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**Opening Extract from...**

# The Fort

Written by Bernard Cornwell

Published by HarperCollins

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BERNARD CORNWELL

*The Fort*



HarperCollins *Publishers*

HarperCollinsPublishers  
77–85 Fulham Palace Road,  
Hammersmith, London W6 8JB

[www.harpercollins.co.uk](http://www.harpercollins.co.uk)

Published by HarperCollinsPublishers 2010

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A catalogue record for this book  
is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978–0–00–733172–7

While some of the events and characters are based on historical incidents  
and figures, this novel is entirely a work of fiction.

Set in Meridien by Palimpsest Book Production Limited,  
Falkirk, Stirlingshire

Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

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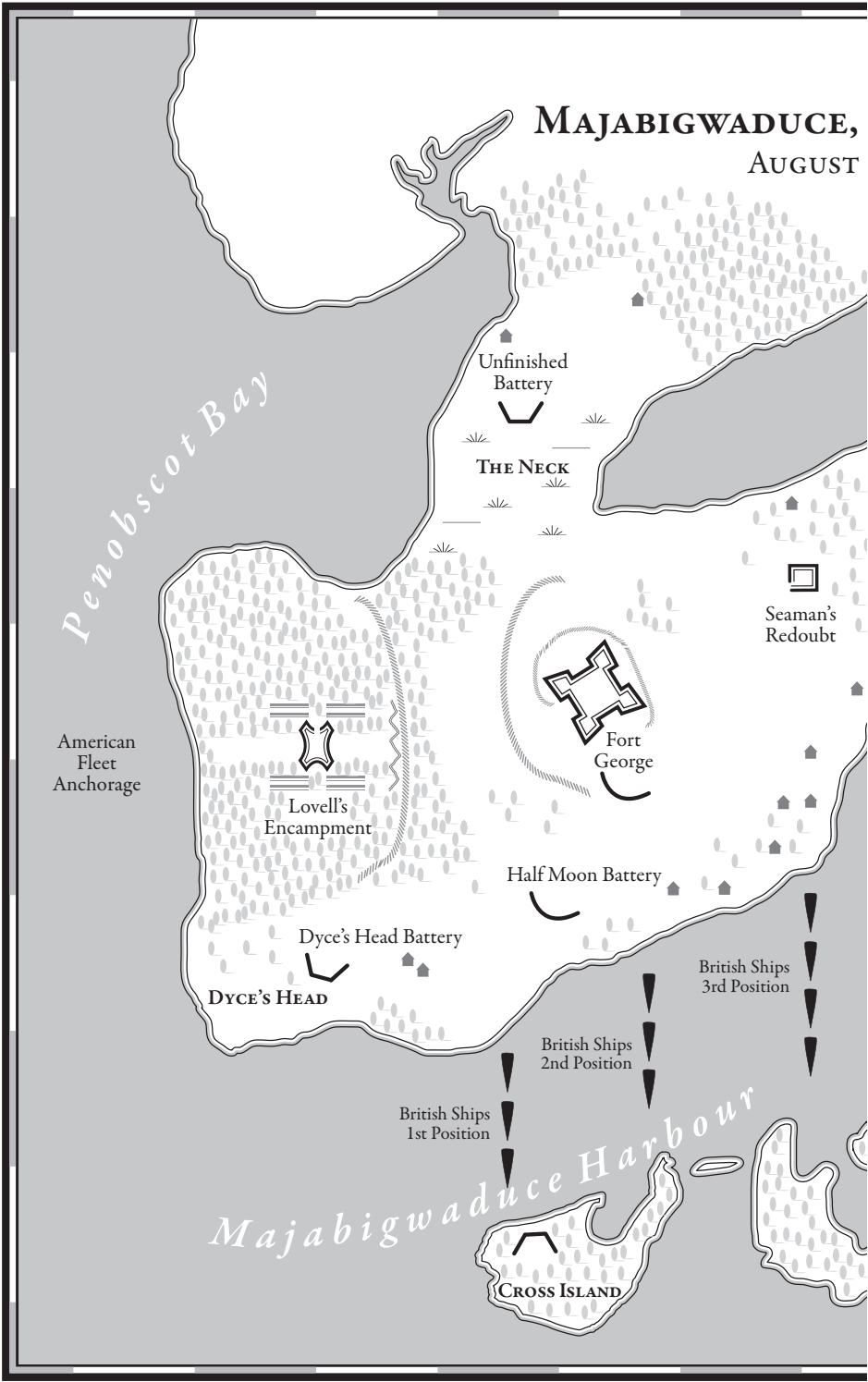
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THE FORT

*is dedicated, with great admiration, to  
Colonel John Wessmiller, US Army (Retired)  
who would have known just what to do.*

MAJABIGWADUCE,  
AUGUST

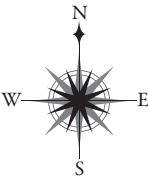


MASSACHUSETTS

1779

Westcot's Battery

Majabigwaduce River



HANEY'S BATTERY



A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,  
And a word that shall echo for evermore!  
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,  
Through all our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
The people will waken and listen to hear  
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,  
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

From Henry Longfellow's  
*The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,  
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;  
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,  
But we left him alone with his glory.

From Charles Wolfe's  
*The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna*

## A NOTE ON NAMES AND TERMS

In 1779 there was no state of Maine, it was then the eastern province of Massachusetts. Some place names have also changed. Majabigwaduce is now called Castine, Townsend is Bucks Harbor, and Falmouth is Portland, Maine. Buck's plantation (properly Plantation Number One) is Bucksport, Orphan Island is Verona Island, Long Island (in the Penobscot River) is now Islesboro Island, Wasaumkeag Point is now Cape Jellison and Cross Island is today called Nautilus Island.

The novel frequently refers to 'ships', 'sloops', 'brigs', and 'schooners'. They are all, of course, ships in the same way that they are all boats, but properly a ship was a large, square-rigged, three-masted vessel like a frigate (think of the USS *Constitution*) or a ship of the line (like HMS *Victory*). Nowadays we think of a sloop as a single-masted sailboat, but in 1779 it denoted a three-masted vessel that was usually smaller than a ship and distinguished by having a flush main deck (thus no raised poop deck). Sloops, like ships, were square rigged (meaning they carried rectangular sails hung from crosswise yards). A brig, or brigantine, was also a large square-rigged sailing vessel, but with only two masts. Schooners, like brigs,



carried two masts, but were rigged with fore-and-aft sails which, when hoisted, lie along the centre line of the vessel rather than across it. There were variations, such as brig-sloops, but at Penobscot Bay, in 1779, there were only ships, sloops, brigs and schooners. With the exception of the *Felicity* all the names of the boats are taken from history.

Most of the characters in the novel existed. The only fictional names are those of any character whose surname begins with F (with the exception of Captain Thomas Farnham, RN), and the names of British privates and non-commissioned officers (with the exception of Sergeant Lawrence, Royal Artillery).

Excerpt of letter from the Massachusetts Council, to Brigadier-General Solomon Lovell, July 2nd, 1779:

*You will in all your operations consult with the Commander of the fleet that the Naval Force may cooperate with the troops under your command in Endeavoring to Captivate Kill or Destroy the whole force of the Enemy there both by sea & land. And as there is good reason to believe that some of the Principal men at Majorbagaduce requested the enemy to come there and take possession you will be peculiarly careful not to let any of them escape, but to secure them for their evil doings . . . We now commend you to the Supream being Sincerely praying him to preserve you and the Forces under your Command in health and safety, & Return you Crowned with Victory and Laurels.*

From a postscript to Doctor John Calef's Journal, 1780, concerning Majabigwaduce:

*To this new country, the Loyalists resort with their families . . . and find asylum from the tyranny of Congress, and their taxgatherers . . . and there they continue in full hope, and*

*pleasant expectation, that they may soon re-enjoy the liberties and privileges which would be best secured to them by the . . . British Constitution.*

Letter from Captain Henry Mowat, Royal Navy, to Jonathan Buck, written aboard HMS *Albany*, Penobscot River, June 15th, 1779:

*Sir, Understanding that you are at the head of a Regiment of the King's deluded Subjects on this River and parts adjacent and that you hold a Colonel's Commission under the influence of a body of men termed the General Congress of the United States of America, it therefore becomes my duty to require you to appear without loss of time before General McLean and the commanding Officer of the King's Ships now on board the Blonde off of Majorbigwaduce with a Muster Roll of the People under your direction.*

## ONE

There was not much wind so the ships headed sluggishly upriver. There were ten of them, five warships escorting five transports, and the flooding tide did more to carry them northwards than the fitful breeze. The rain had stopped, but the clouds were low, grey and direful. Water dripped monotonously from sails and rigging.

There was little to see from the ships, though all their gunwales were crowded with men staring at the river's banks that widened into a great inland lake. The hills about the lake were low and covered with trees, while the shoreline was intricate with creeks, headlands, wooded islands and small, stony beaches. Here and there among the trees were cleared spaces where logs were piled or perhaps a wooden cabin stood beside a small cornfield. Smoke rose from those clearings and some men aboard the ships wondered if the distant fires were signals to warn the country of the fleet's arrival. The only people they saw were a man and a boy fishing from a small open boat. The boy, who was named William Hutchings, waved excitedly at the ships, but his uncle spat. 'There come the devils,' he said.

The devils were mostly silent. On board the largest warship, a 32-gun frigate named *Blonde*, a devil in a blue coat and an

oilskin-covered cocked hat lowered his telescope. He frowned thoughtfully at the dark, silent woods past which his ship slid. 'To my mind,' he said, 'it looks like Scotland.'

'Aye, it does,' his companion, a red-coated devil, answered cautiously, 'a resemblance, certainly.'

'More wooded than Scotland, though?'

'A deal more wooded,' the second man said.

'But like the west coast of Scotland, wouldn't you say?'

'Not unlike,' the second devil agreed. He was sixty-two years old, quite short, and had a shrewd, weathered face. It was a kindly face with small, bright blue eyes. He had been a soldier for over forty years and in that time had endured a score of hard-fought battles that had left him with a near-useless right arm, a slight limp, and a tolerant view of sinful mankind. His name was Francis McLean and he was a Brigadier-General, a Scotsman, commanding officer of His Majesty's 82nd regiment of foot, Governor of Halifax, and now, at least according to the dictates of the King of England, the ruler of everything he surveyed from the *Blonde's* quarterdeck. He had been aboard the frigate for thirteen days, the time it had taken to sail from Halifax in Nova Scotia, and he felt a twinge of worry that the length of the voyage might prove unlucky. He wondered if it might have been better to have made it in fourteen days and surreptitiously touched the wood of the rail. A burnt wreck lay on the eastern shore. It had once been a substantial ship capable of crossing an ocean, but now it was a ribcage of charred wood half inundated by the flooding tide that carried the *Blonde* upriver. 'So how far are we now from the open sea?' he asked the blue-uniformed captain of the *Blonde*.

'Twenty-six nautical miles,' Captain Andrew Barkley answered briskly, 'and there,' he pointed over the starboard bow and past the lion-crested cathead from which one of the frigate's anchors was suspended, 'is your new home.'

McLean borrowed the captain's glass and, using his awkward right arm as a rest for the tubes, trained the telescope forrard.

For a moment the small motions of the ship defeated him so that all he glimpsed was a blur of grey clouds, dark land and sullen water, but he steadied himself to see that the Penobscot River widened to make the great lake that Captain Barkley called Penobscot Bay. The bay, McLean thought, was really a great sea loch, which he knew from his study of Barkley's charts was some eight miles from east to west and three miles from north to south. A harbour opened from the bay's eastern shore. The mouth of the harbour was edged by rocks, while on its northern side was a hill crowned thick with trees. A settlement stood on the southern slope of that hill; over a score of wooden homes and barns were set among patches of corn, plots of vegetables and piles of timber. A handful of fishing boats was anchored in the harbour, along with one small brig that McLean assumed was a trading vessel. 'So that's Majabigwaduce,' he said softly.

'Back topsails!' the captain called, 'order the fleet to heave to. I shall trouble you to signal for a pilot, Mister Fennel!'

'Aye aye, sir!'

The frigate suddenly seethed with men running to release sheets. 'That's Majabigwaduce,' Barkley said in a tone that suggested the name was as risible as the place.

'Number one gun!' Lieutenant Fennel shouted, provoking another rush of men who ran to the forward starboard cannon.

'Do you have any idea,' McLean asked the captain, 'what Majabigwaduce signifies?'

'Signifies?'

'Does the name mean anything?'

'No idea, no idea,' Barkley said, apparently irritated by the question. 'Now, Mister Fennel!'

The gun, charged and wadded, but without any shot, was fired. The recoil was slight, but the sound of the gun seemed hugely loud and the cloud of smoke enveloped half the *Blonde's* deck. The gunshot faded, then was echoed back from the shore before fading a second time.

‘We shall discover something now, won’t we?’ Barkley said.

‘What is that?’ McLean enquired.

‘Whether they’re loyal, General, whether they’re loyal. If they’ve been infected by rebellion then they’ll hardly supply a pilot, will they?’

‘I suppose not,’ McLean said, though he suspected a disloyal pilot could well serve his rebellious cause by guiding HMS *Blonde* onto a rock. There were plenty of those breaking the bay’s surface. On one, not fifty paces from the frigate’s port gunwales, a cormorant spread its dark wings to dry.

They waited. the gun had been fired, the customary signal requesting a pilot, but the smoke prevented anyone aboard from seeing whether the settlement of Majabigwaduce would respond. The five transport ships, four sloops and frigate drifted upriver on the tide. The loudest noise was the groan, wheeze and splashing from the pump aboard one of the sloops, HMS *North*. The water spurted and gushed rhythmically from an elm spigot set into her hull as sailors pumped her bilge. ‘She should have been broken up for firewood,’ Captain Barkley said sourly.

‘There’s no patching her?’ McLean asked.

‘Her timbers are rotten. She’s a sieve,’ Barkley said dismissively. Small waves slapped the *Blonde*’s hull, and the blue ensign at her stern stirred slow in the fitful wind. Still no boat appeared and so Barkley ordered the signal gun fired a second time. The sound echoed and faded again and, just when Barkley was considering taking the flotilla into the harbour without the benefit of a pilot, a seaman hailed from the foremast top. ‘Boat coming, sir!’

When the powder smoke cleared, the men on *Blonde* saw a small open boat was indeed tacking out from the harbour. The south-west breeze was so light that the tan-coloured sails hardly gave the boat any headway against the tide, and so a young man was pulling on two long oars. Once in the wide bay he shipped the oars and sheeted his sails hard so that

the small boat beat slowly up to the flotilla. A girl sat at the tiller and she steered the little craft against the *Blonde's* star-board flank where the young man leaped nimbly onto the boarding steps that climbed the tumblehome. He was tall, fair-haired, with hands calloused and blackened from handling tarred rigging and fishing nets. He wore homespun breeches and a canvas jacket, had clumsy boots and a knitted hat. He climbed to the deck, then called down to the girl. 'You take good care of her, Beth!'

'Stop gawping, you puddin'-headed bastards!' the bosun roared at the seamen staring at the fair-haired girl who was using an oar to push her small craft away from the frigate's hull. 'You're the pilot?' the bosun asked the young man.

'James Fletcher,' the young man said, 'and I guess I am, but you don't need no pilot anyways.' He grinned as he walked towards the officers at the *Blonde's* stern. 'Any of you gentlemen have tobacco?' he asked as he climbed the companionway to the poop deck. He was rewarded with silence until General McLean reached into a pocket and extracted a short clay pipe, its bowl already stuffed with tobacco.

'Will that do?' the general asked.

'That'll do just perfect,' Fletcher said appreciatively, then prised the plug from the bowl and crammed it into his mouth. He handed the empty pipe back to the general. 'Haven't had tobacco in two months,' he said in explanation, then nodded familiarly to Barkley. 'Ain't no real dangers in Bagaduce, Captain, just so long as you stand off Dyce's Head, see?' He pointed to the tree-crowned bluff on the northern side of the harbour entrance. 'Rocks there. And more rocks off Cross Island on the other side. Hold her in the channel's centre and you'll be safe as safe.'

'Bagaduce?' General McLean asked.

'That's what we call it, your honour. Bagaduce. Easier on the tongue than Majabigwaduce.' The pilot grinned, then spat



tobacco juice that splattered across the *Blonde's* holy-stoned planking. There was silence on the quarterdeck as the officers regarded the dark stain.

‘Majabigwaduce,’ McLean broke the silence, ‘does it mean anything?’

‘Big bay with big tides,’ Fletcher said, ‘or so my father always said. ‘Course it’s an Indian name so it could mean anything.’ The young man looked around the frigate’s deck with an evident appreciation. ‘Day of excitement, this,’ he remarked genially.

‘Excitement?’ General McLean asked.

‘Phoebe Perkins is expecting. We all thought the baby would have dropped from her by now, but it ain’t. And it’ll be a girl!’

‘You know that?’ General McLean asked, amused.

‘Phoebe’s had six babes already and every last one of them a girl. You should fire another gun, Captain, startle this new one out of her!’

‘Mister Fennel!’ Captain Barkley called through a speaking trumpet, ‘sheet in, if you please.’

The *Blonde* gathered way. ‘Take her in,’ Barkley told the helmsman, and so the *Blonde*, the *North*, the *Albany*, the *Nautilus*, the *Hope*, and the five transports they escorted came to Majabigwaduce. They arrived safe in the harbour and anchored there. It was June 17th, 1779 and, for the first time since they had been driven from Boston in March, 1776, the British were back in Massachusetts.

Some two hundred miles west and a little south of where the devils arrived, Brigadier-General Peleg Wadsworth paraded his battalion on the town common. Only seventeen were present, not one of whom could be described as correct. The youngest, Alexander, was five, while the oldest were the twelve-year-old Fowler twins, Rebecca and Dorcas, and they all gazed earnestly at the brigadier, who was thirty-one. ‘What

I want you to do,' the general said, 'is march forward in single file. On the word of command you stop. What is the word of command, Jared?'

Jared, who was nine, thought for a second. 'Halt?'

'Very good, Jared. The next command after that will be "prepare to form line", and you will do nothing!' The brigadier peered sternly at his diminutive troops who were in a column of march facing northwards. 'Understand? You do nothing! Then I'm going to shout that companies one, two, three and four will face left. Those companies,' and here the general walked down the line indicating which children comprised the leading four companies, 'are the left wing. What are you, Jared?'

'The left wing,' Jared said, flapping his arms.

'Excellent! And you,' the general paced on down the rest of the line, 'are companies five, six, seven and eight, the right wing, and you will face right. I shall then give the order to face front and you turn. Then we counter-wheel. Alexander? You're the colour party so you don't move.'

'I want to kill a redcoat, Daddy,' Alexander pleaded.

'You don't move, Alexander,' the colour party's father insisted, then repeated all he had said. Alexander was holding a long stick that, in the circumstances, substituted for the American flag. He now aimed this at the church and pretended to shoot redcoats and so had to be chivvied back into the column that singly and generally agreed that they understood what their erstwhile schoolmaster wanted them to do. 'Now remember,' Peleg Wadsworth encouraged them, 'that when I order counter-wheel you march in the direction you're facing, but you swing around like the arm of a clock! I want to see you turn smoothly. Are we all ready?'

A small crowd had gathered to watch and advise. One man, a visiting minister, had been appalled to see children so young being taught the rudiments of soldiery and had chided General Wadsworth on the matter, but the brigadier had assured the

man of God that it was not the children who were being trained, but himself. He wished to understand precisely how a column of companies deployed into a regimental line that could blast an enemy with musket fire. It was hard to advance troops in line because a long row of men inevitably straggled and lost its cohesion, to avoid which men must advance in companies, one behind the other, but such a column was fatally vulnerable to cannon-fire and quite unable to use most of its muskets, and so the art of the manoeuvre was to advance in column and then deploy swiftly into line. Wadsworth wanted to master the drill, but because he was a general of the Massachusetts Militia, and because the militia were mostly on their farms or in their workshops, Wadsworth was using children. The leading company, which would normally hold three ranks of thirty or more men each, was today comprised of Rebecca Fowler, aged twelve, and her nine-year-old cousin, Jared, both of whom were bright children and, Wadsworth hoped, capable of setting an example that the remaining children would copy. The manoeuvre he was attempting was difficult. The battalion would march in column towards the enemy and then halt. The leading companies would turn to face one way, the rearward companies turn to face the opposite direction and then the whole line would counter-wheel about the colours in a smooth pivot until commanded to halt. That would leave the first four companies facing away from the enemy and Wadsworth would need to order those eight children to about turn, at which point the whole formidable battalion would be ready to open fire against the enemy. Wadsworth had watched British regiments perform a similar manoeuvre on Long Island and he had reluctantly admired their precision and seen for himself the swiftness with which they had been transformed from a column into a long line that had unleashed a torrent of musketry on the American forces.

‘Are we ready?’ Wadsworth asked again. If he could explain

the system to children, he had decided, then teaching the state militia should be easy enough. 'Forward march!'

The children marched creditably well, though Alexander kept skipping to try and match steps with his companions. 'Battalion!' Wadsworth called, 'Halt!'

They halted. So far so good. 'Battalion! Prepare to form line! Don't move yet!' He paused a moment. 'The left wing will face left! The right wing will face right, on my word of command. Battalion! Face front!'

Rebecca turned right instead of left and the battalion milled about in a moment of confusion before someone's hair was pulled and Alexander began shouting bang as he shot imaginary redcoats coming from the Common Burying Ground. 'Counter-wheel, march!' Wadsworth shouted, and the children swivelled in different directions and by now, the general thought despairingly, the British troops would have hammered two slaughterous volleys into his regiment. Perhaps, Wadsworth thought, using the children from the school where he had taught before becoming a soldier was not the best way to develop his mastery of infantry tactics. 'Form line,' he shouted.

'The way to do it,' a man on crutches offered from the crowd, 'is company by company. It's slower, General, but slow and steady wins the day.'

'No, no, no!' someone else chimed in. 'First company front right marker to step one pace left and one pace forward, and he becomes left marker, raises his hand, and the rest fall in on him. Or her, in your regiment, General.'

'Better company by company,' the crippled man insisted, 'that's how we did it at Germantown.'

'But you lost at Germantown,' the second man pointed out.

Johnny Fiske pretended to be shot, staggered dramatically and fell down, and Peleg Wadsworth, he found it hard to think of himself as a general, decided he had failed to explain

the manoeuvre properly. He wondered whether he would ever need to master the intricacies of infantry drill. The French had joined America's struggle for freedom and had sent an army across the Atlantic and the war was now being fought in the southern states very far from Massachusetts.

'Is the war won?' a voice interrupted his thoughts and he turned to see his wife, Elizabeth, carrying their one-year-old daughter, Zilpha, in her arms.

'I do believe,' Peleg Wadsworth said, 'that the children have killed every last redcoat in America.'

'God be praised for that,' Elizabeth said lightly. She was twenty-six, five years younger than her husband, and pregnant again. Alexander was her oldest, then came three-year-old Charles and the infant Zilpha, who stared wide-eyed and solemn at her father. Elizabeth was almost as tall as her husband who was putting notebook and pencil back into a uniform pocket. He looked good in uniform, she thought, though the white-faced blue coat with its elegant buttoned tail was in desperate need of patching, but there was no blue cloth available, not even in Boston, at least not at a price that Peleg and Elizabeth Wadsworth could afford. Elizabeth was secretly amused by her husband's intense, worried expression. He was a good man, she thought fondly, as honest as the day was long and trusted by all his neighbours. He needed a haircut, though the slightly ragged dark locks gave his lean face an attractively rakish look. 'I'm sorry to interrupt the war,' Elizabeth said, 'but you have a visitor.' She nodded back towards their house where a man in uniform was tethering his horse to the hitching post.

The visitor was thin with a round, bespectacled face that was familiar to Wadsworth, but he could not place the man who, his horse safely tied, took a paper from his tail-coat pocket and strolled across the sunlit common. His uniform was pale brown with white facings. A sabre hung by leather straps from his sword belt. 'General Wadsworth,' he said

as he came close, 'it is good to see you in health, sir,' he added, and for a second Wadsworth flailed desperately as he tried to match a name to the face, then, blessedly, the name came.

'Captain Todd,' he said, hiding his relief.

'Major Todd now, sir.'

'I congratulate you, Major.'

'I'm appointed an aide to General Ward,' Todd said, 'who sends you this.' He handed the paper to Wadsworth. It was a single sheet, folded and sealed, with General Artemas Ward's name inscribed in spidery writing beneath the seal.

Major Todd looked sternly at the children. Still in a ragged line, they stared back at him, intrigued by the curved blade at his waist. 'Stand at ease,' Todd ordered them, then smiled at Wadsworth. 'You recruit them young, General?'

Wadsworth, somewhat embarrassed to have been discovered drilling children, did not answer. He had unsealed the paper and now read the brief message. General Artemas Ward presented his compliments to Brigadier-General Wadsworth and regretted to inform him that a charge had been laid against Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Revere, commanding officer of the Massachusetts' Artillery Regiment, specifically that he had been drawing rations and pay for thirty non-existent men, and General Ward now required Wadsworth to make enquiries into the substance of the allegation.

Wadsworth read the message a second time, then dismissed the children and beckoned Todd to walk with him towards the Burying Ground. 'General Ward is well?' he asked politely. Artemas Ward commanded the Massachusetts Militia.

'He's well enough,' Todd answered, 'other than some pains in the legs.'

'He grows old,' Wadsworth said, and for a dutiful moment the two men exchanged news of births, marriages, illnesses and deaths, the small change of a community. They had paused in the shade of an elm and after a while Wadsworth

gestured with the letter. 'It seems strange to me,' he said carefully, 'that a major should bring such a trivial message.'

'Trivial?' Todd asked sternly, 'we are talking of speculation, General.'

'Which, if true, will have been recorded in the muster returns. Does it require a general to inspect the books? A clerk could do that.'

'A clerk has done that,' Todd said grimly, 'but a clerk's name on the official report bears no weight.'

Wadsworth heard the grimness. 'And you seek weight?' he asked.

'General Ward would have the matter investigated thoroughly,' Todd answered firmly, 'and you are the Adjutant-General of the Militia, which makes you responsible for the good discipline of the forces.'

Wadsworth flinched at what he regarded as an impertinent and unnecessary reminder of his duties, but he let the insolence pass unproved. Todd had the reputation of being a thorough and diligent man, but Wadsworth also recalled a rumour that Major William Todd and Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Revere nurtured a strong dislike of each other. Todd had served with Revere in the artillery, but had resigned in protest at the regiment's disorganization, and Wadsworth suspected that Todd was using his new position to strike at his old enemy, and Wadsworth liked it not. 'Colonel Revere,' he spoke mildly, though with deliberate provocation, 'enjoys a reputation as a fine and fervent patriot.'

'He is a dishonest man,' Todd retorted vehemently.

'If wars were fought only by the honest,' Wadsworth said, 'then we would surely have perpetual peace?'

'You're acquainted with Colonel Revere, sir?' Todd asked.

'I cannot claim more than an acquaintance,' Wadsworth said.

Todd nodded, as if that was the proper answer. 'Your reputation, General,' he said, 'is unassailable. If you prove

peculation, then not a man in Massachusetts will dispute the verdict.'

Wadsworth glanced at the message again. 'Just thirty men?' he asked dubiously. 'You've ridden from Boston for such a small affair?'

'It's not far to ride,' Todd said defensively, 'and I have business in Plymouth, so it was convenient to wait on you.'

'If you have business, Major,' Wadsworth said, 'then I won't detain you.' Courtesy demanded that he at least offered Todd some refreshment and Wadsworth was a courteous man, but he was annoyed at being implicated in what he strongly suspected was a private feud.

'There is talk,' Todd remarked as the two men walked back across the common, 'of an attack on Canada.'

'There is always talk of an attack on Canada,' Wadsworth said with some asperity.

'If such an attack occurs,' Todd said, 'we would want our artillery commanded by the best available man.'

'I would assume,' Wadsworth said, 'that we would desire that whether we march on Canada or not.'

'We need a man of probity,' Todd said.

'We need a man who can shoot straight,' Wadsworth said brusquely and wondered whether Todd aspired to command the artillery regiment himself, but he said nothing more. His wife was waiting beside the hitching post with a glass of water that Todd accepted gratefully before riding south towards Plymouth. Wadsworth went indoors and showed Elizabeth the letter. 'I fear it is politics, my dear,' he said, 'politics.'

'Is that bad?'

'It is awkward,' Wadsworth said. 'Colonel Revere is a man of faction.'

'Faction?'

'Colonel Revere is zealous,' Wadsworth said carefully, 'and his zeal makes enemies as well as friends. I suspect Major Todd laid the charge. It is a question of jealousy.'



‘So you think the allegation is untrue?’

‘I have no opinion,’ Wadsworth said, ‘and would dearly like to continue in that ignorance.’ He took the letter back and read it again.

‘It is still wrongdoing,’ Elizabeth said sternly.

‘Or a false allegation? A clerk’s error? But it involves me in faction and I dislike faction. If I prove wrongdoing then I make enemies of half Boston and earn the enmity of every freemason. Which is why I would prefer to remain in ignorance.’

‘So you will ignore it?’ Elizabeth asked.

‘I shall do my duty, my dear,’ Wadsworth said. He had always done his duty, and done it well. As a student at Harvard, as a schoolteacher, as a captain in Lexington’s town troop, as an aide to General Washington in the Continental Army and now as a brigadier in the militia. But there were times, he thought, when his own side was far more difficult than the British. He folded the letter and went for his dinner.

Majabigwaduce was a hump of land, almost an island, shaped like an anvil. From east to west it was just under two miles long, and from north to south rarely more than half a mile wide, and the ridge of its rocky hump climbed from the east to the west where it ended in a blunt, high, wooded bluff that overlooked the wide Penobscot Bay. The settlement lay on the ridge’s southern side, where the British fleet lay in the harbour’s anchorage. It was a village of small houses, barns and storehouses. The smallest houses were simple log cabins, but some were more substantial dwellings of two storeys, their frames clad in cedar shingles that looked silver in the day’s watery sunlight. There was no church yet.

The ridge above the village was thick with spruce, though to the west, where the land was highest, there were fine maples, beech and birch. Oaks grew by the water. Much of the land about the settlement had been cleared and planted

with corn, and now axes bit into spruce trees as the redcoats set about clearing the ridge above the village.

Seven hundred soldiers had come to Majabigwaduce. Four hundred and fifty were kilted highlanders of the 74th, another two hundred were lowlanders from the 82nd, while the remaining fifty were engineers and gunners. The fleet that had brought them had dispersed, the *Blonde* sailing on to New York and leaving behind only three empty transport ships and three small sloops-of-war whose masts now dominated Majabigwaduce's harbour. The beach was heaped with landed supplies and a new track, beaten into the dirt, now ran straight up the long slope from the water's edge to the ridge's crest. Brigadier McLean climbed that track, walking with the aid of a twisted blackthorn stick and accompanied by a civilian. 'We are a small force, Doctor Calef,' McLean said, 'but you may rely on us to do our duty.'

'Calf,' Calef said.

'I beg your pardon?'

'My name, General, is pronounced calf.'

'I do pray your pardon, Doctor,' McLean said, inclining his head.

Doctor Calef was a thickset man a few years younger than McLean. He wore a low crowned hat over a wig that had not been powdered for weeks and which framed a blunt face distinguished by a determined jaw. He had introduced himself to McLean, offering advice, professional help and whatever other support he could give. 'You're here to stay, I trust?' the doctor demanded.

'Decidedly, sir, decidedly,' McLean said, digging his stick into the thin soil, 'oh, indeed we mean to stay.'

'To do what?' Calef asked curtly.

'Let me see now,' McLean paused, watching as two men stepped back from a half-felled tree that toppled, slowly at first, then crashed down in an explosion of splintering branches, pine needles and dust. 'My first duty, Doctor,' he said, 'is to prevent

the rebels from using the bay as a haven for their privateers. Those pirates have been a nuisance.’ That was mild. The American rebels held all the coastline between Canada and New York except for the beleaguered British garrison in Newport, Rhode Island, and British merchant ships, making that long voyage, were ever at risk from the well-armed, fast-sailing rebel privateers. By occupying Majabigwaduce the British would dominate Penobscot Bay and so deny the rebels its fine anchorage, which would become a base for Britain’s Royal Navy. ‘At the same time,’ McLean continued, ‘I am ordered to deter any rebel attack on Canada and thirdly, Doctor, I am to encourage trade here.’

‘Mast wood,’ Calef growled.

‘Especially mast wood,’ McLean agreed, ‘and fourthly we are to settle this region.’

‘Settle it?’

‘For the crown, Doctor, for the crown.’ McLean smiled and waved his blackthorn stick at the landscape. ‘Behold, Doctor Calef, His Majesty’s province of New Ireland.’

‘New Ireland?’ Calef asked.

‘From the border of Canada and eighty miles southwards,’ McLean said, ‘all New Ireland.’

‘Let’s trust it’s not as papist as old Ireland,’ Calef said sourly.

‘I’m sure it will be God-fearing,’ McLean said tactfully. The general had served many years in Portugal and did not share his countrymen’s distaste for Roman Catholics, but he was a good enough soldier to know when not to fight. ‘So what brought you to New Ireland, Doctor?’ he asked, changing the subject.

‘I was driven from Boston by damned rebels,’ Calef said angrily.

‘And you chose to come here?’ McLean asked, unable to hide his surprise that the doctor had fled Boston to this fog-ridden wilderness.

‘Where else could I take my family?’ Calef demanded, still

angry. 'Dear God, General, but there's no legitimate government between here and New York! In all but name the colonies are independent already! In Boston the wretches have an administration, a legislature, offices of state, a judiciary! Why? Why is it permitted?'

'You could have moved to New York?' McLean suggested, ignoring Calef's indignant question, 'or to Halifax?'

'I'm a Massachusetts man,' Calef said, 'and I trust that one day I will return to Boston, but a Boston cleansed of rebellion.'

'I pray so too,' McLean said. 'Tell me, Doctor, did the woman give birth safely?'

Doctor Calef blinked, as if the question surprised him. 'The woman? Oh, you mean Joseph Perkins's wife. Yes, she was delivered safely. A fine girl.'

'Another girl, eh?' McLean said, and turned to gaze at the wide bay beyond the harbour entrance. 'Big bay with big tides,' he said lightly, then saw the doctor's incomprehension. 'I was told that was the meaning of Majabigwaduce,' he explained.

Calef frowned, then made a small gesture as if the question was irrelevant. 'I've no idea what the name means, General. You must ask the savages. It's their name for the place.'

'Well, it's all New Ireland now,' McLean said, then touched his hat. 'Good day, Doctor, I'm sure we shall talk further. I'm grateful for your support, grateful indeed, but if you'll excuse me, duty calls.'

Calef watched the general limp uphill, then called to him. 'General McLean!'

'Sir?' McLean turned.

'You don't imagine the rebels are going to let you stay here, do you?'

McLean appeared to consider the question for a few seconds, almost as though he had never thought about it before. 'I would think not,' he said mildly.

‘They’ll come for you,’ Calef warned him. ‘Soon as they know you’re here, General, they’ll come for you.’

‘Do you know?’ McLean said, ‘I rather think they will.’ He touched his hat again. ‘Good day, Doctor. I’m glad about Mrs Perkins.’

‘Damn Mrs Perkins,’ the doctor said, but too softly for the general to hear, then he turned and stared southwards down the long bay, past Long Island, to where the river disappeared on its way to the far off sea, and he wondered how long before a rebel fleet appeared in that channel.

That fleet would appear, he was sure. Boston would learn of McLean’s presence, and Boston would want to scour this place free of redcoats. And Calef knew Boston. He had been a member of the General Assembly there, a Massachusetts legislator, but he was also a stubborn loyalist who had been driven from his home after the British left Boston. Now he lived here, at Majabigwaduce, and the rebels were coming for him again. He knew it, he feared their coming, and he feared that a general who cared about a woman and her baby was a man too soft to do the necessary job. ‘Just kill them all,’ he growled to himself, ‘just kill them all.’

Six days after Brigadier-General Wadsworth had paraded the children, and after Brigadier-General McLean had sailed into Majabigwaduce’s snug haven, a captain paced the quarter-deck of his ship, the Continental Navy frigate *Warren*. It was a warm Boston morning. There was fog over the harbour islands, and a humid south-west wind bringing a promise of afternoon thunder.

‘The glass?’ the captain asked brusquely.

‘Dropping, sir,’ a midshipman answered.

‘As I thought,’ Captain Dudley Saltonstall said, ‘as I thought.’ He paced larboard to starboard and starboard to larboard beneath the mizzen’s neatly furled spanker on its long boom. His long-chinned face was shadowed by the forrard peak of

his cocked hat, beneath which his dark eyes looked sharply from the multitude of ships anchored in the roads to his crew who, though short-handed, were swarming over the frigate's deck, sides and rigging to give the ship her morning scrub. Saltonstall was newly appointed to the *Warren* and he was determined she should be a neat ship.

'As I thought,' Saltonstall said again. The midshipman, standing respectfully beside the larboard aft gun, braced his leg against the gun's carriage and said nothing. The wind was fresh enough to jerk the *Warren* on her anchor cables and make her shudder to the small waves that flickered white across the harbour. The *Warren*, like the two nearby vessels that also belonged to the Continental Navy, flew the red- and white-striped flag on which a snake surmounted the words 'Don't Tread on Me'. Many of the other ships in the crowded harbour flew the bold new flag of the United States, striped and starred, but two smart brigs, both armed with fourteen six-pounder cannons and both anchored close to the *Warren*, flew the Massachusetts Navy flag that showed a green pine tree on a white field and bore the words 'An Appeal to Heaven'.

'An appeal to nonsense,' Saltonstall growled.

'Sir?' the midshipman asked nervously.

'If our cause is just, Mister Coningsby, why need we appeal to heaven? Let us rather appeal to force, to justice, to reason.'

'Aye aye, sir,' the midshipman said, unsettled by the captain's habit of looking past the man he spoke to.

'Appeal to heaven!' Saltonstall sneered, still gazing past the midshipman's ear towards the offending flag. 'In war, Mister Coningsby, one might do better to appeal to hell.'

The ensigns of other vessels were more picaresque. One low-slung ship, her masts raked sharply aft and her gun ports painted black, had a coiled rattlesnake emblazoned on her ensign, while a second flew the skull and crossbones, and a third showed King George of England losing his crown to

a cheerful looking Yankee wielding a spiked club. Captain Saltonstall disapproved of all such home-made flags. They made for untidiness. A dozen other ships had British flags, but all those flags were being flown beneath American colours to show they had been captured, and Captain Saltonstall disapproved of that too. It was not that the British merchantmen had been captured, that was plainly a good thing, nor that the flags proclaimed the victories because that too was desirable, but rather that the captured ships were now presumed to be private property. Not the property of the United States, but of the privateers like the low-slung, raked-masted, rattle-snake-decorated sloop.

‘They are pirates, Mister Coningsby,’ Saltonstall growled.

‘Aye aye, sir,’ Midshipman Fanning replied. Midshipman Coningsby had died of the fever a week previously, but all Fanning’s nervous attempts to correct his captain had failed and he had abandoned any hope of being called by his real name.

Saltonstall was still frowning at the privateers. ‘How can we find decent crew when piracy beckons?’ Saltonstall complained, ‘tell me that, Mister Coningsby!’

‘I don’t know, sir.’

‘We cannot, Mister Coningsby, we cannot,’ Saltonstall said, shuddering at the injustice of the law. It was true that the privateers were patriotic pirates who were fierce as wolves in battle, but they fought for private gain, and that made it impossible for a Continental warship like the *Warren* to find good crew. What young man of Boston would serve his country for pennies when he could join a privateer and earn a share of the plunder? No wonder the *Warren* was short-handed! She carried thirty-two guns and was as fine a frigate as any on the American seaboard, but Saltonstall had only men enough to fight half his weapons, while the privateers were all fully manned. ‘It is an abomination, Mister Coningsby!’

‘Aye aye, sir,’ Midshipman Fanning said.

‘Look at that!’ Saltonstall checked his pacing to point a finger at the *Ariadne*, a fat British merchantman that had been captured by a privateer. ‘You know what she was carrying, Mister Coningsby?’

‘Black walnut from New York to London, sir?’

‘And she carried six cannon, Mister Coningsby! Nine-pounder guns! Six of them. Good long nine-pounders! Newly made! And where are those guns now?’

‘I don’t know, sir.’

‘For sale in Boston!’ Saltonstall spat the words. ‘For sale, Mister Coningsby, in Boston, when our country has desperate need of cannon! It makes me angry, Mister Coningsby, it makes me angry indeed.’

‘Aye aye, sir.’

‘Those cannon will be melted down for gew-gaws. For gew-gaws! It makes me angry, upon my soul, it does.’ Captain Saltonstall carried his anger to the starboard rail where he paused to watch a small cutter approach from the north. Its dark sails first appeared as a patch in the fog, then the patch took shape and hardened into a single-masted vessel about forty feet long. She was not a fishing boat, she was too narrow for such work, but her gunwales were pierced with tholes showing that she could ship a dozen oars and so be rowed on calm days and Saltonstall recognized her as one of the fast messenger boats used by the government of Massachusetts. A man was standing amidships with cupped hands, evidently shouting his news to the moored vessels through which the cutter slid. Saltonstall would dearly have liked to know what the man shouted, but he considered it was beneath his dignity as a Continental Navy captain to make vulgar enquiries, and so he turned away just as a schooner, her gunwales punctuated by gunports, gathered way to pass the *Warren*. The schooner was a black-hulled privateer with the name *King-Killer* prominent in white paint at her waist. her dirt-streaked sails were sheeted in hard to beat her way out of the harbour.



She carried a dozen deck guns, enough to batter most British merchantmen into quick surrender, and she was built for speed so that she could escape any warship of the British navy. Her deck was crowded with men while at her mizzen gaff was a blue flag with the word Liberty embroidered in white letters. Saltonstall waited for that flag to be lowered in salute to his own ensign, but as the black schooner passed she offered no sign of recognition. A man at her taffrail looked at Saltonstall, then spat into the sea and the *Warren's* captain bridled, suspecting an insult. He watched her go towards the fog. The *King-Killer* was off hunting, going across the bay, around the northern hook of Cape Cod and out into the Atlantic where the fat British cargo ships wallowed on their westward runs from Halifax to New York.

'Gew-gaws,' Saltonstall growled.

A stub-masted open barge, painted white with a black stripe around its gunwale, pushed off from the Castle Island quay. A dozen men manned the oars, pulling hard against the small waves, and the sight of the barge made Captain Saltonstall fish a watch from his pocket. He clicked open the lid and saw that it was ten minutes past eight in the morning. The barge was precisely on time, and within an hour he would see it return from Boston, this time carrying the commander of the Castle Island garrison, a man who preferred to sleep in the city. Saltonstall approved of the Castle Island barge. She was smartly painted and her crew, if not in real uniform, wore matching blue shirts. There was an attempt at order there, at discipline, at propriety.

The captain resumed his pacing, larboard to starboard, starboard to larboard.

The *King-Killer* vanished in the fog.

The Castle Island barge threaded the anchorage. A church bell began to toll.

Boston harbour, a warm morning, June 23rd, 1779.

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The paymaster of His Majesty's 82nd Regiment of Foot strode west along Majabigwaduce's ridge. From behind him came the sound of axes striking trees, while all around him was fog. A thick fog. Every morning since the fleet had arrived there had been fog. 'It will burn off,' the paymaster said cheerfully.

'Aye, sir,' Sergeant McClure answered dully. The sergeant had a picquet of six men from the 82nd Foot, the Duke of Hamilton's regiment and so known as the Hamiltons. McClure was thirty, older by far than his men and twelve years older than the paymaster, a lieutenant, who led the picquet at a fast, enthusiastic pace. His orders were to establish a sentry post at the peninsula's western heights from where a lookout could be kept on the wide Penobscot Bay. If any enemy was to come, then the bay was their likeliest approach. The picquet was in thick woodland now, dwarfed by tall, dark, fog-shrouded trees. 'The brigadier, sir,' Sergeant McClure ventured, 'said there might be rebels here.'

'Nonsense! There are no rebels here! They have all fled, Sergeant!'

'If you say so, sir.'

'I do say so,' the young officer said enthusiastically, then stopped suddenly and pointed into the underbrush. 'There!'

'A rebel, sir?' McClure asked dutifully, seeing nothing worthy of note among the pines.

'Is it a thrush?'

'Ah,' McClure saw what had interested the paymaster and looked more closely, 'it's a bird, sir.'

'Strangely, Sergeant, I was apprised of that fact,' the lieutenant said happily. 'Note the breast, Sergeant.'

Sergeant McClure dutifully noted the bird's breast. 'Red, sir?'

'Red indeed. I congratulate you, Sergeant, and does it not put you in mind of our native robin? But this fellow is larger, much larger! Handsome fellow, isn't he?'

‘Want me to shoot him, sir?’ McClure asked.

‘No, Sergeant, I merely wish you to admire his plumage. A thrush is wearing his majesty’s red coat, would you not consider that an omen of good-fortune?’

‘Oh, aye, sir, I would.’

‘I detect in you, Sergeant, a lack of zeal.’ The eighteen-year-old lieutenant smiled to show he was not serious. He was a tall lad, a full head above the stocky sergeant, and had a round, eager and mobile face, a smile quick as lightning, and shrewdly observant eyes. His coat was cut from expensive scarlet cloth, faced with black and bright with buttons that were rumoured to be made of the finest gold. Lieutenant John Moore was not wealthy, he was a doctor’s son, but everyone knew he was a friend of the young Duke’s, and the Duke was said to be richer than the next ten richest men in all Scotland, and a rich friend, as everyone also knew, was the next best thing to being wealthy oneself. The Duke of Hamilton was so rich that he had paid all the expenses of raising the 82nd Regiment of Foot, buying them uniforms, muskets and bayonets, and rumour said his grace could probably afford to raise another ten such regiments without even noticing the expense. ‘Onwards,’ Moore said, ‘onwards, ever onwards!’

The six privates, all from the Lowlands of Scotland, did not move. They just gazed at Lieutenant Moore as though he were a strange species from some far-off heathen country.

‘Onwards!’ Moore called again, striding fast once more through the trees. The fog muffled the harsh sound of the axes coming from where Brigadier McLean’s men were clearing the ridge so that their planned fort would have open fields of fire. The 82nd’s picquet, meanwhile, was climbing a gentle slope that levelled onto a wide plateau of thick undergrowth and dark firs. Moore trampled through the brush, then again stopped abruptly. ‘There,’ he said, pointing, ‘*Thalassa, Thalassa.*’

‘The lassie?’ McClure asked.

‘You have not read Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, Sergeant?’ Moore asked in mock horror.

‘Is that the one after Leviticus, sir?’

Moore smiled. ‘*Thalassa*, Sergeant, *Thalassa*,’ he said in mock reproof, ‘was the cry of the ten thousand when at last, after their long march, and after their dark ordeals, they came to the sea. That’s what it means! The sea! The sea! And they shouted for joy because they saw their safety in the gentle heavens of its bosom.’

‘Its bosom, sir,’ McClure echoed, peering down a sudden steep bluff, thick with trees, to glimpse the cold sea through the foliage and beneath the drifting fog. ‘It’s not very bosomy, sir.’

‘And it is across that water, Sergeant, from their lair in the black lands of Boston, that the enemy will come. They will arrive in their hundreds and in their thousands, they will prowl like the dark hordes of Midian, they will descend upon us like the Assyrian!’

‘Not if this fog lasts, sir,’ McClure said, ‘the buggers will get lost, sir.’

Moore, for once, said nothing. He was gazing down the bluff. It was not quite a cliff, but no man could climb it easily. An attacker would need to drag himself up the two hundred feet by pulling on the straggly saplings, and a man using his hands to keep his footing could not use his musket. The beach, just visible, was brief and stony.

‘But are the buggers coming, sir?’ McClure asked.

‘We cannot say,’ Moore said distractedly.

‘But the brigadier thinks so, sir?’ McClure asked anxiously. The privates listened, glancing nervously from the short sergeant to the tall officer.

‘We must assume, Sergeant,’ Moore said airily, ‘that the wretched creatures will resent our presence. We make life difficult for them. By establishing ourselves in this land of

soured milk and bitter honey we deny their privateers the harbours they require for their foul depredations. We are a thorn in their side, we are inconvenient, we are a challenge to their quietude.'

McClure frowned and scratched his forehead. 'So you're saying the buggers will come, sir?'

'I bloody hope so,' Moore said with sudden vehemence.

'Not here, sir,' McClure said confidently. 'Too steep.'

'They'll want to land somewhere in range of their ships' cannons,' Moore said.

'Cannons, sir?'

'Big metal tubes which expel balls, Sergeant.'

'Oh, thank you, sir. I was wondering, sir,' McClure said with a smile.

Moore tried and failed to suppress a smile. 'We shall be plied with shot, Sergeant, have no doubt of that. And I've no doubt ships could spatter this slope with cannon fire, but how would men climb it into our musket fire? Yet even so, let's hope they land here. No troops could climb this slope if we're waiting at the top, eh? By God, Sergeant, we'll make a fine cull of the rebellious bastards!'

'And so we will, sir,' McClure said loyally, though in his sixteen years of service he had become used to brash young officers whose confidence exceeded their experience. Lieutenant John Moore, the sergeant decided, was another such, yet McClure liked him. The paymaster possessed an easy authority, rare in a man so young, and he was reckoned to be a fair officer who cared about his troops. Even so, McClure thought, John Moore would have to learn some sense or else die young.

'We shall slaughter them,' Moore said enthusiastically, then held out his hand. 'Your musket, Sergeant.'

McClure handed the officer his musket and watched as Moore laid a guinea on the ground. 'The soldier who can fire faster than me will be rewarded with the guinea,' Moore said.

‘Your mark is that half-rotted tree canted on the slope, you see it?’

‘Aim at the dead bent tree.’ McClure explained to the privates. ‘Sir?’

‘Sergeant?’

‘Won’t the sound of muskets alarm the camp, sir?’

‘I warned the brigadier we’d be shooting. Sergeant, your cartridge box, if you please.’

‘Be quick, lads,’ McClure encouraged his men. ‘Let’s take the officer’s money!’

‘You may load and prime,’ Moore said. ‘I propose to fire five shots. If any of you manage five before me, then you will take the guinea. Imagine, gentlemen, that a horde of malodorous rebels are climbing the bluff, then do the king’s work and send the wretches to hell.’

The muskets were loaded; the powder, wadding and shot were rammed down the barrels, the locks were primed and the frizzens closed. The clicks of the flints being cocked seemed oddly loud in the fog-shrouded morning.

‘Gentlemen of the 82nd,’ Moore demanded grandly, ‘are you ready?’

‘The buggers are ready, sir,’ McClure said.

‘Present!’ Moore ordered, ‘fire!’

Seven muskets coughed, blasting evil-smelling powder smoke that was far thicker than the swirling fog. The smoke lingered as birds fled through the thick trees and gulls called from the water. Through the echo of the shots McClure heard the balls ripping through leaves and clattering on the stones of the small beach. The men were tearing open their next cartridges with their teeth, but Lieutenant Moore was already ahead. He had primed the musket, closed the frizzen and now dropped the heavy stock to the ground and poured in the powder. He pushed the cartridge paper and ball into the muzzle, whipped the ramrod up, slid it down hard, pulled it free with the ringing sound of metal on metal, then jammed

the ramrod into the turf, tossed the gun up to his shoulder, cocked, and fired.

No one had yet beaten Lieutenant John Moore. Major Dunlop had timed Moore once and, with disbelief, had announced that the lieutenant had fired five shots inside sixty seconds. Most men could manage three shots a minute with a clean musket, a few could shoot four rounds, but the doctor's son, friend of a duke, could fire five. Moore had been trained in musketry by a Prussian, and as a boy he had practised and practised, perfecting the essential soldier's skill, and so certain was he of his ability that, as he loaded the last two shots, he did not even bother to look at his borrowed weapon, but instead smiled wryly at Sergeant McClure. 'Five!' Moore announced, his ears ringing with the explosions. 'Did any man defeat me, Sergeant?'

'No, sir. Private Neill managed three shots, sir, the rest did two.'

'Then my guinea is safe,' Moore said, scooping it up.

'But are we?' McClure muttered.

'You spoke, Sergeant?'

McClure stared down the bluff. The smoke was clearing and he could see that the canted tree, just thirty paces away, was unscarred by any musket ball. 'There's precious few of us, sir,' he said, 'and we're all alone here and there's a lot of rebels.'

'All the more to kill,' Moore said. 'We shall take post here till the fog lifts, Sergeant, then look for a better vantage point.'

'Aye, sir.'

The picquet was posted; their task to watch for the coming of an enemy. That enemy, the brigadier had assured his officers, would come. Of that McLean was sure. So he cut down trees and plotted where the fort must be.

To defend the king's land from the king's enemies.

Excerpt of letter from the Massachusetts Council, to the Continental Navy Board in Boston, June 30th, 1779:

*Gentlemen: The General Assembly of this State have determined on an Expedition to Penobscot to Dislodge the Enemy of the United States lately enter'd There who are said to be committing Hostilities on the Good People of this State . . . fortifying themselves at Baggobagadoos, and as They are supported by a Considerable Naval Force, to Effect our Design, it will be expedient to send there, to aid our Land Operations a Superior Naval Force. Therefore . . . we write you . . . requesting you to aid our Designs, by adding to the Naval Force of this State, now, with all Possible Speed preparing, for an expedition to Penobscot; the Continental Frigate now in this Harbour, and the other armed Continental vessells here.*

Excerpts from the Warrant of Impressment issued to Massachusetts Sheriffs, July 3rd, 1779:

*You are hereby authorized and Commanded taking with you such Assistance as you judge proper, forthwith to take seize and impress any able-bodied Seamen, or Mariner which you shall*



*find in your Precinct . . . to serve on board any of the Vessels entered into the Service of this State to be employed in the proposed expedition to Penobscot . . . You are hereby Authorized to enter on board and search any Ship or Vessel or to break open and search any Dwelling house or other building in which you shall suspect any such Seamen or Mariners to be concealed.*

Excerpt from a letter sent by Brigadier-General Charles Cushing to the Council of the State of Massachusetts, June 19th, 1779

*I have Issued orders to the officers of my Brigade requiring them to enlist men agreeable thereto. I would inform your Honors that at present there seems no prospect of getting one man as the Bounty offered is in the Esteem of the people inadequate.*