

Revolutionary Gentleman

A TRAGIC-COMIC ROCK MUSICAL

Book, Music & lyrics
by
Steven W Rodgers

Additional lyrics by Carolyn Tracy and Wendy Christopher

Cast of Characters

Benedict Arnold, m 35-60 A Revolutionary Gentleman

Peggy Shippen Arnold, f 20-35 Gen. Arnold's beautiful young wife, and the lover of English officer, Major John André

Emily, f 20-40 Ben's English Nurse (*in 19th Century London*); and "Every Woman" (*in Colonial America of the 1770's*)

Mr. Joseph Reed, 45-75 President of the Council; General Arnold's sniveling, peevish antagonist

Maj. John André, m 25-35 Peggy's lover, and the head of English intelligence

Josephine f 20-35 Reed's sassy assistant

Gen. George Washington, m 45-55 commander-in-chief of the Continental Armed forces

Betsy Dubois, f 20-30 Ben's former crush

Vicar, m 30-70 a sincere, but befuddled man of God

Maria, f 20-30 Betsy's friend

The Judge

Guards 1 and 2

Servants, party-goers, soldiers, jurors, children, townspeople

Setting

July, 1801. London, England. The Home of Benedict Arnold.

Musical Numbers

Act I

1. **Ben's Requiem**.....*Orchestra*
2. **The Apology** *Ben & Company w/ Peggy*
3. **Overture***Orchestra*
4. **Revolutionary Gentleman***Ben & Company*
5. **Tango**.....*Orchestra*
6. **Prelude: Flame in the Dark**.....*John*
7. **Flame in the Dark**.....*Ben & Peggy*
8. **We Have a Crisis***Reed, Josephine & Washington*
9. **Bizarre Honeymoon** *Emily, Ben & Peggy*
10. **Day Of Reckoning***Reed & Josephine*
11. **Jurors' Remorse** *Ben and Company*
12. **Traitor***John, Peggy & Ben*
13. **Don't Egg Benedict On***Ben & Company*

Act II

14. **Entr'acte: Winds of Change**.....*Orchestra*
15. **Up A Creek***Peggy, John, Ben, Emily*
16. **The Midnight Ride** *Peggy & Emily*
17. **Gimme That Address**..... *John*
18. **General Arnold's Demise***Reed & Josephine*
19. **Peggy's Dream***Orchestra*
20. **Without Him***Peggy*
21. **Downward Spiral** *Ben and Company w/Peggy*
22. **Who's To Say?***Emily*
23. **Rather Be in Jamaica**.....*Emily & Peggy*
24. **Finale** *Ben & Company*

Act One

[Prelude]

Total darkness. A cold wind blows. The distant tolling of funeral bells can be heard, answered by coyotes and barking dogs. Lights slowly come up on Benedict Arnold, dressed in his nightgown, lying motionless in his large brass bed.

[Ben's Requiem]

A grave processional of candle bearing mourners enter. They approach the bed, bowing their heads, in respect. We see a befuddled vicar, visibly nervous, continually flipping through the small prayer book which he holds in front of him throughout. As the music reaches the end, we hear recitations in Latin:

“Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.”

Music ends.

Vicar

Oh, lord. Do not judge this one too harshly, I pray ye. The wicked are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they are born. And as the snail....

(Befuddled)

Which melteth...so too, they pass away. Thou therefore, Oh ye God of.....

(Searching frantically in his book)

oh ye God of.....

Ben

(Impatiently intervenes, sitting up in bed).

Hosts. God...of Hosts!

Vicar

God of Hosts—

(He does a double take).

forgive this heathen, if thou canst..... and suffer him to enter into thy kingdom. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, may God have mercy on his soul.

(One of the women begins to cry. Ben sits up in bed, with difficulty).

Ben

Madam, control yourself.

Betsy

I don't care what anybody says. Benedict Arnold had to have been one of the greatest generals of the revolution.

It was nothing, really. **Ben** (*Modestly*)

He certainly was the bravest. **Vicar**

Thank you, Father. **Ben**

He ought to have been brave...considering how much whiskey he drinks. **Josephine**

Watch it! **Ben**
(*He points to Josephine with his cane.*)

Well, maybe he took a nip now and then, but drunk or sober, he was truly a great man! **Betsy**

Thank you for that endorsement! But if you don't mind, I'd like to get some rest now, so... **Ben**
(*Ben lies back down.*)

Personally, I feel sorry for him. **Maria**

Did you hear me? **Ben** (*Bolting up again*)

Sorry for that sozzled rascalion ? **Reed**

That'll be just about enough out of you! **Ben**
(*Pointing accusingly at Reed.*)

Still, it couldn't have been very easy for him, to live with the thought of what he had done! **Maria**

I know what you mean. At school today, I heard one of the kids yelling "Oh, don't be such a 'Benedict Arnold!'" **Little Girl**

(*Crowd laughs*)

All right, that does it. Who...who are you people, anyway? **Ben**

Don't you recognize us?
Washington

You... look familiar.
Ben *(Trying to remember)*

We're the faces of your past, Ben, come to pay our last respects.
Washington

Last respects? But....but I'm not dead yet.
Ben

So, we're a little early.
Josephine *(Shrugging)*

It isn't fair.
Ben *(Grimacing)*

What did you expect?
Reed

I don't know, I guess I just thought that...once I died, that would finally be the end of it.
Ben

You'll find it's just the beginning.
Reed

[The Apology]

(Ben gets out of bed, with some difficulty. He moves about with the help of his cane. Mourners gather around him, taunting).

Ben
IT'S HARD TO SAY
WHAT COULD HAVE BECOME OF ME
IF I HADN'T BEEN SO LOYAL TO HIS MAJESTY
NOW I FIND NO ONE REALLY WANTS ME
NOW I FIND NO ONE SEEMS TO CARE ABOUT ME

Mourners
WELL WHO COULD BLAME THEM
CONSIDERING YOUR CRIME?
NO ONE WANTS TO BE SEEN
WITH THE GREATEST TRAITOR OF OUR TIME!
YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A BENEDICT ARNOLD
A TRAITOR THROUGH AND THROUGH
THAT'S ALL YOU'LL EVER BE

Mourners (Cont)

THAT'S ALL ANYONE WILL SEE
SORRY THAT WE HAD TO DO IT TO YOU

Ben

SORRY THAT YOU HAD TO IT TO ME
(To Peggy)
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS MESS YOU'VE GOT ME IN

Peggy

WELL HOW WERE WE TO KNOW
THE WRONG SIDE WAS GONNA WIN?

Ben

NOW I FIND NO ONE REALLY WANTS ME
IT SEEMS AS IF MY FRIENDS HAVE ALL
ABANDONED ME FOREVER

Mourners

WELL, WHO COULD BLAME THEM
CONSIDERING YOUR CRIME?
NO ONE WANTS TO BE SEEN
WITH THE GREATEST TRAITOR OF OUR TIME!

YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A BENEDICT ARNOLD
A TRAITOR THROUGH AND THROUGH
THAT'S ALL YOU'LL EVER BE
THAT'S ALL ANYONE WILL SEE
SORRY THAT WE HAD TO IT TO YOU

Ben

SORRY THAT YOU HAD TO IT TO ME

*(During the brief instrumental, They all dance playfully
around Ben, taunting him).*

Mourners

SORRY THAT WE HAD TO DO IT

Ben

DON'T KNOW WHY YOU PUT ME THROUGH IT

Mourners

SORRY THAT WE HAD TO DO IT...TO YOU!

(End of Song)

(Emily, Ben's English nurse, enters suddenly, and is shocked to see Ben standing on the bed in his nightgown, his musty old continental jacket draped over his shoulders. Ben as he looks around the room, confused, as by now, the mourners, along with Peggy, have disappeared)

Emily

General! General Arnold! What are you doing out of bed?! You know what the doctor said about that! Now get back under those covers. Do I have to call Mrs. Arnold again?

Ben

(Delirious, clutching his blue Continental coat)

We must continue the march on Quebec! If we can reach the fort in time, we may be able to convince the Canadians to join our gallant cause! We haven't any time to spare! C'mon lads! Follow me!

Emily

Oh, I see. We're back in Quebec, again, are we? That's ...just ...fine. Now General, please get back into bed, and give me that silly coat!

Ben

(Clutching the coat tightly)

No! No, let me keep my coat. At least let me have that.

(Ben sighs deeply, looking despondently at the coat).

God forgive me for ever putting on another.

Emily

(Yelling as she runs offstage)

Mrs. Arnold! He's at it again! Mrs. Arnold!

(Ben proudly puts on his coat over his nightgown)

[Overture]

Lights fade

The overture ends and lights come up on Ben, in bed.

In Ben's mind, he is now back in Colonial America, in the early years of the Revolution. He still has on his blue Continental general's uniform. From this point on, the division between reality and imagination becomes increasingly blurred as he struggles against the delirium that besets him during his inglorious final moments on earth.

Ben pulls the covers tightly around him. He is surrounded by colonists and soldiers, huddled in blankets to protect themselves against the bitter cold. Emily approaches Ben.

Emily

General? Are we going to be moving on soon?

Ben

I...I don't know if I have the strength. You go on without me.
(Ben turns back over in bed, exhausted)

Emily

Go on without you? How can you say that? General! You're our only hope!

Ben

Am I a ...was I a general? Back at the very beginning, then?

Emily

Not only a general, sir. You were the greatest general, of either side!

Ben

I deserve no praise!

Emily

I beg your pardon, sir, but you do. Everyone is in your debt!

Ben

Half our troops died along the way!

Emily

But half lived, sir.

Ben

How long has it been so far? How many days?

Emily

Forty-seven.

(Ben grimaces).

Oh, but I'm not complaining, sir. No one is.

(Emily shivers in the wind and snow. Ben suddenly jumps out of bed, alarmed)

Ben

God, woman—where is your coat?

Emily

My what, sir?

Ben

Your coat, damn it! Your coat! That's no way to dress in this weather!

Emily

Oh, I'm all right, sir, really I am.

Ben

Well ...here.

(He runs back to his bed and takes off one of the blankets)

Here—at least take my blanket.

(Ben tenderly drapes the blanket over her shoulders)

Emily

(Genuinely touched)

Thank you, sir. You're very kind. Now, please, just don't give up hope. With you to lead us against England, I know we'll make it!

(Emily goes off to join the others, leaving Ben alone).

Ben

How can I give them hope...when I have none to give myself?

[Revolutionary Gentleman]

(Ben crouches in front of the campfire).

Ben

IT'S TIME TO START A REVOLUTION
IF I JUST KNEW HOW
ALL I SEE SURROUNDING ME ARE FACES OF DESPAIR
IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO KEEP THEIR HOPES ALIVE
WHEN DEATH IS EVERYWHERE?

AM I A REVOLUTIONARY GENTLEMAN
JUST LIKE ALL THE PAPERS SAY,
OR CAN IT BE I'M JUST AN ORDINARY MAN?
CAN I CARVE US OUT A NATION ONE DAY?

(He walks near groups of soldiers, trying to keep warm)

WOULD THESE SUNSHINE PATRIOTS
KNOW HOW TO FIGHT A WAR?
OR AT THE SOUND OF ENGLISH CANNON
WOULD THEY ALL RETREAT?
WHO AM I TO LEAD THEM ALL
AGAINST A MIGHTY POWER
AND SAVE THIS NATION FROM DEFEAT?

I'M NOT A REVOLUTIONARY GENTLEMAN
AS ALL THE HISTORY BOOKS WILL SAY
I'M NOTHING MORE THAN JUST A MAN CONTENT TO KNOW
A GRATEFUL NATION WILL REMEMBER HIM SOME DAY.

(The Crowd gathers supportively around Ben)

Crowd

WE WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED WITHOUT YOU
 NONE OF US HERE WOULD BE ALIVE WITHOUT YOU
 JUST LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE
 WE NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT THIS FAR
 WITHOUT YOU....WITHOUT YOU...

WE WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED WITHOUT YOU
 (NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT WITHOUT YOU)
 NONE OF US HERE WOULD BE ALIVE WITHOUT YOU
 (NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT WITHOUT YOU)
 JUST LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE

WE NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT THIS FAR
 WITHOUT YOU...
 WITHOUT YOU...

NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT
 NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT
 NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT WITHOUT YOU
 (WITHOUT YOU)

NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT
 NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT
 NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT WITHOUT YOU
 (WITHOUT YOU)

NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT
 NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT
 NEVER WOULD'VE MADE IT

...'CAUSE YOU'RE A REVOLUTIONARY GENTLEMAN
 JUST LIKE ALL THE PAPERS SAY
 WITH YOU TO LEAD US
 WE KNOW WE'LL SOON BE FREE
 YOU'LL BE KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD SOME DAY.

(Reed, Ben's peevish, sniveling nemesis, is receiving a massage from his sassy sidekick, Josephine while receiving a manicure, etc. from servants).

Reed

Ahhh!!!!!! Ohhhh!!!! You know, Josephine, in all these years with me, you may have been the most ineffectual, molly-coddled, ingrate it's ever been my misfortune to employ.....but.... as a masseuseyou are the crème de la crème!

Josephine

Oh, sir, you really know the way to a girl's heart!

Reed

Josephine, have you ever met Benedict Arnold?

Josephine

Sir, this unhealthy obsession with General Arnold has to stop. It is keeping you up at night.... It's keeping me up at night..

(He looks at her, shocked)

Well, I hear you moaning endlessly in bed.

(Flustered)

You in your bed. Me in my bed, of course. What would I be doing in your bed? But through the walls, don't you see?

Reed

Josephine, what a peculiar manner of speaking you have adopted! Simply answer my question.

Josephine

Well, yes, sir. I did meet the General...once...but, sir, he was not a gentleman.

Reed

You don't mean--?!

Josephine

Oh, no sir. Nothing like that. But he called me vile names. Reprehensible names.

Reed

General Arnold? Are you certain?

Josephine

I ought to know. I was standing right there! He bumped into me on the street and said quite plainly "Pardon me, Madam." Madam?! I, a madam? I was never so insulted in my life. I'm only 26. I still have most of me teeth.

(Josephine sits down to read the paper)

Reed *(Sitting up)*

So what's in the papers today? Anything good this time? You never have anything good to read!

Josephine

But sir. Don't hurry to blame the messenger. Ooh! Ooh! Here's some good news!

Reed

Wait! Don't tell me. Let me guess!— Congress plans to nominate me as first president of the United States of America!

Josephine *(laughing)*

You?!?! Oh! Come on, sir! Stop it. You're killing me.

Reed

Uh... yes, yes, all right. Ah! I know. I'll finally be allowed to sign the Declaration of Independence, after that John Hancock fella took up so much space with his signature I had nowhere to sign my own name!

Josephine

Oh, God, are you still on about that?? Give it a rest! It's over.

Reed (*Exasperated*)

Well for heaven's sakes! What, then?!

Josephine

Your favorite general and mine, Benedict Arnold...has just been shot through the leg again at Saratoga!

Reed (*Excited*)

Any chance it'll be fatal?

Josephine

Mmm....lemme see....blah blah blah....oh. sorry, no... but—it says here he will be laid up and in excruciating pain for quite some time.

(Servant girls feed Reed grapes and fan him as he lounges)

Reed

Well, that is encouraging!

(Munching on grapes)

Ah, Josephine, if you only know how arduous and challenging this war has been on me.

Josephine

Yeah. And I hear some of the soldiers don't have it so good, either.

Reed (*ignoring*)

Well, it just seems that civil leaders don't matter anymore! I'm President of the Council, and yet do you think anyone cares?

Josephine

I know I don't.

Reed

No, and do you know why?

Josephine

Well, sir a political appointment such as yours somehow lacks romance. You don't really do that much, do you? I mean, anybody could do what you do.

Reed

Be that as it may.... Whatever the reason, it is unquestionably the military officers who get all the glory!

Josephine

Yeah, what the hell did they ever do? They risk their lives, get shot at, die in battle....and it's like everybody thinks they're heroes or something! It's pathetic, if you ask me.

Reed

You are correct, my pernicious cucumber! Well, now with Arnold out of the way, perhaps people will start noticing me for a change!

Josephine (*Watching him gorge himself*)

With a belly that size, some are starting to notice you already!

(Suddenly there's a furor offstage. Cannon are being fired in celebration.

People can be heard running about the street, shouting excitedly.

Josephine yells to one of them from the window)

Yo, yo yo! Ya wanna keep it down out there? There are noise ordinances in this town, yer know!

Little Girl

Haven't you heard? The Rebels have finally driven the English out of the city! They're on the run, and General Washington's just appointed Benedict Arnold military governor!

(Reed and Josephine exchange glances and sigh as lights fade. Excited crowd noises as light comes up on ballroom in Philadelphia)

Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen, I don't think it need be said too many times, how thrilling it is that we were finally able to rid the city of Philadelphia of the English...once and for all!!

(Polite applause).

However...

(The crowd grows respectfully quiet again)

However, we are here to pay tribute to a very special man; a man without whom, I most assuredly would not be here addressing you here tonight.

(Turns to Ben, motioning for him to stand and be recognized)

Benedict Arnold, I am pleased to be here honoring you tonight. For storming the fort at Ticonderoga; for valor and heroism displayed at Saratoga—a raid which netted us 59 cannon, incidentally, and for heroism above and beyond the call of duty at Quebec, where we nearly persuaded the Canadians to join our gallant cause, I hereby give you command of the city of Philadelphia, as its new military governor!

(Applause. Washington again quiets the crowd)

We also have another guest with us here this evening. The President of the Philadelphia Council, your very own....Joseph Reed.

(Josephine applauds enthusiastically, while the crowd gathers excitedly around Ben, congratulating him; ignoring Reed altogether. Reed, seemingly oblivious to the lack of attention, unfolds his prepared speech and begins to read it)

Reed (*With feigned modesty*)

Ladies and Gentlemen, please! I'm undeserving of all this—Really! I uh...I have here a few remarks. Oh, it's nothing very much, you understand. First of all....if I may begin by...

Josephine (*Embarrassed; with frozen smile*)

Uh, sir? sir?

Reed

What is it?

Josephine

Why don't you just forget about it. You know what I mean?

Reed

(*Looking around at the inattention*)

Oh.

(*He folds his speech and puts it away*)

[Instrumental: Tango]

(*The crowd dances, except of course, for Ben. A group of fans are getting his autograph. Maria and Betsy approach him, carrying glasses of champagne. The music underscores the following dialogue:*)

Betsy

General! I brought you a nice cold glass of champagne!

Maria

I did too!

Betsy

I thought of it first!

Maria

You did not!

Betsy

I did too!

Ben

Ladies, please! How kind of you both, to have noticed that I was...exceptionally thirsty this evening!

(*He takes both glasses; takes a sip from each. They giggle*)

(*Josephine stands nearby, listening*)

You'll forgive me for not getting up...

(*Pointing to his lame leg with his cane.*)

...but this nearly fatal, and unquestionably painful injury, was an honor and a privilege to have received in the defense of your sweet liberties....

Both (*Dreamily*)
Oh, General!

Josephine (*Rolling her eyes*)
I think I'm going to be ill.

Maria
General, how did you hurt your leg?

Ben (*With feigned modesty*)
Oh, I don't think you want to hear about that.

Maria and Betsy
Oh, yes we do! Yes, we do!

Ben (*Without missing a beat*)
It was a blustery winter's day. The morning frost clung to the withered blades of grass...

Josephine
Skip it!

Ben
Er, yes....well—at any rate, I was leading my men into battle, where the heaviest fighting was going on?—

Betsy
General! You don't mean to say that you were—out in front?—leading the charge??

Ben
Madam, with me it was never “Go, lads, go!” It was always “Come on, lads! Follow me!!!”

Maria
It must have been awfully dangerous!

Ben
I had my hat shot clean through nine times!

Josephine (*Aside*)
Mmm. Last time it was only six. This story just keeps getting more and more riveting.

Ben
Then, suddenly, my horse was shot out from underneath me. I tried to jump clear, but it was too late—my foot was caught in the stirrup and my leg was crushed beneath the beast.

Maria (*To Betsy*)
How awful for the general!

Josephine (*Aside*)

How awful for the horse!

Ben

More to my immediate concern, however, was what to do about the blasted Redcoat who had chanced to come upon me at this rather inopportune moment. He ran up to me, and pointing his musket in my face, said: “You’re my prisoner!”

Betsy (*Covering her ears*)

I don’t think I want to hear how this ends!

Josephine (*Aside*)

I didn’t want to hear how it started!

Maria

What happened next?

Ben

I looked him square in the eye and said “Not yet!” Then I drew out my musket, and—

(Using his cane as a weapon, Ben “fires,” and a loud, resonant “boom” is heard. Blackout).

(The lights come up on Reed, Josephine and Washington)

Reed

General Washington, do you really think that this...Arnold fellow was a particularly wise choice to be our new military governor?

Washington

I was told you might be coming around to see me about that.

Reed

It’s not that I’m objecting, you understand, it’s just...Well...you know how people talk...

Josephine (*Aside*)

Yeah, but so far, it’s mostly you doing all the talking.

Reed

... and, well, quite frankly, when my subordinate told me he’d seen English officers coming and going from Arnold’s home, well.... I told him, no, stop, I refuse to listen to idle gossip!

Josephine (*Aside*)

Yeah, he refuses to listen to gossip. Mostly he just starts it himself!

Washington

There must be some mistake.

Reed

Oh, your Excellency, if only you know how much I wished that were true. When the reports on Arnold's associations came out, I hoped and prayed they were nothing more than idle conjecture... but upon insistence from members of my council, I looked into the reports and, regrettably, found them to be true.

Josephine *(Aside)*

Regrettably, my ass. He was celebrating with champagne half the night!

Washington *(To Reed)*

Reed, let me understand something. You don't mean to imply, do you, that there's anything more going on than just...*socializing* with the English?

Reed

Oh, absolutely not!

Washington

Good. I'd hate to think you'd make accusations against a man to whom we all owe our very lives.
(pause)
Still, I suppose I should speak to him about hisassociations....for appearance's sake....

Reed

That's my only concern, too, your Excellency.

(Washington walks off in disgust. Ben sees him).

Ben

Your Excellency!

(To his Fans)

Excuse me, my friends. Duty calls.

Fans *(Disappointed)*

General!

Ben

Sorry, excuse me. Sorry.

Washington

Ben...I know that a military governorship wasn't exactly what you had in mind for yourself. If it hadn't been for your injury...

Ben

Your Excellency, anywhere that I can be of service to you is where I belong, and I certainly understand that, with my leg injured..... againduring my victory at Saratoga...against overwhelming odds....

Washington

Yes, well that's just what I wanted to talk to you about, Ben. You've always been my ablest and most trusted general. Some are even tossing out your name as first president of the new republic.

Ben

Oh, I am flattered, sir, but I wouldn't consider it. You are the obvious choice.

Washington

Nonsense. I have no interest in politics. That sort of life is not for me. I am simple farmer. I plan to retire to my home at Mount Vernon when this is all over. But you, Ben—you're a born leader.

Ben

You honor me beyond words, sir.

Washington

In the meantime, as soon as you feel you're ready for active service once again, I have something to offer you that's a bit more...prestigious, than a military governorship, shall we say? Ben—what I've proposed, as soon as you're able, is that you be given command of the left wing of the Continental Army.

Ben

(Hardly containing his excitement)

Your Excellency!—surely you don't mean—second in command?!

Washington

Well, it's not official yet, you understand, but I've spoken with members of Congress about it, and it's looking very good. I would say that would be a little more to your liking, wouldn't it, Ben?

Ben

It's just what I—Your Excellency, what I mean to say is...uh.....thank you, Your Excellency!

(He kneels, kissing Washington's hand repeatedly)

I am your most humble and obedient servant, your Excellency!

Washington

(Embarrassed at all the attention, exiting)

Uh.....yes, well, uh—I get the general idea.

(Washington leaves and lights come up on John Andre, with a disconsolate Peggy)

[Prelude: Flame in the Dark]**John (To Peggy)**

I MUST LEAVE YOU NOW
 BUT I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU, SOMEHOW
 DUTY HAS CALLED
 AND I MUST LET YOU GO
 YET HERE YOU'RE SAFE FROM ALL THE LIES
 AND WHEN I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES

John (*Cont*)

THERE THEY ARE...
THOSE SECRETS ONLY WE WILL EVER KNOW

(They embrace, Peggy is in tears)

Emily

Sir...Don't look now, but isn't that Mrs. Arnold over there...with John Andre, the English officer?—they certainly seemed ...close.

Ben

Ah well, yes, but then, this of course was before she and I had first met. Even I had former romantic interests.

Emily

No! Really, sir?

Ben

Oh, yes. Yes, I had three children by a former marriage! My sister raised them in Connecticut. Oh, I would have raised them myself, if not for the demands of military life.

(A little dreamily)

But—I loved those children. Truly I did.

Emily

So where are they now?

Ben (*Nonchalantly*)

Oh, hell, I don't know. Grown up, somewhere, I suppose. The point is, after my wife died, I didn't think I could ever love anyone again—and that's when I met her.

Emily (*Touched*)

Mrs. Arnold!

Ben (*Taken aback*)

No! The beautiful Betsy Dubois! I spent days working on a letter I was convinced would win her heart.

(Betsy and Maria read Ben's letter, as Ben and Emily stand behind them, looking on).

“Your charms, madam,” I wrote, “have lighted an inextinguishable flame in my heart, and your heavenly image is too deeply ingrained ever to be erased.”

(They giggle)

Betsy (*Reading*)

“...Whatever my fate may be, my most ardent wish is for your happiness, and my last breath will be to implore heaven's blessing upon you.”

(Looking up from the letter, sighing)

Maria

Well, isn't that sweet!

Betsy

Yes, I guess so. But I could never become romantically involved with Benedict Arnold.

Maria

Why not?

Ben (*miffed*)

Yeah, why not?

Betsy

Are you serious? Even if he weren't twice my age, he's a cripple! They say that when his leg finally heals, it will be two to three inches shorter than the other one, and—get this—permanently disfigured!

Both

Oooh!!!!

*(Betsy throws the letter down and the two exit, screaming.
Ben runs to the spot and retrieves the letter).*

Ben

Well, thank goodness it's still intact! Surely there must be someone who can appreciate a fine piece of romantic literature such as this!

Emily

You don't mean to say you'd actually use the same lines on another woman?!

Ben

Why not? Those heart-felt words of love were too good to use only once. Now let's see...

(Looking around, he suddenly spots Peggy. Music begins to play softly)

Ah, yes. Dear.....Peggy!

(Hurriedly scribbling)

Your heavenly image is too deeply impressed ever to be erased!

(The lights are lowered as the scene takes on a dream-like quality. Ben approaches and they start to dance)

[Flame in the Dark]

Peggy

IS THIS HOW IT STARTS,
WITH A GAME OF HEARTS
PASSED LIKE A GIFT OF GOODWILL BETWEEN MEN?
OUR LOVE'S SO UNORTHODOX
I'M LIKE MY LITTLE MUSIC BOX
OPEN UP MY HEART AND I WILL PLAY FOR YOU AGAIN

Ben

YOU RUN FROM THE NIGHTS FULL OF SHADOWS
I AM YOUR FLAME IN THE DARK

Peggy and Ben

CLOSE ALL THE DOORS AND HOLD IN THE LIGHT
THE REST OF THE WORLD CANNOT TOUCH US TONIGHT
SOMEDAY YOU'LL BE
FOREVER WITH ME

Peggy

I KNOW ALL TOO WELL
MORNING WILL BREAK THE SPELL
DUTY WILL CALL
AND THEN I'LL LET YOU GO

Ben

YET HERE YOU'RE SAFE FROM ALL THE LIES
AND WHEN I LOOK INTO THE SKIES
THERE THEY ARE THOSE STARS
THAT SHINE FOR US ALONE
WHEN THE DAY IS OVER AND THE SUN GOES DOWN
LOOK FOR A FLAME IN THE DARK

Peggy and Ben

CLOSE ALL THE DOORS AND HOLD IN THE LIGHT
THE REST OF THE WORLD CANNOT TOUCH US TONIGHT
SOMEDAY YOU'LL BE
FOREVER WITH ME

(Instrumental. Ben stumbles over to the bed and lies down, Propped up on pillows. Peggy sits on the edge of the bed next to him and he embraces her from behind)

Ben

YOU WILL STAY SAFE AND WARM
LYING HERE IN MY ARMS
NOBODY SEES THROUGH THE WINDOWS
WE ARE JUST FLAMES IN THE DARK...IN THE DARK

Peggy and Ben

CLOSE ALL THE DOORS AND HOLD IN THE LIGHT
THE REST OF THE WORLD CANNOT TOUCH US TONIGHT
SOMEDAY YOU'LL BE
FOREVER WITH ME

(The lights come up)

Peggy
General? General?

Ben
Huh? What was that, Miss?

Peggy
I was just saying....I don't blame you for not remembering me, you've met so many people here these past few days. I'm Peggy Shippen?

Ben
The judge's daughter. Yes. Yes. Miss Shippen, as always, you are a vision of delight.
(Kissing her hand)

Peggy
I trust you don't think less of me because my father is a loyalist. I've heard stories how you've burned people out of their homes if they were even suspected of allegiance to the Crown.

Ben
Don't worry, Miss. I have no plans to be burning anyone out their homes tonight... particularly not the homes of lovely ladies such as yourself.

Peggy
Oh, what a relief! For a minute there, I was afraid I was going to have to run home and save the family heirlooms!

Ben
I wish I could ask you to dance, but with my leg the way it is...

Peggy
Yes, I was so sorry to hear about that.

Ben
Well, perhaps it's just as well I can't dance with you tonight. There's a bit too much competition for my liking.

Peggy
Competition?

Ben
Yes, yes, yes....thatyoung man you were with earlier?

Peggy
General, I don't know how to tell you this, but I've been sitting over there by myself most of the evening with only a glass of champagne for company.

Ben
Youwhat?

Peggy

Don't look so surprised. It's a more common occurrence than I'd like to admit. I am ashamed to say, I'm becoming quite the spectacle, sitting in the corner, waiting for an eligible man to come along and sweep me off my feet.

Ben

Excuse, me, excuse me, but... do you mean.... you weren't just now ...standing...right over there...with a young English officer?

Peggy

An English officer—still here in Philadelphia!? General, I think you may have had just a tad too much champagne....if I may be so bold?

Ben

(He looks at his glass and sets it down)

Er...yes, you may be right at that.

(Encouraged)

You know, Miss Shippen—Peggy—it's true that I can't ask you to dance, but there's no reason the two of us can't step outside, for a...breath of night air.

Peggy

I can't think of anything I'd like more.

(The two walk off arm in arm and kiss in the moonlight as the lights fade)

(Lights come up on Reed, lounging comfortably, reading the newspaper, ensconced in the lap of luxury. One servant is feeding him, another is fanning him, and still another is holding the tray for his goblet. Reed takes another sip of wine)

Reed

So...it is true, after all! Benedict Arnold is engaged to Peggy Shippen—the daughter of a loyalist judge. I'd be very interested to see what General Washington has to say about this!

Josephine

So would I. After all, General Arnold is practically twice her age! I can't think they'd have much in common.

Reed

Idiot!! I'm talking about her family's association with the English!! There's a war on, you know!

Josephine

But it's not a crime to be a loyalist. God knows you certainly are, when it suits your purpose!

Reed

But all we need do...is plant the seeds of doubt in Washington's mind.

Josephine

Mmm....you may be right. And if what you say isn't altogether true, well...that can't be helped. You make mistakes. You're only human!

Reed

I'll say he can't be trusted!

Josephine

He's been acting suspiciously of late!

Reed

I'll say he's a traitor!

Washington (*Storming in*)

Aren't you blowing this out of proportion?!

Reed

But, sir....if you'll just look at the evidence.

(Reed brandishes a paper in his face, which he dismisses)

Washington

I have! And I've seen nothing to shake my faith in my most trusted general.

Reed

With all due respect, Your Excellency, your devotion to Arnold is...increasingly suspect.

Washington (*Seething*)

How dare you question my loyalty to the cause!!

(He approaches Reed, who cowers slightly)

Josephine

Oh, oh. Here it comes.

Washington

It seems to me, I remember a young army officer under my command, during the French and Indian Wars, who took it upon himself to go behind enemy lines to negotiate a settlement with the French...behind my back!!!

Reed (*With an embarrassed laugh*)

Now, sir...please understand.... I was only doing what I thought best at the time...and that's all I'm doing now. Your Excellency, you are in a position to prevent this from turning into a catastrophe!

[We Have a Crisis]

Reed

WE HAVE A CRISIS

ITS NAME IS BENEDICT

WHAT ROCK DID HE CRAWL OUT FROM UNDER?

HE IS NOTHING BUT A DERELICT

HE'S GETTING MARRIED

Reed (Cont)

TO AN ALLY OF THE KING
RUMOR NOW HAS IT
SHE'S ALREADY EVEN HAD A FLING

Josephine

SHE'S BEEN SNEAKING OUT LATE AT NIGHT
TO AN ENGLISH OFFICER'S DELIGHT
HOW LONG BEFORE
HE WANTS EVEN MORE
HOLD ONTO YOUR SEATS, FOR WHEN THE SPARKS IGNITE

Washington

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS

Josephine

YOU MUST BE DELIRIOUS

Washington

THESE RUMORS ARE SLANDER
HE'S OUR BEST COMMANDER

Reed

STAVE OFF THE BLEEDING
SAVE THIS NATION WHILE YOU CAN

Washington

I'VE NEVER DOUBTED HIM
HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY RIGHT HAND MAN!

Reed

BUT WE HAVE A CRISIS
AS OF NOW, IT'S NOT TOO LATE
WHEN YOUR RIGHT HAND'S DISEASED
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO AMPUTATE!

Josephine

HE ENTERTAINS THE ENGLISH EVERY NIGHT
FOR ENEMIES, THEY SEEM RATHER TIGHT
WHAT UNDENIABLE RAPPORT!
SOMEONE NEEDS TO TELL THEM
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AT WAR!

Reed and Josephine

YOU ARE NAÏVE
IF YOU BELIEVE
THIS SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR MEANS NOTHING AT ALL
WITH HIM AROUND WE ARE ALL DOOMED TO FALL.

[Bizarre Honeymoon]

(Offstage we hear crowd noises, applause, and laughter, followed by wedding bells ringing. Ben and Peggy enter. Ben pulls back the covers of the bed to find John in his pajamas. Emily stands near the bed, narrating the scene)

Emily

ON THE DAY BEN AND PEGGY WED
THEY CAME HOME TO FIND
JOHN ASLEEP IN THEIR BED
AND ALTHOUGH SHE SAID:

Peggy

HE MEANS NOTHING TO ME

Ben *(Aside)*

STILL I COULDN'T GET IT OUT OF MY HEAD

Emily

MORE THAN ONCE, HE SAW HER WRITE
A LETTER TO JOHN IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT;
SHE SAID:

Peggy

IT'S MY MOTHER, POOR DEAR IS DYING

Ben *(Aside)*

BUT SINCE SHE WAS ALREADY DEAD
I KNEW SHE MUST BE LYING!

Emily

STILL, HE TRIED HIS BEST TO PLEASE HER

All

WHICH WASN'T AN EASY THING TO DO

Ben

THIS HOUSE COST MORE THAN I CAN AFFORD

Peggy and Emily

AND EVERY DAY SHE'D/I'D BUY ANOTHER PAIR OF SHOES...

Ben *(shaking his head in disbelief)*

Oy, vey!

Emily

THOUGH PEGGY FELT SHE HAD IT BAD

Ben

I DID WHAT I COULD ON WHAT LITTLE WE HAD

All

IF WE/THEY RAN OUT OF MONEY WE'D/THEY'D BORROW MORE

Emily

TILL THE CREDITORS CAME KNOCKING AT THEIR DOOR.

(A loud knock on the door. Ben answers the door)

(Reed and Josephine and a group of movers file past him and begin carting off the household furniture. They all are wearing cover-alls, with prominent letters that read Colonial Moving Company)

Josephine

Colonial Moving Company. We're here to collect on the debt.

Ben

But, I don't have it.

Reed

Just what we were hoping to hear!

Josephine

Come on, boys. We got a real piece of work, here!

Reed

The furniture isn't much to look at, that's true, but we'll sell what we can at auction, then burn the rest. Take it away!

Peggy

Please, if you could just give us a little more time.

Reed

And then what? Borrow even more money until soon your entire salary is going only to make payments on the interest?

Josephine

I'm afraid we've heard that song and dance before!

Reed

What if everyone did the same? Can you imagine what would happen if your government acted so irresponsibly? Why, someday our national debt could well be in the... hundreds of dollars!

Josephine

Any politicians who would allow that belong in the loony bin, sir.... If I may be so bold.

Reed

You may. Such behavior would be the ruin of us all. You must learn the price one pays for extravagant spending...for living beyond one's means! Anymore caviar, Josephine? I seem to be out!

[Day of Reckoning]**Reed**

WHAT SERENE CONTENTMENT!
WHEN BILLS ARE ALL PAST DUE!
THEIR MISERY IS OUR GREAT FORTUNE

Reed + Josephine

SOON WE'LL BE LIVING ON PARK AVENUE

Josephine

SEE HOW UNDERHANDED WE CAN BE
CHARGING TOO MUCH INTEREST

Reed

PLUS FEES!

Josephine

THEN, WHEN YOU FIND YOU'RE OVEREXTENDED

Reed + Josephine

WE SWOOP DOWN, DEMANDING YOU HAND IN YOUR KEYS

Reed

TRIPS OVERSEAS!

Josephine

SHOPPING SPREES!

Reed

EVENING WEAR TO DIE FOR

Josephine

ALL THE LUXURIES YOU FIND APPEALING

Reed

BUT YOUR DAY OF RECKONING HAS COME

Josephine

TIME TO SHOW US ANY MONEY YOU'RE CONCEALING

Reed

START THE CELEBRATION

Josephine
BREAK OUT YOUR BALLROOM GOWNS

Reed + Josephine
WE DON'T SELL TOO MANY TICKETS
BUT YOU'LL FIND IT'S THE HOTTEST SHOW IN TOWN!

(During the brief instrumental interlude, A family on vacation, are ushered to their seats. They have hot dogs, bags of popcorn, pennants that say "Reed, D.C." as they watch the proceedings)

Josephine
HUMILIATE
HEADS OF STATE

Reed
UNDERMINE THE GENERALS

Josephine
RUINING THEIR LIVES IS NEVER EASY

Reed
BUT DAMN, IF WE DON'T FIND IT FUN!

Josephine
EVEN IF WE END UP FEELING RATHER SLEAZY

Reed and Josephine
LET'S ALL DRINK AND PARTY
IN OUR FINEST HOUR
WE MAKE A FORTUNE OFF OTHERS' MISTAKES
WE'RE AROUND TO CLEAN THINGS UP
WHEN IT'S ALL GONE SOUR

Josephine
SUCH ENJOYMENT
WATCHING LIVES DECAY

Reed
WE FULFILL A USEFUL FUNCTION

Josephine
BANKRUPTCIES
ONLY MAKE US HAPPY

Reed and Josephine
YES WE'RE SCUM
AND WE'RE BOTH HERE TO STAY!

(The song ends. Lights fade and come back up on Reed and Josephine alone at home)

Reed

Now let's take a look at what you brought me on the General. Oh? What's this?
Oh, dear, oh dear, oh dear... why must you always disappoint me?

Josephine

Sir?

Reed

I ask for smut on General Arnold, and this is the best you could come up with? Didn't issue a proper pass? Borrowed an old army wagon?

Josephine

It's all true!

Reed

It's all boring!! I give you three weeks to discredit the general, and instead, what do I find?—his popularity is increasing with every passing moment!! Now I find that the whole city is raving about him, while they all seem to think I'm some sort of a...a....

Josephine (*Matter-of-factly*)

A bastard, sir?

Reed

Well, you'll simply have to try, try again.

Josephine

Oh, please, sir! Don't ask me to go back! I couldn't bear it. We have to face facts—Arnold may simply be above reproach.

Reed

Nonsense. There are always mean, vile, and fiendish qualities to be found in every man.

Josephine (*Dreamily*)

Ah! If only this were a perfect world!

Reed

Well...let's have another look at your notes.

Josephine

But you didn't like any of it. You said it was worthless. You said I was worthless. You wished you had never met me or asked me to come to stay with you in Philadelphia, keeping the fire lit for you on all of those cold winter nights, applying some kind of scented cream...I think it was jasmine....

Reed (*Flustered*)

Yes, yes, all right, all right. We can have another look, can we not? Perhaps with the proper... creative embellishments, even the most innocent acts can appear... suspect. What was the first one, again?

Josephine

Uh...Let's see here...Allowed a ship to enter the port with an expired pass.

Reed

All right, all right, ah! How about "Authorized a foreign ship to infiltrate American waters, endangering innocent civilians."

Josephine (*Writing furiously*)

Good one, sir! You are so evil!

Reed

No time for compliments now. I'm on a roll. Next?

Josephine

Then there'smmmm....yes, he used an army wagon to take home some new furniture.

Reed

Well, that's theft of government property! And, what's this here? I can't quite make that out.

Josephine

Oh, that was nothing. It's just that last week he asked a corporal to go and fetch a barber.

Reed

Fetch a--!!!! Why that is shocking! Absolutely shocking! Imposed menial offices upon the sons of freedom serving in the American militia!

(The lights come up on the courtroom. Members of the jury seem robotic. Ben storms over and angrily grabs the paper out of Reed's hands)

Ben

Reed! These charges are utterly ridiculous and you know it!

Reed

May I remind the learned general that you were the one who requested—no, no, no—demanded a hearing on these charges!

Ben

You don't honestly think I'd let you drag my name through the mud without a fight, do you? My silence could easily have been misconstrued as an admission of guilt. I will not be stung to death by insects!

(Loud, angry murmuring is heard).

Judge (*Banging her gavel*)

Silence! There will be no more outbursts in my courtroom!

Reed

Your honor, it's true, at first glance these seem to be rather insignificant charges, but I ask the court to consider is where all this will lead. Today he asks one of our noble sons of freedom to—how did you put that?—to go “fetch a barber”—but tomorrow! Who knows what demands he may place on high ranking government officials.

Ben

Why shouldn't the military governor be able to make demands of his subordinates? What are they there for, if not to serve?

Reed

Objection!

Judge

Sustained. You'll have your turn, General Arnold.

Reed

Your honor, this is exactly the kind of rash, arrogant behavior that has brought us here today. Let us not forget, your honor, that General Arnold has been approved to command the left wing of the Continental Army. We must not to allow this unstable individual to become second in command of the Rebellion. The future of this new nation is at stake!

(The jury applaud, mechanically)

Ben

Reed, you have harassed me ever since I joined the military. Just what is it about me that you're so afraid of? Could it be that without me as your scapegoat, people might see you for the incompetent buffoon you really are?

Reed

The prosecution rests, your honor.

Emily

Sir, don't worry. I'm sure the jury will find you innocent.

Ben

What worries me is that I should be out there!—Leading my men—not cooped up in some courtroom defending myself against a crazed zealot!

Judge

General Arnold, please rise!

Josephine (*to Reed*)

This ought to be good.

Do you have the envelope? **Judge**

Juror
(Handing the Judge the envelope, which he opens)
 I have, your honor.

And the verdict is....guilty! **Judge**

What? That's impossible! **Ben** *(Stupefied)*

Guilty!!! **Reed**

This can't be! **Ben**

Guilty, guilty, guilty!! **Josephine**

[Jurors' Remorse]

Ben
 IF YOU ONLY KNEW
 WHAT I WOULD DO
 YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN QUITE SO QUICK TO CONDEMN

Jury
 A CURIOUS SIGHT
 YOU COMING HERE TODAY TO FIGHT
 THE CHARGES WERE SUCH TRIVIALTIES

Ben
 I WAS CERTAIN THAT YOU WOULD BE ON MY SIDE
 YOU DIDN'T FIND ME INNOCENT

Jury
 OH WELL, WE TRIED...
 YET EVERYONE HERE (EVERYONE HERE)
 IS WONDERING WHY (WONDERING WHY)

Ben *(Overlapping)*
 I'M LEFT WONDERING WHY YOU CHOSE TO CRUCIFY ME

Jury *(Overlapping)*
 YOU ALLOWED YOURSELF TO BE CRUCIFIED

Jury (*Cont*)

IF YOU LET IT GO
EVERYONE WILL KNOW
YOU'RE THE HERO THAT YOU'VE LONGED TO BE

Ben

THAT'S NOT DONE SO EASILY.

Jury

BUT IF THIS IS A REASON
TO COMMIT SOME KIND OF TREASON

Ben + Jury

A REDCOAT IS THE ONLY THING THEY'LL SEE.

(Washington gravely steps forward in front of the court)

Washington

General Arnold: it is with regret that I am bound to administer this public censure of your actions.
(There is laughter from the crowd)

Ben

But...Your Excellency! These were all such trivial charges! I don't understand why there was no acquittal!

Washington (*Pulling Ben aside*)

Ben, on a personal note—I know this may not help much—but I do realize these were very petty charges, and I'll—I'll do what I can.

Ben

Your Excellency, what about—well, what I mean is...this won't affect my being given second-in-command, will it?

Washington

Oh, I uh...I'd been meaning to talk to you about that, Ben.

Ben

You're not giving it to me.

Washington (*Flustered*)

Oh, no, I—well, it's just that I have some...particulars to discuss with the Congress...

Ben

Never mind. I have my answer!

Washington

Damn it, Ben! Congress is on my back! Reed has some very influential friends, and this trial

Washington (*Cont*)

didn't help matters any. You didn't even have to answer these ridiculous charges, but you did, and played right into his hands. He has them convinced that you don't have the country's best interests at heart.

Ben

But, Your Excellency...

Washington

Now, I know differently, and you know differently, but...

Ben

So what do you have in mind for me?

Washington

Well, I think we need to let things simmer down a bit before, uh...

Ben

You Excellency, I am awaiting your instructions! I have completed my tenure as military governor, I am once again restored to perfect health—please tell me now! What is to be my command?

Washington

All right, Ben. You'll be uh....

(Clears throat, lowers voice)

... guarding the federal arsenal, at West Point.

Ben (*In disbelief*)

West Point?! An administrative position?!

Washington

I know it doesn't sound very prestigious to an able commander such as yourself...

Ben

It's little more than a glorified secretarial post, and you know it!

Washington

West Point is crucial to our nation's defense!

Ben

Don't patronize me!

Washington

That will be all, General Arnold!

(John and Peggy, playfully seated together, are celebrating with champagne. Ben brooding in the corner).

Peggy

Ben, don't worry. You've made the right choice.

Ben

You really think so.

John

No one could fault you, merely for following your conscience. You have my word on it.

Ben

I gave them every chance.

Peggy

We know that, dear.

Ben

Well, at least I will do the honorable thing. I will see Washington tomorrow and resign my commission in the Continental Armed forces.

Peggy (*Jumping up, alarmed*)

You'll do no such thing!

Ben

What? Why not?

John

No, Peggy's right, Ben. You're much more valuable to us if you stay right where you are. And don't worry....Washington did the same thing. No more, no less.

Ben

That's different. He resigned his position. Everyone knew which side he was fighting for.

John

And you can resign, too, if that's all that's worrying you. All we're asking is that you wait for two weeks—then it will all be over.

Ben

Two weeks? What's in two weeks?

Peggy

Ben...the English plan to attack West Point, now that Washington's put you in command—the entire federal arsenal confiscated, Ben! Just think of it! It's certain to mean the end of the war. All John's asking you to do, is surrender the fort without a fight. Then, it'll only be a matter of time.

John

...And it will absolutely ensure our success, if, when we attack West Point...you see to it that Washington is there with you...so that he can be arrested, and hanged for treason.

(Ben turns away in disgust. John and Peggy exchange glances)

[Traitor/Don't Egg Benedict On]

Ben

TELL ME I'M NOT HEARING
WHAT IT IS YOU'RE TELLING ME TONIGHT

Peggy

THERE'S NOTHING THAT I'VE SAID
YOU HAVEN'T THOUGHT YOURSELF LONG BEFORE TONIGHT

Ben

WHY HAVE I ENDED UP SO TERRIBLY REMORSEFUL?

Peggy

YOU CAN TURN THAT AROUND
YOUR BRILLIANT AND RESOURCEFUL
HOW CAN A NATION BE SO CRUEL
AS TO MAKE THEIR HERO OUT A FOOL
LOOK WHAT THIS NATION'S DONE TO YOU

John and Peggy

WHAT DID YOU EVER GET
FOR BEING THE WAR'S BEST COMMANDER?
WHAT DID YOU EVER GET
BESIDES BEING PASSED UP AND SLANDERED?
HOW CAN YOU STILL SAY YOU LOVE THIS NATION?

John

SO MUCH FRUSTRATION!
DON'T WAIT FOR VALIDATION ANYMORE

John and Peggy

TIME TO SHOW THEM ALL WHO THEY MUST NOT IGNORE!
BE A TRAITOR
TELL 'EM YOU WON'T PLAY THEIR GAME
SAY "SEE YA LATER"
"I'M OFF TO FIND SOME FAME AND FORTUNE"
JUST SAY SEE YOU LATER I'M OFF TO BE A TRAITOR
RESPECT IS ONLY A REDCOAT AWAY

John

WE ALL KNOW THAT ENGLAND
WILL SURELY WIN THIS WAR
AMERICANS ARE LOSING
SO MUCH MORE SO
THAN BEFORE SO...

John and Peggy

BE A TRAITOR
 YOU'LL BE BETTER OFF THIS WAY
 SAY "SEE YA LATER"
 TELL 'EM YA WANNA TAKE A LITTLE HOLIDAY

John

AMERICANS DON'T STAND A HELLUVA CHANCE

Ben

I'VE ALWAYS HAD THE ATTITUDE
 THAT I DESERVED SOME GRATITUDE
 BUT I'M NOT ABOUT TO USE THIS WAR
 TO MAKE A PROFIT ON

Peggy

BUT BEN, HOW I'VE BEEN LONGING FOR
 A LITTLE MONEY....MAYBE MORE
 JUST THINK OF ALL THE FRIENDS
 THAT WE FINANCIALLY DEPEND UPON

John

BE A TRAITOR
 TELL 'EM YOU WON'T PLAY THEIR GAME

Peggy

SAY 'SEE YA LATER, I'M OFF TO FIND SOME FAME AND FORTUNE

John and Peggy

JUST SAY 'SEE YA LATER'
 'I'M OFF TO BE A TRAITOR'

Ben, John and Peggy

RESPECT IS ONLY A REDCOAT AWAY

Company

DON'T EGG BENEDICT ON
 IT WON'T TAKE MUCH FOR HIM TO BE
 PUSHED OVER THE BRINK, SO...

HEY! DON'T EGG BENEDICT ON
 THERE'S NO TELLIN' WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN
 I'M AFRAID TO THINK

Ben

AND IF THEY'D ONLY SHOWN SOME ADMIRATION
 FOR ALL THAT I HAVE SACRIFICED FOR THIS NATION
 I MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN SO INCLINED TO DECEIVE

Company

DON'T EGG BENEDICT ON
WHEN SOMEONE'S ON THE BRINK
YOU DON'T EVER THINK OF PUSHIN'
HEY! DON'T EGG BENEDICT ON
FALLING FROM SUCH A HEIGHT
EVEN HE SHOULD HAVE A CUSHION

Ben

YOU'LL NEVER FIND A MAN MORE DEVOTED

Company

UNLESS HE FINDS OUT HE WON'T LIKELY BE PROMOTED

Company

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO BE KNOWN
FOR ALL THE GOOD YOU HAVE DONE

Ben

WHY AM I NOT KNOWN
FOR ALL THE GOOD I HAVE DONE?

END OF ACT ONE

Act two

[Winds of Change]

(Lights up)

[Up a Creek]

Emily

WELL FINALLY CAME THE DAY
WHEN TREASON WOULD PAY
AND JOHN DROPPED IN ON BEN
FOR A FINAL MEETING

(Loud explosions)

THEN PEGGY JOINED THE BOYS
AND THEY ALL HEARD A NOISE
AND THEY LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW
TO SEE JOHN'S SHIP RETREATING

Emily, John, Peggy + Ben

AMERICANS WERE FIRING ON THEM
THEIR SENSE OF TIMING COULDN'T HAVE BEEN WORSE!

Emily

AMERICANS WERE STRUTTING THEIR STUFF
DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO FINALLY GET TOUGH
AND NOW THEY WERE CLEARLY
ENGAGING ENGLAND IN BATTLE
JOHN'S SHIP WAS HIT, AND IT WENT DOWN

Peggy *(To John)*

THAT SHIP WAS YOUR RIDE OUTTA TOWN!

Emily

NOW HE WAS UP A CREEK WITHOUT A PADDLE!
JOHN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO GO BY LAND
HE HOPED PEGGY WOULD UNDERSTAND
BUT HE CLEARLY HEARD THE BATTLE CRY
AND PUBLIC TRANSIT WAS IN SHORT SUPPLY

Ben

NOW THERE IS JUST ONE THING LEFT TO DECIDE:
WHAT COLOR COAT YOU SHOULD WEAR ON YOUR RIDE

Ben (Cont)

THAT RED COAT WILL BE SEEN A MILE AWAY!

Peggy

WHY NOT WEAR ONE OF BEN'S COATS INSTEAD?
YOU'RE A SITTING DUCK ... WEARING BRIGHT RED!
I DON'T WANT YOU TO LOSE YOUR HEAD!

John

IT MAY BE TRUE
THAT IF I WEAR BLUE
BEN'S UNIFORM WILL HELP ME TO GET BY...

John, Peggy, Ben + Emily

...THE AMERICANS!

John

BUT IF INSTEAD
I WEAR RED
THEN IF I'M CAUGHT
I WON'T BE THOUGHT A SPY

John, Peggy, Ben + Emily

...AND WE ALL KNOW THE PENALTY FOR THAT!

John and Ben

WHEN YOU'RE CAUGHT BY THE CHARMS
OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN YOUR ARMS
THERE'S NO REFUSING ANYTHING SHE ASKS OF YOU!

John

WHO COULD RESIST A GIRL WITH SUCH PRETTY EYES?

Ben

EVEN IF IT MEANT HIS EARLY DEMISE

*(Peggy helps him out of his red coat. Emily helps him
on with the blue coat).*

John, Peggy, Ben + Emily

SO JOHN GAVE IN AND WORE BEN'S COAT OF BLUE

John

SHE WANTED ME TO

Ben

YET I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER WHAT ROLE I PLAYED
OR HOW I'LL BE PORTRAYED.

(Ben enters Washington's office. Washington is working at his desk)

Your Excellency?
Ben

Washington
Ben!

Ben
I hope I'm not disturbing you.

Washington
Come in, Ben. Come in.

Ben
I, uh...I just wanted to apologize for the way I behaved at the trial the other day. It was most uncalled for.

Washington
Not at all, Ben, not at all. I understand completely! You were treated very unfairly and not given nearly the credit you deserve. And that's why I made a special trip to Congress on your behalf. "Ben is too good a soldier to be cooped up behind some desk" I said. "A man like Arnold deserves to be out on the field of battle with his men" I told them. And Ben.... I'm happy to say they came around to my way of thinking!

Ben *(Worried)*
Huh?

Washington
They acquiesced. Ben? Did you hear me? The left wing is yours!

Ben *(Frantic)*
Not—West Point?

Washington
But Ben! Second-in-command! I thought this was what you'd always wanted!

Ben
Oh, it is---I....

Peggy
Ten thousand pounds, Ben!

John
Just think of it!

Ben

I, uh...your Excellency...I am truly grateful for all you've done on my behalf...and I accept your gracious offer. Ooooooooooh!

(Ben suddenly grabs his leg in pain and limps around the room).

Emily

Sir, what are you doing?

Washington

Ben, are you all right?

Ben

Oh, don't concern yourself with me, your Excellency. It's nothing, really. It comes and goes.

John

Well don't over-do it!

Washington

Well, you are in good enough health to take the post, aren't you?

Ben

Oh, unquestionably, your Excellency. Unquestionably.

Washington *(Not convinced)*

Well...fine. That's just.....fine.

Ben

It's just that..... no, no, never mind.

Washington

What is it?

Ben

Well, I was just hoping that my impediment wouldn't affect my performance on the field of battle, or worse yet, result in the loss of innocent lives?

Washington

Ben, I was under the condition that your condition had improved!

Ben

Your Excellency, please don't tell me that my services are no longer needed. That would be worse than death.

(Ben starts limping around again).

Look! I can still hobble as fast as any man!

Washington

Well now, Ben, we don't have to make a hasty decision on this. If you think it might be wiser to hold off for a few weeks, the position will still be there for you.

Ben

Well, if...if you're sure it wouldn't inconvenience you.

Washington

Not at all, not at all. But, Ben—until your leg is better, would you mind...that is, would you still consider taking command of West Point?

Ben

Your Excellency, for you, I will make that sacrifice.

(Washington exits. John and Peggy approach, laughing. John slaps Ben on the back.)

[Midnight Ride]

Peggy

THE MIDNIGHT RIDE IS DRAWING NEAR
THE MOMENT I FEARED IS SUDDENLY HERE

Emily

SUDDENLY HERE

Peggy and Emily

AND WHAT WILL HISTORY HAVE TO SAY
WHEN HE HAS LONG SINCE GONE AWAY....

Peggy

WHEN HE'S GONE AWAY.
WHAT AM I DREAMING OF?
HOW CAN I KEEP MY WORLD FROM CLOSING IN SO FAST?

Emily

LIFE IS SUCH A SAD DREAM
ILLUSIONS THAT WERE

Both

NEVER MADE TO LAST.

Emily

THE MIDNIGHT RIDE IS DRAWING NEAR

Peggy

THE MOMENT I FEARED IS

Both

SUDDENLY HERE

Peggy

SUDDENLY HERE

Peggy and Emily

AND WHAT WILL HISTORY HAVE TO SAY
WHEN HE HAS LONG SINCE GONE AWAY
WHEN HE'S GONE AWAY.

[Gimme That Address]**John**

IT'S GONNA BE A LONG AND LONELY RIDE
LORD, I ONLY WISH I KNEW WHICH SIDE
YOU WERE ON, IN THIS WAR

THEY SAY THAT ENGLAND WILL WIN
BUT WHO REALLY KNOWS?
ONLY YOU CAN GUARANTEE HOW IT GOES
WHO ARE YOU FIGHTING FOR?

I'M JUST A REDCOAT
WHO IS CAUGHT UP IN A MESS
IF YOU KNOW A PLACE I CAN GO
WHERE I WON'T FEEL SO MUCH STRESS
GIVE ME THAT ADDRESS, WHOA, YEAH
GIMME THAT ADDRESS, WHOA
GIMME THAT ADDRESS, WHOA, OH...OH YEAH

IF YOU COULD FIND ANOTHER POOR SOUL
WHO'D MAKE THE RIDE
AND WHO'D DO WHAT HE'S TOLD
WELL THEN, I'D HARDLY OBJECT

JUST SAY THE WORD AND I'LL STEP ASIDE
I'D LET MY OWN GRANDMOTHER MAKE THIS LONG RIDE
I'M AN EMOTIONAL WRECK

I'M JUST A REDCOAT WHO COULD USE A LITTLE REST
IF YOU KNOW
A PLACE I CAN GO
TO ESCAPE THIS HELLISH MESS
THEN GIVE ME THAT ADDRESS
GIMME THAT ADDRESS
GIMME THAT ADDRESS

OH, DEAR LORD, GOD ABOVE
ONLY YOU KNOW WHAT A MAN WILL DO FOR LOVE
I DIDN'T HAVE TO COME HERE TONIGHT

BUT WHAT ELSE COULD I DO?
SHE WAS THE LOVE OF MY LIFE

I'VE NEVER MINDED HELPING DAMSELS IN DISTRESS
BUT SAVING A NATION IS JUST A LITTLE BIT HARDER, I'D GUESS
I'M STILL WAITIN' FOR THAT ADDRESS! WOO HOO
GIMME THAT ADDRESS, WHOA
GIMME THAT ADDRESS, WHOA, OH YEAH!

Reed

Halt! Stop right there, young man!

John

You talkin' to me?

Josephine *(In a Liverpudlian accent)*

Come closer! We can't see you!

Reed

A bit late to be out, isn't it?

John

Uh.....are you folks ... with the English?

Reed

English? What are you thinking? Are you daft, man? Of course we're English!

John

Thank God, I'm among friends again.

Reed

Can you prove you're one of us?

John

Oh, I think these papers will show you why I have to get through tonight.

(John shows his papers)

Josephine

But, this pass is signed by...Benedict Arnold.

John

Oh, yes. Benedict Arnold is on our side, now. I saw to that!

(Reed drops the British accent, and now speaks in a heavy southern backwoods accent)

Reed

Well, now. This is an interstin' situation.

(Two armed guards come out of the shadows).

Josephine

(Also speaking "backwoods")

Yeah. We forgot. We're not really with them English.

Reed

I dunno how we could have made that mistake, there, young feller, really, I don't.

(Dropping the pretense)

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Joseph Reed, President of the Philadelphia Council. And you, sir, are under arrest.

John

What will happen to me now, sir?

(One of the guards ties his hands, while the other keeps watch).

Reed

You are familiar with a man by the name of Nathan Hale?

John

Yes, but...surely you're not suggesting my situation is similar to his.

Reed

Oh, but I am. And your fate will be similar, as well.

[General Arnold's Demise]

Reed

CAN IT BE TRUE?--
I STUMBLED ON A WAY
TO SABOTAGE THEIR RENDEVOUS?
GENERAL ARNOLD'S DEMISE...IS LONG OVERDUE

AND BEST OF ALL
WASHINGTON WILL HAVE TO PAY ME A LITTLE CALL
WHEN HE FINDS OUT I WAS RIGHT AFTER ALL
WHAT A THRILL IT'LL BE TO SEE HIM CRAWL!

Josephine (To John)

AND LET'S NOT KID OURSELVES
THINGS AREN'T LOOKING BETTER FOR YOU
WE DON'T OFTEN PUT ENGLISH SPIES TO DEATH
BUT THERE'S ALWAYS AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE
AND WE'D BE HAPPY TO MAKE THE EXCEPTION...FOR YOU.

Reed

THESE PAPERS THAT YOU'VE GOT
ARE THE ONLY THINGS THAT WE NEED
TO ABORT THEIR SORDID PLOT
WE FINALLY HAVE THE CHANCE TO WATCH YOU BLEED

Reed

WHAT A LUCKY BREAK FOR US THAT YOU'VE BEEN CAUGHT
 AND NOW IT'S CLEAR
 ARNOLD'S NOT A RISK TO MY ONCE FLOURISHING CAREER
 THEY MAY NAME THE CAPITAL FOR ME
 WHAT A THRILL IT'LL BE
 TO VISIT REED, D.C.

Josephine

PEOPLE WILL BE STOPPING YOU ON THE STREET
 JUST TO GET YOUR AUTOGRAPH
 YOU CAN SAY YOU'RE UNDESERVING OF ALL OF THIS FAME

Reed

BUT I'LL CHARGE THEM FIFTEEN SHILLINGS, ALL THE SAME
 OH LAH DEE DAY...OH LAH DEE DAH DEE DAH DEE
 DAH DEE DOH DEE DAH DEE DAY

Reed and Josephine

GENERAL ARNOLD'S DEMISE IS OVERDUE! OLE!

[Peggy's Dream]

(Pre-dawn. In this surrealistic dream sequence, as poignant music plays, minutemen solemnly beat on their snare drums. Peggy enters the clearing. A noose hangs from the nearby tree. Peggy and John are reunited. They dance, kiss. Drums are heard. Dancers come and pull John away. Peggy tries to reach him; she is restrained. The Vicar reads silently from his prayer book, spectators cheer in eerie silence. Soldiers put a hood over John's head. John is hanged. Finally, John is taken down and placed on the ground. Peggy is devastated; she approaches the body).

[Without Him]**Peggy**

NO TEARS TONIGHT
 NO STRENGTH TO FIGHT
 ANOTHER NIGHT....WITHOUT HIM

I LOVED HIM SO
 HE SCARED ME, THOUGH
 WHAT DID I KNOW.....ABOUT HIM?

HE TOOK ALL THE LOVE I COULD GIVE
 BUT WHAT DID THAT LEAVE ME WITH?
 I MUST BE STRONG

Peggy

WAS I SO WRONG?
THE NIGHTS ARE LONG....WITHOUT HIM

I'LL LIVE THIS LIE
UNTIL I DIE
YET HERE AM I...WITHOUT HIM

SHARED LOVE IS HALF A LOVE
AND HALF A LOVE'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH

HE SAID HE LOVED ME
BUT COULD NOT SEE
I'D ALWAYS BE.....WITHOUT HIM

(Instrumental interlude)

AND NOW IT'S LATE
YET STILL I WAIT
THIS IS MY FATE...WITHOUT HIM

WHERE CAN I GO
NOW THAT I KNOW
I'LL ALWAYS BE...SO LOST WITHOUT.....HIS LOVE?

[Downward Spiral]**Company**

COME GATHER ROUND,
LISTEN TO A SAD TALE
THE DAY BEN FOUND OUT
HIS PLANS HAD ALL FAILED

Ben

IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO ADMIT DEFEAT
THE DAY YOU BECOME OBSOLETE!

Company

IF THINGS ARE AS BLEAK AS THEY APPEAR
HE REALLY SHOULD CHOOSE ANOTHER CAREER
WHO WANTS TO BE HANGING AROUND
A MAN WHO'S BEEN CROWNED
"TRAITOR OF THE YEAR"

(Lights up on Ben and Peggy)

Ben

I MUST CONFESS, DEAR
 THAT THINGS AREN'T LOOKING GOOD
 AND I FEAR
 NOTHING'S TURNED OUT AS IT SHOULD
 AMERICANS HAVE WON
 THEY'VE GOT US ON THE RUN
 WE HAVE NO TIME TO LOSE

I FEAR JOHN ANDRE
 HAS SOMEHOW BEEN FOUND OUT
 HIS PART IN THIS
 SEEMS NO LONGER IN DOUBT
 NOW WASHINGTON'S MEN ARE ON THEIR WAY
 TO SEE
 IF THEY CAN PIN THIS ON ME

I WON'T STAND A CHANCE
 SURELY THEY WILL KNOW
 SO FOR NOW, PACK YOUR BAGS
 WE HAVE TO GO

Peggy

BUT JOHN COULD WELL BE DEAD

Ben

LET'S THINK OF US, INSTEAD

Peggy

MY GOD, WHAT LIES AHEAD!?

(Peggy has worked herself into a frenzy and faints in Ben's arms. He lays her on the bed and tenderly holds her hand)

Ben

IT'S NOT THE KIND OF LIFE
 I WAS ALWAYS DREAMING OF FOR YOU
 I ONLY DID WHAT I THOUGHT I HAD TO DO
 SLEEP NOW, MY LOVE,
 UNTIL ANOTHER DAY
 NO ONE WILL SUSPECT THE ROLE YOU PLAYED
 BUT I WOULDN'T BE
 TREATED MERCIFULLY
 IF I STAYED!

*(Ben has packed his bags by this time and starts to leave.
 Emily is horrified)*

Chorus

WHAT KIND OF GENERAL WOULD LEAVE HIS TROOPS BEHIND?

Ben

IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF SHE'S ALL THEY FIND
AND JOHN'S ALREADY DEAD
SO I'LL SAVE ME, INSTEAD
TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY

I ONCE KNEW A MAN WHO'D ALWAYS CHOOSE
TO DIE MANY DEATHS BUT NEVER TO LOSE
GOD ONLY KNOWS HOW I COULD HAVE DONE ANYMORE
BUT NOW, WHAT WAS EVERYTHING FOR?

Chorus

WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW?
I THINK YOU'RE THROUGH NOW.

(Ben starts to leave but is confronted by Emily)

Emily

That was heartless of you to have left her like that.

Ben

What else could I possibly have done?

Emily

Do you really think after all you've done to General Washington, that her safety could be entrusted to him?

Ben

All right, all right, I'll tell you what I'll do. I will write Washington a letter, pleading on Peggy's behalf.

Emily

Well, that's big of you!

Ben *(Handing Emily a quill)*

Would you mind?

Emily

You're pushin' it.

Ben

Dear General Washington: By now you will have learned of my hasty departure. I have no favor to ask for myself. I have too often experienced the ingratitude of my countrymen to expect it. I do have one small favor to ask, however, on behalf of Mrs. Arnold. She had no part in any of this, and I ask that you see to her safety and security.

(Lights come up on Washington, sitting on a stump, reading the letter)

Washington

...in any event, would you please send me the clothes and other belongings I did not have time to pack. Your humble and obedient servant...

(Through clenched teeth)

Benedict Arnold!

(In a rage, Washington crumples up the letter and throws it on the ground. He starts to storm off when Ben points to the letter with his cane)

Ben

P.S.!

(Washington scurries back to the stop, and uncrumples the letter to read the rest)

Would you also please send me the three and half weeks' back pay I have coming.

(Washington angrily throws the paper away and storms off)

[Who's to Say?]

Emily

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE DECIDE TO SWITCH
FROM ONE TEAM TO THE NEXT?
THE REASONS FOR IT SOMETIMES CAN BE QUITE COMPLEX

BUT IF YOU COACH THE WINNING TEAM
YET NOBODY HOLDS YOU IN HIGH ESTEEM
IT MAY FINALLY SEEM
THE TIME'S COME TO SAY GOODBYE

TRY NOT TO LET IT GET YOU DOWN
PUT OUT YOUR CHIN AND STAND YOUR GROUND
AFTER ALL, YOU MUST HAVE HAD A REASON
EVEN THE BEST OF US MAY FIND
OFTEN IT'S BEST TO CHANGE OUR MINDS
WHO'S TO SAY WHAT IS OR ISN'T TREASON?

YOU'VE BEEN SET UP AND BEEN PUT DOWN
NOBODY'S BEEN MORE PUSHED AROUND
WHO REVERES YOU FOR YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS?

YOU WON THE BATTLES THAT YOU FOUGHT
YOU DARED TO GO WHERE MOST WOULD NOT
HOW COULD IT BE
THEY REFUSE TO BELIEVE IN YOU?

Emily

TRY NOT TO LET IT GET YOU DOWN
 PUT OUT YOUR CHIN AND STAND YOUR GROUND
 AFTER ALL, YOU MUST HAVE HAD A REASON
 EVEN THE BEST OF US MAY FIND
 OFTEN IT'S BEST TO CHANGE OUR MIND
 WHO'S TO SAY WHAT IS OR ISN'T TREASON?

WELL SUPPOSE A BRIDE HAS MADE
 A PROMISE TO BE WED
 BUT HE'S BROKE AND SO SHE LEAVES HIM
 FOR A WEALTHY MAN, INSTEAD

OR SHE NEEDS A BETTER JOB
 SO SHE QUILTS THE ONE SHE'S GOT
 DON'T THINK THAT YOU'D DO ANY DIFFERENTLY
 'CAUSE....YOU WOULD NOT!

WELL WHO IS WRONG AND WHO IS RIGHT?
 THINGS DON'T ALWAYS COME IN BLACK AND WHITE
 OFTEN IT'S A MATTER...OF PERSPECTIVE
 SO IF YOU THINK YOU'RE OFF THE HOOK
 GO TO THE MIRROR AND TAKE A LOOK
 DON'T SLANDER SOMEONE'S NAME
 UNLESS YOU KNOW YOU KNOW
 YOU'D NEVER DO THE SAME!

*(Lights go down, then back up slowly. It is dawn. Peggy is in bed.
 Emily rushes in)*

[I'd Rather Be in Jamaica]**Emily**

SAY HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?
 WASHINGTON'S NOT AMUSED
 BEN CAUGHT THE LAST BOAT OUT OF TOWN
 HE'S LEFT YOU ON THE SHELF
 THINKING ONLY OF HIMSELF
 HE'S THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP BUT

Both

HE'S NOT GOIN' DOWN!

Emily

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
 WOMEN WEREN'T SUPPOSED
 TO KNOW MUCH
 THEY HAD TO ACT NAÏVE

Peggy

LONG TIME, NO SEE
 OUT OF TOUCH

Emily
 UNEDUCATED
 EVEN IF IT'S TRUE THAT SUCH BEHAVIOR
 MAKES US NAUSEATED

Peggy
 OUT TO LUNCH
 WE FEEL NAUSEATED

Peggy
 IF THEY SHOULD ASK ME
 DEEP, PROBING QUESTIONS
 THEY WON'T GET MY CONFESSIONS!
 I'LL SAY THAT I WAS SHOCKED AND DISILLUSIONED
 THAT MY HUSBAND COULD HAVE DONE THIS TO ME!
 IF THEY COME FOR ME
 IT WON'T BE A TRAGEDY
 I'LL TRY TO KEEP MY COMPOSURE

Emily
 SOMEHOW MAKE IT PLAIN
 YOU'VE SIMPLY GONE INSANE

Both
 ONE OF MANY LOYAL PATRIOTS
 WHO JUST WENT NUTS!

(instrumental)

Emily
 AND IF THEY ACCUSE YOU
 TELL THEM HOW HE USED YOU

Peggy
 I NEVER WANTED TO BETRAY ANYONE
 THAT IS WHAT I'LL GLADLY CONFESS TO ANYONE

Both
 I/YOU LOVE MY/YOUR COUNTRY MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF.

Peggy
 IF I HAD GONE AWAY
 I'D BE THE FIRST ONE TO SAY
 "GOOD-BYE, BEST REGARDS, FROM JAMAICA"
 I'D RATHER GET A TAN
 FIND ME THE KIND OF MAN
 WHO WOULD BE CONTENT TO SAY
 "COME ON WITH ME, I'LL TAKE YA"
 ALL THINGS CONSIDERED
 IF IT WERE UP TO ME

Both
I'D/YOU'D RATHER BE IN JAMAICA!

(Peggy starts to exit and practically runs into Washington as he enters. The music stops abruptly)

Your Excellency!

Peggy *(Startled)*

Mrs. Arnold...

Washington

General...I-I know how all this must look to you, but I—

Peggy

You poor creature.

Washington

Excuse me?

Peggy

(Pause)

How could he have done this to you?

Washington

Well, I...I must say, your Excellency, that I was....shocked...and distressed when I learned what my husband had done.

Peggy

Don't worry, Mrs. Arnold. Though it may indeed be a small consolation, we've at least managed to capture your husband's accomplice... John André.

Washington

(Peggy gasps for air and clings tightly to Washington)

Mrs. Arnold, are you all right?

Washington

(She is unable to answer)

I assure you he will pay for what he's done. You have my word on it.

(Washington stumbles backwards onto the bed—with Peggy on top of him—just as Reed and Josephine enter)

Well! I never would have guessed!

Reed

(Washington scrambles to get up and to help Peggy off the bed)

Washington

Reed! What are you doing here?

Reed

I must say, General, you certainly didn't waste any time. It's just a shame that General Arnold isn't aware of your selfless devotion...to his wife!

Washington

Can't you see this lady is in a state of shock?

(Peggy feigns a cry)

Reed

With all due respect, sir, may I suggest that you are a little too close to the situation to see behind this pathetically unconvincing act of hers.

(Beat)

Washington *(Baffled)*

Reed—is this going anywhere?!

Reed

I've just come from having interrogated the prisoner. He's confessed to complicity with General Arnold.

Washington

We're fully aware of Arnold's involvement.

Reed

And are you also aware of Major Andre's involvement with...Mrs. Arnold?

Peggy

That's a lie!

Reed

If you don't believe me, General, go and ask the prisoner yourself.

Washington

I am not so base that I would ever accuse a woman of dishonorable motives.

Reed *(Incredulous)*

You're a fool!

Washington

Reed! Get back to West Point and wait for my instructions. You'll hear from me shortly!

Reed

Is that supposed to frighten me?

Washington (*Getting flustered*)

You have your orders.

Reed

Who are you kidding? You have no jurisdiction over me.

Washington (*Ready to explode*)

Reed...Get the hell out!!

Reed

Just wait until we tell all our friends in the Congress that we warned you about Arnold from the very beginning, and yet you stood by and did absolutely nothing. We'll see to it that you never hold a position of importance again!

Washington

Ha!!

(Emily, is helping Ben into bed, as his elusive grip on past events is eroding, and reality sets in. He is now only a shadow of his former self)

Ben

I don't understand this at all. I've been waiting three weeks for General Burgoyne to pay me a call, but it seems that he doesn't have time for me. What is taking him so long?

Emily (*Tucking him in bed*)

I'm sure he's just busy, sir. He's a very important man.

Ben

And I'm not?!—the greatest general of the Revolution—of either side!! They should be falling over themselves to thank me for all that I've done for them, and yet so far they've treated me as if I'm still one of the enemy!

(A knock at the bedroom door)

Emily

There. That must be General Burgoyne now. You see, sir? You were worried for nothing!

(Reed and Josephine enter. Reed is dressed in an English general's uniform. They smile patronizingly. Ben is shocked).

Ben

Reed! What the Hell?!—

Reed (*With an English accent*)

I'm soooo sorry, I'm afraid you're mistaken.

Josephine

This is General Burgoyne of His Majesty's armed forces.

Ben (*Dazed*)

Forgive me, Your Excellency. I thought for a moment....

(Ben struggles to get out of bed, but it's too much for him)

Reed

Please, don't bother getting up, General. You're ... overwrought. I suspect this has been a very trying week for you.

Ben

Oh, Your Excellency. If you only knew. I'll tell you, I—

Reed (*Impatiently*)

Yes, yes, yes. I'm a very busy man, Arnold. What is it you wanted to see me about?

Ben (*Stupefied*)

What did—!!— Your Excellency! I am....at your service!

(Pauses to let this sink in, to Reed's glazed look)

Ben

I...I have sworn eternal allegiance to my King, for whom I'm ready to give my very life!

(Josephine whispers in Reed's ear)

Reed

(Only vaguely interested)

Oh, that! Right, right. Uh...well, to tell you the truth, Arnold, we don't actually have any openings in your field right now. You might want to check back with us sometime next month... see if anything turns up by then. You understand.

(Turns to go)

Ben

I only hope that you understand, Your Excellency, how anxious I am to begin service to my King.

Reed (*Sighing*)

Uh, yes....well, General Arnold... I suppose now is as good a time to tell you this as any... uh, how shall I put this? Uh....none of the men wants to... serve under your command!

Ben

How is that possible, sir?

Reed

Well, for one thing, John André was a very popular figure around here. Some of the men think you should have been hanged in his place.

Ben

But...I can't be held responsible for that!

Reed (*Snapping*)

No!—you can't be held responsible for anything, can you! Personally, I was in favor of making a trade—you for André., but...unfortunately I was overruled.

Ben (*Hopeful*)

Then there are some who support me, after all.

Reed

No, no, not really, no. It's just that...we want to encourage defections from the rebel army.

Josephine

Yeah, turning over someone like you for the slaughter isn't exactly great for our image.

Ben

But I don't understand why the men won't serve under me.

Reed

I'd think that point should be obvious. Yes, well don't you see? No one knows who you may turn your back on next.

Ben (*Softly*)

What about my money?

Reed

Mmmm???

Ben

My money! My money, dammit! What about the ten thousand pounds I was promised?

Josephine (*Incredulous*)

Ten thousand pounds!?! For what?? You haven't done anything!

Ben (*Exasperated*)

Then give me a command!

Reed

But I've just told you—no one wants to work with you. What can I do about that?

(*Nonchalantly*)

Of course, if you're not happy with us, you could always go back to the Americans.

Ben (*Quietly*)

You know that's impossible.

Reed

You know, I asked one of our American prisoners this morning what would happen to you, if we were ever to turn you over to them. And do you know what he said? He said your left leg would be severed from your body and buried with full military honors. The rest of you would be hanged from the nearest tree, your carcass left to rot.

(He pauses to let this sink in)

Josephine

Now if you'll excuse the general. The sight of you sickens him.

[Finale]

(In the background, the shadows of his past ominously gather around him, singing a haunting, slow reprise of "Greatest Hero" as the lights dim)

Ben

NOW I FIND NO ONE REALLY WANTS ME
IT SEEMS AS IF MY FRIENDS HAVE ALL ABANDONED ME FOREVER

All

WELL, WHO COULD BLAME THEM, CONSIDERING YOUR CRIME?
NO ONE WANTS TO BE SEEN
WITH THE GREATEST TRAITOR OF OUR TIME

YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A BENEDICT ARNOLD
A TRAITOR THROUGH AND THROUGH
THAT'S ALL YOU'LL EVER BE
THAT'S ALL ANYONE WILL SEE

Ben

WHY IS IT NO ONE CAN RECALL
I WAS THE GREATEST HERO OF THEM ALL?

(Emily comes running in with Peggy. The song segues into a haunting dirge which underscores the dialogue):

Emily

Madam, madam, come quickly. I don't know what could be the matter with him! I came into his room a few moments ago, and he tried to throw a blanket over me. He said I wasn't dressed properly for this kind of weather. "This kind of weather?!" I thought. "What could he mean by that? It's the middle of July!"

(Peggy examines Ben. The Mourners enter, as before, solemnly, with candles)

Emily

Shall I get the doctor, mum?

Peggy

No, it's too late!

Ben

Too late? But no one knows what really happened yet!. Everyone thinks I was disloyal, but they've got it all wrong! It was all of you who forced me to do what I did! But... I want

Ben (*Cont*)

you to know, I've learned to forgive you for what you've done to me! I forgive you all!

I WAS A REVOLUTIONARY GENTLEMAN
JUST LIKE ALL THE PAPERS SAID
BUT NOW IT LOOKS AS THOUGH NO ONE WILL RECALL
THAT I WAS THE GREATEST HERO OF THEM ALL!

(The mourners sing backup "oohs" and "ahhs", building to an ethereal climax. Lights come down from heaven.)

FADE TO BLACK

END OF PLAY