**NOTES ON THE TELLING OF THE STORY**

There are many characters in the story of what is called the Daniel Shays Rebellion, and since it was a populist, agrarian, anti-taxation rebellion, I have chosen to tell the story featuring the “people”, those whom are rarely seen in these dramatic works about American history, and I have chosen to leave out the characters so often portrayed in plays about the American Revolution. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, even Tom Paine are spoken about, but do not appear. The story centers on Daniel Shays, Jason Parmenter, Maude Parmenter, Abigail Parmenter, Moses Sash, Nettie Sash, Luke Day, John Worthington, Reverend Joseph Lathrop, Oneida {*Onyota'a:ka}*, Samuel Ely, William Shepard and other known, though not “famous” participants. And then there are the rarely portrayed and sometimes unnamed characters: Crispus Attucks, farmers (yeomen), their sons and daughters and wives. Boston merchants, soldiers, townspeople will be played by the company of actors and those characters are not assigned names but given title like “SOLDIER #1.” No disrespect is meant, but these people are frequently anonymous, as are many of the enactors and most of the victims of history.

The story moves quickly in time and from place-to-place. Necessarily, the playing space should be open and space and time defined by the actors, allowing the action to be fluid, moving from locale to locale without fixed scenery.

**ACTORS**

**{4W; 11M}**

A white female, age 30+, to play HENRY MCCULLOUGH’S MOTHER (Sarah McCullough)

A white female, age 30+, to play ABIGAIL PARMENTER

An Native-American man to play ONEIDA {*Onyota'a:ka}*

A 30+ African-American male to play CRISPUS ATTUCKS, MOSES SASH

A 42+ African-American female to play NETTIE SASH (Moses Sash’s mother).

A young white girl, age 10 to 16, plays MAUDE PARMENTER.

A young white boy, age 15 to 20, plays SAMUEL GRAY, JASON PARMENTER, JR., SAMUEL BUFFINGTON and others

A young white man, age 20 +, plays JAMES CALDWELL, HENRY MCCULLOUGH.

A 40+ white male to play DANIEL SHAYS

A 40+ white male to play REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP and others

A 45+ white male to play WILLIAM SHEPARD

A 30+ white male to play JASON PARMENTER

A 30+ white male to play LUKE DAY

A 40+ white male to play REVEREND SAMUEL ELY, WESLEY SMITH

A 35-40 white male to play JOHN WORTHINGTON, BRITISH SOLDIER CAPTURED ON THE BRIDGE who is later the same BRITISH SOLDIER Daniel Shays fights at the end of Act One.

The company, in general, will play the other roles: REDCOATS, FARMERS, SOLDIERS, YEOMEN, ETC.

**PROLOGIA~**

[A gallows. JASON PARMENTER is standing with a noose around his neck. Next to him is a young man, HENRY MCCULLOUGH, also with a noose around his neck. JASON speaks to the audience here for the hanging]

JASON PARMENTER

My name is Jason Parmenter. Originally from Bernardston. Now from Pelham. I am the father of nine children, a farmer, and a Christian man. I am standing on this gallows here, not because I killed a man, which I did, and his name, Jacob Thomas, is engraved upon my heart. I am condemned to die because I opposed the tyranny of my government twice. Once, in the Continental Army where I served as a Sargeant fighting against the British crown, and today as a member of the Regulators where I served under Daniel Shays, a man I would gladly die next to, as we were both fighting for the survival of our farms and the farms of our neighbors, us being taxed to death to pay for the war against the British we all fought in. And won.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

My name is Henry McCullough and I am 20 years old. I fought with Daniel Shays and Luke Day and Eli Parsons to keep the courts from putting any more of us into debtor’s prison. I am unmarried and have no children—

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

[from the audience]

I am Henry McCullough’s mother. He has no father to guide him. And his young life will end unless Governor John Hancock pardons him. And for the mothers of this country of Massachusetts, I have to wonder if it has been worth all the bloodshed, this *idea* of a nation.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Mother—

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

And does anyone even remember how it started, this bloody eternal battling that was supposed to bring us liberty?! How did this never-ending “revolution” begin?

[end of PROLOGIA]

**SCENE ONE~**

[Winter in Boston. Snow on the street. March 5, 1770, near King Street, Boston, Massachusetts. Daytime. CRISPUS ATTUCKS, a mixed-race man (Wampanoag and African) is unloading a ship. He enters with bundles, puts them on a pallet with wheels. JAMES CALDWELL, a young white mariner approaches. Sound of a skirmish offstage]

JAMES CALDWELL

Crispus. The Redcoats are harassing some apprentices on King Street.

CRISPUS ATTUCKS

We just docked. I don’t have time for anybody’s problems.

JAMES CALDWELL

I know. But it burns my soul. They are an army. And these are boys.

CRISPUS ATTUCKS

Oh, I’ve seen everyone harassing those soldiers. And there’s just a handful of them.

JAMES CALDWELL

Those soldiers have no right being here. We’re not in England. We are in the *country* of Massachusetts Bay.

CRISPUS ATTUCKS

You just want a fight. Save it for the tavern tonight.

[SAMUEL GRAY enters. He looks 14 or so]

SAMUEL GRAY

Where’s a stick. Something.

Snowballs aren’t going to do it.

One of those infernal soldiers wants to take my job when he’s off-duty. They get paid and don’t even belong here. He thinks he can just be a ropemaker without any apprenticeship? I told him, “Yes, by all means, you can have a job--**cleaning out our crapper!**” And now one of those lobsterbacks hasn’t paid his bill at the barber’s, and they do that all the time! Why are they here in the first place? To make sure we all pay these taxes that go right into English pockets and all of us working as hard as we can. We left their bloody country!! And now they’re here in ***OURS!***

[He takes a piece of wood from CRISPUS, maybe something CRISPUS had on the pallet he was using, something that could serve as a weapon and exits with it].

CRISPUS ATTUCKS

What is he doing? Those men are armed.

JAMES CALDWELL

Oh, we’ve thrown rocks at them. And they just throw them back.

***[Almost immediately—the offstage sound of increased shouting and SAMUEL GRAY shouting in pain]***

CRISPUS ATTUCKS

Come on. We have to stop this.

[CRISPUS exits with JAMES. Sounds of a volley of musket fire]

JAMES CALDWELL

[from offstage]

*CRISPUS!*

[ANOTHER SHOT. SILENCE. THEN A HUGE ROAR OF ANGER]

[end of scene]

**SCENE TWO~**

[March, 1770. In Western Massachusetts, outside at a market in Springfield. JOHN WORTHINGTON, a Springfield Merchant, is loading up DANIEL SHAYS, a local farmer, with a couple of bags of flax. JASON PARMENTER, a farmer from Pelham. And WILLIAM SHEPARD, a frequent soldier in the Massachusetts militia, but also a successful farmer in Westfield, REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP, the pastor of Springfield are with them. LUKE DAY, from West Springfield, is listening]

DANIEL SHAYS

Seven men killed is NOT a massacre. That’s the point. Seven, Reverend.

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

Well, the Sons of Liberty are calling it—

DANIEL SHAYS

--The Boston Massacre. I know.

LUKE DAY

The Sons of Liberty?

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

Pagans, Luke. They have a designated tree of liberty in a square in Boston. They worship it. It’s sacrireligious.

LUKE DAY

What’s happened, Daniel?

DANIEL SHAYS

Nothing. Everything.

LUKE DAY

Jason?

JASON PARMENTER

Boston.

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

I’d be glad to send a reputable preacher up your way. Dark days ahead, I’ll wager.

DANIEL SHAYS

Pelham can take care of itself. Thank you, Reverend. And isn’t wagering a sin?

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

Come along, Luke.

[LUKE DAY and REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP exit. MOSES SASH enters. He’s African-American and about the same age as JASON PARMENTER]

MOSES SASH

[to JASON]

The horses are watered. Colonel Shepard is looking to trade--

JASON PARMENTER

No. And that mare foals every year. We’re keeping her.

MOSES SASH

I told him.

DANIEL SHAYS

Moses, could your mother help my Abigail with some—

JASON PARMENTER

My wife can’t spare her. With most of our children being so young. I’d sooner spare Moses and I don’t know how good he’d be with the housework.

DANIEL SHAYS

Moses? You’re a freed man. You can speak for yourself.

MOSES SASH

I am a “free” man, Mr. Shays. No one freed me but myself. I fled to Massachusetts and then earned the money to free my mother.

DANIEL SHAYS

I did know that. I misspoke. I apologize, Mr. Sash.

MOSES SASH

“Moses” is fine. And Jason is right. We are up to our necks in work. Daniel.

[to JASON PARMENTER]

The livery stable gave us the new tack for the oxen.

JASON PARMENTER

Dan. Moses. Let’s take a ride up on that hill before we head home. You can see the three rivers up there and Enfield Falls. We can go home up through Chicopee and over the notch. I’ve found some caves. Beautiful. Come on. We live in the most beautiful place on earth. To Hell with Boston and its doings. It’s a different country.

MOSES SASH

I’m going home by the river, stop at my land, and do some hunting in the woods. I saw some deer.

JASON PARMENTER

Good luck.

[MOSES SASH exits]

JASON PARMENTER

He’s got some acres near Westfield. Bit-by-bit, he’s building his farm.

DANIEL SHAYS

You have to admire him.

JASON PARMENTER

I don’t have to. I do. And what choice does he have? The only freedom is owning your own land.

DANIEL SHAYS

And then holding on to it.

JASON PARMENTER

I’m taking the newspaper? My wife uses the paper to make patterns.

[end of scene two]

**SCENE THREE~**

[A few hours later. Out in the forest, on land belong to MOSES SASH. MOSES has his bow with an arrow in it, in readiness. He aims at something his sees offstage, stops. ONEIDA {*Onyota'a:ka}* enters, dressed in a Massachusetts militia uniform]

[ONEIDA stares at MOSES, then moves his chin up, as if to say, “hello.” MOSES removes the arrow and puts it back in the quiver]

ONEIDA

You hunt the way we do.

MOSES SASH

We’re not allowed to carry firearms. Negroes.

ONEIDA

You are a runaway slave.

MOSES SASH

Not anymore. I am a free man and this is my land.

ONEIDA

How did you get this land?

MOSES SASH

I bought it.

ONEIDA

Who owned it before?

MOSES SASH

Israel Thomas.

ONEIDA

And where did he get it?

MOSES SASH

From your people?

ONEIDA

This land was the Mohawks. Hunting all through here to the river. I am from the Onyota'a:ka people. White people call us “Oneida.” So that has become my name.

MOSES SASH

The land’s all divided now. Over there are the Parmenters. My mother works for them. And me, too.

[ONEIDA hits the ground, hiding, motions to be silent]

[long beat, MOSES SASH joins ONEIDA on the ground]

ONEIDA

[whispers]

There are troops. Look through the trees.

[points to the Redcoats in the woods]

Red. Red. Red. See? Redcoats. Something happened in Boston and they are watching. I’ve been a spy for the French. They don’t forget.

MOSES SASH

What do the French have to do with us?

ONEIDA

Everything.

[Sound of shooting from offstage soldiers. ONEIDA starts to flee. MOSES SASH shouts at the offstage soldiers]

MOSES SASH

*Stop!! Stop!!*

[ONEIDA starts to flee again and MOSES SASH tackles him and covers him with his body]

MOSES SASH

[shouting to the offstage soldiers]

This is my land!!! This man is—is—works for me!!

[They wait for a moment. Sound of soldiers leaving, trampling the brush]

MOSES SASH

What do the French want to know?

ONEIDA

What’s going to happen next.

[beat]

You saved my life. I’ll see you again.

[ONEIDA exits, leaving MOSES SASH]

[end of scene three]

**SCENE FOUR~**

[Four years later. DANIEL SHAYS, out in the town square of Shutesbury, Massachusetts {near where he lives in Pelham} with a group of young men and boys, FARMERS. The youngest one is HENRY MCCULLOUGH. WESLEY SMITH is a grown man but is training—he’s the only one, other than DANIEL SHAYS, who has a real rifle, a musket—the rest have wooden poles or sticks. **OR he may deliver this to the audience, as if they were soldiers**.]

DANIEL SHAYS

All right.

This is a Brown Bess muzzle-loading rifle.

Keep your powder dry always—more important than your feet. This ball is your ammunition. It is made of lead. After you load your powder, you drop the ball down the barrel, followed by a wad of paper. Push it down hard.

The soldiers, the English soldiers, we will be fighting--and we will be fighting them very soon--can load and shoot *three times as fast as however fast you think you are.*

If you cannot load and re-load, you will perish or the man next to you will.

JASON PARMENTER

[enters, in a rush, with a newspaper]

Daniel, read this.

[DANIEL SHAYS offers to share it with the others

WESLEY SMITH

None of us can read that well. You read it.

[DANIEL SHAYS unfolds the newspaper—it’s been cut as a pattern for clothing]

JASON PARMENTER

Merchant Worthington wraps goods in them, but there’s enough there to know something happened in Boston.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Something’s always happening in Boston. And I live here.

DANIEL SHAYS

[reads]

“The Boston and Country Gazette Journal Foreign and Domestic.”

I don’t know where to look—the title takes up the whole front page.

Here’s the date: “Monday March 14, 1774.”

Where do you want me to read?

JASON PARMENTER

I don’t know. It’s somewhere.

DANIEL SHAYS

[finds something else on the page]

Here’s this:

“On Monday evening the horrid tragedy of the 5th of March was observed with the usual solemnity, by exhibiting to public view a portrait of that inhuman and cruel Massacre perpetrated by Preston and his infamous butchers…”

JASON PARMENTER

That was four years ago. Will they never stop mentioning it? Something else happened.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Wait, what is that? So many words—must be important.

[starts to read, finds it difficult]

“His Majesty OKNOOKORTUNKOGOG—“

[hands it to DANIEL SHAYS]

DANIEL SHAYS

[reads]

“His Majesty OKNOOKORTUNKOGOG, King of the Narrangansset Tribe of Indians, on receiving information of the arrival of another cargo of that Cursed Weed TEA, immediately summoned his Council at the Great Swamp by the River Jordan, who did Advise and Consent to the immediate destruction thereof—

JASON PARMENTER

That’s it. That’s it. Something about tea.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

How can you tell? I can’t figure out what they’re talking about?

WESLEY SMITH

Keep reading.

DANIEL SHAYS

[reads]

--“after resolving that the importation of this herb, by any persons whatever, was attended with pernicious consequences to the lives and properties of all his subjects throughout America—

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

What are they talking about? It’s harder to read than the

Bible.

WESLEY SMITH

You should still learn. To read.

DANIEL SHAYS

[with newspaper]

All right.

[reads]

“after resolving that the importation of this herb, by any persons whatever, was attended with pernicious consequences to the lives and properties of all his subjects throughout America.”

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I can’t understand anything they’re saying. What good is reading if you can’t understand what people are saying?

JASON PARMENTER

Why can’t they get on with it?

DANIEL SHAYS

They’re afraid of being arrested.

[goes back to reading]

“Orders were then issued to their seizor and destroyer-General, and their deputies to assemble the executive body under their command; to proceed directly to the place where the noxious herb was. They arrived last Monday evening in town, and finding the vessel, they emptied every chest into the Great Ocean, and effectually destroyed the whole (four hundred and twenty-eight chests and a half).”

JASON PARMENTER

They dumped four hundred and twenty-eight chests of tea into Boston Harbor.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Who did? Indians?

JASON PARMENTER

No, men dressed as Indians. It’s some of the Sons of Liberty.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Where does is say that?

DANIEL SHAYS

[reading]

“They are now returned to the Narragansett to make report of their doings to his Majesty, who we hear is determined to honor them with commissions for the Peace.”

WESLEY SMITH

How do you know it’s the Sons of Liberty?

DANIEL SHAYS

It has to be them. The Loyal Nine, they called themselves, when they burnt the stamps in protest of the Stamp Act. Benjamin Edes is a printer and John Gill of this very newspaper. And this Boston shoemaker, Eben McIntosh, raised over two thousand men back then.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Two thousand men!?

JASON PARMENTER

Sam Adams? Paul Revere? Are they in it?

DANIEL SHAYS

Probably. But it’s a secret society. Until, at least, they storm your house and then the secret’s out.

WESLEY SMITH

Whose house?

JASON PARMENTER

Hutchinson’s house, for one. They tore off the cupola. Sacrilege. And he knew it. Then they tarred and feathered him. How do people endure living in Boston?

DANIEL SHAYS

That was not the Loyal Nine. That was just destruction and they were drunk. Some other tradesmen. It never seems to end. How did you know about all that, Jason?

JASON PARMENTER

My oldest daughter’s been reading the patterns her mother cuts. From the newspapers. She taught herself.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

A girl who reads? My mother thinks that’s not right. Unless it’s the Bible.

JASON PARMENTER

She started with the Bible. And that’s heavy-going.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I’ve read a little of the Bible but this newspaper is much worse. What’s all this about the Narrangansett?

WESLEY SMITH

[explaining, as to a child]

Some of the men dressed as Indians. See? And one of the tea dumpers may be writing this article and he’s trying to cover up what really happened.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

What are they trying to do?

JASON PARMENTER

They didn’t want to pay the tea tax because the tax is levied by Parliament. In London.

WESLEY SMITH

[still to HENRY MCCULLOUGH]

It’s this simple. We shouldn’t have to pay taxes to England and when we have no say in it at all. Now do you understand?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

But what about the King?

DANIEL SHAYS

Why are you mustering with us, learning to use a musket?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I finished my chores and Mother said, “Go.”

And the Indians might come. And now the Redcoats have been about. I want to be able to protect our farm.

WESLEY SMITH

Just learn to use the musket, boy. And do what Mr. Shays says.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

[enters]

Hello, Daniel. That’s old news you’ve got there. Damage done and done again.

DANIEL SHAYS

John.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Because of the shenanigans of a few crazy colonists, the Harbor is closed now. No commerce of any kind until the British East India Company is repaid for their destroyed tea. So I cannot get any of the goods I need for my store because the wholesalers in Boston cannot get goods because the BOSTON HARBOR IS CLOSED!!

DANIEL SHAYS

I thought what happened in Boston didn’t matter.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Get your goods now, Daniel. Everyone. Because there won’t be any soon enough. We’re being cut off at the neck.

DANIEL SHAYS

We still have the river.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

I will have to travel to New York or Providence and arrange to get goods in the future. All because of being slaves to the whims of an English Parliament.

DANIEL SHAYS

I should be trading for some powder and musket balls, then. Is that what you’re saying?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

That’s an excellent idea.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Do you really mean that, Mr. Worthington?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

I suppose I don’t. But I’m angry enough today.

DANIEL SHAYS

Haven’t you been known to say, “revolution is bad for business?”

JOHN WORTHINGTON

I’m sure I never used the word, “revolution.” I feel the discontent, that’s all. Stop using my idle comments against me, Daniel! WAR is bad for my business. Because war stops the trafficking of goods. Unless you make munitions. I deal in cotton.

DANIEL SHAYS

I was going to bring in some cheese my Abigail just made. I was going to trade for some ***tea***. I’ve got a sudden hankering for it.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

So you won’t take this seriously?

DANIEL SHAYS

Will you be picking up a musket, Mr. Worthington? I’ve been mustering men on the common. Come join us.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

[to DANIEL SHAYS]

No. I just came over to give you this—it’s an accounting of how much credit you HAVE with me, from last year’s maize.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

[To JASON PARMENTER]

And here’s an accounting of how much you owe me in trade.

JASON PARMENTER

Thank you.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

And I’ve got goods at Warehouse Point and need scows to bring them upriver and men with to haul them inland when they get here. Looking for wagons.

WESLEY SMITH

I can help you. We all can use the work until the haying starts.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Until we can control our own endeavors, we’re like grass in the field, swept by whatever breeze the Crown stirs up. Don’t quote me!!

[WILLIAM SHEPARD enters]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Not a good morning so I won’t wish you one. I’m *summoned* to Boston. Some so-called Indians have cost Massachusetts self-rule. I’m looking for volunteers for more militia. I see you’ve mustered quite a group, Daniel. Any of you men willing to go with me?

JASON PARMENTER

Self-rule? What? Daniel, what are they talking about?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

No matter what we do, we get more soldiers. From Britain or from Germany. General Gage is on his way. The Crown has sent one General Thomas Gage here to rule us. He’s coming with troops. Would you dump tea into the harbor, Mr. Worthington, knowing what it would cost everyone?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Wait, William Shepard. I would have been the person who had paid some innocent merchant in England to have that tea delivered. And let me tell you this--the government in England will ***not*** feel the loss of the tea, but two merchants, one here and one in England, might very well be ruined by now.

DANIEL SHAYS

Are you saying that we’re no longer the Province of Massachusetts Bay? That we’re just some unnamed part of England now?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Whatever our name is, Daniel Shays, we are going to be ruled by this general from England. And his soldiers. Because we’re represented, not by sane orators, but by an unruly mob dressed up like Indians!

WESLEY SMITH

[to HENRY MCCULLOUGH]

Better get yourself a musket, Henry.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I can’t keep up with everything. Are we going to war or something? Over some tea?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

It was a symbolic act, but symbolic acts include the destruction of property and someone has to pay.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Are any of your goods imported goods?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Clearly not, Colonel Shepard. Since the Harbor is now closed. Are you one of those?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

What “one of those”? What does he mean?

DANIEL SHAYS

Those who are opposed to imported goods.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Ask your wives. And, in your case, son, ask your mother. How they will do without cotton?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I just look young, sir. I am sixteen.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Well, ask yourself what will the women do for their own clothes? And children’s clothing? And your underwear? Do you want to wear wool next to your skin?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

So you don’t give a damn that a British general is arriving to rule us.

DANIEL SHAYS

I give a damn.

JASON PARMENTER

So do I.

WESLEY SMITH

Henry’s still thinking of scratchy wool against his bum.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

My mother and I—that is, ***I****,* ***I*** own a wagon, sir. And it’s ready.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Meet me at the riverbank at noon.

[JOHN WORTHINGTON exits]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

We’re heading for war. Mark my words.

DANIEL SHAYS

I can defend this area. That’s what we’ve been training for. But I can’t leave my farm.

JASON PARMENTER

Neither can I.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I can’t leave my mother. Without her permission, anyway.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

All I can say is to get ready.

[WILLIAM SHEPARD exits]

[HENRY MCCULLOUGH picks up the musket and gets into position to fire it]

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

It’s a lot heavier than I thought.

WESLEY SMITH

That’s because, for the first time, you’re thinking of using it.

JASON PARMENTER

I need to get home. I’ve got work to do before the day is gone. Daniel? Are we really going to fight the British?

DANIEL SHAYS

That’s why we muster, Jason. But it has to be from here.

[JASON PARMENTER exits]

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

[gives WESLEY SMITH back his musket]

I—I have to get the wagon for Mr. Worthington.

[HENRY MCCULLOUGH exits]

WESLEY SMITH

[gives DANIEL SHAYS the musket]

Here you go, Dan. I’ve got another at home. And this one’s better than the one you got there. And I think you’ll be leading us. Wherever we go. Now, don’t argue.

DANIEL SHAYS

Wesley. What a gift.

WESLEY SMITH

Maybe. Maybe not.

[end of scene]

**SCENE FIVE~**

[Three years later. Near evening. JASON PARMENTER is hauling wood out of his own land. MOSES SASH is helping load a pallet with rocks. MAUDE PARMENTER is with them. She is 12 and has a basket of food]

MAUDE PARMENTER

Mama sent me to say it’s getting late and you’re losing the light. And Aunt Nettie said, “Tell Moses to bring himself in, but here are some biscuits, anyway.”

JASON PARMENTER

I’ve been clearing this plot for three years and it’s still not ready for planting.

MOSES SASH

This Pelham land is filled with rocks, Jason. The more we dig out and haul away, the more we find, it seems.

JASON PARMENTER

You got that river bottomland in Westfield.

MOSES SASH

I did. And I could not have had any of that without your family.

JASON PARMENTER

You earn your money, Moses. And my wife couldn’t do without your mother. Still, I sometimes wonder about leaving Bernardston. But I was a laborer there. No future.

[A REDCOAT enters, carrying a lantern]

JASON PARMENTER

Where did you come from?

REDCOAT

Good evening, yeoman.

JASON PARMENTOR

Are there more of you?

[REDCOAT just laughs]

What do you want?

REDCOAT

Calm down. Our horses need water. I left them by the road.

JASON PARMENTER

River’s that way.

REDCOAT

We’re looking for a place to ford or just some shallows. You are hiding something? A cache of weapons? Are you a rebel, sir? Do rebels keep slaves? What if the slaves ***rebel***? That’s a question for you.

JASON PARMENTER

I’m farming. This is my farm.

ONEIDA

[enters from seemingly nowhere, not in uniform, talks to REDCOAT]

Leftenant?

REDCOAT

Yes? Where did you come from?

ONEIDA

We served—

REDCOAT

I knew I knew you! We served together. Battle of Fort Beausejour. You were with the French.

[With a look, ONEIDA acknowledges MOSES. MOSES remains silent]

JASON PARMENTER

What is everyone doing here?

REDCOAT

This your land?

JASON PARMENTER

My house is up there.

[longgggg beat]

Your horses needs water? The river’s down there, but I have a well. How many are you?

REDCOAT

We’re just scouting.

JASON PARMENTER

You’re in the King’s army?

REDCOAT

And you are not?

JASON PARMENTER

I will do what needs to be done to protect the Province of Massachusetts Bay when I’m called. It’s haying season now and I can’t leave.

REDCOAT

Then you are safe. For us.

ONEIDA

[to the REDCOAT]

I’ll show you the way to the river.

REDCOAT

This farmer doesn’t know what happened.

JASON PARMENTER

Recently?

[REDCOAT laughs]

REDCOAT

North Bridge at Concord. A skirmish.

ONEIDA

A battle. You won. That is, Massachusetts won. Just farmers. Not soldiers.

REDCOAT

Didn’t mean to offend, old boy.

JASON PARMENTER

No offense taken.

REDCOAT

[to ONEIDA]

So. We will see you.

ONEIDA

[to the parting REDCOAT]

On some battlefield, Leftenant.

[Waits until the REDCOAT is gone]

MOSES

One’ya’toka?

ONEIDA

My name.

[he hands MOSES a medicine bag]

It will keep you safe.

[looking at JASON PARMENTER with sincerity]

Things are going to get very bad.

[ONEIDA exits quickly]

MAUDE PARMENTER

Who was that?

JASON PARMENTER

Come home with me right now.

MOSES SASH

I’ll hitch up the oxen.

[They exit]

[More REDCOATS run through, with lanterns]

[end of scene five]

**SCENE SIX~**

[JASON PARMENTER, age 39, talking to his teen-age son, Jason, Jr.]

JASON PARMENTER

You will have to finish the haying by yourself. There are boys on other farms whose fathers are going. Asa’s boy is old enough. Ride over tomorrow morning and get him. Asa was going to ask for our team.

JASON, JR.

Yes, Father. I’d like to go—

JASON PARMENTER

Don’t ask me again, son. Think of it this way--the shoulders of our ox team reach nearly six feet. When you grow to that height, we can consider you for military service.

JASON, JR.

But I’ve reached my height, sir. I am nearly fifteen. I’ll probably not grow any more.

JASON PARMENTER

I’m counting on that.

[ABIGAIL PARMENTER enters with JASON’S military coat. She is very pregnant]

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

[the name of her husband’s commanding officer--this is how she can find her husband, if necessary]

Agrippa Wells?

JASON PARMENTER

*Captain Agrippa Wells.* That’s how you can find me. He is up in years but he’s seen battle, a lot of it, and he’s a good leader.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

They’ve a place in Shelburne. They’ve lost their share of children. And now their father is leaving again.

JASON PARMENTER

[to JASON, JR.]

Two namesakes. The name probably killed them. “Agrippa.” Aren’t you glad your father has a solid name?

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

[about JASON making light of the death]

One drown! He was eight years old!

JASON PARMENTER

They’ve got enough children to run their farm. Correct, son? You are the oldest and now the man here.

JASON, JR.

No worries, Father.

JASON PARMENTER

My captain is a seasoned soldier. He was a Roger’s Rangers and fought the French and the Delaware. He knows what he’s doing. All right?

[long beat]

I’m going. Pray for me.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

No need. You will be safe and victorious.

[JASON PARMENTER holds his wife against him. She doesn’t hug back. He exits. ABIGAIL PARMENTER leans into her son for support]

JASON, JR.

You’re not going into labor.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

Find me a grave and I’ll give birth right into it.

JASON, JR.

Mother!

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

It’s been nothing but war since I can remember. Indians. French. British. They are not getting you, my son. No soldiering for you! NEVER, DO YOU HEAR ME??? **NEVER**!!!!!

[end of scene six]

**SCENE SEVEN~**

[Below a hill in Boston Harbor, 1775. In the Continental Army uniforms, DANIEL SHAYS and WESLEY SMITH, are sitting in the evening. They are dirty and exhausted in danger of falling asleep. Sounds of volleys far off. This wakes WESLEY up]

WESLEY SMITH

What? Are they starting again?

DANIEL SHAYS

They’re still firing from the Harbor.

WESLEY SMITH

They already won the day.

DANIEL SHAYS

If we had had one more round of ammunition, we could have kept the hill. And the fortress.

WESLEY SMITH

We’re not an army, Daniel. Compared to them.

DANIEL SHAYS

We’re all we’ve got.

WESLEY SMITH

They think they’ve won the Battle of “Bunker Hill.” But it’s Breed’s Hill. Idiot limeys.

DANIEL SHAYS

Small comfort--they got the wrong map. But they got Boston. I hope I get home so I can tell my Abigail what it’s like, Boston. It’s huge.

SOLDIER #1

[entering]

We’re going home. Our six months is up. We have to get back to our farms.

DANIEL SHAYS

How many are going with you?

SOLDIER #2

Not a regiment, but a few of us. And the damn Virginians have arrived, anyway. And their head officer is coming.

DANIEL SHAYS

Anybody from the north? Vermont?

SOLDIER #2

Don’t know. But we’re leaving.

WESLEY SMITH

I’ve got another month and a half.

DANIEL SHAYS

I heard that Indians are paid to kill deserters.

SOLDIER #1

We’re barely an army. How can we desert?

SOLDIER #2

What Indians?

WESLEY SMITH

Probably ones who served in Queen Anne’s War and can’t go home.

DANIEL SHAYS

Or got no home to go to.

WESLEY SMITH

Or like the killing.

Savages.

DANIEL SHAYS

The British standing in line, waiting to be shot. It’s like a firing squad. And we just shoot them. *That’s* savage.

SOLDIER #2

Indians don’t fight like that. We could learn something. They ambush.

DANIEL SHAYS

I still can’t forget. All those men in those fine uniforms. Redcoats and black boots, just marching up to the redoubt to be shot. Lines of them. And then we wait—

WESLEY SMITH

Until we “see the whites of their eyes.” General Putnam played it close with our lives with that order.

SOLDIER #1

But he was right.

WESLEY SMITH

For a while--

DANIEL SHAYS

And we fire and they fall.

WESLEY SMITH

--until that ship in the Harbor fired on us with cannonballs.

SOLDIER #2

And the boy next to me got his face blown off. What was his name? Anybody know?

DANIEL SHAYS

They found a letter in his pocket. He was from a family in Colrain.

SOLDIER #1

Where is that?

WESLEY SMITH

Never heard of it.

JASON PARMENTER

[entering]

It’s near where my parents were from.

[hands around some firecake {dough fried on rocks}]

Just made this. It’s hot

SOLDIER #2

Where is that?

JASON PARMENTER

Bernardston.

SOLDIER #2

Near Braintree?

JASON PARMENTER

Further West. Near the River.

SOLDIER #1

Worcester?

DANIEL SHAYS

Springfield. Just think of it as Springfield.

SOLDIER #2

They’re training more soldiers there. In Springfield. To replace us.

JASON PARMENTER

To *join* us. I’m not planning on dying.

WESLEY SMITH

Are they training for longer duty? We’re going to be a standing army? That’s not right. That’s the beginning of tyranny.

[HUGE VOLLEY. CANNONBALS. THEY DUCK AND COVER]

DANIEL SHAYS

“Tyranny,” Wesley? What do you call being fired upon?

JASON PARMENTER

I’ll tell you one damn thing-- I’m not sticking my head up and returning fire.

DANIEL SHAYS

But we have to be better than this. The British are trained and trained well.

SOLDIER #2

We haven’t been paid. Or fed. Except for this firecake. Thank you, by the way.

SOLDIER #1

It’s not desertion. We’ve got papers to prove it.

WESLEY SMITH

Can those papers be seen in the dark? Can you wave them to keep from being shot?

SOLDIER #1

We’re just going to travel far enough to get out of harms way. And then we’ll camp and travel in the morning.

[sound of another volley]

SOLDIER #2

They’ve got reinforcements. Must be. Let’s go while we still have some light.

[the SOLDIERS exit]

DANIEL SHAYS

I’m going forward to see.

[He exits another way]

JASON PARMENTER

Daniel! Be careful!

DANIEL SHAYS

If I were being careful, Jason. I wouldn’t be here.

[DANIEL exits]

JASON PARMENTER

I left a pregnant wife, children, and a farm to come here and I’m not going home until—

[sound of a big explosion]

WESLEY SMITH

--UNTIL WHAT? YOU’RE KILLED??

[sound of more volleys. WESLEY SMITH starts to run. JASON PARMENTER grabs him. They duck down]

JASON PARMENTER

Where were you going? There’s no place to go. And since you asked, Wesley. And since you have no wife or children, you may not understand this, but this fighting will come our way, to our homes, unless we stop it here.

WESLEY SMITH

Oh, why can’t we just give it all to the Redcoats. And just live our lives? I’d like to be married again. I was married, Jason. And she died giving birth. And the baby, too.

JASON PARMENTER

I’m sorry.

WESLEY SMITH

Talk to your wife. Women keep track of these things.

[sound of another volley—much closer. They cover their heads. DANIEL SHAYS returns]

DANIEL SHAYS

We’re getting some new leadership. Muster tomorrow morning. And I’m now a lieutenant.

[They salute him, casually]

JASON PARMENTER

I miss my wife. I wonder what she’s doing right now?

[end of scene seven]

**SCENE EIGHT~**

[Three women, ABIGAIL PARMENTER, NETTIE SASH, SARAH MCCULLOUGH all dressed as colonial men, and armed with muskets, wait near a bridge]

NETTIE SASH

Are you up to this, Sarah McCullough?

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

My mother would not approve of me in men’s clothing, I can tell you that.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

Your mother was in England. Different place. Different. . .life.

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

My mother died on the way here. She was passenger number 86 on the Weymouth Queen, thirty years ago.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

I’m sorry. How did you arrive, then?

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

I was born at sea. The Newells of Westfield took me in. And then Cyrus McCullough married me and we came to Pelham. But, still, my mother would not approve of what we’re doing. Really, pretending to be men. Disgraceful.

NETTIE SASH

There are worse disgraces. Letting some lobsterback spy cross the river and get to Boston.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

I hope this man tries to cross soon. I’ll need to get back nurse the baby. I gave Maudie a sugar teat for the meantime. And Mrs. Prunty there as a wetnurse. I just don’t know if he’ll accept her milk.

NETTIE SASH

You can shoot a musket, Mrs. Parmenter. We had to take you.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

[about her musket, to SARAH MCCULLOUGH]

Are you prepared to shoot this, if needs be?

NETTIE SASH

I hope you are ready to do what needs to be done.

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

Couldn’t we be better-employed sewing shirts for the regiments?

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

I’d rather keep my husband alive to wear the shirt. Wait. Who is that?

[BRITISH SOLDIER enters. He is disguised as a merchant]

BRITISH SOLDIER

What are you lads doing?

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

We could ask the same of you. And we are men.

BRITISH SOLDIER

When you get beards.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

I don’t need a beard to shoot this gun.

BRITISH SOLDIER

Are you threatening me?

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

Yes. We are.

BRITISH SOLDIER

What right do you have to even speak to me? And who owns this negro man here? How old are you, boy?

NETTIE SASH

Older than you. And I am a ***man***. And a free man.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

We live here.

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

This is our. . .land.

BRITISH SOLDIER

I doubt you built this bridge.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

It belongs to us.

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

Where are you going?

BRITISH SOLDIER

I am going to Boston.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

Only British soldiers go to Boston.

BRITISH SOLDIER

I’m a merchant.

NETTIE SASH

Bartering in what goods?

BRITISH SOLDIER

I have bills of leighting.

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

What are those?

BRITISH SOLDIER

I doubt you can read them.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

Let me see them.

BRITISH SOLDIER

I don’t have to—

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

LET MY FRIEND SEE WHAT YOU’RE CARRYING.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

Be careful, there, PETER, with the—

[Musket goes off by accident, then SARAH MCCULLOUGH drops it]

[BRITISH SOLDIER curls up in a ball]

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

[losing her “man” voice, completely]

I shot him! I shot him!

NETTIE SASH

You shot something. But—

BRITISH SOLDIER

Wait. You’re not men. You’re not even boys.

[to SARAH MCCULLOUGH]

You—you’re a female!

This is ridiculous! I am leaving.

NETTIE SASH

No, you’re not.

[points gun at him]

Curl back up. Do it!

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

DO IT!!

[BRITISH SOLDIER curls back up]

NETTIE SASH

Empty his pockets.

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

I don’t want to—it’s immodest.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

You nearly killed him!! How modest was that?

Now search him.

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

[goes through the BRITISH SOLDIER’S pockets, finds a document]

What is this?

BRITISH SOLDIER

What kind of monstrous creatures are you?? What ungodly—

[about the piece of paper SARAH MCCULLOUGH found]

Oh, don’t pretend you can read that. It is documents of a financial nature, something no woman could—

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

He’s a Tory.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

How do you know?

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

There’s a seal. And a map.

NETTIE SASH

You’re not a merchant.

He’s a spy, Abigail. I mean, Peter. Wait a minute, who is “Peter.”

BRITISH SOLDIER

Oh, just stop the charade. No one’s “Peter.” You’re all women. I’ve been captured by women!

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

We’ve captured a spy.

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

We ***did*** something!

[BEAT]

Now what do we do?

NETTIE SASH

We hold him. Prisoner.

BRITISH SOLDIER

I’ve been captured by three women. And one of them is a negress.

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

Don’t try to escape. I’ll shoot you this time. On purpose.

BRITISH SOLDIER

Why would I escape? I’m humiliated. I could lie. But it would be found out. Because it is such a story.

[He attacks SARAH MCCULLOUGH and wrestles the gun from her. ABIGAIL jumps on top of him, but he fights her off. He takes the musket and starts to aim it, but NETTIE has the other musket aimed at it him. As he moves to lay his musket down, he points the gun at his foot and fires. He cries in agony]

SARAH MCCULLOUGH

What did you do??

BRITISH SOLDIER

[barely able to get the words out]

I will say you shot me in the foot and that is why I was captured. I’d rather be crippled for life than captured by women!!

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

Now how do we get him anywhere?

NETTIE SASH

Leave him. Let’s get what he was carrying to one of our regiments.

[They exit. SARAH MCCULLOUGH comes back and gets BRITISH SOLDIER They hobble out, together]

[end of scene]

**SCENE TEN~**

[BREED’S HILL, outside, of course. The morning. The Continental Army soldiers are standing in attention DANIEL SHAYS arrives and salutes]

DANIEL SHAYS

As Lieutenant Shays of the Fifth Massachusetts Regiment--

JASON PARMENTER

[salutes]

Sir.

[DANIEL pulls out some pieces of paper]

DANIEL SHAYS

--I have been given more scrip.

JASON PARMENTER

What happened to our Major?

DANIEL SHAYS

Went home. Had to get a crop in. But we’re getting a Colonel. On a horse.

WESLEY SMITH

[entering]

Jason! Daniel’s a lieutenant. But we’re getting a Colonel! From Virginia! We should be able to see him and his crack troops riding in over there. They have uniforms. Blue and a light brown—no red. They look like soldiers.

DANIEL SHAYS

Jason, to be honest, I got this rank because I can drill. And I brought a lot of men with me.

WESLEY SMITH

What’s the date?

JASON PARMENTER

Third of July.

[WESLEY SMITH wants more]

Why?

All right—1775.

WESLEY SMITH

Because whatever happens, I know this is a day that will be recorded. Here he comes.

[They watch as a light passes upstage in front of them]

JASON PARMENTER

Everything’s going to get better.

WESLEY SMITH

Needs to.

JASON PARMENTER

It will. With someone who looks that fine on a horse.

DANIEL SHAYS

Seventeen hands high—and that’s just the horse.

JASON PARMENTER

That’s as tall as my oxen team. And he’s a very tall man. And that uniform. The British will have to give us some respect now.

DANIEL SHAYS

His troops are specially-trained.

WESLEY SMITH

George Washington?

JASON PARMENTER

George who?

DANIEL SHAYS

Washington.

WESLEY SMITH

His brother, Lawrence, was a great soldier. So this Washington has a lot to prove. My enlistment time is almost up. But I may stay.

DANIEL SHAYS

He wants to be called “Your Excellency.” I heard.

WESLEY SMITH

If we have occasion to speak to or with him, which I doubt.

JASON PARMENTER

I’ll call him whatever he wants, if he can lead us to some kind of victory.

WESLEY SMITH

Will we get uniforms like that?

DANIEL SHAYS

I doubt it, Wesley. He’s not happy with the fact that we have Indians among our troops and Negroes and wants his special forces to stand apart. He’s going to be assigning officers to whip us into shape, so I don’t think we will be talking to him, much at all.

WESLEY SMITH

I’m staying, anyway. My farm’s gone to hell, so what does it matter?

[end of scene ten]

**SCENE ELEVEN~**

[FORT TICONDEROGA. LUKE DAY is carried in by JASON PARMENTER]

JASON PARMENTER

[waking LUKE DAY]

Hello. Luke Day? Hello? I’m from home.

You look terrible. Have you eaten? We’ve been fed here.

[feeds LUKE DAY something]

The women got some vegetables out of the local farmers. It’s amazing to me that we have to barter with local people to get food because they’d rather sell to the British for an only slightly higher price. It make me ask some hard questions about why I’m here.

LUKE DAY

Where am I?

JASON PARMENTER

Someone renamed where we are. All I know is that it’s Fort Ticonderoga now. If you want to write home.

LUKE DAY

Jason Parmenter.

JASON PARMENTER

Right. Let’s see. Daniel Shays is fighting in Long Island. And Wesley Smith went home. I was with Washington at Breed’s Hill.

LUKE DAY

I may not look like a lieutenant but I am.

JASON PARMENTER

Sir.

[feeds him some more]

LUKE DAY

His Excellency George Washington insists that we officers dress differently than our men, but I refused.

JASON PARMENTER

Sir.

[feeds him some more]

LUKE DAY

Oh, it was bad, Jason. Some women captured one of the spies or we would all be worse than we are. Our supposed commanders, Benedict Arnold and Richard Montgomery, are so disgraced by their loss we haven’t seen hide nor hair of them.

JASON PARMENTER

My wife Abigail was one of the women.

LUKE DAY

Is she all right?

JASON PARMENTER

Yes. Last I heard, I have a new child. A boy. Have you seen Moses Sash?

LUKE DAY

No. The Negro? I’ve seen several Negro troops, but I don’t know I’d recognize him specifically.

JASON PARMENTER

I’d hope you wouldn’t see him. He’s the only help Jason, Jr. has right now.

LUKE DAY

I have no idea how my father’s farm is doing. Do you have any more news from home?

JASON PARMENTER

No. We got moved here. Nobody’s heard of Fort Ticonderoga. It’ll take time to get any mail.

LUKE DAY

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD." That got me through many a dark night. And my family—so many of the men are Continental soldiers. Resisting England. This war. Gives me a feeling of peace. I know in my heart, I’m doing what God wants me to do.

[nothing from JASON]

Do you agree?

JASON PARMENTER

I don’t know. I don’t mean to be impious, Luke. I think we have no other choice. We can’t live and have no word in what happens on our land. It’s intolerable.

LUKE DAY

You don’t see the hand of God in this.

JASON PARMENTER

Don’t you think the Tories see the hand of God in what they’re doing?

LUKE DAY

It can’t be the same for them.

JASON PARMENTER

Well, they are Church of England.

LUKE DAY

Might as well be Catholic. All that nonsense and mumbling. I went to a service once. They even have bells—little ones they ring, not big booming church bells--

[SOUND OF CANNONS FIRING]

JASON PARMENTER

You can rest. Those are our cannons. Colonel Henry Knox arrived with several horses pulling pieces of cannons on pallets. We put them together and had them up and firing by the afternoon. Two of the horses were so exhausted and depleted, we had to destroy them. But now we have meat. That’s what you’re eating.

LUKE DAY

Well, it’s good. The Lord will provide because we’re in the right, Jason.

JASON PARMENTER

All I know is when I see the children here, I long for my own children. I have a son, nearly grown, who’s taking care of the farm for me. I miss him and he wants to be here, but I thank God each night that he is not.

LUKE DAY

Young men want to be in a war. Until they get in one. And who could blame them. “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” {Hebrews 9:22}.

JASON PARMENTER

But you and I know what it’s really like.

LUKE DAY

I admit it. We had no choice.

JASON PARMENTER

We had no choice. I’ll show you to a place to sleep.

LUKE DAY

Why are they firing still? Is there an attack?

JASON PARMENTER

Celebration. The Green Mountain Boys. They’ll leave tomorrow. We’re almost out of alcohol.

LUKE DAY

How much longer before we can go home?

JASON PARMENTER

We have to get Boston back. We’re taking the cannons down there.

LUKE DAY

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

JASON PARMENTER

I saw Washington on a white horse. When he took command at Breed’s Hill.

LUKE DAY

That’s why we have to prevail. It’s God’s will. I really believe that.

JASON PARMENTER

Finish your meat. You need the nourishment. You’re a little delirious, still, is what I think.

[end of scene eleven]

**SCENE TWELVE~**

[Western Massachusetts, on the PARMENTER farm, outside. MOSES SASH and his mother, NETTIE. He is packed to leave]

NETTIE SASH

I do not understand this.

MOSES SASH

I’ll be able to buy more land, Mother.

NETTIE SASH

You will be captured and put back into slavery.

MOSES SASH

Not while I’m in the army.

[beat]

Was my father a black man?

NETTIE SASH

Are you asking me this now because you think you’ll never see me again?

MOSES SASH

Tell me.

NETTIE SASH

He was very black. Blue black. He was an African. Although I didn’t go willingly. I was eleven or thereabouts. But full-bodied. He could have thought I was older.

[he embraces her and holds her]

MOSES SASH

However I got here and by what means, violent and unfair, I am not interested in having any of it unless you are with me. Think of it this way--I know it breaks a Commandment. But I enjoy being a soldier. And it’s a good way to earn a wage.

NETTIE SASH

Oh, Moses, I couldn’t condemn you for anything. I could not. You’re the only one of my children I still have. Alive. And with me.

MOSES SASH

I will be in the *Continental* Army. A continent—this one. These colonies are going to be a country. Based on freedom. All those petitions Negro folk have been sending to England—this war will settle the problem of our liberty. Do you believe me, Ma?

NETTIE SASH

I don’t know if I believe in whatever these colonies are going to become. But I believe in you.

MOSES SASH

I love you with all my heart.

NETTIE SASH

You’d better hurry. You’ll get arrested if you’re out past nine o’clock.

WESLEY SMITH

[enters, packed to go to war, too]

Moses.

MOSES SASH

I’ll be with a white man.

WESLEY SMITH

[to NETTIE SASH]

Ma’am.

NETTIE SASH

I thought you came home to stay, Wesley.

WESLEY SMITH

I’ve re-enlisted. I need the money. And I’ve given up on my farm. Let it go fallow. It enriches the dirt.

MOSES SASH

We’ll be to South Hadley before dark. And join the troop there. Remember: Colonel Ruggles Woodbridge. That’s my commanding officer. It’s the only way to reach me.

WESLEY SMITH

[exiting]

I’m going to start down the road, Moses.

MOSES SASH

I’m going.

NETTIE SASH

Don’t pick up a walking stick. Negroes are not allowed to have so much as a club or anything that’s a weapon. Even if they’re with a white man.

MOSES SASH

Mother. Stop. I’ll have a musket by tomorrow morning. Legally. I’ll be armed legally from then on.

Good-bye.

[He runs off]

NETTIE SASH

Good-bye, son.

[MAUDIE enters]

MAUDIE

Aunt Nettie?

Why are you crying?

Where’s Moses?

NETTIE SASH

He’s gone to town to get something.

MAUDIE

You are all lying to me. I can tell.

NETTIE SASH

You’re getting too big explain everything to. You need to figure some things out for yourself.

[NETTIE SASH exits]

MAUDIE

Wait.

[MAUDIE follows her off]

[End of scene twelve]

**SCENE THIRTEEN~**

[MOSES SASH in uniform, with a musket. Dusk. ONEIDA enters. He is bloody and in a full British uniform].

MOSES SASH

Halt!

Wesley!! Wesley!!

WESLEY SMITH

[entering]

A Redcoat. Let’s take him in. Or shoot him?

He’s an Indian?

MOSES SASH

Hold on. I know him.

ONEIDA

They abandoned us. When we couldn’t beat the Americans. So they we were. Fighting the Haudenosaunee, our own people.

WESLEY SMITH

He’s talking to you, Moses. It’s like he doesn’t see me.

ONEIDA

My English is very good now. It is my salvation. They grab me and I speak this language and they are so shocked, they let me go.

MOSES SASH

You’re all right. We won’t expose you.

ONEIDA

At the battle. The British were gone. It’s was just loyalists. Born here. But on the side of the King. That’s what I was saying. But being born here means nothing to them. To any of the white people. The land is for their use. It means nothing more than that. Sometimes I see one of them standing quiet in the field and looking around and I think, “the spirits are talking to him,” and then I see that he is making water. Then back to work, head down, moving forward behind the plow. And now with all this fighting, all those harvests are rotting on the ground. Fallow grounds not yet ploughed. The cattle in a great measure are destroyed. All because of this fighting.

I witnessed the burying of the hatchet with a ceremony at the flagpole up north. I was there. Eleven years on this earth I was then and had never known peace among the people. But their Governor Belcher, in red robes, promised peace and the hatchet was laid in the ground like a dead body.

The Haudenosaunee and the Anicinàpe have been enemies.

I am Iriquois to them. And the Algonquin are of the Lnu’k, the Red Earth People. And I’ve forgotten my spirit name.

French, Dutch, English—all of them wanted our land and we have tried to find a way. But there are so many of them and they keep coming. Our confederacy has begun to crumble. The Mohawk and the Seneca fight with Joseph Brant. Eight hundred of them are called Tories. I’ve seen battles but this one--

So. . .much. . .blood. A slaughter. Of the Rebels. Of your men. Why are you alive?

MOSES SASH

That’s another regiment.

WESLEY SMITH

Ask him where all this was.

ONEIDA

We met them at the place near a small creek. They had three cannons and we none. We had tomahawks and a few guns, but agreed to fight with tomahawks and scalping knives. During the fight, we waited for them to fire their guns and then we attacked them. It felt like no more than killing a Beast. We killed most of the men in the Rebels’ army. Only a few escaped from us. We fought so close against one another that we could kill or another with a musket bayonet.... It was here that I saw the most dead bodies than I have ever seen. The bloodshed made a stream running down on the sloping ground. Who was killed? Who bore the losses? The Senecas. But your army lost the most.

After the battle, the Oneida Village of Oriska and its crops were destroyed, and many of its people are dead everywhere—no one to take care of their bodies. I could not stop, even though I knew some of them.

[long beat. He takes a drink from a canteen made of animal skin]

I need to find another regiment. I took this water from a dead woman, her child massacred.

I heard that the Cherokee lost most of their lands east of the mountains in South Carolina. And now they’re on the move to somewhere.

I see no end to it. I’m a ghost, my brother.

[hears something]

Those are human feet. In boots.

[ONEIDA exits, running]

MOSES SASH

Wait!!

SOLDIER

[enters]

Captain Wells says we double-march now. Ways to go before we reach camp. We need to clear out. Royalists, loyalists, those American scoundrels, fighting for the British, won some battle. So we’re not needed. Come on!

WESLEY SMITH

It looks like snow coming. March to keep warm.

[end of scene]

**SCENE FOURTEEN~**

[outside at Fort Ticonderoga, near a campfire, talking to the audience/soldiers]

JASON PARMENTER

The snow was already falling when I got back home to Pelham that November. So I almost made the harvest, but Jason, Jr., had all the important crops in and stored. But I made it in time for the pumpkins, yes. I made it in time for the pumpkins. Before the frost. I helped with that. So the following July, I came back here to Fort Ticonderoga again and defended it against General John Burgoyne and his well-trained but tired troops. And then, my son Jason wanted to enlist and I let him go. He’s sixteen years of age. He’s a man. He’s up the Hudson, near Lake George. This war has become a way of life. But I have been remarkably fortunate—no injury, battle wounds, or disease and sickness, the biggest killers.

[SEVERAL CAST MEMBERS, DRESSED IN WHATEVER COSTUME enter and look at Jason. He stands]

JASON PARMENTER

What is it?

SOLDIER WITH THE LETTER

[making his way through the crowd]

Captain Jason Parmenter?

[SOLDIER hands JASON PARMENTER a letter, official-looking. JASON PARMENTER opens it and then falls to his knees and then forward as if he has just been shot]

SOLDIER WITH THE LETTER

I didn’t hear a shot. What happened?

LUKE DAY

Jason?

[taking the letter out of JASON PARMENTER’S hand, reads it]

“Jason, Parmenter, Jr., was taken to the eternal world by a cannon ball during a battle with British forces at the southern end of Lake George.”

[They all look at JASON PARMENTER. He stands up slowly, takes the letter]

JASON PARMENTER

[reads]

--“cannonball.”

I’m going to get what is left of his body and take it home.

[the crowd separates]

LUKE DAY

I’ll get you a horse.

[He exits with LUKE DAY. Everyone watches them go]

**SCENE FIFTEEN~**

[Saratoga, NY. DANIEL SHAYS, now a lieutenant in the Continental Army, is wet and muddy. They are in trenches they have dug. JASON PARMENTER enters, equally muddy. This is October 17, 1777]

JASON PARMENTER

Something’s happening. Captain Shays.

DANIEL SHAYS

Still a lieutenant, Jason. Hope it will be retroactive. I need the increase in salary desperately.

JASON PARMENTER

But they’ll pay us in scrip. So how will we know?

DANIEL SHAYS

I was sick to hear about your boy. You didn’t have to come back.

JASON PARMENTER

My wife will not forgive me that. But I had to. There’s no work since the harvest, what there is of it, is in. I’m going to have to sell the oxen. They eat too much.

[long beat]

I’ve complained. Like any soldier. And doubted. But, Daniel. I believe we are making a nation here. That somehow it’s meant to exist. All of us here on these shores. And you and I may not have the best land, but it is so much more than what we came from.

DANIEL SHAYS

I was a laborer, Jason. And now I have my own farm. Changed my name, made it less Irish. Some of the family kicked out of Worcester because all Irish must be papists, right? They tore down our meeting house without even looking inside. There was no Mary, no Jesus on the cross. But down it came. So Pelham is our haven. Or heaven. I haven’t a single regret for anything I’ve done or had to do in this war.

JASON PARMENTER

I think it’s about to be over. On the road here, I heard lots of shouting.

LUKE DAY

[enters]

Redcoat General Burgoyne has discovered that there is more profit in being a playwright than in being a general for the British. He’s surrendered. “For the first shall become last,” boys. I’m going home to West Springfield.

DANIEL SHAYS

Oh, speak straight, Luke. And stop this preaching. What’s happened?

LUKE DAY

General Burgoyne has *surrendered* to our General Gates. Come on, boys, watch the British troops come in and lay down their arms. In the mud.

[sound of rain. They cross to a place where they can see everything. SOUND OF A BAND PLAYING “YANKEE DOODLE.”]

JASON PARMENTER

What’s that tune?

DANIEL SHAYS

I though it was derisive, making fun of us.

LUKE DAY

[quoting the Bible again]

“And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked ; and, behold—“

DANIEL SHAYS

There are lobsterbacks as far as I can see.

LUKE DAY

Thousands. But he lost another thousand in the battle. “And, behold, the multitude melted away.”

JASON PARMENTER

Surely, this will be it.

DANIEL SHAYS

I hope so, Jason. Winter is coming fast.

JASON PARMENTER

Where is “His Excellency” General Washington?

LUKE DAY

“His Excellency” always in uniform and insisting that we dress like officers. And I still won’t. And I see you haven’t, either, Daniel. I’m looking for his white horse.

DANIEL SHAYS

Can’t afford a officer’s uniform. He’s not here. He’s holding out in Pennsylvania. Did that decide all of this? There’s still fighting somewhere. Is this surrender?

LUKE DAY

We can only pray, Daniel.

DANIEL SHAYS

Well, let’s pray, then.

LUKE DAY

Father in Heaven—

DANIEL SHAYS

Make it a silent prayer? I want to hear the music!

[They kneel and pray. Sound of YANKEE DOODLE gets louder. DANIEL SHAYS can’t stay kneeling. He stands and smiles]

[end of scene 15]

**SCENE SIXTEEN**

[1777. December 25. VALLEY FORGE, outside. In the shreds of what is left of a Continental Army uniform, MOSES is on watch, as a sentry and is trying to keep warm by stomping and moving. He’s also eating from a small loaf of bread. COLONEL WILLIAM SHEPARD enters, with a bag. He looks a little like Santa Claus, but only to the audience. MOSES snaps into attention and holds]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

[to MOSES]

As you were.

[MOSES goes to “at ease.”]

No, not to “at ease”—I really mean, “as you were.”

[MOSES goes back to trying to keep warm]

You look familiar.

MOSES SASH

Sir, I’m Moses Sash, Colonel Shepard. Sir. I worked on Jason Parmenter’s farm, in Pelham. I own property near you, sir. I’m serving with the 25th Regiment under Colonel Ruggles.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Good. I thought I recognized you. Not that many Negro soldiers.

MOSES SASH

I’ve heard of a few thousand, sir. All told.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Does that count the disgraceful Ethiopian Regiment, as if those black bastards even know what Ethiopia was.

MOSES SASH

Those are fighting for the British, Sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

They think the Crown will give them their freedom.

MOSES SASH

I am a free man, sir. And I bought my mother’s freedom as well.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Are you and the other Negro soldiers quartered with the other men?

MOSES SASH

Some of the men, white or black, are quartered now, in cabins, sir. We started with one barracks and it took three days to make it because we only had one hatchet.

Sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

You have to understand, it’s been a hard campaign. But if we can just hold the British off for the winter, we’ll have won. It’s important to muster. We’ve got a good Prussian to lead the maneuvers. He’ll have you standing up straight and clicking the heels of your boots.

MOSES SASH

Many of us are barefoot, sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

You are close to being insubordinate. But it’s too cold to punish you. This damnable weather is punishment enough.

MOSES SASH

Yes, sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

I’ll see you back in Massachusetts, then, Moses. Because we will win this war. I know it’s difficult to see. But we will be victorious. Is that bread?

MOSES SASH

We’re given a small loaf a day. It’s been easier since they started that. No other rations.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

“Give us this day our daily bread.” Better than that awful stuff you make on the fire. What is it called? “Fire cake?” Ugggh. I hope you men are saving enough grain for your horses. Mine are well fed. And will remain so.

MOSES SASH

Why aren’t you on horseback, sir?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

I wouldn’t subject either of my horses to this weather. They are in the horse barns constructed for the officers’ mounts. And are awaiting Mrs. Washington and her livery.

[beat]

Your attitude nearly made me forget your gifts.

Woolen mittens from Tom Paine.

MOSES SASH

[putting them on quickly, as he talks]

Thomas Paine?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

“These are the times that try men’s souls, the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot may, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.” That’s Thomas Paine. I’m a soldier, been one since I was 17, fighting with the Iroquois and the French against the British and haven’t memorized much poetry, but those words are good ones. One of my sons is quite the scholar and reads. He’s not in any army. His mother—well--

MOSES SASH

Yes, sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

And here is a linen shirt made by Benjamin Franklin’s illegitimate daughter, can’t remember her name. She has one. Well, I doubt she sewed this herself, but she raised money to buy hundreds of bolts of linen for the ladies auxiliary to make these shirts for you soldiers.

[MOSES SASH wraps it around his neck like a neck scarf]

I know there is some discontent with General Washington and his officers being housed at the house of Isaac Potts, but there are no beds save the one for Washington and his lady. Even his aide-de-camp, Billy Lee, sleeps on a pallet in Washington’s room. Billy Lee is a Negro, too, you know. The food is the most basic. We had potatoes and cabbage soup for Christmas dinner. The tavern was planning a ball for Lady Washington but she declined, saying it was not right since the troops were underfed and underclothed. And she is knitting socks for all for all of you.

MOSES SASH

We are four thousand men. Death continues to take us, but there are still thousands of feet that need socks. I don’t know how fast Lady Washington can knit. . .

WILLIAM SHEPARD

You are being paid, Moses!! You have written bonds for your wages which you can cash in. And spare your anger for the local farmers who chose and still choose to sell their food to the British because the British can afford to pay higher prices and in pound sterling. Meanwhile, the army that is winning their independence from British rule is starving. Here’s my ration of bread for today.

MOSES SASH

Thank you, sir. My replacement should be here soon, Sir. I thank you for the gifts.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

It’s Christmas. And the gift is a new country, Moses!

Where were you a year ago?

MOSES SASH

I was at home in Massachusetts--warm, fed, with my mother and the family I worked with and she cooks for.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

I was in Trenton, New Jersey. With George Washington and these troops. Well, many of them. And those soldiers, those soldiers, as they marched in the snow, left bloody footprints because many of them were without boots. But do you know what they did that day? They beat the British. And took the town. The British Colonel, Colonel Rahl may his name be a source of shame for the Crown, didn’t believe the Americans, the Americans, could possibly cross a nearly frozen river and attack his Hessians. Hessians, Moses. Mercenaries. Born to fight, disciplined. You know. Because we have a Prussian doing our musters here. But Rahl was wrong. We did cross the river and we did attack and we won. The world underestimates us, Moses. That is their mistake. You give men hope. And some good ideas. And promise of land and freedom, and they will be victorious.

MOSES SASH

Yes, sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Come to Westfield, Moses. When we all get home. I’ll have some work for you.

MOSES SASH

I plan to have my own place up and running by then.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

You do not sound grateful, soldier. Here are some words for you, that you may deem to appreciate, not necessarily poetry, written by Mr. Thomas Jefferson: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable—“

[sees something, points it out]

There! It’s Mrs. Washington in her fine coach. Beautiful. Encouraging to the troops. Yes?

[MOSES nods, then turns away]

Are you ashamed to let her livery see you?

MOSES SASH

Her livery? Why?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

I mean her slaves, running alongside the coach.

MOSES SASH

I am sorry for them, sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Because they’re cold? It’s temporary. And they are beautifully-dressed and well-fed.

MOSES SASH

They are slaves, sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

You don’t envy them, even a little?

MOSES SASH

No, sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Good soldier. You know and appreciate your place.

MOSES SASH

I am a soldier, temporarily. My place is as a free man on my own land.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

I’m trying to—

MOSES SASH

--to what, sir?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Maintain morale, soldier.

[beat]

Where is that replacement of yours?

MOSES SASH

It hasn’t been an hour yet.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Well, good night, then, soldier.

[beat]

MOSES SASH

Yes, sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Happy Christmas.

[MOSES SASH and WILLIAM SHEPARD salute. WILLIAM SHEPARD exits. ONEIDA enters]

ONEIDA

I was waiting for Shepard to leave. I have nothing to do with any of them, any more. I brought you something, too.

[He gives him a wrap of animal fur]

MOSES SASH

So many presents. Do you know what Christmas is?

ONEIDA

Yes. I’ve lived around the English most of my life.

MOSES SASH

How will you keep warm now?

ONEIDA

I don’t need to be warm. Any more.

[gives him some pemican]

Pemican.

MOSES SASH

Good.

ONEIDA

He gave you gifts.

MOSES SASH

Oh. Those are because we haven’t been paid. And people will do anything other than the actual fighting. And waiting. Always waiting. Soldiers. And getting sick. And being filthy. But if I went home, it would be desertion. And they would see me as a coward. When not one of them had been in a battle.

You’re still spying for the British?

ONEIDA

I spied for all of them. The French and the British and the colonists. They are all bad for the Oneida, the Algonquin, all the people. We fought on one side or the other because we wanted our land back. But all they gave us was rum. And disease.

MOSES SASH

Wish I had some rum now.

ONEIDA

For Indian people, it is as bad as disease. Warriors, young men, women, see white men and run to them, saying, “rum, rum, give us rum.” And the white men do and then a madness possesses the people. And we lose everything. I’m going. Into the darkness. To die. Because I cannot bear to see what is coming. I know you won’t come after me. Because you won’t leave your post. You are a good soldier. Now when I’m over there by that tree, I will turn and I want you to shoot me.

[points to heart]

Here.

MOSES SASH

What?

ONEIDA

Moses. You saved my life once and now you must take it. You will have no choice, so just listen to me.

I will raise my tomahawk, as if I’m about to throw it.

I am asking you. As a warrior. As a man. To send me to my ancestors.

MOSES SASH

What?

ONEIDA

*I will fling this tomahawk into your forehead unless you shoot me.*

[beat]

I have chosen you.

It’s a gift you’re giving me.

Is your musket loaded?

Because I will aim true with this tomahawk.

Expect it in your forehead if you falter.

Always wear your medicine bag. It will protect you.

Is your musket ready?

[MOSES SASH checks his musket]

MOSES SASH

It’s loaded. And ready.

ONEIDA

Thank you.

[shows MOSES SASH the tomahawk]

I ***will*** kill you with this.

[ONEIDA walks into the darkness and offstage. MOSES SASH sees that he is stopped and reacts to the tomahawk being aimed at him. MOSES SASH aims his musket and fires. We hear ONEIDA’s body fall. MOSES SASH exits to where ONEIDA’s body fell. We hear MOSES SASH whimper slightly. MOSES SASH RE-ENTERS with ONEIDA’S tomahawk. WESLEY SMITH enters and goes offstage to find ONEIDA. COLONEL SHEPARD re-enters]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

[to MOSES SASH]

Good. Good. The bastard could have killed you. He was very good with that weapon. He spied for both sides. No loyalty. Couldn’t be trusted. They’re like that.

[about one of the soldiers, WESLEY SMITH. MOSES nods to him]

And here’s your replacement. We’re both from the same place, soldiers. God bless the Connecticut River.

[WESLEY SMITH stands guard. SOLDIERS start to carry ONEIDA’S body]

MOSES SASH

[concerned with the roughness they exhibit with ONEIDA’s body]

No. No, let me help.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

No. You’ve done your job, soldier.

Carry on, men.

[They carry ONEIDA’S body off]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

[to MOSES SASH]

You’re *dismissed.*

WESLEY SMITH

Moses.

MOSES SASH

Wesley. When did you arrive here? They transferred you from the Ruggles regiment?

WESLEY SMITH

This morning. Some more deserted to go home. And we were sent to replace them.

[MOSES SASH gives WESLEY the linen shirt he got from WILLIAM SHEPARD and has been wearing as a scarf]

MOSES SASH

Benjamin Franklin’s daughter made this. Happy Christmas.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

[to MOSES SASH]

I said, you’re dismissed, soldier!

[MOSES SASH exits]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

[to new guard]

I’ll make certain your replacement comes within the hour. Keep your spirits up. We’re winning this war.

[WILLIAM SHEPARD exits. WESLEY SMITH stands guard, stamps his feet to keep warm]

WESLEY SMITH

[sings to himself as he stamps his feet to keep warm]

“God rest ye merry gentlemen,

Let nothing you dismay.”

Bloody hell.

[END of scene 16]

**SCENE SEVENTEEN~**

[DANIEL SHAYS, looking as good as he can in what is left of his uniform, looks at a beautiful presentational sword]

DANIEL SHAYS

Lafayette gave me this. For service. He’s not even my countryman. It’s engraved. And, look at this, Jason—gold on the handle.

DRUNKEN ENGLISH SOLDIER

[enters. He has a limp]

You are an officer?

In the so-called Continental Army?

DANIEL SHAYS

I am.

DRUNKEN ENGLISH SOLDIER

Our General Cornwallis thought so little of you and your so-called “army” that he wouldn’t attend the surrender. He sent his second in command.

JASON PARMENTER

Where are you headed, soldier? Can we re-direct your path?

DRUNKEN ENGLISH SOLDIER

I supposed you know your great commander Washington let our supporters, the one who still love the Crown—he let them board the Bonita and head into Boston. I can see by your faces, you didn’t know that.

DANIEL SHAYS

General Washington is not advocating revenge. Of any kind.

DRUNKEN ENGLISH SOLDIER

That’s a beautiful sword. Here. Use it. I have no weapons because I just laid them down in the field. We all did. In formation! By regiment!

DANIEL SHAYS

I’m finished with fighting.

DRUNKEN ENGLISH SOLDIER

You’re probably some Irish potato-eating gutter scum. Come on, you coward.

JASON PARMENTER

You lost!!! Now get out of our country!!

[JASON hits him. The soldier falls and a scuffle happens. DANIEL SHAYS breaks it up]

DANIEL SHAYS

[to DRUNKEN ENGLISH SOLDIER]

Where do you belong?

DRUNKEN ENGLISH SOLDIER

The French saved you. If they hadn’t filled the harbor with their ships...

Look at you. What kind of uniform is that?

Seven thousand officers and men, nine hundred seamen, one hundred and forty-four cannons, fifteen galleys, a frigate and thirty transport ships.

That’s your pirate booty.

Scum taking over the world. I wish I was dead.

I lost my heart to one of your women. I shot myself in the foot for her. Well, no—to save my own pride.

What does it mean to be captured? What does it mean to lose? I’ve been in this—I supposed it’s a country now. I’ve been in this country for so long, I have nothing to go home to. Pity me.

[he passes out]

DANIEL SHAYS

Well, he got his wish partly. He’s dead, Jason. Dead drunk. Poor bastard. I shouldn’t say that. I don’t know his lineage of that of his mother.

I waded up to my armpits in muck in Stony Point, fighting for Mad Anthony. We got that fort and he danced with his wounds, blood streaming from his head. Insanity.

This man has a permanent limp from some battle, probably.

Oh Lord in Heaven, I am done with all of this.

JASON PARMENTER

[pieces of paper on the ground]

Scrip. Here’s my scrip. Fell out of my pocket. That’s our payment, Daniel. For all of this. Paper. We have all this paper. It’s not even currency. It’s a promissory note.

DANIEL SHAYS

I’ll get what I can for what I have.

JASON PARMENTER

The sword? It’s got gold on it.

DANIEL SHAYS

Never. I meant, I will get what credit or even coin I can for this scrip. Abigail’s last letter was desperate. The farm is failing for lack of manpower to tend it. How’s your farm?

JASON PARMENTER

Since the death of Jason, Jr., it’s nearly fallen to ruin. The remaining children are young and can only do so much and their mother, their mother, no longer cares. She lacks the heart of your Abigail.

DANIEL SHAYS

My Abigail hasn’t had as many children, Jason. We’ve got three, only. When I get home, we’ll remedy that.

[JASON laughs in a comradely, male way. They both laugh]

[sound of fifes playing]

DANIEL SHAYS

Well, shall we go home?

JASON PARMENTER

It’s a long march, but we’ve marched further, haven’t we?

What’s that tune they keep playing?

DRUNKEN ENGLISH SOLDIER

[raises his head]

“The World Turned Upside Down.”

[Soldier exits, sound of vomiting]

DANIEL SHAYS and JASON PARMENTER {and the rest of the cast]

[singing the words to “The World Turned Upside Down”]

Our Lords and Knights, and Gentry too, doe mean old fashions to forego,

They set a porter at the gate, that none must enter in thereat.

They count it a sin, when poor people come in.

Hospitality itself is drown'd.

Yet let's be content, and the times lament, you see the world turn'd upside down,

You see the world turned upside down…

[JOHN WORTHINGTON enters]

You see------the world-----turned………

[The singing stops as JOHN WORTHINGTON approaches DANIEL SHAYS]

JOHN WORTHINGTON

I’m sorry, Daniel.

JASON PARMENTER

Did somebody. . .die?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

I might. Or my business surely will. You see, Daniel, Jason, since we’re no longer British, and the colonies, us, have no valid trade agreements with anyone, I have to demand, in coin, since we are prevented by law to use barter, I must have what you owe me, and I’m very sorry, but it’s my survival.

WESLEY SMITH

You might consider selling your scrip. Governor Bowdoin, as a private citizen, is buying. That’s what I did—got twenty pence on the dollar. It’s enough to buy grain for next harvest. General Benjamin Lincoln, too. Is buying.

DANIEL SHAYS

I’ve already done that, Wesley, and sent it home.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

[to JASON PARMENTER]

And you, Jason Parmenter, have a heavy tax bill coming up, I hear.

[DANIEL SHAYS unwraps his presentation sword]

JOHN WORTHINGTON

That’s gold on the handle. You owe me twelve dollars. That should do fine.

[DANIEL SHAYS hands him the sword]

It’s this or I will have to take you to court and seize your property. Please understand, my friends, somebody has to pay for this war.

[JOHN WORTHINGTON exits with the sword]

**END OF ACT ONE.**

**ACT TWO**

**SCENE ONE~**

[A Sunday. Inside a church in Pelham, MA, we see and hear a congregation doing shape-note singing. SAMUEL ELY, their pastor, is leading the singing. {It is the “sacred harp,” sound used in early American protestant churches before it was deemed “crude and lewd” and replaced by the “better music” movement, headed by Lowell Mason at the Presbyterian Church in Boston where hymns were sang based on classical music from Europe}. In the CONGREGATION is JASON PARMENTER’S daughter, MAUDIE, and her mother ABIGAIL]

ELY AND CONGREGATION

The earth belongs unto the Lord

And all that it contains

The world that is inhabited

And all that there remains.

For the foundations thereof

He on the seas did lay,

And He hath it established

Upon the floods to stay.

[In this verse, ELY says the verse first, then the CONGREGATION sings it.]

SAMUEL ELY

[speaks]

The spacious earth is all the Lord’s--

CONGREGATION

[sings]

The spacious earth is all the Lord’s--

SAMUEL ELY

[speaks]

--And men, and worms—

CONGREGATION

[sings]

--And men, and worms—

SAMUEL ELY

[speaks]

--and beasts, and birds—

CONGREGATION

[sings]

--and beasts, and birds—

SAMUEL ELY

[speaks]

He raised the building on the seas--

CONGREGATION

He raised the building on the seas—

SAMUEL ELY

[speaks]

And gave it for their dwelling-place.

CONGREGATION

And gave it for their dwelling-place.

[SAMUEL ELY, now preaches, from the pulpit]

ELY

This hymn is about God’s kingdom on earth, which is in the hands of men, men who do not understand basic Christian principles.

The law, as it is now enacted in Massachusetts, is not the law of God. It is no longer about sins against God. It is about sins against property.

[LUKE DAY and ANOTHER OFFICER start to enter the church but hang back so as not to intrude. LUKE DAY is in uniform, as a Captain, and has one leg with a frozen kneecap. ELY stops his sermon]

SAMUEL ELY

Welcome, sir.

LUKE DAY

Finish, Reverend Ely.

SAMUEL ELY

You are in uniform and I know why you are here.

You are Captain Luke Day? Your church is in West Springfield.

LUKE DAY

Springfield, Reverend.

SAMUEL ELY

Joseph Lathrop is your pastor. Is that why you won’t come all the way in and join this congregation?

LUKE DAY

Please continue. We’ll wait outside.

SAMUEL ELY

No, I want you to hear here and consider its wisdom.

[back to his sermon]

Since the courts are the source of this unholy law, the courts must be shut down. Just as Jesus threw the money-lenders out of the temple.

[to LUKE DAY]

Is that what you’re here to arrest me for?

LUKE DAY

We have been authorized to do so.

SAMUEL ELY

You’re limping.

LUKE DAY

I was injured in battle. I’m on medical leave. I was called up today for active duty.

SAMUEL ELY

But the Treaty of Paris was signed. This expensive war is over.

LUKE DAY

I fear—

SAMUEL ELY

What do you fear, Captain Day? That justice is not on your side?

LUKE DAY

Since you are determined to not continue with your service, then I’ll carry out my duty.

Forgive me. Everyone. I have to arrest this man for sedition.

SAMUEL ELY

[to the congregation]

I was expecting this.

Pray for me.

And you pray for me, too, Captain, and I will pray for you.

[LUKE DAY and WESLEY SMITH begin to escort SAMUEL ELY offstage. LUKE DAY sees MOSES SASH. MAUDIE PARMENTER and her mother ABIGAIL see all of this. MAUDIE sees MOSES SASH who has been waiting with the wagon to escort them home]

MAUDIE

[to MOSES SASH]

They arrested our preacher!!

LUKE DAY

[acknowledging MOSES SASH]

Captain Sash.

MOSES SASH

[replying]

Captain Day.

SAMUEL ELY

[to his congregation]

Don’t fret. “Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice.”

[LUKE DAY leaves with SAMUEL ELY]

MOSES SASH

[to ABIGAIL PARMENTER]

The wagon’s over here.

MAUDIE

Moses! It isn’t right! He’s our pastor!

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

I have to get back. Your mother’s kind enough to watch the children.

MOSES SASH

Let’s go.

MAUDIE

Do something, Moses! It’s not right!

MOSES SASH

Hush, now, Maudie. Come on.

[He leads her away].

[end of scene one]

**SCENE TWO~**

[JASON PARMENTER and DANIEL SHAYS are sitting, silently for a few beats. They are outside]

DANIEL SHAYS

We’re not the only people in this county having trouble paying our debts.

JASON PARMENTER

It’s just a terrible thing to have our pastor carried away by militia. Maudie was crying. Abigail wouldn’t talk about it. And you know who did the arresting? Luke Day.

DANIEL SHAYS

Well, he’s still being paid and he needs the money.

JASON PARMENTER

Paid with what, Dan? Scrip? I have heard, from John Worthington of all people, that our governor had one thousand dollars worth of scrip he bought off of our fellow soldiers, all desperate to get what money they could.

DANIEL SHAYS

John Worthington is no supporter of James Bowdoin, so it doesn’t surprise me that he said that. And I’m sure it’s true. I sold my scrip for a fraction of what it said it was worth and to Benjamin Lincoln. I’ll say this once. If we had had paper money with a fixed value, all would have been different.

JASON PARMENTER

I’d take you to Conkey’s Tavern if I had some of that. He won’t accept barter any more. And a soldier is there to make sure he doesn’t.

DANIEL SHAYS

That’s a job for a soldier. Guard the tavern. I wouldn’t mind that job. It hurts my heart I can’t help you, Jason. I just don’t have the coin, the specie, whatever they want to call it. I can loan you my team. I’m also sorry you had to sell yours. That was a fine pair of oxen.

JASON PARMENTER

They were partial to Jason, Jr. and wouldn’t “gee-haw” for anyone else. Oh, here’s some of that jam you like. Abigail and Nettie Sash made up a passel of it.

DANIEL SHAYS

It’s a great life if you don’t weaken.

JASON PARMENTER

Truer words were never spoke.

[DANIEL waves to JASON PARMENTER as JASON exits]

[end of scene two]

**SCENE THREE~**

SAMUEL ELY

[in jail in Northampton, MA. He looks terrible. He’s preaching, but through bars in a jail window]

My friends. I am covered in boils and sores. I am afraid to unwrap my feet for fear of what I may see there. I’ve no feeling in my toes for days now. There are men in worse shape here and only for unpaid debts. I am accused of sedition. Their only crime is to be unable to pay taxes that they can ill afford since their farms suffered when they were away fighting for the creation of this republic which now imprisons them. We are a wretched group while merely six inches outside these walls is the beautiful town of Northampton. And don’t talk to me about law in this world. **The law is not God’s law, it is no longer about sins against God, it is about sins against property.**

[end of scene three]

**SCENE FOUR~**

[A year or two later. Town meeting in Hatfield, MA. Daytime]

DANIEL SHAYS

I want to thank Reverend Joseph Lathrop for leading us in prayer and for coming all the way from Springfield for this meeting. Our pastor, Samuel Ely, was arrested for sedition for saying some things these particular walls will, no doubt, hear today. A season or two has passed since then and things have gotten worse for most of you here. I know they’ve gotten worse for me. We can only be thankful we are safe over here in Hatfield.

HIRAM

And they broke him out of that Northampton jail. The people did that. And no one got arrested because somebody in power thought what they did was just. And what is Luke Day doing here? He arrested Samuel Ely.

LUKE DAY

My shirttail barely touched me before I was arrested myself for non-payment of debts and in the same jail.

DANIEL SHAYS

I’m not heading anything here. We are all equals. But I’ll start by saying I am Daniel Shays, formerly Captain in the Continental Army. I’m not in my Continental Army uniform, I resigned my commission because I could not bear the approbations I received from my fellow officers when I had to sell my presentation sword from Lafayette to pay a debt to keep myself out of the Northampton jail.

[sympathetic sound from the audience]

I look out on this assemblage of yeomen, like myself. And I see men in homespun cotton, woven by the women of Pelham. I see Hampshire men in those checkered shirts, because peddlers come here, used to when we could afford to buy it, those bolts of indigo John Worthington sold. And many of you in your tan and blue Continental Army uniforms, or what is left of them, after years of fighting. And I see some hope because there are so many of us.

HIRAM

I came here to say this: we here inland are different from them in the East. I have 150 acres and I plow just enough to feed my family and stock and have some left over for barter. Why cut my 100 acres of woods for nothing? And why plow up my meadowlands when I can have a few acres lie fallow? Leave God’s beauty alone. In the East, yes, I mean Boston and Providence, but, Boston, yes, money is the only object alluded to and the only acquisition that commands respect. Likewise, no respect for community. I’m telling you, it’s not godly the way they think. Tom Hancock has no care for society, only himself. Same as James Bowdoin, Samuel Adams, Benjamin Lincoln buying land to sell at a profit—no feeling for this home we call Massachusetts. And yet, mark my words, their names will grace the roads on which our grandchildren will travel. And they may as well be country squires in England, with their tenants and labor. They don’t do a lick of work except deal with the money coming in and coming in, it does. And that is not the case with us. We are our own. We are closer to being citizens of the Republic of Vermont.

PEOPLE

[agreeing]

Here. Here!

ANOTHER FARMER

I’ve been obliged to do more than my part in the war, and I come home to be loaded with class rates, town rates, province rates, Continental rates, been pulled and hauled by sheriffs, constables, had my cattle sold for less than they were worth.

OLD PLOUGH JOGGER

And the great men are going to get all we have, and I think it is time to rise and put a stop to it, and have no more courts, nor sheriffs, nor collectors, nor lawyers, and I know that we have the might and the experience!!

[Some applause, enough to bother LATHROP]

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

[brings down the gavel]

We are not here to foment some violent action! We are gathered to discuss the situation.

DANIEL SHAYS

I agree with the Reverend. Luke Day? You came all the way from West Springfield. Do you have something to say?

LUKE DAY

It will make the ride home with Reverend Lathrop a long one, but I agree with Hiram.

JASON PARMENTER

I think a ***show*** of might is enough. Other Regulators have been closing courts in Rhode Island and in Worcester and the powers that be are getting the message.

LUKE DAY

As one who was standing guard to protect the courts not so long ago, a show of might works at that moment, because no one soldier, or three, and, certainly, a judge, does not want to take on a mob.

HIRAM

We’re not a “mob.” We are citizens of the Republic of Massachusetts.

JASON PARMENTER

My wife will not allow me to go near any show of arms again. I have to speak frankly. And you may think me a weak man to be governed by a woman, but I am saying this here now because I feel the sentiment in this room is heading us into violence.

LUKE DAY

It’s simple. When the courts meet, farmers lose their property, farmers are put into jail. We are coming up on the anniversary of the day I left debtor’s prison and walked home to West Springfield, in time for the haying. Court is going to meet and someone is going to lose everything. I came here to ask for you to march with me. If you aren’t het up enough by what keeps happening to all of us, then here is something from the Bible to inspire you. This is from Ecclesiastes: “Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforters; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.” What I’m saying is I don’t want to be praised when I am dead. I just want to be able to live and work, as God intended me to do. We will muster at the courthouse in Springfield next Tuesday early. I have a fife and drum corps already. Henry McCullough got them together. Wear your Continental Army uniforms, if you have them. And look sharp. And bring your musket, if you have one. If not, I’ll bring clubs from my farm. Everyone should have a weapon. That’s all I have to say today. Jason? I know you’ve lost some livestock to the debt collectors—I’m sure you have reason to come. With you wife’s permission. And Daniel?

DANIEL SHAYS

Luke. Do you know what you’re saying? We are here to air grievances, not to forment another rebellion. I will not be a part of another military action, even if I agree with the intent. You’re taking a fateful step by doing this.

LUKE DAY

Joseph?

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

I think there is danger in referencing the Bible, Luke, referencing for your own use.

LUKE DAY

Tuesday, then. I’ll see you there.

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

I’ll pray for you.

LUKE DAY

God is already on my side, Joe. I can feel it.

[to everyone]

Tuesday!

[LUKE DAY exits. JASON PARMENTER, HIRAM and the other farmers cross to DANIEL SHAYS]

JASON PARMENTER

Fact is, men have been gathering in Springfield for days. The roads are filled with them. Colonel Shepard has been called up to protect the court. I don’t think Luke Day can handle all the men who have come to see what we do. They’ll follow you, Daniel.

DANIEL SHAYS

I am on my way home. Abigail expects me.

HIRAM

If we go, I’ll only be led by you, Cap’n Shays.

DANIEL SHAYS

I’m no longer a captain. And I am expected at home.

[DANIEL SHAYS exits]

[end of scene four]

**SCENE FIVE~**

[AT NIGHT, JASON and ABIGAIL PARMENTER enter. They spread out a quilt. ABIGAIL rubs an herb on Jason’s neck and arms. He does the same to her, finding his way to her breasts, now and then. She doesn’t respond]

JASON

What is it, Abigail?

ABIGAIL

Pudding grass.

JASON

[referring to the herb]

I know what this is. I’m asking you about yourself.

[no answer from her]

The moon is in a safe place. We shouldn’t conceive.

[no answer]

I miss you, Abby. We have had no time alone.

[ABIGAIL slaps a mosquito on her arm]

ABIGAIL

More pudding grass.

[JASON rubs the pudding grass on ABIGAIL’S arm. Then he gets sexually excited and kisses her neck. She doesn’t move. He stops]

JASON

Abby, I won’t force myself on you. I know that is my right. But I cannot do it. Don’t you miss me?

ABIGAIL

You’re going to war ***again***. You just got home, Jason.

JASON

What we’re doing is demonstrating. We are Regulators of Government. Just as they did in Rhode Island. How can you call that a war? It’s silly and womanish of you.

[ABIGAIL slaps him. He grabs her hand]

ABIGAIL

It was a mosquito.

[He takes the same hand to his mouth and kisses the inside of the palm, as if asking for forgiveness for doubting her intent when she slapped him]

ABIGAIL

Listen to me. Are you listening? I dressed as a man and stopped a British spy. I did that for you, to keep you alive. And then I returned to my “womanish” life--here, on this farm. My daily life has nothing to do with who governs the land. I am governed by you. My husband. When there is war, you are away—that is all I notice. And then my oldest son, my firstborn, leaves. And you bring him back and we put him in the ground.

Many women lose sons. And other children. All of the time. But I am bitter about losing Jason, Jr. I admit that. And it’s unchristian and I know that. And unseemly. And cowardly. But I’m not a beast of the field that can just live and not ever think about things. When we married, I lived for you, Jason. And the children came and I didn’t lose a single one in childbirth. And I lived for them, too. But I always have thought that there would come a day when we could live in a peaceful time, with all of the men home, and all these farms could be a group of neighbors. Moses and his mother on their land. And the Shays over there. And Henry McCullough and his mother—he needs a father, Jason. He needs someone to look up to. There is life to be tended to!

JASON

But we can’t have a life as long as the government takes everything we have!

ABIGAIL

Everything WE have is still here.

JASON

For how long? Daniel Shays has been sued twice for unpaid debts. He sold his sword from Lafayette.

ABIGAIL

Who cares about a sword? I don’t. Let them have it.

JASON

It’s the principle.

ABIGAIL

Principles? What does that have to do with me? Or our nine—I mean, eight—children? Just let the men who want to rule, rule. And leave us alone.

JASON

It can never be like that, Abigail.

ABIGAIL

All of the women who have lain under moons like this have wondered why men can’t get along?

JASON

[Exasperated, he grabs her by the wrists]

Because some men just take! Whatever they want just because they want it! Can’t you understand that, woman!

[Beat. He has her now and they both realize it. He could push her down and be on top of her in a second. He lets go of her. She slaps him. Another beat.]

JASON

Mosquito.

[She looks at him. Then slaps him again.]

JASON

Abigail.

[A lantern approaches. It’s carried by her daughter, MAUDE PARMENTER]

MAUDE

It’s the baby, Ma. He’ll only settle for you.

[ABIGAIL starts to pick up the quilt]

JASON

I’ll get that.

[He picks up the quilt and follows them offstage to the house]

[end of scene five]

**SCENE SIX~**

MAUDE PARMENTER

[reading the newspaper, cut like a pattern]

Part of the article is cut out, but it says that the court closings in the Western part of Massachusetts are fomented by British spies who are upsetting our country folk. The Treaty of Paris didn’t end the fight with King George, that he is conspiring to get his colonies back.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

[reading the newspaper]

“Ye ought to do something! Ye ought to do it immediately! Ye are hostile to the state if ye do less than all ye can to save it. Signed Lucius Junius Brutus.” What kind of name is that?

MAUDE PARMENTER

It’s a false name. The writer is Fisher Ames. He writes for the *Independent Chronicle.*

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

How do you know all of that?

MAUDE PARMENTER

My father talks about it. All of this risky business. Of taking on the government.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

But we’re the government.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Do you own any land?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I don’t own anything.

MAUDE PARMENTER

As soon as you own something, then you become aware of the fact that the government wants it. Or part of it. What does your father say?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I am fatherless. Captain Daniel Shays is a man I look up to as a father.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Does he even know your name?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

He trained me and I was with him in the war against the British. What difference does it make, anyway? I still believe in what he’s doing. The Supreme Court of Massachusetts cannot meet because we are here.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Well, I know Captain Shays well. And I wish I could march with you.

[MOSES SASH enters]

MOSES SASH

Maudie, Captain Shays says go stand with the women. And Henry, come with us, if you’ve a mind to.

[MAUDE exits, disappointed]

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Maude? Maude? I’ll see you later.

[to MOSES SASH]

She’s mad at me now.

MOSES SASH

Come on, boy. When will you stop being a boy?

[They exit]

[end of scene six]

**SCENE SEVEN~**

[A few minutes later, outside the Courthouse in Springfield. WILLIAM SHEPARD, in uniform, is commanding the troops defending the courthouse. DANIEL SHAYS is wearing his uniform and has a spring of hemlock in his hat.]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Captain Shays.

DANIEL SHAYS

I am not a Captain. I resigned my commission. I resigned from the army.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

You’re in uniform.

DANIEL SHAYS

I’m in uniform to control that angry—

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Mob.

DANIEL SHAYS

--assemblage of citizens.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

What is that sprig of evergreen?

DANIEL SHAYS

I asked that the men wear that, as a *reminder* of the tree of liberty.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

It looks like hemlock.

DANIEL SHAYS

It is.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

It that a symbol of suicide?

DANIEL SHAYS

How could it mean that?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Socrates drank hemlock.

DANIEL SHAYS

I don’t know who that is.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

He was a philosopher. My son has been to school and is schooling me, now.

DANIEL SHAYS

Well, my son was in the war against the King. And if I were a philosopher, I would have committed suicide long ago. Philosophy means nothing. Property means everything. My government has taught me that.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

What do you plan to accomplish with this show of arms?

DANIEL SHAYS

Most of the men have clubs.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

The Boston Massacre taught us what snowballs and rocks can do.

DANIEL SHAYS

Yes, they can draw fire. From much greater and lethal weaponry. But if you have enough men with clubs, then you might have a stand-off.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

What do you want?

DANIEL SHAYS

We want the court to not meet.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

You want them to adjourn.

DANIEL SHAYS

They haven’t met. The judges haven’t appeared.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

The judges are going to be escorted, safely, into the court. That is my job today. May I do my job, unmolested by your “assemblage of men”?

DANIEL SHAYS

If they hold court, then we will take action. And we outnumber your troops by, I estimate, five to one.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

I will do what I’ve been ordered to do.

DANIEL SHAYS

And I will do what my assemblage wants me to do.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

You are NOT A LEADER, SIR! You never were! Men followed you but you did NOT lead them. And THAT is why you were NEVER OFFICER MATERIAL!!

DANIEL SHAYS

Good afternoon, Colonel Shepard. I hope never to see you again.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

I’ll not salute you.

DANIEL SHAYS

Good.

[DANIEL SHAYS exits.]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Damnable man!

[end of scene seven]

**SCENE EIGHT~**

[PARMENTER FARM, later that same day. JASON and MAUDE face ABIGAIL]

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

[to JASON]

You went. And you took Maudie with you.

MAUDE PARMENTER

I had to see, Mother. It was glorious. Not a single shot fired. The judges proceeded to the court, past all of our men, standing at attention, with their muskets ready and clubs. And shouting. We were. The men, I mean. And Mr. Shays and Papa kept them in order. Even though they were shouting terrible things. And the judges went into the courthouse. The supreme court, Mama. It was the supreme court of Massachusetts. They went in and convened and then adjourned immediately. And they came out, processed by us and everyone was cheering. And they went back to Boston. It was glorious. And I met Henry McCullough.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

Who is that?

JASON PARMENTER

Sarah McCullough’s boy. He’s been following Daniel around, since we came home from the war. His father is long-gone—don’t know why.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

What happens now?

JASON PARMENTER

I don’t know.

MAUDE PARMENTER

We won. Is what happened.

JASON PARMENTER

I think there will be a lot of talk before courts meet to take farmer’s property away. It’s a victory, Abigail. Really. You can believe it.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

All right. I’ll believe. What choice do I have but to. . .believe?

[end of scene eight]

**SCENE NINE~**

[SPRINGFIELD. JASON PARMENTER, DANIEL SHAYS, LUKE DAY]

LUKE DAY

I feel we are being watched.

JASON PARMENTER

By who?

LUKE DAY

By John Worthington. Over there.

JASON PARMENTER

He’s probably trying to figure out what the soldier who arrested Reverend Samuel Ely for opposing the government is doing with this rebel band of Regulators?

LUKE DAY

If he’d seen my elderly father weeping when some of our property was seized to pay taxes, he wouldn’t wonder.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

[enters]

Stop staring at me, Luke Day. I have enough trouble with a government soldier watching my every move, making sure I use currency and do not barter.

LUKE DAY

When do we get paper money for our crops? Paper money is the same value no matter what happens to the price of corn.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Why am I in the middle? I’m barely making it.

DANIEL SHAYS

[entering]

People find that hard to believe, John.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Still riding that white horse, Daniel? Trying to look like George Washington?

DANIEL SHAYS

You haven’t seized this old stallion for money owed. Yet. Actually, he’s not worth much. And, yes, I’m trying to look like Washington. I admit it. We’re doing what we can with show, John. An ounce of image is worth a pound of performance.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Listen, all of you. I owe money! I, too, owe money! The goods from the West Indies I used to get have dried up. And why? Because this new country isn’t recognized by anyone. I can see that means nothing to you.

Please, I will exchange some information with some good will.

JASON PARMENTER

Something about the price of cotton?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

The price of guns, more like.

The Armory here is going to become a fort. With a resident army.

DANIEL SHAYS

What does that mean?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Some people believe that we are a volatile people here in the Western part of the country of Massachusetts and need to be under someone’s thumb.

DANIEL SHAYS

Who is ordering this?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Our governor, James Bowdoin, with the support of some wealthy men in Boston.

JASON PARMENTER

James Bowdoin who bought my scrip at a fraction of its worth? Because I was desperate to pay bills? He’s not my Governor.

DANIEL SHAYS

When will this happen? This making the Armory a fort?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Soon.

[long pause]

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Well, I see I’ve been taken seriously.

LUKE DAY

This is a rumor.

DANIEL SHAYS

Where did you hear this, John?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

From other merchants, thrilled to be suppliers of food for this army. And horses. And mules and oxen and ships to bring stores upriver and upcanal to Springfield. And on sledges since the River is frozen.

[long pause]

So, may I have some good will?

A thank you?

May I feel less like a foreigner in my own county?

DANIEL SHAYS

Yes, John. I, personally, grant you that, all of that.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Well, then. I’ll leave you to do with this information what you will. Good day.

[He exits]

JASON PARMENTER

Daniel?

Luke?

LUKE DAY

This is not a good day.

DANIEL SHAYS

No. it’s not.

No.

[lights fade.]

[End of scene nine]

**SCENE TEN~**

[Meeting in the PARMENTER barn]

JASON PARMENTER

Abigail knows. So we can go to the house.

DANIEL SHAYS

No need to track in dirt from the road. Agreed? And the cold will keep the meeting short and to the point.

[They all agree]

LUKE DAY

All right. I am proud to say that I have twenty-one of my family members in the hundreds of men from West Springfield, all ready to follow me.

JASON PARMENTER

We have Colton from Longmeadow and a large group of willing soldiers from Chicopee. The Berkshires have hundreds under the command of Eli Parsons.

DANIEL SHAYS

Pelham is in and Wendell and New Salem.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

[entering]

Sorry to be late. My mother doesn’t know.

DANIEL SHAYS

What would she say, Henry?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I’m not going to find out. Because she will never know.

JASON PARMENTER

When you’re gone for days….

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Days?

DANIEL SHAYS

We are going to take the Armory and then march to Boston, fully-armed, and demand justice.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Justice.

JASON PARMENTER

We are going to demand that we not be taxed without representation.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

But—we already fought for that.

LUKE DAY

Why are you here, Henry?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

To be a part of what Captain Shays is leading. For liberty.

[MOSES SASH enters]

JASON PARMENTER

Moses!

MOSES SASH

Jason.

JASON PARMENTER

We’ve missed you. Maudie asks for you. How’s your mother?

MOSES SASH

Not happy I’m here.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I didn’t tell mine.

[beat]

MOSES SASH

Good advice, Henry. But only for a while.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

What are we calling ourselves? The New Sons of Liberty?

LUKE DAY

We are the Regulators. That’s what they called themselves in Good old Rogue’s Island. And they got paper money and could pay their bills.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Rogue’s Island?

MOSES SASH

Rhode Island, Henry. And we are regulating government. That is what we’re doing. And we are a militia. As we were in the Continental Army.

JASON PARMENTER

The difference is we have all had more military experience than we had fighting the King’s soldiers.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

But we’re not going to need much, are we? There’s no standing army at the Armory.

DANIEL SHAYS

A few soldiers. And, considering how soldiers have behaved when we closed the courts. . .

LUKE DAY

They fell out and joined us. “And they saw with their hearts what was right and threw their lots in with the righteous.”

JASON PARMENTER

Luke. There can’t be a Bible verse for everything.

LUKE DAY

But there is. Because the Lord is in all things.

DANIEL SHAYS

Well, we will need the Lord.

JASON PARMENTER

And you, Daniel. We need you. You are our commanding officer. What do you say?

MOSES SASH

I agree. It must be you. You were an officer in the Revolution.

DANIEL SHAYS

I only got rank in the Continental Army because men would follow me. I never understood why.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Because you’re a great man, Captain Shays.

DANIEL SHAYS

A “great man?” I never wanted to be that. And I’m fairly sure I’m not.

You’re silent, Luke.

LUKE DAY

Captain Shays.

[LUKE salutes him]

DANIEL SHAYS

All right. All I know is that, as we speak, the Armory is being outfitted as a fort—a fort to keep us in our place.

So, what we’re going to do must be done. And it must be done now.

LUKE DAY

Let us pray.

DANIEL SHAYS

No.

[He puts his right fist out in front of him. One—by-one, the men put out their right fist and touch his, until they make a circle. LUKE DAY is the last to join].

“These are the times that try mens’ souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.” Let us earn their thanks.

LUKE DAY

Amen.

[end of scene ten]

**SCENE ELEVEN~**

[Early morning. ABIGAIL PARMENTER is up, wrapped in a shawl, looking out at the audience. She is crying. MAUDE, in her nightdress, comes up and embraces her mother]

MAUDE PARMENTER

He’ll be all right, Ma.

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

People always say the weakest things at the worst moments. I raised you better than that.

[MAUDE shakes her head in agreement. They stand there]

[end of scene eleven]

**SCENE TWELVE~**

[DANIEL SHAYS, in uniform, freezing with JASON PARMENTER, also in uniform. MOSES SASH enters, in uniform]

DANIEL SHAYS

Where is Luke Day and his men?

MOSES SASH

No sign of them yet.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

[enters, also in uniform, but his is in better condition, though a little too small since he’s grown in the years since he was in the Continental Army]

Captain Shays, sir.

A soldier has arrived on horseback. We could barely see the white flag through the snowfall.

DANIEL SHAYS

From where?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

From the Armory, sir.

[WESLEY SMITH enters. He’s dressed as a Redcoat]

MOSES SASH

Wesley!

[WESLEY SMITH shows the white flag]

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

This is the man—

MOSES SASH

Wesley, you had to volunteer for the militia.

WESLEY SMITH

I volunteered for the Continental Army, too, Moses.

MOSES SASH

[can’t believe that WESLEY would be in opposition]

We served together. At Valley Forge.

WESLEY SMITH

Under Colonel William Shepard.

And now I have a message from General William Shepard. For Daniel Shays. Rank not mentioned.

DANIEL SHAYS

You know who I am, Wesley.

WESLEY SMITH

General Shepard is asking that you and your assembly of citizens go home.

DANIEL SHAYS

My ***army*** and I will not do that.

WESLEY SMITH

Daniel—

DANIEL SHAYS

Captain Shays.

WESLEY SMITH

Captain. He—***we*** are about four hundred strong. And have the weapons. I am here to ask you to surrender.

To ask you to not attack and go to your homes in a peaceful manner. You will not be pursued.

DANIEL SHAYS

I doubt that.

WESLEY SMITH

Benjamin Lincoln is coming with soldiers. They are on the march. They’ve been paid by the rich men in Boston.

[long pause]

JASON PARMENTER

We know that. There’s a nor’easter of snow coming with them. They are in it.

WESLEY SMITH

What you’re doing is hopeless.

MOSES SASH

[to WESLEY SMITH]

That’s what some people said when you and I joined the Continental Army.

WESLEY SMITH

All right, then. What you’re doing is *wrong*. Sam Adams said that new governments need to be respected or they will fail. That they have a dignity that must not be sullied.

MOSES SASH

Where did you read that, Wesley? You don’t read.

WESLEY SMITH

My commanding officer told me.

DANIEL SHAYS

No, he’s right. All of the Sons of Liberty are decrying what we are doing.

JASON PARMENTER

Sam Adams wants us hanged from the precious Liberty Tree.

WESLEY SMITH

Because what you’re doing is treason.

MOSES SASH

What we were doing in the Continental Army was treason, Wesley.

WESLEY SMITH

You are going to lose. Badly. We are in the Armory, with all of the weapons. We have cannons. Loaded.

[long pause]

JASON PARMENTER

“We.” We were about to become one nation.

WESLEY SMITH

We ***are***a nation.

MOSES SASH

No. No, we aren’t, Wesley. And that was never the intention. We came together, all these colonies, to get rid of the British. And now we’re the nation of Massachusetts again, as we were in the beginning of all of this.

WESLEY SMITH

It is *Captain* Smith, to you, Private Sash of the Continental Army.

MOSES SASH

***Captain*** Sash, in the Massachusetts Regulators. And you heard nothing that I said?

DANIEL SHAYS

Captain Smith, tell General Shepard that we are not going home.

WESLEY SMITH

Yes, Sir.

JASON PARMENTER

Wesley—what are you doing?

WESLEY SMITH

I’m an old man and my farm is gone. I am being paid to be a soldier so a soldier is what I am. Ideas don’t keep you warm at night.

JASON PARMENTER

We’re not fighting for an idea, Wesley. We’re fighting for our survival.

WESLEY SMITH

Take what you’re offered. Take what you can get. Go to what homes you have. Live quietly.

[beat—no change from the men]

Well, God help us all.

[WESLEY SMITH salutes DANIEL SHAYS and exits]

DANIEL SHAYS

[to the men around him]

Are we still in agreement?

JASON PARMENTER, MOSES SASH, HENRY MCCULLOUGH

[not all together]

Yessir.

DANIEL SHAYS

As soon as I hear from Luke Day that his men are on the move over the bridge, we begin the march up the hill.

MOSES SASH

The men will be glad to move.

JASON PARMENTER

We won’t be able to hold them back, once they see those warm barracks waiting for them.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I’d like to volunteer to look for Luke Day and his troops crossing the bridge.

DANIEL SHAYS

Take my horse, Henry. Ride low. He’s white, so the falling snow can hide you both.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Yes, sir!! General Shays, sir.

[HENRY MCCULLOUGH exits]

[end of scene twelve]

**SCENE THIRTEEN**~

[Across the river, still in West Springfield]

LUKE DAY, REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

[finish praying]

Amen.

[beat]

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

Do you believe in your heart you are ready?

LUKE DAY

No. The weather. This terrible weather.

Do you think it’s a sign? From God? Saying, “not now.”

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

Is there a way to demand that here? At the Armory? Peaceably.

LUKE DAY

If I march over the bridge, that will be an attack.

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

Can you send a message to the troops—to wait, until the blizzard has abated? That will give you time to send someone to the Armory and ask for a meeting? Do you have the authority?

LUKE DAY

This is as much my revolution as it is Daniel Shays. I was the first to amass a militia, to close a court! He was in the crowd in Northampton as we marched by. I have family members, friends out there, ready for my word to move.

REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP

Or your word to wait. Luke, this is not my decision. And I’m glad of it.

LUKE DAY

I’m going to send a message to Daniel, saying we’re not ready and we have to wait until the storm stops.

[end of scene thirteen]

**SCENE FOURTEEN~**

[AT THE ARMORY. WESLEY SMITH is standing at attention. He has just given DANIEL SHAYS’ answer to the general.]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

God have mercy on us all. At ease, soldier.

[WESLEY goes to “at ease”]

I still believe the British are behind this. And are fomenting this insane action on the part of good soldiers. Captain Daniel Shays was a brave and good soldier!

WESLEY SMITH

Moses Sash is among them.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Oh GOD.

Jason Parmenter?

WESLEY SMITH

Yes.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Any other of my neighbors? Friends? God forbid, relatives?

WESLEY SMITH

Henry McCullough.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

He’s not old enough to handle a musket.

WESLEY SMITH

He served, sir.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Luke Day?

WESLEY SMITH

No sign of him. On my way back, I saw Alpheus Colton of Longmeadow. On his way to help Shays.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Don’t know him, thank the Lord.

WESLEY SMITH

Daniel Luddingon—

WILLIAM SHEPARD

--from Southampton. Know his family well.

WESLEY SMITH

James White of Colrain.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Colrain?? That hotbed of rebels? Doesn’t surprise me, but spare me the other names. For I fear I will be firing on them. This is the worst day of my life, Private—

WESLEY SMITH

**Captain.**

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Yes, of course, ***Captain*** Smith. You are dismissed.

You may go. Wait. Send me Buffington.

WESLEY SMITH

Lieutenant?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Yes. God.

[WESLEY SMITH exits]

[end of scene fourteen]

**SCENE FIFTEEN~**

[MOSES SASH, JASON PARMENTER. SAMUEL BUFFINGTON, dressed in a spiffy uniform, waiting]

SAMUEL BUFFINGTON

I am General Shepard’s aide and I am to speak--

[DANIEL SHAYS enters with a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other]

DANIEL SHAYS

I am Daniel Shays. Who are you and why are you here?

SAMUEL BUFFINGTON

I am Lieutenant Samuel Buffington and I am here in defense of that country you are endeavoring to destroy.

DANIEL SHAYS

If you are in defense of the country, we are both defending the same cause.

SAMUEL BUFFINGTON

If you advance, you will meet men who are accustomed to obey. They will fire, sir.

DANIEL SHAYS

As will we, sir. By sunset, New England will see such a day as she has never yet seen.

[HENRY MCCULLOUGH enters. He is wet with snow and full of news. He waits]

SAMUEL BUFFINGTON

Good day, sir.

[SAMUEL BUFFINGTON salutes and exits]

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

There is no sign of Luke Day, sir. But Eli Parsons has arrived with his six hundred men.

DANIEL SHAYS

God bless Berkshire County! I knew they would come through. Let’s move out. Let’s take that hill. We’ve done it before, and for the same reasons. We’re still fighting the Revolution, men. It never seems to stop.

[end of scene fifteen]

**SCENE 16~**

[WILLIAM SHEPARD at the Armory]

SAMUEL BUFFINGTON

He’s not going to back down, sir.

WESLEY SMITH

This message was intercepted.

[hands it to SHEPARD]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

It’s from Luke Day to Daniel Shays. He’s not ready to attack and has moved the date to tomorrow. And he’s sending someone to talk “sense into the head of William Shepard, Esquire, former neighbor.”

I don’t want to wait for THAT visitor. Let’s ready the cannons. When the—***enemy***—comes within one hundred yards, fire ***above*** their heads. If they still come, fire a second volley above their heads. If they still come, aim at waist height. And fire.

If what is left of the forward column still comes, fire muskets at will.

If they retreat, do not pursue.

I will give the orders, personally.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

[on the battlements at the ARMORY]

FIRE!

[He shakes his head, in disbelief]

FIRE!

[They still come]

AIM AT WAIST HEIGHT! ***FIRE!***

VOICES

[Shouts from everywhere in the theater]

MURDER!! MURDER!!! MURDER!!!!

WESLEY SMITH

They’re retreating, sir! Six or seven down. In the snow. Seem to be casualties. From the grape shot in the cannon fire. Not a single musket fired. On either side.

VOICES

[Shouts from everywhere in the theater]

MURDER!! MURDER!!! MURDER!!!!

WESLEY SMITH

We suffered a casualty, sir. John Chaloner stepped in front of the cannon he was assigned to just as it was going off. He’s alive, sir. But both of his arms are missing.

Any further orders, sir?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

No. We wait. And see if Shays or those other troops attack again. And then there is the flank from West Springfield, if they come. Benjamin Lincoln is on the march with his four thousand troops but with this blizzard…

WESLEY SMITH

We have won, sir. It seems.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Have my aide send a report to Governor Bowdoin and leave me alone.

WESLEY SMITH

Yessir.

[end of scene sixteen]

**SCENE 17~**

[MAUDE PARMENTER is with JOHN WORTHINGTON]

JOHN WORTHINGTON

[reading newspaper]

“Shays at the head of 15,540 men, killed seventeen men at the Armory, captured all the continental stores, taken 32 prisoners, including General Shepard. Ethan Allen joined with an army of 10,000. And the British fleet is offshore, ready to take over.”

MAUDE PARMENTER

We are alone out here, aren’t we?

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Take this and cut it all up. It’s worse than lies. It’s the kind of fantasy written to alarm people in Boston. To justify whatever is in store. Here’s some oil for your ma. No charge. And I’ll help you load up that flour I gave you. This storm is going to get worse. Ride home now.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Thank you.

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Sorry I took your colt. For payment.

MAUDE PARMENTER

I shouldn’t have made a pet of him. He was property and I understand. I’m beginning to get a larger view of everything, Mr. Worthington.

[end of scene seventeen]

**SCENE 18~**

[Three days after the attack on the Armory. In the hills of Pelham. At a camp set up by the Regulators]

JASON PARMENTER

People keep bringing us food. I think we can survive.

MOSES SASH

And kindling. And men. Every able-bodied man in Amherst joined us as we trudged through—

JASON PARMENTER

***--marched*** through town and up here.

DANIEL SHAYS

[entering, with HENRY MCCULLOUGH limping next to him]

I’m moving him in here.

What’s the report?

MOSES SASH

We’ve retrieved the dead and wounded and were not fired upon. Twenty wounded.

DANIEL SHAYS

What are the names of the dead?

MOSES SASH

[hands him a piece of paper]

Here.

DANIEL SHAYS

[reads the list]

See if someone in Amherst can get news to the families.

[about a name on the list]

This boy was wearing his father’s Continental Army uniform. He was so eager to be in the front line.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Why did everyone run when the cannons started? Didn’t they know? I was shot down or I would have kept going.

JASON PARMENTER

If Luke Day had arrived and Parsons on the other flank—

DANIEL SHAYS

If we had waited longer, it would never have happened. Lincoln’s troops would have crushed us.

[beat]

Is anyone here going to say that we are crushed?

MOSES SASH

We made a point. And there are other fronts. Sheffield. This was one battle.

JASON PARMENTER

A battle we lost.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I can’t imagine facing my children and not have been here. To fight. What would I say to them? I let rich and powerful men take everything I own?

JASON PARMENTER

You don’t have any children, Henry.

MOSES SASH

We have to remember the people who cheered us when we marched through South Hadley and Amherst and here in Pelham. They know we were right.

JASON PARMENTER

So what do we do now, General Shays?

DANIEL SHAYS

You sound bitter, Jason.

JASON PARMENTER

I’m just cold.

DANIEL SHAYS

We have a petition before the General Court of Massachusetts to stop the seizing of our property and to allow us to pay off our debts in a reasonable manner. That has been there for a year.

JASON PARMENTER

I’d forgotten about that. Hopeless, though.

DANIEL SHAYS

The Legislature is assembling in Boston and we have a stand-off here.

ANOTHER SOLDIER

Sir. Report from Hadley. Benjamin Lincoln and his mercenaries are billeted there and mustering. They are well-fed, thanks to the residents of Hadley and preached to every morning from a pulpit carved out of a snowbank. Elisha Porter is doing the preaching. There are three thousand of them. Soldiers, sir.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I’m going outside to relieve myself. Sir.

[JASON tries to help HENRY but HENRY isn’t having any of it]

JASON PARMENTER

What do we do? Daniel?

DANIEL SHAYS

We have the majority of the people of Pelham and Amherst and other townships on our side. Does the Legislature want more rebellions?

[sounds of shots—one farther away, another closer. Pause. Another nearby. These are the signals from the look-outs]

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

[entering, limping]

There’s a delegation, sir. Heading up East hill. With a flag of some kind. There are only three officers, so they must want peace.

[end of scene eighteen]

**SCENE 19~**

[PETERSHAM, Massachusetts]

[MOSES SASH enters, carrying a wounded HENRY MCCULLOUGH and puts him down]

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I have bled on your uniform, Moses.

MOSES SASH

Your wounds opened up again.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

I was healing in Pelham.

MOSES SASH

You could’ve stayed.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

No, I couldn’t. I will follow General Shays anywhere.

MOSES SASH

Even if someone has to carry you.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

That’s fair. I deserved that.

They didn’t see any value in our cause. Even though it had been their cause just a few years ago.

MOSES SASH

They were mercenaries, Henry.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

No, I mean the generals.

MOSES SASH

Same thing. Paid more, that’s all.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

General Shays—

MOSES SASH

--tried to negotiate our amnesty. But no. They weren’t listening.

You need blankets or you won’t make it through the night. I know where I can get some. Don’t go running off now.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

How can I—Oh, you’re being funny.

[MOSES SASH exits. Sounds of shots being fired]

[end of scene eighteen]

**SCENE 19~**

JUDGE

Of the thirty-three indictments issued against the perpetrators of the Regulator rebellion, we are considering the indictments of Moses Sash, Negro and laborer, also a Captain and one of Shay’s council being a disorderly, riotous and seditious person and minding and contriving as much as in him to unlawfully and by force of arms oppose this government and Commonwealth. And took a leading role in recruiting and encouraging armed opposition to the state. To achieve these ends, Moses Sash, did advise, persuade, invite, encourage and procure others to join and unlawfully and seditiously procure guns, bayonets, pistols, gunpowder, bullets, blankets, and provisions to arm fellow riotous and seditious persons. Against Henry McCullough, apprehended near Moses Sash, we are considering the indictment of sedition. As for the previous perpetrators, specifically, Captains Daniel Shays, Jason Parmenter, Eli Parsons, et alia we are in agreement as to their charges and, if they are captured, a punishment of hanging by the neck until they are dead. With this exception: one Luke Day who has a plea of mercy submitted by his town of West Springfield, explaining that Luke Day was used by the insurgents for their treasonness purposes and should receive clemency. This court agrees.

[end of scene nineteen]

**SCENE 20~**

[February 16. Vermont woods. DANIEL SHAYS and JASON PARMENTER are fugitives]

DANIEL SHAYS

[reading a piece of paper]

A Proclamation:

Whereas the General Assembly of this Commonwealth, by a law entitled, an act for co-operating with the state of Massachusetts Bay, agreeable to the articles of confederation in the apprehending of the proclaimed rebels DANIEL SHAYS, LUKE DAY, JASON PARMENTER, have enacted, “that rewards additional to those offered and promised to be paid by the state of Massachusetts Bay, for the apprehending other aforesaid rebels, be offered by this state: “ We do hereby offer the following rewards to any person or persons shall within the limits of this state, apprehend the rebels aforesaid, and ensure them in the jail of the city and country of Philadelphia. For the apprehending of the said Daniel Shays and securing him as aforesaid, the reward of *one hundred and fifty pounds* lawful money of the state of Massachusetts Bay, and *One Hundred Pounds* lawful money of this state—

JASON PARMENTER

How much?

DANIEL SHAYS

One hundred and fifty pounds. I could’ve paid all my debts and been secure for some time.

JASON PARMENTER

Maybe you should arrest yourself. Or I could arrest you and we could split the reward.

DANIEL SHAYS

Good idea.

[continuing to read]

“and the apprehending of the said Luke Day, Jason Parmenter and Eli Parsons, and securing them as aforesaid, the reward (respectively) of *One Hundred Pounds* lawful money of Massachusetts Bay and *Fifty Pounds* Lawful money of this state—“

JASON PARMENTER

More money?

DANIEL SHAYS

“And all judges, justices, sheriffs and constables are hereby strictly enjoined and required to make diligent search and enquiry after, find Daniel Shays, Luke Day, Adam Wheeler and Eli Parsons, their aiders, abettors and comforters, and every one of them, so that they may be dealt with according to law.

GIVEN in Council, under the hand of the President, and the Seal of the State at Philadelphia, this tenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven. Signed, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

JASON PARMENTER

His daughter—

DANIEL SHAYS

Illegitimate daughter—

JASON PARMENTER

Any reward for bringing him in? For fathering a child out of wedlock?

DANIEL SHAYS

You can break a commandment—just don’t threaten property or ask for your own.

JASON PARMENTER

It would be two Commandments. Adultery. And whatever commandment you break when you create a child with a woman you’re not married to.

DANIEL SHAYS

Sally. Her name is Sally. Raised three hundred thousand dollars for to purchase linen for shirts—

JASON PARMENTER

--and she sewed them with all those women. For Valley Forge. We were heroes then.

DANIEL SHAYS

And now we’re fugitives.

JASON PARMENTER

What would it have taken to win. If Luke had shown up?

DANIEL SHAYS

We were outnumbered. But if we had “won.” If we had—we could have seceded and become like Vermont. Western Massachusetts a separate republic. Of farmers. With a fair taxes based on our true earnings.

JASON PARMENTER

Where would we split the Commonwealth?

DANIEL SHAYS

At Worcester.

JASON PARMENTER

Worcester in or out?

DANIEL SHAYS

After the support we got there? In.

JASON PARMENTER

John Adams’ place at Braintree safely part of the other Massachusetts. The Boston part. Let him have his doubts about the people voting. And what we’d vote for.

DANIEL SHAYS

And all those signers. Even John Hancock. They’d be part of the other Massachusetts.

JASON PARMENTER

What would we call this land?

DANIEL SHAYS

The *Republic* of Massachusetts.

JASON PARMENTER

And the river?

DANIEL SHAYS

Ours. Only brackish water for them. And some streams that come from OUR river.

JASON PARMENTER

But they would have the shores.

DANIEL SHAYS

Yes.

JASON PARMENTER

And the cod, and the lobster, and the clams and the oysters.

DANIEL SHAYS

I hate fish. Except trout.

JASON PARMENTER

As do I.

DANIEL SHAYS

We’ve made so much happen here. On these shores. In Ireland, we’d still be in those little villages, owning nothing. Spelling our name S H E A. And your folk?

JASON PARMENTER

We’ve been here a hundred years.

[beat]

The Republic of Massachusetts.

[beat]

It will never happen, will it?

DANIEL SHAYS

We could become part of Vermont.

JASON PARMENTER

If they’d have us.

[beat]

Daniel. I’m leaving. I have to leave. I can’t live like this anymore, Daniel. Look at us. We’re living as if we had nothing. Like beggars.

DANIEL

We don’t have to beg, Daniel. People will help us.

JASON

I have property. I have a farm.

DANIEL

You’ll be caught.

JASON

Ticonderga, Daniel. Valley Forge. We were starving. You were at Tarrytown. How was that?

DANIEL

Some froze to death.

JASON

Merciful. That was an act of mercy on the part of the Lord. I have to see my family.

DANIEL

You will. And so will I. There are people here who see things our way. This is the Republic of Vermont, Jason. We can start over.

JASON

I started over. In Massachusetts. I’m going back there.

DANIEL SHAYS

They want our heads, Jason. I’ll never see you alive again.

JASON PARMENTER

What was left of Eli Parsons’ troops. They came over the New York state border and into Stockbridge and raided stores, as starved as they were, and lawless, and met more of Benjamin Lincoln’s forces in Sheffield where twenty or so of the Regulators were wounded and captured and it’s over, Daniel. We have lost and I’m going back to my house to see my wife and children. We are living like vagabonds on the road, like highwaymen, as if we had never owned anything, never fought against the British. How quickly we can slip into being nobodies, the scum of the earth, with less than our grandparents or parents arrived with, when they came to these shores.

DANIEL

Load your rifle. Keep your powder dry. I will pray for you. I’m starting now.

JASON

I’ll see you in a few days.

[he exits]

DANIEL

I hope so.

JASON

Stop hoping. It’s a poison.

[JASON exits. DANIEL watches him go]

[end of scene twenty]

**SCENE 21~**

[February 17, PITCH DARK. Outside, a day after JASON PARMENTER left Shays and everyone in Vermont. Several soldiers encounter JASON in the dark. *This scene should be done entirely in the dark, with only sounds telling the story*]

SOLDIERS

Halt!

[lots of scuffling, shouting, as JASON tries to escape]

SOLDIER

Identify yourself!

[JASON shoots and runs, exits]

SOLDIER

Jason Parmenter!!! Halt!!!

ANOTHER SOLDIER

Jacob is shot.

SOLDIER

I know that was Parmenter. We served together under Morris. Oh god.

ANOTHER

He got Jacob.

SOLDIER

JACOB! Speak to me!! Come on!

ANOTHER

He’s gone. He’s dead.

SOLDIER

That seals Parmenter’s fate. Treason and murder.

[They exit]

[Morning light on the same spot. There is blood on the snow. JASON PARMENTER enters and goes straight to the blood, kneels down. He knows what happened]

JASON PARMENTER

There’s a lot of blood. I was the only one who fired a shot. I recognized a voice. They called my name! In the war, I fired a howitzer. I never fought man-to-man. I am a fugitive and I’ve killed someone and I will never see my family again. God forgive me.

[He exits, running]

[end of scene twenty-one]

**SCENE 22~**

[The Notch in the Holyoke Range, above Amherst, on the way to South Hadley, in front of a cave. MAUDE PARMENTER enters, dressed as a boy. She’s carrying some food. With her is HENRY MCCULLOUGH]

MAUDE PARMENTER

Pa? Pa!

[JASON PARMENTER comes out of nowhere, grabs her, she fights him. HENRY MCCULLOUGH emerges and holds a gun on JASON PARMENTER]

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Don’t make me shoot!

JASON PARMENTER

What are you doing?

MAUDE PARMENTER

It’s me, Father!

JASON PARMENTER

What unholy thing have you done?

MAUDE PARMENTER

I have food.

JASON PARMENTER

[starts to sob as he eats]

What I’ve come to. And my daughter is dressed as a boy.

MAUDE PARMENTER

I had to travel this way. I couldn’t negotiate the climbing up here in a dress.

JASON PARMENTER

I’m filthy.

Henry, how are you free? I thought they got you in Petersham.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

They let me go home because I’m the only one to take care of my mother.

MAUDE PARMENTER

We can take you home. At night.

JASON PARMENTER

I shot a man.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Jacob Walker from Whately.

JASON PARMENTER

How do you know his name?

MAUDE PARMENTER

He died, Papa.

JASON PARMENTER

I knew it. There was so much blood.

Look, Maudie. Henry. I am doomed. Listen to me.

Ideas are the curse. Get property. Hold on to it. Get more. Don’t trust anyone. Don’t look up to anyone. Don’t SERVE anyone but yourself. Look at your starving, disgraced, betrayed father and remember this spectre that used to be a man. Now get! Take the horse. I’m an outcast. I’m a foreigner. I’m on the road for the rest of my life. Give me the gun. GIVE ME THE GUN and get out of here!!!!

[a sound in the brush. They freeze. The sound becomes the sound of a bird taking flight. They relax. They, suddenly, the sound of a flock of birds taking off].

JASON PARMENTER

[to HENRY MCCULLOUGH]

Soldiers.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

[shakes his head in resigned agreement]

MAUDIE PARMENTER

No!

[end of scene twenty-two]

**SCENE 23~**

[June 21, 1787. A gallows. JASON PARMENTER is standing with a noose around his neck. Next to him is a young man, HENRY MCCULLOUGH, also with a noose around his neck. It’s the same scene as at the beginning of the play. ABIGAIL PARMENTER enters and runs to the gallows, tries to touch her husband JASON PARMENTER]

ABIGAIL PARMENTER

Jason! I love you with all my heart.

[to the audience]

This is the bravest man I have ever known. And, in his soul, the most honorable, and a true patriot!

[Sounds of “boos” from the audience. MAUDE PARMENTER enters]

MAUDE PARMENTER

Mother!

OFFICIAL ENTERS

I have a stay of execution, signed by our new governor, John Hancock, and amnesty for one Jason Parmenter and one Henry McCullough. The prisoners are released. Also, a Moses Sash has been released. And Luke Day has been apprehended and released. Take down the gallows.

Oh, there is still a warrant for one Daniel Shays. I don’t suppose any of you have seen him.

Good. Now, where’s the tavern?

[OFFICIAL exits]

[end of scene twenty-three]

**SCENE 24~**

[Late afternoon. Sugarloaf Mountain, above Sunderland, Massachusetts. MAUDE PARMENTER and HENRY MCCULLOUGH. They are winded from climbing. She is wearing trousers]

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

We can’t stay too long or we’ll be stranded up here and your father will kill me.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Have you been up here before?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Never.

MAUDE PARMENTER

You can really see that we live in a Valley. And the Oxbow of the Connecticut River is just so beautiful.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

There’s the Notch.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Where you and Pa were caught.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Let’s go back to happier, hopeful times, please—look right down there at Hatfield. I was at that “Convention,” they called it, all those farmers from all over.

MAUDE PARMENTER

There’s another one in Philadelphia. Right now. All the big men are there. We’re getting another Constitution.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

You know why? Because of what we did—your father, General Daniel Shays, he will always be a general to me—scared them into coming together as a nation, instead of these little nation-states we once were, making a country that can raise an army to put down insurgents. Like us.

MAUDE PARMENTER

General Shays went to some town in York to start over.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Luke Day.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Pa said that old man Day cut Luke out of the will and Luke’s not doing too good.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Eli Parsons.

Berkshire County almost won it for us.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Won what, Henry? I’ve been afraid to ask Pa what we would have done?

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

Split the state. Make our own republic.

MAUDE PARMENTER

A fair one. And truly just.

A new republic.

HENRY MCCULLOUGH

There’s Amherst and there is sweet Pelham. We set up camp in Pelham. As if we were going to win still. And we watched from West Hill and from East Hill, with sentinels on all the roads. We had no field pieces. And Lincoln had so many of the best cannons set up in Hadley, with Hadley’s town preacher leading those bought-and-paid-for troops in prayer. And then they were not interested in compromise and we headed up to Petersham, thinking they’d never pursue us in the next driving snow. We could have taken them in New Salem, as undone as they were by the ice storm blowing against them. They probably wouldn’t have been able to put together the field pieces fast enough if we had attacked. But they surprised us in the morning. I was sleeping in a haymow when heard the hue and cry, grabbed my musket and ran out to be shot. Again. And then Moses Sash found me and carried me to the trees in Petersham and went to get blankets. And they got him. And I made my way back to Pelham to you. And as I stood on those gallows, next to your pa, I was certain I was going to die by hanging. Which is worse than being shot. But I saw you, watching me, and I thought of your pain and how I needed to be strong. So I was.

Maudie, I’m scared now. I’ve never proposed to someone in trousers.

MAUDIE PARMENTER

Be strong. You can do it.

[she smiles at him, then notices something]

What is that, over there? Smoke?

HENRY PARMENTER

That’s Westfield.

Oh, can’t we have some peace? Ever?

[they watch]

[WESTFIELD. William Shepard’s farm. His barn is burning and we can see the lights from the flame. WILLIAM SHEPARD is covered in soot and holding a mattock. MOSES SASH enters]

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Moses! Good lord!

MOSES SASH

I could see the smoke all the way from my house.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

The barn’s gone. Just let it burn out.

MOSES SASH

What about your horses?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

Some devils gouged out their eyes. My son and I had to shoot both horses. Now we need to bury them where they fell. I couldn’t prolong their suffering by making them wait until we dug the holes.

MOSES SASH

Do you have any extra shovel?

WILLIAM SHEPARD

You can take over for my son. I came to get the mattock to break some of the soil. When will it stop, Moses? They tear down my fences. They burned ten acres of my woods this winter! Those evil bastards cut the ears of my beautiful filly and the stallion and gouged out their eyes. Why did they have to mutilate them like that? Poor dumb animals. It’s not their fault.

Moses, I had to give the order to fire the cannons directly at you. You wouldn’t stop coming. I couldn’t let you take the Arsenal and all those weapons. And Lincoln was coming with four thousand more troops. It would have been a stand-off and all of you would have died in a bloody battle. What good would that have done?

MOSES SASH

You could have stood with us. And fought the Lincoln troops.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

And then we all would have died! And they would have taken your farm. And mine, for being a traitor. They’d take everything.

MOSES SASH

Who is “they”? It always seems to be someone I’m not. Listen, General, this land was settled in blood. It’s in the soil, comes up into the crops, into our daily bread.

Let’s bury your horses.

[They exit. Sound of shoveling dirt under the next scene]

[end of scene twenty-four]

**SCENE 25~**

[lights up on WESLEY SMITH. He is covered with soot and holds a bloody poker]

WESLEY SMITH

STOP! QUIET! I will hear those horses screams for as long as I live!

And that that will be my punishment.

And this war?

It will never be over. Never.

[WESLEY SMITH exits]

[end of scene twenty-five]

**SCENE 26~**

[YEOMAN, ETC. HAVE NEWSPAPERS AND ARE READING THEM]

YEOMAN #1

Daniel’s not here to read this.

YEOMAN #2

That’s all right. I’ve learned to read myself.

YEOMAN #3

Me,too.

YEOMAN #2

Here’s John Adams quoted about the Constitution they’re cooking up in Philadelphia

YEOMAN #1

Cooking, is right. It’s bloody hot there.

YEOMAN #3

Read, Caleb.

YEOMAN #2

“The same reasoning you would apply to giving men who have no property the vote, you could use to prove that women and children might also have the vote. There will be no end of it. New claims will arise. Women will demand a vote. Lads from 12 to 21 will think their rights not enough attended to, and every man, who has not a farthing, will demand an equal voice with any other in all acts of state. It tends to confound and destroy all distinctions, and prostrate all ranks, to one common level.”

YEOMAN #1

So unless we’re property owners, we don’t get to vote.

YEOMAN #3

If you’re poor, you can’t vote, anyway. James Madison at the Convention says that he “fears that the dependent situation of the poor will make them tools of the rich so they should not have the vote, either. Landowners would be the safest depositories of republican liberty.”

YEOMEN

[not all at the same time]

Hi, Maude.

MAUDE PARMENTER

Here is Son of Liberty Samuel Adams on our little rebellion: “In monarchy the crime of treason may admit of being pardoned or lightly punished, but the man who dares rebel against the laws of a republic ought to suffer death.” Well, thanks to our new governor John Hancock, that didn’t happen, except to two.

YEOMAN #2

What was their crime?

MAUDE PARMENTER

They stole property.

YEOMAN #3

No offense meant, Miss Parmenter, but your pa killed a man and he was let go….

MAUDE PARMENTER

But he didn’t steal, Mr. Prunty. Property is more important than human life, sir. I’ve learned that, although I still don’t accept it.

[Far upstage, in his own light, DANIEL SHAYS is on the road, hitchhiking. We hear modern traffic whiz by]

YEOMAN #1

Here is our friend Thomas Jefferson, sitting in a garden in Paris, thinking what we did was necessary. “I hold that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical. The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of tyrants. It is its natural manure.”

YEOMEN

[not all together]

Yup.

YEOMAN

Well, I’m going to go back to work.

YEOMAN #2

Me,too.

YEOMAN #3

And there’s a lot of work to do.

[The YEOMEN exit. MAUDE exits through the audience. DANIEL SHAYS continues to hitchhike. Sound of modern-day big rig going by, stopping. DANIEL SHAYS runs off to get his ride into the 21st-Century]

**[END OF PLAY]**