Love, Liberty

and

**Other Holes in the Fabric of the Universe**

*A French-Canadian Telenovela*

By Frank Starns

Dedicated to Aaron Fattal

*Former President of These United States*

Prologue

He stood atop a mountain, his coat blowing behind him in almost a movielike fashion as the strong winds came in from the south side. Triumphantly sticking a flagpole in the fertile soil at his feet, he looked off into the distance at the lands beyond. With his fully semiautomatic musket in the other hand, he felt that nothing could stop him at this point.

Yerolda Manplicor turned himself away from the painting he had been staring at for at least an hour. Barely awake, he turned to face President Aaron Fattal, who had just been handed a tray of grass by his aides.

“Mr. Manplicor?”

Yerolda did his best to appear awake in the presence of the head of state.

“Did you hear what I just told you?”

“Oh, yes, of course,” replied Yerolda promptly. You were wondering if I wanted any refreshments.”

The president opened his mouth to speak as Yerolda cut him off.

“And I would like some refreshments, as a matter of fact. I feel like I haven’t eaten in years. What have you folks got up in the West Wing? Have some salted meats or something?”

The president was quick to respond.

“Mr. Manplicor, I was laying out the terms for your secession.”

“Right,” said Yerolda as he sunk down into his seat.

“This country’s resources are completely spent, not only from the war but for Lincoln’s funeral. I have neither the resources nor the energy to fight another war against a secessionist group. At least your group’s land is only ten square miles,” explained the president.

“So…?” asked Yerolda as though he were a two-year-old child waiting to find out if he could have ice cream before dessert.

“East West Virginia will no longer be admitted to the United States, effective immediately. Your state’s sovereignty shall be recognized by all governments of the world.”

“Yes!” exclaimed Yerolda giddily. Overloaded with adrenaline, he jumped out of his seat and embraced the president.

“I honestly have no willingness to deal with you. Get the fuck out of here,” said the president.

Yerolda promptly ran out of the Oval Office and made his way onto the lawn of the White House where his twelve comrades were assembled, eagerly awaiting the news of the negotiations with President Fattal. As soon as Yerolda emerged from the White House doors, they all rushed toward him in anticipation of the coming news. Was East West Virginia, sovereign and free state, going to become a reality? Yerolda prepared to make a speech to his associates who had worked for days to secede from the United States.

“It took many hours of negotiation and boredom in there, but the news I have for all of you is going to change all of our lives forever and ever. Today is a day that we have prepared for tirelessly and we finally have an answer to the question we have wondered about all this time. Today will be-“

“Goddammit, just tell us what happened,” said Jeffery Jothymice, Yerolda’s second-in-command.

“We’re free.”

As the joy spread from person to person, Yerolda soon found himself on top of twenty-four arms carrying him ecstatically down the White House lawn. As his name was chanted repeatedly, Yerolda suddenly felt a sense of relaxation he had not been able to feel for days.

It was a few days later that the thirteen men made their way to their newly independent land on the eastern tip of West Virginia. The area was ripe with mountains and forestry, with abundant livestock lining the landscape as far as the eye could see. As the sun began to set, the men began to discuss their living situations.

“Where even is the closest water source?” asked George Redcarts, Yerolda’s best resource manager.

“Oh, it’s just a few miles back there over the mountain,” replied Yerolda, who was already eyeing the best trees to begin constructing their houses.

“Don’t you think we should get some water stored if it’s that far?” asked George, who was the only man in the group paying attention to vital resources.

“That’s a good idea. Want to get on that?” asked a distracted Yerolda.

“Alright then, but where are the canteens?”

Yerolda glanced at the many backpacks that the group had brought along with them. None of the water canteens that had accompanied the group on their journey over were there.

“Boys, what the hell happened to the canteens?” asked a confused Yerolda.

“I threw them all out. I thought there was a stagnant lake here that we would be using for water,” said Morton Darvish, who was supposed to handle supplies.

“Shit!”

Yerolda bent over in frustration, desperately trying to figure out how they were supposed to keep everyone hydrated. It had been at least four hours since their last drink of water and everybody was beginning to tire. If they weren’t able to figure anything out soon, they would all die of thirst.

“I’m going to head on over to the river and get us a temporary water supply. You guys just stay in the shade and try not to die,” instructed Yerolda, picking up his supplies.

“How are you going to bring it back?” asked one of the men.

“I’ll figure it out.”

Yerolda set off into the forest, not once looking back at the group of thirst-ridden men watching him leave in silence.

//Spends two days climbing mountain, dying of thirst as he finds river, uses fabric blanket to carry water, expands to thirteen times its size, religion formed around godly fabric of the universe.