Scene Nineteen

(Sunday morning, April 20, 1777, on board “The Victory,” in Lafayette’s cabin. Cot downstage left. Workdesk centerstage. Window upstage right with small table beneath on which are two tumblers with madeira, and door downstage right. Stack of books on left corner of desk.)

***Mauroy:*** (Knocks at door.)

***Lafayette:*** (Writing at desk.) Come!

***Mauroy:*** (Walks in, surveys the cabin.) Very nice. All the comforts. It’ll be a long trip. DeKalb says we’re ready…Supplies…Rigging…

***Lafayette:*** Look. Let me show you something. (Motions Mauroy to come to his desk. Opens a folio of maps.)

***Mauroy:*** Maps. (Thumbs through them.) Battle of Minden. What are you going to do with them?

***Lafayette:*** They’re maps of great battlefields. We’ll have plenty of time: I want you to teach me…strategy…tactics.

***Mauroy:*** You get seasick. I don’t want to be around you when you’re seasick.

***Lafayette:*** I’ll get over it. Will you do it?

***Mauroy:*** Sure. (Eyes the stack of books on the left corner of the desk.) What’s this. You’re just full of all sorts of stuff. Shakespeare. Milton.

***Lafayette:*** Study books. I’ll have time to work on English. That’s why Edmund Brice is with us. He’s from Maryland. Carmichael knows him. Said he could make my English better.

***Mauroy:*** I don’t know this trip will be long enough. (Walks to the window.) I have to give it to you. I didn’t think you had it in you. I didn’t think this day would come.

***Lafayette:*** I had to figure things out.

***Mauroy:*** I still think you’ll be disappointed.

***Lafayette:*** So you’ve told me. I’ve thought a lot about it. We’ll be back. We’ll be heroes. Maurepas will take us in with open arms. The King will praise us for bringing honor to France….(Picks up two letters from his desk.) Would you give these to the courier. One’s for Adrienne…the other for Carmichael. My last letters from this side of the Atlantic. (Gives the letters to Mauroy.)

***Mauroy:*** You’re an optimist with imagination. I don’t know that America is ready for you. No letter for the Duc d’Ayen?

***Lafayette:*** No. Words won’t do. His respect…I’ve got some work to do. Carmichael was right.

***Mauroy:*** Carmichael has put a lot of ideas in your head. Remember what I told you. America won’t be the glorious land of your fancy. You’re fooling yourself.

***Lafayette:*** (Stands. Walks to window, Mauroy behind.) It’s all about ideas. And ideals. These are things worth fighting for. Here’s what I think, truly: “America is intimately connected with the happiness of all mankind; she will become the respectable and safe asylum of virtue, integrity, tolerance, equality, and a peaceful liberty.” (Turns to face Mauroy.)

***Mauroy:*** (Deadpans. Looks at him. Looks at audience.) That is the stupidest thing I ever heard you say. And you believe every word of it.

***Lafayette:*** (Puts his arm around Mauroy, escorts him to the madeira on the table beneath the window.) I do believe every word and if it’s stupid it won’t be the last stupid thing you hear me say. Come…Celebrate…Today is special…(Hands a tumbler to Mauroy, takes one himself.) Sunday, April 20, 1777. To “The Victory.” (Touch glasses, drink.) You and I are a good team.

***Mauroy:*** You get seasick and I don’t. Yes, we’re a good team. Let’s go to America.

***Lafayette:*** I can’t wait for the next chapter. (Gazes out the window, thoughtfully. Turns back to Mauroy, raises his glass.) Cur non!

(Lights dim.)

The End.