

A Company of Devils

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

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

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

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

After reloading the pistol, he sighs.

ROBERT CLIVEN

Dear gawd. Can I get anything right?

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

SNAP TRANSITION TO DOCK SCENE

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

(CONTINUED)

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

WELL APPOINTED MAN

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

OFFICER OF THE DECK (OOD)

And who might you be?

WELL APPOINTED MAN

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

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

WILLIAM TREMAINE

Well, may I come aboard?

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

WILLIAM TREMAINE

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

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

THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN

And who might you be? He questions disdainfully.

WILLIAM TREMAINE

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAPTAIN JOSHUA NASH

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

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

4 TREMAINE FUMES 4

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

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

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

He bangs his fist hard on the coach wall.

5 THE MAIL 5

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

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM TREMAINE

Chief clerk! We have Boston parcels
to deposit!

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

CHIEF CLERK

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

WILLIAM TREMAINE

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

CHIEF CLERK

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

WILLIAM TREMAINE

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

CHIEF CLERK

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

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

CLERKS

Yes Mr. Parsons?

CHIEF CLERK

Haul these mail parcels to the
sorting room posthaste!

(CONTINUED)

CLERKS

Yes, Mr. Parsons.

CHIEF CLERK

Turns to Tremaine.

CHIEF CLERK

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

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

CLERKS

All hands to the sorting table!

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

(CONTINUED)

CHIEF CLERK

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

COYLE

Yes sir, Mr. Parsons, yes sir!

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

COYLE

Message for the Guvnor' General,
Sir!

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

MR ABBOTT

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

COYLE

Uh, yes sir.

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

MR ABBOTT

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

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

MR ABBOTT

Get yourself some pants, boy.

Coyle nods,

(CONTINUED)

COYLE

Yes, milord.

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

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

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

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

MR ABBOTT

Shite.

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

6

A TEA PARTY...WITH OUR TEA!

6

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

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

MR ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

Don't I have enough burdens, Abbott?

MR ABBOTT

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

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT

Dear gawd. Must I handle every detail?

MR ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

(Nodding wearily.) Give it here Abbott.

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

SIR ROBERT

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

MR ABBOTT

Yes, milord..

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

MR. ABBOTT

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

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

Our other spice trades are continuing in excellent condition.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. ABBOTT (cont'd)

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

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

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

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

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

MR. ABBOTT

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

(CONTINUED)

Sir Robert gasps. Their eyes lock again. Abbott continues...

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

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

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

SIR ROBERT

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

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

SIR ROBERT

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

MR. ABBOTT

Milord, may I get you a draught of
Scotch.

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

SIR ROBERT

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

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

SIR ROBERT

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

MR ABBOTT

Yes, milord.

SIR ROBERT

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

(CONTINUED)

MR ABBOTT

Will you be stopping by your club,
milord?

SIR ROBERT

No Abbott. Not today. Get my
carriage.

MR ABBOTT

Immediately milord.

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

7

ONE YEAR EARLIER: JANUARY 1773

7

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

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

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

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

CLIVEN

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

JAMES

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

CLIVEN

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

There is discussion among the group until Cliven takes charge

CLIVEN

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

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

WHIPPLE

Not you fleas again!

CLIVEN

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

WHIPPLE

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

CLIVEN:

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

WHIPPLE

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

(CONTINUED)

CLIVEN

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

WHIPPLE

I'll show you!

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

CLIVEN

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

Whipple lifts the pistol up and pulls the hammer back.

WHIPPLE

You think not Cliven?

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

CLIVEN

Well, that certainly livened up an
otherwise dull afternoon.

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

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

9

A MAN TO MAN CONVERSATION

9

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

IAN

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

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

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

ROBERT CLIVEN
Uh....

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

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

ROBERT CLIVEN
You little weasel
(half way getting up)

RICHARD CLIVEN
You sit yourself down, Robert!

Robert sits down, seething.

RICHARD CLIVEN
What do you know, Ian?

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

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

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

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

ROBERT CLIVEN
 I won't go!

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

THERE IS MUFFLED KNOCKING AS THE MAN ON THE DUVET STIRS

10

THE NEXT MORNING, 1773

10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

11 RECOVERY

11

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

SIR ROBERT
Come in.

The heavily paneled, ornate door slowly opens.

MR. ABBOTT
Your lordship, I trust you are
feeling better?

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

MR. ABBOTT
Milord, I apologi....

SIR ROBERT
Just get me my jackanape valet!

MR. ABBOTT
Yes Milord

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

12 LEAVING AT 11 A.M.

12

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

SIR ROBERT
Who can we twist today, Abbott?

Abbott opens some of his files bundled on his lap.

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT

Do we know what the shipment of slaves is worth?

MR. ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

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

MR. ABBOTT

Yes, milord.

SIR ROBERT

Who else is feeling pale, Abbott?

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

MR. ABBOTT

There are a few others, Milord.

SIR ROBERT

Can we turn them?

MR. ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

Where is Dempsey at?

MR. ABBOTT

His position has only hardened, Milord.

SIR ROBERT

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

(CONTINUED)

MR. ABBOTT

Yes, Milord.

SIR ROBERT

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

MR. ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

(Grumbles)

I wonder what that bastard son of our good King George is up to?

MR. ABBOTT

(Remains quiet.)

SIR ROBERT

Are Oswald and Berry on board?

MR. ABBOTT

Yes milord.

SIR ROBERT

What did it cost us, Abbott?

MR. ABBOTT

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

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

Sir Robert breaks out in laughter.

MR. ABBOTT

Our men roused him from the room. he fully understands the implications, milord.

SIR ROBERT

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

(CONTINUED)

MR. ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

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

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

SIR ROBERT

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

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

13

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

13

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

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

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

1ST BARONET JOHN SMITH-BURGESS
Indeed, sir!

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

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

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

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

All the men begin filing to their seats.

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT

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

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

14 GOVERNMENT REGULATION

14

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

This fall session, the 67th
gathering of the lords shall come
to order! God Save the King!

HOUSE OF LORDS IN UNISON

God Save the King!

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

We shall open our fall session with
a traditional convocation from the
Right Reverend Samuel Pepsys.
Reverend Pepsys.....

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

RIGHT REVEREND PEPSYS

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

HOUSE OF LORDS IN UNISON

Amen!

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Good lords and gentlemen, I welcome
you back to this holy center of our
government. As we move through this
agenda, I pray that you look to the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

SERGEANT AT ARMS
 At once, milord.

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

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

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

15 THE STABLE BOY (CLIVEN TEMPTER OUTBURST)

15

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

SIR ROBERT:

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

TOMMY

Milord, he doesn't like ...

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

SIR ROBERT

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

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

SIR ROBERT

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

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

16 THE READING OF THE BILL

16

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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

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

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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

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

SIR ROBERT

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

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

Sir Robert sits.

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

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

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

The Prime Minister, Lord North, stands

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

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

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

Sir Robert Cliven springs from his chair..

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

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

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

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

The chamber is hushed again.

SIR ROBERT, FUMING
 Yes, milord.

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

(CONTINUED)

LORD NORTH

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

THE CHAMBER STIRS....

LORD NORTH CONTINUES

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

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

The man clapping is George Dempsey.

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

Sir Robert Cliven slowly rises.

SIR ROBERT

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

(CONTINUED)

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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

SIR ROBERT

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

(Sir Robert says in a measured voice.)

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

The chamber stirs

SIR ROBERT

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

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

(CONTINUED)

SIR ROBERT

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

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

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

There are murmurs of agreement in the chamber.

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

Just as Oswald rises, George Dempsey interrupts.

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

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

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

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

There are guffaws and chuckles.

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

There is some murmuring.

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

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

(CONTINUED)

SIR BERRY

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

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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

SIR ROBERT

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

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

A voice vote has been called!

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

SERGEANT AT ARMS

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

GEORGE DEMPSEY

Aye!

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

SERGEANT AT ARMS

Clerk of the house, do you have a
 count?

CHIEF CLERK

Yes, Sergeant at Arms.

SIR ROBERT

Guffawing..turns to Abbott...and
 smiles

SERGEANT AT ARMS

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

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

SIR ROBERT

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

The speaker of the house bangs his gavel.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Pausing....What say the house of
 lords, Sergeant at Arms, in this
 motion?

SERGEANT AT ARMS

Clerk of the house of lords, what
 is the count?

(CONTINUED)

CHIEF CLERK

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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

MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

I second the motion.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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

HOUSE OF LORDS IN UNISON

God save the King!

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

MR. ABBOTT

Sir Robert, the...

SIR ROBERT

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

MR. ABBOTT

Yes, milord.

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

(CONTINUED)

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

SIR ROBERT

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

MR. ABBOTT

Yes, my lord.

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

17

THE RIDE HOME

17

THE CARRIAGE MOVES THROUGH THE BUSY LONDON STREETS.

SIR ROBERT

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

MR. ABBOTT

Yes milord.

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

MR. ABBOTT

Ready milord.

SIR ROBERT

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

MR. ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

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

(CONTINUED)

MR. ABBOTT
Yes milord. Immediately.

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

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

MR. ABBOTT
Yes milord. I completely understand.

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

MR. ABBOTT
Future news, milord?

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

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

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

MR. ABBOTT
Yes, milord.

(CONTINUED)

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

MR. ABBOTT

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

JONES, THE BOY

Yes sir, Mr. Abbott.

MR. ABBOTT

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

JONES, THE BOY

Yes, Mr. Abbott, sir! Right on it, sir!

MR. ABBOTT

Good boy. Now go!

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

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

MR. ABBOTT

Aren't you the Johnson boy?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNSON BOY
Yes sir, milord.

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

JOHNSON BOY
Yes milord.

MR. ABBOTT
Good. Then you know my
expectations.

JOHNSON BOY
Yes, milord.

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

JOHNSON BOY
Yes, milord.

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

18

MR. ABBOTT'S HOME

18

1 BOY ABBOTT
Yes?

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

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

JOHNSON BOY
A message from your father. Here.

Johnson boy hands him the letter and tips his cap.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNSON BOY

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

1 BOY ABBOTT

I will! Thank you!

JOHNSON BOY

My pleasure, governor! Good night!

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

19

THE HAROLD ABBOTT FAMILY

19

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

1 BOY ABBOTT

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

WIFE ABBOTT

George, bring it to the parlor!

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

GEORGE ABBOTT

Mum, here you are! Can you read it
too us? Please?

WIFE ABBOTT

Yes, of course.

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

WIFE ABBOTT

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

ABBOTT CHILDREN

Yes, mother, they reply.

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

(CONTINUED)

My darling:

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

Love, Harold.

Marie stares at the letter and turns sad.

MARIE ABBOTT

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

GEORGE ABBOTT

Yes mum.

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

20

DINNER WITH SIR ROBERT

20

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

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

MR. ABBOTT

I can pull my own chair out, Walton.

FOOTMAN 1

Yes sir, Mr. Abbott.

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

SIR ROBERT

Abbott! Have you set our pigeons in motion?

(CONTINUED)

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

MR. ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

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

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

MR. ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

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

MR. ABBOTT

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

SIR ROBERT

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

SIR ROBERT
Yes, Abbott. Please do.

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

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

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

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

SIR ROBERT
Of course.

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

SIR ROBERT
Nellie! Nellie, come here!

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

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

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE

Yes, master. Right away master...

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

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

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

SIR ROBERT

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

NELLIE

Yes master.

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

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

21 THE BATTLE PLASSEY, THE DREAM.

21

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

(CONTINUED)

CLIVEN

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

EIC OFFICERS

Yes, Colonel Cliven.

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

CLIVEN

What do you make of it Clark?

CLARK

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

CLIVEN

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

CLARK

Indeed, Colonel, I hope they are aces!

CLIVEN

So do I, Clark, so do I.

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

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

CLIVEN

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

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

CLIVEN

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

MAJOR EYRE COOTE

Attack!

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

CLIVEN

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

MAJOR EYRE COOTE

There's always a first time, sir!

CLIVEN

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

(CONTINUED)

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

CLIVEN

Gentlemen, do I have any other motions?

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

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

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

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

MAJOR HENDRICKS

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

MAJOR EYRE COOTE

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

Cliven stares at Major Eyre Coote.

SIR ROBERT

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

(CONTINUED)

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

Sir Robert sighs.

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

EIC OFFICERS
Yes sir!

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

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

CLARK
Yes, Colonel.

Clark leaves and the Richards and Cliven are alone.

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

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

(CONTINUED)

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

At this point, sir, no.

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

To Company and King! God bless England!

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

To Company and King! God bless England!

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

(CONTINUED)

CLARK

Yes sir!

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

OFFICER OF THE GUARD

Sir! Reporting as ordered.

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

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

ENSIGN ROBERTS!

Right away, sir! Immediately!

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

(CONTINUED)

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

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

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS
Yes sir, he says dejectedly.

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

23

APPROXIMATELY 18 HOURS EARLIER, IN THE EIC CAMP

23

CLIVEN AND WATTS ARE IN CLIVEN'S COMMAND TENT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM WATTS

Indeed, Colonel.

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

WILLIAM WATTS

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

WILLIAM WATTS

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

WILLIAM WATTS

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM WATTS

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

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

WILLIAM WATTS

Of course, Colonel Cliven. I completely understand.

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

Cliven extends the letter to Watts.

WILLIAM WATTS

Yes sir. I shall die trying.

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

WILLIAM WATTS

Certainly, Colonel Cliven!

Watts takes the letter.

WILLIAM WATTS

Will that be all?

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM WATTS

Yes sir!

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

THE IMAGE FADES BACK TO CLIVEN AND RICHARDS AT THE TABLE

24

GROWING LATE

24

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

Richards is sits is silence.

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

LT. COLONEL RICHARDS

Yes sir, Colonel Cliven.

COLONEL CLIVEN

Dismissed, Richards.

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

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

ENSIGN ROBERTS!

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

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

(CONTINUED)

ENSIGN ROBERTS!

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

ENSIGN ROBERTS!

Yes sir..

Roberts hands the letter to an eager Cliven.

COLONEL CLIVEN

Get me some light, dammit!

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

It's from Mir Jafar!

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

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

CLARK

Here, sir!

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

(CONTINUED)

CLARK

Yes sir!

Clark runs off.

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

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

25

THE BATTLE PLAN

25

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

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

COLONEL CLIVEN

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

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

EIC FFICERS

Yes Sir!

(CONTINUED)

COLONEL CLIVEN
Major Coote!

MAJOR EYRE COOTE
Yes sir!

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

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

The men laugh and Cliven smiles.

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

The men chuckle again.

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

OFFICERS AND MEN
Sir, Yes sir!

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

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

CLARK

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

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

SIR CLIVEN

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

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

