

MOUNT MCGREGOR MEMOIRS

Written by

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Based on the life of Ulysses S. Grant.

In a race against time to provide his wife, Julia, with a suitable income after his death, a broke and terminally ill Ulysses S. Grant labors to finish his personal memoirs inside a remote Adirondack cottage, where he teams up with the unlikeliest of authors.

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EXT. GRANT COTTAGE, THE ADIRONDACKS, WILTON, NY - DAY

A dense Adirondack forest gives way to a clearing on the property of Grant Cottage State Historic Site, located in Wilton, NY. Inside this modest dwelling the Narrator quietly visits each room, finally easing himself into a front porch rocking chair overlooking the mountainous terrain.

NARRATOR

If these walls could talk, what history they would tell! Of Point Pleasant and West Point, Hiram Ulysses Grant, U.S. Grant, Sam. The Mexican War, his marriage to Julia Boggs Dent, Sacketts Harbor NY, Fort Humboldt CA, Wish-ton-wish as a failed farmer near Saint Louis, Firewood Salesman, Real Estate Agent, building a home he named Hardscrabble, Galena, IL, Grant & Perkins Tanners, the Confederate attack on Fort Sumpter, and the 21st Illinois Volunteer Infantry he commanded as Colonel. Then, Brigadier-General in the Battles of Belmont, Fort Henry, and the first Union victory at Fort Donelson, soon to be labeled Unconditional Surrender Grant by the Northern Press! A Major-General at Shiloh, Champions Hill, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, then promoted to Lieutenant-General to lead the entire Union Army, the first such rank issued since George Washington. His chestnut horse, Cincinnati, the Wilderness Campaign, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Sherman and Sheridan, the burning of Atlanta, the Dedication of Arlington Cemetery, Mobile Bay, and the gallant push up the Shenandoah Valley. Soon Richmond, Appomattox Courthouse, the surrender of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, Grant's generous parole terms, Lincoln's tragic Assassination, and the subsequent surrenders of General Joseph E.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
 Johnston in Durham, NC, General
 Richard Taylor in Citronelle, AL,
 General Nathan Bedford Forrest,
 future leader of the Ku Klux Klan,
 at Gainesville, AL, and finally
 General Edmund Kirby Smith in
 Galveston, TX.
 Children: Fred, Buck, Nellie, and
 Jesse.
 Duty!

INT. DELMONICO'S RESTAURANT, BEAVER STREET, MANHATTAN -
 EVENING

Twenty-four year old Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., known by his family as Buck, attends an exclusive dinner party held in a third-floor private dining room at Delmonico's Restaurant on the evening of March 21, 1877. This event is hosted by the law firm where he serves as a Junior Member. The noise generated by the boisterous, all-male crowd is making direct conversation close to impossible.

WILL
 It's nice to see someone here
 that's my age, relatively speaking.
 (looking about the room)

BUCK
 Yes, it's quite, uh, gray in here.
 (chuckling)
 How are you connected with
 tonight's dinner?

WILL
 I'm an Assayer with the U.S. Assay
 Office, here in New York. And you?

BUCK
 Oh, I'm a Junior Partner with the
 law firm hosting this event. I hear
 the food planned for this evening
 is going to be fantastic!

Taking a sip of champagne from his glass before standing up to extend his hand across the table.

I'm sorry, Ulysses Grant, Jr.

WILL
 William Ward.
 (surprised)
 It's a great pleasure to meet you.
 You're originally from Galena,
 right?

BUCK

Well, yes, but actually I was born in Bethel, Ohio. And you?

WILL

Geneseo, in Upstate New York, near Rochester. I served in the United States Navy during the war, manning gunboats on the Mississippi. I saw your father, General Grant, a number of times during the Vicksburg Campaign. He was aboard our boat the night we took more than our share of shells. Mighty dangerous out there, mighty dangerous!

BUCK

I'll bet. My father's shared many stories about that siege. I practically know them all by heart.

Flashing a Grant smile.

WILL

So, what brought you to New York?

BUCK

Well, after Harvard I attended Columbia Law School. After that, I was appointed as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, here in Manhattan, before joining this law firm.

Will raises his glass.

WILL

I attended Columbia, as well, and graduated from their School of Mining. That was some years back. Looks like they're starting to serve dinner.

Grant turns around, as waiters begin serving salad to the dinner guests. Within an hour dinner is finished, and Buck soon wipes his mouth with a dinner napkin.

BUCK

I'm really not interested in coffee and dessert, are you?

WILL

Not after that meal! I'm stuffed.

BUCK
Come on, I'll buy you a drink
downstairs.

The two discreetly get up from the table and exit the room.
Arriving at Delmonico's first-floor bar, they each take up a
stool.

WILL
I'll buy.

BUCK
Nonsense, I insist. Please! What
will you have?

WILL
I can't believe I'm saying this,
but, I really don't know what to
order.
(flustered)
I don't usually drink anything
stronger than wine. My father is a
Presbyterian Minister.

BUCK
No kidding.
(pausing)
Well, unless you object, may I
suggest...an Old Fashion!

WILL
You're the expert, Ulysses.

BUCK
Please, call me Buck.

WILL
Alright, I'm known by Will.

BUCK
Great.

Buck raises his finger to the bartender, who soon approaches
the pair.

Will, here, wants an Old Fashion
and I'll have a Bourbon.

The bartender returns with the drinks, and Buck sets a Silver
Dollar in front of him.

Here's to the future!

WILL
To the future...!
I'm an uncle now, Buck.

GRANT JR
You don't say...

WILL
Yes, my brother, Ferdinand, and his wife, Ella, just had a baby boy a week or so ago!

GRANT JR
Well, congratulations are in order, there, Uncle Will.
(laughing)

WILL
Uncle Will. That sounds so strange.

GRANT JR
So where is this Nephew of yours, Will?

WILL
Brooklyn. Brooklyn Heights, to be exact. On another subject, what are your father's plans now that he's out of the White House?

Smacking his lips.
My, this is good!

BUCK
My father and mother, and a few siblings are heading off on a World tour. They depart Philadelphia in May. I hope to join them in England this Fall.

WILL
He didn't waist any time!

BUCK
He certainly didn't.

Both pause to take another swig.
Hey, on Saturday I'm heading to my lady friend's country house in Great Neck, to hunt Pheasant. She has a cousin, who could join us.

WILL
How old is her cousin?

BUCK
She's my age, close to twenty-five.

WILL
How old is your, um, lady friend?

BUCK
That's none of your business!
(laughing)
Let's just say she's of age. I
don't believe it's going anywhere,
though, her father dislikes me.

WILL
No. You?

BUCK
I know. I'll tell you something,
Will, never court the only-child of
a wealthy family.

WILL
I see...

BUCK
Anyways, how about Pheasant hunting
this Saturday? I can meet you at
the Chelsea Piers around, say, ten
o'clock.

WILL
I'll be there! How about another
drink?

BUCK
Sure.

Signaling for a bartender.
Hey, Will?

WILL
Yes.

BUCK
What do you call people from Great
Neck?

WILL
I don't know. What?

BUCK
Great Neckers.
(smiling broadly)

WILL
Ha, ha, ha...

EXT. ABOARD THE SS INDIANA, PHILADELPHIA DOCKYARDS,
PENNSYLVANIA - MORNING

NARRATOR

The SS Indiana departs
Philadelphia on May 17, 1877.
Eleven days later, Ulysses and
Julia Grant, along with members of
their family, arrive in the
bustling dockyards of Liverpool.
From there, they travel to the
cities of Manchester, Birmingham,
and London. Then, off to such
countries as Belgium, Germany,
Switzerland, Scotland, France and
Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Turkey and
Greece, the Netherlands, Norway,
Russia, neighboring Poland,
Austria, at the Schönbrunn Palace,
Spain and Portugal. Later, India,
Burma, Siam, China, and Japan.
During this time, Grant was
welcomed by world leaders and
dignitaries, including Queen
Victoria, Bismarck, General Li
Hongzhang, representing China,
Emperor Meiji of Japan, Czar
Alexander II, Pope Leo XIII, King
Chulalongkorn of Siam, Austrian
Emperor Franz Joseph, King George
of Greece, and the Maharaja of
Jeypore.
But perhaps the most enthusiastic
reception Grant received while on
his world tour, was reserved for a
throng of one-hundred thousand
grimy coal miners in Newcastle,
England. Where before, during, and
after his address, they lauded this
hero of the ages.

INT. FERDINAND WARD HOUSE, PIERREPONT STREET, BROOKLYN
HEIGHTS - MORNING

Inside the front parlor of Ferdinand and Ella Ward's stately
Brooklyn Heights home, an ornate baby cradle, covered with a
lace canopy, occupies a space next to a large marble
fireplace. Ferdinand is standing in front of a nearby bureau,
distracted by paperwork.

ELLA

You haven't once asked about your
son...?

Receiving no response, she walks over to check on him, before returning to the Davenport.

Ferdinand. Now that our baby is beginning to thrive, don't you think it's time that we...

(embarrassed)

Reconcile?

FERDINAND WARD

Well, how exactly is our son?

ELLA

He's well, dear, and feeding like a real champion.

(confidently)

FERDINAND WARD

Let me check for myself.

Walking over to the cradle, he moves some lace aside and peers into the tiny bed. He quickly turns around to address his wife.

My boy will be the talk of Wall Street someday.

Strutting across the floor, directly in front of her.

ELLA

You mean, our boy.

FERDINAND WARD

He won't have to suffer the gossip and slights that I endure every day. Envious wags!

ELLA

(concerned)

I believe it's time you invite your mother for a visit!

FERDINAND WARD

He won't be some, some hayseed from Geneseo, New York. No, he'll be the very definition of success and power. A regular Tycoon!

A maid enters the room and retrieves the baby from the cradle.

ELLA

Rose, do be sure to check on his belly button. It appeared to be a little red yesterday.

MAID

Yes, Mam.

Sweeping out of the room.

FERDINAND WARD

I have to go into town to deal with my insufferable investors! What complete dolts. Fine people, mind you, just a little slow to the punch!

ELLA

You haven't said a word about our reconciling?

FERDINAND WARD

Our what!
(aggressively)

ELLA

Our reconciliation. Our relationship, Ferd.
(sheepishly)

Reaching out her hand.

FERDINAND WARD

My only thought at this very moment is the Firm and my son's future in the realm of high-stakes investment!

Walking over to the closet to grab his hat and coat, before returning to the parlor.

Oh, I almost forgot my umbrella!
It's supposed to rain all day.
I see my carriage has arrived.

Touching his umbrella to his hat. Ferdinand Ward leaves this breathtaking five-story brownstone through the front door, leaving his discouraged and very lonely wife seated on their luxurious Davenport.

INT. PALMER HOUSE HOTEL, STATE & MONROE STREETS, CHICAGO, IL - NIGHT

Seated atop the head table at his friend's wedding reception at the Palmer House in Chicago, Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., proposes a toast to the bride and groom, Jane and Will Ward, on April 28, 1880. Dressed in an elegant formal Tuxedo, he looks the very image of his President-father, as he stands and addresses the guests.

BUCK

My name, for those of you who don't know me, is Ulysses Grant, Jr.

Clapping erupts throughout the ballroom.

I'd like to propose a toast to the bride and groom. In three short years, Will and I have become very close friends. We were roommates in New York for much of that time, so we've shared many happy times together. But, not as happy as today. Jane, always remember that you are Will's golden girl and the true woman of his dreams.

Waiting for the applause to end.

So, let us raise our glasses in tribute. May you both enjoy endless years of love, life, and laughter. Hear, hear!

Raising his glass. Later, Will requests that Buck meet his brother, Ferdinand, in a private parlor just off the ballroom floor. Grant soon complies and knocks on the door.

FERDINAND WARD

Come in.

Grant enters the room, as Ward meets him halfway across the floor.

Mr. Grant. Thanks for meeting with me. Please, sit down.

BUCK

Thank you. What is this about, Ferdinand?

Scanning the opulent quarters.

FERDINAND WARD

We'll get into that in a moment. Are you enjoying yourself this evening? Your toast was charming...

BUCK

Yes, very much, thank you.

Seating himself.

I, myself, am to be married in November to Miss Fannie Chaffee of Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

FERDINAND WARD

You don't say... Wait a minute,
Chaffee. Not Senator Chaffee?

BUCK

Why, yes. Her father is the U.S.
Senator from Colorado.

FERDINAND WARD

Oh, how marvelous. You must be very
excited, and what a catch! I hope
you'll be very happy together. How
about a drink? Brandy, or, I know,
Cognac!

Snapping his fingers.

Only the very best for ole' Judge
Ward's wedding guests, aye.

BUCK

Cognac is fine, thanks.

Ferdinand gets up and goes over to a center table, where he
fills both glasses halfway with Grand Marnier Cuvee.

FERDINAND WARD

And a cigar to go along with your
drink?

BUCK

Sure, that sounds good. Your
brother, Will, says your a new
father.

Ferdinand sets both Cognacs down on a low table between their
chairs. He opens a cedar-lined box and retrieves two cigars,
cutting their ends and offering one of them to Buck.
Ferdinand lights Buck's cigar before lighting his own.

FERDINAND WARD

Yes. My wife and I are very happy.

BUCK

You should be...

FERDINAND WARD

I am. I'm very invested in my son.
I have big plans for his future.

BUCK

That's most admirable.

FERDINAND WARD

Well now, I understand you're a Harvard man!

BUCK

What's this all about, Mr. Ward?

FERDINAND WARD

Why, business, of course!

BUCK

What kind of business?

FERDINAND WARD

Investments. I thought you might be interested.

BUCK

I am, but...

FERDINAND WARD

Will is starting to become very successful in the mining business out West, due to your generous influence. Silver and Lead, to be more specific. He's well aware of my approaching you on the subject. But, if you're not interested, I completely understand. Isn't this Cognac striking?

Holding his glass up to the light.

BUCK

I didn't say I wasn't interested... What exactly are you proposing?

FERDINAND WARD

Working together. Why, with Will's inside information in the metals industry, well...there's millions in it, as they say.

Buck taps his cigar over the ashtray, setting it down on the edge.

BUCK

But, I'm a legal practitioner, not a skilled investor.

Rubbing his beard.

FERDINAND WARD

But, I am! Not convinced?

(frowning)

Will said you'd be a tough sell! I admire that in a man. Tell you what. When you get back to New York, come to dinner at my house. Here's my card.

Sliding it across the table.

My Ella would love to meet...Fannie, is it?

BUCK

Yes, that's right. Fair enough. Dinner it is!

FERDINAND WARD

Now, about Harvard, I'll bet that was fun. Can I pour you another Grand Marnier?

These two complete strangers continue their conversation far removed from the noisy celebration going on outside.

EXT. MONTAGUE STREET, BROOKLYN HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN - AFTERNOON

Julia Grant and her soon-to-be daughter-in-law, Fannie Chaffee, meet at the head of Montague Street in Brooklyn Heights, on a sunny Spring afternoon.

JULIA

I received your telegram asking me to meet you here today. Is everything alright? Your message didn't let on...

FANNIE

Everything is fine. I just thought we could take a stroll...and talk.

Starting to walk.

JULIA

This is such a lovely street.

Looking up into the trees, while Fannie remains quiet.
What is it, dear? Is it Buck?

FANNIE

Oh, no! Well, yes...

JULIA
What is it?

FANNIE
I hope Buck and General Grant
aren't making a mistake partnering
with Ferdinand Ward.

JULIA
What makes you say that?

They continue their stroll.

FANNIE
I get a bad feeling about him,
that's all.

JULIA
How so?

Taking Fannie's arm.

FANNIE
Well, Buck and I were invited to
dinner at his home, here in
Brooklyn Heights, a few weeks
ago...

JULIA
Go on.

They are suddenly stopped short by a large baby stroller,
blocking the sidewalk.

FANNIE
Well, it was the most beautiful
house I've ever seen. It's one
block over, in fact.

Pointing toward Pierrepont Street.
Anyways, it's everything a woman
would ever want, I mean, it had the
best of amenities, and yet...

With the stroller now removed from the sidewalk and stored
under a brownstone stoop, they continue on their way.

And yet, I never saw a more unhappy
woman in my life. Ella is her name.
Ella Champion Green. She's an only-
child just like me. You would think
she had the world on a string!

(MORE)

FANNIE (CONT'D)

But, while she didn't show it outright, there was a tension between those two that I've rarely ever witnessed.

JULIA

I'm sure that they must have had a squabble before you and Buck arrived.

FANNIE

Oh, no, Mrs. Grant. I know the difference between a fight and being truly afraid of someone. It was little things that I noticed. I can't put my finger on any one in particular, but, it was most unsettling, I can assure you.

(advisedly)

No, if I were Buck and General Grant, my, that sounds funny me saying, if I were General Grant-

Covering her mouth.

If I were those two, I'd stay well clear of that man!

JULIA

I simply can't believe it!

FANNIE

Well, take it from me. He's a baddie. I'm not that old, but I know what fear in a woman looks like. Any man who mistreats his wife will mistreat the best of men, no matter who they are!

JULIA

But his brother, Will, is such a fine person. And his father, a man of the cloth!

They stop at the end of Montague Street, while Fannie holds fast to the cast iron fence overlooking New York Harbor.

FANNIE

I'm frightened, Mrs. Grant.

They both study the Manhattan skyline and watch the boats drift up and down the East River, far below.

JULIA

Look, I trust Buck. I always have and I always will. You must, too. He's the most educated and legally experienced of all the Grants. But I'll have a word with him, if it makes you feel better. He won't know this came from you. I'll just say I'm relying on a woman's intuition!

Tapping Fannie on the hand.

Put your mind at ease, dear. Let me handle it. You have a November wedding to plan! Besides, my husband, Buck, and the man who owns Marine Bank, of all places, James Fish, have already formed a partnership with Ferd Ward and invested money together. They've opened up their brokerage in the General's Mexican Southern Railroad office on Wall Street. Why, they've already put their sign in the window.

FANNIE

(unintelligible)

The whistle of a large steamboat, sailing close by, drowns out Fannie's tepid response.

INT. HOME OF THE HONORABLE JEROME CHAFFEE, 26 W. 58TH STREET, MANHATTAN - EVENING

It's now November, and Bride, Fannie Chaffee, while making last minute adjustments to her dress, hears a knock on her door.

FANNIE

Yes. Who is it?

JULIA

It's Julia Grant.

FANNIE

Oh, do come in, Mrs. Grant!

Julia comes into the bedroom, where Fannie greets her with a respectful kiss.

JULIA

You look wonderful, dear! Go on, go on, finish what you're doing.

Julia sits down on an elegant camelback couch. Everything looks so beautiful downstairs. I simply love weddings. Did I ever tell you about mine?

FANNIE

No. Please do...

JULIA

Well, I was a St. Louis bride, for starters. And it was so hot that summer! Star candles lit my footsteps as I made my way down the staircase.

(dreamlike)

My gown from Paris, was of watered silk with patterns of Cape Jessamine, my favorite flower! Ulys, bronze from his recent duty under the Mexican sun, was in full uniform, along with his attendants. My guests marveled at how radiant my translucent veil made me appear on my father's arm. Oh, I was so happy that August night, just as I am now.

FANNIE

Such a beautiful story, Mrs. Grant.

Coiffing her abundant blond hair in the mirror.

JULIA

Just as your story will be someday, dear!

FANNIE

I have to say, Mrs. Grant, that I am so happy to be marrying Buck. He's a man of great kindness and warmth, who has tremendous respect for me as a woman.

JULIA

He's so much like his Father...
(proudly)

FANNIE

And mother, too, if I might add.
(smiling)

JULIA

You're too kind. Buck's a good man!

FANNIE

Indeed, he is! You know, I never believed the talk in the gossip columns about Buck being promised in marriage to some wealthy West Coast heiress. Not one word of it!

Fannie rises from her vanity, facing Julia.

JULIA

I knew for a fact that it wasn't true. My husband has many detractors, you know. Particularly in the press!

FANNIE

To be sure.

Now sitting down on the edge of the couch.
Mrs. Grant...?

JULIA

Yes?

FANNIE

As you know, my mother died when, when I was only one.

JULIA

I'm well aware.

FANNIE

And...well,

Looking at the floor.

without a mother to confide in, I'm wondering what to...what to expect tonight, when I'm alone with Buck? Please forgive me asking.

JULIA

No forgiveness needed. There's really nothing to it, dear.

FANNIE

Really?

Taking Fannie's hand in her own.

JULIA

Do you have anything to wear during your private time tonight?

FANNIE

Well, yes.
(blushing)

JULIA

Well, I suggest you first get under the bedcovers and shimmy up close to Buck.

FANNIE

Alright.

JULIA

Then, once the kissin', and a huggin', and the petting begins, keep as close to him as you can, and let the rest kind of...fall into place.

FANNIE

That's it?
(giggling)

JULIA

Uh hmm.
(nodding)
Now, it doesn't have to be perfect, mind you, and probably won't be the first few times, or ever! As long as it's between you two, and you two alone. And it makes a baby someday!

Lifting their joined hands.

FANNIE

Oh... Oh! Yes, yes! Thank you, Mrs. Grant.

Bobbing her head rapidly.

JULIA

Not at all, dear. Like I said, there's really nothing to it.

FANNIE

That makes good sense.

Letting out a big breath.

(MORE)

FANNIE (CONT'D)

I'm ready! You best be getting downstairs.

JULIA

Oh, yes!

FANNIE

Oh, and do tell General Grant that Buck is bringing in the head chef from Delmonico's for tonight's celebration.

JULIA

I will.

Extending both of Fannie's outstretched hands.
Again, you look simply gorgeous,
dear.

FANNIE

Thank you!

Julia departs the room and descends the broad staircase to greet the wedding guests gathered in the parlor below.

EXT. ABOARD A MADISON AVENUE STREETCAR, MANHATTAN - AFTERNOON

Five months earlier.

It's late October 1884. Grant is riding in a horse-drawn streetcar with his personal attendant, Harrison Terrel. They are on route to the office of renowned throat specialist, Dr. John Douglas. Months earlier, General Grant fell victim to a massive Ponzi scheme involving his namesake son, Ulysses S. "Buck" Grant, Jr., and his business partner, Ferdinand Ward. As a result, Grant loses the bulk of his assets and is forced to sell his most precious Civil War memorabilia to help pay the mounting bills. While dozing off on the lumbering streetcar, Grant relives his financial downfall.

INT. GRANT HOUSE, EAST 66TH STREET, MANHATTAN - AFTERNOON

A well dressed, rather dapper gentleman appears unannounced at the front door of Ulysses Grant's Manhattan home on Sunday, May 4, 1884. He turns the Victorian doorbell and is soon greeted by Personal Attendant, Harrison Terrell.

HARRISON

May I help you, Mr. Ward?

FERDINAND WARD

I know my being here wasn't expected, particularly on a Sunday. But I wonder if General Grant is available? Kindly, extend my apologies for any unwanted intrusion.

HARRISON

Let me ask. One moment, please.

Harrison enters the parlor, finding his boss reading a children's book to his granddaughter, Julia, while seated in an oversized leather chair.

General, Ferdinand Ward is here to see you. He apologizes for the short notice. He's looking very haggard, sir.

GRANT

Tell him to come in.

HARRISON

Very well.

Harrison returns to the vestibule and admits Ward into the home. He now shows him into the parlor.

GRANT

Mr. Ward, I'm not surprised you're here. I've been expecting you.

Receiving no handshake, Ward proceeds to stand before a seated Grant.

What is it, Mr. Ward?

FERDINAND WARD

Something's come up.

GRANT

Not bankruptcy, I hope!

Hesitantly puffing on his cigar.

FERDINAND WARD

Why, no.

(smoothly)

Nothing of the sort. But there is a bit of a problem. You see, the city chamberlain made a rather large withdrawal Friday afternoon from Marine Bank, where our investment deposits are held.

(MORE)

FERDINAND WARD (CONT'D)

So large, in fact, that the bank won't entertain any further withdrawals for the time being, rendering our client base vulnerable. And, well, given all the talk on the street about Grant and Ward, all false, as you know, we wouldn't want to be caught off guard if one of our investors should somehow demand that his shares be liquidated. A onetime, short-term infusion of money would help fend off a much publicized embarrassment.

GRANT

That makes a good deal of sense. What are you proposing?

FERDINAND WARD

A one or two-day loan of, say, \$150,000, to keep Marine Bank afloat. That would cover us in the event that such a securities liquidation is requested.

GRANT

A short-term loan...?

FERDINAND WARD

No more than two days! As an insurance policy, if you will.

GRANT

If that's all it is, tell you what I'll do. Let me talk to my neighbor, William Vanderbilt. I just might have a check from him today to deposit in the morning.

FERDINAND WARD

(restrained)

General Grant, you have no idea how relieved this makes me!

GRANT

Not at all! Not at all.

Puffing away.

I'm counting on you to remedy this...situation, Mr. Ward, with the understanding that this never happens again.

FERDINAND WARD

Oh, it, it won't. You have my
solemn promise. Thank you, General.
Good day!

Ferdinand departs the residence.

LITTLE JULIA

Grandpa, why was that man in such a
rush?

GRANT

It's complicated, Julia.

Grant places his cigar back on the ashtray, before returning
to their book.

Now, where were we...?

Little Julia settles herself back into Grant's arms,
prompting her grandfather to put aside the thought of
visiting William Vanderbilt for the time being.

I/E. OFFICE OF GRANT AND WARD INVESTMENT FIRM, WALL STREET,
MANHATTAN - MORNING

A few days later, Grant visits his Wall Street office, as is
his usual custom, where he's met by a crowd of bewildered
investors. He wades through the pack and enters the building,
only to find Buck waiting for him near the elevator.

BUCK

You had better come upstairs. I
have some rather troubling news.

They escape the madness and enter Grant's office, which, up
to that time, has conveniently served as the venue for Grant
and Ward.

GRANT

You want to tell me what's going on
here?

BUCK

You'd better sit down.

Grant takes a seat behind his enormous Southern Mexican
Railroad desk.

The \$150,000 check you endorsed
over to Grant and Ward yesterday
was apparently cashed by Ferdinand,
I'm guessing somewhere up in
Connecticut. Both he and the money
are now missing.

Grant freezes in his desk chair, tightly gripping the wooden armrests.

There's more. Ward told me yesterday that the firm needs \$600,000, not \$150,000, like he relayed to you. When he left the office, I went to see Jay Gould and ran a list of our current stocks by him.

GRANT

Continue.
(battle ready)

BUCK

Gould informed me after looking down the list, that our stocks aren't worth the gold-leaf parchment they're printed on! I immediately went to see my law partner, Stanley Elkins, who suggested we pay a little visit to Mr. Ward.

The General now opens his center desk drawer, removes a sheet of paper and an ornate fountain pen, and begins making notes.

When we arrived at his Brooklyn Heights home, we were told by his wife, Ella, that he wasn't in. So, we camped out in his parlor and waited for five long hours, only to find out that he was upstairs all the time! During our wait, Ella entered the parlor a number of times, pleading with us to keep the conversation down, as there was a baby asleep in the house.

GRANT

That's news to me.

BUCK

Anyways, Ward finally came downstairs, where we confronted him. He proceeded to give us the same line that he apparently gave you the previous day, that everything was perfectly fine.

Stopping to study his father's expression. Elkins, needless to say, wasn't buying any of this.

(MORE)

BUCK (CONT'D)

He demanded that Ward write a check for \$400,000 to cover his client's investment. Ward demurred, but eventually agreed, saying the check would be available in the morning. We then left his residence and haven't seen hide or tail of him since! When I wrote out a check this morning for the \$400,000 owed to Senator Chaffee, Marine Bank refused to honor it. Come to find out, Ward has no more than \$1,000 left in his various bank accounts!

A stunned General Grant sets his pen down on the desk.
I suggest you go home, Father. It's going to get ugly here and I don't want you to be around if the police show up.

Grant stands up and walks over to one of the front windows, observing an even larger assembly of prattling investors. He soon departs the building by way of the back stairs, but not before admonishing Buck.

GRANT

Handle it the fairest way you're able, Son.

INT. OFFICE OF PHYSICIAN JOHN H. DOUGLAS, MANHATTAN - LATER

Stepping off the Madison line, Grant and Harrison walk to the office of Dr. John Douglas. The General enters the premises alone, as a nurse greets him just inside the door.

NURSE

General Grant, may I take your coat?

Grant hands over his top-hat and coat.
Please take a seat. The Doctor will be with you shortly.

As she makes her way to the back of the practice, Grant studies the many certifications hanging on the far wall before finally resting his eyes on Dr. Douglas's University of Pennsylvania Medical School Diploma, written entirely in Latin. It's year of issue - anno Domini, MDCCCXLVII. The nurse now interrupts Grant's keen inspection of the doctor's credentials.

The doctor will see you now,
General.

Grant rises and enters Douglas's private office. The esteemed doctor stands to greet him.

DR DOUGLAS

General Grant, it's a pleasure to meet you again. Please, sit down. It's been a while.

Doctor Douglas sits down behind his desk, while Grant takes a seat in one of the visitor's chairs, directly in front.

GRANT

Yes. I believe we met on several occasions during the war while you were detailed as Associate Secretary of the Sanitation Commission. Both times in Saint Louis, as I recall...

DR DOUGLAS

That's right! I had dinner with you and your wife, during one such meeting. And how is Julia?

GRANT

Oh, she's fine, thank you. And Josephine?

DR DOUGLAS

Equally fine, sir. Now, what brings you here, General?

GRANT

Before I begin, Doctor, my wife doesn't know I'm here, so I trust my visit will stay within this room.

DR DOUGLAS

Of course, General. You have my word that your visit and my examination will remain strictly confidential.

GRANT

Very well.

(somberly)

This Summer, while vacationing in Long Branch, I happened to bite into a peach. I immediately experienced a sharp pain in the back of my throat. I have never had a sensation like that before, not in my mouth anyways.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

At the time, I attributed it to just a sore throat, but now I'm not so sure. Neither is my physician, Fordyce Barker.

DR DOUGLAS

Come with me, General. Let's go into my examination room.

GRANT

Very well.

Grant follows Dr. Douglas into an adjacent room.

DR DOUGLAS

Sit down on the table so I can see your throat under the light.

Dr. Douglas picks up a physician's mirror and swings a lamp over in front of Grant's mouth.

Now, open up your mouth as wide as you're able.

The doctor turns to grab a tongue depressor. He now places this instrument gently into Grant's mouth.

Tip your head back, General.

Grant complies.

Good. Now level your head and turn it to the left.

Grant turns his head.

That's good. Now, right...

Dr. Douglas soon sets down the tongue depressor and proceeds to feel around the outside of Grant's throat, working his way up to the regions of his lower jaw.

The doctor now retrieves a glass vile from his medicine cabinet.

Now, what do you say we do something about that persistent pain of yours?

Grant closes his eyes and nods.

I'm going to apply a solution of cocaine to the back of your throat. This may sting a bit. Open wide.

The doctor proceeds to cover the back of Grant's throat with the solution, intermittently dipping a cotton swab into the vile.

How does that feel?

Withdrawing the swab for the last time.

GRANT

Better. Much better, in fact!
(laughing)

DR DOUGLAS

Good. Let's go back to my office.

The pair depart the examination room, just as the nurse enters it to clean up. Grant and Dr. Douglas take their respective chairs back in the office.

GRANT

Doctor, is it cancer?

DR DOUGLAS

Well, whatever it is, it's a serious growth. General Grant, I know how open and direct you always preferred your after-battle reports, so I'll be blunt. I believe you have a form of epithelial cancer. But, until we obtain a biopsy to make absolutely sure, you are to visit me twice a day for a topical treatment of cocaine, like the one I applied today, as well as a coating of iodoform, to relieve that inflamed tonsil of yours.

Grant quietly ponders the news for a moment.

GRANT

If it is indeed cancer, is it curable?

DR DOUGLAS

I'm not going to lie to you, General. It's almost always fatal. But, that's not to say it isn't curable either.

GRANT

(nodding)
I see.

DR DOUGLAS

Let's not get ahead of ourselves. I'll see you tomorrow morning at nine o'clock.

GRANT

Thank you, Doctor.

They rise and shake hands. Grant makes his way out to the foyer, where the nurse is waiting with his hat and coat.

NURSE

We'll see you tomorrow, General.

Grant gives her a slight smile and departs the premises, finding a very patient Harrison waiting for him outside. Two middle-aged amputees wearing tattered Union Army Shell Jackets soon approach their former commander on makeshift crutches.

FIRST AMPUTEE

General Grant, is that you?

SECOND AMPUTEE

Sure as I'm standin' here, it's him! How are ya, General?

Offering his hand to Grant.

GRANT

I'm doing fine, much obliged for asking.

Tipping his hat to them.

Were you two injured during the Great Rebellion?

FIRST AMPUTEE

Indeed. We're both Cavalry, sir. I lost my leg on Champion Hill.

Turning to the other vet.

SECOND AMPUTEE

Mine was shot off during the Shenandoah Campaign, while servin' under General Sheridan.

GRANT

Such a sacrifice.

Shaking his head.

SECOND AMPUTEE

We's fine, sir.

GRANT

How you boys fixed for money?

Silence quickly overcomes them, as one of the veterans leans forward on his crutches and scuffs the pavement with his spared foot.

I'll take it that you aren't properly fixed. Here.

Grant reaches into his vest pocket.

On behalf of a grateful General.

Pressing a \$10 Gold Eagle coin into each of their hands, Grant proceeds to pat them on the shoulders.

Good luck, boys. You stick together, now, you hear. I'm on East Sixty-Sixth Street next to Central Park, if you're ever in trouble.

FIRST AMPUTEE

God bless you, General Grant.

SECOND AMPUTEE

Yah, thank you.

Scanning both sides of the coin, before looking his General straight in the eye.

It's been a great honor, Sir.

They slowly depart, as Grant and Harrison now make their way back to the Madison Avenue line.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CENTURY BUILDING, UNION SQUARE, MANHATTAN -
MOMENTS LATER

HARRISON

Why are we stoppin' here?

GRANT

I have an urgent appointment,
Harrison! Wait down here. This
shouldn't take long.

INT. FIRST FLOOR SUITE, LUDLOW STREET JAIL, MANHATTAN -
MORNING

Soon after his arrest, Ella Ward is seated inside her husband's first-floor cell at the Ludlow Street Jail. This cell, composed of three rooms, affords inmates of means with all the comforts of home, except for the front entrance, which consists of heavy iron bars.

ELLA

I've brought you some cash, like you asked.

FERDINAND WARD

How much?
(directly)

Reaching into her undergarments.

ELLA

Three hundred is all I could manage. My banker is getting suspicious, Ferdinand. Besides, I have household expenses to think about.

Ward sits down to count the cash.

FERDINAND WARD

We've discussed the household expenses before!

Pausing to finish his count, before looking up.
I'm going to send you and Ferdinand upstate to live with my family. I'm worried your inheritance is being winnowed away, leaving me nothing for my own wellbeing!

ELLA

But I can't live there.

Covering her face.

FERDINAND WARD

We'll see about that! Mother has already agreed, and everything's been arranged.

ELLA

But, what about Ferdinand, he loves his nanny, Rose, so much.
(entreating)
If you're perfectly content about my living with your family, what about him?

Placing his boots on the marble table.

FERDINAND WARD

My mother is perfectly suited to see to his needs. She raised me, didn't she?

ELLA
 But, Ferdinand...
 (anguished)

FERDINAND WARD
 It's done! You are to leave next
 week.

Ella takes out a handkerchief to dab her eyes.

ELLA
 Ferdinand, I have a life here in
 New York. My family, my friends,
 and our house...

FERDINAND WARD
 And what do I have? I'm stuck in
 jail, and probably won't get out
 for years. You talk about a life! I
 have no life!

Noting his wife carefully.
 Oh, stop your crying! If you want
 to cry about something, cry about
 me.

ELLA
 I do. I do, Ferdinand.

FERDINAND WARD
 Good! Let's get this straight,
 Ella. I simply cannot live the life
 I'm accustomed to without money.
 And you're the one who's going to
 give it to me. But you must make
 sure your inheritance holds out,
 that's all!

Rising.
 You need to go and pack your
 things. My attorney is due to
 arrive any minute. Go on!

Ella stands, kisses her husband, and walks over to the barred
 door.

ELLA
 Warden Kiernan, I'm ready!

The Warden comes to the door and lets her out. Spotting
 Ferdinand's attorney in the hallway, she fast approaches him.
 There will be no bail money coming
 from me!
 (rigidly)

Ella Champion Ward leaves the Ludlow Street Jail with a fresh, determined look on her face.

INT. GRANT HOUSE, EAST 66TH STREET, MANHATTAN - THE NEXT DAY

Oldest child, Frederick, has frequented the Grants brownstone a great deal of late, serving his father as both researcher and fact-checker, for a series of articles he is writing for Century Magazine, namely about the Battles of Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and the Wilderness. Fred, as he is called, is in his father's study, standing behind the General's large wooden desk.

FRED
Mother, what's this?

Holding up what appears to be a formal agreement, as his mother enters the room.

JULIA
What is it, dear?

FRED
What's this?

JULIA
You'll have to ask your father. He should be down any minute.

As he paces the floor, Fred continues to leaf through the pages of this document.

FRED
It reads: This contract, dated the 16th Day of October, Eighteen-Hundred Eighty-Four, between The Century Company, publishers, with offices operating at 33 E. 17th Street, New York, NY, and Ulysses S. Grant, author, of 3 E. 66th Street, New York, NY, for the expressed purpose of publishing and marketing certain memoirs written by the author, to include his life story up and through his command of the Union Army, to the conclusion of the American Civil War.

Fred flips to the final page, which is signed by the president of The Century Company. As for his father's signature, it remains blank.

Mother, it's a contract to publish father's personal memoirs!

JULIA

I know nothing about this, Fred...

Seating herself down on a leather couch, contemplating the news.

Your father has always dismissed the idea of writing his memoirs. I'm wondering, why the change? Why now...? And another thing. Have you noticed Ulys has stopped smoking cigars?

Fred quickly moves back to the desk and sets the contract down, just as Grant is entering the room.

INT. FRAUNCES TAVERN, PEARL STREET, MANHATTAN - EVENING

Brandy and cigars are the evening fare for Samuel Clemens and literary critic and author, William Dean Howells, in the Long Room of Fraunces Tavern.

SAM

Howells, over here!

Clemens stands to shake hands with his close friend, William Dean Howells. They proceed to sit in well-worn club chairs set in front of a window overlooking Pearl Street. A tavern attendant takes Howells' coat.

HOWELLS

Nice to see you again, Sam!

Lighting his cigar.

SAM

Same here, William. I ordered us a bottle of your favorite Brandy.

HOWELLS

A perfect night for it. There's a chill out there, to be sure.

SAM

Hmm. Summer can't come fast enough!

The bottle and two fine crystal snifters are set on a table, previously placed between them.

Thanks, Meldrick. So, what are you working on these days?

HOWELLS

Well, I'm in the process of writing a story about a character named Silas Lapham, a paint-retailer who loses his moral way.

SAM

Sounds appropriate.
(nodding)

HOWELLS

Other than that, I'm waiting for Houghton, Mifflin to publish *The Register Farce*—

SAM

Yes, I read through the early drafts you mailed me. Melancholy Street, is it?

HOWELLS

Melancthon Street, purely fictional. No such place. As for Silas Lapham, Century Magazine is poised to publish it in serial form, beginning in November, I believe.

Brushing off the ashes littering his vest.

SAM

Speaking of Century, do you know that Roswell Smith is paying General Grant a measly five-hundred dollars each for his accounts of the Battles of Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and the Wilderness?

HOWELLS

I've heard.

Emitting another cloud of smoke.

SAM

Can you believe it? Grant's not just any ordinary author!

HOWELLS

I tend to agree.

SAM

What's more, I had dinner the other night at Richard Gilder's house, over on 15th.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

He told me, rather candidly, that Century is certain to sign General Grant to write his memoirs.

HOWELLS

For peanuts, I'll bet.

Sam strokes his white mustache.

SAM

Uh hmmm. So, the next morning I rushed right over to the Grant home, only to find the General poised to sign the Century contract for a meager ten percent of all royalties!

Contributing to the smokey cloud.

HOWELLS

A pittance!

SAM

I then suggested he cross out ten percent and replace it with seventy-five!

Howells bawls out a full-throated laugh, causing the other Long Room guests to turn their heads.

I did! I then went on to explain to both he and Fred, that while seasoned publishers, Century has no concept of the new-fangled book subscription business, only the much-outdated trade publishing approach. Horse and buggy, if you ask me, I told them, stocking and restocking ho-hum, musty bookstore shelves!

Sam pours Howells and himself another drink. The General then made it clear to me, that he has an affinity towards Century, since they were the first company to set the wheels in motion, concerning his memoirs. So, I said to Grant and his son, horse feathers! Sentiment has nothing to do with it. It's a matter of good old Yankee business!

HOWELLS

Damn strait!

Picking up his glass and taking a swallow, while Sam gets up to walk over to the window. He soon turns around.

SAM

So, get this. I stood up, placed both hands firmly on my hips, and declared, I don't give a hoot nor holler what Century agreed to. Besides, if you're basing your loyalty solely on Century being the first to come to terms about publishing your papers, I should be the publisher,

Jabbing his chest.

since I came to you three years ago, in the company of William Dean Howells, suggesting that you write your memoirs!

HOWELLS

Ha! I remember! In fact, he invited us to lunch that day in his dining room... So, what did he say?

SAM

He thought about it for a moment and said, well, that's true. Classic Grant!

HOWELLS

(nodding)

As I remember it, he treated us to bacon, beans, and black coffee. A common soldier's meal.

SAM

Indeed. Getting back to yesterday, Grant then agreed to give the matter some thought over the next twenty-four hours. I knew then and there, that I could reel him in.

Walking over to sit back down.

The next morning, Grant balked again, much to Fred and my dismay. I can see why he won the war. He's as stubborn as any pack mule!

Taking another pull from his Brandy glass.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

I then declared that I would double Century's offer, telling him I had a checkbook in my pocket, and was ready to write one out for fifty-thousand dollars, if he'd allow my publisher to draw up a better contract!

HOWELLS

Get to the chase, Sam. What's the bottom line!

Butting out his cigar.

SAM

Very well. Grant still demurred, but agreed to run the Century Contract, as well as my offer, by his good friend, George Childs. After careful consideration, Childs offered his advice: Give the book to Twain, he said!

HOWELLS

Childs has always enjoyed Grant's trust. That was a fine move, Sam.

SAM

I'll say! Royalties of seventy percent, due Grant and his successors, were ultimately agreed upon, along with a whopping \$25,000 advance.

Howells whistles in approval.

The contract was signed by all parties, and title to the memoirs of General Ulysses S. Grant was duly transferred to my publisher, Charles Webster, to guard against any creditors seeking to enjoin the royalties.

Taking out his pocket watch.

HOWELLS

I couldn't have done a better job myself, Sam.

SAM

I'm sure you couldn't, Howells!

Both men stand, shake hands, and head over to the cloakroom, before stepping out into the chill Spring night.

INT. GRANT HOUSE, EAST 66TH STREET, MANHATTAN - DAWN

With a stylus pen and an ample supply of loose-leaf paper, Ulysses S. Grant begins his memoirs by providing an account of his father's ancestry, tracing his bloodline as far back as 1630 in Dorchester, England. On his mother's side, however, the Simpson family recorded history consists only of a few generations of Pennsylvanians.

GRANT

About half my school-days in Georgetown were spent at the school of John D. White, a North Carolinian, and the father of Chilton White who represented the district in Congress for one term during the rebellion. Mr. White was always a Democrat in politics, and Chilton followed his father. He had two older brothers -all three being school-mates of mine at their father's school -who did not go the same way. The second brother died before the rebellion began; he was a Whig, and afterwards a Republican. His oldest brother was a Republican and brave soldier during the rebellion.

TEACHER

Repeat after me. A noun is the name of a thing!

STUDENTS

A noun is the name of a thing!

Shouted out by a whole range of voices, while the teacher paces in front of the students, flexing a newly recruited beech switch.

TEACHER

Good. Don't forget it!

GRANT

Chilton is reported as having told of an earlier horse-trade of mine. As he told the story, there was a Mr. Ralston living within a few miles of the village, who owned a colt which I very much wanted. My father had offered twenty dollars for it, but Ralston wanted twenty-five.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

I was so anxious to have the colt, that after the owner left, I begged to be allowed to take him at the price demanded. My father yielded, but said twenty dollars was all the horse was worth, and told me to offer that price; if it was not accepted I was to offer twenty-two and a half, and if that would not get him, to give the twenty-five. I at once mounted a horse and went for the colt. When I got to Mr. Ralston's house, I said to him:

YOUNG GRANT

Papa says I may offer you twenty dollars for the colt, but if you won't take that, I am to offer twenty-two and a half, and if you won't take that, to give you twenty-five.

GRANT

It would not require a Connecticut man to guess the price finally agreed upon. This story is nearly true. I certainly showed very plainly that I had come for the colt and meant to have him. I could not have been over eight years old at the time. This transaction caused me great heart-burning. The story got out among the boys of the village, and it was a long time before I heard the last of it.

VILLAGE BOY

There goes Ulysses Grant, the dumbest horse-trader in Brown County!

A crowd of village boys jeer, as a thoroughly humiliated Grant passes by.

GRANT

Boys enjoy the misery of their companions, at least village boys in that day did, and in later life I have found that all adults are not free from the peculiarity. I kept the horse until he was four years old, when he went blind, and I sold him for twenty dollars.

By that time, the teasing had long since ceased, and Grant's father, Jesse, was pleased with the price his son negotiated.

JESSE

That was a fine piece of
negotiation you conducted, Ulysses.
Mighty fine!

Grant sets down his pen to relive the elation he felt that day.

GRANT

When I went to Maysville to school,
in 1836, at the age of fourteen, I
recognized my colt as one of the
blind horses working on the tread-
wheel of the ferry-boat.

Standing on the banks of the Ohio River, with tears in his eyes, a young Grant feels pangs of regret at the sight of the colt he once loved, strapped to such a dreary and laboring existence.

EXT. PARADE GROUNDS, WEST POINT MILITARY ACADEMY, WEST POINT,
NY - MORNING

GRANT

During my first year's encampment
General Scott visited West Point,
and reviewed the cadets. With his
commanding figure, his quite
colossal size and showy uniform, I
thought him the finest specimen of
manhood my eyes had ever beheld,
and the most to be envied. I could
never resemble him in appearance,
but I believe I did have a
presentiment for a moment that some
day I should occupy his place on
review— although I had no intention
then of remaining in the army.

A six-foot-five, fully framed, General Winfield Scott, in all his regalia, stands atop the review stand, high above the cadets.

The next summer Martin Van Buren,
then President of the United
States, visited West Point and
reviewed the cadets; he did not
impress me with the awe which Scott
had inspired.

A rumpled President Van Buren walks between rows and rows of smartly uniformed West Pointers, their black plumes a waft in the breeze.

In fact I regarded General Scott and Captain C. F. Smith, the Commandant of Cadets, as the two men most to be envied in the nation. I retained a high regard for both up to the day of their death.

EXT. JEFFERSON BARRACKS, U.S. 4TH INFANTRY, ST. LOUIS, MO - DAY

GRANT

On the 30th of September I reported for duty at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, with the 4th United States infantry. It was the largest military post in the country at that time, being garrisoned by sixteen companies of infantry, eight of the 3rd regiment, the remainder of the 4th.

At West Point I had a classmate - in the last year of our studies he was roommate also - F. T. Dent, whose family resided some five miles west of Jefferson Barracks.

West Point Firsties Frederick Dent and Ulysses Grant are seen walking across the Parade Ground at West Point during the 1842-1843 academic year.

Two of his unmarried brothers were living at home at that time, and as I had taken with me from Ohio, my horse, saddle and bridle, I soon found my way out to White Haven, the name of the Dent estate.

Passing through the entrance of White Haven on his horse, Grant arrives at the front steps of the green country mansion dressed in a dark blue infantry uniform.

As I found the family congenial my visits became frequent. There were at home, besides the young men, two daughters, one a school miss of fifteen, the other a girl of eight or nine.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

There was still an older daughter of seventeen, who had been spending several years at boarding-school in St. Louis, but who, though through school, had not yet returned home. She was spending the winter in the city with connections, the family of Colonel John O'Fallon, well known in St. Louis.

A youthful Julia Dent appears for the first time laughing vivaciously while sipping punch at a Christmas Party hosted by the Planter's House in St. Louis.

In February she returned to her country home. After that I do not know but my visits became more frequent; they certainly did become more enjoyable. We would often take walks, or go on horseback to visit the neighbors, until I became quite well acquainted in that vicinity. Sometimes one of the brothers would accompany us, sometimes one of the younger sisters.

During a mid-Spring horseback ride, this time accompanied by eight-year-old sister, Emma, Julia and Ulysses talk quietly while sitting along the edge of the Gravois Creek. Emma, seated higher above, proceeds to pluck pedals from the wild Daisies blooming there, while Julia stretches her arms below.

JULIA

It's so peaceful here, Ulys. Now that the spring floods have receded, I can finally show you the spot I have been tellin' you about.

Grant remains quiet, admiring the shimmering stream.

Oh, Ulys, recite something for me.
You do it so very well.

Emma continues to pluck while looking on.

GRANT

Alright... I am particularly taken with the poetry of Alfred Tennyson. He published this poem about fifteen years ago. It's entitled Mariana in the Moated Grange.

Clearing his throat.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted one and all

The rusted nails fell from the knots
 That held the pear to the gable-wall.
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
 Unlifted was the clinking latch;
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
 Upon the lonely moated grange.
 She only said, "My life is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said;
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!"

Minutes pass. Grant now moves back from the bank, admiring the scenery.

About a stone-cast from the wall
 A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
 And o'er it many, round and small,
 The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
 Hard by a poplar shook alway,
 All silver-green with gnarled bark:
 For leagues no other tree did mark
 The level waste, the rounding gray.
 She only said, "My life is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said;
 She said "I am aweary, aweary
 I would that I were dead!"

JULIA

That's marvelous! I simply love it.
 His name is Tennyson, you say...?

GRANT

Yes. Alfred Tennyson.

Their intimate discussion continues, as young Emma keeps watch.

If the 4th infantry had remained at Jefferson Barracks it is possible, even probable, that this life might have continued for some years without my finding out that there was anything serious the matter with me; but in the following May a circumstance occurred which developed my sentiment so palpably that there was no mistaking it.

Setting down his pen, Grant reaches into his desk drawer for still more paper. He then proceeds to stand up, walk around, and clean his spectacles, before returning to his chair.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

I mustered up courage to make known, in the most awkward manner imaginable, the discovery I had made on learning that the 4th infantry had been ordered away from Jefferson Barracks. The young lady afterwards admitted that she too, although until then she had never looked upon me other than as a visitor whose company was agreeable to her, had experienced a depression of spirits she could not account for when the regiment left. Before separating it was definitely understood that at a convenient time we would join our fortunes, and not let the removal of a regiment trouble us. This was in May 1844. My duties kept me on the frontier of Louisiana with the Army of Observation during the pendency of Annexation; and afterwards I was absent through the war with Mexico, provoked by the action of the army, if not by the annexation itself. During that time there was a constant correspondence between Miss Dent and myself, but we only met once in the period of four years and three months. In May 1845, I procured a leave for twenty days, visited St. Louis, and obtained the consent of the parents for the union, which had not been asked for before.

INT. U.S. ARMY 4TH INFANTRY ENCAMPMENT, MATAMORAS, MEXICO -
EVENING

Huddled in a rain-soaked tent in Matamoras, Mexico, a youthful Second Lieutenant Ulysses Grant writes to his fiancé, Julia Dent. Grant will soon be promoted to Regimental Quartermaster of the 4th U.S. Infantry.

GRANT

July 2, 1846

I received last evening your letter of the 10th of June, in which you speak of this Earthly paradise. If it is a Paradise where it rains about four hours each day why then Matamoras is the place.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

I have no doubt though I should like the place very much if it was only the home of My Dearest Julia, but I know that I shall never be contented until I am with her once more. I am afraid Julia that Matamoras will be very sickly this Summer. The whole of this country is low and flat and for the last six weeks it has rained almost incessantly so that now the whole country is under water.

Just outside, cumulative puddles gather closer around his tent, as raindrops continue to pelt the ground.

Our tents are so bad that every time it rains we get a complete shower-bath. Now that the Oregon boundary is no longer in dispute I think we will soon quiet Mexico and then dearest Julia, if I am not one of the unfortunate who fall, nothing will keep me from seeing you again. I really am very much in hopes that another Spring will not roll around before I will be able to call Julia my own dear, (shall I say wife,) Just think it is now going on three years since we were first engaged! You never will tell me Julia if you think your Pa & Ma will say no. I don't think they can but I would like to hear you say that they will not.

Just then, a fully soaked officer conducting bed-checks pulls back the tent flap and shines a lantern into the leaky space, finding Grant seated at his writing table before an army lamp of his own.

I did not let the flowers in your last letter blow away. When I opened the letter and saw the rose leaves I just thought that only two short weeks ago Julia had them in her own hands and here I am and have not seen her for more than a year. If I was in Missouri and you were here I know what I would do very soon; I would volunteer to come to Mexico as a private if I could come no other way.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

But I recollect you did volunteer
some time ago, or what showed your
willingness to do so, you said that
you wished we had been united when
I was last in Missouri and how
willing you would be to share even
a tent with me. Indeed Julia that
letter made me feel very happy.
Remember me to all at White Haven.
Your Devoted
ULYSSES

Grant folds the letter in quarters and stuffs it into a
preaddressed envelope, ready for the morning post. He now
turns the light down, undresses, and climbs into his damp
cot.

I/E. MADISON BARRACKS, EASTERN SHORE OF LAKE ONTARIO,
SACKETTS HARBOR, NY - EVENING

First Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, Julia, endure
another howling winter night inside their two-room quarters
in the Madison Barracks complex of Sacketts Harbor, in
Northern New York State on December 17, 1848. Newlyweds since
August, this is Grant's first garrison assignment since the
end of the Mexican-American War. A quiet study of fellow
junior officers and top brass, West Point and Mexico have
provided him with an ample supply of competent leaders should
his time ever come to command. Another gust of icy wind
shakes the barracks' foundation, as the Grants shiver
underneath a battery of heavy quilts. Unable to sleep, Grant
gets out of bed and changes into his warmest clothes.

JULIA

Wherever are you going, Ulys?

GRANT

I can't sleep with those shutters
making such a racket.

JULIA

Those shutters are the only thing
standing between us and the bitter
cold.

Julia hops back into their warm bed, shivering momentarily.

GRANT

All the same, I need some air!

JULIA

Don't be long, you'll catch your
death out there.

Going outside, Grant makes his way across a vast open space, only to approach the frozen lake below and stand at the end of the barracks pier, gazing into the wintry abyss. Snow continues to fall over Lake Ontario during this early morning hour, causing a dreamlike silence over the young Garrison Lieutenant.

No longer able to withstand the frigid gale winds, he returns to his quarters and the comfort of he and Julia's bed, but not before forcing two twigs in between the shutter latches, stilling the deafening clatter. Suddenly awake, Julia speaks from under their covers.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Oooh, Ulys! Your feet are as cold
as a St. Louis icehouse.

GRANT

I wasn't out there that long,
Julia!

JULIA

Still, it's just that it's so warm
under these quilts that anything
cold is most unpleasant.

GRANT

Well, we are in Sackett's Harbor!

JULIA

Yes, we are, and yet, I can't help
but love it here.

Staring at the beamed ceiling, before rolling over onto her side.

Why, I no longer want to be
stationed in Detroit, now that
we're here...

GRANT

Don't get too attached, dear, I
might just be transferred back
there in the Spring when the lake
thaws. But that will be up to the
Army. I'm sure the Colonel would
feel better knowing we're back in
Detroit.

JULIA

Oh, my father wouldn't understand.

Reaching under the thick covers to her husband.
I don't know.

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

It's rather quaint here, romantic-like, don't you think...?
Ulys, the shutters have stopped
their knockin'... Ulys?

With the shutters now firmly secured, Grant has drifted back to sleep. Julia now shimmies closer to her husband, dragging her feather pillow behind her. She soon follows his lead and falls asleep, as the wind continues to pummel the sturdy limestone exterior of the Madison Barracks.

EXT. CROSSING THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA FROM GORGONA TO THE
PACIFIC COAST - CONTINUOUS

The next day, it's back to the memoirs for Grant. He now focuses his attention on the 4th Infantry's deployment to the West Coast, by way of the treacherous Isthmus of Panama.

GRANT

In the spring of 1851 the garrison at Detroit was transferred to Sackett's Harbor, and in the following spring the entire 4th infantry was ordered to the Pacific Coast. It was decided that Mrs. Grant should visit my parents at first for a few months, and then remain with her own family at their St. Louis home until an opportunity offered of sending for her. In the month of April the regiment was assembled at Governor's Island, New York Harbor, and on the 5th of July eight companies sailed for Aspinwall.

Helping in the clean up of a medical inspection station for prospective passengers of the steamship Ohio, is Ulysses Grant's future throat specialist, twenty-eight-year-old Dr. John Hancock Douglas.

We numbered a little over seven hundred persons, including the families of officers and soldiers. Passage was secured for us on the old steamer Ohio, commanded at the time by Captain Schenck, of the navy. It had not been determined, until a day or two before starting, that the 4th infantry should go by the Ohio; consequently, a complement of passengers had already been secured.

Ascending the gangway to the Ohio behind a line of infantrymen, Grant salutes Captain Schenck before stepping onto an overly crowded deck.

The addition of over seven hundred to this list crowded the steamer most uncomfortably, especially for the tropics in July.

In the summer of 1852 the Panama railroad was completed only to the point where it now crosses the Chagres River. From there passengers were carried by boats to Gorgona, at which place they took mules for Panama, some twenty-five miles further. Those who travelled over the Isthmus in those days will remember that boats on the Chagres River were propelled by natives not inconveniently burdened with clothing.

Emerging at last from the Isthmus jungle with a contingent of the 4th Infantry, Grant gallantly makes his way through the flat coastal lowlands, just below the Pacific slope, to Panama City.

Altogether, on the Isthmus and on the Pacific side, we were delayed six weeks. About one-seventh of those who left New York harbor with the 4th infantry on the 5th of July, now lie buried on the Isthmus of Panama or on Flamingo island in Panama Bay.

EXT. MERRYWEATHER FARM, 3 JUNE ROAD, NORTH SALEM, NY -
AFTERNOON

On a sunny Autumn afternoon, Buck and Fannie Grant celebrate their daughter Miriam's third birthday on the grounds of Merryweather Farm in Westchester, New York. This outdoor affair includes Buck's parents, who have been staying on the estate since July. Seated on a veranda hours before the party, Fannie and Julia share some rare private time alone.

FANNIE

How is the General feeling today?

JULIA

He's still fighting a terrible sore throat! But, as you know, illness of any kind never stopped him.

FANNIE
So I've noticed.

JULIA
His memoirs are taking up so much
of his time these days, that he's
actually been looking forward to...
to Miriam's Birthday Party.
(tearfully)

FANNIE
What is it, Mrs. Grant?

JULIA
Oh, you were right, Fannie!

FANNIE
Right about what?

JULIA
About Mr. Ward, of course!
(defiantly)

FANNIE
Mrs. Grant, can we set that aside
for one day?

JULIA
You're right.
(calmer)
Again...! But I have to ask, how is
that poor wife of Ferdinand Ward?

FANNIE
Ella?

JULIA
Yes, Ella.
(suddenly remembering)

FANNIE
That may be the only silver lining
in this whole Grant and Ward saga.

JULIA
How so?

FANNIE
You didn't hear?

JULIA
Why, no.

FANNIE

Well, her husband's still in jail!

JULIA

Yes, that much I know.

FANNIE

But what you probably don't know is that he was counting on Ella to come up with the bail. She inherited a great deal of money when her father died.

JULIA

That, I didn't know. I assumed that all of her wealth was due primarily to Ferdinand!

FANNIE

Oh, no. Why, it's the other way around!

(giggling)

Believe me, she would have no problem putting up the bail.

JULIA

By the way, how much is it?

FANNIE

Three Hundred Thousand.

Coifing her fine blond hair.

JULIA

Three hundred thousand!

FANNIE

Yes, Three Hundred Thousand! Ella told me that when she went to see her husband last month, she saw Ferdinand's attorney later on in the hallway, and told him in no uncertain terms that there would be no more talk of bail. And there he sits, day after day, in jail!

Fannie gets up from her chair, walks over to the porch railing, and turns around to face Julia.

She's free, Mrs. Grant! Absolutely free.

Raising her arms in the air.

And her ruthless, cold-hearted husband is all locked up!

(MORE)

FANNIE (CONT'D)
(smiling broadly)
Liberating, isn't it?

Ulysses Grant suddenly steps onto the veranda.

GRANT
What's with all the celebratory
speech?

FANNIE
Oh, nothing Father. Nothing...

Yielding her chair to Grant.

EXT. ABOARD A MADISON AVENUE STREETCAR, MANHATTAN - MORNING

A few weeks before Thanksgiving, Julia and her son, Fred, are returning home from Dr. John Douglas's office, shortly after confronting him on the health of their patriarch. They are riding in a horse-drawn streetcar on the Madison Avenue Line.

JULIA
I'm not going to let this affect
me, simply not!

Placing her hand in his.

FRED
Still, we can't deny what Dr.
Douglas just revealed to us,
mother. It all makes sense now.
Father's disappearances twice a day
with Harrison, the intensity with
which he pens his memoirs, his lack
of appetite, and the cessation of
smoking cigars...

JULIA
Not to mention a constant sore
throat!

The streetcar now makes one of its many stops, allowing passengers to depart and climb aboard, before moving ahead with a hard jerk.

FRED
How shall we approach father?

JULIA

You let me handle that! I'll simply tell him that we...paid a visit to Dr. Douglas this morning, who, when pressed, briefed us on your father's condition. You know Pa, he'll be so embarrassed at first, but he'll understand.

FRED

Five more stops.

Observing the road ahead.

How can you be so matter-of-fact about this, mother? We're talking about life and death here!

JULIA

I know, I know!

(fervently)

I have faith, Fred. Faith that everything will turn out fine in the end. Dr. Douglas said it himself; it might not be cancer and could very well be something, something...entirely benign! He won't know for certain until he takes a sample from your father's throat after the Holidays. Until then, we wait!

FRED

I still say, we treat this coming Christmas like it was Father's last. I know that sounds cold, but, there's a very strong chance that it will be!

JULIA

Still, we must have faith.

Folding her hands in her lap.

All of us! Every day, every hour. I'm counting on you, Fred! Even if it's only pretend.

FRED

You know I will, mother. All I'm saying is, we must be prepared.

Julia now taps Fred's arm, before getting up to leave the car.

JULIA

Granted. But faith will prevail! It
always does. Every time!

Standing in the isle, she bends down and whispers into her
son's ear, who remains seated.

Besides, your father is far too
great a man to succumb to the likes
of cancer of the tongue, of all
things. Come on, Fred.

Fred rises to catch up. They soon step down onto the sidewalk
and head back to the Grant home, as their streetcar begins to
once again lurch its way up Madison Avenue.

EXT. FORT HUMBOLDT, 4TH U.S. INFANTRY, EUREKA, CA - AFTERNOON

Promoted to Captain, Grant is ultimately assigned to a post
in Northern California. There, being so far away from Julia
and his young family, he experiences bouts of loneliness and
despair. Standing on a bluff overlooking a remote Humboldt
Bay on yet another rainy afternoon, he weighs the prospects
of his Military career.

GRANT

My family, all this while, was at
the East. It consisted now of a
wife and two children. I saw no
chance of supporting them on the
Pacific coast out of my pay as an
army officer.

A shot glass next to a nearly-consumed bottle of Old Crow,
suddenly tips over, spilling its contents onto the floor of
Captain Grant's quarters.

I concluded, therefore, to resign,
and in March applied for a leave of
absence until the end of the July
following, tendering my resignation
to take effect at the end of that
time. I left the Pacific coast very
much attached to it, and with the
full expectation of making it my
future home. That expectation and
that hope remained uppermost in my
mind until the Lieutenant-Generalcy
bill was introduced into Congress
in the winter of 1864. The passage
of that bill, and my promotion,
blasted my last hope of ever
becoming a citizen of the further
West.

INT. GRANT HOUSE, EAST 66TH STREET, MANHATTAN - DAWN

A sleepless Grant again digs into his work, this time well before sunrise. Finding her husband in his study, Julia stands behind him dressed only in a nightgown.

JULIA

Why Ulys, you haven't touched your coffee!

Grant stops writing, sets his pen down, and takes hold of Julia's hands, which are draped around his neck.

Where are you in your manuscript?

GRANT

I've resigned my commission from the Fourth Infantry in California and made my way back East to White Haven.

JULIA

I remember it well...

Grant releases one of her hands and reaches for his coffee.

Dudy! That coffee of yours has got to be stone cold by now. Here, I'll fetch you another one in the kitchen.

She takes his cup and walks into the kitchen. Returning, Grant accepts the steaming brew from his wife, wraps both hands around it, and draws in its invigorating aroma. Julia now plants herself on the couch.

Do you remember that day, Ulys?

GRANT

What day?
(teasingly)

JULIA

Oh, you! Well, I do.
(reminiscing)

Grant takes his first sip, sets the cup down, and reaches for his pen.

You rode up our driveway in a buggy, as I recall. Not knowing when you would arrive, I would put on the finest dresses for days and days, making sure you'd find me at my best! You jumped down from that rig, embraced the children and me, and never let go!

Grant nods in reflection.

And, always willin' to work, you
followed my father around the farm
for weeks!

GRANT

The Colonel assigned me the most
mundane tasks imaginable. But, I
managed to work up a powerful
appetite every night.

JULIA

Yes!

(laughing)

My mother enjoyed watching you fill
your face immensely.

Grant takes a large gulp from his coffee cup.
But still you weren't content.

GRANT

No.

(nodding silently)

JULIA

So, using the land given to me by
my father, we began to farm. Let's
see,

Touching a forefinger to her chin.

there were Irish potatoes; sweet
ones, too; early corn; cucumbers;
cabbage; beets; and melons. Do you
remember the melons, Ulys?

(cherishingly)

Grant smiles and takes another pull on his cup.

GRANT

Those were lean years.

JULIA

Still, I wouldn't trade them for
anythin' in the world.

GRANT

I'm afraid you don't remember them
the same way I do!

A sobering silence now descends on them.

JULIA

Then, there was Hardscrabble.

GRANT

Yes, I hired the free blacks from our farm to help me, once the crops were in, that is. I never missed a day!

JULIA

Indeed, you didn't! Even when you were terribly sick with ague. You were driven in those days, Ulys, eager to make a proper livin' for us. You also cleared close to half the trees on the property to sell firewood in town. Remember?

GRANT

Now that was humiliating!
Especially passing all the Army officers I once served with.

Setting down his pen to lean back in his chair.

Then, collecting rents for your cousin, Harry Boggs. And here I am still trying to make a go of it!

(coughing)

Dr. Gordon has scheduled a biopsy for me in early February. Here in New York, I believe. I care little of the results, as long as I have enough time to finish my memoirs.

JULIA

You mustn't say that! I want you around for many years to come, husband.

GRANT

Clemens says that my memoirs will take in millions!

JULIA

That's not important, dear. What's important is keeping you around. Oh, if it wasn't for Ferdinand Ward, our life would've been just fine!

(lamenting)

Fannie once told me about the despicable way he has treated his wife!

GRANT

I'm not surprised.

JULIA

Ah hmm. But, like Fannie says, he's all locked up now! You know, Dudy, our Buck has married a pretty special girl.

GRANT

She's quite a woman. Can I trouble you to fetch me another cup?

(smiling)

Warm coffee makes my throat feel so much better!

JULIA

Not at all. I'll be right back.

Julia returns with a fresh cup, and the couple continue their casual chat until dawn.

INT. GRANT AND PERKINS TANNERY STORE, GALENA, IL - DAY

Just weeks after the Confederate Army's attack on Fort Sumpter, a group of ragtag volunteer soldiers march through the streets of Galena, IL. Alongside the troops walks their commander, Colonel Ulysses Grant, a diminutive figure weighing no more than 130 pounds.

Standing in the doorway of the Galena Evening Courier is its Editor, Leland F. Leal, one of the village boys who jeered Grant about his horse-trading talents so many years ago. As the volunteers file past, Leal spots Grant donning a saber, only to belt out a sizable laugh.

INT. KEENS CHOP HOUSE, 72 W. 36TH STREET, MANHATTAN - EVENING

Dr. John Douglas enters the front door, where he stomps the snow from his boots.

DR DOUGLAS

Has Dr. Elliott arrived?

MAÎTRE D'

He was just seated, doctor. May I take your coat?

DR DOUGLAS

Yes, of course. Can you direct me to his table?

MAÎTRE D'

He's seated along the wall, midway
down on the right, under the
sconce. Table Number Seven.

DR DOUGLAS

I see him. Thank you.

Placing a silver dollar on the Maître d's stand, Douglas
walks over to the table and greets his colleague, who rises
from his chair to shake hands.

DR ELLIOTT

I ordered us two Manhattans, John.
You look like you could use it!

DR DOUGLAS

Thank you. Let's eat before
discussing your findings, alright?

DR ELLIOTT

Good idea!

The Manhattans arrive, and the waiter hands them both a menu
from his tray.

Wasn't this place once called the
Lambs Club?

DR DOUGLAS

Yes! It has a different name now,
but the same owner.

Opening up his menu.

And the same chops!

DR ELLIOTT

That's good, because I'm starving!

Taking a slurp from his Manhattan.

Ahhh.

Amidst the clatter of dinner plates, tinkling glass, and
bawling patrons, the doctors finish their meal.

WAITER

Can I interest you in coffee or
dessert?

Elliot looks over at Dr. Douglas, who declines.

DR ELLIOTT

No. But you can bring us two more
Manhattans!

WAITER

Very good.

DR DOUGLAS

George!

DR ELLIOTT

Trust me, you're going to need it.

The waiter soon returns with the Manhattans, giving Dr. Elliot an opportunity to address him.

We're going to need this table for at least another hour. With no interruptions, please.

WAITER

No problem, Doctor.
(nodding)

Dr. Elliot now retrieves a Manila folder from his leather briefcase and lays it on the table.

DR ELLIOTT

Sadly, your original diagnosis was correct, John. I'll read from my report:

Taking another belt to clear his throat.

I have made a histopathologic examination of the right oropharyngeal lesion. The razor-cut tissue sections, while thick and uneven, easily made it onto eighteen slides. These slides exhibit a cohesiveness of cells and areas of keratinization representing a moderately differentiated invasive squamous cell carcinoma, or what is commonly known as epithelioma.

My diagnosis is based, more or less, on the lobulated appearance of the epithelial mass, cell nests, cellular pleomorphism, and other characteristics uniquely consistent with that of a carcinoma. The only regret I have in conducting this examination, is that the patient from whom the biopsy was obtained is none other than the esteemed General Grant.

Gazing up from his report.

DR DOUGLAS
I understand.

DR ELLIOTT
Doctors Barker, Sands, and Markoe,
all concur.

DR DOUGLAS
I see...

DR ELLIOTT
We then consulted the renowned
Physician, Dr. George Shrady,
concerning possible surgery, who
wrote, wait a minute...

Searching for Shrady's report among his paperwork.
Oh, yes. Here it is! A wide
excision of the tumor would have
involved the division of the lower
jaw in front of the ramus, the
extirpation of the entire tongue
and the greater part of the soft
palate, together with the removal
of the ulcerated and infiltrated
fauces and the indurated glandular
structures under the right angle of
the lower jaw.

Dr. Elliot empties the contents of his glass.
According to Dr. Shrady, surgery
was considered technically
possible, despite the extremely
close proximity of critical
arteries and veins. However, in the
best interests of such a
distinguished patient, he and
others did not feel inclined to
recommend this overly invasive
procedure. I concur completely!

DR DOUGLAS
I'll inform the family and see to
it that Grant is made as
comfortable as possible.

Leaning back from the table.
Do you think, George, that medicine
will advance someday to the point
where we don't have to lose such
great men to the likes of cancer?

DR ELLIOTT

I'm certain of it, Doctor! But for now, especially in General Grant's delicate condition, we do no harm.

DR DOUGLAS

Precisely!

Rapping the table with his knuckles, as Dr. Elliot checks his pocket watch.

DR ELLIOTT

I must be going, John! I have a lecture to give in the morning.

Searching for the waiter, while raising his hand.
Check, please!

EXT. FORT DONELSON, ALONG THE CUMBERLAND RIVER, TENNESSEE -
EVENING

A heavily defended redoubt located high above the Cumberland River, known as Fort Donelson, is the next target in Brigadier General Ulysses Grant's plan to gain absolute control of the strategic waterway that is, the Mississippi River. To accomplish this feat, he will need the assistance of the U.S. Navy to shell the low-lying Confederate mortar batteries spread out below the steep advances to the fortress.

GRANT

General Halleck did not approve or disapprove of my going to Fort Donelson. He said nothing whatever to me on the subject. He informed Buell on the 7th that I would march against Fort Donelson the next day; but on the 10th he directed me to fortify Fort Henry strongly, particularly to the land side, saying that he forwarded me intrenching tools for that purpose. I was very impatient to get to Fort Donelson because I knew the importance of the place to the enemy and supposed he would reinforce it rapidly. I felt that 15,000 men on the 8th would be more effective than 50,000 a month later.

Grant sits back and marvels at this pivotal fact.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

I asked Flag-officer Foote, therefore, to order his gunboats still about Cairo to proceed up the Cumberland River and not to wait for those gone to Eastport and Florence; but the others got back in time and we started on the 12th. I had moved McClernand out a few miles the night before so as to leave the road as free as possible. Just as we were about to start the first reinforcement reached me on transports. It was a brigade composed of six full regiments commanded by Colonel Thayer, of Nebraska. As the gunboats were going around to Donelson by the Tennessee, Ohio and Cumberland rivers, I directed Thayer to turn about and go under their convoy. The plan was for the troops to hold the enemy within his lines, while the gunboats should attack the water batteries at close quarters and silence his guns if possible. Some of the gunboats were to run the batteries, get above the fort and above the village of Dover. I had ordered a reconnaissance made with the view of getting troops to the river above Dover in case they should be needed there. That position attained by the gunboats it would have been but a question of time-and a very short time, too-when the garrison would have been compelled to surrender.

Over the period of February 14-15, 1862, the Battle of Fort Donelson begins in earnest. After an easily repelled incursion on his right flank, Grant's troops succeed in gaining ground both above and below the object at hand. Later, U. S. Navy gunboats open fire on the fort, and its artillery entrenchments along the water. Great discharges from the mouth of 32-pound cannon and 9-inch howitzers, on the Confederate side, and vasty guns sighted on the decks of Union Ironclads, consume the night sky with golden arcs and fizzling tails of light. The ensuing explosions tear apart manned shore batteries and passing wheelhouses alike. Similar scenes play out with frequency until the early morning hours.

A council of war was held by the enemy at which all agreed that it would be impossible to hold out longer.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

General Buckner, who was third in rank in the garrison but much the most capable soldier, seems to have regarded it a duty to hold the fort until the general commanding the department, A. S. Johnston, should get back to his headquarters at Nashville.

General Buckner discusses gossip surrounding his former West Point classmate, before deciding how to attain an honorable surrender of the fort.

LIEUTENANT ONE

Word has it that General Grant's a drunkard, sir.

BUCKNER

That's not necessarily true. Some men have a greater ability to handle whiskey than others, that's all. It's body chemistry, nothing more, nothing less.

LIEUTENANT TWO

Were you ever witness to any excessive drinking on his part, General Buckner.

BUCKNER

Never. We spent a good deal of time together in the Mexican War, both as soldiers as well as tourists, and nothing!

LIEUTENANT TWO

What's he like, sir?

BUCKNER

He's the quietest, most unassuming guy you're ever going to meet. All I remember is that he was a quick study of others, and didn't suffer fools kindly. But, that was years ago. Possibly he's changed with age.

(reminiscing)

We best get back to discussing plans for our capitulation, boys.

GRANT

Before daylight General Smith brought to me the following letter from General Buckner:

BUCKNER

Headquarters, Fort Donelson,
February 16, 1862.

Sir:- In consideration of all the circumstances governing the present situation of affairs at this station, I propose to the Commanding Officer of the Federal forces the appointment of Commissioners to agree upon terms of capitulation of the forces and fort under my command, and in that view suggest an armistice until 12 o'clock today.

I am, sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
S. B. Buckner,
Brigadier General, C.S.A.

GRANT

To this I responded as follows:
Headquarters Army in the Field,
Camp near Donelson,
February 16, 1862.

General S. B. Buckner,
Confederate Army.

Sir:- Yours of this date, proposing armistice and appointment of Commissioners to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works.

I am, sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
U. S. Grant,
Brigadier General

Grant's pen, now tearing at the page, forces him to abandon it and find another one with a smoother nib in his center desk drawer.

To this I received the following reply:

BUCKNER

Headquarters, Dover, Tennessee,
February 16, 1862.

To Brigadier General U. S. Grant,
U.S. Army.

(MORE)

BUCKNER (CONT'D)

Sir:— The distribution of the forces under my command, incident to an unexpected change of commanders, and the overwhelming force under your command, compel me, notwithstanding the brilliant success of the Confederate arms yesterday, to accept the ungenerous and unchivalrous terms which you propose.

I am, sir,

Your very obedient servant,

S. B. Buckner,

Brigadier General, C.S.A.

Grant begins to write on a new piece of paper.

On the day Fort Donelson fell I had 27,000 men to confront the Confederate lines and guard the road four or five miles to the left, over which all our supplies had to be drawn on wagons.

The news of the fall of Fort Donelson caused great delight all over the North. I was promptly promoted to the grade of Major-General of Volunteers, and confirmed by the Senate. My chief, who was in St. Louis, telegraphed his congratulations to General Hunter in Kansas for the services he had rendered in securing the fall of Fort Donelson by sending reinforcements so rapidly. To Washington he telegraphed that the victory was due to General C. F. Smith; "promote him," he said, "and the whole country will applaud."

NARRATOR

OUR SPECIAL WASHINGTON DISPATCHES;

THE FALL OF FORT DONELSON

The New York Times

Feb. 18, 1862

WASHINGTON, Monday, Feb. 17.

The news of the fall of Fort Dunelson was recived with extraordinary demonstrations in Congress today. In the Senate the gallery rose en masse and gave three enthusiastic cheers. In the House this was improved on the floor try three cheers and a tiger.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The House was considering a proposition to allow a stenographic reporter to the Committee on the Conduct of the War. A member, amid great applause, moved that the Committee on the Conduct of the War be discharged from further duty. Both Houses adjourned at an early hour, and a general jubilee reigns in the city. Salvos of artillery are heard from every camp within sound of Washington.

HONOR TO GEN. GRANT.

Honors follow swift on the heels of victory. Immediately on the receipt of the telegraphic news announcing the capture of Fort Donelson, the Secretary of War sent the name of Gen. GRANT to the President for nomination to the Senate as Major-General, as a reward for his gallant services.

GRANT

On the 19th there was published at St. Louis a formal order thanking Flag-officer Foote and myself, and the forces under our command, for the victories on the Tennessee and the Cumberland. I received no other recognition whatever from General Halleck. But General Cullum, his chief of staff, who was at Cairo, wrote me a warm congratulatory letter on his own behalf. I approved of General Smith's promotion highly, as I did all the promotions that were made. My opinion was and still is that immediately after the fall of Fort Donelson the way was opened to the National forces all over the Southwest without much resistance.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

If one general who would have taken the responsibility had been in command of all the troops west of the Alleghanies, he could have marched to Chattanooga, Corinth, Memphis and Vicksburg with the troops we then had, and as volunteering was going on rapidly over the North there would soon have been force enough at all these centres to operate offensively against anybody of the enemy that might be found near them. Rapid movements and the acquisition of rebellious territory would have promoted volunteering, so that reinforcements could have been had as fast as transportation could have been obtained to carry them to their destination. On the other hand there were tens of thousands of strong able-bodied young men still at their homes in the Southwestern States, who had not gone into the Confederate army in February, 1862, and who had no particular desire to go.

A young man leaning on a shovel is seen working on his father's farm in rural Arkansas.

If our lines had been extended to protect their homes, many of them never would have gone. Providence ruled differently. Time was given the enemy to collect armies and fortify his new positions; and twice afterwards he came near forcing his northwestern front up to the Ohio River.

I promptly informed the department commander of our success at Fort Donelson and that the way was open now to Clarksville and Nashville; and that unless I received orders to the contrary I should take Clarksville on the 21st and Nashville about the 1st of March. Both these places are on the Cumberland River above Fort Donelson. As I heard nothing from headquarters on the subject...

A weary Grant, briefly admiring his new pen, soon sets it down on the desk.

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK, MANHATTAN, NY - AFTERNOON

In mid-March, 1885, Samuel Clemens and William Dean Howells get together again, this time in Gramercy Park. They are seated together on a long wooden settee.

HOWELLS

It's nice to finally get outside!

SAM

It sure is. But the cold is supposed to return this week. In the low-twenties, I'm told.

HOWELLS

Manhattan in late winter!

SAM

Uh hah! Did I ever tell you about my visit to Hawaii?

HOWELLS

Only about a thousand times!

SAM

I'm thinking, now that Huckleberry Finn is completed, that I'll write some sort of poem or narrative about my time there. A remembrance of sorts...

HOWELLS

It must have been a special time for you.

SAM

Oh, it was, Howells, it was.

Gazing up through the bare trees.

It's been twenty years and still I long for it. There's a sweetness in the air in Hawaii! I swear, that aroma has remained in my nostrils to this day.

(sighing deeply)

HOWELLS

Sounds like you have some inspiring imagery to work with.

SAM

Indeed.

HOWELLS

How is Grant getting along?

SAM

Well, I was over to the house a few days ago and Fred's oldest daughter, Julia, was there.
(smiling)

HOWELLS

Yeah? How old is she?

SAM

I don't rightly know. Eight or nine, I guess. Her grandfather sure gets his fill of laughter whenever she's around. The General says his Little Julia is clever.

HOWELLS

Clever! I do admire that in a child.

SAM

(chuckling quietly)
Grant's still sizing people up, even his own granddaughter!

HOWELLS

Say, how is his book coming along?

SAM

Well, I went into Century's offices last week with Charley Webster and our attorney, Clarence Seward. The reason for going wasn't so much about the money they're paying 'em, but whether Century will release the rights to his articles once they publish them. I tell you, William, that the General's health has deteriorated so since Christmas, that if these four battle accounts had to somehow be rewritten...I'm afraid he wouldn't live to complete his memoirs!

In a film flashback, Julia tends to her ailing husband, who, once again, is struggling through another night, trying to breathe the damp urban air.

Why, a month ago, he began expecting blood whenever he coughed, which is now an every day occurrence!

A bloody metal basin waits to be washed out next to the kitchen sink.

HOWELLS

What is his condition now?

SAM

Miraculously, his condition has remained somewhat stable. But, just last week, the General lost his voice and can no longer dictate to his stenographer, forcing him to once again take up his pen.

HOWELLS

This is going to get bad, Sam!

Unable to swallow, Grant now receives daily injections of vitamins and nutritional supplements, administered by Dr. Barker.

SAM

Do you know that the back of his throat gets coated twice a day with a solution of cocaine?

HOWELLS

Cocaine!

SAM

That's right! Grant says it deadens the incessant pain he's experiencing. Dr. Douglas applies it when he's around, which is often. Otherwise, Julia has been instructed how to do it. There's a large apothecary jar in Grant's study filled with the stuff. It's as clear as spring water, I tell you.

Howells shakes his head, while checking his pocket watch.
Anyways, getting back to Century.

HOWELLS

Yes!

SAM

The three of us, Charley, Clarence, and myself, piled into Roswell Smith's office.

HOWELLS

How is Smitty?

SAM

Oh, he's fine, fine!

Removing a cigar from his overcoat and admiring its construction.

I'll smoke this on the way home.
Anyways, he said that returning the rights to the Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and Wilderness articles, is not a problem, and will revert back to Grant once Century publishes them. But, just to show me that they're doing Grant a big favor, Smith produced the receipt the General signed last Fall, giving Century exclusive rights over the articles, just to stick it in my ear!

Howells lets out a bellowing laugh.

HOWELLS

What about the money Century is paying him?

SAM

Oh, Smith said he made good with Grant some weeks ago. I believe he doubled the contract commissions. Not that the General cares! He couldn't give a hoot about the money, but I do! We're talking about showing Grant the respect he deserves.

HOWELLS

Hear, hear!

The two continue to chat on the park bench just as the sun is about to set.

SAM

It's getting chilly, Howells.

Tucking in his scarf.

HOWELLS

Yes, it is!
(stretching)
Keep me informed about Grant's condition, Sam. I'm very worried about him.

Sam shakes Howells hand before standing up.

SAM
I certainly will, William.

HOWELLS
Besides, it has the making of an
incredible story someday!

The pair soon saunter out of the park in the same direction.

I/E. HEADQUARTERS OF MAJOR-GENERAL ULYSSES GRANT, MEMPHIS,
TENNESSEE - CONTINUOUS

A victory party for the officers after the Battle of Shiloh is held in the Headquarters Commissary. Frayed nerves during the battle now contributes to the revelry, and, after a large meal, drinking becomes the order of the night. John Rawlins, seeing where the celebration is heading, now addresses Grant, who is seated directly next to him.

RAWLINS
I think it's time we get out of
here! Come on, let's build
ourselves a fire and have a
celebratory cigar. What do you say?

Grant's Chief of Staff John Rawlins pulls his General by the arm, hoping the fresh outdoor air will somehow be a healthier alternative for the victor of Shiloh.

Moments later, seated in front of a modest fire, the glow emanating from two cigars appear as beacons in the pitch-black night.

INT. HEADQUARTERS OF MAJOR-GENERAL ULYSSES GRANT, MEMPHIS,
TENNESSEE - THE NEXT DAY

RAWLINS
That was some party last night.

GRANT
Indeed. The boys had to let off
some steam! It's been building, as
you know, and last night's dinner
was the perfect antidote.

Rawlins sits down on a chair in front of Grant's writing table, carefully avoiding the written orders strewn about the floor.

RAWLINS
(subdued)
General, you have an unscheduled
visitor this morning.

GRANT
And who might that be?

Continuing to concentrate on his work.

RAWLINS
Charles Dana!

GRANT
Of the Tribune?

RAWLINS
Well, sir, he's no longer with that
paper.

GRANT
Oh?

RAWLINS
No. Dana is currently working
for...none other than Secretary
Stanton.

Grant immediately looks up from the table, leaving aside his
orders.

GRANT
I detect an investigation...

RAWLINS
I'm sure of it, sir. McClennan
would be my guess.

Grant briefly contemplates this threat.
I can put Mr. Dana off if need be,
sir.

GRANT
No, no. Bring him around after he
arrives. Do you know where he's
coming in from?

RAWLINS
St. Louis. He's investigating
irregularities within the
Quartermaster's Department.

GRANT
Here!

RAWLINS

No. In Cairo, so I'm told.

GRANT

Very well. Bring him by when he gets here, and make arrangements for his stay, preferably in the tent next door.

RAWLINS

Yes sir!

GRANT

And John.

RAWLINS

Sir?

GRANT

There will be no changes in the way we operate here. I want Mr. Dana to experience Army life, under my command, with his own two eyes. And, as higherups in Washington would have it - nose! Absolutely no sugar-coating will be tolerated. Is that understood?

RAWLINS

Understood, sir.

Rawlins departs Grant's tent, where the General returns to his work, as usual.

INT. CHARLES WEBSTER & COMPANY PUBLISHING, 67 FIFTH AVENUE, MANHATTAN - DAY

Gathered in the office of Charles L. Webster and Company are Charles Webster, attorney Clarence Seward, Samuel Clemens, and various workers and pressmen.

SAM

Gentlemen! This is indeed a great day. In my hand I hold documents giving Charles Webster and Company the legal rights to Century Magazine's recent accounts of the battles of Shiloh, Chattanooga, Vicksburg, and the Wilderness.

Standing tall, with one hand on his hip, Samuel Clemens proudly finishes his short address.

We are now free to publish Volume
One of the Personal Memoirs of
Ulysses S. Grant!

Applause immediately resounds within the walls of this
burgeoning Fifth Avenue publishing firm.

INT. HEADQUARTERS OF MAJOR-GENERAL ULYSSES GRANT, MEMPHIS,
TENNESSEE - AFTERNOON

Later that afternoon, Rawlins and Charles Dana appear at
Grant's tent.

RAWLINS

Sir, allow me to introduce you to
Mr. Charles Dana.

Grant rises from his table and extends his hand.

GRANT

Mr. Dana, welcome. Please, sit
down. Can I have an attendant bring
you anything?

DANA

I've already eaten, thank you.

GRANT

I have set you up in the tent next
door. My Chief of Staff, John
Rawlins, will see to your needs
while you're encamped here.

Rawlins nods to Dana in agreement.
That will be all, John.

RAWLINS

Yes, Sir.

Saluting.

I'll be in the hospital tent if you
need me, Mr. Dana.

DANA

Thank you.

RAWLINS

Sir, would you prefer the flap
closed.

GRANT

(slightly yawning)
No, no. Leave it open.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)
We have nothing to hide here.
(winking)

RAWLINS
Right, Sir!

Rawlins departs the tent, leaving his General alone with Charles Dana.

GRANT
Now, tell me Mr. Dana, what is the purpose of your visit?

DANA
Please, call me Charles.

Grant nods his head.

Well, as you may be aware, I've left the New York Tribune to serve on War Secretary Stanton's staff, in an effort to contain, as best as possible, any purloining or mismanagement of Army stockpiles.

GRANT
Is that all?

DANA
Well...

GRANT
Mr. Dana, you're not suggesting malfeasance on the part of my command here in Memphis?

DANA
No, no, not here! But, I'd rather not go into details.

GRANT
I understand.

DANA
General Grant, as you know, I was, and remain an ardent supporter of your particular brand of warfare. That's part and parcel why I was let go at the New York Tribune. Owner Horace Greeley didn't exactly appreciate my zeal in that department, to be honest with you.

GRANT
I'm familiar with your articles,
Charles.

A dispatcher enters Grant's tent, salutes him, and stoops to gather the written orders scattered on the floor. Saluting once again, the Corporal whirls around and leaves the tent.

DANA
So, you write out your own orders?

GRANT
I do.

DANA
Without a stenographer?
(puzzled)

Grant lowers his uneven eyebrows at Dana.

GRANT
I find that I write more clearly
than I dictate, to be frank. I know
that may seem odd to you.

DANA
Not at all, General!

GRANT
And what exactly is my...particular
brand of warfare you so admire?

Now opening his cigar box and politely offering it to Dana.

DANA
Why, thank you, sir.

Selecting a single cigar.
I'll be sure to smoke it later
tonight.
(sniffing)
By your particular style of
warfare, I'm referring to
your...your concept of, well -

Grant quickly stands up and walks over to the apron of the tent, observing the camp's activity.

GRANT
Total War!

DANA
Yes, total war.

GRANT

While I adopted this concept years ago, along with many of the officers I've surrounded myself with, such as General Sherman, I haven't, up to this point, felt the need to advocate for it until Shiloh.

DANA

Shiloh?

GRANT

You must understand that the enemy we face during this unfortunate rebellion are our very own citizens!

Dana looks down at the floorboards.

DANA

I see... So, what changed?

GRANT

What changed, was the sobering realization that the South will fight us to the death. Up till now, their property, such as farms, houses, factories, railroads, and...even their slaves, are to remain untouched, as a matter of Union Army policy. In my opinion, that will be changing very soon!

DANA

As it should.

GRANT

But not now!

Shaking his head.

Notwithstanding, Shiloh, particularly on the second day of the battle, instilled in me the necessity of total annihilation of the enemy. Just as I reported in the events leading up to Fort Donelson: better to attack with twelve-thousand men when the situation is ripe, than with fifty-thousand a year from now.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

You know, Mr. Dana, had we extended our lines, then and there, to protect the life and property of the American Southerner, they would have never, in my estimation, taken up the Confederate cause, let alone offer up their menfolk to join the CSA.

A sold Charles Dana wholly agrees. A volley of gunfire is now heard in the distance. A sentry soon appears at Grant's tent accompanied by Chief of Staff Rawlins.

They salute.

SENTRY

Sir, our pickets have located a pocket of abandoned Confederate forces, and have joined the infantry in surrounding them.

RAWLINS

The gunfire was from our side, sir. The enemy contained there seems to have run out of ammunition. To avoid a physical confrontation, Colonel Baxter ordered his men to fire over their heads.

GRANT

Do we know their number?

RAWLINS

Only what's been reported to me, which is over two-hundred and fifty. The Rebs are mighty frightened, I'm told.

Dana becomes transfixed by this swiftly moving event.

GRANT

Very well. Subdue them and take every officer and soldier into custody. I want every possible weapon confiscated.

RAWLINS

Yes, sir!

GRANT

You may billet them along the road outside of camp.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

The weather should cooperate during the next few nights, so tents won't be necessary until the prisoners are transported to Alton. See that the wounded are attended to by our corpsman and brought to the hospital, if necessary.

RAWLINS

Yes, sir.

GRANT

And, see that they're properly fed. Kindly inform the cooks that no Shenanigans will be tolerated! Understood?

RAWLINS

Understood, sir.

GRANT

Two more things.

RAWLINS

Sir!

GRANT

Were there any explosives found at their encampment?

RAWLINS

No, sir. Just rifles, pistols, bayonets, oh...and a few knives.

Waiting for the second order.

GRANT

Finally, pull out a few of their officers and enlisted men to interrogate. Nothing harsh, John. I want your most responsible men on this detail.

RAWLINS

Right, sir.

GRANT

That will be all. I'll see you at dinner.

RAWLINS

Thank you, sir.

A wide-eyed Dana, impressed with Grant's concise and decisive commands, looks on, as Rawlins and his Sentry depart the tent.

EXT. HEADQUARTERS OF MAJOR-GENERAL ULYSSES GRANT, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE - NIGHT

The glow from three cigars now shines out like sentinels, on the perimeter of this Union Army campfire.

INT. EXECUTIVE MANSION, 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, WASHINGTON, DC - DUSK

The following letter addressed to General Grant, issued from the White House, is read aloud by President Lincoln.

LINCOLN

July 13, 1863

MAJOR-GENERAL GRANT:

MY DEAR GENERAL: — I do not remember that you and I ever met personally. I write this now as a grateful acknowledgment of the almost inestimable service you have done the Country. I write to say a word further. When you first reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, I thought you should do what you finally did — march the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports, and thus go below; and I never had any faith except a general hope that you knew better than I, that the Yazoo Pass expedition and the like could succeed. When you dropped below, and took Port Gibson, Grand Gulf, and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join General Banks; and when you turned northward, east of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake. I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right and I was wrong.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN

INT. GRANT HOUSE, EAST 66TH STREET, MANHATTAN - EVENING

NARRATOR

NEW YORK TIMES

April 4, 1885

ULYSSES S. GRANT'S SUFFERINGS.

STRENGTH GAINED AFTER PASSING
VERY LOW. SAD SCENES AT NIGHT AND
IN THE EARLY MORNING. FAMILY
BY HIS SIDE

Colonel Fred Grant said Wednesday night: "I have little hope that my father will live through the night." This fear was almost realized. Soon after midnight the General became very restless. In spite of his tiredness, he constantly walked the floor. He never remained on his feet more than a few minutes at a time, but the restlessness was evidence that his condition was becoming very serious. He coughed frequently and combined with his restlessness, these symptoms began to tell on his system. At 5 o'clock he suddenly became so weak that the doctors feared the worst. Each member of the family was at once informed of the General's critical condition. As they hastily but quietly made their way into Grant's bedroom, they found him sitting in his chair, but looking weak and wan. The Reverend Doctor Newman stood at the General's left hand. As the family grouped itself in a semi-circle which faced the General, Rev. Newman held family prayers. At their conclusion, General Grant extended his hand to his wife, daughter and sons as they passed by him, and spoke softly to each of them. Then addressing them all, he said, "I bless you." He then became so weak that stimulants were at once administered. Under their influence he rallied, but so close had he had to death, apparently, that for more than an hour all the members of his family remained in his room.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The doctors saw, and it was also apparent to the family, that his excessive restlessness was wearing him out faster than the disease and that the end would come from exhaustion if not checked by radical means. The truth is that at the critical moment, life was kept in the General by morphine and brandy. At 8 o'clock in the morning, the General started up from his sleep coughing, but seemingly in not great pain. But his appearance was such that the family was again summoned. His mind went back to his youth and his young life as a soldier. These partings were associated in the General's mind with its wanderings among youthful scene, for when the family had passed in front of him, he straightened up and said in a low voice, but clearly audible, "I am detailed from 4 to 6."

INT. PADDOCK ARCADE, PUBLIC SQUARE, WATERTOWN, NY - AFTERNOON

It's a snowy Saturday afternoon and Grant is seated at a card table inside Paddock Arcade, located in Watertown, approximately ten miles east of Sackets Harbor.

OTIS

Come now Grant, what do you mean you have to leave?

GRANT

It's a ten-mile trot on horseback to Sackets Harbor, and I am detailed from four to six.

OTIS

It's not like we're at war, Sam! Besides, you have a pretty big pile of winnings in front of you.

Fellow card players have a good laugh.

GRANT

Well, that's a first for me, playing with you card sharks!

More banter is directed at the young lieutenant.

OTIS

Alright, alright. See you next week, Sam!

Slapping him on the back.

GRANT

Sure thing.

Tipping his hat to the others. Grant rises, sweeps together the winnings, grabs his hat and returns home along the blustery road to Sackets Harbor.

NARRATOR

At the examination of the throat, it was found that the cancer has made dangerous progress since the last examination, advancing both backwards and inwards, beyond the nares. The doctors could not see how far it had gone, but one of them said it was in its final stages, and was in and of itself, sufficient to cause death at any time.

INT. GRANT HOUSE, EAST 66TH STREET, MANHATTAN - DAWN

Simultaneous action plays out on screen, as the following New York Times account is read aloud by Samuel Clemens.

SAM

NEW YORK TIMES

April 9, 1885

ULYSSES S. GRANT MUCH WEAKER.

DRAGGED DOWN BY AN ATTACK OF
HEMORRHAGE - LITTLE HOPE THAT HE
WILL LIVE LONG

A new phase of General Grant's disease developed early yesterday morning. At 4 o'clock a.m., the General awoke. Dr. Douglas was instantly at his side. After attending the patient, he gave him his usual nourishment. After taking it the General was seized with a paroxysm of coughing. The attack was one of the most violent he has suffered. In the midst of it a stream of blood issued from his mouth.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

During his struggle to obtain mastery over the cough he did not for a moment lose his composure. Even when the blood spurted from his mouth he remained perfectly calm, and with an apparent effort managed to direct Harrison how to hold the basin so none of the blood might fall upon his person or the floor. The family were awakened, though none of them entered the room until after the culmination of the attack.

Being unable to determine the source of the hemorrhage, Dr. Douglas said he would send for Dr. Shrady and Dr. Sands. The General coolly wiped the blood from his mouth and said, 'What is the use of you sending for the other Doctors? you are enough.' Still the doctors were sent for, Dr. Sands arriving at 5:45 a.m. and he remained in the house but a short time. As he had brought his instruments it was thought an operation was contemplated. He had them, however, merely as a precaution. His services, fortunately, were not required, as before his arrival the hemorrhage has ceased on its own accord. It was caused, it was believed, by the encroachment of the cancer, although it had been hastened by the fit of coughing. The growth of cancer had probably not been sufficient to break the artery from which the blood came, although the hemorrhage had been primarily due to the deeper penetration of the disease. The hemorrhage left the General in a very debilitated condition. The loss of a teacupful of blood was an immense drain upon a system already weakened almost to the last degree. An injection of morphine brought sleep to his tired and enfeebled frame.

Senator Chaffee left the house at 6:15, satisfied that General Grant was safe for the time being.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

The General, he said, had been of great help to the doctors when the hemorrhage occurred, following the directions coolly and taking the bad turn as a matter of course, without apparent thought that it might have a serious ending. By 8:00 a.m., the alarm of the morning hours was passed. The General lay perfectly motionless in his chair with his eyes closed. The incessant watchfulness of the attendants betrayed their anxiety. Still one of them said, "The General is now able to breathe through his nose, and we do not regard the morning attack as very important. Much of the alarm of the morning was due to the distressing sight of blood." At 2 o'clock, fever had set in and the General was silent. It annoyed him to answer any questions and he had taken no food for several hours and the doctors agreed he needed it. He could hardly bear the thought of eating, but he supposed he could force himself to do it. The doctor insisted onto necessity of nourishment and he sipped a little milk as one takes medicine. When Dr. Barker came out, he said: "A man of his will power is in very low condition when he becomes so listless that he takes his food only under protest. There's no denying his condition is critical. The fever reached such a high pitch that the General broke the silence of the day by frequent mutterings. They were not intelligible. It was though that he might be trying to say something to his attendants, but it soon appeared that the fever had affected the brain and he was wandering. The incoherence lasted a little while, then exhaustion set in and the patient slept. It is no longer disputed that the cancer has reached the danger point, the rupture of the artery being on the precursors of the death in his disease, the physicians were gloomy and almost helpless.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

The family have made up their minds that the end is close. Mrs. Grant has been so much affected by the change that she refuses her meals and would not leave the General's floor, although she is rarely by his side. "There is little doubt," said Dr. Douglas, "that the end is near. There is no use in battling the disease much longer and the General wants to go. He is wearied of the trouble that has been taken on his behalf and would be glad to be free. I cannot say when the end is likely to come, but it is very near."

Dr. Newman left the General at dinner time. "There will be no deathbed scene," he said. "That is certain. The General said good-bye and farewell to his family when he addressed and caressed them last Thursday. The General is calmly awaiting the summons to go. As he spoke of joining his friends over the river his face lightened up with an expression of pure happiness and contentment. The General's face shows he is considerably more wasted. The swelling of the neck is perceptible." At 10:30 the doctors issued the following bulletin: "General Grant continues to be in a comfortable condition, he has slept well and his pulse is 84. He has just taken his nourishment with pain. His respiration is 14."

Like a falling curtain, Clemens drops the newspaper at his feet and buries his face in his hands.

EXT. BATTERY PARK, NEW YORK HARBOR, MANHATTAN - AFTERNOON

Samuel Clemens and William Dean Howells are standing on the Promenade at the edge of Battery Park, directing their field glasses toward Bedloe's Island, approximately three-miles away.

Only days before, Ulysses Grant was transported by train with members of his family to Mount McGregor, just north of Saratoga Springs. His journey now coincides with Clemens and Howells' outing.

HOWELLS

Tell me more about this liberty statue that the French have presented to us.

SAM

The statue is named Liberty Enlightening the World, commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of our Revolution. Workers and engineers have been carefully storing its parts in a building out there on Bedloe's Island, during the past week.

Pointing at the site with his free hand.

HOWELLS

Parts? Just how many are there and what are they made of?

SAM

Why, copper, of course! I'm told there's about three hundred and fifty pieces in all, packed in over two hundred crates of all sizes. As for the statue's robe, it will be fashioned using three hundred giant sheets of copper.

HOWELLS

All packed into one ship?

SAM

That's my understanding. I saw it anchored yesterday in Gravesend Bay. I believe the ship is the Insere out of Rouen. I heard about the pedestal being constructed to support lady liberty, and now that she's officially arrived, I wanted to come down here and take a look at the project.

Cleaning off the lenses of his field glasses with a handkerchief, before offering it to Howells.

Do you know, that once the statue is fully raised, it will hold a torch that will illuminate at night. Do you need this? It's clean, I can assure you!

HOWELLS

No. I can see just fine, thank you.
Where did you get these field
glasses?

SAM

Fred lent them to me a few days ago
when I mentioned that we were
meeting up to see the construction.
They're U.S. Signal Service issue.

HOWELLS

I rather like them!

Admiring the brass exterior.
Very handy...

Howells once again scans the construction site with his field
glasses.

Do you know how tall the statue is
going to be?

SAM

Once it's added to the pedestal,
over three hundred feet, so I read.

Pulling a cigar out of his breast pocket, he soon directs his
glasses on yet another cargo ship headed out to the island.
When completed, it will be the
tallest structure in New York City!

Grant waives goodbye to well-wishers at Grand Central
Station, before boarding a steam locomotive with his family.

HOWELLS

Most impressive!

Focusing in more closely with his field glasses.
Sam, there must be thirty men
milling about on top of that
pedestal. Why, they look like ants
on an anthill!

SAM

Ha! Actually, the pedestal is being
constructed entirely out of granite
and cement.

HOWELLS

Amazing! I can't imagine working
that high up in the air.

As Grant's train passes through the Hudson Valley, the steep
walls of West Point come into view.

Julia walks over to wake her husband and soon points out the granite fortress, prompting him to turn his head and nod in solemn acknowledgment.

SAM

Indeed!

Clemens strikes a match and lights his cigar, sending smoke drifting across an unusually tranquil New York Harbor.

Howells now turns around to watch the passersby.

HOWELLS

This was all very interesting, Sam.
So glad you happened to include me.

SAM

One day, millions of people from around the world will be welcomed by this...lady of liberty, to help build this country into one, great nation of immigrants.

HOWELLS

Well said, Sam! Maybe you should write the dedication when this statue is inaugurated.

SAM

I may just do that, William!

Howells hands his field glasses over to Clemens.

HOWELLS

Here. Thank Fred for the use of these.

SAM

I will, but it's possible he won't be back in New York for a few weeks.

HOWELLS

I don't understand. Isn't he one of the primary researchers for General Grant? What about his Memoirs?

SAM

Grant and his family left Tuesday for Mount McGregor, north of Saratoga Springs. His physician, Dr. Douglas, believes the cool, clean mountain air will help with his humors.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

He insists that the summer vapors in Manhattan are bad for the General's condition, not to mention his temperament.

HOWELLS

I can appreciate that. It was a hundred degrees on Tuesday. I tell you, Sam, I hardly got a wink of sleep that night!

SAM

I know the feeling!

HOWELLS

How long will Grant be up there?

SAM

Pretty much the entire summer, it's hoped. Some of his doctors have already relocated up there to tend to him as best they're able.

HOWELLS

Please give the General my best when you see him.

SAM

I shall. I should be up there in a week or so.

HOWELLS

And the memoirs...?

SAM

He's almost there!

Vanderbilt's train pulls into Saratoga Station. Too exhausted to greet the formal delegation assembled on the platform, Grant can only muster the strength to wave his cane as he passes by, to be carried aboard one final train to the foothills of the Adirondacks.

INT. DREXEL COTTAGE, THE ADIRONDACKS, WILTON, NY - THE NEXT DAY

Emerging from her bedroom the next morning, Julia discovers to her delight, that her husband has slept through the night without interruption. Sitting in the parlor next to Grant's adjoining chairs, she patiently waits for him to awake. After twenty minutes, he begins to stir. Opening his eyes, Grant turns his head to his wife.

JULIA
 Why, Ulys, you slept the entire
 night!

GRANT
 (croaking)
 I did?

Squinting to look up at the porcelain clock set on the
 fireplace mantle.
 Why, I did!

Grant sits up and forms a rare grin.

JULIA
 It's either due to the fresh air or
 the cool temperatures last night.
 Harrison said it went down to fifty-
 six degrees. What a remedy!

Julia rises from her chair to celebrate this small victory.
 I'm goin' to make us some coffee!
 Maybe you'll be able to take a few
 sips up here in the mountains.

GRANT
 Yes!

While Julia is busy in the kitchen, Grant studies the wooden
 beams spanning the ceiling. She soon reenters the parlor.

JULIA
 Shall I ask Harrison to make a
 fire?

GRANT
 No. Don't these beams remind you of
 Hardscrabble?

Julia raises her eyes.

JULIA
 Why, yes. Yes, they do!
 How about that fire?

GRANT
 That won't be -
 (inaudible)

JULIA
 You've lost your voice again! I'll
 get your pen and pad, so you can
 write on the porch when it warms
 up. The sunshine will do you good!

Grant acknowledges Julia's suggestion with a bob of his head. At ten o'clock, after receiving a morning dose of vitamin supplements and an application of cocaine to the back of his throat, Grant appears for the first time on the porch of Drexel Cottage, dressed in a heavy coat, knit skull cap, and a scarf. He settles into a comfortable rocking chair, laying a woolen blanket across his knees, ready to write.

INT. EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, DC - CONTINUOUS

LINCOLN

March 9, 1864

GENERAL GRANT: -The expression of the nation's approbation of what you have already done, and its reliance on you for what remains to do in the existing great struggle, is now presented with this commission constituting you Lieutenant-General of the Army of the United States. With this high honor, devolves on you an additional responsibility. As the country herein trusts you, so, under God, it will sustain you. I scarcely need add, that with what I here speak for the country, goes my own hearty personal concurrence.

INT. WILLARD HOTEL, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, WASHINGTON, DC - AFTERNOON

With young Fred looking on, Grant writes out his acceptance of the President's offer on a hotel-room desk.

GRANT

Mr. PRESIDENT: - I accept this commission, with gratitude for the high honor conferred.

INT. EXECUTIVE MANSION, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, WASHINGTON, DC - EVENING

Ulysses Grant and his young son, Fred, are admitted to the Executive Mansion after a short walk from the Willard Hotel. Met by President Lincoln and the First Lady during a weekly reception, the General is later mobbed by a pressing crowd of guests in the East Room, where, at the suggestion of an eager patron, he stands atop a couch so that others in the room can catch sight of the latest Commander-in-Chief of the Union Army.

INT. EXECUTIVE MANSION, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, WASHINGTON, DC -
THE NEXT DAY

Upon being formally presented with his commission as Lieutenant-General by President Lincoln, with members of the Cabinet and others present, Grant now reads from a simple piece of paper, written in pencil back at the Willard Hotel.

GRANT

With the aid of the noble armies
that have fought on so many fields
for our common country, it will be
my earnest endeavor not to
disappoint your expectations.
I feel the full weight of the
responsibilities now devolving on
me, and I know that if they are
met, it will be due to those
armies; and above all, to the favor
of that Providence which leads both
nations and men.

Applause echoes throughout the room, as Lincoln shakes
Grant's hand.

LINCOLN

Congratulations, General Grant.

Drawing him closer.
Total War.

Ulysses now receives Cabinet members and other important
attendees, before making his departure from the Executive
Mansion to set off on the Overland Campaign.

RAWLINS

Total War.

GRANT

You heard him!

Taking young Fred by the hand.

Grant soon sets down his pen and maps out a plan for the
remainder of his Memoirs, beginning with the crossing of the
Rapidan River in Northern Virginia.

EXT. GRANT COTTAGE, THE ADIRONDACKS, WILTON, NY - AFTERNOON

Weeks after Grant arrives at the Cottage, he takes an
afternoon off from writing and persuades Harrison Terrell to
transport him up Mount McGregor to the Hotel Balmoral.

HARRISON

General, why not just enjoy the afternoon and watch the parade of gawkers walkin' by?

GRANT

I mean to view what I've been told is a magnificent vista, up there on the mountain.

HARRISON

And just how am I goin' to get you up there, sir?

GRANT

I understand Joseph Drexel has a barrow in the shed.

HARRISON

And how exactly does this include me?

GRANT

Why, you push me up to the hotel! I'm down to one hundred and twenty pounds, Harrison, surely you're up to the challenge.

Harrison Terrell walks over to the end of the porch, making note of Mount McGregor's steep incline.

HARRISON

That's a mighty steep mountain!

Returning to Grant, he leans against the rail facing him. Have you talked to Mrs. Grant about this?

(inquisitively)

GRANT

She suggested it!

HARRISON

Well...in that case, let's give it a try.

GRANT

Her only demand is that I dress warmly. She said it might be windy up there.

HARRISON

Right! Tell you what, let me go and take a look at the barrow to make sure it's sound.

Harrison leaves the porch to inspect the transport. He soon exits the shed, cups his hands, and shouts,
It's a pull cart, General!

EXT. NORTHERN SHORE, RAPIDAN RIVER, VIRGINIA - DAWN

GRANT

Soon after midnight, May 3rd-4th, the Army of the Potomac moved out from its position north Rapidan, to start upon that memorable campaign, destined to result in the capture of the Confederate capital and the army defending it. This was not to be accomplished, however, without as desperate fighting as the world has ever witnessed; not to be consummated in a day, a week, a month, single season. The losses inflicted, and endured, were destined to be severe; but the armies now confronting each other had already been in deadly conflict for a period of three years, with immense losses in killed, by death from sickness, captured and wounded; and neither had made any real progress accomplishing the final end.

Stacks of Union dead are made ready for burial at any number of battle sites in Northern Virginia, alone.

It is true the Confederates had, so far, held their capital, and they claimed this to be their sole object.

But previously they had boldly proclaimed their intention to capture Philadelphia, New York, and the National Capital, and had made several attempts to do so, and once or twice had come fearfully near making their boast good - too near for complacent contemplation by the loyal North. The campaign now begun was destined to result in heavier losses, to both armies, in a given time, than any previously suffered;

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

but the carnage was to be limited to a single year, and to accomplish all that had been anticipated or desired at the beginning in that time. We had to have hard fighting to achieve this. The two armies had been confronting each other so long, without any decisive result, that they hardly knew which could whip.

Scores of belly-crawling picketers face each other along the many fields approaching what will soon be coined The Wilderness.

Ten days' rations, with a supply of forage and ammunition were taken in wagons. Beef cattle were driven with the trains, and butchered as wanted. Three days' rations in addition, in haversacks, and fifty rounds of cartridges, were carried on the person of each soldier. The country over which the army had to operate, from the Rapidan to the crossing of the James River, is rather flat, and is cut by numerous streams which make their way to the Chesapeake Bay. The crossings of these streams by the army were generally made not far above tidewater, and where they formed a considerable obstacle to the rapid advance of troops even when the enemy did not appear in opposition.

In order to move swiftly in pursuit of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, Grant, for the most part, eventually sheds his use of heavy artillery, opting instead for more nimble tactics.

The country roads were narrow and poor. Most of the country is covered with a dense forest, in places, like the Wilderness and along the Chickahominy, almost impenetrable even for infantry except along the roads. All bridges were naturally destroyed before the National troops came to them.

On the first night of the Union Army's arrival on the Rapidan River, after orders have been drafted and distributed, Grant writes one of his customary letters to Julia.

May 2, 1864

My Dearest,

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

Now that I have been given command over the entire Union Army, I have assembled my troops to begin our great campaign to end the war.

I know the greatest anxiety is now felt in the North for the success of this move, and that the anxiety will increase when it is once known that the Army is in motion.

I don't know the precise day I will start or whether Lee will come here before I am ready to move. And even if I did, I wouldn't tell you or anybody else.

You might be interested to know that I found the scarf you made for me packed in my trunk. While handy now, the further south I go, the less likely I'll be needing it. I appreciate it all the same, dear. When the President elevated me in Washington last month to Lieutenant-General, all I could think about was you. All the same, I was happy to have young Fred and John Rawlins by my side. I'm sure they will always remember that day, as I will. Bed check is just around the corner, so I must get this in the mail. Imagine, the highest ranking officer in the Union Army subject to bed check, on my orders, no less.

When we get to the James River, and secure our position there, maybe you can join me! Until then, please write and know that my only idle thoughts are of you.

Your dutiful husband,
Ulys

EXT. SOUTH SLOPE, MOUNT MCGREGOR, WILTON, NY - AFTERNOON

GRANT

I sure hope we make it to the summit by nightfall.

Drawing a sharp reproach from Harrison, who is struggling to pull the passenger-laden hand truck up the mountain.

HARRISON

Pulling ain't nearly the same as pushin', General!

Losing his footing once again.

GRANT

Why, I've had draft horses move faster than this!

HARRISON

Well, I ain't no draft horse!
Though right about now, we sure
could use one.
(chuckling)

GRANT

You're doing just fine, Harrison!
We'll be there in ten minutes, by
my estimation.

They soon reach the hotel grounds. Harrison, following Grant's instructions, swings the hand truck around in a Northeasterly direction, facing the Green Mountains of Vermont.

HARRISON

(breathless)
Tis' beautiful, isn't it, General?

Grant remains silent for some time.

You know, I'm kinda glad you took
time off from writin' today.

GRANT

Yes. My writing hand kept cramping
up on me yesterday. I do believe it
was trying to tell me something!

HARRISON

Maybe so! Maybe so... I'm powerful
thirsty. The hotel must have water.
I'll get us some and be right back.

Harrison walks up a slight mound, then scales the hotel steps, leaving Grant to overlook the enormous vista spread beneath him.

EXT. FOLLOWING THE BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS, NEAR LOCUST GROVE, VIRGINIA - AFTERNOON

Following the Battle of the Wilderness, some twenty miles west of Fredericksburg, Ulysses Grant sits on a tree stump, whittling sticks throughout the afternoon. He is joined by his Chief of Staff, John Rawlins.

GRANT

We're leaving this place tonight.
Inform the other officers to ready
their men to move out.

RAWLINS

And go where?

GRANT

Wherever Lee and his army are
headed. South, most likely.

RAWLINS

South? But General Hooker and
Burnside are retreating, sir.

GRANT

But we're moving South! See that
the dead on both sides are buried
before we leave.

RAWLINS

Yes, sir.

He rises to his feet, while a whittling Grant remains seated
on the stump. Later that night, he leads his troops out of
the dense forest in the direction of Spotsylvania Court
House, with Rawlins by his side.

You know, you and Nelson are a lot
alike!

GRANT

Who are you referring to?

RAWLINS

Horatio Nelson of the British Royal
Navy! The hero of Trafalgar...

Grant holds up his hand to halt the march, so a fallen tree
blocking their way can be hauled to the side of the road.

I studied Admiral Nelson while
attending Rock River College.

GRANT

And how exactly are we alike?

RAWLINS

Why, he fought the same way you do,
with most frightening tenacity!

Two horse teams brought up from the rear are tethered to the
tree by heavy ropes, and are soon guided where to pull it by
their handlers. Grant soon turns to Rawlins.

GRANT

How so?

RAWLINS

For Nelson, it was always, go
straight at the enemy!

Demonstrating that direction with a chop of his hand.
Scared the bejesus out of 'em! Why,
if he ever did turn around, it was
to strafe the other side of the
their ship. Absolutely relentless!

With the tree fully cleared, a sentry riding towards them
rears up next to Grant and salutes.

SENTRY

Sir, we sighted what's believed to
be remnants of General Lee's rear
guard about eight miles up the
turnpike. Everything between us and
the suspected troops has been
thoroughly swept.

GRANT

Very well. Carry on.

SENTRY

Yes, sir!

The sentry salutes, turns his horse around, and gallops away.
Grant signals Forward March with the arc of his arm.

GRANT

That's all very interesting. About
Nelson, I mean.

Grant remains oddly silent for a few moments, then speaks.
Ever since I was a young boy, I
made it a habit of mine never to
turn around. If I struck out in one
direction, even when I got lost, I
would never retrace my tracks. I'd
circle round by another route until
I found my way. I'm still that same
boy, John.

Grant reaches into his pocket for a cigar and proceeds to
light up.

RAWLINS

And that's why we're going South?
So as not to turn around?

GRANT

Well, yes. Have you ever seen me do otherwise since the rebellion began?

RAWLINS

Not since you first took command of the 21st Illinois!

By now, it's so dark that Rawlins can scarcely make out the glow of his General's cigar.

GRANT

We were taught about Nelson back in my days at the Academy, but only briefly. We weren't exactly Marines, strictly land fighters! I heard he died at sea.

RAWLINS

Yes, at Trafalgar. An enemy sharpshooter perched in the crosstrees above the deck, shot him through the neck. The musket ball passed directly into his spine. He was dead within hours. England later erected a statue in his honor on a column that stands almost a hundred feet high.

GRANT

Yes. Let me see,
(amusingly)
I believe his last words were, Kiss me, Hardy.

Drawing a sharp look from Rawlins.

RAWLINS

Why you! So you do know about him!

Grant grins broadly beneath his slouch hat.

GRANT

Then you're probably aware that he went into his last battle with one eye and one arm. The sight in his right eye he lost on Corsica and his arm at Tenerife. He never overcame his seasickness, either.

RAWLINS

That's right!

Slapping his knee.

Sam, if you know so much about
Nelson, why have you been quizzing
me ever since we headed out
tonight?

GRANT

To take your mind off the charred
disaster we left back there.

Rawlins, realizing the wisdom of his General, suddenly
excuses himself.

RAWLINS

I'm going to make my rounds among
the officers.

GRANT

Good thinking!

Rawlins salutes and swings his horse around. For his part,
Grant continues the push forward and, unlike Nelson, lives to
fight another day, this time in the bloody Battle of
Spotsylvania Court House.

I/E. DREXEL COTTAGE, THE ADIRONDACKS, WILTON, NY - MORNING

In early-July 1885, Samuel Clemens raps on the backdoor of
Drexel Cottage, and is soon let in by Harrison. Clemens is
now shown into the parlor, where he finds Julia sewing in a
rocking chair.

SAM

Julia!

JULIA

Sam.

(smiling)

SAM

Please, don't get up!

JULIA

Alright.

Settling back in her chair again.

How is your room at the Balmoral?

SAM

Fine, fine. Lovely place they've
got up there!

JULIA

They have an excellent breakfast,
too! In fact, everything they make
is excellent. We get most all of
our meals from them!

Rocking nervously.

SAM

How is he?

JULIA

He's been great! See for yourself,
he's on the porch, writing.

Clemens follows Julia's suggestion and appears on the porch,
only to find an unresponsive Grant. He draws closer to the
General and notices almost immediately that his breathing has
ceased. Grasping Grant by the forearm, Clemens shakes him
vigorously.

SAM

General! General Grant!
(loudly)

Hearing Clemens' voice, Julia rushes out onto the porch.

JULIA

What is it, Sam?

SAM

It's the General. I believe he's
passed. Quick, find Dr. Douglas.

Julia soon appears on the porch with Dr. Douglas. She
abruptly leaves the scene, while Douglas rushes over to
Grant, placing a domino-size mirror under his nose.
Is he?

DR DOUGLAS

Stand back! Give me room to work.

Dr. Douglas quickly unbuttons the left cuff of Grant's
overcoat and shirt, pushing them up to his elbow. Sitting
directly next to his patient, he proceeds to lightly slap
Grant's forearm while softly calling his name. Clemens turns
and faces the nearby forest, while Julia prays in the parlor.
Ulysses. Ulysses Grant...

Moments pass. A cough from Grant is now heard, causing
Clemens to shout for Julia, who immediately comes out on the
porch. The General soon regains his ruddy complexion.

That was a close one, Mrs. Grant...

Clemens stumbles down the steps, searching for a stump to collapse on. He pulls out a cigar, examines it, and returns it to his pocket. Meanwhile, Julia addresses a shaken Dr. Douglas.

JULIA

Bless you, Dr. Douglas. Bless you.

Julia pulls down her husband's sleeves and proceeds to button them back up.

INT. RESPECTIVE TELEGRAPH AND MAIL TENTS OF LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT AND MAJOR-GENERAL SHERMAN - CONTINUOUS

GRANT

CITY POINT VIRGINIA

September 4, 1864-9 P.M.

Major-General SHERMAN: I have just received your dispatch announcing the capture of Atlanta. In honor of your great victory, I have ordered a salute to be fired with shotted guns from every battery bearing upon the enemy. The salute will be fired within an hour, amid great rejoicing.

U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant-General

The heartbeat of the Confederate Army's transportation and supply network, now sacked by Union forces, causes the people of Atlanta to not only suffer defeat, but encounter flames of grave magnitude and force.

CITY POINT, VIRGINIA

November 2, 1864-11.30 a.m.

Major-General SHERMAN:

Your dispatch of 9 A.M. yesterday is just received. I dispatched you the same date, advising that Hood's army, now that it had worked so far north, ought to be looked upon now as the "object." With the force, however, that you have left with General Thomas, he must be able to take care of Hood and destroy him. I do not see that you can withdraw from where you are to follow Hood, without giving up all we have gained in territory. I say, then, go on as you propose.

U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant-General

CITY POINT, VIRGINIA

November 7, 1864-10.30 P.M.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

Major-General SHERMAN:

Your dispatch of this evening received. I see no present reason for changing your plan. Should any arise, you will see it, or if I do I will inform you. I think everything here is favorable now. Great good fortune attend you! I believe you will be eminently successful, and, at worst, can only make a march less fruitful of results than hoped for.

U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant-General

SHERMAN

Special Field Order No. 120, Nov. 9, 1864

To army corps commanders alone is entrusted the power to destroy mills, houses, cotton-gins, etc.; and for them this general principle is laid down: In districts and neighborhoods where the army is unmolested, no destruction of each property should be permitted; but should guerrillas or bushwhackers molest our march, or should the inhabitants burn bridges, obstruct roads or otherwise manifest local hostility, then army commanders should order and enforce a devastation more or less relentless, according to the measure of such hostility.

Major-General W. T. Sherman

Sherman's Bow Ties, as they are called, soon appear throughout the Deep South.

ON BOARD DANDELION OSSABAW SOUND,
December 13, 1864-11.50 p.m.

To Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War, Washington, D. C.: To-day, at 6 p. m.,

General Hazen's division of the Fifteenth Corps carried Fort McAllister by assault, capturing its entire garrison and stores. This opened to us Ossabaw Sound, and I pushed down to this gunboat to communicate with the fleet. Before opening communication we had completely destroyed all the railroads leading into Savannah, and invested the city.

(MORE)

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

The left of the army is on the Savannah River three miles above the city, and the right on the Ogeechee, at King's Bridge. The army is in splendid order, and equal to any thing.

Sherman, along with his staff, inspects his Army of the Tennessee and Army of Georgia, assembled outside Savannah.

The weather has been fine, and supplies were abundant. Our march was most agreeable, and we were not at all molested by guerrillas. We reached Savannah three days ago, but, owing to Fort McAllister, could not communicate; but, now that we have McAllister, we can go ahead.

We have already captured two boats on the Savannah river and prevented their gunboats from coming down.

I estimate the population of Savannah at twenty-five thousand, and the garrison at fifteen thousand. General Hardee commands.

We have not lost a wagon on the trip; but have gathered a large supply of negroes, mules, horses, etc., and our teams are in far better condition than when we started.

My first duty will be to clear the army of surplus negroes, mules, and horses. We have utterly destroyed over two hundred miles of rails, and consumed stores and provisions that were essential to Lee's and Hood's armies.

The quick work made with McAllister, the opening of communication with our fleet, and our consequent independence as to supplies, dissipate all their boasted threats to head us off and starve the army.

I regard Savannah as already gained. Yours truly,

W. T. SHERMAN, Major-General

The beleaguered armies of Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee and John Bell Hood, now march on empty stomachs.

SAVANNAH, GA., December 22, 1864

His Excellency President LINCOLN:

(MORE)

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah, with 150 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about 25,000 bales of cotton.
W.T. Sherman, Major General

EXT. OVERLAND CAMPAIGN BETWEEN THE RAPIDAN AND JAMES RIVERS,
VIRGINIA - CONTINUOUS

During the Overland Campaign from the Rapidan to the James River, and on to the heavily protected City of Petersburg, immediately south of Richmond, select excerpts from Grant's Memoirs are read out loud while scenes of battle and troop movements play out on screen.

GRANT

During three long years the Armies of the Potomac and Northern Virginia had been confronting each other. In that time they had fought more desperate battles than it probably ever before fell to the lot of two armies to fight, without materially changing the vantage ground of either. The Southern press and people, with more shrewdness than was displayed in the North, finding that they had failed to capture Washington and march on to New York, as they had boasted they would do, assumed that they only defended their Capital and Southern territory.

Citizens throughout the South read newspaper accounts of the War, posted outside of printing offices.

Hence, Antietam, Gettysburg, and all the other battles that had been fought, were by them set down as failures on our part, and victories for them. Their army believed this. It produced a morale which could only be overcome by desperate and continuous hard fighting. The battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna and Cold Harbor, bloody and terrible as they were on our side, were even more damaging to the enemy, and so crippled him as to make him wary ever after of taking the offensive.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

His losses in men were probably not so great, owing to the fact that we were, save in the Wilderness, almost invariably the attacking party; and when he did attack, it was in the open field.

The still smoldering forests of the Wilderness are now being drenched by a hard rain. Meanwhile, Arlington Cemetery is dedicated on Wednesday, June 15, 1864, with Secretary of War Edwin Stanton presiding. Private William Christman of the Sixty-Seventh Pennsylvania occupies the first honored plot.

With a view of cutting the enemy's railroad from near Richmond to the Anna rivers, and making him wary of the situation of his army in the Shenandoah, and, in the event of failure in this, to take advantage of his necessary withdrawal of troops from Petersburg, to explode a mine that had been prepared in front of the 9th corps and assault the enemy's lines at that place, on the night of the 26th of July the 2nd corps and two divisions of the cavalry corps and Kautz's cavalry were crossed to the north bank of the James River and joined the force General Butler had there.

Filthy Union Army sappers, mainly from the coal mining regions of the North, finish digging a tunnel under the city of Petersburg, ready to light the long fuse to sever Confederate defenses embastioned there. Soon lit, the ensuing explosion creates a gaping hole. Panicked Confederate soldiers and officers alike scramble to stop the advancing troops as they climb their way through loose dirt up and up the steep rim formed by the crater. Once over the ridge, the confused Northern soldiers slide their way to the bottom of the crater, making easy targets for the enemy marksmen assembled along the level ground above. For whatever reason, the stream of Union soldiers going over the ridge freezes, and they refuse to proceed further against an already breached Richmond.

Had they done this, I have every reason to believe that Petersburg would have fallen. Thus terminated in disaster what promised to be the most successful assault of the campaign.

EXT. SOUTH SLOPE, MOUNT MCGREGOR, WILTON, NY - DUSK

HARRISON

A letter?
(confused)
For me?

GRANT

Yes. You've been as much a part of
this family as anyone else!
Especially during the past year.

HARRISON

Well, yes. But...
(shyly)

Grant searches his suit coat pocket, at last retrieving it.
General Grant, it's getting late,
the Misses will be worried!

GRANT

Nonsense. This won't take long.

Waiving him off, Grant proceeds to read.

I give this letter to you now, not
knowing what the near future may
bring to a person in my condition
of health. This is an
acknowledgement of your faithful
services to me during my sickness
up to this time, and which I expect
will continue to the end. This is
also to state further that for
about four years you have lived
with me, coming first as a butler,
in which capacity you served until
my illness became so serious as to
require the constant attention of a
nurse, and that in both capacities
I have had abundant reason to be
satisfied with your attention,
integrity and efficiency. I hope
that you may never want for a
place.
Yours,
U.S. Grant

With tears welling in his eyes, Grant fixes them straight
ahead on the distant Green Mountains. Harrison soon makes his
way down the side of Mount McGregor, toting General Grant
behind him. He finds the way down infinitely easier than his
earlier ascent. Now close to home, he spots a welcoming light
in the Cottage window and a slightly impatient Julia waiting
on the porch.

I/E. DREXEL COTTAGE, THE ADIRONDACKS, WILTON, NY - THE NEXT DAY

Having arrived at the Drexel Cottage once again, Samuel Clemens greets Grant, who is writing on the front porch, and Julia, who is reclining in the parlor. There, he carelessly sifts through a stack of research documents laid out on a table and comes across a firsthand account of President Lincoln's jubilant entry into the Confederate Capital of Richmond, written by Admiral David Dixon Porter.

SAM

I now realized the imprudence of landing without a large body of marines; and yet this seemed to me, after all, the fittest way for Mr. Lincoln to come among the people he had redeemed from bondage.

What an ovation he had, to be sure, from those so-called ignorant beings. They all had their souls in their eyes, and I don't think I ever looked upon a scene where there were so many passionately happy faces.

While some were rushing forward to try and touch the man they had talked of and dreamed of for four long years, others stood off a little way and looked on in awe and wonder.

They had been made to believe that they never would gain their liberty, and here they were brought face to face with it when least expected.

But we could not stay there all day looking at this happy mass of people; the crowds and their yells were increasing, and in a short time we would be unable to move at all. The negroes, in their ecstasy, could not be made to understand that they were detaining the President; they looked upon him as belonging to them, and that he had come to put a crowning as to the great work he had commenced. They would not feel they were free in reality until they heard from his own lips.

In his account, Admiral Porter poignantly recalls Lincoln's speech that April 1865-day, and the scene where it took place.

'My poor friends,' he said, 'you are free - free as air. You can cast off the name of slave and trample upon it; it will come to you no more. Liberty is your birthright. God gave it to you as he gave it to others, and it is a sin that you have been deprived of it for so many years. But you must try to deserve this priceless boon. Let the world see that you merit it, and are able to maintain it by your good works. Don't let your joy carry you into excesses. Learn the laws and obey them; obey God's commandments and thank him for giving you liberty, for to him you owe all things. There, now, let me pass on; I have but little time to spare. I want to see the capital, and must return at once to Washington to secure to you that liberty which you seem to prize so highly.'

The crowd shouted and screeched as if they would split the firmament, though while the President was speaking you might have heard a pin drop. I don't think any one could do justice to that scene; it would be necessary to photograph it to understand it. One could not help wondering where all this black mass of humanity came from, or if they were all the goods and chattels of those white people who had for four years set the armies of the Republic at defiance; who had made these people work on their defenses and carry their loads, the only reward for which was the stronger riveting of the chains which kept them in subjection.

Clemens wanders out onto the porch, waiving Admiral Porter's written account in the air.

I'm holding here Admiral Porter's account of Lincoln's entry into Richmond.

Rapping the collective pages with his hand.

General, he makes no mention of
you...!

Leaning forward in classic Samuel Clemens style, placing both
hands on his hips.

GRANT
(exhausted)
Of course not, Sam. I wasn't there!
(coughing forcefully)
By then, I was already on my way to
capture Lee days later, at what
would prove to be Appomattox Court
House, where he surrendered to me
as Commander of the Union Army.

Surprised by this reply, Clemens is at once satisfied with
General Grant's account.

SAM
I meant to tell you that our
canvassers, many of them veterans
who served under you in the War,
have secured over three hundred
thousand subscriptions for your
memoirs.

Now turning around.
Why, hello there Julia!

Young Julia slowly mounts the front porch steps while holding
a wreath she made from the leaves out back. She now
approaches her grandfather.

LITTLE JULIA
I made this for you, Pappa.

GRANT
Why, thank you, Julia!

SAM
That's very nice, young lady.

Winking at Grant as she enters the cottage.

GRANT
(croaking)
So, how much do these subscriptions
amount to in actual dollars?
(coughing)

SAM
Prit'near three hundred and eighty
five thousand dollars!

Grant smiles broadly, letting out a weak sigh of relief.

I have Volume One for you in my bag
at the Balmoral, but forgot to
bring it down with me. How close
are you to finishing volume two?

Grant tries to speak, but once again, his words are barely discernible. He now writes out his reply on a small corner of paper, before tearing it off and handing it over to Clemens, who reads the note.

That's great news, really! Truly
remarkable!

(stupefied)

I shall inform my nephew-in-law
today. This calls for a
celebration.

Clemens removes a cigar out of his suitcoat, bites off the end, strikes a match against the porch rail, and begins to smoke. He immediately senses Grant's desire to enjoy one too.

Oh, sorry, General.

Writing on the page he's currently working on, Grant tears off another note. Clemens reads it and replies.

Sure. I'll be right back!

Clemens returns to the porch with Dr. Douglas, and addresses Grant.

I inquired with Dr. Douglas if you
can have a puff of my cigar. I'm
happy to report, General, that you
may!

Grant signals that he would rather to hear it from his doctor.

DR DOUGLAS

I can't see that it would do any
harm now.

Dr. Douglas reenters the house. After briefly considering a more generous offer, Clemens sets down his own cigar and lights up a spare one from his coat pocket, passing it over to a well pleased Grant.

INT. DREXEL COTTAGE, THE ADIRONDACKS, WILTON, NY - LATER

Finished with penning his memoirs, as well as his cigar, Grant enters the Cottage and sits down on a bed to receive his daily injections of brandy. Julia soon appears at his side.

The relief that morphine and cocaine once provided, suddenly became ineffective weeks ago, making alcohol the miracle balm that soothes the General's excruciating pain. Dr. Shradly finishes his work.

DR SHRADLY

There you are, General.

Doubling up Grant's arm.

JULIA

That's my Ulys!

Patting his free hand. A thoroughly nourished Grant now rises and walks over to his leather chair configuration for a well-needed nap.

EXT. SOUTH SLOPE, MOUNT MCGREGOR, WILTON, NY - AFTERNOON

That same day, after receiving yet another approval by Dr. Douglas, Grant once again appears at the top of Mount McGregor with the assistance of Harrison Terrell - this time in a shiny new rolling chaise, otherwise known as a Bath chair.

HARRISON

My, that's a fine lookin' buggy.

Admiring its black leather exterior, while circling the sleek light carriage.

Yes siree. Why, it looks like a mighty chariot, tailor made for a conquerin' general.

Grant nods in agreement, while adjusting his white silk scarf.

GRANT

Harrison, swing my Chariot South...

Ulysses S. Grant now surveys the faint, distant Catskills with his finest set of field glasses.

THE END

*We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.*

From Ulysses

By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

EPILOGUE

Ulysses Simpson Grant died on the morning of July 23, 1885, inside Drexel Cottage, on the gentle slopes of Mount McGregor, New York.

Following one of the largest funeral processions in New York City history, Grant's body was laid to rest in a temporary vault in the Morningside Heights section of Manhattan. Julia, who remained on Mount McGregor, did not attend.

After the *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* is published, Julia received the equivalent of \$15 million in today's marketplace.

On April 27, 1897, marking the 75th anniversary of his birth, the General Grant National Memorial, better known as Grant's Tomb, was dedicated. To this day, it remains the largest mausoleum in the United States.

Julia Dent Grant outlived her husband by seventeen years, dying in 1902. Her memoirs were published in 1975.