

Executive Powers: Revolutionary War



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Preface

This is a work in progress. Please let me know if you have comments on the current draft, especially regarding critiques and/or places where the writing is not particularly smooth.

Further information regarding the references made throughout the book can be found in the companion text located at <https://samspiro.xyz/bookFF.pdf>.

If I sent you this, I emphasize you are under **no obligation to read any of this**. For those that do choose to read, I hope you enjoy!

Preamble

Dropping the Bomb

Huntress Thompson stared outside her office window with a sense of fear and loathing.

Once again, her idiotic editors had rejected her newest piece, saying it was too raw, too edgy, too `self-centered.'

Well, of course it was!

The people were sick and tired of reading the same bland stories day after day. They wanted something new. Something spicy. Something to keep them at the edge of their seats!

One of these days, Thompson was going to find a story so powerful, even her eggheaded editors would be blown away! And when she did, she wasn't going to just sit back and watch from the sidelines. No, she was going to be right there, smack dab in the middle of the action!

Suddenly, Thompson's phone rang out, shattering her concentration. She snarled and grabbed her device.

"What the hell do you want?!" she screamed.

"Oh my," Curtis Vonnegut said with a chuckle, "it sounds like somebody got another rejection."

Thompson clenched her fists.

"I'm hanging up!"

"Wait, wait, wait," Vonnegut pleaded. "I wanted to get your opinion on my newest idea for a novel I'm writing."

Thompson raised an eyebrow, but said nothing.

"The story," Vonnegut continued, "centers around a parallel universe similar to our own. For example, its characters are all based off of historical figures from our world, but with different names, backstories, and even genders."

Thompson rolled her eyes.

"If I wanted to read about history," she said with a snort, "I'd read a damn history book."

"But that's not all!" Vonnegut exclaimed with enthusiasm. "The biggest difference is that, unlike in our world, no one in this parallel universe has any Powers, nor Executive Powers! They're all just ordinary folks, living ordinary lives."

Thompson scratched her chin.

"A world without Powers...without Executive Powers?"

"Exactly!" Vonnegut remarked. "So...what do you think?"

Thompson looked to the horizon.

"...I think..., " she spoke softly, "I think, that a world...like...that..."

Thompson slowed her speech as she took sight of a strange, mushroom shaped cloud blossoming in the distance.

“What...the...?”

Before she could finish, a massive shockwave slammed into her building, shattering its windows and tossing Thompson to the floor.

“Hello?” Vonnegut asked worriedly. “Are you there, Thompson?! What just happened?”

Thompson rubbed her head, then looked back at what remained of the mysterious cloud.

Without listening to Vonnegut’s words, Thompson calmly grabbed her phone and placed it to her ear.

“...I think...” she said, wiping a streak of blood off her forehead before giving a mischievous grin. “I think, that a world without Powers wouldn’t be half as fun as ours is!”

Thompson hung up her phone and sprinted full speed down the hall. As she ran, Thompson cleared her throat and shouted at the top of her lungs.

“Power: Gonzo Journalism!”

Instantly, a tall, lanky figure with a camera for a head materialized by her side.

“What’s up boss?” The cameraman asked as it ran besides her.

“I don’t know Gonzo, but whatever it is...” she said with as grin, “...it’s definitely a scoop!”

The two of them made it to the roof’s helipad, then quickly jumped into the copter before flying off in the direction of the strange cloud. After setting their course, Thompson activated her Power again, summoning a second Gonzo to take control of the wheel.

A few minutes later, Thompson nodded to the first Gonzo as she adjusted her bucket hat and yellow-tinted glasses. Gonzo raised three fingers...then two...one...

“Hello Baltimore!” Thompson shouted into her mic. “This is Huntress Thompson, reporting live from the air! Moments ago, our city was hit by a titanic shockwave! Was this a natural disaster? A new weapon? Or maybe the aftermath of a bloody battle between two Presidents? Well, we’re here today to find out.”

Thompson shifted to the side, revealing a massive crater behind her.

“Below,” she continued, “we’ve discovered where the shockwave most likely originated from. Preliminary calculations suggest that this crater is about 300 feet deep with a radius of 1200 feet. Moreover—”

“Woah, woah, woah!” Gonzo pointed his camera to the edge of the crater, “there’s something down there!”

Thompson turned, then spotted a blazing light flickering at the edge of the crater. She gave a sly grin.

“...take us down, Gonzo!”

“Uhhhh, I’d rather not...” Gonzo spoke nervously. “I think I’m getting the fear...”

“Nonsense!” she shouted back. “We came here to figure out what happened here! And you must realize,” she pointed to the light, “that we’ve found the main nerve!”

“I know,” Gonzo shook his head, “that’s what gives me the fear...”

Reluctantly, Gonzo lowered the copter down. Before he could finish landing, Thompson jumped out of the vehicle and sprinted fullspeed towards the light.

The glow faded as she approached, and from within it, a large man with short gray hair and circular glasses stepped forward.

“Greetings!” the man exclaimed as the last of the light faded around him. “Are you with local or national news?”

Thompson blinked.

“Uhh...local?”

The man maintained his smile, but he was clearly disappointed.

“Oh well,” he shrugged, “it will get there soon enough. Are you rolling now?”

Thompson hesitantly nodded her head.

“Excellent!” The man cleared his throat. “My fellow Americans...”

The man raised the back of his hand, causing Thompson to release an audible gasp.

“A Presidential Seal...?!” Thompson whispered to herself as she stared at the symbol of a bald eagle inscribed within a circle of stars.

“...my name is Henry S. Truman,” the man continued, “a President of our great nation. And the destruction you see here...” he gestured to the massive crater behind him, “...is a result of my Executive Power: The Manhattan Project.”

Thompson paused, taking in the weight of his words.

“...and what exactly do you want?” she asked nervously.

Truman nodded with a heavy sigh.

“As it stands, our nation is being torn apart by the constant clashes between Presidents and their Parties. Heck, we’re practically on the brink of a second Civil War. As a President, I know this is bad, and I’ve come here today with the hope of putting an end to all of these pointless feuds.”

He looked off into the distance.

“But of course, it is not enough to yearn for peace. We must work for it, and if necessary...” Truman grinned, “...fight for it!”

“...fight for it?” Thompson asked.

“Exactly!”

Truman raised his arms, transforming his friendly grin into a viscous smile.

“In order to form a more perfect union, insure domestic tranquility, and to secure the blessings of liberty!” he exclaimed, “I am declaring the establishment of a grand tournament that will decide once and for all: which President stands as the greatest of all time?!”

Truman stared expectingly at Thompson.

“...please...tell us more?” she spoke hesitantly.

Truman raised three fingers.

“This experiment shall be organized by a trinity of Presidents, consisting of myself, Bill Taft, and Ruth Hayes...” he raised another finger, “it will take place at this very spot, four months from today, on Tuesday, November 4th.” He drew a sly grin. “I’m also very pleased to announce that we already have four notable Presidents lined up to take part...”

Truman lowered his fingers one at a time, lingering his voice on each name as he spoke.

“Theo Roosevelt...Gabe Lincoln...Tanya Jefferson...and Jordan Washington...”

Thompson’s eyes widened.

“All of Rushmore!”

“Exactly...” Truman said as he stared directly into Gonzo’s camera. “So, my fellow Presidents, I sincerely hope you’ll join me for what is sure to be...a Revolutionary War!”

Thompson stood dumbstruck for a second, then waved her arms.

“C-cut!” she exclaimed.

Gonzo’s light flicked off, ending the broadcast. Immediately, Truman let loose a heavy sigh.

“Welp,” he said with a noticeably thicker Missouri accent than before, “the die is cast!”

He turned to Thompson.

“Say, do you mind if I catch a ride back with you?” he said chuckling to himself. “It seems my car didn’t quite survive the blast.”

“...uhh, yeah, sure...” she replied automatically, her brain still in a daze.

Thompson continued staring blankly, her eyes fixed on Truman, then suddenly shook out her head.

Jesus, what was she doing?!

The golden opportunity she had always dreamed of was standing right in front of her! Was she really just going to stand here and let this once in a lifetime chance slip by?

Thompson gritted her teeth, then slapped herself hard across the face, startling Truman.

“You can come with us!” Thompson shouted, regaining her former sense of composure, “on one condition!” She pointed to herself with a snarl. “I get to be the MC of this tournament!”

Truman gave an icy stare at Thompson, then let loose a hearty laugh.

“Man alive!” he said with a snort, “you’ve got gumption, I’ll give you that much!”

Truman gave Thompson a friendly pat; the force of his playful slap nearly toppling her over.

“I’ll have to run it by Taft and Hayes first,” he said with a grin, “but as far I’m concerned, you’ve got the job!” Truman looked out, then pointed back to the helicopter. “Now then, what sort of model do you have there?”

With that, Truman jaunted to the vehicle, leaving Thompson and Gonzo trailing behind.

“...Gonzo...” Thompson spoke up.

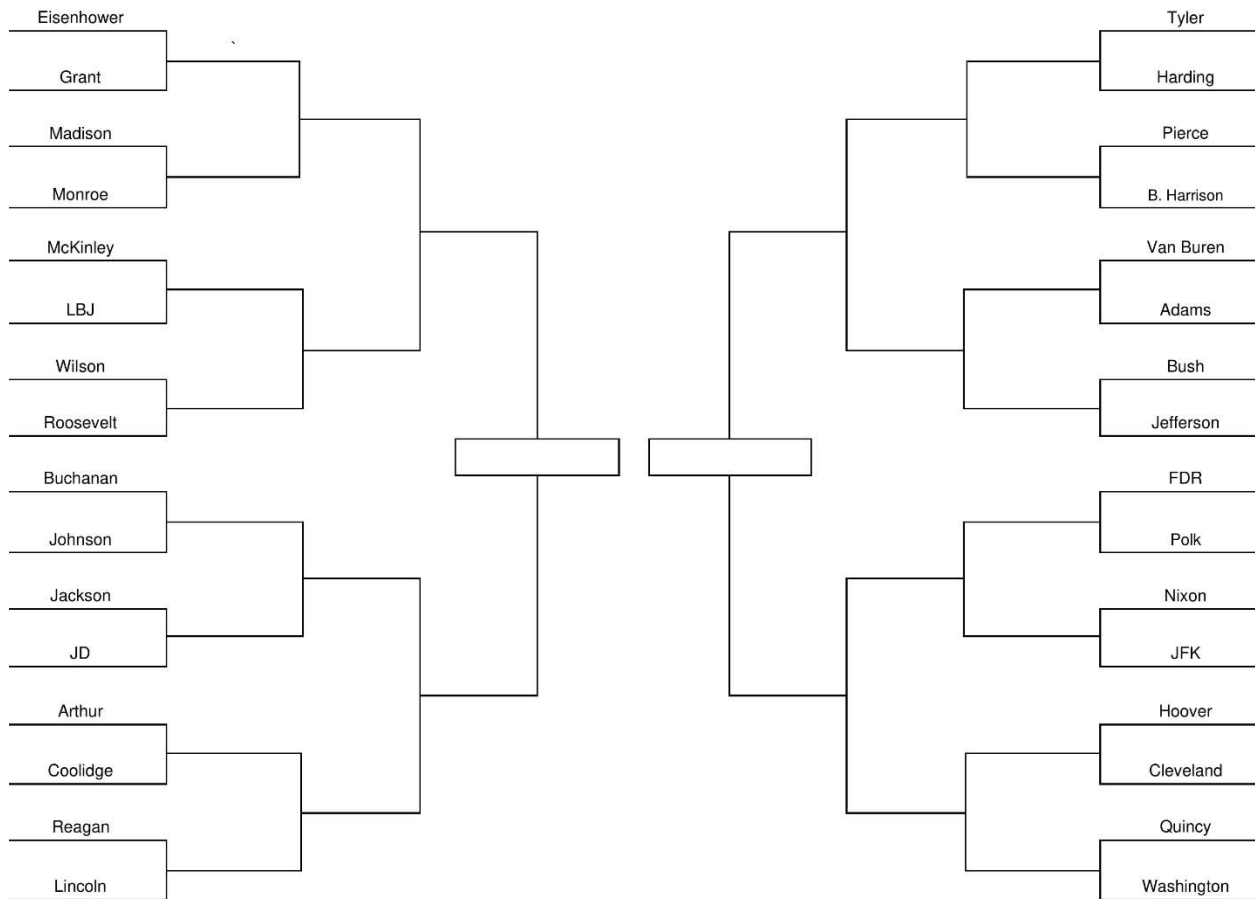
“Yeah boss?”

“I have a lot of questions right now...” she said while looking at the mysterious man geeking out over their news helicopter. “...the first one being...” she said scratching her head, “...is who the hell is Henry Truman?”

* * * * *

Over the next few months, dozens of Presidents would reach out to join in Truman’s Revolutionary War. Then, on the eve of November 3rd, the fateful bracket was released for the world to see...

The Bracket



Block R:

[The Supreme Commander] Deedee Eisenhower vs [The Hero of Appomattox] Odysseus Grant.
 [The Sage of Montpelier] Jamie Madison vs [The Heir of Good Feelings] Jane Monroe.
 [The Napoleon of Protection] Will McKinley vs [Landslide Landon] LBJ.
 [The Professor] Willow Wilson vs [The Man in the Arena] Theo Roosevelt.

Block L:

[10-Cent Jimmy] Jim Buchanan vs [The Tennessee Tailor] Andre Johnson
 [Old Hickory] Andrea Jackson vs [The Masked Fighter] JD
 [The Gentleman Boss] Charles Arthur vs [Silent Cal] Callie Coolidge
 [The Platinum Star] Ronda Reagan vs [The Rail Splitter] Gabe Lincoln

Block J:

[The Presidential Killer] Johnny Tyler vs [The Harmonizer] Wanda Harding
 [Handsome Hank] Hank Pierce vs [The Human Iceberg] Benny Harrison
 [The Little Magician] Martina Van Buren vs [The Colossus of Independence] Johan Adams
 [The Timberwolf] Jorge Bush vs [The Apostle of Democracy] Tanya Jefferson

Block W:

[The Sphinx] FDR vs [Young Hickory] Jade Polk

[The King of Camelot] JFK vs [Tricky Dick] Dixie Nixon

[The Great Humanitarian] Hera Hoover vs [The Beast of Buffalo] Gregory Cleveland

[The Madman from Massachusetts] Quincy Adams vs [[The American Cincinnatus] Jordan
Washington

Day 1: The First Branch

Two Star Generals

Huntress Thompson weaved her motorcycle through the crowded lines of traffic. It was hard for her to believe that just four months ago, all of these streets had been nothing more than dirt.

But now? Families ate burgers alongside thugs with cigars; saxophonists jammed next to workers putting up walls; and arms dealers peddled their wares in front of fanatics screaming about religion.

The city was pure chaos, and Thompson loved every second of it.

She continued forward a bit longer, then skidded to a halt as she hit the town's center. She got off her ride, then stared in wonder at the giant marble coliseum before her.

"Hey you!" an agent in black shouted at her, "you're not allowed to park here!"

Thompson smirked.

"Listen up, chump," she said raising her badge in front of him, "I'm Huntress Thompson, VIP!"

The Secret Service agent checked her ID, then gave her a sour look.

"You were supposed to be here half an hour ago."

"Oh yeah?" Thompson asked sarcastically. "Well, sue me!"

The agents rolled his eyes, then grabbed his walkie-talkie.

"Huntress Thompson is at gate 7; requesting teleportation."

Thompson tilted her head.

"Requesting wha—?"

She blinked, suddenly finding herself inside a large room with a clear glass panel at its front. She stepped forward, looking out through the window.

"Hot dog..." she muttered to herself as she stared at the Coliseum's arena below her. "So this is the commentary box, eh?"

"Ehem," someone coughed from behind.

Thompson turned around, then noticed a pianist seated behind her.

"You ready?" the man asked.

Thompson grinned and shot a thumbs up.

The pianist nodded his head, then slowly started to play.

The music rang quietly at first, then increased in volume as the rambunctious crowd took notice of the sound playing across the stadium speakers. At the same time, the cameras throughout the arena turned and pointed at Thompson.

"Good morning everybody!" Thompson shouted, "and welcome, to the Revolutionary War!"

The crowd let loose a torrent of screams.

“For those that don’t know,” she continued, “I’m Huntress Thompson, your master of ceremonies!” She threw out her arm. “Helping me out this week with the technical analysis for our fights, we have the man who made this event possible...”

The music suddenly crescendoed, then ended with the pianist slamming his hands across the keys. The man rose from his seat, revealing their face to the crowd.

“Hello!” Truman spoke out to the crowd, “Today, the entire world...”

“Just a minute, Henry,” Thompson spoke while holding the mic away from her, “let me introduce you first.”

Despite the distance, Thompson’s mic ended up broadcasting her message across the stadium, which incited a wave of good hearted laughs throughout the crowd. She let out an embarrassed cough.

“Anyways,” she continued, “joining me today is [The Man from Independence], Henry Shipp Truman!”

The crowd erupted in cheers.

“Henry S. Truman,” he corrected, then turned back to the crowd. “Today, the entire world shall be looking to America for enlightened leadership towards peace and progress. It is my duty to find this leadership, and I shall not shirk from it!”

The crowd gave another round of applause.

“Beautiful stuff, Truman,” Thompson spoke up, “now let’s get down to brass tacks!”

The stadium screens shifted to a timeline for the rest of the week.

“Our schedule is as follows,” Thompson continued. “We’ll have eight fights during each of the first three days, followed by the quarterfinals on Friday, with both the semifinals and finals taking place on Saturday. Our closing ceremony will be on Sunday, whereupon our fighters shall pledge allegiance to the ultimate winner of the tournament!”

She gestured down to the arena.

“To help referee our fights, we’re proud to have the only man in the world who’d rather be judge than President! Give it up for [The Big Chief], Bill Taft!”

At that, the giant Taft walked into the arena with a jolly grin, his hands holding a massive war hammer serving as his gavel.

“Now, as you may have noticed,” Thompson continued, “we have Secret Service agents stationed throughout the stadium in order to make sure nothing here goes awry. Leading these soldiers is a real master when it comes to quelling riots and removing uninvited guests! Let’s hear it for [Ruth the Forgotten], Ruth Hayes!”

In the stands, Hayes waved her right arm together with what remained of her left; the heavy scars covering her body on full display.

“And we must emphasize,” Truman continued, “that while we’ve taken every precaution possible to protect our spectators, we are not able to guarantee your safety. Those who are concerned may safely watch all of our matches from the televisions stationed throughout the stadium, as well as those spread throughout the town. And for those who choose to stay with us...” he grinned, “...get ready for the ride of your lives!”

“Alright, enough with the foreplay already!” Thompson shouted, “let’s move on to the action!”

The crowd roared.

“We’re starting things off here with a banger!” she continued. “It’s a match featuring two of the greatest commanders the world has ever seen! We may never know who’s the better general, but we’re about to find out who’s the better fighter!”

She gestured to the arena.

“Coming from the Western entrance, we have a warrior who’s fought around the world! She’s trained countless soldiers during her military career, as well as generations of students as head of Columbia! If you ask anyone what they think about her, the answer is invariably the same: I, like, her! Now let’s hear it for [The Supreme Commander], Deedee Eisenhower!”

Suddenly, a tank rolled into the arena. The crowd paused for a moment, then erupted with cheers as Eisenhower popped out of the tank’s hatch wearing her signature wool field jacket and peaked visor cap. Her clothes were covered in stripes and medals, with a circle of five stars placed squarely atop her shoulders.

She waved to the crowd, then pulled herself out of the tank and grabbed the barrel of its gun. She lifted upward, tearing the head clean off its body.

The tank rolled back as Eisenhower walked forward, carrying the tank head with her to the center of the arena.

“Jesus Christ!” Thompson exclaimed, “Looks like Eisenhower is planning to use that tank head as her freaking weapon! We haven’t even started the fight and I’m already getting goosebumps!”

“Don’t get too excited now,” Truman said rolling his eyes. “Eisenhower’s an okay general, but she doesn’t know any more about fighting than a pig knows about Sunday.”

“Ouch!” Thompson said while pretending to flinch, “I take it you two aren’t on the best of terms?”

Truman gave a sly smile.

“No comment.”

“Anyways,” Thompson continued, “coming from the Eastern entrance, we have the second in command of the National Union Party! He carries the reputation as a butcher, but in reality, he’s just a gentle soul who can’t stand the slight of blood! But don’t think for a second he’s a pushover! No, this man won’t ever stop fighting until he’s obtained complete and unconditional surrender! He’s [The Hero of Appomattox], Odysseus S. Grant!”

"There's no S..." Grant mumbled to himself as he made his way to the arena. He walked in wearing a plain blue army outfit together with a well-worn silk hat and a pair of muddy boots. Behind him, Grant dragged a large, lumpy bag into the arena.

Grant reached the stadium's center and opened the bag, releasing a stockpile of weapons onto the ground. He adjusted his hat, then carefully picked up a gun from the pile.

"This was Calvin's pistol," he spoke softly. "He died in our final fight against Lee before he had the chance to fire a single shot..."

Grant gently placed the pistol back down before grabbing a nearby sword.

"This one was Benjamin's," he continued. "He was a valiant soldier, slain on that terrible night of Johnson's betrayal." Grant shook his head and placed the weapons back down. "I've lost a lot of soldiers on my watch..." He said looking to Eisenhower. "...and I will not let a single one of their deaths be in vain."

He thrust his arms to the side.

At that, the weapons surrounding Grant rose into the air. Suddenly, a gun slammed into Grant's arm, followed by a sword, then another weapon, and another. Before long, each of Grant's arms were covered by a mass of weapons in the form of two giant, metallic, weaponized arms.

"Executive Power," Grant spoke quietly but decisively, "Union Army; To Arms."

Taft glanced at the two fighters while maintaining his jolly smile.

"Are both of you feeling about ready to start?"

The fighters gave a pair of silent nods.

"Excellent!"

Instantly, Taft replaced his happy smile with an icy glare.

"Oh man!" Thompson shouted, "looks like Taft's getting serious!"

"He's typically an easy-going guy," Truman grinned, "but not when it comes to judging."

Taft breathed out, then raised his gavel into the air. "Let the first match..." he said as he slammed his hammer down, "begin!!"

Tanks

Grant pointed his arms forward.

"Union Army," he shouted, "21 Gun Salute!"

As Grant spoke, dozens of rifles extended out of his weaponized hands, then fired in quick succession. Eisenhower placed her tank head in front of her, blocking the shots, then charged forward, crashing into Grant with the force of a moving train.

Grant took half a step back from the heavy blow, but no further. He pushed forward, shoving Eisenhower off of him, then thrust his hand towards her.

Eisenhower stepped back, barely dodging his attack. She smirked for half a second, then dropped her smile as a sea of blades shot out of Grant's palms.

Frantically, Eisenhower flung herself back, dodging the blades at the cost of losing her balance. Grant then stepped forward, slamming his fist into Eisenhower and flinging her body halfway across the arena.

In the air, Eisenhower calmly twisted her body around, landing on her feet with perfect poise.

"You know," Eisenhower spoke out, "In spite of the many bitter criticisms I've read about you, my respect for you has always been high...I'm certain you're one of the greatest generals America has ever had, if not its greatest."

Eisenhower tightened her grip, then widened her smile.

"That being said," she continued, "I've got people counting on me...and I'm not going to let them down!"

* * * * *

Years ago, a bugle blared across Camp Meade, rousing its soldiers awake. The troops eagerly shot out of bed, ready to greet the day with the guidance of their beloved commander.

"Good morning soldiers!" a young Eisenhower shouted to her troops.

"Good morning ma'am!" The soldiers shouted back.

Eisenhower smiled as she looked across her line, then gave a slight frown.

"Where's Fitzgerald?"

Someone pointed to a solitary figure underneath a green light by the docks.

"He's working on his novel again."

Eisenhower shook her head with a smile.

"I'll allow it this time," she said playfully, "but only because we've got such good news from headquarters." She gave a toothy grin to her soldiers. "Pack your bags boys, we're taking a trip to Europe!"

"...wait a minute," a soldier responded with glee, "does that mean we're finally going off to war?"

"You're damn right we are!" she replied.

The soldiers let out hoops of joy as they exchanged high fives, a few of them even breaking into tears.

"Now, don't start crying on me yet," Eisenhower said with a grin. "Because I still have one more piece of news to tell you!"

"I knew it!" a soldier said with a groan, "there's always bad with the good!"

"It does seem that way now, doesn't it?" Eisenhower said with a chuckle. "Heck, you all joined the Tank Corp hoping to take control of the army's greatest weapon, only to find out we didn't have any tanks!"

"That's alright, ma'am!" a soldier exclaimed. "You helped us put together those makeshift ones!"

"That I did," Eisenhower said as she looked across the row of trucks with machine guns strapped to their backs. "Sadly," she continued, "we'll be discontinuing our makeshift models starting today."

The soldiers let out a moan.

"Because..." Eisenhower continued with a grin, "we've gotten our hands on a real one!"

At that, a tank rolled onto the field. The soldiers let out screams of joy as they rushed towards it, none of them waiting for Eisenhower to officially dismiss them.

Eisenhower let out a smile, then looked back to their deployment orders.

"November 18th..." she spoke to herself.

That was that the day they'd head to Europe; the day Eisenhower would finally achieve her dream of fighting in a real war.

Then, on November 11th, the war together with Eisenhower's dream came to a sudden halt.

A few days after that, Eisenhower found herself quenching her sorrow at the army's grand victory celebration.

"I tell you," she lamented to a nearby friend, "we're going to spend the rest of our lives explaining why we didn't get into this damn war..."

She downed her drink, then got up to grab another. As she rose, she bumped into a large man carrying a pitcher of beer.

"Oye!" the man shouted as he spilled the drink over himself, "watch where you're going!"

"You could do the same..." Eisenhower spoke under her breath.

"Excuse me?!" the man stepped forward. "I'll have you know this uniform you just ruined costs over \$250!"

"Good to know," she said rolling her eyes, "feel free to send me the bill."

"Oh, I don't think you understand!" the man snarled. "Willingly destroying army property is a federal crime...one worthy of a court martial!"

Eisenhower stared blankly.

"You're not serious...are you?"

The man gave an evil grin.

"I hope you enjoyed the fights you had during the war," he continued, "because they're the last fights you'll ever have in this army!"

The man let out a cackle as Eisenhower stood still, trying in vain to keep her anger in check.

"Well," she muttered as she took a step forward, "if I'm going to get court martialled anyways..."

"Wait just a moment," a quiet voice called out from the crowd.

Eisenhower and the man turned to see an older officer approaching the two of them.

"I apologize for the intrusion," the officer said to the man, "but I think it would be best for all of us if you dropped this little affair."

"Little affair?!" the man snarled and pointed to himself. "I'll have you know that I'm Inspector General Elliot Helmick, and an insult against me is an insult against the entire US Army! So why don't you..."

Helmick turned his finger to the officer, then stopped as the officer calmly grabbed his wrist.

"And I'll have you know," the officer replied softly, "that I'm General Dox Conner." Conner slowly lowered Helmick's hand, bringing him to his knees. "And this woman you just threatened is one of my most valued subordinates."

"Conner..." Helmick's eyes widened. "*The* Dox Conner?!"

Helmick glanced at Eisenhower, then back to Conner

"Uhh, well," Helmick said clearing his throat, "seeing as you're a proper authority, I'll leave the punishment of this soldier for her offenses in your capable hands."

At that, Helmick quickly scurried back into the crowd.

"Thanks a ton, Conner," Eisenhower said letting out a sigh, "you really saved my hide this time!"

"Saved you?" he said with a knowing grin, "why, I've just been told I have to punish you."

Eisenhower gave a nervous laugh.

"But it'll be a light punishment...right?"

"Oh no," Conner shook his head with a smile, "I expect it to be quite severe."

With that, Conner pointed a finger dramatically at Eisenhower.

"As your commanding officer," he spoke defiantly, "I order you to come train with me down in Panama."

Eisenhower blinked.

"Are you serious?" she asked, barely able to contain her joy.

“Don’t get too excited,” Conner said wagging his finger. “After your hell week with me, I’ll be sending you to learn martial arts from Pershing in France, diplomacy from MacArthur in the Philippines, and leadership from Marshall back in the States.”

“Th-thank you sir,” Eisenhower stammered. “But...but why do all this for me?”

“Because you’ve got talent,” he spoke matter of factly, “and by God, it’d be a loss for the nation if you never got a chance to show your stuff on the field of battle.”

He placed a hand on her shoulder and gave a warm smile.

“I’m counting on you to do great things for this country,” he continued, “and I order you not to disappoint me.”

Eisenhower smiled and gave a sharp salute.

“I won’t let you down sir!”

On the ride back home, Eisenhower daydreamed about her forthcoming training marathon. She continued thinking this way right up until her car suddenly dipped into a muddy ditch and stalled.

Eisenhower dropped her smile and shook out her head.

“I swear,” she remarked as she got out and started pushing her car, “if there’s one danger this country faces, it’s the lack of quality roads!”

* * * * *

In the present, Eisenhower raised her arm into the air

“Executive Power,” she shouted, “Interstate Highway System!”

As she spoke, a grid of miniature roads spread across the grounds of the arena.

Grant raised an eyebrow.

“Interesting,” he remarked as he calmly kicked the road beside his feet.

“Now get ready...”

Grant looked up with astonishment to see Eisenhower suddenly in front of him.

“For my massive retaliation!”

Interstate Highway System

Eisenhower slammed her tank head forward, throwing Grant back.

Grant started to regain his balance, only for Eisenhower to once again instantly appear before him with her tank head raised.

Without hesitation, Grant slammed his fist forward. The two attacks landed against their opponents, flinging each of them back.

Eisenhower hopped backwards, rubbing her wounded head.

“Hot dang!” she shouted. “Anyone else in that situation would have retreated for sure! But you?” She let out a laugh. “You went for a damn counter!”

Grant shrugged his shoulders.

“Retreating was never my style,” he replied gruffly.

“Agreed,” Eisenhower crouched down. “I say, if you’re going to use force...use overwhelming force!”

At that, Eisenhower shot forward, sprinting across her road with insane levels of acceleration.

“That speed...!” Grant hastily raised his arms, narrowly blocking Eisenhower’s high velocity strike, “so that’s how you appeared so quickly!”

“Roger that,” Eisenhower said as she pushed off of Grant. “I gain a speed boost whenever I run along the roads from my EP.” She gave a taunting grin. “And I’m sorry to tell you, but my roads won’t do anything for you!”

Grant snorted.

“Fine by me,” he spoke as he readied his stance, his left foot placed squarely on Eisenhower’s road.

In the stands, a towering figure with a stovepipe hat nodded his head.

“Yes, that’s quite alright,” Gabe Lincoln mused to himself, “now that Grant knows the roads don’t affect him, he has no need to worry about where he places his feet.”

“I swear,” a voice called from behind, “both you and Grant put far too much trust in the words of your opponents.”

Lincoln looked back behind him, but saw no one there. Then, a dark figure slowly emerged out of the shadows.

“And that weakness,” Dixie Nixon continued, “shall be Grant’s undoing.”

Back in the arena, Grant charged forward with his fist raised. Eisenhower grinned, remaining perfectly still while Grant threw out his punch.

Suddenly, Grant’s left-side jerked backwards, causing his attack to whiff. At the same time, Eisenhower raised her weapon.

“Fore!”

At that, Eisenhower slammed her tank head hard into her defenseless opponent.

Grant gritted his teeth at the heavy blow, then immediately threw a counter.

Eisenhower smirked.

"I'm not falling for that again!"

As she spoke, Eisenhower shifted unnaturally to the side, causing his attack to miss. She then swung her weapon a second time, landing another critical hit.

Lincoln clicked his tongue.

"Now I get it," he remarked, "her EP doesn't center around speed...but movement!"

Nixon nodded her head.

"Interstate Highway System," Nixon spoke up, "an EP that grants Eisenhower the ability to move objects along her roads. Not only does this give her a speed boost by moving herself forward along the roads, but she can also use her roads to shift out of danger or to throw her opponents off-balance."

"Which is exactly what she did to Grant," Lincoln continued, "after tricking him into think the roads didn't affect him." He shook his head. "I'll admit, I'm surprised. I never thought Eisenhower was the trickster type."

"No one ever does," Nixon said with a smirk. "But she's a far more devious woman than most people realize."

In the arena, Grant slowly rose from the ground.

"...you're strong," he spoke calmly as he steadied himself. "If I hadn't opened the fight with my most defensive form, I'd almost certainly have lost."

He scanned the mesh of roads around the arena.

"But now that I have an understanding of how your EP works," he continued, "I think it's high time I take the offensive."

Eisenhower gave a grin.

"You're saying you've been playing defense up to now?" she asked with a mixture of fear and excitement.

Without replying, Grant's weapons peeled off his arms, dropping to the ground before swarming Grant's legs and lifting him into the air. The mound of weapons twisted and shaped itself beneath Grant, then settled into the form of a large horse with its legs made of swords and its nose a large cannon.

"Executive Power," Grant spoke atop his steed while grabbing its reigns made of chains, "Union Army; Cavalry."

Eisenhower readied her weapon as she looked Grant over.

From what she could tell, Grant's newest form was far more agile than before. However, he wouldn't be able to use its agility to its fullest. Indeed, if he stepped on her roads, even for just a second, she'd throw him off-balance and hit him with a heavy strike; one he wouldn't be able to block with his beefy arms. Yes, Grant would have to tread slowly and carefully, that much she was certain of.

As Eisenhower thought this, Grant stepped forward.

At first, his horse moved with a light trot, carefully avoiding Eisenhower's roads. The trot then turned into a gallop, before finally transforming into a full-blown sprint.

Eisenhower glanced downwards, waiting for his horse to touch her roads. But, to her complete astonishment, the horse narrowly avoided her roads with every step.

"What?!"

Eisenhower shook out her head and hastily raised her guard as Grant came closer. But, just before colliding, Grant's horse suddenly leapt forward and front flipped directly over Eisenhower's head. As the horse nimbly passed over her, it tilted its neck back, aiming its cannon nose directly above Eisenhower's head. The gun fired, detonating its shell on impact.

"Gahh!" Eisenhower screamed in agonizing pain; but she did not fall.

Instead, Eisenhower gritted her teeth and promptly turned around, readying her EP for the moment Grant made his impromptu landing. But, to her shock, the horse hit the ground with its feet once again avoiding her roads.

"That's impossible!" Eisenhower whispered.

Before she could recover her senses, the horse lifted its sword legs, ramming them towards her. Quickly, Eisenhower activated Interstate Highway System, moving her body away just before being skewered, then shifted her body back further to avoid a follow-up attack.

Grant raised an eyebrow.

"Retreating?" he asked sincerely.

Eisenhower gave an annoyed smile.

"Oh, don't you worry about me," she said, cracking her neck, "I have not taken, and shall not take, a single backwards step!"

Cavalry

Eisenhower stuck her hand into the head of her tank.

“Take this!”

She pulled something inside her weapon, causing a shell to fire from the barrel of its gun.

Grant’s horse leapt away from the shot, then fired a blast from its cannon head.

Eisenhower shifted away from the attack using Interstate Highway System, then fired another shot, and another, and another. Again and again, Grant deftly dodged each attack while launching counters of his own and simultaneously avoiding stepping on Eisenhower’s sprawling set of roads.

Nixon solemnly placed a hand to her chin.

“I’ve misjudged Grant,” she remarked, “his fighting abilities are far greater than the rumors had suggested.”

Lincoln gave a proud smile.

“He’s the best fighter I’ve ever commanded,” he replied cheerfully. “He’s strong on the battlefield, and practically invincible on a horse!”

* * * * *

Years ago, Seargent Herschberger stood in front of his graduating class of West Point cadets.

“Before we begin our graduation ceremonies,” Herschberger began, “I thought we could have ourselves a little bit of fun...”

At that, Herschberger strode to the jumping bar, lifted it higher than his head, then turned to the class.

“Cadet Grant!” he barked.

At that, a small cadet stepped forward atop a towering steed. The cadet was a young Odysseus Grant. The horse was York, a ferocious creature known for his terrifying temper. Only two cadets could ride him, and only Grant could ride him well.

Quietly, Grant placed his hand on the beast’s back. The animal took a step forward, then charged straight for the bar. The horse leapt into the air, clearing the bar with plenty of room to spare.

The room erupted in cheers. With ease, Grant had just set a new record for the high jump, one that would stand for another 25 years.

Herschberger gave a smirk. “I can’t follow that! Well done sir; class dismissed!”

Grant dismounted, then noticed Herschberger calling him over.

“That was quite the spectacle there, Grant!”

“York deserves all the credit,” he replied quietly while stroking the horse’s mane.

"In any case," Herschberger said while handing Grant a letter, "this just came for you." He gave a big grin, then patted Grant on the back. "Congratulations son! You've been personally invited to the Mexican front by [Old Rough and Ready] herself!"

At the Mexican border, future President Jacqueline Taylor strode through her camp wearing a plain military uniform.

"Have the new recruits come in yet?" she asked an aide.

"Yes ma'am," they replied.

"Good," she looked over her clipboard, "send Lieutenant Grant to meet me posthaste."

"I'm right here, ma'am."

Taylor stopped walking, then turned to see a short man following just behind her

"...how long have you been back there, soldier?"

Grant shrugged his shoulders.

"...anyways," Taylor waved her hand, "the reason I wanted to speak with you," she said, handing him her clipboard, "was to officially appoint you as quartermaster of our regiment."

Grant looked at the forms, then back to Taylor.

"I'm not sure that's the right position for me, ma'am."

Taylor crossed her arms.

"Are you complaining, soldier?"

"No ma'am," Grant replied sternly, "I'm merely expressing my opinion. I had expected to serve on the front lines. But, if this is the task you assign me, then I shall perform it to the best of my abilities."

Taylor gave a small nod.

"I understand your hesitation," Taylor remarked, "but I assure you, the position of quartermaster is vital to our operations." She pointed to a storage area across camp. "After all, it doesn't matter how brave our soldiers are; they can't fight without weapons, and they can't march without food."

"Of course," Grant agreed, "I completely recognize the role's significance, I'm simply confused as to why I was specifically selected for it."

Taylor chuckled.

"I love my soldiers," she said with a smirk, "but most of them can't count past ten! Needless to say, none of them are qualified to keep accurate counts of our supplies." She looked to Grant. "So, when I heard of a young soldier hoping to become a math professor after his terms of service," she placed a hand on Grant's shoulder, "well, I just knew I had to grab you before anyone else did."

Grant nodded his head.

"Understood. In that case, I—"

Before he could finish, a bullet whizzed past Grant's face.

Calmly, Grant and Taylor turned to see a group of Mexican soldiers charging through camp.

"Take cover!" Taylor shouted as she and Grant jumped behind a neighboring building.

"What's the situation?" a soldier asked her.

Taylor took a quick peek around the barrier.

"We've got them outnumbered," Taylor remarked, "but we don't have enough ammo here to take them out."

"Is there any more ammo in the storage unit?" Grant asked.

Taylor nodded.

"There's a whole stockpile just outside its doors," she replied, "but there's no way to get there without taking fire."

"In that case," Grant said mounting a nearby horse, "there's nothing left to decide: I'm the one in charge of supplying our troops, after all."

Taylor furrowed her brow.

"Don't be a fool," she spoke sternly, "you'll be shot down the moment you're spotted!"

"Don't worry," Grant said as he grabbed the reigns, "I won't be spotted."

Before Taylor could stop him, Grant suddenly ran his horse out of cover and towards the Mexican soldiers.

"Idiot..." Taylor murmured as she closed her eyes, anticipating the inevitable sound of gunfire. But, to her surprise, nothing happened.

Curious, Taylor peeked out from cover, then widened her eyes. Grant's horse was continuing to spring forward, but Grant was nowhere to be seen!

"It's just a mount," a Mexican soldier said as the horse ran past. "Must have gotten spooked by the gunfire."

At that, the Mexican soldiers ignored the beast, but Taylor continued keeping her eyes locked on the creature until it stopped in front of the storage shed.

"My god!" Taylor said as she spotted Grant appearing behind the horse and grabbing a box of ammunition. "That daredevil just rode straight through the battlefield while clinging to the side of his horse!"

After picking up the supplies, Grant turned his horse around and rotated his body to the horse's other side before sprinting back to Taylor.

"Hey..." a Mexican soldier remarked as the steed ran by again, "isn't that the same horse we just saw?"

Another soldier took a closer look, then noticed the flaps of an army uniform rustling underneath the horse's stomach.

"It's the enemy!" he shouted, "fire!"

Quickly, Grant rotated his body back atop the horse.

"It's alright girl," he spoke softly while stroking the horse's mane, "I'll get you through this."

He turned around, looking at the Mexican soldiers just before they open fired.

Grant pulled the reigns, shifting his horse away from their shots, then swiftly rounded the corner to Taylor's side.

"Excellent work, soldier!" Taylor said as she took the ammunition and distributed it to her troops.

"She did all the work," Grant said as he scratched the horse's ears.

"I know you're not planning to stick with the army long term," Taylor remarked as she loaded her rifle, "but you should reconsider...I'd hate to lose a man of your talents."

Grant scratched his chin.

"Me...an army man?"

Grant looked out as the battle around him raged in earnest. His horse trembled at the sound of gunfire, but Grant stroked its back, calming her down.

"I suppose," Grant finally spoke up, "that doesn't sound half bad."

* * * * *

Eisenhower took her hand out of the tank and went back to grabbing its barrel. She charged forward and swung out her weapon.

Grant stepped his horse to the side, dodging the attack. As he moved, firearms sprung out his horse's side and fired. Eisenhower slid along her road, dodging the shots.

"These fighters are way too nimble!" Thompson shouted, "between Grant's horse and Eisenhower's roads, it seems like this fight is in a complete gridlock!"

"It is for now," Truman added, "but this high intensity brawl can't continue forever. Sooner or later, one of them's going to break."

As if on cue, a series of cracks formed across Eisenhower's network of roads, followed by whole sections of roads suddenly dissolving into thin air.

Eisenhower wiped a streak of sweat across her forehead, then hastily slid back as Grant charged towards her.

"You really never stop attacking, do you?" Eisenhower spoke through a forced smile. "Well...I suppose I need to wrap things up myself."

Eisenhower snapped her fingers. At that, the road behind Eisenhower extended up into the air.

“Executive Power!” Eisenhower shouted as she turned around and ran straight up her vertical road, “Interstate Highway System; Space Race!”

She kicked off the road, shooting her body towards Grant with the speed of a comet.

“Now get ready!” she screamed, “for a lesson in three dimensional warfare!”

Grant took half a step a back with his horse, anticipating what would likely be Eisenhower’s final attack. But, as the horse’s foot landed, Grant felt a strange sensation beneath him.

“What the...?” he said as he quickly glanced down, then widened his eyes.

Despite his diligent care with each of his steps, the back feet of Grant’s horse had somehow landed themselves on the edge of Eisenhower’s roads.

Before he could think further, his horse’s legs rapidly shot back along the road.

“So that’s what happened...” Grant grumbled as his steed toppled over, “you pretended like your roads were breaking up because you were running out of steam...but in reality,” he shook his head, “you were just using the extra energy to widen the road directly behind me!”

“Correct!” Eisenhower screamed as she pulled back her weapon. “And despite your gullibility,” she continued, “know that you were without a doubt, one of the strongest opponents I’ve ever had the privilege to face!”

Grant gave a solemn nod.

“You too.”

At that, Grant suddenly pulled his reins, sending his horse’s legs sliding even farther across Eisenhower’s road. The horse then kicked off with its back legs; the combined momentum of Eisenhower’s EP together with Grant’s pull throwing its legs up and around in a tight circle.

Before Eisenhower could react, the horse reached out, intercepting and wrapping its legs around Eisenhower’s airborne body. The horse continued to spin with the added force from Eisenhower’s fall before slamming its legs and Eisenhower hard into the ground.

Eisenhower coughed violently as she hit the floor, then gritted her teeth as she swiftly struggled to free herself from the horse’s iron grip. She started pushing herself free, then looked up in horror to see the horse turn towards her, its cannon nose pointed mere inches across from her face.

The cannon fired, the smoke from its blast covering the two fighters in a cloud of dust.

“Time out!” Taft screamed as he jogged to the center of the arena. He reached the fighters, gave each of them a brief inspection, then nodded his head.

“The match is over!” Taft shouted as he slammed his gavel to the ground.

As he spoke, Grant, got up, brushed dirt off his jacket, then calmly lit a cigar next to his unconscious opponent.

“The winner of the first match,” Taft continued, “is [The Hero of Appomattox], Odysseus S. Grant!”

Democratic Republicans

Eisenhower opened her eyes with a groan. Bright lights shone overhead, and she seemed to be lying on some sort of hospital bed.

"Finally awake?"

Eisenhower looked out to see a woman sitting across from her wearing suspenders and a pair of glasses.

"Wilson?" Eisenhower said rubbing her head, "Where...?" she squinted her eyes, the memories coming back to her. "That's right..." she said quietly, "I lost."

"That you did," Willow Willson said matter of factly, "and in a very pitiful way, I might add." She gave a cruel smile. "Then again, such lackluster performances are to be expected from the head of a second-rate school like *Columbia*."

Eisenhower gave a light snort.

"I appreciate you trying to lift my spirits by channeling my grief into anger," she said with a small smile, "but there's really no need to worry...I'm more than accustomed to the harsh realities of battle."

"Are you sure?" Wilson asked with feigned disappointment, "I was really hoping to discuss your failures in more detail."

Eisenhower chuckled.

"There's not much to it..." Eisenhower said looking down. "I had concentrated my last few attacks towards ending the fight...I felt that I was making big progress," she shook her head, "...then that stupid Space Race mess ruined all my efforts." She let out a sigh, then took on a somber smile. "But, the decision to attack was based upon the best information I had...any blame or fault is mine alone to bare."

"Righttttt," Wilson spoke sarcastically, "that definitely sounds like something a person who doesn't need any cheering up would say."

"Shut up," Eisenhower said, regaining some warmth in her smile.

Sounds started playing in the room, and Eisenhower turned to see a television by her bed, its screen announcing the start of the second match.

"Shouldn't you be upstairs watching from the stands?" Eisenhower asked.

"Oh, please," Wilson saved her hands, "there's nothing to be gained by watching this farce of a match."

"Fair enough," Eisenhower looked back to the television. "It's going to be a fixed fight after all..."

In the stands, Thompson grabbed her mic.

"Hello everybody!" she shouted. "We're ready to get back to the action with a fight featuring two Presidents from the legendary Democratic Republican Party!"

She gestured to the arena.

"First, we have the calm, no-nonsense, second in command of the Democratic Republicans! She might seem frail on the outside, but she boasts one of the strongest constitutions the world has ever seen! Give it up for [The Sage of Montpelier], Jamie Madison!"

Madison walked into the arena with a pinstripe blazer, a trident in her hands, and a sharp gaze spread across her face.

"Her opponent," Thompson continued, "is a tall sharpshooter known for her friendly disposition! A diligent patriot; she's willing to take on any role and travel any distance for the sake of her country! She's [The Heir of Good Feelings], Jane Monroe!"

Monroe swaggered into the arena with a tie dye shirt, baggy pants, and a tri-pointed hat. She shot a peace sign with one hand and carried a rifle in the other.

"So, Truman," Thompson spoke up, "what do you think about this upcoming match?"

"Given that Monroe specializes in long-range combat," Truman remarked, "it's clear that Madison holds a significant edge in our enclosed arena..." he shook his head, "or at least, that would be the case, if the fight actually took place."

"But it might not!" Thompson added on, "because Madison and Monroe are from the same Party!"

"Exactly," Truman nodded his head. "It's pretty boring, but one of them will almost certainly just give up at the start of the fight. The only question left..." he looked to the fighters, "is which of them is backing down?"

* * * * *

Just before entering the arena, Madison and Monroe stood in front of a tall, slender woman.

"...I hate having to do this," Tanya Jefferson said with a moan. "Are you quite certain you can't decide this for yourselves?"

"Sorry, ma'am," Madison replied, "but we're both convinced we should be the one winning the match." Jefferson sighed.

"Very well..."

She looked over her two best friends.

"...given Grant's EP," she finally spoke up, "Monroe is better suited to fight in the second round."

Monroe gave a small grin, but Madison remained unmoved.

"That being said," Jefferson continued, "I've decided that Madison shall be the one going forward."

Monroe blinked.

"But...but ma'am!" she stammered, "you just said I was the more suitable fighter!"

"Against Grant," Jefferson corrected. "But Grant is not our concern here..." she tapped her fingers across her leg, "it is Roosevelt and Lincoln for whom we must plan for." She looked to Madison. "And for opponents of that caliber, only Madison stands a chance."

Monroe dropped her head.

"So...when you told us you'd make your decision after watching the first match..." she clenched her fists, "that was just a boldfaced lie! You were always going to pick Madison, regardless of the outcome!"

Jefferson frantically waved her hands.

"No, no!" she spoke feverishly, "That's not true at all! The first winner could have ended up possessing an EP which Madison stood no chance against. In such circumstances, I would have gladly declared you to be our champion!"

"But outside of that one in a million chance..." Monroe grumbled, "it was always going to be her..."

"...I'm sorry, old friend," Jefferson hung her head. "It pains me to do this, it really does...but it's for the best of the Party."

Monroe huffed and puffed, then regained her composure.

"Don't worry," Monroe said with a humble smile. "I completely understand. Now, if you'll excuse me," she walked off before the others could reply, "I've got a defeat to prepare for."

Jefferson watched Monroe leave, then gave a shallow moan.

"You know," Jefferson spoke to Madison, "I was initially elated when you secured a match between two of our members." She shook her head. "But now I would gladly face all of Rushmore on my own if it meant restoring our former sense of tranquility."

"It's okay, ma'am," Madison patted her back. "Monroe is no fool. She'll come around eventually."

"Eventually, yes," she nervously tapped her arm, "but there's no telling when that time shall come."

Jefferson looked Madison in the eye.

"I have complete faith in Monroe's loyalty," Jefferson spoke sternly, "but she can be impulsive at times, especially if she feels she's been slighted." Jefferson rested a hand gently on Madison's arm. "Please, be careful out there."

* * * * *

In the arena, Taft eyed the two combatants. There was a noticeable tension between the two of them; far more than he expected two members of the same Party to have. He lifted his gavel with an ounce of hesitation.

"Let the match...begin!"

The gavel hit the ground, but neither fighter moved an inch.

Madison waited a moment, then furrowed her brow.

“Well?” she asked expectantly. “Isn’t there something you’d like to say?”

“Hmmm?” Monroe asked innocently. “Oh, yes, right.”

Monroe smiled and nonchalantly raised her arms.

“I, Jane Monroe of the Democratic Republicans, have decided that I shall yield...”

Monroe lowered her arms, aiming her rifle straight for Madison’s head.

“...to no one!” Monroe declared with a sinister grin.

Monroe's Doctrine

During the War of Independence, a young Jordan Washington looked over the enemy encampment through his spyglass.

"There's two large cannons aimed right for us," he remarked. "We'll have to take a small crew across the Delaware, then seize their artillery before our main force can move in."

He turned to his soldiers as they exchanged worried glances between each other.

"...sir," someone finally spoke up, "you're asking us to paddle in the dead of night through a raging snowstorm for over eight hours straight!"

"Yes," Washington replied without batting an eye. "Now, who's coming with me?"

No one moved. Then, a small hand rose from the back. The troops turned around as Washington made his way to the volunteer.

"Name and age?" he asked.

"Jane Monroe," the soldier replied, "18 years young, baby!"

Washington nodded his head, then turned to the rest of his army. "Now then...will anyone else be joining me? Or is this young'un the only one here with some courage?"

A few of the older soldiers raised their hands, followed by a couple dozen more.

"Good," Washington spoke sternly. "Ready your boats; we leave in 5."

Monroe started for shore, but Washington blocked her path.

"You're coming with me, lad," he lifted a nearby flag, "and you'll be carrying our banner."

On the boat, Monroe watched on as her crewmates rowed besides her through the frigid waves.

"Sir," she finally spoke up, "I really feel like I should be doing some of the rowing as well."

"Keep holding the flag," he replied without breaking his gaze.

"Why are we even bringing this, anyways?" she asked, "it's just going to slow us down!"

Washington turned to Monroe, then stared at the flag.

"This flag," he spoke as he ran his hand along its stripes, "is a symbol of freedom. A symbol, which possesses greater strength than any weapon in our arsenal." He pointed to the boats. "As these men row through the night...as they put their very lives on the line," he pointed back to the flag, "they can look to this banner and remember exactly what it is they're all fighting for."

Monroe slowly nodded her head. She didn't fully comprehend his words, but she could tell she wouldn't be changing his mind anytime soon.

After some time, the boats finally reached the bank of the river.

"We'll be back with the second wave," Washington shouted as his soldiers disembarked, "While we're away, you're to guard these roads with your lives. Do not leave your spots for an instant, understood?"

"Yes sir!" the troops shouted in reply.

With that, Monroe found herself alone on an empty road, standing in silence as the weather shifted from snow, to rain, to hail.

She let out a heavy yawn and stretched out her arms, then snapped to attention at the sound of footsteps echoed besides her. She turned, raising her rifle.

"Who's there?"

Through the fog, Monroe could make out a pistol aimed towards her.

"Get outta here!" a voice screamed at her through the mist.

"Not happening, baby," Monroe spoke coolly while tightening her grip, "I'm under orders from General Washington himself to stay put."

"...Washington you say?"

The man took a step forward, then looked to the American flag behind Monroe.

"Ah, shucks!" the man chuckled as he lowered his gun, "I didn't realize you were a fellow American!" he pointed to a house just off the road. "Please, come inside for some food and warmth. It's the least I can do after startling you like that."

Monroe looked to the house and licked her frozen lips.

"...I can't," she finally said, shaking shook her head, "I was given strict orders to guard this post."

The man scratched his chin.

"I see..."

The man thought for a moment, then raised a smile.

"Give me one second."

The man ran into his house, then came back carrying a large bag and a toasty sandwich.

"I'm guessing your 'strict orders' didn't say anything about eating on the job?" he asked with a grin.

"They most certainly did not!" she exclaimed before devouring the sandwich.

As she finished her meal, Monroe took a closer look at the man's bag.

"What's that?"

"My medical bag," the man said with a smile. "I'm a doctor, you see, and I may be able to help some poor fellow in your troupe," he gave a small salute. "As such, I'm coming with you!" The man dropped his salute and awkwardly scratched his head. "Assuming General Washington will take me, of course."

Monroe smiled and tipped her hat.

"I'm certain Washington will be more than happy to have you in our ranks."

"Indeed, I would."

The two turned to see Washington marching through the storm, the rest of his battalion trailing shortly behind. Monroe gave a quick salute, then joined Washington's side as he brought the doctor up to speed.

"The Hessians are an elite band of warriors," Washington explained. "We'd stand no chance against them in a direct fight. Fortunately though, most of their troops are out of commission after a night of heavy drinking, and they won't be expecting us to attack from behind like this. Overall, things should go quite smoothly for us, unless of course..."

Washington froze as his eyes locked with a Hessian scout coming out from the woods.

"We're spotted!"

Washington lunged forward, striking the scout with the blade, but not before the scout raised his arm, firing a flare into the sky.

"Oh god!" a soldier exclaimed as the Hessian camp started to stir. "Should we turn back?"

"No!" Washington shouted. "We press on!"

Without pause, Washington ran full force into the enemy camp, cutting down twenty Hessians before they had the chance to draw their weapons.

"Fire!"

Before Washington could react, a cannonball burst in front of him, knocking him to the ground.

The Founding Fighters stood still, watching as Washington tried to rise, only to fall back to the ground.

"What do we do...?" a soldier mumbled nervously, "...what do we do?!"

"Isn't it obvious, baby?"

Monroe charged past the soldiers, planting her flag directly in front of Washington.

"We press on!"

Monroe drew her rifle, firing at half a dozen Hessians as they charged towards Washington.

"...the kid is right!" an American shouted behind her, "let's show these Hessians what we're made of!"

The Americans let out a valiant yell, then charged forward into the camp.

"Go for the general!" a Hessian screamed, "they'll lose all morale once we cut off his head!"

"Go ahead and try, baby!" Monroe shouted as she took down another wave of soldiers.

On the ground, Washington jerked and twisted his body.

"Be..." he mumbled.

"Sir?" Monroe asked.

“...Behind you!”

Monroe quickly turned around, but she was too late. Before she could react, a bullet pierced straight through her chest and into her left shoulder.

“That’s what you get,” a Hessian marksman snickered as Monroe fell back, “for waving around that gaudy piece of cloth!”

Monroe clenched her teeth.

“This piece of cloth...”

She grabbed the flagpole, stopping her fall.

“Is a symbol of freedom!”

She fired her rifle, knocking the Hessian to the ground. She smirked, then fell down, the snow beneath her turning a scarlet red.

“Hang in there, kid!” the doctor exclaimed as he rushed to her side. “You’re going to be alright!” He took a closer look at her wound, then gave a slight gulp. “...but just barely...”

“...help...Washington...” Monroe spoke wearily.

“I’m fine, lad,” Washington spoke besides her, “I just got the wind knocked out of me, that’s all.” He grabbed her hand. “You just focus on getting better, alright?” he continued. “Do that, and I promise you, the next time you enter the battlefield, you’ll be a captain!”

“...a...captain...huh?”

A smile drew over Monroe’s face as she drifted to sleep, her head filling with dreams of the brave warriors she’d command in battle.

But that day would never come; at least, not in this war. Time after time, Monroe would attempt to get back onto the field of battle, only for her to be turned away each time.

She did her best to maintain a cheerful disposition on the outside, but on the inside, she raged.

With fight after fight taking part without her, Monroe swore to herself she would never again let someone take her out of combat without putting up a fight.

This, above all else, would be her sacred doctrine.

* * * * *

Monroe fired her rifle, its bullet grazing Madison’s face.

“Oh man!” Thompson exclaimed, “Against all odds, Monroe has launched an attack against her fellow Democratic Republican!”

Madison, without breaking her gaze, rubbed a finger along her cheek, feeling the thin streak of blood trickle down her face.

“...so that’s how it’s going to be,” Madison said with a sigh. She raised her trident, aiming it towards Monroe. “Executive Power: Ratification.”

At that, the tips of Madison’s trident unglated up and down.

“Three Branches!” Madison exclaimed.

Her prongs suddenly lengthened, their tips shooting rapidly towards Monroe.

“Don’t play with fire, baby!” Monroe twisted her body, narrowly dodging each of the prongs, “cause you’re going to get burned!!”

The crowd drew a collective gasp as blood splatted across the ground.

Madison looked down, instantly noticing the three fresh cuts along her arm.

Monroe smiled and gave a peace sign.

“Executive Power: Monroe Doctrine, baby!”

Madison retracted her prongs and clicked her tongue.

“Ratification; Three Branches.”

Again, her trident extended, the prongs thrashing wildly across the battlefield.

A prong came at Monroe from below, but she easily jumped over the attack, then leaned back to dodge a blow to the head. She landed on her hand and pushed off the ground, leaping away from another strike.

Again and again, Monroe dodged Madison’s attacks, and each time she did, a new wound appeared across Madison’s body.

“What the heck?!” Thompson shouted, “Madison keeps attacking, but for some reason, she’s the only one taking damage!”

“This is obviously the result of Monroe’s EP,” Truman scratched his chin, “though that being said, I’ve got no idea how it works.”

From the stands, Jefferson let out a deep sigh.

“Things not going as planned?”

She turned to the young man with a swimmer’s body standing beside her.

“No, Quincy,” she shook her head, “they most certainly are not...once again, it seems that my plans have fallen to ruin.”

“I’m surprised how optimistic you were in the first place,” Quincy replied with a chuckle, “you know Monroe can be a real wild card.”

“Perhaps she would be a bit more docile,” she said with a somber smirk, “if you hadn’t helped her obtain such a powerful EP.”

Quincy gave a snicker.

“Monroe Doctrine,” he remarked, “the ability to instantly counterattack any hostile action taken against her...it’s a devastating EP, especially when combined with her magnificent dodging abilities.”

“It would certainly be a difficult ability for Madison to overcome,” Jefferson added on, “if she weren’t already aware of its limitations.”

Madison retracted her prongs, then charged forward.

Monroe smirked.

“So, you want to get closer to me?” she readied her rifle, “how sweet!”

She fired, but Madison easily deflected the bullets.

“No funnnn,” Monroe playful shook her head. “But even if you don’t take any hits,” she drew back her rifle, readying her stance, “I can still finish you off with Monroe Doctrine!”

“The thing about your EP...” Madison raised her trident and thrust it at Monroe’s feet. Monroe stepped back, easily dodging her weapon, then smiled as she waited for her EP to take effect.

“...is that it only works if I’m actually trying to hurt you!” Madison continued.

Monroe’s eyes widened as Madison vaulted herself off her trident, then wrapped her legs around Monroe’s torso, her body entirely unharmed by Monroe’s EP.

Madison's Constitution

Soon after the War of Independence, a group of Virginians gathered around a dominating figure.

"Well?" Pat Henry folded his arms, "we doing this or what?"

"Yes, of course," Eddy Randolph said glancing at his watch. "Our representative should be here any minute now..."

"I already am," a weak voice called out from behind.

The group turned to see a haggard Jamie Madison standing just outside the circle.

"Jesus, Madison!" Randolph exclaimed, "you look like crap!"

"I've caught a bit of a cold..." Madison mumbled between coughs.

"I don't care what you've got!" Randolph continued. "You can't go out there like that; you'll get destroyed!"

"I have to," Madison replied coldly, "no one else is strong enough to take Henry in my place."

Randolph started to speak, then looked to the ground, unable to reply.

"It'll be fine," Madison reassured him as she made her way to the center, "I will not allow this land fall to ruin."

Henry snorted loudly.

"No, you will not," Henry said raising his arms, "because I'm going to put a stop to your disastrous plans here and now!"

Henry suddenly charged forward, not waiting for the referee to start the match. He stopped in front of Madison, then threw out a masterful punch.

"You're too focused on perfection," Madison remarked as she easily dodged his overly prepared attack, "you need to be practical!"

Madison unleashed a flurry of thrusts with her trident. Henry raised a perfect guard, absorbing the blows while blocking off his vision. Madison swung out her leg, striking Henry's unguarded shins and knocking him to the ground. Henry started to rise, but stopped as Madison's trident pricked his neck.

Henry clicked his tongue.

"...I surrender..."

The Federalists released a chorus of hoots and cheers, only to be drowned out by the wailing howls from the Anti-Federalists.

"Screw this match!" Joe Mason said stepping forward, "I don't care what we agreed to; I'm going to put a stop to this ridiculous ploy myself!"

The Anti-Federalists rallied behind Mason, raising their fists and weapons into the air.

"Stand down!" Henry barked, silencing his allies. He turned to Madison. "I swear on my honor," he spoke quietly, "Virginia shall not oppose your plan of uniting the States into a single nation."

Henry gave a furious snort, then exited the arena.

"What the heck are you doing?" Mason hissed besides him, "you're giving in far too easily!"

Henry looked to him, then gave an evil grin.

"Who said anything about giving in?"

The next day, Randolph barged into Madison's office, slamming a stack of papers onto her desk.

"We've been had!" he said with a snarl. "While we were busy focusing on Virginia's approval, Henry's been sneaking in clause after clause into our deal!"

Madison skimmed through the papers before her.

"And by the looks of things," she spoke softly, "these amendments are all centered around blocking me from attending the convention."

Randolph nodded his head.

"And without you there," he continued, "this entire project is doomed to fail!"

Madison crossed her arms.

"This is quite troublesome."

"I say we take this piece of garbage right back to Henry," Randolph grabbed the pile of papers, "and tell him right where he can shove it!"

"We can't," Madison calmly lifted the papers out of Randolph's hands. "He played us fair and square; challenging him on these amendments would only undermine our movement." She shook her head. "No, we have to fight him on his terms."

Madison flipped through the papers, then pointed to a line of text. Randolph leaned in and read things over.

"...I don't like our odds."

"It's our only option."

The next week, Henry greeted Madison and Randolph with a warm smile..

"Greetings!"

"Shut it," Randolph replied curtly.

"Anyways," Henry continued, "I'm sure you're both dying to know the details for the match to decide Virginia's final delegate." He gestured behind them. "Well, the battlefield is before you."

Madison and Randolph looked out to an abandoned city consisting of towering buildings separated by wide open spaces.

Randolph raised an eyebrow. "I'm surprised you'd want to fight in a dump like this."

Henry gave a feigned look of surprise. "Oh my, I think there's been a slight misunderstanding here." He gave a malevolent grin. "I never said I would be fighting...only that I would choose Madison's opponent."

Randolph and Madison exchanged confused glances.

"But if you're not representing the Anti-Federalists..." Randolph began.

"...then who is?" Madison asked.

"I am," a voice called from behind.

Madison turned in shock.

"Monroe?!"

"That's right, baby!" she said with a grin.

"Why..." Madison blinked, "what are you doing!"

"You see..." Monroe gave an innocent smile. "I was a tad miffed after you stole my position for the Virginia conference," she twirled her rifle and pointed it to Madison, "so, I think it's only fair that I take your seat at the national convention in return."

"...stole your position?" Madison furrowed her brow. "I did no such thing!"

She grabbed Monroe's shoulder.

"Listen," Madison whispered in her ear, "Henry is obviously just using you to get what he wants!"

"Please, baby," Monroe shrugged her off and headed to the arena, "I'm the one that's using him."

Randolph clicked his tongue.

"This is bad," he whispered to Madison, "this battlefield is a sniper's paradise! It'd be tricky to beat Monroe even if you were in peak condition, but with your illness..."

"...it'll be alright," Madison said, gathering her composure before heading down, "I will not fail."

Randolph and Henry stayed back, listening from afar as the fight raged below.

"Oh my," Henry gave a smile as the gunfire came to a close, "it sounds like your fruitless little struggle is finally over."

Randolph slumped his shoulders...then suddenly raised himself up.

"Not quite!"

"What do you...?"

Henry turned in shock to see Madison walking towards them. Her body was covered in injuries, with the tip of her nose partially shot off, but she strode forward with confidence and a cold look of determination.

"I win," she spoke matter of factly.

Henry continued staring at Madison with a blank expression, then tightened his fists.

"...you're making a mistake," Henry spoke softly, "uniting the country, giving greater powers to our Executives...it will only bring destruction to our land!"

Madison paused for a moment.

"...it is entirely possible this experiment ends in failure." She stared Henry in the eyes. "But if we do nothing, we are all certain to perish."

Henry let out a snort.

"I swear," he spoke with a snarl, "I'll never stop fighting you...not as long as there's the slightest chance I can save my State from your tyranny!"

"And I swear," Madison raised her hand, revealing a freshly formed Presidential Seal, "I'll stop anyone who tries to destroy my nation."

* * * * *

"Wowzer!" Thompson exclaimed, "Madison's managed to capture the agile Monroe between her legs!"

"Did you really think..." Madison remarked as she tightened her grip, "that I wouldn't exploit your EP's weakness of only responding to direct attacks?"

Monroe gave a slight grin.

"And did you really think," she replied, "that you could trap me with such stubby legs?"

Monroe twisted her body, ducking down and slipping out of Madison's hold.

Madison landed, then lunged forward, leaving her trident in the ground as she reached out for Monroe. In turn, Monroe stepped back, her long strides easily outpacing Madison's shorter reach.

In the stands, Quincy turned to Jefferson.

"So," he spoke up, "who do you think is going to win in the end?"

Jefferson gazed across the battlefield.

"...naively," Jefferson remarked after a lengthy pause, "it would appear Madison holds the stronger position. After all, she's forced Monroe into a close-range fight while neutralizing her EP." Jefferson shook her head. "But in terms of experience, Monroe actually holds a significant advantage."

"True," Quincy nodded his head. "Monroe is used to facing opponents in close range. In contrast, Madison almost never fights without her trident."

"If that were the whole story," Jefferson continued, "I would be compelled to pick Monroe as the winner. However," she crossed her arms, "there's something more lurking under the surface of this match..."

On the ground, Monroe let out a smirk as she dodged yet another desperate grab of Madison.

“Stay still already...” Madison grumbled as she once again lunged at Monroe.

“Sorry, baby,” Monroe remarked with a grin, “but you’re never going to catch me...”

Monroe suddenly stepped forward, sweeping Madison’s legs off the floor.

“Especially not with your face planted in the ground!”

Monroe quickly extended her arms, aiming her rifle point-blank at Madison’s falling body.

Madison remained non-plussed.

“Executive Power,” she spoke softly, “Ratification; Three Branches!”

“What?”

Before Monroe could react, three prongs shot out of the ground, tearing through her legs.

“Gahhh!!”

Monroe stumbled back, tripping over herself and dropping her rifle. As she fell, Monroe looked out and stared at Madison’s trident planted in the ground.

“I see,” Monroe hissed, “You were only pretending to leave your weapon behind, all so you could extend its tips beneath my feet!”

Monroe hit the ground, then quickly reached for her rifle. Before she could make it, Madison leapt onto her arm and brought back her fist

“I’ve been waiting to do this,” Madison spoke coldly as she readied her punch, “for a very, very long time.”

“Wait, wait!” Monroe frantically raised her hands, “I surrender! I surrender! For real this time!”

Taft hastily slammed his gavel.

“The winner,” he exclaimed, “is [The Sage of Montepelier], Jamie Madison!”

Madison quietly shook her head, then dismounted Monroe.

Monroe started to rise, but fell back on her injured legs.

Madison reached forward, grabbing Monroe’s arm before she hit the ground.

“...thanks,” Monroe replied meekly.

Madison gave a small nod, then lifted Monroe to her side. The crowd erupted with cheers as the two walked out of the arena arm in arm.

“Well,” Eisenhower remarked from her hospital bed, “what did you think of the match in the end?”

“It was absolutely dreadful,” Wilson said with a snort. “There was no point in Madison attacking Monroe at the start if she knew what her EP could do, nor was there any reason for Monroe to fall for such an obvious trap at the end.”

"Agreed," Eisenhower said with a nod. "I guess there really is no benefit to watching a fixed fight..."

On the ground, Monroe slipped Madison a quick glance.

"...when did you figure it out?"

"I suspected it after your first shot," Madison rubbed the scratch along her cheek, "it was a weak attack," she pointed to her battle-scarred nose, "and I'm well aware you can shoot better than that." She looked to the cuts along her arm. "But I became certain of it after you used Monroe Doctrine...your slashes were all designed to look painful while inflicting the minimal amount of damage."

"And I appreciate you doing the same," Monroe said as she wiggled her supposedly injured leg. "Though of course," she gave a sly smirk, "I let you hit me."

"Anyways," Madison spoke, ignoring her quip, "why in the world did you make us go through this ridiculous farce?"

"Can't you hear it?" Monroe gestured to the crowd around them, "you put up a valiant fight against a disrespectful ally, then accepted her back without any hard feelings. The audience is completely on your side now!"

"I hardly see the relevancy," Madison replied sharply.

Monroe shook her head. "If you won with a bye, the people would never have accepted the Democratic Republican winning the tournament. Sure, the Presidents would still have to swear their allegiance, but their soldiers would abandon us in droves."

"...I suppose that's fair," Madison finally replied, "but why not tell me all this beforehand?"

"Because you're a terrible actor!" Monroe said with a grin, then slowly lowered her smile. "That...and I thought there was a small chance that you might blunder badly enough to give me the win."

Madison stepped on Monroe's injured foot, inciting a yelp.

"I swear," Madison shook her head and gave the smallest of smiles, "you never cease to amaze me."

Monroe grinned back.

"You too pal!"

???Insert the Remaining Fights