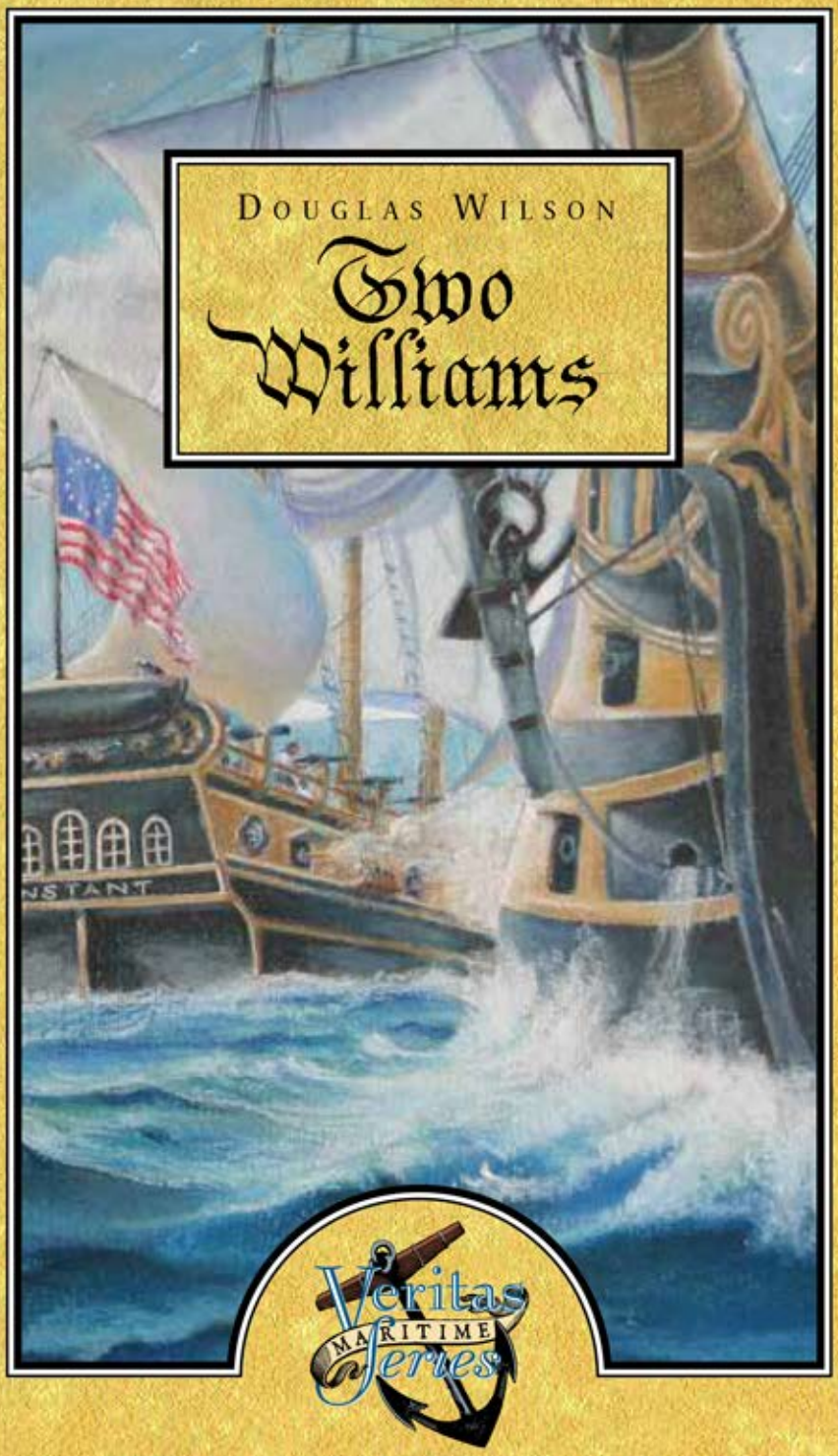
DOUGLAS WILSON
Two Williams
NSTANT
Veritas
MARITIME
Series

DOUGLAS WILSON

Two Williams

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Two Williams

Veritas Press, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

(800) 922-5082
www.VeritasPress.com
ISBN 978-1-932168-66-2

The illustrations in this book are pastel drawings that were made by Judith Hunt (www.huntjudith.com)

Printed in the United States of America.

This book is for
Judah Wilson Merkle and
Seamus James Wilson.
May you always resist
the revolution with courage
and cheerfulness.

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Prologue

This book is the third in a series of stories about the Monroe family in early America. And who knows? If the books keep going we might even work our way down to the present day.

The first book, *Blackthorn Winter,* is about a young man named Thomas Ingle, who lives with his mother Sarah. Thomas's father was lost at sea (probably in a battle with pirates), and Thomas desperately wants to go to sea. His mother finally lets him, reluctantly, and he is apprenticed to a Captain Monroe. In the course of their adventures, Thomas discovers a pirate treasure, Captain Monroe marries Thomas's mother, Sarah, and they buy the land that the treasure is on. The treasure becomes the basis for the Monroe family fortune. The book is set in the very first part of the 1700s, when pirates on the Chesapeake Bay were not uncommon.

The second book in this series is called *Susan Creek* and is set in the late 1740s, the time of the First Great Awakening. The young hero is John Monroe, the grandson of Captain Monroe and Sarah of the first book. His parents are Thomas Monroe and Jane (Thomas had been named after his much older step-brother, Thomas Ingle). John has been apprenticed to sea before he goes back to work in the family business. On this particular voyage to Scotland, he meets a young girl named Jenny Geddes and gets swept up into an adventure

involving a British officer who is spying for the French. George Whitefield and his preaching enter the story in several ways, and the story ends with John and Jenny getting married, and with a young son.

This third story concerns the three sons of John and Jenny Monroe and their adventures in the American War for Independence. The oldest son is William, who is an officer in the Continental Navy. We met him as a toddler at the very end of *Susan Creek*. The second son is named Robert, and he is fighting with Morgan's Rifles. They had distinguished themselves at the battle of Saratoga and show up in this book at the battle of Cowpens. But the youngest son, Stephen, is the main character in the book. To find out what happens to *him,* you will just have to read it.

A Tory Tavern

JUST A SHORT WAY OUTSIDE ANNAPOLIS Stephen Monroe had spent the last three weeks sleeping in the stables of his father's country estate. His brother William was due to return from sea to visit the family at any time, and it had been decided that Stephen should finally accompany William back to sea. Until that time, it was very important for him to stay out of sight.

How Stephen came to be living *there* with the draft horses was a small adventure, or joke, depending on how you looked at it, but the consequences were serious enough. Stephen was wanted by the British Redcoat colonel for tying ribbons in the tails of their horses while all the Colonel's staff was taking luncheon at the house of Lady Westmore. The nearby militia was a far greater threat to the Redcoats, but the Colonel was

a peacock, and he intended to make an example of Stephen. Besides, it provided an excuse to not take to the field. From the day of that small lark, Stephen had to stay out of sight during the day and spend each night in the stables.

Stephen had been desperate to join the war for liberty for several years, but both his parents had been resistant for reasons that had not been entirely clear to him. His oldest brother William was in the Continental Navy, and the next brother Robert was a lieutenant in the Maryland Line. Why couldn't he go? But the reason Stephen didn't know the reason he couldn't enlist—*that* was the reason. He had been given the reason many times, but for various causes he did not understand them at all. His mother had told him many times that if he understood her, she would be satisfied. But he didn't, and she wasn't. Stephen was something of a hothead, at least for the Monroe clan, and his parents were afraid that he would get a case of liberty fever, worse than he already had it. They were patriots, but they were afraid of some of the patriots they had heard.

But Stephen was hot to fight, and it was a trial to him to obey his parents. However, despite being a hothead, he was obedient, and he tried to be cheerful. Most of the time, he was. When William finally came home, he agreed to take Stephen with him, but he was reluctant for the same reason his parents were. But unfortunately, the zeal of the British colonel was making their choice for them. William and Stephen's

mother had talked to William privately about it before he agreed to take Stephen. "He needs to go *somewhere* now," she said. "And we would much prefer it be with someone who cares for him, and who knows our concerns and would honor them."

Late that night, Stephen was summoned in from the stables by a servant, and met in the sitting room with his parents, John and Jenny Monroe, and his brother William. Despite their concerns, which they went over one more time with him, Stephen was hot with excitement. He was going to sea. He was going to see action against the *tyrant*. He did not understand how his parents could be willing to fight for liberty and yet not be excited about liberty in the same way he was. He tried to understand them, but he didn't. They tried to understand him, but they didn't.

At one point near the end of their farewells, he tried to explain a last time. "Just yesterday I was reading Mr. Paine's book *Common Sense . . .*"

William snorted and interrupted. "Mr. Paine is a prodigious fool."

His mother looked with alarm at William, as though to say that she wanted him to restrain Stephen—but not to give him a drubbing. John Monroe looked at the floor, nodding for a moment. Then, looking up, he said, "Perhaps a future conversation will be more fruitful than this one has been. Stephen, go upstairs for your trunk—it is already packed for

you. I want you to take your Bible and leave behind Mr. Paine. That gentleman is all sail and no ballast. When you come back down, we will pray, and you may go."

Three days later, William Monroe sat with his back against the wall of the Jamestown tavern, and next to him sat his young brother Stephen. Stephen was taller than his brother when he was sitting down, and when they were standing he was *almost* taller. But he was also thirteen years the younger, and this meant that although they were not close as brothers, Stephen had always looked up to William as one might an especially important uncle. William had been away at sea for many years—he had left for the first time when Stephen was only three, but he had been faithful to return at regular intervals, and he always kept Stephen's imagination fired with his stories. Of course, it did not take much to keep Stephen's imagination fired, and William always seemed a little stiff and distant. Stephen always wanted to hear more than William was willing to tell.

They had come down to Jamestown from Annapolis because it would be here that Stephen would finally become a midshipman with his brother in the Continental Navy. The two brothers had arrived in Jamestown that afternoon by coach, and when they unfolded themselves from it and stretched in the street, they sought out a place to eat. They were hungry enough that they were not too scrupulous about the tavern they chose and were just now finishing their stew.

William Monroe had been a lieutenant just the previous year, serving under John Paul Jones. He had acquitted himself so well in the battle between the *Serapis* and the *Bon Homme Richard* that when they returned to America, he had been given a commission—a ship of his own, the Susquehanna. It was now the spring of 1780, and it was almost time to sail.

"Tell me again what happened after Captain Jones defied Pearson."

"Well, Pearson called upon our captain to strike his colors, and Captain Jones just stood there, saber in hand, musket balls flying past him, and shouted that he had not yet begun to fight. That stirred every man of us, I don't mind telling you. Their guns had taken out much of our starboard battery, and we didn't have many gunners left either. We sent the marines up into the rigging, and bless them if they didn't shoot like a pack of wizards. They raked the decks of the *Serapis*—I have never seen shooting like that, never."

"What happened next?" Stephen was done with his stew, and his brother was nowhere close. William was not nearly as stiff as he seemed to his brother, and he could tell a sea story as well as any of his mates—but in talking like this to his brother he always felt like he was stoking a fire that was already too hot and high.

"The *Bon Homme Richard* was taking on water, and settling into the sea, sluggish like. We couldn't maneuver, and so Captain Jones tied our bow off to the side of the Serapis, and

we just went at it, hammer and tongs. They were preparing a sortie to board us, and so Captain Jones just nodded at me to do something. So I took about seven lads who were with me, and we attacked them, right up the middle. God showed favor to us that day—there was no reason for us to win that battle. And after we won, our ship sank, and we had to sail off in theirs."

"That's *it?* You just told me that there was some fighting, and then it was over."

William laughed in spite of himself. "Well, because of how the ships were lashed together, we had to run single file, and jump from our bowsprit, and not spread out shoulder to shoulder until we were on their forward deck. I was first, and three of us got there before they saw our plan. It was all sabers, and for some moments there all I saw was sabers. A man named Huggins saved my life—twice I think, maybe three times. I had my saber knocked out of my hand by some ruffian, who seemed extremely interested in the color of my insides. Huggins split him like he was chopping wood on a Saturday evening. . . . I got my saber back, and by that time, all seven of us were there. We gave them what for, and that's the truth of it."

Stephen was about to ask yet another question, but he suddenly yelled, jumping in his seat instead. From across the tavern, a pewter mug sailed right past his head and struck the wall behind him, spattering ale everywhere.

William was on his feet instantly, and Stephen quickly stood up beside him. Stephen had no weapons with him, but William had both a saber and a pistol. From across the tavern, a large figure began to weave toward them. Behind him were several others.

The two brothers waited until their visitor was a few steps away, with only a table between them. "And did ye not know," the man began, "that this is not a Whig establishment? We offer victuals and drink for *Tories,* and for any honest souls who are loyal to their king."

William bent slightly at the waist. "I did not know," he said. "We are strangers in your town. We would be happy, under the present circumstances, to pay our bill, and take our leave." With that he reached toward his pouch to bring out his payment.

The innkeeper (for it was the innkeeper) held up his hand. He stopped for a moment, still weaving, and then lowered his hand again. The men behind him looked slightly apologetic. "Keep your continentals," he said. "*Worthless.*"

William started to say that he would pay with silver, but the innkeeper held up his hand again. His dark hair was greasy, tucked behind his right ear. He was in his cups, and when he was in his cups, he was the kind of drunk who wanted to talk politics.

"Here's how ye may pay the bill," he said. "Answer me three questions."

"I see," said Captain Monroe, sucking on his teeth. "And must we answer the questions to your satisfaction? Or just answer the questions?"

"Aye. I take your point." The innkeeper stood there pretending to be puzzled for a moment, and Stephen thought briefly that he was the kind of man that he might like. If he were sober. And if there were no war going.

The innkeeper turned around and looked at the fellows who stood behind him, who had been hanging back somewhat uncertainly. *"You,"* he said, pointing to one of them. "You are the judge. You were a Whig before you got paroled. You've been on both sides. You're the judge. Sit here." With that the innkeeper pulled a chair behind a nearby table and pushed the young man down into it.

"Now," he said, turning around. "King George is my lawful sovereign. Why is he not yours?"

Stephen stepped forward as though he was going to blurt out an answer, but a glance from his brother stopped him. The Monroes had been over this countless times at the dinner table—their father had actually had to *decide* what he was going to do when the war broke out. They had friends and family on both sides, and the issues had not been a simple one for them, except for Stephen.

William rested his hands on his belt, and looked straight into the innkeeper's eyes, which was hard because the innkeeper kept looking at the floor. Captain Monroe was an

imposing figure when he was standing, and not eating stew, and when he was this close.

"The king *was* my sovereign. And as such, he had a responsibility as my liege lord to protect me and my family from those who had no such sovereignty, but who sought to exercise it anyway. When Parliament took up the pretence that they were the legislative body for Maryland, when we already had our representatives, the king had a duty to intervene and stay their grasping hand. With Parliament I had nothing to do, and under the ancient rights of Englishmen, I had every right to expect the king to defend us. This duty he refused. And when a liege lord refuses the duty of protection, the vassal is released from the obligations of allegiance."

It was clear to Stephen that the innkeeper had not followed any of this, and it was not surprising to him because *he* had trouble following it. He thought William ought to have simply said that the king was trampling on the rights of man. And had he said this, it would have been on the innkeeper's level, because when *he* usually talked politics, the debate usually amounted to a lusty shout of long life to King George, followed by a fist fight with those who would not drink to his health. Stephen glanced at the young man who had been impressed into the duties of the judge (whose name was Tom) who *was* following the answer, and he was looking increasingly nervous.

The innkeeper cleared his throat when it became obvious

that Captain Monroe had finished, and continued, "Does not the good book say that we are to obey the existing authorities?"

Stephen smiled to himself. The good book also had things to say about getting drunk and heaving pewter mugs at the guests. But Captain Monroe just shook his head.

"King Charles claimed that passage as part of his divine right before he lost his head. But the apostle plainly says in that place that the magistrates are God's servants and are not absolute. They are appointed to their servant's station to reward the righteous and punish the evil doer. The apostle does not contemplate the circumstance when the magistrate rewards the evil doer and punishes the righteous. And if my handling of the sacred text be wrong, it is at least the handling of it that was approved by the rulers of England in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. We have maintained nothing in this war for independence except what was established by our rulers as part of common law, before you or I were born."

Stephen looked sideways at Tom again. He was staring at his judge's bench and was drawing pictures with the spilt ale that was there. He seemed absorbed in something else, although he wasn't. Stephen looked up at his brother with exasperation. *Why not just say that friends of tyrants are enemies of God? Why give an answer full of words?*

The innkeeper's face was redder than it had been. He was intent on his fight, but he needed something he could understand. He finally decided to dispense with the finer points of

politics. "Have you raised arms against our king?"

"I have. I fought with Captain John Paul Jones when we took the *Serapis . . .*"

With that the innkeeper roared, lowered his head, and ran straight at William. William stepped aside easily and clapped a hand to the innkeeper's back, which sent him sprawling into a cluster of chairs. "Come on, Stephen," William said, and stepped toward the door. They both blinked coming out into the sunlight and were two streets down the way before anyone spoke. William suddenly stopped.

"What is it?"

"We forgot to pay." William was rummaging in his pouch for the coins. "Don't you think he forfeited it? You answered that old loblolly's questions, and to *spare.*"

But William ignored the taunt, turned back, and they made their way back to the inn. When they got there, they found judge Tom leaning against the doorpost, looking up toward the afternoon sun. William touched him on the shoulder, which made him jump, and then offered him the coins. Tom smiled, nodded, and took them.

"You were paroled?" Stephen asked Tom, hoping for a story with some action in it.

"Yes. I fought with the Whig militia when the war broke out. I was captured a year ago in a skirmish near Colcock Creek. I was released on parole and haven't seen action since. My mother is happy about it, fair enough. I sometimes think

of breaking my word—especially when I hear things like that in there."

Stephen started to say that every friend of liberty should take the field, but Captain Monroe interrupted, shaking his head. "No—keep your word. We are fighting because the king wouldn't."

With that they began to go, but they stopped when Tom called them back. "One more thing?" William nodded, so he went on. "Don't be hard in your thoughts on my master, old Nob. He lost two boys in the first month of the war. He didn't used to drink. He is a simple man, and I don't think he can make it here if we win. He'll have to go to Halifax."

William nodded, and Stephen didn't know what to do, so they turned toward the harbor. They walked several furlongs when William suddenly said, "Stephen, that's one more thing to remember about my story. Every man we killed on the *Serapis* was a mother's son, and back in some English shire it may be there is a poor innkeeper who drinks too much."

Stephen was silent, but after a moment, he asked—"But wouldn't you do it again?"

"Of course," William said, "but always remember that war is a splendid and terrible duty. It is not a diversion."

Lady Huntington

WHENEVER LIEUTENANT WILLIAM MORRIS was angry, he would simply swallow and grow a little colder. An intense and disciplined man, he was not given to outbursts, but the anger was still there, each incident taking it a little deeper. Hungry for glory, he had surpassed heroism in several encounters with the Royal Navy and was known throughout the small Continental fleet. After the last encounter, off the coast of Carolina, in which the captain of the *Susquehanna* had been mortally wounded, he had fully expected his long-delayed promotion. Now there should be no good reason for him not to become the captain of the ship, a ship he had served on since the very beginning of the war. Morris had twice previously been passed over for this promotion by the Continental Congress—once because of the ordinary kind of petty politics that swirl around all legislative

bodies, and the second time because of genuine doubts about his temperament. This third time had been the hardest to take. He looked out over the rail, down the pier, waiting for the arrival of Captain Monroe.

Congress had learned some of the lessons that could be learned from General Benedict Arnold's defection to the British, but not all of them. One of the lessons they had learned was not to entrust command in the hazards of battle to men who were excessively lean and hungry. And those who knew Lieutenant Morris knew that he was certainly that. He was an intense patriot, but the intensity was of a kind that under the right conditions could possibly be turned and ridden in another direction. Those who saw this—and who because of it hesitated in bestowing honors apparently well-earned—simply provided Lieutenant Morris with yet another grievance.

Lieutenant Morris stood up straight, looking down the dock from the deck of the *Susquehanna.* Turning off the streets of Jamestown and onto the pier were two approaching figures. One wore the uniform of the Continental Navy and walked with a seaman's gait, and the other, almost as tall, stayed just even with him. Behind were three servants, two of them carrying a great sea trunk between them, and one carrying a small midshipman's trunk.

Captain Monroe, for it was he, stepped up on the gangplank, turned and saluted the ensign. He then turned back to Lieutenant Morris and said, "Permission to board?"

"It's your ship, sir."

"It will be shortly, but not yet. Permission to board?"

Lieutenant Morris nodded curtly, and William Monroe stepped lightly on deck. Their eyes met, and they each briefly took the measure of the other. Lieutenant Morris felt he understood his man immediately, but of course he had the bitterness to help him in the task. It had begun with a letter he had received weeks before from a friend in the Congress saying that he had been passed over yet again. The friend had not stinted when it came to his *own* thoughts on the subject, and they were completely in line with what Morris already wanted to believe. And this meant that not only the stupidity of Congress needed to be enlarged upon, but also a necessary congressional malice and dishonesty had to be attributed to the whole affair. For his angle, Captain Monroe simply saw a shrewd and intense face, but one with more gray behind the eyes than was good for him.

Stephen was on board a few moments later, oblivious to all such concerns, too excited to notice anything. Lieutenant William Morris directed the servants to deliver the great trunk to the captain's quarters and the smaller trunk to the midshipmen's berths. Stephen clambered below decks, and the two Williams retired to the captain's quarters to settle the details of the change in command.

When the door closed behind them, all the superficial civility that Lieutenant Morris had managed to maintain

evaporated. His answers to questions were entirely brief, and he volunteered a bare minimum of information.

"Is this the cabinet for the sextant?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you have the key?"

"Yes, sir."

"With you? May I have it?"

"Yes, sir."

After a few minutes of this conversational heavy weather, Captain Monroe stopped and cleared his throat.

"Lieutenant Morris, I am not unfamiliar with your difficult circumstances with regard to the captaincy of this vessel, and I am not unsympathetic. But I am a man under authority, as are you. If you can serve me as an officer of the line, I would be happy to keep you engaged. But if not, I would be willing to write you a letter of transfer to a place that offers broader scope for your legitimate ambitions. However, if you remain with us, I expect whole-hearted service, and no day-labor."

Lieutenant Morris said nothing. Captain Monroe pressed him, and he just nodded. "I want no transfer," he finally said. "I am honored to have you acknowledge my circumstance." He turned to go, chafed at having to speak of the matter at all, and something in his heart turned away at the same time. "I will serve you faithfully," he said. Captain Monroe extended his hand, and after the slightest delay Lieutenant Morris took it and left the cabin.

William Monroe turned back to his trunk, now open on his bunk, and took a handful of volumes out. He looked at the spines, silently counting them. There were Blackstone's *Commentary* on the law, Mr. Locke's treatise on toleration, a small quarto volume by Algernon Sidney, a Bible, and Baxter's *Everlasting Rest,* and a handful of others, including a slim and well-marked edition of the *Westminster Confession.*

They cast off the next day and put out to sea—a good breeze behind them and a slight chop to go with it. The *Susquehanna* had good lines and took the waves well. Yankee-built, she was as fine a ship as sailed in the world anywhere, and she sailed with sixteen guns. The entire first day Captain Monroe stood on the afterdeck, enjoying the sea, enjoying his command, enjoying his prospects. The second day he stayed below, helped there by a slow drizzle, going over charts and a few newspapers he had brought with accounts of recent battles in Caroline. The war was prospering there, and he had a free commission to prey on British merchants *en route* to the Caribbean, or to engage any warships he encountered, as he thought prudent. The third day out, they turned south where Captain Monroe thought the slowest merchants could be found—where the lowest fruit might be found hanging, just above the water.

With the exception of the rain on the second day, the weather was perfect their first week at sea. The crew showed themselves a lively group, and the only problem that Captain

Monroe noticed was Lieutenant Morris spending more time than he liked with Stephen. The second-in-command customarily took efforts to instruct the midshipmen, and Lieutenant Morris had of course done this, but he would also spend time afterwards visiting with Stephen, leaning on the rail, deep in what appeared to be innocent conversation. And the conversation *was* innocent, although Morris could not be described that way. He had discovered the first day that Stephen had been one of Maryland's liberty boys and that his zeal for the Revolution had something of a different stripe than his brother's. Morris determined by the second day that it would serve him well to plant *some* seeds of dissatisfaction, but nothing too obvious unless Stephen took it up.

At the end of the first week at sea, Captain Monroe had Stephen to his quarters for a private dinner. When they pushed back from the table, William looked at Stephen, arched his eyebrows, and said, "Well, how do you find it? Is it to your liking?"

Stephen looked up eagerly. "Aye," he said. "Although I will like it best when we see action." Like many in his family, Stephen had truly taken to the sea. Not sick at all, he was limber in the rigging, and he knew how to work hard. He had studied diligently while still at home and already knew the rudiments of navigation. In this, he surpassed the other midshipmen, although those two had been on board for six months. Excited, disciplined, and young, he was also pleased

with his developing friendship with Lieutenant Morris—although he knew his brother well enough not to say too much about it. Lieutenant Morris had loaned him several other books, one by Mr. Paine, and one by a "hothead reverend" from Massachusetts. At least that is what William Monroe had called him some months ago when his name had come up before in Monroe dinner conversations. But Stephen had read through both of them, and found nothing to object to—unless zeal should be thought objectionable. But he said nothing to his brother about the books.

But he did say something about why it bothered him to have to hide what he was reading. "Brother, back in Annapolis, you called Mr. Paine a prodigious fool. But you fought with John Paul Jones. Our family is solid for liberty. Father is one of the leading patriots in Maryland, and he will almost certainly be in the Continental Congress next session. Our brother fought with Morgan's Rifles at Saratoga. You are a captain in the Continental Navy. I don't understand why you have such distaste for Mr. Paine's fire."

"Because it is a strange fire, and this cause is an altar to God. If it is to remain an altar to God . . ."

At this there was a clatter in the passageway outside, and then a sharp rapping on the door. A tousled head came through the door. "Beg pardon, Cap'n. Ship ahoy, abaft the starboard beam."

The two brothers jumped to their feet and left the cabin,

Stephen barely remembering to let his brother go first. Captain Monroe snatched his hat and an eyeglass and took the ladder up without using his hands, Stephen right behind him. A moment later, standing at the starboard rail, Captain Monroe lowered his eyeglass. "Three masts. But what is she? We shall have to snip in and see. Right full rudder! Sound to quarters!"

In spite of himself, Lieutenant Morris watched in admiration. Captain Monroe was making his approach so that if it became apparent that the ship was a British man of war, he could immediately use the wind to cut, turn, and disappear. But the excitement was short-lived, and Stephen was quickly disappointed. The ship was a merchant, separated from her convoy, and as soon as she saw the *Susquehanna,* she turned and tried to lumber away. Low in the water, she was carrying supplies to Lord Cornwallis—clothes, shoes, powder, muskets—supplies that, apart from the red coats, the rebels could put to a much more effective use. But as soon as it became obvious that the *Susquehanna* was much more nimble, the captain of the merchant ship struck his colors. He was a prudent man and not about to go to Davy Jones for the sake of his ungrateful and inanimate cargo. While he was standing at the rail scowling, his irritated thoughts were interrupted by an indignant protest from behind his left shoulder. "Sir, why do you not resist the rebels?"

He bowed his head. "Because, my lady, we have no guns to speak of." The speaker he was answering was Lady

Huntington, the daughter of a British brigadier general serving under Cornwallis. Her father, the good general, had summoned her to come and attend him at their headquarters, which was an unusual request but not entirely unusual. There were several other distinguished ladies there already, and Lady Huntington suspected that she was being summoned because her father wanted to marry her off to Major Smythe, a man she admired and detested in equal measure. She detested him almost as much as she did the Americans. This brought her back to the subject of fighting the Americans, and she started to argue with the merchant captain. She thought to herself that she had seen the cargo hold *full* of guns, but when she saw the look on his face, she decided that she would say nothing more, and save her indignation for speaking to the rebels when they boarded.

That boarding was accomplished in short order, and in a brief exchange of words, the merchant captain surrendered his ship to Captain Monroe. "Sir, I relinquish to your rebellious cause most of my worldly cares."

Captain Monroe grinned. "And sir, I accept your kind offer."

Lady Huntington stood back at a distance as haughtily as she knew how, and the effect of her general disapproval was pronounced. At the same time, the first appearance of the Americans on board unsettled her. At all the fashionable dinners in London that she had attended, where the war was always discussed, Americans were routinely described

in such a way as to give her the unquestioned image of the Americans as orangutans, barely able to speak or do business with civilized human beings. But the American captain, standing beside her craven and annoyed merchant captain, provided her with no place in her mind with which to categorize him. She did not know what to say or think, and so she just continued to stand haughtily.

"You were sailing for Charleston?" asked Captain Monroe. The merchantman nodded. "Have your men form a work party to transfer as much of your cargo to us as may be. Start with the munitions. When that is done, you and your first mate come with us." Turning to Lady Huntington, Captain Monroe bowed slightly, and said, "M'lady, it is obvious that you are of some rank and station. When we have arrived back in Jamestown, a message will be sent to the place of your intended destination, and a transfer of your person will be effected. May I have the honor to ask where that may be?"

"With Lord Cornwallis, sir. And I thank you."

He tipped his head slightly and said, "One of the men will bring your belongings over to our ship as well. A lady such as yourself ought not to sail the high seas on a ship without guns."

She flushed and started to reply in a temper but held herself back in time. "I thank you again, sir, for the kindness."

The seamen of the merchant vessel, as soon as it became apparent that they were not going to be slaughtered, turned to the work assigned to them with a will. The holds of the

Susquehanna rapidly filled, with about a third of the cargo left in the holds of the merchant ship. A prize crew was assigned to the merchant from the *Susquehanna* and instructions given to them to sail for Jamestown in case of separation. When that was done, the last thing left was the transfer of Lady Huntington and her possessions. The sea was calm so the ships had been lashed together, and several rough planks were serving as a gangway between the vessels.

As she stepped onto the deck of the *Susquehanna,* she was met by Captain Monroe again, who took her offered hand and bowed again. "I have made arrangements for you to take my quarters," he said. "It is only for a few days, and I am loathe to subject a lady to any unnecessary hardship."

Her eyebrows went up. "Your manners are most refined, sir." She thought, but did not say, "for an American." She did not say this because that was the kind of thing she knew how to communicate without saying it. But she did say, "One would almost think you had spent time in the salons of Paris."

"I have spent time in the salons of Paris," he said. And he did not say—because he did not need to say it—that the salons of Paris were the native habitat of effete and perfumed sophists. But they *were* well-mannered.

Two sailors escorted her to her new quarters—Captain Monroe's necessities had already been removed to make room for her.

Stephen was standing with Lieutenant Morris near

the after rail, watching all the goods come over. They both watched, without comment, as Lady Huntington came aboard, and the exchanges that followed.

"Your older brother," Lieutenant Morris said, "is a very talented man." The accent of his voice fell slightly on the word *older,* and with a little more emphasis on the word *very.*

"I know that," Stephen said. "But why do you say so?"

"Well, certainly, his gallantry is well known throughout the fleet. Who has not read about it? And the way he approached that merchant just now . . . nothing to call it but smart seamanship. No, he is more than talented—I think the *Susquehanna* has found a great captain."

Stephen flushed with pride, still naïve enough to miss flattery in the mouth of an expert. "Thank you," he said. Lieutenant Morris hesitated, but the hesitation was not visible. "Why, even our Lady Huntington recognized it!" And Lieutenant Morris laughed as though he admired what he detested. "Who could blame him for accepting the homage? I certainly would do the same." Stephen looked across at the Lieutenant Morris, baffled.

At the same moment below decks, Lady Huntington was staring, equally baffled, at Captain Monroe's shelf of books. She reached out and took two of them down, oblivious to the titles. The titles did not matter. He had *books,* out at sea. She could not have been more surprised if she had discovered that Blackbeard the pirate had been an accomplished

player of the cello and harpsichord. Impressed and shaken for a brief moment, she then looked more closely at the titles. *Whiggery. Presbyterian rebels. Calvinism.* She put them back and resumed her disdain.

Hot Work

THE WIND WAS CONTRARY, AND THE TWO ships had difficulty making their way back to Jamestown. An expected two or three days turned into four. But late on the third day, the lookout far above the decks of the *Susquehanna* cried out, "Ship ahoy!"

Captain Monroe had been pacing the quarter-deck impatiently, and he swung around immediately, with his eye glass up. One of the first things he saw was the unmistakable colors of the Union Jack.

The prize ship was about a mile ahead, and the British ship just spotted was coming up from astern. Captain Monroe had already given his instructions to the prize crew, and though they saw the man of war also, they just continued on. The only thing they could possibly have done by hanging

back would be to make a British victory more lucrative. They could not fight, and so as the looming battle unfolded they disappeared over the horizon.

Captain Monroe immediately began shouting orders, and the *Susquehanna* immediately came about, all her men scrambling to quarters. Stephen, at his station for battle, in spite of all his eagerness to see action, wanted nothing more than for the shooting to start, and yet he felt like some kind of spider was crawling around in the back of his throat. A silence fell over the deck, and for a moment all Stephen could hear was the creak of wood and the recurring slap of water at the bow. No one spoke. Lady Huntington had been taking the air on deck when the sail had been spotted, and Captain Monroe issued a curt order to Stephen.

"Escort the lady to her quarters, instruct her to remain there unless summoned, and return here." Stephen nodded, and approached Lady Huntington courteously. She was not happy about it but nevertheless complied.

When Stephen returned, he heard his brother telling Lieutenant Morris that the English had twenty-four guns, which, he said, "will not be a trouble if we play her right." Lieutenant Morris nodded, appearing to understand what the Captain was going to do. Stephen did not understand at all, but licked his lips as though that would help him watch more closely.

Neither ship made any move that would indicate it wanted

to parley, and no signals were sent. Each was in a posture for battle, and nothing further was necessary. Everyone knew what was happening, and the silence on deck said that a naval battle was the only possibility. The wind was behind the *Susquehanna,* and the British ship was off her port bow, about twenty degrees. Captain Monroe had more of a breeze to work with, and he managed it well. By veering slightly to starboard, Captain Monroe made the English captain think that he was going to wager everything on a broadside, like a fool, even though he was outgunned.

But at the last moment, Captain Monroe shouted, "Left full rudder!" and cut across the bow of the British ship, crossing her like a *T.* This meant that all his eight guns on the starboard side had a smaller target—but at least they could fire at that target, and the British ship could fire at nothing but the empty sea. And Captain Monroe knew from all accounts that his gunners were marksmen—a smaller target was not a problem.

"Fire!"

Flame shot out from the starboard side, eight guns recoiling back against the ropes, like lunging tigers. Inside her cabin, Lady Huntington jumped, despite the fact she had thoroughly prepared herself for the inevitable cannon fire. The cannonballs tore lengthways down the deck of the British ship, one of them splintering a portion of the mainmast, and dangerously weakening it. The mast began to lean

ominously. In the still aftermath of the volley, across the water, they could hear some violent cursing. The *Susquehanna* spun away, and by the time the English ship came about so that she could return fire, the Americans were nearly out of range. The *Susquehanna* was a smaller ship, lighter and much more maneuverable. Captain Monroe had used all the firepower he had, without allowing the English to punch back at him at all. He could not do this indefinitely, but it was a good way to open the ceremonies.

The *Susquehanna* sailed on ahead of the British ship until there was enough distance to come around again. When that had happened, Captain Monroe gave the order to turn about, and they found themselves in exactly the same position they had been in just about fifteen minutes before. This time the English captain was much more wary and had slowed to about five knots. But Captain Monroe was now ready to trade broadsides. He strode over to the hatch and shouted down to the gunner's mate. "They have four more guns than we do, but here it doesn't signify. They will want to rake us, and if we fire first, and with any luck, enough of their shots will miss to make this an even exchange. Do not rake them. I want all your guns to concentrate on the same spot. Have all guns aim amidships, just above the water line."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

The *Susquehanna* did fire first, and the effect was devastating. A large hole appeared in the side of the English ship,

Caught up in the American War for Independence, young Stephen Monroe is excited to be joining his older brother, Captain William Monroe, in the war at sea. But as he joins him there, he also encounters Lieutenant William Morris, who stands for a very different understanding of the Revolution than does his brother. Stephen only gradually comes to realize that these are actually two forces battling for the soul of America's future. Along the way, he meets Lady Huntington, an aristocratic English lady on her way to join her father, who is serving with Lord Cornwallis, and he also stumbles into the great battle of Cowpens. As the story comes to its climax, Stephen is forced to decide which American Revolution he will be a part of.

Douglas Wilson is pastor of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho, editor of "Credenda Agenda" and author of numerous books, including *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* and a collection of books on marriage and parenting. His previous contributions to this series are *Blackthorn Winter* and *Susan Creek*.

Veritas Press

ISBN 978-1-932168-66-2 US$12.00

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