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# Chapter 1

## Prolog

**Sunday May 1, N.S. 1763.** Rays from the pre-dawn sun filtered through the upper branches. Kariwase scanned the perimeter of the clearing. He and his fellow Shawnee smelled the smoke a few miles downwind. Over the past hour, they quietly positioned themselves around the campsite. The white trappers chose a site flanked on three sides by hills and on a fourth by the river. Kariwase thanked the Great Spirit they chose poorly.

Satisfied his warriors were in place, he stood. He walked down the incline and into the camp. The six trappers were asleep about their now extinguished camp fire. Their haul sat in a two piles: pelts in one, carcasses in another. Flies had already started the process of returning the beavers to nature. Kariwase took no notice of this, it was little different in their camps. Over the smell of rotting meat, he knew could smell the stench of the English.

He kicked one in the head, hard enough to wake him. The stomach would have been softer, but not as rewarding. He held his war mace behind his arm, hiding it from the trappers.

“Ow! Amos—” The trapper’s voice trailed off when he looked at who kicked him. The trapper looked about, not seeing the other indians.

“What are you doing here?” Kariwase said.

“I don’t understand.” The trapper responded in French, far louder than necessary.

Kariwase switched to French. “What are you doing here? Do you understand that?”

“Yes.” Again, louder than necessary. One of the nearby trappers stirred, slowly at first, then suddenly when he realized what was going on.

“So answer me.”

“What does it look like? We are Quebecois trapping beaver.”

Kariwase tutted. “I know the Quebecois trappers in this area.”

The trapper interrupted “We’re new.”

“And I know the accent. French is not your mother tongue. You are English.”

The other trapper kicked the legs of the man next to him. His stare at Kariwase failed to mask its hostility.

“Hey!” yelled the other. The other trappers all began to rouse.

“We are not English,” the first trapper said.

“You certainly are not French, or Quebecois. Based on your accent, I would say Virginians.” Using his left hand, Kariwase pointed toward a few of his warriors on the opposing rise. The warriors, in turn, raised and lowered their flintlocks. “We killed many Virginians.”

The trapper switched to English. “Bloody fine. Then you will know you are on English, and therefore Virginian soil.”

Kariwase let that statement feed his anger. He chose instead to play with his victims. “This was my land long before it was yours.”

The trapper stood and spat. “Good luck keeping it.”

Without signaling his move, he swung the concealed war mace. He drove with his hips, putting all the power he could into the swing. The mace head connected with a satisfying thud. The trapper toppled, falling in the direction of the swing and toward the extinguished camp fire. The skull revealed the divot from the impact.

The other awake trappers recoiled in shock.

Other warriors whooped and joined in the fray. They used the butts of their flintlocks to bash the skulls of the other trappers, not discriminating whether the trappers were awake, semi-awake or asleep.

Kariwase looked on approvingly. Two of the warriors had just come of age. He thought spilling English blood was a good initiation. Rather than motion them to stop, he let them expend their energy on the corpses. It was over in a few minutes.

The carnage over, he smiled. He remembered the story of how the last war started. *Tanacharison washed his hands with a Frenchman’s brains.* Kariwase dropped his mace and drew his tomahawk. He hacked the Englishman’s skull open, and repeated the ritual. His fellow warriors smiled approvingly.

*They know the story. Good. Soon, we will start a new war that will drive the English out of our homeland.*

Kariwase and his band looted the corpses for anything useful. He distributed the beaver pelts to those who participated in the ambush. The two who held back went empty handed. They would not hold back again.

## Chapter 2

### Chapter One - Hideaway

**\*\*September, 14 N.S. 1762.\*\*** It was a dark and stormy night. Ephraim Biggs stood under the building's eave as rivulets of rain poured over its edge. Between lightening flashes, he could see the lane ahead. Puddles of brown rain collected and formed a small stream. \_Four more doors.\_

Ephraim hued up and bolted down the lane. A nearby bolt of lightening flashed and thunder roared at the same time. The nearness scared him. He dove down, into a mud puddle. As suddenly as the lightening came, Ephraim felt foolish for jumping into the mud.

He stood and shook himself off. He picked up his bag and continued down the lane. After two steps, he stopped. Mud on his face oozed toward his eyes. He looked up into the rain, letting the water help him wash the mud from his face away.

Soaked to the bone, he stopped running down the lane. It was a cold, dark rain, but in a few minutes he would be warm and dry.

<!-- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shippensburg,\\_Pennsylvania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shippensburg,_Pennsylvania) -->

He walked up to the house that the Widow Piper's Tavern keeper said belonged to Jeffry Biggs. Light cracked through the shutters signaling they were still awake. He straightened his coat. With his fist, he pounded on the door. He waited a few moments, then repeated his pounding.

The door opened. Jeffry Biggs pointed a flintlock pistol at Ephraim. "Who is it?"

Ephraim looked at the pistol. It was at half-cock, the primer pan down. "Your brother, Jeffry."

"I don't have a brother named Jeffry."

"Don't be an ass. It's me, Ephraim."

Jeffry hesitated before tilting the pistol up. He grabbed the hammer with his thumb and decocked the pistol. Ephraim flinched. It was a bad habit their father taught both of them. At least he pointed the barrel away safely. "Not like that."

<!-- <https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20141020061334AAujVoR> -->

Ephraim removed his hat before he crossed the threshold. He shook the rain off of it. He handed it over to Jeffry. He then took off his long coat, still covered in mud.

Jeffry motioned to a chair on the porch. "Leave that on the chair. We'll take care of that in the morning."

Ephraim lay the coat across the chair's arms. He looked back at his brother to see if there was anything else he needed to do.

"Enter."

Ephraim crossed the threshold. The house was warm. The faint wood smoke at the fire coaxed Ephraim to relax for the first time in a week.

"Barbara, would you mind warming up some soup?"

Jeffry's wife Barbara set down her needlework. "Certainly. Good evening, Ephraim." As she stood, Ephraim noticed the slight bulge that would be a new niece or nephew. He was there when their first was stillborn. Peggy and Jeffry junior would be asleep upstairs.

He started to shiver. "Evening." Without asking, he moved a nearby three-legged stool closer to the fire and sat.

"Do you need a blanket?" she said.

He shook his head. "Rum?"

Jeffry said, "I'll get that." He went to a cabinet to get a mug and the rum.

Barbara moved a near-empty pot of soup back onto the fire. "We just finished a short while ago, so it won't take long."

Jeffry handed the rum to Ephraim, and stood back. Ephraim could feel the—it was not quite a glare or a stare. It was that annoyed look Jeffry had when they were younger. It was a familiar look. Ephraim preferred to sip the rum to warm him and let the fire slowly dry him.

After a bit, Jeffry sat at the table. He put his glasses and picked up his quill and started reading. He made notes as he went. Every few moments, he would pause and glance toward Ephraim before returning to his work.

Barbara gave Ephraim some soup, then resumed her needlework.

It remained quiet for quite some time. Ephraim finished the soup and milked the rum. His clothes dried up. Most of the mud was on the longcoat on the porch.

Jeffry set down the papers, quill and glasses. "Alright, what's all this?"

Ephraim noted frustration and exasperation in his voice.

Ephraim took another sip of rum to buy a few more seconds. He thought through what he had rehearsed en route. He never found a way to make it sound less incriminating.

"I need a place to stay a while."

"You have a place. Philadelphia."

"I'm thinking of moving West a bit. Philadelphia is a bit too modern. Right? That's why you left."

"I left because there were too many lawyers there, and not enough here. As soon as the wilderness is opened up they will need lawyers."

Ephraim mumbled, "people go West to avoid lawyers."

"What's that?"

"I said that's very enterprising of you. I'm sure Pennsylvanians will find comfort in knowing the law is with them in the wilderness. Maybe you can lawyer your way into subduing the savages."

"You mean the Shawnee? The Cherokee? Many of them are adopting our modes of dress and law. Some are starting to write in their own language. Being out here—I think I can help subdue the savages with the law, as you say." Jeffry poured rum into his own mug, then poured some into Ephraim's.

"Don't you think they would be happier if we stayed where we were and minded our own business?"

Jeffry laughed. "I don't right care what they prefer. Locke was right, if they were the rightful owners of this land, it would be prosperous like England. Instead, they left it a wasteland. We English are more enterprising. We will subdue the Earth as divine law decreed. My way is more civil. Would you rather they adopt English law or French?"

"You know I don't care one way or the other."

"Right, you don't even agree with the appeal to divine law."

It was a subtle barb, and one that did not get through Ephraim's skin. "I learned all about God I needed in seminary. Look, I need a place to stay for while."

"Why not Philadelphia? You had a place there. You had one in New York before that. New Haven was your home for a time before that. I don't think you have a home here."

"I'm not looking for a home. Just a place to stay while I find a home. I don't think these crossroads are where I will end up. Although, I did not see a smith."

Jeffry clinched his jaw. "There is a smith, and he barely makes ends meet. Getty's tavern brings most of his work. I don't think another smith is what this place needs."

"I don't think this place could handle two Biggs, either."

Jeffry smirked, "it's Bigg enough with one. Don't be coy."

Ephraim feigned innocence. It was an old joke.

"Why are you really here?"

Ephraim finished his rum. "I just need to get away from Philadelphia, that's all."

Jeffry glared at him, just like their father used to. "I will let you stay a few days. After that, you should continue down Wagon Road."

<!-- TODO: Complete Scene one

This scene is not over. Need to show him milling the town and bristling at the troops passing through at the Widow's tavern. Needs to establish he is a tinkerer by repairing the toy. -->

**September, 17 N.S. 1762.** A few days in Shippensburg was all Ephraim needed. On the first day, he toured the town. He was surprised to find the log stockade fort, Fort Morris. It was inactive, but represented English rule nonetheless. He learned it was built to protect this part of the Wagon road during the French & Indian War after Braddock was slain. Given that many

of the town's buildings, including Jeffrey's house, were made of stone, it struck Ephraim oddly that the fort was wood.

The Widow's Tavern was another inducement to move on. Its clientele included trappers, traders and redcoats. Lobster backs. He needed to get further away. At least until things quieted down. Falling Springs was appealing. It had a fort, privately owned, and few settlers. It was much smaller than it used to be, which meant it may soon resettle. Ephraim worried that hostilities had only recently paused near Falling Springs. It could resume. He thought Jeffrey was mad to settle so close to the wilderness with Barbara and their children.

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On Tuesday before dawn, he set off for Falling Springs. It would be a long walk—about ten miles—and a less awkward farewell. He helped himself to some cold chicken, and some shillings paper his brother absentmindedly left on the table the night before. His brother did not ask where he was going, so he did not tell him. *—All the better.* Ephraim thought. *—The fewer who knew the better.*

He passed a few travelers on the road. Most were travelers. All were armed. With each mile, Ephraim felt more conspicuous wearing attire more suited for Philadelphia than the wilderness. Not a few of the travelers eyed him with suspicion or derision.

Not long before noon, he arrived in Falling Springs. As he had heard, there were more buildings than needed for the inhabitants. A good place to start over.

He made his way straight for the smith. He found it near Conococheague Creek, not far from Chamber's fort. It was odd to him that the log fort in Shippensburg filled him with more dread than Chamber's. Falling Springs oddly mirrored Shippensburg with its wooden houses and stone fort. It was as if Judge Shippen expected his settlement to withstand the test of time, and Chambers did not. Or, it could be because Shippen started earlier. Ephraim thought the war brought a lot into question.

The smith pumped the bellows as Ephraim entered. The smith's back was to the entrance, and he focused intently on his work. Ephraim set his bag down and watched quietly for a few moments. He remembered working the bellows for his dad when he was a boy. A journey towards being a blacksmith diverted to divinity by fortune. The smith was perhaps a dozen years older than Ephraim, or a bit less than that.

After a few minutes, the smith turned. He looked less surprised than he was tired. "Are you going to just stand there? What do you want?" The Scotch-Irish brogue was intelligible enough.

Ephraim hesitated at the abruptness. "I did not want to distract you from your work."

"You have. What will it be?"



Straight to the point. "I'm looking for a job. I've worked in a smithy before. You seem a little short handed."

The smith shook his head. "Maybe a few years ago. It's the damned war. Most the townsfolk have moved back to Philadelphia, or been killed."

None of this surprised Ephraim. The war lasted nearly half his life. Bradford's Pennsylvania Journal reported on the atrocities. It was a fact of life. "True. But, it's gotten quieter over the past couple of years. With the Navy beating the French and Spanish in the Indies, it will be over soon."

"Prophet, are ye? It may have quieted between the English and French, but not for us and the Indians." The smith forgot the bellows. "Just the other day, we hear word that Jim Walker just escaped the savages. He made the mistake of straying too far from Fort Loudon when the bastards shot his horse and mounted it saddle on him. Had he not the knife on him, he'd have been a goner. Heard that, did ye?"

Ephraim shook his head.

"Aye. They got him back to the Indian settlement when he was left with two of them. He fetches his knife when they were both asleep." The smith pantomimed cutting tied wrists. "Just like that, he's free. One of the bastards woke and they scuffled. He grabs the savage by the hair and plunged the knife into his throat." The smith enjoyed acting out the fight. "He said the other fellow woke when he heard his friend killed, but was so scared that he ran off. Mr. Walker only two weeks ago emerged from the wilderness back to Fort Loudon. So, I don't think the settlers will be back as soon as you think."

"Where's Fort Loudon?"

The smith motions over Ephraim's shoulder. "Off that way about a day's ride."

Ephraim concluded "that way" was further to the West. "When were they last here?"

"A few years. We haven't but one in ten that we had here when the war started. Ben plans to lay out a proper town at some point. Maybe then—"

"Then you need help."

The smith sighed. "When there's a town, yes. But that won't be for years."

"I need the work. Not for wages. Just to get on my feet and head down the road."

"To Fort Pitt?"

"No, down to Virginia, perhaps."

"Aye, perhaps. What's in Virginia?"

"My business."

"You got a name?"

Ephraim hesitated. The last thing he wanted was his name to attract attention. "Jeffry."

"Jeffry what?"

"Boydell." It came out of his mouth before he could think. Now he had to commit to it. "Jeffry Boydell."

"You're a dandy, Mister Boydell. I mean, look at you. Nobody dresses like that out here."

Ephraim looked down at his suit. It fit Philadelphia fashion with its skin tight breeches buckled at the knee. He had loosened the fitted blue waistcoat during the walk from Shippensburg, but the neckerchief hid that. The gold embroidery and buttons did stand out. The Smith's breeches were similar, albeit black, with a looser fitting brown waistcoat. None of the ruffles, embroidery or non-functional buttons.

"No way you're working in that. You've not worked a rough day in your life."

"My father was a smith, I'll have you know." He made a point of changing his accent a bit. He tried to sound rougher. "I 'prentised under him. I can work the bellows. I can do most of the work you would expect if you had a 'prentise. You're doing work you oughtn't do if you're the master smith. I can't do much about the suit. But, you can't judge a book by its cover."

"Humph." The smith considered Ephraim for a few moments. "Go on. Let me see your hands."

Ephraim held his hands out.

The smith grabbed the hand, and turned it palm up and back to palm down. "Not a dandy's hands. I'll give you that. Not quite rough, but not dainty. They've seen some work."

"As I said, I 'prentised under my father. He wanted something better of me and my brother. Don't let my attire deceive you. I can do just about everything you need."

"Everything, eh? We'll see about that. It would do to have a lighter load. I'll try you on and see if this works out, Mister Boydell. But, if you've not proved your metal by week's end, away with ya."

Ephraim noted the bite in the smith's warning. He thought back to the hot, sweaty days as a young boy. It just occurred to him that he may not be in the best shape to swing a hammer. He had to try. "There's something more?"

"Aye?"

"I'll need some place to stay." He lifted his bag. "All that I have is here."

"Och. There it is. Did you think that didn't occur to me, lad? Here I thought you've lived here in Falling Springs me whole life and I just now laid eyes on you. You're a daft one that." He motioned toward a ladder at the back of the shop, then pointed up. "There's the loft, for services rendered. But, until then, get this fire going again. I'm going for a piss."

**\*\*November 10, N.S. 1762\*\*** Even with the leaves falling off the trees, Mortimer Bethlehem thought America was beautiful. At least the middle colonies part of America. New England had its beauties, more in the inhabitants than the scenery. The Carolinas were too hot and sandy. The Quakers managed to pick the best part of America. The further away from Philadelphia they rode, the more he enjoyed the scenery.

The road widened as they entered the town. The afternoon sun just started to dip below the tops of the trees. Sharpsburg, he thought they named it. As they rode through, it looked quaint enough. Grey stone buildings in the Georgian style. They were not going anywhere. He chuckled when he saw the wooden fort. He pointed it out to Dorian Mabbott. "Sharpsburg has permanent

buildings but temporary fortifications. They should be glad hostilities are at an end.”

“Shippensburg, sir.”

“What?”

“We are in Shippensburg, sir. Named for Chief Justice Shippen.” Dorian’s tone was respectful.

“Quite right. Shippens-burg.” He muttered its name a few times under his breath. “Still, he does have a beautiful wife.”

“Who, sir?”

“His Honorable Judge Shippen.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Do you see the church?”

“Not yet, sir. I doubt he’s in one. They’re Presbyterians out in the country. He was trained in the Puritan tradition.”

Mortimer chuckled at that. “Puritans are a tradition? Hardly.” “Damned separatists. The Church of England is the only civil church. God save the King.”

His men repeated in unison, “God save the king.”

“Still, I’ll buy you a pint if he’s not found in a church.”

They rode until they came to the tavern. “Widow Piper’s Tavern. Handsome structure, that. Such clean lines. I wonder who built it?” He shifted in his saddle. It had been a long ride. “Come on, let’s give it some business.”

He and his men dismounted and tied their horses. Mortimer paused a few more minutes to study the shape of the building. For an American tavern, it was not terribly large. Its size was more like the alehouses in London.

The ten of them entered the tavern. Describe interior.

- [ ]: TODO: Visit the Widow Piper’s Inn

The common area was just large enough for his entourage. A woman, probably Widow Piper, worked the fire by the hearth.

“Good evening, madam.”

She looked up. “How can I be of service?” The Scottish burr was distinct, unsoftened by her time in America.

“If you have lodging,” pointing his hat at his men, “we will be staying the night.”

She smiled. “Aye. No boarders today.”

“Splendid. We’ve just arrived from.” He paused and turned to Dorian.

“Harrisburg, sir.”

“Yes. Quite. Harrisburg. Hard journey. We are famished.”

“Well, you’re in luck. We have a meat pie, hasty pudding with bacon, oatmeal porridge, a dish of eggs and beer. Should be ready in an hour.”

“No ale, perhaps?” Mortimer said.

“Aye, ale beer.”

After a pint, Mortimer’s men took the horses to the nearby stable while Mortimer and Dorian remained. They were on their second pint. The prices were lower than Mortimer would have expected. It was a decent ale, even if too malty for his palette.

"Mrs. Piper. Have you recently had a visitor?"

"This is a tavern, sir. With all the travel between Philadelphia and the wilderness, we usually have several visitors. Usually redcoats or trappers. It starts to slow down about this season."

"Anyone by the name of Ephraim Biggs?" Dorian jumped in.

Mortimer felt a little exasperated. Dorian was younger, always in haste.

"No Ephraim Biggs. There is a Jeffry Biggs here in town."

Mortimer sat up a little. "Oh?"

"Aye. He lives just on the other side of the fort."

Dorian continued, "has he been here long?"

"He brought his family here a couple years ago. Once the indian troubles started to quiet down a bit."

"Pastor?"

"Oh, no. Worse. He's a lawyer."

"There does not seem to be much calling for the law out here." Mortimer injected.

"You'd be surprised. He works for Judge Shippen, who owns all the land around us. Once the war is over, they'll be selling plots of land. Mr. Biggs will be handling the surveys and sales. He usually comes in every morning for a beer and Indian pudding with the missus being with child."

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The next morning, Mortimer and Dorian sat over breakfast and waited. Mrs. Piper described Jeffry to them, so they were prepared. They did not wait long. A somewhat tall man with reddish-brown hair came into the tavern.

"Jeffry!"

The man reflexively looked their way.

"Join us."

"I'm sorry. Who are you?"

"I'm Captain Bethlehem, and this is Ensign Mabbott. You are Jeffry Biggs, land broker?"

That seemed to put Jeffry at ease. He hesitated for a moment before joining them at the table. Mortimer observed his mannerisms as an odd mix of gentleman and commoner. Jeffry was pretending at being one, probably a gentleman.

There was serving bowl of Indian pudding. Mortimer pushed it toward Jeffry. He offered a spare bowl and wooden spoon to Jeffry, who took it from him. Jeffry filled his bowl. Dorian set a mug of ale at Jeffry's place. The three ate together, trading small talk for most of the meal.

"Thank you, gentlemen, for that wonderful breakfast. Piper has excellent pudding. I am afraid we are not offering plots for sale quite yet. Once a peace treaty is signed, perhaps."

"I imaging in time Shippensburg will be a thriving city. Handsome countryside. We are not here for that. Have you heard from your brother Ephraim?"

Jeffry paused for a moment. His facial expression changed almost imperceptibly. It was enough for Mortimer to judge that Ephraim was here recently. "No, I haven't. He should be in New Haven." Mortimer thought Jeffry did not sound like he expected Ephraim to actually be in New Haven.

"Should be, but he is not. He left New Haven some months ago, and I'm tasked with finding him."

"Is he in some sort of trouble?"

Mortimer paused. As a younger brother, he would want nothing better but for his older brother to disappear. Then he would have title and would not be traipsing over the back side of America, to Mortimer's brother's delight. Would Jeffry protect his brother or not? Mortimer decided confronting him with a hard statement would yield a worthwhile reaction. "I'm afraid he is. Ephraim Biggs murdered an English officer last June in New Haven. I've been dispatched to find him for execution."

Dorian started to react when Mortimer cut him off with a glare. It denied him the chance to see Jeffry's reaction.

"But...No. I don't believe it. Jeffy isn't the murderous sort."

Mortimer let a silent pause work for him. Colonial Colonel Whiting hated playing All Fours against Mortimer because of his ability to read the other players. He tried those tactics here. When Jeffry looked down, he gave a glance and wink to Dorian. "Tried and convicted, I'm afraid. He managed to escape the jail soon after. Ensign Mabbott and I have been in pursuit ever since. He gave us a slip in Philadelphia, but we hear rumor that he headed this way. Pray, when did you last see your brother?"

"Not since he went to Yale."

It was a lie that Mortimer read easily. He opted to change tact. "Well, he must not have come this way, then. We were convinced he would seek refuge with family. Ensign, you may have been right. He went to Baltimore." He noticed Jeffry relax his shoulders, though the look of shock on his face remained. "What amazed me that a Puritan ministerial student would be capable of murder with his bare hands. How is it that you became an attorney and he went a different path?"

"We weren't born into wealth, if that's what you mean. Our forefathers were smiths. Our grandfather came over after Queen Anne's War. Our father did well enough to send us to college so we could advance the family's position."

"So you worked in the smithy as lads? That would explain Ephraim's ability to crush a man's throat." Mentally, Mortimer moved the Biggs down several social pegs. Commoners pretending to be elitists. That was the mode in America, with men thinking they can climb some social ladder and forget their places. It was different for aristocrats. They already had their place. All that remained was jockeying for position.

The meal ended abruptly there. The interrogation stole whatever appetite Jeffry still had. He thanked them and left.

"What was that about?" Dorian said.

"About the conviction? I had to know whether Jeffry knew about the murder. I dressed it up a bit." He set back in his chair. He steepled his hands

together, and tapped his upper lip. "His brother went through here, but failed to tell his brother why. I doubt they are very close. Jeffry is quite a few years older. Did you notice anything else?"

"They are smiths."

"Quite. Ephraim will not conceal himself as a pastor. Too obvious, and not as much call for that out here. Scottish Presbyterians and Puritan Separatists."

"You suppose he reverted to smithing?"

"It makes sense. Either that or he's fled the country and gone south." Ensign Mabbott had not been in America for long. Mortimer decided to size him up a bit. "What course of action do you propose?"

"Well, we are close to Indian country. There are not too many places that could take a smith. He could have fled south, but his resources would only take him too far. I'll wager a pint that he is in a nearby town working as a smith."

"How do you propose we find out?"

"Divide our forces. Winter is fast approaching. But, if we send the men out a few days in any direction, we should figure out if he is in the area or has passed through."

"My thoughts exactly." "Sobeit. Split the team and send them out. Have them all report back in a fortnight." Widow Piper's is a fine place for us to headquarter until they return. See to it."

The next morning, Dorian assembled his men and instructed them to visit the next two towns down each road, then report back. That would fit within Bethlehem's orders and give some indication which way Ephraim went. He told them to ask for a preacher or smith, working on the theory Ephraim was using his trade. They broke up and headed to the stable to ride on.

A few minutes later, Sergeant Tailor returned with a sheepish look on his face. "Sir, Doris has a limp."

"Sergeant, I don't know what you do with your mounts. They always come up limp."

"I dunno, sir. It's not like I had them growing up." Sergeant Tailor's accent came from the worst parts of London.

Ensign Mabbott knew where they found him, a jail not much farther from there. "Fine. Take my Black Betty. She's rock steady. But go easy on her. She's still a bit wild."

\*\*November 20, N.S 1763.\*\*

<!-- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fannett\_Township,\_Franklin\_County,\_Pennsylvania -->

<!-- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burnt\_Cabins,\_Pennsylvania -->

Lance Corporal Miller rode uneasily toward Fannett. He was a foot soldier, unaccustomed to riding a horse. They had been riding since they left New Haven, so he was getting better at it. He would rather be walking. He cursed Ephraim Biggs for pulling him further away from civilization.

The town of Fannett was a ride up a narrow path through the mountains from Shippensburg. Miller knew well the area may have savages. The French may have withdrawn to focus on other parts of the world, but the savages were native to the land. They would not leave. The presence of several English settlements did nothing to alleviate his professional concern. He rode carefully, watchful for any sign of threat. The journey took all day.

He arrived in Fannett as the sun had just set. Its reputation as a town was a far cry from what it was. Four cabins flanked the trail. There would be no Ephraim Biggs here. The officers ordered him ask, so he would ask.

He dismounted and went to the more substantial of the cabins. None of them looked inviting. He pounded on the door, wishing he had his musket instead of a pistol and hatchet.

The door opened up slightly. The barrel of a musket poking through. "What do you want?" The accent was Irish.

"Sir, I am looking for Ephraim Biggs. He's a preacher, or smith, or something." He hesitated. "Um, he's a friend of mine."

"You're the only stranger in these parts."

"Alright. No need to be alarmed. As I said, he's a friend. He said he was coming this way."

A harumph came from the other side of the door. "Your friend must have sent you the wrong way, Englishman."

"Alright. I believe you." He took a moment to assess the situation. He needed shelter through the night so he could press on the next day. "Is there somewhere for my horse and I to stay?"

"Not here. Be off with you."

The door slammed as the musket barrel was withdrawn. Miller breathed a sigh of relief. He tried the other cabins to see if any would accept him for the night. With each refusal, he grew more frustrated. \_If they knew I was a part of the regiment sent to protect them.\_ He wanted to exercise what authority being a member of the Royal American Regiment conveyed, but suspected by their Irish accents the effort would meet with more than the hostility he had just experienced.

He considered his options, and remembered the clearing. He saw it right at dusk, a few furlongs back. He led the horse back to the clearing, and settled down for the night. Sleeping in the open was not novel to him, though in those times he was accompanied by several hundred men and muskets with pickets and cannon. He counted himself lucky when his unit was reassigned to New Haven. It was as far from any of their campaigns as he could have expected. He cursed this detail to hunt a fugitive as he fell asleep. He did not understand why a simple murder would result in such a manhunt. They happen with regularity in England.

He woke the next day sore and cold. His horse was content grazing on some nearby grass. Miller made a small fire for warmth. He ate a bit of breakfast. "If I wait another day or two and head back, they will be none the wiser," he said to the horse. "It's not like you would report me. You like this place well enough. None of these people would report to Captain Bethlehem either." It was just

the sort of thing he sorely wanted to do. He suspected that bastard would ask him some silly question like a description of the settlements. "Bethlehem has that glare that read right through you."

He finished breakfast and extinguished the fire. He resaddled the horse and resumed his journey down the path. It was another climb through a mountain down a narrow path. At the bottom of the mountain he crossed a creek. A few minutes later, he stopped. There were several burnt cabins along the path. The path itself was used, but there was no sign of habitation. He looked up at the sun and judged it was barely noon.

"Well, this is the second town. If a many like Biggs came this way, I'd be surprised." He patted his horse. "I know where you can get your supper. Let's go back to Fannett." He turned the horse around.

As they reached the creek, he felt a sharp pain in his chest. He recoiled from the suddenness of it and accidentally pulled on the tether. The horse reared back, dumping him onto the trail.

Miller looked at the source of pain and saw an arrow lodged in his lower right chest, just above where the ribcage starts. He unconsciously screamed. He simultaneously wanted to pull it out or run. While he hesitated, another arrow slammed into his chest, closer to the heart. He tried to run, but his legs lost their ability to move. A third arrow went through the breastbone and into his heart. His legs went out from under him.

He tried to get up, but none of his muscles responded. He wanted to run away, but could not. He rested his head on the path, smelling the earthiness of it. He was tired. The ride made him want to take a nap.

As he faded to semi-consciousness, he felt his head being grabbed and jerked. He could not see the face, but the hair was long. He imagined it was a beautiful woman cradling his head. She combed his hair with a very sharp comb. He fell asleep.

**November 21, N.S 1763.** Ephraim wiped his brow. The long day's work had taken its toll. Not as much as it had the first few weeks, but enough to assure him he would sleep well tonight. He grinded from apprentice into journeyman at his father's smithy from the age of seven to seventeen. He knew his way around the shop. Had he kept at it, he would have become a master by 21.

It was grueling work, and his father wanted him to follow Jeffry's lead and become an attorney. This despite Jeffry's insistence that he study in Philadelphia, hoping to enter into Dr. Franklin's society.

The last thing Ephraim wanted was apprentice to an attorney. He refused. For years his father continued the pressure for Ephraim to not become a smith. All the while, he toiled at the forge. Years of persistence paid off. Ephraim agreed to enter the ministry. It took a few years to prepare, but by seventeen he was admitted to Yale College. Over the past three years, he filled his mind with divinity, and his muscles weakened.

O'Brien daily reminded Ephraim why he should have stayed at Yale. Not that he could under the circumstances. He would not be welcome in Connecticut ever again. He put that out of his mind and finished cleaning the shop.



The sun was nearly set and he had not finished. It had been this way for weeks. He only got rest on Sundays, and spent most of his time then asleep. O'Brien was getting the most out of the bargain that he could. Ephraim's income was limited to sleeping in the loft and foot from O'Brien's table.

Taking a short break Ephraim looked out to the road that led back to Shippensburg. He saw a man walking, followed by a beautiful black horse on its tether. The horse limped on its front left leg. Ephraim sighed. It would be nightfall before he finished.

He walked toward the man, shortening the distance. "Your horse. Bit of a limp?" His voice strained to speak though a dry mouth.

"I rode him across a stream a couple miles back. He slipped, and he's been limping since." The man was curt, his accent clearly English.

Ephraim took the lead and led the horse toward the shop's lamp. Inspecting, he saw a piece of stone caught in the hoof. He patted the horse gently as he set the leg back. He picked a pair of pliers off the workbench. He returned to the horse and lifted the leg. The horse started to shuffle. "He's worried. Calm him?"

The stranger moved up to the horse's head and stroked him. The horse settled. Ephraim grabbed the stone with the pliers and gently pulled. The stone was wedged in worse than it looked. He shifted and braced the leg more firmly and tried with more muscle. After a couple minutes, the stone came out.

Ephraim looked at the stone. It was flat and narrow, the sort of shale that everything seemed to be made out of. He held it up to the rider. "Pretty big piece. He's a tough one to walk as far as he did." He dropped the stone and inspected the hoof. There was only slight damage.

"Whoever shod your horse did a fine job. If you can manage to stay off of him for a few days, he should be fine. If you have to ride him, take it easy. Maybe wade across with him if you have to cross another stream?"

The rider pursed his lips. "Sure. How much?"

Ephraim shook his head. "No charge."

"Is there somewhere I can rest?"

"There's an old tavern a bit that way. Most people seem to pass here from Shippensburg and go to Getty's ford and stay there."

"How far is that?"

Ephraim shrugged. He turned to O'Brien. "How far to Getty's?"

"Getty's? Why? That's over the mountain."

"Isn't that where people go from Shippensburg?"

"No. Elizabethtown, down in Maryland. That's about another day's ride straight down the road."

"Aren't we in Maryland now?" the rider said.

"Depends on who's asking. The Penns say we're in Pennsylvania. The Calverts say Maryland. Colonel Chambers would prefer we were in Pennsylvania since he holds a land grant from them. That's his." O'Brien pointed at the fort.

The rider studied O'brien and Ephraim. "It sounds like your Irish, old man. And you're American."

"Yes. From Philadelphia. Any reason?"

The rider shook his head. His voice derisive. "I could not imagine anyone working for the Irish. This continent perpetually amazes me."

O'brien closed on the rider. "You'd better be off to the tavern now."

Judging from the look of the rider, Ephraim knew if it came to blows between the Irish and English, O'brien would triumph. The scene faintly reminded him of New Haven.

The rider hesitated. "Forgive my manners. No offense intended. It has been a long day."

Ephraim nodded.

The rider touched his hat the way Ephraim had seen redcoats. The rider took the horse's lead and made for the tavern.

"Damned English. No matter where they go, they think they're the master."

"They are of us, for now."

"Aye. I've heard that before. Here is farther from England than Cork, but not far enough."

Ephraim chuckled, agreeing with the sentiment. "We'll have to see what happens when this war ends."

"If the last two are any indication, we'll be in another one by 1780. They seem to happen with every new king. You're young enough to see that one. I won't. It would be great to be rid of the English, but I have no fondness for the French, Spanish or Indian." O'brien sighed. His age showed more than Ephraim had noticed before. "At least there are a bunch of Germans around us. They seem content to be left alone. And the quakers are only trouble for them, not for me." He clapped Ephraim on the shoulder. "Jeffry lad, you've done a fine job. You know your way around a shop nearly as well as I."

"Thank you."

"But you know there's not a lot of work for the both of us."

"Telling me to move on?"

"Not yet. Weather's getting dank. I'll let you stay on through the season."

"You can stay in the loft, and I'll pay you what I can. That should give you enough to press on into Virginia come."

Fast forward a couple weeks when they find new smith hand in Falling Springs. One not returned from the area near Burnt Cabin, PA.

Mook 1 returns to Shippensburg. Reports to Mortimer.

Mortimer decides its the right place. Sends Dorian Mabbott. MOOK-1 and 7 other men to inquire further.

**\*\*November 30 1762\*\*** Ephraim is working in the back of the smithy, when Dorian & Mook-1 shows up asking to talk with Jeffry. Ephraim is immediately suspicious, and climbs the ladder to the loft. When Dorian overhears him asking Chester where he lives, he grabs what few possessions he has and uses a rope to escape through the loft's door to the ground below, obfuscated from the road. He runs into MOOK-2 who is waiting for such a move, and the ensuing fight alerts MOOK-1 and Ephraim runs away. Dorian warns Chester that

they will be back, and he, \_\_MOOK-1\_\_ and others pursue Ephraim. Ephraim steals a horse and gallops away, under pursuit. The race goes until night, with Ephraim fretful that he escaped. He headed into the wilderness. He lets the horse go, hoping it will distract Dorian's team. Hearing their hushed voices, he realizes the hunt is not over.



**Chapter 3**

**Chapter Two - Runaway**



## Chapter 4

# Chapter Three - Technology discovered

He explores the temple, finding the lantern, then weapons, then massive trove.

He finds a way out of the Temple, but the pursuit resumes when he gives away his position.

He shoots the hunting party killing the five of them in rapid succession. Rather than run, he loots the bodies for shoes and uses their arrows to conceal the wounds.

With a makeshift sled, he pulls out his samples and heads to Philadelphia, but he stops by his place in Smithytown, which alerts Mortimer that he is not dead.

Meanwhile, Kariwase discovers the slain warrior party and discovers the ruse, bewildered he tracks Mortimer's sled until he realizes it is leaving their territory.

Reece does something

Mortimer, alerted to Ephraim's return confronts the Smithy, but is thwarted somehow, and has his men resume searching neighboring towns while he goes back to Jeffrey.





## Chapter 5

## Chapter Four - Showing Off

text

Ephraim arrives in Philadelphia and quietly makes himself known to the Sons.

Ephraim dines and arranges demonstration

After a meal, he arranges a rural demonstration of the rifles, but SOLOMON SHARPE reports this to WARREN BOYDELL, who sends word to Mortimer.

Meanwhile, Kariwase meets with Pontiac and receives instructions related to the brewing war.

Mortimer meets with Jeffry and is flustered, accusing him of harboring a fugitive (and of being a coward by not challenging a duel), but when he gets back to his room in the Inn has word from Boydell of Ephraim's location. He hurries back to Philadelphia.

In Philadelphia, Boydell traps Ephraim by having Sharpe entertain Ephraim over dinner.

Meanwhile, Kariwase is involved in a battle fought before Ft. Pitt Siege.



## Chapter 6

# Chapter Five - Trial

In a cell (Research jails in Philadelphia circa 1770), Ephraim sends word to Jeffry asking for help.

Mortimer arrives in Philadelphia and after meeting with Sharp wants to find out about the weapon. They secure the rifle and test it, with Mortimer having a thumb incident.

Ephraim and Mortimer talk about the rifle, and Mortimer tries to get him drunk, only to learn that Ephraim has a high alcohol tolerance. They argue about British authority instead. "Your sentence will be carried out." "I've not been tried yet." "You were in absentia."

Meanwhile, Kariwase involved in another attack somewhere, and we find that he is up-and-coming and very anti-European.

Jeffry arrives in Philadelphia and tries to find a way to help his brother; finding out that Mortimer might let Ephraim free if the Temple's location was revealed. But, Ephraim refuses to help the British.

Meanwhile, news of Pontiac's raids reach Philadelphia, alerting to the need to take action. LOCAL COMMANDER realizes there are insufficient troops to protect the interior, when Boydell mentions the weapons.

This renews pressure to divulge the location, and when confronted about the facts (which he wants to doubt but for Jeffry's fear), Ephraim surrenders the weapon cache's location.



Chapter 7

Chapter Six - Change of Heart



## Chapter 8

## Chapter Seven - Battle of Ft Pitt





## Chapter 9

# Chapter Eight - Denounment

There is cleanup afterward and discussion about the rifles.

Meanwhile, word gets to Boydell who sends a rifle, case of rounds and a lantern to London.

Mortimer and Biggs talk, Biggs agreeing to disappear.

Mortimer & Boydell talk about the need to take what they have and break the Iroquois' back, when Johnson arrives to suggest negotiation. "How can you beat back an entire nation with 16 rifles and a box of bullets?"

Biggs arrives in Charleston, taking up work as a smith. He reviews a drawing what he remembered the rifle looking like.

The Strand brothers retrace their steps to the Temple; grab a bunch of tech and head to Philadelphia.

The technology reaches London, George "this changes everything."



## Chapter 10

### Author's Note

**TBD, 2020** Thank you for reading through to the end. I originally wrote and released *Bellicose* with no professional editing in 2013. I didn't know if anyone would want to read it. If you've seen the Amazon feedback before 2020, the story was decent but the editing lacking. While I started a revision in 2017, I let life get in the way—a new house, more education, work, family. I even started a new series hoping Bophendze could get some rest. He takes a lot of abuse to go from being a kid to a marine. The other series is an alternate history set in mid-18th Century North America. Let me know if you're interested in reading it?

But, Bophendze and Smee insisted on telling their story. This time I'm coming back with solid editing. I removed Smee's back story. It's now a short story you get when you sign up to the newsletter. I added Pijemio's storyline because a friend said the Navy didn't get fair billing. And, I added a hook for the next Bophendze adventure *Luctation*.

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subtitle: "Strand Series: Book 1"
# =====
# Other titles by the author
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<!-- Synopsis: Biggs the rebel discovers advanced weaponry that he wants to use against the British when he is confronted with Pontiac's War.

Summary: Biggs is a former clergy who turned rabid anti-British patriot. He shows up at his brother's door while being pursued by Hunter, and flees when he finds his brother is Loyalist and turned him in, only to be chased by Indians and falls into a pit where he discovers advanced weaponry. He tries to smuggle the weapons back to his Sons of Liberty friends only to be exposed by a mole within the organization and sentenced to be hanged. Before the sentence could be carried out, Pontiac's War erupts and distracts the British, and Biggs decides to help the British against the Indians by giving up the weaponry which requires sneaking past the Indians and then lifting the siege.

- Biggs
- Biggs' brother
- Hunter
- British commander
- Pontiac

- King George 3

#### #### Act 1

1. Raining, Bigg's shows up at his brother's door feverish and looking for aid.
2. A few days later, Biggs is recovered (tinkers with brother's son's toy)
3. Biggs discovers his brother is a Loyalist when they argue.
4. Biggs agrees to leave, heading to a new town to be a smith.
5. Hunter shows up at brother's door and coerces Brother to give Biggs away.
6. Biggs learns Hunter is looking for him, barely gives him the slip. Heads into Ohio
7. Hunter pursues Biggs into Ohio, decides to back off when barely evade Indians (watched by Biggs)
8. Biggs frying pan to fire, tries to follow Hunter out of wilderness without being caught
9. Indians pick up on Biggs' trail, debate whether bigger War at risk. Decide to kill both Biggs & Hunter, split party
10. Biggs prepares to cross stream, attacked by Indians and narrowly escapes.
11. Hunter's party attacked by Indians, Hunter narrowly escapes (heroic fight)
12. Biggs' pursuit rejoined and he slips into a sinkhole, passes out.
13. Indians decide he will not come out of the hole, and leave to join Hunter's pursuit.
14. Biggs leg broken, pain, splint, etc.
15. Biggs' Temple Discovery "This changes everything"

#### #### Act 2

16. Biggs decides to get a few weapons to the Sons of Liberty.
17. Tries to slip past the Indians, kills them with his new rifle, and tries to stage a fake fratricide.
18. Biggs gets back to his home, cleans up and leaves for Philadelphia
19. Gets to Philadelphia, contacts Sons of Liberty
20. Indians attack first fort.
21. Dinner with Sons of Liberty, shows them rifle, scoffing. Discusses indian attack & staging the fratricide scene.
22. Mole informs on Biggs.
23. Takes rifle out to backwoods and demonstrates to Sons of Liberty
24. Biggs captured with other prominent Sons on return.
25. ...
26. Biggs question about rifle & refuses
27. ...
28. Show trial, discover Hunter's death claimed "staged"
29. ...
30. Biggs to be hanged "This changes everything"

#### #### Act 3

31. ...
32. Brother pleads leniency if Biggs will give up weapons even by craft
33. Biggs & brother discuss & Biggs discovers brother trying to give him up.
34. ...
35. ...
36. ...
37. ...
38. ...
39. ...
40. ...
41. ...
42. ...
43. ...
44. ...
45. Learn about Pontiac's siege of Ft. Pitt.
- #### Act 4
46. ...
47. ...
48. ...
49. ...
50. ...
51. ...
52. ...
53. ...
54. ...
55. ...
56. ...
57. ...
58. ...
59. Biggs' mock hanging
60. King George informed about Pontiac's defeat and shown a rifle and light. "This changes everything" ->

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