

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, e.g. 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 helicopter with a sense of fear and loathing, sighing to herself as she brought a cigarette to her lips and raised her hand 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?” one of the Gonzos asked as Thompson took her seat in the back.

“A group of Presidents are wreaking havoc downtown, and we’ve been granted the ‘high privilege’ of reporting in on the story.”

“Ahh geez!” the other Gonzo groaned. “Why do we keep getting the short end of the stick here?”

“It’s because I’m the only goddamn reporter in this city with enough balls to do the job! Honestly, I’d go and volunteer for the post if only our eggheaded editors would just chill out for a second and let me do things my way. But no; they keep insisting I ‘do things by the book’ and that I ‘stop cursing on live television’, like I’m a freakin’ girl scout here or something.”

Thompson looked outside her window, watching the violence unfold below as the helicopter flew off overhead.

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

She quietly shook out her head, adjusting her bucket hat and yellow-tinted glasses before pointing over to the closest Gonzo. He aimed his camera head at her, raising three fingers...two...one...

“Hello Baltimore!” Thompson screamed. “This is Huntress Thompson, reporting live from the air! Our city once again finds itself in the middle of a turf war waged between the Jacksonians and the New Dealers, and this time there’s a whopping four Presidents in the fray! This is bad news for anybody who owns property in the area, but great news for anyone like me hoping to watch some real-life Executive Powers in action! Now, let’s see what we’ve got going on down there!”

Gonzo tilted his head, zooming in on a plain looking woman facing off against a large cowboy on the street down below. The woman jumped back as the man lunged at her, then placed her arms in front of her chest.

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

A pair of ornamental blades materialized in her hands as she swung out the swords at the man’s protruding stomach.

“Woah there!” Landon B. Johnson hollered, backing himself off. “Hurry up, JFK! I could really use some backup over here!”

Across the street, a young, handsome man silently shook out his head as a giant chunk of concrete hurtled towards him.

"Ask not what your Party can do for you," Jay F. Kennedy grumbled, "but what you can do for your Party!" He crouched down, the golden Seal on his hand glowing a mixture of red, white, and blue. "Executive Power: Man on the Moon!"

JFK leapt into the sky, his body floating through the air as the concrete passed harmlessly beneath his feet. He looked out, watching as a rugged man lifted a car off the street, his beady eyes locked onto his own reflection in the car's side-view mirrors.

"Just give up already!" Hank Pierce quipped as he tossed the vehicle over towards JFK, "I've got you beat in terms of both looks and power!"

Thompson grinned to herself as she watched the chaos unfold down below.

"Incredible; absolutely incredible! I tell you folks, I never do get tired of seeing two Presidents...fighting...it..." Thompson slowed her speech as she noticed something strange out in the horizon. "Hey..." she said, pointing over to a mushroom shaped cloud blossoming in the distance. "Am I on too many shrooms right now, or is that a—"

A giant shockwave slammed into the city, cutting Thompson off as the helicopter flung across the sky. The piloting Gonzo frantically pulled on the controls, fighting to keep control of the copter as Thompson continued to stare out at the strange cloud. She grabbed a cigarette from her pocket, then turned to her cameramen with glee.

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

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

"Screw the higher ups!" she screamed. "I'm not going to sit back and watch as another scoop passes us by just because those fatcat dumbnuts wanted to stay home and scratch their own asses! We're going out there, and that's final!"

The Gonzos nodded, directing the copter out of the city. They flew for some time, the mysterious cloud dissipating long before they could reach it. However, what remained in its place appeared just as shocking.

"Jesus Christ; are you seeing this folks?" Thompson shouted, looking over the titanic crater carved into the earth below. "This must have been where our strange shockwave came from! Offhand, this crater looks to be around 300 feet deep with a radius of 1200 feet. Moreover—"

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

Thompson turned around, spotting a bright light flickering at the crater's edge as a sly smile crept over her face.

"Take us down, Gonzo!"

"Uhhhh, I'd rather not," he replied, "I think I'm starting to get the fear..."

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

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

Reluctantly, Gonzo lowered down the chopper, with Thompson jumping out and sprinting up ahead before he could finish his landing. She mentally readied herself as she ran, anticipating every possibility as to what might lie waiting for her within the mysterious 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. He looked over Thompson and took a quick glance to the Gonzo running towards them from the copter. "So you're journalists then! Well that's just perfect. Tell me, are you all 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, it'll get there soon enough I suppose. Are you rolling now?" the man asked.

Thompson gave a quiet nod as the Gonzo reached her side.

"Excellent!" The man stepped back, clearing out his throat. "My fellow Americans..."

He raised his hand, causing Thompson to widen her eyes.

"A Presidential Seal?" she hissed, looking over the familiar symbol of an eagle inscribed within a circle of 13 stars burned into the back of the man's hand.

"...my name is Henry S. Truman," he continued, "a humble President of our great nation. And the destruction you see here," he spoke, gesturing to the crater behind him, "is the aftermath of my Executive Power: The Manhattan Project."

Thompson paused for a second, taking in the weight of his words.

"...and what is it that you want?"

Truman gave a sigh.

"As things stand," he continued, "our nation finds itself on the cusp of being torn apart by the needless and repeated fights waged 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 all these pointless feuds." He lowered down his head. "But of course, it is not enough to yearn for peace. We must work for it, and if necessary," he said, raising a small smile over his previously solemn face, "fight for it!"

Thompson glanced to Gonzo, then back over to Truman, furrowing her brow.

"The hell are you talking about, old timer?"

Truman transformed his smile into a vicious grin as he dramatically threw out his arms to the side.

"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 will be organized by a trinity of Presidents including 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 4th. I'm also very pleased to announce that we've already secured the participation of four prominent Presidents for our humble 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.

"That's...that's every member of Rushmore right there!"

"Indeed it is!" Truman chuckled. "And so, my fellow Presidents, I hope you'll join me for what is sure to be...a Revolutionary War!"

Thompson stood still, her body frozen in shock, then frantically signaled over to Gonzo.

"C-Cut!" she stammered as Gonzo's light flickered off, shutting down the broadcast.

Truman let out a sigh of relief, wiping a hand across his forehead.

"Welp, the die is cast now!" He smirked, turning over to Thompson. "Say, would you mind giving me a ride back into town? It seems the car I drove over here didn't quite survive the blast!"

"...uhh, yeah...sure..." she replied thoughtlessly, her brain still in a daze. She continued staring blankly at Truman for a moment, then shook out her head.

Jesus, what the hell am I doing? she thought to herself. *The opportunity I've always waited for all my life is literally standing right in front of me, and all I can do is stand around here gawking like an idiot?*

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

"You can come with us," she shouted, regaining her former sense of composure, "on one condition!" She pointed over to herself. "I get to be the emcee for your tournament!"

Truman instantly turned his friendly smile into a cold, icy stare.

"Are you honestly making demands of me..." he asked, gesturing over to the crater behind him, "...after witnessing the kind of destruction I can bear against you?"

Thompson maintained her iron gaze at Truman, her spirit unyielding. Truman stared at her a second longer, then broke into a hearty laugh.

“Man alive!” he exclaimed, “You’ve sure got gumption, I’ll give you that much at least! Why don’t we talk out the details on our ride back?”

Truman chuckled to himself as he jaunted over to the copter with Thompson and Gonzo trailing just behind.

“Gonzo?” Thompson spoke up.

“Yeah boss?”

“I’ve got a lot of questions right now...the first of which being...” she said, looking towards the strange man geeking out over their news helicopter, “...who the hell is Henry Truman?”

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Over the next four months, dozens of Presidents would register for Truman’s Revolutionary War. Then, on the eve of November 3rd, the fateful bracket was released for the entire world to see...

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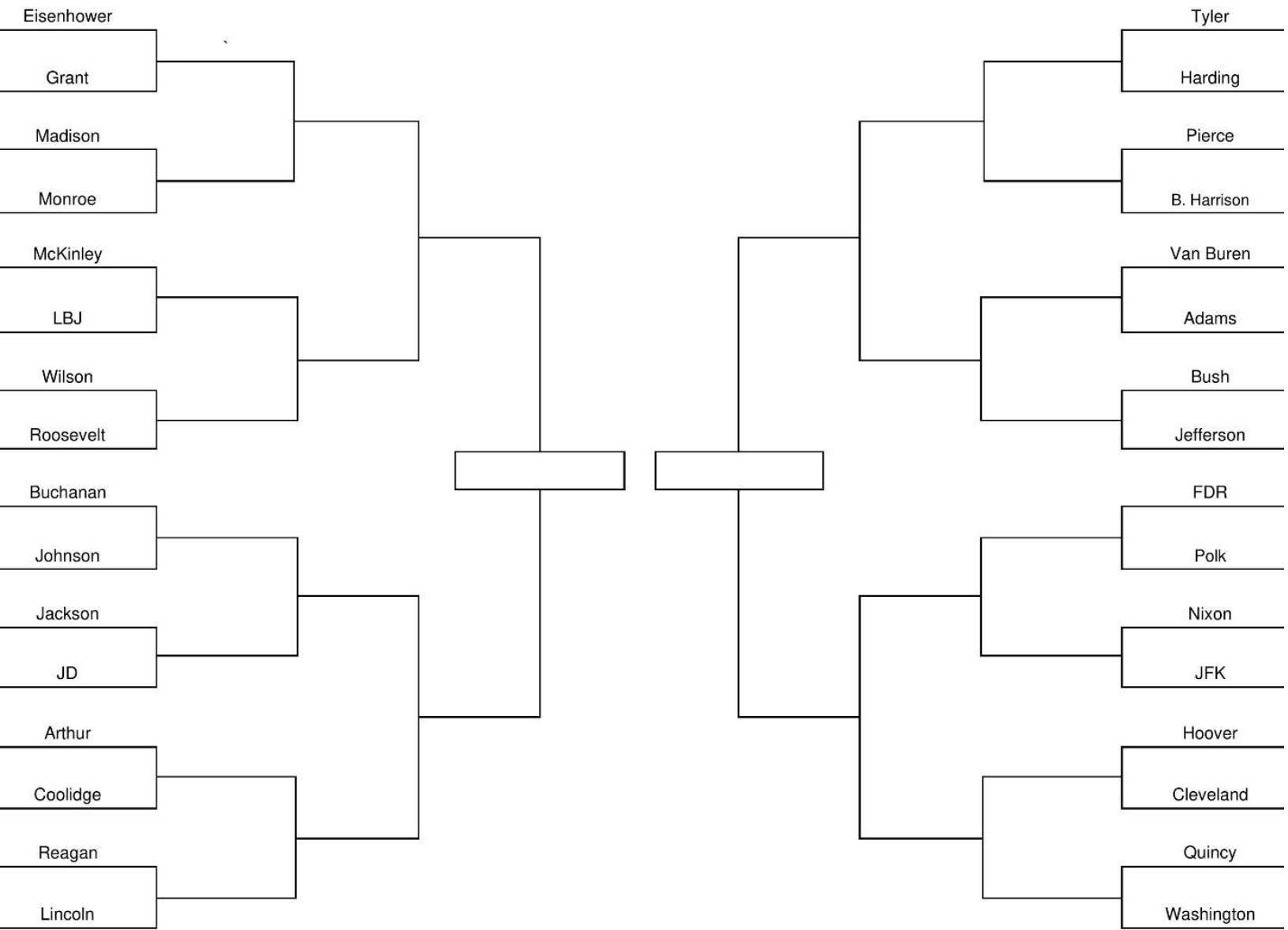
Hello Reader! As you may have already noticed, there are many historical references made throughout this novel. To help make these references more accessible, I have included **entirely optional** historical notes at the end of each chapter to elaborate some of these references and to clarify points 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 was largely defined by including the writer (i.e. himself) as a central character in the stories he wrote.

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

This, to be clear, is a super obscure reference which I don’t expect anyone reading this to have noticed. There are many more references of this level of obscurity made throughout the book, but I’ll refrain from commenting on these sorts of references unless they really stand out in the text like this one.

The Bracket



Day I: The First Branch

[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

[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

Two Star Generals

“Out of the way!” Huntress Thompson screamed, weaving her motorcycle through the crowded lines of traffic.

It was hard to believe that, just four months ago today, this entire area had been nothing more than dirt. Now you couldn’t go two feet without seeing something wild, whether it be construction workers putting up walls next to screaming religious fanatics, or saxophonists playing in front of armed thugs with cigars. The city was complete and total chaos, and Thompson loved every second of it.

Thompson continued with her ride, skidding to a halt as she reached the towering coliseum at the town’s center.

“Hot damn,” she muttered, getting off and rubbing her hand along its glistening marble walls. “Now this is something else...”

“Madam!” a secret service agent shouted, marching over with a glare. “It’s against city rules and regulations to park so close to the stadium walls! Please remove yourself this instant.”

“Didn’t nobody ever teach you how to read?” Thompson sneered, shoving her ID badge into his face. “You see this? It says V, I, P; i.e. I don’t give a flying crap about your stinking rules!”

“...Huntress Thompson...?” the agent frowned as he read the name aloud. “You told us you were going to be here over an hour ago.”

“And I told my dear old grandma I’d never cuss again in my life,” Thompson quipped, “but the world ain’t so fucking simple, now is it, punk? So why don’t you go ahead and pull that stick out of your ass before leaving me the hell alone!”

The agent rolled his eyes as he flipped on his walkie-talkie.

“Huntress Thompson is parked at gate 7; requesting immediate teleportation from Hayes, over.”

Thompson raised an eyebrow.

“Wait, what did you—?”

Thompson blinked, instantly finding herself standing in front of a wide Mahogany desk overlooking a stadium filled to the brim with people.

“Woah...” she muttered, looking down to the dirt floor at the coliseum’s center. “So that’s the arena, huh?”

“Ehem,” a voice coughed from behind. Thompson spun around, noticing a piano player seated beside her. “You ready for this, Thompson?”

Thompson smirked, shooting off a pair of thumbs up. The pianist nodded, pressing on their keys as the music played across the speakers, quieting the rowdy crowd. The screens around the coliseum flickered to life, giving a view into the commentary box with Thompson seated in center frame.

“Gooooood morning folks!” She shouted to a storm of cheers, “And welcome, to the Revolutionary War! For those that don’t already know, I’m Huntress Thompson, your master of ceremonies!” She threw her

arm over to the side. "Helping me out this week with the technical analysis for our fights, we have the lead organizer of the whole tournament..."

The piano music crescendoed as the pianist slammed their hands onto the keys and rose out of their seat, revealing their smiling face to the crowd below.

"Greetings!" Henry Truman shouted into his microphone. "Today, the entire world—"

"Just a minute, Henry," Thompson interrupted, holding her mic some distance away from her face, "let me go ahead and introduce you first." As she spoke, Thompson's mic accidentally picked up her words, broadcasting them across the stands. The crowd gave a friendly laugh as Thompson gave an embarrassed cough, her face turning a bright red. "Well, anyways; joining me today is [The Man from Independence], Henry Shipp Truman!"

"Henry S. Truman," he promptly corrected before turning back to the crowd. "Today, the entire world shall be looking to us for enlightened leadership aimed towards peace and progress. It is my duty to find this leadership, and I shall not shirk from it! That is to say," he said, pointing over to a wooden sign lying atop his desk. "The buck, stops, here!"

"Beautiful stuff there, Truman," Thompson remarked, "Now, let's get down to brass tacks!" The stadium screens shifted to a timeline for the upcoming week. "Our schedule will consist of eight fights for each of the first three days, followed by the quarterfinals on Friday, with both the semifinals and finals happening on Saturday. We'll end things off with our closing ceremony on Sunday, where all our fighters here will gather to pledge their allegiance to the ultimate winner of the tournament!" She gestured over to the arena. "To 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 warm grin. He wore a set of judge's robes, his hand gripping onto a massive war hammer as if it were a gavel.

"And, as you've probably all noticed," Thompson went on, "we've got a load of Secret Service agents scattered around the coliseum to make sure nothing here goes awry! Leading our agents is a master of quelling riots and removing uninvited guests! Let's hear it for [Ruth the Forgotten], Ruth Hayes!"

In the stands, Hayes gave a light wave with what little remained of her severed left arm, a set of heavy scars covering the rest of her body.

"To be clear," Truman interjected, "while we've taken every precaution we can in order to protect you, we can't guarantee your complete safety during these fights. Anyone who's concerned should go ahead and watch our matches from any of the many televisions that can be found around the town. And for those that do choose to stay with us...well, all I can say is: buckle up for the ride of your lives!"

"Alright, alright," Thompson shouted over Truman, "enough with the foreplay already! Let's move onto the action!"

The crowd roared its approval.

"We're starting things off with a bang!" she continued. "It's 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 right here, right now!"

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 University! 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!”

The audience cheered as a tank rolled onto the arena carrying Eisenhower on top. She wore a peaked visor cap along with a wool field jacket covered in medals and stripes, a circle of five stars placed squarely on her shoulders.

Eisenhower finished waving to the crowd, then reached down and grabbed hold of the barrel of the tank’s gun with both hands. She lifted up, tightening her grin as she slowly pried the head clean off the tank’s body. The vehicle rolled back out of the arena as Eisenhower moved forward, carrying the tank head with her as she walked.

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

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

“Yeowch! I take it you two aren’t on the best of terms then, Truman?”

“No comment...” Truman muttered.

“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 simply a gentle soul who can’t stand the slight of blood! But don’t be mistaken: this man ain’t no pushover. He won’t ever stop fighting; not until he obtains complete and unconditional surrender! He’s [The Hero of Appomattox], Odysseus S. Grant!”

“There’s no S...” Grant grumbled to himself as he strolled in wearing a plain 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 ring’s center and opened the bag, spilling a stockpile of weapons onto the ground. He crouched down, carefully picking up a gun from the pile.

“This was Calvin’s pistol,” he spoke softly. “He died in our battle against Lee before he could fire off a single shot.” Grant placed the gun and picked up a nearby sword. “This was Benjamin’s. He was a valiant soldier, slain on that terrible night of Johnson’s betrayal.” Grant placed the weapon back, giving a shake of his head. “I’ve lost a lot of soldiers on my watch...” he spoke out, staring directly into Eisenhower’s smiling face. “...and I will not let a single one of their deaths be in vain...”

As he spoke out, Grant’s pile of weapons vibrated on the ground, then rose up into the air. A gun slammed into Grant’s arm, followed by a sword, then another, and another. Soon, both of Grant’s arms were covered in weapons, their combined shape taking the form of two, giant, weaponized arms.

“Executive Power,” Grant spoke, “Union Army; To Arms.”

Taft looked over to the fighters with a smile.

“Are both of you about ready to start?”

The fighters gave a pair of silent nods.

“Excellent!”

Taft instantly morphed his jolly smile into a stern glare.

“Oh man!” Thompson shouted, “Looks like Taft is getting serious now!”

“He’s an easy-going guy in general,” Truman smirked, “but not when it comes to judging!”

Taft breathed in, lifting his gavel high into the air.

“Let the match...” he shouted, slamming his hammer down with a thunderous crash, “...BEGIN!”

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Epitaphs. In most cases, the epitaphs used in the book are nicknames that the Presidents had in real life (modulo changing their first names). However, there are several exceptions to this rule which I will point out as they come up. For example, the epitaph [Ruth the Forgotten] is unrelated to anything about the real-life Rutherford Hayes: I made this epitaph up largely because there aren’t any nice nicknames for Rutherford to use. Speaking of lies involving Hayes...

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

Rutherford Hayes had essentially nothing to do with the Secret Service. The fact that Ruth is in charge of them here 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 so a President he became. He would eventually achieve his dream however after being named chief justice of the Supreme Court during Harding’s administration.

Truman. This chapter features a number of small 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 before someone interrupted saying “let me introduce you first,” which accidentally got broadcasted to the crowd. His real-life nickname [The Man from Independence] refers to his hometown of 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 went 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

“Executive Power,” Grant shouted, “Union Army; 21 Gun Salute!”

Dozens of rifles extended from Grant’s weaponized hands as they fired in quick succession.

“Starting things off with a bang, are we?” Eisenhower quipped, moving her tank head in front of her and blocking off the shots. She extended her smile as she charged up ahead, crashing into Grant with the force of a moving train.

Grant skidded back, then thrust his arm at his opponent. Eisenhower stepped aside, dodging the attack. She grinned, then dropped her smile as a sea of swords shot out of Grant’s open palm. Eisenhower flung her body back, narrowly evading the blades as Grant stepped forward, slamming into Eisenhower and flinging her across the floor. She twisted her body midair, landing herself with grace.

“You know,” Eisenhower remarked, “in spite of the many criticisms I’ve read about your abilities, 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 the grip around her weapon. “That being said...I’ve got a lot of people counting on me here, and I’m not going to let them down for anyone!”

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Years ago, a morning bugle blared across Camp Meade, waking up its soldiers.

“Good morning soldiers!” a young Eisenhower shouted as they lined up in front of her.

“Good morning ma’am!” the group replied in earnest.

Eisenhower looked down her line, then gave a light frown.

“Where’s Cadet Fitzgerald at?”

Somebody pointed over to a solitary figure seated by the docks.

“He’s out there working on that darn novel of his again.”

Eisenhower shook her head.

“I’ll allow it this time,” she replied with a grin, “but only because we’ve gotten some very exciting news from headquarters this morning.” She looked over her troops. “Start packing your bags, boys; we’re taking a trip to Europe!”

“Seriously?” a soldier asked with glee, “Are we finally going off to war?”

“You’re darn right we are!”

The soldiers hollered and cheered, a few of them even breaking down into tears.

“Now, don’t start crying on me yet!” Eisenhower said with a grin. “I still have one more piece of news I need to share with you.”

“I knew it...” a voice moaned, “there’s always bad news coming with the good!”

"It does seem that way, doesn't it?" Eisenhower chuckled. "Heck, you all joined this Tank Corp hoping to take control of the army's greatest weapon; only to find out, we didn't have any tanks for you to use!"

"That's alright, ma'am!" a soldier exclaimed. "You helped us with building all those makeshift ones instead!"

"That I did," she said, looking fondly over their row of trucks with machine guns strapped to their backs. "Sadly, we're going to be discontinuing our makeshift models starting from today..."

The soldiers gave a collective groan.

"...and that's because..." Eisenhower continued as a shiny, new tank rolled onto the field "...we've finally gotten our hands on a real one!"

The soldiers screamed at the top of their lungs, rushing over to their newest toy without waiting long enough to be officially dismissed. Eisenhower raised a smile, looking down and reading her deployment orders one last time.

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

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

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

Two weeks later, Eisenhower found herself sulking in the corner of the army's victory celebration party.

"I tell you," she lamented to a nearby friend, "we're going to spend the rest of our lives explaining why we never fought in this damn war..."

She downed her drink and got up to grab another, accidentally bumping into a large man as she rose.

"Oye!" the man shouted as he spilled his drink over his shirt, "Watch where you're going!"

"You could do the same..." Eisenhower muttered.

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

"Is that so?" Eisenhower replied, rolling out her eyes, "Feel free to send me the bill."

"I don't think you understand me!" he growled, "Willingly destroying army property like this is a crime worthy of a court martial!"

Eisenhower stared blankly at the man.

"You can't be serious here...right?"

The man gave a vicious grin.

"I hope you enjoyed whatever fights you had during this war, because they're the last fights you're ever gonna see as a part of this army! Hyeh, hyeh, hyeh!"

The man continued to cackle to himself as Eisenhower clenched up her fists.

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

"Excuse me..."

Eisenhower froze as an older officer stepped out in front of her from the neighboring crowd.

"I apologize for butting in like this," the officer continued, "but I think it would be best for all of us here if this little affair were dropped altogether now."

"Little affair?" the furious man snarled as he pointed triumphantly to himself. "I'll have you know, 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, but stopped as the officer grabbed hold of his wrist.

"And I'll have you know," the older man replied, lowering his hand and bringing Helmick to his knees, "that I'm General Dox Conner; and this woman you just screamed at is one of my most trusted subordinates."

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

Helmick looked to Eisenhower, then back over to Conner.

"Uhh, well," Helmick mumbled, clearing out his throat, "seeing as you're a proper authority and all, I'll uh...I'll leave her appropriate punishment in your capable hands then!"

Helmick gave a light bow, then quickly scurried back into the crowd.

"Thanks, Conner," Eisenhower sighed, "you really saved my hide this time around!"

"Saved you?" Conner asked with a mischievous grin, "Why, I've just been told that I'm in charge of punishing you."

"That's true..." Eisenhower replied with a nervous laugh, "but it'll be a light punishment...won't it?"

"Oh, far from it, I'm afraid," Conner said, shaking out his head. He deepened his smile, then pointed over to Eisenhower. "As your commanding officer, I hereby order you to take part in a hellish training camp with me down in Panama."

Eisenhower blinked.

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

"Oh, don't get too excited now," Conner said, wagging his finger. "As soon as you're done with me, I'll be shipping you off 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 these world class generals.

"But...but why do all this for me, sir?"

"Because you've got talent, kid! And by God, it'd be a real loss for this nation if you never got a chance to show your stuff." He placed a hand on her shoulder, throwing out a warm and friendly grin. "I'm counting on you to do great things for this country now, and I order you not to disappoint me."

Eisenhower gave a toothy smile as she shot up into a salute.

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

As she drove back home, Eisenhower couldn't help but daydream about her forthcoming training sessions with Conner and the rest of the generals. She continued looking to the future, only to crash back to reality as her car dipped itself into a ditch. Eisenhower quietly shook her head.

"I swear," she grumbled as she got out and started pushing on 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 hand into the air.

"Executive Power," she shouted, "Interstate Highway System!"

As she spoke, a grid of miniature roads spread across the arena floor. Grant raised an eyebrow, gently kicking a road besides his feet.

"Curious," he remarked.

"Now get ready..."

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

"...for my massive retaliation!"

Eisenhower smashed her weapon into Grant, forcing him back. He steadied himself, only for her to appear before him once again. Grant quickly threw out a punch as she swung down her tank head, the two attacks colliding against each other and flinging the fighters back. Eisenhower brushed a finger across her forehead, feeling a warm drop of blood.

"Hot dang!" she shouted. "I thought you'd retreat for sure in a situation as dangerous as that! But heck, you went for a damn counter instead!"

Grant shrugged out his shoulders.

"Retreating was never really my style."

"Same for me! I say, if you have to use force..." she crouched down, lowering her stance, "...use overwhelming force!"

Eisenhower sprang up ahead, sprinting across her roads at insane levels of acceleration.

"That speed...!" Grant exclaimed as he hastily raised his arms, blocking Eisenhower's high velocity attack, "So that's how you kept appearing so quickly!"

"Roger that," Eisenhower replied, pushing off Grant. "You see, I get a speed boost whenever I run down the roads created from my EP. And I'm sorry to tell you friend," she remarked with a grin, "but my roads won't be doing a thing for you no matter how hard you try!"

Grant gave a snort.

"Fine by me," he replied, readying his stance.

In the stands, a towering figure wearing a stovepipe hat nodded quietly to himself.

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

"...how utterly foolish," a voice snickered from behind him.

Lincoln turned around, but saw nothing but a wall covered in shadow.

"You and Grant put far too much faith in the words of your opponents..." the voice continued speaking as Dixie Nixon stepped out from the shadows. "...and that gullibility will end up being Grant's undoing."

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Eisenhower's Flashback. Many of the events in Deedee Eisenhower's flashback really did happen. In particular: Dwight Eisenhower commanded a tank unit without any tanks, he trained the author F. Scott Fitzgerald during WWI, he struggled desperately to get into combat only for the war to end 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 (though this didn't happen at all the way it's depicted in the novel).

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 bad the nation's roads were. This event would later inspire him to push for construction of the Interstate Highway System during his Presidency.

Backward Step

Grant charged at Eisenhower swinging out his fist.

"Too slow!" Eisenhower cackled as she dashed down her road, dodging his sluggish strike. She turned on an intersection, leaping at Grant from behind. He raised his arms, blocking Eisenhower's blow before pushing her aside.

"Union Army; 21 Gun Salute!"

Grant fired at Eisenhower as her feet hit the floor, only for her to dash away along another one of her roads. Grant silently clenched up his fists.

"Quit moving so much..." he grumbled.

"Oh please," Eisenhower cooed, sprinting down her roads while dodging all his attacks, "you couldn't beat me with my feet stapled to the floor! In fact..." Eisenhower skidded to a halt, turning to Grant with a devious grin. "...I bet you couldn't hit me if I stayed put right here!"

Grant furrowed his brow.

"I don't know what all you're plotting..." he remarked before charging up ahead, "...but I'm not about to look a gift horse in the mouth!"

Grant reached Eisenhower's side, placing his left foot squarely on her road before throwing out a punch.

"That's the plan..." Eisenhower smirked as his fist flew towards her.

Suddenly, Grant's body jerked back, veering him off course. Before he could move further, Eisenhower lifted up her tank head and tightened up her smile.

"FORE!" she shouted, smashing her opponent hard across the face.

Grant gritted his teeth as he took the heavy attack, then immediately followed with a counter.

"Oh please!" Eisenhower chuckled, "I'm not falling for that one again!"

Grant stared in shock as Eisenhower's body shifted unnaturally to the side, avoiding his attack. She swung out her weapon once again, landing another critical hit and knocking him to the ground.

Lincoln clicked his tongue from the stands. "Now I get it!" he exclaimed, "Eisenhower's EP doesn't have anything to do with speed...it actually deals with movement!"

"Correct," Dixie Nixon confirmed with a smile. "Executive Power: Interstate Highway System gives Eisenhower the ability to move objects efficiently down her roads. She mostly uses it to move herself along her roads as she runs, giving her a significant speed boost; but she can also use it to shift herself out of danger, or to throw her opponents off-balance whenever they touch her roads."

"And that's exactly what she did to Grant," Lincoln muttered, "after making him think her roads didn't affect him!" He shook out his head. "Honestly, I'm surprised: I never took Eisenhower to be much of the trickster type."

"No one ever does," Nixon smirked, "but she's far more devious than most people realize."

"That may be," Lincoln agreed, regaining his former smile, "but she's not the only President to be chronically overlooked..."

In the arena, Grant got off the ground.

"You're strong," he spoke matter-of-factly. "If I hadn't opened this fight with my most defensive form, I'm certain I'd have lost by now." He scanned the roads around him, then nodded to himself. "But now that I've gotten a handle on your EP, I think it's high time I take the offensive."

"You're kidding...right?" Eisenhower asked with a nervous grin. "You've been on the offensive since the match began!"

Grant threw out his arms without bothering to reply.

"Executive Power..."

The weapons covering Grant's arms dropped to the floor, forming a mound at his feet and lifting him into the air. The weapons shifted around before settling into the shape of a large horse with legs made of swords and a cannon for a nose.

"...Union Army..." Grant spoke, holding the horse's iron reigns, "...Cavalry!"

Eisenhower bit her lip as she eyed up her opponent.

This new form looks pretty agile, she thought to herself, but Grant won't be able to use its speed to the fullest! If he steps onto any of my roads, even if for just a second, I'll throw him off-course and hit him with my biggest attack yet! Yes, he'll need to move slowly and cautiously...that much I'm certain of.

As she thought this, Grant made his move. His horse started off with a trot, carefully avoiding the roads with each of its steps. The trot gradually rose into a gallop, then transformed itself into a full-blown sprint! Eisenhower glanced down, waiting for the horse to touch her roads. But, to her surprise, it completely avoided them with every step it took.

"What!" Eisenhower shouted before shaking out her head and raising up her weapon. "I'll figure it out later..." she muttered as Grant drew closer, "for now...I'll settle for knocking you off that high horse of yours!"

She swung out her tank head, but, just before colliding, Grant's horse leapt forward, jumping straight over Eisenhower's attack. The horse tilted its head as it flew over, aiming its cannon nose directly at Eisenhower. It fired, detonating its shell on impact.

"Gahhh!" Eisenhower screamed. She clenched up her fists and turned back around, readying her EP to activate for Grant's impromptu landing. But once again, the horse miraculously landed itself without touching any of her roads. "That's..." Eisenhower stammered, "that's impossible!"

Before she could recover, the horse raised its sword legs and rammed them towards her. Eisenhower hastily activated her EP, moving away from the blades, then shifted herself back even further to avoid a follow-up strike.

"Oh?" Grant remarked coolly, "How strange ...I thought you said you weren't the type to run away? Or was that just another one of your lies?"

Eisenhower gave a ticked off smile.

“Oh, I assure you,” she said, cracking her neck to the side, “I have not taken, and shall not take, a single backward step!”

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Hidden Hand. Early historians largely viewed Dwight Eisenhower as a simpleton politically and mostly agreed with Harry Truman’s statement that “Eisenhower doesn’t know any more about politics than a pig knows about Sunday.” However, there’s been a change of perspective on Dwight, and now modern day historians are more likely to agree with Richard Nixon who said, “he was a far more complex and devious man than most people realized.” This revised view of Dwight was largely popularized by the biography “Hidden Hand Presidency,” which is the basis for the Hidden Hand Party that Deedee Eisenhower leads in the novel.

Backward Step. After Dwight Eisenhower was told that he shouldn’t desegregate the Navy, Dwight replied “We have not taken and we shall not take a single backward step. There must be no second class citizens in this country.”

Cavalry

Eisenhower stuck a hand into the center of her tank head.

“Take this!” she shouted, pulling on a lever inside and firing a shell out of its barrel.

Grant’s horse leapt out of the way, then launched a cannonball of its own. Eisenhower shifted herself along her roads, dodging the fire while shooting off a second round. Grant jumped over the shot, carefully avoiding Eisenhower’s roads as he landed.

“Hmph,” Nixon snarled, “It seems I’ve misjudged Grant...his fighting abilities are far greater than I heard.”

“That they are!” Lincoln spoke with pride. “He’s the best fighter I’ve ever had: strong on the battlefield, and practically invincible on a horse!”

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

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

A tiny soldier seated atop a towering steed stepped out of the line. The cadet was a young Odysseus Grant. The horse was York, a fearsome beast known for its terrifying temper. Only two cadets at West Point could ride him, and only Grant could ride him well.

Grant rubbed his hand along the creature’s back. The animal gave a snort, then charged up ahead, leaping forward and clearing over the bar as the crowd erupted into cheers. With ease, Grant had just set a new record for the high jump; one which would stand for another 25 years.

“Well,” Herschberger said with a bashful grin. “I don’t think I can follow that! Class dismissed!”

Grant quietly dismounted off of York as his classmates filed out of the room.

“That was quite the show there!” Herschberger exclaimed as he made his way over to Grant.

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

“In any case,” Herschberger remarked, handing off a letter to Grant, “I wanted to be the first to tell you about your exciting new post.” He gave a wide grin. “Congratulations, soldier! You’ve been invited to the Mexican front by [Old Rough and Ready] herself!”

The next week, future President Jacqueline Taylor looked over her fresh batch of recruits.

“Which one of you is Lieutenant Grant?” she asked sharply. The group turned as Grant silently raised his hand. “Good,” Taylor replied as she passed him a clipboard, “you’re our new quartermaster effective immediately.”

Grant looked over the set of forms, then back up to Taylor.

“I’m sorry ma’am, but I’m not sure that’s the right position for me to take.”

"Are you complaining?" Taylor asked with a frown.

"No ma'am; merely expressing my opinion. I had expected to serve on the front lines here, but if this is what you assign me, I shall perform it to the best of my abilities."

Taylor gave a nod.

"I understand your hesitation," she remarked, "but I assure you, the quartermaster is a vital part for our operations." She pointed over to a storage shed at the back of the camp. "After all, it doesn't matter how brave our soldiers are: they can't fight without weapons, and they sure as heck can't march without food."

"I recognize the job's significance," Grant replied, "I'm merely confused as to why I'm the one being 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 tabs on our supplies. So, when I heard there was a promising young soldier hoping to become a math professor at the end of his service...well, I just knew I had to grab you before anyone else did."

Grant nodded his head.

"I see. If that's the case, then—"

A bullet whizzed past Grant's face, cutting him off. Grant and Taylor calmly looked out as a squadron of Mexican soldiers charged through their camp with guns blazing.

"Take cover!" Taylor shouted as they jumped behind a nearby building.

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

"We've got our invaders outnumbered two to one," Taylor replied, peeking around the corner, "but we don't have enough ammo on hand to take them down!"

"Is there any more ammunition at the storage shed?" Grant asked.

Taylor nodded.

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

"Then the answer's clear," Grant remarked as he mounted onto a passing horse, "as quartermaster, it's my responsibility to make sure we're supplied."

"Don't be a fool!" Taylor hissed, "You'll be shot at the moment you're spotted!"

"Then I won't be spotted," he replied curtly.

Before Taylor could argue further, Grant rushed his horse out of the cover, leaving Taylor silently shaking her head.

“Idiot...” she murmured, closing her eyes as she waited for the inevitable sound of gunfire. But, to her surprise, nothing happened. Curious, Taylor peeked around the corner, widening her eyes at the sight before her.

Grant’s horse was continuing to sprint 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’s 25 year horse jumping record, are almost word for word true.

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

You Too

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

The Mexicans went back to marching, ignoring the sprinting beast. Halfway across the camp, Taylor continued watching the animal as it stopped itself just in front of the storage area.

"My God!" Taylor exclaimed as Grant appeared from behind his horse, picking up a spare box of ammunition from the ground.

"What happened out there?" a nearby soldier asked.

"If I had to guess," Taylor said with a smirk, "I'd say that daredevil just rode through this battlefield clinging to his horse's side for cover!"

Grant tucked the ammunition underneath his arm, then rotated himself to his horse's side before sprinting back over towards Taylor's position.

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

Another soldier stared out at the horse, noticing the flaps of a blue army uniform dangling just beneath its chest.

"It's the enemy!" he snarled, "Fire; fire!"

Grant rotated back onto his horse as the bullets shot past his face.

"It's alright girl," he spoke, stroking the horse's mane, "I'll bring us through."

Grant turned around, locking eyes with the Mexican soldiers as they fired from their rifles. He yanked his horse's reigns, shifting away from the bullets, then turned sharply around a corner back to Taylor's side.

"Excellent work there, soldier!" Taylor exclaimed as she handed out Grant's ammunition to her troops.

"She's the one that did all the work," Grant replied, scratching his horse's ears.

Taylor loaded up her rifle, then looked back over to Grant.

"I know you're not planning to stick with the army long term, but I think you should reconsider. I'd hate to lose a man of your abilities."

Grant scratched his chin.

"Me...an army man?"

Grant looked over as the fighting raged on in earnest. His horse trembled at the sound of gunfire, but Grant stroked its back, calming down her nerves.

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

"That's what I like to hear!" Taylor replied. "And if you're going to be staying with us..." she continued, pointing over to a well-dressed soldier standing just beside them, "...you should go and get on this man's good side. He's the rising star of our engineering corps, and the first person you'll want to turn to if you ever need any fortifications."

"Oh madam," the officer chuckled, giving a light bow, "you are far too generous with your kind words directed towards one as humble as myself."

Grant got off his horse and extended out his hand.

"A pleasure to meet you, sir," Grant, the future commander of the Union Army spoke, "I'm Odysseus Grant."

"The pleasure is all mine," the future commander of the Confederate Army replied. "I'm Robbie Lee."

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In the present, Eisenhower swung out her tank head as Grant's weaponized horse stepped over to the side. A dozen rifles fired from the horse's chest, only for Eisenhower to slide across her roads, dodging the attack.

"These two fighters are just way too nimble!" Thompson screamed. "Between Grant's horse and Eisenhower's roads, it looks like this fight's in a total gridlock!"

"It is for now," Truman agreed, "but such high intensity fighting can't go on forever. Sooner or later, one of them has to fall..."

As if on cue, a series of cracks suddenly appeared over Eisenhower's roads, with huge sections of her highway breaking off and dissolving into the air. Eisenhower panted heavily as she slid herself away, avoiding yet another charge from Grant's metal steed.

"You really never stop, do you now?" Eisenhower chuckled, forcing up a smile. "Then again," she continued, wiping away a blot of sweat over her brow, "it looks like I'll need to wrap things up myself." She snapped her fingers. "Executive Power: Interstate Highway System; Space Race!"

The road behind Eisenhower instantly extended itself up straight into the sky. Eisenhower gave a wicked grin as she turned back around and ran straight up her vertical road into the air. She reached the road's peak, kicking off and shooting herself down to Grant with the force of a burning comet.

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

Grant instinctively took half a step a back as Eisenhower's approached, then glanced to the ground in complete and utter shock. Despite his careful calculations, the back feet of his horse had somehow landed themselves on the very edge of Eisenhower's road. Before he could move himself away, his horse's legs immediately slid out across the road at high intensity speeds.

"I see," Grant grumbled as his horse toppled over. "You pretended like your roads broke up because you were running out of steam...but in reality, you were just saving up enough energy to widen up your road behind me!"

“Correct!” Eisenhower screamed. “And despite your extreme gullibility, 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 suddenly yanked hard on his reigns, sending the horse sliding even faster across Eisenhower’s road. The horse kicked off its hind legs; the combined momentum from Eisenhower’s EP and Grant’s sudden pull throwing its legs up and around in a tight circle. The legs reached out, wrapping around Eisenhower’s falling body before slamming her hard into the ground.

Eisenhower coughed as she hit the floor, then promptly pushed herself away as the horse turned its metal head towards her, its cannon nose aimed directly at her face.

“Fire,” Grant declared.

Eisenhower quickly swung out her weapon as the cannonball fired out of its nose, the explosion covering the two fighters in a thick cloud of dust.

“Time out!” Taft screamed, jogging over to the arena’s center. He reached the fighters, gave each a brief inspection, then solemnly nodded his head.

“The match is over!” Taft declared, slamming his gavel to the ground.

As he spoke, Grant got off the ground, brushing the dirt from his jacket before lighting up 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 quiet groan as she slowly opened her eyes. Bright lights shone overhead, and she found herself lying on top of some sort of hospital bed.

“Have you finally come back to the land of the living?” a voice cooed besides her.

Eisenhower looked over to see a slender woman in an orange dress shirt and black suspenders standing by her side.

“...Wilson...?” Eisenhower asked. “Why are you...? Where...” she squinted as the memories gradually came back into her head. “That’s right...I lost against Grant...and in the very first round, no less...”

“That you did,” Willow Willson spoke matter-of-factly. “But don’t worry darling; such a lackluster performance was to be expected from the leader of a second-rate school like *Columbia*.”

Eisenhower gave a light smile.

“I appreciate you trying to transform my grief into anger here, Wilson, but there’s nothing for you to worry about. I’m more than accustomed to the harsh realities of battle, after all.”

“Are you absolutely sure?” Wilson asked, expressing feigned disappointment, “Because I was really hoping to discuss your failures in greater detail.”

“There’s not too much more to say, I’m afraid.” Eisenhower remarked, forcing on a smile. “I had concentrated my last few attacks towards ending the fight...I felt that I was making big progress...” she shook out her head, “but then that stupid Space Race mess ruined all my efforts.” She gave a sigh, then put back on her solemn grin. “But in the end, my decision to attack was based upon the best information I had at the time...any blame or fault in the matter is mine alone to bare.”

“Righttttt,” Wilson said, rolling out her eyes, “that deffffinitely sounds like what a person who doesn’t need any cheering up would say.”

“Oh shut up!” Eisenhower snarked, regaining some of the warmth back into her face.

Music started playing from the television across the room, and Eisenhower turned to see Thompson starting her announcements for the upcoming match.

“Don’t you want to go up and watch this from the stands?”

“Oh please,” Wilson remarked with a dismissive wave of her hands, “there’s nothing to be gained from watching that farce of a match.”

“Fair enough,” Eisenhower replied, turning her attention back over 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 changes were made to simplify the details in the novel. 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 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 instead ended up finding his calling in the army during the Mexican-American war.

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