

A Company of Devils

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A SMALL ROOM WITH DULL TAN WALLS, A BED, A DESK, WITH A CHAMBER POT AND A WINDOW LOOKING OUT ONTO ON INDIAN STREET SLUM IN CALCUTTA, INDIA. 1744. IT IS HOT, HUMID AND MISERABLE.

The cheap door opens and a young man walks in, distraught. He sits down on the edge of a thin bed with a coarse blanket and rubs his hands in his face, pulling at his hair. After a while, he stops and looks up. He has made a decision. He stands up and goes to the desk, where he pulls out the drawer, revealing an ornate wooden box. The young man pulls the box out of the desk, places it on the table and opens it, revealing an ornate flintlock pistol. The young man picks up the pistol and proceeds to load it, dropping the powder and ball in the barrel and tamping it. After loading, he contemplates it, in his hand. He starts to get flustered. But he has made his decision. He lifts the flintlock pistol to his temple, takes a deep breath, and pulls the trigger.

The hammer drops, but nothing happens. He holds the gun to his head for a moment. He slowly brings the gun down, utterly shocked it failed to discharge.

He looks at the gun. Staring. Just staring. He is in disbelief. He places it on the desk before him, looking at it. He sits down and proceeds to reload it with a fresh round, mindlessly and with a single purpose: Killing himself.

After reloading the pistol, he sighs.

ROBERT CLIVEN  
Dear gawd. Can I get anything right?

He places the pistol next to his temple and pulls the trigger, again. The hammer hits the flintlock plate.

SNAP TRANSITION TO DOCK SCENE

IT'S A CHILLY MORNING IN MID JANUARY 1774. THE LONDON WHARVES ARE BUSY DESPITE THE COLD, WITH SHIPS UNLOADING CARGO FROM THE FAR FLUNG COLONIES OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE. DOCKWORKERS HAUL ROLLS OF SILK AND BAGS OF SPICES OFF THE SHIPS ONTO WAITING WAGONS. SAILORS OF ALL NATIONALITIES CIRCULATE ON THE WHARVES. THE IMPORTED GOODS ARE REPLACED ON THE DOCKED SHIPS BY MEN HAULING FINE ENGLISH FURNITURE AND MANUFACTURED GOODS ONTO THE WAITING SHIP HOLDS. A WELL-DRESSED MAN, FOLLOWED BY FOUR MEN IN RED UNIFORMS WITH

(CONTINUED)

BLACK TRICORN HATS TRIMMED WITH GOLD, NEGOTIATE THEIR WAY ALONG THE BUSY DOCKS TO A SPECIFIC SHIP, RECENTLY ARRIVED FROM THE BRITISH COLONY OF MASSACHUSETTS, IN THE AMERICAS. AS THEY APPROACH THE STERN, THEY FIND THE SHIP THEY ARE LOOKING FOR, EMBLAZONED WITH "THE FLEETWING," ON ITS STERN, FROM THE PORT OF BOSTON. A RED AND WHITE STRIPED FLAG FLIES FROM THE STERN, RATHER THAN A EAST INDIA COMPANY OR UNION JACK THAT IS FLYING ON ALL THE OTHER SHIPS. THE THREE MEN STOP IN FRONT OF THE SHIP'S GANGWAY. THE LAST OF BOLTS OF COTTON CLOTH AND ENGLISH FURNITURE ARE BEING LOADED ABOARD THE SHIP FLEETWING BY STEVEDORES.

WELL APPOINTED MAN

Good morning to you! I request  
permission to come aboard!

OFFICER OF THE DECK (OOD)

And who might you be?

WELL APPOINTED MAN

I am Jonathan Tremaine of the  
Honorable East India Company. You  
have mail packets which I have come  
to collect. Permission to come  
aboard!

The OOD stands for a minute, sizing the man and his escorts up. Without saying a word, he turns to a young boy on the deck and mutters something unintelligible to the boy. The boy runs off.

WILLIAM TREMAINE

Well, may I come aboard?

The OOD leans over and puts his hands on the rail. He doesn't say a word.

WILLIAM TREMAINE

You are trying my patience! I wish  
to claim my packages!

The OOD stands unmoving and doesn't utter a word. Tremaine is starting to get flustered. A few moments later, another man arrives, obviously the ship's captain.

THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN

And who might you be? He questions  
disdainfully.

WILLIAM TREMAINE

As I told your officer of the deck,  
I am Jonathan Tremaine of the  
Honorable East India Company. I  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM TREMAINE (cont'd)  
have come to collect our cargo. And  
who might you be?

## THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN

I am Captain Joshua Nash, master of  
this ship, and I have no "cargo" of  
your "Honorable" East India company  
aboard my ship! I do not carry  
cargoes of slaves and I certainly  
do not truck in your opium trade.

## WILLIAM TREMAINE

Growing angry. Your preferences are  
of no concern to me. I wish to come  
aboard and collect our company's  
mail packet from the Americas. We  
pay your shipping company good  
money to provide us with these  
communications! Now, pipe me aboard  
so I ...and you...may discharge our  
duties!

## CAPTAIN JOSHUA NASH

No John from your company of devils  
shall set foot on my fore deck! We  
are a registered ship of the  
Massachusetts Bay Company and sail  
from the harbor of Boston. We are  
not beholden to you!

## WILLIAM TREMAINE

You insolent colonial! How dare  
you! With a flick of our quill pen,  
we could wipe you and your wretched  
colonies from the face of  
existence. Now, I demand the  
packets that our company has paid  
for!

The captain turns to his OOD. The captain says something  
unintelligible to his OOD, who walks off. The captain turns  
his gaze back to the three men on the dock. He leans on the  
rail with two hands and silently stares at them with a sense  
of disgust.

## WILLIAM TREMAINE

Gawd damn you sir! You will deliver  
me the property of the East India  
Company this instant or I shall  
call the constabulary to board your  
ship! I will have your ship seized  
and you and your crew thrown into

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM TREMAINE (cont'd)  
the gaol, if you do not deliver me  
the company's packets immediately!

The captain contemplates Tremaine's out burst and then, with one hand on the rail, motions with his other arm. Four men bring two heavy canvas pouches, two men to a pouch, to the ship's rail. The captain nods and the men start swinging the pouches back and forth, to gain momentum to heave the bags to the dock.

FIRST MATE  
All right boys, let's give these  
them bastards their mail! Aim for  
their centers!

On three....one....two....three...

The heavy pouches fly through the air and land with heavy thuds in front of the five men's feet. The light-colored canvas pouches are imprinted with a heavy ink stating "Property of the Honorable British East India Company." Tremaine and his four men stare at the two bags at their feet, aghast for a moment. Tremaine's gaze lifts from the dock to the ship, where the American crew has gathered at the rail to watch the site. They are expressionless.

WILLIAM TREMAINE  
Why, ...you cheeky bloody bastard!  
Who do you think you are dealing  
with?

CAPTAIN JOSHUA NASH  
"I've recognized I've been dealing  
with the devil all along! You and  
your providence of God and King!  
You and your company are of the  
devil's work! I, my crew, my ship,  
and my colony of Massachusetts will  
have nothing further to do with you  
and your evil enterprises!" The  
captain turns, shouting "Prepare to  
cast off and start setting sail! We  
are done with oppressive city and  
its schemes!"

WILLIAM TREMAINE  
"Your ship shall never dock at  
another East India Port again!"  
Tremaine yells!

## CAPTAIN JOSHUA NASH

The captain stands up straight, from the rail, and flashes a broad smile. He flips Tremaine the middle finger. Tremaine reddens in the face, but turns and starts issuing commands to his crew in preparation to make leave of the port of London for the last time. Moments later, as Tremaine and the four main negotiate the dock with the two heavy parcels, sails begin to unfurl on the Beaver and the ship begins to pull away from the London Wharves.

3 YOU COULD PROBABLY RUN THE OPENING CREDITS AND THEME MUSIC  
HERE> 3

4 TREMAINE FUMES 4

Tremaine and the four men muscle the canvas pouches to a carriage waiting for them off the London wharves. The four men place put the bags in the carriage and as Tremaine climbs into the carriage, they climb onto platforms on the carriage exterior. With a snap of the reins, the carriage jolts off into the busy London street system, making its way one third of a mile to a magnificent building in central London, the headquarters of the United Company of London Merchants Trading in the East Indies, better known as the East India Company (EIC).

Tremaine sits in the coach, alone. He is fuming.

WILLIAM TREMAINE  
(Speaking to himself) Those  
bastards! Those cheeky, bloody  
bastard... colonists.

He bangs his fist hard on the coach wall.

5 THE MAIL 5

THE CARRIAGE PULLS TO A LARGE, STONE BUILDING WITH SIX DORIC COLUMNS FRAMING ITS MAGNIFICENT GRANITE ENTRANCE ON LEADENHALL STREET, ABOUT A THIRD OF A MILE FROM THE LONDON WHARVES. FOOTMAN OPEN THE DOORS AND THE FOUR UNIFORM CLAD MEN DRAG THE TWO MAIL BAGS OUT OF THE CARRIAGE. LED BY TREMAINE THE FOUR MEN MARCH INTO THE GREAT BUILDING. DOORMAN SWING THE LARGE, BRASS DOORS OPEN AND THE GROUP MARCHES DOWN A HALLWAY INTO A LARGE ROOM, WELL LIT BY SUNLIGHT STREAMING THROUGH LARGE WINDOWS. THE ROOM WAS LINED WITH STACKS OF CUBBY HOLES FOR SORTING MAIL FROM THE FAR FLUNG OPERATIONS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY (EIC). THE CENTRAL AREA CONSISTS OF ROWS UPON ROWS OF SIMPLE DESKS WITH HARD WOOD CHAIRS. HUNDREDS OF CLERKS, KNOWN IN THE EIC AS "WRITERS" LABOR AT THE DESKS, PROCESSING PAYROLLS FOR INDIAN SEPOYS, RICE SHIPMENTS FROM INDIAN AND THE LOGISTICS OF DELIVERING WEAPONS TO SINGAPORE.

WILLIAM TREMAINE  
Chief clerk! We have Boston parcels  
to deposit!

A man in glasses looks up and starts moving toward the desk where Tremaine and his group stand.

CHIEF CLERK  
Mr. Tremaine! So glad to see you sir! What do we have today?

WILLIAM TREMAINE  
Oh, the usual I suspect, from the american colonies. Although the colonial blighter I had to retrieve it from was a cheeky bastard. I'll be speaking to the harbormaster yet today. Damned if I will let some upstart, ragamuffin colonial insult our company and king! The brig Fleetwing won't be docking in London town's wharves anytime soon!

CHIEF CLERK  
I'm sorry to hear of the disrespect, Mr. Tremaine! It's shameful! I've heard many speak of those ungrateful colonials! They forget we protected them. And that costs money! Perhaps it's time they were taught a lesson, sir!

WILLIAM TREMAINE  
Indeed, Parsons indeed. I have two mail packets for processing from the colony of Massachusetts.

CHIEF CLERK  
Yes, sir, Mr. Tremaine. We will start organizing the parcels right away!

The chief clerk shouts two names and within a few seconds, two clerks are there

CLERKS  
Yes Mr. Parsons?

CHIEF CLERK  
Haul these mail parcels to the sorting room posthaste!

CLERKS  
Yes, Mr. Parsons.

CHIEF CLERK

Turns to Tremaine.

CHIEF CLERK  
Let me get you a receipt for these  
parcel bags, Mr. Tremaine. If you  
could give me just a moment.

As the chief clerk starts to fill out the receipt, the two other clerks drag the mail parcels to a giant table, where they both lift a mail bag and dump it out on the large table with a raised edge, so the mail doesn't drop off.

CLERKS  
All hands to the sorting table!

Other clerks start drifting in and start sorting the mail and packages into piles. A flurry of activity begins as mail and parcels are sorted into bins labeled with the names of "factories" in colonies stretched around the world. Soon, the main table is cleared and the clerks turn their attention to the country bins. They start sorting those letters and packages into groups such as "Indian Rice Trade;" "Indigo trade with China; "Intelligence on French activities in the Indies." There are hundreds of classifications to sort through, and each one has a cubby hole. As the letters are sorted further, young junior clerks come to collect them and place them in the correct cubbyhole. Writers from the desks keep an eye on their cubbyhole. As they see letters and packages start to arrive, the rise from their desks to collect them, retrieving them from the cubby holes and sorting through them as they return to their desks. The writers systematically begin to open the envelopes with letter openers and begin to digest the contents. They start writing notes. The process repeats as more letters are placed in cubbyholes, and then young runners start taking them to the second floor, and then gradually the third floor. There are dozens of young boys running up and down stairs, almost like rats in a maze. The camera focuses in on one of the young runners, a 13-year boy with pants that are too short, worn shoes and a dull, patched gray jacket. The boy comes out of the office, quietly shuts the door, then quick walks down the hallway and to the stairs, back to the cubbyholes. He walks up to them. There is a single letter. It is in the box belonging to the governor general. He had never delivered a letter to the governor. He turns pale. He knows he must deliver it.

CHIEF CLERK  
Get on with it, Coyle! Move your  
lazy Irish cart!

COYLE  
Yes sir, Mr. Parsons, yes sir!

His hands quiver as he nervously takes the letter, turns, and starts quick walking back down the hall, to the stairs, all the way to the third floor and the corner office looking east and south. In a few minutes, he is in front of a large, ornate oak set of double doors. He gathers himself for a minute, summons up the courage and knocks.

COYLE  
Message for the Guvnor' General,  
Sir!

He waits a moment. The doors swing inward, opened by two men in powdered wigs and fancy uniforms. The boy's jaw drops. He's never seen such riches. The outer office is lined with beautifully carved walnut panels, with a fresco on the ceiling. There are brilliant crystal chandeliers hanging from golden chains with expensive art on the walls and sculptures tastefully placed amid luxurious furniture. The boy stands in awe.

MR ABBOTT  
Do you have a letter for the  
governor, or do you not, boy?

COYLE  
Uh, yes sir.

He timidly approaches a man at the fare end of the room sitting at a large walnut desk, polished and shining from the sunlight streaming through the large windows.

MR ABBOTT  
Well, don't be all day about it!  
Give it here!

Coyle quickens his pace and hands the letter to Abbott who has stood up. Abbott looks him up and down. He digs into his vest and pulls out a shilling and hands it to the boy.

MR ABBOTT  
Get yourself some pants, boy.

Coyle nods,

COYLE  
Yes, milord.

Coyle starts slowly backing away and then turns and quick walks through the double doors, which are then closed by the two doormen.

Abbott holds the letter in his hands, absorbing the addressee.

ABBOTT STANDS AT HIS DESK, THE SUNLIGHT FALLING ON HIS AREA. THE LETTER IS BOLDLY ADDRESSED TO "LORD CLIVEN, GOVERNOR GENERAL OF THE HONORABLE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY. FOR HIS EYES ONLY." THE LETTER IS FROM MORGAN, THE CHIEF AGENT FOR THE EIC TRADING OPERATIONS IN THE COLONIES. THE LETTER IS SEALED WITH A HEAVY WAX STAMP.

Abbott carefully places the letter on his desk and quietly folds his hands behind his back. He stares at the letter for some time. He sits down and continues to stare at the letter for another minute. Then he sighs.

MR ABBOTT  
Shite.

He buries his head in hands for a moment, then straightens up in his chair, stands up, picks up the letter, and walks to another set of double doors behind his desk. He bucks himself up, nods to the doorman, who pulls the door open,

6 A TEA PARTY...WITH OUR TEA!

6

AS ORNATE AS THE FRONT OFFICE OF MR. ABBOTT IS, THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IS MAGNIFICENT. (RELATE MORE ARCHITECTURAL MATERIALS AND PALLETS HERE.)

THERE IS A HAGGARD MAN BEHIND A MAGNIFICENTLY CARVED ENGLISH WALNUT DESK. HE IS DWARFED BY HIS DESK, BALDING, AND A WHITE WIG SITS ON A WOODEN HEAD BEHIND HIM. HIS SKIN IS SALLOW AND ITS OBVIOUS HE IS WORN OUT AND IN POOR HEALTH.

MR ABBOTT  
Milord, I have communications from our offices in the colonies.

SIR ROBERT  
Don't I have enough burdens,  
Abbott?

MR ABBOTT  
I'm sorry, milord, but it's from Morgan. In Boston.

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT  
Dear gawd. Must I handle every detail?

MR ABBOTT  
Milord, I apologize for not screening it, but...It was expressly marked for your lordship's eyes only.

SIR ROBERT  
(Nodding wearily.) Give it here Abbott.

Mr. Abbott walks around the desk and places it on the desk mat of Sir Robert. Sir Robert stares at it.

SIR ROBERT  
Go ahead and open it, Abbott. Read it to me.

MR ABBOTT  
Yes, milord..

Abbott reaches onto the desk and picks up a solid gold letter opener with a bejeweled handle. He picks up the letter and slices the thick envelope open. He removes the folded documents from the letter, unfolds them and begins to read from the letter....

MR. ABBOTT  
Ahem....My dearest Lord Cliven: I pray this letter finds you in excellent health and celebrating the New Year in England! How I miss our native land! 1773 was a very fruitful year for our great trust, the United Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies.

Our company imported more than 42,000 pounds of pepper from our holdings in India to the North American markets, giving us a record profit. Lord Cliven, I am also happy to report the gamble we made with ginger has given an immense reward! The colonists have discovered a taste for ginger beer and are quite enthralled with it!

Our other spice trades are continuing in excellent condition.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. ABBOTT (cont'd)  
The Company successfully landed  
11,857 slaves into our Southern  
American markets. Our loss ratio  
averaged 13.4 percent on each  
slaving voyage, well below our  
previous rates of 20 percent loss  
of our cargo. Indeed, our trade in  
negro slaves this past year netted  
nearly 400,000 pounds sterling,  
enough to satisfy our levy to the  
crown!

We are compiling the final numbers  
of our books, which we will post to  
EIC Leadenhall on the next parcel  
ship, within the end of the month.

We do have one thorny issue, though  
Milord. The recent passage of the  
Tea Act has only seemed to spur  
these ungrateful colonists to  
commit further atrocities. They  
like to proclaim their "freedom,"  
but don't understand their freedom  
is a product of our company, the  
King, and our joint armies. They  
enjoy their freedom from attack by  
the Natives, yet balk when they are  
asked to shoulder a fair burden  
when paying for the efforts we  
expend to protect them.

Milord, Cliven it brings me great  
pain to report to you these same  
heathen colonists have struck  
against our Company and King. On  
the evening of December 4th, in the  
year of our lord 1773, these  
ungrateful rapscallions disguised  
themselves as Natives and descended  
on three of our ships berthed in  
Boston Harbor, awaiting to unload  
their cargoes of tea.

Sir Robert and Abbott lock eyes for a moment. There is  
silence. Abbott continues to read...

MR. ABBOTT  
These grubby colonists threw 722  
chests of our company's tea into  
the harbor.....

Sir Robert gasps. Their eyes lock again. Abbott continues...  
....after rushing our ships in what  
we are certain was a coordinated  
attack on His Majesty's interests.  
Sir Robert, we must not let this  
unlawful pillage of our goods  
stand! It is an insult to the  
Company and King! I beg of you,  
Lord, to use your influence in the  
halls of Westminster to punish  
these upstarts.

My deepest apologies, my lord, for  
being forced to report this  
egregious attack on our interests,  
but I pray you will marshal our  
forces and strike down these  
usurpers before their actions  
further wound our great company and  
King. God save the King! Most  
respectfully, your servant, John  
Morgan.

Abbott folds the pages back into their original envelope as  
the anger starts rising in Sir Roberts face.

SIR ROBERT  
By god, those bloody colonials!  
I've had my fill with them! They  
sit on the wealth of a great  
continent, given to them by our  
Majesty, safe from the atrocities  
of natives because of our  
expenditures of money and men! Just  
10 years ago, those colonialists  
were quaking in their boots about  
the Natives. They couldn't sleep  
without dreaming about getting  
scalped in the night! And this is  
how those ungrateful louts repay  
us?

His anger grows and Sir Robert stands up, while still  
supporting himself from his chair and starts to rant:

SIR ROBERT  
Abbott, this is simply outrageous.  
I will not let this stand! Those  
bastards! Those bloody simpleton  
bastards! I send them slaves so  
they may grow cotton and sugar to  
sell and gain great fortune! We  
trade their cotton and raw goods

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT (cont'd)  
and bring them back finished  
products of English quality! They  
would be wearing loin clothes if it  
weren't for the East India Company!  
I give them the opportunity for all  
their wealth and this is how they  
repay me?

By gawd, I brought them tea! I  
conquered India with less than  
3,000 men! I brought those bloody  
colonists their tea and their paper  
and their dyes and their ink and  
they threw my, MY tea into the  
harbor? Disguised as natives?

Sir Robert continues in his rage , ranting about the colonists, problems with the slave trade, etc. He finally pauses and begins to cough..

MR. ABBOTT  
Milord, may I get you a draught of Scotch.

Sir Robert stares at him for a moment. Blinking his eyes, he dejectedly sits down in his luxurious chair, almost collapsing upon himself.

SIR ROBERT  
Yes, he says dejectedly. Yes. Make it three fingers.

Abbott walks to the sideboard and pulls the crystal top of an elaborate decanter and pours Sir Robert a hearty dose of Scotch. Abbott sets down the bottle and replaces the crystal top. He brings the Scotch to Sir Robert and hands it to him. Sir Robert swirls the Scotch in his glass, sniffs it and takes a long sip from the glass. He relaxes a bit and leans back in his chair.

SIR ROBERT  
We must punish these colonials,  
Abbott. We must punish them with  
steel and lead.

MR ABBOTT  
Yes, milord.

SIR ROBERT  
Abbott, I've had about all I can take for this day. Summon the carriage.

MR ABBOTT  
Will you be stopping by your club,  
milord?

SIR ROBERT  
No Abbott. Not today. Get my  
carriage.

MR ABBOTT  
Immediately milord.

Abbott turns and exits the cavernous office, returning to the reception area, where he orders a footman to alert the carriage. He sits down at his desk and sighs. Again, holding his face in his hands.

7 ONE YEAR EARLIER: JANUARY 1773

7

A MIDDLE AGE MAN IS LAYING ON A DUVET IN A LUXURIOUS GEORGIAN ROOM, CIRCA 1770S. HE IS SOMEWHAT UNKEMPT AND DISHEVELED, BUT HE IS OBVIOUSLY VERY WELL OFF AND IN DECENT HEALTH, BETTER THAN HE WOULD BE ONE YEAR LATER. HE IS DRESSED IN LAVISH SILK PAJAMAS AND ELEGANT CRYSTAL DECANTERS OF LIQUOR WITH VARIOUS HUES OF ALCOHOLS ARE WITHIN REACH. THE FURNITURE IS VERY LUXURIOUS AND DENOTES GREAT WEALTH. HE IS IN GOOD SHAPE.

THE MAN REACHES OVER AND PULLS A CANDLE FROM A CANDELABRA AND BRINGS AN ORNATE PIPE TO HIS LIPS. TOUCHING THE FLAME TO THE PIPE HE INHALES DEEPLY, CAREFULLY REPLACES THE CANDLE AND THEN REPLACES THE PIPE ON THE TRAY BY HIS SIDE. HE SLOWLY EXHALES THE BLUEISH SMOKE AND SITS FOR A MINUTE AT THE EDGE OF THE DUVET, UNBLINKING. SILENT.

HE LEANS BACK ON THE DUVET, SETTLES IN FOR A MINUTE AND CLOSES HIS EYES. AND STARTS TO DREAM OF BEING A YOUNG MAN, IN HIS HOME TOWN OF MARKET DRAYTON.

FADE TO A SMALL QUINTESSENTIAL ENGLISH MARKET TOWN WITH HALF-TIMBERED HOMES AND BUILDINGS DIVIDED BY COBBLESTONE STREETS AND ALLEYS. THE YEAR IS 1743. IT IS MARKET DAY AND CLIVEN AND A SMALL GROUP OF TEENAGE BOYS ARE HANGING AT THE EDGE OF THE MARKET, WATCHING THE VENDORS SELL THEIR VARIOUS GOODS, WHICH ARE MAINLY FOOD AND PRODUCE FROM LOCAL FARMERS. OTHER, PERAMENT SHOPS ALSO LINE THE SQUARE, OFFERING LININS AND FABRIC, COOKING WARES, A COBBLE AND A BLACKSMITH, AMONG THE MIX.

CLIVEN

I think we need to visit the  
shopkeepers and collect our due,  
don't you James?

JAMES

Robert, we just collected them last  
week. I fear if we push them to  
hard it may lead to trouble.

CLIVEN

Don't be a coward, James. It isn't  
much that we are asking for...and  
after, we are keeping them safe  
from the true rogues.

There is discussion among the group until Cliven takes  
charge

CLIVEN

Oh, quit your dithering. Let's  
visit Mr. Whipple. He's always good  
for a few pence...

The boys, following Cliven, wander through the market to a  
small shop selling linens and fabric. As they push through  
the door, a bell on the door tinkles. A man comes out from  
the back room. He sees the boys and his face falls

WHIPPLE

Not you fleas again!

CLIVEN

Oh, Mr. Whipple, that's no way to  
great your protectors!

WHIPPLE

My protectors? My protectors, his  
voice raising with anger. You're  
nothing but a bunch of pimply  
extortionists! Get out of my shop!

CLIVEN:

In due time, Mr. Whipple, in due  
time. There is a matter of  
protection money that is past due!

WHIPPLE

I'll be paying no more "protection"  
money to you and your cads! Now get  
out of my shop!

(CONTINUED)

CLIVEN

What you are going to do about it,  
you silly, fat little shop keeper?

WHIPPLE

I'll show you!

Whipple leans down and pulls a flintlock pistol from a shelf below the counter. The boys panic, but Cliven retains his cool

CLIVEN

Surely, Whipple, you don't have the guts to use that, laughing.

Whipple lifts the pistol up and pulls the hammer back.

WHIPPLE

You think not Cliven?

Whipple pulls the trigger, a puff of smoke emanates from the flintlock and a bullet whizzes over the boys' heads. There is panic as they all, including Cliven, turn tail and spill out the door onto the street, knocking over a fruit cart as they flee the area. Angry shouts at the boys from the vendors in the market follow them as they run down a cobble stone alley. After running a few moments they stop, out of breath, and start laughing.

CLIVEN

Well, that certainly livened up an otherwise dull afternoon.

The other boys look at him, some in awe and some as if Cliven were mad as a hatter. They gradually go their ways and Cliven makes his way back to his home, a small, crumbling estate outside of Market Drayton.

LATER THAT EVENING, BACK AT HOME AT HIS FAMILY'S ESTATE,  
CLIVEN IS EATING DINNER WITH HIS MOTHER, FATHER AND 12 SIBLINGS AROUND A LARGE TABLE IN A SMALL ROOM.

JOINING IN AT A NOISY FAMILY DINNER WITH 13 KIDS, TWO PARENTS AND A WAIT STAFF...IT IS NOISY UNTIL A CONVERSATION BETWEEN ROBERT AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER IAN ESCALATES.

IAN

I saw you in town and I saw what you did.

ROBERT CLIVEN  
Oh, did you now, you little toff?  
Spying on me?

RICHARD CLIVE  
That's enough between you  
two...what's this Ian?

IAN  
Father, Robert got shot at today!  
In the village market!

ROBERT CLIVEN  
Shut up you little...  
(Robert is interrupted by his  
father)

RICHARD CLIVEN  
Shot at? Shot at? For what reason,  
Robert?

ROBERT CLIVEN  
Uh....

RICHARD CLIVEN  
Dear god, boy, is this true, Ian,  
did this happen?

IAN  
Yes father! I saw them walk into  
Mr. Whipple's linen shop and then a  
few moments later, Mr. Whipple shot  
his pistol it..  
(Ian is interrupted by Robert)

ROBERT CLIVEN  
You little weasel  
(half way getting up)

RICHARD CLIVEN  
You sit yourself down, Robert!

Robert sits down, seething.

RICHARD CLIVEN  
What do you know, Ian?

BY NOW, ALL THE TALK AROUND THE TABLE HAS DIED DOWN.  
ROBERT'S MOTHER IS STARING AT HIM PAINFULLY.

IAN  
Father, the people in the market  
are saying that Robert has been  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

IAN (cont'd)  
harassing them. They say that  
unless you pay him and his friends  
money, Robert will destroy their  
business.

It is suddenly dead quiet in the dining room. Mrs. Cliven  
stifles a sob.

RICHARD CLIVEN  
Is this true, Robert? Have you been  
extorting money from the good  
citizens of Market Drayton?

ROBERT CLIVEN  
Ah...father, it was just a joke.  
Some fun for ...  
(Richard Cliven explodes)

RICHARD CLIVEN  
You little bastard! That you would  
sully our good name in this  
village, why...

MRS. CLIVEN  
Richard, please! Children, go to  
your rooms!

RICHARD CLIVEN  
Yes, Mary, get this children out of  
here so I may deal with  
this...this...

Mary Cliven commands the children, who have mostly finished  
their food, to go the library.

RICHARD CLIVEN  
Robert, I have heard reports of  
this behavior. This isn't a  
revelation to me. But it has gone  
far enough. You endanger our good  
name.

ROBERT CLIVEN  
Our good name? (Laughs). Our "good  
name" can't keep this place from  
falling down around our ears,  
father!

RICHARD CLIVEN  
Damn you, you insolent little  
prick! How dare you speak to your  
father in this manner! I journey to  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD CLIVEN (cont'd)  
London every week to put food on  
this table and clothes on your back  
and while I am gone you undermine  
our family name and reputation! We  
are done with this, Robert! Done!

ROBERT CLIVEN  
(Mockingly) So da, you gonna send  
me to His Majesty's navy? Shave my  
head and send me to sea?  
(Laughing.)

Richard Cliven walks over the large, arched window, with the last light of a dying day cast a ray through the window. By now, his hands are folded behind him. He stares through the window for a few moments then turns...

RICHARD CLIVEN  
Robert, I have acquired a position  
for you with the East India  
Company.

ROBERT CLIVEN  
The East India Company?  
But..father..  
(Richard Cliven  
interrupts him)

RICHARD CLIVEN  
You will be employed by the East  
India Company as a writer. You will  
report in a fortnight at the London  
docks, where you will take passage  
on the Merchant ship Dover Cliffs.  
God willing, you will arrive in  
Calcutta, India in three months.

ROBERT IS STUNNED AND THE COLOR DRAINS FROM HIS FACE. HE IS SLACK JAWED. THERE IS SILENCE AS ROBERT WILTS IN HIS CHAIR AS HIS FATHER TURNS BACK TO THE WINDOW.

ROBERT CLIVEN  
Father, why ..you...are.. You're  
giving me ... a death sentence! You  
worthless man! You cannot provide  
for the children you have, so you  
send me to my death in India?

RICHARD CLIVEN  
You call me "worthless?" Your  
father, "Worthless?" The man and  
father who enrolled you in eight  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD CLIVEN (cont'd)  
 schools, only to have you ejected  
 from them all? And now you extort  
 our neighbors and kinsman. Enough  
 is enough Robert. For this one  
 time, you will obey your father.

ROBERT CLIVEN  
 I won't go!

RICHARD CLIVEN  
 You've run out of options. If you  
 are going to bring shame to our  
 name, you will do it as far away  
 from here as possible. You don't  
 have a choice, Robert.

THERE IS MUFFLED KNOCKING AS THE MAN ON THE DUVET STIRS  
 10 THE NEXT MORNING, 1773 10

TWO SERVANTS ARE STANDING OUTSIDE OF A ROOM. THEY ARE  
 NERVOUS. IT IS AFTER 8 A.M. AND THEY CAN'T WAKE THEIR  
 LORDSHIP. THEY KNOCK AT THE DOOR BUT THERE IS NO RESPONSE.  
 THEY ARE HESITANT TO WALK INTO THE ROOM SINCE SIR ROBERT  
 ISN'T RESPONDING TO THEIR KNOCKS.

SERVANT 1 (MAN):  
 We must wake his lordship! He is  
 due at Parliament this afternoon.

SERVANT 2 (WOMAN):  
 But you know how he gets. The last  
 time we woke him, he beat me.

A well appointed man walks up, his hair in a small white  
 pony tail

WELL APPOINTED MAN  
 Why haven't you gotten our lordship  
 up?

SERVANT 1 (MAN):  
 Mr. Abbott, our lordship appears to  
 be in one of his funks. He doesn't  
 answer the door.

MR. ABBOTT  
 Good Christ, man. Open the door.

SERVANT 1 (MAN):  
 Yes sir, Mr. Abbott!

THE DOOR OPENS TO SIR ROBERT DRAPED ACROSS THE DIVAN, SPITTLE RUNNING DOWN HIS FACE, HIS PAJAMAS STAINED WITH WINE FROM A SPILLED WINE GLASS AND AN OPIUM PIPE CLUTCHED IN HIS HANDS. HE IS OUT STONE COLD.

MR. ABBOTT

Oh dear gawd. He's a wreck.  
Johnson, set a pot of coffee  
immediately. Victoria, get him  
cleaned up!

The servants scamper to obey Mr. Abbott's orders. There is much scurrying as the two servants activate the household.

MR ABBOTT STANDS AT THE DOORWAY, SURVEYING THE SITUATION. MANY THOUGHTS ARE RUNNING THROUGH HIS MIND. HIS LORD, HIS EMPLOYER, HIS SOURCE OF LIVELIHOOD, IS FAILING IN FRONT OF HIS EYES.

11

RECOVERY

11

THE GEORGIAN GRANDFATHER CLOCK STRIKES 9:30 A.M. AS SIR ROBERT GRADUALLY REJOINS THE LIVING AFTER BEING AWOKEN BY HIS SERVANTS AT 8:30. HE IS BREAKFASTING ON SOME BUTTERED TOAST AND TEA. MR. ABBOT RETURNS, WITH A GENTLE KNOCK ON THE BEDROOM DOOR.

SIR ROBERT

Come in.

The heavily paneled, ornate door slowly opens.

MR. ABBOTT

Your lordship, I trust you are  
feeling better?

SIR ROBERT

What difference does it make how I  
damn well feel, Abbott? I have to  
support all of you bloodsuckers,  
now don't I?

MR. ABBOTT

Sir, it's just that the staff is  
worried about you.

SIR ROBERT

Dammit, Abbott, I don't pay the  
staff to worry about me! I pay them  
to serve me and I pay them bloody  
well! If the curs don't like it,  
they can find other  
positions.....Now get my valet to  
dress me!

(CONTINUED)

MR. ABBOTT  
Milord, I apologi....

SIR ROBERT  
Just get me my jackanape valet!

MR. ABBOTT  
Yes Milord

MR. ABBOTT BEATS A HASTY RETREAT TO THE DOORWAY, CAREFULLY CLOSING THE DOOR SO AS TO NOT MAKE A SOUND.

12

LEAVING AT 11 A.M.

12

THE TWO, LARGE ORNATE FRONT DOORS OF SIR ROBERT CLIVEN'S PALATIAL GEORGIAN MANOR SWING OPEN, WITH TWO DOORMAN IN CRISP ATTIRE AND POWDERED WIGS STANDING AT ATTENTION. SIR ROBERT WALKS THROUGH THE THRESHOLD AND SURVEYS THE SITUATION. IT IS ONE OF A CHAOTIC LONDON STREET WITH CARRIAGES AND PEDESTRIANS BUSILY GOING ABOUT THEIR WAY, FRAMED BY TWO AND THREE STORY BUILDINGS. SIR ROBERT BEGINS WALKING DOWN THE STEPS TO HIS WAITING, ORNATE CARRIAGE. IT IS DRAWN BY A TEAM OF SIX, BLACK HORSES WITH BLOND MANES AND ITS BLACK LACQUERED PAINT GLINTS IN THE SUN. THE CARRIAGE IS TRIMMED WITH SILVER AND GOLD. SIR ROBERT IS TRAILED BY MR. ABBOTT, EVER AT THE READY, CARRYING SIR ROBERT'S PAPERS. A VALET OPENS THE DOOR AND SIR ROBERT AND ABBOTT CLIMB IN AND SHUT THE DOOR. THEY SETTLE THEMSELVES. MR. ABBOTT KNOCKS ON THE CABIN WALL AND THE CARRIAGE STARTS MOVING.

SIR ROBERT  
Who can we twist today, Abbott?

Abbott opens some of his files bundled on his lap.

MR. ABBOTT  
Baronet Colebrook's family bank is in a difficult position, Milord.  
The baronet took a position on hemp that collapsed a few weeks ago and rumors are that he owes nearly 200,000 pounds.

SIR CLIVEN  
(Chuckles.) Fool. What immediate obligations does he face?

MR. ABBOTT  
My contacts at Lloyd's say that unless the baronet can raise 25,000 pounds before June 1, he will lose a shipment of slaves to creditors when they dock in Barbados.

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT  
Do we know what the shipment of  
slaves is worth?

MR. ABBOTT  
My contacts say the ship is  
carrying more than 500 slaves.  
About....40,000 pounds.

SIR ROBERT  
(Smiles.) Approach the baronet's  
man. Ask him if the baronet would  
like to sup at my home Friday  
night.

MR. ABBOTT  
Yes, milord.

SIR ROBERT  
Who else is feeling pale, Abbott?

The black carriage is passing through busy London streets.  
There is poverty everywhere. Everyone stops to look at the  
ornate carriage passing by, with the six magnificent black  
horses drawing it.

MR. ABBOTT  
There are a few others, Milord.

SIR ROBERT  
Can we turn them?

MR. ABBOTT  
It depends on the resources you  
wish to expend, Milord.

SIR ROBERT  
Where is Dempsey at?

MR. ABBOTT  
His position has only hardened,  
Milord.

SIR ROBERT  
Self righteous bastard. All of his  
"enlightenment" talk undermines our  
existence as natural rulers of the  
world. We were chosen, Mr. Abbott.  
Chosen by God to rule the inferior  
races. And by God, that is what we  
will do, Dempsey or no Dempsey.

MR. ABBOTT  
Yes, Milord.

SIR ROBERT  
And what of Lord North? What has his scheming blackard ass been concocting?

MR. ABBOTT  
Milord, the Prime Minister has been receiving many visitors at his estate.

SIR ROBERT  
(Grumbles)  
I wonder what that bastard son of our good King George is up to?

MR. ABBOTT  
(Remains quiet.)

SIR ROBERT  
Are Oswald and Berry on board?

MR. ABBOTT  
Yes milord.

SIR ROBERT  
What did it cost us, Abbott?

MR. ABBOTT  
Very little, milord. Two of our men tailed Oswald for a few days. He went to a dodgy boarding house in the East End. Our men discretely followed him in. The establishment turned out to be a pederast palace.

Breakaway to two thugs rousing Oswald in a room with a 12 year old boy. Oswald is fearful, as is the young boy.

Sir Robert breaks out in laughter.

MR. ABBOTT  
Our men rousted him from the room.  
he fully understands the implications, milord.

SIR ROBERT  
So Oswald likes the little boys? He guffaws. Bugger, (he spits contemptuously.) And of Berry?

MR. ABBOTT

Lord Berry was a bit more conventional. Simple gambling debt, milord. Almost trivial, in the greater scheme, but his farms have been poorly managed and Lord Berry greatly prefers the accoutrements of a London card room to a drafty manor house at the edge of the Northern moors.

SIR ROBERT

If we can get Colebrook on board, we will have the tip of a spear to split the opposition. With our base, and those three turning their fellow travelers to our side, we may have a chance for our plan to succeed. But dammit, Abbott, if we don't get rid of all that tea, our company of merchants may be in grave danger. We must get the monopoly on the tea trade in the Americas.

The carriage rolls up to Westminster Palace. A valet runs up and opens the carriage door the minute the carriage stops. Sir Robert Cliven and Mr. Abbott exit the carriage. They are greeted with the site of a broad plaza and the home of the British Parliament. It is a magnificent and stately building with great Gothic columns and spires.

SIR ROBERT

Abbott, I want you in tip top shape. We have tons of tea rotting in the warehouses. Unless we persuade the House of Commons, the future of our honorable company could be severely imperiled.

THEY WALK THROUGH THE TALL, GOTHIC COLUMNS AND THEY FADE INTO THE DARKNESS. THE BUSTLE SWALLOWS THEM UP.

THE TWO MEN MOVE WITH THE STREAM OF LORDS IN POWDERED WIGS ALONG WITH THEIR AIDS TOWARDS THE MAIN CHAMBER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS. THE ORNATE HALLWAY, WITH ITS LACQUERED WOOD PANELS AND HEAVILY FRAMED ART IS ECHOING WITH THE SOUNDS OF BOOTS CLICKING AGAINST AN ORNATE PARQUET FLOOR. THERE ARE WIDE DOUBLE DOORS AND THE LORDS, RESPLENDENT IN THEIR MAGNIFICENT DRESS AND POWDERED WIGS FILE INTO THE CAVERNOUS CHAMBER. THE FLOOR IS FLANKED BY TWO SETS OF STACKED SEATING, WITH

LUXURIOUS DEEP RED LEATHER CHAIRS TUCKED UNDER A BROAD, ENGLISH WALNUT TABLE SPACE. KNOTS OF MEN ARE GATHERING, SHAKING HANDS, WITH RESERVED SMILES AND THE OCCASIONAL MUFFLED LAUGH. TWO MEN APPROACH SIR ROBERT AND ABBOT

1ST BARONET JOHN SMITH-BURGESS  
Sir Robert, (smiling warmly) how good to see you again!

SIR ROBERT  
Ah, Baronet, the feeling is mutual.  
I trust you and yours are doing well?

1ST BARONET JOHN SMITH-BURGESS  
Why yes, Sir Robert. Our company's operations in Africa are going very well!

SIR ROBERT  
Yes, John, I saw the reports. With our bigger ships, we can transport nearly 600 slaves a voyage. And of course, that also means more rum and sugar home to England!

1ST BARONET JOHN SMITH-BURGESS  
Indeed, sir!

A commanding man comes to the lectern on the floor and starts banging his gavel

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
Hear ye, hear ye, it is time for the third session of His Royal Highness, King George's House of Lords. Members shall take their seats.

SIR ROBERT  
John lets rendezvous later this week. Meet me at my club on Thursday. I have some things to discuss with you.

1ST BARONET JOHN SMITH-BURGESS  
Yes, milord. (bowing, and walking away...)

All the men begin filing to their seats.

SIR ROBERT  
 Quietly speaking to Abbott....It's  
 a damn good thing we've got those  
 darkies as a commodity. We'd be  
 sunk without that black flesh.

THE MEN ALL FILE TO THEIR SEATS AND A GRADUALLY THE ENTIRE  
 CHAMBER HUSHES. THE SPEAKER RETURNS

14

GOVERNMENT REGULATION

14

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
 This fall session, the 67th  
 gathering of the lords shall come  
 to order! God Save the King!

HOUSE OF LORDS IN UNISON  
 God Save the King!

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
 We shall open our fall session with  
 a traditional convocation from the  
 Right Reverend Samuel Pepsys.  
 Reverend Pepsys.....

A portly man dressed in all black, a large brimmed hat rises  
 from his seat and approaches the lectern.

RIGHT REVEREND PEPSYS  
 As I stand before the most august  
 body of Christian men on earth, I  
 pray to our Lord that he may guide  
 your hands and minds, to protect  
 and expand our Christian culture,  
 to magnify our reach of  
 civilization and English justice  
 around the world. Lord God, give  
 these righteous men the power to  
 bring greater glory and riches to  
 our king and our peoples, I pray,  
 in the name of you, oh Lord, amen.

HOUSE OF LORDS IN UNISON  
 Amen!

The Right Reverend retires from the lectern and the Speaker  
 returns.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
 Good lords and gentlemen, I welcome  
 you back to this holy center of our  
 government. As we move through this  
 agenda, I pray that you look to the  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS (cont'd)  
 best interests of our King and  
 realm. Let us conduct this, our  
 nations sacred business, mindful of  
 the weight of history behind us and  
 the opportunities ahead of us.  
 Sergeant at Arms, please report the  
 agenda for the day!

SERGEANT AT ARMS  
 Milord Speaker of the Honorable  
 House of Lords, in this the 67th  
 session of the gathering of body,  
 we have one agenda item for  
 discussion on this day 22 day of  
 January, in the year of our lord  
 1773.

Sir Robert and Abbott look at each other, perplexed. Sir Robert looks to Sir Oswald, who seems just as perplexed, as does Berry. They look to Sir Robert for guidance, but he is stunned.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
 Please present the first bill,  
 honorable Sergeant at Arms!

SERGEANT AT ARMS  
 At once, milord.

The sergeant at arms nods, and a trumpeter with a long horn sounds a call. The large, ornate walnut doors to the chamber swing open and a handsomely dressed valet in a powdered wig, and flanked by two similarly dressed valets walking two steps behind, brings in an ornate, cherry wood box. He marches down the center aisle and places the box on the speaker's lectern. The three valets bow, back away from the lectern, stand up straight, execute an about face and walk back through the walnut doors, which are then closed. The speaker of the house opens the box and pulls out a sheaf of papers. He begins to read:

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
 On this day, the 22 day of January  
 in the year of our Lord, 1773 a  
 petition from Lord North, Prime  
 Minister of Great Britain, to be  
 heard before the august House of  
 Lords for parliamentary decision.

THERE IS A STUNNED, BUT MUTED GASP. SIR ROBERT'S COLOR IN HIS FACE BEGINS TO REDDEN AND HE MOVES TO THE EDGE OF HIS SEAT, LEANING FORWARD TO LISTEN, VERY AGITATED. MR. ABBOTT

IS ALSO STUNNED, BUT IS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT HIS LORD'S REACTION. HE FEARS SIR ROBERT MAY HAVE AN OUTBURST OR TURN VIOLENT. IT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE.

BREAKOUT TO A PREVIOUS TIME WHEN ABBOTT WITNESSED SIR ROBERT'S FURY. ABBOTT'S MIND DRIFTS BACK TO AN EVENT AT SIR ROBERT'S ESTATE THE PREVIOUS FALL.

15 THE STABLE BOY (CLIVEN TEMPTER OUTBURST)

15

A LARGE STONE BARN IS FRAMED IN AN EARLY MORNING MIST. A GROUP OF MEN WELL DRESSED FOR A HUNT ARE MILLING AROUND, DRINKING CUPS OF BUTTERED RUM, THEIR ARMS CRADLING EXPENSIVE AND ORNATE SHOT GUNS. NEARBY, A PACK OF EXCITED HUNTING DOGS AND STRAINING AT THEIR LEASHES, READY TO GO. STABLE BOYS BEGIN PARADING MAGNIFICENT HORSES OUT OF THE BARN, LED BY A MAGNIFICENT GRAY STALLION WITH AN ORNATE SADDLE STITCHED IN LARGE BRIGHT GOLD LETTERS "R" AND "C. THE MEN, LED BY CLIVEN START TRICKLING OVER TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR MOUNTS. A STABLE BOY HOLDS THE HORSE BY THE REINS AS SIR ROBERT APPROACHES.

SIR ROBERT:

Damn you Tommy! I can tell from here that you haven't cinched up the belly to my specifications, raising his voice..

TOMMY

Milord, he doesn't like ...

Sir Robert walks up and slaps the 12-year old boy to the ground and then kicks him.

SIR ROBERT

I don't give a damn what he likes, Tommy and I don't give a damn about you! Now, follow my instructions and tighten that belly cinch up!

Sir Cliven kicks him again and the boy gets up, limping, reaches under the horse's belly to a giant buckle, which he unbuckles, then pulls it tighter, constricting the horse's belly. The horse neighs and starts to fidget. Cliven takes the reins, hands his shotgun to the bloodied, injured boy, now standing by. Cliven pulls a cat of nine tails from his belt.

SIR ROBERT

Trifle with me today, (reining the horse) you fancy bastard and you'll feel the sting of my cat!

ABBOTT DRIFTS BACK TO REALITY AS THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
BEGINS TO TALK.

16

THE READING OF THE BILL

16

THE ENTIRE HOUSE OF LORDS IS RAPT. LORD NORTH IS THE PRIME MINSTER OF ENGLAND. FOR A PM TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION WAS RARE.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

To be introduced on the floor, a discussion, for the House of Lords of this Great Britain, to enact statutes, regarding the Honorable East India Company, with the accession of our King, George the III that shall read:

In light of issues with the conduct of the United Company of Merchants of London Trading Trading in the East Indies, an act of reorganization, as authorized by His Royal Highness, shall take place. This Act shall be known as the East India Regulatory Act of 1773.

THE ENTIRE CROWD GASPS. SIR ROBERT IS ONLY SECONDS AWAY FROM A MAJOR TANTRUM.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

This legislation shall reorganize the Board of the United Company of Merchants of London Trading trading in the East Indies into one, Central governing body, with the new elections of six judges per year, to replace the original 24 directors of the United Company of Merchants of London Trading trading in the East Indies over the next four years. Further more.....

Sir Robert can no longer contain himself. He launches himself from his chair...

SIR ROBERT

This is an outrage! An outrage! You are meddling where you do not belong! How dare you, you all, to even attempt to manipulate this, my honorable company that has built

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT (cont'd)  
this empire and paid for its wars  
and reigned prosperity on all! I, I  
ALONE BROUGHT YOU INDIA!

The speaker of the house picks up his gavel and pounds it on the lectern.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
Sir Robert, stand down! I have not completed the reading the legislation. You are interfering with parliamentary procedure and if you continue with this behavior, you shall be ejected, sir!

There is silence as all eyes in parliament turn to Sir Robert. Mr. Abbott rises, puts his hand on Sir Robert's shoulder. Sir Robert turns, his head, then body, slowly pivoting around, looking at the crowds of men, in their fine clothes and wearing powdered whigs. Staring at him.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
Stand down now, Sir Robert!

Sir Robert sits.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
The speaker clears his throat.  
Furthermore, Parliament shall oversee the appointment of a governor-general of Fort William in Bengal, with supervisory powers over the presidencies of Madras and Bombay. The governor-general, with consultation of the Parliament and the Honorable East India, may appoint a council of four who shall be given a casting vote, but no veto power.

A supreme court of four judges, appointed by Parliament, shall have ultimate judicial review of all actions in the colonies of Bengal, Madras, Mujaret and Bombay. The qualifications for all offices appointed shall be raised from 500 LBS to 1,000 LBS. These adjustments, if approved, would incorporate into the Royal Code of Great Britain, providing his approval, three months after the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS (cont'd)  
signature of our Royal Highness  
King George the III on this  
presented legislation.

SIR ROBERT SITS IN HIS CHAIR, HIS FACE LOSING COLOR, LIKE HE HAS BEEN EVISCERATED. MR. ABBOTT IS HOLDING HIS BREATH AND FEELING SOMEWHAT DIZZY. THE ENTIRE CHAMBER IS BUZZING WITH WHISPERS.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
Pausing; Does the house present a motion.

SIR ROBERT  
YES, by god, there is a motion in front of the house! I move to have this outright discussion of theft removed from the consideration of his majesty's house, unless, you are all thieves and you would steal from your King and Country!! It is an outrage! I motion to strike this abomination of thievery!

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
Is there a second for Sir Robert's motion? A point of argument over the motion on the floor?

The Prime Minister, Lord North, stands

LORD NORTH:  
I wish to take the floor to stand in argument, Honorable speaker, against Sir Cliven's motion on the floor.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
I cede the floor to you, honorable prime minister, Lord North.

LORD NORTH  
Thank you, Honorable Speaker. Your position is fitting, given your judiciousness. Good gentlemen of our King's House, there are serious issues and gross endangerment of our interests if we allow this "Honorable" East India Company to continue in its present disastrous practices that create such folly. My lords, just two

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LORD NORTH (cont'd)  
years ago, we, we band of good  
Christian gentlemen voted to send  
thousands of pounds of English  
sterling, gleaned from the sweat of  
the English brow, to India to aid  
in the calamitous famine caused by  
the greed and poor agricultural  
practices of the East Indian  
Company. By destroying the native  
Indian food crops and forcing the  
plantation of indigo plants and  
opium the East India Company...

Sir Robert Cliven springs from his chair..

SIR ROBERT,  
(snarls)  
Now, you, Mr. Prime Minister, you  
just hold there....

There is a gasp in Parliament. It's not customary, nor  
polite, to interrupt the King's prime minister when he is  
speaking.

SIR ROBERT CONTINUES  
It is indeed those crops and many  
more endeavors of the Right  
Honorable British East India  
Company that gives you and this  
great nation EVERYTHING!

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
Sir Cliven! You are seriously  
trying the patience of this  
governing body. You must allow Lord  
North to give his remarks. You will  
then, and only then, be allowed to  
rebut them. If you do not  
understand, Sir Cliven, you will be  
ejected from the chamber. Do you  
understand, Sir Robert?

The chamber is hushed again.

SIR ROBERT, FUMING  
Yes, milord.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
You may continue, Lord North.

## LORD NORTH

Thank you, Lord Speaker,  
( he continues, unruffled, )  
As I was stating, The East India  
plantations of Indigo for dye and  
opium poppies have caused great  
famine to descend upon our  
possessions in India. Indeed, it is  
believed that more than 100,000 of  
His Majesty's subjects have  
perished by starvation to date and  
the famine continues, unchecked."

THE CHAMBER STIRS....

## LORD NORTH CONTINUES

The unrest over hunger threatens  
the stable rule of our King, George  
the Third, and his Majesty's Empire  
in the colonies of Bengal and  
Mujarat. My sources say Bombay is  
in the edge of revolt. The  
interests of our great kingdom and,  
indeed, our king are being  
threatened by the negligent and  
slipshod actions of the East India  
Company. We must pass this  
Regulatory Act of the East India  
Company, or suffer the whims of  
greedy men with their poor  
management and judgement! Honorable  
speaker, I cede the floor.

There is silence in the chamber, for a moment, and then a general buzzing of nervous whispers. Then, in a confusing moment, a man on the opposite side of the Chamber stands up and begins clapping. Others stare at him, but a few men on his side of the chamber also stand up and begin clapping.

The man clapping is George Dempsey.

Sir Robert stares incredulously. He is stunned. He sits on the edge of his chair for a moment, while Mr. Abbott looks on anxiously.

Sir Robert Cliven slowly rises.

## SIR ROBERT

Honorable Speaker, may I take the  
lectern to state the case of the  
most Honorable Company of the  
United Company of Merchants of  
London Trading into the East  
Indies?

(CONTINUED)

## SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Sir Robert, I caution you. You may not use this podium to fling invectives. If you do not exercise restraint, you will be censured!

## SIR ROBERT

Honorable speaker, my honored fellow colleagues in the House of Lords, my company, the Honorable East India Company is being defamed!

(Sir Robert says in a measured voice. )

For 173 years, our company men have risked their capital and their lives to bring glory to England. And not just glory, fellow lords of this great body, but sugar and pepper. Spices to enliven our food and medicines to cure our sick. Dyes for paint and textiles. The East Indian Company brings you all the fine silks and satin which you now cloak yourselves. Your first civilized act of the day is drinking tea. Tea that is procured by we, a United Company of Merchants of London Trading into The East Indies. And here I stand today, listening to the absurdities postulated by Lord North. Do you, my fellow lords, understand what this impetuous man is presenting here? Nothing less than a boilerplate for future government takeovers of public and private companies!

The chamber stirs

## SIR ROBERT

Once a precedent is established, no private or public business shall be safe from the government's reach! And yet, the government cannot put its own affairs in order!

The chamber stirs again and a few "hear hears" are muttered, out loud.

## SIR ROBERT

I will not be coy with you, my fellow lords. I will admit our honorable company is confronted with a rough row to hoe. Our warehouses are bulging in tea. And it is because of the very government that seeks to take our company away! Indeed, we have the most powerful Navy in the world, yet, they are incapable of stopping a few Dutch privateers in broken down sloops from smuggling inferior tea to ungrateful American colonists, undercutting our trade and undermining His Royal Majesty's authority in his own colonies! Indeed, do you want the same prime minister who is incapable of swatting flies, in charge of businesses which create wealth and improve our lives through trade and manufacturing around the world? Only a fool would agree.

And are your memories so short, so short, gentlemen, that I must remind you who delivered India to our providence? Who sweated in the jungles and endured the ghastly scourges of India? Indeed, honored lords, who brought India to our king and country? You forget it was I, Sir Robert Cliven, Duke of Shropshire, who defeated more than 50,000 French and Indian troops with 2,500 men of the honorable East India Company at Plassey? And of the long road, from Arcot? From being besieged at Pondicherry, to conquering the entire continent of India, I, I alone, overcame great obstacles in the name of our company, our crown and our king! I brought you tea and coffee and spices, riches, from around the world! And today, today? I stand before you and you, you who sat here, idly by, growing rich without lifting a finger, are questioning ME?

Now, I will repeat my request: I demand this legislation be  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT (cont'd)  
stricken, for the good of God and  
King! I cede the floor, honorable  
Speaker.

There are murmurs of agreement in the chamber.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
Do I have a second on the motion?

Just as Oswald rises, George Dempsey interrupts.

SIR GEORGE DEMPSEY  
Honorable speaker, I wish to make a  
point against the motion on the  
floor. May I approach the lectern?

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
The speaker recognizes Sir George  
Dempsey. Please approach the  
lectern, Sir George.

A somewhat portly man in fairly modestly clothing, compared to his colleagues, works his way through the seating and down to the lectern. The chamber is full of whispers and murmuring.

SIR GEORGE DEMPSEY  
My fellow lords, I stand here in  
awe today, of Sir Robert Cliven.  
The man comes to us, with crocodile  
tears, after murdering his parents,  
and he throws himself at the mercy  
of the court because he is ...an  
orphan!

There are guffaws and chuckles.

SIR GEORGE DEMPSEY  
Eight score and 13 years ago, our  
great queen, Elizabeth, defender of  
the English Isles, granted a  
charter to this, this United  
Company of Merchants Trading into  
the East Indies. A charter,  
gentlemen, granted by the  
government. Our British Government.  
Our queen. A charter that allowed  
for exclusive trade, dominating the  
East Indies. My fellow lords, a  
monopoly, granted by our  
government, to a single company.  
And now, that "company," that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SIR GEORGE DEMPSEY (cont'd)  
monopoly comes to us, the  
government, and king and states,  
"You shouldn't be involved in our  
affairs?" A company whose "affairs"  
weigh heavily on the English crown?  
The same English crown that gave  
root to those "affairs" which have  
made the men involved in those  
affairs fabulously wealthy?  
Milords, the time has long passed  
since this great nation should have  
embraced the free market. The  
government should not be in charge  
of making a market! A government  
should not be granting an exclusive  
preference to a specific company!  
It is long past time that we reign  
in this company, this company of  
devils that traffics in slaves and  
alcohol and opium under the table  
while disguising itself as a good  
Christian company engaged in  
improving the well-being of the  
average Englishman. Make no  
mistake: This company of devils  
shall be the downfall of the  
British Empire. Their actions shall  
spread resentment and misery, from  
our colonies in the Americas to our  
possessions in India and Africa and  
eventually to Great Britain!

There is silence. Cliven surveys the crowd and focuses in on Oswald.

SIR OSWALD  
Stands up and clears his throat. He  
is visibly nervous. I second Sir  
Clive's motion.

There is some murmuring.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
We have a motion and a second to  
strike the legislation from the  
floor. Do we have a call for a  
vote?

More murmuring ...Sir Robert focuses on Berry. Berry returns  
his gaze, pales, and then rises.

SIR BERRY

I call for a vote on this issue of egregiously restricting the business practices of the right Honorable English East India Company! Our company has annually given remittances of more than 400,000 Pounds Sterling to the Crown! As I stand here before you and gaze into this august body, I see the wealth the Honorable East India Company has brought you and this nation! I call for a voice vote, that all be known by their stand!

The parliament erupts in outright, open speech and there is confusion for a few moments.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Do we have a second for the motion of a voice vote.

SIR ROBERT

I second that motion, by gawd! You will stand and we shall know who the enemies of England are!

All eyes are on Cliven and there are many pale faces.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

A voice vote has been called!

(The members of the House of Lords are stunned. Many of them rely on monies and remittances from the Honorable East India. Their votes could endanger their income from investments in trade and the East India Company.) Sergeant at Arms! Take a voice vote on the matter of floor discussion of Lord North's East India Regulatory Act of 1773!

SERGEANT AT ARMS

Hear ye, hear yeah, this honorable gathering of the House of Lords of his Majesty King George's 67th Parliament shall signify their accession or declination to Lord North's motion to debate the East India Act of 1773 on this august

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SERGEANT AT ARMS (cont'd)  
floor. A voice vote has been  
called! All those in favor of  
continuing the debate, stand and  
attest "Aye!"

The House of Lord is silent. For a moment. Then George Dempsey stands up.

GEORGE DEMPSEY  
Aye!

That stirs many lords in the chamber, who begin to stand up, including Lord North. But it is not near enough to pass Lord North's motion to bring the East India Act to the floor for debate.

SERGEANT AT ARMS  
Clerk of the house, do you have a  
count?

CHIEF CLERK  
Yes, Sergeant at Arms.

SIR ROBERT  
Guffawing..turns to Abbott...and  
smiles

SERGEANT AT ARMS  
Be seated, honorable lords. And  
now, all those in favor of ceasing  
the floor debate, stand and attest  
"Nay!"

There is a moment of pause then the majority of the house of lords rise to their feet and state "nay." Sir Robert is nearly gleeful. But not everybody stands up

SIR ROBERT  
(To Abbott: ....) They know what  
side their bread is buttered on, by  
gawd!

The speaker of the house bangs his gavel.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
Pausing....What say the house of  
lords, Sergeant at Arms, in this  
motion?

SERGEANT AT ARMS  
Clerk of the house of lords, what  
is the count?

CHIEF CLERK

Pausing.. Sergeant at arms, in this matter before the house of lords, we have 67 votes to continue the floor debate and 101 votes to quash further discussion. Honorable Speaker of the House of Lords, the "Nays" have won.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

So sayeth this august body of England! The motion to continue this debate over changing the governance of the East India Company has been defeated....today. Given the late nature of the afternoon, may I entertain a motion to reconvene our august body until the day after tomorrow?

MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

I second the motion.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Sergeant at arms, call a vote to reconvene this house of King George the third on Thursday, February 2.

(The house goes through the motions of shutting down for the day)

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

His Majesty's House of Lords is adjourned until Thursday, February 2 at 1 p.m. God Save the King!

HOUSE OF LORDS IN UNISON

God save the King!

The chamber begins to empty out but Sir Robert sits motionless. Abbott stands up after a few minutes.

MR. ABBOTT  
Sir Robert, the...

SIR ROBERT  
Leave, Abbott. I will meet you in the foyer.

MR. ABBOTT  
Yes, milord.

SIR ROBERT LINGERS IN THE CHAMBER UNTIL THE LAST MEMBER FILES OUT. THE DOORS ARE LEFT OPEN WITH TWO DOORMAN AT

(CONTINUED)

ATTENTION, WAITING FOR SIR ROBERT TO LEAVE. AFTER FIVE MINUTES, AND THE LAST OF THE PEOPLE HAVE LEFT, SIR ROBERT RISES. HE IS SMILING. THERE IS OMINOUS MUSIC IN THE BACKGROUND. HE HAS DEVELOPED A SOLUTION TO HIS PROBLEM AND THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ATTEMPTING TO USURP HIM WILL SUFFER. HE WALKS BACK DOWN TO THE FOYER WHERE ABBOTT IS WAITING.

SIR ROBERT

Fetch the carriage Abbott, we have work to do. And get you pen ready.

MR. ABBOTT

Yes, my lord.

ABBOTT SIGNALS TO THE COACHMAN, WHO FLICKS THE REINS OF THE MAGNIFICENT COACH, WITH THE SIX HORSES' HOOVES CLATTERING ON THE BRICK PLAZA. A DOORMAN OPENS THE COACH DOOR AND SIR ROBERT AND ABBOTT CLIMBED IN. THEY SETTLE INTO THE COACH AND ABBOTT RAPPED ON THE BULK HEAD. THE COACH STARTS MOVING.

17

THE RIDE HOME

17

THE CARRIAGE MOVES THROUGH THE BUSY LONDON STREETS.

SIR ROBERT

We have much work to do, Abbott.  
Bring out your secretaries desk.

MR. ABBOTT

Yes milord.

Abbott pulls out an ornate, flat box and places it on his lap, opening it and setting up his ink bottle and quill pen.

MR. ABBOTT

Ready milord.

SIR ROBERT

How are preparations for the  
Company's board meeting proceeding?

MR. ABBOTT

Very well, milord. Lord Harwood has agreed to host the meeting at his estate just outside of London.

SIR ROBERT

Very well. I want you to get this wrapped up by the end of tomorrow. We must not spare a minute to align our allies. I'm sure that bastard Lord North is plotting against us as we speak.

(CONTINUED)

MR. ABBOTT  
Yes milord. Immediately.

On the rest of the journey back to Sir Cliven's residence, he dictates the requirements and instructions to assemble the EIC board meeting and all the accompanying food, drink and entertainment, logistics, etc. Finally, the carriage pulls up to Sir Cliven's London house. It's going to be a long night for Abbott. A valet runs up and opens the door. Sir Robert and Abbott step out onto the gas lit plaza in front of Sir Robert's house. They begin walking to the threshold.

SIR ROBERT  
I want these directions acted upon immediately, Abbott. We must gather our allies and potential allies in one place and make our case.

MR. ABBOTT  
Yes milord. I completely understand.

SIR ROBERT  
I fear that future news from our colonies may put our solid majority at risk.

MR. ABBOTT  
Future news, milord?

SIR ROBERT  
Abbott, I want you to burn the midnight oil. We must have this effort readied by morning. You have all of my resources at your command, Abbott.

MR. ABBOTT  
Yes, milord. Will you sup in the dining room tonight?

SIR ROBERT  
Yes, and you will too. Make the arrangements, Mr. Abbott. And start pulling in your resources. We will need them. I will meet in you the dining room at 7:30.

MR. ABBOTT  
Yes, milord.

The two enter the foyer of Sir Robert's palatial home and go their separate ways. Sir Robert goes to his chambers, where his valet undresses him and prepares a bath. Abbott goes to his office and summons a young man.

MR. ABBOTT  
Jones, I need you to be fleet of foot, tonight.

JONES, THE BOY  
Yes sir, Mr. Abbott.

MR. ABBOTT  
Jones, this will be a busy night. I need you to activate your network. But first, I want you to summon our calligrapher, Mr. Donner, immediately. Bring him here and I will give you further orders. Tell him it is of the utmost urgency. Do not leave without him. If you run into others in this chore, send them here. I will need all the messengers I can get! Now, here's two schillings. Tell your friends to ask for me. Get moving, and they'll be more from where that came!

JONES, THE BOY  
Yes, Mr. Abbott, sir! Right on it, sir!

MR. ABBOTT  
Good boy. Now go!

The boy bows and backs away before turning, he sprints out into the long corridor, with the two doorman opening the door as Jones breaks into London's spring evening twilight. Abbott watches the boy leave the house and returns to his desk. He writes a note on a piece of linen paper, folds it in half and tucks it into an envelope.

Soon, young boys are queuing at the gate. Abbott instructs the footman to begin letting the young men in one at a time. A 14 year old boy is allowed into Abbott's office. The boy stands with his head bowed and hat in hand.

MR. ABBOTT  
Aren't you the Johnson boy?

JOHNSON BOY  
Yes sir, milord.

MR. ABBOTT  
I've used you before, correct?

JOHNSON BOY  
Yes milord.

MR. ABBOTT  
Good. Then you know my  
expectations.

JOHNSON BOY  
Yes, milord.

MR. ABBOTT  
Johnson, take this message to 414  
Montgomery Street. Return here and  
you will be paid 2 pence. If you  
cross me and attempt to swindle me,  
you will pay a heavy price. Do you  
understand?

JOHNSON BOY  
Yes, milord.

Abbott hands the boy an envelope and he sprints off. This time, the camera follows the boy into the London night. The boy runs into the streets and navigates his way through a maze of streets until reaching 414 Montgomery Street. Montgomery Street isn't in a "prosperous area." The narrow, two story, half-timbered, white-washed home is sandwiched among others in neat rows, each house with a stairway up to a small porch and a painted wooden door. The boy knocks on the door and it is opened in a moment.

1 BOY ABBOTT  
Yes?

JOHNSON BOY  
I have a message from Mr. Abbott.  
Who are you?

1 BOY ABBOTT  
I am George. I am Mr. Abbott's son.  
What have you got there.

JOHNSON BOY  
A message from your father. Here.

Johnson boy hands him the letter and tips his cap.

JOHNSON BOY  
Make sure and give that to your  
mum, right away!

1 BOY ABBOTT  
I will! Thank you!

JOHNSON BOY  
My pleasure, governor! Good night!

THE ABBOTT BOY CLOSES THE DOOR AND JOHNSON BOY RUNS OFF INTO  
THE NIGHT.

19 THE HAROLD ABBOTT FAMILY

19

The eldest Abbott boy looks at the envelope addressed to his mother.

1 BOY ABBOTT  
Mum, it's a message from dad, I  
think!

WIFE ABBOTT  
George, bring it to the parlor!

George runs excitedly through the small house into the parlor, where his mother and six other brothers and sisters are engaged in various activities.

GEORGE ABBOTT  
Mum, here you are! Can you read it  
to us? Please?

WIFE ABBOTT  
Yes, of course.

Abbott's wife opens the letter and glances over it... the children glance up from their activities and there's a welling of excitement. Father!?

WIFE ABBOTT  
Oh, dear, children. It looks like  
your father is in for a long night.  
Keep him in your prayers, for he  
works very hard to feed us and  
clothe us and keep a roof over your  
head!

ABBOTT CHILDREN  
Yes, mother, they reply.

Abbott's wife, Marie, opens the letter and begins to read to herself. It reads:

(CONTINUED)

My darling:

I regret that it will be a long few days before I am able to return. I have been tasked with much to do by Sir Robert and I may not arrive home until Sabbath evening. I trust in you to keep things in order.

Love, Harold.

Marie stares at the letter and turns sad.

MARIE ABBOTT

George, we need more wood on the fire. Please fetch some.

GEORGE ABBOTT

Yes mum.

She throws the letter on the fire as George goes outside to bring in more firewood. She sits by the fire, with a sad look on her face, as the children resume their various activities. And things return to a familiar rhythm, a rhythm without a father.

20

DINNER WITH SIR ROBERT

20

A GONG ECHOES THROUGH THE HOUSE. DINNER IS BEING SERVED, BUT THERE ARE ONLY TWO DINERS: SIR ROBERT AND MR. ABBOTT. THE DINING ROOM IS SUMPTUOUS, WITH A MASSIVE OAK TABLE AND A LARGE FIRE PLACE CRACKLING WITH FOOTMEN STANDING BY. THE OAK TABLE IS TASTEFULLY ARRANGED WITH CHINA AND HEAVY LEAD CRYSTAL GLASSES AND FRESH FLOWERS.

Abbott enters the room through a double paneled door opened by two doorman. He goes to the right of the table and a footman motions to begin pulling his Abbott's chair out.

MR. ABBOTT

I can pull my own chair out,  
Walton.

FOOTMAN 1

Yes sir, Mr. Abbott.

Abbott settles in as a servant pours him a glass of wine. The fire sends a comforting glow into the room. Presently, Sir Robert enters the room when the footman swing open the doors. Sir Robert walks in. Mr. Abbott stands up.

SIR ROBERT

Abbott! Have you set our pigeons in motion?

(CONTINUED)

Sir Robert walks to the head of the table and waits for a footman to pull back his chair and seat him.

MR. ABBOTT

Yes, milord, all of our pigeons, as you refer to them, are ready to fly. Milord, we only need to know where to dispatch them.

SIR ROBERT

I have the list of 25 people, other than the directors and MP's who I consider of value. I would like to invite them to the board meeting. I have a 26th that I am pondering.

Sir Robert hands Abbott a parchment paper with a list of names. Abbott scans the list of names for a moment. His eyebrow rises.

MR. ABBOTT

This 26th name, milord, Sir George Dempsey, milord? You wish to invite him to this gathering?

SIR ROBERT

An old saying, Abbott. Keep your friends close and your enemies closer. I wish the opportunity to engage Dempsey.

MR. ABBOTT

Yes, milord. But I fear he may sow his radical ideas amongst your guests, sir. It's a risk I am uncomfortable taking.

SIR ROBERT

"Oh damn your comfort, Abbott," Sir Robert wistfully replies. "Risks?" Sir Robert laughs. "Abbott, I conquered India with less than 3,000 men. I'm playing for stakes you do not understand. It's obvious Lord North covets the power of our company. He wishes to subvert us and seize our resources and holdings by undermining the very charter that granted the governance to our league of stalwart Englishmen who enriched this Empire!" Now, Abbott, I want you to  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT (cont'd)  
dispatch a messenger to Harwood's  
estate. Tell them no expense must  
be spared and the company, will  
naturally, reimburse him.

ABBOTT CHILDREN  
Yes, milord. May I finish my  
dinner, your lordship?

Sir Robert looks at him, grudgingly, for a moment.

SIR ROBERT  
Yes, Abbott. Please do.

Abbott finishes eating in silence, while Sir Robert takes his time, watching Abbott hurriedly eating his elegant meal.

SIR ROBERT  
You don't get much pheasant in a  
glace' at home, do you, Abbott?

Abbott shakes his head "no" rather than reply with a full mouth and mumbles, "no, milord," with a full mouth. There is silence as Sir Robert, slightly amused, watches Abbott finish his meal in haste. Abbott cleans his plate, pushes it forward and says..

ABBOTT  
Please excuse me, milord, but I  
have matters to attend.

SIR ROBERT  
Of course.

Abbott stands up and leaves the room, leaving Sir Robert alone. The candlelight dances in the darkened room as Sir Robert leisurely finishes his meal, followed by a glass of port. As he wipes away the last of his meal with a heavy linen napkin, he calls out.

SIR ROBERT  
Nellie! Nellie, come here!

A young slave girl enters the dining room obviously fearful. Sir Robert leers.

SIR ROBERT  
Nellie, fetch me my pipe, would  
you, and bring it to my bedroom?

NELLIE  
Yes, master. Right away master...

Nellie scurries off to retrieve Sir Robert's pipe as he pours himself another glass of port. The fireplace's light dances off the walls and creates shadows that are warming and yet...ominous.

Sir Robert stands and walks slowly to his bedroom, where he sits in an ornate chair as Nellie enters the room.

The young slave girl returns with a tray carrying an ornate, Indian wood box and a pipe in a pipe holder. She lays it on the side table, next to Sir Cliven's chair. She is scared....Sir Robert gives her the once over. He smiles, in a leer....

SIR ROBERT  
You may go know, Nellie. Be sure to have the staff wake me by 10 a.m.

NELLIE  
Yes master.

Nellie curtsies, turns and leaves the room, feeling grateful, and silently closes the door. The only sound is of hard, English wood burning in a large fireplace, with an occasional crackle. Sir Robert lifts the chest lid open, and proceeds to pack his pipe with opium. He reaches over and pulls a candle from the candlestick and slowly warms the opium, and then pulls his first hit. He holds it for a few moments and his body physically relaxes. There is silence as he stares into space and his eyes flicker...and the images start coming...

IT IS 16 YEARS EARLIER, IN INIDA, IN 1757. A YOUNGER, MORE VIGOROUS MAN IS STANDING AT THE EDGE OF A RIVER IN PLASSEY, INDIA. COLONEL ROBERT CLIVEN HAS 1,000 BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY (EIC) SOLDIERS, NINE BRITISH ARMY CANNONS AND 2,000 ENGLISH-TRAINED INDIAN SEPOYS. THEY ARE DEPLOYED NEAR THE EDGE OF A BROWN, WINDING RIVER. THE SUN IS SETTING AND IT IS INTERMITTENTLY RAINING. FRENCH AND INDIAN TROOPS CARRYING TORCHES ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE VALLEY ARE SETTING CAMP. CLIVEN, HIS OFFICERS AND HIS TROOPS WATCH AS THE INDIAN AND FRENCH TROOPS ENCAMP AND DEPLOY AGAINST THEM.

COLONEL CLIVEN AND HIS OFFICERS SILENTLY WATCH THE FRENCH/INDIAN ARMY AS THEY STREAM INTO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VALLEY.

CLIVEN

Gentlemen, we shall retire to a council of battle. Rendezvous at my camp at 9 p.m. We must discuss our course of action. In the meantime, fully prepare my men for action!

EIC OFFICERS

Yes, Colonel Cliven.

The junior officers disperse and return to their bivouacs to prepare their troops. A four-man squad of EIC troops stand off to the side. Clive remains with his aide, Clark, surveying the scene.

CLIVEN

What do you make of it Clark?

CLARK

Well, sir, you know I'm no hero. We should bloody well cut and run. Those buggers can just swarm us and they won't even notice their dead the next day. There's must be 100,000 of them Colonel!

CLIVEN

Chuckling. Yes, Clark. They have an overwhelming force. But we have some cards in our sleeve, and I hope we can play them by the time the sun rises on the morn.

CLARK

Indeed, Colonel, I hope they are aces!

CLIVEN

So do I, Clark, so do I.

THE TWO MEN TURN AND WALK BACK TO THEIR FRONT LINE, ANCHORED BY A BATTERY OF CANNON. THE FRONT LINE IS MANNED BY MEN ON WATCH, WITH THE REST OF THE MEN ABOUT 50 YARDS BEHIND THEM, CAMPED OUT IT IS LATE TWILIGHT. THE MEN HAVE COOKING FIRES. CLIVEN AND CLARK WALK TO CLIVEN'S TENT. CLARK OPENS THE TENT FLAP FOR CLIVEN AND THEY WALK IN TOGETHER. THE FLAP IS CLOSED.

22

COUNCIL OF WAR

22

IN A CLEARING, NEAR CLIVEN'S TENT, A TABLE IS PLACED WITH CANDLES RUNNING DOWN THE CENTER, ILLUMINATING THE AREA. THE SENIOR OFFICERS ARE SITTING AT THE TABLE, WHILE THE JUNIOR OFFICERS ARE CLUSTERED AROUND. THE JUNIOR OFFICERS HAVE NO VOTE AT THE COUNCIL OF WAR, BUT THEY CAN SPEAK. THEY ARE QUIETLY CHATTING. THERE IS ONE CHAIR, AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE, EMPTY. THERE IS QUIET, EXCITED CHATTER FOR A FEW MOMENTS WHEN COLONEL CLIVEN STRIDES UP. THE CHATTER QUICKLY DIES DOWN AND ALL THE MEN SEATED AT THE TABLE JUMP TO ATTENTION.

CLIVEN

At ease, men. It is rare that I would call this council. But I feel, in the face of our situation, that I must examine all ideas to further estimate our necessary efforts.

Cliven stands next to the chair as his aide Clark, pulls it out for him. Cliven sits and the senior officers, a moment later, at the table resume their seats at the table. The junior officers lean in, eagerly.

CLIVEN

We've all seen, with our own eyes, the tremendous forces arrayed against us. I wish to hear your thoughts on our position and more importantly, our action. So I open the table to all of you!

MAJOR EYRE COOTE

Attack!

The junior officers cheer, while some of the senior officers at the table shift uncomfortably.

CLIVEN

Indeed, Major Coote. Have you ever fought against a force superior to your own by a factor of 25?

MAJOR EYRE COOTE

There's always a first time, sir!

CLIVEN

With 3,000 of our boys against their 100,000 troops, that "first time" may well be your "last time," Major Coote, (Cliven says sternly)

(CONTINUED)

THERE IS SILENCE IN THE COUNCIL FOR A MOMENT. THE CANDLE LIGHT ON THE TABLE ILLUMINATES THE FACES OF THE OFFICERS AND CLIVEN, WITH THE EIC JUNIOR OFFICERS FADING INTO THE BACKGROUND.

CLIVEN

Gentlemen, do I have any other motions?

There is another silence at the table. Finally, someone speaks

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

Colonel, I feel our position here is untenable. We are obviously out manned and our back is against the river. I think our best course of action is to retreat with all haste and set up a defensive perimeter there, in the foothills. As it stands, now, Colonel Cliven, I believe, that in our present position, we will be crushed by our adversary's overwhelming force.

There are murmurs of agreement around the table. The standing junior EIC officers are silent.

MAJOR HENDRICKS

I second the Lieutenant Col. While I'd enjoy striking a blow for company and king, I fear our forces may not be equipped with enough powder and shot to deal with such a large body of enemy forces.

MAJOR EYRE COOTE

Sir, if we strike now, before they have a chance to arrange their forces, we could sow confusion and cast their forces in disarray. !

Cliven stares at Major Eyre Coote.

SIR ROBERT

Perhaps, Major, perhaps, but that would require leaving our positions and place our forces on open ground. Lt. Col. Richards, have we heard from Watts?

L.T. COLONEL RICHARDS  
No, milord, no dispatches have arrived from Mr. Watts.

Sir Robert sighs.

SIR ROBERT  
At this time, I feel it is importune to attack. I feel our forces would face a crushing defeat. Unless we hear from Mr. Watts, we will stand down our troops and reevaluate in the morning. Gentleman, you are dismissed. Return to your commands and get your men bedded down for the night. Stand by and be watchful. I want double the sentries posted tonight. Is that clear?

EIC OFFICERS  
Yes sir!

The officers begin to disburse, discussing the war council's actions and wandering into the dark Indian night, leaving Cliven, the Lt. Colonel and Clark alone at the table. The candle light flickers, casting dancing shadows across the men's faces.

SIR CLIVEN  
Fetch us a bottle, Clark. Lt. Col. Richards and I have much to discuss.

CLARK  
Yes, Colonel.

Clark leaves and the Richards and Cliven are alone.

SIR CLIVEN  
I fear my plan to turn Mir Jafar has failed, Richards. He left at sunset yesterday. Surely he....

L.T. COLONEL RICHARDS  
It was a bold plan, sir, and there is still hope for it, sir. It was quite a difficult task. I only wish you had let me undertake it, Colonel.

COLONEL CLIVEN

Nonsense, Richards. I needed your command skills here, not as a rat worming your way through filth to find the king rat. That is why I sent Watts. He is a rat. But he is my rat.

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

Do you think Watt's dealings with Siraj ud-Daulah will give him the advantage with Mir Jafar, Colonel?

COLONEL CLIVEN

I sent rat to deal with other rats. Now, if the rat will just report, dammit!

Clark returns with a bottle of Scotch whiskey and two glasses. He places them on the table in front of the two officers.

COLONEL CLIVEN

I trust Richards, that in the meantime, you don't have much to do?

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

At this point, sir, no.

COLONEL CLIVEN

Good. Let's drink in some spirit from our home land.

Colonel Cliven pours them both a dram of whiskey and then raises his glass and says

COLONEL CLIVEN

To Company and King! God bless England!

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

To Company and King! God bless England!

They toast, clinking their glasses together in the firelight of an Indian Mango grove. The two men settle down to wait for a communication from Watkins.

COLONEL CLIVEN

Clark, fetch me the officer of the guard, immediately!

CLARK  
Yes sir!

Clark speeds off into the darkness. A returns a few moments later, panting, with the officer of the guard in tow.

OFFICER OF THE GUARD  
Sir! Reporting as ordered.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Stand at ease, Roberts. Ensign Roberts, I want you to send out patrols staffed with one EIC soldier and three sepoys. I want you to send them in these quadrants... and look for a messenger from Mr. Watts. If he was successful he would have dispatched a runner immediately. Look for that runner.

Cliven beckons the EIC officer over and shows him the map. Ensign Roberts nods and takes the map. Stepping away from the table, he does a full salute

ENSIGN ROBERTS!  
Right away, sir! Immediately!

Ensign Roberts executes a sharp turn and double times it into the night.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
My only supposition at his point is I am waiting for failure.

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS  
Robert! You have conquered much of India with less than 3,000 men! You should not doubt yourself at this juncture! Let us wait! It's been only two sunrises, Colonel. We both know things here don't happen at an efficient pace, sir. At some point, patience is required!

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Damn you, Richards don't you tell me about "patience!" "Patience? I have never exhibited anything but patience since arriving in this god forsaken land of pestilence and death. For gawd sakes, man, you can't even drink the water! Don't lecture me on patience, Richards!

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS  
My apologies, Colonel Cliven, I did  
not wish to offend...

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Just keep your mouth shut,  
Richards. Your jabberwocky  
interferes with my thoughts.

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS  
Yes sir, he says dejectedly.

The two men wait, at the table, with the firelight  
flickering, for word, any word from Watts.

23 APPROXIMATELY 18 HOURS EARLIER, IN THE EIC CAMP

23

CLIVEN AND WATTS ARE IN CLIVEN'S COMMAND TENT.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Mr. Watts, you, as the chief EIC  
agent in this area surely  
understand the gravity of the  
situation at hand.

WILLIAM WATTS  
Indeed, Colonel. The French and  
their Indian allies led by Siraj  
ud-Daulah are less than a day away  
from arriving at the junction.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Do you have any proposals, Mr.  
Watts?

WILLIAM WATTS  
Colonel, I believe with the proper  
guarantees, we may be able to turn  
Mir Jafar.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
And what, exactly would those  
guarantees be, Watts?

WILLIAM WATTS  
The Mir Jafar wants the throne of  
the Nawab, Colonel.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Ahh. A man with greed and ambition.  
Good.

WILLIAM WATTS  
Indeed, Colonel.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
And how many men does Mir Jafar  
bring with him, Watts?

WILLIAM WATTS  
He claims to have 35,000 troops,  
Colonel. He could also bring  
another 20,000 troops of his  
brother, if we sweeten the pot  
correctly. Siraj ud-Daulah has  
about 50,000 troops under his  
command, if our spies are to be  
believed.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Aye, but if we sweeten the pot, it  
may spoil future batches. We must  
keep these barbarians on a leash.  
We may let them think they are  
actually running our this country,  
but the operations of the East  
India Company must supersede their  
will and be treated as superior to  
their needs. What would you say,  
Watts, if we could extract some  
monetary concessions from Jafar?  
Would he be open to that?

WILLIAM WATTS  
Mir Jafar only wants the throne of  
the Nawab. I reckon he would pay a  
pretty pence for that chair.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
A pretty pence indeed, Watts. Give  
me a moment to compose a message.  
Can you penetrate the Bengal lines  
and deliver a message to Mir Jafar,  
Watts?

WILLIAM WATTS  
Not personally, sir, but I have a  
very reliable man who should make  
short work of it.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Good. He can be trusted with the  
utmost of sensitive communications?

WILLIAM WATTS

Yes, Colonel. I have used him many times before.

Cliven turns to his writing desk, sits down and withdraws a quill pen from an ink well and begins writing on piece of vellum. In a few minutes, he is done. He folds the vellum into thirds and with a candle, melts some wax on the paper and presses his ring into the wax. He stands and hands Watts the letter.

COLONEL CLIVEN

Watts, it is of utmost importance that this communication reach Mir Jafar. Do you understand? The entire fate of the East India Company may well rest on this, as well as the fate of our entire contingent.

WILLIAM WATTS

Of course, Colonel Cliven. I completely understand.

COLONEL CLIVEN

Good Watts. You have 36 hours. Can you make it?

Cliven extends the letter to Watts.

WILLIAM WATTS

Yes sir. I shall die trying.

COLONEL CLIVEN

Dammit, Watts, I don't want you to die. I want you to bring this back with Mir Jafar's signature!

WILLIAM WATTS

Certainly, Colonel Cliven!

Watts takes the letter.

WILLIAM WATTS

Will that be all?

COLONEL CLIVEN

At this juncture, this will be quite enough. Now, go and godspeed. Deliver this to Mir Jafar. Nothing must stop you and this mission. Is that clear?

WILLIAM WATTS  
Yes sir!

Watts turns and exits the tent, leaving Cliven alone. Cliven sits down and begins to brood.

THE IMAGE FADES BACK TO CLIVEN AND RICHARDS AT THE TABLE

24 GROWING LATE

24

The two men sit, barely communicating for another hour, occasionally making short observations about the weather. It is growing very late.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Richards, I think we may be done for. That damned Watts must have failed on his mission.

Richards is sits is silence.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Let us adjourn to our tents, Richards. There doesn't seem much sense in waiting around for a message that won't come. Tomorrow morning, we must pull back at dawn. Let the troops sleep another three hours then sound reveille. We will fall back to the south and establish a better position in the foothills and hope for reinforcements.

L.T. COLONEL RICHARDS  
Yes sir, Colonel Cliven.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Dismissed, Richards.

Cliven slumps in his chair. The candles are melting and the fire light is dying. Two armed guards stand at attention. After a time, Cliven's head slumps and falls asleep for a few moments when there's a disturbance.

Ensign Roberts comes running into the firelight, carrying a message, totally out of breath...

ENSIGN ROBERTS!  
Col. Cliven, Col. Cliven, I have word from Watts!

Cliven, jarred awake, stares incredulously, sitting up on his chair and wiping his eyes, trying to focus.

ENSIGN ROBERTS!  
It's from Watt! One of our patrols  
found his messenger on a trail. We  
think he got away clean. I  
instructed my sergeants ...

COLONEL CLIVEN

Cliven, now fully cognizant and vaulting up  
Just give me the damn letter,  
Roberts!

ENSIGN ROBERTS!  
Yes sir..

Roberts hands the letter to an eager Cliven.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Get me some light, dammit!

One of the guards picks up one of the few candles left and  
brings it to Cliven, holding it so Cliven can see the wax  
seal.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
It's from Mir Jafar!

Cliven breaks the wax seal and unfolds the letter. He is  
silent for a few moments, and then he smiles. He slowly  
drops his hand away to his side, holding the letter. And  
then Cliven starts to laugh. He laughs for a moment or two  
more and then silent for a moment. He turns and surveys the  
men.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Men, we are going to be either very  
rich or very dead by sunset  
tomorrow.

Roberts, I want you to gather the  
officers immediately. Clark, where  
are you?

CLARK  
Here, sir!

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Clark, I want you alert the  
officers of the guard and spread  
the word for a silent reveille.  
Instruct the squads to ensure we  
keep the campfires attended and our  
baggage defended. Nothing must  
remain out of the ordinary.

CLARK  
Yes sir!

Clark runs off.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
You two, gather some candles and  
torches. We have a battle to plan!

SOLDIERS ARE RUSHING AROUND, PURPOSELY AND THE CAMP BEGINS  
TO STIR FROM THEIR SHORT SLUMBER.

25 THE BATTLE PLAN

25

A few minutes later, the officers are gathering at the table, still groggy with sleep, but in a few moments they are all there, although they may not be all dressed complete uniform. Colonel Cliven stands

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Gentlemen, we are at a unique moment. It is two hours and 40 minutes into a new day. We have been presented with an opportunity to rule India, in the name of the company, and the King! We march this morn' on Siraj ud-Daulah!

The officers are too tired, sleepy or dumbfounded to grasp what Cliven means. Cliven recognizes this.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Fetch us some rum!  
(not addressing any particular soldier, one scampers off though)

Men of the East India Company, we have a difficult task this morning. We must deploy our forces right now to position ourselves against the oncoming onslaught. This will be no easy day. But as we have demonstrated before, when we stand in rank and file and execute our orders, we are succesful. Is that understood?

EIC FFICERS  
Yes Sir!

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Major Coote!

MAJOR EYRE COOTE  
Yes sir!

COLONEL CLIVEN  
After we convene, I want you to send 500 of your sepoy's with ropes and pulleys to the river and begin creating a crossing for our artillery. I also want 500 of your sepoy's to accompany the artillery and aid them in crossing the river. Major Kilpatrick, is your artillery ready to move?

MAJOR KILPATRICK  
Yes Sir! A thousand men should be enough to transport all nine of our field pieces, sir!

The men laugh and Cliven smiles.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Maybe after this, we can buy you some new toys, Major!

The men chuckle again.

COLONEL CLIVEN  
Major Hendricks, you shall take the first and second squads of the 14th EIC Rifles and 1,250 hundred sepoy's to our left flank, by the river with two pieces of artillery. Lt. Col. Richards, you shall take four pieces of artillery and the Second Infantry company with 400 sepoy's and hold the center. I shall take four cannons and deploy to the north, as the right flank, with the remainder of the troops. EIC Infantry and Sepoys are to be deployed immediately. Do I make myself clear?

OFFICERS AND MEN  
Sir, Yes sir!

There is an immediate flurry of all out activity as the officers rush to take command of their units and start

issuing orders. Within 15 minutes, the expedition begins its march to the river. The EIC infantry and sepoys are in the lead, wading through knee deep river, while other sepoys are rigging lines across the river to help transport the cannons across the slow moving river. The cannon, moved by sepoys, are rolled up to the river on their caissons and start getting winched across, with other sepoys in the river helping the cannons through the river bottom mud. The EIC infantry troops, led by Cliven, Richards and Hendricks, deploy their troops along the treeline of a mangrove, somewhat camouflaged from view. As the cannons begin to get placed behind the front line of infantry, the first glimmer of sunrise touches the far peak. The sun is behind their backs.

THE SUN BEGINS TO RISE GRADUALLY, REVEALING THE EXTENT OF THE ENEMY TROOPS CLIVEN AND HIS MEN FACE. THERE ARE GASPS UP AND DOWN THE LINE, FROM BOTH EIC AND INDIAN SEPOYS. IN 15 MINUTES, CLIVEN AND HIS COMMAND OF 3,000 MEN BEGIN TO REALIZE THEY MAY FACE AN ARMY FOR MORE THAN 100,000 INDIAN AND FRENCH TROOPS.

CLIVEN STANDS AT THE RIGHT OF HIS CENTER, SURVEYING THE SCENE. HE LOOKS AT HIS PITIFUL LINE OF 1,000 EIC INFANTRY AND 2,000 INDIAN SEPOYS DEPLOYED ALONG A THIN LINE, WITH THEIR BACKS TO A RIVER. CLARK STANDS NEARBY.

CLARK

It's going to be a long day, isn't it, sir.

Clark is behind Cliven and surveys the enemy arrayed before them.

SIR CLIVEN

Yes it will be a long day. But maybe we'll only have to fight 50,000 of them, Clark, and we can be done by noon.

THEY LOOK FOR A WHILE LONGER AND RETURN BACK TO THEIR LINES. THE SHOT PANS OUT AND REVEALS THE TWO OPPOSING FORCES AND THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE PLASSEY BATTLE SITE. SQUADS OF BRITISH AND INDIAN MUSKET MEN AMOUNTING TO 3,000 TROOPS ARE POSITIONED AROUND THE EDGE OF A U SHAPED MANGROVE FOREST. THERE IS SILENCE FOR THE MOMENT.

65.

26

--30-- EPISODE 1

26