

# Executive Powers: Revolutionary War

Eisenhower

Grant

Madison

Monroe

McKinley

LBJ

Wilson

Roosevelt

Buchanan

Johnson

Jackson

Samuel S. Spirits

## 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.

If I sent you this 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 at her news copter with a sense of fear and loathing, then lifted her hand high into the air.

“Power: Gonzo Journalism.”

Instantly, a pair of tall, lanky figures with cameras for heads materialized inside the copter.

“What’s up, boss?” a Gonzo asked as Thompson took the back seat.

“A couple of Presidents are wreaking havoc downtown, and we’ve been granted the ‘privilege’ of covering the story.”

“Ah geez, why do we keep getting the short end of the stick?”

“Because I’m the only reporter with enough balls to do the job! Honestly, I’d volunteer for the post if our editors would just let me do things my way. But no; they insist on doing things ‘by the book’, like I’m a goddamn girl scout or something.”

Thompson stared at the skirmish raging below as the helicopter lifted off.

“At this rate, I’m going to end up in a ditch long before I ever make my mark...”

Thompson continued staring while she adjusted her bucket hat and yellow-tinted glasses, then gave a quick nod to the Gonzo beside her. He pointed his camera and raised three fingers...then two...one...

“Hello Baltimore!” Thompson screamed. “This is Huntress Thompson, reporting live from the air! Our city is once again at the center of a turf war between the Jacksonians and the New Dealers, and our sources indicate there’s a whole four Presidents in the fray! This is bad news for anyone with property in the area, but great for anyone like me hoping to watch some real-life Executive Powers in action! Now then, let’s see what we’ve got going on!”

Gonzo turned his camera, focusing on a plain woman facing off against a plump cowboy below. The woman jumped away as the man lunged at her, then extended her arms.

“Executive Power,” Jade Polk shouted, “Manifest Destiny!”

A pair of blades formed in her hands, blocking the man’s strike before Polk swung her weapons at the man’s stomach.

“Woah now!” Landon B. Johnson hollered as he dodged the attack. “Hurry up already, JFK! I could use some backup over here!”

“Ask not what your Party can do for you,” Jay F. Kennedy muttered as he dodged a street lamp hurtling towards him, “but what you can do for your Party!” JFK looked to see a dump truck flying at him. He crouched down, the Seal on his hand glowing red, white, and blue. “Executive Power: Man on the Moon!”

JFK leapt up, his body floating through the air as the vehicle passed harmlessly below. Across the street, a handsome man lifted a car with one hand, his eyes locked onto his own reflection in the windshield.

"Give it up already," Hank Pierce quipped as he tossed the car at JFK, "I've got you beat in terms of both looks and power!"

Thompson grinned from ear to ear.

"Incredible, absolutely incredible! I tell you folks, I never do get tired of watching two Presidents...fight...ing..." Thompson slowed as she spotted a strange, mushroom cloud blossoming in the distance. "What...the...?"

A shockwave slammed into the city, shattering glass and tossing the helicopter through the sky. Both Gonzos grabbed the wheel as they fought to keep the vehicle afloat. Meanwhile, Thompson continued staring out. She lit a cigarette, then turned to her cameramen.

"Change of plans boys: we're heading to whatever the hell that was this second!"

"We'll need to get approval from the higher ups first," a Gonzo replied, "otherwise—"

"Screw the higher ups!" she screamed. "I'm not letting another scoop pass us by just because those idiots want to stay home and scratch their own asses!"

The Gonzos nodded and directed the copter out. The mushroom cloud dissipated well before they could reach it, but what remained was just as shocking.

"Jesus Christ; are you seeing this folks?!" Thompson shouted as she looked over the titanic crater carved into the earth below. "I don't know about you, but I'd bet my bottom dollar this is where our mystery shockwave came from! Offhand the crater looks to be around 300 feet deep with a radius of 1200 feet. Moreover—"

"Woah, woah!" the closest Gonzo shouted, pointing his camera past her, "there's something going on down there!"

Thompson turned, spotting a light flickering at the crater's edge. She gave a sly smile.

"Take us down, Gonzo!"

"I'd rather not boss...I think I'm getting the fear."

"Nonsense! We came all this way to figure out what the hell happened here! And you must realize," she said, pointing to the light, "that we've found the main nerve!"

"I know...that's what gives me the fear..."

Reluctantly, Gonzo lowered the copter as Thompson jumped out and sprinted to the crater's edge. She mentally readied herself for whatever might lie within the flickering light. However, she was entirely unprepared as a large, ordinary man with short gray hair and circular glasses stepped out of its glow.

"Greetings!" the man shouted as the light faded around him. "Are you with local or national news?"

Thompson blinked, opened her mouth, then closed it again.

"Local...news?"

The man maintained his smile but was clearly disappointed.

"Well that's alright now, it'll get there soon enough. Are you already rolling?"

Thompson nodded weakly.

"Excellent!" The man cleared his throat. "My fellow Americans..."

The man raised his hand, causing Thompson to take a step back.

"A Presidential Seal?!" she hissed as she looked over the bald eagle inscribed within a circle of stars burned into the back of the man's hand.

"...my name is Henry S. Truman," the man continued, "a President of our great nation. And the destruction you see behind me is the aftermath of my Executive Power: The Manhattan Project."

Thompson paused, taking in his words.

"And what exactly do you want?"

"As things stand, our nation is being torn apart by the constant battles between the 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 these futile feuds. But of course, it is not enough to yearn for peace. We must work for it, and if necessary," he said with a small smile, "fight for it!"

Thompson furrowed her brow.

"The hell are you talking about?"

Truman transformed his smile into a vicious grin as he threw out his arms.

"In order to form a more perfect union, insure domestic tranquility, and to secure the blessings of liberty; 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.

"...uhh," she spoke up, "please...tell us more?"

Truman raised three fingers.

"This experiment shall be organized by a trinity of Presidents consisting of myself, Bill Taft, and Ruth Hayes." He raised a fourth finger. "It will take place at this very spot, four months from today, on Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. I'm also very pleased to announce that we've already secured the participation of four prominent Presidents for our event."

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

"Theo Roosevelt...Gabe Lincoln...Tanya Jefferson...and Jordan Washington."

Thompson widened her eyes.

"Every member of Rushmore!"

“Exactly! And so, my fellow Presidents, I hope you’ll join me for what is sure to be...a Revolutionary War!”

Thompson stood still, then waved at Gonzo.

“C-Cut!” she screamed. Gonzo’s light switched off, ending the broadcast. Truman breathed out, wiping a hand across his head.

“Welp, the die is cast!” He turned to Thompson. “Say, would you mind giving me a ride back? It seems my car didn’t survive the blast!”

“...uh, sure...” she replied thoughtlessly, her brain still in a fog. Thompson continued to stare, then shook out her head.

Jesus, what was she doing?! The opportunity she had always yearned for was standing right in front of her and she was gawking like an idiot. Thompson gritted her teeth, then slapped herself hard across the face.

“You can come with us!” she shouted, regaining her composure, “on one condition: I get to be the emcee for the tournament!”

Truman gave Thompson an icy glare.

“Are you honestly making demands of me,” he asked, gesturing to the crater behind them, “after witnessing the power I can bear against you?” He continued staring at Thompson, then broke into a hearty laugh. “Man alive; you’ve got some gumption, I’ll give you that! Why don’t we talk out the details on our ride back.”

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

“Gonzo,” Thompson spoke up.

“Yeah boss?”

“I have a lot of questions,” she said looking over the strange man geeking out at their helicopter. “The first of which is...who the hell is Henry Truman?”

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Over the next months, dozens of Presidents reached out to join Truman’s Revolutionary War. Then, on the eve of November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the fateful bracket was released for the world to see...

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**Hello Reader!** As you may have noticed, there are many historical references throughout this novel. To help make these more accessible, I have included **entirely optional** historical notes at the end of chapters to elaborate on these references, as well as to clarify points where the book strays from historical accuracy.

**Thompson.** The character Huntress Thompson is based off the journalist Hunter S. Thompson who is best known for writing the book “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas,” as well as for his unique style of “Gonzo Journalism,” which included the writer (i.e. himself) as a central character in the stories he wrote.

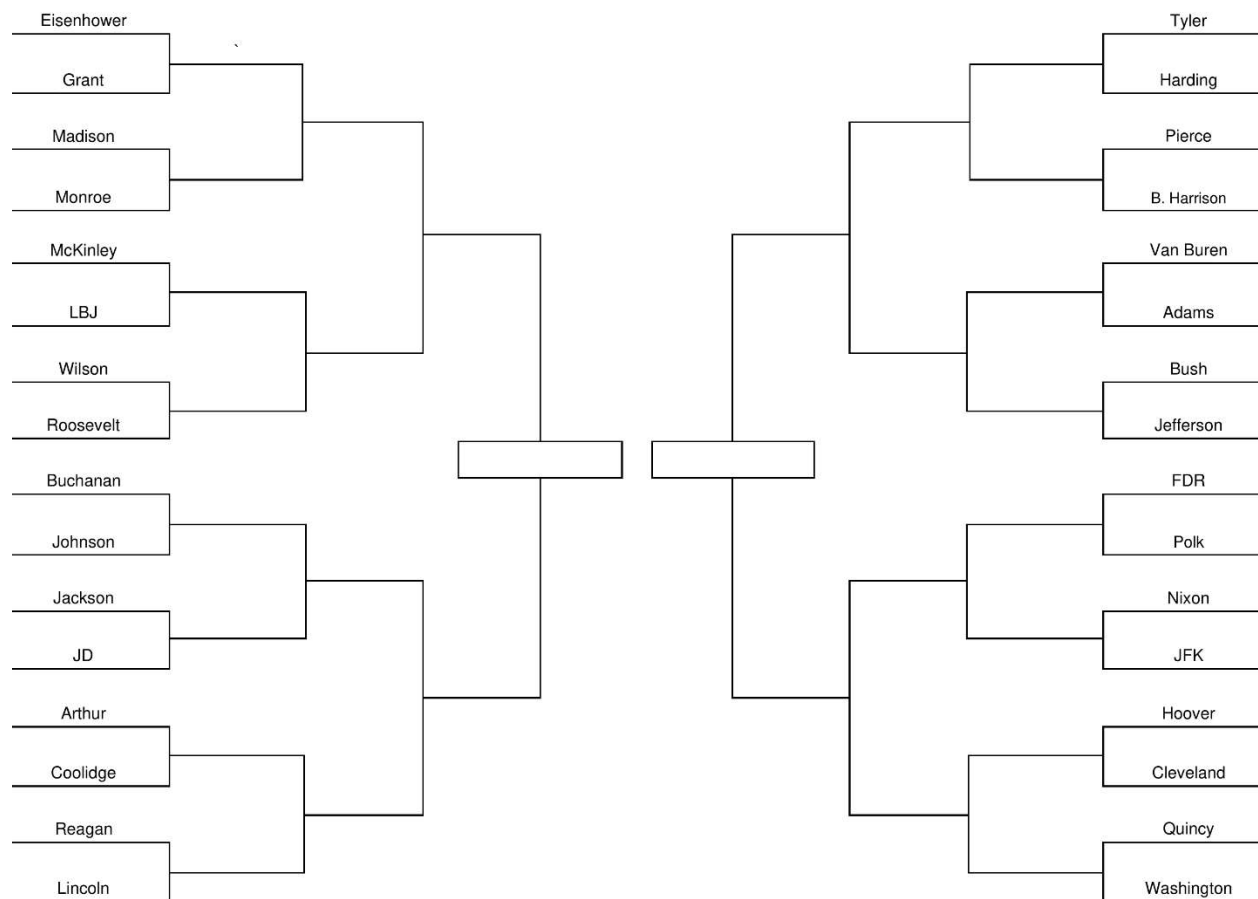
**The Manhattan Project.** This refers to the real-life project which developed the atomic bomb during World War II. It was initiated by Franklin D. Roosevelt and ultimately used by Harry Truman.

**“Who the hell is Harry Truman?”** This is a quote said by William Leahry after learning that Harry Truman had been placed as the VP for the 1944 Democratic ticket with Franklin D. Roosevelt, emphasizing the fact that he was largely a political non-entity up to this point.

This, to be clear, is a very obscure reference which I don’t expect anyone to have noticed. There are many more such references throughout the book, but I’ll refrain from pointing these out unless they stand out in the text like this one does.



## The Bracket



### Block R:

[The Supreme Commander] Deedee Eisenhower vs [The Hero of Appomattox] Odysseus S. Grant  
 [The Sage of Montpelier] Jamie Madison vs [The Heir of Good Feelings] Jane Monroe  
 [The Napoleon of Protection] Will McKinley vs [Landslide Landon] Landon B. Johnson  
 [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 Man who Shouldn't be President] 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] Frances D. Roosevelt vs [Young Hickory] Jade Polk

[The King of Camelot] Jay F. Kennedy 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 through the crowded lines of traffic on her motorcycle. It was hard to believe that just four months ago, these streets had been nothing but dirt.

But now?

Families ate burgers next to thugs with cigars, saxophonists played besides workers putting up walls, and arms dealers peddled their wares alongside fanatics screaming about religion. The city was pure chaos, and Thompson loved every second of it.

She continued her ride, stopping at the towering coliseum at the center of town.

"Hot damn," she muttered as she admired its glistening marble walls.

"Hey!" an agent in black shouted at her. "You can't park here!"

Thompson gave a cocky grin.

"Listen up, chump," she said, raising her ID badge, "I'm Huntress Thompson, VIP!"

The Secret Service agent scanned the badge with a sour look.

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

"Oh yeah?" Thompson asked sarcastically. "Bite me!"

The agent rolled his eyes and grabbed his walkie-talkie.

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

Thompson tilted her head.

"Requesting wha—?"

She blinked, her body transported into a spacious room with a desk and a clear glass panel at its front. She stepped forward, looking out the window at the stands surrounding a giant circle of earth at the stadium's center.

"So that's the arena, eh?"

"Ehem," someone coughed from behind.

Thompson turned around, noticing a pianist seated behind her.

"You ready?"

Thompson gave a thumbs up. The pianist nodded, then started to play. The crowd below quieted down as they noticed the music playing across the stadium speakers. The screens throughout the arena flickered off, then shifted to a view inside the commentary box.

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

The crowd let loose a torrent of screams.

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

The music crescendoed, ending with the pianist slamming his hands on the keys. The man rose up, revealing himself to the crowd.

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

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

Despite holding the mic at a distance, Thompson’s words accidentally broadcasted across the stadium, inciting a wave of laughs from the crowd. Thompson gave an embarrassed cough.

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

The crowd erupted in cheers.

“Henry S. Truman,” he corrected, turning 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! That is to say,” he pointed to a small sign on his desk as he read its words aloud. “The buck stops here!”

“Beautiful stuff there, Truman; now, let’s get down to brass tacks!”

The stadium screens shifted to a timeline for the week.

“Our schedule,” Thompson continued, “will consist of eight fights for 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 where our fighters shall pledge allegiance to the ultimate winner of the tournament!”

She gestured to the arena.

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

The giant Taft walked into the arena with a jolly grin, his hands gripping a massive war hammer as if it were a gavel.

“Now, as you’ve probably noticed,” Thompson continued, “Secret Service agents have been stationed throughout the coliseum to make sure nothing here ends up going awry! Leading these soldiers is a 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 and what remained of her left; a set of heavy scars covering her body.

“And we ought to emphasize,” Truman interjected, “that although we’ve taken every precaution to protect our spectators, we can’t guarantee your complete safety. Anyone who’s concerned can safely

watch the matches from any of the televisions stationed throughout the stadium, as well as those spread throughout the town. And for those who do choose to stay with us...get ready for the ride of your lives!"

"Alright, alright; enough with the foreplay already!" Thompson shouted, "let's move onto the action!"

The crowd roared its approval.

"We're starting things off with a bang!" she continued. "A match featuring two of the greatest commanders the world has ever seen! History 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 as the leader of the Hidden Hard Party! She's trained legions of 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 always the same: I, like, her! Now let's hear it, for [The Supreme Commander], Deedee Eisenhower!"

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

She waved to the crowd, then stepped out of the tank and grabbed hold of the barrel of its gun. She lifted up, tearing the head clean off the tank's body. The vehicle then rolled back as Eisenhower walked forward, carrying the tank head with her to the center of the arena.

"Jesus Christ!" Thompson exclaimed. "It looks like Eisenhower is using that tank head as her freaking weapon! We haven't even started and I'm already getting goosebumps!"

"Don't get too excited," Truman said, rolling his eyes. "Eisenhower's an alright general, but she doesn't know any more about fighting than a pig knows about Sunday."

"Ouch! I take it you two aren't on the best of terms, then?"

Truman gave a small 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 a gentle soul who can't stand the slight of blood! Nevertheless, this man won't stop fighting; not until he obtains complete and unconditional surrender! He's [The Hero of Appomattox], Odysseus S. Grant!"

"There's no S," Grant mumbled as he strolled in with a plain blue army uniform, a well-worn silk hat, and a pair of muddy boots. Behind him, Grant dragged a large, lumpy bag into the arena. He reached the center and opened the bag, releasing a stockpile of weapons onto the ground.

"This was Calvin's pistol," he spoke as he pulled out a gun from the pile. "He died in our battle against Lee before he could fire a single shot."

Grant placed the pistol and picked up a sword.

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

He thrust his arms to the side. The weapons around Grant vibrated, then rose into the air. A gun slammed into Grant's arm, followed by a sword, then another, and another. Before long, each of Grant's arms were covered in a pile of weapons taking the form of two, giant, weaponized arms.

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

Taft glanced at the fighters while maintaining his jolly smile.

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

The fighters gave a pair of silent nods.

"Excellent!"

Taft replaced his joyful smile with a stern glare.

"Oh man!" Thompson shouted, "looks like Taft is getting serious now!"

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

Taft breathed out and raised his gavel into the air.

"Let the first match!" he shouted as he slammed his hammer, "begin!"

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**Epitaphs.** In most cases, the epitaphs (displayed [like this]) throughout the book are either nicknames people had in real life, or slight deviations due to changes in their first name. Epitaphs which deviate from this will be commented on when they are introduced. For example, [Ruth the Forgotten] is unrelated to anything having to do with Rutherford Hayes; I made this up largely due to there not being any nice nicknames for Rutherford. Speaking of lies involving Hayes...

**Hayes.** To be clear, **Rutherford Hayes did not lose an arm.** Ruth's battle-scarred appearance is simply a nod to the fact that during the Civil War, Rutherford took some serious damage (including heavy damage to his left arm).

Rutherford Hayes had essentially nothing to do with the Secret Service. Ruth being in charge in the novel is a reference to Rutherford being skilled at "quelling riots and removing uninvited guests," in the sense that he quelled riots during the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 and removed federal troops from the south.

**Taft.** William H. Taft genuinely wanted to be a Supreme Court justice more than he wanted to be President, but his wife had the opposite opinion, and thus a President he became. However, he would eventually achieve his greatest dream of becoming chief justice of the Supreme Court.

**Truman.** This chapter features a number of references for Henry S. Truman: he was an avid piano player, had a “the bucks stops here” sign on his desk, and he once started talking early before someone interrupted saying “let me introduce you first,” which accidentally ended up getting broadcasted to the crowd. His real-life nickname “The Man from Independence,” refers to his hometown Independence, Missouri.

**Middle Initials.** The S in “Harry S. Truman” does not stand for anything, though it’s a common misconception that it stands for “Shipp.” Notably, the judge who read the oath of office for Harry S. Truman mistakenly referred to him as “Harry Shipp Truman,” though Harry was quick to correct him.

Ulysses Grant was born “Hiram Ulysses Grant” and ended up going by his middle name. In particular, the “S.” in “Ulysses S. Grant” stands for nothing and shouldn’t even be there in the first place. This phantom letter was created due to a typographical error at West Point, after which the S stuck around despite Ulysses’s protests.



## Tanks

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

Dozens of rifles extended from Grant's weaponized hands and fired in succession.

"Starting things off with a bang?" Eisenhower asked as she lowered her tank head, blocking the shots. She tightened her smile and charged forward, crashing into Grant with the force of a moving train.

Grant took half a step back, then pushed forward, shoving Eisenhower off him before thrusting his hands at her. Eisenhower stepped back, dodging the attack. She smirked, then dropped her smile as a sea of swords shot out Grant's palms.

Eisenhower flung her body back, dodging the blades while losing her balance. Grant stepped forward, slamming Eisenhower with his fist and flinging her across the arena. Eisenhower twisted her body midair, landing with grace and poise.

"You know," Eisenhower remarked as she readied her stance. "In spite of the many criticisms I've read, my respect for you has always been high! I'm certain you're one of the greatest American generals, if not its greatest." Eisenhower tightened her grip. "That being said, I've got people counting on me; and I'm not going to let them down!"

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Years ago, a bugle blared, waking the soldiers of Camp Meade. The troops shot out of bed, eager to start the day with their commander.

"Good morning soldiers!" a young Eisenhower shouted.

"Good morning ma'am!" The soldiers replied.

Eisenhower smiled looking across her line, then gave a light frown.

"Where's Fitzgerald?"

Someone pointed to a solitary figure sitting by the docks.

"He's working on his darn novel again."

Eisenhower shook her head.

"I'll allow it this time," she replied playfully, "but only because we've gotten such good news today!" She gave a toothy grin. "Pack your bags boys, we're taking a trip to Europe!"

"Wait, seriously?" a soldier asked with glee, "are we finally going off to war?"

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

The soldiers whooped with cheer 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. "Cause I still have one more piece of news for you!"

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

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

"That's alright!" a soldier exclaimed. "You helped us build those makeshift ones!"

"That I did," she said, looking across the row of trucks with machine guns strapped to their backs.

"Sadly, we'll be discontinuing our makeshift models starting today."

The soldiers gave a collective moan.

"Because," Eisenhower went on as a tank rolled onto the field, "we've finally got ourselves a real one!"

The soldiers screamed and rushed to their newest toy; none of them waiting enough for Eisenhower to dismiss them. Eisenhower raised a smile, then reexamined her deployment orders.

"November 18<sup>th</sup>," she spoke to herself.

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

Then on November 11<sup>th</sup>, the war, along with Eisenhower's dreams, came to a sudden halt.

A few days later, Eisenhower found herself sulking at the army's victory celebration.

"I tell you," she lamented to a 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, bumping into a large man carrying a pitcher of beer as she rose.

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

"You could do the same..."

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

"That's nice," Eisenhower said, rolling her eyes, "feel free to send me the bill."

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

Eisenhower blinked at the man.

"You can't be serious, right?"

The man gave a vicious grin.

"I hope you enjoyed whatever fights you got during this war, because they're the last fights you're ever going to have in this army!"

The man cackled as Eisenhower tried her best to keep her anger in check.

"Well," she muttered, taking a step forward, "if I'm going to get court martialed anyways..."

"Just a moment now," a voice called from the crowd.

Eisenhower turned to see an older officer approaching them.

"I apologize for butting in, but I think it would be best for all of us here if we 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 started turning his finger, only to be stopped as the officer grabbed his wrist.

"And I'll have you know," the officer replied, "that I'm General Dox Conner." Conner lowered Helmick's hand, bringing him to his knees. "And this woman 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 uh, leave her punishment in your capable hands!"

Helmick gave a small bow, then scurried back to the crowd as fast as he could.

"Thanks Conner," Eisenhower spoke up, "you really saved my hide this time!"

"Saved you?" he replied with a knowing smile, "why, I've just been told that I've been put in charge of punishing you."

Eisenhower gave a nervous laugh.

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

"Oh no, I expect it will be quite severe." Conner pointed a finger dramatically to Eisenhower. "As your commanding officer, I order you to train with me back in Panama."

Eisenhower blinked.

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

"Don't get too worked up now," Conner said wagging his finger. "After your hell week with me, I'll be sending you to learn martial arts from Pershing, diplomacy from MacArthur, and leadership from Marshall."

"Th-thank you, sir," Eisenhower stammered as she processed the names of all of these world class mentors. "But, why do all this for me?"

"Because you've got talent, and by God, it'd be a loss for the nation if you never got a chance to show off your stuff!" He placed a hand on her shoulder and gave a warm smile. "I'm counting on you to do great things, and I order you not to disappoint me."

Eisenhower gave a sharp salute.

"I won't let you down, sir!"

On the ride back, Eisenhower daydreamed about the forthcoming training sessions she would have, her mind coming back to reality only as her car dipped into a ditch and stalled. Eisenhower shook her head.

"I swear," she grumbled as she got out and pushed her car, "if there's one danger this country faces, it's the lack of quality roads!"

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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 over the grounds of the arena. Grant raised an eyebrow and gently kicked a road besides his feet.

"Interesting," he remarked.

"Now get ready..."

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

"For my massive retaliation!"

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**Eisenhower's Flashback.** Many of these events really happened: Dwight Eisenhower really did command a tank unit without any tanks, he really did train F. Scott Fitzgerald, he really did struggle to get into combat with the war ending just a week before his deployment, and Fox Conner really did step in and save Dwight from being court martialed by Eli Helmick over an essentially bogus fine of \$250.

The scene with Deedee Eisenhower's car getting stuck is a reference to Dwight taking part in the army's Transcontinental Motor Convoy, which demonstrated to Dwight how poorly maintained the nation's roads were. This event would later serve as inspiration for him pushing for building the Interstate Highway System during his Presidency.

## Interstate Highway System

Eisenhower slammed into Grant, throwing him back. He regained his balance, only for Eisenhower to appear before him again with her weapon raised. Grant immediately thrust his fist at the same time Eisenhower swung out her weapon. The two attacks landed against each other, flinging the fighters back.

"Hot dang!" Eisenhower shouted as she rubbed her wounded head. "Anyone else in your situation would have retreated for sure! But you? You went for a damn counter!"

Grant shrugged his shoulders.

"Retreating was never my style."

"Agreed! I say, if you're going to use force," she crouched down, lowering her stance, "use overwhelming force!"

Eisenhower shot forward, sprinting across her road with inhuman levels of acceleration.

"That speed...!" Grant exclaimed as he raised his arms, narrowly blocking Eisenhower's high speed attack, "that's how you appeared so quickly!"

"Roger that," Eisenhower said, pushing off Grant. "I gain a speed boost whenever I run along my EP's roads. And I'm sorry to tell you, but my roads won't do a thing for you!"

"Fine by me," he replied while readying his stance, his left foot placed squarely on Eisenhower's road.

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

"Yes, that's quite alright," Gabe Lincoln mused to himself. "After all, now that Grant knows those roads don't affect him, he has no need to worry about where he places his feet."

Lincoln turned at the sound of rustling behind him, but saw nothing other than a wall covered in shadows.

"I swear," a voice called from the wall, "you and Grant put too much faith in the words of your opponents."

A dark figure emerged from the wall's shadows.

"And that weakness," Dixie Nixon continued, "shall be Grant's undoing."

Grant charged forward and threw out a punch. His left side suddenly jerked back, causing his attack to whiff. At the same time, Eisenhower raised her weapon.

"Fore!" she shouted, slamming into her defenseless opponent.

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

"I'm not falling for that again!" Eisenhower shouted as her body shifted unnaturally to the side and avoided the attack. She swung her weapon a second time, landing a critical hit.

Lincoln clicked his tongue.

"Now I get it!" he remarked, "Eisenhower's EP doesn't center around speed, but on movement!"

Nixon nodded.

"Interstate Highway System," Nixon explained, "is an EP which grants Eisenhower the ability to move objects efficiently along her roads. This give her a speed boost by moving herself along them, but she can also use the roads to shift herself out of danger or to throw her opponents off-balance."

"Which is exactly what she did to Grant," Lincoln added, "after tricking him into thinking the roads didn't affect him." He shook his head. "I'm surprised; I never took Eisenhower to be the trickster type."

"No one ever does," Nixon said with a smirk. "But she's far more devious than most give her credit for."

In the arena, Grant rose from the ground.

"You're strong," he spoke sternly. "If I hadn't opened the fight with my most defensive form, I'd surely have lost by now." He scanned the roads around the arena. "But now that I've gotten a rough understanding of your EP, I think it's high time I take the offensive."

Eisenhower gave a grin.

"You're saying you've been playing defensively up to now?"

Without replying, Grant's weapons dropped off his arms and swarmed around his legs, lifting him into the air. The mound of weapons shifted around, settling into the form of a horse with legs made of swords and a cannon as its nose.

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

Eisenhower readied her weapon as she eyed her opponent.

Grant's newest form looked more agile than before. However, he wouldn't be able to use its speed to its fullest: if he carelessly stepped onto one of her roads, 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 made his move. His horse started off with a light trot, carefully avoiding Eisenhower's roads. The trot then rose into a gallop before transforming into a full-blown sprint. Eisenhower glanced down, waiting for the horse to touch her roads. But, to her surprise, the horse avoided them with each step.

"What?!"

Eisenhower shook her head and raised her guard as Grant drew closer. Just before colliding, Grant's horse leapt forward, front flipping over Eisenhower's body. As the horse passed over, it tilted its neck back, aiming its cannon nose directly at her. The gun fired, detonating its shell on impact.

"Gahhh!" Eisenhower screamed. She gritted her teeth and turned around, readying herself for Grant's impromptu landing. But once again the horse hit the ground with its feet avoiding her roads.

"That's...that's impossible!" Eisenhower exclaimed.

Before she could recover, the horse raised its sword legs, ramming them towards her. Eisenhower quickly activated Interstate Highway System, moving aside before being skewered, then shifted herself further back to avoid another follow-up attack.

“Retreating?” Grant asked with a raise of an eyebrow.

Eisenhower gave an annoyed smile.

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

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**Hidden Hand.** Many historians initially viewed Dwight Eisenhower as being as a simpleton politically (e.g. Harry Truman said “Eisenhower doesn’t know any more about politics than a pig knows about Sunday”). However, as Richard Nixon once said, “he was a far more complex and devious man than most people realized.” This revised view was popularized by the biography “Hidden Hand Presidency,” and this name is the basis for the Hidden Hand Party that Deedee Eisenhower leads in the novel.

## Cavalry

Eisenhower stuck her hand into the head of her tank.

“Take this!”

She pulled inside her weapon, causing a shell to fire out its gun. Grant’s horse leapt away and fired a blast from its cannon in return. Eisenhower shifted herself along Interstate Highway System and fired another shot. Grant dodged the attack and launched counters of his own, all while avoiding stepping on Eisenhower’s sprawling set of roads.

“It seems I’ve misjudged Grant,” Nixon remarked, “his fighting abilities are far greater than the rumors suggest.”

“He’s the best fighter I’ve ever had!” Lincoln said with a proud smile. “He’s strong on the battlefield, and practically invincible atop a horse!”

\* \* \* \* \*

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

“Before we begin our ceremonies, I thought we could have ourselves a little fun.” Herschberger strode to the jumping bar, lifted it higher than his head, then turned to the class. “Cadet Grant!”

A small cadet seated atop a towering steed stepped forward. 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.

Grant placed his hand on the beast’s back. The animal gave a snort, then charged at the bar. The horse leapt forward, clearing the jump with room to spare. The room erupted in cheers. With ease, Grant had set a new record for the high jump; one that would stand for another 25 years.

“Well,” Herschberger said with a bashful smirk. “I can’t follow that! Well done sir; class dismissed!”

Grant dismounted his horse, then noticed Herschberger calling him over.

“That was quite the spectacle there, soldier!”

“York deserves all the credit,” Grant replied, stroking the horse’s mane.

“In any case,” Herschberger said handing Grant a letter, “I wanted to personally give you this.” He gave a grin, then patted Grant squarely on the back. “Congratulations son! You’ve been invited to the Mexican front by [Old Rough and Ready] herself!”

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

“Have the recruits arrived?” she asked an aide.

“Yes ma’am.”

“Good,” she replied, “go ahead and send Lieutenant Grant to meet me posthaste.”

“I’m already here, ma’am.”



Taylor stopped, turning around to see a short man following behind.

"How long have you been back there, son?"

Grant shrugged his shoulders.

"Regardless," Taylor continued, "the reason I wanted to speak with you," she said, handing him a clipboard, "was to officially appoint you quartermaster of our camp."

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.

"You complaining, soldier?"

"No ma'am; 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."

"I understand your hesitation soldier, 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 recognize the role's significance, I'm simply confused as to why I was selected for it."

Taylor gave a grin.

"I love my soldiers, but most of them can't count past ten! Needless to say, none of them are capable of keeping 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 term 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.

"In that case, I—"

A bullet whizzed past Grant's face, cutting him off. Calmly, Grant and Taylor looked over 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. Taylor took a peek around.

"We've got them outnumbered, but we don't have enough ammo on hand to take them out."

"Is there more ammo back at the storage unit?" Grant asked.

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

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

“Don’t be a fool!” Taylor shouted, “you’ll be shot down the moment you’re spotted!”

“Then I’ll be sure I don’t get spotted.”

Before Taylor could continue, Grant ran his horse out of cover and towards Mexican soldiers.

“Idiot,” Taylor murmured as she waited for the sound of gunfire. But nothing happened. Curious, Taylor peeked around and widened her eyes at the sight before her.

Grant’s horse was sprinting towards the Mexican troops, but Grant himself was nowhere to be seen...

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**Grant’s Flashback I.** The scenes at West Point, including Grant setting a 25 year horse jumping record, are almost word for word true.

While it is true that Ulysses Grant was reluctantly appointed to be quartermaster, it is not true that he was personally recruited by Zachary Taylor himself. He also put up a bit more of a resistance to the position than is displayed in the story because he really wanted to go and fight on the front lines.

## You Too

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

The Mexican soldiers marched forward, ignoring the beast. Meanwhile, Taylor continued watching the horse as it stopped in front of the storage shed.

"My God!" Taylor remarked as Grant appeared behind the horse and picked up a box of ammunition. "That daredevil just rode through that battlefield clinging to the side of his horse!"

Grant grabbed hold of the ammunition, then rotated his body to the horse's other side before sprinting back towards Taylor.

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

Another soldier took a closer look, noticing the flaps of an army uniform rustling beneath the horse's stomach.

"It's the enemy! Fire, fire!"

Grant rotated back atop the horse.

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

He turned around, looking at the Mexican soldiers just before they fired. Grant pulled the reigns, narrowly shifting his horse away from the shots, then rounded a corner back to Taylor's side.

"Excellent work, soldier!" Taylor exclaimed as she distributed the ammo to her troops.

"She did all the work," Grant said, scratching the horse's ears.

Taylor loaded a rifle, then looked back to Grant.

"I know you're not planning to stick with the army long term, but I think you ought to 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 raged on in earnest. His horse trembled at the gunfire, but Grant stroked its back, calming her down.

"I suppose," Grant spoke up, "that sounds alright with me."

"That's what I like to hear. And if you're going to be staying with us," she said, pointing to an older soldier besides them, "you'd well to get on this man's good side. He's the rising star of our engineering corps, and the first man you ought to turn to if you're ever in need of fortifications."

"Oh madam," the man said with a light bow, "you're far too kind."

Grant dismounted and extended his hand.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, sir," Grant remarked, "I'm Odysseus Grant."

The man grasped Grant's outstretched hand.

"Robbie Lee."

\* \* \* \* \*

Grant's horse stepped aside as Eisenhower swung her weapon. Firearms sprung from the horse's side and fired while Eisenhower slid along her roads, dodging the attacks.

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

"It is for now," Truman agreed, "but this high intensity fighting can't continue forever. Sooner or later, one of them is going to breakdown."

As if on cue, a series of cracks spread across Eisenhower's network of roads, followed by whole sections of her roads dissolving into the air. Eisenhower wiped a streak of sweat across her forehead, sliding back as Grant charged at her.

"You really never stop, do you?" Eisenhower asked through a forced smile. "Then again, I need to wrap things up soon myself."

Eisenhower snapped her fingers as the road behind her extended up straight into the air.

"Executive Power: Interstate Highway System; Space Race!"

Eisenhower turned around and ran straight up her vertical road. She reached its peak, then kicked off the road, shooting herself at Grant with the velocity of a comet.

"Now get ready!" she screamed, "for a lesson in three-dimensional warfare!"

Grant took half a step a back, then glanced down in shock. Despite his careful calculations, the back feet of his horse had somehow landed right on the edge of Eisenhower's roads. Before he could move, his horse's legs shot out along the road.

"I see," Grant grumbled as his steed toppled. "You acted like your roads were breaking up because you were running out of steam, but in reality, you were using the extra energy to widen the road behind me!"

"Correct!" Eisenhower screamed. "And despite your gullibility, you should 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."

Grant yanked his reigns, sending his horse even farther across Eisenhower's road. The horse kicked off its hind legs; the combined momentum of Eisenhower's EP and Grant's pull throwing its legs around in a tight circle. The legs reached out, wrapping around Eisenhower's airborne body before slamming her to the ground.

Eisenhower coughed, then pushed against the horse's iron grip around her. As she broke free, the horse turn to face her, its cannon nose pointed directly in front of her face.

"Fire," Grant declared.

Eisenhower swung her weapon at the same time as the cannon released, the smoke from its shot covering the two fighters in a cloud of dust.

"Time out!" Taft screamed as he jogged to the arena's center. He reached the fighters, gave each a brief inspection, then nodded his head.

"The match is over!" Taft shouted, slamming his gavel to the ground.

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

"The winner," Taft continued, "is [The Hero of Appomattox], Odysseus S. Grant!"

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Eisenhower gave a groan as she opened her eyes. Bright lights shone overhead, and she found herself lying on top some sort of hospital bed.

"Finally come back to the land of the living?" a voice cooed.

Eisenhower looked to see a woman wearing an orange dress shirt and a pair of black suspenders.

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

"Indeed," Willow Willson spoke frankly, "and in a most pitiful way, I might add. Then again, such lackluster performances are to be expected from of a second-rate school like *Columbia*."

Eisenhower gave a light snort.

"I appreciate you trying to turn my grief into anger," she said with a smile, "but there's nothing to worry about; I'm more than accustomed to the harsh realities of battle."

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

Eisenhower chuckled.

"There's not much to say. I had concentrated my last few attacks towards ending the fight; I felt that I was making big progress," she shook her head, "but then that stupid Space Race mess ruined all my efforts."

She gave a sigh, then raised a somber smile.

"But my decision to attack was based upon the best information I had; any blame or fault in the matter is mine alone to bare."

“Righttttt,” Wilson spoke with a roll of her eyes, “that certainly sounds like what someone who doesn’t need any cheering up would say.”

“Shut up!” Eisenhower retorted, regaining some warmth in her smile. Sounds played in the room, and Eisenhower turned to see a nearby television, its screen announcing the start of the next match. “Don’t you want to watch this from the stands?”

“Please,” Wilson said waving her hands, “there’s nothing to be gained by watching that farce of a match.”

“Fair enough,” Eisenhower said turning back to the screen. “It’s going to be a fixed fight after all...”

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**Grant’s Flashback II.** Ulysses Grant honestly did ride a horse sideways to grab ammo for his troops, but some changes were made to simplify the details of the story. In particular: he didn’t do this because he was quartermaster (in fact, the quartermaster wasn’t even in charge of ammunition), this event didn’t happen on his very first day, Zachary Taylor was not present when it happened, and he didn’t meet Robert E. Lee right afterwards (though the two really did meet briefly during the Mexican War).

Another fun fact: Ulysses Grant really was planning to become a mathematics professor after his term of service, but he ended up finding his calling in the army after the Mexican-American war.

**Eisenhower and Wilson.** The fictional rivalry between Deedee Eisenhower and Willow Wilson is based loosely on the fact that Dwight Eisenhower and Woodrow Wilson were both heads of universities (Columbia and Princeton, respectively) and both played an excessive amount of golf.

## Democratic Republicans

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

She gestured to the arena.

"First up, 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 in with a black 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'll 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 in wearing 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 forthcoming match?"

"Given that Monroe specializes in long-range combat, it's pretty clear Madison holds the advantage 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 come from the same Party!"

"Exactly," Truman replied with a shrug. "It's pretty boring, but one of them will probably just give up once the match begins. The only question left," he said looking to the fighters, "is who's backing down?"

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Before entering the stadium, Madison and Monroe stood in front of a tall, slender woman.

"I had the most tremendous idea last night!" Tanya Jefferson spoke with jubilee. "Why don't we decide the outcome of the fight through a vote of the people?"

Madison and Monroe exchanged worried glances.

"...do you mean to say," Monroe asked, "that you want us to poll the audience regarding which of us they want to go forward?"

"Exactly! After all, it is only fitting that we, the Party of the people, leave the choice in the hands of the masses."

Madison bit her lip.

"This is certainly...an admirable idea," she spoke carefully. "But I believe there may be some practical considerations to be accounted for. For example, how should we conduct such a vote? Orally? This

certainly won't work if the voting is close to split. Would we instead use paper ballots? Such a process could take hours, if not days, to go through."

Jefferson brought a hand to her chin.

"Yes, perhaps this plan is too grand to be implemented on such short notice." She silently nodded her head. "Well then, in that case you two should just decide between yourselves who shall be going forward."

"We can't," Monroe replied. "Both of us are convinced that we ought to be the one to win. You're the only one who can make the decision."

Jefferson gave a sigh.

"I was afraid it might come to something like this."

Jefferson looked over her two best friends.

"...given the nature of Grant's Executive Power," she finally spoke, "I would say that Monroe is better suited to fight in the second round."

Monroe gave a small grin.

"That being said," Jefferson continued, "I have ultimately 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 you are," Jefferson corrected. "But Grant is not our primary concern here. It is Roosevelt and Lincoln for whom we must plan for, and for opponents of that caliber, only Madison stands a chance."

Monroe dropped her head.

"So, when you told us you'd be making your decision after watching the first match..." she said, clenching her fists. "That was just an outright lie! You were always going to pick Madison, regardless of the outcome!"

"No!" Jefferson insisted, "that's not true at all! Indeed, the first winner might have possessed an EP for which Madison stood no chance against. In such circumstances, I would have gladly declared you our champion!"

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

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

Monroe snarled, then slowly took back her composure.

"Don't worry," Monroe said with a modest smile. "I completely understand your decision. Now, if you'll excuse me," she said, walking away 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 originally elated when you secured this match between our members. But as things presently stand, I would gladly face all of Rushmore on my own if it meant restoring our Party’s sense of unity.”

“It’s okay,” Madison said patting her back. “Monroe is no fool. She’ll come around eventually.”

“Eventually, yes; but there’s no telling when that time shall come.” Jefferson looked Madison in the eye. “I have complete faith in Monroe’s loyalty, but she can be impulsive at times, especially if she thinks she’s been slighted.” Jefferson rested a hand on Madison’s arm. “Please, be careful out there.”

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In the arena, Taft eyed the combatants. There was a genuine tension between them; far more than he expected from two members of the same Party. Taft shook his head, then raised his gavel.

“Let the match...begin!”

The gavel struck the ground, but neither fighter moved. Madison waited a moment, then furrowed her brow.

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

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

Monroe nonchalantly raised her arms into the air.

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

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

“...to no one!”

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**Epitaphs.** The nickname “The Sage of Montpelier” for James Madison comes from the plantation Montpelier that he owned, as well as it being a play on the nickname “The Sage of Monticello” for James’s political partner and friend Thomas Jefferson.

Jane Monroe’s epitaph, [The Heir of Good Feelings], is a slight mutation of James Monroe’s most common nickname “The Era of Good Feelings President” due to him being President when there was (at least on the surface) little political disagreement due to a temporary one party system. It is because of this epitaph that Jane Monroe was given her **hippie aesthetic (which is historically inaccurate** to say the least!).

## Monroe's Doctrine

During the War of Independence, a young Jordan Washington looked across the river at the enemy encampment.

"They've got two cannons aimed right for us," he remarked. "We'll have to bring a small crew across the Delaware and seize their artillery before our forces can move in."

His soldiers exchanged worried glances.

"Sir," someone replied, "you're asking us to paddle in the dead of night through a raging snowstorm for over eight hours straight."

"Yes," Washington replied promptly. "Now, who's coming with me?"

No one moved. Then, a small hand rose from the back.

"Name and age?" Washington asked as he made his way to the volunteer.

"Jane Monroe; 18 years young."

Washington nodded his head, then turned to his army.

"Will anyone else be joining me? Or is this young'un the only one here with some backbone?"

A few older soldiers raised their hands, followed by a couple dozen more. Washington gave a slight nod.

"Ready your boats; we leave in five."

Monroe started towards shore, but Washington blocked her path.

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

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

"Sir," she spoke up, "I really feel I ought to do some of the rowing."

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

"Why are we even bringing this piece of cloth anyways? It's just going to slow us down!"

Washington turned to Monroe, then back to the flag.

"This flag," he spoke, running his hand across its stripes, "is a symbol of freedom. A symbol, which possesses far greater strength than any weapon we possess."

He pointed to the boats.

"As these soldiers 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 fighting for."

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

After some more rowing, the boats arrived at the bank of the river.

"A few of us will go back to pick up the second wave," Washington shouted as the soldiers disembarked, "In the meantime, guard these roads with your lives. Do not leave your posts for an instant; understood?"

"Yes sir!"

Monroe took to her post guarding an empty road. She stood alone waiting for hours as the raging weather shifted around her from snow, to rain, to hail. She gave a quick yawn and stretched out her arms, only to snap back at the sound of footsteps from behind. She turned, raising her rifle.

"Who's there!"

Through the fog, Monroe could make out the hazy image of a pistol aimed at her.

"Get the heck outta here!" a voice screamed.

"Not happening, baby," Monroe replied, tightening her grip, "I'm under direct orders from General Washington to stay put."

"...did you say Washington?"

The man stepped forward, then looked at the American flag behind Monroe.

"Ah, shucks!" the man said with a chuckle while lowering his gun, "I didn't realize you were 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...I was given strict orders not to leave this post."

The man scratched his chin.

"I see."

The man thought for a moment, then put on a smile.

"Give me a second."

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

"I'm guessing your 'strict orders' didn't say you couldn't eat on the job?"

"They did not!" she exclaimed before devouring the sandwich. As she finished her meal, Monroe took a closer look at the man's bag in his hand. "What's that?"

"A medical bag. I'm a doctor, you see, and I thought I may be able to help some poor fellow in your troupe." The man bashfully scratched his chin. "Assuming General Washington wants me, of course."

Monroe gave a tip of her hat.

"I'm certain he'd be more than happy to have a patriot like yourself in our ranks."

"Indeed, I would."

The two looked to see Washington marching to them, the rest of the battalion trailing shortly behind. Monroe gave a salute, then joined Washington 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, their troops are out cold after a night of heavy drinking, and they won't be expecting an attack from behind like this. Overall, things should go pretty smoothly, unless of course..."

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

"We're spotted!"

Washington lunged forward, striking the scout with his blade, but not before the soldier lifted his arm, launching a flare into the sky.

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

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

Washington ran into the camp, cutting twenty Hessians before they had the chance to draw their weapons. He turned to face another wave, only for a cannonball to detonate in front of him, knocking him down. The Americans stood still, watching as their General started to rise, then fell back to the ground.

"What do we do?" a soldier mumbled as he bit into his nails, "What do we do?!"

"Isn't it obvious?"

Monroe charged past the line of soldiers, planting her flag next to Washington.

"We press on, baby!"

Monroe drew her rifle, firing at a dozen soldiers as they ran at Washington.

"The kid's right!" an American shouted, "let's show these Hessians what we're made of!"

The Americans gave a valiant yell and charged into the enemy camp.

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

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

Washington twitched on the ground.

"Be..." he mumbled.

"Sir?" Monroe asked.

"Behind you!"

Monroe turned around as 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, striking the Hessian. Monroe smirked, then collapsed down, the snow beneath her turning a scarlet red.

"Hang on, kid!" the doctor exclaimed as he rushed to her side. "You're going to be alright!" He took a closer look at the wound, then gave a small gulp. "But just barely."

"...Washington..." Monroe spoke wearily, "...save...him..."

"I'm fine," Washington spoke besides her, "just got the wind knocked out of me, that's all. You just focus on getting better, alright? Do that, and I promise, the next time you step onto the battlefield, you'll be a captain!"

"...a...captain...huh?"

Monroe smiled as she drifted to sleep, her head filled with thoughts of the brave warriors she'd command in battle someday.

But that day would never come; at least, not in this war. Time after time, Monroe would try to get back onto the battlefield, only to be turned away each time. Monroe did her best to maintain a cheerful disposition on the outside, but on the inside, she raged.

As fight after fight took 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.

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Monroe fired, her bullet grazing Madison's face.

"Holy cow!" Thompson exclaimed, "Monroe has actually launched an attack against her fellow Party member! We might have a real fight on our hands after all, folks!"

Madison rubbed her cheek, feeling the streak of blood trickling down her face.

"So that's how it's going to be, huh?"

Madison shifted her gaze between Monroe, Jefferson, and Grant. She paused, nodded her head, then pointed her trident at Monroe. The trident's tips unguled back and forth, as if they were leaves rustling in the wind.

"Executive Power," Madison spoke, "Ratification; Three Branches."

The trident suddenly lengthened, its prongs shooting out straight towards Monroe.

"Don't play with fire, baby!" Monroe shouted, twisting her body and dodging the prongs, "cause you're going to get burned!"

The crowd gasped as blood splattered to the ground.

Madison looked down, noticing the three fresh cuts along her own arm. Monroe smiled as she shot a peace sign.

“Executive Power: Monroe Doctrine, baby!”

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**Monroe’s Flashback.** James Monroe did volunteer to cross the Delaware, but it’s not true that he was the first to do so, nor did George Washington gave him any particular praise for this. He also didn’t ride in the same boat as George Washington, nor did he carry the flag (and in particular, he didn’t have a gallant last stand as he clung to the flag before going down). These last two points were done solely to reference the famous painting “Washington Crossing the Delaware” where James Monroe is depicted (ahistorically) doing both of these things.

Somewhat miraculously, Monroe’s interaction with the doctor is almost entirely true! Although he didn’t have a gun pointed at him, James Monroe was indeed harassed by a passing doctor who mistook him as a British soldier, after which James Monroe denied the doctor’s offer to go into his house. The doctor then joined Washington’s march, and during the battle this doctor narrowly saved James Monroe’s life after receiving a near fatal wound.

The incident with Washington going down in the fight is half true: it really is the case that during this battle, James Monroe’s commander took an injury and went down, after which James Monroe heroically stepped in to lead the troops before chaos erupted, only to go down himself shortly afterwards. However, **this commander was not George Washington** (as depicted in the novel), but rather William Washington (a distant cousin of George). Narratively it was far simpler (and cooler) to use Jordan Washington in EP:RW rather than introduce another character also named Washington.

## Madison's Constitution

Madison extended her trident once more, its prongs thrashing across the battlefield. Monroe jumped over one prong, then leaned back, dodging a strike to the head. She landed with one hand, pushing off and leaping away from another attack. With each dodge, a new wound appeared across Madison's body.

"What the heck?" Thompson shouted, "Madison is the one attacking, so why is she the one taking damage!"

"It's clearly got something to do with Monroe's EP," Truman remarked, "but I've got no idea how it works."

Jefferson gave a sigh from the stands.

"Things not going as planned?" asked the young man beside her.

"No, Quincy, they most certainly are not."

"I'm surprised how optimistic you were to begin with," Quincy remarked with a chuckle, "you know how free and independent Monroe can be."

"Perhaps she'd be more docile," Jefferson replied with a somber smile, "if you hadn't helped her acquire such a tremendous EP."

Quincy gave a nod.

"Executive Power: Monroe Doctrine," he remarked, "the ability to instantly counter any hostile action taken against her...it's a devastating EP, especially when combined with her artful dodges."

"It would be a difficult EP for Madison to overcome," Jefferson added on, "if she weren't already well acquainted with fighting Monroe."

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

"Well?" Pat Henry asked, "we doing this or what?"

"Give us a second," Eddy Randolph replied as he turned back to Madison. "Are you sure you can do this? You really don't look good."

"I have to do it," Madison replied with a cough, "no one else can defeat Henry."

Randolph solemnly lowered his head.

"It's fine," Madison assured him as she made her way to the center, "I will not let this land fall to ruin."

"No, you will not," Henry agreed, raising his arms, "because I'm going to stop you here and now!"

Henry charged, not waiting for the referee to start the fight. He stopped before Madison and threw a masterful punch.

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

Henry raised his guard as Madison unleashed a series of thrusts, perfectly absorbing the blows at the cost of blocking his vision. Madison swung her leg, striking Henry's shin and knocking him down. Henry started to rise, but stopped as he felt Madison's trident pricking his neck. He clicked his tongue.

"...I surrender."

The Federalists released a chorus of cheers as the referee announced their victory, only to be drowned out by howls from the Anti-Federalists.

"Screw this!" Joe Mason screamed, "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 weapons into the air.

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

Henry gave a snort, then left the arena.

"What are you doing!" Mason hissed behind him, "you're giving in way too easily!"

Henry gave an evil grin.

"Who ever said I'm giving in?"

The next day, Randolph slammed a stack of papers on Madison's desk.

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

Madison skimmed the papers in front of her.

"It looks like all of these amendments are centered around blocking me from attending the national convention."

"Exactly! And without you there, the project is doomed to fail!"

"Very troublesome..."

"You know what I think!" Randolph exclaimed, grabbing the papers. "I think we should take this garbage back to Henry and tell him right where he can shove it!"

"We can't," Madison replied, lifting the papers from Randolph's hands. "He beat us fair and square; challenging him on these amendments would only serve to undermine our movement. Our only choice is to fight on his terms."

Madison flipped through the papers and pointed to a line of text.

"...I don't like our odds," Randolph spoke as he read the line over.

"Neither do I," Madison replied, "but it's our only option."



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

"Greetings, friends!"

"Shut it," Randolph replied.

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

Madison and Randolph looked out at an abandoned city with towering buildings separated by wide open spaces.

"Seriously?" Randolph asked as she examined the battlefield. "I'm surprised you'd want to fight in a dump like this."

Henry gave a feigned look of surprise.

"Oh my," he said with a sly grin, "I think there's a slight misunderstanding here. I never said I would be the one fighting, only that I would be choosing Madison's opponent."

Randolph and Madison looked to each other.

"But if you aren't representing the Anti-Federalists..." Randolph began.

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

"I am," a voice called from behind.

Madison turned in shock.

"Monroe?!" she exclaimed.

"That's right, baby!"

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

"You see," Monroe explained. "I was quite miffed after you stole my seat at the Virginia conference away from me," she twirled her rifle and pointed it at Madison, "so, I thought it would only be fair if I took your convention seat in return."

"Stole your seat?" Madison furrowed her brow. "I did no such thing!" Madison grabbed Monroe's shoulder. "Listen, Henry is obviously just using you to get what he wants!"

"Please, baby," Monroe said, shrugging her off, "I'm the one using him."

Randolph clicked his tongue.

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

"It'll be alright," Madison said, gathering her composure, "I will not fail."

Randolph and Henry stayed back, listening as the fight raged in the town below.

“Oh my,” Henry spoke as the gunfire came to a close, “it sounds like your fruitless little struggle is finally over.”

Randolph slumped down as he looked out into the horizon, then quickly raised himself back up.

“It is over!” Randolph exclaimed with triumph, “cause we’re finally done dealing with you and your lot!”

“What are you...?”

Henry stopped as he spotted Madison walking to them. She was covered in injuries, and the tip of her nose was partially shot off, but she strode onwards, a look of determination covering her face.

“I win,” she declared.

Henry tightened his fists.

“You’re making a mistake,” he spoke softly, “uniting the country, giving greater powers to our Executives...it will bring disaster to our land!”

Madison paused for a moment.

“It’s possible that our experiment will end in failure,” she admitted, staring Henry in the eyes. “But if we do nothing, we are certain to perish.”

Henry gave a snort.

“I swear, I’ll never stop fighting you! Not until you either give me liberty...or give me death!”

“And I swear,” Madison responded, raising her hand together with its new Presidential Seal, “I’ll stop anyone who tries destroying my country.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Madison retracted her prongs and charged forward. Monroe smirked in response.

“Trying to get closer to me?” she said readying her rifle, “how sweet!”

She fired, but Madison deflected her bullets.

“No funnnn,” Monroe bemoaned. “But even if you don’t take any of my hits, I can just finish you off with Monroe Doctrine!”

Madison thrust her trident at Monroe’s feet. Monroe stepped back and smiled as she awaited her EP’s effect.

“The thing about your EP,” Madison spoke out, “is that it only works if I’m actually aiming to hurt you!”

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

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**Monroe Doctrine.** This EP is based off of the doctrine introduced by James Monroe, which essentially declares that the United States will fight back against any interference from the Old World in the New World.

**Madison's Flashback.** Few of the events in this flashback literally happened (e.g. there were no physical fights, only political ones), though most of the events are based around James Madison's very real struggle to ratify the Constitution despite the many roadblocks Patrick Henry put in front of him.

Notably, it is not true that Patrick Henry literally added secret clauses to their agreements, but he did genuinely do a lot of maneuvering to make it so that James Madison didn't appear at the national convention for ratifying the constitution. In particular, he forced James Madison to take part in an election in a heavily gerrymandered district against James Monroe (with this gerrymandering represented in the novel through the abandoned city favorable to Jamie Madison). Nevertheless, James Madison narrowly defeated his old friend James Monroe and ratified the constitution.

Also, James Madison really did have his nose damaged when fighting James Monroe, namely by getting frostbite while campaigning out in the cold.

## Under the Surface

"Did you really think," Madison remarked, tightening her legs around Monroe, "that I wouldn't exploit your EP's big weakness of responding only to direct attacks?"

"And did you really think," Monroe replied with a grin, "that you could keep me with such stubby legs?"

Monroe twisted around and ducked down, slipping out of Madison's hold. Madison hit the floor and lunged forward, leaving her trident behind as she grabbed for Monroe. Monroe stepped back, her long strides easily outpacing Madison's short reach.

"So," Quincy spoke from the stands, "who do you think is going to win?"

Jefferson gazed across the arena.

"Naively it would appear Madison holds the better position. After all, she's forced Monroe into close-combat while neutralizing her EP." Jefferson shook her head. "But in terms of experience, Monroe actually holds a significant advantage."

"Fair point. Monroe is plenty used to fighting in close-range. On the other hand, Madison almost never goes into battle without her trident in hand."

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

Monroe gave a smirk as she dodged yet another grab from Madison.

"Stay still," Madison grumbled as she lunged at Monroe once more.

"Sorry, baby, but you're never going to catch me..." Monroe stepped forward, sweeping Madison's legs off the floor. "Especially not with your face planted in the ground!" Monroe extended her arms, aiming her rifle point-blank at Madison's falling body.

Madison remained entirely non-plussed.

"Executive Power," she spoke, "Ratification; Three Branches!"

Three prongs shot out the ground, tearing across Monroe's legs.

"Gahhh!" Monroe stumbled back, tripping over and dropping her rifle. As she fell, Monroe looked at Madison's trident planted in the ground.

"I see," Monroe hissed, "you left your weapon behind on purpose, all so you could extend its tips underneath my feet!"

Monroe hit the ground with a groan. She reached for her rifle, but Madison leapt onto her arm, stopping it as she brought back her fist.

"I've been waiting to do this," Madison spoke while readying her punch, "for a very, very long time."

"Wait, wait, wait!" Monroe spoke frantically, "I surrender! I surrender! For real this time!"

Taft slammed his gavel.

"The match is over! The winner, is [The Sage of Montepelier], Jamie Madison!"

Madison shook her head, then dismounted off Monroe. Monroe started to rise, but fell back on her injured legs. Madison reached out, grabbing Monroe's arm before she hit the ground.

"...thanks," Monroe mumbled.

Madison gave a nod, then lifted Monroe to her side, the crowd cheering on as the two walked out arm in arm.

"Well," Eisenhower remarked from her bed, "what did you end up thinking about the match?"

"It was completely dreadful," Wilson replied with a snide. "There was no point in Madison attacking at the start if she knew what Monroe's EP was capable of, nor was there any reason for Monroe to fall for such an obvious trap at the end."

"Agreed," Eisenhower said with a nod. "There really is no benefit in watching a fixed fight."

On the ground, Monroe slipped Madison a subtle glance.

"When did you figure it out?"

"I had my suspicions after your very first shot," Madison explained, rubbing the cut on her cheek, "it was a weak attack," she pointed to her chipped nose, "and I know you can shoot better than that." She looked to the scars along her arm. "I only became completely certain after you activated Monroe Doctrine. Each of your slashes were designed to look painful, but they inflicted almost no real damage."

"And I appreciate you doing the same for me," Monroe said, wiggling her supposedly injured leg.

"Though of course," she said with a smirk, "I let you hit me."

"Anyways," Madison continued, "why in the world did you make us go through this ridiculous farce?"

"Can't you hear it?" Monroe said, gesturing to the crowd, "you put up a valiant fight against a disrespectful ally, then accepted her back with open arms! The audience is completely on your side now!"

"I hardly see the relevance."

Monroe shook her head.

"The people would never accept the Democratic Republican winning the tournament if you won this match with a bye. Sure, the Presidents would still be forced to swear their allegiances, but their soldiers would never join us."

"...I suppose that's fair. But why didn't you tell me all this beforehand?"

"Because you're a terrible actor!" Monroe said with a grin, then lowered her smile. "That and, I thought you might end up blundering badly enough to give me the win."

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

"Honestly," Madison shook her head giving the faintest of smiles, "you never cease to amaze me."

Monroe grinned back.

"You too pal!"

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A giant cowboy paced down the Coliseum.

"You got this," LBJ muttered, "you got this!"

"Nervous?"

LBJ looked to see a handsome man wearing a baggy tweed jacket, wrinkled cackles, and mismatched socks.

"N-nervous?" LBJ replied, puffing out his chest. "Why...why would I be nervous?!"

JFK rested a hand on his shoulder.

"These are extraordinary times, and you face an extraordinary challenge. That being said," he tightened his grip, "if you reduce your sights in the face of difficulty...well, perhaps it would be better for you not to go at all."

"Not go...?" LBJ said weakly, then let out a snort. "Not go!" He threw JFK's hand off his back and marched off. "Like hell I won't!"

LBJ continued onwards, stopping as he reached the final gateway. He stared at the iron door; the sole barrier separating him from the match that would make or break his entire career. He swallowed, then turned around.

"I should eat something," he muttered before shuffling down the hall. He started rounding a corner, then stopped after hearing a voice from the other side.

"I can't stand Johnson's long face!" JFK shouted, "he just stands around looking sad, waiting for someone to stroke his damn ego!" He shook his head. "Honestly, I think it's high time we reconsider whether we keep him in the Party."

A woman in a wheelchair placed her hands together.

"I understand what you're saying," FDR spoke, "but we ought to at least see the outcome of the match before making such rash decisions."

"Oh please," JFK said with a roll of his eyes, "McKinley's a veteran fighter! LBJ's only known for his signature move, the 'Johnson City Windmill'..."

JFK got on his back and kicked in a windmill motion.

"If you hit me I'll kick you!" he squealed, "if you hit me I'll kick you!"

FDR crossed her arms.

"It is true that Johnson can be a coward when it comes to even the mildest of dangers..."

LBJ clenched his fists.

“Damn Harvards,” he whispered, “I’ll show you yet!”

LBJ raced down the hall, not bothering to listen to the rest of their conversation.

“...but,” FDR continued, “when his back is really against the wall...that is when LBJ shines best!”

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**LBJ and JFK.** While Jack Kennedy did complain about Lyndon Johnson’s “damn long face”, there isn’t actually a solid record of Jack saying that Lyndon should be ousted. The only exception to this I know of is one conversation recorded by Evelyn Lincoln, but her account was later disputed by Robert Kennedy.

This being said, it is quite plausible that Jack would have wanted Lyndon off of the ticket in 1964, since, at this point, it seemed unlikely that they would be able to win many states in the south (which was the main reason LBJ was brought onto the ticket in the first place).

**Johnson City Windmill.** Lyndon Johnson attracted crowds during his campaigning by flying around in a helicopter (nicknamed the Johnson City Windmill), which was a piece of technology that was practically unheard of in many parts of rural Texas.

As a kid, Lyndon was known to be quite the coward. In particular, whenever someone threatened to fight him, Lyndon would get on his back and kick his legs out while screaming “if you hit me I’ll kick you!”