Call attention to it, and it will become worse.

HAMILTON. I have told the truth! This is a lie. *(Throws pamphlet on table, gets up to leave.)* I'm going after Jim!

(HAMILTON leaves before TROUP can stop him. TROUP, disgusted, picks up pamphlet and leaves.)

Scene 12

(A few days later. BURR in his law office. A despondent TROUP walks in.)

BURR. And a cheery good morning to you too!

TROUP. *(Moves dueling pistols off the only chair.)* Why are these out?

BURR. *(Pulls out pair of swords.)* You think Alex would prefer these?

TROUP. Please.

BURR. Jim has no preference, so I thought you might chose which...

(TROUP not interested.)

Later. That's fine with me. Just trying to move things forward. Let's see, what else... *(Recalling The Code:)* "The Seconds shall try all possible means to bring the parties to a reconciliation."

TROUP. I'm not really his Second.

BURR. Whatever you can do will be appreciated. *(Picking top letter off a stack of letters:)* He sent Jim this letter several days ago.

(BURR holds out letter to TROUP. We hear HAMILTON:)

HAMILTON. Mister Monroe, Sir. It was my earnest wish to have experienced a conduct on your part such as was due to me, to yourself, and to justice. It would have been agreeable to me to have found in your last letter sufficient cause for relinquishing my earlier impressions of your intentions toward me, but I cannot say I do.

BURR. So, in our letter, *(Tries to hands new letter to TROUP.)* Jim is prepared to offer whatever appeasement he can, but that is not to say that Jim put the story out.

TROUP. *(Doesn't want to look at it.)* Someone did.

BURR. The papers are full of it again today, but still there's no proof for him to name Monroe.

TROUP. *(Really tired of this subject:)* Please.

BURR. Fine. *(Puts letter down.)* How's Eliza bearing up?

TROUP. She has taken to bed.

BURR. You would think Missus Hamilton would be inclined to avoid the source of her troubles.

TROUP. She is expecting! The child will be here at any minute, Alex should be at her side, and where is he? At his desk, writing denials.

BURR. You are tired of this subject. They ran the full denial in last week's papers.

TROUP. Oh no, he's working on yet another!

BURR. He does love to put pen to paper.

TROUP. This time he plans to admit to the affair with Missus Reynolds.

BURR. Get going! He needs you worse than I do.

TROUP. I have already told him that would be monstrous behavior! Ungentlemanly!

BURR. *(Laughing:)* Hiding behind a woman!

TROUP. He's not listening to me.

BURR. No one will believe it.

TROUP. Oh yes they will! Because he is giving the newspapers copies of the letters she wrote to him.

BURR. He's teasing you.

TROUP. Six children...another one coming...

BURR. You're serious? We need to calm him down... Maybe if we get this business resolved with Jim... *(Spots his sword and picks it up.)* You need inspiration! Another mock fight?

TROUP. Put that away!

BURR. Should I suggest to Monroe that he not respond to Alex at all?

TROUP. Alex would just take after someone else. I tell you, I don't know what to do with him.

BURR. *(Holding out the letter again:)* Read this.

(TROUP not responding.)

We could go to Little's when we're through. Let's see, it's Saturday...Giblet pie...

(TROUP perks up a little.)

Ah... Look at Jim's letter first, then we'll go eat.

(Finally, TROUP takes the letter and reads. We hear MONROE.)

JIM MONROE. Mister Hamilton, Sir. The several explanations which I have made accorded with truth, and hold no charge against you. If these do not yield you any satisfaction, I can give no other, unless called on in a way which always for the illustration of truth, I am ever ready to meet.

TROUP. You want a response that Alex wishes Monroe no harm either?

BURR. Perfect.

TROUP. *(Pockets the letter from Monroe.)* I will see what I can do. You promised me giblet pie.

(They leave together, while scene changes to HAMILTON's office. A PAPER BOY passes.)

PAPER BOY. Read all about it! Love letters from Philly female to Fed Chief! Exact copies! Printed here! Read all about it!

(Repeats until he exits.)

Scene 13

(HAMILTON in his office studiously reading newspaper. TROUP comes in dropping newspapers.)

TROUP. *(To audience, as if they are people waiting in an office:)* Hot off the presses, don't miss this one! It's the best gossip you've had in a long, long time. In fact, it's better than gossip because it comes to you right from the horse's mouth!

(Drops some with HAMILTON too.)

HAMILTON. Robert! those people are my clients.

TROUP. You think they haven't heard?? *(To audience again:)* Don't leave. Mister Hamilton will have more time than ever to handle your cases now. *(To HAMILTON:)* I wish to God you had let me at least read the thing before—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts, scanning papers:)* Damn them!

TROUP. Every Federalist I know is saying the same of you. You have ruined us!

HAMILTON. I cannot find one newspaper that has printed the full statement! I gave them a full explanation—

(TROUP, with a paper in his hand, begins to read aloud, until MARIA takes over:)

TROUP. My little Alex,

MARIA. My little Alex, I have kept my bed these two days and now rise from my pillow which your neglect has filled with the sharpest thorns. If my dear friend has the least esteem—

TROUP. *(Interrupting:)* You told me the woman was illiterate.

HAMILTON. I thought she might have dictated the letters—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* The language is hardly simple, though, and the syntax is—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Spare me the analysis.

(TROUP turns to the paper again, to read the rest of her letter.)

MARIA. If my dear friend has the least esteem for the unhappy Maria whose greatest fault is loving him, he will come as soon as he shall get this, and until that time, my breast will be the seat of pain and woe.

TROUP. Didn't you even like the woman?!

HAMILTON. I did it as a last resort—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* You have used her!

(A stand-off as HAMILTON is called up short by TROUP. HAMILTON waits as long as he can, but finally breaks it, as he wants to move forward)

HAMILTON. You think someone will challenge me on her behalf.

TROUP. Her husband should.

HAMILTON. He is no gentleman.

TROUP. He was civil enough not to take his business with you to the newspapers.

HAMILTON. I do not know that for sure.

TROUP. Then why did you go after Jim Monroe!?

(Beat. Another stand-off.)

HAMILTON. What do you think I should do?

TROUP. I can't believe you are even asking me—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Not one paper addresses the fact that these letters clear me of the charge of profiteering.

TROUP. No one cares anymore!

HAMILTON. I have given this pitiful collection of states countless hours, trying to get them out of debt and now—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* And now you've given them a wonderful laugh.

(Another stand-off.)

HAMILTON. We have three years until the next election.

TROUP. You need to go home and patch up things with Eliza today.

HAMILTON. Don't worry about her—

TROUP. *(Interrupting:)* Someone has to!

HAMILTON. I tell her these little fusses are one of the burdens of being in the public eye, and when that fails, I remind her, "Eliza, you—"

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* "You are a Christian."

(Beat. Another stand-off.)

HAMILTON. Three years from now, this will be forgotten, it will be like the investigation—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* No one will ever forget this! The minute your name is put up for President, Maria's "seat of pain" will be back in every newspaper in the country.

HAMILTON. We can find something equally damning on any candidate—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Your reputation is ruined! That dream is gone.

HAMILTON. Reputations can be made again.

(Once again, a stand-off, then TROUP laughs.)

TROUP. It might not have been a good idea anyway. Do you remember what the old General said about the Presidency?

GEORGE WASHINGTON. Thank you, gentlemen, thank you, for all your expressions of confidence, but do not think me modest when I tell you, I would have thought twice about waging a war if I had known I would have to be your President too.

HAMILTON. First we have a man who doesn't want the office. Now we have one who doesn't deserve—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Adams is a Federalist.

HAMILTON. People will support a man who deserves the office, who has proven himself—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* You think you can get by with anything?

HAMILTON. I told the truth.

TROUP. *(Very tired of fighting with his old friend:)* Alex. You are the brightest among us, and you have worked hard, but a President...no.

HAMILTON. I will find a way.

TROUP. You have your practice. You have your family. You might even be able to still head up the Party here in New York, if the old General can be persuaded to vouch for you. *(Leaving.)* My regards to Eliza, and your new little, William?

HAMILTON. William.

TROUP. Tell her I will come to see them, soon.

HAMILTON. I'll send a letter to Washington.

TROUP. Give him my regards.

(TROUP leaves.)

HAMILTON. Washington will help me out.

(Lights fade. Eleven months later, Spring 1798. DELIVERY BOY on street, carrying a large parcel, looking for address.)

DELIVERY BOY. Partition Street... Number Fifty-eight...Fifty Eight. *(Stops at door, reads nameplate:)* A. Hamilton, Esquire.

(Knocks. HAMILTON comes to the door.)

Colonel Hamilton?

HAMILTON. General. General Hamilton now, boy.

DELIVERY BOY. *(Salutes.)* Yes sir!

(Waits a minute for a tip. Gets a salute instead.)

Thank you.

(HAMILTON waits for the proper acknowledgment.)

Sir.

(DELIVERY BOY leaves. HAMILTON takes parcel inside, unpacks and holds up his new uniform.)

Scene 14

(Continuous, same day in spring 1798, HAMILTON's office. He is trying on his new General's uniform, which doesn't quite fit. BURR peeks in, catching HAMILTON looking in the mirror.)

BURR. *(Salutes, half in jest.)* General, sir. Congratulations.

HAMILTON. Come in, come in, Aaron. At ease.

BURR. Where is everyone? I thought the Water Committee—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I, uh, yes! Today's the meeting. I needed to talk with you about something else first, and then the uniform just happened to arrive, so I thought I had better try it on.

BURR. Good idea.

HAMILTON. Washington ordered the new ones with such urgency he didn't even ask my measure. This business with France may flare up at any minute.

BURR. Oh yes?

HAMILTON. I have no doubt the French will attack soon. And after that's over, if all goes well, I'll take the Army out west, to see what we can do about annexing those Spanish holdings.

BURR. Take LeGuen with you.

HAMILTON. I never thought I could grow weary of a lucrative case.

BURR. Nor I.

HAMILTON. How can you be so cheery when you may not be alive tomorrow?

BURR. Ah. That is what you wanted. You were asked to speak officially, then, for your brother-in-law?

HAMILTON. I speak to you only as a friend.

BURR. We are past that point, John and I.

HAMILTON. I could find a place for you in my Army.

BURR. Washington has already denied my promotion.

HAMILTON. I could change that if you could be persuaded to withdraw your challenge and—

BURR. (*Interrupts:*) If you are not John's official Second, we best speak only of water issues, don't you think?

HAMILTON. I have very little time, Aaron, before the others come.

BURR. Let's see, there's the stock the new water company will be offering, and the multiple investment opportunities, you always enjoy that, and—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) Call off this challenge.

BURR. Getting pure water is a challenge indeed, considering the city's tainted sources and—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I hear John accused you of bribing the legislature. So what?

BURR. So what?

HAMILTON. I did not mean to say you actually put money in someone's pocket—

BURR. (*Laughing, interrupts:*) Thank you, sir.

HAMILTON. I know you may not remember this, but Nicholson accused me once of profiting on the foreign debt...

BURR. Oh I remember.

HAMILTON. And I challenged him.

BURR. Much the same situation.

HAMILTON. I will always be thankful for a friend's intervention, a friend who persuaded me to withdraw—

BURR. (*Interrupts:*) Save it for the courtroom, Alex.

HAMILTON. A duel proves nothing!

BURR. The classic argument of a man not directly involved at the moment.

HAMILTON. And a perfectly correct one.

BURR. You are using me, Alex. Using my honor to keep your affairs covered up—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) How dare you question my intentions!

BURR. Bribery, sir! is a serious charge, and John has been given sufficient opportunity to withdraw the accusation. Why are you not speaking with him if you are sincere, or do you now agree with the charge?

HAMILTON. I told you—

BURR. (*Interrupts:*) Alex, I understand. Maria, the letters, when was that, just a year ago? And now there's a possibility I might kill Angelica's husband, and that affair would become public fodder too. How much can Eliza bear? I do understand, believe me.

HAMILTON. Are you quite finished?

BURR. How much can your reputation bear? You'd have to defeat the whole French army single-handed to beat down the specters of two illicit women on your Election Day.

HAMILTON. If I were not about to blaze my trail into the chronicles of history, I could be upset with you, Aaron. I dare say, with a little kindness, Washington might have been useful to you, too, at this time of great opportunity.

BURR. One hates to press on the old General in his retirement but then, one doesn't try to use another man's reputation for his purposes either.

HAMILTON. I am sincerely trying to help you, Aaron.

BURR. You stray outside the rules, Alex.

HAMILTON. Tell the others I will be at the meeting as soon as I return from the tailor. Colonel.

(HAMILTON walks off.)

BURR. General.

(BURR salutes, then exits.)

(A few days later. HAMILTON, packed up and ready to go, is putting on the coat of his new uniform. ELIZA helps him.)

HAMILTON. By the time I return, Eliza, you will be so proud of me. The Presidency will seem like nothing compared to what I have accomplished on the battlefield.

ELIZA. Is not Washington commanding—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* Yes, yes, I believe he may be along, somewhere at the back.

(HAMILTON leaves. ELIZA picks up after him.)

ADAMS. *(Strolling with WASHINGTON:)* Hamilton, General Washington? Hamilton as your second in command?? Surely you will want your old Secretary of War, General Knox, beside you.

WASHINGTON. Have you spoken with him since you've been President?

ADAMS. Well, no...

WASHINGTON. He prefers to stay home.

ADAMS. Then Pinckney, General Pinckney—

WASHINGTON. (*Interrupts:*) We might not get Hamilton if Pinckney were above him.

ADAMS. Is that so bad?

WASHINGTON. Hamilton is most anxious to serve.

ADAMS. Oh it is hard to keep him from it! His letters of advice are received daily in all the government offices. And did we not just promote him to Inspector General? Why should he also have to be second in command of this particular—

WASHINGTON. (*Interrupts:*) You are concerned about my choice.

ADAMS. Well yes! Who wouldn't be! He is always begging for a fight!

WASHINGTON. You're the President, John. Why aren't you speaking to the French instead of wasting time with me?

ADAMS. Well, I...

WASHINGTON. Compromise is a possibility.

ADAMS. Yes, there's an idea. Best to try and prevent the conflict all together. I know, you'd rather be spending your time in Virginia.

WASHINGTON. That is where I intend to be.

ADAMS. Then I will certainly do my best to avoid...unnecessary trouble.

HAMILTON. (*Comes back to his home, July 1800.*) A truce! Before the French even attacked!

ELIZA. I'm glad you're home.

HAMILTON. Goddamn that sniveling idiot. I have tried my best to shore up his presidency, and this is the thanks I get! I am calling his hand! I am calling his hand on this one.

(Exits, throwing uniform coat off.)

ELIZA. *(Picking up coat off floor:)* Robert. I'd better send for Robert. He'll think of something to keep Alex busy.

Scene 15

(A month later, August 1800. HAMILTON and TROUP in HAMILTON's office. HAMILTON searching through stacks of papers.)

HAMILTON. I tell you, this is so...secret, I had to take extra precautions.

TROUP. So you hid it from yourself.

HAMILTON. I just now put it aside...

TROUP. *(Glancing around the office:)* It's been a while since I've been here.

HAMILTON. It's good to see you.

TROUP. How's little William, is he talking?

HAMILTON. Uh...

TROUP. And the baby...?

HAMILTON. I think you should come see them both, before we move so far out of the city that you won't want to make the trip—
(Finds lengthy letter he was looking for.) Ah, here it is! *(Reading:)* "A Letter from Alexander Hamilton and Robert Troup, Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams." *(Giving it to TROUP:)* I'll take it to the printers as soon as you read it.

TROUP. You're moving?? soon?

HAMILTON. I am still looking for a place. Read the letter, Robert!

TROUP. *(Reading from it:)* "President Adams does not possess the talents adapted to the Administration of Government, and there are

great and intrinsic defects in his character which unfit him for the Office of President”?

HAMILTON. (*Pointing out another section for TROUP to read:*) I detail that statement...right...here.

TROUP. “The disgusting egotism, the distempered jealousy, and the ungovernable indiscretion of Mr. Adam’s temper...”? Why did you write this?

HAMILTON. I want us to win! Jefferson asked Aaron to run again on the Republican ticket. What do you think will happen to Adams if he has to stand against those two?

TROUP. He won last time!

HAMILTON. Just three votes more than Jefferson.

TROUP. People want Adams again!

HAMILTON. I tell you Pinckney has a much better chance of winning. (*Holding out a pen:*) I need for you to initial the draft.

TROUP. No!

HAMILTON. I need another name on it, you know my reputation isn’t quite what it was—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) No Federalist will put his name on that!

HAMILTON. (*Holds out the pen again:*) I will print and mail it with the greatest secrecy.

(*TROUP crumples letter and tosses it away.*)

TROUP. We’re losing Party members already. It is time to stand together, all for one, one—

(*A knock interrupts him, and BURR pokes his head in, as HAMILTON is retrieving the crumpled letter.*)

HAMILTON. (*To TROUP:*) For Pinckney!

BURR. The saints are with me, you are still in town.

TROUP. (*To HAMILTON:*) I will call you out if you leave my name on that!

BURR. You two aren't still sparring over LeGuen, are you?

HAMILTON. *(Laughs nervously as he hides the letter, then to BURR:)* I have your money, if that's why you are here.

BURR. *(To TROUP:)* The creditors can rest easy tonight.

TROUP. LeGuen must have finally paid you two the big bill.

HAMILTON. In a manner of speaking. *(Handing BURR a sheet of paper:)* These are his terms for the distribution, subtracting, of course, our advances.

BURR. No complaints from me.

(BURR signs two copies, keeps one.)

HAMILTON. No, I shouldn't think so, considering our client paid the associate more than he did the lead counsel.

(Hands other copy of document to TROUP.)

What do you think? should I challenge this allocation?

TROUP. LeGuen knows what he is doing.

HAMILTON. I beg your pardon?

TROUP. Holding one's temper is always worth a little extra in my book.

BURR. A testament to friendship that Robert even speaks to you after that trial.

(BURR begins a bit of mock swordplay with TROUP.)

TROUP. Early dawn on Weehawken Cliff did come to mind.

HAMILTON. You two laugh all you want! *(To TROUP:)* You were representing the other side.

TROUP. *(Standing very straight:)* That's hardly an excuse to abandon civil behavior,

(Beat.)

but I accept, Alex...

(Beat.)

Your apology?

HAMILTON. *(Finally extends his hand and TROUP accepts it.)* Never again.

TROUP. I thank you, sir. *(Turns to BURR:)* We heard a rumor you might be on the ballot again.

BURR. Is this another offer?

TROUP. How many do you have?

BURR. How many have you heard?

TROUP. The big one. Jefferson is begging you to win the Yankee vote for the Republicans.

(BURR gets up to leave.)

BURR. The hallmark of an independent is to keep an open mind. *(With a salute:)* General Hamilton. *(To TROUP:)* Colonel Troup.

TROUP. Colonel.

(BURR leaves.)

HAMILTON. I cannot believe politics is still just a game to him.

TROUP. He seems willing to play along with us.

HAMILTON. *(Hands TROUP the crumpled letter:)* We must move quickly if we are to win.

(TROUP rips it up.)

TROUP. Not with that slander.

HAMILTON. *(Starts looking.)* I have another draft here somewhere.

TROUP. For God's sake, Alex, what if it gets in the wrong hands?

HAMILTON. Pinckney is the only chance for the Party to stay in our hands. Adams won't even speak to me any more. Washington always welcomed me, and Pinckney will too.

TROUP. Adams is our candidate.

HAMILTON. I mean to change that to Pinckney.

(Lights fade off them.)

1ST PAPER BOY. Get your New London Bee, your New London Bee. Federalist Party Chief denounces President Adams.

2ND PAPER BOY. Hamilton urges electors to support Puh, Pinchme, Puh, Pickme, Puh, (*Finally resorts to spelling it out letter by letter.*) P-I-N-C-K-N-E-Y. In the Morning Star, read all about it in the New York Morning Star.

1ST PAPER BOY. Jefferson and Burr tie for President! Adams and Pinckney out. President Adams blames Federalist Party chief for Party's defeat. Read all about it now in the New London Bee.

ADAMS. (*Speaking to a reporter:*) Why did I lose the Presidency? why else? Because of that bastard brat of a Scotch peddler! Only Washington, may he rest in peace, could keep him in check. Oh, if Washington only knew the brat challenged me! While I was President! The old General would have disowned him on the spot. What does Alex have against me? Who knows. What that man has, however, is a superabundance of excretions which he can not find whores enough to draw off! That's where all his plotting and scheming comes from. And I'm not the only one to suffer his venom, as you well know.

Scene 16

(February 1801. A vote is being taken in Washington, in the U.S. House of Representatives. Can be played as if in a very large public room, with all standing.)

CLERK OF THE HOUSE. Quiet! Quiet please, while the vote for President is taken. Delaware?

DELAWARE CONGRESSMAN. Burr.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE. Virginia?

VIRGINIA CONGRESSMAN. Jefferson.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE. The tally for ballot fifteen for President of the United States yields eight states for Mister Jefferson. Six for Mister Burr. Two abstentions.

(A groan of Congressional male voices.)

HAMILTON. *(Following closely what is happening:)* Damn.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE. I would remind you again that a clear majority of nine states is needed to elect a President. Ballot sixteen will be taken at four o'clock this afternoon.

(HAMILTON's home office. TROUP strides in. HAMILTON is at his desk, writing.)

TROUP. *(Has an opened letter in hand, puts it on HAMILTON's desk, gets no reaction, so he picks it up again and reads aloud:)* "Burr's private character is not defended by his most partial friends. He is bankrupt beyond redemption, except by the plunder of his country." One of our own congressmen just sent me this.

HAMILTON. *(Holds up what he has been writing.)* I have more to do if you want to help—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* You are writing against the man we now support.

HAMILTON. I do not.

TROUP. Please, Alex, put your pen down for a minute and—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* I don't have time to stop. Anyone who might influence an elector must receive a letter before the tie breaks to Aaron's advantage. One hundred more letters.

TROUP. *(Looking at the letter he came in with again, reads:)* "If he can, Burr will certainly disturb our institutions, to secure to himself permanent power, and with it, wealth.

(HAMILTON has been listening, pleased, mouthing words along with TROUP as he reads the letter)

He is truly

TROUP and HAMILTON. The most corrupt man in America."

TROUP. Aaron is now the candidate of the Federalist Party. We could still win!

HAMILTON. No.

TROUP. You want Jefferson.

HAMILTON. Yes.

TROUP. He will get rid of everything you did in the Treasury.

HAMILTON. I trust him to do that.

(Beat.)

Aaron leaked my letter about Adams to the press.

TROUP. *(Doesn't know how the letter got out.)* You should never have written the letter. You shouldn't be writing these!

HAMILTON. I do not know what Aaron will do.

TROUP. He'll listen to you more than Jefferson ever will.

HAMILTON. I don't think even you are listening to me.

TROUP. *(Grabs the stack of finished letters.)* You are destroying us!

(HAMILTON follows, wrestling him for the letters. He forces TROUP to release the letters. HAMILTON picks up the letters, and smoothes them out. TROUP leaves. As set changes to Vice President's office, we are in the midst of the Congressional roll-call again. We hear a tolling of ten clock chimes.)

CLERK OF THE HOUSE. Ballot twenty-seven. Wake up, wake up.

HAMILTON. How can they sleep???

CLERK OF THE HOUSE. *(Sleepy now himself:)* Ballot thirty-six.

(We hear applause.)

VIRGINIA CONGRESSMAN. Finally!

CLERK OF THE HOUSE. Ten votes for Mister Jefferson.

HAMILTON. I did it!

CLERK OF THE HOUSE. The next President of the United States of America is Thomas Jefferson. Vice-President Elect, Aaron Burr.

(Applause. As scene changes for VP office, the following occurs on a street in Washington. Two years later, 1802. TROUP and BURR walking together, and encounter the New York Senator DEWITT CLINTON.)

CLINTON. Robert? Robert Troup? You came all the way down here to the Federal City?

TROUP. Senator Clinton.

BURR. *(To CLINTON:)* Morning.

CLINTON. What brings you, Robert, to this God-forsaken place?

TROUP. Visiting friends.

CLINTON. Ah.

TROUP. The Vice President.

CLINTON. *(Finally acknowledges BURR's presence:)* Oh yes. Aaron.

TROUP. And seeing how this new capital city works.

CLINTON. Well, with more boarding houses than government buildings, it hardly looks even legitimate yet, but then it's only been two years, but tell me, Robert, have you seen Alex lately? No one's heard much from him, and people wonder how the family's doing. There are stories going 'round about the oldest girl. They say she's gone quite mad after...

TROUP. *(Doesn't really want to remember this.)* Philip's death. Yes. The child saw her brother in...well, there's no other way to say it, in...in agony. The bullet went through his middle...a pretty painful way to die...No, she's not doing well, at least that's what I hear. They have their hands full, and there's a new baby, Little Phil.

BURR. *(To TROUP:)* Lunch is waiting for us.

TROUP. Nice to see you, Senator. *(As soon as they leave Clinton:)* A bit chillier than usual. To you.

BURR. That's pretty much the standard I've been living with. We'll talk inside.

Scene 17

(Continuous from previous scene. TROUP and BURR walk in together into Burr's Vice President's office. A waiter is ready with lunch, served to them as soon as they come in.)

BURR. What else do you hear from Alex?

TROUP. *(Anxious to avoid this topic:)* Cheese soup is one of my favorites.

BURR. There's been some talk here about this new Party of his, the Constitutional, the Religious, the—

TROUP. *(Stops eating.)* The Christian Constitutional Society! No one can remember it.

(Beat.)

I don't see much of him anymore.

BURR. Sounds like the President and me.

TROUP. If you had just come down here during the vote, you would be—

BURR. *(Interrupts:)* I could do nothing that might look like campaigning.

TROUP. If you had just given us a word of encouragement—

BURR. *(Interrupts:)* I had already given my word to support Tom.

TROUP. But Tom was here, campaigning.

BURR. Oh yes.

TROUP. Cutting his deals to win.

(BURR has no answer.)

He did not give his word to support you?

BURR. *(Yes, of course Tom did.)* What can one do? I'm not about to challenge the President.

(TROUP knows BURR could not have done anything else.)

The first two years here were not so unpleasant, but now, there are many chilly encounters like the one you just witnessed. Tom is speaking out against me all over town.

TROUP. He's getting ready for the next election.

BURR. No doubt.

TROUP. Would you run?

BURR. If people still want me in another year, why not? But...

TROUP. But?

BURR. Alex—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Alex is out of it!

BURR. The letters Alex wrote—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* That wasn't why Tom won the election! It was the last deal he struck that won—

BURR. *(Interrupts)* But I can't ignore what Alex wrote! And before I even had a chance to call him on it, Alex—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Alex apologized.

(BURR confirms.)

“Never again”?

(BURR confirms.)

For the umpteenth time!

TROUP and BURR. *(Laughing at the unbelievable:)* Never again!

BURR. Why did he write those? And to everyone??

(TROUP really doesn't want to remember this.)

Surely you saw him during the election, you must have heard something—

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* Don't fight with me, Aaron. I don't want to lose any more friends.

(Long beat.)

BURR. Do you see Eliza?

TROUP. Eliza, yes, I do go to see her when I know Alex is not at home. It's all they can do to cope with losing Phillip. They are grieving. Still. It's been seven months, and even with the new baby but, still, their first born? He tried to talk Phillip out of it, but the boy had to respond to the challenge. No choice but to duel. Eliza

tells me Alex spends all his time working, at his practice, or on the new house.

BURR. Have you seen the plans?

TROUP. I only know it's big, and he will still have an office in town.

BURR. And the new Party—?

TROUP. *(Interrupts:)* No one listens to him! Can we get off this subject now!

BURR. Never again!

TROUP. *(He spies a thin pamphlet, placed on his tray beneath a plate.)* Is this for me?

BURR. A little memento from the inauguration.

TROUP. *(Pulls out a thick pamphlet.)* And have you seen—

BURR. *(Grabs it from TROUP.)* Where'd you get this!

TROUP. I guess you know about it.

BURR. Someone showed it to me a couple days ago and—
(Thumbing through it:) Still there! Damn!

TROUP. It speaks quite well of you, a whole chapter on your political career—

BURR. *(Interrupts, he is up, gathering coats:)* We can stop for coffee and a pudding after we see the printer.

(TROUP confused as to why the sudden rush.)

I asked him to take those pages out.

TROUP. *(Looks again, reads title:)* “The History of the Administration of John Adams”?

BURR. I was no part of it! Someone is trying to ruin me before the next election!

TROUP. You don't have to shout.

BURR. I'm sorry, the President makes me so mad yet I have to go through this charade!—

(Beat.)

I am shouting. *(His manners are not what he would like them to be.)* I am sorry, Robert. There is no excuse.

(Beat.)

What is happening to us?

(TROUP feels it too, the changing standards of civility drifting, unwanted, onto them too.)

Forgive me.

(They leave.)

1st HAWKER. Get your copy here! “History of the Administration of John Adams.” Available now in New York, get your copy here!

1st MAN ON STREET. I heard Aaron Burr bought out all the copies in the Federal City.

2nd HAWKER. New issue! New issue! “The Narrative of the Suppression by Colonel Burr of the History of the Administration of John Adams.” Get your copy here!

2nd MAN ON STREET. Someone’s going to challenge on this one.

1st MAN ON STREET. *(Buys one:)* Challenge who?

2nd MAN ON STREET. The editor.

1st MAN ON STREET. *(Reads cover:)* That’s Cheetham. Jim Cheetham.

1st HAWKER. Read it now, read it now. “A View of the Political Conduct of Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States.”

(Two women walking on the street.)

MRS. RIKER. Robert Swartout challenged my Richard because of what he’d been saying about Aaron Burr. For the life of me I couldn’t persuade him to apologize.

2nd HAWKER. *(Coming up to the women:)* For the first time, now available, “A Correct Statement of the Various Sources from Which the History of the Administration of John Adams—”

(Women interrupt by shooing him away.)

MRS. COLEMAN. It's no use. Bill called out Jim Cheetham but I was lucky this time, Cheetham apologized. Even came to the house with hat in hand.

MRS. RIKER. That man's smarter than most.

MRS. COLEMAN. Bill had just killed the harbor master. That might have put him wise.

PAPERBOY. John Swartout claims Senator Clinton behind Cheetham's attacks on Burr. Clinton calls Swartout a liar! Clinton calls Swartout a liar.

MRS. COLEMAN. It'll be Weehawken Cliff, tomorrow.

Scene 18

(The next day. HAMILTON and other men, rougher types, in a tavern.)

FIRST MAN. *(Youngest one, peering out the door:)* Looks like John went down.

HAMILTON. You talking about Swartout?

FIRST MAN. Think so. Hard to keep 'em all straight, ain't it?

SECOND MAN. *(Coming in door:)* John took a bullet in the leg.

THIRD MAN. *(Coming in too:)* The doctor may have to cut it off at the knee.

FIRST MAN. Clinton walking?

FOURTH MAN. *(Oldest man of the four:)* Don't see him yet. The fourth pair, ain't it, to come to blows over Mister Burr?

HAMILTON. I do believe that whore has hit the all-time record.

FOURTH MAN. Who you calling a whore, mister?

(Everyone suddenly quiet.)

HAMILTON. I said Burr, wasn't that Mister Burr you just referred to.

SECOND MAN. (*Indicating HAMILTON, to THIRD MAN:*) Who's he?

THIRD MAN. Ask him.

SECOND MAN. Don't remember seeing you in here, sir.

HAMILTON. (*Extending his hand:*) General Hamilton.

THIRD MAN. You in the Great War, sir?

HAMILTON. Alexander Hamilton.

FOURTH MAN. Name's familiar, but...

HAMILTON. You here for that big parade on Broad Way a number of years back?

FOURTH MAN. Evacuation Day, yeah, sure, I was here. You in the parade?

HAMILTON. I was talking about one a few years later...

SECOND MAN. There was another one! The tradesmen done it, remember? The sailmakers had a boat, the carpenters had something or other, there was this huge barrel of ale went by—

THIRD MAN. (*Interrupts:*) Cannons! there were cannons on one of them floats, real cannons! that shot out—

FOURTH MAN. Yeah, I remember that, never could figger out what it was all about, some sort of advertising, I guessed—

HAMILTON. The Constitution, that's what it was for. The first float, they called it "The Alexander Hamilton."

FIRST MAN. Huh. That was you? What ya' doin' now?

HAMILTON. I am a lawyer, here in town. And I'm heading up a political party that might interest—

FOURTH MAN. You're the Federalist!

HAMILTON. Yes. That's me, I—

FOURTH MAN. The Federalist who came to Philly, Met a filly there with the long blond hair! The filly whose breast were a seat of pain, waiting for you, pining for you—

HAMILTON. *(Interrupts:)* To hell with you!

(HAMILTON bolts from the tavern, turning over a table, deliberately, as he exits.)

SECOND MAN. I remember all that! I thought he was dead.

FIRST MAN. What'd he do—

(Interrupted by TROUP coming in, these rougher types are a little suspicious of yet another gentleman.)

TROUP. *(To the men:)* I was supposed to meet someone here.

(BURR comes in.)

Alex isn't here yet.

FOURTH MAN. You looking for that Federalist?

BURR. Man about my size?

FOURTH MAN. A general...

TROUP. General Hamilton.

FOURTH MAN. He just left.

THIRD MAN. Another boat is coming in.

SECOND MAN. From Jersey?

FIRST MAN. The west.

SECOND MAN. Could be Clinton! Let's go!

FOURTH MAN. *(Indicating table that is still turned over, to TROUP and BURR:)* He was kinda upset. *(To BURR:)* Ain't you—

FIRST MAN. *(Interrupts, yelling inside the door:)* One man's standing!

FOURTH MAN. *(To MEN:)* Wait for me!

(All but TROUP and BURR leave.)

BURR. I would call out the first gentleman I could find, but they are hiding behind their editors.

TROUP. *(Holding up pamphlet "The Political Conduct of Aaron Burr":)*
There's always Alex.

BURR. Cheetham's name is on that.

TROUP. This sentence could only be written by Alex.

(Hands it to BURR, pointing out sentence.)

BURR. *(Reading:)* "Burr from the start was jealous of Hamilton and hated him." Is this why you wanted us here?

TROUP. I was going to make him apologize to you before you challenged him!

BURR. Cheetham stuck his name on it.

TROUP. Yes, but...

BURR. Best to leave it at that.

(They exit. The following takes place as set is changing to two offices, side by side. Two years later, early 1804.)

PAPERBOY. Jefferson to run for President for second term, but not with Burr. People talk of Burr for Governor of New York.

ELIZA. *(To HAMILTON, putting on his coat:)* It's an awfully long ride to Albany.

HAMILTON. I have to go! We are choosing a candidate.

PAPERBOY. Federalists back Aaron Burr in bid for governor. Vice-President to run for Governor of New York.

ELIZA. *(To HAMILTON, removing his coat:)* What could have happened up there that Aaron was nominated—

HAMILTON. I gave them every argument I had against him. I'll just have to think of something else. Something that will really catch their attention.

ELIZA. Why don't you forget all this? You were enjoying the new gardens—

PAPERBOY. *(Interrupts:)* Vice-President loses race for Governor. Federalist Party members do not vote as predicted. Ex-Party Chief

suspected of intervention. Get your Morning Star, get your Morning Star here.

Scene 19

(Two months after the gubernatorial election, New York, June 1804. Two home offices side by side. HAMILTON and TROUP in one, BURR by himself in other. BURR, reading a newspaper, intent on a particular item.)

BURR. A Doctor Cooper...? Do I know this Doctor C.D. Cooper?

DR. COOPER. I assert that General Hamilton declared that he looked upon Mister Burr to be a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government.

BURR. *(Rips article from newspaper:)* He destroyed his own Party, he will destroy me!

(Takes up a pen and begins to write.)

June eighteen, 1804. Mister Hamilton, Sir: I send for your perusal a letter

(HAMILTON, reading BURR's letter aloud to TROUP, continues.)

HAMILTON. A letter printed in the newspaper. You must perceive, sir, the necessity of a prompt and unqualified acknowledgment or denial of the use of any expressions which could warrant the assertions of Dr. Cooper. I have the honor to be, your most obedient servant, A. Burr.

(Hands newspaper clipping to TROUP.)

I believe Aaron found it printed in the Albany Register.

(TROUP reads it as we see and hear DR. COOPER again.)

DR. COOPER. I assert that General Hamilton declared that he looked upon Mister Burr to be a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government. And really, sir, I could detail to you a still more despicable opinion which General Hamilton has expressed of Mister Burr.

HAMILTON. Seat?

TROUP. (*Refusing to sit:*) Give me your apology and I will take it to Aaron right now—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts:*) I don't think anything from me will change his—

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) Let me just try! I will beg him to accept—

HAMILTON. (*Interrupts, laughing at TROUP's misconception:*) No no no, it was kind enough of you to come by. I often say to Eliza we don't see as much of Robert as we used to, but then, we do live in the country and I know how you hate to travel, but, do you want to hear my response?

TROUP. Of course.

HAMILTON. (*Reading, amused:*) "Sir, I have maturely reflected on the subject of your letter, and the more I have reflected the more—"

TROUP. (*Interrupts:*) That is not an apology! (*Turns to leave.*)

HAMILTON. Wait! please! (*Has to go after TROUP.*) I want to claim that last ounce of friendship you might have for my family.

TROUP. What? what is it you want?

HAMILTON. Eliza and the children will need to be provided for if I die. A widow's fund, would you oversee it? I have instructed Coleman to print up a little volume of the newspaper tributes and memorials to sell on behalf of the fund. And I would like you to send copies of it as soon as it is printed to these papers in Saint Croix. (*Handing him a list:*) I have told Eliza in this letter, (*Handing him a sealed envelope:*) to heed your counsel. Instruct her to allow no biographies of me to be written in her lifetime. Be sure she understands.

TROUP. (*Surprised at first by the request, now recovered:*) Apologize to Aaron.

HAMILTON. Aaron can always withdraw.

TROUP. His reputation is at stake and you know it!

HAMILTON. I have been thinking lately how well people are remembered once they are gone. Our old General, is he not now "The Father of the Country"? My old Reverend Knox even, back on the

island they call him “A Saint.” I have been given an opportunity to regain my good name, and I intend to make the most of it. Yes indeed, General Hamilton may not shoot—

TROUP. *(Interrupts, turning to go again:)* I will go tell Aaron immediately.

HAMILTON. And then again, I might.

(TROUP is stopped again in his tracks.)

I have taken the precaution, though, to post a letter that says I did not intend to shoot if I should possibly die at Aaron’s hand. That piece of paper alone should insure my name as The Father of something or other.

TROUP. You are despicable!

(Throws items HAMILTON gave him down and leaves.)

HAMILTON. *(Calling after him, note in hand:)* I guess you won’t take this either, the one I was reading? To Aaron?

(BURR picks up a letter he has just written, starts to read it aloud, and then turns directly to HAMILTON, as if they were meeting to discuss the duel.)

BURR. Mister Hamilton, sir. Your letter of the twentieth instant has been this day received. Having considered it attentively I regret to find in it nothing of that sincerity and delicacy which you profess to value. Your letter has furnished me with new reasons for requiring a definite reply. Your obedient servant. A. Burr.”

HAMILTON. You could withdraw your challenge.

BURR. I could aim at your leg.

HAMILTON. At your own risk, sir! *(Raises a glass.)*

BURR. You would raise a glass with The Devil?

HAMILTON. *(Snaps fingers, as if “now he remembers”.)* I was wondering what particular opinion Doctor Cooper might be referring to. I put out quite a few to keep you from being elected Governor. But The Devil, oh, I remember thinking at the time, “The mob will enjoy this one! It’s as good as that fuss about me and the Reynolds

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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