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## Dogs In A Village

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DOGS IN A VILLAGE

by

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B.A. University of Central Florida, 1998

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of Liberal Studies  
in the College of Arts & Sciences  
at the University of Central Florida  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Nearly all of the histories of Shays's Rebellion point to debt as the reason why farmers in western Massachusetts rose against the courts and the state government in the fall and winter of 1786-87. Recent scholarship demonstrates a new line of reasoning based on the tax records of those involved.

The following thesis, a screenplay, offers a fictional telling of this insurgency. The story is told using language pulled from contemporary letters and documents and follows a line of causation pointing to inequitable state tax structure and poor representation as the provocation. The response that ensued was not a rebellion – it was a Regulation.

The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written... by the hand of divinity itself, and can never be erased.

Alexander Hamilton,  
The Farmer Refuted (1775)

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I wish to recognize the unending support and love from my parents. My deepest gratitude extends to both of them for their teachings of faith and their devotion to one another. The fusion of kindness and strength they have displayed in their own lives in turn gave me the courage to develop into an individual I hope they find worthy.

I wish to thank my professors for their goodwill as I struggled to find my voice.

Lastly, and most importantly, thanks be to G-d.

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## INTRODUCTION

On February 15, 1787, Eli Parsons, one of the leaders of the Regulators sent a missive to “friends and fellow sufferers.” He pleaded, “And can you bear to see... the yeomanry of this Commonwealth being parched, and cut to pieces... and not resent it even unto relentless bloodshed” (Minot 146)? This letter was sent after a bitter defeat, when words were the last volley. Just eleven years after the Revolutionary War there was a rebellion against the government in Western Massachusetts. In the backcountry, farmers, calling themselves Regulators, considered themselves “economically abused by government policies favoring Boston elites” and they marched on rural courts, blocking the entry of judges to stop debt proceedings (Engels 64). Shays’s Rebellion challenged the legitimacy of the state government which responded by “violently repressing the protestors” (Engels 64).

There was a public and private financial crisis after the American Revolution. Taxes, paper money, and debt burden were just some of the issues facing the new nation. When the veterans of the war broke rank there were no government programs to cushion the shock of readjustment to civilian life. The Articles of Confederation did not give the central government the power to tax and it became necessary to farm out the war debt to wealthy citizens, who in return received federal securities (Brown 424). Now the burden of repayment fell to the men returning to plough or workbench, their pockets stuffed with worthless government certificates. Thousands of backcountry soldiers and farmers sold their certificates / notes to speculators at rock-bottom prices. One such veteran, writing under the name the “Old Soldier”, asked if justice is served by taxing him to redeem the notes at a much higher value when “the man who has sauntered at home during the war, enjoying the smiles of fortune, wallowing in affluence, and

fattening in the sunshine of ease and prosperity” would receive three-fourths of the money (Hampshire Herald, March 7, 1786). Nearly eighty percent of the state debt made its way into the hands of speculators who lived in or near Boston, and nearly forty percent into the hands of just thirty-five men (Richards 78). These men claimed that they had come to the government’s aid in time of need. In reality most of these men had acquired their holdings on the open market at rock-bottom prices. Unable to pay their debts, many farmers suffered the loss of their farms and were thrown into debtor’s prison. It is important to remember that this was an eighteenth century prison. There was no country club prison for financial crimes. Samuel Ely was incarcerated in Bristol County, Massachusetts in 1783 and wrote that he was “alive and that is all, as I am full of boils and putrefied sores... some of my feet frozen which makes it difficult to walk” (Szatmary 34).

### **Contemporary Voices**

The Rebellion was named after Daniel Shays, one of several leaders, who was a Captain decorated for bravery in the Revolutionary War. After the war, Shays settled in Pelham where he experienced economic depression and tax woes like many others in the backcountry of Massachusetts. Daniel Shays was not a part of the insurrection at the onset. Nevertheless, many of his contemporaries believed that a revolutionary soldier, promoted for bravery, gave the impression of legitimacy. When asked by his former revolutionary commander about his role in the uprising, Shays replied: “I at their head! I am not.” (Szatmary 99). The so-called rebellion was planned by a committee in the tradition of the Revolution just ten years back. It is interesting that Captain Shays name was pinned on this Regulation. Perhaps it was because he was new to the Pelham area and had neither kith nor kin nearby to benefit or suffer for his renown.

In the backcountry, Shays was a hero but to government supporters trying to maintain order in the new Commonwealth he was an outlaw. General Henry Knox, a former artilleryman for Washington, viewed the activities of these veterans as a calamity, requiring military intervention. He believed the goal of the rebels was to seize the property of the rich and redistribute it to the poor as part of the 'leveling principle' so feared by the Boston elite. David Humphries a former aide to George Washington also depicted the Regulators as 'levelers' determined to end all debts public and private (Richards 2). Constantly needled by conservatives Washington declared: "For God's sake, tell me, what is the cause of these commotions? If they have real grievances, redress them if possible. If they have not, employ the force of government against them at once" (Washington, S2, L14). Jefferson in Paris, physically remote from the clash; was cool and collected. "I hold that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing." He commented; "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure" (Adams 257).

Newspapers initially linked the rebellion to rural indebtedness. Why else would men shut down the courts if not to suspend debt suits? There seems to be greater balance in the gunsight view recorded by Generals Lincoln and Shepard; both went out of their way to avoid firing on their former comrades-in-arms. The climax of the rebellion was the attack on the Springfield arsenal on January 26, 1787. In a missive to Governor Bowdoin, General Shepard wrote: "The unhappy time has come when we must shed blood" (Hampshire Gazette, Feb. 7, 1787).

The traditional reporter of the insurgency was the New England historian, George Richards Minot, formerly a clerk of the Massachusetts House. His attitude, more often than not, was hostile toward the rebels and he biased historical writing for many years with his book entitled: *History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts*. However, on at least one occasion, he

considered the despair these men must have felt: “They could not realize that they had shed their blood in the field... to secure their creditors, a right to drag them into courts and prisons” (116). The Reverend Bezaleel Howard remarked on the sheep-like behavior of Shay’s followers. He suggested they were swept away with the “fals Eloquence of those about them. Like the dogs in a village if one bark, all bark...” (Brown 439). Howard also addressed the effects of the rebellion. He writes that the conventions and petitions only served to agitate the people and “render of our public affairs more Imbarrassed” (437). Fear of public embarrassment is a common theme in the early depiction of the Shaysite Rebellion.

Perhaps the clearest explanation comes from the Regulators themselves. In January 1786, sixty petitioners from Greenwich, Massachusetts, plainly stated their case. They wondered what other states might think of Massachusetts’ pride in their “fine constitution” when “their government is such that it devours their inhabitants” (Brown 426). They made their case in a petition; “Sirs, in this situation what have we to live on – no money to be had... What can your honours ask of us unless a paper currency or some other medium be provided so that we may pay our taxes and debts?” Within this petition these farmers admitted their debt and showed a willingness to pay their portion so they might, “... enjoy our shars in independency and constitutional privileges...” (Brown 425). “Backcountry citizens were economically crippled when the Boston legislature closed on July 8, 1786 without addressing their repeated pleas for hard money, simplified courts, and a more centrally located state capitol” (Engels 67). The situation deteriorated and public protest meetings demanded action for the relief of debtors.

In an address from the General Court to the people of Massachusetts the Legislature responded to grievances by reminding citizens that these petitioners were trying to destroy their own laws. The General Court also suggested that the farmers were disappointed because their

wish list was not redeemable. “Because they could not have everything as they wished, could they be justified in resorting to force” (Brown 428).

### **Historical Interpretations**

What set off the powder keg in the backcountry of Massachusetts after the Revolution? Was the ‘leveling principle’ at work? Was it a culture clash, or merely the fine-tuning of representational ideals carried on through extra-legal measures? Historical interpretations of the goals, the successes, and the failures of the Shaysite Rebellion have traveled diverse political roads. There is a different theory to be culled out of the extremism of each scholar’s era.

Minot wrote in his diary; “Daniel Shays’s decapitation would have dissolved a common tie... and so rendered their opinions [the farmers’] harmless speculations” (Szatmary; xi). Even if Minot had found the opportunity, Shays’s decapitation would have changed little. A committee planned the court closures and other incidents. It was not the battle of a single man. Minot’s comments are devoid of neutrality in this matter, but he toned down his personal beliefs a little in his *History of the Insurrections*. He takes a strong pro-government stance but is leery of depicting a dividing line. Mindful of this he writes of the success of the maritime towns but also the excess of importation. In addition, he remarks on the loss of produce markets, which exasperated the private debts of the farmers most of whom lived in western counties. In his concluding paragraph, Minot refers to the rebellion as a “dangerous internal war” (192).

Daniel Shays’ reputation and his cause decline further in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In his book, *The Confederation and Constitution 1783-1789*, Andrew McLaughlin writes a vitriolic chapter on the Shaysite Rebellion. He admits that the tax burden was “cumbrous” because of state and domestic debt; but he also writes that Massachusetts has “the foundation for reasonable prosperity.” He grudgingly admits to a “scarcity of money” but

again renounces the debtor for having been imprudent in borrowing. Furthermore, he states that the rebellion was based on moral and not economic issues and grew from envy for the rich. This is an interesting hypothesis but it does not consider the manner of life in an agrarian society. McLaughlin mentions the Tender Act, which allowed debts to be paid with articles rather than money. This act was only in effect for a short period of time and some creditors “had shrewdly not pushed their debtors for payment” until they could collect currency instead of produce. If a farmer had no currency a lawsuit was issued and his possessions were sold below value. If the debt was still not met he was thrown into prison. When lawsuits were issued to collect money and not produce, “... the shiftless, the improvident, and the unfortunate were in straits” (McLaughlin 112).

McLaughlin refers to Daniel Shays as a “man of no great caliber” and claimed that he was a glory-seeker. He does not allow himself even the smallest glimpse of the rebellion from the Shaysites’ point of view. McLaughlin’s views were written in an era of intense nationalism and accordingly he took a strong pro-government stance. For him, the Shaysite Rebellion was “nothing short of a civil war” (114). He considered the rebellion a success in that it pulled the blinders from the eyes of those still living with the notions of a virtuous society. The time for idealism had passed and “turbulent passions” must be controlled (118).

In the twentieth century the Shaysites have fared somewhat better. The previous scholarship gave way to a fairly balanced approach. In 1948, Jonathan Smith, in his article, “The Depression of 1785 and Daniel Shays’s Rebellion” explained the reasoning behind the rebellion in three simple parts. The first reason was a weak national government due to the limits of the Articles of Confederation. Congress could declare war but could not draft soldiers. They could arbitrate disputes between states but its decisions could not be enforced. They could make

foreign treaties but could not punish violators (Smith 78). For the second reason Smith described the farmers' plight – a lack of paper money. If a farmer needed cloth he had to pay for it with corn or hay but first he had to find someone who needed those items. Tax collectors wanted their revenue in cash. If this were not possible the collector would sell whatever the farmer had at “ruinous rates.” The third reason for the Rebellion was the extreme poverty of the people combined with public and private debt. Judgments against a debtor might leave him with only the clothes on his back. Smith claims that these and other circumstances “drove the people... to desperate and unwise measures” (Smith 80).

Smith also writes of the men involved in the rebellion; Daniel Shays, Eli Parsons, etc. “It would not be wide of the truth to call it a movement organized and sustained by revolutionary soldiers” (Smith 88). He argues that these men had legitimate grievances since a portion of their debts had accumulated while they were “absent in the service.” Even so, Smith does not agree with the methods of the Shaysites: “Under a government where the people choose their rulers and make the laws, insurrection is never permissible...” (Smith 93). For Smith the reasons for the rebellion are clear, but that does not justify the rebels' actions.

Other recent scholarship downplays differences between the conflicting groups in the insurrection. It was not only the farmers who were indebted but some merchants were in trouble as well. Britain now considered the United States as a foreign nation and excluded New England importers from certain markets. American merchants were having difficulty paying for previous purchases from England. Louis Hartz, in his book, *The Liberal Tradition in America* writes that “they do not have the feudal lord to hate; they have the money-lender to fear” (Hartz 75). Their few possessions were being taken away from them after having fought to create a “Lockian state of nature.” When these men stepped into rebellion it was not to frighten the brothers they had

fought with and for but rather as “unhappy kindred spirits.” Writing during the McCarthy witch hunts may have affected Hartz’s need to bind every citizen in the nation together against a greater tyranny thereby moving the theory from yeoman envy for the wealthy merchant into a brotherhood of merchant and yeoman debtors (76-78). In 1966, Gordon Wood wrote an article called, “A Note on Mobs in the American Revolution” and he argued that “Shays’s Rebellion represented something of an anomaly, largely because the farmers of Western Massachusetts, unlike other groups in the 1780s, found no release for their pent-up grievances in legislative action but instead were forcefully resisted by the authorities” (Wood 641).

In 1980, David P. Szatmary added to the Shaysite debate something more defined than class warfare and certainly far different than unhappy kindred spirits. Writing in an era in which cultural diversity was applauded; Szatmary was able to strip away the prejudice of previous scholarship. According to Szatmary the insurrection was rooted in the differences of the agrarian and merchant societies. American agrarianism was based on a subsistence farm society. A small surplus was grown to use in exchange for manufactured goods. Farmers rarely sold extra crops for money. They would barter for that which they could not grow or make for themselves. Yeomen cultivated only a small portion of their land, working as much land as was necessary to survive. The size of the family was the deciding factor for increasing crop size. Survival, love of land and family, and following the traditions of their fathers were the primary concerns of the yeoman farmer. They were dedicated to the small farming communities in which they lived. A farmer came to the aid of his neighbor during planting and harvesting. This way of life was also that of the country artisan. Rural craftsmen did not produce mass quantities but rather worked by request, often trading work for crops (Szatmary 8).

This traditional way of life of the yeoman was vastly different from the commercial merchant who was “market-oriented.” Individual need came before community need in a society judged by “acquisition and accumulation” (Szatmary 20). Social and community relationships were important only as far as they could lead to profit. The merchant culture slowly furrowed into the traditional life of the farmer. A merchant might offer articles on short-term credit and accept surplus farm goods for payment. If there was a crisis and the crops failed the merchant extended credit further binding the farmer to him. Unfortunately, if there was a credit crisis the merchant could call in the loan because he was unwilling to wait for the surplus crops to be harvested. A farmer might find himself planting and harvesting at the behest of the merchant (Szatmary 21). That sort of relationship was a frightening reminder of the serfdom of Europe.

In 2002, Leonard L. Richards attempted to show that the American history textbook reporting on debt-ridden farmers as insurgents did not make sense. In his book, *Shays's Rebellion, The American Revolution's Final Battle*, Richards writes that he discovered, in a footnote, that the Massachusetts Archive had the names of the Shaysites, not just the leaders, but some four thousand names. It is rare to find such a list but the Shaysites were offered leniency by accepting “a temporary loss of citizenship and swearing future allegiance to the state... Thousands did so. Scores of others were arrested and stood trial” (Richards ix). After looking closely at the microfilm, Richards understood why this research had not been done before... the handwriting was barely legible. Now that he had the list he was able to track down tax and homestead information on these individuals and he found that poor farmers accounted for only a minority of the rebels. Another curiosity is the battle at the Springfield arsenal. While the idea of debt-ridden farmers shutting down courts to stop debt suits seems reasonable it does not explain why they tried to seize the Springfield arsenal. “Had they succeeded, they would have

been better armed than the state of Massachusetts. Did they also intend to overthrow the Massachusetts government” (Richards 2)? Or, was the stand-off at the arsenal symbolic?

When the Regulators stood ground at the arsenal they were outgunned. The first two artillery shots hit only sky, tree, and snow but the third was deadly, killing four men. Indignant voices charged Shepard’s troops with “murder.” In February 2005, Jeremy Engels wrote an article called, “Reading the Riot Act: Rhetoric, Psychology, and Counter-Revolutionary Discourse in Shays’s Rebellion, 1786-87.” In this work he discusses the Regulators’ response to the death of their men. Obviously they believed that “there were clear boundaries of legitimate regulation, and killing people fell outside these bounds” (Engels 70).

Pulling together the ideas of Richards and Engels we find a story that fits the men who participated. But why was there a Regulation in the first place? According to Richards, “the answer is twofold: the new state government – and its attempt to enrich the few at the expense of the many” (Richards 63). According to Engels “Shays’s Rebellion began because James Bowdoin’s government ignored the voices of frontier citizens” (66). The Regulators put it another way; “We do Each one of us, acknowledge our Selves to be Inlisted... for the Suppressing of tyrannical government in the Massachusetts State” (Hampshire Gazette, Oct. 4, 1786). Throughout the backcountry, “regulation” had been common for decades. It was a tradition that whenever distant authorities got out of hand, or whenever outsiders threatened a bona fide settler’s landholdings, the people had an obligation to rise up and restore communal order. This way of thinking had been strengthened by the actions and the rhetoric of the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence (Richards 67).

Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any For of Government becomes

destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government... it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security.

Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison from Paris regarding the insurgency; “Unsuccessful rebellions... establish the encroachments on the right of the people. It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government.” He believed that the “punishment of rebellions” should be mild so “as not to discourage them too much” (Jefferson 259). Were the Regulators unsuccessful? The Regulators followed the same form of protest their own government used: conventions, petitions, and finally arm conflict. If they had no goal other than to stop debt procedures they were successful and the Regulation made a difference. “If their goal was to bring the speculators to heel, and to stop the state from shifting money from the backcountry to Boston, the Regulators emerged far better off than they were before” (Richards 119).

Ultimately, their limited success turned into a larger political disappointment. The farmers had little need for an intrusive overpowering central government. Nevertheless, their Regulation was proof to many that the government under the Articles of Confederation was powerless to suppress a revolt, and the outcome depended on the “loyalty” and effectiveness of the state militia. A stronger central government would have to be established, not only to squash such uprisings but, better still, to prevent them by improving economic conditions. On the other hand, the rebellion brought relief to those on whose part it had been undertaken: the Massachusetts legislature postponed imposition of a direct tax, and limited the liability of debtors, exempting tools and certain personal effects. Regulators continued their rebellion even after the insurrection was quelled. They put away their arms and peaceably opposed the new

federal constitution, a document that, ironically, might have been motivated by their very acts of rebellion.

Finally, it is evident, as we sift through previous documentation about the Regulation and its aftermath, that each author was affected by the political air he breathed. Every inch of the political spectrum is exposed from the Shaysites contemporary Bezaleel Howard's calling the Regulators "mindless sheep" to Szatmary's culture clash of the merchants and farmers. However, the most recent research is based on something more concrete - the tax records of those that participated in the Regulation. These records have muddied the waters of previous theories. The puzzle pieces no longer slip into place and future scholars will have to rethink this event in a whole new way. There is an African Proverb which reminds us that, "Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunters." The following tale is for the lions.

## NOTES ON SCREENWRITING

The visual nature of screenwriting, encapsulated dialogue and strange formatting can make reading a screenplay a frustrating experience. In a screenplay “showing through action usually works better than telling with dialogue” (Trottier 4). Actions weigh more heavily than words in real life and on the big screen. Using only the visual for communicating an idea creates mystery and mystery captures the imagination. A novel will focus on the thoughts and feelings of each character. That’s the strength of the novel form – inner conflict. A stage play is almost exclusively verbal but a screenplay is visual. Another important technique is to refrain from giving too much information. “Only give the audience what it needs to understand the story without getting confused” (Trottier 15).

A couple of important ingredients to look for in a screenplay are a strong story concept and characters with whom people can sympathize. Steven Spielberg said, “The best stories are about a protagonist who loses control of his or her life and who must regain it.” That is because crisis reveals the heart of a character. The Shaysites offer such a story, moving from conflict, to crisis, to action. This is drama – characters in willful conflict. Each character has a different view of the facts, a different belief system, and a perception of reality that is influenced by their own past experience. A “character will act from his or her point of view or belief system, regardless of how that point of view squares with reality” (Trottier 41).

Gamble Brooks serves as an amalgamation of a lot of people. He is a Greek chorus of a kind; the conscience of his time, and the voice of the Regulators. He is a composite of many men of the period who had enough for a good life but feared that government gone awry would leave him with nothing. He finds himself questioning his faith in the system, his faith in the

leaders of the country and even his faith in himself. Gamble has a story to tell. He lifts the ink from the dusty pages of a history book to say; “Yes, I was there and I can take you there now.”

**APPENDIX A:  
DOGS IN A VILLAGE (SCREENPLAY)**

THE SCREEN IS BLACK

NARRATOR (O.S.)

I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness. I keep swallowing. Other times I feel mildly drunk. No fear, just grief... loss, terrible loss. No one told me that grief felt so much like fear.

SUPER: MASSACHUSETTS, 1787

There is a tapping, soft, irregular.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

Every leaf, every branch, every weed that ever wished it was a flower... is fragrant and every sound... is musical... even the sound of hammer against nail.

The tapping grows louder, more distinctive, a pounding of hammer and nail in the distance.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

I've known many such moments before battle... before facing death.

FADE IN

A wagon wheel rolls over pebbles and stones grinding them under its weight as it turns. The DRIVER'S back is muscled and wide from shoulder to shoulder. He doesn't turn around when he speaks to one of the TWO MEN in the back of his wagon.

DRIVER

I'm sorry 'bout this Gamble.

One of the passengers, GAMBLE BROOKS, 30s, a raw-boned, keen-looking fellow, of meddling stature looks toward the driver's back and beyond him to some point in the distance..

NARRATOR - GAMBLE (V.O.)

That would be me in the back of the wagon. Not a fellow one might remember... almost tall, almost handsome, almost smart... almost.

GAMBLE

It's all right Shadrack.

SHADRACK

We are so desperate for coin.

GAMBLE

No worries... Is that your brother  
up there pounding away.

SHADRACK

Yes, sir. He wanted to make sure  
everything was done right.

Gamble looks over at the man riding in the buckboard with him. AARON JEWEL, thin, lanky, worry-lines etched deep around his eyes, has a narrow strip of leather wrapped tight around his hand. The cross that hangs from it is centered in his palm. He's reciting to himself...

AARON

...through the valley of the shadow  
of death...

GAMBLE

I will fear no evil.

Gamble slowly runs his hand along the pine box that's sitting beside him.

AARON

For thou art with me...

GAMBLE

(To himself) Smooth as glass... not  
a splinter to be found. (To  
Shadrack) Did you make these?

Shadrack doesn't have to turn around he knows what Gamble is referring to.

SHADRACK

No, sir. Meshack is the carpenter  
in the family. He's the one that  
noticed...

AARON

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort  
me.

Shadrack looks down the road at Meshack hammering away.

SHADRACK

...the crossbar had terrible wood rot.

GAMBLE

Thou preparest a table before me...

Gamble and Aaron lean over to look around his wide shoulders. Then their eyes travel over to the hooded man standing nearby.

GAMBLE

Abendigo?

AARON

In the presence of mine enemies...

SHADRACK

Yes, sir. You saved his life at Bunker Hill.

GAMBLE

Saved his life?

SHADRACK

Yes, sir. He lost seven toes to frostbite, nearly lost his hand to gangrene and starved more than he ate. But you saved him...

GAMBLE

I didn't take a bullet nor nothing.

SHADRACK

There's all kinds of ways of saving a man... you gave him hope in a place where all hope had gone. Anyway, he wanted to make sure it was quick and painless for you. He's been studying height and weight ratios...

Abendigo gives each noose a hard tug.

GAMBLE

Good at math is he?

SHADRACK  
 (Sad smile) Yes, sir.

Gamble looks closely at the familiar places and things that are passing by.

AARON  
 Surely Goodness and mercy shall  
 follow me all the days of my  
 life...

Gamble looks over at Aaron who change the words of the psalm.

AARON  
 ...follow me the last day of my  
 life...

Gamble almost smiles.

GAMBLE  
 ...and I will dwell in the house of  
 the Lord, Forever.

GAMBLE (V.O.)  
 Every detail becomes important when  
 you know you won't be passing this  
 way again.

The church bell tolls making some of the store windows vibrate. Some of the town folk move in to walk behind the wagon. The wagon dips down hard into a pothole and the coffins jump and land with a thud. Aaron moans...

SHADRACK  
 (Hitching the reins) Giddyap...

GAMBLE  
 You'd think the Sheriff could have  
 waited for it to be finished afore  
 they brought everyone down here.

The sheriff is walking in front of the wagon. He turns around so he can eyeball Gamble.

GAMBLE  
 Oh, sheriff I didn't know you were  
 escorting us... all I could see was  
 the horses'... ummm, backside.

A lawman's star glimmers on a black vest. A voice above the star grunts...

GAMBLE

Your audience is growing unhappy  
sheriff.

SHERIFF:

No talking!

SHADRACK

(Pulling back on the reins) Whoa,  
girl...

A breeze blows hair into Gamble's eyes. He swats at it while taking in the rough-hewn wood of the cross beam and the freshly knotted rope. From his perch in the wagon he sees MESHACK still hammering.

The sheriff pulls out his pocket watch.

SHERIFF:

Out of the wagon!

GAMBLE

Do you think we might oughta wait  
'til Meshack is done nailing things  
together.

SHERIFF:

Get down off that wagon, now!

Gamble nudges Aaron who is still staring at the nooses. The two men ease off the wagon and slowly make their way up the steps of the gallows.

MESHACK

Finished!

Meshack jumps down from the platform and the top beam sways from his movements. The two men standing under it quickly look up and study the workmanship.

GAMBLE

Isn't the benevolent High Sheriff  
supposed to test this contraption?

Gamble says the words calmly like he's asking about the weather.

The sheriff does not look up from his watch but the jowl on the left side of his face grows stiff... he's biting the inside of his cheek.

SHERIFF:

You're going to be testing it in about one minute. Of course, it could be downright messy if he made the crossbar too high and your body weight is too heavy. That drop will pull your head clean of your neck.

A look of panic crosses Gamble's face but he catches it in time. Aaron lets out a quiet moan. Gamble looks over...

GAMBLE

Hold tight, Aaron.

He looks back at the crossbar and then beyond it, then draws in a deep breath. The air is cool, crisp. The sky does not have a single cloud. He tilts his head a little... he hears a woman's voice calling his name...

WOMAN

Gamble...

... and he smiles because he recognizes the voice. His wife, Maggie is calling to him.

MAGGIE

Gamble, come down from there!

His smile grows wide and the townsfolk are amazed by it but Gamble can no longer see them because...

INT. BROOKS FARM - BARN - DAY

...he's back at home standing in the hayloft of his barn, a rusty pitchfork in hand, looking out over a cloudless, blue sky...

MAGGIE

Come down I need to talk to you.

Maggie blows some curly tendrils of hair out of her face and waves a paper at Gamble. He recognizes the paper but asks anyway...

GAMBLE

What is it?

The bottom of her dress is muddy and she has miscalculated the buttons once again... The overall package is held together with twine not silk... but Gamble and many previous suitors thought Maggie a very handsome woman.

MAGGIE

You know exactly what this is  
Gamble Brooks. It's a call to all  
citizens. Folks are fed up with  
Bowdoin and his Boston bankers.  
There's going to be a Regulation.

MARY, a skinny nine-year old girl is sweeping the porch. She yells across the distance to the barn.

MARY

Pa, what's a Regulation?

Gamble puts a finger to his lips to shush her. He climbs down from the hayloft, and walks hand in hand with Maggie up to the house.

MARY

Is it a secret?

GAMBLE

Well, we don't want to make a big  
noise about it just yet. Not til  
we know more.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Gamble grabs his pipe from the windowsill and sits down at a well-worn table to lite it and Mary sits swinging her legs back and forth waiting... Gamble grabs the family bible and pulls out one note of paper currency.

GAMBLE

Mary, this is a Continental. This  
is what the Continental Congress  
used to pay for the war. The  
Continental were promissory notes  
but they quickly fell to zero  
value.

Mary turns the note over a couple of times in her hands as Maggie puts a kettle on to boil...

GAMBLE (V.O.)

Then the States issued IOU's, or securities, to pay the military. In 1778 the value of these securities fell 25 percent.

...lays out a cup for herself and Mary.

GAMBLE (V.O.)

By 1781 they were down to two percent. Some soldiers in the field sold their notes at 2 percent of their value in order to keep their families above water.

Gamble reaches for the other cup in her hand but she squirrels it out of his reach. He gives her a squinty-eyed look and reaches for it again. Mary holds up the note...

MARY

But how can the value of something change from day to day?

The room grows quiet...

GAMBLE

We elect men to represent us and make those kinds of decisions. But some men are greedy and make themselves rich at the expense of their neighbors.

Mary is pensive for a moment.

MARY

But we're supposed to love our neighbor as our self.

Gamble smiles, reaches over and tugs at her ponytail.

GAMBLE

You hold on to that thought Mary girl. No matter what you here...

MAGGIE

Mary, you need to go the barn and check on Nuisance its near her delivery time.

Mary runs outside.

MAGGIE

How much of this do you think she understands?

GAMBLE

Well, she's quoting Jesus. She's in a higher place than the rest of us.

Gamble picks up the Continental and slowly rips it into small pieces.

GAMBLE (V.O.)

Speculators and merchants set up a system to tax the soldiers when they redeemed the notes. We had to sell our notes at rock bottom prices and pay taxes at full value to get them back.

Maggie watches as Gamble gathers the tiny pieces into his right palm...

GAMBLE (V.O.)

Three-fourths of the money went to speculators who sauntered at home during the war, enjoying the smiles of fortune, wallowing in affluence, and fattening in the sunshine of ease and prosperity...

...he opens the door and blows the pieces into the wind. He watches for a moment as they flutter down.

Maggie pours hot water into Gamble's cup and he reaches over to unbutton the top button of her dress and she smacks his hand. The exchange is light and playful, but there is a worrisome look on her face.

GAMBLE

I'm just trying to match the buttons to the button holes.

MAGGIE

It's not your job to make  
everything right.

He adjusts the buttons...

GAMBLE

Maggie, we've got to do something  
about this. I'm sick to death of  
greedy speculators. For several  
years we've petitioned the  
government for relief, but they  
just ignore us.

MAGGIE

Let someone else do it...

GAMBLE

Should we sit by while they bleed  
us dry?

MAGGIE

Is Daniel involved?

GAMBLE

Yes...

MAGGIE

Is it because he took a blade meant  
for you?

GAMBLE

Daniel just joined our cause. He  
was trying to stay out of it.

MAGGIE

You've been involved in this all  
along... without telling me?

She turns away and grabs her sewing basket to look over the  
mending. She pulls out needle and thread.

GAMBLE

We put our grievances in writing.  
We wanted it to be very clear why  
we are taking up arms.

She looks up from her needle.

MAGGIE  
Arms? Gamble, no.

GAMBLE  
They have meetings in Boston during blizzards, make decisions about our lives when our representatives can't get through... Why is the government in Boston anyway? Why isn't it more centrally located?

MAGGIE  
We're doing okay. You need to think about Mary and me.

GAMBLE  
We need to have a voice in government Maggie. That's what I fought for...

She reaches out to touch his face.

MAGGIE  
I know you did. I hear it in your dreams.

GAMBLE  
Am I walking at night again?

MAGGIE  
It was getting better but the past few weeks... That's why you fall asleep in the barn in the afternoon.

He laughs...

GAMBLE  
I do not... I just close my eyes for a second. I'm not really sleeping.

She smiles a sweet smile.

MAGGIE  
It doesn't matter... a little rest in the afternoon...

GAMBLE

Maggie, me and the boys did some calculating...

MAGGIE

Oh, have you now?

GAMBLE

We wanted everything to be accurate in the petition to the General Court. These men like numbers... we thought we give them a few.

Gamble reaches inside his jacket pocket and pulls out some notes. Maggie turns the crumpled paper this way and that as she reads between the scratched out parts.

MAGGIE

"If something isn't done at least one half of our neighbors will become bankrupt - the appraisers are daily wandering everyone's property both real and personal, looking for what might be taxed or sold."

GAMBLE

Isn't it the duty of government officials to protect the people rather than oppress them?

Maggie picks up her needle again and busies herself with threading it. She does not look up at Gamble.

MAGGIE

I have something to tell you?

GAMBLE

Smith's land was appraised by the best judges under oath, yet it sold for about one third of its value, his cattle about one half the value...

MAGGIE

Gamble, I have something to tell you. The appraiser was out here Thursday last.

GAMBLE

Why didn't you tell me? What did he ask you? What did you say?

Gamble voice grows louder with each question. Maggie drops the needle.

MAGGIE

It seems we've been keeping secrets from one another.

GAMBLE

What did he say?

MAGGIE

He asked how many polls were in our family? Did we own this house? A barn? Any other buildings? How many horses do we have? Oxen? Milch cows?

GAMBLE

Go on...

MAGGIE

I thought the questions were kind of silly since he could see with his own eyes that we have a house and a barn.

GAMBLE

He has to have you say we own it. What else?

MAGGIE

How many acres do we have in tillage? In pasture? What was the size of our woodlot? Did we have unimproved land?

Gamble stands up abruptly and shouts...

GAMBLE

Why did you keep that from me?

MAGGIE

Because I don't want you running off to get yourself killed!

He reaches for her but she steps away. They hear small feet running across the porch and straightaway to the barn. Maggie shakes her head, sorry that Mary should hear such anger.

Gamble sits back down trying to calm himself. Maggie sits across from him. They do not speak. He picks up the needle and stares through the eye of it like it was the site of a gun.

GAMBLE

The legislature in Boston decided its work for the year was complete and they adjourned until January 31st. They closed the session without addressing any of our concerns, or petitions. They have ignored us for the past four years. If this mess is left untended debtor's prison will be overflowing... all of our people, my cousins and yours will take up arms to fight this.

He pushes the thread through, ties a slip knot and hands it over to Maggie.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Gamble is sitting at his desk, bills neatly stacked and ready to be entered into his ledger. He slowly turns the pages showing precise penmanship. Every entry is clearly labeled. He looks at the stack of bills, grimaces and then loses himself in the flicker of the candle, the ink drips onto the page...

Maggie comes up behind him and reaches round to pull the pen out of his hand. She looks at the entries on the page.

MAGGIE

I thought you'd seen enough killing?

GAMBLE

Where's Mary?

MAGGIE

She's in her room.

GAMBLE

How are we supposed to pay our debts and taxes with hard money when there is no hard money available? We computed the taxes laid upon us the five proceeding years: the state and county, town and class taxes, the amount is equal to what our farms will rent for.

He closes the journal with a thud...

GAMBLE

They will leave us with nothing to live on - no money to be had, our neighbors estates are daily posted and sold... And why do honest men have to cope with so many layers in the court system? Because lawyers and court officials collect fees every step of the way...

He grabs his coat...

GAMBLE

What can the General Counsel ask of us unless a paper currency or some other medium be provided so we can pay our taxes and debts.

MAGGIE

Where are you going?

GAMBLE

McNabb's... to get a feel for who's for or against this Regulation.

EXT. - MCNABB'S - NIGHT

Gamble looks up at the freshly painted sign over the door. McNabb's Tavern. He pushes open the door and steps inside. As he waits for his eyes to adjust to the lamps at the tables ELI PARSONS calls to him.

ELI

Over here, Gamble.

Gamble grabs the mug that MCNABB has waiting for him at the bar and heads over. Two of the men at the table are happy to see him, the third is bent over some paper, intent on the newspaper. ELI PARSONS...

ELI  
Are you with us?

GAMBLE  
Can't a man take a swallow or two before being accosted by ne'r do well's?

ELI  
We don't have time for one of your stories, nor even a song.

GAMBLE  
I have to talk it over with Maggie.

The men at the table speak in unison.

ALL THREE  
He has to ask Maggie.

He laughs.

GAMBLE  
Eli your wife's as mean as they come. I know you wouldn't be here without permission.

ELI  
My wife's a sweet, little thing.

There is a pointed silence at the table.

GAMBLE  
The only time I ever saw the General take a step back was when your sweet, little wife came in a wagon to take you home to bring in the crop... she dared Washington to stop her.

Eli ignores their nonsense and looks through the newspaper.

AARON

Later he asked if she'd like to  
lead the men into the next  
battle...

GAMBLE

I'm certain The War would have been  
over much sooner if she had.

Eli finds what he is looking for.

ELI

Here it is... they printed it...  
here Gamble you read it to us.

He passes the paper over.

GAMBLE

Rouse! Rouse yourselves! Ye sons  
and daughters of America.

Gamble's oratory skills bring life to the printed page.

GAMBLE

Listen for a moment to the voices  
of sincere and ardent friends.

The men at the table's closest to them quiet down to listen.

GAMBLE

It is the eleventh year of our  
Independence from England.

One patron slurps his stew and the others look over in  
irritation.

GAMBLE

I speak to the sons of reason,  
judge ye of what I say. It is a  
moment of danger.

Everyone is quiet waiting for Gamble's next words when THREE  
MEN push through the door. They hover near their door looking  
around the room for another companion. Gamble continues with  
the list of grievances from the newspaper.

GAMBLE

First, the General Court, for  
certain obvious reasons, must be  
removed out of the town of Boston.

A stranger nearby raises his mug to that.

STRANGER

Here, here.

GAMBLE

Second, the total abolition of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions of the Peace.

They men are dressed in a finery not to be seen on the other patrons in the tavern. TOM, 40s, slight brogue, slowly sheds his leather riding gloves.

TOM

Michael, Simon, what has been done during the session of the General Court?

MICHAEL, 40s, eyes watches the faces of his companions for reaction to whatever he is talking about. He needs constant confirmation.

MICHAEL

A great deal of important business...

SIMON, 30s, distracted by the crowd. Michael and Simon often complete each other's sentences.

SIMON

...but we have not thoroughly digested it and deferred the meat of it to the next session...

MICHAEL

...in the hope that something thorough and effectual would be done.

The Sheriff walks in and tries to be seen with Michael and Simon but he is generally ignored.

GAMBLE

Third, Deputy Sheriffs totally set aside, as a useless set of officers in the community; and Constables who are really necessary, be empowered to do the duty...

The Sheriff sees BEN GRAZIER, an attorney made wealthy by all of the debtors suits and walks over to his table.

GAMBLE

...by which means a large swarm of lawyers will be banished from their wonted haunts, who have been more damage to the people at large, especially the common farmers, than the savage beasts of prey.

The conversations at the tables around the tavern stumble to a close as each man stops to listen to the Simon and Michael. Only Simon is aware of their audience.

SIMON

But these delays in justice and the impossibility of collecting on debts... I might just as well give up as seek them out...

A grey-haired, genteel man at a nearby table drops the newspaper he is reading and waves them over. Tom leads the way. Only Simon excuses himself as they push through the crowded room. The grey-haired man addresses them before they even reach the table.

GREY-HAIRED MAN

But what of the article in the Bill of Rights that says every man should have justice freely and without being obliged to purchase it: promptly and without delay.

TOM

Isaac, if something is not done with lawyers and courts, and even with the Laws themselves we are an undone people.

Tom reaches out to shake ISAAC's hand. The heavy, gold ring, marked with a mason's symbol presses into Tom's hand.

MICHAEL

I must confess that I have obtained credit to a large amount, in hopes to better my fortune by trade...

He grows more embarrassed as he continues his confession of debt.

MICHAEL

...but the scarcity of cash, the difficulty of the times, trusting others who have not paid me... My creditors are all calling me out at the same time - bringing suits against me, and I am subject to the costs of all those suits...

Michael wipes his brow and gulps his ale.

MICHAEL

...my goods must be taken and sold at half price - was this the liberty we fought for?

An older man at the next table over chokes and spits out his ale at this last remark. In between coughs he gets out the word...

OLD SOLDIER

We?

Seeing that the real soldiers of the revolution are listening he stumbles to a close.

ISAAC

Here, Tom, we have two men complaining, the one at the delays of justice...

Tom lights his pipe...

ISAAC

And the other at its swiftness and expense.

He draws deep on his pipe... exhales slowly, deliberately.

TOM

Will you have justice promptly and without delay and then suffer every smooth-tongued insinuating fellow by a plausible story or by a bribe to convince the judge

He inhales again...

TOM

...without being confined to any particular statement of his cause or giving an equal opportunity to defend yourself...

He nearly talks himself out of breathe.

TOM

...let there be no formal pleadings nor record of the cause...

More ale is brought to the table and he pauses to drink. The other patrons all seem to be leaning in to hear.

TOM

...these will take up too much time, and likewise would discover the error and tempt you to wish for a new trial...

Tom turns to Isaac hoping for some confirmation of his argument but none is given.

ISAAC

..if men would only observe this one rule, there would not be half so many complaints, innovations, and new-fangled maggots as we see every day generating and crawling over our law.

Food is brought to the table for Isaac.

ISAAC

Roses always have thorns - why should we expect justice to run down our mouths only for gaping. And why should we expect justice to be perfectly pure? These discontented people appear to me like a fretful child that cries for the moon.

Isaac tears apart his bread and swabs his plate with it. He uses the dripping bread as a prop as he brings his point home.

ISAAC

If everyone might call for meat and drink at this tavern, and not pay until he himself found it convenient the owner would have customers enough but how long would the doors remain open? Yes, they are crying for the moon.

He looks up to see Gamble staring down at him. The man finds it difficult to swallow as he looks up at Gamble's angry face. Gamble jerks the man's plate out from under him.

ISAAC

What are you doing?

Isaac is unsure what to do with the sopping wet bread. He drops it on the table.

GAMBLE

I cry for the moon and you cry for your food. How long would this tavern owner have food to serve if every farmer is in debtor's prison?

Gamble walks the plate to the end of the bar gives it a swat and it slides all the way down it as each man moves his drink away from the gliding plate. A MAN at the very end of the bar puts out his hand to stop it and turns to smile at Gamble who is at the opposite end of the bar.

MAN

Let's talk.

Gamble nods and starts to walk out. ISAAC steps in front of him.

ISAAC

While we certainly thank you for doing your part in the war the world does not owe you a living.

A FARMER at a nearby table raises his empty mug to show his need and McNabb fills it.

FARMER

Oh, and put it on Isaac's tab he said he wants to thank us for doing our part.

GAMBLE

I think the government should pay me what they promised. While I fought the war for **you** my fields lay empty.

Gamble pulls at his own shirt about the area of his right ribs, nearly busting the buttons and in the doing a crooked, angry scar is visible.

GAMBLE

Ticonderoga.

ISAAC

What of it?

GAMBLE

Were you there?

ISAAC

I served in my own way.

The man from the bar walks over and puts an arm around Gamble.

MAN

Oh, you mean you made a fortune selling supplies to the army. Supplies that never made it to the soldiers.

ISAAC

That wasn't my fault... And just who are you?

The man, 30s, nearly 6 ft. His face, hair, eyes all of the same soft brown color. He is distinctively indistinct. A man you would have trouble describing because there was nothing memorable except for the narrow, jagged scar under his right eye, moving upward toward his temple.

MAN

Daniel Shays... Captain Daniel Shays...

ISAAC

Captain Daniel Shays.

ISAAC repeated the name a second time putting it on some mental list.

DANIEL  
Have trouble with your memory?

ISAAC  
Oh, I'll remember you... Captain...

He looks Daniel up and down.

ISAAC  
Well, Captain I have some news for you... the war is over.

DANIEL  
Maybe not... (Turning to Gamble)  
Come on, friend. We can find better company than this.

Gamble starts to follow Daniel out but stops and looking back at Isaac...

GAMBLE  
I made it back from the war...  
alive and ready to live in a new republic... but you filled my pockets with worthless government notes and I had no fields to harvest...

Gamble leans in a little with each word.

GAMBLE  
...and now you would tax me unto death or see me in debtor's prison... What will our neighboring states say about Massachusetts if its government is such that it devours its own inhabitants?

Daniel, Gamble and Eli move for the door, many others move from their tables and out the door, choosing sides by leaving at that very moment. Each one slowly makes his way to the door looking back to make sure the men from the General Court were looking at them.

Daniel whispers to Gamble as these men parade past...

DANIEL

Watch close, Gamble, some of these men may never make a braver stance than walking away from their ale.

GAMBLE

It may seem like little but it still makes me proud.

DANIEL

I bet those assemblymen are feeling a bit lonely in that hollowed out tavern.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE TAVERN - NIGHT

The men stop and look up at the moon and Eli begins to howl. The others laugh.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

ISAAC hears one of the men outside howling at the moon and he looks out over the empty tables and realizes the numbers for his side are far less than anticipated.

EXT. THE BROOKS HOME - NIGHT

Gamble tiptoes in. He sees a single candle burning on the kitchen table and moves towards it. Maggie is tying her robe as she joins him in the kitchen. Her hair is loose and shimmers in the candle's light. She sits at the bench opposite him with the table between them. They try to keep their voices low. She looks in his eyes and...

MAGGIE

You made a decision.

GAMBLE

The men from the General Court came in.

He clenches his teeth, then takes a deep breath.

MAGGIE

And?

GAMBLE

And... nothing. They postponed  
their decision again.

MAGGIE

How can they keep putting it off?  
Everyone is suffering...

GAMBLE

It's simple, Maggie. These men  
have no idea what to do.

MAGGIE

You've offered solutions.

GAMBLE

They don't want yeoman telling them  
how to run the government.

MAGGIE

Then everything you risked your  
life for was a lie.

Maggie cocks her head toward Mary's door. She hears  
something. The two of them walk softly towards Mary's room  
and push open the door...

MAGGIE

Have you said your prayers little  
one?

The bed is empty...

MAGGIE

(Snuffling) What's the point in  
praying if nobody's listening?

... Gamble and Maggie follow the voice to a corner of the  
room. Mary is huddled on the floor her wet face shimmers in  
the candlelight.

Gamble picks her up and sits her on the bed and starts  
examining her like a doctor.

MAGGIE

What do you think doctor.

GAMBLE

This child has sprung a leak.

Gamble pretends to stop the leaks at the corners of her eyes. Mary starts to giggle. He continues to prod, poke and tickle eliciting giggles from both girls.

MAGGIE

Can it be fixed doctor?

GAMBLE

Yes, but I'll need your help.

MAGGIE

Recommendation?

GAMBLE

Sloppy kisses... over the entire face.

MARY

No, no, not that...

Mary receives lots of kisses as she makes her escape under the covers. They tuck her in and Gamble looks into her eyes.

GAMBLE

Jesus is always listening and right when you think your at the end of your rope...

MARY

But why does he wait... why not fix it right away?

MAGGIE

God's not on our time schedule. We are on his.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Gamble is leaving the blacksmith and sees Daniel walking with a purpose yet moving at a slow pace - a look of dread on his face. He knows where he's going but he doesn't want to get there.

Gamble gives a greeting from across the street but Daniel does not look up and does not see him. Gamble recognizes the case he is carrying. It houses the gold-handled ceremonial sword given to him by the Lafayette for bravery. Gamble follows at a distance.

Daniel stops at the door of the mercantile store.

Down the road a farmer, his wife, and two children stand near the town stable as their worldly goods are auctioned off. Their heads are bowed down but just for a moment Daniel and the farmer's eye meet, then they both look toward Gamble.

Daniel hovers for a moment then moves into the dark doorway of the mercantile shop. A moment later Daniel fairly leaps from the store and moves down the street to the farmer and brushes by him putting coins in his hand so deftly than no one but Gamble saw what happened.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Daniel, Eli and Moses listen as Gamble reads from the Gazette.

GAMBLE

Here it is... The Governor's  
response to our petition.

Gamble reads silently for a minute...

GAMBLE

Son of a ...

He throws the paper on the floor. The headline reads...

THE MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURE ADVISES THRIFT, VIRTUE, AND  
PATIENCE, 1786

Daniel picks it up and reads aloud.

DANIEL

Although our country abounds with  
all the necessaries of life, the  
importations from abroad, for our  
own consumption, have been almost  
beyond calculation; we have  
indulged ourselves in fantastical  
and expensive fashions and  
intemperate living...

ELI

Fantastical and expensive fashions?

He looks down at his homemade clothing...

ELI

I didn't think anyone had noticed.  
It's a good color for me don't you  
think?

DANIEL

By these means our property has  
been lessened and immense sums in  
specie have been exported.  
Government is complained of, as if  
they had devoured them; and the cry  
of many persons now is, make us  
paper money.

GAMBLE

Are we living in the same state as  
this Legislature? How can they  
accuse us of extravagance?

DANIEL

Oh, they are a clever lot. They  
are offering imprudence as our sin  
to distract others from the truth.

GAMBLE

Why did we bother to write the  
petition? It was a waste of time.

DANIEL

No, it was the right thing to do.  
We have made every attempt to let  
our cause be known.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Everyone arrived at the courthouse at the agreed on time.  
They had on their uniforms except this time there was a sprig  
of hemlock in their hats.

GAMBLE

Hey Eli that uniform getting a  
little tight in the middle?

ELI

I'll always be more handsome than  
you.

GAMBLE

What woman wants a man that's soft  
in the middle?

ELI

Want a list?

Daniel Shays arrives and everyone comes to a attention.

DANIEL

Men, here's the plan. No pushing,  
no shoving, no shooting.

ELI

No shooting?

DANIEL

No shooting!

ELI

No even the little fat-faced one?

Daniel gives Eli a look that makes him get serious in a hurry.

GAMBLE

Hey, Cap'n look over there.

He points to the hotel. The men from the General Assembly, Simon and Michael, are leaving the hotel and headed their way.

DANIEL

Prepare yourselves, men.

The Regulators stand shoulder to shoulder and block the courthouse. Simon and Michael see the Regulators, see the muskets they are holding and veer right heading straight for the tavern.

DANIEL

Well, that's not quite what I  
expected. I thought maybe we'd have  
an exchange of words.

GAMBLE

Maybe we should stick around a  
while just in case.

INT. MASSACHUSETTS BANK - DAY

GOVERNOR BOWDOIN

Gentlemen we need an army. I have petitioned Congress to send in Federal troops but the U.S. Army has only seven hundred men.

The BANK PRESIDENT, WILLIAM PHILLIPS walks over to a crystal decanter and pours himself a cordial.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Only seven hundred?

GOVERNOR BOWDOIN

They promised raise that number to over two thousand but we have to raise six hundred and sixty of that number. Congress has created a phony war story to justify sending troops to quell our little tax revolt. (Laughing) Apparently there is an impending Indian war.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

No one is going to believe that, John.

GOVERNOR BOWDOIN

Well, the Army raised a total of 100 recruits.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Have you asked yourself why we need military support from Congress? Massachusetts has 92,000 on its rolls.

GOVERNOR BOWDOIN

Yes, of course I've thought about it. Our militia members here in Massachusetts are joining the rebels. We have over 600 veterans in the Northampton militia but only 23 volunteered for duty. The two senior officers who responded had between them a total of 14 days of service in the War. Fourteen days!

(MORE)

GOVERNOR BOWDOIN (cont'd)  
All of the rebel captains have at least three years' experience.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS  
But that doesn't answer the question of why. Let me explain it to you. The government is not representative of the opinions of the people.

GOVERNOR BOWDOIN  
Who's side are you on?

WILLIAM PHILLIPS  
Oh, I'm on my side. Not yours, not theirs... mine. But that doesn't stop me from looking at things squarely... I would never delude myself... I realize these rebels are standing on some moral ground that you and I will never perch on.

GOVERNOR BOWDOIN  
So, you would have some yokels running this state and all its business.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS  
Absolutely not. But we will have to do business with them in the future. They aren't just going to disappear. Anyway, back to the business at hand. It looks like we'll have to buy an army.

GOVERNOR BOWDOIN  
It will be better to spend a little now to quell this ridiculous rebellion than to spend a lot down the road if we do not.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS  
Sounds like something King George might have said a few years back.

BOWDOIN  
I still can't believe they blocked the court house.

Phillips pulls out his pocket watch.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

I've got to go. I've a foreclosure to attend to. Would you like to join me? It's a fine piece of property.

INT. MCNABB'S TAVERN - DAY

Daniel, Moses, Gamble and Eli are gathered round a table near the fireplace. They are bundled up tight.

GAMBLE

Looks like it's going to be one of the coldest winters we've had in a long while.

ELI

What news of Boston? Did our representatives make it through the storm.

DANIEL

Only the merchant party was there. But the news is worse yet... Bowdoin's hired some mercenaries.

MOSES

Do we know how many?

GAMBLE

Not sure...

DANIEL

We are not ready for this. We need powder and linen... We need to get a message to the Selectmen. Here, Gamble, take this down...

Gamble begins to write...

DANIEL

Gentlemen, By information from the General Court, they are determined to call all those who appeared to stop the Court to consign punishment.

GAMBLE

Hold up, you're going to fast.

DANIEL

Therefore I request you to assemble your men, to see they are well armed and equipped with sixty rounds each man, and to be ready to turn out at a minute's warning; likewise to be properly organized with officers, I am your most obedient, and shall ever serve...

Daniel and Eli look at each other for a moment... and smiled as they both hit on the same idea.

ELI

I'm thinking the Springfield Arsenal.

DANIEL

Exactly... all the supplies we'll need.

GAMBLE

You can't be serious.

DANIEL

I assure you that's where Bowdoin's Generals are headed. And they have no more right to seize the arsenal than we do. The arsenal does not belong to Massachusetts; it belongs to the federal government.

GAMBLE

If Shephard gets there first we are done for.

EXT. BROOKS' PORCH - NIGHT

Gamble is sitting on his porch smoking his pipe when he hears a hoot owl. He sits up straight watching the woods on the east side of his house. He makes out Daniel and Moses headed his way. They join him on the porch.

DANIEL

Are we ready Gamble Brooks?

GAMBLE

Let's go over one more time.

MOSES

We are divided into three regiments, each under a seasoned Revolutionary officer with five or more years of experience.

DANIEL

We have more men than Shepard, more than twice as many. The only problem I foresee is communications since we will be in Palmer, Eli Parsons will be in Chicopee, and Luke Day is across the Connecticut River in West Springfield. We will be miles apart and have to dispatch messengers back and forth to keep in touch.

MOSES

The initial plan is for a three-pronged assault on January 25th.

INT. BOWDOIN'S OFFICE

Bowdoin sits behind an ornate desk while General Shephard paces the length of the room.

GENERAL SHEPHARD

To use the arsenal and its weapons, we need written authorization from the Secretary of War Henry Knox.

GOVERNOR BOWDOIN

Knox is not going to make a fuss. Arm your men with the arsenal weapons. Use those cannons and howitzers against these rebels.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The sheriff is moving at a fair clip from the tavern to the jail passing the office of the Hampshire Gazette. It is bitter cold.

A copy of the newspaper is blowing across the walkway and wraps round one of his legs. He reaches for it and quickly goes into his office.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

He throws the paper on his desk, rubs his hands back and forth for friction and heat then sits to read the latest on the insurgents. The caption reads Northampton, January 24th.

SHERIFF

On Thursday late, a number of the militia of this county amounting to 1500 men, by order of Major General Shephard, marched to Springfield with a view, as we are informed, to defend the public Store at the place on behalf of the government.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

WILLIAM BUTLER, editor of the Hampshire Gazette is looking over his handiwork and reading aloud.

BUTLER

It is said that the insurgents to the number of five or six hundred have assembled at West Springfield and that Mr. Shays with his party also of more than 500 men marched from Pelham towards Palmer. General Lincoln with his division arrived on Monday last, at Worcester, from which movements it is highly probable events of importance speedily take place.

INT. MCNABB'S TAVERN - DAY

McNabb has the Gazette splayed out over the bar as he reads to a couple of patrons.

MCNABB

We are told, in the Worcester Magazine of the week before last, that several of the inhabitants of that county, who had opposed Government, took the oath of allegiance previous to the first of January.

McNabb turns a page.

MCNABB

Head-quarters, West Springfield, January 24, 1787. Notice to Captain Luke Day regarding disarmament. The body of the people assembled in arms, adhering to the first principles in natural self-preservation, do, in the most peremptory manner, demand,

BACK TO SHERIFF

SHERIFF

First, the troops in Springfield lay down their arms.

BACK TO BUTLER

BUTLER

Second, their arms be deposited in public stores, to be returned to the owners at the termination of the present contest.

BACK TO MCNABB

MCNABB

Third, the troops return to their homes upon parole.

EXT. NEAR SPRINGFIELD - EVENING

It is snowing as the sun goes down. The wind makes a eerie whistle as it moves through the frozen limbs of the trees. Several SHADOWED FIGURES come into view. They signal one

another as they cautiously move forward. Daniel and Gamble are in uniform, and three-cornered hat with a sprig of hemlock tucked in its brim.

DANIEL

Sergeant Brooks, have some of the men see to the water supply and forage for dry wood. Remember, small fires only... stay behind the snow banks.

GAMBLE

Yes, Cap'n.

Gamble signals to the men to prepare camp. Daniel Shays walks further up the road and looking heavenward...

DANIEL

I'm standing in the middle of a blizzard, Lord. And there's an army bearing down on me. The cause seemed true, Lord. As true as the one ended a few years past.

Gamble calls out orders.

GAMBLE

Let's move it men...

Then he starts his mumbling to himself.

GAMBLE

Fine time to be having a rebellion. A blizzard, no less.

He yells at the men.

GAMBLE

I said move it... it's nearly dark!

He turns to look for Daniel and directly in front of him is a man he neither saw nor heard. Gamble stops dead in his tracks.

GAMBLE

I hate it when you do that!

MOSES SASH, has a kinetic energy, holding a conversation but looking everywhere at once.

MOSES

(Grinning) I'm a black man standing  
in a snow storm. It's a wonder you  
survived the war, Gamble.

Gamble doesn't have a chance to defend himself. Daniel is  
coming towards them.

DANIEL

Moses Sash, I thought you'd be  
frozen, gun in hand, up high in a  
cottonwood tree...

MOSES

No, sir. I moved just ahead of the  
storm. Luke's not going to make it  
through until day after tomorrow.  
The men are too weary...

DANIEL

And Lincoln?

MOSES

He's hot on our heels but the storm  
hasn't hit him full force yet...  
don't know if he'll risk it...  
marching his men through the dead  
of night in a blizzard.

GAMBLE

I can't believe those men would  
fight for Gov'ner Bowdoin.

DANIEL

Those soldiers are bought and paid  
for by Boston bankers.

MOSES

Mercenaries...

Moses spits a dark wad of tobacco covers the pristine snow at  
his feet.

DANIEL

They couldn't raise a militia - men  
who fought shoulder to shoulder  
with us back in '76 wouldn't  
join... so they had to buy some  
loyalty.

Gamble starts picking up bits of wood laying nearby.

MOSES

Maybe some of our brothers were  
desperate and took the Boston gold.

DANIEL

Or, some may fight out of old  
loyalties to General Shepard or  
General Lincoln...

Moses is watching the tree line, the skyline, the trail,  
everything around them...

MOSES

Shepard maybe - Lincoln... I don't  
think so.

GAMBLE

Daniel do you think he'll wait 'til  
the weather lets up?

DANIEL

I'd like to think that General  
Lincoln is resting in some warm  
place.

GAMBLE

Do you think hell would be warm  
enough?

Daniel considers this, then closes his eyes and lets the snow  
fall across his face. The shot widens to AERIAL SHOT of  
soldiers moving towards their position.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Hmmmm... I think he'll pursue us at  
any cost, even in a blizzard.

SUPERIMPOSITION SPRINGFIELD ARSENAL, JANUARY 26, 1787

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ARSENAL - DAY

Daniel is at the head of 1200 men. Gamble is beside him.

DANIEL

(To Gamble) Where is Luke?

GAMBLE

The storm must have kept him back.

Daniel signals the men and they move towards the public buildings in battle array. They march in an open column by platoons.

General Shephard has his army on the hill with two pieces, one howit and one field piece. They are stationed in front to rake the great road where Daniel's main body would come up. The artillery was converged on the right by the Company of Cadets under Major Williams and Captain Dickinson with his company of Infantry.

A dispatch rider, MAJOR LYMAN, is sent out by General Shepard to Daniel. He reads it silently.

GAMBLE

Asked you to tea?

DANIEL

He wants to know what we are after.

Daniel looks at Shepard's aid...

DANIEL

Tell the General that we want warm barracks to sleep in this night and barracks we will we have.

The aid seems gone only for a moment and is back with a reply.

MAJOR LYMAN

The General says, then you must purchase them dear, if you will have them.

Daniel signals his men to continue the march. He positions his army within 250 yards of the arsenal and calls them to halt.

Again, the aide is back with words from General Shepard. Daniel gives him a quirky smile.

DANIEL

You must give me time to miss you, sir.

MAJOR LYMAN

The General says if you move any nearer the arsenal it will be at your peril, as he was stationed here by order of his Excellency and the Secretary at War, for the defence of the public property. He will fire on you and your men.

DANIEL

That's what we've been waiting for.

Daniel immediately puts his troops into motion and marches rapidly within one hundred yards.

GENERAL SHEPHARD

Major Stephens, fire on them. Make the first two high as a warning.

The warning shots had no effect. The Regulators just kept on coming.

MAJOR STEPHENS

For the next shot, let's take it through the middle.

The fourth shot was better directed and the Ball took its course directly into the Regulators' ranks about breast high. The fourth and fifth shot put the whole column into the utmost confusion. Daniel tries to display the column but in vain.

There is not a single musket fired on either side. The Regulators move back. Three Regulators are dead on the spot, one wounded and dying.

INT. GENERAL SHEPARD'S TENT - EVENING

The General is writing a letter addressed to his Excellency, Governor Bowdoin.

GENERAL SHEPHARD (V.O.)

The unhappy time is come in which we have been obliged to shed blood.

Major Lyman waits patiently at the tent opening. Finally, he clears his throat.

MAJOR LYMAN

Sir, we have a dispatch from  
Captain Shays.

He walks it over to Shepard but is waved back.

GENERAL SHEPHARD

Just read it, Major.

MAJOR LYMAN

To General Shepherd or the  
Commanding Officer in Springfield.  
Sir, I desire you to send my dead  
and wounded men by my flag so that  
I can bury them. I am yours,  
Daniel Shays.

FADE OUT

THE SCREEN IS BLACK

The voice of a young man, out of breath, whispering...

STEPHEN (O.S.)

Evidently, the news of my real  
name, character, etcetera,  
etcetera... has reached the good  
people of Pelham. And this has  
served to arouse their indignation  
to its full height.

FADE IN:

EXT. STABLE - DAY

A pale green eye peeks through the wooden boards of a stable  
out onto a city street.

A horse drawn carriage passes by and the person belonging to  
the eyes steps back.

INT. STABLE - DAY

STEPHEN BURROUGHS, a man of nineteen, 6'3" lean, sinewy, dark  
hair, pale eyes, and a pleasing face. He is dressed in the  
dark clothes of a minister and clutched in his right hand is  
a silver-tipped walking stick.

After the carriage passes he presses his face back to the stable wall and looking across the street to the sheriff's office.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Angry citizens gather near the sheriff's office. There is urgency, anger in their faces, and in their gestures.

BACK TO STABLE

STEPHEN

(Whispering) I must leave Pelham...  
very suddenly.

Stephen watches as the townspeople break into groups to search the town.

CHUBBY PELHAMITE

Find him... find him... spare not  
horseflesh!

MACHO PELHAMITE

Yes... shoot him and the horse he  
came in on. I never liked him.

STEPHEN

(Whispering) Listen to them...

CHUBBY PELHAMITE

He ever had a very deceitful look.

STEPHEN

...each one is anxious to clear  
himself of being the dupe to my  
artifice.

Stephen breathes in the dust of the stable, sneezes, smacks his forehead on the boards. Some Pelamites look toward the stable. Stephen holds his breath. They turn back as the sheriff comes out.

STEPHEN

(Whispering) Suddenly, not one can  
discern anything which ever  
appeared good or commendable about  
me...

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A white-haired woman with a gentle expression standing near the emporium listens and watches the commotion.

WHITE-HAIRED WOMAN

Well, I hope they will catch him,  
and bring him back among us...

STEPHEN (V.O.)

(Whispering) These are the same  
people that so warmly accepted me  
these past six months as their  
minister...

WHITE-HAIRED WOMAN

...and we will make him a good man,  
and keep him for our preacher.

INT. STABLE - DAY

Stephen blinks rapidly as his eyes start to fill.

STEPHEN

Ah... a woman who understands God's  
grace.

Stephen rubs his eyes, jumps on his horse and makes way for the next town over.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

He dismounts in front of the Mercantile Store walks in and calls out...

STEPHEN

Frisk! It's me, Burroughs...  
Stephen Burroughs.

INT: MERCANTILE STORE - DAY

Stephen sits near the store front window and talks to a man who has his back turned as he stocks the shelves.

STEPHEN

Are you certain you need no help,  
Frisk?

Suddenly, there is a violent trampling of horses and he looks out the window to see the people of Pelham coming for him.

STEPHEN

Pelamites!

FRISK

Where?

Frisk looks down and begins to stomp on anything that looks suspicious as Stephen grabs his walking stick and makes a dash for the door calling out...

STEPHEN

No, no! It's the townspeople of Pelham. Stay safe Robert and say you don't know me.

Frisk having never turned from stocking shelves mumbles...

FRISK

That's always been my claim.

Stephen runs through the back door and a Pelhamite grabs him and he strikes and breaks the man's arm with his walking stick.

He continues round the building stopping in the alley, panting, he softly whistles for his horse who is loosely tied out front. The horse follows the sound.

Just as he readies to mount two Pelhamites clamor into the alley and his horse shies away. He takes off running several feet with the Pelhamites hallooing with all their might.

PELHAMITES

Stop him! Stop him!

Stephen stops and makes a stand. He picks up a stone and declares...

STEPHEN

The first who approaches me I will kill on the spot.

The Pelhamites stumble over each other as they come to an immediate halt -- dismay registers across every face - to hear such language from one recently believed a clergyman.

Only one of them advances. With one stroke, Stephen hits the man right between the eyes and he tumbles to the ground, lifeless as a corpse.

Stephen is surprised at his marksmanship, he bends over him to check for breathing. The man is not dead but looks it.

The Pelhamites look on at Stephen as if the devil had appeared in human shape, ready to destroy them.

Stephen's horse walks up to him and nudges him on the shoulder.

STEPHEN

Instant destruction will be your portion if you come any nearer.

The Pelhamites keep their distance as he mounts his horse. Many of the Rutlanders have gathered nearby.

He slowly backs his horse out of the throng. Reaching a safe distance he turns his back on them and the town of Rutland.

Wondering if any will follow he cocks his head to one side to get a better earful of their intentions.

RUTLAND BUSINESSMAN

What has this man done?

PELHAMITE DEACON

He is an impostor. He came among us, called his name Davis, when in reality it was Stephen Burroughs;

The deacon's face grows redder as he recites each infraction.

PELHAMITE DEACON

He has grossly deceived us, preaching to our congregation throughout the summer.

RUTLAND BUSINESSMAN

Did he preach well and conduct himself accordingly?

The Pelhamites are hesitant but finally nod in the affirmative.

RUTLAND BUSINESSMAN

He preached well. You paid him well. All parties are satisfied.

The crowd starts to disperse.

RUTLAND BUSINESSMAN

What signifies what he called his name? A name does no good nor hurt, it will be well for you to make the best use of his preaching.

Stephen is well away from Rutland riding in an open field but he still hears the voice of the townsman from Rutland.

RUTLAND BUSINESSMAN (V.O.)

A name does no good nor hurt.

SUPER: SIX MONTHS LATER

INT. PRISON - DAY

A narrow shaft of light glitters on a drip of water gliding down a SLIMY wall. It drops with a 'pling' on a couple of mice. The mice scatter and there is a moan, a laugh, and a curse from the different men in the prison cell.

They hear the JAILOR jangle his keys as he comes down the short walk to their cell.

JAILOR

Oh, boys... I have another guest.

AN IRON-BARRED DOOR

Squeals on its hinges then opens with an enormous CLANG. Everyone in the cell looks up as Stephen is pushed inside. He walks past the others as if he didn't have a care in the world.

He fashions a spot for himself under a tiny window. ELI PARSONS, a physical presence to be reckoned with watches Stephen closely.

ELI

...names Eli. Welcome to the Springfield Inn.

He gives a crooked smile showing teeth stained by chewing tobacco.

ELI

...any tobacco?

Stephen takes in the width and breath of Eli.

STEPHEN

...names Stephen. No tobacco...an  
ugly habit to be sure.

ELI

My mother always said the same.

A nod of greeting between the two. The other prisoners are wary. Stephen pulls a small book from an inner pocket and aims the pages under the meager light. All eyes are on him as he pretends to read.

ELI

(Loud whisper) Your book is upside  
down.

The jailor clamors his keys loudly as he comes back to the cell and spares Stephen from having to make a response.

The guard brings bowls of stew, crusts of bread and a day old copy of Worcester Magazine for the prisoners.

Stephen reaches for the paper and shuffles through some of the pages quickly taking in headlines. The guard stands pointedly over Stephen until he puts the paper down and takes the food.

JAILOR

Are you looking for your story Mr.  
Stephen Burroughs?

They square off with their eyes. Stephen wins.

STEPHEN

What's your name?

JAILOR

I don't fraternize with the  
prisoners.

ELI

Wise... We might inspire you to  
despicable acts.

STEPHEN

I shall call you Cerberus.

ELI

Excellent choice.

Cerberus hurries back to whatever hole he hides in. He unsure how large the insult and wants to find out what Cerberus means.

AARON

(Whispering) Eli, what's Cerberus?

ELI

Cerberus was a vicious beast that guarded the entrance to Hades and kept the living from entering the world of the dead. Some say he had fifty heads and the tail of a dragon and that he devoured raw flesh.

STEPHEN

(Surprised) You are a man of letters?

ELI

Nah... just an ignorant farmer.

STEPHEN

Boys, I think this is about you.

He looks pointedly at his cell mates then begins to read out loud.

STEPHEN

Rouse! Rouse yourselves! Ye sons and daughters of America.

Stephen's oratory skills and a bit of drama bring life to the printed page.

STEPHEN

Listen for a moment to the voices of sincere and ardent friends.

One of his cell mates is sleeping but the others are intrigued.

STEPHEN

It is the eleventh year of our Independence from England.

One cell mate slurps his stew and the others look over in irritation.

STEPHEN

I speak to the sons of reason,  
judge ye of what I say. It is a  
moment of danger.

Everyone is quiet. Now that he has their attention he drops  
the paper.

STEPHEN

To be continued after supper.

Stephen looks closely at the COLD CRUST OF BREAD slipping  
into the stew.

EXT: RESIDENCE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, FOREIGN MINISTER TO  
FRANCE - NIGHT

SUPER: PARIS, FRANCE

INT. JEFFERSON'S PARLOUR

**WARM BREAD** covered in a red, brocade scarf is laid out on a  
lace cloth. A servant uncovers the bread and the heat from  
the basket rises. THOMAS JEFFERSON, tall, and lean passes  
the bread to the MARQUIS de LAFAYETTE, short, dark-haired.  
There is a blazing fire. The dining table is set with the  
finest silver, a servant is laying out the first course. The  
men are elegantly dressed from the curl of their white wigs  
right down to their silk stockings.

LAFAYETTE

Thomas, have you heard more on the  
unrest in Massachusetts?

JEFFERSON

I've had a letter from John Jay,  
and letters from the Adams'.

LAFAYETTE

How are John and Abigail liking  
London?

Lafayette passes the bread back to Jefferson who takes a  
piece and smothers it in butter.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Eli is eating his bread bit by bit trying to make it last.

INT. JEFFERSON'S PARLOUR - NIGHT

Lafayette exhales the smoke of his cigar and sips his brandy as Jefferson reads.

JEFFERSON

John Jay writes, "In short my dear sir, we are in a very unpleasant situation. Changes are necessary, but what they ought to be, what they will be, and how and when to be produced, are arduous questions."

LAFAYETTE

Changes? To what? The system, the Articles of Confederation? Does he clarify?

Jefferson responds with a lift of the shoulders.

JEFFERSON

No, he doesn't and John Adams writes, "Don't be alarmed at the late turbulence in New England.

Lafayette shakes his head in disagreement.

LAFAYETTE

Don't be alarmed? The recent Revolution began with a small disturbance.

Jefferson holds up his hand to quiet Lafayette while he continues.

JEFFERSON

"The Massachusetts Assembly had in its zeal to get the better of their debt, laid on a tax, rather heavier than the people could bear."

Jefferson then switches to another letter. He reads a little of it silently...

JEFFERSON

John is optimistic but Abigail...  
She writes; "Ignorant, restless  
desperados..."

He shakes his head in dismay...

JEFFERSON

...without conscience or  
principals... under pretense of  
grievances which have no existence  
but in their own imaginations."

The smoke from Lafayette's exhale in a short, heaving  
burst... he nearly chokes.

BACK TO PRISON CELL

Aaron is trying to sew a hole in his sock, his hands shake  
and puffs of cold air fill the air at his exhale.

LAFAYETTE (V.O.)

(Angry) That was a short walk from  
Revolutionary soldiers to  
'ignorant, restless, desperados'.

BACK TO PARIS, FRANCE

JEFFERSON

Adams added something on the bottom  
of his letter and if you put it  
together with Jay's... you may be  
right about the 'changes.'

Jefferson siphons through the letters once more until he  
finds John Adams and he begins to read...

JEFFERSON

"But all will be well, and this  
commotion will terminate in  
additional strength to government."

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

The sleeping prisoner turns over. Gamble is feverish,  
sweating, even as his short breaths reveal the fierce cold of  
the cell. He is dreaming... he starts motioning a signal to  
move ahead...

INT. PRISON - DAY

Gamble wakes with a start. Aaron reaches toward Gamble with concern.

AARON

Back at the Springfield Arsenal?

Gamble nods. Aaron keeps his voice low but everyone is listening.

ELI

I say, Gamble Brooks, what would our comrades in arms think, if they could know what we are doing, and what we are suffering at this blessed minute?

GAMBLE

I guess they would think we were tarnation fools for listing in this cause.

He coughs hard... hacking. Eli pulls a small jar from a dirty pocket. He hands it to Aaron.

ELI

Put this across his chest...

Aaron hesitates.

ELI

Camphor... it will help clear his lungs.

Aaron sticks his nose in it and immediately pulls back eyes crossing. Eli helps Gamble to sit up a little straighter while Aaron rubs the ointment on his chest.

GAMBLE

I ain't a marrying you cause of this.

Gamble breathes long and deep taking in the ointment.

STEPHEN

Do you think you are a fool for following Daniel Shays?

GAMBLE

I wasn't following Daniel Shays. I was following my heart.

STEPHEN

So, your heart was engaged... what about your brain?

GAMBLE

Well, looking backward I might not have been looking forward enough...

Everyone laughs.

BACK TO PARIS, FRANCE

INT. JEFFERSON'S PARLOUR - EVENING

Jefferson is sitting at his desk. A candle offers a wee bit of light on a stack of letters. He singles out one of them. CLOSE UP Abigail Adams signature. He scratches at the edges of his tightly curled wig, pulls out a fresh sheet of paper and begins to write.

JEFFERSON

I hope they pardon them. The spirit of resistance to government is so valuable is so valuable on certain occasions, that I wish it to be always kept alive...

Jefferson slowly pulls off his wig and loosens the tie holding back thick, red hair. He picks up the pen and taps it against his chin a couple of times.

JEFFERSON

I like a little rebellion now and then.

He puts down the pen, scratches his scalp with both hands. He takes pen to paper...

JEFFERSON

It is like a storm in the atmosphere.

He smiles at what he has written.

JEFFERSON

(To himself) I wish I could see her  
face...

He laughs and blows out the candle.

EXT: RESIDENCE OF JOHN & ABIGAIL ADAMS, FOREIGN MINISTER TO  
ENGLAND - DAY

John and Abigail Adams coo over the bright flowers, well-  
manicured garden, cobbled walkway, and the fountain of the  
house they will be staying in.

SUPER: LONDON, ENGLAND

Abigail is sitting quietly reading a letter.

ABIGAIL

A storm in the atmosphere?

JOHN

Oh, that's good. Why couldn't I  
have thought of that... that will  
be remembered.

ABIGAIL

But John, he's saying that they  
should not be punished.

JOHN

No, no... he said he hoped that  
they would be pardoned. They are  
being punished... wasting away in a  
debtor's prison... all their  
worldly possessions taken from  
them.

He sees that Abigail is still stunned by the letter in her  
hand. He keeps on talking.

JOHN

Would you have them hanged?

INT. PRISON CELL - EVENING

ELI

Do you think we were fools?

GAMBLE

Well, I ain't a-going to write home  
about it just yet.

He see's the mortification on Eli's face.

GAMBLE

I'm no fool and neither are you.  
We might be in for it now, but I  
say we go for facing it out as a  
man ought to.

ELI

Well said, Gamble Brooks, well  
said. You're a little fellow but  
you've got the real grit in you.

He walks over to Gamble and gives him a hale hearty slap on  
the back nearly toppling him over.

ELI

You're a regular full-blooded  
Yankee, and an honor to the Bay  
State, though you're just tall  
enough to pass muster.

AARON

Everyone's a 'little fellow'  
compared to you.

GAMBLE

It's a might aggravating though to  
think how nicely them tarnal  
merchants are enjoying themselves  
in their snug beds...

Gamble starts coughing.

GAMBLE

...while we have to sit up all  
night wondering what's in store for  
us.

AARON

I feel as if I could kill a  
merchant-tyrant, and eat him, too,  
this minute.

ELI

Speaking of food... Gamble, do you remember that kick-up we had about the oxen, it was September... right before Valley Forge.

Everyone begins settling in to listen.

GAMBLE

I used to dream of Valley Forge.

ELI

Go ahead, Gamble... tell us about Valley Forge. Maybe the talk will warm us a little.

Stephen lays down his book of verses...

STEPHEN

I don't think such talk will warm you.

AARON

Who the hell are you?

GAMBLE

It's all right, Aaron. Mr. Burroughs is right. We underwent sufferings I'm not ready to tell.

Gamble scratches his chin pondering...

GAMBLE

Now guarding the oxen on t'other side of the Jerseys, that might be worth the telling...

STEPHEN

Tell us, please.

GAMBLE

Well, let's throw some pitch-knots into the stove.

They threw some knots on the fire and everyone assumes the most comfortable sitting posture for listening, while Gamble struggles to stand and commence his narrative.

GAMBLE

It was in the early part of fall -  
in September of 1776, I guess --

AARON

Are you sure you have the strength?

ELI

Standing and moving might help  
break up what's settled in his  
lungs.

GAMBLE

I'll only tell a little...

Stephen watches as Gamble becomes the storyteller, animated, capturing the attention of his cell mates and even the Cerberus.

GAMBLE

General Washington had sent us to  
guard some fat cattle.

EXT. NORTH RIVER - NEW YORK

The sun is rising, cattle are grazing on a large, cleared patch of acreage. A detachment of light infantry some three thousand are moving into place to guard them.

The cattle are feeding on a narrow neck of land between a piece of thick woods and the North River. Aaron and Gamble are standing together waiting for orders.

AARON

Gamble, what river is this?

GAMBLE

Why, the North River, to be sure.  
I told you it was on the other side  
of Jersey, right over against York  
State.

Gamble is ordered to stand sentry at the side of the encampment. The cattle are about five miles away. The commander of the detachment is the MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Lafayette steps out of a tent in full military regalia.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

STEPHEN

You fought under the banner of the Marquis?

ELI

So, what was running through your mind just then...

Gamble looks round the cell at the eager faces...

GAMBLE

I think it's time to call it a night boys...

Stephen smiles at Gamble.

STEPHEN

Ah, leave them with visions of swords and glory dancing in the their heads.

Gamble leans heavily on the wall as he makes his way to his bed of straw.

GAMBLE

Always leave them wanting more.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Stephen wakes to the clanging of keys against the bars. Stephen feels someone looking at him...

GAMBLE

Did you know sir, that you talk in your sleep?

STEPHEN

No, sir, I did not know that.

Gamble goes back to his letter-writing. Stephen stands and swipes at the hay stuck all about him. He does so much dignity.

STEPHEN

I hope my conversation disturbed you and the others but a little.

GAMBLE

Rest easy... I was the only one who heard... and it was a short conversation. You talked of Eden coming...

STEPHEN

(Grimacing) Ahhh... I see.

GAMBLE

You dream of paradise, of Eden, but paradise distresses you...

STEPHEN

Sir, Eden... is a person. What are you writing?

GAMBLE

A letter to my wife and little girl.

Cerberus opens the cell to bring in breakfast and newspaper. Stephen walks over to the pump, pulls off his shirt to wash his face and neck and Gamble can see the marks from a recent whipping. The Cerberus stares openly,

Cerberus hesitates as he passes out some biscuits and strawberry preserves to the men. Finally, as he leaves the cell and drives the key home he whispers...

CERBERUS

If you good gentlemen... and you Mr. Burroughs, would like more of the same...

He nods at the biscuits.

CERBERUS

You will need to pay for it.

The prisoners have been watching Cerberus with a keen eye. They can see he has letters for someone. He takes a whiff of them before handing them over to Gamble.

CERBERUS

Roses... Oh, and Burroughs you have some visitors.

The others in the cell have are chewing their warm biscuits with abandon as Cerberus motions for the visitors to move forward. Two girls and their mother look through the bars at Stephen. All of the men stop eating.

MOTHER

This man dresses and speaks as a gentleman but is in reality a manipulator. This is what we must protect ourselves from... This man stole a watch and a suit of clothes from a clergyman.

STEPHEN

I what??? I did no such thing.

CERBERUS

It was in the paper.

STEPHEN

And you believe everything you read in the paper, sir?

CERBERUS

I have no reason not to.

STEPHEN

This woman is merely a curiosity seeker. If she were a good mother she would not bring her young girls into such a setting as this. (Directly at the mother) Please remove yourself from my sight and take Cerberus with you.

The woman turns in huff pushing her girls in front of her and Cerberus smirks at Stephen then follows the woman. There is an awkward silence in the cell...

AARON

Gamble... finish your story.

ELI

Let the man finish his meal. If you can call it a meal.

Gamble eats slowly, then rises to wash at the pump. Taking his time and building anticipation.

GAMBLE

Well, when I was standing in that field I was thinking about home and calculating that father might be pretty well through with harvesting his winter rye. Just then I heard...

EXT. NORTH RIVER - DAY

A fellow is trotting along the ground pretty considerable hard, and coming right towards Gamble...

GAMBLE

Who goes there?

NERVOUS STRANGER

A friend.

GAMBLE

Advance and give the counter sign!

NERVOUS STRANGER

I don't know the countersign but the Regulars is landing from the river...

The stranger, a JERSEY COUNTRYMAN, moves to stand right in front of Gamble.

JERSEY COUNTRYMAN

...and if you don't make haste, they'll carry off all your fat cattle, in their launches.

He's a little fellow and Gamble grabs him by the collar with his left hand and cocks and discharges his piece in the air with his right.

GAMBLE

Now, my good fellow, if what you say is true, you'll get rewarded for your news...

Gamble loosens his grip a little.

GAMBLE

...but if you've been giving a false alarm, you'll catch it, or my name's not Gamble Brooks.

STRANGER

It's as true as true can be.

The guard arrives in force. Gamble watches from a distance as the stranger is escorted into the Marquis' quarters.

Within seconds COLONEL RUFUS PUTNAM strides out of the tent and jumps on his horse.

COLONEL PUT

To arms... down to the point...  
double-quick time!

Aaron, Eli and the rest of the Continentals are called up, mustered in a hurry and begin to march the five miles of rough ground.

AARON

(To Eli) Old Put himself. He's as cool as a peach.

ELI

(Out of breathe) And as wide awake when the smell of gunpowder is about.

The Continentals are nearly running.

AARON

Eli, this is a sample of the tallest kind of walking that ever I experienced.

They are nearing the edge of the woods.

COLONEL PUT

Eli!

ELI

Sir!

COLONEL PUT

Go forward and see where the  
Regulars are and how many they  
mustered.

Eli runs ahead. As he nears the enemy he lays on the ground,  
crawling on his belly. He gets an eyeful... three columns  
each one about a thousand strong. He backs out slowly then  
makes a dash for the Colonel.

ADJUTANT

Sir, they are forming on the  
shore... and as near as I could  
calculate three thousand strong.

The Colonel rises up in his stirrups, and points back with  
his sword.

COLONEL PUT

Then ride back to the camp, as fast  
as you can, tell Lafayette to come  
on!

Eli jumps on a horse and rides hell for leather. Colonel Put  
rides over to one of his captains, CAPTAIN DANIEL SHAYS, a  
good officer, and a right clever man to his soldiers.

COLONEL PUT

Well, Captain Shays' shall we be a-  
playing with them a little, till  
the Lafayette comes?

DANIEL

As you please, Sir.

Daniel turns to his men...

DANIEL

Men are you ready to see the whole  
game these rascally red-coats are  
playing?

Daniel is walking up and down the line.

DANIEL

There are three thousand men all  
ready to steal our fat cattle, and  
carry them off, or to shoot us  
down, if we say 'Nay.' Let's show  
them how you feel about it?

Daniel orders them to advance. They come out of the woods,  
to the open land upon the point. The whole force of the enemy  
comes in to view. And the enemy is... singing.

THE REGULARS

"Oh, he's a Yankee, doodle dandy."

AARON

Singing?

GAMBLE

They mock us... we're just a rag-  
tag army... they don't call us  
Continental anymore...

The rest of the Regulars are joining the song...

GAMBLE

They call us Americans. They spit  
out the word like it's stale  
tobacco.

The Continentals ready themselves... a great volley of  
musketry from the Regulars, and the cannon from the launches  
begins to roar.

INSIDE THE PRISON CELL

GAMBLE

Says I to myself, Gamble Brooks,  
you'll never see home again; for  
there are Regulars enough to eat up  
your regiment without salt.

The prisoners hear the guard coming with other folk tramping  
behind him. They are silent.

GAMBLE

I think we'll hold off for a  
little...

Cerberus reaches the cell and calls out...

CERBERUS

Aaron, your mother is here.

Aaron spits on his hands, slicks back his hair and stands up straight. He starts to cry as soon as he sees her. Everyone busies themselves trying not to notice.

Her gray hair is stiff as wire and pulled tight in a bun. Her lips are tightly pressed. She turns to the guard and whispers something to him.

CERBERUS

Follow me...

The two move to another room. Gamble pulls out paper and ink and contemplates the place where Aaron's mother had been standing and then begins to write.

STEPHEN

A letter to Maggie?

GAMBLE:

No, a song...

STEPHEN

The insurgent is a songwriter too?

Gamble ignores his sarcasm. Stephen is intrigued and tries to see over his shoulder.

GAMBLE

Is your family nearby?

STEPHEN

I'm a grown man. I can take care of myself.

GAMBLE

Yes, I can see that.

STEPHEN

And what of your wife?

GAMBLE

She's... afraid for me...

Aaron returns a little worse for wear and Gamble gives him a pat on the back.

GAMBLE

Don't mind it none...

Then he musses Aaron's spit-shined hair.

GAMBLE

Okay, boys let's finish our story.

Everyone settles in comfortably.

GAMBLE

At length we commenced; and we worked mighty fast, boys, I can tell ye: and, for one regiment, made a pretty considerable noise.

BACK TO THE BATTLE OF NORTH RIVER

Colonel Putnam rides back and forth, before his regiment, cool and calm while the balls whistle about them in every direction. A tiny number of Continentals trying to hold their own, loading and firing, loading and firing.

GAMBLE

The loading and firing, to keep an enemy, five or six times your number, in check, is rather warm work.

The Corporal takes a bullet through the chest.

DANIEL

Just then the Corporal was shot right through the body, and falls dead at my feet. I'd never seen a man killed so near me before. Daniel looks over and see's my distress... and he says, Gamble never mind it. I will take his place.

Daniel was good as his word. He begins blazing away at the redcoats as cool as if he was beginning a day's work in the haying season.

Sweat beads down Daniel's face as he stands beside Gamble firing away, with a poker face and deadly aim.

Now the fighting is too close for rifles, just bayonets, and guns swung like clubs, primitive...

Gamble takes is attacked on two sides and Daniel steps in front of a bayonet aimed at Gamble's throat and it nearly costs him an eye. The cut is deep and leaves a tale-bearing scar.

Carnage, men killing each other in embraces, soldier crushed against soldier, desperate to survive, killing to live.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

GAMBLE

I always liked that Captain Daniel Shays. He was the best captain I have ever served under yet. He was bold to the enemy, and always kind to his men. He stood shoulder to shoulder with me through the rest of that fight.

STEPHEN

And where is this brave soul now? This Captain Shays? He has run away leaving you with the burden of his little rebellion.

GAMBLE

We were Regulators not rebels. Everything was planned by committee. The newspapers needed a name to pin things on and Daniel's the one that got stuck.

Stephen rifles through a discarded newspaper.

STEPHEN

(Dripping) Well, it's right here in black and white. It MUST be true.

GAMBLE

I was loading my gun for the twenty-second time when... I will forget the feeling of that moment, when I first heard the sound of drum and fife!

## BACK TO THE BATTLE

Drums beating, Lafayette and the main body of the infantry dash out of the woods and move up behind Gamble and the men holding the line.

Daniel and Gamble look at the reinforcements then at each other. Gamble lets out a whoop...

DANIEL

Now, Gamble, we'll give it to them!

The main body forms to the left of Gamble. Lafayette is riding out in front of the line decked out in full dress uniform.

Though he is slight -- a mere stripling in his appearance -- his eye is full of fire. Lafayette turns toward the line and gives his orders in a voice bigger than anyone could expect.

LAFAYETTE

Let the whole line charge bayonets!  
Rush on, and drive them into the  
river!

Lafayette's orders breathe new life into the Continentals. They rush forward bayonets levelled at the Regulars.

The British charge to meet them but are pushed back to the shoreline driving them pell-mell into the water. Weary from battle and the weight of their gear pulls the Regulars under.

A haunting scene: Hundreds drowned before reaching their boats. The Regulars that make it into the launches are reaching over trying to grab on to those that are drowning. The Continentals, farmer/warriors, start to sing a slow, hushed version of the song the Regulars used to taunt them. Only this time it is a death knell...

CONTINENTALS

Oh, I'm a Yankee doodle dandee...

A fog is moving in and the Regulars hear only voices as their launches begin to move away. The voices of the Continentals carry across the water.

CONTINENTALS

A Yankee Doodle do or die...

## INSIDE THE PRISON CELL

GAMBLE

Only fifteen hundred of the three thousand British made it to their vessels.

Stephen stands and walks back and forth, back and forth, touching seams in the walls.

GAMBLE

Looking for a crack to squeeze through?

He jiggles the foundation of the water pump and around the stove chimney but everything is solid.

STEPHEN

Your story makes this cell ever smaller. I must make a way out!

Stephen continues his walk around the cell stopping to run a finger around the edge of a tiny window. He pushes at the edges.

STEPHEN

When I was fourteen I ran away to join the army...

GAMBLE

Somehow you don't seem the military type.

Stephen doesn't hear Gamble. He gazes out of the narrow crack of a window and there is a fourteen year old Stephen standing just outside his cell. Young Stephen is gangly, all arms and legs.

STEPHEN

I had all these romantic ideas of military prowess and such...

## MONTAGE - STEPHEN TRIES TO JOIN THE ARMY

-- Young Stephen is runs down a dirt, reaches the army camp. He is standing over a table filling out papers as Captain Shays looks on.

-- The back of REVEREND BURROUGHS, a presbyterian minister, talking with Captain Shays requesting his son's release from service.

-- He watches as the company passes by his house and takes off running after them. He is filling out papers, looks over his shoulder to see the Reverend behind him talking to Captain Shays requesting his son's release. Daniel smiles and shakes the Reverend's hand.

-- Stephen sneaks out in the night and runs after the company. This time there is a different officer in front of him. He keeps looking over his shoulder as he fills out the paperwork. Eden astride a fast horse gallops into the camp.

END OF MONTAGE

IN THE PRISON CELL

STEPHEN

I ran twenty-eight miles to catch up to the regiment. This time I enlisted with another officer.

GAMBLE

Did your father come after you?

STEPHEN

Yes, but this officer refused to discharge me without my consent. Father pleaded with me...

GAMBLE

Brothers and sisters?

STEPHEN

Four of my siblings had passed on. There was only me and my oldest brother... the good son... but he too, died of fever. The next day a friend of my father's came to persuade me to go home and I said yes.

GAMBLE

And the officer wouldn't release you...

STEPHEN

How did you know?

GAMBLE

Because that's the way life works  
son.

STEPHEN

The next day we headed for the  
North River.

GAMBLE

Did you see any action?

Stephen is tugging at the pot belly stove that keeps them warm. The flu that creeps upward out of the cell seems loose in places.

STEPHEN

We had a number of skirmishes but I was kept in the back by the baggage. When I realized they weren't going to let me fight I just wanted to go home. In fact, I remember you Gamble Brooks and the day the British tried to steal our oxen.

Stephen moves towards the splash of light coming in through the window.

STEPHEN

My father wrote a letter to General Washington asking for my discharge.

The air is frigid. Gamble stands and stamps his feet. Stephen brushes the straw from his clothes. Gamble smiles at this and Stephen stops what he's doing.

GAMBLE

And if you had been allowed to  
fight... would it have made a  
difference...

Stephen begins his trek around the cell once more. Always moving...

STEPHEN

A difference to the battle?

GAMBLE

A difference to how you ended here.

STEPHEN

Well, we are both sitting in the same cell Gamble Brooks. What has soldiering done for you?

Gamble rubs the fresh growth on his chin...

GAMBLE

Ah... yes. But we are here for very different reasons.

Stephen stops in front of Gamble. They are eye to eye.

STEPHEN

Are you so certain? I am being punished for rebellion against the system same as you.

GAMBLE

Passing counterfeit coin is stealing... it's not a rebellion.

Gamble looks around him at the others sitting on piles of hay.

GAMBLE

What say you gentlemen. Are we of the same root?

STEPHEN

Your crime was not having enough coin. Unlike you I tried to find a non-violent solution to my lack...

GAMBLE

As did we all...

STEPHEN

I was trying to help a friend.

GAMBLE

Ahhh...

STEPHEN

Really... I was. Lysander is an excellent friend.

Stephen holds both hands on the tip of his walking stick which is propped in front of him.

STEPHEN

We made a partnership of sorts with  
Glazier Wheeler...

GAMBLE

Glazier Wheeler has been trying to  
perfect his craft for fifty years.

ELI

He has yet to pass coin undetected.

Stephen seems not to hear their remarks.

STEPHEN

We thought we'd not be with the old  
man long before we will be able to  
work at the business on our own.

GAMBLE

We? So, a friend talked you into  
this? You are sensible that  
counterfeiting the coin of any  
country is against the law.

Stephen stands and readies himself to make a case for  
counterfeiting.

ELI

How often has Glazier been  
confined, pilloried, cropped and  
whipped for this business?

Aaron's eyes widen in alarm.

GAMBLE

If you continue with this nonsense  
you would entail misery and  
infamy...

ELI

...be treated with contempt;  
injured without pity...

Stephen laughs at their little drama...

GAMBLE  
...be confined in jail... separated  
from your friends... What did your  
friend talk you into?

STEPHEN  
He is my friend.

GAMBLE  
Did he visit you while I was  
asleep?

STEPHEN  
When I see Daniel Shays standing  
outside those bars we'll talk of  
friendship.

Silence.

GAMBLE  
Continue... please.

Stephen stands ready to postulate his side.

STEPHEN  
We have laws to protect each other  
from injury, and where no injury is  
intended, nor in fact done, the  
whole essence of law is attended  
to.

He walks around the cell as he speaks.

STEPHEN  
Money, of itself, is of no  
consequence. Mankind agreed to put  
a value on it. The only thing  
necessary to make a matter  
valuable, is to induce the world to  
deem it so...

He walks over to the window and raises his face to the dying  
light outside.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

A boy is selling day-old papers. Outside the cell he calls  
out the headlines.

NEWSBOY (O.S.)

The Shaysites face judgement! The  
Shaysites will stand before the  
judge!

STEPHEN

Boy! Throw one through the window.

Stephen flings a coin through the small window. The boy runs  
off with it.

GAMBLE

He took off with your coin. What  
are people teaching their children  
these days.

Stephen laughs.

STEPHEN

You have such high expectations of  
people, Gamble. For all have come  
short of the glory of G-d.

GAMBLE

He couldn't have been seven or  
eight.

STEPHEN

All, Gamble... all. Not just those  
above eight.

GAMBLE

If my Mary did something like  
that...

STEPHEN

No worries... it was a coin left  
over.

GAMBLE

You gave him bad coin?

STEPHEN

It was a day old paper.

Gamble hangs his head in defeat. A church bell tolls.  
Gamble smiles in relief.

GAMBLE

Well, the judgement won't be today boys. I lost track of time... it's Sunday.

Gamble lifts his face upward towards the window at the sounds of people gathering. Someone throws a paper through the window. Stephen grabs it.

STEPHEN

It looks like the editor has reprinted some of your original petitions.

He reads silently for a moment... then aloud.

STEPHEN

And can you bear to see... the yeomanry of this Commonwealth being parched, and cut to pieces... and not resent it even unto relentless bloodshed?

ELI

I sent that letter to a friend. How did it get into the paper?

GAMBLE

Your friend probably sold it.

STEPHEN

Eli... this is well-written.

ELI

Do I look like I'm uneducated or something?

STEPHEN

Well... yes. There is a certain lack of couth about you.

ELI

(Laughing) So, you're saying I'm not couthy? (Brit accent) A crushing blow to my ego, sir.

Gamble shushes them. More people are gathering on the street.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A minister steps onto a crate... the better to be seen and heard. He is well dressed. There is a pudginess all about him. Most of the people gathered around are in their Sunday best.

REVEREND BEZALEEL HOWARD

These men must pay a price for their sheep-like behavior. They could not have everything as they wished... but does that justify resorting to force?

He dabs daintily at the beads of sweat above his lip.

BACK INSIDE THE PRISON CELL

Everyone is moving closer to the voice except Stephen. Eli and Aaron grab the bench and pull it under the window.

REVEREND BEZALEEL HOWARD (O.S.)

The petitions written by these men only served to agitate the people and render of our public affairs more embarrassing...

Gamble and Eli nudge Aaron aside so that they can take a look at the preacher. The bench barely puts their noses over the breach of the tiny window.

OUTSIDE IN THE STREET

REVEREND BEZALEEL HOWARD

We can feel sorry for them... as they were swept away by the false eloquence of those about them...

BACK IN THE PRISON CELL

Stephen pushes the others aside as he jumps on the bench raises his walking stick to shove it through the glass and hit the preacher.

REVEREND BEZALEEL HOWARD (O.S.)

...like the dogs in a village if one bark, all bark...

Gamble grabs him and the two tumble to the ground.

STEPHEN

First, he calls me a sheep... then a dog.

GAMBLE

He wasn't talking about you. He was talking about us... about the Regulators.

STEPHEN

No, Gamble... he was talking about everyone in this cell and we are all forced to listen to this... to this...

GAMBLE

(controlling a grin) Stephen, would Jesus hit that man with a walking stick?

STEPHEN

I think Jesus would thoroughly beat him about the head and shoulders...

They eyeball one another for a long moment then burst out laughing. Bezaleel hears laughter drifting through the window and huffs and puffs a little louder.

Aaron steps on the wooden bench. He raises his lips toward the small square of blue, opens his mouth...

Stephen and the others in the room grow quiet. He has not spoken a single word since his mother came... until now. But he doesn't talk... he sings.

AARON

Come thou fount of every blessing,  
tune my heart to sing thy grace.

A voice so tender that it brought the open sky into the room. Their tiny window to the world seems to grow with every note vibrating those little used cords.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Bezaleel sees the townspeople are no longer listening to him. Their gaze is fixed on the window. His tirade stalled...

sputtered... died as sweet notes drift slowly from the window.

AARON

Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
call for songs of loudest praise.

The townspeople push forward toward the voice... the voice of a man lately called a "dog" by a preacher.

A tune of grief and redemption, a melody known to everyone... all of the faces are raised up towards the small window as Aaron's voice seems carried on a breeze that billows over them.

AARON

Teach me some melodious sonnet.  
Sung by flaming tongues above.

Bezaleel backs his way through the people. He stands at the fringes of the gathering crowd wondering what will happen when Governor Bowdoin hears of this.

INSIDE THE PRISON CELL

Stephen moves closer and stares at the young man's face. Slowly Aaron pushes the words out and over the wall that separates him from the townspeople.

AARON

Praise the mount. I'm fixed upon  
it. Mount of thy redeeming love.

Silence. Aaron comes back from the place he has been and steps down from the bench.

A young, female voice from the other side of the prison wall...

YOUNG WOMAN

Another verse... please... sir.

Eli helps him back up on the bench. Gamble turns to Stephen...

GAMBLE

Let's see... walking stick or song  
of mercy... hmmm,

AARON

Oh, to grace, how great a debt-or,  
Daily I'm constrained to be.

Eli adds his rich alto.

AARON & ELI

Let thy goodness, like a fether  
bind my wand'ring heart to thee:

Gamble joins in...

AARON & ELI & GAMBLE

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it.

Stephen moves closer to Aaron and touches his arm. Maybe he can feel the same things he sees on Aaron face if he touches him.

For just a moment the window grows and he sees a sky so wide, and blue... but only for a second. Stephen turns his back as the voices of the townspeople waft through the bars...

TOWNSPEOPLE (O.S.)

Prone to leave the God I love.

AARON & ELI & GAMBLE

Here's my heart, O take and seal  
it. Seal it for thy courts above.

As the last notes fade no one is sure what to do. A bridge has been built through a small window.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)

Thank you, sir. You have lifted  
me up. What is your name?

AARON

Aaron Jewel.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)

I will bring you a fine supper this  
very evening, Aaron Jewel.

Gamble nudges Aaron to respond.

AARON

I would like that very much.

Eli and Gamble are grinning at Aaron who is beet red. Stephen is walking the cell again. Testing the bars.

STEPHEN

My, my... but that was a precious moment.

GAMBLE

Don't pretend with me Stephen Burroughs I caught your look.

Stephen rubs the silver tip of his walking stick.

STEPHEN

I am not a 'turn the cheek' New Testament fellow.

GAMBLE

No one is... it's something you have to work at.

STEPHEN

I'll take the Old Testament, thank you very much. Plagues, locusts, floods...

GAMBLE

(Laughing) God didn't take no guff back then.

STEPHEN

Exactly.

INT. PRISON CELL - MORNING

AARON

Gamble, what do you think the verdict will be?

GAMBLE

The Governor has already cited treason and the rest is just a formality.

AARON

Do you think they'll offer leniency?

GAMBLE

I think we're in God's hands now.

Stephen reaches inside an inner pocket for his book of verses. Hoping to distract his cell mates he says...

STEPHEN

Like children we might open this book and see on which verse it falls. Maybe it will tell us our fortune.

He holds the book still, eyes closed, and lets it fall open on the floor. Gingerly, he picks it up and speaks the first verse his eyes linger on.

STEPHEN

"Why all this toil, for triumphs of an hour? What tho' we wade in wealth, or soar in fame, Earth's highest station ends in 'Here he lies.'"

He shuts the book hard...

STEPHEN

Well, that gives the spine a bit of a tingle. Let's give it another try shall we?

Stephen drops the book again.

INT. PRISON CELL - AFTERNOON

When Cerberus brings their meal he watches the camaraderie in the cell and doesn't like it. He opens the cell and motions for Eli and Stephen to come out and he places them in the cell next door.

Still determined to escape, Stephen begins to search this new cell for possibilities. He peeps into every corner of the room, surveys all the barricades, contemplates every possible measure. He fiddles with the foundation of the chimney. At last he finds a way.

STEPHEN

The chimney!

ELI  
We'll start tonight.

INT. ELI AND STEPHEN'S CELL - NIGHT

They pull off their coats and go to work on the stones in the chimney. They fill the cell with stones and rubbish as they dismantle the chimney. They need light so they take pine slivers peeled off from a board, which keeps one hand constantly employed in feeding the blaze. So, Eli feeds the light while Stephen rolls huge stones out of the chimney-way. Just before dawn they run out of slivers to light the way.

STEPHEN  
What I wouldn't give for a farthing  
candle!

ELI  
We'll wait for the light and  
hopefully Cerberus won't bother to  
visit until late morning.

INT. ELI AND STEPHEN'S CELL - DAWN

Eli and Stephen renew their labor with increased animation. Within an hour they are close enough and Eli pushes himself into the chimney but before Stephen can move in behind him there is the thundering noise of the jailer opening ponderous doors, throwing back the many bolts, and turning the keys of the enormous locks.

Cerberus comes into the room and sees the rubbish, rocks, stone and dirt filling the cell. There is Stephen almost naked, covered with sweat and dust.

EXT. PRISON - DAWN

Eli shimmies down the side of the jail and hears Moses give a bird call from the woods nearby and makes a dash for it.

INT. STEPHEN'S CELL - DAWN

Cerberus backs out of the cell and is gone only for a moment. He returns with his minions ties Stephen to the grate, and gives him ten lashes on his naked back with a horse-whip.

After the whipping...

CERBERUS

Take him to the dungeon!

STEPHEN

You've been waiting a long time to say that... haven't you?

INT. STEPHEN'S CELL - DAY

The Sheriff watches as his minions put a flat ring around Stephen's leg...

SHERIFF

Where's Eli headed?

...about six inches wide and an inch thick.

SHERIFF

Who helped the two of you?

The ring is connected with a chain about thirty-six pounds and ten feet in length.

SHERIFF

Who was waiting out in the woods?

STEPHEN

Sir, I have no idea what you are talking about. I do not traffic with known traitors. I am a patriot.

Stephen answers in a manner quite composed until the other end of the chain is fastened to the timber of the floor, with an iron staple driven in with a sledge hammer that makes the whole jail tremble.

STEPHEN

You have pinched me with hunger, mangled me with whips, confined me in a dungeon as though you envied me the liberty of walking a room twenty-foot square. And now you have confined me to a space of half that dimension.

SHERIFF

You have done these things to  
yourself. You have pushed liberty  
away with both hands.

The sheriff and his minions leave Stephen to his despair.

SUPERIMPOSITION: TWO WEEKS LATER

INT. STEPHEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Stephen's leg is worn by the iron around it till the skin is coming off. He has no other person to speak to. He has grown so thin as to be unrecognizable. He is talking to himself, first in a mumble then he roars with anguish.

STEPHEN

I will endure these trials no  
longer...

He sees that the flooring of the jail is laid with two thicknesses of timber. The cracks between were two inches wide in some places with shavings and other combustible stuff in between. Into this Stephen drops hot coals from the pot-belly stove.

INT. GAMBLE'S CELL - NIGHT

Cerberus, out of breath, unlocks Gamble's cell.

GAMBLE

What's happening?

CERBERUS

That fool set fire to his own cell!  
We need to check your cell for  
damage.

GAMBLE

Desperate man, desperate measures.

INT. - STEPHEN'S CELL

The floor being tight in most places does not admit the blaze directly where the coals have been dropped but rather it seeks passage elsewhere, and soon bursts out, through the underpinning and blazes up behind the walls to the height of the eaves of the jail, about twenty feet.

CERBERUS

Oh, yes. The fire, for the most part moved behind the walls and showed itself up in the eaves.

Stephen watches all of this with a look of horror and the sublime. He takes out his book of verses, rips out a favorite page and throws the book up towards the eaves where the fire rolls upwards... He reads aloud from the single page.

STEPHEN

'Tis as the general pulse of life stood still, and nature made a pause...

The fire loosens the staple which confines his chain to the floor and he is at liberty to walk from one end of the room to the other, contemplating the fire's dreadful progress.

STEPHEN

...An awful pause! Fate! Drop the curtain! I can lose no more."

He crumples the page in his hand and adds it to the flames.

There is chaos outside Stephen's cell. Cries of fire from all around. Smoke fills the air and the other prisoner's scream to be freed of their cells.

INT. STEPHEN'S CELL - 4 AM

The jail house is entirely silent. The fire is subdued and Stephen is on edge waiting for his punishment but none comes just yet.

INT. STEPHEN'S CELL - 9 AM

The outer door of the jail is opened. There is a crowd entering and passing along the alleyway, previous to their coming to the prison door. The door opens and the high sheriff, Cerberus and about twenty more enter. The sheriff advances with a cocked pistol held to Stephen's breast.

SHERIFF

I swear by God that if you offer resistance I will kill you in an instant.

STEPHEN

You are a despicable, cowardly wretch to advance upon a poor helpless unarmed man in such a manner. Do your worst, sir. I expect no less from such a barbarian as you.

SHERIFF

Seize him!

They advance and laid hold of Stephen. As soon as they have him secure the sheriff takes hold of his hand and twists it round nearly wringing his arm off. He is led out of the jail in this manner and into the yard.

EXT. PRISON YARD - MORNING

Stephen is tied to the grates and stripped naked. The sheriff gives him twenty lashes with a hunting whip.

INT. GAMBLE'S CELL - MORNING

Gamble and Aaron are standing on the bench and looking out of the small window into the yard.

GAMBLE

(Whispering) Oh, Stephen, what have you done?

Gamble and Aaron both jump and wince with each stroke of the whip that's laid on Stephen's back.

INT. PRISON - AFTERNOON

The men in the cell hear Cerberus with his slow gait coming down the hall. There's another pair of footsteps behind him.

CERBERUS (O.S.)

Gamble Brooks you have a visitor!

Gamble can't hide the look of surprise on his face... but when the footsteps end at the front of the cell his face moves from surprise to shock.

As they stand in front of the cell the Cerberus looks Moses up, down, and sideways.

CERBERUS

No passing anything through the bars. Keep your distance.

Moses has a hillbilly grin on his face but when the guard looks away for a moment he drops it like a hot potato.

Neither one speaks. The guard hasn't left. He draws deep on his pipe and waits.

GAMBLE

(Stumbling) Moses...

Moses leans his head a little left in warning.

MOSES

Zeke... Don't you remember me Gamble?

GAMBLE

Of course, I remember you... Hmmm, you've been...

MOSES

(cuts him off) helping Mrs. Brooks at the farm while your... away.

ELI

Gamble's been sick, Zeke. He's not quite himself.

MOSES

Is there anything I can bring you?

ELI

(Pointedly at guard) A good doctor.

With that the Cerberus decides to leave. Gamble reaches through the bars and squeezes Moses hand.

GAMBLE

It does my heart good to see you, Moses. But why have you done this. You got away...

MOSES

Daniel wanted to come but I thought it best to get the lay of the land first.

GAMBLE

No... you need to go. There's enough to be hanged. Governor Bowdoin should be happy.

MOSES

You know, Governor Bowdoin has been voted out of office...

A huge smile crosses Gamble's face.

GAMBLE

That's the best news I've heard in a long time. Please tell me Hancock is back in the Governor's seat.

MOSES

Yes, he is.

GAMBLE

Yes! He will set things to right...

There is a chair available but Moses sits on the floor Indian style.

GAMBLE

You've heard haven't you... the hangman's nearly ready for us.

MOSES

Tomorrow.

Aaron moans and Gamble changes the subject quickly.

GAMBLE

We've been telling tales of  
soldiering Moses.

Moses had come to spend as long as he could with his former comrade-in-arms and if he wanted to talk about battles he would oblige.

MOSES

It's a wonder we're still living  
after Valley Forge back in '77...

EXT. VALLEY FORGE

SUPER - Valley Forge, 1777

Several units of American soldiers march into a wooded area.

CAPTAIN GREER

Halt!

The soldiers stop. They are freezing... in pain.

GAMBLE

Hold tight Aaron. We're gonna make  
it.

AARON

I... I

Aaron falls. Moses and Gamble try to adjust the torn up pieces of an old shirt that Aaron has wrapped around his bloodied feet. All of the soldiers are destitute; clothing threadbare, no shoes. They marched over frozen ground, they present a pitiable spectacle, and their trail might be traced on the ground, by the blood drawn from their bare feet upon the march.

GEORGE WASHINGTON strides through the wooded area barking orders to a Corporal. Just under six feet four and slightly above two hundred pounds, he was a full head taller than most of his soldiers.

His face is pockmarked, his teeth decayed, oversized eye sockets, massive nose, heavy in the hips, gargantuan hands and feet...

but somehow, when put together and set in motion, the full package conveyed sheer majesty. His body did not just occupy space; it seemed to organize the space around it.

The area marked for camp is bound on one side by the river Shuykill and on the others by ridges of hills.

GENERAL WASHINGTON

Corporal take down those trees,  
construct huts from the logs;  
dimensions of each should be  
sixteen by fourteen.

CORPORAL

Yes, sir.

The General looks over at Aaron for a moment. He moves on...

GENERAL WASHINGTON

Twelve privates to a hut... we only  
have nine blankets for each hut so  
the men will have to take turns  
sleeping... nine sleep with the  
blankets, three stay on guard and  
keep the fires in each hut going.

The Corporal is having a difficult time keeping up with the General.

GENERAL WASHINGTON

Arrange the huts in parallel lines.  
Soldiers from the same States will  
inhabit the same street or avenue.

CORPORAL

Yes, sir.

GENERAL WASHINGTON

Build intrenchments around the  
whole encampment...

CORPORAL

Yes, sir.

GENERAL WASHINGTON

And a bridge across the river to  
establish communications...

CORPORAL

Yes, sir.

## GENERAL WASHINGTON

We must remember that our enemy is but twenty miles away... quartered in Philadelphia. And Corporal... (he points back to Aaron) put proper bandages on that man's feet.

Montage of scenes as the General's orders are carried out. Washington is in his tent writing a letter. He looks out of his tent and sees the encampment has been cleared of trees.

## GENERAL WASHINGTON

Only eighty-two hundred men, fit for duty, could be mustered if we need to resist an attack.

He looks up again and he sees rows of huts are going up.

## GENERAL WASHINGTON

Almost 3000 of our men are unfit for duty, barefoot, and otherwise naked in the depth of winter. The apathy of Congress and the people, the wretched system, or rather no system of supplies prevails.

He looks up from his letter writing and he can see a new bridge in the distance.

## GENERAL WASHINGTON

Upon the ground of safety and policy, I am obliged to conceal the true state of the army from public view....

He looks up once more and the encampment has the appearance of a town, with streets and avenues.

## GENERAL WASHINGTON

...Incapacity in the commissariat of the army is glaringly apparent...

He walks to the opening of his tent and looks out over the encampment. As he walks back his tent has also become a hut.

GENERAL WASHINGTON

...at the very time when the army  
is suffering so severely for want  
of clothing and shoes...

INT. HUT - NIGHT

MOSES (V.O.)

Inside one of the huts in the  
middle of this disastrous winter  
three men from the Massachusetts  
line sit around a fire; Aaron,  
Gamble and Moses. The other nine,  
having blankets, could sleep: and,  
on the next night, three of them  
would have to take their turn of  
watching...and shaking from cold.

GAMBLE

Now guarding the oxen on t'other  
side of the Jerseys, that might be  
worth the telling... General  
Washington had sent us to guard  
some fat cattle.

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

SECRETARY

Mr. Hancock... Let me show you to  
your office, sir. I will be acting  
as your secretary until you appoint  
a new one.

JOHN

Please call me John. What is our  
first order of business today.

SECRETARY

Well, sir. We have petitions for  
pardons for you to look over.

JOHN

For who?

Governor Bowdoin comes in to the outer office. He hovers  
near John's door listening.

SECRETARY

The Regulators, sir. If you are willing...

JOHN

Call me John. Let's take a look shall we?

John stifles a yawn.

SECRETARY

Tired, sir? I mean... John.

JOHN

Oh, pardon me. I've just returned from Philadelphia.

SECRETARY

I understand there were some exciting things happening... secret meetings and such.

JOHN

Well, it must not have been much of a secret...

SECRETARY

Yes, s... John.

JOHN

A new Constitution for a new nation. (He shuffles through the pardons) These men helped bring it about and they don't even realize it...

John looks down at his bold signature which nearly overwhelms the tiny scrawl of his secretary.

JOHN

Send a dispatch rider immediately!

INT. PRISON - DAY

Cerberus comes to collect Gamble and Aaron for the gallows.

CERBERUS

I'm gonna miss your stories Gamble.

GAMBLE

I suppose it's good to be missed.  
I'd prefer to be alive... but  
missed will have to do.

Cerberus cuffs his hands in front and Aaron's too. They begin their walk towards the front of the jailhouse. Gamble stops short...

GAMBLE

Tell me of Stephen Burroughs. What cell is he in. I must see him.

CERBERUS

Why do you want to see him?

AARON

He's no friend to you... or anybody for that matter.

GAMBLE

I woke up this morning knowing that I'm supposed to tell him something.

CERBERUS

He's in the dungeon paying for his failed escape.

GAMBLE

But that's been well over a month. The sheriff can't keep him locked in a dungeon that long.

CERBERUS

The sheriff does what he likes. He's waiting for the men of the General Counsel to come in to town.

GAMBLE

How is he?

Cerberus hesitates.

CERBERUS

I'm not really sure. He's not allowed any food, only water. And we're not supposed to look at him or speak to him. No fire...

GAMBLE

How can the sheriff not give food  
nor warmth? Can a man go that long  
without food?

CERBERUS

He stopped crying out for food  
after about ten days. That's what  
the sheriff said; no fire, no food,  
no clothing, no exercise...

GAMBLE

You really are a monster. How  
could you listen to a man cry for  
food and not feed him? I want to  
see him.

They go downward and the smell of burnt wood lingers in the air. The air grows colder and colder. Cerberus opens a little door within the larger door so that Gamble could view the prisoner. Gamble is shocked at what he sees on the other side.

Stephen is emaciated to a skeleton. His beard has not been cut, his hair stands in every direction. He looks like some savage beast of the forest.

There is an iron bar running from one leg to the other. This bar is bolted to the floor. There is an iron cuff about his waist, also, bolted to the floor. He is handcuffed and pinioned, unable to stand, walk or step to keep warm.

Gamble watches for a moment as Stephen rubs his bare feet against an iron spike, causing friction, to keep his feet from freezing. He has worn the iron spike very smooth with perpetual friction. He is not even given a bit of straw to lie on.

No person is allowed to look through the little aperture into the dungeon so Stephen does not realize he has guests.

GAMBLE

Let me go in.

CERBERUS

No. I shouldn't have let you down  
here.

GAMBLE:

Move then...

He pushes the guard out of the way and presses his face into the aperture.

GAMBLE

Stephen, look here. I'm here.

Stephen jerked in surprise to hear a voice. His chains rattle with the movement. He has trouble adjusting his eyes to the direction of the voice.

GAMBLE

Here, at the door. Cerberus won't let me in though.

Stephen thinks the voice is in his head and closes his eyes.

GAMBLE

No, Stephen, don't close your eyes.  
Don't close your eyes...

Gamble waits patiently... finally, Stephen, opens his eyes and looks over at Gamble. The hopelessness in Stephen's face made Gamble shudder. Thirty-two days and Stephen Burroughs had disappeared.

Aaron is standing close, then Cerberus, and then Moses behind them.

CERBERUS

(To Moses) How did you get down here?

MOSES

(Hillbilly grin) Well, sir, I lost my way and thought it best to follow the man that knew where he was going.

Gamble turns to Moses. Nods for him to take a look at Stephen. Moses looks in the aperture, steps back in shock. Gamble leans in to whisper to Moses.

MOSES

Send word to Rev. Burroughs... Rev. Eden Burroughs. Tell him their slowly killing his son.

CERBERUS

Hey, what's going on.

He jostles his gun into a shooting position.

GAMBLE

I asked Moses to do me one last favor.

Gamble turns back to Stephen as Moses slips out.

AARON

May I see him?

Gamble steps out of the way.

AARON

Gamble, that's not Stephen.  
(Turning to Cerberus) Where's Stephen?

CERBERUS

Come on, it's time to go.

Gamble looked in again and Stephen had again closed his eyes and rocked a little back and forth.

GAMBLE

Stephen, Jesus was forty days in the desert, no food... so he might commune with God.

STEPHEN

Gamble, I ask you, is there anything remotely Jesus-like about me? And I don't think God is who I've been communing with down in this dungeon.

GAMBLE

Oh, he's here. You're just so strong-willed and arrogant. And you rail against the inhumanity of man but ignore the creator. What sense in that? Talk to the source...

STEPHEN

You're right... I'll talk to him now. Lord, was I not suffering enough? Must I endure Gamble Brooks' face stuck in my door while I am shackled and unable to escape...

Gamble started laughing, out-loud, hearty. Stephen nearly smiles then closes his eyes.

STEPHEN

It's good to hear your voice Gamble. There is something soothing... hopeful in the sound of it. I feel like you have the answers but I no longer know any questions to ask.

GAMBLE

Instead of using that nimble brain of yours to plan escapes... why not do the time and plan yourself a future beyond that...

CERBERUS

We need to go, Gamble.

GAMBLE

Stephen, they're taking us now. They're taking me and Aaron to the gallows. Please listen to me.

He opens his eyes... huge, pale green eyes, anchored in the skeletal planes of his face.

GAMBLE

This is your life... not your brother's life, not your father's life... This is your life... are you who you want to be?

Stephen blinks but is too weak to cry.

GAMBLE

Don't close your eyes...

CERBERUS

Let's go! You're supposed to meet  
with the Reverend before I take you  
to the gallows.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE TAVERN - DAY

Moses is giving instructions to a MAN who then jumps on a  
horse and gallops out of town.

Moses turns to see Cerberus escorting Gamble and Aaron to the  
church for their 'last-rites' meeting with the Reverend  
Howard. He moves in behind them.

AARON

Gamble, I don't want to see him.

GAMBLE

I don't think the sheriff cares  
what we want.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The Rev. Howard is sitting down on the stairs leading up to  
the church door.

REVEREND BEZALEEL HOWARD

I thought you boys might like to  
sit a spell out in the sun.

He looks over at Cerberus...

REVEREND BEZALEEL HOWARD

Unshackle them, sir.

CERBERUS

But...

REVEREND BEZALEEL HOWARD

Please, they offer no harm.

Cerberus concedes.

GAMBLE

Thank you, Reverend.

REVEREND BEZALEEL HOWARD

Let's go around to the back so we  
won't draw a crowd.

As they walk to the back steps of the church they see two women are waiting; Maggie and Theresa. Gamble stops dead in his tracks.

The Rev. Motions for Cerberus to follow him down to the pond. He hands him a fishing pole and they give the men some privacy.

GAMBLE

I told you not to come here.

MAGGIE

You told me not to come to the  
jail.

GAMBLE

Where is Mary?

MAGGIE

She's with my sister. I didn't  
tell her I was coming to see you or  
she would have been desperate to  
come.

The conversation stutters and Gamble realizes he has not crossed the distance between them. And does so slowly.

GAMBLE

Did you get my letters?

MAGGIE

Yes...

And she begins to cry. First, she waves her hand in front of her eyes as if to shew away the tears. And then finally she covers her face.

MAGGIE

I promised myself I wouldn't do  
this.

Gamble puts his arms around her, saying nothing, remaining this way until it was time to go. And then Maggie taking hold of Theresa's hand heads for the farm and tends to the sapling that Gamble asked her to plant to remember him by.

EXT. GALLOWS - NOON

Gamble looks back at the crossbar and then beyond it, then draws in a deep breath. The air is cool, crisp. The sheriff is watching the second hand on his watch, the executioner's hand is on the drop lever... The sheriff raises his hand and says...

SHERIFF

Hold! These men have been pardoned  
by his Excellency Governor John  
Hancock.

The air goes out of Gamble's body and he nearly chokes himself on the noose as his knee's give way.

EXT. TAVERN

Gamble is trying to make his way through the crowd. He wants to get home to Maggie. Everyone is cheering and clapping him on the back and pushing him towards the tavern but he passes it by and heads for home. Many in the crowd offer him a horse, or a carriage to take him home but he just keeps walking.

EXT. TRAIL - AFTERNOON

GAMBLE (V.O.)

Well, Aaron is courting Theresa.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Aaron and Theresa sitting on a porch swing.

GAMBLE (V.O.)

Oh, and he set the words to my  
song. A sweet melody to be sure.

INT. CHURCH

Aaron standing in front of the church, singing. Theresa sitting in the front row.

GAMBLE (V.O.)  
He's asked to sing it often. He's  
also asked to testify about his  
brush with death... but he'd rather  
just sing.

BACK TO THE TRAIL

GAMBLE (V.O.)  
Daniel is living in Vermont which  
is an independent republic. General  
Lincoln turned to Governor  
Chittenden of Vermont for aid in  
capturing Daniel. He said he would  
help but he didn't do anything.

INT. VERMONT LEGISLATURE - DAY

Vermont legislature raising hands to vote...

GAMBLE (V.O.)  
But a bare majority of the Vermont  
legislature passed a resolution  
requiring the Governor to act.

Governor Chittenden speaking in front of the legislature  
after the vote.

GOVERNOR CHITTENDEN  
Vermonters shall not harbour,  
entertain or conceal Daniel Shays  
or his cronies...

EXT. DANIEL'S FARM

Daniel waves as the Governor passes by in a carriage.

GAMBLE (V.O.)  
Daniel and several other rebels  
were staying at the farm next to  
the governor's at the time.

Daniel is walking his fields.

GAMBLE (V.O.)

Daniel is carving out a new life  
but he no longer has to deal with a  
state government that is the  
servant of the Boston gentry.

BACK TO THE TRAIL

GAMBLE (V.O.)

Moses headed down South to the  
Seminoles.

EXT. FLORIDA SWAMP

Moses is peeking out from the branches of a cypress tree.

GAMBLE (V.O.)

I asked him if'n he was for or  
agin' them Seminole. And he said  
he never fights for the Goliath's  
of this world. Just give him a  
slingshot and he's a happy man.

BACK TO THE TRAIL

Gamble picks wildflowers as he walks along the trail.

GAMBLE (V.O.)

Stephen was sent to the house of  
correction at Castle Island in the  
harbor of Boston ...

EXT. FRONT OF PRISON

Prisoners chained by two's are put into a sleigh heading for  
Boston.

GAMBLE (V.O.)

Two years of hard labor in a place  
considered inescapable.

INT. CASTLE ISLAND PRISON CELL - DAY

Stephen, in his cell, brick walls, five feet thick, laid in  
cement. He walks the room looking for a way out.

GAMBLE (V.O.)

He tried anyway... but that's a whole other story and it'd be best to let him tell it in his own words.

Stephen walks towards the chimney, smiling.

BACK TO THE TRAIL

GAMBLE (V.O.)

As for our little Regulation... well, with only a handful of court closings and skirmishes it seems we failed. But if you look a little closer you'll see... we did make a difference.

Gamble now has a huge handful of flowers...

GAMBLE (V.O.)

We wanted to bring speculators to heel, and to stop the state from shifting money from the backcountry to Boston and we did that. The new legislature passed a moratorium on debts and cut direct taxes to a bone. Direct taxes fell to about 10 percent of what they had been. Under the new system, indirect taxes no longer went to speculators.

He can see the boundary of his farm...

GAMBLE (V.O.)

That's me walking home after seeing death close up and tight around my neck I could have hitched a ride. I had lots of offers but walking free of shackles is a glorious thing.

He sees Maggie on the porch and runs towards her...

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