A Mind At Work

by InsertACatchyPennameHere

Summary

Hark! A Role Reversal AU has appeared! In the legendary musical, we see America's founding fathers engage in legendary battles, triumphs and losses to form a nation. So how does a haughty, privileged, no-nonsense, sharp-tongued, remarkable scholar of an immigrant woman sent to America in secrecy and squalor grow up to be a game changer with political power?

Enter Elizabeth Schuyler, the mind at work the nation is looking for who has a million things she was once helpless or resigned to not do who is now going to write herself into
the nation she moved to in hopes for a new lives. Though she may be practical and intelligent, there is nothing entirely fair about love and war, and she will face plenty of obstacles along the way with remarkable people, both good and bad. Regardless, there is one thing she is certain of: When the time comes, she will not throw away her shot.
The ocean was choppy due to the storm that rained down on and off the day she and her sisters arrived.

Her blue Brunswick dress swung around her legs along with the wind, her gaze set on the busy colony bustling before her. She kept her left hand securely attached to her older sister and her right holding onto her younger sister, her face lighting up the more she saw taking place between all of the colonists. There were men and women alike conversing and trading in the streets, and they seemed as quaint, intelligent and proper as she’d imagined for years. She grinned at her siblings, jumping off of the dock with all the skillset expected from someone who grew up having to be tough to survive.

“Betsey, wait!” She heard Angelica call, but she kept running into the crowd; she’d spotted someone she’d heard much about in Princeton, and she was not about to let her go.

“Pardon me!” She called out above the lull of the crowd, finally catching up to the walking figure. “Are you Theodosia Prevost, ma’am?”

The woman in question turned around, her gaze skeptical underneath her lengthy hat. “That I am. What does it mean to you?”

“Oh, well sure, ma’am!” The younger woman chirped, her smile unshakable as she caught her breath and sidestepped to avoid clogging the walkway. “My name is Elizabeth Schuyler, and I’m at your service, ma’am. I have been looking for you-!”

“I’m getting nervous,” Theodosia commented, but her smile seemed good natured.

Deciding she ought to settle her nerves externally, Eliza smoothed down her travel dress and gave her an excited smile. “I heard your name at Princeton, ma’am. I was seeking an accelerated course of study when I got quite out of sorts with a friend of yours, and perhaps my sister punched him but it’s a blur, ma’am, as he quite problematic. You see, this gentleman handled the financials and found it improper to designate funds to a woman who’d far exceeded the expectations and requirements to achieve such aide, and I come to you now to humbly ask for advice on how next to continue with that university far out of the question.”

“Your sister punched the bursar?” Theodosia repeated, looking impressed if not a little amused. “He is quite a difficult case when it comes to progression of the times, I’m afraid. May I buy you a drink?”

“I would very much appreciate it,” the smaller replied sincerely. “I have been travelling all day and would be thrilled to share a brew with you.”

“There you are!” Angelica’s voice declared more clearly now, her presence immediately revealing itself due to her marching through people hurrying to avoid her evident passion with their youngest Irish triplet in tow. “I told you to wait!”

“I simply had to speak with Miss Prevost, Angie!” The middle Schuyler sister responded with a beaming smile. “Miss Prevost, may I formally introduce you to Angelica and Margarita Schuyler respectively. Angie, Peggy, this is Theodosia Prevost, the early graduate from Princeton I told you about.”

“Sisters, I presume?” The New York native mused, curtsying along with the two new women.
“The pleasure is mine. Elizabeth and I were about to share a brew, if you two would care to join us.”

“You are too kind, ma’am, but I’m afraid we must be on our way,” Angelica declined easily, her arm wrapping around their Peggy now. “I’m afraid the boat ride over was none too kind to Margarita, but we must talk later at earliest convenience.”

“Of course,” Theodosia agreed with a sympathetic smile. “May you feel better soon, Miss Margarita.”

Peggy gave her a weak, polite smile. “I will do my best. However, please refer to me as ‘Peggy’; my sisters know I do not care much for my birth name.”

“If that offer is still good, Miss Prevost, shall we?” Eliza interjected before her older sister could whisk them both away at her sides.

Angelica’s expression was terribly unimpressed, but the nineteen year old was successfully able to walk away with her idol leading her. They walked into a homely tavern filled with men and a few women who looked respectfully toward the pair before returning to their previous engagements, a notion that made her feel more like more of a foreigner than she were. It was certainly not unusual for immigrants to come from London before, but given the growing tension between her homeland and the colonies, it was nothing short of a miracle that the three sisters were able to board and sail toward a new life promising freedom and opportunity equal among sexes.

“You seem practical,” her new friend mused as they took their seats and ordered the brew of their liking. “Nevertheless, let me offer you some free advice: Reveal less, smile more. They need not know what you’re against or what you’re for.”

“You cannot be serious.” She found herself at a loss for words; yes, times were changing quickly, but a woman would get nowhere if she pretended to be compliant and agreeable.

“If you want to get ahead, you will hold your tongue and what you find until it benefits the most people to reveal it,” the older woman explained with a mysterious smile. “Women who run their mouths wind up dead, you know.”

As if on cue, the doors to the tavern swung open and in stormed in a trio of women, all of which looked overheated, parched, and ready to drink the joint out of business. The woman at the head shrugged off her jacket to expose her bare arms, a gesture that sent many gentlemen blushing and looking the other direction at the plopped herself right beside Theodosia.

“The usual!” She called to the bartender in an accent Eliza had never heard before. “Come, my friends, let us drink until we forgot our problems awaiting us tomorrow! The day is long, but the night need not be!”

“They do say that the consumption of alcohol can lead to shorter life span,” the second young woman commented, her stature considerably smaller despite her face not being the most youthful looking. “I only want the best for you, Madame Adrienne.”

“Do not worry for me, Lucy,” Adrienne replied with a dismissive wave of her hand. “Try the alcohol, it will do well to cheer you in these trying times.”

“If you don’t like it, you just haven’t had the right kind!” The third woman, the one who was clearly not yet of age and very spitfire-and-piss, announced. “The same for me, gentleman behind the bar!”
“Wait, wait, I know you,” Adrienne suddenly announced, looking to Eliza’s new companion with excitement and curiosity. “You are the prodigy of Princeton College! Do indulge in the secrets to life, we will drink all night in rejoice!”

“Madame, you are simply looking for excuse to continue your disorientating habits,” Theodosia replied curtly. “For the life of me, I cannot understand by you look after such a loose cannon, Lucy. And Sybil, what would your father say if he witnessed you here in such a manor?”

When all three women exchanged looks and booed at Theodosia in a partially playful, mostly dismissive of the criticism manor, Eliza knew immediately she wanted in on their group. She watched with fascination as Adrienne launched into a spiel about how she would bring freedom to America while her husband worked on the same in France, smiling as Lucy chimed in about her dreams to assist those possibly condemned to an otherwise lonely death or recovery, and how Sybil raved that she’d be the first woman to fill the shoes her very successful father. Her first friend was clearly less impressed, listening with a resigned expression before cutting in before Sybil appeared to be finished.

“You never know what type of crowd you will encounter in a public place like this,” she said with a quick once-over of the other crowd members. “You must be more carefully taught. If you talk, you’re bound to get shot.”

Eliza stood up so suddenly her boots made audible noise on the floor, her hands gripping her dress as the anxiety of introducing herself to such remarkable women faded into temporary confidence. “I intend to get a scholarship to King’s College, it is not polite to brag but I’m set to amaze and astonish. I have so many ideas but not accreditation, and yet boldly going forward, I will help shape our new nation. We must be loud to be heard, Miss Provost, if we are to take an honest stand and begin to topple both the patriarchy and the oppressive government that prevents everyone from being truly free. All the action in the inevitable war is exciting, but between all the bleeding and fighting I have been becoming well-read and even better written. We must handle our moral compass in spite of all the blood we shall spill, and formulate a plan to found a land of the free that can hold up post battle. Madame Adrienne here is an immigrant like me, and we intend to make this state, this nation a place where people can live and thrive regardless of where they hail. Miss Sybil is defying all expectations like myself, filling the shoes of a man that may not fit us, but we will make our own through our own accomplishments. Miss Lucy may be kind and not so eager to do the violent demands, and yet she embodies exactly what I have dreamed this land could become, should we be free of King George’s mad tyranny.”

Her lengthy speech seemed to have caught the attention of the attendees of the establishment as a whole, and for a moment, she feared she should have taken her original companion’s advice for fear she’d be struck down during her first twenty four hours in America. Instead, the trio of women got to their feet almost as one unit, surrounding her and throwing their arms around her like they were welcoming a long lost relative to their club.

“I’m terribly sorry, but am I talking too loud?” She managed over their physical displays of approval and her own anxiety. “I tend to get overexcited and shoot off at the mouth; I have never had a group of friends before outside of my sisters, and I promise that I will you all proud.”

Adrienne grinned and tugged lightly on the braid falling down her back. “You are perfect, petit fleure.”

“Show those Loyalist non-believers what we stand for! You have to teach me how to talk like that!” Sybil chimed in with a grin. “Hell, we ought to get you in front of a crowd!”

“You speak so eloquently and so honestly, I know you will make all the difference you promise!”
Lucy agreed with a grin that made the young Schuyler feel like she was coming home for the first time. “What is your name, ma’am?”

Giving a grin she was unashamed to conceal any further, she dropped her grip on her dress confidently and stood up straight, so much so that no onlooker could mistake exactly who they’d be dealing with. “Elizabeth Schuyler. My name is Elizabeth Schuyler.”
More of Us

Chapter Summary

Eliza has to answer to those she came across the sea with, and frets over the well-being of those she had to leave behind. Alexander Hamilton enters his own narrative and makes valuable friends who will well shape his life going forth.

Chapter Notes

Despite the ideas presented by the characters, I am not nor will I ever be against Lams or it's being very canon both in the musical and probably in real life. As the note suggests, I explain much better in the End Chapter notes if you'd like to read that before this chapter!

Eliza did not care what all the talk in England was; she felt disgusting after a largely ruthless journey across the sea. She was grateful to fetch the washing basin from the back of their new home and fill it with freezing water, which she then she scrubbed every inch of herself in until she felt a new woman. After carefully combing her hair out and making sure there were no insects or grime, she tied it into a brunette braid that fell down her back, then she pinned underneath a freshly cleaned bonnet for the night before finally slipping into her shift. Her positive, rejuvenated mood faded as she walked into the sitting room, her gaze lowering when she saw the disapproving look her older sister was giving her as her younger sister nursed herself on some medicine bottle she’d clearly been given.

“Did you have fun with the colonist?” Angelica asked coolly.

“I learned much and laughed even more,” the middle sibling replied easily, telling herself she didn’t mind her sibling’s stare. “I met a most remarkable group of young women, ones that reminded me much of ourselves. I do believe you’d quite get along with them.”

“I am sure you are correct,” the older mused before sighing, a small smile crossing her face. “You used to be such an obedient child. Now we get away from our parents and our siblings, and you run off without a second thought to your poor sisters that you left in the dust. What have you to say for yourself, Elizabeth?”

“All of our lives we had to live by the regime of corrupt powerhouses. Our parents had to do the same, and now we’re here in the land of the free and you want to conform to rules that don’t exist?” Eliza hopped to her feet and grabbed her older sister’s hands. “Angelica, look around! Really, look around, and know how lucky we are to be alive right now!”

“History is happening in Manhattan and we just happen to be in the greatest city in the world,” the eldest sister acknowledged with a tired sigh and loving smile.

“That’s right!” Peggy chimed in before dissolving into a small coughing fit. “Pardon me,
but this is the greatest city in the world! Let’s make our futures our own for a change, why don’t we?”

“Our futures have been in our own hands since we got on the ship,” Angie reminded as she wrapped her arms around her sisters affectionately. “We’ll be fine, but we need to at least check in with each other. I don’t know what I’d do if something bad happened to either one of you.”

“Hear here,” the youngest of the trio agreed. “Betsey?”

Though she didn’t like the idea of answering to anybody, she loved her sisters more than anything else; if it meant sacrificing her independence just enough to give them peace of mind, she would do it every time. “We’re agreed.”

With her family contented, the young adult took this opportunity to familiarize herself with their home. It was quite modest compared to the mansion they’d owned in London, but she was already adjusting to the less daunting corridors and fewer rooms that would house themselves and potential guests. She ran her hand against the wall, marveling at the cool stone that built the foundation to make this home stand two stories high. Her parents had spent so much to send them here for a better life, and while much of the effort landed on the trio to be admitted into the university, she longed for them to be with them in America along with her five younger siblings. She hated to think of them trapped in an oppressive country with a king who was quite crackers, and her uselessness to protect and keep them updated on the war that would inevitably rage through both countries.

“You miss them, don’t you?” Her younger sister’s voice inquired softly from behind her.

“Of course I do.” She hugged herself and sighed, turning around with a sad smile. “I think they would love it here. Perhaps it’s quaint, but if it meant they were here…”

“Papa has assured us time and time again they’ll be on the next ship available to safely transport all of them to us,” Peggy reminded, but it was clear the concern was weighing her down just as much. “We will simply have to be patient. Besides, if wartime really is on the horizon, I’d much rather them ration and be closed lipped over there than seek shelter and scavenge over here.”

“You do have an excellent point,” Eliza conceded, but she couldn’t shake the troubled feeling. “We ought to send a letter tomorrow and let them know we made it alright.”

“Will they allow mail to travel overseas now?” The younger reminded with a worried frown. “What if it gets them in trouble, having family over here right before war?”

“When the colonists first came to the Virginian colony, they all came from our homeland. All of the country has family over here,” the older justified easily. “We’ll just not talk too specifically and they’ll be totally safe.”

Her sister didn’t look convinced, but she gave her a nervous smile and nod before bidding her a goodnight. Eliza retired to her own quarters, finding herself far too restless to sleep until she finally seized several pieces of parchment, one of her many quills, and her current jar of ink, settling into her new desk and burning the midnight oil to write all of her experiences thus far down to her parents. She, in the interest of the revolution, did not give names or plans, but she did talk quite a bit about her new friends under aliases, and discussed her hopes to attend new, exciting things in the colonies, such as their formal balls and strange games and recreations she’d seen children doing. She made it a point to designate space to talk to each family member directly, even young Catherine, who was not yet one, and signed off after nearly all of her supply had been expended with her new usual affectionate signature, that being ‘Betsey’ in her neat, flowing
handwriting.

Much to her surprise, the sun had begun to rise by the time she set the papers out to dry. To avoid being scolded by Angelica, she quickly wiped her hands free of the ink and slid into her bed, snuggling underneath the fabric and slipping into dreams of her new life.

Alexander Hamilton was many things. He was an immigrant coming up from the bottom, a bastard, and a short-tempered man. However, he was not the son of a whore, and he had no problem punching the man who indicated it after his reputation began proceeding him only two months into entering the United States.

“At ease, soldier,” a voice he didn’t recognize commanded smoothly, and when he whipped around, he found a rather handsome fellow dressed well with a bald head and a steady expression. “Do not feed into a violent agenda. You are better than a drunk harassment call.”

“I’m not a soldier,” Alex grumbled, giving the pig a final condescending glare that sent him skittering back and out of the bar with his metaphorical tail between his legs. “What’s it to you, anyway?”

“You’re Alexander Hamilton,” the man said with a patient smile. “I’ve heard much about you and I hate to see you dulling up your fantastical reputation. Please, sit, have a drink with my friends and I.”

He gestured to a table where two other men sat, and Alex felt his heart skip a beat when caught sight of the handsome man with curly hair trying to drain a glass with one go. He quickly threw out the ‘indecent’ thought to walk with the gentleman who’d encouraged his calming down, skeptic as he settled onto a barrel stool.

“I’m sorry, sir, I didn’t catch your name?” He extended.

The man smiled and sat down between his two comrades, rolling his eyes when the curly haired man loudly cheered for chugging the alcohol easily. “Aaron Burr.”

“Hello there, you’re Alexander Hamilton, right?” The man with a rag wrapped around his head greeted, smiling in a friendly, at-ease putting way. “Hercules Mulligan, tailor’s apprentice and local rebellion joiner.”

“It’s nice to meet you as well, good-“

“I’m John Laurens!” The curly haired man announced, seizing Alexander’s hand firmly and giving it a very firm shake. “I don’t know if you know it, brother, but this is the place to be! Watch this: Those redcoats don’t wanna with me, cause imma BAP CHIKA BLAP these cops till we’re free!”

Alexander tensed, ready for somebody to call for said redcoats or to kick them out of the bar. Much to his astonishment, nobody batted an eye aside from a couple of people raising a glass to Laurens’s notion, which made the freckled face man grin like the obvious maniac he was. Burr clearly shared his notion, grabbing his younger friend by the back of the waistcoat and pulling him to sit down with a firm look.

“This may be an anti-Loyalist establishment, but they can only enforce that through word of mouth from patrons,” he scolded in a low, quiet voice. “If this place gets busted, we’re all danger;
“Hmph. I still meant what I said,” the man grumbled unhappily, but he seemed to light up again when he saw Alexander. “Hey, I know you! You’re the guy that laid that Loyalist trash out with one punch!”

“He was Loyalist? Now I double don’t feel bad for knocking his teeth loose,” Alex replied with a grin. “Laurens, I like you a lot. What do you say we go create some mayhem sometime?”

“Hell yes!”

“Let’s have another round for tonight,” Hercules injected kindly, pushing the newly refilled glasses toward the gentlemen at the table.

Laurens seemed to finally have calmed down as they took long drinks of their brews, each of them too used to the hard concoction to have to cough or sigh. They discussed their lives thereafter, and while he had ample reason to trust these men, he tried to keep the conversation off of himself in favor of learning more about them. Aaron was a graduate of Princeton College at the ripe age of sixteen, and was now enlisting in the rebellion in hopes of working with the higher ups to increase of social status and income. Hercules was a very talented tailor and wanted to socially advance and become more than a poor man, which resonated with all of them enough to drink again. Laurens was a man on fire, passionately opposing slavery and intending to create the first all-black battalion of soldiers for their freedom.

As the bar emptied out, John began to drunkenly sing something that sounded vaguely like a lullaby. “Raise a glass to freedom…Something they can never take away, no matter what they tell you~!”

“Raise a glass to the four of us!” Alex chimed in due to the alcohol in his system skewering his sense of alertness. “Tomorrow they’ll be more of us! They’ll tell the story of tonight~”

“Let’s have another round tonight?” Hercules suggested, but Aaron, the clear and mostly sober voice of reason, interjected and sent all of them on their way back home with the firm suggestion they keep their noses clean until they could meet again.

Too intoxicated to walk alone, Alexander wrapped his arm around his new friend and stumbled into the town with him, their easily induced laughter loud and jokes full of things far too inappropriate for the daytime. The immigrant hadn’t even realized he had no idea where his tiny loft was in the dark of night until they came to what was evidently John’s home, which was a one bedroom, tiny house that he graciously invited him to spend the night in. He sat on the couch and accepted a loaf of bread and water, slowly consuming both until the room stopped turning and he felt tired enough to sleep.

Needless to say, he was more than shocked when his companion’s lips pressed against his. This did not prevent him from returning the favor with more passion, and soon the two men were sprawled across his each other, kissing everywhere they could reach and pulling off his each other’s shirts to reveal their bare upper torsos for more kissing. It was after this impromptu make out session that John looked to him, his hair fully undone and his lids heavy, a blush across his face and a nervous edge to his words.

“We don’t have to tell anyone that happened, right?” He asked quietly. “I…I don’t want to get committed for public indecency.”

“But we’re not in public,” the slightly man breathed. “And the laws that exist because I
look at men the same way I look at women are ridiculous.”

“I know, I know,” John acknowledged with an anguished smile. “But we are subject to that ancient law until we are free. Until then, my Alexander, we ought to abstain.”

The notion made an ache appear in Alex’s chest, right over where his heart ought to be. He wondered if this brilliant, gorgeous, excellent kisser of a man would be the end of him here and now, but he simply brushed the other’s curls out of his face with a resigned sigh.

“Very well. Goodnight to you then, Mister Laurens?”

“And a goodnight to you, Mister Hamilton.”

With that he was gone, disappeared into his bedroom with only a small glance back. He felt cold suddenly, like a warmth that should have been there had been removed too quickly, but he knew his now dearest friend was right. Homosexuality was a crime, and to continue would be detrimental to them both in the long run.

As he pulled the quilt over him and settled against the couch, he resolved that he’d find a way to make them both happy while keeping them both safe and prosperous, even if it took the entire Revolution to do it.

Chapter End Notes

Gentle PSA stating that I, as a member of the LGBTQUA+ community, have no problem with homosexuality and ship Lams quite hard. However, for the sake of this role reversal and all the things I have planned, I have decided to keep (one of my other very favorite ships) Hamliza as the main protagonists' ship. Worry not, things will not always be as they same as the story continues, and I will tell you that in this narrative, a certain someone takes the place of the romantic interest that always lingers, even after very happy and very unhappy marriages alike occur~
A Woman's Work

Chapter Summary

General Washington and Lady Washington have no time to waste in recruiting more men and woman for the revolution; Alexander catches the eye of the most remarkable woman he has ever encountered.

“Here comes the general!” A voice cut out above the crowd of colonists plodding along against the January cold, and almost immediately everybody stopped and began looking around.

“Could it really be?” A woman asked in awe.

“It is, look!” The same voice, one that belonged to a man with no hair and fancy clothes that Eliza recognized as Aaron Burr, assured. “George Washington!”

“We are outgunned!” The famous general was marvelously right there, standing on the stage made from several sheets of plywood and boxes and looking far more ready to fight for America’s freedom than anybody she’d met, even her trio her of friends. “Outmanned! Outnumbered, out planned! We’ve gotta make an all-out stand, and you know I’m gonna need a right hand man!”

“Oh woman,” a female voice added from behind him, one that belonged to a radiant woman with long, black hair tucked away underneath a mop cap.

The two dismounted from their position above the swelling crowd, the general beginning to talk to young men about enlistment while the lady, clearly his wife, began to discuss with women the potential of their enlistment and what they must do back home to support “the boys in blue”. Eliza stood to the side with her companions, her eyes wide as she watched George seemingly send away the irritated redcoats with a look and a signal to his well-armed side pouch.

“So he’s the famous commander that everyone has been talking about,” the Schuyler noted to her friends. “I can see how his reputation precedes him.”

“My father says he’s an excellent man and an even better leader,” Sybil commented, casting a watchful eye on him. “He does say that his ‘know when to retreat’ stance can be troubling, though…”

“If he knows when to withdraw from battle, wouldn’t he be saving more lives and allowing his men to fight another day?” Lucy inquired with a patient smile. “I cannot see anything problematic with that.”

The youngest of them still grimaced. “These men must know what they are committing to when they enlist. I cannot think of a more honorable way to die than for one’s new, promising country.”

The twenty two year old simply placed a hand on her back comfortingly. “I am sure he will demonstrate his line of thought in due time. After all, Henry thinks very fondly of him, and you have said yourself he has remarkably good taste.”

The sixteen year old simply grunted and squared her shoulders the more the couple drew near. “Yeah, in beer and potential strategy.”
“Good evening to you ladies.” And suddenly Martha Washington was before them, looking even more dazzling up close despite her dress being quite plain. “Pray you tell me, what are your ideals and vision for the colonies?”

Before any of her friends could pop off or otherwise answer, Eliza swiftly stepped nearly nose to nose with the other woman. “I say it’s time we ought to rise up; when you’re living on your knees you rise up, so when are these colonies? We have resources that far counterweight what we receive from Britain, and for what we lack, we have hundreds upon thousands of individuals right here that can make or find these items and goods. With the right allies backing us up and enough support from the public, there is absolutely no reason we ought not to be a nation of our own, one with representation that would never be allowed in our birth places.”

Martha stared at her for a long moment, and for a split second, she feared she’d somehow said something wrong. Then the older woman extended her hands, taking hers firmly and giving her a genuine smile.

“My, my, what a head you have on your shoulders,” she mused. “Minds progressive and innovative like yours are the kind my husband and I like to see. Please, remain here until I come fetch you; George will very much like to make your acquaintance.”

“Then he would like to meet my companions as well,” Eliza assured, smiling warmly to her and then to her trio. “Madame Adrienne has one of the most tactical and fearless minds I have ever had the pleasure of encountering. Miss Knox is compassionate and observant, and I believe she has a nurse’s heart that could withstand the pressure of a war casualties. As for Sybil—”

“Hold on, hold on, why are they ‘Mrs.” and “Miss”, but I’m just Sybil?” The teen interjected, her cheeks puffing with air in a pout.

Eliza brought her hand to her cheek reassuringly, a kind motion that seemed to settle her down once more. “I believe her spirit speaks for itself, does it not?”

“It does indeed,” Mrs. Washington agreed with an easy smile, her eyes thoughtful. “He will pleased to meet all of you interesting young women. Please, do pardon me for a brief period as I finish my recruiting efforts.”

“Of course, ma’am. Thank you.”

The quad looked at each other, giving each other excited expressions. Adrienne wrapped her arm around her, kissing her a light kiss on the cheek and letting out a laugh choppy with nerves and anticipation.

“You are something else, Betsey,” she declared. “Talking to one of the most notable women of our time like it was something casual, and getting our names in! Wait till they give you a position in their staff! The whole world won’t know what hit them!”

“Thank you, Addie, I appreciate that!” She laughed excitedly, extending her arm around the other woman’s corset line to steady them both. “That’s the plan, anyway.”

As promised, the Washingtons made their way over to the eager group of women, Martha leading her husband with her arms around one of his. “Ladies, please introduce yourselves to us; I did not catch your names in their entirety before. My name is Martha Washington and this is my husband, George.”

“It’s a pleasure,” the general replied, taking off his hat briefly and dipping it into his partial bow
before replacing it on his head.

“Adrienne de Lafayette!” The eighteen year old of the group declared immediately, extending one hand boldly while flourishing out a curtesy with the other. “The pleasure is mine, sir. I believe you have conversed via letter with my husband, Marquis de Lafayette?”

“A young man with a passion for supplying aide to our new nation as well as freeing his own,” George mused, shaking her hand with the same firmness he likely used with his men. “It is lovely to meet his wife. You seem all the like him, ma’am.”

“Lucy Flucker Knox,” Eliza’s oldest companion interjected next. “You work alongside my husband quite closely, and while we have met in passing, it a pleasure to speak with you properly now.”

“You are eloquent and lovely as he has mentioned,” the commander replied with a smile. “It is a privilege to have our efforts backed by women like you back home.”

“Sybil Ludington, you know my father!” The youngest said quickly, not bothering with the curtesy as she shook his hand with both of hers. “I trust you will stop at no ends until we are free, general?”

“Absolutely,” he agreed, accepting her greeting and saluting her briefly. “And I trust that you will serve the home frontier with dignity and prowess to make your father proud.”

“Yes sir!”

Now that their eyes drifted to her, she felt a bubble of anxiety rise in her chest. The chill seemed all that more unforgiving as she removed her hands from her muff, tucking it away into her basket and lowering it to the crowd swiftly. She grabbed the ends of her gown to curtesy, but decided against it in favor of accepting his outstretched hand.

“Elizabeth Schuyler. It’s a pleasure to meet you, sir,” she said as evenly as she could muster.

“My wife has said that you embody the ideas that fuel the revolution,” the older man stated with a formal curiosity setting his face. “I would be very interested to hear more about these ideas of yours, Miss Schuyler. Shall we get out of this awful weather first?”

Eliza was so excited she felt she could implode, but she looked first to comrades for approval, as she felt bad just leaving them in her wake when they’d help refine and fuel these concepts so she could go stir up the minds of all the colonists she encountered. A collective ecstatic nod and hand motions to urge her forward was at it look for the young woman to turn back to the soldier and begin listing her tentative battle strategies, making it a point to focus efforts heavily on continuing the recruitment of those back home when the battles were well under way and formulating how the republic out to be run when the last canon was fired. She talked the entire carriage ride to his home, which silenced her in its grandeur and beauty alone.

“Here, love, you simply must try this,” Lady Washington told her, handing her a cup of hot chocolate and settling into the couch with her. “Now, as for our mutual interests, we would like to offer you a position in my husband’s staff. How well can you write?”

“I come from a very well read family,” she replied with a smile, trying hard not to jump up and hug them both right there. “I have been writing for quite a long time, and should I be given parchment and enough ink to put legacy to my ideas, I feel I could easily do any task you put before me.”

“That’s exactly what we wanted to hear,” George responded with a small smile of his own. “I simply do not have time to write to Congress and implore them for the supplies we demand to
continue our efforts, as well as answer the collective inquiries and concerns around thirteen colonies struggling to stay together. I believe you would be a valuable asset to solving this problem.”

“Of course!” She almost shouted, unable to hold back her enthusiasm. “Ahem, pardon me. It would an honor, your honor, to serve and assist you.”

“Excellent. My love also mentioned you were insist about giving notability and credit to your companions?”

She beamed and adjusted her gown, accepting the piece of parchment and a quill/ink container offered. “Thank you. Assuming that I have their consent, I have some ideas about how they may assist…”

Stealing cannons was a lot harder than it looked. For one thing, they were ridiculously heavy, they made a lot of noise, and they smelled too strongly for one to bear after encountering it frequently enough. As they passed the final one off to men from the Continental Army to carry on, the ragtag quad set from the bar was properly exhausted and more than ready to grab some alcohol and stuff their faces with some food.

“You holding up, short stack?” Hercules joked lightly and good naturedly, ruffling Alexander’s sweat-soaked hair as they limped to their usual tavern.

“Shut up,” he grumbled in protest, but that was all he really had the energy to do at this point. “I don’t see you just rearing to go again, Mister Hot Pants.”

“Take it easy, both of you,” Aaron implored calmly. “Let’s share a couple of rounds and rest up. Tomorrow shan’t be much different than today until we’re free.”

“There’s got to be something more we can do,” the tailor griped with a sigh. “Like old Laurens! Aide de camp to Washington like it wasn’t nothing at all!”

“Ah, yes indeed. Writing revolutionary words and essays against slavery until my fingers bleed. My idea of a good time,” John countered, but all of them knew very well that he absolutely loved working so closely with someone so renowned. “You could quit your belly aching and just talk to the man, you know. I could put in a good word.”

“I plan to do just that tomorrow,” Aaron responded with a determined smile. “I pray that he’ll give me command of a battalion of men to lead.”

“The general’s always looking for new, willing blood,” his best friend replied with a grin. “You’ll have it in no time, my friend.”

As they approached the tavern, they knew immediately something was wrong. People were gathered around it in twice the volume they usually were, and redcoats were angrily trying to push through to no avail. Exchanging a knowing look with John, Alexander wasted no time circling the outside of the cluster and climbing up the back of the slanted roof with his companion, peeking in through the broken slates to see what all the commotion was about.

A gentleman that practically reeked of prim and proper Loyalist stood on one of the tables, a Bible in one hand and a scroll that reached the floor in the other. He was announcing that the patrons ‘head not the rebels who scream ‘Revolution!’ and how he prayed the King would show them his
mercy, and the nerve of such an arrogant imp had no issue burying itself deep into his nerves.

“Oh my God, someone tear this dude apart,” John grumbled, looking just as irritated as he felt.

“I’m about to go in through the window and tell him some hard truth,” the immigrant agreed, but before he could shimmy down, he caught eye of a woman, one that looked as young as he and wore a blue riding gown, standing up with rigid determination written across her body language.

“Head all you want and scream at the sound of the screams but the revolution is coming, the have-nots are going to win this!” She declared, interjecting boldly into his rambling. “It’s hard to listen to you with a straight face!”

Watching her make an ass out of the ignorant man was something he’d never seen before in a female, especially one as gorgeous and well-class as she appeared to be. Alexander watched in amazement as she hopped on the table with the Loyalist, her wit sharp and unforgiving as she cut down his argument and his ineloquent stance with seemingly no effort. From where she’d once sat, he saw three other women, all of who looked equal parts proud and appalled at her bold behavior. It was the one with dark, braided hair that eventually came to her companion, extending a hand and looking around nervously.

“Miss Schuyler, please-!” She hissed, but the revolutionary woman was clearly have none of it.

“Theo, I’d rather be divisive and bold than indecisive and weak like Mister Seabury!” The Schuyler woman responded coolly, looking to Seabury like one might look at a lame, rapid beast. “For the likes of him, we ought to drop the niceties.”

The doors finally banged open further and redcoats came swarming in, all of which calling for silence as one on the outside fired his gun in the air. Two of the bastards seized the woman unforgivingly, yanking her to her knees from her former position and not stopping as they marched her outside. Alexander was not sure he and John could or had moved so quickly as they did then, tearing toward them as they threatened to hang her for treason or shoot her for being so disrespectful to ‘the great King George’. The gall of the men sent a surge through him and had him reaching for his brand new pistol that Aaron had gifted him, but John simply extended a hand toward him and rushed between the guards and Miss Schuyler.

“Gentlemen, gentlemen!” He cried out before she could let loose the insult or declaration of her independence that was clearly brewing on her face. “Please forgive my wife. She knows nothing of these matters, and shall be given a stern lesson in holding her tongue once we return home.”

“You ought to give it now!” One of them barked angrily. “A woman isn’t bright enough to maintain that level of thought for too long.”

John simply gave them a tight, polite smile. “With all due respect, good sir, I must disagree. Please allow me to tend to her; this will not happen again.”

Grumbling but satisfied in large, the redcoats marched off. Laurens immediately scowled passionately at their backs, offering his hands to help the woman to her feet.

“Are you alright?” He asked kindly, and much to their mutual surprise, she simply grinned and shrugged.

“I rid the country of one more ignorant preacher and pissed off some redcoats properly. I would say I’m doing quite well,” she told him with an aurora of calmness. “If I died at their hands, I died for our freedom. I greatly appreciate your assistance regardless, Mister…?”
“Laurens. John Laurens,” he responded with a charming smile, taking her hand and bowing down while kissing it. “I do believe I recognize you. Aren’t you the woman on Washington’s staff?”

“Yes sir. I have been for the past nearly two months now,” she agreed.

Before Alexander could say ‘hello’ or compliment her remarkable bravery, the women from her table rushed in and swooped her away with partial worried doting, partial scolding, and a lot of congratulating the further they got away from the tavern. Alexander was left to powerlessly stare after her, mouth slightly agape, before looking to his intimate companion in awe.

“She is not like anyone else,” he finally managed.

“That she is, my friend, that she is,” John agreed, his own cheeks pinkened from the encounter. “Didn’t she say her last name was Schuyler?”

“Yes, and we should have gotten her first name.”

Laurens immediately broke into a grin that he knew all too well meant mischief and adventure. “Well then. I know for a fact that General Washington is throwing a lavish ball in a fortnight’s time, and that three women with the last name ‘Schuyler’ will be in attendance. I assume now that one Mister Hamilton will also be attending?”

Alex simply grinned, still staring after the direction she’d been ushered away from. “Why yes, Mister Laurens. I believe he shall.”
Down for the Count

Chapter Summary

Reality is not always as simple and eloquent as it potentially could be, and the relationships forged on a few critical nights impact the rest of those affected's lives. Not one, not two, but three individuals fall helpless to the ruthless grip of love.

Chapter Notes

THIS CHAPTER HAS BEEN UPDATED! The original version was published on July 17th, 2018, but I am officially updating its length by around an addition 3,000 words as of October 19th, 2018! I absolutely adore the songs 'Helpless' and 'Satisfied', and the further I got into this story, the more I was struck with the notion I'd severely undershot all that could be done with this section of the story. I hope you enjoy all the changes and clarification made, and I'll see you soon with a new chapter! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Come now, Eliza, you must look proper for such a formal occasion!”

“I would look more like a woman suitable to being Washington’s aide-de-camp if I were in a battle uniform,” the twenty-two-year-old grumbled unhappily. “I’m his right hand woman in every aspect, and yet I must keep my feet planted firmly on the soil in safety. Why should we be hosting such an elaborate ball if our men are still out there dying?”

“It is a means for the soldiers to relax before they may possibly perish for our cause. It is also a means of alleviating the pains the ration has brought the public,” Lucy replied calmly, placing one last flower for decoration in the braids she’d made in the Schuyler’s hair before swiftly pinning said braids into a lovely high bun. “You look marvelous.”

“I ought to. You have been at work on me for the past three hours!” The younger woman exclaimed, but she did wrap her friend in an embrace when she stood. “Thank you for your help.”

Trying to remember how to walk in the elaborate dress that covered any view she may have previously had of her legs, she made her way to her sisters downstairs. Angelica was busy with a lengthy list, one that she had been worrying over for the past two months since she learned she’d be travelling back one last time to France to serve as an ambassador along with Thomas Jefferson and other greats, this time until the war was won. Peggy, who’d grown well into her figure and who was wearing the most complicated and beautiful marigold gown of the three, grabbed the scroll and pocketed it swiftly.

“Not another look at that wretched thing until this event has concluded!” She announced with a childish pout. “This is the last night we shall have of you before you’re off shaking hands and aiding this awful war. Could we please have our sister rather than the backside view of her endless tasks?”
Angelica sighed fondly and smoothed down her own dress, a regal beige gown that fell over her practically flawless features in all of the most flattering places. “Your sister you shall have. It looks like our tomboy of the family has at last arrived, though I do wonder she’s done with our Eliza…”

“Blame it on Lucy!” The middle child lamented, unceremoniously stomping over to her siblings and having to catch herself against the youngest. “This gown cost almost as much money as the whole damn war!”

“Watch your language!” Peggy gasped, but the older of the two simply screwed up her face and stuck out her tongue.

“There she is,” Angelica resolved affectionately. “Now, look alive and pleasant, both of you. I encourage you to have actual fun while you know you still can.”

The other guests were filling in, so the right hand woman tried to look as graceful as possible amid the crowd. As any eligible woman ought to do, she made the rounds with the bachelors and wed men alike who were signing up with the hosts to dance with her, and she found herself quite fond a few of them despite not feeling the need to pursue it further. Despite all the formalities and the expectation to be secured within a union- it mattered not whether it be a happy one or otherwise according to the general public, she noted to herself disdainfully, - the blossoming twenty-two-year-old still took every chance she had to simply waltz or mess around with her beloved friends, and her stomach took precedence when the servants brought in the food. She’d just finished devouring one hearty portion of the meat dishes they’d laid out when a very handsome young man, one that tugged on the strings of her memory, approached her with his arm extended.

“May I have this dance, Miss Schuyler?” He requested with a smile and a mild southern accent, both of which she immediately placed.

“May I, indeed, Mister Laurens,” she conceded at once, accepting his hand and beginning to perform one of the many ballroom dances she’d known since she was very small and once practiced with her beloved father.

As they went through the same motions she’d already done graciously with so many others, she was able to get a good look at his face. He was handsome, certainly one of the most handsome men at the event, and he was well groomed without being as gaudy as most of the other bachelors looking to impress. The things Eliza lingered on the most were his hair and eyes; his hair was immaculately cared for and looked quite fluffy, so much so she was tempted to stroke it, but his sincere gaze was enough to keep her at bay. His eyes were a brilliant shade of green and caramel brown, one she’d surely seen before but never quite so clearly, and his thoughts seemed to be a million miles away while his eyes simultaneously never left her own. That look was one she knew all too well as belonging to the most able and intellectual of the country, and should this gentleman be as eligible as she, she was struck by the intense desire to secure a mind as recklessly brilliant as her own to her side.

“You strike me as someone who has never been satisfied,” she finally commented.

He seemed surprised at first- even with the more progressive times, women rarely spoke so plainly in polite company, but what more did he expect from the lady he’d once saved from being shot? He smiled regardless as he carefully spun her. “I’m sure I don’t know what you mean; please explain yourself.”

She laughed softly and completed her turn before continuing her thought. “You’re like me. I’m never satisfied, no matter what pleasantries I bow through, how many essays I write, or how many accomplishments I seem to achieve. It is hard to say indefinitely what I want, but not having it
seems to light a fire under me that cannot be put out.”

John’s eyes were sparkling now. “Is that right? Perhaps we are more of the same, then. My cause has been one that I have believed in since I was five years old, and yet the more progress I make, the less slack I tend to give myself.”

She nodded; she understood those feelings very well, particularly as a woman being a driving force behind the war. “You work with General Washington yourself, do you not? You are the man creating the first all-black battalion of soldiers.”

“Pleased to meet you again,” he responded with a crooked grin that made her heart flutter in piqued interest.

“You have saved my life before,” she affirmed aloud. “I never thanked you properly. You were very brave, and I am indebted to you for outwitting those nasty men when you didn’t even know my name.”

“It was no issue at all, ma’am,” he assured, and despite the weight of what he’d done for her, something about the way he assured made her believe him. “We aide-de-camps have to look after one another.”

The song concluded and they exchanged their proper bows to thank the other for the interaction, and she gave him a warm smile. “I suppose we do. It shan’t be an effort done in vein; I have a million things I haven’t done, but just you wait.”

She was reeling over the encounter and recounting the conversation to Theodosia when she spotted him again. Her dear female friend simply smiled at her, suggesting he was ‘coming back for more,’ before she slipped away and he slipped his arm around Eliza's own.

“I have someone who would love to make your acquaintance,” he reported while carefully leading her through the masses.

“So where are you taking me?” She inquired with a smile; she trusted him indefinitely regardless.

He grinned crookedly and squeezed her bicep lightly. “I hate to make promises I cannot keep, but I’m about to change your life.”

Alexander has never felt so helpless in his entire life. His father abandoning him and his mother, the hurricane that destroyed his town and nearly drowned him, the quiet after his mother stopped breathing; none of it compared to the way he reacted when he saw Elizabeth Schuyler, filled out like a dream and as wise and intelligent as she’d ever been. As he watched her dance with other man, he found himself easing through the masses, desperately trying to catch her eyes while being far too flustered to approach her directly.

“Alexander!” Hercules exclaimed as he joined his companion and his very lovely wife near the back of the ball. “What are you doing here? Shouldn’t you be sweeping young women off their feet rather than lingering among the affectionate and married?”

He felt like an absolute child as he seized his close friend’s arm, burying his eyes in his own sleeve
lightly and exhaling shakily as he attempted to steady himself. “God, I am so into her! You must shake me to my senses!”

“Aww, that’s adorable!” His wife exclaimed warmly, her eyes scanning the sea of people eagerly. “And who is the lucky lady?”

“I do not need any teasing to know how ridiculous I sound!” Alex practically whined as his companion wrapped an arm good-naturedly around him.

“Whoever she is, does she know you’re interested? Many of the eligible ladies here have their lists available for potential suitors,” Hercules pointed out easily. “They’re located in a small area near the front of the gala-”

“I do not think you understand!” The younger practically squeaked. “I cannot talk to her! She is far from my social class and ranking, dear sir, and every man here has her within his vision! It’d be foolish for me to think I could speak to her so boldly.”

“Wait-!” Mrs. Mulligan exclaimed. “Are you perchance speaking of one Elizabeth Schuyler?”

The heat radiating off his face was would be enough to warm the entire room, he decided. “Perhaps.”

“She’s a lovely lady if the rumors hold any truth, and any woman denying you is not a woman worth your time!” Hercules insisted, his eyes catching someone in the dancing crowd nearby. “Johnny! Come here and help me convince Alexander that he should talk to-”

“Hercules Mulligan!”

Alexander paused his scolding to his companion, his heart sinking hard when he saw his closest friend, clearly having not heard the outburst, go up to her and ask her quite eloquently to dance. As he watched both of them talk and easily move across the dance floor, he could not help but to confront the reality that Laurens had so much more to offer her (at least financially), and that she’d be nearly as foolish as he felt to not accept a courtship from him. Watching them made him feel cold as he politely skirted away from the Mulligans, as though the feeling of being hopelessly enamored now felt like a curse, he couldn’t bear the idea of being satisfied with whoever-whoever- else if he didn’t at least try.

“Yo,” he’d stuttered as he grabbed his best friend from his exiting the floor. “This next one’s mine.”

John looked to where his eyes fell before smiling, making his way back into the swell toward her immediately. Alexander had been frantically and ‘subtly’ trying to adjust his outfit to be more presentable thereafter, but as he saw his very handsome comrade retrieving her, his heart sunk further. He would be truly ignorant not to note that there no way she’d go for a scoundrel like him when she could have a commander like Laurens. He’d all but resigned himself to that grim reality when she looked up at him, her brown eyes glimmering in the candlelight, and his heart leaped nearly out of his chest yet again.

“Here he is!” John announced, loyal friend he was. “The man, the myth, the legend, the gentleman who would kill to have a dance with you!”

“Alexander Hamilton,” he clarified with an unmistakable blush powdering his cheeks. “I’m at your service, ma’am.”

“Elizabeth Schuyler,” she responded with pink flushing into her own face, her curtsy deep. “It’s a
pleasure to meet you. Do you two know each other?”

“He’s my best friend,” Laurens responded with an easy beam. “He is also an aide-de-camp to the general. I am certainly not implying you ought to dance with all of us, good ma’am, but I assure this one is a worthy partner.”

“Thank you for all your service, sir,” she said with elegant sincerity. For a split second, he feared she turn her affection back to his John, and while Lord knew he deserved it, he felt strongly compelled to persist.

“Why should you thank me?” He blurted, his eyes wide as he looked her up and down. “You came from a wealthy family, leaving it all behind to begin anew in America with your sisters that you allegedly pulled along for the ride. You have done leaps and bounds more than any man in our time, and you continue to surprise the world with your intellect, wit, and of course, your unmatched beauty. Truly, thank you.”

He would remember that night for the rest of his life, he supposed. They’d danced and laughed and did not leave each other’s side the entire ball, and when they parted, she’d left him with a small peck to the cheek that’d left him a hardly coherent mess. For the following week, he pumped out love letters as much as he did motivation and assurance to Congress, and he found his life getting better with every time she responded with in excellent prose, masterful concepts, and love language that was by far the most exciting he’d ever heard.

“Another letter from your lover!” Laurens announced, sitting beside him on his tiny bed in the mediocre apartment he’d resided in for years. “No, wait, **two** from her, one from your father, and one from…Angelica Schuyler, of all people! Alexander, you old dog!”

“I am not courting two sisters at once!” He exclaimed, hurriedly taking the parchment and hesitating over his lady’s letters before deciding to exam her sister’s message first.

*Mister Hamilton,*

*Cold in my professions but warm in my friendships, I must concede to write you rather than demonstrate by action that I am quite fond of you. I am nevertheless too sensible of the defects of man to not think it probable that you commit many errors, but the reason for my postage is to encourage against which you may commit against my most dear Eliza.*

*You see, from a quite young age she has been a generally gentle soul. Her disposition has always been that of kindness and consideration for the well-being of others. From the time she could walk without assistance, she has been on a constant endeavor to see to it the various wrongs of the world rightened, as though she could fix it all with enough careful attention to detail, compassion and sharp wit. She has always been awfully fond of animals, preferring to keep our estate bustling with furry companions and assisting beasts of the wild loyally when it came to her knowledge they were not thriving. I have thought for quite some time that God secured her with the heart of a saint while giving her enough spirit for a life alongside but not within the church, and yet, as you can imagine, this could be a source of weakness for some young suitor to exploit to achieve of financial status.*

*Pay head to my words, Alexander. Should it be of my or Peggy’s opinion that you are not of our sisters’ highest affections and standards, you shall be booted and publicly humiliated beyond possible redemption. Our father may be of great social standing back in London, but in his absence fighting the war and in the inevitable expense of his mortality, I am the matriarch of the family. Do not tread carelessly upon the terrain I have worked all of my life to maintain and protect, young man. It will be your downfall.*
Though I take you as the type of gentlemen to take harsh truths bodily, I have been implored by dear Peggy to note that should you be genuine that we will welcome you with open arms.

Adieu,

Angelica Schuyler.

As he reread the letter, Alex found his face growing redder with the pain and offense to her miscalculations along with the bitter knowledge he’d have to endure it should he wish to wed the young woman he was infatuated with. He handed the parchment carelessly to his companion and indulged himself in his lady’s fantastic love letters, ones that excited him an embarrassing amount and made him practically dance around like a child, before beginning all of his replies. He worked side by side on the postings to the two Schuyler sisters, one bound for France and other a town’s length away, while Laurens made their dinner and hummed along to the street band performing outdoors.

“What shall you do if you mix up the contents of the envelopes?” His best friend teased as the ink dried and they ate together.

At the mere thought, he immediately groaned. “I fear that Angelica may rid me of a nose all together.”

The two laughed at the sexual implication like two schoolboys; of course it would be alright to say ‘penis’ in each other’s company, but it still was nothing he wanted to envision anywhere near the terrifying future matriarch of the Schuyler family. As they finished up and his companion prepared to bathe, he checked and double checked each piece of parchment carefully until they were sealed up for posting.

“I’m just saying, Alexander~” John drawled out, and with a terrible renewed blush the younger came to realize his best friend was nearly completely undressed, his underclothes far too thin to leave much to the imagination. “If you really loved me, you would share her.”

“HA!” The twenty-two-year-old practically choked out, tossing one of the holding weights from his desk toward his companion.

It was evident by the end of the month that his affections were quite returned by the female revolutionary, a prospect that made him giddy. He was eventually faced with the prospect of obtaining her notable family’s blessing, and while it relieved him to know Angelica was far too out of pocket to tear him to pieces, he would need to speak with one Phillip Schuyler, a war general Washington was familiar with and was much more confident about the temperament of than his aide-de-camp could dare to be.

Her father unfortunately did not seem all the impressed with him when he asked for his blessing in his fanciest attire and most well-polished pleasant talk. Of course Eliza had warned him that he was quite hard to please given that it was only he was able to infiltrate the Redcoats and become a Patriot while the rest of her family stayed in England, but he could not find it recommended by anyone to wait until the end of the war to proclaim all of his love for her, nor did he want to. The world seemed to weigh its’ entirety on his shoulders as the older gentleman sat stiffly, eyes stern and movements deliberately eloquent. Alexander eventually internally acknowledged that her father was a man born with a silver spoon in one hand and a tea cup in another, and that he was just some bastard orphan from the Caribbean. What good reason should he give his beloved second child over to the likes of him, no matter how sincere his affection?

When Mister Schuyler finally stood, it felt as though Alexander's heart was beating between his
mouth and neck. Rather than go to him, Mister Schuyler walked over to his daughter and took her
dainty hands within his own before speaking.

“It is quite clear to me this young man is fond of you in earnest. Should you feel quite identical of
him, you have my blessing,” the Schuyler patriarch stated with resigned but proud smile. “See to it
that you be true.”

Despite the bubbling shock combined with intense relief, Alexander somehow managed to contain
it long enough for his elder to come to him and shake his hand. “You will give my daughter all that
she deserves and more, or you shall be within sorrow for the rest of your days. Understood?”

“Yes sir!” He responded, face full of color and eyes stinging from tears of joy. “As long as I shall
live, I shall give her the best life that I can.”

His beloved Betsey immediately squealed in delight, throwing her arms round her father and
hugging him before practically tackling her younger sister. She was so ecstatic, in fact, that she
leapt right into his expectant arms, giving him the opportunity to spin her around and press their
foreheads together as they laughed in joy. They decided to take a private walk in the park after the
initial elation passed, their hands firmly clasped to each other’s, when he decided to meekly bring
up what they both already knew.

“Eliza, I don’t have an acre a land, a troop to command, or a dollar to my name,” he pointed out.
“All I have is my honor, a tolerance for pain, a couple of college credits and my top notch…er,
brain.”

“I don’t have much myself,” she interjected gently, somehow putting all her worries to bed with her
voice. “My family gave up nearly everything to this country. We live in a sizeable home, yes, but
we have five little mouths to feed back home along with my mother. Times will be pressed when
they are finally able to join us safely; it is not as though it has not been equally difficult enough
with Angelica strapped just to keep herself prospering while I try to convince dear Peggy she ought
not to marry straight away. In addition to all of this, I have to scream just to stay balanced on the
tightrope that is societal prosperity; even then, I am only slightly above the bottom. I know that we
can get a little place in Harlem, and we will figure it out.”

“I’ve been living without a family since I was a child,” he recounted wistfully at the reality of
marrying into a large family. “My father left. My mother’s soul has been at rest for quite some
time, and I have only grown up out of my own will. I’ll never forget my mother’s face- it was real-
and as long as I’m alive Eliza, I swear to God you’ll never feel so helpless.”

She smiled widely and paused her stride, leaning in and kissing him softly. He couldn’t help but
depen it, his hands lightly engulfing her smaller, much smoother ones. It was only the gentle
laughter of the older couples nearby that broke them apart, and even then she giggled so profusely
at his flush that he was practically forced to tackle her to the ground and roll around with her as
though they were only years old.

“I know it isn’t much…” He confessed as they laid side by side, looking up to the sky with their
bodies pressed close. “But I hope it will be enough to earn your seal of approval.”

With his fingers trembling, Alex carefully got out the two golden rings he’d had crafted with their
initials and each other’s birthstones, displaying them to her in the palm of his hand. As she stared at
them silently, he’d begun to worry she disliked them before she captured him in a kiss, one that
made him melt anew if it were possible.

“Oh,” she whispered as he hopefully slipped it on her finger. “I do, I do, I do, I do!”
“YES!” He exclaimed to the world, a gesture that sent them rolling around in their laughter yet again, but the grass and dirt stains were no price compared to what they had.

Before either of them knew it, they were being wed outside the Schuyler manor, his eyes filled with tears of love as she walked toward him in the most flawless gown he’d ever seen with her face hidden shyly behind her veil. At his side stood his best friends, almost all of which were crying themselves, and couldn’t help but stand a bit straighter in the presence of her visiting family members.

“In New York, you can be a new man,” he told her as he got to the end of his lengthy vows. “I came to this country dirt poor, full of piss and vinegar, and lost. Now that I have you, I have realized what I am meant to be. I want to be by your side, paving the way to a new nation that we will grow along with and begin a family within.”

Her eyes were full of her own tears as she vowed the same to him, describing his hair, which he used to think was ugly and out of place, as fitting his personality and being stunningly unique; she also compared to his eyes to being like the sky, and his words the sweetest song she wished to hear for the rest of her days. They could not say ‘I do’ quickly enough thereafter, and when they kissed so deeply and sincerely that it felt like a dream, Alexander felt completely, irrefutably happy for the first time in a very long time.

It seemed that the only individuals John Laurens was allowed to love were people he could not have. As a matter of fact, the two people he’d fallen intently and passionately for were now newlyweds dancing around the ballroom, and the contradicting feelings that coursed through his entire being had him feeling vaguely ill. He watched them with quiet reverence now as they stared into each other’s eyes as if they were only people that mattered, and for the first time in the chaos of meeting her family and engaging in all the traditional wedding festivities, he was left simply with his thoughts and his glass of champagne.

He’d been confused about his sexuality since he was very young, and though he was always forced to conform to heterosexuality, he often dreamed a future with Alexander until he became her knight in shining armor all those months ago. Some part of him was awakened by longing for her at a respectful distance, but it all went up in flames when Alexander clung to him and whispered that he wanted to meet her at last. Anyone who knew him at all knew that he loved his best friend more than anyone else in his life, and that he’d immediately discard his own happiness every time if it meant Hamilton could get the victories he fought so desperately for. He’d introduced them, they’d fallen in love like they’d always known they would with each other. He, for one, had known they would, and yet he sacrificed his own dreams for both of their sakes.

As the evening wore on and he carried around his unspoken baggage, he found himself unable to fall back in the familiar patterns of flirtation he’d become known for. It was a huge relief when the formal well-wishing of the new couple began, finally allowing him to evade an older widow’s advances with a polite nod and any remorse he may have felt having been slaughtered by his own internalized depression. Young Margarita Schuyler, the maid of honor along with the eldest sister, went on now in comparing them to a fairy-tale and complimenting them both on their compatibility, and she finished with a hilarious anecdote that temporarily managed to alleviate his stress before all eyes came to him, the best man to his best friend.

“A toast the groom!” He declared, holding up his wine glass and fighting back the bite of his cold
reality. “To the bride! From one mister, who’ll always be by your side.”

People were eating it up, their eyes shining and happiness evident. The Hamiltons stood together, looking to him and lifting their own glasses with shameless grins of pure happiness. He wondered if they’d ever release the other as long as they lived.

“To your union, and the hope that you provide!” He continued with a smile. “May you always be satisfied!”

As he stepped down, both of them rushed up to him and brought him swiftly into a tight group hug. He threw his arms around them both, his breathing hitching quietly and trying his hardest to savor their intimate touches enough to last the rest of time. Alexander was soon led off to dance with a man that served him more like a father than a general, leaving John allowance to embrace Eliza once more.

Leaning close to her ear, he whispered with meaning felt and concerned inquisition, “Will you ever be completely content?”

“I-“She began softly, but he didn’t miss the way her figure tensed in response.

“You don’t have to tell me that you love him. I know you do,” he assured with a soft smile that he knew gave away his sadness. “But for him, and for your marriage…remain satisfied.”

She might have been prepared to answer, but then her beloved Angelica came over and insisted they share a dance to a song chronicling the love of a family. He watched her go fully before turning on his heel, intending to drink himself into a small coma to forget his troubles, when he was stopped by the most unexpected of the Irish triplet set. Margarita stared up to him with her brown eyes shining in the bountiful candlelight, her mouth set in a vague near-pout as she studied him with all the inspection that he would expect from someone like their father.

“You seem terribly out of place, good sir,” she remarked after an uncomfortable silence. “Do you reckon we go be out of place together?”

“I would be delighted to,” he conceded; what more did he possibly have to lose?

Together the two journeyed to a more vacant building on the block where the festivities were taking place, all the way to the garden of a hotel that’d lodge several people from out of town when the night was dark and the dew of early morning began to form. Once they were the secrecy of the groves, she revealed a large bottle and two ‘borrowed’ glasses, ones she filled all the way to the top and decorated with some additives before handing one to him.

“You seem terribly out of place?” He finally inquired after he drained half of his beverage in silence. “You belong far more naturally than I could ever hope to.”

“You’d think that, but not when I’m twenty and not encouraged to wed despite the prosperity it would bring!” The more youthful sighed against her own glass. “It is a dreadfully lonely business. I am convinced Daddy thinks it best I marry within the family, but I feel as though I need not explain why I am reluctant.”

“You would be correct.” In the wake of Henry Laurens suspecting the ‘affliction’ of his son, much of the same had been insisted to a much younger John, a concept he’d vehemently denied to the point of threatening all out estrangement until it was never brought up again. “My dear, you have your whole life ahead of you, more expansive than a bright eyed young woman could ever imagine. Worry not about the superficial and focus only on what’s genuine.”
“I have been watching you throughout the union of my sister,” she commented after another long pause to drink in. “I believe that is the business that got you into trouble yourself, Mister Laurens.”

Color was summoned inevitably to his face as he sent a hard stare her way. “Watch your tongue, young lady.”

“Watch your attitude, good sir,” she snipped back, voice immediately oozing with resentment that stemmed from the struggle of remaining ‘proper’ while holding her own underneath her revolutionary, outspoken, man-killer siblings. “Need I remind we are alone in a private area, and that your actions here could be condemned in the future?”

Though he knew it was a gamble, he simply chuckled once and lifted his glass to finish off the rest of its contents. “You wouldn’t accuse of me of improper conduct when we are both so well off and hold such delicate positions in our respective families. Besides, I would hope you respect me enough to only tell the truth.”

“Then you ought to respect me enough to speak to me as an equal!” She declared proudly, and it was in the presence of the youthful sister that he rejoiced that no matter how much he’d potentially lost his Eliza, her wild spirit constantly lived on in her most closely aged of a legacy.

“Yes ma’am,” he agreed with a polite bow and a consensual kiss to her hand. “My apologies. You are a lady, after all, Miss Margarita Schuyler.”

A proud and fond expression graced her youthful face as she simply smiled and gave him a one-handed curtsy. “Oh, please, call me Peggy.”

The two talked for a couple more hours about their hopes, dreams and fears, and lamenting about the families they loved despite their occasionally (and his case, constant state of) being insufferable. Eventually he led her, arm and arm, back with the understanding she was a bit too youthful to court and that she’d explore her options for as long as she possibly could, but they’d be in touch for ages and ages to come. His mind had been lulled to a comfort he’d been craving all evening by the alcohol and a blossoming new friendship, so much so that he bumped into a young woman that was holding her skirts in two fists. When she turned as he apologized, he heard her breath audibly hitch, and he knew at once by the way she looked at him that he’d found someone to be alright with.

“No issue!” She squeaked meekly. “M…my name is Martha Mannings.”

Casting one last look in the people he knew he’d spend the rest of his life getting over, he took one her hands and coaxed it to hold his own. “John Laurens. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Chapter End Notes

If you’re enjoying this story, please bookmark it/give it kudos/leave a comment! On another important not, Laurens deserves the world in every sense of the word.
In the heart of the Revolutionary War, morals are compromised and realigned constantly. Eliza questions her own and learns valuable truths from the most unlikely of places; Theodosia’s heart belongs to a man she would much prefer to wed to rather than the Loyalist father to those she loves the most.

Let me just say, this chapter was extremely hard to write. I had to pull a unique battle of the Revolutionary War, which was hard enough considering how many there were as well as the outcomes, and dates are very hard to keep straight when you’ve written and rewritten so many times. My sincerest hopes are that writing the Battle of Yorktown with America’s favorite lady in blue will be less mentally strenuous to write, as I currently feel mentally burnt out from the effort it took to make this as accurate as humanly possible despite this being a Role Reversal AU.

All that to say, PLEASE LEAVE A KUDOS, A COMMENT AND A BOOKMARK! I would appreciate it beyond measure and make the time feel all the more worth spent if I know how much you all love this story, which is hopefully as much as me!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Eliza strongly disliked that Nathaniel Greene despite his military success. He’d been an incomparable improvement on Horatio Gates, the fool who cost hundreds their lives at the Battle of Camden, but the new commander was too seemingly indecisive and somberly arrogant based on her few brief encounters with him for her liking. He’d had the nerve to ask her to aide him a couple of years ago, and she’d never been able to look at him the same; she wondered even now what a man such as himself stood for and what he’d be willing to fall for.

She paced up and down the corridor of Washington’s building where one of his offices was located, her hands releasing and gripping her gown anxiously as she waited for the final report of the casualties and deceased in the recent battles. The door opened and she rushed to the soldier, gratefully taking the report and sending him with some bread and water for his trouble.

“Approximately twenty hundred and twenty three dead, wounded or captured,” she read aloud, furiously throwing the parchment on the desktop and finding herself unable to stand as she placed her head in her hands.

“Mrs. Hamilton.” Martha Washington’s voice was kind and calm, and the young woman took no trouble with rushing into her open arms. “I know, little one, I know. It never does get any easier, I’m afraid.”

“So many men dead and gone, for what?” She asked shakily. “For a general bound only by former glory, and one of our great leader’s secret calls gone terribly wrong!”
“My husband is only a man,” Martha justified softly. “And despite the gravity of our losses, Nathaniel Greene has been a most valuable asset to our cause. He was simply tactically outdone.”

“No future victory will bring those soldiers back!”

“I know you are upset, child, but neither will your hysteria.”

She slowly lifted her head back into its usual proud position, dabbing at her eyes with her handkerchief and exhaling deeply. “I apologize for the loss of my composure.”

“That is quite alright. Why don’t we discuss our next moves over some tea?”

The younger woman accepted gratefully, but she was troubled as they did so. War was won with several losses and more bloodshed than victory cries, and yet she found herself more upset that she could not take the weight of what occurred the way she used to. She ended up heading back to her home once they’d fully exchanged knowledge of the brewing battle led by their French allies, one that she felt would be decisive victory but was unable to speak aloud for fear of her own potential error. She retired to her home and collapsed to the ground, weeping for what felt like hours before finally summoning the strength to pour herself a drink and settle in with the letter from her dear sister; she clung to every word and was nearly finished when there was knock on the door.

“Hello?” She greeted in a weary tone, and was surprised to see her youngest friend standing there with a basket in hand. “Sybil!”

“It seems you’ve forgotten about me!” The now eighteen year old teased, happily coming in and setting right to work on making a meal. “I go on one revolutionary ride and you’re off marrying Alexander Hamilton and moving downtown!”

Eliza couldn’t help but beam despite her dismal mood; her little friend had taken the world by storm with her now famous ride, one that she’d taken in with no hesitance and with all the bravery of a soldier. She hadn’t seen her since days prior to this event, so being able to hug her tightly was a lovely surprise.

“How is your father doing? More importantly, how are you holding up?” The twenty two year old woman doted, smiling fondly when her rebellious companion tried weakly to refuse the help but quickly conceded under maternal instincts she’d learned since they’d last met.

“I’m still looking for that elusive ‘husband’ creature that everyone insists I find,” the smaller responded dryly, looking quite annoyed at the prospect. “I haven’t heard from Papa in a few weeks, but I know he is alive through word of mouth. I have the utmost faith he will survive this war in stride.”

“I’m sure you’re correct,” she assured while sitting down carefully. “It is quite ironic that you are here. If you’d come just a few days later, I’d be long gone.”

“What are you going?” Sybil arched an eyebrow, and she simply smiled and let out a small sigh through her lips.

“Our dear Lucy has become exceptionally unrest staying stationary. She and I will be travelling to Virginia to attend to the masses of casualties located there,” she replied calmly.

The smaller tilted her head curiously, then let out a raucous laugh that alarmed her at once. “You just cannot stand it, can you? Madame Adrienne is commanding whole armies, I’ve been congratulated and awarded heftily for my ride, and yet despite being an aide-de-camp, you remain cooped up and tied up to someone on the battlefield.”
“I love my husband dearly,” she snipped back. “It is frustrating to not be able to do much, yes, but that is changing rather quickly.”

“You want to be in the middle of it, though,” the teen countered easily, getting her feet and finishing brewing the tea. “You want to be out there bleeding and dying like all of the other patriots.”

“We live in a time where women can do most remarkable things,” Eliza responded coolly, then forced herself to steady as she continued preparing their dinner. “You are living and breathing proof. I set into this country to make changes and improve it, not just watch and worry from the sidelines.”

The younger woman was quiet for a few long moments, and then she was at her friend’s side with a comforting arm. “You’ve done so much already, you bizarre creature, you. Nobody else lights a fire under Congress’s arse like you, and those encoded messages? They’ve saved hundreds upon thousands of lives, and yet you fret just because you haven’t laid your life on the line in battle for your country.”

“There is no more honorable way to perish.”

“And you don’t think you’ve stuck your neck out by doing all that you have? Please!” Sybil wrapped her arms around her fully now, and she couldn’t help but relax and return the loving embrace. “You don’t have to prove yourself to anyone, Betsey. We homefronters depend on your staying alive.”

The rest of evening was pleasant and full of laughter and drinks, but both women knew deep down there was no deterrent to the Schuyler descendant once she’d set her mind. She spent another night alone in the bed she’d once shared with her husband, another living soul that was off changing the world every day while she wasted away back where she first began. When the sunrise began to tentatively mount the east, she quickly changed and met their carriage just outside of the city, her entire being trembling with excitement as she held her dear Lucy close once more.

“It seems like a perfect day to save lives, doesn’t it, Mrs. Hamilton?” The older of the duo mused as they mounted with their soldier escorts, both of which were from the very Nathaniel Greene’s army she’d been so wary of.

Eliza grinned; the past months had not deterred her comrade’s eloquence and heart, but she was far more determined now to take an honest stand than she’d ever been. “That it does, Mrs. Knox. That it does.”

When they were finally able to exit their transportation means, they were able to safely to set up across the Dan River along with a group of exhausted, freezing men. The women’s timing in being there was completely coincidental, and by the time they’d reached the other side, they’d learned with a great deal of shock that they’d narrowly missed being caught and slaughtered by a British-Loyalist party set. The tents were struck in rows along the riverbank, and neither of them were met with protest as they replenished supplies and offered comfort to those stricken by too many ailments from war to name.

“Mama!” One of the men cried out as he fell to the frozen ground, and by the time Eliza reached him, she realized with a turning in her stomach that the man’s gaze was far, far away, and that he’d likely not see the next hour. “Mama, please!”

“It’s alright now, son,” she soothed in a steady voice, clasping his violently trembling ones in her own. “Mother’s here now. You need not fret any longer, mother’s here.”
The man’s cries immediately quieted, and she saw the faint trace of a smile before the light exited him all together. From a soldier who’d been stumbling along with his companion in her arms before he collapsed, she learned his name was James, and that he’d been fighting for their freedom since he’d come to his colony with his family nearly a decade ago. She did him the decency of closing his eyes a final time and sent a quick prayer, resolving her ability to do the grim task set before her and moving to continue ensuring more lived than died.

Theodosia knew well of what it felt like to be rubbish when it counted the most. Her health had been declining rapidly despite her best intentions, and she’d been forced to resign her command the year prior. Now she was anxiously awaiting a response from her selected school of law, but more pressingly, she was sneaking in to see her lover.

“Theo…” Aaron breathed, and she simply grinned as she nimbly climbed through his open window. “It’s been so long, my love.”

“You’re telling me, my darling. I’ve been left with that insufferable husband of mine for far too long,” she lamented, draping herself over him and exhaling contently as he wrapped his arms around her.

There was uncomfortably heavy silence before Aaron spoke again. “How are the children?”

She cracked a small smile; of all the things that hurt her and wrought her with guilt and shame, her children made well sure she was as happy as she could ever be. “Rambunctious, loving, and full of wit. Mary Louisa resembles her father too much for my liking, but she is still an excellent young woman of clever nature. I am sure she will come around with a bit more guidance.”

“I am sure,” he agreed in his easy way that always seemed to make her worries evaporate. “For the time being, I gathered several articles I thought you’d find more enriching than the garbage your darling husband keeps round your home.”

The rest of the visit proceeded as usual, full of brilliant debate and humorous, flirty, and meaningful exchanges that made her fall all the more in love with the man she was not wed to. Of course, she’d loved Jacques when she was much younger and much more naïve, and had born his children with the devout loyalty her own mother had instilled in her to her husband. When she’d met her most beloved Aaron back in 1778, she felt her breath be confiscated in a way it never had been before, and she began making it regular place to travel and see him as he did the same for her. Her Augustine and John were very skeptical at first, but they’d grown to love and defend him with the same fierceness of their very largely absent father, especially in the wake of being educated and brought up to side strongly with the Patriots while their papa fought with a red coat.

“You ought to hear what the neighbors say,” he drawled as she laid on his chest, her hair undone and in a mess her husband would never allow. “They refer to more as the object of your affections rather than a man.”

“That does not sound so bad,” she mused, smirking to him. “It is the truth.”

“My dear, you wound me. Have I not done more in my career to win more than your sidekick rather than your equal partner?”

She hummed mischievously, causing him to groan dramatically before capturing her in a kiss. They continued pressing further into each other throughout the evening, only breaking once for a hasty
dinner brought in by one of his many maids with cheeks so red by their scandal, Theo feared the poor woman may burst. As the night grew darker still, she slipped out of her outfit with a calm superiority she usually reserved only for her ever colder legal partner. Aaron’s eyes grew wide, and for a long moment he lay perfectly still before doing away with his own drawers and shirt.

“Do you love me, Aaron Burr?” She breathed.

He simply grinned, his youthful eyes sparkling the way all young soldiers did when they were given their first rewards of service. “I am positively smitten, Mrs. Prevost.”

Their lovemaking was passionate, far more so than anything she’d ever experienced with Jacques. She was only aroused the next morning by the sounds of hurried conversation, and when her beloved hurried back into the bedroom, she’d already dressed in her fresh clothing and stood tensely at the bedside.

“What’s happened?” She demanded at once, and he simply grimaced.

“They’re trying to out chase our men,” he replied. “Cornwallis was halted by necessity before he could pursue them over the North Carolina border across the Dan, but they may well regenerate moral and strength before our men are able.”

Virginia. The colony’s name seemed fresh in her head, and she realized was sinking feeling of dread as she recalled the letter she’d sent recently to that Elizabeth Hamilton. “There is little just over the river for them via local means. They’ll demolish their supplies before they have an honest chance.”

“Word says that General Greene intends to fend them off if it comes to it,” he replied, slowly sitting on the side of the bed with a sorrowful expression. “You are correct in that their odds are grim. God rest their souls.”

Theodosia thought of her companion, the woman on fire that was Eliza and how she’d likely be heading there and killed by proxy if she was not already dead. Though she was a remarkable individual, she never had much liked the act of warfare despite her insistence to jump in the thralls, and if one of her husband’s men did slaughter her the acts of cruelty may. She bowed her head and exhaled a lengthy breath that hitched in her throat thinking of the young soul she supposed now she could have better tutored, better guided so this would not be the reality she’d now face.

Though she knew there was no chance at all she’d hear her plea, she found it appropriate to mumble, “Stay alive, child.”

The smell of death was nearly as strong as the scent of musket smoke and ill despair. She’d been assisting men and women alike into their tents when she heard the loud crack of the canon; the sound sent all of them diving for cover desperately, but the cannonball simply splashed in the river in the distance, assuring them all they were safe for now. Gathering herself up swiftly, she continued to help the soldiers lay down and feed them what the modest homesteads had been given in preparation for this ‘race to the Dan’.

“Greene intends to send the bulk of the cavalry on their way by sunrise,” one of the men, an older gentleman called Barlow, informed her as she changed his bandages. “I heard them talking in their tent, and he seems to believe we have to catch them before they catch us. Seems like a risky gamble to me.”
“It does,” she agreed, finishing her nurse work with a final tug of the cloth. “I encourage you to worry more about seeing your wife and children again from now on though, sir. Nearly losing a leg is very proper reason to be honorably discharged, you know.”

He simply grinned at her and laid back with a sigh, but she knew by the way he spoke he was ready to be with his family once more. She decided she was quite tired of hearing everything second and third hand as she emerged, grabbing a basket of goods intended for the officers and brushing past the other volunteers with resoluteness. As she entered their tent, she realized with a tinge of embarrassment she’d waltzed in the middle of strategy discussion, but she simply continued forward in setting down their supplies.

“General Greene,” she greeted politely, though she still had no reason to trust the man. Colonial Lee, Colonial Pickens.”

“Don’t you know to call out before you enter such a place?” Pickens snapped irritably, but she simply raised her chin and looked down to him with resigned coldness.

“Nothing goes on within this temporary setup that anybody on the side of freedom ought not to know,” she responded easily, casting a look down at the map they were drawing before moving one of the rock pieces. “Set up between Hillsborough and Haw River and sent out scouts from there. We need not put more lives at risk the necessary, sirs.”

She’d barely gotten back into the center of their encampment when she felt a hand on her shoulder, and with a startled jump, she turned to face the man of her contempt head on. He was a reasonably attractive fellow despite his hard expression, and she quickly stepped back from his hold.

“Ask before you touch me,” she said plainly.

“I thought we were not following rules so formerly today,” he responded plainly. “Though I did not come out to scold you, your remarks are bold for a woman.”

“Your remarks are tasteless for a gentleman,” she fired back. “What did you come out here for, general?”

He paused, looking her up and down before cracking a small smile. “I wanted to thank you for your recommendation; I appreciate a strategist like yourself considering elements we war veterans often neglect in times like this.”

She mirrored his half smile before smoothing down her gown in a business like fashion. “Really, that is remarkable. I thought I was only suitable to be a secretary.”

“To be blunt, Mrs. Hamilton, you have essentially taken that position with General Washington with no complaint to be made.”

“His approach was much different than your own,” she shot back, recalling with great distain the way he’d put his arms around her and promised her glory in ways that’d repulsed her deeply. “I fear that while you are a great commander, you and I simply approach things differently.”

“In truth, Mrs. Hamilton, I am quite the pacifist like you,” he said sharply as she began walking away from him, and she was all but forced to stop and turn back around. “Many of my men dislike this reality, but it is true. If it were up to me, the entire war would’ve ended in a draw that led to our freedom.”

She was hit with a wave of guilt over how she’d condemned this gent for being no more than a predecessor doing what he must in the interest of their country, and she approached him swiftly
before he could turn away. Against what was likely her better judgement, she extended her arms openly, and after a moment of tense, shocked silence, he accepted her embrace with a heavy sigh of relief.

“I have always thought highly of you,” he commented with sincerity. “You remind me much of my dear Caty back home. I know you may not agree with the decisions I make, but they are made only out of necessity for the survival of our country. If we were to lose this war, we would lose everything, even more than our lives, but the lives of our children. I cannot stand the thought of my dearest legacies serving that king of theirs for any longer than any colonist did. It is simply too great a cost.”

“How do you reconcile it, then?” She asked softly, not breaking their embrace as she spoke. “Your faith and your humanity along with your duties?”

He pulled back partially, his eyes seeming much older as he gazed into her own. “History has its eyes on those who fight for our country’s glory. The thought is enough to continue this fight long past what we can achieve alone, for without our sacrifice, there is nothing left from the hard decisions I could fail to make. The same, I am positive, is true of you. Remember that and carry it in your heart; you will need it should you ever battle alongside my or Washington’s men. Take care, ma’am.”

As he walked away, she turned to face the setting sunset and thought of her Alexander, of her friends both in war and in the homestead, and of the life she longed to have with a family of her own. If she was going to make her travel to her New York City worth it, she’d have to sacrifice more than she’d ever imagined, but as she sailed within the armed forces back across the river and fled back for New York with her Lucy and their escorts, she resolved that she was ready to do whatever it took to protect her future and her legacy.

“How Lady Washington!” She announced as she rushed into her office two days after her conversation with Greene. “I require your assistance for learning to fire this device. I have no hope to protect anybody, myself included, if I cannot wield a simple musket. I will also need assistance making my own Continental Army uniform in the coming days, for ‘no’ may not always be an acceptable answering regarding the service I may gratefully give to our cause.”

Martha looking surprised and amused as she stood, taking the weapon from her hands with careful grace. “Very well, my child.”

Chapter End Notes

Remember the effort it took me to write this. Remember to leave a kudos, a comment and save a bookmark. I implore you with my most passionate plea until we meet again!
When Alexander finally arrived back at their home, Eliza greeted him with a kiss in nothing more than her shift. He smiled warmly to her, running his hands down her back and bringing her closer to his chest while stroking down her lengthy hair.

“It has been far too long,” he breathed. “I’m afraid I had no other option, but the general insist we spend at least two days’ time with our families before the siege.”

“It will cost many lives,” the young woman agreed steadily. “I am quite positive our plan will work regardless.”

He gave her an amused smile. “How did you worm your way back into the decision making process? Last I heard, your falling out with Washington was as fresh and detrimental as ever.”

She simply smirked and led him back inside, the smell of the feast she’d prepared strong even from their front door. General Washington had been furious with her for setting out across the Dan, giving her a dressing down in his office that had brought her to fury and tears. She’d ended up yelling at him, daring him to ‘call her child one more time’, and he’d sent her home with tight, poorly concealed anger of his own. Lady Washington had been no help, simply assuring that her that her husband’s mood would pass and she’d likely be called to action, even if it was after the war. In the days immediately following this catastrophe, she’d sat down with her beloved Laurens’s wife, a lovely young thing named Martha or ‘Martie’, and cranked out essays against slavery that sent waves of reactions through the masses, and gotten all the updates and strategic conversations consistently with Madame Adrienne.

“This dinner is fantastic!” Alex exclaimed excitedly, his eyes shining as he looked at her post cleaning three servings. “This far beats anything we get in the line of duty any day at all.”

“I should hope so,” she responded somewhat defensively, arching an eyebrow knowingly when he face pinkened with the realization of his error.

“My darling, you are the best cook I shall ever know,” he said decidedly. “The fact it is far superior to anything we get on the field is merely an additive to its incomparable glory.”

She simply laughed good naturedly and walked over, seating herself side-saddled on his lap and bringing him into a kiss. “I am only teasing, my darling husband. Save getting yourself worked up for your enemies.”

“Yes ma’am,” he conceded with an easy smile he seemed to reserve only for her. “How is our effort for a legacy going?”
She simply gave him a sad smile; though it was true she’d been having some back pain and her time of month was virtually non-existent, she had no real reason to believe she could pregnant. After all, lack of nutrients from the ration could attribute to nature being unkind, and she found herself increasingly unable to sleep in the night due to anxiety.

“Perhaps it would go better if you were home more often to make the attempts more frequent, Mister Hamilton,” she finally answered.

He gave her a smirk as his eyes lit up with excitement. “Perhaps I can make up for lost time?”

“I reckon that you ought to.”

It was later on that evening that she received the letter from her general calling her to the line of duty. She read it intently in the light from the fireplace, her heart swelling at the prospect of finally being able to fight side-by-side with her fellow patriots in the plan that would bound to be the end of the war if they won. She cast a look to her Alexander, who was fast asleep on their couch, and kissed him on the head before guiding him carefully to the bed. He’d be worried sick if he knew she’d be risking the life of not only herself, but their potential of having a legacy in the future, but she had firm belief she could stay alive long enough to end the terrible war once and for all. When the morning light came, she changed into her uniform and headed out with her fellow soldiers after leaving an explanatory letter for her beloved husband.

“Madame Hamilton!” Adrienne called, striding over to embrace her and looking all the well like the fierce general she was now.

“Madame Lafayette!” She responded warmly, pulling her close and trying not to wince when she felt the other woman grimace against her.

“You are with child,” she hissed, her eyes flitting over to their armies. “You cannot lead these men and women into battle and risk your offspring’s life.”

Eliza immediately made a face, pulling back further with pink shame creeping across her cheeks. “That’s no way to speak of a woman’s body, my dear comrade. The lack of supplies in our homes have made me quite swollen, yet I assure you am still in excellent health and without child.”

The Frenchwoman clearly didn’t approve, but she sighed and brushed her hair away. “If you perish and I find out you were pregnant, I’m never going to forgive you.”

“Quite the same. Nevertheless, when we win, where shall we rendezvous?”

“I will be heading back to France and bring freedom to my own people,” she responded with a glow of hope that Eliza had seen in countless Patriots.

She embraced herself once more, more tightly now. “We will be will you when you do.”

“Of that I am positive. Now go, you enule fou. Lead your command.”

“We’ll see you other side!” She called, turning away and waving back as she marched back to the souls she was now in charge of.

“Until we meet again!” The older woman called back before doing the same.

Laurens was in South Carolina redefining bravery with his all-black battalion, Madame Lafayette would cut the British off at Charleston Bay, and all of it was possible largely due to Hercules Mulligan, the loyal friend of her husband’s, being a spy on the inside circa The Sons of Liberty.
She felt confident as she headed to the front lines, beginning to fire and burrow down in the trenches as the American flag flew high and proud. This was her shot, and she was doing anything but throwing away, even as her men began to die and fall ill as the fighting wore on so much longer than day. Constant sickness seemed to grow in her the more she desperately supplied her rations to ensure as many of them could see their families again, and a bullet grazed her cheek toward the end that had medics frantic that it’d be infected and kill her before the enemy’s surrender, but she insisted they press on and outlast the murderous, oppressive bastards. No matter what it took, she and as much of her battalion as conceivable would live to fight another day and live peaceful lives in the home they fought to have now.

“Lieutenant Hamilton, look!” One of her ‘boys’ called out, peering out of the trench a compromising amount if it hadn’t seemed it was finally over after over a week’s time of constant warfare.

A young man in red coat stood on a palette in the distance, frantically waving a white flag. She broke into a smile, gathering those that weren’t too wounded or ill to escort Cornwallis’s men out of Yorkdown in a single file, stumbling line. She caught General Washington’s eye and he mirrored her relieved smile, and she reluctantly left the sight of the enemy retreating to negotiate the terms of surrender with the generals that had fought and killed and left their men to die, only to lose to ‘their’ America.

“We won!” She yelled much like a child as ran out, throwing her arms around Madame Adrienne and watching as the ships sailed back to their homeland. “We won!”

“We won!” She agreed with tears of joy pouring from her gaze, jumping along with her and yelling various methods of saying ‘goodbye and piss off’ to the retreating army of over 7,000 men.

Much to her relief, the nausea and pain in her stomach that had been a constant for ten days finally subsided, as if it were agreeing with her. She ended up kneeling over, wracked with sobs of relief, of joy and of taken down with the knowledge that she, her family, and her country had finally won and would be just fine going forward. Of course her soldiers ran to her aide and asked what was the matter, but she simply wept and dismissed them by repeating ‘we won, we won’ until she finally felt she’d said it enough for the time being.

After so many years, the war was finally over, and she went home proudly to a celebration held by the entire nation.

Alexander was initially furious when he’d found out what his wife had done, but he couldn’t maintain it after the intense argument they’d had directly after amidst all the joy. After all, the woman he married was a decorated war veteran and full of so much glory, and all of those under her command insisted there would have been a much different outcome had she been such an unmoving force. Their reunion thereafter had been one with intense happiness, and though he didn’t understand why she didn’t drink or eat too much, he knew she was thrilled that she’d finally had her shot at contributing to the revolution without perishing.

“Mister Hamilton.” Lady Washington’s voice was calm and even in the Hamilton household on a rather lazy Sunday post church, but when he turned, her face looked somber. “Your wife needs to speak with you. She requests you join her in the garden.”

As he stepped out among their expansive, beautiful area covered with all kinds of plants and flowers, he immediately knew something was terribly wrong. Eliza sat in her soldier’s uniform, her
hands brought around to her front in an almost protective manor, and her hair with frizzy and fell freely down her back. He cautiously came to her side and sat down, noticing for the first time how round she’d become around the middle and abdominal area. Before he could think too much more into this realization, he noticed how tears streamed down her face rapidly and quickly went to wipe them.

“T-I am such a fool,” she whispered, clutching her hand and letting out a harsh sob. “All the indicators were there, all of the signs were swung to my face, and yet I ignored them and nearly got both of us slaughtered. I am a terrible excuse of a mother.”

The words echoed around in head before making sense, and he immediately bought his free hand over her stomach with shocked urgency. “Y-you are with child?!”

She let out another heartbroken cry, and this time he wrapped both arms around her before placing both of his hands over her belly. “L-Lady Washington was suspicious from the moment I arrived home, so sh-she ordered for a doctor. Alexander, I have been with child for quite some time, including during the Siege of Yorktown. I was dying slowly in the trench, and it is simply a miracle our baby survived those unbearable conditions. I’m a wicked, unredeemable mother that ought to be hanged!”

“My love, my love, talk sensibly!” He implored with no unkindness in his tone, wiping her eyes tenderly before readjusting so they were more closely cuddling. “You did not know of your unique position until this day, correct?”

She sniffled. “Madame Adrienne had speculation, I should have listened—”

“But you did not know for certain until this day, yes?”

 “…Yes, I suppose that is true.”

“Then there is no one at blame,” he resolved. “As a matter of fact, it makes you all the more remarkable that you were able to keep our child and yourself alive without a single soul knowing, not even yourself. There is no doubt about it, you are a remarkable woman who is set to be an evening more exceptional mother. You already are a remarkable mother; you have not drank once since you began to feel oddly!”

She finally let out a small ghost of a laugh, pressing her face into his neck and allowing her bump to nestle more firmly into his hands. “That was for fear of upsetting my own digestion, not poisoning our offspring.”

“Listen to me,” he implored gently, pulling her chin so they made eye contact. “I don’t pretend to know the challenges you’re facing, or the worlds you keep creating and erasing in your mind. But I’m not afraid; I know who I married, so let me just stay here by your side. That, my darling, would be enough.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck, and she finally unclenched the muscles she’d been keeping stiff for what seemed like ages now. “I just want our baby to be alright. They are ours, and I could’ve jeopardized it all by taking my opportunity so hastily. I don’t know if I could’ve ever recovered, and—”

“But he is alright,” Alex interjected patiently. “He’s living and thriving inside his most incredible mother right now, growing so he can meet the world. You don’t have to plague yourself with the ‘what ifs’ and ‘if I hads. You can let it go and enjoy the present, my dearest wife.”
She looked to him with her large brown eyes, those that shone with love and trust. “You truly are the best of husbands and best of men.”

He let out a laugh; that was far from the truth, but it meant a countless amount she thought so when she was the best of wives and best of women. He continued to stroke her swollen belly, his own eyes pricking with tears as the thought they were finally starting a family together in their brand new country. Nothing could take this freedom away, and as the sun set and a cool winter breeze blew back their hair, he could see her thoughtful expression more clearly from his bent position. He sat up but kept one hand over hers and looked across the horizon, his heart fluttering in contentment when she laced her fingers through his.

“Look at where we are,” he mused. “Look at where we started. The fact that we’re alive is a miracle! We stayed alive through our unfavorable childhoods, through war and famine, and through countless losses and gains. If this child has a fraction of your smile, or a fragment of your mind, well, look at world! Would that be enough?”

Her expression changed to one more warm, but her eyes still seemed far away. Nevertheless, she kissed him sweetly and pushed his head back to the little bundle of life that remained inside her.

“If we could be enough,” he murmured against the fabric of shirt. “That would be enough.”

Her husband had died of the yellow fever while away from herself and her children. Theodosia supposed she should be grief-stricken, or that should at least cry like a proper widow, but instead she found herself unable to feel much of anything. She’d not ever truly loved Jacques, especially not the way she loved Aaron, and due to his constant absence and generally reclusive personality, she found she knew nothing of him at all in the wake of his passing.

“At least he ought to have died honorably,” her youngest son whispered at her side, his face streaked with old tears and wet with new. “The fever ought to have been cured, and yet it took my father instead. It isn’t fair at, Mama!”

“I know, my John,” she soothed, holding him all closer to her bosom and smiling sadly when her next youngest buried his face there as well. “I know, my Augustine. But we are a strong family made of good men and women. I know that you will make your Papa proud in the coming days, my beloved sons.”

Aaron stood in the back of the mourners, face concealed with winter wear and lenseless frames, but he embraced all of her children as though they were his own post the procession. Much to her relief, they took right to him and recounted happier times through their sorrow, and she found herself longing she could do the same, even just a little, rather than fake it for his brilliant legacies. Once they’d retired to bed, she all but dragged him out of the home in order to walk the length of the city and discuss something, anything, but her damned husband.

“I suppose you are a window now,” the younger man finally commented as they neared the end of her walk, and she let out a heavy, tired sigh; the rest of their visit had been so lovely up until this moment.

“I suppose I am,” she agreed. “What a time to be one. A newborn government to rely on is not the way I envisioned my potential loss of that man, I must admit. It’s hardly anything to take to the bank.”
“Agreed,” he commented, his voice noticeably shaking now. “Which is why I reckon that a woman like yourself should not have to.”

She let out a small and bitter laugh. “Don’t we all? Regardless, movement like that comes very slowly, and I intend the have the patience to wait for my time of glory by your side.”

He sucked in a deep breath, and when she turned to look at him directly, she found him on one knee with a ring in his palm that shone in the moonlight. “I was intending to bid my time until your grief was over, but…But Theodosia Prevost, will you marry me?”

She immediately burst into overjoyed tears, taking the ring delicately before knocking him in the ground in their ecstasy. They remained there for quite time, laughing and playing and kissing like two teenagers, before she finally slipped her new jewelry piece into her pocket.

“I must wait to tell the children,” she reminded. “Their losses are still very new, and it is too good of an occasion to ruin their perception of you right now. I would especially dislike it if my eldest lost faith in the man her age, after all.”

He simply smiled and dusted them both off, taking her hand securely and giving it three squeezes. “I’m willing to wait for it the rest of my life if I must, for I am yours and you are mind until the end of our days.”

Chapter End Notes

Let it be known that this chapter was extremely hard to write, and I apologize for such an abrupt ending. I'm having a terrible case of writer’s block at the moment, but the more you guys comment/bookmark/kudos this piece, the more I'm motivated to write! I want to give a big thank you to the three members and eleven guests who have 'Kudos'ed this project; it means the world! PLEASE, SHARE THIS WITH YOUR FELLOW HAMILTON FRIENDS! Tell me what you like and dislike! Do you have any suggestions? Thank you for your support as always, and I'll see you in the next (longer) installment! ♥

P.S. The real irony is that I wrote about half of this in a women's clinic due to having to wait for my doctor about two hours.
Schuyler Interlude

Chapter Summary

A brave soul caught in the aftermath is lost. Two new souls meant to change the lives of everyone make their appearance, and one is lit more on fire than ever before. After all, tomorrow shall bring more of us.

Chapter Notes

I'd like to give a HUGE shoutout to Ayra_Chan, whose support and insightful, witty and exciting to read to comments fueled the fire back within me to update this much beloved stories! They truly went above and beyond to let me know how much this story to meant to them, and for that I am eternally grateful. Thank you so very much for your support, Ayra, and all of those of you who have left kudos thus far! It means more than I can ever properly express, and I would like to invite you all to leave comments or put this story under a Bookmark so you know when more comes out! Thank you all once again, and enjoy! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Coming to America was originally her dream.

She’d been all of fourteen years old, sitting in the grass of the front yard of her parent’s large, wealthy estate. She was sewing a new stuffed animal, one that the newest baby of the family, Rensselaer, had drawn out and described in as much detail as a one year old could; it was meant to be a mix between a cat and a bunny. She happily soaked up the sun as she tended to her project, and was scared half out of her wits when she looked up and a pair of bright blue eyes stared back at her mere inches from her face. She’d immediately kicked out and fallen back, sending the mischievous young man she admittedly loved dearly into frantic giggles as he flopped beside her.

“Jonathan Church, you ought to be careful with that!” She scolded, her cheeks pink and dress ruffled all around her. “If Papa catches you, you’ll be promised a proper whipping for scaring me!”

“You wouldn’t let him lay a harmful hand on me;” the twenty one year old drawled out confidently. “You’d cry and grovel at his feet before you’d let him harm your best friend. You’ve never let him lay a hand on your siblings, either, if I recall correctly.”

“Yes, I suppose that’s true,” she admitted, but she still let out a huff as she sat up and straightened herself the best she could. “Why must you disturb me, you terrible heathen?”

“I have something important to tell you,” he said, his playful demeanor at once shifting into one more somber and grim. “You know times are changing, right?”

“I suppose times are always changing. Life would be dreadfully dull if things were always the same,” she mused, but his expression worried her. “What do you mean specifically?”
“Well, you know that colony across the seat. That America,” the older man described, and when she nodded, he gave her a worried half-smile. “Well, I’ve spoken with some of my family over there. It seems to government doesn’t want us to know as much as we ought to about life with our relatives.”

Wide-eyed and heart pounding, she listened to his recounts of the colonists’ oppression, and how the taxation without representation was definitely a crime. He told her tales of revolution every day after that, and how the people were growing tired of all the oppression and debt they’d ultimately been forced into. She was initially shocked that these colonists would rather begin their own country rather than return, but the more she learned and read, she began to understand more and more. On her fifteenth birthday, she’d met on the balcony and he’d given her a book titled “Common Sense” by one Thomas Payne, and they’d read it for the first time together all night.

“I want to go over there, Angel,” he’d said one night as exciting and scandalous as any other. “And when I go, I want to take you with me.”

“I could never leave my family,” she’d said at once; she was always looking to expand her knowledge and make a real difference in the world while destroying gender roles, but she loved her siblings and parents far more than her ambition.

“Then we’ll bring them too!” He declared without missing a beat, flopping back at her side and gently clasping her hand. “We’re both wealthy, we both have enough power to get a private ship if we like! All you have to do is get them to come along and we’ll be free in no time.”

“We’re free to be here as well,” she protested weakly, but she knew that wasn’t true even before he made a disgusted face. After all, they were hiding away in the depths of her private estate just to speak like this.

“You can’t lie to me,” he said coldly, but she saw the doubt shining in his eyes. “We didn’t have all this time just for you retreat when it matters the most.”

“I would love nothing more than to run away with you!” She countered just as frigidly. “But I have a family that I love and need to protect back here. You may just have to make your journey alone.”

He’d been angry been he left that night, and she hadn’t seen him again until she’d gathered her closest sisters to see him off on the ship he boarded in the dark of night with other desperate, freezing passengers. She’d run to him and embraced him, even pressing a quick kiss to his lips before he was pulled on board by other anxious future colonist who didn’t want to be caught and shot for this risqué travel.

“Come with me!” He’d implored desperately, practically dangling half-off the side as they began to set to pull up the mount. “We can have a life together, just you and me! This could be your only chance!”

“Go ahead, Angie,” she heard Peggy’s voice say with resigned sadness. “You deserve it. We’ll see you after the war.”

“Don’t wait up for us!” Eliza implored more resolutely, even pushing her forward so she’d stand on the wood.

“Are you coming aboard, miss?” The captain asked in a frayed tone. “We must be going at once if so.”

She looked to the man she loved more than anything, stepping towards him in a trance of passion
and love so deep it hurt. Then she looked back to her younger sisters, the two she’d always protected and kept near since they were born just a year and two years after herself, and stepped back onto the pier.

“I will catch up with you!” She called to a crestfallen John. “I promise! I promise, John!”

She cried the entire night, but when the morning came and the officers went into the town raging and demanding to know the passengers of the ship, her lips were very firmly closed. It was her idea to stow away on a supply ship and reveal themselves along with other newly enlisted Patriots as ‘redcoats’ as their Loyalist wives. Eliza had been a hassle to keep alive and under cover as they made the long journey, and Peggy had been so terribly sick most of the time she feared one of the officers would throw her overboard. When they’d finally arrived, her beloved sisters immediately plunged into the new lives, and while she intended to do the same, she was first determined to find her John and find out if he was still alive.

Going to France was originally a sharp, intuitive man’s idea, one whose name was Thomas Jefferson. He’d evidently been dazzled by her at the first dance she’d allowed herself to go to, and all but whisked her away to a wealthy, privileged and exciting life of serving her beloved chosen country as an ambassador during a brutal war. She’d become smitten with Jefferson- of course, she would never admit it, but it was true- and reckoned she would have agreed to wed him had he not had beloved Martha and her finally getting a location on her long lost lover and Patriot, very much alive and all too excited when they exchanged their first letters.

When they’d finally reunited on a final visit back home, they’d fallen even more in love, and he’d proposed; she’d ecstatically accepted securing a lifetime of happiness and wealth for the two of them. They’d wed before she sailed back to their allied country, and while she was there, she was with and gave birth to their child, a beautiful son she named Phillip Schuyler Church after her loving father. John had been the image of proud new parent, asking of his son’s every move and development until they’d finally been reunited as a family a fortnight before.

Her life was not supposed to end like this. She was visiting the surviving members of John Laurens’s spectacular all-black battalion and making merriment with them when the redcoats attacked, evidently having not received word that war was over. Laurens had leapt from his place of rest, given he was quite ill, and fought valiantly until it seemed they’d pushed their enemy back for good. She’d be riding a stallion, refusing to let her recent reuniting with her husband end with her not exhibiting bravery on the battlefield as their son stayed overnight with her parents. In a terrible turn of a conclusion, a stray officer had gunned her down while she was looking among the soldiers when the enemy was retreating.

“Angelica!” Her love screamed, getting to her side rapidly and clutching her hands in his own violently shaking ones. “Hey, it’s okay, baby, you’re going to be okay, I promise! SOMEBODY GET A DAMN MEDIC, SHE NEEDS HELP! Look at me, look at me, i-it’s going to be okay…”

Even despite his best efforts, she knew it wouldn’t, at least not for her. The wound was huge and the blood was flowing all across her brand new riding gown, but she felt strangely calm despite feeling the life push out of her with every struggled breath. Her vision was hazy and her ears rung with screams and ringing alike, but as she relaxed into the cool, dewy grass, she could not regret that she at least perished for the sake of her love, her sisters, and her new country.

“Be sure to bury me here,” she whispered to John. “I want to always be surrounded by America, even when I’m gone.”

“Okay, baby, but you’re not dying here.” Even with the darkness blurring all of reality, she could see how he teared up, and how desperate he was becoming. “Not here, my angel. N-not like this.”
She gave him a weak smile, summoning most of her remaining strength to squeeze his hands in return. “I...I may not live to see our glory. B-but...but I have gladly joined...the fight. And when our s-son shall tell my story...he’ll tell the story of...tonight.”

Her siblings who died as infants, now grown and welcomed, were on the other side.

Eliza found that giving birth nearly paled in comparison to nearly perishing in a trench. It was still excruciating, but at least there was a definite, unimaginable joy when it was over, not to mention a massive relief on the body overall.

“Mommy, you’re wanted,” her husband’s loving voice greeted from the threshold of their bedroom. “Angie, say ‘the sun is awake, so I am too!’”

The six, nearly seven month old, baby happily cooed and waved her tiny arms around as if she was trying to prove her father’s point. The remarkable young woman chuckled and sat up, happily taking the infant in her arms and allowing her to happily grab and gently tug and play with her clothes and hair.

“Angelica, you outshine the morning sun,” she cooed in response, nuzzling noses with the baby before looking to her beloved. “Look at our child, Alexander. Bright as the day is long and as loving as anyone else at only a few months of age!”

“If she has any fault at all, it is that she laughs too much,” he mused as the tot happily giggled in her play.

“Don’t be ridiculous!” Elizabeth scolded at once, cuddling her all the closer. “There is no such thing as being too joyful! After all, what is there to not be happy about? We are so lucky to be alive right now, together, in the greatest country in the world, after all!”

She’d taken to a prestigious law school in New York post the war’s end, being easily admitted into the curriculum and finishing her studies while trying to tend to her loved ones. She was eagerly awaiting to receive her sisters’ letters as she ate a quick breakfast and headed to her office, working on the paperwork and theoretical ways to answer and analyze her assignments while keeping a leg up on her rivals. One such rival was the same Theodosia she’d meant right after entering this nation, but she reckoned their friendship was still intact despite their being competitive; after all, they still regularly exchanged letters.

“Eliza?” Her husband’s voice was soft and somber as he opened the door to her home office. “A letter arrived for you in the post.”

She barely looked up from her planning. “It’s from either Peggy or Angelica, I’ll read it later.”

She only began to register the reason for his grave tone as he inhaled quietly. “No, it’s not. It’s from her husband.”

Slowly setting down her quill and turning around, she stared at his grim expression with wide eyes; from where she sat, he even had their sleeping daughter in his arms as he held a piece of parchment in the other. “Will you read it?”

“On Tuesday the 27th, my wife and your sister was killed in a gunfight against British troops retreating from South Carolina. The war was already over; these men had not received word. As
you know, she was an avid supporter of John Laurens’s movement to emancipate and recruit 3,000 black soldiers to fight for their freedom. Despite our grave and unjust loss, her dream for these valiant men lives on.”

The words stung worse than bullets as they reached her ears. Alexander’s face was grim and sad as he walked toward her, gingerly placing the letter on her desk; in the candlelight, she saw the tears in his eyes. Her daughter slept on, unaware of the unimaginable pain her namesake must have gone through before dying an early death for no reason at all, and the grief her family were now left to bear. She looked into his eyes, tears streaming down her face as she met his heartbroken gaze as she remembered one of the first conversations she’d had with her closest sisters in America.

“*Our futures have been in our own hands since we got on the ship, We’ll be fine, but we need to at least check in with each other. I don’t know what I’d do if something bad happened to either one of you.*” Angelica had always been so doting and unconditionally loving, holding she and Peggy close as they conversed.

“*Hear, here.*” Peggy had agreed; her younger sister was so fragile, and she had no idea how she was supposed to be the support and love she’d need once she knew. “*Betsey?*”

She’d be so young, so foolish to believe that none of them could ever ‘really’ die, and so painfully optimistic to assume she’d all live to be old. She’d swallowed her pride and said “*we’re agreed*”, but surely her older sister knew she was reluctantly saying even that.

“*Eliza?*” Alexander’s voice asked softly, his hands delicately encasing her own as he stood there. “Are you alright?”

She stood up with uncertainty, burying her face on the free side of his neck and feeling the tears downpour with new vigor. Angelica was the only older sibling she’d had, and had been there through every single part of life at her side with fierce loyalty she wasn’t even sure her parents had. When she was celebrating or mourning, when she was on the top of the world and hiding away, when she was sick or embarrassed, she was there with a hug and a warm drink, and a lot of love and understanding despite being older by just one year. As she wept into the cloth of her beloved’s shirt, it felt as though everything she knew had been cut to ribbons, and a massive piece of heart was now undeniably vacant. In a moment of sorrow and intense grief, she wondered if she would ever move on.

Little Angelica, her surviving, youthful and loving Angie, cried out sharply with a sudden jolt of consciousness. Her own tears ceased as she took the baby, shushing her tandem with Alexander until she contently drifted back to sleep. As she watched the fresh life she’d created breathe and grunt softly, she resolved that she going to have to make her sister’s ultimate sacrifice worthwhile. She’d work so relentlessly and with such purpose, there would be no shred of doubt that she was making her proud beyond the grave. With her quills, parchment, and constantly evolving and rich ideas, she would build a nation that her sister could rest within with easy contentment as she lived a pain and carefree life beyond the mortal realm.

Resting their baby against Alexander once more, she sat back down at her desk before grabbing a fresh piece of parchment and her current quill. “I have so much work to do.”

It was Aaron’s idea to name their first child after her. She’d protested and complained that a child was typically named after a maternal/paternal or close family relative figure, or to make her name an honorable tribute to someone his life, but he’d been stubborn until she finally won out post
birthing their healthy son. He’d been named Theodosius in the end, after her late older brother, and he was every bit her newlywed’s with no theoretical doubt in mind.

“Oh Theodosius, what to say to you?” She heard her partner coo from their son’s nursery, and she couldn’t resist standing on the outside and listening in. “You have my eyes, you have your mother’s smile, and when you when you came into this world you cried and it broke my heart. I’m dedicating every day to you, I swear. Domestic life was never quite my style, my son, but when you laugh, I fall apart. Here I thought I was so smart.”

She couldn’t resist not partaking in their joy and entered the room, her hands resting on the other side of the baby’s crib. “You will come of our age with our young nation. Trust me, we’ll bleed and fight for you; we’ll make it right for you.”

“And if we lay strong enough foundation, we’ll pass it on to you,” Aaron agreed with a warm smile in greeting, reaching to the tiny infant’s bed and allowing him to grip onto his finger. “My son, I’ll give the world to you, and someday you’ll blow us all away.”

“You are happier than I’ve seen you in ages,” she mused as the baby closed his eyes and went to sleep. “This joy is no match for the happiest days of our lives so far.”

He simply grinned, placing his hands over her own. “We have a son, my love. A legacy to grow and play and learn and bypass us long after we’re gone.”

“Well, I’ve been set for quite some time,” she teased affectionately. “Jacques’s only gift to me were my children.”

“Speaking of which, I must go tell the children their bedtime stories,” he mused, standing up and letting out a few harsh coughs that she feared would wake the baby. “Pardon me.”

“Are you sure you’re feeling alright?” She asked delicately, going to his side and placing his hands on his hunched shoulders. “Your health seems to only be on a regular decline.”

“The doctors assure me this is nothing but a case of intense allergies,” he assured easily, turning and kissing her in reassurance, but she did not miss the way he staunched a few more coughs as he pulled away and headed for their other sons’ rooms.

She was reading in the foyer when a knock came at the door, alarming her considering the late hours. She was more surprised still when Elizabeth Hamilton was the cause of the disturbance, her once backside length hair bundled largely in the younger woman’s free hand over her shoulder.

Even before she spoke, she could see that a considerable portion had been chopped off, and by the looks of it, it could have been very well done in the dark with a dull blade.

“Mrs. Burr, ma’am,” she greeted, face pink in the candlelight. “I have some reports to go over with you, and while I wouldn’t usually bother you at such an unreasonable hour, I may have made some error in restyling myself.”

“Goodness, Elizabeth!” She exclaimed softly, ushering her friend inside and having her sit at her vanity at once. “I have some reports to go over with you, and while I wouldn’t usually bother you at such an unreasonable hour, I may have made some error in restyling myself.”

“Goodness, Elizabeth!” She exclaimed softly, ushering her friend inside and having her sit at her vanity at once. “I will fetch some proper scissors to cut your hair with, and we can go over your reports. Might I ask why you were working on the case when you ought to be asleep?”

“It seems you were reading,” the smaller pointed out evenly. “I reckon our purposes are quite the same, ma’am.”

She couldn’t argue with that sound logic, she supposed. She fetched some of their sharpest scissors and combed through the once lengthy locks, lighting several oil lamps to see properly to make the
now shoulder length hair look well. As she worked, she reflected on how mortified she’d be to lose her locks—though looks were fleeting, they were integral to their society—and how it would take some hefty getting used to. As the more youthful turned around, however, she was grinning from ear to ear at her new style, which she tied back with a blue bow she’d evidently kept in her pockets.

“Why the sudden change?” She inquired as they both switched off and rearranged the lamp in the foyer around the couch. “I quite liked your hair. I wish I could’ve grown mine to be so luxurious.”

“I have a million things to do and no time at all to do them, and keeping up with it too up a valuable portion of the daylight. I have no time for it!” Eliza exclaimed. “Now, as for Levi Weeks’s innocence, I believe using this proof that he loved his fiancé will prove his innocence far faster than a bunch of alibis…”

“That’s not concrete,” she countered easily. “You need to tone down that passionate reasoning for the courtroom. Relax, we will get him acquitted.”

“I can’t relax! This is a man’s life at stake!”

As the twenty-four year old continued on her opening statements and the evidence she was clearly determined to propose within the courtroom, Theodosia had a strong initiative feeling her passion didn’t stem just from Mister Week’s fate. Of course she knew that her sister had perished tragically the year before, but it was 1783 and times were changing too rapidly to remain hung on their losses rather than pursue their gains. After all, she had a young daughter of her own back home, and a husband every bit as dedicated and patient with stern concern as her own. For these reasons and for the sake of not getting too attached to someone too passionate for her own good, she kept these inquiries silent.

Chapter End Notes

Goodnight, sweet princess.
Why do you assume you're the smartest in the room? Soon that attitude may be her doom, though she is not the only character who feels this way about what means the most to her.

TRIGGER WARNINGS FOR THIS CHAPTER! After the first line break, there is pretty raw and emotional talk of a miscarriage/stillborn. There is also talk of potential sexual assault and threatening gestures, but no actual rape or otherwise occurs or will occur in this chapter. Be safe! ♥

Chapter Notes

6, 074 words, everyone; that is the length of this extra long chapter, written from scratch in just one day, just for you all! ♥ Considering the song is the halfway marker for the musical (and this chapter could possibly, but not concretely) be the same for this story, I wanted to make it a treat for all of the supporters of this passion project of mine! Please remember to leave kudos, review, subscribe, and maybe even bookmark this if you love it as much as I do, and enjoy! ♥

New York, 1786

Alexander had simultaneously become more than he ever thought he could be and less than he ever expected in marrying Elizabeth Schuyler. He had three beautiful children- a passionate, clever two four old daughter, a happy, curious two year old son, and another passionate and bold son who was freshly two months old- and he intended to make many more with his astonishing wife. He stayed at home more than he went out, preferring to care for and begin educating his legacies while his spouse did remarkable things of her accord, such as help in founding the Bank of New York and restoring King’s College into Columbia College from all the damages down to it during the war. As revealed by the recent mail, she’d also been approved to attend and speak at the Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy Defects in the National Government, which was arranged so the delegates from the colonies could discuss all that would be remedied and set in stone in the United States Constitution; this was naturally an immense honor.

“Eliza!” He called as the door opened, revealing her in all her glory with her hair tied back only partially and loosely while she furiously scribbled something in her notes against the nearby wall. “You received an important notice today! Why don’t you come read it?”

“I don’t have any time to!” She replied, her gaze never leaving her work as she rearranged it in her grip. “I have to get this financial plan simplified so the absolute imbeciles I work with can comprehend it! The fate of the college depends on it!”

“Mama!” Angelica cheered from the dining room, hopping down from her chair and running to
hug her parent’s legs. “Mama, made dinner with Papa!”

“That’s nice, darling,” her mother mumbled, still fiddling with her papers. “Unintelligible ideas with no purpose?! Oh, I’ll show that twat unintelligible-“

“Elizabeth! Language, my darling!” He exclaimed, quickly moving to cover their eldest son, Phillip’s, ears.

“What’s a twat, Mama?” Their eldest inquired, her large brown eyes gleaming with curiosity.

“What my co-workers are, baby,” the woman responded without missing a beat. “Now don’t say that new word again. Even if it’s true, it’s not ladylike to say.”

Alexander saw it coming from their spirited, intelligent daughter before his wife did. He simply watched with a proud chuckle as she grabbed her mother’s skirts, tugging on them until she finally flitted her gaze over to their daughter. It may have been brief, but it was all the youth needed to ‘get on her soapbox’.

“You said that being ladylike is just a way to make ladies play nice and sit still!” The four year old all but yelled, placing her hands on her small hips. “You said that if anyone ever tells me t-to be LADYLIKE, I gotta be even more like a man!”

At least Eliza looked to her their offspring, and for a moment, he feared she’d attempt to tame or scold their free spirited girl. He simply exhaled softly in relief as she scooped their first born up, spinning her around and making the youth squeal excitedly and giggle.

“You are your mother’s daughter!” She announced proudly, kissing the girl all over her face. “Now, what did you make for dinner?”

He was admittedly much happier to have her sit with them for once rather than scarf something down long after the rest of them had finished, and he showed it by giving her a kiss so intimate that their babies whined and complained they were being ‘gross’. While she was greeting their youngest, an adorable heir named Alexander Jr. after himself, he took the papers she was worked on and hid them in one of their several kitchen drawers so she wouldn’t be distracted as they tried to enjoy dinner as a family.

“You said I got something?” His Eliza asked as they sat down for the meal he’d prepared along with the ‘help’ of his two eldest.

“Don’t worry about that now,” he implored. “We worked hard on this roast tonight so we could enjoy it as a family. Isn’t that correct, Angie and Pip?”

“Worked hard!” Their Phillip agreed excitedly, clumsily holding up his spoon and fumbling to get some of the entrée onto it until he gently assisted his blossoming son.

It was a miracle they got through the entire dining period before she began to demand where her papers were and whisked away into her office, letter from the government in tow as well. He sighed to himself, bathing his youngest, his beloved Alex, in some warm water before changing the baby for bed. He cast a look to his spouse’s office, wondering if he could persuade her away from her work long enough to sing a lullaby to their newest legacy or at least bid him a goodnight, but he knew it wasn’t likely even as he knocked on the door.

“Alex would like to say goodnight,” he called to her, shouldering the infant like he’d done the other two in their younger years. “His little eyes are barely open.”
Given how busy she was, he feared his youngest might not even know who she was as he grew older. She was always seemingly too busy to bond with the boy, and when she couldn’t seem to get the breastmilk he needed in her morning rushes, she simply strapped the child to her and went on the day with him partially covered as if he wasn’t even there. Alexander knew how much she loved her children, so the fact she hardly showed it other than in quick kisses and absentminded cuddles was hard to swallow and likely even harder on the children themselves who asked daily when she’d return and if she was going to be okay. He was shocked when she actually came out, scooping up Alex while cooing endearments and walking him to the nursery to be fed and rocked to sleep.

“Papa?” Angelica whispered as he changed her into her nightgown, Phillip hanging onto his neck and back like it was the most natural position in the world despite his father insisting it would be uncomfortable. “Mommy eated with us tonight.”

“She ate with us,” he corrected lightly, tucking her into the full sized bed she insisted she share with her best friend, which was of course her Pip.

“Yeah!” The four year old said in response, clearing her throat all too similar to how he might before continuing. “Mommy ate with us tonight. I liked that a whole lot, Papa.”

“You did?” He gave her a sad smile, gently flipping his two year old over his shoulder so he landed by his sister with loud giggles. “I liked that very much as well.”

“She should do it more,” she mused, laying down and wrapping her arms around her brother.

“Mommy eat all time!” Pip chimed in excitedly. “Mommy eat wif us!”

Alexander simply didn’t have the heart to tell them that despite previous best efforts, it was hard to say if she’d ever put her work aside to spend time with them. Instead, he assured them he’d do his best to see it happen and told them a fantastic story of knights and princesses and magic until they fell asleep. When he exited their room, he was surprised to see his love still outside her study, her body almost as immaculate as it was when it first met her despite carrying three healthy babies to term, waiting for him with open arms that he gladly went in to.

“I was chosen for the Annapolis Convention,” she whispered eagerly his ear. “I’ll finally be able to make the changes that need to done in this nation! No more working with insufferable idiots on a project they barely care to finish, only progress!”

“Don’t you care about it still?” He asked, surprised to hear her speak so dismissively of it when she’d be so riled up otherwise. “Wasn’t it one of the biggest reasons you wanted to come to America?”

“Of course I do, and that’s where you come in!” She exclaimed, pulling away slightly and looking to him with excited eyes that practically showed all the gears turning in her mind. “You came to America so you could get your education and make a difference that counts, right?”

“Yes, absolutely.”

“Then I want to put you in charge of the Columbia College project!” She grabbed his hand and led him into her workspace. “They won’t listen to me because they’re insufferable and sexist. If someone as intelligent and MALE as you were to take over, they wouldn’t have a choice but to cooperate! It’s the perfect plan!”

Though he hated to deflate her enthusiasm, he immediately thought back to their offspring. “What
about the children? The entire reason I stay home is to look after them while you are the regular ‘breadwinner’.”

“You’ve been wanting to get out of the house for ages!” She exclaimed, which was sadly very true; he loved the babies, but he longed for adult interactions that stimulated his mind and brought about much-needed remedies to awful, ignorantly enforced policies. “We shall leave the children with hired help, or perhaps with my parents, or Peggy! They have plenty of places to reside and thrive on while we work!”

“They already miss you terribly. Just tonight Angelica and Phillip were insisting you eat with us more often,” he countered. “What will come of them if both of us are out trying to change the world? We owe to them to be present.”

At first, she seemed irritated at the points he brought up. Just as quickly, however, an expression of shame crossed her features, and she looked anywhere but his eyes as she continued to hold fast to his clothing.

“We will eat at least one meal with them and ensure their preparatory education is followed strictly,” she finally resolved, meeting his gaze with a tight smile. “Angelica has nearly mastered her alphabet and writing along with a prompt. We can exchange letters, she and I, when I’m off on my meetings, and you can help them write it all out. It will be just like we’re here all the time.”

“But we won’t be hear all the time,” he reminded somberly. “I want to get out there and do something as meaningful as what you’re proposing just as much as you. The fact of the matter is that our legacies are just as important as anything we do outside of the home, and as their mother, I figured I wouldn’t have to spell it for you.”

He knew he’d struck a chord by the way she looked wounded before setting her expression and tone much more coldly. “And as their father, I figured I wouldn’t have to explain to you the importance of building a country they can thrive in. They won’t be lonely; they’ll have each other and whoever we leave them with. They will be the most influential, educated and revolutionary children to ever make movement through America, and you want to deprive of that for a few small sacrifices that won’t matter later. I am not a perfect parent; that much is true. But neither are you if you’ll neglect what is right in front of us! All our lives, our hopes, our dreams, our potentials, they’re right in front of us! If you don’t take it, then what did you fight in the war for? What was any of this for?”

She had a point; he hated to admit it, but it was true. Instead of saying anything, he leaned in and kissed her, pressing their lips together and snaking his hands down her back. Her breath hitched quietly in her throat, her own arms wrapping around his neck and he lifted her up, straddling each leg around his middle until he laid her against their bed.

“Alexander Hamilton, you are a scoundrel,” she teased, gasping again when he trailed kisses down her neck.

“I don’t pretend to know all the challenges we’re facing;” he murmured in her ear, resting on top of her body lightly while stroking down her sides. “I can’t imagine all the worlds you keep creating and erasing in your mind; I have my own thoughts and ideas to keep me busy, and if we’re as similar as I think we are, it’s astonishingly hard to keep up yourself more often than not. But I’m not afraid, my love. I know who I married, and so long as you come home at the end of the day…That would be enough. If we could be enough when it is all said and done…that would be enough.”

For the first time in nearly a year, their lovemaking was undistracted, unconditional, and full of all
the love that brought them together. As he lay by her side and cuddled her into his chest, feeling her breath deeply, he longed for a life where their companionship could be all she needed to stay longer than quick pecks and lingering promises. For all of their sake, he resolved he’d do what she proposed, and with enough time, they would both finally settle down enough to raise their family. Somehow, he was sure that a massive conclusion of their ‘conventionally productive’ lives that be enough to settle them both, and that would be more than enough.

Theodosia was sure that her agony and all of her suffering would meet its end after her mother died. She’d laid in the bed with her, arms around her frail and sick parent, and felt her take her last breaths before going completely still. She’d be inconsolable for ages afterwards, moving forward but finding it hard to feel much of anything until Aaron came along, breathing life back in her and rejuvenating her life raising her children and working subtly to impact the world they lived in. After she’d wed him and had their first son, she was sure that little could be done to deter her joy as long as she should live; maybe there would pockets of sadness, but overall, they could both finally be happy.

She was broken again when she gave birth to a baby prematurely and it did not survive. She sat in the nursery, the same one that they’d tended to her now three year old in, one that should have a squeaking, happy child in it now. Instead all she was left was an empty crib and terrible sorrow, one too terrible to name aloud, and a blanket that her dear friend Lucy had sewn up for the baby, a little girl who would’ve been named Estelle after her husband’s mother. She was still named this, of course, but she was laid to rest in a very fancy grave instead of her mother’s arms.

“Dosia?” Aaron inquired softly, her new nickname feeling out of place when there was so much sorrow in their home. “Are you…Well, are you hungry?”

She shook her head and gripped her skirts, feeling like she may be ill from the remnants of an overall failed pregnancy. “I do not deserve to live when I cannot become a mother to another one of your children. The only reason I have to remain is my political position and our beloved Theo.”

He approached her in four long strides, and because of his clearly passionate intent, she feared for a long moment he’d strike her. Instead he pulled her into a hug, one that she found herself crumpling into with violent sobs she’d not allowed herself to have since the initial report came back that their daughter would not make it. He ran his fingers through her hair repeatedly, murmuring words she couldn’t make out over her grief, but they were clearly soothing and reassuring in nature.

“Listen to me, please,” he said quietly once she’d finally settled. “I know this is devastating in ways I can’t properly put into words, but I don’t need to; we know of it. But this terrible turn of fate is not in the least bit your fault. You are the mother to six healthy, beautiful and successful children, and this was simply one of God’s plans that make no sense to us. You are a wonderful, loving and attentive mother; you have done everything just right. I know that our baby doesn’t blame you either.”

“How can you know? She never got an honest chance,” she whispered, but his words seemed to reach her heart directly and begin to piece it back together with the tenderness no other man had for her.

“There are things you can only know in your heart,” he said gently. “Nobody blames you. You are allowed to forgive yourself and move on when your heart is ready. Going forward, our little Estelle will always be with us. I love you so very much.”
She leaned up and kissed him with heartbroken passion, the kind that left them both breathless long after they initially stepped apart. Smoothing down her dress and smiling to him sincerely for the first time in nearly a month, she stepped out of the nursery, gently shutting it with her fingers lingering for mere moments before she headed to check on their surviving child and her teenage boys.

_Same location, 1787_

As the days turned into weeks into months and finally nearly a year, Theodosia found herself being able to stop visiting the nursery all together, preferring instead to tend to Estelle’s grave tenderly once or twice per week. Rather than continue to be hung up what could not be controlled, she worked on teaching works to her reading and largely fluent Theodosius in the evenings when she was finished on her day cases. Though she loved her youngest with the same fierceness as she did her other five natural offspring, no one was as in love with the four year old as his father, who lovingly kept him in a firm routine designed to see him to be very happy and successful in his life before he was finished with primary education.

“Mrs. Burr, Mrs. Burr! I must have your company at once, ma’am!”

She’d just finished at a meeting with her commander William Malcom, the gentleman who found her to be an exceptional military figure despite having to bow out toward the end of the war, when she was rushed by a very excited Elizabeth Hamilton. The older woman extended her arms, steadying the excited youth before she sent herself tripping across the floor.

“Consider my attention yours,” she responded as the younger gently wiggled free. “What’s all the rush for?”

“I was chosen for the Constitutional Convention!” Eliza exclaimed excitedly, her grin spreading across her entire face. “I will finally be able to see our new constitution underway!”

“Don’t be so cocky,” she advised lightly. “You have no idea what you are going into with a massive room full of delegates. Should your pride get ahead of you, nothing good will come from it.”

“If you were chosen for this massive and integral of an event, I doubt you’d contain yourself!” Hamilton countered with a proud, indignant huff, turning away and spinning around once in a manor identical to a young girl’s, her skirts flying up and hair falling from its’ ribbon. “I have so many ideas I have to condense! I’m finally in a position to change the world, and those same ideals they could brush over will finally be broadcasted to more individuals that will be open to persuasion! It is their very job to listen to reason and not shush someone who knows what she is doing!”

“It is also your job to listen to them,” Mrs. Burr replied evenly, taking the other’s shoulder with gentle firmness and fixing her hair back with the saved and retied ribbon. “Don’t become so caught up in the ‘ought tos’ and the ‘well thens’ you mimic those we fought to get away from, okay?”

“I would never!” The other practically squeaked with indignation before grabbing her hands. “Now, do get some shoes on, my dear friend. I must obtain suitable for the occasion.”

“What is wrong with the several outfits you have?” The elder inquired as she got on her travelling boots. “I know for a fact that someone takes care of them being clean and in excellent condition.
Why does this warrant something new and expensive?"

“This is the Constitutional Convention, my friend! That is explanation enough!” Eliza declared. “You own far more garments than that of the average citizen as well. Both of our husbands insist on doting on us with our similarly amassed wealth.”

“That is a valid point,” Theodosia conceded as they rode to town by her personal carriage. “I do wonder, why do you care for my modest opinion on what you should adorn yourself in? I know that both of our best consultant is all the way across the sea, but Lucy leads a quiet life and Sybil is far more in tune with modern fashion than myself.”

As they dismounted, she found her younger friend to have a pink face brought on by far more than the wind. “Well, Mrs. Burr, ma’am, you have always been someone I thought very highly of along with Lucy. You, to be quite frank, have always reminded me very strongly of my late older sister with your blunt directness and tough love approach. I look to you for quite a bit of guidance, even if I talk too much and my approaches are very abrasive and it doesn’t seem like I always value your opinion. I truly do, Theodosia, from the very bottom of my heart.”

The sentiment warmed her heart greatly, and she linked arms with her companion. “Well, in that case, let’s get you something appropriate to appear before a convention of hard headed men and even more sharp tongued women.”

Eliza and Theodosia had ended up selecting and making the proper modifications to a dark green dress, one that they’d given pockets and various extra hems and hidden fabric so she could easily move around in it as freely as she could ever want. They’d even used an excess piece to create a more sturdy ‘ribbon’, one that she proudly wore her shorter hair with, especially when she got it trimmed to be slightly above the base of her neck.

“Now what I’m going to say may sound indelicate!”

She’d completely shaken the grounds of which the Constitutional Convention was founded upon, but she didn’t think of it as such a bad thing as everyone else seemed to. As they were dismissed for the evening, she exited the front floor in a hasty fashion, intending to see her family for the farewell dinner arranged for her beloved John Laurens, moving his Martha and their children back to South Carolina to give himself more political leverage to make real changes happen more quickly in the southern states. As she approached the double doors, she found the insufferable John Lasing Jr. and the even more intolerable Robert Yates, both of which violently opposed her despite being her fellow New York delegates.

“Going somewhere in such a hurry, Mrs. Hamilton?” Yates asked in that snide, condescending voice of his. “We have many things to discuss, unless you’re only so bold when you think nothing will hurt you.”

“I’m not worried about you hurting me,” she responded coldly. “I have a prior arrangement. If you will excuse me.”

“Don’t you think she ought to call us ‘gentlemen’, Mister Yates?” Lasing mused in a similar sickly tone, standing shoulder to shoulder with ally. “She has an awfully bold spirit for a woman, does she not? Someone is meant to teach her some manners.”

“Her parents are immigrants as well,” Yates chimed said with a cruel sneer. “There was no hope
for her ‘manners’ coming from that kind of background. The naïve little twit needs those lessons from proper gents such as ourselves, methinks.”

“Yes, I concur, good sir.”

“You won’t lay a hand on me,” she snapped, her pleasantries dissolving as they stepped closer and forced her to take several steps back even more quickly. “It is not in your political or personal interest to violate me in any way. You are already treading thin ice by saying such damning things about me.”

“Trust me, Mrs. Hamilton, you won’t be inclined to speak in an incriminatory way about either of us,” Yates purred; he was clearly the ring-leader, and she figured Lasing would have nothing to stand on if she gutted their little operation from the inside relentlessly.

She walked briskly right toward them, making the older of two smirk and make a grab for her, but she was experienced in these types of men from growing up in an unforgiving, predatory city full of corruption. She sidestepped and grabbed his arm, forcing it against his back and shoving him down with the aid of her shoe in his ass.

“I challenge you to a duel, Robert Yates,” she declared in the same tone she’d originally spoken with, her posture far more assured than she internally felt in those moments. “Should you win, I shall resign. Should I win, you shall resign. I will hear no more of your ridiculous threats and empty, pride-filled whining. I will see you across the river in New Jersey at dawn in the morning light.”

As swiftly as she could while keeping a poker face, she swung the doors open, being sure to knock Lasing unforgivably in the front before going into the protective arms of her husband. She wasted no time in telling him what she’d been through, leaving in all the horrifying details until she worried her love would implode with the rage clearly set across his face.

“Those bastards!” He exclaimed furiously, and had she not held fast to his arm, she was sure he’d go murder them both with no remorse and worry about the court repercussions later.

“I challenged Yates to a duel,” she assured, sending him spinning back to face her.

“You did what?! Eliza!”

“He ought to be taken quite a few notches and I know my way around using a pistol under pressure,” she assured, gently taking his hands in her trembling ones. “Now, we need to get back to our children.”

“Eliza-“

“Please.” For the first time in the past forty eight hours, she allowed her voice to shake and crack as prominently as her inner monologue had been. “Let’s…let’s put it to the side until the morning. I would like to go home to our babies and our friends…please.”

His face, though still red with passion, softened as he met her rapidly watering eyes. “Of course, my darling. I won’t abandon your side, not now, not ever. I promise you, you will be safe so long as I live and breathe.”

“And as long as I live and breathe, I will allow it,” she responded with a watery laugh. “Now, come along, before the supper grows cold.”

The meal they shared with their closest friends was full of merriment and play, though John
Laurens was appalled she’d be dueling before they department to the point he insisted upon being her second. He left late in the evening, coming back as passionately enraged as her husband when an apology was refused and condemned by Lasing, and Eliza found herself spending her sleep in her bed with all three of children snuggled between her and her husband. She resolved that in the event of her death, she would at least let her last night be spent with the people she loved more than anyone else.

When the light was slowly inching across the horizon, she got into the boat with her doting husband and riled up best friend while the lovely Martha Manning Laurens watched over all of the still asleep children. In their agreed meeting place, she noticed immediate that Yates seemed much more outwardly shaken, and his hands shook as he handed his part of the payment to the doctor they’d found hurriedly. She kept her poker face on very firmly, staring holes in her enemy as Lasing shouted back and forth with her beloved John before both men stalked away. As he approached, she was alarmed to see the slightly deranged look her companion shared, and placed her hands on his arm in a silent attempt to settle him.

“You won’t have a damn bit of trouble shutting him up,” he assured in a low voice. “Be sure to look no higher than his eyes, even if it’s tempting to blow his puny brain out.”

Despite the morbid nature of his humor, she found herself giggling quietly before approaching the older man stained with sweat and with bloodshot eyes. They said nothing, but she sent him a stony half stare, half glare before they settled back to back and had their paces counted. As she stepped in time with the overseer, one as unbiased as the local doctor, her thoughts seemed to tick in time with the potential death march.

One.

She imagined death so much it felt more like a memory. Is this where it got her, the enemy ahead of her like in the war?

Two.

Alexander was a remarkable man, maybe even more so than her. He’d make their family name something worthwhile if this truly was the end.

Three.

Angelica would be furious with her if she came so soon, but maybe it would be worth it just to be with her older sibling once more. She wondered if she’d get to meet those siblings she’d lost so long before-

Four.

No, she had to keep her shot despite these thoughts. If this was how she was remembered…

Five.

She wanted to be remembered for much more than a bullet. She wanted to be known as a “Founding Mother”, a revolutionary war veteran who did so much that history revered her in the highest regard!

Six.

Perhaps she could shoot between his legs. He did not deserve the joy of children.
Seven.

Her children, her loving girl and boys. They’d be devastated should she leave so early; she wondered if they’d even forgive it.

Eight.

Her Peggy needed her, and so did her beloved John, and all of her other younger siblings and her worried parents. She did not come here for nothing.

Nine.

It took a lifetime of work to come to this country, the one that seemingly called out for her, and the one that she could change if she could rid herself of ignorant enemies like the one trying to end her. She’d be damned if this was her last hurrah, for all of them, and for herself.

Number Ten! Place; fire!

As set and sturdy as ever, Eliza whipped around and shot blindly, her eyes meeting his for a flash of time before he crumbled to the ground. As she was ushered off the field, she saw the blood erupting from his upper thigh; perhaps he really would be deterred from more procreation.

“Yo, we won!” John exclaimed, throwing his arms around his neck and letting out a sound that was unmistakably a sob of relief.

“You did it!” Alexander chimed in, sounding close to tears himself as he pulled them both in a secure embrace.

With shaking fingers, she handed off her pistol to someone else and pulled her beloved men tight to her. For a few long moments, nothing else mattered but them, and how they emotionally clung to her as she did them in mutual celebration she’d unmistakably won the duel. Her political position seemed so petty as they boarded the boat back across the river, and she resolved she’d try her best not to take advantage being able to kiss her offspring’s foreheads as she returned to their home.

“Are you going back in today?” Her Alexander asked softly as she returned to him, handing her a fresh mug of coffee.

Should she? She’d risked her life and her reputation, and she wasn’t even sure if her enemy would be alright. However, if she was gone, she risked Lasing smearing her name and destroying all she’d be struggling to maintain. With a soft, sad smile, she kissed him and nodded, swigging her beverage and heading out to the convention with renewed vigor.

As she approached the political arena once more, Eliza was positive that it was because she loved her family so fiercely that she would not stop until their legacies and lives were so secure that it would help them all survive eternally.

“‘You wouldn’t ever duel like that…would you, love?”

The question took John Laurens off guard for a few reasons. For one, they’d just left a place where one of his closest friends silenced a dangerous enemy via duel, and he’d become her second with no hesitance. Secondly, they were on a (admittedly large, but regardless,) boat with their three young children, all of which were listening to every single thing their parents said. Thirdly, she was
swollen and pregnant to the point he feared she’d pop any moment, and they’d agreed to keep their lives as settled as possible despite the stress of moving.

“It depends,” he responded honestly. “I wouldn’t take anyone trying to harm my family lightly, I assure you.”

Martha, the woman he’d pledged his life to, the mother to his beloved offspring and companion through life, gave him a sad smile. “I hate to think of losing you in such a violent, frightening way. I want to be by your side when your times come, not worrying back at the home as you throw away your life for the sake of fading honor.”

“Are you implying that it was not honorable for Eliza to defend herself against two potential rapists and abusers?” He asked quietly, appalled at the implication until she rapidly shook her head.

“No!” She assured, and given that she was an awful liar, he knew he could believe her words now. “She is by far one of the bravest women I have ever had the pleasure of knowing and calling my friend. I ask because I know you are more easily aggravated than she, and I could see you in a position to shoot rather than bring dishonor. All I’m saying is that people perceptions’ fade, and at the end of the day, it is more important to return to your family rather than kill yourself arguing about them.”

He decided he would not tell her about his duel with the mouthy Charles Lee back in 1778 and simply took her hands, giving her the same charming smile he’d won her over with. “I assure, my love, I do not intend to leave this mortal coil for quite some time.”

His wife smiled and they moved on in topics, and he found the rest of the journey to an excellent time of reflection. He adored his Martha- she was a lovely woman and a stellar wife- but he could not deny the feelings that refused for his Alexander and his Eliza. He’d hugged Eliza the longest, he’d noted, and whispered for her to not forget to write, and while he’d never admit aloud, his marriage with Martha was one unfortunately plagued with monotony due to her pacifism, downplayed patriotism, and these promises she trapped in to not go fight for what he believed in post the war and the liberation of the slaves he’d fought with and grow to love as brothers. He spent his days tending to his children and writing essays rather than fighting and going on escapades with his beloved friends, and while that was not a bad life or one he resented greatly, he longed for the spice he knew that would be brought with marrying a more passionate or headstrong partner, someone like Alexander or Elizabeth. At least he was able to keep their eyes and companionship in his life, and he least he was contently married if not married to complete satisfaction.

When Martha birthed their fourth child, a baby girl who stubbornly cried and seemed to demand the things her tiny body and mind craved with more conviction than her siblings upon their births, he easily convinced his spouse for her name to be Schuyler.
Relations Missed

Chapter Summary

Despite the best intentions, many things are missed as the political parties are formed and begin to crack under the pressure of a brilliant mind countering those more traditionally known for leading a status quo.

Chapter Notes

Let it be known that some of this is more than likely not completely historically accurate, but neither was the musical and this is only an AU, after all. I'd like to give another huge shoutout to my incredible reviewers, ClassicLitFam and Arya_Chan, whose support along with the rest of you who subscribe, leave bookmarks, and leave kudos means more than I can ever expression! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

New York, 1789

“Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept, huit, neuf…” Eliza sang as she played a scale that corresponded nicely with her soprano vocal rang, looking to her a brilliant seven year old daughter expectantly from where she sat her side at the piano bench.

Angelica repeated the same in a similar octave, her fingers miming her mother’s remarkably well as she sang. The two harmonized and played all the way up to twenty in French, going back down the scales and giving each other a well-earned side hug when they finished before the mother left her child to practice her sheet music and fill the home with lovely, though somewhat shaky, music. As she exited the foyer, she greeted her eldest son, whose curly hair that was remarkably similar to John’s, miraculously had become wild and unkempt despite her earlier attempts to brush it. He simply nudged his face into her stomach excitedly when she tried to smooth it again with her hands, lifting a piece of parchment toward her face excitedly.

“Did you write another poem?” She asked, smiling when the five year old nodded eagerly and bounced up and down. “Do you want Mommy to read it now?”

“Yes please!” He chirped excitedly, practically dragging her to their large couch and sitting eagerly as she read the partial rhymes and simple creative story with a proud tone.

“Good job, buddy!” She praised, giving him a big hug and pulling one of the spare ribbons she carried most places, using the fabric to firmly tie his hair back into a high bun. “You’ll have it down like a professional in no time if you keep practicing. Now, why don’t you go practice your reading with your Papa? I have important work to do.”

“But you played with Angie!” Phillip huffed, crossing her arms and not wavering when she gave him an unamused expression. “I miss you, too! I love you, too!”
“I promise we can play later,” she soothed, unable to stay irritated with her flesh and blood as she kissed his forehead. “I have some new coworkers to meet in a couple hours’ time, and I must finish making copies of my financial plan for their reading. Trust me, if I could put off the dull repetitive task, I would.”

Though her child blinked a few times in confusion, he simply nodded and agreed before running further into their home. She ruffled her nearly three year old’s hair fondly as she headed into her office, smiling kindly to her beloved Alex as he looked up from his messy art project with a grin that missed a newly fallen baby tooth. When she reached her study, she sat in her chair post checking on her eleven month old, James, who was still contently playing with his trinkets in his gated play area in said study.

“I do wonder if these men will be worth it,” she mused to her toddler, earning a curious gurgle from him. “You tell them, buddy.”

She finished her writings with some painstaking efforts, finally setting the ink out in the window to dry with impromptu desk top weights so they wouldn’t blow while the sun baked the writing on quickly. James had begun to whine and cry as she finished this, so she lifted him up, changing his cloth diaper and cleaning him up with fond coos about how handsome and patient he was, finally making him giggle excitedly.

“Good job, Mama. No one comforts our little ones like you do,” Alexander mused, the son named after him on his hip with very messy, paint-covered hands. “Care to help me scrub some skin clean?”

They worked together, talking kindly to their toddlers and keeping them in the bathroom as they got them both clean enough to not stain their home. Eliza noticed with a small smile the music had stopped and given way for squeals and muffled sounds of play; they really were lucky their two oldest got along so well and didn’t make each other cry constantly like their youngest. Truthfully, she wasn’t sure she’d ever have more children post a terrible forty nine hour labor with James, but at least she laughed when her spouse teasingly entertained the idea of ‘having more now that their boys had their fifth squabble of the day’.

“I imagine you’re going to the city to meet with the city’s most influential and anticipating today,” Alexander mused once the toddlers rushed away.

“How did you guess?” She replied with a chuckle. “I don’t know what to make of these other than they seem well educated. With any luck, I’ll persuade them my plan is worthy of their endorsement.”

“And if they’re new political enemies?”

“They better watch out, because I’ll cut them with my words,” she responded with a proud smirk, inspiring him to chuckle and kiss her.

“I was planning to invite them for a meal sometime, though a more neutral meeting place than home would be good. I have many questions about their beliefs and inconsistencies,” he mused thoughtfully. “I’d try and catch them today, but I care not to leave these four to their own devices.”

“Mother and Father enjoy the company, and little Kitty does enjoy having a playmate her age,” Eliza mused kindly. “I know you like to stay with them now more than ever since the completion of Columbia, but I value the time we spend as a wed couple alone.”

A grin filled his face, his eyes twinkling like they always did with their love was reaffirmed aloud.
“Then perhaps they would like to see their grandparents, young uncles and aunt for the evening and perhaps even night?”

“Perhaps so. Shall you see to the answer?” She put a hand on his shoulders and sauntered all around him, palms never leaving his body before rejoining before him with a deeply intimate kiss.

A blush tainting his cheeks like makeup, he smirked. “I most certainly will… get on that. God, Elizabeth, do you have any idea what you do to me?”

Lifting her older pink dress/skirts that she’d kept in lovely condition over the half decade, she sent the fabric swinging side to side as she grinned suggestively. “I may need a reminder when the night grows dark. Until then, shall we meet in the square as soon as our children are settled away?”

“We shall, my stunning and flirtatious wife.”

As she made her way downtown, she found herself appreciating the view and bidding a good afternoon to passing citizens with a content smile. Upon growing closer to the courthouse, she noticed her companion, James Madison, hacking unceremoniously into a handkerchief. Feeling sympathy for the gentleman who’d been so kind to help her writing the Federalist Papers, she approached with a warm expression.

“These summer colds with kill you, won’t they, my friend?” She asked empathetically, founding herself quite alarmed when he looked to her with an expression of terrible contempt.

“Don’t talk to me,” he said frigidly. “You and I are not ‘friends’, and if you don’t have the good sense to understand it, you will once my closest confidantes arrive.”

“Your closest confidantes?” She repeated, unsure of what he was trying to start but not appreciating his tone. “We are civil acquaintances, or at least we were. I believe I deserve the decency to know why you are being so condescending.”

“Your new financial plan is nothing less the government control!” The short man exclaimed, face red as he paused to hack further before resuming his attempt to dress her down. “You’d let all of the states’ rights be thrown out with the bathwater in the interest of creating an economy that directly strengthens the seat of government wear you precariously sit. It’s preposterous you have maintained a position you have no idea about how to maintain!”

“Excuse me?” She stated frigidly, her hands going on either hip as she stood to her full height, which was conveniently three inches taller than him. “You and I shared drink and food for hours while we wrote The Federalist Papers. You told me on more than one occasion I was the best supervisor you’d had in quite some time, and two years’ time later I’m incapable of maintaining a well-earned position of power? Have you gone mad?”

“You’re attempting to strip the South of what little power it currently has!” He snapped back. “I would not expect a haughty, privileged, illegal immigrant woman send here in secrecy and squalor growing up to be a lawyer to understand positions that aren’t directly in front of her.”

“And what does that make you then, sir?” She fired back, voice oozing with the same derogatory sarcasm. “An unimpressive, sickly little man with a big mouth and wealthy parents? Don’t make me laugh, good man, you are a bleak desert compared to my aggressive rain.”

With that, she strode past him with her shoulders square and head high; she resolved he did not deserve her tears as she looked to the sky to let the moisture slip more subtly. The general public b*ecame much more congested around the city limit marks, and the sounds of cheers began to
erupt as she stepped in the new, impressively built courthouse, Unable to help her curiosity, she was nearly at the top of the stars to catch a glimpse out of the window when she nearly bumped directly into her beloved Martha Washington.

“Terribly sorry, ma’am!” She squeaked, internally scolding herself for such a weak tone in contrast to her proud telling off to Mister Madison.

“No need,” Martha assured with patient smile, and though she was as accommodating and as a remarkable presence as ever, Eliza could not miss how her features had dramatically aged since the passing of her eldest two children; the reality haunted the newly First Lady even now, as they’d confided to each other many times. “Mister Jefferson seems to have finally arrived.”

“He has indeed,” the younger woman agreed, smiling lightly as the first president of the United States himself, and the man that inspired her ‘President for Life’ movement, came proudly marching in with his appearance the epitome of success and weathered excitement.

“Mister President,” she greeted warmly, accepting his brief embrace happily. “Our Secretary of State has been off in Paris for quite some time.”

“The masses and my wife and I are glad to have him back,” George mused, putting on his general’s hat and allowing his spouse to straighten it. “He will be a valuable asset to our foreign trading. His influence over in France has already led to very progressive progress that would take many years to build otherwise.”

“That is valuable,” she conceded, watching at his side as the doors opened and people paved the walkway for Jefferson, the crowd full of cheers and warm welcome that she’d never seen outside of England with ‘the great King George’.

“Mister Jefferson!” The president greeted as the trio made their way down, Eliza stepping a few feet behind him to keep respectful distance. “Welcome home, good sir.”

“The pleasure is all mine, Mister President.” The Thomas Jefferson, the gentleman she’d heard so much about, drawled in a distinctly Virginian accent, shaking Mister Washington’s hand with left while his right remained positioned on a very fancy cane, complete with a decorative purple orb for a handle topper. “I want to thank you for allowing me to powerfully serve my country back on free soil, sir. I don’t intend to let you down.”

“I have high hopes that you won’t,” Washington replied with a kind smile that looked almost proud; with a twinge of jealously, she realized that was the approving look he often gave his right hand woman.

“I’m afraid I have a meeting for the time being,” Thomas drawled, accepting Lady Washington’s hand and kissing it while bowing deeply. “Until we speak again, sir, madam.”

“Mister Jefferson?” She exclaimed with sudden sharpness as he breezed right past her, having the audacity to flash her a smug smile as though she were a commoner. “Elizabeth Hamilton, Treasury Secretary.”

The tall gentleman paused his stride, looking to her like she imagined she looked to her children when they were misbehaving. “Oh, I’ve heard much about you. A seemingly remarkable little lady coming to shake up the political game when she tired of procreating with her own family, and she thinks she can stand on equal footing with an American and French hero like myself? You’re adorable, really. Now, be a doll and find somewhere to put my overcoat; it’s quite humid in here, and I’m afraid it might not just me causing the atmosphere to warm.”
Same proud, insufferably cocky smirk on his face, he shrugged off his magenta overcoat and draped it across her entire head, causing her to be assaulted with a disgusting foreign fragrance and long dried sweat. Her face darkening with rage, she immediately pulled it off, thinking to throw it on the ground and stomp to regain his attention before deciding instead to cast it down the staircase as her beloved Washingtons disappeared into another room in the expansive estate.

“Secretary Jefferson has tired of this outerwear! Won’t somebody take it off his hands?” She called down to his excited fans, smirking and watching with pleasure as several rushed in to tear pieces of the fabric for themselves.

When she turned back to face the corridor, she found him standing with his free hand on the doorknob of a further off room, scowling. Wasting no time, she came up to his side and placed one hand on her hip while leaning against the other on the wall.

“You’re a glorified Francophile,” she told him with a proud, slightly sadistic grin. “You must have been quite the ambassador if you are so small minded you don’t recognize our previously problematic society changing all around you. Perhaps you can find some knowledge while conversing sorely of me with Madison, though I don’t you’ll find yourself presented with any original ideas from the likes of him. Adieu.”

Walking away with her head and pride at renewed heights, she resolved a political rivalry where she intended to come on top would be a positive thing after all. As for the immediate present, she had more important things to do, such as her intellectual husband.

Theodosia refused to believe the rumors, but she could not proudly say she’d never doubted her husband faith even once. After all, following the death of their Estelle and her miscarriage, it would not be unlike a man to seek comfort in another’s arms. She had no doubt that he loved their Theodosius and that he cared well for her five adult or teenage offspring, but that meant little compared to a marriage full of potential invisible strain. She largely believed how he’d soothed her immediately after Estelle’s birth, and how he remained at her side throughout many long days and nights, but there were still business trips and doctors’ visits he insisted he make alone that led to a fair bit of room for adulterous acts to occur within.

“Have you heard?” She heard one woman whisper to her husband as she dropped her beloved youngest at his pre-primary education institution. “Aaron Burr had a child with another woman. A mixed child from a war hero; can you imagine?”

At least that individual had the decency not to use the barbaric and cruel term for people of color, she resolved as she bid her natural child goodbye. She walked through the streets, someone aimlessly as all of New York celebrated the return of their favorite ambassadors. She spotted Hamilton, her face full of conviction and flush with evident emotion, but found herself feeling too fatigued to meet with the young woman. She found herself at the newly established courthouse, climbing the grand steps and looking around the beautifully decorated corridors for the president. He’d not payed much personal mind to her during the war, but perhaps she could get her name in and achieve a purpose more greater than being an allegedly cheated on housewife with mostly grown children and no ability to birth new ones. After all, she was just as much a war veteran and soldier as her younger companion had ever been.

“…She’d rather pass around the debt than own up to it when she created it! She’s the type of tyrannical tyranny that we fought so bravely to escape!”
The unfamiliar voice was loud enough to be heard through a heavily made shut door, so Theodosia was intrigued to say the least. She leaned on the connecting walls, listening to two male voices feed off of each other’s evident discourse about someone, who she eventually concluded was her Eliza. She had half a mind to go in there and defend her friend, but much to her own alarm, she found that both gentlemen made rather excellent points that she found herself unable to poke holes through. When the door was finally pushed open, she ended up tripping over herself in order to make it seem like she wasn’t spying, leading her to collapse on her side in a rather undignified position.

“Ma’am, do you require some assistance?” Finally linking the soft, husky voice to the James Madison she’d met briefly and in pacing, she extended a hand and gratefully got back to her feet with his red-faced aide.

“For you to be listening to such a strongly worded rant session, you must either be a friend of Hamilton’s or a spy,” another voice mused, and she found herself face to face with the remarkable Thomas Jefferson.

“I would call us friends, yes,” she responded with a surprising amount of evenness to her voice. “That does not mean I am blind to her shortcomings and foolish stances on how she believes our nation ought to be run.”

Quirking up a well-groomed eyebrow, she felt her heart nearly leap out of her chest as Jefferson extended a hand to her. “I’m sure I don’t need to introduce myself, little darlin’, but I’m awfully interested in who might you be.”

“Finding a like-minded person outside of the south is somewhat a rarity,” Madison added in an echo before blowing his nose with a loud honk.

“My name is Theodosia Burr, sir. It’s a pleasure to meet you both,” she said with a small curtesy, not feeling it all the appropriate to flourish entirely to the men who just seen quite a bit of her bare legs and who seemed to like her company. “Mister Madison, if you are looking to effective remedy to your summer cold, I have a couple of tea brews I’ve either gotten from family or created myself. They’ve done wonders for my family and me despite all the weather and political climate changes.”

Much to her pleasure, both men chuckled and accepted her invitation to her home. She made her previously mentioned recipe with renewed confidence, listening intently as the men continued their conversation about Elizabeth Hamilton with her chiming in occasionally with checked facts or understanding. She also got to learn a great deal of review from Madison, who drank three cups of her brew gratefully and explained to Thomas in painstaking detail all that he’d missed since being in France. Though she knew her young friend was ambitious and servant to her own agenda, she was alarmed at some of the figures of her projects, the demands she enlisted out for the Federalist Papers, and her stances and statements concerning the hot button Vermont dilemma.

“She’s only going to spiral out of control if we don’t stand up to her,” the short man grumbled. “And she’ll trample the South first if left to her own devices.”

“Rest assured, her little reign of power is over,” Thomas assured with a mischievous smirk. “And how is that?” She inquired politely.

“We have a cabinet meeting tomorrow,” he replied, his smirk only growing as he stood and surveyed her décor. “Her financial plan may be a real piece of work, but I won’t need half the space she tries to take up to cut it down. As long as I’m afraid, she won’t get shit through to
“As a fellow newly aligned anti-federalist, I intend to know all of which you intend to say. Perhaps we can iron them out over lunch,” James mused as he stood himself, putting his cup away for cleaning. “It was nice talking to you, Mrs. Burr. You have a lovely human and a good head.”

“It’s nice to see women who aren’t blowing out as much hot air as they inhale from birthing babies,” Thomas commented, laughing along with his friend before turning to her as he went outside. “In all actuality, you’re damn smart. A time may come where I need your pretty face and strong brain on my side; I reckon you’ll be up to it?”

Washington had never offered her an opportunity to serve for what she believed in against the grain. As much as she cared for Hamilton, it would be good for her to level herself against an equally intelligent counterpart or two, and their nation would benefit from both sides in the end. With all of that in mind, she assured that she would and shook his hand proudly.

With the right alignments, she took her new purpose with pride and hope for the future as she finally got her mind off of the possible marriage infidelity.

John did not care for his new job much in trying times. It was very nice to be able to pass laws and oversee the drastic reduction of slavery while improving the lives of those he met great public resistance in freeing, and yet meetings such as the one he had with the leading candidate for the new senator of Virginia was grinding on his nerves in a terrible way.

“Why would you need a petitionary for criminals? It prolongs the life of society’s worst,” he stated blandly to one James Monroe, who’d been talking out of both sides of his mouth relentlessly in a fair less interesting way than those he loved who tended to ramble.

“Not all criminals are found guilty,” the other gentleman pointed out with a look he found to be a little too condescending. “And death will be a release from the some of the things these bastards commit. It makes to shorten and prolong suffering hand in hand in a secured location.”

“At the expense of the people,” he reminded dryly.

“It is a service to the people!” Monroe exclaimed with a smug sip of his tea. “They will be spending their money in far more useful ways than what they currently pay for, good sir.”

“Such as what, good man?”

“For example, the Federalist concept on taxing whiskey. It is a preposterous idea that hails from a woman who clearly cannot handle liquor and intends to take it out in a plan full of holes,” the younger political figure grunted. “I intend to rejoice once the cabinet meeting in the morrow sees the end to this recipe for mayhem. I cannot imagine you feel much differently, as you are a mostly sensible individual, Mister Laurens.”

Though it pained him to say anything in agreement with this buffoon, he managed to come across politely. “Yes sir, Mister Monroe. If you’ll excuse me, I must attend to some papers laid upon my des before this visit began. I hope you will allow to me to respectfully cut this…fascinating discussion short.”

“Certainly, my good man. Until we meet again.”
As soon as he’d left his office, John found himself pacing furiously, resisting the urge to punch a hole through the wall and instead scrawling out his venting to his dearest Eliza first. Despite Alexander’s evident inability to read his angry markings, she also responded in complete accuracy with no complaint on the legibility, so he took great pleasure in discussing all the Jefferson fan had the audacity to spout.

“And there you are so many miles away,” he muttered as he wrote it, his passion finally fizzling out for the time. “Do you have to live so many miles away? There is nothing but trouble for you in a state overrun with anti-Federalist trash; you’d be much safer and I reckon happier in my home town.”

“Good sir, I do believe I forgot my hat,” Monroe’s voice said so suddenly he nearly spilled all his ink when he jumped. “I apologize for alarming you.”

In his reflexive jump, several sheets of the newly written parchment had glided to the ground near his visitor’s feet. As he placed the hat upon his head, he lifted them, his eyes scanning them with an unreadable expression forming over his features. Now unafraid to hide his defense over her beloved, he snatched the papers back.

“You speak of what you have no idea,” he said gravely. “You haven’t half the nuance as she or I, and you draw your influence idolizing a man in love with France who has no business running a country he didn’t fight, bleed and nearly die for.”

“Just because you a war veteran does not make you better than those of us who are intellectual enough to fight with words rather than guns and swords,” Monroe replied coldly. “I have more of a political career than you will likely ever have.”

“Despite your alleged ‘Southern charm’, you aren’t welcome too warmly outside of your home state,” Laurens fired back sharply. “You haven’t the connections I had or the weathered, accurate reflection of how the world works. This game you play will only lead in a dead end for you. Unless you want to prepare yourself to bleed out, I suggest you leave my office and apologize for your blatant disrespect to those who fought for the very free soil privileged asses like you are allowed to prance upon.”

For a moment, John hoped he’d be able to shoot the idiot down in honor, ridding his beloved Hamilton family of further trouble from his likes. Then his new enemy simply bowed down, apologizing with a sincere tone for his disrespect for excusing himself. Unable to calm himself, he took the rest of the day off and finished his lengthy letter to Eliza in his home, his children playing around and nearby and his wife cooking his favorite meal to make up for the trash he’d had to dispose of politically.

The last line he wrote read as follows: For the sake of our country, both of our dignities, the welfare of what we leave behind, and simply for our pleasure, I wish for you to make an example out of the blind his blind, naïve eyes follow. Furthermore, he has no respect for the men and women who died for him, so relent no mercy upon his idealism. Forever yours, J. Laurens.

Chapter End Notes

I'm very sorry if the ending felt a little rushed; I intended to have this chapter include extra plot points I originally intended and begin Eliza's rivalry with the anti-Feds, and while James Monroe isn't directly face to face with her here, rest assured this will not
always be the case. Don't worry though, my dear readers; Eliza may occasionally rile easily, but she's not going to let these men trample her, either. I'll see you next chapter for the events of Cabinet Battle #1 and, as always, more! Goodbye for now, please remember to kudos/bookmark/subscribe/review! ♥
The Costs of Arrogance

Chapter Summary

The first cabinet meeting is one in which two storms collide with enough momentum to hold each to flood the political game. One woman finds loss subtly lingering in an enemy's eye in times of her own poised agony.

TRIGGER WARNINGS: The section after the second content break contains slight depiction of a miscarriage and cheating is heavily referenced and implied thereafter. Stay safe, my loves.

Chapter Notes

Writing this chapter was an absolute whirlwind, and I'm not sure I could be prouder of the end result! I'd like to shoutout the incredible reviewers by the name of Arya_Chan, ClassLitLover, and anonemones, whose support, ideas, and endless love/praise means more than words can describe. I’d also like to shoutout to the incredible people who keep leaving kudos, bookmark, and subscribe; I see you and love you all! Without further ado, enjoy! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

A knock coming to the door right before the children were put to bed was a surprise to the Hamilton household, but Alexander still opened the door and politely greeted whoever before he’d ever gotten a good look at them. Unsurprisingly, he profusely welcomed inside the president and his first lady, calling in his wife and getting both powerful leaders some tea as they settled on their couch.

“Mister President, Mrs. Washington,” Eliza greeted warmly, repeatedly smoothing down the thin full-body, flannel cover she’d hastily put on over her shift. “To what do we owe the honor?”

“Don’t worry too much about your appearance, child. You are more than presentable for us, and we won’t be here long,” Martha soothed before continuing. “George and I were looking over the material for cabinet meeting taking place in the morning and came across a very interesting revelation.”

Relieved at her superior’s loving assurance and secretly hoping what they’d found was something to ruin her tedious rivals, the younger woman took a seat with her spouse on the other couch. “Is that so?”

“You never officially signed on a Secretary of Treasury,” George replied, arching an eyebrow and pushing a few forms toward her on their coffee table. “Neither of us could think of for the life of us why you’d deny such a position, but if that is the case, I may have to postpone the meeting until another candidate can be located.”

“Sir?” It felt like all the air in her lungs had been knocked out while she felt her soul ascend to
Cloud Nine. “You...you never asked me to lead in such a way, but I am more than the willing and ready to serve effective immediately.”

“I didn’t?” He blinked a few times and looked to his wife with a soft sigh. “My memory is still suitable to run the country with, and yet it fails to consider little details within the chaos of my new position. It is for these reasons I need a reliable cabinet full of my most trusted confidantes and intelligent men and women.”

“Absolutely, sir! It was be an honor, your honor!” She exclaimed, wasting no time in signing where it was appropriate. “I am flattered and privileged that you would ask me to help lead our country, but you will find your decisions to not have been made in vain. I have many, many plans, and this title will give me more than ample room in which to cover grounds and obtain the knowledge necessary to push my plans through Congress.”

“Oh yes, we know,” Lady Washington agreed with a fond smile. “Do try not to work yourself into the ground. Politics are important, but do not forget to appreciate and notice what is directly in front of you. History has its eyes on you.”

Nathaniel Greene’s similar words echoed in the chambers of her memories, making her heart pound as she remembered the smell of death and blood across the fallen and injured soldiers alike. “You and Mister Greene must be friends; he said the same thing to me several years back. He said it would come in handy in times of stressful decision making.”

“He obtained such advice from my wife,” George replied with a smile to his beloved. “Her insight for the future has gotten me through my entire career.”

“You want to make something that’s going to outlive yourself. I understand that,” Martha told her with an expression that held wisdom embedded in every one of her aging feature. “You are aware of your influence today and for the rest of your life, but historians will look back on the independence war we fought to win our country, and the people who helped shaped it after, such as yourself. You must remember that every decision you make reflects in the eyes of those you will never know or meet, and for that, you are responsible. You must always keep your legacy as your first priority from here on in. Do you understand?”

Her legacy. The thing she had to protect as dearly as anything in her life. Without out, she’d be lost to folded pieces of parchment and faded notes, long forgotten by the children of the country she loved. Despite what her enemies may say, she was capable of much more than most men could craft; she’d already done so much, but there was a million more she hadn’t yet. As she shook the leaders’ hands, she resolved that from now on she would put the future first and worry about the present when she was satisfied with it. After all, what had she began this all for but to great more than herself, and what else would her sister have died for?”

“I do.”

“Do you have plenty of water?”

“Check.”

“Extra quills and ink?”

“Check.”
“Do you have all your papers? You double checked?”

“Alexander, you look like you picked papers up off the street when you go to meetings whereas I’m mostly tidy. Yes, I have all my papers.”

“Touché.” Her husband gave her an adorable pout before leaning in closer, pressing their foreheads together affectionately. “Good luck kiss?”

She smiled and kissed him tenderly. “Check.”

“You’re going to do great, babe,” he assured with a proud smile, kissing her forehead and squeezing both her hands. “That Jefferson character seems like a real piece of work. I must admit, Madison being so terrible to you was a bit alarming, but I say you ought to kick both of their asses back to Monticello.”

“That’s the plan,” she responded with a grin. “Now go ahead and find yourself a good seat, we’ll be starting soon.”

She was wearing her beloved dark green dress from the Annapolis Convention, and she found herself internally grateful as she watched several members of Congress fidget and try to subtly air out their stuffy clothing as workhands moved around the expansive room to let in more air and release the stuffiness that sat like a weight over everyone. She was smoothing her papers across her space and reviewing them a final time when she saw an unmistakable, tall and purple tinted figure come strolling in with a shorter, coughing grey tinted figure right behind him. Despite her best attempts to keep calm and pay them no mind until necessary, she found herself forced when the end of a cane clunked against the middle of one of her papers.

“Can I help you?” She asked somberly, looking up to him with an unamused scowl.

“Only cabinet members are needed on the Congress floor,” the insufferable Virginian drawled. “I know the president has excellent enough judgement to not insist upon the likes of you. I know you think you have privilege because you were stupid enough to serve in the war while you were pregnant and he asked your opinion on some things, but why don’t you go ahead and move along?”

“Listen here, you pretentious waste of air,” she snipped, getting to feet sharply and grabbing his cravat with such fierceness and strength, his smug expression dropped in favor of one of anxious concern. “My sister died in that war you say it was stupid to fight in, and thousands of more men and women, good men and women died, while you were off getting intoxicated with the French. You keep your mouth shut about the war and what it means to honorably die for a country’s freedom, or I swear to you that you shall bleed. Have I made myself quite understood?”

“Don’t believe her,” Madison grumbled from behind their own table. “She doesn’t have the guts.”

Taking a long look into her narrowed, daring eyes, Thomas had the good sense to slowly shake his head and step out of her grip with a cautious glance over her. “My sister died in that war you say it was stupid to fight in, and thousands of more men and women, good men and women died, while you were off getting intoxicated with the French. You keep your mouth shut about the war and what it means to honorably die for a country’s freedom, or I swear to you that you shall bleed. Have I made myself quite understood?”

Feeling irritated and fuming on her frustration, Eliza smoothed down her papers and stared directly at them until Mister Washington began speaking, welcoming the public and the committee members with grandeur that was unmatched. He presented the ‘issue on the table’ as being her place getting passed, and she was gearing up to stand and present before he declared that Secretary Jefferson had the floor first. As the taller man stood up and began swaggering forward his cane, she was agitated further to see all signs of regret and genuine thought seemed to have melted right off his relaxed shoulders.
“Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These are rights we demanded for; we shouldn’t settle for less,” Thomas announced to everyone, his weight rested casually against his cane while he gestured around fantastically with his free arm. “These are wise words, enterprises may quote them, but don’t act surprised, you lot, cause I wrote ‘em!”

The young women simply rolled her eyes, sitting back with her arms crossed as he continued on his soapbox. “You see, Mrs. Hamilton insists that her plan should assume states debts. Now place your bets as to who that benefits…yes, the very seat of government where he pretty privileged self sits!”

“Not true!” She protested sharply; he was just upset because Virginia passed all their work off on human beings who had no say to get paid or well.

“Aww, are you mad? If the shoe fits, wear it!” He replied with a sadistic grin, making his way across the floor just as animatedly as before. “If New York’s in debt, why should Virginia bear it? Our debts are paid, I’m afraid, so don’t tax the south cause we’ve got it made in the shade. Now, about your funny little political agenda, it sounds excellent on paper but the credit will never stand in practicality. All thirteen colonies, contributing to a bank that makes the government more powerful than it already is? Why, we might as well sail back to England! You operate under the rouse that this bank will act as a means to force cooperation among our most contrary states, and yet you insist they pay for the blind leading the blind with this plan, which, by the way, is too many damn pages for anyone to understand!”

With his most recent point, he took hand and swept across her desk, sending all the parchment flying without even having the decency to look her in her eyes. She immediately jumped to her feet and got on her knees, hastily scooping into her arms and resisting to make a fool of herself by spitting on his too polished shoes.

“Stand with me, ladies and gentlemen, in the land of the free,” Thomas finally concluded, sitting down before George could say anything about his cocky foul play. “Let us pray to God this young gun never sees her name on a ballet. She knows nothing of what she speaks and has gotten to this position by privilege and wealth alone, and knowing her background, who’s to say she didn’t commit unspeakable dishonors to win her way up the political latter?”

“That is quite enough, Secretary Jefferson,” Lady Washington finally said with a sharply strict tone. “Thank you.”

“Look, when Britain taxed our tea, we got pissy,” Thomas stated with a grin to the stirred up masses. “Imagine what’s gonna happen when she tries to task our whiskey.”

The crowd and Congress alike stirred more vocally, forcing to the president to demand their cooperation firmly and forbidding him from speaking until his opponent was finishing with the floor. Feeling flustered but confident and determined to take her enemy down, she stood and walked in front of her table post neatly laying her papers back down.

“Thomas, that was a very nice declaration,” she told him, bending at the waist and placing her hands on her thighs as if she was praising and borderline patronizing a young child before snapping back up to her usual proud tone and posture. “Welcome to the present; we’re running a real nation. Would you care to join us, or will you stay mellow, doing whatever the hell it is you do in Monticello?”

As she asked the question, she changed her voice to poorly imitate the southerner, causing a few people to chuckle and even more stifle the same. Jefferson was scowling and Madison had his arms crossed like a sulking toddler, only fueling to her fire as she grinned smugly and faced the Congress.
“The plan is very clearly stated, so how he is doesn’t get it is beyond me!” She exclaimed to them. “If we’re aggressive and competitive, the union gets a much needed boost and lifts our country as a whole free of debt rather than sedate it deeper into promises we are in no position to keep. What will we do if another war is to be fought and the credit is so dismal, nobody, not even our beloved French allies, will move to aide us?”

The crowd was beginning to murmur among themselves as they’d done with him, proving she was getting through. She crossed toward the general public on looking, spreading her arms out grandly.

“We are one people! Cooperation is not forced, it is put into place so it’s the most practical thing for everyone to contribute to!” She told them, lowering her arms so she could place her hands on her hips. “As for states not being in debt, the cold reality is that it has to do with those who have no rights to change a thing, even if they wanted to. Virginia’s debts are paid because they don’t pay for labor, Mister Jefferson, so please keep ranting; we know who’s really doing the planting.”

The crowd really responded, some cheering, others groaning and more making grunting sounds as if the cutting words as been to them. She made her way to their table, meeting their harsh glares with a smug smirk and by leaning on the palms of her hands on the wooden stand, her dress having to swing around her legs as it caught up with her rapid movement.

“And another thing, Mister Age of Enlightenment, you cannot speak of war, and do you know why? You didn’t fight in it. You think you intimidate me, sir? I nearly died in the trench while you were across the sea getting high with the French!” She declared, eyes sparkling as he scowled, mouth pressed into a line as he leaned back from her. “Oh, poor Thomas Jefferson, always hesitant round the president, and man there’s no plan for him to propose instead of my own. And James Madison, mad as a hatter! You ahead and take your medicine if you’re going to be in worse shape than the national debt is in!”

She knew deep down she was taunting more than making points at this point, but she had no real reason to be afraid of these two fools. After all, she had the president and the first lady on her side, and they’d open the door for her wrath when they dared take swings at her intellect and her family. The crowd was roaring with commutation now- the reactions were mixed but seemed to be in her favor for the most part- so she made her way to her own station with a snide look over her shoulder.

“Go ahead, sit there as useless as two shits!” She quipped mercilessly, but when Jefferson stood up and made his next snap back, she lost what little patience she’d been clinging to.

“That’s pretty high talk for a woman who doesn’t have the good sense to know whose loyalties lie where!”

“You know what, Thomas?” She whirled around, scowling. “Turn around and bend over, I’ll show you where my shoe fits!”

As the other cabinet members, Congress and public went mad with their reactions, the smug beanpole had the audacity to turn around and taunt her by presenting his (admittedly nicely made but not the point) posterior. The president immediately banged his mallet, demanding for order by yelling ‘Excuse me!’ to calm the masses.

“Mister Jefferson, Mister Madison, take a walk,” he told them firmly before looking to her, looking exasperated. “Mrs. Hamilton, take a walk. Ladies and gentlemen, we shall reconvene after a brief recess.”

“Young lady,” Lady Washington said in a tone so simultaneously calm and frayed as Eliza stepped
outside of the room. “A word.”

“Yes ma’am?” The young woman asked quietly as they stepped into a more private section.

“Do you want to pull yourself together?” She demanded in hushed voice, making the Hamilton feel all the much like a child being scolded.

“I’m sorry, ma’am,” she said, and she meant for her. “It would seem these Virginians are birds of a feather.”

“Young lady, I’m from Virginia as well as my husband, so watch your mouth.”

“My apologies, but regardless we cannot let Congress be held hostage by the South. Madison and Jefferson may hate me, but we need bold strokes like these to bring the people over to my side rather than theirs!”

“You’re absolutely right; you need to convince more people to vote in your plan. Your numbers are dismal at this time,” the elder woman conceded solemnly. “You cannot go to their level if you wish to appear better than them. You are a young lady, Elizabeth, and we both know you are above this petty political squabbling. You are going to have to find a compromise; their endorsement is key whether you like it or not.”

“They won’t talk to me as an equal, so that’s a non-starter!” She said with a slightly raised voice, blushing when her superior raised her eyebrows daringly but continuing in a normal tone. “They’re being intransigent, and they don’t have a plan, they just hate mine!”

“You will have to convince them otherwise,” Martha responded evenly. “I am quite sure you will figure it out, or you risk their calling for your removal from this position.”

The implication she could lose to such petty assholes was enough to bring tears to her eyes, but she stepped back before her beloved mother figure could comfort her; she figured there was nothing making this better. “I-I refuse to beg to a man who makes light of war heroes and insults my being a mother and practically spits upon my sister’s grave!”

Martha stepped to her swiftly, wrapping her arms around the nearly thirty year old like the mother she was. “Shh, shh, settle down my child. You have two very good powerful people in your corner, and we are not the only ones across the colonies who stand with you, even if you tell off individuals not worth the breath in a cabinet meeting.”

Hearing that was great comfort along with the hug, so she let a watery giggle out and buried her face in the modest frock. “I shall not let them get the better of me. Neither of them know anything for fighting to stay at the top or earning their respect.”

“As First Lady, I shan’t comment further on them,” she said with a small wink. “Now, let’s clean up your face and clothing; you are far too pretty and intellectual to cry over problems simply not yet solved.”

Several minutes later all traces her emotional cracking was gone, and Eliza began making her way back to finish the meeting. Before she got there, the doorframe was blocked by a very smug pair of assholes.

“You don’t have the votes, you don’t have the votes,” the taunted as though they were grown children. “You’re gonna need Congressional approval and you don’t have the votes!”
Thomas let out a taunting fake life and stepped closer to her, taking his cane in his hand in the middle and using the decorative sphere to tilt her chin to look him more directly in the eye. “Tsk, tsk, such a blunder sometimes, it makes me wonder why I even bring the thunder.”

Madison poked his head around and smirked just as widely. “Why he even brings the thunder!”

“At least I have the lightning and rain,” she countered coldly, smirking up at them; Martha said nothing about being petty outside of political climates. “And, Mister Madison, the originality.”

Parting between them and feeling like a sassier Moses, she brushed past them and took her seat while blowing her beaming husband a kiss.

New York State Attorney General, Theodosia decided, was a very important position that had a very fancy title to take away from the pains of all the writing that came with it. It was exciting to see laws pass and to enforce them when the time came, but the day to day was filled with monotony. It seemed her loving husband was away for longer and longer periods as she burned daylight and midnight oil, and young Theodosius spent many of these visits at his beloved father’s side. Though there was no doubting their son was smart as a whip, he never mentioned word of the affair rumors and seemed to not understand when she tried to ask him in privacy.

“Damn it all!” She shrieked, clutching her stomach as she crumpled on the floor of the bedroom as pains wracked her body.

She’d known she was miscarrying their third attempt for another child for four days, and yet Burr had no idea due to not being home. As she convulsed and bled seemingly everywhere, sobbing loudly to lose the rest of her dignity, she thanked her lucky stars she was isolated from her loving family despite wanting nothing more than to crawl into her man’s arms. The spell finally passed and she was able to clean both the floor and herself, her tears still dripping like a spout until she finally curled up in front of the fire to try and warm the chill across her that had nothing to do with the weather.

“Mrs. Burr?” An unfamiliar voice called out, alarming her into sitting up. “I hate the disturb you, ma’am, but I do have some important matters to discuss with you immediately.”

Gathering herself with the poise she’d learned over many years of pain, she strode over and encountered a remarkably well dressed older man with a folder under his arm. Despite his business like stature, he smiled kindly enough when she allowed him into her home and thanked her when he poured him some soothing tea.

“You are a very intelligent, witty and level-headed woman,” the man said as he sipped the beverage. “I have many reliable sources telling me that much, and yet now I have seen it with my eyes. I do not feel as though this meeting will be unpleasant.”

“What have you come for?” She inquired somberly, far from in the mood for pleasantries.

“Right.” The man opened his folder and took out several letters, and immediately she recognized her husband’s stiff, precise handwriting. “There are have been rumors that only grow about your husband cheating on you, as I am sure you well aware. I have done some investigation on your behalf and regret to inform you that these rumors appear to be more than street conversation, and I have evidence to indicate he may be fathering this woman’s child.”
He extended the parchment from her, but all she saw was a red haze as she shoved them back against his chest. “I don’t want your evidence, or your concern, or your pity. Please, take you belongings; I am not interested.”

“Ma’am, nobody must find out about this,” he said after a long, seemingly shocked, pause. “I know your family names mean much to you and him. To be blunt, Mrs. Burr, I came to proposition you to work alongside my colleagues and I to build a better nation in exchange for my silence about this massive scandal.”

Wasting no time, she snatched the folder, immediately casting it with a violent swing into the fireplace, which roared in response. The man looked quite shaken and even got his feet, as if he meant to leave, but she simply seized him by the front of her coat and backed him against the opposite wall.

“If you want my respect and help, you will respect me,” she practically snarled through her teeth and the blows of evidence that lingered like slaps. “You will not come into my home and accuse my husband of infidelity in the name of forcing my cooperation. Rest assured, you dishonorable man, I fear not what any politics can do to me. I have lost more than you can possibly fathom, and if my marriage is unstable, that is for me to bear and me alone. You keep your misshapen nose out of it, or I shall have you arrested for several crimes I know by section number like I know my own heartbeat. Have I made myself clear?”

The gentleman initially nodded, but once she stepped away, he averted his gaze before speaking. “I know a thing or two about great loss, madam. You need not forgive my intrusion and intentions if you do not wish to- I would not if I were in a similar position- but my wife and I have had much trouble spawning more than one child to survive either pregnancy or past infancy. Loss politically and socially in war and aftermath do enough to a man, as I am sure you know. Something this intimate and unimaginable…it’s hard to admit, but that destroys far faster than the rest combined.”

“Imagine being your wife,” she snipped back coldly. “You must be there for her and your surviving child. Do not make the common mistake of men who run from problems and tell lies; we have more than enough of those in the world today.”

He paused, then nodded. “Should you allow me to attempt at winning your respect and assistance, please contact me at this address. My name is James Monroe, for the postage. Good day, ma’am.”

She let the slip of paper he handed her fall to the ground as he left, but picked it up and threw it in her desk drawer as his footsteps disappeared from earshot entirely.

Chapter End Notes

Don't forget to leave kudos/bookmark/subscribe or comment if it so compels you!
Taking One's Time

Chapter Summary

Theodosia is met with the hardest challenge she has yet to encounter, and the Hamilton family, save for one, is ready to spend the summer away from the political environment along with some very dear family friends.

Chapter Notes

Hello friends! I'd like to warn you all that this chapter is written a bit strangely; the events that take place in Theo's half are later chronologically than they are presented here, thus the double line skip, but I wanted to end on who I conclude the chapter with before I even wrote this. I hope you'll be able to correlate the two narratives chronologically despite the admittedly backwards telling!

Shoutout as always to the lovely Arya_Chan, ClassLitLover, and anononones, who continue to review and encourage me greatly, and to my fantastic subscribers/bookmarkers/kudos leavers! I love you all! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

New York City, September of 1791

The sound of piano music drifted through the house as Theodosia awaited her husband’s return. Her youngest pride and joy concentrated on the keys before him, his free leg swinging slowly as he tapped out his mother’s favorite tune. She found herself humming along, which made the eight year old grin and improve his accuracy on the rhythm a bit. When he’d finished the song, she gathered him into her lap and kissed him all over his face, eliciting several embarrassed but joyful giggles for the boy.

“Mama!” He squeaked, rolling his small body to the side in a loose attempt to free himself.

“You’re growing up so fast!” The mother lamented, gently setting him to his feet and helping him smooth out his clothes. “What happened to my little boy?”

“I have to like Papa, Mama! I’ll take care of you!” Theodosius replied eagerly, grabbing her hands and giving them both a kiss. “You’ll never have to worry about a thing as long as I’m around! Papa told me that it’s my job to be ‘the man’ when he’s gone, you know?”

“Well, my precious son, you don’t have to worry about taking care of this old lady,” she responded fondly, cupping his face in her hands and squishing his chubby baby cheeks. “I find all of us to be remarkably self-efficient, and even if we weren’t, I know we’d all take care of each other. That’s what families do; it isn’t about men and women.”

“Oh really?” The child’s eyes shone with curiosity and thought just before the front door opened and
he hurried to greet his parent. “PAPA!”

Aaron laughed and scooped the child up, spinning him around and kissing his cheeks like the proud father he was. “Theodosius! Look at how big you are; you’re growing like a very cute weed!”

“I’m gonna be a man! I have to, Papa, that’s what the teacher says!” The youth replied excitedly, throwing his arms around his neck and burrowing close. “I missed you so, so, SO much, Papa! Why d’ya have to go for so long?”

“I have to work to provide for you and your mama and your brothers and sisters,” her husband reminded gently, his eyes lighting up anew as she stood up from her bench. “My Theodosia, what to say to you? You shine so bright, you out beam the morning sky and when you smile, you knock me out, and I’ve fallen apart! I used to think I was so smart…”

Despite the feeling of dread practically eating her alive, she walked to him with open arms and kissed him, leaving their child to be happily squished between them. He felt and tasted the same as he always had; warm, familiar, safe, and yet something wasn’t quite right as she pulled away. When he’d left, they’d argued for ages before he took off at the first sign of the dawn’s light, and he’d been gone for nearly two months on work related visits. He loyally sent updates to all of them and there were no continuity issues in his claims, and yet she hadn’t heard of any of other man being sent to do the same job.

“Papa, I learned to play a new piece all by myself!” Her youngest chirped, bringing her out of her hazy thoughts. “You have to hear it right away!”

“I’d love to, but my ride back was very long-“ Aaron began, but he was cut off by her kissing himself lightly.

“Papa would love to hear at once, Theo,” she cut in gently, setting him down and smiling as he rushed to the piano. “He’s been practicing just for you, Mister Burr, sir.”

“I suppose I can’t argue with that logic, Mrs. Burr,” he conceded with a loving smile.

Both proud parents clapped when he successfully completed the harder piece, praising him abundantly before their entire family reunited for a nice supper she’d been cooking the majority of the day. When the night grew dark and her eldest children and their families returned to their own homes while her youngest retired for bed or quiet hours, Theodosia made haste in changing into a semi-casual outfit while her husband washed up and readied for sleep. When he entered their room, she was standing expectantly at their bedside with her arms crossed protectively over herself.

“Is everything alright, my love?” Aaron raised an eyebrow at once, and in the candlelight, he looked so sleep deprived and adorably confused she wanted nothing more than to make up for the weeks without his touch.

“I have been plagued with accusations and our good name has been weighed down terribly with rumors in your lengthy absences,” she said coldly to avoid betraying her tense posture and racing mind. “Even since you began going on your alleged business trips in late 1787, people have talked about the potential infidelity you were committing. Being your loyal and trusting wife, it was easy at first to pass them off, but has grown worse the more you drift from our family. I have been presented with evidence suggesting that not only have you been cheating on me, but you have fathered at least one child with this colored woman. I have tried to hold my tongue and keep my faith steady in you, but not one of your co-workers seems to know of any assignments out of the city that you’d be tending to and I cannot help but feel we continue to drift apart and you are...
largely apathetic. I demand the truth from you at once, for if you lie I have a more than reliable source to see the truth. If you have betrayed our union and admit to it now, I am willing to work through it and maintain our marriage. If you have betrayed me and you refuse to admit to it fully and honestly now, we will be divorced before the week’s end. Have I made myself quite clear?”

Aaron’s face was unreadable for what felt like an eternity. As his silence filled the room and all she could hear was the sound of her rapidly beating heart, she nearly collapsed when he got to his knees and approached her until they held hands and she saw the tears slipping down his face. Before he even spoke, she knew that James Monroe and all the gossips of the town had been right after all, and she’d lost the one good thing she’d ever known save what she produced from her own loins.

“It was mistake,” he said, his usual warm and proud voice broken by evident grief. “I never intended for it to happen this way, and I never wished to betray the woman I love more than I could ever imagined I could love. My original trips were business in nature and were very stressful, but I wished not to project my woes on you when we were going through so much with your pregnancies and raising Theodosius to become the fine young man he is today. My illness has only grown worse over the best few years, and though it pains me greatly to say this, I was seeing doctor after doctor to find a treatment means that would work to no avail. I became angry and irrational, and during one of my long nights at the bar, I met a beautiful free woman, one that I was immediately drawn to. In my moment of complete weakness, I…I wished to have an heir with her if none of your own would be successful.”

Though he was sobbing openly in her dress now, she remained cool despite how heart fell in pieces into her stomach. “And did you obtain one with this woman?”

Aaron’s quiet sob answered before he spoke. “I did. A little girl; her name is Louisa Charlotte Burr, and she is nearly three years of age at this time.”

“And your visits to Philadelphia have been to visit your mistress and your daughter?” She demanded.

“They have in addition to continuing my search for a doctor to cure my ailments,” he admitted, his reddened eyes looking her expressionless ones. “I don’t expect you to forgive me, nor the less should you. I do wish for you to at least know that there is no woman in the entire world like yourself, and that while I admittedly love my daughter, I could not obtain what them what I have with you. They have been my weakness and my guilty pleasure, and…And I regret having to tell you, but she is with child once more. My most recent visit oversaw she got excellent treatment throughout her term despite our skin color.”

It felt as though all the air had been pulled from her lungs, leaving her gasping and trembling within herself as her husband admitted how she’d not been enough, largely because she could not produce more legacies to satisfy him. Her worst nightmares had come true, and yet as she stared at the suffering, guilty man before her, she could not make her way past her deep love for him to end their marriage despite how all reason demanded her to. Instead of speaking her anger and pain immediately, she stepped away from his pathetic position and walked to the door with icy purpose to be anywhere but in her now broken home.

“Sheodosia, you are my wife,” he barely whispered, and she paused in her tracks.

“If you thought you were mine and only mine…” She said, grateful her back was turned so she wouldn’t be betrayed by her tears. “Don’t. I…I thought that I could be enough.”

With that she burst into the city, taking her beloved stallion through her city and weeping silently
into his mane until she felt she could produce no more moisture. When she’d mounted, she
neglected to tell him a location and found herself at the home of Lucy Flucker Knox; despite the
late hour, she tied her pet up to feed and water before knocking on her long time friend’s door.
Though her hands shook and her stomach twisted with regrets, she knocked on the door and nearly
broke down into her beloved friend’s husband when he was the one to answer.

“Mrs. Burr?” Poor Henry inquired, his face surprisingly alert for the hour and full of concern. “Are
you feeling unwell? Are you in need of transportation to a medical facility?”

“I’m afraid all I have been stricken with are matters of the heart,” she responded, attempting a
small smile for the confused man’s sake. “If your wife should be available, I find it very
appropriate with speak at once.”

“But of course, good woman,” he responded easily, letting her inside and fixing her a nice cup of
tea as his wife entered the foyer.

“Dosia? Oh my stars, what happened?” The older woman asked at once, rushing to her side and
holding her tightly as she wept hard and unattractively into her companion’s shoulder. “There,
there, now. Henry has brought some nice, soothing tea just for you, my beloved comrade, please
drink some. There…Isn’t that nice?”

From around the porcelain she cracked a small smile; the brew was fresh and settled warmly in her
hysterically twisted stomach and down her raw throat. “I-it is. Thank you, Mister Knox.”

Through the weight of sorrow that held her down in seemingly every weight, Theodosia told her
close friend all of what Aaron had told her and about the terrible rumors that came be true, making
sure to include the offer James Monroe had made in attempt to blackmail her. Lucy was as patient
and reactive as her, her face thoughtful as she finished and made an attempt to clean up her face.
Her heart was still heavy, but it felt nice to open up to someone about the burdens she’d carried
alone, and as much as she was hurt and angry she still found herself terribly in love with the man
she chose to marry. As she sat on the couch and sipped her tea, she found herself wondering with a
heavy spell of depression if everything they shared had all been a sick lie in order to achieve
offspring to protect his survival against history.

“Aaron Burr is a very flawed man,” Lucy acknowledged first with a somber tone. “He should have
never been so weak minded and weak willed that he abandoned your holy matrimony, for that is a
terrible sin to commit and a very awful way to treat someone you love. Though he may be
regretful, I know it will take quite some time for you to forgive him, as it should. You are more
than welcome to stay here in the meantime.”

“Y-you would do that for me?” The older woman asked, suddenly feeling very small in her light
outer clothes and pain-slimmed body. “I have hardly done anything so generous for you, I don’t
want to take advantage of such a remarkable woman as yourself…”

“You have provided friendship, merriment and an always open door,” the younger woman replied
gently. “I know you would do the same for me at a moment’s notice. Please, take as long as you
need, and feel free to move in your children if you feel that would be the best thing to do.”

Theodosia smiled sincerely for the first time in quite a few days and embraced her at once, relaxing
quite a bit into her beloved friend’s arms. She did as her junior suggested, moving her two
teenagers and child into the Knox residence while Aaron had nearly five months of solitude to do
as he pleased and think over his crimes. The next time she spoke to her husband it was via one of
his weekly posts, which she typically ignored, but her oldest boy insisted it was worth her read. In
it she learned his mistress had given birth to a healthy baby boy, one they named John Pierre Burr,
and that he intended to send money and occasionally visit if she would give her blessing. He talked endlessly of how he missed them and lamented his choices, though he could honestly say he regretted giving life to the two he had, and that he wished to renew their vows if she would still have him.

“Do you want to forgive him, Mama?” Augustine inquired softly, his youthful face showing as he looked to her despite how he was quickly coming of age.

“I do,” she admitted, sighing as she rested her head on her exceptional boy’s shoulder. “I cannot stand another heartbreak, I fear. I know he is sincere in his words, but I shan’t be cast away from all the honor I’ve accumulated just because I am unable to birth anymore.”

“You have every right to divorce him if you please,” her eldest son agreed. “I have been thinking for quite some time on it all the same. Even if what you had never completely restores itself, I believe it would only be a service to your own heart if we move back in. Though my sisters hate to admit it, he’s been a very exceptional father to all of us, and I know how Theodosius longs for us to live together. If you can find it in your heart to try and mend your union, I would encourage to do so before it’s too late to try.”

“Too late to try?” She inquired as she internally mulled over his wise words.

“He has mentioned increasingly that his stomach illness has only been progressing. If he should die…Well, I would hate for you to me further hurt by his death if you wanted to forgive him but never had the chance to. Please correct if I’m wrong, Mama, but I have good reason to believe you wish to reunite with the man you love.”

She wrapped her dominant arm around him and planted a kiss on his cheek, earning a small blush and smile from her boy. “When did you get so smart, my child?”

“I learned it from you,” he admitted as he returned the embrace.

From where he’d evidently been standing in the doorway with his older brother, Theodosius’s hopeful piped up. “Does this mean we can go home now?”

Chuckling despite the wariness she had for the future, Theodosia got to her feet. “Yes, my sons. We can go home now.”

New York City, Late May of 1791

“Come on, Pops! You’re going to have be faster than that to catch me!”

“That arrogance is going to be your downfall, my son!”

“GAH! Alex, Alex heeeelp!”

“No way, big brother, you did that yourself!”

“YOU ARE THE WORST LITTLE BROTHER!”

“Hey now, be nice to your- Oh-ho, little boy, I’m going to get you now!”

“NOOO! Eep!”
The sounds of laughter filled the house as Eliza entered her home, her head buried in her files as per usual. She looked up just in time for her three year old to throw his arms around her petticoat, his tiny face burying deep into the cloth as his older brothers screeched to a stop in front of her to avoid crashing. She chuckled despite being interrupted, leaning down to scoop up her toddler while kissing her other two boys on their foreheads.

“You boys sound like you’re having fun,” she commented with a small smile.

“Papa is pretty fast for an old guy!” Alex, her five year old little replica of her husband, chirped with a mischievous giggle. “He keeps trying to pinch our noses and tickle us!”

“Don’t worry, Lexi, we’re still way faster,” Phillip, her soon to be seven year old, assured with a proud grin. “He had to rest so he didn’t throw out his back again!”

“He threw out his back again?” Their mother repeated with an exasperated sigh. “That man does not know his limits. Speaking of which, where is he and where is your sister? She should be arriving from boarding school today.”

“She hasn’t been here yet!” Her ‘Pip’ replied with an annoyed huff, looking so much like his Uncle John in that moment she had to do a double take. “Pops promised she’d be hear for supper, and that stinky old headmaster hasn’t brought her home YET!”

“Hey now, the headmaster isn’t-” She began, but the very discernable scent of said headmaster filled her nostrils at the mere mention. “Well, just be sure not to mention it around him. I take quite a bit of pride in my girl being his favorite and would like to keep it that way.”

All three her sons giggled at that, and Alexander finally appeared in the doorway with his lengthy hair pulled back into a ponytail and face dotted in sweat. The couple approached each other quickly, kissing despite the ambience of their kids gagging and complaining, and she couldn’t help but beam when she looked into his gorgeous blue eyes. The rumors about her poor Theodosia’s husband only grew with the passing days, but despite how she felt Aaron resembled her own spouse in a few ways, she never had to be curious once about her Alexander’s loyalty. The internal reminder was enough to bring her to kiss him again, which her boys disliked but her man seemed to take great pleasure in.

“That smelly headmaster better arrive my little girl soon,” Alexander whispered against her lips, and she let out a rare string of giggles.

“He’ll have Hell to pay otherwise,” she whispered in return, and her toddler bumped his head gently to her chin to receive attention immediately after.

“Mama,” he said sweetly. “Pip Pip has a big surprise when Angie gets here!”

“Shhh, James!” Phillip squeaked and put his finger to his lips pointedly. “Not a surprise if you talk about it!”

The tot’s face colored and he hid his face into his mother’s neck. “Sorry!!”

“It’s still a surprise, my boys,” she shushed kindly, adjusting her mild tempered youngest to her hip and looking to the papers held securely in her other hand. “Now, I must go finish these in my office. Do let me know when Angelica arrives.”

She sat at her usual desk and finished revising her revised financial plan, James perched contently on her lap, before transferring it all to clean parchment. She was nearly halfway done when her other children called for her to hurry downstairs, which she did after laying her project to the
window to dry.

“Are you excited to see your big sissy, James?” She cooed, taking full notice of the tiny child in her lap.

“Angie!” The three year old agreed eagerly.

She wasn’t even fully off the second to last step when another pair of arms caught her around her middle, the long limbs securing across her hips fully as her daughter buried her face into her.

“Hello, Angelica,” Eliza greeted warmly to her eldest, a now beautiful nine year old who beamed when she was greeted.

“It’s been too long!” The child quipped excitedly, wasting no time launching into all her stories from her elite school as her father herded them silently to eat dinner together for the first time in three months.

When they’d finally finished their meal, she intended to go back to her study and conclude transferring her genius. Instead she was quickly sat in the living room by her husband, much to her displeasure, but her pout was met with a gentle smile from her beloved.

“You can keep taking a rest from being a smart person,” Alexander replied softly and with a smile. “Our children have a little surprise and it cannot wait. Angelica and Phillip have something they’d like say, and our son’s been practicing all day. Babies, take it away!”

“Mama, Mama, listen!” Her eldest son chirped, bouncing nervously on his heels as his beloved older sister began to tap out a catchy little beat on the piano. “My name is Phillip, I am a poet, I wrote this poem just to show it! And I…I’m nearly seven, growing up so fast and rhymes are like Heaven!”

“What?!” She exclaimed, beaming and leaning down in her seat to cheer her babies on; both brightened at her excitement and began to play more confidently, Angelica playing more complicated rhythms to harmonize with her brother.

“I practice French and play piano with my father! I have a sister and two awesome little brothers! My mother’s gonna start America’s Bank, un, deus, trois, quarter, SINQ!”

“Bravo!” She cheered, beaming proudly as he jumped onto the piano bench beside his older sibling with a grin ear to ear.

“My name’s Angelica, I am a pianist!” She sang, her voice as beautifully trained and soprano as her mother’s. “I play on the keys and I lean into it! I’m only nine year old but my mind is older, the more the world throws at me I become like you all, but bolder! I’m with my family, my cherished and beloved, I’m singing out this song with my best friend Phillip! We’re going to dance and play and soon we’ll get away, six, sept, huit, neuf, dix!”

Their mother cheered again, grinning and sweeping her eldest children close as her daughter finished the last notes on their little song. Both clung to her, giggling with pride and exclaiming eagerly to each other that she loved it, a notion that made her ready to burst with pride. Once they’d gone off to try and teach verses to their younger brothers, Alexander took her in his arms and tucked his chin over hers.

“Take a break,” he implored softly, as if he’d somehow read her thoughts about heading back to her office.
“I am taking a break, my love!”

“No, take a break,” he repeated with extra emphasis, pulling away and looking deeply into her eyes. “Run away with us for the summer, let’s go upstate.”

“Alexander, I have so much on my plate.”

“Your parents just moved, so we can all go stay, it’s no bother,” he interrupted gently. “There’s a lake I know, in a nearby park…You and I could go when the night gets dark?”

His stunning eyes were suggestive, and she couldn’t help but blush as she captured his soft lips in a kiss. “I promise that I will try to get away.”

‘My dearest Elizabeth,

You must compromise with Jefferson and Madison. I need not explain the pains I know it will bring you, but you must sit down with them and not stop until you agree. Your favorite older brother, Jonathan Laurens reminds you, there’s someone in your corner all away the sea no matter how intolerable they may be. On another subject, the letter I received from you two weeks ago contained something rather peculiar. Rather than a usual common post my first name, you placed it in the middle of the phrase, and I’ve been left to wonder if this was intentional. You’ve written, ‘My dearest John’, with a common after ‘dearest’. ‘My dearest, John’…One stroke and you appeared to consumed my waking days! Surely you know the effect you have on me!

Anyway all this time to say, I’m coming home this summer at my best friend’s invitation, and I’ll be there with your family when you make your way upstate. I know what you’ll say, and I know you’re very busy and that your work is important, but we’re crossing all the miles and I just can’t wait, as I hope is shared with you…’

John was pulled away from his letter writing when his eldest called for his assistance. He quickly went to her side, chuckling when he saw his nine year old practically sitting on her luggage with her curly hair wild and unkempt. She called out for him once more when they made eye contact, and he quickly helped snap the luggage shut while assisting her back onto the floor without her injuring herself.

“There has to be easier way about doing this,” he teased gently, earning his daughter’s tongue stuck out in protest.

“I simply must bring all these things!” Frances exclaimed with conviction. “We’re going away for the entire summer, Pops! What if we run out of the essentials, or we don’t have enough room to bring our wares back?”

“They sell luggage and essentials in upstate New York as they do here,” he reminded kindly, ruffling up her curls playfully. “Is that all you needed from me, little bit?”

“I am not a little bit!” She huffed and nearly tackled him to ground, laughing excitedly as he swung her around safely and sent her on her way as soon as her feet hit the floor.

“Papa?” His youngest, his beloved little Schuyler, greeted him when he re-entered his study from where she sat on his chair. “Can I help you write Auntie Betsey?”

“Of course you can,” he agreed easily, scooping his daughter and sitting her on his knee. “Just sit
tight while I finish my message, and then you may write whatever you like. Does that sound
good?”

“Yes Papa!”

‘As it were, I am helping my children pack while my wife rests; we recently found out we are
expecting a fifth child, which I invite you to see welcomed into the world. It is impossible to know
at current what the gender shall be, but she and I have a very strong feeling that they will be a boy
like my poor Henderson, who certainly could use a brother. Frances is full of energy as ever, and
I’m sure most of her excitement stems from the preposition of seeing your little one once again…’

“Papa? Can I write now?”

“I’m wrapping up now, Schy.”

‘…I myself am very excited to see my favorite goddaughter once more. It is my sincerest hope her
schooling as continued to go well, and should that headmaster ever deter her learning, I shall
deliver the mighty hand of justice across his ancient face. You mentioned in our last exchange that
Phillip is much like myself, which is terrifying notion but one my Martha insists cannot be true
when our own son is practically my clone. Though I’ve never settled down, I hope for his sake he
is able.’

“Paaaaapaaaaa.”

“I’m writing as fast as I can, baby girl!”

‘Of course Beth, our second girl, is as mild mannered as always. Martha insists that myself,
Frances, and Henderson provide enough excitement that it is only proper than Elizabeth and she
are calm. Schuyler, who is currently sitting rather impatiently to speak with you herself, is a
firecracker in a more subtle way, and while I know that all of my offspring shall achieve great
things, I have no reason she shan’t be the one to run Charleston. Until we meet, I shall now hand
my quill before my daughter becomes more upset.’

Schuyler, moving her small hand as carefully as she was able, wrote a ‘Dear Auntie Betsey, we’re
gonna see you in ONE MONTH! It’s the best!” before leaping off her daddy’s lap to go excitedly
tell her mother she’d written a letter. Chuckling and wiping the sweat from his brow due to the
heat, John signed off on the postage and headed downstairs to be with his wife and children. He
found himself increasingly satisfied to live the life he did- his offspring were his pride and joy- but
Martha only grew more irritable and finicky as she aged, which was nearly impossible to deal with
half the time. Needless to say, this vacation was just what the governor needed, and he kept his
beloved Hamiltons’ in mind during their lengthy journey back to the colony.

“Eliza, come downstairs!” He heard Alexander’s familiar voice call from outside their expansive
home as he approached with Schuyler in one hand and some of the heavier cases in the other.
“John and his family are arriving any moment now!”

Once he knocked with his foot, he was swiftly greeted with a hug by Phillip and ushered inside.
He’d barely set everything, his child included, down when he saw his beloved Alexander, and the
two hardly wasted a second as they rushed into each other’s arms. His best friend smelled as
familiar and pleasant as he always did, his face burrowing comfortably into his companion’s
lengthy hair, and he found himself never wanting to let go as he held tightly.

“Laurens,” Alex breathed into his ear, his breath hot and voice low, and he felt his heart skip a beat
even after all the years.
As he subtly nuzzled closer, he found himself laughing fondly and rubbing his nose to his neck before pulling away lightly. “Alexander~”

“The power duo,” a familiar female voice mused, and he broke into a grin when he saw her, her light going out clothes complimenting her still gorgeous frame as she stood atop the last two steps.

“Eliza!” He exclaimed with a joyful laugh, scooping her up and spinning her like he might spin his own wife, both of them laughing like the children they were. “It’s good to see your face.”

“John Church, is that you?” His wife inquired, her face lighting up as she went to greet their longtime friend. “How have you been, good sir? It has been entirely too long.”

“I’ve been alright,” the fellow ‘John’ replied with a kind smile. “This vacation has been all Phil has wanted to speak of.”

The nine year old boy, the spitting image of his mother, nodded excitedly and hugged his ‘aunt’ tightly. “I’ve never been to upstate New York before!”

Laurens couldn’t help but smile to see his friend looking so content for once. The death of wife had dismal effects on the gentleman, and he’d sworn off love as he raised his one child and worked to protect his beloved’s legacy. Despite all the hardships that had plagued the gentleman for nearly a decade, they hugged tightly and sincerely, and he even heard him laughing as he conversed with his nieces, nephews, and Martha.

“John, please tell this woman that John Adams spends the summer with his family,” Alex said pointedly to his best friend, gesturing to Eliza with an unamused expression.

“John Laurens, tell my husband that John Adams doesn’t have a real job anyway,” she replied curtly, and while he had to laugh, he realized what her implications meant with a frown.

“You’re not joining us? Now wait a minute!” He exclaimed, grabbing her arms gently. “Elizabeth, I came all this way just to hear you won’t accompany us? I think not, my dear lady!”

“The Washingtons are staying in the city,” his beloved friend responded gently, but her eyes were far away and set in their expression. “So I have to stay in the city.”

“He came all this way!” Alexander agreed, taking one arm from him and running his fingers up and down her skin. “Eliza, take a break! Run away with us for the summer, let’s go upstate!”

“We can all go stay with your parents!” He added, spinning her around slowly with his best friend. “If you’re here, I know I’ll miss your face. Screw your courage to the sticking place!”

Playfully and mischievously, he pressed a hand under her backside as he said the last part of the sentence, earning him a blush from her and chastising look that was given away by a grin. Alexander, none the wiser, simply finishing spinning her and wrapped his arms around so that they held hands from his position behind her.

“You know he’s right!” He lamented, pressing a kiss to her neck briefly. “There’s a lake I know, in a nearby park; you and I could go when the night gets dark…”

“I have to get my plan through Congress,” she protested, slipping away and letting her hands linger in his own; he wasn’t sure if she was aware how everyone’s gazes were on the two of them, particularly her. “I can’t stop until I get this plan through Congress.”

As he looked around at his family and those like family, Laurens couldn’t miss their disappointed
or resigned expressions. The rest of the night was pleasant despite the evident elephant in the room, but he set out once his spouse was asleep to join Eliza in her office. To his surprise he found her on the front porch instead, her form curled up tightly underneath a quilt as she stared across the city view in the nighttime. He sat beside her carefully, nudging his way underneath the cool fabric and watching as lightning bugs lit up the ink of night.

“I do want to go,” she admitted before he could even bring it up. “I would love to get away from my responsibilities, but it will cost me my job if I allow my enemies to exploit my absence.”

“Don’t even they have families to get back to?” John inquired pointedly, earning him a frustrated sigh. “I know you have to constantly fight to stay up in the political game, but at what cost? The worst case means losing your job and finding one that would admittedly stress you out a little less, and then you still have your family. Would that truly be so bad?”

“I didn’t fight in a war and claw my way to the top just to lose it in a summer,” she responded sharply, her eyes never meeting his own.

He allowed the silence to hang for a few moments before speaking again. “If you take your time, you will make your mark. In the meantime, why not close your eyes and dream as the night grows dark? Alexander is right; you really must take a break or you’ll break yourself.”

Eliza turned to him and squeezed his hand, pressing a tender, lingering kiss to his cheek before standing up. “I’m sorry, my dearest, John.”

As she went back in and he was left with his thoughts, he couldn’t help be filled with a sense of dread. The summertime made the most even tempered person hot headed, irritable and impulsive, and given how fire and brimstone she’d become in her growing age, it would be grueling on someone committed solely to their work. He shed the quilt carefully, rubbing his hands together and brainstorming on how to drag her away from her office for more than five minutes before the door reopened.

“Couldn’t resist the view?” He teased knowingly.

Alexander’s soft, deepening voice immediately sent shivers racing down his spine. “You know I never really have been able to.”

The two sat together, his best friend’s arm around his shoulder, as the insects decorated the night and sang their hopeful songs to one another. The longer they sat in silence, the more Laurens became aware of his companion’s figure arched around him, and how his breath slowed as he evidently tried not to drift to sleep in their position.

“You couldn’t convince?” He mumbled a bit suddenly, his forehead pressed into the slightly taller man’s neck and making said man shiver as he shook his head. “If you can’t, nobody in this world can.”

Fearing he’d finally caught on to how they felt about each other for so long, he hesitantly inquired, “Hm?”

“You’re her best friend,” Alexander continued, sending a surge of relief through the war veteran. “Hell, I’ve always thought you two more like siblings with how intimately and often you talk. I was hoping you would help budge her stubborn backside, but it seems she’s quite determined to topple the patriarchy regardless of where her family goes.”

“I know she loves you,” John reassured his closest comrade gently. “She’s like me; she thinks
about you lot all the time, and she’s worse at showing it with age. I know my Martha thinks of me the way you think of her, but I’ve got no excuse like being the Treasury of Secretary to keep me in my office.”

“Yeah, yeah,” the shorter man grunted with a light, playful nudge. “Say, why don’t we go to that park instead? I bet you’ll like boat rides if you’re so much like her.”

“Oh my God, you’ve finally found my fatal weakness after these years.”

The two men laughed before wishing each good night, but Laurens made a stop before going back to his own room at Eliza’s office. She was writing as usual, her hair piled onto her head loosely and glasses perched on her nose, and he made his way behind her to whisper in her ear.

“I reckon you will never be satisfied,” he murmured, and he felt her tense up despite how the quill continued moving across the parchment. “For his sake, while we’re gone…Please stay satisfied.”

Chapter End Notes

1. I’m pretty sure I get worse with writing conclusions with each story I write. I am so, so sorry.

2. This chapter ended up way longer than I expected (6,487 words! A new record for this story!!!), but considering Take a Break is one of my absolute favorite musical songs and songs from the soundtrack, I’m genuinely not that surprised.

3. Please remember to leave kudos/subscribe/bookmark/comment if it so compels you! ♥
Nowhere Else to Go

Chapter Summary

There is nothing quite like summer in the city. Actions only dreamt about become reality, and the consequences begin to fall into place along with the reality that indulgence is the hardest poison to turn away from.

Chapter Notes

IT IS FINALLY DONE! I apologize for a lengthier wait, but I recently restarted college and I wanted to do this extremely important chapter justice. I thank you all for your patience! ♥ Shoutout again to my beautiful reviewers, Arya_Chan and anenomnes, as your comments always make me extremely happy, motivated and inspired, and shout out to anyone who has left a kudos/subscribed/bookmarked! You all make me a very, very happy woman ♥

I must give credit where it is due- the premise for new ship seen here goes to my beloved Amanda, who suggested this a few chapters back; I got very attached to the idea. My dear bean, I am forever grateful for all the inspiration you funnel to me; I have no idea where this work would be without you. Much love! ♥

Slight trigger warning for depicted cheating! (It is only slight because it happens in the musical.) Also, this is not a warning as much as it is a statement, but this chapter is super gay. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“There’s nothing like summer in the city,” Eliza commented to herself, staring at her desk with a long sigh before getting up and pacing.

It’d been two weeks, and she felt she hadn’t slept in either of them. She’d been working endlessly at the plan at first, of course, but she’d finished that up in a week and realized she was a fool for not joining her husband, best friend, and everyone else on a summer getaway where the water seemed always cool and the atmosphere was always full of laughter and love. Instead of being with her beloved Alexander or John, she was in a stuffy office that seemed to grow smaller the hour with absolutely no idea how to bide the next three months by.

George and Martha had tried, of course. Martha had scolded her for nearly an hour when she found out she’d stayed in the city for the sake of work, and it had been so thorough she’d rather bluntly declared the invitation for dinner and had a meager amount of salted porridge inside in her empty home. She’d eaten with them every other night since, showing her utmost gratitude and providing a couple of the meals herself, but that did nothing to fill her house with noise or music. She was so sleep deprived she began to see her children where they weren’t or expecting one of her favorite men to come sweeping in, and she could’ve sworn she’d seen Angelica walk by at least twice. Needless to say, she was in desperate need of a break from her mind before she was entirely
convinced she’d gone mad.

The knock at the door sent her flying from her study. For a moment she entertained the thought her family had forgotten something significant enough that someone had come back for it, ensuring she could proudly load up and head upstate, but the dream died in likelihood before she even opened the door. Inside of her loves there stood a young woman, her face so youthful and eyes so wide that she couldn’t have been less than ten years younger than her. She had a black eye and a quivering lip, and the pitiful sight of a practical child standing alone in the drizzling rain was enough to convince her to sweep the poor thing inside.

“Th-thank you, Mrs. Hamilton,” the girl whispered shakily.

“You know my name?” The older woman prompted patiently, having her remove her shawl and shoes at once so they could dry by a dimly lit stove. “Oh my goodness, you’re absolutely drenched. How did a beautiful young thing like you end up in the bitter rain like this?”

“I…I know you are a woman of incredible honor,” the younger said in a hoarse, trembling voice. “I’m so sorry to bother you at home, bu…but I didn’t know where to go, and I came here with only what I knew essential. Y-you see…my husband’s doing me wrong; beating me, mistreating me, and suddenly he’s up and gone! I…I am rather ashamed to admit it, ma’am, but I don’t have the means to go on.”

“You poor thing!” Eliza lamented gently, taking her hands and soon having her bundled up on the couch with a nice cup of sweetened hot chocolate. “You can stay here…tonight.”

Of course, she wished for the helpless thing to stay with her as long as she wanted, at least for the summer. She’d been looking for every excuse to get out of the house and somehow avoid one of her political enemies, but the only way to truly do that was to end up with her family. As wonderful as that would be, she’d have to admit she was wrong and have someone physically stronger than herself help her load, and she wasn’t sure she was humble enough to admit defeat at this point. It seemed that being at constant odds in the political game had its cost after all; she ignored this bittersweet revelation as she helped the girl ring her hair dry.

“What is your husband’s name?” The thirty four year old inquired as the poor thing ceased shaking.

“J-James Reynolds,” she admitted, sounding all the smaller as she looked up with sad brown eyes. “My…my name is Maria.”

“Miss Maria Reynolds,” she echoed softly, brushing the practical child’s hair away from her face. “Well, you’re going to be alright now. I don’t know what atrocities your unhappy marriage may have entailed, but I assure you that they shall be no more. You’re welcome to remain here however long you like, ma’am. Where are you hailing from?”

“Pennsylvania,” the younger admitted, her flushed face growing redder at her surprised expression. “Ma’am, he has beaten me for so long, and while that in itself is hardly acceptable, I have tolerated it for many years. However, on the evening prior to this one, he lay his hands upon our daughter in a way all too reflective of what many individuals claim fitting. I took the punishment for her- what mother would not for her child? - and yet I found myself fleeing to ensure it never happened to either of us again. I knew of your residence through a Mister Aaron Burr, and found myself here when I discovered the rates many of these hotels charge are far more than I can afford for more than a week or so.”

“You were in a rush. As you previously expressed, you brought only the vitals for hopes of
gathering the rest in much safer circumstances,” Hamilton reminded in a tone she recalled used to comfort her children when they were in hysterics. “Now, where is this daughter of yours? No child ought to be in this dreadful weather.”

“I left her in carriage port, ma’am,” the smaller admitted. “If you were to turn me away, we intended to perhaps sleep there.”

Eliza walked outside at once, pulling her heavy overcoat tightly around herself and softly calling out the girl’s name- Susan- until a pair of hazel eyes appeared from behind the carriage she’d been left with. “Hello, little one. Come on now, it’s alright. What do you say we go inside and get you nice and warm? Your mama will be happy to see you again.”

“Mama?” The youth inquired timidly, and when she stepped toward the glow of her lantern, the privileged woman realized the small thing had been struck across the face by something much more sinister than a hand. “Are you going to hang us?”

“Of course not,” she assured softly, bringing the six year old under the layer of her overcoat and leading her into her home. “Let’s get you both settled in for the evening. You and your mama shall be staying with me for a lengthy bit of time, should that be alright with you, Miss Susan.”

The child, clearly bemused to be titled so formally, let out a hesitant giggle. “Yes, Mrs. Hamilton. Thank you, Mrs. Hamilton.”

It wasn’t long before both of her guests had been clad in more suitable clothes- they’d come in tattered rags- and were tucked away in the spare bedroom or her oldest daughter’s room. Little Susan fell asleep once she’d been fed generous amounts of soup, which Eliza made freshly, and soon the Hamilton was able to return to her study. For the first time in eight days, she found herself able to write anew for the upcoming cabinet meeting.

“Good sir, please help.”

John Laurens felt for Mister Church; truly, he did. Regardless of his pity for the old fool, he simply smiled as his daughters happily smeared and did his face with various makeups their mother had allotted them for play, their bell-like laughter ringing through the summer home. Evidently the father to one had agreed to play ‘dress up’ with them and they’d decreed he needed to be prepped for a ball, and now the family friend was amusingly sat upon a stool with an utterly pitiful expression while a nine year old and a six year old lowered a hideously weathered wig of their grandmother’s onto his freshly powdered head.

“I think he’s ready, ladies,” he announced, sending his daughters into near delighted hysterics as the eldest two tugged him off to be shown off among the masses.

“Papa?” His four year inquired politely, her small hands ringing around pallet of rouge lip coating.

“Yes angel?” He knelt down to her level, knowing full well what was coming but allowing it regardless.

She tentatively took some on her fingers, hesitating until he smiled and nodded and proceeding to transfer the greasy beauty tool to his lips and partially across his chin. “Ready for the ball!”

He grinned, scooping her into his arms and using his handkerchief to wipe her fingers. “I don’t need as much primping as Mister Church?”
The tot took a long look at him before shaking her head. “Not even a little close.”

The man couldn’t help but laugh and pepper her faces in kisses before going to greet the laughter ringing out from the foyer. He walked in just in time to see his Alexander practically weeping into his hand, his laughter loud and uncontrolled as he tried to compose himself in humorously failing ways. Catherine was blushing and giggling behind her glove, obviously trying to scold his little ones throughout but failing due to the nature of the situation, and Martha was simply losing her composure into the older woman’s shoulder as she tried to straighten.

“I think you look pretty, Mister Church!” Hamilton’s eldest, a little spitfire of intelligence like her mother, announced with a laughter-induced grin.

“Shall I remove this doing up now?” The poor man mourned, and for his dignity, John gently told his little girls that play time was over if they still wanted to join him in going to town.

Once they’d rushed off to prepare themselves more properly, his wife sat up and wiped her eyes a final time before arching an eyebrow. “You’re taking the girls to town? What for, my love?”

“Goods and supplies,” Catherine replied for him with her usual bordering sour demeanor returning with her knitting. “My husband neglected to remember yesterday and we have had to get quite creative for our meals. There are quite a few of us here despite my daughter’s absence, and I do not intend for another subpar meal so long as our guests are remaining in Albany.”

Laurens exchanged a knowing look with Alexander; Lord knew that the woman hadn’t stopped complaining since the moment they’d all stepped out of their transportations and her second eldest was missing. Though he was certainly still fraying for his agitation with his other best friend, Mrs. Schuyler was helping him understand by the day even more why she’d choose to remain in the city despite their best efforts. Despite the bitter old maid, however, he had yet to get enough of the fresh countryside and endless activities that kept all the children ceaselessly entertained as well as himself. He and Alex had spent the past three evenings walking alone for the first time in years, simply talking and catching up under the guide of millions of stars. Despite the fact his Eliza had very headstrong younger brothers and parents that aged nearly as well as milk, her siblings were still generous and entertained all of the visiting youths while his wife bonded with Catherine, so he couldn’t complain aloud.

“Darling, while you are about, do pick me up more fabric for our family portrait outfits,” Martha muses with one of her slightly rare warm smiles. “I shall send you with the samples.”

“Goodness, I might need some help with all of these wares,” he mused, a blush brushing across his cheeks as Alexander immediately caught the hint and got to his feet.

“I’m sure my Angelica would love some time away from the home,” he announced, disappearing into the home before the ladies began protesting he was meant to be their statue for their sewing projects and Catherine went to snap poor Rensselaer for the boring, uncomfortable task.

It was no time at all before the two men and their four beautiful little girls were boarded into the Laurens’ large carriage and headed into town, the breeze nice against the heat and direct rays of sun. The girls talked excitedly in the front and made inside jokes that kept them quite occupied, leaving the two former nearly lovers toward the back content to speak freely.

“Look at them,” Alexander commented with the same warm smile that he’d worn since the day he fell in love. “We have sons and daughters, and they are doing just as well as they ought to be. We did alright, Laurens. We did alright.”
“I do wish my wife would act like it occasionally,” he mused with a grim smile that made his best friend frown.

“Does she make you that unhappy, good sir?”

“No,” he admitted, and he’d never really be able to lie in front of him so they could be assured this was pure honesty. “She is…difficult. Nevertheless we have had many passionate encounters and life milestones that make us both incredibly happy, and I believe a large part of her distress has hailed from not being able to bear another child until recently. She came from a very large family and shan’t be satisfied until we have at least eight.”

“And as for you? Do you wish to have that many daughters?” His companion teased and nudged him with his shoulder. “They appear to be your specialty.”

“At least I have female offspring for my wife to dote and spoil and raise!” He fired back with a good natured laugh. “Your poor wife, how will she ever survive with only one lady among three smelly boys?”

“Pardon you, my sons do not smell like that headmaster of theirs!” Alexander gave him a playful slap to the head and both men laughed before helping their babies dismount.

“Now, what are we to do in town?” John asked in one of his rare strict tones; he’d never forgive himself if something bad happened to his little girls.

“Stay in sight, because if you can’t see us we can’t see you,” his eldest monotonously repeated.

“And?”

“Keep Schuyler alive,” Frances replied bluntly.

“Excuse me, little lady?”

“Keep up with Schuyler?”

“Frances…”

“Make sure Schuyler is included and safe,” she finally grunted.

“Thank you.” He was relieved to drop the dull tone and faced toward the village. “Now, let’s go and get the non-perishable supplies first. If we are picking from the bottom of the bin, we shall never live it down.”

“You forgot about role call!” Alexander exclaimed with a mischievous grin behind them.

“Alexander, we know who is-“

“Come on, ladies!” The redhead interrupted with another devilish laugh toward his bewildered friend. “Just like Angie showed you, now.”

As this little surprise was clearly rehearsed, the eldest Hamilton daughter began to clap out a rhythm crisply that had passerbyers looking in curiosity. All three of John’s daughters stepped toward, moving their small frames to the beat and spinning their dresses like they were taught by their mama.

“Frances!” His eldest sang with conviction, spinning out of the way of her sisters.
“Elizabeth!” The middle girl sang clearly, her beautiful voice making a few more people turn their heads.

“And Schuyler!” His toddler squeaked excitedly, causing the onlookers to coo and their father to beam more if it were possible.

“The Laurens sisters!” The trio sang, the older two harmonizing remarkably well as they stopped by their conductor’s sides.

“Angelica, remind me what we’re looking for?” His nine year old sang sweetly.

“Franny, I’m looking for people at work!” Angelica sang back, looking and sounding so much like her mama he could’ve mistaken them for a moment.

“We’re looking for people at work, work! We’re looking for the town at work, work!” The youths chanted/sang, holding hands and walking around Angie before running up to their guardian with their hands help. “In the greatest city, in the greatest city in the world!”

“Bravo!” Their father cried, dropping to his knees despite the dirt to hug them all tightly and pepper those cute faces in kisses while Alexander scooped up his giggling preteen to do the same. “Look at how talented my sweet little legacies are! I think that performance deserves treats!”

As the quad hurried toward the candy store, Alexander looped an arm with John’s as they trailed behind. “I got to hear that cute little tune two days ago while you were out hunting with the other men. They’d made it just for us; my Angelica wants to be a musician when she comes of age and couldn’t convince her brothers to join in her little melody.”

“My girls are always ready for show time,” John agreed with a chuckle. “I have no idea where they get it from…”

“I’m quite sure,” the shorter teased.

The shopping trip went well thereafter, their babies acting like perfect angels and earning several compliments either from their behavior or earlier little show. As the daylight began fading, the two friends loaded up all the food and wares before John laid his sleeping youngest down with the other nodding off girls.

“I do believe we wore them out,” he commented as they road back toward the estate. “Poor things didn’t have their usual nap today and it caught up with them at once.”

“I’m not sure any of us want to know exactly what Eliza’s mother thinks about that,” Alexander mused dryly and had a mutual eye roll with his buddy. “I need to ask you a question, my closest friend.”

“Oh oh, not even ‘John’. It must be serious,” he mused with a hint of sarcasm, content to earn at least earn the sharp, short and quiet half chuckle he did.

His comrade was silent for a few long moments before speaking, eyes on the horizon. “I do often feel as though my wife is not content by our state of union.”

Admittedly, of all the questions he was expecting, this did not fit the bill. “Pardon me? Alex, have you gone mad? Are you not feeling well, old bean?”

“Jackie, I’m serious.” Despite the use of his nickname, he felt his heart sink when he saw how downtrodden his loving companion had abruptly become. “She spends so much time seeming so
discontent; what am I to think? She’s always at work with those other men, always in her head and unwilling to talk. Two weeks ago right before we left was the first time she came to bed and didn’t fall asleep at her desk! It seems like all of the signs are pointing that…Well, that maybe her feelings for those enemies aren’t entirely negative.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me!” John declared so suddenly the girls grunted and shifted in their sleep. “You had me all the way up until your last statement, but my friend, do not be a fool! She talks nothing of how much she hates those pieces of shit, and there is not a shred of doubt in my mind she loves you just as fiercely and loyally as you she. I know that she is always shut in her office and that she writes as though nothing else enters her mind, but I can tell you with absolute certainty that is not true. She talks endlessly of how she wishes to be free enough in time and secure enough in her ideas that she spend more time with you and the children, and her accounts of how you each are doing? My dearest companion, I must profess I have learned in great detail of the chamber pot before I hear of anything remotely different!”

“She has spoken of our chamber pots?” He made a face. “At least she’s more attentive than she seems.”

“My dear man, she loves no other,” he assured with confidence that he found himself faking only a bit.

When the night wore on and they’d all had a well prepared dinner, he stole away to his study and began to write her. He knew it would likely be her undoing, but he’d been aware since early in the morning how much she regretted not joining them upstate post the letter he’d been delivered, and he was determined to unravel her pride enough to get her for at least two out of the three months they used for vacation and leisure. Despite how he hardly looked up from his work, he still had the notion he’d only been in there a short time before Alexander came with a candle in one hand and a miniature telescope in the other.

“Are you ready?” He asked in a hushed tone. “I do believe everyone is set for the night.”

“Is it really that late?” John’s question was answered when he let out a huge, uncontrollable yawn that made his Alexander chuckle. “Well, I suppose we ought to get going, then.”

They walked side by side into the park, the night alive with the sounds of insects and creatures emerging from their slumber. On occasion they would pass another couple, one with linked arms and fond words whispered, and this inspired the turtle loving man to do something rather unusual. Once they were out of sight of the youngest pair that seen, a very young couple who were obviously suiting in the secrecy of the dark, he slipped his arm around his best friend’s and held it in a crooked position as though he were a woman. Though distinct features were rather hard to distinguish in the dark, he was almost positive he made the shorter blush, and yet neither pulled away as they continued to their favorite spot to look up at the stars.

“You are a scoundrel, Mister Laurens,” Alexander finally commented as they laid back into the grass.

“Whatever do you mean, Mister Hamilton?” John responded with feigned innocence. “I’m simply pulling my bosom brother close to me. That is no crime.”

Even as they gazed at the world so far above them, the reminder of what transpired seemingly a lifetime ago hung in air. As they bantered and passed theories about the stars between each other, he found his touch lingering across Alexander’s arm, or his confidante’s fingers trailing and squeezing anywhere they could reach as they debated friendlily. He was about to say something in response to the unspoken tension when he made a smart remark about his hair color linking to his
ideologies being flawed, and he found himself even flatter on his back with his smaller friend straddling him and tickling underneath his arms. Their laughter seemed to make space all the more bright and expansive, the park now echoing faintly with their playful struggle until he was pinned with Alexander hovering his above his face from blowing raspberries on his neck.

“I missed this,” the smaller whispered, and John felt his heart melt along with his resolve to push past these feelings that’d plagued him for over fifteen years.

He and Alexander couldn’t go ‘cold turkey’, not after what had transpired in his tiny little home. Their touches always lingered, their gazes suggestive as they egged each other on. He’d seen this man naked nearly as often as he’d seen himself, felt what it was like to fondle and kiss someone of the same gender, and nearly go all the way with. He knew Alexander’s heartbeat like he knew his wife’s, the sound of his breath evening out when he’d fallen asleep, the way he gradually reddened as he was complimented sweetly for hours on end. Alexander was in every way engraved in John, and yet the law forbade seeing it through just as much as their genuine love for the women they’d married.

“I missed this too,” the taller admitted breathlessly. “We can’t do this here. What if we are found out?”

“Why is it such a crime to love a man as I love my wife?” His beloved whispered harshly, tears dripping down onto his own cheeks and making him ache so much he stole a kiss upon his lips, one so brief and innocent it could have been for one of his children.

‘You don’t kiss your children on the lips,’ a voice taunted in his brain, one that sounded eerily like his wife. John told the little voice in the head to eat horse shit.

“None of that,” he murmured into his ear, pulling the other to straddle his lap and stomach. “It is alright. We can…touch more, in privacy. I assure you it will be done.”

As they linked arms and began to leave the park, they happened upon the same young couple before when Alexander got so excited he flung his eyeglasses into the bushes. This time the youthful pair were clearly modified, their faces scarlet as the woman tried desperately to cover her bare chest. The two men politely averted their gaze, and for a brief moment, Laurens could’ve sworn Alexander pushed closer into his frame in alarm.

“S-sirs!” The boy stuttered, but John simply held up a hand and continued to hold close to the man he still loved so painfully and passionately.

“Carry on, you two,” he excused calmly. “Some secrets are best kept hidden away, yes? Nobody needs to know.”

Maria and Susan’s presence made all the difference in the world to Eliza’s productively. For the three weeks of innocent companionship and blossoming friendship, the older woman was able to sleep consistently and get work done while making some much needed time for her houseguests. After all, her Alexander was still several hours away and could not entertain for her, and even if he was she had a feeling the sharp witted and very beautiful younger would not allow her to hole up for hours on end. Many a times had she been run out of her own office by a waving broom or by two complaining young ladies, and though she was initially grumpy under the resistance met her grueling self-set hours, she never truly minded.
It was when the little girl fell ill the two women became increasingly close. The doctor assured them endlessly it was a merely a summer cold and that a little TLC and medicine would heal it, and regardless they spent hours tending and breaking the fever and making sure the poor thing wanted for hardly anything. Her fever spiked for the last time just ten past midnight, sending both mothers scrambling until it was finally sweat out and the youth got some much needed deep sleep.

“James would never have helped me like this,” Maria commented as they both collapsed on the couch, utterly exhausted for the intense day finally behind them. “He said a woman’s place is to tend to the house and home, nothing more. To ask him to call and pay a doctor is hardly conceivable.”

“What an awful man,” Eliza sympathized at once. “If you both shall stay past the summer, please know I would not mind in the slightest, and neither would my husband. We have more than enough room, and I’m sure little Susy would love Angelica and Phillip dearly.”

“You’re too kind, ma’am,” the younger flirted shyly, her hand slowly creeping across the fabric of the furniture until it rested on the elder’s thigh. “I just wish there was some way that I could repay you.”

“You don’t have worry about such a silly thing,” Eliza replied with a smile, nervous smile, suddenly intimately aware of how the younger’s fingers were positioned on her nearly naked flesh and how her breasts poked out from her shift.

“But ma’am, I insist,” the smaller whined softly, scooting closer until their hips were brushed against each other. “You have done so terribly much for me. I feel awful knowing you have exhausted all these resources and I haven’t given a shred in return.”

“Miss Maria, you are a beautiful woman,” the larger suddenly said in a shaky whisper. “Truly, you are one of the most radiant I have ever met, but my dear you simply must realize that I am a married woman. Even if I were not, the law of the land—”

“Does the law exist here, Mrs. Hamilton?” The woman in red suddenly whispered, her backside finding its way into her lap and her mouth trailing soft kisses down her neck. “Are you so uninterested that you’d report me to the authorities? Or shall we ignore the law in favor of what we both need and want?”

“I-I suppose I don’t follow.”

“Our husbands have been gone for weeks,” the darkly clad young woman stated softly, pulling away and sitting so that her curls cascaded around both of them and looked all the more enticing in the dim light. “We are two women well aware of how the world works. I am young and single and experimental. You are a woman repressed by your own honor, terrified of what others may think to the point your risk taking has dulled with time. I understand that you have a husband and children that love more than anything else, ma’am, and should you decline me again, I shall never speak of this exchange again. Let me ask you this before I leave your ultimatum: Marriage infidelity is a terrible civil crime and one to bring about no prosperity. Regardless, do you reckon the same holds true for those of us with the same equipment below the belt? If so…Well, perhaps you wouldn’t like to know of what I did long before my husband began ‘sneaking around’.”

With that she got to her feet, pulling her shift down ever so slightly before wandering back to her bedroom while her host sat there in stunned silence. It was no secret in Eliza’s own mind that she was deviant from the norm, even if just a little, but this reality had never been so boldly brought forward and outright propositioned. She’d known since she was a little girl she found men and women to be equally attractive regardless of what her parents practically beat into her, and had
simply grown to hold her tongue if a lady in suggestive dance outfit made her want to do things far
from holy. Her love for Alexander raced through her mind as she got to her feet, glancing
momentarily and considering if she simply went back to their bed and held her guest to promising
to never speak of the offer.

‘How many times have you said no already? You know she has a point,’ the little voice in her
mind, one that reminded her vaguely of her beloved, mused.

Sybil, a beautiful young thing she viewed like a sister so drunk alongside her and bold enough that
she’d kissed her briefly in her parents’ home. Lucy, her maternal friend who always dressed
modestly but changed in front of them and whose curves always did things to the Hamilton she
could never admit. Adrienne, the bravest and most unhinged, recounting her various homosexual
adventures before she was wed and teaching Eliza how to properly tongue kiss before she met John
or Alexander. All of these women she loved endlessly but remained firmly and happily platonic
with, and finally she’d been met in the middle, inclined to try something she’d never allowed
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herself the luxury of doing.

“Lord, show me how to say no to this,” she whispered as she headed down the hallway. “I don’t
know how to say no to this, and yet if her mouth finds its way to mine I shall not say ‘no’.”

Lovemaking with a woman was different and clumsy and more passionate than she could ever
imagined. When the morning light came, she found herself waking up by her side, her heart
skipping a beat when she saw how messy and natural she looked in the streaming sun. As she made
breakfast and got dressed for a day inside, she found guilt fraying out and banished it by
reinforcing the same logic they agreed upon before it began.

“That was the last time,” she said softly when her lovely Maria padded into the kitchen sleepy and
red faced. “Are we agreed?”

Tilting her head down in a frankly adorable way, the younger replied meekly. “Yes ma’am.”

In all honesty, Elizabeth had intended this excursion to be the first and the last. Then she went to a
cabinet meeting and came back spitting angry, her head spinning and body shaking until she found
her lips captured in two fuller ones and her hand held as she was led down the hallway. As the
weeks turned into two complete months, the two became proficient at what they did, easily sliding
beneath the sheets and murmuring all the right things as long as the other whispered for more. The
entire summer was nearly gone when she received a letter early, and though she wasn’t expecting
John, Alexander or the children for another few days before they finally returned, she was shocked
find the return address to be foreign and from Pennsylvania under a ‘J. Reynolds.’

It read as follows:

Dear good madam,

I do hope that this letter finds you in good health. You do not recognize my name in all likelihood-
perhaps my whore wife neglected to mention me- but I shall jog your memory since she insists you
will recognize me. My name is James Reynolds, and I’m in a position of great distress. I hope that
my demands will find you in a prosperous enough position to put money in the pockets of people
like me down on their luck, for you see it was the woman I wed that you decided to lead to your
cute little marriage’s bed.

As her eyes raced over the rest of the postage, she cursed loudly as she sat on her porch, unable to
help it as her heartrate picked up into pounding. “FUCK.”
Poor little Elizabeth, what to do? The man who married a much younger woman knows about your crimes and has nothing inclining him not to inform the proper authorities of your amorous crimes. Truly, as a law abiding citizen of a country people insist you helped found, I ought to do my duties and put two criminals in their place. However, Mrs. Hamilton, I am willing to offer compensation for your misdeeds. You must pay the price for the skirts you so ruffled, and if the amount is gracious, I’ll even keep letting you see my slut for a partner. If it isn’t, I’m so terribly afraid I’ll be telling the police with a box full of incriminating evidence and your husband.

Do let me know, your time is drawing very thin,

James Reynolds.

Initially, Eliza was absolutely furious. She’d crumpled the letter and marched inside, seizing Maria by the arm and marching her downstairs with such vigor that the poor thing cried out as she was tossed on the couch.

“What in the fuck is this?!?” She demanded in a hiss, shoving the parchment in her face. “You told him?! You will tell me this INSTANT how long you have been speaking with the man who kicked you out for dead! How dare you betray me like this, after all I have done for you!”

“I’m sorry!” Maria cried immediately, her arms trembling as they covered her head. “Please, ma’am, my soul was weak, forgive me! He spoke to me so sincerely, I wished to surprise you with our reconciled marriage, but he forced me to speak of my acts during our time apart or he’d take away and slaughter Susan. I trusted him, I had no idea-!”

“YOU HAD NO IDEA?!” She roared, throwing the parchment at her feet and turning away with a scowl when the younger began to cry. “Of course you knew! I am ruined!”

“We are ruined,” the smaller mourned.

“WE? There is no ‘we’, no anymore!” She screamed in pure frustration and hurled the paper into the unlit fireplace. “We shall be jailed or hanged for what we have committed! I am ruined, how could I do this?!”

“If you pay!” The younger suddenly declared, her face red with tears as she got to her feet and groveled at her host’s, hands locked around her legs. “If you pay, ma’am, you can stay! Miss, I didn’t know any better!”

“Stop crying, get up!” She demanded as her own tears threatened to fall, her hands falling away weakly as she tried to lift up the more youthful. “You have damned us, I am ruined!”

“Please don’t leave me when I am helpless!” Maria cried out, slipping her arms around her and pinning her to the wall.

“I don’t want you!” She cried, trying to wiggle free fruitlessly as her body surged with the intense love she’d build for the other over the months. “I don’t want you, I don’t-!”

“Eliza, if you pay, I will stay!” Maria declared, her messy face pressed to her own and her mouth beginning to work over her own.

She had no means of saying no once her body was on hers. The two openly made love on that day, their dresses disregarded and footsteps padding through the house as they fell over each other and bonded so passionately and so constantly that they slept from early evening to morning. When the morning was still young and the dew remained on the grass, Elizabeth found herself on the porch and not moving away when Maria wrapped her arms around her for the first time in ‘public.’
“I don’t say no to this,” she murmured drowsily, turning and hugging her close friend tightly to whisper in her ear. “There is only one place I can go.”

“I’m sorry,” she whispered, and in that moment, Hamilton finally understood that for all her faults and fear, the poor thing meant it.

The location was in public and something Reynolds mentioned as an afterthought, proving how his intellect was weak despite cornering the prosperous woman. He wore a hideous suit he was preening in and a large hat, one that shaded his expression as she approached in a respectable outfit and a full envelope in hand.

“So?” He drawled in his obnoxious Pennsylvanian accent, and she kept herself expressionless as she handed the package over.

“You will get no more than what is included,” she informed him dryly, her eyes betraying her flit around the area briefly. “Nobody needs to know.”

“It was a pleasure doing business with you, Mrs. Hamilton,” he taunted cockily; she saw red and it took all she had to not to lay him out.

“You will never see your wife again,” she said in a low, dangerous tone. “She will be remaining with me happily for the rest of her days, along with my family. Her business no longer resides with you.”

“It takes two to sign a divorce,” he pointed out with a sinister smirk. “She will be coming home with me; you’re welcome to keep the brat. I expect quarterly payments if you wish to speak with her.”

“I assure you, James, you shan’t come out on top,” she snapped and stormed back to her stallion.

Maria left her at the end of the month in tears and with despair across her features. When her beloved family returned home, she recounted the mostly true story to them all as a large and introduced them to Susan when she’d said that her friend had reconciled for a childless union. With her Alexander near and her John promising to visit more often, she found it was no time at all until she became pregnant with her fifth child and found herself overly stressed with her husband having no means to comfort her. It was in these times she met with Maria, committing their secret in hotels and in the Reynolds household as she continued funneling money to James reluctantly.

“Why me?” Maria finally asked as they laid side by side, Eliza’s pregnant belly protruding the sheets dramatically. “I betrayed your trust and I helped manipulate you. This is just a way for him to get more money, and I still cannot summon the courage to abandon his side. I am a pathetic excuse of a woman.”

“Homosexuality is hardly a crime and I love you for who you have proven to be despite the abuse,” Eliza replied simply and honestly, bringing the girl in for a rare her-initiated kiss. “My door is open when you finally put our relationship’s stock above your own fear. We shan’t ever move at all if you keep waiting.”

The last payment was sent one month before her fourth son, John Church, was due. August 21st, Maria Reynolds finalized her divorce with James under the guidance and protection of one very loyal Theodosia Burr, who was happy to help an extra amount with Eliza’s vehement endorsement. On August 22nd, 1792, the Hamiltons’ fourth son, one John Church, was born into their home and the next chapter of every life present at last began.
Chapter End Notes

*A moment of silence for Marliza and Lams.* Also, this chapter ended up being much longer than I expected it would be, which is awesome. Please forgive me if the next chapter or so is shorter; I'll continue to do my best for you all!

Please don't forget to leave kudos/comment/subscribe/bookmark if it so compels you!
♥
The Art of the Compromise

Chapter Summary

There is a lot to be said about having input in what the political powerhouses trade away in favor of achieving the dreams of a brand new start.

Chapter Notes

I'm so sorry the update took a hot minute, but this chapter was ridiculously hard to write and took quite a bit of research on my part along with making convincing conversation between all of our widely opposing forces. I'd like to note the Compromise of 1790 took place in that year rather than what is listed here, and the dates are extremely historically inaccurate and skewed, much like they are in the musical in favor of a consistent plot. I hope all my fellow history buffs will forgive me, as the 'filling' of this chapter was very taxing and (clearly) took quite a bit of thought on my part! I'm taking after Lin after all, at least I try~

Shoutout again to all the awesome people who kudos/subscribe/bookmark, and another HUGE thank you to the lovely Arya_Chan, whose input is very constant and very inmeasurable in worth, and much love to anenomnes and ClassLitLover, my other two awesome review leavers. Without any further ado, enjoy! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mid November, 1792

“Alexander, I need to have some words with you in private.”

It wasn’t entirely unusual for his wife to want to speak with him alone, but Alexander did find it exceptionally strange that she seemed discontent to speak within the walls of their bedroom. She was clad as though she intended to go out despite the late hour, her shawl and layers wrapped around her in almost a protective manor, and in the glow of the candlelight she looked remarkably old.

“We are alone in here, my love,” he pointed out softly. “It cannot possibly be significant enough to go out in this frightful weather over.”

“I’m afraid it is,” she replied somberly. “Please get your proper clothing on. I think a walk in the park would do for this type of conversation.”

“…If you insist, my darling,” he relented with a sigh, sliding out of the bed and changing in privacy as she ghosted the outside of the entrance to their room. “Do you think Miss Maria will awaken should one of our children need something?”

“She is still awake,” his love responded easily, her somber expression not relenting despite her reassuring tone. “She has assured me she will be carefully listening for our children’s cries. I trust
her; after all, she does have a little one of her own, and she’s been living with us long enough to be well acquainted with the call of each child’s distress.”

“Even John’s?” He joked lightheartedly, deflating immediately when she didn’t offer a mere fraction of her warm small or even a grunt in response.

“Particularly John’s,” she stated blandly, her arms falling away when he tried to loop his to keep her warm as they began the path to the city park.

“You are quite unlike yourself,” he commented in a similarly desolate tone as they neared the walkways paved by thousands of feet and couples just like themselves. “What is on your mind? If it is something you do not wish for our children to hear, we are quite a bit out of their range of hearing or even seeing. You concern me in acting so…distant.”

“I promise I’ll explain once we reach the gazebo,” she said in a near whisper, her thin arms suddenly wrapping around one of his own so tightly he feared she’d be frozen there.

Upon reaching said gazebo, which was proudly standing near the entrance of the park, he wasted no time in helping her perch on one of the large wooden fences on either side before hopping beside her. The winter wind blew through her hair, which was free as per usual, and he was just about to brush some of the snow powder from her locks before she took a sharp inhale of breath that caused him pause out of pure curiosity and concern.

“I have to tell you something…something I’m not proud of,” she announced, her eyes already shiny with tears. “If you hate me, or kill me, or cast me out, I will understand and respond accordingly. All I ask is that for everything I am currently worth to you…please do not fault Miss Reynolds for what I am about to chronicle to you. She may have initiated it, but she is a young woman in a rapidly changing world who fell as helpless for me as we once did for each other. The blame truly lies only on myself, and I ask that you promise to take your frustration and hurt on me and me alone.”

“I would never harm you, much less kill you, and cast you out?” He demanded softly while cupping her face with one hand. “My love, what are you on about? I cannot think of any possible situation where any of these heinous things would dare cross my mind.”

The night was silent for a few long moments before she choked out a harsh sob, her hands covering her face and entire frame crumpling into itself. “I-I bedded her, Alexander! Li-little Susan was ill and we were both so relieved when she began mending, and she wanted to repay me for all I’d done and I didn’t deny her. I took this girl into our bed multiple times, most of within the span of the time you were with my family, but I continued when you were busy with the children or your own projects in hotels and at her old home in Pennsylvania. I never intended for it to go this far, to happen more than once, but it did and I can’t escape it! We said it was okay because we weren’t the same gender, but I still committed marriage infidelity, with someone against the will of the Lord no less! There isn’t a doubt in my mind you shall deliver a brutal hand of justice, and I shall deserve it.”

Alexander felt the air be sucked out of his lungs and his head go light with shock. His wife, the person he’d trusted and loved so dearly despite having an unclear life path and a million things he wanted to do independently had cheated on him with a young woman. The homosexuality didn’t bother him as much as most people would claim it should’ve, as he himself was very attracted to John Laurens and a few other good, handsome men, but she’d had to nerve to not only introduce them but to also invite the marriage wrecker into their home. To kick her and her daughter out now would seem very suspicious on his part to the general public and wound their children, and to speak of the truth would only doom his spouse to a life of solitude and expulsion from society that
destroyed all they’d worked for. Part of him wondered why he cared about her prosperity when she’d been the one to tear about the sacred nature of their union by committing multiple crimes more than a few times, and yet the tearing in his heart reminded him through the implosion of his world that he still absolutely loved her.

“So that’s how much it meant to you?” He finally found his voice as she ugly-wept into herself. “Our marriage…it was only good as long as I was around every second of the day to accommodate you, and then it was thrown out with the bathwater.”

“No!” She pleaded, her grief stricken face snapping up with her desperate eyes meeting his cold ones. “That’s not true, you must know that!”

“I don’t know anything,” he replied blandly as he got back to his feet and placed his hat back on. “All that is certain is that you have shown me what our union means to you. You have broken my trust, and if there is no solace to be found within a partner, a marriage is worth nothing at all.”

As he began walking back toward their home, he felt her hesitant behind him. He thought of their beloved John Laurens, a man he’d always thought she considered as a brother despite their initial and very evident romantic attraction, and wondered with a bitter pang of irony why he hadn’t been the one she’d fallen for instead of a battered, evidently manipulative housewife. While he’d been allowing himself to relax for the day to day grind and spending time with almost everyone important in his life, she’d been in their bed they shared with another person much more limber, innovative and exhilaratingly dangerous. No matter how many nights he’d stayed up late, helping her with her assignments or settling her temper post the trials of being a woman on the top of the social chain, and despite her alleged happiness with their five beautiful children and the talks of having more, she’d gone and violated all of the joy in their lives deliberately and continuously. The winter bit against his face as he ducked his head against the snow and wind, body trembling with sobs building inside his chest when he considered how blindly he trusted her by leaving her back home in the summertime, never thinking she’d ever see another, and how many evenings he’d trusted her whereabouts to be strictly work related thereafter.

“Alexander!” She was behind him now, her boots crunching against the frozen condensation as she caught up entirely with his brisk pace. “Alexander, I understand if you never wish to speak to me again, or even look at me. I do wish for you to know that the only reason I did not less this go entirely unknown is because it is my deepest, albeit likely delusion, desire to reconcile our union.”

This statement stopped in his tracks. On one hand, he mused that is was very bold for a cheater to be speaking of repairing what she broke in the first place, and it was a very abrupt follow up to world shattering news. On the other, the realization still dawned upon him that it most likely because she loved him that she were as risqué in being honest, especially in public (even though the frigid temperatures had everyone else cozied up by the fire in their homes.) She’d done something nearly completely unforgivable, and yet she’d come clean and was pleading for reconciliation that she outright acknowledged would be nearly impossible to achieve.

“Why did you do it?” He finally asked after letting the only the sound of their breathing fill the frozen night. “Why wasn’t I enough for you?”

“O-oh, Alexander…” Tears rolled down her face as she shakily brought her hands up on either side of his face. “Alexander, you’ve always been enough for me. You are the best husband, the best man I have ever had the pleasure of knowing, and the day we got married and the days I birthed our beautiful babies remain to be the best days of my entire life. Nothing can compare to my love that burns for you unconditionally, constantly and without fear. Having…having relations with Maria was a grave personal mistake of mine that reflects not in the slightest upon you. I’ve always
known I was disgusting, sick in the head for ever even considering…to imagine m-myself, with a woman before I met you…nothing about it is natural, holy or legal, and yet I never got a cap on the thoughts that stayed firmly behind closed lips. She was the same nasty itch I couldn’t bear not to scratch, and it may well have cost me everything I’ve ever committed to and loved shamelessly with my entire being. If you shall leave me, I know it is only fitting, but I respect you too much to lie or hide the truth.”

His own tears fell as he thought of his own homosexual tendencies with Laurens, his heart always secretly always considering ‘what if’ despite his intense passion for his Eliza. He turned to face her, a full cry erupting as she did the same, and wrapping his arms around her tightly made all the difference in the world to how stable he fault despite the betrayal that still cut freshly like the frigid weather.

“Let’s go home,” he whispered. “I…I want to fix our marriage as well.”

“Y-you do?” She whispered meekly, her brown eyes meeting as the waterworks continued. “I…I do not deserve you.”

“In truth…” He conceded with a soft sigh and awkward half smile. “I myself have also had homosexual urges. I think them not disgusting or condemnable but any medium other than a still partially corrupt government, and I intend to see to it you feel the same. Being one’s self is no crime, only violating the sanctity of holy union, but I know your sincerity as sure as I know my own heartbeat. Even if it takes the rest of lives, I know you have respected me enough to be honest and fitting with the worst you’ve ever done, and that is more than I could’ve ever asked for or expected in marrying anyone. This road we shall now take shan’t be an easy one, and yet I love you so very much; now kiss me if the feeling is quite mutual.”

Her lips were dry and cracked from the forces of nature, and yet despite how cold he was and how cracked their marriage currently felt, the kiss still felt perfect.

Late September, 1783

John Vanderlyn was an exceptional young man; Theodosia would never have brought him into her home as a prodigy had this not been the case. Despite all of his talent and the countless benefits he procured by being around, he was still another mouth to feed and a young adult to support/house, and she was wearing quite thin given her husband’s continuously declining health and the needs of her numerous offspring. Though her position was still much more prosperous than that of a mere commoner, it still did not pay as it should for all the things she had to cover for her dependents, and the search for an even better position without compromising her current reputation proved tedious and unrewarding thus far.

“Ah, Mrs. Secretary!” She greeted warmly when she saw her younger friend come strolling in with a folder tucked underneath her and her gaze up and alert for once.

“Mrs. Burr, ma’am!” Eliza chirped, moving to set her folder within the bust of her corset before hugging her.

Theo couldn’t help but make a face, her amusement cracking through. “That is quite ladylike, good ma’am.”

“The world operates on the most brutish of us,” the younger teased, and she couldn’t help but
chuckle and roll her eyes.

“Did you hear the news about good old General Mercer?” She now inquired, thinking of the older gentleman who’d be an absolute asset for moral and tragedy alike in the war.

“I did,” the treasurer replied with a somber nod. “Poor fellow.”

“Yes, I concur. However, you remember Clermont Street?”

“Yeah!”

“They renamed it after him,” she relayed with a knowing smile to the general. “The Mercer Legacy is secure.”

“Oh! Well, sure!” The fact this seemed to bring closer to her younger friend made the older woman smile a little more.

“And all he had to was die,” she mused, wrapping an arm around the shorter lady while said woman grunted.

“That’s a lot less work,” Hamilton admitted with a good natured grin at the Burr.

“We oughta give it a try,” Theo continued, which made both of them laugh a little. “Now, ma’am, how do you intend to get your debt plan through? Madison and Jefferson are merciless.”

“Well, hate the sin, love the sinner,” Eliza huffed out with a shrug that was obviously less nonchalant than she was trying to pass it off as. “I suppose I’ll have to finally listen to you, ma’am. Reveal less…smile more…Truthfully, anything to get my plan on the Congress Floor.”

“It’s a solid set of advice that has served me well over the years,” the elder commented despite the fact the younger was clearly imitating her voice when quoting her. “I am pleased to know you’ve listened in the past after all, Mrs. Hamilton.”

“Mrs. Hamilton? They’re ready for you,” one of the building associates chirped politely as she approached the two. “May I take your overcoat?”

“Of course. I’m sorry, Theo, I have to go,” Eliza replied while slipping the garment off of her torso and tossing it distractedly into the associate’s arms.

“And where are you off to now in such a big hurry?”

The woman simply smiled and winked. “Decisions are happening over dinner.”

The tension was clear for the moment Eliza stepped foot into the meeting room. Thomas and James sat at one end of the table, their dinner plates set out and their glasses filled, and they looked to her in sync as though she was an intruder. She made haste sitting in her own chair, accepting her own beverage and sipping on it critically as the food was served.

“My national plan will leave American credit in a prosperous place impossible to reach without one,” she stated plainly as that damn macaroni Jefferson was so found of was put out as the grain of the meal. “You don’t have a plan, you just hate mine.”

“You’d throw the South out with the bathwater if not for myself,” James snipped coldly. “You
can’t handle the reality of New York’s debt and would rather chop it across innocent states rather than pay it off yourself.”

“If all of the credit in America is centralized and competitive, the union gets a boost it desperately needs to keep up with the other countries. Need I remind you we are a very new country?” She countered.

“The debts arose from the Revolution,” Thomas reminded while rolling his eyes. “The only reason to states are in debt are because of the role they served. Planting and rationing in Virginia along with countless ruined masses of land due to warfare is more than enough payment back into the country, and besides, since when do we as a country believe the rich ought to control how our depletion is repaid? Aren’t they the very reason we continue to struggle?”

“No, we continue to struggle because our credit is dismal and the general public doesn’t have the good sense to invest in the stock that keeps the wealthy on the top. Need I remind you that you yourself are wealthy due to an empire of unpaid human labor?” She snapped, starting a heated argument about slavery that Madison had to physically break up by persuading them both to sit down and simply eat a while.

“I think having the nation’s capital in a more remote location, such as Virginia, would benefit the people as a whole,” James finally brought up as they finished up their plates. “These metropolitan areas become smaller the more they expand and cost much more to upkeep. A broad location with less general congestion of population would make travel to and from more easy, and the revenue to make it the modern location would come with general expenses that come with being a person of power.”

“Not just cause that’s where we’re from before you start, Hamilton,” Thomas added spitefully.

Eliza sat back thoughtfully; regardless of the capital, the banks would move with them and the question of ease of access or modern amenities would be nonexistent. “Perhaps I understand that, Jefferson, but the general populace does not think so critically or logically. A place neutral for the three of us may do better.”

The trio were silent in thought before James voiced, “Maryland?”

“What about the District of Columbia?” Thomas followed up quickly. “That’s such a small colony; Lord knows it needs the relevancy to avoid completely collapsing in on itself.”

“I concur, surprisingly,” she announced before taking a lot swig of her glass. “As for the states’ debts, this only climbs with building a new province up to relevancy. Travelers fees are mostly paid for in transit or up front, meaning the only revenue we’d receive is if we charged to see the buildings where these decisions and subsequent businesses and populations nearby spring up.”

“Charge to see the capital?” Thomas immediately scoffed. “Why, I didn’t know we were dining with King George himself tonight.”

“It was a bland statement to show the absurdity of it, but I forgot I wasn’t speaking with somebody nearly as critical in thinking,” she snapped while rolling her eyes.

“The tariff can be transitioned elsewhere, then,” James voiced.

“To pay off for your little bonds?” Thomas scoffed. “The federal powers we’ve put in place are more than capable of handling that of which the public doesn’t understand, or at least doesn’t understand according to you, Hamilton.”
“That is far too much power upon the federal government,” James interjected before she could fire back something witty. “The tariff will have to be paid off under the assumption the new location of the capital thrives, as it ought to.”

“We ought to put the tariff upon importing goods to pay off the bonds purchased and invested in by the rich population,” Eliza determined as the dessert was put out for consumption. “It is in this way our credit comes out on top regardless of third parties contributing, and we create more importations along with securing the consistency of our deportations. Let’s face it, gentleman, we need the ally of credit on our side if we wish to expand our relations in this world.”

“Our influence over Congress can only get you so far,” James reminded while spinning his dining utensil between his hands thoughtfully. “You will have to convince them much more directly.”

“I have been working a first report on public credit,” she admitted while digging gratefully into our own treat. “The acts will undoubtedly be passed as a result of these findings and accurate calculations of mine.”

Thomas scowled, which made her smirk behind her glass. She was slightly alarmed to see how Madison wrapped an arm around briefly and comfortably, a little more intimately and tightly to be that of simple male friendship. She was willing to let it go, but she noticed when she dropped her fork that they’d evidently been either holding hands or placing their non-dominant hands over each other the entire time; she was positive she knew what was taking place between the two, even if they’d be in denial. She herself was far from ‘shame’ when it came to same sex relationships, especially ones the participants loved having, so she resolved to not say what she determined she knew- at least for now- as she raised her goblet.

“It has been a pleasure compromising with you,” she announced with her iconic smirk. “The states and their amassed debts will appreciate it more than we seem to have appreciated each other.”

The two men exchanged eye contact briefly before lifting their own glasses in a symbol of unity, all three clinking before the meeting was officially adjourned and they all emerged victorious.

When the next day began and Theodosia went on the town for groceries and supplies for making Theodosius a new suit to replace his ever-shrinking one, the press was radically ablaze and so was the town. The talk in the general populace with loud and concerned, some springing with relief and joy and quite a few others quite pissed. She found out rather easily that Elizabeth Hamilton had evidently sold out the nation’s capital as being the District of Columbia while receiving unprecedented financial power for herself. Being a person of governmental authority, she knew how tricky compromising a place to represent the entire new nation while most of the things citizen raved about in the streets were nowhere near as simple, but the entire revelation was shocking. Though she kept her own mouth closed against the complaints of nearly every person she spoke to, she resolved she had to learn more at once.

By the end of the day, she managed to find James Madison on the bustling streets, though it was admittedly coincidence. The sickly man had seen her struggling with her wares and helped her load her carriage, and upon learning he’d come on foot in favor of letting his own slightly ill horses rest, she repaid in with a free ride to his destination.

“Where are you headed, sir?” The coachmen inquired.

Her acquaintance/casual friend replied with a location foreign to herself, and she decided to waste
“no small talk in learning where he was going. “Going to a wealthy part of the city eh?”

“Thomas’s New York home is quite nice,” James responded with a knowing nod. “It is a shame he only uses it for business affairs. I am quite privileged to lodge with him more often than not rather than hotels or my own home.”

“It’s funny, I wished to speak with you both about the events that took place yesterday,” she vocalized, earning her a grunted chuckle from the short gentleman.

“Everyone does,” he noted with a hint of scorn across his face. “We will have no issue partaking in the festivities of our own state as opposed to the harsh discourse here, that is for certain. It is quite convenient you managed to catch us before our journey on the morrow, which will start as sunrise descends.”

“I cannot imagine the negotiations that must have taken place to make such vital decisions in one meeting,” she noted, her usual patience being neglected in favor of the answers she desperately craved. “It is hard to believe that you lot agreed for that amount of time, or at all, in truth.”

“That is fair,” Madison chuckled. “I thought I was going to have to escort Thomas out myself a couple of times. There is no doubt about it; that little imp knows exactly how to press his buttons. The major difference between she and her late sister, of which he was very, very fond, is that she has little intellectual ground or personal discipline to balance her radical beliefs.”

“I wouldn’t say she isn’t intellectual. One does not ascend power while simultaneously being at political disposition through dumb luck,” Theo pointed out; even if they didn’t see eye to eye on most things, she still considered the small spitfire a friend. “I admit that I wasn’t aware that Mister Jefferson knew, much less liked, Mrs. Church.”

“The two had a very tightly knit friendship over in France. Had he not been married, I reckon he would’ve courted her himself,” Madison conceded as they approached the neighborhood previously set as the destination. “Those two ricocheted endlessly, though between you and me, I think that is what drew them in so close to each other. He told me several times she had the wit and mind to match the greatest of men, and that her being sent along for the ambassador position benefited both he and the nation in unprecedented amounts. If you care for one man’s speculation, I have no doubt they had least locked lips if not complete martial infidelity; it would be of little consequence to her, and he knew of the late Mrs. Jefferson’s health long before it was public knowledge. It is no matter now; these things are long past, and he doesn’t particularly care for bringing it up now. I greatly appreciate the ride, Mrs. Burr.”

“Anytime, Mister Madison, anytime,” she responded easily, climbing out of the carriage right after him and silently making her way to the entrance despite his raised eyebrow and small smile.

She was admittedly expecting the owner of the residence or one of his house slaves to open the door, but she came face to chest with James Monroe instead. The tall man stepped aside immediately to let the other resident in, his eyes trained on her critically the entire time. He looked a bit like a hungry wolf, one who’d cornered a mindless sheep and who was waiting to strike, and this made her all the more defense by principle.

“Mister Monroe. It has been quite some time,” she voiced before he got a chance to open that loud mouth of his.

“I concede, Mrs. Burr. What brings you here?” His eyes flitted to her pockets and across her body as a whole, as if he was expecting her to finally take him up on the long past offer of protecting the family name against her husband’s very real martial crimes.
“I wish to speak with Mister Madison more in depth along with Mister Jefferson,” she said shortly. “I was unaware you were here yourself, but it is…nice to see you again. How is your wife?”

“She is well,” he responded with a small smirk playing on his thin lips. “And your husband?”

“Ill,” she snipped. “Quite ill, as it were. If you will excuse me, sir, I must be quick in getting back to him.”

“Wouldn’t that mean you don’t have time to stay and visit? My friends are quite busy preparing for their long journey tomorrow, after all,” Monroe taunted in voice dripping with fake concern.

“Mister Monroe, if they have the patience to deal with you, they have plenty of time to have a productive conversation with me,” she shot back coldly, shouldering past him with no more hesitance.

The estate was decorated nicely and opened up into a large foyer, one that the two men she’d been itching to speak with sat in while enjoying tea and pastries. She handed her overcoat politely to Sally Hemmings and walked before the two, her face undoubtedly flush from her unpleasant encounter and patience growing all the thinner as the duo initially ignored her in favor of completing their previous conversation before finally looking up.

“Theodosia Burr,” Thomas mused with a wide smirk that did little to put her at ease. “I reckon you’re here to talk about the new nation’s capital? I assure you, all your burning questions will be answered once we get back home and have the time to document all of it. I know the general public is harassing you nearly as badly as they are us, but that’s hardly constitutional for a house visit.”

“Thomas, we both know very well your press releases will be just as much slander without concrete fact as anything else you’ve written. This conversation is for me and myself alone, and I will direct public inquiries back to whatever story you concoct in Monticello,” Theo shot back, long tired of these men making an ass of her when she was more than capable and likely smarter than the three of them combined. “If you would be so kind, Mister Jefferson.”

“What is that you wish to know?” Madison interjected, waving Sally over to pour her own cup and serve out her own food. “Have a seat,” Madison interjected, waving Sally over to pour her own cup and serve out her own food. “What is that you wish to know?”

What she received was equivalent to that of biased press reports. Thomas was as smug and condescending as ever, citing that Eliza had been begging the Washingtons for Congressional consideration under their jurisdiction and that they’d sent her to him— their ‘most trusted secretary’—for the votes. He claimed she’d cried and even kissed his hands to persuade him, two things Burr knew for fact were bullshit, and the meeting was her enticing Madison to giving the same sympathy treatment. According to them both, she was violently opposed to sending New York City down the river but was backed into a corner thanks to her own incompetence during their meetings, and they were the masterminds that unraveled a national compromise out of her hysterical, foolish position of shame.

“Thank you for such…flattering reports,” she finally had the chance to say, the strain in her voice weighted by their lack of respect for her comrade. “I am sure the public will be more than happy to hear of your selfless sacrifices.”

“People may not be happy, but working a little closer to home is a benefit I intend to keep as subtle as we can,” Madison mused with a knowing smirk. “Truly, I think we selected a perfect spot for the most important affairs to take place.”

“I hope she likes travelling,” Jefferson noted with a sharp, mean-spirited laugh that made her jump
a little. “It’s about time that little hussy sees how much people like her little alcohol tax when she
depends on them.”

“With all due respect, sir!” She finally exclaimed more sharply than she intended to let out, but it
got their attention, so she decided she liked it better. “It is quite possible her banks will be right in
the same spot as where you put the nation’s capital. Nobody else was in the room where the
trading and discussion happened, so I am in no place to state anything as fact, but she did not come
away as hollowed and defeated as you lot seem to be delusional into believing.”

The duo started at her for a long moment before Madison let out a short chuckle. “That you are
correct, Mrs. Burr, but I do not expect you to comprehend the weights shifted in such a critical
political game.”

“You are in no position to ever be in the shoes we fill, to be frank,” Jefferson added with another
sexist charged smirk in her direction. “You’re very smart and observational, and you spend a lot of
time waiting for the perfect moment to get your ball rolling. I assure you though, no political affairs
worth the books occurs within a small office and dealings with the general public with rare give
and take amongst other people of powers. Perhaps your blows would strike harsher should you be
in a seat of historic significance, but until then, your opinion is as washy as your loyalties. I mean,
damn, are you a Republican or a Federalist?”

Theodosia was stunned at his little speech with words that cut deep, but when she looked to
Madison, he simply kept his gaze down as a silent affirmation he thought similarly. She’d worked
hard, graduating Princeton at 16 and persisting long after her mother had left the mortal world,
securing being New York State Attorney General and holding it well while giving valuable input
to the army. Regardless of all this, Elizabeth Hamilton was an immigrant and started at the very
same time, and she was climbing non-stop to the highest of the food chain with sharp wit and
strategies she’d never been able to master herself. Hamilton was a risk taker, a game player and a
society shaker, one that would stop at nothing to enrich herself a thousand different ways while
making America the country all those who lived there dreamed of, and what was she? A gloried
secretary, one much lower of the totem pole than the four elite secretaries of state, and now a
woman who was humiliating herself with affairs she knew little of aside from speculation and
biased reports.

“I hate to break up the honesty hour…” Monroe suddenly voiced for the front of the foyer, one
hand holding a cup of tea and the other lifting a large sum of creased papers. “But I must tell you
I’ll be leaving this evening for my journey to France along with Mister Jay. The ‘reign of terror’
has grown much worse as we anticipate the upcoming cabinet meeting concerning our militia, and
one Adrienne de Lafayette is among those currently imprisoned and being tortured; this cannot
stand when she was an invaluable asset in our causes, and it will be no time at all before the rest of
the country learns through those damn Federalists.”

“Adrienne?” She repeated softly, her eyes widening as the information fully sank in. “Mister
Monroe, you shan’t leave that country until you have recovered her, sir.”

“Who is demanding such a thing here, Mrs. Burr?” He countered, clearly toying with her in her
humiliated position, but she would have none of it concerning a woman she loved as dearly as a
sibling.

“I am,” she spit angrily and stormed up to him. “I shall be getting a seat in the Senate this
upcoming election, I will have you know. I assure you that regardless of the seat I take, you will
have the most radical and factually powered smear campaign destroying your petty reputation
should you not see her to safety and comfort. I swear it on my mother’s name, James.”
A mischievous light danced in his irises, but his face was solemn as he took one of her hands in his own. “Her prosperity for your blazing a trail of your own? You have yourself a deal, Mrs. Burr, ma’am.”

Chapter End Notes

Please remember to LEAVE KUDOS/subscribe/bookmark/LEAVE A REVIEW ♥ if it so compels you!
Chapter Summary

The audacity of certain parties are too much to handle despite the best effort of those with opposing beliefs. The political divide becomes more personal, and to not plant firmly on either side would mean falling into obscurity.

Chapter Notes

Three songs in one chapter? Somehow a thing that happened, believe it or not. The first two are from the workshop versions, particularly 'Schuyler Defeated', and I really just ran with my own ideas with Cabinet Battle #2 to mark out some very key differences. Shoutout as always to the very lovely Arya_Chan and her incredible ideas and support! ♥ As always, enjoy!

Small TW Warning: Non-con kissing implied toward the very end!

Angelica Hamilton had hardly believed her eyes when she read the newest post. Their grandfather’s portrait was included in the newspaper, his thin and proud face as recognizable as any other member of her family’s, and underneath it informed the general public he was in danger to losing his Senate seat to ‘young upstart Theodosia Burr’. Though she felt bad for her old war veteran of a grandfather, she’d always looked up to any woman who knocked the traditional figures of society off their pedestals. The longer she in class, however, she realized that her mother would more than likely not appreciate a friend going for their family, and given how impulsive she’d become under her co-workers, the twelve year old could hardly imagine this ending well if she didn’t warn somebody else first. She’d ran out of the school building and hurriedly grabbed one of her best friends and allies and snuck out, telling herself and her sibling that they’d be safe from punishment as long as their father protected them (and of course he would).

“Papa!” Phillip barreled through the home, his curly brown hair flying behind him as he looked frantically for their father. “Papa, Papa, Papa!”

“Pip?” Their parent appeared from their mother’s study, his lengthy hair tied back in a very messy bun atop his head. “Angie? What in the world are you two doing home; did your mother escort you home?”

“We came home ourselves!” Her ten year old brother chirped while hugging home. “Angie promised we wouldn’t be in trouble if you told them you knew we were coming!”

“Rest assured, my boy, those headmasters and headmistresses shan’t lay a finger on you or they’ll have everything to pay. You both know well your mother and I made it well clear no form of striking a child is acceptable, especially not from a place of claimed intellect,” the man soothed and ruffled the boy’s hair. “Now, what’s the occasion?”
“Look! Grandpa’s in the paper!” She exclaimed, showing him the bundle. “War hero Phillip Schuyler nearing the loss of his Senate seat to Burr!”

“Aaron Burr?” Their father looked genuinely surprised, enough so she had to huff at his problematic and old fashioned assumption. “I thought your grandfather was unopposed.”

“Aaron Burr is still bedridden, I think!” She replied with a pointed point. “Or at least I haven’t seen him around the city…Anyway, it’s his wife! She’s apparently been going all over the place getting lots of support!”

Alexander glanced between the two of them before gently pushing Phillip in the other direction. “Son, go make sure the doors are closed. Angelica, make sure your siblings are inside.”

The twelve year old wasted no time, power walking through their expansive home and clicking her tongue in disapproval when she saw Alex Jr. completely covered in soot along with James. She grabbed them both by the napes of their necks and scrubbed them off, scolding them about playing their room’s fireplace before realizing with a start she still didn’t know where their younger sibling, little John, was. The toddler was fortunately in the kitchen, happily chewing on a piece of tough meat their father had evidently given him to work on and keep him out of mischief. She scooped him up and nuzzled his face, listening as her Papa rushed through the home and emerged in the foyer with a bundle of papers.

“We have to go!” He called hurriedly, his hair now partially falling around his face and coat very poorly buttoned. “Boys, I mean right now! Get down here and clothe yourselves at once, young men!”

The urgency in his tone had clearly inspired something in her younger siblings, as they hurried down and threw clothes over their still soot accented play clothes and skin. Papa seemed to pay no mind, simply ushering them out the door and leaving her to quickly hurry to his side with John in arms while Pip held onto James and Alex Jr.

“How are we going?” She asked immediately upon catching pace.

“The city, to speak with your mother!” He replied, his hair now a proper mess.

“We must let her know we’re on her side!” Angie agreed, reaching up to rescue the dangling piece of ribbon that once held his mane back. “Papa, you can’t go into town looking like that.”

“She’s going to consider Mrs. Burr’s actions a personal slander!” He exclaimed anxiously. “We must stop a homicide.”

The preteen was surprised, and yet she understood; she’d been thinking the same thing earlier. “Oh! Look around, boys, we have to look around!”

“Let’s go and find your mother down in New York!” Papa called back, causing the boys to repeat the city name excitedly and dash in different directions once they reached the square.

Angelica sighed to herself; how in the world had she gotten stuck with the baby? She smiled to John reassuringly never the less and settled him against her chest/neck, briskly walking through the town until she heard the familiar shout of her mother. Immediately the preteen rushed toward it, screeching to a halt in between two of the shops when she realized she was talking to none other than Theodosia Burr herself. Deciding not to interrupt and get caught in the crossfire, she stood still and settled her toddler brother on the ground, signaling for him to ‘shush’ pointedly before honing her listening completely.
“Since when are you a Democratic Republican?” Her Mama demanded sharply. “Next thing we know, I’ll find out you’re a Jeffersonian!”

“Being one put in me in a position of greater prosperity!” Mrs. Burr exclaimed, looking a little surprised but nearly as much as she should if she was feigning innocent. “Wouldn’t you do the same if it benefited your family?”

“Nobody knows who you are or what you do! At least they have some stability in Schuyler!”

“No one needs to know me, they don’t like you,” Burr countered thoughtfully, an insult that made the young Hamilton swallow hard.

Mama just looked shocked. “Excuse me?”

“Let’s be honest now, ma’am. Wall Street may think you’re great, but you’ll always be adored by the things you create,” Mrs. Theodosia said while wrapping an arm around her parent. “You’re remarkable, nobody denies this, but upstate? My dear lady, the word is crooked. You’re a brash young woman in need of someone more experienced to take the reins, and that notion was only strengthened by you so impulsively trading away the capital-”

“Wait a moment-!”

“Dear girl, you’re considered to be an ass who taxes the alcohol!” The older woman laughed well naturedly; the lack amusement in her mother’s face was as clear as day.

“You’re going to make a fool of me through the man who raised me?” Mama’s eyebrow twitched in anger, her face flushing the more she spoke. “You have a lot of nerve to consider my political moves crazy! You wait and you wait for your opportune moment to strike, and yet when the time comes to step on the very hands who helped you, you’re not shy?! You have a lot of nerve!”

“It’s not my fault you don’t think twice about saving your reputation,” Burr scoffed, and the twelve year old suddenly realized that of all the people her mother had fought, she was the hardest to knock down permanently.

Her mother pushed away the comforting arm lightly. “I’ve always considered you a friend.”

“I don’t see why that must end!” The political rival spread her arms out wide. “I am making a mockery of nobody; the seat was up for grabs and I took it, and for that I have done nothing to provoke your rage. Your pride will be the death of us all, good ma’am, but beware: it goes before the fall~”

Angelica knew her mother was about to go off further, but it was at that exact moment her father came rushing up with the boys right behind him. “Eliza, there you are!”

“Alexander?” Mama blinked and looked back to him, her face still red but hard glare softening immediately.

“You forgot some papers,” he told her with a gentle cheek kiss, setting them in her hands.

“But I nev-”

“Mrs. Burr, madam, it’s been so long,” Papa continued easily, stepping to their evident new enemy and bowing deeply. “How are your husband and children?”

“As a matter of fact, my husband is still quite ill,” the older woman conceded with a soft sigh. “He
is barely out of the bed these days with terrible stomach pain.”

“I am very sorry to hear it; I’ll be by to visit very soon,” Alexander said thoughtfully. “And your baby?”

“He’s my pride and joy,” Theodosia replied with a soft smile. “He’s fluent in French, Latin and one of the best writers I know.”

“So am I!” Phillip declared excitedly from their father’s side, encouraging Alex to place his hand on his head.

“He’s the same as your daughter, now that I think of it,” Mrs. Burr continued. “Is she well?”

“She is in town somewhere,” he noted with an eye roll, one that made said daughter screw up her face immediately. “She’s with our youngest, you see. I reckon she’s gone off to the shops to find new sheet music.”

“She is a very talented musician,” Mama interjected in a proud tone. “One day, I swear she’ll run Manhattan.”

“We must be going, ma’am,” Papa immediately followed up. “Please, send Mister Burr our love.”

“Nice to see your sons,” Mrs. Burr agreed and smiled to her brothers before turning around and walking off.

“We’re not done, Theodosia!” Her mother suddenly snapped, but her father simply careened her back with his arms.

“My love,” he stated softly and firmly.

“If I were you…” Burr paused and looked back over one shoulder pointedly. “I’d stick with him, ma’am.”

Her maternal parent clearly still wanted to fight, but she decided to hurry into the music store before they’d known she was spying in hopes of actually getting new sheets. When she turned around, however, she saw a figure rushing out and the air of his movement moved her hair slightly, proving he’d been close to her. The young teen immediately scooped up her brother and rushed after, spotting a mass of dark hair underneath a headband taking off down the street. John squeaked and giggled in her arms as she made haste after him, dress hitched under the weight of her brother, and caught up swiftly by nearly missing crashing into the boy, who was evidently about to sharply turn around and dash the other way.

“Hey!” She began in a normal commanding voice, but she was immediately pulled into an alleyway; it was then she saw they’d been very close to Mrs. Burr, who was just now looking around curiously before going on her way.

“That’s my mother!” The stranger hissed, pushing her mop of damp waves away from his face aggressively. “Are you trying to get me in trouble??”

“Are you trying to give me a heart attack by spying right behind me?” She hissed back pointedly, her grip tightening on the baby at once. “You should be much more careful about how you talk and act around ladies! One day you’ll get slapped and you’ll deserve it!”

The young man before her looked alarmed and vaguely offended before looking down, letting out a very soft sigh. “I am sorry if I hurt you or anything; you were just living your life, I suppose. I
feel it only right to point out, though…you were spying on them, too.”

“One of those ladies happens to my mother,” she confessed with a small mischievous grin. “I couldn’t resist.”

“And the other is mine!” He exclaimed, his eyes twinkling despite the shadows in the space between stores. “That must make you Elizabeth Hamilton’s daughter!”

“And that makes you Theodosia Burr’s youngest son,” she replied easily, setting down the toddler. “Jackie, remember your manors?”

As she cleanly curtsied, her sibling bowed so deeply he had to push his weight back up with his tiny hands. “Hi! ‘m Jackie!”

“Angelica and John Hamilton, respectively,” she corrected while taking the toddler’s hand. “I know how proud of you your parents are; you’re all they seem to talk about when they visit and I’m around.”

“Quite the same here. Theodosius Burr;” he chirped and bowed more properly than her sibling. “Man, I thought our mothers were friends, but apparently not anymore!”

“Indeed.” Angie sighed and looked around nervously. “Someone might catch us and say tattle on us if we keep talking. I don’t want my mama mad at me for ‘talking with the enemy’ or whatever.”

“May I write you, then?” His boldness surprised her and made her smile immediately, though it was part just nervous.

“How are you to write me when our parents are enemies?” She inquired, and he immediately drooped.

“I suppose not, then,” he stated with a grunt.

She let out a disappointed sigh; was he really going to roll over so easily? “You seem to have quite the head on your shoulders, Theodosius. I would’ve quite liked to write you.”

Theodosius immediately took her free hand, boldly bowing down partially and placing a light kiss on her knuckles. “Between first and second lunch, the courtyard spanning between our boarding schools. I shall leave a note in the centermost rose bush post my fourth lesson, as I pass through it for recreational sports. I anticipate your reply the next day, yes?”

“Should your words be worth the ink and parchment they are placed upon, you shan’t anticipate more than is due,” she replied with a genuine smile creeping across her face.

The two school aged youths hurried in opposite directions, Angelica tugging along a fussing John while Theodosius hauled himself back home swiftly. The young teen girl had barely made it inside the music shop when she saw her mother on the other side, her expression tense and frantic as she visibly looked around.

“Mama?” She called right after pulling her very irritated youngest brother behind one of the shelves.

“Angelica, there you are!” Mama exclaimed and hurried over, scooping up the baby immediately. “Your father and I were looking everywhere for you, young lady! Come now; we must go home, I have some very important letters to write…”
“Can’t I have just one piece of new music? I’ve gotten top marks on my past two essays with no reward yet!” She suddenly exclaimed, wrapping her thin around her mother pleadingly.

“Now, now, little miss, the reward itself is getting such excellent marks. You are old enough to perform well and not expect immediate gratification!” Eliza scolded firmly, but the eldest Hamilton child did not let her charm and being the only girl go unused.

Angelica Hamilton, therefore, happily walked back home with three new sheets of piano music in a shiny new folder in her arms.

Alexander always had a way of calming her down in moments of intensity, but that certainly did not mean Eliza would admit it. She was still silently stewing about the audacity of her so-called friend when they arrived back home, wasting no time after laying the napping John in his bed to go to her office. Her husband was already there, a knowing expression on his face, and somehow that did nothing to put a cap on the fury she felt.

“What in the hell was that?!” She demanded angrily. “Why in the hell did you bring our children downtown?! You know very well that Theodosia is trying to make a fool out of me! I will not let our family be disrespected this way! I will not let her gloat in a position she practically stole! I’ll grab a pen and paper, let this whole world know if you come for my family you better not miss, you better have another shot to throw!”

“You could let it go,” Alexander interjected gently, his hands cupping over her trembling ones. “Why not stay alive for me? You can let it go, and let it slide right by! I’ve learned that people will always be cynical, and try to make the personal political. Leave all the others to the subliminal and let it go!”

“That would be better fit advice for a man,” she countered with a sigh. “Being quiet and submissive is my enemy. Unless I want to lose the position I worked my ass off to get, I have to address these things!”

“You have to address the things that directly affect your position. Maybe you and Mrs. Burr don’t see eye to eye on a lot of things, but that certainly doesn’t mean she’s coming for a position you know well you’ll maintain as long as you want,” he responded in the same calm voice. “Instead of showing everyone you fly off the handle at every little thing that anger you, why not let them know you can take a body blow?”

“This is my father we’re talking about!” She threw her hands in the air. “If I don’t stand up for him, nobody will, and they’ll all know her intent as clearly as I do!”

“Let everybody know you can take a body blow,” he repeated pointedly, taking her hands and giving her a guided spin around her fancy office chair. “My Eliza, you have a reputation to protect by your own actions, too. Wouldn’t you rather be known as a badass woman who ignores petty things like this rather than a badass woman who’ll act aggressively no matter how small a call back is? Isn’t roasting your really big enemies in your newspaper enough?”

She couldn’t help the small smile that played on her lips. She’d founded the New York Post, one that provided accurate news while giving her a ruthless medium to combat the slander she constantly underwent through the men she hated so intently. As much as she didn’t want to admit she was behaving irrationally, she knew her husband had very good points, but admitting it would take a lot more than that when she’d outright confronted the offender publically.
“You’re smiling because you know I’m right,” Alexander pointed out with a knowing look.

“HA!” She exclaimed, waving her hands wildly and dismissively while grabbing her quill from the ink pot.

“You know that if the first lady or John were here they’d tell you the same thing!” He continued while propping his upper torso against the back of her chair.

She simply huffed. “No, Lady Washington and John aren’t here, and-”

“I heard about Mrs. Burr!” A familiar Southern voice called, and she immediately flushed while perking up when John Laurens appeared in the doorway with Alex Jr. and James hanging off of him. “You didn’t kill her, did you?”

“You old sneak!” Eliza laughed while standing up before pausing pointedly, looking to her spouse disbelievingly. “Was he here the whole time?!”

“I came to surprise you all, but this admittedly lit a fire under me to get here earlier in the day,” her best friend conceded while walking over despite the boys hanging off of him. “Elizabeth, seriously, let it go! Stay alive for me~”

“Let it go!” Alexander chimed in, slowly spinning her around in the chair by her hands before pulling her to her feet. “Let it...slide right by!”

“You don’t have to bring a knife to gun fight,” Laurens continued pointedly while taking her hands in his own. “You know it’s not a case of your money or life, and you know you really oughta listen to your husband, right?”

The remarkable woman sighed and looked between her beloved men. “I know.”

“So let it go!” They insisted in unison, making her boys giggle and cling onto her.

Looking down at Alex Jr. and James, she could only see the man she loved in their eyes; it encouraged her hug them both a little nearer and sigh. “Fine, fine, you win! Now tell me at once what the occasion is of your unannounced visit, Mister Laurens!”

“I wished to inform you that my dearest Martha is with child,” he replied with a solemn half smile. “However, this pregnancy is rather fragile in nature, and all the doctors we’ve been to insist that if she is to survive this one, this must be her last for the sake of her health. I was therefore wishing that my children stay here for a bit of time, as premature labor is a constant risk and I wish not to expose them to the pains of their sibling’s or mother’s untimely departure from life.”

“Of course, John,” Alexander said before her, the solemn and mortified expression likely matching her own. “We’re here to help you out any way we can. I’m so sorry to hear about your Martha; she is a lovely woman.”

“I am grateful you would stay with her,” Eliza agreed quickly, wrapping her arms around him tightly. “I do hate to say this, but we will need some financial retribution for keeping the children in order to see to their schooling and recreational pursuits are kept up. I know we are wealthy, my old friend, but with your five we’d have eleven including Maria’s little Susan.”

“But of course, my bosom sister,” John noted with a kind smile. “I figured that was a given, in truth. I will be sending them to you with my usual coachman within the next week then along with their belongings. I cannot thank you and Alexander for this enough, truly.”
“May she have a speedy recovery,” Alexander pardoned and hugged his companion tightly. “I insist you lodge here for the night, old friend. It is a long journey back to South Carolina and I wouldn’t want anything more tragic to occur when night is rapidly approaching.”

For a change of pace that was welcome by her family, Eliza spent the evening with the children, spouse and close friends. She sat with Angelica and Phillip after the youngest three had been sent to bed, the sounds of her daughter slowly mastering her unfamiliar and intricate first sheet music while her son wrote with a seeming endless passion on the ground nearby.

“Mama, what kind of note is that?” Her eldest exclaimed, clearly irritated.

She took a long look before slowly demonstrating, but given how riled her girl clearly was, she gently tucked the parchment back into the folder. “I think that’s enough for tonight, my loves. Why don’t you prepare yourself for bed?”

“At least let me practice those of which I am familiar!” The preteen squeaked pleadingly, and Eliza had to admit to herself that discontent that could only be satisfied with visible and hard earned success had come from herself.

“Only for a little while,” she conceded, her words immediately sending the two back into motion in their tasks. “But when I come to retrieve you again, straight to your rooms for sleep, young lady and young man.”

A synonymous ‘yes Mama!’ was enough to lift her from her sitting position, wandering into the kitchen to make a strong cup of tea. Even if she completely disregarded the audacity of that Theodosia, her next Cabinet meeting was the morning after the slowly approaching and she was still deeply discontent with her means of defending her position. She was just adding sugar to the concoction meant to keep her up through the nighttime when Maria wandered in, her expression knowing despite the tiredness weighing down her features.

“Eliza, you and the children should be in by now,” she implored softly. “Why are you making tea at such a late hour? You won’t be in top health for your meeting the day after the morrow if you miss out on vital sleep; it will all catch up with you tomorrow night and you’ll sleep right through the whole affair!”

“I have to go in there and implore a restless government to not provide aide and ally to the French troops when I was openly very close friends with a Frenchwoman who saved thousands of lives, Miss Reynolds. This is hardly the time for easy rest,” she retorted with an exhaustive sigh. “God help me, I can only imagine what Adrienne would say if she saw what I was setting here to do.”

“She is a very smart woman,” Maria mused kindly. “I’m sure she’ll fare just fine on her own, and you are correct in stating we’re better off remaining her to work on our own tribulations.”

“As much as I hate to say it, Jefferson may have a point as well.” The thirty six year old slumped over the counter and raked her hands through her hair. “We fight for freedom, do we not? How can we expected to be held in such a high regard by the rest of the world if we cannot do this for the very better who turned the tide against the British bastards? Not to mention I am technically an immigrant for England! What will that make me look like?! A damn Loyalist, that’s what! I could be jailed for treason!”

“It’ll make you look like the logical person you are,” the younger woman insisted. “If we’re fighting in every revolution, we’re nothing at all! Besides, should they be in a time of great need in the future and we’re in a position to help, we will and Hell, we would! My mama used to say that you can’t assist someone drowning if you’re unable to keep your own head above the water; think
of it like that rather than us being ‘selfish’ or ‘Loyalist.’”

Eliza slowly nodded; her companion had excellent points, the same ideas she’d been positioned to propose now agreed with and spoken aloud by a fairly unbiased source. “You’re right. Thank you, Marie; I needed that.”

“No buts!” The smaller lady exclaimed at once, pulling the cup of tea away from her hastily and grabbing her hands. “It is time for the entire house to be at rest now! Besides, your husband and our visitor are quite frankly too cute for me to be sleeping alone tonight, and I shan’t rest until you’re with me. We can play at this all night, but I assure you I’ll chase you with the broom again sooner rather than lady, Mrs. Hamilton.”

She couldn’t help but smile to herself despite her own desires; Alexander was a steady, intellectual opposing force that kept her happily chasing after, but Maria was all too much like herself, a spitfire with a level head who had no inhibitions doing whatever it took to get the results she demanded. “What do you mean my husband and our guest are too cute?”

Putting a finger against her plump lips, the younger woman lead her up the stairs until they reached the master bedroom and she slowly swung open the door. All curled against each other like they were all the other had were Alexander and John, the curly haired man practically disappearing beneath her lolled over and softly snoring spouse. Her heart immediately melted; she figured a lot of women would hate to see such an intimate sight, but she found it comforting for someone to give the physical contact her husband craved while said husband brought great comfort to their suffering, closest friend.

“I agree, that is adorable,” Eliza whispered knowingly. “I suppose I’ll tuck Angie and Pip in and join you after all, then.”

“Of course she’s the one making such a crucial decision today,” a sarcastic voice grunted from behind Eliza, one that made her turn and give an angry glare that sent the sexist onlooker move all the way to the back rows.

“Lady Washington!” She greeted warmly and with open arms in an attempt to calm down a little before a certainly-meant-to-be meeting. “It’s been quite some time, ma’am. How are you doing?”

“You don’t have to try so hard to be cheerful, child. The doctors said George will be quite alright,” the older woman replied steadily while cupping the younger’s face fondly. “I am doing alright with that news in mind, therefore.”

“I’m glad to hear it!” She was admittedly relieved and pulled her close in a tight hug. “Lord, I’ve prepared and prepared for this day and yet I still fear I’m not ready.”

“You have a remarkable head upon your shoulders; you don’t have to worry about getting your point through with a resource like that,” Washington countered warmly. “Go ahead and take your position.”

Feeling a bit more invigorated, the remarkable woman did as she was told. On this day, she was
wearing something new as per the suggestion of Maria, who’d noticed how much she was stressed
about little details in preparation. This gown was light blue and thick, as per the weather, and had
sleeves that were as fashionable and practical as on her iconic green gown. She contently smoothed
down the gorgeous fabric over her fluffy new petticoats, ones that her youngest children helped her
husband make, and thought fondly how John was here just to see her in action along with her
husband. The knowledge was enough to make her not immediately sneer when Jefferson came
strolling in, not even when she realized the bastard had the audacity to wear a pastel green rather
than his usual purple getup. Madison, as per usual, was right him in a plain grey suit, but she was
stunned to see Theodosia in swift pursuit of her two very public enemies. She’d known her first
friend had slipped somehow into a dangerous political agenda, but this was hardly condonable.

“Theodosia Burr, ma’am!” She hissed furiously and stormed up, getting so close their noses nearly
brushed and clearly scaring the wits out of her companion. “Can we bloody confer?”

“That’s strong language for such a formal place!” Burr hissed back and grabbed her arms, pulling
her just behind the presidential podium. “You must get a hold of yourself or you’ll make an ass out
of yourself up there!”

“An ass out of myself?” Eliza could feel the color up and down her face, her eyes narrowing in a
way she usually reserved for Thomas or James. “Good ma’am, look in the mirror! You have some
audacity to ally yourself with the likes of them!”

“Respectively, ma’am, you have a lot of audacity to defy against a system I see less problems with
in,” Theodosia retorted coolly. “The separation between state and the government is vital. Your
plan to have the upper control all aspects of our new nation is ridiculously, and what’s this I hear of
you not supporting providing France in their time of greatest need? Have you gone absolutely
marbles?! Adrienne is a prisoner of war as we speak, and yet you claim we ought to concern
ourselves with our own problems? They are our only stable ally! They are our problem!”

“Adrienne is one of the most brilliant minds I’ve ever had the pleasure to know! She doesn’t need
our charity, and who would we give it to? Are we just meant to throw money to the masses and
pray for the best?” She shot back, venom dripping from her speech despite the rip it tore in her to
think of her friend.

“The meeting will now begin,” Lady Washington called out, and with a final hard set glare to
Theodosia, she swept back to her position. “The issue on the table: France is neck deep in the war
with England; now, do we provide aide and allies to our French allies or do we stay out of it?
Remember that Congressional approval is not vital for this, and that the only person you have to
convince is me.”

“Are you sure your mind isn’t already quite made, respectively, Mrs. President?” One of the
Congress men called condemningly.

The look the aging woman gave him sent chills down the spines of the most allied with the
Washingtons, including Eliza. “I am a non-biased head of state. Do not challenge my authority or
you will be handled and punished for obstruction of justice. Am I made quite clear?”

The man, now pale and eyes flitting back and forth to his fellow Jeffersonians before looking to
her. “Y-yes ma’am. I’m very sorry for my outbust, ma’am.”

“And Mister Belone…” Her role model kept her unforgiving gaze on him. “That is ‘Lady
Washington’ to you.”

“Y-yes ma’am!”
“Mister Jefferson,” she settled back into her seat, her face all business and her eyes glinting dangerously across the remaining members of Congress and onlookers. “You have the floor, sir.”

“Thank you, Lady Washington,” Thomas drawled and stood in a smooth motion despite tightening his grip on his fancy cane. “I’ll cut right to the chase, as we lose time we could spend reaching out while we confer amongst ourselves. Mrs. First Lady, we were once weakly knocking on the door of death, needing a sliver of hope to replenish our hopelessly outnumber troops. We struggled against the oppressors valiantly as ourselves, but truthfully, we needed money and guns and half a chance. Uh, and who provided those funds?”

Madison coughed behind his hand before declaring quite plainly. “France.”

“In exchange? They didn’t ask for land!” Jefferson threw up his free arm, and the Congress mumbled in agreement. “They only pleaded for a promise that we’d lend a hand should they ever need a similar hand, and revolution is messy but now is the time to stand! How could be turn a cheek against our brothers—”

Hamilton could feel the female Congress members shift and hear them grunt or whisper angrily; a man such as that could not afford not to bend with the times, and she hoped it would eventually break his pompous ass.

“Their blood is on our clothes as they rebel against tyranny! Now, I know that Elizabeth Hamilton is here and she’d rather not have this debate, let me remind the room that she is not Secretary of State!” He announced, giving her a smug look as the Congress coughed and spoke outcries amongst themselves. “Lady Washington, surely you know this woman knows nothing of loyalty! She came into this country claiming to be from nothing, and yet she stepped off the ship with more change in her wool pockets than many of our farmers make in a lifetime! She makes claims and accumulates power like fake royalty, and then has the audacity to be contrary toward those of us who’ve done anything remarkable since the war? Please! Ma’am, everything she does betrays the ideals of our nation, and how sound can her judgement be when she’ll throw away all the comradery she herself had with our hero, one Adrienne de Lafayette? It’s pathetic, and if you don’t know, now you know, Lady Washington.”

Martha was clearly not too pleased with Thomas’s outbursts, but she didn’t show it but for a moment before turning to her with the same even expression. “Thank you, Mister Jefferson. Mrs. Hamilton, your response?”

She could see it in her maternal eyes before she said a thing. All of the eyes in the room were on, a lot more boring than they were supportive, kind, or curious, and she was jarred to remember Commander Greene’s warning that history had its eyes on her held the truest now. She smoothed her gown down once more and stepped out, her hands trembling the more she tried to steady them, and decided the second she made eye contact with the traitorous Theodosia that historians ought to have something to write about in the face of such persistent ignorance. She knew a thing or two about loving and having ones back, but this country she loved had to come first when she knew Adrienne could stand well on her own two feet.

“You, sir…” She began politely before striding to his level and snatching him by the cravat. “Ought to be hung your blasphemous beliefs if you’d ever conceive even for a moment that the First Lady’s going to bring our country into the middle a cataclysmic military mess, a broken up, no-rules game of chess where France is queen and kingless!”

“We had a treaty, mind you!” Madison snipped from behind him, and she roughly released her taller opponent to turn to him.
“And you! A man so shaky in his political runs, he won’t say a word unless his companion loads the gun!” She practically spit. “We signed a treaty with a king whose head is now in a basket. Would you like to take it out and ask it?”

Whirling on her feet, she went to one of the Congresswomen who was nodding along her, one who flushed and smiled nervously and excitedly when she came to her side. “Well, should we honor our treaty King Louey’s head?”

The woman smirked and looked to the Republicans with the same contempt Eliza did herself, the mark of a true Federalist and revolutionary badass. “Well, Mrs. Hamilton, do whatever you want; I’m super dead!”

“That’s quite enough!” Martha declared while smacking her mallet down a couple of times. “You need not make a scene; I know that Hamilton is right.”

“Mrs. Washington!” Thomas exclaimed and stepped closer to her, his cravat still sweaty and bundled from her light assault.

“Mister Jefferson, we’re fragile to start another fight,” she retorted resolutely. “Your ideals are fantastic, and you have quite the way of crafting ideas on parchment, but practically they just can’t take precedence.”

“Ma’am, I worry about your objectivity,” he insisted, face flushing immediately. “We are a country who clawed their way out from under a dictatorship; do we not fight for freedom?”

She let out a sigh. “I would not mind and would be behind you, but when will the French figure out who will lead them?”

“The people are leading!” Theodosia stood up swiftly, face just as flushed, but her stance was the most confident Eliza had ever seen it displayed, especially publically.

“The people are rioting,” Martha shot back very calmly, standing up and scanning the room as she spoke. “Frankly, Mister Jefferson, Mister Madison, Senator Burr, it’s more than a bit disquieting you’d let your optimistic ideals blind you to reality. If we were to combat in every revolution, where would draw the line? Elizabeth, you are to at once draft up a statement of neutrality for John Jay to take along.”

The tone of the room was far too somber for a proper gloat, so the founder of the Federalist Party simply bowed respectively. “Yes ma’am.”

Post getting the contact information of the Congresswoman who’d helped her when she was on the floor, Eliza was beginning to jot down ideas for how to term the paper when she encountered a very disgruntled Jefferson in the hallway. She straightened her back immediately and even tried to walk past to save a little face, but a harsh tap of his cane against the floor was enough to make her instinctually tense and stop.

“So you have forgotten Lafayette,” he said coldly. “You have not an ounce of regret. You sit on your throne of power with no regard to your roots; my, I’m sure she’ll be pleased to learn of how much you stand behind her, as your betrayal is uncouth.”

“Say what you will. Adrienne is a brilliant woman; she and her husband will prevail fine,” she retorted while turning around very sharply. “Before she was your ally, she was my friend. I’d watch my tongue if I were you; that’s awfully high talk for someone who can’t afford the votes to help those you advocate for.”
He turned himself on one heel, giving her the same infuriating snake-like grin. “My, my, so quick witted.”

“Alas!” She threw a hand over her forehead before rolling her eyes. “I admit it.”

“I bet you were quite the little lawyer.”

“My defendants were acquitted.”

“Hm. Well, women do need to put in their place-”

“Make no mistake, Jeffershit, I only hold back in court to avoid my validity being breeched. Make another comment like that and I’ll slap you so hard you’ll cease being able to flex around your horse’s ass looking face,” she sneered.

Surprisingly, his cheeks were brushed with color. “You’re so much like your sister it’s alarming sometimes, little lady.”

Eliza didn’t feel her feet move beneath her, but suddenly she held his well-made cane in her arms and he was on his backside after a sharp jab of the spherical end to his stomach. He scowled up at her, a cough wracking through his body, and she immediately took for the other direction to maintain safety behind the sanction of a public area with her John and her Alexander. Despite his evident lameness, however, he still seized her rather unforgivingly by the back of her corset and pushed against the door. She was horrified to realize his lips were awfully close to her own despite her death grip around her neck, so she spit aimlessly on his face with all the conviction she had in such a compromised position.

“I hate to be the one to remind you…” He hissed menacingly in her ear. “But you are nothing without the First Lady behind you.”

“Mister Jefferson, you will unhand her at once!” A furious female voice suddenly yelled with such command that the apprehender jumped hard and immediately backed away from the newly relieved Hamilton. “You need not worry for resignation, Thomas. You are dismissed permanently. Eliza, come at once to my office.”

Holding his stomach and beginning to turn with his cane, Jefferson looked to her with a dangerous darkness to his eyes. “Mommy’s callin.”

Chapter End Notes

Please remember to kudos/subscribe/bookmark/leave a review if it so compels you!
Your vocal support keeps this story alive! ♥
From Inside of the House

Chapter Summary

Burning bridges and passionately blazing toward the future has their prices to pay, some much too dear to bear as they have been born before.

Chapter Notes

Long time no see, my loyal followers/fans! ♥ This chapter was for, whatever reason, a massive struggle for me to write and finish; incorporating all of those songs in a meaningful and original way was nearly the end of my creative train, I swear. Please enjoy regardless and know the writing should be a bit smoother in sailing going forth! :)

MASSIVE TRIGGER WARNINGS: There is very explored and graphic depictions and coping with a miscarriage, and a semi major character death at the very end. Stay safe, my loves!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Elizabeth! Elizabeth, come downstairs at once!” Maria’s voice called quite animatedly from downstairs. “Oh! Oh, never mind! I have it handled!”

Eliza raised an eyebrow; it wasn’t very like her beloved Maria to behave in such an erratic manner unless there was something she was trying to hide. She adjusted her youngest, a very sleepy John (who everyone called ‘Jackie’) against her shoulder, sighing to herself as she contemplated what to do. If she moved toward the excitement, her toddler would be awakened more than he was already fighting to be and any hope of getting him down for a nap would be lost, but if she didn’t, she’d never know what all of her companion’s fuss was about. Luckily for her, Alexander walked into the room with a smile and open arms before scooping up their whining child.

“Shh, shh, Papa here’s now,” he whispered fondly to the child before looking to her. “Maria needs a bit of help with the baby, it seems, and would not have my help no matter how persistently I insisted I knew how to change a diaper. You women are fickle creatures.”


“Not gumpy!” Jackie immediately protested while burying his face deeper into his father.

Rolling her eyes fondly, she headed downstairs while pulling her robe on over her hardly presentable, old and well-loved blue dress she’d worn the first day she and her beloved sisters had gone out on the town to explore. She’d barely stepped off the last step when she was suddenly affronted with a mass of weight, one that would have sent her crashing down the steps had the same offending person not grabbed her tightly by the tower back while burying their face in her chest. All she saw was a sea of tangled up straight blonde hair in desperate need of good scrubbing
before she was caught up in another set of arms from the side, ones that squished her tightly while the perpetrator stepped behind her to cover her eyes with surprisingly soft hands.

“Unhand me!” She yelped immediately, clawing lightly at the hands and hoping her instincts were right in this being a friend rather than a sick henchman of her enemies. “What is the meaning of this?! Maria!!”

The sound of Maria’s giggling did little to ease her quickly shot nerves, but at least it signaled nobody was in danger. She heard another deeply toned laughter, one that she found so comforting through the years, despite her lack of vision and the other person quaking against her with their own giggles muffled deeply into her gown.

“Madame, let our poor Betsey go,” Lucy Flucker Knox’s soothing voice insisted kindly to break up her warm laughter. “She hasn’t seen you in ages and this is hardly a welcome back if you won’t reveal yourself.”

“She refused to send ally to my country! I am allowed to tease!” A French laced accent protested from behind her, and immediately she felt a swell of emotion that crashed over as she clung immediately to her little (evident) Sybil before her.

“A…A-Adrienne?” She choked out against the tears that streaked out of her eyes. “I-I…I’m sorry! I wa-wanted to help and I couldn’t be-because I! I-I-!”

Eliza found herself unable to speak against the sobs wracking through her body, all the guilt and fear springing up from deep in her soul and bones as she was forced to confront one of her favorite people in the entire world as to why she betrayed her. She wasn’t left to weep alone however, and soon she found herself in the familiar and strong embrace of three ladies who she’d certainly lay down her life for if not the mess that was the nation’s politics. As she choked on her own breath, all she could conceptualize is that she hardly deserved all their love and sympathy for her own traitorous actions. They didn’t have to say a word for her to know how deeply she’d hurt her darling Adrienne, how’d she put her own gain before her companions, and the cost she had to pay alone now against what was the morally right thing she failed in doing. She couldn’t begin to imagine all her comrade had been through, all because she couldn’t pull something else to top that disgusting creep Jefferson without sacrificing one of the only people still on her side after all the years...

“Madame Hamilton, Madame Hamilton!” Adrienne’s voice cut through her swirling thoughts and forced her gaze upon her with a gentle squish of her face. “I would not have wanted you to act any differently than you did. You must preserve the country we love, even at the expense of my own. I knew it was a risk in leading my people through revolution and the Jay Treaty was expertly crafted to a point of perfection. Please, ma petit flouer, do not weep; I am here, my people are prepared to push their way into victory post a disastrous setback, my children are safe with me in this remarkable country of yours. Do not think we did appreciate your sponsored money funneled through to us, or that my husband is ungrateful for all you’ve done to secure our safety. Though I cannot stay long and be without my love, you have been a tremendous help to us, and for that we are eternally grateful. We will be alright.”

“I could’ve done for you, my beloved friend!” Eliza wept still, her shaking hands covering the Frenchwoman’s now. “…I should’ve arranged for a boat to smuggle the lot of you, to convince the president to give citizenship precedence over your nationalities…! God, your husband ought to be here with you as a free and healthy man, not far across the sea while you fight endlessly for liberation from wrongful capacity under a brutish little man with no compensation for his barbaric ideas!”
“Such in the nature of Revolution!” The older woman simply shook her head and wiped Eliza’s tears with diligence and tenderness. “My husband has been suffering from a terrible solitude for which he shan’t bear alone for much longer. My daughters and I will live in capacity and as the technical criminals we are, but only for some time. Do you know what the people shall exclaim in response? My darling, this is only the beginning of an incredible legacy I am currently writing for my family! I have no problem living under the audacity of a country I wish to see free of tyranny, and I am brave in the wake of scum who senselessly slaughtered countless individuals, including my own family. They must pay and I must never cease the fight, and I expect the same of you in this home of yours, young lady.”

“I cannot understand why you are not cross with me. Do you have faith I’d behave similarly if our roles were reversed?” The younger whispered uncertainly. “Besides, Jefferson made it quite clear I was a figure to be resented for not coming to the call of my more humanitarian senses.’

“Thomas Jefferson is not the insufferable idiot you claim and believe him to be. I do wish you two would get along!” Adrienne shook her head despite her concerned words and brushed away her hair. “I do not have faith, Betsey. I know it like my own heartbeat, and if it meant your happiness over the safety you’d refuse to accept…Well, nobody has stopped either of us before. What makes you think that there’s anything you could do to keep from making the decisions I’ve already made up my mind about?”

At this bout of truth and insisted, genuine forgiveness and pardon, Eliza had to laugh watery and kiss her beloved comrade’s cheek. “Oh, how I’ve missed you. How I’ve missed all of you without breaking, I will never know!”

“Does this mean we can finally go make merriment on the town??” Sybil asked eagerly, her hair falling all in her face as she bounced away from the loving embrace the quad engaged in. “That husband of mine is a darling, but if I must spend one more mundane night with my boys I may go positively mad!”

“The older you grow, the more you will appreciate mundane activities and nights in,” Lucy replied lightly. “You have preserved much of your youthfulness throughout the years. Truly, poor Betsey and I are just old women!”

“Why ‘poor Betsey’?” Eliza out cried teasingly. “You don’t have to remind me I’m already greying in some strands! Should I wear a wig on our endeavor out, then?”

“The great Elizabeth Hamilton with a hideous white cap on her head?” Sybil mused while grinning to the rest of their group. “I would pay you a nice sum of money if it meant that kind of memory.”

“Can we pause long enough to board the carriage? I’ve been longing for American liquor for years!” Adrienne cut in with her arms sweeping the lot of them toward the front door. “I shan’t be depraved it before I am a newly convicted criminal!”

“Let me change, you hooligans!” Eliza exclaimed affectionately before hurrying up the stairs.

As she quickly rid of herself of excess sweat and changed into a pale pink dress, she couldn’t help but reflect on how alive the trio downstairs were despite all they’d been through. Poor Lucy’s family could not seem to stay well and not all of her children had survived their births, leaving her having birthed eight and only living with six, if she were not mistaken. Years and years after the horrific tragedy itself, she and their other two close companions Adrienne had been raising a baby when they’d first met the Hamilton, and had lost her when she was but two to disease; it is what lead to her criminal levels of insanity despite the intense genius behind this. Sybil had only been able to bear one child, a little boy named Henry, and while she didn’t seem to mind, the loneliness
that came from a generally unimpressive despite well-loved husband burst out in all its bleak honesty now more than ever.

Despite all of the sorrow and the trauma, they were all going out as though it were 1776 again, all laughing and joking as though no time had passed at all. For at least one night, they could all rejoice in the love they’d all carried for each other, and the world could be lifted from their shoulders for a celebration of being alive and reunited.

Eliza made her way back downstairs, her hands resting subconsciously on the base of her stomach as she reached the lower steps. Sybil was chasing around James, who’d evidently woken from his nap, while Lucy helped Maria braid Susan’s hair and Adrienne laughed loudly at something her little Angelica had said. As the game changing woman looked across her home, she could nearly close her eyes and imagine that she was still a young woman high on love and fueled by revolutionary war instead of an older lady with a sharp tongue and more decisions to make, regret and triumph with than she could hardly keep up with.

“I’m afraid we cannot go drinking tonight,” she finally announced with a small smile as the heads in the room turned to face her.

The Frenchwoman immediately groaned dramatically, which was to be expected. “What do you mean? Have you finally lost your familiar dagger-sharp edge?”

Hamilton simply rolled her eyes fondly and leaned against the banister a little more pointedly. “You all may drink to your hearts content, of course, and I shall be with you to ensure our carriage makes it make in one piece. However…It is unadvisable for me to consume alcohol at such a time.”

“Why?” Sybil demanded immediately with a stunned expression, but Lucy gasped sharply and covered her mouth as realization clearly washed over Adrienne. “What?! Why-?! Oh! OH! ELIZABETH SCHUYLER HAMILTON!”

The thirty six year old could only laugh as she was affronted with more hugging and squeals of excitement, ones that were like music to her ears, as Alexander wiggled through to kiss her with passion. For a long moment, one where she looked across nearly all of the people she loved like a painter would for a poised-precise portrait, the world was truly alright again.

The sight of Elizabeth Schuyler with her arm looped around Martha Washington, the First Lady of the entire country, as they walked and conversed like old friends made Theodosia feel ill to her core. She’d been climbed the political ladder as well, had been proving herself to the current leaders of their union since the possibility of revolution had begun to rise up, and yet she was clinging desperately to a Senate seat while a haughty, privileged, full of nonsense, sharp tongued illegal immigrant gloated so casually in the place of position Burr deserved. She gripped her papers more tightly as the two passed on the street, both being greeted excitedly by men, women and children alike, and resisted the urge to throw her items into the wind and tell both of their wealthy asses off. Instead, she simply turned her back and forced her digits to relax as she stared hard up at the decorative, intricate ceiling of the courthouse.

“It must be nice to have Washington on your side,” she commented aloud to herself, not sure who she was hoping would hear but not truly caring if no one did.

“Yes, it must be nice,” the familiar, husky voice of James Madison agreed from where he was now
ascending the stairs. “It must be nice to have the Washingtons on your side.”

“Mister Madison,” she greeted with a tired smile. “It’s a pleasure to see you again, sir. To what do I owe the pleasure?”

“Thomas noted to me that he has a project that is too massive in nature to conquer alone. I offered my assistance,” he replied before coughing into his handkerchief. “Pardon me. I do believe my beloved may have mistakenly thrown out your recipes for your human remedies, so while I hate to trouble you, I’d be very grateful to receive another copy.”

She found a genuine smile, as rare as it were lately, to play on her lips. “Of course, good sir. I will mail this to you at the earliest possible date, but with my husband’s health being on a very steady decline, I cannot readily assure you it will be immediate, pray you understand.”

“Absolutely, Mrs. Burr,” he concurred with a patient smile. “I must be off. You know how Mister Jefferson gets when he’s been left to wait too long.”

She chuckled. “Pity the fool who lay idle when spending his time.”

The shorter man agreed with a humored tone before heading down the hallway further. He paused for a moment, casting a look back at her and arching an eyebrow when it was evident she was not following.

“Aren’t you coming, Mrs. Burr?” He called pointedly.

“I was under the impression this project was secretive in nature,” she replied; was it really possible two significant two political would want her assistance in this mystery endeavor?

“It is,” he confessed, but then offered her a knowing smile. “This has never stopped you before though, has it, woman? Please make haste now.”

It was because of these events she found herself within Jefferson’s spacious office, papers piled all around and arranging specific lists to go alongside each other while discussing what specific payments would have been made for, as many of the names had been weathered by time. She could not truthfully say she enjoyed the fact that James Monroe was behind the investigation of Elizabeth Hamilton, but with the points Jefferson and Madison consistently brought up, she forgave this fact easily.

“She doubled the size of government when the trouble with our previous government was its size,” James grumbled unhappily as he threw another piece of evidence to the ‘discard’ pile. “She’s so money-obsessed, I find it very hard to believe that none of those transactions can give us dirt on her back.”

“I wouldn’t past her to erase the evidence,” Thomas snorted. “It’s ridiculous we have to stoop to this level, but I get no satisfaction witnessing to her gain over a system she’s exploited for her own enrichment. For God’s sake, I’m in the Cabinet and though I’m not condoning, I just keep watching her climb the mountains of debt and dance around with power she’s not at all qualified to know of, much less possess! And what of the people who lead our country? They wouldn’t listen to discipline or reason if it hit them in their faces!”

“We didn’t even choose this immigrant!” Theo joined in. “Mister Jefferson, you, of all people, had to be Senate approved while she simply settled into a lifestyle she hardly deserves!”

“If we don’t cease her centralizing national funds and making American credit competitive, we’re aiding in passing it,” Madison lamented while beginning to stressfully refile the discarded material
they’d had delivered.

“I’d have to resign before I get fired!” Jefferson raved.

“Somebody has to stand up for the South!” Madison exclaimed. “My dear friend, we made a very
dear mistake in making the deal with that little whelp.”

Theodosia made a face; the deal was successful, but even she was guilty of ignoring the lower
states in favor of the political powerhouses. “Quite frankly, somebody just needs to stand up to her
mouth. I’ve tried countless times, but she is more impossible to reason with than our president and
particularly his wife.”

“If there is a fire you’re trying to douse, I’m proof that you can’t put it out from inside of the
house,” Thomas grunted while lifting a new bundle of checks. “This is why we’re here rather than
tending to anything else.”

Having known the younger woman from the moment she’d stepped off the ship, Theo absolutely
knew there was no way she’d done no wrong in the years that ensued. The girl was simply too
impulsive and too passionate for her own good, and even if it was something foolish, anything to
grab a hold of would give them leverage over her growing treasury empire; simple taunts and press
slander simply would no longer work. Needless to say, she found herself jubilant when she
reached a rather large transaction to one James Reynolds back in 1791, and that isn’t where it
ended. Between 1791 and 1792, nearly a thousand dollars had been funded in quarterly periods to a
man known for his political dishonesty and moral corruptness for reasons explicitly not mentioned.

“I think we’re found something, men.”

As her newly cemented friends looked over what she found, a sinister grin spread across
Jefferson’s right before he had one of his slaves retrieve fresh parchment and his writing kit. “This
is just too good! That little imp thought she could get away with embezzling government funds, did
she?”

“Embezzling government funds?” She was little surprised at such a bold accusation, but given how
the former Schuyler had been warped by political pursuit, she wouldn’t put it out of the realms of
possibility. “I was going to imply she was applying aide to the crimes Reynolds committed, good
sir. Are you quite sure that’s how she did it?”

“Hamilton is wealthy; if she wanted to pay him at once, it would’ve shown externally and not been
so meticulously careful,” Madison said as the light of realization brightened his features. “Yes, my
comrades, the time has arrived to show these unconstitutional Federalists what they’re up against.”

Theodosia Burr considered herself to be a lady, she really did. But in the face of such a juicy
discovery she was no longer resisting sinking her teeth into, she smirked and looked to the two
gentlemen who understood her political pursuits better than anyone else in the country and
affirmed, “Southern motherfucking Democratic Republicans.”

They wouldn’t be invisible or denied any longer, and yet she noted internally it would still be nice
to have a Washington on their side.

The issues that came from taxing alcohol were ones that Elizabeth Hamilton knew she’d have to
face, but the extent the people were rioting was unprecedented. It was no secret that Westerners
had opposed the domestic policy instated in 1791, but the armed revolutionaries had become a
threat far too dangerous to ignore any longer. Under the command of George Washington himself, she’d rode alongside him into Bedford, Pennsylvania, where she’d essentially had to call down the army alongside Henry Lee, the Virginian governor and hero of the Revolutionary War who she was delighted to see after all these years.

“You are outgunned! Outmanned! Outnumbered, out planned!” She screamed, snatching one of the bottles from one of the pale-faced youthful protestors.

“Put your guns down on my command!” The president demanded with all the authority of his glory days, but she was quite frankly too pregnant and too exhausted from a long ride to deal with a bunch of Americans acting just as foolishly as her political opponents.

“You hear it?!” She demanded, smashing the spirit against the dirt. “That’s your last distilled spirit if you keep this flummery up! You heard your commander, hand your damn guns over!”

As one clearly shaken up stunned force (though she resentfully made a mental note she’d told them the militia would come if they didn’t stop their shit), they put away their weapons and the peace talk began. As President Washington dismounted and began to talk individually to the colony leaders who made passing these negotiations a much less painful process, she stalked around the citizens and sternly shook hands while giving a level of eye contact that made the most rugged of them shift around uncomfortably.

“Oh, her? That’s Lady Hamilton, my right hand woman,” she heard George say with a proud tone, and she felt a ball of warmth and affection in her chest for the rest of the long, long evening and night.

When she’d woken up in a pool of her own blood the following morning, she could hardly contain the scream behind her hand, which instinctively flew to her mouth when immediate sorrow like no other erupted from her body. The few neighboring women had immediately rushed to her aide, their faces horrified and sympathetic as they saw the mess the middle aged woman had been forced to awaken within. As she erupted into shameless screams and sobs that she barely contained, her only thoughts were of her family, the ones that she desperately needed now more than ever before but could not bear to face too quickly when she realized it was likely because of all the strain the travel along with Adrienne’s recent departure to be a prisoner of war that she lost the baby once growing inside her.

“These things happen, doll,” one of the lieutenants wives comforted as they dressed her in a fitting dark garment from one of the local shops. “I have had experiences very near to this one in bearing my children, and the Lord has blessed me with twelve little ones. It is no reflection of you.”

Despite the comforts her fellow females tried to give, she heard them whispering amongst themselves that this likely wouldn’t have happened had she stayed at home like ‘she ought to’, or that her own passion was the downfall of ‘Alexander’s angel’. She was remained completely mute on the journey back to her New York City, her gaze somber and faraway as she handed her loving husband the letter she’d written explaining everything before she fled to their garden. It took quite a bit of time for him to join her, but when he sat by her side, she knew that he’d very clearly been crying.

“Hey baby,” he greeted hoarsely, voice still wavering with sorrow and grief, and she couldn’t help but lower her head and clutch at her stomach brokenly. “I…It’s not your fault, you know? The doctor w-warned us from the start th-that…that these t-things happen for reasons to have nothing to do with who we are.”

Even with her husband’s best efforts, she knew that this was not the case and stayed silent. As the
days following banded into nearly three weeks’ time, she felt like a ghost drifting around her own home, her clothes black and face nearly always concealed with her usually uncombed hair. Her children were sorrowful but were far more resilient than their parents, just like she knew they’d always be, and did their best to take of them in doing their chores with careful thoroughness and preparing the meals to save them the burdens. Instead of cooping in her office, she found herself in the foyer and finishing a sewing projects she’d began months ago with intent to clothe the inevitable next member of their family. The younger children tried their best to get her to play before residing to do so nearby or outside if she grew visibly frustrated, while her oldest two would read, write or play piano at her side loyally and nearly as quietly. It was comforting to see how those she loved the most banded around her, and yet she could not lift herself from her depressive state, no matter how hard she tried.

“Mrs. Eliza?” Little Susan’s voice chirped from behind her as she showed Angelica how to make a flower crown. “May I let visitors in? They’re here to see you.”

Though she couldn’t be bothered to look back at the nine year old, she nodded and continued to help her twelve year old to the best of her somber ability. She jumped hard, which was more of a reaction that she’d felt days, when a pair of arms wrapped her despite immediately relaxing when she realized whose they belonged to; her beloved Lucy kissed her forehead easily.

“Hello darling,” the older woman greeted kindly. “Sybil and I have brought supper for you and your family, and we’d be obliged to take you out afterwards.”

Though she hadn’t dressed properly since the awful loss, she nodded vacantly and got to her feet to save some semblance of face before her lifelong comrades. “I shall prepare the table then. Angie, darling, shall we do this another time?”

Her sweet eldest immediately agreed and rushed ahead to do the chore instead, and though it still felt terribly wrong, she managed a little smile for the kind gestures set into motion. The food was bountiful, delicious and fresh, all things that the very bereaved Hamilton family were immensely and vocally very grateful for, and she found herself to reveal in the tastiness for the first time in weeks of not enjoying of taste of anything. As she’d always been, Sybil kept her beloved ones laughing and talking openly while Lucy assisted her children after the meal with their homework, and she took some time to sit her with her husband and lay her head against his comfortingly as some of the stress of the world lifted.

“Perhaps we should come by more often. That’s the most mutual joy I’ve seen from your home in nearly a month,” Sybil commented as the three women dressed and began their walk post tucking in the children.

The hollow feeling of reality settled in Eliza’s belly like a brick. “I’d hate to inconvenience you; how would we ever repay such gratitude? Finances would hardly be sufficient.”

“If it meant restoring the happiness and faith in someone who would and has done the same for us in a heartbeat, payment is relevant,” Lucy justified while squeezing her arm comfortingly between her own. “Isn’t it a beautiful night out tonight?”

Downtown was always bustling, alive with the day or night, filled with people, laughter, sorrow and the messy in-between. “Yes, it is. And it’s very quiet uptown.”

“Isn’t it relaxing?” The eldest women commented with a content sigh.

Her thoughts, she considered, were too loud for such a serene area she’d never paid mind to before. “If you say so, my dear friend.”
They wandered the streets for quite some time, taking special time in the park to admire the nightlife and the sparkling of the fireflies, before finally coming to stop at the very saloon they’d all met for the very time within. The barkeep was young but knew them from his teenage years, so he graciously served them their brews and let them to their conversing while the other patrons had to be more closely monitored or outright left alone.

“Do you remember the nights we’d practically swim home in our intoxication?” Sybil voiced after their laughter calmed from a new joke Lucy had learnt for the night’s occasion. “We’d sing so terribly off key, too! God, to be young and so on fire again…”

“I do remember, and it was always the same risqué business just loud enough to anger and taunt the Redcoats,” Lucy mused with a wiser eye roll. “The things we’d do when we were so certain we couldn’t be harmed.”

“Were you ever unafraid of that? I’m pretty sure you kept all of us alive, especially myself and Madame Adrienne,” the youngest mused with a guilty-as-charged grin.

“I suppose that’s true,” the oldest conceded before setting down her light glass of alcohol and beginning to sing the words they all loved to repeat in their intoxicated states in a lovely, in-tune song. “Raise a glass to freedom, something they can never take away~”

The most youthful raised her mug proudly. “No matter what they tell you!”

“Raise a glass to~” Mrs. Knox continued, easily correcting the ‘four of us’ verse in stride with all of her due grace. “All of us! Tomorrow they’ll be more of us!”

Mrs. Ludington leaned against their maternal figure for support per habit. “Telling the story of tonight! Let’s have another round tonight~!”

It didn’t quite feel correct to sing with the caving her chest and the gaping hole that she feared would never close her heart along with the paralyzing fear for their fourth party member. In truth, Mrs. Hamilton had the sudden strong urges to rush back home, to be old and depressed and a submissive mother to attract no more attention. As she watched her beloved comrades sing and sway from their glory days, she could feel that familiar flame lighting her anew from within, and she knew despite all her mountains and storms of grief that there would be some things that never changed about her and about them.

“I may not live to see our glory, but I will gladly join the fight,” she sang with the meaningful tone making her tear up while smiling. “And when our children tell our story~ they’ll tell the story of tonight!”

Her friends immediately swayed along and swished their glasses in agreeance. “Let’s have another round tonight~!”

“They’ll tell the story of tonight~”

Together with some of her better parts, walking home and singing as though the world was new and their hearts were less tainted, Eliza began to feel the pieces of herself begin to click back into place.

“Mama? You wanted to see me?”
Not grieving for her husband was her punishment now, Theodosia determined. All of the sorrow, brokenness and loneliness was the worst she’d ever felt now, worse than when her most beloved mother died or when her father slowly lost his mind before his departure of the mortal coil, and she was hardly able to breathe now. She’d been procrastinating making it real by speaking it allowed, and yet with her nearly teenage boy still so unaware from boarding skill, she knew she could no longer avoid it.

“Dear Theodosius, what to say to you?” She whispered while staring at her desk to avoid turning and meeting his soon to be broken expression. “Sometime last night, your father breathed your name and like a flame that sputters too soon, he has died and he’s g—g-gone!”

Her sobs consumed her once more, sending her stumbling toward him while she struggled to rotate and meet his eyes. Her body hardly felt like her own as her youngest caught her in his arms, his own tears rapidly streaming down his face while they both sank to the floor in their intense grief. As her child’s face buried within her chest, memories of her Aaron in his prime and the little one in play came to mind, and she held on more tightly to the thought of how he looked over his pride and joy for some semblance of guidance on how to somehow try and keep moving forward.

“He dedicated every day to you,” she whispered while softly cradling her son’s face in both hands. “He changed my life, he made it all worthwhile and when you smile…I know a part of him lives on; I know that I can go on.”

Theodosius let out a soft and pitiful sound, one she herself hadn’t made long ago. For a long while, Burr simply cradled her baby close and let her presence be the comfort they both needed so desperately, and she gave up on trying to explain things. Of course Aaron had been ill for quite some time, and his stomach had been increasingly sensitive for a number of years, but his slow burned turned rapid decline was still nothing any of them truly expected. To save her children the potential horrifying sight of their lifeless real father, she’d already had his corpse retrieved for dressing, photography, and the funeral, and yet she still felt where his warmth and presence ought to have been since he took mortal leave; she worried she knew her child felt the same.

“You will come of age with this young nation. My son, I’ll bleed and fight for you, Mama will make it right for you,” she whispered while helping him retrieve clothes to clean up with. “I swear I’ll lay a strong enough foundation, and I’ll be here for you, every day for you and you’ll blow us all away.”

“Someday…someday…” Her boy whispered with a vague ghost of a smile.

For another pristinely clear moment, she saw her husband and his nervous but determined smile, his eyes sparkling with potential and possibility before it gave way to the reality she was now faced with. In the moments that followed with her continuing to comfort while being comforted by her son, she made a silent vow to herself that no matter what, she’d blaze the trails so clearly that he’d never have to wander/lose his way, and that nobody, not even that spitfire Hamilton, would any longer stand in the way.

Chapter End Notes

Please remember to leave kudos/subscribe/bookmark/leave a comment if it so compels you! Your support keeps the story going consistently!
Talk Less

Chapter Summary

The political stakes have never been so tense and beginning to erupt in the presence of news that alter's the nation forever, and the personal relations of once young revolutionaries pose more and more significance.

Chapter Notes

1. I UPDATED CHAPTER FOUR OF THIS STORY! I absolutely adore the song 'Helpless' and found myself extremely discontent with how little justice I did it, so please be sure to go back and reread my additions and modifications that add over 3,000 words to the original piece!

2. This chapter encompasses two songs, those of which are One Last Time and Cabinet Battle #3. The next update will begin with the events of We Know and going forward with my various personal touches, so I hope you can forgive the somewhat abrupt ending. After all, what's a story without its tension? I also made it a point to focus on one character as an enemy, as another becomes a more massive problem going forward. Trust me, your writer thought it through!

3. Enjoy! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Summertime, 1796

“How are you feeling today, John?”

No matter what he decided to say, he knew he wasn’t alright in the slightest. He’d sat up for weeks on the end tending to his Martha, trying everything in his power to nurse her back to health and preserve that light he’d seen in her when he first began to court her. Despite her age having made her all the more bitter through the years of childbirth and family raising, he knew that she was internally very happy, but it was only as she slowly began to die that he saw what he’d first been so fond of in her. All throughout the days she’d smile and joke around, insisting to read together or exchange letters from the children while he wrote for both of them, and he’d begun to believe she’d pull through to the other side. As with so many good things, however, she’d relinquished her Earthly stay in the late June of 1794, and he was left with nothing but their beautiful children, a large, empty home, and a pained heart to live on with.

Even though it’d been three years and some months, it was still too terrible to alone, and thus he remained with his closest confidantes during these dark days of his mental health.

“The pain is worse today,” he admitted to his Eliza, the woman who’d behaved like the mother his babies needed so desperately in the wake of their mother’s absence. “I imagine we will need to be heading back to our home sooner rather than the later regardless. The children will need to attend
school sooner rather than later, not to mention my tending back to the duties as a Senator.”

“You know you are welcome to remain here as long as you need. The children are no hassle and their teachers will happily accept them into the schools; Lord knows they all have the intelligence for it,” Eliza replied kindly. “And what Senator stays and does exactly as his contract says? Why, my dear friend, I know not!”

“And what about the twins?” He gently rebuked. “You have enough to worry about with this dreadful heatwave and your own, not to mention your...delicate state.”

“I do say, sir, since when has my being a mother usually at home affected any aspect of what I do and don’t do?” She pointed out with a roll of her eyes. “Please, John. You all will be quite alright here for another two or so months without worry of schooling. So long as you contribute to this household, finances are hardly a concern, and you know how ours love having yours around for so long.”

“Johnny, I regret to inform you, but it seems little Martha’s haircut will be taking place sooner rather than later!” Alexander appeared in the doorway, his beloved youngest daughter in hand with her long, dark brown hair skewed all over the place from a self-conducted haircut. “It seems Martie was very tired of her locks.”

“Martha Margarita Laurens!” John scolded at once. “If I were the thrashing type, by God-”

“Jonathan Laurens, that is quite enough!” Eliza cut in, rushing to the toddler who’d gone from being teary-eyed to wailing within a matter of seconds. “She’s just a baby, she hardly knows better! Isn’t that right, Martie?”

“Haircut!” The youth blubbered pathetically. “Da-Daddy said get haircut!”

Immediately his more steeled heart melted, and he made haste in scooping her close into his arms. “Shh, shh, shh. Just…don’t do it again, alright? I don’t want you to be in trouble and getting hurt, baby.”

“Y-yes Daddy,” the tot replied sweetly and with a pitiful expression, one that looked so much like her mother’s, that he blinked back tears as he held her tightly.

“And where’s your brother?” He inquired with an affectionate few runs of his hand through her uneven locks.

“Lexi eatin!” Martie chirped, good natured spirit restored at once. “Eatin’ with Schuy an…and Jackie!”

“Thank you, angel. Now, let’s see what Miss Reynolds can do about this mane of yours,” he tutted while walking toward the newly reborn Christian woman’s quarters.

As the lovely lady fixed up his youngest girl’s locks, he could hear the sounds of his now thirteen year old trying (and failing) to learn the piano from his fourteen year old goddaughter, the two laughing and joking about, as his poor Beth tried to practice her singing with Phillip and possibly Henderson, who she’d no doubt roped into the ‘girly’ activity. Susan, her sharp-as-a-whip but gentle natured ten year old, smiled and pulled her hair into an even bun on top of her head once the damage was corrected, leaving her looking all the better than before despite the drastically reduced length.

“Thank you both,” he said sincerely. “Lord knew it had to happen eventually with one of my little rug rats.”
“Susan did something similar with my face paints; worry not,” Maria assured with a fond smile. “Martie, how about you, Lexi and I take our afternoon nap? It’s finally cool enough to do it in the hammock~”

“HAMMOCK NAP!” The girl cheered immediately, and he gave her one more grateful smile before exiting the room to give the preteen some privacy for a change.

“Papa help me,” his eldest son- he internally remarked at how grown Henderson looked at the tender age of eleven, moaned. “She’s making me sing classical!”

“Son, you know how much I love you, but the classics are nothing to turn up a nose at. If you’re that miserable, why not assist your uncle with his cooking?” He recommended easily as he noted his female best friend rapidly trying to button up the back of her corset with her bandana half undone and papers dropped recklessly on the floor. “Oh my. Do you need some assistance, Betsey?”

“I’ve got it!” She grunted, struggling for a few moments longer before sighing. “Okay, please help.”

“And what do you owe the rush to?” He inquired as he carefully fixed her up, blushing a bit as Maria passed by on her way outside with his lethargic looking twins with a knowing smile on her face.

“I just received post that the Washingtons need to see me at once,” she explained as she regathered her items. “It is very likely to do with the upcoming cabinet discussion, and if it is what I think it is, slavery may be all the sooner to being abolished than we dreamed!”

The prospect made him feel giddy; more of the same had been proposed before, but in her capable hands, he had little reason to believe she’d drop the ball after so long of juggling issues of equal importance. “At long last, my friend, at long last. You better be careful out there.”

“Yes sir,” she teased as she had so many times before, stealing a chaste kiss on his forehead before properly kissing her husband goodbye.

As he watched her load up into the carriage, her hair already falling away from the bandana’s hold, he felt a familiar pang in his heart replaced but the dull sense of contentment. He would love her until the day he died as well as Alexander, and yet around the time his wife took her untimely earthly leave, the same was true for his Martha and that was distinctly alright.

“Mister and Missus Washington!” Eliza’s heart felt as though it may strain right out of her chest as she hurried into their pristine, large office; she’d booked it all the way from down the street, and it was times like these she reminded she was no longer a young woman. “You asked to see me?”

In the always neatly decorated, warm and organized office, she looked expectantly upon two people she immensely looked up to as the president paused writing at his desk and his wife paused some sorting she was doing at one of their impressive bookshelves.

“I know you’re busy,” George noted kindly as Hamilton took this opportunity to set her own papers carefully on one of the chairs before the desk.

“Never too much so for your affairs. What do you need, sir?” she insisted, shifting anxiously when he grew silent while staring directly down. “…Sir?”
“I want to give you a word of warning,” Martha finally announced, turning from her project and revealing a few books that the secretary recognized as some of her favorite reads.

Such a term had been used too much before chastising or punishing her for her squabbling, so she immediately straightened her back. “Ma’am, I don’t know what you heard, but whatever it is, I’m quite sure that Jefferson started it.”

The elderly woman immediately held up a hand to silence her. “Thomas Jefferson resigned this morning.”

The words were among the sweetest she’d ever heard, and yet she was still stunned. “You must be kidding.”

“I need a favor,” George followed up, resuming his writing with new vigor and avoiding the gaze of their treasurer.

“Yes! He resigned, you can finally speak your mind!” Eliza wasted no time at all, grabbing some parchment and fumbling open the nearest inkwell. “Whatever you say, sir, Jefferson will pay for this behavior!”

“Shh…” He held up a finger of his own, placing it on her knuckles pointedly as he spoke. “Talk. Less.”

The prospect confounded her; this was the time when she ought to be raving the most! “Sir, I’ll use the press, I’ll write under a pseudonym, you’ll see what I can do to him!”

The younger woman would only realize in hindsight how her beloved Martha was carefully stacking and arranging their most beloved reads as they spoke. “As though there is another young individual with your level of intellect, prose and dialect that would openly slander Jefferson in your newspaper, Lady Hamilton?”

“We need you to draft an address,” Martha stated blandly directly after her husband.

“You want to get in your retorts before my own?” She rattled on obliviously. “That is quite understandable.”

“No,” George corrected with a reluctant sigh and while looking her in her eyes. “He’s stepping down so he can run for president.”

The prospect immediately made Eliza laugh sarcastically. “Good luck defeating the likes of you both—”

“We’re both stepping down,” Martha interrupted with all the eloquence she’d grown to know. “And I am not running for president.”

“…I’m sorry, pardon me?”

“One last time, my dear. The people will hear from us one last time,” Lady Washington continued, seemingly unfazed by her confidante’s being appalled. “If we are able to get this right, we’re going to teach them how to say goodbye; you and I.”

“N-no, ma’am, why?!”

“We want to talk about neutrality!” Her elder insisted, taking her hand and leading her over to a current map of the world. “Britain and France are on the verge of war, and we do not intend to
advertise our cowardice; merely our unwillingness to slip on the mess they've made with each other. We also would like to warn against partisan fighting—"

“Wh-what?” Eliza practically squeaked, something that made the woman more like a mother than her own look to her sternly and with a raised eyebrow.

“You know very well ‘what’, Mrs. Hamilton,” she noted. “Now, pick up a pen and begin writing.”

“We want to talk about what we have learned, the hard wisdom that we have earned,” George noted as he lifted himself from his feet, ushering her to sit in his well-worn chair instead. “We must preserve that identity that holds us together as Americans, and set clear expectations as to what should be avoiding in the wake of what may pull apart. Those who attempt to separate or mingle with the existing Union are to be suspicious while the potential for intervention by the people is to be held in that of constitutional amendments.”

“Darling, I know that she is a remarkably quick longhand professional, but she is not that rapid in her writing,” Martha teased well naturedly as she approached his side.

“As far as the union is concerned, you have to serve!” Eliza exclaimed as she reluctantly noted all they’d said while leaving room for the expansion of their ideas. “What were Jefferson and I’s efforts for only a few short years ago if you do not see my proposition of President for Life to the end?”

“We never agreed to such!” The president exclaimed. “My darling, you know as well as my most well versed enemies I have never felt qualified to lead this country. Your concerns are unwarranted if you should heed the advice laid before you.”

“One last time!” His first lady interjected as she pulled out the champagne, placing the quill in Eliza’s hand carefully to the side. “You are far too high strung; it is not good for your health. Please, relax, have a drink with us one last time. If we get this right, we’re going to teach them how to say goodbye.”

George smiled and extended his glass to be filled. “You and I!”

“Mister President, they will say you're weak!” Eliza insisted, feeling desperate as she recalled his public statements that he’d been openly opposed to presidency before the political and personal pressure pushed him into the role.

“No, child. They will see we're strong,” Martha corrected gently.

“Both of your positions are so unique! How can you expect the general public to bear that burden?”

“We will use our significance to move them along, and it takes more than wit and opinions to achieve eligibility. You know that, my girl.”

Tears threatened her eyes as she angrily sent them back, her trembling lips subtle as she gazed helplessly to the two most qualified to lead her beloved country to its best potential. “Why do you have to say goodbye?”

Lady Washington took her face in her slender, wrinkled hands, lightly brushing away the budding moisture and smiling tenderly to a woman she considered to be her child. “If we say goodbye, the nation will learn to move on after the glory of the past. Our legacies outlive us when we’re gone.”

She now took Hamilton’s hands, gently guiding her out of the chair and leading her to their
impressive view of the city. The evening sun lit up their world, giving light to the children playing in the streets as mothers tutted and vendors advertised their wares. Nearby, two men were sharing a smoke underneath a street lamp as a young woman picked flowers and others groomed the gardens, and an elderly couple exited a jewelry shop with the woman beaming as though she were a teenager with an expensive string of pearls around her neck.

“It is like the scripture says,” the first lady said softly as they looked fondly to the citizens of their New York City. “‘Everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid. They’ll be safe in the nation that we’ve made.’ I want to sit under my own vine and fig tree, a moment alone in the shade…”

It was in the sunlight that the younger woman really noted her age, how her once bright and solemn features had grayed and become much more imprinted by the years. The president wasted no time accompanying her side, wrapping an arm around her and placing a loving kiss on her temple as he gazed out to the world as well.

“We will be home in this nation we’ve made,” he agreed softly.

A tear cascaded down her cheek as the prospect of how limited their time grew on the Earth, and she wiped away proudly while resting carefully against her beloved Martha. “One last time.”

As it would turn out, James Madison drafted the first version of the Farewell Address before she’d temporally allied with her enemy to keep the Washingtons in office, so she took immense pleasure in destroying his garbage the night after the evening celebrating all the beloved couple had done. It took several days to get their final address to a point the trio were pleased with, but it seemed like no time at all before the day of March 7th was upon them and the nation was gathered as a collective to see off their president and first lady. Eliza stood proudly by her surrogate mother’s side as George delivered the speech with all the grace, poise and hope it deserved, bringing countless people to tears, including herself. As he stepped away from the podium, the two woman took him by each arm and carefully escorted him to the carriage that would take them to their beloved home in Mount Vernon.

“Mister Washington, Lady Washington…” Hamilton managed without spilling too many more tears, curtsying as deeply as she possibly could and kissing both of their hands. “It has been of the utmost honor.”

“We feel quite the same of you, Lady Hamilton,” the now former president replied warmly, taking her hands and doing the same with a warm look over her face. “Your time is not up yet, dear, and it shan’t be for a long, long time. Go forth and do just as we have always known you shall, and do not forget to write.”

As she was tightly embraced by Martha, she found herself smiling and crying anew through both of their words. “History has its eyes on you; do not forget this in my absence. I love you, my child, and farewell for now.”

Watching their carriage grow smaller and smaller with the crowd of spectators and politicians alike, Elizabeth wiped away the remnants of her tears and began to make her way back to her expectant family. She was stopped, of course, by none other than Thomas Jefferson, looking smug as ever with no hint of remorsefulness or regret across his well-groomed face. He’d even had the audacity to halt her with his walking cane, a gesture that tempted to break the thing beneath her weight but decided against to not suggest she was incapable of behaving when not under Lady Washington’s watchful eye.

“I hope you’ve gotten in the habit of calling me ‘Mister President’,” the southerner drawled.
“Surely you’ve realized that’s the only appropriate course of action now that those two ancients have cleared their outdated ideas from the White House, or have you simply been too busy mucking up your pretty little face with tears and mucus?”

“How classy,” she retorted disdainfully. “I hope you realize no matter your following of sheep, people around here are more intelligent than you give them credit for. They’d never vote in someone who so openly talked poorly of the greatest man in the land.”

“I haven’t,” he said with a sadistic smirk. “Enjoy your little school yard taunts while you can, Hamilton. I’ll take immense satisfaction in firing you the second I get.”

With that he strolled away, but she was too emotionally exhausted to kick him or make a scene despite her boiling rage. When she was brushed past rather briskly, she instinctually grabbed onto the offender to avoid tripping, and found herself face to face with Theodosia Burr yet again. As she stared up into the face of the women who was now publically her enemy but grabbed onto her dress as if to keep her from hitting the dirt, she was flooded by the contradictory feelings she’d been struggling with for the past few years. The fact the older lady steadied her before hastily letting go certainly didn’t help, but she smoothed down her clothing and held her chin high.

“Mrs. Burr. I was unsure if you’d be witnessing the Farewell Address,” she commented blandly.

“But of course. Regardless of ideals, he was still a proper president,” Theodosia responded in a similar tone. “I expect that you’ll be running in their place, then?”

“I’m afraid you’d be mistaken,” she countered with a shake of her head. “I intend to maintain my current position to counterweight the immense balderdash, but I will see to it my voice is raised up for another member of the Federalist Party.”

“All of these years and you still neglect to hold your tongue. It is almost treacherous that I fancied the idea you may have changed,” her personal rival stated coldly.

“And surely you’d never entertain the idea of running in their places!” Eliza let out a short, sharp laugh. “At the end of the day, my dear, some of us have more important things to attend to than burning bridges and chasing after pursuits far out of her our reach. Pray you tell me, how is Mister Jefferson’s bedroom in the absence of his wife?”

In all of her affairs, most of which were formal despite her increasing open opinions, she never expected to get any more physical than something like a duel, and even that only occurred once and for her revenge upon sexist pigs. As her former friend recoiled, dominant hand held protectively in her other and eyes dark, Eliza realized just before the stinging pain that Theodosia Burr had struck across the cheek with no forgiveness. The thirty nine year old stood there in astonishment, and rather than attempt to claw her enemy’s eyes out like she would have liked, she stepped back into her gawking, furious husband’s arms while others pulled her elder away.

“I would challenge you to a duel, but I find you too unoriginal and childish for an adult’s affair,” Hamilton spit out as she turned to her wide-eyed children. “Come on now, all of you. Let’s go home; Mommy has some serious work to do for the upcoming election.”

April, 1979

Of all people that affiliated with the Federalist party that Elizabeth Hamilton openly insisted upon
the people electing, that damned John Adams was far from the mark she’d set up. As if it weren’t bad enough that the likes of him were now in the most prestigious position of the nation, she had good reason to believe she’d have to resign rather than get fired, but there was at least one scheduled Cabinet Battle she wouldn’t miss, even if it meant breaking in to scream before being dragged away.

“I wish I looked more like you,” her eldest child commented as she assisted her in preening for the event, which thankfully approached without her being dismissed.

“Oh, don’t be silly!” Eliza exclaimed at once, looking to her fifteen year old with fond eyes. “I wish I looked more like you, little girl. You remind me so much of your aunt it’s uncanny, and she was one of the most gorgeous women in the world.”

The teenager paused audibly before taking a seat beside her mother on the bench. “Will you tell me more about Aunt Angelica?”

“Oh, of course,” the forty year old agreed; many avoided speaking on the deceased, but their memory is what kept them alive, in her opinion. “She was an outspoken woman for equal rights, as you know. What you may not know is how much she protected Aunt Peggy and me in our more youthful days.”

“I can’t imagine why,” her daughter immediately teased, which made her laugh and wrap an arm around her.

“Young Aunt Peggy was very fond of getting into all the places that were specifically forbidden from her, and I…Well, I was always quite blunt about my opinions,” she recounted wistfully. “I remember one time your aunt managed to get into the lake nearby our country home, and she was floating like a lily pad right up until I discovered her and screamed. Your grandfather was still getting out of his boots to rescue her when Angelica, full of the piss and ambition that only a four year old could have, dove right in and got her back to the surface before Grandpa fished them both out.”

“Auntie Peggy had no fear!” Angie remarked with a laugh of her own. “Didn’t you mention once the only time you ever got in a fight was with a schoolboy double your age?”

“He was only two years older, and I got him good. If you ever want to disarm a man, go between his legs swiftly and spin your foot to avoid being caught,” she noted with a grin. “Aunt Angelica got him worse than I ever could, of course. She beat that boy more bloody than the most confident of his schoolmates could, and all because he made a remark about what shoes I was wearing! You can imagine how positively your grandmother reacted.”

“She sounds really remarkable,” her child said fondly, laying her head against her shoulder. “Do I really look like her?”

“More and more by the day.”

“Do you think I could ever do something like she did? Y’know, something that really changed lives?”

As she gazed into the looking glass at the girl that made her a mother, she couldn’t help but internally grow all the fonder that she’d seemed to inherit all the best traits her and her husband’s families had to offer. Her hair was long, dark and curly, her eyes the exact shade her beloved older sisters were, but she was tan and slender like those on Alexander’s family. Aside from the physical, she was headstrong but well versed due to her much guided upbringing, and she had the same
virtuosity and intellect of both of her parents.

“There is not a single doubt in my mind,” Eliza remarked as her final clasps were done. “One day, you shall blow us all away. Now, I must go or I’ll be late.”

She made her rounds through their home, kissing the children goodbye and locating her husband, who was standing with a sleeping Jackie in his arms in the front foyer. “Betsey, I need you to make me a promise.”

A bit taken back, she nodded as she smoothed down their youngest child’s hair. “Yes, my love?”

“Please do not allow the sensitivity of the issue lead you to impulsive behavior. If any of those men harm a hair upon your head, I will gladly slaughter them, but you must allow rationality to take precedence of the justified fury we all feel about the institution of slavery,” her beloved stated carefully.

“…I can try,” she finally conceded before kissing him chastely. “Adieu for now, best of husbands and best of men.”

The picture of how she made him blush after all their years of union made her feel giddy, a feeling she tried to hang onto as she entered the White House. The mood of the room was extremely tense before she even arrived, but once she made her presence clear people began to whisper, grumble and scoff while others sighed in relief. She walked purposefully to her area and shot a cold look over to her main opponents, none other than the men she’d struggled against for the years that felt like lifetimes. The new president sat where either of the Washingtons should be, his face blank aside from a cascade of sweat, but she had no reason to believe she’d have no issue poking holes into his weak, unimpressive arguments. As she expected, such an affair was far too heated for one Senate member in particular, a fact that just added to her resentment for Burr.

“Alright, alright!” Adams announced, dabbing the perspiration from his brow before standing. “The main issue on the table first, I imagine. A Quaker delegation in Philadelphia has called upon Congress to end the African slave trade and abolish slavery in all of its forms. I imagine that most of you here aren’t going to like that and for that I’ll say I’m sorry, but this petition was written and signed by Benjamin Franklin. It cannot go ignored, and should this come to vote in Congress, we must first establish the White House’s position. Jefferson, you first.”

As one of her one opponents took the floor, the middle aged woman could not help but internally remark on how the two men looked to each other only briefly and with poorly contained contempt. Perhaps it was for the better the former friends were turned against each other, but she was still not positive the likes of Adams could see reason.

“Look, I’ll cut right to the chase,” Thomas began with a roll of his eyes. “The constitution clearly states that the union has to wait until 1808 to decide whether or not to end the slave trade. Some of you here aren’t going to like that and for that I’ll say I’m sorry, but that’s the compromise, it’s too risky now to pick out sections of it we want to borrow.”

“Sir–” She exclaimed, irritated more than she’d care to admit, but Adams shook his head and looked pointedly back to his alleged former friend.

“Sugar, please, the grownups are talking,” Jefferson had the audacity to counter before turning back to the president. “Let’s imagine for a moment regardless that the blacks are free walking. Freedom shall reign in these country of ours and we look fantastic in comparison to some, and yet we cannot cure prejudice along with an amendment. Take for instance the notion I attempted to pass back 1784; it was more the same. I didn’t get a single vote for the concept and was forced to
throw away, just like certain members will do now. We could send them back to Africa, or we could give them a separate state; they can’t mingle among us, for that I won’t even both bringing up like a debate.”

“Excuse me!” Elizabeth snapped furiously.

“Maybe slavery is a sin!” Her opponent threw up his hands and gave her a hard stare. “Yes, it’s growing like a cancer, but we cannot address a question if we do not have an answer.”

Before Adams could formally give her permission, she got to her feet and took to the floor while beginning her own arguments. “Is it my turn? Good. Plantation states are full of promises and assurances, fueled by the economy they’ve never worked a day in, and I deplore it. All this precious time the legislators have wasted, and you wish to prolong the inevitable justice for these human beings? Their population will have more than doubled, and you have the nerve act like sweeping them under your rug will solve all your troubles.”

People were openly commenting, the tension was high and dangerous, but she had no desire to halt. After all, the room was secured tightly by some of the most non-biased men in the world, and she shan’t come under public harm as long as she spoke undeniable truth.

“We all know that this institution is a stain on our democracy; how can we be called the land of the free when we have this hypocrisy?” She announced. “We subjugate an entire race of humans, call them property! With all your prejudice, it is no wonder we’re viewed as a mockery!”

“Rumors have circulated you yourself have engaged in transactions,” her loudmouthed opponent snipped, but she’d come far too prepared for that to shake her up further.

“Rumors are words, you have no receipt to counter the truth. Those were made in my name under no consent that I gave, and you shan’t distract me now from the arguments I’ve laid,” Eliza shot back coolly. “This country has hundreds upon thousands upon millions of slaves whose descendants will curse our names when we’re all safe in our graves!”

“High talk from a woman in an insecure economy herself,” Madison voiced bitterly from beside his companion, lighting her soul on fire anew.

“Isn’t that the question of the century!” She scoffed, stepping closer to them with a scowl. “How will the South find honest labor for its businesses? How will Jefferson find his next mistress?”

The red-faced lawmaker immediately got his feet, sharply lurching and making a claw like grab for her front as he hissed. “How dare you-!”

“This is the man you all follow like lemmings!” Eliza practically shouted over how Madison tried to hold back her enemy. “Look at all his howling and crying while he’s procreating with Miss Hemmings!”

“That’s enough!” Adams exclaimed as the shorter friend to Jefferson managed to urge him back into his seat with a great deal of difficulty.

“You asked how I feel,” she remarked as she took her seat, her legs throbbing due to the added weight of her barely showing pregnancy. “I don’t pretend to know the answer but the question is real.”

“If I may, Mister President?” Mister Madison voiced evenly, standing before his personal ally.

“Go ahead.”
“First, we must establish a precedent. I will assure the South that 1808 is the still the year that was agreed on, providing understanding that we do not discuss this again,” the stout gentleman elaborated. “As for the North, I will assure them that on January 1st of the aforementioned year that we shall ban importation, allowing no demand for compensation while the worst of the problem has faced elimination. Once all of this is agreed upon, I will pick up a pen and so to it this discussion is not made between the existing members of the cabinet again.”

“Mister Madison, see to it your plan is followed to the letter,” Mister Adams stated as the speaker took his seat.

“Mister President!” She protested immediately.

“Hamilton, if we support emancipation, it is absolutely true that every slave owner will demand compensation,” the leader of the Union stated in an unimpressed tone. “As for slandering Jefferson with talk of improper speculations, do you really-

“Do you really wanna have that conversation?” Thomas and James chimed in with biting, condescending tones, a notion that made her feel chilled to the core.

All of the eyes in the room were undoubtedly on her, and for the first time in years, she felt absolutely powerless in the view of the public. She hadn’t the slightest idea what the men before her were implying, but she was in no mood to blindly debate something that they seemed to have built against her as a collective, so she decided to heed her half-promise for the sake of her wellbeing.

Taking a silent, deep breath, she looked to the president darkly. “No. Perhaps if the plan is ‘followed to letter’, the next generation will manage to think of something better.”

The meeting continually tersely thereafter, giving her time to jot down more notes about the response she was rearing to give in response to gall of the Adams Administration. Elizabeth found herself burning the midnight oil the next few days to finalize the essay, publishing it despite the adamant protests of all her loved ones and making a point to speak of it as the copies flooded the streets.

“Ladies and gentleman, this is an open letter to fat, arrogant, anti-charismatic national embarrassment known as President John Adams!” The forty year old declared, and she could practically Maria or Laurens going ‘shit’ before she continued. “The man’s irrational, first and foremost. He claims that I’m in some international interleague with Britain, the nation I left as fast as the ship could take me; I mean, bitch, please! You wouldn’t know I’m doing even if that had a slither of truth; you love to go berserk, and yet you never show up to work! Please, sir, give my regards to Abigail the next you decide to discuss my lack of moral compass, because at I least I do my job, you absolute nuisance.”

The people on the streets were absolutely on fire, many of them agreeing loudly while others just seemed to shell shocked at her new levels of boldness. She caught the eye of her newest enemy, the tutting Burr, and it brought out something even more in her to the point she began talking more quickly and with as much venom as she had.

“Oh, the line is behind me, I crossed it again? Don’t worry, the president lost it again! Aww, such a rough life, better run to your wife, and oh, our boss is Boston again! Tell me this, Adams: who sits at your desk while dick around in Massachusetts? Your two cents, it makes no sense! You’ll die of irrelevance, I invite you to call me the Devil while you aspire to my level and attempt at malevolence; say hi to the Jeffersons! All the spies you’ve got gathered around me, perhaps they’ll be so kind to confirm that I don’t care if I kill my career with my letter, I’m confining you to one
“Lady Hamilton!” And there he was, the man she’d openly mocked and looking as though he was considering harming his pregnant enemy. “That is quite enough from the likes of you! You are dismissed from your position-!”

“Oh, sit down John, you fat motherfucker!” Eliza shouted while throwing a few more couples into the huge crowd, a few of him made a point of cheering and helping her down before she went to the side of her close friend Nathaniel Pendleton. “And you cannot fire me; I’ve already quit.”

Chapter End Notes

Adams is a whole character who I wouldn't want as president, to be honest. I had a lot of fun and difficulty alike making this chapter, but the drama only escalates, gradually explodes, and reaches one of the worst periods in the next update, coming soon to an Internet near you!

Remember to leave a kudos/bookmark/subscribe/LEAVE A REVIEW if it so compels you! ♥
Chapter Summary

The actions are what could occur pale in comparison to the response giving way the truths that have been gone. In the wake of wrecking one's own home, forces flush to keep it from falling apart forever.

Chapter Notes

9,354 words, everyone. That is how long this incredible chapter is, so I hope you can all understand why the update took a hot minute! I have also been in production for Peter and the Starcatcher as Prentiss, so writing has been hard to have the time or energy for, we but close tonight (*insert crying here*) and I should have much more free time in general going forward. This chapter contains We Know, 'Hurricane', 'The Reynolds Pamphlet', and a very special song cut from the Off-Broadway show, so get comfortable and without further adieu, enjoy! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I do not know why you are all so out of sorts about this,” James Madison stated as he stepped into the meeting room they’d all agreed to meet within at exactly noon for lunch and discussion. “She’s out of power, she holds no office, and her little stunt only succeeded in destroying the only other significant member of her party. What are you gentlemen so worked up over when she’s essentially thrust victory into our hands?”

“Hamilton is a host onto herself; she doesn’t need any other party member to maintain her empire,” Theodosia noted blandly in response, sighing into her cup of tea and setting it on the saucer. “It’s no secret she’s disliked our current president for quite some time, either.”

“So what are we to do, then?” Madison exhaled and sat back in his own chair, looking defeated and more exhausted than usual.

“I say we at last use the ammo we’ve been saving for such an occasion,” Jefferson finally noted as he inspected the biscuit half eaten in his hand. “We ought to let her know what we know.”

“And surely you aren’t intending to be the one to pull the trigger on her?”

It had far been from Burr’s idea to invite James Monroe into the likes of their plans, but her friends/political allies insisted his insight was crucial in such a desperate time for their party. The man was now arranging the receipts that Jefferson implored her to bring along, looking over them with a cool expression and occasionally sipping at a bit of wine from a fancy glass, and he only looked up when there was an audible pause from the rest of the individuals in the room.

“And why not?” Thomas asked dully; she knew better than to believe he wasn’t put off by the idea of not openly tearing her to pieces.
“You two have very publically squabbled so many times that it is impossible to keep count,” Monroe replied easily. “Do you really believe that accusations made from you, research based or not, will have any real backbone to even the less skeptical? Come now, old friend, you know as well as I do this will amount to nothing more than another petty smear campaign if we do not handle it with care. This evidence is far too hefty to fumble.”

“And so who will do it instead?” Madison inquired after another long silence that was only broken by Thomas nodding his head slowly in thoughtful, albeit reluctant, agreement.

It was when Theodosia made eye contact with the snake-like man that she truly tensed up in her seat. For all the fighting, abandoned alliances and broken respect for Hamilton, she still could not bring herself to volunteer for such a heavy, consequential task that would surely land the Federalist behind bars if not executed. She truly believed with every fiber of her being that the forty year old had stupidly embellished government funds and ought to be humiliated for such a foolish crime, and yet this put her at a vulnerable position to simply be remembered as ‘the woman who destroyed a legend with fact’. She wanted to be remembered for more than her mistakes and shortcomings, so despite how Monroe looked over to her with an unspoken dare across his features, she stood her ground and simply stared back in a deadpan expression.

“Very well. You lot have loaded the gun and cocked it,” Monroe stated decidedly as he stood up, taking the papers and placing them decisively into her briefcase. “I intend to confront her in the morning; we have gotten some security within our pockets.”

When the sun rose for the new day, Theodosia found herself unable to distract herself from the driving curiosity from the unadulterated reaction from her former ally, no matter what she did. It was because of this reality that dressed up in fine, dimly colored clothes and strode decisively to meet her new companion at the front of the courthouse; she did not like how his eyes sparkled knowing as approached the gentleman, who seemed to waiting.

“I was wondering if you’d be accompanying me today, Mrs. Burr,” he commented once she was well within earshot. “You and I understand the weight behind what we’re doing, and of course the significance of your open allegiance with our party.”

“Of course,” she replied evenly. “I have reason to believe the more members to accuse in unanimous certainty, the more likely it is to be believed.”

Monroe gave her a small that held some genuine hope behind it, a notion she immediately accepted as being much more pleasant than his various fake ones. “If nothing else, it will not hurt our campaign. Now, let us go inside; Mister Jefferson is unsurprisingly accompanying us as well.”

She rolled her eyes a bit, more fondly than sarcastically, and it made her feel a little more confident when he chuckled with a nod before leading her up the grand staircase. As per was usual in the earlier hours of the morning, the door to Hamilton’s office was firmly shut and the sounds of movement could be heard after only a few moments of polite hesitation. Monroe reached out and knocked, turning the handle and making her way inside before the inevitable response came, and it was no surprise with Elizabeth greeting them all with a hard expression tinted by surprise.

“Mister Vice President,” she stated coolly as her eyes fell over each of them. “Mister Monroe. Senator Burr…What the hell do you want?”

“I will be most unlike you and cut directly to the point,” James began with a smirk already playing on his lips. “We have the check stubs from various accounts. In total, it is almost a thousand dollars paid in annual, separate amounts to a Mister James Reynolds way back in 1791.”
Elizabeth got to her feet briskly, looking over at their trio before putting her hands over her legs and slightly bending at the waist, as though she was talking to a toddler. “Is that what you have?” She stood back up properly and gave them a pointed scowl. “Are you done?”

Theodosia, heart pounding rapidly against her chest and in her ears, spoke up in a similar condescending tone. “You are uniquely situated by virtue of your position.”

Thomas cut in smoothly, grin wide and unashamedly smug. “Though virtue is not a word I’d apply to this situation.”

“Plainly put,” James cut in easily. “To seek financial gain, you committed crimes against the various institutions you so confidently attempted to shape around your unspoken intentions. Surely you understand by now that there is not a single piece of evidence that does not lead to your engaging in speculation. After all, what would be said if anywhere to bare all the general public? An immigrant embezzling our government funds!”

“I can almost see the headlines!” Thomas interjected cockily, looking over her from her own desk. “Your career is done!”

“Pray you saved up money for daughter and sons,” the older lady cut in, admittedly invigorated by their passion. “Perhaps it’s best you run right back to where you’ve come from.”

Elizabeth had her head bowed now, a notion that both the men alongside her regarded with refueled confidence, but Burr knew better than to believe her opponent was showing easy defeat. The gears were surely rapidly turning in Hamilton’s head, desperately trying to think of something to cover her heinous acts in such short notice, but the patch of silence was enough to show this was as unexpected as they’d all been counting on. It was only when she looked up, brown eyes shining and mouth emitting genuine laughter, the swell of succession was banished from being so boldly shown.

“HA!” She finally spit out, standing up and slamming her hands on her desk so abruptly that she couldn’t help but jump. “You fools don’t even know what you’re asking me to confess! You have nothing, I don’t have to tell you a damn thing! If you three would like to go be publically idiots, might I recommend the president’s office? Perhaps the delusions of your political party have diluted your judgements, but I do not have time for these childish accusations.”

“So you won’t mind if we take this to the press, then?” Monroe noted with an easy smirk. “I will be fascinated to know if the former president and his wife will approve of what you’ve done.”

Despite her expression filled with passionate hatred, Theodosia saw the fear in the other lady’s eyes as she clenched her fingers into tight fists that held part of her dress. The Democratic Republicans watched as their enemy seized something from her desk file, walking angrily toward them and clenching a folded up parchment at her side.

“If I can prove that I never broke the law, do you promise not to tell another sole what you saw?” Elizabeth demanded.

“Uh…” She and Thomas exchanged an expression while Monroe simply smirked and looked to the ground in seeming disbelief. “Yes.”

As she would learn via some very adamant words and cold letters from said from a Maria Reynolds, the woman’s real crime was an amorous connection with her husbands, James, for a considerable time. Eliza raved bluntly about how the young lady had found out after her unfaithful husband seduced her for money and demanded her cash in exchange for silence and saving
marriage, and how the seduction and tricky positions hadn’t stopped until the very last scrap of proof they now held was signed off cleanly. It was the fact that the accused had a record of every single check and record of her own, which she pulled out from her massive piles of clearly organized files, and all but shoved in their faces but comparing them directly against their own lists.

“As you can see, I have done nothing to provoke any semblance of legal actions!” Eliza finally snapped, shutting her folder and snatching their former evidence unforgivingly before throwing it into the nearby fireplace. “Are my answers to your satisfaction?!”

The fire roared up in response to the new material, highlighting Monroe’s rosy cheeks in the pale light of the early hours. He slowly picked up the couple of sheets she hadn’t snatched, disposing of them pointedly in the nearby bin before she managed to summon her voice again.

“Gentleman, let’s go,” she stated, her hand instinctively reaching out to guide Jefferson, who looked equally pissed and stunned, toward the exit.

“That’s not an answer,” Hamilton snipped unforgivingly; the woman simply never would learn to know when to leave a fight, she reminded herself exasperatedly.

“The people won’t know, what we know,” Thomas and James replied with their backs to her, leaving the room with purpose and leaving her in their wake.

“Theodosia.” Eliza was standing near her now, close enough to touch, but their arms were securely at their sides. “How do I know you won’t attempt to use this information against me? How can I possibly trust the likes of your new friends not to attempt to ruin me? No promises mean a damn thing in the games we play.”

“Elizabeth, rumors are bound to grow. If you are so certain now, yet another smear campaign will do little to deter you, just as it has before,” Theo responded blandly, tensing with her wrist was grabbed pointedly and pulling away with a hard look in her enemy’s direction. “I would not be so foolish in the future if I were you, child. We both know what we know.”

The house was only ever quiet when the night was thick and the masses were asleep, and it gave way for Eliza’s mind to run rampant with thought without the chaos of being a mother to counter the knowledge of what she’d seen and revealed nearly a week ago.

This night was not unlike any of the others in the past days; she was pacing the halls silently, trying desperately to think of words to fight and immerse herself into but was unable to without a rapid-fire job to offer new projects within. As a child she’d never liked the silence- a big family ran in her blood, it seemed- but it was more daunting with the problems she was unsure of how to get over. She was proud of herself for erasing the prospect she was ever romantic with another lady, but most people who knew her personally were aware that Miss Reynolds estranged from her abusive husband and lived with her own family, so how would she ever explain that should one of them sell out her story? After all, they had exactly nothing to lose by destroying her reputation further and much to gain, so the only question at hand was time.

“I wrote my way out of Hell,” she whispered to herself as she found herself back her office, a space she’d found spacious numerous occasions now feeling like a death chamber. “I wrote my way into this country, and I can’t think of a single thing to counter an almost certain possibility.”
Had it not been for her late Angelica and incredible Peggy, she was positive she’d never have been so inspired, but it took off regardless. It wasn’t common knowledge in her New York City, but it was because of the accounts she’d given from thousands of hours of research and letters she’d salvaged from government-ordered letters to be destroyed from the colonies that she was first published in a secret paper convincing people to fight alongside their estranged family and friends. People had loved her words, spreading it rapidly and bringing it to the attention of the government officials due to the sheer explosion of her words, but those on her side were ready with more than enough money to get them started in the budding nation and the resources to find her and her beloved sisters on a ship that was bound for the city she’d thrived in. From the day forward, a much younger woman wanted to pay those strangers and revolutionaries back for their kindness, and she was about to throw it all away from her lack of attentiveness with two bastards and a woman she’d once loved.

As she read reluctantly back over the letters that went into detail about what had taken place between Maria and herself, she recalled how she’d written so much hope and tactic in codes and algorithms to win the Revolution. It was because of her ability with a quill and paper that she’d resounded above the oppression that tried to suffocate her entire family, assuring them while clawing away from those who refused to see reason. Hell, she’d even written her beloved Alexander until he fell into her arms while keeping connections so tender and intimately platonic with John and Maria, and at the most intensely uncertain period of her middle life, she was practically speechless.

She swirled one of her quills in a nearly empty ink jar and began to write to her closest in age sister, trying to convince herself to ask for advice from someone she usually didn’t inquire to for such heavy topics. Over the years the two had remained close and visited each other at every holiday and opportunity, but Peggy was still her little sibling, and despite her wisdom she could never take the role of Angelica or vice versa. As the words poured out of her, chronicling all that had been done while omitting the harsh truth about the real affair, the idea came upon her abruptly and strongly.

“Oh, you’re getting slow, old woman,” she murmured to herself, disregarding the barely begun letter and letting all of the concealed but nevertheless raw truth pour onto the pages. “I’ll write my way out. I’ll write everything down as far I can see.”

Theodosia’s aged mantra of waiting for the right time and revealing less echoed in her head, but these only did more to pick up her sense of urgency. The best tool she had after all she’d been through was delivering her own deliverance with a pen, bringing her glory one ink stroke at a time, and she’d found that prayers and bargaining only ended up in hurt and pain. Of course her children and friends would be shocked, and she could only imagine what her family would say when she openly admitted to infidelity, but it wasn’t as if she hadn’t already talked it through with her spouse in the most truthful fashion. As a matter of fact, this would make her ‘seducer’ exposed as being the lowlife he was, and it would heighten her beloved Maria’s position over him in comparison by showcasing genuine resourcefulness. She would not dare let those insufferable snakes get the best of her when she still had bullet left in her chamber, and for all the temporary dishevelment this account may initially cause, this was the only way that she could protect all the good she’d done in comparison.

The days drew on and her paranoia grew along with the length of her confessions. Her husband did not say much, given how she spoke of her birthing pains in the day and tended to their new baby boy when she was not planning the multiple step confession, but the two of them spent more time in her office than anywhere else in their home; perhaps little William would always associate the room with their living quarters. Her sleep deprivation was growing worse by the hour, it seemed, and she found herself rubbing furiously at her eyes when she swore she caught a glimpse of her late
sister. As she bent back over her desk and began to finish the last of this pamphlet, as sure as she breathed as she heard Angelica’s voice whispering in her ear.

“Or you could let it go…”

“The sister who’d say I shouldn’t is now in the ground,” she told herself aloud, trying to banish the surely fake voice as her memory summoned her encounters with John and Alexander after Burr’s betrayal.

“You could let it go…”

“The evidence I gave won’t reveal anything of me now,” she insisted, finishing the last of it and arranging the sheets as the sun rose in the horizon.

“Let it go…”

“I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory,” Eliza stated desperately, grabbing the pamphlet and stumbling over herself to flee the house, which now felt huge, daunting and cold, to get to the press. “Staring it now in the eyes of my enemies, this is the only way I can protect my legacy!”

“Wait for it, wait for it, wait-!”

It was when she arrived at school that she got the news.

Angelica Hamilton walked into her first period class and settled into her desk as per usual, adjusting her skirts subconsciously and finishing up the notes she intended to fully compose once lunch came around. As she looked around thereafter, she couldn’t help but notice the stares of everyone in the room, how they quite evidently avoided where she sat and how the whispers flirted all around her like a trap. When she turned to ask a classmate what was wrong, he immediately ducked his head and walked to another group of students, leaving her offended, stunned, and confused above all else.

“If you lot have something to say to me,” she finally stated loudly. “Go ahead and say it.”

“Sorry, we were just wondering if you were a loose as your mother,” one of her classmates she frequently argued with sneered from the front of the room, sending her snapping to her feet and whirling to face him.

“You better keep my parent’s name out of your mouth before I sew it shut,” she sneered.

“Elizabeth Hamilton is a whore and openly admitted to it!” One of his friends declared with a cruel laugh. “It seems even her daughter is in denial about how scandalous she is.”

“What are you dimwits talking about?” She snipped, fists clenched at her side. “My mother just gave birth a mere nineteen days ago, and you dare speak of her? You are despicable!”

“Angelica, did you not see?” One of her friends, a lovely girl her junior by a few months named Amanda, hurried up to her with a pink face and a massive binding of parchment in her hands. “I know your pride is strong, my friend, but I am of the opinion you ought to get out of here.”

“These morons have nothing intelligent to say in the best of cases, but what are you on about?” The
fifteen year old inquired with an exasperated exhale.

“You know what the most religious of our populace does to children whose parents are immoral,” the younger girl insisted, pushing the pamphlet into her arms. “Please, escape now and find your siblings. You need to get out of here, trust me!”

Though her companion’s statements gave her more questions than answers, the desperation in her expression was enough to convince the teenager. As the eldest Hamilton strode proudly out with her shoulders square and head pointedly high, she cast her eyes of the book labelled ‘The Reynolds Pamphlet’ and began to read quickly. With each sentence and detail she encountered, her walk became more lethargic once she exited the building, and tears began to fall uncontrollably from her eyes as she read over all the cheating that her beloved mother had done with a man whose name she’d only ever heard in hatred from a woman who lived with them. Her legs slowly gave out underneath her as she read over it, frantically flipping through the pages and crying with more passion as she reached the conclusion with no indication this was fabricated or untruthful in any means.

The images of her little siblings, all of them so helpless, innocent and good, enduring punishment and exile for the things some were far too young to understand is what sent her to her feet and rushing to find them. Phillip was weeping quietly behind his hands in the eating area alone, a sight that shattered her heart anew but gave her relief that he hadn’t endured anything more awful than the knowledge itself.

“Pip,” she greeted solemnly, her own voice weighed by sorrow and betrayal. “C’mon, Pip, we need to get the others. We have to get out of here.”

“Sh-she cheated,” he whispered, his face looked far more youthful than thirteen as he shakily got to his feet. “W-why, Angie? Why would Mama do such a horrible thing to Papa?”

“I…” She choked back her tears, commanding herself that she had to be strong for her siblings. “I don’t know, Pip-Pip. Now make haste, we must retrieve them before anything worse occurs!”

Little Alex was evident to her and Phillip before they laid eyes on him, as he was shoving another child hard against the wall and screaming defenses of their mother before Angelica took him by the shoulders and carried her away. They ran into James walking in the direction of the secondary school, who burst into sobs and clung to his older brother like his life depended on it, but the worst came from retrieving Jackie. The boy who’d just turned five the day before was screaming and fighting against a nun, one that had a switch in hand and was urging the other students to witness what happened to ‘children of whores’, in the outside when the rest of his siblings arrived. Angelica didn’t even feel her feet underneath her, just the action of her snatching the woman’s hands and sending her harshly to the ground once her second younger brother hid underneath her dress in absolute terror.

“You have no permission to do such a thing to my brother, and you are a despicable excuse for a woman of God for doing such a thing to an innocent child!” She screamed furiously, leaning down and seizing the woman by her frock cruelly. “I ought-! I ought to-!!”

“You are just as damned as your mother!” The nun hissed, spitting her face but shrieking herself when the fifteen year old unforgivingly sent her sprawling. “Feel free to throw stones at the devil’s spawn, children! Feast your eyes upon the worst of society!”

Of course Angie’s cold, bordering maniac expression toward Jackie’s schoolmates had them rushing back inside to the nuns who were evidently not absolutely insane like the one who’d tried to harm her brother, so the eldest scooped up her brother and began to lead her family home with
purpose. All through town the pamphlet was practically raining around them, leading to countless whispers and insults to be thrown, and her throat felt raw with all the defending and rage she’d thrown right back until she came upon a rare kind human who joined them for protection.

“Theodosius, the people of this town are despicable!” She exclaimed, her tears cascading down her face freely as her closest friend wrapped his arm around her and took Jackie in his free arm so she could hold fast to little James and Alex. “Have they completely gone mad?!”

“I am afraid that hatred is a contagious emotion. It will not always be this way,” Theodosius reasoned with a sympathetic expression, his pace just as swift as they finally arrived to the house where their mother evidently bedded an evil gentleman. “Is it alright if I come in?”

The thought of asking permission for her role model of a mom came to her by instinct, but Angie immediately nixed it with the bitter resentment rising like bile in her throat. “Please do.”

The morning that would have normally been spent in the education she’d been the top of every other day like this was spent comforting her poor younger brothers, enveloping them with warm food, hugs, reassurance and stories to calm them down. Her beloved Theo was right there the entire time, giving them little projects to take their mind off of it and getting all the groceries their father was intending to before he’d evidently vanished from the home post their department for school. As the boys finally took long, well needed naps, she curled up weakly against her companion and wept out her own sorrow, all of the heartbreak and anger and shock coming out shamelessly across his clothes and into his neck like a hurricane that felt like it wrecked everything in its path.

“I wish I had the answer,” he whispered to her when silence finally took the place of her harsh sobs. “I can’t understand any more than you, but I assure you I will remain by your side no matter what.”

“People will begin to talk, you know. If my mother is…is…” Angie could not bring herself to finish the sentence, but she knew she did not have to. “What is keeping her only daughter from doing the same?”

“I don’t care,” he insisted, and despite the logic and probable instincts to counter his words, she believed him. “I have told you before, my dear, that I love you and I love your siblings and…father above any societal convention or our mothers’ relationships. We will continue as we have been, and if you need anything at all, I am a simple walk or letter away.”

His love sent her weeping again, partly from relief and partly from the pain she knew he would now have to endure in excess from everyone around them. She loved him like she loved her family, as unconditionally and truly since the day they grew close, but the life she led was far too chaotic to settle into a courtship with him. Besides all of that, she knew getting their families’ blessings would be nearly impossible- now more than ever, given how Eliza scorned Theodosia openly- but she was now the most certain she’d ever been that she would marry the young man holding her in his arms like she was the only thing that mattered.

Angelica did not remember falling asleep after she was too exhausted to cry, but she was awoken by a pair of her hands very gently lifting her away from a snoozing Theodosius and into their arms. She looked up expecting her father, but was nevertheless happy to see Uncle Laurens, his own face blotchy but smile loving when they made eye contact.

“Hello, sweetheart,” he greeted softly and warmly, and it was all she had to not break down in tears once more.

“U-Uncle John,” she whispered shakily, burying into his neck immediately and pulling herself half
into his lap. “G-God, I do not understand.”

“Me either, honey,” he whispered into her ear, clasping her close to chest and gently smoothing down her curls. “I promise you that I will be here for you. I’m here now and will continue to be just a few minutes away once I’ve moved to the city.”

“Y-your home is in South Carolina,” she said in utter disbelief. “You want to live there until you d-die, you said.”

“My family is in New York and my siblings and I can visit on special occasion,” he reasoned easily; it was evident he’d made up his mind resolutely. “After all, things are going to be… extenuating around here, I imagine. I’ll be helping out your Papa and you kids all you need.”

“W-h-what about your children?” She asked, but the idea of having the beloved family friend so close was a comforting idea when the world was imploding.

Her uncle gave her a tight but well natured smile as he stroked away some of the hair from her face. “Well, Miss Maria is the most fantastic and reliable nanny I’ve ever had the pleasure of knowing. Perhaps she’d still be willing to reprise it.”

Once Uncle Laurens set his things up in the guest room, she finally gathered her courage beneath her and knocked on the door of Maria’s door. All that she was met with was silence at first, but she didn’t wait too long before the eleven year old girl she’d watched and grown up alongside for several years peeked out.

“Hello Susan,” she greeted kindly; why would she ever treat her less than the girl she knew she was? “Is your mother in?”

“…Yes,” the preteen admitted with a sigh. “If you’re going to be rude to her about my father, I ask you kindly take your grievances far, far from us. We have had just as rough of a day as you.”

“I am not here to talk down upon you; neither of you did anything wrong,” the teenager assured with a shake of her head. “I wanted to check on you. We’ve all been grieving and raging with each other and it doesn’t seem to right not to include you.”

Susan gave her a disbelieving but relieved expression just before the door opened fully from behind her. Poor Maria was standing in slumped, defeated devastation, her face raw with tears and splotchy red marks, and clad in a rumpled and sweat-stained shift that clung to her in places to indicate she’d not stood most of the day. It did not take more than a thought for Angie to embrace the woman she’d lovingly regarded as ‘Aunt’ since she was nine years old, and at once the two were gripping onto the other while choking on snifflses and whimpers. The eleven year old swiftly wrapped her arms around them, pressing her face chaste between their chests and gripping to their clothes as though she’d fall away at any moment.

“Maria.”

Her surrogate aunt nearly jumped out of her skin at the sound of Uncle Laurens’s voice, cowering back as though she’d be struck. Her beloved uncle immediately backed away just a little, extending a saucer with a lovely looking pastry to her as well as a glass of a beautifully colored wine.

“To surviving?” He offered gently, with such care that she flinched.

“You don’t hate me?” The pathetic smallness to her voice absolutely broke the eldest Hamilton child’s heart, and she resolved standing in the corridor with her arm around her surrogate cousin and hand resting on Aunt Maria’s back that she would do whatever it took to keep their family
together going forth.

“Not at all!” John assured with a smile softened by pain and determination. “You are one of the best things to ever happen to this family, ma’am. Won’t you join us for some tea?”

Angelica’s heart warmed in her chest with a glimmer of hope when her aunt gave a tiny smile of her own and took the saucer. “Y-yes, of course.”

During the carriage ride that was swiftly made while paying plentiful money to compensate the children’s usual nanny for such a short notice demand for overnight care, John Laurens found himself with time to think. The night where his life changed for both the best and the worst came to the surface of his thoughts no matter how angrily he tried to suppress them, and it with great reluctance he allowed himself to relive it when he tired of the mental exhaustion before he faced the worst of all his close friends destroyed.

The ball was just as if not more lavish than the ones he attended throughout his adolescence with his family, but the most notable difference is that he was having fun. The twenty six year old was escorting women and the occasion gentleman across the dance floor with the moves he relied on his muscles to remember rather than his forefront of thought, spending all his mental energy flirting and teasing to elicit the attention he’d been craving beneath the stress of war. Once he caught sight of that Elizabeth Schuyler, his heart fluttered within his chest and he couldn’t help but blush and turn away for only a few moments before boldly going out to catch her for a bit of genuine conversation.

They’d danced and talked like they were playing a good natured game of cat and mouse, a notion that lit a fire underneath him like no other had done before. All of his life he’d yearned for someone who matched his wits and was legal to wed and openly flaunt as his own, and he’d finally found her with more than he’d ever dreamed of before. As he watched her be swept away in the dancing bodies, her dark hair falling gradually from its braids and her gorgeous eyes turning back to give him a wink, he felt himself begin the slow freefall into total infatuation.

He was relieved from his memories when he finally made it into the city, dismounting with no time to waste and immediately going to comfort those Elizabeth had left in her wake of unexpected destruction. The children had been difficult and heart wrenching to console, even more so with the youngest members of the family, but it was poor Maria that really drove the cold reality home. The poor woman had endured and survived too much for one person to bear, and this was undoing all of her built up esteem and acceptance/relaxation into a good life in real time. As he sat with her once all of the youths were fast asleep, baby William in his arms after Maria finished performing her wet nurse obligations, his mind drifted in the long waited silence of the night.

New York City was dazzling with the lights, sounds and opportunities, but perhaps she’d take the countryside or southern charm of South Carolina. He was still pink faced and imagining making her his bride when Alexander, the first true love of his life, came up to him with a completely red face and breath stolen away with shameless passion.

“Yo,” he’d whispered into his ear, pulling him to the side of the masses and looking directly at the young lady he’d just danced with. “This one’s mine.”

The only other time his heart would shatter while seeming to cease beating in place would be when he lost his beloved Martha. He’d looked to Eliza, who was talking to Theodosia and eating several pastries, and back to Alexander, who looked pathetically smitten, then back to the gorgeous
bachelorette with ghost tears threatening in his sinuses. Laurens knew then and there that his best friend was absolutely helpless, his eyes sparkling in the candlelight and hands clasping his bicep, and he came to three absolute conclusions at the same time.

“I need to tell you something,” Maria said in a near whisper above her tea cup. “It’s something you will almost undoubtedly judge me for, but given how kind you are being, I cannot bare for you to be disillusioned any longer.”

He had the foresight to gently lay the nineteen day old in the bassinette, which he’d taken from the usual foyer temporarily. “Go ahead.”

“Eliza and I…” She began, pausing to take a shaky breath and clutching her clothing before continuing. “Rather, my ex-husband and Elizabeth…were not the ones who committed the affair. As a matter of fact, he was the one who forced me to beg for shelter at various homes after he tried to harm Susan, and my relations with her only grew from there. I know homosexuality is a terrible sin, sir, and I don’t blame you if you think less of me-”

“Don’t be prosperous,” he interjected gently, a notion that made her face deepen in color but cease the self-deprecation. “I am of the opinion you and I have both known for a very long time what the other feels about those of the same gender, particularly those who we reside alongside as close friends. Homosexuality is only a crime within the laws of land, my dear; it is the most natural and obvious state of being within the world along with heterosexuality. I must admit it does bring me a bit of comfort to know she was in better hands than that lowlife’s.”

“I ruined her marriage now,” she mourned softly, shakily. “Had I not been such a whore to my own desires…”

“Did Alexander know beforehand?”

“P-pardon?”

“He allowed you to reside here, did he not?” John pointed out easily. “You cracked the truth to me only after a bit of extra compassion. It would not come as a shock to me if he already knew.”

The woman hesitated for a moment, then looked down with a soft sigh. “He did know the truth, yes. He responded to me quite like you, and for that I am eternally grateful.”

“It is nothing but just love for a lovely lady,” Laurens insisted, taking her hands in his and squeezing comfortingly. “You should not have bedded a wed woman, no. However, it was Elizabeth and Elizabeth alone who thrust us all into the pit of despair and unknown, and we must all bear the consequences without blaming ourselves for things out of control. Does that make sense?”

When she smiled timidly and embraced him tightly, he felt as though at least one of the many pieces of his heart had been slotted back into place. “Y-yes, Johnny, of course.”

Despite all of his campaigning and movements to liberate the slaves his family owned, John was still the son of Henry Laurens, and that made him an object of desire. From the very moment he could considered even loosely a bachelor or eligible, hordes of women were upon him with their lidded eyes and gentle touches, and it had only been because of his loving mother and beloved younger sister he didn’t sink into the hands of the first person who seemed genuine. The war gave him a means to escape the constant grooming while making him even more longed for by the fillies back home, but he’d proudly maintained being a single man until this point.
Alexander, of course, was a completely different case. He was just a kid from the Caribbean, an orphan and a bastard who came into the country so quickly he’d hardly caught his breath. None of those who were always bedding him would desire someone with no little social standing and certainty about his lacking assets, but he knew how loving, loyal and sincere his best friend was and how much he desired a stroke of joy after a tortuously hard life. He took Eliza to be kind, if nothing else, and his ability to pursue her if only for a little bit would do a lot to relit the fire beneath the young aide-de-camp.

Even if he told himself there would countless others just like her, even then he knew that wasn’t true.

“I have someone who’d love to make your acquaintance,” he’d explained to her when he retrieved her from her conversation.

“So where are you taking me?” She was smiling at him, her eyes as youthful and hopeful as so many he’d taken for the night of their lives before.

He’d grin and squeezed her bicep gently, swaying her away from a couple elaborately moving the music to prevent collision. “I hate to make promises I can’t keep, but I’m about to change your life.”

Maria eventually went back to her room and took the baby with her, so he had time to clean up the usual mess from the day and sit in the front foyer in wait. When the morning was young, he was awakened from his light slumber by the door being heaved open, and he was hopeful his best friend had made it home until Peggy Schuyler came hurrying inside with her hair wild and disheveled from evident travel and face tinted with sorrow.

“J-Jonathan?” She whispered, looking just as stunned as he felt.

“Margarita,” he replied sarcastically, as he knew how she felt about her full name but was thrilled to see her in the flesh regardless. “It’s been far too long.”

He’d hardly gotten to his feet before she was in his arms, her skirts swinging to catch up to her body with a small sob erupting from her lips. All the tears he’d been commanding back since he’d initially reacted to the pamphlet came pouring out at once before he could try and remain strong before one of his best friends, and he could imagine what they looked like as they sunk down into the floor in each other’s arms and cried as if their Elizabeth had ceased her worldly stay. When they mutually began to get their bearings, he cradled her face in his hands and wiped away the rather smeared minimal makeup she’d evidently been wearing with a fond, abet shaky, smile.

“She has created quite a stir, has she not?” He half-joked, earning a sarcastic, short laugh and snuffle from her younger sister.

“What else is new?” She replied weakly, laying her head against him before guiding him to his feet. “Alexander is passed out a few blocks down. I tried to get him into the carriage, but I couldn’t budge him and nobody would assist me.”

“The city is a beast,” he remarked after cursing under his breath and hurrying to put his shoes on. “We must make haste before he is robbed!”

Luckily, Alexander was as she’d been forced to leave him and with all of his money, watch and marriage ring in tact as he lay on the side of the road in a drunken heap. Together Laurens got him to his feet and into the cart, laying him across the back bench and taking command of the horse while Peggy lovingly tended to the man wasted out of his senses. It was no small task to get him
upstairs once they’d arrived back at his home, and getting him sober while treating his fever, grief and torn-up stomach was tedious and took all night, but it didn’t have to be said that neither of them truly minded.

“Here he is!” John announced as they reached Alexander, who looked ready to implode from all the redness to his face or the anxious energy he was trying to subtly banish away. “The man, the myth, the legend, the gentleman who would kill to have a dance with you!”

“Alexander Hamilton,” his comrade clarified in a tone wobbling with uncertainly but clear with charm. “I’m at your service, ma’am.”

“Elizabeth Schuyler,” she responded with pink flushing into her own face and her curtsey expertly rehearsed. “It’s a pleasure to meet you. Do you two know each other?”

“He’s my best friend,” Laurens noted with a proud beam. “He is also an aide-de-camp to the general. I am certainly not implying you ought to dance with all of us, good ma’am, but I assure this one is a worthy partner.”

“Thank you for all your service, sir,” she said with sincerity, and for a moment he allowed himself to believe she’d disprove his knowledge about what her union with Alexander would do.

Even if her father was well respected in her home country, Eliza was still making a name for herself and her family while having just enough money to indulge in the fanciful while making a respectable living. If she were after him, her status would be elevated, but it was not due to naïvetés that he was attempting to set that aside. Elevation is something that Alex and Eliza both needed for their social wellbeing, and of course the poor man’s fragile heart...

“Why should you thank me?” Alexander immediately blurted, his eyes wide as he looked her up and down, and John knew then and there that their fondness for the other was a done deal. “You came from a wealthy family, leaving it all behind to begin anew in America with your sisters that you allegedly pulled along for the ride. You have done leaps and bounds more than any man in our time, and you continue to surprise the world with your intellect, wit, and of course, your unmatched beauty. Truly, thank you.”

“I’ll leave you to it!” He’d announced with a knowing grin, winking and wiping away the tears seeping through his lashes as they began to dance and talk the night away.

When he woke up, he discovered that he’d unwittingly passed out at the foot of Alexander’s bed, but someone had been kind enough to put a couple of pillows beneath/around his head and covered him up with a warm blanket. Said best friend was fast asleep, but a quick check with his head made him realize his fever was no more while he lightly snored, so he let him be. The sun was streaming in brightly from the window, indicating it was either late morning or early afternoon, and he noted the hefty silence in the house as he tamed his hair, cleaned his face and got dressed. Fortunately, a note from Maria on the oven door explained she’d taken the children out of town for the weekend and that Peggy should be back from the town around noon while hoping he’d prepare dinner. Given how a look over the clock revealed the time to be a quarter until 2 PM, he noted with a chuckle that her estimation of the notoriously tardy Peggy had been off.

The unmistakable footfall from upstairs alarmed him, to say the least. He slowly put down the ingredients he was pulling out for making the meal he had in mind, making his way up the stairs and feeling his breath hitch in his chest when he noted Elizabeth’s office door to be partially open.

“Are you nervous?” Alexander asked as he tied his hair back into a neat ponytail, blush on his cheeks from secondhand excitement.
“Terrified,” John admitted as he stood up, admiring himself in the looking glass and dusting off the suit for the fiftieth time that hour. “I am of the opinion if she knew what she was getting into, she’d turn right around and flee the isle.”

“Don’t be ridiculous! She is the luckiest woman in the world!” His best friend assured confidently, clasping his shoulders and pressing their foreheads together. “I am so excited for you, my dear brother.”

“Knock, knock?” Eliza poked her head around the corner and beamed when she saw the two of them. “Why, hello, Handsome and Handsomer!”

“What is who?” He’d teased, neglecting to acknowledge the familiar pang in his heart when she went first to her husband and kissed him sweetly upon the lips.

“You look stunning,” she assured him with a beam. “She is a very lucky woman, Johnny. She better treat you right or I’ll have her head!”

As he stood at the altar, eyes glassy with tears of joy and anxiety, he wondered if his heart would ever settle back into its normal rhythm. It was only when he saw her clad in a beautiful dress she’d made and modified herself, her own face full of bliss and unconditional love while she carefully concealed the tiny baby they knew was now growing inside her, that he became certain that for his wife, he’d be more than satisfied.

“Laurens!” Elizabeth got to her feet from being hunched over the damned pamphlet, her eyes puffy but expression relieved as she quickly went to embrace him.

All of the emotions of the past 24 hours crashed over him at once. As he stood in place and she approached, all he could see was Maria, broken down and as afraid as she was as a battered housewife, his best friend drunk out of his mind in an attempt to forget all the betrayal, one of his best friends up all night as they tried to keep what was shattered together, and he couldn’t bring himself to hug her back. Instead, he lightly placed his fingertips on her back as she clung to him, and the coldness engulfing his heart was the only thing that felt appropriate for what she’d done.

“Eliza~” John spoke in the loving way he’d done so many times past before gently, yet quite firmly, pushing her away. “Congratulations.”

She looked bewildered. He knew that she had nothing on the shock and devastation she’d broke upon her family and loved ones, and what she’d done to their reputations.

“You have invented a new kind of stupid,” he stated with the anger seeping gradually into his words. “This is a damage you can never undo kind of stupid, an open all the cages in the zoo kind of stupid. All of your accomplishments and truly, you didn’t think this through?! THAT kind of stupid!”

As his best female friend stared at him, her expression quickly changed to that of annoyance, one identical to how she tended to view her enemies. This did little to dull the flame exploding up through his senses, sending him striding past her and seizing the cursed book off of her desk with an unforgiving snatch.

“So let’s review. You took a rumor that a few- maybe two- people knew and refuted it by sharing an affair of which, let’s see…no one has accused you,” Laurens seethed, snapping open the pages and jabbing at the inside. “Around the time when we went up to New York City, to boot! I beg you to take a break, but you refuse to.”
Now he slammed it on the desk, jarring the decorations and lamp alike, but she’d gone silent down. Now her face was pale, her gaze set to the floor as he slowly came closer to her with no intentions of letting her slide like he always thought he would no matter what she did.

“You were just so scared of what your enemies could do to you. If this is any case of example, you’re the only enemy that you ever worried you could lose to!” He grasped her arms, forcing her to look into his eyes with his fingers pressing rigidly into her arms. “Do you have any idea of why shits like Jefferson can do what they want? They don’t dignify school yard taunts with a response, so yeah. Congratulations!”

Given how she didn’t look in his eyes, John decided she was no longer worth the righteous fury. He let her go and began for the door, but her voice stopped him in his tracks.

“Laurens…”

“You’ve redefined not only your, but OUR, legacies!” He snapped, not giving her the dignity of turning around. “Congratulations!”

Now her voice rang out desperately, tone heavy with tears and regret she was trying to pull up into coherent defense. “I only did it to protect us from something worse! Don’t you know I’d only do it if I was certain we’d prosper from it in the end; I could have never guessed this! It was an act of political sacrifice!”

“…Sacrifice?” The memories rushed over him like a waterfall and he looked up to the portrait they’d recently had done of their entire beautiful family, one that hung proudly in the hallway.

When he turned back around, he could not deny how heartbroken she clearly was despite his fairly brought on resentment. With a heart that was sinking hard into his belly, John walked back toward her, his own eyes threatened by tears once again while he commanded them away by his prissiness.

“I languished in a rapid marriage from a lady in London, but my joy came from reading your letters,” he recounted to her with solemn remembrance. “My wife is now gone and we are what’s left, so what did it all get us? The sacrifices were made and doesn’t wipe their tears or the years away, so I’m back in the city and I’m here to stay. I’m sure you know what I’m here to do.”

Her small, warm hand slipped over his trembling ones. “John-“

The resentment tugged at his heart, turning off his warm compassion for her like he might squelch the flame in a lantern. He gently pulled his hands away, looking down to her and setting his jaw.

“I’m not here for you,” he stated with cool apathy.

Elizabeth’s expression was crumpling, but she held his gaze with stubborn pride. He began walking toward her again, forcing her to step back gradually as the heartbreak beneath the rage began to fall out with every statement.

“I thought I knew you like I know my own mind, I would never find anyone was trusting or as kind,” he declared testily, voice gradually strengthening to borderline shouting. “And a million years ago he said to me ‘This one’s mine’, so I, stood by…Do you know why?”

Tears were brimming over both of their eyes now, and he grasped her by the shoulders as his began to drip down his face.

“I love you both more than anything in this life! I will choose your happiness over mine every time!” He exclaimed passionately, face crumpling but eyes full of determination. “Eliza!”
“Alexander…” She said barely above a whisper.

“He’s the best thing in our lives!” He decreed, pulling her all the closer in insistence she’d hear exactly what he had to say. “So don’t you ever lose sight of the fact that you have been blessed with the best spouse!”

When he released her, she took a few wary steps back, but he was not finished quite yet. He squared his shoulders, closing most of the distance between them and forcing her gaze to lock with his own out of the sheer intensity of his own.

“Congratulations!” He condemned righteously. “For the rest of our lives, every sacrifice you make is for my best friend, give him the best life!”

There was nothing more to say, he realized as all the vigor drained out when he saw how much she’d crumpled into her tears. Turning on his heels, Laurens made his way to the door, grasping the door handle and giving her one last look before shutting her in to mourn by herself for a change.

“Congratulations.”

Chapter End Notes

PLEASE remember to leave a kudos/bookmark/subscribe/LEAVE A REVIEW if it so compels you! ♥ Side note, they are most likely having roasted Ham for dinner, if anyone is wondering~
The Right to a Heart

Chapter Summary

The repercussions for the worst of mistakes behind the best of intents are never as black and white as the victims would intend. The most dire of circumstances bring two wildly opposing forces together, and the oldest of comrades return in the wake of sorrow.

Chapter Notes

10,338 words. That is all. o_o

Alexander’s memory did not return to him for the events that occurred immediately following the publication of The Reynolds Pamphlet, but if what John, Maria and Peggy explained was as truthful as he expected, that was likely for the best. He’d laid in bed for approximately 23 of the 24 hours of the two days the children were not in the home, only summoning his willpower to rinse his body and sit in the living room when they came back home. Of course he was fully aware of his wife’s presence in the home despite John not mentioning it, but he simply ignored her and pretending to be asleep the couple of times she lingered in the doorway before fleeing back to her office. The night finally enveloped the grieving, devastated household, marking the end of three days since the affair became public knowledge, and he summoned his energy from beneath his depression to carry them to bed and tuck them in with bedtime stories ready to be read.

“Papa?” Jackie whispered lethargically as he tucked the child into his bed with plenty of face kisses to soothe him.

“Yes, angel?” He responded softly as he went to the armchair placed between his and James’s bed.

“Do you still love Mommy?”

Their second youngest boy was far too young to understand all that had been done, only that it meant terrible things for all of them and that his parents weren’t speaking. He felt he should be honest regardless, even if he was watering down the complications that weaved within the reality of how he felt about the woman he’d made six beautiful children with.

“Yes, baby,” Alexander confirmed gently. “I still love your mommy with all my heart.”

“Are you and Mama gonna get divorced?” James quipped tentatively, his arms clutching the various stuffed animals that he’d made and repaired for him over the years like his younger brother.

“…I don’t know, son. I do know that no matter what happens, we both love you more than anything,” their father responded before picking up the large book full of tales of love and happy endings. “Now, which one would you like to hear tonight?”
Once the youngest that weren’t infants were asleep, Alexander made his way into Alex and Phillip’s room. He was greeted with the heartbreaking sight of his middle child curled up in his big brother’s lap, face buried into his neck and hair disheveled from clear remnants of crying; Phillip gave him a tight smile as he slowly stepped inside.

“I thought Mommy loved us all!” Alex wept as he slowly lifted the nine year old into his own arms. “I thought she never wanted to hurt us!”

“Of course she loves us and didn’t want to cause us harm,” he soothed the best he could; he’d thought the same once.

“Then why did she ruin our reputation?!” The child demanded, reciting a word one of his older siblings or aunt/uncle had unwittingly taught him.

“Sometimes we hurt the people we care most about,” the father reasoned evenly, stroking down his hair neatly and kissing his warm forehead. “It doesn’t make it right, but even grownups can make some really big mistakes. No matter what, my sweet child, we will stick together. Deal?”

With a small sniffle and a big hug around his parent’s neck, little Alex exhaled and ceased his tears. “Deal.”

Even if his oldest male child rolled over and said ‘goodnight’ before he began reading from the fairytale book, Alexander was pleased to know that he was listening regardless of the ‘tough guy’ façade he was putting on. The two of them were fast asleep in no time, leaving him to go check on his eldest and only daughter only to find her room surprisingly vacant. Worry began pooling in his chest and stomach immediately, and he’d looked over every room in the house with growing anxiety before a door snapped shut with swift but controlled anger and she came fuming out of her mother’s office.

“Angelica-” He stated gently, but the fifteen year old simply shook her head and caught his extended hands in her owns to block the hug he was offering.

“I don’t want to talk,” she said quietly and respectfully despite the anger and pain dripping into her terse tone.

“Alight, honey. I’ll be in my bedroom if you change your mind,” he replied, immediately letting her brush past and lock herself in the room under the recognition that she was much like him when she was in a lot of pain.

With his offspring now either sound asleep or out of hand, he trudged into the bedroom that he intended to sleep in alone going forward. Despite the fact it was August, the early New York chill inspired him to turn on and tend to the fireplace, giving him an excuse to sit down in his casual clothing and begin to read to attempt clearing her from his mind. With all the grief plaguing his mind, however, it was impossible to not look up and over at the door or the portrait of their once generally happy family hanging proudly of the mantle, and eventually he gave up and settled for seizing the box he’d kept and preserved almost all of her letters in from the first ones from her going to war.

Her figure in the doorway was given away as he paused re-reading the fifth or sixth piece of parchment, and while he’d love to ignore her as he’d been doing the past nights, he realized he could no longer turn the other cheek to someone who’d he loved and forgiven so much who’d still go and do what she’d done to everyone they loved. His fingers tightened around the paper and he kept his back to her to save a little face, but he spoke clearly and coldly against the heat of the fire.
“I saved every letter you wrote me,” he recounted aloud, looking down at the papers with resigned love that still lit his heart aflame. “From the moment I read them, I knew you were mine, you said were mine, so I thought you were mine.”

Her shadow grew larger on the wall, and he rigidly put up his hand as a firm, nonverbal warning to stop advancing; she surprisingly complied. He finished rereading the last of the lines of the last letter she sent before one of their overdue dates to a remarkable play, setting it to the side and picking up the next few with a precarious grip between his index finger and thumb.

“Do you know what Laurens said when I once I asked for his advice?” He inquired rhetorically. “He said, ‘Just be careful with that one, love. She will do what it takes to survive.’”

The thought of the winter’s ball where he first began to sweep her off her feet, his heart longing to keep her always when he knew it was nearly impossible to harness such a remarkable force such as her. In her youth, she burned brighter than the sun and was as wild and whimsical as the wind, and as she’d aged the same ambition had been harnessed in her aging but never squelched. It was all of these reasons she’d done such a foolish response now, slashing out to criticism and slander the way she had all her life. Was she simply immature and he’d been love-struck all these years to see it?

“I’m rereading the letters you wrote me,” he told her in a voice barely above a whisper. “I’m searching and scanning for answers in every line, for some kind of sign…God, when you were mine….The world seemed to burn.”

The flames were growing steadily more irritant against his face the longer he gazed directly into them, so he got to his feet and stared down condemningly at the box. Her shadow was stationary against the wallpaper, inspiring him to look over his shoulder and show her the agony she was putting him through in real time.

“You published the letters she wrote you,” he stated coldly, reminding her that he knew the real truth more than any enemy ever could and that should’ve been enough to keep her mouth shut. “You told the whole world that you brought some man into our bed, and while you cleared your name, you have ruined our lives.”

“Alexander…” Her voice was soft against the raging shadows cast by the flames and his tears slipped from his eyes as he turned to face her entirely.

“Do you know the reason I forgave you when you told me what you’d done?” He demanded, eyes locking on hers unforgivingly. “I said, ‘I have married an Icarus, who has flown to close to the sun’. But you and your words, obsessed with your legacy. My logic, it bordered on senseless, you were helpless and did everything just right so I could forgive you…you, you, you-!”

His breath hitched on the truth too terrible to name, so he simply crumpled up one of the letters and chucked it, hitting her squarely in the chest. Immediately she took several steps back, her expression horrified and face full of streamed tears, but he relished in the feeling it gave him to destroy something she’d once worked so painstakingly on. He seized the next few, locking their gazes once more before pointedly ripping them apart pointedly and throwing them to his feet.

“I am not naïve!” He hissed to her, stepping closer while making a point to kick away the pieces that were once her loving handwriting. “I have seen history’s eyes all around you, and don’t think I don’t see how you flirt and charm, with all of your charms! I put us through counseling, I gave you my heart, and I ask you countless times, ‘Would that be enough? Isn’t this enough?!’ Nothing will ever be enough; you’ve torn it all apart, so sit back and watch it burn!”

His wife was now clasping her hands over her mouth and weeping audibly, but he’d not felt so
empowered since his youngest glory days. Despite all of his raging and condemning, he realized before he could reek more havoc that she did not deserve so much of a reaction from someone she claimed she loved if all the emotions he’d given trustingly to her, even in the face of betrayal, ending up meaning nothing in the end. With some reluctance, he gathered up the scraps and moved to discard them in the bin before his eye caught the fireplace, still steady and strongly burning in the otherwise dark and cool room.

“I’m erasing myself from the narrative,” he nearly whispered while knowing full well she got every word, grip tightening as he picked up the box he’d once made and decorated just for the affectionate, passionate and direct words she’d artfully gifted to him. “Let future historians wonder how Alexander reacted when you broke his heart…”

Her gorgeous brown eyes sparkled in the firelight as she stared him in shock, watching helplessly from near the doorway as he turned profile toward their heater. “I-”

The tears came pouring out all at once as he threw the pieces into the flames, the preservative coating popping first as the parchment dissolving against the inferno. “You have thrown it all away, I’m watching it burn!”

Her sobs became more audible, but he was nowhere near finished in forcing her to witness his letting go of what he once valued above most everything else. Alexander grabbed the letters in handfuls, casting them away while the heartbeat streaked down his face uncontrollably and his body trembled with the effort it took mentally and emotionally to ignore the love they’d once had. Memories of their being a young couple and acting as innocent and enamored as they once were flashed through his mind along with the moments each of their children were born, all of the good and bad days alike, the nights they became young again under the care of the other…It was as though he was releasing it all to never return, severing the bond lovingly tending throughout the years as the ultimate consequence for her metaphorically doing the same.

“No right to my heart!” He declared to her as he held the last of them, those that were from when they were first apart. “The city has no place in our bed! They don’t get to know what I said…”

It was now that his Elizabeth came hurrying forward, grasping his face between her shaking hands before he turned away with furious pride. He did not miss how she next grabbed for the papers; that must be what she was truly after if she wouldn’t so much as attempt to comfort him if it saved her ‘legacy’. His response was, of course, to grab her wrist, seizing the papers damagingly in his dominant hand, and throw them with full force into the roaring flames that were devouring all of the ink and fibers like a ravenous animal finally set out.

“I’m burning the memories, burning each letter that might have redeemed you!” He hissed, shoving her back and resolving he did not care how she tripped over her gown and cried out softly. “You forfeit all rights to my heart! You forfeit the place in our bed-!”

Elizabeth backpedaled swiftly, gripping onto the fabric and fleeing desperately into the hallway. Somewhat like he’d once done when he’d pursue her to sweep her into kisses and cuddles, the father to their babies took off after her in close quarters, making sure there was no chance she’d miss the severing of their martial sanction.

“You can sleep at your sister’s instead!” Laurens was there immediately, holding him back as she made haste for the door. “With only the memory, of when you were mine~!”

The word hung on the edge of his tongue, reverberating in all of the ears of those who were listening as he broke down into soft sobs while sinking down to his knees. His wife stood there in
the doorway, hand frozen in a grip of the doorknob and own grief just as prominent, and time seemed to stand perfectly still as the spouses wept over the loss of the other and longed irrefutably to take the other in their arms while knowing they could never as they once did in any prior argument.

It was bold of her to walk toward him, of course. It was even more so daring for her get right before him, sinking to her own knees with her sobs equally unfiltered, and it was outright scandalous for her to take his hands and place a messy, shakily delivered kiss onto their ring fingers. With movements that felt like those of someone else’s but with intention as clear as her face before him, Alexander slipped his ring right over and pressed it into her palm before rising to his feet and stepping back while looking into her eyes one last time.

“I hope that you…” He faltered only momentarily before turning his back on her and going upstairs to check on the only good thing he saw to come from all of his love, dedication and time invested to her. “…burn.”

As she moved the last of her sister’s belongings into her home in New York, Peggy found herself steaming as much as she was reflecting. Her husband had been lovely to her for most of their time wed, but the loss of their two children very early in life had put an unmistakable strain on their union while they struggled to raise their surviving son the best they knew how. Living both near and so far from her surviving closest in age sister was certainly not the easiest thing to be done, and now that Eliza had gone and messed up the best things in her life, she couldn’t help but resent the fact she’d been abruptly saddled to handle the biggest weight of sibling now that she’d gotten herself booted from her own home.

“Does the baby have to come?” Her little Stephan inquired unhappily from her side as baby William squalled for the third time within the hour.

“He isn’t even a month of age!” She scolded gently, squishing the nine year old’s cheek fondly before going back to tidying up the newly designated guest room. “He cannot be apart from his mama, son.”

“But Aunt Maria is a…a ‘wet nurse’!” He protested in a whine. “She can feed him!”

“Son, I am by far the least proper choice for someone to complain to when it comes to spending time with one’s baby,” his mother said firmly. “If you are going to fuss, you ought to write to your father. I will hear not another word about it.”

The child immediately hushed up and took off out of the room, leaving her the silence to sigh against. Her husband would be remaining in Albany for the time being and she was initially relieved somewhat for the release of obligation to him, but she was unexpectedly missing his close presence already, which just added to the stress. The thirty nine year old pondered how their older sister might have handled this situation as she headed into the foyer, discovering her closest in age sister to be there already in a partially crumpled heap on the couch with the baby fast asleep in the nearby bassinet.

“Betsey?” Margarita inquired softly, guilt washing over her immediately for thinking so poorly of their arrangements when everyone in the family was neglecting how the adulterer felt save for, well, her.

Eliza lifted up her head slowly, the little makeup she’d somehow managed to put on terribly
smeared and hair fraying all around the loose ponytail. “I have ruined everything, sister. I am the most foolish woman to walk this Earth; I would be better as dead.”

“Eliza!” Immediately she rushed to her sibling’s side and threw her arms around her, nestling her into her bosom and neck like she’d seen Angelica do for years. “Shhh, my lovely Betsey. I would never cease mourning if you were to extinguish your flame prematurely, so I implore you not to think that way.”

“I know I have brought shame to all of us,” the elder sister said in a hoarse whisper. “You do not want to be saddled with me full time any more than my husband, John, or Maria.”

The guilt was practically drowning her now for slipping into the old vain habits of her youth, and she kissed her sibling back and forth on each cheek until she finally got a tiny smile from her. “Oh, Betsey. We both know I have never been known for my maturity, and is through love I persist past any immature notions. What do I care what people think of us? You and I grew up hand and hand, hearts connected through much worse tragedies than this, and I will not dismiss you in the time of your greatest need.”

The two locked eyes for a few long moments before she was tackled back into the couch cushions under her sister’s weight, Eliza’s tears practically pouring into her shoulder and dress as she clung to her as tightly as she could. Peggy’s heart expanded, engulfing this new life with compassion as she hugged the woman she’d always look up no matter what jostles and mistakes either of them made. They clung to each other for quite some time before the baby stirred and whined, sending Betsey to her feet to take care of the child while she went into the kitchen to prepare dinner, and it was then and there that youngest ‘Schuyler sister’ made up her mind that they would find a way to be alright despite what may come.

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**Late January, 1798**

“Come on! Come to Aunt Peggy!” Margarita encouraged William, who was now a spritely five month old that was doing his very best to achieve locomotion faster than any baby she’d ever seen. “That’s it, get your bearers! Wait, wait- Noooo!”

She fell back dramatically when the infant instead went to her son, who looked thrilled and smug at the notion of being preferred over his mother, while the baby giggled furiously and clapped.

Throughout the near half year that had come to pass since The Reynolds Pamphlet’s publication, the small sector of the family had gotten exceptionally close, and amendments had slowly begun to form between the young woman whose life was just as shattered in the pages of the book and her beloved family. Eliza got to see her children any time she pleased, particularly on weekends and sharing them civilly with Alexander during holidays, and their youngest was thriving in his youth as always, so things were better sooner than Peggy had originally imagined. Her husband was now fully moved with the rest of their belongings to their new estate and seemed to be invigorated with presence of little Will, so despite the fact Laurens and Eliza hardly spoke now and Alexander had little to nothing to do with her aside from terse discussions and polite silence to protect the children, things were moderately alright.

“I’ll get it!” Eliza called an unexpected knock came from the front door, hurrying in from her office space and opening the barrier with grandeur. “Hello, how can- Mother?”

“Don’t ask so offended!” Their mother immediately commanded, nose upturned as she proudly walked inside their home. “Can’t a grandmother pay visit to her grandchildren? Well…one of
them, at least."

It didn’t take a careful eye to miss how Eliza immediately crumpled under the matriarch’s harsh words, and Peggy immediately scowled. While their father had been patient and said minimal about the disaster in the Hamilton household and their younger siblings largely disregarded it, their mother had not paid a bit of mind to the polite love and respect and took nearly every opportunity to remind her of her shortcomings, something that poor Eliza took harder than she ever would’ve before and was wearing down on the forty one year old more than ever.

“That is not necessary,” she reminded sharply, going to stand at her sibling’s side and wrapping a protective arm around her.

William babbled softly, breaking up some of the awkward tension and sending the grandmother to doting over him as she ought to. The sisters took the opportunity to finish up making their lunch, portioning the meat accordingly and sweetening the corn before setting everyone around for the meal, and unsurprisingly her elder sibling avoided their mother’s gaze until it was quite impossible to.

“How are things with you and Alexander?” Catherine inquired against the silence that ensued her husband telling a funny anecdote.

“Mother,” Margarita said sharply, but Eliza simply shook her head and spoke for herself.

“We are civil and that is all anybody is expecting,” she stated in a strong voice. “I do not pretend to know all of what he feels for me or if things can ever progress from here, but I am in no position to make demands. As his wife, I will continue to do things for him from afar and let him do as he will otherwise.”

Their mom looked at her for a long moment before going back to eating, not without adding a snide, “And to think I told dear Barbara wrong.”

“What do you mean?” Stephan- or Steve, as she’d called him since the birth of their son- asked while putting a supportive hand over his wife’s in order to prevent her from snapping back immediately.

“Most people are of the opinion that you do not intend to be the wife your husband so clearly needs,” Catherine replied coldly, not a hint of remorse on her hauntingly beautiful face. “We all hoped, dare I say, that this little stunt of yours would teach you your place in the home and to your family, but if your continuing in career and hiding behind your younger sister is any sign, I suppose I had too much faith in your immature reasoning.”

“Mother, that is quite enough!” Peggy commanded in a strong voice, gaze hard as she got to her feet.

“You don’t know everything there is to know about the world and how I ought to be!” Eliza slammed her hands on the table and got to her feet, glaring despite how the baby immediately started wailing. “Your subservience to Papa is all well and good, but that is not the only way to live your life! I have accomplished so much in my life- I am just as responsible for getting us here as Angelica!- and yet you criticize me and bring me down at every chance you get when I make one big mistake! No matter what I do, I’m never good enough for you, and you hate me because I can’t take the place of Angelica!”

“That is not true-!” The matriarch began, but Elizabeth simply plowed forward and stepped slowly in her direction until they were practically nose to nose.
“You don’t know a damn thing about me!” She raved, heartbreak drowning out the rage with nearly every word. “You want me to be a good housewife and follow in your footsteps because it’s all you’ve ever known, and you’ve held me down more than a society that gives me enough Hell. I needed you to be by my side and supporting me on, but instead you are never satisfied and refuse to see the reason of what I’ve proven time and time again. You may have been in my life, Mother, but you haven’t been around. God help me, I am certain…I am certain that no matter what, I shall be a better mother than you!”

With that she lifted her youngest in her arms and fled outside in sobs contained behind her hands, and the rest of the family was left to sit in stunned awe for several moments. Slowly and deliberately, Peggy finally got to her own feet and walked to her parent’s side, placing a hand on her shoulder that was not smacked away for the first time in a long time.

“When I have done I have done from love,” Catherine finally stated in a tone void of shown emotion, her face the eerie mirror of the hurt she was keeping as perfectly composed as ever. “Whether you girls choose to believe it…Well, I will not concern myself with it.”

Within the next half hour the aging woman was back in her carriage and riding away without as much as a glance to her eldest surviving daughter, a notion that hurt the younger of the duo more than anything else. It was then that she gave her son an extra helping of his favorite pie and left him to read a nice book with his papa before making her way into the area designated for a garden, a space that was mostly concrete at present and covered with invading species of plant due to the lack of time to fix it up nicely. Her sister was sitting on the broken, old bench near the center, her baby bundled up in all her extra clothing to guard him from the winter chill, so the younger woman immediately bundled the thick blanket she’d retrieved from the linen closet around the pair before sitting carefully just over the jagged rest of the seat.

“Some people never change,” she noted in an attempt to somewhat lighten the mood, but she didn’t take it personal when her sibling deadpanned her before looking down to William.

“I can’t help but wonder if I’m the mirror of what I’ve always tried to do more than,” Eliza stated in a voice hardly above a whisper. “I’m not around for the little ones I love more than anything. Am I fated to always harm the people I’ve only ever wanted to help become the best versions of themselves? Perhaps I am just an old bitch if not.”

“Mother’s opinion is hardly gospel,” Peggy replied with the confidence her sister seemed to desperately need. “You were correct in everything you said. It was bound to happen, no?”

“Haven’t I made a fool of myself enough without burning yet another familial bridge?” Her senior mourned. “Before you know it, there will be no coming back from this with anybody I grew up with.”

“You have been doing a lot in letting us in and letting us assist,” Peggy reminded. “You don’t have to punish yourself repeatedly by staying in contact with someone who is toxic. Even if you don’t believe it, you’re allowed to love someone enough to let them go.”

“And if she does not come back?”

“Then it is simply so. You still have some awesome siblings and one little sister who is always be your side, you melodramatic ever new delight.”

Margarita simply laughed good naturedly as Elizabeth threw her arms around her, burrowing into her as closely as they could without suffocating the infant as the unforgiving wind billowed around them. “Best of family and best of sisters, my beloved Peggy.”
“I wouldn’t go that far,” the junior remarked; her knowledge that this was totally true would wait for less emotional times. “Now, let’s get you both inside and we can have some pie. I didn’t make it just so we could cry and neglect it!”

Unfortunately, the falling out with their mother was not the most dramatic thing that would come to pass that week, as the two would soon find out. Thomas Jefferson was on his soapbox yet again about the size and political tension within their military forces, an idea that irked her sibling more than ever now that she’d taken to making her living within said defendant forces, and she was due for a long awaited debate with the blowhard of a vice president in the same location they’d once engaged in cabinet meetings. She helped her sister brush and primp her hair into a neat bun—she’d let it grow out since the Pamphlet temporarily destroyed her self-image beyond repair—before reaching into her pockets to pull out a brand new marigold ribbon that complemented the dress inherited from their eldest sibling, which the surviving eldest now wore with pride.

“Here you go,” she announced, gently tying it into her hair and smiling lovingly when Eliza teared up.

“I love it, Peg,” she whispered, standing up and embracing her tightly before turning back around to finish untucking the folds of her corset. “Hmph, this thing doesn’t fit like it used to. Perhaps we can get another made while we’re out.”

“I wish I could still fit into mine like that!” The younger woman exclaimed with a fond squeeze on her shoulders. “Yes, we will get another made to accommodate you finally filling out post the birth of six children.”

The two laughed and playfully batted at the other briefly, and soon they were loaded up and headed to the court house with the baby content in Maria’s care. Most of the eyes in the room turned to the duo as they proudly strode in, but as though she were young and the affair hadn’t kept her from the public for most of the preceding in the aftermath, Elizabeth ignored them and took her place at her usual stand with little given away on her face. Thomas immediately smirked at her and kicked up a leg in a relaxed position upon his knee, but with pride overflowing onto her face the youngest sister of a former trio watched her senior simply turn the other cheek and look over her notes.

It wasn’t long before the debate commenced, and naturally the politeness dissolved as soon as it came regardless. The two powerhouses were slamming into each other with all the rigor of the day they first met, practically dancing in the way they physically accented their jabs, but the remark that came in the height of the argument was what sent a hush over the room.

“The government overseeing a training camp from our young and impressionable soldiers?!” Jefferson demanded with a scoff. “Perhaps you’d do just as well to supervise them, then. Lord knows that you love to engage with other men when your husband waits up at home—Oh wait, you don’t have one of those anymore, do you? Serves you right for being such a floozy. Truly, ladies and gentleman of the jury, how long are we going to keep listening to this bitch?!”

It absolutely shattered Peggy’s heart to see her Betsey, normally so strong, resilient and proudly confident, stare at her enemy for a few long moments before her agape glare crumpled into an expression she hid within her dominant hand over her mouth. The nearly forty year old immediately came to the rescue, crossing down the floor as the crowd gawked in astonishment that their vice president would go there and pulling her Hamilton to her side with one gentle, firm motion. Her original intention was originally just to get her sister out of the ‘field of fire’ and home, but she thought it better to let the man who’d knocked all the progress her sibling had to be balancing out to the ground know exactly how she felt. After all, she’d never been one to hold her
tongue either, and politeness what not for the likes of him.

“Your dirty laundry is pinned to the lines of the public, and even the things you don’t wish to admit are soon to be in the business of being common knowledge,” Peggy stated with all the vigor and condescending knowledge of her sisters before her. “It is only weak men that claw at the progress and growth of others, squelching the good beneath their expensive boots and never bothering to lend a hand of healing to what’s been broken. Perhaps you are just angry because Eliza is worth more even in her worst decisions than your best, but we have no place for kind of behavior when we have more important things to attend to. Good day, Mister Vice President.”

Head high and expression set, she escorted her trembling sibling out of the building and into the carriage before holding her tightly as she wept out the rage and pain of all the effort it now took to go toe-to-toe when her foundation was still full of holes and patches too weak to stand upon. The following days Betsey largely spend alone in her office, writing and hardly speaking a word, but she managed to sing lullabies for the children and eat a bit of food at each time, so her little sister did her best not to over worry for her wellbeing. Margarita was holding out hope as she straightened up the foyers for guests that the weekend would turn her family member’s sorrow into joy with the arrival of her children, and a knock on the door sent her heartbeat into rapid motion as she hurried to answer it.

“What are you doing here?!” The words exited her mouth bitingly the second she was greeted with the man who’d been responsible for the renewed depression of poor Betsey, standing in her doorframe with two hands folded behind his back and an unreadable expression on his usually smug face.

“I didn’t come here to fight,” the tall man interjected evenly. “My business is with your sister.”

The very idea sent her reeling anew. “And what makes you think I would call her to see you?”

“I implore you not to waste my time, woman,” he replied dully; the subtle jab at her gender did little to help his case, but she was listening by the power of will. “I have come here in peace, for I simply wish to…Well, I have been thinking over what you said to me.”

“I never thought the great co-leader of a nation you arrogantly try to build up would have to consider his faults so hard,” she noted sarcastically, eyes dark. “You will leave your sexist, problematic ideals in Monticello if you know what is good for you. You disgust me and are not welcome in my home under any-”

“Peg?” The sound of Betsey’s voice alarmed her, sending her spinning around guilty from her roast of a pigheaded man.

“I’m sorry, Liza,” she replied kindly, turning back to their unwanted guest coldly. “Mister Jefferson was just leaving.”

“Mister Jefferson, what the hell are you doing here?” The elder asked in a tired voice, walking to her side and dismissing her from his immediate range.

“Are Schuylers always this receptive?” He drawled sarcastically, eyes condescending and posture erect, but her sister just crossed her arms in an unimpressed manor to prompt him to speak more genuinely. “Look, Lady Hamilton. I know what I did a few days ago was…well, it was uncalled for. It is of the general opinion that was a low blow even for our well known rivalry, and after a lot of thought on my part, I understand now that this is not inaccurate. You have plenty of accomplishment that ought not to be discredited even if we are polar opposites, and to jab in the wounds that I was responsible in part for making it is deplorable by men far more honorable than
we know me to be. What I’m trying to say is that I’m…I am…Look, just take these as an offer of peace; alright, darlin?”

From behind his back he presented an arrangement of marigolds and expertly selected complimentary grasses and gains, a bundle of apples fashioned around the stoneware vase with an artificial set of tiny apple ornaments adorning the flowers. In a trance of astonishment and genuine emotion cracking through her features, her beloved sister accepted the gift with trembling hands, bringing it close to her shoulder before straightening up into her more usual prideful, confident posture.

“It’s not a big deal, good sir,” she stated matter of factly. “Coming from you, that is.”

If she didn’t know better, Peggy would say Thomas looked hurt if not deeply offended. “…Pardon?”

Eliza glanced down at the arrangement as she spoke honestly, voice tinged with bitter regret and lust for a different fate. “After I wrote all that bullshit in that damned pamphlet, I’ve become well acquainted with how much people like the descriptors ‘whore’, ‘prostitute’, ‘slut’, and well…” She made eye contact coldly. “Well, ‘bitch’.”

Thomas was staring at her, his face released from its usual sarcastic and terse mold into something more vulnerable and sympathetic. Despite all of his problematic ideologies and admittedly questionable morals, it was times like these that the women would have to admit, even it was just silently, that he was a man and that he was indeed capable of genuinely unfiltered emotion just as they were.

Hamilton’s face morphed into an obviously fake smile within the next few seconds, teeth showing but eyes revealing the anger she so clearly held fast to despite her overly sarcastic and child-like tone. “But thank you, Mister Jefferson! You really made my WHOLE day!”

With that the older sister slammed the door in his face and stormed further into the foyer, looking to throw his gift before thinking better of it and simply setting it heftily on the nearby coffee table. Peggy immediately hurried to her side and put her head on her shoulder, a gesture that made her sigh softly and wrap her nearest arm around her in tandem as they walked back to her office. The rest of the day was spent largely in there save for the younger’s preparation of the meal, and when the next day’s morning gave way to afternoon, Eliza’s gloomy expression finally began to perk up genuinely for the arrival of those she loved more than anything.

“Peggy, I truly cannot thank you for all you’ve done,” she remarked as the two braided and pinned their hair for their guests. “You have put up with me when literary nobody else would take me in.”

“I also know you better than anyone else who had or simply chose to refuse you,” the younger sister responded fondly, cupping her face briefly and kissing her forehead. “That’s what I’m here for you, Betsey. Now, allow me to fix your right braid; no good sister would ever let you been seen with such a hasty job!”

“…Thank you, baby sister.”

“Anytime, big sister. Now give your follicles over at once!”

The night following his best friend kicking his wife out of their home, John found him in a heartbreaking state, even more so than essentially carrying him from his a drunken stupor. The
forty two year old man was sitting in front of his fireplace, hair rumpled and posture sagged toward the flames, and when he sat beside him his companion didn’t move a muscle. His proximity did reveal a bundle of letters the other’s hands, ones tied purposefully with twine that was now partially ripped apart, and he watched as the heat crinkled the edges of the parchment and undoubtedly melted the ink.

John wasn’t sure what to say admittedly, so he simply sat and waited patiently at his beloved man’s side. He watched as he fiddled with the bundle, pulling the twine free and throwing it hazardously into the fire before staring at what was once held together. His Alexander hesitated and picked one up, holding it out to the element and allowing the edge to catch on fire carefully. Together they stared as the heat licked at the disposable material hungrily, working its way across the top of the page and beginning to nip at the words before the holder choked out a strained half-sob and threw it in the nearby garbage bin. Using his better judgement founded out the context clues, Laurens fished it out and quickly muffled it with the retardant material of his shirt to end the destruction before tentatively handing the parchment back to his companion.

“I just…” Alexander finally said quietly, voice hoarse and weighed down by the emotional distress he was in the midst in. “I never thought that you would be right about her.”

An ache reverberated through his very soul as tears gathered in his eyes anew, pulling his arms around his beloved and holding tightly as he crumpled into harsh sobs that absolutely devastated him. As the days trudged reluctantly into weeks and eventually transformed in months, he took care of his Alexander the best way he knew how. He helped him with every household necessity alongside Maria, who he gradually grew closer and closer to, and allowed him to be a second father fulltime to his children, who certainly needed it at times. He’d paint him elaborate portraits of each of his offspring and then a few of moments he’d been lucky enough to see, and slowly but surely, the light began to sparkle in his eyes and he began to become more and more confident despite the burden looming over their heads. Things would not be completely alright if Eliza was not with them, but for what it was worth in her exile, they were all doing just a bit better than simply ‘alright’.

The last weekend of January was finally upon them, meaning the children would be going to be with their mother and the house would be a bit emptier with only his offspring. As per usual, the Hamilton children were ecstatic and bustling around to prepare for their visiting with their other parent while the three adults tried to maintain the peace and ensure nobody was running too behind schedule.

“…silly, but I pray almost everything night it won’t always be like this.” Laurens didn’t mean to catch the conversation between the two eldest children as he passed through the guest foyer with a newly washed shirt that Jackie insisted he bring for the tomorrow’s wear, but he paused in the hallway to see what Angelica was talking about.

“With Aunt Betsey living with Aunt Peggy?” Frances inquired, and there must have been a nod because she continued after a beat of silence. “I miss her too. Nobody else in this world can calm him down like she, not even Uncle Alexander, sadly. I know what she did was awful and really messed with your reputations- I mean, Hell, ours too! - but it just seems like a waste of time to stay apart when we could already be forgiving her. Haven’t you already?”

“Of course I have!” Angelica exclaimed before sighing. “You know Uncle John is more stubborn than Papa, and Papa’s still pretty sore. They act like it happened yesterday, for God’s sake!”

Another beat of silence before his child spoke. “Aren’t you still mad, even just a bit? She did cheat on him and kind of destroyed our lives.”
“Playing the Devil’s advocate, are we?” He could hear the sneer in the newly sixteen year old’s voice without seeing her proud face, a mirror of her mother when she was infuriated so quickly. “Must I remind you she has been the closest thing you’ve had to a mother since Aunt Martha, rest her soul’s, passing?”

“Don’t compare my mother to yours,” Frances snipped, her ease to piss off a trait she certainly got from him. “My mother was loyal to my father until the day she died.”

Laurens barely had time to advance down the hall before his eldest goddaughter essentially shoved past him, fists clenched and head bowed as she stomped further into the home. He hesitated briefly but letting out a soft, audible sigh and going to his own child’s side, watching with a small smile as she angrily straightened her skirts and looked to him with her blonde wisps all in her blues burning with rage.

“Mama never cheated on you,” she stated plainly, so much so he wondered if she’d known he was there. “Angelica has it in her head that it’s okay to compare her to Aunt Elizabeth because she wants her to come home, but she’s wrong.”

“Do you want her home?” He asked simply while wrapping a comforting arm around his fifteen year old. “You never do speak of her.”

“Neither do you,” she reminded before looking up to the ceiling. “I do miss her though. Must we continue punishing her?”

“That is not my decision; you know this.”

“And when’s the last time you sent a letter to her? Perhaps she’d be inclined to try harder if her best friend of…what, thirty years? If he tried to reach out, God knows what she’d do!” His daughter snipped coolly.

“Watch your tone, young lady,” he reminded in a tired voice, one reflective of how he felt about dealing with a hormonal young woman and how he dread doing it again with her siblings.

“I am being honest,” she responded in a terse voice, standing up and looking down at him with all the poise of her mother and piss she’d learned from him. “Do what you will with it, Papa, but you love her just as much as anybody else. Pray you act like it.”

He was appalled by her behavior, even if she had valid points, and immediately ordered her to her room with a stern look that sent her brooding off silently. Almost immediately after he heard little Jackie calling for him, sending him up to finish delivering the specific shirt and get the children set for boarding.

“John, do you think we have enough food for William?” Maria asked worriedly from the base of the stairs where she had a piece of parchment held to the banister while she scribbled with a worn out quill. “I know he so hates the beans, so that won’t do at all, and I’m afraid we have more of that than anything else…”

“Elizabeth will no doubt provide some of his favorite meals, and if we should run out, the nearest store is only a brisk walk away,” John reminded kindly as he descended with Jackie in tow along with the child’s cases. “Are Angelica and Phillip helping now? We aren’t going to keep our coachmen waiting all day, young men, let’s see some progress!”

“I want to go see Auntie Eliza!” His little Martha- could she and her brother really be turning four this year? - chirped excitedly as she bound up to his side with her twin in tow.
“It’s been forreeevvvveeeeer,” Alexander, who they all called ‘Lexi’, whined with emphasis. “Miss her hugs!”

“And her stories!”

“And her sweets!”

“And her singing!”

“And her big words n stuff!”

“Alright, alright!” Their father cut in gently before sighing to himself. “Look, I’m sure you two can go see her next weekend. How does that sound?”

“But-!” The two began to protest in unison, but he simply held up his hand to silence them, albeit reluctantly, at once.

“You both know we have to tell others ahead of time to get ready for us. You two are handfuls by yourself, not counting your brother and sisters,” John replied firmly. “I don’t want to hear any more fussing or you won’t go at all. Am I understood?”

“Yes Papa.” “Yessir.”

The two little ones immediately took off in the foyer, pushing each other and grabbing onto each other the entire time while they giggled. Laurens made a point of avoiding Maria’s stern, concerned gaze as he finished walking down the stairs and loaded the second youngest Hamilton into the carriage alongside young Alex and Phillip, who was half in and half out in adjusting their luggage.

“Don’t try to fit too much here, son,” Laurens advised kindly, reaching out and tightening the straps firmly with the vigor the fourteen year old couldn’t have in such an odd position. “Most of your things will be on the coach with your sister and James.”

“Why does James get to sit in the spacy one?” Jackie whined, and John noted internally that he was probably for the best he’d get a small break from some of constant fussing that came from having twelve children constantly around.

“He wasn’t feeling well this morning, remember?” The nearly fifty year old reminded as patiently as possible. “If he gives sick, you don’t want him throwing up on you, do you?”

“ICK!” The six year old immediately exclaimed while his older brothers both made faces, allowing John to smile a bit and tuck the covers around them for the ride ahead.

“Now you three be good and look after your mother for us all back home,” he instructed with a kind smile. “Don’t forget to show her your drawing, Alex, and you all remember to do your homework. Alright? Good. Come here, your uncle gets to kiss your heads goodbye!”

Once he’d kissed the tops of all their heads goodbye as per usual, the uncle walked up to his best friend and planted a kiss on his temple while wrapping his arm around the other reassuringly. “We’ll see you tonight.”

Alexander somehow didn’t look convinced aside from the familiarity that had grown over this weekly event, but for the sake of not intruding on a man worried enough but his son’s health, John simply accepted his quiet response. “Yes…I’ll see you all then.”
In the beginning of her new way of living life, the only times she felt truly alive were when she was with her children and not around the adults she’d betrayed. Gradually she began to find joy in those she hadn’t lost in her ocean’s width of mistakes, and at present she was generally able to be contented aside from when she was face to face with her cold, unimpressed husband. Alexander hadn’t offered the slightest bit of warmth since he threw her love letters into the fire and things were only worse with John, and she found herself wondering with a grimace why they didn’t just send Maria, the only one who’d made some amends with her, as she watched the man she adored unload their offspring.

“MAMA!” The regrets clogging up her senses were banished when her babies came running to her, embracing her excitedly and covering her face with kisses.

“My darlings!” She exclaimed warmly and with just as much, if not more, affectionate joy while she did her best to return all the love. “Oh, I’ve missed you so much! You’ll have to tell me all about your week at once, go ahead and head inside and out of this awful weather; I made cookies for you in the kitchen.”

She watched warmly as her sixteen year old, fourteen year old, twelve year old and six year old immediately agreed and rushed inside before turning to face her blank faced spouse. He had his arm around their nine year old, and said boy looked positively white in the face as he leaned heavily on his papa.

“James?” Eliza immediately leaned down and felt of his forehead, which seemed warmer than usual to the touch. “Are you feeling ill?”

“He was complaining of an aching stomach this morning,” Alexander stated dryly. “I barely got him to school before they sent him back for not being able to hold down breakfast, but he was able to manage lunch and a bit of milk this afternoon.”

“Baby, if you’re sick, why did you come here? You should be resting in your bed,” the mother tutted while smoothing back the child’s damp hair. “You know I’m right here whenever you want to visit; it didn’t have to be straight away.”

“I wanted to see you,” the child replied softly, his eyes meeting hers sadly. “Don’t you want me here, Mommy?”

Her heart absolutely melted and she took her boy into her arms immediately. “Of course I do, my sweet angel! Let’s get you settled nice and warm now, alright?”

The two made their way toward the home before Alexander spoke, voice level but tone still distant. “I am quite worried about him. You know the disease has been going around quite profusely this year, and if something were to happen…”

“I am sure his condition will not worsen,” she responded quickly, perhaps a little too much so, in the effort of saving face. “If you are so worried about it, I advise you spend the evening with us. I’m sure Peggy will not mind.”

The two made rare eye contact for a moment, one that seemed to suck the breath right out of her lungs, and she had to force herself to turn around and continue moving; it was only thing that she seemed to know how to do.

....
James’s condition did not improve overnight or throughout the course of the next day. As a matter of fact, it only worsened to the point of Alexander and Eliza respectively calling at least two doctors each, all of which came in one after the other and looked over their boy who seemed to decay more and more by the hour. Eliza sat at her nine year old’s side and laid his upper torso in her lap, looking at him with tears threatening her in eyes and the contradictory diagnoses swirling in her head. The common cold. Thiamine deficiency. Malaria. Influenza. All of them felt direr than the last and she had to face that she knew very little about health for all of her alleged intelligence; it was all she could do to sit stationary and pray her son not die in her arms. Alexander was pacing back and forth in the bedroom they’d makeshift quarantined, his face rosy and eyes dreary with sorrow, and she longed to pull him into her arms while knowing he’d never accept her comfort.

“Mister and Mrs. Hamilton,” an unfamiliar voice greeted, and she looked up dejectedly when she saw yet another young doctor come striding in with the confidence only a young adult could have. “My goodness, this is quite a situation. My name is Andres Bissett. May I take a look at your son?”

“Oh course,” she conceded quietly, noting the gentleman’s moderately heavy French accent but too exhausted to question whether they might make him better qualified.

Andres carefully expected their child, his sharp hazel eyes sweeping over the small boy as he moved deliberately to look around in the hefty bag he’d brought inside. Eventually he pulled out a bundle of flowers that he requested to boil and serve it to the boy, which Peggy hurriedly did while poor James coughed weakly and shivered in place. Eliza supported him against her chest while Alexander coaxed the connotation down his throat, adding two cubes of sugar to help convince the poor thing and talking kindly in tandem with her to alleviate some of the fear in his expression.

Even though this was one of the worst circumstances to be forced to comply with her in, the forty one year old couldn’t help but admire his composure, love and persistence as he tended to their baby the best way he knew how. Then again, she noted with a wave of melancholy washing over her, he was likely always as he was now and she’d been too busy to appreciate it.

“There. That should do a lot,” Andres finally said decidedly once the cup was drained and he’d applied some kind of cream across James’s forehead and to the bottoms of his feet. “This looks like a very aggravated throat to me, maybe a little bit of hay fever. If you’ll continue giving him this ointment, he’ll be back to normal in no time at all.”

“And how can you be so sure?” Eliza implored with stubborn fear tinging her every sense. “I’ve heard a thousand different things and none are similar. Doctor…We cannot lose our James. We can’t, I beg you.”

“Mrs. Hamilton, I assure you I have been more vastly skilled than anyone else. I was brought out by your brother-in-law, Monsieur Van Renneslaer, as a favor from an old family friend,” the young man replied kindly before giving her a kind smile. “Besides, I would never try to lead astray a woman who was a wonderful ally to my country during the Revolution. I have the utmost respect for you.”

Her heart fluttered with the warmth of being reminded that not everything she’d done was a terrible failure, even if it wasn’t her best work. “Thank you, kind sir. We are indebted you. Won’t you come back in a few hours, or simply stay? I’d be happy to host you should Peggy already be retired.”

“My wife always extends a hand to those she feels need it,” Alexander remarked suddenly from his perch in the kitchen chair on the other side of the room. “Wouldn’t ever let someone do something she can do better.”
Perhaps it was an insult hidden with a sharp comment, but the Hamilton woman was genuinely just glad he said something of her. “It’s a bit sad but quite true, I’m afraid.”

Her husband was silence for a moment. “…Her ambition and capability are some of the first things I fell in love with. I pray she’ll show me she’s someone worthy of forgiveness she doesn’t deserve.”

“Monsieur?” The doctor squeaked uncomfortably. “Please do not use me as a barrier for real conversation. Love does not rely on lies and slander, but I am very inexperienced myself, so do with my word as you will.”

“I got your forgiveness before,” Elizabeth said after the uncomfortable silence following. “I do not deserve it again. Believe what you will, Alexander, but I love you with all of my heart. I love you as my life partner, whether or not you’ll accept it, and I am as helpless to your judgement and affections since the day I let you into my heart. I adore our children more than anything in this life, and they are the best accomplishments I’ve ever had the honor of having with the best of men and best of husbands. I miss our house and though I may never get the opportunity to sustaining it as a home as it were before, I assure you I am willing to exercise the rest of my life proving how highly I regard you, our babies, and our beloved Laurens and Maria. What more can I say?”

Alexander made eye contact once again with her, his piercing eyes into her own, and she held fast until he finally resided back to his seat. The night wore on and their child slept throughout the rest of the hours, and she found herself drifting off by the time the morning broke. When she opened her eyes, she was relieved to find their miracle physician chatting warmly with their nine year old, who was now sitting up with his hair combed and face clear of the ghostly sweat that painted his very being the day before.

“Mama!” James chirped, sounding relieved as he embraced her tightly. “Mama, Papa told me the sooner I got better, the sooner you’d come home, and I feel really good now! You’re going to come home now, right?”

Relief washed over her as she lifted their middle offspring up into her arms, looking with her face breaking into a genuine smile as her spouse walked inside carrying their youngest. “Is that true, Alexander? Am I allowed to come home?”

Her better half was quiet for a moment before kissing the head of the baby and looking at her directly one more time. “I suppose there is no other way to say, Elizabeth. You are welcome back into our home, but do not think this means we will be sleeping together or any of the like.”

The relief outshined the worst of the implications and damage done to their union, at least for now. “Understood.”

Chapter End Notes

Please remember to leave a kudos/subscribe/bookmark/leave a review if it so compels you! ♥
Chapter Summary

If you see them in the streets, walking by his side, talking by each other's sides, have pity. They are all going through the unimaginable.

Chapter Notes

This chapter hurt me in ways I cannot fully express after being so raw post writing it. If you're anything like me and are deeply emotionally invested in these characters, I might advise getting the tissues for this one. I love you all.

TW: The events and fate of Phillip Hamilton in the more historically accurate Hamilton and the OBP.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The first fourteen days of Elizabeth moving back into the Hamilton residence, John Laurens did an excellent job of avoiding her. He first took the opportunity to travel back to his home state and make a few public appearances regarding their new governor while opening up his office for concerns to be passed along in the realm of the Senate, but he couldn’t bear to be away from his loved ones for more than a week’s time. In the two days before his departure and the four days post his return, he’d acted as though she were not present or simply exited any area she settled down into without so much of a glance, but no investigator was needed to know how the passive-aggressive tension drove both of them absolutely mad. It was on the fifteenth day that he’d come home from his usual work day and begun removing his boots that he realized something was off in the household, and he had just enough time to rise to his feet before he was being chased through the house by the woman he loved but refused to forgive.

“We need to talk to each other!” Elizabeth yelled as she raced after him, grabbing at the back of his clothing but unable to get a proper hold during pursuit. “You have to stop running from me, dammit!”

“I’ll do what I damn well please!” John snapped back angrily, trying to shut himself into his room before she forced the door out of his hands with her own strength in pulling and he fled past her, down the stairs, and towards the front door.

“You’ve been behaving like a child!” She refuted with just as much aggravated passion. “You don’t have to forgive me, but you must speak with me!”

“You’re lucky you’re getting this! You betrayed my family in every single way, and you have the audacity to put the blame of your mistakes on me!” He shot back, throwing up the door and grunting to himself in annoyance when she pursued him onto the porch.

“You family?!?” She retorted while crossing her arms, likely to ward off the freezing cold as much as attempt at showing dominance. “Our family, if anything, good sir. I know what I did was
unforgiveable, and what you do with your regard for me is something I will bear regardless of the severity. However, if our twenty three years meant anything at all and are proof to what I am determined not to lose now, you will behave like an ad-!” She trailed off before swallowing hard and stepping back, revealing that she only had only light home clothing and no shoes. “You are behaving like an adult, I must admit. I request…no, I beg of you…please acknowledge to me if there is any love in your heart let for me despite it all. There is none left in Alexander’s, I am quite sure, but…I still love you both, even if I have no right to after what I’ve done.”

The silence that was swallowed by the falling snow echoed in the older man’s mind as he looked over her, the woman who’d given him so much of the years and who he’d adored from day they first met outside of a bar full of Revolutionaries and Loyalists. Even from where he stood with his feet trembling on the frozen ground, the tears were prominent in her eyes as they formed in his own, and he was forced to admit to himself once for all that there was nothing in the world that either of them could do that would break their intense bond of love. The world seemed to freeze around them as he slowly got back onto the porch, his eyes locked with hers as the tears finally began to cling around his eyes due to the frozen temperatures, and he came to stop directly in front of her before speaking.

“Alexander loves you,” he stated directly, but emotion seeped into his tone the more he spoke to her. “Of course I do as well; I would think I wouldn’t have to note it to you after all this time, but I admit I have not behaved like it for a reason as of lately. I don’t have to tell you any further of the mess you made and the damage you did, and Lord knows I tried to bury you deep in the pile of rubble we’ve all been gathering up, but I simply cannot. I simply adore you, Elizabeth Hamilton, and you make me understand better than any solo life experience that one is not their mistakes at all.”

Their gazes held for a few eternal moments before his moved to open his arms, but she beat him to it by throwing her arms around him and sobbing into his shoulder. Without hesitation he lifted her up, carrying her back inside and holding her as tight as he could while they cuddled and reconciled on the couch. It went without saying that she still had to prove her changed habits to ease away the last of the resentment and humiliation caused by the affair, but as they chatted and laughed like the best friends they’d never stopped being, he was completely (and even more so than) satisfied.

November 9th, 1801

Graduating from the prestigious King’s College at only nineteen years old was nothing short of remarkable, and Angelica Hamilton bore that knowledge with youthful pride that seemed to make her very being glow. The day of her graduation she’d been treated as the most esteemed member of her seeming to ever-grow family, and now she worked ruthlessly to climb the occupational latter at her job as a seamstress while playing her music at any opportunity given. Hardly anything was beneath the eldest Hamilton when it came to her places of business when it came to furthering her creative career, but she’d resolved that one didn’t go about blowing everybody away by being picky.

“Angelica, shouldn’t you be at your job?” Her papa inquired in a chastising, knowing voice as she worked over the melody of her newest song, a notion that made her crinkle her face and look back to him unhappily.

“I’m off for the day; don’t you remember that I left before the dawn to ensure my afternoon was free?” She inquired back.
“Ah, I suppose it must have slipped my mind,” Papa concurred with a soft, tired exhale. “Your father is getting older by the minute, Angie.”

“It can’t help that most of my siblings are teenagers and you have a toddler running about,” she teased good naturedly before turning back to her work. “Godspeed, Old Man.”

Nobody had seen her mother’s pregnancy coming, and given how both of her parents had reacted with overjoyed excitement in the privacy from each other, neither did those who made her only little sister. The eldest of their offspring had predicted that she’d be named after their maternal family like most of them had been, or perhaps ‘Rachel’ as a tribute to her father’s deceased and well-loved mother, but Papa had decided on naming the infant ‘Eliza’ after her mother. Little Eliza-or as they all tended to call her, ‘Lizzie’—was a kind and compassionate soul just like the woman she was named for, but she was sickly from the days immediately following her birth. It was through the countless hours her mother and father sat up with the baby that the Hamilton siblings hoped and prayed they’d reconnect just as vehemently as they begged to God for their baby sister’s health, but when the tot pulled through and continued to thrive slowly but surely the damage remained stubbornly on their marriage.

“So what are you getting up to this afternoon?” Her eldest younger sibling’s voice alarmed Angelica to the point of making her sharply stumble on the notes, leading to her aggravated snapping her head up to glare pointedly at him.

“Phillip!” She hissed between her teeth.

“Come on, you have to tell!” The seventeen year old whined while extending his entire upper torso on the top of her grand piano. “I know my sister, and Angelica Hamilton wouldn’t get up before the sun any day she was not practically held at gunpoint to do so!”

“Ye of little faith,” she retorted sarcastically. “I’m just going to do a bit of shopping. Is that a crime worthy of your prying fingers?”

“Liar!” The younger man exclaimed. “You hate shopping too! I bet you’re headed out to see Theooooo!!”

“Shut up!” Angelica commanded in a soft, strong voice while snapping her hand furiously to cover her brother’s mouth. “If Papa or anybody else hears you and question me, it will be your head I come after!”

The teenage boy immediately lifted his hands in mock surrender while twisting expertly away from her grip, eyes shining with mischief. “If you don’t wish for me to say anything, you ought to tell me the truth. You wouldn’t hide it if it weren’t scandalous and we both know it.”

The young adult sighed sharply in agitation before seizing him by the arm and dragging him into the less frequented guest foyer, making a point to shut the door firmly before turning to him. “Regardless of what takes place, you must swear to be you shan’t say a word to Papa or any other family member of ours. Understood?”

Phillip was practically overflowing with the mischievous excitement that came with being so young in a very big world. “Hell yeah!”

“Phillip Hamilton, I am deathly serious,” she hissed angrily. “Swear it on Grandmother Rachel’s life.”

The sparkle did not diminish, but at least he stopped bouncing on his heels. “I swear it on
Grandmother Rachel’s life. Now *tell* meeeeee!"

“I am going to confront Mary Jefferson today,” she announced after casting another look to the empty hallway leading to their location. “You know as well as I do that she made a grandiose speech back on the Fourth of July smearing our mother’s name. I have written to her several times now, each with no avail, and I am of the opinion the little wench will only listen if I meet her face to face and humiliate her like she attempted to do to our family.”

Her beloved Pip considered this for a moment before responding. “Isn’t she quite with child? Even still, Angie, you know what Papa says about picking fights that aren’t necessarily ours to pick, and the Jefferson family is nobody I’m willing to let you get arrested over.”

“For Heaven’s sake, Pip, give me some credit!” Angie exclaimed in response. “I will be careful and intellectual enough to not be arrested, and this *is* our fight to pick. She has a lot of nerve dispraising Mama’s name like that and then outright ignoring my critiques of her flimsy points, so I’m simply putting an ignorant floozy in her place!”

“Yes, but Ang-”

“I have waited quite long enough, Phillip!” The older sister thrust her hands in air exasperatedly. “She is no longer pregnant and has had enough time to recover! If she wants to exchange blows, so be it, but I am not allowing this kind of behavior from a so-called ‘future political powerhouse’!”

“Then let me talk to one of the other speakers rather than you possibly get hurt,” her younger brother interjected nearly as passionately. “Like…that damned George Eacker, for example! He could do well for a proper dressing down, and it wouldn’t be the biggest scandal since Mister Ainsley did unspeakable things with his cattle!”

“What are you so afraid of?!” She insisted. “I know my way around this city and these people like I know my own mind, Pip. The worst that could happen is that we exchange petty violence and I use some of the skills both of parents ingrained in us for defending ourselves; hardly a cause for all your anxieties, brother.”

“No, the *worst* that could happen is-!” Phillip began vehemently before the door swung open and revealed their father standing there, looking amused.

“What are you two planning back here?” He asked knowingly while arching an eyebrow at his eldest children. “Don’t even try to pretend that isn’t what you two naughty things were doing, for you always snuck off back here to do the very same constantly in your younger days.”

“Well, if we told you, we’d have to kill you!” Her brother exclaimed brilliantly in a tease to their father, a gesture that made the aging man laugh and capture his son in a hug/fond hair ruffle.

“No scheming on my watch!” Papa said jokingly, opening the door wider and imploring his daughter out with his expression. “If you aren’t going to be working, Angelica, I need you to run some errands for your father. The most important of which concerns some medicine for your sister, so I insist you get prepared to leave at earliest convenience before she falls ill again. As for you, young man, I seem to recall some homework left askew on the table that I suggest you finish if you’d like a fresh slice of pie when it comes out of the oven.”

“Yes Papa!” Pip agreed excitedly, casting a knowing, worried look to his sister that lasted a second or so too long before he hurried off and the eldest Hamilton offspring was left to ready for the town anew.
To be sure she looked as intellectual as possible, she took extra time in dressing herself into a smart grey dress that revealed her ankles ever so slightly and ruffled around her features flatteringly. With the help of plenty of pins and a bit of cream, she managed to secure half of her hair into a thickly coiled half bun while her other curls were smoothed down and back, and after nearly an hour she was grabbing her favorite well-made basket and retrieving the list and money from her father.

“Your brother is acting quite restless since I interjected into your discussion,” Papa noted kindly as he handed her the bag he’d prepared with more than enough coin for all of transactions. “Is there anything you’d like to tell me, Angelica?”

The thought of noting her plans to her father came over her, but the prospect of him discouraging or outright forbidding the bold moves smothered the idea nearly immediately. “I am just tired of all of the rumors circulating the town, Pops. If any of these chicken shits were honorable, they’d say something to my face and we could fight properly! I bet that would shut them up!”

“If they weren’t chicken shits, they’d be worth your time, but they are not,” her male parent responded steadily. “I appreciate your protectiveness, my girl; it makes your mother and I terribly proud, truth be told. However, you have much worthier pursuits than those who can’t be bothered to do more than speak ill of a successful family. Do you understand?”

She smiled and agreed, but she didn’t mean it, not when it came to the likes of a Jefferson. “Thank you, Old Man. I’ll see you soon with our wares.”

“Be careful and take care!” She heard him call as she exited their home, guiding her brand new horse, Captain, out of his stable and making her way into the city.

Some may call it a bit strange that she was well versed enough in her enemy’s schedule to know she’d be out on this day to have tea with her little friends, but it was all thanks to her beloved Theodosius for being her ‘spy on the inside’ due to his practically running the shop that had the best beverages in town. Angelica posted her stallion and settled him with some hay and sugar cubes before marching toward the flock of women that contained the woman in question, a thin and eloquently dressed lady with her hair freshly cut into an elaborate style unable to be contained underneath a hat. The young Hamilton had nearly gotten to them when they headed inside the theatre they’d be standing in front of and were practically swallowed in the swell of people within, leaving her to push her way through diligently before she finally located them in a balcony box.

“Jefferson!” Angelica yelled boldly despite the play currently beginning in a dramatic dialogue between actors. “MARY!”

“Shh!” The lady hissed angrily as she turned around. “I am trying to watch a show; do not be a fool, child!”

The nineteen year old’s blood felt as though it were boiling within her. “You speak so freely of my being a fool, but you should’ve watched your mouth before you talking about my mother, though!”

“Who is your mother?” The older woman demanded. “And before you say another word, it is ‘Maria’. If you are going to try and quarrel with the grownups, you ought to get their calling correct.”

“Elizabeth Hamilton,” the younger stated through her teeth. “You have been nothing but disrespectful to my family, and you are long overdue for some apologies before I make this interaction more unattractive.”
“Oh, you’re one of them,” ‘Maria’- she was going to call her ‘Mary’ just to piss her off- sneered before casting a smirk to her friends that made them all condescendingly giggle. “Listen to me, girl. I did not say anything that wasn’t true, and as your mother is a scoundrel, so it seem are you.”

“Oh, it’s like that?” Angie demanded.

“Indeed! Do not expect me to play around; I am not one of your schoolyard friends,” the Jefferson drawled. “It is not my fault that your mother is a crooked, backstabbing, haughty, overpowered cheater that brings dishonor on your names simply by existing. My father has no time for her childish antics, and I will not entertain the likes of a rascal pitching a proper fit in a place of art. Run along.”

The twenty two year old began to turn around, but the slightly younger seized her arm furiously while hauling her out of her seat. “You listen here, you Southern peace of manure! Your father is a racist, problematic, arrogant, loud-mouthed idiot who hath only accomplished what he may because he alludes himself beneath the skirts of influential wives- oh, I must have misspoken, he only violates a helpless young woman he calls his property now, doesn’t he?”

The gasp and interesting groan from all around them proved that everyone, including the actors, were watching the very real drama dispersing between them. The Jefferson scowled and swung her hand as if to slap her, but Angie caught her hand swiftly and gave her a confident grin that she imagined looked as borderline unhinged.

“You have a lot of gall,” Mary hissed. “You must have learned your behavior from your mother. Has she enjoyed having illegitimate children after she destroyed her marriage?”

“Eliza is not illegitimate in the slightest, you wench!”

“And she even named the little bastard after herself! Pray she isn’t a floozy like her mother and sister!”

Angelica shoved her into her little friends unforgivingly. “I’ll see your pretentious ass on the dueling ground. Have your second meet mine in a week’s time in front of the bell tour at sundown, and pray you bring a fresh set of clothing when you’re dealing with the likes of me.”

“Piss off, I’m watching the show now!” She heard her rival yell as she marched proudly of the box.

By the time she got to her beloved’s side, he was already buzzing with nervous energy that showed when he swept her into his arms and pulled her into the back of the business. “Are you out of your damn mind, Angelica?!”

“What?!” She demanded.

“Challenging a Jefferson to a duel?! You were raised better than this!” Theodosius exclaimed.

“My father may not always agree with the choices I make, but if you’d heard the shit he said about my mother!” Angelica responded fiercely. “I doubt Mama would have let it slide, and I was not able to! I came to ask you to be my right hand man, but if you’re going to act like I’m a child, I am not remotely interested!”

“You know Thomas Jefferson’s children are not the type to play fairly, not to mention the upheaval this will cause!” Theo grasped her arms and attempted to kiss her hands, but she jerked angrily enough to prevent him from completing the motion. “My darling, we both know she deserves to be sharply put in her place, but you’re putting yourself in great harm by doing this. The likes of her are not worth losing your life over!”
“I will do no such thing!” She protested angrily. “She does not have the guts and I do not have the desire to kill her. If she even shows up to our peace talk, she’ll have proven more than I ever could.”

“I don’t know what I would do if you were slain regardless!” When he pulled her close and kissed her fiercely, she felt all of her exploding resentment for the man she loved dissolving in their passion for the other. “God, Angie, I just don’t want to see you suffer. Let her be, live to fight another day. There are worthier pursuits and I think you know it.”

“There is no more worthy cause than defending my family’s honor. She called my sister an illegitimate bastard, for God’s sake!”

“…Alright, fine. Kick her ass, my love, but do not expose your back so may not stab or shoot it,” Theo finally conceded with a sigh.

“Does that mean you will be my second, then?” Angie asked excitedly, looking to him hopefully.

“I will attempt the reach a negotiation that will end in no violence,” he resolved before brushing back her free hair. “I adore you with every fiber of my soul and body, Angelica Hamilton. I would never try to prevent you from living your most honest, fearless life if I did not distrust your opponent, for you know I have every single breath of faith in you.”

“You are a lovesick romantic,” she remarked fondly before capturing him into a sincere kiss. “Then again, so am I. I will be safe for you, my darling.”

“…Yes Mommy,” she admitted ashamedly.

“…Yes Mommy,” she admitted ashamedly.

“She is not worth a bullet,” her parent immediate stated. “And she is certainly not worth the guilt that will permanently weigh on your conscience. Trust me, my girl, you do not want this young woman’s blood on your hands.”

“Mama-!”
“Angelica, your father does not deserve yet another heartbreak,” she interjected firmly.

“If I back out at the last minute, I may as well have conceded to her points!” Angelica insisted, a notion that undoubtedly did not surprise her parent but still seemed to frustrate her to no end. “She insulted you and the baby! Would you have ever allowed her father to exclaim such nonsense?!”

“Of course not!” Her mother hissed before sighing exasperatedly. “You will not go to that duel, young lady. Sometimes the shots you are given are meant to be thrown away.”

“If you insist!” Angie stormed away and ended up circling back through the foyer, leading to seeing her papa fast asleep with her adorable baby sister on his chest.

Poor Lizzie looked as sickly as ever as she rested now, her tiny cheeks rosy and forehead damp with sweat, but she could tell that her father had taken most excellent care with all the medical remedies surrounding them and how the fever had clearly broken. The eldest teenager of the family watched as they exhaustedly slept together and resolved that no matter, she was going to protect their names and honor, even if it meant she bore an injury doing so. When she finally retired to sleep, she knew before she woke she’d be having to locate wherever the pistols were hidden, and then there was the business of inevitably escaping her mama’s watch.

The nineteen year old was eager to begin dressing before the sun was in the sky, and she resolutely fashioned a light skirt around the pants she’d purchased a couple of days before so she could escape to the dueling grounds agreed upon without being questioned or judged by early risers. She pulled on a brand new off white blouse, one that may have been worn by a blue-collar woman worker, and blazer before she crept out of her room and began silently searching for her weapons. As she’d expected, her father’s safe was missing from his room and was eventually found within the thorny rose bushes in their garden, and she was properly pissed when she finally wrestled the wretched thing open with several abrasions obtained. The youth strode back inside and bandaged her hands before hovering in the doorway of her papa’s room, her expression crumpling as she watched her dad sleep soundly with the toddler still right beside him.

“God be with me,” she whispered to herself, slowly securing the parchment on his dresser before creeping further down the hallway and discovering her worried mother fast asleep at her desk, the pallet she usually slumbered on still neatly made from the morning before and entire appearance the painful mirror of a night spent awake.

As she retrieved a thick blanket and laid it over Elizabeth Hamilton, she resolved silently that she would make her proud and return before they would miss her. The ride to the river was made in absolute silence, and her lips remained sealed as she met with her old schoolmate, Amanda, who she’d asked to be her second when Theodosius proved far too opposed to the encounter. On the boat, she unsecured the skirt and revealed her pants to her childhood friend, who immediately smiled and complimented her. The sun was hardly teasing the horizon when she arrived, body tense and grip tight on the handle of her trusty basket that now held the two pistols beneath a light dinner cloth.

“Mrs. Eppes,” she formally addressed the born Jefferson. “I trust the rest of your shows were pleasurable to watch?”

“I’d rather skip the pleasantries,” the elder remarked sharply. “Let’s do this, child.”

Angelica felt the same cold resentment she’d carried for the months before as she retrieved her weapon, methodically checking the ammunition before her opponent drew first position. Her schoolmate crossed the field to attempt peace talk one more time and the apprehension rushed into her like water pouring from the sky, but she resolved there was no chance she’d display it to such a
crooked, idiotic bitch.

‘My name is Angie, I am a pianist,’ she noted to herself as the two women before them argued briefly. ‘I have put on a challenge, and I’m keeping to it. Whether they like it, I’m a Hamilton with pride; you talk about my family, I will never let it slide.’

“Grab your pistols,” Mary sneered as their seconds returned to each of their respective allies.

“Confer with your man,” she retorted as she recognized her rival’s second to be none other than her first cousin and husband. “The duel with commence after we count to ten.”

The two women stood back to back as per usual, the doctor Mary brought already positioned with his back turned and their seconds on opposite ends of the field. As she began silently counting her paces, she desperately reminded herself of the rules of their affair in an effort to remember what she’d previously resolved on doing.

‘Look her in the eye, aim no higher; summon all the courage you require,’ she instructed herself resolutely as they began the count. ‘Now slowly and clearly aim your gun to the sky!’

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine-

Ten. Angelica spun around with her pistol aimed proudly toward the sky, head up high and lips trembling minimally as she locked eyes with her sworn enemy. Mary was pointing her gun pointedly directly at her, much lower than she’d originally anticipated it may be, but she did not shoot. The two stared relentlessly at the other for moments that turned into torturous minutes, and eventually the eldest Hamilton child resolved this misunderstanding would fortunately end in a draw. She was just moving to lower her pistol and put it away, but that’s when she heard the bang of the pistol right before the worst pain she’d ever experienced exploded through her hip and sent her crumpling immediately to the ground.

“Angelica! ANGELICA!” Her schoolmate was screaming and gathering her into her shaking arms, and she could hear Mary gasping and her husband cursing/yelling nearby as the doctor got her swiftly into his arms.

“I didn’t mean to shoot! I panicked, I swear!” Her nemesis was loudly sobbing and maddeningly hysterical, but Angie couldn’t be bothered to give a shit as was lifted into the boat to be rapidly rowed back across the river for proper medical care. 

“God, she’s an evil little bitch!” Poor Amanda was sobbing more than she had strength to. “Why would she harm you?! You threw away your shot! It was a draw, it was a damn draw!”

“I know,” the nineteen year old grunted. “I know, I know, but it’s going to be fine. It’s…it’s got to be alright, I will pull through. You act like I’d ever perish to the likes of that piece of shit! HA-! Shit, shit, dammit, never mind…”

Her consciousness faded in and out, and she had to recognize she had no idea what time or day it was when she regained coherence. When she took note of her surroundings, the eldest Hamilton child recognized she was in a vast bedroom and she seemed to be alone, a notion that absolutely terrified her. The pain emitting from her hip was numbingly terrible and had travelled in her right arm, which she realized with a pained shout that she was completely unable to move. Out of her peripheral vision she caught movement, and she found quite a bit of comfort in seeing her beloved Aunt Peggy rush to her side.

“Oh, my darling niece!” Her aunt fretted and kissed her forehead, which felt terribly hot and
drenched with sweat. “Your parents and siblings are on their way, don’t you worry, my girl. The doctors are doing everything they can, and you look horribly uncomfortable…Oh, sweetheart, what were you doing in a duel when you’re capable of fighting with words?”

“That bitch had it coming,” she half-hissed, half-mumbled. “Talked about our family…Proud Hamilton…”

“I know, baby girl,” Aunt Peggy noted worriedly and affectionately. “My girl, you are just like your mama.”

“WHERE IS MY DAUGHTER?!” Her mother’s voice rang out in the house, and almost immediately she was rushing into the bedroom with tears streaming down her face. “Angelica, Angelica, my baby…!”

“M-Mama,” she croaked weakly, the little energy she’d awakened with already dwindling. “I…I did exactly what I intended, Ma. I h-held my head up…”

“Shh, I know, I know…” Her mama shushed lovingly.

“I…”

“I know, I know,” the much older woman assured while kissing her child’s trembling, limp hand. “You did everything just right.”

“Even before we turned around, Ma…” Angelica whispered before letting out coughs that were immediately followed by quiet sobs. “I was aiming for the sky-”

“Shh, I know, I know-”

“I was…” The pain dug into her anew and she cried profusely, gripping onto her parent like her very life depended on it. “I was aiming for th-the sky!”

“I know, my girl,” Eliza assured softly, her eyes desperate and own tears falling as she pulled herself by her child’s side. “Save your strength, and stay alive~!”

“No~!” Her father’s voice partially interrupted her mother’s anguish, and she found herself terribly ashamed as the man she’d been intending to defend as fiercely as the women of their household ran to her side desperately. “Is she breathing, is that going to survive this?! Who did this?? Elizabeth, did you KNOW?!”

Her mother let out a fresh, silent sob into her shoulder, and Angelica looked to him with her own tears with a desperate expression. “Mommy tried to stop me, Daddy. She stayed up a-all night, I snuck out, I…I aimed for the sky…”

“My daughter,” Alexander openly wept, laying at her other side and cradling her face in order to wipe her tears. “My baby, my baby girl…”

Her memory grew foggy nearly immediately after both of her parents laid loyally at her side, but their warmth and loving tending to her delicate state was more than enough to bring her immense comfort. Through spells of consciousness she remembered doctors and nurses, all of them trying different remedies on her wounds and sending her writhing until her parents soothed her back to sleep or she passed out in their arms. From the snippets of conversations she heard before allowing her eyes to open, she learned the bullet was lodged in her arm and was not able to be safely removed, and the situation only seemed to grow direr.
By the time she tried to commit to being awake, she released with horror that she felt hardly alive at all, and her breath was coming out in extremely painful puffs that it took nearly everything to produce. Her mother and father hadn’t left her sides once, and despite how they rested anxiously, she knew there was no chance they were asleep now. All of her siblings, including the poor hysterical Phillip and the horrified, confused Lizzie, were with her aunts and uncles in the other room(s), so Angie resolved that it would be quite alright to die away from her beloved younger siblings and save them the trauma.

“My girl, you’re burning up,” Eliza mumbled, and she realized with a groggy start her eyes had shut yet again. “How are you feeling? Are you hungry, do you need water?”

“How about another story?” Alexander whispered. “Perhaps we could start on another book now that we’ve finished your most recent.”

“Mom, I’m so sorry for neglecting what you told me,” Angelica rasped despite the agony it sent rocketing through her body with devastating stabs. “I forgot all you both taught me…”

“My girl,” her father whispered tearfully. “We forgive you, you don’t have to apologize. You were only doing what was right, you are not to blame.”

“We played piano…” The nineteen year old whispered groggily, her grip on reality rapidly slipping away despite her determination to go as painlessly as possible for her beloved mama and papa.

Alex chuckled softly, kissing her forehead and brushing away her matted, sweat-soaked curls. “I taught you piano.”

“You...you’d put your hands on mine,” she recalled softly before looking over to her mother. “You taught me how to sing right…”

“You’d change the melody every time,” her father whispered lovingly.

“I would always change the line…” Their eldest agreed shakily with a light laugh, a soft, sharp cry inevitable due to the intense effort.

“Shh, I know, I know,” he agreed very gently.

Even though she knew her family members were much older, Angelica saw her Papa a young man by her side in the piano, her Mama singing as they sang happily together to teach her and her brothers. Her hands, which she had the strong notion she wasn’t actually moving, were tiny and precise as she added to the song in her own way, which made them both smile and dance around with her baby brothers. They were all bathed in a warm, amber light, their joy emitting in her soul even when she lethargically blinked and saw her final reality.

"Un, deux, trois, quatre..." Alexander sang beautifully, and she resolved this was the best way to finally let go. “Cinq, six, sept, huit, neuf~”

“Un, deux, trois, quatre~” Angelica echoed weakly, her vison too hazy to comprehend as she held fast with both of her completely numb hands to her parents. “Cinq, six, sept...huit...neuf.”

“Good,” Eliza praised tenderly in unison with her husband, and their eldest child wondered if they looked to each other warmly now despite all the previous tension.

“Un, deux, trois, quarte, cinq, six, sept~” Papa was singing from the upper end of the scale, but she couldn’t even feel herself breathing as she tried to echo the notion.
“Un, deux…” The entire room was bathed in the same welcoming light as the memories they’d been replaying over and over in her head, and Angelica was amazed to see another woman before her.

The woman was bathed in the light and her smile was joyous, but she could see a sorrow reflecting in her deep, dark eyes. The mysterious woman was reaching for her kindly, looking as fond and lovingly as her mama and papa, and she instinctively lifted up her hands in acceptance. The two of them stood and Angie felt amazing at once, as light as air and wearing a beautiful dress that looked just like her favorite hand-downs from her mother. As she hugged the stranger, the knowledge that this guest was her Aunt Angelica, the incredible feminist that she was named for, brought her immediately great peace and joy.

“Trois…”

Eliza would never forget the heartbroken scream full of broken desperation that her husband emitted as their eldest child’s heart stopped beating as she laid in her arms. She continued clutching her firstborn and let out a similar scream, sobs overtaking her violently as she collapsed over her baby’s lifeless body. From the subconscious she was reaching for her husband’s hand, but Alexander simply grasped their daughter’s clothing and sobbed anew as their worlds dissolved around them too cruelly to bear.

Time didn’t seem to matter at all as the following days came upon them and left them. Together with her husband, who’d gone completely silent since Angelica’s death, she arranged for a lengthy funeral full of intense sorrow and overwhelming grief that sent Eliza over and over to her knees. As she attempted to approach her deceased daughter’s grave, she was gently forced to be held up by her beloved Sybil and Lucy as she grossly sobbed and said prayer for her child to be in a place of harmony, peace and unmeasurable joy she vowed she’d never feel again. As the night grew dark and the grave was finished being leveled off and the tombstone was placed with all of the flowers practically burying it, she remained before it and wept until she passed out above where her baby was now buried.

“Eliza…” Her beloved Maria, the woman who she’d hurt so very terribly that adored her still, was the voice she reluctantly came back to consciousness for. “Eliza, my darling, it is freezing and beginning to snow. You must come home.”

“If I die here, it will be of no consequence,” she stated hollowly, not moving from her curled up position. “Alexander would not accept a bit of comfort, even when she initially went to Heaven. Nothing matters now, only who survived, but I am certain I am no longer alive.”

“The children need you,” Maria said gently, sending her dryly sobbing.

“Angelica needed me! This is my fault!” She choked out, to which her deeply beloved comrade took to her side and lifting her into a warm hold.

“It is not your fault in the slightest,” the younger lady hushed with confident soothing. “These things happen and we are left to make sense of it. Please, my darling Eliza, let’s go home.”

Even with the weight of the world hanging heavily with every motion they took thereafter, arm in arm and bodies pressed together in the chill, Eliza allowed Maria to lead her back to their home.
The sound of beautiful, tragedy tinted piano music echoed throughout the walls of the Hamilton’s’ and Laurens’s residence. John set himself in the rocking chair his eldest gifted him along with poor Angie, Phillip, and Alex Jr. on his forty fifth birthday, listening with melancholy reverence to the sad tune the eldest living Hamilton child played as the memories of his old sister continued bounding through all of their heads. Angelica was one of the best things in their lives- all of the children were, biologically theirs or not- but the deep ache her premature, untimely loss was the worst pain in every felt, only comparable to how he’d grieved with the deaths of his wife and mother.

“Papa?” His youngest babies, his nearly eight year old Martha, was standing in the doorway, her eyes clearly stained with tears as she held tightly to her twin. “W-we’re super sad to-today.”

“Come here, my darlings,” he encouraged at once, pulling them easily into his lap and kissing both of their heads. “It’s perfectly normal to feel sad. I’m sad too, definitely.”

“You don’t cry a lot,” his poor youngest son, little Lexi, pointed out. “Never seen you cry expect at the funeral.”

“Just because I don’t cry doesn’t mean I’m not sad,” John counseled calmly; for all the unimaginable pain little Angie’s death brought in waves that drowned, he’d never been more patient, loving and present with his own little ones. “We all grieve differently, you see.”

“…I miss her, Papa,” Martha said with a small sob audible catching in her throat.

“I do too, my babies,” their father agreed while pulling them even closer to his chest. “We all do, very much.”

“Auntie Liza hasn’t left the garden for a long, long time.” Lexi noted with his voice sagging with sorrow. “Can’t you make her come in, Papa? It’s really cold.”

“It’s a little hard to explain, but there are moments that the words we say don’t reach. There’s a suffering too terrible to name, and too terrible to make better,” he replied softly, and when they peeked up at him with innocent confusion, he held them as tight as he could while pushing away thoughts of the unimaginable.

If the loss of a once flourishing marriage made his beloved Alexander ghostlike, John was now certain that his best friend’s soul completely died alongside his daughter. The younger man hardly left his room, but when he did venture to empty out the chamber pot, he walked with hardly enough weight at all. His hair, once well-groomed and rich red, was now graying rapidly with his eyes a million years away, and he hadn’t spoken a word aloud since the services. His still passionately loved wife was just as worse for the wear, her shoulder length hair growing in thick, unruly waves while all of her follicles were now full of grey strands that resembled the shade of pepper in the locks that remained brunette. She’d been spending hours on end in their garden, which had essentially been transported when they all moved uptown, and barely ate to survive while her husband never evidently ate so much as a crumb. It seemed they were both drowning in their sorrow, so deep in the thickness that it was easier to just swim down, and no matter how he tried to pull them toward the surface, he’d been forced to stop trying and do his best for the rest of the grieving and lost, including himself.

“Betsey?” Maria’s voice inquired from behind them after his babies had eventually fallen asleep on his lap. “Where are you heading now?”
“I must go to the store.” Eliza’s voice, once full of passionate inflection and warm conviction, was now despondent and grave; it did little to soothe the brokenness of his own heart. “The children will be hungry.”

“Why don’t I go with you?” The younger woman offered kindly. “There are very many things to get, and I hate to think you’d go another round without getting a scrap of something you’d like or want to eat.”

“There is nothing I want or would like to eat,” her elder replied blandly. “Don’t trouble yourself, Marie. The babies need you here. I will…be back.”

Like a shadow Eliza made her way out of the door, only briefly looking back to John with her permanently dull eyes before ghosting on her way. He looked back to Maria now, catching her own sad eyes and inspiring her to come to his side with her hands grasping around his as fresh moisture threatened in both of their visions.

“I was considering taking the children to the church tonight,” Maria noted softly as she looked over his twins. “Preacher Buchanan has been one of our greatest allies in counseling them. Do you reckon they’d like to speak with him post the regular service?”

As warmly as he’d grown to regard their chosen religious teacher, Laurens had the strong notion the older gentleman only provided extra peace of mind rather than filling in the gaping voids. “I suppose you can try, but do not insist upon it. After all, I’m sure they’d rather attend with their mother as they do on Sundays.”

Despite the population of New York City, John knew how people worried and wondered if Alexander had completely let go of religion in the way of his child’s murder when he stopped being seen in public, much less in church. Of course he knew better, as the few times he’d seen him rare states of activity usually involved prayer or re-reading passages from The Good Book, but it wouldn’t be the first time someone lost all faith in God in the wake of such an unspeakable tragedy. He imagined how their Eliza would be making her way slowly through the town all by herself, occasionally mumbling a prayer to her late daughter and more than likely intended to make the length of the city and back before she’d arrive on the porch in frozen, almost catatonic defeat. People would pity her but few would do anything to help her; if they were lucky someone would implore back to their home. As much as they hated it, not allowing her to try and process this had only lead to more self-destructive tendencies, so he and Maria were forced to leave her be while both of the parents slipped further and further away.

The first time Elizabeth really began speaking more than blandly since Angie’s passing was not to himself, Maria, or any of children, but shockingly to her Alexander. John had just tucked in the youngest members of the family, all of which seemed to be having quite alright day in their own mourning, for their afternoon naps when he caught the sound of her voice through the walls. Despite the initial motion of giving them their complete privacy, he allowed himself to listen in closely so that he may get a better idea of how she was coming along.

“Look at where we are…look at where we started. I know I don’t deserve you, Alexander, but hear me out. That would be enough,” their Eliza was saying with the weight of their sorrow slowly making her voice dissolve. “If I could spare her life…if I could trade her life for mine…”

Her breath hitched and he could imagine her covering her mouth, a habit she often did when she was trying to conceal her tears, but how she continued speaking in clear grief proved she was fully baring herself emotionally for her husband.

“She’d be standing here right now, and you could smile, and that would be enough,” she stated
before he heard the small squeak of her unmistakably sitting on the edge of the bed. “I don’t pretend to know, the challenges we’re facing; I know there’s no replacing what we’ve lost-!”

She was fully speaking through tears that were undoubtedly pouring like rain, and when he dared to peek around the corner to the slightly ajar doorframe, he could see them clearly in the afternoon’s faded light. Betsey was where he imagined, her back to the door but body rotated fully toward her truest love, and Alexander was laying with his back fully to her as he stared at the portrait of their eldest baby with his eyes a million miles away. Even in the brief moment the older man allowed himself to fully look at them, he could that his best friend was very clearly listening despite his lack of response, and that would enough to give a small dash of potential to healing in the future.

“…And you need time,” she continued before falling silent for just a moment and speaking in a more confident tone. “But… I’m not afraid. I know who I married, so just let me stay here by your side….and that would be enough.”

Alexander’s lack of any response was as deafening as always, and John was forced to continue on his original path so they could have the space they clearly demanded. As snow fell more with the lethargic, painful passing of time in a world without their young loved one, the children were able to finish their schooling so they could begin their long break, a notion that clearly brought a lot more joy to their lives.

The only youth that hadn’t gone back to the school so much as once since his sister’s death was young Phillip, but it was not at all for lack of trying on those forced to the strong ones in all of their lives. All of the adults, including Alexander at some point, had tried to convince the seventeen year old to eat more than scraps or puddings, to see the outside again or join them in the painful processing of learning to survive without her, but the young man positively seemed to not be able to in any caliber. Instead, he often spoke as though his older sister were still alive and simply gone for a prolonged amount of time, and went about his days in a childlike disposition that made him exceptionally sensitive, slow to accept change, and unable to grieve without becoming so violently ill and suicidal that all of his loved ones were forced to live with the lad’s new ‘normal’.

“Mama!” Phillip chirped excitedly when Eliza came in from her last bit of holiday shopping, an occasion for which the mother took no qualms in preparing for. “Mama, did you get a pastry for Angie and me to share?? I think she’ll want cinnamon!”

Unlike the first few weeks, the forty two year did not weep or be forced to flee. Instead, she simply produced the treat from her basket and gave half to her eldest living. “Be sure not to eat it too quickly, Pip.”

John knew from previous encounters like this that the youth now eagerly chowing down beside him on the piano bench would get the other half later on, perhaps the next day, but a strange peace remained over the atmosphere for now. He read holiday stories and got everyone through their nightly routine along with his most beloved Maria before settling in for some hot chocolate and reading with the younger woman who he trusted with every aspect of his existence; it was then he saw Alexander out of his room and dressed for the first time in weeks.

“Alexander?” He inquired cautiously. “Where are you going at this hour? It is long past dark.”

His answer came with Eliza stepping down the stairs, her own body bundled and well clothed for the chill of the outdoors, but he was just as shocked as Maria as the two walked side by side out of the door. This routine became as integral as anything else in the day after that night, leading to each encounter between the spouses being almost ceremonial as they’d meet in the foyer, her always initiating conservation and he never responding, and he dared to hope that they did converse on
their walks until she despondently corrected the notion after a fortnight of holding out faith. No matter how result lacking this tradition blatantly was, Betsey continued it steadfast with her love for him no matter how unpleasant the outdoors was, and each night she always returned with him immediately disappearing back to his room and their wedding bands, both of which she constantly wore around her neck now, never exchanged once more.

“You don’t have to put yourself through the constant torture,” he finally reminded her when they returned with her face broken up with tears. “I know you don’t want to give up on him; none of us do. I fear he may be as…lost as our little Phillip, and I cannot bear to lose you as well, my Betsey.”

“I promised him and continue to promise him I will be there right beside him as long as he’ll have me,” she responded while throwing her arms tightly around him. “Moving forward, Johnny. It’s the only thing I can do for him now, and I’ll be damned if I let him down again.”

“Because you want to make things right with him?” John guessed gently while stroking her hair back.

“That is only a fantasy, I’m afraid.” Eliza held fast to him several moments longer before stepping back enough to look him reverently in his eyes, and he knew he understood her heart better than anyone else had before in that moment of clarity. “But I love him enough to never cease trying to let him know.”

Every evening, Alexander would lead her to the park they’d both been extremely fond of since the earliest day of their courting. He would occasionally stride ahead of his wife and very rarely wandered behind her, but most nights he’d be right at her side with a respectable, obvious distance that kept the two from touching. She’d talk endlessly about the day’s events and the things the family had said or done, her voice usually the only prominent filling to the otherwise serene, constant quiet of uptown. In her younger years it would’ve driven her mad—nay, just a couple of years ago would’ve been just as bad—but these days she found herself even loving the silence for the very first time. When they’d finish their walks and she’d be left largely alone again, she would pray despite having already accepting she may not ever be answered; that also never used to happen before.

On the night before the three month mark since they lost their eldest child, Eliza decided she could no longer conceal the upheaving kind of reality she’d slowly accepted while grieving so deeply she feared she’d lose the last thing she had concretely when her daughter died. The night was populated with millions of stars that shone in the inky abyss of the city’s air, and she found herself smiling involuntarily as she realized how plentiful the fireflies were as they made their usual path.

“Alexander, I know the last thing you want to acknowledge is the last time we laid together as husband and wife,” she began tentatively after a silence so prolonged he cast a brief look to her. “It was no secret you let me inside your heart on very special occasions when I became with little Lizzie, and while I long to be your life partner in every single aspect of the word, this is not why I bring it up.”

At the mention of their lovemaking, her husband had understandably strode ahead with anger that radiated off of every movement. Much to her relief, he paused his marching away and turned around to her fully, a rare motion that made her breath hitch in her throat. As he stared at her directly, she wondered if he’d have noticed if she hadn’t destroyed their union long before now.

“I…I am with child,” the former Schuyler managed with her voice trembling as profusely as her
hands in the cold. “Given the last time that you and I made love…I have come to conclusion that I were with this young soul before…before we lost our Angelica. If…it sh-should be a girl, I am…I am of t-the opinion…We name her for her late bi-big sister.”

The unimaginable grief, something she’d carefully managed and learned to live with, was far too unbearable in the speaking of their reality. The once overly prideful, stubborn woman broke down in harsh sobs immediately, her upper torso folding into itself under the weight of their suffering, and it was only when she began to breathe semi-regularly again she realized with shock that her spouse had led her slowly through the park and back toward their house while she’d wept. His hand, which had been grasping the loose excess fabric of her sleeve, immediately removed itself when she moved to touch it, but it changed everything about her weak, desperate hopes for the future. Against what was possibly her better judgement, she took his sleeves in the same manor and rotated him with gentle guidance, leading to their mutual realization they were directly beneath the entrance to ‘their’ park. The fireflies were lighting all around them like something from a beautiful painting, and though tears were slipping from her eyes along with his, she had the strength to speak.

“Look around, look around~” She melodically said to the man she loved, her heart fluttering when he very briefly touched her face with the tips of his gloves. “Alexander…”

Slowly, the two made their way back home soon after, but the change between them was far too powerful to deny. It was enough to help her sleep that night properly for the first time since that awful November day, and she found herself genuinely looking forward to their private time that would surely occur at its usual anointed time.

They were standing in the garden when the miracle occurred. Eliza was at Alexander’s side as they took in the flourishing gardens planted in their late daughter’s memory before he took her hand, his fingers clasping around hers resolutely, and spoke clearly.

“…It’s quiet uptown.”

Eliza felt the sorrow pouring down her face, her head ducking slightly into her dress before she looked up to him with hope fused undeniably with grief and love too powerful to name. Alexander was looking at her with the same, his own face just as broken with the mourning mixed with the same irrefutable love, and she found herself breaking down into violent sobs that reverberated so powerfully they were nearly silent. She could feel Alexander’s, her Alexander’s concerned and passionately warm gaze on her as she sunk to her knees at his feet, grasping his hands properly and letting out waves of emotion so raw that she feared she may never cease. It was hardly any time at all before he sank down right with her, his arms around her tightly enough to know they’d never let go again, and the two grieved together while the relief of what they’d both been yearning for after so long melded their broken hearts together in each other’s.

Forgiveness.

Chapter End Notes

Please remember to leave kudos/bookmark/subscribe/leave a comment if it so compels you! ♥

Angie, we'll see you on the other side.
Equal and Opposite Reactions

Chapter Summary

Grief is a linear process, one that takes the best of some individuals and replaces them with something entirely different. The most important election of the new century is upon the country, and opposing philosophies and remedies have never been stronger.

Chapter Notes

9,730 words and almost two months later, it is finally here!! I had a lot I wanted to put in this update, and I am here to announce that with the end of this lovely passion project rapidly approaching it's end, I have finally decided the number of chapters this story shall contain! The next update WILL BE THE PENULTIMATE CHAPTER, and the finale will follow it. I want to thank every single of one of you for being patient, loving and support throughout this long, incredibly difficult but far more rewarding journey, and I hope you all get the sense of accomplishment, love and pride as we descend to the end of this story. ♥♥♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When the morning shyly began to caress the horizon, Theodosius made his usual path to his betrothed woman’s grave. He grasped the freshly arranged flowers in front of him, the winter wind whipping through his hair and the causing the plants to tremble while he walked in solitary misery. He had done this nearly every day since she was fatally shot, her final life drained away in a gruesomely slow death that was undoubtedly very painful. He hadn’t felt right imposing when her parents, the sworn enemies to his mother, never left her side, so he visited her thrice when they were both asleep. The next time he saw her after the early morning of the day she died was in her coffin, her features as lovely as ever but perfectly drained of all livelihood, and he hadn’t been able to contain his sorrow in the outfit that mostly concealed who he was as he threw dirt into her plot and sobbed unashamedly. The woman who’d once tricked the female Hamilton into paying money as a price for sexual acts with her husband, her Aunt Maria, even comforted him lightly due to his hysteria, but he’d never revealed his face or said much more than pleasantries.

Being the forbidden lover child of two deeply established rivals meant grief was not an option with the people he almost would have called family, and due to his own mother having no idea of how he’d courted her since they were in their early teenage years, he was forced to carry this terrible darkness every hour he continued to breathe and had been left with no other options than to find his own way to cope other than joining her on the other side.

“How do you do, Angelica,” he greeted softly as he arrived at her final resting place, a still well decorated and beautifully maintained gravesite with the marks of visitors not yet washed away from the previous hours. “I hope you are doing well today. May the other side be as beautiful and prosperous as you were and even more so, my love; this world has practically nothing left for me.”

Even though he knew he was alone in this dreary place, he could imagine her chastising him for
such remarks. His mother still loved very much, of course, and he was still an early graduate of one of the most elite colleges in the country. He had siblings that were busy with their own lives but still found time every now and then to visit, and considering the women who essentially preyed and doted on him when he was a happily taken man, there would be no reason to fret over being able to court, wed and reproduce as any young bachelor ought to do with no ‘real reason’ to delay the inevitable.

“I worry the more I come here, the more you may pray I move on. You’ve never much been the type for lamenting over what you can’t change; you did all you could and then you’d move on to the next grand adventure,” he remarked, imaging her standing right there and smirking knowingly but fondly at his dreary state. “The thing is, my dearest Angelica, is that I want no part in the societal affairs that are so engrained in our culture. I wanted a life with you and you alone, and now that you’ve relented your mortal stay, I’d much rather cease my life than ‘move on’ or marry someone who I do not love.”

Most people would call his current state of mind simply dramatic or overly feminine, and that he would do well to buckle up and ‘be a man’. For all of the faults of her family members, they’d never struggled with showing raw and honest emotion, and for that he’d been long envious in comparison to his stoic, closed-off parents and siblings. It had been a non-event when he’d cried or raged in front of his beloved, and when he was with her, he felt as though his fullest potential self could shine through the charade he’d been forced to play for nearly all of his life to placate his academic driven, emotionally distant and strict mother. Yes, he loved the woman who raised him very dearly, but she could never be what he needed the most any more than some potential fellow rich spouse.

“...Angie?”

The voice directly behind him nearly startled Theo out of his skin, sending him whipping around to come nearly nose-to-nose with her closest in age sibling and most closely bonded brother. Upon the most sparing of sights, it was evident that the seventeen year old—no, he supposed the boy would eighteen now—was not doing well at all, and the amount of coping he’d worked through was minimal. His curls were a wild mane of tangled knots and his dress consisted of a thin white shirt and brown pants, a stark contrast to the neat and eloquent outfits he’d worn with immaculate pride before the loss of his older sister. The young man’s socks were on crookedly, as though a child had put them on in haste, his tattered-up shoes looked too large, and his face was a shockingly sharp picture of resigned sorrow and hollow desolation. The boy’s sad brown eyes studied him with surprise, as though he hardly noted his presence until they were abruptly before the other.

“What are you here to visit Angelica too?” Phillip asked softly. “It’s been so long since I’ve been able to do this…alone. Mama and Papa...Aunt...Uncle…even the smelly doctor…they say it is bad for my ‘mental state’. I think they’re full of dirt clumps.”

The youth immediately began giggling furiously, a stark contrast to the somber mood of the cemetery that frankly disturbed Theodosius. The older wanted to shout at him for behaving so immaturely the face of his sister’s grave, demand how he could act so foolish when he knew they both grieved so deeply for her loss, but given how the younger looked up with a blank, curious expression as soon as the laughter quieted, something in Theo’s gut told him that while the young master possibly didn’t mean to, he had lost some kind of control over his action. As if to accent this notion, the young adult wiped his nose crudely on the back of his wrist before sitting in a classic elementary pose before the tombstone, his free hand pulling out two wooden carriages with matching horses from his pockets.

“Come on, Angie,” he chirped happily, as if he saw nothing at all unusual about how he was
behaving. “Let’s play before it’s time for breakfast, okay?”

As the nineteen year old sat in astonished silence to observe his friend, he talked idly and simply, moving the toys around and laughing occasionally as though his big sister was sitting as plainly as day before him. Admittedly his limitations with the Hamilton family had been strictly limited by his own violation in the wake of this unspeakable tragedy, but he had no idea how rapidly their now living eldest had deteriorated mentally past the point of any semblance of who he’d once grown up to be. It was as though the clock had abruptly been cranked at least a decade, more than likely even more, for the young man in front of Theodosius while the rest of the world progressed as normal, and the rest of his loved ones were left to deal with the wreckage of their oldest boy. Most families would sent Phillip away to some kind of mental asylum, chain and lock the man away until he got so fluent in faking normality he could go free or keep him in torturous confinement until he died, but the Hamiltons were very clearly different. Even if they likely didn’t condone it this morning, he was visiting his sister’s gravesite and doing the only things he now knew to do to create happiness. Given how much they’d gained and lost so devastatingly over the years, the older youth didn’t blame them for not disposing of yet another failed potential in their lives.

“You should marry my sister!” Phillip’s chirp brought him out of his thoughtful state and almost immediately brought hot, angry tears to his eyes.

“I wanted to,” he admitted through his teeth; who was this boy to interrupt his grieving with impossible notions, and why hadn’t his damned parents come and retrieved him? “She’s dead now, Phillip. She’s passed on to Heaven.”

Angelica would’ve never condoned him talking to her brother like this, especially when they were younger, but he could no longer bring himself to care. For better or for worse, this adult child had no idea what was going on around him and what this loss meant for all of them, and he had the audacity to essentially mock what could have been in front of him! Perhaps the young man’s subconscious knew or he was just really that dumb now, but regardless it brought a terrible rage over the bachelor that seemed to choke out the tears he’d been trying not to weep.

“She’s not gone,” Phillip argued with knit eyebrows and an indignant point. “She is right here. Maybe you need your eyes checked!”

The younger giggled, sending Theodosius fully over the edge. He grabbed him by the front of his shirt, jostling him roughly and making him gasp sharply. The cemetery felt colder now, like cold taking harsh bites of his exposed skin rather than nips, but he was too invigorated to care.

“She’s dead!” Theo screamed, the tears pouring down his frozen cheeks and knuckles white from clutching his companion so unforgivingly. “She’s. Not. Here. She’s dead, she’s gone! She’s gone and she’s NEVER COMING BACK! NEVER!”

It was too much. His grief broke through the irrational fury the second he saw the pale pink wooden carriage, one that he’d seen countless times on her desk from sneaking into her room when nobody was home, dropped to the side on the frozen dirt due to his own outburst. Phillip was wide eyed and his face was crumpling into tears- did he actually break through, or was he just scary? – leading the older to simply embraced him tightly as though he was the last shred of sanity he could manage to find.

“T-Theo,” Phillip whispered brokenly against the fabric of his own coat, and the nineteen year old realized with a stab of guilt how cold his companion must be in such thin clothing in the dead of winter.
“I’m sorry…” The elder conceded in a tone wavering with his emotions, pulling off his thick overcoat and pulling the younger’s arms through before buttoning it up fully. “I’m sorry, here… there you are. Does that feel…better?”

“Mhm,” he agreed before looking back at the toys. “…I want to play with Angie, Theo. Where is she? Will she be back in time for breakfast? We’re gonna have muffins, her favorite. She’s gotta be back in time.”

The temperature seemed warmer than he had minutes before, and as he swallowed the lump of emotion practically choking up in his throat, Theodosius resigned himself to transferring some of that love for the deceased into productivity for the living. “I’m sure…I’m sure she will, buddy. Come on, let’s get these dusted off, and you can…play with Angelica.”

The Election

“Reveal less! Smile more! Don’t let them know what you’re against or what you’re for!” Theodosia exclaimed happily as she spoke with her enemy turned occasional ally, James Monroe. “You shake hands with her, give a bit of charm to him, when the election comes your favorite Senator is sure to win!”

“You’ve grown quite confident in your skin, Lady Burr,” Monroe remarked from behind his usual glass of alcohol. “How are you so certain that you, a woman no less, would be able to defeat the likes of Jefferson in a race for the title of president?”

“It is quite simple, good sir,” she replied coolly. “Jefferson, much like yourself, is a Francophile. He’s an extremist in every sense of the world, and with the growing resentment for slavery underlying every action either party sees passed, someone like me is the clearly superior option. When you don’t put conflicting opinions into the blank spots reporters want to fill out, the public is left to imagine and project exactly what they want to see in my slot. I didn’t get this far by not thinking these things through.”

“You realize you are speaking to one of the most loyal Jeffersonian, if you are so astute,” James responded with formally frigid politeness. “My good woman, if I’d known how arrogant you’d become, I would have run in tandem just to push you out of the realm of election possibilities. Don’t make me laugh; you do not stand a chance.”

“His poll numbers have never been lower,” she responded with a small laugh of her own. “Please, leave your petty ideology at the door when you come to inquire about just what is it I’m here to do. Face the facts; you’ll have your third president as a woman before the official numbers pour in.”

“A key endorsement could shift the current balance,” he remarked thoughtfully. “It is no secret who has been loyal to Thomas Jefferson throughout the years, though you are clearly not in that category any longer…”

“Oh, please. I still get on just fine with Thomas despite our political discourse,” she refuted with a light scoff. “Where have I been aligned since our first formal meeting with each other?”

“A Senator whose stance is impossible to pin down,” he snapped back plainly.

“A Democratic Republican! Have you not been paying attention, good sir?” She exclaimed while taking his glass with an easy lift her hand, bringing it to her own lips and dragging a substantial
amount in a blatant power move. “Oh, James. You’re losing your touch, old bean; perhaps you should act more quickly and more abruptly rather than endlessly criticize though who are prospering more than you.”

With her point made, she quickly made her way out of his office and took back to the bustling streets of New York City to continue her campaigning. From passing conversations, her morale only strengthened; Jefferson was in love with France, all the women of the city were aglow with prospect of one of their own in such an influential position in this brand new nation, the men were charmed by her approachability and charms. The nail in the coffin, of course, was the fact that Jefferson’s own daughter had slain the eldest Hamilton child in petty cold blood, a notion that had driven the two parents apart in ways that no politics or personal opinions could’ve ever managed. While Mary/Maria was slaying innocent people, Theodosia’s children were successful and her youngest was working full time in a respectable position while being beloved by all, knowledge that made her prouder every time someone reminded her of it. It would seem the tides had at last turned in her favor and the clouds that plagued her horizons for so many years were at last cleared, and it was finally time for the young Burr to shine the brightest she could with no real enemies to knock her down like they’d done all of her life.

“Mrs. Burr, as it were!” A familiar voice called, and the still mostly young woman turned to see her friend turned enemy standing there with two satchels brimming with their fullness on each of her sides.

“Elizabeth!” The older woman greeted with a smile. “It has been quite some time, ma’am.”

“You’ve been creating quite the upheaval since our last conversation, I must say,” Eliza mused with an arched eyebrow.

“Well, these things do tend to happen when you go door to door to spread your campaign,” she replied with a proud, excitement-tinged smile. “I haven’t heard much from you, on the contrast.”

While her expression did not turn fully sour or rude, it was impossible to miss the darkening in the younger woman’s expression. “That does tend to happen when you lose a child.”

“…How are you doing?” Theodosia finally asked, the familiar weight of all the loss she’d felt herself washing over her out of sympathy. “Are your…other children doing alright? Your husband?”

“How convenient of you to ask now,” the other woman remarked with a tight smile. “They are doing…alright. My husband is as remarkable as ever and my children are the most resilient, remarkable young men and children I know.”

“I take it that you gave birth? I seem to remember you being with child.”

“Yes, I did. She is a beautiful, healthy baby girl, named for her late sister. We have nicknamed her 'Angel’.”

“I am glad to hear it.” Theodosia, swallowing her pride back for the sake of being polite to someone she once loved so much, approached her and extended her hands for a two-handed handshake. “I wish you and your family the best, Elizabeth.”

Once the younger accepted the handshake, she audibly paused. “…Burr?”

“Yes?”

“Is there anything at all that you wouldn’t do?”
“Absolutely not,” she conceded with another proud smile. “I’m chasing what I desire for and am making up for all the time I simply waving through a window. And do you know what?”

“What?” Eliza’s gaze was steely, but Dosia was far too fulfilled to mind.

“I learned that line of thinking from you. Godspeed, good woman.”

With her head lifted even higher, she continued on her way with her campaigning. As she made her way up and throughout the town with her handmade posters and familiar strategies seeming to resonate with the people, she couldn’t help but overhear the things people were saying about her. As a clump of smartly dressed individuals exited a very new, nice building chattering about politics, she took the opportunity to settle on the steps of the building they just left and listen.

“…Well, there is one thing for sure, I don’t like Adams!” One of the men exclaimed, sending a murmur of agreement throughout their small crowd that Burr found amusingly satisfying.

“I don’t think you have anything to worry about.” The woman who spoke had her hair elaborately plaits and was being doted over by a young indentured servant. “He’s going to lose; it won’t take much to beat him.”

“And then Jefferson…” The man who originally spoke scoffed now.

“In love with France!” A wiry young man and a giant of a man echoed at the same time while leaning against each other, each openly mocking her opponent.

“Yeah, he’s so elitist!” A young woman, one that was much plainer in her gowns but still stunning, complained. “However-”

The same woman spoke in unison with the clearly elder woman, the one who talked down of Adams. “…I love that Theodosia Burr.”

“How lucky we are to be here with her!” The wiry man squeaked, his face an adorable shade of pink.

“She certainly seems approachable and to the point,” the giant gentleman concurred while patting the smaller gent on the back. “Certainly a woman like that is someone worthy of a government position.”

The plainly dressed youth grinned up at the man who just finished speaking, her adoration of him clear in all she did. “Word!!”

The forty six year old lady was practically hoisting a celebration of her own as she continued on her way back to her home, a rare grin spread out across her face and a new spring in her step. Of course there were people gossiping against her just as much as there were for her, plenty wondering what had come of the significant member of the Federalist Party and what her opinion would be of the main candidates. Fortunately for Burr, however, Eliza had remained largely if not completely silent about this entire affair, so she reminded her she had nothing to fear as she walked inside her place of living.

“Teodosius?” She called warmly into the seemingly vacant corridors. “Are you home yet, my son?”

She knew something must be amiss when one of their servants came out of his room, his expression somber and his eyes sad as he bowed politely to her before hurrying back into the house. The mother slowly approached the door, knocking gently against the mood and openly
grimacing when she heard the sound of parchment being rustled harshly.

“Son?” Dosia called hesitantly. “Is everything alright in there? Has something happened to upset you to the point you don’t wish to confer with me?”

“Just a moment, Mother!” He called, and she tried to keep a lid on the reverberation the formal title to her pulsated through her body.

When his door opened, the news that he hadn’t yet laid out before her painted in his stiff posture and somber face. Out of instinct, she immediately brought him close to her, his chin resting on her chest as she pulled him closer to her level. For a few long moments, she felt as though perhaps that all would be well if she just held them like their lives depending on it, just as much as she once did when they were both so much younger. The illusion melted when he eventually pulled away, his expression as somber as it was before and shoulders squaring up stiffly.

“What is wrong, my darling?” She finally asked in a quiet, firm voice.

“I have decided that is time for me to move along in my life. I cannot be all that ought to be as your son if I am forever beneath your wing,” he announced after a long, hesitant pause. “I have booked a ticket to be London bound on tomorrow’s dawn. I know that this is something you will have wanted much more explanation and preparation time for, but if I’m being honest, this was as sudden of a decision it is a revelation. It was an impulse, but now that I have spent hard-earned dollars, I believe it only right I see to whatever end it brings. This does not mean I do not love my home here, or that I will never visit. I’m afraid it is just time for me to move on, just like you are in the political game, my beloved mother.”

The mother was understandably stunned, but she managed to push out at least one of her immediate questions. “And where will you stay? Surely you do not have the funds to live independently.”

“I do,” he noted with a tight smile. “I must confess to you that this has been a long time coming, even if my original intent was not to go so far from my roots. This will be good for both of us inevitably. You must trust me on this.”

“You are so young!” She protested while grasping his shoulders. “With no wife and no social standing, you’ll hardly last in England! What has gotten into you?!”

Something seemed to rest on his lips as he pulled away from her, his expression darkening instantly. The older woman crossed her arms, leaning her weight against the doorframe and glaring as she watched her younger hastily pull his belongings into a thick suitcase. She’d poured all of her love and energy into him, maybe even more so than her five older children, and they’d turned out to be intensely loyal and successful in the country that she and so many others fought to free from the British’s tyrannical reign. Now the one baby she’d had with someone she loved was going right back to them because it would be ‘better for them both’, and the longer she thought of it, the angrier she became.

“You think you’re so astute because you’re nearly of age, do you?” Theodosia demanded. “You think you’ll be quite alright on your own? Not even two years ago you were clinging to my arm and now you’re ready to pave the way today?! I think of you warmly, my Theo, but don’t be a fool! They have nothing over there you couldn’t thrive with here! You’re one misstep from a total freefall; is this what the loss of one girl does? Keep in mind, my boy, she was a burning flame that flickered out while I am woman! I am the raised you, nursed you, bathed you! Follow in her lead, go right away, but don’t you ever say I didn’t warn you both-!”

“You don’t know a thing about me!” Theodosius suddenly yelled, whipping around with a
maddeningly furious expression she’d never seen before. “You say you know best now, do you?!
You think you’re convinced I’m the one in the wrong! How can say when you know nothing of
that girl who I was dedicating my entire life for?! Angelica Hamilton was the best person I ever
met, she saved my life, and she was the warmth that emitted from the sun while you were isolation
that comes with what’s long done! If freedom means this then I’m ready to go and if you truly love
me, then you’ll let me! So tell me, Mother…do you?”

The words echoed in her very core. Did she love him? What kind of a question was that? She
understood right then and there that children did not have the capacity to understand all that those
that raised them did for their wellbeing and the sacrifices they made, and while it made her terribly
sad, it was clear what path to take going forth.

“Yes, I do.” Mrs. Burr stated dryly. “May God be with you, because if you leave this home now, I
do not care to see you again. You are not who I thought you were, my child.”

With that, she turned on her heel and stalked into her home. The rest of the evening, she stowed
away and wrote to her companions about what happened, hoping to fill them in without allowing
too many of present emotions to spill into her tone. A few times she heard a knock on the door, and
for the sake of her temper, she ignored it completely and did reemerge until the morning for food.
As she ate her porridge and eggs, she watched Theo take his suitcases outside and completely
disregard her presence as she’d done the night before. Much to her displeasure, the servants were
doing their best to assist him and prepare his dress to something practical for the long journey
ahead. When the sun was banishing shadows plentifully, he made a last stop in the dining area to
press a chaste kiss to her forehead and a bundle of parchment into her hand.

“My God be with you in all that you do,” he whispered against her skin. “If you ever change your
mind about seeing me, this is my address to write to. Goodbye, Mother.”

The world was turning upside down as she watched him go to the door, the carriage fully prepared
to take him to the dock. All of the servants hugged him and kissed his face, thanking him for all
he’d done over the years and wishing him well. As she looked down at the parchment, which was
several pages thick and tied with one of the many ribbons she’d once used to tie back his hair in
childhood, she recognized that this was the only human left alive that her defense tactics and
apathy could never reach.

“Theo!” Theodosia called out as she got to her feet, her heart pounding as he looked back to her
with teary eyes. “Wait up, my son. I will be happy to see you off and will eagerly await your return
for visits.”

The sorrow cracked and he managed the smile she’d strived to get every day of her life since the
day he entered to world. “Thank you, Mama. Let’s go.”

---

Dear Mrs. Hamilton,

I know that is been quite some time since we last spoke…

....the pressing matter that none of us can escape....

...Adams, understandably...

...thankfully...
not a chance, so it is of the most urgent nature that your fellow Federalists...

who you are promoting?

Plainly put, Jefferson or Burr? If you had to choose, for we all know it’s lose-lose.

Eliza took all the letters she’d received and cast them into the bin, exhaling loudly and shoving the over-brimming container’s contents down yet again so it would all fold inside. She couldn’t leave her house without being bombarded with more of the same questions, nor could her family or friends, but no matter the persistence of her party she did not have an answer. The Reynolds Pamphlet was her most lasting mistake that she’d ever make and the loss of her oldest child was something she’d never thought she would’ve survived even a year ago, so she’d resigned from the political game completely in favor on focusing on the more personal, pertinent matters of her family, friends and other personal relationships.

“Three more!” Her husband, her poor Alexander, announced as he walked into her office. “My God, they never stop coming! If I hear one more word of this damned election, I may go mad.”

“I believe my mind is a husk of what it was before Jefferson formally announced is campaign and Burr began running,” she lamented as she took the envelopes for her spouse. “I’m ready to burn these damn things and put up a notice that should anyone have any more inquires on matter, they can kindly kiss my ass.”

“I certainly don’t see why you couldn’t…” Her life partner’s eyes sparkled mischievously, reminding her once again why she’d fallen so deeply in love with him and why she continued to thrive in his presence.

“My reputation is already practically garbage, my love,” she reminded with a chuckle. “I have added quite enough material for my enemies to bring up a thousand times, don’t you think?”

“Pardon me, ma’am, but are you beginning to take some the advice we’ve been trying to drill into you for years?” Alexander teased while taking a seat on the top of her desk, his lengthy auburn hair falling all around him in rich curls as he looked to her with the same eyes he did when they were much younger. “I can hardly believe it. Won’t you hire a photographer to capture this moment?”

“Very funny!” She protested with a laugh, standing up and wrapping her arms around his neck while he echoed her joy with playful nuzzles and allowing his hands to roam across her lower body.

“PAPA!” The sound of Alex Jr.’s complaint drew them apart immediately, but the intent of what he’d begun remained in both of their eyes despite his son’s displeasure. “Angelica won’t stop crying!! She doesn’t need changing, she screamed when I tried soothing him, she refuses to sleep-!”

“She’s probably hungry, darling!” Eliza called back on her husband’s behalf, giving him another suggestive, fond look before exiting her office and taking the wailing infant from her seventeen-year-old brother’s arms. “There is no reason to create such a fuss, my darling Angel. Why don’t you run along to town if your studies are finished for today?”

“The weather outside is insufferable!” The young man before her lamented. “University has me prepared to take up drinking, and Phillip…Phillip is Phillip, Mama!”

“I know your brother is not who he once was, my dear, but I will hear none of that disrespect and judging. We are all family and we will treat each other as such,” she reprimanded firmly before cupping his face with his free hand. “With that said, your father will give you a bit of money to go
buy some proper winter clothing for you and your siblings. Would you mind taking them along? I’ll lend you the carriage; I know you are a capable coachman.”

Clearly delighted at the prospect of responsibility despite being scolded, their second oldest (and her husband made over) gave her a quick cheek kiss and agreed as he collected what he needed from his family. Once he’d rushed back down the stairs while calling for his brothers and sister, she nursed the cranky four-month-old in her arms and talked kindly to her as Alexander gently played with the infant’s feet and long, fluffy hair. Standing there in her once solitary office space with their little miracle child, the one that survived despite the waves that drowned her mother in agony and grief when her older sister died, Elizabeth wondered for what felt like the millionth time how she’d ever settled for anything other than her incredible family.

“Eliza! Peggy is here!” Maria’s voice called from downstairs, laughter in her voice as she was most likely captured in a hug from the Hamilton’s little sister.

“I swear, she only comes about without formal invitation when we are either trying to be intimate or one of us is bathing,” Alexander remarked with a fond overtone as he stepped away from she and their baby girl. “I will go greet her.”

From beneath her feet, Eliza listened with a smile as she heard Peggy’s excited voice floating throughout their home while her kids cheered for her arrival. Her darling little sister had been desolate only a month ago, her heart shattered with the loss of her husband, but she’d begun to recover nicely with enough time, patience and love from those who lived now. Now Stephan Jr. (as the boy liked to be called since the passing of her loving papa) was a solemn but recovering eleven-year-old boy, one who spent as much time as possible with his family (mostly his cousins) and friends while his mother found her own peace of mind in similar places. Several times since the heartbreaking loss of Angelica did her beloved trio of friends sweep her along to go drinking, and in the more recent months, they’d been more than happy to accept ‘little Peggy’ along for the ride. The mother of eight carefully adjusted baby Angelica on her shoulder once he’d clearly finished nursing, cooing fondly to her in a soft voice before making her way down the staircase.

“Hello Betsey, and hello sweet baby girl!” Her sister immediately gushed.

“Miss Angelica really needs a nap now, I’m sure, but we’ve learned the hard way to just let her fade out on her own,” the older of the two noted with a tired smile. “What brings you by, my dear?”

“Well, the first order of business is that I received more letters from your ‘friends’ and ‘colleagues’…” Margarita had barely gotten the bundle of envelopes out of her pockets before Alexander pulled them away with an exasperated sigh. “Exactly my feelings on the matter.”

“Betsey, are you sure we can’t burn them like you said?!” Her husband grunted as he crushed the papers in his fist. “They simply won’t relent until we make it a point that we are not interested!!”

“You know…” With two of her favorite people standing before her and two more nearby within the home, Elizabeth Hamilton could not help but feel the heat of the internal fire she’d once fanned into raging flames lighting up all the possibilities she saw. “That may not be that terrible of an idea after all.”

Her decision finally came to life around two weeks later. She’d planned and cooked with her husband and sister all day while John lead the boys to gather supplies from the outdoors and Maria got all of them suitable outfits for the occasion, and soon there was a roaring bonfire just outside town that was carefully managed and strategically place close enough to water that it wouldn’t get too out of hand. Eliza stood hand and hand with her husband as all of the children ran around,
playing and laughing as they all took in the crisp, late autumn night. In addition to the Laurens and Hamilton families (as well as Maria and Peggy with their respective child each), Elizabeth decided to invite close family friends and their families, so the night was alive and all of the food was being devoured at a steady rate.

“This is going really well,” Alexander remarked with a smile, but the sadness was apparent in his eyes despite what he said.

Hesitantly, she gave his hand a squeeze and rested her head against his shoulder with a heavy, shaky sigh. “You wish that she was here too?”

It was hard to say if the moisture in his eyes was natural or tears. “Yes. I do.”

“Why the long faces??” John called out warmly from within the crowd, and she spotted him as she wiped the moisture from his eyes and he did the same for her with gentle affection. “Come on now! This is a celebration! The instrumentalists among us, pray you give us more music to dance to at once!!”

With a laugh and a sniffle, the middle aged woman conceded to dancing and celebrating life and freedom along with the rest of her guests and family until the last of the family friends had made their way back home. She had her older children carry/escort their younger siblings back to their home before she gathered her most trusted friends and adult family members around the last of the fire, which was now crackling at much more manageable volume. Since more of the central activities of this shindig involved burning anything politically charged that they wanted to move on from, she found herself trying to tidy the heaps of soot and ashes before she stood before her loved ones with trembling hands and a heart seeming to weigh like rocks in her chest.

“One of the biggest reasons I gathered you here was to clear up one of the biggest if not the largest of my many mistakes,” she announced. “I must preface this by saying that I do not regret having known this person, as I continue to love them deeply, but the state of the affairs we participated in were not correct or proper in the slightest. We have both come to know and accept this, and we thrive nevertheless. I carry with me the hope now that you all shan’t judge us therefor, and that we can finally let go of all the negative energy, hatred and regret that comes with one of my deepest, most sincere of friendships.”

At her core, she was gripping stubbornly to her optimism in pertaining to those before her. Adrienne de Lafayette and her husband were in for a visit to this country and had always been more promiscuously open than the general population in either of their countries, and given how she’d been taught to properly kiss by her beloved female friend, she clung to the notion that homophobia was as ridiculously to the Frenchwoman as it was to the England native. Sybil was a youthful leader of rebellion even in her aging years and Lucy was always the most open-minded of their entire ragtag crew, so while she was confident in all of them, most of her hope rode on them. Her amazing Maria had agreed to this meeting several days prior and the rambunctious John Laurens had been evidently somewhat attracted (if not fully attracted to) men as he was women, particularly toward her husband, so she had no fear when it came to their positive reception. All of her living siblings were there, even the youngest, Catherine, which was a hard decision on her part but one she anticipated with anxious stubbornness would turn out for the better. It was hardly a decision to not invite Burr, as she’d proven to be far, far more problematic than compassionate, and with the passing of her deeply, deeply loved and respected Washington around two years and a few months respectively prior, all that remained were their free slaves, servants and animals. Her poor husband who already knew the truth about the ‘Reynolds Affair’ but reconciled with her, and her poor husband who had to deal with the consequences of her overzealous nature and paranoia. More than he was pitiful or to be mourned now, however, her brilliant Alexander gave her a small smile and
encouraging nod, both of which immediately brought tears to her eyes.

“James Reynolds is a liar, thief, scoundrel, and overall sorry, shitty excuse of a human,” Eliza announced. “However…his former wife of several years is the most thoughtful, persistent, lovely, kind and strong humans I’ve ever had the pleasure of maintaining a flourishing relationship with. This is why…this is why in 1791, the two of us were between the sheets with each other several times. James Reynolds found out and blackmailed us two viciously, and this is why he is the subject of my infamous pamphlet. I must confess that I spoke with my husband on this extensively quite a long time before the publication of my mock affair, and we were able to maintain union despite it. As I esteem all of you very highly, I decided that it was high time I came clean about what truly happened. If you are angry, resentful or hurt by this, I apologize. I do implore you to never take it out on the very lovely Maria Lewis. If you should against the idea that I ever have sexual relations with anyone other than a man, our business of being in a relationship has died and I have the resources to either swear you to secrecy or completely derail your claims. Otherwise… please feel free to speak freely and honestly.”

The area was understandably silent despite the crackling of the flames and the distant sounds of the night. Maria was the first to stand up, walking over to her and embracing her tightly as tears streamed down her face and her entire body trembled. Elizabeth immediately clutched her as tightly as she might one of the children, one hand tangled comfortingly in her hair while the other pressed her near to her skin.

“Honestly, that just makes more sense,” Sybil finally piped up from where she was sitting. “And I don’t have to tell you infidelity is wrong or anything else, so…I’m glad it’s all worked out and we should all just move on if it’s all good.”

“Hear here,” Lucy agreed as she swirled her mildly alcoholic drink in her glass. “After all, there are far more pressing issues in the world than if one of the best people to ever grace this world likes women. As a matter of fact, I reckon if anyone here claims they’ve never been at least a little attracted to someone of the same sex, they are lying!”

“Absolutely!” Adrienne chimed with a laugh, one arm wrapped around her husband as she raised a glass toward the Hamilton. “It’s all in the past, and even if it wasn’t, those who really matter don’t care! What does it matter anyway??”

Her younger brother, Phillip Jeremiah, nodded along with a calm expression his face before casually fiddling with his pipe. “It’s nothing to worry about, Betsey. Your secrets are as safe with us as they’ve ever been.”

“I was hoping you’d all say that,” Alexander stated as he got to his feet, revealing a stack of parchment papers that filled his hands entirely with their thickness. “You see, Betsey and I discussed this at quite a bit of lengths, and so I took it upon myself to write down the cut and dry of it all. You’re welcome to read it, but immediately after, I am of the opinion casting it into the fire just like all the other bad things we’ve left in the past would only be fitting.”

“Hell yeah!” Rensselaer, her youngest brother at twenty nine, exclaimed eagerly. “Burn party!”

“Isn’t that what this entire evening has already been about?” Cornelia, her second youngest sister at the ripe age of twenty six, reminded with an eyebrow raise that was so much like their late oldest sister Eliza could weep.

“Yeah, but this was is the most important one! Haven’t you been paying attention?” Rensselaer elaborated while pushing her playfully. “Live a little! Stop and smell the burning paper!”
The baby of the family, sweet and steady Catherine who was only twenty three, simply wrapped her arms around both of them. “Please don’t fight, you two. This is about our beloved Betsey.”

“You three are blessings too great for words,” Eliza interjected with light laughter tinged with the remnants of her tears. “I am so lucky to have such wonderful young siblings. Please know that you all have made all the sacrifices I made worth it a million times over; every single one of you.”

“Hey!!” Peggy protested with a laugh, her arms thrown around her at once and successfully squishing Maria gently between them both. “That better include me, Hamilton!”

“Oh obviously!” Eliza properly laughed now, rocking the two of her favorite women back and forth gently before allowing them grab their papers for the burning.

When John approached her, his expression was hard to read, causing the forty seven year old to swallow her pride and emotions with difficulty. As he stood before her with a mostly blank face, she reasoned he was about to strike at her, perhaps scold her and put her in her place for something he himself had mostly resisted all his life. Instead, he embraced her tightly, so much so she had to adjust her nose to be able to breathe as she inhaled his sweet scent and the fire staining an odor into his clothes.

“My God, you never seize to amaze me,” he muttered in her ear as they kept to each other as tightly as possible. “While I can’t condone an affair, I must concede it makes far more sense than you bedding such a loser. At least you’re a seductress with standards, my friend.”

“My beloved Laurens, I know how you have looked at my husband in days past; some much more recent than others,” she whispered back with kind cautiousness, and her theories were only confirmed when he tensed. “I want you to know that there is nothing wrong with owning who you are so long as you are careful. All of that to say…thank you, my dearest, my lovely, my phenomenal John. You have always been better to him than I could have ever dreamed.”

For a long moment, he was silent. She was naturally surprised when his grip tightened and he spun her around, causing her to giggle out of surprise while droplets of moisture freed themselves from his eyes. Nothing could compare to her shock when he kissed the tears away, but unlike how a younger version of herself would have teased him or tried to play off her strong emotions, she simply relaxed to it and gave him a sincere, shaky smile that she hoped conveyed how much she adored him.

“Nonsense,” he finally said with conviction. “You two were made for each other and that is there is to it. Now, I suggest you go to him. I know he is longing for your touch now more than ever.”

Despite her agreeing, Eliza couldn’t help but chuckle and press a kiss to his forehead before slowly sliding away from him as he did the same for her. “I don’t know what I did to deserve you, Mister Laurens, but I’m damn glad I did it.”

Alexander gave her a shaky smile as she approached him, one that was full of conflicting emotions that were practically mirrored to her heart. She wasted no time taking his hands in her own, kissing them gently before meeting his lips as both of their tears slipped into each other’s down both of their faces. Despite all she’d done to hurt him, he remained loyal. He was the one most consistent thing, even more so than their incredible family and remarkable friends, and he was hers.

“Boy, you got me helpless…” She whispered fondly, the words he’d once said to her at least a hundred times when they first fell in love. “Look into your eyes and the sky’s the limit…”

“I’m still helpless,” he agreed immediately, smiling and laughing with a voice full of love and
choppy with emotion, but it was one of the sweetest sounds she’d ever heard. “Down for the count, and I’m drowning in it.”

That night, the fire climbed toward the sky, looking like it almost reached the stars as they cast away the parchment, drank, ate and cried/laughed with each other. For the first time since the loss of their beloved little Angelica and the world seemed to cave, it felt more than wide enough for all of them to be happy.

The cabinet meeting was going about as per usual before Hamilton barged in.

Theodosia was among the Senate, deliberating and listening to the various complaints and questions brought up. When it pertained to her, she used her usual tactics of redirecting and dancing around the subject, giving the people all the room they’d need for filling in what she believed while respecting what little she did give away. The vice president was looking quite agitated on this day, something that was not terribly uncommon but was much less frequent with Elizabeth out of the equation at large, and Madison looked equally as stressed out/exasperated. She was just about to inquire to them once a break was called by the clearly fried president, who was drinking in a disguised flask behind his desk, when she overheard what they were discussing among themselves.

“…heard back from her yet?” Madison was asking Jefferson before hacking unceremoniously into his handkerchief.

“My God, man, haven’t you gone to the doctor for your illness?” Jefferson demanded before exhaling sharply. “And what do you think? The very idea is preposterous-”

“Well, I can’t imagine she’d back her-”

“My daughter killed her daughter!” Thomas hissed out, his eyes flitting around but seeming to pass over the eavesdropping political opponent. “If she detested me before, there is hardly reason to believe she’d ever say one positive thing regarding me now!”

“Look, people see Burr has a less extremist. If you can get somebody significant to back you that isn’t part of your forces already or a Francophile…”

“I’m not a Francophile!” The older man protested sharply. “They’re all just pressed because I know where France is!”

“Well, if not Hamilton on your side, then who else do you have in mind?”

“Shit, I don’t know, Jaime!”

The older woman was understandably baffled at the implication that Madison was putting out. Hamilton had openly detested Jefferson and all he stood from the moment he arrived back into the country and she met him, but now they were willing to forge an ally ship simply because they did with her for to win? It seemed to her that they’d long forgotten the two of them were friends for quite a few years, and despite their hefty political differences, it was would be prosperous to imagine someone like Elizabeth backing a slavery-advocate, entitled and rich asshole that bathed in his privilege like Thomas.

“I can’t even fathom how she’d stand behind you, Mister Madison,” she interjected forcefully, causing both men to either jump or snap their heads to glare at her. “Weren’t you two previously
allies? Yes, if I’m not mistaken, you helped write ‘The Federalist Papers’, but you won’t give each other time of day now. How convenient of a line you try to walk along, sir.”

“Oh look, she does have opinions after all,” Jefferson drawled derogatorily. “Please, Burr. The men are talking.”

“And to think I ever wondered how people didn’t get along with you, even those once or currently on your side!” She exclaimed.

Perhaps the insults would have continued, but the president called the meeting back to order, separating the now openly opposing forces despite his rapidly slurring speech and bored eyes. They were in the middle of discussing the prospects of the land now being integrated into the Union when the doors swung open and Elizabeth Hamilton herself came striding her, her iconic hairstyle from her slightly younger years secured in pins rather than a bandana as she took the floor with her rich grey skirts seeming to stand out despite it being a generally average color.

“The people have been asking to hear my voice!” She announced, all traces of her confidence that had once been long past echoing along with her proud tone. “I do not have to explain how difficult of a choice this country is facing, but I will attempt to be brief.”

“Hamilton?!” Adams demanded from his podium. “This is a private session, I de…I demand that-”

“Sit down, John, you drunk piece of rubbish!” Eliza hissed before getting a top of one of the tables. “Listen up and tell your loved ones on my behalf! I have never agreed with Thomas Jefferson once; we’ve fought on over seventy five different fronts! I have also not agreed with Burr since the moment I stepped on this land, so you can imagine the dilemma I face when it comes to the prospect of electing a leader for this country. However, I have come to a very solid confusion that when all is said and all is done, the Jefferson Administration is sure to have beliefs, no matter how flawed or painfully idiotic they are. Burr? I’m sure I don’t have to tell you, but she has none.”

Baffled silence filled the courtroom, and Theodosia found herself too stunned to react along with the other subjects of Hamilton’s clear wrath. The younger woman simply got down, thanking them for their time and exiting with the same swagger that she’d entered in, but the cabinet meeting might as well have been formally adjourned with the way people became to spill out. When the shock had worn off enough to allow her move, the Burr simply went to the nearest bar and began to drink, her mind reeling at the audacity of Elizabeth and gall of what she’d said. With her most trusted child long gone to broader horizons, she found herself drunkenly writing letters to all of her offspring late into the night before finally passing out to slumber at her desk so sloppily that she was forced to clean ink for her clothing and face when the morning rose.

For the next three weeks, she spent most of her time desperately defending herself from the waves of questions that were so plentiful she thought she’d drown in them. Despite her supporters evident doubts, she took comfort in the fact that she’d likely have more loyal voters simply based on her status, personality and gender, and constantly demanded reassurance of her companions as the voting at last began. She wrote letters to her now very open enemy before disregarding them, as she was torn between not wanting to care what such a little wench would say and demanding an apology for the strike to her honor and goals. Yes, Hamilton had audacity in saying what she did, but surely that could be water under the bridge. After all, the younger woman had been a controversial figure for far, far longer, and it simply wasn’t likely in the elder lady’s mind that people would be so easily swayed by the likes of a privileged, haughty floosy like Elizabeth.

It was only when the results came in and she was forced to confront that she’d lost by a very, very clear landside that she knew she’d have to address this problem, and she very well ought to do roughly if this was going to be the nature of their already strained relationship going forward.
“Congratulations on a race well run on both ends,” Theodosia stated to the new president of the United States as his celebants finally cleared out enough for to get through. “I look forward to our partnership, as I do believe it is mutually beneficial if we are on the same side. Don’t you agree, sir?”

The expression Thomas gave her was infuriatingly smug, one that sent her blood boiling faster than any of her other enemy could. “Oh, sweetheart. You openly campaign against me and insult my personal and political life in no uncertain times, and now you’re going to talk about ‘mutually beneficial in her partnership’?”

He immediately dissolved in laughter, the mean-spirited kind that she could not believe was coming from the mouth of a full grown adult. She had good mind to yank the cane he was leaning on out from beneath him just for being so disrespectful, but as much as she detested it, he was in authority far above her now.

“It is bizarre that the person who comes in second gets to the Vice President,” Madison remarked with a smug grin of his own.

“You know, I do believe that will be one of my first orders of business!” Thomas straightened up, his eyes sparkling with cruelty she’d rarely seen so confidently displayed as he took his wooden support and tilted her chin up to look at him directly. “You may be my Vice President, Burr, but don’t get it in your pretty little head you’ll be making any changes around here. I bet you’ll make a fine maid, don’t you think?”

“Never,” she practically spat, but she would have to concede she felt like a child in the way he laughed and tapped the top of her head as though she was small and naughty.

“I don’t think you can say that kind of talk now, darling,” he purred, looking to Madison with a broad mistake. “Do you happen to know why?”

“Why?” Madison echoed deviously.

“Because I am the president!” Thomas announced before laughing again, dropping his cane but not bothering to respect what little distance Burr was trying to put between them as he leaned close to her. “Theodosia…Be a lamb and thank Hamilton for the endorsement.”

As the two of them sauntered off with arrogant pride radiating from their very beings, Burr could only watch as the door slammed behind them with a mighty crack. She resolved to send her letters to Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton- her greatest opponent at the end of the day- that night.

Chapter End Notes

Please remember to leave kudos/subscribe/bookmark/write a review if it so compels you! I'm not sure when the penultimate update will be (as university is restarting and it's going to be a very long chapter with a lot of things covered), but I'll see you beautiful humans then! ♥
The letter felt heavier than anything only consisting of parchment ought to in Eliza’s hands as she read over the contents. Theodosia’s handwriting was impossible to not recognize with the neat way she accented each later and used cursive so meticulously neat that it was impossible misconstrue the legibility.

Dear Madame Eliza,

After all these years of both enjoying and lamenting each other’s acquaintance, you ought to know that I am slow to anger but I tow the line as I reckon with the effects of your life on mine. In the past couple of weeks, I have reflected to where I’ve failed in my life, and you may be unsurprised to know that in every place, the only common thread has been your insolent disrespect. For all of the opportunities that I have provided you throughout the course of our lives, I find it to be terribly
blasphemous of you to be preventing me from achieving the things in my life that I have gone after with so much vigor when I have not proved to be a considerable roadblock in your personal endeavors. Yes, we may not have seen eye to eye for quite a few years past now, but nothing I have ever procured in our petty disagreements has ever posed a significant threat to you.

Now I hear from good friends of mine that you have called me immoral, dare I quote them, ‘a dangerous disgrace’. With this in the addition to your treacherous statement that ultimately contributed to the downfall of my prosperity in running for the presidential seat, I have found myself left to pick up pieces for things I am not responsible for breaking. If you have something to say, I encourage that you say it bluntly and to my face, and for you to realize that this petty gossip that has been taking place behind turned backs and covered mouths is as beneath you as it is me. In short, if you’ve got something to reply, name a time in place, face to face, and I do sincerely suggest you think carefully and choose your next words as well as actions carefully.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

Theodosia Burr.

“My love, it seems all of the paleness in your face has vanished,” her doting husband commented from where he sat with Angel, who was fast asleep and curled against his chest. “What has colored your cheeks so? Is it Jefferson again?”

“Though it may come as less of a surprise to you, the matter actually concerns Theodosia Burr,” Eliza admitted in a tersely solemn voice. “She has grievance with my political standpoint regarding the most recent election and solely blames me for her failed campaign.”

Much to her pleasure, Alexander immediately let out a half-laughed ‘tsk’ and rolled his eyes. “The woman grows delusional in her age. Does she not recognize that your stance only affects those who would have followed you should have been publicly transparent or otherwise? Preposterous.”

“I concur, my dear,” she noted while rolling her own eyes pointedly. “I have more pressing issues to attend to than these childish accusations. I do not truly care to give this postage the dignity of a response.”

“I suggest that you follow that feeling. You are correct in that she is not worth the ink, and certainly not worth the emotional response that she is eliciting from you,” he advised while carefully readjusting their youngest child. “Focus your time where it will give you flourishment. We are too experienced and growing too old for these games, don’t you think?”

Eliza admitted hesitantly in her answer despite how she did largely agree with him. It was most unlike her to simply ignore the political stirrings of her rivals and pretend as though they would not have consequences for attempting to soil her good name, not even after all of these years (if what she pulled by marching into a cabinet meeting was indictive of who she was.) It felt dishonest to neglect things that had been so critical to her character and reputation no matter how harmful they were, even if the very thought admittedly fatigued her. Now that she was at the ripe age of forty-five, such pettiness paled by far in comparison for the strongest relationships she’d ever had with her loved ones. Even with her heart welling up to her throat at the concept of subtly admitting the error in her previous ways, she neatly the folded the letter and discarded it in the waste bin.

“As long as I remain in the good graces of those who truly matter to me, that would be enough,” she affirmed aloud.

Alexander gave her a warm smile, slowly rising to his feet to kiss her sweetly before turning on his heel. “Thank you, my love. Now, I must be off to my lecture classes for my students at the college.
Maria is preparing dinner tonight, so I ask that you aide the children with any lessons they have questions on. Do keep in mind that Lexi has been struggling quite a bit with his mathematics, and Martha’s sewing remains to be insecure. Perhaps you could also speak with Frances on the rather dismal state of her reports before her father finds out—

“Need I remind you that as a woman, I am a fairly competent homemaker if not an exceptional one?” She interjected with a fond eye roll. “Be on your way before you are late! I shall handle things here.”

He kissed her once more, carefully settling their baby in her arms and smoothing her hair back from her eyes in a final gesture of farewell fondness. “I am certain you will. You are, after all, the best of wives and best of women.”

As her soulmate’s footsteps descended on the staircase, she cast another look to their daughter, then to the door before gingerly pulling the letter from Burr from the trash and placing it in one of her desk drawers. She would keep her word on not responding to it, at least not immediately, but she had the strong premonition that simply holding on to this written record would not do any harm.

New York, June 1804

Out of the two members of the rivalry established between Hamilton and she, Theodosia understood plainly that she was historically the most likely to let things go or to not bother with things that could not be changed. Regardless of this fact, she simply could not let the transgressions against her slide, not even after substantial time had passed. Of course, it was not as though her opponent was without guilt when it came to subject of her prolonged defense and aggravation, but somehow it was consistent that Burr was the one to send multiple letters despite no clear responses, if a response in writing was granted at all.

“Burr!” The sound of her ‘boss’s’ voice cut through her stewed concentration, making her jump and immediately fixate a glare to the smug offender.

“What do you want now, Jefferson?” She demanded bluntly, refusing to refer to him by his official title as much as she’d done the first day of their being in such high office.

“I hope you aren’t too lost within your own head to do your job,” Thomas scoffed. “I have orders and bills to be sorted through based on their importance. You are to take care of these by the time I return from my evening appointment.”

“And why am I obligated to do your monotonous work when the allotted time for the office has expired?” Theodosia sharply protested as three sizeable folders were dropped unceremoniously to her otherwise immaculate desktop.

“A leader’s job is never done, Burr,” her senior drawled with a devilish grin playing on his lips. “Surely you knew that when running for such high office. Is the pressure too great for you? I certainly wouldn’t be surprised given your… delicate state.”

“Pray you tell the precise meaning behind your words,” she said tightly.

If there was any true shame within the insufferable President’s head, it did not at all translate in his response. “Oh, come now, Miss Burr. You have been without a husband to take care of you for a full decade, and your children have gone on with their lives with so little regard for you that it would break any mother’s heart. Add that in with your political ineptness and the fact that God
simply didn’t make women to handle so much stress…Well, let me be the first to say it is a surprise to me every day when you walk through the doors.”

“The question is not my ineptness; it is your bias being so influential that I am confined to irrelevance!” Theodosia practically snarled in response while rising sharply to her feet. “If our fellow countrymen knew of the prejudice and neglect that takes place within the walls of these offices, they would be far more appalled than they proclaim to be in their concerns that they wasted a vote on myself.”

“Tut, tut, Miss Burr!” Thomas let out a short, jeering laugh as he turned away from her and headed for the exit. “Have you been too consumed in your own failings to embrace reality? The things that take place between us have little relevance above petty gossip to the people, and despite your own beliefs, their thoughts are merely unsubstantial opinions, particularly in the eyes of the law. If you truly want to deliver what you believe is ‘justice’ for this country, find yourself a beau to comfort you and alleviate your burdens. A woman isn’t meant for this line of work; we both know you are no exception. In the meantime, be a lamb and get to work, alright?”

With a pointed kick backwards, the heavy wooden door shut with a reverberating ‘thud’ and left the vice president feeling more humiliated and furious than ever before. She would have to be a damn fool not to know of how he and so many other lawmakers gossiped about and insulted her, but now he was cutting with reckless abandon into her personal life in order to try and uproot her; that was dirty even for the likes of him. Theodosia felt as though she was paralyzed by her fury as she continued standing perfectly still for a few very long moments, her head ablaze with offense at the audacity of someone she’d once respected while her eyes inevitably filled with hot tears. When the weight of what had just happened seemed to finally peak and send her back into motion, she threw the folders harshly against the floor and let out a broken sound somewhere between a sob and a long scream into the fabric of her skirts while biting it into her mouth to further muffle herself. The bastard certainly did not deserve to know he was getting the better of her, especially when she knew that this reaction was practicality useless when she knew there was nothing she could do to change her position aside from resigning. As she composed herself several minutes later by drinking water and cleaning up her stained face, she could not help but return to the long-stewing hatred she felt for that damned Elizabeth Hamilton. It was her fault that she was so tortured and miserable in a position that they both knew would only bring her sorrow beneath the radical nature of Jefferson’s biases. If Theodosia had achieved becoming the third president of their country, she would be a historic powerhouse, one that no one would dare not to take seriously, and one that would set in motion reforms that desperately needed to be made within their young nation. Instead, she was as much of a figurehead as their country was in their ‘representation’ when they were still Britain’s colonies, and she was constantly reminded and ridiculed for it by statesmen and general citizens alike. Her entire life had gone to unredeemable ruin, all because of a haughty, privileged, sharp tongued, sob-story driven scholar of an immigrant woman with a delusional political party that never ceased to cause nationwide issues.

“I want to be in the room where it happens…” Theodosia whispered now as she stood alone in her office, which suddenly felt much too small and much too disgusting thanks to the clutter of Jefferson’s God-forsaken documents all across her floor. “The room where it happens, was almost in the room where it happens…She kept me from the room where it happens for the last time.”

Despite her strong desire to leave the mess for her boss to deal with himself, she knew that such disrespect would only harm her in the long run despite how bitterly enraged she was. She reluctantly organized and signed off on each bill and proposition that she had jurisdiction on before dropping them each on the ground in front of his office to give herself at least one subtle way of
insulting the man. Burr wasted no further time in mounting her stead and hurrying on her way home, her grip on the reins tighter than usual and the commands she barked to her horse harsher than she usually would handle any animal with. As she went on her way, several people either waved to her in eager greeting (usually women), and others simply avoided her gaze or outwardly gave tight, displeased expressions as she passed (usually well-dressed men). Despite the kindness of many, the flame of passionate righteous could not be dulled from her today, and she wasted no further time before storming inside her office and writing a final letter to coax a reply out of her enemy.

Dear Elizabeth,

Your lack of response continues to agitate me rather than appease the simple requests I have made to you for nearly two years’ time now. In a different time, I may have complimented your evident ability to not confront a problem head-on, as that has caused you many problems in your past. However, I must now concede that I find you to be little more than a placated coward, and that I have expected more from the likes of you. I now comprehend that I was ill-dispositioned to know how you would handle my pleas and demands alike, and though I am sorely disappointed, I suppose I shan’t contact you further.

Perhaps that husband of yours had finally gotten through the immeasurable density of your head. Perhaps you are attempting to make amends for a messy affair that led to a public downfall so severe that you rarely emerge from your home for anything more than casual socialization and chores. Still yet, it may be that you have reflected that impulsivity and spite will only get so far if not used wisely. The consequences of your public image undoubtedly reach home in the wake of your daughter’s death. I maintain my curiosity and shock at the notion that you’d rather put the father of her last rival in a more prestigious position than myself, but I am sure you have no doubts that he treats me with all the respect that he would of an insect who wandered in the building.

Perhaps you will see past whatever naïve game you are playing with me and give me the very basic decency of a written response. Regardless, I wish you the best in your own attempts to reconcile your life as I do the same. I must ultimately wonder if the world truly is wide enough for the two of us to coexist, but I suppose we will see.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

T. Burr

Theodosia could not help but to find that the red-hot anger inside of her was beginning to cool as she re-read this letter. If Jefferson was stooping to deplorable levels to get beneath her skin in shamelessly displaying sexism and poking at the most tender events of her life, she was doing the same with Hamilton. Even if she did not particularly like her rival any longer, bringing up a public scandal as well as the death of her eldest child were two very heavy-handed insults, ones that the irresponsible use of could lead to terrible consequences for herself. Hamilton was insufferable and their friendship was permanently in a state of shattered disrepair, but Burr had to admit to herself as she looked over the piece of parchment that someone she detested so truly did not deserve the pleasure of knowing how she’d hurt her, no more so than Jefferson or Monroe did.

She was just about to destroy the parchment and cast it to the bin when a knock came at her front door. When she opened the door, she was alarmed to find a young man holding a large bundle of flowers in one arm that had a large length of thyme tying the arrangement together. Even within the leafy encasement, Theodosia could make out yellow carnations and peonies, and something that suspiciously resembled butterfly weeds amongst the yellow and lavender shades. She received the parcel with a very tight smile, resisting the urge to immediately hurl the offending florals in
favor of undoing the wrapping and inspecting exactly what flowers she’d been sent, and from whom.

Just as she’d originally noted, yellow carnations and peonies were all intertwined together by butterfly weeds, all of which had clearly been well upkept so that they were in good health upon delivery. At the very base of the package, Burr was positively shocked to find a singular, large sunflower, one that practically stared back at her as she lifted it away from the rest of the parcel with trembling fingers. On the end of the thyme, she found a folded-up piece of parchment, which simply read:

*Your incessant messages have been received, Ms. Burr. I will keep mine short in response; I do hope you understand it clearly nevertheless. I have the honor of being your obedient servant- E. Ham.*

Theodosia was shaking uncontrollably as the rage overflowed with new vigor, the force of it making her feel ill as her new tears flooded from her eyes. She made up her mind now that she had no reason to feel any empathy for the woman poisoned by political pursuits, and that she should not hold anything back if her foe was not going to, either. The widow practically flew back to her desk, sealing the letter with just a drop of wax before scrawling out the address and flagging the mail boy back down. This was the final time she’d be humiliated by the likes Hamilton.

When the response came nearly a week later, she had time to prepare herself. She steeled her nerves as she unfolded the letter, delicately smoothing it out along the desktop as she studied Elizabeth’s long-anticipated formal response, which she could already tell was quite lengthy.

*Ms. Vice President,*

*I do believe you have parted far from the original sanity and sensibility that I granted you to have when I first came to this budding country. A large portion of my conscience insists that I not give your audacious, bold, and crude letter the dignity of a response, but you brought more into this fight than what was morally allowable. You have slandered the name of my decisions in the condemning of my deceased child as well as compromise my family’s suffering for your own amusement, and I cannot allow that for a single moment longer.*

*To put it bluntly, you disgust me. I am not the reason that people do not trust you. That stems more from the fact that nobody is certain as to what you believe, and you have only yourself to blame for that. I am all-too familiar with your strategies and decisions to neglect mentioning that this is blatantly intentional on your part. You do not take a side in hopes of winning everyone’s favor on the assumptions that you are on their ‘correct’ side of the political spectrum, and yet it has kicked back spectacularly in your face. You are clearly far too immature to acknowledge your own responsibility for your upheaval, and you would much rather throw it on a scapegoat like myself than grow from your mistakes. Ultimately, I am not to blame, and you detest that fact.*

*Furthermore, if you have grievances with me specifically, I expect you to site them. Vague statements are simply inflammatory and have no academic merit behind them, so I have taken the time to attach an itemized list of the nearly thirty years of disagreements that have occurred between us on record. Unlike yourself, I kept receipts of these exchanges in case of my needing them, and given how petulant you are behaving, this was a wise call on my behalf.*

*I will not force you to write back nor encourage you to abstain from it. However, I will tell you now that I honestly do not give a rat’s ass about what I said that pissed you off. There is nothing I have ever said to you to merit the apprehensible things you said to me concerning my loved ones, so nothing will ever justify your ignorant rambling. I stand by what I said; every bit of it. You are the kind of person who stands only for yourself and tries to convince others that you do not long*
enough for you to utilize them and then toss them aside. I cannot nor will I ever consider apologizing for the truth.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

1. Ham.

As promised, the itemized list was attached, and Burr did manage to look over it with some reverence before casting the loose binding all out into the streets below from the roof of her home. She forced herself to prepare and eat dinner as well as reply to her son’s letter before she replied to Elizabeth, but her response was much shorter and concise than her cheeky counterpart could ever hope to convey.

Hamilton,

If you are woman enough to insult me so fruitfully and withstand the harsh lash of my tongue in turn, you ought to be woman enough to take a genuine stand where the stakes mean more than squabbling like schoolchildren. July 11th, Weehawken, dawn. Guns drawn and grievances to be fully laid to rest.

She added their now-usual snarky response to the end along with her abbreviated signature. She also took the time to procure an orange lily from her garden, pressing it and slipping it in the envelope with the parchment before having it dropped it off at its’ appropriate address by one of her hired hands. After all, she would not risk for a second that the wrong eyes could happen upon this formal and risqué rendezvous, especially when duels were illegal in their home state by this time. Elizabeth would undoubtedly get this message loud and clear, and should she respond appropriately, there would no longer be a need for revenge-seeking behaviors and decades of bad blood to continue to matter.

Theodosia Burr had been wronged by Elizabeth Hamilton for the very last time, and they both knew it well, even before the letter was opened by the recipient.

Elizabeth was returning from a morning in the city with some of the children- her and Laurens’ youngest in specific- when she received the final infamous letter from one Theodosia Burr. She’d allowed the little ones to fill it moderately sized pouches of sweets for her to buy for them when she’d stopped by the bulletins as per usual, so she was admittedly surprised to have a home delivery waiting for her neatly on her desk. As was typical for the intelligent and curious children whom she’d spent so much time with, they followed her into her office and settled in to watch her do some of her work before they inevitably grew bored or fell asleep for their usual naptime.

“MamaMamaMamaMamaMamaMamaMama~” The youngest member of the family, her Angelica Jr. - Angel-, babbled eagerly, her small hands bundling around her mother’s skirts as she attempted to hoist herself into Eliza’s lap.

Despite the coldness that ran sharply to her core as she read what Burr had written, Eliza took her daughter into her lap and settled the toddler against her as she debated internally on how to respond. Theodosia had not only done the unthinkable and outright challenged her to a duel, but she had done it with the expressed knowledge that she’d lost one of her babies to one such act of violence and vile powerplay. She quietly stroked Angel’s back as she pondered what refusing would imply about her honor while potentially preserving her overall legacy, and how agreeing would give her honor but endanger her family to yet another loss. Even if she were able to come out as the victor of this deadly arrangement, it would mean the blood of a long-time former friend on her hands, not to mention she could very well be jailed or killed for such a thing.
Then again, who had she become if she would allow someone to talk so boldly and cruelly to her and in concerns to her most beloved family? If she allowed Burr to walk away without penalty for such gross misconduct, it could very well encourage other enemies to take these kinds of jabs at her going forward. For all of her many faults and mistakes, she had spent most of her political career attempting to shield her family from the onslaughts and risks that came from her aggressive statements and bold power moves, and she refused to have anything or anyone upend it, even her own pride. The past few years had been relentless enough without some conceited older enemy trying to worsen things because of past quarrels that did not amount to anything truly significant regardless of what said enemy thought.

Ultimately, the thought of abandoning of her loved ones via the vice of death was what made her the most hesitant. She had no doubt that her Alexander would persevere long after she was gone, and had similar feelings about her children, John, and Maria. As a matter of fact, everybody in her life would find ways to survive and be happy if she should die, and yet she could not justify indulging the selfish notion of taking flight into the great unknown. Despite her religiousness and despite her most private beliefs being that she and everyone she loved would be better off if she were no longer around to ruin more things, she could not willingly walk into something as serious as a duel on a whim or for petty reasons. If she were to give her life, it had to be for something greater than her own agitation or caving into her rival’s prodding.

“Mommy…” A soft voice brought her out of her deep thoughts and had her turn to face her middle daughter, the very child that was named after herself and whom they all affectionately called ‘Lizzie.’ “I had a bad dream…”

“My poor dear,” she sympathized softly while brushing the five-year-old’s hair back. “Why don’t we go to your room, and I’ll tell you a little story to help you have kinder dreams.”

“Y-yes please,” the girl agreed lethargically, immediately nestling into her mother’s lap and encouraging her namesake to scoop both her and her baby sister up to tuck them both in into their sections of the former nursery.

“Now,” Eliza said once both of her precious girls were cozy in their beds. “What kind of story would you like to hear today? Do you want one from one of your books?”

“Mommy, can you tell us one about our big sister?” Lizzie’s doe-like eyes were pleading, and Elizabeth knew at once that she wouldn’t have been able to deny her request even if she had wanted to.

“Of course, dear heart,” she replied softly before adjusting herself against the bed and wall. “Well now, let’s see…Have I ever told you about the time that she and your older brothers threw a ‘health ball’ for me and your Papa when we recovered from the yellow fever?”

“What’s a health ball?” The small girl tilted her head.

“We didn’t know either,” Eliza confessed with a smile. “It was something that your big sister made up. She wanted to do something special to celebrate that we didn’t grow disabilities or even die from what we went through with that God-awful fever, so she declared to her brothers that they would throw a ball in honor of our good fortune.”

“That’s silly,” Lizzie giggled softly. “How old was she?”

“Eleven,” Eliza recounted with a smile. “She may have been quite young and her brothers all the younger, but that did not deter her for a single moment. With a bit of help from your Aunt Peggy, Uncle Laurens, and Aunt Maria, she did pull together a very nice little ball. As a matter of fact, it
was one of the only ones that the city dared host amidst all the sickness, and everyone in attendance had a fabulous time. Why, as a matter of fact, Angelica told me some time later that on that evening she had her very first formal dance and kiss!”

“Really??” Lizzie’s eyes were sparkling despite the dimness of the room as she snuggled close to her mother. “With whom, Mama, with whom??”

“She never did tell me,” the forty-seven-year-old admitted with a bittersweet smile. “But I am sure that the young gentleman was very lucky to have known her.”

“Tell us more about this ball? What did you all eat? Did you wear pretty dresses? Were you and Papa surprised? Who all came? Would we have got to go to if we had been there?”

“Now now, settle down. I will answer all of your questions in due time,” the mother soothed while tucking her girl in more securely. “I will tell you everything that I know, my dear. I promise.”

Of all the many less-than-ideal things that Elizabeth Hamilton was, she was indeed a woman of her word. She told her babies of the dazzling gowns and suits, the sparkling lights, the fireflies in mason jars with holes in the tops and the food that had been home prepared. She told them of the music, of the band and how someone lost their bow when a piece grew too quick for him to keep up, and of the news reporters who asked questions for the following issue of the papers. She told them of how this ball was a beacon of hope amongst all the death and disease, and how Angelica Sr. had demanded at least three dances with her beloved mother before the night drew to end. How she and Alexander had been so proud and so surprised, and how their eldest and her brother had crawled into their bed that evening for the first time in years to celebrate their all being home at long last.

By the time she finished, Lizzie and Angel were well-asleep, and she was grateful to be able to clear her misty eyes in private. Somehow it did not seem that her precious girl had been gone for nearly three full years while it simultaneously felt as though she never died at all. Even now, she secretly longed for her to come strolling in through the door, getting animated about everything just like her mother and knowing just how to comfort her siblings like her father. The pain of losing her along with everyone else she’d outlived never truly ended, including the still occasionally freshened grief of the loss of her poor older sister (who now had two namesakes). It did not seem fair any more now than it ever had that somehow Elizabeth, who had made millions upon millions of mistakes, got to go on and be successful when so many others were long deceased.

Theodosia must feel the same way. Theodosia even had the gall to mock her with these facts, and that sent a rage over Eliza so intense that she nearly screamed aloud. Theodosia Burr had crossed the line of no-forgiveness with involving her family, especially her late girl in this, and she had all of their honors to defend just as she must defend her own. She could not, would not, allow a cruel backstabber like Burr to hurt them any further and tarnish their carefully preserved legacies. This was so much more than just about the two of them now.

Accepted.

Your obedient servant,

E.Ham.

It had been on a whim that Theodosia had returned to the bulletins late in the evening on the day before the scheduled duel. She held the parchment leaves that she’d procured from the envelope she’d found for her there in both hands now as she stared at the writing across them, hardly able to
comprehend what her youngest son, her Theodosius, had written to her.

“...It is with complete sincerity, Mama, that I must confess to you that I was previously courting for a marriage that I had never been so certain that I could not live without,” she murmured as she re-read his writing for what felt like the hundredth time. “I have been, and reckon I always will be, completely smitten with one Angelica Hamilton, and that her untimely murder was the main catalyst seeing to that I move so far from the nest where I could only spread my wings a limited amount thereafter.”

The rest of his letter acted as a simultaneous confessional and massive informational supply. He talked of some aspects of the courtship he’d undergone with the late daughter of one of her greatest nemeses, from the early days to the ‘cruel end he was forced to live through.’ He then went on to tell her that had met a fine young woman that made him feel as though love were a bright possibility, not a cruel prison he’d be endlessly confined to, and at the end he included a formal invitational for her to not only attend their impending wedding, but also walk him down the aisle. The end only very nearly covered up the absolute rage and betrayal that stemmed from the massive front of his letter. She nearly cast the first nine pages into the flames as tears of joy mixed with devastation and rage poured down her face, but she thought better of it long enough to simply throw them into her bottommost, least-visited drawer. By the middle of the next day, the past would no longer matter, anyway.

One. Theodosia dressed sensibly, using a fresh shift and a dark grey stomacher to compliment her black, only very lightly ruffled dress. She used the pistols that she had inherited from her father, ones that were as practically built as she found herself to be. She checked the ammunition more than was necessary, made sure that she had backup and tucked her potential final letter to her children into the backing of the case. She left her other papers- a copy of her recently signed-off upon will- on the kitchen table so that they would not be missed before walking two miles to the park where she’d meet with the rest of her party. They made their way in their carriage to the Hudson river thereafter and were well across the water when dawn had just begun to streak its way across the sky.

Two. William P. Van Ness had been employed by her to be her second. He held her steady as they arrived at their predetermined location in Weehawken, and he helped her out of the boat with ease. As per usual for a duel, the sky was only adorned with a couple of practically transparent clouds, banishing any chances of rain. Nearby, Hamilton was approaching the landing, her face steely enough to match Burr’s own. Elizabeth had brought along Nathaniel Pendleton- Theodosia wondered in a moment of sharp clarity if she had even told her allegedly precious best friends of this event- and had also provided a doctor that they both knew.

Three. As Hamilton dismounted her boat, she examined the terrain with a hardened gaze and with her mouth in a tight line. It was unusual for her to not be making some kind of commentary or otherwise egging on her enemy and that made Theodosia feel fidgety at the very base of her stomach. For a moment, she considered giving the younger woman a final chance to apologize in favor of turning their precious lives toward more worthy pursuits, but the notion died quickly when she thought back to her son’s letter.

Four. First position was given to Hamilton, who drew it rigidly while casting her gaze back across the horizon. The sky was growing richer now, casting more light across this land that was so full of tension and hatred that felt frozen in place. Theodosia worried briefly that they would be caught if the sun rose too high, but she dismissed it with the stubborn belief that this was nothing that she
could not maneuver her way out of if worse came to worse. Perhaps law enforcement would be less tricky than somehow escaping this woman’s marksmen abilities, the ones she’d witnessed countless times during the Revolution. The doctor seemed to sense her thoughts as he cast a long, weary gaze toward the two of them before turning his back to ensure his own deniability.

*Five.* She thought back to one of the cruelest blows she’d taken to stir her enemy to action; the death of that damned Angelica Hamilton. Her son had never been the type to leap headfirst into danger, to recklessly defend imaginary concepts like ‘honor’ until he practically put himself on the chopping block. That girl did and would have further tainted all she’d built up in her son, and it was all because of her even more forsaken mother. She would only learn in hindsight that they were near the same spot that said girl died.

*Six.* Hamilton’s gaze did not leave her gun. She methodically ran her fingers over the trigger, her expression hardening and changing to something much more guarded. Theodosia had no doubt now that Hamilton’s mind was poisoned by her own political pursuits. If her clock was threatened to expire, she would not hesitate to shoot.

*Seven.* Burr had never been much for the war. She was a pretty good shot under calm circumstances, but in the line of fire she grew anxious. Precision was not her strong suit like it was her opponent’s. Perhaps a duel was not in her own best interest, but it was the only way left to solve this to ensure no chance of it resurfacing.

*Eight.* The final time to negotiate came and went like the calm breeze that ever-so-slightly ruffled the leaves on the trees. Van Ness came back to her while shrugging off a scowl. She understood her friend perfectly before he said a thing. As he spoke words that she would ultimately not recall, she watched as Elizabeth slipped her glasses over her eyes and stared with a cold, apathetic expression to her. She had never seen her wear corrective lenses for any reason other than reading. She felt her own fingers tighten hard round the barrel of her gun; this Hell-bound woman would not make an orphan of her son.

*Nine.* Theodosia looked Elizabeth in the eye, reminding herself as calmly as she could possibly muster to aim no higher. Courage exploded through her senses as her stomach seemed to give way to a bottomless well, and she turned with precise ease as they put them both through their paces. This was the finale; there was no more time for hesitation!

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine- she aimed her pistol at the sky, but it was too late-

**Ten**-

Eliza had been working on her letters when her husband roused to join her. His hair was adorably messy, and his eyes were only half as bright as they were when he was fully awake, so she did not hesitate to wrap him around herself and snuggle back into him as he stood behind her desk chair. He buried his face into her freshly combed and washed hair and inhaled deeply.

*Nine-*

“Eliza, come back to sleep~” He crooned. She wished she could tell him that she longed to more than she had ever longed to abandon any project before.

“I have an early meeting out of town, my Hamilton…I may have forgotten to mention it sometime last night…” She murmured in response.

“Who could possibly want to meet now, in the dead of the night?” Alexander grunted.
“I assure you that there will soon be morning’s sweet light,” she nearly whispered against his soft and lightly caressing hands. She wished she could tell him how she had prayed as she had when they lost their girl that this morn would not be her final.

“Betsey…” He inhaled against her again before moving to stand between her and her desk.

_Eight-

“Why do you write like you’re running out of time?” Her Alexander continued with a sleep-laced smile.

“Shh…” She crooned in return. Could he feel how her heart felt leaden and cold in her chest when he buried his face against it?

“…You always…write day and night…” He murmured.

_Seven-

“…like you’re running out of time…”

“I will be back before you remember that I’ve gone,” she tried in a soothing voice that she tried to force to not tremble. Could he have come to any other conclusion; would he have really wanted her to if he knew what Burr had involved?

_Six-

“My Betsey, come back to sleep~” Alexander attempted with a final drowsy look of pleading from where he was still tucked into the crook of her neck.

“I am truly sorry,” she whispered with all of her deepest sincerity for their rapidly approaching reality soaking her words. “But this meeting is at dawn.”

_Five-

“Well, I am going back to bed,” he finally relented before giving her a gentle, sincere kiss.

Eliza’s breath caught in her throat as he began his way back toward their bedroom, and she caught his hand carefully but firmly before he was fully away from her. “Hey… Best of husbands, best of men.”

He gave her another one of his most treasured smiles before disappearing into the darkness of their home.

_Four-

Eliza had taken the time to kiss and embrace each of the darling children, all of hers that were hers in heart as well as from her and her Alexander. She wished to herself silently that she could do the same for Peggy now; she would have done so if she’d been there. They all slept soundly through this early morning that felt more like the precursor to tragedy and she found herself grateful.

_Three-

Eliza had been mindful to crawl into the bed with Maria before she left. She softly combed her hand through her loose curls, cuddled her back when she naturally rolled toward her. She kissed her forehead and whispered how much she loved her, that she was eternally grateful to have had her as a best friend, and that she did not regret having been so intertwined in her life, even if the methods
were not conventional and far, far from perfect.

Two-

Eliza had done the same for her John. She tucked into his arms, shushed him gently and methodically when he roused ever-so slightly. She told him how their hearts understood each other’s more clearly than time could have ever prepared her for. She told him how she loved him in her whispers, and how she would not have changed a single thing in any life to have the opportunity of having been so close and so privileged to know him. She whispered she knew he felt the same, and that even if he somehow did not, she would understand.

One-

She’d asked them all to take care of her Alexander for her.

-last-

She always intended to aim her pistol at the sky.

-thought...

...From the moment she first experienced seeing death at the tender age of six, Elizabeth had imagined it so much for herself that it felt more like a memory. Memories of all the times that she could have died, all of the times that she should have died, and the knowledge that this was why she would die all occurred in a frenzy, yet as a single, inevitable thought that her soul seemed to understand before her mind could begin to comprehend.

The dilemma was as cut-and-dry as the bullet that she could see coming toward her. She could flee but it would catch her, she could fire back but that would not stop it, or she could let it simply be. Time all around her seemed to be ticking forward like the thunderous beating of her heart, but her thoughts were still as rapid as ever while the end approached ever closer. There was no peace and there was no chaos. There was no more room for uncertainties.

Theodosia Burr. The woman who had been her first friend, her first general complication of love and hate, her sworn enemy, and now perhaps the final face she would ever see. In the end, were all of her triumphs, failures, accomplishments and mistakes all to be overshadowed by the bullet that this woman fired toward her? Was Burr always meant to be her legacy? In the same thought, she questioned what did a legacy mean to her if she was not going to possibly be around to see it come to fruition, and how everything she’d ever done had been the beginnings of notes in a song that hopefully someone could one day sing for her.

She was a beginning, she realized with a sharp intake of breath. She was like her country; a great unfinished symphony that she impacted so deeply and so sincerely, and yet she was at the beginning, even now as she herself was at her end. Her legacy was long ago orchestrated in a bigger plan, then, one more than she could ever possibly wrap even her brilliant mind around. All that she could know- and had always known despite everything else- was that her loved ones were equally as certain as her larger impact upon the world.

She was running out of time. Her time was up, it was time for her to make her last decision and rise up, wise up, and she lifted her eyes up…

Across the horizon, past the endless light and colors and ever-occurring certain beginnings of the day, she could clearly see a glimpse of the other side. Her older sister was teaching a flawless
dance to faces she knew well but could not quickly recognize by name. Her daughter was on the other side; she was with her long-lost siblings on the other side. George and Martha Washington were hand-in-hand, watching from the other side. She longed for them all now in a rush of grief combined with a relief that she could not possibly have ever felt before, and yet she had no idea how to say goodbye. How could she conceivably understand how to say goodbye to her city, her living siblings, her living children, her Maria, her John-?! Alexander.

It looked as though she would not make it back to him before he opened his eyes after all, and she already could not wait to see him again. Despite how she longed for just one more kiss, one more affirmation of love, one more look at him, she smiled to the imagine she saw of him so clearly before her while the tears streamed down her cheeks.

My love take your time. I will see you on the other side.

... 

She reached out to take her daughter's hand.

Theodosia knew even then that the sound of her bullet making contact with Eliza’s torso would haunt her for as long as she should be condemned to live with her greatest mistake. She felt her heart go numb, then her entire body as she sank toward the ground that her former friend collapsed upon. She did not recall reaching toward her, but she was quickly brought to her feet and ushered to her own boat while Hamilton’s crew frantically rowed her back across the Hudson.

The drink she was given by Van Ness was hardly enough to cover up her knowledge of the wailing she heard in the street as she was briskly walked through town. Van Ness was gripping her arm, whispering instructions frantically, writing something down clumsily as they walked. He was telling her something about hiding, and trials, and liability. All she seemed able to focus on was the flask in her hands, and the sounds of a family falling apart somewhere behind her as she was unceremoniously put in a carriage back to her home. She realized only halfway into her journey that she was sobbing, too.

... 

...It is in this letter that I now summarize to you that I am at the very beginnings of my sorrows, and that there shan’t be another day that I am not reminded of July 11th, 1804. I will be joining you and your Josephine by the earliest ticket available, and I will be hesitant but obedient to answer any clarifications that you may need for my aforementioned accounts. Do not pity me if it so compels you to do so by natural position; I myself have been the one too blinded by my own eyes to have seen the truth as it so intently stares back at me and laughs.

Perhaps I shall take this communal time to acknowledge what it demands me to. The world, it seems, was indeed wide enough for both Hamilton and me. The world was somehow wide enough for all of the endeavors and tragedies and loves and victories of one Elizabeth Hamilton...and me.

Your loving mother,

Theodosia Burr.
The finale is coming before the end of 2019. I love you all. Please remember to leave kudos/subscribe/bookmark/leave a review if it so compels you, and I'll see you all soon for one last time on this project of mine. ♥♥♥

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