

She'd begged him to stay, but Alexander is Alexander and she knows who she married.

Sometimes she wonders if he was the right one.

Of course, Angelica had warned her, but there was no conviction in the words. Her sister, she suspects - no, knows - is as besotted with him as she is. Why Angelica wouldn't have him - if he'd ever asked her, Eliza will never know - is beyond her. If she had truly objected to him, she wouldn't have given their union her blessing. And so if she hadn't, and didn't... well, why? She'd venture to say that Angelica may be better suited for Alexander than she is.

She supposes that's another thing she'll never know for sure.

She won't say it doesn't haunt her more often than she'd like, because she'd be lying. She won't say that she doesn't wonder why Alexander chose her, doesn't wonder if Angelica had turned him down, doesn't wonder if she's the true owner of his heart or only, always, second-best. Truthfully, she wouldn't be surprised if she is. She can never hope to completely understand the brilliance, assiduity and insatiable thirst for greatness that is Alexander Hamilton; the part of him that is her husband is but the tip of an iceberg. There is so much of him that she will never know, and she has long accepted that. Has he?

Will he ever?

And then she wonders why she'd agreed to have him. Was she so foolish, to believe they could be happy together? Did she loathe herself so, such that she was willing to settle for being a back-up plan, to settle for being settled for?

Does she still?

But it is futile and injurious to be thinking so. It is hardly the time, if there even was a time for having these thoughts. Whether or not she would (or will) have it, she has vowed to love and to cherish him for the rest of their lives, and so she will. He is both her stumbling block and her cornerstone; her storm and her safe harbour. He is her husband, her love, her better half, no matter what she may be to him.

And now he is the father of her son.

She lays a hand on the small bump that will be a living, breathing child in a few months, and smiles. *You deserve a chance to meet your son*, she'd told him. She can't say how she knows it is a son; perhaps she doesn't. But Alexander must have a boy, he'd written to say, and so she hopes and hopes that it will be one. It is one of the few things she can give him.

There is a soft kick against her palm, and she pats her belly soothingly. The little one quickened just a week after he left her once more, and she cannot but mourn that he may never feel the child move against his hand in this way, never see her grow larger with it every day.

If he will see it at all.

She doesn't want to think of it, for fear that it would come true, but she must consider the possibility. What will she do if he does not come home, if he has lost his chance to meet their son? Move back to the Schuyler mansion, she supposes. Well, there's the practicalities sorted. She can remarry if she wishes; it will be well within her capabilities to do so. And if not, her father has enough to support them both, and she will have Angelica and Peggy and her other sisters to share in the raising of the child. They will be well provided for. She may love again.

What has she to fear?

The loss of his love? No, they have spent months apart before, and neither of them pined away. As if her absence would grieve him so, she scoffs. But no; to think so is to do him an injustice. He has been a faithful and loving (if not always dutiful) husband to her. And again this is injustice - what is there to say that he has shirked duty? Is the child in her womb not testament to the fulfilment of his obligations to her? Her cheeks flush at the thought, but the indecency of it does not make it any less true. He has given her the vitality of his seed, and in return, she will nurture it and present him with a son.

She thinks, rather, that it is the loss of *him* - all of him. Not merely the Alexander that is her husband - that is a poor representation of what he truly is, and she dares say, not much to be mourned - but Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hamilton, orphan, scholar, rebel, *man*. America will suffer from the loss of him, she is certain. The world will suffer - and her with it.

But, she realises, were it to happen, the loss would not be complete, would it? For now Alexander is no longer the only one of his kind in the world, not when he is to have an heir. An heir of his blood - and hers. An heir that might possibly inherit his smile, his eyes, and the inimitable, unfathomable (to her, at least) mind behind them. There is now more of Alexander in the world than before, and she marvels at the fact that she has played a not insignificant role in the causing of it.

There is always the possibility that one of him is already quite some more than is needed - God knows she won't need another Hamilton in her life, that Alexander is enough. But He has willed that it be otherwise, and she will have to manage. She prays now that if it He will have it be so, that the child will have just a little less of the ambition, a little more of the prudence. She's not sure if her character has strength enough to temper Alexander's... no, not shortcomings, never that. Excessive eagerness, she decides, is the best description of it. But the Lord will do as He sees fit, and if the child is all Alexander and none of her, she will welcome it nonetheless.

After all, she figures, the world is wide enough for two of Alexander. Just in case.