

THE OUGHTHOUSERS
(excerpt)

Written by

Ari Krause

ari.krause@gmail.com
240-481-6773

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A HORSEMAN'S POV, as he rides along a wooded trail.

Super: LATE SUMMER 1781, SOMEWHERE IN THE NEW YORK COLONY

EXT. FOREST / CONTINENTAL ARMY CAMPGROUND - DAY

A platoon of British Redcoats sneak around Continental tents, amidst snores and the crackling embers of last night's fire.

BACK TO THE HORSEMAN'S POV as he gallops along a forest path, catching sight of the plumage of the Redcoat hats.

EXT. FOREST / CONTINENTAL ARMY CAMPGROUND - DAY

A grizzled Redcoat Captain raises a sabre, as his troops unsling their muskets and take aim.

Just as the captain lowers his sabre, a beer bottle smacks him in the jaw, dropping him like a sack of turnips.

A Redcoat turns his musket toward the incoming horseman, whose face we still haven't seen.

The horseman hurls a book from his satchel like a boomerang, knocking the musket aside just as it fires, sending the musket-ball through several Redcoats.

A BLUECOAT PRIVATE dodges gunfire to ring the chow bell.

BLUECOAT PRIVATE
Redcoats! Redcoats! To arms!

Bluecoats scramble from tents, still in their nightgowns.

The remaining Redcoats aim their muskets at the incoming horseman, charging straight at them.

Just as the Redcoats fire, the horseman JUMPS OVER the hail of gunfire and lands on top of them with his horse!

But there are still too many Redcoats, and they rip the horseman from his mount and pile on top of him.

Muskets, hats, and ENTIRE LIMBS fly this way and that!

Seconds later, the horseman, MURRAY OUGHTHOUSER, 20s, pony-tailed, unassuming, emerges from the pile, victorious and unscathed. He removes a joint from a silver case and lights it over the campfire embers.

As Murray enjoys his joint, GEORGE WASHINGTON, 45, wearing his trademark powdered wig, strides over.

WASHINGTON

General George Washington. And who in the name of the savior are you?

MURRAY

Oughthouser, sir. Murray Oughthouser.

Washington does a double take.

WASHINGTON

The Murray Oughthouser? Man of letters? Hemp enthusiast?
(raises an eyebrow)
Ladies man?

Murray hears a rustling in the distant foliage.

He gestures to a nearby Bluecoat, who tosses Murray a bomb, which he lights with his joint, and lobs over a hill.

A flash of red heat blankets the sky. Redcoats hurtle through the air, as troops erupt in applause.

MURRAY

They fought well. Gotta give 'em that.

Washington hands Murray a frosty tankard of beer.

WASHINGTON

From this day forward, the whole world shall know the name Murray Oughthouser.

MURRAY

You think I could get my face on a shilling someday?

Washington takes a drag off Murray's joint.

WASHINGTON

A shilling, a pence, the side of a mountain in South Dakota--you name it. It's the least we can do.

VERONICA SHAPELY, 20s, with long brown hair, bright blue eyes, and a sturdy frame, peeks out of Washington's tent wrapped in only a towel, and notices Murray.

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

To Murray!

The entire regiment raises their tankards while Veronica sashays closer to Murray.

MURRAY

Veronica? What are you doing here?

VERONICA

You realize what you've done? You saved the goddamn revolution!

MURRAY

Holy shit! I'm a hero!

She drops her towel and kisses and gropes at Murray like no tomorrow.

OTTO (O.S.)

Murray! Murray! Will you stop that?! What a display!

INT. MURRAY'S 18TH-CENTURY BEDROOM - DAY

The voice is from OTTO OUGHTHOUSER, 60s, gnarled with a silver mane, missing a few teeth, shaking Murray by the arm.

Murray writhes about in a bed he outgrew a decade ago, going through make-out motions with his arms and legs.

OTTO

Get up! And stop whatever that is you're doing, which had better be a seizure of some sort!

Beside Murray's bed hangs a poster of King George III with a caption: KING GEORGE CAN KISS MY ROYAL ASS!

Also visible: a bookshelf of classics, a bong made from a pumpkin and glass lampshade, and a liberal arts diploma from Brooklyn Heights Community College on the wall.

A still asleep Murray slips his hand under the covers.

OTTO (CONT'D)

Enough!

Otto slaps Murray, who finally stirs awake.

MURRAY

Please, papa...five more minutes.

Murray drifts back asleep.

OTTO

Now!

Otto rips back the covers and cringes.

OTTO (CONT'D)

(to the heavens)

If only my son could get so excited
by the thought of a hard day's
work.

Murray looks down and realizes his "musket" is at attention through his night trousers. Otto exits, appalled.

TITLE CARD: THE OUGHTHOUSERS

Murray reaches for the pumpkin bong on the floor, sees the bowl is full of ash, and sighs.

EXT. OUGHTHOUSER BACKYARD - DAY

Minutes later, Murray picks buds from hempgrass clippings drying against the picket fence encasing his immaculate hempgrass garden. If "*High Times*" magazine existed back then, this would be a cover shot. Placards denote the strains of plants: "Bluecoat Haze," "Patriot OG," and "George Kushington."

VERONICA SHAPELY, 20s, the same girl from Murray's dream (now dressed for the day in barmaid's attire) leans over the fence from next door and reads Murray's placards.

VERONICA

Mornin', neighbor. Glad to see
someone's still a patriot.

Murray drops some buds on a piece of rolling paper.

MURRAY

Livin' the dream.

Murray rolls the joint tight and licks it.

VERONICA

What's on tap today?

MURRAY

Let's see, Veronica. Shit, shit,
shit. And more shit. So it goes in
the outhouse biz.

He sparks the joint. Takes a puff and coughs his lungs out.

VERONICA
Hey, everybody poops.

She grabs the joint and takes a smooth drag of her own.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Strong revolution in this one.

MURRAY
Still working on a name. What do you think of George Kushington?

VERONICA
A fitting tribute. Strong, bold, tastes of leathery old man. But in a good way.
(takes another drag)
You think Washington gets lifted?

MURRAY
Without a doubt. The man lives in the woods with nothing but horses and soldiers. What else is he going to do?

VERONICA
I don't know, Murray, uh, save the country? He's a born leader.

MURRAY
What does that even mean? He's magically predestined for greatness? And the rest of us are just supposed to content ourselves with whatever life doles out? That's not the American dream I dream about.

VERONICA
Well, the good news, ladies and gentlemen, is that the weed works.

MURRAY
I'm serious, Veronica. We could do something great. We could be real patriots. All we need is a chance.

Just then, YULESS PORRIDGE, 60s, a Redcoat with a powdered wig rides up on a white horse in the street.

VERONICA
 Speak of the devil. Imperialist
 alert at six o'clock.

Murray observes Yulesse hitching his horse to the post.

MURRAY
 Relax. He's just a messenger.

VERONICA
 A Redcoat's a Redcoat, Murray.

Murray looks into her furious eyes, falls under her spell.

YULESS
 (to Murray)
 Pardon me, young master. I'm
 looking for...

He squints at his memo with tiny spectacles.

YULESS (CONT'D)
 ..."Oot-hoo-ser?" Am I saying that
 right?

Murray reassuringly pats Veronica's knee.

MURRAY
 (to Veronica)
 I got this.

Murray makes a show of slowly standing up to face Yulesse.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
 Who wants to know?

YULESS
 My master, Lord Claymoore, 2nd Earl
 of Cranberry Place. Brooklyn, New
 York, 11201.

Murray dramatically clenches one fist...

MURRAY
 I got a message for your master.

Just as Murray clenches his other fist, he recoils in pain.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
 Owie!!! Hot! Hot!

He opens his hand to reveal the burning joint.

YULESS

Are you quite all right? It appears
you've scalded your flesh with...

Yulesse tries to discern the nature of the joint.

MURRAY

I don't need your sympathy,
you...colonizer. You merciless,
mercantilistic menace of the new
world. You tooth-rotten
festerbottom.

With that, Yulesse covers his half-rotten smile, and sobs.

YULESS

You...you didn't have to make it
physical!

VERONICA

Damn, Murray. That was inspired.

Otto approaches, forcefully.

OTTO

Just what's going on here?!

Yulesse turns back from his horse.

YULESS

Are you Ooot-hou-ser?

OTTO

(generously bows)
Otto Oughthouser, at your service.

YULESS

My master, Lord Claymoore, 2nd Earl
of Cranberry Place, 11201, requires
your services.

OTTO

My god! A real British Earl?!

YULESS

...but this man, this very, very,
very mean man...

His tears resume.

OTTO

(to Murray)
You yell at him? The client of my
dreams? Apologize, Murray.

Murray looks at Veronica; she pumps a fist for encouragement.

MURRAY
Not in this lifetime.

OTTO
Funny boy.

Otto jovially puts his arm around Murray's shoulders.

OTTO (CONT'D)
We'll see how funny it is...

He deftly pulls Murray over his knee.

OTTO (CONT'D)
When you *mess with my business!*

Otto brings down a spanking with such force, birds scatter from the trees.

MURRAY
(chokes back tears)
I'm sorry. Okay...?

OTTO
He didn't hear you.

Otto readies his hand for another spanking.

MURRAY
Sorry! With cream and sugar!

Murray kisses Yule's hand.

YULESS
Water under the bridge.

OTTO
You mean, I got the job?

YULESS
(hands Otto a calling
card)
We'll be expecting you.

VERONICA
(to Murray)
Some patriot.

MURRAY
Veronica, please. I had no choice.

Veronica makes for her house.

OTTO

Who needs her? The Oughthousers are going to be rich. Filthy, stinking rich.

MURRAY

Why not? Filthy, and stinking, we've already achieved.

INT. OUGHTHOUSER KITCHEN - DAY

ROBERTA "BERTIE" OUGHTHOUSER, 40s, vibrant and pleasantly plump, clips coupons from today's NEW YORK JOURNAL.

Otto, in a daze, shakily pours the coffee kettle, splashing Roberta's newspaper.

ROBERTA

What's gotten into you?

Roberta wipes away the coffee from the table, and proceeds to properly fill Otto's mug.

OTTO

(sips)

My American dream, Bertie, it came true. Did I think it would happen so soon? No. But here I am, being recognized as the artisan I always knew I could be. Soon enough, all of high society will be popping squats in Oughthouser Outhouses.

Otto winces and grabs his stomach.

ROBERTA

The gas? Have a toast sandwich.

She puts two pieces of toast together on plate and sets it in front of Otto.

OTTO

They'll see right through me, Bertie. I'm not meant to mingle with aristocrats, not a guy like me.

Roberta looks at Otto's tattered clothes.

ROBERTA

Not if I can help it.

Roberta opens a large wooden wardrobe's door, removes an elegant white box. Otto's eyes light up.

OTTO

My wedding costume? Don't be ridiculous. You know damn well I'm saving this for my funeral.

ROBERTA

Remember what happened the last time you wore it?

OTTO

Sure. I paid the balance on the wedding kugel. Stopped Uncle Harold from making a mess with the cantor.

ROBERTA

I said "yes," Otto. And so will anyone else, aristocrat or not.

OTTO

Oh, Bertie. I don't know what I'd do without you.

As Roberta leans in for a hug, Otto hands her his empty coffee mug.

OTTO (CONT'D)

Freshen the linens, I have a feeling we'll be celebrating tonight!

Roberta eyes the mess of unwashed dishes, unfolded clothes, and unopened bills, and sighs.

EXT. BROOKLYN MAIN STREET - DAY

Otto oozes confidence in a close-cut white suit with frills, cravat, and powdered wig, as he steers his old horse, Mr. Tumbleweed, from atop a canvas-covered carriage with an embroidered sign that reads:

OUGHTHOUSER-BRAND OUTHOUSES. YOUR BUSINESS IS OUR BUSINESS.

OTTO

(to Murray)

You work hard, you keep your nose down, and someday...

As Otto continues to drone, Murray smokes a joint and pores over the cover story of today's edition of the New York Journal: "**General Cornwallis Routs Rebels -- Continental Concession Imminent**" that includes an illustration of Redcoat General, Charles Cornwallis atop a majestic horse.

Before Murray's eyes, the sketch of Cornwallis transforms into Murray wearing a Bluecoat uniform. The words change too.

MURRAY

(reads newspaper)

"With his blend of wit, wisdom and weed, Murray Oughthouser, of Brooklyn Heights, Single-Handedly Saves the American Revolution."

Otto tears the paper from Murray's hands.

OTTO

Are you even listening?

MURRAY

Yes, papa. Shit this, shit that.

OTTO

I'm talking *opportunity*, Murray.

Murray takes a long drag.

OTTO (CONT'D)

Again with the frankincense.

MURRAY

Hempgrass, papa. It's 1781. I'd also accept witchweed, meadowlark, tiddlywink, lubberwort, honeysuckle...

OTTO

--Whatever you call it smells like goddamn skunk bottom.

Otto's turns the cart onto another busy street, his knobby gnarled hands tightening and twitching on the rein.

MURRAY

At any rate, hempgrass is proven to alleviate arthritis. Ben Franklin swears by it, and judging by his writing output alone...

OTTO

I don't need any of your liberal hocus-pocus. Arthritis is a myth.

(MORE)

OTTO (CONT'D)

In the old country we called it
 "workman's palsy." And the remedy?
 More hard work! A remedy we ought
 to be considering for you.

Just then a maid from a third-story window empties a chamber
 pot, the deluge splashing up from the curb onto Murray.

MURRAY

(to Otto)

Has it ever crossed your mind that
 the conveying of nightsoil might
 not be the ideal fit for me?

OTTO

Not for you? It's the American
 dream, you worthless loiter-sack!
 Start from the bottom, work your
 way to the top.

MURRAY

Yes, literal bottoms, atop a giant,
 ever-increasing turdmound. Look,
 papa, I help you because you
 require it for my upkeep. Just
 please don't expect me to actually
 give a shit.

Otto turns to Murray as he blindly weaves in and out of
 carriage traffic.

OTTO

That "ever-increasing" turdmound,
 as you call it, puts food on our
 table. That turdmound paid for 2
 years of community college so you
 could "study the classics," and
 "figure things out," and now, that
 very turdmound has provided me with
 the biggest break of my career. But
 all you care about, Murray, is
 smoking frankincense and allowing
 thoughts into your head...

MURRAY

For the last time, it's not...

Otto pinches the burning ember of the joint just as
 JOSIAH CRANE, 20s, in a tattered BLUECOAT UNIFORM, and with a
 prominent neckbeard, staggers in front of their horse.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Papa! Watch out!

Otto jerks the reins and screeches his cart to a halt, grinding carriage traffic to a standstill in the circle.

OTTO
Son of a witch!

CARRIAGE-GOERS stuck in the traffic circle ring handbells and pelt Josiah with overripe tomatoes, apples, and turnips.

CARRIAGE-GOERS
Out of the road!

Murray fixes on Josiah's face as he endures the projectiles.

MURRAY
Josiah?

Murray hops off the cart.

OTTO
What are you doing? Get back here!

MURRAY
(to Otto)
He's a patriot, papa! He needs my help.

Murray rushes over to Josiah.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
Josiah! It's me, Murray Oughtouser.
Brooklyn Heights High, Class of
'79.

Josiah's hazy vision focuses enough to get a look at Murray.

JOSIAH
Snout Trouser? That you? Man, you
have not aged a bit.

Murray swats away incoming projectiles.

MURRAY
(screams to the crowd)
Cease fire! This man is a patriot!

JOSIAH
Patriot? Get your head out of your
ass. They don't clothe us, pay us,
or feed us. To which I say, fudge
that!

A turnip clocks Josiah's head, which he picks up to nibble.

MURRAY

Wait. Are you saying *you deserted?*

JOSIAH

(to the crowd)

Yes! Josiah Crane is a deserter!
This war is a lost cause! Wake up!

A Redcoat Trio sipping tea at a sidewalk table at the nearby Imperial Snail Tavern politely golf-claps.

MURRAY

(to Josiah)

But you can't give up.

JOSIAH

I did my time. What'd you ever do?

MURRAY

Just this morning, in fact, I
happened to give a Redcoat a very
thorough dressing down.

JOSIAH

Well, let's give you a purple
heart.

He shoves Murray out of the way and heads for the tavern.

MURRAY

Wait!

Murray pulls the joint from his case and catches up.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

I know, it isn't much. But thank
you for your service.

JOSIAH

Hey man, grub is grub.

Josiah pops the joint in his mouth and chews.

MURRAY

No!

Murray fishes the joint out of Josiah's mouth, shakes it dry.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Like this.

Murray pulls a tinder box from his pocket and sparks it up.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
First we puff.

Murray takes two quick hits.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
Then we pass.

He passes the joint to Josiah.

Josiah copies Murray and coughs his lungs out.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
Whenever I'm down, this lifts my
spirits. Considerably.

Otto rings his handbell at Murray.

Second later on the cart...

OTTO
Why can't you be more like him?
Even he accepts that this
"revolution" is over.

Josiah hangs on front of Otto's cart as it starts to move.

JOSIAH
I won't forget you, Snout Trouser.

Josiah falls down laughing. Just then an incoming TOMATO misses Josiah and explodes on Otto's chest, liquefying into a red paste all over his immaculate wedding suit.

JOSIAH (CONT'D)
You gonna eat that?

Josiah scoops tomato paste from Otto's suit.

EXT. BROOKLYN MAIN STREET ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Otto drives in silence, deflated by the huge red stain. He swats away Murray's attempt to dab at the blemish.

OTTO
The stain is set, Murray.

MURRAY
Well, if I have to crawl on hands
and knees across the five boroughs,
by God, I'm going to find you the
best dry cleaner...

OTTO

--I don't want a dry cleaner,
Murray. All I want, for one day, is
for my son to accept who he is. Our
people...we aren't patriots, son.
We aren't heroes. We're
Oughthousers. Committed to the
receiving, handling, and disposing
of nightsoil, one glorious, life-
sustaining crap at a time.

Murray grabs Otto's hand.

MURRAY

Okay, papa. I'll do it.
(to himself, looking away)
He couldn't have chosen real
estate?

EXT. CLAYMOORE MANOR - DAY

A giant British flag waves out front. Murray hitches Mr.
Tumbleweed to a post while Otto pulls a sketchbook from a
satchel.

LORD CLAYMOORE, 60, a portly Redcoat with a powdered wig,
waddles his way from the entrance.

CLAYMOORE

What in Jupiter's asshole took so
long?

Otto breaks out in a sweat.

OTTO

Uh...traffic, my lord.

CLAYMOORE

(off Otto's stained suit)
And what's your excuse for this
wretched, vile, contemptible, ill-
fitting, and atrocious garment?

Otto starts to weep.

CLAYMOORE (CONT'D)

Here I thought Oughthouser was a
name to be respected. Be gone!

Claymoore waves one hand and walks off. Murray steps in front
of him.

MURRAY

Forgive him, my lord! Papa is still raw from the field of battle. He insisted we run a colonial patriot down in the road.

Claymoore turns sharply on his heel, and marvels at the sight of Otto's "blood" stained suit.

CLAYMOORE

(to Otto)

Why on earth didn't you say so?

Otto squeezes Murray's hand with joy.

EXT. CLAYMOORE BACKYARD - DAY

A sea of half-dressed Redcoats litter the yard.

CLAYMOORE

I'll start with the good news, the officers' jamboree was a certifiable smash. Until the cold-cuts reached room temperature.

Murray's gaze drifts to saucepans beside the numerous Redcoats, each overflowing with earthy brown sludge.

CLAYMOORE (CONT'D)

You know the story, timber, timber, they all fall down? Well, they all fell down.

Yulesse rushes over.

YULESS

We're down to our last saucepan, m'lord.

Claymoore grabs it for himself.

OTTO

Aha, a code brown. Fret not, my lord, you're in good hands.

He stuffs a shovel into Murray's arms.

MURRAY

(aside, to Otto)

Dung matter from a Redcoat? But this goes against everything I stand for, papa.

OTTO
 (pats Murray on back)
 Don't overthink it.

Without missing a beat, Otto twirls to Claymoore and flips open a folio of outhouse blueprints, up to and including *The Admiral*, an outhouse as detailed as DaVinci's Virtuvian Man.

OTTO (CONT'D)
 (to Claymoore)
 For all of your nightsoil needs,
 may I present *The Admiral*? Heated
 seats, a talcum spray, sphincter
 spritzes, and keep this between you
 and me, but I can even do
 endangered Brazilian rosewood.

CLAYMOORE
 I'm not looking for a work of art,
 Oughthouser. Can you build me a
 basic shitbox, yes or no?

Murray takes a shovelful of dung in the yard, fights his gag reflex, and carefully walks toward an empty bucket.

OTTO (O.S.)
 (to Claymoore)
 Sure. But why go basic when the
 good lord invented birds-eye maple,
 my lord?

Otto gives Murray a thumbs-up.

Just a few steps from the barrel, a metal flash blinds Murray, causing him to spill brown muck on his shoes.

CORNWALLIS (O.S.)
 Well played, toilet boy.

Murray turns to the voice belonging to none other than GENERAL CHARLES CORNWALLIS, 40s, strong-jawed, wig askew, wearing a Redcoat laden with shiny medals that generated the flash, slumped over on the ground.

Murray squints to get a better look at Cornwallis.

MURRAY FLASHES BACK TO THE CORNWALLIS NEWSPAPER ILLUSTRATION.

MURRAY
 (to himself)
 Holy Saint Turdmounds! Can it be?

Murray looks at the head of his shovel, then at Cornwallis.

VERONICA(V.O.)
Some patriot.

Murray tightens his grip on the shovel.

MURRAY'S DAYDREAM

He stands over Cornwallis, shovel in hand.

CORNWALLIS
What is it now, toilet boy?

Murray brings his shovel down, knocking Cornwallis out cold. That instant, Redcoat Guards grab their muskets. Before Murray can react, he's pumped full of musket balls.

BACK TO REALITY

Murray contorts as if being shot, hits the ground, and snaps out of it.

MURRAY
I'm alive!

Cornwallis's stomach gurgles.

CORNWALLIS
If you call what you're living a life, toilet boy.

He feebly reaches his hand up for Murray to take.

CORNWALLIS (CONT'D)
Now...make yourself useful.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: A pale, wrinkly, extended hand clutching Murray's.

MURRAY (O.S.)
Forgive my skepticism, sir, but do we feel this is absolutely necessary?

Widen to reveal:

EXT. CLAYMOORE BACKYARD - DAY

Cornwallis squats over the lip of a large barrel, squeezing Murray's hand for support.

CORNWALLIS

You'll assist me until this vile
business has been completed. My
bowels are in rebellion.

He tightens his grip and resumes his cacophony of suffering.

MURRAY

It sounds like scrub-pox, my lord.
Trust me, you'll live.

CORNWALLIS

It has...a name? If it has a name,
it must have a remedy. What's the
remedy?

MURRAY

Not much of a remedy. You just
kinda let it run its course.

CORNWALLIS

"Run its course," he says? If
General Washington got word I was
here, hunched over a cold,
splintery barrel...

Cornwallis expels a vile torrent into the barrel.

MURRAY

(to himself)

We could turn this war around!

Cornwallis still squatting, wipes his brow.

CORNWALLIS

What did you say?

MURRAY

Uh...

Murray looks into the depths of the barrel.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Never before have I seen such
vibrant browns.

CORNWALLIS

Yes, well, you're the expert.

Cornwallis passes Murray a toilet towel and clears his
throat. Murray cringes at the task ahead.

INT. GEORGE WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS - DAY

In a tented room, at the head of a table, George Washington scans a crinkly letter written in smudged brown ink. He puts it aside and takes in the faces of the seated men:

Colonel Alexander HAMILTON, 25, wavy hair that resembles feathery flames, taps his fingers.

General Anthony "MAD ANTHONY" Wayne, 30s, grey wig, and bulging blue eyes, snarls.

French Count ROCHAMBEAU, 50s, in a velvet military suit, catches Washington's eyes and checks his pocket-watch.

HAMILTON

What's that you're holding, George?
A toilet towel?

WASHINGTON

A confidential dispatch, Colonel Hamilton. Our agent reports that General Charles Cornwallis has been spotted in Brooklyn Heights.

MAD ANTHONY

Cornhole wouldn't be dumb enough to go pokin' his imperial peter anywheres outside of Manhattan. Sure as shit, he's in Virginny.

WASHINGTON

Thank you, Mad Anthony, but I've made a career of trusting my instincts.

HAMILTON

(coughs to muffle words)
--Benedict Arnold.

Hamilton and Mad Anthony snicker.

WASHINGTON

That was an honest mistake.

MAD ANTHONY

Look, George, this note you're holding, would you stake your life on it?

WASHINGTON

Well, I admit, I haven't had time to...verify the dispatch's...veracity...

MAD ANTHONY

Then how you expect me to ask my
soldiers to stake theirs?

Washington crumples the paper into a ball and throws it.

HAMILTON

(to Rochambeau)

See what we're dealing with, Count?

ROCHAMBEAU

(to Washington)

Enough! Three years now, France
bleeds gold for your glorious
cause, for your "American Dream,"
and you continue to dither. I can
stomach this no longer.

Rochambeau pushes back his chair and shoots to his feet.

WASHINGTON

Your nerves are raw, Count
Rochambeau. You must be hangry.

Rochambeau sneers at the lavish assortment of bagels, lox,
Danish pastry, and fruit being laid out by EUCLID, 14,
General Washington's valet.

ROCHAMBEAU

Va te faire foutre, George! And
fuck your, how you say,
"continental breakfast," too! Do
something, Washington, or you shall
lose this war. These days, your
revolution, like yourself, has no
teeth!

Rochambeau storms out in a huff.

EXT. CLAYMOORE YARD - DAY

Murray pulls Cornwallis's pants up and buckles him.

CORNWALLIS

Ahh! After a brief derailment,
Charlie boy's bowels are back on
track.

YULESS

My lord, your chariot awaits.

Cornwallis bounds toward the front yard.

MURRAY

Wait! You can't leave!

CORNWALLIS

I appreciate your concern, toilet boy, but duty calls.

MURRAY

That's what I'm afraid of, my lord.

CORNWALLIS

How's that?

MURRAY

Doodie will call, my lord. As you can imagine, scum-pox on the road for you and your men would prove less than ideal.

Cornwallis grabs his ass to suppress another tremor.

CORNWALLIS

You certainly know your trade, toilet boy. But what choice do I have? I'm supposed to be en route to Virginia. I've got a bloody seaport to defend.

MURRAY

Completely understood, my lord. In that case, at least permit me to offer a bit of professional advice.

Murray drops a bunch of not-quite-white toilet towels from the yard into Cornwallis's hands.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Remember, be gentle. When overscrubbed, the involved area can get a bit...raw.

Murray snatches a water pitcher from Yules's tray and swings it into Cornwallis's hands.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Rule number two, hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. If there's one thing you can count on, scum-pox dries a man crisper than a spinster's prune.

As Cornwallis sneers at the thought, Murray lays a sludge-crusted shovel across Cornwallis's arms.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 So you don't soil the King's road.

Murray salutes.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
 OK! All set, my lord! Godspeed.

Cornwallis, with his hands full, harrumphs.

CORNWALLIS
 (to his sickly officers)
 On second thought, gents, perhaps
 we do need a bit more time. It's
 not as though any rebels know we're
 here.

Redcoat officers, clutching their stomachs, acknowledge their commander with a groan.

Murray looks down the road, into nearby Brooklyn Heights.

MURRAY
 Know what you really need, your
 excellency? A nice cup of pho from
 Miss Saigon's.

Cornwallis grabs his stomach, jolting with fresh pain. Murray helps Cornwallis onto a lawn chair.

CORNWALLIS
 Is that the new Vietnamese soup
 cart on High Street? I'm told Lord
 Zagat gave it nothing but favorable
 reviews.

MURRAY
 Don't tell my bubbie, may she rest
 in peace, but for an upset stomach,
 chicken soup can't hold a candle to
 the restorative power of a quality
 pho. Tell you what, stay here, and
 I'll be back with a tureen or two.

CORNWALLIS
 Godspeed, toilet boy.

Murray and Cornwallis bump fists.

EXT. CLAYMOORE YARD - DAY

Murray unhitches Mr. Tumbleweed, his horse, from the post.

OTTO (O.S.)
I know what you're up to.

Otto grabs the rein.

MURRAY
It's not what you think.

Otto embraces Murray, cries tears of joy.

OTTO
Pampering the most prized backside
in the empire? You really are an
Oughthouser!

INT. IMPERIAL SNAIL TAVERN - DAY

Large floor to ceiling windows overlook the East River teeming with British warships. Josiah chugs ale at a table of drunken Redcoat Sailors. Josiah raises his tankard.

JOSIAH
To the best decision of my life. To
deserting!

The Redcoats drum the tabletop with their hands.

ADMIRAL THOMAS GRAVES, 60s, portly, with a powdered wig, looks on as he fumbles with something under the table.

GRAVES
If every rebel had the courage to
accept that this war is over, the
sooner we could amuse ourselves
with more...

His gaze drifts to Veronica, as she polishes glasses behind a well-stocked bar.

GRAVES (CONT'D)
...fanciful endeavors.

Graves slams the chamber pot he's just filled onto the table, splashing a good amount onto the floor.

GRAVES (CONT'D)
(to Veronica)
Cleanup on aisle one!

Veronica scowls and clenches the handle of a butterknife.

MR. SHAPELY, 50s, a mole of a man with tiny spectacles, materializes with a bucket of cleaning supplies.

MR. SHAPELY
 Right away, Admiral.
 (to Veronica; re: Graves)
 You have any idea who he is?

VERONICA
 Let's see, papa, another Redcoat
 who can't hold his water?

MR. SHAPELY
 Not just any. Admiral Thomas
 Graves, Veronica. Commander of the
 British fleet. He's single. And
 rich.

He shoves the cleaning bucket into Veronica's hands.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. IMPERIAL SNAIL - DAY

Veronica scrubs on her hands and knees beneath the table, as Graves lowers his head to sneak a look.

GRAVES
 Are you tired, love? Because you've
 been sailing through my mind all
 afternoon.

His table huzzahs. Veronica stares at her reflection in the piss-covered floor and clenches her jaw.

VERONICA
 That's cute, Admiral. I didn't know
 men of advanced age still possessed
 a libido.

GRAVES
 On the contrary, sweetness, I'll
 have you know, I possess a
 tremendous libido.

He looks at his FIRST MATE, 30s, anxious for affirmation.

FIRST MATE
 Tremendous.

Veronica rolls her eyes, and happens to look right onto the river, where the HMS LONDON, a gigantic battleship, floats center stage.

GRAVES
 She's mine, you know.

Graves motions toward his ship, as the huge Union Jack flag billows beautifully in the breeze from the main mast.

GRAVES (CONT'D)

(O.S.)

Biggest in the fleet. And nobody is authorized to take even the slightest action, not to fire so much as a single musket or cannon shot, not even to break wind! Until I give the signal.

He strikes a rakish pose for Veronica.

GRAVES (CONT'D)

My flagpole makes it happen.

VERONICA

(seductively)

Well, you know what they say about men with big ships?

GRAVES

What's that, love?

VERONICA

(whispers)

Small dinghies.

Just then the wind outside dies and the Union Jack flag falls flaccid from the top mast.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

But certainly not you, my lord.

Veronica saunters off, as the entire table looks like they've just suffered a punch to the gut.

GRAVES

Well, lads? She fancies me, clearly.

First Mate cues the rest of the table to huzzah.

AT THE BAR

MR. SHAPELY

What the hell was that?
He's a bachelor looking for a
bride. You could be that bride.

VERONICA

I'd rather die.

MR. SHAPELY

So dramatic. You'd think I was asking you to wed the town peasant.

Just then Murray barges into the tavern and scans the area.

MURRAY

(spots Josiah)

Thank heavens! He's here!

VERONICA

Christ, Murray, you too? I don't think you're his type.

She looks at Graves enjoying a shoulder-rub from First Mate.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I could be wrong.

Murray leans over to catch his breath.

MURRAY

I don't know how to say this...you know General Cornwallis?

(whispers)

Commander of the British army?

VERONICA

The most powerful Redcoat in the entire free world? Nope. Never heard of him, Murray.

MURRAY

Okay. Well, as we speak, Cornwallis is incapacitated, sick to his stomach. Foodborne illness, most likely, I'll spare you the details, dark brown stools, more like...raw umber, if I had to put a name on it...

VERONICA

--Murray! What happened to sparing?!

MURRAY

Suffice it to say, Cornwallis and his men are up shit's creek without a paddle. Pretty much literally.

VERONICA

Where'd you hear that?

Murray soaps his hands in the bar sink.

MURRAY

I attended to him first hand. Both hands, actually.

He pours water over his hands, as brownish muck rinses off.

VERONICA

Wait. Cornwallis is here? In Brooklyn?

MURRAY

Down the street. Pants at his ankles. Bent over a barrel. Again, literally.

Veronica grabs a musket from under the bar counter.

VERONICA

Come on! Let's go.

MURRAY

As much as I admire the idea of one musket against an entire platoon...

VERONICA

Coward.

Murray gazes at Josiah, carousing with Redcoats.

MURRAY

Technically, he's a deserter.

VERONICA

What does that turncoat have anything to do with this?

Murray helps himself to a glass of Madeira wine.

MURRAY

Who do you think he deserted from? Two words...George Washington. Which means, Josiah knows how to find him. Which means, we give Josiah the message, Washington sends the cavalry...

VERONICA

And we win!

Veronica eases down her musket, setting it off by mistake, and shooting out a window. Nobody seems to notice.