

Perfidy

In the chapter titled "Perfidy," set on April 9, Governor Pickens, General Beauregard, and former federal judge Andrew G. Magrath gather in Pickens's office at the Charleston Hotel, anxiously discussing the delivery of mail addressed to Fort Sumter, halted by Beauregard's order. The men recognize the extraordinary state of affairs due to the looming conflict with the Union and face a moral dilemma concerning the unopened mail. While ordinarily, the integrity of mail is paramount, Pickens rationalizes that in a time of war, they need to gather all pertinent information.

Initially hesitant, both Magrath and Beauregard shy away from opening the mail, leading Pickens to take charge. As he nervously tears into the letters, they decide to limit their examination to official correspondence, intending to forward any personal letters without reading them. However, the men inadvertently uncover a letter from Major Anderson to Colonel Lorenzo Thomas in Washington, detailing an impending supply expedition for Fort Sumter and implicating Captain Fox as the architect of this effort. This revelation heightens their suspicions and highlights the untrustworthiness of the Lincoln administration.

Moreover, specific letters shed light on Anderson's conflicted loyalties. Despite his newfound hero status within the Confederacy, the letters suggest he does not fully support the war efforts, exemplified by his statement that his heart is not in the war. This discovery offers the Confederacy a double-edged sword; it provides a potential rallying point against Anderson while also inviting criticism from those who might commend his bravery.

Following this discovery, Governor Pickens promptly communicates his concerns about the Northern expedition to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, asserting that preparations are underway in Charleston for an anticipated confrontation. With thousands of troops already deployed and reinforcements en route, he expresses confidence in their readiness to defend against what he perceives as an imminent assault. Overall, the chapter encapsulates the tension and strategic maneuvering occurring in Charleston as the first hints of war emerge.