

The Forge
by
Jack Wibbe

640 Realm Court West
Odenton MD 21113
r3aaa@yahoo.com
410 305 4633 home
443 654 7163 office

Read all of Jack's scripts at <https://threewibbes.wordpress.com/>

FADE IN:

EXT. A BERMUDA WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Pitch-black building. A roof panel is removed, the moon shines through. Two spies peer in; one looks down the road. One is CLARK, quite young; HONEYMAN and WAINWRIGHT are about 30.

WAINWRIGHT

It's not a patrol. Two soldiers.

HONEYMAN

Only takes one to see us. Let me know when they're gone.

WAINWRIGHT

Alright, we're on.

HONEYMAN

Alright, get in there and open the gate.

CLARK

I can't see a thing down there, give me your torch.

HONEYMAN

The whole building is filled with gunpowder, and he wants a torch.

CLARK

It's dark!

HONEYMAN

Use the moonlight, the gate is at the north end.

CLARK

How do I get it open in the dark?

HONEYMAN

Figure it out, for God's sake.

They lower him in by a rope.

CLARK

Goddamn!

HONEYMAN

Louder, they can't hear you in London.

CLARK
Give me a hammer!

HONEYMAN
Too loud, you fool. Try a pry bar.

They drop one in.

CLARK
Goddamn!

He pops open a slat with a loud crack.

HONEYMAN
Shit. Is the patrol coming back?

Silence.

WAINWRIGHT
Clock's ticking, boy!

CLARK
I've got it!

In front of the warehouse, a team sneaks in and begins emerging with barrels of gunpowder.

HONEYMAN
Not a bloody sound!

The team rolls gunpowder out to a small boat; a larger vessel in the distance. As the boat crosses the water, shouts and then shots are heard.

HONEYMAN (CONT'D)
Heads down, boys. Their cannon are down the road, they can't sink us. Yet.

EXT, SHIP DECK - NIGHT

Heavy seas off Bermuda. Ben FRANKLIN, Honeyman, Clark and the ship's MASTER on the bridge.

MASTER
There's a patrol coming. I see two ships already. We've got to head north.

FRANKLIN
You're the master, but I'm paying the bill. We go west.

MASTER

They're going to catch us!

FRANKLIN

This is Bermuda? There's a current over there, take us right to Philadelphia. Got the King's supply of gunpowder in the Americas, give it straight to George Washington.

(laughs)

MASTER

The seas are too heavy over there.

FRANKLIN

And that's how we lose the Brits.

MASTER

If we don't sink.

FRANKLIN

You're a coastal sailor. This is the ocean, boy. Biggest waves you'll ever see. I'm the biggest bloody pirate in the Atlantic, got a whole fleet, Irish ships, French ships.

MASTER

Aren't you a bit old to be a pirate?

FRANKLIN

Watch your mouth, lad. Last time we grabbed a British ship, the captain was arrested in Boston - we took him so easy the Brits thought I bribed him! He's in the same jail they had me in.

MASTER

There's more of them now!

FRANKLIN

Are they catching up to us?

MASTER

No.

FRANKLIN

Are they firing their cannon?

MASTER

No.

FRANKLIN

Then get back to the wheel, make sure we don't sink, can you do that? ...I'm bringing this lad into the network.

HONEYMAN

You can't sir, we don't know him -

FRANKLIN

(to Clark)

Boy, I run the spy network for the Americans. I have agents all over London, propaganda, intelligence. I had to let Congress in on it -- how long you think Congress can keep a secret? The King is probably reading my messages before I do.

CLARK

So you're a pirate and a spy.

FRANKLIN

You showed real promise at that warehouse. Even if you are clumsy. Want to do more work like this?

CLARK

Rather be on dry land. I'm no sailor.

FRANKLIN

Perfect. Need a few smart boys to keep an eye on the British camps, supplies, cannon. The bad part, you eat the same shit food as our soldiers, and there's a chance the Brits will hang you. Think about it and then get some sleep. I'm going to my cabin, practice my guitar.

CLARK

Yes, captain - are you the captain?

FRANKLIN

No, son. Just a book printer. Name's Franklin. Go get dry now. Who's this?

CLARK

Wainwright. Clumsy as a club-footed cow.

FRANKLIN

Alright, you had your go as a spy.
Back to the army with you. You're
not cut out for this work.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF TOWN ON DELAWARE RIVER -- DAY

Burning house in a fishing town. British platoon, led by an
OFFICER, surrounded by VILLAGERS.

OFFICER

The Willett family. Second time
today, you will get no relief here.

VILLAGER

But your soldiers burned down my
house!

OFFICER

Yes, we burned a dozen of them.
Next time your village won't be so
quick to help those smuggling
boats.

VILLAGER

Where is my family supposed to
live? We've got nothing. You got my
shop with the tax on contracts, on
pamphlets, on newspapers, glass,
paper, playing cards.

OFFICER

It's to pay for your protection.
We're fighting the French and the
Indians. You want to be killed in
your beds?

VILLAGER

That war is over! The only thing we
need protection from is you!

OFFICER

Parliament ordered it, and you will
pay.

VILLAGER

So when do we go to parliament?

OFFICER

The Simmons boy. Suspected of
burning our barn. We're taking him
for trial.

VILLAGER

Where will the trial be? We've got witnesses to can tell you where he was.

OFFICER

The trial will be in London.

VILLAGER

London? We'll never see him again!

OFFICER

(perusing a beautiful
teenager)

And whose pretty girl are you?

SECOND VILLAGER

That's my daughter.

OFFICER

Perkins, change the quartering order. I'll be billeting with this family here.

SECOND VILLAGER

And who's going to pay for your food?

OFFICER

You are, of course. It's a privilege to serve the Crown.

SECOND VILLAGER

I won't have it.

OFFICER

Then we'll remove you, and you can go starve with the Willetts.

THIRD VILLAGER

The girl is engaged to be married. To me.

OFFICER

Perkins. How many more do we need for the Navy order? Take this lad down to town for the Navy.

THIRD VILLAGER

You're putting me in your Navy? To come back here and hunt down my friends?

OFFICER

Or you can hang for desertion, your choice...

VILLAGER

You need to move our court back to the city. You shut down the statehouse, you cancelled our laws - we don't even know who owns what anymore. We can't even have a town meeting to clean up the mess you created. Our records are in town.

OFFICER

You want to pass a law, submit it in writing, it will be reviewed. In London.

VILLAGER

When will we get it back?

OFFICER

Parliament is done for the year. Hunting season for the nobility.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD NEAR TRENOTN-- DAY

A river, at dusk. A windy sleet storm. Gigantic chunks of ice float down the river. A small boat loaded with men and a cannon sinks near the shoreline. The men scramble out. Observing is their commander. WASHINGTON is 45, tall, red hair. HAMILTON, his aide, is 22.

HAMILTON

Some of those bits of ice are bigger than our boats.

WASHINGTON

Hamilton...

HAMILTON

Just making an observation.

WASHINGTON

The army is about to fall apart. Nobody believes in this thing anymore. We need something fast. Something bold.

HAMILTON

Some units tried to cross. They didn't make it.

(MORE)

HAMILTON (CONT'D)

Already three cannon are at the bottom of the river. Another week -

WASHINGTON

In another week, the river will be frozen solid, the Brits will come over and attack, and my army will disappear.

HAMILTON

Sir, most of these men can't swim. Well, they can't shoot or march either.

WAINWRIGHT

Sir, the short-termers, they want to go home. Enlistment's up.

A crowd of suspicious soldiers gathers.

SOLDIER

I can go whenever I want.

SECOND SOLDIER

Says so right on the contract.

SOLDIER

We've had enough. Sorry, sir. Came here looking for a real war, a real army.

WASHINGTON

My brave boys. I know many of you are done with your enlistment. You did your time. You have done all I asked you to do. You have worn yourselves out with fatigues and hardships. But your country is at stake, your wives, your houses and everything that matters. I do not know how to spare you. If you will consent to stay a month longer, you will render that service to the cause of liberty which you probably never can do again.

A long pause. A single soldier steps forward. Then more. Then almost all.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

And by the way, we're attacking again.

(MORE)

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

You wanted a real war?...Those of you who only came for the money, go back to Philadelphia. I'd rather have you fighting for the other side. Those of you who want to be free, man your boats.

EXT. A RIVER BANK - NIGHT

Near Assunpink New Jersey. Hamilton confers with Washington.

WASHINGTON

Putting in these damn teeth.

HAMILTON

Come back later?

WASHINGTON

No time, let's get on with it.

HAMILTON

Sir, we're crossing a third time?

WASHINGTON

Up north the river is frozen solid, we need to get our men across there before the Brits get up there.

HAMILTON

But this time they know we're coming. And the ice is not that solid up there. You fall in, the cold can take off your toes, it can kill you.

WASHINGTON

Perhaps we put the fat boys in the boats down here, and the skinny ones can walk the ice up there.

HAMILTON

Sir?

WASHINGTON

It's a joke, Hamilton.

HAMILTON

Not a bad idea, sir.

EXT. A FIELD LINED WITH TREES -- DAY

British troops form a line and fire at Assunpink. Americans retreat into the trees. Brits advance.

CAPTAIN

Climb!

Americans climb the trees and fire from there, pushing the Brits back for a moment.

A heavy-set American looks despairingly at the trees, then kneels, determined. He fires.

The Americans run into town and fire from houses. British launch an assault; American cannon push them back.

EXT. NEAR PRINCETON - NIGHT

Washington's camp. GREENE is an officer of 35. Washington is repairing his tattered uniform.

WASHINGTON

Just one real victory, that would get Congress off their asses.

GREENE

What about Trenton?

WASHINGTON

What about it? We surprised a bunch of German mercenaries, they didn't give a damn, they didn't even post sentries. They surrendered. I mean a real victory.

GREENE

Sir, speak freely? Remember that fight in New York? Your army was a mess. The few men who had guns only seemed to fire them when they were drunk.

WASHINGTON

Yes, I lost New York. Congress never tires of reminding me.

GREENE

We got crushed, sir. We lost half our baggage train and a thousand deserters.

WASHINGTON

Greene, we're rather busy.

GREENE

Did you learn anything from New York?

WASHINGTON

Clearly you're dying to tell me.

GREENE

First, you led a retreat at night, worked like a charm. One thing your men can do is move quietly at night. ...Second. What was your massive mistake in New York? You're a general now.

WASHINGTON

I split my forces. Half on Manhattan and half in Brooklyn.

GREENE

Split your army, and they killed you... Our spies came in. The redcoats split their army, just tonight. Half of them are here, the other half in Princeton. We found a road that takes us there. Want to pay em back for New York?

WASHINGTON

Good God. You're sure?

GREENE

Sure as anything can be out there.

WASHINGTON

Hamilton. Keep a company here, keep the fires going, make a godawful noise with picks and shovels. Make the Brits think we're digging a massive defense line.

HAMILTON

But not really.

WASHINGTON

But not really. They can dig a new latrine for all I care. Round about four in the morning, pull all your men out and follow us.

(MORE)

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

Greene, leave a scout behind to lead them so they don't get lost out there, it's dark.

EXT. PRINCETON STREET -- DAY

American unit marching toward Princeton, silently.

WAINWRIGHT

Here they come.

British units charge down the street toward the Americans. Some Americans fall and the rest run. Washington arrives, hops off his horse.

HONEYMAN

Stop! Form a line and load!

They do, and then fire at will.

WASHINGTON

Mercer, the road connecting the two British forces runs over there. I need to you cut them off.

Down the road, Mercer's unit finds the road already loaded with Tories. The Tories, unlike the Americans, have bayonets, and overrun the Yanks with a charge. Washington arrives.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

Not again. Stop running. Is there anyone here who can form a bloody straight line?

They manage to load and fire; the charge is halted.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

Bloody Congress. Asked them three times - these guns can't even mount bayonets.

GREENE

Sir, Brits coming on the flank.

WASHINGTON

Greene, take a company left, make sure they're all loaded. Don't want another bayonet fight.

Greene's unit runs left and manages a musket barrage which destroys the Tory charge.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

Sheer luck - these men still can't move in a group. Like watching sheep in a thunderstorm.

HAMILTON

Sir, the Tories are holed up in that big hall over there.

WASHINGTON

Greene, got a gunner who can hit that door flat on?

GREENE

Absolutely.

WASHINGTON

I don't think so.

GREENE

Dammit. McCauley!

McCauley blasts the door with a single cannon shot; American soldiers enter, and the Brits run the white flag from the upper story.

WASHINGTON

The Tories keep their money here, I want it.

HAMILTON

Sorry, sir, no time, the other British unit finally figured out what you did. They're coming down the road.

WASHINGTON

Damn. Alright, all units fall back, over to that hill there.

The Americans trot away. Soldiers sit under a tree atop the hill.

CLARK

That was not bad at all. Two battles in a row, we belted em proper.

Another soldier arrives.

HONEYMAN

Right after we pulled back, the Tories ran. All the way back to New York!

CLARK

(laughs)

Good thing, or this army would have fallen apart. Lot of these boys would run back to their farms.

HONEYMAN

Well, the Brits will come back again.

CLARK

Not tonight they won't!

INT. A PENNSYLVANIA FARMHOUSE -- DAY

MARY TOMKINS, a young midwife, assisting at a difficult birth; frightened MOTHER and FATHER.

MOTHER

Oh, God, when is she coming?

MARY

It's the fastest horse in the valley. Be any minute now.

FATHER

Why can't you do it?

MARY

I'm the second-best midwife in the state. You want the second best?

FATHER

Who's the best?

LIZZIE, an African woman, bursts into the cabin.

LIZZIE

Mary, what on earth is going on? Why are you throwing business my way?

MARY

The money is all yours on this one.

LIZZIE

Baby coming out wrong? Cord all tangled?

MARY

No, it's the mother. I tried all day, the baby is huge, won't deliver. Tore the womb, tore the sack. The mother's pulse is racing.

LIZZIE

Got your nails trimmed? Got a stool ready?

FATHER

What in God's name are you?

LIZZIE

You're the father?

FATHER

Yes, I want to -

LIZZIE

Get some whisky and a good hard stone. And a tree branch, about like that.

She shows him her pinky. He leaves. The African pulls out a knife.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

We get her drunk, we sharpen the knife on the stone, cut across like this.

MARY

Not up and down?

LIZZIE

Cut across, slow the bleeding. We cut the skin here, then cut everything else down here. We get out the same way - stitch the womb, then outside. Then we pray we can fight back the infection.

MARY

God, the mother, how can she possibly -

The African gives her a sharp look.

MOTHER

Don't be silly, Mary. I'm doomed.

LIZZIE

Not so fast. We've done this before.

MOTHER

Be honest. How often do the mothers live through this?

LIZZIE

Cutting you open? With Mary, she can save one mother in six. With me, one mother in two. We've been doing this in Africa for ages.

MOTHER

Africa?

LIZZIE

I think you live, I think the baby lives. Which would be a good thing, because this will be your last baby.

MOTHER

My only one?

LIZZIE

You want to tell the father, or shall I?

MOTHER

I'll tell him. That's if I'm ...

LIZZIE

If you're alive? Leave it to me.

The husband returns. The African begins sharpening the knife on the stone.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

Whisky. Get her dead drunk. Then we use it to clean her belly, the knife, the needles and thread. You bite down on the branch and we go in. Got clean cloth?

MOTHER

In the crate by the stove.

LIZZIE

You, mister, if the next farm has whisky, get some.

MARY

Next place over isn't a farm, it's the valley forge. He sells needles, get a few!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE FARMHOUSE - DAY

Mary is with her horse. Lizzie and the father approach.

MARY

(to the horse)

If you hadn't been so quick, this would all be over. You saved that girl's life. Got you a nice apple.

LIZZIE

(from the doorway)

You remember everything I told you?

FATHER

I think so.

LIZZIE

You were lucky. Get those girls over on the next farm to help for a few weeks.

MARY

Lizzie, something I wanted to ask you. Do you know what you're doing next?

LIZZIE

Got money in my pocket now. I'm going to find the Continentals, the army. My man, he was trying to join up with them.

MARY

I was thinking the same thing. My husband is a Tory soldier, but the Continentals need nurses.

LIZZIE

You're English!

MARY

Not anymore. The Continentals are dying by the dozen - hundreds of men with the flux, the pox, no food, it's one big patch of mud. My husband is furious, the whole idea. But I like that General Washington.

LIZZIE

Don't be singing songs to me about your General Washington. He owns 300 slaves, he hunts down the ones that escape.

MARY

Down Virginia way, didn't they promise your men they would be freed if they fought with the army?

LIZZIE

They lied. After Boston they put them right back in the tobacco fields.

MARY

Well, now's your chance to make the general see the light.

LIZZIE

Just nursing? You're not a camp follower?

MARY

God no. They have hundreds of women in camp. Wives, women who do laundry for bread, the children. And of course the other kind of women.

LIZZIE

Alright, I'll go. Colored midwife, even up here, hard to find work. These days mostly I'm helping pregnant girls in trouble, you know what I mean?

MARY

You mean -

LIZZIE

Yes. Knife work. The nasty stuff.

MARY

The Tories will kill you if they catch you at it.

LIZZIE

Catch ME? You know the Tories are looking for you?

MARY

Me?

LIZZIE

Trying to find out where you go on
all these rides, what you're up to.
They think you're a spy for
Washington. In spite of your
husband. Suspicious times.

EXT. SIDE STREET IN A SMALL TOWN - NIGHT

Mary leaves a livery stable and heads for a pub when SUE
PRUDEN, a young woman, grabs her and pulls her into an alley.

SUE

Mary, thank God.

Mary touches Sue's face.

MARY

Sue, sweet, what's wrong?

SUE

Come on back here!

MARY

What -

SUE

Quickly!

MARY

I hear horses.

Quick glimpse of British cavalry trotting down the main
street nearby.

SUE

British soldiers. You rode your
horse? Can I borrow him?

MARY

My horse?

SUE

Please, I'm in serious trouble -

MARY

What kind of -

SUE

I need to go now!

MARY

He's at the livery, you know -

SUE

Course I know which one. Fast as
blazes, just what I need.

Sue runs to the stable, mounts, gallops into the trees
nearby. Within seconds, the British ride up.

SOLDIER

Hello, Missus Tomkins, isn't it?
Looking for a woman about that
high, did she come through here?

MARY

Haven't seen her.

INT. A PUB - DAY

Mary enters and sees Sue, giving her a big hug.

MARY

Sue! I missed you something
terrible. It's been days since you
were in town!

SUE

Had a bit of business to do.

MARY

Sue. Is the Army after you for
something? The King's Army?

SUE

I need you to not ask questions.

MARY

Sue, you're frightening me.

SUE

I don't want to get you in the stew
too. Your horse is back in the
stable.

EXT. A TOWN SQUARE -- NIGHT

A depot is on fire. British soldiers panic.

BRITISH OFFICER

Did you get the bucket brigade
going?

SOLDIER

When we took the town from the rebels, they shut down the fire brigade.

BRITISH OFFICER

Our supplies for the whole summer. They already stole our gunpowder.

SOLDIER

Good news, got a report from our agent. There's a boarding house across town.

BRITISH OFFICER

Get me a platoon, meet me in the square.

INT. A BOARDINGHOUSE ROOM -- NIGHT

JOHN SAMSON, a young American spy, is burning notes in a fireplace. Brits enter.

BRITISH OFFICER

Had yourself an exciting evening? ...How careless, some of your papers have caught fire. Here, let me help.

He plucks out a burning page.

BRITISH OFFICER (CONT'D)

What language is this, I wonder? Letters and numbers all together? ...Take off his boots and check the heel.

SOLDIER

This one's hollow, sir.

BRITISH OFFICER

I brought my men here to beat you senseless until you confessed. With the cipher notes and the hollow boot, I hardly need a confession now. Sorry lads ...You have a string of spies running from Philadelphia to New York. But it doesn't work if you jump right into the middle of the chain. You broke the rules. Now I can march right up your chain to New York.

(MORE)

BRITISH OFFICER (CONT'D)

After we hang you, we'll find them
and hang them too.

JOHN SAMSON

I don't know what you're talking -

BRITISH OFFICER

Please, spare me. Your partner made
a mistake. The shipment of muskets,
only two men knew about it. All we
had to do was follow them.

JOHN SAMSON

Partner?

A soldier pushes Sue Pruden into the room.

JOHN SAMSON (CONT'D)

Sue --

BRITISH OFFICER

How extraordinary. She said she had
no idea who you were.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BOARDINGHOUSE -- NIGHT

Honeyman and Clark wait helplessly outside the boardinghouse.

CLARK

We only need a few lads -

HONEYMAN

We can't get her out of this. Or
him.

CLARK

Dammit, Honeyman -

HONEYMAN

You want to hang with them? They
were sloppy and they didn't listen.

CLARK

We've been betrayed. Someone in one
of the chain is working for the
Tories. Maybe someone at the
warehouse.

EXT. A TOWN SQUARE NEAR PHILADELPHIA -- DAY

A horsecart set up under a tree for a double hanging, John
Samson and Sue Pruden.

A platoon of British soldiers nervously watches an angry crowd. Mary, terrified, watches from the crowd.

OFFICER

By order of the royal governor, the prisoners John Samson and Susan Pruden are to be hanged by the neck until they are dead, under the charge of treason, the specification, providing maps to enemies of the Crown. Have you anything to say, before carrying out the sentence?

SUE

I reject the charge. I reject the authority of this king and his army. You lot out there. If having a king did us any good, it still slavery, isn't it? But it doesn't. How often has England given us a child for a king, or a murderer, or a foolish old man who can no longer reason? And nobles and uncles burning towns as they fight for power? Having a king is so dangerous that the British already had to kill one king. There are no kings in Holland and they have peace and they prosper.

JOHN

I speak to every American here. We can have no laws except what this king allows, and he has shown that every law will be written to keep us as low and as humble as possible. How can we accept that we will be slaves, and our grandchildren after us? What parents would we be then?

Disruption in the crowd, two men arrested by the Tories.

SUE

And where did these English kings come from? Centuries ago a band of pirates, bandits, took England at swordpoint, led by a French bastard. Their rule began with years of murder, robbery and rape, just like their bastard soldiers today. Every English king has bastard blood.

OFFICER

This is treason, top to bottom!
Let's get on with it!

SUE

Treason! What are you going to do,
hang me twice? You said I could
speak, I can damn well speak my
mind...You know me. You've come to
my shop, eaten my bread, shared
your lives with me. Has anyone here
seen this king? No man can be a
king unless he knows his country.
The kings of England never come out
of their castles. They know
nothing.

Another disruption; a man is beaten by soldiers.

JOHN

And this king, George, he's a
raving maniac, he yells at trees,
he won't eat, they locked him in a
cell while his idiot ministers
argue about how they can hire
mercenaries and Indian savages to
kill us, the king's subjects.

SUE

Even if -

She spots Clark and Honeyman in the crowd and they look at
each other for a moment, until a soldier looks over to see
what she's looking at.

SUE (CONT'D)

Even if we were not his slaves -
even if we had rights - what good
is it, to be English? Being an
Englishman means we have enemies
across Europe. We get dragged into
one war after another with France
and Spain, can't sell our goods.

HANGMAN

Don't mean to interrupt, but did
you say you don't want the hood
over your head?

SUE

I'm not bloody finished yet!

HANGMAN

I have to do things in the right order. You know if you don't have the hood on, the rope is going to hurt your neck.

SUE

Hurt my neck? It's going to break my neck, you great pillock! Some hangman, worried about my neck, how did you get this job? You belt up until I'm done.

The crowd laughs.

SUE (CONT'D)

How can we allow this continent to be ruled by a tiny island miles away? As well have the moon rule the earth. If Britain is the mother country, why is the mother devouring her young? This king can't reason with us, compromise with us, we can't trust him, we can't forgive the men who burn our towns. This winter will make us or break us. If we waste this chance, the ages to come will not forgive us. The sun never shed its light on a cause of greater worth. This is the cause of all mankind --

(sees Mary in the crowd)

...Mary? You go now. You promised. You said you wouldn't watch. I want to be brave, I can't do this with you here.

Mary, streaming tears, runs around a corner.

SUE (CONT'D)

Alright, I'm done with you bastards. Let's get it over.

Mary, in an alley, hears the sound of a cart rolling, a riot beginning, some firing. She runs away and finds her husband TOMKINS.

MARY

I don't want to hear it. She was my friend. And me, I found her persuasive. Treason or no. You said you're going off on a mission, well go! I have no interest in what you're doing for the king.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Got a baby to deliver.

(to her horse)

How's my good boy? Off we go. Got sugar for you.

She heads out of town, Clark stumbles into her path. They look at each other for a moment, make their excuses, and flee in different directions.

EXT. THE CAMP - DAY

Clark argues with Wainwright; Mary waits a few paces away.

CLARK

This woman. She's British! She came here when we captured her husband. Shot in the gut.

WAINWRIGHT

She's our new nurse. You can trust her.

CLARK

Not with everything.

WAINWRIGHT

Of course not everything...Miss, I'm sorry. When you were getting the bullet out of me, I heard you arguing with your husband.

MARY

You were listening?

WAINWRIGHT

Didn't tell a soul, honest. But I'm telling him.

(to Clark)

She's no friend of the king. And she's...she's the kind of person we want. She takes good care of us, she's clever, she rides that mad horse of hers...

MARY

(smiling)

You're that interested, I got a sister just like me back home...I can speak for myself.

CLARK

Alright. We were wondering how well you knew that warehouse.

MARY

Every smuggler in the valley goes there, buying, selling, drinking, fighting. I'm a midwife, I get supplies there.

CLARK

You were Sue Pruden's friend, right? I saw you in the square when she...

MARY

Yes. I was there. I didn't stay for the ending.

CLARK

We were wondering about her other friends at the warehouse. Could be one of them wasn't really her friend.

MARY

And that's how she ended up -

CLARK

Yes.

MARY

So that means you two are - never mind -

CLARK

We couldn't possibly tell you about that, you're a Brit.

MARY

Sue was my friend.

CLARK

I know.

MARY

You see the position you're putting me in? My husband's in the King army!

CLARK

How's he doing?

MARY

Infection, it's bad. Out of my hands.

CLARK

How often do the British patrols go to the warehouse, look people over?

MARY

(suddenly puzzled)
Never. I'll be damned.

CLARK

So the British army never watches the place. So who's there every time you go?

MARY

The barman and his daughter, the one who peddles the drinks.

CLARK

Who else?

MARY

French smuggler, Thibodeau.

CLARK

He's not working for the Tories, the French hate the English. Who else?

MARY

Smith, good friend of mine, smuggler. Rich boy, smuggles tea and molasses. Got balls, too - tells anyone who will listen how much he hates the King. Keeps to himself otherwise. Lots of trips out to the dock for "business".

CLARK

What's his name again?

MARY

Smith.

WAINRIGHT

Thanks, Mary.

MARY

This is the one who done for Sue?

WAINWRIGHT

Think so.

MARY

Well...go kill him then. I mean it.

Clark goes to Honeyman who has been listening.

CLARK

So he brags out loud he hates the king, and disappears to do business in the shadows. The smuggler.

HONEYMAN

I've heard some rough stuff about the barman, too.

CLARK

The Brits don't bother checking the warehouse because they have their own man there already. Shite!

EXT. A WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The warehouse is a depot where smugglers and traders buy and sell; a bar at one end is busy. Lizzie and Mary enter.

LIZZIE

I've still got more of that vaccine, if you can get me cash.

MARY

Not now. Can you stay a bit, just watch things for me?

LIZZIE

Watch what?

MARY

I'm not sure.

BARMAN

Hey, isn't your man a Tory soldier?

MARY

Yes, he is.

A silence descends.

BARMAN

Well, we get all kinds.

Honeyman and Clark enter, separate doors. They ignore each other. Mary is perched in the middle. Clark watches the barman, Honeyman watches SMITH, a charming smuggler with a chicken leg.

DRUNK

You're clearly a lady, or a lady's lady. What on earth are you doing here, love?

MARY

In town for some tea. I've been nursing my man up in Washington's camp.

DRUNK

I'll slide over, you probably got more diseases than Annie over there.

MARY

Rebel camp's almost empty anyway.

Smith looks at her and moves closer.

DRUNK

Get off it.

MARY

Any man who can stand, marched off. Head for the city, I think. In a big hurry.

SMITH

An attack?

MARY

I'm just a nurse.

Clark watches the barman, who ignores the talk and argues with Annie over money. Honeyman sees Smith move to the bar girl; Smith looks at Mary, not the bar girl. He has abandoned his chicken leg.

SMITH

Tuppence and we're square, right?

He heads for the door, then turns to see Clark, Honeyman and Mary all standing and staring at him. The customers turn to see what they're looking at. Mary decides to flush him out.

MARY

Run back to the King and get your money, you bastard.

His face gives it away. He runs, they all pursue.

EXT. TOWN MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

Clark and Honeyman run to different ends of the main street; bar customers wander outside to watch. They meet again in front of the bar.

CLARK

He must have a bolt hole ready for him.

HONEYMAN

Clever lad. Shite!

CLARK

Least we put the bastard out of business.

HONEYMAN

I want his hide over the fireplace. Shite! Meet you in town.

He takes off. Mary comes round a corner.

MARY

You find him and put paid to him. Promise me! We were that bloody close!

CLARK

We? Whose side are you on?

MARY

You just find him.

LIZZIE

You got trouble with that tea boy?... He's got a shack two blocks from the docks. Each time he sails in, first night with his wife, second night at the shack with his mistress.

CLARK

And the mistress, who might she be?...Buy you a rum, let's talk.

LIZZIE

You boys are trouble.

CLARK

We need to warn Washington quick. Mary, you think -

He turns, and sees Mary galloping away like mad.

MARY

Come on, sweet! Show me what you can do!

EXT. A TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Clark and Honeyman watch the square from behind a hut. Clark kitted up as peddler, sack on his back.

HONEYMAN

So no sign of that bastard Smith?

CLARK

Not a thing..We shouldn't be doing this.

HONEYMAN

We have no choice.

CLARK

I think they know my face, and if they see us together...

HONEYMAN

With that shitty map, I'm amazed we found this place at all.

CLARK

We need more agents, or we're sunk.

HONEYMAN

We need to find out what's in that shipment. If it's food, the Tories are settling in for the winter. If it's ammunition, they're attacking soon.

CLARK

Okay, let me go first. If they do know me, we'll see it pretty quick, and you can make a run for it. Stay back!

He enters the town square with his pack. He gets a third of the way across when he hears soldiers -

TORY

Hey. There he is again.

CLARK

Tinker, housewares, cheap as they come -

TORY
Hey, tinker!

CLARK
Oh bollocks -

He runs. They chase him and shoot him in the rear. He escapes into the trees behind the town. Soldiers pursue and then give up the chase.

TORY
That peddler's working for
Washington.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Continuation. Honeyman finds Clark.

HONEYMAN
Clark!

CLARK
Shot me in the ass.

HONEYMAN
I know, I saw.

CLARK
Get me back to camp. We'll have to
take the woods above the road.

HONEYMAN
Alright.

CLARK
Can you get the ball out?

HONEYMAN
Let's leave it for Mary back in
camp.

CLARK
She's a Tory.

HONEYMAN
Her husband's a Tory. Mary's
alright.

INT. WOMEN'S TENT - NIGHT

Wainwright looks for Mary.

WAINRIGHT
Miss?

MARY
Um, what...

WAINRIGHT
Sorry. Got a boy needs a doctor...

MARY
Now?

WAINRIGHT
Now.

INT. MEDICAL TENT - NIGHT

Mary tending to Clark's bullet wound.

MARY
You can stop drinking, I got the ball.

CLARK
Nice work, miss. It damn well hurts!

MARY
I know. Alright, come on in.

Hamilton enters.

MARY (CONT'D)
I take it you want me to -

HAMILTON
Just a moment's privacy, yes, thanks.

MARY
Hey boy. Any word of Smith?

Clark shakes his head. She leaves.

HAMILTON
Back on the road soon?

CLARK
Mary's a marvel. She knows I'm a spy. She figured it out.

HAMILTON

Damn! Let's warn Washington - she might tell the Tories.

CLARK

No she won't... Let's find a new recruit. Something different this time.

INT. WASHINGTON'S TENT -- NIGHT

Washington's tent near Brandywine; Honeyman reporting in, Hamilton listens.

HONEYMAN

Yes, sir, the spies all agree.

WASHINGTON

For once.

HONEYMAN

The Brits did run all the way to New York. But now they're back.

WASHINGTON

They think they win the war if they chase us out of Philadelphia.

HONEYMAN

They brought so many ships, they blocked the river.

WASHINGTON

How many ships?

HONEYMAN

He stopped counting at 200. 200 ships.

WASHINGTON

They have more ships than I have cannon.

HONEYMAN

They're nine miles away, coming fast. How did they find the road so fast?

HAMILTON

They have better maps than we do.

WASHINGTON

I need real maps! Tell the generals, move the whole army to the south road where it meets the Brandywine. We'll line up along the creek.

EXT. A RIVER BANK -- NIGHT

Near Brandywine, fog sets in. Chaos, FIRING, American troops fall, survivors run. LAFAYETTE, a French nobleman of 20, tries to restore order.

LAFAYETTE

Alright, Continentals, guide on me, we're getting out!

SOLDIER

Can't bloody see you!

LAFAYETTE

Go up the hill. Long as you're going up, you're fine. Just look with your feet.

SOLDIER

It's that bloody Frenchman, Lafayette.

WAINWRIGHT

Who cares, just climb.

The Yanks begin to climb under fire.

GREENE

Sir, we'll have to leave our cannon.

WASHINGTON

I don't think we can even find our cannon in this fog.

INT. WASHINGTON'S TENT NEAR BRANDYWINE-NIGHT

Hamilton brings Lafayette to Washington who is emerging from the loo.

HAMILTON

Who is this boy? Wants to come into your tent, I tried to shoo him off

-

WASHINGTON

Lafayette. Please, come in. Got the damned flux again. God, you are young. Nice job organizing that retreat out there. Cool head for a young man.

LAFAYETTE

Well, we're not going to win anything with our retreats.

WASHINGTON

So, Brandywine, give me the truth. Hit me with the bark still on it.

LAFAYETTE

Sir, I came to learn, not to teach.

WASHINGTON

Son, don't be silly. I need you to help with this army. You know this business better than I do. When did you start training for the military?

LAFAYETTE

I was eleven. I was an officer at thirteen, a musketeer at fourteen.

WASHINGTON

So, tell me.

LAFAYETTE

Well, you didn't protect your flank of course. Your troops couldn't form a straight battle line if you tied them all to a rope. You've got deserters in the woods. If Howe had brought in cavalry, your army would have been destroyed.

WASHINGTON

I was confused. There was a fog.

LAFAYETTE

It was foggy on both sides of the field. The Tories did fine.

WASHINGTON

Congress is leaving. I've lost New York and Philadelphia both. This is more than you bargained for, if you want to go back to -

LAFAYETTE

I can't. King Louis ordered me not to come. If I go home I'll be arrested. If you lose, I have no country I can go to.

WASHINGTON

Well, you saw my disaster so clearly, help me write my report to Congress. What's the date, do you know?

LAFAYETTE

September eleventh.

INT. WASHINGTON'S TENT NEAR GERMANTOWN - DAY

Lafayette reporting in to Washington who is chewing on some very vague-looking meat.

WASHINGTON

Starting to dream of roast beef.
Roast anything.

LAFAYETTE

General, it's a miracle! Letters from my Canadian friends. Up in Canada there is a British civilian, Germain. He's running the whole war for the king.

WASHINGTON

Pity we can't kill him.

LAFAYETTE

No, you don't want to kill him, leave him there, he's an idiot! He split the British army into two bits.

WASHINGTON

I was wondering what the rest of their army was doing up north.

LAFAYETTE

Germain ordered the Tory General Burgoyne to go north to Albany and told General Howe to go come here to Philadelphia. He expected Howe to take the city and then run north to help Burgoyne, but Howe didn't go north.

WASHINGTON

Obviously.

LAFAYETTE

That English army up there couldn't survive without Howe helping. Your man Gates destroyed them, they surrendered!

WASHINGTON

Surrendered...

LAFAYETTE

A whole English army, off the map! Place called Saratoga. It gets better. Down here, Howe split his army again, part of it in Philadelphia, part of it out here. He thinks he can destroy you with half of his part of the army.

WASHINGTON

Rather insulting. But he may be right.

LAFAYETTE

General, if you can follow up that Saratoga fight with a win down here, the English may give up and go home forever.

WASHINGTON

I have an idea - no, it's absurd -

LAFAYETTE

Sir?

WASHINGTON

We split into four forces. One hits the town from the east, one from the west. Then the other two forces attack from even further outside, one east, one west. Flank the English and crush them.

LAFAYETTE

Are you serious?

WASHINGTON

My men can't handle a simple battlefield maneuver, why not try something complicated?...You said all great battles are won with flanking attacks.

LAFAYETTE

I also said splitting your forces is insane... Well, they won't expect it, will they? Have your boys wear white rags in their hats so they don't shoot each other.

EXT. A TREE LINE - NIGHT

Fog near Germantown. American forces trying to organize. Washington, Hamilton and Greene confer.

WASHINGTON

I can't believe it. Fog again.

HAMILTON

Dawn is coming.

WASHINGTON

Are all four columns in place yet?

HAMILTON

No sir, only one.

American troops push British pickets into the town. The Brits fall back to a stone house.

GREENE

Sir, we can just bypass it.

WASHINGTON

No, then they can hit us in the rear.

American cannonfire on the house, without success. American infantry attack and are driven back.

WAINWRIGHT

I'm out!

SECOND SOLDIER

Ammo here!

WAINWRIGHT

Sir, we're all out of cartridges.

CAPTAIN

Dammit, pull them back, try to form a line back near that house.

Elsewhere on the field.

GREENE
Can't see a damn thing.

A shot. Then more.

WAINWRIGHT
Hold your fire! Continentals!

SECOND SOLDIER
Who are you?

SOLDIE
Ninth Virginia! See the bloody hat?

SECOND SOLDIER
Can't see anything.

SOLDIER
Where the hell are the Brits!

SECOND SOLDIER
Over there. Let's go then!

Part of Greene's column attacks the British and break through, but are surrounded and surrender.

GREENE
Come on, let's break them out!

CAPTAIN
We can't save them. They
surrendered. We go in, we'll be
surrendering too.

GREENE
Let's form up on that hill. Be
ready, the English will be coming
after us.

They line up on a hill and repel a British attack.

INT. WASHINGTON'S TENT NEAR GERMANTOWN -- NIGHT

Washington and Lafayette confer.

WASHINGTON
They chased us nine miles. How
angry does a man have to be to run
nine miles?

LAFAYETTE

Both sides thought they could end the war in one day. We're lucky we survived.

WASHINGTON

Yes, you were right, I was stupid. Splitting the army into four bits.

LAFAYETTE

(laughs)

No, I loved that part. It was so insane it might have worked.

WASHINGTON

Sometimes you roll the dice.

LAFAYETTE

It's just your luck that you launched a complicated attack with untrained men - and then the fog rolled in. Once in a while you need to do something crazy.

WASHINGTON

(with paper)

Now I get to explain everything to Martha.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S CAMP NEAR VALLEY FORGE -- NIGHT

Soldiers march. Washington and Greene observe.

SOLDIER

It's Tuesday, my turn with the shoes.

SECOND SOLDIER

I know it's Tuesday. Look at my feet.

SOLDIER

Oh fine. You owe me Thursday. My turn.

Behind them are the soldier's bloody footprints.

GREENE

General, I think we're done here.

WASHINGTON

Done?

GREENE

The boys, their shoes were coming to pieces even before we marched. Now only one man in three has shoes at all. The rest are barefoot.

WASHINGTON

So we're giving up?

GREENE

No, sir. Look at those two ridges up there near the river, the Schuylkill.

WASHINGTON

It's far enough north so the Brits can't surprise us...

GREENE

But close enough to stop the Brits from controlling the whole countryside.

WASHINGTON

We'll build all our cabins from scratch, carry water up that hill. If it's on a hill, why does it have that silly name?

GREENE

Valley Forge.

EXT. VALLEY FORGE CAMP - DAY

Washington meets the chaplain.

REVEREND

Been looking for you at services Sunday.

WASHINGTON

I need Sunday to catch up on my reports. Begging the governors for bread and boots. You tried to shame me in front of my men, for not taking communion.

REVEREND

Be helpful if we had your help building a Christian nation, when we're free.

WASHINGTON

We're not building a Christian nation - a lot of us came here to get away from exactly that. As far as I'm concerned a man goes as far as he wants, no matter what he believes. Or doesn't believe.

Mary approaches.

MARY

General? I was talking to Hamilton. He said you might have some opium.

WASHINGTON

So much for keeping confidences. I'm in constant pain from the teeth. I used opium but it's all gone now. How much you want for that horse of yours?

MARY

He's my best mate. Save your money.

WASHINGTON

How's your husband?

She shrugs and sighs. It's painful.

MARY

...General, I'm not just a midwife, I can knock about as a doctor, for a need. What sort of problems have you had with your health? Aside from the teeth?

WASHINGTON

Let's see. I already got over malaria, smallpox, diphtheria and tuberculosis...

MARY

Good God.

WASHINGTON

Old business. Can't read without glasses and I can't hear well. And I still have a running fight with dysentery.

MARY

God, what are you doing here? You'll die!

WASHINGTON

(laughs)

When I came out here, my wife gave me hair powder. As if I'm going to powder my hair in front of men with no shoes... I'm out here because those men are out here. You've heard of the prison ships?

MARY

Even my husband thought it's awful.

WASHINGTON

Our boys are dying on the prison ships, in the hundreds. The English torture, starve those boys on purpose. You know why? Not long ago the British admiral gave them a chance - alright, you can go free, long as you switch sides, join the British army. Know how many switched?

MARY

Not many?

WASHINGTON

It was exactly none. Not one, out of thousands. I couldn't be more proud. Those boys on the ships, these lads with no shoes. Even now I'm not worthy to lead them, ask for all this sacrifice. What would I be worth if I ran back home? Give me a hand, need the latrine.

And she helps him up; he is sore all over. But by the time he is outside the tent, he is ramrod straight. An actor going onstage.

EXT. VALLEY FORGE CAMP -- DAY

VON STEUBEN, an energetic 47-year-old German in an impeccable uniform arrives with two very young men and a beautiful Italian greyhound.

VON STEUBEN

Is there an officer here?

He looks at an untidy officer with distaste, Benjamin WALKER,
24.

WALKER

Walker, sir. Captain.

VON STEUBEN

I am Friedrich Wilhelm August
Heinrich Ferdinand von Steuben. I
come from Prussia. I was on the
king's general staff. Do you speak
German or French?

WALKER

Um, a bit.

Von Steuben sighs, points to LOUIS, the 17-year-old boy with
him. Another boy just like him, PIERRE, also waits.

VON STEUBEN

This is my aide de camp, Louis de
Pontière. And my military secretary
Pierre Etienne Duponceau. The dog,
his name is Azor. He needs meat
immediately.

WALKER

Sorry, we haven't had meat in days

-

VON STEUBEN

Come Schatzie, see if you can find
yourself a nice rabbit in the
woods. No more kisses for Papa, I'm
busy. You will take me to your
general. Louis, viens mon cher.
Pierre! To my tent.

Pops into his tent for a moment.

LAFAYETTE

This Steuben fellow -

WALKER

Von Steuben?

LAFAYETTE

I think he added the "von" himself.
This Blumenmadchen was never on the
king's staff. They arrested him for
playing around with boys.

WALKER

The general hired him to train our
soldiers to fight. He offered his
services for free.

LAFAYETTE

Free help is usually worth exactly
what you pay for it.

VON STEUBEN

(reemerging)

Who is this French fellow?

LAFAYETTE

The Marquis de Lafayette.

VON STEUBEN

Tell me about these Americans.

LAFAYETTE

There's a lot of fight in them.
They're angry. But they're farmers.

VON STEUBEN

Angry farmers.

LAFAYETTE

They've only been an army at all,
for a year. They can shoot ducks
and geese. I intend to teach them
the drill.

VON STEUBEN

That's what Washington brought me
here for. Of course I'm only a
baron -

LAFAYETTE

No no, you give it a try. You even
look the part. The men think I'm
Washington's drummer boy, if you
get my meaning.

VON STEUBEN

Tell me about their last battle.

LAFAYETTE

(laughs)

Well, Washington is still learning
too. The four-prong assault in the
fog. My friends in Louis' court
loved that one - they were almost
as impressed with Washington's
lunacy at Germantown, as they were
with the win at Saratoga. It showed
panache. If Louis decides to help
them, it could change the whole
war.

VON STEUBEN

Our king said the same thing.
Frederick said these boys will be a
great army, once they learn to
fight. So, here I am.

EXT. OUTSIDE A TENT IN THE CAMP -- DAY

Washington looks over his camp.

SOLDIER

This week, firecake and pepper
soup.

WASHINGTON

Firecake?

SOLDIER

It's flour and water mashed
together. We were lucky to get
flour at all.

WASHINGTON

And pepper soup?

SOLDIER

We take water, boil a cow's stomach
in it, for flavor.

WASHINGTON

For flavor.

SOLDIER

Take out the stomach, add pepper.
There's your broth. We were lucky
to get the water too. The Brits
were watching the river, and there
wasn't enough snow to drink - just
enough to make sure we were wet day
and night.

WASHINGTON

What about that baker?

CLARK

He got a visit from the British
army, scared the piss out of him.
So he stole our money and he won't
sell to us.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- DAY

American soldiers in a town square, surrounded by locals with muskets.

TOWNSMAN

Third time this month. You steal our food, bother our girls. Next time, we're just going to start shooting.

HONEYMAN

(aside to a soldier)

Dammit, every time we do this, we create more followers for the king. Congress needs to get moving and feed us.

EXT. OUTSIDE WASHINGTON'S TENT - DAY

Mary bothering Washington who is consoling a sick soldier.

MARY

It's not just dysentery. It's the cold. They're dressed in rags, no blankets, no shoes, they freeze to death, or starve. That regiment there has 200 men and 100 shirts. A quarter are unfit. They bundle together under the trees like old married couples. I think you've lost another dozen, desertion.

WASHINGTON

Two orders. Ten dollars to the man who can find a substitute for shoes, use raw hides.

HAMILTON

Serious? I may make the shoes myself.

WASHINGTON

Get the word out, use the spies. Any deserter who returns by the first of the year, all pardoned. No questions asked.

HAMILTON

A bonus if they bring bread and boots.

MARY

And then pray the typhoid doesn't
come for another go.

HAMILTON

Sir, this girl, her husband's a
Tory.

WASHINGTON

Nothing here the Brits don't know
already. Thanks for your help,
maam.

MARY

Any sign of that bastard
Smith?...Fine, don't tell me. Just
find him and kill him.

EXT. A FIELD NEAR THE CAMP -- DAY

Von Steuben, as he is in every scene, is in immaculate
condition and full of energy. Walker accompanies.

VON STEUBEN

Captain Walker, come with me. Come
Azor. Take me to each of your
regiments.

WALKER

I beg your pardon?

VON STEUBEN

I'm looking them all over.

WALKER

You'll want to meet their officers.

VON STEUBEN

No, I won't.

WALKER

You're going to talk directly to
the men? The captains will go
insane.

VON STEUBEN

So far I think most of your
captains are not worth the powder
to blow them to pieces...Present
company excepted.

He sees two companies marching toward each other. The units
collide, swearing ensues.

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)

That company on the left.

WALKER

It's a regiment, sir. What's left of it.

VON STEUBEN

The commander?

WALKER

A politician, out of work but rich.

VON STEUBEN

Bring the regiment here, if you can, without trampling me to death.

With Walker's help the thundering herd slowly rumbles into a clearing. Hamilton approaches.

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)

Well, there are eight of you who are actually in line. I'll take them. You seem to be cleaning your musket properly - I'll take you too. And this one, and that one. The rest of you are going back to your commander, I'm afraid.

HAMILTON

What's going on?

VON STEUBEN

I go through your regiments until I find a hundred men who look like they can count to twenty without taking off their shoes. We teach them to march and shoot, and they teach the rest. Did the general give you a copy of the army manual?

HAMILTON

Manuals, sir. There are a dozen or so.

He looks at them.

VON STEUBEN

So each regiment has a different manual? And some of them are in French. We will write one manual for the whole army, and we can throw these out. Sheiss paper for the latrine. Ah, yes, the latrine!

HAMILTON

Sir?

VON STEUBEN

Up there? I can smell it. This week we tear down this camp and rebuild it. The tents must be in rows, with streets in between. Have the officers give the order: the men do not piss and shit outside their tents! Use the latrine! I don't care how cold it is!

HAMILTON

Sir?

VON STEUBEN

And next - what's the first thing every soldier learns, going all the way back to Julius Caesar?

HAMILTON

Sir?

VON STEUBEN

Shit flows downhill! What happens to those latrines every time it rains?

HAMILTON

Shit flows downhill.

VON STEUBEN

You didn't figure this out yourselves? Are you surprised you have a hundred men down with disease? Dig new latrines at the bottom of the hill. The kitchen goes at the top. And remove the dead animals. Louis, to my tent. My head needs a rub.

WASHINGTON

(watching from the trees)

Who's running this army, me or Von Steuben?

EXT. A BATTLEFIELD -- DAY

A hilltop artillery piece with a crew of six including Sergeant MCCAULEY; Greene observing, as well as McCauley's wife MOLLY. The cannon fires at a nearby British company and recoils.

MCCAULEY
 (hitting the deck)
 Aw, Jesus.

MOLLY
 (helping him sit up)
 What happened?

MCCAULEY
 Wheel went over my foot. It's
 broken.

GREENE
 Sergeant, you're not on line -

MOLLY
 Here, help me get him out of the
 way.

She and a soldier drag McCauley away. Soldiers reload the
 gun. Mary arrives to tend McCauley.

GREENE
 Miss -

MOLLY
 (to Mary)
 Missus. That's my man with the
 foot. You give him back to me in
 two boots.
 (to McCauley)
 Don't you move. Do what she tells
 ya.
 (to the crew)
 Now you boys turn that gun to the
 left.

GREENE
 Missus, get the hell out of the way
 -

MOLLY
 Boys, look over there. They're
 coming left and then up the hill.
 Get the gun pointed left and lower
 the muzzle.

The crew looks at her, and then steers the gun per her
 instructions.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

A bit more. Now get out of the way.
You see, husband, you get your
bloody feet out of the way before
you set the fuse!

A perfect shot scatters a charging British unit.

GREENE

Erm, Missus.

MOLLY

(to the crew)
Alright, load her up again!....
(to Greene)
What the hell do you want?...
(to the crew, now
reloading)
Same place but further back,
they're retreating. Yes, raise the
muzzle! Perfect!
(to the fleeing Brits)
You want some more, ya stupid
lobsters?

She fires one more perfect shot; she waggles her hips and
arms in an attempt to urge the ball in the right direction.
And turns around.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Stop staring at me ass, get your
muskets, they may come back! Jesus
save your ass if you're not loaded!

A British platoon does indeed charge the artillery team, and
musket fire drives them away.

Greene steps behind her. She senses he's there and raises her
botefeux (torch), ready to pound him.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Bollocks, almost took your head
off!

GREENE

Alright, they're retreating,
everyone take a breath, get some
water.

Molly runs to her husband.

MARY

I'll fix him up proper. You clear
out.

GREENE

(offering Molly a cup of
water)

Would you hit me if I asked you to
cut your hair and put on breeches?

MOLLY

Take your head right off with this
thing!

GREENE

When you fired the cannon. You shot
straighter than your husband ever
did. You shot better than my whole
battery.

MOLLY

I hunt geese at home, a few ducks.
Used to be a surveyor, I can read
the field. I hate being here
without my own musket.

GREENE

How would you like your own cannon?

MOLLY

What? Cannon?

GREENE

I'm short of gun captains. You can
have an enlistment fee..

MOLLY

In American dollars? Latrine paper.

GREENE

And full rations like everyone
else..

MOLLY

My dog back home eats better.

GREENE

And you can kill all the English
you want.

MOLLY

(looks at him and smiles)
Where do I make my X?

GREENE

Shall I break the news to your
husband?

MOLLY

Oh no no no no. The pleasure's all mine.

(to Mary)

Is he -

MARY

Stay clear. He's not going to lose the foot but he needs a splint.

MOLLY

How much you want for that horse? I could use him for -

MARY

Not for all the tea in London.

MOLLY

(to Greene)

...My own cannon? Sure it'll blow the ducks all to hell.

GREENE

You can't take the cannon home with you. It's just for the war.

MOLLY

(smiles)

I wanted to put it in the front garden, impress the neighbors.

GREENE

Time's up. Get the boys wheeled up and on the road. Boys, this is Sergeant McCauley, it's her gun now. Any questions?

SOLDIER

Hell, no, sir. Molly can shoot the moon out of the sky.

GREENE

I would say your husband is a lucky man. Until today. ...If you could hide the fact that...I mean, your hair -

(waves his arms)

It's impossible. Every man within a hundred yards can see you're a woman.

MOLLY

Too bloody right. ...Come now, husband.

She helps her husband onto the wagon. Kisses him and hugs him.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Scared the By Jesus out of me.
(touches his face)
Get you some water.

EXT. VALLEY FORGE CAMP - DAY

Wahsington confers with Mary and Greene.

MARY

The smallpox tent, we're losing one man in three. We need to inoculate.

WASHINGTON

Once we inoculate, they are contagious for days, and they're not fit to fight. You may not care, but if the Brits comes down on us, we're helpless, and that's the end of the army, the whole country. And the inoculation is going to kill some of them. Isolate the patients as before, there will be no inoculation.

MARY

Sir, some of your soldiers are inoculating themselves secretly. The whole country is sick with it.

WASHINGTON

Congress can't even find bread and boots, but these scarecrows can find the pox vaccine...By the way, that man you were asking about? Smith? Got word he's back in Philadelphia with the British general's staff, wining and dining.

MARY

Bastard.

WASHINGTON

Nathaniel.

GREENE

Sir. I've got my regiments doing their musket evolutions --

WASHINGTON

Got a nasty one for you. I need you to step away from the regiments for now.

Greene is devastated.

GREENE

Sir, may I speak freely? Is this about Germantown?

WASHINGTON

No, it's -

GREENE

My men had to run two miles, I got to the field quick as I could, they fought like madmen when they finally engaged -

WASHINGTON

I know.

GREENE

Sir, if you don't trust me, how can my men trust me?

WASHINGTON

You got the wrong end of the stick. I'm giving you the hardest job in this army, because you're the one man I can trust.

GREENE

Thank you sir.

WASHINGTON

But you're still not going to like it. I need you to take over as quartermaster.

GREENE

Serving up bread and hay and boot nails?

WASHINGTON

If we don't get supplies, the men will scatter or die. I need you to scour the area for food and clothes, it's actually more dangerous than leading infantry. I need a man with some sense.

GREENE

When the army is ready to fight, I want to fight again. Sir.

WASHINGTON

I promise. You'll get a command.

Greene crosses to his men.

GREENE

We need to start with the farms. Some of these farmers love King George. Some can be persuaded, some will shoot on sight.

SOLDIERS

Or sell us to the Brits, soon as we go.

GREENE

Yes. But we are not marauders. We're not going out to the farms to steal and rob. Those people need to eat too. We cannot defeat the enemy by becoming the enemy.

SOLDIER

But we need food.

GREENE

Yes. We can't go back to camp without food. Especially this first time - the men see us empty handed, they'll desert.

SOLDIER

So we can't steal from the farmers who try to kill us?

GREENE

Use your judgment, don't tell me the details. Same for those Tory farmers who hide their cows in the woods. And leave the women alone. Dead serious.

CLARK

Two miles down, there's a farm. Tory man, shot at us before. Has a herd of pigs.

GREENE

You said pigs?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Greene's men herding pigs as quickly as they can; shots heard in the distance.

EXT. VALLEY FORGE - NIGHT

Pig herd arrives in camp to great cheers.

INT. SICK TENT -- NIGHT

Mary and another nurse treat patients; Wainwright brings them water. Washington watches.

MARY

(to Wainwright)

You're a lifesaver.

(to a patient)

Alright, another week on your back.

SOLDIER

Really, I feel better --

NURSE

He looks fine to me -

MARY

Still has a fever. Boy almost died!

NURSE

Says he's alright -

MARY

Look at his face, it's still - ow!

Who the hell pinched my arse?

She turns around and then looks at the soldier.

SOLDIER

And a fine arse it is.

WAINRIGHT

Oi, keep your fingers to yourself!

MARY

Alright, fine, made your point.
Tomorrow morning if your fever's
down, off you go. Keep your fingers
to yourself.

Washington enters with Hamilton.

MARY (CONT'D)

We're losing too many to the smallpox. We need to inoculate. I'll teach them how - it's a cut on the hand.

WASHINGTON

We'll do everyone. Teach me too.

MARY

Sir, you can't possibly --

WASHINGTON

I already had smallpox. Why do you think I have no children?

MARY

Sorry, sir.

WASHINGTON

How many horses do we have left?

HAMILTON

Seven hundred died. Dealing with the carcasses is a major problem.

WASHINGTON

Surprised the boys aren't eating them.

MARY

(appalled)

You keep em away from my ride!

WASHINGTON

Get these men washing their clothes every week. Have them cut windows into their huts, get fresh air in - and patch the roofs, these men can't get better if they're wet from the rain all the time.

HAMILTON

Yes, sir.

WASHINGTON

Now all we need to worry about is the typhoid, the dysentery, pneumonia, food and the British army. ...Why in God's name doesn't Howe attack and finish us off?

EXT. FIELD NEAR THE CAMP -- DAY

Von Steuben shouts at troops in French and German; Walker, in English.

WALKER

(shouting and gesturing)

The Baron has asked me to curse you in English for your stupidity.

I'm a Methodist minister, I don't really know how to do that.

He says each of you is the son of a - what was it? Son of a hedgehog?

Muskkrat?

And you're all a bunch of - don't know that one either, but it doesn't sound like a compliment.

Oh, no, German. And the next man who drops his weapon is going to get a bayonet right up in his --

VON STEUBEN

(pantomiming with Walker)

ARSCHLOCH! ARSCHLOCH!

WALKER

In a very sensitive place. Stop smiling, Atkins, why don't you hang your heads in shame so he knows I did a good job.

VON STEUBEN

Louis! My tent!

EXT. A TOWN - NIGHT

A new American spy running across the rooftops in the rain, bleeding, Tories in pursuit on the ground. He comes to the end of the street and runs out of roof. He leaps from a two-story to a one-story, and then leaps to the ground. The second leap snaps his ankle.

TORY

Back alley, we got him.

The spy hobbles through some trees to a creek, which is swollen with rain. He rolls into the water, drifts with the current. British soldiers arrive on the bank; Smith is with them, smiling.

TORY (CONT'D)

Can't see a thing, sir.

TORY OFFICER
Down the river, then.

Clark and Honeyman run down the bank, ahead of the Tories but behind the floating spy. The Tories see them and fire. Clark dumps Honeyman to the ground.

TORY
Never find them in this mess, sir.

TORY OFFICER
Nonsense.

TORY
So what do we do, sir?

TORY OFFICER
Back to town.

Clark and Honeyman see the Brits wander off.

HONEYMAN
Taylor! Taylor!

SPY
Behind you. Snagged the tree trunk.

They pull him to the riverbank; blood everywhere.

SPY (CONT'D)
Shot me three times, and I did for my ankle too. That man Smith again - I saw him with the redcoats. He actually smiled at me. The bastard.

CLARK
How do we get him back to camp?

HONEYMAN
He'll be dead in a few hours.

CLARK
Taylor -

SPY
Seventeen cannon. Tell Washington - they're doing another ambush up north. We need more agents and better maps.

CLARK
Sorry. Your mother's in Boston?

SPY

Even money they come back with a platoon. Get going!

EXT. MIDDLE OF THE CAMP - DAY

Washington confers with Steuben.

VON STEUBEN

The thing to do now is nothing.

WASHINGTON

Nothing? The Tories are running all through the woods every night.

VON STEUBEN

They're trying to make you panic. That general, Howe, know him, read his mind.

WASHINGTON

But look at his movements - he wants to cross the Delaware.

VON STEUBEN

It's a fake. You think like a soldier. Don't look at his troops. Look at his boats.

WASHINGTON

What boats?

VON STEUBEN

Exactly. He has no boats. A trick to lure you out. ...Your men are afraid. You can't let them see you panic.

Nearby, Mary comforts her dying husband.

MARY

They've given me more time to visit you. You know why, don't you?

TOMKINS

Don't stay too long - these colonists live like pigs. Disease is everywhere.

MARY

We got the bullet out, I couldn't do anything about the infection.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

I don't know when they're going to let me see you again. Let's not quarrel anymore, alright? I don't know how much time we have left.

SOLDIER

Miss?

MARY

Yes, Sergeant.

TOMKINS

Mary, I'm sorry. About everything.

MARY

There's no point in going into all that. Just try and eat all you can.

SOLDIER

Miss?

MARY

Yes, of course. Where is your general?

SOLDIER

Up the hill, looking at the kitchen, but he's awfully busy -

WAINWRIGHT

How is he, then?

Mary gives him a helpless look and approaches Washington's tent.

MARY

General?

HAMILTON

General's busy right now -

SOLDIER

They're talking strategy. She's British.

MARY

General, just a minute of your time! My husband is one of your prisoners.

WASHINGTON

I know. You want me to set him free?

MARY

General, my husband is going to die in a matter of days.

WASHINGTON

I'm sorry. Not sure what I can do for him. He gets the same rations my men do.

MARY

General, my husband is loyal to the Crown. I'm not.

WASHINGTON

I don't understand.

MARY

It made for an unquiet house this year. Time for us to be free, go our own way.

WASHINGTON

Us?

MARY

Americans. Us. I want to help.

WASHINGTON

Help how?

MARY

As I said, I'm not just some housewife, I have a job. I'm a midwife.

WASHINGTON

Actually we do have a few pregnant women in camp, but we're mostly men, you know.

MARY

I know all these valleys. When a girl reaches her birthing time, I need to know every little goat trail.

WASHINGTON

And your husband's a British officer. You see why I'm suspicious? You could lead one of my units into an inferno.

HAMILTON

Sir, we need a map of the north valley. Why not send her off with a platoon, Lieutenant Urquhart?

WASHINGTON

Why Urquhart?

HAMILTON

Because he's an imbecile. If he walks into an ambush, we're better off.

WASHINGTON

My problem is picking good officers. Got a bunch of rich idiots, daredevils who get their men killed, whip-crackers who beat their men, officers who want to be friends with everyone...You're Mary..

MARY

Mary Tomkins.

WASHINGTON

We do have women in our army. Dozens killed in battle, caught scouting and spying, hanged for traitors. If you're caught out in the valley, they'll kill you. Shed all the tears you want, they will string you up.

MARY

Sue Pruden, the girl who was spying on the Tory camp, they strung her up? My best friend. I was there. Please --

WASHINGTON

(smiling)

Franklin would love this. Go make me a map with Urquhart. You can't take your horse.

MARY

And when the time comes, I want to hunt down that bastard Smith. The spy.

WASHINGTON

Smith. How did you find out about - never mind.

MARY
(walking off with
Hamilton)
How stupid is this Urquhart?

HAMILTON
He means well...

Congressmen arrive in camp, with GENERAL CONWAY.

WASHINGTON
Gentleman of Congress... General
Conway, don't recall giving you
leave to travel.

CONGRESSMAN
Conway has brought us some
disturbing reports about our
situation here.

WASHINGTON
Our situation?

CONGRESSMAN
When are you going to take the
advance, attack the British over
there?

WASHINGTON
So you came to look me over.

CONGRESSMAN
The Pennsylvania delegates
complained that you're not doing
enough to protect them out in the
countryside.

WASHINGTON
You can't even give me enough boots
to put my whole army on its feet
all at the same time, and you want
me to protect every village and
farm in Pennsylvania?

CONGRESSMAN
You need help. Perhaps General
Gates, fresh off his victory at
Saratoga...

WASHINGTON
Congress. You seem to have little
sympathy for my men, waiting in the
snow for you to send blankets, but
we feel great sympathy for you.

(MORE)

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

How hard your job must be,
criticizing this command from a
soft chair by a fire, glass of
madeira, miles away. Let me relieve
you of your burden. Whenever
Congress is no longer satisfied
with my service, say the word and I
will retire to Virginia.

He waits, his anger rising.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

Just say the word.

Silence. He walks away. A Congressman follows.

CONGRESSMAN

General, we don't have the power to
raise taxes. We've got to beg all
thirteen states for money and food.

WASHINGTON

Then beg. Lie. Steal. Rob. This
army is about to blow away in the
wind. You think my numbers are so
small because the men are
deserting, they've given up on me?
We've already lost two thousand,
dead men, to sickness. Because of
you.

CONGRESSMAN

And every state wants the next
state over to do all the heavy
lifting.

WASHINGTON

If you men can't do it, we need men
who can. You do nothing for the
troops, you're not even doing
anything for the civilians, except
argue. My couriers can't even find
you half the time.

CONGRESSMAN

The British ran us out of
Philadelphia. For a day our capital
was in Lancaster, and now we're in
York.

WASHINGTON

You'll be hiding in Indian country
by summer.

CONGRESSMAN

We're writing articles of confederation, but they're as bad as what we have now.

WASHINGTON

They're rubbish. We need a strong government in the capital, wherever that is. Otherwise the nation will come apart into thirteen tiny bits, and the British will snap us up one by one. The army, same thing - state militias are worthless, they keep deserting, we need long-term troops, discipline, training.

CONGRESSMAN

Hancock quit. Got tired of the arguing and went home. This is Hancock! Quit.

WASHINGTON

You want me to do your job for you? Get back there. Find me food and boots.

CONGRESSMAN

And then what? I've defended you up and down. But what are you doing out here?

WASHINGTON

Every time I go into battle I face a gigantic army, and I usually lose. But I never surrender. All I need to do is keep the army together, until our luck changes. If I can keep their morale together until spring, we have a chance.

EXT. CENTER OF CAMP - DAY

Mary approaches Wainwright who is chatting with his friends.

MARY

Hey, soldier, can I borrow you for a minute?

WAINWRIGHT

Mary, what's wrong?

MARY

Is it that obvious?

WAINWRIGHT

Come over here.

MARY

I need to go out on the road, and I can't face it alone. It's my husband -

WAINWRIGHT

Your husband -

MARY

(emotional)

See, this is why I never talk about him, I come unraveled. Everyone I ever knew in the world is three thousand miles away, I'll never see them again. My family, the town where they raised me, the girl who taught me my trade, it's like they're dead or they never lived. I had three people here to hold me together. Lizzie went off to New York. Sue Pruden -

WAINWRIGHT

I know about the girl.

MARY

And now my husband. The one who always knew how to pick me up when I'm low.

WAINWRIGHT

So you came to me...

MARY

How sad it all that? I don't even know you, and you're my friend - you're all I have in the world.

WAINWRIGHT

Mary...

MARY

This is bollocks. Come on, follow me. Just help me with the rough bits.

EXT. FAR END OF THE CAMP - DAY

Mary and Wainwright approach a soldier near a mass grave by a stand of saplings.

MARY

You're sure this is where my
husband is?

SOLDIER

Yes, maam. Last to die, first to be
buried. Near that sapling.

Mary ties a ribbon on the sapling so she can find it later.
And she manages not to cry, because she's not alone.

MARY

Sweets, I don't know what to say.
You died so young. I've gone over
to the enemy. But I will say, you
made me happy. When we were in
Yorkshire, before the war, I was
happy. You made me laugh. You
didn't give me hooraw when I did my
work. And then all this happened.
Someday up there we'll meet and
have a jar or two. And we'll laugh
again. ...It must be a sad thing to
die over the sea, far from everyone
you know. ...Just give me a minute
here.

Wainwright walks away a bit.

EXT. FIELD NEAR THE CAMP -- DAY

Von Steuben and his dog, before his chosen troops.

VON STEUBEN

Now, who is good with a musket?

SOLDIER

Been feeding my kin with it for
years.

VON STEUBEN

How quickly can you load?

SOLDIER

Pretty damn quick, minute or so.

VON STEUBEN

Alright, you and me.

They stand beside each other, the other soldiers cheering
them on. Steuben rapidly gets through the ten steps, fires
into the air, and says -

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)
You're dead.

While the soldiers works through his first load, Steuben starts another. Fires.

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)
You're dead again.

SOLDIER
Hey, I got it!

VON STEUBEN
Well, not bad. I expected to kill you three times. You only allowed me two. A smart redcoat can do it in fifteen seconds. I can do it in twelve.
Ein. Prime and load. Turn to the right, lift your weapon.
Zwei. Pull out a cartridge, tear off the end with your teeth.
Drei. Prime. Pull the hammer, pour some powder in, not all of it! And close.
Vier. About. Stand up the musket, pour the powder, the ball, the paper so the ball doesn't fall out.
Funf. Draw ramrod.
Sechs. Ram down cartridge.
Sieben. Return rammers.
Acht. Make ready. Raise your musket.
Neun. Present. Point at your target.
Zehn. And Fire. Try not to shoot me.

EXT. A HILLTOP IN PENNSYLVANIA -- DAY

URQUHART, Mary, Wainwright and a platoon on the move; the sun is sinking fast.

URQUHART
Alright, let's stop here for the night.

MARY
Um, Lieutenant Urquhart -

URQUHART

What now? Let me make this clear.
If you're part of this army, you
execute my orders, make your map.
If you're not part of this army, go
back to your redcoat friends.

MARY

Lieutenant, there are no trees up
here -

URQUHART

Well, I can see that.

MARY

We're on the ridge, everyone on
that trail down there can see you.
You need to go down.

URQUHART

Want to lead us downhill into a
trap?

MARY

Just get off the ridge.

URQUHART

We're miles from the city.

MARY

Corporal, pass me my blanket,
please?

WAINWRIGHT

Right here, miss.

She lays her blanket, ten yards below the summit. Soon, the
rest of the platoon has joined her.

URQUHART

Corporal, what are you doing? We
can't see a thing from down there.

WAINWRIGHT

Valley's dark anyway. All I can see
is those two horsemen running the
trail.

Mary returns to the summit.

MARY

Horses, heading past the fork. They
saw you. Corporal, those horsemen
are going to go get help.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

If they reach that fork down there before we do, we're trapped. They'll starve us out and then kill us.

URQUHART

It's a lie. She's working for them!

MARY

I'm heading for the fork. Anyone who wants to stay alive, come down the hill.

URQUHART

Corporal, put that woman under arrest!

Everyone but Urquhart runs down the hill.

MARY

Who's the best shot here?

WAINWRIGHT

Me and him, missus.

MARY

Past the bend in the road, those horses are coming. Shoot them both down, but only if you have a sure shot.

WAINWRIGHT

Too dark?

SOLDIER

Yeah, and they're too fast.

WAINWRIGHT

Sorry, miss.

MARY

No, you did the right thing. A hundred yards past the fork, there's another fork, leads up into the woods. But it's impossible to see. You need to trust me, and you need to follow me close.

WAINWRIGHT

I can barely see you now.

MARY

Hell.

She pulls off her brown skirt, revealing a white underskirt.

MARY (CONT'D)

Can you see that? I'm not taking
off any more! Everybody, after me!

They run up the fork and into the trees.

WAINWRIGHT

Want your skirt back now? You're
like a lantern in the dark.

MARY

How poetic. Where's the Lieutenant

-

WAINWRIGHT

Shh.

Sounds of horses. Yelling men. Shooting.

WAINWRIGHT (CONT'D)

Damn. They spotted the Lieutenant.
What if that idiot leads them here!

She climbs up about ten yards. A soldier follows.

MARY

The lieutenant is leading them away
from us. I'll be damned.

Volley of shots, then silence. She goes back down.

MARY (CONT'D)

That jackass Urquhart. Saved our
lives.

Soldier pulls out a wineskin.

WAINWRIGHT

Urquhart. Until we meet again.

They all drink.

MARY

Bloody hell, what is that?

WAINWRIGHT

Rattle Skull. Sorry, miss, a bit
rough going for a lady.

MARY

(chuckles)

A Lady.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

I can use this in my midwife work.
Knock the girls right out. Who's in
line after Urquhart? Are you...

They all look at her.

WAINWRIGHT

Your valley, miss. Tell us what to
do. We'll follow your knickers to
the ends of the earth.

MARY

The Brits will know Urquhart wasn't
out here alone, he's obviously an
officer.

WAINWRIGHT

They'll come back looking.

Right on cue, sounds of horses. They wait.

MARY

There's four miles left of the
trail. They'll go up, and then come
back down. We sit tight, go back
before dawn.

WAINWRIGHT

Alright, who's on watch with me?

MARY

I'll do it. First thing you learn
as a midwife, is how to get through
the night with no sleep. Don't want
to fall asleep with a bunch of
randy soldiers around.

WAINWRIGHT

Oh, miss, that's hard.

MARY

Turn around so I can get my dress
on.

They do and she does.

MARY (CONT'D)

Can't figure you at all. So you
followed me and ignored your
lieutenant?

WAINWRIGHT

You were a friend of Sue Pruden?
She said you're the genuine
article. Suppose I can tell you now
- even Washington is hot to find
that bastard Smith.

EXT. FIELD NEAR VALLEY FORGE CAMP - DAY

Steuben is barking one to ten at soldiers.

WASHINGTON

Are they drilling the musket
properly?

HAMILTON

Not quite yet, but thanks to
Steuben they're learning a lot of
German.

Soldier walks by -

SOLDIER

Ein, zwei, drei, vier... Arschloch!

More yelling in German.

Mary arrives with Wainwright.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Stop right there.

HAMILTON

Well, I'll be damned. She came
back. Take her to the general, let
him decide.

WASHINGTON

Missus Tomkins, was it?

MARY

Yes, sir.

WASHINGTON

And Corporal...

WAINWRIGHT

Wainwright, sir.

WASHINGTON

Where's Urquhart?

WAINWRIGHT

Dead, sir. He saved us all.

WASHINGTON

Urquhart? I was about to put him in charge of the kitchen.

MARY

He led the redcoats away from us.

WASHINGTON

Damn. So who took over the platoon?

WAINWRIGHT

Well, she did, sir. Knows the whole valley, up and down.

MARY

The third hollow over is flooded, but the fourth one is loaded with cavalry. Next force you send there, it's a trap.

WASHINGTON

You're sure?

MARY

Did twins up there in spring.

WASHINGTON

Can you find where the cavalry unit is based? Where they get their supplies?

WAINWRIGHT

You want to attack their horse, sir? ...Sorry sir.

WASHINGTON

No, I want to steal their supplies.

MARY

I can find them. Need a sensible man to cover my back. Wainwright, in the light. Show me your teeth. Now take a bath and comb your hair. Use soap if we have any.

WAINWRIGHT

Alright, but why?

MARY

You're going to be my lover. Kissing will be involved.

WAINWRIGHT

Jesus...I'll get out the brown coats again. Blend right in.

MARY

No, blue. Borrow a nice big hat. Bring some coins. This time we get caught.

WAINWRIGHT

Caught?

EXT. FIELD NEAR CAMP - DAY

Soldiers learning drill from Von Steuben.

VON STEUBEN

I told you to bring your bayonets today. I see about half of you have them.

SOLDIER

I never got one.

SECOND SOLDIER

What's a bayonet?

THIRD SOLDIER

It's this thing, isn't it?

VON STEUBEN

Why is it rusted and scorched like that?

SOLDIER

I cook with it, like everyone else.

VON STEUBEN

Who told you this is for cooking? Never mind.

SECOND SOLDIER

If we actually get any meat, we stick it on the end and roast it.

SOLDIER

A nice rat, a squirrel.

VON STEUBEN

No. This is not a cooking tool. The bullet is foolish but the bayonet is wise. It always knows where to go.

(MORE)

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)

In the next battle, a hundred of you will die, thirty will die because of the bayonet. Learn the bayonet, or you die.

The British march in two ranks. One rank fires, then the other. If you survive that, they come with bayonets, and then trample out the rest of you with cavalry.

Look at your musket - if you aim at a man, it's accurate to about fifty yards. Seventy five if you're aiming at a whole battle line of men.

So the redcoats have a rank in front of you, they can shoot at your line accurately at seventy five yards. How quickly can you run seventy five yards?

SOLDIER

The quick boys can do it in ten seconds.

VON STEUBEN

And the Tories take fifteen to load. So you close in to seventy five yards. Sometimes the redcoats panic, and fire both ranks at once, boom boom - they're all empty at the same time. When they fire, some of you fall, but the rest of you have a fifteen count before the next volley. Your muskets are loaded, but you do NOT fire. You run full speed at them, that alone will make them panic and drop their bullets.

Half way across, you fire. Thirty years ago in Scotland, the Scots lost their last chance to be free - they launched a charge at the English with bayonets, but they forgot to fire their guns first! Dying with a loaded gun in your hand is the stupidest way to die. Next, hit their line with bayonets. If you get in close, your musket is too big -- hand-to-hand, pull off the bayonet and use it as a knife. And kill.

Let us run our seventy-fives and charge with bayonets at the end.

(MORE)

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)

Who can mark off the field? Seventy five yards.

SECOND SOLDIER

Got it sir.

VON STEUBEN

At least none of you is fat.

SOLDIER

I ain't got shoes.

VON STEUBEN

Go tell the general those boots better be in the next wagon! An army with no shoes is no army. Today we run downhill. Tomorrow we go up.

SOLDIER

So when we get close in, take the bayonet off the musket? Hand to hand?

VON STEUBEN

Come, attack with your weapon. Let's turn to the side, so when I kill you, the others can learn a valuable lesson.

The soldier charges, his bayonet still mounted on his musket. Von Steuben calmly pulls his bayonet off his musket, ducks and parries the charge, swings his bayonet to the soldier's chest.

SOLDIER

I think I see your point.

VON STEUBEN

Keep your blade sharp. Don't cook with it! Don't shave with it! Don't scratch your arschloch with it! Take care of it and it will save your life! Beginning next week, I am splitting you up. You teach the other regiments. I built the company, you build the army.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF SMALL PENNSYLVANIA TOWN - DAY

British garrison town; Mary and Wainwright on the main street.

WAINWRIGHT

You've gone on a dozen of these rides for Washington, the Brits must have noticed by now.

MARY

The British staff at the north end of town. We go to the south end.

WAINWRIGHT

Why?

MARY

You'll see...Alright, this is perfect.

WAINWRIGHT

Why?

MARY

Let me know when the soldiers are patrolling this end of town.

WAINWRIGHT

Here they come.

MARY

I think they noticed you.

WAINWRIGHT

It was you they noticed, Mary. Trust me.

MARY

Okay, now! Kiss me!

WAINWRIGHT

What the -

She kisses him.

MARY

Now, run!

WAINWRIGHT

Why?

MARY

So they'll chase us!

They hide and are caught by British soldiers.

BRITISH SOLDIER

In a hurry, miss?

MARY

Please, just wanted a minute with my man, my father would kill us both -

SOLDIER

Running off from your farms, both of you? Ought to be ashamed, going at it like rabbits in a barn. You two, come with me. Jemmy, take the rear.

They march through town, the officer in front, the soldier behind. They observe everything.

MARY

A lot of cannon for a little town.

WAINWRIGHT

Three-pound gallopers and a few six-pounders.

SOLDIER

Belt up til we get to the Major.

Before the Major, in front of the local church.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

These two aren't from this town, they don't belong here.

MAJOR

Sneaking off for a bit of a toss in the bushes? Bloody colonists.

MARY

Seems an awful fuss for a stupid little town -

MAJOR

This is my garrison. This stupid town is the heart of the valley - we can launch cavalry raids in every direction -

SOLDIER

Sir -

MAJOR

And every man-jack of them is loyal here. And you two -

MARY

We're just farm kin, sir.

MAJOR

You're trespassing on a military post. Fine's three shillings.

MARY

Pay the man.

MAJOR

American shillings, they're worthless!

WAINWRIGHT

What my boss pays me, sir!

MAJOR

Get out! I see you in this town again, you're going to the prison ship! Boy, tell Smith to come back to town tonight.

Mary and Wainwright walk down the main street.

MARY

Smith. Did you hear? Oh my God -

WAINWRIGHT

They're still watching.

MARY

Now, to land the fish all the way in the boat.

WAINWRIGHT

Sorry?

MARY

You've got to kiss me on the high street, right in the middle.

He does.

WAINWRIGHT

You think that fooled em?

MARY

(sad)

Could be. I just felt like being kissed. Now hold my hand, they're watching.

He does.

MARY (CONT'D)

Next trip, we do the same in Kirkby. First we've got to tell Washington there's a cavalry raid coming. And God, we have a chance at Smith.

SPY

(emerging from the trees)
Miss?

WAINWRIGHT

Who are you? Whatever your business is, you can deal with me.

SPY

My business is with her. Miss...Tory headquarters, any day now, they're going to figure out what you're doing.

WAINWRIGHT

Who the hell are you?

SPY

I'm doing what you're doing. Friend of Clark. But I'm more careful than you are. Go to Valley Forge and stay there, before they hang you like Sue Pruden.

MARY

Keep an eye out for that bastard Smith. Here in town.

EXT. A BATTLEFIELD - DAY

American unit trapped along a river, Lafayette in charge, Von Steuben observing.

LAFAYETTE

Damn, they're coming on three sides, we're trapped on the river.

VON STEUBEN

But look - they're all in a single line, it's all disorder. Shall I?

LAFAYETTE

Shall I - what are you -

VON STEUBEN

Everybody load your guns. See that road over there? That's where they will stop running and start shooting.

SOLDIER

Can we take the road?

VON STEUBEN

Only if you want to be gunned down. Any farmers here, surveyors?

SOLDIER

Me. Why?

VON STEUBEN

Look at that road, and draw me a line 75 yards down from it. ...Remember the bayonets. The redcoats will be here any minute, running like madmen. They get to the road, they fire, and then they will all be empty. Ready to run them down?

SOLDIER

It's nasty terrain, sir. Chuckholes.

VON STEUBEN

Fine, go to the river and wait for them to kill you. The rest of you: follow the farmer, form up on that line. If they all fire at once, that's the signal, they're empty. Hold steady, don't panic.

Brits do indeed stop on the road and fire all at once. Some Yanks go down.

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)

They're empty. Empty, empty! Charge!

The Americans charge across the field. The Brits look confused. Clumsy reloading.

The Americans raise their rifles. Scream and fire.

Brits fall and begin to skitter backward.

The Americans run to the British line and go wild with the bayonets. A bit of hand to hand. Brits break and run. The Americans stop and cheer.

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)

Can't believe it actually worked.
Follow that trail - let's leave
before they come back and kill us.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF ANOTHER TOWN -- DAY

Mary and Wainwright.

WAINWRIGHT

What's this, the fourth town we've
done this?

MARY

Fifth. Alright, kissing time -

WAINWRIGHT

Bollocks, it's that Major! What's
he doing here?

MAJOR

What are you doing? Planting your
seed in every town in the valley?
Or spying for Washington. Who did
you say your boss is, with the
Continental money?

WAINWRIGHT

It's a farm, you see -

MAJOR

Where?

MARY

Oh, just tell him the truth.

MAJOR

Yes, it'd be refreshing for a
change.

MARY

We came here to get married. My
father tried to stop us. Got a baby
coming.

MAJOR

Don't believe you. There's a simple
answer.

INT. A CHURCH - DAY

Mary, Wainwright, the Major, a priest; impromptu wedding.

REVEREND

Do you pledge to take her, keep her
as our lawful wife, to love and
entreat her in all things according
to the duty of a faithful husband,
forsaking all other during her
life?

WAINWRIGHT

(takes prayer book)

Here, I can read. I take you to be
my wife and my spouse and I pledge
to you the faith of my body, that I
will be faithful to you and loyal
with my body and my goods and that
I will keep you in sickness and in
health, and that I shall not
exchange you, for better or worse
until the end.

REVEREND

Say after me --

MARY

(taking the prayer book)

I pledge to you that I will take
you to be my husband and master,
etc. Here I wed you, with my body I
honor you, and I endow you with a
dowry agreed upon by my friends and
yours.

REVEREND

Are you either of you
Presbyterians?

MARY

I'm sorry?

REVEREND

There's an extra line. Miss, do you
want to promise him love, or
promise him subjection and
obedience?

MARY

(with a straight face)

I promise subjection and obedience
to my husband.

REVEREND
Is there a ring?

Mary takes a cloth from her bag, ties their hands.

REVEREND (CONT'D)
What God has joined together, let
man not put asunder.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CHURCH - DAY

Mary and Wainwright walk out of town.

WAINWRIGHT
So far, being married is slightly
better than being hanged as a spy.

MARY
Slightly.

WAINWRIGHT
Subjection and obedience?

MARY
It's a joke. You can tell our
children.

WAINWRIGHT
Our children -

MARY
You did promise to honor me with
your body. And now that Major
expects me to drop a baby.

WAINWRIGHT
So we're really married?

MARY
At least til the war is over.

WAINWRIGHT
Married. Not how I pictured it all
in my head. What was that bit of
cloth?

MARY
A bit of birthing linen, for good
luck. And fertility.

WAINWRIGHT
Fertility. ...You realize what we
just did?...Honor you with my body?
Never heard it put quite like that.

MARY
For now, just honor my lips.

And he does.

MARY (CONT'D)
Come, husband. Here, take my hand.

WAINWRIGHT
Why?

MARY
They're still watching.

WAINWRIGHT
How can you tell? They're behind
us.

MARY
A woman can always tell. It's
magic. ...I've been dying to ask you
this.

WAINWRIGHT
What's that?

MARY
Since we're married...What's your
name? You signed it in the
minister's book.

WAINWRIGHT
You know. Wainwright.

MARY
Your first name.

WAINWRIGHT
Ezekiel Wainwright.

MARY
Zeke. I am married to a Zeke.

WAINWRIGHT
Wainwright's fine.

MARY

A lovely wedding, I almost cried.
Washington would have a real laugh,
if he ever laughed.

WAINWRIGHT

Someday you'll have the real thing.

MARY

That was the real thing. Minister
and all.

Wainwright takes her hand and stops them both.

WAINWRIGHT

Um, Mary?

MARY

The look on your face. No way in
the world I would hold you to it.
Man like you, you want a farm
someday, nice boring, quiet wife,
lots of babies.

WAINWRIGHT

I think I'd like a nice, boring
midwife.

MARY

Zeke. You're serious. Did we really
just get married? I just buried my
husband.

WAINWRIGHT

Been stunned and gobsmacked since
the minute I met you. Mary, we care
about the same things. You're
brave, you're strong, you've
already saved my life.

MARY

I've already kissed you...a lot.

WAINWRIGHT

I've seen you pee in the woods and
take a bath in the river. And I'd
run through a brick wall to keep
you safe, make you happy. How are
we not married already?

MARY

It's insane.

WAINWRIGHT

It's likely one of us will die in the war, maybe both - disease, battle, hanging. Our lives are going to be short. Perhaps we jump ahead to the good parts. And we need to be more careful.

MARY

And how in blazes to we do that? We have a dozen more missions to run.

WAINWRIGHT

Mary, we're going to have our first argument. You've been on so many of these rides, you run insane risks...

MARY

And I get the job done.

WAINWRIGHT

I do care about you. A lot. And that means I want to get you off that horse.

MARY

This really bothers you, doesn't it?

WAINWRIGHT

You're a woman. You ride the hills at night, you commit treason, you run the risk of hanging at least once a week.

MARY

Well, Washington won't let me do any more spying. Just reconnaissance rides and a lot of nursing in camp.

WAINWRIGHT

We got lucky today. If the Tories catch you again, fair chance they'll hang you. Or take you to some prison in London.

MARY

Don't get all husband-like. Only one man tells me what to do, and that's Washington. I love to ride. And I will never stop delivering babies in the valley.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

...Well, Zeke, you want to marry me and stop me riding, all in the same day, there's a simple solution.

WAINWRIGHT

There is?

MARY

Put a baby in my belly. Get me off my horse for good. That's the deal.

WAINWRIGHT

Are you joking?

MARY

See the field of reed grass? Come honor my body. But first, kiss me for real.

WAINWRIGHT

Never done all that before.

MARY

I'm an old married lady. Leave it to me.

WAINWRIGHT

Hamilton was right, this spy business is right dangerous. Take one wrong step and you end up married.

EXT. STREET IN A SMALL TOWN -- NIGHT

Mary, on her horse, meets an innkeeper and hops to the ground.

MARY

Good boy!...Alright, hold your horses, tell that fishmonger his wife is going to be fine.

INNKEEPER

Erm, miss, this isn't actually for a fishmonger's wife.

Soldiers materialize out of nowhere.

MARY

Am I under arrest?

SOLDIER

Come with us, please.

Soldiers lead her down a street to a stately home.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

It's the colonel's wife, her father
is in the King's cabinet. She needs
the best.

They walk through the home. On the ground floor, a gathering
of British military officers and agents.

OFFICER

Well, they're getting their
information from somewhere. It's
even money that tinker is one of
them.

SECOND OFFICER

I hear there's a midwife out there.
Perhaps we should arrest them
all.

Mary is now shaking like a leaf. The soldiers lead her to a
bedroom with a girl in labor.

MARY

Hello, my name is...

She looks toward the soldiers, wondering whether giving a
fake name will increase or decrease her danger.

MARY

Can we have the room please?

The soldier leaves.

MARY

(whispers)

My name is Mary. I'm going to get
you through this.

MOTHER

I've never had the pains like this.

MARY

No telling what you're going to
get, is there? Good Lord, just in
time. Big push!...Another!

A surprisingly smooth delivery and a baby cries.

MARY (CONT'D)

Hello young man.

(looks warily over her
shoulder)

Welcome to America.

MOTHER

Thank you.

MARY

Going to put in a few stitches.
This isn't your first?

MOTHER

Fourth. I think I know what I'm
doing finally. Ouch!

MARY

All done. You're sure you're all
set then?

MOTHER

I've got servants for the rest of
it. Thank you so much.

MARY

Is there a stairway for the
servants?

MOTHER

Through there.

Mary emerges out of a back door and takes a gigantic breath.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S CAMP - NIGHT

Mary finds the general outside his tent.

MARY

Never seen so many redcoats in my
life.

WASHINGTON

And none of the officers recognized
you?

MARY

Got lucky.

WASHINGTON

God, Mary, even your midwife work
is getting dangerous.

MARY

You're not taking that away.

WASHINGTON

You know everything there is to know about my army. You go where I allow you to go.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S CAMP - NIGHT

An officer runs up to the general. Mary nearby.

OFFICER

General, I'm sorry, it's my fault.

WASHINGTON

What?

OFFICER

Harlech's company, I sent them up the western valley, it's a trap.

WASHINGTON

An ambush?

OFFICER

It's too late now.

WASHINGTON

Who's our fastest man on a horse?

MARY

Did you just say fastest man?

WASHINGTON

Mary, not now -

MARY

General, in this whole state, who's the one person who needs to know every hill and valley, move like lightning day and night?

WASHINGTON

A midwife. Mary, I've got cavalry.

MARY

You got plowhorses, I could outrun them on foot. We're wasting time.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD NEAR A TOWN - NIGHT

Mary rides toward a town and attracts the attention of a platoon of soldiers, mounted.

SOLDIER

That's her.

SECOND SOLDIER

Staff was right.

SOLDIER

You out here to deliver another baby, then? So who's baby?

SECOND SOLDIER

Take you to Major Andre.

Mary wheels her horse and flees.

SOLDIER

We can trap her against the river.
Cover the other road.

The soldiers take both roads, forcing Mary up a tree-covered hillside. She and the horse hide below the summit.

MARY

Oh no no no no.

(sudden rush of emotion)

Old friend, I have to say goodbye.
I have to make a swim for it. You
can't come with me. At least when
the Brits catch you, they'll feed
you proper. If only all my friends
were like you. Jesus. If I had a
penny for every time you saved my
neck.

Crying, she hugs the horse's neck.

MARY

Goodbye.

She scurries down the hill, removes her coat and skirt, and jumps into the river.

EXT. THE CAMP - DAY

Walker and Von Steuben wash their clothes.

WALKER

Why on earth do you stay in this hellhole? You're not even American.

VON STEUBEN

Look at this boy here. Skinny as a rail, finally he beat dysentery, still has the frostbite on the feet, he can barely walk. We have a thousand boys like him.

WALKER

We?

VON STEUBEN

Us. If these terrible things happened to a European army, the army would collapse and the men would blow away like leaves.

WALKER

Or kill their generals.

VON STEUBEN

There is no army anywhere who can do what these boys do, live through what they live through. They can barely stand, they don't want to go home to their mothers and their wives. They want nothing more than to fight the greatest army in the world. They're insane.

WALKER

They're Americans. Or is that the same thing?

VON STEUBEN

They'd rather die of the flux than bend the knee to that fat king. Can you imagine what will happen when these boys are all on their feet? When they have bread and shoes? When they know how to fight? Would you want to fight them?

WALKER

So you really are an American.

VON STEUBEN

They are almost seeking death. And for what? A dream.

(MORE)

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)

This foolishness with a new Roman Senate and judges and letting people vote on who their king will be - this country is all farmers, where will these magical Ciceros and Catos come from? Have you seen their Congress? The same imbeciles who can't even get bread and blankets to these boys think they can change the history of the world.

WALKER

Democracy.

VON STEUBEN

Dreamers. I just love these boys.

Elsewhere, Washington greets an elderly recruit.

LUDWIG

I am Ludwig. I was in the Prussian army. Now I'm a baker in the city. Try that. Gingerbread cookie. I want to enlist.

WASHINGTON

How old are you?

LUDWIG

And I want to donate my money, and bake bread for your troops.

WASHINGTON

Bread! Congratulations! Welcome to the Continental Army.

He sees a still-frustrated Greene.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

Greene, sign him up, let's feed these boys...Yes, I know, I'm going to get you into battle.

Greene greets a supplier named MEADE.

GREENE

Mister Meade? Congress appointed you Clothier General of the army?

MEADE

Yes sir. Working like blazes to make your shirts and coats.

GREENE

You must be so proud. We got your shipment for Wallace's regiment.

MEADE

It rushed it for you special, sir.

GREENE

Have you seen the British in the field?

MEADE

God, no. I'm a civilian.

GREENE

Did it occur to you that we might have problems if I put Wallace's regiment onto the battlefield in red coats?

He opens a sack and pulls out a red jacket.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S TENT -- NIGHT

Washington, his spies, and Hamilton.

WASHINGTON

Hamilton, we're rounding up some of our agents in my tent tonight.

HAMILTON

So our spies are going to meet each other? Isn't that a bit dangerous?

WASHINGTON

Hello boys, I'd like you to meet Mary Tomkins. Midwife in the valley.

CLARK

I know who she is.

WASHINGTON

And her partner Wainwright. This is - call him Peddler Clark, works the city, got agents everywhere. Clark, you were right, you need to stop the smuggling for now - too risky to run agents and smuggle guns on the same trip.

CLARK

One more run tonight, sir.

WASHINGTON

Damn right. ...This is Jack Honeyman.

MARY

I know you! He's a Brit! Works for the Tory army, out of that butcher's shop!

WASHINGTON

She paid you the ultimate compliment. Jack works for us, not them. He ran a brilliant deception against the Hessian camp near Camden, we hit them with a raid, they were all asleep. So he's proved whose side he's on.

MARY

Jesus. They're going to hang you!

HONEYMAN

You're worried about me? What a laugh. Miss, I have word of you all through Jersey. The Tories are onto you, and your man Wainwright here. Next job you do, they're going to hang you.

WASHINGTON

And that's one reason why we're all here. Clark, Jack, you need to recruit more agents and then get out of the field, too dangerous. ...Mary, I'm sorry...

MARY

No more missions?

WASHINGTON

You can go back to nursing the wounded.

MARY

You said I can do reconnaissance with your patrols.

WASHINGTON

Jesus. Fine, reconnaissance, large units only. No jobs with Wainwright either. We're building an empty camp down the river, make them think our army is twice the size it really is. It will work, as long as they don't actually attack it.

Lafayette enters with JAMES ARMISTEAD, a slave.

LAFAYETTE

Sorry about the delay, Jemmy just got here. You sure you want to tell the others? This is very dangerous.

WASHINGTON

Either we trust our spies or we don't. And they need to know who he is, in case he is betrayed, because he's a double agent. Everyone, meet James Armistead. He's been hired to work for the British general staff. As a British spy.

MARY

You mean...

WASHINGTON

Yes, he's a gold mine.

ARMISTEAD

I've been feeding them false information - they think your army is the size of an Oriental horde. That's why they're not attacking. And after the war, you're going to set me free. Isn't that right?

WASHINGTON

Clark and Honeyman are going on their last ride together. Tonight. You know who they're after?

MARY

(smiles)

Oh God. Smith.

EXT. OUTSIDE A NICE TOWN HOUSE - DAY

A British officer, ANDRE, meets a mother named LYDIA at her door.

ANDRE

Madam, I'm here to requisition your house. You need to leave.

LYDIA

For how long?

ANDRE

Indefinitely.

LYDIA
I have children, I have no place to go!

ANDRE
You have a big main hall?

LYDIA
Yes, sir. Please -

ANDRE
You can stay, if we can use your hall for the general's strategy meetings.

A blank look comes over her face. She blinks.

LYDIA
I'm at the King's service, sir.

INT. INSIDE LYDIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Andre examines intelligence reports with other officers.

ANDRE
Bring the map, the family is gone.

OFFICER
Alright, look over here by this river. Can you read that?

ANDRE
The Wissahickon.

OFFICER
You're joking.

ANDRE
White Marsh. We can hit Washington there, his defenses are a disgrace. It will be a total surprise.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD -- DAY

Andre and the Brits arrive at Washington's line only to find a sophisticated defense there, logs, carts, cannon, and Molly.

MOLLY
Reload, move your asses! Battle ain't over yet!

On the English line.

ANDRE

What in blazes - how did they get all that up so quickly?

OFFICER

We can withdraw, sir.

ANDRE

Not bloody likely. Bunch of scarecrows, charge em and they'll fall apart.

OFFICER

You mean a frontal assault, sir?

ANDRE

What are you worried about? Be over in a few minutes, might even pick up a few cannon. Captains, charge!

The Brits attack and are thrown back.

OFFICER

Seems they learned a thing or two -

ANDRE

Yes, let's have a conversation right in the middle of - round up your men, form a line for God's sake! Tell your Colonel over there to get round and flank them!

A flanking attack, also thrown back. The British general, Howe, arrives.

HOWE

What in blazes happened?

ANDRE

They were waiting for us, General. Washington built up his defenses.

HOWE

We were inches away from ending the war, right here.

INT. LYDIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Andre interrogates Lydia upstairs.

ANDRE

And where were you last night?

LYDIA

Asleep. I promise. Is something wrong?

Frustrated, he proceeds downstairs and finds Howe.

HOWE

Alright, Andre, what happened?

ANDRE

The family, they know nothing. But look at that battlefield. Washington knew we were coming and laid up a defense. The walls must have ears.

In a cupboard Lydia's young son is listening.

EXT. VALLEY FORGE CAMP - DAY

Washington confers with Von Steuben.

WASHINGTON

What can I say? You made me an army.

VON STEUBEN

You're talking nonsense. That terrible winter in the valley, the men know fighting the British could never be as bad as that. It was that valley that made the army. That and one other thing.

WASHINGTON

And the second?

VON STEUBEN

You, sir. You stayed up here with them, ate the same shit, shivered in the same tents. Any other general, you'd have a mutiny, you'd be dead.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD NEAR A TOWN - NIGHT

Smith exits a tavern and heads down the lane outside. He sees a pursuer standing in the street and runs the other way, only to find another pursuer behind him.

Two more pursuers close in from the sides. They draw pistols and relieve him of his weapons.

SOLDIER

Evening, Master Smith. Hope you had a nice piece of meat and a drink, cause you're going to the General. Gag him up.

INT. WASHINGTON'S TENT -- NIGHT

Washington is meeting with his spies when Hamilton arrives with Smith, guarded by two soldiers.

HAMILTON

Sir, we got him.

WASHINGTON

Got who?

HAMILTON

The spy. Smith. Sent two of ours to the gallows.

WASHINGTON

You're sure?

HAMILTON

He had a map of the camp.

MARY

Sir, I'm English, even I know he's guilty.

WASHINGTON

Anything to say?

SMITH

No, sir. ...I will say. It's shocking, how you've held this mob together all winter. Don't know how you did it.

WASHINGTON

Thank you. Well, it's your choice. Hanging or shooting.

SMITH

I've seen your men drilling. You have six men who can shoot straight? I don't want to be butchered.

VON STEUBEN

I can shoot the hairs off your head one by one. Me and my boys. Send you off quick. And we'll only need three.

INT. VON STEUBEN'S TENT - NIGHT

Von Steuben awakens his aides.

VON STEUBEN

Louis, Pierre?

LOUIS

Monsieur?

VON STEUBEN

Wake up. Meet me by the creek. Full uniform. Not a hair out of place. Muskets loaded.

EXT. IN THE WOODS BY A CREEK -- NIGHT

The sun rises. Von Steuben and his men meet at the creek. The spy is tied to a tree. With a needle, Von Steuben puts a tiny white button over his heart.

VON STEUBEN

Hold still while we prepare.

He goes to his aides. Mary emerges from the trees.

SMITH

So we're square now?

MARY

Will be in a few minutes.

SMITH

Sue Pruden was a good old soul. And she adored you. Just so you know. ...Missus? The British units have orders to capture you so they can hang you. They know what you've been doing.

MARY

Thank you for the warning, but why on earth are you telling me?

SMITH

I haven't the faintest idea.

MARY
Here, hold still.

She ties his blindfold. And touches his face.

VON STEUBEN
(whispers to his aides)
Right through the button, where the
heart meets the blood vessel. You
must be perfect. You are loaded up
to sept?

LOUIS
Oui, monsieur.

VON STEUBEN
(whispers)
Rammers returned?

They stand at attention. He stands with him.

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Huit. Neuf. Dix.

All three fire as one. Von Steuben unties the spy using his
bayonet, and checks his pulse.

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)
Reposez armes...Rompez les rangs.

Louis shaken. Von Steuben touches his shoulder.

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)
Remember Ecclesiastes. Whatsoever
work your hand finds to do, do it
with all your strength and all your
skill. Even in this. Because there
is no work, nor knowledge, nor
wisdom, when you're in
the grave....You both did well.

He sees Mary.

VON STEUBEN (CONT'D)
English, right? Did you know that
boy?

MARY
We shared a mutual friend. She's
dead.

VON STEUBEN
I'll walk you back.

EXT. VALLEY FORGE COMPOUND - DAY

Cheering soldiers in a line. Long live France! Wainwright find, Mary, Lafayette, Von Steuben and Greene in front of Washington's tent.

MARY

What's going on?

WAINWRIGHT

France has come into the war.

MARY

On whose side - on our side?

WAINWRIGHT

Spain and the Dutch may come in too. And Howe resigned. New man is Clinton, he's leaving for New York, he thinks the French will hit there.

MARY

So the British will be out in the open field. Where we can hit them.

GREENE

You've got the celebration ready?

VON STEUBEN

You wanted me to set up a salute, to celebrate the French? You do know I'm a German, yes? ...The French.

LAFAYETTE

(smiles)

It's killing you, isn't it?

VON STEUBEN

Oh, fine, I'll give the order. I'll even do it in French. Feu de joie!

A unit executes a maneuver wherein muskets fire down the line in rapid succession. Cheers.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD HEADING TOWARD MONMOUTH - DAY

Wainwright and Mary have a tense moment as the army prepares for battle.

WAINWRIGHT

Tell me you're going to stay off
the battlefield.

She folds her arms and looks at him, determined.

WAINWRIGHT (CONT'D)

Jesus, Mary. All these plans you
have, none of it matters unless we
both live. What are the odds?

MARY

(undoing a chain round her
neck)
Take my good luck charm.

WAINWRIGHT

What about you?

MARY

What's the point of anything, if
I'm lucky and you're dead?...Let's
go together then? We go down, we go
down together.

Washington with Hamilton and his troops.

WASHINGTON

Clinton is marching to New York, we
need to make him pay in blood for
every mile. Mary, one last ride.
Can you take a team out, rip up
roads, burn bridges?

MARY

Love to.

WASHINGTON

Mary! Don't let them take you
alive.

MARY

Why? Is being shot better than
being hanged by a rope?

WASHINGTON

Just come home, alright? Take my
horse.

She gallops off.

HAMILTON

Um, you do know Mary's pregnant,
right?

WASHINGTON

She's - what? God damn and blast --

EXT. FURTHER UP THE ROAD -- DAY

Mary's team gallops away from a burning bridge.

MARY

Thank God for wooden bridges.

Wainwright chops a tree which falls on the road.

MARY (CONT'D)

Listen. If the Brits come back this way, don't let yourself be captured with me. Just run.

WAINWRIGHT

What do you mean, get captured with you? You want me to leave you behind?

MARY

If you're with me, and the Brits capture you - I can't explain it. Just run.

British troops appear, and lacking a bridge, begin wading across the river. Mary and Wainwright look at each other, and then Wainwright takes Mary's hand. They flee into the woods; Wainwright throws Mary to the ground inside a thicket of bushes and throws himself on top of her. British troops march past but miss the thicket.

MARY (CONT'D)

It's me they want to hang, not you. You knew?

WAINWRIGHT

Of course I knew. Brits want to hang you, they got to get through me.

She kisses him and holds him tight.

WAINWRIGHT (CONT'D)

If you don't tell Washington, I will.

EXT. MONMOUTH ROAD - DAY

Washington with his troops including a General LEE.

LEE

This means hitting the full British force in the open.

WASHINGTON

Either we can beat the enemy or we can't. Let's find out.

LEE

It's got to be a hundred degrees out here. Sir, the men aren't ready, we don't have the strength to attack.

WASHINGTON

Tell the men with coats to leave them off - I don't care if they fight naked, as long as their guns are loaded. I don't want them falling over in the heat... So you don't like the plan?

LEE

Sorry, sir, no.

WASHINGTON

Fine. Lafayette? You think you can lead an American force on this field -

LEE

Sir!
(incredulous)
A Frenchman?

WASHINGTON

Your point?

LEE

Respectfully request the command.

WASHINGTON

To lead the attack?

LEE

Yes, sir.

WASHINGTON

We've all got to attack at once.

He turns to a boy.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

Okay, boy, you do this, you get double rations and no work for a month.

BOY

Two rats a day instead of one.

WASHINGTON

You're the only one small enough to get up that tree. Over there on the ridge.

BOY

It's easy sir.

WASHINGTON

But if they see you, they'll hang you. Still want to go?

BOY

Back in an hour sir.

EXT. A FOREST -- DAY

The boy climbs the tree. The Brits fire at him, but they don't really have their hearts in it.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S COMMAND POST - DAY

The boy reporting back.

BOY

Sir, they have enough men to kill us all three or four times over.

WASHINGTON

Just means more redcoats you can kill.

BOY

Too small for a musket sir.

WASHINGTON

Go help the artillery boys, then. Just don't tell your mother.

EXT. THE MONMOUTH BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Walker watches as Lee tries to organize his attack.

WALKER

Sir, I'm not sure the regiments understood all those orders.

LEE

Are you questioning my orders now? We're engaging any minute!

WALKER

Are we, sir? Washington wants the whole attack coordinated.

The Americans, alas, attack piecemeal. First the Americans attack the left flank.

Cornwallis, the British commander, is behind a makeshift defensive line.

CORNWALLIS

Ready. Fire.

And the Brits fire. The Americans withdraw and then new American units attack right.

CORNWALLIS (CONT'D)

Prime and load. Fire.

Brits fire.

And then an American attack from the center.

CORNWALLIS (CONT'D)

Prime and load. Fire.

Brits fire.

CORNWALLIS (CONT'D)

And charge!

The Brits run the Yanks them off the field. Some Americans are shot or bayoneted. American soldiers stream toward Washington, led by Lee.

WASHINGTON

Everybody stop!...Lee, how do I put this? Go to the rear with the cannon. Colonels, form up on me. Pull this thundering herd together and form up between the two rivers. Make a line, for God's sake.

Brits hit the American left with cavalry.

WALKER

Here they come, on the left! Like
we practiced it!

Americans move brilliantly, kneel with bayonets and repel the
British horse.

Greene gallops up to Washington.

WASHINGTON

Greene, move, move! ...What do you
see?

GREENE

The Brits hit the left, they're
coming after me next, on the right.

WASHINGTON

I promised you, didn't I? You don't
have time to move the heavy guns.
Get your three-pounders around
their end and hammer them.

On the flank.

GREENE

Molly, the ball is about to begin.

MOLLY

Alright, lads. They're coming after
us. This is the real thing. Load
her up.

The boy from the tree scene helps with her horses. Brits do
hit the right; Greene's artillery swings around their end,
moving precisely, and blasts them. The Brits pull back,
leaving their wounded. Exhausted, the Brits pull off their
coats and lean heavily on their guns.

WASHINGTON

And now what?

GREENE

They hit the left, they hit the
right...now for the center.

WASHINGTON

Right. Wayne's out there, way ahead
of the line -

GREENE

He's got hedges and trees for cover

-

WASHINGTON

He's stuck with a ton of artillery, his horses are exhausted. He can't move, they're going to flank him out. Nothing we can do about it. Can you cover him while he retreats to the main line?

GREENE

Jesus, I better run.

WASHINGTON

Take my horse. But bring him back!

The Brits chase Wayne out of his forward tree line; Greene fires and covers the retreat.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

Alright, we're so close to winning this thing. The one most important thing -

GREENE

Steal a march on them at night?

WASHINGTON

The men are dropping from heat stroke. Both armies are sleeping on their guns, we can practically smell the enemy's breath. The army that gets water tonight wins. Find a few men who can still stand up, get out there with water buckets, make sure the men are ready to fight tomorrow.

MARY

I've got it, sir.

WASHINGTON

Mary, it's too dangerous -

MARY

Greene, Hamilton, twenty men, twenty buckets, meet me at the creek.

WASHINGTON

Tomorrow when the English wake up, they still have enough left to kill us all. What the hell am I going to do?

Mary on the battlefield, fetching drinking water, finds a man with a broken leg.

MARY

Sweets, give me a hand, we need to get him off the field now.

WAINWRIGHT

What about that one? British lad, heat stroke.

She looks at him and shakes his head.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

Lafayette enters Von Steuben's tent.

LAFAYETTE

Wake up, Von Stupid, we have a job.

VON STEUBEN

Verdammt.

LAFAYETTE

Round up fifty good men.

VON STEUBEN

If anyone's awake.

Lafayette, Von Steuben and an armed platoon watch the British supply train from a ridge.

LAFAYETTE

The English are running away. That's their supply train. Enough food for all of Europe.

VON STEUBEN

A good man will die to defend his country. You think those boys will die to defend turnips and cabbage?

Von Steuben leads a noisy charge which frightens off the Brits.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Mary tends to the wounded while Washington and his officers watch.

HAMILTON

General, it's a miracle. The Brits ran away in the night.

WASHINGTON

They were heading north to New York anyway. Jesus, what a mess.

HAMILTON

A mess? We fought the British army to a draw. Long battle, hot day, they came at us three times, we stopped them. Could we have done that a year ago? We're an army now. We march to the city with our heads held high, get stinking drunk, say hello to the ladies, Congress will vote to make you king. In a month we'll be up in New York hunting the British.

GREENE

Wine, women and song. But first, a long, hot bath. Smile, General. The field is ours. That's how you know you won.

Meade arrives with soldiers carrying crates.

MEADE

General, got the uniforms!

HAMILTON

Uniforms? They're all different colors!

WASHINGTON

I don't care if they match! Look in the crate, got boots, shirts, the lot!

MARY

What's this on the button? U.S.?

WASHINGTON

U.S. United States. Your new country.

MARY

No, I think it means "us".

WASHINGTON

United States.

MARY

U.S. Us. Hey, boys. Here's to us.

SOLDIERS

(smiling)

Here's to us.

WASHINGTON

I've never really won a battle
before, is this what it looks like?

Von Steuben and Lafayette approach with sacks.

LAFAYETTE

I'll tell you want winning looks
like. We raided their supply train.
Got shoes, shirts, blankets,
potatoes, sausages...

WASHINGTON

Boys, the victory is ours. The
victory is yours. Dammit, let's
eat!

Thunderous cheers. Magnificent, sloppy feast.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Washington, Wainwright and other soldiers ride up to Mary
with an extra horse.

WASHINGTON

Mary?

MARY

General!

WASHINGTON

Need you to come for a ride. Borrow
one of the cavalry horses you love
so much.

MARY

Long as we're not in a hurry...

WASHINGTON

We're attending a birth.

MARY

So we ARE in a hurry. I'll get my
bag. Why on earth are you coming?

WASHINGTON

Relax, you're not delivering the baby.

MARY

I don't understand -

WASHINGTON

Hop up, let's go for a ride.

Mary sees her husband's grave, the ribbon faded but still tied to the sapling. She dismounts and Wainwright does also.

WAINWRIGHT

Can you do this by yourself now?

MARY

Yes, but come hold my hand anyway.

They go to the sapling and she kneels. Washington watches them but can't hear what they say.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Continuation. They arrive at a farm, where a mare is giving birth to a colt. Right from the off, the colt is clearly a bolt of lightning, bounding all over the field, born for speed. Mary is stunned.

WASHINGTON

We're too late.

FARMER'S WIFE

Born early this morning. You're that spy, Brits want to hang you.

WASHINGTON

I told you, Mary.

MARY

Jesus, be careful! Looks like he wants to jump over the moon.

WASHINGTON

His father was a racehorse. It was my fault the Brits captured your horse, so...

MARY

Jesus, he's mine, then?

WASHINGTON

Can you train him?

MARY

Let's see if I can get close.

She hops over the fence. The colt, curious, hops over to her.
The mare watches.

MARY (CONT'D)

Not afraid of anything, are you?
You and I. We're going to fly.

FADE OUT.

THE END.