Alone in the dark, deafening silence, Hamilton doesn't know if he's been imprisoned months, weeks, or days when his captor finally shows his face.

It’s a strange feeling; at once understanding he’s being subjected to some strange, new torture, while simultaneously the lurking fear creeps in that perhaps he has lost his sanity, his memory, his basic mental faculties.

He lost count after day twenty-six.

Day. He considers the term loosely. There is no day, trapped in this perpetual hell of pitch dark loneliness. He thinks, perhaps, the interrogations began that way. Were the start to someone’s morning, or perhaps a stopover on his captor’s way to tea with a wife, a betrothed, his superior so that he might deliver a report on their progress.

There is no day, trapped as he is in the dark.

There is no time, when he spends most of it shackled to a cot, chains on his wrists looped through a ring by the head of the bed. Sometimes, he isn’t even sure when he’s slept, just drifting about in his own head.

It was around day fifteen that the suspicion crept into his mind that there was no regular rhyme nor reason to the timing of his captor’s visits.

Around day twenty, he realized his count of days meant nothing with the abrupt confidence that his captor was taking full advantage of his disorientation. Visiting him in twelve-hour intervals, and then
six, and then forty-eight, letting his reliance on the routine further confound his muffled senses.

At twenty-six, he stopped trying to keep pace. It’s possible he’s been here, in the suffocating, silent dark, for two weeks, three, four.

It’s possible he’s been here six months.

For all he knows, the war that had been raging when he was captured near Philadelphia has drawn to a bloody close. Washington hanged, and Gates and Schuyler. Hancock, Adams, all the rest, caught fleeing west when the British took the capital.

He at once knows he would never take his captor at his word, should he report such a tragic end to the brutal strife; and yet, would welcome some acknowledgement, any acknowledgement, of the passage of time; of the world still spinning outside these cold walls.

Each time, his jailer comes to him, in the dark. Unshackles one arm, lets him blindly eat some bread, drink some water, relieve himself in a pot in the corner.

And then asks him the same things, time after time, day after day, week after week, as if it were their first meeting.

His initial reaction was confusion; then anger, then rage, but his shackled arm limited his ability to lash out at his faceless oppressor.

His oppressor remains stoically immovable through it all, until it becomes impossible not to question his own sanity instead.

When he next hears footsteps, he sticks out his arm in anticipation of the key. Remains otherwise motionless on the cot, eyes closed, rambling off the answers to the litany of questions he’s come to expect for the fiftieth time, or the hundredth, or the thousandth.

(Or the first, says the sinister voice growing louder where it lodges deep in his brain)

“Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hamilton,” he begins in a slow drawl. “Aide-de-camp and chief of staff to His Excellency, General George Washington. Captured on the west bank of the Schuylkill near Daviser’s Ferry. Born in the Caribbean, arrived in New York in ‘seventy-four, attended King’s College until the onset of the war, and -”

“Colonel Hamilton,” the soft voice of his captor interrupts him.

His eyes snap open, and then he cries out and presses them closed again. How long, he wants to beg, hand flung over his face, how long since he’s seen light?

“It’s alright,” the man soothes, and he tries again, but even the dim glow of the lantern is too much, too blinding, when all he wants is a glimpse of his tormenter. There’s movement, unhurried; a muted clang of the lantern being set on the stone floor. Gentle hands drawing his wrists up above his head again, the scrape of the key in the locks. Heavy chains thudding against the walls.

For the first time in – months? Weeks? Days? Hours? – he is free. Uninhibited in his movement, save by the same blindness plaguing him all the while.
“What…? What are you…?”

“Come, Colonel,” he orders, but his tone is soft, and gentle hands at his shoulders urge him upright. He shudders at the touch. Just one more neglected sense. “We treat officers with dignity, they ought never have put you down here.”

You put me down here, he wants to argue. You, the voice of my waking nightmares.

He does not. He cannot. Can only seize on this shift, this proof that time has not lost all meaning, that he is not doomed to repeat the same routine, the same interrogation over and over again for time eternal.

“Come,” the man repeats, guiding him forward, step by halting step. “I will be your eyes.”

They climb narrow stairs. By the top, his vision is adjusted enough to register that it is night, that the house is lit by the same dim glow of lanterns. He blinks fast, willing his sight to steady itself faster, that he might look for any clues to the date, his location, the progression of the war, but there is little to see besides the fixtures of a well-appointed home.

“I’ve had my servant draw you a warm bath.” He fights to focus on the man’s face as they walk. “I’m told they fished you out of the river, and I must say, you smell like it.”

Ridiculously, his first thought is that he must still be in Philadelphia – the river. Not a river. His second thought is to cling to the conviction holding his sanity together – that was months ago. Weeks at least, surely.

When his face finally comes into focus, it is adorned by a benign smile and wholly unfamiliar. Gentle features, intelligent, assessing eyes. A single lock of braided hair hanging just behind one ear and the rest pulled back in a queue at his nape.

“Who are you?” he finally manages to rasp out as they cross the threshold of the washroom.

“Major John André, at your service.”

And that is a name he knows. The subject of numerous intelligence reports, a constant thorn in Tallmadge’s side, and with a ruthless reputation that seems at odds with the kindly eyes peering at him with concern, with compassion.

If André gives him an instruction to strip, he misses it entirely, and instead starts when fingers begin deftly pulling at the ties of his stained breeches. There’s an efficiency about him that brooks no protest though, and he finds himself obeying the silent command to lift his arms as André slides his shirt over his head.

“Relax,” André urges him softly as he sinks into the bath, failing to fight back the whimper at the soothing warmth over sore muscles. He uncorks a bottle of something that sends a cloyingly sweet scent into the humid air, further muddling his mind. Massages the slick oil into Hamilton’s neck and shoulders, before urging him to dip his head down to wet his hair.

He tries, and fails, to recall the last time he was bathed in such a manner. Fingertips massaging into his scalp. A soft cloth caressed gently over his face, across his aching shoulders and down his back, down his chest, lower. Gentle hands lifting his manhood and giving it the same diligence as the rest of his body, no more and no less, but still too much, too intimate. The fogginess in his head caused by the perfumes in the air, by an undoubted state of malnourishment, the confusion swirling about his mind at this abrupt change in routine; this soft touch the only he’s known these long months (weeks
days hours it does not even matter anymore), and he can feel his body respond in a wholly inappropriate way, and a flush rises in his cheeks to match.

“It’s quite alright,” André murmurs from where he kneels beside the bathing tub. He discards the cloth, drapes it over the side, and Hamilton watches it absently, strangely concerned that it might drip and create a slick spot on the floor. The hand drifts back under the water and seeks him out, careful caresses that bring him to a fuller hardness, that drag an involuntary whimper from his throat. “Now tell me your name, soldier.”

His head drops back against the side of the tub, and he surrenders to it. To the touch. To the voice, to the questions, to the waking nightmare. “Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hamilton.”

The hand strokes him deftly; his breathing comes in faster, shallow bursts. “Under whose command do you serve, Colonel?”

“I am aide-de-camp and chief of staff to His Excellency, General George Washington.”

André pulls him higher, closer to the edge, voice soft and seductive by his side. “Where were you captured, Colonel?”

*The west bank of the Schuylkill, he wants to say. Months ago, weeks, days, hours, it no longer matters. In the cellar of this very house, chained and tortured with nary a finger laid upon him. In the sunken depths of his own mind. It doesn’t matter. Is all one and the same. Yesterday, and today, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.*

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